Clyde River
(Kangiqtugaapik)

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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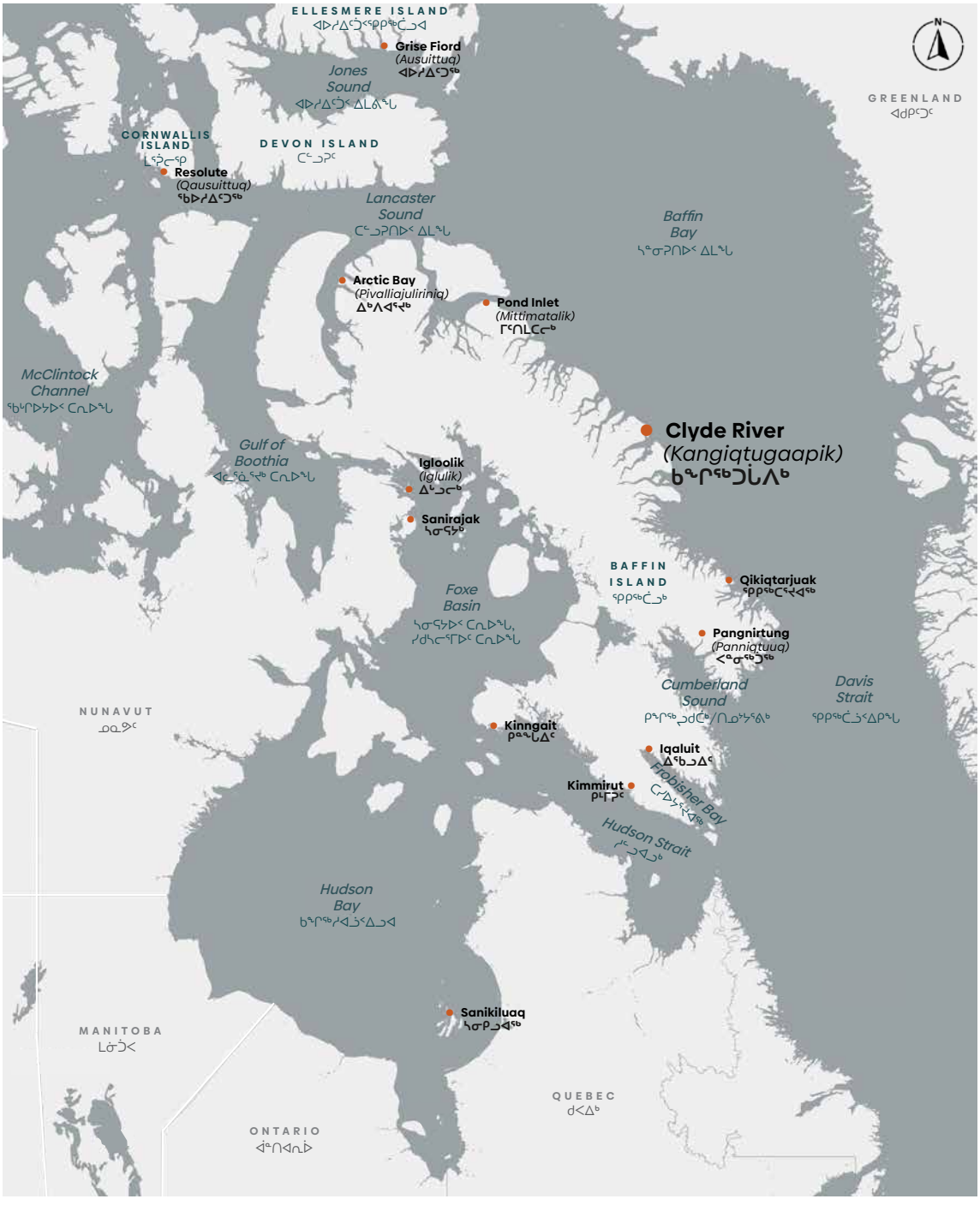

Introducing Clyde River
(Kangiqtugaapik)

The hamlet of Clyde River is known in Inuktitut as Kangiqtugaapik,[i] a word that means "a nice little inlet." Inuit of Kangiqtugaapik call themselves Kangiqtugaapingmiut. While the official place name for the hamlet is "Clyde River", this report uses the Inuktitut name Kangiqtugaapik, except in quotes and when referencing the river itself or the area near it.

Located on the western shore of Patricia Bay on the east coast of Baffin Island, nearby fiords stretch towards the ancient Barnes Ice Cap and contain some of the most spectacular scenery in Canada. Clyde River itself is well known for its commitment to maintaining Inuit knowledge and for artwork, especially soapstone carvings and print making. The hamlet is home to the Ilisaqsivik Society, a community-led, non-profit organization, which is dedicated to promoting Inuit culture and language.

The traditional land-use area generally extends from Buchan Gulf in the north to Home Bay in the south. Inuit moved throughout the area taking advantage of the local resources but rarely stayed long. The arrival of whalers and trading companies in the 19th and 20th centuries changed local settlement patterns. The establishment of the short-lived Sabellum Trading and Gold Company at Cape Henry Kater and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) post on the east side of Patricia Bay at Clyde River attracted people to the region. In the 1935–1940 period, the HBC convinced some Inuit families from other places, especially Kimmirut, Kinngait, Iqaluit, and Pangnirtung, to come to the area to supply the post with the furs needed to keep the post profitable. In 1942, the construction of a military weather station at Clyde River was completed, followed by the creation of a Long Range Navigation station (LORAN) and RCMP detachment in 1953–54, amplified the qallunaat (non-Inuit) presence and gave Kangiqtugaapingmiut some new opportunities for trading and employment.

With the arrival of territory-wide government[ii] programs in the 1960s, the population of Kangiqtugaapik doubled as people moved away from ilagiit nunagivaktangit[1] and into the settlement. The hamlet was originally located on the east side of Patricia Bay, where soil is composed of silt and fine sand mixed with clay and gravel. Runoff from the nearby hills kept

i This report uses current geographical place names for most places.

ii 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.

the ground wet throughout the entire melt season, making for poor building conditions. These conditions forced the settlement's relocation to the western shore in 1970, where it is still located today. When the LORAN station closed in 1974, Kangiqtugaapik's population had reached 357.[2] On July 1, 1978, Kangiqtugaapik (as Clyde River) received hamlet status, and by 2011, the population had grown to 934.[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 in the 1950s to early 1960s when most Inuit were living in government-chosen settlements and participating in the cash economy. During this time, the Inuktut term *ilagiit nunagivaktangit* is a more accurate expression for the places Inuit called home and qallunaat (non-Inuit) named "camps." Ilagiit nunagivaktangit were places regularly used for hunting, harvesting and gathering. Inuit groups traditionally had several ilagiit nunagivaktangit, which allowed them to move to follow game.

ILAGIIT NUNAGIVAKTANGIT

Kangiqtugaapik is situated on a shallow gravel ridge on the north coast of Clyde Inlet. The Inlet, extending 100 km into the central east coast of Baffin Island, is typical of the many deep fiords and inlets that define the ragged coastline of the area. North of Kangiqtugaapik, a low coastal plain extends from the coastline inward for several km. To the south, a low terraced plain runs parallel from the coastline inward and connects with low-lying hills.[4] There is a distinctive rise known as Black Bluff on the eastern shore of Patricia Bay that reaches a height of 478 metres. As one of the highest features in the area, the black cliffs serve as a landmark for Inuit travelling through the area.[5] Other prominent features in the area include the numerous ice caps and glaciers located in the interior of eastern Baffin Island, the most notable being the Barnes Ice Cap, Canada's oldest and one of its largest.

The early history of the area is the subject of oral accounts and studies by qallunaat researchers. Details concerning early Inuit settlement and migration patterns prior to the arrival of qallunaat whalers and trading companies are vague. Early documentation produced by Franz Boas in 1888 implied that the area was only rarely inhabited and acted as a buffer between the Akudnirmiut of Home Bay and the Tununirmiut of Ponds Bay (Pond Inlet area). It is important to note that Boas never travelled to the Clyde River area himself, but rather only reached as far as Home Bay, 200 km to the south. Boas suggested that these two groups visited the area at irregular intervals, but that the area itself did not host a distinct Inuit population. He noted that Akudnirmiut regularly travelled to the islands in Home Bay to hunt caribou during the summer, or to Isabella Bay, McBeth Fiord, and Inugsuin Fiord, south of Clyde Inlet, to reach the lakes and rivers important for fishing Arctic char or hunting walrus (Inugsuin Fiord).[6] Farther north, Boas reported that Tununirmiut occasionally used the areas around Buchan Gulf and Cambridge Fiord.

A 1928 census conducted by Therkel Mathiassen in Pond Inlet echoed what Boas reported, while also noting that a small number of Tununirmiut were loosely connected to Akudnirmiut near Clyde River and Home Bay, which means that both groups may have travelled throughout the Clyde River region more often than previously assumed.[7] This is supported by the fact that William Edward Parry, while on a British Admiralty expedition in September 1820, met a group of Inuit near what is now Kangiqtugaapik. When compared with Kangiqtugaapingmiut memory and oral history, evidence shows that people occupied areas throughout the Clyde River region for multiple years and that it was more than a "void to be traversed as quickly as possible."[8] A 1903 Canadian Geological Survey expedition to the area on the SS *Neptune* estimated the population of the area near Clyde River and Home Bay to be around 90 persons.[9]

Based on immersive fieldwork with local people using local knowledge and oral histories in the late 1990s and early 2000s, George Wenzel, a cultural anthropologist and geographer, described the general east-west seasonal cycle of Inuit in the Clyde River region. During the winter, ilagiit nunagivaktangit

were commonly set up near the headlands of fiords to take advantage of the seal-hunting grounds. Spring, summer, and fall settlement patterns were more transitory. In May and June, groups would move west to take advantage of the fishing sites. Ilagiit nunagivaktangit were occasionally erected in areas where stone weirs or walrus haul-out locations had previously been constructed because of the relative permanence they provided. In the summer, people travelled along the river valleys towards inland caribou grounds. They returned in the autumn, arriving at the fiord heads in time to take advantage of the char fishery. The cycle would finish in the winter, with a return to ilagiit nunagivaktangit near the fiord headlands.[10] A typical pattern of travel consisted of sealing at various fiords in the winter, fishing at the heads of fiords in May and June, passing inland to hunt caribou through the summer, returning to the fiord heads for autumn char fishing, and then returning to the winter ilagiit nunagivaktangit by boat or over ice to hunt seals.[11]

Three species of seals were hunted. The ringed seal, the most important in terms of food, fuel, clothing, and tools, was found all along the eastern coast of Baffin Island from Buchan Gulf in the north to Cape Hooper in the south.[12] Favoured sealing grounds were located at Scott Inlet and Alexander Bay. During the winter, breathing holes were used for hunting, and in both the winter and spring, large leads and cracks in the sea ice that formed off many of the headlands and peninsulas—such as Cape Christian (Pinguajuk)[13]—were used whenever possible. Open-water hunting was concentrated around fiords and islands. Bearded seals were hunted during the late summer on floating ice pans and at the mouths of fiords and bays during the early fall. Hunters often reported Scott Inlet, Eglinton Fiord, the mouth of Inugsuin Fiord, and Isabella and Alexander bays as the most important areas for hunting ringed and bearded seals. Harp seals were hunted in a small area near Cape Christian, about 10 km off the coast, but were of less economic value.[14]

Polar bears were another important resource for Inuit in the region, and probably accounted for a significant portion of their meat each year. Hunting generally concentrated around small areas associated with bears' feeding and denning locations, with most polar bear hunting occurring on the land and sea ice between Cape Hooper and Buchan Gulf.

Walrus, belugas, and narwhals, with narwhals being more common to the area, were hunted when they fed in the shallow fiords and inlets during the fall where hunters could take advantage of open water.[15] Caribou hunting and fox trapping took place all year and wildfowl were often taken during these hunting trips. Weirs were used to catch char in the region's fiords, rivers, and lakes. There were two fish weirs where Clyde River meets Clyde Inlet.

EARLY CONTACTS

Prior to the 20th century, there were very few contacts between Inuit and qallunaat in the Clyde River area. In 1818, a Royal Navy explorer, Captain John Ross, named many features along the west coast of Baffin Bay and Davis Strait, including Clyde River and Clyde Inlet. The original purpose of the Ross expedition was to locate a northwest passage, but, while surveying Baffin Bay, Ross missed the entrance to the Lancaster Sound passage and instead turned home. On his way, Ross very roughly mapped the coastline, but made little effort to contact Inuit or study conditions ashore.

A woman and child standing in front of a tupiq (skin tent) at Clyde River, six years after the HBC established a post there, [1932].
Credit: *David L. McKeand / Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development fonds / Library and Archives Canada / a102069.*

In September 1820, William Edward Parry explored Lancaster Sound as part of a British Admiralty expedition, providing the first documented contact with Inuit in the Clyde River area. After encountering a group of whalers who reported seeing Inuit near the entrance to Clyde Inlet, Parry stopped overnight at Patricia Bay. The meeting place was at or near the present-day summer and autumn ilagiit nunagivaktangat known as Supaigaiyuktuq, approximately 20 km from what is now Kangiqtugaapik.[16] There, Parry met 17 Inuit with whom he traded with, noting that they were in possession of beads and metal goods and providing descriptions of their clothing and dwellings in his records.[17] This was probably the first introduction that local Inuit would have had to alcohol. Parry also reported that the group was preparing to move to a nearby winter ilagiit nunagivaktangat, approximately 2 km away. It has yet to be confirmed, however, whether anyone living in Kangiqtugaapik today is a descendant of one of the people Parry met in 1820.[18]

Oral accounts by Kangiqtugaapingmiut explain that this winter ilagiit nunagivaktangat described by Parry is the same as a current archaeological site containing collapsed dwellings identified as being Thule in origin.[19] Similar dwellings were used throughout the region as late as the 1970s.

People living in the area also came into contact with whalers from Scotland, England, and America. Stations for hunting, securing supplies, rendering blubber, and trading with Inuit were set up by whalers along the coastline. Larger stations were established in the north in the Eclipse Sound area and to the south in Cumberland Sound. Small temporary stations were constructed at Clyde Inlet and Cape Henry Kater. However, ice conditions in the Clyde River region effectively limited whalers' access to the area, resulting in little use of the stations. Until recently, ice lasted until late August, which made landing on the coast difficult.

The whalers' focus on the areas to the north and south of Kangiqtugaapik, as well as the travel patterns of Inuit meant that there was limited contact with qallunaat within the region during the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition to the whalers' presence, the establishment of trading posts at Pond Inlet (a small fur-trading post in 1903) and Kivitoo (Sabellum Company in 1916) drew Inuit away from the Clyde River region, attracted north and south by the prospects of trade. This resulted in an even sparser occupancy of the area. This changed in 1923 when the Sabellum Company and the HBC moved in. The Sabellum Company established a post on Henry Kater Peninsula, and the HBC on the site of what would become the original community of Clyde River, on the east side of Patricia Bay. When the Sabellum Company closed in 1926 after the death of Mr. Pitchforth, the post trader, the HBC became the primary qallunaat influence in the area.[20] This new, permanent trade presence drew Inuit back to the region to trade.[21]

CHANGING PATTERNS OF LIFE

Trade with whalers and trading companies impacted Inuit in their day-to-day lives, as well as their choices of where to travel and gather. Through trade, new technologies such as tobacco, guns, ammunition, fox traps, hatchets, telescopes, pots, musical instruments, sewing machines, and other items, led to changes in hunting techniques, diet, and clothing. Contacts through trade, while for the most part peaceful, introduced new diseases, such as influenza, measles, and venereal disease.[22]

The arrival of the new HBC post at Clyde River and the temporary Sabellum Company post at Cape Henry Kater provided a new means for accessing trade goods through trapping. While trapping was a relatively new activity for Kangiqtugaapingmiut, it did not significantly alter traditional hunting patterns because fox trapping occurred on the sea ice in conjunction with the seal hunt.[23] In reality, while furs were the sole source of income for many years, trapping specifically did not assume great importance among Kangiqtugaapingmiut. They continued to rely almost completely on hunting during the 1920s and 1930s.

Trapping and trading influenced choices Kangiqtugaapingmiut made about where to live. Reports from the HBC and Sabellum Company, as well as RCMP patrol reports from the Pond Inlet Detachment, shed light on the area's settlement patterns during the early 1920s and 1930s. RCMP reported that there were only four ilagiit nunagivaktangit in the Clyde River area.[24] Kangiqtugaapingmiut memory, however, suggests

that there were more winter ilagiit nunagivaktangit located throughout the area.[25] Feeling that the area lacked inhabitants, the HBC relocated a number of trappers and their families from Lake Harbour (present-day Kimmirut), Cape Dorset, Iqaluit, and Pangnirtung between 1935 and 1940 in an attempt to increase the post's profitability.[26] The family that had formally assisted the Sabellum Company at Cape Henry Kater was one of the relocated families. When many people who had moved north or south from the Clyde River region to be closer to the trading posts in Pond Inlet or Kivitoo returned, they supplemented or replaced the relocated families. Soon, the population in the area increased.[27]

In 1928, RCMP reported eight Inuit living within 25 km of the post at Clyde River. They reported two families at Dexterity Harbour, three families at Scott Inlet, one family at Eglinton Fiord, and three at Cape Henry Kater. All were reported to be living with sufficient access to game.[28] Almost ten years later, RCMP reported two families at Scott Inlet, two families living at the Clyde River post with four families located within a few km, and ten families in the Home Bay area.[29] By the early 1940s, settlement had begun slowly migrating towards the "core" of the Clyde River area. At the same time, other locations, such as Eglinton and Sam Ford fiords, which had previously seen sequential occupation by different families, had developed into stable ilagiit nunagivaktangit, such as Natsilsiuk, Nasaklukuluk, Akuliahatak, and Aqviqtiuq. Estimates of the population during the 1940s indicated that between 140 and 180 people lived between Coutts Inlet and the Henry Kater Peninsula.[30]

Cleaning a bear skin at Clyde River, with Jacobie on the right. Clyde River (Kangiqtugaapik), [1949].
Credit: *Gavin White / Library and Archives Canada / e002852355.*

Up until the Second World War, the HBC was the primary qallunaat presence in the Clyde River region. In 1942, the US Army Air Corps established a weather station for the Crimson Air Route on the eastern shore of Patricia Bay next to the HBC post.[31] Responsibility for the station was transferred to the Canadian Department of Transport in April 1945. The station was closed in 1963.

Due to the weather station, a concentration of qallunaat men were now found in Clyde River working at the HBC post and at the weather station. The enclave provided Kangiqtugaapingmiut with some opportunities for wage employment. Along with the decline in fur prices during the Second World War, the attraction of wage labour as an alternative source of income rose in importance. Social benefits, especially family allowance, old age pensions, and welfare support, were also introduced by the government during this time. Combined with the arrival of military facilities at nearby Cape Christian in the 1950s, Kangiqtugaapingmiut faced new challenges in adapting to a new, mixed economy of hunting, trapping, and wage employment and in living with an increased qallunaat presence in the area. By 1953, the Inuit population of the whole Clyde River region was listed as 147. Only 20 people were living in the settlement near the meteorological station in Clyde River—2 Inuit working for the HBC post, 2 employed as support labour by the US military, their families, and a widow.[32] The majority of people in the area continued to live on the land outside the settlement, only travelling to Clyde River when the annual supply ship arrived to trade, to receive medical care, or to accept social transfer payments.

Sangussaqtauliqtil-luta (1953–1960)

The term "Sangussaqtauliqtilluta" means "the time when we started to be actively persuaded, or made to, detour or switch modes." when we lived on the land." 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.

The Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line was a joint US–Canadian project consisting of a series of radar sites across Alaska, Canada, and Greenland designed to provide advanced warning of a Soviet attack over the polar region. It has been assessed as one of the largest construction projects ever attempted. In 1953–54, the US Coast Guard established a long-range navigation site for the DEW Line at Cape Christian, approximately 20 km north of Kangiqtugaapik on Clyde Inlet. First known as DOPE 2, it was later renamed the US Coast Guard LORAN Station, Cape Christian.[33] The site included a main station, garage, airstrip and terminal, antenna, fuel storage facilities, and storage buildings.[34] The LORAN site at Cape Christian remained the responsibility of the United States until 1974 when it was abandoned. At that time, all existing materials and facilities were left in place and the site was transferred to the Canadian government.

Unlike many other DEW Line installations, the LORAN station at Cape Christian did not employ Inuit labour.[35] Nevertheless, many Inuit were attracted to the area. Some came out of curiosity, while others sought discarded building materials or a chance to get temporary employment. The RCMP arrived in 1953 with specific instructions to enforce rules to stop fraternization between Inuit and military personnel, and to keep Inuit away from the LORAN station.[36]

Almost as soon as the RCMP detachment began reporting on its mission, it expressed concern about Inuit "loitering" near the LORAN station. "Loitering" was a term used by the RCMP to refer to time spent by Inuit in qallunaat enclaves or settlements while socializing, looking for work, or waiting for services, such as health care. Loitering was strongly discouraged, but the procedures and policies were contradictory and confusing to Inuit.[37] Sam Palituq explained to the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) that many Inuit came to Kangiqtugaapik as a necessary part of their seasonal routine. "When we came for re-supply in the spring, the whole family came here, to Clyde River … We came here to get some supplies."[38] Also, at ship time, Inuit living in the area were needed by the station and by the HBC to help unload and handle the freight. Due to the sheer volume of supplies that needed to be unloaded from multiple ships, many Inuit received substantial incomes from their hourly wages for a few weeks of work.[39]

At the same time, RCMP instructed Inuit that they needed to come to Kangiqtugaapik for annual medical check-ups and X-rays by staff on the *C. D. Howe*. Following instructions, Inuit moved close to the settlement in the spring, waiting for medical officials to arrive. Since many Inuit did not have their own water transportation, they remained in the area until freeze-up, unable to return to their ilagiit nunagivaktangit at Scott Inlet or Home Bay. RCMP reported that, in 1953, Kangiqtugaapingmiut owned only two small, unpowered wooden boats and one eighteen-foot canoe with an outboard motor. In fact, the officers writing the reports recommended that more boats be provided to allow people to return to their homes more quickly.[40]

While the RCMP discouraged Kangiqtugaapingmiut from visiting the LORAN station at Cape Christian, the police simultaneously managed some of the selling of crafts, clothes, and furs by Kangiqtugaapingmiut to US Coast Guard and Canadian military personnel.

They also sold a number of other furs and country food to the ships and planes that visited.[41] As soon as the RCMP arrived, however, Kangiqtugaapingmiut were discouraged from visiting the LORAN station, and rather had to go through the RCMP to sell their products to the military personnel.

In 1957, the RCMP declared the "loitering problem" to have been "solved" through a policy of encouraging Inuit to return to their ilagiit nunagivaktangit and convincing qallunaat to stop giving excess materials or food (termed "handouts" by the RCMP) to Inuit.[42] Discouraging certain behaviour on the part of the RCMP probably had a strong effect among Kangiqtugaapingmiut. Johanasie Apak remembers: "At that time, our parents listened to what they were told. As soon as they were told to do something, they went ahead and did it. That is how it used to be. I've done it myself. We were all scared of the qallunaat."[43] However, the decline in what was perceived as loitering may have correlated with changes in sealskin prices. In the postwar years, prices were low until 1958, when they increased, eventually reaching a high of $25 per skin. Because of the low prices, more Inuit probably looked to wage employment such as unloading ships, construction or labour jobs, or trade opportunities with qallunaat, to supplement their incomes. To do so they would have needed to be near the settlement. The increase in prices in 1958, combined with an increased demand for carvings and the now well-established distribution of family allowances and welfare, brought Inuit income to a new high, potentially allowing more time between necessary trips to the settlement.[44]

In the 1960s, it was clear that Inuit were taking advantage of new economic opportunities and services associated with the settlement. This meant that more people were deciding to live in Kangiqtugaapik. In 1961, the Inuit population of Kangiqtugaapik was 32; by 1964 it would reach 107, although it dropped to 91 two years later, and by 1969 it had reached 210.[45] Four major winter ilagiit nunagivaktangit with a total population near 60 were still active outside the immediate area in the early 1960s. Two ceased before 1965, and a third by 1968 precipitated by ill health and accidents resulting in the remaining people moving to the settlement. These ilagiit nunagivaktangit were at Akuliahatak at Eglinton Fiord, Naiaunausaq–Alpatuq at Henry Kater Peninsula, Natsilsiuk near Scott Inlet, and Nasalukuluk at Sam Ford Fiord.[46] At the start of the decade, RCMP also reported families residing at smaller ilagiit nunagivaktangit located at Cape Hewett, Inugsuin Fiord (Piniraq), and just outside of Kangiqtugaapik.[47]

Nunalinnguqti-tauliqtilluta (1960–1975)

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

The establishment of military facilities in the north and general social and political changes in the postwar period led the government to develop a newfound interest in what it termed the "welfare" of Inuit. Efforts were made to provide services in the Arctic considered essential for all Canadians. The most significant and far-reaching programs were in the fields of education, health care, and housing. The implementation of these programs was accompanied in the north through standardized administrative procedures and policies around services offered in centralized, government-chosen locations, such as Kangiqtugaapik.

The fate of Inuit families was closely tied to the way in which government programs in the 1960s were delivered and managed. Housing, in particular, was used to entice Inuit to move to the settlement. The rapid increase in the settlement's population resulted in the need to expand infrastructure, which was constrained by the geophysical conditions of the site on the east shore of Patricia Bay.

By 1963, discussions were underway to relocate the community of Clyde River to the west side of the bay, although the move itself was not completed until 1970.

Federal authorities believed that education and training would provide Inuit with access to more of the economic opportunities available to Canadians.[48] In 1960, the government delivered a school to Clyde River. The school prompted renewed concern among the RCMP about the potential for loitering.[49] Constable R. E. Boughen reported that Inuit were bringing their children to the settlement for school but waiting around for a few days. He cautioned that it could lead to parents hanging around to avoid "breaking up" the family.[50]

Again, the RCMP approach to loitering was contradictory. Children were encouraged to attend the new school, but they recognized that there would be negative consequences if parents and siblings were expected to live apart from the students. Inuit and most qallunaat understood that children were an integral part of Inuit life and that families relied on their labour, keen eyes and ears, and companionship. As Jason Palluq recalled, "I was in school for a very short while, maybe a year, but my parents needed my help with day-to-day things."[51] Many adults might have wanted to participate in night classes as well, which were likely offered in the community since the inception of the school. In 1973, adult educator Larry Okkumaluk expressed his pleasure in seeing strong demand for adult classes, citing the positive reception to classes in the previous years.[52] In 1962, kits for two eight-bedroom hostels, which were intended to house children so parents could return to their ilagiit nunagivaktangit, arrived but could not be erected because so many parts were missing.

Health care services eventually arrived in Kangiqtugaapik. Since its inception, the HBC post officer had acted as a dispenser of medicines and first-aid materials.[53] When medical advice was needed, the doctor at Pangnirtung was contacted by radio.[54] With the construction of the LORAN Station at Cape Christian, the US Coast Guard doctor would examine people if the illness was severe, but this was uncommon.[55] In the fall of 1956, an unknown virus killed seven people in the area. The RCMP complained that the lack of facilities likely caused the deaths of some who might have otherwise been saved. "This office has an ample supply of medicine, but the district is in dismal need of a locale to treat such emergencies. To effectively nurse gravely ill patients in a filthy, damp, cold and seamy duck tent in sub-zero temperatures is indeed a very difficult task."[56]

In 1957, the RCMP submitted their first request for a nursing station, however it would be over a decade before one arrived. An Indian and Northern Health Service (INHS) short-stay cabin was constructed in 1963, but no staff was provided. In 1965, the HBC post officer was still acting as the lay dispenser. It is unclear when the first nurse arrived at Kangiqtugaapik. RCMP reports suggest one was expected in January 1969.[57]

Between 1950 and 1969, the medical and supply ship *C. D. Howe* made yearly summer trips to the Eastern Arctic. The ship was specially designed to carry medical supplies and personnel and would stop at settlements to screen for tuberculosis. Among Inuit, the ship caused a great deal of anxiety. Anyone who tested positive for tuberculosis was transported at very short notice to hospitals in the south where they were treated for months or even years. Many died.

In his 1988 study on tuberculosis, P. G. Nixon noted that approximately 70% of Kangiqtugaapingmiut over the age of twenty-five had, at one time, been hospitalized in the south.[58] The removal of so many people would have had a devastating impact on the close kinship groups that made up the ilagiit nunagivaktangit in the area. Families were incredibly interdependent, so removing even one member could be devastating, and often would result in the remaining members having to abandon their ilagiit nunagivaktangit and move into the settlement. The leader at Natsilsiuk, for example, was evacuated south for tuberculosis treatment in 1959. His three-year absence and subsequent need for constant medical care upon his return resulted in the entire community moving to Kangiqtugaapik in 1962.[59]

Dissolution of other ilagiit nunagivaktangit under similar conditions, as well as moving to accompany children attending school, meant more and more Inuit were relocating to Kangiqtugaapik where they needed housing. Inuit families only had access to a limited number of prefabricated houses in the 1960s. Prior to this, there were few southern-style houses in the community. In 1955, surplus US Coast Guard Atwell huts had been provided to Inuit employed by the government and the HBC, but by 1957 rotting boards and tears had rendered them useless.[60] By 1960, the RCMP reported that most houses in the area were made out of scrap wood, canvas, and sod.

Inuit from the area visiting the settlement during the winter of 1963 expressed a desire to obtain a house. By 1964, there were five welfare houses and five low-cost houses in the settlement.[61] Unfortunately, this number still fell far short of demand, and the majority of Kangiqtugaapingmiut still resided in makeshift shacks. Levi Illingayuk recalled, "We were told that there was appropriate housing available. When we moved, there wasn't any housing available."[62] Johanasie Apak shared a similar memory with the QTC. "The qallunaat who were at the DEW Line had real houses. The Inuit didn't have real houses … They had qarmaqs, some had their own shack, that way they were able to have a house."[63]

An Inuit survey conducted in 1965 compiled by the Public Housing Section of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada reported that many of the houses consisted of only one room, often occupied by entire families. There were eighteen one-room houses for an estimated Inuit population of 238. One one-room house was home to eleven people.[64] In discussing life in the settlement, Kangiqtugaapingmiut recall that they were promised good housing and low rents when they moved from the land. Johanasie Apak remembers having to pay more and more for rent once he received a house. "We started renting at $2.00 per month. Later on … three-bedroom housing cost $15.00 per month. We were told that it would be this way, but today, it is now almost impossible."[65]

In 1963, the rising demand for housing prompted discussions of a large-scale building program at Kangiqtugaapik. The current settlement (located on the east side of Patricia Bay) had been constructed on muskeg over permafrost and there was no local source of gravel closer than 5 km. Due to runoff from the surrounding hills, poor soil conditions in the area, and lack of proper drainage, building conditions were very poor because the ground stayed wet for a long period. Since there was not enough suitable ground at the current settlement site to expand, an alternative townsite was needed.[66] In 1967, an Ontario engineering firm recommended relocation across the bay based on soil analysis and discussions with the "departments involved and with the local residents."[67] Nevertheless, there were a number of problems with the new site, too. While the old site became very wet and swampy during summer, the new site was battered by winds and snow during winter.[68] The existing site had been occupied by generations of families because there was rarely any wind and it had good landing beaches for canoes, factors that also led the HBC to choose the location for its post.[69] In spite of various concerns, however, seven new houses were erected on the western shore of Patricia Bay in 1967 as the start of a new settlement location.[70]

The settlement move was poorly managed and there were construction delays that eventually forced a motion in the NWT Council in 1969. This motion ultimately suggested that the NWT government refrain "from moving the present town site and … develop the present town site at greatest speed possible to alleviate the over-crowding, the poor health conditions, and the poor education facilities."[71]

As part of discussions on the motion, Mr. Simonie (likely Michael Simonie, as listed in the other records) elaborated on the "deplorable conditions" at Kangiqtugaapik.[72] The school that had been operating since 1960 was now housing more than 88 children. Although a larger school had been delivered in 1968, it was still sitting on the beach due to construction delays. While the construction crews had erected three new houses, they now

occupied them, leaving Kangiqtugaapingmiut living in "cracker-boxes," using oil drums as stoves, burning whatever they could find to heat their homes. In addition, the settlement still had no nursing station.[73] By 1969, out of a total population of 266 in the Clyde River area, 210 lived at Kangiqtugaapik, with only four Inuit living at Cape Christian and the remaining people in four outlying ilagiit nunagivaktangit.[74]

NWT Commissioner Stuart Hodgson visited Kangiqtugaapik during the spring 1969 and reported a divided community, with Patricia Bay separating the old townsite and the new townsite.[75] Two boat accidents in the summer of 1969, resulting in two deaths, illustrated the physical dangers of the division. The people at the new townsite had witnessed the accident, but no boat was available for a rescue.[76] Arnaq Illauq lost her husband during one of the boating accidents, as she explained to the QTC. "During the construction of the houses around 1969, my husband tried to cross from there to here and drowned. They never found his body. When I tried to get some compensation from the place he worked at, nobody listened to me. We never received any compensation. That really affected my life."[77]

The divisions in the community were taking their toll. In late 1969, the regional administrator, J. B. H. Gunn, recommended that the community be reunited as soon as possible at the new location.[78] The remainder of the old townsite was relocated during the spring and summer of 1970, although some buildings, such as the Canadian Department of Transport buildings, remained at the old townsite.[79] After the move, the RCMP detachment relocated from Cape Christian to the new Kangiqtugaapik site and an airstrip was developed north of the community.[80] Some dwellings remain near the old site, but they are used only during spring and summer.

SHAPING COMMUNITY LIFE

During the 1960s, the majority of Inuit in the area had moved to Kangiqtugaapik, encouraged directly and indirectly by the promises of education, health care, and housing. While centralization facilitated government logistical concerns and the administration of the area, for Kangiqtugaapingmiut it represented new challenges that had to be overcome, as Johanasie Apak remembered. "[Community life] was okay at first because there were only a few families that lived here. When more people started moving here, more problems started."[81] Hunters were no longer living in areas they were familiar with, choosing instead to move as they pleased to follow game. They now found themselves in a more concentrated community, meaning they had to travel farther to hunt. Settlement living also meant more qimmiit[iii] were living in one place, resulting in increased potential for the spread of disease among qimmiit and for conflict between humans and qimmiit. These challenges effectively led to a transition among Kangiqtugaapingmiut from owning dog teams to owning snowmobiles. By the 1970s, in order to pay for things like housing, as well as snowmobiles and their maintenance, Kangiqtugaapingmiut were fully embracing the notion of a mixed economy.

Prior to any major centralization at Kangiqtugaapik, RCMP had reported little to no disease among qimmiit in the area. From 1964 to 1968, after many Inuit had moved into Kangiqtugaapik, they reported no disease at all. This is contradictory to evidence presented by George Wenzel, who conducted fieldwork in Kangiqtugaapik during the early 1970s. Wenzel reported that there "was a massive die-off of dogs from two major episodes of canine distemper between 1964 and 1966. Clyde Inuit estimated that at least 500 dogs died locally."[82] This would have greatly diminished the qimmiit populations, affecting hunting patterns and techniques, as qimmiit were relied upon heavily for transportation.

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

At the same time, with high numbers of qimmiit now living in close proximity, the likelihood of conflict between qimmiit and people resulted in strict enforcement of the Ordinance Respecting Dogs by the RCMP. As part of the ordinance, qimmiit were required to be tied up at all times. This was contradictory to traditional Inuit customs when it came to taking care of their qimmiit. In addition, qimmiit were particularly known for breaking free, and when they did, they were often shot. Many Kangiqtugaapingmiut shared memories of their qimmiit being shot. In an interview with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA), Jacobie Iqalukjuak remembered the day in 1964 when three of his qimmiit were killed:

> *The first time that I found out dogs had to be tied was when we came to Clyde River to buy supplies. We were told to tie them up as it was not allowed for dogs to be loose … Three got killed. One of them I still envision today. That dog was shot from a distance and it did not die. It was dragging its behind, bleeding. It could only use its front legs. As it approached me, it was watching me, it hurt so bad watching that particular dog. I can still see it in my mind. I did not know why they were being shot. I assumed that maybe I was not allowed to get my dogs ready for travelling in that particular area. I started tying my dogs to any rope that was available. I wanted to leave as soon as possible because I needed the rest of the dogs to get back home.*[83]

While many Inuit received no explanation as to why their qimmiit were being shot, some were told it was to inhibit their travel. Johanasie Apak told the QIA, "We were told not to have dogs anymore. We would live in the community and not travel outside it."[84] This may have been to encourage movement into the settlement. A 1968 Area Economic Survey suggested that the reason migration to Kangiqtugaapik had been slower than to other communities may have been due to its accessibility. Distances from the surrounding ilagiit nunagivaktangit were shorter in terms of boat or dog team, or even snowmobile.[85] Shooting qimmiit would have limited the ability of Inuit to travel to and from the settlement, ultimately resulting in many moving into the community. Regardless of the reasons provided, the loss of qimmiit had deep impacts. Mary Iqaqrialuk remembered how the loss of their qimmiit affected her husband:

> *We were not told why [they were killed]. They were our only form of transportation. It was very hard on my husband. He had the responsibility to feed us, but he did not have the means … His mind was not normal as he used worry about where the next meal would come from.*[86]

These devastating losses, whether from disease or strict enforcement of the Ordinance, resulted in a dramatic shortage of qimmiit by the end of the 1960s. By 1971, there were only 185 qimmiit left in the area.[87] In place of qimmiit, Kangiqtugaapingmiut turned to newer technology such as the snowmobile to maintain their ability to hunt and travel. RCMP reports during the 1960s note the rise in snowmobile ownership in Kangiqtugaapik.

The first two autoboggans (enclosed tracked vehicles) owned by Inuit arrived in Kangiqtugaapik in 1962. By 1964, there were an additional five snowmobiles. Two more were reported purchased in 1966.[88]

The cost of a new snowmobile was still quite high for a casual wage earner. Johanasie Apak remembers, "I had a Ski-Doo at that time, I didn't get it right away although they were quite cheap, about $700 to $800. It seemed very expensive at that time."[89] However, despite their costs, it was more than just a desire to own a snowmobile—it was a necessity. The centralization of the population that occurred at Kangiqtugaapik during the 1960s meant that an increased number of hunters were competing for game in areas close to the community. To reach more remote hunting grounds by qimmiit was difficult and time-consuming, and many hunters had lost their dog teams to disease or shootings. As well, by the late 1960s, caribou herds had moved. They were now found over 145 km up Clyde Inlet. Snowmobiles made it easier to reach these distant hunting grounds quickly.[90] By 1967, RCMP reported that all full-time employees had purchased snowmobiles and younger men in the settlement aspired to do the same. "[M]ost of the younger men are saving for skidoos and are only resorting to the dog team as a last resort."[91] Between 1953 and 1966 the number of full-time wage jobs in Kangiqtugaapik had increased from three to seven.[92] Kangiqtugaapingmiut took advantage of the limited temporary employment opportunities. By early 1969, there were twenty-one snowmobiles reported in Kangiqtugaapik, seven being new 1969 models purchased with summer construction wages. Two snowmobiles were also owned by people in outlying ilagiit nunagivaktangit.[93]

The use of snowmobiles also changed how and what Kangiqtugaapingmiut hunted. In 1967, an RCMP officer commented on the changes in the efficiency of hunting with a snowmobile by writing "an animal seen is invariably an animal killed."[94] Without qimmiit, no time was needed to hunt for dog food. Unfortunately, snowmobiles could be unreliable and dangerous to run on the ice. In 1967, two young men drowned when their snowmobile broke through the ice at Clyde River. Snowmobiles also placed the owner in a position of dependency on the HBC (until the arrival of local co-ops) for fuel and replacement parts.

During the 1960s, in an effort to supplement their income, Kangiqtugaapingmiut worked to develop local carving and handicraft initiatives in their community. As early as 1960, the schoolteacher was encouraging local women to make dolls, miniature articles, and souvenirs. By 1962, they were reporting good returns.[95] In April 1968, the previous school principal, John Scullion, organized the Nanook Group of Clyde. With financial assistance from the federal government, the group purchased soapstone carvings from Kangiqtugaapingmiut and sold them with a 50% mark-up to local buyers, namely government and military personnel.[96] In 1974, the Qimikjuk Cooperative replaced the Nanook Group and the first coffee house was opened in the Nanook Building.[97] In 1975, the Igutaq Group was launched in an effort to revitalize the craft industry at Kangiqtugaapik.[98]

Conclusion

By the end of the 1970s, Kangiqtugaapik had a population of approximately 340 people. There were about fifteen permanent jobs and five part-time wage positions, including seven that were held by women. Incomes generally came from trapping, seasonal labour, and the sale of carvings and handicrafts, or a combination of the three.[99] Some people also left to work at the Nanisivik mine at Strathcona Sound, but usually only when fur prices were low.[100] This ensured that hunting continued to play a strong role well into the 1980s. At the same time, ringed seals, and hunting in general, provided every hunter with an opportunity to secure resources for his family, as the minimum return was always food. The continuing relevance of hunting and sharing food also maintained a strong community environment in Kangiqtugaapik.[101] On July 1, 1978, Kangiqtugaapik received hamlet status.[102]

ENDNOTES

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

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25 For a complete and thorough discussion of ilagiit nunagivaktangit locations and settlement patterns see Wenzel, "Clyde Inuit Settlement and Community," 9–21.

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Foreword (2013)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Aingai,

E7-1865

J. Okalik Eegeesiak, President, Qikiqtani Inuit Association

Introduction to the Work of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission

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

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

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

The Evidence

THE WITNESSES

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

ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

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

MAPS

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (2024 EDITION)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

QTC Report Collection

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

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