

## THE MIDDLE RIVER: A STORY BEING TOLD IN MANY VOICES<sup>3</sup>

This is a project about place and the particular knowledge tied to it, emerging from it, and guiding our relations to it. It is a project very much about who-knows-what-where, so where we are is foundationally important. The “where” of these conversations is the ancestral homeland of the Beothuk and the Mi’kmaq. Most of the knowledge sharing took place in Miawpukek Mi’kamaway Mawi’omi, the First Nation Reserve located at Conne River, Newfoundland. We are grateful to be welcomed as visitors in these places.

PAM: In 2011, I began a community-engaged art-and-knowledge project called *Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge*—the ELK, for short. It is a very long story on its own and you can find its telling elsewhere, but it led inevitably to this deep creative collaboration with Jerry Evans and the Knowledge Holders of Miawpukek/Conne River to build together “The Middle River”—Chapter III of the ELK.

First though, it led me to Bonne Bay and the Great Northern Peninsula, to Fogo Island and Change Islands, to try to reveal some of the local knowledge that was shared with me by over 150 knowledge holders in more than 30 rural communities. Those first two chapters of the ELK found their way into the world not just in art galleries, community museums, hockey stadiums, and university libraries, but also through their presence online as a free-standing website. Then, in 2017, taking another form as a hardcover book, the ELK entered even more conversations.<sup>4</sup>

As it became more public, many folks encouraged me to do this work with more communities, in other regions, in Labrador, and with Indigenous communities. As a white settler I was reluctant to “go there” even then, five or more years ago, when it began to be suggested to me. It was before our conversations about colonization, appropriation, and Indigenous-settler reconciliation or collaboration were as advanced, or as fraught, as they are today.<sup>5</sup>

For me, the ELK is already a wildly political project. Those first two chapters show that not all knowledge is urban, male, in books, or only in formally “educated” bodies. I *was* interested in reminding us that knowledge, local or otherwise, is not all white, and not all in English. I went to my friend Jerry to ask what he thought about undertaking the project in Conne River, an Indigenous community

*“We need to let people know about the things that we are doing, like building drums and canoes. The more people I tell about us, not just the Mi’kmaq people in Conne River, but the Native Canadians, increases our chances of survival.”*

— *Sagamaw Mi’sel Joe, 2009*<sup>6</sup>



## MIDDLE RIVER: A'TUKWAQN PUKWELI-SKU'TASIK<sup>3</sup>

Ula telukutimk na wije'tik ta'n tleyawimk aqq ta'n kejitaqnn wije'tikl, wejiaql, aqq apoqnmak ta'n tela'sik koqoey. Telukwek kwiluan ta'n wen kejiteket aqq tami wja'tow koqoey me' nuta'q mawi nuta'q. "tami" wesku'tasik na ta'n wejita'jik Beotukaq aqq Mi'kmaq. Mawi pukwelk kinua'taqn wejiaq Miawpukek Mi'kmawey Mawi'omi, L'nue'kati etek Miawpukek, Ktaqamkuk. Welta'si ta'n tel wli wela'sualulsie'k api mittukutie'k na'tel.

PAM: 2011-ek, ni'n poqtamka'tuap wtankewey wiaqpultinow art and knowledge project telwisik Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge-the ELK teliapsuwi'tasik. Pittaq na attukwaqn aqq we'jitsk se'k wesku'tasik, pasik katu iliapaja'sitow ta'n wen kisite'tk Jerry Evans aqq net Knowledge Holders of Miawpukek/

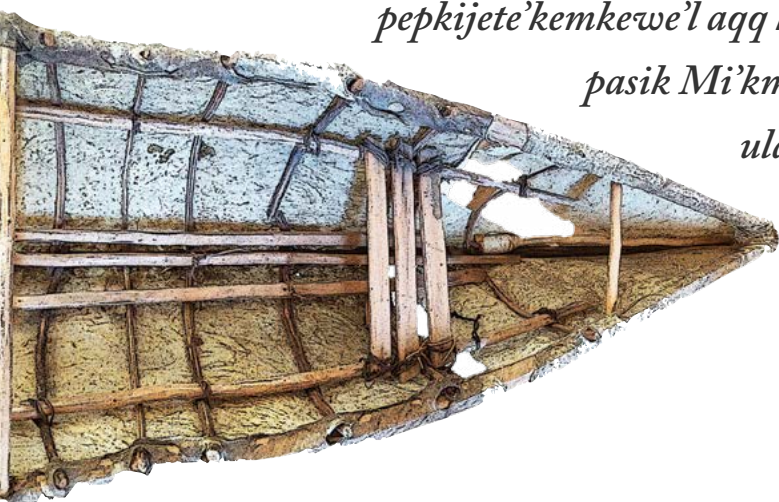
*"Nuta'q kinua'tuanow skwijnuk ta'n ula telukuti'k, nkutey eltmkl*

*pepkijete'kemkewe'l aqq kwitnn. Aji pukwelk wen kinua'tu'k, mu*

*pasik Mi'kmaq Miawpukekewaq, katu ms~t l'nu'k*

*ula kanata na aji siawi ta't~snu."*

*— Saqmaw Mise'l Joe, 2009<sup>6</sup>*



Conne River toqlukwatmnnow "The Middle River"—Chapter III of the ELK.

Tmk na'sik, ela'lik~p Bonne Bay aqq Great Northern Peninsula, misoqo Fogo Island aqq Change Islands, wjit me' ne'a'tasin koqoey nenmi'tij tle'k kinua'tuinow piamu 150 te'sijik ekinua'tuipnik 30 piamu te'skl wtann tle'k. Amkwesewe'l tapu'kl chapter net ELK we'jitasik~pn mu pasik net art galleries, community museums, hockey stadium aqq Espi-kina'matnewo'kuomkewy Library, katu wejitsk online telwi'tasik free-standing website. Tujiw, 2017ek, app pilutek etek pase'k ankuntek wi'katikn, net ELK me' ewikasik aji pukel wi'tasik koqoey.<sup>4</sup>

Ke'sk pukelnmitasik, pikwelk wen pewalijik me' siawlukatmn me' pukwelkl wtann, net tle'k, Labrador, and l'nue'l wtann. M~ta ni'n aklasie'w metuwite'tmap "lien," tlia na tujiw, na'n kisna piamu nanipunqekek, na tujiw poqji pipanimimk~p. Keskmna'q wesku'tasikek aklassiwita'sultimkek, kemutno'qn, aqq l'nu'k-aklasie'wk kisa'matnultinow kisna ila'matultinow ikanpult~snik, kisna ewla'sin, nkutey tele'k kiskuk.<sup>5</sup>

Wjit ni'n, ki's net politicalewik lukwaqn. Amkwesew'el tapu'kl chapterl teluekl mu ms~t lukwaqn wejianuk kjikan, ji'nmuk, wi'katikniktuk, aqq ta'n espi kina'masultite'wk. Ketu ilkinua'tuloq ula lukwaqn, wtankewaq kisna se'k, mu na puktaqi kisa'tu'tik aklasie'wk, aqq mu pasik aklasie'wi'sinuk. Aji pipanimk~p nitap Jerry kisi lukwatmn Miawpukek, l'nue'kati aqq na'ms~t l'nue'kati'l telki'k net mniku. Pipanimk~p talte's toqi lukwenow m~ta kejituap

and the only reserve on the island. I also asked if he would consider being my partner in such an adventure, since there was no way I would do this work alone. I was prepared to be told no. I asked others too, a Métis colleague at the university, a resident of Conne River who was Chair of our Arts Council, but it was Jerry's affirmative response that mattered and moved us forward.

JERRY: I've admired and respected Pam and her art practice for many years; I've known her since my late teens. Always a friend, I've always seen her as a mentor. I knew of the ELK and when Pam approached me and asked me about her idea of bringing it to Conne River, I immediately saw the benefits to the community and all our Mi'kmaw people. I saw and understood how this project would be a fit for any community.

I could see how Pam needed permission as a white person to move forward. She reached out not only to me but to others she knew in the Indigenous community here in St. John's. I, too, asked for feedback from my family in Conne River—to see if it was a good fit—to get permission to step forward in bringing the new chapter of ELK to Miawpukek First Nation (MFN).

I guess I was the natural choice for partnering with Pam with my ties to the community.

With permission, Chapter III would reveal and shine a light on our historic and contemporary traditional ways and current knowledge that reflects our Mi'kmaw people here.

PAM: I relaxed because I had Jerry by my side. I knew that if I fell, he'd pick me up. But I also knew that if I was too bold, he'd hold

me back. He'd say, "Wait a minute Pam, this is not where you want to go." We had long conversations about what was appropriate and what wasn't appropriate. I relaxed about a lot of that, because the Chief was so generous, and he was also very articulate about Mi'kmaw values in sharing knowledge. When we walked into the Band Office the first time, there was a whole wall of traditional Indigenous knowledge published, waiting for anybody who wanted it, to pick up and inform themselves. For me, Jerry brought all those things. And besides, I would never walk in the woods without him, which meant I was safe from bears.

JERRY: Having Conne River as my second home for many years, and soon to be my permanent home, I understand our history here. I know what has been lost. I witnessed the passing of so many Elders these past few years, but I have been lucky to have had the pleasure of spending time with, speaking to, and even documenting some of the stories and knowledge of this place from family and other community Elders. Many pots and mugs of tea have been shared in my own quest over the years to fill the cultural void I grew up with here being raised outside.

When I started asking questions, I was told, "You don't need to know about that stuff." Questions about my culture came after I had moved away from here, from Newfoundland. I went away to art college and met other people in the greater world, shall I say. I got to know more Indigenous people, some Indigenous artists. I started asking some of these questions and I started getting some answers. But if I had access to a book like this when I was younger, I think it would have opened a lot of doors for me earlier.

l'pa ma kisa'tu newtukwa'lukweyan. Kisita'siap tlmn moqwey. Pipanimk~pnik ki's pilue'k, Metis College at the university, tley Miawpukek ta'n ikana'toq Arts Council, na'sik keta'matk Jerry na maw-nutaq we'kow kisi siawa'sin.

JERRY: Welamk~p aqq mekitelmk Pam aqq wjit telinta'lukatk Artey lukwaqn ki's sa'q. Nenaq weja'tekmk me' maljewe'juianek. Ki's sa'q wela'matiek, tel nemi'k nkutey nuji kina'muit. Nenmap net ELK ki's, aqq ta'n tujiw peji ne'amijek aqq peji pipanimjek kisi te'tk pisitun Miawpukek. Ankmiatq nemituap ta'n tlwla'sis wtanminaq aqq wjit ms~t M'kmawaq. Nemituap aqq nestmap ta'n tlwla'sitow ta'n pasik wtan.

Nemi'k~p Pam m~ta aklasi'e'w nuta'j wejikesin klaman kisi siawa'sin. Mu pasik ni'n weji nu'kwaliks~p wejinu'kwalasni ta'n etl nenuaji l'nue'kati tett St. John-k. Elt ni'n pipanimk~pnik nikmaq Miawpukek-wla'sin- wja'tun asite'taqn siawa'sin kisa'tasin piley chapter ELK li'an Mawipukek l'nue'katik (MFN).

Telte'tm maw wla'sik toqlukwenow Pam wjit ta'n tewji wli wettaqne'wasi wtan.

Wejikesimk Chapter III nmitten aqq wasoqa'tasik nkutey sa'qewey aqq kejikawey telo'timk aqq ta'n tela'sik nike' nemiten wjit Mi'kmaq tett tle'k.

PAM: ila'siap m~ta Jerry apoqnmuit. Kejituap nisieyan na mknitow. Aqq kejituap asama'sian na kisi apaja'litow. Tluetow, "kijka skma Pam, mu ketu'liewn na'tel." Pekiji sku'tmekl koqoe'l wla'sital kisma ma wla'sinukl. Weli ila'sianek wjit koqoey telamu'k m~ta Saqmaq weliapoqnmuiq aqq mu metua'lukuk telisku'tk Mi'kmawey

telo'timk aqq wesku'tmn. Ta'n tujiw amkwes piskwl~ka'tie'k Band Office, na etek~pn ta'n teliks~ka'q walliktuk kisa'tasikl l'nueye'l wi'katiknn publishewa'tasikl, eskmtikl wjit ta'n pasik wen menukej, wjikina'masin. Wjit ni'n, Jerry na pekisitoq~pn. Api's, mu kisi lieu nipuktuk keskmna'q wije'wan nekm, teluemk ma taleyiw i'k nekm ikalitow muin i'k.

JERRY: Miawpukek ki's sa'q asueyi, aqq ma pije'nuk kisawi wikites. Welinstm telo'timk tett. Kejitu te'sik teliska'q. Nemi'kipnik te'sit kisiku'k siawita'pni'k mu tewji sa'q, na'sik wela'sikek tel wli tekweyaqi'k, etlewo'ktie'k, aqq ewi'kme'k attukwaqnkl aqq telwlnenmi'tij ula eymek Wejiaq wikmawa aqq ktk kisiku'k wtankewaq. Pukwelkek p~teweyek pte'ma'timkek ke'sk elukwatm weji etepno'si ta'n koqoey menso'tmas ke's etlikweyanek se'k.

T'an tujiw i'pipanikesianek koqoey, telimulsiap, "mu nuta'nuk kjijitun net nekmowey," Pipanikesimk ta'n telo'tiek ketu kjijituap ta'n tujiw ejikliwsianek tett, Ktaqamkuk. Naji kina'masiap Art Collegek aqq weltesaq~pnik ktkik skwijinu'k tlupek aji o'plowik wsitqamu. Weji nenaqik pilue'k l'nu'k, eykik l'nu'k ta'n nata'lukutite'wk. Pojji pipanikesi ula koqoey aqq eknua'tulsi. Nasik na ala'tuasan na telamu'k wi'katikn nutkweyanek, pukweli panta'sisoq ka'qnkl wjit ni'n.

We'jituap 70 per cent skwijinu'k telitpia'tijik nkutey ni'n ula Ktaqamkuk jel etuk je me' mu welnenasulti'k. Ika'tuap nklukwaqnk na pekisulik Miawpukek, -jikla'sin, kwiluasin wjinestmn telo'timk aqq tli'suti, aqq teliaqs~p Mi'kmawey ula tett.<sup>7</sup> Ke's kisipkwatueyanek tetujeyanek tapuisa'q jel na'n -kaqikisa'tekeyanek Art College-aqq suel nesiskaqipunqek tetujeyanek ta'n tujiw te'sk mu talukew



Eliujek ula nipi'k na mawlukutimk~p. Ta'n nikoql wesku'tasikl na ika'toql Jerry kisi wasoq~testoq~pn tujiw e'wk~p Photo shop illukwatkl. Na teluemk ejikla'toq me' kowey ta'n mu nuta'nuk wtejk etek~p. Jerry kisi toq~pnn ta'n ewikasikl kuntewe'l kisna siskue'l nikoql, Aqq wiaqa'toql kisi waso'q~testoql Pam. Pam kisi ilamko'toq~pnn wi'katiknn, weliankite'tk ta'n tlwlteskatital aqq ankua'toql kisi amalwi'kasikl wjit samqwan. Aklasio'w wikasik (Pam kisi maqatow-wi'k~k~p, iloqapts~p Jerry, tujiw ila'toq~p Pam. Wejiaq mawaknutma'ti'tjek ne'sijik kisna newijik skwijinu'k. Pukwelkek mawaknutmaqnek telip pijiaq net, aqq apaji ta'mk, klaman menaqajewtetow. Howard Jeddore, Shane MacDonald, Everest Hinks, Daulton Benoit aqq net Saqmaw Mise'l Joe. Ms~t kisi mawo'tu'tij ta'n welnenmi'tij ula wi'katikn

App piluey nipi-ta'n amalkamkewey toqwan wesku'tasik- ms~t l'nupisuaqnn kisi wasoq~testoqipnn aqq maliaptk~pnn Pam ke'sk Jerry kwilk~p maskwi nipuktuk aqq Sulia'n. Net ewikasik na wejiaq lukwaq kisa'tu'tij Chloe aqq Jenna. Tapusijik nutqwe'kik lukewinu'k ta'n kwiluasisnik aqq pipanima'tisni e'pite'sk nuji amalkewinu'k. Cassidy Lambert, wiaqpis. Mu kisi wasoq~testekeks~pnik ta'n tujiw etlewistu'tijek, na Cassidy wujjl pekisitoqs~p ms~t wtapsun Band Officesk klaman Pam menaqaj panteka'tow aqq menaqaj ewi'k~ket. Cassidy iloqapts~p kisi wikasik apaja'sikek wtank wjit iloqaptasin aqq amkwes weltesuasnn Pam-al. Kitkik welta'sisnik wjit ta'n teli-ika'lsisni'k pilue'k wjit ula nemitmk lukwaqn.

Making pages was really collaborative. The eel spear pages were made with photographs Jerry had taken and cleaned up in Photoshop. That means taking out backgrounds and other things in the original photograph that aren't needed in the final image. Jerry also made drawings of the rocky or muddy bottom spear, joining a few photographs of Pam's. Pam did the layout of the pages, figuring out where each image would go, and added the graphic symbol for water. The English text (drafted by Pam, reviewed by Jerry, edited by Pam) came from conversations with three or four different people. There was substantial discussion of the process, and a re-enacting of it, so we could document it appropriately. Howard Jeddore, Shane MacDonald, Everest Hinks, Daulton Benoit, and the Chief, Mi'sel Joe, all contributed to the knowledge that is reflected on this page.

On another page—the one about the Jingle Dance—all the regalia images were photographed and prepared for use by Pam while Jerry was out gathering birchbark in the woods with Bill. The text is based on the work done by Chloe and Jenna, two of our youth researchers, who interviewed the young jingle dancer, Cassidy Lambert, together. They didn't get any photographs at the interview, so Cassidy's dad brought all of her regalia into the Band Office so Pam could carefully unwrap it and document it for later use. Cassidy checked the draft page when it was returned to the community for review and met Pam for the first time. They were each grateful for the other's contribution to making this knowledge visible.









Cassidy's Jingle dress was made by Ruby Ball in Morrisville. Cassidyal jjuuekey makkotm kistsoqs~p Ruby Ball Morrisville.



## EMBRACING THE JINGLE DANCE

Cassidy Lambert learned the jingle dance from Jasmine Drew and Susan Hill, who gave lessons on traditional dancing when she was in Grade 7 at the school in Conne River. It comes from many cultures but Cassidy knows the Ojibwa story about its origins in a father's dream for his sick daughter. In the dream he saw the dance and the dress and when he woke, he made the first jingle dress and taught his daughter the dance he had dreamt. Each day that she danced she grew stronger, and eventually her illness left her. The jingle dance sends a prayer to the Creator.



In the older times, the dress was sewn with seashells to make the noises made by jingles today.



Michaela Benoit made these earrings. Micheal Benoit kistsogs~pn wsiuqaqe~ml.

There should be one jingle on the dress for each day and years ago, a jingle dress would have 365. Cassidy's dress has about 200 jingles on it and even those make it very heavy. It weighs 7 pounds.

When she puts the dress on, she feels transformed-- not as shy as usual, and very connected to everyone around her. It is very noisy and sometimes she worries about scaring children with the noise of her dress.

When she dances at Powwow, being in regalia helps her talk to others and to listen and learn to what they have to share with her. She learns new words and gains understanding of her people's traditions and culture. After dancing at Powwow, like other dancers, she goes to the Sacred Fire to offer tobacco and make a prayer for someone who is absent.



Cassidy believes in the power of the jingle dance and experienced it directly when dancing at an event in Terra Nova a few years ago. A woman from Texas asked to offer tobacco so Cassidy could dance a prayer for her sister, who had recently died of cancer. While they were looking for some tobacco, Cassidy felt a bug land on her ear and picking it off gently, discovered a ladybug, which she showed to her Mom. The lady from Texas began to weep when she saw this. Her sister's last words to her were, "If you see a ladybug, think of me."



# MUKWITE'TM NUJJ TEL PEWAS: KELO'TMN JINGLE DANCE

Cassidy Lambert ekina'masis jingle dancing ekina'masipnn Jasmine Drew-al aqq Susan Hill-al, nekmow ekinna'muesnik teliamalkamk ta'n tujiw gr. 7 a'qek kina'matnewo'kuo'mk Miawpukek. Wejiaq na se'k tle'k l'nu'k na'sik Cassidy nenk a'tuk-waqn wjit ta'n wejiaq, wejiaq epite'ji'j kesnukwas na wujjl pewitoqs~p. Pewajek nemitoqsip ta'n teliamalkamk aqq ta'n teliks~p makkot. Ta'n tujiw tukwietek na ankmiq eltoqs~p amkwesewey jingle dress aqq ekina'muasn wtusl teliamalkamk ta'n telpewitoqs~pnek. Na te'sikiskik amalkaj na pemiajiknat, aqq klapis etupkwet. Net jingle dress elkitkl alasutmaqnn kikulkek.

*Me'ki's sa'qek, net makkot nasi'sasiks~pnn s~ke'saqna'wl klaman telikesikaweta'tal nkutey kiskukewe'l jujukwejkl.*



Newe'jk te'sk nasa'tu'n jijikwek makkotiktuk wjit nastekl na'tami 200 jingles aqq ki's keskuk. – mu telji netakeyuk , ms~t wenl tekweywatl.

te'sk na'kwek, jingle dress nastetal 365 klapis. Cassidy wtoqan Teliksukulk 7 pound. Ta'n tujiw nasa'toq net makkot, na l'pa pilua'sit Kesikaweta'q aqq jijuaqa jipatk wtaiwan mijua'ji'jk telkesikawetesk.

Ta'n tujiw amalkaj powwow, ta'n tujiw eknesij na apoqnmaj kelulaj pilue'k aqq jikstk aqq eknu'tmasit ta'n koqoey ekinua'tusnek. Kisi kina'masitl klusuaqnn aqq pemi aji nestk ta'n telo'ltisni'k l'nukik. Kaqiamalkaj, na nkutey iktkik amalkewinu'k, eliey kepme'k puktow ika'toq tmawey,tujiw alasutmelsewatl na'tuenl ta'n mu eymuk.

Cassidy ketlamsitasit melkiknaq na jingle dress aqq tela'siks~p wjit nekm ke'sk almalkajek Terra Nova mu asami sa'q. E'pit wejiet Texas ika'toqs~p tmawey klaman Cassidy amalkowatal wkwe'ji'jl ta'n nepksnaq mu sa'q ne'pa'spnek cancerek. Ke'sk kwilmi'tij tmawey , Cassidy we'tueywasn jujil ke'kupa'silitl wsituaqnk aqq na menaqaj mena'laj, na nemiatl po'ksl, na so'wa'tuatl e'pite'ji'jl kwijil. E'pit tley Texas poqttemit ta'n tujiw nemiaj jujijl. Wkwe'ji'jl kespi tluesnaq, nmi'j po'qs, mukwite'limitisk.

