

PECHITAWNO PLAYERS

of

ERIC G. LAMBERT SCHOOL
Churchill Falls

present

"SPIRIT IN THE FALLS"

"Spirit in the Falls" is based on an old Nauskapi Indian legend which states that a spirit dwells in the falls and tries to seek revenge on those who interfere with its power.

Players

Debbie Anthony
Cheryl Jacobs
Juanita Winsor
Jodi Clarke
Jackie Burquahart
Candida Mackey
Michelle Vigeant

Teacher: Noreen Heighton



"THE SPIRIT IN THE FALLS"

Scene I An Indian maiden enters on side aisle, gathering
(Candida) firewood. She climbs the hill overlooking the falls
and topples into the river. During this scene the
narrator states:

JODI: There is an old legend among the Nauskapi Indians
about Churchill Falls. It is said that several
hundred years ago, a young Indian maiden was gath-
ering firewood at the brink of the falls.
Fascinated by the spectacle, she edged closer and
closer for a better view. Hypnotized by the rushing
water, she fell. Since then she has been condemned
to live forever in the caves beneath the torrent.

Scene II An Indian enters, sees the scattered forewood, sur-
mises what has happened and says:

JACKIE: It seems that the falls has claimed another victim.
The power of these falls is greater than what we see.
Our people need a spirit to protect them from the
danger's here ~ a warning that they must stay away
from this place. I shall reveal the Spirit in the
Falls. (SPIRIT'S IMAGE & MUSIC APPEAR). This Spirit
shall condemn anyone who tries to interfere with its
power. It shall remain in the Falls from now until
eternity.

Narrator: As time passed, continues the legend, the girl lost
her youthful charm. Today superstitious Indians
claim that her spirit sometimes appears at the edge
of the falls. With her long white hair streaming
in the mist, she tries to entice mortals over the
brink to join her in her unearthly home.

Narrator: This play is more than a short history of Churchill
Falls; it is a feeling that there may indeed be more
than what we see. It is dedicated to the memory of
those who lost their lives in the stories depicted
here.

Musical Interlude

Scene III An Indian guide and two explorers enter.

GUIDE: Notice the clean water.
(Candida)

MCLEAN: The falls must be very powerful because I can feel
(Juanita) the tremors from here.

ERLANDSON: Judging from the mist in the air, it must be very
(Debbie) beautiful.

MCLEAN: Well, if its beautiful, I can tell you, it will be
a change from all of the ugliness in this God forsaken
land.

ERLANDSON NARRATES

For hundreds of years the falls continued to be a natural part of the geography of Labrador. Avoided by the Nauskapi Indians because of its legend of a Spirit in the Falls. It thundered over the rocks unseen by man. Then, an early explorer, John C. McLean and me, his companion, Erlandson, travelled on one of the first expeditions to Labrador. We discovered the power and beauty of the cataract in the early 1800's on a voyage from Fort Chimo to Lake Melville.

GUIDE: AS NARRATOR

The Naskaupi Indians have avoided the falls for many years because of the spirit which we think will draw people into the falls until the end of time. I too have avoided the falls but I have agreed to show these white men the way to the falls. But now that they can see and hear it, I must go back.

I won't go any further!

ERLANDSON: Why not?

GUIDE: Because of the Spirit in the Falls.

MCLEAN: You don't believe that old Indian legend do you?

GUIDE: I am an Indian. I believe in all the Indian legends.

MCLEAN: Well, at least show us, which way is it to the Falls?

GUIDE: You just follow the sound and the mist. I'll go back to the base camp. I warn you --don't anger the Spirit and don't look too long at the water. It will make you dizzy.

MCLEAN: Erlandson, how long have we been travelling?

ERLANDSON: About 3 hours.

MCLEAN: Oh, look, Erlandson - we are seeing one of the greatest spectacles on earth!

ERLANDSON: It goes on for miles-----

MCLEAN: It must be greater than the mighty Niagara.

ADLIB COMMENTS ABOUT NOTES, SKETCHES, ETC.
MAKE LOTS OF EXCLAMATIONS.

ERLANDSON: McLean, what will you do now? There are rapids below and above the Falls. We can't go any further on this journey.

MCLEAN: It will be too hard to get to Lake Melville from here. We'll have to return to Ft. Chimo. That is a great disappointment but we at least have discovered these grand falls! We needn't leave it yet, Erlandson. Let's camp near here for a few more days and enjoy our great discovery!

ERLANDSON: Good idea! Such power in these falls, McLean. Its too bad man can't harness this power - trap the water and use its force!

MCLEAN: In order to do that man would have to live right here. Erlandson who, even with this beautiful spot, would want to live here anyway. Darn these flies!

ERLANDSON: Let's set up camp over there!

MUSIC PLAYED FOR A FEW SECONDS. DEPICTS PASSAGE
OF TIME BETWEEN SCENES.

MUSIC

SCENE IV: Two trappers loaded with supplies enter:

STAN: I'm glad this is our last load, Max.

MAX: We've carried these 60 lbs. loads for 3 miles, Stan. It's not far to the falls now.

STAN: Even though its hard work, I like this part of the trip every year - the portage.

MAX: I can't wait till we get to camp. The boys should have the flummies and tea made.

STAN: Right, along the way we should shoot some partridge - that would go good. Oh! Look at the beautiful falls.

MAX: I like to see this every year - its the best part of the trip.

STAN: It sure is beautiful. Oh I'm glad to get this off my back.

MAX: Mee too!

STEP TO FRONT OF STAGE TO NARRATE

I'm Stan Baikie. I'm Max McLean.

STAN: We're trappers from N.W.R. We travel every year to set our traps in our trapping grounds near Churchill Falls.

MAX: For 100 years our families have trapped this land with the trap lines passed, like property from father to son.

STAN: Its a hard trip in here, paddling the canoe until we reach rough water and then portaging our goods to below the falls. But a trip like this in the fall of the year is certainly pretty and enjoyable.

MAX: You might be wondering what do we get out of it? This quote from John Montague of N.W.R. tells it all.

Father was born a trapper and died a trapper. He and my brother and me got a lot of furs between us. I minds when Father used to come down from up Grand River (Churchill) with lots of fur. Martens, foxes, cats and everything. But always he come out just square. The Hudson's Bay Company always said 'you was just about square.'

There was no cash them days. H.B.C. made a lot of money off us fellers. They never let you starve, you know. In the summer if you never had no money you could always go down and get a pound of butter or a gallon of molasses or whatever from them. Of course they had to keep us alive because if we was finished, they was finished.

MAX: Hey, I think that bottle is around this rock somewhere.

STAN: You mean the bottle those boys from Bowdoin College left here. Trappers and visitors have been putting their names and messages in it for a long time.

MAX: Let's put our own names in it! Here's the bottle!

STAN: I wonder who has already left messages here. Let's read some of them!

ADLIB RDG NAMES, DATES. PUT THEIR NAMES ON PAPER AND ADD TO BOTTLE.

MAX: It's getting dark now. We'd better get on to the camp. I'll put the bottle back here for safe keeping.

STAN: It's late too - if we want to shoot some partridge before dark we'd better go. But I hate to leave the falls. Its so nice, so beautiful.

MAX: So do I but, it will always be here - we'll see it again!

STAN: You're right! Nobody can stop the Falls. Let's go. Look, a partridge. Shoot it. BANG.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

SCENE V: A newscaster is ready to announce a live event.

NEWSCASTER AS NARRATOR

NEWSCASTER: Before the next 20 years had passed, the hydroelectric power potential of C.F. was discovered. Man decided to alter the course of the river and harness the power to produce hydroelectricity. A new type of people came to Labrador. Men who wanted to change the environment and suffered many hardships to do it. They had to make roads, build bridges and produce a modern town out of a wilderness.

NEWSCTR: I'm reporting today from Labrador where construction is about to begin on the giant Churchill Falls Power Project. The first thing the engineers had to do is build a bridge across this gorge so that trucks and equipment can be brought from the railhead at Esker. A cable has been shot across the gorge and embedded in the rock on the other side. BRINCO has employed a tight rope walker to walk across that cable to secure it, and another cable, on the other side. A Bailey Bridge

can then be built between the cables. Here is the tight rope walker now!

ADLIB INTERVIEW WITH TIGHT ROPE WALKER. WALKER WALKS ACROSS - NEWSCASTER DESCRIBES THE EVENT - CLOSE CALLS, ETC. WATCHING CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ADLIB ENCOURAGEMENT, MAKE BETS, ETC.

NEWS-
CASTER:

He made it! This was a most amazing feat for the Churchill Falls project. When this is finished, it will be one of the largest hydro projects in the world. Now let the construction begin!

Jackie Burquhart on the banks of the Churchill River.

SCENE VI: Construction sounds and pantomime by the construction workers. They 'alter' the land by rearranging the set, changing backdrops, etc.

SCENE VII:

1st truck driver: Adlib about putting time, bad roads, families back home etc, their work, food, etc.

The truck drivers talk about a near accident while driving and also about other near mishaps.

By dialogue, it is obvious that they have an accident. They throw themselves from the vehicle, exit in darkness.

FOREMAN: 47 to base camp. 47 to base camp - over.

Boss, we'll need a crane and a flat bed out here near the bridge - there's been an accident with one of our trucks.

Two men were killed - I'm sorry to say. The ambulance was here and gone. No they were both dead by the time it got here.

We don't know yet what caused the accident - we'll have to check the truck and the road.

The road seems to be pretty good but there is a large hole about 10' from the bridge.

Yes, they were both good truck drivers - had all

the lessons - no I don't think it was their fault.
Some of the men think it was the Spirit.

DON'T SHOUT!!

You know- the Spirit in the Falls. Some people think that might have something to do with it.

Oh - you know - Spirits revenge at all this construction boss - old Indian legend they say.

Oh OK, I'll wait for the crane and than I'll come in. We'll notify the families. Over and out.

SPIRIT & MUSIC

SCENE VIII Woman as narrator.

WOMAN: Many people from Nfld. and other parts of Canada and the world came to Churchill Falls during the late 60's and early 70's to work - money was good, benefits were plentiful and for many people it was a good opportunity to begin a career. Newspapers like this one were full of information about the project and the jobs there ---George, honey, I'm going into the living-room to read the paper and check the want-ads.

WOMAN: Reading the newspaper.

"Giant hydro project hits quarter mark on schedule".
Churchill Falls - not more about that place again.

"Men will be working for the next 7 years".
I wonder what 7 years in C.F. would be like "Churchill Excitement grows. 7000 people living there. Sounds like a big city".

"What makes C.F. such a unique place? Winter 55 below! Summer 87° - black flies and mosquitoes."
(Cough, cough.)

"Five firms share C.F. deal. All Canadian!"
"This project is costing 950 million dollars!" Me and Garge could sure use some of that! And that's not all! It says here they will develop the Lower Churchill Brinex will explore for minerals. That's a lot of business for Labrador.

"Gull Island and Muskrat Falls will soon be as big as Churchill". Joey will make a nice bit of money out of this. Maybe Garge will make some of that money too.

GATHER UP PAPERS IN GREAT EXCITEMENT.

Forget the fishing Garge. Throw your duds in a bag - we're movin North. Don't forget to pack the muskal.

MUSIC

SCENE IX:

And now for the Provincial news. Good evening. Today, all over Nfld. and Canada, Remembrance Day ceremonies were held to remember the brave people of the great wars. But the top story tonight is in Labrador. 21 min. out of C, CFLCO's new twin-jet, D.H. 125 crashed into the side of an open pit mine while attempting to land at Wabush airport. All eight aboard died. They included the top executives involved in the financing, planning, and construction which resulted in the diversion of the mighty Churchill Falls.

The cause of the crash is not yet known but the reason may be greater than what we see. There are some people who think there is a spirit in the cataract - one of the largest in Canada. According to the old Indian legend, a curse was put on the falls. This curse condemns anyone who tries to interfere with its power. Even now, the Indian people are afraid to go near the Falls.

With more on that story, we have an interview with Michelle Vigeant, a public relations officer of CFLCO. With her, we will explore that bizarre aspect of this accident.

JODI: Miss Vigeant, do you think the crash had anything to do with the Spirit?

MICHELLE: No, absolutely not. I doubt that even if there is a spirit, that its power could reach the location of Wabush.

JODI: What do you mean? It might have a connection, after all, the victims were responsible for the diversion of the falls.

MICHELLE: This is just an old Indian legend ---

JODI: What do you think the cause was

MICHELLE: The cause has not yet been determined but an investigation is underway.

JODI: Could it be the fault of the pilot?

MICHELLE: Certainly not! Our pilots are the best trained in all of Labrador --- maybe in all of Canada.

JODI: Well---could it be the fault of the management?

MICHELLE: What do you take us for, a worthless organization?

JODI: Maybe---If the investigation can't determine a definite cause, would you be willing to say it was the Spirit's fault?

MICHELLE: The Spirit is just an old Indian legend but if there was enough evidence to back it up I might say yes, however...

JODI: Thank you Miss Vigeant. And that's the notebook for Nov. 11, 1969. I'm Jodi Clarke. Goodnight.

SPRIT AND MUSIC

SCENE X: MICHELLE AS NARRATOR

The tragedies returned to Churchill Falls. In a number of events even after construction days were over. When the construction was complete, the water which normally spilled over the falls was diverted to the power plant. But, occasionally, the dams were open and a large volume of water returned to cascade over the rocks creating once again the C. Falls. On such occasions, people visited the site to enjoy the view. (One spring day the falls were running and 3 teachers set off to view the spectacle.

TEACHERS ENTER ON AISLE

CANDIDA: Its nice weather for the Easter holidays.

CHERYL: I'm glad we planned this visit to the falls today.

DEBBIE: Isn't it lucky that the falls are running - it will be a nice view from up there.

CANDIDA: We should be able to get some nice pictures today.

CHERYL: Watch out, its really slippery here. Its the mist from the falls that makes it icy.

DEBBIE: We should have brought our skates - zippee.

SLIDE AROUND HANG ONTO EACH OTHER, ETC.

CHERYL: Should I take a picture here?

CANDIDA: You'll get a better shot from over there.
AD LIB DIALOGUE ABOUT PICTURES, ETC.

CHERYL: Lets leave our pac-sacs here.

CANDIDA: No, take them with you and take mine also, we'll have our picnic over there where you take the pictures.

DEBBIE
CHERYL: OK, enjoy the view, we'll see you later.

CANDIDA: Good luck with the pictures. Try a few with your wide angle lens.

CHERYL:
DEBBIE: OK - good idea, see you. ADLIB AS THEY EXIT OFF R.

ONE TEACHER REMAINS. LOOKS AT FALLS. WATCHES OTHERS IN DISTANCE.

CANDIDA: Be careful you guys - its real slippery there!
(cheerful voice)

CANDIDA: (WITH MILD ALARM) Go back! Don't go near that rope. It's there to keep you back from the edge----

CANDIDA: (more alarm) Don't go beyond that rope! It's not safe! Come back! You're in danger. You might slip over.

CANDIDA: (GREAT ALARM) Grab him! grab him! He's sliding over oh hold on to the ice! Hold on!

CANDIDA: Oh my God! They've fallen over! They're gone
(exit running).

SPIRIT & MUSIC

SCENE XI: JUDGE NARRATES

The event most remembered and most mysterious happened one December night. The CFLCO company plane was flying into Churchill Falls from Montreal. Although the pilot had no difficulty approaching the airport, the aircraft crashed just short of the runway. A sudden fierce storm swept down, preventing a rescue party from reaching the crash site. All aboard perished. Was it really a sudden storm or was the Spirit present again in all her fury!

JUDGE:

Juanita: I'm the judge who is inquiring about this accident. This inquiry has been going on for several weeks - I've listened to mechanics who worked on the airplane, people from the company who built the plane, former pilots and members of the search party who eventually reached the crash-site.

Now I'll be talking to the weatherman who was working the night of the crash.

JUANITA: Describe the weather the night of Dec. 9, 1977.

JODI: The weather at 7:20 p.m. was overcast with light snow. And visibility of 10 mi.

JUANITA: Did the weather worsen after the time of the airplane crash?

JODI: Yes. Within the next hour, the visibility had dropped from 10 to 3 miles. The snow increased.

JUANITA: Did the storm worsen steadily after that?

JODI: Yes by 2 AM the visibility was reduced to less than 1 mile and the wind speed had increased greatly.

JUANITA: Do you feel that the sudden increase in the storm hampered the search rescue efforts?

JODI: Yes, I do. The snow, wind and low visibility prevented any rescue from taking place immediately.

JUANITA: Thank you this inquiry will adjourn until tomorrow at 10 AM.

SPIRIT AND MUSIC

SCENE XII: Tourguide as narrator

JACKIE: Life went on in Churchill Falls despite these tragedies. Frequent visitors to the project were given guided tours of the plant and underground.

GUIDE: It is my job as tour guide to show these people how water power is converted into electrical energy. Here comes my group now. I hope they are an intelligent bunch.

Did you like your elevator trip? ADLIB INSTRUCTIONS
"GATHER AROUND, PAY ATTENTION NOW."

Any questions?

t

There are 11 penstocks which carry the water to each turbine with a weight of 450 lbs. to the square inch!

Any questions?

Moving along here, the water when it has activated the turbines goes out into the surge chamber and then out through the tail race tunnels to the lower river. Nothing is wasted here in C. Falls.

Any questions?

Here we are in the access tunnel! These rocks were put in the ground naturally about 3 million years ago.

Any questions?

Use the bathroom! We are 1000' underground and all you want is to use the bathroom. Come along - we're going back up to view a film and of course use the bathroom! Off to the left you will see the surge chamber where-----

exits still guiding.

MUSIC

SCENE XIII: Jodi as narrator.

People in Churchill Falls enjoy spending time outdoors. On weekends, even in winter, people venture up the road to their cabins, enjoy cross-country skiing, snowshoeing or just plain walking and hiking in any season.

One occasion which draws spectators to the Falls is the rare times when the Churchill Falls are running full force. Then many people come out to take pictures. One lovely sunny day in summer----

TOWNSPEOPLE ENTER ON AISLES AND WINGS

Adlib dialogue about the falls, taking pictures, etc. One person notices a small airplane flying in and out of the gorge. He draws the groups attention to it.

DEBBIE: There's an airplane up there!

Others react - adlib questions, exclamations

DEBBIE: It's flying too low in the gorge. That's dangerous.
Oh no, it's losing power! Its falling!

OTHERS REACT

CANDI: I'll get help.

DEBBIE: Too late. It's gone.

FREEZE. SPIRIT AND MUSIC

DEBBIE: That accident was the last tragedy at Churchill Falls.
It, and the others are part of the history of our town.

In our community, places like Frizzell St., John C. McLean St., and John Cabot St., are named for early explorers. Eric G. Lambert School, McParland House, Donald Gordon Centre, Cantle, Jackson and Lethbridge Streets cause us to remember the men who built Churchill Falls.

Just how much influence did a legendary spirit have on the events chronicled here? Perhaps none.

CANDI: But a strange thing happened last April. The Pichitawno Players wrote and performed this play - the first public statement concerning the Spirit.

CHERYL: We planned to bring the play to H.V.G.B. to perform it in the Arts Festival but the trip was cancelled because of the strike by the NTA.

On the very day when we should have left Churchill Falls, our Labrador Airways flight developed problems with its aircraft and returned to the airport with a smoke-filled cabin.

On the same day, the CFLCO Company aircraft, the King Air, developed engine problems and was grounded.

MICHELLE: The Pichitawno Players would have been aboard those 2 aircraft on that day. With their scripts, costumes, and props for the Spirit in the Falls.

JUANITA: We hope we get there/home okay.

SPIRIT AND MUSIC

The End