



# The Beothuk Extinction

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CARIC 2023

April 20, 2023



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# Early Interactions Between Europeans and the Beothuk

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- Lack of evidence makes understanding 16<sup>th</sup> Century interactions questionable.
- As a result, archaeological evidence is the most reliable way to identify Beothuk behaviour patterns until the 17th century.
- The Beothuk built an economy by taking objects left on the coast by seasonal European fishermen.
- Interest from Anglican and Catholic missionaries during the 16<sup>th</sup> century was virtually non-existent, resulting in minimal trade.
- Interactions are relatively peaceful



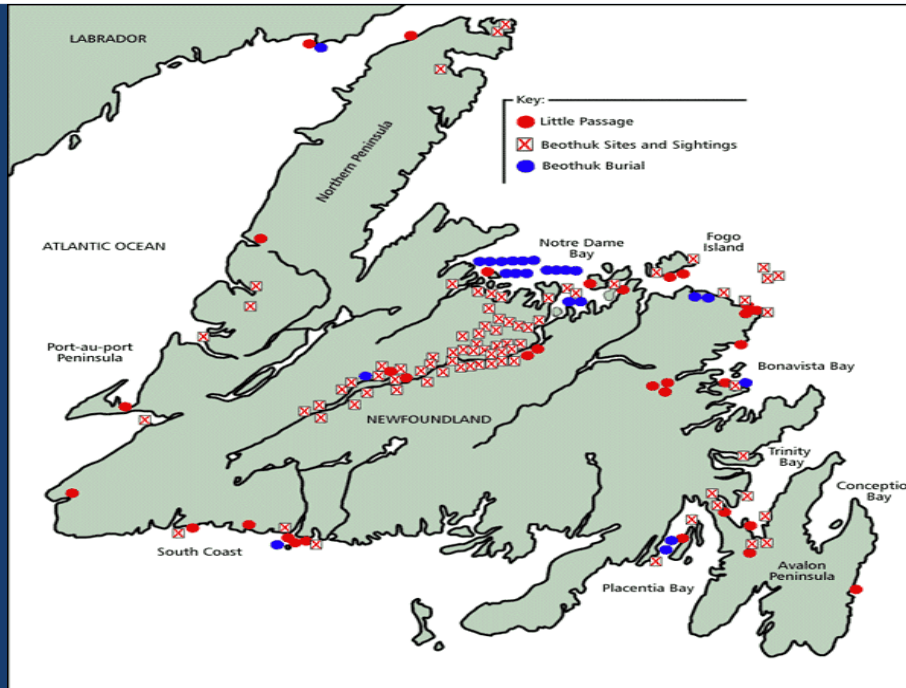
# Beothuk Migration Inland

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- An influx of Europeans to the island forced the Beothuk to abandon the coast and move inland.
- It is possible that the Beothuk forfeited the southern coast to maintain a positive relationship with the Mi'kmaq.
- Due to the environment and lack of fur-bearing animals in the island's interior, survival would have been difficult.
- Beothuk attacks on European salmon fisheries intensified as most of the island's resources became under European control.
  - Extinction of the Great Auk (1844).



# Newfoundland Island



<https://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/indigenous/beothuk-distribution.php>



# Attempts To Save the Beothuk

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- Following the Napoleonic wars, the island of Newfoundland becomes a financial burden.
- Anglican and Catholic churches executed little interest in the Beothuk; however, the Methodist church demonstrated concern as early as 1809.
- Capture of Demasduit (1819) and Shawnadithit's family (1823) is the last known contact with the Beothuk.
- It was hoped that capturing Demasduit and Shawnadithit's family would result in an intermediary between settlers and the Beothuk. However, it was largely unsuccessful.



# Conclusions About the Beothuk Extinction

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- The resource-poor island lacked enough fur-bearing animals to support the Beothuk and the Europeans.
- When Methodist missionaries expressed interest in the earliest stages of the 19th century, it was essentially too late to save the Beothuk population.
- The extinction of the Beothuk is due to the failure to establish a peaceful relationship, the harsh environment of the Newfoundland Island interior, and Europeans exhausting the land of its resources and animal population.

