The Partridge and the Loon

In Glooscap’s day, the loon and the partridge competed for the honour of becoming the official canoe builder of the Mi’kmaq. Loon’s canoe was too big and heavy, and just like the loon, sat low in the water. Partridge’s canoe was round and sank. However, partridge tried again and again and succeeded in building a fine canoe, and thus won the contest. Today, you can hear the loon’s mournful cry of failure and see its eyes red from tears. The partridge’s drumming—which is said to sound like a Mi’kmaw at work building a canoe—is a sign of the honoured profession of partridge’s great ancestors.

This is one of several legends about Glooscap and the first Mi’kmaw canoe. For others, search for “Glooscap Legends” at your local library or on websites like www.mns-firstnet.ca

Birchbark Canoe builder Toddl Labrador

Spent about 20 years learning how to build traditional Mi’kmaw canoes. It was a dream of his and his father, the late Charles Labrador, to revive this art that was all but lost. Today Todd builds model and full-sized canoes and teaches traditional birchbark canoe building to Mi’kmaw young and old.