

# MEMBERTOU HERITAGE PARK

## Frank Doucette on Micmac Ruggedness



Plansue ne'wt aknutk ta'n lnukik tel mlkna'tisni'k aqq mlkikna'tisni'k amskwes ke's metue'kek suliewey teli msnmik wjit mijipjewey aqq pikwelk koqoey. Teluet, eksitpu'k jel me' mu eit'klakinukw, ki's nipuktuk weskwita'jik ketantu'tij püksuk wjit wikual. Amastek ta wen e'plewiktn wutma'kittaqn na tujiw. Msit wen tmi'kn eweketoq elte'ket newtikiskik kweji wjua'toq tepaqn lni kmu'jl kwlamen kisi lmaisikutew neskmna'q poqji piskianukw. Teluji kaqi'sk pemaisiku'tijik jel wastew teli ksu'teskasik nkutey nuke' awti'l kis-kuk. E'tasiw na ji'nm ke's pem tepte'k wpuksukm wiaqi tepekett na miti'l tujiw kipiteketal qatayik ta'n wen'ji'kuomji'j tliutuaqq ta'n tli atlasmitew aqq tli pite'matew wen. Klapis na kisitasikek na wen'ji'kuomji'jek asnma qatayik aqq asuaisikutite'wk wel'ta'sit pekisink na tujiw mita kisi atlasmitew aqq pite'matew.

Kitu' ekntie'wimk ika'q, na miamuj askoqte'mn püksuk tepiaq wjit asukom te'sukuna'q tujiw ilamko'tu'n menaqa. Newtikiskik na na'tami teli pkija'lik na lukwaqn. Na nuke' teluemk asukom te'sukuna'q attikna'sin elukwen. Toqo mu na pasik eight hours elukwewn nkutey nuke' kiskuk ji'nmuk. Elukwen na wej-a'tekemk eksitpu'k mi'soqo piluam'kwiaq. Toqo na mu teluemmaw maw klu'lk mijipjewey mestm na tujiw. Eksitpu'k na porridge malqutmn mita weli wjua'luek, tujiw na nuku' jiptuk wela'kwe'l app wlataltisk.

Ekntie'wimk elleketa'mk na Sacred Heart Church aji alame'skewultimk tujiw apateketa'mk. Teli nqase'k kisi miaw-wla'kwatalultimk aji akkie'ma'timkek na lusipayji'jk mi'soqo wqwayij piluam'kwiaq, tujiw elmita'mk aji wloqotalultimk. App ta'n tujiw kisi wloqotalultimk ki's app el'ta'mkek lusipayji'jk aji amalipqomultimkek mi'soqo suel aqatpa'q. Newte'jit na ji'nm el'toq nu'te'nmaqn aqq siaw nujo'tk we'kayiw kaqipqomultimk tujiw na nuku' elmeketa'mk. Ki's app eksitpu'k at snoqna'timkek kisna kate'ka'timkek tuitnu'jk.

Kate'ka'timk app na mu tatqite'tm-i'tikip ji'nmuk. Wet semaqita'jik sa'qew-

Frank once explained why it was that the Micmac people were so rugged and strong at one time when money for food and many other things was difficult to obtain. He said that it wouldn't even be eight o'clock in the morning and they were already in the woods hustling firewood for their homes. In those days it was out of the question that a person's cutting tool would have been anything like sophisticated. Everyone used an axe and cut all day long in order to try to fill up a sled with hardwood, so that he could head home with the load before it got dark. The men hauled so many loads out that the snow packed down as hard as some of today's roads. When each man had all but finished loading up his firewood, he would throw on a poplar to boot; then halfway home he would throw it off at this place where they were going to erect a cabin for resting up and having tea. Eventually that hut was built exactly halfway along the trail, and the men were glad to arrive there because they could rest and quench their thirst with a cup of tea.

When Saturday arrived it was a must that you chopped up enough firewood to get you through the next six days, not to mention stacking it up neatly in a pile. This work would take you almost the whole day. In other words, in those days you did strenuous work six days of the week; and it wasn't for just eight hours a day that you worked, like the men of today do. Moreover, you didn't get the best of food then either. In the mornings you ate porridge because it was very filling; evenings you might or might not get a good meal.

Sundays you'd go by foot to Mass at Sacred Heart Church; afterwards you'd walk home again. As soon as the midday meal was completed, you'd go play hockey at the reservoir until it was almost dark; then you'd walk home to have supper. And then once again after the evening meal, it was back to the reservoir for some leisure skating until almost midnight. One man in particular would make the bonfire and then maintain it until the skating was finished; when it was all over, you'd walk home a-

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eyek wutanek aqq elleketa'jik tuitnu'jk ta'n newtikiskik tl kate'ka'titaqq. Wela'kwe'l na elmleketa'mk aqq e'tasiw wen pemketnaji forty kiswa fifty pawna'laji kata. Jiptuk mtu'sats nika' wen kiskuk na nekmewey, katu na tujiw ji'nmuk naqlo'tmi'tip keskunikemk aqq amasek elleka'timk.

Tluekk ta'n koqoey wjit wejikna'tit-kik lnukik na tujiw a, na mata awisiw eyk wen lamikuomk. Kwijmuk eyu'tijik steti aqq wju'sn kelu'lk kamlamatmi'tij aqq kaqi tepiaq wen exercise mesnik attikna'sit elukwet.

## Ta'n Tel Lukutisni'k Toqwa'q

Na'tami siwkw kiplno'l poqji anki-te'tk ta'n tli tpi'ketutew suliewey wjit ta'n tel lukwasik awti'l, pilikann l'tasin kiswa lukwasin sa'qewikann. Mu o'pla'si-nukw koqoey na toqwa'q kiskattetew suliewey wjit tli pgot lukutiten.

Nike' kiskuk ta'n tujiw ketuitasik pilikann na mawi amskwesewey lakka'p mulqwatasik ewe'wut bulldozer. Amskwes ta amasteksipnek bulldozeewa'tuksin wen lakka'pm. Pike'ks na aqq qaliputi pasik. Attikneta'mk na miamuj mulqwatmik lakka'p pike'ks aqq qaliputiiktuk mi'soqo tepiske'k aqq tepi pitalqek kisalqatmik.

Kiskattek na nuku' pgoji pitkmasin. Kiskuk app na ta'n tujiw lakka'p kiskattek pgoji pitkmasin, pasik mattaqte'kewt smenta'q ta'n ki's wesko'tk kiskattek sment aqq ankmayiw pkisintew pgoji pitkmetew. Katu na tujiw ta'n ni'n wesku'tm miamuj na wpitniktuk miksewit wen. Ansma na alasukwen smentiktuk aqq attikna'sin miksewin mata mu kisi iknmatmu'n kispaten. Ta'n tujiw na espate'ji'jk we'kwi pitkmemk miamuj na

gain. The next morning it was time again to go for wood or to go eeling at East Bay.

And again the men thought nothing of going eeling. They left from the old reserve and went by foot to East Bay where they would spear eels the whole day. Toward evening they walked home again, each man carrying forty or fifty pounds of eel. Today a person would likely recoil at such a feat, but in those days men used to carry heavy loads and walk long distances without hesitation.

I would say the thing that conditioned the Micmacs in those times was that a person was seldom indoors. He was always outside where he breathed in good air and got plenty of exercise in the course of the strenuous work he performed.

## Autumn Work

Sometime around spring the government would begin to think about how it was going to distribute money for the repair of roads, the building of new homes or the fixing up of old ones. If nothing went wrong, then money to start this work would be available in the fall.

Nowadays, when a new house is about to go up, the very first thing is to dig out the basement with a bulldozer. At one time, though, the idea of dozing out a basement wasn't even thought of. You just used a pick and shovel. And that was strenuous work because that's all you used was a pick and shovel for making the hole big enough and deep enough.

Next it was time to start pouring. Once again, nowadays, when the basement is ready to be poured a person just calls up a cement company, which already has the cement

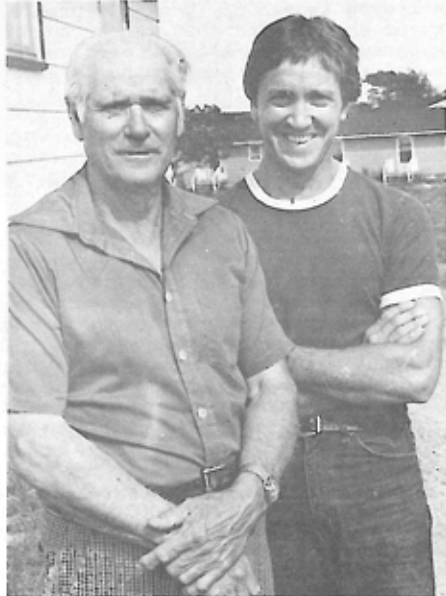


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sasqey ika'tu'n tujiw i' tqojuaijitu'n sment wheelbarrowiktuk. Na nekmewey metue'k. Newte'jit na ji'nm so'qaijitoq ke's ktik ji'nm setamk ketmoqja'latl aqq nikantuk ktik ji'nm kwetnatl a'papi'l nastaqpilitl nikantuke'l wheelbarrowiktuk. Na nekmewey kinua'tultew ta'n tell ksuks sment so'qaijitungk sasqeyiktuk. App na mu pasik puktaqianukw sment wjit lakka'pl na tujiw. Nespi pijo'tu'nl na kun'tal kwlaman ma' te'sik sment wekasinukw. Ta'n tujiw na kaqi kise'tasik lakka'p aqq aklasie'wk poqjitu'tij wenji'kuom, lnu'k app na nuji plastera'taqatipnik. Mu gyproc ewe'wasikip na tujiw.

Psike'kn app na ne'wt elalqasikek kikjiw awtik lnu'k app na kisalqatmi'tip pike'ks aqq qaliputituk. Amskwesewey psike'kn weji pgotalqasik weja'tekemk na'tami miawe'k nuke' kiskuk teluisik Gallagher St. mi'soqo sipu'ji'jk. Ta'pu-ewey psike'kn app kisalqatmi'tip weja'te-kemk sipu'ji'jk mi'soqo kikjiw so'sep mikitanlo'q i' wikip. Sipu'ji'jek app na pemiaqnek na'te'l amskwes.

Tan tujiw na kaqiaq lukwaqnn amastek na ankmi apankituksin wen. Pawe'kip suliewey tell ika'q ta'n tli apankituaen ji'nmuk. Wqwayij na kitu' nipi alasutmank apankitulk. Katu ki's na nuku' wel'ta'sin apankitulk mita mu amasenukw san'tikkla's miamuj pgoji mawteluaen.



Frank Doucette and Bernie Francis

This article is Frank Doucette's recollections as they were told to Bernie Francis. Frank told them to Bernie and Bernie wrote them out in Micmac and Doug Smith translated the Micmac into English. But the Micmac is not in Frank's exact words. Bernie explained that Frank's Micmac is really too good, too subtle and difficult for the junior high school students to whom this kind of article is aimed. Bernie said that the language used

made up, and they come out right away and begin pouring. But at the time I'm talking about, you mixed the cement by hand. You actually waded in the stuff, and mixing it was hard because if you let up, it would dry out on you. After the cement you were pouring got so high, you had to lay a plank down and then wheelbarrow the rest of the cement uphill. And this was difficult! One man would take off up the plank with the load; at the same time another man at the back would push him along, while yet another man at the front would pull on a rope which was attached at the head of the wheelbarrow. That just goes to show you how heavy cement can be when you're going uphill on a plank with it! Then, too, the cement you made basements out of in those days wasn't exactly pure. You mixed in so much rock in order to save on the cement. Finally, when the basement was done, and the house started going up, again, we people did the plastering. In those days gyproc wasn't used.

And, again, when it was time for the ditch at the side of the road to be made, it was us who did the digging with pick and shovel. The first ditch was dug from around the middle of what is called Gallagher Street today up to the brook. Then they dug the second ditch from the brook up to about where the late Joe MacDonald used to live. At one time a brook ran by that place, too.

Once all the work was done, it was still a long way off before a person got paid. The men's pay was slow in coming. It would be almost Christmas before you got it. Still, you were happy when it did arrive because the time when you had to start buying up Christmas toys was not far off.

here is common to the younger people today, that it is used on a daily basis.

"The younger people today--say in the age group of 12 to 16--would have difficulty in understanding an elder as he tells a story because of the superior knowledge the elder has about the Micmac language." (Is this the case even when it is spoken?) "Oh, yes. The younger person might get the gist of what the elder is saying --but if he was telling a story from way, way back, he would use words he would not normally use in conversation."

Bernie explained that because there has not been written material in the Micmac language, even to this day, the younger people have not been able to grow in sophistication in terms of their own language. This is the purpose of the new writing system. "Nobody up to this point knows how to read and write Micmac well. So we devised a new writing system a couple of years ago and have been promoting it."

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