Grise Fiord
(Ausuittuq)

Qikiqtani Truth Commission
Community Histories ***1950–1975***

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to the Inuit of the Qikiqtani Region. May our history never be forgotten and our voices be forever strong.

About This Report (2024 Edition)

This report was originally produced by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) from reports drafted by the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) in 2010 and published by QIA in 2013. In 2024, QIA updated the reports by reinstating footnotes, correcting official place names, making minor corrections to grammar and syntax, correcting maps, and changing some images. The Inuktitut versions also added footnotes.

Foreword and Introduction texts from the 2013 edition are found at the end of the 2024 report to provide context about the work of the QTC.

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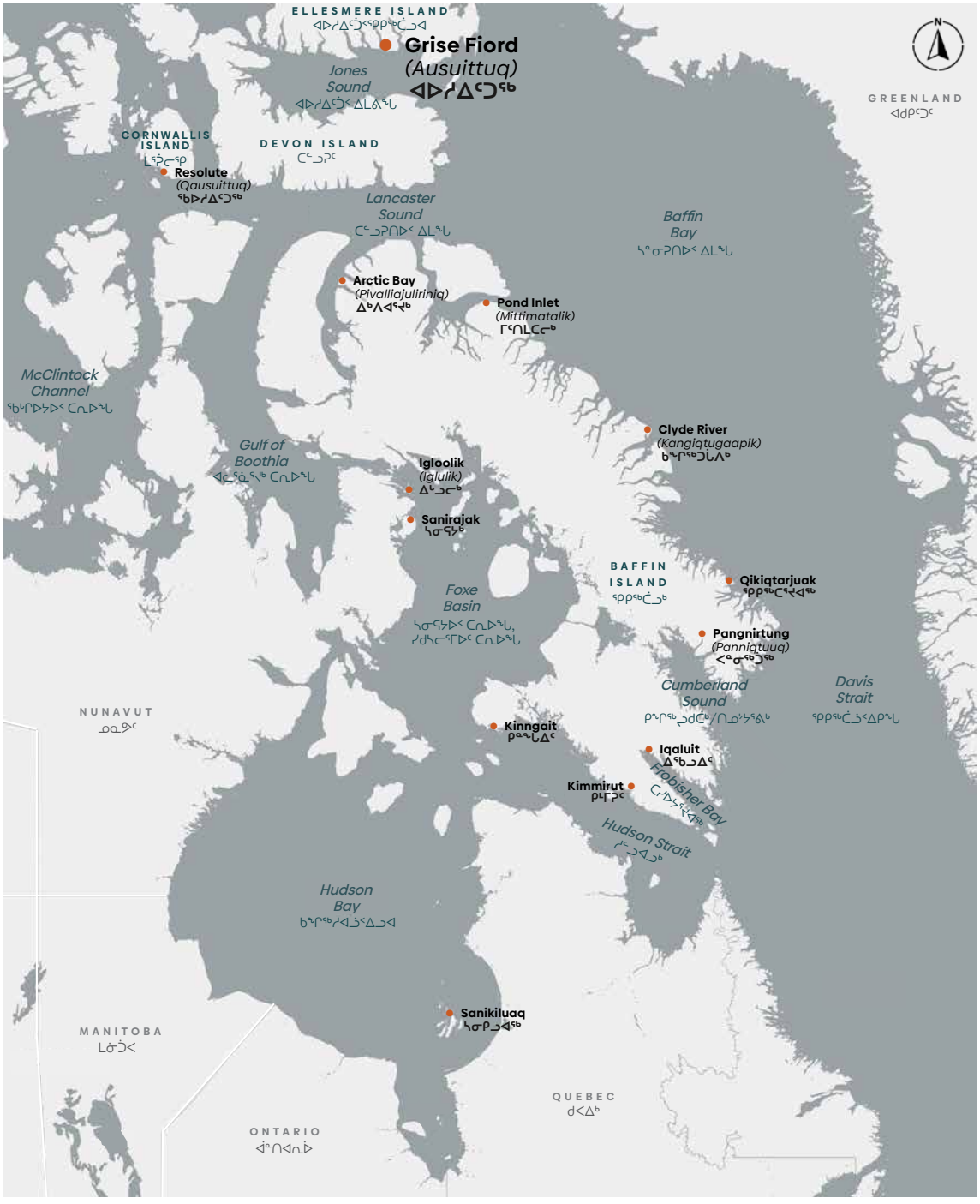


View of Craig Harbour, [1920s].
Credit: *Library and Archives Canada / PA-061670.*

Introducing Grise Fiord
(Ausuittuq)

Grise Fiord is the northernmost community in North America. The Inuktitut name for the community is Ausuittuq, meaning "the place that never thaws."[i] The name Grise was given to the fiord on Ellesmere Island by Norwegian explorer Otto Sverdrup during his exploration expedition from 1898 to 1902. The name means "pig inlet" in Norwegian, referencing the appearance of the walruses that Sverdrup saw in the fiord.

Until the 1950s, the Ausuittuq area remained unused and uninhabited, except for occasional hunting trips by Inuit from Greenland or northern Baffin Island. In 1922, a small enclave of year-round residents was created with the establishment of an RCMP detachment at Craig Harbour, approximately 55 km east of Grise Fiord. The following year, a second post was established on the Bache Peninsula, but abandoned in 1933. The primary role of the posts was to demonstrate Canadian sovereignty over Canada's Arctic Archipelago.

As part of government-sponsored[ii] relocation programs of the 1950s, a permanent Inuit settlement was planned for Ellesmere Island. In 1953 and 1955, families from Pond Inlet, known as Mittimatalingmiut or Tununirmiut, and families from Inukjuak, Quebec, known as Itivimiut, were moved to Lindstrom Peninsula, eight km west of Grise Fiord. In 1956, the RCMP relocated their post to Grise Fiord. In 1961, the Inuit families that had been moved to the Lindstrom Peninsula were sent to Grise Fiord where a school opened. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, some of the original families that had relocated to Grise Fiord, especially families from Inukjuak, returned to their previous homes. An opposite migration also occurred when

i This report uses current geographical place names, with Inuktitut place names added.

ii This report uses the term "government" to include all the bodies that existed under Canadian federal legislation to serve and control people, mostly Inuit, in the Qikiqtani Region. These bodies exercised all the powers that were distributed among federal, provincial and municipal orders of government in the rest of Canada. In Ottawa and locally, most government programs in the Qikiqtani Region were delivered by the Northern Affairs Branch and the RCMP. Inuit had no voice in their own government, and there were no legal codes to protect their individual or collective rights.

some family members still living in Pond Inlet and Inukjuak moved to Grise Fiord to be closer to family and friends. By 2011, Grise Fiord's population had reached 130, and the community was serviced by an airport, hotel, the Grise Fiord Co-operative, a school, and an Anglican church.[1]

Today, people living in Grise Fiord have chosen to call themselves Ausuitturmiut, after the Inuktut name of their community. In earlier times, however, people living in the community often identified themselves by the places from which they were relocated.[2] This distinction reinforced and reflected the strength of family attachments to Pond Inlet and Inukjuak despite years of separation.

Taissumani Nunamiutautilluta (On the Land)

The term "Taissumani nunamiutautilluta" means "when we lived on the land." It reaches back thousands of years. The end date depends on the community, but it is generally in the 1950s to early 1960s when most Inuit were living in government-chosen settlements and participating in the cash economy. During this time, the Inuktut term *ilagiit nunagivaktangit* is a more accurate expression for the places Inuit called home and qallunaat (non-Inuit) named "camps." Ilagiit nunagivaktangit were places regularly used for hunting, harvesting and gathering. Inuit groups traditionally had several ilagiit nunagivaktangit, which allowed them to move to follow game.

ILAGIIT NUNAGIVAKTANGIT

The people relocated by the government to Grise Fiord in the 1950s originally came from Pond Inlet on northern Baffin Island, and from Inukjuak in northern Quebec. Some families had already moved to government-run enclaves, while others were continuing to live in ilagiit nunagivaktangit year-round or returning to the settlement seasonally. Ilagiit nunagivaktangit were places regularly used for hunting, harvesting and gathering. Inuit groups traditionally had several ilagiit nunagivaktangit, which allowed them to move to follow game and return seasonally or on a multi-year cycle to these homes.

The Innualuk family (Mary Panipakoocho, Markusie, and Boaz) pose with a season's worth of furs in front of the Grise Fiord co-op store, [1967].
Credit: *NWT Archives/Northwest Territories. Department of Information fonds/G-1979-023: 1565.*

Grise Fiord is located on the southern tip of Ellesmere Island, the most mountainous island in the Arctic Archipelago. For Ausuitturmiut, the primary hunting area is centred on Jones Sound, encompassing over 97,000 square km.[3] The terrain and environment, while visually striking, are incredibly harsh compared to many other places occupied by Inuit. The sea is frozen for ten months of the year, with break-up occurring in mid-August. The surrounding mountains provide limited support for wildlife, and overland travel is restricted to valleys and waterways winding between the mountains. From May to August, the sun never sets, and from October to mid-February, it never rises. Grise Fiord is considered one of the coldest communities in the world, with an average yearly temperature of -16 degrees Celsius.

Archaeological records show Tuniit people inhabited Ellesmere Island as early as two thousand years ago. Thule people later settled in the area but had moved away by the 16th century. Remains of Thule villages can still be found throughout many of the inlets and fiords of Ellesmere Island. Over the next two centuries, Inuit were present temporarily on the island, usually as small groups of hunters from Greenland or northern Baffin Island passing through the area. In 1856, forty Inuit led by a man named Qidlak migrated north from Baffin Island in search of the "polar Inuit" they had heard about from European explorers. While the majority turned back after spending a couple years on Devon Island,

some eventually moved north across Ellesmere Island towards Smith Sound. By 1860, however, they had moved on to Greenland. After that, Ellesmere Island remained generally uninhabited until the 1920s.[4]

Everyone had to adapt quickly to the new landscape and environment of Ellesmere Island. Initially the land-use area for the new arrivals was limited to the Jones Sound region. As time went on, and hunters grew more familiar with their surroundings, they travelled farther. By the 1960s, during the annual great spring hunt that took place at the end of March, some hunters travelled as far west as Norwegian Bay and the Bjorne Peninsula. Others crossed Jones Sound and hunted along the north coast of Devon Island. With the exception of the occasional hunter from Greenland or Resolute Bay, hunters from Grise Fiord had exclusive use of the entire Jones Sound area. Hunters primarily focused on marine mammals. Some terrestrial wildlife was harvested in the lowlands and rolling hills of Ellesmere Island, but the mountainous terrain resulted in most of the island being devoid of game.[5]

The Grise Fiord region is, by far, a rich sealing area. Ringed seals were available year-round and are still the primary focus of hunting activities. Winter hunting, between November and the end of April, took place at breathing holes. After April, ringed seals were hunted while they basked on the ice, or by harpoon through larger breathing holes. Generally, seals were not hunted at the floe edge because of the long distance to open water. Both bearded and harp seals also migrate into the area, but hooded seals are extremely rare. Aside from trading, Ausuitturmiut used sealskins to make rope, clothes, boots, and handicraft items such as gun cases, rugs, and toys. Bearded sealskin was prized for its durability when made into ropes and tethers.

During the month of July, massive numbers of belugas migrate through the area. In 1963, an estimated three thousand belugas were reported, and in 1966, a herd nearly 1.6 km long and 25 to 35 metres wide was spotted near the settlement.[6] Beluga meat was used as food for qimmiit,[iii] but Ausuitturmiut also enjoy maktaaq for themselves. Narwhales and walrus were also hunted during periods of open water and break-up, with walrus being considered the best qimmiit food available.

Char was highly valued not only for its taste but because it had been a customary item enjoyed by both the Pond Inlet Inuit and Inukjuak Inuit before the relocations. Unfortunately, there are few lakes in the area, and it took the new hunters some time to locate them after their arrival. By the 1970s, approximately two dozen lakes that support char had been located, but only three were accessible enough for regular fishing.

Limited amounts of land-based animals, including small Peary caribou, were available to supplement the economy and diet of Ausuitturmiut. When they first arrived, the people relocated to Grise Fiord hunted caribou in the lowlands between Craig Harbour and Harbour Fiord. Later, caribou-hunting areas were visited at Bjorne Peninsula, Svendsen Peninsula, the Makinson Inlet area, Graham Island, southwestern Ellesmere Island and western Devon Island. More recently, large populations can only be found near Blind Fiord on the Raanes Peninsula. Caribou skins provided vital clothing for hunters and first-class bedding materials. However, as the herds moved farther away, and seasonal conditions further limited hunting, Ausuitturmiut were forced to turn to other materials for clothing and bedding. Today, caribou are harvested primarily for meat, providing a welcomed break from a diet based on marine animals.[7]

Polar bears are also numerous in the area, with a large concentration found at Bear Bay. While also found in high numbers at Coburg Island and near Hell Gate, the treacherous ice conditions in these areas deter Ausuitturmiut hunters. Over the years, the price received for polar bear pelts increased, eventually making up 55% of a family's cash income by the late 1960s. In 1967, a quota of 27 polar bears per year was imposed on Ausuitturmiut hunters, one that they have filled regularly since.

Arctic fox was also trapped as a cash species, but the number of animals trapped fluctuated annually. Since 1953, Ausuitturmiut hunters have regularly trapped along the south coast of Ellesmere Island. Traps were usually set while on bear, caribou, or (later) muskox hunting trips. Wolves were

iii Qimmiit means *Inuit sled dogs* (singular version of the Inuktitut word is qimmiq).

occasionally hunted as well, but not in large numbers. Smaller animals, such as ptarmigans, seabirds, geese, ducks, and Arctic hares, were also hunted in conjunction with the harvesting of sea and land animals.

EARLY CONTACTS PRIOR TO RELOCATIONS

The first European reference to Ellesmere Island comes from William Baffin, commander of the ship *Discovery*, while visiting the Jones Sound area in the summer of 1616. The island was later named after the First Earl of Ellesmere by Commander E. A. Inglefield while on a mission to find the lost Franklin Expedition in 1852. During the 19th century, various explorers and whalers visited Jones Sound, but the area was not thoroughly explored until 1899, when Otto Sverdrup began charting the region after being trapped by ice.[8] For three years, Sverdrup visited and mapped major portions of southern and western Ellesmere Island and northern Devon Island. While doing so, Sverdrup claimed parts of Ellesmere Island for Norway. This resulted in Canada turning its attentions to the Arctic by first sending explorers and later the RCMP.

In 1922, the Canadian government moved to establish RCMP detachments on Ellesmere Island to assert Canada's claim to the area.[9] At that time, there was only one other RCMP post north of the mainland, located at Herschel Island, west of the Mackenzie River delta. These detachments were also intended to act as small "colonies," demonstrating Canadian influence in the north. The first detachment was located at Craig Harbour.[10] In 1926, a second post was established on the Bache Peninsula, but was abandoned in 1933. By that time, Norway had relinquished all claims to the Canadian Arctic. With the onset of the Second World War and with the Canadian government's focus directed elsewhere, the Craig Harbour RCMP detachment was also closed in 1940.

The RCMP often employed Inuit families at the detachments as special constables to help hunt, serve as guides, and assist in maintaining the post. The first Inuit special constable at Craig Harbour was Kakto, from Pond Inlet. Kakto brought with him his spouse, Oo-ar-loo, and their two children. Unfortunately, after only a couple of months, the two children died from influenza, which led Kakto and Oo-ar-loo to return home to Pond Inlet. After that, all special constables were recruited from Greenland until the post's closure in 1940. At times, one or more families lived at the post, but they were never considered a permanent population.[11] When the post was reopened in August 1951, the Canadian government decided that only Pond Inlet families would be employed to dissuade Inuit from Greenland from coming to the area to hunt. In 1953, the detachment at Craig Harbour was home to one RCMP special constable and his family from Pond Inlet, and two single RCMP constables.[12]

CHANGING PATTERNS OF LIFE

Life prior to the relocations shaped the experiences of the people who eventually made Grise Fiord their home. Although the relocatees had experience with qallunaat institutions and culture, the extent of the disruption to Inuit life varied. In northern Quebec, Itivimiut had been very well acquainted with the three institutions that played a large role in disrupting Inuit life—traders, missionaries, and RCMP. Trade had been prevalent throughout northern Quebec since the eighteenth century. Because of greater competition among trading companies in the area, trade had firmly rooted itself as the primary base of the Itivimiut economy. Consequently, mobility patterns changed as people centralized towards trade centres, relying on furs and credit rather than on customary hunting practices. At the same time, missionaries competed for religious dominance through church and schools. The RCMP was the only government representative in the area taking any responsibility for local Inuit, albeit in a very limited way, through small doses of social services and provisions.[13] By the 1950s, and the time of the relocations, many Itivimiut regularly sent their children to school (39 children were reported in attendance in 1953) and had become exposed to a sustained qallunaat presence.

People from Pond Inlet were less burdened by government involvement in their lives, despite their long history of trade. Whalers from Scotland, England, and America had operated in the area since the 19th century and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) had established a post at Pond Inlet in 1921. While trade played a role in their daily

lives, Tununirmiut had yet to embrace settlement life. At the time of the relocations, Pond Inlet had no school. In fact, it would not be until 1959, six years after the first families were relocated to Grise Fiord, that a school opened.

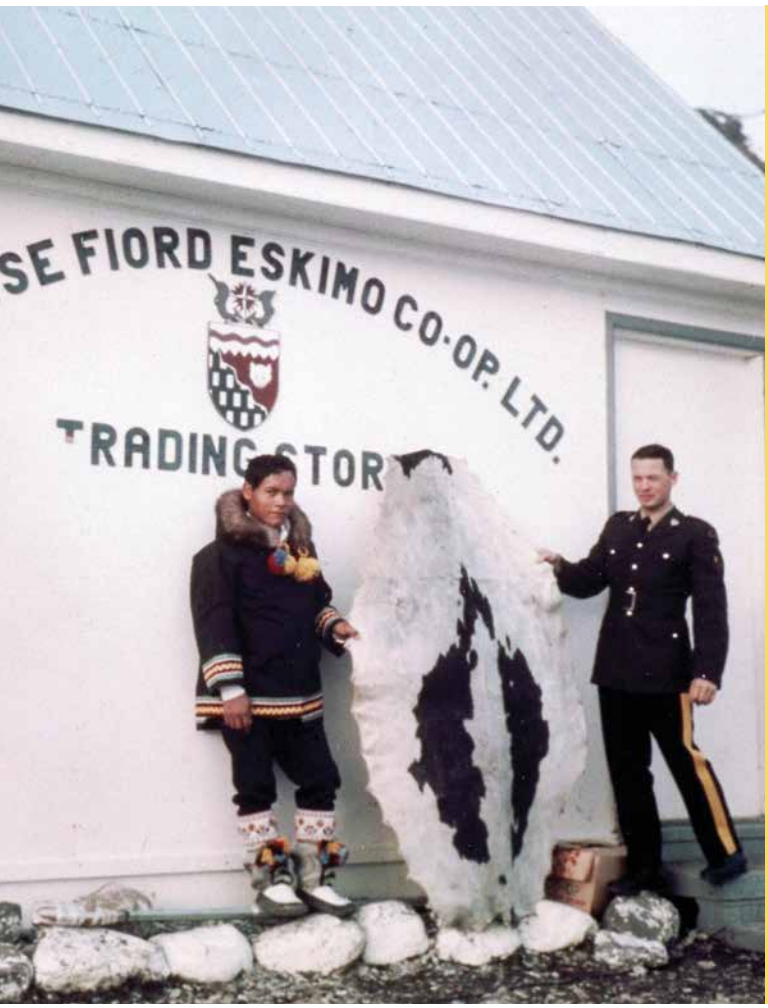
Once in Grise Fiord, however, both groups found themselves in a new landscape living close to strangers with different customs and expectations. On top of this, Inuit were shocked to learn that they faced strict game laws.

The history of the game laws provides an important context for understanding the history of the relocations and the changes in the community. The people relocated to Grise Fiord were affected by game laws to an extent that they had not experienced in their previous homes. Wildlife conservation, as a larger movement, had been gaining momentum in Canada and the United States during the latter half of the 19th century. It was spurred by the near disappearance of bison from the Canadian and American plains, and the muskox from the Arctic mainland. Although nobody lived permanently in the high arctic prior to the relocations, restrictions on qallunaat hunting in the area had been in place since 1887. By July 1917, hunting restrictions under the Northwest Game Act applied to all inhabitants, including Inuit. The act was designed to protect muskox and further restrict the caribou-hunting season throughout the Northwest Territories. It sought to regulate any "Indians or [Inuit] who are bona fide inhabitants of the Northwest Territories" as well as "other bona fide inhabitants of the said territories, and … any explorers or surveyors who are engaged in any exploration, survey or other examination of the country." Inhabitants, as described, were permitted to take caribou, muskox, and bird eggs "only when such persons [were] actually in need of such game or eggs to prevent starvation."[14] Through the act, the caribou-hunting season was limited to late summer and mid-winter, and all hunting of muskox was prohibited except in specific zones set out by the government from time to time.

The creation of the Arctic Islands Game Preserve (AIGP) in 1926 effectively established permanent boundaries for a conservation area. It also aimed to establish control over the Canadian Arctic Archipelago by demonstrating a form of functional administration. The preserve encompassed the high arctic islands, northwestern Baffin Island, islands as far west as Banks Island, and a small portion of the mainland. The AIGP also further restricted qallunaat hunting, trapping, trading, and trafficking inside its boundaries. Qallunaat were not allowed to hunt without a special license.

In general, the regulations put in place by the act still applied to local Inuit, and the relocatees were expected to follow the provisions of the AIGP. Since 1932, the RCMP had been tasked with enforcing the regulations, but were sporadic in doing so, as it depended on whether an officer perceived a legitimate "need" in any given situation.[15] For their part, Ausuitturmiut conformed to the regulations. However, throughout the 1960s, they increasingly questioned the legitimacy of legislation imposed on people who had no voice in its creation. In a brief to the government in 1967, Ausuitturmiut wrote:

> *For a long time we have respected the law and not killed muskox, even in times of great need. This is because we understand there were few and agreed their number should increase before hunting could take place. It was easier for us to follow this law believing that one day we were to be able to hunt them again … you understand hunting is our livelihood; we have no other source of meat but the animals we hunt … very often muskox are the only animals to be seen on our travels. This restraint placed on us in these circumstances is very hard to bear, but we do restrain ourselves because we respect the purpose of this law.*[16]



An unnamed RCMP constable and Aksakjuk pose with a harp seal skin in front of the co-op store at Grise Fiord, [1967]. ***Credit:*** *NWT Archives/Northwest Territories. Department of Information fonds/G-1979-023: 0039.*

The AIGP was eventually disbanded in 1966, and in 1969, the ban on hunting muskox in the Northwest Territories was rescinded and quotas established.[17]

Sangussaqtauliqtilluta (1950–1960)

RELOCATIONS

The term "Sangussaqtauliqtilluta" means "the time when we started to be actively persuaded, or made to, detour or switch modes." Combinations of both externally driven and local pressures detached individuals, families and kin groups from life on the land and moved them towards government-directed settlements.

Game laws and policies were only part of an escalating government involvement in the Canadian north. Beginning during the Second World War, and increasingly evident in the immediate postwar period, the Canadian government ramped up its presence in the north and became more directly involved in the lives of Inuit. At first cautious about interfering with Inuit trading and subsistence routines, the government became bolder as more qallunaat (non-Inuit) and government services appeared in the Qikiqtani Region and other parts of the Arctic. For many officials and Canadians in general, change was inevitable and necessary; however, the desired direction and pace of change was never established with certainty. This made it difficult for anyone—Inuit, RCMP, bureaucrats, businesses—to plan effectively.

In some cases, a perception that Inuit were poor and vulnerable to starvation led the government to act, but it was colonial attitudes and the lack of effective communication that led to harmful decisions. The collapse of fur prices in 1949 became an important motive for the relocation of Inuit. The drop in prices reduced Inuit incomes from furs by about 85%, while the cost of goods doubled. The government saw the effect on relief costs in areas where country food was scarce, and where people depended on store-bought goods. Government officials were also concerned that the economic downturn in fur prices might drive traders, especially the HBC, out of the Arctic. This would leave the government with sole responsibility for ensuring that Inuit received emergency relief in times of hardship and for providing them with access to manufactured goods, including rifles.

The federal government began pursuing an internal policy of "inducing" Inuit from areas deemed to be "overpopulated" to move to places where game was thought to be more plentiful. Reinforcing this policy was a concurrent and paternalistic idea that Inuit not already heavily exposed to qallunaat institutions and ways of life would be better off living farther away from qallunaat influences. Relocating Inuit to keep them relatively isolated with easier access to game would help the government prevent rising costs associated with Inuit "dependence" on government relief services.[18] As government official Graham Rowley stated in a memorandum concerning a relocation plan to Arviat on Hudson Bay:

> *So far as I can determine the idea is to get Eskimos and to put them where nobody else can get to them, no [Hudson Bay] company, no missions, only a benevolent Administration. In this way they would be protected against everybody—except of course the government. I asked who would protect them against the government, but this was of course assumed to be a joke.*[19]

A parallel view also held that colonization of the high arctic by Inuit would help assert Canadian sovereignty over the area. The United States had increased its presence in the Canadian north during the Second World War. In the postwar period, it had started building an equally strong military and scientific presence.[20] In reporting on its inquiry into the history of the High Arctic Relocations, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) explained:

> *This is not to say that sovereignty was necessarily of equal rank with the economic concerns that drove the relocation. It is to say, however, that sovereignty was a factor that, in the minds of some people who played key roles in the project, reinforced and supported the relocation and contributed to the attractiveness in their minds of a relocation to uninhabited islands in the high arctic.*[21]

Crucial to the relocation plan was the presence of RCMP detachments. Police officers could provide supplies and help to Inuit, monitor the success of the experiment, and represent a strong Canadian presence.

The government first tried high arctic relocations in 1934 when ten families from Kinngait, Pangnirtung, and Pond Inlet were relocated to Dundas Harbour, on Devon Island, where they were placed under the care of the HBC. The experiment was short-lived, as the HBC considered the environment too severe, and the relocated families were dissatisfied with life there. Relocated people were later transferred to Arctic Bay and Fort Ross. The RCMP also attempted seasonal relocations in the early 1950s near the community of Inukjuak. Inuit hunters were persuaded to move to the nearby King George Islands and Sleeper Islands on the Belcher Islands during the fall months to reduce pressure on local game. The local RCMP considered this short-term, short-distance relocation program a success, but the government remained concerned about access to game in the Inukjuak area.[22]

In 1952, the Canadian government decided to make another attempt at permanent relocation to the high arctic. This time, Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island and Craig Harbour and Bache Peninsula on Ellesmere Island were chosen as potential relocation sites. These places were purported to be plentiful in game, although no wildlife studies had been conducted there and no Inuit had permanently resided in the area for centuries.[23] Bache Peninsula was eventually abandoned as a potential location because the site was too difficult to access.

The Inuit targeted for relocation were those living in northern Quebec, specifically the Inukjuak area. Government officials reported that people in Inukjuak were having difficulty sustaining themselves due to a lack of sufficient game, but the problems they faced were more complicated than that. Northern Quebec had seen multiple trade companies vying for Inuit customers for decades. As a result, the companies competed with one another by offering high prices for fur, low prices for goods, and easy credit. As a result, people were spending more time trapping for trade while increasing their dependency on store-bought food and clothes purchased on credit against social benefits, especially family allowance.[24] They lived near or in settlements, and often their children

attended school. Therefore, when fur prices dropped, the number of people struggling to pay for food and other necessities alarmed the government.

When making decisions about relocating Inuit, however, evidence firmly points to the fact that Inuit were never fully informed of options or potential consequences. The question of consent in the high arctic relocations is a contentious issue. Inuit were reluctant to relocate for many reasons, including the very rational and human fear of losing connection to their homeland. Although the government and RCMP referred to the relocatees as "volunteers," the selection of families fell to individual officers. The government expected that "resourceful trappers" would be chosen or volunteer for relocations. Evidence shows, however, that families who were the most dependent on government assistance were more likely to be relocated.

Oral testimonies from RCAP and testimonies collected by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) and the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) show that Inuit were afraid of the RCMP officers and felt pressured to move. George Eckalook, whose family was relocated from Inukjuak in 1955, told the QIA that his parents at first "did not agree to the move but later on they agreed, but in their hearts, they were reluctant to leave … We left our relatives, close relatives."[25] Simeonie Amagoalik, also from Inukjuak, told the QIA that he felt pressured to relocate as well. "It seemed like I had no other choice but to say yes."[26] Many people remember receiving little or no detail on the way the relocations would work, especially that families were going to be divided between different communities. These factors strongly negate the idea of a voluntary move.[27]

Some government agents were concerned from the outset that the relocation experiments might not work. To alleviate their concerns, Alexander Stevenson, the Federal Administrator of the Arctic, stated that, if after two years relocatees were "dissatisfied or unhappy in their new environment they could return to Port Harrison [Inukjuak]."[28] The RCMP involved in the planning and implementation of the relocation made a similar promise. Henry Larsen, the Officer Commanding "G" Division (the Arctic Division), promised, "families will be brought home at the end of one year if they so desire."[29] These promises were never honoured. It was not until 1996, following the RCAP recommendations and other political initiatives that relocatees were given compensation and an opportunity to be returned home.

On August 29, 1953, six Inuit families arrived at Craig Harbour with their qimmiit and personal possessions, accompanied by RCMP Constable G. K. Sargent. Craig Harbour was the first stop for the ship *C. D. Howe*, and the first point at which the relocatees were told they would be separated. John Amagoalik, who was later dropped off at Resolute, recalled the arrival at Craig Harbour:

> *When we got near [Craig Harbour] the RCMP came to us and they told us; half of you have to get off here. And we just went into a panic because they had promised that they would not separate us … I remember we were all on the deck of the ship, the C. D. Howe, and all the women started to cry. And when women start to cry, the dogs join in. It was eerie.*[30]

The following month, two more families originally destined for Cape Herschel, one from Inukjuak and the other from Pond Inlet, were dropped off at Craig Harbour.[31] Shortly thereafter, everyone was moved to the Lindstrom Peninsula, approximately 70 km west of the detachment and 8 km west of present-day Grise Fiord. Constable Sargent stated in his December 1953 report to "G" Division that the Lindstrom Peninsula location was chosen because it reduced the possibility of Inuit becoming dependent on the RCMP, but also allowed some contact. He also felt the site was located a reasonable distance from the caribou herds, which he felt would be at risk from overhunting by Inuit.[32]

The families from Pond Inlet were included in the relocation because the government felt that they would be able to help the Itivimiut families adapt to a more northern environment. It is important to remember how different life in the high arctic was from northern Quebec. The distance between

Inukjuak and Grise Fiord was more than 2,200 km. Grise Fiord also experienced three months of total darkness, much more extreme temperatures, different ice and snow conditions, and different animal patterns. In northern Quebec, some wood was available for building supplies and for fuel. Itivimiut had also been accustomed to attending school, worshipping, trading, and receiving medical care within developed settlements. Pond Inlet, only 433 km away from Grise Fiord, was well above the tree line and had a similar climate to Grise Fiord, and there most Tununirmiut still resided in ilagiit nunagivaktangit.[33] Tununirmiut also had some experience with full-winter darkness.

Nevertheless, both groups struggled from the moment they arrived. Many people remember the shock they felt when they realized that there were no supplies available to help them set up. Larry Audlaluk recalled for the RCAP report an argument between his uncle and the RCMP over the lack of boats available for hunting. He recounted that his father had been told not to worry about bringing anything, to just pack tents and personal possessions.[34] Samuel Arnakallak, from Pond Inlet, shared a similar memory in the RCAP report:

> *All the people who went to Craig Harbour were used to being supplied with the white man's trade goods and had not brought much from their original homes. They were under the impression that they were going to a land of plenty where everything was going to be provided. If they had been told they had to bring their own supplies, they would have done so. As it was, they were very poorly supplied because no one told them that they would have to fend for themselves. When they first pitched their tents at Craig Harbour, they did not have any light. They had a stone stove but no light to eat by. One man had a flashlight and he used his flashlight when they were having a meal. Then the flashlight was passed from shelter to shelter so that people could eat.*[35]

People also had difficulty finding food as they adapted to the new environment, different ice conditions, and hunting regulations. Itivimiut were also accustomed to a varied subsistence diet that included birds and their eggs, fish, whales, seals, walrus, and caribou. When the relocated families arrived in Grise Fiord in September, they faced strict restrictions on caribou and muskox hunting. Samwillie Elijasialak's experiences were also summarized in the RCAP report:

> *His mother and his father told him what they were promised. They were promised plentiful caribou in the new land … What they found was very different. They were told right off that, "you can only catch one caribou per year for your family. That's the regulation." And that, "you are not allowed to kill any musk-ox. You are liable to a $5,000 fine or be arrested if you kill any musk-ox." He wonders why the police even bothered mentioning caribou and musk-ox and the plentifulness of these animals when they were trying to recruit people.*[36]

Obtaining fresh water also proved difficult for the new arrivals. Fresh water had to be obtained from the sea ice because the area's geography made it very difficult to draw water from lakes or rivers. It took a long time for everyone, especially people from Inukjuak who had previously had easy access to drinking water, to learn how to recognize non-salt water among the ice pieces on the sea.[37]

Limited supplies of caribou hide for clothing, inadequate ammunition supplies, cold temperatures, and three months of total darkness that began only two months after their arrival compounded the effects on the relocatees.[38] Elijah Nutaraq told *Makivik News* in 1989:

> *I assumed that the far north had the same terrain as the Inukjuak area. It turned out that the land was not the same, and that the sun behaved differently in those latitudes. It got darker and eventually disappeared for good in November. We couldn't get used to the never-ending darkness.[39]*

The dark period was especially hard on the women and children as they were confined to the settlement. Anna Nungaq shared her memory of her first experience with such long periods of darkness in a 1989 interview. "Practically for a year I slept very little, because I was so scared, threatened. It is also very, very cold. Because I had never been in a place where there is no daylight at all, I was so scared and thought there would never be light again."[40]

The first years on the Lindstrom Peninsula were characterized by change and uncertainty. Added to these challenges were the loss of friendships and kinships, and cultural and language differences between Itivimiut and Tununirmiut. Many of the families from Pond Inlet had been told that the people from Inukjuak were poor and used to living on relief, but Itivimiut did not consider themselves to be poor or in need. On top of this was the expectation by relocatees from Pond Inlet that they would be compensated for helping the Itivimiut adapt to the northern environment. No payment was ever received, which likely fuelled resentment over the relocations and the situation in which they found themselves. One anthropologist recorded that "indifference, ridicule, and even hostility were not uncommon features of intergroup relations."[41]

The following spring, many families expressed an interest in leaving. They were given assurances that they would be allowed to return to their homes in Inukjuak or Pond Inlet after a year or two if they did not like the new location. Many people remember this promise being made. Unfortunately, it was never considered as a serious option by the government, who wanted to see the relocations succeed. Samwillie Elijasialak recalled:

> *When our parents attempted to make the case for returning, they were told outright that there's no possible way for them to ever go back and in fact some government officials said, "If you want to return, you are going to have to find other people to take your place before we allow you to go back." This was said by people where no appeal was available to a higher authority.[42]*

A few years later, RCMP claimed that people were no longer requesting to go home but were interested in having their family and friends join them in Grise Fiord. However, there is much evidence that life remained difficult for the relocated families. Within the first year, an Itivimiut Elder had been appointed camp leader by the RCMP. Unfortunately, he died of a heart attack during his first year. A lack of a good leader increased divisions between the two groups, and as a result, the settlement suffered. By 1955, discussions about dividing the settlement were already taking place. Different beliefs, distinct dialects, and separate tastes had led each group to hold the other in low esteem. By 1958, the Inukjuak families had moved to a new site 3 km away. Both groups tried to augment their numbers by encouraging family and friends to move to Grise Fiord.[43] Former RCMP officer Terrance Jenkin shared his view of the community in 1962, the year that he was posted to Grise Fiord. "What it boiled down to was that there were two groups but there was no fighting, just not a lot of interaction as there would have been if they had been from the same community."[44] For Jenkin, the divisions were overemphasized by some observers.

As news drifted south about the apparent success of the settlement at Grise Fiord, more families from Pond Inlet, Inukjuak, and even Pangnirtung moved north. In 1955, two more Itivimiut families were moved to Grise Fiord as part of the same relocation program; however, one family would not arrive until 1957 after being delayed at Arctic Bay.

Like those who came before them, the new families were disappointed with what they found on their arrival. Rynee Flaherty, who arrived with her husband and children from Inukjuak, told the QTC that her first impression of the settlement was that "there was absolutely nothing up there."[45]

During the 1950s, the RCMP remained the primary contact for Inuit with the Canadian government. In 1956, they moved their post closer to the Lindstrom Peninsula settlement, establishing a detachment at Grise Fiord. They felt that the mountains would provide additional shelter from the winds. In early 1960, the RCMP reported four Tununirmiut families living at the original Lindstrom Peninsula settlement, eight Itivimiut families living at the new break-off settlement nearby, and two families living at the Grise Fiord location.[46]

Unlike other Inuit communities, the relocatees also had to adjust to the fact that there was no HBC post nearby. A small trading store was established next to the RCMP detachment at Craig Harbour in summer 1954 and had moved to the new location at Grise Fiord in 1956. Thomasie Amagoalik was responsible for looking after the store, while the RCMP handled the accounts.[47] Unfortunately, the store was poorly supplied and often ran out of materials and goods, as Rynee Flaherty remembered in the RCAP report.

> *They were dumped in a place where there was no grocery, no milk and her youngest son, Peter, almost starved to death because she was not breast feeding him. She tried to make formula for him by mixing flour with water … in the spring, there was no flour, no milk, no sugar and she could only feed her little son small pieces of seal meat. When the C.D. Howe would come, it would stay only for a few hours and would drop just a few supplies that were supposed to be used for the whole year … she still cries about how she almost starved her son.*[48]

During the late 1950s, drastic declines in caribou numbers accompanied by a decline in foxes resulted in the RCMP encouraging more carving and the making of handicrafts in an attempt to supplement Ausuitturmiut incomes. A supply of stone was shipped each year on the *C. D. Howe*, but most years the rocks that were received were of very poor quality and were unusable. By 1959, the RCMP reported that more money was being brought in from people making articles "pertaining to their old mode of life," such as kayaks, snow goggles, bow drills, fishing spears, bow-and-arrow sets, and harpoons.[49] In December 1960, the Grise Fiord Eskimo Co-operative Limited was formed. It took over the old store in March 1961. Akpaleeapik, was elected president, but an RCMP member continued to serve as secretary-treasurer because the RCMP wanted to keep control over the accounts and regulate people's spending.[50]

For former RCMP Terrance Jenkin, the community was welcoming and interesting. He told the QTC:

> *I really enjoyed my year at Grise Fiord. It had two regular police and two special constables, and ten to twelve other families. It was a good community. They did not have the prosperity of Resolute. They were hunters and trappers. I operated the Inuit co-op store. I didn't have any training for this. I learned on the job. We had to order our supplies in; we might have had some guidelines. We ordered our supplies and asked locals what they like and what they could afford. The difference with Resolute was the wage economy and goods to trade. One could order things through*

> *mail order. Grise Fiord could not do that. They only had government allowance, and hunting and trapping.*[51]

Nunalinnguqti-tauliqtilluta (1960–1975)

The term "Nunalinnguqtitauliqtilluta" means "the time when we were actively (by outside force) formed into communities." Nunalinnguqtitauliqtilluta conforms to the period when the whole population the Qikiqtani Region was overwhelmingly concentrated in 13 communities where people worked with little or no continuous time living on the land.

AGENDAS AND PROMISES

Despite the hardships faced and the cultural and physical divides in the community, the relocatees at Grise Fiord continued to adapt to their new environment. By the early 1960s, newcomers and natural population increases had boosted the population of the area to seventy people, including two RCMP officers and two Inuit special constables living at Grise Fiord.[52] At this time, there was a change in government attitudes towards Inuit across Canada's Arctic. Officials and politicians developed a newfound interest in what they termed the "welfare" of Inuit, and throughout the next two decades government programs aimed at education, health care, and housing were introduced.

A federal day school was sent to Ellesmere Island in 1961; however, the government had provided no indication as to where the school should be built. The RCMP recommended the school be constructed at the Grise Fiord location because it was the only area with suitable land for further expansion. They recognized that, with the extreme temperatures and the long dark period, wherever the school was built would have to be able to support the movement of the entire population, as it would be too dangerous for students to commute. Grise Fiord had a good water supply nearby and the weather was milder than in other locations. It was also the only location, aside from Craig Harbour, that provided a suitable approach for supply ships. The RCMP conducted a survey among Ausuitturmiut families about whether a school should be built. They all agreed that the school should be built at Grise Fiord and that they would move their families to the area.[53] In the QTC hearings, Terry Jenkin recalled "in my memory, it was almost our decision locally that we should be together. We made the proposal by radio, and I think we got approval and everyone came together at the main settlement."[54]

The school opened in 1962 with one teacher on staff. By the end of the year, the RCMP reported that students were attending regularly and that handicraft classes were held two nights a week. The school building was also used as a community centre, where weekly dances and movies were hosted, as well as Girl Guide and Wolf Cub meetings. Over the next couple of years, more adult education classes were started in sewing, cooking, and art. A second classroom was constructed in 1968, and by 1969, a second permanent teacher had arrived.[55]

Since 1953, and the arrival of the first relocatees, health care had been a challenge. Generally, day-to-day health care was the responsibility of the RCMP who regularly radioed Pangnirtung for advice. The *C.D. Howe* also visited the settlement once a year to conduct examinations. The isolation of the community always became apparent whenever there was a medical emergency or outbreak. In 1959, an Inuk man became ill with stomach problems. After consulting with Pangnirtung, the RCMP arranged for immediate evacuation via an RCAF aircraft from Goose Bay, Labrador. The plane arrived two days after the illness had been reported, remained overnight, and left the next day with the patient, who went on to make a satisfactory recovery. While, in this instance, response times had proved to be reasonable, the reliance on outside help was not always so efficient. In 1960, an epidemic of whooping cough caused one death and the serious illness of six children. Because of radio problems, the RCMP could not contact Resolute for help. An American camp in Greenland picked up the signal but could not reach the community due to poor weather conditions. Eventually, a doctor and medication were flown in from Ottawa. This event triggered a series of memos in October and November of 1960

from the government[56] discussing the difficulties the department was encountering getting medical attention and supplies to Grise Fiord. Unfortunately, there were no immediate solutions. The RCMP continued to handle daily health care issues and emergencies, and medical staff on the *C. D. Howe* continued to be the only real health care contact for Ausuitturmiut until a nurse arrived in 1971.[57]

Housing for relocated families was inadequate. The RCMP had expected the relocatees to build "traditional" homes from natural materials, but the Itivimiut had no experience with using stone and sod for building shelters. Even the Tununirmiut had some access to wood. On top of that, snow conditions were different on Ellesmere Island, making the construction of snow houses difficult. Between 1953 and 1955, scrap lumber was scavenged from the RCMP detachment at Craig Harbour and used to supplement canvas and local materials for houses. The houses were heated with seal-oil lamps and insulated with local plant material and imported buffalo and reindeer hides attained from the local RCMP-run store.[58] In 1959, the government granted loans to five families to purchase housing. The loans were part of the Eskimo Loan Fund, set up in 1952.[59] That year five low-cost permanent housing units were shipped to Grise Fiord and the Lindstrom Peninsula. When Itivimiut and Tununirmiut moved their perspective settlements to Grise Fiord in 1961, they each set up their houses on opposite sides of the RCMP buildings, thereby maintaining a division even in the new settlement. At the same time, five additional houses were constructed, bringing the total number of houses to ten. The houses were generally only 12 feet by 16 feet, but were expected to house five to six people. Not only were the new accommodations incredibly cramped, but five of the houses had been constructed without chimneys because the proper supplies had not been received. In 1964, all of the houses were again moved into one row on the east side of the police and school buildings. Even at this point though, the families from Inukjuak and those from Pond Inlet set up their homes at a distance from one another. They continued to remain separate within the settlement.[60]

Rynee Flaherty cleaning a seal skin, Grise Fiord (Ausuittuq), Nunavut, c 1974.
Credit: *Health Canada / Library and Archives Canada / e002394465.*

In an attempt to deal with the issues of overcrowding within houses and the sub-standard conditions of houses made from scrap lumber, the government erected seven prefabricated three-bedroom houses in 1966. The average rent was $16 a month, and included electricity, heating, fuel, and garbage removal. The old houses were dismantled or converted into workshops. By the following year, the population of Grise Fiord had reached ninety-one, and all families were living in three-bedroom houses.[61]

SHAPING COMMUNITY LIFE

The population of Grise Fiord shifted throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Some Inuit left Grise Fiord in search of wage employment; others left in search of spouses.[62] Many Ausuitturmiut often requested to move from Grise Fiord to Resolute, as they were interested in the development and the comforts it afforded, as well as opportunities for wage employment. During the spring of 1959, a family from Grise Fiord had been temporarily trapped at Resolute during a measles outbreak and decided

to stay. This decision prompted a reaction on the part of the RCMP who felt that if they agreed to let one family move, the rest would want to follow suit. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the RCMP continued to dissuade people from leaving Grise Fiord.

In addition, Ausuitturmiut often had to look outside the community for spouses because marriage partners were limited in Grise Fiord. This was exacerbated by the fact that marriages between Itivimiut and Tununirmiut were widely frowned upon and generally resisted.[63] Ausuitturmiut often looked for spouses in Resolute, especially people originally from Inukjuak, as that was the closest location where they could find potential matches from their hometown.[64] At the same time, Inuit also moved to Grise Fiord from other parts of the Qikiqtani Region in order to be with friends and family who had relocated earlier.

In the 1960s, the RCMP began reporting more on the divisions that were affecting the community. They especially drew attention to what they perceived to be a lack of leadership and the problems it entailed, even if the lack of leadership was due to Inuit having so little control over their own lives. In their 1967 report the RCMP explain that:

> *The greatest obstacle locally to morale is the noticeable division between the Pond Inlet and Port Harrison [Inukjuak] Eskimo. No form of leadership is evident with this division and no one Eskimo is willing to make decisions affecting the community. Having a representative from each group results in no communication between representatives and again no decision being made. This greatly hampers any community projects wherein the Eskimo is encouraged to organize, decide and produce results using his own initiative.*[65]

Nevertheless, during the 1960s, Ausuitturmiut from both groups began to exert influence over the development of local affairs by forming a housing committee and local community groups. The housing committee at Grise Fiord was, from its start, an all-Inuit committee, which was significant for the community. It was the first time Ausuitturmiut were acting free from outside qallunaat influences. In 1967, Grise Fiord hunters were at the forefront of successful challenges to federal sport-hunting permits for muskox and worked to increase their quotas for polar bears. In 1969, the government gave Grise Fiord hunters an annual muskox quota of 12, which was later raised to 20 in 1973. Later in 1973, Grise Fiord hunters attained a quota of 32 polar bears.[66]

During the 1970s, Grise Fiord residents also spoke out against the expansion of mineral and oil exploration. They often criticized the negative impacts seismic testing would have on local animal populations and the government's failure to conduct proper studies or consult with local residents.[67]

Wage employment was slow to develop in Grise Fiord. Up until the 1960s, the economy had been firmly rooted in hunting and trapping, supplemented by the sale of carvings and handicrafts. In 1961, with the arrival of the school and housing, a small construction program was started to provide temporary wage employment. While the construction program provided limited additional income, the community's economy continued to remain solidly grounded in hunting and trapping until the mid-1960s. By 1965, only three Inuit were employed full time, two as special constables and one as a school janitor.[68]

By 1967, however, many men were moving between temporary wage employment and hunting. The arrival of houses for construction often provided all the men with temporary employment. Inconveniently, the ship carrying the supplies arrived in August, the same time that the ice broke up allowing canoes and boats access to the water for hunting. As the RCMP reported in 1967:

> *Following the sealift, naturally all available men were hired to haul and store the incoming supplies. Construction of local houses then started and carried through September and October. All men were hired. September, being the only month when seal, whale and walrus are readily available in great numbers, passed with the men being torn between making as much money as possible on the construction project or hunting for their needs. Work on construction took precedence.*[69]

Many hunters had to resort to hunting at seal-holes in all temperatures to get enough food after the construction season was over. By 1970, the economy shifted as the largest portion of income came from wage earnings. By 1972, all men had wage employment and only hunted on evenings and weekends by snowmobile or boat.[70]

The shooting of qimmiit by authorities also resulted in a clear disruption to Inuit life, including hunting patterns. Qimmiit were essential to their mobility and an integral aspect of everyday life so the unexpected and violent loss of qimmiit was a painful wound.

Dog teams in Grise Fiord were large (about ten qimmiit) and generally healthy, according to RCMP reports in the early 1960s. Except for two qimmiit testing positive for rabies in 1965, there was no evidence of serious disease among qimmiit populations in Grise Fiord.[71] Between 1964 and 1967, the RCMP reported inoculating around 160 animals.[72]

As well, RCMP rarely commented on a "dog problem" in Grise Fiord, which may have been due to low number of qallunaat living in the settlement. As part of the Ordinance Respecting Dogs, qimmiit were required to be tied up at all times. Jopee Kiguktak explained to the QTC that "loose dogs were always shot."[73] Other qimmiit appear to have been shot without any explanation. Jarloo Kiguktak told the QTC in 2008 about the day his father's qimmiit were killed:

> *When my father and I were in the house, we heard some shootings. We looked through the window and saw the police were shooting the dogs. After he shot the dogs that were tied up, he never said a word to us or anybody in the house. Nobody came to tell us why the dogs were being shot. Although I was a child, I remember this part because I saw it myself. Those dogs were very dear to us. It was very painful.*[74]

Kiguktak believes that qimmiit may have been shot because the government wanted people to switch to snowmobiles. He noted that after the killings, his father "had no choice but to try to purchase a Ski-Doo."[75] As mentioned, the RCMP provide no explanation for the shootings in their reports; rather, they briefly noted a small decline in the number of qimmiit in one year, from 1966 to 1967, and reported in 1967 that "the dogs saw little work and were used as stand-bys to the skidoo [*sic*]. Hunters not owning skidoos would team with skidoo owners to check their traplines [*sic*]."[76]

By 1967, the RCMP noted five snowmobiles had been purchased by local hunters.[77] Additional machines had been supplied to the RCMP and the two Inuit special constables. The following year, the RCMP reported sixteen snowmobiles in the community, and that they had ceased keeping dog teams themselves.[78] Some hunters, however, continued to rely almost exclusively on qimmiit.

Some people found there were benefits to hunting with snowmobiles rather than with dog teams. Snowmobiles allowed hunters to find distant caribou more quickly, to check traplines using headlamps during the dark season, and to collect fresh-water ice more efficiently. The RCMP explained:

> *A trip by skidoo was made to Baumann Fiord in October for caribou hunting. Ten caribou were shot and five were immediately brought back to the settlement. A later skidoo trip retrieved the remainder of the meat. This trip, which took 10–11 days by dog team in the past, can be made by skidoo in 3 days.*[79]

While owning a snowmobile also meant that a hunter no longer needed to hunt for qimmiit food, there were downsides to using snowmobiles as well. They often broke down and had very short life expectancies compared to qimmiit. In an article published in *Inukshuk* newspaper, the author noted that:

> *When someone goes far away for a hunt usually two people go together. We have this tradition that when someone goes out far away we do not want to see them alone as one skidoo might get broken. Then if that happens they can always use the other and just put the broken machine on the sled.*[80]

At the same time, the costs associated with snowmobile ownership were much higher than those associated with owning qimmiit. Between 1965 and 1967, before many people had purchased snowmobiles, the average cash income of a hunter from the sale of furs was around $550, with expenses of approximately $572. Between 1969 and 1972, the annual income from furs had increased to $890, but expenses had jumped to $1,846, due primarily to the use and ownership of snowmobiles. While snowmobiles shortened time needed to travel and harvest and eliminated the need to hunt for qimmiit food, the costs associated with owning one of the machines often outweighed their benefits.[81] Nevertheless, snowmobiles facilitated a transition from a hunting-and-trapping-based economy to a wage-based economy during the late 1960s, early 1970s.

While some people had grown confident in their abilities to live in what had, at first, been an incredibly unfamiliar and difficult environment, others never forgot the impact of the high arctic relocation programs. As Rynee Flaherty told the QTC, life in Grise Fiord had become "a lifestyle. It became home."[82] For others, however, it would never be home. During the 1970s and into the 1980s, many people petitioned the government to return to Inukjuak or Pond Inlet. In 1988, the government paid for many to return home.[83] During investigations in the 1990s into the relocations, both before and during the period of the RCAP report on the high arctic relocations, the federal government stood firm on its position that the relocation was a success. Nevertheless, relocated families continued to press the case that they unwittingly participated in an ill-conceived "experiment" and demanded acknowledgement of wrongdoing on the part of the government.

In 1996, the Canadian government signed a memorandum of agreement with the Makivik Corporation acknowledging the contributions of the relocated Inuit to a "Canadian presence" in the high arctic and the "hardship, suffering and loss" encountered during the initial years of the relocation."[84] While the Agreement led to $10 million being awarded to the survivors of the relocation, the government refused to issue a formal apology.[85] Many people in Grise Fiord, as well as others who were relocated as part of the government programs, are still waiting for this apology.

Larry Audlaluk spoke to the QTC in 2008 about the importance of receiving an apology.

> *The bottom line is that we are seeking an apology … what still hurts me as a survivor is that what we know and claim today is still not fully acknowledged*

> *by the federal government, [and] the biggest problem was that the plan was done so poorly.*[86]

This history does not change for him, however, the fact that Grise Fiord is his home. "We are not hesitant to be here; we are determined to stay here and make it our home … We have earned our right to stay."[87] Today, Grise Fiord remains a community defined, in part, by the experiences of the relocation. As Martha Flaherty told the QTC, "There is a lot of healing to do yet with people who were separated and relocated. There is so much unfinished business. We need a lot of healing. If we don't do it now, I don't know what is going to happen."[88]

Conclusion

Grise Fiord is a small, welcoming community located amidst spectacular scenery and landscapes. Serviced by a small airport, many people stop over on their way north to visit Quttinirpaaq National Park or the 'Frozen Forest' on Axel Heiberg Island. Grise Fiord is also located 100 km west of the Nirjutiqavvik/Nirjutiqarvik National Wildlife Area on Coburg Island. The local Hunter's and Trapper's Organization often organizes guided trips to view wildlife or to visit many of the nearby archaeological sites.

The people of Grise Fiord have maintained strong connections to their original homelands of Pond Inlet and Inukjuak, resulting in a tight-knit and traditional community. In addition, many Ausuitturmiut have not forgotten the impacts of the relocations and the hardships they faced. Over the years, they have worked hard to ensure their survival, establishing the northernmost community in Canada. In the process, a leadership emerged that was critical for forging a path to gain Inuit rights.

During the mid 1970s, companies like Panarctic Oils Ltd. and Atlantic Richfield Company were looking for permission to do seismic exploration on Ellesmere Island. While Panarctic failed to get permission, Atlantic Richfield proved more successful. In August 1974, the Chairman of the Ningiuq Settlement Council in Grise Fiord delivered a speech in response to this decision. In his speech, the Chairman explained the importance of recognizing the value of the land and its resources to the community of Grise Fiord, and the need to preserve it for hunting alone. He highlighted the fragility of the ecosystem and importance of it to the survival of the community. He called for the company to consider the reasons behind the community's hesitation, and to consider the value of the knowledge held by people who had made Grise Fiord their home.

> *These studies are all relatively recent in comparison to the knowledge that we have gained of conditions on this area; knowledge and experience that cover our lifetime of hunting and trapping by dog team, and now skidoo and canoe on this land that in recent months seems so important to outsiders. … What you call progress is not so for the animals or hunting and trapping. We take our way of life seriously, as you must with your jobs and that is why we do not want pollution in our land. … You must also realize the fact that long after the companies you represent have taken what you came for from our land, we will still be here, and we will have to live with the effects of your efforts.*[89]

Grise Fiord is a community with an extraordinary, albeit short history that is relevant to understanding Inuit life today. In the face of countless challenges and limited government support, Ausuitturmiut have continuously demonstrated their capacity to adapt to their surroundings and literally build a community from nothing.

ENDNOTES

1 Statistics Canada. 2012. Grise Fiord, Nunavut (Code 6204003) and Nunavut (Code 62) (table). See Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2011 Census, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa, Released February 8, 2012. Online at www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed March 28, 2012). No Aboriginal/Non-aboriginal identity population data available for 2011.

2 Freeman, Milton M.R., "Adaptive Innovation among Recent Eskimo Immigrants in the Eastern Arctic Canada," *Polar Record*, Vol. 14, No. 93 (1969), 781.

3 Milton Freeman Research Limited, *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project—Volume 1* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1976), 179.

4 R.R. Riewe, "The Utilization of Wildlife in the Jones Sound Region by the Grise Fiord Inuit," in *Truelove Lowland, Devon Island, Canada*, ed. L.C. Bliss (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1975), 623–624

5 Fred Bruemmer, "Eskimos in Grise Fiord," *Canadian Geographical Journal*, Vol. 77, No. 2 (1968), 64–71; and Milton Freeman Research Limited, *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project*, 179.

6 Riewe, "The Utilization of Wildlife," 634.

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8 Bruemmer, "Eskimos in Grise Fiord," 65–66.

9 By that time, there was only one other RCMP post north of the mainland, located at Herschel Island, west of the Mackenzie River delta.

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12 Freeman, "Adaptive Innovation," 771.

13 Saladin D'Anglure, "Inuit of Quebec," *Handbook of North American Indians—Volume 5*, ed. Damas, 501–506.

14 Peter Kulchyski and Frank Tester, *Kiumajut (Talking Back) Game Management and Inuit Rights 1900–70* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 24–32.

15 Kulchyski and Tester, *Kiumajut (Talking Back)*, 33–36; M. Zaslow, "Administering the Arctic Islands 1880–1940: Policemen, Missionaries, Fur Traders," *A century of Canada's Arctic Islands: 1880–1980* (Ottawa: Royal Society of Canada, 1981), 61–78; and Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG 18, RCMP, Box 55, File TA-500-8-1-14, Resolute Bay, 1957/07/07.

16 Northwest Territories, Council of the Northwest Territories, *Debates: Official Report—34th Session, Volume III, March 6 – April 10, 1967* (Ottawa, 1967), 452.

17 Sharon Angnakak. *Timelines of Social Histories: Iqaluit Submissions*. Last updated February 2002. Online at http://http-server.carleton.ca/~mflynnbu/chronologies/nunavut.htm (Accessed August 2012) Link no longer functioning, May 12, 2023; and Kulchyski, and Tester, *Kiumajut (Talking Back)*, 136.

18 Kulchyski, and Tester, *Kiumajut (Talking Back)*, 7; Alan R. Marcus, *Out in the Cold: The Legacy of Canada's Inuit Relocation Experiment in the High Arctic* (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 1992), 13–14.

19 Graham Rowley in memorandum to Geert Vandensteenhoven; no other citation information found. Quoted in Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), *The High Arctic Relocation: A Report on the 1953–55 Relocation* ([Ottawa]: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994).

20 Shelagh D. Grant, *Polar Imperative A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 320.

21 RCAP, *The High Arctic Relocation*, 115.

22 Marcus, *Out in the Cold*, 11–12.

23 Marcus, *Out in the Cold*, 22.

24 RCAP, *The High Arctic Relocation*, 48–51.

25 George Eckalook, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, n.d.

26 Simeonie Amagoalik, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, n.d.

27 Marcus, *Out in the Cold*, 14, 16, 20–21.

28 RCAP, *The High Arctic Relocation*, 6.

29 It was only in 1996, following RCAP recommendations and other political initiatives, that relocatees were given compensation and an opportunity to be returned home.

30 As quoted in Kulchyski, and Tester, *Kiumajut (Talking Back)*, 145.

31 LAC, RG 18, RCMP, Accession 1985–86/048, Box 55, File TA 500-8-1-5, Conditions among Eskimos-Grise Fiord, period ending December 31, 1953.

32 LAC, RG 18, RCMP, Accession 1985–86/048, Box 55, File TA 500-8-1-5, G.K. Sargent, Eskimo Conditions, Craig Harbour Area, period ending December 31, 1953.

33 In the value-laden vocabulary of the years before 1975, tiny enclaves of transient non-Inuit were called "settlements" while the places where most people actually lived were usually called "camps". In reality, many so-called "camps" could equally be called "settlements". For the QTC histories, the English term "camp" has been dropped in favour of the term ilagiit nunagivaktangat (plural ilagiit nunagivaktangit), meaning "A place used regularly for hunting, harvesting and gathering." Implicit in this meaning is the pre-settlement concept of home. The choice of the term was determined through a terminology/linguistics workshop organized in April 2010.

34 Canada, RCAP, *The High Arctic Relocation: Summary of Supporting Information, Volume 1* (Ottawa: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994), 68.

35 RCAP, *The High Arctic Relocation: Summary Volume 1,* 79.

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58 Kulchyski, and Tester, *Tammarniit (Mistakes)*, 158; Milton Freeman Research Limited, *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project*, 180; and Freeman, "Adaptive Innovation," 772.

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Foreword (2013)

As President of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, I am pleased to present the long-awaited set of reports of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission.

The *Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Community Histories 1950–1975* and *Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Thematic Reports and Special Studies* represent the Inuit experience during this colonial period, as told by Inuit. These reports offer a deeper understanding of the motivations driving government decisions and the effects of those decisions on the lives of Inuit, effects which are still felt today.

This period of recent history is very much alive to Qikiqtaalungmiut, and through testifying at the Commission, Inuit spoke of our experience of that time. These reports and supporting documents are for us. This work builds upon the oral history and foundation Inuit come from as told by Inuit, for Inuit, to Inuit.

On a personal level this is for the grandmother I never knew, because she died in a sanatorium in Hamilton; this is for my grandchildren, so that they can understand what our family has experienced; and it is also for the young people of Canada, so that they will also understand our story.

As it is in my family, so it is with many others in our region.

The Qikiqtani Truth Commission is a legacy project for the people of our region and QIA is proud to have been the steward of this work.

Aingai,

E7-1865

J. Okalik Eegeesiak, President, Qikiqtani Inuit Association

Introduction to the Work of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission

This work began with the breaking of a long silence. In the 1990s, Inuit made great strides in taking charge of their own affairs through the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the creation of Nunavut. They were then ready to examine the past, including the harm done during the period of greatest change, from 1950 to 1975. They wanted to understand more about their own lives and those lived by their parents, grandparents, and siblings in an era that was profoundly marked by game laws, residential schools, medical evacuations, substantial population movements, and broken promises about housing and jobs. One especially sensitive source of anguish and disturbing memories was the government's campaign to eliminate qimmiit (Inuit sled dogs) from the settlements. Qimmiit were often shot without warning by the RCMP and others, leaving many people without any means of winter transportation. In a culture where qimmiit were vital to hunting and travel, and valued as companions, this campaign struck very close to the well-being of every Inuit family. The history is still a painful wound for many Inuit in the Qikiqtani Region.

For a long time, many Inuit grieved in silence. Others spoke out in anger, aware that their experiences seemed to follow a pattern that was hard to decipher, but was important for understanding the problems in communities today. These feelings led the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) to interview Elders in 2004 about various issues related to moving into settlements. In 2007, the QIA created the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC), a forum where Inuit could speak openly about difficult events in the decades after the Second World War and understand more about how communities took shape and the true costs of the changes. The QTC's investigation had two closely related activities. The first was to gather testimonies about events between 1950 and 1975 from Inuit who had lived through this difficult period, as well as from their children who continue to remember the suffering of their parents and other relatives. Commissioner Igloliorte and QTC staff travelled to all thirteen communities in the Qikiqtani Region between January 2008 and May 2009, and invited all interested residents to share their memories and feelings about how their lives had changed. They also held hearings for the Inuit community in Ottawa, and paid return visits to all communities in early 2010 to report on findings and ask for comments on proposed recommendations. Including interviews that the QIA had already conducted in 2004, the QTC had testimonies from approximately 350 individuals. Hearings were conducted with more flexibility than normal legal proceedings, but to emphasize the seriousness of the task, Commissioner Igloliorte asked all witnesses to affirm that they would tell the truth to the best of their knowledge. He also respected the decision made by a few individuals to keep their experiences private.

In addition to learning about events and impacts through testimonies, the Qikiqtani Truth Commission also completed an extensive archival research program and interviewed Qallunaat who worked in the region during this period. Among the people interviewed were several retired RCMP officers, government officials, and academic researchers.

The Evidence

THE WITNESSES

The QTC is indebted to the many men and women who attended meetings and opened their homes to give their testimonies. People welcomed the commission warmly into their communities and spoke freely and honestly about their lives. Without their testimonies, the commission would not have been able to fully appreciate what happened to Inuit during this period of immense transition. They also provided very thoughtful and constructive feedback and suggestions regarding the kind of recommendations that would promote reconciliation between Inuit and government. A full list of individuals is included in the List of Witnesses on the QTC website.

ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

The QTC's research team collected and reviewed accessible archival and secondary sources for the period in focus, 1950 to 1975. This included examinations of relevant records from Library and Archives Canada, as well as the Archives of the Northwest Territories, the RCMP, the Hudson's Bay Company, and Anglican and Roman Catholic bodies. Thousands of documents were digitized for the QTC's research database.

MAPS

Maps provide important details about how Inuit lived and used the territories surrounding their present-day communities. These maps reject a common idea in the south that the Arctic is "empty." In addition to showing the sites of ilagiit nunagivaktangit, details on twentieth-century maps include place names indicating how Inuit knew and utilized the land, along with their travel routes, and the best places for hunting. This kind of information began to be set down on paper before 1840. However, some of the most thorough maps are those created by Inuit for the Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project (1976) and the Nunavut Atlas (1992).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (2024 EDITION)

The reports drafted in 2010 for the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) were prepared under the direction of James Igloliorte, Commissioner, and Madeleine Redfern, Executive Director, QTC. The Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) project managers in 2013 were Bethany Scott, Navarana Beveridge, and Sandra Kownak.

The primary authors of most reports were Julie Harris, Contentworks Inc. and Philip P. Goldring, Ph.D. Writing and research support was provided by Joan Bard Miller, Francis Levésque, Ryan Shackleton, Frank J. Tester, Anna Gilmer, Alice Glaze, Teresa Iacobelli, Natascha Morrison, Linda Radford, Dr. Yvonne Boyer, and Brian Cameron.

The translation team for the reports produced in 2013 included Jay Arnakak, Mali Curley, Julia Demcheson, Veronica Dewar, Elisapee Ikkidluak, Emily Illnik, David Joanasie, Leonie Kappi, Pujjuut Kusugak, Nina Tootoo, and Blandina Tulugarjuk. Additional translation for the 2024 editions was provided by Ruth Kadlutsiak.

The work of the QTC would not have been possible without the financial support of the following organizations: Qikiqtani Inuit Association; Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated; Makivik Corporation; Walter & Duncan Gordon Foundation; First Air; Air Inuit; Unaalik Aviation; Kenn Borek Air Ltd.

The 2024 editions of the QTC reports were prepared by Julie Harris, Augatnaaq Eccles, Zarina Laalo and Anne Brazeau of Contentworks Inc. under the direction of Inukshuk Aksalnik, Jennifer Ipirq, and Simon Cuerrier of QIA.

For many years, Inuit Elders in the Qikiqtani (Baffin) Region have been haunted by a deep sense of loss as they remember how their lives changed in the decades after 1950. The thematic reports and special studies in this collection explore themes that emerged during the work of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission. What started as an inquiry into the slaughter of sled dogs quickly grew to include other experiences of profound colonial change.

Commissioner James Igloliorte's Final Report, titled *Achieving Saimaqatigiingniq*, and 22 companion thematic and historical reports published by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association in Inuktitut and English weave together evidence from testimonies and documents collected during the Qikiqtani Truth Commission about the consequential 1950–1975 period.

QTC Report Collection

Aaniajurliriniq: Health Care in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

Achieving Saimaqatiqiingniq: Final Report of the Commissioner of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission

Analysis of the RCMP Sled Dog Report

Igluliriniq: Housing in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

Illinniarniq: Schooling in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

Nuutauniq: Moves in Inuit Life in the Qikiqtani Region to 1975

Paliisikkut: Policing in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

Pivalliajuliriniq: Economic Development in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

Qimmiliriniq: Inuit Sled Dogs in the Qikiqtani Region, 1950–1975

The Official Mind of Canadian Colonialism

Arctic Bay (Ikpiarjuk) Community History, 1950–1975

Clyde River (Kangiqtugaapik) Community History, 1950–1975

Grise Fiord (Ausuittuq) Community History, 1950–1975

Igloolik Community History, 1950–1975

Iqaluit Community History, 1950–1975

Kimmirut Community History, 1950–1975

Kinngait Community History, 1950–1975

Pangnirtung Community History, 1950–1975

Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik) Community History, 1950–1975

Qikiqtarjuaq Community History, 1950–1975

Resolute Community History, 1950–1975

Sanikiluaq Community History, 1950–1975

Sanirajak Community History, 1950–1975

QIA Qikiqtani Inuit Association

QIKIQTANI TRUTH COMMISSION