ABSTRACT

This is a study of the documented oral accounts of the Micmac people of Atlantic Canada for their potential as historical source material. William G. Doty's perspectives on mythography are adapted into an historical-functional approach to stories in the accounts. Consideration is given to the nature and history of the oral accounts, how they came to be recorded, and role of the recorders in shaping the accounts. Finally, a sample of the documented accounts are analyzed for evidence of change in Micmac spirituality and religious beliefs from contact in the seventeenth century to the mid-twentieth century.
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INTRODUCTION

An intriguing debate currently taking place in the field of Native North American Indian history concerns the use of documented Native oral accounts, in the form of myths, legends, traditions, stories and tales, as evidence in historical research. Concern over the use of oral evidence in historical work is not new, either in the field of Native history or in historical research in general. Since the emergence of the "New Indian History" in the late 1960’s,¹ the need to find sources of evidence that present a Native "voice" or perspective has provoked questions about the validity and usefulness of traditional Native accounts of historical events. More widely, these questions raise the issue of the role that Native North American oral tradition, mythology and other forms of oral culture should play in historical work. One aspect of the debate emerges from criticism over the ability of historians, using the historical method of evaluating evidence, to make proper use of oral accounts that appear in conventional historical sources. This raises the specific question of how historians may use the documented accounts derived from a Native people’s oral culture and recorded by members of other cultures for various, disparate reasons, as historical evidence for questions that are framed within the Western concept of history. My interest is in how historians, using conventional historical methods for analyzing documents, may discern information from documented oral accounts without the benefit of living informants and the specialized techniques of field research. In order to address this question, I will use the transcribed, historic oral accounts of the Micmac people of Atlantic Canada to explore potential approaches
towards this type of evidence and to illustrate, through examples from Micmac documented oral accounts, how they might contribute to historical inquiry.

Historic documented oral accounts may be defined as those materials that are found in the historical record in documentary form, written down by various Europeans and their North American descendants from the time of contact until the twentieth century, but derived from oral culture. This type of evidence is found in various conventional historical documents, such as the writings of explorers, missionaries and traders, but also appears in folklorists’ collections and anthropologists’ ethnographies, including their accompanying fieldnotes. In its original form the material was spoken, transmitted as part of an oral culture. In this work, oral culture is defined as the entire body of oral genres taken together, and assumes a central role for oral communication in disseminating an oral society’s store of knowledge to its members. The various oral genres include mythology, legend, folklore, tradition, and stories, as well any debates, commentaries, descriptions, or explanations that may be attributed to oral culture. Often they were communicated through the medium of storytelling and included stories of the ancient ones or myths, in Micmac, a’tukwaqmn, and news, or aknutmaqmn.2 The accounts may include indirect as well as direct statements, second-hand information, and material presented in a writer’s narrative or commentary that could only have been derived from oral testimony. For my purposes, "documented oral accounts" refers to any documentary evidence that existed at some time in a purely oral form or was a product of oral culture. Such a wide definition allows the study to include all types of oral evidence that were gathered from the Micmac and written down by Europeans.
The growing acceptance of oral history as an historical methodology produced an interest in spoken, rather than written evidence. Although oral histories differ from documented oral accounts in that oral history concerns evidence that is collected by the researcher from living members of a particular study group, recording memories of a past that is still remembered within a community, oral historians have opened the way for the use of documented oral accounts for historical evidence. In its practice, oral historians have shown that certain types of oral testimony are valuable, often unique, sources of historical evidence, especially for groups that are not well represented in historical documents. African historian David Henige in *Oral Historiography* defined oral history as

> the study of the recent past by means of life histories or personal recollections, where informants speak about their own experiences.... Oral history provides an opportunity to explore and record the views of the underprivileged, the dispossessed, and the defeated - those who, by virtue of being historically inarticulate, have been overlooked in most studies of the past. ³

Henige considered documented oral accounts to be only a minor part of oral history.

But recent studies of topics such as resistance to colonial rule [in Africa] have necessarily tended to rely on second-hand oral and written accounts (some of which include early interviews) since few who took part are still alive.... These instances are probably a relatively minor aspect of oral history and the discussion here assumes that oral historians are primarily interested in events personally experienced and attitudes personally acquired. ⁴
The similarity between using documented oral accounts and practising oral history is the concentration on evidence that is spoken rather than written. Both deal with, in one fashion or another, people talking about the past. But with documented oral accounts, the conventional distance between the historian and the sources exists. The informant cannot be questioned directly nor can the source be expanded through additional questioning. The historian operates separately from both the recorder and the informant.

Of all the spoken forms, oral traditions serve as the most important link between the materials of oral historians and conventional documentary historians, between recently collected oral testimony and documented oral accounts. And it is the accepted perceptions of oral traditions as evidence, as much as anything else, that has shaped attitudes towards all genres of oral culture, whether they are collected in the field or occur in documentary sources. While any exact definition of oral tradition is open to debate, in this study the term refers to accounts from either the actual or an idealized past, and their various human and non-human characters. This definition of oral tradition approximates the Micmac term a’tukwaqn, or "stories treasured up, indeed, and handed down from age to age, and often told for diversion, and to keep in memory the habits and manners, domestic and political, of the sahkah-waych-kik, the ancient Indians.... The definition also includes the various animal tales. Generally, they are widely known, but with many localized variations, and have been passed on over generations. It is important to this study that a working definition of oral tradition reflect the characteristics of the specific source material it attempts to describe rather than engage academic debates stemming from other sources. My broad definition of oral tradition probably...
disagrees with specialists in specific details, especially those in other fields and from other disciplines, but it is not the discussion over the definition of oral traditions that is significant here, but rather the debate over their usefulness as historical evidence, especially as they appear in documented oral accounts.

The interest in documented oral accounts as historical evidence for Native history comes from the need to expand both the amount and range of historical materials that may bear on a Native centred history, a need driven in part by the issue of finding the Native "voice" in historical documents. Because a very fragmented and sparse documentary record is a recurring characteristic of historical work on Native peoples, traditions and other oral forms, as they appear in documented oral accounts, may serve to give voice to otherwise inarticulate participants in history. Until recently historians of Native peoples generally have ignored, rather than condemned, the use of documented oral accounts as a type of evidence. To a large degree this has been because the topics that have concerned historians the most, the fur trade and Native-White relations, possess a relatively rich supply of records in conventional archival sources, produced by trading companies, colonial governments and a wide variety of individuals. But historical inquiry that goes beyond these main areas of research, to topics that invoke a Native perspective on events and circumstances, such as relations between different Native groups, attitudes towards settlers, and reasons for involvement in the fur trade or colonial European conflicts, strain conventional approaches towards historical source materials and offer challenges to some of the orientations and attitudes towards historical evidence held by both historians and anthropologists.
Throughout the twentieth century various anthropologists have argued against the use of oral tradition as direct historical evidence. This is not to suggest that anthropologists have opposed using oral tradition for other types of investigation, such as ethnography, but rather indicates a specific rejection of oral tradition as a source for history. In the early twentieth century anthropologist Robert H. Lowie sparked a debate over the use of oral tradition within the folklorist and anthropological communities with his oft cited dictate, "I cannot attach to oral tradition any historical value whatsoever under any conditions whatsoever." Although other anthropologists of his day challenged his extreme rejection of oral tradition, his remarks remained as the starting point for discussions on the topic over forty years later. More recently, individual examples of oral testimony have complemented, confirmed or refuted written documents, but a general bias against these types of sources has continued.

Noted archaeologist and ethnohistorian Bruce Trigger, in his 1976 introduction to The Children of Aataentsic issued an explicit caution against relying upon oral traditions for historical evidence.

Among some Indian groups, oral traditions are of considerable value for supplementing written records. The Winnebago tribe of Wisconsin are reported to preserve memories of events that took place soon after their first encounter with a European, which probably occurred in 1634. For the Huron, however, and for the Iroquoians generally, oral traditions appear to be of little historical value. The reason for this probably lies in the Iroquoians' attitude towards history. For the most part, the purpose of their traditions was not to preserve a literal memory of the past, but rather to supply them with a guide to the social, political and moral order in which they lived....

Hence one seems safe in concluding that oral traditions do not provide an independent means for studying
the history of Iroquoian-speaking peoples. It is of interest when oral traditions confirm other sources of information about the past, but, except when they do, they should not be even used to supplement such sources. 12

In the case of the Five Nations Iroquois, Trigger cited anthropologist A.C. Parker’s idea that "... the Iroquois conceived of their history in terms of periods of ‘cultural revolution’ and that each new revolution systematically blotted out the memory of a former era." 13 In a wider context, however, Trigger’s attitude toward oral traditions as possible historical source material reflects his often discussed concerns over ‘romantic’ approaches toward history. 14 However, subsequent to Leroy V. Eid work on the eighteenth century Ojibwa-Iroquois War, which made extensive use of oral accounts, Trigger withdrew somewhat from his position against their use and called for more research and critical analysis of the methodology for using oral accounts. 15

Anthropologist Julie Cruikshank, in Life Lived Like a Story, her 1989 book about the storytelling practices of three female Tlingit and Athapaskan Yukon Native elders, clearly demonstrated that oral traditions are still actively used to interpret life events and make them meaningful. As a point of departure for her work she distinguished between using oral testimony for historical evidence and using oral testimony, in the form of history or mythology, to study how it is used in the present by members of a society to explain and understand their life experiences. Her perspective concentrates on "how these women use traditional narrative to explain their life experiences." 16 and she "gradually ... came to see oral tradition not as ‘evidence’ about the past but as a window on ways the past is culturally constituted and discussed." 17 In putting forward this
perspective she expressed a concern over the use of oral tradition for historical evidence.

Well-intentioned but uncritical use of oral traditions from one culture as though they are equivalent to historical evidence, as defined by another culture, may lead to misrepresentation of more complex messages in the narrative. Attempts to sift oral accounts for so-called ‘facts’ may, ironically underestimate the value of spoken testimonies by setting positivistic criteria for assessing truth value or distortions.

To interpret any account, be it written or oral, a student of the past makes some evaluation of the context in which the document was made. Researchers working with archival documents share a general framework for interpreting the conditions under which government reports, log books, diaries, personal papers, and newspapers were produced. But these criteria become quite inappropriate when applied to unfamiliar cultural documents where much is implicit, where kinship terms, place names, metaphor, and symbol play a significant role in how the account is presented. Athapaskan storytellers in northern Canada seem well-equipped to correlate seemingly unrelated ideas and show how they are connected: researchers who try to winnow ‘facts’ from oral accounts and relate them to evidence in written documents may mislead themselves. 18

Cruikshank’s position explicitly excludes all but the trained anthropologist or oral historian with fieldwork experience from utilizing documented oral accounts in research. Although there are examples of where such misrepresentations, underestimations, and misleadings take place in historical works, such as in historian Calvin Martin’s controversial Keepers of the Game,19 there are more recent examples where historians have successfully utilized documented oral accounts.
In the early 1990's, several historians writing about Northeastern Native peoples began to integrate oral traditions and legends with other forms of evidence, incorporating them into larger works. In *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of The Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization*, Daniel K. Richter used the Cosmogonic Myth of the Iroquoians to "illuminate the cultural meaning of the social forms produced by [long processes of social] evolution and to attempt to recover - however inadequately - something of the social and mental world of Iroquois people at the turn of the 17th century." Richter further described treaty speeches and oral traditions as "crucial troves of evidence" for the Iroquois point of view. Richard White, in *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, in one case, drew upon late nineteenth century traditions from the Fox Indians of Wisconsin to backup his point about the failure of leadership that led to the French-Fox Wars of the early eighteenth century. The Fox tales of White Robe demonstrated behaviour on the part of a leader that produced warfare and chaos rather than fulfilling the prescribed role of mediation and peacemaking. By incorporating oral traditions and other forms of documented oral accounts into their historical work, both Richter and White have demonstrated the value that these types of sources have for illuminating a Native North American perspective on historical events.

For my own study on the possibilities of documented oral accounts as historical evidence and their unique methodological problems I will focus on the collected documented oral accounts of the Micmac people of Atlantic Canada. Located on the east coast of Canada, the Micmac have one of the longest records of interaction with Europeans and North American settlers of any North American Native people, which
resulted in a relatively wide variety of documented oral accounts. The Micmac accounts present an extensive and diverse record of oral documents, covering the entire range of historical periods from settlement at the start of the seventeenth century up to the twentieth century. They also encompass a variety of oral genres, including myths, oral traditions, historical legends, and localized folklore. Moreover, many of the various types of chroniclers of Native oral culture in North America are represented in the collected works on the Micmac, and this allows for an examination of most of the types of material that users of documented Native North American oral accounts might encounter.

Another reason for focusing on the Micmac stems from the fact that the Micmac, unlike most other Northeastern North American Native peoples, continue to occupy their aboriginal homeland. They were not forcibly removed from the region, did not, like some more southerly Eastern Algonquians, migrated westward, nor were they driven into physical or cultural extinction. The Micmac remain close to the lands that they occupied when they first encountered Europeans, and the geographic stability of the Micmac preserves the connection between the stories and their physical setting. Stability in location of the Micmac is a tremendous advantage for researchers, for it also eliminates the need to account for the impact of dislocation and acculturation with other Native peoples or changes in Micmac oral culture that resulted from a new geographic environment and its associated influences. The continuous existence of the Micmac in both time and place allows the study to examine documented oral accounts in as long a perspective as possible.
Focusing the study on a particular group also, of course, limits the number of sources available to the study. But while a larger study group, such as all the Eastern Algonquian peoples, would yield a greater number of stories on a particular topic, the vast quantity of material would make overall impressions much more difficult. The smaller case study method also allows for a concentration on the methodological problems concerning the use of documented oral accounts and for incorporating documented oral accounts into historical work. Concentrating on a single people also focuses the study to one people so that the findings may apply to the smallest social unit usually used in Native American historical research. Thus the generalizations that emerge from this example may be directed towards larger regional or cultural Native groups with similar types of documented oral accounts.

I have organized this study into three chapters. Chapter One examines historical contexts and backgrounds, the second chapter deals with methodology, and the third and final chapter investigates a particular historical phenomenon from Micmac history using documented oral accounts. By giving the Micmac people, the art of storytelling, the recorders of the accounts and the accounts themselves historical and cultural contexts, I set out the parameters and conditions that inform the evaluation and selection of methods for analyzing the documented oral accounts. The methodological exploration in the second chapter concentrates on approaches towards documented oral accounts that are compatible with the general concerns of historical research and adapting those analytical approaches to the particular needs of Micmac documented oral accounts. In the final chapter I will examine the incorporation of European Christian and "pagan" ideas and concepts into Micmac religion. By addressing the issue of religious syncretism
amongst the Algonquian Micmac I will explore a concrete example of my basic assumption - that stories contain a diverse range of information and have the potential to communicate various ideas over time - and demonstrate the utility of these types of sources for historical inquiry.

The use of stories, myths, legends and folktales drawn from documented oral accounts to conduct historical inquiry remains an intuitive process, drawing on an imperfect record, and this investigation only provides a structure for the processes that limit and inform the historical imagination. Yet a careful, sensitive, and culturally informed analysis of documented oral accounts may reveal evidence of historical events, such as incidents of warfare between Natives groups, and perhaps more significantly, evidence of processes of historical change, for example, the adoption and adaption of Christianity by Native people. Furthermore, work using documented oral accounts may raise new historical questions about Native North Americans, concerning issues such as how oral culture communicated ideas and information. Through this case study of Micmac documented oral accounts I intend to demonstrate that techniques already exist for the analysis of documented oral accounts and that there is a readily available supply of stories, translated and reprinted, waiting to be incorporated into Native history. By bringing together various forms of expression, and diverse ways of transmitting knowledge, from different cultures, that bear on similar subjects, historians may be able to expand their perspective beyond the limited view of any one set of contemporary observers. In addressing the methodological concerns for utilizing documented oral accounts, I hope to demonstrate that they are a valuable, perhaps indispensable, part of
ethnohistorical research and may provide an important avenue into the Native North American historical experience.
CHAPTER ONE:
THE MANY CONTEXTS OF MICMAC DOCUMENTED ORAL ACCOUNTS

The need to discover the context in which an account was written is no less true for historic documented oral accounts than other forms of historical evidence. For documented oral accounts the process is complicated by the fact that the act of transcribing the stories of a foreign, non-literate culture decontextualizes those accounts. When European writers converted the spoken stories into written texts, they, consciously or unconsciously, changed them by communicating them through a different medium, to a new audience and for reasons other than originally intended. Writing the stories down removed them from their original social setting and language, and cemented their form. The task of now placing the stories contained in the accounts into relevant contexts is complex and challenging, but it is necessary to explore fully their meaning. An historic documented oral account is the product of two worlds: that of the storyteller and that of the recorder. Re-contextualizing the accounts requires the consideration of the diverse conditions that influence them. By providing the documented oral accounts with a variety of contexts and settings, the oral accounts become connected to the wider patterns of Micmac history and culture to which they relate, and integrated with the intellectual processes that created them in all their forms.

The Micmac People

A brief description of the ethnography and history of the Micmac people adds to the historic documented oral accounts a sense of cultural belonging and a place in time.
An overview of Micmac history and culture situates the accounts in the general contexts of circumstance and event, belief and custom to which they refer. The general patterns of Micmac history and culture provide the historian with a chronological and ethnographic framework that connects the individual written stories with the wider experiences of Micmac people. These experiences are important because they may have altered the role of storytelling in Micmac settings.

The Micmac are an Eastern Algonquian speaking people who share many of the cultural traits of other Algonquians from central Canada and the northeastern United States. They differ in some aspects from both their northwestern and southern neighbours because of either ecological adaptations or historical circumstances. Similarities exist in areas of material culture and social organization, but aspects of economic adaptation and belief systems show more variance. The Micmac altered their economic cycle to the maritime environment and either lost, or never acquired, horticulture because of the short growing season and poor soils in the region. Cultural ideas, expressed through both religious ritual and oral culture, differed from the hunters from the northwest as well as the horticulturists to the south, leading to speculation about the timing of the arrival of the Micmac in the region and their place of origin. The mixture of cultural aspects from both the north and south certainly suggests some unknown historical processes at work, and is open to speculation.¹

From before contact with Europeans in the sixteenth century to the late-seventeenth century, the Micmac occupied most of the Maritime region, from the Gaspe Peninsula in Quebec, down along the north shore of New Brunswick, including all of Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton, and mainland Nova Scotia, and extending
around the shore of the Bay of Fundy to the mouth of the Saint John River in southern New Brunswick. The dominant geographic feature of the region is its extensive, indented coastline, which is marked by wide bays, lesser inlets, and numerous sheltering islands. Influenced by the proximity of the Atlantic ocean, the climate is generally temperate with cold winters, late, cool, wet springs, warm summers and long, warm falls. The weather varies considerably, from season to season and year to year. The growing season is short, hampered by the late springs, which probably made the cultivation of crops, such as maize or tobacco, difficult. The region’s landscape is characteristically rough and broken, with several major uplands, especially in the Gaspe, on Cape Breton Island, in central Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and along the south shore of the Bay of Fundy. The land itself is a rolling and rugged low plateau, covered with a dense spruce and fir forest, and pock-marked by shallow lakes and bogs.

The landscape of the Maritime region was a common feature in Micmac oral accounts. Many accounts contained references to dominant local landforms, including mountains, capes, islands and caves, which gave the accounts a strong sense of place and reminded the audience of events or important characters, such as the cultural-hero Gluskap. In the nineteenth century the Micmac used the metaphor of a giant to describe their entire territory, imagining that he stood with his head at Cape Breton, one foot at Gaspe and the other at the southern tip of Nova Scotia.

With the exception of the Saint John River on the edge of Micmacs’ territory, the region has no major river system. It is cut by many short rivers that empty directly into the sea, and which, along with the many lakes, formed an extensive water network. These rivers supplied vital necessities, including food, coastal camping areas, and
transportation routes. Shellfish were found in the nearby saltwater estuaries and bays.\textsuperscript{7} The small river valleys were the focal point of seasonal migrations. In the spring and summer extended families gathered together near coastal shellfish beds and fishing grounds. During the winter they dispersed into family hunting camps further up the valleys. But in contrast to the horticultural riverine orientation that emerged among Algonquians along the Atlantic coast to the south, the Micmac combined hunting for land mammals with a strong maritime economic orientation.\textsuperscript{8} Various types of salt and anadromous fish, shellfish, marine mammals, including seals and whales, as well as shore and migratory birds were all important sources of food and materials.\textsuperscript{9}

Long after contact in the sixteenth century, to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Micmac maintained a socio-political organization that was organized around large extended families grouped together into bands. Band organization emphasized flexibility and independence, which accommodated seasonal migration and periods of dispersal. Each band had a sagamore who provided persuasive leadership. Usually the pre-eminent male from the largest family in the band, the sagamore was responsible for the sharing of communal resources, protection of band members, organization of war parties and the conducting of external relations. Within each band, individual community relations were guided by ideals of co-operation, sharing, respect and restraint.\textsuperscript{10} Political organization beyond the band level was informal and reflected the independence of each Micmac band. Political coercion was unknown and large scale co-operation between the bands occurred only with agreement from all participants. Even as settlement increased, economic resources were depleted and new
economic activities replaced older ones, the Micmac persisted in conducting their economic activities within the framework of the band socio-political organization.11

Aspects of Micmac religious beliefs and oral culture shared characteristics from both the interior Central Algonquians and coastal Eastern Algonquians, but also differed from each in important ways. Shamans provided spiritual guidance and medical care, which, as in much of the northeastern region, reflected the deep relationship assumed to exist between the spirit world and sickness. Micmac mythology shared its hero cycle with the coastal Eastern Algonquians but was similar to Central Algonquian Ojibwa mythology in other regards.12 In the seventeenth century, the Micmac converted to the Roman Catholicism of the French missionaries and practices of the Acadian settlers. At least nominally, and by the time the area fell under British authority, in 1713, the Micmac were firm in their adherence to the Catholic faith. However, the Micmac retained many of their pre-Christian ideals, which were often expressed through their oral culture.13

It is beyond the scope of this study to do other than briefly describe the major eras of Micmac history and the changes that characterized them. The "French era" extends from the time of sporadic contact along the coasts between the Micmac and seasonal French and Basque fishermen and fur traders in the sixteenth century, through the period of Acadian settlement, to the British occupation of mainland Nova Scotia in 1713. The second era covers the period of colonial military conflict, starting in 1713, including the Anglo-French wars for empire of 1740-1748 and 1754-1760, and extending to the end of the American Revolution in 1783. The "British colonial era" covers the consolidation of British power in the region at the end of the eighteenth century, the
creation of a British colonial society in the nineteenth century and also includes the first decades after Confederation, to the late nineteenth century. Finally, the "modern era" is marked by the industrialization of the Maritimes at the end of the nineteenth century, and the industrial technological and economic changes of the twentieth century.14

There were four developments during the French period that dramatically affected the Micmac, their way of life, relations with other groups of people and identity. Technological and economic change associated with the fur trade, the demographic and cultural impact of imported foreign diseases, religious conversion and French settlement all served to distort or disrupt pre-contact social and cultural patterns. Yet, importantly, most Micmac accommodations to new pressures were made within the confines of existing ways of thinking and doing things.

From about 1500 until the establishment of Port Royale in 1604, the Micmac made regular contact with seasonal Basques and French fishermen, with whom they engaged in sporadic trade with the Europeans and even developed a pidgin trade language.15 Archaeological evidence from northeastern New Brunswick suggests that during this period Micmac bands may have changed their seasonal migrations to meet with the Basque and French traders who frequented their shores, disrupting their economic cycle.16 By the first decade of the seventeenth century some Micmacs were using European shallops to sail along the coasts and across the Gulf of Maine to trade European goods with other Native peoples.17 Certainly by 1611, when the Jesuit Father, Pierre Biard, began his mission and started to write his Relations, the Micmac were already well acquainted with European technology and had incorporated it into older trade networks.18
The Micmacs’ desire for European trade goods, whether for utilitarian or spiritual reasons, caused a shift in their economic production, a change that eventually re-oriented the goals of their seasonal cycle. The Micmac gradually altered their way of life to suit the demands of the fur trade, and began to be drawn, like so many other Native peoples, into an ultimately damaging relationship with French traders, who introduced to them new foreign infectious diseases and alcohol abuse. The Micmacs’ material culture and economy shifted from hunting, fishing and gathering for nutritional and material needs, to more specialized hunting and trapping economies geared to exchange for tools, food stuffs, dry goods and alcohol from Europe. Despite these changes, certain structural aspects of Micmac economic activity remained stable. These included the centrality of hunting, whether for food or fur, in their winter camps and the continuation of a social organization based on extended families and migratory bands. The migration patterns may have been altered to suit the new demands of trading furs to European fishermen, but the bands themselves seem to have remained intact.19

The introduction of European diseases to the Micmac produced a sharp population decline in the early seventeenth century. The appearance of the new diseases and the dreadful losses of life during the epidemics had particular repercussions for Micmac attitudes towards the French and French priests. Father Biard mentioned in his first Relation of 1611 the population drops, the serious impact of the declines on Micmac confidence in their own spiritual power and the Micmac belief that because the diseases did not affect the Europeans in their midst that the French were favoured by greater powers.
Such are the marks of intelligence in the people of these countries, which are very sparsely populated, especially those of the Soriquois [Micmac] and Etechemins, which are near the sea; although Membertou assures us that in his youth [1560?] he had seen chimonutz, that is to say, Savages, as thickly planted as the hairs upon his head. It is maintained that they have thus diminished since the French have begun to frequent their country; ... by pleurisy, quinsy and dysentery which kills them off. During this year alone [1610] sixty have died at Cape de la Heve, which is the greater part of those who lived there; yet not one of all M. de Potrincourt’s little colony has even been sick, ... which has caused the Savages to apprehend that God protects and defends us as his favourite and well-beloved people. 20

The missionaries advanced the argument that Micmac spiritual beliefs were ineffective, and confronted the shamans with their inability to control the diseases. The Roman Catholic priests, as was their custom at the time, attempted to bring about miraculous cures of sick individuals, calling for divine intervention through the use of religious relics. The occasional success of the priests were seen by the Micmac as evidence of their ability as shamans, which in turn opened the way for their missionary message. 21 The most notable early missionary success was the baptism and conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1610 of Membertou, the sagamore of the band near Port Royale, and his extended family. 22 Through debate and toil, the missionaries were slowly able to introduce Christian ideas into Micmac spiritual beliefs, and a common ground was established on which they could at least disagree. 23

Relations with the French settlers, known as the Acadians, were marked by joint participation in the fur trade, the exchange of food stuffs, intermarriage, and military co-operation. From 1604 to 1713, the Micmac adjusted to their new neighbours and had peaceful relations with them. The small number of Acadians dyked coastal marshlands
and tidal flats for agriculture and worked only a tiny portion of the land. This did not disrupt the Micmac's seasonal migrations nor did it compete with the Micmac for possession of the land. Inter-marriage created bonds on the individual and family level, which were important to both the Micmac and the Acadians. The Micmac also established relatively good relations with French imperial authorities. The local missionaries distributed material goods as gifts from the French to the area sagamores. In many circumstances diplomacy replaced trade as the main source of European goods. As is commonly known, the Micmac, through kinship ties with the Acadians, and dependence on the material goods of gift diplomacy, began to identify themselves as allies of the French. With the influence of the missionary priests and adherence to their new faith, they began to see themselves as Roman Catholics, which would have important consequences for them once Nova Scotia was settled by British Protestants from New England.24

An era of colonial conflict started with the rivalry between France and the colonies in New England and ran through to the War of American Independence. The Micmac participated fully in the inter-colonial conflicts between France and England that spanned the first half of the eighteenth century. Although the local French Catholic missionaries encouraged them in their resistance, and although colonial officials in New France exploited Micmac hostility towards the English for their own strategic objectives by supplying arms, the decisions by the Micmac to wage war against the English in Nova Scotia were their own.25 In 1713 the English gained control of mainland Nova Scotia, effectively dividing the Micmac's territory between the two colonial powers. This precipitated an intermittent armed struggle between the Micmac and the British that
lasted until after the fall of New France in 1760. The elimination of French power in North America at the end of the Seven Years' War, 1754-1760, (1756-1763 in Europe) forced the Micmac eventually to come to terms with the British; they signed a peace treaty in 1761. The disappearance of French power in the region eliminated the Micmac’s ability to promote their own interests through alliance and, because the British felt no need to continue the French practice of giving presents to the Micmac for military support, prevented them from acquiring European goods through diplomacy.

If France’s defeat in the Seven Years’ War harmed Micmac fortunes, having Britain lose the American Revolution brought disaster. While the Micmac lost status as military allies and the material benefits of gift diplomacy with the departure of the French, 20 years later they suffered extensive territorial dislocation when British United Empire Loyalist refugees from America settled the river valleys of the region. In the year 1782 the British population in Nova Scotia tripled to 52,000 with this influx. The relatively small size of the province made it impossible for the Micmac to avoid contact with the settlers and the Micmac were no longer in a position to offer armed resistance. Loyalist settlement restricted or prevented access to their usual summer gathering and fishing places at the mouths of rivers, and the new settler population quickly killed off the local game for food. The Micmac rapidly lost their main traditional sources of food and supply of exchange commodities. Like those Acadians who managed to avoid expulsion by the British in 1755, the Micmac were pushed to the geographic, economic and political margins of their homeland by century’s end.

In the nineteenth century, the period of British colonial rule and the early decades of Confederation, the Micmac struggled to maintain both their physical and cultural
survival against the pressures of a dominant and generally hostile, industrializing society. They continued to be pushed to the geographic, economic, and political margins. As early as 1800, petitions on behalf of the Micmac were presented in the Nova Scotia Legislature. The colonial society, when it was concerned with the welfare of the Micmac at all, encouraged them to establish farms and adopt a settled way of life. At the same time, however, the colonial legislative assemblies were usually more concerned with reducing the expenditures on relief for destitute Micmacs. Protestant missionaries and philanthropic groups made efforts to aid the Micmac, but both met with failure. The Micmac resented the intrusion of Protestant preachers, preferring their own brand of Catholicism, which they had practised without priests since the fall of New France. Attempts were made to settle the Micmac on reserves, but this effort was hampered by the failure on the part of colonial authorities to properly survey the reserves, and the persistence of seasonal migration in Micmac life. The Micmac combined wage work, handicrafts sales, and the occasional attempt at farming with hunting, fishing and trapping although these latter activities became less and less viable for either income or subsistence.

During the latest era, the Micmac participated in the industrial economy, albeit usually at the lowest levels. The conditions of poverty and marginality that marked Micmac life throughout the nineteenth century continued well into the twentieth. During the economic boom that came with industrialization at the turn of the century, the Micmac became increasingly involved in casual labour activities. They also sold the products of cottage industry, such as baskets, pick handles and hockey sticks. Within the confines of their position on the margins of early industrial society and special legal
status as Native people, the Micmac fared as did other rural Maritimers, prospering
during the booms and facing starvation during the long economic depressions. During
the 20th century, as a result of being unable to maintain employment, many young men
migrated to New England, especially Boston, in search of jobs, often remaining there for
their working lives. Efforts by colonial and early provincial governments to aid the
Micmac, who were a federal responsibility, were largely inadequate, inefficient, and
misguided and many Micmac groups struggled to preserve their cultural identity.

The Social Place of Storytellers,

Storytelling and Stories

The writings of the earliest European observers of Micmac society reveal that the
art of oral communication, in all its forms, was central to Micmac social life. The early
French sources from the seventeenth century are laced with references, usually casual,
to the tremendous speaking ability of the local people, and the frequent occasions for
orations. Father Biard, in 1612, remarked in a letter that, "these people are the greatest
speech-makers in the world; nothing can be done without speeches." Orations, recitals,
and the telling of stories marked every social event in the life of the community and its
individuals. War and peace ceremonies brought forth the best in speeches and orations.
Wedding ceremonies involved the listing of genealogies, lineages and ancestral
achievements, while the funeral oration for a hunter included the feats and prowess of
the deceased and his ancestors. If he was prominent, the orations could take three or
four days to complete. Funerals for women and children followed the same pattern, but
were of shorter duration. During such solemn events each member of the group was
given the floor in turn, permitted to speak as long as need be, without hindrance. Interruptions were unheard of, except for their *hau, hau, hau's* of approval, outbursts of laughter, and groans of derision. While Biard and his compatriots directed most of their comments towards orations and the speeches that accompanied special social events, they also made a few specific references to everyday storytelling. From these comments it can be assumed that the general respect shown for speakers and the spoken word applied to all oral forms of expression. This degree of respect for speakers attests to the importance of the spoken word in Micmac society. It was in this cultural environment that storytellers told their stories and informed their audiences.38

From the time of the French writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries until the early twentieth century, the Micmac were able to keep oral culture alive in their communities and maintain a strong respect for storytellers. When anthropologist Wilson Wallis began his fieldwork on the Micmac Reserves in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in 1911, he found storytelling to have about the same high degree of status and respect as that recorded by the French over 200 years earlier. "During the telling of a story, auditors did not interrupt with a question or remark, except to grunt, now and then, ... or otherwise indicate interest or emotion."39 In spite of, and perhaps because of, settler efforts to assimilate or relegate the Micmac, nineteenth century folklorists and twentieth century anthropologists found Micmac oral culture intact and operational.

Traditional Micmac storytelling only began to fade into the background in the twentieth century, after the Micmac became integrated into modern industrial society by economic necessity, and then only with a sense of sadness and remorse.40 When Wilson and Ruth Wallis returned to the Maritimes in 1950 and 1953, they concluded that
knowledge of the old stories had diminished and was retained only by elders. Those elders who continued to tell stories remembered their own story learning experiences as children, but lamented the lost interest on the part of the youth in the community. Wallis claimed that between his first and second trips to the Micmac that a new attitude towards life emerged that was "progressive" rather than "nostalgic". He also noted that young working men had replaced elders as Band council leaders. Wallis argued that this shift on the part of the Micmac, from a romantic view of an idyllic hunting past held by the elders to a greater participation in the modern world changed, the audiences' receptiveness to the old stories and their messages. Even at the major Eskasoni Reserve in Cape Breton, which was regarded as being more tradition-oriented than mainland reserves, one observer noted that there were no longer any recognized storytellers. In 1984, informant Max Basque, a Micmac himself, after describing hearing stories as a child from his grandfather and regretting his own poverty of folklore material, remarked, "no wonder they could tell stories, because there was no radio, no gramophone, or no nothing in the evenings, when it got dark." However, it should be noted that declines in both knowledge about the old Micmac stories and the position of elders as storytellers did not necessarily mean storytelling itself, as a form of expression, had diminished in the same way. Max Basque himself, as Ruth Holmes Whitehead makes clear in The Old Man Told Us, remained quite a storyteller.

A reading of the many Micmac folklore and legends collected between 1869 and 1925 reveals that Micmac stories were flexible, varying, and diverse in contents. They had two terms for their stories: aknutmaqn, which meant "news", and a’tukwaqn, meaning stories of the sahk-ah-waych-kik or "ancient ones". A’tukwaqn were set in a
time "long ago" and began with traditional openings such as "The old people are encamped ...", or, "There, at the home place, among the old people, ...", placing it in an ancient setting. Micmac stories were free-form; the documented accounts are examples of a type with no "correct" version. They usually centred around a particular character, with various short story elements loosely connected together to form a longer story. These short elements were not necessarily associated with any particular character. Different accounts may tell the same story about different characters. These characters were often anthropomorphic animals, possessing both human and animal form, and pursuing human activities. The stories may possess allegorical, metaphysical, etiological or historical elements, but not necessarily. The flexibility of the stories, in both content and narrative form is an important feature, because it allows storytellers to alter the stories to suit the demands of the audience, or incorporate new material into existing formats. It also allows for the dressing of European folktales in Micmac guise.

One aspect of oral culture that influences its reception as a source of historical information concerns the rate of the transmission of stories from one generation to the next and the degree of alteration that takes place in the process. Many scholars have dismissed oral source material in the belief that the frequent handing down of the accounts made them unreliable. This may be true over long periods of time, but there is evidence to suggest that the rate of transmission in Northeastern Algonquian societies, at least, was slower than the sceptics assume. The general assumption had stories being learned by new tellers every generation, about once every twenty years. However, as mentioned earlier, Gordon M. Day’s article, "Oral Tradition as Complement", suggests that this was not the case. Many of the informants who contributed to the nineteenth
and twentieth century collections recalled learning their stories as children from grandparents or other elders.\textsuperscript{50}

Over the five centuries, between contact and the twentieth century, the role of both storytelling and storytellers in Micmac society seems to have remained stable, but the content of the stories likely changed considerably. From the perspective of using stories for historical research, the perseverance and longevity of storytelling as an activity is of some importance. In the case of the Micmac, storytelling has remained an important form of communication throughout the historic period. Placing the documented oral accounts into the context of this remarkably stable historical and cultural structure allows the stories to become meaningful active agents in Micmac intellectual and social life, capable of conveying ideas and changing thought.

From the early seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries, the contents of Micmac oral culture ebbed and flowed, grew and faded. Oral culture, like any other form of culture, is as lively and vigorous as its practitioners and as relevant as its receivers deem it to be. Storytelling is an art, as creative and individualistic as any other. The body of stories that existed at any given time in Micmac society included old standards, fragments of older stories grafted on to newer inventions, news events, and stories that were heard elsewhere and adapted to suit the contemporary audience. Just as stage directors will change Shakespearean dialogue to make it relevant in different times and settings, so too did Micmac storytellers give European folktales a Native gloss. The oral culture recorded at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries was without doubt different in content from the one that existed when Port Royale was founded. Nevertheless, many of the key elements of Micmac ways of
thought remained enshrined in that oral culture, even if the individual tales had changed.

The European Documenters of Micmac Oral Accounts

Throughout the recorded history of the Micmac, various European individuals wrote down certain of the Micmac oral accounts. They did so for a variety of reasons, with a greater or lesser self consciousness about the type of record they were producing. Historians attempting to use documented oral accounts must interpret the stories through both the intellectual assumptions of the authors and their cultural milieu, as well as the perspective developed from Micmac history and culture. Historically, there are two groups of writers: the French missionaries and traders from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the various types of folklorists and anthropologists from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The French recorded stories, speeches and evidence about oral culture as part of their efforts to describe and explain the Micmac way of life to a contemporary French audience, in hopes of encouraging investment and support for missionary work, trade and settlement. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, folklorists and anthropologists transcribed Micmac stories either in a conscious effort to preserve what they thought to be a disappearing culture, or to gather evidence for scholarly study. More directly concerned with the recording of oral culture of the Micmac than the French writers, both amateur and professional folklorists made the Micmac the subject of the scholarly pursuits. Short profiles of several of the more significant collectors of documented oral accounts demonstrate some of the characteristics, differences and limitations of each group. Chrestien Le Clercq represents
the writers from the French era, while Silas T. Rand, Elsie Clews Parsons and Wilson Wallis represent the diverse group of the latter period.\(^{51}\)

Amongst the French writers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Recollet Father Chrestien Le Clercq stands out as one of the most experienced and insightful observers of Micmac life. From 1674 to 1686, Le Clercq lived and worked with the most northwesterly branch of the Micmac, whom he referred to as the Gaspesians. He differed greatly in his opinion of the Micmac from the contempt and pity shown by the Jesuit Father Pierre Biard.\(^{52}\) Le Clercq’s attitude remained paternalistic and condescending, but in his writings he defended the Micmac way of life against its detractors. He refuted the prevalent idea that the native inhabitants of North America were no better than animals, even to the point of declaring it a preferable way of life, were it not for their lack of Christian knowledge.\(^{53}\) By way of expressing himself and relating his observation to his readers, Le Clercq relied upon the religious symbols of early modern Christianity to make sense of the New World and its inhabitants. Importantly, Le Clercq’s writing also contains the voice of experience, reflecting his many years of travelling and living with Micmacs, sharing the hardships of life.\(^{54}\) In terms of recording oral culture, Le Clercq documented several Micmac stories including a myth about the afterlife, the story of Papkootparout, Guardian of the Land of the Dead, and an historical legend, the story of the coming of the Cross to the Gaspesians. Alongside these examples of storytelling, Le Clercq recorded several speeches and paraphrased dialogues between himself and particular Micmacs.\(^{55}\) The greatest limitations in using Le Clercq as a historical source are that he wrote much of the book after he returned to France from Acadia, and that, in keeping with the custom of the times, plagiarized parts
Nevertheless, a careful and cautious reading of Le Clercq reveals a man who had an intimate knowledge of Micmac social and cultural life.

Silas T. Rand was a Nova Scotian Baptist minister and missionary to the Micmac in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He was informally, but well educated and a talented linguist, learning Micmac, Maliseet, and Mohawk, along with classical Greek, Latin and several European languages. Rand became interested in the Micmac while he worked as a missionary to the settler community in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. He worked diligently to publicize the plight and condition of the local Micmac population. However, he was a failure as a missionary. The Roman Catholic Micmacs resented his efforts to convert them into Baptists, and he also had a very public falling out with his own church. Nevertheless, he seems sincere in his efforts to improve the lives and condition of the Micmac, regardless of how those efforts were received. Rand’s difficulties in the missionary field were off-set to a degree by his success as a folklorist and linguist. Sharing the common nineteenth century view that the permanent extinction of North America’s original inhabitants was imminent, he recorded as much of the oral culture of the Micmac as he could, while it was still possible. The result of Rand’s efforts is a collection of eighty-five Micmac myths, legends, and stories, the most complete ever made and his greatest legacy. Rand also published a Micmac dictionary, extensive Micmac translations of the Bible, several articles concerning their manners and customs, and some promotional material for his mission. Although they are only lightly annotated and deviate from the style of Micmac storytelling, their range of topic and
depth of detail provide a remarkable and unequalled glimpse into Micmac oral culture and thought.

Elsie Clews Parsons was one of the most distinguished of the professional anthropologists to study the Micmac in the early twentieth century. Her successful career as both an anthropologist and folklorist, which produced a large number of books, essays, treatises and folklore collections, has been the subject of two biographies. She was a unique individual, a member of the established American social elite, wealthy and well connected, but also a strong feminist and rebel against social convention. Following the leadership of Franz Boas, Parsons was part of the movement towards cultural anthropology. These scholars observed, recorded and studied existing Indian communities in an effort to discover their pre-contact contents. Although Parsons is better known in folklore circles for her work in the American Southwest and in the field of African-American folklore, she did spend a short period of time in 1923, studying Micmac and Black Nova Scotian folklore. The results of her Nova Scotia fieldwork, a collection of stories and accompanying fieldnotes, appeared in *The Journal of American Folklore* in 1925 and 1926. While her collection of Micmac tales is only a minor aside in a much greater body of work, it is an important source of documented Micmac oral culture. Parsons' Micmac work provides a few variants to the stories collected by Rand, and a more formal academic approach to the subject. She was also interested in family history through female informants and a female point of view on family structure as revealed through folklore. This approach lead her to interview female storytellers, thus adding balance to the pre-dominantly male informants used by Rand and Wallis.
Wilson Wallis was also an anthropologist from the Boasian era, but unlike Parsons, Wallis made the Micmac the focus of extensive ethnographic research. Part of his research included the collection of oral material, which he used as a source of ethnographic information. Added to the collection of stories were short biographic sketches of the key informants. Wallis conducted his initial fieldwork during 1911 and 1912, and returned to the Maritimes in 1950 and 1953, with his wife, a sociologist named Ruth Sawtell Wallis, to note what changes had occurred in Micmac society and culture during the intervening decades. After the second visit, the Wallises published the most complete ethnography of the Micmac to date.

Wilson Wallis brought to his work a life-long interest in the cultural expression of religion, and a keen appreciation for the ethnographic content of stories. The greatest weaknesses of the work is Wallis’s tendency to present his interpretations in the "ethnographic present" without reference the various periods of Micmac history, and the general trend among anthropologists in the 1950’s to urge assimilation. However, from the point of view of using his collected oral accounts, this is mitigated by his inclusion of about two-thirds of his research material in a separate and independent part of the book.

Individually, each of the recorders of Micmac oral accounts brought to their work on the Micmac their own idiosyncrasies, training and point of view. They were also influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by the general contemporary attitudes held towards Native peoples by their own society. Among the French clergy and traders who wrote about the Micmac there were both supporters and detractors of the Micmac way of life. In the more recent era, important differences occurred between those writers who
were academic scholars and those who produced documented oral accounts as a by-product of a broad interest in the Micmac. There also existed distinctions between folklorists and anthropologists, and between those who concentrated on the Micmac and those for whom Micmac material was only part of a wider research agenda. Regardless of their own perspective on the material they collected, as a group, these individuals succeeded in producing a valuable and extensive corpus of documented oral accounts, which historians will want to explore.

Documented Oral Accounts as Written Texts

In their documented form, the stories which have survived in various writings are only fragments of a larger Micmac oral culture. As individual texts, they are, in the words of Micmac scholar Ruth Holmes Whitehead, "potsherds of literature", incomplete in themselves, yet part of an overall, discernable pattern. Unlike broken pieces of pottery, however, the degree to which the stories are incomplete is not entirely noticeable at first. Obviously, many of the stories are incomplete as narratives, but they also have been altered in other ways. Historical evidence strongly suggests that a poetic form was more normal than their published prose narrative form. Folklorist Charles Leland was told by one of his informants that she remembered when the story she gave him was sung rather than told. The process of writing a story down fixes it into a particular form and style, removing its ability to change with the mood of the audience or the whims of its purveyor. As texts, the stories of the Micmac become still and lifeless, and lose much of their informative power. However, this loss may be compensated for in some ways by using evidence about Micmac oral culture in general
to recreate the setting in which the stories were told and to restore some of the missing atmosphere.

Some of the seventeenth century French commentators directly addressed the subject of stories and storytelling, recording some details about the physical acts of both storytelling and listening. In 1672, Nicholas Denys, explorer, trader, and settler, wrote that,

There were some old men who composed them [stories], as one would tell children of the times of the fairies, of the Asses’ skin, and the like. But they compose them about the Moose, the Foxes, and other animals, telling that they had seen some powerful enough to have taught others to work, like the Beavers, and had heard of others which could speak. They composed stories which were pleasing and spirited. When they told one of them, it was always as heard from their grandfather. These made it appear that they had knowledge of the Deluge, and of matters of the ancient Law. When they made their holiday feasts, after being well filled, there was always somebody who told one so long that it required all the day and the evening with intervals for laughing. They were great laughers. If one was telling a story, all listened with deep silence; and if they began to laugh, the laugh became general. During such times they never failed to smoke. The smoke was not strong, the tobacco good and very mild. Those story-tellers who seemed more than clever than the others, even though their cleverness was nothing more than sportiveness, did not fail to make fun of those who took pleasure in listening to them.

Ethnographic information in Denys’ book also contains some indirect evidence about storytelling. There is a strong sense that the accounts he listed of ancient Micmac practices came to him, not through first-hand observation, nor by the observances of fellow Europeans, but from the recollections of the Micmac themselves. Certainly Denys version of the hunting technique of the Quincajou, or wolverine, and the Foxes, has the
same narrative tone as later Quincajou stories recorded in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{72} William Ganong, who translated and edited Denys work in 1908, asserted that, "probably there is some truth mixed with much folk-error in this account."\textsuperscript{73} In several places Denys noted that the customs he described were not those of the current Micmac, but of olden times and he concluded his book by recounting the impact that Europeans, and especially alcohol, had on the Micmac.\textsuperscript{74} This reinforces the idea that he did not observe the old customs first-hand, but heard their lament from disillusioned Micmacs.

It is certain that the stories that appear in the various historical writings were altered to suit different audiences. Conventions of English or French prose have replaced the Micmac verbal forms of expression, or else those forms may not have translated well into English. Nova Scotia Museum assistant curator, Ruth Holmes Whitehead, who has published her own re-writings of some Micmac stories, points out that Silas Rand often converted the Micmac way of expression into nineteenth century Romantic forms. In \textit{Stories from the Six Worlds}, Whitehead herself rewrote some of the stories from Rand's collection and created composites out of several stories from different sources, giving them a style more in keeping with what she thought to be Micmac storytelling. By modelling her reworkings after the expressive techniques of modern Micmac storytellers, Whitehead attempted to return to the stories some of their native forms of expression.\textsuperscript{75} From an historian's point of view, of course, the reworkings provided by Whitehead need to be treated as new literary creations, not historical material. Nevertheless, Whitehead's work will help historians to develop an appreciation for the atmosphere and style of Micmac storytelling that was lost through translations.
Historian Robert Darnton, in his work on eighteenth century French peasant folktales, suggests that the art of performance is lost by the very act of writing. This certainly applies to Micmac stories. Descriptive evidence indicates that many of the stories were quite humorous, frequently provoking laughter and amusement. The humorous nature of Micmac storytelling was lost primarily through translation and by selective omissions by either the informant or the recorder. Also, translating the Micmac version into either English or French would have greatly disrupted its natural rhythm and rhyme. Forms of humour that specifically depend on language, such as puns, innuendos, double entendres, and plays on words, could disappear in translation. Certainly, in a language as given to rhyme as Micmac, the occasional pun was probably a natural part of any storyteller's performance. Some of the stories collected by Elsie Parsons were edited by the teller to exclude particularly crude reference. Bodily functions, when referred to at all by the informant, were done so euphemistically. In part of one story told to Parsons by 76 year old Mary Madeline Newell Poulet, the storyteller stated: "They came to a wigwam. In it younger sister saw the neck bone of a moose. She sat on it.", only to be corrected by her daughter to say, "She pissed on it." Poulet remarked, "Nicer to say 'sit'." While this change clarifies the action, it also indicates the effort to "clean-up" the stories for outsiders.

These examples indicate some of the changes that affected Micmac stories when they were transformed from a spoken, Micmac language to a written form of communication in other languages. Historians should be aware of the nature and degree of these changes, and should be familiar with ethnographic and historical information about storytelling in Micmac society when studying the stories. By accepting that each
story is only a particular variant on a theme, and that the stories existed in complex social and historical circumstances, it may be possible to discern significant patterns in the ideas expressed in the stories, patterns that reflect ongoing changes in Micmac society and culture. Considered within these varying contexts, the qualities and characteristics of Micmac storytelling emerge. Despite the biases and particular experiences of the Europeans who recorded the oral accounts, it is fairly certain that the Micmac "voice" did creep into the written record.
CHAPTER TWO:
AN HISTORICAL-FUNCTIONAL METHODOLOGY FOR USING DOCUMENTED ORAL ACCOUNTS AS HISTORICAL SOURCE MATERIAL

At best, documented oral accounts on their own provide an imperfect and incomplete record. Overcoming the inherent source problems requires that the method for assessing the accounts has a strong theoretical underpinning in order to provide interpretive guidelines, help bridge the gaps in the sources, and accommodate the particular characteristics of each collection of documented oral accounts. This chapter deals with the specific problem of establishing a workable method for using Micmac documented oral accounts in historical research and developing an interpretive framework. It is important that the theoretical perspectives used are compatible with the specific characteristics of the available Micmac evidence. Balancing the relationship between theory and evidence depends upon selecting perspectives that respect both the demands of historical inquiry and the constraints of the documented oral accounts as well as the specific social and cultural contexts and roles of stories and storytelling in Micmac society. The objective is to create an interpretive framework that allows for the use of significant overarching Micmac symbols, metaphors, beliefs and ideals to interpret the stories. The interpretive framework will hopefully help to provided a reading of the material that approximates the original understanding of the storytellers and their audience.
The Historical-Functional Approach

When approaching the topic of oral culture and documented oral accounts, historians may look to the work of scholars in other disciplines for approaches and analytical techniques on both subjects. Scholarship interested in myths and mythology provides much of the potentially useful developments regarding documented oral accounts, storytelling and stories. By reviewing the ways that other disciplines have used myths as research materials, historians may discover new ways to probe mythic and legendary evidence to find out what it reveals about the cultures and individuals who created it. However, not all methods of myth analysis are suitable for historical research. For example, some of the more popular and well known approaches towards myths and rituals, such as Levi-Strauss’s structuralism or Northrup Frye’s literary archetypal approach, prove to be synchronic and ahistorical.\(^1\) Applied to Micmac documented oral accounts, they would compress the material into a single entity, devoid of both chronology and change. Another approach, popular among French cultural historians and others, is the process of "thick description" developed by anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Geertz reads events as texts, making rituals and myths into symbols that represent social structures. However, from the point of view of using Micmac documented oral accounts, there is a problem with his method: it is much more difficult to apply it to documented stories than observed or recorded rituals.\(^2\) An attitude that not only recognizes both the wide range of scholarship that has explored myths and the specific requirements of the historian, but also respects the complexity of the stories themselves and their multiple roles within a society helps to sort through the diversity of analytical methods and approaches.
To this end, the perspective of mythography, which is the critical study of myths and the methods used for myth analysis,\(^3\) provides an invaluable overview of possible approaches towards using documented oral accounts as historical source material. Such an overview allows historians to consider only those aspects of mythography that bear on the problems of using mythic evidence found in documented oral accounts for historical research. In *Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals*, scholar of religion and mythographer William G. Doty provides an extensive and thorough examination of the critical use of myth and myth analysis in modern scholarly research.\(^4\) He traces the development of important approaches and schools of thought from a mode of mythography "that depends upon a constant overlayering and comparison of approaches."\(^5\)

A definition of myth is needed that includes the various types of material found in documented oral accounts and also permits a high degree of analytical flexibility. Simple, rigid definitions of myth and mythology that express a single point of view regarding the subject or promote a particular school of thought, often exclude important aspects of mythic expression or roles that myths play in society and culture. Restrictive definitions may also draw historians into debates that are of little consequence to their study or needlessly complicate their work.\(^6\) From a utilitarian point of view, it is more beneficial to resolve these problems in a well developed, general definition of myth, that may appear overly detailed, than to allow a simpler, exclusive definition to hamper historical analysis. Doty defines myth in a way that is broad, flexible and complex, facilitating the diverse and sometimes conflicting theories that have been developed concerning the use of mythology. He argues that the definition of myth needs to convey
that myths are themselves complex and multifaceted; that bodies of mythology are often incomplete and fragmented; and that mythic expression and function are also varied, both within a culture and universally. Such a definition is in keeping with the demands of historical evidence.

A mythological corpus consists of a usually complex network of myths that are culturally important imaginal stories, conveying by means of metaphoric and symbolic diction, graphic imagery, and emotional conviction and participation, the primal foundational accounts of aspects of the real, experienced world and humankind’s roles and relative statuses within it.

Mythologies may convey the political and moral values of a culture and provide systems of interpreting individual experience within a universal perspective, which may include the intervention of suprahuman entities as well as aspects of the natural and cultural orders. Myths may be enacted or reflected in rituals, ceremonies, dramas and they may provide materials for secondary elaboration, the constituent mythemes having become merely images or reference points for a subsequent story, such as a folktale, historical legend, novella, or prophecy.

Doty further elaborates that myths, or "culturally important imaginal stories", are shared by a society, address 'big' questions, "reappear repeatedly within the various frameworks of the society's oral and written literature....", have a "role in providing the frameworks for human consciousness, the necessary linkages between the generations, even the sequences and measures of the human life span ... [and] are told most often at our most impressionable age, that of childhood." Regardless of their form of expression, the underlying mode of these stories is the narrative. Mythic stories use narrative to deliver an "ordering of significant events, ... a plot of experienced or ideal
existence." In addition, to the cultural outsider, mythical stories are generally regarded to be fictions. However, from a culturally internal point of view, myths are believed to be true, or else to hold a certain truth value.

The participant in the mythical cosmos ingredient to the network of myths does not perceive the represented events, persons, times, and so on, as primarily unreal or imaginary but sees them as reflections of what actually transpires on some level. In general mythical personages are believed really to have existed, or really to exist, at particular times in the mythic chronology.  

Mythic stories communicate the "frameworks for human consciousness": values, systems of interpretation, and beliefs, through the use of culturally recognized imagery. Imagery gives meaning, and "mythical metaphors, symbols and allegories provide concrete conveyances for (abstract) thought." Furthermore,

In supplying the root metaphors, the ruling images, of a society, mythological language provides a coding mechanism by means of which the apparent randomness of the cosmos is stabilized. Myths structure the overarching conceptualities of a society: protomythical accounts may recall the first namings of the features of the landscape or of cultural activities; children are taught mythological stories as a means (albeit often only tacitly recognized) of socializing them into a worldview and an ethnic pattern of ethical behaviour.

Doty's definition of myth attempts to represent the various approaches to mythology and also the wide ranging forms of mythic expression that occur in various societies. This allows for both the consideration of the specific needs of historians and the dispersed nature of the documented sources of mythic material at their disposal.
There are two underlying aspects of Doty's perspective on mythography that inform his definition and are important for the use of documented oral accounts for historical research. The first point is that Doty's definition is based on a functional idea of myths: myths do things; they serve a role in social life. The second point is that Doty maintains a high regard for the socio-cultural and temporal contexts of both individual myths and collective mythologies.

The functional approach that Doty brings to his work may be particularly useful to historians because any effort to make use of the recorded products of oral culture as historical sources is predicated upon an assumption that storytelling acted as an effective form of communication. A functional approach towards understanding social life and cultural forms has been around since the early twentieth century work of sociologist Emile Durkhiem. In anthropology, functionalism examined myths and mythic systems for their utility and pragmatic value, working on the assumption that cultural patterns served particular needs within the society. As an explanatory theory within the discipline, functionalism is considered to be dated and limited, most notable because of its inability to explain diversity among cultures or cultural change. Yet methodologically, functional analysis remains important. The appeal of functionalism lies in its practicality, utilitarianism, and its sympathy for contextual constraints.

In summarizing the lasting values of a functional approach towards myths, Doty suggests five ways in which "myths serve society", providing historians with a functional framework in which to consider mythic research material. His main points are that myths help to clarify symbols derived from social life itself, justify society by connecting the needs of social life to mythic examples and standards, build social integration through
the performance of rituals, and act as a medium of education and a storehouse of knowledge. Finally, myths provide guidelines for the resolution of personal and social conflict and, through rituals, act as a mediating force in alleviating social tensions. Doty proclaims his respect for the importance of the social function of myths when he writes,

Myths and rituals have importance in large measure because they represent corporate significance, meanings that transcend individual needs, desires, and values. They provide a mechanism for enabling holistic interaction between individuals who otherwise might remain independent and disengaged. Hence myths and rituals mean culture, mean social structure and interaction, and a sociofunctionalist view remains crucial to appreciate the ways they bring about and sustain the social worlds of their performers.

A product of Doty's functional perspective, and the other important point for adapting his perspective to historical work, is his concern for social and cultural contexts, and the significance of change over time. This respect emerges in his argument that individual myths and rituals have varying "levels of operational vitality". According to his argument, individual members of a given society derive different meaning and importance from myths and those meanings change over time. He suggests that myths go through three phases of vitality, "moving from the original, most powerful and dynamic context to the most rationalized form." Primary myths are newly developed forms of mythic expression, fully functional within their current social context, but also rough and inconsistent. They are believed, but not necessarily fully understood. Implicit myths are integrated into the subtext of the culture, expressing the world view in terms that are accepted by the members of the society as universal truths and the natural order
of things. They also become standardized and widespread. In the final phase, rationalized myths are those myths that are reinterpreted by the society to conform to new understandings and beliefs. Interpretation of their meaning varies considerably and they lose their status as explicit truths.\textsuperscript{18}

Doty also makes the point that myths and their accompanying rituals are both socially significant and localized in specific societies and cultures and only abstractly form patterns.\textsuperscript{19} However, from an historian's perspective he understates the case. The evidence required for studying myths and rituals only appears in highly localized and individualized records. The usual way that evidence appears is in the work of individual observers, each of whom carried their own personal, cultural and historical biases. Within each collection, the observations are unique and uniquely recorded. Doty's "localized occurrences" are the evidence for the generalizations that are produced by mythographers. The material speaks first of the social, cultural and historical context that produced it and only then to general patterns that academics recognize or assign to them. Micmac documented oral accounts may indeed contain evidence of general patterns in human society and culture, but historical investigations must utilize those patterns in such a way as to relate them to event, experience, and processes of change.

The functional and contextual considerations given by Doty to the study of myths and myth analysis provide a foundation for regarding the products of oral culture as potential sources of historical information. When Doty conditions his functional approach towards myths with a respect for the influence of the passage of time, he produces what may be termed an historical-functional perspective that may be utilized effectively by historians. What makes Doty's particular approach towards myth valuable
to the historian is the combination of the specific social and cultural contexts of the myths, the importance of the practical purposes that mythic expression had in its own society, and, finally, the impact of the passage on time on both. His stressing of the practical utility of mythology in society and accommodation of changes in the social function of particular myths over time, allows for variety in source material and flexibility in interpretation. With regards to using this perspective for working with Micmac documented oral accounts, Doty’s approach suits the free-form nature of Micmac storytelling and the idiosyncratic quality of the sources in which examples of storytelling are found. The functional consideration that is central to the use of documented oral accounts is its ability to record and transmit a wide variety of concepts, ideas, and beliefs over successive generations and long periods of time. The historical component reflects the need to bear in mind that Micmac society and storytelling existed in a concrete historical environment that was subjected to internal and external forces that could either produce change or support stability. By having a functional approach conditioned by historical considerations, the result is an approach towards Micmac stories that is sensitive to pragmatic concerns of time, place, use and circumstance.

The Applicability of an Historical-
Functional Approach to Micmac Documented Oral Accounts

I believe Doty’s historical-functional approach to myths and myth analysis provides a plausible theoretical outline for studying Micmac documented oral accounts. Key aspects of his definition of myth, his position concerning the functional role of myths in society, and his arguments on the changing vitality of individual myths within
a culture over time, apply directly to the stories found in Micmac documented oral accounts. The historical sources that pertain to the Micmac contain substantial evidence to support the inclusion of the products of Micmac storytelling within the parameters of mythography established by Doty's generalizations. The most significant points raised by Doty, which may be seen in Micmac documented oral accounts, include stories of a metaphoric and symbolic nature that make up a complex network, that appear in the background of other types of oral expression, that have an important communicative function in society, and that transmit information through time. Other aspects of his definition, and points he raises while elucidating it, further indicate the possibilities of Micmac stories as significant sources of historical information, and also suggest important restrictions and cautions for this type of source material.

The ability to demonstrate that these important aspects of Doty's universal generalizations about myth occurred in Micmac storytelling and exist in both the historical record and Micmac documented oral accounts establishes a strong theoretical foundation upon which to build an interpretive framework. There is evidence from across the whole body of Micmac documented oral accounts that supports the application of Doty's historical-functional approach. However, it is difficult to extract a particular piece of evidence from an account to support a theoretical point without either destroying the story element or distorting its meaning. Part of the nature of myth and the way it informs is that it relies on context to be meaningful. Being true to the stories, their tellers and their audience requires presenting the stories in as whole a form as possible, rather than dissecting them for reasons of argument. Because evidence for the points made by Doty often appear obliquely in the stories; because individual accounts contain
evidence that relate to several different theoretical points at the same time, and because, in much the same way that myths build upon each other to create a world view, the evidence within the accounts builds upon itself to form a complete argument, I will draw examples that support Doty's theoretical writings from a few selected accounts that are representative of Micmac storytelling rather than attempt to include all of the different varieties.

In Micmac documented oral accounts the functional relationship between oral culture and behaviour is most evident in the relationship between stories and religious practices. In oral societies such as the Micmac's, religion and oral culture were tightly integrated and mutually reinforcing. Myths, in the form of stories and secondary elaborations, expressed both spiritual beliefs and ideas concerning the nature of the universe and the role humans played within it. At the same time, the ideas about the world in any particular story were connected to the greater body of oral culture. Myth's function of providing the roots of cultural beliefs and spiritual ideas, especially as sub-text, informed both religious beliefs and rituals. In turn, religious rituals and practices were the embodiment and expression of mythic ideals and cosmological perspectives. Evidence from historical sources about Micmac religion supports the type of functional approach advocated by Doty towards myths. It also demonstrates the ability of oral culture in general, and stories in particular, to convey ideas and beliefs from generation to generation.

Several snippets of documentary evidence from seventeenth and eighteenth century French historical sources on the Micmac point to a strong functional relationship between Micmac a'ukwaqn, or myths, and Micmac religious behaviour, in the form of
expressed beliefs and performed rituals. The first evidence of a relationship between Micmac oral culture and religious ritual appears in one of the earliest writings about the Micmac, penned by the Jesuit Father Pierre Biard during his mission to Port Royal. In his 1616 *Relation*, Biard indicated the importance of oral culture and stories in communicating religious ideas when he commented on Micmac religion, stating that, "They have no ... religious teachings ... save certain customs and traditions of which they are very tenacious." A second example may be found in the writings of Father Chrestien Le Clercq, the late seventeenth century Recollet missionary to the Gaspesian branch of the Micmac. When Le Clercq recorded the Micmac story about Papkootparout, Guardian of the Land of Souls, in his 1691 *New Relation of Gaspesia*, he considered their beliefs concerning the afterlife to be, "no less ridiculous than the reason itself which has convinced them that our souls are immortal[,] ... which is based on the tradition of their ancestors." A more revealing documented connection between storytelling and religious behaviour comes from Cape Breton Island around 1740, when a Micmac informant told the local missionary, Abbé Maillard, their reasons for the religious ceremony surrounding the treatment of animal remains.

De te dire la raison de cecy, mon Père, je ne la scais pas, je scais seulement que nos grand pères nous disoient qu'il falloit jeter tous les os des castor que nous mangions, dans des rivières où on y en voyoit des cabannes, ... Les seigneurs jongleurs et moy le premier, ... n'avions pas d'autres raison à rendre de ces pratiques à notre jeunesse qui quelquefois nous faisoit là dessus des questions.  

The fact that these examples come from different observers, who covered the whole territorial range of the Micmac and the entire time span of the French era, indicates that
stories and oral traditions gave sanction to at least some religious rituals and that the importance of oral culture in informing religious belief was widespread and held sway throughout the French period.

Several of the characteristics and functions of myth discussed by Doty may be found in Le Clercq’s version of the Micmac story of Papkootparout. It demonstrates the strong intellectual relationship between myth and religious belief, including the reliance on storytelling to give meaning to certain rituals, the role of a story in providing a conceptualization of an abstract idea, which in this story is the afterlife, and the inclusion of significant peripheral information in a story. According to Le Clercq’s Micmac storyteller, when one of the most respected and esteemed elders fell seriously ill, he lapsed into a state of unconsciousness that lasted for several days. When he revived, the people of the village asked him where he had been. He replied that he had been to the Land of Souls, and that he was given permission by "Papkootparout, Governor and ruler of this country," to return to the living to tell the Gaspéians about that place. After telling the story, he died. Sometime later, in order to aid a father who was unable to recover from the grief of the death of his only son, a band of men resolved to make the 40 to 50 league journey across a fordable pond to the Land of Souls. During the journey, many men died from fatigue, but five or six reached their destination, where they arrived they were pleased to find "an infinity of spirits of moose, beavers, dogs, canoes, and snowshoes." But they also encountered an enraged giant with a club, named Papkootparout, who was ready to kill them for coming to the Land of the Dead while still living. After a respectful and submissive appeal by the bereft father, Papkootparout excused the Gaspéians their trespass and allowed them to return
to their homes. He was so moved by the father's grief that he even allowed them to take the soul of the son, but not before some gambling. During the game they won from Papkootparout the gifts of corn and tobacco, which explained how these objects came to Gaspesia. Upon their return the adventurers planted these items with success. "But the negligence of their ancestors, say they, deprives them to-day of all those conveniences so useful and so essential to the nation as a whole."

The soul of the son, invisible and reduced to the size of a nut, was wrapped in a cloth bag by Papkootparout, and given to the father. He was instructed to place the soul back into the body, but under no circumstances was he to open the bag beforehand, or else, because it was leaving with "extreme repugnance", the soul would return. Unfortunately, a woman opened the bag while the father helped to build the special ceremonial wigwam needed for placing the soul back into the body. The son's soul escaped and returned to the Land of the Dead. The father, upon hearing the news, died of grief.

Le Clercq, in considering this story, concluded that, "This it is, and this only, which makes our Indians believe in the immortality of souls.

From these false premises, based upon a tradition so fabulous, they have drawn these extravagant conclusions, — that everything is animated and that souls are nothing other than the ghost of that which had been animated: that the rational soul is a sombre and black image of the man himself: that it had feet, hands, a mouth, a head, and all other parts of the human body: that it had still the same needs for drinking, for eating, for clothing, for hunting and fishing, as when it was in the body, whence it comes that in their revels and feasts they always serve a portion to these souls which are walking, say they, in the vicinity of the wigwams of their relatives and of their friends: that they went hunting the souls of beavers and of moose with the souls of their snowshoes, bows and arrows: that the
wicked, on their arrival at the Land of Souls, danced and leaped with great violence, eating only the bark of rotten trees, in punishment for their crimes, for a certain number of years indicated by Papkootparou (sic): that the good, on the contrary, lived in great repose at a place removed from the noise of the wicked, eating when it pleased them and amusing themselves with the hunting of beavers and of moose, whose spirits allowed themselves to be taken with ease. Such is the reason why our Gaspesians have always observed inviolably the custom of burying with the deceased everything which was in their use during life."

The story of Papkootparout conveys information on several levels. It gave the Micmac an understanding of the soul and afterlife, one that agreed with other ideas about spirituality and the cosmos. Through the story the Micmac audience learned about the Land of the Dead, a place of abundance and ease, where they were to be joined by the spirits of the goods that were buried with them, so that they could continue to pursue their hunting activities. It mirrored the world of the living, and even though a few Christian ideas about reward and punishment appear in the story, the afterlife of the Micmac epitomized an ideal way of life. Furthermore, the story provided an explanation for the use of grave goods while reinforcing the idea of an animate material world. Thus, the ritual use of grave goods was justified in myth, and, in turn, the use of grave goods reinforced, through action and ceremony, those ideas that the myth communicated about how the cosmos was structured. In this way, myths gave sanction to rituals and ceremonies, informed the listeners about the greater universe, and established perspectives on the relationship between the mundane world and spiritual experiences. Le Clercq’s own analysis recognized the importance of stories and traditions in educating the Micmac about religious ideas and informing their view of the world.
The evidence from the French sources indicates that a functional relationship did exist between storytelling and religious behaviour. Unfortunately, these sources are also limited in both the number and types recorded. Because priests and missionaries produced most of the documented oral accounts and secondary evidence about oral culture, religion is a central focus. The primary interest of these writers was in converting the Micmac to Christianity; the recording of oral culture was a by-product of that effort. They were not folklorists, nor did they attempt to preserve any quantity of Micmac oral culture for its own sake. When they did so, it was almost always in connection with the task at hand, either as evidence about the difficulty of the mission or the nature of the people to be converted. In terms of historical evidence about Micmac storytelling, the French sources present a deep yet narrow slice, connecting storytelling to social life like no other sources, but severely limited in scope. A more diverse range of material is contained in the nineteenth and twentieth century collections of oral accounts and needs to be referred to in order to further demonstrate that the properties attributed to myth by Doty appear in Micmac documented oral accounts.

A common genre in the Micmac documented oral accounts recorded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which may be used to illustrate some of Doty’s points, is the war story. Silas Rand, Truman Michelson, Arthur Huff Fauset, and Wilson Wallis all recorded stories that were concerned with warfare in one form or another. Rand collected the largest body of war stories from the 1840’s through to the 1870’s, most of which were old tales of conflict between the Micmac and the Kwedech, generally identified as the Mohawk Iroquois. He also gathered tales of conflict between the Micmac and the Kennebecs, as well as some generalized accounts concerning
warfare. Anthropologists and folklorists working amongst the Micmac around the turn of the century included in their collections several war stories, usually concerning wars with their traditional enemy, the Mohawk, including a few variants of Rand's stories. Micmac war stories provide an example of how stories were part of an interrelated network, made use of culturally significant symbols, metaphors and references, contained mythic elements in their setting, background, and underlying assumptions, and acted as agents of socialization.

In general terms, Micmac war stories have a narrative plot which recounts the martial exploits of a particular Micmac warrior or hero. In the course of the story's events the hero encounters and usually defeats an enemy force, often through the use of extraordinary abilities. More implicitly, the material expressed in the war stories conveyed Micmac beliefs and ideals. References to social life, history and geographic environment filled the stories with culturally significant images. Well-known metaphors and symbols informed the recorded story material and through the repeated use of common plots, images, beliefs, and mythic ideals, often as secondary elaborations, Micmac war stories were part of the greater network of Micmac mythology. The secondary elaborations of mythic ideals and elements found in Micmac documented oral accounts correspond to Doty's implicit stage of operational vitality. This stage of vitality refers to myths when they were powerful cultural truths incorporated into the sub-text of stories. However, any reading of Micmac war stories must bear in mind that they refer to a period from the Micmac past, and that the images and mythic ideals portrayed to be true in the story may be archaic in the contemporary society. Therefore Micmac ideals and beliefs that were once powerful cultural images continued to be present in
the war stories after they had lost their initial meaning, were fused with other ideas or else reduced in their contemporary cultural significance.

One example of a mythic ideal that is present in the Micmac war stories is the repeated use of the distinctly Native North American concept of "power". The idea of power as a religious concept is fully discussed in the next chapter. It is used here only to illustrate a point. In various stories about the Kwedech wars Micmac buoin, or shaman, and warriors relied on their power to learn of advancing enemies, to protect themselves from bullets and blows, to hide undetected, and to commit a variety of extraordinary feats. In one story, when a party of Micmac were ambushed, a powerful powwow (a term indicating shamanic abilities) was wounded because he was caught unawares. He then used his power to remain under a river until the danger had passed. In another tale an old man used his power to predict the arrival of a Kwedech war party on his family's isolated wigwam. He enhanced the fighting ability of his two sons and when he was eventually captured, his power allowed him to survive the torture of the Kwedech without releasing a groan. The Kwedech were so impressed by his power that they decided to adopt him, but he refused and returned home, much to the delight of his village. The importance of power in achieving victory reinforced the spiritual beliefs of the Micmac warriors and served to strengthen the relationship between spiritual and worldly life.

Rand's version of the Micmac story detailing the causes and beginning of the war between the Micmac and their neighbours, the Kwedech, indicates both the use of common metaphors and symbols in a story to convey meaning and the use of stories to teach social behaviour. According to a story told to Rand by Louis Benjamin Brooks in
1869, the war between the Micmac and the Kwedech started after a young Micmac boy was killed while playing with youths from a neighbouring Kwedech village on the opposite shore of the Restigouche River. At a subsequent feast involving the two villages, the Micmac youths avenged themselves on the Kwedech and killed two of them. Thus an animosity was built between the young men of both villages. In the spring a party of fifty Micmac, who had gone up the river to fish, were ambushed and killed by a party of young Kwedechs led by their Chief's son. But one old Micmac used his power to escape. Micmac justice held the whole of the Kwedech village responsible for the attack, and rather than face open warfare, the Kwedech remove their village to Canada. Before they departed, the Micmac chief promised to visit them on occasion, a veiled threat of war. What had started as an accidental death, or even a disguised murder, had escalated into a blood feud and a full fledged war. The lone survivor of the attack eventually led a party of warriors against the Kwedechs. The meeting between the two forces began on mock friendly terms, with the Micmac leader being hosted in the chief's tent. The other warriors gathered on ice flows in nearby lake and began to playfully push and shove until it turned into a general melee, which the Micmac won.\(^4\)

There is a possible metaphoric allegory in this story. When the lone survivor of the Kwedech raid led a war party against the relocated Kwedech, he spied the Kwedech chief's son, who was disguised as a lynx. He did this by changing several of his warriors into white bears. Both the lynx and the white bear had meaning in Micmac mythology. The trickster character, Quinquajou, sometimes appeared as a lynx, although usually he was portrayed as a wolverine.\(^4\) The white bear possibly represents a harbinger of death.\(^4\) Thus in the story, the Micmac leader sent death to the foolish Kwedech. The
death of the young Kwedech punctuated the consequences of leading an unsanctioned war party. This type of tale would have been used to control young warriors, anxious to prove themselves, regardless of the greater impact their actions may have had on the whole community.

Alongside the roles of boosting the Micmac social ego, reminding the audience of who the enemy were and why, and warning against unwarranted action, the stories also taught the rules and etiquette of warfare. The warfare portrayed in the stories was a hit and run affair, with few major battles and no organized armies. Raiders struck silently, killing and scalping enemy warriors and carrying off women and children. Raiders who were discovered, however, were greeted and feasted by their intended victims. Pleasantries were exchanged, which were actually challenges, and preparations for the youths' "play" made. Naturally, these delays favoured the defenders, who could summon reinforcements and ensure themselves of victory. As agents of socialization, these tales taught young Micmac males, especially those who were just becoming warriors, what was expected of them in the face of battle, even long after the end of Native and colonial conflicts.

In terms of how they operated as historical accounts, the Micmac war stories bridge the gap between truly mythical accounts about animal characters or cultural heros, and mundane stories about daily happenings. Micmac war stories contained an historical component in their actual or idealized accounts of past conflicts, descriptions of war practices, and commentary on Micmac relations with their neighbours. However,
there is a general quality about the genre that links them to more explicitly mythical accounts. These qualities include the possession of special abilities by the war hero, including power, strong social allegories, common or similar plots, localization of a story through geographic setting, and certain overarching values, attitudes and religious beliefs that inform the stories.

Within historical sources pertaining to the Micmac from both the French period and the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there is evidence to support Doty's historical-functional perspective on mythography and to justify the application of his perspective to Micmac documented oral accounts. While the evidence is scattered throughout the historical record, and often appears in the sub-text of oral accounts, it nevertheless builds a strong connection between theory and evidence. This connection allows for the use of more elaborate and complex understandings of how myths operated in society to recreate a sense of how stories and storytelling operated within Micmac society to convey meaning.

**Developing an Interpretive Methodology**

Because the accounts refer to a particular culture with its own understanding of the world, it is necessary to devise a way in which the accounts may be interpreted through that specific cultural understanding. The anthropological concept of "world view" helps to address this concern by providing an intellectual framework that looks from the subject society out into the world. As explained by anthropologist Robert Redfield,
‘world view’[means] that outlook upon the universe that is characteristic of a people....‘World view’ differs from culture, ethos, mode of thought, and national character. It is the picture the members of a society have of the properties and characters upon their stage of action. While ‘national character’ refers to the way these people look to the outsider looking in on them, ‘world view’ refers to the way the world looks to that people looking out. Of all that is connoted by‘culture,’ ‘world view’ attends especially to the way a man, in a particular society, sees himself in relation to all else. It is the properties of existence as distinguished from and related to the self. It is, in short, a man’s idea of the universe. It is that organization of ideas which answers to a man the questions: Where am I? Among what do I move? What are my relations to these things? 46

The nature of world view as an analytical concept is that it describes what exists implicitly within a culture. It is that group of assumptions about nature and society that is learned at an early age, but is seldomly explicitly articulated. In a predominantly oral society, such as the Micmac, the evidence for their world view is scattered throughout their oral culture.

Mythology plays an important part in the shaping of world view. According to Doty’s definition, myths are part of a complex network and, as a collective, express aspects of the societal world view.

Within a network, various myths may actualize parts of the underlying cultural worldview. Seldom does a single myth actualize the entire worldview, because that seems to require a collection of many interlocked stories, a canon rather than one sample. In the processes of transmission, constant change and adaptation to new or changed contexts seem to be normal. 47
Individual myths do not communicate complete world views. They include, often as sub-text, aspects of a world view, elements of a way of thought, and wisdom handed down through the generations. Following Doty’s argument, the elements of Micmac myth in the documented oral accounts should contain aspects of their world view. The world view of the Micmac was not clearly stated in any particular myth or legend, but was communicated through references, metaphors, and symbols in the storyteller’s narrative. Within, what for the purposes of discussion I will call the "Micmac world view," lies the intellectual context in which those stories were invented, told, and understood. It was both informed by the contents of the stories and acted as a filter through which the stories were returned to the body of oral culture when they were retold. Therefore it should be possible to reconstruct parts of the Micmac world view from mythic elements found in the accounts. A reconstructed world view, based on the beliefs and assumptions of the Micmac as recorded in the documented oral accounts, may then provide an interpretive framework for understanding the wide range of material contained in Micmac storytelling.

There are several approaches to the problems of ordering the source material and selecting a period in which to situate the framework. One is to try and reconstruct the belief systems of groups and individuals before contact. While this may appeal to some anthropological purists, there are overwhelming limitations in the proto-historical and early historical records. A second approach relies on current field research and adopts upstreaming as a method to build an "ethnographic present". This is also a troubled approach for historical purposes because its assumptions about the nature and pace of change are antithetical to the historical perspective. The reconstruction that is labelled
the ethnographic present is a static one that weeds out all the changes that have taken place over time. While what remains may be important longstanding structures in social and cultural life, it also limits the historian's ability to measure the impact of changing circumstance on those structures precisely because of reasons for which they were selected.\textsuperscript{50}

A more promising approach uses comparison between chronologically distinct reconstructed elements of the Micmac world view to detect possible changes in Micmac ideas and beliefs in various times and places. The approach begins with establishing hypothetical reconstructions of Micmac belief systems at particular places in time and then searches for changes forwards and backwards in time. Inconsistencies in the sources, in both narrative and sub-text, may indicate the possible presence of change. This is an approach that arises from the sources themselves, since the most complete reconstructions come from the periods in which documented oral accounts abound. One advantage of this approach is that it addresses the need for the flexibility required to produce an effective analytical tool.

The comparative approach also utilizes the differences in the documented oral accounts that result from such a variety of recorders and the inherent diversity in storytelling and biases in recorders. Differences in the stories may be seen as the results of the influences of change in Micmac society and culture, or simply variations within storytelling and recording, rather than errors or conflicting points of view. For example, Silas Rand and Chrestien Le Clercq both recorded samples of Micmac storytelling, but from different eras, for different reasons, using different languages, and their own translations of Micmac, which naturally produced distinct results. The writings of one are
not superior or inferior to that of the other, but rather they complement each other and expose the range and variety of Micmac storytelling and European recording practices. They establish some guidelines as to how Micmac stories might be interpreted. They do not put forward definitive statements on Micmac stories against which all others must be evaluated. Such an attitude towards the various sources of Micmac documented oral accounts and distinct interpretations of Micmac stories helps to create a flexible and sensitive interpretive framework for subsequent readings of Micmac accounts, and in large measure reduces many of the inherent problems of using documented oral accounts.

Although in the case of the Micmac the corpus of recorded stories is severely reduced and contains few explicit expositions on Micmac perspectives, a lesson of Boasian ethnography suggests that many of the stories that were recorded may contain elements of religious beliefs. These sources are especially rich in examples of abstract thought, including elements about the creation and structure of the universe, the nature of being, and general assumptions about cause and effect. The interpretation of these more abstract aspects found in the documented oral accounts, is dependent on theoretical understanding of how oral culture informed society. An historical-functional perspective, grounded in part on the relationship between stories and world view, helps formulate interpretive frameworks into which specific stories may be placed. Reading the stories found in the documented oral accounts through an interpretive framework based on a hypothetical Micmac world view helps to generate an informed and controlled empathy to their meanings and nuances. It is recognized, however, that any attempt at re-creation of Micmac beliefs from European produced conventional historical sources
and documented oral accounts is an idealized view of the world, but reading documented oral accounts through the lens of a reconstructed world view at least attempts to understand the stories from the perspectives of the storyteller and the audience.
CHAPTER THREE:
AN EXPLORATION OF CHANGES IN MICMAC RELIGIOUS BELIEFS: A CASE STUDY

Change in Micmac religious thought is, I suggest, one area of Micmac history that lends itself to exploring the potentials of using documented oral accounts for source material. There is a close relationship between religious behaviour, storytelling and belief, a result of the abstract nature of religious thought and its reliance on metaphoric and symbolic forms of expression. This suggests that documented oral accounts are an important information source about changing religious ideas among the Micmac. An enduring characteristic of the centuries of contact and interaction between the Micmac and European communities from the beginning was the intermittent effort by various groups and individuals to convert the Micmac to Christianity. Many of the writers who created documented accounts had religious backgrounds and interests, and, as a result, much of the material they selected to record was either religious in nature or conveyed spiritual ideas. The French missionaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries succeeded in creating a Catholic population, but after the end of New France, the Micmac practised their new religion without priestly guidance for many generations. Micmac identification with the Catholic faith helped them to resist attempts to convert them to Protestantism in the nineteenth century. Within Micmac religious culture, however, older religious ideas continued to persist alongside new ones, and gained new forms of expression within the framework of a new faith.¹

To explore Micmac documented oral accounts for evidence of change in religious thought I employ the methodology developed from the historical-functional perspective.
advocated by William Doty, in *Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals*, discussed in the previous chapter. First, I identify and develop key concepts in the Micmac world view that pertain to Micmac religious thought. The ideas of spiritual beings, dreams as a form of communication in the spiritual environment, and spiritual power are developed using anthropological theory from related Native peoples in Northeastern North America, ethnographic data on the Micmac, and material contained in the documented oral accounts. These form "reconstructed aspects" of the Micmac world view. The anthropological theory and the ethnographic descriptions together provide collaborating evidence for the material in the documented oral accounts and support interpretations of Micmac documented oral accounts.

Then, these reconstructed aspects of the Micmac "world view" are used to provide an interpretive framework for studying the interaction between Micmac religious ideas and the transplanted Christian ideas. Documented oral accounts and ethnographic descriptions supply the source material for explorations into changes in Micmac religious thought, with a concentration on religious beliefs, symbols and characters. Three themes are explored: changing ideas about creation and the creator, from the early French period to the twentieth century; the use of the cross symbol by the Miramichi Micmac, known as the Gaspesians, during Chrestien Le Clercq's era; and the critical question of religious syncretism among the Micmac. The latter addresses the influence of Christian anthropomorphic deification and hero worship, expressed in the form of God, Jesus Christ, and the Christian patriarchs, on Micmac mythological characters.
Micmac Spiritual Beliefs

Three related spiritual concepts form the basis of Micmac religious beliefs: spiritual beings, communication with the spiritual world (dreams), and spiritual power. In the Micmac view of the world, other-than-human persons were the agents in the cosmos who caused all nature of things to happen. Dreams were the communications network within their cosmos. Spiritual power was the means by which persons made things happen. These beliefs are documented for both the seventeenth and eighteenth century French period and the late nineteenth and early twentieth century modern "academic documentary" period. In combination, they suggest a clear Micmac understanding of the spiritual world and how it worked. These beliefs were part of a general view of both the material world and the spiritual cosmos, which was expressed in ideas, values and attitudes, and also informed ritual behaviour. Within the stories from the past found in the documented oral accounts, the concepts of other-than-human persons, dreams and power are the active agents, or cognitive symbols of storytelling. These spiritual concepts were the means by which the heroes were able to succeed, events were explained, and daily experiences were connected to important cultural ideas through storytelling. They were complex symbols, understood by both the storyteller and the audience. But these intellectual structures were fully integrated with Micmac culture, interdependent, and subject to changing interpretations. By examining the characteristics of these aspects of thought, and allowing for change, variability and inconsistency, it is possible use these beliefs to re-create the essential framework of Micmac religious beliefs.
Spiritual Beings: Other-Than-Human Persons

In many of the stories collected by Rand, Parsons and Wallis the main characters were usually either animal characters with human traits or non-human beings such as cannibal giants, underworld serpents, the animal-trickster Quinquajou, and the cultural hero, Gluskap. These animal characters and non-human beings were central to Micmac storytelling, mythology and religion. The animals characters in the stories, such as Killer Whale, Rabbit, Moose and Beaver, occurred in the Micmac’s ecological environment and often portrayed personality types associated with the different animal species. These story characters filled the other worlds of the Micmac cosmos, where they lived like humans, in human form. But they were not just characters that appeared in myths; they were considered by the Micmac to be real, influencing and affecting their lives.

The concept that best describes both the animal and non-human characters in the Micmac stories and integrates them into the Micmac world view is that of "other-than-human person", which was first put forward by anthropologist A. Irving Hallowell in his important and far-reaching essay "Ojibwa Ontology, Behaviour, and World View". Based on his own field work among the Ojibwa, Hallowell defined other-than-human persons as a fully animate class of being that existed and interacted with humans, but also possessed abilities and characteristics usually considered by Western thought to be supernatural or spiritual. The concept of the other-than-human person was central to Hallowell’s effort to address the important issue of how culturally prescribed intellectual constructions manifested themselves in behaviour and outlook. He used Ojibwa examples to demonstrate how Algonquian peoples conceptualized the cosmos, how these ideas were made available to the society through mythology and
storytelling, and how this understanding affected both behaviour and the explanation of phenomena.\textsuperscript{7}

Hallowell based his recognition of other-than-human persons on a common grammatical construction found in Algonquian languages. By providing an animate ending for a large variety of objects, Algonquian grammar allowed for the possibility of animate behaviour, giving them "person" status. Other-than-human persons were also identified by their existence in mythology, ability to metamorphose from character to human form, anthropomorphic behavioural traits, and contact with humans during dreams.\textsuperscript{8} Hallowell’s conceptualization transcended earlier explanations of Algonquian mythical characters. He rejected the usual dichotomy between natural and supernatural forces as foreign to Ojibwa ways of thinking, arguing that the idea of "natural forces" did not exist for the Ojibwa. All phenomena were thought to be the result of actions taken by a person, but not necessarily by a human.\textsuperscript{9} Hallowell’s explanation opened new perspectives on Algonquian beliefs. Previously viewed simplistic stories of mythical creatures became sophisticated treatments of the world with important behavioural implications.

While Hallowell theorized that his arguments extended to all northeastern Algonquian peoples, including the Micmac, there are concrete cultural and intellectual links between the Micmac and the Ojibwa that strengthen the application of his ideas to Micmac sources. For one thing, the Micmac and the Ojibwa shared the linguistic structures that form the basis of Hallowell’s work. Although the Micmac and the Ojibwa belong to different linguistic and cultural Algonquian sub-groups, the Micmac language does contain the same type of animate and inanimate endings and they are used in
similar ways to include a variety of objects that most Westerners would have thought of as inanimate. Secondly, like the Ojibwa, the Micmac considered other-than-human persons to be "grandparents". In the early twentieth century, one Micmac informant referred to the cultural hero, Gluskap, as the Micmac's best Grandfather, and animal-persons were also regarded as grandparents, both metaphorically and as real spiritual ancestors. Contact with these "grandparents", especially during dreams, enabled people to acquire power. In several of the war tales powerful people either transformed into animals, their toemul, or else drew power from an object that symbolizes it. In Le Clercq's time, a Micmac shaman carried a carving of a wolverine, possibly a representation of the trickster-character, Quincajou, and regarded him as the chief ouahich or power-source.

The final connection between the Micmac and the Ojibwa occurs in their oral culture. When folklorist Stith Thompson undertook a study to demonstrate the value of studying oral traditions in a literate society, by showing how oral stories operated in a non-literate environment, he chose as his example a Native North American tale commonly referred to as The Star-Husbands. The story existed in many parts of North America, but one particular variant existed only in Canada and the state of Maine; it appeared in both Micmac and Ojibwa storytelling. Thompson suggested that the whole story originated in the Upper Great Lakes region, probably with the Ojibwa, and then spread east and west. There is, however, reason to consider an Eastern Algonquian source, at least for the variation at the end of the story involving Quincajou. Regardless, the evidence indicates that there may have been an exchange of story material between the Ojibwa and the Micmac although the reasons for this are unclear. Further
comparison of Micmac and Ojibwa story material indicates a strong similarity between the two outside of the "cultural-hero cycle", with the primary trickster character Wolverine existing in both Micmac and Ojibwa stories. Shared linguistic structures and stories suggest that it is possible that more sophisticated cultural characteristics, including world view, may also have been shared in common. This does not suggest that the Micmac and Ojibwa viewed the world in identical ways, but it does indicate a similarity in general outlook that encompassed local idiosyncrasies and provides enough evidence to allow for the application of Hallowell's conclusions about the Ojibwa to the Micmac.  

In the Micmac stories, many of the animal characters are recurring, appearing in various stories as both primary and secondary characters. The relationship between the other-than-human person and the actual animals was one of elder sibling. Micmac hunting rituals concentrated on maintaining a good relationship with the senior animal. This was done by first seeking the animal-person out in a dream. Seeing the animal-person indicated a successful hunt was in the offering. It was thought that the animal-person allowed itself to be killed, giving of itself whenever a "younger brother" was taken, and this generated the rituals surrounding the proper treatment of the bones and carcasses of game. By portraying the local wildlife as active persona, the stories integrated the natural environment into Micmac mythology and religious thought. In religious terms other-than-human persons were important both as agents of causation, and as benefactors in the hunting cult. In reading the documented oral accounts, other-than-human persons occupy a central space, acting out the moral dilemmas and
social relationships, providing a real connection to the physical environment and fulfilling a metaphysical expectation.

Dreams

In the French historical ethnologies only Biard and Le Clercq mentioned the Micmac belief in dreams. Biard simply added the belief in dreams to his general description of their religion, but fortunately Le Clercq made more extensive notes. Le Clercq considered the belief in dreams to be a superstition, but he also recognized its importance in conditioning Micmac behaviour and decision making. He struggled with them to abandon the practice, as his encounter with Ejougouloumouet, an unbaptized Micmac between 50 and 60 years of age, indicates. Ejougouloumouet claimed to be superior to the Biblical Patriarchs, because God spoke to him during his sleep, telling him where he could catch game. "Nevertheless, his hopes were vain and profitless, and he was in fact obliged to admit that he had been too credulous, and that for the future he would believe no more in visions or in dreams, to which all these Indians are attached, even to the verge of superstition." Because there was no game, the hunting dream of Ejougouloumouet turned out to be a false dream, which invalidated that particular dream, and only with the work of Le Clercq was it seen to discredit dreaming altogether. This was a rare success, however, as elsewhere Le Clercq lamented that, "Our Gaspesians are still so credulous about dreams that they yield easily to everything which their imagination or the Devil puts into their head while sleeping."

The belief in dreams as a conduit to places beyond the material world remained as an active part of Micmac thought and world view well into the twentieth century, as
indicated by the field work of Wilson Wallis in 1910. Wallis was able to collect several dream stories from his Micmac informants, which stressed the active agency that dreams played in connecting with the spiritual realm and the role that they had as an avenue for gaining power and information. One of his informants, John Newell, provided seven different stories about his own dreams, including an encounter between himself and a witch. During the encounter with the witch Newell discovered why she had made his knees too sore to walk with a bad wish. In other dreams, Newell received prophesies or harbingers of other peoples death, encountered the Saviour, and did battle with his enemies. On occasion, in both his dreams and the dreams of others, the physical results of the blows delivered in the dream fight appeared on the other combatant in waking life. Another informant, Chief John Sark, of Lennox Island Reserve, P.E.I., spoke of struggles with witches in dreams. According to Sark, witches sent bad wishes, often in the form of animals (he used bears as an example) which the dreamer had to fight off. The outcome determined whether or not the ill will resulted in sickness and death. Victory could return the bad wish to the sender.

Dreams were important in Micmac society, and in other Northeastern Native societies, because they acted as a conduit between the spiritual world and the waking, material world. Through dreams a person sought contact with the spirit masters of animals in a quest to locate game, received calls for vengeance from dead ancestors, sought the causes and cures of illness, learned of enemy attacks, and attempted to predict the future. In war stories, dreams alerted the hero to advancing enemies and the prophetic nature of his dreams indicated his power. One of the responsibilities of the shamans was to interpret dreams and determine their validity. As in the case of Le
Clercq’s informant, Ejougouloumouet, this was often a retroactive assessment, based on experience. John Newell’s dreams that forecast deaths were significant because those people did die soon after the dream. Had no one in the community passed on, the dream would probably have been considered meaningless. It was also through dreams that people gained power and contacted other-than-human persons. The hunting dream was an integral part of Micmac and Eastern Algonquian ritual and belief. Because the belief in dreams was so prevalent, it is not surprising that dreams were a common device in storytelling. They were used to alert the audience to the unusual and they were an important element in relating a story that had a spiritual nature or indicated contact with either spiritual beings or their worlds.

The Micmac belief in dreams not only was a long held and enduring spiritual concept but may also have facilitated changes in other Micmac religious beliefs. The Micmac belief in dreams as a active part of life, during which the material, everyday world came into contact with the spiritual cosmos, has persisted from the time of Pierre Biard to the twentieth century. And while some early twentieth century informants doubted the validity of dreams, they also were quick to mention when their own proved to be prophetic. A. G. Bailey’s scholarship argued that the belief in dreams helped to change Micmac religious ideas. He observed that the French missionaries even used the Northeastern Algonquian belief in dreams to encourage conversion. The repeated messages of the priests entered into the sub-conscious of the flock and then reappeared in dreams. This common psychological phenomenon helped to change Micmac religious conceptions. The Micmac belief in dreams remained as an important avenue of contact with the spiritual world, even if changes in Micmac religious beliefs altered the messages.
received in the dreams and the willingness of Micmac informants to admit to believing in them.

**Spiritual Power**

The cosmos portrayed in the Micmac stories was infused with spiritual power. The heroes of the mythical tales, whether they were human or not, always possessed spiritual power. Silas Rand conveyed spirit power as magic, its practitioners are wizards, magicians, great powwows, and powerful boooins (buoin), or jugglers. Wilson Wallis, in his Micmac ethnology, used the Micmac term *ginap* translated as "strength", to indicate power or supernatural strength, equating it with magic, and classified the *buoin* as witches. Recently, Ruth Holmes Whitehead asserted that power was energy, that *puoinaq* or *buoin* were people with power, and *kinap* and *mn’tu* were synonyms for power. She defined power as, "the essence which underlies the perceived universe; it gives rise to it, transcends it, energizes and transforms it. It is everywhere at once, and yet it is also conscious, particulate: it is Persons." Unfortunately, these definitions and understandings of power do not properly explain the concept as the Micmac understood and used it in their stories. Whitehead in particular, by making power the mystic life-force that bound their universe, needlessly over complicates and romanticizes the concept. Whether it is understood as a magic, spiritual energy, or the actions of spirits, power has been explained and viewed from a European perspective. Part of the problem is the insistence that power exists independently of people, persons, and objects. This is the result of the way academics, both historians and anthropologists, derive meaning
by raising the level of abstraction, through erroneous analogies with European concepts, and by continuing to use the natural/supernatural dichotomy.

An effective, consistent, and compatible working definition of power that I find useful when reading the Micmac stories is simply to think of "power" as "the ability to make things happen." Power was a characteristic, an attribute, and no different from physical strength except that it applied to areas Westerns would regard as beyond the physical, material world. The power to transform from human to animal, or to see into the future was the same as the strength required to lift a heavy object. And just like lifting a boulder, power was evident through its use. Shamans of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were those individuals who combined a knowledge of healing with the rituals of forecasting the future and assessing dreams. In the seventeenth century ethnologies they demonstrated their power by being able to predict the future, warn of enemy attacks, interpret dreams, and cure sickness. Their power came to them through their dreams, in which they encountered persons. From them they received strength and ability. Like physical strength, power ebbed and flowed. If power was evident by success, failure in turn denoted its loss, and did not refute previous accomplishments. When an object, such as a kettle, wore out, it was thought to have lost its power. Even the Micmac cosmos was subject to this type of decline, demonstrated by the comment recorded by the early seventeenth century Jesuit Pierre Biard that the Autmoinos or shamans complained that their "Devil" had lost power since the arrival of the French.

This interpretation of power is supported by the Micmac understanding of cause and effect. The Micmac assumed that living beings made things happen. Natural
phenomena were the result of the activities of other-than-human persons. The trenches
and other glacial scars found in Micmac territory were caused by the movement of
Horned Serpent Person underground. Death and disease, like other events, were
believed to be caused by persons, either human or other-than-human. Displeasing a
powerful person was certain to bring about illness.\textsuperscript{35} This view extended to everything
in the animate class, including objects, such as a cross. A story about cross worship, told
by Chrestien Le Clercq, illustrates the point.

An Indian women, named Marie Joseph, ... Falsely alarmed,
in common with the other Indians ... and believing that the
Iroquois had invaded ... embarked with very much haste in
her birch canoe, in order to cross the river, and, having
abandoned it to the will of the current, she lost herself
purposely in the woods in order to escape the fury of her
enemies. The hunger and need felt by this poor woman
became so great that she considered herself fortunate to find
in these wastes some roots which served her nourishment
during the ten or twelve days of her wanderings.
Overwhelmed with misfortune in this vast solitude, she had
no other consolation than her Cross. She never parted with
it, even when obliged to repass the river by swimming....
She preferred to forsake and leave the little she possessed
rather than to abandon her Cross, which she held between
her teeth. She returned thus to the wigwams, saying that
there was nothing more precious than the Cross, since it
had preserved her from an infinity of dangers, had procured
her all kinds of consolations in her misfortunes, and that, in
a word, life would appear to her altogether without interest
if she had to live without the Cross.\textsuperscript{36}

Marie Joseph believed that the Cross had preserved her through her trials. Similarly, had
she lost the cross, its disappearance would have been blamed for the hardship that she
did suffer. Finding the roots and surviving the river currents were caused by the cross,
it made these things happen, it had power. For a culture that ascribed personal causes
to all phenomena and events, the ability to make things happen indicated power. From a Micmac point of view, no further explanation was needed because the question of how a person, whether human or other, made things happen, was not asked. To the Micmac, the pertinent question to understanding the world was not "How does this happen?" but rather, "Who did this?".  

Morally, power in and of itself was neither good nor evil, it was the use of power that had moral value. Those with strong power were to be feared because they could cause catastrophic events, not by being inherently evil, but because they were strong and potentially dangerous. The best example of this attitude comes from Rand's story of Ulgimoo, a "great magician". Set during the Mohawk Wars, he leads his people to victory against a dangerous enemy. When he was an old man, he foresaw a Mohawk attack, but purposely sent his warriors to the wrong place. When the raiders arrived and tried to burn him at the stake, he transformed himself into a young man and slew all of his opponents. When he eventually died, he informed the people that he was not to be buried but placed on a scaffold. In the spring he was alive again, but a marten had chewed a hole in his cheek, proving he had been dead. The second time he died, he was buried. He told the people to open his grave after one night, and he would be alive and stay with them forever. He would give a sign that his spirit had returned to his body: a clap of thunder on a clear day. But his friends and the people decided to let him remain in his resting place. They dug a deep grave and covered it with rocks, so that he could not get out.  

Even though he was their leader and friend, the Micmac feared his power more than they feared the Mohawk. Over the centuries of contact and settlement, the buoin, or holders of power, slowly became associated with the European idea of the
witch, a concept acquired, no doubt, from the Acadian and Scottish Highland neighbours of the Micmac. This imparted the characteristic of evil onto the buoin, and their chief occupation become the casting of bad wishes on other people, making them sick.

The three spiritual ideas, of other-than-human persons, belief in dreams, and spiritual power together form the cornerstone of Micmac cosmological beliefs. At least within the documented oral accounts, it was through these three ideas that more universal religious concepts such as creation and humanity’s relationship with the spiritual world were expressed. As a system of symbols, these concepts were used by storytellers to relate a variety of information, knowledge, wisdom to their audiences. These ideas changed over time, but remained essential components of both Micmac storytelling and religious beliefs. They also form a framework through which documented oral accounts may be interpreted. By articulating the possible meanings of power, for example, the terms used by Rand to denote holders of power, such as magician and wizard, become more meaningful and precise, and, at the same time, narrows the gap between the Micmac understanding of the buoin and Rand’s attempts to translate it into a meaningful contemporary nineteenth century word. It also allows for a glimpse into the difficulties that Rand had in attempting to convey Micmac stories through another language and world view. Such insights aid the historian in understanding some of the more abstract nuances and subtleties contained in the Micmac documented oral accounts. The framework formed from the concepts of other-than-human persons, dreams and power by no means gives the researcher full access to the Micmac world view or a complete understanding of Micmac storytelling,
but as an analytical device it does allow for a greater understanding of Micmac documented oral accounts as historical documents.

Changes in Micmac Religious Beliefs

The historical-functional approach to documented oral accounts suggests that through the comparison of stories and story elements changes in social structures, cultural symbols and their related functions over long and short periods of time may become apparent. These changes are set in motion by cultural contact, altered social, political, and economic circumstances, and even environmental change. They tend to occur slowly rather than result from sudden events. One example of this type of phenomenon is the change in Micmac religious ideas from the seventeenth century through to the early twentieth century, a process indicated by the growth and development of Christian and European ideas in Micmac religious thought and mythology. Underlying the exploration of changing Micmac religious thought is a concern for how storytelling and documented oral accounts communicated and recorded historical evidence. Throughout the investigation, material from documented oral accounts and historical ethnologies is analyzed and manipulated to reveal evidence and processes of change in Micmac thought. The concepts of other-than-human persons, dreams, and power act both to inform the interpretations of the documented oral accounts and to delimit the parameters of possible explanations. In what is essentially a variation on intellectual history, the following discussion indicates the ways that the Micmac adjusted to new ideas and incorporated them into existing intellectual frameworks. They focus on changes in ideas about creation and the nature of the creator,
the adoption of a new religious symbol, and changes in the representation of the cultural hero.

The Micmac Creator

Two intellectual developments concerning the concept of creator point to a pattern of change in Micmac religious thought over several hundred years. The first is the incorporation of sun worship and a belief in the sun as creator within the framework of Christian creation and monotheism. The second is the closely related elevation of the concept of manitou from local spirits to a single deity in the form of the Great Manitou. Throughout the French era, the Micmac were exposed to French culture and ideas through contact with fishermen, fur traders, farmers, and missionaries. Part of the cultural exchange that took place was the swapping of stories. Through this process, many European and Christian ideas entered into Micmac culture, and some aspects of Western mythology, superstition, and religious belief were incorporated into the Micmac world view.

Micmac mythic expression and religious ideas underwent important and significant changes during the French regime, both as a result of the encounter with Europeans generally, and the missionizing efforts of the French in particular. Conversion to the Catholic faith began shortly after the establishment of a permanent settlement at Port Royale and began to influence Micmac religion, world view and oral culture. By the end of the French period, after one hundred and fifty years of missionary activity, most of the Micmac in Acadia were at least nominally Catholic. Part of the challenge of contact and acculturation for the Micmac was to preserve within their Catholicism a
sense of identity separate from their Acadian neighbours. By merging their pre-Christian notions of a sun-creator with the Christian god, the Micmac were able to conform to both their new religion and maintain respect for the old ways. Evidence of these changes in religious thought appear in their religious beliefs and practices, oral culture and language.

A central characteristic of seventeenth century Micmac religious thought was the belief that the sun was the creator and giver of life. In reference to sun worship, Le Clercq wrote that,

This [the lack of worship], however, is not true with regard to the sun, which they have worshipped, and which has always been the constant object of their devotion, homage, and adoration.

According to a speech recorded by Maillard the sun was responsible for the growth of plants and the creation of the Micmac. The sun impregnated the ground, causing the Micmac to grow out of it like the herbs and trees, "of which thou art equally common father." The sun was also described as all knowing and had some characteristics of a war god and judge, a possible result of Old Testament influence. The Micmac may even have considered the sun to be the first author of stories and songs. "cet astre lumineux ... , en etoit aussi le premier auteur;" In Maillard's "Lettre à Madame de Drucourt", his informant, Arguimaut, a Micmac shaman, tells of the honouring of a woman who kept the winter fire burning for over three months. She was "to share in the benign influence of the Father of Light, the Sun, because she had so skilfully preserved His emanations."
As early as the writings of Le Clercq, there is evidence that the Micmac worldview, and the myths that justified it, were beginning to incorporate European mythic material. Often these ideas were used by the Micmac to explain the presence of Europeans in their material and cosmological world. But there is also the sense of Micmac storytellers adapting new story elements to Micmac settings. Le Clercq's description of Micmac ideas concerning the flood in Genesis provides an example.

They have, indeed, if you will, some dim and fabulous notion of the creation of the world, and of the deluge. They say that when the sun, which they have always recognised and worshipped as their God, created all this great universe, he divided the earth immediately into several parts, wholly separated one from the other by great lakes: that in each part he caused to be born one man and one woman, and they multiplied and lived a very long time: but that having become wicked along with their children, who killed one another, the sun wept with grief thereat, and the rain fell from the heaven in such great abundance that the waters mounted even to the summit of the rocks and of the highest and most lofty mountains. This flood, which they say was general over all their earth, compelled them to set sail in their bark canoes, in order to save themselves from the raging depths of this general deluge. But it was in vain, for they all perished... with the exception, however, of certain old men and of certain women, who had been the most virtuous and the best of all the Indians. God came then to console them for the death of their relatives and their friends, after which he let them live upon the earth in a great and happy tranquillity, granting them therewith all the skill and ingenuity necessary for capturing beavers and moose in as great numbers as were needed for their subsistence.50

Le Clercq finished the passage with this tormenting comment, "They add also certain other wholly ridiculous circumstances, which I purposely omit, because they do not bear at all upon a secret which is unknown to men [their origin], and reserved to
God alone." The Biblical stories of Adam and Eve and Noah and the Flood, centrepieces of Christian mythology, were incorporated into Micmac oral culture (those wholly ridiculous circumstances) to place the Europeans in the Micmac cosmos. The idea of multiple creations, on separate continents, was a commonly used device, which accounted for the Europeans and their religion, and also allowed Native peoples their own close relationship with the creator. In this case, the sun remains the creator, but quickly assumes a character similar to the Christian God of the Old Testament.

As discussed earlier, the seventeenth and eighteenth century Micmac concept of manitou, as revealed by the French missionaries and chroniclers, was an interactive, persuasible, and omnipotent being, or spirit, which tended to be localized and plural. In all the early French sources dealing with the Micmac, manitou was personified by the authors and treated as a deity, spirit, or devil. The Micmac themselves saw manitou as both benign and malevolent, and expended considerable religious energy pursuing its goodwill, advice and knowledge. Later on, after several generations of Micmac were exposed to European religious ideas, through both the missionary effort and Acadian folklore, the idea of manitou was elevated to god status, confronting and accommodating the European Christian concept of Supreme Being. By the nineteenth century, the idea of a Great Manitou had become part of their religious thought.

It is linguistic evidence that connects the sun-creator with the Great Manitou. In the seventeenth century, Biard wrote that they had no name for God other than the sun, named Niscaminou, which Diereville recorded as Nichekaminou and translated as "the Very Great". Anthropologist Wilson Wallis suggested that both Niscaminou and Nichekaminou were forms of the Central Algonquian Kitchimanitu, equating the ending
minou with manitu. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries similar terminology for the sun-creator identified the Great Manitou. Silas Rand gave the word ukchesakumow as one word for deity in his Micmac dictionary, the first part of which was similar to the terms Uckcheeginupt and Utchginup, used by Clara Dennis in the 1930's as a Micmac name for the Creator. Dennis also identified "Ginup, a mighty worker who with Glooscap helped to finish the world-" and the root ginap was used by Wallis to indicate physical strength. Micmac terminology for the creator stressed greatness, power and strength and these terms were used to describe both the sun-creator and the Great Manitou or Spirit creator. The linguistic connections between the sun, the Great Spirit and the creator indicate that within the Micmac language, the ideas of a personified and animate sun-creator, and a omnipotent spiritual being were becoming integrated.53

In Micmac documented oral accounts collected between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the ideas Great Manitou and sun-creator existed together in different versions of the same story. In the nineteenth century the sun and his female companion, the moon, still maintained "creator", or deity status in the old stories. In a story called Hanged-up-by-Heels, the title character, an abandoned boy, makes a request that he and his sister become fully grown so that they may fend for themselves. In Rand's version he made the request to the Creator, "After a time the boy asks of Keswolk (the Great Spirit; the Creator, literally)." However, in a version gathered by Elsie Clews Parsons, the boy asks it of the moon, the female companion of the sun and an object of religious affection in Maillard's eighteenth century work.54 After centuries of exposure to Christian ideas about one creator-God, these Micmac documented oral accounts
testify to a continuing diversity of expression for a creator class of being and a lack of fusion even between older and newer Micmac concepts.

While it is almost impossible to determine how ideas of sun-creator, great manitou and god changed over three hundred years, it is possible, using documented oral accounts, historical ethnology, and mythographic theory, to hypothesize how these ideas changed in reaction to missionary efforts. The missionaries aggressively attacked both belief and ritual, confronting the shamans at every turn, attempting to replace the Micmac world view with a Christian one. In response, the Micmac seized upon those aspects of their own belief that were most in agreement with the missionaries, sometimes grafting Christian ideas onto older ones. The elevation of an animate, personified, creator-sun, to the level of God and supreme being preserved Micmac identity and self-esteem while at the same time brought old beliefs in line with the successful new teachings. Catholic missionaries facilitated the process, by also utilizing those aspects of Micmac belief that could be interpreted as analogous to Christian doctrine. Such cross-overs may have lasted until the twentieth century. The sacred/mythic idea of manitou may have changed from a localized spirit, to a universal monotheistic Great Manitou in reaction to the idea of the Christian God. The apparent ability of the Europeans to survive epidemics and their subsequent economic and political success would have been perceived as a waning of power on the part of the Native spirit world. This experience would open the way for new mythic explanations of the world. As well, new myths were needed to replace old beliefs that were attacked and dispelled by the French in the seventeenth century. As a continually renewed archetype, the idea of
manitou changed as events were interpreted, fulfilling the role of myth in explaining the world and revising to reflect new experiences and understandings.57

The Coming of the Cross

A discussion of the origins of the cross symbol among the band of Micmac in the Miramichi region examines a legendary account of a known, but mysterious, event which resulted in the adoption of a foreign religious symbol into their existing culture. This debate over the origins of the cross provides a framework for exploring ways to read a Micmac legend as a source of historical evidence and also indicates how the setting of the story and its context changed to become mythical and legendary rather than current: a shift from aknutmaqn (news) to a’tukwaqn (myth). The Micmac legend conveyed information about an historical event through time, using meaningful references to actual practices and beliefs to give it significance. Looking at how the story itself was passed on over time, it is possible to see some of the mechanisms and processes that produce change in oral culture at work. As an episode of cultural contact between two deeply different religious systems, the adoption of the cross symbol by the Miramichi Micmac provides evidence, I will argue, of the adaptability and flexibility of Micmac religious practice.

In February, 1677, Father Christian Le Clercq travelled overland from his mission on the Restigouche River to visit a band of Micmac on the Miramichi. There he found the most unusual practice of Micmacs paying material homage to the symbol of the cross: it appeared in their art work and embroidery, and on the bows of their canoes. They painted crosses on their skin, hung crosses around their necks, and placed a cross
at the center of their councils. The cross symbol that Le Clercq first saw among the Miramichi Micmacs, was a small wooden one, embodied with beads, occupying the place of honour in his guide’s wigwam. Naturally intrigued by the sight of what to Christians was a sign of salvation, Le Clercq endeavoured to find out as much as possible about its origins and the nature of its worship among the Micmac.

In attempting to explain the presence of the cross among the Mirimichi Micmac, Le Clercq provided both his own explanation and the following Micmac story detailing the events surrounding the origins of the worship of the cross symbol, its discovery and its adoption. Le Clercq’s information provided the basic data for a conventional debate concerning the origins of the worship of the cross; it also allows for new investigations into how Micmac storytelling related an event and how the Micmac version may contribute to the conventional historical debate.

I do not know what judgement you will pass upon the manner in which our Indians say they have received the Cross, according to the tradition of their ancestors. They claim that, at a time when their country was afflicted with a very dangerous and deadly malady which had reduced them to an extreme destitution in every respect and had already sent many of them to their graves, certain old men of those whom they considered the best, the wisest, and the most influential, fell asleep, all overwhelmed with the weariness and despair at seeing a desolation so general and the impending ruin of the entire Gaspesian nation, unless it should promptly be rescued through the powerful aid of the sun, which they recognised ... as their deity. It was, they say, in this sleep filled with bitterness that a man, beautiful as could be, appeared to them with a Cross in his hand. He told them to take heart, to go back to their homes, to make Crosses like that which were shown them, and to present these to the heads of families with the assurance that if they would receive the Crosses with respect they would find these without question the remedy for all their ills. As the
Indians believe in dreams... [they] resolved, by common consent, that all would receive with honour the sacred sign of the Cross,... And so it turned out in fact, for the sickness ended, and all the afflicted who used the Cross with respect were restored miraculously to health.  

The testimony of both the French and the Micmac indicate that, whatever the real origin of the cross symbol was, it had, by 1677, become enshrined in myth and was part of Micmac oral culture. The explanation provided by the Micmac to Le Clercq was a legend, not an eyewitness account. He stated that, "... I have no solid foundation for the persuading [the reader] of this truth than the testimony of the older Indians and of the French, which is confirmed by ... Saint Vallier, now Bishop of Quebec."  

There are essentially two possibilities concerning the origin of the cross symbol among the Miramichi Micmac. It was either a symbol of aboriginal invention, or it was adopted from Europeans. The Micmac themselves and William Ganong, Le Clercq’s modern editor, claim a pre-contact usage of the cross. The Micmac claimed the cross appeared to them in a dream while Ganong suggests that the cross was a totemic symbol that had Christian ideas grafted on to it. Le Clercq and Father Lafitau believed the cross to be of Christian origin. Le Clercq thought that the source of the cross was Christian, but he also thought that their belief in the cross pre-dated the arrival of the French. This was consistent with his idea that the Micmacs were of ancient Christian origin. Lafitau, however, accused Le Clercq of exaggeration and claimed that all he had seen were relics from earlier missionaries.  

The Micmacs who informed both Le Clercq and Saint Vallier’s French source on the origins of the cross insisted that it occurred before the arrival of the French or other
Europeans. When Le Clercq tried to persuade the Micmac that they had adopted the Cross from Europeans, one Micmac responded:

Dost thou not still see everyday the old man Quioudo, who is more than a hundred and twenty years old? He has repeated to thee often that the Indians of Mizamichi (sic) have not received from strangers the use of the Cross, and that his own knowledge of it has been derived through tradition from his fathers, who lived at least as long a time as he.\(^63\)

Saint Vallier added that,

[An old man], aged a hundred or a hundred and twenty years questioned by M. Fronsac, son of M. Denis, said that he had seen the first ship from Europe which had landed in their country; that before its arrival they had already among them the usage of the Cross; that this visage had not been brought to them by strangers; and that everything he knew about it he had learned by tradition from his ancestors.\(^64\)

Regardless of these claims by the informants, conventional documentary evidence allows for a European origin of the cross, and evidence within the story itself points towards the same conclusion.

External circumstantial evidence suggests the possibility that the cross arrived after early contact, despite the denials of the Micmac. Le Clercq most likely reached the Miramichi in 1677. Even if his informant was one hundred and twenty, which was unlikely, Jacques Cartier’s arrival on the North Shore of New Brunswick preceded his birth by more than twenty years.\(^65\) and Basque fishermen probably were in the Gulf of St. Lawence at least a decade earlier than him. However, the sporadic nature of European presence along the North Shore makes it possible for there to be more than
one first contact, as memories of earlier European visits faded. While it may seem improbable that such a significant event as contact with Europeans would be forgotten by Micmacs, it must be kept in mind that contacts may only have lasted a few days or even hours, and been separated by decades. With no lasting impact on the Micmacs, these extraordinary events would be regarded as visions, dreams, or even routine contacts with other-than-human persons, and would probably not be remembered with great accuracy. It is therefore plausible, and from a Micmac perspective, realistic, that they thought the cross had arrived before the French, when it had not. If "arrival" is interpreted as "settlement" rather than "contact", then the Micmac interpretation of pre-European becomes even more understandable.

Turning to the actual story, two factors, the belief that a cross cured the sickness and its arrival in a dream, strongly suggest that the actual event occurred in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries, during the earlier phases of European contact. The traditional account of the origin of the cross is set during a period of severe distress for the Micmac due to some mysterious disease. The extent and lethal nature of the great malady suggests that the arrival of the cross was preceded by a European disease, probable spread by fishermen. The coincidental easing of the affliction at the same time as a missionary effort would have, in the eyes of the Micmacs, made either the missionaries or their relics the source of the cure, and therefore a great source of spiritual power. Since the deliverers of the crosses had departed, the crosses themselves were credited with curing the disease. The Miramichi Micmac would have retained the rituals taught them by the missionaries because they were proven to be effective, while other bands may have ignored or discarded them. Ceremonial evidence further indicates that
the Micmac considered the cross to be a source of power. They regarded the cross as "a potent sign filled with a marvellous fertility of favours and benedictions." When sending an ambassador to another nation, "the chief would draw from his bosom an especially fine Cross.... Showing it with reverence to the whole assembly, he would make, by means of a prepared speech, a recital of the favours and blessings which the whole Gaspesian nation had derived from the assistance of the Cross." These fine crosses were inherited by heads of households and held in very high esteem. The neglect of the worship of the cross noted by Le Clercq also indicates that the Micmac probably thought the cross had power. After the calamity had passed, the cross would have been seen as responsible for fewer and fewer successes, which was consistent with the power's fleeting nature.

The appearance of the cross in a communal dream, delivered by a beautiful person, signifies that the Micmac considered its arrival to be a spiritual event, but also an unusual and extraordinary one. In keeping with the idea that sporadic contact with Europeans made little impression in Micmac storytelling, over time any reference to Europeans may have been enhanced to become the exceptional beautiful man. This description may even have been adopted from a missionary's description of Christ. Placing its arrival in a dream made it part of Micmac spirituality, because dreams linked the physical universe to the spiritual world, and it was a Micmac belief that power could be received during dreams. Setting the unusual and inexplicable into a dream made it acceptable, and Micmac. In this way, when a visit by cross-bearing priests or laymen coincided with the easing of a disease, the cross became important as a source of power,
with the importance of its arrival being signified by the dream setting, and the actual deliverers were reduced to a simple spiritual figure.

It is possible from this analysis to trace the evolution of a Micmac tale from aknutmaqn (news) to a’tukwaqn (myths). By examining the story in conjunction with the conventional historical facts, the changes that occurred in the story become apparent. This reveals how oral tradition functioned as a carrier of information from one generation to the next, and how historical fact, as understood by Western historians, became integrated with other aspects of Micmac storytelling. The fact that the story of the Coming of the Cross was a legend indicates that the event was no longer aknutmaqn (news), nor was it memorable; the eyewitnesses and their cohorts were no longer alive. Therefore the story may be placed in mythical time.

One aspect of Micmac myths is that they were generally set in a time that predated European settlement. The beliefs that the cross cured disease and that it appeared in a dream both reinforced traditional belief. The acceptance of a foreign religious object was made more palatable by surrounding it with Micmac beliefs. As the story was told and retold, the Micmac characteristics strengthen and the symbol of the cross was absorbed into Micmac religious and oral culture. Furthermore, as a storytelling device, placing the arrival of the cross in a dream alerted audience that the following account was of a mysterious and spiritual nature. The important function of the story was to convey to the audience that the cross was a source of power, responsible for curing sickness. Secondarily, the story reinforced ideas concerning both spiritual contact and the receiving of power through dreams. In becoming mythical, the story was set in a pre-contact era, and Europeans were slowly removed, if they ever were included in the
story. Once this had happened, subsequent generations of Micmac would believe their story rather than assertions made by the now more permanent and familiar Europeans who were among them.

**Trickster Tales and Hero Stories**

The trickster and hero tales of the Micmac constitute the most complete oral narratives ever recorded by the folklorists and anthropologists who studied this culture. At first glance, the story cycles and tales of the trickster wolverine Quincajou and the cultural hero Gluskap also appear to be the least informative sources for historical evidence. In part this is because they resemble literary fiction and common European folktales, which fall beyond conventional documentary material, and even that familiarity is betrayed by the alien cultural concepts which abound in these stories. Thus in both their familiar and foreign guise they dissuade the historian. Upon closer examination, however, these story cycles and tales reveal two important types of historical information. In terms of historical evidence, they provide material that could indicate the slow process of acculturation, such as instances of the adoption of European and Christian ideas, values and motifs into Micmac storytelling and oral culture. In terms of historical process, they show how tales and stories acted as agents of change, disseminating new ideas through a common and accepted format.

One of the assumptions that informs this discussion is that story materials that have animal characters, semi-human heros and other-than-human persons as their main actors are a’tukwagn, and older than those with the anthropomorphic cultural hero Gluskap, especially those in which he encounters Europeans or Jesus Christ. The
collections that provide the stories roughly span a sixty year period, excluding Wallis's additional material from 1950 and 1953. Within the whole body of material, there is no chronological distinction between older Micmac story elements and newer Christian influences. The old and new co-exist, and some of the least influenced material was collected near the end of the period. Because acculturation is a slow and incomplete process, and Micmac storytelling was free form and idiosyncratic, it is not surprising that a story collected in the 1870's is more fragmented and incomplete than a similar tale collected in the 1930's. It is also important to note that generally, in Micmac storytelling, plots and characters were interchangeable, so that an analysis based on changes in detail is less persuasive than one based on shifts in patterns and trends. The more significant changes are in values, attitudes, and cosmological outlook.

Signs of acculturation in Micmac society and culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are evident in the hero and trickster story cycles. They show up in the emergence of the anthropomorphic Gluskap as the main story character, the replacement of other heroes by him and the gradual reduction of the importance of the trickster Quincajou along with other animal characters in the stories. Quincajou was most likely the older of the two characters. As mentioned earlier, evidence of the wolverine as an important cultural symbol stretches back to the time of Le Clercq, when it appeared in the form of a wolverine-shaped bark carving claimed by a shaman to be the most powerful ouahich, or power-source. His companion, sometimes referred to as his little brother, was Marten, who was looked after by Mrs. Bear, or Grandmother. In the stories recorded by Rand, Wallis, Parsons, and Dennis, Quincajou is uniformly a
malevolent, mischievous, foolish and powerful character,\textsuperscript{74} who most commonly interacts with other animal characters.

In contrast, there is no mention, nor indirect evidence, of Gluskap in the earlier French sources; he does not appear in Micmac historical sources until Rand’s 1894 collection. Although claimed by the Micmac as an original creation, he also appears in other Eastern Algonquian oral cultures.\textsuperscript{75} He may well have originated in New England, or among the Malecite, who knew him as the Liar. In Micmac sources, however, only one mention of Gluskap as a trickster character appears, and it was probably borrowed from the Malecite.\textsuperscript{76} It is possible that Gluskap is an intermediary character, a transitional figure that facilitated the intermingling of older Micmac stories with newer Christian ideas.\textsuperscript{77} In the collected Micmac works concerning Gluskap, he has two personae. One is as a granter of favours, who lives in a wigwam with his two companions, Grandmother Bear and younger brother Marten. He is a helper to the Micmac, the provider of material culture, and a shaper of the landscape. He has great power and many of the stories about him involve his overcoming the power of other persons, especially enemy \textit{buoin}. In these stories he often interacts with other characters from Micmac storytelling, including Quincajou. This type of Gluskap tale generally conforms with other Micmac stories, in their disconnected narrative form and in plotlines.

This older form of the Gluskap character was part of a conventional change in storytelling. The decline of animal characters reflected the changes in the Micmac’s social and economic life. The forest economy no longer dominated their way of life, and the old story connections between animals and people fell into disuse. Animal characters played a significant role in Micmac storytelling, often depicting human personality types,
which, in part, accounts for their appearance simultaneously as animals and humans. When this psychological framework went into decline, the older animal and person stories began to condense around Gluskap. Gluskap tales adopted the plots of animal stories and other characters, and rendered previously independent characters as subordinates or supporting cast members.\textsuperscript{78} This was not an unusual process. Remnants of the eighteenth century Papkootparut story appear in some Gluskap tales, indicating that storylines were attached to different personalities through time and existed independently in Micmac oral culture.\textsuperscript{79}

However, in stories from the 1920’s, Gluskap began to encounter Jesus Christ, and developed an hierarchical relationship to both Christ and the Christian creator-God. The relationship between Gluskap and Christ marks a second transition in Micmac storytelling and a second persona for Gluskap. It exemplifies how storytelling acted as a strong agent of change, enabling Western and Christian ideas to enter into Micmac oral culture and compete with previous held notions for acceptance and prominence. Often these ideas were added onto older stories as trailers, and slowly gained a circulation. In the second type of Gluskap story he adopts a Messianic role. In some stories, Gluskap has departed from the land of the Micmac, to a distant place, usually to the west. He is expected to return in a time of dire need, to defend the Micmac from their enemies and his return will either occur during the last days of earth, or else his return will usher in the end of the earth. These elements sometimes appears independently, but are often added onto the end of the first type of Gluskap tale. Attending these, and acting as a reminder of Gluskap as cultural hero, were his transformations of the landscape, the most common Gluskap characteristic, and his companions, Grandmother and Marten.
In 1910 Wilson Wallis recorded two examples of a familiar tale, in which Gluskap transforms the landscape of the Maritimes. The story he collected from Peter Ginnish at Gaspe also contained a story element in which Gluskap, when he returns, fights the devil. The description has strong overtones of Revelations and he attributed the last part to the Bishop and the Scriptures. The two stories collected by Parsons with both Christ and Gluskap incorporated a sense of the Biblical story of Genesis into an older framework. Christ was the creator, while Gluskap retained his role as the cultural hero and provider for the people. Whites and Indians were created separately, with the Biblical account of Adam explaining the creation of the Europeans, who were responsible for sin, probably an expression of attitude towards them. Independent Micmac religious identity was bolstered through the mention of the older practice of praying to the moon. Gluskap provided a social charter for the Micmac, as Christ did for Christians. Frank Speck also included stories that involved both Gluskap and Christ, during which they tested each others strength, with Gluskap proving to be Christ's equal. By the time Wallis returned to the area in the 1950’s, the stories surrounding Gluskap contained both Micmac and Christian elements. Older stories were blended with newer ones; conventional animal stories and familiar characters occurred alongside allusions to Armageddon and references to the Christian creation myth. Gluskap retained, however, his position as benefactor, landscaper, and inventor of material culture. These examples indicate that Micmac storytelling not only provides evidence of the change in Micmac intellectual and cultural life, but also illustrate that the stories themselves, as Peter Ginnish revealed, carried rich new material into Micmac oral culture.
The recorded products of Micmac storytelling contain evidence of historical change in religious ideas. Storytellers incorporated Christian ideas into the existing ancient frameworks of Micmac religion, symbolism and mythology. By blending Christian elements into established themes and patterns of storytelling, the storytellers were probably eased the Micmacs' existence in two spiritual constructions. In a sense, Micmac storytellers became active agents of change in Micmac thought, rather than merely preserving older cultural expressions. The documented oral accounts and historical ethnologies also contain both important evidence for reconstructing the Micmac world view and the stories that express Micmac ideas. The historical-functional method thus is an important tool for historians. Understanding the meaningful symbols within the stories themselves leads to an appreciation of the intellectual world both of the original storytellers and their audience.
The recent debates in both academic and literary circles concerning the appropriation of the Native North American "voice" and ownership of the past has brought attention to the search for new historical sources that may reveal the "voice" of historically silent people. Following the successful work of anthropologists in collecting oral testimony from living informants about their pre-literate culture, historians have also turned to oral material to expand their sources. An important variant of oral material collected in the field are those oral accounts stemming from earlier periods and found in existing historical documents. At first glance, documented oral accounts appear to have the potential of containing within them the "voice" of their informants; to present in story form the ideas, values, and even history of oral societies. Examining documented oral accounts for historical evidence renews the debate over the trustworthiness of oral accounts as historical sources, but also challenges historians to make use of the types of information found in these accounts.

In exploring some of the issues concerning documented oral accounts William G. Doty's perspectives on mythography have proved invaluable. Applied to the documented oral accounts of the Micmac people of Atlantic Canada, his perspectives presented a broad approach to the types of intellectual material found in the accounts which is pragmatic, flexible and, importantly, compatible with the historical perspective. In Doty's own assessment of methods of myth analysis, he continuously stresses the importance of social and historical context; to Doty, myths are a dynamic cultural force. From Doty's work I have been able to construct and apply an historical-functional
approach towards mythic accounts. Once the stories from the documented oral accounts
are placed in their proper cultural and intellectual context, that is, the Micmac world
view, it is possible for historians to see how stories may have recorded changes in
Micmac culture or even have been active agents of change.

I selected documented oral accounts of the Micmac for this study because they
cover a wide range both chronologically and in terms of types of documenters. Living
on the northeast coast of North America, the Micmac had early contact with Europeans;
from the early seventeenth century on, the Micmac made regular appearances in the
historical record. Within this relatively large historical record, there are many different
types of documented oral accounts, spanning most of the historical period. This record
was created by a diverse collection: missionaries, traders, folklorists, anthropologists and
travellers. In studying the published legacy of Micmac oral culture, I found that the
context in which they were recorded to be extremely important. Just as the stories
cannot be separated from the original storytellers, neither can they be separated from
their recorders.

The particular themes and stories explored here, concerning Micmac spirituality
and religious thought, contain powerful insights into Micmac abstract culture and
intellectual life. By looking at the incorporation of both European Christian and "pagan"
ideas and concepts into Micmac religious beliefs, I attempted to probe their ability to
convey important ideas. What I found was that the relationship between oral culture and
behaviour is most evident in the relationship between stories and religious practices. This
is confirmed by early accounts of Micmac life. Chrestien Le Clercq’s recounting of cross
worship amongst the Mirimichi Micmac, for example, clearly indicates how storytelling
recorded past events, justified current religious practices and preserved fundamental Micmac religious concepts. The stories in the Micmac documented oral accounts also provided direct examples of how particular concepts in the Micmac world view took shape in Micmac oral culture.

Studying Micmac documented oral accounts revealed that storytelling was an important and essential form of communication in Micmac cultural and social life. Storytelling had the ability to convey a myriad of values, beliefs, ideals, and attitudes, as well as an understanding of the past and past events. The historical role of storytellers may be added to recent interest in storytelling from anthropologists and the contemporary revival of Native cultural activities. I found that the particular cultural milieu and intellectual training of the recorders of the accounts had great significance in shaping the types of material they were interested in and how they presented it. Finally, I gained some insights into the relationships between the recorders and the individual Micmacs from whom they learned and among whom they worked. While the relationship between seventeenth century missionaries and the Micmac may have been paternalistic, and the views held by many nineteenth and early twentieth century field researchers are condemned in the late twentieth century, it was interesting to learn how these people actually interacted with their Micmac informants and hosts. It is important to note that many of these documenters, despite the reactions to them by the Micmac, their own contemporaries and modern commentators, appear to have had a sincere interest and concern for the Micmac and their culture.

I must conclude, however, that documented oral accounts, because they were recorded by non-Natives, and translated from their original language, are unable to
provide historians with examples of the pure Native "voice". The stories in the accounts are only representations of a much wider body of oral culture and therefore only allow impression of Micmac thought. Yet even though documented oral accounts are limited and imperfect, they nevertheless offer historians a unique and unequalled glimpse into Micmac intellectual life. They are a product of Micmac cultural life, and as such record elements of Micmac creativity and belief, if not their "voice". Despite the fact that the stories in the documented record were influenced by contact with Europeans and settlers, they remain a product of the Micmac imagination and in this capacity are a significant historical source. Attempting to enter into the Micmac cultural world through the stories found in the accounts may be an intrinsically flawed endeavour, but the attempt is necessary if historians are to at least approach how the Micmac thought and felt about their world in the past.
Introduction


5. Part of the reason for the disagreements over the definition of oral tradition stems from the diversity of scholarly interest attracted to oral tradition. Anthropologists, folklorists, and scholars of religion, as well as historians, have used, studied, defined, and debated oral traditions. The term oral tradition cuts through other classifications, such as myth, legend, and folklore, and is often implicitly included in definitions of myth and folklore for non-literate societies, adding to the confusion. Oral traditions are an important part of the material collected by fieldworkers, including oral historians, especially those working with the indigenous peoples of Africa, the Americas, Oceania, Australia and New Zealand. But scholars who do not necessarily collect traditions themselves also rely on oral traditions, among other types of evidence, to recreate the past of pre-literate cultures or recover particular aspects of non-literate cultures. In these pursuits they use documented oral traditions found in archival or published sources, which are sometimes combined with their own fieldwork collections.


9. For example, Wilson Wallis, the ethnographer of the Micmac, made extensive use of oral traditions and accounts, that he collected from Micmac informants, as a basis for his reconstruction of the Micmac way of life. Wilson D. Wallis and Ruth Sawtell Wallis, The Micmac Indians of Eastern Canada (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), 5-8, 317.


11. For two examples from Algonquian peoples see: Gordon M. Day "Oral Tradition as Complement". Ethnohistory 19 (1972) and Leroy V. Eid, "The Ojibwa-Iroquois War: The War the Iroquois Did Not Win," Ethnohistory 26 (1979). Day demonstrated that taken together Abenaki traditions of a raid on one of their villages and the military account of the same event provided a much more complete history than either account alone. The Abenaki versions of the raid resolve a conflict between the French and English accounts over the number of casualties. The English leader of the raid, Robert Rogers, claimed that 200 Abenaki were killed while various French sources suggested only thirty. The Abenaki stories tell of warning before the raid by a sympathetic Indian on the English side, allowing many Abenaki to hide in the woods while their homes burned. 100-101, 103, 105-107.

Leroy V. Eid's reconstruction of the war against the Five Nations Seneca by the Huron-Petun, Ottawa and Ojibwa over the possession of southern Ontario in the latter half of the 17th century is both compelling and uses few conventional European sources. Eid uses the traditions of the Ojibwa and other Algonquians to counter the belief that the Iroquois remained in possession of Southern Ontario beyond the end of the seventeenth century. Like Day, Eid uses accounts of events that appear in published sources, recorded by the descendants of the participants between approximately 160 and 200 years after the war. His evidence is supported by the historic demise of Iroquois power signified by the Grand Treaty of 1701, the numerous and varied oral accounts of the Ojibwa-Iroquois War on the part of the Algonquians, and Mississauga (eastern Ojibwa) ownership of Southern Ontario by the time of the American Revolution.


14. Bruce Trigger is critical of impressionistic research and speculation, as it "can quickly degenerate into fantasy". Trigger launches this criticism at historians who do not pay enough attention to documentary evidence or the rigours of the scientific method, including Calvin Martin. Bruce Trigger, "Ethnohistory: Problems and Prospects," Ethnohistory 29 (1982): 8-9; For some of Trigger's discussions concerning romantic and relativist approaches towards Native history see: Children, xx-xxii; "Evolutionism, Relativism, and Putting Native Peole into Historical Context," Culture VI (1986); "Hyperrelativism, responsibility and the social sciences," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 25 (1989); "Early Native North American Responses to European Contact: Romantic versus Rationalistic Interpretations," The Journal of American History 78 (1991).


17. Ibid., 14. Cruikshank's approach towards orally produced evidence, collected in the field in her own case, differs from history in that it looks at how the past is used by people in the present, distinct from how the past itself may be investigated. This reflects her interest in the essentially ahistorical nature of structural anthropology and her efforts to diminish her role as researcher in presenting the stories of the elders (p.4).


21. Ibid., 5-6.


Chapter One

1. Philip Bock, "Micmac," in Handbook of North American Indians. Volume 15: Northeast, Bruce Trigger, vol. ed., William G. Sturtevant, gen. ed., (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institut, 1978), 109 (hereafter referred to as HBNI); Dean R. Snow, "Late Prehistory of the East Coast," HBNI, 69. Bock and Snow differ on the relationship between the Micmac and their close Eastern Algonquian neighbours, the Mailseet and Abenaki. Bock in "Micmac," states that the Micmac were closely related to the other two, while Snow in "Late Prehistory," argues that there are some important differences. Both authors suggest that there are some historical factors at work in explaining variations in Micmac culture, but neither are specific. While archaeologists speculate that the ancestors of the Eastern Algonquians in the Maritime region arrived from the Canadian Shield to the northwest around 1000 B.C., replacing or driving out the pre-existing culture, according to Snow there is little archaeological evidence pertaining to the pre-historic Micmac, partly due to coastal erosion. James A. Tuck, "Regional Cultural Development, 3000 to 300 B.C," HBNI, 34; Snow, "Late Prehistory," 69.


5. Clark, Acadia, 14-22, 36-44.

6. For examples of local landmarks attributed to Gluskap see: Silas T. Rand, Legends of the Micmac (New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1894), 292-293; Wallis and Wallis, The Micmac Indians, 325, 330-332. The Micmac used the giant metaphor to help divided their country into seven districts, with the head, Onomag, or Cape Breton, standing alone and the other districts placed together into two even groups. One group of districts extended down the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia. The Micmac named Nova
Scotia's Eastern Shore Esgigeoag, called the region bound by the valleys of the Musquodoboit, Shubenacadie, and La Have Rivers Sepepenegatig, and referred to the southern third of the province as Gespogoitnag. Together these three districts were known as Gespogoit, from the Micmac name for Cape Sable, the southern most tip of Nova Scotia. The other group of districts ran along the Northumberland Strait and south coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The districts were Pigtogeoag and Epegoitnag: Pictou and Prince Edward Island; Sigenigteoag: southeastern New Brunswick, the isthmus of Chignecto and Cape Chignecto; and Gespegeoag: northeastern New Brunswick above the Richibucto River, to the Gaspe. Collectively they were called Sigenigt, after Cape Chignecto. Father Pacifique, cited by William F. Ganong (ed.), in Chrestien Le Clercq, New Relation of Gaspesia (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1910; Repr. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 63, n.1; Bock, "Micmac," 110; Upton, Micmacs and Colonists.

8. Father Pacifique was the missionary at Restigouche, Quebec, from 1894 to 1943.


9. Rueben Thwaites, ed. Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents (Cleveland: 1898) (hereafter referred to as IR.) 3:79-83. This economic pattern is supported archaeologically in Tuck. "Regional Cultural Developments," 32-33, which actually refers to the economic activity of the pre-Algonquian Maritime Archaic tradition but is assumed to also represent the Eastern Algonquians.


14. This periodization follows the works of Bock, Wallis and Wallis, and Upton.


20. *JR* 1:177. Other factors besides disease contributed to the decline in Micmac population. Participation in the fur trade reduced the amount of time spent procuring local food, leaving the Micmac reliant on European food to supplement an increasingly meat oriented diet. As a result, the Micmac were more susceptible to an interrupted food supply and less well fed, which, consequently, left them less able to resist diseases. Alcoholism and increased warfare throughout the French period also reduced numbers through violent death and serious injuries. For early comments on the impact of European disease on the Micmac see *JR* 2:77, 3:110. For the effects of alcoholism and warfare on Micmac population see: Bock, "Micmac," 117 and Bailey, *European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures*, 114-115. For an overview of the population debate see: Virginia P. Miller "Aboriginal Micmac Population: A Review of the Evidence," *Ethnohistory* 23 (1976): 117-127.


26. British settlement in Nova Scotia was minimal until the establishment of Halifax in 1749. It consisted of only a garrison at Annapolis, near Port Royale, and a fishing base at Canso. After the expulsion of the Acadians in 1750, the Micmac resisted the settlement New Englanders in the old Acadian lands. The Micmac were fully involved in the Seven Years' War on the side of the French, laying siege to Annapolis for a time, raiding throughout the countryside, and helping to defend Louisbourg. However, the most persistent form of armed resistance againsts the British were raids against fishing vessels. Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, 48-60; Olive P. Dickason, "La "guerre navale" des Micmacs contre les Britanniques, 1713-1763," in Charles A. Martijn, ed., *Les Micmacs et la Mer* (Montreal: Recherches amérindiennes au Quebec, 1986), 233-248.


28. Ibid., 81-82, 78.

29. Ibid., 82, 85, 129.


32. Ibid., 86-87, 128-129, 175.


37. IR 2:45.

38. For descriptions of marriage and funeral orations see:

40. For the decline of storytelling in the first half of the twentieth century see: Wallis and Wallis, The Micmac Indians, 306, 481, 490.

41. Wallis's assertion that younger working men replaced the elders in leading the communities and that they were much more forward looking than the previous group of elders is borne out in the increased Micmac political activism in the following decades. Wallis and Wallis, The Micmac Indians, 306-308; Bock, "Micmac," 120-121; Upton, Micmacs and Colonists. 178-181.

42. Sheila Steen cited by Wallis and Wallis in The Micmac Indians, 481.

43. Whitehead, The Old Man Told Us, 346.

44. Ibid., 120, 146, 180, 182, 261, 292-293, 296, 317-318, 320, 340-341, 343, 346.

45. Whitehead, The Old Man Told Us, xii; idem, Stories From the Six Worlds, 221 citing Hardy, Sporting Adventures, 226. Silas Rand refers to a'tukwagn as Ahtookwokun. Legends, 75; for the traditional openings see: ibid., 82-83.

46. This summary of the main characteristics of Micmac stories is drawn primarily from the collected accounts of Rand, Wallis and Elsie Clews Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," IAFL, 38 (1925): 55-133. Rand's first story, "I. Murder and Robbery Revenged," Legends, 1-6, provides a good example of anthropomorphic animal characters. For an example of similar stories about different characters see: Rand, Legends. "XXXV. Glooscap, Kuhkw, and Coolpujot", 232-237 and Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," 71-72. Wallis classified a group of stories as historical, many of which concern external relations with other Native peoples and Europeans. Although different in content, they have a similar tone to more abstract stories. Wallis and Wallis, The Micmac Indians, 447-480.

47. Parsons recorded several stories that her informant identified as Sa'kis' we'nuch, "long ago, French" and others that she concluded were Afro-American stories brought


49. Day, "Oral Tradition as Complement," 100, 103, 105-107. Day noted the slow rate of transmission of Abenaki stories about an English raid near the end of the Seven Years War. Rather than being handed down generationally, it appears as though old storytellers trained youngsters to replace them, and thus the stories were handed down only twice over four generations and two hundred years.


52. Father Biard in *JR* 1:173. "The nation is savage, wandering and full of bad habits; the people few and isolated. They are, I say, savage, haunting the woods, ignorant, lawless and rude: they are wanderers, with nothing to attach them to a place, neither homes nor relationships, neither possessions nor love of country; as a people they have bad habits, are extremely lazy gluttonous, profane, treacherous, cruel in their revenge, and given up to all kinds of lewdness, men and women alike, the men having several wives and abandoning them to others, and the women only serving them as slaves, whom they strike and beat unmercifully, and who dare not complain; and after being half killed, if it so please the murderer, they must laugh and caress him."

54. Ibid., 159-187.


56. Ibid., 18-19.


65. Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," 55. "That I was lured to the borders of the field he [Frank Speck] has worked so systematically and successfully, he will explain by our appreciation of the fact that to folktales and their variants there is no end and that my approach through women informants and their family life was from a somewhat distinctive angle."


*Stories from the Six Worlds*, 222.


Denys, *Description of Acadia*, 418-419.

Ibid., 385-387. "The Wolverene [Quincajou] is nearly like a Cat, with hair red brown. It has claws. It climbs trees, stretches its length upon a branch, and there awaits some Moose. If one of these passes, it throws itself upon its back, grips it with its claws, encircles it with its tail, then gnaws its neck a little below the ears, so that it brings it down. The Moose swiftly runs and rubs against the trees, but the Quincajou never quits its prize. If the animal does not pass near, it runs after it, chases it, and does not give up. If it is once able to reach it, it leaps upon its rump, and proceeds to attach itself to its neck, and gnaws it so well that it brings it down. In order to save itself the Moose runs to the water as soon as it can and throws itself into it. But before it throws himself into it the Quincajou lets go and jumps to the ground, for it does not wish to enter the water. Four years ago one of them captured a heifer of mine three years old, and broke her neck. The next morning we set our Dogs upon the track, and we found her. It had eaten only her eyes and tongue.

The Foxes and the Quincajou hunt together. The Quincajou has not a good sense of smell as the Foxes have. These beat the woods until they find the track of the Moose, and they hunt without making a noise. If they meet with a track they follow it until they have found the animal. If they find it grazing or lying down they do nothing to it, but they go around and seek a place the most convenient to make their prey pass by. Then the Quincajou which follows them places itself in ambush on the branch of a tree. It Being placed, the Foxes return to fetch the animal. They place themselves at some distance in the woods, on both sides. Another Fox goes behind to make it rise, yelping very softly. If the animal goes directly to where the Quincajou is, those which are on the sides make no sound; if it does not go there, those which are on the side towards which it is going yelp in order to turn it. They do so well that they make it pass where the Quincajou is, which does not fail in its blow, and throws itself on its neck and gnaws it. When the Moose has fallen they throw themselves upon it, and make good cheer together as long as the beast lasts." Nineteenth century Quincajou stories may be found in Rand, *Legends*, 263-269, 306-320. For another example of Quincajou not liking water see Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," 68.

Denys, *Description of Acadia*, 387 n.1.

Ibid., 399, 432, 437, 439-441, 442, 449-450.
75. Whitehead. *Stories from the Six Worlds*, 221-223. In this book and idem, *The Old Man Told Us*. Whitehead attempts to recreate the Micmac historical experience through the use of their stories, myths and legends. From an historian's point of view, the main problem with the book is the mixing of stories from the French period with mid-nineteenth century sources. The inclusion of Papkutparut (Papkootparout), from Le Clercq's 1691 *New Relation of Gaspesia*, with stories collected by Silas Rand in the 1870's assumes a cultural and intellectual continuity that has not been demonstrated. In *The Old Man Told Us*, the Micmac experience is related co-currently with excerpts from colonial history to give some indication of the relationship between the Micmac and the settlers, yet there is still no interaction between the Micmac produced sources and the more conventional colonial material, nor are chronological restraints always respected.


77. Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," 63 n.5, 69. Biard also commented on how the Micmac were "droll fellows". *JR* 3:45.

78. Maillard, *An Account*, 3. In commenting on the Micmac language, Abbé Maillard observed, "I affect, above all, to rhyme [sic] as they do, especially at each member of a period."


Chapter Two

1. Claude Levi-Strauss was one of the major theoretician of structural anthropology. He argued that ethnography, ethnology, and cultural anthropology were each part of a process that began with description, proceed to comparison and ended in universal generalization. Within this framework, the study of myths and other oral source materials was part of an overall nomothetic objective. Levi-Strauss used structuralism to search myths for patterns in the logic used by societies. His analysis focused on how the relationships between binary opposites, which were expressed in myth, and mediation between them, shaped the logic of the mind. Levi-Struass drew on the precepts of structural linguistics, seeing the structure of mythology as parallel to the structure of language. The goal of Levi-Strauss was to recreate the mind of humankind, beyond the limitations of time and space. Partly because of the lofty positivistic goals Levi-Strauss set for it, his method of mythic analysis was by its very nature ahistorical. In particular, his structural analysis of mythology required several processes that greatly limit its application to specific studies, such as the investigation of historical problems. The first process was the reduction of the mythemes, or elements of a myth, to a manageable number of motifs for comparative purposes, The premise of a closed system of limited mythemes accompanied this step. The second limitation was the need for ethnological comparison, which moved the analysis beyond the constraints of place and time. Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 1-27, 206 -231,


Geertz sees in Levi-Strauss a return to the rationalism of the French Enlightenment and Rousseau. In pursuing the logic behind the culture, Levi-Strauss implicitly declares in favour of rational thought as the driving force behind human behaviour. Geertz, on the other hand, lets the emotional action of humanity to speak for itself. Geertz has had an important part in the development French cultural history by influencing the work of Natalie Zemon Davis and Robert Darnton. However, criticism of Geertz, especially applied Geertz, complains that his thick description is as static and ahistorical as Levi-Strauss' structuralism. His rejection of generalizations and comparisons has led to the accusation that his work is the anthropological equivalent of antiquarianism. Another suggestion is that his work operates outside of theoretical development and makes ambiguous comments about it, and it is wondered if his thick descriptions have any relevance beyond their own explanations. Suzanne Desan, "Crowds, Community, and Ritual in the Work of E.P. Thompson and Natalie Davis," in Linda Hunt, ed., The New Cultural History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 52-53, 64; Aletta Biersack, "Local Knowledge, Local History: Geertz and Beyond," in ibid., 76-80; Natalie Zemon Davis, Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Standford: Stanford University Press, 1975); Darnton, The Great Cat Massacre, 283 n2, 284 n4.

3. Doty, Mythography, xiii.

4. Ibid., iii.
5. Ibid., 168.

6. Ibid., 6-11.

7. Ibid., 11. Doty follows this definition up with an extensive, detailed explanation, 11-40.

8. Ibid., 13.

9. Ibid., 17.

10. Ibid., 16.

11. Ibid., 26-27

12. Ibid., 20.


14. Early functionalists in anthropology, whether concerned with the individual or society in general, developed it with a strong materialist and corporeal point of view, but failed to accommodate beliefs that went beyond material utility or social function. Anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, for example, thought of myth as a force in society that acted as a "pragmatic charter", outlining conventional wisdom and codifying moral behaviour. Subsequent functionalists have modified the view to suggest that myths present an idealized form of society rather than an exacting code of conduct. Doty, *Mythography*, 43-44. For a discussion on the differences between the methodological functionalism of French sociologist Emile Durkheim and Malinowski on the one hand and the structural-functionalism of English social anthropologist A.R. Radcliffe-Brown on the other, see: de Waal Malefijt, *Images of Man*, 181-190, 192-206. The discussion takes place within the context of the relationship between methodological and theoretical developments, most notable the ability of functionalists to explain diversity among cultures and cultural change. The primary difference between Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown is a focus on the biological and psychological needs of the individual in the work of Malinowski and the study of the functions of social structures by Radcliffe-Brown, Bohannan and Glazer, eds., *High Points in Anthropology*, 274-275, 296-297.

A necessary caution for historians using a functionalist approach is that many functional studies focus on stable societies with engaged cultures. However, because historians are usually more interested in dynamic societies and cultures confronting change, an awareness that functional relationships may be askew is in order. In the case of the history of Native peoples, the society under study is often in the midst of cultural change or else has undergone change, its cultural system already disrupted. In such instances, relationships between function of cultural forms and their meaning are
disarray. Cultural expressions, such as stories, may have lost their prescribed meaning, been replaced in their importance by a new forms, or else been given new meanings to make them more relevant. Doty, *Mythography*, 46-47.


16. Ibid., 49.

17. Ibid., 50.

18. Ibid., 49-51. In the formulation of these operational levels of myth in society Doty acknowledges the work of R.E. Moore, *Myth America 2001* (Philadelphia, 1972), which suggests "three phases of myth in the history of Christianity ...." Ibid., 253, n. 5. Doty qualifies these stages, claiming that they neither represent a process of development that all myths follow nor are they associated with levels of social complexity.

19. Ibid. 42.

20. For Doty on the relationships between myth, religion and world view see: Ibid., 26, 27, 29-30, 33-34.


22. *JR* 2:75. There is another reference by Biard in his Relations that is suggestive but inconclusive. He described a shaman's elaborate healing ritual, which centered around a common mythical character. As the rite drew to its climax, the shaman removed a dubious stick from under the patient, declaring, "There is the accursed one with the horn...." This was probably in reference to the red and yellow horns of the Horned Serpent, a common character in later stories. There is a hint in Chrestien Le Clercq's New Relation of Gaspesia that diseases were caused by a worm, translated to germ. Thus the healing ritual recorded by Biard may connect the cause of disease and illness to a known mythical character. *JR* 3:121; For oral accounts containing references to serpent horns or the Horned Serpent see: Rand, *Legends*, 12, 25, 53, 116; Wallis and Wallis, *The Micmac Indians*, 345-347; Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," 95-96; Whitehead, *Stories from the Six Worlds*, 6, 44-47. Le Clercq, *New Relation*, 90 n.2, 219.


26. Ibid., 208.
27. Ibid., 205.
28. Ibid., 212-213.
29. Ibid., 211.
30. Ibid., 213.
31. Ibid., 213-214.
33. Le Clercq, New Relation, 207, 211, 212, 213.
34. For other Micmac war stories see: Wallis and Wallis, The Micmac Indians, 447-469; 490-492; Michelson, "Micmac Tales," 41-51; Fauset, "Folklore From the Half-Breeds in Nova Scotia," 305-307. All of the recording of the stories took place at least a hundred years after hostilities had faded. Most, if not all, of these examples were collected well after the establishment of British colonial rule in the Maritimes. With the absence of warfare between the Micmac and either other Native peoples, imperial forces, or colonial settlements, the war stories are set in, and described, the past. This collaborates with Doty's assertion and caution that, "Myths (and rituals) may emphasize values and conditions that are just the opposite of what is found in contemporary experience; .... Hence the mythographer [and historian] should proceed very cautiously in drawing conclusions about social situations from the mythology emphasized at any given period. The emphases of myths in repeated use may reflect idealizations rather than actualities." Doty, Mythography, 30. Indeed, for the Micmac of the period in which the stories were collected, circa 1870-1925, the telling of war stories does not indicate that the Micmac were involved in warfare at the time, or were necessarily fond of actual warfare, but rather, suggests that there was a certain appeal to stories that glorified the Micmac people, presenting them as strong, independent, and powerful, both martially and spiritually.
35. Parsons gives Gwedich as the term for Mohawk from Montreal. "Micmac Folklore," 93. Whitehead states that there is uncertainty as to which Iroquois group the term Kwedech refers to, either the Mohawk, possibly the St. Lawrence Iroquois or both, The Old Man Told Us, 46. Bruce Trigger also refers to the theory that there was a war between the Micmac and the St. Lawrence Iroquois in the Gaspe region during the era of Jacques Cartier. Children, 183, 216. A story recorded Fauset supports the claim, "Folklore From the Half-Breeds in Nova Scotia," 307.
37. For variants in another work of war stories collected by Rand see Wallis and Wallis, *The Micmac Indians*, 448-449, 452.


41. Ibid., 200-206.


48. Ibid., 12, 17.

49. Doty supports the process of reconstructing world views and attempting to connect dispersed mythic elements. "The more one studies individual myths constituting a corpus, the more one becomes aware of common elements and internal connections
between them. Obviously there is a problem for the analyst, in this context, when only fragmentary sections are extant, but the more familiarity the analyst has with mythemic units in a corpus, the more it is possible to make accurate guesses about the gaps." ibid., 11-12.


Chapter Three

1. Scholars long ago noted the phenomenon of religious syncretism among various North American Native peoples, including Eastern Algonquians. In 1937, Bailey noted the accomplishments of early twentieth century anthropologists is this direction when he stated that, "The field work of Speck, Hallowell and others has brought to light a large amount of religious lore among the Montagnais-Nascopi and others within the present century, which makes it clear that Christianity and the native beliefs have often continued to exist side by side, the lack of system making it possible for diverse creeds to be held simultaneously." European and Eastern Algonkinian Cultures, 132.

In his own work, Bailey offered an extensive critique of American folklorist Charles G. Leland attempt, in The Algonquin Legends of New England, to prove that much of the mythology and folklore of the Eastern Algonquians originated with the Norse. Bailey made use of stories collected by Leland, Rand, Elsie Parsons, Truman Michelson and Frank Speck to both refute Leland's theory of a Norse origin for Eastern Algonquian oral culture and advance his own arguments concerning the infusion of French folklore into Eastern Algonquian storytelling (Bailey, 170-185) and the impact of missionary activity on culture on aspects of Eastern Algonquian oral culture, especially on the character of Gluskap. (Bailey, 187-188).


3. Rand, Legends, 310.

4. According to Ruth Holmes Whitehead, the Micmac divided the cosmos into five different worlds that had specific geographic positions related to the Earth, the center of the Micmac universe. The other worlds were Beneath the Earth, Beneath the Water, Above the Earth (daylight sky) and Above the Sky (night sky). She also includes Ghost World. Whitehead, Stories from the Six Worlds, 3.

5. Rand, Legends, 288. In describing the Loons that met with Gluskap Rand wrote, "Glooscap found on the island of Newfoundland a village of Indians, friends of his,
called Kwemoo (Loons). As in all such cases, these Indians were at one time people, and
at another time real loons." For other examples of animal characters living and acting
both as animals and humans see Rand, Legends: "I. Robbery and Murder Revenged,"
1-6; "LXXV. Pules, Pulowech, Beechkwec (Pigeon, Partridge, and Nighthawk),"
389-395; "LXXVIII. Wiskumoogwasoo and Magwis (Fish-Hawk and Scapegrace.)"
409-415.

8. Ibid., 21, 23-24, 27, 30, 33-34, 35, 40-43.
9. Ibid., 21, 29.
11. Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," 85, 87, 71. For other references to "grandfather" see:
Michelson, "Micmac Tales," 52; Rand, Legends, 228. For an example a family descended
from a bear see: Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," "30. The Ancestor of the Sylliboy Family,
96-97, also see Rand, Legends, "XLIV. A Child Nourished by a Bear," 259-262.
13. Rand, Legends, 133, 239.
15. Bailey, European and Eastern Cultures, 157 citing Dixon "The Mythology of the
central and eastern Algonkins," IAFL 22 (1909), 4-5.
16. Stith Thompson, "The Star Husband Tale (1953)," in Alan Dundes, ed., The Study
of Folklore, 414-459.
18. Denys, Description of Acadia, 430.
19. IR 2: 75
21. Ibid., 227.
23. Ibid., 158-159.


25. In Cape Breton in the mid 1600’s, a Micmac claimed that in a dream, a dead ancestor called on him to avenge his death. IR 47:221.

26. Wallis and Wallis, The Micmac Indians, 299. For acquisition of ginap, or power, during dreams, see: Bailey, European and Eastern Cultures, 136.


28. Bailey, European and Eastern Cultures, 137.

29. Wallis and Wallis, The Micmac Indians, 134 n.16.

30. Ibid., 156


32. Ibid, 4. This understanding of power as energy emerged out of attempts to define and explain manitou. Elizabeth Tooker attributes the definition of manitou as energy to the works of anthropologists William Jones, Alice Fletcher, J.N.B. Hewitt, Franz Boas, and Ruth Benedict. Manitou, and its Iroquoian and Siouian counterparts, orenda and wakan, was a concept that was common to most, if not all, Native peoples in Northeastern North America. Because it was both wide spread and foundational to Native religious thought, the idea of manitou attracted considerable attention from early anthropologists. Two competing arguments were advance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to explain the ideas of manitou, orenda, and wakanda. Animism, put forward by E.B. Tylor, stressed "the belief in Spiritual Beings" which inhabited the objects that Native peoples held to be sacred. The second concept, held by R.R. Marett, was animatism, "the attribution of life, or better, supernatural power, to the inanimate.", which suggested that manitou was a form of spiritual power, similar to magic; a mystical force that could influence events and the physical world. Anthropologist Paul Radin criticized these early efforts to define manitou, claiming that there was an excessive influence from current debates over the origins of religion creeping into the discussion and that much of what had been concluded "confused interpretation with fact". Tooker, ed., Native American Spirituality, 12-24.

33. Denys, Description of Acadia, 440.
35. For examples of natural phenomena that were the result of the activities of other-than-human persons or people with power see: Rand, *Legends*, 234, "LXXVI. The Adventures of Tornado and Wave," 396-400; Wallis and Wallis, *The Micmac Indians*, 123, 159, 296; Parsons, "Micmac Folklore", 70-73, 84-85; Whitehead, *Stories from the Six Worlds*, 4-5.


39. Erickson, "The Micmac Buoin," 5. This process was noted by Wallis, but the Western idea of supernatural continued to colour his perceptions concerning power.


41. Elsie Clews Parsons recorded several French and Black American folktales recited to her by Micmac women. They held a sharp distinction between their own and other tales, 102 n.1. "Micmac Legends," 102-132. See also Whitehead, *Stories from the Six Worlds*, 220-221.

42. Erickson, "The Micmac Buoin," 5.


45. Ibid., 143.


47. Ibid., 22-27.


51. Ibid., 85.

52. For early French references to manitou see: JR 2:77; Denys, Description of Acadia, 117, 418; Maillard, An Account, 37-38, 41-43, 46.

53. JR 3:133-135; Sieur de Diereville, Relation of the Voyage to Port Royal in Acadia or New France, ed. John Clarence Webster, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1933); Wallis and Wallis, The Micmac Indians, 143 n.2; Silas T. Rand, Dictionary of the Micmac Indians (Halifax: Nova Scotia Publishing Co., 1888), 78; Clara Dennis, Down in Nova Scotia (Toronto: 1934), 94, 165; Dennis, ibid., 165; Wallis and Wallis, The Micmac Indians, 156; "Genub", a variations of "Ginap", also identified a mighty warrior, see Fauset, "Folklore from the Half-Breeds in Nova Scotia," 309-311. Rand recorded the character as "Kenap", Legends, 275.

54. Rand, Legends, 47; Parsons, "Micmac Folkore," 80.


56. Denys, Description of Acadia, 439-441.

57. Doty, Mythography, 188-191.

58. Le Clercq, New Relation, 50, 144-152, 176.

59. Le Clercq, New Relation, 146-150. This story also appears, in a slightly different form on pages 190-192.

60. Ibid., 189. Ganong, in his notes, also provides a version of the story found in Monseigneur de Saint Vallier's 1688 "Relation", 189 n.2.

61. Ibid., 32-40.

62. Ibid., 36-40.

63. Ibid., 191.

64. Ibid., 189-190 n. 2.

65. Ibid., 191 n. 2.

66. Silas Rand recorded a Micmac story regarding the first coming of the Europeans in which a young woman's dream herealded their arrival. This could well have been a previous sighting by the woman, expressed in terms of a dream because of the events unusual nature. Rand, Legends, 225-227.
71. Dennis, *Down in Nova Scotia*, 168. In her detailed story the loon got its call when it warned other birds to "Open your eyes and fly", after they were tricked and attacked by Wolverine. Rand attributed the loon's call to Gluskap, *Legends*, 289.


82. Frank Speck, "Some Micmac Tales from Cape Breton Island," 60-61.


84. Ibid., 305-306.
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