

Wabanaki Studies Commission Summary of Meeting of January 8, 2002

Participants

Commission Members

Barney Bérubé, Maine Department of Education
Rick Doyle, Governor, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik (afternoon)
John Bear Mitchell, Penobscot Nation
Wayne Newell, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkmikuk/Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission
Christine Petersen, Elementary School Teacher
William Phillips, Chief, Aroostook Band of Micmacs (afternoon)
Maureen Smith (Oneida), Ph.D., Native Studies Director, University of Maine
Rebecca Sockbeson, Penobscot Nation

Others

James Francis, Penobscot Nation
Diana Scully, Executive Director, Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission
Gail Sockabasin, Director, Wabanaki Center, University of Maine
Donald Soctomah, Passamaquoddy Tribal Representative
Betsy Tannian, Penobscot Nation

Meeting Convened

Maureen Smith convened a meeting of the Wabanaki Studies Commission at 10:15 AM on Tuesday, January 8, 2002. Because of inclement weather on January 7, the Commission met on this previously established snow date. The meeting was held in the Mahogany Room at Wells Common, University of Maine, Orono.

Identifying Resources

Christine Petersen shared with Commission members a number of books and other resources that she uses for teaching fourth and fifth grade students relating to Native Americans:

- *Birch Bark House* by Louise Erdrich.
- *Crossing the Starlight Bridge* by Alice Mead.
- *Guest* by Michael Dorris.
- *Micmac Legends* by Shirley Bear and Alden Nolan.
- *Keepers of the Earth*.
- *Keepers of the Animals*.
- *Maine Speaks*, an anthology of Maine literature, which includes legends.
- *Forgotten Waters*, a 1997 series of news articles by the Portland Press Herald.
- Various websites, including one about brown ash.
- Resources about prehistoric Maine at the Maine State Museum.
- An article by Richard Judd and Bruce Bourque, which is part of a book by Judd and Churchill.

Chair Smith noted that the Wabanaki Studies Commission should think about background material for teachers, as well as materials to use with students. She mentioned that the American Friends Service Committee has provided copies of *The Wabanakis of Maine and the Maritimes* for Commission members. Copies of this resource book and accompanying record, with lesson plans for grades 4-8, were distributed. Also distributed was an annotated resource list for all educational levels provided by Mary Griffith, which will be part of an updated version of *The Wabanakis of Maine and the Maritimes*.

Chair Smith also distributed a number of other resource materials for the Commission to review. These included chapters from various books that she uses in her work:

- *Paying the Bills: Economics*, Chapter 7 from a book.
- *Teaching about Sovereignty, Tribal Governments, and Indian Policy*, Chapter 12. *Using Community Resources*, Chapter 14. These are chapters from a book about how to teach about American Indians.
- *American Indian History, Culture and Language*, a curriculum framework from Minnesota that includes lesson plan models for all grade levels.
- *American Indian Tribal Governments*, a 2-3 day activity for students in grades 8-12, prepared by the Madison, Wisconsin Metropolitan School District.

Wayne Newell shared material that he brought, including the following:

- *Maliyan*, a book and CD about a young Passamaquoddy girl in the 1920s.
- *Baskadegan*, a step-by-step book by Mary Sanipass about basket-making.
- *The Wampum Records*, a book published by the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton.
- *Penobscot Man*, a book by Frank Speck and an article by Frank Speck entitled *Wampum in Indian Tradition and Currency*.
- *Delia's Story*, by Joyce Carle as remembered by Delia Mitchell.
- Historical maps of Passamaquoddy Territory.
- *An American Perspective*, from REACH, an ethnic perspectives series.
- *Contemporary American Indian Writers*, Indian Education Technical Assistance, USDE, 1996.
- *Passamaquoddy Medicinal Plants*, a paper by the Passamaquoddy Natural Resources Committee (September 15, 1997.)
- *Wolaku (Yesterday)*, an early 1990s video about an archaeological dig.
- *Wo-na-ki-ne*, a 1974 article by Wayne Newell and Sue Tureen about singing and dancing.
- *Katahdin Fantasies*, a brochure by Marion Whitney Smith, originally published in 1953 and reprinted in 1964. The focus of this is that the stories are not real. There is no ill intent, but the interpretation is not correct.
- *Vision of Teaching and Learning*, a one-page diagram by the Passamaquoddy Tribe.
- *Community Project (Passamaquoddy Village)*, a lesson plan for several weeks for grades 6-8.
- *Toke Katop Qenoq Sipkiw (For Now but Not for Long)*, a teachers' guide about the Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Penobscot involvement in the Revolutionary War.
- *Creating a Sacred Place to Support Young American Indian and Other Learners*, by Sandra Fox, Bureau of Indian Affairs, who is working on a national curriculum.
- *We Shall Stand United*, a 1970s video by Jay Kent.

Chair Smith identified two additional resources:

- *Captain Lewey, A Passamaquoddy Pioneer*.
- *Maliseets and Micmacs* by Robert Leavitt.

Mr. Newell added that Sue Stevens wrote a paper on economics, which he will read over again to see if it would be helpful. He noted that what people thought was appropriate in the 1960s and 1970s has changed, and now there is more understanding and more tolerance.

Barney Bérubé mentioned that the Department of Education's ESL program has instructional resources that would be helpful.

Holding and Using Materials

Mr. Newell indicated that the Commission needs a place to gather and hold materials. He said the Maine State Library has an archival mentality and is not such a good distributor of material. Chair Smith suggested that perhaps one of the colleges of education could house and lend materials.

Rebecca Sockbeson suggested that some of the materials could be recommended to faculty teaching multi-culturalism and education. She said they could weave these materials into their syllabi. Chair Smith commented that in Wisconsin professors went around to train teachers. Noting that teachers don't have time to develop curricula, Mr. Newell said the Commission needs to figure out a way to have a unit that is published for teachers to use. John Bear Mitchell commented that resources could include the Maine State Museum, the Abbe Museum, and the Wabanaki Center.

Conferences

Ms. Sockbeson suggested that the Commission think about a statewide conference on this issue with principals (key people?) from each institution making a commitment to attend. She said this could be an annual gathering during which materials could be shared and critiqued.

Ms. Petersen commented that this is a wonderful idea. She pointed out that at present there are Learning Results facilitators in the schools to help teachers look at things in a different way. She suggested that teams of teachers from different grade levels along with the Learning Results facilitators could participate.

Chair Smith suggested that the Wabanaki Studies Commission could start by getting on the agendas of conferences for superintendents and principals. Others suggested that the Commission also could get on the agendas of conferences for social studies teachers and the Middle School Institute.

Involving the Commissioner of Education

Mr. Newell suggested that the University's diversity effort could be tapped into. Ms. Sockbeson said the Commission's work needs to be on the radar screen of Commissioner of Education Duke Alabanese so he can communicate to Superintendents about this. Mr. Bérubé suggested that the Commission could have a meeting at the Department of Education and bring Commissioner Albanese and Deputy Commissioner Judy Lucarelli in. Commission members agreed that this is a good idea.

Update on Staff Position

Diana Scully reported that two people had applied for the staff position for the Wabanaki Studies Commission and that she, Chair Smith, and Cushman Anthony had held a teleconference to discuss them. She explained that she is in the process of contacting references, and things should be finalized in the next few days.

Involving the Tribal Communities

Chair Smith suggested that the Commission might want to invite people from the tribal communities to talk about their history and culture. She said this section, in particular, needs a lot of input. Mr. Newell mentioned that Joe Nicholas is interested in the Commission, and suggested that maybe there should be a meeting with elders when the weather is better. Chair Smith asked whether it would be better to do this before or after the Commission brainstorms about history and culture. Ms. Peterson suggested that if the Commission identified topics, this would help focus input. Ms. Sockbeson said everyone from the tribal communities is a stakeholder, and it is appropriate to give more people a voice.

Ms. Scully asked whether involving tribal people should happen community by community? Ms. Sockbeson responded that the Commission could have a meeting with elders, and the Commission's representatives from the Tribes could have open forums in their communities and bring the information back to the full Commission. Mr. Newell agreed that there is always a need to share information. He pointed out that Mr. Bérubé will be meeting with the Passamaquoddy Joint School Board this week, that a presentation could be made to the Passamaquoddy Joint Tribal Council, and that there also could be more informal give and take.

Mr. Bear Mitchell said the meetings with the tribal communities will be content driven, especially the meeting with elders. He added that it is a major responsibility to give kids the right information. He said he likes to have his students learn one new concept every week.

June 1 Deadline

Mr. Bear Mitchell noted that the June 1 deadline is coming up for the Commission to submit its first report. Pointing out that there are only 4-5 more meetings until then, he said it is important for the Commission to get to the communities sooner than later. He added that the Commission will need outreach to sell what it is doing. He suggested that the Commission have a rough draft of the report by April. Chair Smith commented that this is a preliminary report, and the Commission should not rush into its product. Mr. Bérubé said by June 1 the Commission needs to account for what it is doing.

Mr. Bear Mitchell said he sees the preliminary report as an outline with bulleted goals...as a syllabus about where the Commission is going. Mr. Newell stated that, according to the law, the Commission is supposed to assist the Department of Education. He said LD 291 will be as good as the amount of responsibility the Department of Education takes. He added that the Commission's report should focus on what the Commission wants the Department to do. Mr. Bérubé said there should be certainty that things that Commission members have put on the table will happen (e.g. going to meetings of superintendents, principals, teachers, etc.)

Mr. Newell suggested that Ms. Scully should present a synthesis of what the Commission is doing by its mid-point. He wondered what will happen after the Commission expires, noting that one of its missions is a sell job. Mr. Bear Mitchell agreed that the Commission needs to sell its recommendations, and commented that this will be easier to do if they are on paper. He asked how to get schools interested, and pointed out that in the end schools must be accountable for doing this and this accountability is part of Learning Results.

List Serve

Chair Smith stated that part of the challenge for the Commission is meeting just once a month. She suggested that the Commission could do e-mail exchanges between meetings to help move the process along. Ms. Peterson commented that a list serve would be helpful, because Commission members could send stuff to a central location and then it would go out to all Commission members. James Francis wondered if "First Class" could be used for a list serve. Mr. Bear Mitchell said maybe his technical coordinator could help set up a list serve. Chair Smith suggested that this could be a task for the Commission's new staff person.

Appropriate Materials; Tough Subjects

Mr. Newell commented that the Commission needs to pick out "appropriate" materials. He noted that part of history is presenting information in the best light from everyone's perspective and some history is ignored because it is horrific. Ms. Sockbeson suggested that perhaps the Commission should break into working groups to review resources. Ms. Petersen pointed out that a lot of topics are inter-related and asked whether the Commission needs to have the big picture first. Mr. Newell asked how the Commission will present tough subjects, such as spirituality. He said they have a responsibility not to ignore these, but wondered how such subjects should be presented. Ms. Sockbeson said it might make sense to stick with the categories identified in LD 291.

Possible Outside Assistance for Writing Tribal History

Chair Smith mentioned that she has a grant to help get more minorities into NASA. Through this grant, she would like to contact the University of Oklahoma, because they have a program that helps write tribal histories and develop curricula. Mr. Newell noted that this program has a unique way of writing tribal history—it is culturally based, not linear. Chair Smith said she will see if the University of Oklahoma can send Robin Butterfield to Maine to make a presentation about curriculum from the native perspective.

Mr. Newell asked if this would be a specialty thing above and beyond the Commission. Chair Smith responded "yes." Mr. Newell said the Commission members could be invited to attend. Mr. Bear Mitchell said bringing in someone who has done this would be helpful.

Chair Smith commented that teachers will not use a 50-page document about tribal history, so it would be quite concise. Mr. Bérubé suggested that the guiding principles of the Learning Results could be used to structure tribal history. Mr. Newell stated that it is important to come away with something better than a stereotypical view of Indians. He mentioned that at Pleasant Point all of the elders are being interviewed and said there is a need to elevate oral history. He noted that there are people in the native community who disagree with some of the things in the Bourque book (e.g. relating to repatriation.)

Economic Systems

Two Written Resources Identified So Far. Chair Smith said she would like to Commission to discuss teaching about economic systems (one of the four areas required in LD 291.) She pointed to two written resources distributed at the beginning of the meeting about this topic—*The Wabanakis of Maine and the Maritimes* (page B-91) and *Paying the Bills: Economics* (Chapter 7.)

Focus on Past and Future. Mr. Bear Mitchell indicated that there should be a focus on the role of Native Americans in the Maine economy in the past, as well as into the future.

Survival; Land and Resource Base of Economy. Mr. Bear Mitchell stated that the ability to hunt, harvest and fish was needed to survive. He noted that the Tribes used and shared each other's lands and resources; the economy is intertwined with land use; and fishing and land use are a base of the economy.

Impact of Economics on Culture. Chair Smith asked how people survived when they did not have stores and money. Mr. Newell replied that as economies evolved, they forced the native people into another way of living. He noted that even people who profess to live the traditional life, are not really able to live it, because of the existence of cars, lights, etc.) He said economics is the master of all of us.

Mr. Bear Mitchell asked if economics encompasses tribal medicine people. Mr. Newell responded that in traditional times this was all accounted for, but now medicine people are paid. He said he pays a penny to a woman, who then throws it away. He said the gesture is important, not the money.

Chair Smith said people cannot continue to do what they did prior to contact with the Europeans. Mr. Newell mentioned that an 84-year old woman in Alaska won a major subsistence battle for which she had fought for half her life. He said in Maine, tribal members are still arguing for their right to subsistence. He noted that the Maine Indian Claims Settlement helped, but it did not address the ocean. He said the Tribes are still talking about their right to economic autonomy today.

Archaeological Data. Mr. Bear Mitchell mentioned that archaeological data indicates that Norse jewelry was traded with people here, and stones from Greenland are in Maine.

Impact of New Things. Mr. Newell said he would like students to understand what it was like to get a kettle, as well as to look at the impact of today's gadgets such as cell phones. He suggested that students should look at periods when things were easier and periods when things were more difficult. Chair Smith mentioned that when the Cree Indians got central heating, this changed their lives. Mr. Newell commented that when a Tribe out West wanted to re-establish whaling, some people were upset because the Tribe was using new technology. He also mentioned that when the first radio came to Indian Township, everyone came in to listen to it, and some believed it was possessed.

Educational Resources. Chair Smith asked what resources about economics are available now, and what resources need to be developed. Mr. Newell said there is a museum in Easton that is like a Walmart from the past and indicated that there is a universality in what people need.

Trade, Bartering, Wampum. Representative Donald Soctomah mentioned that economics was based on bartering. Mr. Bear Mitchell said a gross misunderstanding is that wampum was like money. Representative Soctomah stated that during European contact it became like cash. Mr. Newell added that wampum was not from this area.

Mr. Newell said his mother remembers a story about how in the springtime, people would dress up in their funniest get ups and write a song. He said the purpose was to get those they wanted to trade with in a good mood.

Sophisticated System. Chair Smith focused on the idea that there was a system of bartering and trade routes. She mentioned that:

- There was a sophisticated economic system...a sophisticated approach to survival.
- This system was prescribed.
- This system was as evolved and sophisticated as the European's system.
- This system was different from but not less than the European's system.

US-Centric. Mr. Bear Mitchell commented that US people always look at everything they do as better, and students look at things as comparative. He said moving away from this would help remove stereotypes. Chair Smith said this is difficult, because the new and everything reinforces that US people are better.

Economic Distress. Ms. Sockbeson stated that the contemporary state of economic distress of Indian people in Maine should be made visible. She said Indian people are four times more likely to be poor than whites, and blacks are three times more likely to be poor than whites. She said there should be some focus on the impacts of colonization. Mr. Bear Mitchell said this also involves a look at the reservations and homeless Indians who live off reservation. Chair Smith mentioned that many people left the reservations because of economics.

Perception of Wealth. Mr. Newell stated that the perception is that the Tribes are wealthy because of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act. He added that here also is a perception that the Tribes do not pay taxes, when the only tax the tribes do not pay is the property tax because of how property is owned. He said it is important to deal with these contemporary attitudes.

Gaming; Industry. Mr. Bear Mitchell pointed out that gaming is part of economics. He suggested looking at a gaming versus non-gaming tribes and at industrial versus non-industrial tribes.

Tourist Trade. Chair Smith asked about the tourist trade. Mr. Bear Mitchell responded that the General Citizenship Act was passed in the 1920s. He said before this, it was illegal for tribal members to practice their ceremonies and speak their language, but after the Act was passed, they could. Mr. Bear Mitchell mentioned that the Act provided that men who fought in World War I could become citizens, but their wives and children could not. He noted that baskets and carved clubs were useful day-to-day items, and now they are art items...collectors' items.

Mr. Bear Mitchell said there is some distortion in items made for the tourist trade, such as carving totem poles. He said the Wabanaki did not have these. He noted that these and western headdresses represent a melding of cultures. Mr. Newell added that the Indian shows at the turn of the century led to "pan-Indianism." He noted that the ribbon shirt is not part of Wabanaki tradition, but it is important for the Wabanaki culture to have permission to evolve.

Mr. Bear Mitchell said the Penobscots have shared their food, medicines and transportation. Mr. Newell mentioned that Harald Prins says that basket-making came from Europe. Mr. Newell added that even if this is true, the Wabanaki people learned this very well.

Bounties on Scalps. Ms. Sockbeson commented that there is a document that shows there were bounties on Penobscot scalps. She said this was not based on the native economic system, but was part of the European economy. Chair Smith said this information is a good way to deal with scalping and stereotypes.

Warfare. Chief Billy Phillips mentioned that if an area was rich in one commodity and another was rich in another, the tribes would either trade or engage in warfare to get needed things. Mr. Bear Mitchell said warfare involves history, economics, and land. He wondered what issues should be taught and how to get the resources to teach these.

Conservation. Ms. Petersen asked whether it would be a stretch to include conservation of resources as a topic related to economics.

Similarities and Differences among Tribes.

Chief Phillips said it is important to talk about similarities and differences among the tribes in Maine. Chair Smith said when the Commission talks about tribal histories and cultures, it needs to stress differences as well as commonalities. Mr. Bear Mitchell said it is hard to find things written on differences; it is easier to find things about commonalities since all the tribes are Algonquian.

Mr. Newell mentioned that Jesse Fuchs tapes from 1889 make a reference to "dancing like the Micmac." He said there must have been a different dancing style. He noted that there is distinctness among the Wabanaki communities—not differences. He pointed out that there are many similar words.

Chief Phillips commented that the Micnacs were aligned with the Montaignards and the xxx??? from Newfoundland. Mr. Bear Mitchell said there are Cree people in northern Quebec who can speak Penobscot.

Pre-Service Training; Speakers; Ongoing Process

Chair Smith urged the Commission not to lose sight of the importance of pre-service training, speakers, etc. Mr. Newell commented that the Commission could make recommendations about teacher certification relating to multiculturalism and pluralism. He noted that the Commission's work will only be as good as the teeth that go into its recommendations. He said the legislation could be amended to have something beyond a voluntary commitment to multi-culturalism.

Chair Smith stated her belief that what will make this work is having good teacher training and good resource material. She said the Commission should have two products: the report and something teachers can use. She added that what the Commission has to give teachers is the really important product, and it would be nice to have an alternative for what many of them teach at Thanksgiving.

Ms. Petersen suggested that there could be something for teachers, as well as an ongoing process to continue gathering, generating, and distributing materials.

Future Commission Meetings

Mr. Newell said he would like to see the non-Indian members of the commission argue their points enthusiastically. It was agreed that the next meetings of the Wabanaki Studies Commission will be on the following dates:

- Monday, February 4, 2002
- Monday, March 2, 2002
- Monday, April 1, 2001