

Gayong
1897

[FROM THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST FOR JANUARY, 1895.]

MICMAC CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS *

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My information about the customs and traditions of the Micmac Indians of Nova Scotia has been derived almost entirely from Abram and Newell Glode, the first a man of seventy-three years, the latter somewhat younger and of exceptionally pure blood for a time when none are wholly so. These two Indians have justly achieved a reputation among their tribe for intelligence and knowledge of their native lore. During the many days I have spent with them at Digby and elsewhere I have invariably found them as eager and interested in being questioned as I was in catechizing them. However, in most cases I have confirmed what they told me by information obtained from others, and I have read to them what I have written in order to avoid mistakes.

It is a misfortune to these Indians that while all their tribe have been taught to read the characters invented by one of the early priests they have been debarred from learning the much simpler Roman characters by the successors of that priest, who until quite recently forbade Micmac children to attend the public schools.

The Micmacs have a system of communicating while in the woods. Sticks are placed in the ground; a cut on one of them indicates that a message in picture-writing on a piece of birch bark is hidden near by under a stone. The direction in which the stick leans from its base upward indicates that in which the party moved, and thus serves as a convenient hint to those who follow to keep off their hunting grounds.

A game much in use within the wigwams of the Micmacs in former times is that called by some writers *altestakun* or *wöltz takün*. By good native authority it is said that the proper name for it is *wöltzstömkwön*. It is a kind of dice game of unknown antiquity, undoubtedly of pre-Columbian origin. It is played

*The author's thanks are due to Major W. S. Beebe for valuable assistance in the preparation of this paper.