

Mi'kmaw Decision-Making

Tufts Cove

Scenario

It is the First World War (1917) and a very large warship has exploded in Halifax Harbour (Kjipuktuk). Your community where you have lived for your entire life has been affected very seriously by the explosion. Many people all across Kjipuktuk have died, and it is an extremely difficult time for everyone. Your school, as well as many houses, have been badly damaged.



<https://archives.novascotia.ca/images/halifax/199900141.jpg>

In the years before the explosion many of the non-Mi'kmaw people living nearby have been asking the government to move your community to another area. You, your family and the other Mi'kmaw families do not want to move. Some months ago the community had been ordered by the government to move to Albro Lake. The lake is two kilometers inland from where you live now along the shoreline. With the explosion, that move is unlikely.

The people who survived the explosion are in shock and need the support of other Mi'kmaw families who live outside of Kjipuktuk. There is some aid available, but you are concerned for everyone's well-being.

Group Resolution

Within your groups, you must decide what to do to take care of those people who survived the explosion.

Use Mi'kmaw values as you make decisions: work together to reach a decision, honour humility, respect each other and include everyone. Remember that in Mi'kmaw worldview, decisions consider all living beings and the land, not just people.



Tufts Cove

Historical Notes

Tufts Cove, also known as Turtle Grove, was a Mi'kmaw community 5 km northwest from Dartmouth Centre (Punamu'kwati'jk). Despite Mi'kmaq living at Tufts Cove for generations, Settlers harassed community members during the early 20th century for more than a decade.

The Mi'kmaq living at Tufts Cove did not wish to move. Settlers wrote letters of complaint to the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA). Mi'kmaq lobbied for Tufts Cove to become a designated Reservation and made efforts to "improve" their community (such as a schoolhouse in 1912) to convince the DIA. When this failed, Jerry Lonecloud requested financial assistance in the sum of \$40 to relocate the families at Tufts Cove to (Sipekne'katik) Shubenacadie.

This request was denied. The Department of Indian Affairs entered unsuccessful negotiations with local landowners from 1913–1916. Eventually, the Tuft family offered to sell 94.5 acres of land near Albro Lake to relocate the community. On November 6, 1917, Indian Affairs Agent A. J. Boyd ordered the community to relocate. However, before this could happen, the Halifax Explosion demolished the community. The explosion killed nine community members and destroyed the schoolhouse at Tufts Cove. Following the tragedy, no attempt was made to re-establish the community, and the Mi'kmaq received little compensation for relocating to other Mi'kmaw communities, primarily Sipekne'katik and Millbrook.

What did the Mi'kmaq decide?

The Mi'kmaq who survived the explosion left to live with family in Sipekne'katik, Millbrook, and elsewhere. They chose not to try to re-establish the community nor to pursue the relocation to Albro Lake. There weren't enough resources or people to rebuild the community at Tufts Cove.



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