



THE RATIFICATION: A READERS' THEATRE (T4)

OVERVIEW

This essential learning experience is a reader's theatre (role play script) of the 1726 ratification of the 1725 Treaty. The hilarious, detailed, and illuminating script authored by Melody Martin-Googoo, highlights the key moments of the ratification and conveys a wealth of information on the context, decision-making, and events of eighteenth-century Mi'kma'ki. The text is based on historical fact and includes notes and comments on the actual ratification.

LEARNERS WILL...

- ▶ Understand the primary events of the 1726 ratification of the 1725 Treaty, the first in the Covenant Chain of Treaties.
- ▶ Understand that protecting netukulimk was the priority for Mi'kmaw leadership in the 18th century.
- ▶ See Mi'kmaw cultural values and decision-making reflected in the character roles.
- ▶ Understand that the British and the Mi'kmaq wanted the treaty to create peace and stability across Mi'kma'ki.
- ▶ Understand that the ratification took several years, one saqmaq at a time. No one saqmaq or other leader spoke for the Nation as a whole, which is still true today.

FOCUS

The script contains further notes about delivery of this learning experience. Roles are assigned to individual learners, with some roles requiring more or less content, as noted in the text, to accommodate various reading levels. Educators can choose to include props or simply to read from the text. As noted in the script, if teachers want to involve more learners in the Readers' Theatre Activity, they can consider the following:

- Add student written commercials influenced by the theme of Mi'kma'ki in 1726. For example, homemade mosquito repellent, finely made parchment paper, authentic feather quill pen, etc.
- Have more than one cast and have casts take turns presenting their versions.



TEACHER TIP

Teachers may need to remind learners to demonstrate respect to the Kji-Saqmaq and other leadership roles. This is not a "play" activity, but a learning one.

- Read several scripts in small groups then choose one to perform for the class.

Split the narrator roles into more than one person (e.g., first half and second half).

PE!

It is important that learners engaging in this learning experience have a clear understanding of the following content:

- The Mi'kmaq as the Indigenous people of Nova Scotia and the Atlantic region.
- Mi'kma'ki as the ancestral homeland of the Mi'kmaq.
- Understand the concepts of *netukulimk* and *ms'it no'kmaq*. (See LE F4.)
- What a treaty is. (See LE T1)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

See the theme introduction on page 29 as well as this theme's introduction (Treaty Making) on pages 34-36 and the general introduction to the resource (p. 11-12). There are additional resources on the Mi'kmaw treaties at the following websites:

- **Sister Dorothy Moore L'nu Resource Centre** (includes FAQ): <https://www.cbu.ca/indigenus-affairs/unamaki-college/mikmaq-resource-centre/treaties/>
- **Nova Scotia Archives**: <https://novascotia.ca/archives/mikmaq/results.asp?Search=AR5&SearchList1=all&TABLE2=on>



“The Ratification”

—SCENE 1—

Narrator 1: (*proud and very serious*) Many years ago, in the land of Mi’kma’ki...(me-gumah-ghee)

Narrator 2: (*interrupts with excitement*) today we call this place Nova Scotia!

Narrator 1: Ahem, (*clears throat*) Many years ago, in the traditional land of the Mi’kmaq, a group of British soldiers, Acadian men, Mi’kmaw chiefs, warriors and community members gathered at Annapolis Royal.

Narrator 3: (*bright and cheerful*) Annapolis Royal is the site of..

Narrator 2: (*interrupts*) Oh my gosh! The date! We need to mention the date. We forgot the date!

Narrator 1: (*quietly mutters to Narrator 2*) We will get to the date, could you please let Narrator 3 finish?

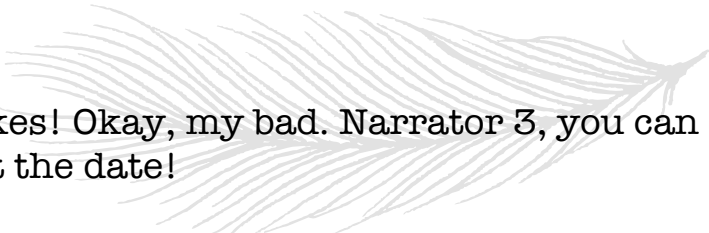
Narrator 2: Meskay! (mess-gay)

Narrator 3: Annapolis Royal is the site of a British Military fort named “Fort Anne.” British officers lived here and there were...

Narrator 2: (*interrupts again*) Are we going to mention the date? Um, also, just to let you know that *Meskay* (mess-gay) translates to “I’m sorry” in the Mi’kmaw language. O gosh, meskay...again. I can’t help myself. I am just sooo excited to narrate the story of the Mi’kmaq and the British ratifying the Treaty of 1725! ▶

Narrator 1 & 3: Narrator 2! Stop Interrupting!

Narrator 1: Narrator 2, there are a lot of people waiting for us to begin this story. And look at all our classmates ready to read their parts.



Narrator 2: Yikes! Okay, my bad. Narrator 3, you can continue...and, um, don't forget the date!

Narrator 3: The year is 1726 and it is a Saturday morning on the fourth of June. The British, Mi'kmaq and some Acadians have gathered at Fort Anne, a place that has been significant to the Mi'kmaq for thousands of years...

Narrator 1: (*interrupts*) thousands? Wow.

Narrator 2: Look who's interrupting now?! Ha ha.

Narrator 1: Meskay (mess-gay)

Narrator 3: Okay you two, let's get real. Where was I?

Narrator 2: It was a beautiful spring morning on the fourth of June, 1726. The leaves are in full bloom, there is energy in the trees, the fish are returning to the rivers and soon it will be time for the Mi'kmaq to harvest the bark from the birch trees.

Narrator 1: Wow, that was beautiful Narrator 2. Did you know that Fort Anne was in an area where Mi'kmaw families would traditionally meet to fish? It was known as Nme'juaqnek, (n-m-eh-joo-ach-neg): the "place of bountiful fish."

Narrator 2: Why didn't I know that? That was a fun fact.

Narrator 3: We better stay on script here, or we are all going to get fired.

Narrator 2: (*nods to teacher*) Nah, "Teach" wouldn't do that to us! But okay.

Narrator 1: The Scots were the first Europeans to arrive in the area, now known as Fort Anne. After three years, they were evicted because their own king signed a treaty with France. So, they bounced. Then the French took over the fort, lost it in a battle and it was then taken over by the British.



Narrator 3: So, Fort Anne would change hands many times because it was key to controlling European fishing and trade routes in Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee).

Narrator 2: The British and the French kept bickering over control. The British were realllllly eager to get their hands on Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee).

Narrator 3: But it was the Mi'kmaq who occupied the whole of the Maritimes, it was their homeland...

Narrator 2: (interrupts once more) That's why it was called "Mi'kma'ki," (me-gumah-ghee) it means the land of the Mi'kmaq. Whoops. I just interrupted, again didn't I? Sorry. I swear I'll keep to the script now.

Narrator 1: Don't worry about it, fun fact! Right? But as I was saying, it was here in Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee) that the Mi'kmaq maintained their way of life. For thousands of years, and still today, the Mi'kmaq lived off the land, they hunted and fished, travelled and gathered resources.

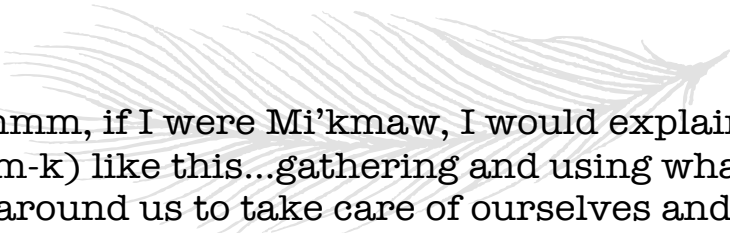
Narrator 2: So, if Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee) was the land of the Mi'kmaq, why were the British and French fighting over it? Didn't it belong to the Mi'kmaq?

Narrator 3: Well, first, the Mi'kmaq didn't believe in owning land, *they* belonged to the land.

Narrator 1: But the Acadians were here too, and they didn't fight for control, did they?

Narrator 2: The Acadians and the Mi'kmaq learned how to co-exist with one another. The Acadians respected the Mi'kmaw concept of Netukulimk (neh-doo-guh-lim-k).

Narrator 3: Remind me of what Netukulimk (neh-doo-guh-lim-k) is?



Narrator 1: Hmm, if I were Mi'kmaw, I would explain Netukulimk (neh-doo-guh-lim-k) like this...gathering and using what we need from the world around us to take care of ourselves and our families. It is the practices of hunting, fishing, gathering and other activity we do that provide for our communities.

Narrator 3: Oh! I see.

Narrator 2: But, Netukulimk (neh-doo-guh-lim-k) also means that the Mi'kmaq work to gather resources—like things they needed, in a way that does not harm the environment and the plants and animals of Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee). We believe that all animals, plants and people are tied together in spirit and that we must respect these relationships in the ways that we live.

Narrator 3: So, basically traditional hunting and fishing and the way the Mi'kmaq gathered resources and stuff was a part of Netukulimk (neh-doo-guh-lim-k), right?

Narrator 2: Yes, and Netukulimk (neh-doo-guh-lim-k) is sacred to the Mi'kmaq.

Narrator 3: So, this way of life was being disrupted, right? And the Mi'kmaq saw their traditional hunting and fishing grounds disappearing and that was like the ultimate insult to the Mi'kmaq.

Narrator 2: In the Mi'kmaw worldview, it was an act of war.

Narrator 1: The British reallllly wanted to control the trade, and expand their colonies and they reallllly needed to make peace with the Mi'kmaw nation.

Narrator 3: Reallllly?! (*sarcastically*)

Narrator 2: Hey! Guess what? Several months before, in December 1725, the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Penobscot tribes met in Boston to sign a treaty with the British. The British wanted to make Peace with these tribes and the Mi'kmaq also wanted to protect Netukulimk (neh-doo-guh-lim-k). So, they signed the treaty and then the Mi'kmaw



Chiefs hopped on a plane and flew to Halifax International airport and...

Narrator 1: Ha ha, nice try buddy boy! But there were NO airplanes in 1725. There weren't even any highways.

Narrator 2: Actually, the oceans, rivers and lakes *were* the highways. The waters were busy!

Narrator 3: Ha ha! JK! But for reals, the Mi'kmaw chiefs travelled to different villages throughout Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee) to speak to Elders and community members about the negotiations for peace.

Narrator 2: So, in June an important group of Chiefs got together to say, yep! We are ready to ratify this thing! Which brings us to finally begin our story...

—SCENE 2—

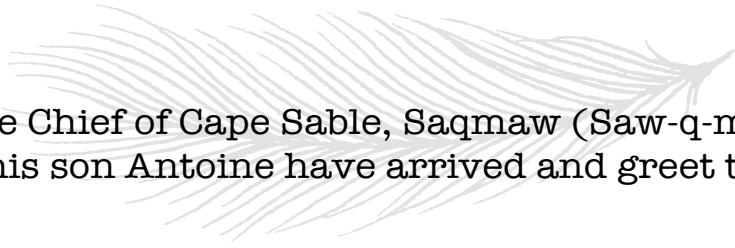
Narrator 1: (*Clears throat and with great seriousness*) Saturday June 4, 1726, it is early morning and Mi'kmaq are arriving at Fort Anne, many travel the waterways by canoe and some travel from the nearby villages on foot.

Narrator 2: The Chief of Si(-)pekne'ka'tik, Saqmaw (Saw-q-m-ow) Jean Baptist Pon and his son, Etienne, pull their canoe up the bank of the river. The Chief and his son face the rising sun. They both raise their hands in an action of respect.

Saqmaw Jean Baptist Pon: Kji Niskam (gee-niss-gum), I greet and honour the rising sun. I am grateful for our safe voyage. The early morning sun is strong and gives me energy, the energy I need to give thanks for the hope of friendship and peace.

Etienne Pon: Ahoh!...Ahoh!...Ahoh!

Narrator 3: The father and son join many other Mi'kmaw Chiefs, warriors, women and Elders who have gathered by a fire.



Narrator 1: The Chief of Cape Sable, Saqmaw (Saw-q-m-ow) Paul Tecumart and his son Antoine have arrived and greet their brothers and sisters.

Saqmaw Paul Tecumart: Kwe!(g-way) Kwe! nitap! (knee-dup)
Kwe!(g-way)

Antoine: Kwe! Taliaq (dull-ee-ach)?

Saqmaw Jean Baptist Pon: Wli eksitpuk! (well-ee-eck-seet-boog)
Good Morning!

Etienne: Kwe! (g-way)

Narrator 1: It is an important day for the British and for the Mi'kmaq. The Mi'kmaw Chiefs have taken great care in their appearance.

Narrator 3: The Chiefs wear regalia, leggings and moccasins decorated with shells and quillwork. Capes made of caribou and moose are draped over their shoulders. Their long hair has been smoothed down with seal oil and is neatly tied back with leather string.

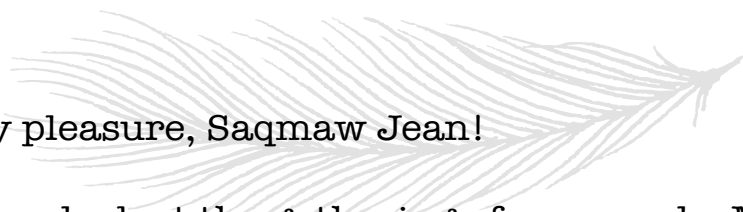
Narrator 2: Abram, the Acadian deputy, walks toward the group of Mi'kmaq gathered by the fire.

Abram Bourg: Kwe (g-way) nitapk! (knee-dup-k) Bonjour mon ami!

ALL Mi'kmaq: Ahoh! Nitap! Ahoh! (knee-dup-k)

Narrator 2: There is good cheer as the Mi'kmaq greet their Acadian friend. The men have known each other for some time and because of this, are able to understand both the Mi'kmaw and French languages.

Saqmaw Jean Baptist Pon: Abram! Our good friend, you have arrived to translate what the British want to communicate to us in their English language.



Abram: It is my pleasure, Saqmaw Jean!

Etienne: Antoine, look at the gathering of our people. Many chiefs representing different villages in Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee) are here. Cool.

Antoine: Not bad eh Etienne?

Etienne: E'e (eh-heh)

Antoine: Not all chiefs chose to be here today and we respect their decisions. But I must say, it looks like much of Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee) is represented today by the many Chiefs.

Abram: Yes, it does look like Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee) is represented well. There is an equal amount of British here too. Well, I was talking to the Lieutenant Governor of Annapolis Royal, the council and some British officers and let me tell you, they are some nervous. They really want to make peace with the Mi'kmaw nation. So, you boys ready to get things started?

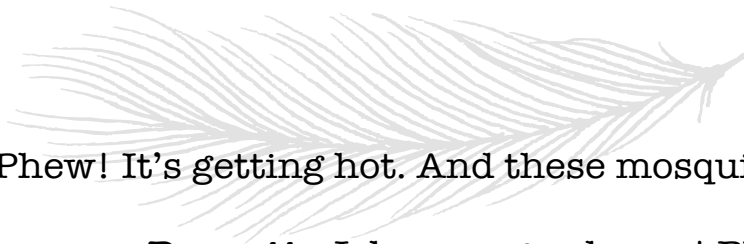
ALL Mi'kmaq: Ahoh! Tla'tikenej! (dl-lah-dee-ghen-edge)

—SCENE 3—

Narrator 1: The sun is beginning to shine; a soft breeze is blowing off the waters and the British flag flaps in the wind.

Narrator 3: A large wooden table is set up in front of a white clapboard building. On the table lay a few pieces of parchment paper, a bottle of black ink and a large feather quill pen.

Narrator 2: The Lieutenant Governor of Annapolis Royal stands by the table and he is surrounded by several British officers and council members. There is a short, rounded fellow fiddling with his uniform, his face is red and he is sweating. He swats his head, first with his left hand and then his right. The short, rounded fellow brings his hand to his face, disgusted with the squished insect, pulls a handkerchief out of his pocket and wipes his soiled hand.



John Adams: Phew! It's getting hot. And these mosquitoes! Arghhh!

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: John, my good man! Please stop fiddling about. It's a beautiful day in June. Summer has not yet arrived. You're sweating? I'm sweating! This day has got to go right. I want things to go well with the Mi'kmaw nation. I need to make his Majesty King George of Britain proud of me. I *must* make peace and agreement with thy tribes belonging to and inhabiting Great Britain's territories of Nova Scotia and New England.

John Adams: I concur! Mr. Doucett, but thoust not agree thy sun's rays shine greatly upon thee? Where art thou Governor of Nova Scotia?

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: Mr. Adams, thoust not in Britain. The honourable Lt. Governor of Nova Scotia is on vacation and could not travel to Fort Anne in time for the Ratification. My apologies.

John Adams: I see. But, Mr. Doucett, I have forgotten my wig and I have no hat. The sun is shining upon me and I am sweating quite a bit. The buzzing of these hideous creatures about my ears is quite the annoyance. My dear head is riddled with mosquito bites!

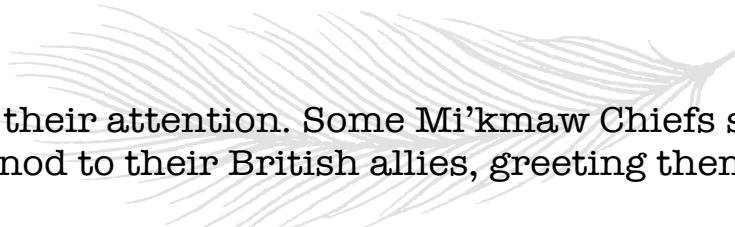
Lieutenant Governor Doucett: Someone get our Notary Public a hat! Mr. John Adams will make our treaty official with his special stamp and we need him comfortable. A hat! A wig! Someone! Make haste!

John Adams: Mr. Doucett, a spot of tea and a biscuit would be lovely too. Would you happen to have a lovely jar of marmalade as well?

Narrator 1: The Notary Public, John Adams, borrowed a wig and is finally content with his tea and biscuit. Unfortunately, the closest jar of marmalade happened to be 4,744km away in London, England.

—SCENE 4—

Narrator 3: There are over one hundred people present at Fort Anne. The Mi'kmaw Chiefs, warriors, Elders, women, and children begin to



quiet and focus their attention. Some Mi'kmaw Chiefs stand by the front table and nod to their British allies, greeting them in this way.

Narrator 2: The Chief of Cape Sable steps forward.

Narrator 1: Like many Mi'kmaw Chiefs, the Creator has given Saqmaw (Saw-q-m-ow) Paul Tecumart many gifts. He is a leader, chosen for his unique talent to skillfully hunt and fish. He is generous, sharing resources with his people. He can build consensus among the villages because his voice is strong and powerful.

Narrator 2: The Chief stands tall and proud. He begins to speak.

Chief Paul Tecumart: My name is Saqmaw (Saw-q-m-ow) Paul Tecumart. I am the son of the Elder Chief Tecumart. The same Elder that is buried near these grounds, here at Fort Anne. I have carefully listened to the Elders in my village and I bring their voices with me. I'm here. Let's ratify this treaty.

ALL Mi'kmaq: Ahoh! Ahoh! Ahoh!

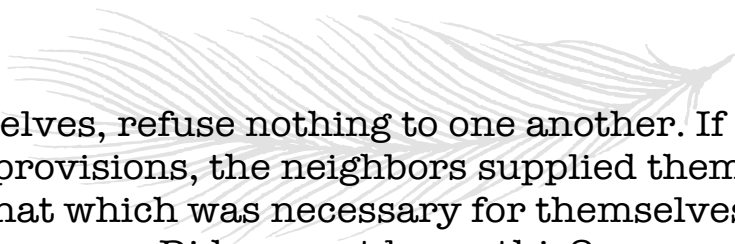
Lieutenant Governor Doucett: Good Morning Chiefs, Warriors, Elders and other members of Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee). My apologies, Lieutenant Governor Lawrence is on vacation in Boston and could not be here today. We desire to build partnerships with the Mi'kmaq and so I will speak in the Governor's absence.

Narrator 1: Mr. Doucett claps his hands together, nervously turns to his British officers and nods his head. The Acadian deputy, Abram Bourg is the translator and he steps forward.

Abram: Mr. Doucett, have you brought tokens for my Mi'kmaw friends?

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: Tokens? Do you mean presents? I've got no presents. Nobody told me I needed to bring presents.

Abram: Mr. Doucett, it is customary to bring tokens for the Mi'kmaw Chiefs. Gift giving honours the Mi'kmaw practice of sharing. The



Mi'kmaq themselves, refuse nothing to one another. If one wigwam or family had not provisions, the neighbors supplied them, although they had only that which was necessary for themselves. And in all things, it was the same. Did you not know this?

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: I did not think this custom was necessary. I...I have no presents, nor tokens of goodwill. I mean no disrespect to the Mi'kmaw Chiefs and their people.

Abram: Sir, some time ago, his majesty sent presents. May I suggest you distribute those presents to the Mi'kmaw Chiefs?

Narrator 1: Mr. Doucett is a bit relieved and he motions his hands at one of his officers. The British officer, aware of the conversation, runs into the Officers' quarters to look for the tokens his majesty had sent from England.

Etienne: Generosity and interdependence is at the heart of our culture.

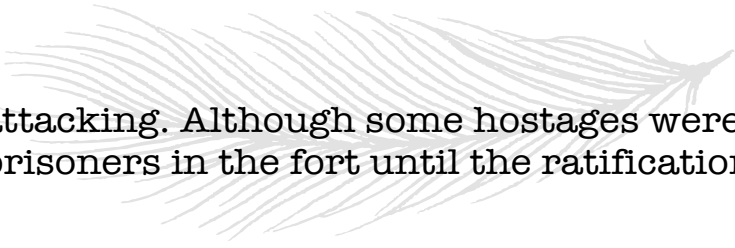
Narrator 1: There is a low continuous whispering in the crowd.

Claude: Mr. Doucett, while you are finding your tokens, I stand here with my brothers. Rene and Francois and I speak on behalf of my father Saqmaq (Saw-q-m-ow) Grand Claude, who chose to send me and my brothers in his place. While you released my mother and sister in our previous agreement, it is well passed time to let the prisoners go. My father traveled throughout the villages, seeking the negotiations your Majesty had requested expecting his good faith in return. He is true to his word and I ask that you release the hostages.

Rene: Release them!

Francois: It has been many cycles of the moon that their families have not seen their loved ones. My father demands their safe return.

Narrator 2: At Annapolis Royal, the British officers, distrustful of the Mi'kmaq living near the fort, captured hostages from their village. Elders, women and children, were captured to discourage the



Mi'kmaq from attacking. Although some hostages were released, the rest remained prisoners in the fort until the ratification of the 1725 treaty.

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: (*whispers*) Should we release the prisoners?!

John Adams: (*whispers back*) They are not worthy to be kept.

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: (*whispers*) They are indeed elderly and sick.

John Adams: (*whispers back*) And I must say that the Mi'kmaw Chiefs show an honest will of friendship and peace. What would the Governor have you do?

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: I shall do as my Governor pleases. RELEASE the prisoners!

ALL Mi'kmaq: Ahoh!

Claude: My father will be overjoyed. We give thanks to the Creator—our strength carries us forward.

Rene, Francois and Claude: Ahoh!

Narrator 1: Several British officers walk toward a dark cavern known as “The Black Hole.” It provided shelter for women and children during the many attacks on Fort Anne but it was also used as a prison, to shelter the hostages taken from the Mi'kmaw village. The hostages emerge from the cavern and are embraced by the Mi'kmaq gathered at the Fort.

—SCENE 5—

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: And now we ratify. Abram, I will read the treaty agreements in English and you will translate them into French for our Mi'kmaw brothers and sisters.



Francois: Hey Rene, why doesn't our Acadian friend just read them to us in Mi'kmaw?

Rene: I don't know Bro, Mr. Doucett wants them read in French.

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: (*Ahem, clears throat*) We desire peace and security, and to make peace, first we have released the hostages and second we promise to not interfere with your practice of Netukulink (neh-doo-guh-lim-k).

Saqmaw Jean Baptist Pon: Yes, we agree. And my brothers? My sisters?

ALL Mi'kmaq: E'e (Eh-heh)!

Saqmaw Jean Baptist Pon: So just to make things clear, for years you have been fishing and hunting in our territory without sharing as is our custom. This treaty will guarantee protection of Netukulink (neh-doo-guh-lim-k) and our traditional way of life?

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: Yup. The Mi'kmaq have every right to hunt and fish and gather resources without any worries whatsoever.

Chief Paul Tecumart: Let me remind you Mr. Doucett, we chose to negotiate rather than continue to fight.

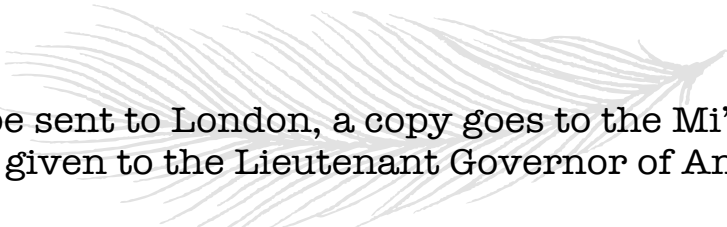
Lieutenant Governor Doucett: I assure you.

John Adams: Oh, this sun is quite warm. Please Mr. Doucett, let's ratify this treaty so we can get on with our spot of tea.

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: Patience my dear fellow, we have been anxious for this day and we will get to the tea and biscuits in no time.

John Adams: I've got my royal stamp ready!

Narrator 3: The Mi'kmaw chiefs begin approaching the table, each taking their time to mark or sign the different copies of the treaty.



Six copies will be sent to London, a copy goes to the Mi'kmaq and another copy is given to the Lieutenant Governor of Annapolis Royal.

Lieutenant Governor Doucett: Can you please sign or mark here? And here? and here too? Oh, and don't forget here. Yes, right there. Thank you.

John Adams: Oh my! that clan mark looks rather interesting Saqmaw (Saw-q-m-ow) Baptiste. Is that a Beaver? Quite the industrious animal, I must say!

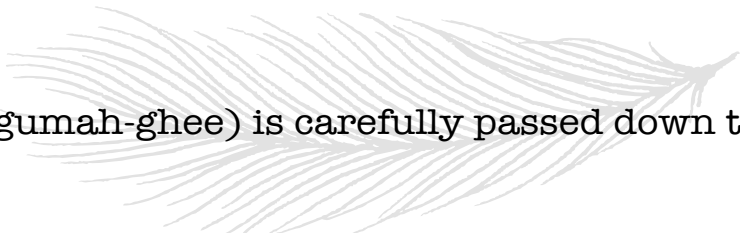
Lieutenant Governor Doucett: There we go! All marked, signed and stamped! There are many, many signatures and marks on this Ratification. What a glorious day. The sun is setting and now, we shall break bread with our Mi'kmaw friends.

Mi'kmaw Putu's (Boo-doo): I am Antle, Keeper of the wampum for the Santé Mawio'mi (Sun-day-maw-ee-oh-me). Today, I have witnessed the sacred promises made to protect Netukulimk (neh-doo-guh-lim-k) and only the finest of quahog shells have been used to weave the story onto this fine leather belt.

Saqmaw Jean Baptist Pon: It looks good Putu's (Boo-doo). As Keeper of the Belt and as Keeper of Stories, our children for many moon cycles will hear the sacred promises made today. Your job is very important to our people.

Mi'kmaw Putu's (Boo-doo): We've got a lot of work to do; we will take this wampum belt to other parts of Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee) and share the story of our agreements by the sacred fire.

Narrator 2: Okay Reader's Theatre participants, let's pause here. I need you to understand just how significant the role our Mi'kmaw Putu's (Boo-doo) played in the transmission of sacred knowledge and history. Do you remember Antle (Awn-dlay) explaining that he would share the story of the wampum by the sacred fire? This is called oral tradition, the telling of stories. It is through the Putu's (Boo-doo) and Mi'kmaw Elders that the history and culture of



Mi'kma'ki (me-gumah-ghee) is carefully passed down through generations.

Narrator 1: Remember this, because you will need this knowledge of the strength in Mi'kmaw oral traditions to fully understand honouring our treaties in the future. Good point Narrator 2 and now, let's get back to the skit. On the count of 1...2...3...the Ratification of the treaty of 1725 continues...

Chief Paul Tecumart: And now, I light the sacred tobacco in my pipe, the smoke will rise and I share this medicine with you my Mi'kmaw brothers and sisters. Like my Mi'kmaw brother, Saqmaw (Saw-q-m-ow) Grand Claude of Lequille has stated, our strength carries us forward. To Netukulink (neh-doo-guh-lim-k) and to all my relations! Msit no'kmaq...(mm-sit-know-guh-ma)!

ALL Mi'kmaw: Msit no'kmaq! (mm-sit-know-guh-ma)

Narrator 1: And so, the ending of our story...

Narrator 2: (*interrupts*) Wait! It's not the end. These Mi'kmaw Chiefs wouldn't know it, but the Ratification of the 1725 Treaty was only the beginning of a chain of many treaties that would soon follow.

Narrator 3: And, may I add, the same promises were made through and through...

Narrator 2: (*interrupts again*) 1749, 1752, 1760, 1761, 1778, and 1779 just to name a few.

Narrator 1&3: Narrator 2! You're interrupting!

Narrator 2: Meskay (mess-gay).

—THE END...BUT NOT REALLY—