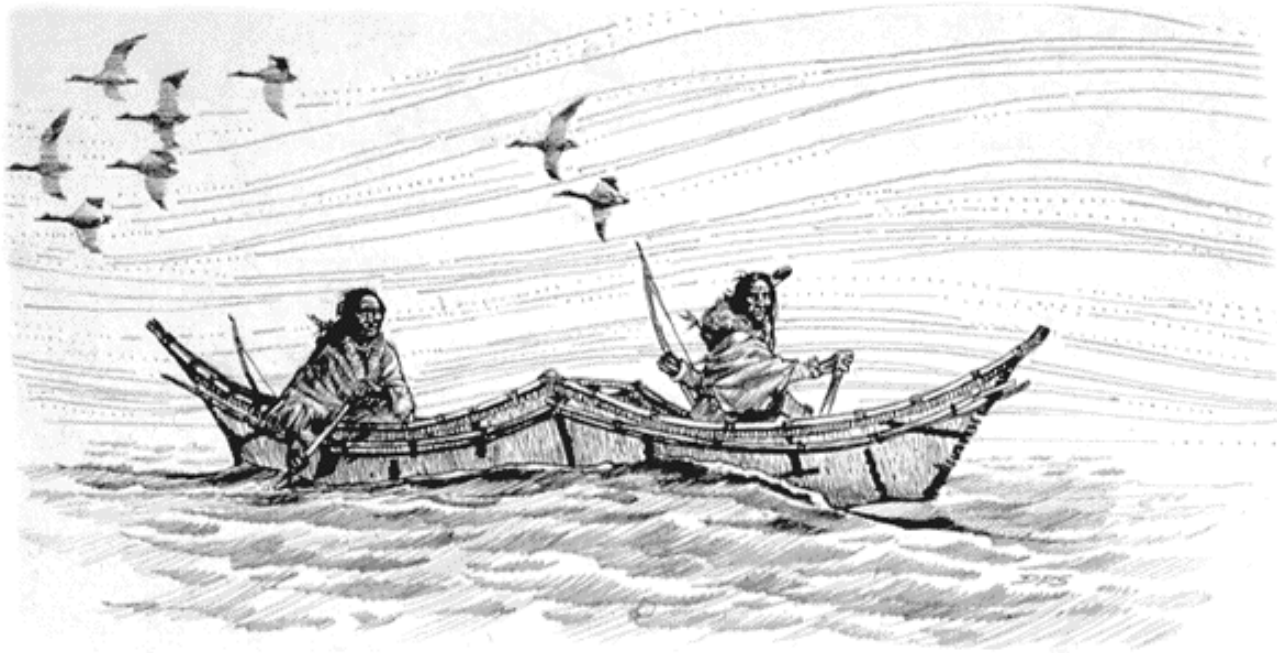


# The Beothuk People

## A Brief Description

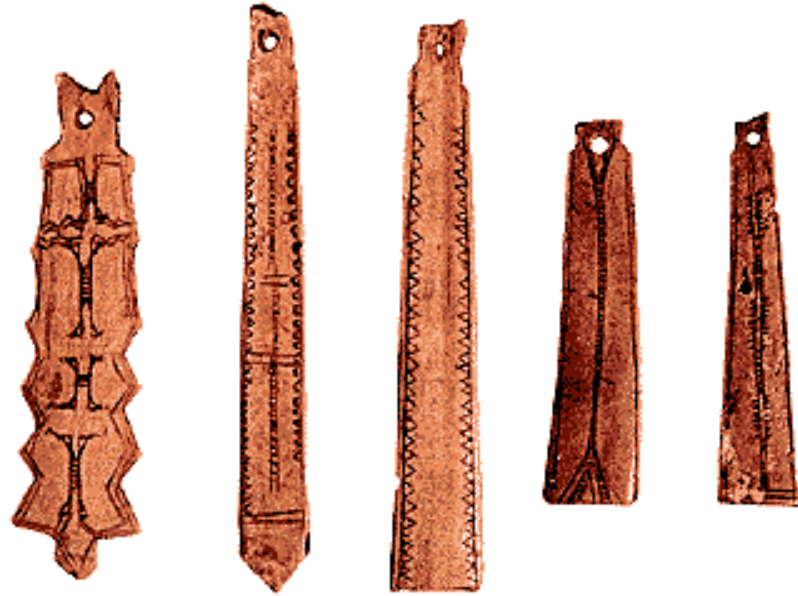


# Who Were They?

- Aboriginal people
- Hunter-gatherers
- Probably numbered less than a thousand people at the time of European contact
- Lived here for many centuries

# Evidence

- Beothuk material culture consists of the physical things left behind by these people including their tools, weapons and *features*--the non-movable artifacts of a culture, such as the remains of houses, pits, fireplaces, and the like.
- Letters, journals written by settlers and explorers
- Shanawdithits's sketches



- St. John's, Newfoundland **Beothuk Carved Bone Objects.** Original artifacts housed in the Newfoundland Museum. Courtesy of Dr. Ralph Pastore, Memorial University of Newfoundland

- **Spoon, saw and scissors from a Beothuks site on the Exploits River.**

The Beothuks often acquired metal objects like these by visiting abandoned European fishing posts. Reworking the metal, the Beothuks were able to construct their own traditional hunting tools which included arrowheads and harpoon tips.

Reproduced by permission of J. A. Tuck, Atlantic Archaeology Ltd. From Dr. Ralph Pastore, *Shanawdithit's People: The Archaeology of the Beothuks* (St. John's, Newfoundland: Atlantic Archaeology Ltd., ©1992) 61.



- Bands of 30 to 55 people
- Migratory
  - Summer camped along coasts, used canoes to search for food
  - Winter moved inland

# Food

- Traditionally used bow and arrows, spears, snares, fences to hide, direct animals
- Furbearers
- Caribou, seal, beaver, salmon, eggs

# Clothing

- Used animal skins.
- From eyewitness accounts – mainly wore a coat made from caribou skins sewn together into one large piece.
- Thrown over the shoulders, wrapped around the body and held in place by a belt.
- The hairy side was turned towards the body for greater warmth.
- Often used marten, otter or beaver skins.

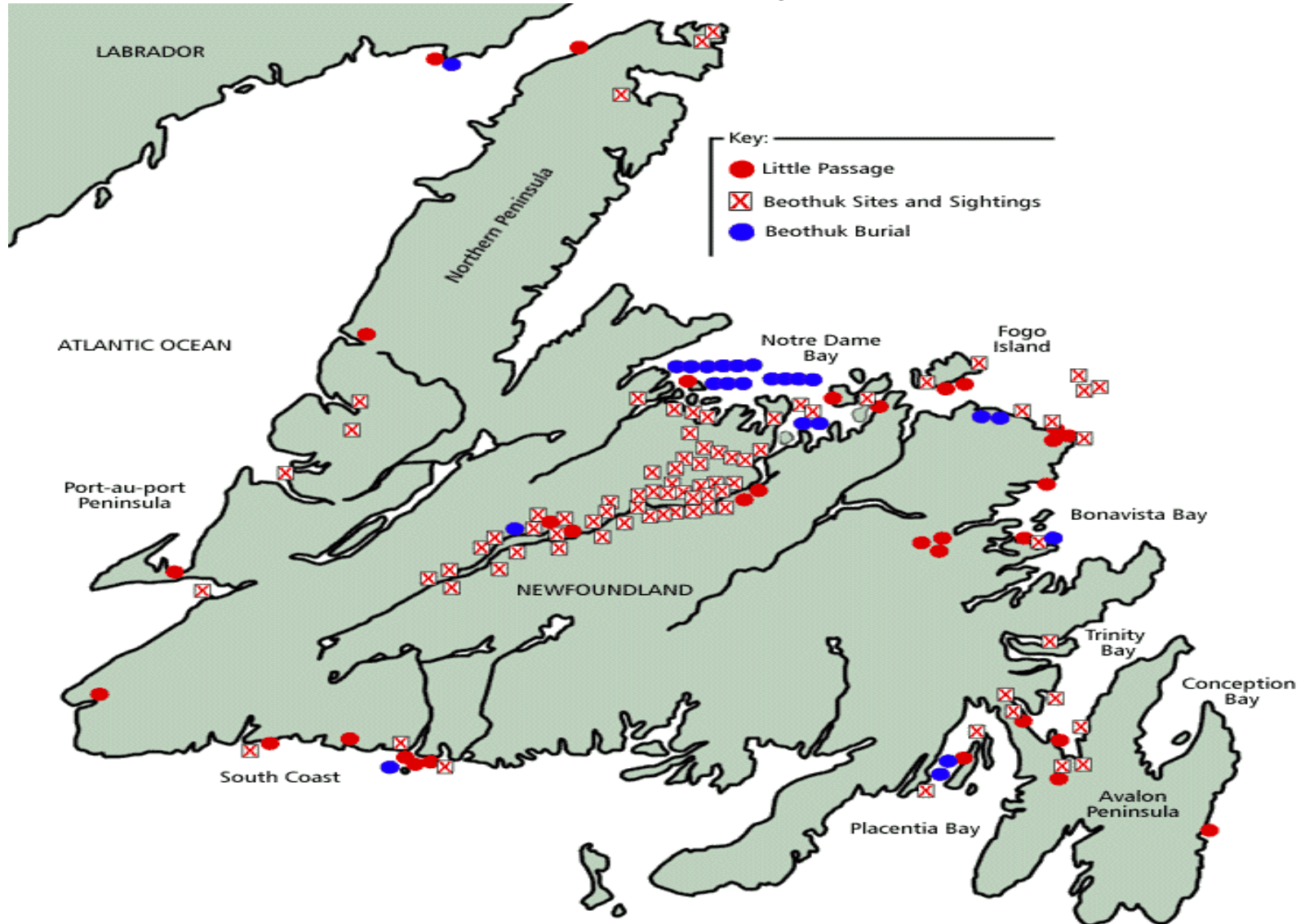
- **Portrait of Shanawdithit by W. Dicks.**  
Based on a miniature watercolour by William Gosse.  
Reproduced by permission of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London, England.  
From Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (Great Britain), *The Mission Field* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1856) frontispiece.



- **Demasduit.**  
Portrait of Demasduit (Mary March), painted in 1819 by Lady Hamilton. Original portrait housed in the National Archives of Canada.



# Where They Lived



- Avalon, Bonavista Peninsulas
- St. George's Bay
- Interior around Red Indian Lake

# Evidence of Contact

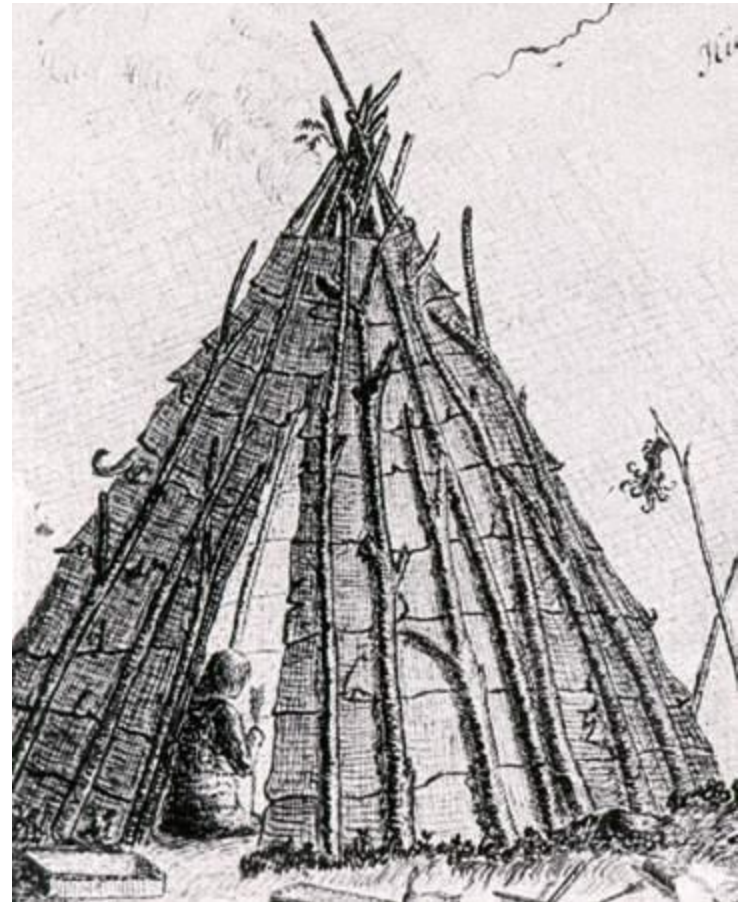
- "The Dancing Woman" by Shanawdithit.

From James P. Howley, *The Beothuks or Red Indians: the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland* (Cambridge: University Press, 1915) 248. Original drawing in the Newfoundland Museum, St. John's, Newfoundland.

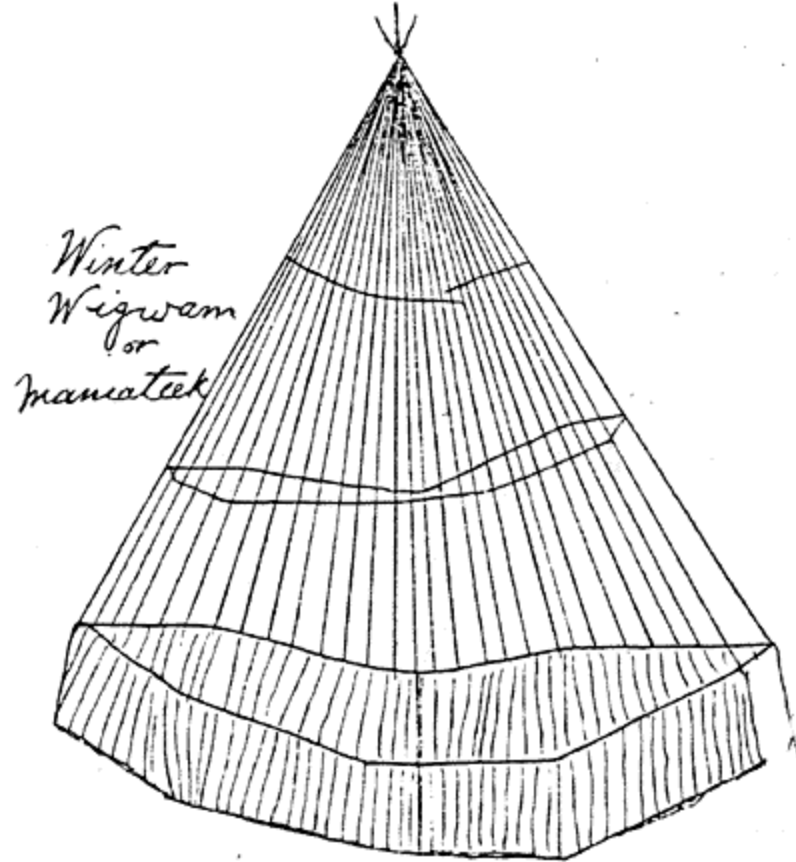


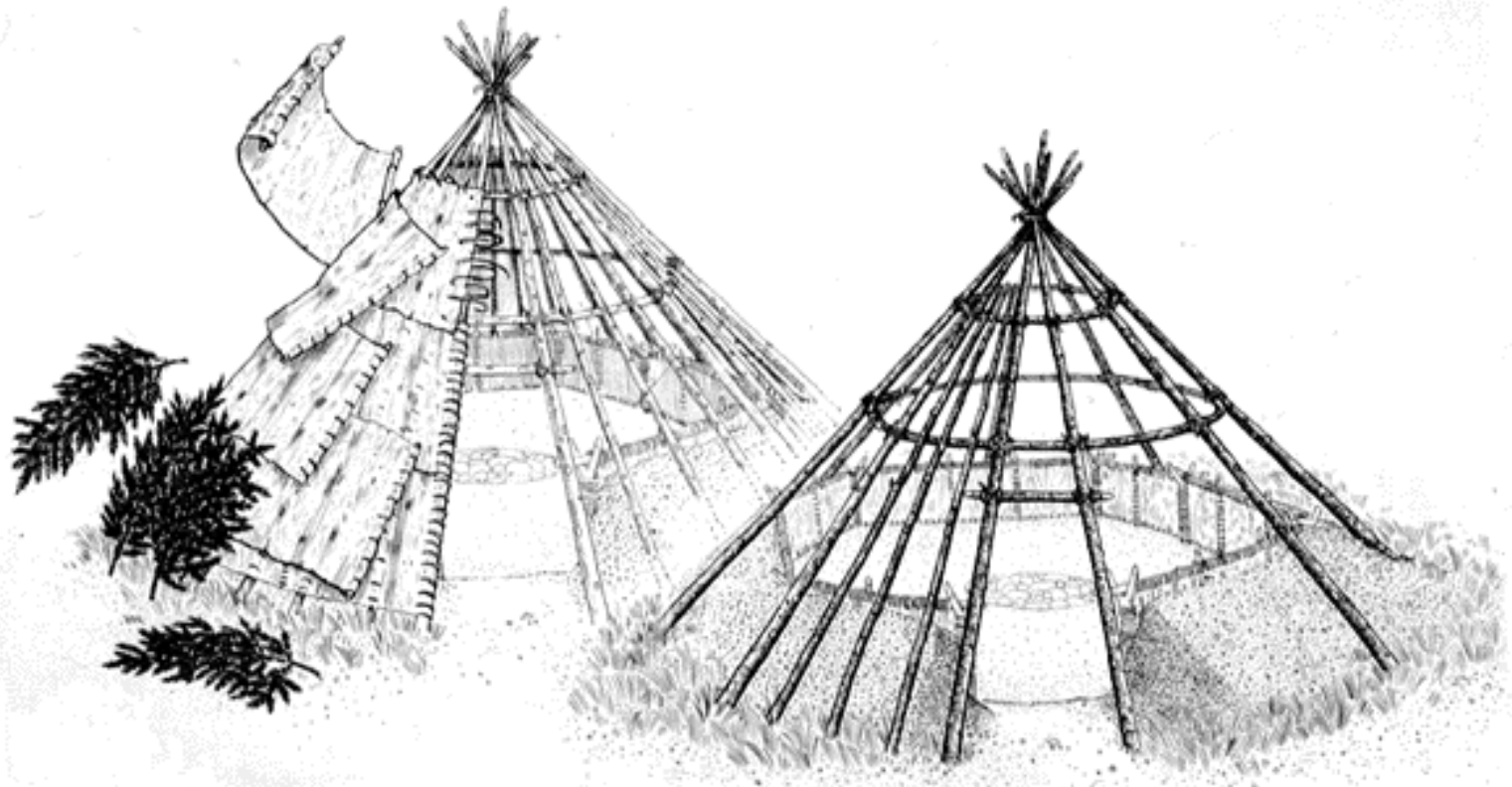
# Housing Styles

- Two main types
- Mamateek – summer and winter
- Summer – cone shape
- Birch bark, animal skin
- Winter more solid, insulated with moss



# Shanwdithit's Sketch Winter Mamateek



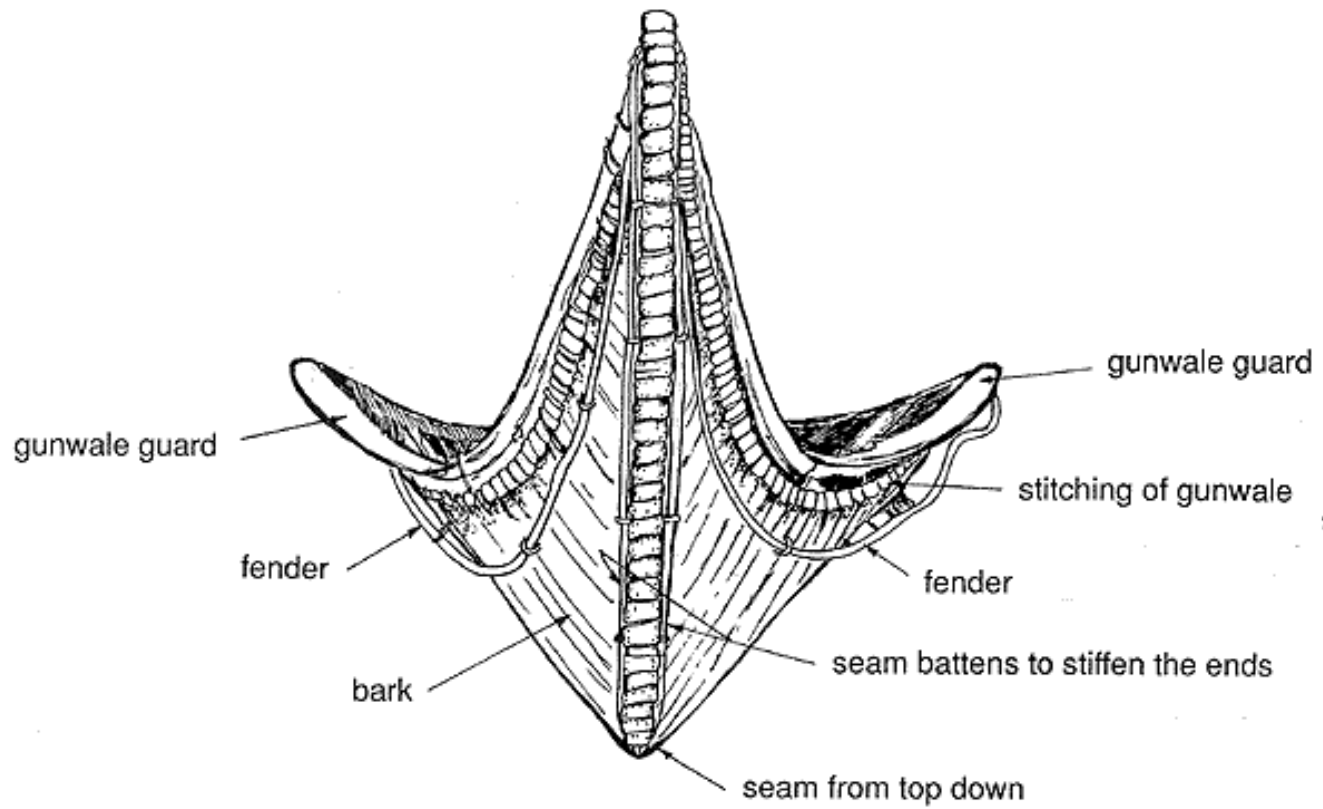


# Red Ochre People

- Covered skin with red iron oxide pigment
- Mixed with oil/grease
- Spiritual – life giving powers

# Transportation: Birch Bark Canoe





# Extinction

- Settlers forced them into poorer resource areas..
- Starvation
- Diseases – no immunity
- Some settlers killed them, chased them from their homes