

**Taking the Lead**

**Volume 4:**

**Crossing Cultures**

**A project of the Writer's Alliance of  
Newfoundland and Labrador**

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**Questions for Discussion**

### Introduction

*Taking the Lead* is a collection of essays and personal portraits that highlight the struggle and achievements of a diverse array of individuals, groups, and organizations. The common thread among these movers and shakers is the urge to bring about positive change — to refuse to accept an untenable or ineffective status quo. These are stories of hard-working people, many from the margins of society who have defied the odds in an effort to improve their own lot, and the lives of others.

But there is also a strong personal component to these stories. Mixed in with the practical, concrete goals of improving how we are governed, how our laws are written, interpreted, and enforced, there is always personal growth. Many of those profiled here undergo a marked change in their spirituality and sense of self-worth. They are not quite the same at the end of their journey as they were at the beginning.

The people in these essays are of all age groups, many races, and both genders. There is also a wide variety of subject matter. Many of the stories deal with women, native people, and children. Readers will meet, among others, an anti-poverty crusader, a native Peacekeeper, a Chinese doctor, and a gay rights activist. There is a story of police insensitivity and brutality, a profile of a community-minded, unpretentious priest, and a look at the life work of someone who strives for the personal enrichment of the disabled.

*Taking the Lead* offers stories of people who, either on their own or with others, have fought against what they believe is fundamentally wrong. A catch phrase binding these essays might be: "We're not going to take it!" Or the even more positive: "We're going to make the effort to change it!"

These stories, then, are life affirming in a broad way. They show that positive change, both on a personal and social level, can be brought about by "ordinary" people, that ultimately, we all have to "take the lead."

### Acknowledgements

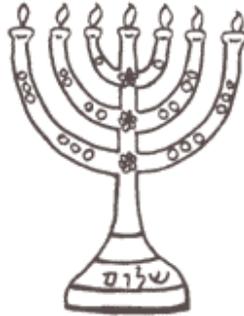
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*Taking the Lead* is the fifth in a series of literacy projects undertaken by the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador. Copies of our other projects, including the *Newfoundland and Labrador ABE Social History Series* and *Working Lives*, may be obtained by contacting our office:

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**Ernie Mauskopf:  
The Story of a Survivor**  
Robin McGrath



**Word List**

**Békéscsaba:** A town in Hungary. In the 1930s, it had a population of 60,000. About 5% (3,500) were Jewish men, women and children.

**Typhus:** An infectious fever associated with crowded living conditions. Typhus is also called ship fever. A vaccine is now available.

**Rabbi:** A Jewish religious leader or teacher.

**Anti-semitism:** A hatred of Jews.

**Holocaust:** The mass-murder of Jews by the Nazis in 1939-1945.

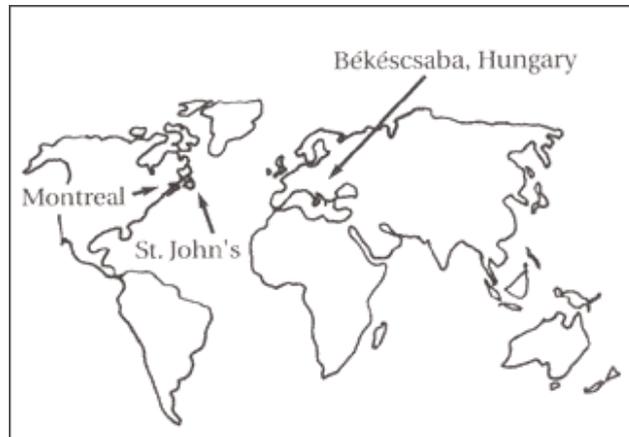
**Concentration camp:** A place for the detention of political prisoners, especially in Nazi Germany.

**Auschwitz:** A town in Poland, site of a Nazi concentration camp during the Second World War.

**Black market:** An illegal market or system of buying and selling goods.

**Synagogue:** A place for Jews to study and observe their religion, similar to a church or mosque.

### Introduction



Ernie Mauskopf was born in Hungary in 1927, in the small town of Békéscsaba, southeast of Budapest. The town had a poultry plant, a publishing industry, and a mill that ground wheat and corn. A narrow gauge railway carried the books, chickens, eggs, and flour produced in the town to places all over Europe. During the Second World War, six million Jews, including most of the Jews of Békéscsaba, were murdered by the Nazis. A few of the Jews who survived this political oppression later made their homes in Canada. In Canada they had to learn to choose personal freedom. This is the story of one of those survivors.

### Ernie's Childhood in Békéscsaba

Ernie's father had a small jewellery store in Békéscsaba. His mother was a homemaker. There were nine children in the family; the three oldest were girls and the six youngest were boys. Every day, Ernie's mother got up at four in the morning to do a big wash and hang it out to dry. His father would get up to wait for a truck to take him to a market in the next town. At the market Mr. Mauskopf would set up a little table to sell alarm clocks, watches and jewellery.

Hungary was a modern country, but many people did not have indoor plumbing. Ernie's family had a four-room house with electricity, but there was no toilet. The children slept two or three to a bed. There was a well in the yard but the water was not fit to drink. Water had to be carried from an artesian well nearby. Ernie carried the water in zinc cans, which were very heavy for a little boy.

They had no radio or telephone, although both things existed. They could not afford them. The house was heated with a coal stove. Pipes ran across the room and sometimes they would glow red. Ernie says they were very lucky there was never a fire.

The cooking was done in a separate building, using a wood stove. Ernie was an excellent wood chopper and made all the splits his mother needed. Wednesday was market day. Ernie's mother would buy chickens or geese at the market. She would render the fat and pour it off to save for the winter. They cooked with goose fat. There was very little meat during the week. People ate beans, peas and barley, but Ernie's mother had dozens of wonderful ways of cooking these things.

All summer, Ernie's mother would bottle fruits such as cherries, peaches, and apricots. She also made tomato sauce, green peppers stuffed with cabbage, and pickles. Best of all, she made plum jam. If you didn't like beans for dinner, you could sneak into the pantry for bread and plum jam to take to school.

Ernie had a very loving family. There was lots of hugging and kissing. The six young boys often fought each other with their fists, but they loved one another. During the Jewish holidays, the three big sisters used to compete, to see which of them could dress the younger brothers the best.

Sometimes, though, things were very hard. When Ernie was six years old, he fell ill with typhus. At one point, he was so close to death that his heart stopped beating. A man who worked for his father was helping to watch him at that time. He held Ernie up by his feet and shook him until his heart began beating again. When you have typhus, you cannot eat. Ernie remembers his father begging him to eat even one spoon of chicken soup. When he got better, his shoes were so big on him that his feet floated out when he walked. He lost a whole year of school.



Photo: Mauskopf family collection

*Ernie's parents, Roza and Israel Klein Mauskopf were murdered in Auschwitz in July of 1944, along with their two youngest sons, 15-year-old Andor and 13-year-old Akiva.*

## School

From the age of three or four, all the children in Ernie's family went to a Jewish school. They learned Hebrew and studied religion. Ernie remembers that the Jewish school was upstairs in a building next to the public elementary school. In Hungary, the winters were very cold and the summers were very hot. In winter Ernie's father would have icicles in his beard. People had overcoats, but no boots or mitts. In winter, the school was very cold. In summer, the school was so hot it was like an oven.

School was very important to Ernie's parents. At first Ernie didn't like to go to school, but he got used to it. All week, the children would study at the Jewish school, and on Saturday afternoons the rabbi or some other adult would question them on what they had learned. Household chores such as sweeping or bringing in the wash or carrying water were necessary, but you still had to bring home an A from

school. Ernie says that if you fell down on the job, God help you. "Nobody beat you or anything, but you lost face," he explains. Jewish school was a hard grind. You had to learn a lot by heart, but Ernie says it was good training.

### Anti-semitism

Things were very bad for the Jews in Hungary when Ernie was a boy. Anti-Semitism — a hatred of Jews — was everywhere. Even when Ernie was very small, other children would throw stones at him. Sometimes they would shout, "Dirty Jew, go back to Palestine." Ernie would answer, "Give me the ticket and I'll leave." Every day, the children at the public school next door would beat up the Jewish children. As soon as Ernie left the Jewish school to go home, there would be trouble. Once, when he was twelve, he decided to fight back. He got some wire and he and his friends twisted it together and hid it around their waists. When the public school boys attacked them, they beat them with the wires. After that, the Jewish children were left alone for a time.

In 1936, Ernie's parents had sent his older sister Ida to Switzerland. Two years later, she came home and told them what was happening to the Jews in Germany. She got on her knees and begged her father to sell everything and run away. Their father said no. They had no exit permits and no one to take them in.

### The Holocaust

Then in 1939 a terrible tragedy happened. Just as the war broke out, Ernie's sister Serina died of a heart condition because they could not get good medical help. Her death was a terrible blow to the family. Her parents were grief stricken, but today Ernie says she may have been the lucky one. She could never have survived in a concentration camp. The 1940s were miserable years for the Jews in Békéscsaba. Jews could not sell cigarettes in a store, even if they were war veterans like Ernie's father. They were not allowed to travel. Their businesses and schools were closed. Ernie's father and an older brother acted as middlemen for people selling gold and silver and diamonds. People were buying these to hide, because of the war.

Ernie says that his family did not know the Holocaust — the extermination of the Jews — was happening at that very time. They assumed they would survive the war. One day, Ernie's brother brought him a little bar of gold and got him to chop it in half with his axe. They buried it under the floor of the woodshed, in two different corners, for after the war. Then in 1944, the Germans occupied Hungary. Jews had to stay in their homes with a sign on the door. They were allowed out for only two hours twice a week. All the contents of their stores were taken. Ernie's brother, Mickey, was murdered by Hungarian soldiers on the Russian front. The rest of his family was sent to a concentration camp. His father and mother and his two younger brothers were taken to Auschwitz and murdered, all on the same day. Ernie was taken away to do slave labour.

Ernie has given speeches about what happened to him during the war, but he doesn't like to talk about it. He spent over a year in a concentration camp and was liberated on May 5th, 1945. At that time he was on the brink of death. He was so underweight that he could not stand up. After several months in hospital, he began to regain his strength, and one day he simply walked out. Eventually Ernie got to an uncle in Budapest who told him what had happened to his family. At night his uncle would put food on a chair next to his bed to encourage him to eat and gain his weight back.

For the next two years, Ernie worked with his older brothers Hugo and Eugene. They used the gold bar from the woodshed to set up a black market business. They sold sugar, trucks, oil, anything that people needed. They had to work very hard, but at least they had food and shelter. Because Ernie's education had been interrupted by the war, his brothers hired a teacher for him. They paid the teacher in goose fat — a pound of fat for a lesson. Two or three times a week Ernie would study with the teacher. Many times he woke up at two in the morning with his head on his books. This went on for

two years. Then it became clear that the Communists were taking over in Hungary so Ernie's brothers hid him in a military truck going to Vienna. From there he went to Canada.



### Emigration to Canada

The trip to Canada was not easy. Ernie travelled on one of the Liberty Ships, the *General M.B. Stewart*. He was with a group of 120 young people from Germany, Hungary, and other parts of Europe. Everyone was seasick most of the way. They landed in Halifax and then went on to Montreal. For about six weeks, Ernie was unemployed. Although it was only a short time, he has never forgotten how terrible it felt. Then he got a job at \$21 a week, working for a Jewish jeweller. He asked his boss to speak to him only in English as he had to learn a new language. Soon he found a better job at \$32 a week. Just when things were going well, disaster struck. A test showed a spot the size of a quarter on his lung and Ernie was diagnosed with tuberculosis.

At this time, Ernie was lucky to have what he calls a "guardian angel." His social worker, Miss Fisher, was able to get books for him while he was in the sanatorium and he used his time well. He listened to music, worked on his English, and read a lot of books. He especially liked books about art. After sixteen months, he was released and once again his guardian angel came to his rescue. Miss Fisher asked Ernie what he wanted to do, and he said, "Get a job and go back to school." She had him tested and they let him into grade ten at night school. During the day he worked as a wholesale jeweler, and at night he did algebra and English poetry. After a lot of hard work he got his grade eleven.

For a while, Ernie thought of going to college, but he was afraid of being without a job. Learning had never come easily to him — only as a result of hard work. He says he was always jealous of people who learned easily. When he recalls his years at school, he remembers a boy who could look at a page and know it. "You can't buy such a mind at in Canadian Tire," he laughs. "I know because I looked."

Then Ernie met Ida Levitz, a girl from Newfoundland. Ida was working in Montreal. They have been together ever since. They were married in the synagogue on Elizabeth Avenue in St. John's, and in 1970 they moved back to Newfoundland for good. Ida's mother was alone in a big house and she convinced them to move in with her. Ernie already did a lot of business in Newfoundland, selling jewellery from Port aux Basques to St. John's. He sold to Thompson's Jewelry, Ayre's, Bowring's, the Royal Stores, Alteen's and stores all across the island. It wasn't difficult to make the move.

### A New Business

Although Ernie earned a good living, selling jewellery wasn't his whole life. As a boy, Ernie had an excellent voice and he loved to sing in the synagogue, so he was very proud when his son Randy became a musician. However, he longed for more interesting work himself. Ernie's wife Ida thought he should do something about that. Ida urged Ernie to try to do something with art.

Newfoundland artists, like David Blackwood, Christopher Pratt, and Mary Pratt, were among the best in the country, but there were no art dealers in Newfoundland. There were dozens of people making art in the province and not one person selling it. If Newfoundland artists wanted to sell their paintings they had to send them to Toronto or Vancouver. Ida had not grown up with political oppression. She

believed she could do anything she wanted. She began to show paintings in the basement of their house while Ernie kept up their jewellery business.



Photo: Mauskopf family collection

*Ernie Mauskopf married Ida Levitz at the synagogue on Elizabeth Avenue, St. John's, in 1963. Ida, who was born in St. John's, encouraged Ernie to start working as an art dealer for Newfoundland artists.*

It soon became clear that there was a market for art in Newfoundland. Ida and Ernie rented a tiny shop on Water Street and called on all the artists. At first, the artists were not sure it was a good idea. Some of them said, "How do you know you will succeed?" Ernie told them he and Ida had no choice — they had nowhere to go but up. They held their first show in a rented hall at the Holiday Inn because the shop wasn't big enough. The artist was George Noseworthy and ten percent of the sales went to the fishermen at Hibbs Hole. It was a great success. Ida and Ernie were the first art dealers in Newfoundland. Today there are dozens of art dealers and art galleries in St. John's alone.

### **Life Today**

After many years in the art business, Ernie and Ida retired, but Ernie had not run out of new things to try. While the art business was growing, the St. John's Jewish community was shrinking. By the mid-1980s they were no longer able to support a rabbi. Ernie began to play a bigger and bigger role in conducting services. The soprano voice he had when he was a boy had turned into a baritone and all those hours in the Jewish school paid off. Ernie says he never intended to take the lead in the synagogue. It just happened. As other people moved away or died, he found himself more and more often leading the services. Some of the services are up to five hours long, but Ernie sings the service for the sheer joy of being able to.



Photo: Sheilagh O'Leary

*When Ernie Mauskopf first came to Canada, he spent 16 months in a sanatorium with tuberculosis where he read every book about art he could get. Ernie became the first commercial art dealer in Newfoundland.*

Even today, life is not easy for any of the survivors of the Holocaust. Ernie sometimes gets very emotional when he reads from the Bible. Whenever he reads about Abraham and Sarah, or Joseph and Benjamin, Ernie finds it painful because it reminds him of the family he lost. However, he also loves to chant from the sacred scrolls because it helps to keep their memories alive. It keeps his mother and father, his three sisters and his five brothers, alive and together. The Nazis tried to wipe out Ernie's family but they could not wipe out his memory or his faith. They stopped him from going to school but they could not stop him from learning. Ida taught him that in Canada, he had the freedom to choose a different life, the freedom to lead and not just follow. Ernie says he is still learning something, every day. He laughs with pure happiness when he says that.



### Sources

The writer has known Ernie Mauskopf for many years, and was always impressed by the happy memories he has of his childhood and his family in Hungary. Robin wrote this article after doing two tape recorded interviews with Ernie in December of 1999. Several times during the interviews, Ernie began to cry, but he felt he wanted people to know what had happened to his family. A video about Ernie's art business is available from the A.C. Hunter library in St. John's.

### **Ernie Mauskopf: The Story of a Survivor**

#### **Questions for Discussion**

##### **Introduction**

1. What town in Newfoundland could you compare to Békéscsaba?
2. Who was the leader of the Nazi movement in Germany?

##### **Ernie's Childhood in Békéscsaba?**

1. How does Ernie's childhood compare to your our own?
2. What chores did Ernie have to do around the house?
3. What illness did Ernie suffer when he was a boy?
4. What kinds of food did Ernie eat when he was a boy?

##### **School**

1. How was Ernie's school different from yours?
2. What are winters like in Hungary? What are summers like?
3. Why did Ernie find Jewish school hard?

##### **Anti-semitism**

1. What racial groups other than Jews have suffered discrimination?
2. Some Newfoundlanders say they have suffered discrimination. In what ways?
3. Why did Hitler think people should hate the Jews?

##### **The Holocaust**

1. The Holocaust was an example of genocide — an attempt to exterminate an entire race. Do you know of any other attempts at genocide in your lifetime?
2. The seal hunt has often been compared to the Holocaust. Is this a reasonable comparison?

##### **Immigration to Canada**

1. Why did Ernie immigrate to Canada?
2. A refugee is someone who takes refuge in another country from war, persecution, or natural disaster. What is an economic refugee? Do you know any economic refugees?

##### **A New Business**

1. Which artists did Ernie notice when he came to Newfoundland? What Newfoundland artists are well known across the county today?
2. Ernie identified a need for a new business in the 1960s. Can you see any similar opportunities around your community today?

### Life Today

1. Is Ernie happy with his life today?
2. Who helped Ernie build a satisfying life in Canada?

**Diane Rowe: Roots in Two Worlds**  
Robin McGrath

**Word List**

**Marshall Decision:** The court ruling that said Donald Marshall could fish and sell eels because of his Aboriginal treaty rights.

**Aboriginal people:** The original inhabitants of a country

**Genocide:** The deliberate extermination of a people or nation.

**Visible minority:** People who look different from others around them.

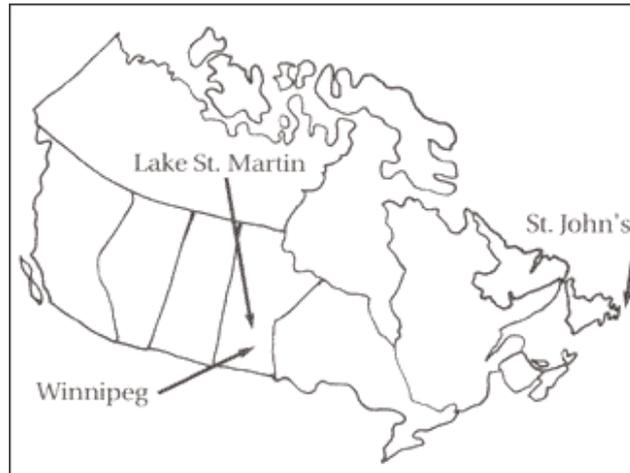
**Indian Act:** The Canadian Federal Government Act of 1876 which says who is an Indian and who is not for the purposes of the law. An act is a law passed by an elected governing body.

**Aboriginal rights:** The rights some people have because they are the original inhabitants of a country.

**Treaty rights:** The rights some native people have because of agreements made with the government.

### Introduction

Diane Rowe was born in Ontario in 1967. Her father, Cohn, was a young man from Newfoundland. He was working at the time for IBM (International Business Machines) in Oshawa. Her mother, Millie, was from Manitoba. Millie was only 17 years old. Millie is a Cree Indian from the Lake St. Martin Reserve.



Shortly after Diane was born, Cohn and Millie moved to Manitoba to be near Millie's family. Millie felt less lonely near her family, but there were still problems.

Cohn and Millie soon decided it would be better not to stay together. They thought Diane might benefit from being raised by Cohn's parents in Newfoundland. When she was three years old, Diane went to live with her grandmother and grandfather in St. John's. Even though she was so little, Diane remembers the excitement of coming to a new home. Soon, her grandmother became her mother, and that is what she calls her to this day.

When Diane grew up, she became a lawyer. Shortly after she graduated, the Marshall Decision was brought down, affecting the fishing rights of both Newfoundlanders and natives. Diane was suddenly expected to be a spokesman for only one side. She was asked to reject one part of her heritage to uphold the rights of the other. As a lawyer, Diane knew this was not necessary. This is the story of an Aboriginal Newfoundlander who refused to choose sides.

### Growing up Native in Newfoundland

In many ways, Diane's life was like that of any other Newfoundland girl. Diane's new mother lived near St. John's, so Diane attended St. Augustine's school and Littledale. St. Augustine's was a Catholic girls' school. There were very few girls of different cultures or races at St. Augustine's. There was one girl there from the Philippines. Diane was the only Aboriginal pupil in the school. She certainly stood out.

At school, Diane was always asked a lot of questions about her background. Both teachers and students would ask: "Where are you from?" Then they would ask: "Where are you *really* from?" Nobody believed she could really be a Newfoundlander, or even a Canadian. Cohn and Millie always stayed in touch with her, so Diane knew she was really a Newfoundlander and a Cree Indian. She was very proud to be both.



Photo: Rowe family collection

*Diane came to Newfoundland when she was three years old. She remembers the excitement of having a new home and a new mother.*

From kindergarten on, Diane says, there was always someone who would have a problem with her origins. Sometimes children would call her "Chink" and use rough language. Sometimes they would try to beat her up or throw rocks at her. Once, in grade three, Diane got into a fight with a teacher who referred to American Indians as "savages." Often she would take these problems back to her adoptive mother. Her mother encouraged her to fight back. She told Diane that if someone threatened her, "Hit them with everything you've got, and keep going." That's what Diane did, and after a time there were no more fights.

While she was growing up, Diane had almost no contact with other Aboriginals in Newfoundland. At that time, there was only a very small Aboriginal community in St. John's. Millie would send small presents that helped Diane maintain her Indian identity: Millie sent beadwork and pictures and stories about the Lake St. Martin community and the Cree nation.

Mrs. Rowe was very concerned about Diane. She worried about her daughter living in a society where she felt people hated Aboriginal people. She tried to teach Diane about Aboriginal people in Newfoundland. Diane's mother admired Sir Wilfred Grenfell and told her about his work with people then called Naskapi Innu. She also took her to the grave of Demasduit, the last of the Beothuks. Demasduit, called Mary March by white people, was buried over on the south side of St. John's Harbour. Mrs. Rowe tried to educate Diane about genocide. Diane says the history of Newfoundland worried her because all of the Beothuks died or were murdered. She knew she was not a Beothuk, but she was like them. The fate of the Beothuks made her aware of racial hatred in society.

Diane's adoptive mother was very challenged by Diane's experience of racism. Mrs. Rowe is a small, blonde woman who had not grown up with racism. She had to learn about it through Diane. Sometimes Diane's mother drew comparisons between the history of her own Irish people, who were colonized and persecuted by the British, and the history of native Indians. Sometimes she compared the experience of Aboriginals to that of the Jews. Diane found Irish Catholic society in Newfoundland very welcoming and warm, but sometimes hard to fit into.



Photo: Rowe family collection

*At school, people would ask Diane where she came from.  
When she said she came from the Goulds, they would ask where she was really from.*

As a student, Diane spent a lot of her time educating her teachers. She was often the first person of colour that the teachers or other students had met. Diane says she still experiences racism in Newfoundland in small ways. Sometimes people assume she cannot speak English. Sometimes store clerks will not give her change, or they will give her credit card back to a white person standing behind her. Sometimes, when she says she is not an Asian, people will not believe her. They do not think it is possible for her to be an Aboriginal. Today there are more visible minorities in Newfoundland, but life is still not easy for people who are different.



### **Life as an Artist**

Throughout her childhood, Diane had a strong interest in drawing and painting. While she was in high school she took art courses. She thought Gerry Squires was a wonderful painter. She especially liked a series of paintings he did of ravens and crows. She also liked Haida and Woodland Indian art, and tried to blend the two styles. During the summers, she worked in Toronto, painting silk for commercial sale. At the end of high school, Diane was chosen to take part in a group exhibit at the McMichael Gallery in Kleinburg, Ontario, which is well known for its Aboriginal art.

This was the first time Diane had ever come together with a group of other young native artists like herself. They were all the same age but they came from different backgrounds. Some were from reserves and some were from cities. Some had been adopted and some had been raised by their birth parents. Many of them didn't know their own language. Some were interested in political issues and others just wanted to paint and be left alone. Some of them had suffered from poverty or sexual abuse. All of them had experienced racism.

Diane came to realize that, like these other young Aboriginals, she would always be different. She would never really blend in. Diane was raised to be politically aware, but as a young person she was not politically active. After Kleinburg, she became politically active.

For a short while, Diane attended Mount Allison University in New Brunswick where she studied art. She says now that Mount Allison was not a good choice. It was very elitist. It was also very hostile. During her first week, someone told Diane, "We don't like your kind around here." Her kind was Aboriginal. She was almost the only Aboriginal at Mount Allison. She left without a degree.

After she left Mount Allison, Diane went to work as a graphic artist. She also worked for the Canadian Association of Aboriginal Businesses. This work gave her more insight into people who made a political and personal commitment to economic development. She saw native people working to pull Aboriginals out of the poverty they had sunk into. She came to feel that it was the responsibility of each native person to do that with whatever tools and means they had. She put together a business plan to use multi-media computing as an education tool. She was only 21 at the time.

Diane's business plan was very ambitious. A woman at Industry Canada and the president of the Aboriginal Business group she worked for both looked at the plan. They both liked the plan but they thought Diane might do better to go back to school. They suggested she study law.

Diane had a good school record. Her experience of selling commercial art was not satisfying. There was a lot of pressure to paint in the Haida style or the Woodland style. Nobody encouraged her to paint like Gerry Squires or Mary Pratt. She got locked into a style she wasn't comfortable with. For Diane, art was not the tool or the means. She decided to go back to Newfoundland to get her degree and then go to law school in New Brunswick.

### Law School

One of the things that drew Diane to law school was the Indian Act. All her life, the Indian Act had been a mysterious force. It had influenced personal decisions made by her parents and her ancestors, and she wanted to understand it. Her mother had loved her father, but she hadn't wanted to marry him because of the Indian Act. Under the Indian Act, if Millie had married Cohn she would no longer have been legally an Indian. Diane would not have been a member of the Lake St. Martin Band. They would have had no right to live near Millie's family on the reserve. At law school, Diane finally had a chance to take the Indian Act apart. She was able to find out what it meant.

One of the things Diane learned at law school was that if you were a native, you were invisible. Some of her teachers never once asked her a question. Some students thought she would be given special or better treatment at school. She also found out that even if you graduated, you might not get a job. After she graduated she accepted a job in Nova Scotia. Diane was the only Aboriginal law student ever hired back by a law firm in Nova Scotia. Diane found racial tension in Nova Scotia was extreme. There was little dialogue between Aboriginals and white people. Diane began doing volunteer work for Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia, helping them set up businesses. She spoke out on their behalf. Then the Marshall Decision came down.

### The Marshall Decision

In August of 1993, Donald Marshall and a companion went eel fishing in Pomquet Harbour. Donald Marshall didn't have a permit for commercial purposes. He could have fished eels for his own use, but he was not allowed to fish eels to sell. Donald and his companion caught 463 pounds of eels and sold them for \$787.10. Then Donald was arrested and charged under the Fisheries Act. The courts eventually decided that Donald Marshall had a right to fish and sell eels because he was an Aboriginal. Non-Aboriginal fishermen were very upset about this and violence followed. Diane became a

spokesperson for native people in Canada about the Marshall Decision. She tried to explain that the Marshall Decision had nothing to do with special rights; it had to do with rights that were already there.

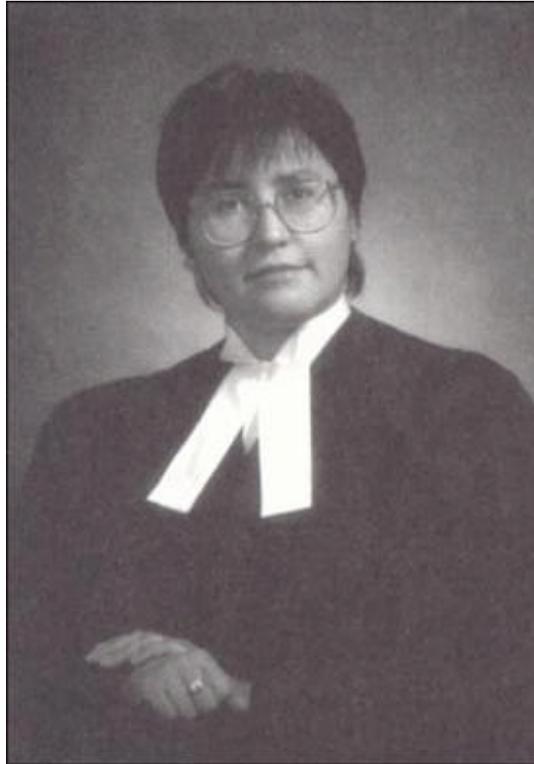


Photo: Rowe family collection

*At law school, Diane was able to study the Indian Act apart.  
She was finally able to find out what it meant.*

Diane compares Aboriginal rights to a person's right to dig in his garden. If a new neighbour moves in, it does not change that right. Even if a person hasn't dug in his garden for 50 years, he still has the right to do it. It's his garden. Aboriginal people always had the right to fish eels in Nova Scotia. They just didn't exercise that right until Donald Marshall went eel fishing. The court decided that a combination of Donald Marshall's Aboriginal right under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and his treaty rights as a Mi'Kmaq under specific agreements, allowed him to fish and sell his catch. The treaty agreements recognized that he had a right to hunt and fish, and non-Aboriginal people had a right to buy his catch from him. The Marshall Decision applied not just to Mi'Kmaq. It applied to many native peoples in Canada, including the Innu of Labrador.

Diane believed that the Marshall Decision was a good opportunity for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to co-operate. Non-Aboriginal people can't fish out of season beyond the limits of their own licenses, but Aboriginal people could. Aboriginal fishermen could hire non-Aboriginals or could go into joint ventures with them. Fishplant operators could have longer seasons which would benefit everyone in the community. The Marshall Decision expanded commercial opportunities for fishermen who were willing to work together.

Unfortunately, the Department of Fisheries did not encourage Aboriginal people and other Canadians to fish together. Diane thought people believed that if Aboriginal people were allowed to fish, there would be no fish left for anyone else. Diane believed that the Marshall Decision was a good opportunity for all fishermen to work together, but instead it was used to divide them. It put

Newfoundland fishermen against Aboriginal fishermen. She felt that the government decision to set two disadvantaged groups up against one another was very deliberate.

Diane had been brought up to respect her ancestors — not just some of them but all of them. When the government tried to set natives and non-natives against each other, Diane felt insulted. She was insulted both as an Aboriginal and as a Newfoundlander. It concerned her that the media often reported on native issues in a negative way. She reminded them that her Aboriginal ancestors probably had a better life than her Newfoundland ancestors had when they came to this country.



### Life Today



Photo: Donna Rowe

*Today, Diane practices with the firm of White, Ottenheimer and Baker in St. John's, and works closely with Aboriginal people in Labrador. She is trying to make a place for Aboriginal Newfoundlanders like herself.*

Shortly after the Marshall Decision came down, Diane decided to move back to St. John's. She has joined a law firm that works closely with Aboriginal people in Labrador and is now finding her way as an Aboriginal Newfoundlander. Today, Diane sometimes thinks about what her life would have been like if she had stayed in Manitoba with Millie. She thinks her life would probably have been very different. Millie's family history has been bleak. Like Diane, Millie had also been raised by her grandmother. Millie had suffered a lot in her life. In Canada, a native woman has a greater chance of going to jail than of going to university. Millie's three older brothers had all been to jail.

If not for the two women who made a generous decision, Diane thinks she might have ended up on the streets of Winnipeg. Instead, Diane's birth mother, Millie, and her adoptive mother, Mrs. Rowe, worked together. Thanks to these two women, Diane is now a lawyer in St. John's. Today, Diane is trying to make a better life for both Aboriginals and Newfoundlanders. She is also trying to make a place for Aboriginal Newfoundlanders like herself. Diane wishes that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal fishermen could work together like Millie and Mrs. Rowe.



### Sources

Shortly after the Marshall Decision came down, the writer heard a CBC program about the case. Diane Rowe was one of the panel. She spoke out very strongly on behalf of Native fishermen. However, everyone on the panel was surprised when she spoke just as strongly on behalf of the Newfoundland fishermen. Robin taped an interview with Diane after she moved back to St. John's. Robin has an adopted Aboriginal daughter and, like Mrs. Rowe, she was dismayed to discover the extent of racism in Canada today.

### **Diane Rowe: Roots in Two World**

#### **Questions for Discussion**

##### **Introduction**

1. What were the two worlds Diane came from?
2. What Indian group did Diane's birth mother belong to?
3. How old was Diane when she came to Newfoundland?

##### **Growing Up Native in Newfoundland**

1. Did Diane experience racism at school?
2. Have you ever been insulted because of your racial or religious or cultural background?
3. How old were you when you first met someone of a race other than your own?
4. What factors other than skin colour make someone a visible minority?

##### **Life as an Artist**

1. What Newfoundland artist did Diane especially admire?
2. What was Diane's first job as an artist?
3. Name two reasons Diane decided not to be an artist.

##### **Law School**

1. What was the main reason Diane decided to go to law school?
2. How does Diane experience racism in Newfoundland today?

##### **The Marshall Decision**

1. What did Donald Marshall go fishing for?
2. How long did it take the courts to decide if Donald Marshall was guilty of illegal fishing?
3. What rights to harvest protected species do all Newfoundlanders have?

##### **Life Today**

1. What does Diane think her life might have been like if she had stayed with her birth mother?
2. Is a native woman in Canada likely to go to University?
3. Is it good for adopted persons to know who their birth parents are?

### Dr. Hong Liu: A Chinese Doctor in St. John's Paul Butler

#### Word List

**Chinese medicine:** A different type of medicine used by Chinese doctors; medicine using acupuncture and Chinese herbs.

**Establishment:** An existing order or group of people that is very powerful.

**Acupuncture:** Way of curing illnesses by putting needles into a patient's body.

**To practise:** For a doctor to work as a doctor.

**To refer:** (For a doctor) to send a patient to another doctor.

**A practice:** A doctor's job, patients, and office.

**Western medicine:** Type of medicine used by family doctors and hospitals everywhere in Canada; "normal" medicine with drugs, X-ray, and surgery.

**Alternative medicine:** A term used in Canada describing any kind of medicine that is not Western medicine: Chinese medicine, acupuncture, Aboriginal medicine, herbal medicine, etc.

**Symptom:** The pain or discomfort a person feels if he/she is ill. For example, a symptom of a heart attack is a pain in the chest. A symptom of a cold is a runny nose.

**Holistic:** A type of medicine where the whole person is treated, not just the symptoms of a disease.

**Qualification:** An exam which has been passed.

**Personal empowerment:** A feeling of being in control; the ability to make decisions and follow a plan.

### Introduction

This is an essay about a Chinese doctor called Dr. Hong Liu who came to Newfoundland ten years ago. Like most people coming into a country for the first time, Dr. Liu wanted to work. But she had a struggle on her hands. Chinese medicine is very different from the type of medicine used by family doctors in Newfoundland and Canada. It is still very new here. Before Dr. Liu could be a success, she needed to convince people that she could help them when they were sick. She needed to gain their trust.

### Medicine and Politics

There was another challenge facing Dr. Liu. In Newfoundland and all over Canada, doctors are very powerful. The public — ordinary people — see doctors as authority figures. They are "in charge." Their authority is backed up by medical boards and hospital boards, groups of important people who make decisions. The medical profession is very much part of the "establishment."

When someone with different ideas tries to break into the establishment, they often get involved in a political struggle. They are going against authority. They are seeking change where powerful people do not want change.

Dr. Hong Liu wanted to bring about change. Before she came to Canada, she worked in China as a doctor. She practised Chinese medicine. Her greatest skill was in acupuncture. She was a "specialist" in acupuncture. Ten years ago, doctors in St. John's did not accept these types of treatments. They thought acupuncture and Chinese medicine did not really work. In one way, this did not matter. Dr. Liu was not seeking to be part of the establishment. She did not want to practise in a Western hospital. She wanted to work treating patients by herself.

But in another way, it did matter. If doctors here did not believe that Chinese medicine was good, then the public would not believe it either. Because doctors are authority figures, many people believe what doctors tell them about health. Also, if she was going to have a successful practice, Dr. Liu needed family doctors to refer patients to her.

This essay will describe the many ways in which Dr. Liu found acceptance among patients and doctors. It will show how she overcame political roadblocks and how she built up a successful practice.

### A Visit to Dr. Liu's Clinic - March 2000

I am lying face down on a doctor's couch. Dr. Liu presses her finger under my right shoulder blade. She feels around it for a second. She is checking for the right spot. Then she takes a long, thin needle and slides it through my skin. It goes in about 1/4 of an inch. It doesn't hurt. At least, not as much as I thought it would.

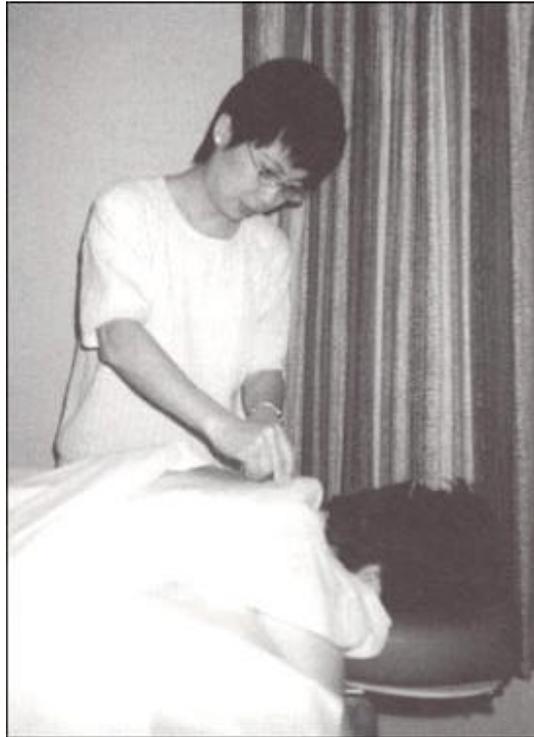
I have come to Dr. Liu because I have a pain in my arm. I have been at the computer too much. I have been in the same position so long, I have given myself an injury. But Dr. Liu is an expert at acupuncture. I know she can make the pain go away.

She puts six or seven needles into my body. I feel like a porcupine. I ask her about acupuncture. I ask her where the idea comes from and how it works.

She tells me that acupuncture is a cure used for hundreds of years in China. The needles are put into exact positions in the patient's body. These positions depend on the patient's illness or injury. None of the needles go to the exact point of my injury. The treatment helps the body to produce its own pain-

killing chemicals. These chemicals are called "endorphins." Endorphins relax the body. When the body is relaxed, it heals more quickly. The idea of acupuncture is fairly new to me. In some ways it doesn't seem to make sense. You could have a back pain, yet the needles might go into your wrists. And when the pain goes away, it seems like magic. But it isn't magic. These days, acupuncture is accepted by modern science.

### **Dr Liu's Background: Chinese and Western Medicine Together**



*Dr Liu does acupuncture on a patient.*

Dr. Liu goes into the next room where she has another patient. I start to feel sleepy. When she returns I wake up. She starts removing the needles. She presses a piece of cotton wool over the place where the needle comes out. She can tell by touch how well the treatment has worked. She slides two or three needles back.

I ask her how her work is different now from how it was in China ten years ago.

Dr. Liu laughs. She says it is very different. Before she came to Newfoundland, she worked in a very large Beijing hospital as a physician (doctor). She worked in the acupuncture department of this hospital. In Canada, she explains, Western medicine and "alternative medicine" are quite separate. In China, it is different. Western medicine and Chinese medicine exist side by side in the same hospital. Dr. Liu specialized in acupuncture. Her patients saw her as just another doctor. They did not think she was any less a doctor because she practised acupuncture.

In a Chinese hospital each doctor has to know all types of medicine. Dr. Liu had to know Western medicine as well as acupuncture. She had to know if her patient needed Western treatment rather than acupuncture. She had to know when to refer a patient to another department.

Dr. Liu puts it like this: "For some problems acupuncture is good. For some problems Western medicine is good. Chinese medicine is not good for everything. Sometimes you have to have an operation to cure the problem."

This is true if a patient has appendicitis. Acupuncture may ease the pain. But to solve the problem, the patient must have his/her appendix removed. This can only be done with surgery.

In a Chinese hospital, a patient will go from one department to another, depending on which treatment is best for the patient.

The Western medicine department dealt with surgery and X-ray. It would also give antibiotics like penicillin to a patient if needed. The acupuncture department would help patients with a wide range of injuries and illnesses. Acupuncture is good for injuries to muscles and tendons. It can help arthritis, flu; it can even help a patient get movement back after a stroke.

Dr. Liu thinks the Chinese way is good. It is good to have acupuncture, herbal medicine and Western medicine side by side. She is not against Western medicine at all. She had to understand and practise Western medicine in China. But there is a different way of thinking behind Chinese medicine, she says. Western medicine sees the body as made up of separate parts: head, arms, legs, etc. Chinese medicine sees the body as a whole. With Chinese medicine, if you have a headache, it isn't just your head that's ill, it is your body. The headache is just a symptom. Western medicine will treat only the symptom. Chinese medicine finds out what causes the headache. The thinking behind Chinese medicine is called "holistic." Holistic means seeing everything as connected, not separate.

### Reasons for Leaving China

I am still lying face down on the couch.

I ask Dr. Liu about leaving China ten years ago. I ask her why she left her country.

"For me it was a case of wanting to see what the outside looks like," she replies. I know that when Dr. Liu talks about the outside, she means outside China. I know that many Chinese people felt that way in 1989.

1989 was a very bad year in China. Many Chinese people wanted their government to be more open. They did not have freedom to criticize their leaders. If someone did criticize the government they were likely to end up in prison.

Young people began to protest. One of these protests was in Beijing's central square, Tiananmen Square. On June 4, 1989, the Chinese government ordered the army to attack the protestors. The army killed many students because they were protesting. This was world news.

### Early Plans

Dr. Liu tells me she was very keen to leave China. Her husband, Ping, wanted to take a Ph.D. in Canada. A Ph.D. is a special kind of qualification, higher than an ordinary degree.

Ping already had a degree from a Chinese University. He was accepted by three Canadian Universities. He decided to come to Memorial University in St. John's. Ping left China in May, 1990. Dr. Liu followed her husband to St. John's in November, 1990.

Sometimes it is hard leaving your own country. Dr. Liu and her husband had to leave their two-and-a-half-year-old daughter behind with Dr. Liu's parents. It is difficult to immigrate (come into a country) with a small child. This is because immigration is a long and uncomfortable process. Immigrants often have to wait in a country for months before they know whether they will be allowed to stay.

First they need to get a "work permit." It can take two or three months to get a work permit and it is against the law to do any kind of paid work without it. To break the rules would mean risking deportation (being thrown out of the country). So, for that two or three months, new immigrants are often quite poor.

After receiving the work permit, immigrants usually wait for another few months before they receive their "Record of Landing." The Record of Landing is a document which allows them to stay in Canada. All this uncertainty is very bad for small children. New immigrants often try to get settled before sending for their children to join them.

Dr. Liu says she and her husband did not really have a clear plan when they left China. They did not even know they would be in St. John's for as long as six months. Their landlord wanted Dr. Liu and her husband to sign a six-month lease. But this seemed too long for them.

"We just wanted to see the outside," Dr. Liu tells me.

Back home in China, people urged her to leave. "If you can stay away, stay forever," they said. As soon as things were right for a child, Dr. Liu planned to have her daughter sent to her. She didn't know whether it would be Newfoundland, somewhere else in Canada, or another country altogether.

Most of all Dr. Liu wanted good English. She knew this was vital to her chances of success in her new country. A doctor in China gave her advice before she left. He told her she could teach Canadians acupuncture. Dr. Liu laughs when she tells me this. She finds it funny because this did happen in the end. But it took a long time, though, and there were many challenges to overcome first.

### **A Stranger in St. John's**

People often feel very powerless when they are new immigrants. For Dr. Liu, this was the case.

She knew very little English. She also had no profession in this new country. Dr. Liu could not work as a doctor in Canada because the medical system is different here. Canada has its own medical degrees. It does not accept Chinese medical degrees.

Dr. Liu takes the needles out for the last time. I ask her what it was like in St. John's when she first came. She says it was difficult in some ways. When she was in a shop or on the streets she noticed people with health problems. She would see someone with a bad back or a brace around their neck. She knew that acupuncture was better for these problems than Western medicine. But she could not use her skills to help. She was not part of a hospital anymore. She had no office or clinic. The worst thing, she says, was not knowing the English language.

Dr. Liu was taking classes in English at the Association for New Canadians (ANC). The ANC helps new immigrants. Learning the language is important if you have come into a new country for the first time. It is often the first step in *empowerment* — the first thing that makes you feel in control.

While she was at the ANC, Dr. Liu asked a teacher if she could do acupuncture here in St. John's. The teacher said most people here have not heard of acupuncture. It might be difficult. Dr. Liu was advised to ask a doctor in St. John's about it. A doctor here might refer patients to Dr. Liu, she was told. This might be a good way to get started.

### Trouble Getting Started

Dr. Liu heard of one St. John's doctor who knew about acupuncture and believed it was good. She went to see this doctor. But she found there was a problem. Dr. Liu had competition. This doctor already had an acupuncturist to whom he referred patients. The acupuncturist was not a qualified doctor like Dr. Liu. Dr. Liu had studied for years in China. She had passed many exams, and she had five years experience in a Beijing hospital. The other acupuncturist had only done a course lasting a few months.

Dr. Liu remembers her conversation with this doctor very well. She started trying to explain the difference. She looked at the doctor and said: "Yes, but I am a professional."

The doctor stared back at her and said: "Do you think you are the only one who can practise acupuncture?"

At this moment, Dr. Liu says, she knew she had no value. All she had learned in China meant nothing in St. John's. People did not understand what her degrees and qualifications meant. They were just pieces of paper. Canadian doctors were just as happy with a short diploma course in acupuncture as with years of training and a medical degree. They didn't realize acupuncture was a serious thing. They didn't regard it as proper medicine, so they did not have high standards for acupuncture.

### Learning to Start from Scratch

Now when Dr. Liu remembers this story, she just laughs. Dr. Liu has a cheerful nature. She does not take it all too seriously. And everything has worked out well for her since then. But in the doctor's office ten years ago she remembers thinking, "Maybe I'll be a housewife if I stay here."

She didn't really want to be a housewife. She wanted to work. And it wasn't too long before she found a way to work. But the true beginning of Dr. Liu's practice in St. John's would be very humble. It would not involve the medical establishment at all.

This is what happened: One of Dr. Liu's friends from China had a Canadian boyfriend. This young man had a sports injury. The Canadian doctors just told him to wait. They said it would get better in its own time. But Dr. Liu's friend knew acupuncture would help. She told her boyfriend to go to Dr. Liu. He did. And his injury healed so well, he told some of his friends about it. More people came to Dr. Liu with aches and pains

### Bargaining Power: An Exchange

Dr. Liu began to realize the doctors in St. John's would only help her if she could help them. And soon she found her bargaining power. She met a doctor who wanted to learn acupuncture. She made a deal with this doctor. Dr. Liu would teach him acupuncture. In return, Dr. Liu asked him to teach her "clinical English." "Clinical English" means the words for medicines and diseases, words only doctors use. Dr. Liu knew these words in Chinese, but she had to learn them in English too.

With the help of these lessons, Dr. Liu could soon read medical books in English as well as Chinese. She could tell patients exactly what she was doing in their own language. This doctor also referred patients to Dr. Liu for acupuncture. Slowly, she was learning how to get accepted by the medical establishment. It was very much a political process: she had to find out what power she had, what she could offer the doctors in exchange for their help and co-operation.

Up until 1994, Dr. Liu had been treating most of her patients in her own home. As she got more and more patients, she set up her own office and clinic in 1994.

### Accepting the Canadian Way



*Dr Liu in her clinic.*

To be fully accepted in Canada, Dr. Liu needed Canadian qualifications in acupuncture. Even though her Chinese qualifications were more advanced, they were of less value here. So she went to Vancouver and Toronto. She took the exams called AABC (Acupuncture Association of British Columbia) and CAFC (Acupuncture Association of Canada). She passed them very easily. She had accepted the rules of the country into which she had come. This was a central part of Dr. Liu's success. In some ways, this was a political decision, a compromise. She had to adapt and change to her new country.

### Changing Times: 1990-2000

I am putting on my shirt. The pain I came with is slightly better. It will take time to heal. Dr. Liu's treatment will work over the next few days. I ask her about how things have changed in the last ten years. Are acupuncture and Chinese medicine more accepted now?

Dr. Liu says acupuncture is more accepted now. She says when she first started it was harder. Doctors would even tell patients not to go to acupuncture. They were afraid because it was new. Now many more doctors are sending patients for acupuncture treatment.

Her patients have changed too. At first they would ask lots of questions about Chinese treatments. They wanted to know how acupuncture could help them. Some were not at all sure about it. They were skeptical — not really believing that acupuncture could help. In China, Dr. Liu says, patients do not ask the same kinds of questions. Chinese patients trust an acupuncture doctor just like Canadians trust their family doctor. Dr. Liu learned she had to explain everything about her treatment to the patient. She was not used to this. She was not used to having to prove that acupuncture was any good. In China, people trust acupuncture. She did not mind about any of this. In fact, she finds it funny. Explaining things has helped her English. But now, her patients usually just accept that her treatment works, especially if they have been to Dr. Liu before. It is getting more like China.

### **Conclusion**

Dr. Liu is glad she stayed in Newfoundland. She likes it here and she believes her work has helped serve a purpose. She has helped to educate people about Chinese medicine. Memorial University has even asked her to teach medical students about acupuncture. Dr. Liu believes that, in time, the influence of Chinese medicine will help Western medicine. She is glad she can play a part in this change.

### **Sources**

An interview with Dr. Hong Liu in early February 2000, in her clinic, and two acupuncture sessions in 1999.

### **Dr. Hong Liu: A Chinese Doctor in St. John's**

#### **Questions for Discussion**

##### **Medicine and Politics**

1. What kind of medicine did Dr. Liu practise in China?
2. Did it matter to Dr. Liu what doctors here thought of Chinese medicine? Why/Why not?

##### **A Visit to Dr. Liu's Clinic - March 2000**

1. How far does Dr. Liu put the needles into the patient?
2. Does she put the needles into the exact point of the injury?

##### **Dr. Liu's Background: Chinese and Western Medicine Together**

1. Does Dr. Liu think that acupuncture works for every type of illness?
2. Is Dr. Liu against Western medicine?
3. What does "holistic" mean?

##### **Reasons for Leaving China**

1. What does Dr. Liu mean by "outside?"

##### **Early Plans**

1. What special reason made it hard for Dr. Liu to leave her country?
2. What was vital to her success in Canada?

##### **A Stranger in St. John's**

1. Which association gave English classes?

##### **Trouble Getting Started**

1. How did Dr. Liu feel when the Canadian doctor did not understand the value of her qualifications?

##### **Learning to Start from Scratch**

1. How did Dr. Liu get her first patient in St. John's?

##### **Bargaining Power: An Exchange**

1. What did Dr. Liu teach in exchange for learning "clinical English?"

### **Changing Times: 1990-2000**

1. How does Dr. Liu say the attitude of doctors has changed over the last ten years?
2. How does Dr. Liu say the attitude of patients has changed over the last ten years?

**Justine Jack: Keeping the Peace**  
Robin McGrath



**Word List**

**Solvent:** A liquid chemical such as gasoline or glue.

**Mushua Innu:** The Aboriginal people who live at Davis Inlet, Labrador.

**Evict:** To expel or send a person out of a place by legal process.

**Contempt of court:** Disrespect for or disobedience to a court of law.

**Peacekeeper:** A member of the Aboriginal police, also called tribal police or native constables.

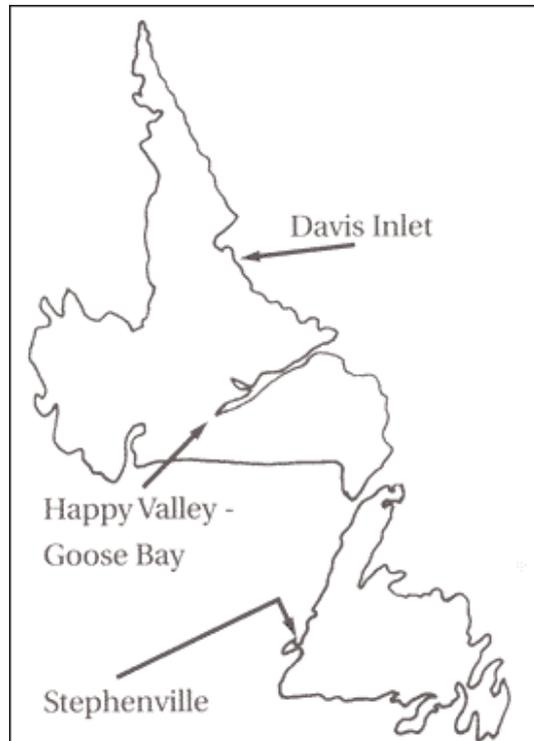
**Innu Aimun:** The language of the Mushua Innu people.

**Bail:** Money pledged as security that an arrested person will appear in court to stand trial.

**Peace bond:** A promise made by persons charged with a crime to keep the peace and be of good behavior until their trial.

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## Introduction



Davis Inlet is one of the most troubled communities in all of Canada. The incidence of solvent and alcohol abuse in the community is very high. The suicide rate is one of the worst in the country. In December of 1993, the Mushua Innu people of Davis Inlet evicted the provincial court of Newfoundland from their community charging that the court was acting improperly. They said that punishing people for their problems was not helpful. The following summer, three women were charged with contempt of court in relation to the incident. One of those women was Justine Noah Jack, an Innu Peacekeeper. This is the story of how Justine became a Peacekeeper and why she went to jail for her beliefs.

## The Early Years

Justine Jack was born in Sheshatshiu, Labrador, the daughter of Mary and Simon Noah. Justine's mother was Mushua Innu, but she went to live among nuns and priests in Montreal after her parents died. Her mother considered entering religious life herself, but she was refused because she had epilepsy. Instead, she was trained as a nursing assistant and sent back to Davis Inlet. It was there that she met Simon Noah. Mary and Simon married and lived most of the year in the country where Simon hunted. They only came into Davis Inlet to sell furs and get supplies.

Justine had an older sister and brother, both of whom died in the country. Initially, Justine was adopted out to another family, but her birth mother, Mary Noah, heard she was not being well cared for and took her back. The priest in Davis Inlet told the Noahs they should move permanently into the community so that Justine could go to school.

Justine remembers that they lived in a wooden house with a canvas roof when they first moved into the settlement. Justine went to school in Davis, and then she went to high school in Sheshatshiu and Goose Bay. She dropped out in grade eleven and went back to Davis Inlet to look for a job. That was when she met her husband, Mike Jack.



Photo: R. McGrath

*Davis Inlet is a very small island.*

*The only way to go hunting or fishing is by boat or plane.  
All goods must be delivered by coastal boat during the summer months.*

For a time, Justine worked for the Innu Nation in Davis Inlet, and then she went to work for Legal Services. Up until this time, Justine hadn't been very involved in her work. It was just a way to earn money. However, she found being a court worker interested her. There were a lot of . problems with justice issues in Davis Inlet at that time.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) represented the justice system in Davis Inlet. There are no words in Innu Aimun equivalent to "royal" or "mounted." There is not even a word for "police."

As Justine explained, "The word we use in our language, *kamakunuest*, means 'the man who locks up people.'"

One day, Innu leader George Rich came into Justine's office and began to talk to her about two Mushua Innu men who were going to train as native police officers. They were going to do the Peacekeepers' course in Mission, British Columbia. George thought that Justine would make a good Peacekeeper and suggested she apply to go there also.

"I could see that he felt really strongly that I could make it," Justine says. She hadn't thought about being a Peacekeeper before, but once the idea was in her mind, she really wanted to do it. It was a turning point in her life, but it wasn't an easy one. She had a husband and two children to think about.

### **Peacekeeping as a Career**

In 1992, Justine travelled with another member of the Mushua Innu community to the First Nations Tribal Police Institute in British Columbia (B.C.) to train as a Peacekeeper. The decision to go to B.C. was a difficult one for Justine as she had to leave her family behind for many months. After she completed the first term of the nine-month program, the strain was too much for Mike.



Photo: R. McGrath

*The RCMP truck is the only emergency vehicle in Davis Inlet. There are no cars or pickups. Water and groceries are carried by hand or hauled on a sled. Some people have four wheel bikes or skidoos.*

Justine and Mike separated temporarily and Justine brought the children with her when she went back to British Columbia. When she completed her training and returned home, she and Mike were reconciled but things did not get much easier.

"When I came back from Mission, Mike hated my work," she explains. "It was hard. I had to educate him about what it meant to me."

Justine's problems weren't just personal. There were political problems, too. The Band Council had thought that since there were Mi'Kmaq constables in Conne River, Newfoundland, who had been trained at the school in Mission, there would be no difficulty getting recognition for the new Mushua Innu Peace-keepers once they completed their course. However, the Newfoundland government refused to recognize the credential of the Mushua Innu tribal police. They said the Peacekeepers would be charged with impersonating police officers if they tried to work in Davis Inlet.



Photo: R. McGrath

*When Justine first became a Peacekeeper Mike didn't always understand why her job had to come first. In time he came to see the importance of her work. Now he is her best supporter.*

Justine and her fellow Peacekeepers continued working anyway. RCMP from Goose Bay and elsewhere kept coming to the community and arresting people at a higher rate than anywhere else in the country. In court, little or no translation was provided. There was often no attempt to understand cultural differences in behaviour. Jail sentences were frequent and harsh. Children were handcuffed and shackled for court appearances, which outraged the elders. Shortly after Justine's return to Davis, matters reached a crisis. Twenty-eight women in the community including Justine, signed a letter ordering the court to leave Davis Inlet. They felt that the justice system did not work for the Innu and did not meet their need to heal.

### Going to Jail

In Davis Inlet some people were very happy about the action of the women, but others were worried. In the summer of 1994, the Newfoundland government sent RCMP and army riot troops to stand by in Hopedale, Nain, and Goose Bay. There was fear of a full-scale invasion. The Band Council filed a complaint with the Judicial Council of Newfoundland against two judges. The eyes of the world were on the tiny community and slowly, the crisis eased. However, two weeks later, three of the women involved in the incident were charged with contempt of court. The women were Band Chief Katie Rich, Justice of the Peace Nympha Byrne, and Justine.

For a time it looked as if nothing was going to be done about the charges. Then in April of 1995, the RCMP arrived in Davis Inlet with arrest warrants. Their plane landed at the airstrip outside Davis Inlet and they served the warrants on all three women. Katie, Nympha and Justine were taken aboard the plane and flown out to the RCMP lockup in Happy Valley. Two days later they appeared in court for a preliminary hearing. The police expected them to ask for bail and then go home until the case came up for trial. However, this did not happen.

In order to get out of jail, Justine and the others had to sign a peace bond, promising not to break the law again. They refused to do this. Since no Innu person had ever agreed to be governed by Canada or Newfoundland, the women refused to recognize the authority of the court. Because they wouldn't sign the peace bond, they had to stay in jail. There was no long-term jail for women in Labrador, so they were taken to Stephenville. The farther they got from home, the more frightening the experience became for the three women.

Going to jail was very difficult for Justine. As a Peacekeeper, she knew about the correctional system, so she wasn't afraid of being in jail. However, like most prisoners, she worried about what was going on at home. She worried that Mike would be angry at her. She worried about how he would manage with the kids. The newspapers said the women were just doing this as a stunt to get attention and sympathy. An editorial in the *Evening Telegram* called it a "publicity gimmick" and suggested they should be punished with a lengthy stay in jail.

Peter Peneshue, the president of the Innu Nation, was one of the few people who defended what the women were doing. He wrote that "Resisting a wrongful charge — even to the extent of imprisonment — shows principle and courage."

The other women were determined not to sign the bond. Justine supported their position, but she did not feel she could abandon her family. She felt she had to consider Mike's feelings as well as her own. She signed the peace bond and was released. She was very relieved to be able to go home.

On April 28th, 1995, Katie Rich, Nympha Byrne and Justine Noah Jack were found guilty of contempt of court arising from the 1993 incident in Davis Inlet. In resisting the authority of the Canadian and Newfoundland judicial system, they broke the law. They did not use threats, they did not use violence, and they did not hurt anyone, but they were treated as criminals and paid for their political actions.

On the day of their conviction, Peter Peneshue wrote, "Gandhi, Mandela and Martin Luther King have shown it is the courage of a few that changes the minds and hearts of many." Like those three famous men, the three women of Davis Inlet hoped to change minds and hearts.

### Life Today

After six years as a Peacekeeper, Justine has grown in confidence, and Mike has a greater understanding of how important her work is to her. He has seen her save lives. Once, Justine disarmed a man who was threatening suicide with a shotgun. Often she intervenes when family violence erupts. She explains the law to people in their own language so that they will understand it. Justine is a good Peacekeeper. She works with the RCMP and helps them understand the cultural differences that exist in Davis Inlet. She would like to see more tribal police employed in the Aboriginal communities. She was very pleased when her 13-year-old daughter Nellie said she wanted to become a Peacekeeper, too.

Being a Peacekeeper has a very personal importance for Justine Jack. Justine has lost a lot of members of her family to suicide. Many of her cousins have died and two of her brothers attempted suicide. "They wouldn't have made it if there were no tribal police," she says.

However, Justine is still seeking ways to reduce the impact of her position on her family. "My kids are proud of me," she says, "but I can see that other kids, even parents, take it out on them." She thinks it would be easier for peacekeepers and their families if they were posted in communities other than their own. "I'd like to see tribal police come from other places. That way they can feel they have more power for their work in the community. It's too hard when the people you police are your relatives."



Photo: R. McGrath

*Justine Jack is proud to be a Peacekeeper, but says it is hard on her kids. She doesn't want to put people in jail, she only wants to save their lives.*

In 1999, Justine graduated from high school. She wants to continue to help peacekeeping in Davis Inlet but thinks maybe it will be possible to do more from a distance. Justine feels that when people go to jail, they don't get any help with their problems. They need to see psychiatrists and doctors, but in correctional centres they don't get that.

"I don't want to put people in jail," she explains. "I want to save their lives."



### Sources

The writer first heard about Justine Noah Jack from her husband, who acted as Justine's lawyer when she was arrested. Robin later read *Gathering Voices*, the book about the People's Inquiry into social conditions at Davis Inlet, and watched documentary films such as "The Two Worlds of the Innu," which tells about the struggle the Innu have had since their first contact with non-aboriginal people. When Robin decided to write about Justine going to jail, she looked up newspaper accounts at the library. She later met Justine in Davis Inlet and interviewed her about her life.

### Justine Jack: Keeping the Peace

#### Questions for Discussion

##### Introduction

1. Where is Davis Inlet?
2. Who are the people who live in Davis Inlet?
3. What had you heard about Davis Inlet before reading this profile?

##### The Early Years

1. What work did Justine's mother do before she married?
2. How did Simon Noah support his family?
3. What kind of a house did the Noahs have when they first moved into Davis Inlet?
4. How does Justine translate the Innu Aimun word for "policeman"?

##### Peacekeeping as a Career

1. Where did Justine go to train to be a Peacekeeper?
2. Where do Peacekeepers work on the island of Newfoundland? Can you locate the place on a map of the province?
3. What charge were the Peacekeepers of Davis Inlet threatened with by the Newfoundland government?
4. Give three reasons why the people of Davis Inlet objected to the Newfoundland justice system.
5. Why do you think it was the women rather than the men of Davis Inlet who took a stand?

##### Going to Jail

1. How many of the 28 women who signed the eviction order were charged?  
How many were not charged?
2. Where were the three women taken to jail? Why were they moved to a different jail?
3. What did Justine refuse to sign?
4. Why did she change her mind and sign the paper?
5. What was Justine's greatest worry in jail?
6. What did the women have in common with Gandhi, Mandela and Martin Luther King?

##### Life Today

1. How many years has Justine been a Peacekeeper?
2. How does her job affect her family?
3. What changes does she think would help reduce the stress on Peacekeepers?
4. Why does Justine feel that putting Innu people in jail is not helpful?