

The Augustine Mound



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Miramichi Literacy Council - Miramichi Literacy Writers series

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Judy Arnold
President
Miramichi Literacy Council Inc.
P.O. Box 534
Miramichi, NB
E1N 3A8
(506) 773-6734
judy960@hotmail.com

Written by Phyllis Johnstone

Illustrated by Dawn Maclean

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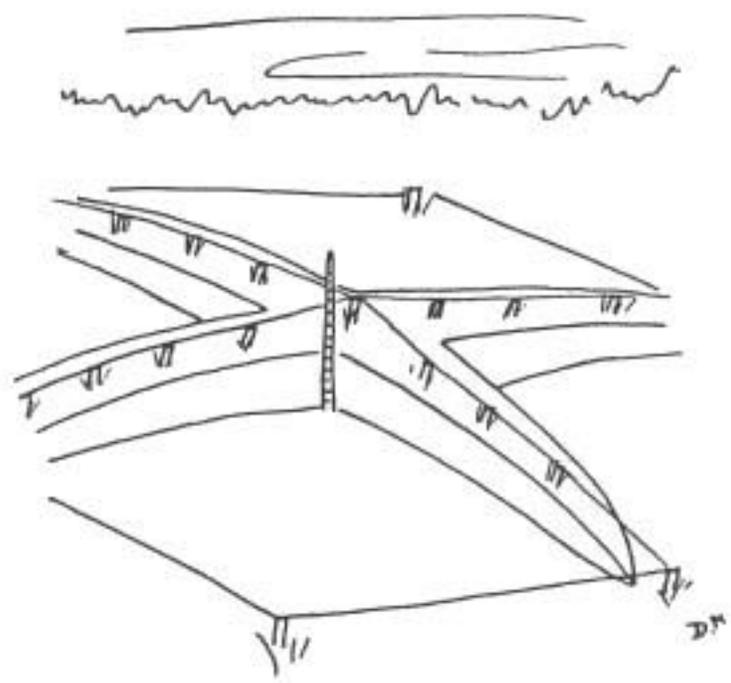
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Miramichi Literacy Council
P.O. Box 534
Miramichi, NB
E1N 3A6

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THE AUGUSTINE MOUND

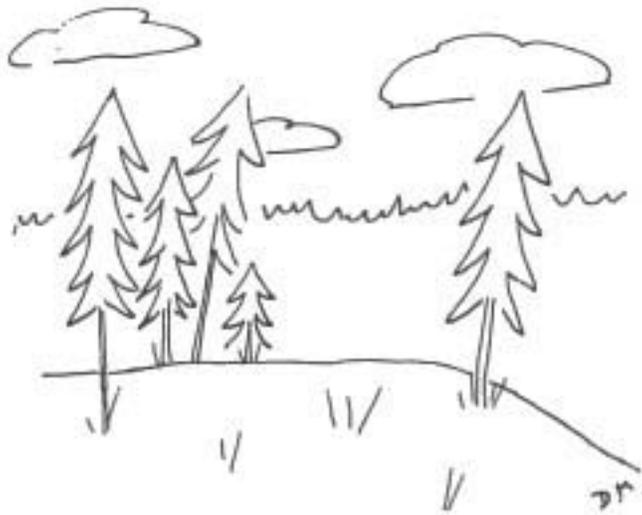
CHAPTER I

There are many examples of early history to be found on the Miramichi. One very interesting example of early history which dates back hundreds of years, is The Augustine Mound.

The Augustine Mound is an early Micmac Burial Ground. It is found on a Red Bank Indian Reserve. Red Bank is about twenty miles from Chatham.

The Augustine Mound was uncovered by Joseph Augustine in 1972. He had known about it from the early age of ten. His grandfather had told him stories about it. He told Joseph it was a "Ceremonial Dancing Place" for the Indians.

Mr. Augustine decided to see what was in the mound. One day he went there and uncovered a small part of the mound. He found several items. These items were wrapped in bark. Where the bark of the bundle was broken, he could see a spear head. Mr. Augustine took the bundle of items home.



Picture of Augustine Mound

CHAPTER II

At home, Mr. Augustine showed the bundle to his daughter, Madeline. He began to carefully lay the items out on a newspaper. He found spear points and arrowheads. Spear points and arrowheads were items used by the Indians in their every day life. They needed the spear points and arrowheads to hunt game. They used small spear points and arrowheads to kill birds and other small animals for food. Larger, heavier spear points and arrowheads were used for larger game.

Mr. Augustine and his daughter decided to call in someone to help uncover the mound. They had to wait until Ottawa told them it was right to do so. It was not until 1974 that the mound could be uncovered.

Dr. Chris Turnbull, the head archeologist for the province, was called in. He was very excited about the mound. An archeologist is a person who looks for signs of early life. It is because of the work of archeologists that we know so much about our ancestors. The archeologists uncover artifacts which tell us how our ancestors lived.

Many artifacts were found in the 'Augustine Mound. These artifacts were things that were made by the Indians. They told the story of how the Indians lived on the Miramichi many years ago.

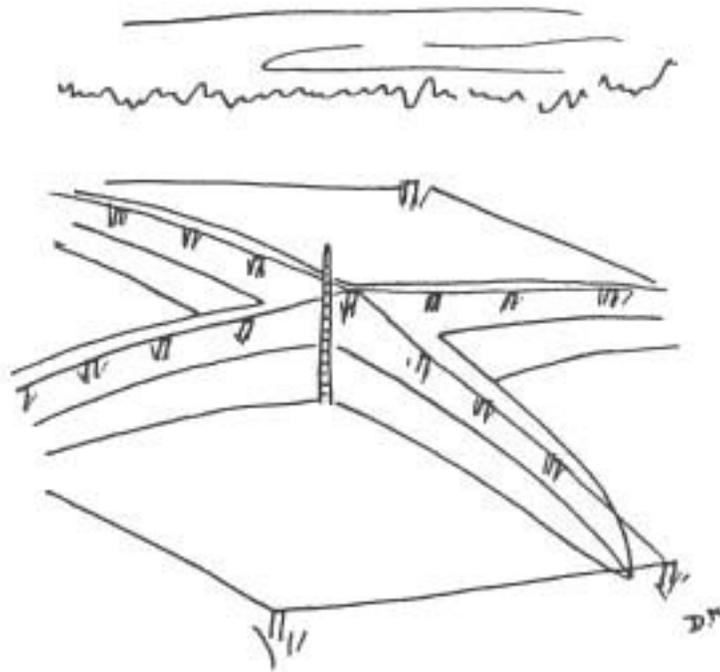
CHAPTER III

The archeologists and other workers of the digging team were very excited. They had to be very careful how they removed the artifacts. It would take many months of slow hard work. The artifacts in the mound told the story of the Micmac people's ancestors. The artifacts showed these ancestors were living on the Miramichi nearly three thousand years ago. These items were well kept because of the type of soil that covered them.

Many years ago, when an Indian died, his belongings were put in the grave with him. The archeologist and his team uncovered spear points, arrowheads, dishes, jewellery and other items.

In order to uncover every part of the mound, it was carefully measured out. The mound was roped off into four sections. Each piece of soil was carefully checked. No piece of soil was left unturned. It took two and one-half years to completely uncover the mound.

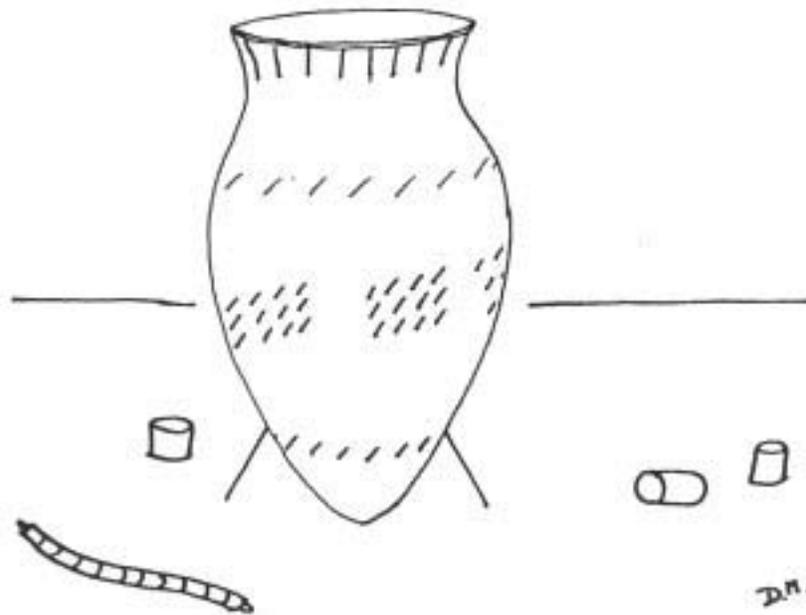
The Augustine Mound was about thirty-six feet long and about three feet high. But, it held much information. Bones were also uncovered. Much can be found out about people by studying their bones.



CHAPTER IV

The artifacts and bones that were uncovered in the Augustine Mound were priceless. They told of the great skill of the Micmac People. They showed how they lived off the land and hunted with handmade items of stone. The artifacts also showed how the Micmacs made their jewellery, dishes and clothing. The artifacts and bones showed that these people dated back almost three thousand years ago.

The Augustine Mound is the only one of its kind in Atlantic Canada. A mound somewhat like it was found in Virginia, in the United States. Several of the same kind of artifacts and bones were found in the Virginia Mound. This tells of the many miles of land the Micmac people must have travelled and lived on at one time.



Example of dish used by the Indians

Nothing is left in the Augustine Mound now. The bones and artifacts were removed. They are now in Fredericton. Many of the artifacts can also be seen at the Red Bank Federal School.

Some day the bones of the Micmac People's ancestors will be returned to the Augustine Mound. It is hoped that some day the Augustine Mound will serve as a monument to the Micmac Indian People.

CHAPTER V

Not far from the Augustine Mound is another side of the early history of the Micmac People. It is called The Oxbow Site. The Oxbow Site is a Micmac Campsite. It was also carefully uncovered and studied.

When digging in one of these sites, everything must be carefully measured. The holes that are made must be very even. No stone or piece or soil can be pushed or pulled out of place.

The Oxbow site also had a story to tell. The layers of sand each stood for a year. Because of the floods, the Micmac Indians could only use the campsite from early spring to late fall.

The yearly flooding raised the land many feet. As each layer was uncovered, artifacts were found. These artifacts told what years the Indians were there. Flooding no longer takes place because the land is higher now.

At the campsite, bones of the fish eaten so many years ago were found. Seeds also were uncovered. These seeds showed the archeologists what type of berries grew at that time. They found blueberry seeds, duckberry seeds and the seeds of many different kinds of plants.

The deeper the diggers went through the layers of sand, the more they found. Holes were uncovered. These were believed to have been made by wigwams. A wigwam was an Indian home many years ago. Wigwams were made of wood and animal skins. The Indians may have used caribou skins to cover their wigwams.

These wigwams kept the Indians protected from the cold and also from wild animals.

The artifacts found at the Oxbow Site told of the food eaten by the Indians at that time. It was found that caribou lived on the Miramichi then. Caribou meat was part of the Indian's food. These animals are no longer found on the Miramichi. Northern Canada is one of the few places where Caribou can now be found. The Indians also hunted other wild animals besides the caribou.



Picture of Wigwam

The woods were full of game. Several different kinds of fish were found in the river. Blueberries, duckberries and fiddleheads were part of the Micmac Indian's everyday food. Fiddleheads are a green found even today in many parts of the Miramichi. They grow in wet places. The fiddlehead is so named because it looks like the top of a fiddle. Every spring many people on the Miramichi pick fiddleheads.

The Oxbow Site, like the Augustine Mound, is a part of the Micmac People's history. It is possible that such sites may be found all over Canada. The Micmacs are a proud people who have played a great part in the growth of the Miramichi, its spirit, and its history.

WORD LIST

archeologist

seeds

bundle

caribou

ancestors

fiddlehead

artifacts

items

spear points

sites

arrowheads

bones

wigwam

early

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