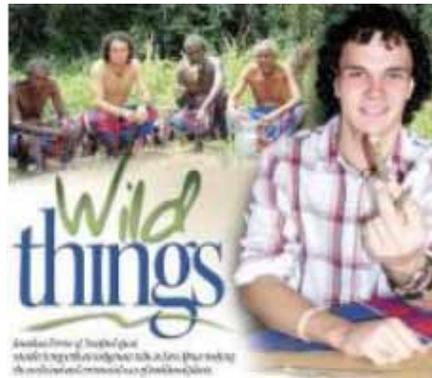




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<http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/Business/Natural-resources/2007-05-05/article-1295667/Wild-things>

Mary MacKay  
*Wild things*

**The Guardian - Business - Natural resources  
Wild things**

Published on May 5th, 2007

Jonathan Ferrier of Stratford spent months living with an indigenous tribe in East Africa studying the medicinal and ceremonial uses of traditional plants

Topics : **Canadian International Development Agency , St. Francis Xavier University ,Coady International Development Institute , Kenya , East Africa , Cape Breton**

Sometimes something as simple as a headache or stomach ailment remedy is as close as the medicine cabinet or as far away as the local pharmacy. However, for Jonathan Ferrier of Stratford, P.E.I., who was an apprentice to a medicine man for the indigenous Giriama tribe in eastern Kenya, cures for common and not-so-common ailments required a barefoot hike through the forest of Kaya Fungo. "These are the oldest people on earth, the oldest society. We were living in the cradle of civilization there, the first languages, the first dances, the first anything," Ferrier says of this indigenous tribe with whom he lived and worked for four months, documenting and describing traditional medicines in addition to other ethnobotany-related things.

"When I got there, there had been nothing written about this tribe in depth, and so I was taking notes on a 1,500- to 1,800-year tradition from this kaya for the first time," Ferrier says. "A kaya is a forest fortress. Inside this kaya is a clearing and then it's surrounded by forest."

**(Continued on Page 2)**



**1910 Indian Head Type Gold Quarter Eagle (\$2.50)**



## Wild Things (Continued from Page 1)

Born in Cape Breton, Ferrier moved with his family to P.E.I. eight years ago. He studied anthropology, sociology and biology at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, N.S., and then finished a certificate at Coady International Development Institute. It is through the Coady Institute and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) that Ferrier worked as a Fair Trade Program Associate for Honey Care to help increase the income of rural farmers in Kenya. He was in Africa from August 2006 to February 2007. "Honey Care wanted an increase in honey export and wanted to develop new products. I figured medicine (would be the key) and I figured if I'm going to help people I'm going to help people on the edge of the forest that are feeling the wrath of an influx of desert."

Using a topographical map, Ferrier found the perfect spot along the southern coast of Kenya, one of the sacred kaya forests of the Mijikenda tribes. He lived with the Giriama, one of these tribes. As an apprentice to the tribe's medicine man, he helped document and describe traditional medicine.

He described a pharmacopoeia of plants for everything from coronary ailments, fungicides, nausea and diarrhea to stomach, kidney ailments and snake anti-venom. "My time at Kaya Fungo consisted of roughly about three or four months of living with a family at the edge of the forest in a mud hut. And so every morning you would get up and either the women would bring (me) water or I would head down to the stream with the chief of the community and we would bathe in the stream together," Ferrier says.

"Every morning I would follow my friend into the forest and you could only walk barefoot and you would wear a robe and then sometimes a loincloth underneath. In the centre there was a clearing where they'd do judicial or religious matters or sacrifices." Before entering the Kaya, visitors must be cleansed to prevent evil spirits from entering the forest. This serious ritual is marked by a sacrifice. "When I got in there, they had everything prepared. So I had to hold the cow and they were preaching to the gods and then they slit its throat and then a big blessing ceremony, basically saying, 'Thank you God for allowing our visitor in,' and then we all eat," Ferrier says. Ferrier then became an apprentice of the Kambi elder society, which is in charge of preserving the way of life of the Giriama in the 550-hectares of virgin Kaya Fungo forest.

"The elders would gather every single morning to tell stories and teach me the ways of the Giriama elder clan. That was an amazing experience, and some of these experiences were trekking through the forest with the medicine man. With a keen ear for Swahili, a strong desire to better know the Giriama and an outgoing personal nature, Ferrier quickly meshed with their way of life. "I slowly began to wear their clothes and they showed their ways and how to do things. Walking barefoot just became natural. You can't wear shoes or (western) clothing in the kaya. It's a rule. It's a religious thing."

One highlight of his six-month stay in Kenya was meeting Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize recipient and founder of the Green Belt Movement. "We came up with the idea that when I was going through the forest with the medicine man I could collect indigenous seeds of the forest," Ferrier says. And so he developed an indigenous tree nursery to help protect the remaining forest and water supply against the encroaching desert.

He also wrote an environmental policy and sustainability guide for Honey Care Africa and created new products such as skin creams and lip balms from the unused surplus of beekeeping products.

After living and working with the Giriama for four months, Ferrier has a respectful appreciation for their ability to live in harmony with their natural surroundings. "They've still got it, they still have this nature heritage and an evolved system. They really know how to deal with development in a way that's (sustainable)."

## Jonathan and Taylor Ferrier

We are proud to present articles written by brothers, Jonathan and Taylor Ferrier. Both are members of the OMFRC and are involved in aboriginal issues in both Canada and worldwide. See "Wild Things" and "Aboriginal Representation". Their brother Andrew is in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a PhD program in Cellular and Molecular Biology, at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute. What an amazing family!



## Advocating for Representation

by Taylor Ferrier



In 2009, I began my medical research at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) studying access to cancer care. During this time, I became more aware of the vulnerable populations that exist in Newfoundland and elsewhere in Canada, like the Aboriginal communities. These communities struggle accessing necessary health care in a timely manner, suffer from high rates of morbidity and mortality, and experience a lack of proper support systems known to most urban areas.

While my studies continued at MUN, I became more and more involved in the campus and community life through my volunteer work, which is a passion of mine. I noticed that in many academic disciplines at Memorial University there is a strong fight to improve the awareness of Aboriginal communities and to develop their experience academically in many of the undergraduate programs. However, I failed to see any support for these same communities at the graduate level, beginning with representation on the Graduate Students' Union (GSU).

Throughout the summer, I began working with the Native Liaison Office of Memorial University and the GSU board of directors to discuss the possibility of allowing an Aboriginal representative to sit on the GSU. After attending many

meetings, providing motions to be heard, and writing letters, the Constitution Committee agreed to have representation. They too saw the need for Aboriginal representation, which they believed to be imperative for sound representation of a diverse campus. Moreover, an Aboriginal representative can provide better insight to policy, health and safety, academic, and campus life from an Aboriginal's perspective.

Following subsequent meetings, the GSU allowed me to fulfill this position as GSU Aboriginal Representative and to begin working with the Native Liaison Office to promote awareness and support for Aboriginal graduate students. I felt like this was a wonderful opportunity and the beginning for me to make an impact on Aboriginal life.

This month there will be a "Meet and Greet" for new Aboriginal students. This will allow new Aboriginal students to meet other students and share their experiences. For many, university life can be overwhelming; a classroom with 50 to 100 people is larger than the community that they come from. A simple meet and greet is an invaluable opportunity for these new students to feel like they have a place on campus and that they can be successful academically and socially. I continue to work hard so I can have an influential impact on these new students as I help promote similar events and support their academic needs on the board of directors as Aboriginal representative.\*

### Taylor Ferrier

**Taylor Ferrier:** I am from Stratford, Prince Edward Island and have two brothers Andrew and Jonathan. My parents are Terry and Audrey Ferrier. In 2008, I graduated with my B.Sc. in Chemistry and Biology at Gardner-Webb University in North Carolina. During this time, I was a NCAA Division I tennis athlete and President of Sigma Zeta National Honour Society for Natural Science and Mathematics. Currently, I am a graduate student at Memorial University of Newfoundland studying Epidemiology. My research focuses on cancer care wait times, while focusing on urban and rural differences. I am still an avid tennis player and spend my spare time volunteering in my local community as an Aboriginal youth leader and graduate representative.



## Mi'kmaq Heritage

<http://www.danielnpaul.com/>

Many of our members are from the Maritime Provinces and this site that Paul Allaire brought to our attention will be of interest to them. This Site is dedicated to the memory of the Mi'kmaq who perished resisting the invasion of Mi'kmaq territory by Europeans. The awe-inspiring tenacity and valor they displayed in the face of virtually insurmountable odds has assured the survival of our Nation's Culture!

There is also a link on the site for a petition to have Colonial Governor Edward Cornwallis's name removed from public places and things in the Maritime Provinces:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/01101749/petition.html>



Pictures courtesy of <http://www.cbv.ns.ca/mikmaq/>

## Where did we come from?

Paul Allaire provided us with this link:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/horizon/2002/columbus.shtml>

This is quite a fascinating article describing the latest thinking on the origins of the aboriginals of North America. It is only a page long so why not take the time to expand your knowledge.

## Training - Time Is Short!!

Passage is a project offering training options for the French Aboriginals living in Ontario. The definition of aboriginal includes First Nation, Métis, Indian, Inuit or any person with aboriginal ancestry.

This project is established at La Cité collégiale, in partnership with the Odawa Centre. It offers the following options:

1 Programmes d'apprentis (Apprenticeship Training Programs):

Plomberie (Plumbing)

Charpenterie – menuiserie (Carpentry and woodworking)

Mécanicien – Montage industriel (Mechanics-Industrial Installation)

2 Formation préparatoire MOS (Microsoft Office Specialist) (Preparatory training for MOS certification)

**All training begins November 1<sup>st</sup> so don't delay if you are interested.**

Contact:

Amélie Gagnon, Chef de projet – Passage  
La Cité collégiale – secteur Cité des affaires  
(613) 742-2483 poste 2761  
[amegagno@lacitec.on.ca](mailto:amegagno@lacitec.on.ca)

## Métis History

This link was provided by Paul Allaire. Paul frequently sends us interesting articles and websites. I never seem to have time to sift through the latest events, books, websites, etc. and Paul is kind enough to share his findings with me. Thanks Paul! This site features a terrific article on Métis history and culture.

<http://www.uwgb.edu/wisfrench/library/articles/metis.htm>



## In Flanders Fields



This is part of a Remembrance Day Presentation given at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 465, in Merlin Ontario, by Spencer Alexander.

Perhaps it is in the works of great poets where all the aspects of war; deep sadness, ambivalence and a host of other emotions are most eloquently portrayed. And one of the most well known war poems ever written is "In Flanders Fields". The poem was written by Canadian army physician Major John McCrae. It is a lasting legacy of the terrible battle at Ypres in the spring of 1915. One of the most asked questions about the poem is; why poppies?

Wild poppies flower only when other plants in their direct neighbourhood are dead. Their seeds can lie on the ground dormant for years and years, but only when there are no more competing flowers or shrubs in the vicinity (for instance when someone firmly uproots

the ground), these seeds will sprout. There was enough rooted up soil on the battlefield of the Western Front; in fact the whole front consisted of churned up soil. Therefore in May of 1915, when McCrae wrote his poem, around him blood red poppies blossomed like no one had ever seen before. Also from wild poppies morphine is obtained and was at times administered in large dosage to put the incurable injured to rest and out of their misery.

Here is the story of how John McCrae wrote his poem – and how the recent death of a dear friend moved him. Major McCrae had been a doctor for years and had served in the Boer War in South Africa. However it was impossible to get used to the suffering, the screams and the blood during the battle at Ypres, and McCrae had seen and heard enough in his dressing station to last him a lifetime. As a surgeon attached to the Canadian 1st Field Artillery Brigade McCrae had spent sixteen days at Ypres treating injured men – Canadians, British, Indians, French and Germans. It had been an ordeal that he had hardly thought possible. McCrae latter wrote to his mother:

"Seventeen days of Hades! At the end of the first day if anyone had told us we had to spend seventeen days there, we would have folded our hands and said it could not have been done." One death particularly affected McCrae, the death of his friend, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer of Ottawa who had been killed by a shell burst on May 2nd 1915. Lieutenant Helmer was buried later that night in a little cemetery called Essex Farm, just outside John McCrae's dressing station. In the absence of a Chaplain McCrae performed the ceremony reciting from memory some passages from the Church of England's Order Of Burial Of The Dead. This happened in complete darkness, as for security reasons it was forbidden to make light.

The next morning sitting on the rear step of an ambulance parked near his dressing station, McCrae vented his anguish by composing a poem. In the cemetery McCrae could see the wild poppies that sprang up from the ditches and the graves and he spent twenty minutes of precious rest time writing fifteen lines of verse in a notebook.

A young soldier Cyril Allison who was delivering mail that day watched him write it. Allison recalled McCrae's face being tired but calm as he wrote, his eyes from time to time straying to Helmer's grave. When McCrae finished writing he took his mail from Allison and without saying a word handed his pad to him. Allison was moved by what he read; he later said; "The poem was an exact description of the scene in front of us both. He used the word blow in that line because the poppies actually were being blown that morning by a gentle east wind. It never occurred to me at the time that it would ever be published. It seemed to me just an exact description of the scene. "

The commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Edward Morrison later gave his account of the scene; " The poem was literally born of  
**(Continued on Next Page)**



**(Continued from last page)** fire and blood during the hottest phase of the second battle of Ypres. My headquarters were in a trench on the top of the bank of the Ypres Canal, and John his dressing station in a hole dug in the foot of the bank. During periods in the battle men who were shot actually rolled down the bank into his dressing station. Along from us a few hundred yards was the headquarters of a regiment, and many times during the sixteen days of battle, he and I watched them burying their dead whenever there was a lull. Thus the crosses, row on row, grew into a good sized cemetery. Just as he describes, we often heard in the mornings the larks singing high in the air between the crash of the shell and the reports of the guns in the battery just beside us.”

The poem initially called (We Shall Not Sleep) was very nearly not published. John McCrae tossed it away, but Morrison retrieved it and sent it to newspapers in England. The Spectator, in London rejected it, but Punch magazine published it on Dec. 8th 1915. Tomorrow on Nov. 11th I will attend the Remembrance Day Ceremonies in Chatham, but I know I will walk away with more than the usual feelings of mournfulness mixed with hope and pride in my country. I will also feel a profound sadness that Remembrance Day just isn't how I remember it.

As a child, I saw Remembrance Day as a time of ritual and quite reflection. We made construction paper poppies at school and drew pictures of the crosses row on row in Flanders Fields. On Nov.11th we didn't go to school, but rather to the local cenotaph to hear the bagpipes and the bugle, to lay wreaths, to see the veterans my father among them, their uniforms weighed down with metals.

We went to hear read aloud the long list of names of the local men who sacrificed their lives in the two World Wars and in Korea. --- On Nov.11th the world stood still. Tomorrow I will stand quietly in Kinsmen Auditorium along with some three hundred mostly older people in observance of Remembrance Day. But around us the world will not stand still. Cars and trucks will roar by drowning out the service, stores will remain open, real estate agents will make deals over coffee at Tim Hortons, children will go to school and nannies will push strollers down the sidewalk. To most people it will be just another day.

War has become an abstraction, something that happens far away, to people we don't know. And peace is just as abstract to the younger generation – they can't appreciate it because they have never experienced anything else. So Remembrance Day fades with every passing year. The veterans die off, and it seems as if few young people care. Most are too busy to fit a few moments of silence into their schedules and business owners won't forego a few sales to close up shop for an hour.

It seems that nobody cares about a few elderly people in uniform marching with their flags and pipers, reminding us that life hasn't always been so pleasant. That in a time before long range missiles, war meant your son, your father, your brother fought the enemy face to face and maybe never came home again.

Is it asking too much that everyone just stop what they're doing, to give just one hour out of 8,760 hours in a year to honor those brave soldiers who gave the rest of their lives for us? Are we so caught up in ourselves and careers, that we have forgotten the alternatives to peace and prosperity? Doesn't anyone appreciate the selflessness of those brave soldiers who fought and returned home and those who died in battle and whose ghost remain forever young on the battlefields of foreign lands? How the tears well up in my eyes as I remember and think that if we're not for those brave Canadian soldiers, I wouldn't be here. That, to me, is worth every hour of every day.



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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.omfrc.org](http://www.omfrc.org)  
[www.aboriginalstatus.org](http://www.aboriginalstatus.org)

## New Submissions!

We are always looking for new interesting submissions to add to upcoming issues of the OMFRC Newsletter. If you have something you would like to add to the newsletter please call or email us! We'd be happy to consider it for an upcoming issue.



In Flanders Fields  
By: John McCrae

*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly*

*Scarce heard amid the guns below.  
We are the dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders Fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe;  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders Fields.*