**“The Beothuk on the Eve of their Extinction,”**

The Beothuk Indians of Newfoundland were faced with increasing hostilities and expansion from the European settlers, as well as a loss of access to resources to the coastal regions of the island in the historic periods. The Beothuk’s historically were one of the first aboriginal inhabitants of Newfoundland and first Native American peoples to come in contact with Europeans, dating back to over 1000 years ago. The majority of prehistoric Beothuk sites have been found along the coastline of Newfoundland, where they lived in relatively small populations prior to European contact. Living on the coastline allowed the Beothuk people to exploit the rich resources near the shore of the island.

The Europeans originally came to Newfoundland with interest in the offshore resources, namely the cod, and other fish; they had little desire to venture deep into the mainland of the island. European traffic of the coastal region had made it difficult for the Beothuk people to travel to the bird islands surrounding Newfoundland for birds and their eggs, and seals. A huge food resource for the Beothuk’s.

The economy in Newfoundland had become increasingly diversified as Europeans settled and grew into the island. The majority of the fish resources were taken up by the Europeans, putting major constraints on the Beothuk’s food supply. The Beothuk people would gradually be forced out of their coastal settlements and have to find new homes in the mainland. Interior settlements for the Beothuk people were said to serve social objectives and provide for a safe location for religious ceremonies.

The Beothuk individuals who decided to live upon the white man were sacrificed upon their return the Beothuk tribes. Many Beothuk people believed that the sacrificed would continue to be punished even after death, it was said that they would be denied entry to “the happy island,” the after world for the Beothuk people.

Many physical encounters between the Beothuk Indians and the Europeans were fuelled by retaliation. In one of the Beothuk’s retaliation efforts, they used a sea pigeon decoy. As a group of Europeans sailed into Shoal Bay in the late 1700s, the Beothuk’s tactically employed a ‘sea pigeon’ to see if the crew had any weapons before the Beothuk’s bombarded them with arrows to force them to retreat from the land.