

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

of

ODIN LEAVES

c 1000 to 1070

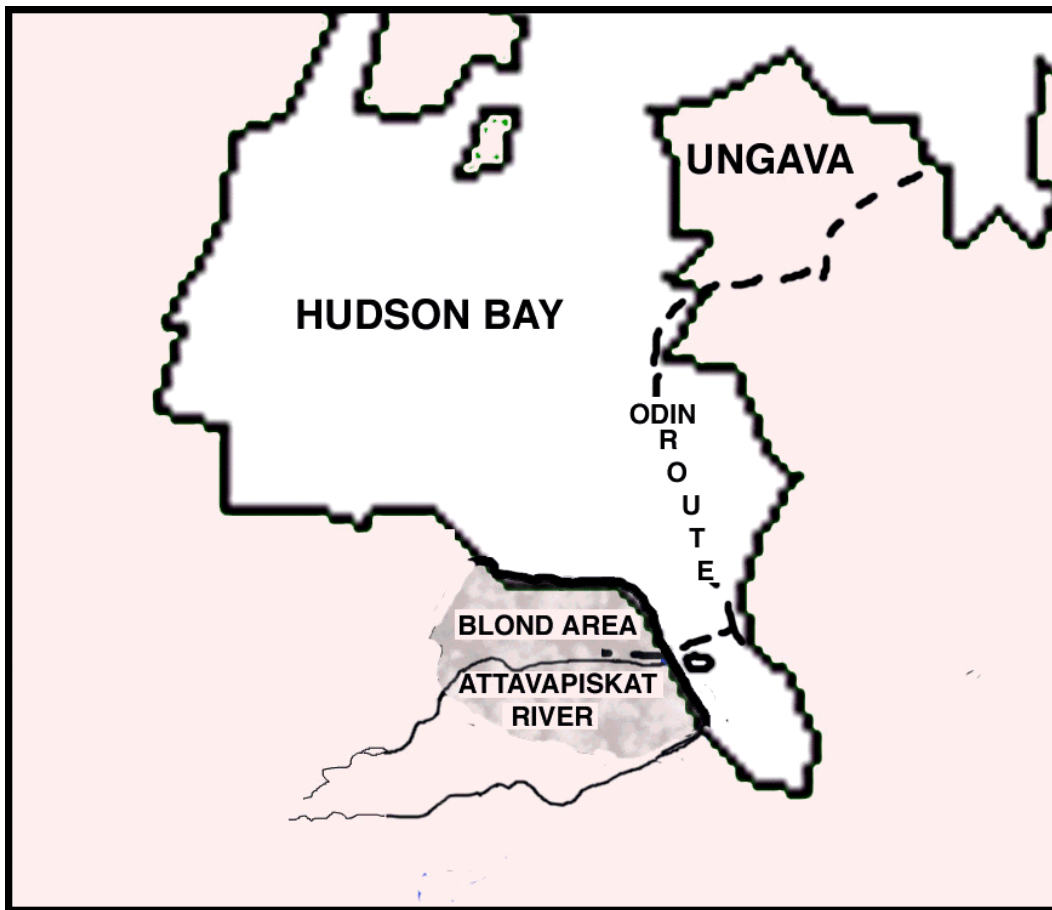


E. S. 7



E. S. 8

MIGRATION OF ODIN BELIEVERS



Beginning about the year 1000, the Odin believers in Greenland were confronted with converting to Christianity, staying in the midst of harassment, or migrating. Many families chose to migrate to the Blond Area where hunters had previously found plentiful fish, animals, and fowl.

ODIN LEAVES

In Greenland, fifteen years after the Vikings moved into Alban houses, an unknown man introduced a new religion, Christianity. The man had the powers of a Bishop.

King Olaf of Norvege had become a Christian. The scribes wrote that King Olaf imposed the Christian religion on Norvege, Iceland, Oakney, Shetland, and the Faroes. Greenland was not included on the list.

A monk in Iceland, two centuries after King Olaf, wrote his own version of history. The monk wrote that Leif Eriksson converted Greenland at King Olaf's request. That version of the Greenland conversion was written into the sagas.

Despite what the sagas say, Leif was not the man who converted Greenland to Christianity. But the unknown bishop who did lead the conversion arrived in Erik's Fjord while Erik the Red was still alive.¹ ~ Erik's wife converted to Christianity. She had a small church built, and she refused to have marital relations with Erik, who would not convert. To avoid confrontation with Erik, the Red, the unknown Bishop took up residence at Gardar in Hrein Fjord.² ~ The powerful landowners living in Hrein Fjord became Christians. They also advocated that everyone should be Christian, just like the people in Norvege and Iceland.

In Norvege some people who resisted the new religion were murdered. Other resisters were violently intimidated. Similar events occurred in Iceland. Starting with the people in Hrein Fjord, those resisting a change in religious beliefs were persecuted. An Odin believer with a productive farm in a good location was persecuted more than other people were. The Odin house-builders felt oppressed. Their families were tormented. Their livestock and crops were destroyed. The Odin house-builders grew fearful for their lives.

The Odin believers went to their priests. The believers said, "Let us go to Marrike." The Odin priests felt powerless in face of the new official religion. The most powerful house-builders in Hrein Fjord had converted to Christianity. Hrein Fjord became the power center of the people living in Greenland. So the Odin priests agreed that going to Marrike would be best for Odin believers.

By several boatloads, over several years the Odin believers made the journey to the swampy area on the west side of James Bay. About fifty families and around three hundred single hunters made the mini-migration.

¹ Greenland Missionary

² Einarsfjord

The people in the Blond area on the west side of James Bay would continue to have children with fair hair and blue eyes for the next six centuries.¹ ~

Many families who believed in Odin and all the hunters had left relatives behind in Greenland. As the years passed some Odin men, especially the hunters with parents still in the old Greenland house, sometimes returned to visit. Religion was one subject not mentioned during those visits. The Odin men often returned from the Greenland farmhouses with the belief that they, and their families, were better off in Marrike.

A decade after the migration of the Odin believers, the Norse hunters, who stayed on Ungava Peninsula after the boats left, were young Christian men.



¹ Fair hair

Vignette six

The DIVIDE

The next morning Azon was waiting for Pitolo at the waterway. He was hoping to help Pitolo go up the steps faster. Pitolo was willing, but they found the task more difficult than they had expected. Pitolo's left leg, without the foot, and Azon's stiff right leg took the best space on the narrow steps. Both good legs were forced onto the sloping ground beside the steps.

Twice they fell. The crowd that gathered to watch them laughed. They laughed too, and decided to go back to climbing the steps the old way, one person at a time.

The best method was to place Pitolo's right foot in the center of the steps and use the stick poked into the sloping ground. Azon's push on Pitolo's butt did help steady him as he hopped up to the next step. The pace was slightly faster than before because Pitolo did not have to readjust his balance as often.

At the top of the steps, Pitolo noticed the maidens further downstream. They were pounding maize to be used in the Big House celebration. He turned toward them. Pitolo and Azon walked along the bank until they found a grassy spot overlooking the activity. There, they both lowered themselves to rest. The maidens appeared not to notice.

Pitolo asked, "How is Maalan Aarum? He must have been really tired to make a story so short."

Azon replied:

"He was awake when I came out here to wait for you. He was also awake for a while last evening. I asked him why the story was short. I told him there should have been more to tell about the fifty families driven from their homes.

"He said there were many tales, but all the tales were about the same things: the neighbors threatened to destroy the Odin believers. They killed animals or burned buildings. People grew afraid. They went away and found a better place to live with neighbors they could enjoy."

Pitolo commented, "I would have liked to hear more about the woman who would not satisfy her husband."

Azon said, "Grandfather said that all those tales are difficult to put together to make a potent story."

"I am puzzled," said Pitolo, "We will have four engraved sticks for a story so short. We made none for the big fight. Why?"

Azon said, "Grandfather told me that the driving of the Odin believers to this land was more important. Their experience with the rich land enabled the Leni Lenape hunters to lead the migration."

Azon reached into his medicine bag and pulled out an engraved stick. He said, "Here is my engraved stick."



Azon continued:

I divided the scene into a "from" on the left and a "to" on the right. The mound on the left is the old mound land. On the right is the waving grass of the marshland to the west the big salty bay. The grieving people are low in the water, coming out of hiding.

Pitolo said, "Interesting. You identified the old land and the new land." Then he laid out his stick.



Pitolo said:

I showed the Christian people with three hairs, because Maalan Aarum said they believed they could talk to the Great Spirit in three different ways. I showed the Odin people with one hair. As Maalan Aarum suggested, I used the "from" place on the left and the "to" place on the right. I put the Lenape people on the 'from' land and the Odin believers with their one way to talk with the Great Spirit on the 'to' land. But I did not identify where the lands were."

Azon asked, "What do the three slash marks through the little line mean?"

Pitolo replied, "They help me remember the people as split asunder, weak, and trembling and their things as burned, torn, and broken."

Azon said, "We had better go see grandfather. We have much to talk about."



Azon's mother and his grandfather were just returning from a walk out to do necessary things. Grandfather appeared to be walking well, except Azon could see his mother's hand gripping tightly to grandfather's hand. Azon went forward to help.

When they were seated in their usual spots in the tepee with their liquids nearby, Maalan turned to Azon and asked, "What verse did you make for the fat man?"

"Grandfather," replied Azon, "I say::



"In that ancient country,
in that northern country.
in that mound country.
the best of the Lenape
were mound men."

Grandfather smiled, saying, "Good. Ancient, northern, and mound are all facts."

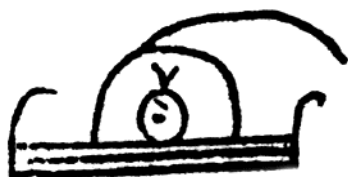
Pitolo chimed in, "What about the hunters?"

Maalan Aarum was still smiling when he replied, "Obviously the hunters were not in that ancient, northern, mound county. That is where the homebuilders lived. Azon is right. The best of the Lenape were men who controlled the mounds, or hollowed out homes if you prefer."

Pitolo felt embarrassed for missing the obvious. He said, "Oh." Then he remained silent.

Maalan Aarum turned to Pitolo and asked to hear the verse for the engraved stick with the powwow on it.

Pitolo said, "I hope I have this correct. I say:



"All the cabin fires
of the land were disquieted.
And all said to the [powvow],
'Let us go'."

Maalan Aarum continued to smile, "Pitolo you have a way with words that is very interesting. Yes, all the fires, and the people too, in many of the houses in that ancient, northern, mound land were disquieted. Do you both understand how big a happening we are talking about?"

Azon answered, "It would be like the wolfpacks telling us that we must worship the turtle shell and not the Great Spirit."

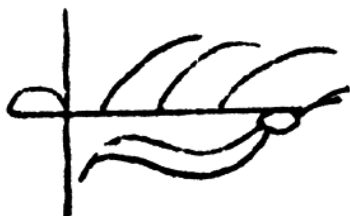
Pitolo added, "It would be like the wolfpacks telling us that the dead should not be buried and that they will not live again in a beautiful country."

Maalan Aarum said, "You both have the right thoughts, but replace the word 'wolfpacks' with 'powerful sachems of our own people'."

Pitolo responded with alarm, "Can that happen?"

Maalan Aarum said, "It happened once in the history of our people. Powerful men from the outside compelled the powerful Lenape leaders to do bad things to those who did not believe as the Lenape leaders. That is why it is such an important happening to remember. Let me see your own engraved sticks and tell me your verses. Azon, you go first."

Showing his engraved stick, Azon said,



"To Akomen Land
They went forth
Going away,
Earnestly grieving"

Grandfather paused for a moment, then he said, "The verse is good. The engraving you have for a grieving person may be difficult for your grandsons to understand. They may not know that a person who is underwater is grieving. Pitolo what do you have?"

Pitolo passed his engraved stick to Maalan Aarum and recited



"Split asunder, weak, trembling
Their land burned,
They went, torn and broken
To Akomen Land

Maalan Aarum said, "You do have a way with words. I could not have said it better. What are the three slashes through the line?"

Pitolo said, "Those are to remind the speaker to tell about the three bad happenings to the people and the three bad happenings to the things of the people."

Maalan Aarum replied, "That will be a difficult concept for your grandsons to know. But, I guess, if they understand that they are to say three miserable words about the people and three miserable words about their things, whatever words they chose will make the story."

Maalan continued, "I will use all four of these engraved sticks. This period was a traumatic time for the Leni Lenape in mound land and for our ancestors who came to the Blond Area."

Pitolo responded, "Something is out of balance between the engraved sticks and the story. You now have four sticks about the people being driven out of their homes, but your story was very, very short."

Maalan studied his knees for a moment. Then he raised his head to look Pitolo in the eye. He said, "I thought so too. But remember the event happened nine grandfathers ago. I think it is better to say what little we know correctly than to say too much and be wrong. I am pleased we could make four engraved sticks to emphasize the event."

Maalan took a sip, then he said, "An even more important event happened before one more grandfather had passed away. You will not prepare an engraved stick for that event because the engravings to remind you of that happening are all around. I am sure you will know what it is, when I finish the story in the Big House tonight.

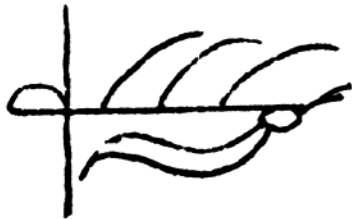
"Let us all rest before the ceremony tonight. Tonight will be your first night as aarum-tids in the Big House. This will be the start of my last few nights in a Big House on earth. I want the people, and especially you, to remember the story I tell tonight."



In that ancient country,
in that northern country,
in that mound country,
the best of the Lenape
were mound men.



All the cabin fires
of the land were disquieted.
And all said to the powwow,
'Let us go'..



To Akomen Land
They went forth
Going away,
Earnestly grieving



Split asunder, weak, trembling
Their land burned,
They went, torn and broken
To Akomen Land.

Vignette Seven

The CROSS

That evening, Pitolo and Azon felt very alive as they waited beside Maalan Aarum, while the people moved through the door to the steady beat of the drum.¹ ~The drum signaled a stop with four loud beats. Then it fell silent. The people sat down along the walls.

The drums started again with a loud beat made by both drumsticks falling on the drumhead at the same time. The Big House leader followed by his three assistants led off. In order after them came the two sachems, the two paves, the two war leaders, the two medicine men, and, finally, Maalan Aarum followed by Pitolo and Azon. The leaders walked once around the fires. The Big House leader shook hands and talked with the people. The drums beat softly and slowly but cued on his movement as much as they could.

Pitolo and Azon grew uncomfortable. Maalan Aarum had not warned them that they, too, were supposed to speak to people, one at a time. So they said little as they moved along the lines of people. They were not accustomed to hands reaching out to touch them in a caressing manner. They were startled to have a handful of flowers thrust into their hands by the maidens they sometimes saw besides the stairs.

The drums reached the loud four beat ending. The Big House leader sat down on his bench. The sachems, paves, war leaders, medicine men, and aarum-tids went to their seats. Azon sat beside Maalan Aarum. The Big House went silent. For a long pause only the crackle of the fires was heard.

The Big House leader nodded to both paves. They stood and stepped to the center of the house under the red masks. The pave of the north village began with praise of the Great Spirit. He directed his remarks to the north and then toward the door on the west of the Big House. The pave of the south village gave praise to the south and then to the east. A drum roll starting slow and soft, then ending hard and fast followed his final thanks.

Two men, who had walked quietly to the fire in front of the red masks, laid their loads of small logs on the fire. The logs were soaked in fat. The flames rose high, lighting the room as the drums thumped the end. Both paves extended their right arms toward the Big House leader and said together. "The light of the world has entered the Big House.

The Big House Leader stood gazing into the fire for an appropriate length of time. Then he took one step forward, raised his arms and said, "It is our tradition to hear the aarum-tids stories last, because we do like to save the best to last.

"But the Great Spirit, who joins us tonight, has been waiting sixty-one long summers to bring home the best aarum-tid we know. This past week the Great Spirit showed us he was tired of waiting. He may come back to take Maalan Aarum before this Big House is

¹ Drum

over. So, we want to hear from Maalan Aarum first every evening. Then we will send him to rest. In the next few nights we hope we can hear as many of his stories as the Great Spirit will allow.

"We all call ourselves "Leni Lenape". We also know that most of us have ancestors from the Algän kin. Last night our fighting men listened to a story of the big fight between the Leni Lenape and the Algän kin. At that time, nine grandfathers ago, the Leni Lenape and the Algän kin were bitter enemies. But the Great Spirit did not want his best peoples fighting each other so he struck a small spark that grew into the blazing fire of friendship of today. It is easy to remember big fights. It is difficult to remember when a small spark started to change our world. Maalan Aarum remembers. For twenty-eight summers I have listened to him tell the story using the exact same words, as though they were engraved words. Our Big House, today, with Leni Lenape and Algän kin descendants enjoying a meal together, happened because of the small spark lighted by the Great Spirit about nine grandfathers ago. Please be silent and listen with care to Maalan Aarum.

In the silence, Azon helped Maalan Aarum to his feet. Pitolo scurried from his seat to the spot where Maalan Aarum would stand. Maalan Aarum walked erect to the spot and turned to look the length of the Big House. With a shake of his arms he shook off the supporting hands of Azon and Pitolo. But they stood near by.



Maalan Aarum spoke with a firm voice;

"A light, dry snow fell from a gray overcast sky. Five men were walking, slowly, on the ice near the shore. The men were east of the north Twin Island in the big salty bay to the north.

"The lead man had blue eyes. He was a tall man. The next two men behind him were almost as tall. One had blue eyes; the other had brown eyes. Their blond hair was not visible because all three men wore hooded jackets.

"The last two men, one on each side, were even bigger. They were Tunits, who stood about a half a head taller than the tallest blue-eyed man. The Tunits wore high fur collars made with three folds. The upper edges of the folds were high enough to reach the top of their heads, which were covered with a beaver skin cap.

"The blue- and brown-eyed men had left their boat that fall to have an adventure in Merica. They had visited many nights around the boiling pots in the Tunit camp.

"When the blue-eyed men asked about the people to the south, the Tunits had said, "Those people are tough. They can endure pain, cold, and hunger longer than most of us can. They are not big. Most of them are smaller than the smallest of you. Their hair is black. Their eyes are black. The color of their sharp faces is brown. They tell stories, of their ancestors coming from the east

over the great salt sea, our stories. They are very brave. They are loyal to their friends, deceptive to their enemies. Those are the reasons why the Tunit want to keep them for friends.

"Thrilled, by those talks, the three men with brown and blue eyes begged the two Tunit to guide them south. The Tunit agreed but only on the condition that if a fight came up, the Tunit would not side with either friend.

"So, the five men set out on their journey. After half a moon's time traveling together, they moved slowly along on the ice but close to shore. They were in a spread "V" formation with the Tunits last on each side. They watched the edge of the forest for animals and for...

"A flicker of a shadow between two trees.

"The lead blue-eyed man called out, 'Man!'

"I see three,' cried the brown-eyed man.

"Four,' said the second blue-eyed man calmly.

"More,' said the first. Turning his head to the Tunit on the left, he asked, 'What do we do now?'

"You do this,' the Tunit answered as he set his bow down and let his quiver slide to the ice. 'They are using crossbows.¹ They rarely miss. If they do, they will run you down.'~

The brown and blue eyed men lowered their bows and quivers. On the shoreline, a man stepped out from the cover of the trees. He came slowly forward on snowshoes. When he reached the ice he slipped out of the snowshoes, laid down his crossbow, and raised his coverlet. He pulled out a knife and laid it on the ice, The three Norse men untied the lower half of their jackets. Each man laid a knife on the ice.

"The man with black hair came forward. His black eyes flickered as he scanned each man. Black eyes turned to a Tunit and asked, in his Algän tongue, 'Friends?'

"Good friends,' answered the Tunit, who had learned a little Algän from previous trading trips.

"The black-eyed man studied the biggest blue-eyed man closely. Then said, 'Blue eyes, not good. Ancestors say they are vicious enemy.'

"The Tunit said, 'Many moons, good friends.'

"Black eyes said, "Do not trust. When over there, maybe safe." The black eyes man was pointing west across the big salty bay to the other shore out of sight. "But we always have to watch, always!"

"Then he signaled for the three men to open their jackets wider. All three men untied the top tie and opened the jackets wide, revealing ivory crosses — symbols of their new religion — glinting in the sunlight.

¹ Crossbow

"Quash!" shouted black eyes.

"What?" asked blue eyes.

"He sees your cross," said the Tunit with a smile.

"Is that good or bad?" asked blue eyes.

"Wait," the Tunit replied.

Black eyes reached slowly to his neck with both hands and carefully pulled up on his necklace until the pendant fell free. The pendant was a cross.

Blue eyes asked, 'You are a Kristen?'

Black eyes replied, 'K'nistenaux.'¹~



¹ Slough

Vignette eight

The CROSS and The WORLD

Azon lowered himself down the south steps and leaned back onto the bank to wait for Pitolo. The early morning sun was filtering through the trees. There was a slight chill in the air.

On the north bank of the waterway Azon saw his sister and the maiden from the north village lay down their deer hides. Then the maidens sat down and opened bags of beads. Azon could see that each was working on the upper piece of a moccasin. The design, more than half-done, was a white cross in a blue background.

Pitolo came out of the distance with his usual skip-poke lurch. Pitolo took a good look at the maidens. They ignored him. He skipped his way down the north steps. After crossing over the waterway, he rested against the bank beside Azon.

Pitolo said:

I can see why Maalan Aarum thought we did not have to make an engraved stick for the cross story. The cross token is everywhere in the village. I have been looking more closely at what people are wearing . One person in four people is wearing the cross.¹ ~ Even those maidens are working it into moccasins. I would like to be the man who wears one of them.

Azon replied:

We treat the cross as a decoration or a personal token of our faith in the Great Spirit. It is our private belief. Few people ask us, 'is the cross only decoration or for something more?' Yet, in grandfather's story last night, the sight of a cross was compelling enough to change men's behavior. Does the world beyond these trees think the cross means more than we do?

Pitolo said, "That is something to ask Maalan Aarum. Let us start skipping."

¹ Cross symbol



Maalan was sitting on the large stone near the tepee. He waved Pitolo and Azon to come and sit near him.

Azon said:

When you finished your story last night I saw many people touching or looking at their crosses. I had not realized there were so many. Some crosses were very small within a big design on a dress or jacket. Some were big crosses hanging from a necklace.

Maalan smiled and said, "I think you may have missed some crosses. The older wives who grew up in Ojibwa or K'nistenaux villages had on their black clothes. Did you see the little design that appeared to rise upward and then spread into two graceful arcs.¹ ~ The arcs usually end with a big dot at the end."

Pitolo said, "I know what you are taking about. My Ojibwa grandmother told me they were crosses without a top. She told me that the son of the Great Spirit died on such a cross."

Maalan Aarum said, "I have heard those tales. I avoid getting into a debate about which token is more valuable. I suggest you do too."

Azon asked, "Grandfather, in your story last night, men who were enemies behaved differently when they saw a cross on the other man. Is the cross token really that powerful?"

Grandfather looked at the trees above the palisade walls, then he looked both Pitolo and Azon in the eyes and said, "I do not really know. Yet, I have heard tales from the older people in Eastman Land and from men who have made their quest as far east as the stone tower in Akonsee.² ~ Apparently, there were people in the world beyond the salty sea in the east who either thought the cross was a powerful token or who used the cross as an excuse to do powerful things.

My knowledge of those things is very sparse. I will tell you what I know, but you must try to learn more, much more, from people who may know the whole story



Not an **Engraved Stick** in the *Walam Olum*

¹ Tau cross

² Eastman Land

FACTUAL FICTION

CROSS SYMBOL

A review of old and modern photographs of various Indian Tribes indicated that the Algonquins did and still do display the cross on their clothing, tepees, or inside their homes. One person in four displayed the cross symbol, usually the equal armed cross of St. Ninian often with tied ends. The display to person ratio is higher than any other tribe including tribes in the southwest where missions worked sooner and longer. An entire museum display of Indian artifacts and photographs in Sacramento, California revealed only two cross symbols.

(Return to Cross symbol place)

CROSSBOW

A photograph of a crossbow is shown in HNAI Vol. 15. Underhill, 1953, p. 79 cites the crossbow first of the hunting methods of the Northern Hunters. **(Return to Crossbow place)**

DRUM

The Merica and Akomen use of drums are fictional but based on observations of drums at dances in America. The Greenland drum is fictional. Unsubstantiated authors mention the conversion of old Odin dances to Christian use, but no substantiated reference to a drum in Old Norse history has been located. . **(Return to Drum place)**

EASTMAN LAND

Eastmain (Eastman) is an area on the east shore of James Bay. The Eastmain River of today used to be the Slood (sleet) River of the Algonquins. The name appears during descriptions in Hudson Bay books as if Eastmain was a known location as opposed to building a trading station and naming it, usually for Englishmen.

The Alban migration to Eastmain via Ungava Bay and the communications with the Albans in the St. Lawrence River valley might have happened. The Cree and the Micmac wore similar, distinctive clothes.

Jesuit Albanel provides tantalizing, but not conclusive, support for this conjecture. In the seventeenth century he describes the unexpected yearning of the people in the southwest James Bay Region to be baptized. (*JRAD*, Vol. LVI, CXXVIII) **(Return to Eastmain Region place)**

EINARSFJORD

In Ivar Bardarsson's time (1342-60) Einarsfjord was the fjord just south of Eriksfjord in the Eastern Settlement of Greenland. Gardar, the Bishop's residence and the cathedral were at the head of this fjord and Hrein Island was at the mouth.

The original name for Einarsfjord might well have been Hrein Fjord three centuries earlier. Hrein Island lies in the mouth of the fjord. There are examples of fjords and the island in their mouth having the same name. (i.e. Eriks Island was in the mouth of Eriksfjord.). The "ar" syllable is often inserted after some Norse nouns. (i.e. see Bardarsson above.) Thus the original fjord name could have been Hreinarfjord, Over the centuries the "Hr" might have faded away and a "s" would have slipped in to make the vocalization smoother. The vocal changes are well within the expectations of language morphing. **(Return to Einarsfjord place)**

FAIR HAIR

Charles Earl Funk wrote a foreword to Sherwin's *The Viking and the Red Men* on February 1940. He wrote "the tribe of "white Indians," some with "fair hair and gray eyes," said to be still inhabiting the west shore of James Bay and speaking a Cree dialect, has also been advanced as such an indication" [of Norse settlement.] **(Return to Fair hair place)**

GREENLAND MISSIONARY

Magnus Magnusson reported that Jon Johannesson of Iceland proved conclusively that Leif did not introduce Christianity to Greenland as the sagas report. (Magnusson, 1966)

(Return to Greenland Missionary place)

SLOUGH

The Gallic dictionary defines "slough" to mean "multitude of people". Transformation of "slough" through time and cultures to the French "naux" or the English "neaux" used by Mackenzie is a real possibility. Mackenzie named several other tribes with a "neaux" syllable. The *HNAI* lists at least five tribes using variations of "neaux". (Vol. 15, pp. 768-770) **(Return to Slough place)**

TAU CROSS

The trim on the black clothes of the Micmac, Cree, and Ojibwa repeated a tau cross throughout the pattern. A similar style tau cross relic from the end of a priest's staff was found in Iceland. The relic is considered to be a Norse artifact, but perhaps it was Alban, because tau crosses are not seen in Norse drawings. (Sawyer, 1997, p. 111)

(Return to Tau Cross place)