Document generated on 04/18/2024 7:28 a.m.

Newfoundland Studies

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Volume 22, Number 1, Spring 2007

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/nflds22_1art11

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Publisher(s)

Faculty of Arts, Memorial University

ISSN

0823-1737 (print)
1715-1430 (digital)

Explore this journal

Cite this article

Tulk, J. E. (2007). Cultural Revitalization and Mi'kmaq Music-Making:: Three Newfoundland Drum Groups. *Newfoundland Studies*, *22*(1), 259–285.

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Cultural Revitalization and Mi'kmaq Music-Making: Three Newfoundland Drum Groups

JANICE ESTHER TULK

FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, Newfoundland Mi'kmaq have been active in the revitalization of their culture.[1] Among other initiatives, their efforts have resulted in a Mi'kmaq language program in the Conne River school curriculum, support structures for Mi'kmaq arts and crafts, and an annual powwow held in Conne River. Such cultural activities primarily occur on the province's only Mi'kmaq reserve; however, similar initiatives are being implemented throughout the island. Music-making is one area that demonstrates this resurgence of Mi'kmaq culture. The powwow in Conne River is perhaps the best-known event, attracting participants from the surrounding area as well as visitors from Eastern Canada and Europe. On the west coast of Newfoundland, the past decade has seen the emergence of heritage events in Corner Brook and Stephenville, including mini-powwows, healing ceremonies, crafting workshops, and drum-making workshops. In St. John's, the Native Friendship Centre has become the home of a flourishing Aboriginal drumming and dancing group which has been active in a variety of local events including the Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Festival and the opening of the new provincial cultural centre, The Rooms. The participants draw on contemporary and historical Native American traditions, some of which are intertribal, while others are First Nation specific. These processes of cultural exchange are not new to the Mi'kmaq of Atlantic Canada.

Scholarly discussion of music-making among the Mi'kmaq has focused on the Maritimes, and Newfoundland has been largely ignored. Wallis and Wallis (1955) collected the texts of a few Mi'kmaq songs, and briefly discussed the music-making opportunities related to the annual celebration of St. Anne's Day in Nova Sco-

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tia. Similarly, descriptions of St. Anne's Day by Jackson (1993) and Prins (1996) include only passing references to singing and dancing. In their study of First Nations musical instruments in northeastern America, Diamond, Cronk, and von Rosen (1994) discuss traditional and contemporary Wabanaki instruments in terms of design elements, construction, and decoration, for example, but this work is not specific to the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq.

Several scholars have focused on contemporary music-making styles and practices of mainland Native musicians such as Lee Cremo (Davis 1991, Smith 1998), Rita Joe (Smith and Alstrup 1995), the Simon family and Michael W. Francis (Rosen 1998). The focus on Newfoundland Mi'kmaq is comparatively recent. Diamond's (2005) study of contemporary recording practices among indigenous musicians, which used the Conne River-produced CD *Miawpukek* as a case study of the relations of production in First Nations recording projects, and my earlier research (2003, 2004), which focused on the contemporary musical style of Alaska-based Medicine Dream, led by Corner Brook Mi'kmaq Paul Pike, are two examples.

This study of Mi'kmaq music will centre on music-making opportunities on the island of Newfoundland. It will consider three sites of music-making: the powwow and drum group in Conne River, the drum group hosted by the St. John's Native Friendship Centre, and the female drum group in the Stephenville area. Focusing on these three sites, the paper will consider the ways in which First Nations drum groups in Newfoundland access and learn repertoire, the challenges they face in cultural revitalization efforts, and the structure of drum groups. Further, it will point out features distinct to the Newfoundland revival of Mi'kmaq music.

THE NEWFOUNDLAND MI'KMAQ CONTEXT

While Bartels and Janzen (1990) assert that the Mi'kmaq immigrated to the southwest coast of Newfoundland from Cape Breton during the 1760s, there is evidence to support the claim that Mi'kmaq resided here, at least seasonally, more than 150 years earlier, since the turn of the seventeenth century. Some oral histories cite the early fifteenth century as the period when Mi'kmaq came to the island. Others maintain that the Mi'kmaq arrived even earlier, 9,000 years ago (Anger 37).[2] Frank Speck, who conducted research among the Mi'kmaq in the early twentieth century, recorded an oral history account that asserted Mi'kmaq peoples were indigenous to Newfoundland and that their ancestors, referred to as the "Ancients" (Sáqwéjíjk), lived in Newfoundland before the Beothuk[3] arrived (123-124).

On this basis of this evidence, the Mi'kmaq assert a claim of indigeneity for rights as First Nations people in Newfoundland. Any formal or informal treaties, agreements, or understandings that they had with European settlers, however, were

not negotiated or settled when Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, though the issue had been discussed in the years leading up to Confederation. As Jerry Wetzel (1995, 1999) and Edward Tompkins (1988, 1998) have demonstrated, the Indian Act, which sets forth the federal government's responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples, was not invoked in the province at the time of Confederation. Financial responsibility for Indigenous Peoples in Newfoundland initially rested with the provincial government, regardless of the guidelines defined in the Indian Act and the Constitution at the time; the federal government's responsibility to Indigenous Peoples was instead implemented gradually over several decades, in piecemeal fashion.[4] One of the arguments against bringing the Indian Act into force in the province was the fact that the negative aspects of the Act at that time would be invoked; Mi'kmaq in the province would be denied enfranchisement and its attendant rights (such as the right to vote), be prohibited from purchasing alcohol, and receive relief payments in lieu of old age pension, all of which would be regressive (Tompkins, *Pencilled Out* 15, 26). However, by not implementing the Act, benefits such as the creation of reserves, free education and medical services, family allowances, and tax exemptions were slowly introduced in Newfoundland (Tompkins, *Pencilled Out* 15).

Thus, Indigenous People in 21st-century Newfoundland are in a particularly challenging position. The struggle for Native rights and for the federal government to acknowledge its responsibility to Newfoundland's indigenous population has been an arduous one, though it has made gains over the past three decades: Conne River Mi'kmaq were granted status in 1984 and a reserve established in 1987.[5] Mi'kmaq residing outside of Conne River continue their efforts towards registration and recognition by the federal government and in November 2005 began negotiations based on a landless band structure (Federation).

A key issue in the negotiations will be determining the criteria under which Mi'kmaq may be registered under the Indian Act, and also under which criteria Mi'kmaq may obtain registration on the band list. As Mi'kmaq scholar Bonita Lawrence (2004) has explained, being legally registered (having status) in Canada and having membership on a band list are often not synonymous and can have a divisive effect on communities. Further, determining who can and cannot obtain status is a complicated process, one that has been (and continues to be) fraught with gender and racial bias. Moreover, determination largely depends on the version of the Indian Act in force in the year of an applicant's birth. This necessarily complicates notions of identity, of what it is to have Mi'kmaq or Aboriginal identity in legal or organizational terms, and of what it is to have Mi'kmaq or Aboriginal identity in cultural terms.

Asserting Mi'kmaq identity in cultural terms and, in some cases, repatriating lost elements of Mi'kmaq culture have become the focus of revitalization efforts in Newfoundland Mi'kmaq communities over the past two decades. The recovery and maintenance of language, customs, beliefs, rituals, and material culture have be-

come important pursuits among community members. The desire to learn about music, singing and drumming practices, traditional songs, their histories, their functions, and related elements of belief and ritual is at the forefront of cultural initiatives in the province. This musical focus has led to the creation of drum groups and has been an important factor in the emergence of the powwow as a cultural event in Newfoundland. While this type of event does not have roots in Atlantic Canada, it currently draws on both intertribal and local traditions.

Early ethnographies provide limited information on historical music-making practices and musical instruments used in Mi'kmaq culture, and while some transcriptions of song texts were made, few transcriptions of the accompanying music were created. Wallis and Wallis (1955) noted that early Mi'kmaq instruments fashioned out of a stick or a rolled piece of birch bark would be struck against another object or the hand to provide a percussive accompaniment to song (119, 184). At the time of their research in 1911, there were three types of songs discussed by consultants: *neska wet* (sung at a large gathering without dance), *tcigamaan* (sung at a special event accompanied by dancers), and *neska winto* (sung when only one singer was present and sometimes accompanied by dance).[6]

In *Visions of Sound*, Diamond, Cronk, and von Rosen identify several Mi'kmaq instruments including *ji'kmaqn* (a term that refers to both a square piece of wood or birch bark that is struck with a stick, and several layers of split ash which are slapped against the hand), *sesuwejk* (rattle), and *pipukwaqn* (flute). While Wallis and Wallis also identified the rattle and flute (both made of birch bark in their account), they also described a birch bark box struck with the knuckles of the free hand (also called a drum) and a roll of birch bark (which may be used as a "speaking trumpet") (119). Wallis and Wallis noted that these instruments were well known to their consultants during their first wave of fieldwork in 1911, but were virtually unknown during their second wave of fieldwork in the early 1950s. In Wallis and Wallis's ethnography, like many others, rarely is a distinction made between elements of Maritime Mi'kmaq culture and that of Newfoundland. While there is no doubt that many elements are the same or similar throughout Mi'kma'ki (the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq), this approach denies the possibility that there were distinct elements of Newfoundland Mi'kmaq culture (as well as distinct elements of other areas and locales in Mi'kma'ki). Since dialects of the Mi'kmaq language exist, other variations in tradition and culture seem likely.[7]

Particularly interesting in these descriptions of musical instruments is the prominence of birch bark, which is highly valued in Mi'kmaq culture and used in a variety of applications including canoe building and medicine. Anger, however, suggests that "Newfoundland Micmacs also relied less on birch bark than did their mainland counterparts" (24). Birch bark is lightweight, readily available, and easily portable, characteristics which would make it an excellent material for constructing musical instruments that could travel with the people while "on the country."[8] When Wallis and Wallis conducted research in 1953, these birch bark in-

struments were no longer made or used, but no drums were used either. Further, in archaeological records and historic-ethnographic descriptions, there is no discussion of Mi'kmaq using drums.[9] Diamond, Cronk, and von Rosen note that the place of drums in Mi'kmaq traditional culture is disputed (176): "Very few people seemed to know a Micmac word for drum. Some, including a contemporary Micmac drum-maker, told me that the Micmacs never had any drums and suggested that this was why they had no name for it" (76). One of their consultants, George Paul, in a presentation in Conne River in 1987, referred to "birch-bark hand drums" (Diamond et al. 176) which seems to align with Wallis and Wallis's description of a birch bark box (called a drum) that was used as a percussion instrument. Diamond, Cronk, and von Rosen note that in the 1980s drums were an important part of Mi'kmaq culture, explaining that large intertribal drums were "used by 'traditionalists,' people identifying with an intertribal revival of spiritual teachings and ceremonies" (186). The drum may be a relatively recent addition to Mi'kmaq culture; however, it has quickly gained a place of importance and prominence in traditional activities and teachings, and its use now constitutes a tradition in its own right.[10]

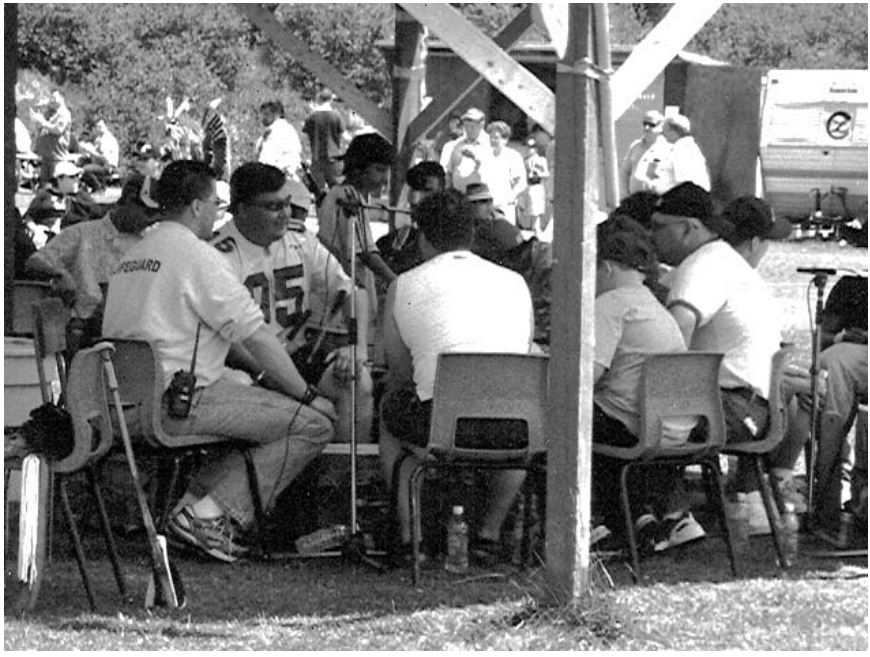
In the revival of culture, several questions emerge surrounding the notion of "tradition," whether "tradition" is feasible or desirable in the modern context, and who or what can be a source for traditional indigenous knowledge, such as songs or protocols. To what or to whom do you go back? What past are you choosing to revive? Or, perhaps more importantly, what *present* are you choosing? The choice to revive culture not only ties a cultural group to its past, its history, and its ancestors, but it also functions in the present as a means of fostering unity among communities, cultural groups or Nations, regions, and, more broadly, First Nations throughout Canada and the United States. The following discussion of three First Nations drum groups in Newfoundland seeks to describe the "present" that its members have chosen in their revival of Mi'kmaq culture. It attempts to identify the manner in which musical traditions and cultural knowledge are transmitted, and considers issues of repertoire and style in the resurgence of Mi'kmaq music-making in Newfoundland.[11]

Sipu'ji'j Drummers of Conne River

The tenth anniversary of the Conne River powwow was marked in 2005. Held annually on the first weekend in July, it has become an important annual celebration of Mi'kmaq culture. Each summer, drums from the Maritimes, such as Eastern Eagle and Free Spirit,[12] join the Sipu'ji'j Drummers under the arbour and provide the musical fabric for this multifaceted cultural event.

A combination of the spiritual and the social, the powwow spans a long weekend. Craft vendors travel great distances to sell traditional baskets, moccasins, and

beadwork. Other vendors sell hand drums, CDs, and photographs of dancers, while still others sell kitsch jewellery inspired by rap and hip-hop musicians, which is particularly popular with the children. In the midst of these vendors is a large flat-bed fitted with a backdrop and a roof. This serves as a stage for the social events each night, which include an evening of musical entertainment by community members and guests, and an evening of karaoke. The food vendors sell an array of typical fast food, as well as traditional food such as moose dinners, Indian fry bread, and Indian tacos. The vendors and stage encircle the powwow area, a large flat field with a dance area marked off by knee-high pegs and rope. In the centre is the arbour, with several sets of chairs surrounding microphones. This area is reserved for the drums.



Sipu'ji'j Drummers at 10th Annual Conne River Powwow in 2005. Photo by author.

The celebrations begin the night before the actual powwow commences. This is an evening of entertainment by community members which goes on while participants and visitors arrive and vendors set up. Performances include those by soloists and small ensembles of youth and adults alike, often singing popular or country music, as well as performances by professional musicians who live in or are visiting the community. For example, the 2005 social night featured the talents of father-daughter team Reg and Angela Brown (Angela lives in Conne River, while her

father resides in Corner Brook), as well as Paul Pike, originally from Corner Brook and visiting from Alaska.[13] This evening functions as a first opportunity to meet with old and new friends and to socialize in advance of the powwow.

Each day of the powwow begins with a sunrise ceremony held by the sacred fire located several hundred feet northeast of the arbour. The morning is relaxed, as dancers and drummers prepare for the powwow. They begin arriving as early as 10:30 a.m. and by noon their preparations are well underway, with drums singing warm-ups in the arbour and dancers registering and putting the final touches on their regalia. When everyone is ready to begin, around 1 p.m. the Grand Entry marks the opening of the powwow. This is a traditional[14] powwow, opening with a Grand Entry, followed by a Flag Song and a Veterans' Song. Then the drumming and dancing continues with a variety of styles including intertribals and specials. This activity continues throughout the afternoon, and pauses around 5 p.m. for a community-sponsored feast. After the feast, dancing continues until the retiring of the flags, around 7 p.m. On the evening of the first day, karaoke takes place on the main stage, while groups drum in the wigwams and others participate in sweatlodge ceremonies. The subsequent day(s) of powwow continue in much the same way. On the evening of the last day, however, there is a giveaway ceremony in which volunteers, dancers, and drums are honoured for their contribution to the event. Music, then, is a central element of the celebrations. It occurs as both part of the powwow proper and as part of the social events that surround the powwow. Outside of these organized musical events, drums can also be heard early in the morning and late into the night — rarely is a moment devoid of music, even during the feast.

Following a mini-powwow in February 1996, during which visitors from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick instructed Conne River community members on powwow protocols and etiquette, several members of the community formed a group to drum at the first annual powwow in July of the same year (Phil Jeddore, "Miawpukek Hosts" 1). Originally referred to in a newspaper article as "Miawpukek's own Mi'kmaq Drummers," this group soon became known as the Sipu'ji'j Drummers (Phil Jeddore, "Ktaqmkuk Mi'kmaq" 6). During the 2005 powwow, I met two former members, Tony Drew and Rod Jeddore, who provided me with background information on the Sipu'ji'j Drummers. A group of about ten men had formed the original group and constructed the powwow drum. They learned some songs from Randy Augustine from Big Cove, New Brunswick; Drew and Jeddore agree that learning songs through oral means is preferable. However, learning songs through other methods was sometimes necessary. Recordings of other drums proved valuable, especially in learning traditional Mi'kmaq songs. Jeddore noted that, in particular, the Denny Family recording by the Kitpu singers called *Mi'kmaq Chants* was essential, as well as Free Spirit's *Micmac (Mi'kmaq) Songs*. In addition, the group learned songs from other drums attending the Conne River powwow, sometimes by recording them. In another productive method of learning songs, each member of the drum learned one song from a CD and then

taught it to the others. This entrusted the responsibility for learning new songs to each member of the group.

The lead drummer was Tony Drew, whose earliest experience with the powwow drum occurred in his teens, when Birch Creek Singers from Big Cove visited Conne River and sang for the community. Drew says he was chosen early on as lead drummer because he showed the most interest and was more outspoken than the others; he did not mind leading songs in front of a crowd. As lead drummer, Drew was responsible for maintaining the harmony or balance between the drum and the voices, choosing which songs to sing, leading off the songs, and deciding when to end a song. In some drum groups it is also the responsibility of the lead drummer or another individual to care for the drum, but the Sipu'ji'j Drummers made this a shared role; all members were entrusted with protecting and honouring the drum at all times and especially during powwows. Drew explained the serious nature of this responsibility, noting that the drum is spiritual and that it represents the community and the culture. Further, the nature of drumming itself is serious and spiritual. Drew impressed upon me that "It's not really a performance," but an act of educating and teaching the listeners when the drum sings. In describing the songs sung by Sipu'ji'j, Drew noted that they were songs that "[make] you feel good inside" and they are "strong, spiritual, and knowledgeable."

The group is especially proud that it created "Community Song," the result of a group effort to produce a song specific to Conne River. Drew noted that Joel Denny assisted with the translation of the song into the Mi'kmaq language. The creation of this song was one factor behind the CD *Miawpukek*, recorded in conjunction with the Se't A'newey Mi'kmaq Choir. The goal of the recording was to create something that would represent the groups involved and the community, and to produce something that they could all feel good about. The two groups decided which songs each would sing, and Saqamaw Mi'sel Joe secured the permissions to record some traditional Mi'kmaq songs. Even when the drum group sings songs at a powwow with no intention of recording them, they still must obtain permission to sing the songs of others. Jeddore explained that the group offered tobacco at a powwow to sing another group's songs. He chuckled as he recalled that for three consecutive years they offered tobacco to Kitpu, the Eskasoni-based drum group heard on the Denny Family recording *Mi'kmaq Chants*, and asked permission to sing their songs. Each time, permission was granted. Finally Kitpu said they did not need to ask again, as they had already given their permission. At this time, however, Sipu'ji'j were especially careful to observe appropriate cultural protocols.

In the early years the Sipu'ji'j Drummers frequently travelled around the island to participate in a variety of events in other communities. However, due to family and work commitments they have rarely gone off the island to other powwows. Sipu'ji'j has travelled for special events, such as to Miquelon in 2004 as part of the Acadie 400 celebrations. While the group has sung at fewer events in the past several years, Jeddore notes that these events have often been more prestigious. For

example, they received an invitation to sing at the 2005 dedication of the Mattie Mitchell[15] site in Gros Morne National Park.

Jeddore noted that the drum "sings on behalf of the community." Its prominence has given the community a voice to express their culture and traditions, and transmit them to future generations. During the summer of 2005, the torch was passed to the next generation, as Drew and Jeddore retired from the group. The group now has many young members who are keen to continue, and it is hoped that they will enable the tradition started almost a decade ago to endure well into the future.[16] Drew hopes that eventually the community will have more than one group, perhaps one for youth and one for older drummers. He encourages members of the community to start their own drum groups.

This brief consideration of the Sipu'ji'j Drummers has highlighted the need to follow appropriate protocols both in the care of the drum and in singing the songs of other people. The shared responsibility for such protocols, as well as creating and learning new songs, was emphasized by both Drew and Jeddore. In communities without an available Elder or mentor to teach songs to the drum group, bringing in a knowledgeable person from another community to teach in the traditional manner is preferred. Where access to song carriers is limited or not possible, however, the use of recordings may be necessary and encouraged. The way in which a person emerges as a lead drummer in a group is related to his interest, dedication, ability, and personality. Indeed, the role requires an outgoing person who is not too shy to sing in front of others. Finally, the emphasis on drumming as education and learning, rather than "performance," demonstrates cultural values and goals concerned primarily with sharing.

Aboriginal Drumming and Dancing Group in St. John's

The St. John's Native Friendship Centre [SJNFC] was established in 1983 with the goal of assisting Aboriginal people who were moving into the city. It established support structures to address issues relating to language, housing, employment, transportation, alcohol and substance abuse, and the law (SJNFC 6). The Friendship Centre also established a space where urban Natives could meet others. The National Association of Friendship Centres has increasingly taken on a cultural role in urban centres along with its other mandates, and it is guided by a code of ethics that embraces diversity and "[supports] unity amongst all Aboriginal people without regard to legal distinctions that may be drawn between Status and Non-Status individuals or amongst Métis, Indian or Inuit people" (SJNFC 9). Friendship Centres encourage "respect and honour for all Aboriginal beliefs and customs" (SJNFC 9). At the SJNFC, funding and other programming resources are provided to implement social and cultural programs established by a standing Activities Committee.

"St. John's Aboriginal Drumming and Dancing Group at the Multicultural Fair Celebration of Diversity held at The Rooms on Sunday, 11 December 2005. Photo courtesy Pat Donnelly.

In February 2002, the Four Winds Youth Centre at the SJNFC established a drumming and dancing group under the guidance of Victor Muise Jr. Its eleven members learned Mi'kmaq songs and dances, and began sharing their music with the community, and appeared at a variety of functions ("Drumming"). When I joined the drum group in September 2004, the drum was under the new leadership of Jason Morrisseau, who is of Anishnabe and Cree heritage and has been singing in drum groups since childhood. He has travelled the powwow circuit, and is a fluent speaker of his language. Not surprisingly, then, the group's repertoire shifted from predominantly Mi'kmaq songs towards a more varied selection that might be termed the intertribal powwow repertoire. Drawing on his own traditions and experiences singing at powwows in central Canada, Morrisseau taught the group a Flag Song,[17] a Veterans' Song,[18] a healing song known as "White Wolf," and a Cree intertribal, among others. He also taught a few Mi'kmaq songs that are sung by Eastern Eagle and are featured on their CD *Sacred Flight*, such as Eastern Eagle's contemporary "Honour Song" and the sobriety song "Dry Run."

During my first few months with the group, Morrisseau chose a new name that would refer specifically to the drummers — Young Thunderbirds; but whenever this group performs in public, it still uses the title St. John's Aboriginal Drumming

and Dancing Group.[19] Morrisseau told me that he had chosen the name Young Thunderbirds because the Thunderbird is a powerful, mythical creature. He taught the group "Thunderbird Song" which is our drum song and is sung to honour the drum alone. It should be sung before a powwow as a warm-up, but it can also be sung during the powwow.

During the time that Morrisseau was lead drummer for this group, songs were only learned aurally. He was adamant that this was the appropriate way to learn songs, even though it was a struggle for most of the group to remember the songs and pronounce them correctly in Mi'kmaq, Cree, or other languages. Morrisseau continued with this method and gradually the group became more accustomed to this way of learning songs. His teaching style was not overt; he did not explain the hand signals[20] used while we were singing, and he rarely broke songs down into smaller parts so that the group could learn them more easily. Rather, through repeated observation of Morrisseau's movements, the group learned this mode of communication, which non-verbally tells a group who will sing the next push-up,[21] when to change the drumming intensity, when someone other than the lead will play the accented "honour beats," and when to end the song. Powers classifies these non-verbal signals as "gestural-visual codes" which communicate information for vocal and instrumental production in a performance context (47). They are an important language for all members of a drum group to master, for effective communication will ensure the "tightness" of the group's singing, in staying "on beat," and in ending the song in unison.

In much the same way that Morrisseau did not explicitly teach the group how to use hand signals, he did not instruct the group on vocal production or how to achieve the sound that he was producing. Instead, members of the group attempted to imitate his vocal style, sometimes manually manipulating the larynx as he did occasionally, even though they might not have understood how or when to do this, or what this manipulation achieved. I found vocal production particularly difficult, as I was often the only female present and I did not have a mentor who modelled the vocal sound I should be producing. For the first few months, standing outside the circle of seated drummers and usually positioned so that I could observe Morrisseau's vocal production, I chose to sing songs mostly at pitch with the men, jumping up the octave only at the end of phrases when the pitch was too low and out of my range. On songs where this was obvious, Morrisseau often commented that he liked the way it sounded and after about five months, he attempted to instruct me on appropriate vocal production for powwow songs because he wanted to have a more prominent female sound in the group. While he was unable to model the sound for me, he suggested a more nasal sound, the removal of vibrato, and singing an octave or two above the men. However, he did not limit this to only the second half of the song as is normally the case in Northern style (see Browner 73). Morrisseau also recommended that I listen to recordings in which women sing with the men and to attempt to imitate their sound.

The practice took place weekly on Wednesday nights. Once everyone was gathered around the drum, with the men seated and any women present standing behind them in a circle,[22] the practice began with smudging. Sage was placed in a shell and lit, passed clockwise around the drum, and then, in a similar manner, around the outer circle of singers and dancers. Morrisseau then led out a song and the drumming for the night began. He was largely responsible for choosing the songs and in what order they would be sung, although there did not appear to be any specific pattern or criteria. Sometimes he asked the group what they would like to sing, and members often responded not with the name of a particular song but by singing part of a song. After about an hour of singing, the group often sang a 49er[23] before taking a short break, and then resumed singing for another hour. It was rare to sing a song more than once in one night and usually only four push-ups were sung of each song, rather than one for each member present. Sometimes Morrisseau invited others to lead a push-up; however, usually only two or three members were willing to do so, as the others were shy or insecure about their singing. Other times, Morrisseau led out all of the push-ups himself. As the practice came to a close, 49ers were again sung, challenging the drummers with their strong-weak dotted drumming pattern and eliciting laughter at the sometimes irreverent English lyrics. Before leaving, the group sang "Prayer Song" from Eastern Eagle's CD *Good Medicine*, to end the practice. Members seated around the drum would shake hands, arrange for rides home, and then say goodbye until the following week.

Under Morrisseau's leadership, the group contracted to a core of five regular singers, a unique combination of Mi'kmaq, Inuit, Innu, and various European heritages, including Welsh and Irish. The drummers improved in ability and repertoire, becoming more confident in their singing, learning more songs, and increasingly accepting invitations from the community to sing at events. When Morrisseau discovered that I had access to recording equipment, he asked me to bring it to a few of our practices so that we could record our songs. After recording the group with a portable mini disc, I made copies on CD for the group. These served as a record of the group's progress, and provided a way of practicing by singing along. When Morrisseau left in August 2005, these recordings proved to be useful tools.

The first few practices without a lead drummer were challenging. The core group had been reduced to four members: Jerry Evans, Steve George, Stan Nochasak, and myself.[24] Sitting around the drum, we would struggle to remember how to start songs, though we could easily sing through them once the lead had been sung. We turned to recordings, initially singing along with the CD so that we could hear the leads and where the honour beats were placed. Over time the group has become less dependant on recordings. We have made a greater effort to remember leads, and, when help is needed, the group listens to a push-up or two of a song, then turns off the recording and attempts to sing it. The group also turned to new recordings of favourite songs in an effort to increase its repertoire, including the

"Mi'kmaq Gathering Song," learned from the Denny family recording *Mi'kmaq Chants*.

The group does not have a lead drummer, but tries to maintain an egalitarian drum in which responsibility is shared, including care of the drum. At the same time, Evans often starts a song and signals when it will end. He passes the lead to those present around the drum, so that everyone has an opportunity to sing the lead if they so desire. Sometimes a member will pass on this opportunity, and other members will take the lead instead.When Evans feels it is time to end a song, usually after four push-ups, he often looks to other members for confirmation before giving the signal.

The power dynamic of the group, then, has changed significantly. Some elements of the former practices have been retained by the group, such as beginning with a smudge, but a practice no longer ends with a standard song. The ritual of the practice, the structure of fixed and unfixed components that together make up "the practice" and delineate it from other daily activities, has changed as the membership of the group and its structure has changed.

The position of lead drummer, then, has a wide-reaching influence on a group. The lead drummer may make decisions regarding repertoire, as a keeper of knowledge be responsible for teaching the group new songs, and also provide a vocal model. While a lead drummer may teach songs to the group via oral transmission, he himself may not have learned the songs in this manner. Morrisseau often learned songs by listening to CDs, such as *Sacred Flight*. With his experience in powwow music, he was able to pick up the song and its words much more quickly with fewer hearings than would other members of the group. In the absence of a lead drummer, recordings can become essential for a drum group, whether these are recordings of other groups or of the drum group itself. For female members of a drum group with limited or no previous exposure to indigenous music or a female mentor, recordings can provide a model vocal style which the singer can imitate. Finally, in a community where few have the ability to take on the role of lead drummer, a movement towards more egalitarian structures where responsibilities are shared among many members of a drum group may occur.

These methods of learning to sing First Nations music have particularly interesting consequences for the sound production and vocal timbre of a group. Drum groups are usually categorized as using either a Northern or Southern singing style. Northern style singing normally features a high tessitura with vibrato or pulsation. In contrast, Southern style tends to sit in a much lower tessitura. Browner has noted that it is possible for women to sing Northern style music at pitch with the men, but virtually impossible to have the range to sing Southern style songs in the same way (73). Hoefnagels has further noted differences between the two styles, including ways of increasing tempo, the placement of honour beats,[25] and geographic diffusion of these styles ("Northern" 12).

Under the guidance of Morrisseau, the St. John's Aboriginal Drumming and Dancing Group sang in a Northern style, with the exception of one Southern style song (which partially served as a joke among members, because one singer liked to sing songs at a lower pitch, which was better suited to his vocal range). After Morrisseau left, the singing style of the group changed, particularly in tessitura. The same songs are sung, but at a slightly lower, more comfortable pitch. The tessitura now sits somewhere on the continuum between Northern and Southern styles. Jerry Evans often refers to this as "old man singing," in contrast to the high-pitched, heavily pulsating style of the young men in Northern powwow groups. Further, the vibrato employed by the group (which I suspect comes naturally and without conscious effort) is a much gentler pulsation than the strident Northern style singing. Evans feels that he has found his "own voice"; indeed, it appears that the drum group has found its own sound.

This shift should not be surprising. In her work on powwow songs, Browner notes that the division between Northern and Southern singing styles is a false dichotomy that is increasingly reinforced by commercial recordings (66-67). Regional and local styles of vocal production emerge: "[C]hoice of singing style can vary greatly and depend on a number of factors, including personal style preferences and the presence of influential singers not native to the region in which they live" (Browner 66). I would suggest that the lack of influential singers in a region, native or otherwise, also influence local style. If singers are not required to match the high pitch of a lead singer of Northern style music, they select a starting pitch that is comfortable for their vocal ranges rather than pushing for higher notes. Like Browner, Hoefnagels notes that the boundaries between Northern and Southern singing styles are becoming "more fluid" ("Northern" 12) and the "repertoire is dynamic and changing" ("Northern" 23). Singing styles are becoming increasingly difficult to "neatly" classify, and they demonstrate the influence that the local has on the singing style and repertoire of a drum group (see Hoefnagels, *Powwows*).

In responding to the first draft of this paper, Steve George observed that the strength of the St. John's group is its diversity, but that this diversity means that the group must, by definition, be different from other drum groups:

> We're different as a drum group because we're urbans, because Jerry and I are mixed-bloods and Stan is an Inuk. We don't belong to a mono-culture, or understand the group to belong to a single culture, not that any group can accurately claim to be a culture in itself without external influences.

George thinks the group may decide to pursue other styles of music or add other instrumentation such as hand drums or rattles. The group's repertoire may change and expand based on recordings, and, as he eloquently stated, a change in repertoire may be based on "our own interests, likes, dislikes, and how we each grow as people who understand what we can from the wider cultures around us and beyond us."

While this drum group has diverse repertoire and membership and is open to new experiences and musics, its place in Mi'kmaq cultural revitalization is an important one as it provides a space where Mi'kmaq in the St. John's area can be actively involved in cultural pursuits.

Rainbow Thunderbird Women from the West Coast

I first encountered Rainbow Thunderbird Women while attending the Conne River powwow in July 2005, where they sang three songs to a captivated audience. This female drum group had been formed a year earlier when Eastern Eagle from Indian Brook, Nova Scotia, held a week-long drum workshop at Stephenville. They brought with them a powwow drum which they gave to the community and passed on a wealth of knowledge to interested Mi'kmaq on the west coast. They taught the youth to make hand drums and then shared songs, such as the "Mi'kmaq Honour Song"[26] and the "Friendship Song."[27] This week of learning culminated in a cultural heritage day, a mini powwow of sorts, held in Indian Head Park.[28] The event stimulated much interest in Mi'kmaq culture among the youth in the area and provided the momentum that led to the founding of Rainbow Thunderbird Women.

At the 2005 Conne River powwow, there was much interest in the female drum group, and those in attendance anxiously waited for Rainbow Thunderbird Women to sing. Mid-afternoon, they approached the dance area. There was already a song in progress with many people dancing, so some members of the female drum group joined the dancers, a few carrying their hand drums as they danced clockwise around the arbour. At the end of the song, the women joined the emcee at the edge of the arbour. He announced, "We're gonna go to these ladies here from the west coast.... The Rainbow Thunderbird Women from the west coast of Newfoundland." He began speaking to them as they gathered around the microphone, and over the PA system he was heard asking, "Is there a lead singer?" After a response from the group, inaudible to the audience, he spoke into the microphone again saying, "No, you're all gonna go together? OK."

A young woman made eye contact with the other singers, discreetly nodded her head, and began a song, the other women joining in, each playing her own hand drum. The same young woman led the following two songs, in each several members led push-ups. They seemed to go around the circle clockwise, each member looking at and making eye contact with the next member, who would lead a push-up. This style of non-verbal communication is similar to that used by other drums (Powers 43-44). While the lead was shared among members, each of the eight members did not sing a lead on each song — this would have resulted in eight push-ups of every song, which was not the case. They sang for an audience which resoundingly applauded after each song, with the other drum groups vigorously beating their powwow drums in appreciation and encouragement. When the group

had finished their last song, they were applauded by those present and congratulated by the emcee. I observed that their music had brought tears to the eyes of some of my consultants and friends, and as the young women left the arbour, they were warmly embraced by many.

Several important observations can be made about this drum group and their music-making. Rainbow Thunderbird Women play hand drums following a tradition held by some First Nations that prohibits women from playing the large horizontal powwow drum. Their respect for tradition is further demonstrated by their dress. Traditionally, women wear long skirts while inside the dance area and the arbour. Rainbow Thunderbird Women respected this tradition and donned ankle-length wrap skirts before going into the circle. While the group's response to the question of "Is there a lead singer?" indicated that there was no single singer who held this role (or title), one member of the group (at least in this performance context) had taken on the role of lead singer, singing the first lead of each song and communicating with other members of the group. The same type of egalitarian structure demonstrated by the drum group at the St. John's Native Friendship Centre after their lead singer left appears to exist in this group; each member is given the opportunity to lead a push-up, and many members take on this responsibility.

My discussion of Rainbow Thunderbird Women is brief and limited to my observation of the group singing at the Conne River powwow; it does not address methods of learning repertoire, the influence of particular Elders or song carriers, the use of recordings as a source for inspiration or additional repertoire, or the structure of practices. As members in the group are divided on the issue of whether their traditions should be shared with outsiders or discussed by a non-Native author, I have not included any information learned through an interview with a group member. However, I feel I would be remiss not to acknowledge this group's significant role in the revitalization of Mi'kmaq culture on the west coast of the island or the important role women are playing in cultural revitalization in the province[29] Rainbow Thunderbird Women is the only female drum group in the province and is an important role model for their communities. It is one of the first drum groups on the west coast (if not *the* first), and, like their male counterparts playing the powwow drum, with each function at which they sing, the members bring awareness of a vibrant and living Mi'kmaq culture to their audiences, sharing aspects of this culture with them. I hope that one day they will choose to share their experiences, challenges, and successes with a broader audience in the way that they deem appropriate.

Issues Emerging from the Case Studies

The preceding case studies have highlighted some of the challenges facing members of drum groups in Newfoundland as they actively participate in the revival of their traditions. Many Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland have not had access to some ele-

ments of their culture such as language or songs, as these were not transmitted to younger generations in the middle decades of the twentieth century. As the cultural revival grows, there is a need for access to knowledgeable Elders and song carriers who can share songs, language, and protocols, as well as other aspects of tradition, with members of burgeoning drum groups. In the case of Sipu'ji'j Drummers and the St. John's Aboriginal Drumming and Dancing Group, there has been contact with cultural experts from other communities. These experts have sometimes been from other areas of the province, but more often from communities on the mainland whose culture and language has remained more stable throughout the past century. I would expect that similar contact with song carriers and knowledgeable community members has proved significant for Rainbow Thunderbird Women.

Elders and others with experience in singing traditional Mi'kmaq songs and intertribal music are essential as mentors for drum groups. They provide guidance in terms of protocols and tradition. However, they also serve as models for vocal production to members of drum groups who have not been exposed to indigenous music and for whom the singing style and vocal timbre is new and unfamiliar. Indeed, these influential singers will make an impression on the singing style in terms of tessitura, the use of glottal attacks, the degree of vibrato or pulsation, and the degree of nasality. For myself, as a non-Native singer with western classical training, altering my vocal technique and timbre has been particularly challenging without the opportunity to sing with other women.

The importance of recordings to the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq community cannot be overstated. Recordings of traditional songs by the Denny Family, Free Spirit, Eastern Eagle, and now the Sipu'ji'j Drummers substitute for oral transmission of songs as necessary. While this is not the preferred method of learning songs, it has become an accepted avenue through which cultural knowledge is disseminated. Such recordings may be commercially available or made privately, either by the groups themselves or at powwows with the permission of the drums present. It should also be noted that the recordings to which drum groups in Newfoundland turn are largely contemporary recordings. While the traditional recordings of Mi'kmaq groups are important, drums are increasingly looking to contemporary recordings such as *Sacred Flight* and *Good Medicine* by Eastern Eagle to supplement their repertoire and inspire their singing. Nevertheless, before singing another's song in public or for a recording, the necessary protocols for obtaining permission must be followed. It is here that Elders and those with experience in drum groups can provide important cultural guidance.

The lead drummer, often a person with an outgoing personality and a memory for songs, generally has much control over the drumming experience, choosing which songs to sing and when, how many push-ups, and who leads each push-up. However, when a cultural expert or lead drummer is unavailable, the trend toward shared responsibility for singing leads, learning and teaching songs, and caring for the drum is indicative of a new structure for drum groups. This structure, seen in the

St. John's Aboriginal Drumming and Dancing Group, as well as in some aspects of the experience of the Sipu'ji'j Drummers in Conne River, emerges as a means of coping with the challenges Newfoundland Mi'kmaq face in attempting to revive their culture. When coupled with a system of workshops by visiting drums, this structure for Newfoundland groups not only functions, but flourishes. Drums such as the Rainbow Thunderbird Women and the Aboriginal Drumming and Dancing Group have the potential to benefit significantly from increased support for this sort of community-based musical exchange between those with knowledge of songs within Newfoundland, as well as between mainland Mi'kmaq and Newfoundland Mi'kmaq.

The Ethnography of Emergent Cultures: Choosing a Past, Choosing a Present

Livingston defines revivals as "social movements which strive to 'restore' a music system believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past for the benefit of contemporary society" (66). While one could argue that the music system of the past for Mi'kmaq consisted of birch bark percussion instruments, Newfoundland Mi'kmaq, like Mi'kmaq in the Maritimes, have chosen to restore a music system that focuses on the powwow drum and hand drum, as well as traditional Mi'kmaq and intertribal songs. This choice certainly reflects the influence of Mi'kmaq in the Maritimes, who were agents in their own music revivals in the 1980s and who now serve as a basis upon which some continuity of culture may be constructed, but it is also indicative of the proliferation of powwows in late twentieth century and early 21st-century North America. Such powwows are localized, however, through references to local oral history during the event, the use of some Nation-specific music and dance, the use of local or regional singing styles, and personalized regalia designs that reflect both the individual and the First Nation to which he or she belongs.

Revival literature has often pointed to the importance of recordings in the revival of folk music and style. Livingston has said, "An integral part of many twentieth-century musical revivals is their reliance on technological advances, from the microphone and recording technology to advances in instrument construction" (80), while Winick has noted that recordings made by a "previous generation of performers [are] a significant source of material" (326). The embracing of technology demonstrates the ever-changing and adaptable nature of culture, in that mediated sound is mobilized when traditional means of oral transmitting of cultural knowledge is not possible. My work with Newfoundland drum groups has indicated that the recordings of three drum groups in particular have become significant for the revival of Mi'kmaq music in Newfoundland — the recordings of traditional songs by the Denny Family (Kitpu), Free Spirit, and Eastern Eagle. One could see

the early recordings of these groups, produced in the 1990s, as a "previous generation" of recordings which have greatly influenced Mi'kmaq groups and their repertoire in the 21st century. The community recording *Miawpukek* (2000) by the Sipu'ji'j Drummers and Se't A'newey Mi'kmaq Choir, which features songs learned from these Maritime Mi'kmaq groups and their recordings, represents a first wave of musical revival in Newfoundland and perhaps a second wave of revival for Mi'kmaq music more generally. As the process continues and Mi'kmaq music expands throughout the province, the Sipu'ji'j Drummers' recording is becoming a resource for other Newfoundland Mi'kmaq drum groups.

The decision to adopt a particular shared musical style, such as that cultivated by Maritime Mi'kmaq, or aspects of the style of another region, such as powwow, is perhaps a way of encouraging Mi'kmaq communities and other First Nations to relate to one another and find a common ground in the present.[30] Powwow, as it is currently celebrated, is a relatively new phenomenon for many First Nations in the East, and Hoefnagels notes that in Southwestern Ontario this tradition has existed for no more than 45 years (*Powwow*).[31] In Newfoundland it is even younger, with the powwow drum first introduced in 1987 and the first powwow occurring in 1996. However, this is not to say that powwow is without ties to past traditional celebrations or that it does not have a foundation in history. Certainly there were community celebrations that were both spiritual and social at once, where music and dance were central features, and where previous generations engaged in some of the traditional songs and dances still evident today, although they have undoubtedly changed over time as all elements of culture do.[32]

In choosing powwow, a community or cultural group is acknowledging a tie to the past, even if that tie is tenuous or symbolic, and this in no way reduces its power, importance, or significance in terms of identity formation and assertion. With this same decision to engage in powwow as a cultural event and as a musical tradition, however, is a choice to engage a bond of kinship or solidarity with other First Nations in the present. In the specific case of the St. John's Aboriginal Drumming and Dancing Group, such choices reflect a need to foster unity amid the diversity of a mixed urban drum group; hence, the choice of a musical style and musical instruments appropriate for sharing with many different traditions, such as powwow, helps to achieve that goal. More broadly, however, it may represent a choice of musical style that permits cultural dialogue with other Mi'kmaq and other First Nations.

My ideas and preliminary suggestions for interpretations are in the formative stages and part of an ongoing dialogue with my consultants. Readers may question why I have chosen to write about this topic while it is effervescing with newness, while members of drum groups such as the St. John's Aboriginal Drumming and Dancing Group still face challenges in the pursuit of cultural knowledge, instead of waiting until they are well established as a drum group with Mi'kmaq and intertribal songs firmly set in their repertoire and they have become song carriers and

lead singers instructing the next generation. The valuing of process over product leads me to this approach. As Tedlock and Mannheim have noted, "cultures are continuously produced, reproduced, and revised in dialogues among their members" (2). It is this negotiation of culture that is demonstrated in the choice of repertoire and singing style by drum groups, as well as their choice of structural organization and division of musical and extra-musical responsibilities, and the ability of all of these factors to change over time.

Describing these drum groups risks freezing them in time and, indeed, this article cannot be read as more than a snapshot of three drum groups in a particular time period, place, and set of circumstances. During the time that passed between writing the first draft of this paper and its final version, the groups and their contexts have changed. For example, the St. John's drum group has added two new members and Morrisseau has returned to the group. However, in the intervening time, dialogues with consultants after they had read the first draft greatly shaped the final version of this paper, thus highlighting that ethnography, like culture, is emergent (Tedlock and Mannheim 2). I have provided a snapshot of part of the ongoing process of cultural revitalization among Newfoundland Mi'kmaq that may, and likely will, in the end look very different from another snapshot captured in another time and set of circumstances. What is achieved in writing during the revitalization rather than waiting, as if there will come a time when it has taken place, is the opportunity to further the dialogue with consultants on both their processes of cultural revitalization and my interpretation of these processes. It would be naive to think that the process of revitalization of culture will ever "end" as such; there will be no demarcation of a point in time where the process has been completed. New experiences, creative ideas, and interactions with others will ensure the continued remaking of Mi'kmaq music and culture in the future and the revitalization process, like culture itself, will endure.

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Notes

[1]I am grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the J.R. Smallwood Foundation for Newfoundland and Labrador Studies, and the Institute for Social and Economic Research for their financial support of this research. I would also like to thank my consultants for sharing their experiences with me, as well as Steve George and Candace Russell for providing valuable feedback on early drafts of this paper. Finally, I want to thank Paul Pike for his continued encouragement and guidance as I endeavour to learn more about Mi'kmaq music and culture.

[2]Anger notes that the earliest known account of Mi'kmaq on the west coast of the island dates back to 1604 in an account by Samuel de Champlain (ix); however, Pastore identifies 1602 as the earliest account of Mi'kmaq travelling to the island, when they were encountered by Bartholomew Gosnold (10). Pastore also acknowledges the existence of an oral history that states that Mi'kmaq came to the island in the fifteenth century (10). In con-

versations I have had with Steve George on this subject, he has noted that some Mi'kmaq acted as guides for newly arrived Europeans, because they were the ones who had intricate knowledge of the land and how to survive on it. He explains that having this knowledge, this "traditional indigenous knowledge," is an indicator that the Mi'kmaq are "of" this land.

[3]Some Mi'kmaq believe the word Beothuk is a corruption of the Mi'kmaq word *Pi'tawagk* meaning "the people above here" or "the people up stream" which in English would sound like "Bee-da-wach"; however, the Mi'kmaq name for Beothuk is "O-say-yana" (Wetzel in Coish 55). In my discussions with Jerry Evans and Steve George, they always refer to the Beothuk as *Pi'tawagk*. In *A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk*, Marshall notes that "Osa yan a," a word referring to "a Beothuk tribe," was the term known by the Mi'kmaq for the Beothuk. However, she asserts that "Beothuk" is a term emerging from conversations with the last known Beothuk people — Demasduit and Shanadithit (434-435).

[4]Wetzel's (1999) research supports his assertion that this was a deliberate action on the part of the federal government. Chalker also notes that this abdication of responsibility was actually agreed upon by both the Government of Canada and that of Newfoundland in the discussions that led to Confederation (12). In the past decade, the advantages and disadvantages of Newfoundland joining Confederation have been analyzed and critiqued by many. In outlining the main reasons why Confederation was a poor choice for Newfoundland, lawyer James R. Chalker notes that the federal government transferred financial responsibility for Indigenous Peoples in Newfoundland to the provincial government, "notwithstanding the provisions of the *Indian Act* and the Constitution of Canada at the time, under which the federal government was responsible for all Indian (aboriginal) affairs. Over time, the federal government has assumed a greater degree of financial responsibility for the aboriginals living in Newfoundland" (12). While some Indigenous People assert that the fact that the Indian Act was not initially enacted in Newfoundland was a grievous error, it should be noted that the Indian Act has been somewhat of a double-edged sword. It is this policy that caused great destruction of Native communities, through centralization processes, the creation of residential schools, and divisive regulations for determining registration in the Act and on band lists. However, it was this same Act that provided (and continues to be a source of) important financial support for programs and services (such as access to health care) and ensured the maintenance (or creation) of reserves. See Wetzel (1995, 1999), Tompkins (1988, 1998), and Tanner and Henderson (1992) for a more detailed accounts of this issue as it relates to the Newfoundland context.

[5]It is important to note that while this is the year that the federal government officially made Conne River a reserve, community historian Philip Jeddore has asserted that oral history dates the reserve as being more than a century old: "The history of Miawpukek goes back much farther than 1987. Our oral history say the reserve was actually established in 1870 when the Newfoundland Surveyor General, Alexander Murray, surveyed it." While surveying the area does not make it a reserve, Tanner and Henderson have noted that "In 1870 land grants were made to the Mi'kmaq residing at Conne River" (149), while Tompkins identifies 1872 as the year in which the Mi'kmaq "had been granted a reserve at Conne River" (*Pencilled Out* 5). Tompkins suggests that "with no agency of government responsible for them, the knowledge of their reserve soon slipped from the government memory" (*Pencilled Out* 5).

[6]It is important to consider that while Wallis and Wallis only provide the Mi'kmaq names for three song types, it is possible (and perhaps probable) that others were known at

the time, but that their consultants may have chosen not to share them with the ethnographers for spiritual or ceremonial reasons.

[7]For example, while porcupine quillwork is a traditional Mi'kmaq craft, and decorative and symbolic art, the lack of porcupines in Newfoundland would have necessitated importing quills in order to create quillwork in the Newfoundland context. Similarly, while baskets were generally woven of ash splints in the Maritimes, in the Newfoundland context they were commonly made of spruce root (Anger 24).

[8]"On the country" is an expression used to refer to the practice of going out on the land for hunting or gathering purposes and is also the title of the work by Jackson.

[9]This is not to say that drums did not exist in the culture. It is possible that drums were present and even seen by ethnographers, but not recorded by them, because they did not deem them significant at the time or relevant to their study. Or, if a scholar approached the ethnographic field through the lens of "cultural loss," then he or she might only identify that which was lost, rather than what was also retained.

[10]In Augustine's catalogue of *Mi'kmaq & Maliseet Cultural Ancestral Material* held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, he includes only two hand drums, one dated 1913 and the other 1993 (64, 102). There is one group drum in the collection, also dated 1993 (103). There are, however, several birch bark boxes that appear as though they could substitute for drums. It could be that birch bark boxes served a dual purpose during some time period. Of course, this is merely conjecture on my part.

[11]Cultural revitalization and revival as a process may appear to involve what has been termed the "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm 2). The notion of "invented tradition" can refer both to traditions that are formally constructed and implemented and traditions that emerge through more informal means, quickly taking root in community practice. Such traditions may imply or overtly assert some basis for historical continuity and through repetition can play a role in shaping and strengthening collective identity (Hobsbawm 1). I have chosen, however, not to apply this terminology as it can be offensive to practitioners of a particular tradition or culture.

[12]Eastern Eagle formed in 1991 under the name Indian Brook Singers and in their formative years travelled and sang with Free Spirit, whose first recording of traditional Mi'kmaq songs called *MicMac (Mi'Kmaq) Songs* was produced in 1993. Eastern Eagle, as a distinct group, released their first recordings a few years later — *Mak-Attaq* in 1995 and *Traditionally Yours* in 1996 (Marr).

[13]Reg and Angela Brown have been performing together for the past twenty years, having produced audio and video recordings available in the Corner Brook area. Angela's most recent work, a tribute song called "Mardena," is on the *Bay D'Espoir Cancer Benefit Album 2005* CD and can be purchased locally in Conne River, Head Bay D'Espoir, and St. Alban's or online at www.steadfast.h-g.ca. Paul Pike is the lead singer of Medicine Dream, a contemporary Native music group based in Anchorage, Alaska, that has recorded two albums with Canyon Records. More information about the group and how to purchase recordings is available at www.medicinedream.com (see also Tulk 2003, 2004).

[14]Here the traditional powwow is contrasted with a contest powwow, in which dancers and drum groups compete for cash prizes. For discussion of these two types of powwow in the Mi'kmaq context, see Tulk 2006.

[15]Mattie Mitchell is recognized as an important Mi'kmaq and Newfoundlander, who worked as a guide on the Northern Peninsula of the island, was integral in the first attempts to

map this area, and discovered mineral deposits significant to the mining industry. For more detailed information about his life see *ENL* (s.v. "Mitchell, Matthew"). For artist Jerry Evans's rendering of this important historical figure, see "Mattie Mitchell" (http://www.fni.nf.ca/main%20page/newpage1.htm; accessed 15 November 2007).

[16]The Sipu'ji'j Drummers are not active at the time of publication.

[17]A Flag Song is sung to honour the flags and eagle staffs before they are posted at the opening of the powwow. It functions in much the same way that a national anthem would.

[18]A Veterans' Song is sung after the Flag Song at the opening of the powwow to honour those present who are veterans of any wars or conflicts, such as World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Korea, or Desert Storm.

[19]As of the time of writing, there is a movement among the group to choose a new name to distinguish the First Nations powwow drum group from the newly formed Inuit drum group which is also based at the St. John's Native Friendship Centre.

[20]The hand signals used in the performance of powwow songs have been described by Powers (43-44). He notes the significance of eye contact, chin gestures, and the raising and pointing of the drumstick as means of communicating who will begin the next push-up and of accepting or declining that request. Interestingly, while Morrisseau used eye contact and chin gestures, he did not point with the drumstick. Instead, he used discreet finger movements to pass the lead. His free hand would be low, near the drum, he would make eye contact, then point to the person. The person then either nodded or pointed at himself to accept the lead or shook his head and/or hand side to side to refuse the request.

[21]A push-up is one complete rendition of the song material (sometimes compared to the verse of a strophic song). Often this push-up (verse) is repeated four times. Dancers may refer to this as a "round" (Browner 73). Push-up may also, somewhat confusingly, refer to the lead or the short solo segment sung at the beginning of each complete rendition of a song. For the purposes of this paper, I have chosen to use "lead" to refer to this solo segment and "push-up" to refer to the complete rendition of the song material.

[22]For a discussion of the various configurations of space as related to singing roles in drum groups, see Browner (73-74).

[23]A 49er is a song, often with romantic and/or humourous text or undertone, which features a combination of vocables and English language, and is sung to a round dance beat (dotted rhythm in long-short pattern).

[24]The membership of this drum group is in a state of constant flux. Since I wrote the first draft of this paper in December 2005, two new members have joined the drum group and Morrisseau has returned.

[25]Honour beats generally occur during the second half of each push-up of a song. They are strongly accented beats, often four in a group, that are played usually by the lead drummer. As a sign of honour and respect, when these are played, dancers raise their eagle feathers, eagle fans, or right hand above their heads.

[26]"Mi'kmaq Honour Song," also known as "Kepmite'tmnej," was made by George Paul of Red Bank.

[27]"Friendship Song," also known as "I'ko," is a Mi'kmaq song found on recordings by Free Spirit, the Denny Family, Eastern Eagle, and Sipu'ji'j Drummers. During cultural presentations in Conne River, I have heard it said that this is a song of peace between the Mohawk and Mi'kmaq people. Kevin Alstrup discusses this song and its meaning in his article

"Mi'kmaq Atukwaqann and Aural Symbolism in the Music-Making of Thomas George Poulette" (2004).

[28]For more information about these events, see Federation of Newfoundland Indians Youth (www.fniyouth.com/drum.htm).

[29]An important discussion of women's roles in revitalization and the particular challenges facing Mi'kmaq women on the west coast of Newfoundland can be found in Muise (2003).

[30]While some readers may wish for more conclusive assertions as to the distinctiveness of Newfoundland Mi'kmaq music in the past and the present, it would be premature to draw such conclusions in this preliminary study. Further, it may not even be possible to determine the distinctiveness of Newfoundland Mi'kmaq music in the past based on the documents that exist because they were often written in such a way that they conflate the details of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland Mi'kmaq culture and traditions.

[31]For one history of the origins of powwow, see Browner (2002).

[32]See, for example, the descriptions of St. Anne's Day celebrations at Chapel Island which historically featured music and dancing in Howard, and Parsons.

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