Pangnirtung: Community Histories, 1950–1975

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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Group of Inuit haul white whale hides at Pangnirtung, [1929].
Credit: *Leslie David Livingstone / Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development fonds / Library and Archives Canada / a102680.*

Introducing Pangnirtung

Pangnirtung[i], called Panniqtuuq in Inuktitut, has a population of more than 1,300 people and is the third-largest community in the Qikiqtani region. The hamlet is near the centre of a particularly rich habitat for marine mammals. Historically, people lived quite densely around all the islands and shorelines surrounding Cumberland Sound, from Cape Edwards in the southwest to Cape Mercy in the southeast. The hamlet, however, has only seen permanent habitation since 1921. It grew around a Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) trading post that attracted the RCMP in 1923, an Anglican Mission in 1926, and a government[ii]-assisted hospital in 1931.

The history of Cumberland Sound is unique in the region. Its people lived through three waves of economic and demographic change since 1824. The first was the whaling era, from 1824 to 1919. During this period, around 1860, Scottish and American whalers established permanent stations in Cumberland Sound. Material and cultural changes were accompanied by huge losses of population to disease, and by the near extinction of the bowhead whale. The second wave of change began in 1921, when the population scattered into ilagiit nunagivaktangit,[1] mostly around sites that their ancestors occupied before 1840. Inuit in this area hunted seals and caribou, seasonally hunted beluga and walrus and trapped white foxes. They traded these, along with sealskins and seal oil, for imported food and manufactured goods at Pangnirtung at least once a year, or more often if they lived close to the trading post. This economy remained the basis of most people's annual routine until 1962, when a growing number of government officials and services at Pangnirtung drove a third wave of change. This change disrupted the hunting and trapping economy and put great pressure on individuals to relocate permanently to the settlement. This re-settlement was virtually complete by 1970.

i This report uses current geographical place names, with Inuktitut place names added
ii This report uses the term "government" to include all the bodies that existed under Canadian federal legislation to serve and control people, mostly Inuit, in the Qikiqtani Region.

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 government-chosen settlements and participating in the cash economy.

ILAGIIT NUNAGIVAKTANGIT

The Uqqurmiut are the people of the Lee Side, an ancient and very broad regional description covering the southeastern part of Baffin Island from Clyde River on Baffin Bay, almost to the mouth of Frobisher Bay.[2] Although broken up by mountains and glaciers, this is a very rich environment for marine mammals, caribou, and char. For centuries, Inuit thrived in this area due to the abundance of wildlife. Caribou and ringed seal were primary sources of food and materials for clothing and shelter, as were the enormous bowhead whales found in the area.

Up to the 1840s, four local groups occupied ilagiit nunagivaktangit along the shores and islands of Cumberland Sound itself. 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. According to information collected in 1883, the groups were: the Talirpingmiut on the southwest coast; the Qinguamiut around the head of the sound from Immigen to Ushualuk; the Kinngarmiut along the coast where high mountains back the northeast shore; and the Saumingmiut around Cape Mercy at the mouth of Cumberland Sound. Over the years, the pull of the whaling industry and the loss of population to diseases apparently reduced the distinct identities of these groups.

For much of the 20th century, the population could be described as comprising two groups, each attached until 1921 to one of two main whaling stations—Qikiqtat (Kekerten Island) and Umanaqjuaq (Blacklead Island).[3] People from these groups, with very few exceptions, now live in Pangnirtung.

Hills around the hamlet rise abruptly to almost 1,000 metres, and distant views are dominated by even higher mountains of about 2,500 metres that surround the Penny Ice Cap. Elevations in the south and northwest are lower. The principal geographical features of Cumberland Sound are deep fiords and hundreds of islands separated by narrow saltwater channels. Winter and spring land-fast ice and its varying floe edge are also important features.[4]

The ringed seal and the caribou are essential to Inuit; but larger seals and small whales are also hunted. The enormous Greenland or bowhead whale was culturally and economically important both before and after the region became a famous destination for whaling ships from Great Britain and New England.[5]

The ringed seal provides meat for people and qimmiit[iii] as well as skins for traditional clothing and tent coverings. For much of the twentieth century, sealskins also provided significant export earnings. They can be taken year-round in open water, at the floe edge, from breathing holes on the land-fast ice, and at open holes in places that never freeze over fully. The harp seal and bearded seal are sometimes available and are valued for their larger skins and greater amount of meat. The bearded seal provides the best leather for qimmiit harnesses and for kamiit soles.

Beluga or white whales feed throughout Cumberland Sound during the short season of open water. They congregate in late summer in shallow waters, where commercial whale drives were carried out as recently as 1964. The skin makes soft, strong leather. There is plenty of meat and blubber, and the maktaaq (outer skin) is a delicacy. The tusked narwhal is found in limited numbers in Cumberland Sound and occasionally in Pangnirtung Fiord itself.

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

The bowhead or arvik, which can grow to more than 20 metres in length, is still seen quite often in Cumberland Sound. Organized annual whale hunts ended by 1919, though an unexpected catch occurred near the head of the sound in 1946. The legal harvest of bowhead in 1998 kept this tradition alive in spite of international criticism.

The caribou became an extremely important source of both meat and skins. Small herds roam the Cumberland and Hall Peninsulas. Large migratory herds located further north on the edge of the Barnes Ice Cap migrate south and west in the summer months. Many Inuit leave the coasts each fall to hunt inland.[6] Walrus is hunted on the Leybourne Islands at the mouth of Cumberland Sound, and the polar bear is most often found towards the mouth of the sound. Polar bear skin, formerly used for clothing, has also been a valuable trade item for many years. The white or Arctic fox has little or no food value, but had very good value for commercial trapping from 1921 through the 1950s. The fox is not as plentiful around Pangnirtung as it is in other parts of southern Baffin Island, so it generally earned the Uqqurmiut less than their trade in sealskins.[7] The Arctic char, traditionally gathered at stone weirs during the August migration from salt to fresh water was also fished at inland lakes.

Uqqurmiut of Cumberland Sound lived for most of each year in some of the largest, most continuously occupied ilagiit nunagivaktangit in the whole of the Qikiqtani region.[8] Until the 1960s, around a dozen of these large dwelling-places typically served as a base for several families. The yearly cycle followed the migration of animals and fish, as well as the making and breaking of the huge sheets of ice that offered highways across Cumberland Sound.[9] Long-term change was driven by the adoption of firearms and wooden boats in the 1860s, by the seasonal concentration of people around the whaling stations from 1880 until 1921, and by the re-concentration in Pangnirtung after 1962. The description here is focused on 1930–62.

A typical winter routine began in October or November when ice formed. Ice would put an end to seal hunting in open water from qajait (kayaks) and umiat (boats). The ice needed to be firm enough to allow hunters to approach the sinaa (floe edge) from the landward side or to wait for seals at their breathing holes. Ringed seals were hunted year-round by methods that changed with the seasons. In March and April, whole villages of people moved onto the ice to harvest "white-coats" for domestic use or trade.[10] The break-up of the land-fast ice at the end of June, or in early July, at one time signaled the hunt for bowhead whales that often crowded its retreating edge. Once the ice goes out of the head of Cumberland Sound in July, beluga whales also become abundant. Around the end of August, people travelled inland to hunt caribou for food and a supply of winter skins. On their return from the caribou hunt, families again prepared for the stormy period of broken ice that preceded the winter sealing.

After 1921, the annual routine began including visits to the HBC trading post at Pangnirtung. Depending on how close people lived to the post, they might visit every month or as seldom as once a year. Generally, around late September a large number of people would gather at Pangnirtung to help unload the annual supply ship. Many would also return to celebrate Christmas at the post. Less frequent visits were more typical for those who lived at distant ilagiit nunagivaktangit such as Tuvakjuaq, on the south coast facing the Labrador Sea. Their route to Pangnirtung led them across mountains to Kekerten, where they often stopped for the white-coat seal hunt.[11] People who hunted around the mouth of Pangnirtung Fiord had the easiest access to the post for medical care or frequent trade. The Uqqurmiut resisted HBC pressure to move to the best trapping grounds and continued to make their homes where the hunting was best.

EARLY CONTACTS

British explorers first entered Cumberland Sound in 1583, but soon realized the area was not part of a Northwest Passage. Regular contact did not begin until 1824, when British whalers appeared along the Davis Strait shore north of Pangnirtung. At that time, some Cumberland Sound Uqqurmiut moved north to trade with them and began encouraging the whalers to sail around Cape Dyer to enter the ice-clogged waters of the Sound. In 1839–40, Inuluapik, a young man from Kingmiksok, convinced a Scottish whaler to enter Cumberland Sound, and Uqqurmiut began flocking to the area to trade with the ships and to work. Inuit sometimes suffered from the uncertainty of the whaling ships' arrivals and departures or became tragically familiar with viral and bacterial diseases, which made heavy inroads before 1860.[12]

A new phase of contact began with the frequent visits by whalers to Cumberland Sound after 1840, and ran until 1872, when declines in whale stocks caused a corresponding fall in the number of vessels wintering in the area.[13] During this period, Inuit acquired firearms and wooden boats and began a long tradition of working seasonally or year-round for whalers on the ships or at the year-round stations. At the same time, traditional harvesting activities continued from the stations, where one hundred or more people congregated at certain times each year. During this time, the year-round qallunaat (non-Inuit) population remained very small but stable.

After the First World War, the annual routine of the bowhead whale hunt ended, but furs, skins, walrus ivory, and seal oil were still collected by a handful of small Scottish and English firms. Their trading posts or stations were typically managed by Inuit or by long-term qallunaat residents. There were two stations near the mouth of Frobisher Bay, one at Blacklead Island, one at Ushualuk, one at Kekerten Island, and another at Saumia (Cape Mercy). On Davis Strait, whalers regularly visited anchorages at Aggidjen (Durban Harbour) and Kivitoo. With the arrival of the HBC in 1921, these stations could not compete with the powerful HBC monopoly.

Other than whalers, a notable Qallunaaq to live in the region was Reverend Edmund Peck, the Anglican missionary who introduced Christianity to the Qikiqtani Region in 1894 and translated biblical texts into the new syllabic system for writing Inuktitut. Syllabic literacy spread rapidly, and new religious practices challenged traditional belief systems and cultural practices.[14]

German geographer and anthropologist Franz Boas collected Inuit knowledge at Kekerten Island and published it in 1888 in his book, *The Central Eskimo*. Another German visitor was the ornithologist Bernhard Hantzsch, whose exploration of the coast of Foxe Basin ended with his death there in 1911. In the 1920s, Canadian government explorers used Pangnirtung as a base for scientific surveys. All these individuals and parties employed Inuit to carry out their objectives. Most of these transient visitors did not disrupt the annual cycle of harvesting country food to supplement whatever was available at the stations. In fact, country food, chiefly caribou but also fish and seal meat, became an important part of the diet of visiting qallunaat, though some made heavier demands on Inuit than they were able to repay. The 1920s saw a major reorganization of where people lived and how they took part in external trade.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF LIFE

After the First World War, the HBC pounced on the small British firms trading around Baffin Island. In 1921, the *SS Baychimo* imported buildings and supplies to establish an HBC trading post near the mouth of Nettilling Fiord, northwest of all the rival stations in Cumberland Sound. After wasting two days searching for a site, the HBC party allowed an Inuk from Kekerten, Attagoyuk, to lead them up Pangnirtung Fiord. Here, one passenger called "Pangniatook [Pangnirtung] … possibly one of the most beautiful fiords I have seen," but the captain initially rejected Attagoyuk's first choice—the community's present site—because the anchorage was too windy and too deep. The next site inspected was even worse, however, so the *Baychimo* unloaded its cargo where the community now stands. While the chosen place for Netchilik Post was not ideal, better sites along the Sound were already occupied by the competition, and the navigation season was ending. With help from three boatloads of Inuit, the first buildings and cargo went ashore on September 9 and the vessel sailed away before dawn on the twelfth.[15] In 1923, the RCMP also established a detachment at the same site and renamed the place Pangnirtung.

This establishment launched the beginning of a phase that some scholars call contact-traditional.[16] This way of looking at the history of the Canadian north labels the periods according to the amount of influence incomers had on Inuit lives in the area. The first stage involved minimal contact between Inuit and explorers and others travelling through the area. It is followed by transitional (more contact and frequent but irregular trade), then contact-traditional (a hunting life with dependable trade at fixed locations and some wage employment), and finally centralized (people clustered in a few places for trade and all services).[17] In the Pangnirtung trading area, the contact-traditional phase lasted from 1921 to 1962.[18]

A dog team delivers drinking water to St. Luke's Mission Hospital, [1946]. St Luke's was the Qikiqtaaluk Region's only hospital for more than 30 years.
Credit: *George Hunter / National Film Board of Canada. Photothèque / Library and Archives Canada / PA-166453.*

By 1930, the depletion of bowhead whales and the opportunity to exchange fox furs for imported food, clothing, hunting tools, and luxuries, marked two significant differences from life a century earlier. The Inuit population at the Pangnirtung post grew slowly, limited to hired employees and a handful of Elders and a few others who could not hunt. In 1928, the RCMP and traders sent the aged and infirm out to their relatives in ilagiit nunagivaktangit, relieving the government and the HBC of the cost of feeding them.

The HBC was more interested in fox furs than whale products or sealskins, and for twenty years struggled to make Uqqurmiut focus more on trapping. This was difficult, partly because of mistrust. The HBC had abandoned the long-term reciprocal sharing that prevailed in whaling days and instituted a straight barter system. Inuit also complained of being cheated when they had to pay for items that they believed had been offered as gifts or they had already paid for. HBC managers frequently complained that Inuit wanted to hunt, not trap, and that many fox skins were lost by lack of effort. On the other hand, Inuit hunters wanted to ensure that they and their relatives obtained the essentials of life, namely meat and oil, before shifting their efforts on the land towards trapping foxes.[19]

In 1930, about half the population of Cumberland Sound could reportedly reach Pangnirtung in a day's travel. Many trade items were incorporated into the hunting economy—the people of Cumberland Sound retained their strong preference for sturdy wooden boats and high-powered rifles, and the HBC introduced nets for sealing in 1921. In other respects, however, the land economy and yearly routine of Uqqurmiut from 1921 to 1961 was remarkably similar to what the government still favoured as "traditional" Inuit life.[20] For the time being, the government and HBC had succeeded in slowing and indeed reversing economic change in Cumberland Sound.

POPULATION OF ILAGIIT NUNAGIVAKTANGIT IN PANGNIRTUNG AREA, 1954

Location	Place Name	Population	Comments
Pangnirtung Fiord	Pangnirtung	80	Not a camp; main trading post in district
Cumberland Sound	Avatuktu	20	
	Noonata	12	
	Tesseralik	30	Pre-1921 whaling station
	Kekerten	23	Pre-1921 whaling station
	Ooshooaluk	30	Pre-1921 trading post (Duval)
	Bon Accord	34	Also Illungajut
	Imigen	37	
	Sowic	37	Not identified
	Kreepishaw	40	Inhabited until 1984
	Kingniksoon	30	
	Abraham Bay	30	Former trading post (Kanaka)
	Noonigen	35	Not identified
	Kingnait Fiord	16	
	Touack Fiord	20	East of mouth of Cumberland sound
Davis Strait	Padloping	60	Weather station on Davis strait
	Kivitoo	60	former trading post (Niaqutsiaq)
	Broughton Island	9	DEW line site established in 1955
	Padlei Fiord	6	
Total		609	394 people lived in ilagiit nunagivaktangit on Cumberland sound, 135 on Davis strait, and 80 in Pangnirtung

Table 1:[21] Place names are printed as given in the original qallunaat source. The comments above are not found in the original source.

In 1930–31 the government and the Anglican Church collaborated in building and staffing St. Luke's hospital at Pangnirtung.[22] With a year-round resident doctor and four southern nurses, it was the Qikiqtani region's only hospital for over thirty years. The medical officer's assistant, Etuangat, convinced Inuit to use the medical services and taught successive doctors to understand and respect their patients. Several doctors at Pangnirtung in the 1930s were aware of the inroads of tuberculosis (TB) in the district and challenged the conventional medical opinion that these were miscellaneous chest infections and not TB at all. In 1939, Dr. Orford designed a proposal to isolate TB patients in "model camps" where they would rest, eat country food, and stay in contact with their families.[23] This proposal, so different from the evacuation program of the 1950s, was never adopted. Medical officers were also tragically unable to do anything about the viral infections that followed the visit of each year's supply vessel. Many Inuit who helped unload the ship became infected, and frequently some would die.

In 1941, the HBC supply and trading ship RMS *Nascopie* brought a disease, thought to be paratyphoid (a salmonella infection), which killed 42 people.[24] This was a disaster on a scale not seen since the 1850s, and worse than anything that followed. By the end of the Second World War, the settlement of Pangnirtung had a population centred on the hospital staff (a doctor and four nurses), an RCMP detachment, an Anglican mission, and the HBC staff. Some qallunaat were married with families, and all employed at least one Inuk to hunt and assist on journeys. The families of hired Inuit, the patients in the hospital, and up to eighty elderly or infirm people in an "industrial home" made up a larger Inuit population than any other enclave of this kind in the region. Far more numerous were about three hundred people who traded into Pangnirtung. The RCMP gave discs to Inuit that identified them as inhabitants of the E-6 district and bore the numbers by which all Inuit were identified in the official records. Most of these people passed at least a few days a year around the trading post, but their yearly routine was still centered on the land.

Until the end of the Second World War, the HBC was the dominant economic force in Pangnirtung, while St. Luke's Anglican Mission also exerted a strong cultural influence. The RCMP made patrols and were respected and feared, especially for their influence over the issue of relief to invalids and poor hunters. Unique to Pangnirtung, a government doctor had services as well as trade goods to provide, but he often competed with other qallunaat agencies for prestige. Overall, however, the balance of power was evident in transport and communications—it was the HBC that imported government supplies from 1932 to 1947 and controlled the messages going out on the settlement's only radio transmitter.

The balance of power and prestige began to tilt towards government in 1945, when Parliament passed the Family Allowance Act. This universal program gave a big boost to the incomes of Inuit. In 1947, the HBC lost prestige with the sinking of the annual supply vessel, the *Nascopie*. In 1949, the government launched its own Arctic freighter, the *C.D. Howe*. It also served as a hospital ship, intervening forcibly to remove sick Inuit from their homes for TB treatment in southern sanatoria. Another well-meant intrusion was the passage of the Game Acts, setting quotas on a number of species and giving the police authority to issue tags and monitor trade of species such as polar bears. Finally, schools were established throughout the Arctic, and while Pangnirtung had a day school run by the Anglican mission since 1936, teachers after 1950 carried the job title of welfare teachers and involved themselves in much of the people's affairs. The direct involvement of civil servants, as well as the RCMP, in the lives of Inuit was becoming remarkably visible.

The measured financial aspects of Inuit life at this time, which excluded the considerable value of country food and skins consumed locally, is captured in a table prepared for the administrators on the Eastern Arctic Patrol (EAP).

SOURCES OF INCOME OF CUMBERLAND SOUND INUIT IN 1950–1951

Source of Income	Pangnirtung		Total of Eight Surveyed Communities	
	$	% of Total	$	% of Total
Furs, etc.	8,140	19.2	75,727	29
Handicrafts	0	0	0	0
Labour, etc.	3,828	9.07	38,971	14.9
Family allowances	22,691	53.9	97,961	37.5
Government relief	1,887	4.4	13,780	5.3
Trader relief	65	0.1	788	0.3
Unpaid debts	918	2.1	1,625	0.6
Old Age Pension	921	2.1	1,738	0.7
Other	3,730	8.8	29,610	11.3
Total	**$42,180**	**99.67%**	**$260,000**	**99.60%**

Table 2:[25] The eight communities in the survey were Southampton Island, Kinngait, Kimmirut, Iqaluit, Pangnirtung, Clyde River, Pond Inlet, and Arctic Bay.

Here, more than anywhere else in the Qikiqtani region, seals were an important part of the trading economy. In peak years in the 1930s, the HBC accepted more than three thousand sealskins in trade.

Another significant part of the annual round of activities was a collective white whale drive carried out by boats from most of the ilagiit nunagivaktangit. Since 1927, the HBC had facilities at Pangnirtung to chop and render whale blubber quickly and to prepare the skins for export. When the HBC stopped organizing the annual white whale drive, a number of groups co-operated in running one themselves, earning about $2,500 a year. Constable Johnson described in 1955 how "most of the natives take part in the whale hunts and all benefit to some extent through the sale of oil and hides. The meat of the whales is divided among the camp members and is most useful as dog feed." Constable Terry Jenkin provided more detail in 1959.

> *Presently at Pangnirtung, the Hudson's Bay Company is operating a whaling station especially for the processing of white whales … The processing amounts to taking the pure oil from the fat of the whale, and the hide is pickled for shipment to England where it is made into boot laces of the finest quality. The average white whale brings between$25.00 to $30.00 to an Eskimo and he is allowed to keep the meat.[26]*

In 1964–65, the market for oil and hides collapsed. It did not recover, and since then beluga have been taken in smaller numbers for subsistence.[27]

There is evidence that the RCMP and traders were ready to stifle any initiatives by individual Inuit to spend more time at the settlement, and to dictate where they lived and when they moved. Constable H. A. Johnson's annual report for 1954 hinted at his power. He reported that Ushualuk had been "evacuated" in the summer because game had

been judged scarce and the people were visiting the trading post monthly to buy food on Family Allowance.[28] Ushualuk was normally considered a rich game area, and the move away from it may have been involuntary—Inuit there "were asked to move to a better location" where they would limit their visits to the settlement to twice a year. Johnson next turned his attention to another nearby camp that he claimed attracted "bums and scroungers" who were likely to make demands on his relief budget. He wrote:

> *[T]hese natives are able-bodied but have no ambition. They were informed during their visit to the settlement that unless they moved from this location they would receive no further Family Allowance, they were further advised that relief assistance to all members of that camp had been discontinued. All the natives of this camp agreed to move. In most cases they will return to their old camps and will be transported there on the Police Peterhead this summer.*[29]

Johnson's report shows racist and hard-nosed attitudes towards family allowance, a universal social program and an entitlement of anyone with children, and "relief," social assistance available to those in genuine need. Inuit who came to trade were not welcome to stay after they transacted their business. Johnson's successor, G. C. Barr, reported that, "Some of the poorer types of Eskimo have been trying to move into Pangnirtung and loiter away the summer months, but all the Natives have been told that they cannot live in Pangnirtung unless they are employed by one of the White Concerns … Loitering around the Settlement is not permitted."[30] Inuit were Canadians with the right to live where they pleased, but the RCMP, traders, and missionaries made the settlement an unwelcoming place except for people who were on business or were in obvious need due to poor health or old age.

There were other pressures forcing Inuit to conform to qallunaat expectations about loitering. These included threats to kill visitors' qimmiit, as Pangnirtung resident Levi Evic recalled for the QTC in 2008.[31] In 1956 a police officer threatened to kill his family's qimmiit while they were staying in Pangnirtung with family.[32] Levi Evic testified:

> *Someone came over and told my father [Jaco Evic] that they were going to shoot his dogs tomorrow, kill all his dogs. It was winter at that time. In the middle of the night when it was dark, really cold, we left this community. He did not want his dogs to be shot. So in the middle of the night they took off, towards our home … [The police] were planning to shoot our dogs if we were still here at morning.*[33]

According to Levi Evic, the police officer made demands in English, which were then interpreted into Inuktitut. On other occasions when he was present, qimmiit were shot in similar circumstances. Incidents like this were very humiliating to the people concerned and would not have been reported back to Ottawa by either perpetrators or the victims.

In 1960, the National Film Board (NFB) issued a short documentary on Pangnirtung, portraying an isolated place with an almost uninterrupted connection to the past.[34] The reality was somewhat different, as there had been constant changes in both annual routines and material belongings of the Uqqurmiut compared to fifty years earlier. Boats were bigger and were powered by gasoline, qamutiit were probably longer and pulled by more qimmiit, doctors and nurses were nearby, and tupiit (tents) and qarmait were bigger and more comfortable. People travelled to Frobisher Bay to experience the astounding changes occurring there, and others spent years in hospitals in Ontario or Quebec. In their own ways, both Inuit and qallunaat on Cumberland Sound were accepting some kinds of change while trying to avoid others. The disruption, which began early in the 1960s, would be sudden, unplanned, and traumatic.

Sangussaqtauliqtilluta (1962–1966)

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.

The winter of 1961–62 was a turning point in the history of Cumberland Sound. Most of the qimmiit in the region died of disease or were shot to prevent its spread, and almost all the people were temporarily but forcibly evacuated to a settlement that was not prepared to shelter them. Just as in 1840–52 and 1921–23, old patterns of life were shattered and then replaced very quickly with new ones. The start of this disruption was the sudden arrival of an epidemic disease, later diagnosed in Ottawa as canine hepatitis,[35] which gradually spread from the west. In December 1961, dog teams brought the disease overland from Iqaluit to Kingmiksok and from there it spread to all the ilagiit nunagivaktangit who traded at Pangnirtung.

News and the virus spread together, and scenes that were common two years earlier around Kimmirut were repeated here—hunters travelled on foot from camp to the floe edge or pooled a few remaining qimmiit and took turns using much-reduced teams. The difference in Cumberland Sound in 1962, though, was the readiness of qallunaat officials, assisted by Inuit they employed, to forcefully move people to a settlement. The local authorities also called on reinforcements from Iqaluit—an RCMP aircraft and senior government representatives from the regional office in Iqaluit. Before winter ended, they even flew in an autoboggan, the first motorized sled seen in Cumberland Sound.[36]

In February, these agents visited the ilagiit nunagivaktangit they could reach and concluded that the population was extremely vulnerable. The qimmiit population had fallen by about three-quarters, and snow and ice conditions were unusually hard for travel for the weak teams that remained. While the authorities left rations with families who insisted on staying on the land, five of the thirteen remote ilagiit nunagivaktangit were completely evacuated and more than half the population was quickly brought into the settlement by the first week of March. Here they found the preparations were inadequate. Raigalee Angnakok spoke to the QTC in her testimony about it:

> *The RCMP came to take us, just up and they moved us. I am not sure why or how we got there. I remember that we were living in a tent in the middle of winter. It was so cold … [T]he only things we had from then was a little bit of heating oil and little bit of minced meat in a can. Those were the only things we survived on. We were moved from our camp without taking anything, just us wives and the children. And I can say that within three days of being moved, looking back, it is comical, ridiculous. It was that cold in the tent that when we woke up in the morning we had frost on our eyebrows and hairy areas. And when I look back; they treated us like nothing … Underlings. They treated us so bad compared to what we have today … We had hardly anything when they moved us as all our equipment and our bedding was left in our camp when they just took us and moved us. They put us in tents that were very cold. They did that to us.*[37]

During this time, Pangnirtung was very small—barely 20 buildings in total for the RCMP, HBC shop and warehouses, mission, hospital, and a few new houses for southerners and their Inuit employees. There was nowhere to put more than 200 people, so families set to work building canvas-covered qarmait which were colder and less substantial than the ones they had left behind. Years later, administrator Keith Crowe wrote of the contributions of two year-round residents.

> *Kilabuk was the ideal person to handle the welter of emergencies, innovations and sensitivities. From the first day, he and his friend Etooangat, who was employed by the Department of Health and Welfare, gave me help and encouragement. They taught me the local dialect, explained the complexities of Inuit kinship and camp affiliations and described the now-disrupted seasonal economy. They spent much unrewarded time arranging and attending meetings, dealing with community problems and advising me and other qallunaat on our various plans. Their patience, humour and diplomacy had beenfinely tuned during decades of handling transient employers, and these qualities, together with their knowledge, contributed immensely to the peace and progress of all.*[38]

Many Panniqtuumiut spoke to the QTC about these times. Constant themes were the lack of any sort of preparation or explanation for the evacuations by the unilingual qallunaat who visited each community in the RCMP's recently acquired airplane. People were pressured to leave with very few belongings, and families were often split. Elijah Kakkee told the QTC that at Tuvakjuak a couple of hunters were returning home, saw the plane circle, land and leave, and reached their ilagiit nunagivaktangit to find it almost empty:

> *Once I arrived in our camp … the tent on the porch area. It was no longer there. Nobody came out from the qarmaqs. Only one person approaching from my uncle's qarmaq … The people were picked up by the airplane. There's only four of us left. "What are we going to do?" They didn't bring anything—only bedding. All the contents in the qarmaq were left. We were told the airplane would come at 8 am for us. I didn't know what to do. Only four of men couldn't live in the camp. There were some still-not-dry polar bear skins. We were store them [sic] and some fox skins stored in the same place. There was no discussion. We were not told. There was just Spam and butter. That's what we got from the RCMP—butter and Spam. They didn't bring kettles. We didn't see them again.*[39]

After all were removed, they never lived at Tuvakjuak again. Medical authorities in Pangnirtung, expressing concern for the oldest family member, prevented the family from ever returning to this remote and most independent of the ilagiit nunagivaktangiton the land.

Officials described the events as an important humanitarian rescue of a population facing starvation. Yet, at Kimmirut two years earlier, when the RCMP allowed Inuit to deal with this qimmiit disease in their own way, people fed themselves despite a loss of qimmiit and even managed to tend their traplines.[40] At Pangnirtung, however, only the very hardy and most confident were able to resist pressure to be evacuated to the settlement.[41]

Many Panniqtuumiut have spoken of the evacuations as the beginning of the end of life on the land, but it was not a simple case of just staying in the settlement forever after the evacuations. About two-thirds of the families were back in their ilagiit nunagivaktangit before freeze-up in 1962. The administrators in Pangnirtung, who did not want to see another winter without adequate housing, welcomed their departure. The RCMP and government officials quickly imported healthy qimmiit from other districts, and by summer 1964, most teams were up to strength again. At the same time, the attachment of people to the land was being undermined by other government actions. The first places to be abandoned were the remotest ones around Cape Mercy. People from near the head of Cumberland Sound began to resettle in Pangnirtung, from where they could reach their most familiar hunting places. This combination of government effort to shore up the existing economy with the promotion of centralization appears incoherent but was consistent with a general government policy stated in 1957. The policy called for accelerating change only where Inuit society was already under stress, while "in remote areas … relatively free from contact with white civilization, it is planned to leave their present economy as undisturbed as possible." Gradually the south side of Cumberland Sound was depopulated and by 1969, only three ilagiit nunagivaktangit remained.[42]

What Inuit wanted in this period varied a good deal, but most moved to Pangnirtung with regret; later, many felt the government did not live up to the promises and inducements made to encourage people to resettle, especially promises of adequate and inexpensive housing and forecasts that schooling would lead to jobs. In testimonies to the QTC and in various oral history projects since the 1980s,[43] Panniqtuumiut have talked about the pressures they were under to leave the land. Although only the settlement offered the advantages of schooling for children and medical care for all ages, the difficulties included distance from familiar hunting places, reduced access to country food, and the loss of traditional roles for all, especially Elders and men.

A confusing element in the history of this period is that federal authorities, despite new housing policies implemented in 1956 and 1959, still felt that places like Pangnirtung (as well as Igloolik) might be able to prolong their hunting and trapping well into the future. This optimism was encouraged by an economy that enjoyed a strong boost from high prices for sealskins. Constable M. J. McPhee described 1963 to be an exceptionally good year.[44]

> *Very rarely are any [ringed seal skins] retained for domestic purposes by the Eskimo in view of their values. In the past a large amount of clothing, particularly footwear, was manufactured from seal skins, however, in the present day commercial clothing is evidently preferred … with the exception of seal skin boots or kamiks worn during cold or wet weather. As the price of their skins has increased sharply from the previous period, the seal forms the basic element of the native economy, also serving as the prime source of food … In a minor way, blubber is still rendered for use in native oil lamps, but gradually, commercial sources of heat are replacing seal oil.*

High prices were not stable, but the sealskin trade remained an important part of the local economy until a European boycott ended it suddenly in 1984.

One significant change was the increasing use of snowmobiles, which were first seen in Pangnirtung in 1962.[45] The 1964 sealift brought fourteen snowmobiles to the HBC store, and half were snapped up by employed Inuit in the settlement and seven more by hunters still living on the land.[46] An even larger shipment the next year also sold out within days, many being bought by hunters.

Nevertheless, the qimmiit population in the settlement continued to rise. As Pangnirtung grew, the local RCMP constable became seriously alarmed about qimmiit running at large, (he had about 250 destroyed in 1966) and encouraged Inuit to kill many of their own. He made plans for another slaughter in 1967. His superiors in Ottawa felt he might be overreacting, but the report for 1967 showed more reductions in the qimmiit population, along with an increase in the number of snowmobiles to 60, and 70 the following year. In 1968, the RCMP abandoned qimuksiq[47] travel and, as a result, discontinued their annual autumn trip to hunt walrus.[48] In the spring of the same year there were only three teams remaining. Some of them were already engaged in the growing business of guiding tourists.

Nunalinnguqti-tauliqtilluta (1966–1975)

The term "Nunalinnguqtitauliqtilluta" means "the time when we were actively (by outside force) formed into communities." Nunalinnguqtitauliqtilluta conforms to the period from the 1950s to 1960s, 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 the 1960s, Pangnirtung moved from being one of the most developed of the permanent qallunaat establishments to its present status as one of the Qikiqtani region's thirteen communities. Symbolically, the development—in Ottawa—of a town plan for Pangnirtung in 1961–62 could be seen as the beginning of the modern era, as the government applied technological solutions to the settlement's problems, such as permafrost, poor drainage, and isolation from markets and service centres. Modernization dominated the community's life by 1966, with the centralization in one place of more than half the people of the Pangnirtung trading area, the launch of a major government housing program, construction of a tank farm and diesel generator, a freshwater reservoir, and a year-round gravel runway to replace uncertain landings on the ice or water of Pangnirtung Fiord.

This brief period of modernization also saw the establishment of telephone and broadcast connections to the south through the Anik satellite (1973), the development throughout the Arctic of a government fostered co-operative movement, the designation of a large national park just north of Pangnirtung to channel and encourage the growing tourism business, and further encouragement for the production and marketing of the work of the community's artists. Each step in this process brought Pangnirtung into closer contact with the larger political and economic communities of the Northwest Territories and of Canada and demanded new skills and new organizations for Inuit so that these changes could be managed for their benefit. Modernization was therefore not simply an upgrading of infrastructure—it demanded significant changes in the daily lives of individuals.

Preparing foundations for new houses at Pangnirtung, [1967].
Credit: *Lynn Ball / NWT Archives / Northwest Territories / Department of Information fonds / G-1979-023: 1355.*

In common with other communities in the Qikiqtani region, Pangnirtung had to absorb a young and rapidly growing population. In February 1965, the area had a reported population of about 568 Inuit living in family units averaging 5 people. Of the total, a remarkable 313 were under the age of 21.[49] Between 1970 and 1980, the population of the Pangnirtung district increased further, from 690 to 839. One ilagiit nunagivaktangit, Kipisa, was continuously occupied until 1984 and another, Opingivik, was re-established in the late 1970s by Lypa Pitsiulak, who invested earnings from his work as an artist to reestablish a foothold on a more traditional life than was possible in the settlement. In 1981, Pangnirtung was one of the five biggest communities in what is now Nunavut and second only to Iqaluit in the region.

Before 1950, in ilagiit nunagivaktangit, abundant building materials from ships and shore stations enabled the development of larger qarmait. These dwellings were built with large double-walled shelters, timber-frames and covered at least partly with canvas or duck. Within Pangnirtung itself, this semi-permanent type of shelter was occasionally used by people employed around the settlements or by the elderly or disabled receiving rations. The RCMP provided a wooden house for the Inuit special constable.

When more than 200 Inuit were evacuated to Pangnirtung during the emergency in 1962, there was practically nowhere to house them. Until then, Iqaluit and the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line sites were top priorities for the government's Inuit housing programs, so by 1962 only one "Eskimo House" (along with seven staff houses and three eight-bed student hostels) had been assembled in Pangnirtung. Orthodox town planning had just begun—an as-built plan of the settlement was on Ottawa's drafting tables at the end of 1961—and Pangnirtung had to take its turn with eight other communities as housing production increased. This was boosted by a new housing plan in 1965, when the government sensibly began "requesting the comments of the local people concerning the siting of their housing units." In 1969, the subcommittee making the choice for ten new house sites consisted of John Dialla, Jim Kilabuk, Adam Pudloo, Amosee Etooangat, Simo Veevee, and Peterossee Karpik. (These names, as recorded by a Qallunaaq, show that Pangnirtung had already moved to a system of Inuit surnames, earlier than the rest of the Qikiqtani region.)

Housing programs were transferred to the Northwest Territories from the federal government in the late 1960s. Some programs were planned but not fully implemented to keep up with relocations and the natural increase in the territory's population. After the oil crisis of 1973, the territorial Housing Corporation introduced multi-family dwellings, and 18 duplex units were installed in Pangnirtung in 1978. That same year, a pilot project saw six Pangnirtung trainees erect a "stick-built" house (i.e., not prefabricated). Despite this versatility and sense of urgency, in the mid-1980s, many homes were crowded, and a few families still lived in qarmait on the edge of the community.

Part of the pressure to expand school facilities in the 1960s came from government promotion of adult education. The focus of adult education was very much on the transition from ilagiit nunagivaktangit to settlement and included, for example, cooking classes for young women. After 1964, however, the shift of families away from the land accompanied expansion of schooling for children as well, and by 1966, Pangnirtung had a four-room school. It also had three of the now-standard small eight-bed hostels for children whose parents remained on the land. By 1976, Pangnirtung was offering education from kindergarten up to grade eight.[50]

SHAPING COMMUNITY LIFE

Over a long period, Pangnirtung's hunters produced small ivory carvings for travelers, medical officers, and HBC staff, but the fame of Pangnirtung Inuit art is recent. The major events in developing cultural production as an industry were the establishment of the Pangnirtung co-operative in 1967–68, establishment of the Weaving Shop in 1970, and the addition of the Pangnirtung print shop, which published its first collection in 1973.

Three young men sit outside carving whale bone and stone at Pangnirtung, [1967].
Credit: *: Lynn Ball / NWT Archives / Northwest Territories / Department of Information fonds/G-1979-023: 1703.*

A regional co-op development officer visited Pangnirtung in December 1967 to prepare for the organization of a provisional Board of Directors for the Pangnirtung Eskimo Co-operative. The development officer felt that the arts and crafts from the community were already of high quality, and that there was high potential to develop a commercial char fishery as well. In 1969, Elijah Irkloo and Tagak Curley visited to give training in Inuktitut to co-op members.[51]

Pangnirtung carvers made abundant use of the whalebone remaining at Thule house sites and 19th-century commercial whaling sites throughout Cumberland Sound. This became, in effect, the final harvest from the once-abundant bowhead, and the carvings were distinctive and often large. Soapstone carvings were produced, despite a lack of good local stone. From the earliest days, the Pangnirtung printmakers, weavers, and carvers have expressed different themes, including mythical beings, traditional lifeways, and images of more recent experiences including ships, wooden buildings, and the material culture of the recent past.[52]

The community is also a gateway to Auyuittuq National Park, and as such has many of the facilities visitors look for, including accommodations, guides, and tour operators. Other exceptional features are the *Uqqurmiut* Centre for Arts & Crafts, and the headquarters of Pangnirtung Fisheries, a commercial char and turbot operation employing six residents full-time and forty seasonally. The Angmarlik Centre was built in the 1980s to serve as a library and an Elders' centre, as well as an interpretation centre for visitors to the national park and to the territorial heritage park nearby at the old whaling station on Kekerten Island.

As people collected in larger numbers in Pangnirtung, wage employment became a bigger concern for men and women alike.[53] The traditional employment opportunities as hunters, guides, and housekeepers, were severely limited even after the qallunaat population grew in the 1950s, and short seasonal hiring, unloading ships and the like, were similarly no basis for a strong wage economy. After 1962, many jobs in the community contributed to building the physical infrastructure or providing services in government offices. Anthropologist Ann McElroy summed the situation up in the mid-1970s:

> *In the period of transition from hunting to dependence on a wage economy, male Inuit took the lead in seeking employment, learning to speak English, and participating in the development of local government and economic cooperatives … The primary male model provided in many Inuit households included the roles of truck driver, heavy equipment operator, construction crewman, janitor, carpenter, and similar skilled and semi-skilled occupations. … Hunting and fishing were still prestigious activities … During the first decade of town living, a woman who continued to be skilled in working skins, in sewing boots and parkas, and in rearing children was assured of considerable esteem.*[54]

While this observer was relatively uncritical of government economic policy, others were not. R. G. Mayes painted the government's attitude in bleak tones:

> *The programs and projects that local administrators were to implement had their shortcomings. Economic activity received the greatest attention, but change was shackled by Ottawa's determination to create wage paying positions as a replacement, to the exclusion of any attempt to make hunting itself a more viable occupation, whether as the basis or simply one component of the local economy.*[55]

Many Inuit took wage employment in order to buy hunting equipment, especially the new snowmobiles that made it possible to live in Pangnirtung and return to distant points on the land on weekends. Women were adjusting, too. Mayes found that thirty-three men and nineteen women, the women working "as secretaries, store clerks, domestics, or in specialized crafts, such as weaving,"[56] held Pangnirtung's 52 full-and part-time positions. Mayes judged that men, particularly young men, were increasingly oriented towards wage employment, but that a shortage of jobs was threatening the community with "increased social tension." According to Mayes, the real combined rate of unemployment and underemployment in the village in 1978 was about 42%.[57]

Before the mid-1960s, all major decisions about the government of Pangnirtung and its inhabitants were made by outsiders under direction from Ottawa. This situation had to change after 1962, since increasing numbers of people were living closer together than ever before, and the numerous demands of officials would fail if not accepted and encouraged by leading Inuit.[58] In a brief biography of his friend Jim Kilabuk, Keith Crowe stated that during the qimmiit epidemic of 1962 the senior Inuit employees of the southern agencies in Pangnirtung made huge contributions to maintaining relative calm.[59] In the years to come the same individuals, probably with co-operation from the former leaders of the small communities on the land, served on formal settlement committees and continued their jobs of educating newcomers on local ways.[60] While some southern observers[61] did not trust local Inuit leadership, the participation of Elders and other Inuit leaders was an essential part of local governance. By 1975, Pangnirtung had an elected council that managed a wide range of public issues, including lobbying the government in Yellowknife. The hamlet's infrastructure consisted of an airstrip with twice-weekly flights to Iqaluit, an RCMP detachment, a nursing station to replace the thirty-bed hospital (closed 1974), a K-8 school, an Anglican church, the Arthur Turner Training School for Anglican clerics, a community hall, a library, telephone service, a post office, "public accommodation" offering basic lodging, three general stores, and the co-op. It was able to host small conferences and regional training courses. Apart from Iqaluit, Pangnirtung was the best-serviced community in the region.

Hudson's Bay Company post buildings, Pangnirtung, 2007.
Credit: *Qikiqtani Truth Commission*

Conclusion

As the service centre of a district with abundant and stable game resources, Pangnirtung has always supported a substantial population in reasonable security. As a place of exceptional natural scenery, it also attracted more than its share of outside interest. In 1947, the HBC post manager called it "the metropolis of the Eastern Arctic." Yet in 1960 the NFB documentary *Arctic Outpost* showed Pangnirtung as a peaceful and isolated place, scarcely touched by the modern world.[62]

This was an outsider's view. In contrast to the "modern" features of other Arctic communities, Pangnirtung had no airstrip, no military post, no DEW Line, no weather station, and almost no income from carving or printmaking. Within two decades, however, Pangnirtung was the gateway to a national park, its weavers and printmakers were internationally famous, and its people engaged in territorial, regional, and national Inuit politics. Despite its exceptional characteristics, it had reached this point through the same hard transitions in the 1960s as almost every other community in the Qikiqtani region. Changes were due to a local mixture of the same general causes: health care, compulsory schooling, government housing, the killing of qimmiit and introduction of snowmobiles, and, for some, 9-to-5 jobs. By 1975, Pangnirtung was fully part of the new economic and political conditions of the Qikiqtani region, while also using tourism and art to present the community to the world.

ENDNOTES

1 The Inuktut term *ilagiit nunagivaktangit* is a more accurate name for places called "camps" in the historical record created by ethnographers, bureaucrats and police. Ilagiit nunagivaktangit were places regularly used for hunting, harvesting, and gathering. Inuit groups traditionally had several ilagiit nunagivaktangit, which allowed them to move to follow game.

2 The name is still in practical everyday use. The Nunavut constituency of Uqqurmiut takes in the communities of Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq on Davis Strait. The Uqqurmiut Centre for Arts & Crafts is an important art and crafts shop in Pangnirtung.

3 Marc Stevenson, *Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence: Structure in Cumberland Sound and Central Inuit Social Organization* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), xvii–xviii and passim.

4 See floe edge mapping in Franz Boas, *Die Eisverhaltnisse des sudostichen Teiles von Baffin-Land* (Petermanns Mitteilungen, 1888), xxxiv and 296–298.

5 Names in Inuktitut have been taken from Piruvik Press, *Inuktitut Essentials; A Phrasebook* (Iqaluit: 2009).

6 G Haller Anders et al., *The East Coast of Baffin Island; an Area Economic Survey* (Ottawa: Industrial Division Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967), 30–49.

7 Stevenson, *Inuit Whalers and Cultural Persistence*, 94–100.

8 Stevenson *Inuit Whalers and Cultural Persistence*, 99 and 100, provides head counts of these places at nine unevenly spaced years between 1923 and 1966. Using data from Haller's *The East Coast of Baffin Island*, Stevenson identifies 17 inhabited places, other than Pangnirtung, in 1951, with an average population of 24 people. This contrasts with a 1927 report of 257 people in 16 places, an average of 16 per group.

9 William Kemp, "Inuit Land Use in South and East Baffin Island", in Milton Freeman Research Limited, *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project—Volume 1* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs, 1976), 125–51.

10 Franz Boas, *Baffin-Land*. Geographische *Ergebnisse einer in den Jahren 1883 und 1884 ausgefuhrten Forschungsreise*; and Philip Goldring, "Inuit Economic Responses to Euro-American Contacts: Southeast Baffin Island, 1824–1940," Historical Papers 1986 Communications Historiques, 158–60.

11 Elijah Kakkee, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 13 May 2008.

12 Goldring, "Inuit Economic Responses," 146–72.

13 Goldring, "Inuit Economic Responses," 152 and Table 1.

14 John Bennett, "Whalers, Missionaries, and Inuit in Cumberland Sound" (Ottawa: MA Research Essay, Carleton University, 1985).

15 A very good written account of this event is the diary of student medical officer, Leo Jackman in Library and Archives Canada (LAC), L. J. Jackman Fonds, MG30-B34, Diary [textual record], 192; See also Archives of Manitoba, Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), B.455/a/1, "Netchelik Post Journal". The journals use the name "Netchilik" until "Pangnirtung" or "Pangnatook" begin to be used in August 1924. (HBCA:B.455/a/5, Pangnirtung Post Journal 1924–25.); and HBCA: C.1/5, Log of the Bay Chimo, 1921. The sparse detail in this log includes a note at 05:30 on 8 September, "Anchored at 'Netchelik' ('Pangnirtung Harbour')."

16 This is one of four stages roughly defined by the evolving patterns in the way Inuit interacted faced-to-face with qallunaat, and used imported manufactures, especially hunting tools and foodstuffs.

17 Because the Qikiqtani Truth Commission focused on one generation, 1950 to 1975, the research team recognizes a distinct phase of contact, which we call "Disruptions". This acknowledges the troubled period when people were gathering in immature and underserviced population centres.

18 David Damas developed this model in a number of different articles, including "The Eskimo" in C.S. Beals and D.S. Shenstone, eds., *Science, History and Hudson Bay*" (Ottawa, 1968), 141–71. For refinements to this model in the whaling era see W. Gillies Ross, *Whaling and Eskimos: Hudson Bay 1860–1915* (Ottawa, 1975), 137–38; and Goldring, "Inuit Economic Responses," 151–54.

19 Marc G. Stevenson, *Inuit Whalers and Cultural Persistence*.

20 The pattern of wide dispersal of families with infrequent visits to the trading post was favoured by government officials and missionaries until after 1960. A general description is provided in David Damas, *Arctic Migrants, Arctic Villagers; The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002), 27–51, "The Policy of Dispersal". At Pangnirtung it was described, with statistics, by Dr. A.G. MacKinnon in his annual report to the Director, Lands, Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch, 14 September 1936, in LAC, RG85 vol. 815 file 6954, Health of Natives—Report of Pangnirtung and Ponds Inlet.

21 LAC, RG85, Northern Affairs Program, Volume 362, File 201-1 part 31, "Arctic Inspections—Eastern Arctic Patrol - Western Arctic Inspections, 1954–1955; Draft Minutes of 1 Dec 1954 Committee Minutes, attached to Sivertz to Director, 16 Dec. 1954 attaching Draft Minutes of Eastern Arctic Patrol Committee."

22 For annual reports to Ottawa by medical officers, see LAC, Northern Affairs Program, RG85, Volume 815, File 6954, "Health of Natives - Report of Pangnirtung and Ponds Inlet".

23 LAC, RG 85 vol. 1872 file 552-1 [1], 15 August 1939. Orford also believed that TB would remain a problem unless economic conditions improved.

24 Richard Diubaldo, *The Government of Canada and the Inuit* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1985), 100.

25 LAC, Northern Affair Program, RG85 vol. 1207 File 201-1-8 part 3, "Attachment to report of J. Cantley to Acting Chief, 19 November 1952."

26 LAC, RG 18 Acc. 1985-86 Box 55, File TA-500-8-1-11, Conditions Among Eskimos, Pangnirtung; H. A. Johnson's report on moving families is dated 1 January 1955; T. Jenkin reported to Ottawa on beluga whaling on 4 August 1959; G. C. Barr wrote about "loitering" on 3 April 1959.

27 LAC, RCMP Fonds, RG 18, Accession 1985–86, Box 57, RCMP Game Conditions Reports, various years; see also Randall Reeves and Ed Mitchell, "White Whale Hunting in Cumberland Sound", *The Beaver*, Vol 61, No. 3 (Winter 1981), 42–49.

28 LAC, RG 18 Acc. 1985–86 Box 55, File TA-500-8-1-11, Conditions Among Eskimos, Pangnirtung, report 1 January 1955.

29 LAC, RG 18 Acc. 1985–86 Box 55, File TA-500-8-1-11, Conditions Among Eskimos, Pangnirtung, report 1 January 1955.

30 Damas, *Arctic Migrants, Arctic Villagers*, 64.

31 Levi Evic, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 15 May 2008.

32 The police appear to have been aiming to limit the number of dogs without understanding, or bothering to understand, the economic and cultural realities of Inuit. RCMP favoured keeping dog teams small, around six to eight animals. See LAC, RG18 Acc. 1985-86/048 Box 55 file TA-500-8-1-11; T. Jenkin Annual Report, 15 May 1959.

33 Levi Evic, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 15 May 2008. The idea of shooting qimmiit in order to discourage loitering is consistent with the police view that dog teams should be small, around six to eight animals.

34 John Feeney's National Film Board production was titled *Arctic Outpost; Pangnirtung NWT* (1960). For a teachers' guide, see http://www3.nfb.ca/sg/14280.pdf, accessed 10 January 2013.

35 This incident is described in many sources; reliance here is on information supplied by Dr. Frank Tester from the *Nunavut Social History Data Base*; see also the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), *The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs (Nunavut and Northern Quebec: 1950–1970*), unpublished report (Ottawa: 2006).

36 This event has been written about often, generally from a pro-administration point of view. Only the writers who use oral evidence emphasize the suddenness, often bordering on cruelty, of the evacuations. See R. Duffy, "The Cumberland Sound Dog Disease", *North/nord*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 4–15; and Damas, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers*, 142–49; and Kathleen Knotsch, "Views of the Past", in Maria Von Finkenstein, ed., *Nuvisavik: the place where we weave* (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2002), 23–41; and Francis Levesque "Les Inuit, Leurs Chiens Et L'administration Nordique, De 1950 À 2007. Anthropologie d'une revendication inuit contemporaine" (PhD Thesis, Laval University, 2008), 400-14. Levesque notes that an important near-contemporary source, Anders' "South-east Baffin Island", is silent on the issue. A major source of contemporary comment is LAC, RCMP Fonds, RG18, Accession 1985–86/048, Box 55, File TA-500-8-1- 11, Conditions Among Eskimos, Pangnirtung.

37 Raigalee Angnakok, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 30 September 2008.

38 Keith Crowe, "Arctic Profiles: Jim Netsiapik Kilabuk (1902-1985)," *Arctic*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 254.

39 Elijah Kakkee, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 13 May 2008.

40 Information about the qimmiit disease at Kimmirut includes remarks from LAC, RG18 Accession 84–85-1048 vol. 57 file TA500-20-10-13, annual reports by Cst. C. P. Pallister (14 Jan. 1960 and W. H. Canam, 17 Jan. 1961).

41 The resettlement period is covered in Anders et al., East Coast of Baffin Island (1967), and is mentioned at various points in Damas, *Arctic Migrants*. See also the remaining Pangnirtung files in the Northern Administration Records (RG85) in LAC, and the RCMP "Conditions Amongst the Eskimos Generally" and "Game Conditions" reports until the end of the 1960s, found in LAC, RCMP Fonds, RG18, Accession 1985–86/048, Box 55, File TA-500-8-11 (General) and LAC, RCMP Fonds, RG18, Accession 1985-86/048, Box 57, File TA-50020-10-14 (Game Conditions).

42 Canada, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Advisory Committee on Northern Development, *Government Activities in the North*, (Ottawa, 1957), 58: "Where primitive Eskimos in remote areas are relatively free from contact with white civilization, it is planned to leave their present economy as undisturbed as possible." This concern continued to guide the pace of development until about 1965.

43 The QTC research team acknowledges the assistance of Parks Canada and the generous permission obtained from the Innamariit Piqqusingit Society in Pangnirtung for use of transcripts (translated into English) of interviews conducted for Auyuittuq National park by Jaypeetee Akpalialuk and Rosie Okpik in 1984–89.

44 LAC, RCMP Fonds, RG18, Accession 1985–86/048, Box 57, File TA-50020-10-14 Game Conditions: Pangnirtung, NWT, Memo to OC from M. J. McPhee, re: Annual Report—Game Conditions, 17 July 1964.

45 LAC, RCMP Fonds, RG18, Accession 1985–86/048, Box 55, File TA-500-8-11 Conditions Among Eskimos, Pangnirtung, Memo to OC from M. J. McPhee, re: Conditions Amongst Eskimos, 27 January 1965.

46 LAC: RG18 Acc. 1985–86/048 box 55, File TA-500-8-11, Annual Report for Pangnirtung Detachment Areas year ending 1964.

47 The Inuktitut term qimuksiq means to travel by dogsled.

48 LAC, RCMP Fonds, RG18, Accession 1985–86/048 box 57, File TA-500-20-10-14 Game Conditions: Pangnirtung, NWT: Annual Report by P. W. Nowakowski, 21 August 1968, Game Conditions, by H. Kearley, 13 August 1969. The last hunt, in 1967, took only nine walrus. On the same file, see also Insp. A. Huget, Ottawa, to Director, Conservation and Protection Service, Department of Fisheries, 22 October 1968, announcing the end of the need for dog food and consequent end of walrus hunts at Igloolik, Kimmirut, Pond Inlet, Arviat and Pangnirtung.

49 LAC, Northern Affairs Program, RG85, Accession D.1.a, Volume 1892, File 251-3-18, pt. 13, Experimental Housing for Eskimos, Project Section, Report: Eskimo Housing Survey. Public Housing Section, DNANR Jan-Apr 1965, 1 January 1965, 15 and 17.

50 Kemp, "Inuit Land Use in South and East Baffin Island," 137. The following local files are fragmentary but important: LAC, Northern Affairs Program, RG85, Accession 1997–98/076, Box 29, File 255-5/170, Arts & Crafts - Pangnirtung, NWT. Outside Dates: 1965–1970/01; LAC, Northern Affairs Program, RG85, Accession 1997–98/076, Box 43, File 303/170, Part 1, Town Planning—Pangnirtung, NWT. Outside Dates: 1960–1969/12.

51 LAC, RG85, Accession 1997–98/076, Box 29, File: 255-5/170, Pt. 1 Arts & Crafts—Pangnirtung, NWT. 1965–1970/01.

52 The Pangnirtung Print Shop has published a catalogue of each year's prints since 1973; see also Pangnirtung Eskimo Co-operative, *Pangnirtung Eskimo Cooperative, Pangnirtung Print Retrospective: 1973–1986*. For weaving, see Maria Von Finkenstein, ed., *Nuvisavik: the place where we weave* (Hull, Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2002).

53 Ann McElroy, "Canadian Arctic Modernization and Change in Female Inuit Role Identification," *American Ethnologist* Vol. 2, no. 4 (1975), 662–686 (quote on 662–3); and Mayes, "The Creation of Dependent People," (1978), 295–302 (quote on 175).

54 McElroy, "Canadian Arctic Modernization and Change," 662–63.

55 Mayes, "The Creation of Dependent People," 175.

56 Mayes, "The Creation of Dependent People," 298.

57 Mayes, "The Creation of Dependent People," 302.

58 LAC, Northern Affairs Program, RG85, Volume 1382, File 1012-9 pt. 5 Eskimo Affairs Committee (Booklet of Instructions, Minutes and Agendas), Memo to the Director from C. H. Belger, re: Community Development and Local Organization, 5 January 1962.

59 Keith Crowe, "Arctic Profiles: Jim Netsiapik Kilabuk," *Arctic*, 254.

60 Ron Mongeau, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 15 May 2008.

61 Ken Crassweller, "Arctic New Towns—Social Implications," part of LAC, Northern Affairs Program, RG85, Accession 1999–01301-8, Box 139, File 2830-0, pt. 1 Town Planning and Community Planning—Policy, Letter and attached report re: the social implications of developing of new towns, by Ken Crassweller, University of British Columbia, School of Regional and Community Planning, 1 Aug. 1974.

62 John Feeney and National Film Board of Canada, *Arctic Outpost*, 1959. Online at www.nfb.ca/film/pangnirtung/.

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