



Cousin Silas
and the Moose Woman: A Baptist
Missionary meets the Mi'kmaq

with Storyteller Elinor Benjamin

The Rotary Arts Centre Corner Brook

March 14, 2016

ELINOR BENJAMIN I was born in Amherst, Nova Scotia, the descendant of a number of the 8,000 New England Planters who settled on the land confiscated from the Acadians after the Expulsion. After many wanderings, my tribe and I ended up back in Canada, where I received a Library Science degree at University of Western Ontario, and subsequently worked for the Newfoundland Public Library system for 22 years and lived in Corner Brook for 32 years. I developed an interest in storytelling in mid-life, and have found it to be a satisfying pastime ever since.

This project has been on my “to do list” for over a decade, but this year that I couldn’t ignore “The Signs.” When I suggested it to David Smallwood in the fall, it did not yet exist. There is nothing like a deadline to inspire. This is the maiden voyage of this piece. Feedback is welcome, especially to correct errors.

I was intrigued by Dr. Silas Rand even before I discovered he as was my second cousin five times removed, and before learning I had, for a long time, been telling a story, that he collected

Thank you to

My Voice Teacher, Dr. Jennifer Farrell

Dr. Doreen Helen Klassen

Dr. Ivan Emke

for helping me with the music

You are invited to a reception after the show.

I believe in pianos!

All proceeds from this concert are being donated to help with the purchase of a new piano for this facility.

PROGRAMME

Tout Passe

Le Grand Derangement

Silas Rand,
New England Planter

*The Invisible Boy or Tia'm
and Tia'mskw - Part 1*

Silas Rand
Baptist Missionary

*From Greenland's Icy
Mountains*

Silas Rand
Linguist, Ethnologist

Badger and the Star Wives

Song of the Stars

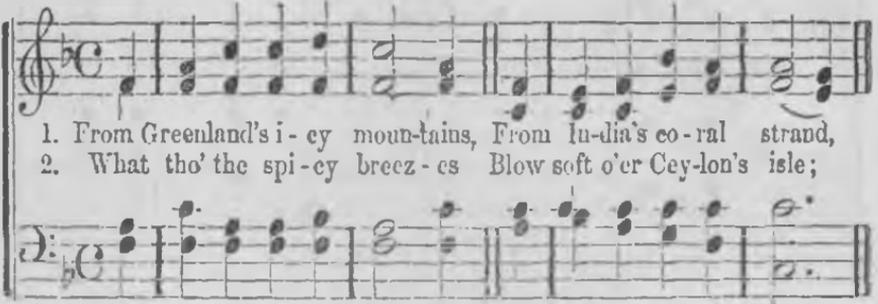
*The Invisible Boy - or Tia'm
and Tia'mskw Part 2*

Tout Passe

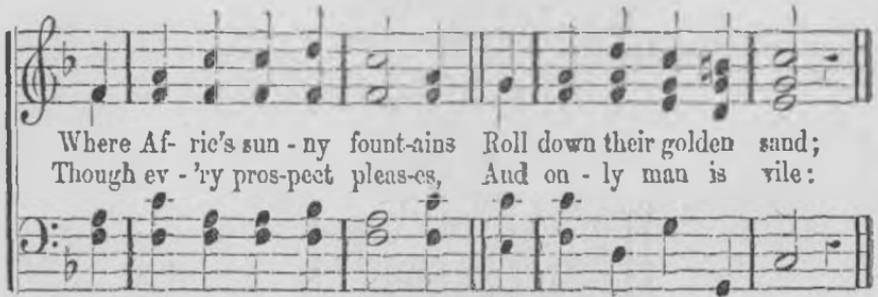
No. 19. From Greenland's Icy Mountains.

Lively.

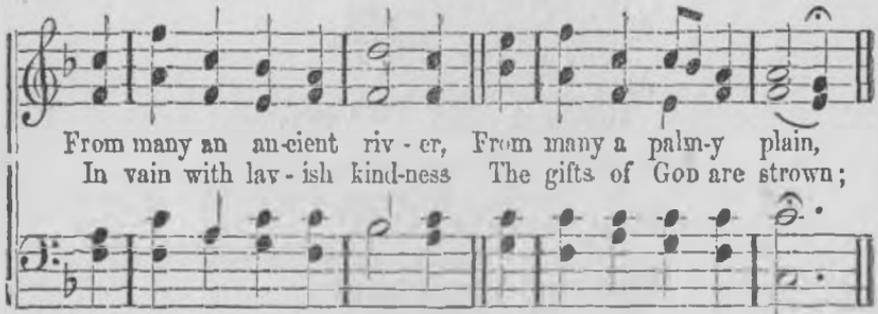
L. Mason,



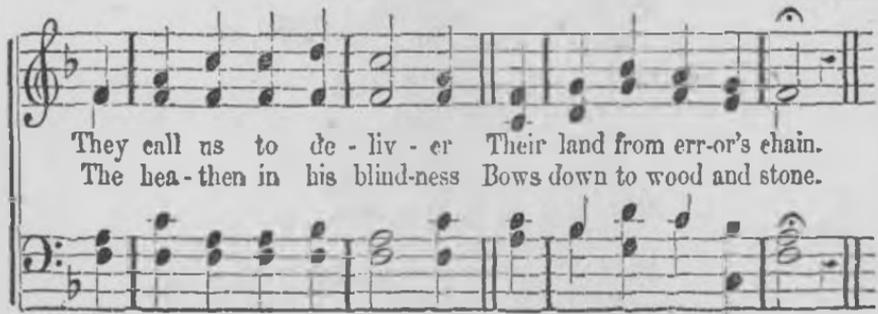
1. From Greenland's i - cy moun-tains, From lu-dia's co - ral strand,
2. What tho' the spi - cy breez - es Blow soft o'er Cey-lon's isle;



Where Af - ric's sun - ny fount-ains Roll down their golden sand;
Though ev - 'ry pros-pect pleas-es, And on - ly man is vile:



From many an an-cient riv - er, From many a palm-y plain,
In vain with lav - ish kind-ness The gifts of God are strown;



They call us to de - liv - er Their land from err-or's chain.
The hea - then in his blind-ness Bows down to wood and stone.

FROM GREENLAND'S ICY MOUNTAINS

From Greenland's icy mountains, from India's coral strand,
Where Afric's sunny fountains roll down their golden sand;
From many an ancient river, from many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver their land from error's chain.

What tho' the spicy breezes blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle;
Though every prospect pleases, and only man is vile:
In vain with lavish kindness the gifts of God are strown;
The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone.

Shall we, whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high,
Shall we to those benighted the lamp of life deny?
Salvation! O salvation! The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth's remotest nation has learned Messiah's Name.

Waft, waft, ye winds, His story, and you, ye waters, roll,
Till, like a sea of glory, it spreads from pole to pole:
Till for His ransomed people the Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator, in bliss returns again.

Words: Reginald Heber, 1819

Music: Missionary Hymn, Lowell Mason, 1823

Tout Passe Acadian soprano, Suzie LeBlanc discovered and recorded this ancient French hymn on her album of the same name. The English translation is by Sean Mccutcheon

Beneath the sky
always in flux,
everything passes on,
and no matter what you do
your days flow,
faster than the torrent
everything passes on

A great truth:
Other than eternity itself,
Everything passes on.
Let us put mercy first.
Time is precious
when, before our eyes
Everything passes on

Kids and adults,
Bosses and workers,
Everything passes on.
Everyone takes their place
And then disappears one day.
During our mortal sojourn
Everything passes on.

Like the ship
That glides far away over the water
Everything passes on;

So, without a trace,
Go prizes, Goods, and glories.
Everything passes on

Youth and beauty
Pleasure, strength, and health
Everything passes on.
All fades and wears away,
Nothing resists time.
Like a meadow flower,
Everything passes on.

Such is our lot.
Everything must die
And pass on.
The righteous person who dies
Can say contentedly
That strife, disappointment, and
sadness ...
All pass on.

Happy is the passerby
Who is always aware that
Everything passes on.
Nothing is more effective
For bearing sorrow
Than these two simple words:
All passes.

The Invisible Boy or Tia'm and Tia'mskw (Moose Person and Moose Woman) as it is known in the Ruth Holmes Whitehead re-telling. Rand collected it from Susan Barrs, sometimes called Susan Doctor. A note from Robert Bringham's *A Story as Sharp as a Knife* says

Susan Barrs was a Micmac mythteller and shaman, [who] dictated a number of texts to Silas Rand at Charlottetown in 1847 and 1848. These were published in 1894 in Rand's rather cavalier English translations. It appeared for many years that the originals had all been destroyed, with the rest of Rand's papers, in fire at Wellesley College in 1914. In 2003, however, Peter Sanger discovered the manuscript of one of these stories (Rand n.d.). It is published, in Micmac with a close English translation, in Paul & Sanger 2007. [The Stone Canoe] This seems to be the oldest securely dated text in Native Canadian literature.

The Missionary hymn – On Greenland’s Icy Mountains

On Whit Sunday, 1819, Dr. Shipley, Vicar of Wrexham and Dean of St. Asaph, preached in Wrexham Church in aid of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, on behalf of whose Eastern missions a Royal Letter had just been issued authorizing collections in every church. A course of Sunday evening lectures also began the same day in Wrexham Church, and Heber was to give the first lecture. Dean Shipley, his father-in-law, asked Heber on the Saturday to write ‘something for them to sing in the morning.’ ... All was done in twenty minutes. It was said to have been sung next morning in Wrexham Church to an old ballad tune, ‘Twas when the seas were roaring.’ From

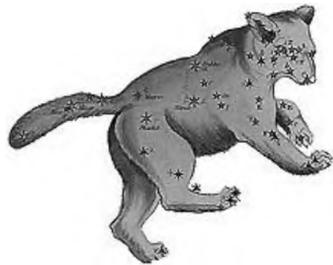
<http://cyberhymnal.org/>

Badger and the Star Wives is part of a larger story related to Rand by Susan Christmas, Sept. 7, 1870. She professes to have learned this story, and many more, when she was a small child, from an old blind woman on Cape Breton. This woman used to interest her and other children, and keep them quiet for a long time, telling them stories. I have extracted the portion heard tonight from Rand’s version, blending it with the version re-told by Ruth Holmes Whitehead in her book. Whitehead also lets the wolverine out of the bag in advising that Rand mistranslated the animal involved - Ki’kwa’ju, - as a badger and not a wolverine. As I’ve grown so used to telling it with Badger, I may have trouble correcting myself. At least the badger and the wolverine are from the mustelids family and neither is found in Nova Scotia. They are tenacious, strong and relentless, and both endangered species.

Song of the stars is from “Songs of the Lights” by Imant Raminsh is a Canadian composer of Latvian descent, best known for his choral compositions.. This piece was composed for children’s choir. Thank you Imant Raminsh for giving permission to adapt it for one *mature* voice. It has been recorded a number of times including with Toronto Children’s Chorus

We are the stars which sing;
We sing with our light;
We are the birds of fire;
We fly over the sky.
Our light is a voice;
We make a road for spirits,
For the spirits to pass over.
Among us are three hunters
Who chase a bear;
There never was a time
When they were not hunting.
We look down on the mountains.
This is the Song of the Stars.

This lyric was, in 1882 collected by the journalist and linguist Charles G. Leland from the Passamaquoddy on Campobello Island, New Brunswick. He translated it into English from Algonkian.



Thank you to the people who write books to help us ponder the cosmos and our wanderings therein. Here are just a few: Helena Blavatsky, Joseph Boyden, Robert Bringhurst, Joseph Campbell, J. Edward Chamberlin, Wendy Doniger, Eduardo Galeano, Sean Kane, Thomas King, Charles C. Mann, Daniel Paul, Jill Lepore, John Tattrie, Barbara Tuchman, Ruth Holmes Whitehead and Ronald Wright
Especially helpful were

Cornwallis, The Violent history of Halifax Jon Tattrie

Stories from the Six Worlds: Micmac Legends Ruth Holmes
Whitehead

*They Planted Well: New England Planters in Maritime
Canada.* Edited by Margaret Conrad

*To Be a Pilgrim : A Biography of Silas Tertius Rand, 1810-
1889.* Dorothy Lovesey

Cape Breton University's MIKM 2701: Learning from Knowledge Keepers of Mi'kma'ki, its first free, online, open-access, share-with-the-world Indigenous course presented by Stephen Augustine [http://www.cbu.ca/indigenous-affairs/unamaki-college/mi km-2701/](http://www.cbu.ca/indigenous-affairs/unamaki-college/mi%20km-2701/)

By Silas Rand (all items are available online in various archives)

Legends of the Micmac 1894

*Short Statement of Facts Relating to the History,
Manners, Customs, Language, and Literature of Nova Scotia
and P. E. Island.* 1850

*A Short Account of The Lord's Work among the Micmac
Indians with some Reasons for his Seceding from the Baptist
Denomination.* 1873