



A Further Account of the Beothucs of Newfoundland

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Source: *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 5 (1876), pp. 222-230

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](#)

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From the SOCIETY.—Proceedings of the Royal Society. Vol. XXIII.
No. 161.

From the AUTHOR.—Principles of Mythonomy. By Luke Burke.
From the EDITOR.—Nature (to date.)

FOR THE MUSEUM.

From J. MILLIGAN, Esq.—Tasmanian Necklace.

From Dr. JOHN SHORTT.—Skeleton of Male Hindu (Soudra).

The following papers were read by their authors:—

A FURTHER ACCOUNT of the BEOTHUCS of NEWFOUNDLAND.

By T. G. B. LLOYD, C.E., F.G.S., M.A.I. [With Plate vii.]

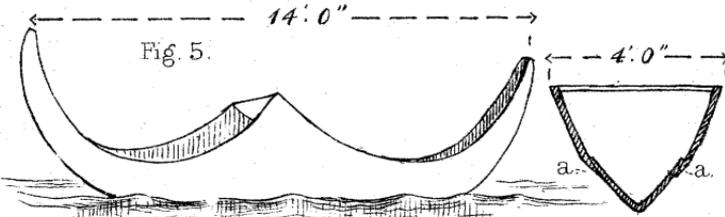
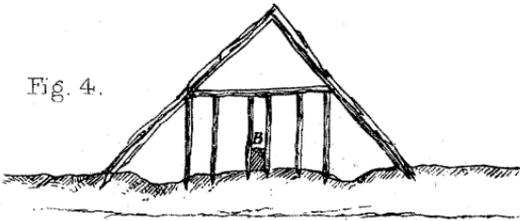
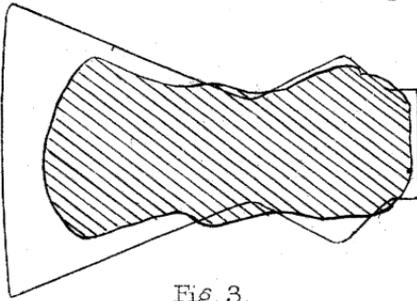
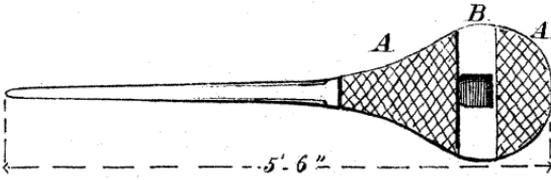
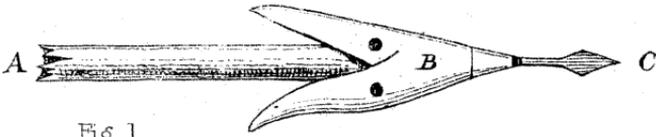
THE following account of the Aborigines of Newfoundland is a continuation of the subject of a paper I had the honour of laying before the Institute last year.*

The second paper contains a description of a number of stone implements which I discovered during a cruise round the island last summer, and inferences as to the probability that the Beothucs were the fabricators of them, and of the origin and probable destiny of that people. In an extract from the voyages of Cabot, given at the commencement of my former paper, mention is made of savages having been seen on St. John's Island. It appears to be a matter of doubt whether the Island of Newfoundland is there referred to, or whether Prince Edward Island, which was for a long time known as the "Isle of St. John," may not have been the one to which Cabot alludes.†

Old Camping Grounds; Bonavista Bay.—On the north-west shore of "Bloody Bay Run," at the north side of the entrance to Rocky Bay, in Bonavista Bay, a narrow, gravelly beach connects an outlying mass of rock on the east with the mainland. It is about a quarter of a mile long, and of an average width of about 120 yards, being narrowest in the middle, and widening out on the east and west. Its flat surface, which rises about 5 or 6 feet above sea level, is partially covered with long grass, the centre portion being bare of vegetation. On the western side of the bar are two rows of circular pits, numbering thirteen in one and three in the other. At the eastern end a row of three pits was visible, which corresponded in direction with the longer row at the western end. They averaged about 12 feet in diameter, and were placed at distances from each other varying from 3 feet to 24 feet. Their depths also differed: some of them were about 2 feet in depth, whilst others did not exceed 6 or 7 inches. All the pits were flat at the bottom. The relics of their former occupants comprised a piece of round iron, about 4 inches

* See "Journ. Anthropol. Inst.," vol. iv. p. 21.

† See the "Maritime Monthly," vol. iv. p. 291-92.



IMPLEMENTS, &c USED BY THE BEOTHUGS.

long, flattened at one end, and very much rusted; some stones, bearing marks of fire upon them; a few lones; and a small heap of single valves of shells of *Mya arenaria* and clams. It will be observed that the locality selected by the Beothucs is well adapted for a fishing station, besides commanding an uninterrupted view across the sea to the north and south.

Mouth of Victoria Brook; Red Indian Pond.—Victoria Brook, the principal tributary of the Exploits river, enters the south side of Red Indian Pond through three outlets. On a low sandy point, projecting from the eastern side of the chief outlet into the pond, were the remains of a small encampment; in a small clearing amongst the alder bushes, three circular wigwam pits were arranged in a straight line, near the water's edge. One of them was 15 feet in diameter, and the other two measured 10 feet 6 inches across the middle. They were placed about 7 feet apart. Numerous small fragments of bones were found in the centre of the larger one. The remains of a circular trench were visible around its edge.

The camping ground stands on the line along which the Caribou deer are accustomed to cross Red Indian Pond during their periodical migrations. Judging from the small size of the encampment, and its situation, it was probably used only at such times.

Red Point.—Eastern Arm of Red Indian Pond.—Near the edge of a steep bank of drift overlooking the water, and about thirty feet above it, was a group of wigwam pits, twenty-one in number. At a short distance to the east was another series of pits, which extended as far as Low Point, where the Micmac wigwam is built. The largest pit of the group commanded an uninterrupted view across the arm of the pond. It was in all probability so placed for observing the movements of the deer when crossing over to the point below. A circular excavation had on one side a raised bank of earth, about four feet high above the bottom of the trench inside. The top of the bank slopes gradually down to Low Point, where it is not more than three or four feet above the pond. The largest pit I have seen measured thirty-three feet in diameter. The Micmac trapper of the district gave me the following description of the wigwam, which was formerly erected over it. (Plate VII. fig. 4.) He received the account from his father, who hunted over the same grounds about forty years ago.* It was built with

* Bancroft, in his interesting volume on the "Native Races of the Pacific States of North America," in describing the various devices used by the Columbians for capturing game, says the frightened deer are driven into an ambush by converging lines of bright-coloured rags, so placed in the bushes as to represent men—p. 264.

eight sides, at the corners of which upright posts were driven to carry a bow frame for supporting the sides of the wigwam. The entrance is shown at B. Inside one of the pits a few strips of decayed birch bark and fragments of charcoal were found, and in and around others a considerable number of the broken shafts, and articular ends of marrow-bones of deer, besides some astragali, lay under the turf. Almost all the marrow-bones were broken off short at the ends, but one was found which had been split open lengthwise, in the manner usual amongst the Micmac hunters. These people have been accustomed to camp on the spot for the last forty years. It is, therefore, not surprising that the refuse-heaps of the original and present occupiers of the place should be found mingled together.*

About three miles to the north of the eastern arm there is a deer fence, running in a direction north and south, across a wide marsh. It has been reconstructed by the Micmac Indians, partly out of the old materials left by the Beothucs, who formerly built one on the same site. The stakes, which are, for the most part, those planted by the Beothucs, have been re-stuck in the ground in a zigzag manner, and on their tops, which now stand about three or four feet above the surface, were placed sods of grass, to serve the same purpose as the "sewels" described in my former paper. This fence formerly extended as far as the south-east side of Grand Pond, a distance of about thirty-five miles, as marked on one of the maps of North Island. There are also remains of another fence on the north-east of the same pond.

The other localities where remains of old encampments still exist in the district of the river Exploits are as follow:—Right bank of Exploits river, about three or four miles north-east of the mouth of Noel Paul's Brook; junction of Badger Brook with a stream running from Little Red Indian Pond; Rushy Pond, on left bank of Exploits river. Besides these there are a few between Grand Pond and Hall's Bay on the Indian Brook.

Mr. Alex. Murray, of St. John's, told me he had found, about four or five years ago, remains of poles and birch bark coverings of wigwams at Badger Brook.

Canoes (Pl. VII. figs. 5, 6).—In a foot-note in my former paper (p. 27) I expressed a fear that the shutting-up of the canoe, as described by Mr. John Peyton, would have caused the joint (fig. 6, *a, a*) at the keel of the canoe to open and let in the water. During a short interview with Mr. Peyton in November last, he gave me to understand that the joint in question was made of a *kind of plaster*, by which, his

* It is customary among the Micmac Indians to divide the hunting grounds into separate districts, which descend from father to son.

son told me, he referred to a strip of deerskin, which was fastened to the lower edges of the birch bark, thus forming a flexible hinge, by which means the canoe could be folded up without injury. Mr. Thomas Peyton, who said he once found the remains of a canoe, described the side of it as consisting of two sheets of bark, the edges of which formed a joint half-way between the keel and the gunwale.*

The *Arrow*, of which Cartwright gives a description (see former paper, p. 28) was fitted with an ornamentally carved horn, fastened to the shaft by iron pins. Mr. Peyton told me he had one in his possession, but was unable to find it during my visit.

The *Harpoon* which the Beothucs used for killing seals differed only in the shape of the head from those made use of by the Eskimo of the north-east coast of Labrador. Fig. 1, pl. VII. is a copy of the sketch which was drawn for me by Mr. John Peyton. The wooden shaft, A, is inserted in a socket in the barbed piece of bone, B, in which are *two* holes for the attachment of cords. Into the extremity of B an iron point of a lozenge shape, C, was driven. The object of the second hole is not apparent.

Snow-shoes (Pl. VII. fig. 2).—The snow-shoes were of a somewhat different shape and construction from the ordinary North American type, resembling the racket of our English game, inasmuch as they were broader in the nose, and far longer and more taper in the tail, which caused the ends to bend upwards under the weight of the body. A board, with a hole in it to receive the toes, B, was fixed across the middle of the "racket" bow, A A. The matting was composed of "seal skin or of cord" (or more probably, I should think, of babiche made of deer or seal skin).

During my first visit to Mr. John Peyton, in reply to the question, "How did the Beothucs obtain fire?" he replied, that they ignited the down of the blue jay † by sparks struck from two pieces of iron pyrites. This statement I omitted in my former paper, on account of its apparent improbability; but one evening during my stay last fall in the wigwam of the Micmac hunter Johnny Joe, my guide, Reuben Soulianne, remarked that the Red Indians were witches, for they could raise a fog through which to escape; to which credible statement, when pursued, Johnny Joe added, "Yes, and could kindle a fire from the down

* At the present time it is difficult to get birch bark in North Island of a sufficiently good quality for making canoes. There is only one locality known where such can be procured, and I have been told that an old Indian named Noel Paul is the only man left who is capable of making them.

† The bird spoken of is not the blue jay, but the Canadian jay (*Corvus canadensis*), which is a constant attendant at meal-time in the bush. It is ordinarily called the blue jay by the Newfoundlanders.

of a blue jay and pieces of mundic, or flint and steel." Subsequently I mentioned the subject to a seafaring man, whom I met at Jil's Cave, who told me he had seen the feathers of the blue jay take fire and blaze up like paper. On repeating to Thomas Peyton what his father had said, he told me it was quite a mistake. I regret I did not put the question to his father; but from the circumstance that he now, at the age of eighty, had become very deaf and failing in memory, I found it very embarrassing to obtain even the few details I got from him during an evening's visit.

The *iron axe*, which I obtained from Johnny Joe, who said he found it at the bottom of Red Indian Pond, was recognised by Mr. J. Peyton as one of those which had been stolen by the Beothucs from the white settlers. It was originally of the shape shown by the outline in the sketch (Pl. VII. fig. 3), and must have been a clumsy tool, such as the British woodman uses at the present day.

The Indians had, it seems, cut away the wings, so as to form an implement, as far as was possible, like a tomahawk, as shown by the shaded part of the figure.* The groove on each side shows where the process of conversion was discontinued. Some such tool as a cold chisel must, I imagine, have been used in the operation.

An *iron arrow-head*, with the mark of the broad arrow upon it, was found near the mouth of Badger Brook. It is one of a number made for Lieutenant Buchan, who, with Mr. Peyton, conveyed them to the places frequented by the Beothucs, and tied them up in bundles to the branches of the trees for their use. According to Mr. Peyton, they were far inferior in workmanship to those manufactured by the Indians.

Mr. James Howley, of St. John's, has given me some information obtained from Mr. Peyton some time ago, which is as follows:—The Beothucs were a much finer and handsomer race than the Micmacs, having more regular features and aquiline noses; nor were they so dark in the skin. They were of middle stature, and of a very active build. They did not appear to be so fond of gaudy colours as their continental neighbours. They constructed a wall of stones, clay, and sods on the outside of the trenches of their wigwam pits.

Further information regarding the Red Indian, in the Museum at St. John's, Newfoundland.—Mr. Alexander Murray, in answer to my queries, says, in a letter, dated March 19th, 1875: "I have made a discovery regarding the Red Indian skull I have. It appears that Dr. Winter, of this place,

* The shape of the American axe of the present day appears to have been copied from the stone implement of the country.

took it and a thigh bone from the skeleton which was found on the straight shore opposite the Indian Islands, in Sir Charles Hamilton's Sound. The skeleton, according to Dr. Winter, had been wrapped in birch bark, and buried in a sitting posture, and had various stone implements entombed, together with large crystals of iron pyrites to strike fire with when he woke up again. Dr. Winter further states, that the remains bore evidences of having been shot, some large seal- or swan-shot being found sticking in the bones, some of which and the skull were fractured."

They had a very ingenious mode of preserving their venison in a fresh state; they first of all cut it into thin strips, and after having taken out the veins and sinews, and washed away the blood, they packed it in alternate layers of meat and melted tallow, in a casing of birch bark, which they bound up tightly, thus forming an hermetically-sealed mass. On one occasion when Mr. Peyton was on an excursion up the river Exploit, he surprised a party of Indians at dinner; they took to the woods on seeing him, leaving everything behind. A tin kettle, stolen from the fishermen, was hanging over the fire, in which venison was boiling. It is a curious circumstance that the Indians, on seeing a gun in the hands of a white man, would instantly fly for their lives; but as soon as it was discharged, they would return and take it in their hands, and examine it with the greatest curiosity. If this be true, it would indicate that they must have been, at one time, on familiar terms with the white population. (See former paper, p. 22).

The skull of a woman which I saw in the Museum of the Geological Survey, at St. John's, Newfoundland, at the time of my visit in the year 1873, had a label attached to it, "Skull of Red Indian." My inquiries at the time as to its true history were not satisfactory; I therefore hesitated to affirm its authenticity. However, on my return to Newfoundland last year, I made further inquiries respecting it, with the following result:—The Indian woman, Shawnadithit, mentioned in the former paper, who was at the time living in Mr. Peyton's house, procured the skull for the explorer Cormack, to whom she presented it, together with a lock of her hair and other small articles. The whole of these were given by Cormack to the Beothuc Society of St. John's, and, subsequently, were transferred to the Athenæum there, from whence they were finally removed, together with some stone pots, axes, and arrow-heads, to the Museum of the Geological Survey under Mr. Murray's care.

Mr. Peyton's answers to some miscellaneous queries re-

specting the Beothucs.—The Newfoundland dogs were savage towards the Indians, and whenever Mary March touched one of them, it would show signs of anger.

The Indians worshipped the sun if they worshipped anything; but it is not known whether they had any religion. They had single wives, and the women were chaste. They left the hair on the skins, which they used for clothing, clipping it short, and wearing the hairy side next the skin. They dressed the skins soft and supple.

Old Paul, the Micmac trapper of Exploits river, told me he believed the last of the Red Indians perished from starvation during the winter time, after having been driven away northwards. There is a tradition that the remnant of them, after climbing to the summit of "Indian" Hill (Half-way Mountain of the maps), took a track northwards, and were never seen again.

The most important evidence regarding the ultimate fate of the "Last of the Beothucs," is that given me by Mr. Murray. He was told by Mrs. Peyton, that according to a statement made to her by Shawnadithit, the Indian woman who lived with her, only fourteen individuals of her tribe were then living (about the year 1825).

An anecdote of Mary March, related to me by Mr. John Peyton, may serve to illustrate in a measure her natural disposition. After her capture, she refused to take any food from anyone except himself, and used to sleep in the tent by his side. One night she was missing from her accustomed place. At dawn of day a search for her was made. She was at last discovered crouching in the snow about two or three hundred yards from the tent. It appeared that, having taken off her deerskin dress, and laid it under her on the snow, she had dragged herself along on her hands and knees, without leaving any mark of her track behind her, except that made by the dragging of the skin. On finding she was discovered, she bared her breasts, thus disclosing her sex, of which Mr. Peyton was unaware, as the men and women dressed alike. She soon became attached to him, and would place his snow-shoes under her pillow on retiring to rest, for fear he should leave her behind.

Cooking Utensils.—In my former paper (at p. 22) an account is given of the vessels of birch bark which were found by some English sailors in an encampment of the Beothuc Indians whilst a feast was going on. Now, it is doubtful whether the pots were hung over the fire, or whether the water therein was boiled by throwing in hot stones. Cormack, in his account of an expedition across Newfoundland, says, in reference to the

remains found in an Indian village :—“There was also discovered the remains of a vapour bath. The method of raising the steam was by pouring water on large stones, made very hot by a pile of fuel around them. After the ashes were cleared away, a framework closely covered with skins, to exclude the external air, was fixed over the stones. The patient then crept in under the skins, taking with him a birch-bark bucket of water and a small bark dish, by which he poured the water on the heated stones.” The “three stems” which supported them may have been three sticks, bound together at their upper ends, from which the kettle was suspended.* It appears that the Beothucs did not make any kind of pottery; but, according to Mr. Peyton, they manufactured vessels of soap-stone, a circumstance to which I shall refer again in my description of the stone implements.

The Vocabulary.—At p. 37 of my former paper will be found a vocabulary of the language of the Beothuc Indians. In order to get a start on the right trail, I wrote a letter to Dr. R. G. Latham, enclosing a copy of my paper, in answer to which I received a reply, from which the following is an extract :

“The Beothucs were ‘Algonkin,’ as opposed to ‘Eskimo,’ and as Algonkins they were not a mere branch of the Micmacs, Scoffies, and the like, of the main continent. They were members of a division of their own—not a very distant one, but still a separate one.

“Upon my inspection of your vocabulary, I venture, *meo periculo*, on the following conjectures, though I, of course, look upon them as certainties :—

“‘*Good night.*’ This is the word in which the ethnological name originated. It was the word caught up by the earlier discoverers, *i.e.* the Beothuc Indians—the ‘Good-night Indians.’ This is a recognised process of developing names. The root ‘kuis’ = ‘sun,’ and ‘moon’; *kuis* = light. Under ‘moon,’ ‘*kuis* [and] *washewnish*’—light of night; being a compound, and *not* two synonymous words. (See ‘*night.*’) The same is doubtless the case with ‘sun’—light of day, though, as we have no word for day, we cannot prove it. Most of the Algonkin languages illustrate this.”

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VII.

Fig. 1.—Harpoon-head used by Beothucs (from Mr. Peyton’s sketch). A, wooden shaft; B, barbed piece of bone; C, triangular head of iron.

* I have been told by the Micmac Indians that water can be boiled in such vessels over a fire, if done in a gradual manner.

Fig. 2.—Snow-shoe, used by Beothucs. A A, netting of cord or sealskin; B, board, with foot-hole.

Fig. 3.—Axe found in Red Indian Pond, Newfoundland. The outline shows probable original shape of axe, whilst the shaded part of the figure represents its form as converted into a tomahawk by the Beothucs.

Fig. 4.—Section through centre of a Beothuc wigwam. B, the entrance.

Fig. 5.—Red Indian Canoe of Newfoundland.

Fig. 6.—Sketch-section of canoe amidships.

DISCUSSION.

MR. E. B. TYLOR inquired whether any exact description has been preserved of the complexion of the Beothucs. The presence of fair tribes on the north-west coast of America, described as not darker than Spaniards, and as sometimes with blue eyes, had given rise to ethnological speculations as to immigration of tribes from Asia, &c. The similar phenomenon of fair tribes appearing in Newfoundland seems to throw light on this problem, but the mere assertion that their complexion was fair is too vague to found an argument upon.

MR. LLOYD, in reply to the query respecting the complexions of the Beothuc Indians, said that, in the opinion of Mr. John Peyton, who is the only man now living who was familiar with their personal appearance and with their complexions, they resembled gipsies or Spaniards.

DESCRIPTION of two BEOTHUC SKULLS. By GEO. BUSK, F.R.S., V.P. Anth. Inst. [With Plate viii.]

MR. LLOYD, on his late visit to Newfoundland, was unable to obtain any skull belonging to the aboriginal Indian inhabitants, although he was afforded an opportunity of inspecting several, and had a photographic view of one taken. Owing to the circumstance, however, that this view had been taken from the skull in an oblique position, and was without any scale of measurement, it was not available for the determination of the craniological characters.

But as he was desirous of supplementing his remarks upon the "Beothucs of Newfoundland" by some account of their cranial peculiarities, I have, at his instance, been very liberally allowed the opportunity of examining and figuring two authentic specimens of the skull of that people, which are now in the Edinburgh Museum, having, I believe, been presented to the late Professor Jamieson, by Mr. M'Cormack, in 1826.