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ISSUE : [Issue 14](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1976/8/1

Evidence of Early Man on Cape Breton Incomplete History of Cape Breton Indians by John Brskme As I could not learn from books about the predecessors of the Micmacs, I asked any older Indians whom I met. Those of the southwest knew nothing, except that one said that the Micmacs had driven the Maliseets from Bear River. At Pictou Land? ing a very helpful Indian told me that the Micmacs had found the Red Indians in Cape Breton and had driven them out to Newfoundland. At 'Whycomogah I was told the same. The "Red Indians" were the Beothuks of Newfoundland, whose men and women covered their hair, face and clothing with red ochre. Old Indians told me exactly the form of the Beothuk winter house, dug into the ground and with a groove for each sleeper, but all agreed that no such hollows had ever been found in Nova Scotia. For some years I thought that the "Red Indians" were the "Red Paint" Indians, also called "Archaics" and "Laurentians." They were called "Red Paint" because their graves contained only a few of their tools and an amount of red ochre, but so were the graves of many other Indians and as well also on the Cave-Men graves in Europe. Some of these Laurentian tools were illustrated in a book on the Beothuks. Gradually it came to me that no one knew anything about the Beothuks except in the last years before their destruction. I had to attempt to dig for their history. My first effort was at the well-known camp at Little Narrows. It had suffered from the buildings of a mill, and thereafter by digging for curios. I found some bits of Indian pottery and broken tools among gin bottles, but I was looking for a home which would give me an idea of the people who had used it. There were no bones to tell of hunting, but bones do not last in this limeless soil unless shells come to remedy it. There were oysters in the water beside the camp, but only four oyster-shells appeared in the site • and these had been used as scrapers. At last I found 2/3 of a wigwam site, the other 1/3 having been destroyed by a building. The depth of the site was never more than six inches, but the few arrow- or spear-points were of three cultures: the uppermost Micmac, below it another belonged to the Shield Archaic, and below this was a point of the Archaic (or Laurentian), not less than 3000 B.C. Several archaeologists have attacked Cape Breton, but no other cultures than these have been found. (Editor's Note; No other cultures had been found until a few months after Mr. Erskine's article was written' See the account of Ron Nash's 1975 discoveries which follows Mr. Erskine's history. The Laurentians This tribe reached Nova Scotia at about 3000 B.C. They seem to have come by way of the Great Lakes, but their tools and their artistic sense suggest contact with the Eskimos. Their canoes were dugouts • the logs dug by means of fire, the charred wood cut away with stone gouges, and then the inside was scraped with a broad chert scraper. In the winter they hunted moose or deer in the snow, their lances tipped with points with triangular steers which would inevitably leave the point in the wound. They must have had snowshoes, but no trace of these has been found. With the coming of spring they moved down a river to a convenient place to catch smelts, gaspereaux or salmon as they came up the



river. Their nets were weighted, at first with square flat stones with opposite notches, but later with neat plummets. Later they might move out to the sea. They did not eat shellfish and had no pottery. They made a few small stone-carvings of fish or turtle, but their speciality was the making of slate knives which varied from simple fish-knives to elaborate or long knives not intended for use. Our study of their sites in Cape Breton have been poor, as the few camps had been ploughed. One was in Scotsville and another at Margaree Forks. By 2000 B.C. Laurentians were established in Newfoundland, but a diminishing part of this cul-