

News and Reflections: "A Further Exploration of the Life of Chief François Mius of La Hève and Mirliguesche, Acadia" from the Folders of Christian Boudreau, Director, L'Association des Acadiens-Metis-Souriquois -- August 3, 2019

A Further Exploration of the Life of Chief François Mius of La Hève and Mirliguesche, Acadia: This folder contains copies of a couple of rather interesting documents concerning Chief François Mius, who as we know from various discussions throughout this collection, was the son of Philippe Mius d'Entremont II and his second First Nations wife, "Marie" (unknown surname) and therefore, the half-brother of the "Part Indian" Joseph Mius d'Azy I, one of the progenitors of the "Sang-Mêlés" ("Mixed-Bloods") of historic Cape Sable/the present-day region of Southwest Nova Scotia.

The first of the documents that I've chosen to discuss is a July 25, 1742 "Brevet de Commission of the Indian chief" of the "village Sauvage Mikmak de Mirligueche en l'Acadie" ("Mikmak Savage village of Mirligueche in Acadia"), which was recorded at the fortress of Louisbourg on Île Royale (Cape Breton, Nova Scotia) by "Jean-Baptiste Louis Le Prevost Chevalier Seigneur Duquesnel," who was then- "Commandant pour Sa Majeste a l'Isle Royale. Isle S. Jean & autres adjacentes" ("Commandant for His Majesty at Isle Royale, Isle St. Jean & other adjacents"). The original document was copied by Père Jean-Mandé Sigogne in the early nineteenth century, as he was permitted to do so by the son of Chief François Mius, who was a parishioner of Père Sigogne. This copy can be found in the "Nova Scotia Archives" record collection entitled, "Mi'kmaq Holdings" under the name of "Commissioner of Public Records — Indians series Nova Scotia Archives RG 1 Vol. 430 No. 20" and will be used for the purposes of the current discussion.

Instead of discussing "bits and pieces" of the "Brevet de Commission of the Indian chief," I have chosen to provide you with a transcription and translation of the entire document, which is as follows:

"Copy

of the Brevet de Commission of the Indian chief.

Nous Jean-Baptiste Louis Le Prevost Chevalier Seigneur Duquesnel Capitaine des Vaussaux du Roy Chev. de l'ordre Royal & Militaire de S. Louis - Commandant pour Sa Majesté a l'Isle Royale. Isle S. Jean & autres adjacentes./.

Estant necessaire pour le bien du Service de Sa Majesté & pour la tranquillité du village Sauvage Mikmak de Mirligueche en l'Acadie dependant de ce gouvernement, de pourvoir à l'etablissement d'un Chef dont l'experiance pour la Guerre & la bonne conduite Soit connue, & Sous le bon & louable rapport qui nous à été fait de la personne du nommé Francois Miousce de sa capacité pour la Guerre & de Son Zele & attachement à la France. NOUS n'avons cru faire un meilleur choix que de Sa personne pour commander ledit village de Mirligueche; & en consequence l'avons commis & établi par ces presentes pour se mettre à la tête de tous les Sauvages composait ledit village afin de leur faire executer les ordres que nous lui donnerons. Ordonnons à tous lesdites Sauvages de le reconnoitre & lui obéir en tout ce qu'il leur commandera pour le Service du Roy.

Pour raison de quoi Nous lui avons donné les Presentes, & à icelle fait apposer le cachet de nos Armes.  
Fait à Louisbourg ce vingt cinquieme Juillet Mil Sept cent quarante deux.

(Signé) Duquesnel

NB. The Son of Said Francis Miouce, possessor of the original hath besides a medal of Louis XV, which he wears when he appears at Church or in publick. he is now in a decrepit old age.”

This loosely translates to:

“Copy

of the Brevet de Commission of the Indian chief.

Us Jean-Baptiste Louis Le Prevost Chevalier Seigneur Duquesnel Captain of the Ships of the King Knight of the Royal Order & Military of St. Louis – Commander for his Majesty at l'Isle Royale. Isle St. Jean & others adjacent./.

It is necessary for the good of the Service of his Majesty & for the tranquility of the Savage Mikmak village of Mirligueche in Acadia depending on this government, to provide for the establishment of a Chief whose experience for War & good conduct Be known, & Under the good & laudable relationship that has been made to us of the person named Francois Miouce of his capacity for War & of His Zeal & attachment to France. WE did not believe we would make a better choice than His person to command the said village of Mirligueche; & in consequence it was committed & established by these presents to put him at the head of all of the Savages comprising the said village in order to make them carry out the orders that we will give him. Order to all of the said Savages to recognize him & obey him in everything he will command them for the Service of the King.

For the reason why We gave him the Presents, & to this one has the stamp of our Weapons affixed.  
Written at Louisbourg this twenty fifth of July one thousand seven hundred and forty two.

(Signed) Duquesnel

NB. The Son of Said Francis Miouce, possessor of the original hath besides a medal of Louis XV, which he wears when he appears at Church or in publick. he is now in a decrepit old age.”

This is a rather interesting and important document because it clearly demonstrated that it was actually the “French” who had designated François Mius as the Chief of Mirliguesche, Acadia, rather than the members of the Mi’kmaq village there. This is very important because it shows the power that France had over the Mi’kmaq in deciding who they would work with from the First Nations tribes of Acadia.

Another importance of this document is that it clearly demonstrates that although he was a mixed-blood residing among his maternal Mi’kmaq relatives and was considered a member of the Mi’kmaq

village at Mirliguesche, Chief François Mius maintained strong ties to his paternal place of origin, which was France.

A second document that I have chosen to discuss concerning Chief François Mius is a May 09, 1812 letter written at Clare, Nova Scotia by Père Jean-Mandé Sigogne to General of the British Army in Nova Scotia, Sir John Coape Sherbrooke. A copy of this letter, which is properly entitled, "Letter from Sigogne to John Cope Sherbrooke regarding Muis-Belcher Treaty, Maillard, the Mi'kmaq "Peace-Dance and ceremony of burying of war weapons",," can be found in the "Nova Scotia Archives" record collection entitled, "Mi'kmaq Holdings" under the name of "Commissioner of Public Records — Indians series Nova Scotia Archives RG 1 Vol. 430 No. 21."

The importance of this letter, which details the "Peace-Dance and Ceremony of burying war-weapons" that took place after Chief François Mius signed the 1761 "Peace and Friendship Treaty" as the Chief of the Mi'kmaq residing at La Hève, Acadia, lies in a few key excerpts.

According to Père Jean-Mandé Sigogne, the information that he reported to Sir John Coape Sherbrooke in this May 09, 1812 letter was told to him by "an Acadian eye-witness" to the event, who was a "friend to Mr Maillard" (Abbé Pierre Antoine-Simon-Maillard, the Priest "who signed the Treaty & seems to have written the name of the Indian chief and been interpreter between the Parties"). That being said, the first important excerpt from this letter can be found on page 02 and is as follows:

"...To that I have Joined a Copy of the Brevet de Commission of the Indian chief from the French Government thinking it might be agreeable to Your Excellency.

After the reception of Your Excellency's Letter I went in a neighboring wood where I knew that Jacques Muice Son to Francis was laying infirm by old age. I demanded of him His Father's Credential Letters, which he willingly delivered..."

This excerpt is important because it identifies the identity of the "The Son of Said Francis Miouce, possessor of the original hath besides a medal of Louis XV, which he wears when he appears at Church or in publick. he is now in a decrepit old age" that was mentioned by Père Jean-Mandé Sigogne in the "NB." (Notez Bien) section of his copy of the recently-discussed "Brevet de Commission of the Indian chief." Therefore, we can conclude that the son of Chief François Mius who had inherited this document, as well as the "medal of Louis XV" was named "Jacques Muice" (Jacques Mius).

A second important excerpt from this May 09, 1812 letter can be found on page 03 and is as follows:

"...I have heard the best character of that old chief Franc. Miuce both for Morals and Religion, from every body that knew him, but His descendants do not follow his steps. His family, however poor, is respected amongst the Indians..."

This excerpt is important because it demonstrates that although none of Chief François Mius' descendants alive in 1812 were deemed by Père Jean-Mandé Sigogne to be at the same level of greatness as François was himself based on what he had heard about the Chief, François' legacy endured

and “His family, however poor, is respected amongst the Indians.” Therefore, although François himself was a mixed-blood who was appointed Chief by France in 1742, he became a great leader and his family was still well-respected by the Mi’kmaq long after his passing.

One final excerpt that I have chosen to discuss can be found on pages 01 and 02 of Père Jean-Mandé Sigogne’s May 09, 1812 letter. This excerpt details what happened after Chief François Mius signed the 1761 “Peace and Friendship Treaty” as the Chief of the Mi’kmaq residing at La Hève, Acadia. This excerpt is as follows:

“... At the conclusion of the Treaty, according to their Custom the Indians had their Peace-Dance and Ceremony of burying war-weapons. The Priest was present with some Acadians and many English people. A hole being dug, the chief at the head of his warriors began the dance with the Casse-Tête in their hands. They made more sounds than customary and the Chief shewed some reluctance. He had much talk that was not understood by the by Standers but by the Priest who came nearer & whispered to the Chief to fling his Hatchet in the hole; The Chief observed that perhaps they would be oppressed and could not afterwards make war again. The Priest then told him that if any wrong were done them, they might take their arms again. Then the Indians flung down instantly their weapons, which were soon covered with the earth.. So far for the Treaty of Peace...”

The importance of this excerpt simply lies in the fact that it describes, in great detail, what had occurred during/after the Chief François Mius signed the 1761 “Peace and Friendship Treaty.”

Before I conclude this summary, I will note that I’ve also included a scan of Père Jean-Mandé Sigogne’s 1812 copy of the 1761 “Peace and Friendship Treaty,” which as we know from our discussion for “Folder #211” of “Volume 2” of this collection, was signed by François Mius as Chief of “the Tribe of La Hève Indians” (“the Tribe of La Hève Indians”). According to the “official” description of this document, which was written by the “Nova Scotia Archives”:

“Signed at Halifax, 9 November 1761, by Jonathan Belcher, President of His Majesty’s Council and Francis Muis, Chief of the La Have and witnessed by "P. Maillard, Priest missionary of indians.”

No original copies are known to exist for this, or for any of the other 1760 and 1761 treaties. This is a copy made in 1812 by the Rev. Jean-Mandé Sigogne, who had access to an original document.”

Based on this description, we can conclude that Père Jean-Mandé Sigogne’s 1812 copy of the 1761 “Peace and Friendship Treaty” is the only known copy of the original treaty in existence, as the original copy of the treaty has yet to be rediscovered. This 1812 copy can be found in the “Nova Scotia Archives” record collection entitled, “Mi’kmaq Holdings Resource Guide: Peace and Friendship Treaties” and is properly entitled, “Copy of "Treaty of Peace and Friendship" between Jonathon Belcher and Francis Muis, 1761” (“Peace and Friendship Treaties Nova Scotia Archives RG 1, Vol. 430, No. 20a”).

In conclusion, the documents discussed in the current summary are very important additions for a couple of reasons, the first being that they clearly show how different sibilings in many mixed-blooded families of pre-Deportation and post-Deportation Acadia, although being very close genetically, often

had different cultural experiences, such as is the case with the mixed-blooded children of Philippe Mius d'Entremont II and both of his First Nations wives, the mixed-blooded children of the Baron Jean-Vincent, d'Abbadie de Saint-Castin, etc., which we have discussed throughout this collection.

For example, the descendants of Chief François Mius were considered to have been Mi'kmaq, whereas the descendants of his half-brother, the "Part Indian" Joseph Mius d'Azy I were considered to have been "Sang-Mêlés" ("Mixed-Bloods")/Métis/"Bois-Brûlés (Burnt Woods)"/Etc. As we've seen at various points throughout this collection, other siblings of these two men (half- and full-siblings) and their descendants were labelled as "Mulattos," "Demi-Sauvages," etc.

The second importance of these documents, is simply that they demonstrate the power that France, and later England had over the First Nations Peoples of Acadia, especially in deciding which First Nations Peoples they would work with/to do their bidding.