

Two Eyed Seeing Place Names Axiology

Oral History **Reverence** Storytelling

Elders Collective Good Peace & Friendship Treaties

Msit no'Kmaq Holism Transformation

Interconnected

Liberation Mi'kma'ki **Land**

Metaphysics **Reciprocity** Shared Space

Mi'kmaw Worldviews **Stories as Reconciliation**

Decolonization

Mi'kmaq Mi'kmaw Knowledge Based Systems

Netukulimk Time Immemorial Synergy

Relational Accountability Settler Identity

Truth & Reconciliation **Respect** Interrelatedness

Indigenous Allyship Epistemology

Thinking Seven Generations Ahead

Reverence UNDRIP **Responsibility**

Ontology Intersection Ta'n Weji-sqalia'tiek

~~Etuantmumk~~

~~Paletianahje~~

A Lunenburg County Settler's Account of Her Role and Responsibility in Decolonization

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Abstract

The goal of this study was to contribute to decolonization through an examination of a settler's recent decolonizing initiatives. This study examines the role of the author and her responsibility in decolonization, truth and reconciliation, and ways to practise Indigenous allyship authentically.

The focus of this study is on the Mi'kmaw Peoples of Atlantic Canada and their traditional Mi'kmaw territory known as Mi'kma'ki. The work for this thesis involved particular attention to Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada, where the author and her family have lived since European settlers arrived in 1753. The project required the personal exploration of the biases and prejudices of the author that stemmed from her upbringing, which the European Canadian white supremacist patriarchal colonial ideology heavily influenced. An additional feature was an examination of the mechanisms that supported the invention of the settler identity, such as myths and stereotypes and the erasure of the Mi'kmaw's longstanding existence in Lunenburg County.

Another aspect of this dissertation is the documentation of the Mahone Bay Museum's decolonizing initiatives and what the author learned as a volunteer on the museum's decolonizing committee. During the short time of working together, the committee was able to highlight the plethora of Mi'kmaw history in Lunenburg County. Honouring the Mi'kmaw perspective of local history is an essential piece of this work because it disrupts and challenges local colonial

discourse. This Mi'kmaw-settler way of understanding shared history also supports the transformation of personal, local/community, regional, and decolonial initiatives.

The crux of this study lies in following an Indigenous research paradigm that emphasizes a holistic learning process and the importance of emotional learning, a perspective that traditional western objective approaches to research generally overshadow. An Indigenous research paradigm also held the author and all aspects of this work accountable to Indigenous ways of knowing. The types of Indigenous methodology that guided this study included practising relationships from an Indigenous perspective and incorporating Jo-ann Archibald's Storywork Principles to build and maintain Indigenous-Settler relationships, to name a few.

Part of this work was an examination of the relationship between the European colonialization of Canada, the colonial narrative and settler identity, on the one hand, and their juxtaposition with white supremacy and racism, and how these discriminatory norms continue to play out across every aspect of Canadian society today, on the other. Integral to understanding these contemporary connections is also the role and responsibility of the author in combatting racism today.

Lastly, the author believes this work can facilitate strengthened peace and friendly relations between the Mi'kmaq and settlers as well as promote their shared responsibility to represent the history of Canada in a way that supports reconciliation. The intention is the development of transformative education that produces constructive social change and applies to other educational institutions, such as public schools and universities.

Acknowledgements

Like many PhD dissertations, this work would not have been possible without the help and assistance of many. First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisor, Dr. Jim Sharpe, and committee members, Dr. Ardra Cole and Dr. Sherry Pictou, for their steadfast support in helping me complete this doctoral thesis. Dr. Sharpe's interest in decolonizing education was instrumental in my choice of this continued research path.

I would like to thank the Mahone Bay Museum for inviting me to be on the decolonizing committee that they created, and then giving me permission to use our decolonizing work as a doctoral research idea. I really do not know how I could have completed this body of work without the huge support of our truly collaborative team, which includes Elder Ellen Hunt, Elder Joe Mike, Michael Eisnor, Barry Stevens, Curator Lyne Allain, and the different Mi'kmaw summer university students who helped us with research each year.

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I am deeply grateful to Flo Blackett Apli'kmuj, Joan Smith, Marlene Companion, and the other All Nations Drummers who, from the beginning, took me under their Indigenous wings and generously shared their perceptions, knowledge, and stories with me. These strong women have

I would like to thank the curators at the Nova Scotia Museum who showed genuine interest in this project, provided valuable archeological information about the Mi'kmaq in Lunenburg County, and offered continual support.

I also would like to thank my sister in law Barbara Trotter who is my editor. She was a huge help in more ways than I can begin to imagine!

A huge thank you goes out to my husband, Glen Dexter, for sharing his invaluable expertise on many and varied subjects over the course of this doctoral endeavour. There were times when he seemed even more passionate than I was about our shared history with the Mi'kmaq and why we need to honour, respect, and prioritize Mi'kmaw perspectives and worldviews.

Lastly, my immense and deep gratitude goes to all of the wildlife that repeatedly showed themselves to me daily. Although I do not always understand their messages, I know they have presented themselves to me in some capacity to nurture my learning spirit and its relationship to something much larger than myself. Their visits are always welcome. I look for them every day and want them to know that they have influenced my relationship with Mother Earth in profound ways.

Msit No'kmaq

Weliaq



Water colour: *Mahone Bay, N.S.*, ca. 1850
Source: Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. R9266-299
Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana

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List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Terms

Abbreviations, Acronyms and Terminology

APTN: The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network

BOD: Mahone Bay Museum Board of Directors, which is a different body from the decolonizing committee and is responsible for managing the museum and the work of the decolonizing committee

CBPR: Community-Based Participatory Research, which is a methodological practice that prioritizes the engagement of community partnerships as an integral part of the research process

HRM: Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia, Canada

MSVU: Mount Saint Vincent University, located in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

NSITEN: Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, creator of one of the most extensive settlement packages in the history of Canada and a result of the Indian Residential Schools Agreement, whose purpose was to compensate survivors for the harm they endured in residential schools and to work towards a socially just future for Indigenous Peoples

TRC Calls to Action: An outcome of the TRC report in the form of a document that addresses the ongoing impact of residential schools on survivors and their families, containing 94 calls to action across a wide range of areas, including child welfare; education; health; justice; language; and culture, including museums

Terms and Definitions

All Nations Drum: A women's big drum group based in Mi'kma'ki

Āseedĭk/E'se'katik: Mi'kmaw place name for Lunenburg before European colonization

COVID-19 Pandemic: A contiguous upper viral disease that began in 2019 and became a

L’nu: Also spelled L’nuk, word that Mi’kmaq use for describing themselves as the Indigenous Peoples of Mi’kma’ki, with a translated meaning of “the people”

Mirlegueche: Acadian settlement name for Lunenburg prior to the arrival of the British in 1753

Mi’kma’ki: Traditional unceded Mi’kmaw territory that includes Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick (north of the Saint John River), the Gaspé region of Quebec, and parts of northern Maine and southwestern Newfoundland

Mi’kmaq: Plural form of Mi’kmaw meaning “the people,” which refers to more than one Mi’kmaw person or to the entire nation and represents the Indigenous Peoples inhabiting Mi’kma’ki

Mi’kmaw: Singular form of the word Mi’kmaq and the adjective form for both words

Settlers: Non-Indigenous peoples living in Canada who form the European-descended sociopolitical majority

Mahone Bay or Waters of Mahone Bay: Large area of water on the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia along the eastern edge of Lunenburg County, said to have more than 365 islands, or as the locals say, “one island for every day of the year”

Mahone Bay Museum: Small community museum located in the town of Mahone Bay that the registered non-profit charity known as the Mahone Bay Founders Society created to provide both onsite and online access to the history of the Mahone Bay area and to preserve that history for the benefit of future generations

Terra Nullius: Latin term for an aspect of the settler narrative that translates into “nobody’s land”

Town of Mahone Bay: Area within the fixed colonial and provincial boundaries that geographically determine where the town’s borders are located

The Committee (also the decolonizing committee): Volunteer committee at the Mahone Bay Museum whose mandate is the decolonizing of the museum’s museological infrastructure

Members of the Committee (On Site Committee Members):

Dr. Elder Joe Michael (Joe Mike) is a very well-respected Mi’kmaw Elder from Indian Brook Mi’kmaw Reserve, Nova Scotia, who recently received an honorary doctorate from Acadia University. He is on the Board of Directors of Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN), a volunteer based, not-for-profit cultural tourism organization that works towards supporting the growth of authentic and Mi’kmaw cultural, tourism business, and community enterprises in Nova Scotia.

Elder Ellen Hunt is from Lunenburg and has conducted extensive research in Lunenburg County related to the history and origins of the Mi'kmaq.

Lyne Allain is the Mahone Bay Museum manager and curator. A new hire in spring 2016, she has made decolonizing current museological practices a priority.

Barry Stevens is a local area Mi'kmaw businessperson. He has a natural interest in representing local history and culture that privileges the Mi'kmaw knowledge about the area.

Margaret JA Knickle (the author) is a PhD candidate at Mount Saint Vincent University, who is interested in learning about her colonial upbringing from a Mi'kmaw perspective. Her ancestors were some of the original European colonizers who helped to settle Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, in 1753.

Michael Eisnor is an amateur historian whose family has lived in the Mahone Bay area since early British colonization. He has done extensive research on the intriguing history, origins, and background of the area that highlight the Mi'kmaw presence. Michael's family included some of the original settlers who landed in Mi'kma'ki in 1753.

Mi'kmaw Summer Student: For the past three years, the museum has hired a different university student, who is Mi'kmaq, to assist in its decolonizing work.

Offsite Resources: I

Introduction

Force fields of knowledge
respond only to the
energy of where the catalyst
resides.

(KisKaieyi-I AM READY by Michelle Sylliboy, 2019, Rebel Press.
Reprinted with permission from the author.)

Dissertation Statement of Intention

A primary feature of this PhD dissertation is the examination of my decolonization journey and my attempts to engage in authentic truth and reconciliation with the Mi'kmaq in what is currently called Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada. A critical component of this work is the examination of my colonial roots and family settler history in Lunenburg County that dates to 1753. The goal of this dissertation was to demonstrate the responsibility that settlers like me have with respect to truth and reconciliation and to highlight the role of settlers as active agents of change in decolonization and why these efforts are fundamental to the well-being of all Canadians.

Part of this study included the active participation of me as a volunteer at the Mahone Bay Museum, a local museum that settlers in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, created. Currently, the Mahone Bay Museum focuses on displaying the colonial history of Mahone Bay following English settlement in the mid-1700s. Since the museum desired to add a component to their work that privileges the Mi'kmaw voice and the way the Mi'kmaq wished to represent history in the museum, the museum established a volunteer committee (the committee) to work on this project. For part of this study, I documented and described the decolonization actions and initiatives of the Mahone Bay Museum Committee, also identifying what worked well, the tensions and problems that arose, and subsequent solutions for the resolution of those problems.

A significant component of this dissertation is the articulation of my reflections about what I learned by being part of the museum's initial attempts to understand its role in decolonization. From this experience arose a deeper understanding of the shared narrative about Lunenburg County history from both Mi'kmaw and settler viewpoints. The purpose of this thoughtful introspection was to understand a personal role as an Indigenous ally, to combat racism, and to assist in decolonization. This line of thought agrees with the convictions Marie Battiste expresses in her recent interview with Karl Moore and Wáhiakatste Diome-Deer of the *Globe and Mail* (2021), called "For Mi'kmaw educator Marie Battiste, inner growth is essential to be a leader." As with Battiste, I believe that I can undertake significant learning, self-discovery, and personal development through personal lived experience with the research, reflection and writing about this learning process. This type of learning will build an understanding of a personal role in decolonization and truth and reconciliation processes in Canada.

The transformative processes this work describes relate directly to the mandate stipulated in Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (Government of Canada, 2018) document, *Calls to Action*. The TRC requests that the Canadian government, all education sectors, public and private institutions, and individual citizens be responsible for advancing the process of reconciliation.

In the same way that the *TRC Calls to Action* aligns its obligations with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), this study also honours the conditions laid out in UNDRIP. In 2007, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted UNDRIP as an international human rights instrument for addressing Indigenous human rights issues worldwide (UN General Assembly, 2007). UNDRIP is a significant Indigenous

rights milestone that effectively defines the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples. UNDRIP is a crucial component of this study because, in June 2021, the Canadian Senate passed Bill C-15, which demanded the alignment of Canadian law with UNDRIP. While Bill C-15 does not directly implement the declaration's various articles into Canadian law, it establishes a sound framework for its implementation. This landmark legislation spells out how the Canadian government must take the measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with UNDRIP.

An essential note is to mention that in 2010, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States did not endorse UNDRIP. When Canada initially agreed to the application of UNDRIP, it was only an aspirational document. The implementation of UNDRIP is significant and became possible because of the hard work and due diligence of Indigenous Peoples to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with its mandate.

A participatory approach was a critical aspect of this study because of the importance of emphasizing partnerships and the building of strong relationships with local Mi'kmaw Elders and their communities in order to privilege the Mi'kmaw worldview. This study demonstrates what can happen when Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous researchers like me have a shared interest in working together by practising Indigenous allyship and Indigenous holistic research approaches. Accordingly, this PhD dissertation follows the prevailing principles of community-based participatory research (CBPR).

Since this dissertational project is about Indigenous allyship, it speaks to the importance of using Indigenous knowledge and holistic methods in a university context combined with traditional western methodologies as part of the decolonizing process. Therefore, this study honours an Indigenous research paradigm as its primary mode of inquiry and learning.

As a final point, the intention of producing this dissertation is to provide a new educational experience that does not cause further alienation between Indigenous-settler relations. Instead, the goal was for settlers to learn more about their colonial baggage by engaging with this study. Hopefully, the example of this dissertation will move other settlers to practise Indigenous allyship, which supports personal, local, national, and global socially just transformation across all aspects of society.

The Silver Lining of the COVID-19 Pandemic

In many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the ability to conduct research. Visiting physical spaces such as the Nova Scotia Archives and Nova Scotia Museum was not possible. With the Mahone Bay Museum closed, the decolonizing committee failed to meet in person.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government advised the public to stay home during the initial lockdown. Confined at home, I used mainly written documentation as the primary way to conduct research. Completing at home studies led to the witnessing of a plethora of news events steeped in racial tensions, such as the stories about George Floyd, Chantel Moore, Stephen Labrador, and Saulnierville. The relevance of this study to historical narratives and current issues became apparent, leading to the identification of real-life present-day connections among colonization, white supremacy and racism, and the research at the museum.

The enforced restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic changed my research trajectory and led to significant unanticipated personal reflection, along with the adaptation of the research so that it would work within the learning constraints, which resulted in research outcomes that differed from the initial expectations. The incorporation of my personal experience is an example of following an Indigenous research paradigm, which involves an

opened-ended approach that trusts the process and not the product as a research methodology. The western understanding of auto-ethnographic reflections thus becomes a crucial component of the whole research experience.

One example of an unforeseen benefit of doing research in this way is the wildlife that I witnessed because of the more extended time at home, which resulted in sightings of and meetings with many wildlife creatures. During COVID-19, watching awe-inspiring wildlife became a part of the research experience, daily occurrences that enabled me to apply the natural world to the learning from the research.

Another example of the benefits of doing research this way is the deep personal reflections that ensued, with resultant introspection and critical examination of the intersections among racism, white supremacy, and colonization.

Ultimately, my PhD research interests were invested in practising Indigenous allyship through building relationships with the local Mi'kmaw community and unsettling the historical settler ideology in Lunenburg County. Hence, a strong motivation was to contribute a vision that would inspire interest in and the preservation of local Mi'kmaw history.

Apji'jgmuj

Duck

Peaceful Synergy

Time alone is important

Use these quiet interludes

Live in the moment

&

Pace yourself at the same time

What is the reality of

Your work?



Chapter One: Literature Review

No one is truly ever “just passing through.”
Every encounter has within it the power of enchantment,
if we’re willing to look for it.

(*Ember* by Richard Wagamese, 2016, Douglas and McIntyre.
Reprinted with permission from the publisher.)

Introduction

A review of the relevant literature acted as a starting point for the beginning of my decolonization journey, this study, and the documentation of my interest in decolonization, along with my role and responsibility in truth and reconciliation.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (2000, p. 24) states that “the educator has the duty of not being neutral.” The basis for this study was a position similar to the one Freire’s (2000) insight expresses, which is that all educators should consider social action as an important component of pedagogy. Like Indigenous scholar Marie Battiste (2013) in *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit*, as a researcher, I refuse to accept situations that place people in positions of marginalization, violence, and powerlessness. The literature review explores this theme in ways that support this interest in practising Indigenous allyship and in building relationships with Indigenous Elders and their communities so that socially just historical narratives privileging the Mi’kmaw voice can emerge.

The review also demonstrates the importance of grounding relationship building in allyship and kinship between Indigenous Peoples and settlers so that genuine steps toward reconciliation can occur. The perspective that guided the review was one of linking theory and practice in order to explore the pedagogical potential of decolonizing museums as sites for re-storying colonial history through an Indigenous lens and strengthening relationships between

Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians as a means of supporting truth and reconciliation as the TRC outlines.

Relationship and Research in Partnership with Indigenous Elders

In her work, *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada*, Chelsea Vowel (2016) uses her first-hand knowledge and life experience to demonstrate the intersections of decolonization, reconciliation, myths, and stereotypes that support colonial ideology and to show how settlers must grapple with the tensions that exist when colonization privileges an Indigenous narrative. As with *Living Treaties: Narrating Mi kmaq Treaty Relations* by Marie Battiste (2016), this dissertation focuses on the purposeful intention of unsettling a mainstream colonial upbringing that has shaped both the Indigenous Peoples and the settlers living in what is now known as the nation state of Canada.

Paulette Regan (2010) suggests in *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* that for successful reconciliation to occur in Canada, settlers must consciously wrestle with their Eurocentric colonial history from an Indigenous perspective. According to Regan, when settlers become informed about and attentive to Canadian history from an Indigenous point of view, they recognize the endemic nature of colonialization and how the use of colonial-dominant discourse perpetuates an ideology that continues into the present. As a result, centring on Indigenous worldviews serves to disrupt the mainstream colonial narrative so that settlers can begin to grasp how colonization significantly influences the many unearned privileges that settlers invisibly receive from Canadian societal structures.

In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault (1995) argues that dominant discourse contains a particular set of ideological beliefs, which societies employ in

order to set up privileges for specific individuals and to control, silence, marginalize, ignore, and erase the power and points of view of others. The Foucauldian (1995) theoretical framework clearly brings to light the complex relationship between Canadian institutions (e.g., residential schools, public schools, post-secondary institutions, museums, government) on the one hand, and Eurocentric/colonial discourse, knowledge, and power on the other as well as the use of this relationship for the assimilation, control, and even extermination of the ways of life and being of Indigenous Peoples such as the Mi'kmaq.

Vital to a settler's ability to grasp the conceptualization of decolonization as an Indigenous perspective is the development of lifelong friendships with Indigenous people, especially Indigenous Elders. Both Regan (2010) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), in her work *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, remind us that Elders are important members of Indigenous communities and have earned a high degree of respect based on their acquired wisdom and knowledge pertaining to Indigenous ceremony, healing practices, traditional teachings, and history. The point Vowel (2016) and Smith (2012) both emphasize is the vital role that Elders play in decolonization because of their position as highly valued community members who have acquired years of wisdom and experience, feel a deep reverence for Indigenous ways of knowing, and have shouldered a responsibility to support what is best, not only for their own local community but also for the greater good. Fundamental to the validity of this dissertation as a decolonizing approach was the adoption of a research technique that involves recognizing, respecting, and centring on the important contributions of Indigenous Elders as knowledge keepers.

Building genuine relationships with Mi'kmaw Elders who are willing to be teachers of non-Indigenous researchers, like me, require becoming involved with the local Mi'kmaw

community, practising Indigenous allyship, and collaboratively re-storying local colonial history to reflect a Mi'kmaw worldview. As in Shawn Wilson's (2008) work, *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Regan (2010) and Tuhiwai Smith (2012) also suggest the importance of building relationships with Indigenous Elders and of learning about their role. For a non-Indigenous researcher working with the local Mi'kmaq, both understanding the importance of Elders and building these kinds of relationships is ethically important to the overall research process.

A non-Indigenous researcher should therefore build with Mi'kmaw Elders and other Indigenous Elders genuine relationships that are based on trust, transparency, and an investment of time, working in partnership with them throughout the entire research process. Although this process takes time, it is fundamental to practising Indigenous allyship.

I have already begun this practice of spending time with Mi'kmaw Elders and, as a result, in each case, both parties have developed real friendships with each other. Through the practice of Indigenous allyship, these relationships are built on mutual respect as well as a belief in the strength of combined abilities with respect to practising research in a holistic way in order to effect knowledge production and social change.

Over the past four years, these Elders have become important to me and my life, both professionally and personally. They have taught invaluable knowledge and skills from Mi'kmaw knowledge-based systems such as Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing), Msit No' kmaq (All of My Relations), and Thinking Seven Generations Ahead, as well as other Mi'kmaw ways of knowing. Mi'kmaw Elders Hunt and Joe Michael, for example, have been adept at conveying the holistic

teachings that form the foundation of these Mi'kmaw worldviews as well as how they are employed for interacting with and interpreting the world that all life shares.

From spending time together, genuine friendships grew and extended to working on a variety of projects, such as the decolonizing work with the Mahone Bay Museum, anti-racism work in the Town of Lunenburg, and researching Mi'kmaw burial grounds in Lunenburg County. My hope is that this work with others will manifest as a practice of Indigenous allyship. This type of research in partnership honours the relational intersections that connect these Elders, their community, and me as a non-Indigenous researcher, all of whom share similar objectives of decolonizing and indigenizing the way history is represented in Lunenburg County.

Becoming an Indigenous Ally: Decolonization and Indigenization

The building of these incipient relationships is a very important avenue for informing the path to becoming a respectful Indigenous ally and to providing insight into what constitutes purposeful decolonial practice. In the *Handbook of Indigenous Education* (2019), which Elizabeth Ann McKinley and Linda Tuhiwai Smith edited, the chapter entitled “Indigenous Family Engagement: Strong Families, Strong Nations,” by Megan Bang, C. Montaña Nolan, and N. McDaid-Morgan (2019), makes a strong case for reimagining relationships between Indigenous Peoples, non-Indigenous educators, and educational systems. Bang et al. (2019, p. 804) declare that “respectful and reciprocal relationships” between Indigenous Peoples and settlers are “foundational for cultivating the types of long-term collaboration necessary for resurgence.” They further emphasize that these mutual relationships between Indigenous Peoples

and settlers must include recognition and honouring of the global history of colonialism from an Indigenous stance.

One way to build amicable relationships between Indigenous Peoples and settlers is through the practice of Indigenous allyship. In *Becoming an Ally: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression*, Anne Bishop (2006) defines what an ally means. She states that part of being an ally is recognizing the inherent, effortlessly received societal privileges that are tied to patterns of injustice toward others. She suggests that upon recognizing these unequal relationships, allies then take active responsibility for changing these hegemonic structures. Referencing Bishop's (2006) work in an Indigenous context would suggest that an Indigenous ally is an individual who begins a personal decolonizing process by acknowledging his or her own settler privilege. Indigenous allies stand with those who are affected by the harm colonialism has caused and is still causing and realize that to effect any social change, the real work must begin within themselves.

When embarking on this decolonizing journey, I incorporated Bishop's (2006) ideas about allyship. Part of the process of allyship is to understand one's inherent privilege and its relationship to unsettling one's own colonial history that has resulted in the dispossession and oppression of Indigenous Peoples. The research for this dissertation led to the work of delving into the intersections of socially just truths, colonial narrative, and Mi'kmaq knowledge-based systems and worldviews. The process certainly entails discomfort. Such uneasiness stems from the original conflict between the Mi'kmaq and settlers that resulted from early British colonization in Lunenburg County and that carries forward into the present day. The research interests expressed in *Museums, Heritage, and Indigenous Voice: Decolonizing Engagement*, by

Bryony Onciul (2015), stress this very fact. Bishop's (2006) notion of allyship also includes the development of genuine relationships and friendships with Indigenous Peoples.

For me, an important step of this work began with reaching out to the local Mi'kmaq and their Elders to understand how the museum can respectfully include the Mi'kmaq in their museological practices. Instrumental in the decolonizing efforts of the museum is the continuation of the development of these important bonds and relationships that privilege the Mi'kmaw voice.

The Term "Settler" and Its Implications

In his scholarly work, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*, Richard Slotkin (1992) suggests that

[t]he term settler has most often been used to describe a pioneering individual who leaves their homeland with the intention of starting a new life living in a new place; they were immigrants who have moved to the frontier, a geographical space which was considered wilderness and vacant of other people. (p.2)

Mi'kmaw Elder Daniel Paul (2008), in *First Nations History: We Were Not the Savages*, further brings to light how the term settler was used to manipulate colonial discourse in order to support the perspective of European colonizers at the expense of the original inhabitants' more than 13,500 years of history, culture, and occupation of Turtle Island (name the Mi'kmaq and other groups use to identify North America). Paul (2008) confirms that the word settler has traditional attachment to a nostalgic connotation of new inhabitants who were responsible for the "founding and building" of Canada and the United States. The new arrivals inaccurately

characterized these lands as *terra nullius*: vacant and free for the taking. The Latin term represents an aspect of the settler narrative; in English, it translates into “nobody’s land.”

An

policy of ignoring Mi'kmaw treaty rights and of the constant land disputes that occur between the Mi'kmaq and the government or between the Mi'kmaq and resource extraction businesses. The dispute between the Mi'kmaq and Alton Gas, regarding the storage of natural gas on the banks of the Shubenacadie River is an example of a contemporary land conflict that, from the Mi'kmaw point of view, is a violation of the Peace and Friendship Treaties. The Alton Natural Gas Storage Project involved a plan to build a new natural gas storage facility in the underground salt caverns of the tidal Shubenacadie River estuary. A natural gas pipeline will also link the caverns to the North American natural gas supply network. Francis Campbell (2019), a reporter for *SaltWire*, recently reported on the overall concerns the Mi'kmaq expressed. Campbell (2019) noted that, from the Mi'kmaw perspective, Alton Gas used false land claims and was trespassing on unceded Mi'kmaw territory. Campbell (2019) also reported that the Mi'kmaw communities and their allies were deeply concerned about the serious environmental impact of this project, which they believe had not been adequately addressed. Mi'kmaw water protectors and their allies therefore emphasized Mi'kmaw treaty rights through a platform called *Stop Alton Gas*. They opposed Alton Gas and their plans, and they requested conducting further research regarding the environmental impact on the various ecosystems of the river. After years of opposition, in October 2021 the Alton Gas project on the Shubenacadie River was cancelled.

Regan (2010) offers another cutting-edge approach to understanding the term “settlers” as it relates to colonization and power. Regan (2010) has vast experience in documenting the culturally genocidal impact of the Canadian Indian Residential School system, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation process in Canada. As Director of Research for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Regan (2010) has been able to offer insight into challenges related to resolving contemporary conflicts between Indigenous Peoples and non-

Indigenous Canadians that have their roots in the colonization of Canada.

A critical and unique aspect of Regan's (2010) work is that she considers herself a settler and places her own privileges at the heart of her research. Regan (2010) states that tackling decolonization requires settlers to acknowledge the hard truth that the identity of a settler is not one of benevolent peacekeeper, as they have surmised. Instead, the Canadian identity is linked to the erasure from public view of the perpetration of the many forms of violence against Indigenous Peoples. By following Regan's (2010) lead, other "settlers" can also begin to make this new ethical shift with respect to the term and its meaning.

Based on the use of critical theory, comparative analysis, and ethics, Regan's (2010, p. 17) research methodology focuses on "the synergy of truth telling as a pedagogical tool by the settler to create counter-narratives, which will dismantle the historical colonial legacy." Her perspective requires "authenticity and reciprocity from settlers, as they begin to witness first-hand the present-day struggles of Indigenous Peoples, such as those of the Mi'kmaq, that are tied to colonialism." Today's settlers must genuinely listen to the various Mi'kmaw narratives that are associated with colonization and its detrimental impact.

Regan's (2010) narrative challenges the story of the benevolent peace-loving settlers that Europeans wrote from their own Eurocentric standpoint in order to obliterate the Mi'kmaq historical perspective. Regan's (2010) position is that when today's settlers earnestly become true allies with Indigenous Peoples, the potential for transformation is possible for everyone. Lilla Watson, an Indigenous Australian, visual activist, and academic, defined this ideology when she said, "If you are coming to help me, you are wasting your time. But if your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together" (Ablett et al., 2014, p. 7). Many social activist groups have since used this phrase to emphasize the point that an appropriate view of the

liberation of oppression should not be as a charitable act but rather as an emancipatory process for all. Watson prefers to credit the collective process of the Aboriginal Activist Group of Queensland in 1970 with the origin of this quote (Ablett et al., 2014).

Regan (2010) further states that today's settlers must understand the inherent interrelatedness of the benefits they and their ancestors have reaped from colonization and its relationship with the continued oppression of Indigenous Peoples. The links between murdered and missing Canadian Indigenous females and resource extraction is a contemporary example of the correlation of settler benefits, the negative impact on Indigenous Peoples, and their intersections with colonialization. The recent article by Barbara Clabots (2019) in *Scientific America*, called "The Darkest Side of Fossil-Fuel Extraction," clearly shows the growing evidence of the direct connection between murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls and fossil fuel production. Her article draws on data that demonstrate the intersection between resource extraction and increased rates of the domestic abuse, sexual abuse, murder, and trafficking of Indigenous women.

In 2016, the Government of Canada established the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This platform gave a voice to many Indigenous families and individuals so that they could share their stories about what had happened to their beloved family members. The conclusion of this national mandate became public in June 2019, thus bringing into the limelight the sad fact that many settlers had previously been unaware of this Canadian genocidal atrocity. Regan (2010, p. 20) reminds today's settlers that when they "begin to understand themselves as the problem, there is potential for social, political, and cultural change."

Regan (2010) challenges the mythical and sentimental perspective of the term settler and

its meaning, believing that transformational learning occurs when settlers remain mindful, challenge the false innocence they understand as their history, and speak difficult truths such as the links between resource extraction and violence against Indigenous woman and girls. Instead, Regan (2010) suggests using the word settler to include current-day descendants and other non-Indigenous Canadians. She argues that, in this way, the term constitutes a pedagogical tool for instilling a better understanding of the colonial ontology of the relationships linking power, the beneficiaries of colonization, and the systems of oppression inherent in colonial hegemonic frameworks. Her use of the word settler is intended to help Canadians like me, broaden our understanding of our true identities rather than clinging to who we claim to be. Her choice of meaning for the term is intended to facilitate a way of more fully comprehending the 21st-century Canadian perception of colonization.

Vowel (2016, p. 18) supports the use of the word settler as a contemporary term for non-Indigenous Canadians and contends that “just like we need terms to define Indigenous Peoples, we need terms to define non-Indigenous peoples.” However, Vowel (2016) also states that there is no perfect, generalized label that describes the historical, contemporary, and future relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. She believes this gap exists because “the majority tends to have the power to sanction and widely accept terms and does not have much cause to refer to itself” (Vowel, 2016, p. 14). The point that she makes is the profound importance of choosing a modern-day term for people who are not indigenous to Canada that enables the acquisition of an understanding of the relationship between Canada’s

colonial legacy and the way it informs present-day relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.

During conversations on almost every topic with Mi'kmaw Elder Joe Mike, he often says, "It's complicated." Vowel (2016, p. 18) reminds us that, like Elder Joe Mike's characterization, relationships among Indigenous Peoples, the Canadian government, and settler Canadians are complex and based on a colonial ideology that supported an imbalance of power that negatively impacted Indigenous Peoples. Her choice to use the word settler is suitable because this term helps people recognize how past and present events impact the current relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. Employing the term settler places an emphasis on the intersections of the many types of relationships (historical, modern-day, and future) that exist, and as Vowel (2016) argues, these relationships connect directly to the occupation of land and the extraction of resources at the expense of today's Indigenous Peoples.

Museums as Sites for Social Justice

Considering that part of the research experience for this thesis included working with the Mahone Bay Museum on their decolonizing initiatives, looking at studies that examine this topic was an important component of the work presented here. This portion of the literature review explores how, by emphasizing the colonial/imperial system of knowledge, the pedagogical space of a museum has constituted a Eurocentric mechanism for establishing cultural historical norms. A key effect of this mainstream method of presenting knowledge has been to erase the historical narrative of Indigenous Peoples, such as the Mi'kmaq in Mi'kma'ki. From a perspective of decolonization, the literature review includes an examination of this type of biased educational institution, which carries the burden of western ideology, as a site that can be transformative in nature and provide an opportunity for expressing resistance to a dominant negative discourse.

Onciul's (2015) study spells out how building better relations between Indigenous communities and museums is fundamental to the decolonization and indigenization of general museological practice. She has demonstrated that despite the good intentions of museums in Alberta, Canada, with respect to including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, the museum infrastructure falls short (Onciul, 2015, p. 240). She says this deficiency is the result of museums being "enshrined in dominant western professional and social conduct approaches," which greatly limit the ability of Indigenous Peoples to fully participate in how they want a museum to represent their stories.

Using her construct of engagement zones, Onciul (2015, p. 243) successfully identifies and elaborates on the many limitations on Indigenous engagement that occur because of the deep-seated western museological theory, standards, and history that characterize museums. A few examples of these restraints include prioritizing Eurocentric modes for the collection and exhibition of heritage and artefacts, power relations within the museum that place non-Indigenous staff at the top of a hierarchal administration, western heritage management conventions that are still preferred over Indigenous customs, and unknowing negative consequences for Indigenous staff working in a very western ideological space.

Despite the countless complexities and problems associated with the decolonization and indigenization of well-established Eurocentric museological infrastructure, Onciul (2015, p. 237) remains optimistic about museums as potential sites for "creative, inspiring, life-changing and empowering" transformation. She argues that, if museums truly desire to invest in envisioning decolonization and indigenization as emancipatory ways to move forward, they must expose and critically examine how the inherent barriers of museum infrastructure limit Indigenous engagement. Her work is important to the research presented in this thesis because of her critical

examination of the inherent tensions that exist within the current relationships between Indigenous Peoples and the purpose and operations of museum's purpose and operations.

First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries, by Terri Janke and Company (2018), is a significant study that the authors produced for the Australian museum and gallery sector. The purpose of Janke and Company's (2018) work is to outline a 10-year plan that is "committed to improving Indigenous engagement and employment" across all levels of museums and galleries. Janke and Company's (2018) roadmap highlights the importance for museums and galleries to build stronger, improved relationships with Indigenous Australians in ways that support the decolonization and indigenization of the Eurocentric foundations of their institutions. Some of their suggested ideas include reimagining representation, embedding Indigenous values into museums and gallery businesses, increasing Indigenous opportunities, two-way caretaking of cultural material, and connecting with Indigenous communities. Their roadmap also includes a vision statement that "is about changing interactions, communications, understanding, and ultimately, the Australian view of First Peoples." An integral component of this ambition is the creation of a "future where Indigenous communities have control over their cultural material." Janke and Company (2018) aim to connect Indigenous community self-determination to museums and galleries by placing Indigenous Peoples in control of how their history, culture, and heritage are both managed and represented.

Janke and Company's (2018) roadmap can be applied to other colonial nation states, such as Canada, where Eurocentric museums and galleries serve to support the colonial narrative and the erasure of the original people of a region. Their outline has the potential to shift any nation whose identity is based on colonization away from mainstream colonial rhetoric and to move it

towards supporting and building non-oppressive democratic relationships with Indigenous Peoples. The key point is that Janke and Company (2018) have already set out a high-level strategy for improving overall Indigenous engagement in this type of cultural institution. In short, their roadmap aligns with this study and provides a template for a strategy whose design is to achieve research goals that target the implementation of significant changes in the colonial institution of the museum.

The Predatory Museum by Lynn Maranda and Bruno Brulon Soares (2017) underscores the hidden purposes of museums and their relationships with European colonization throughout the period from the 17th to the 19th century. Maranda and Brulon Soares (2017) argue that the complex process that characterizes a museum has always arisen from an interest in field expeditions and is still very much associated with the use of this means for the assemblage of Indigenous collections. Maranda and Brulon Soares (2017) argue that this western notion of physically going out to collect information and artefacts inherently connects to the hegemonic structures of colonization. More to the point, they insist that western researchers, scientists, and scholars from colonizing countries were usually the ones who carried out the collection, categorization, and exhibition of items from field expeditions. A prime example was the British, who did not understand the sacred cultural value of these objects from the perspective of their first caretakers in the context of their original location. For example, Maranda and Brulon Soares (2017) emphasize the fact that during the 19th century, ethnographic museums formed their collections by taking sacred cultural objects from Indigenous Peoples and then decontextualizing and re-contextualizing these items based on European measurements and values. They contend that, as a result, the placing of artifacts exemplifying Indigenous Peoples and their culture in a

museum led to the imagining, representation, dissemination, and ultimate understanding of such objects from a European perspective.

The Role of Museum vis-à-vis Reconciliation

For a better understanding of the use of museums as methods of legitimizing the normalization of European colonialism, any analysis of these public pedagogical spaces must occur within the broader context of the purpose of education in settler states such as Canada. Battiste (2013) states that an integral factor in this scrutiny is the explicit portrayal of the Eurocentric colonial historical narrative as normative across all types of education, including public educational spaces, which erases the historical significance and importance of Indigenous Peoples.

In *Resurgence and Reconciliation: Indigenous-Settler Relations and Earth Teachings*, authors Michael Asch, John Borrows, and James Tully (2018) weave together the work of a variety of scholars who have examined the hegemonic discourse that has had substantial political, social, and economic control over the settler project. The multidisciplinary efforts of Asch et al. (2018) challenge the purpose behind the implementation of countless Canadian reconciliatory practices since the arrival of settlers to Turtle Island and reveal it as nothing more than a colonial ruse. They expose the hidden agenda of colonial instruments that include treaties, law, and government (the Indian Act, for example), education, and public pedagogical spaces and their use for manipulating a mainstream narrative that supports colonial priorities, a practice that continues today.

Brian Noble (2015) defines coloniality in contemporary terms in *Tripped Up by Coloniality: Anthropologists as Instruments or Agents in Indigenous-Settler Political Relations?* Based on the notion of “the other” as Edward Said (1978) presents in *Orientalism*, Noble (2015,

p. 429-430) states that coloniality presumes a modern oppositional relationship between the self (settlers) and the other, which in Canada's case, represents the original inhabitants. He surmises that an understanding of coloniality in this way leads to its consideration as "the tendency of a self-settler as an encounter to impose boundary coordinates such as territory, knowledges, categories, normative practices, on the domains of land, knowledge, ways of life, etc." (Noble, 2015, p. 429-430). The targets of these intentional colonial actions are the other/Indigenous Peoples who had/have both prior and current connections with these realms, which exclude the highly valued relationships Indigenous Peoples have with the land, self, community, and way of life.

One objective of this research was to demonstrate the use of museums as educational mechanisms that privilege colonial authorship of the European settler narrative over the original inhabitants' point of view. This objective was based on an understanding of Noble's (2015) work on "coloniality as an apparatus" involving countless forms of colonialization. As the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) (1996, vol. 3,) concluded,

Education is the transmission of cultural DNA from one generation to the next. It shapes the language and pathways of thinking, as well as the contours of character and values, the social skills and creative potential of the individual. (p. 433)

The United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples at the UNESCO Conference on Education in July 1999 also stated the following: "Displacing systemic discrimination against Indigenous Peoples created and legitimized by the cognitive frameworks of imperialism and colonialism remains the single most crucial cultural challenge facing humanity" (p.433).

Leona English and Peter Mayo (2012) devote a chapter to "Museums, Cultural Politics, and Adult Learning" in their book, *Learning with Adults: A Critical Pedagogical Introduction*,

which highlights the Eurocentric and class bias in museums that influences the production of knowledge and what can be counted as knowledge. They contend that consideration of museums should thus be as sites of cultural politics and public pedagogy, which play an important role in the politics of the production and representation of knowledge. English and Mayo (2012) maintain this view: “The critical adult educator can utilize museums as an important space for critical pedagogy and non-formal education by scrutinizing the social, political and cultural intersections of the overall purpose of the museum” (p. 101). They assert that both museums and educational curricula are storehouses for the inclusion or exclusion of elements as official knowledge.

As Foucault (1995) reminds readers, “Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of the truth, but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, becomes true” (p. 27). In her article, “Exhibiting Decolonising Discourse: Critical Settler Education and the City before the City,” Kay Johnson (2016) clearly demonstrates the strong ties that link the complex intersections of public education, museums, imperialism, colonialism, and colonial discourse to an imperial hegemonic infrastructure that controls the content and method of translating knowledge. In short, she uses these discursive themes to expose the past control by colonial powers of the production of settler knowledge for the purposes of land occupation, dispossession, and erasure of the original inhabitants of Turtle Island.

Despite the inherent relationships linking public pedagogy, hegemonic knowledge, and pedagogical practice that serve the status quo, Regan (2010), Battiste (2013), English and Mayo (2012), Johnson (2016), and Asch et al. (2018) see these same public institutions as places where pedagogical struggles for social change and innovation are possible. For example, Johnson

(2016) agrees with the TRC (2018) that museums play a key role in reconciliation as a public space for reimagining education. She says, “This is not surprising, given the political, ethical, spiritual, ceremonial, and embodied dimensions of historical remembering in public history institutions” (Johnson, 2016, p. 178).

My argument is that museums and this research can enable an expansion of the scope of reconciliation so that it can be an example of ways of practising Regan’s (2010) and Bishop’s (2006) notions of Indigenous allyship. As Regan (2018) suggests in her chapter, “Reconciliation and Resurgence: Reflections on the TRC Final Report,” in the book that Asch et al. (2018, p. 209-227) edited, reconciliation must go “beyond residential schools to encompass the whole settler project.”

The Relationship Linking Racism, Colonization, and Decolonization

A research theme at the forefront of this study is the inextricable relationship between the European colonization of Turtle Island and racism. In his research, Elder Daniel Paul (2008, 2017) foregrounds this deep-seated connection, and remarks that decolonization cannot happen until after the exposure, examination, and addressing of the direct links between colonization and racism. Elder Paul’s (personal communication, September 20, 2020) views on racism, the colonialization of Canada, and the role of settlers in decolonization were crystal clear:

The British empire of the past was the foremost white supremacist promoter that the world has ever seen. When I attended school in the 1940s, we were taught that the white way was the right way, and that the Mi’kmaq came from a barbaric culture. It doesn’t matter how open-minded or socially conscious you think you are; the fact remains that the formation of Canada is based on racism, and that

Canadians have been taught to be racist and judgemental of others who are not white.

Gerald Horne (2018) examines the deliberate intersection between racism and European colonization in *The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, and Century North America and the Caribbean*. Horne (2018) holds that the colonial project used whiteness as a fundamental criterion for settler colonialism. Horne (2018, p. 24) further contends that society maintains colonialism, which continues to receive a new lease on life through “the toxic racial identity of whiteness.”

Another study that supports the intersection between racism, colonization, and decolonization is *The Reconciliation Manifesto, Recovering the Land and Rebuilding the Economy* by Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson (2017). They expose the building of the nation-state of Canada on racist ideology, which carries over to the present day. They argue that a prerequisite for truth and reconciliation in Canada is to deal with basic colonial structures that rely on a racist understanding of human rights and property, which dominate and distort the unequal relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Canada.

Terminology and Definitions

Below is an explanation of the terms that feature in discussions of racism, along with their application to the relationship linking colonization, racism, and decolonization.

Beginning with Critical Race Theory

In *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (2017) firmly lay out the theoretical foundation of critical race theory (CRT) and its importance in combatting racism. In their work, Delgado and Stefancic (2017) use CRT as a means of examining society and culture, along with their intersections with race, law, and power in the

United States and how they support the white supremacist ideology. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) apply CRT in the advancement of ideas around the social construct of race and racism in the United States and discuss how this social construct creates different class and power structures according to race. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) also point out the opportunity to use CRT as an emancipatory method for combatting prejudice and systemic racism.

My first real introduction to CRT was during PhD summer institute course work in 2017. In a course called Methodological Perspectives on Educational Research, the professor, Dr. Susan Brigham asked, “When we see someone who is not white, what is our immediate observation?” More specifically, she inquired, “Do we notice which gender you think an individual is, or do you notice first the colour of their skin?” Her inclination was to believe that people see the colour of someone’s skin before making any judgements about which gender the person might be. She defined this moment, when skin colour precedes recognition of gender, as the social construct of race, which she said uses the colour of someone’s skin for making mainstream assumptions and for reinforcing stereotypes about the reality of individuals and the group in society to which they belong. In other words, society forms ideas about race based on geographic, historical, political, economic, social, and cultural factors, as well as physical traits, even though none of these is applicable for justifying racial superiority or racial prejudice. As a supplementary note, when Dr. Brigham first asked this question, I did not answer it quickly, likely in part because of a suspicion that her hunch was correct and also because of my personal discomfort in acknowledging the fact that for me too, I use skin colour as the initial attention-catching feature at first sight of a person.

Dr. Brigham expanded this discussion to encompass the CRT school of thought in order to explain how humans (whites in particular) normalize the social construct of race by humans

(whites in particular) making quick unconscious inferences and observations about whether someone is white or not. According to CRT logic, the social construct of race supports a person's social standing, with direct ties to the social, political, educational, and economic normalized hierarchies of race. Dr. Brigham further noted that race as a social construct has links to racism, which is a broader experience and practice than racial discrimination. As a belief that one group is superior to others, racism lends itself to open displays in racial jokes, slurs, or hate crimes. Racism can also be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values, and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, people do not even realize they have these beliefs. Instead, they are assumptions that have evolved over time, have become part of systems and institutions, and have associations with the power and privilege of the dominant group.

Dr. Brigham also suggested that CRT is a school of thought that challenges racism in education, since education functions to maintain the interests of the white population that constructed it. For example, CRT questions mainstream educational practices because it involves an examination of how knowledge is passed on, how learning occurs, and what counts as valid knowledge. CRT inspires an interrogation of why social justice curricula often omit the honouring of other worldviews and knowledge-based systems, which are rooted in teaching tools such as interdisciplinary approaches, experiential knowledge, and oral storytelling.

In her work, *What Is Critical Race Theory? Definition, Principles, and Applications*, Rebecca Bodenheimer (2019) uses CRT to challenge the educational outcomes and differences among Black, Latino, and white students. A factor that Bodenheimer (2019) applies in conjunction with CRT is the notion of color-blindness. People commonly express the following or similar statements: "We are all one people. We are all human beings. When I see someone, I do not notice the colour of their skin." Bodenheimer (2019) maintains that colour-blindness is

the belief that allows whites to enjoy the illusion that race, and colour are not factors that influence how someone is treated. Therefore, since everyone is considered the same, everyone has equal opportunities. Bodenheimer (2019) argues that people (mostly white) in the United States have this erroneous view that racial inequality and discrimination are no longer in effect, and therefore, do not apply any more.

In her book, *Good White People: The Problem with Middle-Class White Anti-Racism*, Shannon Sullivan, (2017) thoroughly examines white fragility and racism and suggests that the construct of colour-blindness gives human beings the ability to be free of the necessity to recognize differential societal, educational, legal, and healthcare treatment, for example. As well, Delgado and Stefancic (2017) contend that CRT exposes colour-blindness and argue that mainstream culture and society use this false assumption that people's racial identity no longer determines their social or economic status so that racism appears not to exist and thus does not have to be addressed.

Since this work is primarily concerned with decolonization through the honouring of Mi'kmaw knowledge-based systems and worldviews, one might question the inclusion of a chapter on racism as part of this dissertation. A look back at my PhD journey reveals that Dr. Susan Brigham first planted the seed by bringing CRT to mind, along with its application to the primary research interests for this thesis. This influence was combined with Dr. Stephen Brookfield's (2019) mention of CRT during his conference lectures and in his current book about teaching race, which led to continual connections with the work at the museum, my own decolonizing journey, and CRT. The result was a gathering of ideas and information for a reflective chapter about CRT and its intersections with decolonial roles and responsibilities, both personal and institutional, such as for museums. This reflection also allowed the opportunity for a

critical examination of my responsibility with the goal of acquiring an understanding of my personal complicity in racism as well as its intersection with decolonization and this PhD research.

What it Means to be Prejudiced

Robin Diangelo's (2018) work, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, states that prejudice occurs when individuals and groups make prejudgements about others that arise from preconceived opinions, which are constructions that the social group to which they belong have created. Diangelo (2018, p. 19) maintains that "prejudice consists of thoughts and feelings we may have about others, which includes stereotypes, attitudes, and generalizations." People then project these egregious inaccuracies, which have no basis or reason, onto everyone they consider to be from that group.

The deep-rooted presence of racism at all levels of education is addressed in Stephen Brookfield's (2019) new book, *Teaching Race: How to Help Students Unmask and Challenge Racism*. Like Diangelo (2018), Brookfield (2019) contends that unfortunately, humans cannot avoid being prejudiced, arguing that all humans are prejudiced. However, Diangelo (2018) takes prejudice a step further and holds the belief that people who allege that they are not prejudiced are exhibiting a deep lack of self-awareness about what prejudice really means and how they are complicit. Diangelo (2018) argues that when someone says that they are not prejudiced, they are demonstrating the power of socialization, which shapes the mainstream notion of the importance of not being prejudiced. Since the mainstream portrayal of prejudice is as something unacceptable, Diangelo (2018, p. 19) states that whites "deny its unavoidable reality." As a result, Diangelo (2018) suggests that when white people are called out about being racially prejudiced, they interpret it as pejorative. Instead of acknowledging and examining their

seamlessly ingrained racial prejudices, Diangelo (2018) maintains that whites instead defend who they are and why they are not prejudiced. Thus Diangelo (2018) contends, “It is in this way that our misunderstanding about what prejudice is, protects it.”

Understanding decolonization is a massive undertaking that must include dismantling the prevalent and maintained prejudice in contemporary settler society. The success of a settler’s decolonization journey depends on willingness to examine modern-day biases that originated from the colonial project of Turtle Island and how they reinforce settler prejudice, which in turn, sustains settler society today.

Discrimination

The Canadian Human Rights Commission (2020) defines discrimination as an action or a decision that a person or group makes to treat another person or group differently. A number of authors have also explored this subject, such as Brookfield (2019), who states that discrimination occurs when people base negative distinctions and judgments about a person or group on mainstream socially constructed norms, such as skin colour, race, gender, age, or disability, for example.

Diangelo (2018, p. 20) expands even further, making an important distinction about discrimination: the fuel that feeds it is often emotions. When the particular emotion is hatred, Diangelo (2018) says, aggressive discriminatory acts often occur. Her argument is that when this type of discrimination happens, as in the recent violent discriminatory law enforcement action against George Floyd, for example, it is easy to see and recognize that discrimination is taking place; however, Diangelo (2018) cautions that discerning discrimination becomes more difficult when the emotional state is subtler, such as a mild aversion. As with the subtlety of the emotional responses, individual personal discriminatory actions are also less noticeable and

harder to detect. Diangelo (2018, p. 20) contends that any unease “comes from living separate from a group of people while simultaneously absorbing incomplete or erroneous information about them.” She says that the end result is that discrimination occurs when prejudices and biases cause people to act differently towards an individual or racial group. Diangelo (2018) asserts that prejudice always manifests itself in some form of action because an individual’s worldview is driven by the intersection between emotions and the actions and responses that result from those emotions. For example, people might consider what they would think their emotional reaction and feeling might be if they witness a homeless Indigenous person asking for money on an urban Canadian street. Would they feel scorn and disgust or pity and empathy? What would their physical reactions and thoughts be? What conscious and unconscious biases immediately kick in? If people could imagine that the person, they see is the same race as they are, would it change what they think about the person?

Racism is Structural

Structural, (also known as systemic), racism broadly refers to the system of social structures such as education, healthcare, and government that have in place procedures or processes favouring mainstream Eurocentric Canadian norms. A number of sources have addressed this concept and its ramifications.

Brookfield (2019, p. 3) states that the point of racism is to preserve the power of one dominant racial group and argues that “Racism is both socially constructed and learned” from the minutiae of daily life experiences. According to Brookfield,

Racism is a system of beliefs and practices that are embedded in the institutions we move through as individuals and are routinized in the conventions of everyday life. These beliefs and practices help to legitimize the power of whites and justify

their viewing of all other racial groups as inherently inferior. Organizational structures, social policies and institutional habits embody racism by combining to exclude people of colour from access to full participation in social, political, and economic life (2019, p. 2).

In an article entitled, “What is Systemic Racism? There is Broad National Confusion about the Concept,” the staff of *National Post* (2020) concur that understanding how systemic racism operates in Canada is a difficult topic for Canadians. The authors stress that part of the problem for Canadians is their understanding of what the term “racism” has come to represent, which they then must combine with its interrelatedness to systemic racism in Canada.

Diangelo (2018), argues that white people generally understand the social construct of racism to be more individual than collective in nature. Since the upbringing of most North Americans has occurred in or involved inherently racist institutions (e.g., education, religion, media, and entertainment), they are unable to easily detect how they are complicit in racism and therefore deny that they are. As Diangelo (2018) explains, since the forces of socialization shape culture, and these forces include the construction of societal biases and discrimination in the form of racial norms, and since humans are products of their culture, the normalization of racism is heavily influential.

Diangelo (2018) maintains that full comprehension of the differences between racism and systemic racism and how they are connected to societal norms requires first an understanding of the distinctions that differentiate prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Diangelo (2018, p. 21) argues that, on one hand, racism can be considered an emotion and a type of hatred towards a racialized individual or group. On the other hand, she says, racism is much more complex and is a form of oppression. As with other types of oppression (sexism, genderism, classism, for

example), she states that when a “racial group’s collective prejudice is backed by the power of legal authority and institutional control, it is transformed into racism.” Racism then becomes a far-reaching entity that Diangelo (2018, p. 12) contends “functions independently from the intentions or self-images of individual actors.” Racism “becomes the default of the society, is reproduced automatically, and is a system.”

Diangelo (2018, p. 21) goes on to articulate the concept that this racist system must begin with an ideology that must continually support it. Such an ideology, she says, constitutes the big ideas that are reinforced throughout society. According to the line of thought that Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans, and Sean Nixon (2013) express in *Representation: Culture Representation and Signifying Practices*, ideology is an encompassing framework that teaches people to represent, interpret, understand, and make sense of their social existence. Hall et al. (2013) maintain that from the moment of birth, people are subject to continual conditioning from the societal norms that shape the cultural products of actions and perceptions.

Other writers explain the historical origins of systemic racism. To provide an understanding of systemic racism in Canada, Andrew Leyland et al. (2016, p. 2) report in *Health and Health Care Implications of Systemic Racism on Indigenous Peoples in Canada* that one must examine the emergence of race as a defining set of categories that European nations developed when they began to colonize other continents. The establishment of colonial governments both relied on and lent further legitimacy to the idea that Indigenous Peoples were both separate and inferior races. Leyland et al. (2016, p. 2) argue that this point is important because “the history of Canada is the sum of the total actions that brought us to the present moment and has implications for the entire framework around which our Canadian society is built.”

The colonial institutions of power that shaped Canada used discrimination and biases towards Indigenous Peoples to create government policy to oppress, assimilate, remove, and kill Indigenous Peoples. These racist discriminatory approaches include, but are not limited to, the Indian Act, the residential school system, the pass system, the Sixties Scoop, centralization, and the present-day foster care system. Ultimately, systemic racism became part of the everyday life of all Canadians. Systemic racism can be found in the prison system; the healthcare system; political representation; all levels and representation of government; social/class makeup; the justice system; incarceration rates; and all areas and levels/types of education, including museums.

One of the most racist pieces of Canadian colonial government legislation is the infamous Indian Act, which took effect in 1876 and is still in force today. Bob Joseph's (2018) book, *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act*, defines the many ways in which this institutional racist policy controlled every aspect of Indigenous life across Canada, such as Indian status, education, healthcare, band administration, and land and resources. In her study, *Institutional Racism in Canada: Indigenous Lived Realities*, Sierra Fonseca (2020) examines the history of Canada and its roots in institutional racism. She demonstrates the use of institutional racism as a colonial tool for exploiting Indigenous Peoples on every level imaginable and how it continues to facilitate the ongoing oppression of Indigenous Peoples even today. Fonseca (2020) exposes the way in which institutional racism enabled colonizers to forcefully remove Indigenous People from their lands so that settlers and their government could then use and control those lands. An egregious example of the effects of Canada's history of institutionalized racism is the horrible legacy of residential schools for Indigenous children. In the book *Indigenous Peoples as Subjects of International Law* edited by Irene Watson (2017, p.171-

200), Tamara Starblanket's (2017) *chapter* "Kill the Indian in the Child: Genocide in International Law" exposes the severe assimilative practices placed on Indigenous children. Starblanket (2017) foregrounds components of cultural genocide, which included preventing Indigenous children from speaking their language and practising their culture to "kill the Indian in the child." As Fonseca concludes,

The Indian Act and reference to the Canadian Indian Residential School System, display how these examples of institutional legislation have provided the groundwork for seemingly covert racism of Indigenous Peoples, as compared to their white counterparts (2020, *The Society*, p. 50).

As final points, Fonseca (2020) exposes how such discriminatory Canadian institutional policies and laws continue to put First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples in severely disadvantaged lived experience and positions. For example, her findings suggest that specific references to the 1876 Indian Act and residential schools reveal ongoing institutional racism directed at Indigenous Peoples, which has carried over into the present day (p. 50).

National Post writers (2020) concur that systemic (or institutional) racism is structural because of its embedding as normal practice within Canadian society, organizations, and institutions. The result is that virtually every aspect of Canadian society, from criminal justice, employment, housing, healthcare, politics, and education to government, is fraught with discrimination, bias, and prejudiced views. They further highlight the fact that systemic racism is not about individual attitudes but is entrenched in how Canadian society works, thus meaning that good people can participate in systemic racism.

Like the views of the *National Post* staff (2020), Brookfield's (2019) arguments are that whites therefore have a tough time acknowledging how they are complicit in racism because it is

so deeply embedded in the fabric of society, going beyond a single act or individual person to be part of the larger structure of systemic racism. Brookfield (2019) contends that systemic racism does not mean that numerous racist people are operating within the many large institutions but rather that, even if no racist persons were present, the system would still disproportionately harm people who are discriminated against.

Institutional racism occurs when the systematic distribution of resources, power, and opportunity serves whites over other social groups such as Indigenous Peoples. In Canada, the history of racially distributed resources and ideas shapes our personal views of ourselves and others and supports white supremacy. The Indian Act is a prime example of a legislative tool that promotes present-day racism. The Indian Act is a hierarchal policy that shapes discriminatory governmental norms and practices to limit and control resources and opportunities available to Indigenous Peoples in Canada. From an Indigenous lens, the Indian Act promotes institutional racism, racial stratification, and disparities in employment, child welfare, housing, education, healthcare, government, and criminal justice, to name a few.

Other authors provide additional background to shed light on the origins of racism. James V. Fenelon (2016) offers an excellent overview of the intersection between settler colonialism and critical race analysis from Indigenous perspectives in *Critique of Glenn on Settler Colonialism and Bonilla-Silva on Critical Race Analysis from Indigenous Perspectives*. Fenelon (2016) examines how Spanish and English colonizers and United States imperialists exploited systemic racism during the conquest of the Americas. American historian Gerald Horne (2018) has also done extensive research on the inextricable links between European colonization and racism. Horne (2018) gives a harrowing account of the intersections that connect racism, white supremacy, capitalism, and the 17th century European colonization of Africa and North America.

He argues that virtually no part of modern North America is exempt from the racist roots of European colonization, which has its foundation in the dispossession, destruction, and genocide of Indigenous Peoples and in the slavery of African and Indigenous Peoples.

In Canada, human rights laws and systems address discrimination, but at the same time, the country was founded on the displacement of and the committing of genocide acts against Indigenous Peoples in order to steal and control Indigenous land and resources. The hard truth is that from the beginning, Canada was built on the racist treatment of the original occupants, and the roots of this racism still play out in every aspect of Canada's societal makeup today.

Historically, institutional racism has been a fundamental component of Canadian social, economic, and political structures. These racist structures shaped Canadian norms and values and supported the overall colonial project. Ignoring Canada's historical legacy of violence against Indigenous People allows structural racism to exist seamlessly into the present day. Therefore, any decolonization efforts must involve an examination of the intersection between Canada's history and the structures that keep racism alive and well throughout every aspect of modern-day Canadian society.

White Supremacy

An important aspect of racism is the notion of white supremacy, and numerous authors have weighed in on this subject. "White supremacy is the philosophical foundation of racism" (Brookfield, 2019, p. 4). In other words, the roots of racism lie in the ideology of white supremacy. Brookfield (2019, p. 4) states, "Behind the structure of racism lies a set of ideas that legitimize its existence. This is the ideology of white supremacy. White supremacy is a worldview sedimented in institutional practices to ensure that white people stay in control of the systems and structures that control society." He also says that white supremacy connects to the

myth that whites are superior in intellect and reason, and therefore, should be in control of decision making for society as a whole. This inaccurate belief results in whiteness being projected as the preferred norm in society, with whites becoming the natural authorities in any situation, and white knowledge and white forms of knowledge production representing the most valid of humankind.

Horne (2018, p. 29) asserts that the rationalization of the warped notion of white supremacist ideology “was required to build North American ‘modernism’ and a supposed democracy.” As he says,

Future historians may very well conclude that an explanation for this abject hypocrisy is that many could not see beyond the deliverance of more impoverished Europeans from the barbarism they endured on their home continent to have sympathy with those victimized in the process. Ultimately, they could not overcome the poisonous snare of white supremacy. (p.29)

Further, Horne (2018) argues that the discriminatory norms of the European colonialism in North America led to the so-called present-day democratic modern and advanced world. He maintains that the outcome of the 2016 United States federal election is evidence of how the seeds and roots of colonial white supremacist ideas that spearheaded colonial settlement in the 17th century at the expense of Indigenous Peoples and enslaved Africans have carried over into the present day. A group of less affluent Americans of European descent, more than half who are women, voted for a white male billionaire, whose ideals lean towards a white supremacist ideology.

An investigation of the intersection of white supremacy, racism, and settler colonialism reveals the long-lasting educational, political, social, and economic implications of white

supremacy, and how it supports contemporary Canadian settler society. In short, since white supremacy was foundational for creating the social construct of settler/Indigenous races, and hence racism, scrutiny of this concept is an essential component of an examination of decolonization.

Research Challenges

The research reported in this thesis involved numerous challenges. The first was the realization that decolonization is complex and unsettling and requires a significant overhaul of Canadian societal values and norms, thus presumably making it an extremely daunting task for many settlers even to comprehend. Vowel (2018) surmises that decolonization might also give rise to mainstream opposition due to hegemonic rhetoric, biased views, and resistance to change, all of which strongly connect to the colonial discourse and infrastructure that shape virtually every area of Canadian society. Michael F. Brown's (2008) book review of Christina Kreps (2013) work, *Liberating Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation and Heritage Preservation*, emphasizes that seeing decolonization and indigenization as a solution that can democratize the Indigenous storyline is a flawed perspective. For example, Kreps (2013) states that decolonizing and indigenizing curatorial practices is complex, multilayered, and an integral part of the process of dismantling and transforming the Eurocentric hegemonic infrastructure which has been complicit in suppressing what Brown (2008) maintains as "inconvenient truths" for its own benefit.

Other writers agree with this view, such as Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012), who caution researchers and educators in *Decolonization is not a Metaphor*, claiming that decolonization cannot be perceived as a metaphor for improving society and education. As a result, Tuck and Yang (2012) warn researchers about adopting quick and seamless socially just

initiatives and critical methodologies. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon (2004) argues that decolonization disrupts how the world operates. This view speaks volumes to the fact that decolonization ultimately changes how all levels of Canadian society function. Tuck and Yang (2012) assert that tied to this realization about decoloniality is the inability of settlers to recognize and accept how their own complicities, relationships, and benefits are connected to the many hard truths of colonization. Tuck and Yang (2012) further argue that settler colonization brought on a severe disruption of the cultural relationship of Indigenous Peoples to land, water, and all that it encompasses. They identify the difficult truth that, for settler colonization to occupy Indigenous Peoples' land, the use of a variety of brutal methods was required in order to completely erase and/or assimilate Indigenous Peoples. Examples of colonial mechanisms that enabled colonists to do whatever was necessary to accomplish these violent goals include Gorham's Rangers, the residential school system, the pass system, and the Indian Act.

Vowel (2018) is another author who asserts that present-day Canadian political infrastructures, governmental and educational institutions, law enforcement, national languages, economies, and trade tie in heavily to the roots of European colonization, which dates back to the 15th century. She maintains that decolonization and indigenization, by their very nature, must work against the challenges of continued Canadian colonial cultural and political hegemony that are still firmly in place. This difficulty includes the contemporary colonial illusion that Canadian colonization happened a long time ago, that it is a part of the past, and that things are different now. Every Canadian province and territory have historical monuments, copious written documentation, annual celebrations (e.g., Canada Day), and nostalgic museum displays that help inaccurately mark the static quality of Canadian settler history. Changing the rigid mindset that characterizes Canadian history, to shift towards a perspective that recognizes history as a fluid

entity directly related to the types of relationships non-Indigenous Canadians have with Indigenous Peoples today, will be difficult.

A willingness to make connections with the intersections of Canadian colonization, the negative impact on the original inhabitants, the benefits for others, and the ways these relationships continue into the present, is a harsh Canadian truth that many do not want to swallow. Along with previously noted authors, Patrick Wolfe (2006) in his work, *Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native*, contends that settler colonialism should be understood as a hegemonic structure and not as a past historical event. To highlight how colonization is still very much alive today, Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 5) emphasize that “[colonial] violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation.”

Regan (2010) states that, all over the world, scholars have discussed the problems of structural change associated with the symbolic patterns of violence that lie at the heart of the history of Indigenous-settler relations. In his work, *Five Qualities of Practice in Support of Reconciliation Processes*, John Lederach (2001) expresses concern that breaking free from these cycles of inherent violence will be a challenge of authenticity and ethical cognition for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, with respect to determining how to transcend from the past through the present and into the future.

Battiste (2013) asserts that the decolonization of Mi’kma’ki history is an excellent starting point for critical analysis that challenges the personal privileges, belief systems, assumptions, and biases that form a deep foundation of the current culture and view of history. Lederach (2001) states that for settlers’ consciences to welcome this new perspective, they must embrace the possibility of change, and not be fearful of what might transpire as a result. For most

people, this shift is more easily said than done. For example, it is one thing for a 21st century settler to acknowledge that Nova Scotia is considered unceded Mi'kmaw territory according to the Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1752 but quite another to come to an understanding of the contemporary realizations of what it means to genuinely live up to this statement and the treaty agreements. What are the treaty obligations of present-day settlers who live and share space with the Mi'kmaq on their territory? For example, can people collectively and individually uphold the Mi'kmaq right to self-determination and governance separate from the Crown? Should there be recognition and acceptance that the Mi'kmaq have an inherent right to hunt, fish, and earn a reasonable living without the interference of the government or state?

Susan Dion, Krista Johnston, and Carla Rice (2010) suggest in their study, *Decolonizing our Schools: Aboriginal Education in the Toronto District School Board*, that, in theory, the concept of decolonization is a wonderful term for the achievement of Indigenous resurgence and self-determination. However, the authors go on to propose that, upon deeper reflection, it becomes obvious that decolonization will be an uphill battle until non-Indigenous Canadians become actively and genuinely involved in true social action. In agreement with Regan (2010) and Battiste (2013), I believe that challenging one's own belief system is a trying and distressing process because of the difficulty of acknowledging that Canada's origins are tied to the alienation and degradation of Aboriginal Canadians, African Canadians, immigrants, and others.

With respect to research, the historical approach meant that any with links to Indigenous Peoples involved the use of mainstream qualitative and quantitative approaches that support a colonizer ideology and continue to devalue Indigenous ways of transmitting knowledge. As Smith (2012, p. 1) notes, "the term research is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonization." In addition, she asserts, "When mentioned in many Indigenous contexts, the word

research stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises an emotion that is knowing and distrustful.”

From a different perspective, the inherent colonial bias that exists within museum infrastructure and Canadian society may impact a person’s ability to understand the goals of the decolonizing committee and even the importance of the work. Realistically, when settlers attempt to dismantle or even begin to wrap their heads around the decolonization of Canadian history and its present-day relationship with contemporary colonization, as Vowel (2016) points out, they find it a very uncomfortable and daunting task. For this reason, at this juncture, some individuals might not be willing or even able to consider their role in practising Indigenous allyship and decolonization.

Another challenge that distinguished this research was the time it took to build trust and genuine relationships with the Mi’kmaw community. This challenge relates to enlisting Mi’kmaw Elders and community members willing to work on the committee and to identifying other individuals who may have a wealth of knowledge to share from a Mi’kmaw point of view. At this point, ascertaining which oral history about the area one generation has successfully passed down to another and which has been erased from Mi’kmaw memory is impossible because residential schools, the Indian Act, and other Canadian government laws and policy have significantly impacted the Mi’kmaw’s ability to impart knowledge from generation to generation. Although a concern, another view of this limitation is as a key objective of this research. The generation of written documentation of the oral history of Lunenburg County in a way that honours the form of representation that the Mi’kmaq would prefer will be an important outcome of this work.

A final key challenge inherent in this research is the necessary grappling with the intersections of Tuck and Yang's (2012, p. 1) constructs of "settler moves to innocence" and "an ethic of incommensurability" with settler involvement in decolonization. Tuck and Yang (2012) claim that despite the good intentions of settlers, the reconciling of colonial culpability pervades this step. They argue that, when non-Indigenous individuals take on decolonial desires, settler efforts can "actually further settler colonization." Although these decolonial measures can decentre settler perspectives, Tuck and Yang (2012) spell out how decolonial actions on the part of settlers have objectives that are incommensurable with decolonization. Further in this vein, Tuck and Yang (2012) highlight the fact that settlers continually find ways to absolve their colonial legacy and its impact on the original peoples. The authors contend that when decolonization is employed metaphorically it "makes possible a set of evasions" that they call "settler moves to innocence." For example, when settlers choose to use decolonial discourse as a research method, Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 1) claim that decolonization becomes a metaphor that settlers use to help "problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity." They firmly assert that "decolonization is much more than a metaphor" and expose the many tropes that settlers use to make the path to reconciliation easier for them, so that they can feel less guilty about their complicity. Examples of "settler moves towards innocence" include settler nativism, fantasizing adoption, colonial equivocation, conscientization and reoccupation, and the urban homesteading of Indigenous Peoples.

As a final point, Tuck and Yang (2012) challenge and unsettle these notions of "settler moves towards innocence" by demonstrating their relationship with their other construct of "an ethic of incommensurability." The writers recognize that since "decolonization is not equivocal to other anti-colonial struggles," it is therefore incommensurable. One of the key purposes of

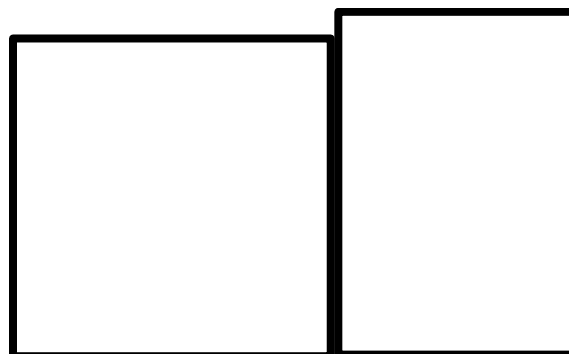
Tuck and Yang's (2012, p. 1) work is to make it known that "what is distinct and sovereign for project(s) of decolonization in relation to human and civil rights based on social just projects" has no common measure, which means that it therefore cannot be compared and, as a result, is thus incommensurable.

Closing Thoughts

The viewpoints explored in the literature review support participatory-style approaches to collaborative research with the Mi'kmaq and me, using Indigenous knowledge structures that will challenge the epistemic framework enabling teaching, learning, and healing to occur. It is through unlearning, relearning, and embracing Indigenous ways of knowing that settlers can practise Indigenous allyship and begin to understand the inherent racism embedded in the adopted colonial system of culture and commerce they portray in their institutions. Once this colonial fabrication has been disrupted, a more balanced and ethical understanding can emerge. Through Indigenous epistemology, truth and reconciliation can become transformational approaches for liberation, emancipatory growth, and insight.

Ku' ku' kwes Barred Owl

Intuitive wisdom and discernment
Find what is hidden?
Observe what others can't see
What is the true story?



Chapter Two: Methodology

So, the most profound truth in the universe is this:
we are all one drum and need each other.

(*One Drum* by Richard Wagamese, 2019, Douglas and McIntyre.
Reprinted with permission from the publisher.)

Framework for Bringing Methodologies Together

This chapter explains the use of various methodologies for gathering data and analysis relevant to this PhD study. The methodologies include Indigenous and western methodological approaches to research and, where applicable, honour an Indigenous research paradigm over traditional modes of conducting research. Such an approach was essential because the goal of this project was to privilege the Mi'kmaw voice across all aspects of the work.

Etuaptmunk (Two-Eyed Seeing), a fundamental Mi'kmaw pedagogical methodological tool, enabled the research process to successfully work between Indigenous and western research frameworks. This concept was created by Elders/Drs. Murdena Marshall, Albert Marshall, and Dr. Cheryl Bartlett (2012), and is described in, *Two-Eyed Seeing and Other Lessons Learned Within a Co-Learning Journey of Bringing Together Indigenous and Mainstream Knowledges and Ways of Knowing*. Etuaptmunk is a guiding principle for integrating Indigenous and mainstream research frameworks.

This kind of research process is also consistent with reconciliation as the TRC defines the term (Government of Canada, 2018). The methodological obligations of the research were thus in keeping with the TRC guideline and followed Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing, which emphasize Mi'kmaw knowledge-based systems as the underlying principles and protocol for all areas of the research.

Indigenous Research Methods

The principles of the Indigenous research methods outlined below reflect the relational process that I adopted throughout the work for this study. Following Indigenous research methods enabled the many ways in which I engaged with the Mi'kmaw community to become the methodology. This type of methodological approach, which differs from western research, allowed a personal account of my own learning, which became the focus of the dissertation.

Relationship as Methodology

One of the principles I followed for this study was Wilson's (2008, p. 40) notion of "relational accountability." This important Indigenous method states, "Key to the Indigenous research paradigm is that the researcher is subjective, builds [a] relationship with the research, and views research as [a] ceremony of maintaining accountability to these relationships." As Wilson (2008) suggests, this Indigenous way of conducting research holds the researcher accountable to all the relationships that he or she develops as the process unfolds. For this study, the application of "relational accountability" meant the incorporation of the Mi'kmaw knowledge construct Msit No'kmaq (detailed explanation, p. 55) as a means of better comprehending the intersection between my personal responsibility and all of the different types of relationships that were present during this work.

As Wilson (2008) suggests, the implementation of Indigenous methodological practices must encompass an understanding of, and respect for, Indigenous research as ceremony, which is reliant on the deep holistic levels of Indigenous relationship. Following Wilson's (2008) lead meant investigation in a manner that recognizes the ceremony of maintaining accountability to all of those relationships as well as to others that developed along the way. As a result, this doctoral research experience incorporated spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional

components of Indigenous methods of conducting research. This technique differs significantly from the one that mainstream academia employs, which places greater importance on qualifying and quantifying data according to a specific scientific approach.

To successfully support the ability to move between Indigenous and non-Indigenous research paradigms, the overall methodology emphasized practising Indigenous allyship through relationship building from an Indigenous knowledge standpoint. This type of socially just structured research in partnership privileges the Mi'kmaw worldview and was dependent on the of interest Mi'kmaw Elders and their community in building genuine friendships with me. For Mi'kmaw Elders and other community members to be willing to work on research in partnership with settlers like me, well established trust and relationships were essential.

The first crucial step was an understanding that building trust takes time. Authentic trust does not develop overnight. For me, the process of building trust with local Indigenous Peoples began in the fall of 2016, when Dr. Sharpe suggested that I become involved with the local Indigenous women's drumming group known as *All Nations Drum* as a practicum requirement for graduate studies in the lifelong learning program. These wonderful and strong women welcomed me into their close-knit group and introduced me to the healing powers of Indigenous drumming, the Indigenous ways worldview, and other members in the local Mi'kmaw community.

Dr. Sharpe also contacted Catherine Martin, a Mi'kmaw Elder and MSVU Nancy's Chair at the time and asked her to be my practicum supervisor. My doctoral research would not have been possible without the genuine relationships that I developed under the guidance and wisdom of Catherine, *All Nations Drum*, and the many Mi'kmaw Elders I have met throughout this decolonizing journey. The trust that developed with all of these individuals and other members

of the local Mi'kmaw community was a result of the many experiences that we shared together. This trust grew because of my extreme respectfulness and humbleness towards the Mi'kmaw community, which helped demonstrate my authentic interest in learning about Mi'kmaw knowledge and cultural practices. This trust also included practising Indigenous allyship through involvement in socially just initiatives that aligned with their interests, such as Stop Alton Gas, Walking with our Sisters, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls vigils, Save The Avon River, combatting racism directed towards Mi'kmaw fishermen and women, and other public events and peaceful protests.

My practice of Indigenous allyship, building of genuine relationships, and following Wilson's (2008) notion of relational accountability were essential to the overall learning process necessary for this project. Central to Wilson's (2008, p. 110) view, and my own, is an understanding of the continuing evolution and improvement of a relationship with a research idea and its intersection with the term "relationship" from an Indigenous perspective. A look back at the original master's degree from which this doctoral project stems reveals that this concept is analogous to Wilson's (2010) construct known as "relational accountability." This Indigenous research way of knowing represents the synergetic, interdependent, interrelated responsibility between the two different projects, and how the doctoral work was predicated on a commitment to begin where the master's work left off. Many of the relationships I developed from the mutually lived practicum experience carried over into my master's thesis and then became fundamental to the success of my doctoral work. This evolution constitutes the primary reason why I began working with the Mahone Bay Museum, became involved with their intention to decolonize how they represent local history, and then decided to document this decolonizing process as my PhD dissertation.

Another way that the concept of relationship found its way into this study was through the inspirational poetry that I often read. While writing this dissertation, I discovered Mi'kmaw author Michelle Sylliboy and Ojibwe author Richard Wagamese and began reading their work first thing in the morning. The insight from their writing and the connections I made with my dissertational efforts were immediate. I found that the power of the words and stories of these authors help me to cultivate ideas about the responsibilities that settlers have in decolonization and in truth and reconciliation. To honour the introspection and the relationship of their writing with my own, I have included poems or stanzas from these visionary poets to introduce each chapter of this thesis.

Unintended relationships that developed over the course of this study were the interconnections I made with all the wonderful animals who repeatedly visited me while I was completing this work. Their appearance was a welcome distraction and break from the drudgery of sitting in front of a computer screen all day. I am always in awe of their presence, I thank them whenever they stop by, and I contemplate what messages they may have brought for me! I started to sit in places in my home that had windows so I that could look outside in anticipation of getting a glimpse of my new friends whenever I was writing. I placed my camera next to my computer, and I have lost count of the wildlife that I have photographed. Whenever they appeared, it always seemed that I was contemplating some profound conundrum or revelation and was stuck with respect to organizing my thoughts. Since they have been part of the experience of writing this dissertation, it seemed only fitting that I include these truly sentient beings who have helped me immensely on this journey. Following the advice of Mi'kmaw Elder Nancy, who has a great ability to discern the messages that animals bring, I thought about the message each animal hoped to relay to me. At the end of each dissertation chapter, I included

photographs of the various wildlife that had visited me and a small poem I wrote about what I thought they were communicating.

These examples demonstrate how the concept of relationship is foundational to every aspect of this dissertation and is tied to the methodology described. Crucial to my understanding of what Indigenous research means were my efforts to draw on the interrelatedness of Indigenous epistemology, ontology, axiology, methodology, and the associated commitment to Indigenous philosophy. Since I employed a relationship-style methodology, this project made connections that supported a more ethical approach to learning. In turn, this approach enhanced the mobilization of holistic Mi'kmaw epistemologies as deep platforms for viewing public pedagogy as an avenue for social action.

Indigenous Storywork Principles

The principles set out in *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*, by Jo-ann Archibald (Q'um Q'um Xiiem) (2008), were an important Indigenous research paradigm that informed the research methodology. As Archibald (2008) explains, Indigenous storywork is an Indigenous pedagogical tool that uses the power of oral narratives as a method of achieving deep learning. Her seven Indigenous storywork principles of “respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness and synergy” (Archibald. 2008, p. 129) constituted the basis for recognizing the importance of accountability across all aspects of this project.

An example of the incorporation of Archibald's (2008) storywork principles is the documentation of the museum's decolonial process. I approached the research in a way that was respectful and that demonstrated responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. Indigenous storywork principles guided many aspects of how I conducted research

in other ways, such as accountability to Mi'kmaw Elders and Mi'kmaw scholars and my relationship with the decolonizing research topics and themes that emerged. Using these principles demonstrated my commitment to honour Mi'kmaw ways of doing research and facilitated a culturally responsible approach to the decolonization.

Etuaptmunk (Two-Eyed Seeing)

Etuaptmunk (Two-Eyed Seeing) is a very important Mi'kmaw pedagogical framework that was used as part of the methodology for this study. Intergrading Etuaptmunk as part of the methodology was important because it is a type of Mi'kmaw epistemology that celebrates an integrative co-learning journey between the Mi'kmaw, and non-Indigenous people like me. The work of Marshall et al. (2012) is necessary to balance Indigenous and non-Indigenous methodology because Etuaptmunk illuminates the depth of involvement of the research through both an Indigenous and a mainstream lens.

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According to Marshall et al. (2012), Etuaptmunk is a gift of multiple perspectives that many Indigenous Peoples treasure and that is a requisite for genuine transcultural, transdisciplinary, and collaborative work to occur between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In *Two-Eyed Seeing in Medicine*, Marshall, Marshall, and Bartlett (2015, p. 17-18) distinguish this way of knowing as “learning to see from one eye, with the strength of Indigenous knowledge and ways

of knowing, and from the other eye, with the strength of mainstream knowledge and ways of knowing for the benefit of all.”

By applying Etuaptmumk, I was better able to integrate Mi’kmaw and mainstream ways to understand Indigenous and colonial stories from a variety of perspectives. For example, by following Etuaptmumk, I employed a combination of Indigenous oral history and western document analysis to make sense of local Mi’kmaw middens and Acadian kilns found near each other in the Mahone Bay area. Etuaptmumk allowed the validation of multiple stories to occur which supports the creation of a deeper, richer historical account of why the Mi’kmaw middens and Acadian kilns existed near each other.

An important consideration to point out is that the process of decolonization and reconciliation can bring about situations that are uncomfortable for settlers. For example, the work of developing an Indigenous narrative for the Mahone Bay Museum could produce results that are very uncomfortable for the settler population in Lunenburg County. Therefore, the principles of Etuaptmumk are utilized as part of the research process in order to facilitate research results that enhance the greater good of the entire community. Etuaptmumk gave me and the committee the ability to conduct research using both Indigenous and western frameworks in a respectful and responsible way, which is an instrumental component of decolonization.

Msit No kmaq

Msit No’kmaq is an important Mi’kmaw teaching that guided the research methodology for this dissertation. Msit No’kmaq is a Mi’kmaw knowledge construct that acknowledges deep connections with the living spirit within all things, including animals, plants, rocks, water, fire and air, Mother Earth, and the universe. Translated into English, Msit No’kmaq means roughly “all my relations.”

As with the Indigenous approaches to research that Wilson (2008, p. 70) describes, Msit No'kmaq encompasses an understanding that interprets the whole research paradigm as being “greater than the sum of its parts” and includes the inherent holistic relationships that exist within the research idea. Both Elder Joe Mike and Elder Hunt suggest that this Mi'kmaw way of understanding relationships with the past, present, and future generations of everything is about recognizing that everything has a spirit and that all of these energies are interconnected in a holistic way. Elder Hunt says that Msit' No'kmaq also applies to the many living relationships to be found in stories as well.

Msit No'kmaq asks that I recognize my place in the world and honour and respect the relationships I have with everything in it. An important step forward is that humans recognize, both individually and collectively, the epistemological, ideological, and axiological relationships that touch them and the ways in which their actions connect to those relationships. Msit No'kmaq helped to remind me and the committee that Mi'kmaw knowledge systems are replete with profound teachings that help humans understand their inherent relationship with and responsibility to all life and beings that inhabit Turtle Island. This profound concept is also evident in other Indigenous knowledge-based systems, and it connects directly to respect for and acknowledgement of the complex relationships that humans have with all living things and ultimately with everything (Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre, 2015).

In the case of documenting the museum's research process, Msit No'kmaq helped me to acknowledge the multi-faceted relationships that co-exist between the different narratives about history, such as the Mi'kmaw midden and Acadian lime kilns, and their deep connections to land and place. Msit No'kmaq kept me on track with Etuaptmumk because it involved acknowledging that research about stories and history is very much alive and fluid, with links to place and many

types of relationships, and must balance Mi'kmaw and western views for a successful understanding of the world. Every step of the way, Msit No' kmaq informed this project because it provided an opportunity for me to think differently about research in a rich and holistic way.

Thinking Seven Generations Ahead

The Seventh Generation Principle, or Thinking Seven Generations Ahead, was another Mi'kmaw discernment technique instrumental in informing the research process for this study. In her work, *Thinking Seven Generations Ahead: Mi kmaq Language Resurgence in the Face of Settler Colonialism*, Ashely Julian (2014) examines the Mi'kmaw Seventh Generation Principle. She describes this construct as a community's responsibility to consider the impact their actions or decisions will have seven generations into the future. As with Msit No'kmaq, the Seventh Generation Principle encompasses more than just the human factor. Julian (2014) characterizes the Thinking Seven Generations Ahead philosophy as integral to the Mi'kmaw way of life and states that it derives from the honouring of values that connect past, present, and future generations.

Since the Mi'kmaw ethical principle of Thinking Seven Generations Ahead maintains relational accountability, I applied this concept to decisions I made when documenting the process of decolonizing the museum and when considering how those decisions intersected with my role as an active committee member managing this decolonizing initiative. To help ensure the security of future generations, I saw this principle as a tool for monitoring the ethical responsibility required of a researcher, like myself, during the conducting of Indigenous research. It also guided my decisions about how best to represent decolonial narratives because it places emphasis on how historical representation ties to the past and present as well as how it impacts the future.

Interestingly, these endeavours are exactly what the TRC is asking settlers to do as part of the reconciliation process. Since this research involved a commitment to reconciliation, as a researcher interested in decolonizing colonial history, a big piece of this project was both recognizing and understanding how the historical actions of the past can influence the present and future generations. Recreating historical narratives in the museum in a way that privileges the Mi'kmaw voice and that exposes how mainstream colonial discourse uses the past to influence the present and future is an important part of decolonization. This Mi'kmaw construct was thus important to the methodology for this study because it helped me grasp the multi-generational components of history. Thinking Seven Generations Ahead encompasses not just the ability to look at how our actions will impact the future but also the capacity to consider looking back in history to see how previous actions have impacted where we are today.

Netukulimk

Netukulimk is a Mi'kmaw knowledge-based system arising from the Mi'kmaq Peoples inherent right to access and use natural resources in sustainable ways. Netukulimk represents an understanding that community nutrition and economic well-being must support and not jeopardize the natural world's integrity and diversity. Netukulimk holds the Mi'kmaq Peoples accountable for managing and caring for all resources that come from the Creator, and it inextricably connects with Msit No'kmaq.

Talking Circle

The Mi'kmaw Talking Circle creates a safe environment where individuals can share their point of view with one another. In the Talking Circle, everyone is considered an equal, and everyone belongs, with respect for all views. An intention of the Talking Circle is to build relationships, understanding, and connections with one another. This methodological approach

allowed collaborative work and the creation of new stories to emerge at the Mahone Bay Museum.

Qualitative Methods

One element unique to this study was my attempt to foreground Indigenous worldviews and knowledge-based systems within western academia. To balance Indigenous and western research methodologies, I used Etuaptmumk as the central framework. Etuaptmumk meant that western research approaches often featured Indigenous research styles within their makeup. The qualitative research approaches I applied in this study include autoethnography, community-based participatory research (CBPR), and exploratory informal interviews.

Autoethnography

For this work I was informed by autoethnographic methodology which enabled me to describe, analyze, and understand the intersection between my research experience and the dissertational focus. As a member of a settler society, autoethnography facilitated my ability to position myself in the study and make connections to my personal story, the ethnography of my colonial culture/upbringing, and scrutinize the research experience as an insider.

Autoethnography allowed me to draw from my research a topic of great personal relevance: my identity and its familial and historical attachment to Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. By situating myself as a settler in Lunenburg County, I reflected on my unique experiences living in a colonial historical place from a different point of view. I used a Mi'kmaw lens to understand where I am from, which enabled me to reflect and understand other ways to look at my colonial roots. Using autoethnography to inform this study allowed me to recreate my experiences in a reflexive way which helps the audience reflect on their own experiences in similar ways.

Allowing autoethnography to inform this research enabled me to study how the original settler cultural system in Lunenburg County is organized and shapes our physical and social world into the present day. Learning to acknowledge and understand my settler culture is important because it helped me realize what influences our local contemporary values and beliefs.

An essential reason for drawing on the focus of autoethnography was to use my personal experience and write alongside Mi'kmaw knowledge-based systems and show how personal experiences and learning are significant ways to learn. Autoethnography informed a multiple research approach by bridging Indigenous and western research methodology as a cohesive way to do research. This relational research approach challenged western research methods and foregrounded Indigenous research methodologies, highlighting the process of creating a final dissertation as the product.

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

My PhD research involved the use of two fundamental methodological components. The first is that I adopted Indigenous research methodologies as part of the work on my dissertation. Since I was operating in a variety of local community settings that included decolonization efforts at the Mahone Bay Museum, anti-racist work in the Town of Lunenburg, and exploration of Mi'kmaw burial sites in Lunenburg County, this dissertation followed community-based participatory research (CBPR) principles.

CBPR provides an opportunity for a partnership approach to research, thus making it a methodology that was fitting for the component of this research that involved documenting the museum's decolonizing process. CBPR allowed me, as a researcher and as a participant in the project, to mutually engage with the Mi'kmaw community in ways that past western research

approaches vis-à-vis the Mi'kmaq have not. CBPR supported a fundamental goal of the committee, which was to prioritize Mi'kmaq worldviews as central to every facet of the museum's decolonizing work.

A community-based partnership approach to research was evident in the continual support from museum committee members and in the constant guidance of Elders with respect to conducting research through an Indigenous lens. Examples of CBPR are the actions that local Mi'kmaq and I took to combat racism in Lunenburg because of the relationships (e.g., Stephen Labrador, Michelle Sylliboy, Elder Hunt) that were fostered due to this project.

An excellent book, whose editors are Barbara A. Israel, Eugenia Eng, Amy J. Shultz, and Edith Parker (2012), is *Methods in Community-Based Participatory Research for Health*. Chapter two, *Developing and Maintaining Partnerships with Communities*, by Wallerstein, Duran, Minkler, and Foley (2012), describes in some detail the principles and methods that characterize CBPR. This work includes outlines of the principles that expressly refer to Indigenous research and that this project incorporated.

The following are some of the concepts that Israel et al. (2012) describe and that feature in this PhD research:

1. **Building Trust:** The most important principle was to establish a relationship of trust between the researcher (in this case, me) and the community. Usually, building real trust between Indigenous individuals and their communities, on one side, and settlers on the other is a process that evolves over a long period of time. Since embarking on my master's research, I have engaged in many activities in order to establish both strong and genuine relationships within the Mi'kmaq community, which were essential to the success of this study.

2. **Combining Perspectives:** This principle is the need to bring the traditional academic rigor and discipline of a western-based university together with the knowledge, wisdom, and experience of the local Mi'kmaw community. Israel et al. (2012) highlight the value of this idea: "By respecting the community's expert knowledge concerning its assets as well as its needs and concerns, researchers were in a much better position to forge egalitarian CBPR partnerships."
3. **Maintaining Flexibility:** The authors state (2012), "Plan and then implement the plan is too simplistic. To succeed, CBPR processes were open to permutations and reformulations." This principle was followed in the research process for this dissertation. For example, when the committee was researching Mi'kmaw history in the Mahone Bay area, Mi'kmaw committee members received particular attention since they defined what narratives they wished to tell in the museum.

Israel et al. (2012) also set out four strategies, all of which were followed, assessed, and continually re-evaluated during the research:

1. Self-reflect on my capacity, resources, and potential liabilities as [an] academic interested in engaging with the community.
2. Identify potential partners and partnerships through appropriate networks, associations, and leaders.
3. Negotiate the issues for research, even if the university (in this case I) initiate them and reframe issues and research questions through the partnership that has evolved.
4. Create and nurture structures that sustain partnerships through constituency building and organizational development.

These strategies guided my research. Much of this journey, from the beginning of my master's degree studies and continuing with my PhD research, has forced me to examine critically my own personal history as a descendant of the first German settlers in Lunenburg County and to reflect on how that background affects my perception of the local history my teachers and upbringing have imparted since I was a child. From this experience, I have engaged in deep questioning of the way in which my privileges as a settler have been created at the expense of the local Mi'kmaq and how I need to deal with this reality.

CBPR fits nicely with the Etuaptmunk framework and guidelines set out by Marshall et al. (2012), whereby Indigenous Peoples and settlers work together with less restrictive ranges and types of research methods. As previously mentioned, Marshall et al. (2012, p. 335) frequently explain Etuaptmunk as a way “to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of western knowledges and ways of knowing, and learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.”

As stated by Gregory Younging (2018) in *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and About Indigenous Peoples*, culturally appropriate research requires the placing of Indigenous Peoples at the forefront of the work and should arise from the needs of the communities. He also understands CBPR as an essential component that requires “engagement, and inclusion for [a] new conversation to occur between Indigenous Peoples and settler society” (Younging, 2018, p. 30). CBPR supported one of the main principles of the study, which was that the voice of the Mi'kmaq must be privileged across all aspects of the research.

Like the Indigenous research methodologies that Marshall et al. (2012) (Etuaptmunk), Wilson (2008) (Relational Accountability), and Archibald (2008) (storywork principles) describe

as well as *Msit No'kmaq* and *Thinking Seven Generations Ahead*, CBPR derives from a relational philosophy that connects one's deliberations, actions, and decisions to something larger than oneself. As with the option to incorporate an Indigenous research paradigm, CBPR was thus a natural choice for use in conjunction with this study. Like other Indigenous methodological frameworks, it held me, as well as the entire study, accountable to the study itself and to the Indigenous research methodologies that comprise the work.

CBPR fundamentally grows out of participatory action processes, with a goal of transformative praxis, and thus supports both my work as a documenter and the committee's work in order to create a socially just pedagogy that facilitates social change. Since CBPR is reliant on collaborative engagement between the community and me, it fostered the development of a sense of true partnership among the decolonizing project members. Therefore, CBPR fully enabled our committee to contribute our expertise and knowledge and to share in the decision making across every aspect of the research process.

A final point is that, since CBPR is considered a type of research that involves action and reflection, it also supported my success as the documenter of this project. Because I was personally and actively involved in the Mahone Bay Museum decolonizing project, CBPR supported the learning that comes from the practice of reflection as a fundamental component of recording the research process. The principles of CBPR allowed me to engage in a deep, thoughtful relationship with the lived experience of the decolonizing project and its work and to apply my reflection on the museum's decolonizing work as a crucial cognitive practice in the entire research project itself.

Exploratory Informal Interviews (Primary Sources)

The dissertation also included interviews with individuals who have been working to contest the colonial European historical slant so that more accurate and socially just narratives can emerge. The individuals whom I interviewed include Mi'kmaw Elders, Mi'kmaw scholars, and local Mi'kmaw and Indigenous allies who have been working on co-creating and re-creating narratives that differ from the usual Lunenburg County versions. I used an audio tape recorder to record the responses of the interviewees, which were then transcribed into a written format for analysis purposes. I erased the audiotapes after their transcription.

As an example, that illustrates the value of this process, when Elder Hunt and I were researching evidence about a Mi'kmaw burial site at the end of Indian Point, we interviewed longtime resident Mrs. Kay Joudrey and her daughter Dachia. Both women shared with us their memories of the Mi'kmaw history of Indian Point, the surrounding islands, and the sacred burial ground. Mrs. Joudrey provided valuable information about Mi'kmaw archeological investigations that archeologists from the Nova Scotia Museum conducted at Indian Point and Oakland. Building on this important information, I made inquiries at the Nova Scotia Museum and was invited to the museum to meet with a number of archeologists to discuss the findings.

Broad Themes Covered in the Loosely Formulated Questions during Visits Knowledge Holders N

Topics and questions that influenced the direction of this study evolved during time spent with Mi'kmaw knowledge holders. According to what they shared regarding the re-creation of historical narratives in ways that privilege the Mi'kmaq as valid knowledge holders, the research questions continually evolved, developed, and changed. An example of a topic that changed throughout this study and sparked further research questions was the recurring intersection between colonization and racism. These are some of the questions:

1. What is the Mi'kmaw story about this place?
2. Do you know anything about this story that is connected to the Mi'kmaq?
3. Why do you think you know only the colonial version of the story?
4. What does this story tell us about this time in Lunenburg County?
5. What does this story tell us about today?
6. What purpose, if any, do you think the story serves?
7. Do you have other stories that you would like to share?
8. How can Mi'kmaw ways of knowing be used for communicating the Mi'kmaw understanding of the history of Mi'kma'ki/Atlantic Canada?
9. How do you think local museums can do a better job of telling stories that privilege the Mi'kmaw point of view?
10. What is the relationship between colonization and present-day racism in Lunenburg County?

Ethical Considerations

As a non-Indigenous researcher practising research in partnership with the Mi'kmaq, it was imperative that I understand the ethical concerns that characterize both Indigenous and non-Indigenous research and how they differ. Since this study concerns the Mi'kmaq, it had to be subject to the scrutiny of both Indigenous and mainstream research ethic reviews.

The first ethics review, which was conducted under the auspices of Cape Breton (Unama'ki) University, is called the

. The Mi'kmaw inherent Indigenous right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) was also incorporated as a fundamental ethical value by which to abide. UNDRIP (UN General Assembly, 2006) created FPIC as a prerequisite that ensures the full involvement of Indigenous Peoples across every aspect of an Indigenous research project, from design to implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. An important element of FPIC (UN General Assembly, 2006) is that it allows the Mi'kmaq, at any point during the research process, to give or withhold their consent to this project because of the way it might affect their unceded territory of Mi'kma'ki. The final ethics review entailed approval according to Mount Saint Vincent University's tri-council policy statement on ethical conduct for research involving humans.

Osprey

Relish in moving outside your comfort zone
Everything you need is right in front of you
Grasp the riches that you find
Share them with others
The future depends on it.



(Mother Osprey returning to the nest with food for her babies.)



Chapter Three: Examining the Settler Narrative and Identity

spirit responds,
'pureness you are beautiful—you are beautiful'
Looking down on the faces of reality
we are not born to self-imposed limits

like a dream coming true
spirit born from the creator
gives thanks to her existence
'smokestacks' of prayers silently drift away
making room for the next round of discoveries

(*KisKaieyi-I AM READY* by Michelle Sylliboy, 2019, Rebel Press.
Reprinted with permission from the publisher.)

Introduction

In this chapter I scrutinize settler discourse and the notion of settler identity. I examine how the British used the settler narrative and persona as precise tools for the colonization of Lunenburg County, thus heavily informing the subsequent creation of mainstream local history that followed. The scrutiny includes an examination of the use of colonial stereotypes, myths, written narrative, historical markers, and other tools to support settler identity in order to create falsehoods about the Mi'kmaq. The final element in this chapter is an exploration of why narrative erasure was an essential component of the overall colonial project and how it still plays a part in contemporary colonialism today.

The topic of settler identity and its intersection with the colonization of Canada is a complex question. In this chapter I therefore, give a brief overview of settler identity and explain why it is an essential talking point that requires addressing as part of the truth and reconciliation educational process.

The Settler Narrative

Starting with Myself

Both my recent master's research and this dissertation, which represents a continuation of my master's work, are rooted in my desire to determine how I can contribute to decolonization in Canada. My master's investigation demonstrated how specific components of Eurocentric

Rhine region of Germany (Cuthbertson, 1996). More than nine generations later, my family still shares the geographical space and place where our ancestors arrived, and which has now become the focus of my research. Like most residents of Lunenburg County, I absorbed teachings about the prosperity of the area being due to German ingenuity, enterprising ability, and connections that created community solidarity grounded in our rich colonial heritage and culture. Born into a settler family and raised in Lunenburg, I was a ready recipient of the settler narrative indoctrination. The experience of growing up in Lunenburg had a profound personal impact on my understanding of my family's history, my town, and my roots.

In *The History of the County of Lunenburg*, Mathers DesBrisay (1980, p. 21) says, “The town [of Lunenburg] was settled four years after the creation of Halifax, Nova Scotia [1749], and was one of the first British attempts to settle Protestants in Nova Scotia.” As I’ve described, like many Lunenburgers, I can link my ancestry directly to some of the original European colonizers who first arrived on the south shore of Nova Scotia. The early settlement of Lunenburg County has its roots in the British need to shore up their stronghold in Mi’kma’ki in order to counter the existing Mi’kmaw/French Acadian Catholic population and the Mi’kmaq Peoples dominance and strength.

My family were some of the first settlers responsible for initiating this British settlement and the subsequent displacement of the Mi’kmaq. I understand Lunenburg history as a reflection of the original European colonization of Canada. The promotion of the town centres on its European settler history. The continued celebration of its historic buildings and ships, its seafaring life, and its Eurocentric/Christian-based outlook demonstrates the honouring and maintenance of its colonial history. To say that Lunenburgers take pride in their extensive celebration of their history would be an understatement.

My education and upbringing taught me that many of the early settlers in Lunenburg County were farmers; however, the proximity to the bountiful resources that the Atlantic Ocean offers attracted many others to explore the sea as a new way of life. The result was the establishment of various successful businesses with links to all aspects of the fishing industry (Parker, 1999). One example of such a fishing business is Adams and Knickle Ltd., which my great-grandfather, Captain Alexander Anderson Knickle, and Harry Adams founded in 1897 and which played a significant role in the economic success of Lunenburg. In its early years, the company was an exporter of salt fish, but when the salt fish industry died, it began to harvest deep-sea scallops. During the 1980s, the back of the Canadian 100-dollar bill featured a picture of the scenic front harbour of Lunenburg. The red buildings of Adams and Knickle Ltd. figure prominently in the coloured version of this iconic image of the town.

Local legend boasts that long ago Lunenburg was home to the largest fishing fleet in the world. During the 19th century, the town claimed to have more than 178 ships anchored in the harbour (Zwicker & Schaffenburg, 1993). As Parker (1999) documented, a common saying in the town is “Lunenburg was home to wooden ships and iron men!” No one ever told me that this colonial town, which my ancestors claimed unquestioningly, actually existed on unceded Mi’kmaq land and that the town’s economic successes often came at the direct expense of the Mi’kmaq, whom Lunenburgers pushed to the margins of their territory. Today’s Lunenburg enjoys an established community sense of its colonial birthright, which is an integral factor that supports the town and its identity. Whether it is the creation of one of the first Canadian European settlements or the respect and reverence for a hard life at sea, most Lunenburgers recognize, celebrate, and connect with their settler roots. I grew up with this background surrounding me and deeply defining my sense of self, so becoming aware of an alternative and

parallel reality thus represented a radical shift from the previously accepted version of my own history.

As I began to challenge the settler narrative, I better understood the origin, significance, and roots of popular Atlantic Canadian history and its relationship to my own settler identity. I examined who I was from a Mi'kmaw perspective and scrutinized aspects of the settler narrative that needed exposure, such as the link between colonization and racism. During this process, I continually asked myself, "Is it possible to arrive at a narrative that helps us understand our past and that more accurately defines the relationship between the Mi'kmaq and the European colonizers, both past and current?" Now, when I walk the streets of Lunenburg and Mahone Bay, I not only see the colonial towns built by Protestant settlers, but I also wonder where the Mi'kmaq lived for thousands of years before British colonization occurred. As I continue to examine Lunenburg County's colonial history, I ask myself, "How does celebrating colonial history continue to displace the presence of the Mi'kmaq, who had lived in Mi'kma'ki for more than 13,500 years before the arrival of my ancestors?"

Decolonization requires the refashioning of Canadian societal, political, historical, and cultural ideals. Initial self-scrutiny on the part of Canadians is a critical step in decolonization and in an examination of Canada's violent colonial legacy and the way settler identity is complicit in racism, discrimination, and bias towards Indigenous People, which has carried over into the present day. From my master's work, I acquired knowledge, experience, tools, and relationships that have enabled me to move on to the next step in my journey of commitment to active decolonial work in my local community. My personal growth was necessary before I became involved in such local decolonial activities as the settler's museum in Mahone Bay and anti-racist involvement in Lunenburg. As I have discovered from my own experience, the key to

decolonization is to begin with oneself before moving into larger domains such as family, community, province, and country.

By continually reflecting on this decolonizing process, first with myself and now with my work on a local community project, I have the opportunity, as Dr. Cole (2010) suggested, to better understand myself and who I am because of colonization. As Dr. Cole (2010, p. 3) says, my reflections offer me a scholarly way to wrestle with the ramifications of my colonial “soul and psyche” and how they relate to the present day. This research experience has allowed me to “rethink who and how I am in this world” and to determine my responsibility to support decolonial change from now on.

The privilege of preparing and producing this dissertation has enabled me to reach a better understanding of who I am by dismantling my family, community, provincial, and Canadian Eurocentric upbringing that dates to the British settlement of Lunenburg. As I continue to discover my place within the throes of decolonization, I realize that I am responsible for passing this transformational knowledge on to others. I hope my work inspires them to begin their own decolonization journeys as well.

Through my work, I have gained insight into Canada's cultivated colonialized ignorance, which inaccurately portrays the complex history that Indigenous Peoples and settlers share. While changing the past is not an option, learning from history and using that knowledge to create a socially just Canada for all people are possibilities. Through my continued research interests, I better understand a settler's responsibility to implement reform efforts that support Canada's TRC Calls to Action. These decolonial measures include disrupting the settler narrative, tackling racism, honouring Mi'kmaw knowledge and worldviews, and re-storying Mi'kma'ki history through a collaborative Mi'kmaq-settler partnership.

As Cole (2010) suggests, this research experience has broadened my understanding of the colonial narrative of Lunenburg and its accomplice, the settler identity that defined my early years. I now understand these settler constructs as well-crafted tools necessary for the overall British colonial project of attempted takeover of Mi'kma'ki. I also realize that settler truth-telling and coming clean about the falsehoods of both local and national colonial discourse is fundamental to truth and reconciliation.

Setting the Context for the Colonial Narrative in Lunenburg and Lunenburg County

These celebratory narratives of colonial Lunenburg omit the Mi'kmaq, thus excluding a critical context of the town's formation. The founding of Lunenburg happened in the shadow of a colonial war that pitted the English against the French and allied Mi'kmaq for control over Nova Scotia and was part of a larger war known as the War of the Spanish Succession.

In *New England Relations in the Early 18th Century*, Wicken (1993) articulates that Mirlegueche (the Acadian name for Lunenburg) was one of many well-established Mi'kmaw coastal villages during the 17th and 18th centuries along the eastern shore of Mi'kma'ki. Wicken (1993) explains that during the summer months, the population of Mirlegueche would have been upwards of over 300 Mi'kmaw residents. The intentional settlement at Mirlegueche that displaced the Mi'kmaq and Acadians was part of the British execution of control over North America. Excluded from Lunenburg County's history is the fact that the Mi'kmaq Peoples entire way of life and connection to fish as a primary food source was negatively impacted and changed forever. Over time, initial Protestant settlements, such as Lunenburg and Mahone Bay, facilitated the eventual decline of the Mi'kmaw population.

The culmination of this period of conflict occurred on April 11, 1713, at Utrecht in the Netherlands, where representatives of Britain and France signed the Treaty of Utrecht, in which

the French gave significant North American concessions to Britain. Major fallout of the Treaty of Utrecht was the requirement for France to hand over to the English the part of Mi'kma'ki that is currently mainland Nova Scotia. The Mi'kmaq, who were not included in or consulted about this treaty transaction that involved their land, were highly displeased at this outcome, in part, because they felt that France had betrayed them by giving away their territory—something to which they would never have agreed. Centuries-old Mi'kmaw settlements such as Mirlegueche/E'se'katik (Lunenburg), nearby Indian Point, and many others were included in the relinquishment of control over lands whose occupation the treaty handed over to the British without the consultation and approval of the Mi'kmaq.

In *An Unsettled Conquest, The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*, Geoffrey Plank (2003) maintains that the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 between the French and the British strongly shaped the perspectives of the Mi'kmaq during this era. He argues that because of the failure to include them in the treaty's ratification process, the Mi'kmaq in no way felt obligated or bound to accept the terms of the treaty, and they still do not to this day. This perspective fueled Mi'kmaw resistance to British imperial efforts to build settlements throughout Mi'kma'ki. In contrast to the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht, the Mi'kmaq Peoples later treaties with the British reaffirmed their claim and their continued entitlement to their territory.

In the early days of the colonization of Lunenburg and the surrounding area, the Mi'kmaq and the British Crown signed a number of Peace and Friendship Treaties, including the Peace and Friendship Treaty of Boston of 1725, ratification of the 1725 Treaty in 1726, the Treaty of 1725 that Governor Cornwallis renewed with Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) in 1749, and the Treaty of Articles and Peace and Friendship continued in 1752, along with two additional attempts to formulate further peace and friendship negotiations with the British in 1754 and 1755. The

purpose of these treaties was to outline solemn agreements that set out longstanding promises, mutual obligations, and benefits among the Mi'kmaq, the British Crown, and settlers so that everyone living in Mi'kma'ki could live peacefully together. In *Empire, the Maritime Colonies,*

-1820, John Reid (2009) notes that the

Mi'kmaq were well versed in understanding the intricacies of the treaty process and related

negotiations. Reid (2009) states that when formulatin867 Tm5q0.00T/F1 12G[(form)6(ul)-13(a)3(t)(a)7(nd)] T.

would be able to continue governing themselves autonomously. The Mi'kmaq Peoples strong perception of their interpretation of these documents gave them an empowering sense of their rights to Mi'kma'ki, for which they continue to fight today.

As the Mi'kmaq opposed British territorial claims and efforts to expand holdings in Mi'kma'ki, the British responded in kind, using their military power to displace the Mi'kmaq by force. So resistant were the Mi'kmaq to British claims to Mi'kma'ki that Britain struggled to establish a foothold by populating it with Foreign Protestant settlers from other European countries. Thus, Britain had to “settle” for the German colonists who formed the nucleus of Lunenburg County society. Battiste (2016) remarks that since the Mi'kmaq never ceded their lands, they also never received compensation for territories taken from them and therefore opposed all British-sponsored settlement. However, the British ignored the Mi'kmaq Peoples inherent and legal rights and settled on Mi'kmaw territory anyway.

A further blow to the Mi'kmaq Peoples during this era was the loss of their allies in their homeland: a French Acadian population that had peacefully resided in Mi'kma'ki since the start of the 17th century. Beginning in 1755 and continuing to 1764, the British, again as part of an effort to Anglicize and command control over Nova Scotia/Mi'kma'ki, forcibly removed via deportation more than 10,000 French-speaking Acadians, whose presence in Nova Scotia the British viewed as an impediment to its imperial objectives. As a testament to their affinity for their French neighbours and to resist the British policy of removing the Acadians from Mi'kma'ki, the Mi'kmaq harboured and helped protect their long-time Acadian allies from the British forces. However, none of these events garnered a place in the Eurocentric history of Lunenburg.

As a result, in keeping with the broader historical trend of the teaching of Canadian history, the portrayal of Lunenburg County from the perspective of the Eurocentric colonizer is the norm. The view of Canada, and indeed, all of North America, was as a place for European settlers to explore, settle, and develop freely. Like all Indigenous Peoples across Canada, the Mi'kmaq were egregiously called “Indians,” and portrayed as an enemy of European colonization. Traditional historical references to the Mi'kmaq are few and usually reflect a white supremacist European viewpoint that understood them as barbaric savages who needed help. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Most early Protestant settlers of Nova Scotia probably did not understand themselves as players in Britain's international system. The Mi'kmaq were not seen as a threat to European settlement.

Eva Mackey (2016, p.15) enlarges on the effects of the settler designation in *Unsettled Expectations, Uncertainty, Land and Settler Decolonization* and states: “The words we use to name ourselves are important in Canada, and these collective terms determine the inclusion and exclusion of people to specific societal groups.” During European colonization, the term settler denoted individuals who came to Canada under rights that the British and later the Crown claimed, which led to what Mackey (2016) calls a “fantasy of entitlement” to Indigenous land and resources. Mackey (2016) maintains that for this “fantasy of entitlement” to work, the governance of the colonial society employed many myths, Indigenous stereotypes, and tropes to create a sense of entitlement for colonizers, especially with respect to Indigenous land and resource acquisition. This “fantasy of entitlement” ties in heavily to the notion of the acquisition of land as personal property. Mackey (2016) argues that the intertwinement of settler identity and settler entitlement to resources associated with their new place of habitation was necessary so that the basis of settler identity and its connections to notions of claimed territory and relationships with systems of power would support settler rights over the sovereign rights of the original inhabitants whose territory the settlers were occupying. Contemporary settler identity maintains this sense of settler entitlement, which the Canadian government, politics, and systems reinforce, continuing to claim sovereignty over Indigenous territory and resources.

In Lunenburg County, the term settler refers to European immigrant Protestants from Germany, Switzerland, and France whom the British recruited to settle in the area. The notion of the settler “fantasy of entitlement” normalized their expectations of the nation/state legitimacy of taking over Mi’kmaw territory and laying claim to surrounding land and resources. This century-long process served to uphold settler entitlement to land and resources in Mi’kma’ki and continues to impact Mi’kmaq-settler relations today.

Many descendants of the original European families who settled in Lunenburg and the surrounding area can now look back on a personal history that spans ten or more familial generations. This ancestral connection instills a sense of laudable pride in a family heritage that reaches back more than 267 years. The commemorative signage located all over Lunenburg County foregrounds the original settler families and is a testament to settler identity and the value local residents bestow on this type of colonial history. The interesting dichotomy is that since the Mi'kmaq have lived in Mi'kma'ki for over 13,500 years, their ancestral history spans more than 505 generations. When settlers consider their own relative sense of connection to place, they must indeed realize that their association is minuscule compared to the relationship the Mi'kmaq feel.

For the colonialization of Nova Scotia to be successful, erasure of the vast generational Mi'kmaw family ties to place, their history, and identity was necessary. The lack of Mi'kmaw cultural and historical representation became apparent during a recent project to create a sign similar to the settler family sign in order to recognize the local Mi'kmaw families living in Mahone Bay prior to and during British colonial rule. A major obstacle was lack of information about their history. Since the European settlers did not recognize or value Mi'kmaw family history, very little written documentation about the Mi'kmaq who lived in Lunenburg County exists today. Assimilation, residential schools, and racism have forced many Mi'kmaq to remain quiet about their Mi'kmaw identity, further complicating access to local Mi'kmaw familial history. In addition, the oral history of the local Mi'kmaw families is at risk of disappearing because the Mi'kmaw knowledge keepers and Elders who hold this information have passed on to the ancestral world. Ironically, the Mi'kmaq Peoples sense of venerable reverence for and sacred relationship with landscapes where colonial communities reside, such as Lunenburg,

Mahone Bay, Oakland, and Indian Point, are unfathomable to and outside the cognitive schemata of non-Indigenous people. Instead of learning about, acknowledging, and honouring the Mi'kmaq Peoples profound sense of place on Nova Scotia's South Shore, settlers generally ignore this significant historical aspect of where they live today.

Use of Myths to Support Settler Identity

Critical to the fabrication of settler identity is its intersection with the mainstream colonial narrative, which myths and stereotypes and their intertwining supported in order to help the European colonization of Atlantic Canada at the Mi'kmaq Peoples expense. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2021) describes a myth as a traditional story of “ostensibly historical events, which serve to unfold part of the worldview of a people.” During the colonization of Lunenburg County, the British used myths to promote the settler narrative and identity, to justify settlers as benefactors of colonization at the expense of the Mi'kmaw Peoples. Examples of settler myths include uninhabited land/terra incognita, the white male settler myth, white superiority, the benevolent peacekeeper, and the peaceful settler.

1. Myth: Uninhabited Land/Terra Nullius

Mackey (2016) argues that the extensive British imperial expansion project in Turtle Island involved a view of the original inhabitants as obstacles to the overall British occupation and colonial pursuits. The fabricated colonial narrative that the land was wild and free enabled the British to overcome this problem, and the inaccurate portrayal justified the British dispossession of the Indigenous Peoples from their land in order to enable European inhabitation.

One aspect of the settler narrative is the Latin term *terra nullius*, which in English translates into “nobody's land.” Jacob (2011) argues that during European colonization, newly arrived settlers believed in *terra nullius*: because land had only a minimal number of inhabitants,

it was free for the taking. Accordingly, as Mackey (2016, p. 47) maintains describes, under the authority of a variety of Papal Bulls, Europeans claimed sovereignty over Indigenous land “through occupation or possession.” Thus, “when the land was inhabited, the so-called discovering power had the first right to trade and negotiate alliances, sovereignty, and land sharing with the original inhabitants of a place.” In theory, Mackey (2016) states that the Doctrine of Discovery was not direct sovereignty over the land but a right that prevented other European nations from negotiating with the people occupying that land.

Mark Percy (2014) provides an additional examination of the intersection between *terra nullius* and the Doctrine of Discovery in his PhD dissertation, *Indigenous Peoples, Civilization and the Expansion of International Society: An Inter-Societal Perspective*. Percy’s (2014) position is that these concepts were very much intertwined and used as a robust framework, underpinning the so-called natural law foundations of international law and order. Kody Cooper’s (2018) study of Thomas Hobbes clarifies Hobbes’ natural law system in *Thomas Hobbes and the Natural Law*. Cooper (2018) states that the basis for Hobbes’s theory of natural law arose from the belief that God and the rule of nature transcended all other laws applicable to the observation of humans. In *Contract and Domination*, Carol Pateman and Charles Mills (2007) back up the theory of natural law and its influence on the Doctrine of Discovery, *terra nullius*, and Britain’s legitimatization of land appropriation in Canada. They maintain that the *terra nullius* myth was fundamental to the colonization of places such as Mi’kma’ki. Mackey (2016, p. 48) further argues this point and states that “colonizers decided that if the land was defined to be *terra nullius*, it could be rightfully occupied” despite the presence of the original inhabitants living there.

Other authors agree. Tracey Lindberg's work (2010), *The Doctrine of Discovery and Assertion in the Discovery of Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies*, supports the position that the intersection of *terra nullius*, the Doctrine of Discovery, and natural law theory was necessary for colonization to occur. Lindberg (2010, p. 107) states that European settlers applied the doctrine of *terra nullius* with a unique twist and concluded that "such lands were legally vacant despite the presence of bands of peoples organized according to their societal customs." Therefore, as Mackey (2016) contends, *terra nullius* did not mean totally vacant land but instead signified land that neither individuals nor a sovereign power possessed in specific, culturally recognizable ways, thus making it open to new claims of ownership (p. 48).

Mackey (2016, p. 86) maintains that to make Indigenous Peoples' territory available for settler appropriation, there was a requirement for a "justifying rationale or 'fantasy of entitlement' that entailed defining Indigenous Peoples as inferior and in a state of nature." The creation of the inaccurate characterization was possible through the use of various myths and stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples. They were portrayed as unsettled, wandering, and uncivilized peoples who did not engage in proper forms of European agriculture. This denial and ignorance on the part of the colonizers were facilitated via their disregard of the sacred relationship that Indigenous Peoples have with land and that Mackey (2016, p. 86) argues enabled the colonizers to define Indigenous land as "legally not owned" and therefore as "legally terra distinctly points out that, over time, nullius." Mackey (2016, p. 48) *terra nullius* and vacant were "not used to describe land that was empty or uninhabited." Instead, she claims that the categorization of these uncultivated lands was as unpossessed or unowned as property according to European standards. Colonized land was not empty of people; but rather, it lacked legally recognized ownership, which made it available for Europeans to claim. Thus, from

a European perspective, land occupied by Indigenous groups was open to European colonization since the view was that it was void of people and societies that mattered. Mackey's theory of the intersection of the Doctrine of Discovery, the law of nature, *terra nullius*, and their use as mechanisms for justifying the appropriation of Indigenous land applies to the British colonization efforts in Mi'kma'ki, including Lunenburg County.

Nothing could have been further from the truth because the reality, however, is that Mi'kma'ki was actually inhabited by a well-organized, longstanding society that did matter. The Mi'kmaq had a government, political system, and culture, embodying a holistic democracy that included both living and non-living entities. Their elaborate way of life reflected many of their cultural practices, knowledge, and value systems, such as Msit' No'kmaq, Netukulimk, and Thinking Seven Generations Ahead. The laws that governed the Mi'kmaq paralleled those of the natural world and were, accordingly, indiscernible to Europeans. In effect, the European colonizers failed to understand the highly developed Mi'kmaq way of life. The Doctrine of Discovery and the law of nature placed the Christian God above all and limited the European perspective. By observing the Mi'kmaq in this egregious manner, the Europeans viewed the Mi'kmaq Peoples natural state as less evolved than their own. Since the Europeans understood land from both an ownership and capitalistic position, they could legally acquire land via British law and then use it for farming, resource extraction, and other types of economic endeavours. This narrow European viewpoint left the settlers incapable of understanding the intricate relationship the Mi'kmaq shared with their ancestral landscape. Mi'kmaw governance included an evolved system of rules with ties to elaborate relationships with Mi'kma'ki, which is a perspective very different from that of the British. The Mi'kmaw way of life thus opened the door for the British to make an assumption of *terra nullius*.

Following Mackey's (2016) line of thought, justification of a rationale that was dependent on the notion of "fantasy of entitlement" and that defined the Mi'kmaq as being in an inferior state of nature made Mi'kma'ki available for settler appropriation. Since the Mi'kmaq neither owned land nor partook in being in

2008) states that without the intervention of Joseph Howe and others in the 19th century, the Mi'kmaq could have faced extinction.

Settler identity that celebrates the accomplishments of the settlers and is silent about the Mi'kmaq has the effect of burying the truth about colonization and the impact it had on the Mi'kmaq. Today we celebrate the accomplishments of the settlers but ignore the fact that they stole land and resources from the Mi'kmaq. People like to feel good about themselves and their history and want to avoid discovering the uglier side of what happened during colonization. When settlers focus solely on settler history as the only version, they support the colonial narrative.

2. Myth: White Male Settler

Attached to the settler identity is the emphasis on the settlers being predominantly male. In Leigh Patel (2015) stresses that since “the individual immigrant of [the] European colonization narrative is male, (devoid of female ingenuity, relevance, and importance) revised, and whitened over time, he is lauded for being a hero of conquest, manifest destiny, and patient lawfulness” (p. 2). Patel (2015) defines this white settler hero as “one who has followed a manifest destiny and conquered savage lands and people—who is the figurehead for fantasies of equitable social mobility based on lawfulness and hard work” (p. 2). *The History of the County of Lunenburg* by DesBrisay (1960) supports the white male settler myth on both land and sea throughout the text. In Lunenburg County, the white male settler myth affirms Patel’s (2015, p. 2) contention that myth can “intertwine with the colonial purpose to accrue and protect property for white settlers, and for Indigenous Peoples to be in competition with each other for the façade of available property ownership.” As in many colonial stories, the influence of women in Lunenburg County and its settlement is missing.

Instead, the narrative reflects the well-ingrained western perspective of the success of historic towns such as Mahone Bay and Lunenburg, all cast in terms of men's work. All over Lunenburg County, colonial celebrations, street names, and colonial placenames adorn and commemorate the essential male ingenuity that shaped the history of the place.

3. Myth: White Superiority

Boyd (2004) describes white supremacy as the inherent belief that European "white" people are superior to other groups in society. Boyd (2004) states that this conviction promotes the assumption that people with lighter coloured skin are at the forefront with respect to specific characteristics, traits, and attributes compared to people of other backgrounds. Boyd (2004) contends that white people typically use the term "superior" to describe a political ideology that perpetuates and maintains their domination over other people from whom they have stolen land and resources.

In *A History: The Construction of Race and Racism*, David Rogers and Moira Bowman (2003) conclude that Christianity played a significant role in the emergence of race as a category of difference. They contend that during the 16th and 17th centuries, both Roman Catholic and Protestant officials questioned whether Indigenous Peoples could have souls and were human beings. Rogers and Bowman (2003) maintain that to separate themselves from the Catholic church, the Protestant Calvinist church was more reluctant than the Catholic church to consider the lack of humanness in Indigenous Peoples. Rogers and Bowman (2003) state the importance of noting that the Protestant Reformation (1517-1648) also took place when world exploration and early European colonization occurred in North America. As a result, people in Europe were gaining an increased awareness of other cultures and people. Although the origins of racism are complex, Christianity, certainly during this period, impacted how Christians negatively

perceived, grouped, and ranked people who were not white or Christian. Consequently, during the European colonization of Mi'kma'ki, the Christian foundation for European white supremacy played a prominent role in settlers' disparaging understanding of the Mi'kmaq.

Like Mackey (2016), Elder Paul (2008) demonstrates that during European exploration in the 15th century, the hidden roots of white superiority ran deep and tied into Christian beliefs known as the Doctrine of Discovery. Elder Paul (2008) argues that Roman Catholic Papal decrees created this religious dispensation, which stated that since non-Roman Catholics could not own land, explorers could claim territory on behalf of Roman Catholic monarchs. The Doctrine of Discovery enabled European explorers to use religious, political, and legal justification to seize Indigenous lands such as Mi'kma'ki. Elder Paul (2008) also maintains that European explorers used the Doctrine of Discovery and the concept of European Christian superiority to make inaccurate assumptions that Indigenous groups such as the Mi'kmaq were inferior.

Elder Paul's (2008, 2017) research on early Norse saga documentation reveals that when the Norse explored North America in the 11th century, 500 years before a more sustained European colonization effort, they created inaccurate stories about the Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous Peoples. This Norse view described the Mi'kmaq as less intelligent and supported the assumption that white Europeans were superior. Elder Paul (2008) argues that from first European contact, early European explorers and trade operators considered the Mi'kmaq to be everything from subhuman to non-human, resulting in these unfounded assumptions about the Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous Peoples and thus instilling a perception that supported the ideology of white supremacy. Elder Paul (2008, 2017) contends that despite proof, settlers are still reluctant, even today, to accept that the Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous Peoples had

advanced cultures and civilizations prior to European colonization. Elder Paul (2008) argues that this rigid stereotype about the Mi'kmaq continues today despite evidence to the contrary.

Elder Paul (2008) concludes that British perceptions of superiority enabled the leaders to dictate English values as the preferred way of life during their colonization quests. He says that, since the English considered British doctrine to be the universally desirable mode of civilization, they could not understand the Mi'kmaq as sovereign and sophisticated. One might suggest that because the British incorrectly believed themselves to be the superior universal race, they were racially illiterate and incapable of comprehending equality among all humans, regardless of diversity.

Jacobs (2011) calls this type of narrative “white blindfold history,” a phrase that the former Prime Minister John Howard of Australia coined. Jacobs (2011) affirms that the purpose of “white blindfold history” was to create a narrative that places European settlers in a better light than the Indigenous Peoples whose lands they colonized. She concludes that colonial narratives disguised as colonial myths, such as Indigenous Peoples being savage and primitive, supported the inevitable Eurocentric civilization. She notes that by creating history through the dominant lens, the British succeeded in early encroachments, dispossessions, and land settlements throughout North America. Because they failed to understand who the Mi'kmaq were, Elder Paul (2008, 2017, p. 9) suggests that the colonizers could view themselves as the “superior race,” rendering them unable to fathom their actions as abusive and disagreeable to the Mi'kmaq.

Horne (2018) further explains that since Europeans had little exposure to the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples, they used their inflated sense of themselves to create negative images about people who were not European. Horne (2018) demonstrates that this sense of settler

entitlement discourse supported the inaccurate belief that human skin color and intelligence are intertwined, which subsequently reinforced the myth that whites were superior.

As I argued in my master's thesis, various settler myths, Indigenous stereotypes, and tropes supported the settler identity, enabling settlers to move to Mi'kma'ki and remain blind to the impact of their arrival on the Mi'kmaq. As a result, these egregious beliefs became normalized across settler society as a means of escaping complicity in the various forms of violence directed towards the Mi'kmaq, which was a necessary precondition for European colonization. Emma LaRocque's (2011) work, *When the Other Is Me: Native Resistance Discourse*, exposes how various stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples, such as savage, uncivilized, scalpers, and violent warriors, were used as mechanisms to create an unequal colonizer/colonized relationship that was necessary for colonization to occur. LaRocque (2011) maintains that Europeans used these terms to support the rationale for their occupation of lands belonging to Indigenous Peoples and the subsequent displacement of the inhabitants. LaRocque (2011) argues that the intentional dispossession of Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island and its violent legacy have created a powerful-powerless relationship between settlers and Indigenous Peoples. This unequal balance of power was an important function in maintaining racism as a mechanism for colonization, which LaRocque (2011) argues also helps maintain this power structure through the creation of new Indigenous stereotypes and myths today.

Mackey (2016) backs up LaRocque's argument by exposing the many ways the Canadian government and citizens continue to use a fabricated colonial discourse to justify the continued dispossession and occupation of Indigenous land and to support their resource extraction interests. Her most emphatic assertion is that, by and large, the basis for present-day Canadian governance is the British colonization of Canada and its notion of sovereignty. This type of

nation-state bases its legitimacy on a legal assumption and its claim to sovereignty, which usurps Indigenous sovereignty. As mentioned, a key aspect of Canadian sovereignty is that all title to land and resources belongs to the Crown. This concept is the foundation of the transfer to settlers of ownership rights for virtually all of Lunenburg County and the ousting of the Mi'kmaq from the lands and resources they had occupied and enjoyed for more than 13,500 years. The entire British land ownership system based on Crown grants stems from the settler myth that North America, which included Mi'kma'ki, was *terra nullius* and therefore available to settlers.

4. Myth: Benevolent Peacekeeper

Regan's (2010) scholarship presents an excellent case that reveals the hidden agenda of mainstream Eurocentric Canadian colonial history related to stereotypes and myths. Through her research, Regan (2010) points out the negative influence of Indigenous racial stereotypes and exposes the intentional reasons behind the fabricated creation of the myth of the peace-loving Canadian. Regan (2010, p. 11, p. 213) has shown how settlers deliberately use myths such as "the benevolent peace-keeping Canadian" as a means of deriving values and worth from colonial history. She further exposes the role of myths and stereotypes that help maintain the benefits of colonization for the status quo at the expense of Indigenous Peoples.

Regan (2010) suggests that the origins of the famous "benevolent peace-loving Canadian myth" began with the colonization of Canada. She shows that this term was intentional and used to create a façade that makes the settlers appear peaceful and not perpetrators of violence. She makes a special connection to the tremendous hidden power of the benevolent peace-loving settler myth that reinforces Canada's celebratory colonial narrative. For example, a juxtaposition of the colonization of Canada with the overt colonial violence of the United States traditionally portrays Canada's history as a relatively peaceful process in comparison. Such a comparison intentionally excludes the purposeful violent injustices done to Indigenous Peoples such as the

Mi'kmaq. Regan (2010, p. 11) argues that “a purpose of this benevolent peace-keeping myth is to create a positive national image, which helps to deflect the hidden realities, which are the systems of oppression placed on the Indigenous Peoples for colonization to work.”

The Use of Indigenous Stereotypes to Support Settler Identity

The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2021) describes a stereotype as “a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group, and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.” Examples of stereotypes that supported the settler narrative and displayed the Mi'kmaq in a negative way throughout Lunenburg County include warrior and uncivilized savage.

1. Stereotype: Indigenous Warrior

As with the benevolent peace-keeping myth, the purpose of the Indigenous warrior stereotype is multifaceted. The foundation of Canadian colonization stemming from Mackey's notion of (2016) the “fantasy of entitlement” enabled settlers to appropriate land and resources from Indigenous Peoples such as the Mi'kmaq. Conflict was therefore bound to arise. One of the conundrums facing settlers was the enormous reverence and respect that the Indigenous Peoples had for maintaining peace at all costs. To deflect the reality that the Mi'kmaq were peaceful, the British employed a number of violent measures for appropriating Mi'kmaw territory; a primary one was the use of the Indigenous stereotype that depicted the Mi'kmaq as fierce, savage warriors.

For the Mi'kmaq, maintaining peaceful relations is exemplified in the ceremony known as Burying the Hatchet (Battiste, 2016). This meaningful Mi'kmaw ceremony was steeped in tradition and had significant purpose and meaning related to amicable negotiations and the establishment of peaceful agreements between two parties in disagreement. Battiste (2016)

reminds us that part of the treaty negotiation process between the Mi'kmaq and the British included a Burying the Hatchet ceremony. This Mi'kmaw custom helped conclude the end of war and solidified the reverence of peace, neutrality, and conciliatory practices for both the Mi'kmaq and the English. Despite the inclusion of important Mi'kmaw ceremonial processes, such as Burying the Hatchet, as a necessary part of the treaty negotiations, Battiste (2016) affirms that the British; other settlers; and, more recently, the Canadian government often ignore the essential aspects of Mi'kmaw negotiation. Battiste (2016) argues that instead of Burying the Hatchet signifying peace, many acts of violence toward the Mi'kmaq occurred, including actions that nearly exterminated them.

Most mainstream history however, does not describe the Mi'kmaq as practising peaceful negotiations but instead emphasizes the Indigenous warrior stereotype and all its associations to create an egregiously inaccurate depiction of the Mi'kmaq that makes them appear aggressive and violent, especially compared to the colonizers portrayed according to the peace-keeping settler myth. Any examination of settler identity requires an understanding of the discrepancy between the settler view and the Indigenous view of Canada's history, especially with respect to the violence that occurred during colonization. Regan (2010) and Battiste (2016) describe this contrast as a necessary construct that enabled the portrayal of Indigenous Peoples as violent, especially compared to the supposedly benevolent peace-keeping settlers. This kind of description of the Mi'kmaq in a variety of historical narratives is a recurring theme in DesBrisay's (1960) work.

One of the most famous local settler narratives that support settler identity in the Lunenburg/Mahone Bay area is the legend of the Island with the Bloody Hand. This colonial historical account uses multiple myths and stereotypes to create the egregious belief that the

Mi'kmaq were violent and savage and that settlers were innocent and peaceful. The Island with the Bloody Hand tells the tragic fate of the Payzant family, who, in May 1756, settled on an island in the waters of Mahone Bay. This story reinforced the incorrect assumption that the Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous Peoples alone used scalping and that the European settlers were the helpless victims. Over time, narratives such as the Island with the Bloody Hand reinforced the inaccurate perception that the Mi'kmaq were the foremost perpetrators of this form of violence, ignoring the role of Europeans in perpetuating its use. The use of this stereotype as a central theme in the story deflected the fact that the British were prolific in employing this aspect of warfare. The influence of this story lies in its continued expression in one form or another for more than 260 years, persisting into the 21st century as part of the colonial history of Lunenburg County and a component of the local settler identity.

In their work, *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years*, Bigelow and Peterson (1998) state that most written documentation accuses Indigenous Peoples of using scalping as their primary method of dealing with enemies. On the other hand, the European colonizers' prolific use of scalping to reduce the Indigenous populations often went unnoticed. Several examples exist of instances in which the British issued scalping proclamations directed explicitly towards the Mi'kmaq: Governor Lawrence in 1753, Governor Cornwallis in 1749, and Governor Shirley of Massachusetts in 1744 (Nova Scotia Archives).

2. Stereotype: Savage

Elder Paul's (2008, p. 8) extensive work demonstrates how "the subjugation of Indigenous Peoples, like the Mi'kmaq, by the English Crown, was accomplished using great barbarity [which] has been ignored, hidden and downplayed," with the violent actions instead cast the violent actions primarily on the Mi'kmaq. For example, even though Elder Paul's (2008)

research drew on colonial French and English documents that proved the intentional hunting down of the Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous Peoples, this startling revelation is still not part of today's historical narrative.

Elder Paul (2008) notes that early European scholars documented the Mi'kmaq Peoples sophisticated form of government, including such values as democracy, sustainability, and human rights. However, this was not how the settlers perceived them because this view was inconsistent with key aspects of settler identity. Instead, Elder Paul (2008, p. 1) states that the “European colonizers justified the horrors that would soon commence” by labeling the Mi'kmaq with negative terms such as “barbaric and savage” and by denying the presence among them of a legitimate system of governance. Elder Paul (2008, p. 1) claims that the goal of creating the portrayal of the Mi'kmaq as “uncivilized” was to mollify settler “consciences when the slaughter of the Mi'kmaq and the dispossession of their homeland and its resources began.” He says that it might also have served a legal purpose. In refusing to acknowledge the existence of the seven Mi'kmaw districts in Mi'kma'ki, the authority of Mi'kmaw chiefs, and the legacy of Mi'kmaw

warfare aimed at the Mi'kmaq. Elder Paul (2008) maintains that John Gorham commanded and trained this organized militia to use cutthroat tactics such as violent killing and scalping in order to eliminate the Mi'kmaq and their Acadian allies. The John Gorham entry by John Krugler (2016) in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography provides a biography of John Gorham and an account of his brutal mercenaries, Gorham's Rangers, which confirms their role as integral to the British takeover of Mi'kma'ki.

Elder Hunt (personal communication, September 20, 2020) adds an additional fact that is not well known concerning the amount of land in the Mahone Bay area that the British granted to John Gorham for his successful Mi'kmaw scalping enterprise. Elder Hunt said this grant comprised more than 300 hundred acres at the end of Second Peninsula, two large nearby islands, a peninsula leading from the community of Mahone Bay, and other islands in the waters of Mahone Bay. Today, the name Gorham's Point marks a spot at the end of present-day Second Peninsula in "honour" of this person and his role in the colonization of Mi'kma'ki.

Purposeful Erasure

For the overall colonial project to work, narrative erasure was a necessary element. This process is evident in the maintenance of the symbolism of the colonial narrative and settler identity in conjunction with the intentional removing of information and data that validates the Mi'kmaw position and their inherent rights to Mi'kma'ki. Patel (2015) calls this type of narrative a malignant fiction, and this kind of deliberate falsification of facts erased the longstanding presence of the Mi'kmaq in Lunenburg County, placed them in a negative light, covered up treaty obligations, and obscured the genocidal violence that the British employed to target them.

A critical component of the overall Canadian settler identity is the belief that we live in a reasonably inclusive society. Lowan and Barker (2015) state that Canadians take pride in being

open and accepting of differences. They also consider that politeness, respectfulness, and peacekeeping are central attributes of the Canadian persona. Lowan and Barker (2015) go on to expose the purposeful omission from the Canadian narrative of the fact that Canada is a country whose growth derived from violence, invasion, displacement, and genocidal actions towards the original inhabitants. They state (2015, p. 1) that Canadians prefer “not to talk about the questionable legal and political basis of their country [or] their history of profiting from invasion and dispossession.” Lowan and Barker (2015) remind us that Canada is a state that breaks treaties and uses policing and starvation as methods of stealing Indigenous land and resources. In other words, the foundation of Canadian identity lies in a fictitious narrative that defines who Canadians claim to be and that purposely excludes the various forms of genocide directed at the original peoples.

Patel (2015) concurs that settler origins are deeply rooted in European capitalistic interests in Canada at the expense of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. Patel (2015, p. 1) states that from the outset, the governance of European colonization across Canada had an “intentional hidden objective of the dehumanization of Indigenous Peoples wrought by the insatiable settler capitalist project.” She argues that central to the European settlement of Canada was the need for the territorial expansion and exploitation of land that the original inhabitants occupied. The erasure of the existence of Indigenous Peoples and their sovereign rights therefore constituted a necessary aspect of settler logistics.

Erasure of the Mi’kmaq Peoples Longstanding Presence in Lunenburg County

As with most Canadian European colonization history, the view through the European settler lens defined the documentation of the historical narrative of Lunenburg County. The view of history from the perspective of the Mi’kmaq is missing. Most historical accounts leave out any

mention of the involuntary entanglement of the Mi'kmaq in a joint war with their French and Acadian allies against the British invasion and the Protestant colonization of Atlantic Canada (Reid, 2010).

In *Cornwallis: The Violent Birth of Halifax*, Jon Tattrie (2013) concurs and adds that a less-discussed component of Lunenburg County history was the intentional reason for the founding of the British settlement of the Town of Lunenburg. During his research, Tattrie (2013) found that Britain's primary purpose for initiating the settlement at Mirlegueche was to populate the land with foreign European Protestants. The goal was that the settlement that would become Lunenburg would shore up the British hold over the territory, thus undermining both the Mi'kmaw hegemony over their traditional region and the settlements of the Acadians, who had been sharing numerous places along the South Shore with the Mi'kmaq for over a century.

A further consideration is that the iconic settler representation in Lunenburg is just one example of narratives that help to cover up, as Patel (2015) notes, Britain's desire to claim the land as a form of property that a small proportion of people control. The use of an inaccurate colonial fiction enabled the concealment of the widespread violence of European colonization in favour of the positive settler narrative. In this manner, the writing of these narratives formed the backdrop for the entirety of Atlantic Canadian history and continues to do so today.

Before the arrival of European settlers to Lunenburg County, the Mi'kmaq had lived and thrived in the area for thousands of years. Many Mi'kmaq believe they have been here since time immemorial. The Mi'kmaq had their own distinct cultures, languages, and ways of knowing, and intricate connections to the land and water. Indian Point in Mahone Bay was their headquarters and a significant geographic location. Today, a walk around the nearby communities of the Town of Mahone Bay and Lunenburg reveals very little evidence of this long Mi'kmaw history in the

cultural landscape of local colonial settlements. Even though the Mi'kmaq Peoples deep-rooted presence is unvalidated, one does not have to look far to find an abundance of evidence of their existence all over Lunenburg County. For example, while conducting research for the Mahone Bay Museum, the decolonization committee encountered a number of archeologists and curators from the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre, the Nova Scotia Museum, and the DesBrisay Museum, who agreed with the necessity to red-flag the Mahone Bay area as containing important Mi'kmaw cultural landscapes and communities. Over the years, scientists have found various forms of evidence of the Mi'kmaw presence in and around these places, such as sacred burial sites; summer encampments; numerous shell middens; tools such as spears, arrows, and knives; and a variety of items made from stone, bone, and other materials. The age of some of this evidence is 5000 years and more. During a walk on the low-tide shoreline at Oakland or Indian Point, finding evidence of the Mi'kmaq, such as the arrowhead that a resident located in July 2021, is not uncommon.

When I mentioned the insurmountable evidence of the presence of the Mi'kmaq in and around Mahone Bay to my Mi'kmaw friend Flo, she responded as only she can do:

Heck Hun! All of Mi'kma'ki should be red-flagged, not just the Mahone Bay area. If you did the same type of research that you have done anywhere throughout Nova Scotia, you would find similar evidence, as we lived everywhere. The settler narrative refuses to acknowledge our existence, even though we have been here for over 13,500 years. If you know what to look for, you can find us in every nook and cranny, every lake and river, every ocean bay and inlet!

Mechanisms Used to Erase the Mi'kmaw Presence in Lunenburg County

A number of mechanisms resulted in the eradication of the Mi'kmaw presence in Lunenburg County: written documentation, erasure of Mi'kmaw place names, and the hidden agenda behind public celebrations of colonial history.

1. Written Documentation

Written documentation is a method that normalizes the colonial narrative and supports the persistence of European accounts of events over the Indigenous versions. When a Eurocentric perspective guides the writing, local history derives from chronicled and commemorated colonial reports, whose preparation was intentionally for the benefit of European colonization at a devastating cost to the Mi'kmaq. Another aspect of written colonial discourse is cognitive imperialism, which Battiste (2016) argues is a form of mental manipulation that values and validates Eurocentric Canadian knowledge as the primary source of knowledge, thus ignoring and burying Indigenous knowledge-based systems. When applied to Lunenburg County, cognitive imperialism includes the disclaiming of the legitimacy of the Mi'kmaw narrative and foregrounds the settler narrative instead. For example, until recently, mainstream written descriptions informed the teaching of colonial history through all levels of education, excluding the fact that all colonial towns in Mi'kma'ki, such as Mahone Bay and Lunenburg, exist on unceded Mi'kmaw territory. The written narrative of Lunenburg County also fails to acknowledge that colonialization often came at the expense of the Mi'kmaq and pushed them to the margins of their environment.

Although more recent alternative texts do highlight the Mi'kmaw perspective, a mainstream settler lens still provides the point of view for most of the literature about Lunenburg County. An important point is that many still consider DesBrisay's (1968) *The History of the*

County of Lunenburg to be one of the best historical accounts of the area, and numerous scholars believe this text to be the authority on early British settlement in Canada.

A final point is that documenting historical narrative via written text leaves the impression that the recorded events are permanent, in the past, with little or no possibility of other interpretations. In effect, written narratives perpetuate history as fixed ideas in time; erase other historical points of view; and ignore the perception that history is fluid, continues to change, and connects to causes and consequences in the present day. An example of the fluidity and non-static nature of history is the recent troubling account of the finding of unmarked gravesites of children who attended residential schools across Canada. This immovable piece of history of Canada's legacy of residential schools, which Indigenous Peoples have always sorrowfully known, is finally in the open and available for questioning. Settlers are learning that the purpose of these government-funded institutions was not for the benefit of Indigenous Peoples but part of a policy that represented an attempt to assimilate Indigenous children and destroy their culture and language.

2. Erasure of Mi'kmaw Placenames

The purposeful erasure of Mi'kmaw placenames is an example of a colonial tool for nullifying the presence of the Mi'kmaq, along with their relationship with and reverence for the geography and cultural landscape of Mi'kma'ki. Elder Hunt (personal communication, May 1, 2021) remarks that using male settler names was a common practice for labelling specific geographic locations, such as peninsulas, islands, rivers, lakes, and streets. She notes that this colonial naming method glorifies the contribution of the colonial male to an area as well as his subsequent family's settler identity. Elder Hunt (personal communication, May 1, 2021) added that thankfully, Ta'n Weji-sqalia'tiek now exists as a digital atlas and website project for

documenting the plethora of Mi'kmaw placenames and, hence, the presence of the Mi'kmaq within Mi'kma'ki. This electronic database is continually evolving, but already contains more than 1,500 Mi'kmaw placenames that have been mapped to date. Where possible, explanations help the reader understand the specific connection of the Mi'kmaq with a particular Mi'kma'ki landscape. Elder Hunt also concedes that whether the mainstream Lunenburg County narrative fails to hold Mi'kmaw placenames in high regard is unimportant because, from a Mi'kmaw point of view, these placenames signify places that are culturally relevant and socially important to the Mi'kmaq. She adds that the use of Ta'n Weji-sqalia'tiek is an excellent way to reimagine Mi'kmaw-settler relations since it can help create a shared narrative that begins with an understanding of the sacred relationship the Mi'kmaq have with the land and water. She states that acquiring a Mi'kmaw understanding of the recognition and honouring of these local places can be a beginning of the collective reimagining and re-creation of the shared story of the Mi'kmaq and non-Indigenous people in Mi'kma'ki.

F U - M D

Since the Mi'kmaq language is a verb-based language, it does not translate directly into English, which is a noun-based language. Thus, the entire context and meaning behind Mi'kmaw placenames might not be fully comprehensible in English. The following are examples of Mi'kmaw names for locations in Lunenburg County, along with the English equivalent and a translation of the Mi'kmaw version.

Amaqapskekek

Mi'kmaw placename for *Gold River*

English Translation: *Rushing over rocks*

Apsamkuk

Mi'kmaw placename for *Petite Rivière*

English Translation: *A little sand gully*

Atuomkuk

Mi'kmaw placename for which is part of the LaHave River system
English Translation: *At the sandy lake*

E'se'katik:

Mi'kmaw placename for *Lunenburg*, before colonization
English Translation: *At the place of clams*

Kepijoqjik

Mi'kmaw placename for *Aspotogan Harbour*
English Translation: *At the blocking area*

Kpiteskaqnk / Kepijoqu'jk

Mi'kmaw placename for *Aspotogan*
English Translation: *Blockade place*

Lamso'ql

Mi'kmaw place name for *The Ovens Park*
English Translation: *Caverns*

L'nui-Maqmikew

Mi'kmaw placename for the as well as the *Reserve land at Gold River*
English Translation: *Reserve land*

L'nui-Wksawey

Mi'kmaw placename for *Indian Point*
No precise translation is known. Several sources have indicated that Indian Point was the political and government headquarters for summer meetings of the chiefs of all seven districts of Mi'kma'ki before and during the early days of European colonization (Ta'n Weji-sqalia'tiek, Mi'kmaw Place Names, 2019). This fact gives rise to Mahone Bay and its surrounding coastal area as a place of significance to the Mi'kmaq.

Memqaske'katik

Mi'kmaw placename for *Broad Cove*
Closest English Translation: *At the clearing*

Mesamuetek

Mi'kmaw placename for *LaHave Island*
Closest English Translation:

Mushamush

Mi'kmaw oral history suggests that the Mi'kmaq called the area around the town of Mahone Bay Mushamush. The Mushamush region includes Blockhouse, Clearland, the Town of Mahone Bay, and the Big and Little Mushamush Lake system and river, which empties into Mahone Bay Harbour.

Closet English Translation: Suggested translation: *muddy waters*
(Personal communication, Elder Hunt, May 1, 2021).

Meneskwe’k

Mi’kmaw placename for *Chester*

Closest English Translation (uncertain but possible): *The marshy place*

Pijinuiskaq

Mi’kmaw placename for the *LaHave River*

Closest English Translation: *River of long joints/river branches*

Piktu’juk

Mi’kmaw placename for *Martins River*, which flows into the head of Indian Point

Closest English Translation: *Place of small explosions*

Plawejue’katic

Mi’kmaw placename for *Partridge Island* located on Lake Mushamush

Closest English Translation: *At the place of the partridge*

Sin So’sepe’katic

Mi’kmaw placename for *Bridgewater*

Closest English Translation:

Tuitnek

Mi’kmaw placename for *Maitland*

Closest English Translation: *At the outflow*

Sulieweykitk

Mi’kmaw placename for *New Germany*, which is located on the LaHave River

Closest English Translation: *Flowing money (as in a river)*

Waqmiaq

Mi’kmaw Placename for *New Ross*

Closest English Translation: *Clean flowing water*

Wta’nkuk

Mi’kmaw placename for *Tancook Island*

Closest English Translation: *Facing the open sea.*

Local Mi’kmaw history suggests that Wta’nkuk was a critical navigational marker when the Mi’kmaq were canoeing across the waters of Mahone Bay. It would be important that Wta’nkuk was always between the individual in their canoe and the wide-open Atlantic. If they were on the wrong side of Wta’nkuk, they would be facing the open sea and would be in potentially rougher seas, higher waves, and further away from land. Hence, the term suggests keeping this significant land facing the open sea and between the person and the large wide-open expansive ocean.

(Ta’n Weji-sqalia’tiek, 2019)

3. The Hidden Agenda behind Public Celebrations of Colonial History

Another method of maintaining the colonial narrative, which also helps keep the Mi'kmaw history and presence hidden, is the varied ways settlers celebrate their colonial past. Colonial public celebration comes in many forms, such as monuments, signage, buildings, events, and annual festivals as well as the acknowledgement of important colonial historical figures, historical events, industry, and spaces, both locally and nationally. These mainstream techniques highlight the importance of valuing colonial narrative and identity over other histories, such as that of the Mi'kmaq, that have been excluded and erased.

For example, when I was growing up in Lunenburg, annual events such as the Lunenburg Fisheries Exhibition and Parade, Lunenburg Heritage Day, and International Dory Races celebrated Lunenburg's colonial history. In contrast, I was ignorant of the Mi'kmaq Peoples history in the area and of anything positive about their history and culture. In that regard, my experience would not have differed from that of other settlers growing up in Lunenburg County. The following sections highlight some of these mechanisms that perpetuate the colonial version of history and ignore the Mi'kmaw perspective.

Museums

Historically, people have considered museums to be western ideological educational spaces deep-seated in western museological theory, standards, and practice. Lunenburg County museums follow this traditional museological infrastructure, prioritizing Canadian/European history, art, and culture stemming from European colonization. One example is the Mahone Bay Museum (known as the Mahone Bay Settlers Museum until 2015), which was established in 1979, when the Mahone Bay Founder's Society formed in order to organize the 225th anniversary celebration of the "founding" of the European settlement. From the beginning, the focus of the

museum has been settler ideology; a board of directors provides leadership, with help from a small group of paid staff and a dedicated local community. The museum offers visitors and the town population an in-depth understanding of the community's colonial heritage. Until the arrival of Curator Lyne Allain in 2016, the museological practices of the museum had no Mi'kmaw input or representation.

Ship Building Legacy

Shipbuilding is an important aspect of the proud colonial history of Lunenburg, Mahone Bay, and other Lunenburg County communities. The abundance of timber in Mi'kma'ki made shipbuilding relatively inexpensive and historically a major pillar of the local economy. During

sailing ship struck a reef and sank off Haiti in 1946, the spirit and history of the original *Bluenose* remain alive in the current reproduction of the schooner. The Government of Nova Scotia now owns the replica of the *Bluenose*, which has the title of Nova Scotia's Sailing Ambassador and which visits ports worldwide, welcomes visitors, and serves as a constant link to Atlantic Canada's colonial past. A significant source of Lunenburg pride is its fame as the birthplace of the original *Bluenose* and the home of its replica. Many consider the *Bluenose* to be a Canadian icon. Its image is on a Canadian stamp, on the back of the Canadian dime, and on Nova Scotia license plates. Numerous paintings, photographs, ship models, books, ballads, songs, and other memorabilia continue to perpetuate its seafaring legacy.

Deriving value and historical worth from the shipbuilding industry and sailing vessels of the past is a colonial mechanism that keeps the local historical legacy alive. In this manner, the celebration of the colonial narrative endures, adding to the ongoing denial of the hidden violent colonial conflict against the Mi'kmaq and of its impact today.

Historical Markers

Another way to maintain the colonial narrative and the erasure of the Indigenous storyline is to use historical markers. This type of commemoration includes signage, statues, and colonial architecture that celebrate individuals, events, geographic locations, economies, and events that citizens consider to be important features of the local colonization of an area.

1. Signage

An easy way to commemorate local colonial history, which is also a type of written documentation, is to employ signage, such as plaques and more prominent signs that create a compelling image of settler permanence and progress in an area. The visual graphics of signage that foreground the colonial narrative cement the presence of Indigenous Peoples in the past and maintain its erasure from view.

In *Decolonizing B.C.'s Roadside History | Culturally Modified*, Joanne Hammond (2020) contends, "Historical signage reproduces colonial rhetoric which helps to maintain discriminatory structures of settler colonialism by rationalizing unjust historical acts and, in turn, rationalize contemporary marginalization of Indigenous Peoples." Hammond (2020) further argues that the removal of the history of Indigenous Peoples from the local colonial storyline enables the settler narrative to work seamlessly against justice and reconciliation by convincing settlers that there is nothing to reconcile.

Hammond's (2020) perspective applies to the many signs on display throughout Lunenburg County and their use for commemorating colonial history and keeping the Mi'kmaw account hidden. Many historical signs in the towns of Mahone Bay and Lunenburg memorialize and celebrate colonial messages about the local community history. Such signage demonstrates the immense value the citizens place on the town's colonial historical perspective and ensures the ongoing covering up of the significant presence of the Mi'kmaq.

The Mahone Bay Founding Family sign, which currently lists only the original settler families, is an example of signage that erases the Mi'kmaw history in the area. As the first sign that visitors often read when entering the Town of Mahone Bay and that relates its colonial history, it functions as a celebratory technique to help solidify the colonial account of Lunenburg

County, thus supporting the myths, stereotypes, and tropes that were necessary for European colonization in Mi'kma'ki. Although recent efforts have resulted in the inclusion of Mi'kmaw history on this sign, the town refused to include text that acknowledges that the town is on unceded Mi'kmaw territory.

As educational imagery that grossly overlooks and keeps hidden the enormous prior Mi'kmaw occupation of their Mi'kma'ki territory, their cultural landscape in the area, and their 13,500-year-old way of life, this type of signage contributes to the erasure of the Mi'kmaq Peoples presence in Lunenburg County and helps legitimize and keep the overall colonial project firmly in place into the present day. Such signs support a colonial historical narrative that settlers must tell themselves repeatedly to help justify and explain the historical course of events that ignores the violence towards the original inhabitants. These signs firm up a culturally bound storyline and the use of myths, stereotypes, and tropes that support the colonial game plan.

2. Historic Buildings

Historic buildings are designated locations that represent a reflection of the past. Citizens consider their preservation valuable because of their cultural and historical worth. In Lunenburg County, many historic sites promote the importance of European colonization. The term Old Town Lunenburg identifies the older section of the Town of Lunenburg, with its many well-preserved historic buildings that confirm Lunenburg's standing as one of the best surviving examples of a planned British settlement from the North American colonization period. One reason for Lunenburg's pristine colonial preservation is that Lunenburgers have intentionally taken measures to safeguard the original British architecture. In 1995, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) honoured this colonial settlement by placing Lunenburg on its list of World Heritage Sites.

Like Lunenburg, the Town of Mahone Bay is a classic example of a Canadian European colonial settlement that has evolved over the centuries, and the people who live there take pride in celebrating this aspect of their history. Their promotion of the town's historic buildings and unique architecture provide evidence of its pervading European settler history. Examples of physical sites that citizens consider valuable for their historical and colonial contribution in Mahone Bay include the landmark Three Churches, several heritage homes, and the Town Hall. As with many similar places, it has become a destination spot for travelers. Vacationers from around the world instantly delight in Mahone Bay's seafaring legacy, scenic harbour, well-maintained century-old Victorian homes, heritage gardens, and the iconic Three Churches. Overall, the town has a deep sense of pride in the preservation of the original European colonial settlers' lives, values, and legacy.

Throughout Lunenburg County, the physical aspect of colonial buildings in settler communities effectively provides visual reminders of the colonial past and cements the settler narrative as mainstream and permanent. Focussing attention on this colonial architecture, (e.g., in Lunenburg and Mahone Bay) enables settlers to maintain their ignorance of the history of Lunenburg County from a Mi'kmaw point of view.

3. Celebration of Historic Settler Events

Another type of historical marker is one that signifies an event occurring at a specific geographic location. Like other types of historical proclamations, these markers also contribute to the symbolic and celebratory mechanisms that preserve colonization. This purposeful narrative distortion creates the illusion of a geographic space that important history has secured and defined, thus detracting from other perspectives of the events that occurred. An example of a colonial event at a specific place in Lunenburg is the recognition of the spot where the first

foreign Protestants disembarked from ships and stepped ashore to create the Town of Lunenburg. Known as Rous' Brook to local settlers, it is an area on the eastern edge of the town. Today, the creation of Rous' Brook and Heritage Park represents the honouring of this geographic location. This territorial appropriation includes a large granite rock and an engraving that commemorates this Lunenburg County settler account.

From the beginning, through the generations that followed, and into the present, the presentation of Lunenburg County's historical colonial narrative has been intentionally favourable to the colonizers' perspective. The effect of this perspective was to obliterate the evidence of any Mi'kmaw settlements that predated the building of the British towns and surrounding settlements. By taking this narrative stance, the British justified their claims to Mi'kmaw land and resources. The settler narrative means that people remain much less versed in the prolonged Mi'kmaq occupation of the many South Shore communities and in their centuries-long presence there.

Closing Thoughts

As settlers decolonize themselves, ignorance about settler history and its relationship to contemporary identity becomes the first concerns that need addressing. Choosing to remain in the dark about the present-day settler benefits and their direct relationship with the original colonization of Mi'kma'ki is a sign of settler privilege. Although people are not responsible for the actions of their ancestors, they are responsible for learning about how they benefit from the colonial project. Exercising settler "fantasy of entitlement" (Mackey, 2016) to support mainstream discourse and remain on the sidelines about the erasure of the Mi'kmaq means choosing to be complicit in present-day colonization forged in the past.

Golden Eye

Splendid signs of winter, you are!
Elegant and tough
Your collective presence and conscientiousness
in multiple ways
Is a reminder to other species
Of how it works
For future generations
to come.



Chapter Four: Beginning with Relationship: Foundation of Decolonization

Elders and storytellers who have been given tales to carry
speak softly, reverentially, and the people hear
them. The people do not merely listen—they hear.
To hear is to have a spiritual, mental, emotional
or physical reaction to the words. Sometimes, at
very special times, you have all four reactions
and are changed forever. Share stories, fill cold nights
with the warmth of your connections, your
relationships hear each other and be made more.
That is the power of storytelling.

*(Embers by Richard Wagamese, 2016, Douglas and McIntyre.
Reprinted with permission from the publisher.)*

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how the notion of Indigenous relationship and Wilson's (2008) understanding of relational accountability have influenced every step of this study. This section highlights my growth and discernment of these Indigenous knowledge constructs and how they were fundamental to the success of this work. As with many other doctoral students, the idea for a thesis question evolved over time, and the process was dynamic and fluid. Because this work follows an Indigenous research paradigm, it is not about finding answers to specific questions. Rather, this research is concerned with the transformational possibilities open to a settler who examines who she is by honouring Mi'kmaw worldviews. A key aspect of this decolonial journey was based on Wilson's (2008) holistic understanding of relationship as an integral part of the research process and all that manifests as a result.

For me personally, the deep relationship I have with where I am from has led me to this place in time and to this research. My ancestors and our shared family history in Mi'kma'ki since 1753, my lived experience both with the land and the sea, and my Canadian Eurocentric colonial upbringing have all shaped who I am. Of course, I did not immediately realize how these

holistic, revered connections and lived relationships to place had brought me to where I am today. My Indigenous friends in Mi'kma'ki were the ones who helped me learn how the physical place where one lives is an important teacher for all the lessons needed for spending time on Mother Earth.

An important component of this research is the personal relationships that I have built over time with a number of Mi'kmaq. The many Mi'kmaq who have welcomed me into their homes have been instrumental in teaching me what Msit No'kmaq means and how to use it in research. These relationships have given me many teachings coupled with shared lived experiences that have greatly shaped every aspect of this PhD research process. Simply put, without these important relationships, both human and non-human, the realization of this dissertation would not have been possible.

When someone asks me how my research is going, I often respond that I feel like I am sitting in the cockpit of the Star Trek Enterprise as it hurtles through various galaxies at warp speed. All the ideas, life experience, and information that are related to my research interests and that are constantly being presented to me look like the infinite number of stars that are shooting towards the cockpit windows of the spaceship. This dissertation is my attempt to make sense of the insurmountable number of research ideas that neverendingly come my way and that are a direct result of all of the relationships I have developed along the way.

Relational Accountability

From the very beginning, I have attempted to follow an Indigenous research paradigm. This open-ended approach to conducting research centres around relationship and what it means from an Indigenous theoretical, methodological, ethical, and experiential Mi'kmaw point of view. For example, while documenting the decolonizing initiatives of the Mahone Bay Museum,

I tried to practise the Mi'kmaw relational constructs of Msit No'kmaq, fully immersing myself in all aspects of relationship, as a method of conducting research. Msit No'kmaq is the Mi'kmaw theoretical construct that speaks to the interconnectedness with the cosmos of all humans and everything else on earth. From the beginning, I have tried to honour Msit No'kmaq as best as a settler can and to let it be my guide for relating to myself, others, and all aspects of living. This principle includes making connections to the land and water, my colonial upbringing and history, and all life on Mother Earth as well as exploring how these connections relate to this study. Such a less-structured research approach allows continual breakthroughs, and the unfolding and emergence of new stories that have connections to the particular focus of the research at the time. The constant new stories that evolved about the Mi'kmaq led to more questions, which in turn, gave rise to literally an infinity of ideas and topics about the presence of the Mi'kmaq in Lunenburg County.

For example, when decolonizing research began at the Mahone Bay Museum, the committee did not start with an interest in archeological evidence about the Mi'kmaq in Mahone Bay. However, when we visited the DesBrisay Museum and learned about the Mi'kmaw archeological evidence found at the Indian Point burial site, that revelation led us to investigate its relationship to other Mi'kmaw archeological resources in the area. This step then prompted us to begin locating Mi'kmaw middens, summer encampments, possible travel routes via water, and more archeological items that have been found in the Mahone Bay waters throughout the years. When we learned that archeologists from the Nova Scotia Museum have conducted a number of archeological investigations in Lunenburg County over the years, we contacted them for further information. From our meeting with the Nova Scotia Museum, we grasped the huge concern about the permanent loss of Mi'kmaw archeological resources because of climate change and its

impact on coastal erosion, as well as the effects of various forms of human encroachment. From this point, as stewards of local archeology that is at risk of disappearing, we then created a committee action plan for collective work with the larger archeology community.

Storywork Principles at the Heart of the Indigenous-Settler Relationship

In her work on oral Indigenous storytelling, Archibald (2008) created seven principles that honour the holistic teachings of oral narrative in its completeness: respect, reverence, responsibility, reciprocity, interrelatedness, holism, and synergy. I applied Wilson's (2008) advice to trust the experiential process and the decisions made during research, even though they may be unexplainable at the time. As my perspectives and knowledge continued to grow and change during this research experience, in addition to oral narrative, I incorporated Archibald's principles across many aspects of this research as a guide for respectful participation in research with Indigenous Peoples. The storywork principles are particularly important for settlers to honour when building relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

When I first began my research, I knew very little about the Mi'kmaq or their own unique culture and traditions, which are very different from mine. Thus, it was crucial to incorporate Archibald's storywork principles into my research so that I was able to enter the Mi'kmaw cultural landscape in a respectful way. Practising Archibald's (2008) storywork principles as a protocol for working within the Mi'kmaw community was one way that I tried to show respect for Mi'kmaw culture and traditions and to avoid unintentional disrespect that can result from lack of knowledge and understanding. Archibald (2008) highlights the necessity of such respectful relationships for storywork to be a meaningful experience and states that "showing respect through cultural protocol, appreciating the significance of and reverence for spirituality,

honouring teacher and learner responsibilities, and practising a cyclical type of reciprocity are important lessons documented as [a] type of Indigenous methodology that works” (p.53).

As a result of keeping Archibald’s (2008) storywork principles at the forefront of Indigenous-settler relations, I was better able to navigate the cultural differences involved because of the reduced chance of being unintentionally disrespectful. In addition, the incorporation of Archibald’s (2008) storywork principles into all aspects of the research process facilitated the development of solid relationships. Although it has taken time, I have formed with fellow Mi’kmaq many amicable relationships that are reliant on trust, mutual understanding, and shared social justice goals. The one-to-one connections deriving from our shared experiences also support the foundation of our decolonization endeavours in Mi’kma’ki. Our relationships then became about achieving significant social justice goals and have since developed into lifelong familial bonds.

By practising Archibald’s storywork principles as a methodology for friendship building, I was better able to gain trust within the Mi’kmaw community. Aside from the Acadians, for the most part, historical relationships between the Mi’kmaq and settlers, including the Canadian government, have been fraught with dishonesty and have resulted in negative and devastating consequences for the Mi’kmaq. Trust has therefore become the most important component of the relationship process, a quality that can be enhanced through the practice of storywork principles as a methodology for fostering friendship. From the bonds of fellowship that have developed, I have had the honour of receiving the holistic experience of oral storywork. Without these relationships, I would have been unable to receive the Indigenous oral narratives that effectively touched my heart, mind, body, and spirit as deep modes of decolonial learning. My relationship and personal connections with the storyteller permitted an intimate learning experience that

differs greatly from the acquisition of the same story through reading a text or hearing it from an unfamiliar speaker. During this research experience, I have been blessed to be among many good Indigenous storytellers. These oral exchanges included the sharing of both their traditional oral storytelling and their present-day real-life experiences. These moments have constituted an enormous element of my decolonizing journey. These cherished oral sharing sessions were the channel for the synergy that supported my substantial learning curves. Mi'kmaw cultural ways of teaching, which are directly related to the relationship between the hearer and the storyteller, set up the right storytelling conditions that enabled my capacity for decolonialization to progress actively and helped me decipher the stories that were shared with me as significant meaning-making. The sharing of personal oral stories has facilitated the growth of my awareness of settler complicity as well as my colonial mentality and its limitations and has continued to move me to act.

Encapsulated within the notion of this shared storytelling has been riveting dialogue filled with deep and complicated discussions about Canada's violent colonial legacy and its impact on the original people of Turtle Island. When I reflect on the many shared stories I have received, I realize that connecting with the Mi'kmaq via Indigenous storywork has had the greatest impact on my own learning. Whether driving in the car, drumming, or attending a social justice event together, we are continually synergistically talking and connecting with one another through the sacred space of storytelling. The type of relationship building that results from the reciprocal actions of oral storytelling enabled me to see settler colonialism through an Indigenous lens, which helped me recognize the impact of colonization on Indigenous Peoples.

As Regan (2010) suggests, this method of settler truth telling serves as an example of how, in a research setting, Indigenous storywork can be a powerful tool for building relationships

between Indigenous Peoples and settlers. As I listened to the stories that Mi'kmaw Elders and other Mi'kmaw friends have shared with me, I began to document both them and my reflections about them as a core part of my research. In the beginning, I intuitively knew that this activity was important. As Battiste says (2013), I had to trust the process of my learning spirit as I wrote about and reflected on what I was learning from Indigenous ways of understanding the world.

Archibald (2008) explains that when a listener witnesses the sharing of traditional and personal life experience stories, those stories support the listener's ability to think, feel and "be" through the power of the oral narrative. Archibald (2008) also says that when the beauty and power embedded within a story is a vehicle for meaning-making, the story comes alive and takes on a life of its own, itself becoming the teacher. The type of learning that occurs via oral storytelling redefines its place in scholarship, highlights storywork as a process that begins with the self and speaks to the ability of stories to be transformational.

Mi'kmaw Elders and Settler Relations #1 88 375.38 Tm0G[7(R3y3h)7(ori)7(e)7(s)-6t)7(o b)-20e)7t)-20

work collectively for the broader good and places Indigenous interests and needs at the forefront of this kind of relationship. The interdependent reciprocal affinity that I share with an Elder, combined with the teachings that they have graciously shared with me, has greatly enriched my understanding of the inherent interrelationships that humans share with all life on Mother Earth. Because of this research, the relationships Elders and I have developed enhanced my discernment about the history of colonization in Canada, resource extraction and its impact on Indigenous Peoples, and their connections to the land. When reflecting on my personal growth and learning, I continue to be in awe of the role that Indigenous Elders play as significant knowledge holders who impart their wisdom and discernment to others. From their stories, I have had the privilege of being exposed to Indigenous knowledge-based systems that are centred in holistic ways of interacting with the world. By having the opportunity to interpret life through Indigenous worldviews, I have been able to grasp how all human relationships are inherently connected. I have also developed a better understanding of my role and place within the relationships that I share with all life on Mother Earth, as well as my responsibilities to future generations.

The many teachings that I have received from Elders and their stories are anchored in Mi'kmaw knowledge-based systems such as Netukulimk; Msit no' kmaq; Thinking Seven Generations Ahead; and Bartlett, Marshall, and Marshall's (2012) Etuaptmumk. Since Mi'kmaw epistemology is holistic, it seamlessly taps into all aspects of a learner's well-being, including their physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual being. Capturing the subtle nuances that occur between myself and an Elder who has welcomed me into his or her storytelling circle is virtually impossible. Time seems to stand still as the storyteller includes their lived experiences and feelings when telling a story, and kinaesthetic learners like myself can home in on the oral

lesson in greater depth. Totally captivated, I am concentrating fully on their words as I sit and listen with purposeful consciousness; their storywork connects with all my senses and with a wide range of emotions.

When an Elder chooses to share a personal experience with listeners, it is the beginning of a sacred learning journey that comes from the Elder's heart. Part of the oral narrative dance is that the listeners do not know where an Elder's story is going take them. An added dimension is the fact that Elders sometimes do not tell a story in the conventional sense, with a well-defined plot or structure, or with clear transitions that move the story along. Instead, my experience has been that an Elder often tells a story in a roundabout way. Unlike western narratives, oral stories often do not have a well-defined path with transitions that signify the story's beginning, middle, and conclusion. The beauty of this type of storytelling is that the listeners develop excellent listening skills, connecting their own emotions and imagination as active agents in the transmission of rich knowledge.

An early lesson that an Elder taught me, and one that I will always remember, was the difference between the western research method of conducting a personal interview and being invited into the home of a Mi'kmaw Elder to discuss the research. This important oral teaching opportunity happened on my first visit with Mi'kmaw Elder Nancy Whynot who offered to assist me with my master's research. When I arrived at her home, Elder Whynot noticed me carrying a clipboard and a list of printed questions. She looked at me, smiled, and said very nicely,

That is not how we do things. Today I am going to tell you all about who I am and my family. I have many photos I would like to share with you. You must know my story; it is important that you know who I am.

Listening to Elder Nancy tell stories was my first real exposure to the power of the Mi'kmaq Peoples rich oral storytelling tradition, which helps convey and make sense of information about the world through personal narrative, Mi'kmaw legends, and holistic knowledge constructs. As I continued to meet with her and listen to her teachings, I began to grasp the Indigenous storytelling protocol, and I put my direct research interests on the back burner. I followed Wilson's (2008) advice to trust the Indigenous research process and to find out where that would take me. The need to arrive at her home with a formal research outline quickly changed to looking forward to getting together for the afternoon, sharing a cup of tea or a glass of lemonade, and just chatting about whatever she wanted to talk about. As with so many of my Indigenous friends, it was our relationship, which needed to develop over time, that was the catalyst for our ability to be able to experience the intimacy of oral Indigenous storytelling together. I have not forgotten this very important teaching that Elder Nancy shared with me. Now, when an Elder invites me to witness his or her authentic storywork, I do not arrive with specific goals, objectives, or questions, and I do not jot down notes. Instead, I listen attentively to their stories.

Another interesting aspect of oral storytelling that I have observed is that I never know when an unexpected nugget of learning might emerge. I have realized that the connections I make to an Elder's oral story telling sometimes happen right away, while at other times, they require nurturing for a while before revelations can occur. I know that at some point, if not while I am listening to them tell me the story, then afterward, when I am ready to understand what they were teaching me, I will be able to bask in the sheer joy of some type of transformation. Later on, I will have an "aha moment" as I discover a deep connection to an earlier storytelling event. These types of novel discernments often occur when I am reading scholarly work, engaging in a social activist event, participating in decolonizing work at the museum, or having an experience

in my personal life. The lesson about not arriving with specific research questions and goals when an Elder invited me into her home is an example of this kind of learning. Even though this teaching happened almost six years ago, I am still learning from this crucial lesson that the Elder shared with me.

My visits with Elder Joe Mike last summer are also a good example of cumulative learning that is acquired over time and that is directly related to the relationship between the storyteller and the listener. The stories he shared with me are included in chapter Five. Elder Joe Mike has taken a lot of time to teach me about Mi'kmaw culture, traditional teachings, and Mi'kmaw knowledge-based systems. Like other Elders, he first shares many personal stories about his family and the hard colonial truths of how colonization, the Indian Act, residential schools, and different types of assimilation have negatively impacted the Mi'kmaq, his community, his family, and himself. His storytelling has provided me with the privilege of hearing an Indigenous insight into the different ways that Indigenous Peoples and settlers are historically connected to the land and how these connections relate to colonization. He also talks about the resilience and strength of the Mi'kmaq. He often says to me, "Even after all that has happened to us, we are still here!" On more than one occasion, he has said, "It took 400 years to get us in this mess, and it will take 400 years or seven generations for us to [be] restored to who we are as a people." Although I have had occasion to observe Mi'kmaw self-determination and resilience, witnessing the healing space that Elder Joe Mike recently created, combined with his oral storytelling inside the newly built wikoum (a Mi'kmaw outdoor dome-shaped dwelling), was a pivotal moment for me. These significant encounters allowed me first-hand experience of how the Mi'kmaq are reconnecting to their traditional healing and cultural practices. Even with the official forbidding of many Indigenous cultural practices for many years, I witnessed Elder

Joe Mike's courage and imagination in revitalizing and renewing these powerful Mi'kmaw sacred ceremonies.

Car Rides with Flo

Transformational Possibilities Through a N -Settler Relationship

For my master's practicum, All Nations Drum welcomed me into their powerful feminine warrior circle. Through this rich learning experience, I received sacred lessons about Indigenous drumming, knowledge, and culture, and developed many close friendships. Florence Blackett Apli'kmuj or "Flo" is one of the strong women I befriended through this Indigenous women's drumming group. Flo is originally from the Mi'kmaw community of Millbrook First Nations. She currently lives in Halifax and is studying human nutrition at Mount Saint Vincent University. She is interested in applying Mi'kmaw knowledge-based systems to understand the implications of food sustainability. Our friendship began in 2016, when I was drumming with All Nations Drum. Flo will tell you herself that it took some time before I was able to gain her trust: however, over time, we have become good friends.

Flo and I began driving to Mount Saint Vincent University regularly. From the very beginning, our brief moments of travelling back and forth to school together were filled with captivating dialogue and philosophical discussions. At the end of our car rides, my head was always spinning from our challenging discussions and honest dialogue. It was through our conversations, which consisted mostly of me listening intently to Flo, that we had an opportunity to engage in candid in-depth decolonizing discussions. From these car ride discussions, I learned first-hand from Flo about colonial oppression and systemic racism and acquired a better understanding of what white settler privilege looks like in K'jipuktuk (Mi'kmaw placename for Halifax) and other parts of Mi'kma'ki.

Flo lives her life authentically and speaks from her heart. She is not afraid to have frank, honest discussions and does not hold anything back. Flo always has perceptive and knowledgeable opinions to share, no matter what topic we are discussing. My welcome into her circle of strong women was truly an honour, and I am forever grateful to be a participant in her candid discussions and a recipient of her valuable perspective.

I think that part of the reason that we were able to become friends is that I kept Archibald's storywork principles at the forefront of our conversations as a respectful way to honour Flo's storytelling. For example, reciprocity is a storywork principle that enhanced the way that we both shared important dialogue about colonization and decolonization. In the 1989 CBC Massey Lectures, *The Real World of Technology*, with respect to social sharing of information, Ursula Franklin (1999) discusses how technology affects social communication and talks about the absence of reciprocity with the use of technology. Although Franklin (1999) does not mention Indigenous Peoples in her lecture, what she says applies to the importance of reciprocity and learning, which have to do with the constant give and take and the intimate relational interaction between a teacher and a learner. Due to the holistic aspect of how we collectively interpret the world, reciprocity occurs best when a teacher (such as a storyteller) and listener are both engaged in the same physical space. When I was listening to this Massey lecture, I instantly thought of my relationship with Flo. The give and take between individuals that Franklin (1999) speaks about is the essence of our relationship. Our friendship connects to the interrelated holistic nuances that occur when I am listening to Flo, which facilitates synergistic learning for both of us and derives from multiple reciprocal exchanges between us that have resulted in my deep learning about colonization and decolonization. This revered and respectful way of supporting relationship building between a Mi'kmaq and a settler enabled

me to listen to and learn from Flo and led to my acquisition of a better understanding of my role as an Indigenous ally and advocate for social justice.

Over time, we developed a strong enough relationship that Flo was comfortable sharing with me some of the challenges she faces in her day-to-day life just because she is Indigenous. The relationship that Flo and I formed allowed me to be invited into a different cultural/social world from my own. Our car rides provided a safe space where we could explore complex racist issues together. Flo needed to trust me, and because I needed to give her the freedom to talk, I would listen and not be judgmental. I also trusted Flo to call me out when I was off base. For our relationship to work, its roots had to be these Indigenous relational principles.

Co-Writing for Social Justice

Another example of what can transpire between Indigenous Peoples and settlers when their relationships stem from mutual respect is the recent social justice news columns that Flo and I regularly submit to *The Nova Scotia Advocate*. In December 2020, Flo noticed an advertisement in the *Nova Scotia Advocate*, which is an online local news source that provides the important service of giving a voice to the many Nova Scotians who are often ignored. They are especially interested in stories that include the lived experiences that mainstream media frequently overlook, and they were looking for new writers. Flo and I discussed pitching an idea to the editor: writing about our car ride conversations. Our pitch for a news article was about the transformational dialogue that occurs when a Mi'kmaw and a settler university student share car rides together on their way back and forth to Mount Saint Vincent University. The editor liked our idea, so we began discussing possible conversations for submission. We already had a rough template to draw from because I had included these conversations in my research as examples of my own decolonial learning as a direct result of the friendship that had developed between us.

The partnership Flo and I formed to publish her stories for *The Nova Scotia Advocate* is a great example of Indigenous allyship and a prime indication of what can happen when two individuals with very different upbringings become true friends, with shared interests in addressing human rights and social justice issues fostering their comradery. Even before *The Nova Scotia Advocate* was advertising for news pieces, Flo and I had already jokingly talked about someday publishing a book containing our conversations and the teachings she has offered to me. I have suggested to her that an appropriate title for the book would be *Car Rides with Flo!* Chapter five includes the published stories as examples of how Indigenous-settler relations can develop through storywork.

Relationship and the Power of Our Ancestors' Stories

Ancestors who
came while writing these words
the breath of ancient
air floating through my home
through my dreams
acknowledging my existence by
tapping on my shoulder late at night
because of them silence is not an option
anymore

(*KisKaieyi-I AM READY* by Michelle Sylliboy, 2019, Rebel Press.
Reprinted with permission from the publisher.)

During a webinar entitled, *Standing Together in Righting Relations: We all are Treaty People*, Cheryl Maloney (October 6, 2020) brought up the sacred relationship between the Mi'kmaq and those who have passed over to the ancestor world. Maloney (October 6, 2020) remarked how Mi'kmaw teachings have taught us that our ancestors are always nearby, that staying connected to our ancestors is an embedded part of the Mi'kmaq culture and is integral to how they live. She further noted that each day, our ancestors live through every one of us, and it

is their voices that constantly direct our own lives. She reminded us that we must remember that our ancestors are a source of guidance and are always here for us.

When Dr. Archibald was a keynote speaker at a conference I attended a few years ago, I asked her to sign my copy of *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit*. She included the following inspiration alongside her autograph: “Travel well in the spirit of Indigenous Storywork.” Because of my Eurocentric Canadian upbringing, I have been disconnected from who I am. Through the stories that I listen to, I am reminded, as Archibald’s (2008) preface says, of the “good power of interconnections within family, community, nation culture and the land.” This reminder was certainly at the forefront when I had an opportunity to listen to Maloney (October 6, 2020) talk about ancestors. At that time, I was instantly drawn to her words and made connections with the many ancestors in my own life who daily offer guidance and direction. I felt a profound sense of closeness to my relatives who have gone before me, in part, because of the research that was engaging me. I think that discovering the connection between my ancestors and my research interests acknowledged that we shared something in common, something that was maybe even passed down intergenerationally. Because listening to ones’ ancestors was not a concept my western upbringing supported, I have lost the instinctive ability to trust in the intelligence of these innate relationships. As a result, I found that Maloney’s (October 6, 2020) wise words comforted me. I realized that she had validated the way my reality is manifested through my guiding ancestors, whose teachings have been passed down, influencing my actions today.

By attending this webinar, I was able to grapple with the process of decolonization and its transformative possibilities. After some reflection, I realized that the revelation I was having is actually decolonization in action: it was challenging my perceived settler reality that the

universality of modern western Judaeo-Christian philosophy and the superiority of western culture as it relates to life after death have shaped. From this webinar experience, I was able to acknowledge a truth that I knew deeply and intuitively, which is how the present is connected to the spiritual and physical aspects of all life: past, present, and future. I also made an association linking Msit No'kmaq, Thinking Seven Generations Ahead, being in relationship with our ancestors' guiding eye towards the future, and the way in which the combination of this rich Mi'kmaw knowledge supports the sustainability of all life on Mother Earth. Even though the physical bodies of our ancestors are no longer with us, they are still present because of their timeless synergetic devotion. This holistic, intergenerational social network of love is what directs humans and their relational responsibility to share space on Mother Earth ethically so that all forms of life, including all forms of rock, water, air, and fire, are sustainable and in balance with one another.

Mind, Body, Spirit Connection

One of my first introductions to the Indigenous idea of connecting one's spiritual life with learning came from Marie Battiste (2013) in her book, *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit*. I easily understand her term "learning spirit." The concept of spirituality did not seem, however, to be widely accepted in western academia. On several occasions, during class discussions in some of the post graduate courses, I can remember some of my fellow students disagreeing with the idea of spirituality. Whenever I suggested that spirituality can be thought of academically, their go-to response was that, since science cannot back up or validate spirituality, its use is not valid in scholarly discourse. Thankfully, I did not listen to these naysayers who would not look at learning from a holistic perspective. Since I love to learn kinaesthetically, probably as a result of my primary learning modality, holistic education that

includes the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual self was a concept that I readily grasped. My learning preference also explains why I am drawn to Indigenous knowledge-based systems and ways of knowing as methods of enhancing deep learning. As Vanessa Boris (2017) notes in *What Makes Storytelling So Effective for Learning?*, kinaesthetic learners remember the emotional connections and feelings they experience when they hear a story.

I continue to reread all of Marie Battiste's books and articles and take every opportunity to listen to her in person. When she brings up the importance of our learning spirit as a foundational component for education and learning, I immediately smile and feel a sense of comfort from her discernment of the importance of spirituality as a vehicle for learning. She validates an element sorely missing in most mainstream education: how to connect the mind, body, and spirit as a form of deep learning. I recently read an article that she wrote for Education Canada, called *Nourishing the Learning Spirit*, in which Battiste (2010) states that "life is a journey of our spirits that are in a relationship with Creator." When I read that sentence, I instantly thought about Maloney's earlier teaching and how our ancestors are always present as guides and teachers. As I read the article, I made connections to what Maloney (October 6, 2020) said and to the way my ancestors continue to influence who I am and how I live my life. I wondered if this revelation was the cumulative effect of continually engaging in Indigenous methods of conducting scholarly work.

Perhaps I should be thankful that, while I am writing my PhD dissertation, the social restrictions accompanying the COVID-19 pandemic force me to be by myself more than usual? I have thus had a copious amount of time to reflect on what I was learning and writing about. Whatever the reason, my ancestors seem to be more present than before. I realize that their spirit lives on through my learning spirit. They provide ongoing wisdom for me through family stories

that we repeatedly tell about them and/or the memories that we have of them. Even though their physical bodies are no longer present, just as Battiste (2010) suggests, they shape our collective identity as we engage in lifelong learning.

As a result of this epiphany, I now have a better sense of how my ancestors guide my learning spirit and how they also help me figure out my purpose in life and how it ties to something much larger than myself. I am most grateful that I have received teachings from

the same person. They have lived lives that I have never experienced, some good, some not so good. These experiences have taught me to listen (p. 83).

I am forever grateful for the many teachings that I have received because of our enduring friendships. By following Indigenous relational ways to make sense of the world, I have acquired a deep sense of reverence and respect and a state of awe with regard to the Mi'kmaq. To say that our shared lived experiences have been transformational for me in virtually every aspect of my own life would be a huge understatement. As we move forward together it is our meaningful, lasting relationships, that enable us to work to make a difference and create active social change.

Pallid Harrier

Focus

Strength and poise in your writing

Transformative outcome

Mi'kmaq and settler

Respectful, amicable relationships.



Chapter Five: Building Relationship Through Storywork

The Loons Have Returned

Their nattering is wonderful to
hear and the loose wobble of their call in the darkness cheers me
Relatives
Always glad to see them when they return for a visit.

*(Embers by Richard Wagamese, 2016, Douglas and McIntyre.
Reprinted with permission from the publisher.)*

The Power of Oral Storytelling

In this chapter I detail several stories that the people I have met over the course of this study have shared orally with me. Each story is told from the personal perspective of the storyteller. This Indigenous tool for conveying information uses the personal lived experiences of the storyteller combined with their family history of a particular place, which is set within a larger historical context, to provide a rich teaching opportunity. The basis of this orally shared experience between the narrator and listener is reciprocity and respect, which foster relationship between the parties involved. This specific Indigenous epistemological teaching tool is in keeping with Archibald's (2008) understanding of the importance of the relationship between the oral storyteller and the listener, which provides a deep platform for learning.

The first five stories I was privileged to hear are from members of the committee. During the discussion, they explain why they decided to participate in the decolonizing initiatives of the Mahone Bay Museum. A long-time resident of Indian Point and her daughter Dachia, who are also good friends of Elder Hunt, are the narrators of the sixth story. The last conversation is with a person who is Mi'kmaw and a Lunenburg resident. He shares what it has been like for him and his family to live in the town.

The stories these narrators shared with me take place in different locations throughout Mi'kma'ki. Pages 102 through 105 provide help with respect to understanding any Lunenburg County placenames that appear in the following accounts. In this section, where a story refers to placenames outside of Lunenburg County, I have included a brief description of that place. A further important note is that, in a spirit of respectful storywork, I have tried to recreate as accurately as possible the original versions of the stories as I heard them, without attempting to correct the language or style of the teller.

Long Overdue Visit Among Friends

Elder Joe Mike

(personal communication, Wednesday, March 15, 2020)

Elder Joe Mike is from the Indian Brook Mi'kmaw Reserve, Nova Scotia. He is a traditional Mi'kmaw knowledge holder who offers inspirational and spiritual guidance to Indigenous Peoples, both locally and nationally. Elder Joe Mike works across a variety of university settings in Mi'kma'ki in order to create awareness and communicate to interested settlers an understanding of Mi'kmaw culture and Indigenous Peoples and issues.

Elder Joe Mike was the first Mi'kmaw member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He was appointed Special Constable on the Indian Brook First Nations Reserve. During his 25-year RCMP career, Elder Joe Mike worked to create restorative justice principles and practices as part of the justice system. In 2019, Acadia University awarded him an honorary humanity doctoral. Currently, Elder Joe Mike is creating a sacred healing space in Indian Brook near his home. The location includes a wi'koum, with a sweat lodge in the near future, where both Indigenous Peoples and non-Natives can visit to receive teachings and connect with Mi'kmaw ways for holistic healing.

When a group at Mount Saint Vincent University began building an Indigenous Garden on campus, Elder Joe Mike was invited to join and provide Mi'kmaw guidance for the project. In the garden, we planted tobacco, sage, a variety of vegetables, flowers, and other plants that grow locally. From this unique outdoor learning experience, we became friends. When he learned

questions, nor were we seeking specific information. We were merely looking forward to visiting each other, as anyone would when they have not seen friends in a while. In anticipation of our visit and conversation and the oral storytelling that would take place, I prepared a picnic lunch, picking up coffee at the Tim Hortons closest to Indian Brook for us to share.

When Elder Hunt and I arrived, our eyes were instantly drawn to the wikoum that Elder Joe Mike had recently erected as part of a larger healing space that he is creating. Although wikoums are no longer used as primary dwellings by the Mi'kmaq, today they serve as ceremonial cultural spaces for experiencing Mi'kmaw teachings. The moment I got out of the car, I felt as if I had emerged into a different place in time. I seemed to have arrived at a place where the intersection of the past, present, and future were existing simultaneously. I instantly experienced a sense of relaxation wash over me and felt safe in this Mi'kmaw sacred ceremonial space. I was very excited to finally witness this magical Mi'kmaw place that I had heard so much about.

Inside the wi'koum, we saw several benches placed end to end to form a circle. They were covered with beautiful blankets, decorated with a variety of Indigenous patterns and intricate designs. Placed at the centre of the circle of benches was a sacred fire that Elder Joe Mike had lit before we arrived. On the blankets, we noticed a total of 22 paintings. When we inquired about the beautiful artwork, Elder Joe Mike told us that he painted them as gifts for the families of the victims of the tragic mass shooting in Nova Scotia in April 2020. This unthinkable 13-hour rampage occurred near Elder Joe Mike's residence, and at multiple locations, with 22 people killed and three injured. Elder Joe Mike carefully described for us how he incorporated specific traditional Mi'kmaw teachings into each painting. He says he hopes that these paintings can act as a source of comfort and healing for the families who lost loved ones.

Elder Joe Mike said that Mi'kmaw teachings and ceremonies are medicines that provide nourishment in times of need. He explained that Mi'kmaw ceremonies offer an alternative to western science and can help support a return to balance, wellness, and overall healing during difficult times and especially when a tragic event occurs. He said that if the families who lost loved ones during the shooting are interested, he would like to invite them to come to the healing space at his home to experience Mi'kmaw traditional knowledge and teachings and to participate in ceremonies.

While we quietly looked at these thoughtful paintings crafted with such care, I experienced feelings that I could not quite articulate. I was drawn towards the powerful sketches that Elder Joe Mike had painted. His use of vivid colours and images communicated a deep sense of loss, and yet, I also felt a sense of reverence and tranquility for the victims. Even though the paintings were a reminder of this horrific event, I was struck by a sense of comfort that I was unable to explain. I was in awe of this humble gesture by Elder Joe Mike and the way his gifts of compassion might offer comfort and healing to the survivors of the trauma of this unfathomable killing spree that happened in Mi'kma'ki.

Eventually, we sat down and shared our meal inside this beautiful Mi'kmaw learning space, catching up on what each of us had been doing and how we were all faring during the COVID-19 pandemic. We discussed that, despite the closure of the Mahone Bay Museum due to the pandemic, the committee were still able to conduct research via document analysis and visits to various Mi'kmaw sites, such as burial grounds and summer encampments. One of the topics that Elder Joe Mike talked about was a venture he is involved in called Jiksitui consulting, which is a service that provides experience for those interested in learning more about the traditional teachings and history of the Mi'kmaq. Jiksitui (pronounced Jik-seh-doo-wee) means “listen to

me” in Mi’kmaq. The intention behind Jiksitui consulting is to share traditional and authentic Mi’kmaw cultural experiences in an accessible way so that individuals can learn about the Mi’kmaq. Elder Joe Mike told us the following:

A purpose of Jiksitui consulting, is to form a partnership with others who want to work together to share their visions for a unified tomorrow with all people under the sky, the sun, and the moon, with our brothers and sisters in the animals, birds, and fish ... together, as one, we will find the answers together.

We discussed the parallels between our decolonial work at the museum and Jiksitui consulting. As with Jiksitui consulting, the goal of our decolonial endeavours is authentic and accurate sharing of Mi’kmaw knowledge and worldviews in order to give an audience a sense of who the Mi’kmaq were before colonization as well as who they are today. We discussed the importance of working with Elders like Joe Mike and other Mi’kmaq as a way of making sure the stories we acquire are correct. Devoting work to projects that are important to the local Mi’kmaw community is also critical.

Later in the day, Elder Joe Mike showed us an area behind the wi’koum where he plans to construct a sweat lodge. He told us that the sweat lodge is very spiritual. It allows the Mi’kmaq to connect with the Creator and their ancestors and helps them restore a sense of balance to the natural world, to which we, as humans, are inextricably linked. Elder Joe Mike said he was having difficulty sourcing lava rocks for the firepit in the sweat lodge. He said that volcanic rocks are ideal because they can withstand the intense temperatures that sweat lodge rocks must be heated to, combined with the hot steam that is generated from pouring water onto the heated rocks. Since I grew up on the South Shore, I had learned about finding the many lava

rocks that glaciers deposited along our beaches and that are part of the glacial history of Mi'kma'ki.

I asked him how many rocks he would need and what size. I offered to go beachcombing in search of lava rocks for the sweat lodge fire pit when I returned back to my home. He said that the rocks should be one to three pounds and he needed about 15 in total. I eagerly spent the rest of the summer looking for and collecting lava rocks. I also asked family and friends to keep a lookout. It was my way of saying thank you to Elder Joe Mike for all of his interest in sharing Mi'kmaw knowledge and stories with me.

During the afternoon, we continued chatting back and forth for some time about how he was building the sweat lodge, and at some point, Elder Joe Mike quietly and nonchalantly asked us, "What do you know about the Indian Act? What do you know about the colonization of

Peoples to practise traditional ceremonies, such as the sun dance, round dance, give away dance, singing, sweat lodge, and many of their other customs. Colonization replaced the Mi'kmaw way with that of the settlers. Therefore, Mi'kmaw traditional rituals were first interrupted by the church leaders of this time, and then the Indian Act. This forced intergenerational assimilation and disruption of Mi'kmaw culture and tradition that went on for centuries, and it has impacted who we are as a people into the present.

Elder Joe Mike went on to say that, like other Indigenous Peoples, the Mi'kmaq are relearning their knowledge, traditions, and culture. He said,

The sweat lodge and wi'koum are an important part of this relearning. They are part of Mi'kmaw self-determination and help to build Mi'kmaw cultural resilience and resurgence as we continue to gain knowledge about who we are.

On our drive home, Elder Hunt and I mulled over the many stories and teachings that Elder Joe Mike had shared with us. He had brought up so many topics directly and indirectly related to our work at the museum that had not occurred to us. Despite being passionate about effecting real change, the committee were only beginning to understand the scope of the job in front of us. So many questions were emerging. The process of decolonization was not just about honouring how the Mi'kmaw wanted their history and knowledge represented in the museum. We were starting to become aware of the intersections between racism and the colonization of Canada. How do we bring racism to the forefront of our work? How do we present systemic racism within the colonial context of Mahone Bay? How do we combine all that we are doing so that real change occurs? The ideas and possibilities were becoming limitless; how do we prioritize what we should be working on?

Continued Conversations with Elder Joe Mike

When we returned home, Elder Joe Mike and I continued our discussion around the questions he had asked during our visit via email correspondence. We exchanged several emails about the Indian Act, how this piece of legislation historically controlled every aspect of Indigenous Peoples, and how it continues to negatively impact Indigenous Peoples today. In our email exchanges, Elder Joe Mike asked me questions or prompted me to think about different perspectives. He emphasized that the Indian Act has been, and still is, Canadian federal law that is discriminatory and that the government uses it to control all matters pertaining to Indigenous Peoples. It is a highly paternalistic piece of legislation that intentionally regulates who has Indigenous status and how they must live. Its rules and regulations govern everything from how Indigenous Peoples can govern themselves, to healthcare, social structure, and economic systems, making Indigenous Peoples welfare dependent. The basis of the Indian Act is the affirmation of territorial possession of Indigenous land and resources by the settler state of Canada.

Elder Joe Mike says one can look at Canadian healthcare and the differences in the type of care received by Indigenous Peoples and settlers, for example. He says, for a multitude of reasons, the differences in quality of care and standards are startling, to say the least. These significant health inequities play a big role in why our Indigenous Peoples have higher rates of cardiac disease, diabetes, mental health diagnoses and obesity, to name a few. One can even look at how Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Anne Nuorgam (2020), the Chair of The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, insists that due to their being placed in positions of continued marginalization, the COVID-19 pandemic poses a grave health threat to Indigenous Peoples worldwide.

Consequently, Nuorgam (2020) urges “the international community to include the specific needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples in addressing the global outbreak of COVID-19.”

Elder Joe Mike reminded us that during the H1N1 pandemic, Indigenous communities were given body bags, instead of the necessary medical supplies that were needed. He says that this medical racism is based on discrimination and prejudice, which is directly related to the Indian Act. He also told us that until 1985, the Indian Act stated that Indigenous women who married non-Indigenous men would lose their Indigenous status and rights. Even though the Indian Act was amended to remove regulations that were discriminatory towards women, oppression and violence are something that Indigenous women and their communities still grapple with and are trying to overcome today. He said that one should keep in mind that, in conjunction with other discriminatory government policies, the Indian Act established mandatory residential and day schools for Indigenous children. These assimilative coercive and abusive institutions ran for over 165 years and are directly responsible for the intergenerational trauma that many Indigenous families and communities experience today.

Like Elder Paul (2020) (personal communication, February 7, 2017), Elder Joe Mike (personal communication, March 15, 2021) says that what happened to children at these schools is an example of Stockholm Syndrome. The children experienced sexual, physical, and emotional abuse at the hands of priests and nuns, who often befriended them. The children were powerless and scared, and yet they still believed in the individuals who were caring for them. Despite the many forms of abuse and neglect that occurred, they were young and vulnerable and developed emotional attachments to their perpetrators.

Although over the years, there have been changes made to this racist policy, Elder Joe Mike says,

Today, its purpose is pretty much the same. It is still the main law that the federal government uses to support ongoing settler colonization. It either uses assimilation of Indigenous Peoples into the Canadian society and/or dispossession as a method of control, so that the government, big companies, and individuals can continue to steal and possess our land and resources.

Graced by Spirits and Mi'kmaw Sacred Spaces

Elder Hunt

(Personal communication, Monday, March 15, 2021)

Mary “Ellen” Hunt was born in Bay D’Espoir, Newfoundland. She is originally from the Mi’kmaw Qualipu First Nations Band. Elder Hunt’s Mi’kmaw name means “One who walks with four eagles.” Elder Hunt is a mother and grandmother who has had a rewarding career as a palliative care nurse. She has also worked as a medical secretary with a number of doctors in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, and as an account manager with an insurance company. Elder Hunt’s life work is centred around her endless volunteering and service to both the Mi’kmaw and settler community. She has been involved in the Lunenburg Historical Society, the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, the Cape Sable Island Historical Society, the Mi’kmaw Burial Ground Research and Restoration Association, and Nova Scotia Community College (teacher of Mi’kmaw culture and traditions. She volunteers as a Mi’kmaw representative to share the history and culture of her people. Since 1993, Elder Hunt has also been a member of the Mi’kmaw Elders for the Native Council of Nova Scotia. Elder Hunt devotes her time to the Mahone Bay Museum, the Fort Point Museum in LaHave and the Mi’kmaq Acadian Festival and Reunion held there, to name a few. She is the Mi’kmaw Elder for the Atlantic chapter of Genuine Progress Education in St.

Margaret's Bay and teaches youth about Mi'kmaw culture and traditions, such as the Red Road and drumming.

The Ancestors Are Calling

In the following beautiful story, Elder Hunt explains how she first became interested in sacred Mi'kmaw burial sites.

In 1977, Elder Hunt, her husband Winston, moved from Newfoundland to the Lunenburg area. When they moved to Nova Scotia, they kept up their Newfoundland culture and many of their traditions, including the famous informal Newfoundland dining custom known as a "boil up." Elder Hunt says that Newfoundlanders have traditionally worked outdoors, in the woods, on the land, and on the ocean. When they are tired and need a break, they sit down outside with nature, and eat and enjoy their food and drink. When possible, they would have some type of fire to warm up their food and drink, usually black tea.

Whenever the weather was fit, Elder Hunt and her family would take their outboard motorboat to Speckle Island, which is near Riverport, and go for a proper Newfoundland "boil up." Elder Hunt says that whenever they went to Speckle Island, nothing had ever happened. However, this one summer afternoon was very different. Per usual, Elder Hunt, Winston, and their dog Zinniki motored out to Speckle Island and pulled the boat high on the beach and got out.

Elder Hunt remembers it as a classic, beautiful, sunny summer day on the South Shore. Immediately, they began walking along the beach in search of scrap kindling to make a fire. As they were walking around the island, Elder Hunt also kept an eye out for shells and the occasional beach glass piece to collect. For some reason, Elder Hunt turned left off of the beach. She headed towards some tall beach grass on a plot of marshland about 50 feet away from the

wooded area, where she heard a man's voice call out to her, and he said, "Come in, you are a leader. Come in." The voice kept repeating these words. Elder Hunt said that she was frightened to death when she looked at the woods, and was afraid to go any closer. All she could hear was this man's voice saying, "Come in, you are a leader. Come in." She wondered if a ghost was talking to her, or was she just hearing things. By now, Winston and Zinniki had walked down around the corner of the island, so she could not see them anymore. Then she heard the voice ask her to lay down in the moss. She began to feel very uncomfortable about the situation. She pinched her left cheek to make sure that she was awake and not dreaming. All of a sudden, she felt like she needed to lay down in the moss in the woods and clearly remembers saying to herself, "I am not going in there." Elder Hunt glanced down at her feet as all this was happening, and she noticed a bunch of old bones. She inspected them further and surmised that they were the remains of human arm bones. She saw the inner part of the ulna of the arm and picked it up and thought maybe it's a part of someone's body that washed ashore, and they wanted her to bury it.

Elder Hunt said she was scared and startled. She was able to stand her ground and ignore the calling and feeling to go lay down, and she did not venture into the woods where the voice came from. When she got the feeling of curling up in the moss, she quickly picked up the arm bones and walked farther down the beach to the location of a different wooded area. She knelt down and buried the bones in a mossy area. She turned and walked back towards the beach to look for Winston and Zinniki. Elder Hunt saw them on the beach. To her astonishment, Zinniki trotted back towards her, carrying what looked like the rest of the arm bone pieces in her mouth. Elder Hunt took the bone remains from her dog, went back to where she had buried the first lot, buried the rest of the bones in the moss, and then quickly left.

They gathered up some more wood and kept walking until they found a spot where they wanted to stop. Winston made a fire, and then they cooked their meal of corned beef and cabbage, complete with hot black tea, which was boiled over the flames from the fire. Elder Hunt decided not to say anything to Winston about the strange encounter she had just experienced. They enjoyed their boil up, and when they finished eating, they tidied up, made sure the fire was out, boarded the boat, and left the island. Elder Hunt says that she cannot explain it, but she felt like someone was with her on the boat ride back to the mainland. She had a strong inkling that there was a spirit inside her body besides her own and remarks that she believes that this is where and when her journey began. Although she did not understand it at the time, looking back, she realizes that this was the beginning of her calling to what her ancestors have asked her to do.

Shortly after crawling into bed, she noticed what looked like black spirits dancing on her bedroom wall. This weird ordeal, which included strange dreams, went on for about a week. Elder Hunt said she did not know what was happening. She kept pinching herself and kept saying, “Ellen, you are alright; you are not cracking up; you are alright.” Eventually, the spirits stopped visiting her bedroom at night, and things settled down a bit, with one exception. Elder Hunt always felt as if she had someone else besides herself living inside her. Elder Hunt says, “It felt like a spirit was staying with me, living in my soul.”

Months later, she finally called a friend, Nancy Whynot, and told her something had happened to her over the summer. She needed to see an Elder, and she asked Nancy to take her to see an Elder. When she got off the phone with Nancy, she went into her computer room. She picked up a recent Native Council Magazine and on the front page was a picture of Elder Rose Morris from the Gold River Reserve. When she looked at the photo, Rose’s picture kind of popped off the page, so she called Nancy back, and said that she needed to go visit Elder Rose.

Nancy took Elder Hunt to meet Elder Rose Morris, and Elder Hunt told Elder Rose what had happened. Elder Rose said that Elder Hunt had been in contact with the spirit world. At this point, Elder Hunt was unaware of her Mi'kmaw knowledge, culture, and what the spirit world was. Elder Rose said, "They want you for something, but I don't know what for." Elder Rose said that Easter weekend was coming up. A group of Mi'kmaq were going to Kejimikujik National Park (Kejimikujik) for the ceremony. Elder Rose told her that they were going to Kejimikujik, and they were going to have a Talking Circle with Elder Charlie Labrador. She suggested that Elder Hunt go and join them. Since Elder Hunt was relatively new to the area, Nancy offered to take her.

This was Elder Hunt's first time participating in a Talking Circle. When she was given the talking stick and it was her turn to talk, Elder Rose said, now you tell Elder Charlie Labrador and everyone else here what you told me, so, during the Talking Circle, Elder Hunt told her story. When she finished, Elder Charlie Labrador said that Elder Hunt's experience was a way for the ancestors to help her be born back into her culture. Until this experience, Elder Hunt did not know anything about her Mi'kmaw culture. Elder Charlie Labrador told her that she had been contacted by the spirit world, and our ancestors want you for something. He suggested that maybe she should go back to the island and ask what they want. Elder Hunt said that she did not go back until months later. When she arrived at Speckle Island, nothing out of the ordinary happened. In fact, she remarks that she has been back to Speckle Island many times over the years, and she has never heard voices again.

Elder Charlie Labrador suggested that Elder Hunt go to a sweat lodge, to see if she could receive more teachings and answers from her ancestors. So, a month later, Elder Hunt went to her first Mi'kmaw sweat lodge ceremony. Elder Hunt says that she kept seeing visions of an

eagle, a giant raven, and white headstones during the sweat. After the sweat was over, she told Elder Charlie Labrador what she saw. He exclaimed that she had a very important job to do, which was to balance between the ancestor world and the physical world. When Jean, a friend who was at the sweat lodge ceremony, heard about Elder Hunt's vision in the sweat lodge, she said to everyone present, "We all have to pray for Elder Hunt. She has a big job to do. She must walk between the spirit world and physical world." Elder Hunt said she now knew what the ancestors were asking her to do. Her purpose was to find all the sacred Mi'kmaw burial sites in Mi'kma'ki and assist in them being recognized and respected by proper Mi'kmaw ceremony.

Elder Hunt remarks that after she went to the sweat lodge and saw the headstones with the eagle and the raven, she was told by her ancestors what she was to do. At the time, most of the Mi'kmaw burial grounds were being destroyed to make way for development. Elder Hunt said she believes she was called to protect them from destruction. Therefore, Elder Charlie Labrador and others said it was a difficult job. Even though some of her own people would turn against her, she must stand firm to preserve these sacred Mi'kmaw sites, and not let anyone bother her. She was told not to worry because she would get help from others.

Ever since Elder Hunt's journey began, she says that she listens to her ancestors for guidance. She began to attend Mi'kmaw ceremonies to learn about her traditions and culture from her Mi'kmaw Elders and learn about her Mi'kmaw roots and who she was. With a beaming smile, she says, "I am proud to be L'nu, who are the original inhabitants of Mi'kma'ki."

Elder Hunt began to go to gatherings and ceremonies that Elder Charlie Labrador held up at Kejimkujik. She said: "As time went on and more Talking Circles came into being, more people came, and they always asked me to share my story about the spirit that I felt was still living inside me." During a conversation up at Kejimkujik, she felt that she should go to Cape

Breton and visit her cousin Judy, who she knew lived there, but they did not know each other very well. She and Judy decided to meet at St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Judy brought her grandson with her. When she walked into the room, Judy asked her grandson to look at her, and tell her who he thought Elder Hunt looked like. “When he responded that I looked just like his grandmother, Judy’s mother, she knew we must really be cousins.”

Elder Hunt told Judy that they were on their way to Cape Breton to Chapel Island First Nations Band (also known as Poletok) and staying with Richard Denny. However, when they arrived at Chapel Island, they were reunited with Dr. Granny, who was an old dear friend. Dr. Granny said, “You are not going to stay with Richard. You can pitch your tent instead, on my land.” The next day, they took a boat across to a church. When they arrived on the island, Elder Hunt felt like the gates flew open, and she cried and cried and cried. Winston told her to stop because he thought that people would think she was crazy. They went way to the back of the churchyard. They found a gravestone for Annie Joe, who was eight years old when she died. Annie Joe was related to Elder Hunt on the Joe side of her family. Annie’s family lived on the land where she and Winston had slept in their tent the night before. Immediately upon standing next to Annie’s grave, she felt a weird tightness in her throat, and then something was leaving her body. She felt the spirit of the young woman leave her body.

Elder Hunt believes that the little girl’s spirit came out of the man’s voice on Speckle Island that day and then entered and lived inside her body. She could bring her spirit back home to its rightful place. She felt she was given the job of carrying Annie’s soul back to its home. Elder Hunt states that this remarkable encounter that happened in 1999 has shaped who she is. She has gained much experience in research. She also believes that her Mi’kmaq ancestors have

helped her immensely as a palliative care private nurse by assisting many spirits to leave the physical world to cross over to the spirit world.

Petite Rivière N C T

A couple of days after Elder Hunt returned from Cape Breton, she received a phone call from Doug Cox, who lived in Petite Rivière. She and Mr. Cox were volunteers on the Samuel Champlain historic committee together, so he knew that Elder Hunt was Mi'kmaq. Mr. Cox wanted Elder Hunt to meet with a friend of his, Captain Doug Bell, because his wife was initially from Bear River and was buried in the Petite Rivière

cleaned up and restored. David also introduced Elder Hunt to his sister, Ruth. She lives next to the burial site. She was also interested in helping Elder Hunt restore and preserve the area.

Upon arrival at the burial ground, Ellen noticed the overgrowth of thickly wooded trees, shrubs, plant life, and cattle grazing on the nearby field. She said that you needed to be careful where you stepped, because there were cow and horse patties everywhere between the trees and brush. The disarray and mess of the place was disheartening. Elder Hunt organized a work party with the Mi'kmaw Native Council, and they went down to the burial site and got to work cleaning the place up. While they were cleaning, one of the helpers took her wheelbarrow of debris over to the field where the cows were grazing. Someone took a photo of a cow standing in the field next to her while she dumped out the bunch of debris from the burial site. When the work party looked at the photo image, there appeared to be a feather sticking out of the top of the cow's head. Elder Hunt said everyone laughed and laughed because they knew it must be a spirit.

Shortly after they finally got the Mi'kmaw burial site all cleaned up, a Mr. Richardson called Elder Hunt and said he gotten wind that she was researching the Mi'kmaw burial ground at Petite Rivière. He said he had some information that he wanted to share with her. Mr. Richardson told Elder Hunt that he had grown up in Petite Rivière. He said that he and his friends would go to where the burial ground was located and play when he was a young boy. He also told her that he and his friends used to go to burial sites to dig up items and sell them to Mr. Ron Fielding, from Boston, Massachusetts. He also said that some of the things they sold ended up in the Peabody Museum, just outside of Boston.

Mr. Richardson said that when the Petite Rivière community found out what he and his friends had done, they got in a lot of trouble. They were told to take any items they still had in their possession back to the burial site. Mr. Richardson told her that he wrote a story about what

had happened when he was young. He pulled out an old exercise scribbler, and showed Elder Hunt the story that he had written. Elder Hunt could not believe what she was reading. Mr. Richardson had recorded what he and his friends had found, including the bodies that were buried. He wrote that they were buried in birch bark, and the corpses were placed head-to-head. The bodies were laid about one foot apart, pointing in the opposite direction, and that there was one stone for every two bodies.

Mr. Richardson's written description of how the bodies had been buried was very similar to how the Mi'kmaq buried the dead using four directions. Elder Hunt says that what is so incredible is that unknowingly, Mr. Richard documented that it was a Mi'kmaw burial ground by the story he wrote in a scribbler when he was young. She said that you could tell the story was authentic by the type and age of exercise notebook he used to write the story down, and all his spelling mistakes and bad handwriting.

Elder Hunt felt it was necessary to find out who had been buried at the Petite Rivière site, and have their names put on a stone monument. She made sure that some space was left on the monument in case they find out they have missed someone. Elder Hunt also contacted people down in Louisiana, because they had Acadian ancestors in the burial ground too. Some of the families gave her money to help with the restoration and purchase of the monument. Some of the surnames on the monument at Petite Rivière of those interred there are Benoit, Joe, Jeremy, Labrador, LeJeune (Young), Malti (Martin), Francis, Paul, and Gloade.

Elder Hunt states that, even though there has never been a formal archaeology dig done on the Petite Rivière Mi'kmaw burial site, people have found many fascinating artifacts at the gravesite at Sperry's Beach and the nearby old European settlements over the years. The items that have been found include arrowheads, spearheads, potsherds, shell midden deposits, metal

knives, axes, and kettles obtained from the French. Elder Hunt found out that in the early 1500s to 1600s, the burial area was known to the Mi'kmaq as the "Sacred Ground." Local oral history suggests that the Mi'kmaq brought their dead to the Sacred Burial Ground in the spring and buried them just northwest of the pond near the beach.

With Elder Daniel Paul's help, Elder Hunt was able to find much information about the Mi'kmaw burial site at Petite Rivière. One story, in particular, gives evidence about this Mi'kmaw sacred space, which they read in *The Old Man Told Us*, by Ruth Holmes Whitehead. Elder Hunt found a passage in the book where Ella Marguerite Letson, who lived in Port Medway, was interviewed by Blake Conrad on April 4, 1983. In the interview, Ella Letson recalls an oral history tale that her aunt told her about the Mi'kmaq who lived in the area. The story was about the Mi'kmaq who lived at Foster's Point and took their dead by boat to be buried at the Petite Rivière burial site. Ella says that she remembered her aunt saying that people were chanting as they rowed down the river from Port Medway to Great Island. From there, they had to portage to the other side and then continue to Petite Rivière. However, when a Catholic cemetery was built at Fosters Point, the Mi'kmaq no longer made the long trek to the Petite Rivière burial sites and buried their beloved dead in the Catholic cemetery.

N C T C

Elder Hunt remarks that, by now, the word was getting out throughout Lunenburg County about her interest in researching and restoring Mi'kmaw burial sites. One afternoon, Elder Hunt received a phone call from an older resident of Bridgewater. She told her about the Mi'kmaw burial ground behind the Catholic cemetery in Bridgewater and how people were using it as a dumpsite. The resident lived up the street from the Mi'kmaw burial site in Bridgewater. She told Elder Hunt that she sits and cries when she looks down the road towards the Native burial

ground and watches people dump their garbage there. Elder Hunt said she paid a visit to St Joseph's Catholic church to make some inquiries. She was told to contact Helen and Doug Burgess, who had done research on the burial site. Mr. Burgess said he was pretty upset about all the garbage dumped on the land that had been designated for the Mi'kmaq. Despite his efforts, no one listened to his concerns. Elder Hunt asked him to gather up the documentation he had on the Mi'kmaw burial site and give it to her to take to the Town of Bridgewater.

Once she got the green light to clean the place up, Elder Hunt asked a friend who was teaching students at the alternative school if they might want to help clean up the Bridgewater cemetery. Elder Hunt was aware that they needed to do community service, and she also knew that many students in the alternative school were First Nations. On many fronts, she saw this as an immense opportunity. By obtaining the involvement of the students with the clean-up of the Mi'kmaw burial site, they could complete their community service requirements. A bonus was that the students could witness Mi'kmaw history, acknowledge Mi'kmaw ancestors, and bring their importance to the present day.

Elder Hunt says she will never forget all the junk they found that had been thrown onto this sacred Mi'kmaw space. She said they found rusty car engines, old carpets, everything you can imagine. They filled and hauled two truckloads full of garbage off to the waste site. Elder Hunt was able to get funding to purchase a proper stone memorial from the Conservative Member of Parliament, Michael Baker, the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, who believed in their work. DeMone Monuments gave them a discount for the headstone. Elder Hunt asked Nancy Whynot to create a design for the face of the memorial stone. Like other Mi'kmaw sacred spaces, this Mi'kmaw burial site was not respected by settlers. Elder Hunt wanted it properly consecrated so she held a Mi'kmaw ceremony to honour her ancestors. The Catholic Priest from

St Joseph's, Elder Rose Morris, and other Mi'kmaq attended this very emotional and spiritual ceremony.

Elder Hunt occasionally checks on all of the Mi'kmaq burial sites and makes sure no vandalism has occurred. Elder Hunt says that she is amazed at the transformation at the Mi'kmaq burial space in Bridgewater after it was cleaned up and cared for. Elder Hunt exclaims, "Once the ground had a chance to breathe and grow, the natural vegetation took over, and turned into this beautiful wood lawn as you see in a forest. It is just beautiful."

J Q N C H

Elder Hunt met Michael Eisnor during a Mi'kmaq/Acadian festival at Fort Point, who told her about the Mi'kmaq burial ground at Indian Point. After Michael and Elder Hunt talked, they decided they should get an official Mi'kmaq Burial Ground Research and Restoration Association up and running. They invited Dan Pitman, a local historian who had researched the Mi'kmaq in Lunenburg County, to join them. The Mi'kmaq Burial Grounds Research and Restoration Association was formed to help protect and restore the sacred Mi'kmaq sites that were subject to destruction and had artifacts stolen and sold to various collectors and museums across the United States.

Elder Hunt remarks that the three of them worked well together. Elder Hunt said that Dan was the manager, and she wrote grants and was the contact with the Member of Parliament, Michael Baker, to secure funding. She explains that Michael Eisnor was good at digging and finding information and putting his heart and soul into their research, so Elder Hunt calls him "Eagle Eye."

Elder Hunt says that from the beginning, Indian Point was surrounded with tension. Some landowners wanted to sell land and build houses on Indian Point, so they refused to acknowledge

a Mi'kmaw burial ground there. Initially, an archeologist from the Nova Scotia Museum was on their side. He came down to Indian Point and said that it should be red-flagged as an important Mi'kmaw space and confirmed the Mi'kmaw burial site's existence. But when he retired, he was replaced by another archeologist, who Elder Hunt still believes was paid off. The new archeologist would not request the area be red-flagged as an important Mi'kmaw site or support their interest in having the Indian Point burial site acknowledged. Elder Hunt believes this is because whoever owned the property at the time wanted to build a big home on top of the burial ground and did not want the construction compromised by acknowledging the existence of this sacred Mi'kmaw space.

After much hard work and due diligence, Elder Hunt, Michael Eisnor, and Dan Pitman confirmed the location of a Mi'kmaw sacred site at the end of Indian Point, Nova Scotia, located on the beautiful waters of Mahone Bay. One problem remained: the Mi'kmaw Burial Ground Research and Restoration Association were not given permission by the landowners where the burial site was found to put a monument precisely where the burial ground was located. Thankfully, the homeowners who lived a couple of houses down from the burial site gave them permission to put a stone memorial on the edge of their land near the main road, to honour the Mi'kmaw burial site at Indian Point. Elder Hunt believes that the wife of the family neighbouring the burial ground was from New Brunswick and had connections to the Wolastoqey. She thinks that is why they were sympathetic to the Mi'kmaw Burial Ground Association's wishes and allowed the monument's placement on the edge of their land.

Cape Sable Island and Clam Point

Elder Hunt says that, thanks to a CBC news article about the creation of the Mi'kmaw Burial Grounds Research and Restoration Association and the work that they were doing, they

began getting calls from all over Mi'kma'ki. As a result of the media attention, someone called her about a Mi'kmaw burial site at Cape Sable Island at Clam Point, Shelburne County, situated on the southernmost part of Nova Scotia. The owner of the farmland where the burial site was located at Clam Point was highly wary of them going on his land because he was told if you acknowledge that there is a Mi'kmaw burial ground on your land, you might lose it. Despite the owner's concerns, the committee visited Clam Point and met with Tony Cunningham, who is the Sou'West Nova Métis Chief. When they went to the Mi'kmaw burial site location, Chief Cunningham pulled a stone away from the earth and found Mi'kmaw artifacts. After doing some research, the committee confirmed that the Wampanoag (who lived on Cape Sable) and Mi'kmaq had buried several Chiefs at this location. Elder Hunt asked,

Do you remember the unique stone formations that we had recently visited at Sleepy Hollow, just outside Mahone Bay? Well, we saw similar ones at Clam Point too. Geologists from the United States came up and remarked that these were unique stones that have a story and history that should be researched further.

Elder Hunt conveyed to me the oral history of the militia group known as Gorham's Rangers, who were hired to exterminate the Mi'kmaq during the 1750s, and what they did at Maggie's Rock at Clam Point. Elder Hunt goes on to tell the story about Gorham's Rangers who caught a Native woman who was pregnant. They slit the belly of the expecting mother and then beat the unborn baby's head against the giant boulder which is in front of the Clam Point burial ground down by the water. They killed both the mother and her unborn child. Elder Hunt remarks, "Sadly, this is not the first time I have heard about this atrocity that occurred to pregnant Mi'kmaw women and their unborn children at Gorham Rangers' hands and that happened in other parts of Mi'kma'ki."

F I D

Elder Hunt says that, since she was called by her ancestors to find and protect Mi'kmaw burial sites, she has had phone calls from so many places, as far away as Newfoundland. Other places where Mi'kmaw burial sites can be found in Nova Scotia include Gaspereau Landing, Five Houses, East River Point, Greenfield, Walden, Mersey River, Lake Rossignol, Indian Gardens, Lunenburg, Port Medway, Mahone Bay, Clearland, and Hubbards. Given that the Mi'kmaq have been living in Mi'kma'ki since time immemorial, it only stands to reason that many burial sites exist. However, human destruction, both knowing and unknowing, and climate change are destroying these precious sacred Mi'kmaw heritage spaces.

Even though the Mi'kmaw Burial Grounds Research and Restoration Association is no longer in existence, Elder Hunt is still always on the lookout for Mi'kmaw burial sites that are subject to destruction for whatever reason. Acknowledging and recording the historical significance of these Mi'kmaw places is important, in part so that they will be there for future generations to come and help give them a sense of place. Elder Hunt says that from these Mi'kmaw sacred spaces she feels a direct link to her Mi'kmaw ancestors of long ago, and this whole journey has helped her gain a sense of reverence about her Mi'kmaw heritage and identity.

She reminds me that over the last three winters, she has been in and out of the hospital for several reasons. She is currently in the hospital now and was admitted at the end of November 2020 with an infection she cannot shake. With compassion and a sense of seriousness, she lovingly tells me, "But that does not matter, just call me, or email me, and if I am able, I will respond and help. Until my last breath, this is my life's work."

One More Teaching

Before we ended our visit, Elder Hunt shared with me with one last teaching:

Although the story I shared with you today may seem long, this is where Mi'kmaw storytelling comes in. Even though storytelling is a type of entertainment, there is always a learning element associated with what the speaker is saying. As your storyteller, I have the responsibility to tell a good yarn that keeps you interested so you can learn information. As your teacher, I can't just give you facts, or your mind will wander and drift off when you are listening—the story is what keeps your attention, so you can get the learning if you will.

Further, what I shared with you today you cannot get in a book. A big part of Mi'kmaw culture is learning through storytelling, as we had no books, and we could not read or write. I used my lived experiences to tell you a story for your lesson here today. The story I just told you shows the power and interconnectedness of land, place, and our stories to be teachers. Sharing oral history is a type of teaching tool.

This type of Mi'kmaw oral history that you witnessed is an example of how we pass down information from generation to generation, and this is one of our many methods for imparting knowledge, if you will. By you listening to my personal story, you have learned so much more about me and why I am so interested in Mi'kmaw burial grounds and honouring our ancestors.

Honouring Our Ancestors

Barry Stevens

(personal communication, Wednesday, March 17, 2021)

Barry Stevens is a self-taught Mi'kmaw Indigenous artist, born and raised in rural Nova Scotia near Mahone Bay. He has family ties to the Acadia First Nations/Gold River Reserve. Barry feels fortunate that he was taught the oral family history about his Mi'kmaw ancestors. This rich history has been passed down to him through traditional storytelling by his Mi'kmaw mother and grandfather, the late Basil Kaiser. His Mi'kmaw family were the Penall's who lived on Indian Point until they were forcibly removed to the Gold River Reserve. The surname Penall changed to Kaiser at some point for reasons unknown.

Barry fondly remembers the familial relationship he and his grandfather shared. His grandfather was like a father figure to him. They were very close, like father and son. Barry reverently remembers spending summers at the Walden Reserve with his grandfather, who taught him how to hunt, fish, skin, fur trap, and other Mi'kmaw traditions. His grandfather whose name is Basil, was known as a kind and gentle great man, who taught Barry about the natural world, and the love of being outdoors. Barry says that since his grandfather took time to teach him about his family, people, Mi'kmaw culture, and heritage, he grew up with a genuine interest to continually learn as much as he can about the Mi'kmaq.

In the early 1970s, his mother felt it was important to take him to Kejimikujik National Park so that she could show him the relationships that existed between his people and the park. This was his introduction to the now renowned Kejimikujik petroglyphs. Barry says he was filled with a sense of awe and belonging; this was a physical connection to the ways of his ancestors. Barry thinks his Mi'kmaw teachings from his beloved grandfather and mother greatly influenced his ability to create Mi'kmaq artwork. The incorporation of Mi'kmaw petroglyphs carved on deer horns is an example of his creative artwork that is influenced by the teachings of his ancestors. Since that time, Barry has used this ancestral knowledge to develop artistic skills. He

carves and paints stone and antlers, using traditional methods and colours. Barry says it is an honour to keep the family tradition of using deer antlers alive.

Barry discusses artwork ideas with Elders first to make sure that the history and story are correct and to ensure that his art is accurate and genuinely represents the Mi'kmaq. Over the years, Barry's artistic expressions have been well received at galleries such as the Houston North Gallery, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. Parks Canada and the Canadian Department of Fisheries have used his artwork as calendar images, and several of his pieces were purchased by the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.

Barry pursued his aspirations in art and began the company Stevens Solutions & Design Inc. Barry and his son Noah work together in the company, developing audiovisual custom software and animation projects that help industry, government, non-profits, social enterprises, and Indigenous organizations tell their stories.

One example of a family story passed down to Barry by his grandfather and mother is about Joseph Howe, during his time as the Indian Commissioner for Indian Affairs around 1843. Joseph Howe served as a liaison between Mi'kmaw chiefs and government. Joseph Howe prioritized improving the Mi'kmaq Peoples horrible living conditions and reducing all the land appropriation that was going on by settlers. Barry was told the story of how Mi'kmaw ancestors were the direct recipients of Joseph Howe's compassion, and he maintains that the existence of his family and the Mi'kmaq is because of Joseph Howe's work to prevent their extinction.

Barry enjoys sharing the story about how Joseph Howe learned about the state of the Mi'kmaq, who were left poverty-stricken due to the egregious neglect by the British and local government. When Joseph Howe heard this, he became quite upset. Barry explains that Joseph Howe proposed many measures to improve the living conditions of the Mi'kmaq. Joseph Howe

offered his salary to help pay for their basic needs, such as blankets, food, and other provisions and took three or four years of his salary to purchase necessities for the Mi'kmaq. Barry explains:

There's written documentation in the Nova Scotia Archives that describes how Joseph Howe fought with the legislature for a budget for the Mi'kmaq, and it was denied. The only budget he had was his salary, and he used all of that to keep the Mi'kmaq alive.

When Joseph Howe visited the Gold River Reserve, he met Barry's great-great grandfather, Joseph Penall, who was a skilled huntsman. Joseph Howe liked to join Mr. Penall on hunting excursions. Over the years, they became good friends. When Mr. Penall died, Joseph Howe paid for the tombstone located in the Catholic cemetery in Chester, Nova Scotia. It is believed that Joseph Howe had a hand in creating the inscription of the face of the gravestone. DesBrisay (1980) records the tombstone inscription:

In memory of Joseph Penall, Indian
By William Chearnley, A.D.1859
Gone to death's 'Call' is Indian Joe.
Moose-deer, rejoice!
Here, buried, rests your deadliest foe (p. 346).

Barry says that another initiative of Joseph Howe's was to set aside land for the Mi'kmaq. Therefore, one of the Mi'kmaw areas that Barry would like the committee to examine is the original Reserves designated for the Mi'kmaq in the area and what happened to them. Although Barry is not sure, he wonders if Oakland Common was a parcel of land that Joseph Howe set aside for the Mi'kmaq. Specifically, Barry would like to know more about the Indian Point and Oakland Reserves. He considers this significant work, as most settlers who live on this land today are unaware that they live on land set aside for the Mi'kmaq.

These Reserves were collapsed and then disappeared. Barry believes the Mi'kmaq were removed from Indian Point Reserve and were moved to the Gold River Reserve as a result of settler encroachment and forced relocation. He believes that as settler demand for land increased, the Mi'kmaq were forced off the Indian Point Reserve and relocated to undesirable places like Gold River.

Barry mentions other areas in Lunenburg County reserved for the Mi'kmaq that met with similar settler encroachment, for example, a Mi'kmaw Reserve in Walden near New Germany and another at Indian Path Common on the way to LaHave. First, the British took land without permission, and then the Canadian government continued to take Mi'kmaw land. Barry maintains that Joseph Howe fought against settlers, the colonial sense of entitlement to Mi'kmaw land, and the displacement of the Mi'kmaq. Barry adds that as settlers were given a new piece of land, the Mi'kmaq were displaced to smaller parcels of land and kept out of sight. As the settlers required more land and resources, they continued to take what they needed away from the Mi'kmaq. When the pass system was in place, the Mi'kmaq were not allowed off the Reserve unless they had permission from the Indian Agent. The pass system was a federal policy separate from the Indian Act and never enacted into law. Unless an Indigenous person was given a special travel permit (known as a pass) from their local Indian agent, it was illegal for them to leave their Reserve. An Indigenous person caught without permission to be off their Reserve was either sent back or imprisoned. Barry remarks that this is when the Canadian government also tried to starve the Mi'kmaq to death.

Barry believes that Reserve land was stolen from the Mi'kmaq and converted to Crown land over the years. When the British first arrived in 1749, land was "given" to the settlers to the exclusion of the Mi'kmaq through Crown grants. Some land was reserved by the British for the

Mi'kmaq, such as Indian Path and Indian Point. Barry urges people to think about the history of Indian Path and Indian Point. These locations were both originally set aside for the Mi'kmaq, and they both have "common land" areas, known as Indian Path Common and the Oakland Commons. What was this land before it became common land? From Barry's perspective, the Mi'kmaq history of the land has been erased. He is interested in learning about the whole story, not just the colonial perspective.

Barry Stevens believes that Mi'kmaq history in Lunenburg County should be researched, encompassing all perspectives, and made available to the public. However, until the committee can conduct official research on lands identified as Reserves, (land set aside for the Mi'kmaq) he is satisfied that the stories about these pieces of land that Joseph Howe designated for the Mi'kmaq be documented in this dissertation. As a result of his lived experiences w20(e)7(7(s)-6()] TJETQq0.00

Even though the focus of this story is on the committee's work and initiatives, Barry also felt it was important to share the story of Grandmothers Head. This is a large rock located at the end of Sherbrooke Lake near the old Walden Reserve. Barry remembers the rock up behind his grandfather's home. They would pass it when they went hunting and fishing. He said he needs to do more research on the gigantic boulder, which his grandfather always called Grandmother's Head. Barry wonders if there is a connection to this rock and the Mi'kmaw creation story about Nogami, the grandmother, who was born as an old woman from the dew of a boulder.

Barry emphasizes that it is important for Indigenous Peoples and settlers to work together for many reasons, the obvious one being that we share the same lands; therefore, we have the same common enemy right now: climate change. Barry believes that both settlers and Indigenous Peoples are guilty of the destruction occurring on planet Earth. Barry has been in arguments with other Native people about this topic. Still, he maintains that on some level, Indigenous Peoples have bought into the western way of looking at things. He remarks, "The truth is, we burned our furniture to keep our house warm. The last two or three hundred years, we've changed the planet, so we need to go and reframe how we think."

Barry suggests that from a global perspective, it is vital to listen to Indigenous Peoples and their worldviews based on a sustainable relationship with Mother Earth. An example that he gives is the Mi'kmaw knowledge-based system, called Etuaptmunk or Two-Eyed Seeing by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall, his late wife Murdena, and Cheryl Bartlett. Barry exclaims, "Can you imagine what the world would be like if humans followed the Etuaptmunk guiding principles for how to interact with the natural world?"

Barry mentions a personal reason he thinks Indigenous Peoples and settlers must build relationship and work together. The marginalization that happened to the Mi'kmaq, combined

with intergenerational trauma and stereotypes about Natives, really impacted him when he was younger. Barry has many memories from his childhood in which he is the object of discrimination and prejudice. Barry says that this negative mindset about the Mi'kmaq has been carried over into the recent past and has even caused him to lose his job early in his career. When he was a young boy, he remembers one occasion, when he was asked if he was Basil Kaiser's grandson. When he replied that he was, he was fired on the spot, because the person "did not want an ignorant Native working on their boat."

Barry remarks that when he was younger, and someone realized he was Native, popular culture at the time influenced their egregious beliefs about who he and other Indigenous Peoples were. Some of these inaccurate perceptions were that you had mystical powers and could transform into a wolf or another animal. Even though he knew it was not true, Barry felt like a cartoon character or something out of the ordinary. Even worse, he remembers, "People teased you, called you many stereotypical words or phrases, such as ignorant, dumb, lazy, dirty, scalper, uncivilized, or barbaric, because they knew you were Mi'kmaq." He is concerned about the

The Mi'kmaq also have many ways of doing things based on their long-standing traditions passed down through hundreds of generations.

Barry argues that settlers have privileges connected to structural racism in Canada, which comes at a cost to the original peoples, such as the Mi'kmaq. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge who the original inhabitants are and not have them placed in marginalized positions anymore. Indigenous Peoples have the same rights as settlers, but settlers are granted different rights because of their white societal status in Canada. For example, settlers enjoy and can take for granted clean water, healthcare, and education. H2 79reW*nBvr, h-20(c)7(a)7(rnyInd)genous Peopl

Curator's Vision for Unsettling Settlers

Lyne Allain

(personal communication, Tuesday, March 16, 2020)

Lyne Allain has been the curator at the Mahone Bay Museum for over four years. Curator Allain graduated with Honours in Anthropology from Saint Mary's University in 2011, completed a certificate in arts management in 2012, and graduated from the University of Toronto with a master's degree in museum studies in 2014. Curator Allain has worked at the Joggins Fossil Institute as an interpreter and administrative intern, at the Museum of Natural History as a marketing assistant, and has volunteered at the Toronto Railway Museum. She spent a couple of years in western Canada, where she managed a volunteer centre and worked as a marketing assistant and visitor services representative at Canada's Sports Hall of Fame before returning to the Maritimes. Curator Allain is now living on the South Shore and has been the driving force behind the decolonizing initiatives at the Mahone Bay Museum.

Curator Allain remarks that during university, she chose various courses to help her decide on her primary interest during her undergraduate studies. She says she was instantly drawn to the social anthropology course that she was taking, and this expanded into anthropology and archaeology. Curator Allain said that eventually something clicked. She thinks her interest to pursue curator work as a potential career happened during an archaeology dig that she participated in at Grand Pré, Nova Scotia, one summer. When Curator Allain found something exceptionally interesting, she took it to a designated artefact storage place. She remembers looking around the storage room, thinking that she wanted to be a part of how you tell the stories about these items, so she decided to let someone else do the digging and searching and focussed her studies on becoming a curator.

Instantly after Curator Allain began working at the Mahone Bay Museum, she quickly noticed the lack of Mi'kmaq representation in the museum and immediately began focussing on implementing decolonization initiatives. She remarks that telling the story of Mahone Bay history from only a colonial perspective is disrespectful. She states that, even though many people shy away from the parts of our Canadian history that are difficult to tell and difficult to hear, it is essential to understand our shared history with the Mi'kmaq because it is the foundation of where we are today.

Curator Allain believes her Acadian roots influenced her decolonizing interests at the museum, and stem back to when she was a young girl. She says she grew up speaking French as her first and only language with her Acadian family in New Brunswick. Due to her work, her mother was bilingual, and when Curator Allain was about four years old, her mother married a man who only spoke English. From that point on, Curator Allain grew up with the English-speaking people in her family pushing her to learn English and abandon her French altogether. She discloses that, by living as part of her new English family, she eventually stopped speaking French and forgot most of the language. When Curator Allain was a young adult, her mother filed for divorce from her English-speaking husband. As a result, she and her mother began to use their original Acadian names again. Curator Allain admits that this was a freeing feeling, and she felt she was returning to her French Acadian roots. She highlights that, thankfully, her mother put her in a bilingual school, so she relearned a lot of her French language. However, she is still not as fluent as she would like to be and notes that she does not have a French accent.

Curator Allain remarks that although it certainly does not even begin to compare to what the Mi'kmaq have historically been through, she thinks this childhood experience gave her the ability to sympathize with the Mi'kmaq. She comments on how this lived experience has given

her a small sense of what it must be like to have your roots and culture stripped from you. Again, she asserts that she in no way wants to compare her situation with the Mi'kmaq. She notes that, even though this childhood experience was quite traumatic, she cannot fathom the impact that residential schools have had on the 150,000 Indigenous children who attended them for over 160 years.

Curator Allain believes that an important aspect of the work at the museum is honouring the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Calls to Action. She states that even if the TRC Calls to Action had not taken place and was not a mandate by the federal government, she thinks she would still be on this same path to decolonizing the presentation of the history in the Mahone Bay area. Curator Allain says that has more to do with her own personal beliefs, her understanding of historical erasure, the importance of accurately representing the shared history of a place, and her vision for the museum.

She notes that when you look back at the past curators who worked at the Mahone Bay Museum, it is easy to surmise where they spent their time, efforts, and the museum's money. For instance, the museum's sizeable ceramic display is there because one curator loved ceramics, and a large textile collection reflects another past curator's interests. These different exhibits and collections represent their interests and the work they did during their curator career at the Mahone Bay Museum. Curator Allain hopes that when she is no longer working at the Mahone Bay Museum, future curators will look back on her work and say, you can tell by what she has done she cared about Mi'kmaw history. Ironically, Curator Allain also worries about the next curator's interests for the Mahone Bay Museum. Her concern is that they might not feel the same way that she does about the importance of telling the museum visitors about the Mi'kmaw

history in a respectful manner. If this happens, she hopes the TRC Calls to Action could influence future curators to continue what she started.

However, Curator Allain does not want to take any chances about the potential for the decolonial work at the museum to fall by the wayside. She states that is why she is working to update the museum's exhibition policy, to help the museum direct future curators to stay on this same decolonial path she has started down. Curator Allain says that she is also adding Mi'kmaw history to the interpretation plan as a long-term/permanent historical area that they plan to continue to exhibit.

Another important aspect of the museum's work is navigating what it means to practise Indigenous allyship. Curator Allain says that there is so much that museums can do to practise Indigenous allyship and believes that the first step to this lifelong affirmation is admitting that they should be active allies. Curator Allain thinks that an essential aspect of Indigenous allyship requires non-Indigenous people to reach out to Indigenous Peoples and begin by having respectful conversations with each other. Museums can practise Indigenous allyship by listening to the feedback from Indigenous Peoples. Museums must work in partnership and put Indigenous Peoples' interests and needs at the forefront of their collaborative work.

Curator Allain notes that another aspect of the decolonial work at the museum requires examining the connection to the colonization of Mahone Bay and the surrounding area and its relationship with white supremacy. She says that colonization and its intersection with white supremacy and racism is challenging and complicated. However, Curator Allain believes that, through education, the Mahone Bay Museum can play a role in combatting racism and discrimination. She states that the museum aims to offer visitors learning opportunities that she

hopes will help them to realize that what they were previously told about the Mi'kmaq and their history has affected how they perceive Mi'kmaq today.

Curator Allain believes that if the museum's decolonization initiatives can help fill in some of the gaps in knowledge about the Mahone Bay area history in a way that honours the Mi'kmaw position, it may help change non-Indigenous people's perspective. She hopes that when non-Indigenous people learn about the shared history they have with the Mi'kmaq, it might help them understand the relationship between colonization and racism. This, in turn, may encourage non-Indigenous people to act, get involved in some capacity, and maybe even practise Indigenous allyship.

What is our Shared History?

Michael Eisnor

(personal communication, Thursday, March 25, 2021)

Michael Eisnor is a local amateur historian, who has conducted extensive research with respect to both the Mi'kmaw and colonial history along the South Shore. Since Michael is an eighth-generation settler of Mi'kma'ki, he has made it his life's work to learn about the history of where he is from. Michael says that this includes learning about the Mi'kmaq because their history spans more than 13,000 years before the European settlers' narrative, which only began in the 1600s.

Michael states that written documentation and oral tradition suggest that the Mi'kmaq and European settlers often intermarried and had families together. An Elder told Michael that, if you can trace your ancestors back to the original European settlers of Mi'kma'ki, then there is a 75 percent chance that you have a genetic connection to the Mi'kmaq. From what he knows about his own family history, Michael believes that his great-great grandmother on his mother's

side was Mi'kmaq. This familial relationship to the Mi'kmaq is one reason why he is interested in learning about history from a Mi'kmaw lens.

Another reason Michael is so passionate about local history is because of his ancestors, the Eisenhauers and the Westhavers. In 1751, these ancestors were part of original immigrants who left Europe on the ships *Pearl* and *Murdoch* and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in search of a new life. Michael says that since his ancestors were part of the influx of settlers to Lunenburg County when European colonization of Mi'kma'ki was in full force, he is intrigued to learn as much as he can about the past.

Michael states that Nova Scotia is a part of Mi'kma'ki which is filled with an incredibly rich history that includes both the Mi'kmaq and the settlers. In many ways, Michael feels like he is fighting for the correct history: one that tells the whole story, not just the colonizers' version. Michael believes that when you have a history that goes back thousands of years, you want to know everything there is to know.

Michael says that when settlers first arrived at Mahone Bay most of them were promised land. Like his ancestors, many of the original settlers drew straws to determine which plot of land they would be given. He says to keep in mind: "That the authority to issue land grants to settlers like my family did not rest on any authority but the British and their objective to control Mi'kma'ki, which meant they denied that the Mi'kmaq had rights to their territory."

Michael suggests that at its basic level, settler identity is heavily tied to the acquisition of illegal land. This was made possible through the general belief that the land in Mi'kma'ki was free for the taking. As we know, the Mi'kmaq were living in the area, and archeological evidence suggests that they have been here for over 13,500 years. Elder Hunt has told us many times that the Mi'kmaq will tell you they have been here since time immemorial.

Michael showed me a copy of the original document which was given to his ancestors when they acquired a piece of land on Indian Point back in 1768. One section of the document states that the land must be clear of the threat of Indians before the settlers can safely move there. Michael says this statement speaks to the fact that British settlement of Mahone Bay and surrounding area depended on the removal of the original inhabitants, who were the Mi'kmaq. However, current history is written in a way that does not describe why the Mi'kmaq were attacking settlers. Current history ignores that the settlers were being attacked because settlers were moving in and encroaching on Mi'kmaq territory. In many cases, the Mi'kmaq were being attacked and killed by the British with orders from Cornwallis, for example.

Therefore, Michael states, part of the settler identity during British colonization required the use of myths and stereotypes about the Mi'kmaq and erasure of the Mi'kmaq history and perspective so that settlers could justify occupying their land. Ironically, this piece of colonial history today is still not well known, or contemporary settlers continue to ignore these unpleasant facts about the history of Lunenburg County.

Michael adamantly explains that, therefore, the decolonial work at the Mahone Bay Museum is so important. He sees it as a priority to represent the shared history between the Mi'kmaq and settlers in equitable ways. Until such time as the museum can make this happen, he believes it is important to have written documentation of all the Mi'kmaq evidence that has been found in the Mahone Bay area because much of the Mi'kmaq evidence has been destroyed, due to climate change and human destruction, and there is also a general lack of written documentation about the Mi'kmaq. Therefore, Michael's research underscores the importance of getting oral history about the Mi'kmaq documented.

Michael is concerned about the current real estate boom that is occurring, since Nova Scotia has become a hotspot for new residents for several reasons, one of which he believes is connected to our province's successful fight to keep cases of COVID-19 low. With more people moving to Nova Scotia than leaving, Michael worries that we will be faced with an even greater housing shortage. He recently read that an analyst suggested that housing sales are up a whopping 42 percent in Nova Scotia in the last quarter of 2020, compared to the same time period in 2019. Michael's concern is that this housing demand will spur on further housing development and subdivisions in the Mahone Bay area.

From Michael's perspective, this means there could be more destruction of important archeological history that could be permanently lost. One example is the 64-acre parcel of land that was recently sold on Sleepy Hollow Road and was advertised as a prime location for a subdivision with multiples homes. Since this land has many unique rock formations as well as the remnants of the old coach road that went from Halifax to Yarmouth at one time, Michael believes it has significant historical value. Although there has never been a formal archeological investigation, Michael believes that the stone structures could be the remains of an Acadian settlement, Mi'kmaq community, or something else. He does not know the intentions of the new owners but uses Sleepy Hollow as an example of how land in Mi'kma'ki that might have important archeological history, which has not been documented, could be lost forever through development.

Summer Boat Ride

Kay and Dachia Joudrey

(personal communication, Tuesday, August 27, 2020)

As with our meeting with Elder Joe Mike, the conversation that Elder Hunt and I had with Mrs. Kay Joudrey and her daughter Dachia did not follow western traditional methods for collecting data during an oral interview. During late August 2020, Elder Hunt and I invited Mrs. Joudrey and Dachia to go for a boat ride around the waters of Mahone Bay. Mrs. Joudrey and her family have grown up and lived on Indian Point and surrounding islands for many generations. At one point, her family owned the whole end of the point, all around to Martins River and up through the Narrows. Her family have also lived on nearby Young and Ernst Islands. Born in 1933, Mrs. Joudrey grew up on Indian Point and spent her childhood and young adult years exploring all that Indian Point and the surrounding area had to offer. Mrs. Joudrey and Dachia were very excited to go for a boat ride and visit their ancestral home.

The moment we motored out of Mahone Bay harbour and turned left towards Indian Point, Mrs. Joudrey's memory was instantly activated into vivid immediacy by all the familiar landscapes. For the rest of the day, we listened to Mrs. Joudrey and Dachia go back in time as they reveled in sharing special moments of their family's lives and what it was like growing up in the area. They pointed to different islands or the mainland and would tell us who used to live there. Their stories served as markers of this important time in their lives and gave us a sense of the deep relationship they both shared with the natural rhythm of ocean life in the area.

Mrs. Joudrey said she had her own rowboat and often rowed by herself to the many islands to go swimming, visit family on Young Island, and explore the quiet and pristine shorelines. She remembers that, on more than one occasion, she and her family walked on the frozen ocean ice from Indian Point to visit her relatives on Young Island on Christmas Day.

Mrs. Joudrey said, as long as she can remember, it has always been common knowledge that there was a Mi'kmaw burial ground at the end of Indian Point. Even though some of the

burial ground site has disappeared due to coastal erosion, when we motored past the south-southeast side of the island, she was able to point to its location. Mrs. Joudrey pointed to the left of an existing house, which at one time was her uncle's, and said, "That is where the burial ground is." She also made a comment that the monument that was erected to pay tribute to this Mi'kmaw sacred space is not in the correct place. She said that, unfortunately, the Mi'kmaw Burial Grounds Research and Restoration Association did not have permission to put the monument on the burial ground itself and that is why it was put on the wrong spot.

Mrs. Joudrey recalls people visiting Indian Point when she was a teenager, even from the United States, and asking for permission to walk on their land to look for Mi'kmaw artefacts. Even back then, she thought it was remarkable that people came from all over in search of Mi'kmaw evidence that existed on Indian Point.

Like her mother, Dachia has many fond memories and lived experiences growing up on and around Indian Point and the surrounding islands of Mahone Bay. She says that when she was a child, as late as the 1960s, she recollects a permanent large grassy circle indentation on the southeast side of Young Island. She pulled out a chart to show us the location of this circle and noted that it was just east of an inlet on Young Island known as Indian Cove. Although there was no conclusive evidence, she remembers her grandmother saying that this imprint was made by a teepee that the Mi'kmaq would put up when they lived on the island during the summertime. She also recalls her grandmother trading potatoes and other food with the Mi'kmaq in return for baskets.

Racism in Lunenburg

Stephen Labrador

(personal communication, Thursday, March 18, 2021)

Stephen Labrador is a fierce advocate for Mi'kmaw rights and is not afraid to speak out if he and his family experience discrimination. CBC reporter Emma Smith (2020) addresses recent racism directed toward his family in her news report, "'I want my kids to feel safe': Mi'kmaw Father Speaks out About Racism in Lunenburg." Stephen Labrador told Smith (2020) that since his family moved to Lunenburg in 2014, they have found it challenging to live there because of the ongoing racism they face. Stephen said that his children have been bullied in school for being Mi'kmaq and are afraid to wear their medicine pouches for fear of facing further discrimination.

Smith (2020) reports on a racist incident that the Labrador family experienced, which involved racist messages sent to his son and wife during the summer of 2020. Stephen says that this discriminatory hate speech brought the racism that he and his family experience in Lunenburg to an all-time high. Smith (2020) says that when Stephen called the RCMP, they initially failed to follow up on these blatantly disturbing messages directed towards his family. She says that Stephen felt like the RCMP did not want to help him and that he was an inconvenience. Smith (2020) reports that the RCMP has yet to investigate the matter properly.

As a follow-up to this news piece, I contacted Stephen to see if he was willing to share his story for this research, and he agreed to meet. When asked what it was like to live in Lunenburg, Stephen replied that although it is a lovely town, not everybody is treated the same. He said his children do not like to go outside to play because other children in town often torment them. When I enquired as to why he thinks this happens, he replied that he believes it all leads back to the other children's families and what they hear at home. He believes that parents influence their children's racist beliefs. The result is that many people in town know they are Mi'kmaq and some discriminate against him and his family. Stephen feels frustrated and ignored

as he says his complaints about racism are too easily dismissed or ignored by the RCMP and others.

Stephen remarks that some people are set in their ways. For instance, when he and his family put the Mi'kmaw flag up after the CBC news story this summer, their front yard was littered with bags of garbage. Stephen was getting tired of picking up people's garbage and did not want the children seeing all the trash. As he says, they are already ashamed enough, and he did not want them to feel worse, so he took the Mi'kmaw flag down. Although he does not know if it was a coincidence or not, when he took the Mi'kmaw flag down, the garbage stopped appearing in his front yard. Stephen remarks that after the racist incident that happened this summer and was reported in the news, his children are still afraid to go outside as they are worried about being picked on by other children in town. They are also scared about being racially profiled by law enforcement and getting into trouble for any type of vandalism in Lunenburg.

Stephen recalls one time his children were blamed for damage done to the Lunenburg Academy. When Stephen asked the officer why he accused his children of vandalism, the police officer said that he had a photo of them playing on the Academy playground and standing close to the building. Stephen questioned the officer's evidence and told the officer that, like other children in Lunenburg, his children often play up at the Academy and go close to the building to get Wi-Fi to text. Stephen was frustrated with the allegations against his children based on a photo of them playing near the damage to the Academy and nothing else, so he asked the police officer to leave. Stephen comments that this is not the first time that law enforcement has come to his home and targeted his children as being troublemakers for some reason or another.

Stephen says that, unfortunately, one of the places where his children feel discriminated against is school. Stephen said he could give many examples of the teasing and discrimination that his children experience. An example is what happened to his daughter at Parkview Education Centre last year before school was shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It had to do with the protest about a pipeline. The protest was moving from province to province across Canada and blockades were happening at railroads. The main issue behind the protests was the construction of a pipeline through the unceded territory of the Wet'suwet'en First Nations in British Columbia. A girl walked up to Stephen's daughter and said, "Why are your people blocking the railroads? I need oil to live. I want to live." The next day, he reports, the same girl assaulted his daughter.

Stephen says that it is not all negative at school. There is a race relations, cross-cultural understanding, and human rights (RCH) coordinator at the South Shore Regional School Board, who is an ex-RCMP officer who has supported his children's needs. This person has been very supportive and has also helped educate staff and students about racism.

About two months ago, his daughter, who is in middle school, was being made fun of, and others were pointing fingers at her because of something they were reading in class. When his daughter came home, she told them about what happened at school and how uncomfortable she was. The RCH coordinator discussed what happened with the teacher involved. When the teacher rereads the particular book that gave rise to the incident, the teacher will do things differently to prepare the students better around different peoples, cultures, and traditions.

Stephen says that: "The part about racism is that it happens. However, you must have evidence like a video, before anyone takes you seriously and listens." Mr. Labrador's son, for instance, is bullied in school regularly for being Indigenous. Other students mock him about

being Native by dancing and making stereotypical Native sounds. Stephen says that racism towards his children, like his son, often occurs at lunch or breaks. He says: “Something unsettling about the teasing is that, instead of the school addressing the racist events, they tell my son not to go near the area where the students are hanging out. So basically, my son is the one punished, and not the perpetrators of racism, and he can’t hang out with his friends.”

When the same son did a project about racism, he replied that he did not know what to do. He said that his son cringes every time he learns about the Mi’kmaq in school because he knows he will be singled out and discriminated against by some of the students. Stephen says that sometimes his children ask him why they must be Mi’kmaq.

During the time when Lunenburg formed the anti-racism special committee (ARSC), Stephen was asked if he would like to join the committee. One of the reasons that Stephen decided to volunteer and be on ARSC was the racism he experienced when he was growing up. He kept incidents of racism he experienced to himself and did not tell anybody. He promised himself that he would not allow his children to suffer the same discrimination when he had children of his own. Therefore, he is speaking out about racism and wants to be a part of this new committee.

Stephen believes that education is the key. He says that if we can educate the students in school, they will be able to make changes for the future. However, he remarks, “We also need to inform the parents too, and that’s hopefully what ARSC will do.”

Stephen explains that he was glad when he found out that April Hiltz was on the ARSC. He said, she is on the Native Council of Nova Scotia and is Director of Education and Services and is very experienced in teaching others about racism. He says that Ms. Hiltz is very

knowledgeable about navigating racism and discrimination, and he feels she will be a positive influence as the committee moves forward to address racism in Lunenburg.

Stephen has concerns about calling out racism and says it brings its complications. He worries that there will be resistance by some people in Lunenburg who are set in their ways. Stephen says he knows the actions needed to support anti-racism in Lunenburg are going to be slow, and he hopes that “emotions don’t get too riled up, and that violence doesn’t escalate as a result.”

Even though he knows that ARSC has been tasked with the difficult undertaking of addressing racism in Lunenburg, he feels that just bringing it out in the open is going to be challenging enough. However, Stephen says, he remains optimistic that anti-racist changes will occur. He hopes that one day his children will be able to enjoy everyday life and not have to worry when they go out the door about what will happen next. Stephen hopes that they can enjoy who they are, believe in who they are, and be proud of who they are.

Nova Scotia Advocate Publications—Flo

The following are three articles published by *The Nova Scotia Advocate*, which Flo and I wrote and submitted together.

Children First

By Flo Blackett Apli' kmuj and Margaret Knickle—December 20, 2020



A mixed-race mother and daughter holding hands

K'JIPUKTUK (Halifax) – What happens when a Mi'kmaw woman and a settler share car rides on their way to Mount Saint Vincent University and other places throughout K'jipuktuk (Halifax)?

Whenever Flo (who is Mi'kmaq) and me (Margaret, the settler) travel by car anywhere together in HRM, we have an opportunity to engage in candid in-depth decolonizing discussions. It is through these car ride discussions that I learned first-hand from Flo about colonial oppression and systemic racism. It is through our conversations that I have a better understanding of what white settler privilege looks like in K'jipuktuk and other parts of Mi'kma'ki—the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

One Saturday afternoon when we happened to be together, Flo shared a very personal story about why she finds it difficult to eat when she is in a social food sharing situation. Her response has stuck with me, and I think about it every time I open my refrigerator full of mostly locally sourced food choices.

When Flo was a single mother of three living in Halifax on welfare, resources were extremely tight, and food was often scarce. As a result, she made sure that her children always ate before she did. If they ate everything then she had to go without eating. Even though this happened a long time ago, the habit of taking care of others over herself has stayed with her and carried over into the present day. Most of the time she only ate once a day. As a result, she still has a hard

time eating more often. She still waits until everyone has had their share before she can take sustenance for herself and then she still only takes what is left.

Like all of Flo's stories, this one lingered with me for the rest of the day. Being a mother of three children myself, I thought about what she had shared with me earlier that afternoon. I realized that my children and extended family have never ever had to worry about food security. We have never had to go hungry. Having a full belly and not worrying where our next meal will come from is something that we take for granted. This realization brought me to a greater understanding of where I am positioned in society because of my inherent colonial white privilege, and how this same privilege has impacted others like my friend Flo and her children.

In several teachings received from other Mi'kmaq I have been told that a Chief does not eat until the whole community is fed. I couldn't help but wonder if Flo's need to make sure her family was fed first came from her own Mi'kmaw upbringing. I also realized something else that day. The notion of relationship is key to understanding why this story of Flo is so important. First, we both needed to have developed a respectful friendship where Flo felt comfortable to share her life experiences with me. That friendship was also why I was moved by what she had said, which caused me to make some critical reflections about myself.

Millions of humans go hungry every day because they do not have the means or access to enough food. This is not something new. However, because Flo and I are friends, her first-hand story and unique perspective meant more than if it was someone I did not know. It is because of this relationship that I am open to these critical spaces for dialogue that are necessary, that hold me accountable, and that challenge my Canadian colonial ideology to become actively involved in social justice.

Over the years I have come to cherish and look forward to whenever Flo and I can share a car ride because I know that our brief dialogue, which is usually about 15 minutes, significantly changes how I understand a just world. It has been truly an honour, and I am forever grateful, to be the recipient of Flo's authentic storytelling.

We have talked about driving to Ottawa once the pandemic settles down, to visit Flo's daughter and family. I can only imagine what we will talk about. Who knows what I will learn and how my settler notions will continue to change as a result?

We are all Treaty People

By Flo Blackett Apli' kmuj and Margaret Knickle—January 2, 2021



Tonya Francis Photography

K'JIPUKTUK (Halifax) – What happens when a Mi'kmaw and settler university student share car rides on their way to university and other places? They talk, and the settler learns some hard lessons about colonial oppression, systemic racism, and white privilege.

K'JIPUKTUK (Halifax) – One time, on our way to a drumming event, Flo pointed out that we don't have to look very far to witness present-day settler colonialism in Mi'kma'ki. She exclaimed “OMG just watch what is unfolding in Saulnierville! Settler fishers are getting away with using violence against the Mi'kmaq in an attempt to undermine our inherent treaty rights. Flo said, “We have always had the right to fish to make a moderate living as well as for personal and ceremonial use. It is a falsehood to believe that the Canadian government or any of the provinces have the authority to regulate or control any aspect of our continued existence here.” “The Mi'kmaq can govern how our treaty rights are to be carried out. Our rights have been defined in the Peace and Friendship Treaties and have also been upheld in the Supreme Court of Canada. The treaties define, among other things, the privilege for settlers to fish on Mi'kma'ki. The settlers are the guests in Mi'kma'ki, and their rights are different from our inherent rights. However, just like in the past, present-day settler colonialism is ignoring all this.”

“Do you know what the phrase ‘We are all Treaty People’ means,” Flo asked? “Well, when our ancestors signed treaties, the agreements and benefits that were made were meant for both the Mi'kmaq and the settlers. The treaties were created so that the Mi'kmaq and settlers could share Mi'kma'ki and its resources in equitable and sustainable ways. First the British ignored the intentions behind the treaties, then the Canadian government and now these settler fishermen and women.”

We must critically examine the violation of treaty rights and attacks on the lobster fishers of Sipekne'katik First Nations. It will help us understand how settler-colonialism continues to reveal itself in Mi'kma'ki.

Ask Yourself, Why is Your Privilege so Hard to See?

By Flo Blackett Apli'kmuj and Margaret Knickle—January 10, 2021



Photo hmhps.ca

K'JIPUKTUK (Halifax) – My family now spans over seven generations of settlers who live on the unceded territory Mi'kma'ki. On our way to school one day, I asked Flo, “How do I reconcile with, that on some level my family’s arrival to Mi'kma'ki is in part responsible for the displacement of the Mi'kmaq?”

Her answer per usual was to the point: [Hun], you have no control over the colonial past, you cannot change what happened. However, you sure as heck can take responsibility for the future! There are so many ways that you can do this. First check your privilege. I mean really check your privilege. By that I mean check [your] unearned access to resources that you easily have because of the colour of your skin and that other people can't access because they aren't white. Ask yourself, why is your privilege so hard to see?"

“Privilege doesn't mean you have not had a hard life, or you haven't worked hard. Heck you are doing a PhD and you are tackling social justice issues in Mi'kma'ki, we both know that is hard work. What it means is that compared to someone else, like me for example, you have not experienced the same types of oppression, injustices that I have. In fact, it is your invisible benefits that allow you to have a very different life experience than me.”

“What is something you take for granted because of privilege? How are your life experiences different from mine because of your position of privilege? Heck why does this even matter? Once you start waking up to some of the answers you find, how are you going to use your position of power and influence and be an active agent in decolonization?”

Flo then said: “Let me ask you some questions with simple yes and no answers. Keep in mind that whatever your answer will be the opposite from me.”

“When your daughters left the house and went out with friends in Halifax, did you worry that they could be kidnapped and sold in the sex trafficking market?”

“Do you have a family member that attended residential school?”

“Do you feel like the HRM police and RCMP officers are here for your protection?”

“Has anyone ever treated you in a negative way because of the colour of your skin?”

“Are you afraid to go to the dentist because they make extremely uncomfortable racist statements and make you feel uncomfortable and not safe?”

“Do you understand what it means to live and share space on the unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq?”

Indigenous Storytelling as Methodology

The following are examples of how the methodology of Indigenous storywork was used as a pedagogical tool to unsettle the narrative that supported my ability to understand colonization and my role as a settler in truth and reconciliation. I argue that listening to the oral stories of Indigenous Peoples is a critical first step in decolonization and is required before any type of truth and reconciliation can occur.

Analysis of Settler Identity via Interviews

One of the themes that emerged from the interviews and stories that were shared with me was the linking of settler identity, the settler discourse, and the way these two colonial devices are used for keeping the colonial mindset firmly entrenched in the present day. During our car rides for example, Flo often shared her knowledge about the many Peace and Friendship Treaties that the Mi’kmaq signed with early Europeans, and later, the Canadian government. As we unpacked the purpose of the Peace and Friendship Treaties, using Archibald’s (2008) storywork protocol, I gained first-hand knowledge from Flo about the Peace and Friendship Treaties as understood from a Mi’kmaq worldview.

By honouring Indigenous knowledge in this manner, I learned important information about the history of Nova Scotia and the eastern Atlantic seaboard, which is very different from what I was taught and is generally not accepted as mainstream Atlantic Canadian history. Via oral storytelling, Flo and other Elders gave me a different account of early treaty negotiations in the Northeast Atlantic. The Indigenous Peoples of the Wabanaki Confederacy, which included the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot, were more powerful than their European counterparts. Instrumental in these treaty negotiations was fact that the Mi'kmaq and other members of the Wabanaki Confederacy were not figuring out how to share space and resources and were safeguarding and protecting their homelands for future generations to come.

The oral stories shared with me have helped me grasp that I am a guest in Mi'kma'ki and that I have benefits that outweigh those of my Mi'kmaw host because of a settler government and society that have not honoured the Peace and Friendship Treaties. As a settler who benefits from the Peace and Friendship Treaties that were negotiated by the Mi'kmaq with my European ancestors, I realize that contemporary settlers have a responsibility to make sure that Mi'kmaw rights and privileges are honoured and acknowledged, as defined by these treaties. I now understand this as a legal obligation that is backed up, not just by the treaties, but by UNDRIP, and Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution.

Nowhere is the breach of the treaties more evident than in the recent violence and racism directed towards Mi'kmaw fishers by settlers in Saulnierville, Nova Scotia, in the fall of 2020. This racism is so obvious that a letter was sent to the United Nations regarding the racial discrimination that was occurring. The United Nations has requested that the federal government respond to these racist allegations and treatment of Mi'kmaw lobster fishers.

I D T M T C V to Tackle Racism?

Recently, Stephen Labrador shared with ARSC the stories he told me during our interview about what it is like for him and his family living in Lunenburg. As a result, both his storytelling and the vulnerable position that he put himself in by sharing some very personal and painful lived experiences enabled the committee members to make human connections to the lived realities of the Labrador family. Stephen Labrador's story is an example of how storytelling can touch the hearts and minds of non-Indigenous people through real-life stories entrusted to them. When witnessing stories in this manner, the listener is permitted a personal interaction with another person's lived experience. Listening to Stephen Labrador's vulnerability as he shares his stories about his family's daily lived experiences of prejudice and discrimination directed towards them enables listeners to recognize the Labrador family's reality as members of the community of Lunenburg.

Since the settler narrative is reinforced as the primary mode for understanding Lunenburg history through to the present, today's settlers are the sum total of their colonial history. This celebratory discourse is the blueprint that defines settler identity, which also validates contemporary settler behaviour and privileges. The Lunenburg colonial narrative also shapes

growing up in Lunenburg from Stephen Labrador, his stories brought racism to life in authentic ways. The committee took in the daily microaggressions that his children experience at school, the institutional racism and discrimination on the part of local law enforcement, and everyday racism and prejudice that are continually directed at the Labrador family in the town because they are Mi'kmaq.

The transformative nature of storytelling is possible through Stephen's straightforwardness that brings racism in Lunenburg to life. When listening to Stephen tell his story, his audience becomes moved to make deeper commitments and to become participants for anti-racist change in the town. This type of storywork allows relationships to grow between the people whose stories are erased and those willing to learn about their shared sense of place, as in the Town of Lunenburg. In effect, Stephen's stories became pedagogical teaching and learning moments for the ARSC members and others willing to listen in respectful ways. Transformation is possible through newly formed relationships that support liberatory change in a person, institution, and society.

Closing Thoughts

These shared stories provide an excellent example of Archibald's (2008) notion of oral storytelling and storywork principles as a powerful pedagogical tool. As Elder Hunt suggests, oral storytelling provides a type of learning that is different from and richer than written text. In these examples, oral storytelling is a pedagogical tool used for sharing personal life experiences to impart knowledge. For instance, by listening to an individual share their lived experiences in this manner, I acquired an intimate window into their world. This unique learning method deepened my ability to understand the storyteller's overall life and experiences. The transfer of

knowledge resulted because I received various authentic narratives that wove the past, present, and future synergistically with the storytellers' understanding of decolonization.

Since Indigenous storytelling is a teaching tool, the oral narrative is often connected to a lesson about broader societal issues. Each of the committee members I interviewed used the Indigenous storytelling platform, combined with their personal experience, to demonstrate how their lived experience piqued their interest in supporting the decolonizing initiatives at the museum in one fashion or another.

The unique experience of taking a summer boat ride together with Mrs. Joudrey and Dachia, sharing their lived experiences of growing up in Indian Point, provided a window into what the Mahone Bay area was like in the past. As we motored by and gazed at the islands, small bays, inlets, and mainland shorelines, for Mrs. Joudrey and Dachia the landscape brought up constant memories of the times they lived there. The cherished recollections and their relationship to this beloved place drove the essence of their storytelling. Their local knowledge was filled with their family history, along with the insight and emotions they gained from their lived experience and their family's intergenerational relationships to this place.

Stephen Labrador's story is also based on his family's lived experiences of a specific place: Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. From Stephen's sharing of his personal story with me, I gained a much greater sense of racism and discrimination in Lunenburg than from just reading in the news about his family's recent racism experience. With his willingness to express his feelings to me, a stranger, Stephen's storytelling opened a door for us to build an amicable relationship. We meet regularly to discuss racism currently occurring in Lunenburg and what actions should happen as a result. A final outcome of our newly formed friendship is that we have developed a sense of

camaraderie and mutual interest in tackling racism and making a difference as new members of ARSC.

Kwimu/Loon

Reawaken the intentions of our ancestors
Call upon me I am listening
Learn to call, so others will listen to you
Teach them how to abandon their western ways
Witness clearly all our shared history in Mi'kma'ki
What is the ripple effect of your work?

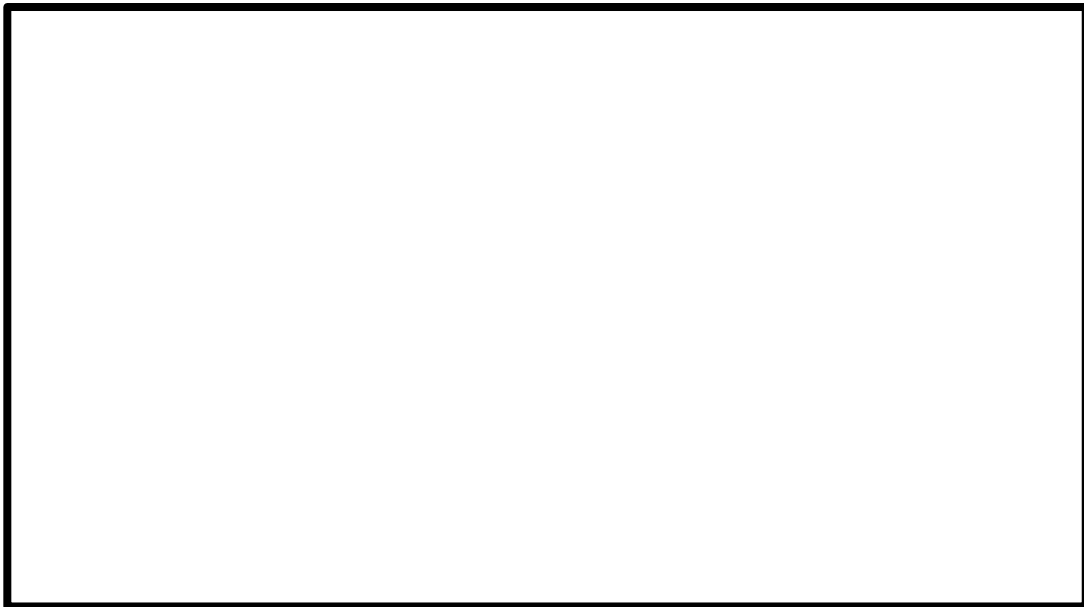


Chapter Six: The Mahone Bay Museum Decolonizing Initiative

there is future just beyond our vision
a future of acceptance
it exists in the minds of many
even through the resistance

pay no attention plant the seeds
listen to your ancient voices
they will guide when needed

(*KisKaieyi-I AM READY* by Michelle Sylliboy, 2019, Rebel Press.
Reprinted with permission from the author.)



(Forshaw Day's *At* , 1865,
from the Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc., as collected by John Risley)

Introduction

Currently, the Mahone Bay Museum focuses on displaying the colonial history of Mahone Bay following English settlement in the mid 1700s. The museum desired to add a component to their work that privileges the Mi'kmaw voice and how the Mi'kmaq wished history to be represented in the museum. When the Mahone Bay Museum established a volunteer committee ("the committee") to work on this decolonizing project, I was invited to join the

group. This chapter documents the decolonizing process that the Mahone Bay Museum is undertaking and provides a reflection on my experience as a volunteer on this project.

There are many reasons for including my involvement with the Mahone Bay Museum's decolonizing initiatives in this study. For starters, with the bit of work we have done thus far, our committee demonstrated the wealth of Mi'kmaw information that exists in the Mahone Bay area. Secondly, to date, the Mahone Bay Museum provides both positive outcomes and challenges faced by colonial institutions in their attempts to decolonize who they are. Lastly, a key reason for including my volunteer position with the museum is to demonstrate how the relationship between myself and members of the Mi'kmaw community enhanced the success of the museum's decolonizing work.

History of the Mahone Bay Museum

From a colonial perspective, the town of Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada, dates to the arrival of foreign Protestants from Germany; Switzerland; and Montbéliard, France who initially settled in the nearby British settlement of Lunenburg in 1753. The new European settlers of Lunenburg were given farmland throughout the area ranging from 30 acres to 300 acres. In 1754, with its easy access to the sea, the head of the Mahone Bay harbour became the logical location for the settlers to establish businesses and build homes. Hence, the bucolic and archetypal settler town of Mahone Bay was born.

As described previously, Mahone Bay is a classic example of a Canadian European colonial settlement that has evolved over the centuries and, like many such places, has become a destination spot for travellers. Vacationers from around the world instantly delight in Mahone Bay's sea-faring legacy, scenic harbour, well-maintained century-old Victorian homes, heritage gardens, and the iconic Three Churches perched across from the harbour. To attract tourists, the

town organizes events such as the annual Scarecrow Festival, Father Christmas Parade, and Pirate Festival. Citizens have an underlying sense of pride steeped in preserving the original European colonial settlers' lives, values, and legacy.

The Mahone Bay Museum, whose name was the Mahone Bay Settlers Museum until 2016, was first established in 1979, when the Mahone Bay Founder's Society formed to organize the 225th anniversary celebration of the founding of the European settlement. At first, the location of the museum was in Pioneer Hall, and it was open only during the summer months, which are the peak local tourism season. Pioneer Hall is in the basement of the local historic Trinity United Church. Eventually, the Founders Society purchased a permanent home for the museum in a large colonial house on Main Street.

From the beginning, the museum has reflected settler ideology. With a Board of Directors, a small paid staff, and a dedicated local community, the museum provides visitors and the town population with an in-depth understanding of the community's colonial heritage. Using museums to commemorate colonial settlement in this way is an example of a colonial tool that creates and perpetuates false myths about Europeans as the first people to inhabit a location. Most of the displays in the Mahone Bay Museum suggest that the Europeans were the first and most important people to create a thriving community on the shores of Mahone Bay. This representation is in direct contrast to the established fact that the Mi'kmaq were present in the area long before the European settlers arrived in 1754. Archeological evidence at The Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre (2015) suggests that the Mi'kmaq have lived in Mi'kma'ki for over 13,500 years, and most Mi'kmaq will tell you that they have been here since time immemorial.

Decolonizing Work at The Museum Begins

Lyne Allain began working at the museum in 2016 as manager and curator, and she immediately noticed the lack of museum documentation of what life was like in the area prior to European colonization. Specifically, Curator Allain observed that there was virtually no representation of the history of the local Indigenous Peoples known as the Mi'kmaq. Mahone Bay is an integral part of Mi'kmaw territory, known as Mi'kma'ki, which, as noted above, the Mi'kmaq have inhabited for thousands of years.

Curator Allain subsequently began working on how best to represent the history in the area prior to European colonialization. She spoke with several local Mi'kmaq in order to include the Mi'kmaw community and determine how to proceed with a Mi'kmaw museum exhibit. The next step was to create a team of Mi'kmaw, and non-Indigenous representatives interested in revolutionizing and transforming how museology is carried out in Lunenburg County. During the summer of 2018, the committee was formed. With the addition of a different Mi'kmaw university student that Curator Allain has been able hire each summer, the committee members include Elder Hunt, Elder Joe Mike, Barry Stevens (local Mi'kmaq), Michael Eisnor (local settler/amateur historian), Curator Allain, and me.

I was thrilled to be asked to participate in the committee because its mandate aligns well with my research work and ongoing efforts to practise Indigenous allyship through building relationships with the local Mi'kmaw community, and to unsettle the historical settler ideology in Lunenburg County. My role has been to act as a liaison between the Mahone Bay Museum and the local Mi'kmaw Elders and other Mi'kmaq, to work collectively with committee members on decolonization initiatives, and to conduct research as the committee sees fit.

The First Conundrum

Initially, the museum's Board of Directors (BOD) asked the committee to focus on researching the Mi'kmaq within the confines of the colonial boundary of the town of Mahone Bay. However, this restriction became an obvious limitation to our research because, prior to European colonization, the Mi'kmaq inhabited and governed a much larger space than just present-day Mahone Bay. As readily became apparent, if we were going to understand and truly honour Mi'kmaq history, then our research must include an area much greater than only the town of Mahone Bay.

As noted in the Nova Scotia Archives (2020), the availability of fish and game dictated the traditional way of life for the Mi'kmaq. To follow food sources, the Mi'kmaq seasonally moved along well-established routes from one location to another. Roger Lewis states that the Mi'kmaq built summer villages and communities along the shores of the Mahone Bay waters and on its islands. In the winter, the Mi'kmaq followed water sources, such as the Mushamush River, Martins River, Gold River, and LaHave River, into the interior land. They then set up their winter encampments in smaller groups of families somewhere along the area where Highway 103 is today. They returned to the same summer communities and smaller winter encampments every year and thus inhabited significant territory beyond the town of Mahone Bay.

The BOD request to confine our research to the Town of Mahone Bay troubled Elder Hunt. She felt that if the museum wished to deconstruct their colonial narrative, then they could not put geographic limits on where we could do research. She further stated that if the committee truly wanted to understand the extent of the presence of the Mi'kmaq in the Mahone Bay area, then we needed to broaden our understanding of where they lived. As mentioned above, the Mi'kmaq were a mobile people who traveled according to the seasons/food availability within

their traditional hunting and fishing districts. The Town of Mahone Bay and surrounding area are within one of these seven Mi'kmaw traditional districts: Sipekne'katik, which in English translates into "wild potato area."

Elder Hunt said that when we place geographic constraints on what we include about the Mi'kmaq in the museum we miss who they are and their relationship to the land. To understand the Mi'kmaq, one cannot look just at the Town of Mahone Bay because the Mi'kmaq inhabited a much larger area than just the colonial town limits. From Elder Hunt's position, this is a short-sighted perspective that misses the rich culture and relational, interconnected way of life that the Mi'kmaq shared with the land, surrounding waters, animals, and plants, which stretched to other parts of Mi'kma'ki.

Mi'kmaw territory in Mahone Bay included other areas such as Blockhouse, Clearland, Oakland, Indian Point, and neighbouring islands. The Mi'kmaq also used the extensive watershed system in the South Shore and along the Atlantic Ocean, and regularly traveled outside the Mahone Bay area to places such as Lunenburg and LaHave to fish, harvest local food sources, and visit family and friends in other Mi'kmaw communities. To acquire a better sense of the depth and breadth of Mi'kmaq communities and where they traveled, the committee wanted the broader area to cover a region at least as far as LaHave and Gold River.

Since a volunteer BOD governs the Mahone Bay Museum, the decolonizing committee must seek their approval. Curator Allain took the committee's concern to the BOD. They decided that the decolonizing committee's research could extend north to Clearland, northwest to Blockhouse, northeast to Martins River, and southeast to include Indian Point, Maders Cove and neighbouring islands, and all lands in between.

It is important to note that the Acadia First Nations Gold River Reserve (Amapapskegek), established in 1820, is just east of Martins River, was not included in our research. Keep in mind this Reserve is located at the mouth of the west side of the picturesque Gold River. The Mi'kmaq have a long history of traditional encampments on the river and the shores of the neighbouring waters of Mahone Bay (Acadia First Nations, 2020). Despite its geographic, cultural, and spiritual significance to the Mi'kmaq it was not considered in our research because it came outside the boundary confinement set up by the museum BOD.

We faced other obstacles while conducting our research, including limited funding, and a small physical space inside the museum in which to display Mi'kmaw information. Since Curator Allain does mainly archival work and grant writing in the winter months, our main time to work together as a cohesive team occurred only when the museum was open in the summer.

During the early months of 2020, our work at the museum was plagued by the implications of the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. Many museums, including the Mahone Bay Museum did not open at all during 2020. Other institutions, such as the Nova Scotia Archives, Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre, DesBrisay and others, were also closed, provided reduced remote services, and/or had very limited availability options. The committee was unable to meet in person because of social distancing restrictions and could not have face-to-face discussions with Mi'kmaw knowledge holders and Elders. However, those restrictions did not stop us from digging into the plethora of written sources that were available, both in texts and online, in order to validate the evidence and history of the Mi'kmaq. Until social gathering restrictions were lifted, we used email or telephone to communicate and share information. Throughout the pandemic, when gathering restrictions allowed, committee members regularly met in person to discuss our ideas about what decolonization could look like at the Mahone Bay Museum.

The committee decided that our decolonizing initiatives would mean engaging in gathering and documenting as much information as we could find about the Mi'kmaq and the Mahone Bay area, efforts that became an astounding experience. Although human settlement, climate change, and coastal erosion has made finding some sites challenging, we discovered an abundance of evidence of the Mi'kmaq in the town of Mahone Bay and surrounding area.

An Additional Conundrum

In January 2021, I visited the Nova Scotia Museum in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to discuss with several curators the research we had been conducting at the Mahone Bay Museum. In advance of the meeting, I sent a comprehensive list of the information, reports, and collections related to the Mi'kmaq that we were interested in viewing. I spent an afternoon with Katie Cottreau-Robins, Archaeology Curator; Vanessa Smith, Archeology Assistant Curator; Roger Lewis, Ethnology Curator; and John Cormier, Special Places Coordinator. They shared their interest in and knowledge about the vast amount of archeological Mi'kmaw evidence that is available in Mahone Bay and the surrounding area. In preparation for our meeting, they had done a significant amount of leg work to provide me with several documents that related to various archeological excavations that had taken place at Mahone Bay, Oakland, and Indian Point and on nearby islands. Some of these documents included Maritime Archeological Resource Inventory (MARI) reports, a variety of maps that display archeological excavations in and around Mahone Bay, *The Micmac News* publication, Nova Scotia archeologists' reports, and a report by Peter Latta about the Acadian kilns. Curator Cottreau-Robins also shared a conference paper on coastal erosion with the committee so that we could better understand the devastating impact of climate change on archaeological sites.

Another topic that came up was the importance of protecting Mi'kmaw archeological resources that are not safeguarded by laws and regulations, such as the Heritage Protection Act. Unfortunately, a significant possibility exists that amateur interest in archeology and excavation, along with potential looting, could result in further damage to these sacred sites. Accordingly, we were strongly encouraged not to publish the specific locations of Mi'kmaw historical sites, such as middens and summer encampments.

Not disclosing Mi'kmaw archeological and historical sites to the public was a problem, because the committee's solution to the geographical boundary restrictions on the research was to create a map of Lunenburg County that showed the locations of all of the Mi'kmaw evidence, including water routes that the Mi'kmaq used for navigating the intricate ocean, lake, and river systems.

Elder Hunt (personal communication, January 25, 2021) felt that the request the Nova Scotia Museum archeologists made not to disclose specific Mi'kmaw archeological sites in the Mahone Bay area is contrary to how Mi'kmaw history should be honoured. On the one hand, Elder Hunt understands the need to safeguard the cultural landscape of the Mi'kmaq. On the other hand, she insists that decolonization is educating the public about the Mi'kmaq Peoples long-time presence in the Mahone Bay area. As far as she is concerned, keeping evidence about the extent of the presence of the Mi'kmaq a secret is a continuation of colonial erasure. She feels that creating a visual map of all the Mi'kmaw proof that we have found to date is a critical decolonial tool that can create awareness about the Mi'kmaq. Elder Hunt argues that instead of hiding all of the information about the Mi'kmaq, the whole area should be red-flagged and come under some protection so that disturbing any of these important Mi'kmaw geographical landscapes would be against the law.

The decolonizing committee was at a standstill again with respect to how best to represent the complex and evolved Mi'kmaw culture and life that extended outside the Mahone Bay town limits. Since the committee has so many other projects that we could be working on, we decided to put the map on the back burner for the time being. For now, all Mi'kmaw evidence is stored in written documents, such as this dissertation.

Since this dissertation is a public record, the archeologists also cautioned me about safeguarding these Mi'kmaw spaces when I included information about the history of the Mi'kmaq in my dissertation. However, the museum archeologists did make one exception to their requests for non-disclosure: *Some Shell Heaps in Nova Scotia*, by Harlan Ingersoll Smith and William John Wintemberg (1929), because, as a document in the public domain, it is already easily available.

Decolonizing the Mahone Bay Town Sign

This section details the experience of the committee and the obstacles they encountered in attempting to modify the signage in the Town of Mahone Bay.

Project Overview

In 2019, Mahone Bay celebrated the 100-year anniversary of the incorporation of the town. To commemorate this colonial milestone, the town undertook a variety of projects, including refurbishing the tattered, worn, and faded signs throughout the town. These signs display various historical facts about the town's European colonial history. For the most part, the signs help to promote and preserve European colonialism associated with Mahone Bay and the surrounding area.

When the committee became involved, the signs reflected only the colonial narrative about Mahone Bay, highlighting the time when European settlers first began arriving at the

region. Two signs were at issue. The first was the Mahone Bay historical information sign, which stands next to the Mahone Bay information centre and gave a European settler account of how the town came to be. The second was the family name sign in the centre of town, which listed the original settler families who colonized Mahone Bay in 1754. Both signs provided mainstream historical information about the town, with no mention of the Mi'kmaq. One sign did state that the town and surrounding area has been known by a variety of different names, such as "Mush A Mush," but the sign failed to specify the fact that this local place name has Mi'kmaw origins.

In 2018, Curator Allain brought the signage issue to the committee's attention. She said that the town was planning to spruce up the current signs as part of their centennial celebration. She did not know whether the town was planning simply to reprint the old signs, or whether they would be open to changing the content, but she knew this was an opportunity to begin our decolonizing work. We unanimously agreed that we should mention to the town that they really needed to update the signs to reflect the Mi'kmaw presence and understanding of history.

In October 2018, on behalf of the committee, Mi'kmaw Elder Hunt drafted a letter to the museum's BOD, requesting that the BOD work collaboratively with the committee to prepare a letter to the Town of Mahone Bay, stating the decolonial changes that the two signs in question required. In her letter, Elder Hunt made two specific requests. First, she suggested that instead of adding the Mi'kmaw family names to the sign with the list of the original settlers, a separate structure similar to a monument be erected, like the one at Indian Point, which would display Mi'kmaw family names. This commemoration would include a list of the names of her Mi'kmaw ancestors, who lived in Mahone Bay and surrounding area prior to 1754. Elder Hunt also asked that the words "founders" and "discovered" be removed from the family name sign and from any other colonial commemorative visual displays. Elder Hunt's position is that these colonial terms

serve to erase the existence of the Mi'kmaq Peoples who had been living in the area prior to European colonization for over 13,500 years.

The BOD responded, thanking Elder Hunt for her letter. They indicated that they recognized the need to address the many displays, commemorations, and other messaging throughout the town that convey only one aspect of Mahone Bay's collective history. For this project, the BOD saw their role as one of advocacy and deemed it appropriate to undertake this project, even though the signs are not a part of the museum. The BOD fully supported our interest in making changes to the signs as a way of formally recognizing the Mi'kmaw presence and legacy in the area, and they assisted with the communication of our decolonizing interests to the town.

Complications with E N G

The reality was that the revision of these two signs in a way that honours the Mi'kmaw understanding of history would take longer than the committee initially hoped, which quickly became apparent. The decolonized signs would not be ready for the June 2019 celebration or the summer tourist season. Several complications arose. One example was our realization that the existing family name sign did not have enough room to include Mi'kmaw names so that maybe this approach was not the best strategy for validating the Mi'kmaw families who lived in the area. This difficulty was what prompted Elder Hunt to come up with her idea that the best way to represent the Mi'kmaw presence in the area would be a separate sign or monument about the Mi'kmaw families.

We faced another obstacle when trying to determine which Mi'kmaw names should be included on the family name sign. As the Nova Scotia Archives (2020) established, land records for the period of the early colonization of Mi'kma'ki have been carefully documented and

maintained since the first days of colonial government, thus collectively providing a significant resource for settler history research. Unfortunately, the same due diligence with respect to record keeping cannot be said about the identification of the Mi'kmaw families who resided in the area. Elder Paul (2006) argues that, because the goal of the colonial project was the complete erasure of the Mi'kmaq in Mi'kma'ki, the lack of any significant effort to chronicle the Mi'kmaq only makes sense.

The committee agreed that a better way to represent Mi'kmaw family names was to create a totally different structure that would stand next to the existing sign listing colonizers' family names. The committee realized that we needed to conduct more research because of the scarcity or absence of written documentation about the Mi'kmaw families who lived in the area. Since this research would be opened-ended, the committee decided that whatever venue is the ultimate choice must include space for new names as they become

the issue that it would not be enough to add just a line or two about the Mi'kmaq and their presence in the area and that the current text needed a total decolonial facelift. As a result, for over a year, the committee and the BOD communicated and edited an evolving decolonized narrative back and forth via Google docs. Mi'kmaw Elders and other Mi'kmaw knowledge keepers who assisted us were quick to point out that despite the many changes to the narrative, the writing was still from a colonial point of view.

Although both the BOD and the town have responded positively to the overall concept of rewriting the Mahone Bay history information sign, their inability to look at Mahone Bay history from a decolonizing stance and create space for the Mi'kmaw understanding of history has limited the progress of the project. Therefore, additional changes still remain that the committee would like to see feature in the narrative that is being written for the new sign. Even though the history sign still has a colonial slant, the committee have accepted the changes so far and have decided that we will incorporate what was missing from the sign into various projects on the physical site of the museum instead. In late February 2019, the Mahone Bay town council approved final drafts of both the family name sign and the Mahone Bay historical information sign. The signs were put up in 2020.

Tensions Surrounding Land Acknowledgement

Another issue that developed during the rewriting of both signs to better reflect the Mi'kmaw history and way of life was how the Town of Mahone Bay would choose to acknowledge that they are on unceded Mi'kmaw territory. The draft of a statement that the committee sent to the town included the word unceded and said, "You are currently standing in Mi'kma'ki on unceded territory of the L'nuk, which means "the people" in the Mi'kmaw language. The Mi'kmaq have occupied this land for more than 13,500 years." The town sent an

email to Curator Allain stating, “We recently adopted a standard Territorial Land Acknowledgement, but it doesn’t include the word ‘unceded.’ The Province and Federal Government won’t use unceded in their acknowledgements, so we’ve had to follow suit.” When the committee asked why they chose not to use the word unceded, they replied that they believed the authority to grant this request was over their heads as a municipal government and that they were following the example that the provincial and federal governments had set. To acknowledge that they occupy Mi’kmaw territory, the town’s choice of language instead says, “The Town of Mahone Bay is part of the Mi’kma’ki territory of the Mi’kmaq who inhabited their traditional lands for over 13,500 years.”

Elder Hunt did some investigating in response to the town’s decision not to include the term “unceded.” She contacted Crystal Dorey, who is the communications manager at the Kwilmu’kw Maw-klusuaqn negotiation office, Mi’kmaq Rights Initiative in Millbrook, Nova Scotia, to inquire whether they knew anything about settler governments and their decisions not to use the word “unceded.” Dorey responded that their senior researcher had found that this was not the first time this situation had occurred. Dorey sent Elder Hunt a link to an Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) report by Justin Brake (2018) called, “Nova Scotia Government Accused of Meddling in Wording of Land Acknowledgements.” Upon investigation, Brake (2018) found that the Nova Scotia Office of Aboriginal Affairs as well as a number of lawyers had advised several schools in Nova Scotia to omit the word “unceded” in land acknowledgements. In her email, Dorey stated, “We cannot find any policies put forth by government that state that only specific language can be used, or moreover restrict what words can be used. We can only assume that the town has received advice from someone who works for the government and have made the decision to not go against it.” Dorey also said that she

would bring this matter to the attention of the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs, in case they want us to push it further with the federal and provincial governments.

The setback with respect to land acknowledgment worried Elder Hunt. She believes the town's refusal and unwillingness to acknowledge that Mahone Bay is occupying unceded Mi'kmaw territory is connected to the greater Canadian colonial narrative and its erasure of the occupation of Canadian land stolen from Indigenous Peoples. Elder Hunt sees this text omission as a huge, missed opportunity to change the current dominant Canadian narrative so that would better reflect the fact that Mahone Bay, like any settler space in Mi'kma'ki, is situated on unceded Mi'kmaw territory that the Mi'kmaq and settlers share because of the many Peace and Friendship Treaties that were signed.

The unresolved conflict around land acknowledgement is reminiscent of MacKey's (2016) work on local land rights in *Unsettled Expectations, Uncertainty, Land and Settler Decolonization*. As Mackey (2016) maintains,

Land right conflicts in settler nations pivot on the profound and foundational tension between national and settler expectations of an entitlement to the land, and the repeated and longstanding assertions by Indigenous Peoples that these lands were most often taken without consent, and that they are still their territories (p. 3).

As we ardently focussed on rewriting the Mahone Bay historical informational sign in a way that honoured the Mi'kmaw representation of their presence and history in the area, other questions kept coming up for me as well. First, when the larger Mi'kmaw community reads the new signs, I wondered what the response would be, especially since the term unceded is missing in the text? Will some Mi'kmaq see the new sign as a gesture or tokenism on the part of the

Town of Mahone Bay so that they can say they have checked off the decolonizing box requirement? I also questioned the process that we have gone through to get the sign to a point where town council decided it is acceptable. Who benefits from this new narrative? How do we ensure that our work is sincere and not unknowingly (or knowingly, for that matter) hypocritical? Is decolonizing colonial markers such as plaques, signs, and monuments even possible, since as Mi'kmaw Elder Paul was quick to point out, despite any narrative changes, this type of signage is inherently colonial?

The committee had to admit that accepting the outcome with respect to the new sign was tough because it still rings of colonial rhetoric, even with the addition of the Mi'kmaw narrative and perspective. We discussed the process among ourselves and concluded that decolonization, which requires change, will take a while. Despite the problematic text, for now, we have accepted the decision and agreed to the printing of the currently approved sign.

The reality is that I can accept the new written version of the sign because I come from a position that allows me to do so. When I presented the final text that was going to be printed on the new sign to some of my Indigenous friends, I received varying responses. Some said that it is a good start, and a few said that it is too colonial and suggested that we needed to go back to the drawing board and start again. However, some of my Mi'kmaw friends remarked that they could not finish reading the draft and revisions of the sign because of its continued use of colonial jargon and what that represented to them.

The experience with the first decolonizing project that included committee involvement thus demonstrated how easily tensions can arise between the Mi'kmaq and settlers when they collectively share their past. The experience highlighted how much work settlers must do if Indigenous Peoples and settlers are going to successfully push through their colonized

experiences and be able to work together to become partners in a transformation that shapes an equitable future.

Documenting Evidence of Mi'kmaw Burial Grounds

This section explains the efforts on the part of the committee to document evidence of Mi'kmaw burial grounds.

N C T

A current project that the committee is working on is the location of the many Mi'kmaw burial sites that are located throughout the Mahone Bay area. The following locations were a particular focus of investigation.

1. Indian Point

Elder Hunt has been locating Mi'kmaw burial grounds and researching their history in Mi'kma'ki for over 21 years. She is very knowledgeable about these sacred Mi'kmaw spaces and has spent countless hours verifying written documentation and recording the biological and cultural remains that have been found at the many Mi'kmaw burial sites. Elder Hunt has also championed the official recognition and protection of these sacred Mi'kmaw places and was one of the original organizers of the Mi'kmaq Burial Ground Research and Restoration Association. From this background, one of the first teachings that Elder Hunt wanted to share with the committee was her extensive knowledge about the Mi'kmaw burial ground located at the end of Indian Point.

This location, which the Mi'kmaq call L'nui-Wksawey, is roughly eight kilometers east of the Town of Mahone Bay. Oral history suggests that, prior to European colonization, the Mi'kmaq used Indian Point as a political and government headquarters, a theory that Smith and

Wintemberg (1920, p. 127) have validated in *Some Shell Heaps in Nova Scotia* as well as on the Ta'n Weji-sqalia'tiek Mi'kmaw Place Names website (2019).

With its quiet bucolic lifestyle and breathtaking ocean views, Indian Point offers a place to connect to the natural rhythms of the land and sea. That Indian Point today is home to some of the most expensive real estate in eastern Canada and is a destination spot for sailors, hikers, cyclists, and kayakers is no surprise. Today, several large settler oceanfront homes occupy land directly on top of the burial ground, which prevents direct access to the sacred space. Elder Hunt advised us that because of the presence of these homes, the location of the monument to the Mi'kmaw ancestors who are buried at the end of Indian Point, which the Mi'kmaw Burial Grounds Research and Restoration Association dedicated in June 2009, is therefore nearby but could not be directly on the site.

In *The History of the County of Lunenburg*, Mather DesBrisay (1980) documents the presence of several Mi'kmaw burial sites throughout Lunenburg County, which included Indian Point near Mahone Bay. He states,

The Indians had several places of burial in the county. At Indian Point, near Mahone Bay, there is a graveyard, to which Captain Cope's remains were taken, and the bodies of others who died at LaHave and other settlements. Thither were brought from Gold River, the remains of Francis, Newell, and Peter, father, and brothers of John Penall, who lived near Gold River bridge.

The last Indian burial at Indian Point was about twenty-five years ago. The man was taken sick in the woods and was carried onto the porch of John Andrew's house, where he died. It is said that some of the graves were opened a few years

ago, and bodies taken away. This offense is made severely punishable by the criminal code of Canada. (p. 346)

The Nova Scotia Museum graciously shared with the committee a publication by *The Micmac News*. In this document, John Erskine (1960, p. 3) writes about his research at Indian Point stating, “Indian Point receives its name from Indians who, until surviving folk memory used to come from Gold River bringing their dead of the winter to bury with proper gifts of food.” Erskine (1960) further notes that “this cemetery has been eroded by the waves, and the present shoreline, now protected by boulders, shows no disturbance of the soil.”

During our boat ride in Mahone Bay, long time Indian Point residents, Mrs. Joudrey and her daughter Dachia (personal communication, August 27, 2020) both stated that as long as they can remember, they have always known about the Mi’kmaq burial site at the end of Indian Point. Since the burial ground was near a relative’s house, they were able to point to its location. Mrs. Joudrey also said that she remembers people coming from all over, even from as far away as the United States, to visit the burial ground and look for archeological evidence of the Mi’kmaq.

Over the years, a great deal of Mi’kmaq evidence has been found at and around this sacred Mi’kmaq space as well as in other parts of Indian Point. Some of these items have made their way to the DesBrisay Museum in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. Included in this collection of Mi’kmaq evidence are two human skulls that were uncovered during the building of a home in 1941. The DesBrisay Museum states that they gave the human remains to a local Mi’kmaq so that he could perform a reparation ceremony and traditional burial, properly burying his ancestors.

Other Mi'kmaw items that were found at or near the Indian Point burial site include stone implements and tools, such as arrowheads, spearheads, axes, gouges, and hammers. The DesBrisay Museum has these items in storage but not on display. The museum filed a police report in 2015 when DesBrisay staff observed that two items were missing and that someone had stolen them from the Indian Point Mi'kmaw burial site evidence.

In November 2020, the committee made an appointment to look at the Mi'kmaw artefacts at the DesBrisay Museum. Two archeologists from the Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn (Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative) joined us to assist with validation and verification. The archeologists confirmed that the artefacts were from the archaic era and were between 2,500 and 8,000 years old. Elder Hunt was quite excited about the age of the Indian Point archeological items because the dating supported her belief that the Mi'kmaq had been living in the Mahone Bay area much longer than the Europeans, and confirmation of her belief helped to solidify her strong attachment to the land as a Mi'kmaw person.

I find it interesting that the DesBrisay Museum has on display many local colonial items that are merely a couple of hundred years old. However, the Mi'kmaw artifacts from Indian Point, which are many thousands of years old, they have hidden away in boxes, and viewing them requires an appointment. From my perspective, this discrepancy is a clear example of the erasure of the existence of the Mi'kmaq in Lunenburg County.

2. Mahone Bay

The Mi'kmaw burial site in the Town of Mahone Bay is located at 30 Zwicker Lane. This site was recently brought to the committee's attention as a site that we should research and acknowledge at the Mahone Bay Museum. DesBrisay (p. 346-347) confirms the presence of this burial ground in *The History of the County of Lunenburg*. The Town of Mahone Bay has also

verified that they are aware of the site. We would very much like to walk the land so that we can look for any evidence that suggests a burial ground exists there. The Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn (Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative) archeologists who visited the DesBrisay Museum have also offered to join us. To obtain permission to walk the land, we have attempted to contact the current owner of the property by phone and Facebook messenger. To date, the individual has not responded. Our next course of action will be to send via Canada Post a letter that explains who we are and what we would like to accomplish. Until we receive permission, our hands are tied.

3. Weihnacht Farm

Other examples of archeological research that Smith and Wintemberg (1929) conducted in the Mahone Bay area are the middens that were found at the Weihnacht (Whynachts is present day spelling) farm site. While excavating a midden heap at Weihnacht farm, which is in the present-day area west of Whynachts Cove in Oakland, Smith and Wintemberg (1929, p. 113) found a “skeleton accompanied by a stone celt that was ploughed up some years ago a few feet from the shell heap on Weihnacht farm.” Smith and Wintemberg (1929) suggested that these findings indicate that this area may have been a Mi'kmaw burial site; however, they felt that validation of this theory required further investigation.

G U N C H

The committee understands that documenting Mi'kmaw burial sites is an important step in the decolonization process of the museum. Evidence at Indian Point validates the fact that the Mi'kmaq have been living in the area for possibly more than 8,000 years. The Mi'kmaw settlements predate the European settlements, which have existed in the Mahone Bay area for only about 266 years. This distinction is important because it helps to establish the Mi'kmaq and their presence for thousands of years before the European settlers began arriving in Lunenburg in

1753 and in the Town of Mahone Bay in 1754. In other words, the land was not *terra nullius*. The settlers were certainly not the first ones here, and when they did arrive, they displaced the original peoples who may have been here for thousands of years! As previously mentioned, at other locations in what is now Nova Scotia, evidence exists of a Mi'kmaw presence dating back over 13,500 years.

These sacred Mi'kmaw spaces can be found in Bridgewater, Lunenburg, Wentzell's Lake and Petite Rivière. The Mi'kmaw Burial Ground Research and Restoration Association has been able to accomplish significant work on the site at Petite Rivière. As a result, they have been able to erect the placement of a monument on this sacred spiritual site, as a means of remembering and acknowledging the remains of the ancestors of the Mi'kmaq and Acadians who once lived in the surrounding area. Elder Hunt (personal communication, September 20, 2020) nostalgically remarks that, when you open the gate of the Petite Rivière burial ground and step into this very spiritual space, you can instantly feel and hear your ancestors all around you. Elder Hunt also says that whenever she goes there, she loves to sit quietly with her ancestors, listening for their guidance about how she is supposed to live her life.

Documenting Evidence of Mi'kmaw Middens

This section details the committee's investigation of other evidence of the early Mi'kmaw presence in Mi'kma'ki.

N *N*

Another project that the committee is interested in learning more about involved the abundant Mi'kmaw shell middens dispersed throughout the Mahone Bay area, on the islands in

the bay, and along the local shoreline. Although many of these critical Mi'kmaw cultural landscapes are no longer in existence, the committee would like to see their documentation.

For the committee to have a better sense of the devastating impact that erosion has had on coastal archeological history, NSM Curator Cottreau-Robins shared with us the abstract of the paper, *Archaeology in a Time of Unprecedented Crisis*, that she submitted to the CNEHA Archaeology 2020 Conference. Cottreau-Robins (2020) remarks that earlier archaeologists, such as Smith and Wintemberg (1929) and Erskine (1957), observed severe erosion at many coastal archeological sites. All of these archeologists noted that the combination of higher winds and powerful ocean wave activity was continually washing away the shoreline, resulting in major loss of archeological evidence from sites along the Nova Scotia coastline.

Cottreau-Robins (2020) states that archeologists from across all sectors are keenly aware that attempts to save and restore archeological coastal culture and heritage are at a crisis point. She says, “The partners of COASTAL (Community Observation, Assessment, and Salvage of Threatened Archaeological Legacy) agree that it is a race against time.” The consensus among stakeholders is that areas featuring the loss of archeological history due to climate change require urgent action, and they identify initiatives for addressing the accelerating crisis that global warming is generating. The future of these sites is dependent on local communities becoming stewards of their own heritage. The larger archeological network and local communities must work in partnership to help save these sites before a considerable amount of knowledge and archaeological heritage disappear. An example of this type of cooperative effort is the collaboration of local Mi'kmaw communities, Mi'kmaw organizations, academics, museums, and other interested parties, known as COASTAL. This combination of stakeholders has come

together to address the vulnerability of local coastal archaeology sites, and the potential for rapid loss of Mi'kmaw cultural landscapes and history into the sea.

In _____, Sue Deschene (2019) documents the work of a team of archaeologists who, despite the odds, are attempting to uncover Nova Scotia's coastal Mi'kmaw history before it washes away forever. Jon Percy (2018), in *Talking Circle Considers Indigenous Artifacts/History*, also concludes that "man-made destruction has been identified as a critical factor contributing to the loss of middens and the history contained within them." Percy (2018) remarks that damaging measures on the part of humans include farmers removing large quantities of crushed midden shells for soil augmentation, archaeological removal, modern and continued expansion, and the development of human settlements as well as climate change, rising sea levels, and coastal erosion. Whatever the reasons, finding these shell-bearing deposits today is very difficult, if not impossible. In Mi'kma'ki, coastal shell middens were quite numerous and easy to find during the early days of colonization. Most settlers now living on the South Shore are unaware of the Mi'kmaw artefacts and evidence all around them.

H. L. Smith and W. J. Wintemberg (1929) conducted research on the many Mi'kmaw middens throughout Nova Scotia, including ones in the Mahone Bay area. Their investigation uncovered several shell heaps in the Mahone Bay area: the Eisenhower heap, an area north of the Presbyterian Church in the Town of Mahone Bay, the west bank of the Mushamush River on the John Keddy farm, a site on the outskirts of the Town of Mahone Bay, heaps on the Hyson land in Oakland, the Weihnacht farm, a deep heap in Whynachts Cove in Oakland, the southeast side of Rous' Island, and C. P. Thomas's land just northeast of the village of Indian Point.

The location of the Eisenhower heap is on the north side of Oakland Road, on land that James Eisenhower owned. Smith and Wintemberg (1929, p. 111) excavated this site in its entirety “as part of the archaeological work of the Geological Survey, Canada, in September 1913.” The evidence of the shell middens helps to reshape the modern perception of the historical and cultural information about the Mi’kmaq and provides a window into the past. These major shell works represent a link to the Mi’kmaq and their thousands of years of history along the shores of Mahone Bay.

In *Archeological Resources in The Maritimes: A Coastal Survey*, Stephen Davis and David Christianson (1979, p. 45) detail the research that was conducted in order to confirm the location of the eight Mi’kmaw middens sites that Smith and Wintemberg (1929) had excavated. They state that their research team was able to locate evidence only at the Whynachts Cove site and were unable to recover evidence from the remaining seven sites. Davis and Christianson (1979) suggested several reasons for the natural and cultural disturbances of these archeological sites. At the Whynachts Cove and Eisenhower middens, for example, professional archeologists, amateur excavators, and treasure hunters are responsible for the exhaustion of the archeological resources that were once present. The construction and continual maintenance of the Indian Point highway has contributed hugely to the significant destruction of the Mi’kmaw shell heaps in the area. Davis and Christianson (1979) also observed that marine erosion, landscaping, and new home and cottage construction have disturbed and caused immense destruction to the Mi’kmaw archeological resources that Smith and Wintemberg (1929) originally excavated. Davis and Christianson (1979, p. 48) state that the devastating condition of these “archeological resources illustrate [the] need for an updated review of all the archeological resources within the province

of Nova Scotia.” They also worry and concur that “due to the destruction of these archeological resources, the scientific value is now suspect for all these sites.”

E N T F

The traditional way of life for the Mi'kmaq was mobile, with ties to the cultural landscape of an area. Where the Mi'kmaq lived depended on the availability of fish and game. In the winter, it was common for one or two families to work seasonally and live together along well-established trap line routes, moving from one location to another. The Mi'kmaq followed food sources and returned to the same locations year after year, which allowed them to acquire a cultural memory with links to the landscape of an area (Nova Scotia Archives, Mi'kmaw Summer Gatherings 2020). In summertime, the Mi'kmaq moved from the interior of Mi'kma'ki and gathered in larger numbers in villages near the coastal waters. Summer was considered the time of easiest living, and these summer communities would often have between 200 and 300 residents, who took advantage of the abundant seasonal fishing (Nova Scotia Archives, 2020). As at other Mi'kmaw midden sites throughout Mi'kma'ki, an accumulation of shells and other refuse near the shores of the Atlantic waters indicates the site of a summer encampment.

Smith and Wintemberg (1929) observed that the locations of summer Mi'kmaw sites throughout Mi'kma'ki were often at places with a southern or eastern exposure, which is indeed the case with the Mi'kmaw middens in the Mahone Bay area. For example, Smith and Wintemberg (1929) observe that the Mi'kmaw midden at Eisenhower's Point was well protected from the north by a hill and had southern exposure to the ocean, a salt marsh, and a sandy shoreline for safely landing canoes and finding numerous species of clams. They suggest that these features constitute evidence that the Mi'kmaq had a summer encampment there. Smith and Wintemberg (1929, p. 113) state that in 1908, a new road was built to Indian Point, which cut

several feet deep into the south side of the midden and “exposed the shells throughout the east and west length of the heap.” Unfortunately, due to the road construction, Smith and Wintenberg (1929) estimated that the removal of material because of the construction destroyed over one-fourth of the shell midden.

In addition to the shell middens, Smith and Wintenberg (1929, p. 112) found other evidence of the Mi’kmaq summer encampment, including stone remains that indicate a possible fireplace. They suggest that Mi’kmaw occupation was “temporary like a spring/summer/autumn encampment, for the purpose of gathering and drying shellfish for winter consumption at a village” when the Mi’kmaq moved to the interior during the winter. Smith and Wintenberg (1929) conclude that the evidence of Mi’kmaw shell heaps in the Mahone Bay area helps to trace potential late winter, spring, and summer Mi’kmaw encampments where they returned for many years.

In the 1970s, David Christensen, an archeologist from the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, found evidence of a Mi’kmaw summer encampment at the intersection of Sleepy Hollow and Oakland Roads. Like other Mi’kmaw summer communities that Smith and Wintenberg (1929) observed throughout Nova Scotia, this encampment also faced southeast towards the ocean in a sheltered cove that also featured a gentle beach where it would have been relatively simple to land and launch canoes, with easy accessibility to the ocean and all its natural resources.

As a result of this research, I have received several communications from residents of Indian Point and Oakland, who have found Mi’kmaw artefacts in the area over the years. In July 2021, I received an email from a person who had recently found what looks like a Mi’kmaw

arrowhead on a beach near one of the archeological sites mentioned in Smith and Wintemberg's (1929) documentation.

Closing Thoughts on the Decolonizing Initiatives of the Mahone Bay Museum

A notable aspect of my background is that I grew up in Lunenburg County with virtually no knowledge of the Mi'kmaq. There certainly were no monuments to commemorate sacred burial spaces, permanent settlements, summer encampments, or other places that were significant to the Mi'kmaq. For example, I grew up looking at Tancook Island and knew about its colonial significance but had no knowledge that the name of this local iconic island has its roots in Mi'kmaw place names, which is startling, to say the least. Not until I began this research did I become aware of the Mi'kmaw First Nations Gold River and Wild Cat Reserves, which seemed to have been deliberately invisible. As well, as a result of this study, I have become knowledgeable about how the notorious colonial governmental policy known as the Indian Act created and governed the Reserve systems.

As the work of the committee evolved, it became clear that a wealth of evidence exists about the Mi'kmaq in Lunenburg County. Their rich lives and integral relationship with the South Shore landscape goes back for a very long time, a time so long that our short colonial history, which we celebrate so loudly, pales in comparison. An interesting note is that, even with limitations placed on our research due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we still uncovered a wealth of information about the Mi'kmaq in Lunenburg County. With a little digging, we learned about numerous archeological finds, middens, burial grounds, summer encampments, local Mi'kmaw place names, and transportation routes, to name a few. With the additional factor of the lack of authentic Mi'kmaw representation in Lunenburg County, I think it is truly remarkable and very discouraging when one considers the signage, museums, monuments, historical markers, and the

like, which are all related solely to the relatively short colonial history in Mahone Bay and Lunenburg. Except for the two Mi'kmaw burial sites whose identification Elder Hunt initiated, absolutely nothing marks or commemorates the historical sites of the original inhabitants of Mi'kma'ki who graced the settler presence when they signed the Peace and Friendship Treaties. In my opinion, given that the Mi'kmaq have been living in Mi'kma'ki for at least 13,500 (some say time immemorial), the failure to recognize and celebrate their history in a fashion similar to or greater than the recognition of our settler history is disgraceful.

In her latest work, *Warrior Life: Indigenous Resistance and Resurgence*, Pamela Palmater (2020) articulates that the total erasure of Indigenous Peoples is part of the original colonial project. In Palmater's (2020) view, the erasure of the Mi'kmaq in Mi'kma'ki, specifically in Lunenburg County in this instance, was, and still is, deliberate. The continual colonial silence about the Mi'kmaq and their historical legacy is consistent with the objectives of colonization, which attempts to diminish both the importance and the presence of the original inhabitants.

When I think about the tension that happened between the town and the committee about including the term "unceded" on the signs, the necessity for substantial decolonial work is evident. The unceded status of the Mi'kmaw territory is a fact—the Mi'kmaq never gave it up or surrendered where they are from. Why would the government not want to acknowledge that fact? I think two possibilities follow from the fact of the territory being unceded. Pam Palmater (2020) has stated that the Mi'kmaq are a sovereign nation; they are the original inhabitants and stewards of Mi'kma'ki, with ties to the land that are unfathomable to settlers. I believe the facts that Palmater (2020) raises have the potential to disrupt present colonial government and society so that terms such as unceded therefore meet with resistance from the status quo. The other fact to

consider, which Palmater (2020) also talks about, is that, as present-day settlers, current residents are living on land that their ancestors stole from the Mi'kmaq, basking in white settler privilege that ignores the treaty rights of the Mi'kmaq, thus permitting occupation of their territory. Real reconciliation requires Canadians, as settlers, to look at themselves in the mirror and acknowledge these simple and self-evident facts. Such efforts would represent a big step towards a better settler understanding of true colonial history.

The irony is that the easily accessible wealth of information about the Mi'kmaq in the Mahone Bay area is more than enough to justify the creation of an entire space dedicated to their history, culture, and perspective of the story of colonization. One must wonder what other information is out there. Sadly, colonization, climate change, and general human development have meant the loss of vital Mi'kmaw history. Would it not be wonderful to envision a space that honours and cares for local Mi'kmaw culture, language, history, and knowledge-based systems, as way to honour Mi'kmaw self-determination according to the local Mi'kmaw definition of these concepts? Certainly, these ideas are appropriate for contemplation as real action that settlers could take in order to support truth and reconciliation.

An Elder's Thoughts on Decolonization and the Mahone Bay Museum

Elder Hunt (personal communication, January 25, 2021) remarks that our decolonial work at the Mahone Bay Museum is a big topic, with many questions and many complex answers. To begin with, another piece of history that is missing from the colonial narrative is the relationship between the Mi'kmaq and the Acadians. Before the British arrived, the Mi'kmaq shared this space of Mi'kma'ki with the Acadians. Therefore, presenting the history of Mahone Bay and the surrounding area through a Mi'kmaw lens that encompasses the rich diversity of

Mi'kmaw history, culture, traditions, and lived experiences is imperative so that both the Mi'kmaq and settlers can know this history.

Elder Hunt states that, because museums are inherently privileged educational spaces, the responsibility of Lunenburg County museums is to create a safe space for the shared history of the county, which includes the Mi'kmaq and the Acadians. She says that museums must create exhibits so that when visitors come away from the museum, they have a greater understanding of the history of both the Mi'kmaq in Lunenburg County and Indigenous Peoples in Canada's Turtle Island, as a collective story.

Further, Elder Hunt argues that the Mahone Bay Museum cannot keep Mi'kmaw artefacts stored in boxes deep in the bowels of the museum, making them hard for people to look at, as some other museums in the area do. She says that, when the museum makes seeing Mi'kmaw artefacts difficult and keeps them hidden from public view, Mi'kmaw history cannot be understood. From her perspective, Mi'kmaw history has historically not been valued, and this example shows how the Mi'kmaw story is erased. Elder Hunt insists that the Mi'kmaw exhibits cannot be temporary exhibits. The position of the Mi'kmaw displays should be front and centre, as a permanent presence in the museum. Unfortunately, due to human development and natural elements, the chance to know this part of history is rapidly disappearing. Therefore, Elder Hunt recommends that the Mahone Bay area should be red-flagged in order to enable recognition of the significant Mi'kmaw historical landscape. Lastly, she states that a goal of the committee should be an application to the Special Places Protection Act, which offers protection to a variety of these valuable Mi'kmaw sites, such as the burial ground at the end of Indian Point.

Red Tailed Hawk

Don't get stuck in the minutia of research details

Fly high and witness the entire experience

Focus on the shared history

Between the Mi'kmaq and settlers

What is the whole story?



Chapter Seven: The Relationship Between Canadian Colonization and Racism

Here we are in the 21st century
still at a place where people who appear different are
'affected' at every turn

Western Society is not comfortable
hearing the truth instead they write new laws
denying us the privilege
in a dialogue or issue that you see as harmful
to your bottom line

(KisKaieyi-I AM READY by Michelle Sylliboy, 2019, Rebel Press.
Reprinted with permission from the author.)

Introduction

This chapter presents my reflections on racism and its intersection with decolonization. There are several reasons why this chapter came to fruition. For starters, during the research into the Mi'kmaw Lunenburg County narrative, the connection between British colonization and prejudice towards the Mi'kmaq kept surfacing. This recurring research theme, combined with the 2020 news events about racism, underscored the relationship between white supremacist ideology, the colonial narrative, and their use as intentional tools for the genocide, displacement, and oppression of Indigenous Peoples.

White supremacist paternalistic ideology is a worldwide problem that results in attempts to normalize humans into marginalized groups through the use of myths and stereotypes that portray humans monolithically. This discriminatory way to categorize humans allows unjust or prejudicial treatment of people because of their differences. Other groups in addition to Indigenous Peoples who experience discrimination in Canada include African-Canadians and other people of colour, Chinese, Japanese, South Asians, Jews, Muslims, Indians, Asians, people

from other non-white ethnic backgrounds, and immigrants. Discrimination also includes ableism, ageism, and bias because of gender or sexual orientation.

Since the goal of this research was to honour Mi'kmaw worldviews and knowledge, the primary focus of this examination is the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and mainstream Canadian society and the intersections with racism. I in no way mean this limitation to be disrespectful of other groups who also experience racism in Canada and other parts of the world. Unfortunately, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are not the only ones who are subject to and/or victims of prejudices and biases in Canada; however, for the purposes of this chapter, the racism that Indigenous Peoples experience in Canada, in particular the Mi'kmaq of Mi'kma'ki, is the primary area of discussion.

The Intersection Between Racism and Colonization

An objective of this dissertation was to examine and challenge my colonial upbringing, which Canadian social norms shaped so that I viewed the world through a Canadian Eurocentric lens. Therefore, decolonization requires me to scrutinize my inherent biases, prejudices, and discriminatory actions resulting from my upbringing. One way of accomplishing this goal is to question my local colonial history through the honouring of the Mi'kmaw perspective of where I am from.

In 2019, at the Atlantic Regional Adult Education Conference at MSVU, I had the pleasure of listening to Dr. Stephen Brookfield give a talk on teaching race and overcoming white supremacy. After the event, I read Brookfield's (2019) new book, *Teaching Race: How to Help Students Unmask and Challenge Racism*, which addresses the deep-rooted presence of racism across all levels of education. While listening to his lecture and reading his book, I made connections that link racism, colonization, and decolonization. Brookfield's knowledge led me to

notice two recurring themes related to racism and education: the relationship between racism and colonization in Canada and the role that settlers have in decolonization and combatting racism.

A pervasive element of the colonial building blocks of Canada was a system of beliefs and practices that legitimized the power of whites and justified their incorrect perceptions of Indigenous Peoples as inherently inferior. I argue that if settlers and educational institutions are truly invested in disrupting the colonial narrative, then they must scrutinize the relationships among racist ideology, colonization, and the unfavourable mindset about Indigenous Peoples that is integral to the Canadian identity. Grappling with decolonization thus means addressing the normative function of racism during the British colonization of Mi'kma'ki and the way it enabled the appropriation of the Mi'kmaq Peoples ancestral territory. Elders Paul, Hunt, and Joe Mike agree that white supremacist ideology dehumanized and colonized settler and Mi'kmaw minds alike, in different ways. They further contend that this racially oppressive reality has carried over into the present day and concur that any form of decolonial work begins with recognition of the historical links to white settler prejudice against the Mi'kmaq and how it supported the colonization of Mi'kma'ki.

History of Racism in Canada

Elder Paul (2017) remarks that the long history of racism and discrimination in Canada is well documented and began when settlers started to arrive in the 1600s. He states that a white patriarchal European ideology fueled the colonization of Canada and has carried over into the present day in the form of systemic racism, which influences how every facet of Canadian society works. Elder Paul (2017) argues that systemic racism plagues all aspects of Canadian society, such as government, economics, politics, healthcare, education, housing, criminal justice, and employment, and that it originated when Canada was created.

Elder Paul (personal communication, June 22, 2020) suggests that of all the groups that have been discriminated against in Canada, Indigenous Peoples have suffered the most. He contends that the easiest way for Canadians to better grasp their racist upbringing is to learn about the history of Canada from an Indigenous point of view. Elder Paul (2017) recommends beginning with the Doctrine of Discovery which has its origins in Papal Bulls, which were formal statements from the Pope, originating in the 1400s during the Crusades. Elder Paul (2017) asserts that the Doctrine of Discovery provided legal and moral justification for the colonial dispossession of Indigenous Peoples from their lands, including the Mi'kmaq in the territory known as Mi'kma'ki as well as over 630 other First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples from their sovereign homelands in what is present-day Canada.

On June 4, 2020, Dalhousie University held an online Anti-Black Racism discussion, entitled *Speak Truth to Power: Forum on Anti-Black Racism*. Naiomi Metallic (personal communication, June 6, 2020), who is a Dalhousie Assistant Professor and Chancellor's Chair in Aboriginal Law and Policy, was one of the forum speakers. Metallic (2020) pointed out that all racism is tied to a historical context. In Canada, for example, she says that the colonizing of Canada, which started in the early 1600s devolved from a racist colonial ideology that enabled Europeans to settle on Indigenous land. Metallic (2020) further points out that the reason racism is so prevalent in Canada is that most Canadians are unaware of the violence towards Indigenous Peoples that enabled the creation of the nation state of Canada. Metallic (June 2020) also said that until settler Canadians begin to understand the brutality and cruelty that occurred, reconciliation is not possible. She (2020) emphasized that today, Indigenous Peoples in Canada will tell you they are not safe and that their treatment at virtually every level of Canadian society differs from the experience of present-day white settlers.

Newly appointed St. Francis Xavier University Assistant Professor in the school of Arts, Michelle Sylliboy (personal communication, June 11, 2020), who is a Mi'kmaw L'nu independent artist and poet, also spoke during the Dalhousie University Anti-Black Racism online forum. Sylliboy (2020) concurs with Metallic's (2020) point of view. Sylliboy (2020) states that we need to go back to the 1600s, when settlers were moving to Turtle Island, in order to begin to understand how systemic racism shaped the development of Canada and how it still operates today. Sylliboy (June 2020) says that the teaching of most Canadians, and especially non-Indigenous Canadians, occurs primarily through a Eurocentric-Canadian lens. From a very early age Canadian's experience exposure to and immersion in a plethora of falsehoods that presuppose the supremacy of white-European Canadian ideology. Sylliboy (2020) maintains that, from the moment Canadians are born, these mainstream systems of belief influence who we are. The success of white supremacy in Canada relies on a variety of prejudices and forms of discrimination towards Indigenous Peoples, Blacks, and others to shape perceptions and experience from a social, cultural, educational, historical, political, spiritual perspective.

Sylliboy (2020) remarks that Canada is fundamentally a country whose foundation is European colonial ideology. An examination of the colonization of Canada from a non-mainstream perspective reveals that it was a violent process stemming from the doctrine of European cultural hierarchy and supremacy for the domination of the Indigenous Peoples living in what is present-day Canada. Colonization involved the brutal actions, processes of genocide, and displacement of Indigenous Peoples in order to control them, kill them, and illegally acquire their territory and resources for settler use.

Daniel Moreau's (2019) work, *Imperialism and Education: A History of the Colonial Rule in India and Canada*, describes the ideology of colonization as a type of doctrine which a

sovereign nation (usually European) implements for control over people living in another place, Mi'kma'ki, for example. Moreau (2019) argues that colonization derives from the enforcement of the cultural hierarchy and supremacy of the colonizer over the colonized. He maintains that colonization is about the assertion of power and control over the original inhabitants of a place, with the goal of displacing and/or eliminating them. In Canada's case, the colonizers were European white supremacists who used their supremacist ideology to try to silence, oppress, and eliminate more than 50 different Indigenous groups that were inhabiting present-day Canada.

An examination of the implications of Moreau's (2019) work gives rise to the realization that a white supremacist patriarchal European colonial ideology has heavily shaped the history of Canada, and therefore of who its citizens are. This realization means that this way of thinking influences virtually every aspect of Canadian society and the social norms that govern the actions of its citizens. The ultimate effect is that Canadians cannot escape the very tenets of their being that required discrimination and bias against Indigenous Peoples. From the beginning of early colonization, white supremacist ideology has pervaded the roots of Canadian identity with foundational intentions to displace and/or eliminate the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Present-Day Racism in Canada

Palmater (2020) exposes how systemic racism against Indigenous Peoples is still present across virtually every level of Canadian government and society. In her YouTube channel video, called *Combatting Racism in Canada: Intro*, Palmater (July 2020) stresses that "Racism is Canada's normal" and argues that "racism is the rule in Canada, and not the exception or anomaly." She maintains that white male supremacist

Indigenous Peoples. By creating egregious myths and stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples that arose from discrimination and bias, settlers could justify the violent actions that were needed for the dispossession of the original inhabitants from their land and resources

With respect to present day, Palmater (2020, p. 227) remarks that even a decade after “Prime Minister Stephen Harper made a formal apology in the House of Commons on behalf of Canadians to former students who attended Indian Residential Schools,” half of Canadians still hold racist views about Indigenous Peoples. The discriminatory perspective that persists in 50 percent of Canadians is that “Indigenous Peoples should abandon their own cultures and assimilate into Canadian culture.” She also warns that many political leaders and media commentators deny that racism even exists in Canada, which helps to support the reality that, sadly, many Canadians are not aware of just how racist Canada is.

Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) remarks that she experiences racism every day, on some level. She says it could manifest in anything from small microaggressions, to Indian Act discrimination against Indigenous Peoples, especially women, to living with contemporary racism against the Mi’kmaq because of colonization.

Historic and Ongoing Genocidal Violence Against Indigenous Women

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) (2019) provides evidence of the presence of racism in present-day Canada. The report concluded that violence against Indigenous Peoples has its origins in the European colonization of Canada and states that Indigenous women and girls have been victims of high rates of violence, abuse, and murder. The report describes MMIWG as a Canada atrocity and a national crisis, which began during European colonization, and is still occurring today. Palmater (2020) reminds us that the MMIWG inquiry requested a

national action plan for addressing the type of present-day racism and sexism that targets Indigenous females and that, to date, nothing has happened.

Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples by Law Enforcement

An example of the type of violence against Indigenous women in Canada that overlaps with the issue of discrimination on the part of law enforcement recently occurred on June 4, 2020, in New Brunswick, when law enforcement received a call asking them to conduct a wellness check for Chantel Moore. The person who called was worried about Chantel since she had been receiving threats. Chantel was 22 years old, weighed 98 pounds, was the mother of a five-year-old girl, and a member of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nation in British Columbia. Her family described her as a kind, gentle individual, who had never been in trouble with the law. The male police officer who answered the wellness check by himself shot her five times and killed her because he said she had a knife.

One week after Chantel's fatal shooting, New Brunswick law enforcement again responded to a report of a First Nations person who was in distress. On June 12, 2020, in the Miramichi region, the RCMP first tasered, and then shot and killed Rodney Levi, a 48-year-old

Morin (2020) also reminds her readers that the “Northwest Mounted Police, which eventually became the RCMP, has as its foundation, an agenda of racism that widely plays out today.”

Legal Ramifications are Different When You are White

On July 2, 2020, a 46-year-old white male perpetrated an explicit threat to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and possibly his family. While the white male was holding a rifle, the RCMP negotiated with the suspect for roughly one and one-half hours before taking him into custody. Corey Hurren has been charged with multiple offences, which include 21 weapons offences and one count of uttering threats. In March 2021, a judge sentenced Corey Hurren to six years in prison, minus a year served. A comparison of the outcomes for Chantel Moore, Rodney Levi, and Corey Hurren reveals a startling contrast. On one hand, law enforcement was asked to conduct wellness checks on two different occasions, and both individuals, who were Indigenous, were killed. On the other hand, law enforcement used peaceful tactics to apprehend without incident a white male who had multiple weapons and a likely intention to kill the Canadian Prime Minister. On July 8, 2020, a press conference was held about the Rideau Hall incident. NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh quickly brought to the attention of the media the fact that a “person shows up with weapons, publicly, at the residence of the Prime Minister of Canada, and was arrested without being killed.” Singh said that because the suspect was white and not a person of colour, the police treated the situation extremely differently. This example shows “how systemic racism is real” in Canada.

These three examples demonstrate what racism looks like in Canadian law enforcement. The excessive treatment of Chantel Moore and Rodney Levi, who were in distress, Indigenous, and ended up dead, compared to that of Corey Hurren, a white individual who had 21 weapons in his possession and was attempting to harm the Canadian Prime Minister, is unsettling, to say the

least. The discrepancy should be a wakeup call about the way people are treated differently in Canada depending on the colour of their skin.

Present-Day Racism in Mi'kma'ki

S E U N G

In _____, William Wicken (2002) mentions that the 1752 Peace and Friendship Treaty outlines the Mi'kmaq Peoples right to fish, hunt, and gather; to make a living; and to provide for their communities. However, the colonial narrative has ignored these inherent rights, which has carried over into the present day. In 1999, in the Marshall decisions, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld these rights.

Danielle Edwards (2020) from The Canadian Press reported on racism against the Mi'kmaq over their inherent right to fish for lobster in Nova Scotia. Edwards' (2020) article, "Mi'kmaq Chiefs Call on Ottawa to Denounce Racism in Lobster Dispute: Federal Ministers Respond," reveals how prejudice and discrimination currently operate against the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia. Edwards (2020) details how, instead of freely exercising their constitutional rights, the Mi'kmaq must fight for their treaty rights because non-Indigenous fishers and the federal Fisheries and Oceans Canada department have been attempting to suppress these rights. The 2020 ongoing dispute between Sipekne'katik First Nations fishers and non-Indigenous fishers over lobster fishing in St Mary's Bay, Nova Scotia, is an example of modern-day colonization and its attempts to erase the inherent Mi'kmaw Peace and Friendship Treaty rights. The treaties protect the Mi'kmaq and their right to their self-regulated earning of a moderate livelihood from fishing. The settler fishers ignored Mi'kmaw treaty rights and used violence to prohibit the Mi'kmaq from fishing outside the commercial fishing season that the Canadian government

regulates. The violence towards the Sipekne'katik First Nations fishers in Nova Scotia was so serious that the Mi'kmaw chiefs were worried about the safety of their people, so they declared the current situation in Saulnierville, Nova Scotia, a state of emergency. The Assembly of Mi'kmaw Chiefs were concerned about the settler fishermen harassing and threatening Mi'kmaw fishers and also illegally vandalizing Mi'kmaw fishing gear as well as ramming and shooting flares at Mi'kmaw boats. Some local businesses were also refusing to serve anyone who is Mi'kmaq.

Brett Forester from the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) (2020) covered several national news segments in order to clarify the misconceptions and inaccurate narratives that many non-Natives believe about the situation in Saulnierville, Nova Scotia. In “‘Lack of Awareness’ about Treaties at Heart of Lobster Protests,” Forester (2020) reports on his conversation with MP Jamie Battiste regarding the general lack of treaty awareness across Mi'kma'ki. Battiste said, “I think that we don't have enough information out there for these fishermen that are protesting the right [to fish]. They don't understand the Supreme Court of Canada, not only once but twice, affirmed that the Mi'kmaq have always had this right to provide a moderate livelihood for themselves based on their resources.” This lack of understanding is the result of

coverage about what is really going on. Roache (Douglas, 2020) noted that the failure to understand Mi'kmaw treaty rights is wrapped up in mainstream language, such as the terms protest (instead of celebration or ceremony) and illegal fishery, and in the way the media ignores the discussion about treaty rights altogether. This type of single narrative causes a lack of understanding surrounding treaty issues and is misrepresentative. The result is that settlers are misinformed and therefore have a negative and inaccurate outlook on the Mi'kmaw position.

Elder Paul (personal communication June 22, 2020) argues that since the federal government, to date, has not addressed the Marshall decisions, which are over 21 years old, no colonial rules govern what is meant by a moderate livelihood. As Roache (Douglas, 2020) suggests, Paul (2020) says that in the eyes of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, it might be an illegal fishery, but the truth of the matter is that the Mi'kmaq have a legal constitutional right fish, hunt, and make a living. The paradox is that since non-Native commercial fishermen come from a place of privilege, they have an unconditional sense of entitlement about how the fishery should be conducted and are trying to prevent the Mi'kmaq from practising their constitutional right to fish. Their perspective has developed because the colonial narrative has shaped mainstream authority over the fishing industry and other resources and has from the beginning virtually ignored the Peace and Friendship Treaties that affirm the inherent rights of the Mi'kmaq to fish and hunt for ceremonial purposes, for food for their communities, and to make a moderate living. The irony of the situation in St. Mary's Bay is that the Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1752 was the blueprint for how the Mi'kmaq and the settlers were to share and use Mi'kma'ki (unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq). The treaty was established to protect the rights of the Mi'kmaq, in this case with respect to fishing, and gave permission for the settlers also to be able to fish. In other

words, this treaty guarantees that the Mi'kmaq have a right to fish in Mi'kma'ki waters and for the settler fisherman to be allowed to do so as well.

White Supremacist Hate Mail

Elder Paul's (2008) countless social activist efforts, especially his historical work, *We Were Not the Savages*, raises public consciousness about British colonial history and its legacy of violence directed at the Mi'kmaq. Elder Paul (2008) highlights the fact that when British colonization of Mi'kma'ki is researched and published from a Mi'kmaw perspective, a story emerges that is very different from the mainstream version. For example, Elder Paul (2008) emphasizes that, prior to the publication of his book, many people did not know that the British issued scalping proclamations for the scalps of the Mi'kmaq. The ones who instigated and carried out these violent acts of attempted genocide were colonial historical figures, such as Governor Edward Cornwallis, the colonial founder of Halifax, Nova Scotia, with enforcement from Captain John Gorham, a New England military ranger, and his troop of Gorham's Rangers, whom the British enlisted to exterminate the Mi'kmaq on mainland Nova Scotia. Elder Paul (2008) points out that, after years of the public education of Nova Scotia citizens about Cornwallis's hidden violent colonial past, in 2018, his statue was finally taken down. Part of the reason for removing this commemorative monument was that Elder Paul made public Cornwallis's responsibility for issuing a bounty on the scalps of the Mi'kmaq and his and other British officials' open discrimination against the Mi'kmaq. Although Elder Paul sees the removal of Cornwallis's statue as progress, he will not be satisfied until other historical markers, such as street names that continue to celebrate Cornwallis, are removed. Elder Paul holds that the new street signs must be renamed to better reflect the shared history between the Mi'kmaq and the non-Native people who live in Mi'kma'ki.

On June 21, 2020, CTV News reporter Ryan MacDonald reported on the Mi'kmaq Peoples request to remove street signs named after Cornwallis. The name of the news report was “*Why is this M Name Still Up? Nova Scotia Community Protests Street Named after Edward Cornwallis.*” In the news article, Elder Paul and other members of Membertou First Nations expressed their concerns about colonial historical markers, such as street names, that commemorate historical figures, such as Cornwallis, and emphasized the need for their removal. The next day, Elder Paul (personal communication, June 22, 2020) received an email from someone, in response to the suggestion to change street signs named after Cornwallis. Elder Paul divulges that this written correspondence sent directly to him was white supremacist hate mail and is a prime example of racism in Nova Scotia today. The racist assumptions embedded in this email demonstrate the existence of the many myths, tropes, and stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people that are still very much alive. The following is the email that Elder Paul received on June 22, 2020:

Do you Micmac's really have nothing better to do than worry about a street sign named after Cornwallis? It's apparent how jealous you are of colonialism and European creations, inventions, and ingenuity, that's why you want anything to do with colonialism taken down. You are jealous of white people's accomplishments because your own race has created and invented nothing, and your whole existence relies on white inventions that you use every day. If you don't like white people or colonialism or whatever, and the inventions made possible by it, then stop using all of it and go back to living in your tents AKA teepees in the woods instead of wood and brick houses. stop coming to our hospitals and using our services and instead use your medicine man. Stop driving around in vehicles and instead get around in a birch canoe. Maybe if your people weren't so lazy and lacking the IQ to better themselves, instead of hanging out on the reserves drinking alcohol and being drunk all day or sniffing gasoline to get a cheap high, they might actually contribute to society, but I highly doubt it. And stop trying to portray Cornwallis as some monster, he was only protecting his people from Indian savages who attacked a sawmill Outpost over by Sullivan's Pond in Dartmouth, he wouldn't have been much of a leader if he let that go without retaliating. Oh, and by the way, scalping was an Indian practice, so if he even did do that, Micmac's got a taste of their own medicine. It's time for you to give up the jealousy of white people's accomplishments and stop blaming us for your

people's failures and bad choices in life. Like black people, your race are recipients of Western culture, and you wouldn't have close to the number of opportunities that you have now if it wasn't for the white man. Crying racism is just so you can continue to get more free handouts. And by the way, Canada is not your country, it belongs to the people that came here and cleared the land and built it into Canada and that was white people, it surely wasn't you Indians that's all you were doing was living in the woods scattered around camping basically. And land cannot be stolen because it's still here, but the fact that white people were/are more ambitious, and superior isn't our fault. And last time I checked you Indians didn't invent the earth and the land on it oh, it was created by mother nature or God or whatever you believe, nobody owns it. If that's the case, then all non-whites should leave Europe and go back to their own countries. You're a jealous little hypocrite of a man, and it's time you stop being jealous of white ingenuity and ambition, just because your people can't measure up to us.

Racism in Lunenburg County

As previously identified and further evidenced in the following subsections, Lunenburg County has its own history of ongoing racism.

Vandalism to the Indian Point Burial Ground Monument

(personal communication, Elder Hunt September 20, 2020)

Elder Hunt has done extensive research on Mi'kmaw burial sites in Lunenburg County. Through her work with local historian Michael Eisnor, together they confirmed the location of a Mi'kmaw sacred site at the end of Indian Point, Nova Scotia, on the beautiful waters of Mahone Bay. With help from the late MLA Michael Baker, in June 2009, Elder Hunt and Michael Eisnor were able to have a monument erected near the Indian Point burial site, so that this important sacred Mi'kmaw space could be commemorated and acknowledged. At the end of summer 2018, the monument was knocked over. When DeMone Monuments investigated, Elder Hunt said they were perplexed and could not understand how the monument could have toppled over as it did. They concluded that someone must have tied a rope around the base of the monument pedestal

and then used a truck or large vehicle to pull the structure over, which broke it into several pieces.

Vandalism to Petite Rivière N C T

(personal communication, Elder Hunt, September 20, 2020)

Elder Hunt is also involved with another Mi'kmaw burial site located in Petite Rivière, Nova Scotia, and resting on the edge of nearby sheltered Sperry's Beach, northwest of Indian Hill, Indian Hill Pond, and Indian Point. The site is noted on a 1604 map that Samuel Champlain drew (Hunt & Paul, 2004). Elder Hunt says that over the years, this specific burial ground has been under constant violence from sources such as grave robbers, vandalism, and people leaving their garbage on or near the site. Through her arduous efforts and with the help of the late MLA Michael Baker, Elder Hunt was able to have the Petite Rivière Mi'kmaw burial area protected under the Cemeteries Act and to have a monument placed on the grounds.

In August 2020, the Petite Rivière Mi'kmaw burial site, which the Mi'kmaq consider sacred ground, was deliberately damaged. The vandals tore up the fence that protects the sacred space, pulled up the fence posts, knocked down the fence and gate door, and lit a fire near the monument. Then, less than a week later, vandals returned to the Petite Rivière burial site and lit another roaring bonfire next to the monument. The burial ground and monument are in a secluded wooded area next to a pasture with cows. The owner of the land had called 911 because she was extremely worried since the woods were dry from lack of rain, and dead debris surrounded the area. Since both fires were next to the monument, Elder Hunt says that it appears from the position of the fires that the vandals were trying to cause damage to this structure.

Elder Hunt says that these latest acts of vandalism to another Mi'kmaw burial site are very disturbing to her and other Mi'kmaq. She emotionally explains that these sacred Mi'kmaw

spaces are their only link to their beloved ancestors from long ago. Elder Hunt states that burial sites are a very important part of Mi'kmaw culture and of their knowledge construct known as Seven Generations. This Mi'kmaw knowledge-based system connects the intimate relationships that exist from one generation to the next and includes the sacred responsibility of acknowledging the relationships among ancestors, the present-day generation, and future generations to come. Elder Hunt explains that, as caretakers of Mother Earth, each Mi'kmaw generation is responsible for ensuring the survival of the next seven generations of all life on earth. This understanding is tied to the lessons learned from their ancestors, who still guide present-day Mi'kmaq from the spirit world.

Elder Hunt says that she and others have spent countless hours cleaning up and attempting to restore the Petite Rivière site, with limited resources. She says that she has a vision that she should restore this site so that the remains of her Mi'kmaw ancestors and fellow Acadians can rest eternally and peacefully and also to create a healing space for others to visit. Even though this latest act of destruction and racism has left her and others emotionally distraught, they continue to clean up yet again another mess and to persevere.

Online Responses to Petitions to Change Colonial Street Names in Lunenburg and Bridgewater

In July 2020, a petition was presented to the Town of Lunenburg to rename two street signs and to install new interpretive panels throughout the town. The purpose of these changes is to better reflect the town's Mi'kmaw and Black history, which for the most part, has been ignored. A similar petition was sent to the Town of Bridgewater to change the name of Cornwallis Street. These small narrative shifts are believed to demonstrate the long overdue anti-racist steps and commitment that are necessary in these colonial communities. The petitions state

that since Edward Cornwallis left a violent legacy in Mi'kma'ki, his name should not be celebrated. His actions included the intentional genocide of the Mi'kmaq and the destruction of the Mi'kmaw/Acadian community known as Mirligueche in 1749, which then became Lunenburg in 1753. The suggestion was that Cornwallis Street be renamed E'se'katik Street because this name, meaning place of clams, is what the Mi'kmaq called Lunenburg prior to European colonization.

, by Stephen Davidson (2013), recorded in the United Empire Loyalist Association of Canada Archives, documents the heroic deeds of Sylvia, with no mention of her surname. Sylvia was an African slave during the early years of the British settlement of Lunenburg. Colonel John Creighton, known as one of the founding fathers of Lunenburg, is the one who enslaved Sylvia. Davidson (2013) remarks that Sylvia was responsible for several heroic events during the American privateer raid on Lunenburg in 1782, which included protecting the colonel's son with her own body. Davidson (2013) holds that, as a result, Sylvia was the only female remembered in the retelling of the "Raid on Lunenburg," also known as the "Sack of Lunenburg." As Davidson (2013) concludes,

When rebels attacked a seaport town in loyal Nova Scotia, an enslaved woman rose to the occasion and risked her life for those she served. Her quick wits and bravery make Silvia a feisty heroine we can all admire (p. 46).

The Lunenburg petition also asked that Creighton Street be changed to Sylvia Street. Colonel John Creighton played a leading role in the British settlement of Lunenburg. CKBW Radio Station News Director Cody McEachern (personal communication, September 17, 2020) says that, across various social media spaces, these petitions created some important discussion on the topic. However, many people were also quick to fire back racist comments and hateful

speech. McEachern used many of the responses to these petitions in his online news report, “Responses Highlight Ignorance, Racism in South Shore Communities,” to bring to light what present-day racism looks like in the area. McEachern notes that one comment said, “If you want to change the name of streets for Indigenous People and Blacks, go to Shelburne or Yarmouth; the first Blacks were down there.” While another comment read, “Give it a rest, there have been many apologies, reconciliation and payments made. When is enough, enough?” Mr. McEachern states that “a few were quick to dismiss the idea of changing the street signs as idiotic, and others demanded the petition be taken down.” Some individuals called it “an attempt to erase history” and “a waste of time,” among other categorizations.

MacEachern said that since many online comments and reactions were racist and hateful, the sites had to take down their ignorant content; however, some of it remains. About all the racist and hurtful responses on the part of local community members with respect to the suggested street changes, McEachern gave this response: “Ignorance is, unfortunately, alive and well on the South Shore.” Sadly, due to the plethora of harsh backlash and knee jerk reactions, McEachern said many community members wonder if real social justice change can ever be possible in Lunenburg County.

The following is an article that I published with *The Nova Scotia Advocate*.

Racism on the Lunenburg Waterfront

By Margaret Knickle—February 9, 2021



Photo <https://www.lunenburgns.com/>

Last July, a friend of mine and her two young daughters set off from Halifax to visit me in my hometown of Lunenburg. As it was their first time visiting, they decided to stroll about the historic streets. They first stopped at a lovely local café with a little garden for a bite to eat. Next, they meandered down Montague Street, and stopped and browsed around a couple of shops. Then, they made their way to Lunenburg’s iconic, scenic waterfront.

Later in the day, when my friend and her daughters arrived at my place, she cut short our usual casual greetings and chit chat – she had something she wanted to get off her chest – something unexpected had happened on the waterfront and she needed to debrief.

She recalled how her girls were excited to watch all the hustle and bustle happening in the front harbour. They were instantly drawn to the waterfront activity: a boat leaving the dock, vessels anchored at their moorings and sailing crafts going in and out of the harbour. My friend thought of her husband and two-year-old son, and how they were missing out on this wonderful family experience. With Lunenburg’s picturesque harbour as a backdrop, and like so many other visitors that frequent the town, my friend reached for her phone and asked her daughters to look at her so she could capture the moment.

While trying to take a photo, the older daughter was cooperating but the younger one was making silly faces, so my friend urged her to smile. A friendly older man approached them from behind and began teasing the younger daughter, telling her to put her tongue back in her mouth. Joking and gesturing with a stick in his hand, he warned that she should listen, otherwise he

would poke her with the stick. The exchange from the gentleman encouraged the younger child to change her facial expression, smiling for the photo.

My friend explained that she didn't remember the exact details of the conversation up to this point, although she did recall the man commenting "I look like a Yankee, but I am not," as she noticed his shades decorated with stars and stripes.

The gentleman then asked her, "From Halifax, hey?" She didn't answer this all too familiar question. After a pause, he said as clear as day, "So, the father must be a darkie, hey?" Half stunned, my friend said nothing. While laughing, he pressed further: "Or, you, you're just the babysitter?" Still stunned, my friend did not reply, though she began preparing to guide the girls back to the car. Finally, the man urged, "Well, are you the mother?" My friend hesitated for what she said felt like a long time before replying "Yes." She said nothing more. As she coaxed the girls to leave waterfront, she heard his last remark, "Yup, they sure are cute ..."

Stupefied by this unexpected encounter, my friend tried to collect her thoughts as they made their way to my place. She tried to think of what she should have said or done differently. This was a "teachable moment" she thought, bothered that she didn't know what to make of it.

I was extremely bothered by my friend's story and the course of events that changed her family's south shore summer outing into a racist experience. As we discussed what had happened, she commented that she did not think the man intended what he said to be offensive. She felt he was determined to figure out the racial makeup and origin of her daughters.

My friend and her daughters experienced what is described as a microaggression. In their case, it was a brief daily biased and prejudiced verbal encounter with a white male in the Town of Lunenburg. During the conversation that he dominated, he made insensitive, prejudicial slights towards them which my friend believes were done in an unintentional, yet still racist manner. During the rest of our day together, we unloaded our thoughts and feelings about this confrontation. We realized there was much unpacking to do to get a better grasp of how it came to occur and what we might learn from it. We both felt that the questioning man's response to a white mother and her mixed-race children was inseparable from the history of slavery and colonialism.

My friend brought up a recent article by Charmaine A. Nelson, *Our Unspoken Discomfort with Interracial Relationships*, which discusses how Canada's history of slavery continues to impact how we view cross-racial couples today. The presence of mixed-race children in this moment on the waterfront seemed to have triggered a need to know if, or how, the white mother's race was contaminated by an invisible "darkie" and how exactly these "cute" children came to be. While my white friend's Black husband wasn't physically present, the idea of him preoccupied the white man with questions he seemed to feel entitled to have answered. In this moment on the waterfront, the presence of mixed-race children brought out a deep-seated attitude of racial superiority.

We both remarked on the importance of reflecting on this kind of teachable moment to become more aware of racial injustice—in both the past and present—so that we can collectively work toward acting in anti-racist ways.

Using Cultural Myths as a Scapegoat to Maintain Settler Canadian Non-Racist Identity

A specific tool that settler Canadians use to maintain a positive self-image about themselves compared to other people, is the cultural myth that allows Canadians to consider themselves to be free of racism and prejudice. As part of the Canadian identity, Canadians have been brought up to believe that they are benevolent peacekeepers, which includes celebrating both an inclusive and diverse society. Regan (2010, p. 12) contends, however, that nothing could be further from the truth. She states that the benevolent peacekeeping myth hides Canada's perpetration of violence against Indigenous Peoples as well as Canada's long colonial history, with its legacy of racist laws and regulations that were and still are targeted against Indigenous Peoples.

Brookfield (2019, xv.) makes the statement that racism is one of "the greatest scars on America's souls." Sadly, I contend that Canadians must make a similar observation about the Canadian conscience as well. I argue that one of the ways that Canadians use to reinforce the benevolent peacekeeping illusion, which enables us to wash ourselves of systematic racism, is to focus on what happens in the United States instead. To cover up Canada's racist history that is complicit in white supremacy, prejudice, and bias, I argue that Canadians have been brought up to believe myths about themselves that separate them from their American neighbours south of the border. By making themselves unique in this way, Canadians have been able to use the Americans as a scapegoat. In fact, Diangelo (2018, p. 77) highlights a colour-blind statement that people use to separate themselves from the racist behaviour in the United States: "I'm not racist; I'm from Canada."

Regan (2010) suggests that the myth of the benevolent peace-loving Canadian was an intentional façade that created the illusion that compared to their American counterparts, settlers

were peaceful and not perpetrators of violence (Knickle, 2017). Regan (2010) makes this distinct connection to the tremendous hidden power of the benevolent peace-loving myth that helped to reinforce Canada's celebratory colonial narrative, which has carried over into the present day. She says this is especially true with respect to the juxtaposition of the overt colonial violence of the United States with the traditional portrayal of Canadian colonization as a relatively peaceful process, a view that intentionally excludes the purposeful violent injustice done to the Indigenous Peoples (Knickle, 2017). Regan (2010, p. 11) argues that "a purpose of this benevolent peacekeeping myth is to create a positive national image, especially when we compare ourselves to the United States, which helps to deflect the hidden realities, which are the systems of oppression placed on the Indigenous Peoples in order for colonization to work."

Palmer (2020, p. 2) states that "Canadians have been conditioned to look outside Canada's borders for evil" and that "evil always exists in some other country, committed by some villainous leader." She argues that when similar heinous acts of racism occur against Indigenous Peoples living in Canada, Canadians have been conditioned to have a variety of rationalizations for why these discriminatory atrocities occurred. These excuses include "the downplaying of what happened as an inevitable culture clash or good intentions of government policy gone wrong, or Indigenous Peoples themselves are blamed for their own conditions." Palmer (2020, p. 3) argues that when politicians profess heartfelt misdirected opinions that things have changed in Canada, Canadian citizens breathe a sigh of relief that the suffering of Indigenous Peoples is over, and egregiously believe that everyone can move on.

In June 2020, Mark O'Neill, who was president and chief executive of the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian War Museum, wrote a piece for *The Globe and Mail* called, "Canada Has a Long, Documented History of Racism and Racial Discrimination: Don't

Look Away.” O’Neill’s (2020) comments sound similar to those of Elder Paul (personal communication, June 22, 2020): Canada’s legacy of systemic, institutional racism and discrimination is well documented. O’Neill (2020) remarks that many Canadians are unaware of the deep-seated systemic racism that Canada is founded upon and that European Canadian colonial white supremacist ideology has carried over to the present day. O’Neill (2020) hits the nail on the head when he states,

The entire concept of Canada as a racist society is antithetical to the mainstream notion of Canadian identity and values as expressed, most fundamentally, in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canada is built on the self-mythology as a country that doesn’t have the same forms of racism as the United States.

Canadians are told in countless ways that their lifestyle and culture are among the best in the world. This message is expressed in monthly media releases that match Canada against other countries and place it at the top in such attributes as friendliest, highest standard of living, top-notch healthcare, best place to live in, and peaceful. One of the countries that Canadians like to compare themselves to is the United States of America because it maintains the falsehood that they are benevolent peacekeepers and live in an inclusive and democratic society.

A recent example comparing United States to Canada can be found in the July 2020 Daily Humour section in *The New Yorker* by Tim Long called, “Make America Canadian Again.” The article pokes fun at the United States of America by expounding on all the ways in which Canada is a nicer, quieter, weirder, and better place to live. The magazine presents the cartoons, funny quotes, and facts comparing ways in which Canada is superior to the United States in an entertaining and jovial manner. On the surface, news articles like these are indeed charming, entertaining, and slightly informative. On some level, when Canadians read or watch

news/media pieces that feature Canada in a preferable position compared to other countries, especially the United States, they undoubtedly feel quite proud. However, the concern I have with these types of news articles is that they reinforce the blind spots of white privilege and support the myths of Canadians as benevolent peacekeepers and a country that is free of racism, discrimination, and bias.

Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) remarks that the fact that so many Canadians were shocked by George Floyd's death validates how strong the notion is that they are the benevolent peacekeepers in contrast to the citizens of the United States. After the violent and needless death of George Floyd, Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) observed a plethora of statements that helped Canadians look better than the United States. These utterances from whites, which helped to deflect how insular Canadians are in their own biased complicities, included remarks such as the following: "Glad that doesn't happen here, like south of the border." "We are so lucky to live in Canada and not the US." "Racism is alive and well in the United States." "We are lucky that violence like that doesn't happen in Canada." "We may have our own problems, but at least we aren't like the US."

Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) says that these types of statements enable Canadians to hide the racist similarities that they share with the United States. She says that many Canadians are pleased when something goes south—south of the border! Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) says that when Canadians compare the operation of racism in the United States to the situation in Canada, they can support various myths that Canada is a peacekeeping, multi-cultural place that is diverse and free from discrimination and bias. In fact, multi-culturalism is a key government policy that enables Canadians to think falsely that they live in a multi-cultural inclusive society.

Flo further (personal communication, October 23, 2020) reminds us that the European Canadian colonial version of history deceitfully portrays European colonizers as operating under the impression that they had best interests of the Indigenous People at heart. To justify their actions, they had to tell lies about themselves and colonization, which has manifested into the colonial history current Canadians tell themselves and the myths that have carried over into the present day. Therefore, Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) contends that Canadians have no moral ground over the United States because white supremacy and Indigenous genocide were specific colonial ideologies that Europeans used in order to steal Indigenous land when Canada was being formed. Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) exclaims, “Just ask any Indigenous person living in Canada about racism! They will say it is alive and well in Canada; it is here on a such a large scale and has been since this Canada was created.”

Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) says that connected to the falsehoods that Canadians must continually tell themselves to try and silence the Indigenous narrative is the mainstream Canadian celebratory history that virtually ignores Indigenous worldviews. Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) emphasizes that anything that honours colonial history and ignores Indigenous worldviews, such as holidays like Victoria Day, Canada Day, and Thanksgiving, museums, colonial statues, the National Anthem, and other Canadian symbols, all help to support the inaccurate European Canadian colonial story as the dominant narrative.

Of all the Canadian celebrations, the one that bothers Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) the most is Canada Day on July 1st. She says that while settler Canadians celebrate the birth of the colonial state of Canada, Indigenous Peoples are reminded instead of the over 400 years of ongoing and pervasive violence, forced removal from their territories,

illegal occupation of Indigenous land, and genocide that occurred in order for Canada to be formed. Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) says, “Remember that the Americans were not the only ones involved in the slave trade. When you celebrate Canada Day, you are commemorating Canada’s silent narrative, which includes the legal instrument of enslavement of African and Indigenous Peoples for almost 200 years, for personal use and for profit.”

Settlers’ Role in and Responsibility for Combatting Racism

From this research experience, I have gained insight into the origin and historical function of racism and how the ideology of European white superiority was fundamental to the overall colonial project that became Canada. I also have a greater understanding of the inextricable links among European Canadian colonization, the continued present-day violence that is directed against Indigenous Peoples, and how the past and present function together to maintain the current Canadian status quo and socio-economic way of life. Palmater (2020) asserts that for the manifestation of truth and reconciliation to occur, settlers must critically examine the intersections between racism and colonization and consider how discriminatory behaviour towards Indigenous Peoples is maintained and reinforced in Canada today. Since there is a direct link between colonization and racism, then it makes sense that part of Canadians’ decolonial work is learning how to be less racist.

Brookfield (2019, p. 4) states that since white supremacy is the mainstream ideology, “progress in the area of racial social justice depends on dismantling this powerful and all-pervasive ideology.” Brookfield (2019) has noted that we live in a time of rampant racism and that, if unchallenged, racism will continue and become even greater. If racism is learned, as Dr. Brookfield (2019) suggests, then education can also include teaching people how to be less racist. Although I agree with Brookfield (2019, xv.) that “there is no neat or exact recipe” to

combat racism, I argue that there are steps that whites can take to begin their personal process of better understanding how they are racist. Once people begin to understand their blind spots and the biases that a Canadian upbringing have shaped, they can challenge their discriminatory mindset. Regan states that when Canadian settlers genuinely tackle their uncomfortable colonial history, it has the potential to transform the settler's ability to become allies for systematic social justice.

In *Indigenous Relations: Insights, Tips & Suggestions to Make Reconciliation a Reality*, Bob and Cynthia Joseph (2019) offer a variety of suggestions with respect to ways in which whites can begin to grapple with how they are racist. Joseph and Joseph (2019, p. 2) state that, since whites are “unable to actually see their biases and racist acts on their own, a way that they can learn about their hidden biases and racist beliefs, is by listening to the people who are at the receiving end of racism.” Their advice is that the “best reflection that settlers can get of themselves is from those who they discriminate against.” Joseph and Joseph (2019, p. 2) point out that settlers “need to be around others who can show them, teach them how to be better, and be patient as they grow past their conditionings.” They also caution that unpacking how one is racist will not happen overnight, and it will not happen by tackling this complex construct on one's own.

In his book, *How to be an Antiracist*, Ibram X. Kendi (2019) critically examines the roots of racism in the United States. He scrutinizes the origins of white male supremacy and how the dehumanizing hierarchal classification system of humans was normalized at a societal and individual level for the self-interest of whites. Kendi (2019) skillfully challenges readers to realize how they are complicit in racism and provides a clear antidote and guideline for taking

action to change their misdirected prejudice and become an active agent in the struggle for racial justice.

Ways that Settlers can Begin to Combat Racism

1. Acknowledge That You Are Racist

Inherent biases and prejudices are heavily tied to a Canadian Eurocentric upbringing, which has shaped the belief systems that give permission to discriminate against Indigenous Peoples and others. Therefore, tackling racism requires an acknowledgment of the difficult realization that Canada's historical legacy is horribly racist towards non-whites and Indigenous Peoples in particular.

I think the first thing settler Canadians, like me, must do, is to say, "I know I am racist, and I know that my country is racist." Although this statement may be uncomfortable to speak out loud and even to read, if Canadians are ever going to create a society that is truly free from discrimination and bias, they must acknowledge that they are complicit and live in a country that is rooted in white supremacy as its foundation. I argue that, once Canadians accept this ugly truth, they can then begin to learn about the many ways in which they are racist and take steps to change. Therefore, a big part of combatting racism comes from people learning about who they are, how they are knowingly and unknowingly racist, and what they are going to do about it. White Canadians must acknowledge that they have been raised in a racist environment. Next, they can identify ways in which they are discriminatory towards others, and they can take action to change this behaviour. I argue that it is important to remember that Canadian white people and settlers will continue to make mistakes when it comes to understanding how to combat racism. Canadians must remain open to teaching from others who experience racial injustices, in this case Indigenous Peoples, and vigilantly monitor themselves for defensiveness and white

fragility. I do not think a person ever can fully arrive at being an ally, but people must continually practise allyship as if their lives are in jeopardy.

For white people, becoming less racist is a process they must always be working on and checking every waking minute and hour of the day. Let me be clear, this process is not about self-congratulation of the recognition of taking an active position on racism, such as changing one's behaviour. This undertaking is a lifelong process that has transformational possibilities, both for the people tackling these issues in themselves and for the collective good. But like most things in life, the changes are directly related to the effort expended.

2. Do Your Own Work

Elder Joe Mike (personal communication, July 13, 2020) says that, in addition to the small steps that I have taken, I still have much more work to do, to better understand how social injustice seamlessly occurs every day to the Mi'kmaq, and how racism and white fragility are normative functions of Canadian settler society. Elder Joe Mike has told me that even though he is here to support my personal decolonization efforts, I am also responsible for doing my own work. He says that doing one's own work is acknowledging that one is privileged, and therefore, that one has power that others do not. Figuring out ways to use this power is essential.

Elder Joe Mike (personal communication, July 13, 2020) also said that one of the best ways to understand how current political and social realities serve white privilege at the expense of others like the Mi'kmaq is to really become involved. Although Elder Joe Mike and other Elders have agreed to be my teachers, I realize that when I am in their company, it will be through my own efforts and humble participation that learning occurs. Elder Joe Mike (2020) says decolonization is tough work, and if there are times of fear or discomfort, they should not constitute an excuse for not doing anything. Instead, one should embrace that discomfort and fear

as a way of learning and see where it leads. He adds, “For heaven’s sake, the Mi’kmaq have been doing that since the white man arrived!”

3. Use Your Privilege and Power

Elder Joe Mike (personal communication, March 15, 2021) remarks that since I am part of the status quo, I am the problem. Therefore, I am responsible for supporting change in the mainstream and fighting for people marginalized by white supremacist ideology, such as the Mi’kmaq. Yes, the system will resist my efforts, but that resistance is okay. To keep social justice alive, the Mi’kmaq and settlers must collectively continue to speak up. Settlers need to get involved for many reasons. One is that often, Indigenous Peoples fail to lead social justice initiatives because they are poorly placed to do so. By this I mean that they might not have the resources, might be struggling with a variety of issues that are connected to colonization, or simply might be unable to take part. White Canadians should use all of the resources their white privilege affords and that others do not have. In some ways, it is my job to educate settlers, since they come from only a colonized worldview, but in other ways they must take this initiative up on their own and learn about the history of Canada through an Indigenous lens.

There are so many ways that settlers can listen to and learn from the Mi’kmaq and from others who have experienced daily acts of racism. White Canadians must use their privilege to do their own work. White privilege gives one access to things many take for granted, such as owning a computer and having internet, for example, as well as possessing the monetary resources to purchase literature about other ways to understand the world. Once open to learning in non-mainstream ways, settlers can emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually embrace Indigenous worldviews as deep knowledge methods for learning. Decolonizing who Canadians are means using a Mi’kmaq lens as an avenue for understanding the links among the

colonization of Canada, white supremacy, and racist ideology. Canadians can then take an active stance and use their privilege and power to educate other settlers and decolonize about who they are.

4. Build Genuine Relationships

Elder Joe Mike (personal communication, March 15, 2021) says that real relationships between Indigenous Peoples and settlers are necessary if they are going to work on social justice problems and solutions together. He argues that, historically, there is much mistrust, so if we are going to be able to work together, Native people must also feel safe with non-Natives, and this trust is going to take time. Therefore, Elder Joe Mike says that building the resilience needed to challenge the racist status quo is a critical part of working together. Through relationships with Indigenous Peoples, whites can do their work and reflect on understanding their complicity in present-day colonization. Although this process will be uncomfortable for whites, it is a critical part of decolonization; otherwise, the racist status quo ideas remain intact, and little will change.

5. Call Out Racist Actions

Many times, Elder Hunt (personal communication, September 20, 2020) has remarked on the importance of speaking up and not remaining silent. Elder Hunt says that a person who is not speaking out is complicit in the system of oppression that also benefits that person. When one hears or sees something racist, one must take on personal accountability and call the racism out. Elder Hunt concurs that this is the difference between authentic allyship and performative allyship. In other words, one must be genuine, and use one's privilege to advocate for others that mainstream society marginalizes. When people see discrimination and speak up, they stand in solidarity with the fight of the marginalized and their right to be heard. However, people who engage in performative allyship speak up only when it benefits them and makes them look good.

Faithful allies call racism out, regardless of the positive or negative outcomes that may occur to themselves. They transfer their privilege and power to speak up for others who lack this ability because they are forced to sit on the margins of mainstream society.

Elder Hunt proposes that when people witness racism and discrimination, such as the events in Saulnierville, Nova Scotia, as settlers try to oppress the Mi'kmaq fishing rights, for example, they need to use their voices and social media platforms to let uneducated settlers know what is going on. In the St. Mary's Bay example, Indigenous native fishermen/women have been harassed, intimidated, and put in physical danger because of the greed of non-Native fisherman. Non-Natives should be educated about the other side of this ongoing tension. Indigenous fishers take up about one percent of the overall profits from the lobster fishing industry. Settlers inaccurately think that Indigenous constitutional rights are perks that the Mi'kmaq have received, and that Indigenous fishers are not environmentally cautious. One needs to speak up and educate settlers on how this perspective is discriminatory against the Mi'kmaq and their inherent right to fish and hunt, as defined by treaties and upheld in the Supreme Court of Canada in the Marshall decision in 1999.

6. Education Key to Understand Role in Decolonization and Reconciliation

Flo (personal communication, October 23, 2020) contends that if non-Natives want to understand how they are racist, they must take responsibility to educate themselves about how Canada is racist, thus making them racist as well. She suggests that non-Natives can start by learning about how the colonialization of Canada is based on white supremacist ideology, which is not a feature settlers should be proud of. Flo says (personal communication, October 23, 2020),

Get your hands on the writing of local Indigenous authors who write about the Indigenous territory you live on. This includes both fiction and nonfiction. If you read literature that is by someone who is not Indigenous, make sure what they have written honours Indigenous worldviews, and has been guided and accepted within the Indigenous community.

A good example of a book that a settler has written is *Cornwallis: The Violent Birth of Halifax*, by Jon Tattrie. Mi'kmaw Elder Daniel Paul was an important guide and influence for Tattrie's (2013, p. 235) research on Cornwallis. Elder Paul did much of the ground-breaking research on Cornwallis and shared his ideas and information with Tattrie when Tattrie was writing the book. The relationship that was built resulted in another book by Tattrie (2017): *Daniel P*. In this work, Tattrie (2017) focuses on Elder Paul's personal life and life's work, which exposes racism in Canada and inspires settlers to embrace and honour Indigenous Peoples, their worldviews, and knowledge-based systems.

Elder Hunt (2020) also specifies what settlers must do to become informed: "Read, read, read! Settlers who live in Mi'kma'ki must get their hands on as much literature as they can by local Mi'kmaw authors, so they can learn about where they live, from a Mi'kmaw perspective." Like Flo, Elder Hunt says, "Settlers must read non-fiction and fiction, as this will help give them a sense of who the Mi'kmaq were, what they have gone through as a result of colonization, and what they have resisted to survive and thrive, and still be here today."

7. Reflexivity

Recently I read an article by Dr. Sana Shaikh (2021) in *Education Post*, called "Educators Who Consider Themselves 'White Allies' Are Dangerous When It Comes to Developing Anti-Racist Classrooms." In this work, Shaikh critically examines the problems with the self-

characterization of allyship and its inherent relationship with systemic racism and education. Although her discussion centres around the recent interest in addressing white supremacist ideology and racism in public schools, her line of thought also applies to our decolonial work at the museum and to individuals like myself, who are seeking to be more aware of their personal complicity in racism.

Shaikh (2021) argues that, although there has been a renewed discussion of the meaning of culturally responsive teaching and allyship in education, the overarching anti-racist innovations are still in the hands of whites, which means that the mainstream continues to determine what cultural responsiveness and allyship measures look like in education. Shaikh (2021) states that this dominant narrative can shape how these concepts are defined, how they are operationalized, and how they are assessed as a determination of the extent of any progress. Shaikh (2021) concurs that part of the paradox lies in the name allyship. She says that to be true allies, whites need to acknowledge that their actions and behaviour perpetuate systems of oppression and inequity for those who are marginalized. Therefore, Shaikh (2021) suggests that the social theory of reflexivity must be at the heart of anti-racist practice and at the forefront of all purposeful and actionable change. Shaikh proposes that to practise allyship is not enough. She contends that allyship must include the authentic use of reflexivity which holds whites accountable for their actions that are tied to institutional racism. She says that reflexivity includes acknowledging your own ties to white supremacy, pushing for authentic change, and having clear goals and objectives that have been defined by individuals who have been the targets of discrimination.

For this study, the theory of reflexivity is a valuable tool because it draws attention to the circle of infinite relationships embedded in the plethora of human belief systems. Reflexivity

requires the researcher to recognize and examine how social norms shape who they are and how this influences research analysis and outcomes. As a settler working within the colonial institution of a museum and pursuing PhD studies within western academia, Shaikh's (2021) article certainly created much food for thought. I considered the implications of our decolonial work at the museum, as well as my own decolonializing initiatives, and I asked the following questions: What does it mean to be culturally responsive? How can the museum create spaces that value Mi'kmaw cultural values, beliefs, and traditions? How can the museum take decolonizing actions that are committed to actually changing the actual system? How do the systems of white supremacy and power protect us? How can we practise reflexivity?

Through the intersection of Wilson's (2008) relational accountability, reflexivity, and positionality, settlers who are interested in practising allyship become relationally aware of the Mi'kmaw knowledge construct, Msit No'kmaq. In turn, this Indigenous knowledge-based system requires that allies take responsibility for their actions and show respect and reverence for all of the relationships they share with everything—living and non-living—on planet Earth, as well as the cosmos. Further, including Indigenous knowledge-based systems, such as Msit No'kmaq and relational accountability, in conjunction with reflexivity as methods for exposing racism honours Bartlett, Marshall and Marshall's (2012) Mi'kmaw methodology known as Etuaptmuk. This technique is an integrative Indigenous multi-disciplinary learning approach that embraces both Indigenous and western approaches and supports a holistic model for examining settler transparency and racism. Incorporating the Mi'kmaw knowledge construct of Etuaptmuk facilitates a collective way to use Indigenous knowledge (Mist no' kmaq, relational accountability) and western theory (reflexivity) as a holistic approach for addressing the need for

settlers to acknowledge the relationship between their own benefits and privileges and the oppression of others.

Etuaptmunk (Two-Eyed Seeing) helps settlers to understand the history of colonization and racism from other worldviews, which exposes the tropes, stereotypes, and myths that are used to support colonization. The good intentions of settlers and settler altruism cannot, for example, override the fact that settlers are misinformed because they continue to use the view through their settler lens in order to decolonize. Using Etuaptmunk to better understand reflexivity opens the path for settlers to receive feedback from their Indigenous friends and other people who have experienced oppression, as a necessary component of allyship. Most importantly, this holistic way to do research ties settlers to Wilson's (2008) Indigenous knowledge construct known as relational accountability, which holds settlers and larger groups, such as our decolonizing museum committee, accountable for their actions, even though their intentions may have appeared honourable at the time.

8. The Practice of Humility

“May the Creator sprinkle strength, wisdom and guidance
May I humbly walk as a grateful student on Mother Earth today”

(KisKaieyi-I AM READY by Michelle Sylliboy, 2019, Rebel Press.
Reprinted with permission from the author.)

Once people begin to understand how they are complicit in racism, and hopefully become active agents for change, I think an added important element is to practise humility. Although taking a humble stance can be difficult for some people, I believe it is critical on so many levels, when addressing social injustice. For starters, practising humility allows people to put the needs and interests of others, such as the Mi'kmaq, before their own. Even when the thinking and reasoning that people encounter is different from their own, practising humility underscores the importance of being culturally humble and privileging other worldviews such as Mi'kmaw

knowledge-based systems. In *Cultural Humility as a Form of Social Justice: Promising Practices for Global School Psychology Training*, Emily Fisher (2020) suggests that “cultural humility can serve as a link between cultural diversity and social justice, providing a deep awareness that allows us to understand ourselves and our interactions with the diversity of others.” Practising humility requires that settlers like myself put on the back burner their unconscious ability to be in positions of authority as decisions makers because of their white privilege and listen to what others want them to do. In this way, they do not dominate the conversation, but instead, take what they have learned (in my case, it is my teachings from the Mi’kmaq and what I have learned from researching and writing this PhD dissertation) from marginalized groups and use their privilege to strengthen the voices of these groups (in the ways they want them strengthened), which are often ignored.

Elder Joe Mike (personal communication, March 15, 2021) has told me that an important step that settlers must take in decolonization, which includes tackling racism, is to take their lead from the Mi’kmaq and other Indigenous Peoples. He said that when it comes to non-Native actions to effect social justice transformation, the non-Natives must be humble and not draw attention to what they are doing for confirmation and accolades. To be a genuine Indigenous ally, settlers must be active agents but in a humble way.

In line with Elder Joe Mike’s concerns, Alexandra Tsuneta (2020) brings this issue up in *Medium*, an online media platform, in an article called “Please Stop—A Message About Performative Activism and Resources on How to be a Good Ally.” Tsuneta (2020) examines the difference between someone who practises cultural humility and someone who is participating in performative activism. Tsuneta (2020) points out how whites have been displaying images of themselves attending and participating in various anti-racist events across various social

platforms in order to increase their social capital. Tsuneta (2020) considers this type of activity performative activism, which she emphasizes is not equivalent to social action.

Like Tsuneta (2020), I am also thrilled that the social consciousness of mainstream society has become more aware of the many inequalities that exist between whites and racialized groups; however, I worry that this recent popularity of social activism is just that. Time will tell whether this interest is just fleeting or whether social justice work will continue to move forward from awareness to outrage, conversation, and finally, to real action. As Tsuneta (2020) has said, racial injustice work is continuous; it is not something that stops just because hot button topics of the day have subsided. My hope is that, when people visit the Mahone Bay Museum, our decolonizing efforts will have an impact on them and that they will be moved to act and make a difference.

What it Means to be Humble

The following quotation sums up the meaning of being humble:

When you debate a person about something that affects them more than you, remember that it will take a much more emotional toll on them than you. For you, it may feel like it is an academic exercise. For them, it feels like revealing their pain only to have you dismiss their pain, only to have you dismiss their experience, and sometimes their humanity. The fact that you might remain calmer under these circumstances is a consequence of your privilege, not increased objectivity on your part. (Twitter Feed, Direct Source Unknown, May 2020)

Specific Action Plans for Practising Indigenous Allyship and Combatting Racism

James Sinclair (as cited in Palmater, 2020) stated that rather than being known for their acts of violence, Indigenous warriors are defined according to the capacity of their esteemed

large hearts (p. ix). Sinclair (as cited in Palmater, 2020) describes an Indigenous warrior as someone who uses the gift of love to support Indigenous resistance and resurgence. He says that being an Indigenous warrior requires “the sacrifice of personal comfort (and often safety) alongside a refusal to tolerate suffering and oppression. Far more importantly, this represents a duty to see the potential in all things at the same time (p. ix).”

Palmater (2020) asks her readers to think about their place as revolutionary agents to combat racism against Indigenous Peoples in Canada. There was a quote by Chief Roland Wilson, West Moberly First Nations, in a *First Peoples Law Report* publication (Bruce McIvor and Cody O’Neil, January 25-31, 2021) that I have found helpful in determining how settlers like myself can practise allyship and stand in solidarity with Indigenous warriors like Palmater. Chief Roland Wilson, West Moberly First Nations (as cited in Palmater, 2020) said, “You can show Canada and the world that the only way to escape our colonial history of neglect and betrayal, is to act boldly and honourably in the decisions that lie before us today.”

For me, Chief Roland Wilson’s (as cited in Palmater, 2020) words verify how settlers must fearlessly practise the gift of love that Sinclair (as cited in Palmater, 2020) talks about in order to support Indigenous settler relations. These renewed Indigenous settler relationships that are based on compassion and not violence offer a collective alternative trajectory for supporting Indigenous resistance and resurgence, which forges a path forward towards a decolonized future together (p. ix).

The Indigenous allyship and anti-racist action plan for myself and the museum is my initial response as beginning solutions by settlers like myself. These intentions are my beginning steps toward honouring what Sinclair, Palmater, Kendi, Brookfield, Chief Wilson, and many other warriors against racism are asking allies to do so that they can help dismantle the face of

dehumanization and transform the world into a mutually respectful egalitarian future for all. As well, I recently became involved in the Town of Lunenburg's anti-racism work and was invited to be on the anti-racism special committee (ARSC). I have attended several meetings and have had direct discussions with the mayor and others about the work of the committee.

I must stress that these initiatives are merely a starting point and are very fluid. How I continue to learn about racism and the subsequent actions I take will always be in sync with people who experience racism. As I continue to develop further discernment about the operation of racism, discrimination, prejudice, and biases within myself, my community, and Canadian institutions, my attempts to examine and eliminate racism will continue to evolve and change.

Individual Action Plan for Practising Indigenous Allyship and Combatting Racism

An important point to keep in mind is that the topic of racism is a very complex subject and therefore offers many avenues that social activists can use as tools to fight for transformation and change. To help me stay focussed on the research connected to this PhD, I have tried to align the dialogue in this action plan with the dissertation questions and themes. The action plan below provides a rudimentary place to start, which can help support the prevention of further racism and address the systemic forms of racial discrimination that occur where I live.

Acknowledge how I am complicit in racism.

Examples of Action:

- a) Examine the quick assumptions I make about people because of their geographic locations such as being in prison, living on a Reserve, and their postal code.
- b) Examine how Canadian norms deliberately shape my socially engrained biases and prejudices.

Acknowledge and continually challenge how and why I assign specific behaviours to racialized groups.

Examples of Action:

- a) Examine why I assign specific behaviours to racialized individuals or the group they belong to.
- b) Be mindful of my opinions about others and think about how I came to my conclusions about someone who is not white.

Daily examine and check my white privilege and how I consciously and unconsciously discriminate against others.

Examples of Action:

- a) Think of examples of benefits that I receive because I am white. For example, why do many of my Indigenous friends disagree with the statement that law enforcement is here to protect me, my family, and community.
- b) Share what I am learning with family, friends, and the broader public, such as through *The Nova Scotia Advocate* news publications.

Use my privilege and power to tackle racism.

Examples of Action:

- a) PhD dissertation that honours Mi'kmaw worldviews and knowledge-based systems.
- b) Find creative ways to disseminate my work. Assist the Mahone Bay Island Conservation Association in building relationships with local Mi'kmaq and volunteer on the newly formed anti-racist committee in the Town of Lunenburg.

Determine how to practise relational accountability as a method of understanding anti-racism.

Example of an Action:

- a) Prioritize practising Indigenous allyship and building genuine relationships that are based on mutual respect, as everyday occurrences.

Recognize how racism is structural and talk about it with others.

Example of Action:

- a) Call out historical governmental policies such as The Indian Act that support practices and norms that maintain white supremacy.
- b) Clarify how the Peace and Friendship treaties apply today to the inherent rights of fishing for both the Mi'kmaq and settlers.
- c) Highlight the merit of other world views usually undervalued in academia.

Examine how racism operates in my community.

Example of an Action:

- a) Expose how Mi'kmaw history and worldviews were virtually excluded in Nova Scotia public education, except when using myths, stereotypes, and tropes to describe the Mi'kmaq.

Investigate and reveal the racist policies within my community that cause racial inequalities.

Example of an Action:

- a) Become educated about the Indian Act and how it has been used as a genocidal tool since its conception.

Determine what actions I can take to change racist policies that are responsible for racial inequalities.

Example of an Action:

- a) Stand in solidarity and support social justice issues that are important to my Mi'kmaw friends such as MMIWG, Save the Avon River, land claims, unsustainable resource extraction and education about Mi'kmaw treaty rights.

Final Thoughts

Like most Canadians, I have been taught primarily through a Eurocentric-Canadian lens. From a very early age, I have been exposed to and immersed in a plethora of falsehoods that presuppose the supremacy of white-European Canadian ideology as the preferred basis for my perceptions and experiences from a social, cultural, educational, historical, political, and spiritual perspective. Since the day I was born, these mainstream systems of belief have shaped and influenced virtually every aspect of who I am today. I cannot change my white supremacist Canadian upbringing, which has taught me to be prejudiced and to discriminate against Indigenous Peoples, Blacks, and others.

By design, racism is a powerful force that white supremacy, policy, violence, and capitalism sustain, thus making the tackling of racism difficult for white people because they do not have the skill set to address or understand how racism and white privilege work in their own lives. My hope is that this chapter and my overall dissertation will give settlers the beginning concepts, knowledge, and language that they need in order to create real social justice.

My PhD work has been merely a starting point so that I can begin to grapple with what racism really looks like and how I am complicit on so many levels, both knowingly and unknowingly. Through this work, I hope that others can find a glimpse of how Canadians are entrenched in a system that supports white people's and settlers' social, political, educational, and governmental interests over others, such as Indigenous Peoples. Drawing from our collective Canadian consciousness, my hope is that mainstream society will become more aware of the

many inequalities that exist between whites and racialized groups and that what they learn will move them to act and make a difference in humble ways.

**Wowkwis
Red Fox**

Racism is a trickster
I'm always here
It's complicated
Analytical intelligence and observation
Are not enough
To tackle this societal structure
Adaptability and ability
To move through obstacles and resistance
is required.



Conclusion

Don't Just Write
What you know. Write what you
wish to know. What you reveal to
yourself, you reveal to the reader.
Storytelling is about discovery.

*(Embers by Richard Wagamese, 2016, Douglas and McIntyre.
Reprinted with permission from the publisher.)*

The writing of this PhD dissertation was an opportunity to examine and then express my decolonizing initiatives and my role and responsibility in truth and reconciliation in the nation-state of Canada. As documentation of the decolonizing process that I have begun, this study identifies lessons learned, examines inherent tensions in decolonial work, illustrates successful decolonial tools, and explains why this work is crucial for Indigenous Peoples and settlers who live on Indigenous land.

These efforts led to the discovery of a plethora of Mi'kmaw history in Lunenburg County. My work contrasts with the general narrative that is inaccurately told in the area, which I learned as a child growing up in Lunenburg, according to which, the Mi'kmaq did not have a significant presence in the area. I now know that a considerable part of decolonization is for settlers to learn about their shared history with the Mi'kmaq. This dissertation serves as a starting point for use in decolonization work, supporting shared life stories that can renew a collective sense of commitment to finding and strengthening social justice for all.

Another feature of this study is its exposure of the inextricable links between Canadian colonization and European white supremacist ideology, which settlers have used for intentionally oppressing, displacing, and committing genocide against Indigenous Peoples in order to steal their land and resources. Further, the personal examination of my settler identity and its associated colonial narrative exposes how the British used these calculated tools to justify their

appropriation of Mi'kma'ki land from the Mi'kmaq. As a result of this introspection, I am better equipped to understand my role as an Indigenous ally and my responsibility to combat racism and assist in decolonization.

Personal Implications

My efforts to produce this dissertation have constituted a personal journey of self-discovery and inner growth that have enabled me to learn about my community differently from the version I absorbed when I was growing up. A significant component of this research experience came from Elders and other Mi'kmaq who helped me understand the differences between Indigenous research, which incorporates a process-oriented approach, in contrast to western research, which often emphasizes the production of empirical data. Although I was familiar with this Indigenous way of partaking in research because of my master's work, my dissertation studies took this introduction to a much deeper level of cognizance.

I drew inferences about and insights into broader cultural, political, and social meaning using autoethnographic self-reflection. This deep learning included the importance of following Indigenous knowledge-based systems, which taught me that collective efforts and relationships have a higher purpose. The way in which the Mi'kmaq Peoples strivings to live their lives via Msit no' kmaq and other Mi'kmaw knowledge-based systems exemplifies this larger consciousness.

Since this dissertation underscored the importance of understanding relationships from an Indigenous perspective, it influenced my ability to critically self-reflect on where I am from, my family, community, nation, land, nature, and Indigenous settler/relations, as a necessary process for learning. This dissertation also emphasizes the importance of Indigenous storywork as a sound method for recreating history through the social interactions between a settler and an

Indigenous person. Without the personal relationships with the many Mi'kmaq who were open to teaching me, no new narratives about where we live would be possible.

Finally, this research allowed me to take on the circle of learning that has been an instrumental aspect of the journey from an Indigenous perspective. First, I needed to listen to and experience authentic storytelling by my Mi'kmaw teachers. Next, I needed to reflect on the teachings that I received and discern whether they were appropriate to share with others or not. This type of learning is significant because it demonstrates the holistic synergy of storywork as genuinely transformational and challenges the conformity of mainstream learning.

TRC/UNDRIP

My doctoral research represents a response to the TRC (Government of Canada, 2018) requests to build Indigenous research capacity by identifying working methods in a partnership that honours local Indigenous communities' research practices. For this study, these practices include Mi'kmaw ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies geared toward initiatives that mobilize Mi'kmaw knowledge. These strategies contribute to strengthening the capacity of the local Mi'kmaw community to research in partnership with the broader research community. This research also supports UNDRIP's requests to address the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples. UNDRIP reiterates that society must put in place proper measures to ensure that Indigenous history and culture are free of discrimination and that accurate representation of Indigenous Peoples occurs throughout education, media, and other public venues.

Therefore, this study provides an example of how non-Indigenous researchers can engage in respectful ways when working with Indigenous communities. This document defines reconciliation as the ongoing process of establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Indigenous Research Paradigm

Overall, the topic of this dissertation is significant because it demonstrates the value of Indigenous knowledge-based systems and Indigenous ways of practising research and methods of incorporating them into current post-secondary research models. This study indicates that Indigenous research is not just adding to an existing body of knowledge through the honouring of the range of Indigenous knowledge and worldviews as the best research practice. Instead, this work illustrates how an Indigenous research paradigm affects the way western research is usually conducted and serves as an example of how Indigenous and mainstream knowledge can work in tandem and follow the Mi'kmaw construct known as Etuaptmumk for the betterment of all. This dissertation has featured the extensive use of Indigenous storywork as a research tool for decolonizing the Mahone Bay Museum and the history of the County of Lunenburg.

Importance of Relationship as Methodology

The study presented here underscores the importance of relationships and their application as research methodology and culturally responsive approaches to decolonization. The work incorporated the Mi'kmaw understanding of relationship, known as Msit No'kmaq, as a focal point for research within university academia. Msit No'kmaq also supported a multidisciplinary research approach, which further incorporated various Indigenous knowledge constructs, such as Etuaptmumk, relational accountability, Netukulimk, Thinking Seven Generations Ahead, and Learning Spirit, to name a few. In turn, this Indigenous relational approach for conducting research held me, accountable to the infinite types of relationships intertwined within the holistic research process.

For example, by honouring Archibald's (2008) Indigenous storywork principles of respect, reverence, reciprocity, responsibility, synergy, interrelatedness, and holism, I, as the

principal researcher of this study, and the museum's decolonizing committee were held accountable for their relationship with local stories and history. This relational accountability helped to keep the storywork principles at the forefront as a tool for examining colonial narratives through a Mi'kmaw lens. I was better able to highlight the interrelatedness of the past, present, and future within the context of Canadian colonialism, which spanned many generations.

The application of the Indigenous notion of relationship as methodology led to the inextricable intertwining of the academic integrity of this project with personal connections to family, community, land, and place as a thoughtful way to learn. The implications of doing research that followed an Indigenous research paradigm demanded from the decolonizing committee, including me, a perception that was both personal and relational and spoke to the breadth and scope of this type of learning.

Relationship between Colonization and Racism

While conducting this research, I found that the recurring theme of the relationships among racism, colonization in Canada, and the settlers' role in decolonization and combatting racism was continually surfacing. This project underscores the fact that the colonization of the settler state of Canada was based on Canadian Eurocentric ideology, white supremacy, racism, and coercive government policies, which involved forced relocation, assimilation, and the genocide of Indigenous Peoples in order to steal their land and resources. Sadly, the racist colonial history of Lunenburg County and Canada formed the foundation for racism that still exists today in our community and country. Therefore, a component of decolonizing initiatives is the requirement for settlers like me to examine inherent racism, which has its roots in racism as an operational structure of Canadian colonization.

The work I undertook for this study also uncovered how Canada is guilty today of racism and discrimination, and how we, as citizens, are therefore either knowingly or unknowingly racist. Through unlearning, relearning, and embracing Indigenous ways of knowing, Indigenous allies understand the inherent racism embedded in their adopted colonial system of culture and commerce. Upon the disruption of this colonial fabrication, a more balanced and ethical understanding can emerge. Through Indigenous epistemology, truth and reconciliation can become transformational approaches for liberation, emancipatory growth, and insight.

Decolonizing Settler Identity

As Indigenous Peoples and settlers work through truth and reconciliation, a vital element is the deconstruction of both settler narrative and settler identity. An essential part of decolonization is an examination of the origin of these colonial mechanisms and their use in supporting the overall colonial project across Turtle Island. In addition, questioning the settler narrative and the construct of settler identity exposes how their contemporary counterparts are maintained and influence Indigenous-settler relations in the present day. Settler identity is a mechanism used for supporting the overall colonial project, which has been carried over into the present day. Since the settler identity validates colonial discourse, it can be a tool for decolonization. Settlers must understand how Mi'kmaw historical erasure supported Foreign Protestant settler colonialism that resulted in intergenerational trauma towards the Mi'kmaq. Acknowledging and learning about local colonial history and settler identity in this manner forces settlers to confront, admit, and show remorse for the wrong doings of the past, which they benefited from and take a stance for change. Based on mutual respect, decolonizing our settler identity allows new Mi'kmaw-settler relations and affection for one another to flourish, despite a shared history of genocide and continued oppression directed against the Mi'kmaq.

As we collectively share space and come to know one another, we have an opportunity to “get the story straight,” as Elder Hunt likes to say. Like our decolonizing work, our intellectual, spiritual, and emotional exchanges are essential when we come together. We learn, grow, and transform together from our mutual respect as we bring the reimagining of new Mi’kmaw-settler relations into reality.

Indigenous Children’s Lives Matter

While I was writing the conclusion of this dissertation, the account of the Canadian residential schools’ unmarked graves of children forcibly taken from their homes from the 1880s to 1990s made mainstream headlines. This horrible colonial history is another example of the Canadian narrative’s erasure and its genocidal treatment of Indigenous Peoples. For most settlers, this news is shocking, but for residential school survivors and their families, the harsh reality of these children’s deaths and murders has been known for a long time. While Indigenous Peoples across Canada painfully recover the bodies of their ancestors, triggering intergenerational trauma, settlers must listen to and learn about what happened. We have a responsibility to learn about what happened and to act. If we choose not to take an active stance, we are complicit in contemporary colonization.

Settler truth-telling is the first step in truth and reconciliation. It requires an examination of the construct of settler innocence in mainstream Canadian history that hides the different types of violence used against the original peoples. We are accountable for historical atrocities, such as unmarked graves of thousands of Indigenous children, because our Canadian lifestyle benefits from this purposeful erasure. Once we understand our history from an Indigenous perspective, we can work with Indigenous Peoples on reconciliation.

Broader Implications

The key aspect of the study is that it demonstrates how Mi'kmaw Elders, settlers, and scholars can work together and use Indigenous pedagogy to support decolonial reform, such as in the Mahone Bay Museum and the recent anti-racist work in the Town of Lunenburg. These community transformations endorse the constructive process for social change that applies to other educational institutions, such as public schools and universities.

My research shows how settlers can become allies and support Mi'kmaw resurgence and self-determination by disrupting and decolonizing their cultural being. It serves as an example of an anti-colonial community-based and culturally respectful project that foregrounds Indigenous ways of knowing and emphasizes how storytelling is educational. Through historical narratives, the Mi'kmaq and settlers can use Indigenous knowledge structures to challenge the mainstream epistemic framework and enable teaching, learning, and healing to occur.

Another intention of this project was to demonstrate how and why amicable Indigenous-settler relations are an essential part of Indigenous allyship and its intersection with the shared responsibility to represent Canada's history in a way that supports reconciliation and Mi'kmaw self-determination. This respectful relationship between Indigenous Peoples' and settlers' research created the ability for "re-storying," or retelling with Indigenous perspectives, the historical narratives that have dominated the region's history. This relational research approach introduced a decolonizing space and made room for the Mi'kmaw history. If today's settlers understood their natural history, which supported settler respect and reverence for Indigenous epistemology, that understanding could move them from being perpetrators of the continued colonization of Indigenous Peoples to becoming Indigenous allies.

My experience with this project has highlighted concrete ways that settlers can practise Indigenous allyship to tackle racism. Practising Indigenous allyship requires settlers to work together with the Mi'kmaq of Mi'kma'ki and begin the collaborative process of re-storying our shared history. It requires us to unpack our connections to racism and is an example of how Indigenous Peoples and settlers can work respectfully and be honest, active agents for social change.

A further contribution of this study is the demonstrated importance of building amicable relationships between Indigenous Peoples and settlers as an essential part of decolonization. These renewed relationships, based on respect and reverence, create space for Indigenous Peoples to share safely with settlers their stories about the impact of colonization.

Final Thoughts

The history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, such as the Mi'kmaq, is vibrant, diverse, and integral to understanding the many narratives and layers that have played a part in the overall Canadian colonization project. Our ability to effect real decolonial change lies in our ability to support Indigenous Peoples and settlers, to work in solidarity. To quote Pamela Palmater (2020, p. 228), “Canadians and First Nations can force the changes we need to turn this ship around and restore justice in Canada for the benefit of our current and future generations.”

Genuine reconciliation is about truth and justice, which requires settlers to become cognizant of, and never to forget, their violent racist historical legacy. I am at a very rudimentary stage in my decolonial work. “Peeling back the onion” is a metaphor that I use to interpret what the job of decolonizing entails. Like an onion, decolonization has many layers. As we peel back the layers, we discover many more layers hidden within. This continual peeling back of layers

helps us move along in the process of self-discovery and its intertwined relationship with decolonization.

The gift of being welcomed into Mi'kmaw homes and communities and given a small glimpse into their lives is an honour and a blessing. Because of this research, I have a greater understanding of who the Mi'kmaq Peoples are today, how Canadian European colonization impacted them, and how they continue to resist and survive as a sovereign nation. As a result of this research experience, I have developed tremendous respect and reverence for the Mi'kmaq and all Indigenous Peoples. I think settlers have so much to learn from the original peoples of Turtle Island.

“Msit No'kmaq”

**Kitpu
Bald Eagle**

Soaring
Flying high
The forces of the universe
Are always in your favour.
There are no limits
to this work!



(All animal photographs taken by author while completing dissertation)

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Appendix

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Source: 2018 Working with Indigenous Peoples
at Acadia University Handbook and Protocol