

## Mi'kmaq History Month Brief

Mi'kmaq History Month is dedicated to the celebration of Mi'kmaq history, heritage, culture and public awareness. The celebration of Mi'kmaq History Month also highlights the signage and importance of Treaties between the Crown and the Mi'kmaq People, and the importance of Treaties to peace and friendship.

- First declared in 1993 following proclamation signing by then Nova Scotia Premier John Savage and Mi'kmaq Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy;
- 2021 is the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mi'kmaq history Month;
- Mi'kmaq History Month is about the celebration of Mi'kmaq history, heritage, culture, legacy and contribution;
- Mi'kmaq History Month is also about public awareness of Mi'kmaq history, heritage, and culture;
- 2021 Mi'kmaq History Month Theme: Exploring Treaties and Treaty Relationships.
- **The Municipality of the County of Kings will be running a month-long Mi'kmaq history, heritage and awareness campaign on the airwaves and on digital platforms. The Campaign will involve the participation of Kings County Mayor Peter Muttart and representatives from Annapolis Valley First Nation and Glooscap First Nation, the two Indigenous communities within Kings County.**

### 2021 Mi'kmaq History Month Poster:

**MI'KMAQ**  
WIKWIKU'S HISTORY MONTH OCTOBER 2021  
Exploring Treaties and Treaty Relationships

**When we speak, Spirit is present.**  
"And whereas it is the full Resolution of this Government that the Indians shall have no Justice done them respecting their lands."  
Treaty of 1726

**There would be no Treaty Rights without oral histories.**  
Treaties are alive because of Mi'kmaq oral histories.  
From 1985 onward the Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Multiple decisions have mandated the protection of Treaty Rights, impacting natural resources, health, education, justice, economic development, and culture. Today, the governments of Nova Scotia and Canada work together with the Mi'kmaq to determine how to implement Treaty Rights. It is not always easy, but the treaty relationship is a priority.

**Many parts of Mi'kma'ki are alive — not just the people, plants and animals. The moon, the sun, the stars and even many everyday items are alive to us. When we say *mas' no'kmaq* we are honouring all of these relations. Our worldviews and practices, particularly *netukulimik*, protect and sustain all life.**

When the Mi'kmaq *Sagmaq* agreed to the Peace and Friendship Treaties with the British in the 1700s, they were extending an offer to live in Mi'kma'ki as part of *mas' no'kmaq*. Through this invitation to a treaty relationship, they sought to live in peace and friendship.

For more than 200 years Britain, and then Canada, denied the treaty relationship established in the 1700s. If Mi'kmaq oral histories had not carried the treaty relationship through this period of denial, there would be no Treaty Rights today.

**Peace and Friendship**  
As British settlement expanded in Mi'kma'ki, both nations turned to treaty-making to establish peace and friendship that was to endure "forever".  
The Peace and Friendship Treaties are not about land — they are agreements about how to live together in Mi'kma'ki. Throughout the 1700s, particularly when violence occurred, new treaties were sought to reaffirm the treaty relationship.  
The treaties are living documents signed without end dates. The true frame of the agreements is "their heirs and the heirs of their heirs forever".

**Chain of Treaties**  
The 1725 Treaty laid the foundation for subsequent treaties in 1749, 1752, and 1760, creating a "Covenant Chain of Treaties." The Covenant Chain of Treaties shares key promises including the Mi'kmaq right to hunt and fish as well as agreements on how laws would be applied. In all the treaties, the Mi'kmaq promised not to bother the British in their settlements, but they did not cede or give up other rights. There are some differences: 1725 had promises, 1752 established Treaty Day, 1749 had few signatures and 1760 had many.  
There were also other treaties signed during the 1700s, such as the Treaty of Westboro in 1776 and the Treaty of 1779. Both addressed whether the Mi'kmaq would ally with the newly formed United States or with the British.

**1725-29**  
What became the first Peace and Friendship Treaty between the Mi'kmaq and the British was negotiated in Boston in 1725. The treaty was ratified by Mi'kmaq and Wôloshôpôyik at Annapolis Royal in June 1726 and then by others until 1728.  
Image left: Imagined drawing of Governor Daniel Clarke (left) and Mi'kmaq, who ratified the Treaty in 1725 and 1760.

**1752-63**  
The Treaty of 1752, led by Jean Baptiste Cope and Governor Hapson of Nova Scotia, offered peace and protected hunting, fishing and trading rights. La Have and Cape Sable joined in 1752. It was upheld by the Supreme Court in the 1985 James Matthew Simon case. One of its clauses mandates that peace and friendship would be renewed "upon the first of October." Since 1995, this day has been observed again as Treaty Day.  
Image left: Imagined drawing of Governor Jean Baptiste Cope. The treaty was signed at Annapolis, who signed the 1762 Treaty. The Peace was called the Treaty of 1752 and they Cope, including Jean Baptiste.

**1760-63**  
The 1760-61 Treaty was made with the Mi'kmaq, Wôloshôpôyik, and Peskotomuket. The treaty was signed by more signatures than any other treaty, making it the longest of the agreements. It was ratified until 1763. This is the treaty that was upheld by the Supreme Court in the 1989 Donald Marshall, Jr. case.  
Image left: Imagined drawing of Governor Philip Cope. Cope and Governor Hapson signed the Treaty of 1752 and the Treaty of 1760. Governor Hapson consulted the Mi'kmaq before signing treaty agreements.

**Denial and Damage**  
Shortly after the last treaty was signed in 1779, the British used population growth and military strength to overwhelm Mi'kma'ki. With the emergence of Canada as a nation, the Crown's efforts to control Mi'kmaq and other indigenous groups grew. The policies of this time came to be known as "Treaty Denial." They damaged Mi'kmaq people and culture.  
Treaty Denial efforts were directed at the heart of communities — land, culture, women and children. They include the creation of the Indian Act, the policy of Centralization, and the Shubenacadie Residential School.  
Despite these difficulties, Mi'kmaq continued to hunt, fish and gather. Towns provided limited opportunities to sell goods or find other work. Above all, people depended on their families. With the treaties denied in courts and ignored elsewhere, oral histories alone kept the treaties alive.

**...their heirs and the heirs of their heirs forever...**

**Antle**  
"This place where you are, this place where you build your house, here where you build your fortress, this place where you want to own all the land, there is exactly where I sprouted from."  
(Mi'kmaq Chief, 1749)

**Pikto'**  
"He [Kji-Sagwa Gabriel Sylliboy] made no attempt to deny having the pelts, indeed frankly admits having them, but claims that as [a Mi'kmaq] he is not bound by the provisions of the Act, but has by Treaty the right to hunt and trap at all times."  
(King vs. Sylliboy, 1828)

**MI'KMAQ**  
1725-1800 NOVEMBER 1725  
www.mikmaqhistorymonth.ca

Indigenous Services Canada Services aux Autochtones Canada

The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

Native Council of Nova Scotia

Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq

## Mi'kmaq History Month

WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia recognizes that the Mi'kmaq have the inherent right to self-government within Canada;

WHEREAS the Province of Nova Scotia and the Mi'kmaq Nation recognize their mutual need to live in peace and friendship in accordance with the spirit of their treaty and nation-to-nation relationship;

WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia recognizes all Treaties which were signed in good faith between the Crown and the Mi'kmaq;

WHEREAS the Province of Nova Scotia and the Mi'kmaq Nation recognize that their mutual peace and friendship requires the public awareness of the history, values and the diversity of cultures;

WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia and the Mi'kmaq Nation wish to promote public awareness for all citizens of Nova Scotia;

NOW THEREFORE we, John Savage, Premier of Nova Scotia, and Ben Sylliboy, Grand Chief of Mi'kmaq, do hereby proclaim the month of October as Mi'kmaq History Month.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF we have hereunto set our hands in peace and friendship and caused our seals to be affixed at Halifax on this 1st day of October, 1993.

(Signed)  
John Savage  
Pri'miir wjit Nopa Sko'sia

(Signed)  
Ben Sylliboy  
Kji-Saqmaw wjit Mi'kmaq