

## Historians believe traders predate Columbus

An Indian inscription discovered on a rock on a secluded Nova Scotia island has convinced two historians that transatlantic voyages were made centuries before Columbus set sail for the New World in 1492, reports the *Canadian Press*.

Nova Scotian author George Young and American author Barry Fell believe the inscription found on McNutt's Island is based on Cypriot script in use about 350 B.C. The Micmac Indians, they said, learned it from Mediterranean traders who established trading posts along the North American coast more than 2,000 years ago.

Young and Fell said that when the Carthaginians were defeated by the Romans in 238 B.C., Libyans and Carthaginians still living in trading posts were cut off from their homelands and were forced to assimilate with the Micmacs.

The Cypriot script was abandoned in Europe about 336 B.C. when Alexander the Great established the Greek script for his empire. But Cypriot writing was still being used in North America by Indians in 1727 when 30 chiefs signed the Treaty of Port Royal, Young said.

Fell, professor-emeritus of Harvard University and author of the historic novel *Saga America*, has loosely translated the Micmac inscription found here as "inscribed and left behind as a memorial

to (or by) Chief Kese". Fell said he has not established whether the inscription marks a burial site or is simply a monument to a great chief.

### Transatlantic crossings normal

Young, author of *Ancient Peoples and Modern Ghosts*, and Fell theorize that by 400 B.C. transatlantic crossings by Mediterranean people had become a "normal routine".

New theories of ancient North American history are only now coming to light because of a past ignorance of artifacts, Young said.

"What to some people looked like only squiggly lines and were discarded, was actually valuable historical evidence," he said. The new findings contradict the traditional view that Columbus discovered America, he said.

Young said that if there was no contact between the ancient Carthaginians and the Micmacs, it is difficult to explain how two languages with such numerous similarities could have developed in such far-flung areas of the world.

On their transatlantic voyages, the Carthaginians would travel north along the Iberian coastline to the English Channel until the travellers sighted land off Cornwall and turned northwest towards Iceland, he said.

After replenishing their water supply, the sailors continued to the North American continent.

A second route took the travellers southwest to the Canary Islands, where they picked up the westward currents across the Atlantic to Cuba to Florida.

Young said about 470 A.D., when the Vandals and Huns swept through Europe, an Egypto-Arab sect called the Copts fled to North America by following the sailing accounts of earlier Carthaginian writings. He said he believed these people settled in caves around Mahone Bay in Nova Scotia and on Oak Island.

Tides at that time would have been lower than today's and underground tunnels were dry caves 2,000 years ago, said Young. As the tides rose over the years, the caves would have been flooded and the Copts forced to move out.

## Canada-ILO relations studied

Labour Canada has released a study dealing with Canada's relationship with the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Canada and the International Labour Organization examines Canada's role in relation to the ILO, the department's objectives in that organization, the priorities the department attaches to the ILO and the resources that should be made available to it. Labour Canada has responsibility for Canadian input into ILO activities and policies.

The study deals with the present and future role of the department within the ILO and outlines Canadian obligations to the ILO and procedures adopted to fulfil them. The second part of the report includes recommendations such as:

- the establishment of a national ILO tripartite committee which could become the umbrella structure for an ongoing contact amongst the three parties involved in the organization's activities; and
- improved consultative procedures in the organization's activities for popularizing ILO programs and activities in Canada.

The report is currently undergoing a review in the department and is expected to provide a basis for future consultation with the provinces and labour organizations. The study, commissioned by the department in 1979, was prepared by the Kalmen Kaplansky, a former director of the ILO in Ottawa.

Copies of the report are available from the Communication Services Directorate, Labour Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0J2.

## Town's bicentennial commemorated

Canada Post recently issued a 17-cent postage stamp commemorating Niagara-on-the-Lake's bicentennial.

Because of its two-hundred year history and its strategic position near the American border, Niagara-on-the-Lake has been the site of important events that have helped shape Canada's destiny.

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario is situated at the mouth of the Niagara River. Colonel John Butler founded the town in 1781, when he was in charge of Fort Niagara on the opposite side of the river. The Loyalists and Indians who had congregated there needed a local food supplier, so Butler sent soldiers to begin farming in what is now Niagara-on-the-Lake.

A bird's-eye view of the area about 30 years after the town's founding, is featured on the stamp showing the establishments associated with its early history. At the bottom of the design is Fort George, a British defence post; and moving clockwise, Butler's barracks, the home of Colonel Butler's Rangers; the beginnings of the town of Newark, later renamed Niagara-on-the-Lake; the lighthouse at Mississauga Point; Fort Niagara on the United States side of the Niagara River; then beside and to the right of Fort George, the Navy Hall, which is thought to be the location of Upper Canada's first legislature.

The stamp was designed by John Mardon of Toronto, who has captured the feeling of an antique perspective map by using a combination of line and colour wash.

