

# Praise for Previous Editions

“*We Were Not the Savages* is the Native American history book written for me. Here is a native author who used the Europeans’ own documents to prove their dastardly deeds and show that, when compared to the Mi’kmaq, the Europeans were the honorless savages. Daniel N. Paul puts history under the microscope, and it does not look anything like the history textbooks utilized throughout North America.”

— Alicia Karen Elkins, Rambles.NET review

“*We Were Not the Savages* is an intellectual blockbuster that shook the foundations of Nova Scotian history. The title alone upended the smug sense that this land was only ever European. The deeply researched book proved Mi’kma’ki is home to an ancient civilization, upon which everything else was built.”

— Jon Tattrie, journalist and author of eight books, including *Cornwallis: The Violent Birth of Halifax*

“Paul has written an excellent L’nu history book — one that provides a truthful view of the colonial history of Mi’kma’kik. I’ve used his book extensively in my Cape Breton University Mi’kmaq Studies Classes for 10 years, where L’nu (and non-L’nu) students learn history from an L’nu perspective. It is very important for students to learn the complete truth about Nova Scotia colonial history, warts and all, so they can have a full appreciation of Mi’kmaq society. This book has enabled me to teach the truth, and this has only made my teaching better. Wela’li’ek Dan for your knowledge.”

— Tuma Young, Mi’kmaq educator and human rights activist; assistant professor at Cape Breton University and president of the Nova Scotia Barristers’ Society

“Reading the pages of this book continually affirms for me how good it is to be a Mi’kmaq. I so wish that my father was still living. Wouldn’t he be so proud that such a book was available. I also wish that this history book was in existence years ago, a book that now empowers me and fills me with great pride to be a Mi’kmaq.”

— Sister Dorothy Moore, Mi’kmaq educator extraordinaire.

“Daniel N. Paul exposes a history that Canadians have long collectively celebrated as benign, and proceeds to deconstruct the popular myth that Canada was, and continues to be, a fair and compassionate country.”

— Marie-Lauren Gregoire, *Tekawennake*

“If you want to see Canadian history from a new perspective and better understand the situation of its Aboriginal peoples, this book is important.”

— Jennifer Wallner, *Nova Scotian Messenger*

“Citing a quote from the book: ‘If Europeans had gotten to know and had accepted Indigenous Americans and Africans as equals during colonial times instead of

adopting White supremacist racist beliefs, which have ruled supreme in negativity depicting both as savages for the better part of five centuries, these people of colour would not have suffered the indescribable hells they have.’ A very very powerful statement.... I’m really really proud that someone from Nova Scotia is writing this kind of material.”

— Burnley Allan “Rocky” Jones, African Nova Scotian human rights activist and lawyer

“This is not a happy story, but an attempt at genocide never is.... It is a tale of deception, greed, brutality, bigotry, and humiliation. Ultimately though, it is a study in perseverance and survival.”

— *Sunday Daily News*, Halifax

“Want an eye-opening ‘New World’ vision through Indian eyes.... Paul tells of the subjugation of the Micmac People.”

— *The Bookwatch*, San Francisco

“Here you’ll find the facts behind on-going stories that are still making headlines today.... Boat Harbour.”

— *Chronicle Herald*, Halifax

“Such an important read for those living in Mi’kma’ki and beyond, teaching of the Mi’kmaw world view, values and principles alongside the physical, spiritual and cultural violence they experienced at the hands of the newcomers and their governments while underscoring Mi’kmaq strength and resilience throughout.”

— Naomi Metallic, assistant professor of law, Chancellor’s Chair in Aboriginal Law and Policy, Dalhousie University, Schulich School of Law

“Your work is a valuable contribution to Nova Scotia literature, quite apart from the challenging message it conveys.”

— Hon. Lorne Clarke, chief justice of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court, Halifax

“I started reading your book, I got so angry I had to put it down to finish later. Congratulations. Somebody had to do it and you did a fine job.”

— Isabelle Tony Shay Knockwood, author of *Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi’kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Schubencadie, Nova Scotia*

“You have done a masterly, erudite, comprehensive, most valuable job with *We Were Not the Savages* and I congratulate you most sincerely.”

— Dr. Ian Maxwell, publisher, Little Tancook Island Press, Chester, NS

“This work is too well documented to discount. Those of us who are of British ancestry have to unlearn much that passed for history when we were in school and take a hard look at what some of our forefathers and mothers did.”

— E.E. Cran, book reviewer and critic, *Telegraph Journal*, New Brunswick

“There are many IFs in life. I cannot help but imagine what a beautiful country we would have today if France had not abandoned us. With the mutual respect that existed between Mi’kmaq and Acadians, all of Eastern Canada would count millions of Mi’kmaq and Acadians living together in prosperity in a truly democratic society.”

— Father Leger Comeau, president, Societe Historique Acadienne de la Baie Ste-Marie

“The result of your insight, experiences, commentaries and conclusions is an excellent book which deserves to be widely read and extensively used.”

— Dr. Bridglal Pachai, executive director, N.S. Human Rights Commission

“Your text is without a doubt a most fascinating and profoundly disturbing account of the history of Micmac civilization, and the courage shown in the face of diversity and hardship. We can all learn from past experiences, both positive and negative, such as the history of injustices and crimes against humanity, of which the Mi’kmaq and other Aboriginal peoples have been victims.”

— Michel Leduc, political advisor, Bloc Québécois

“When will Canada and the United States begin paying reparations to the Mi’kmaq and other tribes for what we did to them over the centuries? Daniel Paul makes a convincing case that the time is now! *We Were Not the Savages* is a fact-filled read that will make Americans of European descent very uncomfortable. I highly recommend it.”

— Thomas H. Naylor, professor emeritus of economics, Duke University

“I think your book *We Were Not the Savages* is excellent. Indeed, the best on the subject — I take my hat off to you!”

— Dr. Allison Mitcham, professor emeritus, University of Moncton

“*We Were Not the Savages* is a provocative and excellent book. A work that deserves the highest praise. It is brave, insightful, unflinching and above all honest. And, most important, it greatly enhances our positive images of Amerindians.”

— Barry Jean Ancelet, professor of French, University of Louisiana, Lafayette

“Count me in, too, among your book’s advocates.... [The book] knocks the smile off Englishmen who claim their colonial presence among Indians was ‘better’ than that of the Spanish.”

— Professor C. Blue Clark, interim director, Native American Legal Center, Oklahoma City University

“I was proud and honoured when I got a call from Dan ... asking me to attend and address this book launch.... It’s really informative.... Congratulations Dan!”

— Mi’kmaq Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy

“As an educator of Mi’kmaw history and culture, it is critical that I ensure that I am accurately sharing and teaching about events, customs, treaties, and governance of the Mi’kmaq. While colonialism had common characteristics across the Americas, and all Indigenous Nations were affected by it, it is important to know that each Nation will have its own history of what happened. *We Were Not the Savages* is an excellent resource that I repeatedly reference when it comes to the Mi’kmaq, our story, our culture, and our unceded territory.”

— Jarvis Googoo, Mi’kmaw lawyer, B.A. (*cum laude*),  
LL.B., Wetapeksi We’koqma’q aq Tleyawi Kjipuktuk

“*We Were Not the Savages* not only changed my perspective of history, it changed my understanding of the world, my place within it, and this unceded land I occupy as a settler. This is a crucial and underrepresented perspective on history, a must read.”

— Chris Benjamin, author of *Indian School Road:  
Legacies of the Shubenacadie Residential School*

“Once you see this land through the prism of Daniel Paul’s book, as an ancestral and unceded sovereign Mi’kmaq territory, you will never be able to unsee the truth — such is the power and grace of this incomparable book.”

— Dorota Glowacka, professor of humanities, University of King’s College

“Daniel Paul has made a very significant and compelling contribution, dispelling many misconceptions and outright distortions and falsehoods about Indigenous peoples in the Americas, especially the Mi’kmaw nation. Through thorough documentation, Paul meticulously destroys the myth of benevolent and well-meaning European — and Canadian — rule and colonialism. In a time of Indigenous resurgence and affirmation, *We Were Not the Savages* is essential reading.”

— Dr. Isaac Saney, director and teaching fellow, Transition Year Program, Dalhousie University, and adjunct professor, Department of History,  
Saint Mary’s University

The late Mi’kmaw Poet Rita Joe, after reading my book, congratulated me for putting into writing for posterity the suffering that the Mi’kmaq endured at the hands of the British colonials, and after Confederation, Canadian governments. She said that I had delivered “a powerful message.” Her words of praise and appreciation for something that took over ten years of my life to finish were music to my ears. I shall continue to savour them for the rest of my days!

FIRST NATIONS HISTORY

# WE WERE NOT THE SAVAGES

Collision between European and Native American Civilizations

FOURTH EDITION

Daniel N. Paul

Fernwood Publishing  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
& Winnipeg, Manitoba

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Editing: Douglas Beall and Brenda Conroy  
Illustrations: Vernon Gloade  
Cover painting: Self-portrait by Leonard Paul  
Cover design: Ann Doyon  
Text layout: Brenda Conroy  
Printed and bound in Canada

Published by Fernwood Publishing  
2970 Oxford Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3L 2W4  
and 748 Broadway Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 0X3

[fernwoodpublishing.ca](http://fernwoodpublishing.ca)

Fernwood Publishing Company Limited gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism under the Manitoba Publishers Marketing Assistance Program and the Province of Manitoba, through the Book Publishing Tax Credit, for our publishing program. We are pleased to work in partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia to develop and promote our creative industries for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.



Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: We were not the savages : collision between European and North American civilizations / by Daniel N. Paul.

Names: Paul, Daniel N., author.

Description: 4th édition. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: Canadiana (print) 20220265828 | Canadiana (ebook) 20220265887 | ISBN 9781773635637 (softcover) | ISBN 9781773635842 (EPUB) | ISBN 9781773635859 (PDF)

Subjects: CSH: First Nations—Maritime Provinces—History. | CSH: First Nations—First contact with Europeans—Maritime Provinces. | CSH: First Nations—Maritime Provinces—Government relations. | CSH: First Nations, Treatment of—Maritime Provinces—History. | LCSH: Maritime Provinces—Race relations—History. | LCSH: Maritime Provinces—Ethnic relations—History.

Classification: LCC E99.M6 P38 2022 | DDC 971.5004/97343—dc23

# Contents

Acknowledgements.....	x
Foreword.....	xi
1 Civilization, Democracy and Government.....	1
The Need for a Native American Historical Perspective.....	5
National Identity.....	7
The Horrors to Come.....	7
Mi'kmaw and European Civilizations.....	9
Mi'kmaw Government.....	14
Religion.....	17
Morality and Customs.....	18
2 Mi'kmaw Social Values and Economy.....	21
Early European Descriptions of Mi'kmaq Character.....	41
Trade and Commerce.....	47
3 European Greed and the Mi'kmaw Resolve to Fight.....	49
Invasion.....	52
Decline of the Mi'kmaq.....	53
European Greed.....	57
European Settlement.....	64
European Disrespect for Mother Earth.....	68
The Mi'kmaw Resolve to Fight.....	71
4 Persecution, War, Alliance and Terrorism.....	72
Persecution.....	73
War: Amerindian versus Amerindian.....	80
War: England versus the Mi'kmaq.....	84
Terrorism.....	92
5 The Treaty of 1725 and Proclamations.....	96
Treaties.....	97
The Treaty of 1725.....	99
Proclamations.....	109
6 Flawed Peace and the Treaty of 1749.....	110

7	More Bounties for Human Scalps and the Treaty of 1752.....	128
	Scalping Proclamation of 1749.....	128
	The Treaty of 1752.....	149
8	The Futile Search for a Just Peace, 1752–1761.....	154
	Lawrence’s Scalping Proclamation, Not Quite as Barbaric as Phips’s.....	179
	The 1760s Treaties.....	186
9	Burying of the Hatchet Ceremony of 1761 and the Royal Proclamation of 1763.....	189
	Burying of the Hatchet Ceremony of 1761.....	190
	The Royal Proclamation of 1763.....	200
10	Dispossession and the Imposition of Poverty.....	203
	The Imposition of Degrading Poverty.....	204
	Dispossessed and Landless.....	213
11	The Edge of Extinction.....	222
12	Confederation and the Indian Act.....	247
	Confederation.....	247
	The Indian Act.....	251
	The Guerin Decision.....	284
13	Twentieth-Century Racism and Centralization.....	318
	Education.....	319
	The Shubenacadie Indian Residential School.....	321
	Indian Day Schools.....	337
	The One Band Theory.....	341
	Centralization.....	344
14	The Struggle for Freedom.....	371
	Notes.....	435
	Select Bibliography.....	445
	Index.....	452
	About the Author.....	469
	About the Cover Painting.....	471



*To the memory of my ancestors,  
who managed to ensure the survival of the Mi'kmaw People  
by their awe-inspiring tenacity and valour in the face of virtually  
insurmountable odds! For more than four centuries these courageous, dignified and  
heroic people displayed a determination to survive the various hells on earth created  
for them by Europeans with a tenacity that equals any displayed in the history  
of humankind. May their brave accomplishment inspire the Mi'kmaq and other  
oppressed Peoples to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow!*

EXCERPT

# Acknowledgements

Thanks go to my wife Patricia, who gave her love and support during the many years it took to write the four editions of this book. The assistance she provided when needed was invaluable.

Thank you to the late Janet Kitz, who showed me the way to get a major book published and set up a meeting with the editor of Nimbus Publishing, which resulted in an agreement to publish the first edition of *We Were Not the Savages*.

Thank you to Errol Sharpe, who started off as my publisher at Fernwood, but quickly became a friend as well, and a gentleman with whom I have had many enjoyable hours of debating world issues.

Donald M. Julien was a key source and deserves a special thank-you. Without Don's support and assistance, the manuscript would have taken twice as long to complete. His knowledge and the research material he collected over the years were invaluable in crafting this history.

Vernon Gloade provided the drawings for this book, which aptly describe situations the Mi'kmaq faced in their struggle for survival. Thanks Vernon!

Tim Bernard was very helpful. When I needed some research done at the Nova Scotia Archives or copies of historical documents, he was the young friend who acquired such for me

Douglas Beall is another friend who deserves credit and thanks for the extra mile he travelled to help identify sources for the original edition. Also, a hearty thank-you to the many others who provided their support and encouragement!

For the original French translation, I owe a special thanks to a very nice lady who originally hailed from France, the late Nicole Jones. Her generous contribution of time and expertise helped make the French version possible. The third edition was translated into French by my good friend Jean-Francois Cyr of Verdun, Quebec. Published by Bouton d'or Acadie, Moncton, NB. Title: Ce n'était pas nous les sauvages, TroisiPme édition.

Bernie Francis, first class Mi'kmaq linguistic consultant and interpreter, probably the best in the occupation, did a great job as master of ceremonies for the first edition!

The late premier of Nova Scotia John Savage, who delivered the Keynote Speech at the 1993 launch of the first edition, by his presence gave the publication of *We Were Not the Savages* the publicity boost it needed to become the education tool I envisioned for it to become.

Finally, during the extensive revision of the first edition, Geoffrey Plank of the University of Cincinnati provided valuable data, and his assistance was greatly appreciated.

I give thanks to the Great Spirit for sending such good friends my way!

# Foreword

While I have learned a great deal from the writings of Indigenous Peoples from all over Turtle Island, there is one book that has been my anchor: *We Were Not the Savages*, by Mi'kmaw Elder and author Dr. Daniel N. (Danny) Paul. I have relied on his book as both a shield against the longstanding, widespread anti-Indigenous racism in society and as a powerful sword of knowledge, challenging racist and false government propaganda about our peoples. This book has grounded me in my own journey to learn more about my Mi'kmaw history and culture. Its core message rings as true today in the fourth edition as it did when it was first published in 1993. The so-called "Indian problem" has never been about us. There is nothing wrong with our people; we were not the savages — the leaders of the invading European countries were. This truth has stuck with me ever since.

I am an L'nu woman and citizen of the Mi'kmaw Nation. My home community is Ugpig'anjig (Eel River Bar First Nation) in unceded Mi'kma'ki. I am a lawyer, professor and author who has spent decades learning about the history of my Nation — the Mi'kmaq. I was raised in a large family who taught me what they could about the current injustices facing our Nation and how to advocate for change. My extended family is inter-married with many other extended families in the Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey Nations (Maliseet), who were also advocating for justice in our territories. I learned a great deal listening to elected and grassroots leaders, organizers and educators talk about the challenges we face in living, asserting and defending our sovereignty, lands and ways of life. My family helped ground me in a traditional form of Mi'kmaw education — the kind of education I didn't get in school.

I learned very little about Mi'kmaw history and culture in grade school, and what little was taught ran counter to what I had learned from my family. I will be forever grateful to my older brothers and sisters who taught me to be proud of who I am, an L'nu, and that the lands of Mi'kma'ki were never ceded or surrendered. They also taught me that the treaties with the British recognized our status as independent Nations. As a young Mi'kmaw girl in my teens, I followed the footsteps of my brothers and sisters in community-based advocacy work and doing what I could to support their efforts to end racism, misogyny and violence against Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey peoples and address the colonial legacy of poverty. I volunteered in different Indigenous groups and organizations that were working to advance safe housing, employment, family well-being, women's safety, treaty and land rights, and cultural revitalization. I was a sponge for knowledge and learned what I could from our community advocates.

As a young mother, I went to university to take Native Studies and learn everything I could, not only about Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey Nations, but all First Nations and Native American tribes. It was during my university studies that I

first came across the first edition of *We Were Not the Savages: A Micmac Perspective on the Collision of European and Aboriginal Civilizations*. When I opened the first page and read the dedication, I knew it would be different from all the other history books I had ever read about Native Peoples in Canada. I have read his dedication hundreds of times:

To the memory of my ancestors, who managed to ensure the survival of the Micmac people by their awe-inspiring valour in the face of insurmountable odds! The Micmac of today are the children of a truly dignified, noble, courageous, and heroic people.

This was the first time I had seen a history book talk about how amazing our people were. I had read so many other history books that talked about us as primitive or savage — backwards people who needed to be controlled and managed by colonial and, after Confederation, Canadian governments. Danny's book presented an entirely different perspective — a Mi'kmaw perspective — on our interactions with settlers and their governments. Long before there was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into Indian residential schools or the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Danny called out the horrors we experienced at the hands of the colonizers for what it truly was: genocide. He documented the violence and inhumanity committed by the colonizers, including the issuance of scalp proclamations, which offered bounties for the scalps of Mi'kmaw men, women and children. He reveals:

The slaughter was indiscriminate. Pregnant women, the old, and the infirm, were all victims; there were no exceptions.

He exposed the long-hidden truth in the historical record that we were not the savages — the majority of settlers and their governments were. My eyes were forever opened to the reality that we were survivors of one of the longest-running genocides on the planet. Our survival is a testament to our strength as Mi'kmaw Peoples; our survival was not by the goodwill of the colonizers.

After my Native Studies degree, grounded in the cultural teachings of my family and this new historical insight about Mi'kmaw Peoples from Danny's book, I went to do a bachelors, masters, and doctorate in law to better understand the colonizer's law — both its power and its weaknesses. All the while, I was seeking out the writings of Native academics and historians who could expose these hidden truths and help lay the groundwork to challenge the rhetoric of benign colonial intentions and fight back against current injustices, often perpetrated through colonial laws. During my extended legal studies and practice, I constantly scanned the library shelves for any new works by Danny Paul and was rewarded in 2000 with the second edition of this book and again in 2006 with the third edition. With each edition, new insights and political context were added.

In his second and third editions, he added to his previous work by calling out the many acts of racism against Mi'kmaw and other First Nations Peoples and put a finer point on the hatred associated with anti-Indigenous racism. He also added more context throughout the book on how racism continued into the twentieth century and has resulted in deplorable socio-economic conditions. The second and third editions also highlighted the many acts of unprovoked violence against the Mi'kmaq throughout history as nothing short of terrorism founded on settler arrogance, propaganda, greed and “egotistical madness” (page 76, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed). These two subsequent editions helped me better link historical atrocities to modern injustices — a genocide that continues. His anecdotes about his own experiences with racism and discrimination in his journey helped me understand the deeply rooted nature of racism against Mi'kmaw Peoples and indeed all First Nations in Canada. He cemented for me the fact that our collective mission is to not only require reparations for historical acts of genocide, but we must also take urgent action to end it in the here and now.

Native Peoples all over Turtle Island have all been deeply impacted and divided by government control over our identities, our lands and our governments. While different Nations have experienced different forms of genocide at different points in time and to varying degrees, generations of genocidal laws, policies and practices have wreaked havoc on our Peoples, and many did not survive. Government attempts to control our Nations through the Indian Act have not only divided us into status and non-status Indians, First Nation band members and non-band members, and those who live on- and off-reserve; but it still contains a notional blood quantum formula that ensures our legislative extinction. From the days of Indian residential schools, Indian day schools and Indian hospitals right into modern times with the Sixties Scoop forced adoptions, the current foster care crisis and massive incarceration rates of First Nations, this fourth edition is as relevant today as his first edition in 1993.

In this new edition, Danny provides an expanded explanation about what motivated him to pen *We Were Not the Savages* back in the late 1980s and early 1990s and how he got it done. It includes in the *About the Author* page a peek into his life accomplishments and in the *Praise for the Previous Editions* pages words of praise by renowned educators, jurists, human rights activists and other prominent individuals.

He talks about a double standard that requires full disclosure of past crimes against humanity committed against Caucasians and practically no disclosure about such crimes committed against Peoples of colour, not only in the Americas but around the globe.

Also included is additional information about Indigenous governance, especially the expanding role of Indigenous women in modern First Nations politics and when and how the ball started rolling in that direction. This political context helps in understanding how Indigenous women — once powerful leaders in our

sovereign Nations — were oppressed by settler governments imposing their values, which prevented their participating as decision-makers. Their stories have more often than not been excluded from the history books, and Danny's emphasis on the disproportionate impacts on Indigenous women helps set the record straight.

There is also new information about Indian residential and Indian day schools — essential context to help Canadians understand the genocidal laws, policies and practices that led to the widespread abuse and deaths in those schools. Danny's new work comes at a time when Canadians are struggling to understand the thousands of unmarked graves of First Nations children and the resulting trauma inflicted on their families. Years after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls for Action to act on unmarked graves and share information to locate missing children, federal, provincial and municipal governments, together with the churches and law enforcement, have yet to step up and fulfil these Calls to Action. Danny links this horrific legacy to the modern-day foster care crisis, and how, through determined advocacy and truth-telling, First Nations families have been able to force governments to account for the continued theft of our children.

Equally important are his revisions related to the Indian Act section, which has been fully revamped. It also contains new information about settlements of First Nations lands, land claims and how they came about. All of the core history is packaged in one book, with the most important updates. This is the kind of history we should all have learned in school, and one that will appeal to First Nations and Canadians alike. Danny's work has been the foundation of First Nations truth-telling in Canada.

Long before people started toppling statues of Sir John A MacDonal, Eggeron Ryerson and Governor Cornwallis, Danny Paul has been calling out celebrated historical figures for their roles in the brutal genocide of the Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous Nations. He has been trying to educate Canadians and First Nations alike about the brutal violence associated with the so-called founding of Canada. Since his last book in 2006, we have had both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 231 Calls for Justice, both calling on Canadians and their governments to make reparations for past genocide and end the current genocide. Yet, progress is slow, much slower than the crisis of genocide requires — something Danny has been saying for decades. He has also led grassroots movements to take concrete action to alleviate these issues and find permanent solutions.

I have followed Danny's work for so long that the first time I met him in person, I was so struck I didn't know what to say. Here is the person whose work helped me survive my university and legal studies, whose work became the foundation of my Native advocacy and whose stories spoke directly to some of my lived experiences. I wanted to tell him all this when I met him, but the words did not come out. I wanted to tell him he felt like an important part of my family,

and I couldn't. I wanted to tell him he reminded me of my father and his thirst for knowledge, but no words came to me.

Danny's work is something to which we should pay special attention. He is not your usual historian; he strengthens his work with lived experience — personal and professional — and unique insights based on decades of extensive historical research. In addition to being a respected Mi'kmaw Elder and Knowledge Keeper, he was the founder and first executive director of the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaw and has served on many federal and provincial commissions. His many positions with Indian Affairs and Northern Development (now Indigenous Services Canada), the last in particular, Nova Scotia District Superintendent of Lands, Revenues and Trusts, provided him with inside knowledge to write about its incompetency and dereliction of trust duty. He has never stopped actively researching and writing about issues impacting Mi'kmaw Peoples. In addition to his books, he written hundreds of op-eds for news outlets, including a multitude of columns published in the Halifax *Chronicle Herald*, and many articles, chapters and short stories in other publications. His research, advocacy and commitment to human rights has earned him many awards, including honorary degrees, the Order of Nova Scotia and the Order of Canada.

He made me a standing offer that if I ever have any questions or ever need information or clarification about issues related to the Mi'kmaw, I could reach out to him. You come across many people in life who make that offer, but few who actually follow through. From that point on, I could email him with questions about our culture, events that happened in history or his take on current issues and he always responded with whatever information I needed. Throughout the years, this communication has continued, and I felt so fortunate to have this relationship with someone who had so much knowledge. I often wondered how he had time for me. I always thought to myself, the next time I meet him in person, I am going to tell him how much his work, leadership and support mean to me. One of the next times I saw him, I was giving a public lecture at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, and there he was, sitting the front row — he had come to listen to what I had to say.

I could not believe my eyes, Danny Paul, a Mi'kmaw Elder I have respected for years, came to hear what I had to say. I didn't think anyone would be able to understand me with my shaky voice — my nerves getting the best of me — but Danny's nods of approval while I spoke helped me put my nerves at ease. Despite my best intentions, once the lecture was over and he came to speak to me, I forgot everything I wanted to say to him — to thank him for his book, his advocacy and his support. Instead, I stood and listened to him compliment me on my lecture and encourage me to continue my work. So, try to image how I felt when he contacted me one day and asked me to write the foreword to what he said would be the fourth and final edition of *We Were Not the Savages*. Even writing about it now, I am holding back tears. I've had to come back to this foreword many times,

trying to think of how I could honour this man's life's work. I am quite certain now that there are no words that could ever express the scope and importance of his work to me in both my personal and professional life or to Mi'kmaq generally.

I am so honoured to be a small part of this foundational work that will be relevant for the Mi'kmaq Nation and other First Nations for many decades to come. This book reveals the truth about our collective histories; work that confirms what we have always known as Native Peoples and work that helps re-educate Canadians about the truth. Danny's work will ensure that, despite the generations of genocide suffered by our Nation, our people will know their true history and be proud of themselves for our strength, determination and warrior spirits. Canadians too will benefit from learning the worst of their history and how it connects to injustices in the past so that they can move beyond shock, disbelief, sadness, anger and guilt and take positive steps to end the current injustices and make reparations for past ones.

The truths, histories and lived realities of Mi'kmaq Peoples, First Nations and Native American tribes since the European invasion began are as simple and as complex as that core message of this book: *We Were Not the Savages*. This book exposes the contradiction between the love, beauty, strength and freedom that settlers witnessed in the Mi'kmaq Nation, but didn't want to acknowledge, and the twisted ways in which they portrayed us to justify one of the most violent and longest lasting genocides on the planet – all for the sake of power and wealth. This is a book about our collective history, law, politics and society on Turtle Island and how the truth can set us on a new path. This book will ensure that my children and their children know that they are “truly dignified, noble, courageous, and heroic people.” For that, I am eternally grateful to Danny Paul — a true Mi'kmaq Warrior in mind, body and spirit that I will always consider family. I hope that as I grow in life, I can contribute to the Mi'kmaq Nation and our relationship with Canadians as much as he has with his truth-telling.

Welal'in, Elder Danny.

— *Dr. Pamela Palmater, professor and Chair in Indigenous Governance,  
Ryerson University*