

**ARCHAEOLOGY AND ORAL HISTORIES IN SANDWICH BAY LABRADOR,
AUGUST 2010**

Laura Elena Kelvin
Memorial University of Newfoundland

In August 2010, Lew Davis, Doris Davis, Brandon Morris and I conducted an archaeological survey of various regions of Sandwich Bay, Labrador, with the aim of locating archaeological sites with a known Metis affiliation. To date, only one known Metis sod dwelling (FkBg-24) has been excavated and further research is needed to establish how Metis ethnicity transcends to the archaeological record. Survey areas were chosen based on information gathered in interviews that I conducted with Sandwich Bay residents in the summer of 2010. The survey areas included Goose Cove, Muddy Bay, Muddy Bay Brook, Norman's Island, Cape Porcupine, White Bear River, Dove Brook and Dumpling Island. Five new sites were identified and two previously recorded sites were re-visited.

Goose Cove (FkBf-06)

According to oral tradition, Goose Cove was first occupied in the early 1800s by a European settler named Charles Davis and his Inuit wife. Occupation of the cove was continuous until the mid 1900s. We visited Goose Cove on the morning of August 2. Outlines of what appeared to be twentieth century wooden houses were located; however, no test pits were put in. Scrap metal and old windows were also scattered about the surface. Time restraints prevented further surveying of the cove.

Winters House (FjBg-01)

During the afternoon of August 2, we visited Muddy Bay Brook, also known as Dykes River. There we found a clearing which is locally known as the site where the Winters family lived. Rev. George Hutchinson recorded William Winters and Silas Winters as living in Muddy Bay Brook with their families sometime between 1853 and 1867 (Buckle 1998: iv-x). On an 1872 L.T. Reichel chart, *Labrador: Aivektók oder Eskimo Bay*, W. and S.

Winters are recorded as living in Muddy Bay Brook and are identified as either European or Newfoundlander. The clearing is approximately 15 x 15 m. No house features were visible and no test pits were put in. Scrap metal and construction materials were visible all over the surface of the site.

Labrador Public School (FjBg-02)

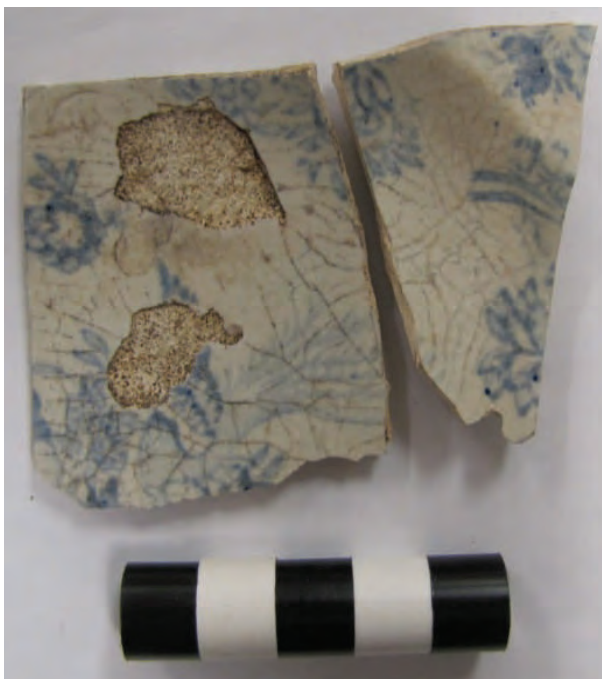
The Labrador Public School was built in 1920 in Muddy Bay to house the forty children that were left orphaned by the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic. The school was burnt down in 1928 by a disgruntled student. We surveyed Muddy Bay on August 2. The concrete foundation of the school is still present. No test pits were made. The owner of a nearby cabin informed us that his family has made many surface finds including old ceramic sherds and silverware.

Norman Island 1 (FIBg-07)

We re-visited Norman Island 1, FIBg-07 on the morning of August 3. The site was previously recorded by Dr. Lisa Rankin in 2002. The site consists of one large rectangular sod structure, a rectangular structure and two round depressions approximately one meter in diameter. Three test pits were made in each structure. Only one iron nail was found in the sod structure. The rectangular structure is associated with Newfoundland fishermen by the local people because they do not know who lived there. The sod structure's occupants are also unknown but the structure is likely an Inuit site because of the characteristic sod walls, entrance tunnel and stone floor.

Cape Porcupine (FIBh-02)

While surveying Cape Porcupine on August 3, to look for nineteenth century Metis houses that were recorded by Rev. George Hutchinson and L.T. Reichel, we came across a clearing in the woods by the shore that is locally known as the site of Herbert Earl's



Hand painted refined earthenware, Cape Porcupine (FIBb-02).

house. Earl and his daughter died sometime in the winter of 1918 during the Spanish flu epidemic. His wife and son were rescued from starvation in December of 1918 (Buckle 2003: 109) after which the house was burned down. No outline of the house was visible. Three test pits were put in and signs of a wooden floor and intense burning were apparent. Ceramic, kaolin pipe, glass, iron nails, animal bone and mussel shell were found in the test pits.

White Bear River (FjBi-02)

On the advice of Lloyd Parady, we went to White Bear River on August 4 to examine three rectangular house depressions that had been occupied by his ancestors. Due to time constraints, we only located one of these structures. Occupation of this area by the family was recorded in Rev. George Hutchinson's census between 1853 and 1867 and was also recorded on the 1872 Reichel chart. The structure measured approximately 7m x 5m. Four test pits were put in, three inside the structure and one in the wall of the structure. One iron nail and window glass was recovered from the test pits. The interior test pits re-

vealed a possible wooden floor.

Dove Brook (FjBi-01)

During the interviews I was informed that Dove Brook has been occupied by European and Metis residents since the early 1800s. During the survey of that area on August 4, we identified the archaeological remains of only one rectangular house structure. High vegetation and time constraints prevented a thorough survey of the area. The structure was approximately 3m x 5m with high walls measuring approximately a half of a meter high. Three test pits were put in revealing a probable mid-twentieth century occupation based on eroding tin cans. Iron nails and white wear ceramics were also recovered.

Dumpling Island 1 (FIBf-04)

On August 5, we re-visited Dumpling Island 1, a site previously recorded by Dr. Marianne Stopp in 1992. While on the island a resident informed us that a large rectangular structure measuring approximately 8m x 12m was once a Hunt and Henley trading post that operated during the nineteenth century until it was bought out by the Hudson Bay Company. Three test pits were placed in the interior of the structure. From these test pits we recovered two kaolin pipe bowls, factory made slipware, brick, glass and iron nails.

The Metis in southern Labrador highlight the problematic nature of ethnic studies in archaeology. The new sites identified during this field season will undoubtedly shed light on early Metis life ways. A comparison of these sites to Inuit and European sites could be used to show how Metis ethnicity transcends to the archaeological record and determine what makes up a Metis archaeological assemblage. The information that may be gathered from these sites could be used to appraise long standing notions that the Metis are simply a hybrid culture. Further research on these sites will not only lead to a better understanding of Metis history but of the history of Sandwich Bay as a whole.



19th century Metis House, White Bear River (FjBi-02).



19th century clay pipe, Dumpling Island 1 (FIBf-04).

References

- Buckle, Francis
1998 *The Anglican Church in Labrador, 1848-1998*.
The Archdeaconry of Labrador, Labrador City.
- Buckle, Francis
2003 *Labrador Diary: 1915-1925, The Gordon Journals*.
Anglican Parish of Cartwright, Cartwright.
- Reichel, L.T.
1872 *Labrador: Aivektók oder Eskimo Bay*. 