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**YUKON NORTH SLOPE INUVIALUIT ORAL HISTORY**

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Yukon  
Tourism  
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## Readers Notes

This Occasional Paper in Yukon History presents the summation of an oral history study contracted by the **Inuvialuit Social Development Program** with funding and logistical support provided by:

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It complements the complete collection of oral interview transcripts prepared with the support of Parks Canada - Western Arctic District. These are available through selected northern archival institutions.

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David Neufeld of Parks Canada developed the format of this document in consultation with the author and Yukon Heritage Branch representatives. The format is intended to allow the reader to visually isolate the quoted voices of Inuvialuit from the imposed analytical structure without seriously compromising readability.

The voice of the author, her scientific analysis and other text providing the structural framework for the document are printed in GillSans font throughout.

The Inuvialuit voices are printed in Gatineau font. From the beginning of Chapter 3 People from Long Ago to the end of Chapter 7 Social Life the two voices are integrated. The page layout in these chapters incorporates "mirrored" opposing pages for visual balance. The Inuvialuit voices occupy the centre columns on each side of the spine.

This attempt to articulate and integrate cultural perspectives has been made to enhance the readers' enjoyment and appreciation of the content.

M. Douglas Olynyk  
Historic Sites Coordinator  
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### Abbreviations

AC	- Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives
ISDP	- Inuvialuit Social Development Program
NAC	- National Archives of Canada
NMC	- National Museums of Canada
YA	- Yukon Archives

## Foreword

Most of the literature concerned with the Inuvialuit who lived on the Yukon North Slope has been written by non-Inuvialuit anthropologists, archaeologists and historians trying to reconstruct the history of these people. Little attention, however, has been given to the knowledge of the Inuvialuit. Thus, until the early 1980s, the scientific community believed that one of three linguistic groups of the Inuvialuit, the Siglit people, were extinguished at the beginning of this century due to epidemics and assimilation with other groups. Errors of this sort could have been avoided if there had been more cooperation between the researchers and the Inuvialuit themselves, not only as subjects of a study but as equal participants. This study attempts to give full voice to the Inuvialuit to tell their story about what life was like along the Yukon North Slope. As the following anecdote from Jimmy Jacobson illustrates, there is much to learn from the Inuvialuit:

About 15 years ago, maybe 10 years, I went back to Herschel Island with a chopper. When I went to Herschel Island with a chopper, I went and looked at that place where I was raised, in that sod house. I was looking for it and I found it near Kunalik's old house. I was standing on that old sod house thinking way back what I used to do when I was a kid and grass was real long and while I was standing on top that sod house, one white man come.

He asked me who I was, I told him my name was Jimmy Jacobson and he said he was a scientist. So that scientist told me while I was standing on top there, he said, "Jimmy, you know where you're standing?"

I said, "Yes."

"Over 400 years ago," he said, "Eskimos have been living where you're standing."

I told him, "No, it's less than 50 years ago, because I was the one raised on it, I used to live in that sod house."

So I figured, well, he's not very much of a scientist when he says 400 years! (JJ90-31A:2)

*This report is dedicated to the memory of  
Jonah Carpenter, William Kuptana,  
Charlie Gruben, Joe Nasogaluak,  
Amos Paul, and Jean Tardiff*

# Preface

## Background of the Project

Although the non-aboriginal history of the Yukon North Slope has been well documented and studied, little attention had been directed to the aboriginal use and knowledge of that vast area. A notable exception is the work accomplished by anthropologist Vihjalmur Stefansson from 1906 to 1918. However, the years following his visits witnessed drastic changes in the life and culture of the Inuvialuit. These changes have not been recorded in a systematic manner. As a result, historic information has focused on events and sites of non-aboriginal relevance, such as the whaling period and the establishment of a whaling community at Herschel Island at the end of the last century. This lack of information has limited both the Yukon Heritage Branch (YHB) and Parks Canada (PC) in identifying significant human history themes from a native perspective in their respective parks on Herschel Island and in the northern Yukon.

The Herschel Island Territorial Park was established as part of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement settlement region during the mid 1980s. The park is operated under a management plan that was agreed to by the Yukon Government and by the Inuvialuit. Since the beginning of the park, both parties have stressed the urgent need to develop an interpretation plan for Herschel Island from an Inuvialuit perspective. A similar situation was created when the Ivvavik National Park was established as part of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. Again, Parks Canada recognized that research on Inuvialuit oral history was essential to fulfill the terms of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement regarding local input to Ivvavik National Park management.

In 1988, the Yukon Heritage Branch initiated what became the *Herschel Island and Yukon North Slope Inuvialuit Oral History Project*, designed as a three year project. The first year would concentrate on the oral history of Herschel Island, the second on the Yukon North Slope and the third year would synthesize all the information collected. The present document is the product of this synthesis.

Although the project received financial support from federal and territorial agencies, it has been designed and administered from the start by the Inuvialuit themselves. This situation reflects the recent empowerment of the Inuvialuit on their own land, and a desire by both the YHB and PC to establish a long term partnership with the Inuvialuit. For this reason the Inuvialuit Social Development Program (ISDP) was chosen to carry out the project. The Inuvialuit Social Development Program, based in Inuvik (Northwest Territories), is a branch of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation created after the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. In 1990 ISDP was contracted by the Yukon Heritage Branch to undertake a cultural study that focused on the Inuvialuit oral history of Herschel Island. The next year, ISDP completed an Inuvialuit oral history project on the Yukon North Slope for Parks Canada.

After summarizing the activities that took place during both projects, this report integrates the data that was collected into an Inuvialuit oral

history of Herschel Island and the Yukon North Slope. The chapters are organized as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the three linguistic groups of the Western Arctic Inuvialuit; Chapter 2 presents brief biographies of the Inuvialuit interviewed; Chapter 3 introduces the narratives with a focus on the indigenous populations of the Yukon North Slope; Chapter 4 concentrates on the period that followed the coming of the white people; Chapter 5 integrates narratives about subsistence activities; Chapter 6 deals with domestic activities; and Chapter 7 presents different aspects of Inuvialuit social life along the Yukon North Slope.

### Objectives

The main objective of the 1990 *Herschel Island Cultural Study* was to document Inuvialuit use and perceptions of Herschel Island. Results of the study would then be used in the development of an interpretive plan for the Herschel Island Territorial Park which would include an Inuvialuit perspective of the island. The next year, ISDP undertook the *Yukon North Slope Cultural Resources Survey*. The goal of that study was to document post-contact aboriginal land-use as recorded in historic habitation sites, graves, resource extraction areas and place names located along the Yukon North Slope. This work would then be used to identify sites of important aboriginal history in Ivvavik National Park and help Parks Canada in the development of appropriate interpretive themes and historic resource management policies. In 1992 and 1993 data from both studies were integrated to present the major themes emerging from interviews with the Inuvialuit.

### Methods and Products

During the summer of 1990, interviews were conducted in Inuvialuktun with Inuvialuit elders who had lived along the Yukon North Slope. The research team was composed of the project anthropologist, the Inuvialuk researcher and the project photographer. A field trip to Herschel Island was organized with the participation of television crew from the Inuvialuit Communication Society (ICS). Five Inuvialuit elders visited historical sites along the Yukon coast and at Pauline Cove on Herschel Island. In addition nine Inuvialuit elders were interviewed in Inuvik, Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk. The next summer, interviews with 22 Inuvialuit from Aklavik, Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk were conducted by the project anthropologist and two Inuvialuit researchers. A helicopter survey of the Yukon North Slope was organized with the participation of Inuvialuit elders. Twenty sites were visited and 120 Inuvialuktun place names were documented. Ninety of these toponyms are located in the Yukon North Slope. Information collected during the study included; seasons of occupation, means of subsistence, structural remains, trading activities and the Anglican mission school at Shingle Point.

During the summers of 1990 and 1991, 33 Inuvialuit were interviewed and 64 interviews were transcribed into Inuvialuktun and translated into English. A visual record of the people interviewed and the places visited was kept for each field season. Toponyms were recorded and historical photographs were collected. In 1992 and 1993, the final editing of the English translations and Inuvialuktun transcriptions was also completed and an index of the translations was produced.



## The Project Team

The major collaborators are the Inuvialuit who participated in the study and were interviewed. In recent years there is a tendency by anthropologists to reject the term "informants" which is associated with the early imperialist phases of the discipline (see Darnell 1992:42), and to use terms such as "collaborators", "consultants" (e.g., Pinxten et al. 1983) or "Resource Specialist" (e.g., Hall et al. 1985, North Slope Borough 1970, Schneider and Arundale 1987). The latter term recognizes the vast knowledge of aboriginal peoples concerning their culture and their land. As Darnell (1992:42) has stated, "this process acknowledges the integrity of the voices we record, allows them not only to speak for themselves, but also to take credit for their own words, transmitting an oral tradition in the medium of literature." In this document, we use the term "Inuvialuit elders" because this is how these people are referred to in their own communities. Furthermore, being an elder among the Inuvialuit (as among other Inuit cultures) confers great respect and authority regarding personal experiences and knowledge. However, since two of the people interviewed were not elders we also use terms such as Inuvialuit participants and Inuvialuit consultants.

Other collaborators of this study include: Renie Arey and Agnes Gruben White, Inuvialuit researchers who conducted the interviews; Rosie Archie, English translator of the Uummarmiut dialect; Barbara Allen, Uummarmiut transcriber and English translator of the Uummarmiut dialect; Beverly Amos, Siglit transcriber and English translator of the Siglit dialect; Agnes Gruben White, English translator of the Siglit dialect; and Murielle Nagy, anthropologist/coordinator of the project who edited the English translations and prepared the report.

## Analysis of Project Operations

The mandate of the 1990 *Herschel Island Cultural Study* was to gather information about the history of the Island as perceived by the Inuvialuit. While doing the first interviews with Inuvialuit elders, it became obvious it was impossible to restrict their stories to discussion of only Herschel Island. In effect, Herschel Island appears to have been only one locale, albeit a very important one, of the many places visited and exploited by the Inuvialuit during their seasonal round. Thus, information relating to some specific sites along the Yukon North Slope was also gathered.

Two of the main observations from the 1990 *Herschel Island Cultural Study* were first that most elders interviewed were not comfortable with maps, and second that many memories were recalled only when the elders arrived at the sites. Boats were used during the 1990 field work, but they proved to be an inefficient and hazardous way to travel, particularly with elders. The success of the following 1991 *Yukon North Slope Cultural Resources Survey* was due in large part to the use of a helicopter. We were able to access and visit sites by travelling less than three hours, while to go to the same sites by boat would have taken a week and might have been impossible due to a lack of landing facilities. In order to reduce expenses, it was necessary to restrict the number of helicopter hours. This meant that we were not able to cover as much territory as we had anticipated. We decided to concentrate our helicopter survey on camp sites that were occupied for more than a few days. Such sites are mostly located along the Yukon coast. We did little survey of inland sites, since

the amount of travel time would have increased considerably. Furthermore, travelling with elders meant that we could not afford to tire them out. An average of four hours of flying per day was already quite exhausting for most of them.

To attribute the success of the 1991 field season to the use of a helicopter is only partially correct. It was really the participation of the Inuvialuit elders that was vital to the successful completion of such a project. The elders were courteous and patient with all our questions. It was a pleasure to work with them and to listen to their stories. There were many powerful moments as we surveyed along the Yukon coast, since most of the elders had not been back to these sites for 40 to 60 years. We all felt that we were participating in a very important project, especially since few people will have the chance to visit the Yukon North Slope in the company of Inuvialuit elders.

The Inuvialuit researchers/translators Renie Arey and Agnes Gruben White were key persons in both projects. Because most interviews were carried on in Inuvialuktun, it was these two people that provided direction. Furthermore, the fact that the researchers were themselves Inuvialuit meant that the people interviewed had an audience with whom they could relate easily. Such a setting certainly created some biases, since the people interviewed assumed that the interviewer had the same cultural background and was aware of the context of their stories. However, the interviewers were careful to remind the elders that younger generations of Inuvialuit might lack some of the necessary cultural background, and the interviewers requested greater precision and elaboration on subjects that were considered common knowledge by the elders. Although we explained all the goals of the project before interviewing people, the one objective that focused their attention was the collection of stories in Inuvialuktun for younger generations of Inuvialuit. Some people who are fully bilingual (Inuvialuktun/English) preferred to talk in English but these were the exception.

Prior to the interviews, the anthropologist would discuss with the Inuvialuk researcher which themes should be discussed. At the end of the interviews, the Inuvialuk researcher would summarize the discussion. Only then would extra questions be asked. At the beginning of the



Renie Arey with Sarah Meybock and David Roland, Herschel Island, July, 1991. (ISDP)

project, the first interviews started with a series of specific questions but it soon became evident that many Inuvialuit elders did not feel comfortable with that setting. The elders had their own style of telling stories, and, as narrator, they expected not to be interrupted until they finished their stories [see Cruikshank (1990:19) for similar comments].

Since the project was aimed at collecting oral histories about the Yukon North Slope, the major part of the interviews were narratives about life experiences in this region. However, the recording of original Inuvialuktun place names was also important. Although Inuvialuit elders told us about place names and their translation, only some of them told us stories related to the actual names. Furthermore, we did not record many stories about specific places that people might have heard from the "old people". Three basic reasons might explain a lack of such stories. First, the people interviewed may not have lived long enough along the Yukon North Slope to become familiar with place names and their stories. Second, this project should have been done in the 1970s when many elders who had spent most of their lives along the Yukon North Slope were still alive. Fortunately, the Committee for the Original People Entitlement (C.O.P.E.) has collected Inuvialuit oral histories and some of this material is integrated into the present report. Third, oral history is passed on by elders, and since many died during the big epidemics of the early 1900s and of 1928, their knowledge might not have survived them.

It is also possible that project methods may have favoured the collection of certain kinds of data. In effect, the emphasis of the project was to bring as many Inuvialuit elders as possible along the Yukon North Slope in order to have a representative sample from people now living in Aklavik, Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk. As a way to collect life histories related to specific sites along the Yukon coast, this was certainly a good strategy. However, as a way to collect place names and their related stories, this strategy may not have been the most appropriate. A longer time period spent travelling with one or a few elders might have been more successful. But this means that one would have had to identify the individuals possessing both the most knowledge and the best memories (one has to remember that some elders had not been back to the Yukon coast for the last 40 to 60 years). While this strategy might have yielded greater continuity in the recorded oral history, it would have also had the associated risk of depending entirely on the recollections of a few people.

Even in order to select the best "candidate" for potential interviews, it would still be important to bring different elders to the Yukon coast to test their knowledge of place names and their related stories. In fact, after the second field season, it was possible to see how elders reacted when visiting sites that they had mentioned to us previously. One of the problems was also to actually locate places that had been mentioned by elders but that neither they nor the research team were able to locate on a map. Some of these people had never been in a helicopter before and to see the land from the sky is quite different than to see it from the sea or from other points on the land.

Being constrained by our budget, we had to restrict each elder to one helicopter survey of the whole Yukon north slope in an average time of 6 to 8 hours. This meant, of course, that we never spent an extended period of time in any one location. Furthermore, we were asking each elder to remember as much as they could about their own life and about place names and related stories after walking around a site for only 5 to 10 minutes! Obviously, this was not enough time for most of them to get a feeling for the site and to organize all their thoughts about each specific

place. If the project was to be re-designed or if there was more time and budget available, it would now be possible to select one or two Inuvialuit elders and take each of them on a longer trip. This would mean having exclusive use of a helicopter for at least two weeks. The need for a helicopter is easily justified because of the great size of the area to be covered, and because the health of the elders would not allow them to walk for long periods of time. In order to restrict the time spent in travelling back and forth from Aklavik to the coast, which is quite tiring for the elders, one or two camps would need to be established.

### Introduction to the Narratives

The wealth of information contained in the interviews was at first overwhelming. In order to organize the material in a comprehensive format, each interview was summarized and major themes emerging from the interviews identified. An index of key subjects was then produced for all interviews. Finally, excerpts from the interviews were selected to present the different themes discussed by the Inuvialuit. Since the main emphasis of the project was to record an aboriginal perspective of Inuvialuit history, the narratives included in the interviews are the primary source of data. It was thus decided not to divert the reader with lengthy summaries of major themes discussed during the interviews. Such a process might have distorted and trivialized the narratives by using them as illustrations of a larger text. Instead, it was decided to incorporate the narratives into the main text. A similar treatment of narratives can be found in Bodfish (1991). The layout of this report, with central columns devoted to the Inuvialuit voice and the authors contextual notes in the outer columns, is an attempt to visually present this material.

A short Introduction precedes each theme to provide a context for the reader. Some themes are more developed than others depending on the amount of information collected. Interpretations of the narratives are kept to a minimum so that the reader can make his/her own conclusions without being influenced by other opinions besides the narrators' voice. Other oral histories dealing partially or completely with the Inuvialuit occupation of the Yukon North Slope (e.g., Bergsland 1987, COPE 1991, Kisautaq 1981, Nuligak 1975) were reviewed and are incorporated here when they add more information. The same process was followed with publications of some non-Inuvialuit people who lived and/or travelled in the Yukon North Slope, as relations with Inuvialuit are often mentioned in these books (e.g., Jenness 1991, Krech 1989, Ostermann 1942, Stefansson 1919, 1922, 1944, 1951, 1964).

Most narratives included here are autobiographical and relate to events experienced by the narrators. When stories of events not experienced by the narrators are told, their form is often the one used in poetry. In most cases, the person from whom the narrator originally heard the story is identified. We have not divided the texts into such categories as "mythical stories" and "life stories" as other authors have (e.g., Minc 1986) since both were used interchangeably by the narrators. Furthermore, the term "myth" could be misleading since they might appear to outsiders to be fiction while they are sincerely believed by the narrators to be true (see Vansina 1985:21-24).

In the short texts which introduce the narratives, we use the word *Inuit* rather than *Eskimo* to refer to the indigenous people of the Arctic in general. We use the term *Inuvialuit* when referring specifically to the

people of the Yukon coast and the Mackenzie Delta. We use the term *İııupiaq* when mentioning the people of Alaska who speak languages belonging to the İııupiat family. When the narrator or the translator uses the term *Eskimo*, we leave it as it is. We do the same when citing written sources where the term *Eskimo* was favored.

### Comments on the English Translations

We originally intended to include the stories in this report in Inuvialuktun and in English. Each line of Inuvialuktun text would have been followed by its literal (i.e. "word for word") English translation. Examples of this kind of format have been prepared by Kari (1986), Metayer (1973) and Moore and Wheelock (1990). This form of presentation would have insured that as little as possible was being lost through the process of translation; both in terms of the narrator's style and the information presented (see Galley 1990). However, since the English translations of the interviews were not done literally, another set of literal English translations would have been required. Unfortunately, time and budget constraints did not allow us to carry out this extra work. Because of similar constraints involving cross-checking correspondent English translations and Inuvialuktun transcriptions, only the English translations and transcriptions are presented in this document. All the original Inuvialuktun transcriptions are nevertheless completed and can be consulted separately. All references to the English translations and transcriptions are listed in the following order: the initials of the Inuvialuk interviewed, the year of the interview, the tape number, the side of the tape and the page number. So, for example, "KH90-1A:2" indicates that the text comes from Kathleen Hansen and can be found in the 1990 interviews, tape 1, side A and page 2.

Ideally, the anthropologist should have been able to go back to the Inuvialuit elders before submitting the English translations included in this report. Restrictions in our schedule did not allow such a verification process. As a result the Inuvialuktun spelling of people and place names remains to be verified and approved by the Inuvialuit elders. The same is true for the location of many sites mentioned during the interviews. The data of this project are literally the interviews. Relevant data include not only the content of the interviews, in terms of the information that one might find regarding place names or specific site histories, but also the form of the interviews. The fact that we are using English translations in this report means that the format of the interviews has been altered. It is very likely that some of the content of the interviews might simply be lost through the process of translation or be somewhat distorted (see Austen 1990, Galley 1990, Niranjana 1992, Swann 1992). Since Inuvialuktun is extremely different from English, it is inevitable that some distortion will occur. One word in Inuvialuktun can easily be translated as a full sentence in English. The reason for this is that Inuvialuktun uses word bases and suffixes, and thus words "agglutinate" in one single word. Furthermore, the plural form is different from English and there is no gender differentiation (see Lowe 1984a, 1984b).

Although Inuvialuktun has a "past declarative" form and a "present declarative" form that can, in some contexts, be used to refer to an event that is past (Lowe 1985), the English translations were almost always in the present tense. It is possible that this is a reflection of the colloquial English spoken by the translators. One other possibility is that

once the speaker makes it clear that he/she is going to talk about past events, then there is no need to emphasize that the story is happening in the past. Indeed, this would be quite similar to the notion of "break-through into performance" introduced by Hymes (1981) where storytelling is considered a performance. Other examples of traditional narratives in Cree (Brightman 1989) and in Inuktitut (Metayer 1973) also show this lack of the use of past tense.

With these considerations in mind, the fact remains that the interviews were often conversations. The interviewer was the main audience and had clues regarding when events were taking place. In contrast, the reader of the interviews might be an outsider not always aware of when the events being related took place. Thus, while editing the translations, many verbs were put into past tense to make the text more fluid to an English ear, and to clarify the tense of the events being described.

It became clear during the editing of the interviews that the use of the phrase "long ago" (*ingilan*) was somewhat misleading. It seems to set the context for stories from the childhood of the people interviewed, as in "long ago when I was young" but also to tell a story about the recent past, as in "long ago with skidoos". Another observation when editing the English translations concerns the verb "to remember" (*itqatuuq*). It seems, at least from the English translations, that in the mind of Inuvialuit speakers, such action occurred at the time the event took place. In other words, the Inuvialuit speaker does not now remember about the past but was conscious when a certain event took place. This would explain such comments as, "long time ago when I could barely remember", or "I could remember well then", or "sometimes I would remember", or even "I came into my senses sucking on a bottle, I remember then". As for the remote past not directly experienced by the narrator, it is usually referred to as "long long time ago", or simply as "before the white man came". There are also allusions to the kind of European material goods accessible at the time when the story took place, as if these form a time reference. Vincent (1990) has noted the same tendencies in her work on the Montagnais in Québec where people talked about events that took place "before they had flour".

In most of the English translations, the editor has taken the liberty of adding words to clarify meaning. These additions are noted with brackets [ ]. Extra information or comments to help the reader are placed within parentheses ( ). The recent trend in the presentation of traditional narratives is to treat them as one would with a poem (e.g., Hymes 1981, Tedlock 1983). This tendency might be taken to an extreme where anything said by an informant is presented in such a form (e.g., Ridington 1988). Here the interviews have been presented in a text form similar to dialogue in books or drama. However, in some cases, the narrator seemed to enter a mode different in style from the storytelling form used to describe daily life. When this occurred, it sounded as if a different rhythm was incorporated in the text. It was decided to present these narratives in a verse format (see Dundes 1984).

What was perceived by the editor as colloquial English spoken by the translators -and very likely by the people of Aklavik, Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk- was kept in its original form. For example: "them guys" rather than "those guys", "learn me" rather than "teach me", "try and do (or whatever verb needed)" rather than "try to do (or whatever verb needed)". The translators and transcribers were also asked to note when people laughed or paused while being interviewed in order to incorporate some of the contextual flavor of the story telling (see Basso 1990, Bauman 1989).

## Acknowledgments

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Inuvialuit researchers Renle Arey and Agnes White have to be complimented for their numerous skills as translators and interviewers. A good example of their dedication during the interviews is the following comment made by Renle on the microphone while interviewing Fred Inglangasuk at King Point: "We're leaving early 'cause there's a grizzly bear coming towards us!", at which point we all jumped into the helicopter and flew away from the bear. Special thanks go to pilot Cathy Moore of Canadian Helicopter for flying us safely along the Yukon North Slope.

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# 1. The Inuvialuit

The traditional territory of the indigenous Inuvialuit stretched from approximately Barter Island in the west to Cape Lyon in the east. Most written sources divide pre-contact Inuvialuit into five major groups. From west to east, these were: the Qikiqtaryukmiut; the Kupugmiut; the Kittigaryumiut; the Nuvurugmiut; and the Avvagmiut (from Stefansson 1919 and McGhee 1974). At least three more groups should be added: Tuyumiat of the Yukon coast, the Igiulualumiut of Franklin Bay (Morrison 1990a), and the Immaryungmiut of Eskimo (Husky) Lakes (GNWT 1991). Before contacts with whalers, traders and missionaries in the late 1800s, the Inuvialuit population is estimated to have been 2000 (Franklin 1971:86-228, Pettot 1876x). The Inuvialuit were thus one of the largest Inuit populations in the Arctic before drastic decimation due to epidemics (McGhee 1974xi). According to police estimates, by 1905 the Inuvialuit population was reduced to 259 people and by 1910 to only 130 (Smith 1984:349). The present Inuvialuit population is about 3000.

The Inuvialuit belong to three distinct linguistic groups. They are the Ummarmiut, who live in the Mackenzie Delta in the communities of Aklavik and Inuvik; the Siglit, who live in the coastal communities of Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour on Banks Island; and the Kangiryuarmiut who live in the community of Holman on Victoria Island. Estimates made in 1981, based on the assumption that most Inuvialuit over 40 spoke their dialect fluently, put their number at 215 for Siglitun; 175 for Ummarmiutun; and 125 for Kangiryuarmiutun (Lowe 1984a:vii). The loss of native language among the Inuvialuit was accelerated by the presence of residential schools in the 1930s where only English was used, and by 1950, after one generation, most Inuvialuit parents were exclusively teaching English to their children (Dorals 1989:201). Thus, as of 1981, only 16.8% of the Siglit spoke Siglitun while 25.4% of the Ummarmiut spoke Ummarmiutun (Dorals 1990:193). One should note however that many Inuvialuit under 50 have a passive knowledge of their language because of the presence of Inuvialuit elders who are still fluent in one of the three Inuvialuktun dialects. Furthermore, the local schools are now offering Inuvialuktun to the students.

*Ummarmiut* means "people of the evergreens and willows". They are the descendants of people from Alaska who moved to the Mackenzie Delta at the end of the last century, again in the 1920s as muskrat trapping developed in the Mackenzie Delta (Ferguson 1961:39), and finally in the mid-1930s and 1940s as stores closed down near the Alaska/Yukon border. Linguistic evidence indicates that the majority of these people came from the Anaktuvuk Pass area (Lowe 1984:xcv). The Ummarmiut are also called Nunatarmiut by Siglit speakers probably in reference to where most of them immigrated from. Hall (1984:345) explained that the term Nunatarmiut refers to "people of the Nunatak or Noatak" River, and Burch (1988:161) added that Nunatarmiut is the Arctic Slope dialect version of Nuataarmiut.

Although many Nunatarmiut moved to Canada to hunt for the whalers who began to winter at Herschel Island in 1889, it seems that some came earlier. In effect, Roxy (Mimurana) told Stefansson (1919:155)

that such a migration started when he himself was a small boy, which would mean during the 1870s. This period corresponds to the beginning of a drastic decline in the population of the Northwest caribou herd in Alaska (Burch 1972). While interviewing Uummarmiut elders, some told us that their grandparents and parents moved from inland Alaska to the Old Crow Flats during the last century (e.g., MH91-16B:4). Some of these people lived near Old Crow until the 1930s (FI91-18B:3, IA90-35A:1, KH90-2A:7). Stefansson (1919:195) also insisted that a large number of Nunatarmiut had come "overland by themselves". In the latter case, it is very likely that the Nunatarmiut did not come specifically to hunt for the whalers but to find better hunting grounds for themselves.

In the mid 1910s, Stefansson (1919:10) referred to the Nunatarmiut as a tribe living near the head of the Colville River but being "nearly extinct". It is more likely that people had already moved out of that area and that he was observing the few families who had remained. However, one should be cautious with this term since Stefansson (1919:10) also wrote that it was used by white and coastal Iñupiaq alike to designate inland dwellers.

Linguistic work has also demonstrated that the Uummarmiut dialect is slowly undergoing a transformation process as some consonants are depalatalized and others are assimilated by many speakers of the dialect (Lowe 1984a:xvi). This transformation process is primarily due to intermarriages between members of the Uummarmiut and Siglit communities and is well illustrated in the transcriptions of the Uummarmiut interviews of the present project.

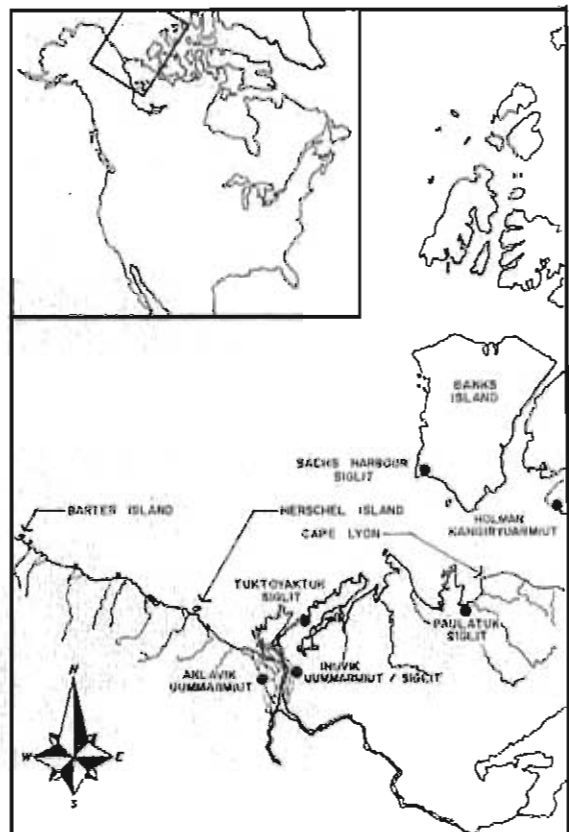
*Kangiryuarmiut* means "people of the large bay" which is Prince Albert Sound on Victoria Island. The dialect they speak has strong ties with the Inuinnaqtun dialects spoken in Coppermine and in other Central Arctic communities (Dorais 1990:194). In our study, no interviews were done in the dialect of the Kangiryuarmiut.

Until 1981, when C.O.P.E. (Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement) initiated a study of the Inuvialuit dialects, the Siglit people and their language were thought by most scholars to have been extinguished at the beginning of this century following a series of epidemics (e.g., Jenness 1928:3, McGhee 1974:5, 1976:177, Morrison 1988:4, Smith 1984:356). This is of course not the case and our interviews certainly demonstrate that the Siglit people are very much alive and that elders are still talking their language. There is, however, a debate as to the origin and the meaning of the word *Sigliq* or its plural form *Siglit*. The terms appear in Emile Petitot's *Les Grands Esquimaux* (Petitot 1887) and in his French/Eskimo dictionary of what he called the "Tchiglit" dialect (Petitot 1876). Smith (1984:357) writes that the term refers to paired labrets worn by males but he does not mention his source. Some Inuvialuit elders suggested to Lowe (1984b:viii) that it might come from an Indian word to designate them but Athabaskan linguists consulted by Lowe were unable to find a possible source for the word.

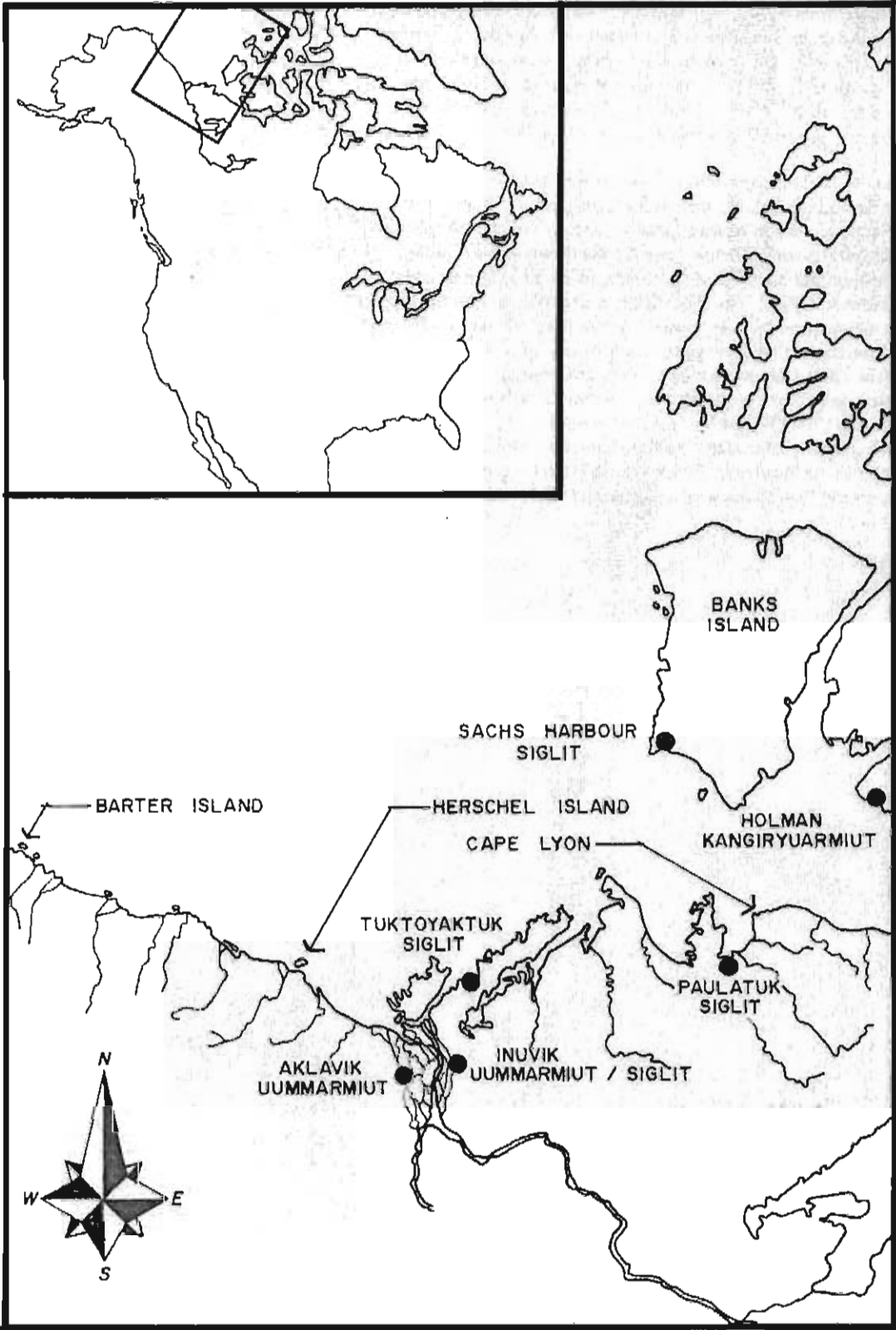
However, most speakers of Siglitun agree that the term *Sigliq* is used by other people to refer to them. During our own work, Persis Gruben told us that the term might come from the Nunatarmiut or Uummarmiut as they are now called (PG91-1B:12). Emmanuel Felix advanced the possibility that it might refer to one of the two toponyms called *Siglitluk* located in the Tukoyaktuk peninsula and that the word *Sigliq* possibly originated from an older version of the Siglit language (EF91-5A:1-2). The word *Inuvialuit* is used by speakers of the Siglit dialect

to refer to themselves wherever they live. The suffix *-vialuk* (plural form *-vialut* as in *Inuvialukit*) is in effect unique to what is called the Siglit dialect. However, for the last thirty years, due to political reasons related to native land rights, the term has been used to represent all Western Arctic Eskimo. To the Alaskan people, the Inuvialuit have long been referred to as "Qangmalit"; people of the east (the "Kogmolik" of the whalers).

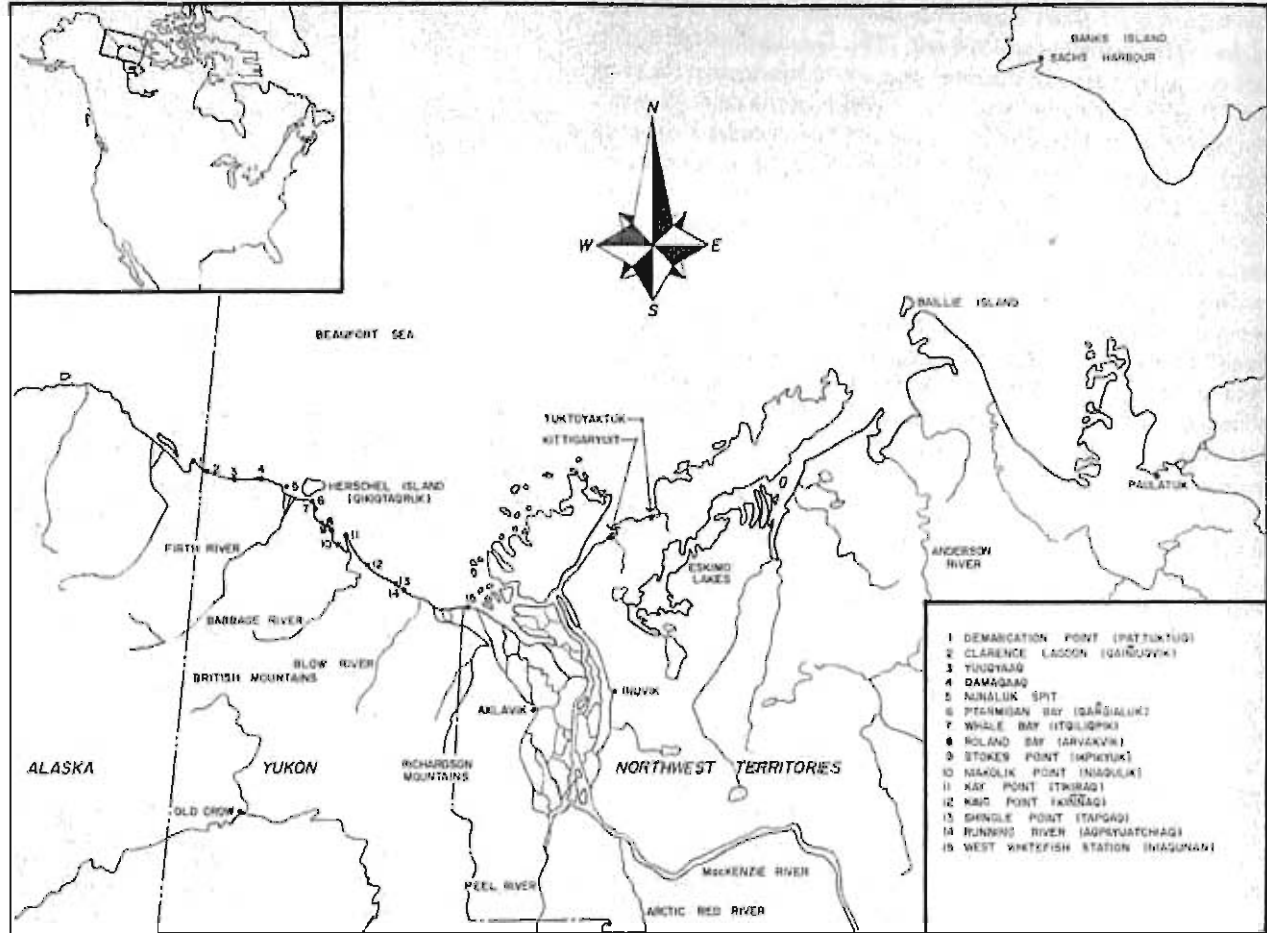
When compared with other Eskimo dialects from Eastern Arctic, the Inuvialuit dialects are considered more archaic (Lowe 1991:45). This means that these dialects have retained older forms of phonological and morphological structure. Furthermore, of the three Inuvialuit dialects, Uummarmiutun has the most archaic traits, followed by Siglitun and Kangiryuarmiutun (*ibid.*). The Siglit dialect is of particular interest because it is structurally quite different from any other Inuit dialects. Finally, linguists have stated that from a grammatical point of view, the Greenlandic dialects are more akin to Western Inuktitun (among which Inuvialuktun dialects are included) than to other Canadian Inuit speech forms (Dorais 1990:197). Such a connection needs to be investigated since the Inuvialuit oral tradition relates an incident where a group of Inuvialuit from the Immarvuit (Eskimo/Husky) Lakes were involved in killing a man and "ran all the way to Greenland" (EF9 I-5B:8).



The three linguistic groups of the Inuvialuit (after Lowe, 1985).



# The Inuvialuit



Place names commonly mentioned in the text

## 2. Inuvialuit Participants

The following are short biographies of the people who were interviewed during the summers of 1990 and 1991. Due to time constraints, we were not able to acquire the same amount of information for each individual. Furthermore, since the main emphasis of the research was to get information about Herschel Island and the Yukon coast, most people interviewed focused on their childhood, as this was the period during which most of them travelled in those areas.

Because of their involvement with the whalers, who did not make much effort at learning local names, the Inuvialuit were often given new names. Thus, Peter Thrasher's father was named after a boat called the *Thrasher* and an Inuvialuk named Kanniq had his name distorted to "Codkney" (Nuligak 1975:10). Stefansson (1922:162-163, 1944:441) also reported on the mispronunciation of toponyms and people names. With the influence of missionaries and white administrators, the Inuvialuit started in the late 1910s to use a family name corresponding to their father's name. In the 1940s, many Inuvialuit took the Christian first name of their father as their last name (e.g., Allen). Due to a lack of standardization in the spelling of Inuvialuktun dialects and poor linguistic background, the original names of the Inuvialuit were often misspelled.

Once the translations of the interviews were completed, it became obvious that it would be very difficult to standardize the orthography of all the names, as the translator and the transcriber interpreted the same names with different spellings. In an attempt to standardize the names, we prepared the following brief biographies using mostly the family information provided by the Aklavik Elders Committee and by information gathered by ISDP. Some names are thus "official" ones but they are spelled with what may be called an "English ear", in that it does not account for phonemes that are unknown to the English language. One should not be surprised to see differences between the spelling of names in these biographies and the spelling in the interviews. To be consistent with the writing system of the three Inuvialuktun dialects as prepared by C.O.P.E., we are using the letter *r* as a voiced uvular fricative (which sounds like the French uvular *r*). The same sound is represented in the Alaskan orthography with a dotted *g* (*ḡ*) and some names were sometimes transcribed in the present texts with a *g* (although without a dot) to represent a voiced uvular fricative *r*.

Most, if not all, Inuvialuit have more than one first name. When possible we have included in the biographies the English first name and at least one Inuvialuktun name. The latter is presented in parentheses when it follows the English first name. In the case of women, the name in parentheses is followed by her maiden name which is usually the Inuvialuit name of her father. When possible, we have provided considerable information about kinship relations, since many of the people interviewed were somewhat related to each other. It is hoped that this information will help explain some of the intricate family ties that are being referred to in the interviews.

## Inuvialuit Participants

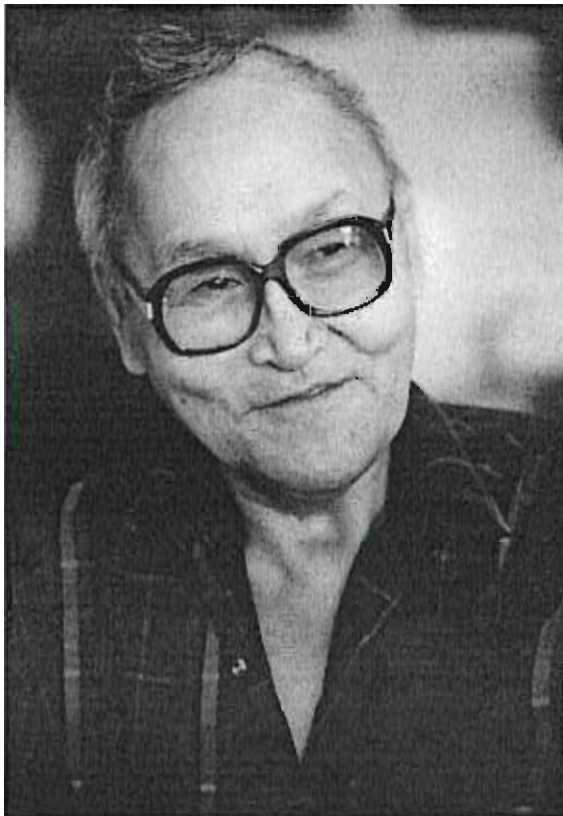


Rhoda Allen

Rhoda Allen, Inuvik, July 1991.

Rhoda (Alak) Iñukilak Allen was born in 1911 in Alaska. Her parents were Harry Iñukilak and Minnie (Natmak), they were also from Alaska but lived mainly in the Mackenzie Delta. She is the sister of George Harry (husband of Martha Harry), Ida Allan, Mable Kaliniq and Sarah Tingmiak.

She was married to Edwin (Yugunuaq) Allen who was a reindeer herder. She had six children. She now lives in Inuvik.



Ishmael Alunik, Inuvik 1990.

### Ishmael Alunik

Ishmael (Suyuk) Alunik was born in 1922 in the Old Crow Flats. His parents were Isaac Alunik and Sarah (Saluk) Kufugaq (b. 1907). His father's parents were Abraham Tirikduk and Sarah Agnaguniaq. His mother's parents were Charlie Kufugaq and Rebecca Alunik. His parents had also three daughters. After the death of her husband in the early 40s, Ishmael's mother remarried to Tom Kaliniq (b. 1889). They had three children.

After marrying Ruth Drusilla Sikrigaq (b. 1924), Ishmael spent about four years trapping near Aklavik, the Yukon coast and around the Old Crow Flats. Ishmael and Ruth raised three children.



## Jean Arey

Jean (Iqilan) Gordon Arey was born in 1917 in Alaska. Her parents, Tom and Mary Gordon, had eight children. Tom Gordon was a white man who worked in the whaling industry and who latter purchased the trading stores at Demarcation Point and Barter Island. Jean Arey is the sister of Alex Gordon.

She is married to Tom (Qaiyan) Arey (b. 1917). They moved to Canada in the early 1940s. While moving, they stayed at Kiffiaq (King Point) for a while. She and her husband hunted and trapped in the Mackenzie Delta and along the Yukon coast. She now lives in Inuvik with her husband and family.



Figure 2.3 Jean Arey, Inuvik, July 1991.

## Renie Arey

Renie Arey was the principal Inuvialuk researcher during the 1990 and 1991 Inuvialuit oral history projects. This short biography is included here to better understand her kinship ties to the Inuvialuit elders who were interviewed.

Renie Allen Arey was born in 1944 in Aklavik. Her parents were Owen Allan Uqpik (b. 1909) and Martha Kuřugaq. They had four children. Her father's parents were Allan Uqpik (b. 1886) and Aileen Aviutuq (b. 1890). They had ten children. Allan Uqpik's parents were Umigiluk and his wife Kakuaduak. Allan Uqpik's brother was Garrett Nutik (father of Kathleen Hansen). Aileen Aviutuq's parents were Roger Angasuk (b. 1870) and Lisa Agipaluk (b. 1872). They had seven children. Roger Angasuk was the child of Napluya and his wife Uiniq.

The parents of Renie's mother were Charlie Kuřugaq and Rebecca Aluniq. The sisters of Renie's mother include: Annie Inglangasuk (*Iglanasaq*) (mother of Fred Inglangasuk), Mary Erigaktuk (*Ingaqtuaq*), Elizabeth Driggs, Sarah (Saluk) Alunik (*Aluniq*) (mother of Ishmael Alunik) and Rachel (married to Albert Oliver). Renie lost her mother when she was quite young and spent most of her childhood at the residential school in Aklavik. In the summertime, she would camp with her father and grandmother.

In the 1970s, after working at the fur shop for a couple of years, Renie worked for C.O.P.E. (Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement). In the 1980s, she worked for ICS (Inuvialuit Communication Society) and she is now involved with the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee and the Aklavik Community Council. She is married to Peter Arey. They have raised seven children.



## Inuvialuit Participants



Jonah Carpenter

Jonah (Ukuk) Carpenter was born in Tuktoyaktuk in 1914. His mother was Tiviana. He was adopted by Qumarpaluk and his wife Jane Itusyug. During his childhood he travelled a lot with his parents, even as far as Coppermine and Great Bear Lake. With his family he lived at Kugajuk, Nalluk and Toker Point until moving to Tuktoyaktuk.

He was married to Lily Aniqkikq with whom he raised five children. He lived in Tuktoyaktuk until his death in 1991.

Jonah Carpenter, Tuktoyaktuk, June 1991.



Hope Gordon, Shingle Point, July 1990.

## Hope Gordon

Hope (Ayagutaufaq) Shingnataq Gordon was born in 1912 in Alaska. Her parents were Martha (Manuqit) from Point Barrow and Erwin Shingnataq from Point Hope. Her mother's father was Monikstaaq. She married Alex Gordon in 1932 and together they have raised fourteen children. She lives with her family in Aklavik where she is quite active singing for the drummers of Aklavik.

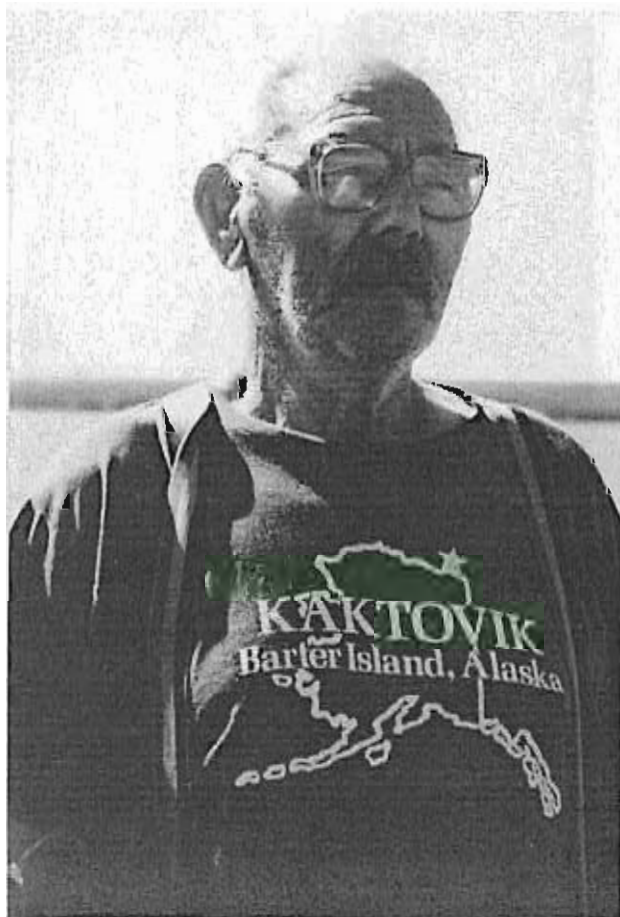
Jane Esau

Jane (Aviugan) Esau was born in Alaska in 1908. Her parents were Dick Piquq and Mary (Mitchak). They had seven children. Jane's father died at Shingle Point during the big influenza epidemic of 1928. Jane was married to Esau Avinnaqqak (b. 1896) and they had ten children. Her husband's parents were Aron Ayaqi (b. 1856) and Ella Ighuquq (b. 1858).

Jane Esau lost her husband in 1941 while her children were quite young and she was expecting her youngest daughter. She raised her six children by herself, trapping, hunting and working at the fur shop in Aklavik for many years. Jane has a cabin at Shingle Point where we interviewed her during the summer 1990.



Jane Esau, Shingle Point, July 1990.



Alex Gordon, Shingle Point, July 1990.

Alex Gordon

Alex (Qalu) Gordon was born in 1909 in Alaska. His parents were Tom and Mary Gordon. Tom Gordon was a white man who worked in the whaling industry and later purchased the trading stores at Demarcation Point and Barter Island. Alex comes from a family of eight children. He is the brother of Jean (Iqilan) Arey.

Alex spent most of his first 30 years near Barter Island (Kaktovik). In 1932, he married Hope Shingnatuq. In 1944, Alex moved with his family and with his wife's family to Canada. They spent two years along the Yukon coast and then moved to Aklavik where they still live. There, Alex worked at the Aklavik Hospital. Alex and Hope have raised fourteen children. Alex had been quite active in performing drum dances.

## Inuvialuit Participants

### Emmanuel Felix

Emmanuel (Kaupkun) Felix was born in 1920 in Tuktoyaktuk and still lives there with his family. His parents were Felix Nuyavlak and Annie (Ikilán). They were from Kittigaryuit. His parents raised seven children. He is the brother of Sarah Mangelana and Norman Felix.

He is married to Christina Rose (Sanmekana) Cockney and they have raised eight children. Emmanuel is an excellent fiddle player.



Emmanuel Felix, Tuktoyaktuk, June 1991.

### Charlie Gruben

Charlie (Ukuk) Gruben was born in 1913 at Kendall Island. His father John William Gruben, was born in Switzerland in 1869 and worked as a store keeper for the Hudson's Bay Company at Kittigaryuit. His mother was Mary (Talrumik). His parents had five sons and two daughters. After the death of his father in the 1920s, Charlie provided food for his family.

Charlie was married to Persis Lennie and they have raised eleven children. He lived in Tuktoyaktuk until his death in 1993.



Charlie Gruben interviewed by his daughter Agnes Gruben White, Kittigaryuit, June 1991.



## Inuvialuit Participants

### Kathleen Hansen



Kathleen Hansen, Kay Point, July 1990.

Kathleen (Qappaq) Nutik Hansen was born in 1915. Her parents were Garrett Nutik (b. 1890) and Emma Nukak (b. 1897). Her father's parents were Nutik Umigiluk and his wife Kakuaduak and his brother was Allan Uqplik. Her mother's parents were Arnold Uqiliaq and Annie Ifukuk. Her father hunted for the Shingle Point mission school and became an Anglican layman. She had nine siblings but few survived. After Garrett Nutik died (ca. 1936 ?), her mother married Noel Ikaqsaq with whom she had two more daughters.

In 1937, Kathleen married Danish trapper/coal miner Hans Peterson Hansen. They raised fourteen children. Kathleen lives in Aklavik and has been involved in teaching drum dancing to the younger generation.

### Persis Gruben

Persis (Ayauniq) Lennie Gruben was born in 1918 at Peel River. Her father died before she was born. Her mother was Sarah Koe from Fort McPherson. When Persis was about three years old, her mother married Lennie Inglangasuk. Although Lennie Inglangasuk's parents were from Alaska, he was born and raised in the Mackenzie Delta. Persis has nine sisters and brothers.

In 1925 and 1929 her family went to Banks Island. In 1930, she went to the mission school at Shingle Point with her sister Winnie. Persis was married to Charlie Gruben until his death in 1993 and together they raised eleven children. She lives in Tuktoyaktuk.



Barbra Allen, Persis Gruben and her daughter Agnes Gruben White, Shingle Point, June 1991.



Martha Harry, Inuvik, July 1991.

**Martha Harry**

Martha (Pisigaluaq) Anaqtuq Harry was born in 1918. Her parents were Simon Anaqtuq and her mother Alice (Sivuluaq) Simon. Her mother Alice was Lennie Inglangasuk's sister. Her father's parents were Olga Iviviq and Nigiq. Her mother's parents were Isaac Simon and Emily Tailiq. Her parents had five daughters and three sons. When she was young she was adopted by her father's brother, Frank Itqialuk, and his wife Lena Uqilaiq. Lena's parents were Napiuyaq and his wife Uiniq. Later on, Martha returned with her original family.

Although Martha's parents were from Alaska, she was born and raised in the Napiuyaq Channel area of the Mackenzie Delta. She is married to George Harry and they raised six children. They live in Inuvik.

**Fred Inglangasuk**

Fred Inglangasuk (*Iglanasaq*) was born in 1922. His parents were Joe Inglangasuk (*Iglanasaq*) (b. 1901) and Annie Kufugaq. They had nine children. His mother's parents were Charlie Kufugaq and Rebecca Aluniq. They had ten children. His father's parents were Jim Kanaurak and Qapqan. They had three children. Fred is the cousin of Renie Arey and of Ishmael Aluniq.

During his childhood, Fred lived with his family at Qafqialuk (Ptarmigan Bay), Nlaqulik and Itqiliq (Whale Bay). He went to school in Aklavik from 1936 to 1939. Fred remembers going to Herschel Island in the 1940s, when there was nobody around anymore. In the 1950s, he worked on the DEW Line.

Fred is married to Lucy Cockney (b. 1930) who is from Tuktoyaktuk. They have raised ten children and they live in Aklavik.



Lucy and Fred Inglangasuk, Aklavik, July 1990.

### Jimmy Jacobson

Jimmy (Mimurana) Jacobson was born in 1925 in Baillie Island. His parents were Fred Jacobson and Vera Kigyun. His mother was from Kittigaryuit. His father was a Russian who came with one of the whaling ships which became stranded at Baillie Island. His name was originally Alexander but he changed it when he became a Canadian citizen. Jimmy's parents had twelve children.

Jimmy was adopted by Nellie Eyakuk and Philip Nauyak. There were four children in the family. Until the death of his adopted parents during the big epidemic of 1928, Jimmy lived at Herschel Island where Nauyak was a hunter for the RCMP. They also lived at Niaqulik. Jimmy spent five years at the residential school in Hay River. He then went to Aklavik where he was taken back by his real father. He stayed with the Jacobson family for a few years. Jimmy is married to Bella Williams and they have raised twelve children. They live in Tuktoyaktuk. Jimmy is also an accomplished carver.



Jimmy Jacobson, Tuktoyaktuk, July 1990.

### William Kuptana

William Seymour Kuptana was born in 1906. His father was Maksagaq and his mother Avillaq. They were from the Prince Albert Sound (Victoria Island) area. William had one sister and two brothers.

William's first wife was Lena Roland, the daughter of Kitty (Kuttuq) and Roland Safuaq. His second wife was Sarah Kungatuk. They have raised three children together. William Kuptana died in 1992.



## Inuvialuit Participants

### Christina Klengenber

Christina (Ukunaluk) Cockney Klengenber was born in 1915. Her parents were Nellie Eyakuk and Philip Nauyak. Her grandparents, Mamayauq and Sukayaq, adopted her sister Arnatuk. Christina was herself adopted by Jeannie (Nevilgana) Kanniq and Duncan Kanniq [also spelled "Kaanerk" and later distorted as "Cockney" (Nullgak 1975:10)]. They were from Kittigaryuit. Kanniq's mother was Sanaq and his father Erksana (ibid.). Christina is thus the sister of Nuligak (Bob Cockney) and Jim Cockney.

Christina was raised at Tapqaaq (Shingle Point). Until getting married to Diamond Klengenber, she also travelled along the Yukon coast and lived at Qikiqtaaruk (Herschel Island). Christina and Diamond have raised ten children. They live in Tuktoyaktuk.

### Diamond Klengenber

Diamond (Angunatchiuk) Klengenber was born in 1912, close to Ballie Island. His mother Kimak (Gremnia) was from Point Hope in Alaska. His father Charlie Klengenber was born in Denmark in 1869. Together, they had eight children (Klengenber 1932). Charlie Klengenber started to work with the whalers as a cook aboard the *Emily Schroeder* at Point Hope in the winter of 1893-94 (ibid.). In 1905, he worked for Captain James McKenna and was in charge of the schooner *Olga*. He went to Victoria Island and on his return to Herschel Island in 1906, he said that they had met Inuit with "European" features. These allegations incited Stefansson to look for these "Blond Eskimos" (Stefansson 1922:54). Charlie Klengenber ran various trading posts in the Tuktoyaktuk peninsula until his death in 1931 (Klengenber 1932).

Diamond Klengenber was raised by Millie Arnavigaq who was first married to Paniksaq and then to Aniqsuaq.



Christina and Diamond Klengenber, Tuktoyaktuk, July 1990.

Lily Lipscombe

Lily was born in 1948. Her parents were Jean (Kisaun) Tardiff (b. 1916) and Augustin Tardiff (b. 1901). Lily was adopted by her maternal grandparents Kitty (Kuttuq) (b. 1879) and Roland Safuaq. Lily was raised by her grandparents mostly around Arvakvik (Roland Bay). They lived there until the early 1960s.

When we visited Arvakvik with Lily, spending about three hours there, we collected not only life stories about herself and her grand-parents but also sixteen place names within that area. What is quite interesting in the case of Lily Lipscombe is that she was raised by parents from two different cultural traditions. The difference is not only one of gender, for she was taught skills of both sexes (e.g., having her own traplines, hunting caribou, sewing clothes, etc.), but also one of culture. Her grandmother was a Nunamliut from the land, while her grandfather was a Siglit from the sea. They each taught her their own languages and their own traditions.

Lily is married to Harry Lipscombe. They have three children and live in Inuvik.



Lily Lipscombe and Renie Aroy at Arvakvik (Roland Bay), July 1991.



Dora Malegana, Shingo Point, July 1990.

Dora Malegana

Dora Kiuruya Malegana (*Maligiana*) was born in 1916 near Pattuktuq (Demarcation Point). Her father was Irish Kiuruya (b. 1892) and her mother was Lucy Imiq (b. 1897). Her mother's father was Qinaak Matuu [?] and her mother's grandfather was Tulugaqpaluk. Dora's parents had six children. Her father's parents were Peter Uyaraiyaq (b. 1874) and Lucy Igluguq. Dora's father was the brother of Kitty (Kuttuq) Roland (adopted mother of Jean Tardiff, David Roland and Lily Lipscombe) and of Archie Ertgaktuk (b. 1896).

Dora's father was a storekeeper at Qalifiuqvik (Clarence Lagoon). They also lived around Yuuqyaaq and Qamaqaaq. During her childhood, Dora spent time in the Old Crow Flats with her family.

Dora was married to Johnny Malegana (*Maligiana*) who was a reindeer herder. They had nine children. Dora later adopted one of her grand-daughters. She lives in Aklavik.



## Inuvialuit Participants

### Raymond Mangelana

Raymond Mangelana was born in 1924 at Whitefish Station. His parents were Raymond and Hope (Kusaluran) Mangelana. They were from Kittlgaryuit. Raymond had one older brother. When Raymond was two months old, his father died. His mother remarried to Jim Cockney but she died shortly after.

Raymond went to the Mission School at Shingle Point for five years. He moved to Tuktoyaktuk in 1938. His first wife's name was Louisa. They had one daughter together.

Raymond remarried to Sarah Felix (the sister of Emmanuel Felix). They have raised five children. They live in Tuktoyaktuk.



Sarah and Raymond Mangelana, Tuktoyaktuk, June 1991.



Sarah Meyook, Shingo Point, July 1990.

### Sarah Meyook

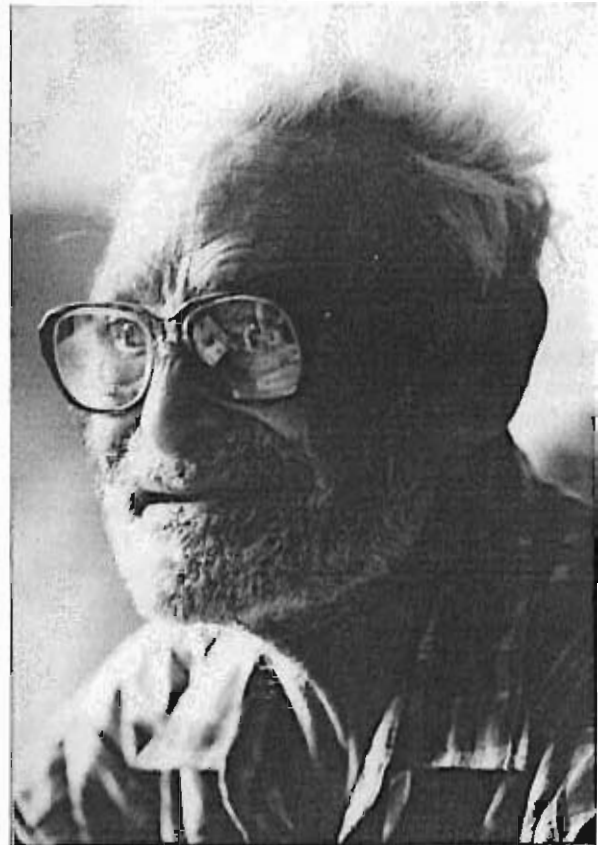
Sarah (Palataq) Ayakhaq Meyook (*Miyuk*) was born in 1925 near Baillie Island. Her parents were Tom Ayakhaq and Nollie Sanikplaq. Nellie Sanikplaq's first husband had been Jimmy Mimurana who was often mentioned by Stefansson. Her parents died during a flu epidemic in 1928 in Aklavik. At the time of their death, they had four children. Sarah was then adopted by Katie and Abel Kasook (*Kalsuk*), whom Sarah always referred to as her "grandad".

In the early 40s, Sarah married Jonas (Kayutaq) Meyook (*Miyuk*) with whom she had fifteen children. They also adopted one of their grand-daughters. With her husband's family, Sarah travelled along the Firth River and the Old Crow Flats. She also lived with her husband and children at Herschel Island in the 1950s, 60s and early 70s. Sarah is a gifted story-teller who also worked as an Inuvialuktun teacher in Aklavik for six years. She lives in Aklavik.

### Joe Nasogaluak

Joe Nasogaluak was born in 1906 close to Baillie Island. His father was a whaler by the last name of Emsley who was possibly from Hawaii (Nuligak 1975:103). His mother later married Anaqlina. Joe went to school for two years (1914-1915) at Kittigaryuit.

Joe was married to Susie Ruben (Sarah Meyook's adopted sister) with whom he raised ten children. Joe remembered spending the summer of 1930 at Herschel Island. Joe lived in Tuktoyaktuk until his death in 1991.



Joe Nasogaluak, Tuktoyaktuk, July 1990.



Albert Oliver, Aklavik, July 1990.

### Albert Oliver

Albert (Náksialuk) Oliver was born in 1920 near Inuvik. His parents were from Alaska, they had come to hunt for the whalers. Albert's parents were Oliver Qiriqtuk and Rhoda Aluniq. They had eight children. His father's parents were Itqilialuk and Nahukpaq.

Albert was married to Rachel Kufugaq (Renie Arey's mother's sister) with whom he had two children. Albert lives in Aklavik.

## Inuvialuit Participants

### Amos Paul

Amos (Kisautaq) Paul was born in 1912 in Alaska, near Barter Island. His father was Paul Uqalisuq (b. 1899). His father's parents were Jim Qanaufaq and Qapqan. They had two other children, including Joe Ingtangasuk (Fred Ingtangasuk's father). His mother's parents were Nlaqyruk and his wife Ilupaquk. Amos spent his childhood near Barter Island and along the Yukon coast.

He moved around the Aklayik area in the 1930s. Amos lost his first wife during a flu epidemic in Aldavik in 1946. His second wife was Julia Steward (b. 1930). Amos died in 1991.



Amos Paul, Aldavik, July 1990.



Peter Rufus, Tuktoyaktuk, June 1991.

### Peter Rufus

Peter (Aqpalig) Rufus was born in 1928. His parents were Charlie Rufus and Mary Yuranguaq. His father became a reindeer herder in the Anderson River area. Peter Rufus went to school in Aldavik and lived with his maternal grandfather until 1940. He then went back with his family. Tragically his father, four of his sisters and two of his brothers were drowned in the 1940s.

Peter Rufus became a herder in 1952. He is a widower and lives in Tuktoyaktuk.



David Roland

David (Qaniaq) Roland was born in 1922 in Prince Albert Sound (Victoria Island). His mother was Evalyn Igiminaq and his father Akhaluuq. They had two other children. His father died when he was very young and he was then adopted by his mother's brother, William Kuptana and his wife Lena.

David went to the Mission School at Shingle Point for four years. When he finished school, he was then adopted by the parents of Lena, Roland Sahaq and his wife Kuruq. David lived with his grandparents at Herschel Island and at Qaŋgūluk (Ptarmigan Bay).

David is married to Olga Tama and they live in Inuvik. They have raised seven children.



David Roland and Sarah Meypok, Qaŋgūluk (Ptarmigan Bay), July 1991.



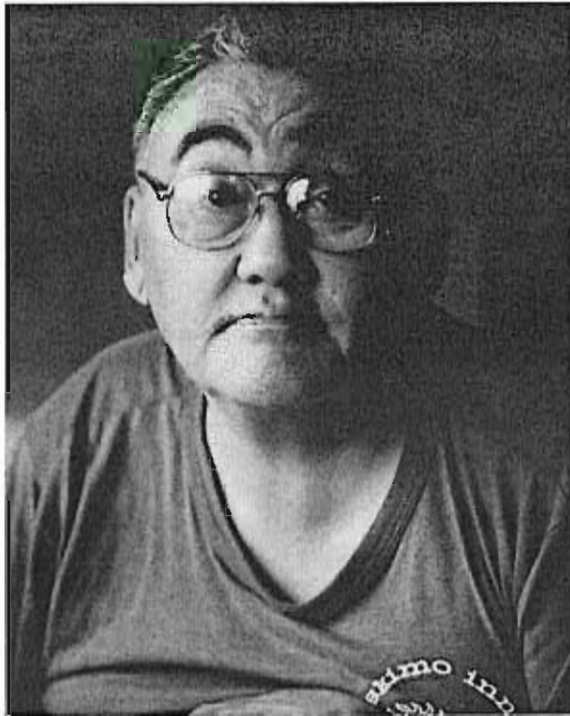
Bessie Wolki, Tuktoyaktuk, June 1991.

Bessie Wolki

Bessie Wolki was born in 1915 at Akulia in the Mackenzie Delta. Her parents were Adam Inuakyaq and Carrie Kimmik Tahaq. They were both from Alaska. They had seven children. Her paternal grandfather was Isaac Inŋangasuk and was also the father of Lennie Inŋangasuk. Isaac Inŋangasuk was a Nunatarmiut from Alaska. Until they moved to Banks Island in 1925, her parents lived in the Mackenzie Delta and along the Yukon coast where her father worked for the Hudson's Bay Company.

Bessie was married to Jim Wolki with whom she had thirteen children. Bessie lives in Tuktoyaktuk.

## Inuvialuit Participants



Peter Thrasher, Akkavik, July 1990.

### Peter Thrasher

Peter (Uyarayaaq) Thrasher was born in 1930. His parents were Billy (Qimiksana) Thrasher (b. 1900) and Mona (Kiviutchlaq) Nlinaqsiq. His father came from Alaska. His mother's parents were Bennett Nigagsik and Ida Igiak. Ida Igiak was the sister of Charlie Kuugaq's wife, Rebecca (grandmother of Renie Arey, Fred Ingiangasuk and Ishmael Alunik). Peter's paternal grandparents were Shakak and Mary Qingaruaq. Mary Qingaruaq's mother was Irriaquq.

Peter's father worked as a captain on the Roman Catholic ship, *Our Lady of Lourdes*. After the death of his first wife Mona, with whom he had nine children, Billy Thrasher married his wife's younger sister Alice, with whom he had six children. Peter was sent to school when he was six and he came back when he was twelve. He then lived with his mother's parents. Peter later married Mary Arvina Greenland. They had seven children. Peter lives in Akkavik.

### Jean Tardiff

Jean (Kisaun) Tardiff was born in 1916. Her father Teddy Allen was from Alaska. She had three brothers and one sister. Her sister Ruth married Johnny Kayutaq (Sarah Meyook's brother-in-law). Jean was adopted by Iklun and his wife Kitty Kuttuq (b. 1879). Kuttuq's father was Peter Uyaralyaq and her mother was Lucy Igluguq. They were from the Kuvuk area in Alaska. Kuttuq was the sister of Irish Kkuruya (b. 1892) and of Archie Erigaktuk (b. 1896). Jean's cousin is Dora Malegana (Maligiana).

Jean's adopted parents travelled with Stefansson to Victoria Island in 1916. *The Friendly Arctic* notes on "eskimo beliefs" were based on information provided to him by Iklun and Kuttuq (Stefansson 1944:409-415).

During her childhood, Jean travelled along the Yukon coast and lived at Herschel Island. She also travelled with her parents to Pierce Point where Iklun died. Later on her mother Kuttuq married Roland Saruaq (b. 1877 ?). They lived at Herschel Island, Arnavik (Roland Bay) and Ptarmigan Bay (Qar'jaluk).

Around 1932, Jean married Augustin (Gus) Tardiff (b. 1901), a Metis from Hay River who trapped and worked as a coal miner. They had nine children together and Jean adopted one of her grand-daughters. Until her death in August 1990, Jean lived in Akkavik.



Jean Tardiff, Shinga Point, July 1990.

### 3. People from Long Ago

They say once there was a big flood all over Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island). You could see nothing! There was nothing then. Kiuruya always told stories about when Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island) was flooded. [...] They say long ago when there was a flood covering Qikiqtaqruk there was some kind of animal high up there in the lake. Maybe it came from the ocean this animal. They don't know what it is. (SM90-4B:1-2)

It is said that after the earth turned over, all the land was covered with water. [...] Also there is a man who is one of the people of the Qangmalliq, he, too, has become very old, and I asked him if Umiat was the only land area at that time. At that time during the big flood, if Umiat was the only area of land, this I asked of that little man of Herschel Island. [...] He said that just east of Herschel Island are some hills where people caught in the flood escaped. It is said to have had some people at that time long ago.

I would not have asked that old man this question but some caribou hunters saw some travellers, newcomers. One among them was a very big man. Now they are all gone. They no longer go to people. (Kisauq 1981:56)

This is Atumiqsana's story, which I heard when he told me stories. That Atumiqsana was a pretty old man who had been a preacher at the time he told it. Now, then I shall tell this story from Herschel Island.

At that time, it is said, a long time ago, before our earth turned over, there lived some people in the east who had their own way of living. Before it was turned over, then, there were people who lived before we got this new world of ours; they lived, then, in that former world of theirs, busy hunting seals -whether they were hunting other game I don't know, but he said that they were living on seal, on fish and seal.

#### The Big Flood

A common story told by the Inuvialuit and by the Iñupiaq of Alaska indicates that a big flood took place "long ago". Some stories identify specific place names where the flood is said to have happened, such as Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island) and Umiat which is located about 120 km inland, southwest of Point Barrow, Alaska. Sarah Meyook heard the following story from Irish Kiuruya (also spelled *Kiuguya* and *Kiguruya*) who was born in 1892:

Elijah Kakinya (b. 1896) told a similar story in the publication *Puiguitkaat: The 1978 Elder's Conference*:

It is very likely that the "old man from Herschel Island" was James Atumiqsana (also spelled *Atumiksana*). The latter is mentioned as the "headman of Herschel" and a relative of Thomas Umauq by Whittaker (1976:74, 245) who was an Anglican minister on the island from 1901 to 1906. Furthermore, the following story was also told to Elijah Kakinya by Atumiqsana:



## People from Long Ago

At that time, our earth -a long time ago those weepers were said to be turned over (with the earth). At that time, before they had Christianity, they used to meet these people on the ocean when they went out to hunt. Because they had a sort of village, for those ancient forefathers of Atumiqsana became acquainted with them.

When a person was about to encounter those weepers, the weepers used to fall on their faces lest their eyes be seen, for they had swollen faces from weeping so much. So, it is said, when a person was about to meet one -one dragging a seal, or a hunter out for something -the weeper would always fall on his face. The people never saw their faces; a weeper never looked up. The people never tried to make him look up, either; they used to talk to a weeper as he lay on his face. For some of them knew them and could recognize them.

Those weepers would sometimes disappear inland there in the east, and when they were out for something on the ocean, they sometimes met people. When a person met him, the weeper would fall on his face, lest his face be seen, for those weepers were ashamed of their faces.

That's the end of the story I got from Atumiqsana. (Bergsland 1987: 126-127)



View of the British Mountains from Harichel Island

(Heritage Branch)

Oliver James provided this story that was told to him by Nasagniq:

At Siksrīkpalik, it is said, when they came upon there, the only land they come upon to, there at Siksrīkpalik, before they caught a whale at Annigruaq over here. When those boats were caught in the flood here on this land. When they went looking for land this was the only area to surface out of the water. When they pulled ashore and then one by one, the people in the first boats lighted on land, each became a marmot every one of them. And it was the people in the last boat who settled in Annigruaq and caught a choice young whale.

This is how he, himself, tells the story. (Kisauq 1981:66)

It is tempting to associated the "place east of Herschel Island" with "Siksrīkpalik", since such a toponym was identified by Fred Inglangasuk (FI90-5A:6-7), Lily Lipscombe (LI91-26A:2), Sarah Meyook (SM91-19A:03) and David Roland (DR91-28A:11) and is located east of Herschel Island. It is possible however that it refers to a place name in Alaska.

Another story set long ago explains the formation, during an earthquake, of Irritchiaq ("new mountain"), located inland and south of Herschel Island. A powerful earthquake is also mentioned in the oral tradition of the Nunamiut (see Gubser 1965:34). The mountain Irritchiaq contains an important archaeological site named Engigstciak (MacNeish 1956). Lily Lipscombe tells:

They claim that years, this is years and years ago.  
Before my mom probably even existed.  
They claim that when they went to,  
these people that go to hunt sheep  
from Herschel or wherever.  
Probably not Herschel, Herschel was not existing too.  
But they'd go up and hunt sheep.

And then there was a real violent earthquake  
or something afterwards.  
But these people always went through that path.  
And then these ones, years later  
when they went through that path  
and that old man was with them.  
And all of a sudden there was a new mountain.  
This is the way the story goes.

That is why they called it Irritchiaq ("new mountain").  
All of a sudden, people had a place to go climb  
and see if there is any sheep close by.  
That's the way the story goes.  
Anyhow, it could be old. (LI91-24A:11)



### The Little People

Stories about the Little People abound in the Arctic. Among the Inuvialuit (both Siglit and Uummarmiut) one story tells about a couple of Iñunuluaq (little people) who lost their son when he was killed by a dog. A long version told by Elijah Kakinya and set near Tulugaq Lake in Alaska can be found in Bergsland (1987:143) and in Kisautaq (1981:183). Sarah Meyock heard the following version from Kluruya, who was originally from Alaska:

These people are small.  
They were a married couple, people that big.  
With weasels they could make parka for one person.  
You see how small they are!  
Kluruya told us a story about them.  
They are scary too.

He said one time over in Alaska,  
there was a visitor like that. [...]  
There was lots of big people that saw them  
holding hands with their child.  
The people were watching them.

Then someone's dog was loose  
and the dog just went there  
and swallowed one small person.  
When the dog swallowed that child,  
the father got hold of the dog by the tail.  
He tore open the dog.  
But their little child was dead already.

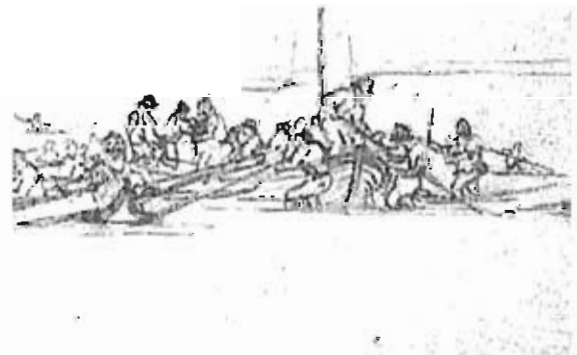
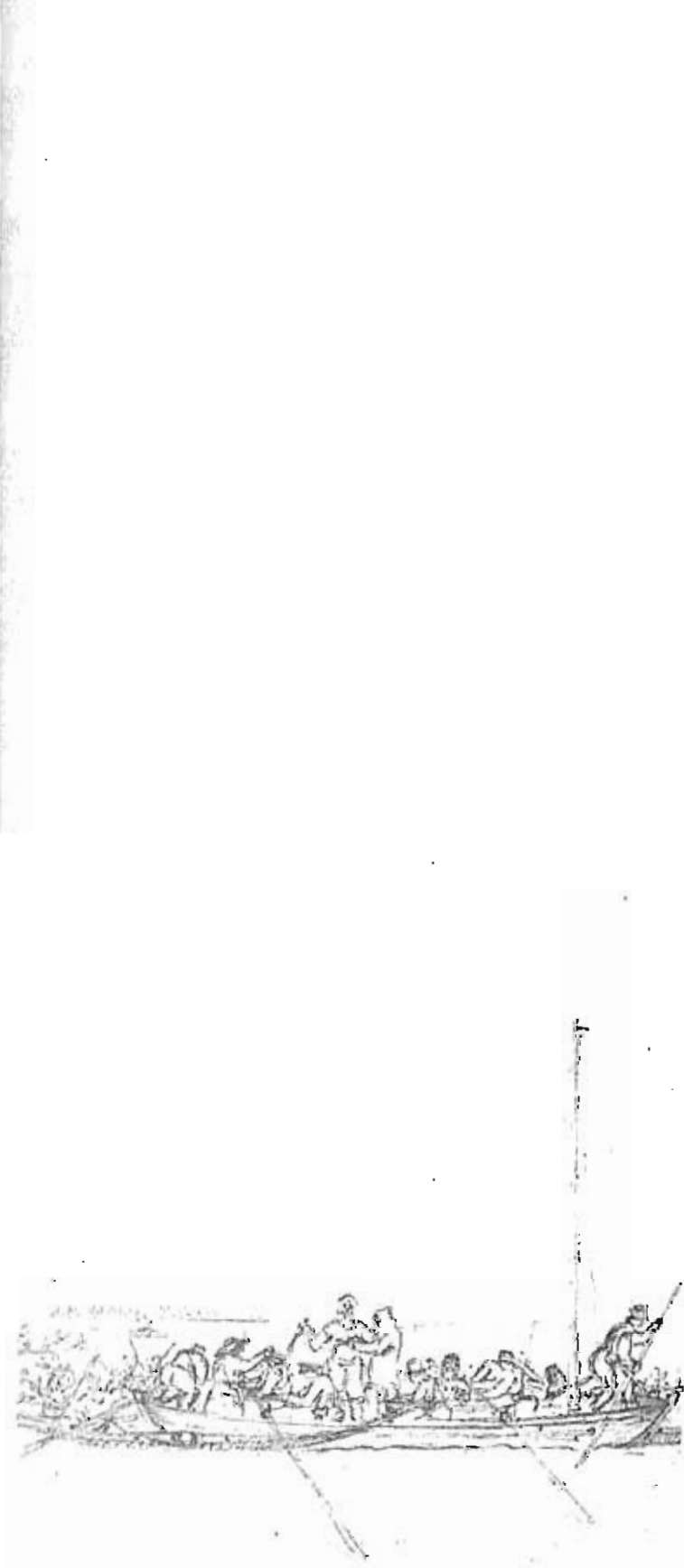
Then those peoples were really scared then.  
When they got scared of them,  
they tried to pay them with anything,  
they thought they were going to kill them.

Even though they were small,  
they killed a big dog like this.  
They opened the dog's stomach in a moment!  
They were very fast.  
Kluruya told us that story  
about the one who killed the dog right away. (SM90-4B:1-2)

### The Tuyurmiat

The Yukon North Slope has been described as a no-man's-land unoccupied in the winter during the early and middle 19th century (Burch 1988:163, Peake 1966:129). In contrast, deserted winter houses were identified by Franklin in July 1826 east of Sabine Point, at Stokes Point, and at Demarcation Point (Franklin 1971). In the latter location, people had left meat caches (Franklin 1971:142) and were certainly intending to return having probably been away on hunting trips. People were encountered by Franklin between Escape Reef and Sabine Point, at Kay Point, at Herschel Island and at Barter Island which seemed to be the western limit of their territory. In fact, the people along the Yukon coast might have been quite numerous since, while returning to Herschel Island, Franklin (1971:172) wrote that he "steered directly for Point Kay, to avoid the sinuosities of the coast and the frequent interruption of the Esquimaux whose tents were observed to be scattered on the beach nearly the whole way to Babbage River".

The people encountered by Franklin along the Yukon north slope were the Tuyurmiat. Petitot (1876:x) heard the term in the mid 1860s while visiting the Siglit but he used it to identify people of the Bering Strait. Stefansson (1919:23) also heard the term at the beginning of the century and noted that "to the view of the Kittegaryuit people, the people west of the Mackenzie River to and a little beyond Herschel Island were know as the Tuyormiut". In a letter written in 1895 at Herschel Island, Reverend Stringer refers to the "Tooyoghmioots" natives from the coast (Peake 1966:36). The word *Tuyurmiat* (also transcribed as *Tuyurmiat* and *Tuyurmiurat*) can be roughly translated



George Back's sketch of the meeting between Franklin's men and the Tuyurmiat, July 7, 1826.

(NAC C-93062)

## People from Long Ago

as "visitors" (AO90-11A:3, LL91-25A:5). Emmanuel Felix stated that the word was from Alaska and meant "strangers" (EF91-5A:5). Lily Lipscombe (LL91-25A:3) indicated that her father, who was from the Yukon coast, never used such a term but that her mother, who was originally from inland Alaska, used it to talk about people from Pattuktuq (Demarcation Point).

Cultural differences might have existed between the Tuyurmiut and the Kittigaryukmiut as Franklin (1971:120) was told by people he encountered between Escape Reef and Sabine Point that they distinguished themselves from the people from the eastern side of the Mackenzie River by having only the women wearing tattoos while in the other groups men also wear them. Stefansson (1919:171) also mentioned a "Tuyormiut form of Kogmollik dance which is the most common at Herschel and has often as many as nine drummers".

The Tuyurmiut spoke a language similar to the Siglit language although some words were pronounced differently (EF91-5A:4, IA90-35B:8, IA91-14A:15). However, it does not seem to have been an Alaskan related language as previously suggested by Lowe (1991:185). Furthermore, the people met by Franklin (1971:13) along the Yukon coast and at Herschel Island distinguished themselves linguistically from their western neighbours but not from their immediate eastern neighbours of the Mackenzie River. The Siglit dialect was originally described by Emile Petitot, an oblate missionary who visited the "Tchiglit" (i.e., Siglit) while traveling to the Anderson River in 1865 and to the Mackenzie River during the summers 1868, 1869 and 1870. During the latter year, Petitot was at Fort McPherson where he met an Eskimo boy of about 14 years old called Arviouna (Arvluna?). Petitot took him to Fort Good Hope to learn his language. According to Petitot (1887:279), Arviouna was originally from the Taréorméout (Tariurmiut or "people of the sea") west of the Mackenzie Delta. This statement is important since it stresses that what is now called *Sigitun* was also spoken west of the Mackenzie Delta. Arviouna's family was probably part of the Tuyurmiut living along the Yukon coast and at Qikiqtaqruk. As Albert Oliver was told by his parents:

They say the first people on Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island) never grow. The very first people there. The first people that went there were the Tuyukmiut. [...] They were there all the time because they were Qikiqtaqruk people. [...] At that time they never grew. [...] That was their land, those people there. (AO90-11A:3)

Tuyurmiut was their name.[...] The people lived there all the time like Old Roland, Jean Tardiff's stepfather, he's one of them there, the tribes. The people never really grow, not like some places [where] the families have children or more people come or others have children. [...] Not too many people there. That's what my parents told me. (AO90-11A:6-7)

Emmanuel Felix talks about the Tuyurmiut and explains that they left the Yukon coast when the stores were closed in the 1930s:

They were always from that country, from Tapqaq (Shingle Point) and Qikiqtaryuk (Herschel Island). The Umauq, Old Man Cockney, the Siksigaaluk, those were certainly there from way back when! People from here called them Tuyurmiat, those from long ago at Qikiqtarayuk and Tapqaq. The Tuyurmiat [were a] different tribe. They were not Kittigaryukmiut. [...] They were always from over there at Qikiqtaryuk! They were not from around here (Tuktoyaktuk). They kept moving little by little, finally there was no one left at Qikiqtaryuk. They all moved this way. [...] The ships quit coming and the Hudson's Bay closed so they followed where the store was. (EF91-5A:1-2)

The original people from Herschel Island and Shingle Point. [...] Thomas Umauq and Gerard Siksigaaluk, Kaanniq. [...] Sitchak. I used to hear he's from there, never hardly come around here. (EF91-5A:7)

[My father] was a Sigliq and he was from here (Yukon coast) but he always liked to specify that he was from Tikiraq (Kay Point), not from Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island), always specify because that's where his mom always was. He never really liked to say that he was from Qikiqtaqruk, that's where his dad was from. There was two places, there was Qikiqtaqruk and there was Tikiraq. She was from Tikiraq and he was from Qikiqtaqruk. (LL91-25A:3)

I guess there were a lot of people that lived like for instance over at Kifñaaq (King Point). Lots of peoples lived along there too, but those people were mixed from Tikiraqmiut, Kifñaaqmiut and then after that they'll go to the Kittigaryukmiut. So Kittigaryukmiut and Kifñaaq people, Kittigaryukmiut and Tikiraq people meet together there. This is how they claimed that they interbreed finally. Because there was these people from Herschel, Qikiqtaqrukmiut, and they were Tikiraqmiut, and there was Kittigaryukmiut and Qiquliuvikmiut, that's around Tuk. Then when they came together, that's where they came together. It was at Kifñaaq. And that's where they finally interbreed [...] They said years ago, my dad used to say, when they came together, Kittigaryukmiut and these guys here, Qikiqtaqrukmiut and Tikiraqmiut, you know when they go together, when they come together, they said they used to be umlaqs (boats) all around, just about all around the harbour at King Point. (LL91-25A-6)

The Tuyurmiat referred to themselves according to where they were from, as Lily Lipscombe explains:

The importance of place names in people's identity is also reflected in the fact that people from Kupuk (west of Kittigaryuk) were still "known to their immediate neighbors by the name of a village which, for a century at least, has been uninhabited" (Stefansson 1919:24).

Although the Tuyurmiat didn't like to be called Siglit (IA91-14A:2), they had close relations with people from Kittigaryuk. Thus, Gerard Siksigaaluk, who was from Qikiqtaqruk, was married to a woman from Kittigaryuk. Also, when Reverend Thomas Umauq, who was originally from Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island), left the island he decided to settle in Tuktoyaktuk rather than in Aklavik. Here is what Lily Lipscombe heard from her father:

Ishmael Alunik thinks that the reduction of the Tuyurmiat population was caused by diseases. He is probably referring to the measles epidemic of 1902 and the mumps epidemic of 1904 at Herschel Island (Whittaker 1976:109). About 60 people died along the coast during the measles epidemic (ibid.).

## People from Long Ago

They used to be lots of them but when there was big flu there, lots of them passed away there too. These people were called Tuyuqmiat, they all speak like Siglit. Safluq was one of them. There was him, Ganliq, Loule Kaeqlik and them, also there was Nauryaq and them. They had no more stores there when lots of them died then. That was then when they all moved to Kirtigaryuit. When there was no one at Tuktoyaktuk then. (IA90-35A:3)



Avumruk and his wife at Henschel Island in the 1890s.

(AC, Springer Col. P7517-163)

### Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island)

Before it was renamed Herschel Island by Sir John Franklin in 1826, that big island was possibly called *Qikiqtaryuk* by Siglitun speakers, as they do nowadays, and *Qikiqtaqruk* (also pronounced *Qikiqtaqtuk*) by Inupiat speakers (and latter by Uummarmiutun speakers). At present the Uummarmiut are the people who are the most closely associated with the island and with the coastal Yukon for subsistence activities. Accordingly, we are using the spelling *Qikiqtaqruk* in this report. When he visited the island in July 1826, Franklin (1971: 128-132) met with people who had camps in three different part of the island. According to Franklin (1971:131), the island was "very much frequented by natives at this time of the year as it abounds with deer and fish." Franklin (1971:130) also learned from the local population that they traded iron, knives and beads from the Indians coming down the Firth River and from western "Esquimaux".

Qikiqtaqruk was not always separated from the mainland, as Jean Tardiff was told by her stepfather Roland Sařuaq (also spelled *Sařuaq* in Uummarmiutun and *Saaryuak* in Siglitun):

He would tell stories [about] when he was small. He said that Qikiqtaqruk was part of Nunaluk. This is how they hunt caribou by walking all the way up all the time. (JT90-16A:6)

While there was a connection from the island to mainland, they called them Nuvuraqmiut ("people of the Point"). They called them that when the island was part of mainland and Nunaluk. And after it became an island, they called it Qikiqtaqruk. Then, the Siglit called them Qikiqtaqrukmiut ("people of the Island"). Sařuaq always told us stories about them. (JT90-16A:9)

They claim that the women used to live there. It was easy for women to live on Avaluraq. Avaluraq is in the Avaliq. [...] It was easy, easier for women to live there, because you know how it's hard to get wood on this side of Herschel, eh? It used to be. [...] But the women used to stay home when their men are out hunting or working for the whalers or the mission there or for the RCMP and it was easier for them to live there. So they used to be a big community of almost straight women and their kids, you know. [...] My dad said his mom used to live there with his brothers and sisters. (LL91-24A:13-14)

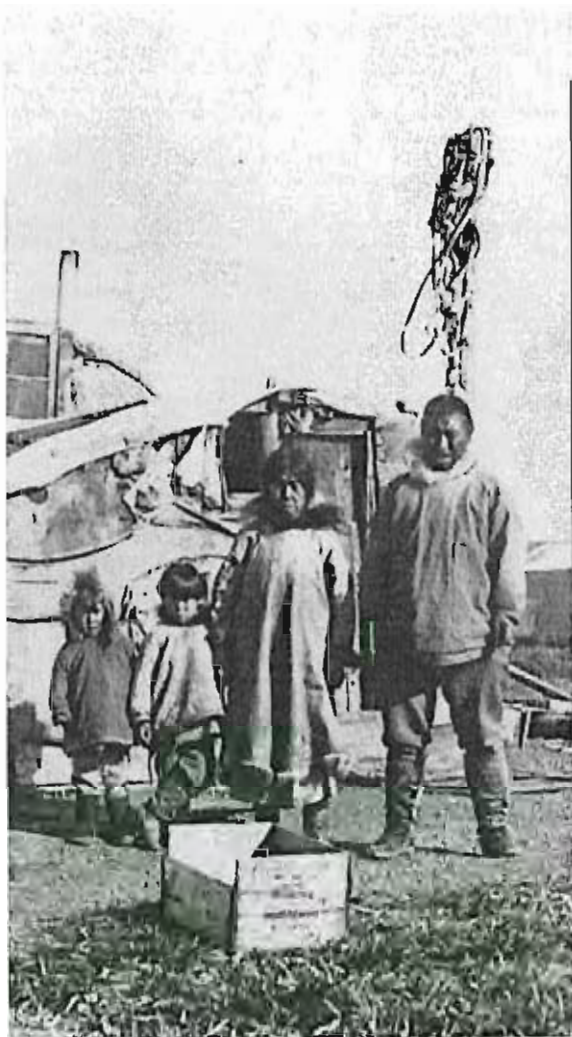
Roland Sařuaq also told stories to his daughter Lily Lipscombe about Avaluraq, a place located on Avaliq (Avadlek Spit, also called Ualiq), on the south west part of Qikiqtaqruk:



## People from Long Ago

### The Shamans and Medicine People

Traditionally, before they converted to Christianity, the Inuit had their own spiritual leaders. These shamans were called *angotkuq*. They were both feared and respected because of their special powers. They had the power to heal but also to kill. One of the last shamans remembered among the Inuvialuit is Kublualuk. He lived at a time when ministers were converting the Inuvialuit and during which the authority and powers of shamans were questioned. Joe Nasogaluak tells the following stories about Kublualuk



Kublualuk (R) at Herschel Island in the 1920s (YA. H-155, Finnie Col.)

Kublualuk was then young around 1900. He was a man of good stature, about six feet tall. There was not too much shamanism then as the younger generation did not believe in it and they mocked the shaman or medicine man. (...) Joking about the shaman was quite common amongst the younger people. But Kublualuk did not participate in these games.

One day he decided that he would like to be a medicine man and to learn about it. This, of course, was greeted with laughter and sneers. "Oh no! Not Kublualuk!" But he persisted in his intention and determination. However, later, determination continued as it was said that Kublualuk could fly, really fly. And so at Kittigaruit began a game of shaman sessions.

Then wanting to learn more and to practice, Kublualuk left Kittigaruit for Herschel Island. He was then still young. At Herschel, he married an old woman. I know her as I saw her several times. Now there was a minister then at Herschel Island, Reverend Whittaker, and sometimes when the people gathered, they would indulge in some shamanistic practices. On the island then, there were some well known and respected shamans, also known as the Flying Shamans. (...)

At the time Kublualuk [was] on the big island, many ships wintered in the harbour. Sometimes the Eskimos and the sailors fraternized in parties. On one occasion, Kublualuk drank more than he could handle and under Inspector Fitzgerald was arrested and brought into the detachment jail. (...) The police heard the next morning that Kublualuk had made an escape and was at home. So the police went to get him and put him in handcuffs, then back to jail went Kublualuk. (...) He told the people that as soon as he was locked in again, he saw an opening, a cut in the bars, the cut becoming larger and larger. Then putting his hands up, the chain of the handcuff fell to his feet. And through the opening he walked away again.

After that the police gave up and did not try to lock him up anymore. Instead the Inspector hired him as a special constable (...) until the departure of Inspector Fitzgerald to the Yukon where he met with ill fate and died of exposure in 1911. (COPE 1990, 1-1-01:1-2)

Kublualuk would fly from Herschel Island. They used to see him. Steve was his English name. We never heard about him after the ministers baptized him, Kublualuk. Because he was a shaman. I

wonder why they flew. Kublualuk was from around here. Apakkak's family, Tikilik's family, Alualuk's family, they would fly. I was a child at that time when I started to remember. The shamans would float out of the house and leave. They would return, maybe they were lying. (laughter) I don't think they lied. (JN90-30A:8)

Long ago when we used to live here, Kublualuk was there too. He was a real magic man. He could turn into feathers [...]. Every time the police locked him up in the jail, he's just gone and staying in his home! Somebody asked him "How you go out?" He said "I turn into, like a little owl feather". He was a shaman that man. Somebody see a hawk, he turned into a hawk also. "I'm gonna kill that bird Kublualuk" someone said. He started to pull the trigger, his bullets would bust. (laughter)

He was so strong this shaman. There at Herschel Island, they could travel under through the land, they started to look for open water. He used to hear from the preachers [...] He said three of them went, they hit, got to a lake [...] just like blood on it, just boiling. Then they turned back, he said "Must be a right preacher, must be right!" So he quit that thing. [...] "This preacher must be right!" he said. After that he turned into a falcon hawk but he quit that too, you know, just before he died. [...] There is quite a bit of stories about him. [...] I never meet him. He was dead already. Those are old time stories! (IA90-35B:6-7)

[...] And then after that they hire him for special constable, yes it's true. He used to live with my grandparents. When my Granddad would go for five days on his trap line, he would really get tired and worry about him and that. Then he noticed a little hawk go around when he was fixing his traps. You know those hawks that go very fast, some kind of hawk anyway. And after that one week my grandfather go home and he (Kublualuk) would say "yes I've seen you when you were at your traps and I watched you as you fixed your traps". All that time Kublualuk turned into a hawk and go see him!

[...] but he don't kill the people, he just carried them and used to have fun with them. Some people used to hear that long ago he killed people only if he was upset with them. [...] My grandparents used to say he made people well. I guess they pray to devil to each of them. They never knew about the bible, them days. [...] They used to make the people scared when they stayed alone in the dark. (LI90-6B:9-10)

[Kublualuk] finally wanted to take me fly to Ukiivik (Kendall Island). [...] When he asked me if I wasn't feeling lazy (tired), I said "yes". He put me on his back. I held him under his arms. When he lift up, he told me to close my eyes. I started getting scared, I was moving on his back. He told me to nudge him on his left side if I got scared. I was scared so I nudged him and we landed. He never changed. I looked back, we could hardly see our house [because] we were so far. We were just about to reach across the big river. We walked all the way back. He really wanted to give me his shaman (power). He said he never used it as bad shaman, just (to) have good time with it. I didn't take it, I was just a young boy. (CG91-6B:1)

Ishmael Alunik and Lucy Inglanagasuk heard the following stories about Kublualuk:

When he was a young boy, Charlie Gruben flew with Kublualuk. He tells of this rather unusual experience:



## People from Long Ago

For Jimmy Jacobson, a young child in the late 1920s, Kublualuk was just an ordinary man who happened to be his neighbour at Herschel Island:

Although the terms "shaman" and "medicine man" are often used interchangeably, it seems that not all medicine people were shamans. Traditionally, there were people among the Inuit who were strictly involved with treating illnesses. One could learn about medicinal plants and other remedies as Peter Thrasher tells:

I remember Kublualuk because I used to go to his sod house and he used to make bannock. I know once or twice I steal his bannock and he pretend to sleep. The next day he walk along with me holding my hand and he told me he was watching me when I was stealing his bannock but he pretend to sleep again. (laughter) At that time he was my next door neighbour. I know him real good because he walk around with me all the time. But all this time I never know I was walking around with a medicine man, eh? Because [he was our] next door neighbour. After that, I found out he was a medicine man. (J190-31A:1)

There's lots of medicine we used to do. That was long time ago. Those medicine men they used to go to jail, or they go after them and they put them in jail for malpractice. They stopped them. [...] you know my grandfather used to be a good doctor, you know when they cut people, you remember that time they used to cut people. [...] To take the sickness out of them. Heal it back, just let it heal by itself, heal by having a rest, even headaches, bad eyes.

I think they know how to, they know how to control body when you got something like that, the eyes especially. When people go blind or just about go blind, they know just where to cut the spot, right spot. They could feel if they push one way, with one finger they push it. They could feel the pressure go right there and if there's no pressure there, it means there's something wrong there. And they cut that spot, take it out, from the top side, from the open side where they could push the blood, it's OK. That's where they cut old blood pouring out, when it pour out, it starts getting good. (PT90-8A-9-10)

[...] Some of them even just only talk to you and make you better. They feel it or they use their hands. They do that first, then they even take that, you know that yellow stuff, they even separate this thing and get it inside the liver, the bladder, the gallstones. They take it out and heal that thing back with their fingers.

[...] But that time, they only used their hand, feeling it and fixing it. They just felt that sickness with their hand, they moved it and they fixed it. Even when they were really far, they could feel it. When they were feeling it, it was just like they had gone down in the stomach and they fixed that problem with their hand. Just like they just soften it up and it goes away. [...]

I don't know how they do it but my God, when they feel it just like God is with them. So darn smart, I thought they were really smart. Just like medicine man, but they're good, they're not bad. (PT90-8A:11-12)

## 4. After the White People Came



Inuit women visiting a ship at Herschel Island in the 1890s.

(AC, Springer Col. P7517-381)

### The Whalers

Herschel Island attracted commercial whalers at the end of the last century. By 1894 fifteen ships wintered there (Bockstoe 1986:345). During the same year, Klengenberg (1932:128) counted 1000 men at Pauline Cove on Herschel Island. From 1890 to 1915, the whalers took about 1500 bowhead whales in the eastern side of the Beaufort sea (Martell et al. 1984:27). As Peter Thrasher was told:

There were lots of them. Sometimes they say that about 30 or 40 ships were here, also whaling boats. There was lots of them. The big ship would go travel to Vancouver Island or B.C. or the States, you know? After they load up their ships with whale oil in them big barrels, the one they boil inside the ships. There was lots of them. (P190-9A:5)

## After the White People Came

The whalers were mainly interested in the baleen and the oil of the bowhead whales and the meat was often wasted, as Peter Thrasher, Joe Nasogaluak and Albert Oliver explain:

[...] They were together all the workers; engineers, skimmers, tanners, boilers, oil workers, steam operators [...] You know that time, there was a ship that went with the steam. It had two pipes, like my dad had told me about. There was lots of them (ships). When they were at the island and at the bay, there was about 30 or 50 of them. Those that are whalers. (PT90-9A:7)

Those big ships they came, they made a big slaughter. Well, there was no oil companies those days, those people they used to call those "white people oil" because they used that oil, for their light and their machines. They wanted that oil, there was lots of it there. (PT90-8A:14)

On the coast, there were a lot of ships for baleen. [...] A bowhead whale has 500 baleen. [...] One would weigh 3000 pounds, the blubber was one foot. One baleen was worth 7 dollars a pound. Silk. They made silk. Because there wasn't any nylon. (JN90-30B:2)

I heard most of them got lots of whales but I don't know which ones. And they would just cut the head off and take them. [...] They throw them away. They never take anything but heads! [...] Their heads, that was all they hunted whales for those people. And also their baleen. Everything on their head they took because at the time they (the heads) cost lots of money. [...] And they say long ago they would braid it and make rope with it and also make string for the hooks and it don't freeze. That's the reason why long ago they hunt blue whales for the things on their heads like the baleen and they cost lots. When they killed a whale, they would hang it on along [the] side of the boat, cut the head off, put them in the ship, and let go the rest of whale. The people always find the rest of the whale when it's washed up on shore. [...] The people would use them too. The ones that need them because the inner part doesn't spoil, just the top of the whale spoils. And they used it for dog food too. (AO90-11A:3-4)

The people would find one on the ocean shore and use them because they are good. The inside part, muktuk also and the oil. When it's fresh they keep it all for food. (AO90-11A:5)

The whalers brought Siberians as well as Iñupiaq from the Alaska North Slope and Nunatarmiut from the Nuatak River in Alaska (Burch 1976:55). They worked as hunters and seamstresses (Bockstoce 1986: 270-274). The Nunatarmiut were specifically hired to hunt caribou for the whalers since the local population were described as living mainly on fish, at least in winter, and on seals (Cook 1926:263, Stefansson 1919:164, Whittaker 1976:185). It is also possible the local population felt no obligation to work for the whalers. Bockstoce (1986:274) wrote that in order to supply the whalers with fresh meat, most of the Point Barrow natives and nearly one hundred from Point Hope were at Herschel Island in 1894 and 1895. Other accounts stress that, at least during the early years of commercial whaling, most of the caribou meat was brought to Herschel Island by Indians (Gwich'in) from the Peel River (e.g., Cook 1926). Albert Oliver explains that his own family had followed the whalers:

The whalers would get people from out there to hunt for them, the whalers. Eskimos from Alaska. Because our ancestors are from Alaska. (AO90-11A:5)

They pick up Alaska's people for hunters. And when they get to Herschel Island, they do hunting around there. These Alaska people never go back. They lived in the Delta, and our parents too never go back. My dad and them are from Alaska. There is lots of them. (AO90-11A:8)

My dad lived around there long ago before us. They stayed at Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island) and Qafgialuk (Ptarmigan Bay). They wintered there always. When the ships wintered there, they say there was lots of them Inuit when they wintered there. They didn't know about Christmas at the time. They hunted, went trapping and made a living there. When summer came they helped the whalers. They say there was not too much whales long ago. They were hard to see. One time they saw two blue whales only. For long time, they looked for them. [...] When someone first saw a whale, the Captain would pay them too. [...] A gold watch. The Captain would tell them, the first one who sees a whale shall have the watch. At that time a watch was so valuable, it was big money. (AO90-11B:3-4)

Most of hunters that were on ships with whalers stayed around to claim land around here in Delta. [...] Because it had lots of animals. [...] There is muskrat, rabbits, ptarmigan, all kinds of animals to hunt. That is why they stayed and claimed the land when they finished with the ships and when they didn't hunt for them anymore. (AO90-11B:6-7)

There was big ships at Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island) from long ago. They always said that the whalers were there. My dad too, he has been to east with the ships, with the whalers. Also his brother was there at Qikiqtaqruk long before. His brother Kupuuq. He was there too with the whalers. My dad went with him with the whalers long ago. Before my dad was married, he was just 14 years old. He was washing dishes for McKenna. [...] He went with him to go see his brother at the beach of Qikiqtaqruk. Well, then, there was always lots of ships gathered there, long ago. They were the whalers then, looking for whales. Then when whalers went back home, my dad came home with his brother. [...] That is how my dad told stories, that is how both told the stories that I learned from them. (HG90-24A:10-12)

It was at Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island), that's where my parents found out when they wintered there. When the ships and whalers wintered there at Qikiqtaqruk, they didn't know too much about Christmas. But when New Year came, they started hearing noise little after midnight, coming from the ships. They were making loud noise with lots of tin cans while they (the Inuit) were already in bed. So, they came going around the houses making all kind of noise, while the people were sleeping already. All this time they were wishing everyone "Happy New Year!" And they were shooting too. [...] From then they knew about Christmas and New Year. That's what my mother said; only then they find out (AO90-11B:8-9).

Hope Gordon was told this story by her father who was hired from Point Hopa (Alaska) to work for Captain McKenna, a whaling merchant and whiskey trader who was around Herschel Island from about 1893 to 1906:

The arrival of the whalers also meant the introduction of their own traditions such as Christmas and New Year. Albert Oliver was told the following story by his mother:

## After the White People Came

Captain Bodfish, who was wintering for the first time at Herschel Island in 1891, wrote: *We watched the old year out and the new in and scared the natives half to death by the blowing of horns and shooting of guns. They thought we were murdering each other, never having seen anything of the kind before.* (Bodfish 1976:60)

Bertha Leavitt (Kisauq 1981:229) reported that the Iñupiaq of Alaska had a traditional "New Year-like" celebration called *ayalik* associated with the return of the sun. The Inuvialuit had a similar tradition, as Felix Nuyaviak, who was from Kittigaryuit, recalled :

These traditions were later integrated into the New Year festivities as Albert Oliver explains:

Other social activities took place at Herschel Island between the Inuit and the whalers, as discussed by Albert Oliver:

It is difficult to have a clear picture of the nature of the relations between the whalers and the Inuit population. However, there is evidence that children were conceived during short-lived relations between Inuit women and whalers. As Joe Nasogaluak tells:

In other cases, the whalers had to rely on Inuit help for survival and were rapidly integrated into Inuit families. Jimmy Jacobson explains how his father met his mother:

At the reappearance of the sun [...] the oil for the lamp, all oil were thrown out. New oil was put in lamps. (COPE 1991, 1-14-03:2)

At the time too, on New Year's Eve, everyone would empty everything in pots and whatever that goes in something. This was done before midnight and this was done for the old year. Empty everything; old water or whale oil in pots and palls. So they could start with new year with new things. That was how, in them old days. (AO90-12A:7)

Sometimes when it's big days they would be boxing, wrestling around and they would show the Eskimos how to box and wrestle. One time they say down at Herschel Island that three white people tried to teach the Eskimos how to wrestle. They let them watch, the three of them. One white man, he win. So one Eskimo want to try now. Now they are going to try Big Dick, he's a big man. And everyone know he's a strong man. All the Eskimos they know it. He was there watching too. He says it's nothing for him, he thinks that way. So the Eskimos tell him "try, go down there and try". He was lazy at first because he thinks it's nothing for him so them boys force him into it, so he went down. He got hold of one of them and just throw him down just like a little child. That white man tries again. He can't stand that Big Dick who is too strong. So that guy, no more teaching! (AO90-12A:4)

Young girls, you know girls. The whalers would take the women away from the Inuit men. They made children. [...] They would leave them and find another wife, like lif if they weren't married. That is how it happened. (JN90-30B:3)

Fred, my dad, came with one of the first whalers' boat. There was about thirty of them in that whale ship, hunting bowhead whales. They froze in the southwest sand spit close to Baillie Island, about six miles from Baillie Island. They froze in there and when the weather was getting cold they started to get scurvy. You know what scurvy is? You put your finger in your leg and that hole don't come up, then they know they got scurvy.

So when my dad and his friend found out the crew started to get scurvy they walked from Baillie to Avuk. Avuk is about one mile

from Baillie Island. They call it Cape Bathurst. They walked there and they move in with Eskimos and my dad and his friend one day after one month they walked back to the southwest sand spit. All the other thirty-one were dead. Only those two they survived because they lived with fresh fish, seal meat, I guess. Then after that, that's how my dad ended up marrying my mother, eh? An Eskimo. And his partner too married an Eskimo but I never heard of him or what happened to him. (JJ90-31A:7)

They got the gold but can't find too much in Firth River. [...] I think one guy he find a big one, a piece, but I think he died then right there. That time lots of them run away. Some see others and bring them back. Some were just about starving, no food. They bring them all back, some don't want to go back. They shoot them. Some Eskimos dogs, they run away with. Even stole lots of grub from the boats. They take off at night time. (AO90-11A:9)

I also went mining up a little there at the Firth River around Sheep Creek. I had few claim marks up there. The other claim I had, someone took it. I guess he got few money from it and it was going to cost us too much to get machines and other tools for mining. (IA90-35B:5)

Some whalers turned to trapping and trading activities and legalized their marriage with Inuit women, as in the cases of Ole Andreasen, Ned Arey, Tom Gordon, Christian Klengenber and Peter Lopez, to name a few (Stefansson 1919, 1922, 1944).

While commercial whaling was a major activity in the Beaufort sea, the gold rush was booming in the Dawson area of the Yukon. Some of the whalers, probably tired of wintering on the island and wanting to try their luck at gold mining, tried to reach Dawson through the Firth River while others tried to find gold directly along the Firth River. Albert Oliver heard stories about those whalers turned gold miners:

After the whalers, some Inuvialuit also tired to find gold along the Firth River. Ishmael Alunik recalls:

## After the White People Came

### The Anglican Missions

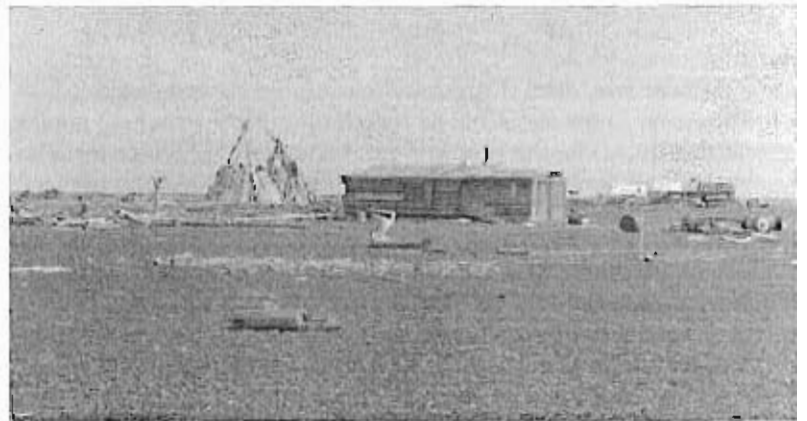
Anglican presence among the Inuvialuit started in the 1890s. At first, the Inuvialuit were suspicious of the missionaries. Jonah Carpenter's father, who was from Kittigaryuk, told him this story:

That time there was no minister.  
They used to come while  
there was so many Inuvialuit.  
They wanted to kill this minister.  
So he left before they killed him.  
Inuvialuit didn't know.  
They didn't want to have minister.  
(JC90-8A:4)

Anglican missionaries made frequent visits to the village of Kittigaryuk from 1892. The village had been previously visited by Oblate Camille Lefebvre (Peake 1966:28). In 1914 and 1915, writing and reading skills in Inuvialuktun were taught there by Anglican ministers (JN90-30B:10). During his visits Reverend Stringer was accompanied by an Inuvialuk named George Greenland (Peake 1966:18). It is very likely that George Greenland was the Arvluna from whom Petitot learned some Sigtun in 1870 (AO90-11A:7, PT90-8B:8, PT90-9A:3).

The village of Kittigaryuk, devastated by the measles epidemic of 1902, was revisited by Bishop Stringer during the summer of 1909. He counted "109 people and 14 whaleboats". During his visit he performed the first marriage at the village between "Jimmy Mimoguna and Shookaiyak" (Peake 1966:116-117). Mimoguna was probably Mimurana (also known as "Memorana" and as "Roxy") with whom Stefansson (1944:468, 1964:70) travelled in 1906.

Written sources accentuate the tragic side of the whalers' invasion of the island (Bockstoeck 1986:275-6, Whittaker 1976). Reports of the bad influence of the whalers on the Inuvialuit population incited Anglican missionary Isaac O. Stringer to visit the island in 1892 and 1893. In 1897, he returned with his wife Sadie and they established a permanent residence on the island. During that first year at Herschel Island, Stringer counted "50 white men and more than 100 Eskimos from half a dozen tribes" (Peake 1966:63). Conversion was slow but by 1898 Stringer had a "congregation of 20 to 30 Eskimos" (Peake 1966:64). Schooling started on the island in 1900. The next year the couple left and Stringer went on to become the Bishop of Selkirk (later the Diocese of Yukon) in 1905. The Stringers' decision to leave the island may have been influenced by the decline of commercial whaling and the fact that from 1900 to 1902 no ships wintered there (Ingram and Dobrowolsky 1989:50). Bishop Stringer made a good impression on the Inuvialuit and was praised for his ability to speak their language and for teaching them how to write. Peter Thrasher heard stories about Bishop Stringer from his father and his grandmother:



Shingle Point (Tapqaq), 1991.

(ISDP)

[...] you know that time when they first started to come they had no priest. You know that time when they started drinking they try and kill each other, fight, drunk. Their wives, they lost them to those white people, those people, their daughters they fooled around. When that preacher came just like that all the bad people they stopped. Bishop Stringer, yeah! (PT90-8A:13)

[Bishop Stringer] is the one my dad saw and talked about. Also my grandmother, they saw him at Herschel, for the first time. But then, they never let him baptize them. (PT90-9A:4). Bishop Stringer was a good man 'cause my grandmother used to really like that man and his wife. (PT90-8A:14)

Those two, Allan (Uqpik) and his brother (Garrett Nutik) [...] They really know about books and reading. They were both good in making church for the people there. When they are getting ready to read in Inuit from the bible they would study it and just go from there. The two brothers were very good in that reading and studying. They were very smart in everything. [...] Before they start the church service, they say what is for sermon that day and start from there. They were little those two brothers, I don't know how old they are but Garrett is the youngest brother. [...] Even both Colin and Herbert Allen followed their dad's footsteps. They did service too before the ministers came. This would be like "in the bush" services. And Colin was a real minister and when there is no one, Herbert would do the church service when we were in the delta on Sunday. [...] On Saturdays, we would cut wood and bring it in our house and also get enough ice too. That way we don't have to touch anything to work on that day, Sunday. The people were like that long ago, they never worked on Sunday. (AO90-12A:6)

From 1901 to 1906, the Anglican mission at Herschel Island was run by Reverend Whittaker and his wife (Whittaker 1976:19). For the next ten years no missionary was in residence on the island but in 1909, Bishop Stringer came back to Herschel Island to baptize six Inuvialuit (Peake 1966:117). Among them was Thomas Umauq, a native of Herschel Island, who in 1927 was to become the first Inuvialuk Anglican minister (Peake 1966:146), and James Atumiqsana (previously mentioned). Though no missionary was in residence, services were led by Inuvialuit laymen who had been pupils of the Stringers such as Garrett Nutik (Peake 1966:146), the father of Kathleen Hansen. Albert Oliver explains:

In July 1916, Reverend Fry and his wife moved to Herschel Island. They were met by about 200 Inuvialuit (Ingram and Dobrowolsky 1989:80). This number might represent more than the local population as many Inuvialuit would be trading at that time of year. The Frys left the island in 1919 due to Reverend Fry's health problems and the following year the mission was moved to Shingle Point (Ingram and Dobrowolsky 1989:86-96). Herschel Island continued to be visited by Anglican missionaries in the 1920s.

The conversions to Anglicanism accelerated in the early 1900s. Between September 1907 and July 1908 all the Inuvialuit were converted. (Stefansson 1951:38) These conversions were probably influenced by the deaths of many Inuvialuit spiritual leaders in the

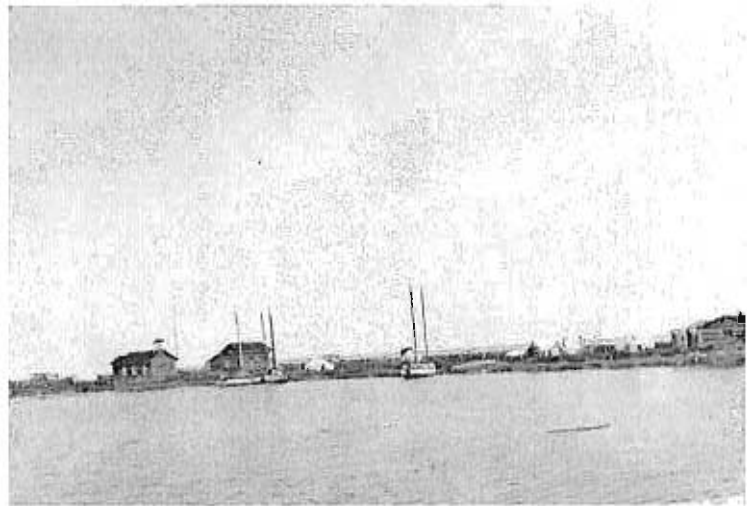


## After the White People Came

numerous epidemics. Traditional beliefs were, however, maintained in parallel to the new christian rituals in a similar manner described by Dellège (1991) for Northeastern America in the 17th and 18th centuries. Thus Stefansson (1951:89) remarked, "while christian prayers are very good in ordinary things, the old-fashioned charms are much more effective when it comes to catching whales". During a visit to Shingle Point in 1908, Stefansson (1951:425) noted the sabbath was particularly well-respected.

Although an Anglican station was maintained at Shingle Point by Reverend Fry from 1909 to 1919, it was only in 1920 that a mission house was built there (Ingram and Dobrowolsky 1989:86, Whittaker 1976:199). A church was constructed in 1922 and a school opened in 1929 with Reverend Shepherd as a principal (Peake 1966:109). From 1929 to 1936 there was an Anglican Mission School at Shingle Point for Inuit children (KH91-27A:8). Some even came from the Victoria Island area. A few of the pupils must have been orphans who lost their parents in the 1928 influenza epidemic.

Martha Harry shares her memories of going to school at Shingle Point for one year in 1931-32 while she was about 15 years old:



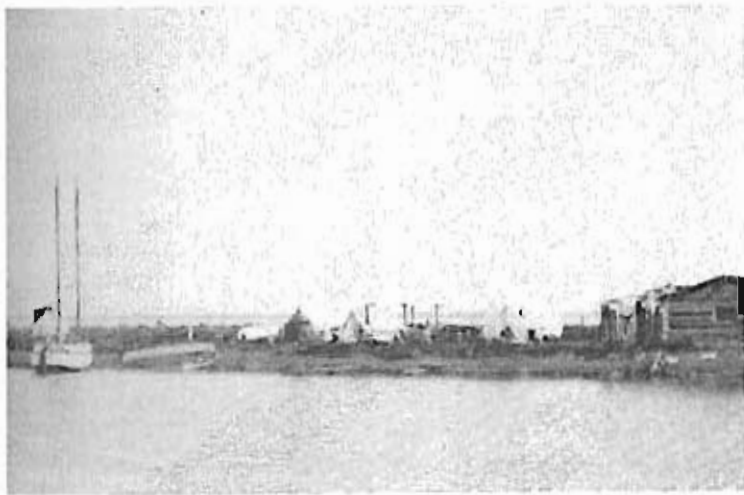
Anglican church, residence and Hudson's Bay Company house at Shingle Point, 1928.

Long ago at 'Upqaq (Shingle Point), when we went to school there. First time when I went to school I was scared because I never knew anything about English ways, I really didn't know. Only thing I knew little was "Good morning" and "Good night" but the other English language I never knew. Because too my mother would learn me how to speak only in Inuvialuktun language and that's the only language I know or learned.

That's how it was when I first went to school. I just followed what the others were doing like my cousin and other young girls like me. Garrett Nutik and them were at 'Upqaq when we first went to school there. When I first went to eat I was so afraid, I thought "How am I going to eat?" [...] And when we ate, the way they eat I follow them. Even if I never get enough, I'd stop eating because it was like that. So I just followed them. Because too we never ate like that before with white man food.

Later on, before it freeze, Garrett would get caribou for them. Garrett Nutik with little bigger boys [...] and also Peter Joe and Uluqaq. There was some Qangualik (eastern people) too, I forget their names. When they go hunting up there, they would have them for help. They say that was to be our food for the winter. They would go hunting on Saturdays, just on Saturdays, they never go on Sundays. Only on Saturday and on Fridays when school is over, they would go. When they finished work, Mr. Shepherd would go with them to pack some meat.

They would go anyway, they could because the caribou was not far up. Just over the first hill, around there they would be. They would bring caribou meat and also make stage for them. Also Umuq helped them then. They make stage and Umuq would teach Mr. Shepherd how the Inuit make [a] living in those days. They made big stages, two of them because one would be for fish and the other for caribou meat.



(NAC, W. Morgan PA 167644)

They also skinned the caribou and cut them up with a saw. Those days they used big hand saws, they cut them up with those, those two Umauq and Mr. Shepherd. When school is finished, the older boys would help them and when they have fish nets too in front down there. Same thing when they got herrings, they stored them in the stage, also wrapped them up before storing them away.

Then when Mr. Shepherd found out how we eat in wintertime, he let us cut up frozen fish with the skin off and clean them sometimes. We cut the herrings in half, take the head and back fins of the herrings and skinned and cleaned them. Then they put them on the tables. In those days they had long tables for us. The boys on one table and girls on other. [...] Then with little bowls they would put whale oil in them. We all eat frozen fish on Saturdays. We eat fish and herring. They would let us eat frozen fish on Saturdays. But some children, small ones, didn't like to eat frozen fish. [...] The ones with white fathers they didn't care to get frozen fish. So they cooked meat for them because they didn't like to eat frozen food. Only on Saturdays we had frozen food, on the other days we never ate them.

Also they melt snow and the washer is like this. We do this ourselves to wash our clothes. Then we bring them this way ourselves and then we rinse them ourselves too. You know they are big wood barrels like this. They are just like big wooden barrels. These were the kind of washers they had then. That way we washed at the little boys' room and we took turns. [...] Us older girls, we took turns, two at the time. [...] We always did a big laundry that way. Sometimes we couldn't get dirt out [so] we used the wash board and rinsed them ourselves too.

Then, we hanged them all at the little boys' room until there was no room for them. They had wire lines for clothes line. They used iron wires, the ones that don't rust. They made them one end to the other end. They were very close together. This way they made lines

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like that. Well there was no dryer in those days, nothing. Also there was a big stove where you could put two big tubs of snow to melt. There was no running water then, only that kind we had. [...] We did our laundry on Mondays and Thursdays taking turns and we helped the little boys' supervisor. They always did the small boys and girls clothes together maybe on Monday, the small boys ones. Ours on Thursday. Like that every week.

This person Kusatyaluk would make our shoes, also duffels too. Us, bigger girls, would help her a little when we could. She made duffel just sewing by hand. She made all the small boys and girls shoes and parkas with covers. [...] I think she had two machines. I wonder how she got paid and how much? I don't know, I never heard!

When we had school we had classes at the Mission House. The higher grades were on the other part of the house [...] and us, first grade, on the other side and the ones that just started were over here. They put them facing each other like that. We only had one teacher. After she taught in a day she would lose her voice because she was the only one. Because too some of the children were silly. [...] sometimes they didn't listen. She [would] yell at them so much that she would lose her voice! [...] She sure could work, just one teacher for all the children there. [...]

When we spend Christmas there, we had drum dance at Garrett's house. Even we danced square dances too there. Even if it was a small room, maybe like this one here. Maybe it was a little wider than this. Then those people from Niaqulik, all came too. There was one Indian that came with them, I don't know who he was, he could play the fiddle good. When he plays fiddle we all have square dances. We also do a jig and drum dance. That's how we have Christmas long ago. And there they let us eat too, Garrett and them. Us bigger children, like our own food when we are home, it sure was good.

Then on Sunday we go to our school to have service there. They always put the school chairs away on Saturdays [...] They always cleaned up for Sunday service for us. [...] And us children, we didn't go home for Christmas or Easter. We never went on holidays to our relatives. Just like that, we stayed down there all winter.

[...] We always worked, worked! We helped Mr. Shepherd and that cook. We washed dishes and everything and played around once in a while. We played outside, we also visited Susie, Umauq's wife. But we couldn't visit there all of us, just three at the time. Girls visited there all day and next day us we visited like that. Just three of us, we couldn't visit all of us like that. (MH91-16A:1-7)

David Roland was at Shingle Point from 1932 to 1936. Returning at Shingle Point in 1991, he recalls his years there:

When I first went to school I really didn't know how to speak in English and I didn't understand too. I guess the only ones I knew was "a spoon", "a knife", that was all I knew in English. [...] Then that summer I went to school.

When I went to school these houses were here then. This one here, there was a big cove in here at the time. And then too, the schooners used to come in here, inside the bay. The school was a log house, right beside it then. Further to the point, there was houses for boys and girls. Long ago when we went to school they never tell us to stay in one house. The boys have their own. Also in winter it's



Inuvialuit students at the Anglican Mission School, Shingle Point, 1930s.

(NWT Archives, Fleming Col. N79-050:0412)

always stormy and when it blows it's very strong sometimes. Sometimes when it does that, they would tie a long rope from our houses to the Mission House where we eat. So when it gets stormy, we would hold on the rope and go to our room by the rope.

At the time, 14 boys were in school sometimes and sometimes 16 girls too. Some years they would be more boys too but they don't let us play together. I don't know why, long ago. (laughter) There Mr. Shepherd was the principal, then there. Also Thomas Umauq was working there and Kusalyuk did repairs on the school children's mukluks. [...]

During summertime, when the school children went home, myself I stayed straight four years. I stayed at Tapqaq because I had no home to go to. Sometimes when children went home with their parents, I wished I could go. I just stayed because there was no place for me to go. I stayed for four summers and four winters.

Then after I finished four years, they looked for a place for me to go home to. So they let me go home to my grandparents then. Well in those days if you went to school, if you finished four years, they let you go even if you learned or not, they let them go from school. In those days everyone hardly knew how to speak in English, so if you learned how, they'd let you go. It's just like the main reason you went to school for was to learn or understand English, that was it. (DR91-27A:5-7)

Because the caribou population had drastically dropped in the 1920s, reindeer were brought to Canada by Laplanders in the 1930s. While she was in school at Shingle Point, Persis Gruben remembers the reindeer herders:

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[...] at Tapqaq, the little girls were saying that there was lots of caribou. When the reindeer arrived their bells were just ringing. They also had reindeer pulling sleds, driving like dogs. [...] When I first saw their shoes they were so pointed! They wore them when they were sking. We couldn't understand him when he was talking. Before the reindeer arrived caribou came in by herds. And here, reindeer were behind them coming. [...]

They came to Tapqaq, they all came in for a night. Some at Thomas Umauq's. I was working in the kitchen. When I swept the floor I didn't think this grass were linings. I shoved them into the stove but we never used it unless it was really cold. This little old man got up and started looking around. Our principal asked him what he was looking for. Then he looked at his feet, trying to explain to the principal, feeling his shoe. Our principal and teacher asked me if I had seen some grass around the stove. I said "Yes! They are inside the stove". He said "Good thing you didn't light the stove, that's the only linings I have". The old man was just smiling. He opened the stove and pulled out his grass linings. He said to me "Come!" He stuff the grass in his shoe. (PG91-6A3-4)

The Mission School was moved from Shingle Point in 1936. Flooding and the closing of the Hudson's Bay stores at Herschel Island and Shingle Point must have also influenced the move to Aklavik (RM91-138:5). Shingle Point continues to be used as a fishing and whaling camp by the Inuvialuit every summer.



Confirmation class at Herschel Island in 1917.

(AC, V.14, Col. P7559-148)



## The Police

The Hudson's Bay Company viewed the whalers of Herschel Island as unwelcome competition. They reported the untaxed trade goods entering Canada with the whalers. The Canadian government was slow to respond but in 1903 two members of the Northwest Mounted Police (later known as the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, 1904-1919 and then as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 1919-present) were sent to the island (Bockstoe 1986:279). The role of the police was not only to enforce Canadian criminal laws and custom's duties on Herschel Island but also to represent Canadian sovereignty on the Yukon North Slope. Peter Thrasher explains:

I don't know what year, maybe when Inspector Wood was an inspector that time. [...] Well that part of the country was just becoming Yukon, just became part of the country too that time. That's why the RCMP start moving into the Alaska border. There was a border already. And Yukon was a place too. But at that time Old Crow was Canadian. Just a little ways from there, it's the Alaska border. The [Fort] Yukon is still in Alaska. [...] There is Inuit over there too. [...] That's what they say (PT90-9B:10).

My dad used to tell stories about when the police started to put the border there in 1909, that's when they started telling the people. The police was telling the people [about] the bay they got to go across. Aqpayuatchiaq (Running River) is the border, just like Demarcation Point, the one for the States. [...] Aqpayuatchiaq is the Yukon border from Northwest Territories, that's the one, yeah. [...] Well, that time Stringer was at Herschel Island too, he was down there that time. He used to come around here once in a while. Then it must be about 1909 too. [...] Bishop Stringer he was the minister that time (PT90-8A:6).

Once I could remember when we went for Christmas, I think around 1928, around there sometime. When we went for Christmas, Uqallsuq was a special constable then. They say when people gambled, he would tell the police and make them to go to court then. They say he was a really tough guy. And when I grew up he would always put his police hat away in a tent, a police hat. These hats, the police's hat, long ago a round hat. He also bought some police pants. They told him to take the yellow strips off along the sides there. They told him few times but he never try and take them off, he just wears them like that when he travels places. So the people were always scared of him. When he finally passed away, they threw them away because they got wet. He got his hat from the inspector around there. (IA90-35A:5)

The police at Herschel Island also hired some Inuvialuit as "special constables". Ishmael remembers:

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The police also patrolled from Herschel Island to Fort McPherson, Rampart House and Fort Yukon reporting on game conditions, fur trade, weather, and to bring the mail. The annual patrol from Fort McPherson ended tragically when Inspector Fitzgerald and three constables died of exposure. (Steele 1936:154). Albert Oliver talks about the help that police received from Inuvialuit and Indian guides:

Just the ones from McPherson, they would make short cut over the mountains over here to Old Crow to bring mail and news and one of them is Gerard Chicksi (Siksigaaluk), he would travel with the police over to Old Crow and down to the coast with them. Long ago, also Old Lazarus Sittichinli and them would help and guide the police at that time long ago and would travel over 500 miles over the mountains with them. They would just make short cuts.

That trail over the mountains have killed lots of people, also police. They would freeze to death or starve too.[...] They would always try themselves that's why. They always want to go alone even when some Indians or others want to help them. They always said they could do it, then they would have trouble travelling by themselves! There was lots of natives that would help them even Big Louie. [...] Fred Cardinal's dad. [...]

They say when he came back with them from Old Crow they had hard time travelling too because there was so much deep snow and no food too. And he couldn't see very well and had nothing at the time with that police patrol. At one time they saw moose tracks and right there they stopped and told the police to make camp there while he'd go look for that moose following the tracks. And he was very good on snowshoes. As he went not far, he shoot few times and he knew those white people were almost starving and now they had food. So he killed and started skinning the moose half way and brought just enough for meal and went to them. And there, they stayed for few days. Only when they had enough strength they went again and made it. (AO90-12A:7-8)

Starting in the 1920s, the police also started to issue game licenses and register trap lines (Ingram and Dobrowolsky 1989 127-28). Levi Greist, an Inupiat from Alaska, remembers:

So when we left in 1923 and got to Kuugruaq some white men from Nome over there heard also about this one who caught five hundred white foxes, these ones also tried to go east over there from Koyukuk but they were told that each person is to go across by paying one hundred and fifty dollars each. Although one could go across just to go visit. (Kisauq 1981:604)

Dora Malegana recalls a time when the law was not yet strictly enforced. Her mention of Yukon seems to imply the inland Yukon area (probably the Old Crow Flats):

It was so good in them days. The hunting had no law so we could go even in the Yukon and Alaska. The only thing was that the Alaska people were not to set traps in Canada. Just by the ocean they would set traps. Also Old Arey would hunt by ocean and shore and reach Yuuqyaaq. He would hunt like that. (DM90-13B:9)

Ironically, some Inuvialuit who had been trapping in the Old Crow Flats area for many years were declined permission to register trap lines. Ishmael Alunik, who was born in the Old Crow Flats had a special arrangement:



Const. Chartrand, Special Constable Saquiaq and Const. Parkes standing in front of the Inspector's house at Herschel Island in 1933. (D. Parkes Col.)

After that I came down by the Babbage River and also reached Old Crow again to the delta up there. When I went up there, the Loucheux people found my tracks they followed them and found me, they never had any blankets, those two, John Kendi and them. I had big eider down blanket. I sleep like that, that one time. But us we stayed little ways over. Before that they did not want us in their land, me and Kayutaq over there. Then Jack Frost find out and because too he was our good friend from our parents too. So the Indian agent knew I was born up there. I could trap up there anywhere and anytime. But later on I took my traps off and never went back again. (IA90-35B:5)

[...] that time, them two Qangmalik, they make them dig their own grave the day before they hang them. Made them visit the people the day before they hang them. One of them, [...] he didn't like it when people asked him he was going to die because he figured he didn't deserve to be hanged. But the other one didn't mind because he killed enough men. (IJ90-31A:5)

Many Inuvialuit elders were quick to recall "people were hanged" by the police. Eight Inuit were charged with murder between 1923 and 1928 and tried at Herschel Island. In 1923, two Inuit from the Coppermine area were sentenced to death and hanged in February 1924 (Steele 1936:241). They seem to have been the only two Inuit ever hanged on the island. Jimmy Jacobson was on the island at the time, as his adopted father Philip Nauyaq was procuring dog food for the police. He describes what happened to the two men before they were hanged:

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Another case involved a young mother who had killed her illegitimate baby (Kemp 1958:114). This incident might have been the source of the following story told by Dora Malegana:

Police came when they were going to have hearing in our house in Qaiñiuqvik. We could not understand, my uncle Archie Irigaqtuaq was their spokesperson. [...] She threw her child away. And then, when they got there, they saved her. The people that had court saved her. And then he let them have him for brother-in-law. She had no husband [...]. They really helped her out, my auntie Kutuq too. She really talked for her. They never took her because they helped her. Right there they really helped her. That was the first time I ever saw police. (DM90-13A:12)

When they came around there, they started to have court. She knew what the woman had been doing down there. [...] Those people feel so sorry for her. They made her get married, they start to help her and she got off free. They made her get married to help her out. [...] It was really scary when they got pregnant, they could kill them! A girl always heard that she shouldn't get pregnant if she was not married. I always heard that I'm not supposed to get pregnant before I got married. If they did that again, they were going to kill them, put them to jail and hang them. I heard a few people got hanged in Herschel Island. [...] Every time, when people used to do something wrong, the police used to hang them. (DM90-14A:10-11)

In 1931, the police headquarters at Herschel Island was moved to Aklavik and the police station was closed in 1933. In response to an influx of Inupiat immigrants from Alaska and to a minor gold rush on the Firth River, the Herschel detachment was reopened in 1948 but it was to be permanently closed in 1964 (Ingram and Dobrowolsky 1989:139). In the 1950s and 1960s, the police also began a dog breeding program. Agnes Gruben White, who was married to an RCMP officer in the early 1960s, recalls:

We had about seventy dogs. They come in from Norman Wells. They were breeding the dogs. They were Siberian huskies. [...] Around middle November, they flew in Nicky the famous dog from California. He used to be in movies. That dog was here. We had to take care of him carefully so that nothing would happen to the dog. They wanted to use the dog to breed. (AGW91-11A:2)

They were real tiny small dogs. I didn't think too much of them. We had seventy of them in the corral. The tied up ones, we had ten of them, plus two teams. It would be about twenty dogs. I have pictures of them. From here RCMP was to make their patrol right to Old Crow. They leave Herschel Island and BAR-B, it's DEW line site at Stokes Point. From Stokes Point to the lowest part of the mountains, then hit across to Old Crow. And from Old Crow to McPherson and Arctic Red and Aklavik and Inuvik and Tuk. Back to Inuvik and Aklavik, BAR-two, Blow River. It takes them about month and half back to Stokes Point along the coast and back to Herschel. They did this once. In Tuk they did pretty much the same.

I was never part of any of them but I sure made their clothes! Their parkas and mitts, their liners, mukluks. I used to make an awful lot of bread buns for them. There was three of them. Every year I have to do it over and repair. Pretty much doing it over and over. (AGW91-11A:5)

### The Trading Companies

Many locals were attracted to Herschel Island by the cheap goods offered by the whalers in return for fresh meat. For example, even after they started paying duty, the whalers were selling one hundred pounds of flour for \$2 while it would cost \$30 at the Hudson's Bay Company's store at Fort McPherson (Bockstoe 1986:276). Because of this competition at Herschel Island, the Hudson's Bay Company did not establish a trading post there until 1915, after the collapse of the whaling industry (Ingram and Dobrowolsky 1989:78).

Starting during the last years of commercial whaling, independent traders had already established partnerships with the Inuvialuit when the Hudson's Bay Company arrived at Herschel Island. Captain C. T. Pedersen was one of those traders who was particularly well remembered by Inuvialuit elders. He first came to Herschel Island with the whalers in 1894 and soon entered the fur market. In 1914, he joined the H. Liebes and Company with whom he opened a trading post at Shingle Point in 1917. The Hudson's Bay Company was quick to get into the competition and opened another post there in 1920 (Ingram and Dobrowolsky 1989:163). After a salary dispute in 1923, Pedersen left H. Liebes and Company and formed the Northern Whaling and Trading Company the same year. He later formed the Canalska Company to comply with Canadian trade laws. Pressure from his own trading company and the Hudson's Bay Company drove H. Liebes and Co. out of business in a few years (Ingram and Dobrowolsky 1989:168). Competition between independent traders and the Hudson's Bay Company was rampant. Jonah Carpenter recalls the following incident between Captain Pedersen and the Hudson's Bay Company:

Long ago I used to travel with Lennie and Gus Astagard. Traveling with boat. I was only about 15, and then steady going on every summer till about twenty. I was twenty then. [...] I used to be among them. I know lots of people that stayed at Tapqaq hunting whales and those Qikiqtaqrayuk's ships. Pedersen used to go over there and there were schooners from Banks Island trading their foxes. There was lots of them, quite a few. One time, Hudson's Bay's boat, a big ship, got in the sand bar not too far from Qikiqtaqrayuk. The ship was in the sand bar for two days. They couldn't pull the ship out. Then, Captain Pedersen was asked by the Hudson's Bay Company to pull their ship out of sand bar. He never would say "yes", he wanted more foxes!

Well, Captain Pedersen, he had a big ship. Then he asked the



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Jimmy Jacobson remembers going to Herschel Island in the mid 1930s and witnessing some of the effects of the competition for furs:

In 1926, Pedersen built a warehouse on Herschel Island where he met his agent George Washington Porter every summer. Pedersen also supplied independent traders and was met every summer by numerous Inuvialuit at Herschel Island. Persis Gruben remembers:

Kathleen Hansen went with her parents to Herschel Island and waited for Captain Pedersen:

Pedersen sold not only white man goods but also bowhead whale muktuk in seal containers (pokes) and reindeer furs which Inuvialuit especially liked. Kathleen Hansen was told the following story by her father:

Hudson's Bay Company "If you give me sixty white foxes, I'll go and pull your ship out of sand bar." [...] Hudson's Bay Company gave Pedersen foxes then he went and pulled them out before west wind came in. They were afraid the wind might broke up the ship. (JC90-8A:1)

Captain Pedersen used to bring a lot of beer by wooden barrels, big wooden barrels! Rum and they buy them by cases, white people only. People bring their furs, Captain Pedersen put up the price, trying to get all the Eskimos' fur.

Finally I was about thirteen years old when I came back with my dad. Bonnycastle got so mad! My dad sold his furs for fifty dollars each to Captain Pedersen. When they got drunk, Bonnycastle who was a big Hudson's Bay man, gave my dad a black eye! I never forget it. They were "fur crazy" that time! (JJ91-10B:1)

A few people owned big boats when they travelled to Qikiqtaqyuk (Herschel Island). The people with no boat would travel with the ones who did. I don't think they had to pay. If someone had none, everyone helped them. The people without boats pitched up tents. (PG90-34A:5)

At the time, there was lots of houses with people in them. There was lots of people here when my dad first brought us here. We came here to wait for the boats to come. Some would put tents on their boats because their was not enough room in their boat. There was lots of them, and then they would have a big drum dance. There was lots of fun that time and they played ball while waiting for Captain Pedersen.

They were never short of food, they put out their stored food from their ice houses. Specially on Sunday after the service. Umauq and them were good at that when they were here. They always let people eat here. (KH90-26B:2)

My dad always gets everything at Captain Pedersen's. Even muktuk in a poke. They say Ole Andreasen's wife, when Captain Pedersen start to unload, she would watch for it because they wanted to eat blue whale's muktuk. They would watch on the shore. They say that day they were going to unload them. While being on the shore, Ole Andreasen's wife, Atugyuk was her name, she tried to be the first to get some. So she picked five pokes. [...] It's a container made out of sealskin. Captain Pedersen would bring some with holes in them. Also put lots of muktuk in them and bring them.

And after she (Atugyuk) got some, she went into Captain Pedersen's office. Mr. Porter was his book keeper. My dad must have been standing close around there, he wanted something too. In the meantime, that Atugyuk said "Utchuporter me I take five pokes". Then she turned around to face others, she said "Me, while I was thinking of whale oil I have been saying *utchuporter* instead!"

My dad never forgot what she said. She wanted to be first one. She said because she was so happy of what she took that she said that. Instead of "Mr. Porter" she said "Utchuporter"! (KH90-1B:2)

Only Pirahialluk (Pedersen's) boat, and *Baychimo*, the Hudson's Bay's boat, long ago. It could land only at Herschel Island that time. They never try to land to us. Kaligauaq (Edward Arey) had a small boat and went to Herschel Island. He hauled some stuff for my dad. Sometimes Napaaqtualuk would bring them. [...] I know when he brought stuff for us. I was already a big girl that time. Also he brought stuff for us in wintertime, after it froze up, before Christmas. My father and Alex went and got stuff too from Herschel Island. Sometimes just Alex and I, when my father was about to finish.

When the days were getting longer, your (Renle Arey's) grandparents, when they spent winter, they always go get some stuff. You know Nunaluk? From Nunaluk they got stuff, from there. That's the time when my father was about to finish. How many winters was he a storekeeper? Maybe three. He could not read all right but Mickey Gordon and Edward Arey always showed him the papers when they came to see the store and my father. When the Gordons used to have no more store. At that time Pirahialluk (Pedersen) used to haul some stuff out for Panaiq too. Only my father was left.

Also way in Alaska there was Panaiq in Qaaktuqvik, that is Barter Island. The store that side. Mickey Gordon that one, he had a store at Demarcation. But he stopped being a storekeeper before his father. Them Gordons, Fred Gordon before he ran out, he also had store. Their father Tom Gordon was a storekeeper. Maybe it is still up there, an old house, still up at Demarcation. They moved it from Barter Island. [...] Little Yaaquaq too had stuff around there. Panaiq also on this side of Hilku (Siku; Icy Reef) and Plnuqraluk, he also had store in a small creek. When he finished we also finished and went to the delta, all of us. (DM90-13A:88-9)

They never used money! We didn't know about money then. They would trade with white foxes. Us children never knew or used money then. What they get from the store, that was what we had. Biscuits and other white man food was good enough for us. There was butter and oranges too then. In them days we never had everything they have now.

Only later at Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island) there was some candies that is hard to break. We used to play with them and stretch them; they would get long because they were hard to break! We hold them with our teeth. They were so big and good candies at the time. We used to see who would break them first. [...] At the time they were good, not like now.

Also there was pickles in wooden barrels, then. When they were empty, we would use them for making sour dough. They were very good! Also we used the butter containers, those large cans. Long ago, they were all wooden boxes or containers, not papers. They say some people around here still have these kind of containers.

That is how we lived long ago. We didn't have everything they have now. Also there was rice and no potatoes or bananas, no other

In order to be more efficient, the Hudson's Bay Company hired former whalers and local Inuit to run many of their Arctic posts. One of them was Dora Malegana's father, Irish Kluruya. He was the storekeeper at Qaiñluqvik (Clarence Lagoon) in the 1920s. Dora Malegana remembers:

Dora Malegana recalls some of the items that were traded in exchange for furs:

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Schooners at Herschel Island, 1930

fresh stuff like we get now. Only rice, raisins and raw apples to cook. They was lots of raw fruits then, they would come in wooden boxes too. There was hardly any can containers then, no jars containers too. The coffee would be in tin cans, you'd have to open them. That is what they had then, when I could remember.

Never had jars or plastic. And later on, they had aluminum dishes and others with flower designs on them. They call them "young seaweed" because they looked like one. They were brown in color, big bowls, also pots. [...] They were not like cups that we have now. Just lots of color dishes we had. Long ago too, when we lived, when going with dog team, we used tin cans for cups when we lived up in the mountains. That is how we made a living long ago; we keep them good (and we did) not throw them away. The lard containers, we keep them good for something too. [...] Even when we come here, they used them. Nowadays, we are living like some rich people. Sometimes we just have to have the right things all the time. (DM90-13B:6-7)

The hiring of local people as storekeepers by the Hudson's Bay Company has been described as a disastrous experiment since "these people, with strong leaning toward the Inuit way of life, extended credit which could not possibly be paid back" (Ingram and Dobrowolsky 1989:159). This explanation contrasts



(NAC, J.F. Moran Col., C-66708 & PA-100660)

with Dora Malegana's account on how she and her brother repaid in furs the value of food they had given to a poor family along the Yukon coast:

When he (Dora's father) camped to different places he would help the families there who had not much to eat. They would charge it down to the Hudson's Bay Co. At the time, we never really knew how he did things he did. [...] One or two times, me and Alex went to bring goods down. One time, we camped at Paul Uqalisuk, they wanted us to camp. At that time this family had not too much to eat, just seal oil or whale oil they had, not even tea! So, we brought them some goods like oats to make them eat.

When we got home my dad asked us what we opened from them goods. All this time, everything [should have been] signed for. So, he charged us and when we got white foxes, we had to pay for them. [...] We had to go trapping for that! [As he was talking] I thought "why is he asking things like that?" All this time he charged it to us! When we got white foxes, we paid him back.

We gave coffee, butter, little bit of sugar too. Lard and biscuits and tea too. She asked for biscuits too. Then we say "tea too"? She say "yes". So we gave it too. We never opened rice for them just dry fruit and apples. Then I thought I'll never do that again. I never knew about all that, I thought that they just gave it.

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Kathleen Hansen remembers that her father worked for the Hudson's Bay Company, hauling goods from Herschel Island to Shingle Point:

With the crash of fur markets, Pedersen finally sold out to the Hudson's Bay Company and left Herschel Island for the last time in 1936 (Bockstoe 1986:343). He continued to correspond with Inuvialuit friends and sent pictures of his southern residence. A year after Pedersen's departure, the Hudson's Bay Company closed its post at Herschel Island. With the closing of the trading posts, people from the Yukon north coast and from the Alaska north slope moved to Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk. An era had past. Dora Malegana explains:

All this time, what we gave away had to be written down. But my dad fixed it. My dad never wrote very much but Edward Arey always helped him. They all worked on the papers after that. Mickey Gordon was there too, helping. It took them all night. At the time, my dad never read good. (DM90-14B:3-4)

After he finished trading with them, my dad would leave us here. He would go alone and haul things to Tapqaq (Shingle Point) because there was a store there. He would carry stuff there to Tapqaq, stuff for the store that belonged to the Hudson's Bay. (KH90-26B:3)

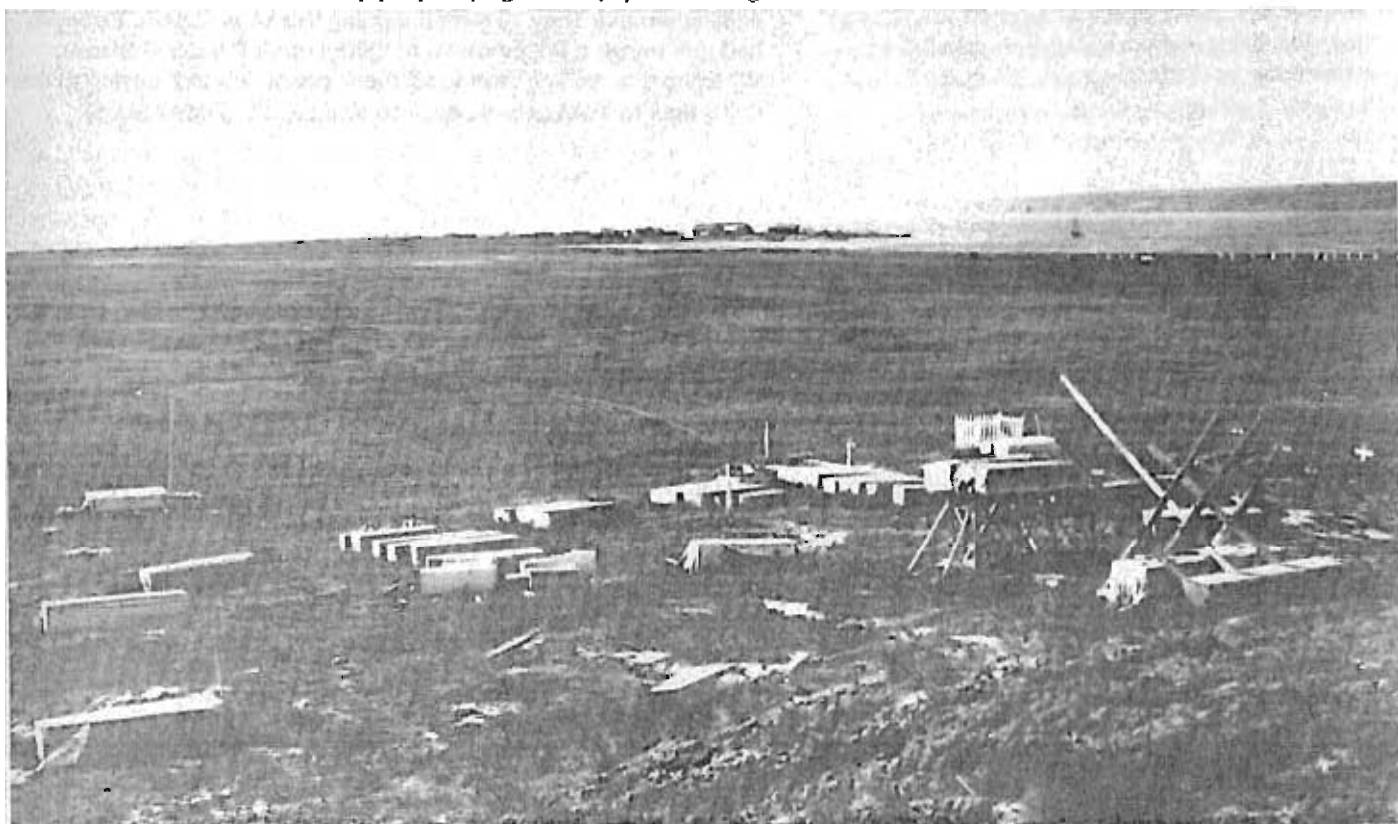
There was no more store to go to. [...] there was no store at that time in Qaaqturvik (Barter Island, Alaska). That's why we started coming this way, where the store was. That's the time all those Alaskan people started coming this way. It was too far where we lived to get groceries. That's the time Captain Pedersen's boat quit coming around. They all started coming this way. Captain Pedersen had quit bringing freight down to Qlkiqtaqruk (Herschel Island). When he quit coming around all those people started moving to the delta, right to Tuktoyaktuk, even to Kittigaryuit. (DM90-14A:5)

### The Epidemics

The arrival of white people also meant the arrival of diseases for which the local population had no immunity. Many epidemics drastically reduced the number of people living along the coast which was estimated to be about 300 during Franklin's visit in 1825 (Whittaker 1976:111). In 1902, the village Kittigaryuit was devastated by a measles epidemic. Felix Nuyavlak who was a young boy then, recalls:

I remember in 1902 when this tribe of Eskimos was staying at Kittigaryuit and this big flu came on. This was when most of the Eskimos died off. I remember the time when the flu came on was during the whaling season. It hadn't been long after the flu arrived that the people began to die off. People died in their tents. People died while they were working on the whales. This was a dreadful sight. I remember though I was very small.

All along the beach at Kittigaryuit and the tents up on the hill, people dying everywhere. Everywhere you looked people died. I remember there were so many people dying that they quit bothering



Graveyard at Herschel Island, 1910s.

(NMC51446)



## After the White People Came

The measles epidemic also reached Herschel Island. Hope Gordon heard about the terrible epidemic from her father:

In 1911 a smallpox epidemic and in 1918 another measles epidemic hit the local population of the Yukon coast (Whittaker 1976:109-110). In 1928 an influenza epidemic took the lives of over 300 people from the Mackenzie Delta (Kemp 1958:126). Written accounts (Kemp 1958: 122-123, Steele 1936:291) report six deaths out of 24 Inuvialuit residing at Herschel Island and nine out of 95 Inuvialuit at Shingle Point but the number was probably higher. Diamond Klengenber remembers being in Aklavik during the terrible influenza epidemic of 1928:

to make graves. At times they would just put two or three bodies together and pile logs over them. This was the way the graves were fixed. Most of the older people died off and the middle-aged. We also heard that in other whaling camps people were dying off too.

Now fall was coming on. [...] I remember the younger people who were able to continue whaling or working on the whales did so. However, they did not remain at Kittigaryuit. They moved to the other camp. There was silence all over. This is something people will not forget for a long time. (COPE 1991, 1-14-02:3)

And then sometimes too, they say everyone got red. [...] They were lots of Inuit people there at Qikiqtaqruk long ago. In the summer they went and waited for the ship to come there. Most of them died and every day they would bury someone. Already there was a minister and my dad was there helping with the funerals. He was helping the minister there, digging graves there, at the time at Qikiqtaqruk, long time ago in 1902. Everyone was red. There was lots sick with flu. It was measles, you know. It was that, everyone got it. (HP90-24A:11)

We went to Aklavik in the spring. People got sick. When the people got sick, there weren't many good doctors. There were doctors but they never really helped, when everyone got sick and started dying. From everywhere we heard people were dying. From Shingle Point on. All over even around here we heard people were dying. It was too hot in Aklavik, which made it worst. The river was hot and thick. While the people had the flu, they spread it around. Most of the tents along the coast, if you walk along the beach there were no people to be seen outside. The only sound were the sick people inside the tents. The sick people could no longer be helped. I think it was because most of the people were dehydrated. They didn't have anyone to look after them properly.

Alice Gruben and Eddie, I would talk to them before I left to work on the graves. I told them to give the sick people water. I told them to give the sick people water, to those who were thirsty along the coast. After I told them, they gave the people water, to the Inuvialuit who were there. Sometimes I didn't go home all day, working with the ministers.

Wallace Lucas, Michael and myself. The three of us worked together. there was no one else to work. People came from Tapqaq (Shingle Point) with boats to Aklavik, that is how a lot of them died. We worked very hard then. There was no more body bags at the end, and no more lumber for coffins so the people were buried just like that. We ran out. A lot of people died. I got sick for just one night. When I awoke I was better. (DK90-33B:1-2)

Sarah Meyook lost both her parents in Aklavik during the epidemic. She tells how she saved the life of her baby brother:

Long ago we were living over there in the East (around Baillie Island). They said Bennett told them there was a big flu in Aklavik and told them not to go. My mom and dad never listen to them. When they came they set tent in Aklavik. Sarah Ross, Ross's wife, that one was a best friend of theirs. Us too we had tent near them. My sister was a bit bigger than I was. My brother was younger. [...] They were both sick too. They both never get up, only me was walking around.

I must have been about two or three years old. My sister must have told me to give my brother a spoon to feed him. That's how he is alive now. He would have died if he'd starved if I didn't give him a drink. I don't remember how I looked after him. Well, they are easy to talk to when they are this big. I guess they understood them or me. I would go on my mom and dad. When I got on them I would find my mom's breast and feed on it. I didn't know they were dead. I try to wake up my dad. They never moved. All that time they were both dead. I didn't know. My older sister and my brother were both very sick, so they never bother to check my mom and dad. They said only me was walking around.

When Sarah Ross was not too sick, she went and checked on my parents. When she saw my parents were both not breathing she went to see the minister. After she went to the minister they took us away from there, before they got too stiff. They let us separate then. (SM90-3A:3-4)

When a lot of them died during the flu epidemic, Jimmy Jacobson's adopted parents, Nauyaq, Naipaqtuq's and Stanley's families died then. A lot of people died then. We were not allowed to go around them so that we would not catch it. We had just arrived from Banks Island. Lots of people died. I never forgot Nauyaq's children. They no longer had parents. [...] At Qikiqtaqryuk (Herschel Island). And Naipaqtuq's family, Lucy Jacobson's parents, her adoptive parents. And Johnny Bernard, his younger sister Aqi died there also. I don't know where they were buried, we didn't see, so we won't catch the flu. I don't know about the graves up there. (PG90-34B:1)

Everybody died off in 1928 because every house we went to, me and Pat Kilik and the kids, older elders [had] died off. The whole village got cleaned out. I remember when I was looking for something to eat, I must have been pretty hungry looking for something to eat, I went to Kublualuk. I was hungry. He fed me good, that's why I never forget that meal. (JJ90-31A:1)

[...] when I was a kid, when everybody died off, we were a bunch of kids, we went up there (the graveyard) because there was no more elders, they'd died off. And when we went up there, we started playing around the graveyard we seen a dragon. And I was

The 1928 epidemic also reached Herschel Island and the police put everyone in quarantine (Kemp 1958:123). This might have helped stop the epidemic west of the island but it was too late for the Inuvialuit living on Herschel Island. Persis Gruben, who was visiting the island with her parents during their annual meeting with Captain Pedersen, recalls:

Jimmy Jacobson lost his adopted parents at Herschel Island and recalls going with other children to the graveyard:

## After the White People Came

the smallest and everybody took off crying and me chasing them from behind. So I thought, "Gee, anytime" I was getting tickly, "anytime I'm gonna get grabbed". I looked behind, there was no more dragon, so I started walking. Everybody left me long ways because they was, they never looked back. (laughter). Yeah, that's why [...] I remember Herschel Island pretty good because it must have been that we put in a lot of tough days, eh? (JJ90-31A:3)

The great loss of life caused by the many epidemics gave rise to a number of stories of restless spirits that haunt Herschel Island. Ishmael Alunik explains:

In those days some people would see a ghost long ago. They say one person was walking around there between the houses, he heard a fiddling music so he went there and there was no one there. Also there was a sound of big square dance there but there was none. He really heard them there. My wife too say those graves up there always have light also they make hammer noise. Maybe the spirits of them never go anywhere. (IA90-35B:1)

Sarah Meyook remembers being at Herschel Island in the early 1940s and having a similar experience:

The people would go hunting seal in the ocean with the boat. There was Meyook, Johnny, Foster and also Neil. They would go so there was no men here when they would go. There was a female dog outside our place and we had our tent facing the big store. It was getting just dark then and the men didn't come back home. So me, Ruth and also Pamiuq were staying home and Annie was staying up there. While that, all at once, there was good music coming from the big old store like if there was a big dance there. But there was no one around and this big dance was going on out there. Ruth just laughs when she is afraid I guess, and while this was happening the dog out there was going round and round.

George Allen and his sister Adela ran really fast to get Annie and they told Ruth to be quiet but she kept laughing louder as if she got ticklish. We told her "Don't laugh!" But she never changed. So we could hear them dancing with music on. Whenever Annie came she always brought her bible with her all the time. So, she came [back] with her bible and then we never heard them. [...] When the men were home there was no music or thing like that around. Only when they went away that was when we heard them playing music and dancing. (SM90-27B:9)

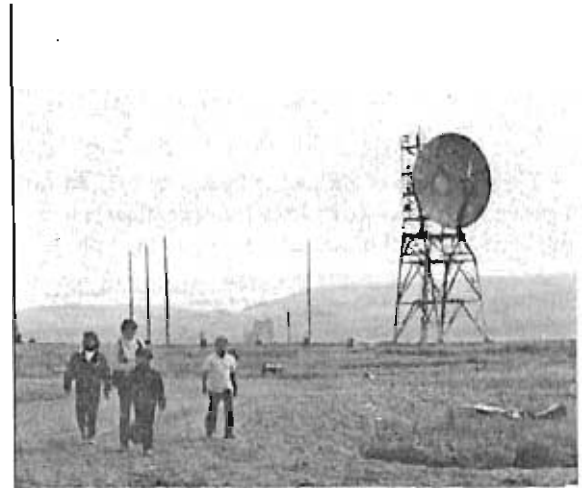


BAR-1 DEWLine Auxiliary Station in 1972.

It was a surprise to the people, you know. They're supposed to get information from Yukon and our government just said there was jobs down there at Early Warnings. So they went to work and they never knew they were coming. We never got information from up this side. Even though they told us to go and work at Blow River from Aklavik. Some of them stayed there long time. (IA91-14A:12)

When they first started, I even used to travel in dog team. Dogs used to be inside the plane every day! Finally they learned how to go in the plane. No problem! Marking out the air strip where it was going to be. Marking where the modules were going to be built. I used to haul eight hundred pound engine with my dog team. Finally when I found out my dogs get paid, I bring more dogs so I could get more money! That time it was a dollar a dog and they feed them, eh! It was good because those days a dollar was like ten dollars now. [...] Anybody who wanted to work and you could put in as much hours. Could even sleep two, three hours unloading planes day and night with fuel. They come by 45 gallon barrels. So, you just put in your time sheet. Was making big money that time because DC-3 were coming day and night and you had to be up.

[...] There was about three hundred to each camp. Because there must have been about hundred tents, two man to a tent, and then they got a kitchen. When the whistle blows, start running for the dining room! [...] Took about two, three years (to build). (J91-10A:1-2)



(NAC, PA 145816)

### The DEW Line

In the 1950s, a second big "invasion" from the white man occurred along the Yukon coast as well as in other parts of the Arctic. This was the creation of the Distant Early Warning Line (DEW Line) built during the cold war period. The Inuvialuit did not seem to be consulted about the construction of the DEW Line stations, as Ishmael Alunik tells:

Jimmy Jacobson was a janitor for the Nicholson Point DEWLine station (BAR 4). He also worked on the construction of the Yukon DEWLine stations.

Many Inuvialuit adapted their trapping economy to wage labour. The next change would come with the oil companies in the 1970s.

Making a Living



Schooner at Herschel Island, 1930.

(NAC, PA-100699)

## 5. Making a Living

### Seasonal Round

Not all the Inuvialuit who exploited the resources of the Yukon coast followed the same seasonal round. Although some people lived along the coast on a permanent basis, most came there during the summer-time to hunt whales and caribou, and to fish. Once trading companies established posts along the coast, the Inuvialuit also went to Shingle Point and Herschel Island to trade their furs. The seasonal round of the Inuvialuit varied depending on where they spent their winter. Many wintered in the Mackenzie Delta, others inland around the Old Crow area and some along the Yukon coast and at Herschel Island. To give an idea of the diversity of subsistence activities along the coast, the narratives of five Inuvialuit summarizing different seasonal patterns are presented. The narratives are grouped into different time periods covering the decades between the 1910s and the 1950s.

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### 1910s

#### Fall

They stayed at Aklavik nearly all fall. Then they start thinking to go back. Lots of people then, lots of people! Then we stayed around for a while. [...] Down at the point, the people would have tents set up. That is how they make [a] living then. (RA91-15A:2-3)

They would pick those *quaqqat* (green plants) too because they store them for winter. As they travelled on the land, they would pick them. *Quaqqat*, also roots, when they go to delta they would pick roots. They would pick them for the winter. They also cooked them and put some in whale oil. They are very good. (RA91-15A:4) [...] In the fall when it was getting dark, [...] they all go out to spend fall time out there (the delta). (RA91-15A:10)

#### Winter

Also they wintered out there (the delta). [...] Then, where we stay for winter, they pull out the boat ashore and put it away for winter, then wait for freeze up. When it freezes up we would start hooking fish and set nets. We work with fish then. That was how the people were when we were growing up. (RA91-15A:10-11)

Rhoda Allen's parents wintered in the Mackenzie Delta and trapped muskrats there in the spring. Summer was spent along the coast, and in the fall they returned in the delta. Rhoda Allen describes how she lived with her parents when she was a child in the 1910s:



All winter long they stayed out there till near Christmas and [...] when it's close to Christmas, they would all go with dog team. They would camp on the way. I have seen the people that never keep still. Long ago they hunted in winter all the time. After hunting they go to Aklavik for Christmas and when it was over Christmas and New Year they all go home. They all go back to their winter camps, they wintered at their camps.

### *Spring*

When it's springtime, when it's good for trapping, when it's really good for hunting, they would start trapping then. They would all move out in a tent and trap. Then they stay out for a while trapping muskrat. When the spring is really here, they go back to their houses and stay there.

Then when it's time to go with canoes. They hunt with them. When they go early evening they come back in the morning, they shoot and get lots of muskrat. There is lots of them when they take them out from the canoes. How long would it take us to skin them? Then after staying there hunting muskrats, when it's over, they would put all their winter tools away and get ready to go to Aklavik. They leave their winter camps.

### *Summer*

When in Aklavik they stayed there for awhile. That's when the steamboat would come too, in the summer. When the boat came there was lots of people going down in front of it. I don't know how long it stayed there, then it goes.

Then us, my dad take us down to Uklivik (Kendall Island) in mid-July for whaling. There, we hunted whales and worked with them. There was people going down from Aklavik too. They always go down and stay at Uklivik there. There was lots of people going down to Uklivik to hunt whales. Then all summer they stored food. [...] mid-July, they go whaling all summer long.

Sometimes in August they all started back up. After they get all the muktuk and oil they wanted to bring with them. They would camp few times on the way up. Then they bring their food to their winter camps and take them out of the boat.

Then they leave for Aklavik. They don't stay there long. They would take off towards Tapqaq (Shingle Point) to hunt caribou also to pick berries too in August. Then, they would camp here and there looking for berries and hunting caribou once in a while, till they reach Tapqaq. That is how we were, just hunting all the time. (RA91-15A:11)

Long ago my dad used to bring us down to the coast to Tapqaq. [...] We would stay there for a long while. Because there was a minister and Umauq and them [...] also there was a store then at Tapqaq, long ago. There was lots of people and houses inside the bay there. Then after staying for awhile, the big ship would come around. We have seen those with three masts on them. [...] They would anchor in front of Tapqaq. Then they would unload the freight there. They were things like whaleboats from the ships. They would grab them and bring them up. These things were for the stores there. We were making a living there for a while.

They say the people are going to Qiklqtaqruk (Herschel Island)

with boats because they say Pedersen has arrived at Qikiqtaqruk. The boats would all go out to the ocean. I don't know how many days it took them to reach there. They would stay at Qikiqtaqruk for awhile just being with Pedersen and buying stuff. There was a lot of people then at Qikiqtaqruk, Siglit too. Also police there, stores and Hudson's Bay store, also ministers staying inside the bay. They would stay for most of summer.

Then they start back again. They would make camps where the old camping places are. After camping around and hunting caribou for awhile, after they looked for food, they'd start going upward towards Aklavik. Then after they hunted around, the women would pick berries, they would pick yellow berries. After that they leave for Aklavik. They would camp here and there before reaching Aklavik. When they are travelling to Aklavik they would camp around. (RA91-15A:2-3)

## 1920s

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Dora Malegana, born in 1916, spent her childhood around Qaiñiuqvik (Clarence Lagoon). She remembers her parents travelling inland to the Old Crow area and coming back to the coast in the summer.

As I could remember, we were living way up in the mountains near Old Crow because they always travelled to Old Crow often. We were together with these people: Agnaqguniaq's son, Putuguq, Mrs. Arey, my cousin. Natmuk's brother and my dad always go to Fort Yukon. That was what I remember way up there. I was very small. [...] They all make living like hunting, fishing. They would go hunting caribou way up behind the big hills. They go where there is no hills. Where we used to make living, there was almost just lakes up there. After, we would travel back down from the mountains [...] with backpacks. It was very hard sometimes, as I remember. We travelled along the Yukon and around Pattuktuk (Demarcation Point), on these big hills around the big river. [...] From there we would get that far and reach Qaiñiuqvik (Clarence Lagoon), way from up there. [...] There, I remember very little up around Qaiñiuqvik. We stayed there for winter [...] (DM90-13A:3-5)

### Summer

In summertime, we would go somewhere around Yukon and around Pattuktuk (Demarcation Point). There are big mountains up that way. We would stay around in summertime and hunt around there. Up to Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island) they would go too with dog team. They go by Qikiqtaqruk River (Firth River), they would reach there and go for arctic char. Up there along Qikiqtaqruk River, the mouth of Qikiqtaqruk River. [...] There was Pattuktuk (Demarcation Point), where we always camped and there are places where we went fishing in summer. There is Blue Hole too up there too. [...] That is where most people fish and hunt. (DM90-13A:6-8)

In the 1920s, her parents had a permanent home at Qaiñiuqvik (Clarence Lagoon). Dora Malegana describes the seasonal activities during that period:

### Spring

Seal was our main food for living. Before seals we had hawks and seagulls down there. [...] Then we tried to live by seals after that. (DM91-21B:9) At springtime before the caribou come, we would just have seal, because they come up by that time, when it warms up. When spring comes, when it's warm, the seals would come up and stay on the ice. If you don't get enough of food from seal you would never have enough food to eat, but then there is ptarmigan, when they come in time. It's very hard sometimes. (DM90-13A:8-9)

In the morning, we always went to get some ptarmigans for our breakfast. Sometimes we didn't even have breakfast. Well in springtime, we always ran short of food. That time we used so much food because we get around so much. And also we didn't have very much white man's food either. (DM91-21B:9)

Then in spring maybe in June, before July, when lots of caribou come, we would get lots of them. We had ice house at Qaiñtuqvik, we would store lots there. We used the Hudson's Bay old ice house too because no one came for the Hudson's Bay anymore at the time. (DM90-13A:9)

When caribou come, we have plenty of caribou and lots of it too. "Springtime caribou". My father always made us get lots of caribou because we had two ice houses, over that way. [We] dried them too. He always made a big teepee. We had a teepee to dry them. You know those *haiguq*, teepee like this. Indian's kind. (DM91-21B:9)

### Summer

[...] we went to Alaska to visit in summertime, that way. Maybe just as far as Qaaktuqvik (Barter Island). [That was] way before I got married. Those Alaskans over there at Patruktuq (Demarcation Point). And on this side of Patruktuq, those Nunamlut (Inland people), they were just making a living there. We camped there with them and we ended up staying for the whole summer. [...] They were lots of them, those Nunamlut like Kalinñan and then, Tulugaq and then and Kayutuq and them. They were all going to pass summer there. [...]

When we were over there, my father asked me and Alex (Dora's brother) to go and hunt caribou again. He told us that the caribou were just coming through again. And he said that soon we will have no meat again. Of course me and Alex had to go hunt caribou again, to over there! We set our tent around there, somewhere. When Alex really got lots of caribou, we put them in the ice house too. We hang some up also, like that.

We had a hard time. I was lazy alright because I didn't want to leave the Alaskans, I mean the people over there. That's the way my father always made us do our living that time. Well, at that time you had to prepare for your food always in springtime.

### Fall/Winter

And then again, in falltime we had to work on fish and then we back-packed up there, to where we were going. Then when we came down from up there, again we go camping towards Alaska, to the mountains. That's just how we started making a living like that at that time. By doing nothing, we can't get whatever we need for the long winter. Can't get nothing. (DM91-21B:9-11)



Cache at Herschel Island, 1925.

(NAC, PA-172848)

That is how we lived long ago. In the fall we would go to the upper hills because my dad wanted to hunt up there. We always had a good supply of food. Sometimes it lasted till we could get seals on the ocean. (DM90-13B:13) [...] We would still go places, also to Alaska for Christmas, over the other side of Demarcation Point, when we were growing up. (DM90-13A:8)

We lived like that long ago. We were making a living that way. Sometimes, we ran short of white man's food. They would load up their sled sometimes, in springtime. They always helped my father Kayutuq and them and those Areys. Also anybody who wanted to help. They always brought back the load with him before the ice goes away, I mean before there's water along the shore. They used to do that, they helped each other make a living. [...] That's the way they used to make a living at that time. (DM91-21B:9-11)

## 1930s

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[...] my parents and grandparents used to winter at Old Crow. My grandad used to winter there at Old Crow. My grandad used to fish for people there, for a white man, a trader there. They were fishing in the summer, making dry fish. While they were there my parents would go up in the springtime. When the trapping was over we would come back. (F190-5B:1)

### Winter

We spent our winter at Itqilqpiik. From over there, we drove our dogs around here and spent springtime around here. They get caribou from across there. When they get caribou, we go and bring them with an *umtaq* (boat). (F191-23A:4)

### Spring

In springtime, we try to hunt ducks and ptarmigans [...]. Around here in the sea, you got not much places to hunt because there are no muskrats or rabbits but there are ptarmigans and ducks in springtime around there. That's the way they do their hunting around here. Around near the ice, my father used to always get some seals and also *ugʔuk* (bearded seal). And from the hills there is always lots of caribou. We always eat caribou. (F191-23A:3-4)

Fred Inglangasuk remembers spending time with his grandparents who used to winter in the Old Crow Flats in the 1920s and in the 1930s:

In the 1930s, Fred and his parents also spent winter at Itqilqpiik (Whale Bay) and spring around Qaʔgiaʔuk (Ptarmigan Bay):

## 1940s

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Sarah Meyook and her family would often go to the Firth River in the 1940s when her father-in-law was alive. She recalls their activities along the Yukon North Slope:

### *Spring*

One spring we stayed at Firth River waiting for the ice to go away. With moose and caribou we made dry meat, that's how we eat. Also, we had trout too. They always had nets for trout up there. [...] Maybe because it's close to the rocks and when ice move it makes the ice roll over, that's how the ice move. The ice rolls and all of a sudden the water comes up right away. When the water went down, they always got some fish for us. But they always put their things away before the water comes up. [...]

### *Summer*

And then we started to go back to the coast with our back-pack. We were coming across the river with our stuff, with a big thick canvas. Those big red thick canvas. With that we covered our dogs and our stuff and went across while there was no wind. They brought us across with a boat. [...] After we crossed with the boat they pull it up. And us we left some of our stuff and pack back to go back to coast by Yuuqyaaq near Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island). This was in summertime, in June. We went there in June, lots of dogs you know. [...] We put back-packs on them. Some are pulling sled with harness on. Irish was one year old and Peter was six years old when once they walked for twelve hours those two children! Only when we made camp, they stopped.

[...] We went down in June, before the eggs were hatched. At the same time we went by Yuuqyaaq to pick up our food, flour and sugar which were at our Yuuqyaaq stage. We left some so we could have food when we would get back. We were almost out of flour so we came back. [...]

When we returned to make camp at Yuuqyaaq, there was lots of caribou. There was lots and they were not afraid. We had our dogs in harness pulling the sled. In summertime, we rode in the sled sometimes. Lots of caribou. They were all together going that way towards Alaska. They were not afraid because there were lots. Some would run away a bit, when we got too close but we never tried to harm them. We killed one only when we camped. (SM90-4B:5)

## 1950s

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They moved here (Arvakvik) because Ptarmigan Bay was too out of place to hunt caribou. [...] It became easier for them because they were getting old by the time and they wanted a central place where they could keep everything here, all their belongings, all their livelihood stuff. (LL91-24B:1)

### Spring

In springtime, we'd go up to Kivalinatchalq for about a week, until my Dad hunted enough caribou and just a few fish. Just enough so that it keep us going. And then he'd make a pit in there and put half dried caribou meat and some fish maybe in it.

Then we'll go up to the summer lake up there, to Silraqlik Lake, where we stayed for another month maybe. Up there is where he did his major hunting, like for caribou. For dry meat, caribou dry meat, moose dry meat, or whatever. And a lot of the whitefish and connd were dried up there. So that they could bring it back to this base here (Arvakvik), when the spring season was over.

We hauled all that back with pack dogs. All the dogs, except for a couple of them. A couple of them would pack all our dry meat and dry fish and all our belongings. Because every time we moved from place to place. All what was left there were staves that were made out of wood. [...] We never left a thing, like my mom's *ulus* (knives) or my Dad's knives or guns.

Of course in those days there was no such things as mattresses, we used caribou hide for mattresses. And those mattresses, mind you, were always left in each places but we never left our blankets or pillows. Everything we brought back with us when we came back to this base (Arvakvik).

And so when we came back to this base it took my Dad about three, four days to put everything away. [...] Then, before we leave for our summer camp, he'd go into this icehouse here and he'd clean the area where he would be bringing fish too from the summer camp.

This one here, is "Nikhaaqtuqvik" ("place of rock ptarmigan"). In the springtime we always set snares there for ptarmigan. Only in the springtime you could snare ptarmigan here. What you do, you get willows, bigger willows. Usually we go up to Firth River in wintertime and haul these tall willows, because there's no way you

Lily Lipscombe was born in 1948 and was adopted by her maternal grandparents who at the time had a permanent base at Qafgialuk (Ptarmigan Bay). They then moved to Arvakvik (Roland Bay) where they spent the next thirteen years. Lily Lipscombe explains why her parents moved to Arvakvik and describes how they spent the different seasons:



could get willows from here. So we'll set on top the snow, willows. We'll stake the willows side by side. And we'll put snares for ptarmigan, and we'll snare a lot of ptarmigan. We do the same thing on this hill here for my mom 'cause it was closer. (LL91-24B:1-3)

#### Summer

And then after we came from in there, we go down to our summer camp. (LL91-24B:5) And then we'll get herring fish, our herring, *uligan* for dogs. Those little fish, tiny tiny little fish. Almost like sardines, but we'll sweep them and put them in the pit. Those were never used for anything. Maybe the grease of them, my mom would render some of them because it was my Dad's type of food [...] because he's from the coast [...].

We'll put that stuff away [...] mainly for bait in wintertime. Once again whether he made bait, put out bait for the polar bear or foxes, anything that came, any kind of animals. We'll set traps for them. And then, we'll be down there for awhile. (LL91-24B:6-7)

#### Fall

Then, if my Dad really felt like it, we always used to go over to that Ugamaqvik and that's where we always used to get our moose, because in there is really good moose [...]. That's where we used to get our moose [...] in the fall. Then, just before the first week in September we'll haul everything back here (Arvakvik).

And for about three four days we'll hunt a geese, because these little islands will just be white with waxies (snow geese). All the flocks will all be white with waxies. That's when we did our duck hunting for the fall. [...] And geese hunting is our last hunt for the year, before freeze up you know. But my Dad had always a net out here so we got few fish every day, just little bit of fish, whitefish. (LL91-24B:9)

Then in the fall, after that, this is really late for berry season here, we only picked yellow berries in late August. [...] Late late August we'll pick the *aqpiks* (berries) here. Then in September or even up to the early October, we'll pick cranberries, because it's so late here. When I first moved to the delta, I was really surprised how early berry season was. (LL91-24B:9)

#### Winter

You know in wintertime it was easier to hunt caribou here (Arvakvik) because the caribou migrated through here. (LL91-24B:1) [We spent] all the winter [here]. We don't leave here until May, mid May. But if my Dad wanted to leave, the only place we'd go in April would be that lake. [...]

But usually, we go out along [the coast]. By right out, because we'd be hunting (seal) along here too. [...] Sometimes the pressure edge is too high and too rough to run your dogs. My Dad always used either seven or eight dogs. And then I always tag along with my five dogs behind him. Everywhere he went, I went! (LL91-24B:13)

## Resource Use

In this section selected narratives more specifically describe the kind of resources exploited by the Inuvialuit along the Yukon coast and at Herschel Island.

## Whale Hunting

Roland Saftuaq, who was born in the 1880s at Herschel Island, told his daughter Lily Lipscombe how bowhead whales were brought back to Arvakvik (Roland Bay) before the commercial whaling period began in 1889 around Herschel Island:

[Arvakvik] is a place where they got *arvig* (Bowhead whales). [...] Years ago, my Dad said they used to hunt bowhead whales [...]. The way they used to do it was, they used to have these big *umiaqs* (boats) with twelve people rowing. The way they used to do it is, they put a log in front of a *umiaq*, a big log. And set their harpoon right in front of the *umiaq*, in front of the log. So when they got close to the *arvig* they used to really paddle hard.

My Dad said he never was part of it because he was just a young kid [...]. He was more like 8 or 10 years old. He couldn't go with the last hunt they made, but he said that he knew how they did it.

So then this harpoon went into this *arvig* (Bowhead whale), that log has a big stump on it. [...] The harpoon would go right into the whale and the harpoon was attached to that big log. The whale would be wounded by this time and they'll chase it. This would take days and days before that whale even slow down. They'll be travelling out in the ocean for days and days on their *umiaqs*. [...]

[The stump] was just like a float. [...] And pretty soon that whale would be so tired that they'll be able to catch it and finally kill it. In those days, my Dad said, this is where they used to bring them. [...] They didn't kill them here, but they brought them here because the harbour used to be really deep apparently. (LL91-24B:5-6)



A whale killed during a spring hunt, ca. 1908.

(Mason, *The Frozen Northland*)

## Making a Living

Sometimes dead bowhead whales were washed along the coast and people would eat them, as remembered by Sarah Meyoock:

Most of the whaling involved, and still does, hunting beluga whales. Jane Esau describes how people would know if beluga whales had been killed:

Martha Harry has similar memories and adds more information about beluga hunting and on the processing of the whales:

Long ago Ulugatchilut found a dead bowhead whale right here at Ualiq (Avadlek Spit) when they were over there, near Qafghatuk (Ptarmigan Bay), at the cove in there. When they were there they found a dead bowhead whale. [...] They found a bowhead whale and we had some of the mukruk from there. Because even for years, the dead whale never spoils. That's why you still could eat it well. The blubber is like this thick. Even if the gulls pick or crack it, it never spoils. And if the dead whale stays on land and if the skin is not cracked, it never spoils. It's not like beluga whales. (SM91-29A:2)

When out getting whale, if they get some they would put up a flag on the mast of the boat. They would pull them in slowly into the cove here. You would know when they got whale if they put up a flag. The women would get ready when they knew that it was their sail boats. The women knew they had a whale. (JE90-22A:2)

When they hunted whales long ago, they used only whaleboats, no engine on the whaleboats, just sailing like that. They always tell us to be quiet even our dogs that are on land because they don't want the whales to go away. That is how our parents tried hard to keep our dogs quiet and because too they have no fast boats to chase them only sail boats they have. (MH91-16A:8)

[...] There would be few people on a whaleboat and they would all go together when they first go. When they come back with a whale, that is how the people long ago hunt together; they make everything same for everyone and they get the same amount. Even how much people there is and when they finished their work too after working together. [...] Just the women would work with the whale, men never worked in those days. Only when they killed and pulled them up the beach, [that] was all they do. When they bring them home and pull them up that is all the work they do. (MH91-16A:9)



Schooners and whale boats at village near Kirelgazuit in 1923.

(NAC, PA-19315)

[People] would travel together then when they finished fishing. When caribou are travelling by up here, before the bull get the smell after breeding. There, they would get enough while they could get them and when they are near. Because too sometimes, there is no caribou around. So when they are near enough, they would get lots and sometimes they would come only in spring. I don't know where they would winter. This is where they would kill them, when they are moving. Some too would kill these young caribou with young ones inside in the spring. Those, they could be in good shape, they have fat on them because they are from coast and they would come in last bunch of caribou. (IA90-35A:7)

Well, I'm gonna tell a story. I told it before alright. When my mother and I finally finished our work, it was late and the sun went down. It was hot and there was lots of mosquitoes, but us we were in a *galuqvik* (willow hut) where there is no mosquitoes. We were just enjoying our evening lunch, when kids went to sleep. I don't know where my father went. There was no wind at all. There was a splash of water and I just started to get away to just look out. And there was caribou, swimming, their antler down below. [...] So, I just got up and my mother just got for her rifle. I think it was a small 30-30, she wanted to get them so bad. [...] They were swimming down

## Caribou Hunting

Caribou were hunted whenever they were found along the Yukon coast, mainly during their spring and fall migrations, although some were occasionally present during the winter. Bull caribou were however avoided during the rut as Ishmael Alunik recalls:

Burch (1991:268) has stated that caribou hides are useless in June, that the meat of cows and bulls tasted awful, and that he did not know of any major June caribou hunt in the Inuit world. During our interviews, at least four Inuvialuit repeatedly talked about hunting caribou in the springtime and the early summer. Fred Ingiangasuk explained that his mother would use the hides for summer clothing and Lily Lipscombe recalled her father putting caribou in the ice house; apparently the taste of the meat was considered acceptable. Furthermore, archaeological evidence from a late pre-contact site occupied by Inuvialuit in the northern Yukon demonstrates that caribou were indeed hunted during the late spring or early summer (Nagy 1990).

The caribou hunting referred to by Fred Ingiangasuk and Lily Lipscombe took place along the Yukon coast, near Arvakvik (Roland Bay) and Niaquulik during the spring migration. In Dora Malegana's stories, caribou hunting was focused on the inland areas towards the Buckland Hills and Whale Mountain (Alaska). Dora Malegana also recounts hunting caribou along the Yukon coast during the summer:

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there, they always go down when there is mosquitoes, at that time they usually come. There were lots of caribou. (DM91-21B:9)

[...] My mom got few there. She said "we'll make dry meat with them". "Gee!" I thought, because we had just finished putting caribou meat in the ice house. (DM90-13B:13)

Jean Tardiff was told by her stepfather Saruaq how people hunted caribou around Qaŕgialuk (Ptarmigan Bay) at the end the last century:

They say when they go hunting caribou they all go there with the whaleboats. Sauaq always said that sometimes they would just row the whaleboats there when they wanted to get caribou. All the whaleboats would go inside the cove there at Qaŕgialuk (Ptarmigan Bay). And when the caribou came they would hunt them. (JT90-16B:1)

When the Inuvialuit were specifically looking for good furs to make winter clothing, then the caribou were hunted during the fall as Kathleen Hansen explains:

When they saw the stars and when it got a little darker, they say about now the caribou skins are good for clothing. Then they would start going up and from below the West Channel, they would start dog packing from there. They went up to get good skins of caribou for their clothing.

At one time, my dad took me up there to get some caribou for clothing. He said it was for winter use. Long ago they say the light ones are good and their fur is good for hunting. They are easier to use when moving around. One week we would stay up there looking for clothing from caribou skins, that's how it was long ago. (KH90-19B:7)

Kathleen Hansen also recalls hunting caribou with her father during winter for the Mission School at Tapqaq (Shingle Point):

[...] when there was caribou, it was my dad, me and Thomas Umauq who would hunt caribou. Me and my dad we each had a dog team in those days, when we were helping the Mission School. I would go back and forth so much that my dogs couldn't do anything anymore. [...] There was so many caribou up there. Then in the middle of winter they started coming down close to us on shore, down to the island too, in wintertime. They never ran out of caribou when the school was first here. (KH90-19B:9)

Amos Paul, whose parents were from inland Alaska, tells that his family followed the caribou in the hills south of Qikiqtaŕruk (Herschel Island):

When there is caribou there is lots in those hills up there. But in the coast it is not the same, not too much because the wolves always bother them. They would all be at high hills above Qikiqtaŕruk (Herschel Island) on the very high hills they would go. Also there is sheep up on the high hills and also around Blue Hole.

Our parents always took us around to hunt for food, just so we could eat. If you stay together in one place the animals always go away. We always just followed the caribou when they were moving. When they moved, we too would move. When you stay together sometimes it's hard to get the caribou. Never hunt one place, you have to scatter all over. (AP90-18A:1-2)

## Seal Hunting

Along the Yukon coast, seal hunting was done mainly in the spring and the summer. Lily Lipscombe describes how seals were hunted in the spring:

[Seal hunting], that's done in March or April. Mainly in April because all along Tikiraq, inside Tikiraq there'd be seal holes, that's where they mostly mate and made holes [...] so you could see them on the ice. We'd have a shield that was made years ago. My Dad's shield was made out of a *naluaq*. It's a seal skin, but white on one side. The hair is taken off and bleached white on the other side. It's just pure white and it got a little hole in there and then he walks with it in front of him. And you can go right, almost right up to the seal. Because they got good eyes, they just see from long ways, you know. (LL91-24B:13)

[...] when my father was hunting seal in the springtime when the water gets muddy down in the coast around Shingle Point or King Point, when the water get muddy [at] the breathing hole. Like one of us stand there and wait it to come up. You could see the waves and bubbles come up. And pretty soon the seal come up with his nose to breathe and you shoot them with 22 rifle.[...] You kill them with gun right away and you have to hook it and pull them up.

This muddy water come from Aklavik and it goes down to the coast down at Shingle Point where it's clear water. In springtime all this muddy water go down to the coast. [...] In the springtime when the muddy water goes down the river then you go down to Shingle Point and all along to King Point and all the way down near Herschel Island. And after the water goes down, the black water settles and it's clear. Just in springtime it gets muddy, when the muddy water come from here somewhere.

[...] It's important, it's good to have dirty water when you shoot the seal when it comes up. Because if it's clear water it stays down there, it sees you from down there and instead of coming up it goes other places. [...] Seals, they can look around in the water too you know. When it's clear water, when you're standing up in the hole, he'll see you and then the seal won't come up. The seal will go some other places, where nobody is around. (FI90-7A:2-4)

[...] we used to just hunt seal just out here, just sitting out there. When it's summertime, seals are not so fat because it's mid summer. They are not as fat as they are at first spring or in late fall. And they'll sink right away when you shoot them. So we used a *givaqtun*. It's a metal heavy thing with four hooks on each sides. We'll throw it out and wheel it in and the seal will finally catch under water. (LL91-25B:1)

Fred Inglangasuk explains how people hunted seal during the spring, taking advantage of the muddy water:

Lily Lipscombe hunted seal at Arvakvik (Roland Bay) with her father during the summer and she explains that a special type of hook was needed to bring in the dead seal:



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Sarah Meyook recalls that in the early 1940s her family would go to Herschel Island in the summer and hunt seals:

The Inuvialuit hunted seals with nets at Herschel Island during the 1950s and 1960s when seal skin could be sold for a good price. The seals were abundant, and Charlie Gruben remembers catching seventy seals in three days while hunting at Herschel Island in 1958 (CG91-1B:7). Sarah Meyook remembers hunting seals at Herschel Island during this period and describes the different kind of seals that were found around Qatgialuk (Ptarmigan Bay):

We all stayed here and there was so much seal then. They were all over but we never had seal nets then. They shot them with 22 rifles. That is how they hunted them. Me and Pamiug, also our husbands Meyook and Foster, we'd go down to the beach and play rummy (card game) while the men were waiting for seals. When the seals were close, they would shoot them from shore. After they got them, we played card games. (SM90-27B:9)



Inuvialuit woman with a seal skin poka, Herschel Island, 1925.

(NAC, PA-172849)

At the time when we were here, me and Elizabeth we would set a net at the point here. We let the children help us to set the net. We had one paddle and so my children used the paddle as a shovel. We stretched out the net and set it. [...] After setting it for few days, we got few seals. Maybe four or five seals. (SM90-27A:1)

We really hunted seals that time long ago! We'd skin the seals for sale. We'd set nets for seals. Sometimes they would be over ten and we would skin them. At the time, one skin could cost over one hundred dollars. That is how we used to live, like that.

At this place, at the end of Qaŕgialuk (Ptarmigan Bay) there are colored seals, spotted seals. They stay there all the time. [...] They are like seal but they are narrow when they come up, they just go half way up. They have head like dogs. A spotted seal. Also the seal heads are round when they come up. When bearded seal come up their whiskers are white. They are different from others. They have white whiskers. (SM90-4A:8)

There also was a walrus for few years. I think we took her young one long ago when Bob Mackenzie and them were still there. We took the young one from her. I think she is still looking for her young one. She would always be there. She wouldn't let you have anything in nets, there were no seal too. I think she's very old. They say she's very wise and no one could kill her. She is very wise one. When you set net and if there was seal in it, she would tear the net and take them. She eat them because they are not too big for her. It's a walrus with tusks that I'm talking about. It has a thick skin. You only can shoot it by the head. The skin is too thick to have you shoot it in other places. Only by the head you'll kill it. The joint is big when you start to prepare food with them. (SM90-4A:9)

Walrus were also hunted around Herschel Island. Sarah Meyook remembers how one walrus used to tear the nets and explains how to shoot a walrus:

## Polar Bear Hunting

Polar bears were hunted along the Yukon coast and their skin was traditionally used as doors for sod houses and as mattresses (F190-5B:7). David Roland killed his first polar bear when he was fifteen years old. He recalls the event:

I was 15 year old then [when] I got a polar bear down at Herschel Island in the spring. In April as I started to go and saw the open sea down there, at the time the crack on ocean was closing in, and then when I went to look down there, the bear was coming towards me. While that I was always scared that time. My grandfather always told me that if I see something dangerous, he or it will never get me first because I have a gun. When I thought of that, I first tied up my dogs hidden behind the big glacier. There I was going to kill the polar bear. Before that, I had never seen any.

I went to get it and I was thinking "If I wound it and he comes after me, I'll be stiff" so I took my outer fur parka and my fur pants off, and I make myself light. I was thinking that if I was not stiff and if the bear try to bother me, I could try my best. That's what I was thinking and I went to kill the bear. I went from behind him, I got close to it, so he was behind the big ice. So I shoot him right there by surprise. When I came home with the polar bear on my sled my stepmother Kuttuq asked me "Grandson, how did you kill this?" Then I told her how I shoot it.

Well, it was the first time I saw a polar bear and I killed it too. My grandfather, my adopted father had told me [that] if I saw something scary he said, "Don't shoot it any other place if it's close, the kill is the neck". When I reached him very close, I looked at him and at the end of the head, I shoot it and it fell down. [...] The skin my grandmother cleaned it and I went to Alaska to sell it to John Olson. At the time bear skin was very cheap, I think he bought it for \$25. It was a big money then. (DR91-27B:6-7)

Another way to kill bear was to construct a device by which the bear would shoot itself, as Alex Gordon explains:

Sometimes in winter, when we travelled by the coast or the sea, when there was a polar bear, they would fix a gun so it could go by itself. They would work on a gun and put a bait with oil or something and set it high. So when a bear get to it and smell the oil and when he touch the oil, the gun go off and he shoots himself. They worked on the gun so it wouldn't break, so when the bear pull on the bait the gun goes off and kills the bear. Sometimes that was how they hunted polar bears long ago. But in those days, you hardly saw polar bears then. That is how some people tried to hunt them but they made sure that they put a marker on the gun so someone wouldn't get hurt from it when they set a gun like that. So, when there is a marker, people would know that there was a gun there. (AG91-20B:11-12)

Long ago when I was young child we used to live here at Tapqaq (Shingle Point). [...] We stayed here and did some fishing. We made dry fish and put them inside the teepees here, those made with long sticks. That's how we used to live around here long ago. (SM90-19B:4)

That way with net and they pulled the fish in the net. Just moving with fish, arctic char. Yes that is how we fish and we had lots of fun over there [...] When we'd go home, we put them inside the smoke house neatly in line. They made smoke house for fish by just standing up logs. They would just put up logs and make us a smoke house that way. (SM91-19B:4)

And this is where (Arvakvik) we spent our summer, mostly for fishing. And then just before it was time to sweep fish, especially the char, before we go over there. And when we'd go over there, we go over there very briefly, like we'll just sweep for one or two days. Because you must remember that every sweep you may get about 100, 200 fish at the time. So you could do it, four or five maybe six times a day and you got enough there. (LL91-25B:10)

[We fish] all kinds; herrings and trouts too. That was what we got from the lakes but only the lakes don't have herrings. The fish down at Kiññaq (King Point) is like ours here. Jackfish, connles, there is no other fish, no different kinds. Only the grayllngs are there too, in some little creeks down there. (AP90-18A:3)

At the time the fish were really running, there was lots of fish then those days. They also would make a pit to put their fish into storage. They make them with logs, like making a log house. Also they would dig a pit on ground to store for the dog food, lots of it. Well, there was lots of herring fish down there. Also these kinds of trout because there is two kinds of trout down here at Herschel Island. Here some would come from Babbage River. Those always come down for summer from up there. And these big arctic char they also come down through Firth River. They say long ago they looked for them on the big open water, up there, these big ones, the arctic char. [...]

Here on the coast shore, Sañuaq used to have nets with the ones you use long stick to set them. You know how they make long sticks, they add another piece to make them longer, you know? That was how he used to have nets all the time down here. Specially when the herrings are running lots. Also these trouts that come from

## Fishing

Fishing was done intensively along the Yukon coast during summertime. Fish were then dried and stored for later use. Sarah Meyook remembers people fishing with nets and describes how the fish were dried:

Fishing with nets gave very good results, as Lily Lipscombe remembers:

Different kinds of fish were caught, including Herring, Jackfish (Northern Pike), Conni (Inconnu), Trout, Arctic Char and Bullhead (Sculpin). Amos Paul, Ishmael Alunik and Fred Inglangasuk relate the following stories about fishing:

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behind King Point they would run in, mix with all kind of fish. (IA90-35A:5-6)

[My grandmother] used to hook around here (Niaqulik) , but she would get mostly bullheads (sculpin), that time when she hooked fish. They used to only hook bullheads that time. My grandmother when she used to hook fish, she had quite a few bullheads when she hooked fish. (FI91-18A:6)

During the winter, fishing was done with nets set under the ice, as Ishmael Akunik explains:

And they go up to fish holes up here to fish. They would go by Herschel Island River (Firth River) by there. Also behind King Point there, there are fish too up there. (...) In this point there is one lake I've seen while I was looking for caribou. They say right there, there is lots of these fish with big eyes what they call them again? We call them *qalusaq*. (...) That is where they winter, in that lake, around here too where there is no creek on top, King Point. On the top edge of King Point hill. Arey and them would get some of those fish again. Also around the flats there, there is all kinds of fish. Whitefish, crooked backs and other fish there on the flats there, also pikes, we caught when we have nets around King Point under the ice. (IA90-35A:7)

Fishing at Tapqaq (Shingle Point) during the summer is still an important activity for many Inuvialuit, as Jean Arey tells:

Every summer we would go down and I'm going to go again this summer. I can't stay in town and it's because we never make living here too. Right now I want to go down again, because it's really good to stay down there. When we sets fish nets it's good and when we get lots of herrings. They will make us some dry fish. (JA91-17B:2)



"One day's catch - 284 salmon trout (*Salvelinus malma*). Pools at foothills of Endicott Mts. Hulshula River, Alaska. L. Akpit and R. "Billy" Natkusiak. The river was frozen over except for rapids and pools in the foothills where we used our gillnets for "sweeping" Sept. 16, 1908. (NAC C-23953)

## Bird Hunting

Bird hunting, particularly ptarmigan and seagulls, was an important activity in the springtime when food was short and the season not yet warm enough to hunt seals. Martha Harry describes ptarmigan hunting on the eastern border of the Yukon coast where willows were abundant:

I remember too when they were hunting ptarmigan in the spring. They always called these *puguanik*, you know, a net. They would fence the willows with nets, that is how they get the ptarmigans with nets set on willows. They would get lots of ptarmigan, I have seen them. Up on a little creek, like they would always be on the willows, when they first come the ptarmigans, you know. (MH91-16A:8)

There is no willows at the coast only on the mountains and you have to go up to get them. We would go and get them from up there. This is how we used to hunt ptarmigan. We would bring old willows from the old mountain. We put them around and set snares and we get them in the morning and have them for breakfast because there is no seal. [...] We used sinew, also little twine. At the time there was twine and rope then. At the time, we got the twisted twine in the shape of a big ball. We would all set snares like that. (DM90-13A:9)

Before the seals, we had hawks and seagulls down there. We trapped them with red sweaters that just looked like blood, we put them on traps. That's the way we tried to eat when there are not too much ptarmigans around anymore. We always got willows from over there. We'd get willows from up there. Then in the morning, we always went to get some ptarmigans for our breakfast. (DM91-21B:9)

So then we'd take them off from the willows, whenever we tried to eat ptarmigan. The seagulls, they come second around there the seagulls, when they come. Old sweater like this one or whatever like a parka cover. That time, girls used to use red parka cover. Then, that way, they say it, they put "pretend blood", red ones. (DM91-21B:9-10)

Down there too when you spent falltime, there is geese. The ones that didn't fly, they hunted them. When we were at Nunaluk long ago when we started to come this way, when we had children already. When they can't fly we'd round them up and also make a "not real geese" and put them around on the other side of Nunaluk.

We were there with my parents to those places in the summer when they were hunting geese. I was not there right away but I was there later on. Then they were putting the toy geese when I went there, they were putting them on the land. (DM90-20A:11)

On other parts of the coast, willows had to be brought from the mountains and snares were prepared as Dora Malegana explains:

Goose hunting was also a popular activity along the Yukon North Slope. Dora continues her stories:

Ducks appear to have been quite abundant along the Yukon coast but the situation seems to have changed and their number has declined. Jean Tardiff and Dora Malegana comment on duck hunting:



They say you could have lots of ducks at Qafgialuk (Ptarmigan Bay). When the young ones grow up, ducklings. (...) No more ducks here now. Not only the ducks, they say even the loons are all gone. (JT90-26A:2)

I heard too that long ago my grandparents used to make a living here with the Siglit. There was my grandmother Turraak, Kanak and them also Jane Esau's parents also Nauyak and them. They would go over to Yuuqyaaq to hunt ducks long ago in the springtime. (DM90-27A:3)

We'll get all, like at night it'll be dark, we'll be sitting down there behind a shield and just knocked them off, you know. (...) *Nirliiqs*, those white ones. But there's two kind of *nirliiq*. There's one *nirliiq* that comes earlier, we always bypassed those. But in springtime we get them and those are *uluagullik* (Canada goose), with white here. They called them *uluagullik*. They're *niiglitqs* too but they're *uluagullik*. And then, the geese, the wavies (snow goose), is in the falltime. It's falltime when we hunt them. And we get a lot of those. And then when we go swan hunting. Swans are always, we always hunt them in springtime, all by that big lake, that summer lake. (LL91-24B:7-8)

Although both Petitot (1887:249) and Stefansson (1919:136-137) recorded a taboo on the consumption of eggs among the Inuvialuit, the Inuvialuit we interviewed did consume eggs. Sarah Meyook remembers going to pick eggs along the Yukon coast:

[...] And then after we came down by Yuuqyaaq, then we crossed the Qikiqtaqruk river with boat, a canoe, before we started looking for eggs that were still not hatched. We got eggs of seagulls or ducks before we brought the dogs across with eggs in this kind of box. Well, if we crossed with the dogs first they were going to break them and eat them. (SM90-4B:5)

When we were picking eggs we always leave one because if you take them all, the mother will cry for them. You just leave one and take all the eggs. (SM91-29A:3)

### Hunting Ground Squirrels

During the spring, ground squirrels came out of their holes and were hunted by the Inuvialuit for their meat and their fur. Fred Inglangasuk remembers going with his grandmother to trap them:

When we were at Niaqulik with my grandparents, [...] in spring they would hunt them. Then my grandmother would dry them and I guess they made parkas with them. [...] we always got tired when our grandmother made us walk with her, looking for squirrel. We always wanted to go home. But at first she always would say "we are going not too far" but we always went far away! At the time, we were not too big [...].

[...] my grandmother had a little pack-sack. We always packed them for her when we got some, when we checked our traps in the morning. If we got some squirrel we set them (the traps) back on. Then coming back, we would check them again, and take them off again. We would go back and forth like that. We would eat the meat too. (FI90-5A:7-8)

[...] My family was on the other side of Herschel Island, at King Point trapping squirrels. They trapped squirrels and filled the traps full. I used to watch them, sometimes I remember, then I forget. Even though it was dark, they would set traps. Lots of squirrels. (CK90-33A:2)

At Tapqaq (Shingle Point), I remember as a kid they had this big bonfire placing *siksik* (ground squirrels) all round in circle. That way they killed the *siksik* fleas. You know the fleas on *siksik*. Heat would kill them. [After, they] skin them and eat them. (CK91-3A:1)

Christina Klengenberq remembers people hunting ground squirrels and putting them around a big fire to get rid of their fleas:

## Trapping

Among the Inuvialuit, trapping for furs became a major activity in the early 1900s, eventually transforming their traditional economy. In exchange for furs, the Inuvialuit were given access to white man goods such as flour, tea, tobacco and guns. In the 1910s, the price of fur was not very high as William Kuptana remembers:

Some people were also able to purchase schooners that would give them access to more territory during the summer months. Both men and women had their own traplines, although the fur trading was done almost exclusively by the men. Children also helped their parents and later on would have their own trapline. Sarah Meyook recalls here how she and her sister would help their mother set her traplines:

Things at the time are very cheap at Hudson's Bay. The white fox was really cheap fur too. Only three dollars. (...) When Ole Andreasen was a trader at Shingle Point, then we heard it was ten dollars, then. It sure went high then! (WK91-14B:12)

My mom started trapping and I was big enough to follow her. When my mom started trapping, my grandad would go with dog team across the lake. We would set traps on the ocean. Me and Carrie we would follow along running. My mom would bring a gun too. Then when she finished setting traps, she would bring us home. Then next day we would start to go again because when we woke up early my mom would say "when you first wake up, just go out".

That is the way the old people are. If you don't get up early the animals would know and it's hard to get them. So, soon as I was awake I would go out and go back in because I want to get some things in my traps. I'll always remember these words that as soon as we awake in the morning to go out.

And when we went to trap with my mom, the trapping was lots of fun. Once there was a dead fox in their traps. A white fox and another one over there making noise. Over, there we could see the dead one. Sometimes there was lots of them, sometimes we killed lots of them and they were making noise. We had lots of fun. Gee! Lots of animals at the time. Like white foxes, cross foxes too. They would put some on our pack or if not, we pulled them and we took them home. We had lots of fun.

They would skin foxes all night. All the foxes they got all day. Lots of foxes. Lots of white foxes and animals to skin. They would be stretched. They looked very nice. After, they cleaned them in the snow. They used something to clean them. We always travelled with them trapping, me and Carrie. (SM90-3B:1-2)

When the prices were high, such as during the 1920s, trapping could be a very lucrative activity. Ishmael Alunik recalls where he used to trap along the Yukon North Slope, and Sarah Meyook describes the kind of journey her husband would undertake to trap:

[...] When there is lots of white foxes, people made good living. There is lots of white foxes sometimes. One time from here I was trapping going by King Point somewhere around here. When the ice is thick enough they would come down from the ocean. Me, I never started trapping soon enough. I was trapping up around Old Crow area and while I was up there, they were getting lots of white fox. At the time I got over 50 white foxes but then there was lots of wolverine then. There is always lots of wolverine around here, around King Point. They have holes up there, I think. I know the white foxes have holes up there. There is always lots of them up there around King Point. (IA90-35A:6)

[My husband] was trapping in November down there, trapping fox. Sometimes he stay down there two weeks and come back to Aklavik. Never stop always hunting. [...] From Aklavik he camps at Police Camp after that to Running River, and to Shingle Point, after that. From there to Nlaqullk and camps there. Then to Qafgialuk (Ptamigan Bay). He would go early in the morning because it's long ways travelling with dogs. He was trapping all the time white foxes, wolves, wolverine and [hunt] sheep sometimes. He really got happy all the time when he get good fur. [...] From Qafgialuk he goes to Herschel Island. And after that he camped behind Herschel at Yuuqyaaq and Nunaluk. He was trapping there too. And then Qaliliuqvik (Clarence Lagoon), it's near Alaska, he come back that way after that. (SM90-19A:1)

We go muskrat hunting in the springtime. Old Crow people were always glad when we went up there. [...] When we go up hunting, my grandparents Old Abraham Tiigiluk went with us at the time. My grandmother Agnaguniaq hold my hand and talked to me nice to go with her. Agnaguniaq, my grandmother. We finally reached Old Crow. Sometimes it was scary when the wolves were howling. I don't know how long or [how many] days it took us. I never got tired too and we reached Nlaqullik with me not getting too tired. I was about over four years. (IA90-35B-3)



Mr. Brayton and a catch of white fox at Herschel Island, 1928.  
(NAC, PA-167648)

The Old Crow area is rich in muskrat. Ishmael Alunik recalls going there with his parents and grandparents in the springtime during the late 1920s and then going back to Nlaqullik along the coast:

## Gathering Berries and Other Plants

Contrary to stereotypes of eating only meat, the Inuvialuit enjoyed picking berries and roots as well as the leaves of some plants. Sarah Mayook recalls picking around Running River and Shingle Point when she was young:

We go to Aqpayuatchiaq (Running River) to pick berries. This is where we always pick berries. It always have big yellow berries at Aqpayuatchiaq and also at Tapqaq (Shingle Point). I would always walk and go for berries from Tapqaq to the point of Tapqaq. When I filled a small whale stomach container, I would walk home. They are very good. Berries from container like that are good. That is how we lived. After we finished picking from the coast and came back here in delta, again we would pick berries too. (SM90-3B:4)

Rhubarbs also other green leafs. The ones that grow on hills. Around here there used to be lots there. [...] They made fruit with them after boiling them in a big boil, they put sugar also flour. (SM90-20A:10)

Lily Lipscombe explains that rhubarb can be picked only at a specific season and that different patches of berries were exploited:

[...] And it's only at certain times of the season that you can pick rhubarbs because they go woody and rusty afterwards. So you get to pick them at the right times. Just like these *avaliqs* here, you pick them just about the time you pick *aqpiks* (berries). Because we'll be picking *aqpiks* over here, then when we go over there to pick *aqpiks*, that's where usually picked them. We usually leave that area for the last part to pick. [...] Because we had to pick those *avalagaik* (leaves) here at the same time as we did the *aqpiks*. So everything was set like. To my Mom and Dad everything was set. (LL91-24B:10)

Dora Malegana also remembers picking but in the mountains. She explains how the berries and rhubarb were stored and at which special occasions they were consumed:

Cloud berries, black berries and blue ones, only these kinds. Also roots from ground, the ones the mouse store for winter. We had so much fun together doing things like that with my mom and my two aunties Annie and Mary Archie. At one time we went dog packing to the hills. We stayed up there for long time till we were almost out of food. Our camp was not far, just down there. Sometimes we'd hear them when they shoot guns back at the mouth of the river.

My mom would store some berries and roots from mouse in butter containers. These barrels were almost filled to the top. They were very good to eat, really nice. We were very hungry for berries before Christmas at the end of November, but my mother never let us have some berries anymore because she is saving them for Christmas. That is how the people lived long ago.

[...] my mom always made eskimo ice cream [...] when we had meat. And again, she would put them away because it was for Christmas too. [...] Those rhubarbs always grew there so we got there to pick them. We stored them for winter in blubber. They are so big down there on the coast. And they taste so good too. (DM90-14B-5-6)

Lily Lipscombe remembers that she and her mother would collect the leaves of a special kind of willow in the fall, and that they would store them in blubber before eating them during winter:

[...] *Avalaqaik* are different from these kind of willows because they put that in *uqsuq* (blubber) and they eat it. [...] That's the reason they call it *avalagaik*. [...] they don't eat any other kind a leaves from willows. Those are the only kinds of leaves they eat. And you know the story goes that when they (the leaves) see human they squeak to themselves those *avalagaiks* because they're gonna be picked. And when you're picking *avalagaiks*, you take one, you take them like that, they're all like that. You go "zzzzh", if they're ready for harvest when you pull them, they squeak. That is why they call them *avalagaiks* ("a thing that makes noise") because they scream!

[...] They would be ready for harvest, like they'll be big, they'll be tall ones. And that's where the tall ones are along a creek or a valley. [...] We used to go there every fall and pick so much of that, you know. And she'll take a drum full of *uqsuk* (blubber) and she'll just put them all in there for winter. (LL91-24A:6)

[...] You know when you go to a lake there is those big grass, when you pull them out, the end of them. They say it tastes sweet, the end part of the big grass. When they go hunting, packing up there in the hills with that kind they try and have something sweet. Before the berries grow. (MH91-16B-2)

Old people [...] when they were here long ago, they picked these green grass here at Tapqaq (Shingle Point). They would look around and pick them. They were for little bags or baskets that they made. When picking them, they would tie them together. Long ago here there was lots of baskets, every old person had one.

They would sew them with a needle and make them into a ball and it got bigger and bigger as you sew them. On top you made a hole. When you put water in these bags, it never leaked. They are the kind of grass that you see now. Some of them made big ones and put their needles or thread in them or anything in the bag they made. Lots of them made them in the old days. (SM90-20A:6)

Martha Harry recalls that while travelling inland to hunt caribou, her parents would eat the root end of grass found near lakes:

Grass was also used to make baskets as described by Sarah Meyook:



## Hard Times

The Yukon North Slope was not always a "friendly" place to use the words of Stefansson (1944). Fred Inglangasuk remembers that it could be difficult to find animals along the coast:

Sometimes there's caribou all year round, but some years nothing. Maybe springtime or falltime we kill caribou but after that, nothing. One year we had a hard time at Niaquilik. We had nothing to eat. There was my grandfather, my parents, Old Archie, Isaac Aluniq. One year we had hard time, me and my grand-father nearly starved!

They lost all their dogs, then we used to stay close to the Niaquilik, we didn't go up in the mountains. Them guys they were gonna go to Fish Hole, at Niaquilik there. Then bad winter came while they were up there. There was nothing to kill up there, no fish, nothing. So they lost all their dogs, no more food.

They came back towards Niaquilik. Us we were doing good. Me and my father and mother, we had ptarmigan all winter that time. Nothing else, just ptarmigan. [...] We just lived on ptarmigan. Spring came, [...] my grandmother used to take me out walking, see there ground squirrels, then we catch them in the trap.[...] When we got squirrels once in a while we did good. When the seals started coming up we were able to live better. After Christmas there was no caribou or anything except for ptarmigan. All we lived on was ptarmigan.

[...] That's how it was in the coast. Some years you were well off. Maybe well off one year, next year nothing. Nothing to kill, just the ptarmigan. Ptarmigan are around all the time. Hard to catch anything, no caribou, can't get seals late in the winter. (F190-7A:6-7)

As Fred Inglangasuk explains, people started to leave the coast because there was not as much food as in the Mackenzie Delta:

Because in the coast we get short of food when the weather is not good. And now in delta we could snare and we could go (fish) hooking. That's how we make our living. If you are in the coast you have no place to hook when it's winter and nothing to hunt but sometimes you could get ptarmigan alright. Sometimes there is not much ptarmigan too. Here in delta there's lots of rabbits and some ptarmigan too and in the spring there is muskrat and there's lots of places where you could go (fish) hooking. That is why we never leave here too. Because too there is nothing for us in coast. There's no place for us to hunt when I was young that time. We stayed in the delta here because [...] all year round we could set snares. We get lots of rabbits, something to eat. We make water hole in the creek where we could hook and we catch fish [...] In the coast there is nothing to hunt in the winter, no rabbits too. There's only some ptarmigans, that's all there is, just ptarmigans. (F190-5B:4)

Sarah Meyook recalls winters in the 1940s and 1950s when her family was on the brink of starvation while travelling along the Yukon coast:

We always go down there every summer and winter time. We went down all the time. [...] I think in 1944, before Jimmy was born. We always went down. One time we got down with dogs. My husband was trapping in January before he was finished, he brought us back. Sometimes too we had hard times when there was big wind and we run short of food. We never had food easy in those days, long ago.

One time we went through hard time without food for a while. When we started to come from Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island) with dogs in January, we only had roll of oats for food, no tea. Fred and Nellie were our only children. When we reached BAR B (Stokes Point) we started back to Aklavik. At the time we just ate seal blubber in the morning, that's all, and for our dogs we give them the same seal blubber.

We went on travelling and on morning we just cooked oats and nothing with it. We gave a little to our children too. We had no other food, really nothing! So we kept going. That's one time we really had a hard time. We had hard time but we never gave up, we kept travelling. Then we reached Aqpayuatchiaq (Running River), we all had frost bite, it was so cold in January. We tried to keep our children warm.

So we manage to reach the Police Cabin. At that time there was lots of rabbits, and Jonas hunted rabbits with his 22 rifle and he got some. But me and him we never had anything to eat for long time, about a week I guess. We never eat anything, never eat, just piece of whale oil. When we were there we had rabbits for our children and dogs. Us we tried not to eat too much. When I boiled some rabbits in the pot I would just give them the broth and a small piece of meat each time.

If we eat lots at once we might just kill ourselves because we never ate for long time because there was nothing then. When we finished eating and felt well enough to go, we went again for Aklavik. When we reached around West Channel there was Paul Uqallsuk and them around there. They sure helped us at the time. They feed our children! [...] His wife was so nice to us and she told us at first not to eat too much. The children had half of a bun at first. After a while she gave them some more when she thought that their food had settled in their tummy. She said sometimes some people ate too much at first meal.

That was the time we went without food, really nothing. Just by eating whale oil you could live for a long time, a small skinny piece of it. You just cut it and swallow it when you go. That 's what I got through. If children hear what I said or understand what we got through, they could live. (SM90-19A:7-8)

When my dad had nothing around here for him, he moved to Aklavik. There was no more white man food around here, not even at Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island), Barrow and Barter Island. There was nothing, not even flour. Even at Yuuqyaaq; most people had only rice over there. There was no white man food, no biscuit even!

[...] They say they had one ptarmigan for a meal for one family! Our grandmother had the head of the ptarmigan. [...] That time there was nothing at all of white man food and there was not much to hunt too. All over it was so hard for everyone.

Dora Malegana also tells of hard times along the Yukon coast in the 1940s which made people move to Aklavik:

A family [...] were at Nuvaugaluk. While the father and someone stayed behind at Nuvlagaluk, they even tried to eat some mice! [...]

My dad would go by dog team by the hills and us we went up too for safety with Nina and her grandfather and my younger brothers. My husband was gone too. At the time my dad got an eagle. First time we ate one too. They say it was not good to kill them. Even that, my dad shot it because there was no ptarmigan around and the weather was so bad too. The eagle tasted so different, something like the smell of mice. Even that we ate it because we had nothing to eat then. We had no whale oil too.

While that Nina was up walking around, she found one dead caribou up there, the snow has just melted on it. It was a nice one too. So we watched how to eat it to make it last as long as we could. That sure helped us to live now. Now we were okay. And there was lots of ptarmigan now. (DM90-27A:9-10)

When you have whale oil, all kinds of meat are good. When you are short of food. [...] We had heard too about one of Stefansson's crew who [had to] eat his parka, when they had nothing to eat. With no fur on it, they say it was very hard to eat and not smooth to swallow because it was dry. (DM90-27B:2)

## 6. Domestic Activities



Erecting a dome-shaped tent near Barter Island, L. to R. Shainguarvik, Akpik and "Billy" Katkusiak, Sept. 3, 1908.

(NAC, PA-172903)

In this chapter, we have grouped narratives that relate to life in camp regardless of whether people lived in sod houses, willow huts or tents. The focus of this chapter is on activities involved in the processing and storage of food, getting water and working skins.

### Houses

#### *Sod Houses*

*Napaqtuq* (in Uumarmiutun) or *nappaqta* (in Siglitun) means "stand up logs" and refers to what is called in English "sod houses". They were built with a frame of vertical logs covered by sod or moss. Amos Paul describes the construction of a sod house:

We built our houses with drift wood. We lay them side by side to make a log house. [...] We'd leave them for other people to use when they are travelling. [...] We'd empty the house we left behind. We never had white man windows. Just the intestine from walrus and also the bear's intestine and also the moose's intestine. We never had everything them days, when I was growing up. (AP90-18A:2)

## Domestic Activities

Fred Inglangasuk explains that a polar bear skin was used for the door of sod house. Note that he uses the term *ivrunik* (from the stem *ivruq* means sod, moss) for a sod house:

Emmanuel Felix describes sod houses with an entrance tunnel to keep cold air out of the structure:

Other Inuvialuit interviewed told us that contrary to the view of most archaeologists, sod houses could be utilized during summertime. We were told that they were "nice and cool" at this time of the year. Lily Lipscombe, Ishmael Alunik and Peter Rufus recall what sod houses were like:

Kathleen Hansen remembers sod houses used in the 1910s and 1920s by the people who lived at Herschel Island:

Outside the door they put a bear skin too. If you had that kind of door it kept the rain drops out. They kept the drops away, the bear and polar bear skins. [...] We didn't have real doors at that time, just the skin ones. We would put nails on one side. It closed itself when you used it. [...] Long ago us we never used windows. I could remember my parents were using bearded seal intestines for windows. They're just like these cellophane. The narrow ones, you sew them together and make them big. [...] I can remember when we used those. [...] Sod house is *ivrunik*. (FI90-5B:7)

The first generation was using *qulliq* (lamps) in *kataligaaluit*. [...] A *kataligaaluit* is a dwelling with a door in the bottom of the floor. [...] There were about four feet tunnels connecting to the porches. Four feet down. They say cold air never comes in. [...] They were porches, entrances. They got about three, four feet down. That cold air don't come in. (EF91-5B:3-4)

Long ago, these were wintering quarters for real cold weather. They always had *katauaq* (door) on the bottom. They go down the *tuqsuuq*. They never call them porches. They called it *tuqsuuq*. [...] Nowadays they call porches *qanittat*. [...] (EF91-5B:6)

They're really warm. They were comparing [them] to these [log cabins] and my mom used to always say "Try to look so nice on the outside and we're freezing inside our house". (laughter) Because when they lived in *nunataq* (sod) houses they were warm, really warm. [...] In summer time they're really cool. Like they'd open one part of it, the front part of it, so the air flows through, and of course there's no sun going in there and it's all insulated. So it's always nice and cool. [...] She puts mosquito screens on our windows and our door, and on the back, and wind flows through and it's always nice and cool. (LI91-25B:13)

[...] When there is wood anyway and when there is no wood hardly any wood, they, you if you go to Nunavut, you're going to see some places where they put sod. Maybe about that big and that high. High up like and they put the roof. [...] they were really wind proof and the heat can't go in when it gets warm. (IA91-14A:10)

My grandfather Qaliakuk had a *nappaqta* in Anderson River. Stand up logs and covered with moss. You know cut up blocks, on top each other. Real warm in winter, summer it's real cool. [...] (PR91-7A:10)

They had houses mostly made of moss. You never saw wood outside, you could only see wood from the inside. All outside of it was made of moss. I never knew how many families had houses there. Only Thomas Umauq had a real house. But when these schooners went down, some stayed in boats and set up tents on the

land. [...] All year-round [houses] for these people who stayed there in their houses. [In the summer] they were nice and cool. [...] They never changed [them] since they made them. Only they rebuilt the ceiling when it started dripping. When they put moss on it, it looks like it's growing the same as the land there. [...] The only time I see them was in summer when my dad bring us down. (KH90-1B:4-5)



Remains of a sod house occupied in the 1920s at Nunakuk, Yukon coast, July 1991. (ISDP)

Sod houses, especially in the Mackenzie Delta region, have been assumed to be "winter houses" (e.g.: Arnold 1988, Arnold and Hart 1991, Morrison 1988). Information presented here, that they could also be occupied in summer, forces a reconsideration of seasonal settlement patterns in this region of the western Arctic (Nagy 1991). Archaeologists have been rather critical of the summertime use of such houses probably because when they excavate them, they find a rather muddy and stinking matrix (e.g.: Morrison 1990a). However, such was not the case when these houses were occupied and maintained. Another argument is that the entrance tunnel would be quite muddy to go through during summertime. But such entrances might not have been used during summertime. For example, sod houses with both summer and winter entrances have been recorded in Alaska (Lim 1990:23). The Inuvialuit who lived in sod houses told us that during the warmer months they used doors made of bear skin.

Another example of how these statements may affect archaeological interpretations is illustrated by McGhee's (1976) arguments regarding the village of Kittigaryuit. Up to a thousand people are thought to have gathered at Kittigaryuit to hunt beluga whales, an activity that took place at the end of July or in August. McGhee (1976) has argued that during the summer months, sod houses were abandoned in favour of tents. Interviews with Inuvialuit elders indicate that, while tents were used for large summer gatherings of people, sod houses were still continuously occupied. People lived year-round at Kittigaryuit but it was only during the summer their number increased because of the whale hunt. Furthermore, as Charlie Gruben (CG91-12A:6) mentioned, after hunting whales most people "would go back to their home" to fish during the winter. They would only come back to Kittigaryuit for major winter festivities. This suggests that the tents were occupied mainly by visitors during the summer. Finally, Emile Petitot, a catholic priest who visited the "Tchiglit" of the Anderson River in 1865, noted that in the summer villages where beluga whales were hunted, people lived in houses made of wood until October (Petitot 1876:xx).



### Willow huts

Huts made of a willow frame and covered with skins or moss were also used. Called *qaluurvik* in Siglitun and *qaluqvik* in Uummarmiutun, these were easily transported, non-permanent structures. Martha Harry's mother told here how they were built:

Ishmael Alunik remembers using such a structure near the Babbage River, in northern Yukon:

Emmanuel Felix describes when the *qaluurvik* were used and how they were built:

Dora Malegana remembers using *qaluqvik* around Qaiñiuqvik (Clarence Lagoon) and describes the kind of covers that were put on the frame:

When my mom tells me stories she says long ago they used to go up just dog-pack. And when they find long willows, they would gather them together and tie them and make a round frame hut-like, covered with moss. They called them *qaluqvik*. They say there is no mosquitoes inside the moss house. It must be dark, you know? There is no little light even I guess. They say they make a place like that to sleep. Just put long willows and put them together and put moss on them. They say they are not bothered by mosquitoes inside. (MH91-16B-2)

Used to be a Willow Creek above Niaquilk. Some place around there. When people used to go and set snares for ptarmigan. But there is nothing [now]. I don't think they never had big camps. They just used some kind of willow houses. [...] *Qaluqvik*! Yes! That kind, yes. You bend willow like that and tie the top and you just put sod on it. It's made out of moss from the ground, green moss. [...] That's the one that we tried one time. Me and Sam Arey we were up close to Babbage River, right on the Babbage, little bit. And we had one made out of willows and they put *uvuq* (moss) about that thick right around it. Really warm in there. So we put some kind of sand [...] and we heated rocks. Really make them really hot because it's cold at night. So it keep it warm all night. (IA91-14A:19)

Long ago, they carried the frames all the time. When they were camping they just set up the frames. [...] They used them in summer. My uncle Norman Saputaittuq used *qaluurvik* even in Imaryuit (Husky/Eskimo Lakes), he just covered it with tent or tarp in springtime. (EF91-5B:4)

[...] *Qaluurvik*, they used them when they're moving around in summertime and late winter. Like springtime they used *qaluurvik* when they can't use the *nappaqta* (sod houses). [...] They used them quite a bit when it's not so cold. (EF91-5B:5)

Our *qaluqvik* was a big one where me and my mother would work on seals and prepare meat for us. [...] We used to make dry meat in it. [...] We had tents like that all the time. You don't even need a shelter, even when there is big wind. With caribou skins, or even old cloth, whatever you could put. With caribou skins, we made them get rotten and when they had thin fur, we used them for covers. They put bear skin over it too. When I got older, I didn't like to have cover with bear skin any more. I always used mostly old cloth in summertime, when it got warm outside, with blankets too. (DB91-21B:6-7)



Inuvialuk man in 1901 with two qalupit in the background.

(NAC, PA- 135821)

Lily Lipscombe clarified that when the willow frame was used inland and covered with caribou skin, her mother called it *itchaligit*. However, when used along the coast and covered with canvas, her mother would call it *qaluqvik*. One should note that her mother was originally from the Kuvuk area in Alaska and that both terms are used to describe similar structures (see Corbin 1974:142).

Right here we always used canvas tents, but up there in the spring, where we spent spring, up in those lakes, we used (...) those round *itchaligit*, we called them, round tent. (...) *itchaligit* is a round shaped tent, raised with long willows tied together. It's real round, and the tarp used to be made out of caribou hides, tanned, salted dry caribou hides with the fur off, you know, and soft and sewed together. Sewed so fine that even rain water don't go through them because it's treated with some oil. (...) For that kind of tarp, for home used tarp, the oil was bear oil, because bear oil don't get that rancid smell as that other kind of oil, like seal. (LL91-25A:8)

[...] The only reason my mom used to call it *itchaligit*, I guess is because of the hide[...] because you see *itcha* means "home-made tarp". And then, if we did use the same thing here in our summer camp, we'd used our canvas and that's when she used to call it *qaluqvik* [...] maybe because of the type of braces. [...] Maybe that's why she called it when we were at this spot, *qaluqvik*, and because out of respect for my Dad, because of his dialect. (LL91-25A:9)

## Domestic Activities

### Food Preparation and Storage

#### *Drying Meat and Storing Food*

Food preparation was discussed primarily by the women we interviewed. Drying meat and food storage in oil containers were activities ensuring food supplies for the cold winter months. Sarah Meyook recounts which meat was dried and how the food was stored when she stayed with her grand-parents at Shingle Point in the late 1920s and early 1930s:

After whaling at Nlaqunnan (West Whitefish Station) they moved down to Tapqaq (Shingle Point) for fishing. They would make big teepee. [...] And when they made dry fish and when they got whale, they dried and smoked the skin of whale. When making them they used a big wood, a smooth one. They made whale skin dry and dry meat and muktuk, raw muktuk. (SM90-3B:4)

My grandparents used to live here (Tapqaq) long ago. [...] When there was caribou, we would make dry meat. We would put them inside the teepee here at Tapqaq. In August when there was seal, they would get some and they dry the meat too. They put (meat) fibers into the seal blubber, store them and leave them inside the teepee. These were very good! They stored dry meat and dry fish in wooden barrels. That was how my grandparents had their food. It was very good! The wooden barrels are very good to give a good taste to the food.

With the whale stomach they made containers in which they put whale oil and dry fish together. Then they would put them in a wooden box so it didn't break. That's how they used to live here at Tapqaq. That is how my grandparents made [a] living. (SM90-19B:5)

Also with these *ugruk* (bearded seals), we made dry meat out of them. The *ugruk* doesn't spoil right away when it's dry, just like a whale dry meat. When a whale meat is dry it doesn't spoil. Those are good, they make good dry meat.

When they get seal for us, we worked with the sealskin. Cutting it between the skin and the fat and then we would turn it inside out and then we dried the skin. That kind of container they call it *avataaqpuk*. We would fill it with food. That is what we stored our food in. We would put all kinds of food in them, like dry meat, dry fish and when you are hungry, it's there and it never leaks. That is how we lived long ago.

Also from the whale's throat, they would put air in it and dry it to make a bag for whale meat cut in small pieces, the ones you smoked. They put them in that bag or container that they make out of whale's throat. *Kalitaaq* is good food when you prepare it before it gets too dry. First you cut them and then put them in a container that they made. (SM91-19B:4)

Martha Harry also gives details on the different containers that were used to store food and reports on how women processed the whales:

The only barrels are the wooden barrels. [...] They would only use the intestine of a whale or dry seal skin for their container, for the whale oil. That's how they stored the whale oil, that's how I saw them. [...] I saw them when they make their whale oil. [...]

Once they pull the whale up the women get to work with it. All of the whale, everything, even the back bone of the whale they hang up. Some they used for dog food, even the head. They skin and they cook some of the head. I guess only the inside of the whale they would throw away. The ones the dogs don't eat, that's all they leave. Further down they put them and when north wind blows, when they think it wouldn't go near them, they put lots of wood with them and burn them. The intestine of a whale. They don't throw them in the water, they burn them. (MH91-16A:9)

*Kuchiqchlaq* means when it drips, you rendering it and it drips. And what my mom used to do, she used to skin, if that's the kind of bear oil she wants, like there's different kinds of bear here. If it's one of those big brown bears, it's when they usually *kuchiqchlaq* (render) the fat. Like when they skin it, the brown bear, they skin it right along the meat, between the meat and the fat. She'll make a stage like this, facing this way. She'll tie each of the legs and the head and everything. Then she'll make a fire long ways from it, so that the fire heats that oil. And then she'll have a trough. And the trough will be made out of a bear hide itself, dried, and it be sinking so that it catches the oil when it drip. (LL91-25A:13)

Oil from sea mammals was not the only type used by the Inuvialuit. Oil was also rendered from bears for consumption and, as we have seen, to waterproof tent covers made of skin. It was also boiled with leaves and applied on dog faces to protect them from mosquitoes (see LL91-26A:8). Lily Lipscombe recalls how her mother rendered oil from grizzly bears:



Women butchering befuqs whales in the late 1910s or 1920s.

(SDP, Martha Harry Col.)

#### *Stages and Ice Houses*

Remains of old stages can still be seen along the Yukon coast and at Sheep Creek. Stages were built to protect food against animals such as dogs, wolverines and bears. Sarah Meyook reports here how stages were built:

They had made a wooden stage with trees. They made it high. They always made stage like that and they cut tin cans in half and nail them on to the logs so when they (dogs or bears) tried to climb on it they wouldn't reach it. That was how my father-in-law made a stage with these old time fuel oil cans. [...] And he put them on the tree so that if a bear tries to climb, he would slide down. With that kind of stage our food was never touched. But we've seen bear tracks after. So, he (the bear) must have tried to climb up but he couldn't because he'd slide down. (SM90-1B:5)

Lily Lipscombe recalls how her father placed the different types of dry meat of the stages when they lived at Arrakvik (Roland Bay):

One (stage) was for dry fish and one was for dry meat. And underneath there, there'll be big tarp where he kept the real real dry meat. And up on top there is where he kept the not so dried meat, but still just to leave it there to dry it by itself. (LL91-24B:2)

This was the ice house here. My Dad used to put 12 to 15 caribou in there for winter. And in this part underneath, there's a section chiseled out for fish, so the rooms of the fish and the caribou don't mix. He used to put lots of fish in there. [...] Mostly whitefish and herring. [...] Arctic char were kept down at the point there, because the transportation to bring them up here was too long of a thing [and] because by the time we get them up here they'll be all soft. So we put them away right away, down at the ice house. There used to be a ice house over there, on this side. (LL91-24A:2)

While all this is happening, we got a lot of half dried, or I guess, you'd call it "aged meat" today. Like he'll hang the hind quarters and everything, and bring them and put them into that ice house on one side. And then he'll clean the area where the old fish were. [...] What was left of the old fish would be used for the dogs. And if there's anything that would be left if the dogs don't eat it, they'll take it to that little island, so that the seagulls and that would prey on it. So it's not wasted. Nothing was never ever wasted.

And then, when there's too much of that, what he'll do is, he'll take it either to that little point over there, or to that point way down here. [...] And so that's where he'll dig a pit, over there. And he'll put all this in the pit. And then he'll put wood first, and then he'll put the moss over it, then he'll finally put a, what you call it, gravel over it, just so that it's accessible in wintertime to open. Enough so that an animals can smell it. He used that for bait, for animals. [...] (LL91-24A:2-3)

They were really strict and very respectful to each other to use words the way they word thing, the way they do things, the way they prepare life, things in general, as to which culture is who's, you know. Like when we live here, a lot of the food is prepared here, is prepared according to the way my Dad would like it, because it's along the coast. Like the way she prepares fish up in the spring camp is not the way she prepares it here, it's different, The way she cuts it and the angle of the cut and everything, it's different, it's Nunataqmiut cut. Nunataqmiut means "inland people". [...] That's why I say whenever my Dad was eating something made especially

The presence of permafrost along the Yukon North Slope allowed the Inuvialuit to built ice houses. These structures were used as fridges to store meat that could be consumed later during the winter months. Lily Lipscombe instructs us on how her father organized the meat in the ice house and on the fact that nothing was wasted:

Preparation of food varied depending if one had been brought up as a Taruirmiut (people of the sea) or as a Nunamiut (people of the land). Such a contrast is reported by Lily Lipscombe who was raised by grandparents of those two different cultural backgrounds. Her grandmother was from the land and her grandfather from the sea. The structural dichotomy between the "people of the sea" and the "people of the land" as discussed by Lily Lipscombe corresponds amazingly well to early anthropological views on the issue (e.g., Spencer 1959). She discusses some of those cultural differences, many of which were related to food:



for him, he'd ask me "Will you eat with me?", when he knows my Mom is not gonna eat with him, because she thinks it's gross. And when my Dad thinks it's gross and my Mom's eating, my Mom always said "Will you eat with me?", you know. (LL91-25B:10)

There was really differences. [...] Like just the way they prepare things was different. The way she cuts, for instance we have two types of char here, but one char my Dad don't like and my Mom likes it because it comes from a lake. [...] And that *iqalukpik* (arctic char) is a char that is a real delicacy to the Qikiqtaqrukmiut, I mean the Tariumiut. [...] And my Mom would hang it and prepare it a certain way or cook it a certain way, And *iqaluagpak* (land locked char) is caught only in the springtime and my Dad would never eat that. It's too pink like, it's too colored and he don't like it. He'd eat it for my mom [but] fried it like she would never eat it. (LL91-25B:11-12)

### Food Taboo

The only Inuvialuk to mention the subject of food taboos before puberty was Lily Lipscombe. However, since we did not ask questions on food taboos, other Inuvialuit may well have additional information on the subject. One has also to keep in mind that although born in the late 1940s, Lily Lipscombe was raised along the Yukon North Slope by her very traditional grandparents. She explains some of the food taboos:

[...] This is mainly for younger people. As you get older you overcome those. You're old enough, I suppose, to deal with the powers if they were to come out, the spiritual powers, that they believed in. Like until I was ten years old, I was not allowed to have here, well we lived over on the other side, I was not allowed to michuqaq (dip in oil). I was not to allowed to a use bear oil with seal dry meat, you know. That just wasn't allowed, you know, things like that, little things. You had to be old enough.

Same way I was not allowed to [eat] parts of the skin of *aviq* (walrus) along the neck especially, they called it *qachiglaq*. They boil that and it's really thick skin, where it's always wrinkly. They scrap the hair of it and shine it on a hot fire and they boil that. And until you've become of age or puberty years I suppose, you're not allowed to eat that if you're a girl. [...] There was restrictions for boys, but I really don't know what there were. [...]

The beliefs from the coast didn't come from my Mom, they come from my Dad because he was from the coast. Polar bear, I wasn't allowed to eat polar bear's feet until I was of age again. [...] Then I was, because it's a real delicacy to eat polar bear's feet or bear's feet [...]. And I wasn't allowed to eat [...] polar bear's kidneys. I wasn't allowed to eat that and the flank along the back, along the back here, that part there. And that's all.

[...] There's lots of parts of seals that I couldn't eat. It was really stupid because I just loved it. (laughter) In fact, if I got caught sneaking, I'll really get strapped, you know. [...] A lot of the inside of seals weren't allowed for a young lady to eat. That's a really hard one to explain because, you know how flippers they got so many joints and that. Like my Mom would say, "You can't eat this part, but you could eat that part, and you can't eat that part, but you could eat this part". And I can't, even me now, I'm really ashamed to say this, but I can't, I wouldn't even figure out which part I ate and which part I couldn't, today if I had to teach a young lady. (LL91-25A:14-15)

*Making Fire and Roasting Food*

Jean Tardiff was told by her grandmother how people used to make fire before they had access to matches. She relates this story and adds information on how her grandparents roasted parts of caribou during summer months:

Long ago while there was no lighter or matches my grandmother always told us about it. She said they just went some yards from Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island) to find something to make fire. They would also gather those little cottons that grow there [...]. They kept them and use them to make fire with when they found some flint there. When they wanted to make fire, these would burn easily. They would strike the flints and the sparks would make fire. That's how they made fire before the matches came. [...] Even in the ocean down there you could find them. And you pile up those white wood and just do this and it burns. They pick lots of those my grandparents. [...] I guess they would keep them away. Before the whalers came.

They would cook and roast outside. There was no pots long ago. [...] They would roast, that's the only way they eat cooked meals. They would cook everything outside, even the caribou heads. Long ago, my grandparents were used to eat that way in the summertime even when there were pots to cook with. They never used them, they would cook outside all the time, just roasting food. Then that's how they ate. It really tastes good to eat when the caribou heads are roasted. They cooked them with the fur on and when the skin or fur is cracking you put it away from the fire. It's very good and it tastes very good and juicy. (JT90-16B:4)

## Getting Water

Archaeologists working in the Arctic often attempt to determine at which season a site was occupied by examining its proximity to fresh water. The underlined logic is that if a site is not located near a lake or small creek, then it had to be occupied during wintertime when people can drink melted snow or ice. In a recent article on a prehistoric Inuvialuit site located near the mouth of the Horton River (N.W.T.), Morrison (1990b:53) argued that the site was occupied during winter because the sod houses "would have been unbearably close and wet during the summer", and that "even more compelling is the total absence of drinking water within a one-hour walk of the site".

Regarding Morrison's argument, we talked with Bessie Wolki, who along with her husband and family, had lived at the site in question. We asked her where they got their water during the summer. The answer was quick and her face looked rather surprised by such a question: "We dig a well!" In fact, the more interviews we did, the more we realized that wells were also commonly built along the Yukon coast. It is quite possible that such structures have not been identified by archaeologists or that they have been confused with the remains of ice houses or even those of storage pits. Lily Lipscombe describes how her father would build a well:

[A well] is dug deep down. You dig it deep down, you haul big rocks from down there. And then in springtime, we'll have fresh water there. It used to be really big. But we used to have edges on it with sticks. Edges on so that it be no debris flying into it. [...] You dig it down to the permafrost. Every year my Dad would take a chisel in the springtime, he'll get some ice and put some ice in it. Rain water and permafrost would melt and then we'll have fresh water. But we had this around it so that no dogs can go in there.

[...] When he first makes it, he puts rocks on it because as it melts, the rocks are really heavy, they sink faster. But what he does is, he'll get rocks from down there (seashore), but he'll wash the rocks with fresh water. So that it wouldn't be salty taste in there. [...] That is why in the springtime he always dug a new one, dug it over again. Because in the fall, September, when it's blowing and wintertime when you get snow blowing from the open crack, you know it's always water here in the wintertime when it opens. And then, the wind would blow, the salt, snow and that would get in that. (LL91-25B:3-4)

## Working on Skins

Traditional women's work among the Inuit is associated with making clothes and other skin items such as tent covers and dog packs. The skin of bearded seals were used to make ropes while caribou sinew was used in the manufacture of snowshoes (see SM90-3B:6). Women had to follow certain taboos on how to sew properly so that the hunter wearing the clothes would have good look while hunting. Sarah Meyook explains:

When we sewed for men, we always watched our hair. We tried not to put hair on our sewing. When we put hair on our sewing the person hunting might get cramps. They always tried to keep their hair away from their sewing. Long ago, they always had long hair. They told us "Watch your hair when sewing because the hunters get cramps when they have hair on their clothes ." Gee! Those elders knew a lot about living! (SM90-3B:6)

My mom got caribou skins ready in the spring for the covers for our tents. [...] In the spring the caribou fur gets thin you know. [...] She would make them for dog packs too. She always got ready like that with the dog packs. Also with sealskin. That is how we lived long ago.

In the spring, when we finished getting enough caribou we would go again hunting with dog packs, this time for our clothes. That is how it was done. When caribou skins were nice and thin they made good fur parka and fur for top pants and also for under our bedding. (DM90-13B:4)

We never used rubber boots. [...] Also we had seal skin shoes when we were out of town. We never tried to buy shoes like now. We always made them ourselves. We used *ugruk* (bearded seal) skin or if none, we used whale skin. We would make soles out of *qilalugaq* (beluga whale) skin when we made *kammig* (boots). Whale skin is very thin for soles but they blocked it with sticks on the ground to dry it. [...]

They taught us how to chew on the skin to make it soft. Like us, we didn't know about white man way. First, we chewed the skin for sole and then we soaked it in water. When it was well soaked, we stretched it out and cut it out. When we finished cutting it out, we would make pleats on heels and toes. We would chew pleats maybe for 15 minutes, I guess. When you use your own teeth it doesn't take long. They are not like these pliers we use now. With teeth, when you chewed pleats, you did them right away and with a scrubber you shape it to your size. That's how we had shoes. (SM90-3B:5-6)

Dora Malegana remembers her mother working on caribou skins that were obtained in the spring to make tent covers, dog packs and clothes:

Women would use their teeth to soften the skin especially when making boots, as Sarah Meyook did herself:

Sarah Meyook also remembers that her grandfather had a raincoat made of bearded seal intestines:



Inuit in traditional clothing at Herschel Island, 1890s. (AC, Springer Col. P7517-179)

I knew what kind of raincoat my grandad had. It was not white man made. You know that part of the *ugruk* (bearded seal) intestines, when you take the top of the *ugruk* and there is oil? So you cut it in small pieces and put it in a plate of oil. When it smells you can eat it. And then the intestine you blow it into a balloon. It's kind of long, that's the kind of rain coat my grandad had. It was made into a parka cover. Never got water inside because they were narrow strips that you sewed together. [...] It was nice to see, it was not like a [modern] raincoat. (SM90-3B:6)

Little information about original fashions worn by Inuit women before they adopted the style of clothes used in Alaska is known. Drawings (see Pettit 1887: 247) done in the 1860s and pictures (Figure 6.4) taken during the 1890s and early 1900s show the Indigenous populations had their own style of clothing and hairdo. Emmanuel Félix heard from his father that Inuit women used to wear hoods that were unattached to their parka.

This description is reminiscent of the "hoodless" parka of the Dorset people (see comments by Hickey 1986:94), supposed to have been the first Inuit to populate the Arctic and whose artifacts are found mostly in Central and Eastern Arctic.

Their parka long time ago was high up on the sides. The hood was separated from the body, only for women. [...] My dad always told me the story. Around the face it got no fur just way back from the face, different hood. [...] They probably made hoods to be fixed by themselves. [...] Around here they don't have packing hoods. They do but the hood covers it. Hood way down here. That's the way my dad tells me about them. [...] Hoods are shoulder length. (EF90-5B:6-7)

## 7. Social Life

Besides the major settlement at Herschel Island which had about 100 local residents in the mid-1910s (Ingram and Dobrowolsky 1989:80), small agglomerations of three to six Inuvialuit families could be found along the Yukon coast at Aqpayuatchiaq (Running River), Tapqaq (Shingle Point), Kiññaq (King Point), Nlaqulik, Ikpikyuk (Stokes Point), Itqiliqpiik (Whale Bay), Qafgialuk (Ptarmigan Bay), Nunaluk, Qamaqaaq, Yuuqyaaq and Qaiñiluqvik (Clarence Lagoon). According to Inuvialuit oral history, Tikraq (Kay Point) had been a major settlement before the arrival of the whalers in the 1890s (see LL91-25A:3). Social life was thus limited to one's neighbours among which were often relatives. However, in summertime people would gather to fish and hunt beluga whales at Nlaqunan (West Whitefish Station) and at Shingle Point. From the early 1900s to the mid-1930s, many Inuvialuit would also go to Herschel Island to trade their furs. Major social events such as square dances and church services would take place on the island at that time. In this chapter, we present some aspects of the social life along the Yukon North Slope as remembered by Inuvialuit elders.

### Toys and Games

The Inuvialuit we interviewed had very fond memories of games they played during their childhood. As Martha Harry recalls:

When I first remember, I used to have a doll. I guess my mother would make it out of cloth and stuff it with something. That is how I guess she let me have a doll. I really liked it. [...] Then when we reached Tapqaq (Shingle Point), us little girls, we always start looking for those rocks for our dolls, you know the heavy ones that you could pack with a belt on? When we put our heads down, they would bang our heads with them. (laughter) That is how it was when we were children. Well we didn't have anything for toys. Only ourselves, with little logs we made our little log houses and with rocks we find for our dishes. (MH91-16B:1)

When all the work was done with the fish and other work, or when the waves were too big, we all played "catching ball". We had so much fun that way! The young boys and girls would play. Us, who were small children, we just watched. (SM90-19B:4-5)

When we were young children, we played around here with the girls and boys. They would always be playing with a ball and with

Sarah Meyook tells the kind of games children and adults played at Shingle Point when she was a child there in the 1920s:

Social Life

Sarah Mayook, Kathleen Hansen and Dora Malegana recall playing with a ball made of seal or caribou skin, or even of whale cartilage:

ring games. After they finished their work, they would put a stick up and play ring games. There was four persons in a game, two sets of partners and they had so much fun! (SM90-19B:5)

Long ago we made ball with seal skin. We sewed the seal skin first. This was how we made ball. We picked the black and white pieces, we would say that is for our ball and we filled them with something. Then we played ball around here. We didn't buy balls in those days. My grandmother showed me how to make ball. (SM90-20A:3)

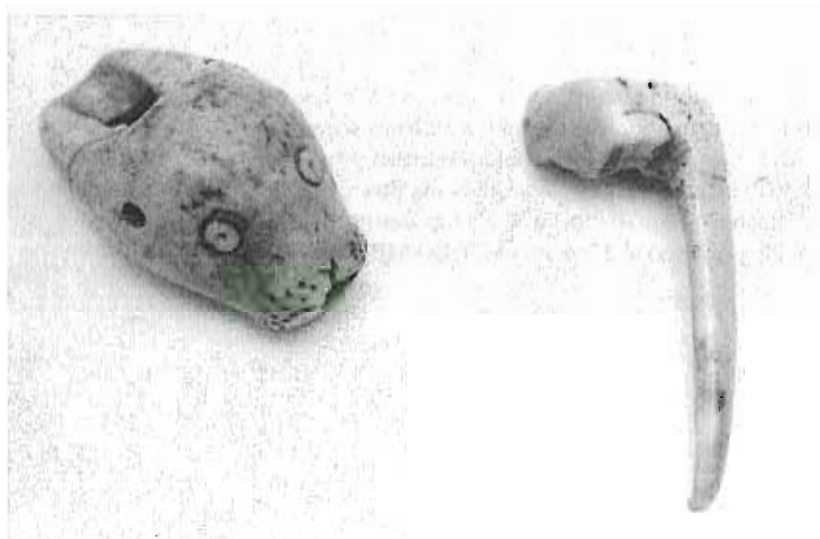
Also with whales. The top of whales is just like rubber, a hard one. They dried it and made ball from it. It fits just on your hand. In those days, the men were always partners and the women would be together. They would try to grab the ball from each other. (KH90-20A:4)

"*Aufijuu!*" they'd say. They say that when teasing and if you had the ball you throw it up and say "*Aufijuu!*" They would try to put oil on the top of their heads. They were always wrestling a lot when they played, just like fighting. (SM90-20A:4)

Even with caribou skin they would play and say "*Aufijuu!*". We were always playing ball over that soft moss on the hill. You can run fast on that. Sometimes it was on the ice. Long ago that was the only game we had to play out. (DM90-20A:4)

Game with sticks were also played, as Kathleen Hansen remembers :

And *gaataagat* ("all full"). [...] You make skinny sticks and you put them on one palm of your hand and throw it up and try to catch many as you can. Sometimes you catch lots and win! You counted them every time you had your turn. When it was same score, both lost.[...] They kept trying to the last one until one person had all the sticks. And if they had one more stick to go, they would try to catch it with their baby finger. Sometimes you were lucky to catch it. (KH90-20A:5)



Drag line handle/toggle carved as a seal head with inlaid eyes.

(Yukon Government)

Ivory carving of walrus head (one tusk broken off).



On Sundays almost everyone was there. There was lots of boats in these days. They would all go into the cove of Tapqaq (Shingle Point) for church service. Almost everyone would go. Mr. Shepherd and Thomas Umauq were the ministers there. After the service was over, they would go to Umauq's house to eat. After eating and everything is done they would all go home this way.

On Sundays they never did anything or worked, the people long ago. There was no needle that day; that's the way the people were long ago. They told us we could work after Sunday. That is why sometimes I wish to do something but I just listen. (SM90-19B:6)

[My husband] found me when we used to go for Christmas somewhere. He was from Alaska. He was a reindeer herder. [...] We used to go to Alaska for Christmas, that's when we meet and got married. They all wanted me to do so! In them days, it was not your choice to marry who you wanted. So, I just had to marry anyone, even if I didn't want him, I had to marry him. [...] (DM90-13B:10)

[My father] married my mom when she was 12 years old. Even not too long ago, after I came back from school [...] they were still getting married at 12 years old. Fourteen years old, that was old if you're marrying a 14 years old! Now, there, they go to court when a woman is 17 or 16 [because] it's too young. Those days, they're all getting married at 12 years old. (JJ90-32B-3)

## Church Services

By the late 1910s, most Inuvialuit had been converted to Christianity and church services were an important event where people would pray, sing and meet each other. As noted in chapter 4, the sabbath was particularly respected. Sarah Meyook remembers people going to Shingle Point in the late 1920s and early 1930s for the church services:

Marriages were performed at Herschel Island when a minister was in residence or when ministers visited the island. Traditionally, marriages were arranged by the parents. Dora Malegana explains that this was still the case in the 1920s when she got married:

Typically, the women married quite young, probably after puberty. Jimmy Jacobson makes the following comments on the age of the bride:

## Giving Birth

During our interviews with Inuvialuit elders, we noticed that women remembered very well when and where their children were born. Furthermore, they integrated stories of giving birth with specific places we visited. It seems that women kept a better track of time because they could relate specific events to when their children were of a given age. A place was remembered because of the child who was born there. For example, Dora Malegana referred to Qaŋgialuk (Ptarmigan Bay) as the place where one of her daughters was born:

My parents had a two units house with Suluk and his family at Qaŋgialuk (Ptarmigan Bay). At that time we were at Niaqulik. So I came there to my mother when the time was near. My mom used to deliver babies. My dad was away hunting. It was the first time my husband was with me when I had a baby. Other times he was away. Now, when I had Lena, he was here. He couldn't keep still so he went out. After my baby was born we returned to Niaqulik. [...]

We heard about the name Qaŋgialuk when we came to Aklavik. It didn't have any name in English then. They never call it "Ptarmigan Bay", not even then. I used to say that it was "the place where Lena was born". (DM90-24B:7-8)

Taboos were associated with giving birth in the period before conversion to Christianity. Stefansson (1919:133) noted that women at time of childbirth drank only snow water. He also described the Nunatamiut tradition of confining the women to a tent after giving birth (also discussed in Anderson et al. 1977, and Kisautaq 1981) but insisted that it was not the case for the indigenous Inuvialuit. Hope Gordon, whose father came from Point Hope (Alaska), tells a similar story about women's seclusion after giving birth:

Someone is in to have baby. They would leave you even in very cold weather. [...] From long ago they are like that, even in a snow *iglu* (house) they would leave you to have your baby alone. [...] That was their way of life, from their old way of life that they had from long ago. If someone had a baby, she'd be left alone for a week. After she was ready to go home. Only the husband could visit her just few times and watched for her. Even if there was snow somewhere in the *iglu* and it was cold.

Infanticide sometimes happened in traditional Inuit culture. Hope Gordon comments on the issue:

And some people too, they would throw the baby away and some would keep them. [...] Or they would let them freeze. [...] They had children too often, not even a year in between for some of them. So they didn't want to take the other baby away from feeding from her or his mom. So they just threw the baby away. Well, long ago, there was no white man things or anything.

Women were helped during the delivery by relatives or by women who had become particularly knowledgeable on the matter. Jean Tardiff recalls the first time she had a baby:

[...] my baby had a big stomach, and she cried a lot. Uqalisuk's wife was my nurse that time. When she came, she said "Hang on to the afterbirth, you let her get air into her stomach every time she cried." So she pressed her stomach gently until most of the air was gone and then she cut it. It was half moon at the time that Florence was born (1937). We never cut her cord right away and this is why she had a big stomach. [...]

I was alone. I was staying at my parent's house but they both didn't know. And Uqalisuk's wife really scolded them, "You should have gone to get me in the beginning." Uqalisuk's family, the Qanauruaq and the Inglangasuk families were staying at Itqiliqplik (Whale Bay).

Uqalisuk's wife used to be so poor, but she wasn't poor anymore after she cut the cord of my baby and the baby was fine. After that, my husband got some white man grub. She just wanted flour, so we gave them some sugar too and some oats. She was very thankful. (1190-25A:3)



Inuit Children, about 1920.

(BDP, MH-23)

### Adoption

Adoption was common among the Inuvialuit, as it was (and still is) the case with other Inuit groups, particularly between relatives. The adopted children know the identity of their natural parents. In some cases, the child would go back to his/her original family. This happened to Martha Harry, and she tells here the circumstances of her adoption:

My real parents were Simon Anaqtuq and Alice and my adopted parents were Frank Itqialuk and Lena Uqilalq. Those were my adopted parents. But Simon and my adopted father Frank were brothers. Uqilalq and Itqialuk, my adopted parents, never had children of their own. But Alice and Simon had children. When I was born Simon said "Let's give her to my brother so he could have a little daughter" he told his wife. So they gave me to them then, to Uqilalq and them.

Well, long ago they don't write things down they just say to each other "you could have this" that's all they say. And when someone dies with lots of children, their relatives would just take them, just like that. That's how they are. Those were my parents and I was adopted. I was born from my mother Alice and Simon. Then they give me up to these people. Then later on, somehow I went back to Simon and them, yes that's it. (MH91-16B:3)

## Inuvialuit and Indian Relations

The Inuvialuit who occupied the Yukon coast, and particularly the Nunatarmiut who had migrated through the Old Crow Flats from inland Alaska, developed a friendship with the Gwich'in of Old Crow. Dora Malegana relates the first time she met Indians:

First time I saw Indians, it was really smelling smoke, really! You know that was Caroline Moses and her grandad. She started talking in Loucheux (Gwich'in) to Annie Joe (Inglangasuk) and then she started looking at Jean. When I looked at Annie, she was talking in Loucheux really good like this.

These Indians made handbag with caribou legs, they looked so nice. This guy started taking meat, caribou dry meat, even fish. We started eating, it was really good. That's the way the Indians have food, they make handbag out of caribou legs and they keep their food in there. You know, they used to call this a bag where they keep food. A food bag that they put around where they're tied. They put moose hide under, really nice, smelling good, dry meat, dry fish, fat moose. Those dry meat were fat! Maybe they were caribou. That was so good.

Me and my cousin Peter Joe, we went out and we started walking home. We were both small, me and Peter Joe. Not too big, maybe six years old, seven years old. We said "Gee! Really smelled smoke those people. Gee! It was so smoky, smelled like smoke!"

My mom said "that's the way they live, that's way we're gonna live too". Yeah, our parents told us not to talk like that, so we stopped talking like that. We were glad too that we ate. That was also the first time we heard about the way they hunt muskrats. You know how they skin muskrats? They clean it so good, even the meat part in the back is just clean. (DM90-14A:1)

Dora Malegana remembers that her father was able to speak in Loucheux (Gwich'in) and Fred Inglangasuk tells that Peter Moses, a Gwich'in from Old Crow, could speak in Inuvialuktun:

My dad used to talk in Loucheux too. We stayed up there so much that he learned their language. I wonder why he never married an Indian. He's a Kuvangmiut. [...] Old Harry Inuklqtuk, Anaqtuq and my dad they're cousins. They came from long ways. (DM90-14A:4)

They say long ago Indians come from up that way, from Old Crow. They came through there to go Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island) for shopping. [...] Sometimes some of them came by Firth River. Some of them, they came by the mountains. I've seen them myself too. Sometimes they go through by Niaqulik those Indians. But where they call it Itqiliqlik, long before us, they go through by there. [...] Since we've been there, they went through there few times, these Indians. So that is why they called it Itqiliqpik (*Itqiliq* means "Indian"). (F191-23A:4)

At Itqiliqpik (Whale Bay) that's where we stayed. That's where the Indian trail is to go to Herschel Island all year round. [...] One



Inuvialuit drum dance at Fort McPherson, 1892.

(NAC, E. Taylor C-7519)

Indian I know was Peter Moses. He speaks in Inuvialuktun, he always tries to speak Inuvialuktun. And he also talked Inuvialuktun language to my grandparents at Nlaqulik. When they (Indians) came down by Nlaqulik in the evening, they built a fire across from there. From Nlaqulik, my granddad and all my relatives could see them. They put their dogs on harness and brought back those Indians. They were Peter Moses and them. My granddad always spoke to them in Inuvialuktun language. When they spoke Inuvialuktun language it was lots of fun.

[...] I guess from long ago they speak the language both Inuvialuit and Indian. They would say "qaunna". That's what they used all the time. They would make sign to each other too, I guess, to understand.[...] That Indian Peter Moses could really talk like our own language. My granddad and him would talk all the time like that and they would really laugh sometimes while talking. It was so much fun then. But me, I never heard about them. I never talked like that. (F190-5B:8)

Fred Inglangasuk explains that his grandparents lived in Old Crow and that his mother and aunts could speak Gwich'in very well. He also mentions Sarah Lennis (the mother of Persis Gruben), a Gwich'in who married an Inuvialuit and who could speak excellent Inuvialuktun:

[In Old Crow] my grandfather fish for a trader in the summertime and make dry fish for him. I don't know how long we stayed up there maybe year round. They stayed up there before my time. I guess my mother and her other sisters they were raised up in Old Crow. They were kids when up there. My mother could talk in Indian language just like Caroline Moses. It was just like me and you talking. Just the same, telling stories. [...] Like Lennie Inglangasuk's wife, she spoke better [Inuvialuktun] than me and you. Her name was Sarah. She spoke good and Laura Martin too. (F190-6A:1)

Stories of Inuvialuit and Indian relations were not always friendly ones. Inuvialuit oral tradition mentions the stealing of women and battles between both groups. Sarah Meyook was told a story by her aunt that explained how peace was made along the Yukon coast between the Eastern Arctic people and Indians. It seems that the story is being told from a Nunatarmiut perspective and that the Eastern Arctic people (or Qangmallik) were in fact Inuvialuit who occupied the Yukon coast. The event happened probably at the end of the last century when the Nunatarmiut had already migrated to the area and trading goods could be obtained at Herschel Island:

They say long ago, some eastern Arctic people were living at Aqpayuadjiaq (Running River) at one time. They were together with the Nunatarmiut and eastern people. This is a story my aunt Aggie told about when she was still alive. Over there, they had some visitors from up the mountains. They came with women with them. They were Indians. The eastern Arctic people had visitors, both men and women.

Then it happened that the eastern Arctic people stole two Indian women while the men didn't know. Four men that did that. Then they took the two (Indian) women far away somewhere. After that, they had them as wives. Later the Indians looked for the women but then never found them.

While there was a store at Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island), the Indians just stayed out and waited to go to the store. This is how it was told to me by my aunt Aggie. Then they hid them (the women) in front of the Inuit boats. So without someone watching for them, they all went to the store.

While this, the Indian followed behind the eastern people and they found the women and took them back and left there. They just took the two women and went back. So the ones that stole the women never found them, so they came back to Aqpayuadjiaq. They saw them right there. Then both sides put out their spears, bows and arrows and knives too! They were ready to fight. Because of the two Indian women, they were all ready for war.

But the chief of the Indians must have been thinking then. He said just to leave everything as it was, he said "maybe the Indians could marry the Inuit then". And soon as the chief said that, the war never started. Then, from there everything was settled. They went back with the rest of the Indians. That is the season they never had wars and everyone is allowed to marry with mixed races. They put away all their war stuff right there! This was my aunt's story. (SM90-20B:6)

## Conclusion

This oral history project provided an opportunity for Inuvialuit who had lived in along the Yukon North Slope and at Herschel Island to tell stories about their lives in these areas. This is not a unique event as other books have been published dealing with life in the Mackenzie Delta and the Yukon north slope written by Inuvialuit authors (Nuligak 1975, French 1976, 1991 and Thrasher 1976), or using Inuvialuit oral history (see GNWT 1991). The narratives presented in this report are only a fraction of all the material that was collected but it is hoped that it provides both Inuvialuit and non-Inuvialuit alike a chance to learn about the traditional use of the Yukon North Slope.

As we have seen, the original people who lived in the coastal area were called Tuyurmiat by the Inuvialuit of the Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula and probably spoke a language very similar to Siglitun. One group of Tuyurmiat lived on a permanent basis at Qikiqtaqruk (Herschel Island) and were referred to as the Qikiqtaqrukmiut. The traditional life of the Tuyurmiat changed rapidly following the arrival of white whalers who wintered at Herschel Island from the early 1890s to the mid 1900s. The whalers provided access to white man goods such as flour, tea and tobacco to the Inuvialuit but also carried with them dangerous diseases for which the local people had no immunity. In a few years three major epidemics tragically killed a major part of the Inuvialuit population. The whalers were followed by traders who encouraged the Inuvialuit to enter the trapping economy.

Reports of the bad moral influence of the whalers on the Inuvialuit incited Anglican ministers to visit Herschel Island at the end of the century. Conversions were at first minimal but by the end of the 1910s most of the population was converted. A mission school was later established at Shingle Point (Tapqaq) during the late 1920s. The church services soon became important and widely attended social gatherings. The traditional spiritual leaders, the shamans, were quickly replaced by Anglican laymen.

The whalers who came at the end of last century, also brought with them other groups of Inuit from coastal and inland Alaska. The latter group was called Nunatarmiut and those people are the ancestors of the Uummarmiut who now live in the Mackenzie Delta. Interviews with Inuvialuit elders have revealed that a group of Nunatarmiut started to emigrate from inland Alaska to the Old Crow Flats. This may have begun as early as the 1870s and was probably caused by a drastic decline of the caribou population. While living near Old Crow, these people developed friendships with the local Gwich'in. Interactions between Inuit and Indian families must have been more than sporadic since some people learned each others language. To our knowledge, such a cohabitation has not been previously recorded and demands more work, specifically from the Gwich'in's perspective.

The information gathered during the interviews also puts in question the allegation by Stefansson (1919) that the term Nunatarmiut was used for any inland group. Since the Siglit use the word Nunamiut more as a generic term to identify any inland people, one may wonder why they are



still using the term Nunatarmiut to refer to the group of people who emigrated from inland Alaska. It seems that this name pertains to the Nuatar River, the original area of the Nunatarmiut. More linguistic work with the Inuvialuit is required to confirm this hypothesis.

It would be too simplistic to group all the Inuvialuit who lived in the northern Yukon as one homogenous culture. The cultural differences between the people who exploited the coast and those who lived mainly inland have been supported by anthropologists (e.g., Spencer 1959) but questioned by others (e.g., Burch 1976). Interviews done with Lily Lipscombe, who was raised by very traditional grandparents belonging to each of the two groups, confirm that such a cultural dichotomy was indeed present. The cultural differences between her parents were not only linguistic but also semantic and behavioral. For example, the taboo regarding food consumption before puberty differed depending on whether it was learned from her father or from her mother.

Although subsistence resources fluctuated over the years along the Yukon North Slope, the people were able to occupy the area on a relatively permanent basis, with occasional excursions inland to hunt caribou and get fish. Contrary to the common interpretation of sod houses as winter dwellings, Inuvialuit elders reported that sod houses were often used year round along the Yukon coast and at Herschel Island. Furthermore, an accumulation of food surpluses stored in ice houses during the summer months also allowed for a permanent occupation of the coast. Other people, mostly inland dwellers from Alaska who later migrated into the northern Yukon, preferred to spend most of their time inland but would visit the coast during summer months. One may wonder if before the migration of the Nunatarmiut, other Inuvialuit groups also spent part of the year inland in the Old Crow Flats. Since we were not able to clarify this issue through our interviews with the Inuvialuit, archaeological investigations in the northern Yukon might be the only way to identify the presence of such groups.

The descriptions we gathered regarding subsistence activities served to illustrate the intimate knowledge the Inuvialuit have of their environment. Taking advantage of muddy water to hunt seal and digging wells to access drinkable water along the coast are only two examples. Gender roles, particularly in the case of Inuvialuit women, seem to have been more flexible than what is usually portrayed among Inuit cultures. Thus, many women were accomplished trappers and caribou and seal hunting was not the exclusive domain of the man.

Finally, the place names that were collected during the course of this project should demonstrate that the landscape was named by the Inuvialuit long before the arrival of non-Inuvialuit explorers, geologists and archaeologists. Although no Inuvialuit occupy the Yukon North Slope on a permanent basis anymore, it was obvious from the comments of the Inuvialuit who returned there with us, that they had a great sense of attachment to this land and that they, as they told us, "were back to their country".

It is hoped that other Inuvialuit oral history projects will be completed in the near future. An emphasis on autobiographies of single individuals in the format of those recently published among the Inupiat (e.g., Blackman 1989 and Bodfish 1991) is recommended, as they would foster a better understanding of life histories rather than a brief overview of one's experiences. The work is urgent, since in contrast to the landscape and the archaeological sites, Inuvialuit elders' testimony will not be available too much longer.

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## ABSTRACTS

1989 mingaanin 1993 mun aglaan Inuvialuit Social Development Program Katimayait Itdjustiit uqausikkun. Herschel Islandlu Yukon North Slope Inuvialuit Oral History Project sivunirait savaangini tapkuak makpiraaqutugit Inuvialuit nunangit qanuq atuqpagaanigta ilisimayaanginniglu Yukon nunangita kanangnam tungaaniittuaq. Auyami 1990, 1991 milu apiqsuutigait Inuvialuit innaalungit inuuniaqtuat Yukon nunanganni kanangnam tungaaniittuaq. Aklavik, Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuq Nunaptingni. Apiqsuutiyaait savaamikkun ukiumi auyami luuniin, anguniaqpangmatalu, igluliumiqtigun, niuvirmiqtigun tuniuqqaiviktigunlu inuusingatigun. Inuvialuit ukpirniaqtuatlu angaadtjuvinganik Anglicankut. Una makpiraaq quliaqtuq inuusinganik Inuvialuit qullartualiuamik una savaanun.

Tavrananin 1989-miin 1993 munaglan inilgann inuuniagusianik igliqtinnigat tapgua Inuvialuit Social Development Program-gut. Tamna hivunigiplugu Qikiqtaruk tamanalu targiuq Inuvialuit iniglaan inuuniagusianoik aglaktukraupluting Inuvialuit nunamiknik huli ilihimakgamiknik tamani targiumi. Tavra 1990-milu 1991 milu upinganani utuqqanaat quliaqtuagutivluta tamani targiumi tavranilu Aklavikmin, Inuvikmin, huli Tutuqaqtumin tamani Northwest Territories-mi. Ilitichugipluting tamakgunina qanuhigautinitnik niqinnaknaigutinitniklu qanuqlu huliqniuraqgumagata, qanuqlu tauqhignagviqqaqtulanu huhumagatalu inuuniaqmata ahin huli Inuvialuit ilaurgaqmata anayuliqiniqmi Anglican Mission-mi. Mana aglaknagat igliqtuaq quiliaqtuagutivluta Inuvialuit huli ilaupluting igliqtiitmatrun.

From 1989 to 1993 an oral history project was undertaken by the Inuvialuit Social Development Program. The main objective of the *Herschel Island and Yukon North Slope Inuvialuit Oral History Project* was to document Inuvialuit land use and knowledge of the Yukon north slope. During the summers of 1990 and 1991, interviews were conducted with Inuvialuit elders along the Yukon north slope and in Aklavik, Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk in the Northwest Territories. Information collected included topics such as seasons of occupation, means of subsistence, habitation structures, trading activities, social life and Inuvialuit involvement with the Anglican mission. This publication presents the major themes that emerged from interviews with the Inuvialuit involved in the project.

De 1989 à 1993 le Inuvialuit Social Development Program dirigea une étude sur la tradition orale des Inuvialuit. Le principal objectif du *Herschel Island and Yukon North Slope Inuvialuit Oral History Project* était de documenter l'utilisation et la connaissance du nord du Yukon par les Inuvialuit. Durant les étés 1990 et 1991, on interviewa des aînés Inuvialuit lors de visites dans le nord du Yukon ainsi qu'à Aklavik, Inuvik et Tuktoyaktuk dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest. L'information recueillie concerne entre autres, les saisons d'occupation du territoire, les moyens de subsistance, les structures d'habitation, les activités de la traite, la vie sociale et la participation des Inuvialuit à la mission anglicane. Cette publication présente les thèmes majeurs qui ressortirent des interviews avec les Inuvialuit participant au projet.

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