

### Reading Log #3 “The Collapse of the Beothuk World” and “The Beothuk on the Eve of Their Extinction”

Both “The Collapse of the Beothuk World” and “The Beothuk on the Eve of Their Extinction” focus heavily on the reasons and facts pertaining to the extinction of the Beothuk people. In “The Collapse of the Beothuk World,” Ralph Pastore argues that the Beothuk people were forced inland away from traditional coastal hunting grounds and gathering sites that were heavily relied upon historically, and that this caused the Beothuk to essentially run out of sustainable food sources. This is evidenced by a series of maps of archaeological sites that clearly show the Beothuk moving inland during the 16th and 17th centuries as more settlers began to arrive on the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.<sup>1</sup> In his paper “The Beothuk on the eve of Their Extinction,” Donald H. Holly expands upon the ideas put forward by Pastore citing the European hunting of birds, cod and seals as a reason for the inland movement of the Beothuk.<sup>2</sup> Holly also argues that with the expansion of the European population surrounding the bays of the island resulted in an increased demand for food and goods which led to more hunting and trapping as well as the fishing of salmon, which the Beothuk had traditionally been dependant upon.<sup>3</sup> Though an increased demand for local wildlife as both a source of food and trading goods was clearly a leading cause of the decline in Beothuk population, Holly also posits the resistance of the Beothuk to European settlement as well as diseases brought from overseas as other key reasons for the dwindling population.<sup>4</sup> This resistance culminated in the deaths of several European settlers in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Pastore, Ralph "The Collapse of the Beothuk World." *Acadiensis* 19, no. 1 (1989):59-65.

<sup>2</sup> Holly Jr., Donald H. "The Beothuk on the Eve of Their Extinction." *Arctic Anthropology* 37, no. 1 (2000): 80

<sup>3</sup> Holly, "The Beothuk on the Eve of Their Extinction," 82

<sup>4</sup> Holly, "The Beothuk on the Eve of Their Extinction," 83

late 1700s which resulted in retaliation from both sides of the dispute.<sup>5</sup> The key argument that Holly makes is that though most argue that the Beothuk didn't have much of a hand in their extinction, that they were simply smothered by the larger European population, is in fact, false and that the Beothuk were able to (and did) put up quite a lot of resistance against European settlers.<sup>6</sup>

When reading an article such as this I always wonder how widespread this style of settling was during the 17th and 18th centuries in Canada. Though it appears the Beothuk were the only tribe to actually go extinct in large part because of settlers it is interesting to consider the effect that settlers would have had on other native populations across Canada even without direct contact (though there clearly was contact in this case).

---

<sup>5</sup> Holly, "The Beothuk on the Eve of Their Extinction," 87-89

<sup>6</sup> Holly, "The Beothuk on the Eve of Their Extinction," 90-91