



Resolute (Qausuittuq)

Qikiqtani Truth Commission
Community Histories 1950–1975

Published by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association

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Originally published in *Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Community Histories 1950–1975*
by Qikiqtani Inuit Association, April 2013.

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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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Introducing Resolute

(Qausuittuq)

The hamlet of Resolute is located on Resolute Bay on the south shore of Cornwallis Island. It is Canada's second-most northerly community.ⁱ The Inuktitut names for the community are Qausuittuq, meaning “the place with no dawn” and Qarmartalik, meaning “the place of the ruins.” The ruins are the piles of whalebones marking a centuries-old Thule settlement site near the hamlet. The people of Resolute call themselves Qausuitturmiut. The current name comes from the naming of Resolute Bay, which commemorated the ship HMS *Resolute* that participated in the search for Sir John Franklin's expedition in the 1850s.

Tuniit and Thule people lived in the area thousands of years but are believed to have left the island about one thousand years ago. In the 19th century, no Inuit were living on Cornwallis Island, but European explorers and investigators passed by the island during searches for the Northwest Passage. The island remained uninhabited until a joint US-Canadian weather station was set up in 1947 and Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) base was established at Resolute Bay in 1949.

Resolute's history as an Inuit community began in the 1950s when the Government of Canada relocated families from Pond Inlet (who call themselves Mittimatalingmiut or Tununirmiut) and families from Inukjuak (formerly Port Harrison), Quebec, known as Itivimiut, to the area.¹

After the relocations in the 1950s, other families moved to Resolute from Pond Inlet and Inukjuak to join people who had been part of the original relocations. By 1961, the combined Inuit population in Resolute had reached 153, with a constant presence of a large transient qallunaat population (sometimes more than 300) associated with the airport and related facilities.²

Over time, Resolute changed from a government-created settlement into an organic, cohesive community that achieved hamlet status in 1987.ⁱⁱ In 2011, the permanent hamlet population was 214.³ Resolute is the business, transportation, and communication centre for the high arctic

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- i The current official names of places are used here except in direct quotations from historical documents. Names of places that do not have official names will appear as they are found in the source documents.
 - 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.

and home to a Polar Continental Shelf research base that attracts scientists from all parts of Canada and around the world who are interested in high arctic studies. Resolute residents played important roles in the political achievements that resulted in the creation of Nunavut in 1999.

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 Inuktitut 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.



View of Resolute Bay.

Credit: H. J. Gerein, NWT Archives/Northwest Territories. Department of Public Works and Services fonds/G-1995-001: 2680.



Inuit children learn the art of setting a trap for Arctic fox, Resolute, 1956. This image was created for federal publicity about the tour Governor General Vincent Charles Massey. Inuit children learned skills on the land with their families.

Credit: Gar Lunney / National Film Board of Canada. Photothèque / Library and Archives Canada / e002265666.

Ilagiit Nunagivaktangit

Resolute is located on the south shore of Cornwallis Island, one of the Queen Elizabeth Islands. Cornwallis is dome-shaped and generally comprised of low-lying plains and plateaus that create an almost featureless terrain scattered with rock debris. The highest point on the island reaches 300 metres. The island also includes numerous small lakes of various depths and sizes. Numerous inlets and bays mark the coastline of Cornwallis Island, and the watercourses between the islands provide important migratory routes for marine mammals.⁴

Archaeological evidence reveals Cornwallis Island was inhabited intermittently since 1500 BCE by Tuniit and by Thule as recently as 1000 CE before they migrated away from the area. Ancestors of present-day Inuit did not live in the region prior to relocations of Inuit to the area in 1953 and 1955.

While there were no Inuit living on or near Cornwallis Island until the mid-20th century, people from what is now Pond Inlet, Arctic Bay, and Igloolik sometimes

hunted caribou on Prince of Wales Island. Seals and polar bears were hunted throughout the waters around Devon Island, Barrow Strait, and Prince Regent Inlet. Trapping also took place along the coastlines of Somerset and Devon Islands, and the Brodeur Peninsula.⁵

Inuit families relocated to Resolute in the 1950s originally came from Pond Inlet on northern Baffin Island and from Inukjuak in northern Quebec. Each group had to adapt quickly to the new landscape and hunting and harvesting conditions. At first, Qausuitturmiut hunted and trapped along the coasts of Somerset and Prince of Wales islands and travelled inland to the interior of Somerset Island where caribou were bountiful. Beginning in the 1960s, Inuit started trapping on the southern coast of Cornwallis Island and outwards to Bathurst Island during the winter. As they learned more about the region and grew more familiar with the environment, they began harvesting a wider area. Eventually their land use covered from the northern tip of Bathurst Island and Bellot Strait south of Somerset Island to Prince Leopold Island in the east and Barrow Strait in the west.⁶

Ringed seals have been an important resource for Qausuitturmiut as food and as skins used for clothing and trade. The seals are abundant throughout the straits, channels, and sounds surrounding Cornwallis and neighbouring islands. Barrow Strait, Wellington Channel, McDougall Sound, Prince Regent Inlet, and Peel Sound also possess year-round populations of seals. Bearded seals are found in the area throughout the year, but in lower numbers than ringed seals, with the main hunting grounds being at Allen Bay and McDougall Sound. Harp seals are of less importance because they only appear for a short period in the summer.

People initially had access to two major groups of caribou: a northern population on Bathurst, Little Cornwallis, and Cornwallis islands; and a southern population on Prince of Wales and Somerset islands and the islands around Peel Sound. The southern caribou were larger and darker than those on the northern islands and were preferred by Qausuitturmiut. In the late 1960s, the northern caribou herds moved away from previous

winter-feeding areas, resulting in Prince of Wales and Somerset islands becoming slightly more important as hunting grounds.

Walrus found on Griffin Island were hunted regularly as a source of food for qimmiitⁱⁱⁱ until snowmobiles became more prevalent in the late 1960s. Polar bears were hunted on the southeast tip of Somerset Island, on Devon Island, and in the Ward River valley on Cornwallis Island. Most bears were killed between February and May when travelling was easier. Arctic foxes were trapped all along the coastlines of Somerset Island and on the shores of Stanwell Fletcher Lake. In the later 1960s, trapping moved to the southeast coast of Cornwallis Island and south coast of Bathurst Island. Numerous lakes, inlets, and river systems support sea-run or landlocked char on Cornwallis Island. Smaller animals, such as ptarmigans, geese, ducks, and Arctic hare were also hunted during various seasons in conjunction with the harvesting of other sea and land mammals.⁷

Early Contacts Prior to the Relocations

Europeans frequented Cornwallis Island throughout the 19th century while searching for the Northwest Passage. As part of his final voyage, Sir William Edward Parry visited the island in 1819 and named it after the British Royal Navy Admiral Sir William Cornwallis. In 1845, Sir John Franklin circumnavigated the island during his own exploration of the area before he disappeared during his Third Expedition. Numerous investigators searching for Franklin and his crew also visited the area. In 1850, Captain Horatio T. Austin⁸ on the HMS *Resolute*, for which Resolute and Resolute Bay are named, wintered at Griffin Island, southwest of Resolute Bay.

Life prior to the relocations in the 1950s shaped the experiences of the people who eventually made Resolute their home. Inuit from Quebec were well-acquainted with the institutions that played a large role in Inuit life—traders, missionaries, and RCMP. Trade had been prevalent throughout the area since the 18th century.

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

With greater competition among trading companies in northern Quebec, trade had firmly rooted itself as the primary base in the economy of the Itivimiut. Consequently, mobility patterns changed when people centralized towards trade centres where it was easier to rely on furs and credit rather than on subsistence hunting practices. At the same time, missionaries competed for religious dominance through church and schools, but often failed to offer continued guidance. Little by little, traditional Inuit social structures and belief systems had fallen away. 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.⁹ By the 1950s, and the time of the relocations, many Itivimiut sent their children to school (thirty-nine 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, compare to Inuit in Quebec, even if they also had a very long history of trade. Whalers from Scotland, England, and America had operated in the area since the nineteenth century and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) had established a post at Pond Inlet in 1921. While trade played a role in their day-to-day lives, Tununirmiut had yet to embrace settlement life. A school only opened in the community in 1959, six years after the first families left the area and were relocated to Resolute.

Changing Patterns of Life

Once in Resolute, however, the two groups found themselves in a new landscape living close to strangers with different customs and expectations. On top of this, an existing military and transportation base created additional, foreign, and unexpected bureaucratic structures and cultural divisions in the community. Many Inuit were also shocked when they learned that they now faced strict game laws. The history of the military base and the game laws provides important context for understanding the community's history, and the new problems and cultural challenges the relocatees faced once they arrived.

In 1947, Canada and the United States established a joint Arctic weather station on the southern coast of Cornwallis Island at Resolute Bay. The meteorological station was originally destined for Winter Harbour on Melville Island, but heavy ice conditions rerouted the ship. Resolute was chosen because the bay was generally clear of ice in the summer, which facilitated the unloading of bulk supplies by sea. Cornwallis Island's central position within the Arctic Archipelago also made it an attractive location for an airfield, which was built by engineers and army personnel as part of the weather station project.¹⁰

Two years later, in 1949, a RCAF base was established 3 kilometres from the airstrip, becoming the new home for the weather station. The base and airstrip remained the responsibility of the RCAF until 1964 when control was transferred to the Canadian Department of Transport (now Transport Canada, TC). The airfield became one of the most important in northern Canada, as it was useable throughout the year and had a large, paved apron. It served as a supply hub for the military bases at Alert, Isachsen, and Mould Bay on Ellesmere, Ellef Ringnes, and Prince Patrick Islands respectively. In 1962, the airfield also became home to Atlas Aviation, the first air company to be headquartered in the Arctic Islands.¹¹

With the relocations, the RCAF base was no longer isolated. As described later in this report, the installation played a major part in the history of the community. Qausuitturmiut received medical care at the base even though the government never intended for medics to serve local populations. Qausuitturmiut also took advantage of excess construction materials for building houses and workshops in the settlement and several people eventually worked at the base. The installation was also a critical factor in hastening change in Resolute. The airfield facilitated consumption of southern goods, including alcohol, and the RCMP likely felt more pressure under the eyes of southern employees to enforce rules, such as the Ordinance Respecting Dogs.

Inuit relocated to Resolute were also affected by federal game laws to an extent that they had not experienced before. 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. In July 1917, hunting restrictions were broadened through the Northwest Game Act to include 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 Eskimos who are bona fide inhabitants of the Northwest Territories” as well as any “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 now permitted to take caribou, muskox, and bird eggs “only when such persons [were] actually in need of such game or eggs to prevent starvation.”¹² Through the Act, the caribou-hunting season was limited to late summer and mid-winter. All hunting of muskox was prohibited except in specific zones set out by the government from time to time.

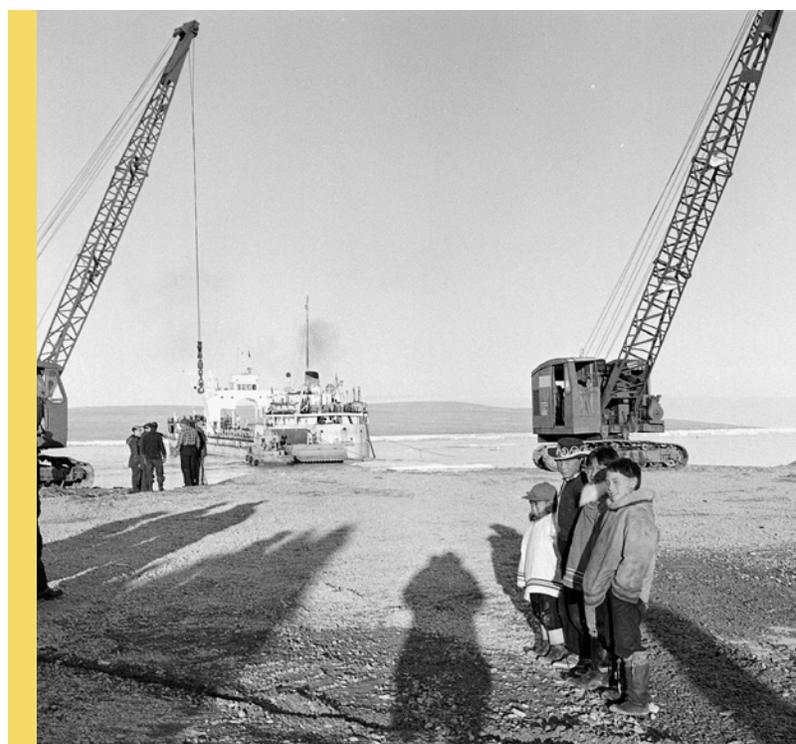
The creation of the Arctic Islands Game Preserve in 1926 effectively established permanent boundaries for a conservation area. It also aimed to establish Canadian control over the Canadian Arctic Archipelago by demonstrating a form of functional administration. The preserve encompassed the high arctic 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 licence. In general, the regulations put in place by the Northwest Game Act still applied to local Inuit, and the relocatees were expected to follow the provisions of the AIGP. Since 1932, the RCMP had been staffed with enforcing the regulations, but was sporadic in doing so, as it depended on whether an officer perceived a legitimate “need” in any given situation.¹³ For their part, Inuit held little to no respect for the regulations that limited access to much-needed food and often hunted muskox or caribou as they saw fit. Throughout the 1960s, they increasingly questioned the legitimacy of the legislation imposed on people

who had no voice in its creation. The Arctic Islands Game Preserve was eventually disbanded in 1966, and in 1969, the ban on hunting muskox in the Northwest Territories was rescinded.¹⁴

Sanguusaqtauliqtilluta (1950–1960)

RELOCATIONS

The term “Sanguusaqtauliqtilluta” 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. For the people of Resolute, the changes began in the communities from which they were relocated, but the challenges were stark when they arrived in Resolute in 1953 as part of the High Arctic Relocations program.



Qausuitturmiut watch cargo being landed at Resolute, [1959].
Credit: K. Parks/National Film Board of Canada/Library and Archives Canada/PA-179000.

The game policies and the establishment of military bases in the Arctic were only two components in an escalating government presence in the Canadian north. Beginning during the Second World War, and increasingly evident in the immediate postwar period, the Canadian government became more directly involved in the lives of the Inuit. It was cautious at first about interfering with Inuit trading and subsistence routines, but it became bolder when more qallunaat and government services appeared in the Qikiqtani Region and other parts of the Arctic. To many officials and Canadians, change was inevitable and necessary. The desired direction and pace of change was never established with certainty, which made it difficult for anyone—Inuit, RCMP, bureaucrats, businesses, and so on—to plan effectively.

Several factors motivated the government to act, including the collapse of fur prices in 1949 and the perception that Inuit were poor and vulnerable to starvation. A lack of effective communication and racist and colonial attitudes led to harmful decisions. The drop in fur prices after the Second World War reduced Inuit incomes from furs by about 85%, while the cost of goods doubled. The government became very concerned that costs for relief would go up and that the downward pressure on fur prices might drive traders, especially the HBC, out of the Arctic. This would leave a reluctant 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 government began pursuing an internal policy of “inducing” Inuit from areas deemed to be “overpopulated” to move 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.¹⁵ As a sympathetic 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's 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.¹⁶

The government also considered the colonization of the high arctic by Inuit as a strategy to 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 started building an equally strong military and scientific presence.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸

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 relocating families in 1934 when ten families from Kinngait, Pangnirtung, and Pond Inlet were relocated to Dundas Harbour on Devon Island and placed under the attention

of the HBC. The experiment was short-lived, as the environment was considered too severe. The relocated families were very dissatisfied with life there. The relocated individuals and families were later transferred to Arctic Bay and Fort Ross in the Kitikmeot region. 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 and Sleeper Islands on the Belcher- Islands during the fall months to diminish pressure on local game. The local RCMP considered this short-term, short-distance relocation policy a success, but the government remained concerned about access to game.¹⁹

In 1952, the Canadian government decided to make another attempt at permanent relocation to the high arctic. Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island, Craig Harbour, and the Bache Peninsula on Ellesmere Island were chosen as potential relocation sites. They were purported to be plentiful in game, although no wildlife studies had been conducted there and no Inuit had lived in the area for centuries.²⁰ 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. 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 on fur, low prices on goods, and easy credit. As a result, people spent more time trapping for trade, which increased their dependency on store-bought food and clothes purchased on credit against social benefits, especially family allowance.²¹ They lived near or in settlements, and often their children attended school. Therefore, when fur prices dropped, many families struggled to pay for food and other necessities, and this alarmed the government.

When making the decision about relocating people, evidence firmly points to the fact that Inuit were never fully informed of options or potential consequences. Inuit were reluctant to relocate for many reasons, including the very real and understandable fear of

losing a connection to their homeland. Although the government and RCMP referred to the relocated families as “volunteers,” the selection of people 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 the RCAP and testimonies collected by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) and the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) show that Inuit were afraid of 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.”²² 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.”²³ 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 that the moves were voluntary.²⁴

Some government agents were concerned from the outset that the relocation experiments might not work. To alleviate their concerns, the Federal Administrator of the Arctic, Alexander Stevenson, stated that, if after two years people relocated were “dissatisfied or unhappy in their new environment they could return to Port Harrison [Inukjuak].”²⁵ The RCMP officers involved in the planning and implementation of the relocation made a similar promise that relocatees could return home. Henry Larsen, the officer commanding the “G” Division (the Arctic Division) promised that “families will be brought home at the end of one year if they so desire.”²⁶ 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. The circumstances surrounding government motivations to move, as well as consent and promises made are fully explored in the RCAP report, *The High Arctic Relocation: A Report of the 1953–55 Relocation*.

In early September 1953, three Inukjuak families and one Pond Inlet family, along with their qimmiit and personal possessions, arrived by ship at the southern shore of Cornwallis Island. Constable Gibson, who had brought with him the equipment required to establish an RCMP detachment and small RCMP

store, accompanied them.²⁷ No site had previously been selected for the settlement; the only stipulation was that they could not establish themselves too close to the RCAF property. In the end, the detachment, store, and settlement were established 8 kilometres from the base and weather station.

LIST OF FAMILIES RELOCATED TO RESOLUTE IN 1953

| Family | Origin |
|---|------------|
| Jaybeddie Amagoalik and his wife Kanoinoo, with their son Ekaksak and two daughters Merrari and Sippora. | Pond Inlet |
| Daniel Salluviniq and his wife Sarah, with their son Allie, and two daughters Louisa and Jeannie. | Inukjuak |
| Simeonie Amagoalik and his wife Sarah, their son Paul (born on the <i>C. D. Howe</i>), Simeonie's brother Jaybeddie, and his grandmother Nellie. | Inukjuak |
| Alex Patsauq and his wife Edith, with their three sons Markoosie, Johnny, and Jimmy, and daughter Lizzie. | Inukjuak |

Table 1:²⁸ Names and their spelling are based on 1990 Makivik documents.

Jaybeddie Amagoalik's family from Pond Inlet was included in the relocation because the government felt that their skills would allow them to help other families adapt to conditions in Resolute. While the climate at Pond Inlet was somewhat similar to that of Resolute, it is important to remember how different the whole environment was from northern Quebec. The distance between Inukjuak and Resolute was over 2,250 kilometres, approximately the same difference between Toronto, Ontario, and Miami, Florida. Resolute also experienced three months of total darkness, much more extreme temperatures, different ice conditions, and different animal patterns than northern Quebec, where some wood was also available for building supplies and for fuel. Itivimiut had also been accustomed to attending school, worshipping, trading, and receiving medical

care within developed settlements. In contrast, Pond Inlet was 566 kilometres away from Resolute, well above the tree line, and most Tununirmiut still resided in *ilagiit nunagivaktangit*.²⁹

People also had difficulty finding food. The Inukjuak Inuit were accustomed to a varied subsistence diet that included birds and their eggs, fish, whales, seals, walrus, and caribou. When the relocated families arrived in Resolute in September, walrus had already migrated out of range, there were restrictions on hunting the few caribou in the area, and the fish in local streams and lakes were inedible due to parasites.³⁰ John Amagoalik later told the QTC, "The men had to learn about this new environment because they just didn't know where to go hunting.

Were there any fish? Were there any caribou? We didn't know any of this."³¹ The limited supply of caribou hides for clothing was serious and was compounded by inadequate ammunition supplies, cold temperatures, and three months of darkness, which began only two months after their arrival.³²

The hardships of the first years are seared into the memories of those who experienced them. Dora Pudluk told the QIA that when she arrived, "I found it scary ... the dark season frightened me. I came here when it was cold and dark. There wasn't really a real home and it was starting to get dark at that time."³³ Allie Salluviniq told the QIA that her parents had a similar first impression. "It was hard at first, cold and they did not know how to hunt for animals up here because they were different from northern Quebec animals, the way the animals up here migrated or where the animals were."³⁴ Added on top of all of these challenges were the loss of friendships and kinships with the move and the cultural and language differences between the Pond Inlet and Inukjuak groups. These differences created significant barriers between the people of Pond Inlet and Inukjuak. Being from Inukjuak, Minnie Allakariallak remembered how difficult it was communicating with the people from Pond Inlet. Her experiences were captured by the RCAP in 1993.

They were not told that they would be joined in Resolute Bay by people from Pond Inlet. The people from Pond Inlet were Inuit and so they had affection for them but they had great difficulty understanding each other. The Pond Inlet Inuit thought that the Inukjuak Inuit were speaking English because their dialects were so different. The Inukjuak people never knew where the Pond Inlet people were going or what they were planning to do.³⁵

Many of the Pond Inlet families had also been told that the people from Inukjuak were poor and used to living on relief, but the Inukjuak Inuit did not consider themselves to be poor or in need. Added to this was the expectation by relocatees from Pond Inlet that they would be compensated for helping the Inukjuak people adapt to the northern environment. No payment was ever received, which likely fueled resentment over the relocations. Anthropologist Milton Freeman recorded that "indifference, ridicule, and even hostility were not uncommon features of intergroup relations" in Resolute.³⁶

The RCMP reported that the hardships were "owing to a lack of supplies and inadequate equipment."³⁷ This was an understatement. When they first arrived, they had no water transportation with the exception of two small one-man kayaks, no storage space, and no stores, and their tents were in very poor condition.³⁸ In fact, Constable Gibson reported shortages totalling more than \$1,000 worth of goods and had to ask the RCAF for assistance in the form of accommodations for himself, storage space for his supplies, and transportation of the supplies from the beach to the RCAF storehouse. Constable Gibson also relied completely on the RCAF for medical supplies.³⁹

The government, as can be seen in a letter from F. J. G. Cunningham, Director of the Department of Resources and Development, provided only limited support. In response to Constable Gibson's report on the poor condition of the Inuit tents, James Cantley, an advisor for the relocation experiment, commented, "As the Eskimos had quite evidently been living in the same tents before they went to Resolute, it is not considered that the conditions they met with there were any more unpleasant than those they left."⁴⁰ The assumption that supplies suitable for the climate of northern Quebec were also suitable for Resolute implies either a lack of concern with regard to the relocatee's well-being, or ignorance of the northern environment. Nevertheless, in the face of all these challenges, the families worked hard to establish a settlement at Resolute.

A month after their arrival, in October 1953, Constable Gibson reported that people were still residing in tents but preparing to construct winter residences. He also reported that a building had been constructed out of materials obtained from the weather station dump to be used as a community centre for drying pelts and clothing, as a workshop, and as a church. Gibson also reported that he would be using the building during the coming dark season as a classroom. He hoped that it would help provide distraction for the Inukjuak children who had never experienced a dark season. He also ordered supplies and materials for carving.⁴¹

The following spring, many families expressed an interest to leave. They had been 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. This had been a condition put in place by Superintendent Larsen, who supported the relocations to Resolute and Grise Fiord, but had witnessed how Inuit who had been relocated to Dundas Harbour in 1942 were unhappy and wanted to return home.⁴² Many people remember this promise being made. Allie Salluviniq told the QIA, "My parents were promised that if they wanted to go back to their original home in northern Quebec, after two years they would be returning back home."⁴³ Despite Larsen's promise, this was not considered as a serious option by the government, who wanted to see the relocations succeed. Rather, the government discouraged Qausuitturmiut from formally requesting to return.⁴⁴ John Amagoalik told the QTC:

That spring the RCMP was told by our community adults that the group wanted to return to Inukjuak because life was too difficult. They missed their families. They missed their home. They missed their food, the kind of food that they were used to. They told the RCMP that next spring the families wanted to go back home ... The response was that they were sorry, there was nothing they could do and that we would have

*to stay there. [The RCMP] said that if we were lonely for our family members perhaps they could be persuaded to come here as well.*⁴⁵

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 Resolute. However, there is much evidence that life remained difficult for the relocatees. Martha Flaherty told the RCAP of the stress and homesickness her family experienced.

*I remember the men being out for months and the women and children were left alone in the community to fend for themselves. I remember my parents always yearning for food. They were crying for fish, berries, game birds, and things that were just not available up there. It is also very important for people to understand the complete and utter isolation that we experienced. We were completely cut off from the world for the first three or four years; no way of communicating with our families and friends back home.*⁴⁶

By the spring of 1954, Qausuitturmiut were gathering scrap and surplus wood from the RCAF base and the dump to build homes. In 1955, thirty-four more people were relocated from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet to Resolute under the same government relocation program. Joseph Idlout and his family, including his daughter Leah, were included in the 1955 relocation from Pond Inlet. Idlout was the subject of a National Film Board (NFB) documentaries, *Land of the Long Day*, filmed at Pond Inlet in 1952, and *Between Two Worlds*, filmed in 1990. He was once considered to be one of the most well-known Inuit and his picture was used on the back of the Canadian \$2 bill.

LIST OF FAMILIES RELOCATED TO RESOLUTE IN 1955

| Family | Origin |
|--|------------|
| Johnnie Echalook and his wife Minnie, their daughters Lizzie, Rynee, Dora, Mary, and Leah, and their son George. Andrew and Jackoosie Iqaluk (brothers-in-law), Mawa, Martha, Emily, and Mary (all unidentified relation) were also relocated under Echalook's care. | Inukjuak |
| Levi Nungak and his wife Alici, their three daughters Annie, Minnie, and Anna, and their son Philipusie. | Inukjuak |
| Joseph Idlout and his family, including Leah Idlout-Paulson and Susan Salluvinik (daughters). | Pond Inlet |
| Horatio Kudloo, his wife Lydia, and their children Ooingot, Ludy, Andrew, Ootook, Mary, Isaac, Nathaniel, and Martha (names provided by John Amagoalik, Executive Advisor, QIA). | Pond Inlet |

Table 2:⁴⁷ List of Families Relocated to Resolute (as spelled in historical documents)

Since the new arrivals also needed homes, materials for three houses were shipped to Resolute in 1955. These materials arrived both too late and in too poor condition. The majority of the food was spoiled. The following year, however, three buildings—a community store, a warehouse, and a school—were constructed using salvageable materials. By 1957, Qausuitturmiut had constructed eleven makeshift houses along the beach out of scrap government materials and materials taken from the military base and dump. The base also provided enough electricity to the village for each house to run a single light.⁴⁸

Constable Gibson reported in 1958 that all Inuit at Resolute were living in well-constructed houses they had built from scrap lumber. He noted that families moved into tents during the summer while fixing up their houses. By 1960, Qausuitturmiut had built fourteen houses. Some families, however, chose to live away from the settlement. Between 1955 and 1960, three or four families occupied an ilagiit nunagivaktangat called Kuvinajuq on

Somerset Island at Bellot Strait and Creswell Bay.⁴⁹ The island had long been a historical hunting ground for caribou, and Kuvinajuq was a popular occupation site.

Physical divisions persisted in the settlement that reinforced racial and socio-economic differences. The RCAF base and the weather station were out of bounds to Inuit unless they worked there and ilagiit nunagivaktangit and the settlement were out of bounds to qallunaat personnel. The Department of National Defence (DND) and the RCAF had not been told about the relocations ahead of time and reported to the government that they would not be responsible for providing housing, food, clothing, or medical attention to Inuit. In addition, they warned that Inuit would have to demonstrate good working behaviour before being hired at the base. Even after a few Qausuitturmiut were hired, qallunaat were still not allowed to visit the settlement and Qausuitturmiut women and children were effectively prohibited from leaving it.

The RCMP officer at Resolute worked as a communications link between the base, the government, and Qausuitturmiut. David Kalluk remembered for the QTC, the “RCMP were the leaders back then. They seemed to be higher than any other bosses because they were very scary.”⁵⁰ George Eckalook recalled that even though there were other qallunaat in the area, “it was only the RCMP that we dealt with.”⁵¹ RCMP Constable Gibson, who accompanied the families relocated to Resolute, made regular reports that indicated that his primary concern was the behaviour of military personnel, not Inuit.

Unlike other Inuit communities, people had to adjust to the fact that there was no HBC post nearby. Instead, the government assumed responsibility for acquiring and shipping goods to Resolute, with the local RCMP officer acting as de facto trader for the community. The trade store run by Constable Gibson provided the only trading opportunities at Resolute.

From the outset, Resolute was part of a mixed economy, with many Qausuitturmiut balancing wage employment at the base and weather station with hunting and income from carving and trapping.⁵² Most wage employment was temporary and seasonal. Many Qausuitturmiut were hired in the spring to assist in loading and unloading air-lifted supplies. In 1960, four men had permanent jobs—one as a teacher and three with the RCAF Survival School. The men employed by the RCAF were picked because they were the top hunters in Resolute and were declared “deserving [of] employment and the benefits that accompany wage employment.”⁵³ Wage employment at the base provided a solid income and access to various base benefits, including easy access to the base canteen. Employment at the base was unreliable, however. Qallunaat summer students were hired on at least one occasion in place of local men. The availability of wage employment challenged the reasons why people were relocated in the first place, namely, to live independent of qallunaat (non-Inuit) interference.

By 1963, there were nine permanent full-time positions, including two janitors, three assistant mechanics, three employees of the Survival School, and one caretaker for the government buildings and facilities. Most of the other men in Resolute

were able to find temporary jobs with the RCAF, TC, the newly arrived Polar Continental Shelf Project, or various other government and exploration initiatives visiting the area. In the winter, many Qausuitturmiut worked on soapstone carvings and handicrafts when they were not hunting. In many cases, Qausuitturmiut were not always paid their wages directly, but rather received “credits” from the government via the RCMP. Qausuitturmiut could then spend their credits at the RCMP-run store, although the credit system appears to have been poorly managed, and many Qausuitturmiut allege that they often worked without remuneration. This system changed when a co-op was founded in November 1960.⁵⁴

Nunalinnguqti-tauliqtiluta (1960–1975)

The term “Nunalinnguqtitauliqtiluta” means “the time when we were actively (by outside force) formed into communities.” Nunalinnguqtitauliqtiluta conforms to the period when the 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

By the 1960s, the community of Resolute had gained a sense of permanence and was starting to feel less like an artificial settlement. The federal government officially ended its relocation policy early in the decade, citing insufficient game resources in the area. Inuit continued to move from Pond Inlet and Inukjuak, now without government assistance, to be with family members already established in Resolute. At the same time, however, some Itivimiut formally petitioned to return to northern Quebec. In other instances, Inuit from Arctic Bay, Bellot Strait, Spence Bay, and Grise Fiord temporarily moved to Resolute for a year or two before settling in another community. With newcomers and natural population increases, the community’s population grew from 89 in 1961 to 154 by 1967.⁵⁵

During the 1960s and 1970s, a number of government programs aimed at education, health care, and housing were introduced throughout the Arctic. Health care services were slow to arrive at Resolute. The RCMP had been tasked with looking after the health of Qausuitturmiut, including making sure that people were given routine, seasonal check-ups. Medical staff visited once a year on the Arctic patrol ship *C. D. Howe* to provide annual X-rays and vaccinations and determine who would be evacuated to southern tuberculosis sanatoriums. In his book, John Amagoalik recalled how almost everyone in his family, including himself, was sent to hospitals in the south for treatment.

*[Tuberculosis] was a scourge in our communities then. Many of our parents ended up getting back on the ship and getting shipped out to recover in southern hospitals. I think in the first two years, about five or six adults and some children were taken on the ship and sent south. My older brother was one of them, and my mother was another ... My younger brother Jimmy was away for two years. Later I was also treated at the Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton for two years.*⁵⁶

Unfortunately, however, the ship sometimes brought infectious diseases with it. In 1957, the *C.D. Howe* was forced to stop at Resolute after some Inuit passengers contracted measles. The infected passengers were off-loaded on the shore near the settlement, but despite efforts to keep the populations separated, the disease quickly infected many Qausuitturmiut.⁵⁷

Resolute's military and transportation installations proved to be a mixed blessing for Inuit health. The RCMP often received support and medicine from the RCAF medic. Nurses travelling to high arctic communities often passed through the base at Resolute and sometimes took time to examine people. The closeness of the settlement to the RCAF base also allowed for emergency extraction of patients with serious illnesses to Iqaluit or other

health care centres, weather permitting. Women with pregnancy complications were often sent to Churchill, Manitoba, for treatment. However, being in proximity to so many new people resulted in frequent illness and influenza outbreaks among Qausuitturmiut.

Beginning in 1961, weekly medical calls were made to all Qausuitturmiut houses by the RCMP, accompanied by an RCAF medic. The RCAF then evacuated any serious cases via aircraft that was scheduled to land every two weeks. A temporary nursing station was erected in 1968, and a nurse from the Tower Company, the organization in charge of maintaining the RCAF base, staffed it.⁵⁸

The nearby qallunaat presence also brought with it easier access to alcohol, with its own consequences for community health. Alcohol also had a terrible impact on family life. As early as 1961, the RCAF had restricted access to purchasing alcohol at the base canteen. By 1962, the RCMP reported that the restrictions "helped the people, although some will disagree, in their homelife [sic] and work. The women are pretty well all agreed that the move was a good one and are quite happy to see it remain that way. Most state that the home and village life has been much better since the move was made."⁵⁹ As Martha Idlout told the QTC, there was initially no regulation on alcohol, and "the whole town would be drunk for a whole week" when a shipment of alcohol came in.⁶⁰

Upon arrival in Resolute, Qausuitturmiut were obliged to build houses from a combination of materials supplied by the government and scrap materials scavenged from the military and weather station dumps. By 1960, there were fourteen houses reported to be in good condition by the RCMP in the settlement. The new co-op, founded in 1960, provided a new avenue for Qausuitturmiut to purchase housing materials. In 1964, an additional four houses were erected, bringing the total number of houses to eighteen. An Anglican church was built in 1965 with a lay preacher from Pond Inlet conducting the services. Mail was delivered to the airport terminal twice weekly, and communications were provided by the Bell Canada Anik satellite system. By the end of the 1960s, the new townsite had a population of 169 Inuit and 18 qallunaat, while the military population was entirely non-Inuit and fluctuated from around 300 in the summer to less than 100 in the winter.⁶¹

While daily life was very different in the settlement than at the military base, Terry Jenkin, a former RCMP officer in the community, remembers that “there were exceptions ... Inuit were invited to the station to the Christmas party. Entertainment troops came in [and] Inuit were invited [to attend].”⁶² Ludy Pudluk moved to Resolute as a teenager and worked for the RCAF as a young man. “I started picking up English. They helped me out ... I am glad they were friendly and they would repeat what they were saying so I could understand.”⁶³ Dora Pudluk had a different experience. “[The RCMP] were welcoming but the people from the Air Force were not very friendly. They used to be told to donate food but they never did. Even though they seemed to be welcoming, behind our backs they were not very friendly. It is something we were not very happy with.”⁶⁴

The balance between wage employment and hunting shifted in the 1960s. In 1963, many people at Resolute were concerned about the effect the transfer of the RCAF station to TC would have on Inuit employment opportunities. After the transfer in April 1964, full-time permanent employment decreased but employment overall remained the same. By the end of the year, five Inuit were employed in permanent positions—one with TC, one with the government, and three with the Tower Foundation in labour positions. Most others were able to find seasonal work with government agencies, the Marine Branch, the Polar Continental Shelf Project, or the RCAF Survival School.⁶⁵

The increasing demand for Inuit labour provided significant boosts to Qausuitturmiut incomes but also reduced the amount of time available for hunting. The use of new technologies, such as motorboats and snowmobiles, made it easier for Qausuitturmiut to work and hunt. Changes in the use of technology for hunting can be seen in information collected by the RCMP in 1958 and 1963. In 1958, there were more than a hundred qimmiit, four motorboats, and a handful of “canoes” and rowboats. By 1964, RCMP reported eighty qimmiit, seven having died from rabies, a number of “canoes” and row boats, fifteen motorboats, and eleven snowmobiles.⁶⁶

The decline in numbers of qimmiit can be attributed to an increased enforcement of the Ordinance Respecting Dogs. The ordinance called for qimmiit to

be tied up at all times. Resolute was always intended as an Inuit settlement, not as a qallunaat enclave, but no allowance was made for combining centralized living with Inuit hunting practices. The impact was seen almost immediately on the number of qimmiit and on the treatment of qimmiit by authorities. As Resolute’s population increased, more qimmiit were living in the community. This resulted in a greater potential for human-qimmiq conflict. A 1959 RCMP report mentioned that many qimmiit were running loose and enforcement of the Ordinance was necessary, but details about the method of “enforcement” were left unstated. The only practical option for enforcement would have been killing the qimmiit; chaining or muzzling working qimmiit was not an option. Qausuitturmiut clearly recall what happened to their qimmiit when authorities decided to enforce the ordinance. Dora Padluk told the QTC about the day her husband’s qimmiit were shot because some were loose. She remembers that her puppies were killed at the same time, even though they were tied up.

The puppies I was raising were tied up, they had grabbed the dogs by the rope they were tied up with, they were still alive and had already been shot and put them in the garbage by hanging them up. I was very mad, they were laughing at the same time, while putting my puppies in the garbage. I couldn't talk to them because I couldn't speak English. I remember being mad at them for laughing when killing the puppies.⁶⁷

Inuit appear to have found ways to replace qimmiit or keep them out of the community as much as possible. Within a few years, however, many Qausuitturmiut began investing in snowmobiles and motorboats. The increased income afforded by wage employment helped encourage this trend. Anthropologist David Damas records that by 1966 the community counted only one full-time hunter, although most wage-employed men also hunted for food when they were not working. While employment could provide the means to purchase

new goods, such as snowmobiles and better hunting equipment, there were also significant problems with the system. In 1966, the co-op was unable to manage stocks to meet demands and owed between \$19,000 and \$33,000 to suppliers. At the same time, many families owed the co-op between \$500 and \$1,500. In December 1971, a local HBC store opened in Resolute.⁶⁸

SHAPING COMMUNITY LIFE

During the 1970s, Resolute underwent significant change as it transformed from a supply base for Arctic military and weather stations to a major base for the trans-shipment of personnel and equipment to remote drilling or mine exploration sites. While researchers and geologists seeking natural resources had been travelling to the high arctic for decades, the worldwide energy crisis of the 1970s accelerated the search for oil and gas near Cornwallis Island. Resolute's airport became the

largest and busiest airport in the Arctic Circle, acting as a major jumping-off point for the huge influx of transients visiting the area each year. Between 1966 and 1971, the number of aircraft moving through Resolute increased from two thousand to thirteen thousand. Scheduled weekly flights to Resolute from Edmonton, Montreal, and Winnipeg began in 1973.⁶⁹

By the early 1970s, Resolute was divided into three separate areas: the Inuit settlement (originally called the Eskimo Village), the airport, and an industrial and residential sector called South Camp, where contractors and employees of the base lived and worked.⁷⁰ Located between the settlement and the airport, South Camp primarily served the transient qallunaat population with a bunkhouse, repair shop, and storage facilities, but it was also the location of the HBC and the local school. In 1974, the settlement's permanent population was around two hundred. Its thirty-two households were served by marine and air transportation, a nursing station, an RCMP detachment, a primary school (grades one to six), two churches, a community hall, a library, a post office, a bank, a curling rink, a theatre, a hotel, an HBC store, and an Inuit co-operative.⁷¹ On a map, Resolute appeared to be very isolated, but in reality, it was well connected through its airport and through the scientists and researchers who stayed in the community often.

In 1970, the Canadian government asked Ralph Erskine,⁷² an architect trained in England and working in Sweden, to examine a new town plan for Resolute. Massive snow drifts, noise and danger from the airport approach, and the requirement for new houses prompted the project. He envisaged a community for seven hundred people, Inuit and qallunaat, composed of a set of family residential units embraced by a wall of three-storey apartment buildings surrounding the community.⁷³ In the end, at least one of Erskine's structures was built—an apartment building that was in use as a hotel in 2011.

With the exception of the airport's residential area, any useful buildings were moved approximately three kilometres from the western shore to the eastern shore of Resolute Bay in the summer of 1975. The new location provided improved water and sewage infrastructure, as well as room for the planned community with its ring-road. The previous



Inuit woman [Alacee Nungaq] wearing an amauti and three children [Philip, Annie and Anna Levi] outside in Resolute Bay, Northwest Territories [Resolute Bay (Qausuittuq), Nunavut].
Credit: Gar Lunney / National Film Board of Canada. Phototheque / Library and Archives Canada / e010949311.

settlement site was generally abandoned, with only a few unusable buildings and the cemetery remaining.⁷⁴ Prior to the relocation, few houses in the settlement had running water— many Qausuitturmiut got their water by tapping icebergs, gathering snow, or fetching water in the summer from Char Lake. At the new townsite, fuel and water were delivered once a week and garbage was picked up weekly by truck in the summer and by snowmobile and sled in the winter. Electricity was improved, and television arrived in the community in 1975.⁷⁵ A number of new prefabricated houses were also erected and serviced by the utilidor system (an above-ground chase for public utilities, such as power and water).

The new townsite for Resolute was located further inland from the water of Resolute Bay, making it more difficult for Qausuitturmiut to observe migrating marine mammals from town. Travel to the ice floe also became cumbersome because equipment had to be hauled across land to the boats. Saroomie Manik told the QTC that she preferred the older settlement location:

I was satisfied with the way it was set up [before 1975]. I'm sorry we moved [to the new settlement]. We were close to the shore, and we are too far from the shore right now. When you come here in the late spring, when you don't have transportation, it gets more difficult to bring supplies up. This is the part I don't like about the relocation from the other settlement.⁷⁶

During 1970s, Qausuitturmiut became more and more politically active, effectively protesting some of the natural resource development in the region. Several important Inuit leaders were residents of Resolute, including John Amagoalik, who played a major role in establishing Inuit rights and the Nunavut Agreement. Two other leaders of note are Ludy Pudluk and Simeonie Amagoalik, both of whom provided testimony to the QTC, albeit about community life rather than their direct political experiences. Pudluk represented the high arctic as a member of the Legislation Council of the Northwest Territories for almost twenty years. He advocated for

improvements to all types of services, including education and game laws, and sought direct Inuit involvement in decision-making. Simeonie Amagoalik advocated for numerous environmental and political issues related to resource development. In the 1970s, caribou populations significantly declined on Bathurst Island. At the same time, companies such as Panarctic Oils Limited and Cominco Limited were trying to develop natural resources through seismic testing and mining near Resolute. Many Qausuitturmiut felt this was scaring away the caribou populations. Various Inuit groups became involved, including the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) and the Inuit Development Corporation (IDC). This political engagement delayed the opening of Cominco's Avarik (Polaris) mine until 1980 and led to the eventual acquisition of mineral rights in Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.⁷⁷

Many people at Resolute never forgot the impact of the high arctic relocation programs. It not only affected those who were moved, but also those left behind and succeeding generations born in Resolute. During the 1970s and into the 1980s, many Qausuitturmiut petitioned the government to return to Inukjuak and Pond Inlet. In 1988, the government paid for many to return home.⁷⁸ As John Amagoalik told the QTC:

The relocation issue, our particular relocation issue, has been dealt with but not completely. We did receive a compensation package from the Government of Canada [but] this issue is not closed until that apology comes ... I think an official acknowledgement and a sincere apology is very much needed because, the Inuit, they do want to forgive people who did this. You can't forgive someone who doesn't acknowledge what happened. So they need to acknowledge, they need to apologize so we can at least have the opportunity to forgive them. In order for forgiveness to be given there must be truth and an acknowledgement of what happened.⁷⁹

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.⁸⁰ While the Agreement led to \$10 million being awarded to the survivors of the relocation, the government only issued a formal apology in 2010.

Conclusion

Resolute is now an important centre for exploration and scientific research in Canada’s Arctic. The community boasts four hotels and serves as a jumping-off point for tourism and research to the North Pole, visiting Quttinirpaaq National Park and tracing the Franklin expedition. It remains home to ancient glaciers and vast stretches of untouched Arctic landscapes.

Resolute is also a community with a remarkable, albeit short, history that is relevant to understanding Inuit life today in all parts of Canada. The relocation of Inuit from Pond Inlet and Inukjuak in 1953 and 1955 set in motion the building of a living community connected to the land, sea, and ice. Qallunaat installations were important for the development of Resolute as a transportation hub, but it was the labour and initiative of Inuit that created and sustained the community. Qausuitturmiut have not forgotten the traumatic events surrounding the relocation and the effects of the ordinance and other policies that changed their lives. Residents took advantage of the language and social skills they learned working with qallunaat. They found ways to survive the darker elements of living next to the frontierlike transportation base at South Camp. In the process, the survival of the community was ensured, and equally important for Qikiqtani Inuit, leadership emerged that was critical for forging a path to gain Inuit rights.

In 1974, Simeonie Amarualik, Walter Audla, and Peter Paniloo wrote a letter to Jean Chretien, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, about the government’s approval of a seismic program on Bathurst Island

that Inuit believed would affect animals that they hunted.⁸¹ They eloquently pointed out the hypocrisy evident in the decision, especially in the context of a community created by the government expressly to hunt. They also set out, in clear terms, how a government that repeatedly used technical studies as the rationale to limit Inuit activities decided to ignore technical studies when it came to mineral development. They asked the minister “to listen to [their] voices” and provided a very succinct summary of the history of their community that will also serve as the conclusion for this community history.

The people who now live in Resolute Bay were re-located there by the federal government in 1953. Some of us came from several thousand miles away, from Pond Inlet and from Port Harrison in northern Quebec.

It was very hard to leave our friends and our relations and to move to a different place, thousands of miles away. In fact, many of us did not want to move at all. But the federal government, represented by the RCMP, told us that the game would be plentiful in Resolute Bay, and they told us that we should live there for two years and then decide whether we wanted to stay or not. After two years when some of us wanted to move back to our homes, the federal government refused to pay our way. So we stayed in Resolute Bay and it became our home. We lived in Resolute Bay, we hunted there, we married there, we had our children there and we became a part of the community there. Now Resolute Bay is our home and we do not want to leave it.⁸²

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.

ENDNOTE

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- 15 Frank Tester and Peter Kulchyski, *Tammarniit (Mistakes); Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic 1939–63* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994), 7; and Alan R. Marcus, *Out in the Cold: The Legacy of Canada's Inuit Relocation Experiment in the High Arctic* (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 1992), 13–14.
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- 17 Shelagh D. Grant, *Polar Imperative A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 320.
- 18 RCAP, *The High Arctic Relocation*, 115.
- 19 Marcus, *Out in the Cold*, 11–12.
- 20 Marcus, *Out in the Cold*, 22.
- 21 Canada, *The High Arctic Relocation*, 48–51.
- 22 George Eckalook, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, n.d.
- 23 Simeonie Amagoalik, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, n.d.
- 24 Marcus, *Out in the Cold*, 14, 16, 20–21.
- 25 Canada, *The High Arctic Relocation*, 6.
- 26 It was only in 1996, following RCAP recommendations and other political initiatives, that relocatees were given compensation and an opportunity to be returned home.
- 27 During the 1940s, a High Arctic detachment known as the Resolute Bay detachment patrolled the entire area comprised of the High Arctic Islands, usually by aircraft.
- 28 This table is based on information compiled from Canada, *The High Arctic Relocation: Summary of Supporting Information* (Ottawa: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994).

- 29 The Inuktitut term *ilagiit nunagivaktangit* is a more accurate name for places called “camps” in the historical record created by ethnographers, bureaucrats and police. 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.
- 30 Tester and Kulchyski, *Tammarniit (Mistakes)*, 149–150.
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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 Egeesiak, 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 Saimaqatigiingniq: 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

