

Cibou

A Novel

Susan Young de Biagi

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Mi'kmaq Pronunciations

Editor's notes: The following are phonetic approximations of Mi'kmaw words used in the novel; they should not be considered the definitive pronunciations. At the end of the novel, there is a glossary of terms and characters.

Cibou: from sibu – see-boo

Apukji'j: a-book-jeej

Apjelmit: up-jel-mitt

Apli'kmuj: up-lee-km-ooj

Beothuk: bee-oth-ick

Elmniket: ell-man-ee-get

E'se'ket: ay-say-get

Eune'k: ew-neg

Huronia: yer-own-ia

Jakej: jug-edge

Jijiwikate'j: jij-ee-wee-ga-tedge

Jipjawej: jip-jah-wedge

Kalkunawey: gull-koon-a-way

Ka'qaqj: gahg-a-guj

Kawi: ga-wee

Keknu'teluatl: geg-new-dell-oo-a-tl

Keptin: gep-tin

Kesasek: guess-a-sek

Kisu'lk: giz-oolg

Kitpu: geet-poo

Kloqntiej: glock-n-dee-edge

Kluskap: glue-s-cap

Ko'komin: goe-go-min

Ku'ku'kwes: goo-goo-gwess

Lentuk: len-tug

Maskwi: muss-gwee

Matues: mud-oo-ess

Me'situkwiek: may-see-dook-wee-eg
Mimikej: mim-ee-gej
Muine'j: moo-in-eyj
Najiktanteket: nah-jeek-done-tech-et
Niskam: niss-gam
Nukumi: no-go-mi
Sespewo'kwet: sess-bew-oh-gwet
Siklati: sig-la-dee
sismoqn: sis-moq-n
Siwkwewiku's: soo-gwe-ee-goose
snaweyey: snah-a-way
su'nl: soon-l
Taqtaloq: dahk-da-lock
waltes: wall-dez
Wikewiku's: wee-go-ee-goose
Wikumkewiku's: wee-goom-gew-ee-goose
Wikuom: wig-wam

Spellings of Aboriginal characters, places, etc., conform to the Smith Francis orthography, which has been adopted officially by Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, the Mi'kmaq education authority for Nova Scotia.

References and glossary

Mi'kma'ki is the territory of the Mi'kmaq of Maritime Canada, encompassing what is now Gaspé, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia (including Cape Breton) and much of the State of Maine.

Amassit – silly, foolish

apukji'j – mouse

apjelmit – can't stop laughing

apli'kmuj – rabbit

Beothuk – Aboriginal people of pre-contact Newfoundland, now extinct.

Cibou – from the Mi'kmaq sipu, river. One of the so-called Bird Islands, off Cape Breton's Cape Dauphin, is known as Ciboux.

In the novel, Cibou is the name given the territory of a fictitious semi-nomadic Mi'kmaw community.

elmniket – carries a load on his shoulder

e'se'ket – digs for clams

eune'k – foggy

Huronian – central Ontario

jakej – lobster

jijiwikate'j – sandpiper

jipjawe'j – robin

kalkunawey – hardtack; biscuit

ka'qaquj – crow

kawi – porcupine quill

keknu'teluatl – shoots accurately

Keptin – Captain

kesasek – shiny, luminous, bright

Kisu'lk – the Creator

kitpu – eagle

kloqntiej – seagull
Kluskap – the first human, was created out of a bolt of lightning
in the sand and remains a figure that appears in many of the
Mi'kmaw legends.
ko'komin – thornberry
ku'ku'kwes – night owl
lentuk – deer
maskwi – white birch tree
matues – porcupine
me'situkwiet – unable to wake up
mimikej – butterfly
muine'j – bear cub
Niskam – the sun
Nukumi – Kluskap's grandmother
sespewo'kwet – talk on and on
siklati – dogfish
sismoqn – sugar
Siwkwewiku's – spawning moon
snaweyey – sugar maple
su'nl – cranberries
taqtaloq – salamander
walties – an indigenous game of chance consisting of a wooden
bowl carved from the burl of a tree. It also has wooden sticks (for
counting) and bone (as dice).
Wikewiku's – animal fattening moon
Wikumkewiku's – moose calling moon
wikuoms – family/group shelters

European references

Baleine: King James I encouraged settlement in the colonies. Sir William Alexander, then Royal Secretary for Scotland, was an early promoter of colonization and the first attempts at Scottish settlement included Charles Fort, at Port Royal, on mainland Nova Scotia, and Rosemar, at Baleine, Cape Breton. These settlements were short-lived. French Captain Charles Daniel, of the *Compagnie des Cent-Associés*, sailed in and attacked the fort. According to the French, they found Sir James Stewart, Lord Ochiltree, on French territory extorting payments from law-abiding fishermen. The French captured Baleine and forced the inhabitants to help build the French fort at St. Ann's, Cape Breton. Later, most of the Scots were returned to Scotland. The area known as Nova Scotia was ceded by treaty to France.

Chaloupe: small single-sail boat used by the French for fishing and transport closer to shore.

de Champlain, Samuel, with the intention of founding a settlement in Acadia, established a settlement at Port Royal, adjacent to the present Annapolis, Nova Scotia.

Daniel, Fr. Antoine, Jesuit missionary, was first stationed in Cape Breton in the first half of the 17th century. Daniel was later posted to Huronia where he met a violent end and martyrdom as Saint Anthony Daniel.

Daniel, Captain Charles, established a French trading post in early 17th-century Cape Breton.

Lescarbot, Marc, based at Port-Royal, travelled widely in 17th-century Acadia. His insights were set down in several published works, most notably his *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* (1609).

Stewart, Sir James (Lord Ochiltree), along with sixty Scots, established Rosemar, at Baleine, Cape Breton.

de la Tour, Charles de Saint-Étienne, Governor of Acadia.

Sources

Editor's note: Where possible, Mi'kmaw spellings conform to the Smith Francis orthography, which has been adopted officially by Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, the Mi'kmaw education authority for Nova Scotia.

- References to the Kluskap traditions, including Kisu'lk, the Creator; Nukumi, Kluskap's grandmother; Netaoansom, his nephew; Kitpu, (eagle) the messenger from the Creator:

In "Mi'Kmaq Knowledge in the Mi'Kmaq Creation Story: Lasting Words and Deeds," written in 1977, Stephen A. Augustine provides a comprehensive overview of the Kluskap traditions. These traditions were passed down to him from Augustine's grandmother, Agnes (Thomas) Augustine, who heard them from her husband Thomas Theophile Augustine, otherwise known as "Basil Tom." The writer also relied on information provided by his great-grandmother Isabel (Augustine) Simon, in a long-standing family tradition. This is recommended reading for anyone interested in Mi'kmaw spiritual beliefs.

- "He Who Travels by Night"

In his book, *Maliseet/Micmac*. First Nations of the Maritimes, Robert M. Leavitt discusses how nouns in English will often appear as verbs in the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet languages. In Maliseet, "moon" can be translated as "Walks at Night."

- "Do you ... do you think he saves all his body wastes in this way?"

Circa 1677, Father Chretien LeClercq wrote, "[The Mi'kmaq] find the use of our handkerchiefs ridiculous; they mock at us and say that it is placing our excrements in our pockets."

- "Do you know how this sweet gift came to us?"

This tale, known to Algonqian-speaking peoples as the Legend of Glooscap, is well-known in many First Nations communities in Canada and the United States.

- “Antoine and I sat and watched each group covet the possessions of the other.”

In his book, *The Mi'kmaq: Resistance, Accommodation, and Cultural Survival*, Harald Prins explains that Europeans and First Nations recognized the value of each other's possessions, even when their original owners did not. To Europeans, beads were simply trinkets, whereas First Nations were astonished that the Europeans wanted their old robes. Seventeenth-century explorer Nicholas Denys spoke of “their old robes of Moose skin, which are greasy and better than new.” [Quoted in *The Historical Ethnography of the Micmac of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* by Bernard Gilbert Hoffman.]

- “Once,” I told him triumphantly, “Kluskap served a whole village from a single birchbark dish. Fifty hunters and their families ate from this dish, and still there was food left over.” Antoine seemed startled at this story. He opened his mouth to speak, but another voice forestalled him.

Related by Robert M. Leavitt in *First Nations of the Maritimes*.

- “Do you know, Mouse, that in our tradition the white lady – a spirit to you – will steal a child away and put a fairy child in its place?”

The folklore of Normandy and Brittany abounds with tales of a white lady, or *dame blanche*. One of the most famous is the Dame d'Aprigny in Bayeux.

- “Moose are noble creatures, freely offering themselves up to the hunters. They are also proud and touchy, with spirits that linger long after the kill, to ensure their bodies are handled with proper reverence.”

In *The Historical Ethnography of the Micmac of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Bernard Gilbert Hoffman writes: “According to our historical sources, the bones of moose, beaver, caribou, bear and marten could not be given to the dogs or burned, else the spirits of the animals would report ‘to their own kind of the bad treatment they had received among the Indians’, and no more would be caught.”

In “Mi'kmaq Knowledge in the Mi'kmaq Creation Story: Lasting Words and Deeds,” Stephen A. Augustine states that a hunter will