Pond Inlet
(Mittimatalik)

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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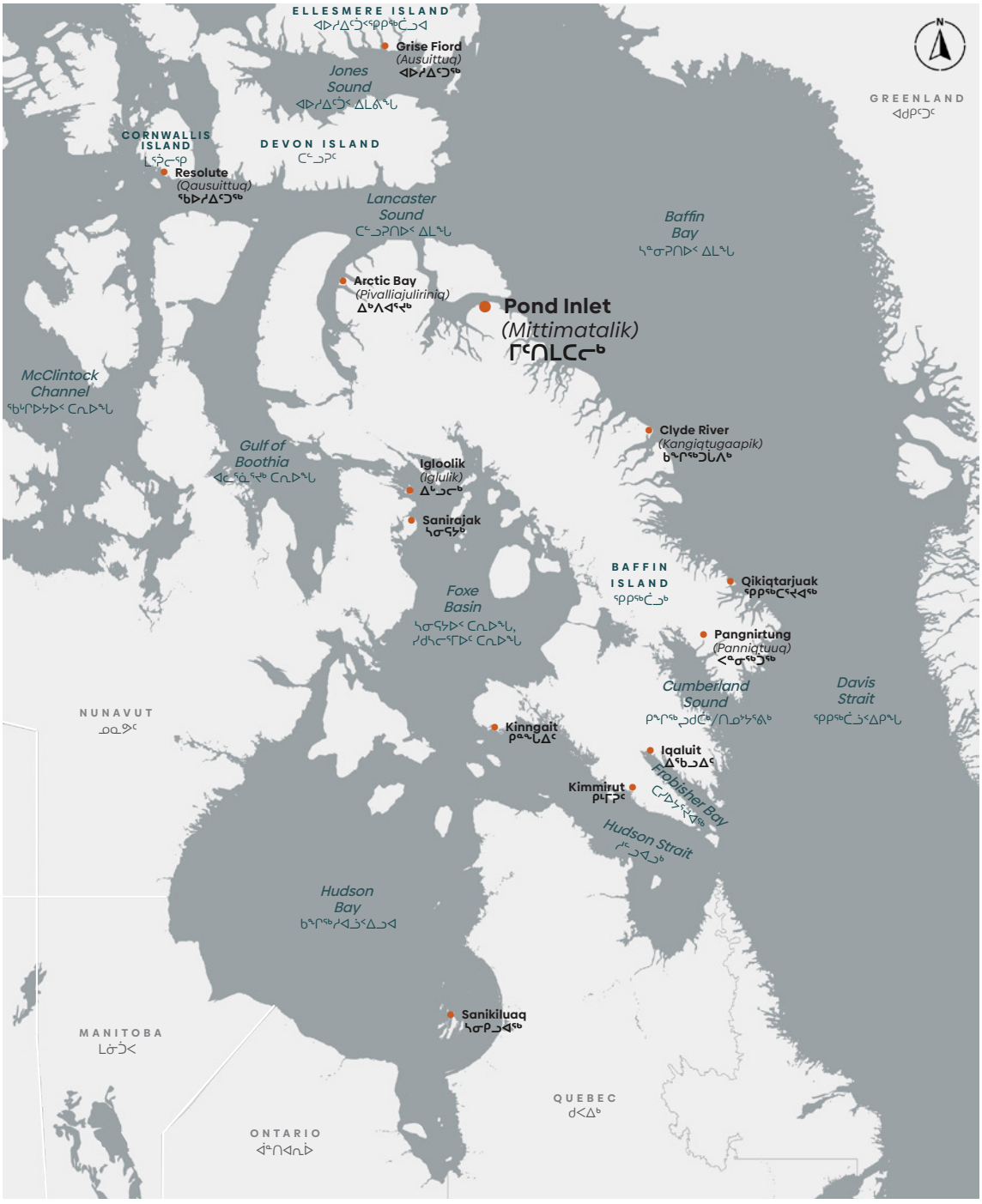

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The Roman Catholic Mission at Pond Inlet with the CGS C.D. Howe anchored in the background, [1951].
Credit: *Wilfred Doucette / National Film Board of Canada. Photothèque / Library and Archives Canada / PA-189152.*

Introducing Pond Inlet
(Mittimatalik)

Pond Inlet[1], named Mittimatalik in Inuktitut, is a hamlet of about 1,500 people, with over 90% being Inuit. It is located on the east side of Eclipse Sound, about 700 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle on Baffin Island. The local name in Inuktitut is Mittimatalik,[i] and the people of the region are known as Tununirmiut, which is thought to mean "people of the shaded place," or Mittimatalingmiut, meaning "people of Mittimatalik." The hamlet shares its name with an arm of the sea that separates Bylot Island from Baffin Island. Many of the present-day residents of Pond Inlet are related to families in Igloolik.

The region has been occupied for four thousand years, through periods known to archaeologists as pre-Dorset, Dorset, Thule, and modern Inuit periods. Since the earliest times, people hunted on land, sea, and ice. Ringed seals, whales, and other marine mammals have been the most important part of their diet.[2] Evidence of a rich material and intangible culture is provided by ancestral Inuit belongings, most famously two superb shaman's masks carved more than a thousand years ago and found at Button Point on Bylot Island.

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

Pond Inlet grew along a shoreline inhabited as long as any other part of Eclipse Sound. The area's 20th-century use by qallunaat traders extended over a 65-kilometre tract from Button Point to Salmon River near the hamlet. Trading establishments started in 1903, when Scottish entrepreneurs set up a small whaling station at Igarjuaq. Over the next twenty years, traders opened several stations scattered around the area. The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) settled at the present site in 1921 and bought out its rivals by 1923. The RCMP set up a post in 1922 and two missions (Roman Catholic and Anglican) came in 1929.[3]

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 around 1955 when most Inuit were living in settlements chosen by the government[ii] and participating in the cash economy.

ILAGIIT NUNAGIVAKTANGIT

Eclipse Sound, with its many fiords, forms the heart of Pond Inlet's community land-use area. The area associated with Pond Inlet and the people who live there stretches west towards Arctic Bay, south towards Igloolik and to the Barnes Ice Cap, and eastward to Dexterity Harbour. This area adjoins the community use areas of Igloolik, Arctic Bay, and Clyde River. In the north, Pond Inlet hunters have used Bylot Island, Lancaster Sound, and parts of Devon and Ellesmere Islands.

For millennia, hunting was a complex and essential economic activity that varied by season, by species, and by place. It also changed over time, and individual hunters had their own habits and preferences. Ilagiit nunagivaktangit were places regularly used for hunting, harvesting and gathering. Inuit groups traditionally had

Left to right: Harold Kalluk, Gedeon Qitsualik, Daniel Komangaapik, Uirngut, Paul Idlout, and Rebecca Qillaq Idlout. The figure bending over in the foreground is Joseph Idlout. The group is in the process of cutting up a seal at Pond Inlet, [1951].
Credit: *Douglas Wilkinson / National Film Board of Canada / Library and Archives Canada / PA-189095.*

several ilagiit nunagivaktangit, which allowed them to move to follow game. People moved onto the ice in spring and towards open water in summer, and then returned to many of the same wintering places year after year. The seasonal round was dominated by the ringed seal, caribou, and Arctic char, which were taken year-round with a variety of techniques, depending on the amount of sea ice. Narwhal and beluga whales were caught from January to August, and walrus, in a few places, from January to May. Polar bears, a highly valuable target both for economic reasons and for a hunter's prestige, were hunted between January and June. Fish weirs were maintained at the mouths of certain rivers.

Different animals had their own habitat requirements and tendencies, which Inuit understood and acted on. Ringed seals could be hunted almost anywhere and at any time, in open water or through the sea ice and in tide cracks. The best places to hunt caribou were the north of the Borden Peninsula and in a large part of the southern interior of the region. Bears were taken at the mouth of Navy Board Inlet, and on

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.

Baffin Bay on the ice and in the water from Bylot Island southeast to Buchan Gulf. Pond Inlet hunters took walrus at the head of Foxe Basin and the mouth of Navy Board Inlet (Wollaston Islands) and crossed Lancaster Sound to the south side of Devon Island. Narwhals, which are highly prized by Tununirmiut, were most commonly hunted along the north and west shores of Eclipse Sound and all along Milne Inlet. Bowhead whales were seen, but almost never hunted in the sound. Waterfowl, including their eggs, were taken on the low flats of southern Bylot Island and nearby on Navy Board Inlet. Finally, char were caught during their spawning runs along the west side of Eclipse Sound, in the fiord to the south and in the Salmon River near Mittimatalik. Changes over time are also important for understanding the recent past. Caribou in particular have changed their range during the past century, and since 1964, the withdrawal of people from ilagiit nunagivaktangit into the settlement has left the outlying districts less visited.

Tununirmiut were known to travel great distances to hunt, socialize, and find places to live. In the 1850s a few families followed their brave but troublesome leader, Qitdlarssuaq (also known as Qillaq), and another leader, Oqe, on a decade-long migration north from Cumberland Peninsula. They lived for some time in Pond Inlet but were then forced to leave with a group of about 35 people, about half of whom decided to turn back. The continuing group successfully navigated Lancaster Sound to live on Devon Island for five years, where they encountered two searchers of the Third Franklin Expedition, Augustus Inglefield in 1854, and Francis McClintock in 1858.

Qitdlarssuaq's journeys took a different route. Several years after learning about Inuit living on Greenland's coast, he set out to find them. Everyone followed him initially, but part of the group turned back under Oqe's leadership because the journey became too long and dangerous. Oqe's group died of starvation trying to return to the Pond Inlet area. Qitdlarssuaq's group also suffered from deprivation and personal animosities, but some members of the group were able to reach Etah Greenland, 1,200 kilometres from their starting point. Qitdlarssuaq died around 1870 at Cape Herschel while trying to return to the Pond Inlet area.[4]

EARLY CONTACTS

In Baffin Bay, warm currents pass north up the Greenland coast, and a cold current descends south along Baffin Island. As a result, the west side of Baffin Bay has historically been isolated from the Greenland shore by pack ice that prevented navigation until late summer. If Norse traders or explorers found a way through the ice, their routes were not known to any Europeans who followed, including William Baffin and Robert Bylot, who successfully circled Baffin Bay in 1616 while searching for a Northwest Passage. Two centuries after Baffin and Bylot, John Ross of the Royal Navy repeated their venture, naming "Pond's Bay" on his way south, and revealing a route that the Greenland whaling fleet could follow in their pursuit of bowhead whales.

Inuit children with supplies for the Roman Catholic Mission landed from the Eastern Arctic Patrol vessel the C.D. Howe. Left to right: Jaimisi Piugaattualuk, Maata Miqqusaaq, and an unidentified individual. By this time imported supplies were an integrated part of Inuit life, [1951].
Credit: *Wilfred Doucette / National Film Board of Canada / Library and Archives Canada / PA-176866.*

Whaling brought a sudden change for the Tununirmiut, who met with whalers and traded skins and ivory for manufactured goods and timber.[5]

The floe edge near Button Point on Bylot Island, which is located across Pond Inlet, became the annual summer rendezvous point for hunters and whalers. Whalers remained cautious—they did not enter Eclipse Sound until 1854 and only made their first voyage through Navy Board Inlet as late as 1872. Contacts gradually became more certain; some Inuit even boarded whaling ships at Button Point to be taken back to wintering grounds in Navy Board Inlet or Dexterity Harbour. In 1895 Scottish whalers found the remains of several Inuit families at Dexterity Harbour, casualties of either famine or infection.

Steam whalers continued to visit Pond Inlet until 1912, but in 1903, the focus for relations between Inuit and qallunaat shifted to shore stations in Pond Inlet and Eclipse Sound. Steam whalers continued to visit Pond Inlet until 1912, but in 1903, the focus for relations between Inuit and qallunaat shifted to shore stations in Pond Inlet and Eclipse Sound. One grounded whaling vessel was harvested off Bylot Island over many decades by Tununirmiut, who utilized the solid, hard Norwegian oak to make ulus, qamutiks, and other tools. The Tununirmiut called the area where the ship was found "Umiajuaviniqtalik", which translates as a place that has the remains of/what was once a big boat.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF LIFE

In the late 1800s and the early part of the 1900s, Tununirmiut experienced a long and gradual transition as they became accustomed to year-round trading. In 1903 a seasoned Dundee whaler, Captain James Mutch (Jimi Maasi to the Tununirmiut), set up a shore station near Pond Inlet.[6] The Tununirmiut had little experience handling large whaleboats, so Mutch imported two Inuit whaling crews from Cumberland Sound. They returned south after about five years, because very few bowhead whales remained to be caught. While their station at Igarjuaq existed, Pond Inlet was visited four times by the colourful Quebec navigator, Captain Joseph-Elzear Bernier (or Kapitaikallak), who made three voyages in the government vessel *Arctic* and came back in 1912 as a private trader. Other competitors included an English adventurer, Henry Toke Munn, and an unfortunate Newfoundlander named Robert Janes. Janes was abandoned by his southern backers, and quarrelled with and threatened his Inuit companions, who put him to death to protect themselves. Janes was stopped from killing another man by Takijualuk (whom traders knew as Tom Kunuk).[7]

The events of the killing became widely known when the HBC installed a post at the present site of Pond Inlet in 1921, and a landmark trial in Canadian Arctic history followed. In 1923, the government's Eastern Arctic Patrol (EAP) came ashore with a magistrate at Pond Inlet to try three of Janes's Inuit companions for murder. One of them, Nuqallaq, was sentenced to ten years in prison in Manitoba. The trial was intended to show Inuit—and the rest of the world—that Canada would protect qallunaat and enforce its own laws in the Arctic islands.

Through the 1920s, annual visits from government and HBC vessels restored the reliable annual contact with the Atlantic world that Pond Inlet once enjoyed in the whaling era. In 1929, this stability encouraged the Anglican and Catholic churches to send missionaries to Pond Inlet, though the Tununirmiut were already mostly Anglican. The government established an RCMP post beside the HBC store in Pond Inlet and began long tradition of hiring Tununirmiut to work in the high arctic. The first were Qattuuq, his wife Ulaajuq, and their four children in 1922. Men or families from Pond Inlet also hunted for the RCMP and travelled with them for great distances on Ellesmere and Dundas islands between the wars. The Tununirmiut were especially valued because they understood their environment and were accustomed to the winter months without sunshine. In 1934, the HBC moved 52 Inuit from Baffin Island to form a new settlement at Dundas Harbour on Devon Island.

Eighteen of these Inuit were from Pond Inlet. Ice conditions made hunting and trapping hazardous and as a result, the Kinngait and Pond Inlet families were sent to Arctic Bay to help support a new trading post there after two years.

Another instance of Tununirmiut involvement in an undertaking of national interest came a decade later, when Captain Henry Larsen planned the westward transit of the Northwest Passage in his tiny vessel, the *St. Roch*. At Pond Inlet in 1944, he hired Inuit to hunt, advise on navigation, sew clothing for the crew, and generally assist with the passage. Among them were Joe Panipakuttuk, his wife Lydia,[8] his mother Panikpak and his six-year-old niece, Mary Panigusiq, a daughter of Special Constable Lazaroosie Kyak.[9]

After traveling to Yukon on the *St. Roch*, Panipakuttuk traveled by dogsled over the next two years with Lydia, Panikpak and Mary to return to Pond Inlet, more than 2,500 kilometres. Later, Mary Panigusiq had a particularly sensitive job in the 1950s working as an interpreter aboard the new government hospital ship *C. D. Howe*. The *C. D. Howe* patrolled the Eastern Arctic each summer and evacuated Inuit with tuberculosis to sanatoria and hospitals in the south. For six years, hundreds of frightened Inuit, separated from their families and surrounded by crew and officials speaking only French and English, depended on Mary for reassurance and to make their needs known, whether they came from Pond Inlet or from any of a dozen other Arctic communities.

In the 1950s, the government chose to move people from Nunavik to southern Ellesmere Island and Resolute Bay, places where game was believed to be more abundant and where new communities would help assert Canadian sovereignty. As in 1934, Tununirmiut were recruited to share their knowledge of extreme conditions. In 1953, Simon Akpaliapik and Samuel Arnakallak were moved with their families to Ellesmere from Pond Inlet, while Jaybeddie Amagoalik was moved to Resolute Bay. Seven families from Inukjuak were also relocated. In 1955, another group from Inukjuak were resettled in Grise Fiord and Resolute. The communities were not harmonious, in part because of friction between Tununirmiut and Nunavimmiut. The people chosen for these ventures were given assurances prior to relocation that they would be allowed to return to their original homes after a year or two if they were dissatisfied with the new location. The government considered the relocations a success, but Inuit protested that they unwittingly participated in an ill-conceived experiment and demanded acknowledgement of government wrongdoing. In 1996, the Canadian government awarded $10 million to survivors of the relocation, though it has never apologized for the hardships they endured.[10]

Throughout six decades of gradual change, the Tununirmiut attracted attention from outsiders who eagerly published impressions of people and place. In 1921, a party of Danish and Greenlandic scientific adventurers launched the Fifth Thule Expedition, a remarkable four-year venture moving from Greenland to Alaska, to document Inuit culture and, through archaeology and ethnography to investigate the origins of Inuit as a people. Some of the party's members, notably Therkel Matthiassen, spent time at Pond Inlet and included its sites and stories in their published expedition reports and memoirs.

Documentary filmmaker Doug Wilkinson also recorded life in the area. He spent a year on Eclipse Sound in 1953 living at an ilagiit nunagivaktangat called Aulatsivik, filming Joseph Idlout and his family for the acclaimed film and book *Land of the Long Day*.[11] Wilkinson lived with Idlout, the star of the film, travelled with him on seal-hunting trips, wore clothes made by Idlout's wife Kidlak, and recorded the annual visit of the *C. D. Howe*. Wilkinson presented a somewhat sentimental but informative portrait of life in northern Baffin Island during the 1950s. The work is also a poignant introduction to Idlout, whose relocation to Resolute Bay a few years later was not a success.[12]

A contemporary of Wilkinson's, Oblate missionary Fr. Guy Mary-Rousselière spent a lifetime in the north as a priest, archaeologist, and recorder of Inuit life and traditions. His book on Qitdlarssuaq, published overviews and vignettes of North Baffin ethnography in *Eskimo*, several scholarly articles, and a 1971 *National Geographic* article called "I Live with the Eskimos," offered a wealth of information he acquired from his Inuit hosts. Also noteworthy is anthropologist John Mathiassen, who stayed at Aulatsivik in 1963, just as families were leaving regular stays in ilagiit nunagivaktangit to stay permanently in Pond Inlet.

People generally lived where hunting was best, but during the 20th century, they also trapped white foxes for their skins. At one time traplines radiated out from the hunting settlements to cover the coastlines of Eclipse Sound and all its tributary fiords. Before 1959, trappers in the Pond Inlet area sometimes went north onto Lancaster Sound or even as far as Devon Island. The ilagiit nunagivaktangit on Baffin Bay trapped in three major fiords—Coutts Inlet, Buchan Gulf, and Paterson Inlet—along the coast from Button Point southeast in the direction of Clyde River. After 1950, the people who trapped there generally made their homes closer to Pond Inlet.

A careful observer described features of the seasonal round in the decades after the HBC arrived:

> *For at least four decades [1920–60] … the situation remained roughly unchanged, which does not mean that the same camps were inhabited year after year and by the same families. Spring was moving time. Then many families piled up their belongings on their sleds and moved to another location, usually to camp with relatives or friends or to exploit better hunting grounds.*[13]

Winter habitations had not changed much since the pre-contact period, except that some timber was available for frames and sheathing. A typical settlement had between four and six houses, all with their doors facing the sea. The basic structure was made of sod blocks around a framework of wood salvaged from various sources. A police report in 1959 stated:

> *The upper part of the walls and the roof are usually made of slats from packing cases obtained in the settlement … [T]he same house is generally used year after year. Moss is apparently used for insulation with an outside covering of a tent. The hole is then covered with snow and makes a warm dwelling.*[14]

The covering could either be the summer sealskin tent or canvas purchased in the settlement. Igluvigait (snowhouses) were built when needed for use when travelling or camping on the sea ice. Summer tents were covered with sealskins, though canvas gradually replaced these. At freeze-up, people usually returned to a former wintering site and prepared it for the activities of the new season. This was also the time when families might leave one ilagit nunagivaktangat[iii] to join another one, sometimes in the same general area, but often as far away as Admiralty Inlet or Igloolik, where many people had relatives. This mobility within a larger region was another dynamic element in the way people lived on the land.

In the 1950s, country food, notably meat, continued to be an essential part of the Tununirmiut economy, and hunting still occupied a lot of the people's time. By the 1950s, however, many of their goods and their incomes were supplied from the south through trade, wages, universal social programs, and individual benefits. In 1959, Inuit here were reported to be earning almost $40,000, although this misleading sum, like all statistics from the period, assigned no cash value to country food.[15]

Despite a general continuity in the Tununirmiut way of life, 60 years of steady contact with incomers did introduce new elements of material culture. Imported manufactured goods, textiles, and foods steadily came into general use. Tobacco was introduced before 1900. Wooden craft with outboard motors had replaced qajait for travel and hunting. Rifles and hand-operated sewing machines performed many of the tasks most essential to survival, and there was a growing demand for luxuries such as radios, phonographs, and clocks. Yet fundamental principles of Inuit knowledge continued: food, tools, and belongings were shared, and all generations worked together on the same tasks that ensured the survival of the group. Yet changes were increasing and many innovations, centred on the settlement of Pond Inlet, posed challenges to the continuity of the ilagiit nunagivaktangit.

In 1960, Pond Inlet was home to around 50 people, a majority of them Inuit, making up one-fifth of the population of the area. Services were limited—a single trading post, an RCMP detachment, and two Christian missions made up the outside agencies. The school was built in 1959, but did not open until 1961. Somewhat uncommonly, Inuit mined soft coal a few kilometres outside the settlement for local use and occasional export. Later the *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Report* would observe that the boundaries of trading areas dictated which people would move to specific communities:

> *By the time day and residential schools had been established in each settlement, every camp had clearly come to be seen as within the province of one or another HBC post. And when the occupants of a camp decided to move into a settlement, it was clear, in virtually all cases, which settlement it would be. Thus, the Tununirmiut looked to Pond Inlet.*[16]

iii 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.

Sangussaqt-auliqtilluta (1960–1965)

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. None of these things was harmful in itself, but they created new demands and new relationships.

Disruption of Tununirmiut life centred around ilagiit nunagivaktangit began in the 1960s when the Canadian government began to decisively implement its new program of northern economic development. In 1963, the government[17] made Pond Inlet the site of its biggest investment in municipal infrastructure in the Arctic. Upgrades included a two-bay heated garage, two new classrooms, and two eight-bed hostels, a walk-in freezer, a two-bedroom house, and maintenance work on existing buildings. A new bulk-oil storage tank and street lighting supported the developments. English-language schooling, centralized settlements, and wage employment for Inuit were key elements of the government program. Because of these changes, there was a dramatic shift in where the Tununirmiut lived. Between 1962 and 1968, almost all families moved into the hamlet.[18]

Year	Tununirmiut Living in Ilagiit Nunagivaktangit	Tununirmiut Living in Pond Inlet
1962	204	65
1963	201	79
1964	192	103
1965	144	155
1966	130	200
1967	93	254
1968	32	336

Table 1: Moving from the Land—1962 to 1968
Source: Statistics come mainly from the annual reports of RCMP constables issued as "Conditions amongst the Eskimos" reports and other accounts of government activity were reported in the Government of Canada's annual Government Activities in the North.

Some of the changes supported by government, including schooling and permanent housing, were supported by Tununirmiut, while others were less so. They were frustrated that their opinions and knowledge were ignored. No officials asked, "How do you want to do this?" or even more significantly, "What do you want to happen?" Instead, federal officials told the people, "This is what is going to happen."[19]

One of the first government initiatives in Pond Inlet was to build a school and student hostels, which put pressure on families to enrol their children. When government officials began to insist on compulsory school attendance, many of the Tununirmiut faced a difficult choice. In 1964, some families sent their children to the hamlet to live at the hostel.[20]

The RCMP report about schooling in Pond Inlet in 1965 summarized the government's inability to consider what schooling might mean for Inuit families and its desire to take control over the Qikiqtani Region as cheaply as possible by delivering the fewest services possible. The RCMP's annual report for 1965 stated in stark terms:

> *The only foreseen problem in the immediate future in the population of the people, will be the mass migration from the camps to the settlements. This has been quite noticeable this year in Pond Inlet. Last year the settlement had a population of 103, while this year there are 155, which is a considerable increase. This is brought about mainly by the parents wishing to be close to their children, when they leave the camps to attend school in the settlement. Because of the close-knit Eskimo family, this will continue to be a problem, and in the future, I would imagine a very great one. This past year, a whole camp moved into the settlement, the only reason given, to be close to their children attending school. This has not become a problem in this area, as the men still travel to their old hunting grounds, to trap and hunt. They will miss some game hunting and trapping in this manner, however, as long as they continue to return to the land for their livelihood they will not become Welfare statistics. The problem in the future of course, will be acute once the young men grow up, and will possibly not wish to travel these long distances for hunting and trapping. This problem can not be taken lightly, however, at present I can see no easy or logical solution to it. In concluding this subject, it is comforting to know this problem does not exist to date.*[21]

Almost 40 years after the RCMP wrote its report, Gamailie Kilukishak told QIA researchers that he did not want his son to be living in a hostel, so in 1967 even though "nobody told me [to move], I wanted to follow for the love towards my child."[22] Similarly, the government's provision of housing, with loans and grants to pay for the new accommodation, encouraged the Tununirmiut to move to Pond Inlet. Moses Kasarnak remembers, "We were directly told that if we moved we would get a house and that it would have a table and dishes."[23] By 1968, the RCMP observed that Inuit occupied 46 homes of varied types, but housing was not always ready to accommodate those who were arriving in reaction to the enforcement of schooling attendance.

Apphia Kiliktee remembered,

> *A teacher came down to our camp and told us that we had to go to school. Knowing there was no housing in Pond Inlet, we ended up in a tent near the river. The whole winter we stayed in the tent. It was so difficult for us. We didn't have any food to eat. Every morning we woke up to everything frozen. All I remember is my grandmother trying to use a teapot to cook with.*[24]

It was two years before her family got a house and then 20 people had to share the 12-by-24-foot structure.

Other factors also influenced the Tununirmiut to settle in Pond Inlet. Wage employment was increasingly available and provided income to help support living in the settlement. The number of Inuit working full-time with qallunaat agencies (the government, HBC, RCMP and the nursing station) rose from seven in 1962 to twenty-three in 1968. In addition, the growing settlement required workers to keep its services operating. There were increases in seasonal employment as well, particularly in construction work. On the land, mining exploration and tote road construction to Mary River (1962–65) provided summer work for up to eight men. As in the past, Inuit knowledge of the land was also in demand guiding the RCMP, sports hunters, and geologists, yet payment for their casual work was not always certain.

The disruption experienced by the Tununirmiut because of this rapid transition from living on the land to living in town was intensified by difficulties experienced in the key areas where their lives changed. Living in the town also brought Inuit into daily contact with white people. Elizabeth Kyak recalled that many Inuit felt they had to hide country food they were eating,[25] and Elisapee Ootoova talked about being frightened by the appearance of qallunaat.[26]

The shooting of qimmiit[iv] by the RCMP was one of the clearest signals of the disruption in Tununirmiut life. Qimmiit were essential to their mobility and an integral aspect of everyday life, the unexpected and violent loss of qimmiit was a painful wound.

Manasie Amagoalik told the QTC that he could recall the scene because "[his] father started crying and it was so unexpected. The RCMP was standing next to [his] father and the dogs being shot, even the puppy running away from all the shooting. It ran to [them]."[27] On top of the emotional impact of this loss, many Inuit suffered long-term hardships. Amagoalik underlined the consequences for his family:

> *We had no means of transportation, no Ski-Doo, therefore, no hunting. The only way was by walking . We were also visited by sickness because we didn't have enough to eat. My father suffered a lot of hardship with no Ski-Doo and no dogs. He had to hunt polar bear by foot and by harpoon.*[28]

Between 1963 and 1968, Tununirmiut experienced radical change, which created the centralized settlement of Pond Inlet. This change was initiated and largely shaped by the Government of Canada, which believed that it understood what the results of its new programs would be. The Tununirmiut acceded to the general direction of centralization, but sought to maintain Inuit values and ways of doing things as their lives were transformed.

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

Nunalinnguqti-tauliqtilluta (1965–1975)

The term "Nunalinnguqtitauliqtilluta" means "the time when we were actively (by outside force) formed into communities." Nunalinnguqtitauliqtilluta 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

In 1965, half of Tununirmiut lived in the centralized community of Pond Inlet. By 1975, Tununirmiut were aware of what living in town involved and laid out how they wished to live in the new environment. Tununirmiut made it evident to southerners that Inuit values, activities, and practices would be an ongoing part of their lives.

While people continued to leave the land, those already living in Pond Inlet began to come together, with some official encouragement, to create the habits and institutions they would require in order to live together in numbers much larger than before. Some of these challenges arose from the fact that Inuit were accustomed to living together in groups of ten, twenty, or thirty, not hundreds. Other difficulties arose from the sudden increase both in the number of resident qallunaat and in the number of Inuit whose lives they were trying to influence.

Large communities in the Arctic were very different from small ones. In many cases, ilagiit nunagivaktangit were home to people who were related by birth or marriage. In Pond Inlet, people would spend more time dealing with Inuit who were less closely related and less familiar to them.

The other main source of difference was the more frequent encounters, casual and official, with qallunaat. For many Inuit men, that sort of contact had occurred a dozen times a year during trading trips to Pond Inlet. For many of their wives, mothers, and children, contact had been less frequent, limited to Christmas and a few encounters a year with a traveller on the land, usually an RCMP constable. In the settlement, schoolchildren regularly dealt with teachers but often this also would create awkwardness or even fear for the children and their parents. Many Inuit adults lacked experience and confidence in their dealings with qallunaat. As the Tununirmiut explained to Hugh Brody, they felt ilira, a fear of "people or things that have power over you."[29] In the settlement, there were many more opportunities to feel ilira. At the same time, the qallunaat themselves were diverse as well as numerous, and their own rivalries and divisions could create friction for Inuit.

New routines were created around the fixed daily schedules of work and schooling, and they created new demands and new relationships. People had to choose times and places to hunt, travelling out by snowmobile from a central base rather than by dog team or on foot from an ilagiit nunagivaktangat. Many Inuit told Hugh Brody in the early 1970s not just of the scarcity of goods and services, but of the "confinement and inactivity" that came with settlement life, and he reported on the "quiet, understated dismay" many Inuit expressed in response to what they had lost.[30]

SHAPING COMMUNITY LIFE

In the midst of these novel circumstances, Inuit found opportunities to leverage collective groups to express Inuit values and choices. One such group was the community council, originally established by the government settlement manager in 1965. This unelected body drew its members from Inuit who had experience working with qallunaat and could speak up on matters of concern to the Tununirmiut. In 1975, the council gained hamlet status, a form of municipal self-government, with the council and mayor elected by, and responsible to, members of the community.

Gradually a community life emerged that was no longer just the sum of older-style activities transplanted to a central location. The Toonoonik–Sahoonik Co-operative became a significant force in the new economy and brought Tununirmiut into an important regional movement. Founded in 1969, the co-op began by importing groceries and hardware and marketing Inuit carvings, furs, and luxury exports like narwhal ivory. Later, it began operating a hotel and a fishing camp for tourists and tendering successfully to deliver municipal services. Similarly, the Hunters and Trappers Association (HTA) was an essential tool for reorganizing traditional activities. The HTA in Pond Inlet, begun in 1970, helped Inuit adapt to territorial game laws, such as the polar bear quota and tag system.

The building of a strong sense of community was also evident when the community radio station opened at Pond Inlet in 1966. Certain councillors intended the station to serve the settlement as well as people still on the land, using equipment that was already in the community without the required government licence. Daniellie, Qamaniq, Josephie, and two qallunaat organized the station, which was soon on the air with volunteer announcers for two hours each evening with music, community news, and local announcements in Inuktitut and English. The station was briefly shut down, but the embarrassed authorities in Ottawa forwarded a small AM transmitter to Pond Inlet and accelerated their own plans for community radio throughout the Arctic. The pirate radio station, CHPI Pond Inlet, was adopted by the government and continued in service for several more years.[31]

The community radio provided an avenue for Inuit voices and opinions to be heard. In April 1968, Alain Maktar took part in the Baffin Region Eskimo Advisory Council Conference in Iqaluit, where he spoke clearly about changes that needed to be made in the schools.

> *We want the Eskimos to be taught in Eskimo. There are four things we want them [children] to learn—hunting, building iglus in the wintertime, and sewing and the language. If they learn these things they will be able to live in the Arctic.*[32]

Inuit wanted these things to be taught by "older people." The qallunaat officials answered positively, but the system was slow and inadequate in integrating these important needs in the school curriculum.

Conclusion

By 1975, the community of Pond Inlet numbered 550 people. They were connected to the rest of Canada via two or three regular aircraft flights per week from Resolute, using a new gravel runway on the hill above the settlement. Anik satellites linked them to other communities by telephone. Two churches, a school with classes up to grade 8, an adult-education centre, a nursing station, an RCMP detachment, a motel, a post office, and a library served the community. Some of the men living in Pond Inlet had experience working with Panarctic oil exploration teams in the high arctic and the Toonoonik–Sahoonik Co-operative was on course to become one of the largest and most diversified co-ops in the Qikiqtani Region. The skills of Tununirmiut were paramount for the next great struggle—to get ownership of the land itself recognized by the federal government and have it dealt with in a land claim.

ENDNOTES

1 The place name "Pond's Bay" was chosen by an explorer in 1818 to honour English astronomer John Pond.

2 For a succinct community history overview see: Guy Mary-Rousselière, "Factors affecting human occupation of the land in the Pond Inlet region from Prehistoric to Contemporary Times", *Eskimo*, 28, Fall-winter (1984–5), 13; and the Hamlet of Pond Inlet www.pondinlet.ca

3 Events related to the early history of the area include many meticulously researched historical articles by Kenn Harper published in *Nunatsiaq News*, as well as Shelagh Dawn Grant, *Arctic Justice* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002). For general histories of the area and its land uses in the post-war era see: John S. Mathiasson, *Living on the Land: Northern Baffin Inuit Respond to Change* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1992); Don Bissett, *Lancaster Sound Survey; An Area Economic Survey, 1967* (Ottawa: Industrial Division, Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1968); Roderick R. Riewe, *Nunavut Atlas* (Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute and the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, 1992); and various sections of Milton Freeman Research Limited, *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project, Report: Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project—Volume 1* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1976), with a main essay by Hugh Brody.

4 For histories of the travels of Qitdlarssuaq (as Qillaq was known in Greenland) and Oqe (also spelled Uqi) collected by Knud Rasmussen, Donald MacMillan, Guy Mary-Rousselière, Robert Peterson and Inuuterssuaq Uvdloriaq, see: Guy Mary-Rousselière, Qitdlarssuaq; The Story of a Polar Migration (Winnipeg: Wuerz Publishing Ltd., 1991) and "Merqusâq (ca 1850–1916)," *Arctic*, Vol. 36, online at http://pubs.aina.ucalgary.ca/arctic/Arctic36-3-292.pdf; Kenn Harper, "Qillarsuaq—Part 1" "Qillarsuaq—Part 2", *Nunatsiaq News* (8 July 2009 and 16 July 2009), available online at: https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/taissumanni_july_10/ and https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/taissumanni_july_17/ (Links accessed on 15 May 2023).; and Lyle Dick, *Muskox Land: Ellesmere in the Age of Contact* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2001), 99–105.

5 The section on ocean currents and early exploration is based on Moira Dunbar and Keith Rogers Greenaway, *Arctic Canada from the Air* (Ottawa: Canada Defence Research Board, 1957), 93–94, 134, and 424–25; W. Gillies Ross, *Arctic Whalers, Icy Seas: Narratives of the David Strait Whale Fishery* (Toronto: Irwin Publishers, 1985); and *Whaling, Inuit, and the Arctic Islands, Interpreting Canada's North: Selected Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1989), 235–51. For other information on whaling see Library and Archives Canada (LAC), MG29 A58, Whaling Logs Collection and Basil Lubbock, *The Arctic Whalers* (Glasgow: Brown, Son & Ferguson, 1937)

6 J. S. Mutch, *Whaling in Ponds Bay* (New York: Stechert, 1906). Anthropological papers, written in honor of Franz Boas Professor of Anthropology in Columbia University: presented to him on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his doctorate, ninth of August, nineteen hundred and six (New York: Stechert, 1906), 485–500.

7 The story of Takijualuk is told in Kenn Harper, "Arctic Secrets: Jamie Florence at Bylot Island—Part 2", *Nunatsiaq News* (25 October 2012), available online at: https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674taissumani_oct-_261/ (Link accessed on 15 May 2023).

8 Lydia was the first woman to travel through the Northwest Passage in both directions.

9 For Mary Panigusiq Cousins, see online obituaries at the time of her death in 2007, including Kenn Harper, "Remembering Mary Cousins", *Nunatsiaq News*, https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/Remembering_Mary_Cousins/, accessed 4 Oct. 2012 and 15 May 2023.

10 More detailed information on the High Arctic Relocations can be found in the QTC report *Nuutauniq: Moves in Inuit Life, 1950–1975* and in numerous published books and articles, including reports issued by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1994.

11 For Wilkinson's work, see Doug Wilkinson's book and film—*Land of the Long Day* (Toronto: Clark Irwin, 1955) and Doug *of the Long Day* [film] (Montréal: National Film Board, 1952).

12 Idlout's relocation to Resolute is explored by Frank Tester and Peter Kulchyski, *Tammarniit (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic, 1939–63* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), 184–187.

13 For the quote on the moves in spring and other parts of the seasonal round, see the circular chart in Bissett, *The Lancaster Sound Survey*, 15.

14 For an example of a description of winter houses in 1959 see LAC, RG 18 Accession 1985–86/048 box 55 file TA 500-8-1-12, Conditions Amongst Eskimos—Pond Inlet, annual report by M.D. Nelson, 23 May 1960.

15 Sources about Inuit income can be found it LAC, RG85, Volume 1207, File 201-1-8 Pt. 3, Cantley to A/Chief, 19 Nov. 1952, "Sources of Eskimo Income for Year ended June 30, 1951" and for LAC, RG 18, Accession 1985–86/048, Box 55, File TA 500-8-1-12, Conditions Amongst Eskimos—Pond Inlet, annual report by M.D. Nelson, 23 May 1960.

16 Milton Freeman Research Limited, *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project—Volume 1*, 158.

17 The term "government" is used in the text as a general way of describing various federal and territorial departments and agencies that were responsible for services in the 1950–1975 period.

18 Milton Freeman Research Limited, *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project—Volume 1*, 158

19 The quote on federal attitudes towards Inuit involvement in decision-making was made by T. Stewart, April 18, 1968, as documented in *Pre-Conference Discussion, Baffin Region Eskimo Advisory Council Conference, Frobisher Bay, Northwest Territories, April 16–20, 1968* available at the AANDC Library, Gatineau, QC.

20 LAC, RG 18 Accession 1985–86/048 box 55 file TA 500-8-1-12, Conditions Amongst Eskimos—Pond Inlet, annual report by R. E. Broughen, 18 Jan 1965.

21 LAC, RG 18 Accession 1985–86/048 box 55 file TA 500-8-1-12, Conditions Amongst Eskimos—Pond Inlet, annual report by R. E. Broughen, 7 Jan 1966.

22 Gamailie Kilukishak, Oral History (interview by Davidee Qamaniq), Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 1 July [2005].

23 Moses Kasarnak, Oral History (interview by Davidee Qamaniq), Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 17 February 2005.

24 Apphia Kiliktee, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 11 December 2008

25 Elizabeth Kyak, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 10 December 2008.

26 Elisapee Ootoova, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 11 December 2008.

27 Manasie Amagoamalik, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 19 December 2008.

28 Manasie Amagoamalik, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 19 December 2008.

29 For discussion of ilira, see Rosemarie Kuptana, "Ilira, or Why It was Unthinkable for Inuit to Challenge Qallunaat Authority", *Inuit Art Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (1993), 5–7; and Hugh Brody, *The Other Side of Eden: Hunters, Farmers, and the Shaping of the World* (New York: North Point Press, 2001), 42–44 and 217–18.

30 For Brody's observations on settlement life see Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*; and Hugh Brody, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 10 March 2009.

31 For pirate radio station, see Robert G. Mayes, *Mass Communication and Eskimo Adaptation in the Canadian Arctic* (Montréal: McGill University, 1972), 49 and 125; and Members of the Arctic District Officer, DIAND, "Pirate Radio Station—Alias CHPI—Pond Inlet", Arctic Circular, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1968), 37–38.

32 Maktar quote about education is from the *Pre-Conference Discussion, Baffin Region Eskimo Advisory Council Conference*.

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 TRUTH COMMISSION