

# WABANAKI

## PEOPLE OF THE DAWN

### PART I







## Aboriginal Affairs Office of the Minister

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The Mi'kmaq have lived in the Atlantic Provinces for thousands of years. This is supported by archeological findings in Debert and the Mersey River. Yet Nova Scotians have very little knowledge of Mi'kmaq culture and history and their contribution to the Province – socially, culturally and economically.

In Nova Scotia, the Mi'kmaq along with the provincial and federal governments have established a long -term process to negotiate the definition, recognition and implementation of Mi'kmaq rights and title. On February 27, 2007, the parties signed a Framework Agreement. This agreement is intended to promote efficient, effective, orderly and timely negotiations towards a resolution of issues respecting Mi'kmaq rights and title. The negotiations will benefit all involved as it will seek to find common understandings over issues of land and resources in Nova Scotia.

Negotiations provide an opportunity to build upon our common learning and our shared interest in building a strong Nova Scotia and a strong Canada – both culturally and economically. With negotiations underway it is important that young Nova Scotians have a better understanding of the Mi'kmaq – Nova Scotia's first people.

In light of this, the Nova Scotia government's Office of Aboriginal Affairs has undertaken to produce this video and accompanying teaching aids which aim to foster an appreciation of the rich history and culture of Mi'kmaq people as well as an understanding of the oral tradition and Mi'kmaw perspective on the world.

The guide was developed in collaboration with a Mi'kmaq educator and advisors from the Mi'kmaq community in Nova Scotia as well as representatives from the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

We hope you enjoy learning from them.

Sincerely,

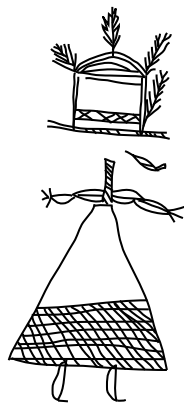
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael G. Baker'.

Michael G. Baker, Q.C.  
Minister



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## OVERVIEW OF VIDEO

In the Fall of 2004, Nova Scotia's Office of Aboriginal Affairs heard about a significant discovery of Mi'kmaq artifacts in the muddy bottom of the Mersey River in Queens County. Nova Scotia Power was repairing six power dams it has on the river and hired CRM Group, a firm of Halifax archaeologists, to search the river bed for artifacts. As the work proceeded, large sections of the river bed were exposed to allow the work on power stations to proceed. The archaeologists found more than 20,000 artifacts, some dating back 8,000 years. The arrowheads, cutting tools, hammers and stone scrapers told of centuries of Mi'kmaq life on the river – fishing and camping and creating tools and weapons for their hunting and fishing activities. The Nova Scotia Museum described it as one of the most significant Mi'kmaq heritage sites in the province.

John Soosaar, OAA Communications Advisor, and videographer Mark Hammond went to the river to capture these images before the water was allowed to return. OAA decided that the Mersey footage could form the basis of a documentary film on Mi'kmaq history and culture and with significant financial support from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada went ahead with its production.

OAA worked with Pine Tree Productions of Halifax, Mi'kmaq historian Don Julien, Todd Labrador of Acadia First Nation, and others to tell the story of Mi'kmaq life in Eastern Canada over thousands of years. John, director Terry Fulmer and videographer Hammond traveled to several points in the province to get additional footage and interviews needed to complete the film.

The Office has worked closely with Department of Education and a Mi'kmaq Advisory Committee to develop accompanying learning activities which promote:

- an appreciation of the rich history and culture of Mi'kmaq people and
- an understanding of the oral tradition and Mi'kmaw perspective on the world.

The Department of Education has agreed to distribute the video and learning guide to all Grade 10 Mi'kmaq Studies and Grade 11 Canadian History classrooms in Nova Scotia.

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs would like to thank members of the Mi'kmaq advisory committee for their advice and direction. Special thanks go to Sharon Paul from Eskasoni First Nation for her contribution.





## PURPOSE OF THE LEARNING GUIDE

The video provides a snapshot of the history and culture of the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia as revealed by the discovery of artifacts in the Mersey River area of Nova Scotia. It also begins to unravel the connection between the archaeological past and the past of the Mi'kmaw as conveyed through oral history and traditions. The video gives us a glimpse of how the Mi'kmaq may have lived thousands of years ago and demonstrates the interconnectedness of the land and water with the lives of the Mi'kmaq.

This learning guide was developed in collaboration with a Mi'kmaw Advisory Committee to ensure that the activities provided are cultural relevant. Without their collaboration and in particular the work of Sharon Paul from Eskasoni First Nation this guide would not have been possible.

*Wabanaki: People of the Dawn Part I* is a video resource that will be of interest and of use to students and teachers in Mi'kmaq Studies 10 and Canadian History 11. The video complements both the content of these courses and the inquiry approach inherent in all high school social studies courses in Nova Scotia.

Depending on the approach taken, and on the context within which it is shown, the video may help address a number of different specific curriculum outcomes in Mi'kmaq Studies 10 and Canadian History 11. The video will not, by itself, address any one outcome. Combined with prior learning, however, and with additional activities and research (like the suggestions in this guide), teachers may use *Wabanaki: People of the Dawn Part I* to help address any one of a number of outcomes.

Below, under the headings Mi'kmaq Studies 10 and Canadian History 11, are listed the specific curriculum outcomes that may be addressed through study that would include viewing *Wabanaki: People of the Dawn Part I*:

## MI'KMAW STUDIES 10\*

- (I1) Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the importance of land to the Mi'kmaw people and of the relationship the Mi'kmaw people have with the land
- (I3) Students will be expected to formulate a concept of what the term "oral tradition" means
- (G1) Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of how pre-contact and post-contact First Nations governing structures and practices were reflective of their societies
- (G4) Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the inherent rights that accrue to the Mi'kmaq and other First Nations as the first occupants of the land
- (G5) Students will be expected to compare and contrast the pre-contact and post-contact First Nations governing structures
- (G6) Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the current issues surrounding self-determination of First Nations people in Canada
- (IS1) Students will be expected to engage in specific research using the historical method and communicate the findings of the research

\* taken from Department of Education Mi'kmaw Studies 10, Implementation Draft, 2003



## CANADIAN HISTORY 11\*

- (GL1) Students will be expected to investigate and assess various traditional and emerging theories regarding the peopling of the Americas
- (GL2) Students will be expected to analyze the effects of contact and subsequent colonization
- (D1) Students will be expected to investigate the economic systems of Aboriginal societies in North America
- (G1) Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of how pre-contact and post-contact First Nations governing structures and practices were reflective of their societies
- (IS1) Students will be expected to engage in specific research using the historical method and communicate the findings of their research effectively
- (S3) Students will be expected to analyze the struggles of First Nations to re-establish sovereignty
- (J2) Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between land and culture and analyze the effects of displacement

\* taken from Department of Education Canadian History 11, Implementation Draft, 2002





## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Overview

The video explores the role of the Wabanaki Confederacy, the development of the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq and the relationship between the two. The following research projects are intended to increase the student's understanding of Mi'kmaq history and culture by researching the concepts and themes raised in the video:

*Wabanaki: People of the Dawn Part I.*

Both Mi'kmaq Studies 10 and Canadian History 11 require students to undertake an Independent Study. This requirement is written as identical specific curriculum outcomes in each course -- "Students will be expected to engage in specific research using the historical method and communicate the findings of their research effectively". The three research proposals below may provide some students with an opportunity to engage in an independent study.

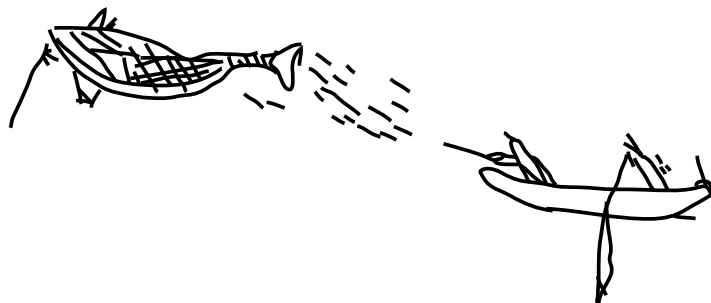
### Activity

#### Research Project # 1 - Wabanaki Confederacy and the Mi'kmaq

The video explores the role of the Wabanaki Confederacy, the development of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq and the relationship between the two.

##### Research Questions

1. How did the Wabanaki Confederacy contribute to the evolution of Mi'kmaq territory, governance, and traditions?
2. How did European settlement affect both the Mi'kmaq and the Wabanaki Confederacy?



## Research Project # 2 - Linking the archaeological past to the history of the Mi'kmaq

The video describes two significant archaeological discoveries in Nova Scotia (Debert and Mersey River) and the link between the science of archaeology and the history of the Mi'kmaq (ie., where they lived, how they lived and how they were/are connected to the land and water).

### Research Question

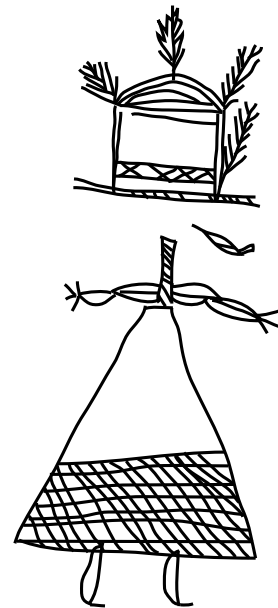
How does the archaeological record correspond to the history as explained through the oral tradition of the Mi'kmaq?

## Research Project #3 - The role of the Constitution Act (1982) and treaties of peace and friendship.

The video highlights how the signing of the Constitution Act (1982) changed the nature of the relationship between governments and Canada's Aboriginal people.

### Research Question

How has the Constitution Act (1982) changed the nature of the relationship between Canadian governments (both federal and provincial) and the Mi'kmaq?



## GEOGRAPHY OF THE MERSEY RIVER

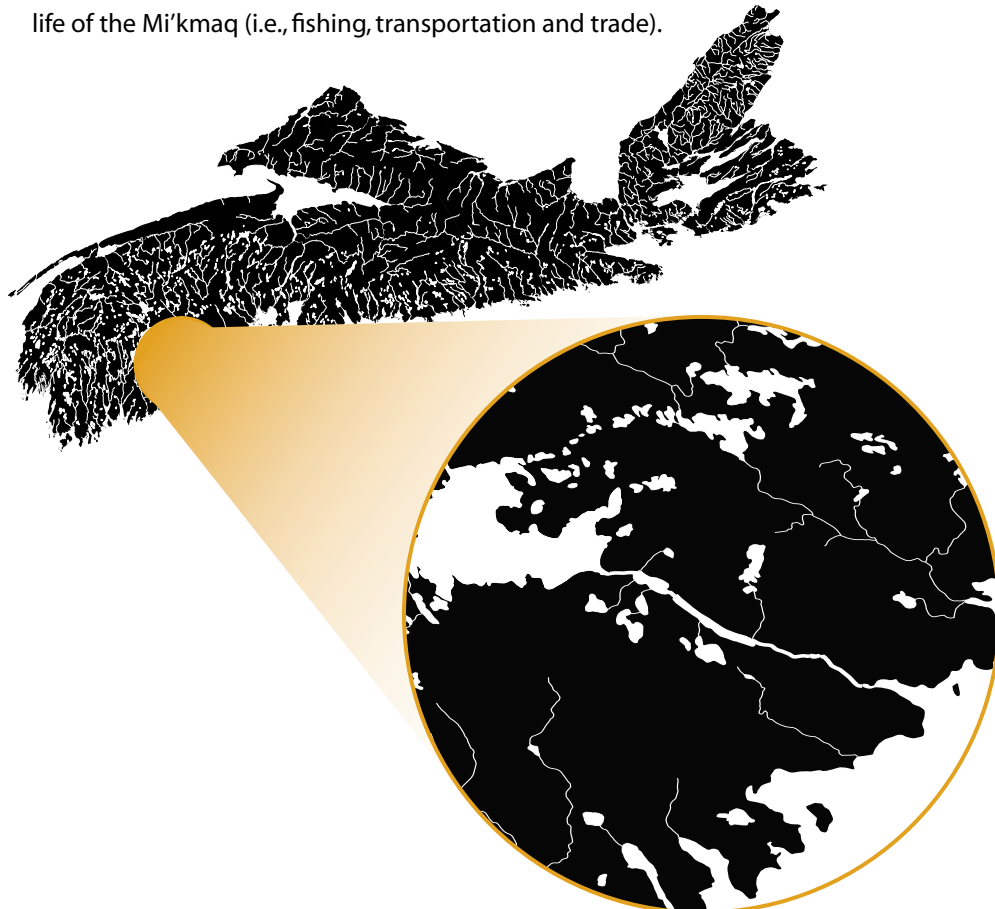
### Overview

As described in the video, the Mersey River was an important waterway for the Mi'kmaq in terms of travel and livelihood. The river was a source of food, a means of travel and a mechanism for trade with other Mi'kmaq. The recent archaeological findings on the Mersey River help describe what the lives of the Mi'kmaq were like 6,000 years ago.

### Activity

Have the students map the Mersey River.

Students should then be asked to consider why the Mi'kmaq would have lived along the river (or other similar river systems). Students could draw or describe what life may have been like along the river 6,000 years ago when it was first inhabited by the Mi'kmaq. In particular, have the students describe the important role that rivers such as the Mersey played in the historical life of the Mi'kmaq (i.e., fishing, transportation and trade).



## CONNECTING THE MI'KMAQ PAST AND PRESENT

### Overview

The video highlighted examples of traditions and practices that existed 6,000 years ago and remain active today.

Using the Venn Diagram provided, have the students describe Mi'kmaq traditions and practices that existed 6,000 years ago and that exist today. With the Venn diagram connect the historical practices that continue to exist today. This exercise should highlight those practices and traditions that remain vibrant and alive in the Mi'kmaq community today and highlight how Mi'kmaq society has changed over time.

### Activity

VENN DIAGRAM EXERCISE (on next page)





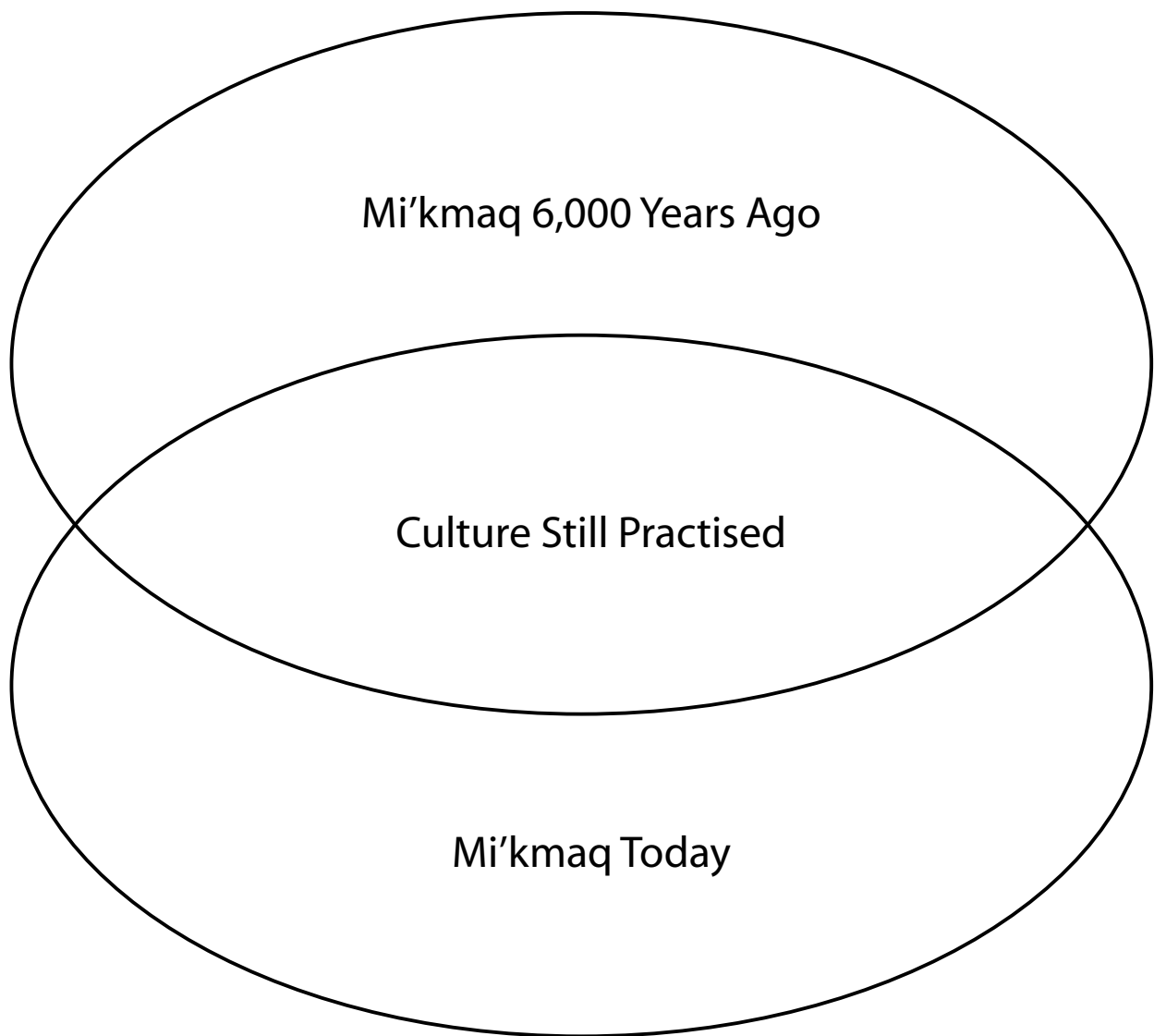
## CONNECTING THE MI'KMAQ PAST AND PRESENT - EXERCISE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## ACROSTIC POEM

### Overview

An acrostic poem is one where you choose a word or name and use each letter in the name as the beginning of a word or line that tells something about the person or topic.

Example: An acrostic poem using the word "Sun"

**S**ometimes when we go to the beach, I will get a sun burn.

**U**sually if I put sun block on my skin, I will not burn.

**N**oon is when I'm really prone to burning.

Kespukwik (meaning "last flow") is one of the seven districts of Mi'kma'ki and includes the area of present day Queens, Shelburne, Yarmouth, Digby and Annapolis counties and is the location of the Mersey River.

Write an acrostic poem using the word below.

K

E

S

P

U

K

W

I

K



## MI'KMAW PETROGLYPHS

### Overview

Petroglyphs are ancient rock drawings. These drawings provide us with an important connection to the history of the Mi'kmaq, they way they lived and important events in their lives. Significant finds of petroglyphs have been made in Kejimikujik and the Bedford Barrens.

Todd Labrador, from Acadia First Nation, describes the importance of these drawings in the video: *Wabanaki: People of the Dawn Part I*.

### Activity

Students should consider the information provided on petroglyphs in the video and the re-created petroglyphs provided with this learning guide. In particular they should think about what the individual drawing these petroglyphs would have been trying to represent at the time.

The student can then be tasked to design images for petroglyphs that tell the story of modern day people/society and discuss how people in 2,000 years would view these petroglyphs.

## LEARNING ACTIVITY

# MI'KMAW PETROGLYPHS



Photo: Brian Molyneux for Parks Canada.

*Sailing ship with men; one appears to be a British soldier in uniform with drawn cutlass.*



Photo: Brian Molyneux for Parks Canada.

*Camp scene.*



Photo: Laird Niven for Parks Canada.

*Paddle-wheeler and canoe, dated 1849.*



Photo: Laird Niven for Parks Canada.

*Man in traditional clothing with long coat and square brimmed hat.*



Photo: Brian Molyneux for Parks Canada.

*Moose.*



Photo: Brian Molyneux for Parks Canada.

*Two large canoes with sails.*



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs is also making available an array of resources for teachers that will complement the use of the video and activities outlined in the learning guide. These resources are outlined below:

- Wabanaki: People of the Dawn (Part I)
- Wabanaki: People of the Dawn (Part II)
- Meeting of Nations (Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs)
- Kekina'muatl - Learning About the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia (Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq)
- Mi'kmaq Resource Guide 4th Edition
- Treaty Day Poster Series

You can also visit the Department of Education website at [mikmaq-services.ednet.ns.ca](http://mikmaq-services.ednet.ns.ca) and [gov.ns.ca/abor/](http://gov.ns.ca/abor/) for additional information.

