Myth, Symbol, and Colonial Encounter
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CHAPTER TWO

LET NOT THY LEFT HAND KNOW WHAT THY RIGHT HAND DOETH

The question of thinking and living in the New World began, for the British in Acadia, with a problem of continuity of place. Fundamentally, theirs was the problem of imagining continuity where there was none. Complicating the issue, however, was the fact that a great many British settlers were possessed of a sense of identity that had been in some measure disfigured and that they were consequently trying to recover. In most cases, the identity that they sought to preserve was of British origin.

The two principal groups of immigrants who came to comprise the population base and colonial administrators of Acadia were the Nova Scotia Yankees and the Loyalists. The first major influx of pre-Loyalist settlers arrived in Acadia in the early 1760s. These were, by and large, New England Puritans from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, and most of them settled in Maugerville (on the east side of the St. John River) and in the area of the Chignecto Isthmus. These settlers had left New England before the movement for independence had gained momentum and they were loyal to Britain. Yet in moving to Nova Scotia they had weakened critical ties with families and friends, and the nature of their farmstead settlements had prevented the emergence of new communities. They were, as one writer has noted, "rootless people," and when, a few years later, the revolu-
tionary war occurred, what was left of their ties with New England was virtually severed. One writer has suggested that this drove the immigrant Yankees into a collective crisis of identity out of which emerged, for example, the Nova Scotia Great Awakening, led by a young man named Henry Alline. Alline believed that New England and England, by corrupting themselves by violent confrontation, had subverted the meaning of the Protestant Reformation, and that it had fallen to Nova Scotia to assume New England's cosmic position in the world. The Yankees responded overwhelmingly to this notion of identity that merged British loyalty and Protestant mission.

At the end of the revolutionary war, somewhere in the vicinity of thirty thousand Loyalists converged upon Acadia and settled, for the most part, at Shelbourne and Annapolis in Nova Scotia, and along the St. John and St. Croix rivers in what was to become New Brunswick. Most of these Loyalists were middle-class tradespeople or farmers who had been stripped of their American wealth and property. They had rejected the revolution, and in so doing, had turned away from the distinct character of what Marcia Kline calls "the New World environment." This rejection compelled the Loyalists to focus upon their European past and to regard themselves as people moving into a future that constituted a continuity with British culture. As Abraham Gesner explained in his nineteenth-century promotional book New Brunswick, With Notes for Emigrants, "the great number of loyalists that removed from the revolted states to Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, have been succeeded by a population that is firmly attached to the Crown and laws of the Empire."

The one million or so colonials who moved to British North America from various parts of the British Isles between 1800 and 1850 shared the Loyalists' desire to sustain a sense of cultural continuity with England. European social and economic structures had undergone massive alterations in the wake of both the industrial and agricultural revolutions in Europe, and the Napoleonic Wars had resulted in a recessionary period in England from which large portions of the population could not recover. For many, the move to British North America was an attempt to regain a standard of living that had been lost in the British Isles; they crossed the Atlantic holding fast to this desire to salvage an identity that had become threatened in Europe.

The problem of continuity for the immigrants pivoted between the desire to conceive and speak of themselves as European, and the reality of not being in Europe. Acadia, in fact, did not appear as remotely familiar to these early colonials. A Scottish traveller in Prince Edward Island wrote home in 1821 to say,
Everything in that Island, and, I believe, in all America, is new in some measure to every European, go from where he may; but the change is greater, and more distressing to an English family than to almost any other.\textsuperscript{13}

Gesner later added,

The animals and plants, the climates, the oceans, seas, rivers, and lakes, were found to be different from those of civilized Europe. The heavens displayed new wonders to the astronomer, and all nature presented itself under forms with which the early voyagers were unacquainted.\textsuperscript{14}

The British experience of Acadia and their problem of identity were primarily entangled in ambiguity, and their European heritage had taught them to be wary of ambiguity in both realms.

Prior to the seventeenth century in the West, human knowledge had generally been considered a product of a diversity of experience and impressions. The language that represented this knowledge was likewise evocative and grounded in the properties of figures of speech.\textsuperscript{15} This began to change as the rise of centralized monarchies led to the emergence of well-defined judicial codes. Technological improvement in the areas of war and manufacturing, as well as the expanded use of currency in Europe’s commercial sectors, coincided with the rise of science and mathematics—both of which required a previously unwarranted rigidity of representation. This climate of linguistic precision gave rise to philosophical calls for language and thought that were purged of ambiguity, and led to movements of “linguistic reform” aimed at eradicating folk vernacular.\textsuperscript{16} John Locke warned that “those who pretend seriously to search after, or maintain Trust, should think themselves obliged to study how they might deliver themselves without Obscurity, Doubtfulness, or Equivocation, to which Men’s Words are naturally liable.”\textsuperscript{17}

Defoe suggested in \textit{The Complete English Tradesman} (1725):

The end of Speech is that we might understand one another’s meaning. . . . If any man was to ask me, which would be supposed to be a perfect style or language, I would answer, that in which a man speaking to five hundred people, of all common and various capacities, idiots or lunatics excepted, should be understood by them all in the same manner with one another, and in the same sense which the speaker intended to be understood.\textsuperscript{18}

Donald Levine has suggested that the drive to eliminate linguistic ambiguity created a context in which the ambiguities of existence could no longer be represented. This contributed to a tendency toward
the denial of "experiential" ambiguity, in which the possibility that human experience could contain multiple or obscure meanings became attenuated. The way in which human identity and origins came to be perceived in the West was an early benefactor of this movement away from ambiguity that has continued to permeate Western culture. Descartes's *cogito ergo sum* gave a structure of interiority to the human soul that effectively alienated it from the potentially kaleidoscopic significance of the historical situation of the body. It constituted an existential leap in supposing the human to be essentially reason "disengaged" from the variability of experience.

Acadia's settlers were the heirs of this tradition that allowed for the generation of identity apart from the ambiguities of historical experience. Drawing upon this mode of self-definition, they set about imagining their British identity in the face of an environment that was anything but British. As Joseph Howe wrote in his poem "Acadia," the settlers "sought amidst Acadia's wilds to claim / A Briton's feelings and a Briton's name." Eighteenth-century New Brunswickers, for instance, endeavoured to reconstruct the architectural landscape of England, and in places such as St. John and Essex, leaders of the colony built houses in imitation of British models. Ward Chipman's house was arrayed with English furniture and imported wall coverings, and George Leonard built an estate that was described by a contemporary as "exceedingly neat and in good taste [resembling] a gentleman's villa in Europe." The Anglican church in Fredericton followed suit, as an ostentatious imitation of Portland Chapel in London. The Loyalists also began constructing educational institutions at the end of the century, the curricula of which focussed upon classical languages, rhetoric, and English literature. Students were taught to imitate European models in their writing, and literature began to emerge from the context of this classical education that aped outdated British styles. In speaking of Acadian poets such as Joseph Howe and Oliver Goldsmith, Fred Cogswell has suggested that the apparent emotional drive that gave rise to their work was, at base, simply a "pathetic" desire to persuade the English that the British North American colonies were culturally identical to the "motherland." Outside of literary circles, British colonials clung with equal tenacity to their sense of continuity with an English identity. In his *Observations upon the Importance of the North American Colonies to Great Britain* (1825), Chief Justice Brenton Haliburton of Nova Scotia wrote, "The inhabitants of British America have no desire to change their national character, and will feel disposed to cling to the Mother Country as long as she fosters and protects them." A nineteenth-century promotional pamphlet written by a Nova Scotian by the name of Henry Bliss turned this sentiment toward the British, when he charged:
let ministers then elevate and enlarge their views to the great circumstances in which they are placed. Let them endeavour to comprehend the whole dominions of Great Britain as one society, and the colonies for its integral parts, as much as if they adjoined Valen-
tia or the Land's End.²⁵

This idea that national—or individual—character could withstand changes in historical setting was a focus in Joseph Howe's campaign for responsible government in the 1830s. In a letter to Lord John Russel, for example, he asked,

Can an Englishman, an Irishman, or a Scotchman, be made to believe, by passing a month upon the sea, that the most stirring periods of his history are but a cheat and a delusion... that the principles of civil liberty, which from childhood he has been taught to cherish and to protect by forms of stringent responsibility, must, with the new light breaking in upon him on this side of the Atlantic, be cast aside as useless encumbrance? No, my Lord, it is madness to suppose that these men, so remarkable for carrying their national characteristics into every part of the world where they penetrate, shall lose the most honourable of them all, merely from passing from part of the empire to another.²⁶

Although it is true that these colonials were culturally equipped to imagine identity in isolation from their temporal and spatial situation, one must consider the question of how such a sense of meaning could be sustained when it was so dramatically inconsistent with their actual experience of the place. The answer, of course, is that at some critical level, it was not at all discordant. To imagine that they were unchanged in the process of "penetrating every part of the world," the British merely had to re-imagine any given place in such a way as to eliminate the potentially disconcerting ambiguity its novelty contained. In Acadia, they availed themselves of a traditional modality of regarding space and expanded it to the breaking point.

Yi-Fu Tuan has suggested that "wilderness" has traditionally been considered profane space in the West, with the "garden" representing the area of wilderness that has been re-fashioned for the exigency of human beings. Wilderness has consequently been regarded as something that must be re-created and the act of re-creation has contained many layers of significance. Each re-created wilderness has become a place where food can be produced; it has also become an indication of the expansion of social patterning; and finally, it has come to signify the conquering of profane space by that which is sacred.²⁷

The colonial British confronted the alterity of Acadia armed with this appreciation of wilderness, and they extended the notion of chaotic or meaningless space to encompass the entire region prior to
settlement. In some instances, this translated into a simple denial of the existence of anything on which a British sense of order had not been imposed. Early colonial cartographers, for example, curiously failed to record anything beyond the boundaries of European settlement. The first map of Halifax to receive wide circulation in England was a town plan drawn by Moses Harris in 1749. The plan depicted a British ship in harbour, and a palisade and five forts surrounding ordered streets, a church, an army barracks, a court house, and a governor's residence. Beyond the palisade, Harris drew two fruit trees, a porcupine, and a beetle of some variety. The forest and its wildlife were conspicuously absent, and nothing even suggested the presence of the aboriginal peoples who habitually hunted in the area.  

In most instances, however, nature was not avoided but endowed with dismal, sometimes even malignant, qualities. In 1827, the missionary John West discussed the Loyalists' first encounter with New Brunswick's landscape, for example, and described the coast as "rugged, and the whole aspect of the country dreary and uninviting. . . . Nothing was to be seen but a few huts erected on the margin of a dark, immense wilderness." In New Brunswick as A Home for Emigrants, a promotional book published in 1860, the author spoke of a colony characterized by savage wilderness and cultivated land: "we have brooks winding through dark ravines and rivers bounding through savage gorges or gliding peacefully through fertile meadows and happy homesteads," and in Howe's "Acadia" the same two images created a rather striking motif. The first was absolutely sinister—associated with the brutal massacre of white settlers by "red hunters" in the eighteenth century:

Around the cot the Indians form a ring  
And songs of joy and triumph wildly sing  
With horrid gesture and demonic strain  
Then plunge into the forest depths again.

The second was pastoral, percolating with images of creation in the nineteenth century:

But see, extending upon every side,  
Her cottage homes! Acadia's noblest pride;  
There honest Industry, by daily toil,  
Covers with fruits and flowers his native soil;  
And calm contentment, with an Angel's air,  
And humble hopes, and smiling joys, are there.

Thomas Chandler Haliburton emphasized the value of re-created landscape in his work, The Old Judge, when an "unnamed English traveller" described his arrival at Halifax-Dartmouth:
The first object that met our view was the picturesque little church that crowns the cliff overlooking the village and haven of Falkland. . . . The entrance to this noble harbour, the best, perhaps, in America, is exceedingly beautiful: such portions of the landscape as are denuded of trees exhibit a very high state of cultivation . . . and the national flag and the British sentinel bear testimony to the power and extensive possessions of dear old England.  

The only landscape that was regarded as significant by British colonials was that which had been re-shaped for their needs and according to the values of their European culture, which they called "civilization." For a group of people engaged in an imaginative process of self-creation (and for a people situated in a context with a disruptive potential) the imperative for extending civilization became an indispensable tool for re-shaping the world. With it, they could reassure themselves that European colonials were not, as an Italian writer once put it, the "offscourings of the nations," but agents of a historical process, through which human history was moving toward a more perfect state. “Developing the resources of a country,” wrote W. R. M. Burtis, in 1860, is not a single factor or attainment, but a successive and never ending series of facts or achievements, reaching far into the future. . . . Our sense of what may be done is improved and enlarged by our acquaintance with what has been done. The art-triumphs of the last half-century, instead of appearing to our lives as defining the reach of the human intellect, and the adaptation of the elements and materials of the earth to the purpose of human life—of social and moral progress—creates a belief in the illimitable application of natural laws—in the still greater triumphs of human reason, and the still higher destiny of the human family. Each successive attainment becomes, in turn, a stepping-stone from which the children of light may take a bolder flight into the regions of discovery.  

Civilization and progress became symbols through which the colonial experience of being displaced could be reconciled with the notion of being steadfastly European. For these symbols to remain effective, much rested on the re-creation of the Acadian landscape, and that required unobstructed access to the land itself. Of course, there were a great many other people on the land who were not entirely enraptured with what the missionary John West described as the "diffusion" of the "light of science and the arts," but the British dealt with the potential impediment they posed by ignoring their presence, or by conceding to them as little attention as possible.  

By the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, France had relinquished control of Acadia. Within the text of the treaty itself, the Mi’kmaq were not even mentioned, and from the colonial point of view this was to become a preferred method of dealing with aboriginal peoples. When,
for instance, in 1761, the English Board of Trade instructed Nova Scotia's governor, Jonathan Belcher, to issue a proclamation forbidding encroachment on Mi'kmaq lands, he obediently drew up the document that stated, among other things,

Wherefore in dutiful Obedience to His Majesty's Orders I do accordingly publish this proclamation in His Majesty's Royal Name, strictly enjoining and requiring all Persons what ever, who may either willfully or inadvertently have seated themselves on any Lands so reserved to or claimed by the said Indians, without any lawful Authority for doing forthwith to remove therefrom.  

Belcher subsequently decided to refrain from issuing it "at large." After reminding the board in a private letter, that the Mi'kmaq had ceded all claim to Acadia by the Treaty of Utrecht, he went on to explain, "If the Proclamation had been issued at large, the Indians might have been incited . . . to have made extravagant and unwarrantable demands, to the disquiet and perplexity of the New Settlements in the Province."  

We might compare the circumstance surrounding the dissemination of Belcher's proclamation with those of another proclamation issued in 1758 and again in 1759, in which Belcher's predecessor Charles Lawrence offered substantial incentives for immigrants settling in the colony. Both versions of the document were widely circulated in the New England colonies.  

Colonial governments generally resisted Mi'kmaq pressure to buy land back for them from colonial interests, and the most acute instance of this resistance occurred in Prince Edward Island, where the British government had granted the entire colony in 1767 to absentee proprietors. Refusal to spend public money on securing Mi'kmaq title to land was a continual problem in Prince Edward Island. In 1843, for instance, the Assembly set aside fifty pounds to buy Murray Island for the native population, but the purchase never occurred. In 1860, Joseph Howe appeared at Land Commission hearings in Charlottetown and recommended that Lennox Island be purchased for the region's Mi'kmaq. The Assembly, however, refused to pay the price set by the island's owner, R. B. Stewart. The Mi'kmaq in that province consequently remained without legal title to any part of the island until 1870.  

Land on which the Mi'kmaq were permitted to remain was generally relinquished by the colonials because of its inaccessibility or its relative lack of a resource base. Although the government of Prince Edward Island did not buy any land for its aboriginal population, in the late eighteenth century it gained permission from the proprietor James Montgomery to allow the Mi'kmaq to settle on Lennox Island—an area furthest removed from white settlement and covered, to a substantial degree, by "barrens and swamp."  

In 1801, the New Brunswick
government likewise chose to grant a particular petition because, as the surveyor-general noted, it “appears to be reasonable and can interfere with no settlement.”

In Nova Scotia, land surrendered to the Mi’kmaq was “chiefly barren, and [situated in] spots removed from the sea-coast.”

In addition to reserving only the poorest quality of land for the Mi’kmaq, colonial governments made concessions often with a stipulation that native communities were not to request any further grants. In New Brunswick, for example, the government entered into an agreement with the Mi’kmaq of the St. John River area in 1807 by which a parcel of land was to be purchased with public moneys on the condition that,

they the said Indians do consider the same as full satisfaction for all claims or pretensions which they may have hithertoore had or which they may now conceive themselves to have to the said Maductic Point or to any other land upon the said River.

Yet legal recognition of the Mi’kmaq presence in any location rarely extended to the settler population. Squatting and various forms of encroachment were endemic and uncontrolled. In 1783, for example, John Julien obtained a licence of occupation from the government of Nova Scotia for twenty thousand acres on the Miramichi River. Between 1785 and 1807 his band repeatedly requested that the licence be confirmed in the face of excessive encroachment by white settlers. The result of their continued effort was that Eel Ground (as well as three smaller tracts along the river) was reserved for them in 1807; but of the original twenty thousand acres, only ten thousand remained at this point.

A few years later the missionary Walter Bromley reported that he had spoken with a chief whose father had cleared two hundred acres of land at various locations and times in Nova Scotia. All of it, he noted, had been appropriated by white settlers.

At the turn of the nineteenth century a Mi’kmaq community was granted four thousand acres of land on the eastern side of the Wagamatacook River in Cape Breton Island. By the 1860s, all that was left of the tract was seven hundred acres containing a village, a burial ground, and a grove of sugar maples.

Whites stole Mi’kmaq land, and they also appropriated timber and hay and built dams with little regard for the reserve land they flooded. Abraham Gesner admitted, in the mid-nineteenth century that, “As the title is not in the Indians, they have no power to prevent trespasses; and the result has been, that the lands set apart for their benefit are plundered for their most valuable timber, and the most fertile places of ground occupied by unauthorized persons.” Although colonial governments intermittently passed legislation intended to protect Mi’kmaq land, these bills were not enforced because, as Lieutenant-Governor William Head was advised in 1848, “it would not now be possible to
eject the occupants, even if in itself such a measure were desirable. The fact was, this "measure" was not deemed to be desirable in any colonial circles. As one Fredericton newspaper noted in 1844, "the extensive tracts of valuable land reserved for the Indians in various parts of the Province tend greatly to retard the settlement of the Country." In 1843, a New Brunswick government committee report suggested that "Industrious poor Squatters" had improved the land on which they had settled and should not be forced to remove themselves, and Abraham Gesner told potential British immigrants that if they chose to become squatters (a group he described as "a very remarkable class of persons") they could safely assume that title to the land could be later obtained at very little cost.

Despite these wholehearted attempts to ignore the Mi'kmaq, the British could not help but notice that the extension of civilization had contributed to the physical decline of the native population. Throughout the process of colonization, dispossessed Mi'kmaq constituted a presence that could not be entirely avoided, and this appears to have encumbered many British with a threatening sense of guilt. As the writer Douglas Huyghe noted in the introduction to his novel The Nomads of the West (1850), "We rear the germ of a great city without casting a thought on the generation crumbling beneath." Gesner expressed this sentiment repeatedly in his reports to the Nova Scotia government in the late 1840s, bemoaning, for instance, the fact that

They have been supplanted by civilized inhabitants, and in return for the lands for which they were the rightful owners, they have received loathsome diseases, alcoholic drink, the destruction of their game, and threatened extermination.

In some cases the British were able to creatively confront this sense of transgression by attributing what they perceived to be the immanent disappearance of aboriginal peoples to the Mi'kmaq themselves, or to the ultimate process of the extension of civilization of which the British were agents, not initiators. At this level the Mi'kmaq were regarded as a vestige of a community whose significance had waned in the working out of human progress. The language employed to speak of them was laden with images of an eclipsed meaning, with words like "remnant" and "remains" pointing to their significance as lying firmly in the past. Thus, Huyghe wrote, "Look at that shrivelled remnant of what was once a powerful, energetic man"; and the Nova Scotia government was warned by a committee in 1801 that "all the pecuniary resources of the Province would . . . be found inadequate to the support of this Remnant of the Mieckmack tribe." John West called the Mi'kmaq "a remnant of a people, who were once sovereigns of the soil"; the Nova Scotian described a chief present at the Halifax
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celebration of Queen Victoria’s marriage as “a remnant of his tribe”; Gesner noted, “At present time, there are the remnants of two tribes in New Brunswick”; and Moses Perley, in his 1841 report to the lieutenant-governor of New Brunswick, called them “the scattered remains of the once proud and mighty,” and the “remnant of an ill-fated race.”

Those Mi’kmaq who “remained” a presence in Acadia were often considered to have ceased to be legitimate aboriginal peoples. Speaking of the Mi’kmaq at Restigouche, Moses Perley admitted, “The old people . . . struck me as possessing very little Indian blood, while the younger portion are so fair, as to raise a doubt whether they should be styled Indians at all . . . each generation appears fairer than the preceding.” In addition to this physical transformation, some also perceived a cultural transformation that had effectively separated the Mi’kmaq from their past. The sportsman Campbell Hardy noted, for instance, “Few Traditions exist among the Nova Scotian Indians concerning the habits and wars of their forefathers.”

The fact that Acadia’s native peoples had nearly disappeared was, for many colonials, a clear consequence of their refusal to co-operate with the unfolding of progress. An article in the Nova Scotian in 1846 claimed that the Mi’kmaq were devoid of “foresight” and naturally lazy, and had consequently failed to come to an enjoyment of the benefits of civilization—“arts, science, and laws.” That they were primordially lazy was a common theme. In a report from the New Brunswick government to the Colonial Office in 1838, for instance, native peoples were described as “naturally indolent.” In 1854, William Chearnley commented that “their character is such that I fear we shall always find them to be a people unwilling to work,” and a few years later he added that the Mi’kmaq were “destined to live a roving life . . . almost wholly dependent on charity.” Gesner claimed that although their outward appearance has undergone alteration, and necessity has compelled them to conform more or less to the present condition of the country, in their social state they remain unchanged, and every effort to bring them to a state of civilization has proved abortive . . . They have been instructed in the arts and in agriculture, but no sooner were they liberated from their masters, than they returned to the haunts and habits of their forefathers, and became the most depraved of all their race.

The historian Alexander Monro informed his readers that from 1763 onward every possible encouragement has been held out to these people by the local governments; large tracts of land have been set apart for their use in different parts of both Provinces, and the Legislatures
have, whenever their necessities have required it, granted large
sums . . . for their relief . . . some of them have been induced to set-
tle. . . . They are sometimes employed in the lumber woods. . . . But
the predilections for hunting, basket making, and the wigwam, pre-
vent them from pursuing other avocations for any length of time. 71

There were times when the British were not so inclined to afford
full responsibility for the demise of the native community to the
Mi'kmaq themselves, but were also reluctant to attribute it to their
own community, and at these moments they identified the ultimate
causes as "civilization" and "progress," as though these had some sub-
jective existence apart from their imagination. So Perley claimed,
when he wrote, "the survivors of the ancient possessors and lords of the
country . . . are fastly yielding to the calamitous fate which so often
befalls uncivilized man." 72 The incompatibility of aboriginal peoples
with civilization was a recurrent myth, and one that Huygue explored
in the conclusion of his book, Argimou: A Legend of the Micmacs. At
their parting, the British officer Edward Molesworth implored his
friend Argimou (a Mi'kmaq chief) to accompany him back to England,
but the chief declined the invitation. Although the two men had been
friends in a context of separation from their respective societies, this
could not continue outside that context: "Brother, said [Argimou] with
pathos—it can never—never be. When you take the moose from the
woods and keep it among the settlements of the pale-faces, it will pine
away and die." 73 The moose motif was a common device in nineteenth-
century writing dealing with the Mi'kmaq. The Reverend John Sprott,
for instance, made use of the motif in an article published in the Nova
Scotian, April 6, 1846: "The approach of the white man, and the march
of improvement, have sealed their doom. . . . Now we seldom see a
moose or an Indian." 74

Whether it was considered to be the fault of the Mi'kmaq them-

selves or of progress, the fact that the Mi'kmaq were facing annihi-
lation was rarely considered to be a result of the attempt by this specific
group of Europeans to re-create an equally specific region of the New
World. At this level, the native community was acknowledged as hav-
ing once had meaning in the world it inhabited, but that world had
given way to one of greater significance, and native peoples were
unavoidably victims of this human movement. At another level, how-
ever, the link between the process of colonization and the physical
destruction of the Mi'kmaq could not be dismissed so easily, and as a
consequence, many colonials sought to reconcile the fact of disposses-
sion with the idea of civilization on which they were suspending their
own notion of meaningful existence. They suggested that the Mi'kmaq
could be saved from their impending destruction through a concerted
effort on the part of the British to re-make them, just as they were
re-making the land. For many, this appeared not just as a possible course of action but a responsibility.

It is important to recognize that for the colonial British, the Mi'kmaq were essentially part of the wilderness and were possessed of the same qualities attributed to "wild" Acadia. When the landscape of Acadia was first encountered, it had been a country "wrapped in the gloom of perpetual fog," and had subsequently been re-made as a place of "calm contentment, with an Angel's air." The Mi'kmaq had been discovered in the margins of the darkness that had been Acadia, and had remained a part of it. As the poet Thomas Daniel Cowdell wrote in the first years of the nineteenth century,

From shores, where howls the savage bear,  
And tawney tribes of Indians are;  
Where quiet, endless forests grow,  
That never felt the woodman's blow;  
A continent rul'd by extremes  
Of frigid cold and flaming beams;  
Far distant from Europa, fam'd,  
And which, like her, may yet be tamed.

John West echoed Cowdell's sentiments when he noted, "Nothing was to be seen but a few huts erected on the margin of a dark, immense wilderness, and occasionally some of the natives, clothed principally with the skins of animals." Their association with the wilderness was consistently emphasized throughout the colonial period, as they were variously characterized as "sons of the forest," "red brethren of the wilderness," or "children of the forest." On one occasion, the Nova Scotian described them as "nature's gentlemen," and on another referred to "Isodore, the chief of Musquodoboit," who had recently died, as "this venerable old hemlock, through whose branches the storms of ninety years had whistled."

Yet the Mi'kmaq were not only part of the wilderness; they also shared in its sinister qualities. Thus, Howe's Indians in the poem "Acadia" emerged from the "forest depths" to embark upon a savage massacre of a family of settlers. Moses Perley identified the Mi'kmaq as "formerly a very fierce and powerful tribe" of people who were also "deceitful," and Alexander Monro recalled for his readers a time when

Their ferocious habits, their physical strength, their warlike propensities, their agility and skill in the use of their weapons, and their deadly opposition to every other race, rendered it an extremely hazardous undertaking for a European to land on their shores, much more so to penetrate into the country.
Oliver Goldsmith, the first Acadian colonial poet to receive serious international critical acclaim, identified the Mi'kmaq with “beasts of prey” lurking at the peripheries of his “Rising Village.” Gesner described what he considered to be prototypical Mi'kmaq behavior during a massacre of eighteenth-century white settlers in the following manner:

In the dark and silent hours of the night, when the peaceful inhabitants of the villages were wrapt in slumber, or when the sentinel trusted to the distance between himself and the enemy, the savages were creeping upon them like serpents, sometimes drawing their bodies on the ground, at other times standing erect and imitating the appearance of trees or other common objects, until the war whoop was raised, when all rushed forward to the indiscriminate and diabolical slaughter of men, women, and children. These fiendish acts and terrible tortures they inflicted on their prisoners, formed the dark pages of Indian history.

Although the British took some pride in having subdued the savage tendencies of the “Indians,” many remained uncomfortable with the fact that the Mi'kmaq were situated at the margins of civilization—they had not shared in the “smiling joys” that the land itself had acquired. In fact, they were languishing as a result of progress, rather than reaping its benefits. The potential ambiguity of civilization was obvious in the demise of the native community, and this rendered the value of the notion at least questionable.

The solution for some was to re-fashion the Mi'kmaq in the image of European colonials. The premise was that if they could be “civilized” and so, made to think and act like whites, the value of progress would remain intact. Thus, the Nova Scotia government was told by its Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1848 that throughout the preceding century of colonization little effort had been made “to civilize the race, now brought to the lowest depth of misery and despair,” and that the Mi'kmaq had been subjugated “not to redeem but to destroy.” During the same period, the New Brunswick legislature was warned by its own commissioner:

If the scattered remains of the once proud and mighty, possessors of the whole land are allowed to continue in a state of degradation or ruinous decay, a mountain of reproach will rest on those who have supplanted them as lords of the soil without imparting any equivalent, therefore supplanting only to destroy instead of to civilize and save.

In a letter published in the Christian Messenger in 1855, the missionary Silas Rand likewise bemoaned the fact that whites had turned away from their “obligations” to the Mi'kmaq, who
eats and sleeps in the midst of confusion—bundles, blankets, kettles, papooses and dogs tumbled pell mell, and huddled together amongst smoke and filth and vermin. . . . We seize upon their country. We rob them of their lands. We drive them from their homes.91

The idea of rendering native culture obsolete through the imposition of European culture existed as a possibility because of the nature of human progress. European culture was regarded as a stage in the development of humanity that had logically proceeded from earlier forms, and the Mi'kmaq were viewed as simply having had the misfortune of not yet progressing to that stage. Hence, they were underdeveloped humans who could be induced to engage in the process of progress. As one writer noted late in the period, "We chide them and wonder at them, because they cannot learn in a few years what we have gathered from the experience of many centuries. We might as well expect infancy to join the rigorous sports of boyhood."92 The myth of the Mi'kmaq as childlike was employed frequently throughout the period. The Free Press, for example, described them as "infants as regards defect of knowledge in their new situation,"93 and Moses Perley suggested that they should be "treated as wards of the sovereign."94 Perley also wrote of Mi'kmaq guides in the London Sporting Review of 1839, and described them as "lynx-eyed, active, half amphibious Indian boys,"95 and the Halifax Reporter, commenting on the city's reception for the Prince of Wales in 1860, defined those whites who had been present on the occasion as "ladies and gentlemen," while referring to the Mi'kmaq as "children of the forest."96

For the British, the "advancement of cultivation in the wilderness"97 was an indication of progress in colonial Acadia. It was logical, then, that the "civilization" of aboriginal peoples would require their adoption of agricultural modes of subsistence, and many whites called for a concerted effort on the part of their contemporaries towards educating the Mi'kmaq in agricultural methods and technology (as well as the English language). New Brunswick's provincial secretary announced early in the period, "If they are willing to learn, we are ready to teach them . . . all the methods of agriculture by which an unfailing Subsistence is secured to all civilized and industrious Planters."98 The government of Nova Scotia passed an "Act to Provide for the Instruction and Permanent Settlement of the Indians," in 1842,99 and in 1864, the province's commissioner Samuel Fairbanks recommended that any Mi'kmaq who settled permanently "should be treated in every respect as a British subject . . . he should be allowed to vote at elections."100

Despite the ostensible desire to see the native population "civilized," the historical situation of the Mi'kmaq during the period points to a fundamental discrepancy between the British language of inclusion
and their practice. Far from striving to provide native peoples with access to the "comforts of refined society," the colonials appear to have been engaged in their absolute dissolution. With the advent of substantial immigration into Acadia in the mid-eighteenth century came rapid and dramatic changes in the world inhabited by the Mi'kmaq. The loss of land has been noted already. It should be noted, however, that a good deal of this land had been prime hunting and fishing areas on which the Mi'kmaq supported their communities prior to the influx of settlers. After 1750, native peoples were increasingly alienated from these regions, and a general depletion of game (especially moose) occurred throughout the colonies. 101 As early as the 1760s, segments of the Mi'kmaq community were beginning to suffer from deprivation, 102 and by the turn of the century a majority had become impoverished. 103 Relief payments to offset this forced situation of privation began around 1800, but were insufficient or offered only in times of crisis. During the first year of relief payments in Nova Scotia, for instance, one government agent reported that despite the distribution of goods, the community at Antigonish was in a "miserable condition," and many were without any clothing whatever. 104 In 1812, rumours of a possible alliance between the St. John Mi'kmaq and the Penobscot on the American side of the border compelled the New Brunswick Council to make relief payments in return for assurances of Mi'kmaq neutrality. Money for supplies continued to be provided on an ad hoc basis until 1814, when the crisis appeared to have subsided. 105

The physical state of the Mi'kmaq degenerated continually throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Government documents consistently demonstrated that they were without food and clothing and were suffering from endemic disease. In the 1840s, Moses Perley informed the New Brunswick Assembly that

I learned on enquiry from many elderly people, who stated themselves to be childless, that they had had from 8 to 12 Children each, who had died in infancy from Measles, Whooping Cough, Scarlet Fever, Croup, Typhua, Small Pox, and a variety of other Diseases, to which Children are subject. . . . During my visit to the Miramichi the Children were suffering dreadfully from Dysentery, and while at Burnt Church Point a death occurred almost daily. 106

In 1831, the Mi'kmaq at Rawden, Nova Scotia, possessed ten blankets for fifty people and in 1834, those of Windsor were naked and without shelter. 107 Between 1846 and 1856, the Mi'kmaq at Digby were said to be dying "for want of food and sustenance," those in Cape Breton and at New Glasgow were "ready to drop from hunger," and those at Pictou were "actually starving [and] crying for food." 108
While whites were calling for their “civilization” in order to share in the benefits of progress, they appear to have been doing pitifully little to promote the possibility. In the 1790s, the Mi’kmaq were encouraged by the Nova Scotia government to produce “baskets, axe-handles, shingles, and staves”—products that the majority of recent immigrants were unable to buy. In New Brunswick, where logging was a more lucrative enterprise than farming, very few employers chose to hire native labourers despite the fact that they were reputed to be “excellent axemen.” Walter Bromley reported in 1822, that at Chedabucto Bay in Nova Scotia,

where the Indians have been in constant habit of fishing and supplying the white fishermen with their manufactures, peltry &c. for several years, they have been expelled in the most brutal manner from that fishing ground by the white people, who entered their camps, defiled their women, abused and beat the men, and, in fact, conducted themselves in such a manner as to prevent the possibility of their remaining any longer.
Those Mi'kmaq who wanted to farm in Prince Edward Island could not obtain land, and elsewhere, encroachment and an inability to secure credit from agricultural suppliers weakened the possibility. Up to 1840, relatively little government assistance was provided for potential farmers, and after 1840, such aid was inconsistent. Little technical advice was provided, and seed potatoes often arrived too late in the season for planting or had to be eaten by the starving prospective farmers. When the Prince of Wales donated fifty pounds to assist the Mi'kmaq of Prince Edward Island in beginning to farm, the money was used by the colonial government to buy old muskets. In a near fitting finale to the period, William Chearnley decided to abandon the notions of civilization and settlement, and spent his entire grant of 1859 on blankets (of which he bought twelve hundred and eighty-six). A year later, he boasted of how many second-hand greatcoats he had purchased with that year’s allotment.

Perhaps the colonial figure who appeared most committed to the actual welfare of the Mi'kmaq during the period was Moses Perley, who was Commissioner of Indian Affairs in New Brunswick during the 1840s. In his 1841 report to the Assembly (from which many references have already been drawn), Perley suggested that the “civilization” of the Mi'kmaq could be achieved without undue difficulty if sufficient funds were channelled into their communities and if contact with British settlers were promoted. He recommended that the office of superintendent be created to oversee the education and settlement of native peoples in the province, that government-funded health care be provided for the disease-ridden population, that land be held communally on reserves, that unused land be leased to pay for education in trades and for health care, and that native settlements be located in close proximity to those of the colonials so that schools might be integrated. These very tangible suggestions were not welcomed by the colonial government, and most were ultimately ignored. In 1844, the government decided to attempt to sell reserve land to settlers who were illegally squatting, and announced that

the monies annually arising from the sale and leasing of the said Reserves, and also from the rents, issues and profits thereof, after payment of expenses aforesaid, shall be applied to the exclusive benefit of the Indians.

Perley was intensely critical of the scheme, warning that squatters would never be induced to pay for the land on which they were settled, but his concerns were disregarded. The plan failed, as Perley had predicted. By 1848, he had been silenced by the government and was informed that he was no longer in their employ. It appears that the
services of one who—regardless of motivation—actively promoted the welfare of the Mi'kmaq and their interaction with whites had probably never been required at all by the colony of New Brunswick.

Notes

1. Jeanne Guillemin notes that the settlement of Nova Scotia substantially followed the expulsion of the Acadians that began in 1755. It was at this point that the British government systematically embarked upon drawing settlers into the region in order to exploit the land that had been cleared by the removal of the French population. Although Guillemin suggests that the number of Acadians involved in the expulsion was about thirteen thousand, estimates in this respect vary. Naylor and Reid have each claimed that only about ten thousand individuals were involved, while Griffiths has placed the number between twelve and seventeen thousand, tending toward the latter. See Guillemin, Urban Renegades, 52–53; Naylor, Canada in the European Age, 131; Reid, Six Crucial Decades, 44; and Griffiths, The Contexts of Acadian History, 89.

2. See MacDonald, Rebels and Royalists, 10, 28–33. MacDonald notes that the first group of New Englanders to move into Acadia “were descendants of English families who had come to America in the 1630s [and most] were Congregationalists” (33). Cf. Stewart, Documents Relating to the Great Awakening in Nova Scotia, xxi, and Moir, The Church in the British Era, 17–18.

3. Stewart, Documents, xv.


5. See Rawlyk, “The 1770s,” 31. Rawlyk suggests that “the Great Awakening of Nova Scotia may be viewed as an attempt by many inhabitants to appropriate a sense of identity. Religious enthusiasm in this context . . . was symptomatic of a collective identity crisis.” Cf. Stewart and Rawlyk, A People Highly Favoured by God, 190–192. Henry Alline was born in Rhode Island in 1748, and moved with his Puritan family to Falmouth, Nova Scotia, at the age of twelve. Cf. Bumsted, Henry Alline, 3.

6. See Stewart and Rawlyk, A People Highly Favoured by God, 166; Rawlyk, Wrapped Up in God, 16, 53; and Rawlyk, “The 1770s,” 31: “God was passing New England’s historical role of Christian leadership to Nova Scotia. With two powerful Protestant nations furiously battling one another, the whole course of events since the Reformation seemed to be ending in a meaningless tangle . . . it could only indicate one thing, that the entire Christian world, apart from Nova Scotia, was abandoning the way of God”; and Rawlyk, “New Lights, Baptists, and Religious Awakenings,” 53.


9. Fingard, The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia, 43, notes, “The majority of the Loyalists arrived in the province as destitute immigrants . . . they had shared the misfortune of losing their property.” She refers to the “Minutes of the Port Roseway Associates for 1782” that listed settlers by occupation, and demonstrated a large proportion of “artisans, farmers, and tradesmen” (Public Archives of Nova Scotia). Cf. MacNutt, The Making of the Maritime Provinces, 94.


12. Stephen Hornsby has suggested that in respect to the Highland Scots, in particular, “Rising prices for wool and meat during the Napoleonic Wars encouraged clan chiefs to clear many of the agricultural villages . . . and to lease the land to large, progressive sheep farmers. . . . Neither the destruction of the traditional agricultural economy nor its replacement by crofting and kelping [an industry that emerged as a result of a French embargo on alkali] were readily accepted. . . . Fearing that they might lose land, rights, and status . . . many preferred to emigrate, hoping to re-create overseas something of the life that was being destroyed in Scotland” (“Scottish Emigration and Settlement in Early Nineteenth Century Cape Breton,” 49-54). Cf. Campbell and MacLean, Beyond the Atlantic Roar, 7-17.

13. Walter Johnstone’s letter of October 23, 1821, quoted in Harvey, Journeys to the Island of St. John or Prince Edward Island, 143.


15. Much of the following discussion is based upon a work by Donald Levine called The Flight from Ambiguity. In respect to the nature of pre-seventeenth-century European discourse, Levine suggests, “the language used to represent human affairs was valued for being vivid and evocative more than for its denotational precision. Metaphor, irony, and analogies of all sorts were the stock in trade” (1).

16. Levine, The Flight from Ambiguity, 2. Cf. Morrison, The Embattled Northeast, 43-44: “Greater literacy—itself the hallmark of civility—also strained social relations. . . . While scholars were discovering that European vernacular languages possessed an admirable vitality, the folk were condemned as quickly as they came to literate consciousness. Study of rural oral traditions led to efforts to eradicate vulgar speech.”


18. Cited in Bell, Defoe’s Fiction, 11. Levine focuses particularly on the influence of mathematical language upon the writing and thought of Descartes, Leibniz, and Hobbes (2), and suggests that Samuel Johnson’s dictionary represented an apex of this trend toward linguistic purity, as he sought to establish “univocal meanings in perpetuity” (4). Ernest Campbell Mossner points out that the “Edinburgh Circle” of the mid-eighteenth-century that included David Hume, William Robertson, and Adam Smith called for the absolute rejection of vernacular languages. The circle had a substantial influence on the contemporary European intellectual climate. See The Forgotten Hume, 16-17.


20. Taylor, The Ethics of Authenticity, 102. Frye discussed the cogito ergo sum as a product of a desire “to derive human existence from human consciousness, and to see that consciousness as being in a different world from the nature which for Descartes was pure extension in space” [Divisions on a Ground, 169]. We might add that, a century after Descartes, Kant’s understanding of the ego was essentially an expansion on the foundation laid by the cogito ergo sum. This notion effectively separated consciousness from the empirical world. See Smith, A Commentary to Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, 211ff., and Mauss, Sociology and Psychology, 89.

21. Howe, Poems and Essays, 32.


24. Quoted in Heik, History and Myth, 300.

25. Heik, History and Myth, 301.

27. Tuan discusses the presence of these primordial symbols in the Bible, which begins with the chaos of Genesis and ends, for Christians, with the heavenly city of Revelation. "In the beginning," as described in Genesis, the entire earth existed in a wilderness state. "The waters represented the primordial undifferentiated flux, the chaos out of which was to emerge, first, dry land, then culture... On the dry land [God] 'planted a garden eastward in Eden.' God acted the role of the divine gardener" [*Man and Nature*, 24–26].

28. See Sparling, "The British Vision in Nova Scotia," 9. Cf. McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome*, 11. McGregor points out that there appears to have been a common tendency among early Canadian colonials to avoid "having to focus on nature... at all" [29].

29. For more general discussion of the negativity of wilderness in Canadian art and literature see Marcia Kline, *Beyond the Land Itself*. Kline points to a fundamental difference in attitude toward nature between American and Canadian writers, noting that Americans were often able to look upon nature as something very positive (though no less founded in the imagination), The "frontier" in American literature has signified a notion of the natural world as something about which human beings can feel some confidence despite any experience of terror. "No such thing was possible in Canada. The wild state was too terrifying..." Schematically, this means that the Canadian skips the frontier and looks east—east to the landscapes of Gloucestershire and the all-protective Union Jack. But the American... never goes East, instead he confidently 'lights out for the West' and the home of Natty Bumpo" [40–52]. McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome*, 5–10; Frye, *The Bush Garden*, 141–142, 225. Frye admits that he has "long been impressed in Canadian poetry by a tone of deep terror in regard to nature."


34. Haliburton, *The Old Judge*, xiv, 3.

35. The term was not actually used by colonials until the late eighteenth-century, when it began to be employed as a descriptive term for certain cultural processes at work in France and England. See Long, "Primitive/Civilized: The Locus of a Problem," 49. Jennings has also noted that "civilization is rarely conceived of in terms of empirical data... It implies not only technical but moral superiority over the stages assumed to be lower on the evolutionary scale" [*The Invasion of America*, 8–10].


37. Burtis, *New Brunswick as a Home for Emigrants*, 36–37. Writing in a similar vein, another nineteenth-century historian claimed, "The removal of such large bodies of the human family from one country, climate, and government, to other regions so entirely different, is one of the most remarkable social phenomena of the present century. There appears to be little reluctance, in this age, to leave one's country, the land of one's childhood, and the home of early associations. The great desideratum with the emigrant is the improvement in his social, moral, political, and pecuniary condition; an object undoubtedly highly important to the welfare of our race." See Monro, *New Brunswick with a Brief Outline of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island*, 376.


40. The proclamation was issued on May 4, 1762, and is filed at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. It is also reprinted in its entirety in Gould and Semple, Our Land: The Maritimes, 177.


42. Reid, in Six Crucial Decades, notes that Lawrence’s proclamation “promised land grants with no rents payable for the first ten years, government structures similar to those of the New England colonies, military protection from any possible Indian attack, and full religious freedom for all Protestants” (50).


45. See Petition of the Tabusintac Indians, September 26, 1801, MGH54, Harriet Irving Library Archives (HILA), University of New Brunswick. Cited in Upton, Micmacs and Colonists, 99.


47. Agreement of July 29, 1807, University of New Brunswick Archives, cited in Cumming and Mickenberg, Native Rights in Canada, 103.


50. See Bromley, An Account of the Aborigines of Nova Scotia, 10.


56. Gesner, New Brunswick, 246, 383.
57. This reference to *The Nomands of the West* appears in Huygue, Argimou, introduction, iv.


66. Jennings has suggested that this may be a common thread in a more generalized American “conquest Myth . . . that the savage creatures of the wilderness, being unable to adapt to any environment other than the wild, stubbornly resisted God or fate, and thereby incurred their suicidal extermination” (*The Invasion of America*, 15).


75. From the *Memoir of Governor John Parr*, Collections 14 (Nova Scotia Historical Society), 1909: 51; quoted in MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 69. Parr added, “it is the most inhospitable climate that ever mortal set foot on . . . and the land is covered with a cold, spongy moss."

76. From Howe’s “Acadia,” in *Poems and Essays*, 32.

77. Cowdell was a Halifax Methodist preacher who published his poetry in Dublin, Ireland, to pay for a trip to England in 1809. The poem is quoted in Chittick, *Thomas Chandler Haliburton*, 193.


79. Howe, in “The Song of the Micmac,” referred to the Mi’kmaq as “Free sons of the forest.” See Lochhead and Souster, *100 Poems of Nineteenth Century Canada*, 2. In “The Old Hunter,” a piece on the exploits of William Chearnley, Hardy referred to a


81. William Thomas Baird, in *Seventy Years of New Brunswick Life*, 113, wrote, "Within my own time and recollection I have seen some of these children of the forest exhibit an ease and freedom of manner and a nobility of character becoming to true princes of the land."


89. Gesner's *Report on Indian Affairs for 1848*, *FLANS*, appendix 24, 114-125, cited in Ralston, "Religion, Public Policy, and the Education of Micmac Indians," 186. Gesner's goal was to see the Mi'kmaq brought to an enjoyment of "the comforts of refined society."

90. From his *Report of 1841*, cited in McGee, *The Native Peoples of Atlantic Canada*, 83, Perley felt certain that "with the exercise of a sound discretion, and under proper and careful supervision, the Indians of New Brunswick may be gradually led to adopt Agricultural pursuits, and acquire habits of settled industry—that instructed by Masters of competent knowledge, and of strictly moral and religious character, they would readily acquire every species of useful information, and that thus...[they] would be preserved from utter annihilation, and in progress of time become useful and respectful members of society." From his report, cited in Hamilton and Spray, *Source Materials Relating to the New Brunswick Indian*, 98, and McGee, *The Native Peoples of Atlantic Canada*, 89.


95. We should note that he was speaking here of grown men. Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, 129, and 215, note 17.


100. JLANS, appendix 37, 1864, in Ralston, 189.

101. See Miller, “The Decline of the Nova Scotia Micmac Population,” 111; Gould and Semple, Our Land: The Maritimes, 39; Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens, 87–89; Upton, Micmacs and Colonists, 129. Miller notes that, because of the relative lack of cattle in the colonies, colonists were prone to killing moose for which New Englanders, in particular, had a taste. Upton adds that moose were also valued for their skin, and whites killed them rather indiscriminately for this reason in the early years of settlement. In 1789, for instance, estimates place the number taken from Cape Breton alone at nine thousand.


103. Forty Mi’kmaq families “belonging to the District of Antigonish, Pamquet and Tracadie in the Gulf of St. Lawrence” were reported to be “in a starving condition, and almost destitute of Clothing,” in 1800; JLANS, April 2, 1800, cited in Whitehead, The Old Man Told Us, 184. Cf. Miller, “The Decline of the Nova Scotia Micmac,” 111; Ralston, “Religion, Public Policy, and the Education of Micmac Indians,” 479.


105. See Upton, Micmacs and Colonists, 100.

106. Perley’s Report of 1841. Cf. Whitehead, The Old Man Told Us, 223–224; McGee, The Native Peoples of Atlantic Canada, 83; Upton, Micmacs and Colonists, 128. Abraham Gesner also noted that “the sufferings of the sick and infirm surpass description, and from lack of a humble degree of accommodation, almost every case of disease proves fatal. In almost every encampment are seen the crippled, the deaf, the blind, the helpless orphans, with individuals lingering in consumption which spares neither young nor old.” See Wein, Rebuilding the Economic Base of Indian Communities, 14–15.


109. Mi’kmaq population figures are difficult to establish, especially for the eighteenth-century. These numbers are based on Miller, “The Decline of the Nova Scotia Micmac,” 114; Upton, Micmacs and Colonists, 45; Elder, “The Aborigines of Nova Scotia,” 1; Johnston, A History of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nova Scotia, 109; and Wein, Rebuilding the Economic Base of Indian Communities, 14. Figures for 1847 range from 1,166 to 1,461, and for 1871 from 1,500 to 1,666.

110. These figures have been variously arrived at on the basis of statistics contained in Upton, Micmacs and Colonists, 32 and 45; Guillemin, Urban Renegades, 53; and MacNutt, The Making of the Maritime Provinces, 13.


112. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, England had a large domestic market for wood products. Charcoal was the country’s most sought-after industrial fuel, lumber was the building material of choice for houses, factories, and furniture, and the British navy constantly required masts for its ships. The American colonies supplied most of the wood required by Britain until the revolutionary war severed
this relationship, and at this point, New Brunswick timber became a commodity of value in the British market. By 1825, Britain was importing twice as much timber from New Brunswick than from all the other North American colonies combined. See Naylor, Canada in the European Age, 177–180.


115. Wein, Rebuilding the Economic Base of Indian Communities, 17.


117. He was able, in 1860, to shave the going price on greatcoats from three shillings to two shillings, sixpence by buying used ones. Ralston, “Religion, Public Policy, and Education of Micmac Indians,” 189.

118. Perley’s desire to have the Mi’kmaq share in the comforts of civilization was previously considered in respect to the colonial effort to eradicate a sense of cultural guilt. I might add here that he undoubtedly carried a similar personal sense of transgression since he and a friend had killed a Mi’kmaq man while target-shooting when he was nineteen. Interestingly, Perley was fined ten pounds for this offense in the early years of the nineteenth century. Another young man who was found guilty of the same crime in the latter part of the eighteenth century was executed because of an outcry from the native community. The strategic significance of the Mi’kmaq was significantly changed within the space of less than forty years. See Mitcham, Three Remarkable Maritimers, 23. For reference to the earlier shooting, see the Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertizer, June 27, 1786, cited in Upton, Micmacs and Colonists, 145.

119. Perley’s Report of 1841. Cf. Upton, Micmacs and Colonists, 105; Hamilton and Spray, Source Materials Relating to the New Brunswick Indian, 93–97; Hamilton, “Indian Lands in New Brunswick,” 15–17. The relative ease with which Perley promoted interaction between whites and the Mi’kmaq was unusual for the period. His experience as a fur trader when he was a teenager likely had some impact on this. See Mitcham, Three Remarkable Maritimers, 22.

120. Printed in the Royal Gazette, Fredericton, September 25, 1844; cited in Hamilton and Spray, Source Materials Relating to the New Brunswick Indian, 114.