

Cape Breton Island

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Welcome to Cape Breton Island

Part One

Word Preview

geography	latitude	longitude	area	island
coastline	formed	volcanic		
sediment	continents	glaciers	boulders	
North	south	east	west	

Why do so many people find Cape Breton Island interesting? Is it because of the quiet beauty of the island? Is it because of its colourful history? Is it because of the way of life of its people? Probably all these reasons explain the interest in Cape Breton Island.

How much do you think you know about Cape Breton Island? This section will give some information about the geography of this interesting place.

Where is Cape Breton Island?

Cape Breton Island is on the east coast of Canada. It is on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. This one fact is important in the history of Cape Breton Island. The western side of the island is on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which is where the St. Lawrence River empties.



Place Names

- Cape Breton Island
- Canada
- Atlantic Ocean
- Gulf of St. Lawrence
- St. Lawrence River
- Nova Scotia
- Bras d'Or Lakes
- Portugal
- Northern Africa
- Ingonish
- Creignish
- Boisdale

Cape Breton Island lies between 45 and 47 degrees north latitude. It also lies between 59 and 61 degrees west longitude.

Map 1: Cape Breton Island in the World



How Big is Cape Breton Island?

Cape Breton Island is 175 kilometres (110 miles) long and 140 kilometres (87 miles) wide. It has an area of 10,600 square kilometres (6,625 square miles). Cape Breton Island is connected to mainland Nova Scotia by the Canso Causeway which is one kilometre (0.6 miles) long. The causeway is a man-made land and bridge link. The island's beautiful coastline is more than 1,000 kilometres (650 miles) long. The coastline is an interesting mix of rocky shores, cliffs, narrow points of land and beaches.

In the middle of the island are the Bras d'Or Lakes. Together, these salt

water lakes are 80 kilometres (50 miles) long and 32 kilometres (20 miles) wide. Bras d'Or in French means "arm of gold." When the sun sets on these lakes, it is not hard to understand why the French would give it this name. But, there is one other story behind this name. Some people think the lakes were named after an explorer from Portugal who was a llabrador, the word for a Portuguese landowner.

How was Cape Breton Made?

Cape Breton Island was formed about 750 million years ago from volcanic rock that cooled. It had been under the ocean. When it pushed up above the water, it also brought sediment with it that became part of the island. Cape Breton Island was not always where it is now. In fact, when the earth was first forming, all the land was joined together. Cape Breton Island was near where Northern Africa is today. But over millions of years large blocks of land drifted away into the continents we have today.

The land continued to change. It rose and fell and folded over itself many times over the years. This gave us mountains and valleys. The highest mountain on the island is White Hill, near Ingonish. It is 532.62 metres (1,747 feet) high. Nature's last big change to the land came from glaciers.

Glaciers started moving over Cape Breton Island about one million years ago. They scraped the hills in Creignish, Boisdale, Mabou, Mira and East Bay until they were all about the same height. The weight of the glaciers created the Bras d'Or Lakes. In some places, the glaciers scraped off soil leaving bare rock.



Place Names Continued

- Mira
- East Bay
- Mira River
- United States

In other places, glaciers moved boulders to new places. For example, at Mary

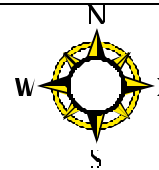
Anne Falls, in the Cape Breton Highlands, there are large round boulders that are unlike any of the rocks around them. Glaciers moved them there from somewhere else.

Cape Breton Island also has many rivers and streams. The largest river is the Mira River. All these rivers help to drain water from the land into the sea.

Map Skills

Finding Directions

North, South, East and West



North, south, east and west are directions. They are based on the sun.

north - the direction to your right, if you are facing the sunset. It also means any place toward the north compared to another place.

Example: Canada is north of the United States.

south - the direction to your left, if you are facing the sunset. It also means any place toward the south compared to another place.

Example: Cape Breton Island is further south than Greenland.

east - the direction you would be facing if you watched the sun rise. It also means any place toward the east compared to another place.

Example: His farm is 20 kilometres east of the city.

west - the direction you would be facing if you watched the sunset. It also means any place toward the west compared to another.

Example: Manitoba is to the west of Ontario.

Most maps, but not all maps, will have north at the top of the page, south on the bottom, east on the right and west on the left. There are often arrows on maps that tell you which way the direction are.

1. Look in an atlas and find a map with direction arrows. If you are using the Nystrom Canadian Desk Atlas, where are the arrows on page 52?
2. On a map of the Atlantic Provinces, what province is Nova Scotia closest to?
3. What three islands is Cape Breton Island close to?
4. What state in the United States is Nova Scotia closest to? (Page 50 in the Nystrom atlas.)
5. On a map of Canada, which province is furthest west?
6. On a map of Canada, is Quebec to the east or the west of Ontario?
7. On a map of Canada, what is to the north of Alberta?
8. Would you say Toronto is in the south of Canada, or the north?
9. On a large map of Cape Breton Island, find the following: the Bras d'Or Lakes, Ingonish, Mabou, the Mira River, St. Peter's, Glace Bay, Cape Breton.

Comprehension Questions

1. What connects Nova Scotia to Cape Breton Island?
2. Where was Cape Breton Island when the earth was just forming?
3. Where is the highest point on Cape Breton Island?
4. Name three ways glaciers left their mark on Cape Breton Island.
5. Do the Bras d'Or Lakes have salt water or fresh water in them?
6. How long is Cape Breton Island's coastline?



Longitude and Latitude

Longitude and latitude are terms that are used all over the world to find places. They are imaginary lines on the surface of the earth. They show on maps and globes, like the one shown here.

Lines of latitude — These lines go east and west to show distances north or south of the equator. The equator is the imaginary line around the biggest part of the earth. The equator is zero degrees latitude. The greatest distances from the equator are to the North Pole (90 degrees north) or to the South Pole (90 degrees south).

Lines of longitude — These lines go north and south to show distances east or west of the starting point which is the Prime Meridian (zero degrees). The Prime Meridian passes through Greenwich, England. The greatest distance from the Prime Meridian is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, half-way around the world from Greenwich. The greatest distance is 180 degrees east or west from Greenwich.

Latitude and longitude lines cross each other to tell us exactly where a place is located. For example, Louisbourg is almost on the 60 degrees west longitude line and is just a little above the 45 degrees north line of latitude. If we wanted to tell someone where Louisbourg is we would tell them to look near 60 degrees west, 46 degrees north.

More Map Skills

1. On a map of Canada (pages 42-43 in the Nystrom Canadian Desk Atlas), look at the border between the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. What line of longitude is the border on?
2. What lines of longitude is Nova Scotia between?
3. What line of longitude goes through Cape Breton Island?

More Map Skills Continued

4. What lines of longitude is Newfoundland between?
5. What lines of latitude is New Brunswick between?
6. What line of latitude is the border between British Columbia and the Yukon Territories on?
7. What line of latitude runs through Ellesmere Island?
8. Is the 70 degrees north line of latitude north or south of the Arctic Circle?
9. On a map of the Atlantic Provinces (page 52 in the Nystrom Canadian Desk Atlas), what line of longitude is Gander, Newfoundland, closest to?
10. What line of latitude runs through the top of Labrador?
11. Using lines of latitude and longitude, describe where the following places are: Sable Island; Moncton, New Brunswick; Sydney, Nova Scotia; the Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

Using Vocabulary

geography**island****coastline****area**

Choose words from the word bank above to complete the sentences below.

1. Greenland is an _____ because there is water all around it.
2. The study of _____ tells us about different places in the world.
3. I know where there is a nice picnic _____ in this park.
4. This _____ has lots of hiding places that pirates could have used.

Welcome to Cape Breton Island

Word Preview

bogs

climate

humid

symbol

Mi'kmaq

Europeans

Vikings

controlled

Part Two

Land, Climate and Wildlife

Early settlers on Cape Breton Island soon learned that most of the soil on the island is not good for farming. It is rocky, with many bogs. Cleared land that is left alone is quickly taken over by evergreen trees, such as spruce and fir. Cape Breton Island is thickly covered with forests. Many parts of the island have trees such as balsam fir, red spruce, white spruce, birch, tamarack and pine. In some northern parts of the island, the reds, oranges and yellows of sugar maples and other hardwood trees make the scenery something people look forward to in the fall of the year.

The climate on Cape Breton Island is cool and humid. The island has four seasons. Most of the snow falls in January. Late July can be quite hot. Spring hardly seems to



Place Names

- Cape Breton Island
- Nova Scotia
- Cape Breton Highlands National Park
- United States
- Bras d'Or Lakes
- England
- Portugal
- Spain
- France
- Atlantic Provinces
- Cape Breton County
- Richmond County
- Inverness County
- Victoria County

happen. The cold weather hangs on and on and then suddenly, it's summer. It has been said that summer and fall on the island are wonderful, winter is hard and spring is rotten.



Most kinds of wildlife in Nova Scotia can be found on Cape Breton Island except for two animals—skunks and porcupines. The Mi'kmaq, who lived in Cape Breton for thousands of years before Europeans arrived, tried to bring porcupines to the island. They used porcupine quills in their crafts. They didn't want to have to go to Nova Scotia to get them. However, the porcupine never survived on Cape Breton Island.



Black bears, beavers, bobcats, chipmunks, otters and snowshoe hares are common on the island, along with white-tailed deer. Moose and caribou roam the Cape Breton Highlands National Park. The island does have two kinds of animals that are hard to find on mainland Nova Scotia. The lynx still lives in wooded parts of the island. The marten, known for its thick fur, does well on Cape Breton Island, though it is extinct in Nova Scotia.



Cape Breton Island has many birds such as blue jays, yellow finches and chickadees, ducks and herring gulls, but its most famous bird is the bald eagle. This symbol of the United States is hard to find there. However, it can be spotted in the Cape Breton Highlands National Park and on the shores of the Bras d'Or.

People

The Mi'kmaq have lived on Cape Breton Island for about 10,000 years. The first Europeans to visit the coast of Cape Breton Island were the Vikings, about 1,000 years ago. John Cabot found Cape Breton Island for England in 1497 and

took back interesting news about the island—the waters around it were filled with fish! Soon other countries such as Portugal, Spain and France heard about the fish. It wasn't long before fishermen from all these countries were fishing near Cape Breton Island.

For more than 100 years, the English and French fought battles to take control over what are now the Atlantic provinces. The French controlled the island for a time before finally losing it to England in 1763. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, thousands of Scottish people came to Cape Breton Island. Around the year 1900, people came from many other countries to work in the island's coal mines and steel plants. The island had its most people by about 1940. The jobs in steel and coal are gone now and some people are leaving the island. In 1996, 117,849 people lived on the island. By 2001, there were only 109,330 people living on Cape Breton Island.

Cape Breton Island's Counties

Cape Breton Island is part of the province of Nova Scotia. It has four counties. People are elected in each county to look after such things as fire protection, garbage collection, building permits and collecting property taxes. In 1835, the Nova Scotia government divided the island into three counties—Cape Breton County, (in the northeast of the island), Richmond County (in the south) and Juste au Corps (in the northwest of the island), which was later called Inverness County. In 1852, Victoria County was carved out of Cape Breton County to make four counties.

* * * * *

Comprehension Questions

1. What did early settlers learn about the soil on Cape Breton Island?
2. Why do some people say spring on the island is rotten?
3. Why did the Mi'kmaq want porcupine to live on Cape Breton Island?
4. What two animals are found on Cape Breton Island, but not in Nova Scotia?
5. Where on Cape Breton Island might you see a bald eagle?
6. Who were the first Europeans to visit Cape Breton Island?
7. What was John Cabot's good news about Cape Breton Island?
8. Which Cape Breton Island county was the last one to be formed?

Using Vocabulary

Draw a line between each word in **Column A** and the phrase in **Column B** that best matches it.

<u>Column A</u>	<u>Column B</u>
bogs	People from Scandinavia who sailed on the sea about 1,000 years ago
humid	The first people to live on Cape Breton Island
symbol	People who live in Europe
Mi'kmaq	Had power over
Europeans	Something that stands for something else
Vikings	Areas of wet, soggy ground
controlled	Damp

Using Vocabulary Continued

Watch Out for Climate and Weather!



Climate means the average temperature, rainfall, humidity and wind over a long time. **Weather** means these things over a short time.

Examples: He likes living in the warmer climate of Florida.
The weather last week was terrible!

Complete these sentences correctly using climate or weather.

1. Because of her health, they had to move to a drier _____.
2. What is the _____ going to be tomorrow?
3. In Cape Breton Island they say, "If you don't like the _____ out your front door, look out your back door!"
4. The _____ in this part of the country seems to be getting warmer.
5. The _____ was beautiful here last summer.

More Directions

How would you describe the location of a place that wasn't exactly north of where you were and not exactly west, but sort of in-between? You would say it was northwest. We combine two directions when the place we are talking about is in-between.

For example, look at a map of Nova Scotia (page 52, in the Nystrom Canadian Desk Atlas). Find Halifax. Now find Cape Breton Island. Cape Breton Island is not exactly north of Halifax and not exactly east. Cape Breton Island is northeast of Halifax.

More Directions Continued

Look at a map of Newfoundland on page 52 in the Nystrom Canadian Desk Atlas. The city of St. John's is in the southeast corner of Newfoundland, because it is south and east of the rest of the island.

Try these locations yourself.

1. On page 52 in the Nystrom Canadian Desk Atlas, what direction are the Madeleine Islands in relation to Cape Breton Island?
2. What direction is Cape Sable in relation to Halifax?
3. In what part of Cape Breton Island is the Cape Breton Highlands National Park?
4. On a map of Canada (pages 42-43 in the Nystrom Canadian Desk Atlas) in what part of Canada is Nova Scotia?
5. On the same map, in what part of Canada is the Yukon Territory?
6. What direction is Grande Prairie, Alberta, in relation to Calgary, Alberta?

Further Activities

1. Bring in as many samples of leaves and twigs as you can of trees that grow naturally on Cape Breton Island. Don't forget mosses, cranberries, blueberries and ground juniper.
2. In an atlas or on a map of the world, find the countries listed in the "Place" box for this reading.
3. On a map of Cape Breton Island, find the boundary lines that separate each county.
4. On a map of Cape Breton Island, find five rivers in each county.

The Mi'kmaw Nation

Part One

Word Preview				
archeologists	ownership	responsible	territories	
district	local	decisions	dwellings	tanned
sinew	charcoal	decorations	herbal	consensus
tuberculosis	ailments	wrapped	wound	turpentine

“Mi'kmaq” and “Mi'kmaw”

Mi'kmaq means “the family” and should be used as a noun, or the subject of a sentence. **Example:** The Mi'kmaq had their own laws.

Mi'kmaw is the singular of Mi'kmaq. **Example:** He is a Mi'kmaw.

Mi'kmaw is also an adjective. **Example:** The Mi'kmaw people have lived here a long time. Mi'kmaw treaties were signed with England.

The Mi'kmaq were the first people to live in what we now call Cape Breton Island. They lived all over the Atlantic provinces and in the southern part of the Gaspé Peninsula. We know they have been in Nova Scotia for more than 10,000 years because of things archaeologists have found near Debert, Colchester County, and Dartmouth, Halifax County. The Mi'kmaq called the land where they lived Mi'kma'ki.

The Mi'kmaq were nomadic people and did not live in the same place all the

time. They moved from place to place, depending on where there was the most food. During most of the year, they lived close to the sea coast. Here they could catch fish, whales, walrus, seals, lobster, eels, and seabirds. They also hunted for moose, caribou, beaver and smaller animals. In winter, they would move further into the forest to hunt.

Mi'kmaw Religion

The Mi'kmaw way of life and the things the Mi'kmaq believed in were based on respect for the land and every living thing. They believed all life was created by one Great Spirit. They believed animals, fish and plants also had spirits and should be respected. They wasted nothing.

To waste something would be a sign of disrespect to the Creator who had made it.

They believed all living things are connected in a circle. They did not see themselves as the most important of all living things, like the people from Europe who came later did. The Europeans believed humans were the most important living things and should control and use nature any way they wanted. Because the Mi'kmaq saw themselves as part of a circle of life, they prayed in a circle and danced in a circle.

Mi'kmaw Government

The respect for the land that the Mi'kmaq had made them very different from Europeans in another important way. The Mi'kmaq did not believe in land ownership. They believed land was not a thing you could own, but a thing you



Place Names

- Cape Breton Island
- Atlantic Provinces
- Gaspé Peninsula
- Nova Scotia
- Debert
- Colchester County
- Dartmouth

must be responsible for, because without it life is impossible. This respect for the land helped shape the way the Mi'kmaq governed themselves.

The Mi'kma'ki area was divided into seven districts. Each district had a district chief. These district chiefs were part of a Grand Council. The Grand Council gave hunting territories to different groups and were leaders in war and peace with other First Nation groups in other areas. The Grand Council met each spring and fall.

Under each district chief were the local chiefs of each village or band. Because the Mi'kmaq respected the rights of others to live on the land, they respected the hunting territories of others when they traveled out of their own territories.

How the Mi'kmaq governed themselves was another way in which the Mi'kmaq were very different from Europeans. The Mi'kmaq believed decisions should be made by consensus. If someone did not agree with an idea, the group would keep talking about it until they came up with another idea that everyone could agree with. They did not believe some people had to accept an idea just because many others liked it.



Wigwam

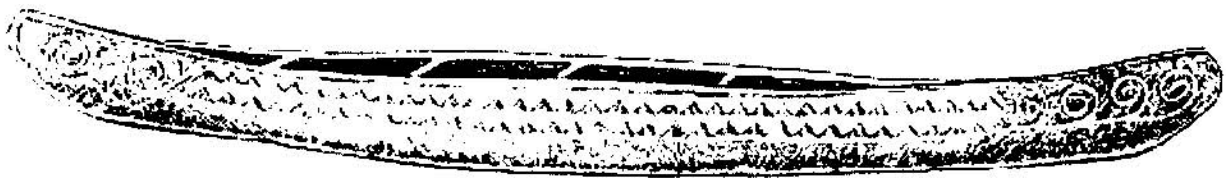
Use of Nature

Because the Mi'kmaq moved from place to place, they lived in dwellings that could be quickly put up and taken down. These dwellings were called wigwams. They were made of five spruce poles tied together at the top with split spruce root and spread out at the bottom. The poles were kept in place by

a hoop of wood tied to the poles, just down from the top. Shorter poles were tied to the hoop to support a cover made of sheets of birch bark. Extra poles were laid over the outside to hold the birch bark. Birch bark was easy to carry and was waterproof. The top of the wigwam was left open to let fireplace smoke out. A large hide covered the entrance. Fir twigs, woven mats and animal furs covered the floor. Wigwams were usually put up by women.

Clothing was made from the skins of animals, birds and fish. The skins were tanned using smoke and oils from animals. Needles were made of bone. Animal sinew was used as thread. Clothing was decorated with patterns and pictures of animals, birds and humans. Dyes were made from earth, charcoal, eggshells, roots, bark, leaves and flowers. Decorations were made from animal teeth, claws, bone and porcupine quills.

The Mi'kmaq used sharpened stones as tools for carving wood, and for killing game and cutting meat. Food was served in bowls of birch bark. Women wove bags and mats from reeds and grasses. Traps to catch fish were also made this way. They were made of birch bark strips.



Canoe

The Mi'kmaq made canoes which could go in streams and rivers and even far out to sea. The canoes were made of birch bark over a light wooden frame. The

Mi'kmaq could tell when it would be easiest to get the birch bark off the trees by the brightness of the firefly. The Mi'kmaq also made snowshoes, sleds and toboggans to get around easily in winter.

One of the most interesting ways the Mi'kmaq people used nature was their herbal medicines. They were so good at finding and using herbs that early explorers were amazed. Many European settlers would not have lived through their first winters here if the Mi'kmaq had not helped them with their medicines.

For example, ground juniper was boiled in pots made of birch bark to make a tonic for kidney ailments. White spruce bark was used as a tonic for colds, tuberculosis and sore throat. The outer bark of the alder bush was shaved off and soaked in water with a dash of peppermint. The shavings were then wrapped in a covering and put on the head for migraine headache.

For cuts, the Mi'kmaq placed a slice of beaver's kidney on the open wound to draw out infection. Fir balsam was then used to dress the wound. A splint of three layers was used to set broken bones. First, the bones were reset. Then they were padded with fine moss which had been soaked in balsam, or a mixture like turpentine. This layer was then wrapped with soft birch bark. Hard pieces of bark were then tied around the broken arm or leg.

This is the way the Mi'kmaq lived until Europeans arrived. After that, their lives changed in many ways.

* * * * *

Using Vocabulary

Choose the correct word from the words in parentheses below each sentence to fill in the blanks.

1. I think the work of _____ sounds interesting.

(**ailments** **arranges** **archaeologists**)

2. There are fifteen _____ on this street.

(**decorations** **decisions** **dwellings**)

3. She got that _____ in a car crash.

(**round** **wound** **worn**)

4. They _____ her leg in bandages.

(**rapped** **wrapped** **ripped**)

5. The students took _____ of the party and made all the food.

(**responsible** **ownership** **consensus**)

6. Hides have to be _____ before they can be made into things.

(**tanned** **sinew** **timed**)

7. The Mi'kmaq had many hunting _____ in Cape Breton Island.

(**district** **local** **territories**)

8. When I want to relax, I pour myself a good cup of _____ tea.

(**herbal** **charcoal** **sinew**)

9. That man is always complaining about his _____.

(**almost** **airports** **ailments**)

10. Do we have a _____ on when we should have our yard sale?

(**consensus** **concert** **constant**)

Comprehension Questions

1. Where did the Mi'kmaq live?
2. How do we know they have been in Nova Scotia a long time?
3. Why did the Mi'kmaq not stay in one place?
4. What was the role of the Grand Council in Mi'kmaw life?
5. How many uses for birch bark can you find in this reading?

Something to Think About



1. The Mi'kmaq saw themselves as part of a circle of life, connected to other living things. The Europeans (and most Western religions) believe man was made to rule the earth. Which view do you think makes more sense?
2. Do you think herbal medicines can be as good as medicines we buy in drug stores? Why or why not?

The Mi'kmaw Nation Part Two

Word Preview

First Nations treaty rights residential schools
organizations influenza

The arrival of Europeans in Mi'kma'ki, the home of the Mi'kmaq, changed the lives of these First Nations people forever. The early French who settled on Cape Breton Island traded with the Mi'kmaq and made friends with them. By 1610, the Mi'kmaq realized many more French would be coming to live in their land. The Mi'kmaq wanted to get along with them so they changed their religion and became Catholic. But by the 1700s, the English in Mi'kma'ki were growing in number. At first, the Mi'kmaq fought the English to help their friends the French. The Mi'kmaq were not defeated and they did not surrender. They ended the fighting by signing a treaty of friendship with the English in 1725.



Place Names

- Cape Breton Island
- Nova Scotia
- Shubenacadie

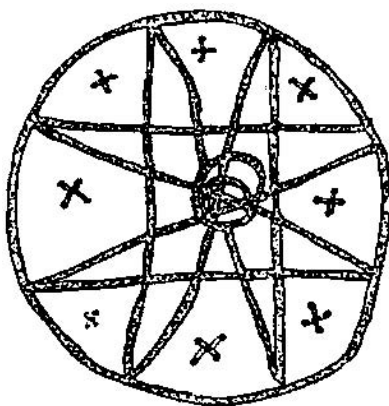
The treaty said the Mi'kmaq could still have all the land that was not yet taken by the English, which, in 1725, was nearly all of it. The treaty also said the Mi'kmaq could still trade, hunt, fish, and use the land as they always had. More treaties were signed in 1726, 1749 and 1752. They repeated the promise

by the English that the Mi'kmaq would not lose any of their rights or land.

Broken Promises

But that is not what happened. Little by little, the Mi'kmaq lost their lands and their way of life because more Europeans were coming to live in Mi'kma'ki. Sometimes the newcomers were cruel. In 1749, Edward Cornwallis, the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, promised to pay a reward for every scalp from a Mi'kmaq man, woman or child that was brought to him. Sometimes the new people passed their diseases, such as influenza, measles and smallpox, on to the Mi'kmaq. The Mi'kmaq had never been around these diseases before and could not fight them. Many of them died this way.

In the 1860s, the Canadian government passed laws about how all First Nations people would live. The laws were called the Indian Act. The government did not ask the First Nations people who they had signed treaties with how they felt about this. Before this, the Mi'kmaq had looked to their elders and leaders for rules about how to live. Now different people from far away were



This Mi'kmaq rock carving was done before 1500 and was found near Bedford, N.S. The eight-pointed star is often used in Mi'kmaq carvings as a symbol of the sun.

making decisions about their lives. The government also set aside small pieces of land for First Nations people to live on. The pieces of land, which were called reserves, were not big enough to hunt or fish on, so the people became dependent on the government for what they needed.

By the 1900s, the treaties of friendship the English had signed with the Mi'kmaq were

nearly forgotten. The Canadian Government had a new plan. It would make the First Nations people just like everyone else.

Cape Breton Mi'kmaq Communities

<u>Name of Community</u>	<u>Population in 2001*</u>
Membertou	621
Chapel Island	419
Wagmatcook	444
Eskasoni	2741
Waycobah	635

* Statistics Canada figures

Government Plans

There were three ways in which the Canadian Government tried to do this. The first way was in 1930, when it forced all First Nations children to go to residential schools. Children were taken from their families and sent far away to schools run by churches. The schools tried to make the children stop being Mi'kmaq. They were harshly punished if they were caught speaking the Mi'kmaw language. Some children were beaten and abused in these schools. Some of the children did not feel they belonged with their families anymore. They also knew they did not belong with non-Indians. They did not know where they belonged and suffered emotional problems because of this. More than 1,000 Mi'kmaw children in Nova Scotia went to the residential school in Shubenacadie. It finally closed in 1966. It had failed to make the Mi'kmaw people disappear.

In the 1950s, the government tried to force all the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia to live on just two reserves. One reserve was at Eskasoni, on Cape

Breton Island and the other was at Shubenacadie, near Truro. The government thought this would save money. But many Mi'kmaw families refused to leave their homes. Others went back home when they saw they were not going to get the new houses and jobs they were promised. The government had to give up the idea. Today there are 12 Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia, five of them in Cape Breton Island.

The White Paper

The government last tried to do away with the Mi'kmaq in 1969 with what was called the "White Paper." This paper said that all First Nations rights would be taken away. Suddenly, First Nations people across Canada realized the rights that were promised to them in the treaties could be taken away forever if they did not act. The Union of Nova Scotia Indians was formed in 1969 to respond to the White Paper. Other groups in other provinces formed too. They got money from the federal government to research their rights. They started to take control over their own lives again. In 1971, the Canadian Government gave up on the White Paper. The Union of Nova Scotia Indians continued its work and won an important Supreme Court decision in 1985. The decision said the treaty signed in 1752 to protect Mi'kmaq rights still holds today.

Today there are many Mi'kmaq organizations. They support Mi'kmaq culture, they work to bring jobs to Mi'kmaq communities, and they run schools in Mi'kmaq communities. There is new pride among Mi'kmaq people over their background. There are Mi'kmaq musicians, organizers, poets, teachers, artists and athletes. The White Paper of 1969 did not spell the end of the Mi'kmaq. It spelled a new beginning.

Using Vocabulary

First Nations**treaty****Rights****residential schools****organizations**

Complete these sentences correctly choosing words from the word bank above.

1. The Mi'kmaq, the Penobscot and the Maliseet are all examples of _____ peoples.
2. He belongs to _____ that support First Nations rights..
3. In Canada, we are lucky because we all have human The Charter of Human _____ and Freedoms..
4. A _____ is an agreement signed and approved by nations.
5. Mi'kmaq families were sad when the children were forced to go to _____.

Comprehension Questions

1. Why did the Mi'kmaq change their religion in the early 1600s?
2. How did fighting between the Mi'kmaq and the English end?
3. What did the treaties promise the Mi'kmaq?
4. Why did many Mi'kmaq people die from diseases brought by the Europeans?
5. Name two things the government did in the 1860s to change Mi'kmaq life.
6. Name three things the government did to try and end the special rights of First Nations peoples.

CAPE BRETON ISLAND WEBSITE RESOURCES

1. <http://museum.gov.ns.ca/mikmaq/index.htm>
This Nova Scotia Museum site contains 800 illustrations and portraits of the Mi'kmaq of Atlantic Canada.
2. <http://museum.gov.ns.ca/mikmaq/links.htm>
Links from the Nova Scotia Museum site to many interesting sites on the Mi'kmaq including the native council of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Museum Mi'kmaq InfoSheet, First Peoples on SchoolNet and a list of Mi'kmaq links from St. Francis Xavier University.
3. www.destination-ns.com/common/trails/ArealD.asp?ArealD=7
Includes brief descriptions of all counties of Cape Breton Island (with population statistics) and descriptions of various trails on Cape Breton Island. Place names are clickable and give latitude-longitude coordinates.
4. www.herald.ns.ca/pop/counties/
Halifax Herald website gives listings for populations in each Nova Scotia county. Also includes graphs which show change over time.

MISCELLANEOUS NOVA SCOTIA WEBSITE RESOURCES

1. <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/natural>
Natural history of Nova Scotia
2. <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/fossils>
Fossils of Nova Scotia
3. <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/highlights>
Highlights of Aviation History