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CHAPTER 8

"I, Old Lydia Campbell": A Labrador Woman of National Historic Significance

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> I, old Lydia Campbell, seventy-five years old, I puts on my outdoor clothes, takes my game bag and axe and matches, in case it is needed, and off I goes over across the bay, over ice and snow for about two miles and more, gets three rabbits some days out of twenty or more rabbit snares all my own chopping down . . . and you say, well done old woman [Campbell 2000:14].

In 2009, the Canadian government, on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), designated Lydia Campbell (1818–1905) as a person of national historic significance. Since 1919, the HSMBC has provided advice to the federal government on the commemoration of places, people, and events that have marked and shaped the country's history.[1] This chapter presents Lydia Campbell's place in the Canadian historical landscape. One of Labrador's best known and most cherished foremothers, "Aunt Lydia" is known for her chronicles of Labrador history and life and is "held in high regard as a notable matriarch and transmitter of Labrador memories" (Hart 2000). Through her writing and through oral traditions passed down by her many descendants, Lydia Campbell has long been

an iconic figure and a touchstone to Labrador's Inuit, Anglo, and, more recently, its Métis past.

Biographical Details

Born Lydia Brooks on November 1, 1818, Campbell lived all her life in the area of Double Mer in Groswater Bay. Her mother was an Inuk whom we know only as Susan (Baikie 1976:12). Her father was an Englishman named Ambrose Brooks[2] who arrived in Hamilton Inlet around 1800 to escape British press gangs during the Napoleonic Wars (Campbell 2000:ix, 42). Ambrose and Susan Brooks were among the earliest of the documented cross-cultural unions that came to characterize the *métissage* of south-central Labrador. Hamilton Inlet in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was inhabited by Innu, Inuit, and a small number of European men who worked for French-Canadian and Anglo merchant outfits.[3] Some of these men had partnered with Inuit women and a few of these unions can be identified in the historical record.[4] The number of European men remained relatively small until the opening of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) at North West River and Rigolet in 1836. Campbell's way of life followed a seasonal pattern typical of the region, whereby families had winter homes away from the coast and closer to sources of wood and trapping areas, then moved during the spring and summer months to the mouths of salmon rivers or to the mouth of the inlet for the cod fishery and sealing.

The youngest of three daughters, Lydia Campbell (Figure 1) grew up speaking English and Inuttitut. Ambrose Brooks, a minister's son, taught his daughters to read English using family letters and the few texts in his possession, which were the Bible and the *Church of England Book of Common Prayer*. Brooks was one of the first Europeans south of the Moravian stations to teach his children to read, also passing on to them a strong Christian faith (Young 1916:14).[5] From the many Christian references in her writing, it is clear that Campbell's faith remained a guiding influence throughout her life. Susan passed Inuit skills to her daughters, including

Figure 1. Lydia Campbell (far right) wearing her trademark eyeglasses, with husband Daniel Campbell and daughter Margaret (Campbell) Baikie. Courtesy of *Them Days*. Flora Baikie collection. May 2008

resource-harvesting techniques such as trapping, shooting, and fishing, medical knowledge, and processing techniques such as skin-clothing manufacture and food preparation. These were skills that stood Lydia and her sister Hannah in good stead throughout their very long lives (the eldest daughter, Elizabeth, born around 1808, drowned in a boating accident).

Lydia Campbell married twice. At the age of 16 she was wed against her wishes to a Labradorian of Inuit-Anglo descent named William Blake, Jr., whose father had come to Labrador in the 1780s. Lydia had five children with Blake, one of whom, Thomas, continued the family name. Following Blake's death in 1845, she lived alone with her children for three years. In 1848, she married Daniel Campbell who arrived in Labrador in 1844 from South Ronaldsey, Orkney, to work a five-year

contract as cooper for the HBC at Rigolet (HBC B.183/1/1-36, entry for 24 July 1845; Powell 1986:41–43).[6] The two were married by the recently arrived HBC clerk, Donald A. Smith. They had six children, two of whom, Margaret and John, continued the Campbell family line.

In addition to her biological children, and in a benevolent tradition common along the Labrador coast, Lydia and Daniel also raised two informally adopted children. The first was an Inuk named Lemuel George, who died tragically at the age of 10. The second, Hugh Palliser, was taken in when Lydia and Daniel were in their seventies. Hugh took the Campbell name and also has a line of descendants. Daniel Campbell agreed to work with the HBC for another two years after his marriage to Lydia, and in about 1851 he became a fully independent Liveyer, or permanent resident. He occasionally took work thereafter with the HBC (Baikie 1976:31) but chiefly fished and trapped, selling his catches back to the post. Movement was central to the Campbells' way of life and they had homes in Double Mer, Cul de Sac, and later Mulligan, as well as fishing premises at Black Island, Tinker Harbour, and Burntwood Cove. Donald Campbell was nicknamed "the Flying Dutchman" for his frequent travels around the inlet and between the HBC posts at North West River and Rigolet (HBC B.153/a/1-44, 13 Jan. 1870). Daniel and Lydia celebrated their "Golden Wedding" with a dance at North West River on September 13, 1898. Daniel Campbell died on August 12, 1900. Lydia was active into her eighty-seventh year, passing away at home on April 29, 1905. She is buried at Mulligan (Way 2006).

The Historical Importance of Lydia Campbell

Lydia Campbell's importance to Canadian history is anchored in her literary contributions. These form a valuable chronicle of the life of a woman of mixed descent but also of a way of life typical of Labrador in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Viewed in the broader context of northern Canadian fur-trade society of that time, Campbell's life provides a rare, documented glimpse of Aboriginal women whose alliances

with European men created a unique and widespread northern culture. In the context of Labrador's current politics of ethnicity, today's descendants of Campbell can be found among both the Labrador Inuit population of northern Labrador (Nunatsiavut Government) and the Labrador Métis of southern Labrador (NunatuKavut Community Council).

In the remaining text, references to "Settlers" or people of "mixed descent" will be used interchangeably to refer to this emerging Anglo-Inuit population in Hamilton Inlet. The following sub-sections consider Campbell's contribution to historical narrative, her literary contributions, her role as a cultural mediator in Hamilton Inlet, and her own perceptions of ethnicity.

Lydia Campbell as Chronicler and Memoirist

Campbell was the first born-and-bred Labradorian to write a memoir of her life in Labrador.[7] In 1894, at the age of 75, she was approached by Arthur Charles Waghorne, a Newfoundland clergyman visiting Hamilton Inlet, to write about her life, which he subsequently published in 13 short instalments entitled *Sketches of Labrador Life by a Labrador Woman* (henceforth *Sketches*) in *The Evening Herald*, a newspaper in St. John's, Newfoundland.[8] She became relatively well known beyond her Hamilton Inlet homeland thereafter. First read by an urban public, *Sketches* was written in a style that reflected Campbell's homegrown education and her Labrador English. Her writing contains "both light and dark, and significant glimpses of the native inhabitants" (Hart 2000). Foremost, it gives a rare, contemporary glimpse of colonial life spanning a time of pervasive culture change. It also reveals a resourceful, pious woman who straddled European and Inuit worlds using the beliefs, knowledge, and skills of both, sometimes in innovative ways:

> There has been many strange things happening to us in this world . . . one day as I was getting myself and children, 2 little uns . . . to see my rabbit snares, I put my little baby . . . on the bed. It rolled on to the floor and stund itself for a little while. I got a fright

> because she was not christened. So I took the book and baptized it with my . . . outdoor clothes on, and my Sarah, 5 years old, standing by. . . . When she . . . was all right . . . I took it on my back, and lead the other by the hand with my axe, through the snow, to my rabbit snares and got a few rabbits [Campbell 2000:35].

In Labrador, history has been passed through the generations in the form of oral narratives conveyed in personal stories that come together as family and community memory. In its structure and level of detail, *Sketches* reflects oral narrative put to paper. It finds its roots both in Campbell's Inuit background and also in the strong oral traditions of her English father. Although it is a relatively short document, *Sketches* is enriching to the people of Labrador because it is a unique first-hand account of a part of their history. It contains minutiae of ancestors' lives that resonate with experiences still in living memory, especially details often absent in formal histories but specific to Labrador life, such as Campbell's description of an old way of catching trout when winter ice has formed:

> and when the ice comes on the rivers . . . then is what we calls trouting. Our grandchildren comes from their homes to gather here. Then the ice is alive with trout, fine large ones and little ones. What fun following the trout as the tide rises or the falling water, all chopping ice as hard as they can [Campbell 2000:15].

Labradorians of mixed descent such as Lydia Campbell and her Anglo-Inuit family introduced an entirely new way of life to Hamilton Inlet. They combined traditional seasonal resource practices such as sealing and salmon fishing with the trapping and gardening of a mercantile economy; they blended traditional Inuit foods and preparations with European fare and vegetables; European religious and social traditions were combined with Inuit ways; and traditional clothing, equipment, and housing styles were integrated with the European. These remain elements of life today made rich by their record in Campbell's early writing.

Campbell witnessed tremendous social and environmental changes in Hamilton Inlet and *Sketches* provides glimpses of these, including candid observations about the impacts of alcohol upon the local population and perceptible shifts in human (and animal) populations:

> The times have changed now from them times that I have been writing about. The first time that my dear old father came from England what few whites was here they was scattered about . . . no one to see for miles but Eskimaux and Mountaineers [Innu] and they was plentiful . . . where are they now? [Campbell 2000:49].

Elements of formal Labrador history are confirmed in *Sketches*, where we learn of the earliest Englishmen in Hamilton Inlet who settled there with Inuit wives. This was oral history knowledge passed down from her parents, who knew William Phippard and John Newhook, whom Campbell calls "John Knocks":

> There were landed here some people looking for a place [and] given provisions and were promised to get picked up the next year, but the [ships] never came back for three years, so my father told us, for he saw them when he came from England . . . they went to the Eskimaux (for they was plentiful at that time) and got seal skin clothes from them and meat to eat. When the white people came back to see whether they was dead or alive, they found them dressed like the natives about here at that time . . . these two, William Phipperd and John Knocks [Campbell 2000:26; 1989:62].

This same information is found in Captain George Cartwright's journal for 1778 (1792: entries for September 9 and December 24, 1778).[9] Anglo–Inuit unions began somewhat earlier south of Hamilton Inlet; several of Cartwright's men had Inuit wives in the 1770s. Cartwright himself may

have fathered a son by an Inuit woman sometime before 1786, as discovered in Moravian archival material (Stopp 2008:30, 73).

Campbell's writing is a straightforward account of the daily lives and concerns of nineteenth-century colonial Labrador, especially of its women. Historical references to Inuit women's lives at the cusp of the European settlement period are brief but illuminate elements of family and gender relations within Inuit society at a time when Inuit women may have been choosing to establish unions with European men. The reasons for this may be found in Inuit society itself, where associations with Europeans held advantages (for Inuit women and men), and where elemental changes in power structures due to European arrival may have marginalized women's roles in Inuit society. Campbell's account of the runaway Inuit girl cared for by European trappers is reminiscent of others found in Labrador documents. Two examples include that of the Inuit woman Mikak, whose treatment at the hands of Tuglavina is revealing and not unusual for its time, and the account of an Inuit girl-servant who fled her Inuit family to find a better life working for George Cartwright (Campbell 1989:56–57; Cartwright 1792: entry for 7 December 1770; Stopp 2009:52–53).[10]

For her readership in distant St. John's, Campbell's descriptions of life in the inlet counterbalanced, and perhaps at times corrected, prevailing perceptions of backwardness and deprivation as presented by many period visitors to Labrador. Their assessments of thriftlessness and the lack of "get up and go" of Labrador's people were generally based on superficial observations made from ship's deck or during brief disembarkations at community wharves (e.g., Packard 1891). A prevailing absence of close knowledge of Labrador society prevented understanding of the impositions of an unforgiving merchant system that had been in place since 1763, but also of the abilities and innovations of its people who lived self-sufficient and productive lives (Kennedy 1995:94). Campbell showed the outside world that perceived hardships were managed through a range of skills and practices rooted in traditional ways, and that woman in these contexts had relevant skills and were

capable actors. One such example described her resourceful older sister Hannah Michelin:

> I have known [Hannah] fighting with a wolverine . . . she had neither gun nor axe, but a stout little stick, yet she killed it after a long battle. . . . She brought up her first family of little children when their father died, teached all to read and write in the long winter nights, and hunt . . . in the day. . . . She would take the little ones on the sled, haul them over snow and ice to a large river, chop ice about three feet thick, catch about two or three hundred trout . . . and haul them and the children home perhaps in the night [Campbell 2000:7–9].

Campbell also recorded observations of Innu and Inuit life that stand alongside George Cartwright's as invaluable, early first-hand, ethnohistoric accounts. One tells of "the Eskimaux's notion about the flood, handed down from generation to generation." Another is of an Innu belief in spirits at Churchill Falls, and several entries refer to the old way of life of both peoples:

> Their [Innu] tent was made of deerskin and birch bark and . . . 7 feet long and about the same width; a ridge of snow covered with [fir] branches for their pillows around the tent: all looking so happy with deers [sic] meat stuck up on scivers [skewers] made of wood [Campbell 1989:59].

> I have seen fifteen, as far as twenty, Eskimos seal skin tents in my time scattered here in little groups not far from each other, five or six tents together and such a bustle, women cleaning seal skins and covering kayaks, their little boats. The men out on the water after a large school of seals, throwing their darts at the end of their houliack harpoon strap [Campbell 2000:50].

Campbell's Literary Contributions

The benefits of Lydia Campbell's education were passed to her children, grandchildren, and adopted children, whom she taught to read and write. Her sister Hannah also educated her family, and together this small population of literate individuals grew to influence broader aspects of Hamilton Inlet society. It is also worth noting that relatively well-educated Inuit from the Moravian missions moved to Hamilton Inlet in the 1820s whose learning and Christian conviction stood them in good stead for HBC employment (Rollmann 2008, 2010).

Literacy held social and economic value in Hamilton Inlet. Those who could read, write, and/or understand basic arithmetic could manage economic relations both as Liveyeres and as employees of the growing numbers of merchant firms that arrived after 1830 such as Nathanial Jones, David Ramsay Stewart, Hunt and Henley, and the HBC. A legacy of literacy followed Lydia Campbell's son, John Campbell, for the span of his lifetime. He moved to St. Michael's Bay as an adult and was one of the few literate individuals along the southern Labrador coast. Upon his death in 1935, the church in his summer fishing community of Square Islands had to close because there was no longer anyone who could read the liturgy (Way 2006:33).[11] The literacy of Hamilton Inlet's residents was noted by a number of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century visitors to the area, and it was known as one of the few places in the British colonies where residents were not only versed in the Christian liturgy without ever having met clergy, but were remarkably literate despite the absence of teachers (Wallace 1932:284–285; Young 1916:14).[12]

Lydia Campbell pioneered a way of writing about Labrador that is both history and personal memoir (Buchanan 1986). Her efforts inspired many later Labradorians to set down reminiscences as a form of historical record, beginning with Campbell's own daughter, Margaret Baikie, whose *Labrador Memories—Reflections of Mulligan* (1976) was written around 1918 and covers the years as far back as 1846. Perhaps it is not by chance that other Labrador memoirists who have written in Campbell's genre also happen to be descendants. Campbell's great-granddaughter,

Elizabeth Goudie, published *Woman of Labrador* in 1973, winning the 1976 Canadian Book Award. Goudie is also featured in the National Film Board's *A Family of Labrador* (1978) and received an honorary doctorate from Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1975. A great-grandson, Benjamin Powell of Charlottetown, Labrador, has published numerous volumes of Labrador stories and is a recipient of the Order of Canada. Doris Saunders, great-great granddaughter of Campbell and editor of *Them Days* for nearly 30 years, compiled one of the largest collections of oral history and genealogical information about Labrador, earning her an Order of Canada and an honorary doctorate from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Many articles published in *Them Days* and other Labrador publications follow Campbell's informal, unstructured style, and use autobiography as a way of documenting the past (Battle Harbour Literacy Council 1998, 1999, 2000; Maggo 1999; White 2004; Montague 2013).

Sketches has been reprinted several times since its appearance in 1894–1895 and continues to be read and studied today as a literary work, as a historical text of the Settler experience, as early autobiography, women's writing, and Aboriginal writing, and as one of the few accounts about and by colonial women who were not of the middle or upper classes (e.g., Ball 1976; Buchanan 1986, 1987, 1991, 1995; Hart 1977, 1982; Hulan 2002; Petrone 1988).

Campbell as Cultural Mediator

Lydia Campbell is representative of the role held by many Indigenous women across the Canadian North who facilitated colonial efforts. These women provided a bridge for European newcomers, at times ensuring the latters' very survival and certainly their eventual successes and, as Brown (2009) emphasizes, their patriarchies. Although largely invisible in formal history, figures such as another northern Métis matriarch, Catherine Beaulieu Bouvier Lamoureux (ca. 1836–1918) from Fort Providence, Northwest Territories, were cornerstones of social development in the North. Like Campbell, Lamoureux remains a cherished icon

whose descendants are numerous and whose life story figures large in oral accounts (Stopp and Constantin 2009). Similarly, the young Dene woman Thanadelthur, who helped HBC trader William Stuart negotiate his way through Cree country in 1715, was central to the success of colonial efforts (Coutts 1999; Van Kirk 1980:69), as was Scottish-Woods Cree Charlotte Small, who ensured the success of explorer David Thompson's travels and mapping of immense areas of western Canada and the United States, ca. 1800 (Brown 2007; Van Kirk 1980:97).[13]

For its part, *Sketches* is invaluable for the "teeth" it gives to the premise that Aboriginal know-how and specifically female intervention, bonding, technical skills, and overall local knowledge were vital to European foundations in Labrador. Campbell's daughter Margaret recorded, for instance, that Daniel Campbell "did not know much about trapping. My mother used to go with him to set the traps" (Baikie 1976:2). Campbell (2000:9) noted that the HBC's servants used to get local women to supply them with clothing suited for the Labrador climate, including pants, shirts, flannel slips, drawers, sealskin boots, deerskin shoes, and caps, details that are confirmed in the HBC records for North West River.

A scattering of historical information suggests that Lydia Campbell served as an important point of contact for newcomers and as a cultural mediator between people of the inlet and visitors from elsewhere, especially church representatives. Campbell facilitated the efforts of several missionaries at a time when the Moravian, Wesleyan Methodist, Anglican, and Roman Catholic churches all considered setting up ministries in south-central Labrador (Rollmann 2010). Missionaries were on different occasions directed to Campbell by the people of the inlet partly because her piousness was recognized by all, but also in recognition of her role as an educated elder whose opinion in the context of inlet society was respected. In 1857, Moravian missionary Ferdinand Elsner travelled in April by sledge from Nain to the HBC post at North West River to ascertain whether a mission could be established somewhere in Hamilton Inlet. En route he was directed to the Campbell home in Mulligan

where he received Campbell's advice that a mission would be welcomed but that attendance would be compromised by the distances between households. Despite the project's full backing from HBC Chief Trader Donald Smith, who committed £100 per annum to the project, the Moravians eventually decided against the venture, probably having considered Campbell's observations (Zimmerly 1975:81–83).

In August of 1891, Dr. John Clement Parker, a member of the Bowdoin College Scientific Expedition to Labrador, visited "the old lady Mrs. Lydia Campbell" over several days at their summer home on what appears to have been Esquimaux Island (Kennedy 2010). Methodist Reverend Arminius Young became a great admirer of Campbell's, visiting her for extended periods during his two-year stay in Labrador. His first impression of her in 1902, when she was 83, is endearing and enduring:

> At 10 o'clock I noticed boats coming from all directions. From one of them there stepped ashore an old, dumpy and interesting-looking lady. I saw, through the dining-room window, that as she came along she had a word to say to everybody, and everybody had a word to say to her [Young 1916:39].

That same morning, his first Sabbath service in Groswater Bay, Young was given unsolicited advice by Campbell: "Now, my son," she cautioned in her Labrador cadences, "you must go out into the kitchen and talk to the people as the other ministers used to do. . . . If you don't the people won't like you" (Young 1916:39). A previous Methodist incumbent, whose preaching had been emotional and zealous, failed to heed her warning not to "preach like that" in the lumber camps dotting the shore of Hamilton Inlet at that time, "because they will make fun at you if you do." As she had predicted, the lumbermen received that particular gospel "with demonstrations of power and that without any apology. His stay on the coast was short" (Young 1916:32–33).[14]

Lydia Campbell's Observations on Her Ethnicity

Campbell's writing intimates that she placed herself "among the few whites" (Campbell 2000:14) in Hamilton Inlet while recognizing that this group was of mixed descent, as in, "our dear Elizabeth got married to a young half-breed as we was" (Campbell 2000:13). She draws a fine distinction between her bloodline and ways and those of the Inuit of the inlet, describing their way of life as an observer and not as a member participant. Campbell was the first Labradorian to express self-identity and a consciousness of mixed descent in her use of the term "half-breed," limning an awareness that was by then an established part of the social landscape: "Through the snow, to my rabbit snares and got a few rabbits . . . not for want of hunger . . . but for custom. Such was life among the half-breeds of Eskimaux Bay" (Campbell 2000:37).

Campbell has a symbolic (and genetic) role in the formulation of concepts of mixed descent and identity politics, since European patrilineal systems were not readily available to this emerging population and present-day membership inevitably extends back to female roots, albeit often unknown.

The way of life of the small, mixed-descent population of Hamilton Inlet was defined by the fur trade, as in the rest of the Canadian North, distinguishing it from many of the Innu and Inuit of the region who participated in aspects of this economy but who were not tied to it in the same way as families such as the Campbells. Such a way of life included European domestic patterns, social customs, language, religion, skills, and work habits that together resonated with merchants' notions of capability. These were bridging elements that allowed relatively seamless entry into this economy, especially with the HBC when it opened its first posts in Labrador in 1836, later than elsewhere in Canada. At that time the population of Lake Melville area stood at 37 Settlers. Well-known names such as Thomas Groves, George Flowers, John Mason, William Blake, William Mesher, John Mesher, and William Phippard appear in HBC records alongside even earlier French-Canadian names such as Old

Dubais.[15] Most, if not all, were men with Inuit or mixed-descent wives and families but little is known about these women. Such alliances in fact predated the HBC in Hamilton Inlet by about 50 years, but it is quite likely that even earlier ones (with Inuit and Innu women) began when Quebec-based trader Louis Fornel opened a year-round post in 1743, marking the start of 85 years of French traders in the inlet.[16] The resident settler population was described by Reverend Thomas Hickson in 1824, who counted 326 people of whom he considered 60 to be of mixed descent ("half-Eskimos"), 160 "pure Eskimo," 90 European Settlers, and 16 French-Canadian (Tanner 1947:466). It is quite likely that a substantial number of the "pure Eskimo," "European," and French-Canadian inhabitants enumerated by Hickson were in fact of mixed descent.

Early mixed-descent families in Hamilton Inlet emerged as overwhelmingly successful competitors for jobs in the fur trade; as already noted, ethnicity became tied to economic success through employability. These families earned income by provisioning the post, and in resource extraction industries such as trapping, salmon fishing, sealing, and the cod fishery. Success was also tied to resource territory expansion. In a letter tabled before the Boundary Commission, Stuart Cotter (1922), factor at North West River post during the years 1893–1901 and 1904–1906, noted the aggressive expansion of Settler trapping activities on behalf of the HBC into Innu lands. Although trapping had subsided almost entirely by the 1950s, it continued to be an elemental aspect of identity well into the 1980s (Plaice 1990) and remains so today.[17] For the Innu, these traditional territories could never be reclaimed because of further land losses due to the Churchill hydroelectric development, the designation of NATO military camp and training areas (Wadden 1991; Mailhot 1997; Pepamuteiati Nitassinat 2008), and the appearance of fishing and hunting lodges on interior lake systems.

Self-awareness of a distinct ethnicity among the Settler families of Hamilton Inlet is mirrored in the partnerships of French and Anglo fur traders with Aboriginal women across the Canadian North. These partnerships began with the North West Company (NWC) in the Canadian

West in the late eighteenth century and continued after its merger in 1821 with the HBC. The Company's governor, George Simpson, introduced a culture of race awareness and class that differed from the earlier NWC, but by the 1840s he was forced to admit the necessity and advantages of having mixed-descent workers and local women. Lydia Campbell's awareness of her separate ethnicity resembles and finds context in this broader fur-trade society, as does her education. By the 1820s, many offspring of mixed unions were comfortable with a dual heritage that combined knowledge of the backcountry with literacy and Christianity. Diverse cultural ties were expressed in their fur-trade roles as cultural brokers and interpreters and, in time, as teachers, catechists, clerks, small traders, and commissioned HBC officers (Brown 1980a, 1980b; Fuchs 2000; St. Onge et al. 2012).

Despite their education, however, the children of the fur trade struggled against subtle prejudices. While acknowledging their wilderness skills and ability to communicate with Aboriginal populations, the HBC believed mixed-descent men tended towards unruly behaviour. At the same time, mixed-descent women were subject to rigorous and unyielding social expectations and class assessments (Brown 1980a; Goldring 1979).

In Hamilton Inlet the situation may have been somewhat different, at least after 1848 when two of the leading fur-trade families in the district were themselves distinguished by mixed bloodlines. In 1848, Richard Hardisty (ca. 1792–1865) became district chief trader at the Esquimaux Bay post in Hamilton Inlet. The Hardisty family arrived in North West River having canoed and boated their way from distant Moose Factory. Hardisty's wife, Margaret Sutherland (ca. 1802–1876), was the daughter of Scots fur trader John Sutherland (fl. 1778–1813) and Jeanny Sutherland, a literate and capable Swampy Cree woman from Albany District, west of Hudson Bay (Van Kirk 1980:103). The Hardisty family in all respects symbolized the realities of fur-trade society of the mid-1800s, and readily fit into the life of the inlet.

Donald Smith (1820–1914) arrived at the same time as Hardisty and

from 1848 to 1852 served as clerk at Rigolet. He became chief trader of the district upon Hardisty's departure in 1852 and chief factor in 1862 until 1868 before moving to Montreal, where he served as chief factor of the vast Montreal Department. Much later he became governor of the HBC (1889) and Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal (1897). While the Hardisty family was still resident in North West River, Smith began a lifelong partnership with Hardisty's daughter, Isabella Sophia Hardisty Grant (Brown 1980a:215; HBC, Biographical Sheets; MacDonald 1996). Isabella had been sent to school in England and was "well equipped to function in her future role as Lady Strathcona" (Van Kirk 1980:233), but she was also a woman of the North, of mixed descent, and at home among the people of the inlet.

Under their regime, Settler families were less affected by HBC prejudices than under previous Esquimaux Bay District factors. The tenor of the HBC journals kept by Hardisty and Smith stand in contrast with those of the first chief trader of the district (1836–1841), Simon McGillivray, Jr., whose prejudices mirrored those of the Company as a whole and extended to his Orkneymen crew, to rival firms in the bay, and to local families (HBC 1836). Under Hardisty and Smith, the Campbells flourished, as did other inlet families (and the HBC). Smith spent many a night in the Campbell home while travelling up and down the inlet and Lydia's daughters cared for the Smith children (Baikie 1976:5, 12). Campbell was living at Mulligan River in April 1894 when she wrote that, "many is the time that I have been going with dogs and komatik, 40 or 50 years ago with my husband and family, up to North West River, to the Hon. Donald A. Smith and family to keep New Year or Easter" (Campbell 2000:25).

Conclusion

Little is known of the early generation of northern women whose way of life spanned both the Aboriginal and the European. The oral accounts that remain of most of these northern matriarchs emerge from the col-

lective memory of extended family ties that are vast and represent "family history on a grand scale" in the North (Hanks 1999:1). Shared memories are the essence of community and belonging, and are cherished from Labrador to Yukon, but such memories have become increasingly fragile with time. These accounts are found outside formal historiography yet contain valuable glimpses of the northern past, of the central role played by women and their capability, and of an early way of life of Métis peoples that began in female bloodlines (Brown 1980a; Van Kirk 1980; Brown and Peterson 1985; Métis Heritage Association 1998).

Lydia Campbell's life story is thus doubly significant to Canadian history for what it tells us of these early matriarchs. Like their stories, it has been quilted together from oral accounts and limited printed documents. From such sources, we come to appreciate Campbell's contribution to the development of Labrador society, to education, and to passing on an "old way" of life that informs identity today.

Aunt Lydia is a familiar figure in the iconography of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and has been recognized in a number of ways. Alongside her many literary reappearances, her role as an esteemed matriarch was reflected in the play *All Lydia's Children*, written and produced in 1987 by young people from North West River for the Labrador Arts Festival. It parodied a familiar afternoon television program through the many and diverse dramas of a small Labrador town.[18] The Lydia Campbell Award for Writing was established by the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council in 1985 and is awarded annually to a writer of distinction. The Lydia Campbell Building in Happy Valley-Goose Bay houses the *Them Days* office and archive.

In closing, Lydia Campbell's importance to Canadian history lies in her literary and educational contributions. *Sketches of Labrador Life* represents the beginnings of a literary tradition in Labrador that presents history though autobiography, and provides a pragmatic account of the daily lives, concerns, and beliefs of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial Labrador as observed by a woman of Inuit and British descent. She is representative of the role held by many Inuit and Inuit-An-

glo women in Labrador and throughout the North, of facilitating colonial efforts through partnerships with European newcomers and through their unique skill-sets needed to carry out the goals of early colonial economy. Campbell's writing and the various oral accounts that exist of her have given the people of Labrador, with their roots in several cultures, a significant part of their early colonial history, in turn affirming self-identification through knowledge of the past.

Notes

1. Directory of Federal Heritage Designations; at http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/default_eng.aspx.
2. Referred to as William Brooks in Young (1916:13). The Campbell family tree has been compiled by Way (2006; chapter 7).
3. These included people of French, Scottish, English, Irish, and/or Orkney descent.
4. Little is known of partnerships between European men and Innu women.
5. From her own account, it appears that Lydia Campbell taught herself to write later in life, and Young (1916:13) further states that for this she used letters from her father's family.
6. An overview of the political and economic circumstances that led to the arrival in Hamilton Inlet of men from the West Country and from the Orkneys can be found in Plaice (1990:23–27).
7. The earliest published account in English of life in Labrador was by Captain George Cartwright, an Englishman who operated merchant stations between St. Lewis Inlet and Sandwich Bay for 16 years and lived there intermittently (Cartwright 1792; Stopp 2008). Unpublished for over a century was Abraham Ulrikab's 1880–1881 account in Inuttitut of his life while in Europe before dying of smallpox (Lutz et al. 2005).
8. Two sources must be consulted for all of Campbell's installments: Campbell (1989) and Campbell (2000). Campbell had once before written a memoir at the request of a Reverend A. A. Adams, "but he lost it" (Campbell 2000:15).
9. In 1902, only two of the earliest generation of Englishmen were still alive. Joseph Lloyd and Charles Allen had married Inuit sisters (Young 1916:47–48). The bulk of the population in Groswater Bay by this time was Euro–Inuit with a few full-blooded Inuit in the Rigolet area who had originally come from the northern coast.
10. Inuit men also offered females for sale or barter. At least one female Inuk in Cartwright's household was purchased. Cartwright (1792:entry for 16 Nov. 1773) refers to "my slave girl" who ran away for a night to spend time with her

mother. Slavery was still very much a part of British society. Of interest is that George Cartwright's brother, Major John Cartwright, was a leading activist in the anti-slavery movement.

11. Many families in St. Michael's Bay are descendants of Lydia Campbell through John Campbell (author interviews with O. Marshall, S. Campbell, Charlottetown, Labrador, July 2012).
12. See also Judge Sweetland's remarks (Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) 1972:1864, No. 529, 1448); Judge Pinsent's remarks (JCPC 1927:1867, No. 529, 1454); Zimmerly (1975:103–105). This was also true in Sandwich Bay as noted by Bishop Feild (1849:19) in 1848, who observed a largely Anglican populace, among whom were many Inuit, who could read the Anglican catechism, write, and speak English.
13. Similarly, the Labrador Inuit woman Mikak (ca. 1740–1795), designated by the HSMBC as a Person of National Historic Significance in 2011, aided British colonial efforts while in England and in Labrador (Stopp 2009).
14. By 1902, several lumber camps operated in Hamilton Inlet belonging to the Grand River Pulp and Lumber Company of Stewiacke, NS, owned by Alfred Dickie, who held leases for nearly 300 square miles of timber along the north and south sides of the inlet (JCPC 1927:1:136).
15. When the HBC opened its posts in 1835–1836, the population of year-round Settlers of European descent in the Lake Melville area consisted mainly of individuals with Anglo names, as well as a few with French names. Some had lived in Hamilton Inlet since 1800 or earlier and had Inuit wives. Names on record of these permanent Settlers were Thomas Groves (at Traverspine), George Flowers, Old Dubais, John Mason, William Blake, William Mesher, John Mesher, William Phippard (known to be at Double Mer), Ambrose Brooks, John Newhook, James Sutton, Charles William, Francis Quirk, Charles Davis, Patrick Sullivan, James Morris, James Goodenough, H. Lucy, Patrick Connors, William Fancy, Jonathon Kennedy, Josh Wills, John Mudge, George Pottle, John Reed, Thomas Broomfield, and Josh Broomfield. There were also merchants and/or their representatives present in the inlet, but these were not considered Settlers and may only have kept summer residency (HBC B153/a/1-11; Anick 1976:667–672; Zimmerly 1975:31–65).
16. The known French establishments began with grants to L. Fornel, followed by his widow M. Barbel (1743–ca. 1755); then an unknown trader ca. 1757; in turn followed by Jacob Pozer (1770s to 1823); Pierre Marcoux (ca. 1785–1799); P. Marcoux and Dumontier (ca. 1799 to ca. 1820s); Flavien Dufresne, who purchased the Pozer properties (1823–1828); Jean Olivier Brunet, who purchased the Dufresne properties in 1828 and sold them a year later to William Lampson and David Ramsay Stewart. The first Englishmen operating in the inlet may have been Jeremiah Coghlan's planters, ca. 1777–1778. Thereafter, English operated

alongside French-Canadian furring and sealing concerns. Robert Collingham began to trade around Rigolet in ca. 1785 (probably in partnership with Pierre Marcoux), and Thomas Bird established a salmon fishery at Kenemish in 1824, followed by several larger merchant concerns.

17. In Plaice's (1990) interesting study of Settler–Innu dynamics and identity, she observed that identity was self-referential and situation-dependent. The study presents a picture of identity just before the growth of the Labrador Métis movement and before "Settlers" began to consider themselves as Inuit. In 1962–1963, Ben-Dor (1966) argued that the ethnic differences between Inuit and Settler in Makkovik might not be apparent to an outsider, but that the distinction was clear to the people themselves. Situational factors included the language one was brought up in, birth location, geography, and the family one was raised in. Over time, mobility or passing from one group to another was possible but was not like "club membership" that actors joined or quit (1966:151). The ethnic divide Ben-Dor (1966) described remained firm when restudied by Kennedy in 1971–1972 (1982).
18. Timothy Borlase, Labrador Institute (retired), and Martha MacDonald, Labrador Institute (personal communications, 7 April 2008).

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