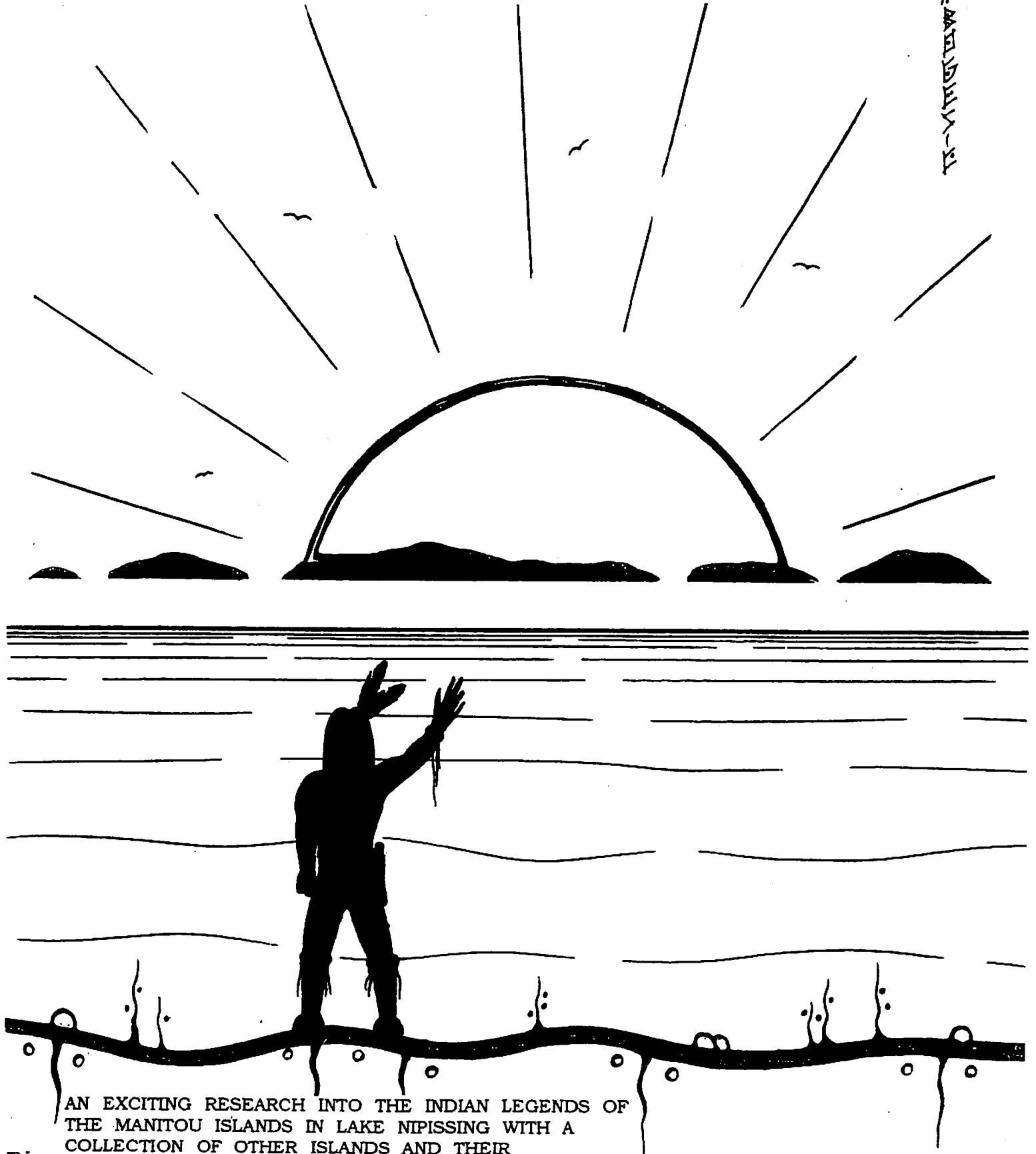


# ISLANDS IN THE SKY

WEE-ME-TOO-NA-NA-NA



AN EXCITING RESEARCH INTO THE INDIAN LEGENDS OF  
THE MANITOU ISLANDS IN LAKE NIPISSING WITH A  
COLLECTION OF OTHER ISLANDS AND THEIR  
ASSOCIATED LEGENDS.

BY: WAYNE D. BLISS (BEETOPEEKSKA)

ILLUSTRATED BY: PERRY McLEOD (SHABOGESIC)

# **ISLANDS IN THE SKY**

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## PREFACE

Upon first arriving in North Bay, and as I had always done in any new town or city I happened to be in, I would look for a high hill, building or any precipice to go up on, and take in the general lay of the land. In the case of North Bay it was the town dock I went out on to scope over the area. It was one of those beautiful, clear summer days, and Lake Nipissing was as smooth as a mirror.

Standing at the lake end of the dock, I looked over the old Chief Commanda I Cruise Ship that was tied there, and then the lake front, city and escarpment behind it. I happened to glance over my shoulder and saw out in the lake a picturesque group of islands, rising up into the sky. I gazed in awe, trying to make some sense of it when a boat came between them, putting them back in proper perspective. Ever since that day I have been greatly interested in them.

I was so interested in fact, that I took it upon myself to do an extensive research about them. Since that time I have researched, read, and been told some of the most amazing, fascinating legends of all time. Here are those legends, handed down by word of mouth for countless generations.

The Indians called it "The Curse of the Manitous", but only the ghosts who dwell on Devil's Island know the truth.

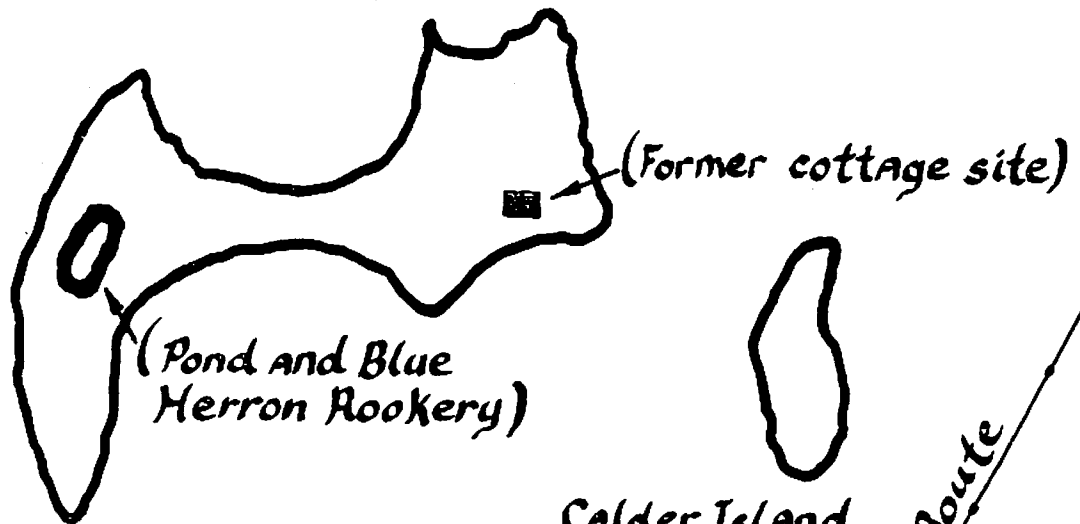
For purposes of comparison and also because of their contribution to the field of ancient oral tradition, the author has included some stories from other islands, in Canada and also from other parts of the world. These islands and their associated legends, interspersed with the traditions of the Manitous, serve to enhance the book's interest.

The illustrations in this collective book of Stories and Legends have been done in the Ojibway's four sacred colours Red, Black, Yellow, and White and represent two things. They symbolize the four directions, Red for the South where it is hot, Black for the West where the dark storms come from, Yellow for the East where the sun rises and White for the North where the snow comes from. They also represent the four great nations in the world, Red for the aboriginal peoples, Black for the African, Yellow for the East Asian, and White for the European or White nation.

The Eye that floats through some of the Illustrations is the eye of the Creator (God). It is a circle within a circle, which means the Creator is within us and around us and always watching. The red line that flows from the eye is the blood line that gives life to all living things.

# Manitou Islands

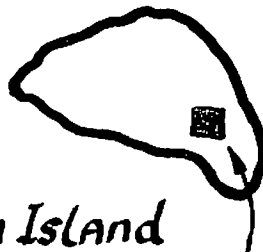
Great Manitou Island  
(Devil or Ghost Island)



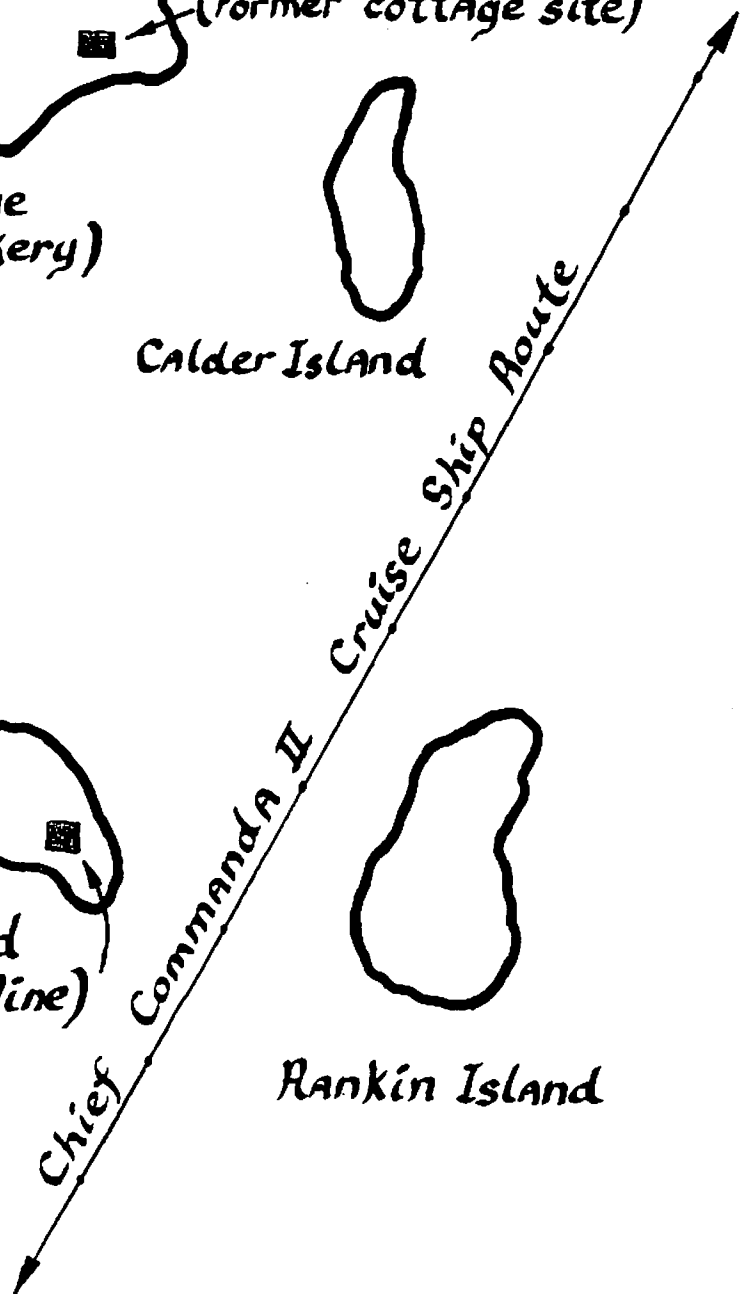
Calder Island



Newman Island  
(Abandoned Mine)



Rankin Island



1

## **Islands in the Sky?**

### **Introduction**

On a clear summer day when the lake is very calm and there are no clouds in the sky, if the temperature is just right and the sun is in its proper place, the sky and Lake Nipissing look as one if you should look out upon it. Should you also happen to see the Manitou Islands at the same time, you will notice that they seem to rise up into the sky. This in itself is probably part of the reason that the Indians felt there was a mystery about them, those cursed, haunted, mysterious rocks out there—those Islands In The Sky.

Dedicated to those of our generation who can see the necessity of preserving the wilds, or as the legendary Grey Owl once said, "To those who love the silent places."

2

## **The Legend of The Manitou Islands' Screaming Maiden**

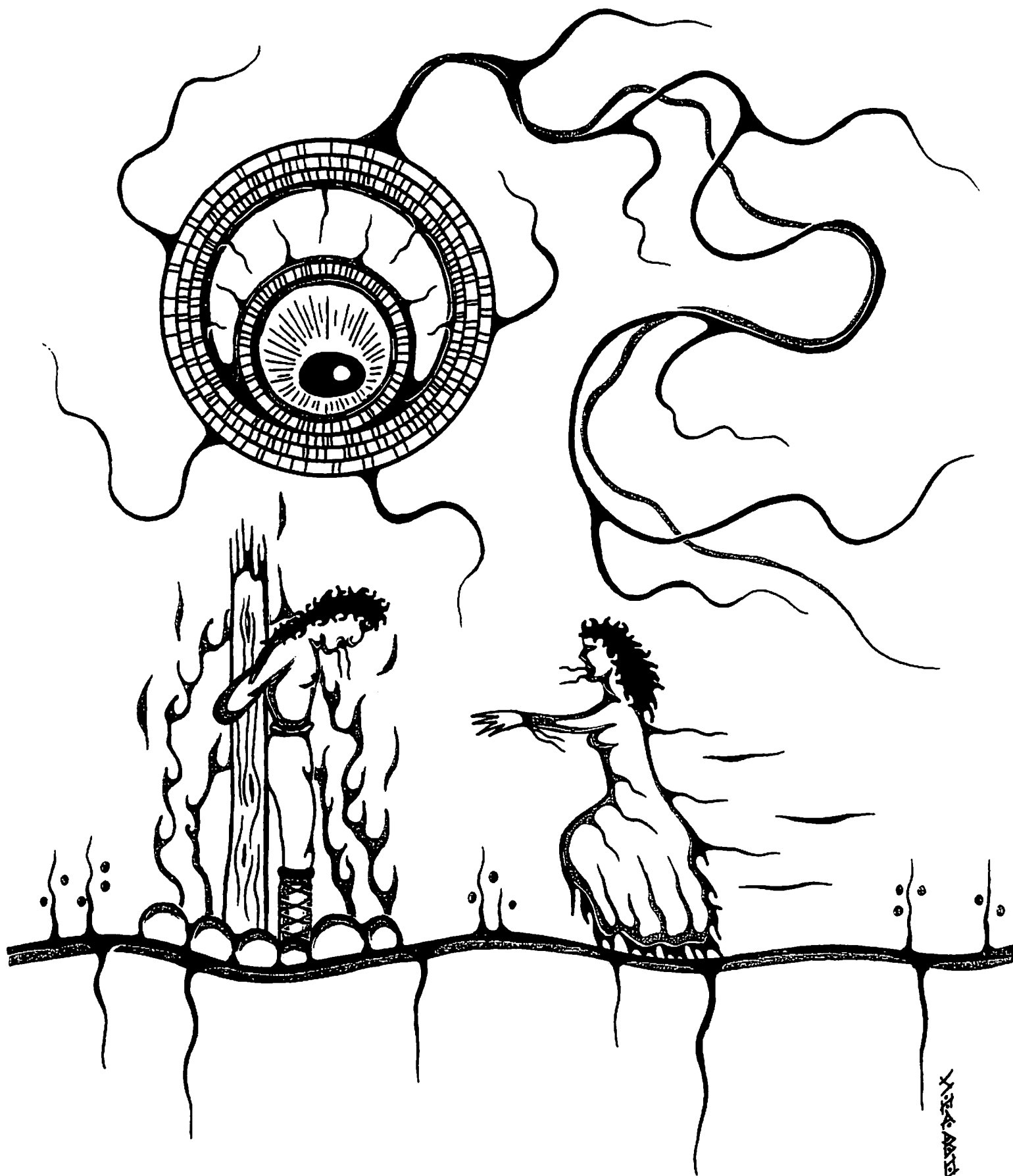
Many, many years ago an Indian maiden from the Nipissing tribe ran away from her people to marry a very handsome Iroquois brave. As it turned out, the Nipissing warriors captured them and took the Iroquois brave to the Manitou Islands to be burned to death at the stake. The maiden was made to watch. She apparently was so much in love with him that she jumped into the fire with him and there she died with him, as the flames engulfed both of them.

It is said today that if you camp on the Manitou Islands over night, you can still hear her screaming just as she did when she died in the fire with her lover so many, many years ago.

3

## **Another Legend of The Manitou Islands "Serpent People"**

A long time ago, when Iroquois Tribes were savagely killing many of the surrounding tribes, the Nipissing people decided for safety reasons that they would live on the Manitou Islands in Lake





Nipissing, which would be hard to attack. They lived there for most of one winter, until food supplies ran short. Soon there was much hunger, and about this time a young girl went for some water at the small pond in the middle of one of the larger islands. While she was getting out the water, she saw a great sturgeon swimming below the ice. She quickly told the others and they caught the great fish. They were so hungry they devoured it as soon as it was cooked.

As was the practice of anyone who was a student in sorcery, fasting for great lengths of time was required, and one of these students who had not eaten any of the fish was just finishing her time. Upon coming out of her lodge she saw that all the people had been turned into snakes.

She went as fast as possible to the Sturgeon River, where more of her people were camped and brought back a group to investigate, and sure enough what she said was true. The people all agreed that the Islands were cursed and haunted and that no one would ever be able to live there.

Until this day, no one has ever lived on those mysterious Islands. A mine was in existence there, but it also could not survive, helping to reinforce belief in "The Curse of the Manitous." Even today, the local Indians still refer to them as "The Ghost Islands" or "Devil's Islands".

#### 4

### **The Origin of Mackinac Island** **An Ottawa Legend**

Mackinac Island lies in the straits between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. The name has been shortened from Michilimackinac, the original name given it by the Indians who used the rocky island as a meeting place.

As seen from nearby Woody Island, it is said to have exactly the form its name implies, that of a large turtle sleeping on the water.

Long ago, when the world was very young and all the living creatures were wandering over its surface looking for the best place to live, a large number of turtles came to the south shore of what is now called Lake Erie. They found the land generally level and they were very delighted with the muddy waters of the lake, and also with the many stagnant ponds near it. Most of the turtles liked the spot so well that they decided to settle there.

But the leader of the group, a huge turtle, was determined to continue his journey. He was lured northward by strange lights



—lights of unusual loveliness that we now know as “The Northern Lights”. He had often seen them moving across the distant horizon.

He journeyed slowly and when summer and autumn had passed, he was only as far as the point of land which then partly divided Lake Huron from Lake Michigan. Already he was numb from the chilly winds but still determined to go on, as the strange lights were still luring him. Finally he reached the point where he could no longer go on, as the ice was forming too fast. Soon he was frozen in for the winter and died shortly afterwards.

When Spring returned and the ice melted, the lakes again were a beautiful shade of blue but the shell of the huge turtle was fastened to a tall reed. As the years went by it grew into an Island which the Indians named Michilimackinac, meaning “The Great Turtle”.

## 5

### **The Great Rock in the Fraser River**

To the Lillooet Indians who lived along the Fraser River in British Columbia, a tall granite rock near the foot of the canyon was a warning. The rock reminded them that the first salmon caught each season did not belong to the person who caught it, but that it was to be honoured with religious ceremonies, and the spirit of the salmon would be honoured and send lots of salmon up the river to the people. At the end of these ceremonies, the fishing season was declared officially open.

One year, a long time ago, the salmon were late in coming and there was much hunger among the Lillooet people. A woman named Sta-eel was very much in distress as her seven children were starving. As it turned out, she caught the first salmon that year but neglected to tell the rest of the tribe about it, and took it right home to her starving family who devoured it quickly. She knew the Tribal Law but just didn't care, for the voice of hunger speaks loudly.

Soon after eating the fish a great storm came up and the Medicine Men knew someone had offended the Spirits. The people watched the storm in terror. Then Sta-eel came out of her lodge and was picked up by the fierce wind and thrown into the middle of the river. As she sank into the water, a rock appeared in her place. Soon the people found out from her children what had happened.

Apparently her body was changed into a rock as punishment, and as a warning to anyone else who might disobey the laws of the Tribe. Today when the Indians see Sta-eel's Rock, they remember

that the first salmon caught must be honoured by ceremony, and they observe that the seven streams that flow down the mountain-side near Yale in British Columbia are the tears once shed by the seven children of Sta-eel.

## 6

### **The Dream of the White Robe and the Floating Island**

Long ago, a young Micmac woman had a strange dream. She dreamed that a small island came floating toward the land. On this island there were tall trees and living beings. Among them was a man dressed in white rabbit skins.

In those days it was custom when anyone had an unusual dream, to consult the wise men of the tribe, especially the Prophets or Magicians, and the girl did so. They thought about it but could make no sense of it.

A few days later, the people saw what appeared to be a very small island that had drifted close to shore. On this island, as in the girl's dream, there were trees with beings climbing along the branches. All the people rushed down to the shore, while the beings, who turned out to be men, came ashore in a crude canoe.

A man standing in front of the canoe was completely clad in white garments. The people asked the girl if this was the island and the man in white she had dreamed of, and she replied, "Yes, exactly".

As the legend turns out, the man in white was a Priest and had come among the Micmac people to teach and instruct them. Although the Magicians and Prophets opposed this, the people did receive educations and were baptized according to the Priest's religion. The Priest in turn learned their language and ways. So goes the legend of the white robe and floating island.

## 7

### **The Legend of Siwash Rock**

In Vancouver Harbour beneath Prospect Point stands a tall, grey rock. Close up, one sees that the monolith resembles a human figure. White people call it Siwash Rock. The Squamish Indians call it T'elch. To them it symbolizes unselfish, noble spirited manhood. According to the legend, T'elch was a nobleman of his tribe, famed for his good deeds. His constant care was to help

A black and white line drawing. On the left, a man with curly hair, wearing a striped tunic, is shown in profile, reaching his right arm up towards a large, multi-layered eye in the sky. The eye has a central pupil, radiating lines, and several concentric rings of small squares or dots. Wavy lines surround the eye, suggesting clouds or smoke. To the right of the man is a large, dark, triangular shape, possibly a tent or a large garment, with several lines radiating from its top. At the bottom, a horizontal line represents the ground, with several vertical lines hanging down from it. On the far left, there is a vertical column of text in a stylized, possibly ancient, script.



others. Even his wives were of the same good heart. They lived in a rocky cave under Prospect Point. Whenever he went hunting or fishing, he always brought home extra for the poor of his tribe.

T'elch and his wives lived in the early days when the world was young and the Changer was working his wonders on the earth. The Great Spirit sent the Changer from tribe to tribe to give each person whatever that person wished most. As it was, the Changer had visited neighbouring tribes and was soon to come among the Squamish. Of course everyone was excited except T'elch, for each one had something to ask for. When T'elch was asked what he would ask of the Changer, he replied "Nothing". When the others asked why, he said simply, "The Spirits have been good to me and have given me all I want and more than I really need. Why should I ask for more?" The people said, "But if you do not meet him, he may become angry and refuse to give anything to our people." "Ah, that is different. If it will help others to get what they want, then I will meet him."

The next day, while T'elch was swimming to purify himself in order to meet the Changer, a canoe with four men in it approached. The man in the front said, "Greetings, swimmer. Who are you?" "I am T'elch," he replied. Then the man asked, "Why are you purifying yourself?" T'elch said, "To make myself worthy of meeting the Changer." "Oh, and what are you going to ask of the Changer?" "Nothing," T'elch replied. "He has already given me more than I need in order that I may help others." Then the man said, "I am the Changer and I have never met a man who has been free from selfishness. We want you to stand for all time as an imperishable monument, so others will look upon you and realize that they, too, should be unselfish." With that, T'elch grew taller and changed into stone, to become an everlasting monument and inspiration to his people.

## 8

### **The Real Owner of Lake Nipissing**

This story is part of the history of the Ojibway Indians of Lake Nipissing, originally named Nibeensing.

Long ago when the world was very young, an Indian travelled to Lake Nipissing from down east. Being the first person ever to set eyes on the lake, he was quick to realize what a natural paradise he had stumbled upon. There was good hunting in the area, and of course plenty of the almost legendary Lake Nipissing pickerel. He remained in this area for an unknown length of time, until inevitably another Indian travelled to the lake.

The first inhabitant, whose name was Makatemooze, soon met the second, whose name was Mnoonianni, and they lived together for a while afterwards. Finally, Makatemooze decided to go away for one winter and told his friend Mnoonianni that should he fail to return in the spring, the lake would then belong to him. When in the spring he did not return for some unknown reason, Mnoonianni inherited the lake and until this day is the only rightful owner of what was named so long, long ago, "Lake Nibeessing".

## 9

### **The Origin of the Earth Itself**

In the beginning, the Earth was covered in water and from the sky a woman fell. Two loons that saw her falling flew under her to break her fall. Then they swam with her on their backs to prevent her from drowning. Eventually, they became tired of the load and a great turtle said that he would take her on his back. Finally the turtle and all the animals agreed that she should have land to live on and the turtle sent all the animals of the water to the bottom to bring up earth to be packed around him until it made land. Eventually the task was complete. Even today evidence of the great turtle is present, but today his great shell is known as "Bedrock".

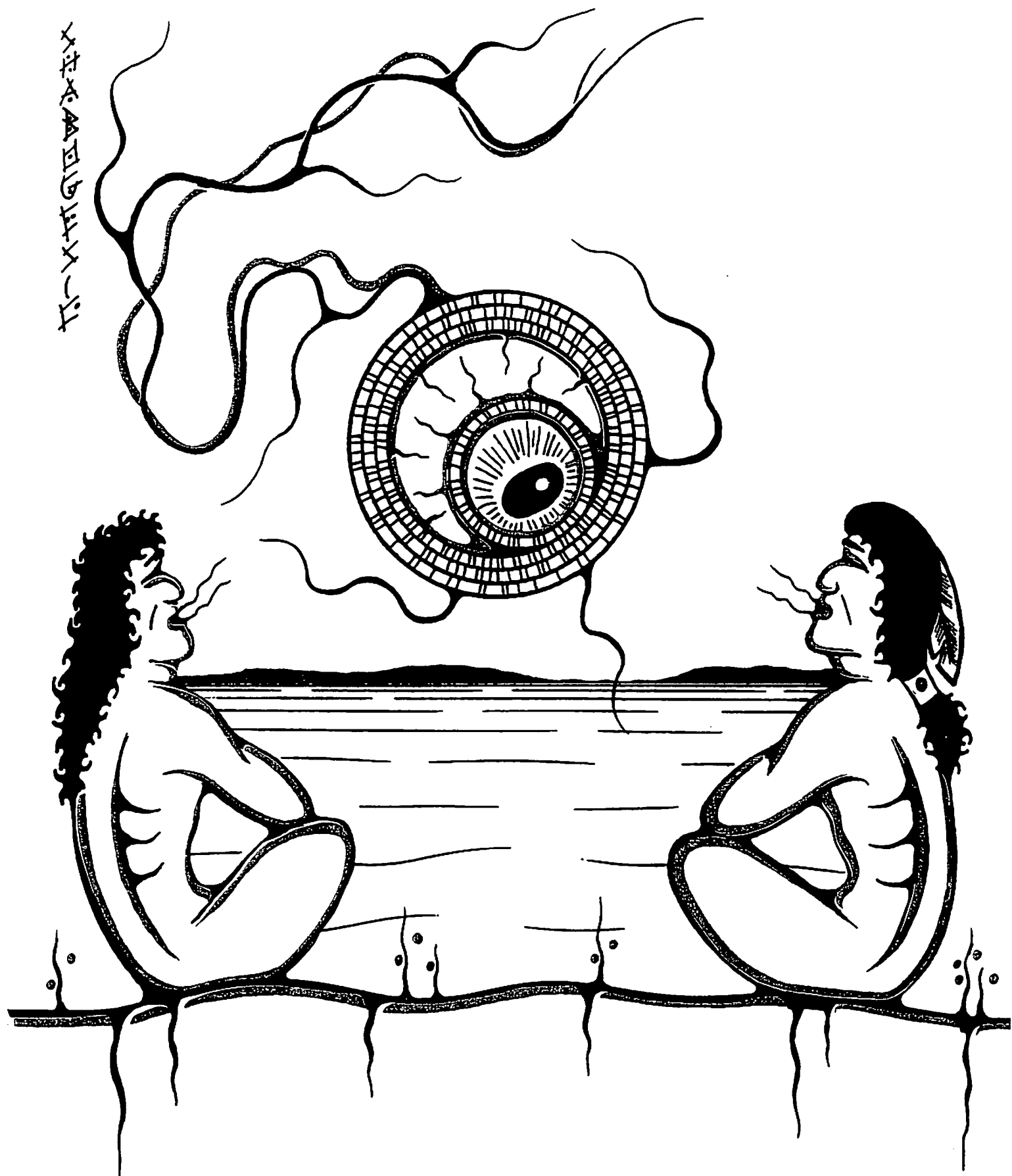
## 10

### **Star Island of the Greeks**

Greek legends tell of an island that once floated around in the Aegean Sea. It was called Asterie or Star Island and often was passed by ships travelling one way, only to find on the return journey that it was no longer there. The philosopher "Callimachus" put it into these words:

"In the beginning, a great God striking the mountains fashioned islands in the deep. He heaved them up from the depths and rolled them into the sea. Some he rooted fast, but you, Asterie, sailed freely over the sea."

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## **Torget Island** **A Norwegian Legend**

Torghatten is a hat-shaped promontory on Torgot Island off the west coast of Norway, about 150 miles north of Trondheim. About 400 feet above its base, it is penetrated by a natural tunnel 550 feet long, up to 250 feet high, and 56 feet wide. It would be surprising if such a unique land form did not have a legend attached to it.

Thus, a giant named Senjemand fell in love with the beautiful giantess Juternajesta who lived about 80 miles away, but she refused him scornfully. In a rage, he shot one of his giant arrows at her, but her lover, Torge, flung his hat and intercepted it. Senjemand fled on horseback but the rising sun caught him, and he and his steed, together with Torge's hat were turned to stone. Torghatten is that hat, the tunnel in the mountain is the hole in it made by the arrow, a natural obelisk in the vicinity is the arrow, and the Island called Hestmona, on the Arctic Circle is the petrified horse.

## **Manitou and the Mine**

Here is further evidence that the Curse of the Manitou Islands is very much alive and active. As I previously said, a mine once existed on one of the islands in the Manitou group but could not survive.

The mine was on "Newman Island" and opened in the mid 1950s when it was purchased by the Mining Company, from Mr. Jack Kennedy and J.L. Shaw. It operated only until the mid 1960s. The mine was to extract "Columbium" and a shaft of approximately 500 feet was sunk, as well as about 2,000 feet of lateral tunneling.

Everything went well, until during the winter months trucks were lost through the ice, during transportation of loads back and forth from the mainland to the islands.

Also once during the summer months, the workmen (and at times there were as many as forty employees) witnessed a strange phenomenon. During thunder storms in which there was much lightning, and on the island directly to the east of the mine island, great ball shaped lightning formations were jumping all over the island, creating a frightening, if not terrifying effect.

The mine continued to produce regardless of these warnings. Soon the columbium, which was the ore the mine was searching



for, became too difficult to separate from the other types of ores found with it. Coupled with the fact that another mine was going into operation in Quebec, the mine island simply could not compete and eventually closed its operation.

It seems obvious that after the first two warnings were ignored, the Great Spirit put the finishing touches on the curse and made the ore itself too difficult to work with, and as far as the Mining Company is concerned, unprofitable. As we know, business does not run at a loss, or at least not for long. Also, wouldn't one find it quite mysterious that the word Columbium is so very close to the word Columbarium, whose dictionary meaning is, "An ancient sepulchre with recesses for urns containing the ashes of the Dead", and Sepulchre means—grave mound. And that is "Mound" not "Island", but still very close wouldn't you say? I'm sure the Ghosts on the mound known as "Devil's Island" would agree.

### 13

#### **The Legend of Gull Rock** **Gull Lake, Minden, Ontario**

At Deep Bay in Gull Lake, just south of Minden in Haliburton County, once lived a beautiful, twenty-two year old girl, who, one fateful day while bringing the cows to be milked, got caught out in a terrible storm. Apparently the cows made it home alone, but the girl was missing for three days following. After extensive searching, she was found floating and drowned amongst the driftwood and foam near Gull Rock. It is believed that she fell off a high cliff into Gull Lake, but it is also said that those caught out in a storm, late at night in the area, can still hear her calling to the cows, just as she must have been doing when she met her death. Do you believe in the legend of Gull Rock? Only the seagulls who rest on Gull Rock know for sure.

### 14

#### **White Island, New Zealand**

White Island of New Zealand is a volcano in a state of solfataric activity. In Maori Legend, it was a place where the demons bringing fire to New Zealand's volcanic area surfaced to look for land.

## "The Lost Island"

### A Short Story

As recorded by E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), told by her friend, Chief Joe Capilano of Vancouver, who was of the Chinook.

"Yes," said my old Tillicum, "We Indians have lost many things; we have lost our lands, our forests, our game, our fish; we have lost our ancient religion, our ancient dress; some of the younger people have even lost their father's language and the legends and traditions of their ancestors. We cannot call those old things back to us; they will never come again. We may travel many days up the mountain trails and look in the silent places for them. They are not there. We may paddle many moons on the sea, but our canoes will never enter the channel that leads to the yesterdays of the Indian people. These things are lost, 'just like the island of the north arm'. They may be somewhere near by, but no one can ever find them."

"But there are many islands up the north arm," I asserted. "Not the island we Indian people have sought for many tens of summers," he replied sorrowfully.

"Was it ever there?" I questioned.

"Yes, it was there," he said. "My grandsires and my great grandsires saw it; but that was long ago. My father never saw it, though he spent many days in many years searching, always searching for it. I am an old man myself, and I have never seen it, though from my youth, I, too, have searched. Sometimes in the stillness of the nights I have paddled up in my canoe". Then lowering his voice: "Twice I have seen its shadow—high rocky shores, reaching as high as the treetops on the mainland, the tall pines and firs on its summit like a king's crown. As I paddled up the arm one summer night, long ago, the shadow of these rocks and firs fell across my canoe, across my face and across the waters beyond. I turned rapidly to look. There was no island there—nothing but a wide stretch of waters on both sides of me and the moon almost directly overhead. Don't say it was the shore that shadowed me," he hastened to say, catching my thought. "The moon was above me; my canoe made scarcely a shadow on the still waters. No, it was not the shore."

"Why do you search for it?" I lamented, thinking of the old dreams in my own life whose realization I have never attained.

"There is something on that island that I want. I shall look for it until I die, for it is there," he affirmed.

"There was a long silence between us after that. I had learned to love silences when with my old Tillicum, for they always led to a legend. After time he began voluntarily: "It was more than one hundred years ago. This great city of Vancouver was but a dream of the Sagalie Tyee (God) at the time. The dream had not yet come to the white man; only one great Indian medicine man knew that someday a great camp of palefaces would lie between False Creek and the inlet. This dream haunted him; it came to him night and day—when he was amid his people laughing and feasting or when he was alone in the forest chanting his strange songs, beating his hollow drum, or shaking his wooden rattle to gain more power to cure the sick or the dying of his tribe. For years and years, this dream followed him. He grew to be an old, old man, yet always he could hear voices, strong and loud, as when they first spoke to him in his youth, and they would say: "Between the two narrow strips of salt water the white men will camp, many hundreds of them, many thousands of them. The Indians will learn their ways, will live as they do, will become as they are. There will be no more great war dances, no more fights with other powerful tribes; it will be as if the Indian had lost all bravery, all courage, all confidence." He hated the voices, he hated the dream; but all his power, all his big medicine could not drive them away. He was the strongest man on all the North Pacific coast. He was mighty and very tall, and his muscles were as those of Leloo, the timberwolf, when he is strongest to kill his prey. He could go for many days without food; he could fight the largest mountain lion; he could overthrow the fiercest grizzly bear; he could paddle against the wildest winds and ride the highest waves. He could meet his enemies and kill whole tribes single-handed. His strength, his courage, his power, his bravery were those of a giant. He knew no fear; nothing in the sea or in the forest, nothing in the earth or sky, could conquer him. He was fearless, fearless. Only this haunting dream of the coming white man's camp he could not drive away; it was the only thing in life he had tried to kill and failed. It drove him from feasting, drove him from the pleasant lodges, the fires, the dancing, the story telling of his people in their camp by the water's edge, where the salmon thronged and the deer came down to drink off the mountain streams. He left the village, chanting his wild songs as he went. Up through the mighty forests he climbed, through the trail-less deep mosses and matted vines, up to the summit of what the white men call grouse mountain. For many days he camped there. He ate no food, he drank no water, but he sat and sang his medicine-songs through the dark hours and through the day. Before him, far beneath his feet, lay the narrow strip of land between the two salt waters. Then the Sagalie Tyee gave him the

power to see far into the future. He looked across a hundred years, just as he looked across what you call the inlet, and he saw mighty lodges of stone and wood built close together, hundreds and thousands of them with long straight trails to divide them. He saw these trails thronging with palefaces; he heard the sound of the white man's paddle dip on the waters, for it is not silent like the Indian's. He saw the white man's trading post, saw the fishing nets, heard his speech. Then the vision faded as gradually as it came. The narrow strip of land was his own forest once again.

"I am old" he called in his sorrow and his trouble for his people. "I am old, oh Sagalie Tyee! Soon I shall die and go to the happy hunting grounds of my fathers. Let not my strength die with me. Keep living for all time my courage, my bravery, my fearlessness. Keep them for my people that they may be strong enough to endure the white man's rule. Keep my strength living for them; hide it so the palefaces may never see it."

Then he came down from the summit of Grouse Mountain. Still chanting his medicine-songs, he entered his canoe and paddled through the colours of the setting sun far up the north arm. When night fell, he came to an island with misty shores of Great Grey Rock; on it's summit tall pines and firs encircled like a king's crown. As he neared it he felt all his strength, his courage, his fearlessness leaving him; he could see these things drift from him on to the island. They were as clouds that rest on the mountains, grey white and half transparent. Weak as a woman, he paddled back to the Indian village; he told them to go and search for "The Island" where they would find all his courage, his fearlessness and his strength, living, living forever. He slept then, but in the morning he did not awake. Since then, all our youth and our old have searched for "The Island". It is there somewhere, up some lost channel, but we cannot find it. When we do, we will get back all the courage and bravery we had before the white man came, for the great medicine-man said these things never die—they live for one's children and grandchildren."

His voice ceased. My whole heart went out to him in his longing for the lost island. I thought of all the splendid courage I knew him to possess, so made answer: "But you say that the shadow of this island has fallen upon you; is it not so, Tillicum?"

"Yes" he said mournfully. "But only the shadow."



## Legend of Cross Point Island

Getting back to Lake Nipissing, this tale was told to me by John Fisher of the Ojibway tribe at Garden Village Reservation near Sturgeon Falls, Ontario.

Near what the Indians call Cross Point, which is the East point of the mouth of the French River, is an island on which a group of Americans once commissioned an Indian man to build a log cabin. After much labour and peeling of logs, the task was finished. The Americans then came up to stay in their new building.

Late in the evening when it was time to go to bed and everyone was settled down, the lights were turned out and eyes were closed. Soon there was an awfully loud commotion. There was a series of noises of pots and pans being rattled and banged. The lights were promptly turned on and the noise ceased. As soon as the lights were off again the noise resumed. With the lights on once again the noise stopped. This continued all along. Lights out, noises, lights on, no noise.

The final outcome of this nerve wracking terror was that the Americans, after spending considerable amounts of money and time on the construction of the log cabin, turned to the builder and told him that he could keep the log cabin, as they must have believed there was something evil or strangely mysterious about the place.

The native gentleman dismantled the structure and moved it to Frank's Bay where it still stands today. Mr. John Fisher, the man who told me this strange tale seemed to be under the impression that there were old Indian graves on that island.

Could it be that the spirits of the long gone Indians simply wanted to rest there in peace? So goes the legend of the Cross Point Island.

## Deadman's Island

### A Short Story

Another, told to E. Pauline Johnson by Chief Joe Capilano of the Chinook.

For many minutes we stood silently, leaning on the western rail of the bridge as we watched the sunset across the beautiful little basin of water known as Coal Harbour. I have always resented that jarring, unattractive name, for years ago, when I first plied paddle

across the gunwale of a light little canoe, and idled about its margin, I named the sheltered little cove the Lost Lagoon. This was just to please my own fancy, for, as that perfect summer month drifted on, the ever-restless tides left the harbour devoid of water at my favourite canoeing hour, and my pet idling-place was lost for many days—hence my fancy to call it the Lost Lagoon. But the chief, Indian-like, immediately adopted the name, at least when he spoke of the place to me, and, as we watched the sun slip behind the rim of firs, he expressed the wish that his dug-out was here instead of lying beached at the far side of the park.

"If canoe was here, you and I we paddle close to shore all around tour Lost Lagoon. We make track just like half moon. Then we paddle under this bridge, and go channel between Deadman's Island and park. Then 'round where cannon speak time at nine o'clock. Then cross inlet to Indian side of narrows."

I turned to look eastward, following in fancy the course he had sketched. The waters were still as the footsteps of the on-coming twilight, and, floating in a pool of soft purple, Deadman's Island rested like a large circle of candle-moss.

"Have you ever been on it?" He asked as he caught my gaze centering on the irregular outline of the island pines.

"I have prowled the length and depth of it" I told him, "climbed over every rock on its shores, crept under every tangled growth of it's interior, explored it's overgrown trails, and more than once nearly got lost in it's very heart."

"Yes" he half laughed, "it pretty wild; not much good for anything."

"People seem to think it valuable," I said. "There is a lot of litigation, of fighting, going on now about it."

"Oh! That the way always," he said, as though speaking of a long accepted fact. "Always fight over that place. Hundreds of years ago they fight about it; Indian people; they say hundreds of years to come everybody will still fight—never be settled what that place is, who it belong to, who has right to it. No, never settle. Deadman's Island always mean fight for someone."

"So Indians fought amongst themselves about it?" I remarked, seemingly without guile, although my ears tingled for the legend I knew was coming.

"Fought like lynx at close quarters," he answered. "Fought, killed each other, until the island ran with blood redder than that sunset, and the sea-water about it was stained flame colour. It was then, my people say, that the scarlet fire-flower was seen growing along this coast."

"It is a beautiful colour—the fire flower," I said.

"It should be fine colour, for it was born and grew from the hearts of fine tribes-people" he emphasized.

We crossed to the eastern rail of the bridge, and stood watching the deep shadows that gathered slowly and silently about the island; I have seldom looked upon anything so peaceful.

The chief sighed. "We have no such men now, no fighters like those men, no hearts or courage like theirs. But I tell you the story; you understand it then. Now all peace; to-night all good Tillicums; even Deadman's spirit does not fight now; but long time after it happened those spirits fought."

"And the legend?" I ventured.

"Oh! Yes," he replied, as if suddenly returning to the present from out a far country in the realm of time. "Indian people, they call it the 'Legend of the Deadmen.'"

"There was war everywhere. Fierce tribes from the northern coast, Savage tribes from the south, all met here and battled and raided, burned and captured, tortured and killed their enemies. The forest smoked with campfires, the narrows were choked with was canoes, and the Sagalie Tyee—he who is a man of peace—turned his face away from his Indian children.

"About this island there was dispute and contention. The medicine-men from the south laid equal claim to it. Each wanted it as the stronghold of their witchcraft, their magic. Great bands of these medicine-men met on the small space, using every sorcery in their power to drive their opponents away. The witch doctors of the north made their camp on the northern rim of the island; those from the south settled along the southern edge, looking towards what is now the great city of Vancouver. Both factions danced, chanted, burned their magic powders, built their magic fires, beat their magic rattles, but neither would give way, yet neither conquered. About them on the waters, on the mainlands raged the warfare of their respective tribes—the Sagalie Tyee had forgotten his Indian children. After many months the warriors on both sides weakened. They said the incantations of the rival medicine-men were bewitching them, were making their hearts like children's, and their arms nerveless as woman's. So friend and foe arose as one man and drove the medicine-men from the island, hounded them down the inlet, herded them through the narrows, and banished them out to sea, where they took refuge on one of the outer islands on the gulf. Then the tribes once more fell upon each other in battle.

"The warrior blood of the north will always conquer. They are the stronger, bolder, more alert, more keen. The snows and the ice of their country make swifter pulse than the sleepy suns of the south



can awake in a man; their muscles are of sterner stuff, their endurance greater. Yes, the northern tribes will always be victors. But the craft and the strategy of the southern tribes are hard things to battle against. While those of the north followed the medicine-men farther out to sea to make sure of their banishment, those from the south returned under cover of night and seized the women and children and the old enfeebled men in their enemy's camp, transported them all to the Island of Dead Men, and there they held them as captives. Their war-canoes circled the island like a fortification, through which drifted the sobs of imprisoned women, the mutterings of the aged men, the wail of little children.

"Again and again the men of the north assailed that circle of canoes, and again and again they were repulsed. The air was thick with poisoned arrows, the water stained with blood. But day by day the circle of southern canoes grew thinner and thinner; the northern arrows were telling and truer of aim. Canoes drifted everywhere, empty, or, worse still, manned only by dead men. The pick of the southern warriors had already fallen, when their greatest Tyee mounted a large rock on the eastern shore. Brave and unmindful of a thousand weapons aimed at his heart, he uplifted his hand, palm outward—the signal for conference. Instantly every northern arrow was lowered, and every northern ear listened for his words.

"Oh! Men of the upper coast," he said, "you are more numerous than we are; your tribe is larger, your endurance greater. We are growing hungry, we are growing less in numbers. Our captives—your women and children and old men—have lessened, too, our stores of food. If you refuse our terms we will yet fight to the finish. Tomorrow we will kill all our captives before your eyes, for we can feed them no longer, or you can have your wives, your mothers, your fathers, your children, by giving us for each and every one of them one of your best and bravest young warriors, who will consent to suffer death in their stead. Speak! You have your choice."

"In the northern canoes scores and scores of young warriors leapt to their feet. The air was filled with glad cries, with exultant shouts. The whole world seemed to ring with the voices of those young men who called loudly, with glorious courage:

"Take me, but give me back my old friend."

"Take me, but spare to my tribe my little sister."

"Take me, but release my wife and boy-baby."

So the compact was made. Two hundred heroic young men paddled up to the island, broke through the fortifying circle of canoes, and stepped ashore. They flaunted their eagle plumes with

the spirit and boldness of young Gods. Their shoulders were erect, their step was firm, their hearts strong. Into their canoes they crowded the two hundred captives.

"Once more their women sobbed, their old men muttered, their children wailed, but those young copper-coloured Gods never flinched and never faltered. What mattered to them such a little thing as death?

The released captives were quickly surrounded by their own people, but the flower of their splendid nation was in the hands of their enemies, those vicarious young men who thought so little of life that they willingly, gladly laid it down to serve and to save those they loved and cared for. Amongst them were war-tried warriors who had fought fifty battles, and boys not yet full grown, who were drawing a bow string for the first time; but their hearts, their courage, their self-sacrifice were as one.

"Out before a long file of southern warriors they stood. Their chins uplifted, their eyes defiant, their breasts bared. Each leaned forward and laid his weapon at his feet, then stood erect, with empty hands, and laughed forth his challenge to death. A thousand arrows ripped the air, two hundred gallant northern throats flung forth a death-cry exultant, triumphant as conquering kings; then two hundred fearless northern hearts ceased to beat.

"But in the morning the southern tribes found the spot where they fell peopled with flaming fire-flowers. Dread and terror seized upon them. They abandoned the island and when night shrouded them they manned their canoes and noiselessly slipped through the narrows, turned their bows southward and this coastline knew them no more."

"What glorious men!" I half whispered as the chief concluded the strange legend.

"Yes, men" he echoed. "The white people call it Deadman's Island. That is their way; but we of the Squamish call it the Island of Dead Men."

## 18

### Society Islands

In the Society Islands there is a legend associated with the island of Raiatea. One day a fisherman, through either ignorance or just plain disobedience, violated a taboo by fishing in waters sacred to the sea God Ruahatu. His hook caught the sleeping God by the hair, and after a long hard struggle he hauled up a very furious diety. Berating the fisherman, Ruahatu decreed that the land was now defiled and must be destroyed. The fisherman threw himself

down and begged for mercy, imploring the God at least to let him escape. Ruahatu relented and ordered the fisherman to betake himself with his family to the islet of Taomorama, inside the reefs on the east side of Raiatea. Next morning the waters of the ocean began to rise and all the people on Raiatea took to the hills. Finally even the tops of the peaks were swamped and everyone was drowned. When the waters receded, the fisherman and his family returned to the main island and became the progenitors of the present inhabitants.

The legend is considered to be an attempt to account for fossil corals and shells found above sea level. The Raiateans do not seem to be troubled by one very glaring problem in the tale: The highest point on Raiatea is 3,388 feet above sea level, while Taomorama, the place of refuge, is a tiny coral islet only a couple of feet above high tide level at its highest point!

## 19

### **Mangaia Island, one of the Cook Islands**

The decidedly unusual topography of Mangaia, one of the Cook Islands, is clearly reflected in local flood tradition. A flat-topped central core of eroded rock, 554 feet above sea level at its highest point, is surrounded by a sort of moat only 20 to 40 feet above sea level, in which taro is cultivated. This in turn is ringed by a raised platform of eroded coral rock called the Makatea, 110 to 210 feet above the sea. From the base of the Makatea at an elevation of about 45 feet, a 100-foot-wide terrace slopes gently toward the sea, ending in a cliff 15 to 35 feet high. At sea level, living coral forms a fringing reef 300 feet wide. Mangaia's shape is unique.

The local legend relates that the shape of the island was once smooth and regular, with gentle slopes. One day the Gods of the sea and of the rain decided to engage in a contest to see which was the more powerful. With the help of the Wind God, the Sea God attacked the island and succeeded in inundating the coast to the height of the Makatea.

The Rain God caused it to rain for five days and nights, washing down the slopes and carving the deep valleys in the slopes, until only the flat top of the central peak remained of the original surface. Having been warned of the impending struggle, the first chief, Rangi by name, had led his people to this central peak—"The Crown of Mangaia." As their situation got worse, Rangi appealed to the Supreme God, who ordered the others to call off their contest.

## **A Legend of the West Arm of Lake Nipissing**

In my research I came across many strange tales, some believable and some quite the opposite. However, this is one of those that we will leave up to the imagination of the reader to determine.

This particular story was told to Mr. John Fisher by his father, John, Sr. A certain lodge was built by a man named Charley Britain who imported several Micmac Indians from down east to do the manual labour. The lodge was on the mainland and not an island, which is the core of this complication. However, the story is so strange I decided to enter it.

Mr. John Fisher, Sr. worked at the lodge as a guide and later related the story to John, Jr., who told it to me.

As it was, on the path that led from the main lodge to the guides' quarters there was an old Indian grave marked with stones. Charley felt that it was just too much in the way and asked several of the Indian helpers if they would move it. Naturally, they were unanimous in their refusal, having great respect for the dead and quite a fear of the spirits of the unknown. Charley was quite determined to have it moved and approached John Fisher, Sr., one of the guides, who was quite appalled at the thought of moving or in any way disturbing those whose spirits were treading on the happy hunting grounds.

He told his employer flatly that he would not, and the highly determined employer decided that he would do it himself, thinking the Indians rather ridiculous in their beliefs.

At about sundown, old Charley was still struggling with the heavy rocks that had been placed on top of the grave by obviously strong and yet unknown hands. With the job about half done, and as it was getting too dark to work, he decided to turn in for the night.

After climbing into bed and trying to get to sleep, he started to feel quite ill and uncomfortable. He drifted in and out of sleep for hours until in the middle of the night he awoke in a terrible cold sweat, trembling and shaking. After awhile, Charley still being unable to determine the cause of this strange illness, John Fisher, the guide who had refused his employer's request to move the grave, stepped forward and stated boldly, "I warned you about moving that grave, Charley, and now you must suffer the consequences." Charley asked how he could rectify what he had done and was told by the others to simply put back the grave as it was and leave it alone.

人々を驚かす幻術



In the dark and late that night he did just that, went back to bed and fell into a deep, soothing, satisfying sleep. Was it coincidence, or did the spirits reach out from the grave to show their disgust with the act that was about to befall one of the hunters who tread the happy hunting grounds?

## 21

### **The Continent of Atlantis**

We surely cannot forget one of the greatest legends of all time, and that of course is the legend of Atlantis.

The general concept of Atlantis is that of a continent in the Atlantic Ocean, inhabited by a superior race, which existed until about 11,500 years ago and was destroyed by a natural catastrophe. The survivors made their way to other lands and took their superior culture with them. This is basically the total concept of "The Legend of Atlantis", and to this day it remains a great mystery.

## 22

### **Danish Island of Sjaelland**

The amazing resemblance in size and shape between the Danish Island of Sjaelland and Lake Vanern in Sweden is supposed to have inspired the legend that the goddess Gefion plowed Sjaelland out of Swedish soil, leaving the lake depression.

## 23

### **Sugar Loaf Rock, Mackinac Island**

As well as islands having very interesting legends, we must not forget that some of these islands also have strange landforms on them—landforms whose origins are deeply rooted in mythology and whose mere existence is shrouded in mystery and legend. The following are two such landforms and their associated legends as found on Mackinac Island.

Manibozho, a hero of ancient Indian myth, had lived for many winters. He had reached old age and found it pleasant to just sit by the fire or to be in the stillness of the forest, which was always soothing to the spirit. Far away from the haunts of man, he had built his lodge that he might be alone and untroubled.

There were ten men who had grown to manhood, each with some deep desire. As children they had heard of the great deeds of Manibozho. They knew he was a magical being, and that if they could find him he would be sure to grant them their wishes.

They joined together in their search and for four weary moons they travelled, always searching for the elusive Manibozho, in all the silent places, some of which they themselves had never seen, and across lakes unknown to them. Finally they came to a lonely lodge where an old man sat.

Upon finding out that he was the mysterious Manibozho, they begged him for the gifts that they had travelled so hard to receive. Manibozho agreed.

The first young man asked that he might become the greatest of all war chiefs and Manibozho said to him:

"Go home! Your wish shall be granted. Your name will be one to spread fear into the hearts of others. Your war club shall speak loudly, your belt shall be hung with trophies and your hair with eagle feathers. All men shall honour you."

The second brave asked that he might be the greatest of prophets and Manibozho said to him, "Go home! Your wish shall be granted. You shall read the dreams with truth. Through your dreams shall the great spirit talk to you, and all men shall listen to your words, for they shall be words of wisdom."

The third wished to become the best hunter; the fourth the most graceful dancer; the fifth the most skillful arrow maker; the sixth the keenest of scouts; the seventh the strongest man; the eighth the fastest runner; the ninth the handsomest of men and Manibozho spoke, "Go home and your wish shall be granted."

The tenth young man, Manibozho changed into a rock, to lie for years upon years, impassive, unmoving, unafraid—defying the fury of the giant thunderbird and the frozen breath of Wiskino. Though life for him was eternal, yet he was without life—for eternity.

## 24

### Arch Rock, Mackinac Island

The bark lodges of an Ojibway village were once built along the north shore of Lake Huron. Here the tribal chief and his lovely daughter, Red Wing, lived.

She was one of the loveliest of the Ojibway maidens, and as pure of heart as she was beautiful. Her fingers were skillful at the tanning of skins until they were velvety soft. The quills of the porcupine she could weave into colourful designs. Baskets, too, she made, and she brought the rush leaves from the lake and wove them into mats. She gathered and dried the Indian corn and



cooked it into delicious meals. The roots and seeds of the water lily she prepared for eating. She had great knowledge of what plants were good for food and for medicine.

The young men of her tribe were all infatuated by her and brought gifts to the door of her father's lodge. Her father saw many good men, but Red Wing, unknown to her father was already betrothed!

One day about dusk, as she guided her canoe homeward from wild rice picking, a handsome brave appeared before her. His voice was very soft as he said:

"My love, have no fear of me though I come from another world. In my world I am the son of a chief—Evening Star. I have observed you for a long time now and admire you from afar. But this should not be, for I am a sky dweller while you are from the earth. I saw the other young men courting you and my heart sank. I lay in my lodge very brokenhearted until my father saw what was happening to me and understood. He said I should tell you of my desire for you. "Red Wing, do not marry any of the young men of your village until you can join me in my sky home! I will marry none but you."

"I will marry none but you" she promised, "for I have noticed myself even apart from the others. Now I know that I am in love with you also."

At last the father of Red Wing grew impatient that his daughter had no husband. "Red Wing, my child," he said, "Many fine young men have come to the door of my lodge. They do not come to see me but to ask for you and you do not notice them. You sit silently and say nothing. You smile at them and are a good hostess, but a daughter cannot dwell forever in her father's lodge. Can you not choose one of these fine young men?"

"No," she answered "for I love a man not of this earth. He is a sky dweller and the son of Evening Star. I have met him in the woods at night and when I paddle alone upon the lake we have told each other of our love. I cannot marry any of the men of our tribe for my heart is with him."

Her father became very angry; he ordered her to forget the son of Evening Star for there could never be a marriage between one of the spirit world and one of the earth. Red Wing told her father that she would not marry until she too became part of the spirit world.

Her father asked her to follow him as he paddled his canoe across the lake, until they reached an island where a great rock stood. He carried her to the top of the stone and there tied her with ropes of rawhide, so that she could not see the star where her lover dwelt. He told her, "Here you will stay until you forget him."

Red Wing did not answer him, and as she lay upon the rock she longed for her star brave and cried because she could not see the

light from his home. Four days she lay upon the rock and cried and her tears little by little wore the rock away until an arch was carved. Through the arch shone the Evening Star at last, and down its rays came the handsome star youth. He gathered Red Wing in his arms and took her away to dwell in peace with him in the heavens.

## 25

### **Wizard Island and the Thousand Islands**

In addition to various authentic Indian myths and legends associated with islands, we also have a modern brand of folklore in the tales concerning the giant woodsman Paul Bunyan, hero of the logging camps, and his companion, Babe, the blue ox. Numbered among the many exploits of this team, is the digging of the St. Lawrence River, because without a boundary, people couldn't be sure whether they were in the United States or Canada. Paul and Babe accomplished the mighty task in just three weeks, using a scoop shovel as big as a house. The dirt they excavated was dumped on Vermont where it formed the Green Mountains. When the million dollars he was promised for the job was not forthcoming, Paul threatened to fill in the new ditch again, and threw a few shovelfuls of dirt just to prove he meant it. The money was promptly paid, but those few shovelfuls remain as the Thousand Islands.

Once when Paul and Babe were in the northwest, Babe was frightened by the roar of Spokane Falls and ran away with the provision sled, dragging the swamp hook. The hook gouged out the Columbia River Gorge and finally caught fast in the Cascade Mountains. Paul started to throw in some rocks to stop the leak, but had to stop because the blue ox was getting too nervous. The hole filled up, forming Crater Lake. One of the rocks dropped by Paul is Wizard Island in that lake.

## 26

### **Talking Shores**

#### **From the Ojibway of Lake Nipissing**

I have included several island legends from places all over the globe, but none are as numerous about one single group of islands as those of the cursed Manitou Islands of Lake Nipissing.

Here is yet another amazing legend related directly to me by one of the descendants of those who created it so long, long ago.

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This story was told to me by one of the Lake Nipissing Ojibway—a man named George Couchie, who was sixty years old at the time and still living on the land of his ancestors, on the north shore of Lake Nipissing.

He told me that if you paddled a canoe along the shores of Devil's Island (the largest in the Manitou group), and only if you listened carefully, you could hear voices talking from the shoreline, voices that warned not to tread on Devil's Island, voices which some thought were of the ghosts who dwell on its rocky surface.

The story teller himself had heard them many times but reasoned that the soft rock amongst the harder granite had been worn into tunnels entering into the sides of the island.

He went on to say, that probably what was happening was that the wave motion from the lake was running up into these tunnels, and upon receding was then probably causing a groaning, voice-like sound. The old Ojibway who sat across from me finally assumed that, "These type of stories were created as babysitters." When I asked, "What exactly do you mean?" he went on to say that the young children of the tribe were always playing along the beaches, and of course there were numerous canoes about, and that some stories like this were told to the youngsters to try to discourage them from taking a canoe out there. Lake Nipissing can get very rough in a short time. He said, also, that sometimes when the tribes travelled they might leave all the children in a clearing and go hunting elsewhere, knowing that the young would not dare wander into the bush for fear of the dreaded Wendigoes who lived in there. Similar tales, I suppose, are told among white people, such as your father saying to you, "Don't go up in the attic or down in the basement alone or the boogieman might get you." About all we can do at this point is leave it up to each individual's imagination. Were the voices created as babysitters or do the ghosts on Devil's Island know the truth?

## 27

### **Bear Island, Lake Temagami**

This amusing story was told to me by John Restoule in Sturgeon Falls and although it is not a legend, I thought I would enter it as it is about an island.

John Restoule, known among his people, the Ojibway, as "Nana Bush" chuckled to himself as he related the story of a woman who came north to see the famous Indian People of Bear Island. John, having met her on her way north was very impressed with her enthusiasm in meeting some real live Indians. He thought to

himself, "This is probably the first time she has been out of the big city."

Approximately one year later, John, our story teller, happened to meet again with the city lady on her way south from Bear Island. He asked her how she had enjoyed her stay there and how she found the Ojibway people of Bear Island.

She replied, "The stay was fine, the country there magnificent and the people quite compatible." She went on to say, "Do you know there are people there who can't speak a word of English? Imagine that!" "They seem to communicate with a flow of mutters and grunts."

John, knowing full well they were speaking in Ojibway, said, "And what type of language do you suppose that was?" "I really don't know," she answered. Possibly with the name of the island in the back of her mind, she finally said, "Do you know, I suppose that they were speaking most likely in . . . Bear."

## 28

### **Belle Isle, Detroit Michigan**

Black Bird, the Great Warrior, feared for his daughter. She was very beautiful—so beautiful that all the tribes spoke of her in wonder. The Ottawas and Ojibwa came from the far north that they might catch a glimpse of her. From the east came the Hurons, hoping to seize her and carry her away.

Black Bird was very proud of this lovely creature who was his. He was jealous, too, and feared that some day a brave would come who would capture her heart, and she would be lost to him. Therefore, he kept her carefully hidden from the eyes of the world. But the legend of her beauty he kept ever alive, so that her glory would reflect upon him.

Though Black Bird thought her well concealed, there were some who found her place of seclusion. The Four Winds gazed upon the lovely maiden, and each fell deeply in love with her. Each was determined to have her for his own, and bitterly they fought over her. There were constant storms, torrential rains and hurricanes. The earth was in such a state of upheaval that Black Bird was compelled to take his daughter elsewhere.

Far down the river Black Bird led the maiden, to a spot seldom visited by man. Even the winds did not pass that way. Here he made for her an island.

He built for her a bark lodge, under the branches of thickly growing trees. Around the edge of the island he placed a ring of

## Canoe Channel Island Legend

### Lake Nipissing Ojibway

Here is yet another strange story about an island that is located on what the Ojibways of the Nipissing area call "Masinabikinging" which, translated, means the markings for the canoe channel.

On the south side of this rocky island is a flat rock that rises up out of the water to a height of approximately 20 feet. About 4 feet above the water's surface are two now faded paint markings. See next page to examine how they appear.

They are obviously depicting two canoes. The first is manned by three men and the second by four. They are, strangely enough, of unknown origin. Mr. Fisher, who at one time worked as an administrator for Indian Affairs and lived in the area all his life, could not identify their origin. Could they have been done by a man standing along side the face of the rock in a canoe? Or could the great spirit himself have inscribed them to guide his Indian children safely on this ageless, ancient, Indian canoe route travelled by them for countless generations?

## The Island in Crater Lake, Oregon

Although modern folklore has the origin of this island deeply imbedded in the tales of Paul Bunyan and his blue ox, Babe, as we have already read in this compilation, the Indians of Oregon seem to disagree and have this strange tale about it.

Evil One and Good One dwelt in the world in the beginning. They were always at war with one another. In the blue waters of a northern lake, Evil One had placed a crawfish to guard the lake and to be his servant. Good One travelled with the eagles as his aides. Evil One and Good One met near the lake of the crawfish and a great battle raged. So fierce was the conflict that the sound of the fighting could be heard throughout the world.

Evil One triumphed and Good One was slain and his heart was thrown into the lake. Crawfish caught it and tossed it up into the air so that all might see it fall into his mouth and be devoured.

One of Good One's eagles swooped down and caught it in the air and threw it to an antelope who was standing on the shore. The antelope ran swiftly, carrying Good One's Heart to silent places in the forest where Evil One could not find it.

poisonous serpents—hissing monsters that would protect the island from invasion. Though the winds gave up their quarrelling and sought her over the country, they sought her in vain. The daughter of black Bird passed her days alone.

Black Bird lives no more. His daughter, too, now treads the happy hunting grounds. The serpents are gone, though the island home remains. But throughout the world the winds still search for Black Bird's daughter, for the remembrance of her beauty is always in their eyes.

## 29

### **Legend of the Apostle Islands of Wisconsin**

This is yet another tale that is centered around the legendary Indian magic man of myth known as Manibozho.

He once built an immense dam in the Pauwating (St. Mary's River). Afterwards he rested and admired his own craftsmanship, for this was something he had never done before. So pleased he was that he thought he would go all over the country building dams in every river. He had learned to do this by watching the beavers as they worked.

The chief of the beavers did not like this at all, for dam building was beavers' work, and their work alone. He instructed all the beavers to break the dam and when they did so, the water rushed into a swirling rapids. Now the beavers had to run away, for Manibozho was furious and hunted them up and down the river bank.

For many moons he searched and finally the beavers had to go north and build a new home far out in Chequamegon Bay. There Manibozho could not follow them.

Manibozho was shrewd and built another dam across the bay. He intended to trap them so they could not escape.

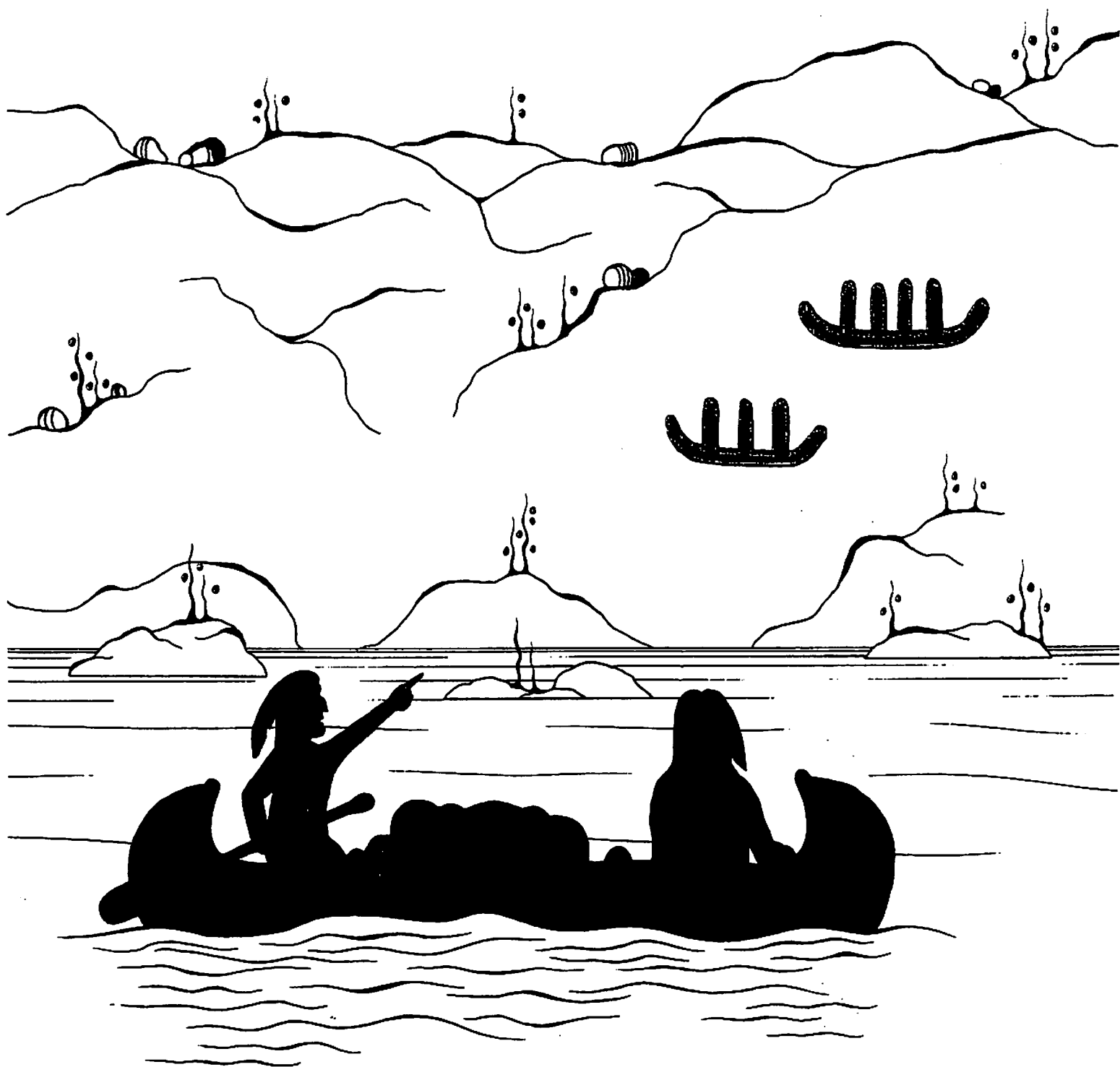
From the south end to the north he built his second dam, leaving an opening at the north end so that he could enter the bay. As he worked, he scooped up handfuls of earth and threw them over his shoulder, and when they struck the water, they turned into islands.

Though he considered himself clever, the beavers were even more so and as he moved northward, the beavers gnawed through the southern end and escaped.

Manibozho did not build any more dams after that. He recognized that the beavers were much more skilled at this than anyone else. But he left the "Apostle Islands" so that all would know into the future that Manibozho, the magical, great, legendary hero was not too proud to admit he had made a mistake.



لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ



He travelled again to the land of Evil One and waged war upon him. This time the battle was worse than before and the mountains even rocked and trembled. Good One's strength had been restored and this time, he was victorious. He carried the body of Evil One to the peak of the highest mountain, cut it into bits and threw the pieces into the lake. Crawfish still lay there waiting and did not know that Evil One had been killed, and unknowingly ate the miserable pieces one by one. Not until the head of Evil One came falling down did he realize what he had done. He fled, leaving the head floating on the surface of the lake.

Good One changed the head into an island. He wished to remind the people who would look upon it in the future that good will always be stronger than evil.

## 32

### **The Origin of Nunivak Island**

#### **A Tale from the Igloo: Nunivak Eskimo**

We must not leave out the Eskimo people while dealing with ancient myths, for those people who choose to live on the top of the world are of a very unique culture. Here is one of their legends, probably told thousands of times while huddling in an igloo during a fierce winter storm.

Two brothers lived in a far land. One was still very young and weak, so that when the elder went on hunting trips he packed the younger on his back. One spring, when the younger was quite grown up, they made a kayak and went hunting, but though they went far, they saw no game. At last, almost exhausted, they stopped by some anchor ice, intending to go home the following day. That night, a great storm came up. "Let us go home!" cried the younger. "No, we shall set out for home tomorrow," answered the elder. The frightened younger brother cried so loudly that the elder threatened, "You'd better stop crying. If you do not, a spirit will hear you!"

But the crying continued. When the moon broke through the clouds for a brief moment, the elder saw, on looking up, something coming to the water. Frightened, he exclaimed, "I told you not to cry! I told you that a spirit would hear you! Now look and see what is coming down to us!"

The younger stopped wailing, and they watched. The spirit came closer, singing as it approached. "I hear people preparing for the night. I want them for my own. I shall have them for my own."

The spirit woman, with fancy trimming on her parka and holding something inside it, stepped on their kayak. She said, "I heard you

are in trouble. I have come to help you." "I told my brother over and over that I would take him home tomorrow, but he wants to go now."

The spirit woman took something from her parka and threw it on both sides of the kayak, and land appeared. The younger brother turned into a woman, whom the elder married. Then all animals, both of the land and sea, became so numerous that the man, who was a great hunter, was able to provide everything in great plenty.

Once, while hunting, his bowstring broke, so he returned home to have his wife make him a new one. As she was shredding sinew, he lay beside her, watching, and began to tease her. As she edged away, he moved toward her, continually teasing, until at last she thrust her sinew threader at him. This she did many times, whenever he moved closer. Finally he became very still. Frightened by his quietness, she looked at him very carefully and saw that his body was full of tiny holes. Then she carried the corpse outside and buried it.

That night, the spirit woman entered and inquired for the man. "My husband broke a bowstring and came home for a new one. He went out again and has not returned since," the wife lied.

The spirit, not quite satisfied with the answer, searched the house, finally asking, "Where did he go? Did he really go?"

"Yes, he went away, taking his new bowstring with him."

One winter night, as the woman built her fire and the smoke hung in the room instead of going through the smoke hole, she went outside to build a wind-break. While she was busy, the spirit woman returned and sat down to watch. As she reclined, she felt something which felt like a human knee bone. She dug, and found the body of the man, punched full of holes.

She asked the woman "Why did you lie to me? You said your husband had gone away, but you killed him."

"He was teasing me, but I only motioned at him with my sinew threader, and that had to happen."

"Why did you do that? You were intended to live together as man and wife."

The woman sprang to her feet to run away. As she did so, the spirit woman reached out to grab her, but just grazed the sole of her foot. As the woman disappeared she sang:

Up shall I go;

Up shall I go;

To the middle of the sky I shall go;

Where all the spirits go, there shall I go;

Up shall I go.

The spirit woman felt so distressed because the man had been killed and the woman had gone to the sky that she broke her knife

in two, inserting the halves into her upper jaw to make long fangs. Then she turned into a wolf and all of her wolf offspring became humans.

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#### **Skeleton in the Sky**

A strange story not of an island but of the people of an island—the people of Bear Island in Lake Temagami. This story was told to me by Mrs. Madeline Theriault, an Ojibway who lived on Bear Island from 1908 to 1940.

In an area slightly north of Bear Island known as Maple Mountain, a group of Ojibway people from Bear Island in Lake Tekmagami found themselves in a very frightful situation. On the lake they called GEE-BAY-JEE the group was camping out for the night.

After settling down for the night, they heard a series of knocking noises coming from not too far off. Soon a party was formed to trace the source of these odd, strange noises, and after much searching in the late evening dusk, they came to a large tree whose branches reached out parallel to the ground near the shore of the lake.

On one of these sturdy branches lay a full skeleton of a man whose parched white bones were knocking and rattling whenever the wind swept through the trees.

Soon the skeleton became aware that he was being observed. In an instant he actually floated up into the air and out across the waters of the lake until he finally disappeared from view. From that time on the people called the place GEE-BAY-JEE; a place to be feared.

This strange story was also told to me by another former resident of Bear Island—a man known as Chimandy, an Ojibway, who when I spoke to him was 75 years of age and had an excellent recall of the old days of his people.

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#### **Tale of a Lost Trading Post by BeetoPeeska**

Here is probably the most amazing story that will ever be related to the mystic Manitou Islands of Lake Nipissing.

It is true that the Larondes Trading Post, at the mouth of the Lavase River, was once moved to a new location at some time in

history. However, historical evidence and facts seem to tell us that this move was not to the Sturgeon River directly, but to an island off the north shore of Lake Nipissing. It was only 8 to 10 miles off the canoe route from Montreal to the French River but they needed a horse, probably for the purpose of dragging firewood. Anyone living on an island would surely find that it can be only a limited time before firewood supplies are finally depleted on the particular piece of land they are inhabiting. This would be common knowledge and basic logic.

The following evidence, together with a businesslike approach to the fur trade situation at the time will indicate, if not prove, that a trading post did indeed, at some point in time, exist on the mysterious Manitou Islands. Most probably the one chosen was the cursed Great Manitou, known in legend as Devil's Island, due mostly to the fact that it has two natural harbours with beaches ideal for the landing of a fur brigade. Both harbours point towards the major canoe routes used at the time, these being the Montreal to French River course and the Sturgeon River to Montreal route. These ports also offer shelter to any travellers who might find themselves caught in a storm while crossing Lake Nipissing, for we know even today that if a person leaves the mouth of the Lavase River he might very well get into quite a blow by the time he reached the Manitou Islands even if he departed on calm waters. This in itself would cause passers-by to view the goods and the post, even if the travellers were not trading at the time.

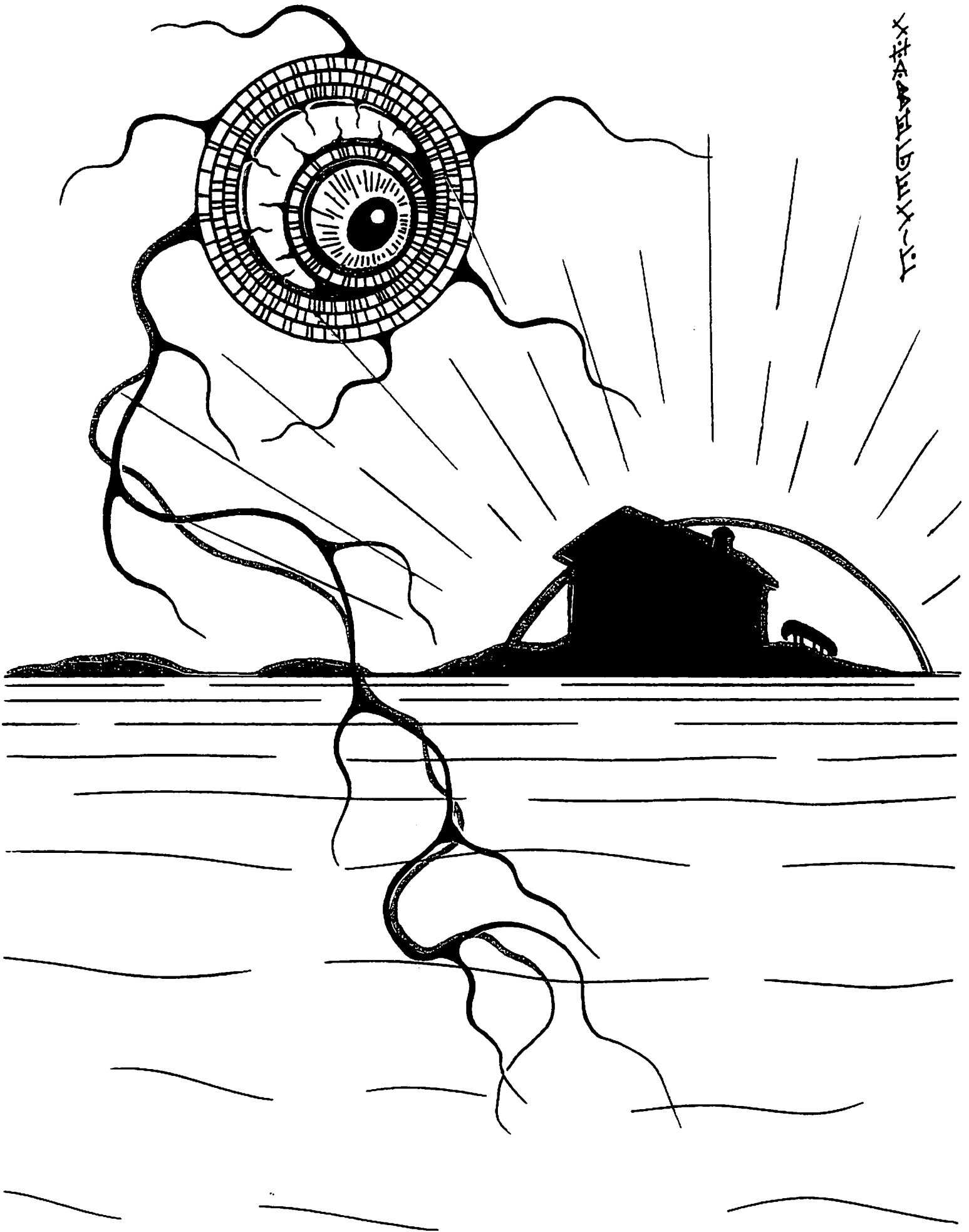
The post was most probably at either end of the beach, and due to the distance to the other end of the island, a horse would probably have been necessary right from the time the post was inhabited, for the sole purpose of dragging firewood to the post. It was much too far to carry it even on the island (Ghost Island) that the post was on.

Here is the proof that a horse was needed at this particular post. In a letter written by a Mr. James Cameron, who was at the time in charge of the Temiskaming District for the Hudson's Bay Company, he requested, "That a young horse for Lake Nipissing . . . should be forwarded from Fort Coulonge." The request was held up until the purpose for which the horse was to be used could be learned.

Cameron replied from Temiskaming on January 3rd, 1884, "That it was necessary because of the distance of the establishment from firewood being fully three miles—but as the buildings are to be removed in the spring to a proper place—one will be necessary for the purpose."

Now, the way that I read this message and its reply is that firewood was to be brought in from a three mile radius to the post.

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This is approximately the distance to the surrounding islands from Ghost Island which the post was on. Also, the fact that the letter of reply says that the buildings are to be removed to a proper place and the horse would be useful for this, seems quite interesting.

Could this not mean that 'proper' meant closer to firewood such as on the mainland, and that the horse would be useful for drawing the already cut logs of the post to the mainland from its island location? That point on the mainland is the location now occupied by the Sturgeon River post.

For some strange reason there is no further information of this move in the history of our great nation, including the Canadian Archives.

As I mentioned before, the post was moved to an island off the north shore of Lake Nipissing, eight to ten miles off the canoe route from Montreal to the French River. Let it be known that this places its position right on the Manitou Islands, and also let the record show that in the book written in 1850 called, "The Shoe and Canoe", it was said that Laronde Post was now removed to an island on the north shore, half-way between the Vaz River and the French River, and also that it was eight to ten miles off the canoe route.

Let's now attempt to pick this apart piece by piece. Firstly the book states quite clearly that the post was definitely moved to an island and it was off the north shore, and the Manitous are closer to the north shore than the southern shore. Secondly, it was half-way between the Lavase River and the French River, putting it in the Manitou Islands range. Thirdly, it was 8 to 10 miles off the canoe route, meaning most probably from the old Fort Laronde location.

Now, I ask my readers: Why would the writer of this particular book put so much descriptive detail into the location of a particular trading post if it were not accurate information?

It could easily have been that there was a mix up between a Hudson's Bay Post and a free trader who moved about as he saw fit. Or it could have been that the island post was operating at or about the same time as the Hudson's Bay Post on the Sturgeon River but, and this is the 'but', why have so many people in their detailed writings at the time called the Island Post the Hudson's Bay Post?

The most startling of all these written statements that comes to my mind, is that "the post was 8 to 10 miles off the canoe route from Montreal to the French River." As we clearly know and as they knew at the time, the Sturgeon Falls Location was and still remains 38 to 40 miles from the canoe route mentioned.

I have spent time alone on the mystic Manitou Islands. I have slept under my canoe in the pouring rain and I have searched for anything that might resemble the rock foundation of a building. I came up with nothing, but this does not dissillusion me in the least, for a log cabin at that time might just as well have been built on a smooth rock or even directly on the ground and now no trace would be evident.

The proof speaks for itself. The people of the time would have no reason for misleading us nor would they record in such detail the location of a trading post that simply did not exist. It is very foolhardy to assume otherwise, I'm sure. For these reasons we have ample reason to believe that such a post did at one time exist on the mystic Manitou Islands.

The question that remains with us in our century is, "What or who caused the total disappearance of this trading post, that, after reading facts and evidence, we can justly believe did exist? We have heard of the curse of the Manitou Islands, also about the screaming maiden, and the people who were turned into serpents.

I, myself, have slept alone there under my canoe on the ground in the old way and heard the screaming maiden of the island. Also, I have heard strange noises coming from the ground on which I slept. I have done this to become acquainted with the mysterious curse first hand, but why would anyone or anything go to the trouble of completely erasing the existence of a building, a business, and probably its Innkeepers, not only from the face of Devil's Island but also from our memories including from the Archives of Canada, by not preserving the documents which hold this story?

Should we take this as further warning, write a story about it, generally shrug it off, or do we need a team of scientists, archeologists and physicists to get out on the Manitou Islands and finally get to the bottom of this mystery once and for all?

The fact remains, that at some point in history, a building (and probably its inhabitants) has simply been removed from this earth, from sight and from memory.

As long as the curse of the Manitou Islands lives on, and before something else strange happens out there, perhaps we had better change our attitudes towards that dimension we cannot touch or see—the dimension of the uncanny, the supernatural, the world of spirits. For it is from that world that comes "The Curse of the Manitous."



## The Curse Lives On

Yes, the curse of the Manitou on Lake Nipissing is quite alive even today—the curse that said, 'No one will be able to live on them!' Until this day no one has ever been able to dwell on them.

Upon discussing the islands with a man who has been part-owner of Great Manitou (the largest of the group) through a real estate company in North Bay, I was given yet more information to ensure that the ancient curse is very much intact.

The gentleman explained that it was the wish of the company to sell cottage lots on the Great Manitou (Devil's island).

After much advertising and planning, the scheme did not come to pass. He even went on to say that his company had constructed a cottage on the island and later removed it when the government bought the island to make it a natural park.

Can we be led to believe that this was just coincidence, or does the purchase of sale papers, deeds, land titles and other documents have to include the signature "Gitche Manitou" before unbelievers will open their eyes and realize that those beautiful, picturesque islands, engulfed in mystery, myth and legend are not for the mortals for they are in the grasp of . . . "The Great Spirit".

## The Curse in Verse

### The curse of the Manitous in a poem by BEETOPEEKSKA

Mortals will always take what they can  
 of earth and dirt or other's land  
 For even wars have been waged for lands unsold  
 But no man will live on land secure, in Manitou's hold  
 The curse says 'That no one will ever live there'  
 And until this day none have, or dared  
 Unbelievers need only listen to the talking shores  
 at the edge of Ghost Island where Blue Herons soar  
 To the voices that warn, 'These islands belong to Manitou'  
 Not to men or governments or anyone, or even you  
 And why not leave them in nature's hands  
 Untouched and clean, free from man  
 Where Blue Herons guard 'The curse of the Great Spirit'  
 And wise men, only pass by, and know enough to fear it  
 Let them float there, occasionally rising into the sky  
 And no one live there, or even try  
 Perhaps Manitou wants them as a starting place  
 For rainbow warriors to begin again  
 when all is ruined by the human race  
 With pollution, destruction, disease or even worse  
 It may be, Manitou is trying to help us with this ancient curse.

**"BEETOPEEKSKA HAS SPOKEN"**

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**EPILOGUE**

There was very little doubt in my mind, after doing this research and gathering together an extensive amount of documentation, that there seemed to be something very strange and mysterious about the mystic Manitou Islands in Lake Nipissing.

As I have said before, I have spent time alone on the islands and I have done this to get as close as I possibly could to the ancient curse associated with the mystic Manitou Islands.

At the time, I slept under my canoe, on the ground, in the Poison Ivy and the pouring rain, in the old way, while the islands themselves shook and trembled under me throughout the night. I know that might sound like a tall tale, but within only a few days the mines in Falconbridge near Sudbury, Ont., suffered massive cave-ins that took several unfortunate miners' lives. Now I'll ask you, my readers, was it a chain reaction of an earth tremor that I was experiencing, or was it the islands themselves? Was it a modern day geological movement of rocks or was it an almost forgotten, almost unbelievable ancient curse? The answer I will leave with you.

Now in closing I cannot help but remember a line of prose I once heard that describes the mysterious Manitous perfectly, and the line reads: *"I am a rock, I am an island, a rock feels no pain and an island never cries."*

## RESEARCH SOURCES

To all of my research sources I would like to say that it is nice to know that there are some who are interested in the past while so many are rushing off into the elusive future.

Bierhorst, John, *THE RED SWAN*

Clark, Ella Elizabeth, *INDIAN LEGENDS OF CANADA*

Gridley, Marion E., *INDIAN LEGENDS OF AMERICAN SCENCES*

Johnson, E. Pauline, *LEGENDS OF VANCOUVER*

Leatherdale, Dr. Murray, *NIPISSING FROM BRULE TO BOOTH*

Luce, J.V., *THE END OF ATLANTIS*

Reynolds, Nila, *IN QUEST OF YESTERDAY*

Vitaliano, Dorothy B., *LEGENDS OF THE EARTH*

## ORAL SOURCES

Mr. John Fisher, Jr., of the Ojibways at Garden Village, Sturgeon Falls, Ontario.

Mr. Don Young of Kennedy Real Estate (Former Owners of the Great Manitou Island)

John Restoule, formerly of Dokis Bay (Known as Nana Bush)

George Couchie of Beaucage Twp.

Madeline Theriault, formerly of Bear Island Ojibway band, Lake Temagami (Known in Ojibway as KA KEETA WA PA NO QUAY)

Karl Graber, former Vice President of Nove Beaucage Mining, owners of the now abandoned mine on Newman Island of the Manitou group.

Jacques Chercuitte, an employee of the now abandoned mine.

Bill Harvey, an employee of the now abandoned mine.

Robert J. Surtees, Professor of History, Nipissing College in North Bay, Ontario.

## AFTERWORD

Had I known what I know now, and had people believed me, perhaps I would have been able to warn officials at Falconbridge of pending disaster, prior to cave-ins in the mines, and perhaps saved human lives.

As it turns out, after much research into the mysterious Manitou Islands, I found through a telephone conversation with a former mine employee of the mine that had existed on them, that—and he seemed to be quite sure—the islands are geologically linked to the Falconbridge and Sudbury area.

Apparently there were similar metals and ores found on the islands that are identical to those found in the Sudbury area. Perhaps the tremblings from the ground that I experienced a day or two earlier were a warning of a movement of rock, and that there would be similar movements along the fault. This unbelievable coincidence only adds to the many mysteries that shroud the Manitou Islands.