



Iqaluit

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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A horizontal number line representing distance in kilometers. It has major tick marks at 0, 250, 500, and 1000. The segment between 250 and 500 is shaded in light blue.



Introducing Iqaluit

The city of Iqaluitⁱ (population of 6,669 in 2011) is unlike any other community in Nunavut. Prior to its development in the Second World War, the surrounding area was known as a good place to fish in summer, and as a place where the coast-dwelling Inuit of Frobisher Bay passed though on their way to the caribou-hunting grounds in the centre of Baffin Island. It was the development of a landing strip for the American military and the intrusion of modern geopolitics and defence into Inuit Nunangat (the Inuit “homeland”) rather than social services or trade opportunities, that concentrated Inuit towards the head of Frobisher Bay in the 1940s. Then, in a series of rapid changes, Iqaluit (known then as Frobisher Bay) became an early warning base, a regional hub, and eventually the capital of Nunavut. In the process, Iqaluit attracted not just people from around Frobisher Bay, but also hunters and their families from many other parts of Nunavut, especially from Hudson Strait and Cumberland Sound. Like many larger centres in other parts of northern Canada, the community tries to balance the interests of its Indigenous population, almost all of whom are Inuit, with a steady flow (and much turnover) of incomers attached to governmentⁱⁱ or business.

Iqaluit is located at the head of a large tidal basin (Frobisher Bay or Tasiujarjuaq) and is sited on the shores of Koojesse Inlet. Dramatic tides create long stretches of rocky beaches and mud flats along the inlet. To the southwest, the Meta Incognita Peninsula separates the bay and the city from Hudson Strait, while on the northeast, the Hall Peninsula lies between Frobisher Bay and Cumberland Sound. Frobisher Bay itself is aligned from northwest to southeast, with its wide mouth open to Davis Strait. About two-thirds of the way up the bay, it is speckled with small islands. Glaciers cap the hills to the south; otherwise, the area is not especially elevated and is dotted with lakes and rocky outcrops. In some places, rich vegetation covers the hills with Arctic flora in summer. Freeze-up generally occurs in November and lasts until June.

More than other Nunavut communities, Iqaluit appears as a collection of neighbourhoods. The earliest development occurred on the broad, flat, graveled lands at the head of Koojesse Inlet and east of the Sylvia Grinnell River where the US Army Air Force (later the US Air Force, hereinafter referred to as USAF) began to build a 6,000-foot landing strip, aircraft hangars, machine shops and barracks in 1941. The Main Base, which supported the airport, was Iqaluit’s first permanent settled place and was later expanded to become the area known as “Lower Base”.

i This report uses current geographical place names unless another name is used in quotation or citation.

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.

The second neighbourhood to emerge was known as “Ikaluit” which was situated on the site of a beach used for fishing. In the 1940s, this area became a small, unplanned settlement of tupiit (tents), qarmait (Inuit houses with rigid walls), and wooden shelters located on the level ground southeast of the head of Koojesse Inlet. Ikaluit was still used to refer to this part of the community until 1987 when the name Iqaluit was given to the whole town.

The third area, located on high ground northeast of the air base is associated with the Cold War. It was built as the most northern station of the Pinetree Line. This was a line of early warning radar stations that ran from the Rocky Mountains across Canada to Labrador and the eastern Arctic south of the better-known Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line. Known as “Upper Base,” this area was off limits to civilians unless they worked there. It closed in 1961.

After the construction of Upper Base in the 1950s, Canadian authorities designed and built a fourth neighbourhood specifically for Inuit. Named Apex (often called “Apex Hill”), it was constructed near an existing Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) post at Niaqunnguut at the end of a new road that connected it to the airport 5 km away.¹ Scholars who studied the two Inuit neighbourhoods, Apex and Ikhaluit, in the early 1960s found that Inuit in the two places had similar attitudes and expectations, even though Ikhaluit was denied many of the facilities that people in Apex enjoyed.

In 1966, the federal government decided to withdraw its services from Apex and concentrate new development for all civilians (Inuit and qallunaat) along rising ground east of the airport in an area that became known as “Astro Hill.” This neighbourhood was dominated by the multi-use federal building, commonly called the Brown Building. A new HBC store and schools were located lower down the hill and other housing was added over the next decade.

Since the 1970s, a hospital and Nunavut Arctic College have been added on the north side of the road to Apex, and residential subdivisions have

spread southeast to Happy Valley, Tundra Valley and Tundra Ridge, and northwest towards Upper Base (the Plateau). Although reduced in population and still physically separate from other neighbourhoods, Apex is home to over sixty families with its own school, and community facilities.

This cluster of neighbourhoods is now the capital of Nunavut, and the territory’s administrative, health, and education centre. It ranks twentieth among the busiest airports in Canada and serves as the legal and justice centre for Nunavut. Iqaluit’s quick rise in status from a good fishing spot for a dispersed population to the capital city was far from certain. Even the establishment of a major military air base on the site in 1941 did not portend that Iqaluit would be such an important community a half century later. It was only in the late 1960s, after the Canadian federal government realized the value of the airport and other infrastructure already in place, that services and facilities for a regional headquarters for Canada’s eastern Arctic were established.

Today, a lot of Iqalummiut are descended from Inuit who lived on the land nearby for hundreds of years, but many come from all over Nunavut. After 1950 the original families living in ilagiit nunagivaktangitⁱⁱⁱ in the area moved into the settlement for a variety of reasons, such as employment, health care and schooling. Many more Inuit who now live in the city trace their origins to relatives who arrived in the 1950s and onwards from all over the north. According to testimony provided to the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC), some came to work in Apex and were provided with housing; others were sent to the rehabilitation centre after health treatments in the south and eventually made Iqaluit their home; and others came for schooling. Many other Nunavummiut living in other parts of Nunavut have connections to Iqaluit. For many years, its high school offered the most complete range of courses in the region, and the student hostel associated with the school, Ukkiivik (the place to spend the winter), was a temporary home to hundreds of young Inuit from across present-day Nunavut between 1971 and 1996. Many babies have been also born in

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

Iqaluit because policies require expectant mothers to spend the last weeks of their pregnancies near the city's hospital. As the medical centre and air-travel hub of the eastern Arctic, Iqaluit gave temporary shelter to travellers from all over, beginning with the returned tuberculosis (TB) patients in the mid 1950s and continuing to the present day.

The QTC community histories focus on social and economic change. Throughout the Arctic, all Inuit experienced a very long period in which the sea and the land provided almost everything people needed. The QTC reports call this period Taissumani Nunamiutautilluta. It includes some very early contacts with outsiders. At times, the contacts were welcomed and exciting, at other times they were disturbing for Inuit.

This was followed everywhere by a period of disruptions, many of them negative and all demanding special adjustments by Inuit. They are described here as Sangussaqtauliqtiluta, meaning when people were more or less forced to change their ways. In the Iqaluit area, this began early in 1941, and in some ways, the changes at Iqaluit drove similar but later changes throughout the Qikiqtani Region.

Eventually nearly the entire population of the region lived in centralized settlements, with outside forces shaping them into the present thirteen communities of the Qikiqtani Region. This period, called Nunalinnguqtiliqtiluta, was particularly complex in Iqaluit, resulting in several neighbourhoods with very different functions and ethnic and socio-economic divisions.

Iqaluit's community history is unique in the Qikiqtani Region not just because of its large size or its current position as the capital, but also because of the growth of the qallunaat population and its social, political and economic institutions. The earliest non-Inuit populations were military men living in barracks. The few contacts they had with Inuit created opportunities and expectations for employment that were unique for Inuit in the region at the time. Developments in the later 1950s and 1960s created a much more mixed population than is common to the rest of the region.

As a result, Iqalumiut (the people who live in Iqaluit) who originally lived in the area are a minority of the population, even if the population today is majority Inuit.

Taissumani Nunamiutautilluta (On the Land)

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

ILAGIIT NUNAGIVAKTANGIT

The land and sea of the Iqaluit area has been home to Inuit and earlier populations for about four thousand years. *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.

Access to marine mammals and caribou determined where people lived well into the twentieth century, and travelling to hunt remains an important activity influenced by knowledge acquired over a long period of time. Archaeologists name the early cultures of Canada's eastern Arctic as pre-Dorset, Dorset, and Thule, and each of these peoples left artefacts to show where they lived. Some even left remains of their habitations around Frobisher Bay. Some of the oldest sites documented by archaeologists are at the northwestern tip of Frobisher Bay, near the mouth of the Sylvia Grinnell River and

the present city of Iqaluit. Only a short boat ride from the city, people can visit the Thule village at Qaummaarviit Territorial Park.

Mapping based on Inuit traditional knowledge reveals the origins of many Iqalummiut who originally came to Iqaluit as adults and were still living there in the mid-1970s. Evidence in the maps of their traplines and the waters where they hunted stretch from Cape Dorset in the west to within 80 km of Pangnirtung in the east. This is not evidence of tremendous travel outwards from Iqaluit, but of migrations from one area to another. Yet these maps also confirm a continuing use of lands around Frobisher Bay. In 1885, anthropologist Franz Boas described four concentrations of winter settlements named Tornait, Operdniving and Tuarpukdjuaq, and Nugumiut, all near Davis Strait around the tip of the Hall Peninsula. Boas also applied the name Nugumiut to Inuit of this region, and described their winter routine:

As these bays open into Davis Strait the formation of the ice is retarded and its extent diminished, and consequently some peculiarities in the arrangement of the life of the Eskimo are observed here. The only occupation of the Nugumiut and the inhabitants of Ukadlik is sealing with the harpoon on the floe of the inner parts of the bay. Near Ukadlik the tide holes east and west of Allen Island abound with seals. In winter, when the seals take to the open ice, the village of this group of families is established near Roger's Island, where the floe of the bay forms the hunting ground.²

By January, however, people would vacate this area to join ilagiit nunagivaktangit inside the mouth of Frobisher Bay where they hunted seals or walrus at the floe edge. In mid-March, people began to move northwest up the bay in preparation for fishing at

various places including Iqaluit, and then moved inland for the all-important caribou hunt into Amadjuak Lake and other parts of the interior.

About forty years before Boas made his observations, the arrival of European whalers in Cumberland Sound in 1840 set off a series of population movements around Davis Strait and Frobisher Bay. Over the next two decades, epidemic diseases thinned the population severely, resulting in some Nugumiut moving north into Cumberland Sound. Interestingly, those places in Cumberland Sound where the Nugumiut influence was still strong in the 1880s later provided many people who migrated in the opposite direction to work and live in Iqaluit in the 1950s and 1960s.

After 1900, the population of Frobisher Bay also began to shift their winter ilagiit nunagivaktangit up the bay on the strength of the fox-fur trade. On the north side of the bay, people had access to foxes, but also to the same animals that were hunted by previous generations. The lakes and rivers provided some of the best char fishing in the whole of southern Baffin Island in summer. Hunting of harp seals and ringed seals occurred throughout the bay and along the coastlines, while walrus was hunted most intensively in the fall in Frobisher Bay and near the Middle Savage Islands. Beluga whales were hunted both at the floe edge in spring and in open water during the summer and fall. In the summer, caribou were hunted throughout the land surrounding the bay and extending to the areas around Amadjuak and Nettilling lakes. In winter, caribou were found on the Hall Peninsula. Polar bear hunting occurred across the Meta Incognita Peninsula.³ Much of this hunting and egg harvesting continues, though the location of Iqaluit relative to the floe edge and unpredictable ice conditions as the climate changes have made the future of some hunts more challenging than in earlier times.

EARLY CONTACTS

The Inuit in this region might have encountered Norse sailors as early as one thousand years ago, but the earliest meetings that survive in local memory were with a party of adventurers led by Martin Frobisher in 1576–78. An English navigator, Frobisher had a remarkable opportunity to visit

Hudson Strait three years in a row. He was searching for both a northwest passage to China and for gold. Although he failed in both quests, he met more Inuit than any other English explorer for two centuries and set a pattern of most European explorers being unwilling to understand Inuit—their language, strength and culture.

In 1576, Frobisher reached what is now Frobisher Bay, and reported what seemed to be a promising “strait” leading northwest. His tiny bark, *Gabriel*, made a safe passage almost to the present site of Iqaluit, and on the second year’s voyage easily found the bay again. In the third season, the much larger expedition of fifteen ships was driven far off course up Hudson Strait before returning to the mouth of Frobisher Bay. On each trip, Frobisher found deposits of black rock that his assayers, fraudulently or by a serious mistake, declared were a rich ore of gold. Each voyage was a failure, and a great deal of worthless black rock was shipped to England, especially in the third year.

Relations between Inuit and Frobisher must also be called a failure. The sailors’ written accounts and Inuit oral records tell similar stories. The first contacts near the head of the bay were almost playful, as Inuit came aboard the *Gabriel* and for two days explored the vessel and traded food and skins for glass and metal goods. The second encounter in 1577 soured when five of Frobisher’s men went off in a small boat and disappeared. The English suspected Inuit had killed the five men, but the men had likely chosen to desert the ship. In retaliation, the Frobisher’s sailors killed several Inuit and took three hostages to England, where they died shortly after arriving in 1577.

Inuit retained a rich body of information about the strangers. Almost three centuries later, their descendants told an American journalist, Charles Francis Hall, that the missing sailors had been cared for until summer and then sailed away. Inuit stories were consistent with written accounts, accurately describing where incidents took place. Hall’s guides led him to Kodlunarn (qallunaat) Island, the site of Frobisher’s extensive mining operation in 1578. The expedition’s abandoned wood and metal became a valuable resource for generations to come.⁴

After Frobisher, Inuit living in the area had no contact with qallunaat unless they paddled out into Hudson Strait in early summer on the off chance of meeting and trading with the HBC’s supply vessels bound for Hudson and James bays. The next intensive period of contact came in the 1850s, when Scottish and American whalers began to operate in large numbers off Cumberland Sound. The erratic fortunes of the whaling industry caused rapid migrations within the region. Many people moved north along the northwest shore of Cumberland Sound to be nearer to the whalers, a migration that did not begin to reverse until a whaling station was built at Singaijaq in 1885.⁵ After it closed in 1896, there was a temporary movement back towards Umanaqjuaq (Blacklead Island) in Cumberland Sound.

Despite moves to follow whaling, there were always Inuit living and using the resources of Frobisher Bay and the deep bays that face Davis Strait between Loks Land and Brevoort Island. Early in the twentieth century, the Singaijaq whaling station occasionally reopened, but fox trapping prompted an English firm to open a new post at Mingoaktuk (also spelled Mingotok),⁶ where an Inuk trader, Mitsiga, managed a small trade for a few years in the 1920s. This post made Frobisher Bay accessible year-round from Kimmirut and in winter from Pangnirtung and Cumberland Sound.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF LIFE

The full suite of core qallunaat institutions—traders, missionaries, and RCMP—arrived late to the Frobisher Bay area compared with other places in the Qikiqtani Region. The HBC established a post at Charles Francis Hall Bay near the toe of the Grinnell Glacier in 1914. In 1920, it moved across to Hamlin Bay, and shifted again two years later up the bay to Ward Inlet, 65 km from present-day Iqaluit. Inuit called the Ward Inlet post Iqalugaarjuit or Iqalugaarjuk.⁷ The HBC finally established a more permanent post at Niaqunnguut (in the Apex neighbourhood of present-day Iqaluit) in 1948.⁸

Contact with other qallunaat was usually brief until the 1940s, with Inuit living in approximately twenty separate ilagiit nunagivaktangit throughout the region.⁹ The RCMP patrolled occasionally from Kimmirut or Pangnirtung from the 1920s onward, before establishing the first detachment in the area

in 1945. The missions were a more complicated story. Frobisher Bay lay on the routes between Blacklead Island to the north and Kimmirut to the south. Many Nugumiut were Anglicans, perhaps even devout Anglicans by the 1930s, though the first church in Iqaluit was erected only in 1957. (This prefabricated building was dismantled a few years later and sent to Clyde River. In Iqaluit, it was replaced by St. Jude's Cathedral, a significant community achievement and a landmark for many years until it was destroyed by fire in 2005.)¹⁰ By 1960 there were enough qallunaat Catholics to form Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Parish. Many Inuit parishioners, mostly from Hudson Bay and Foxe Basin, later joined them.

Sangussaqtauliqtilluta (1941–1960)

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.

By the close of the Second World War, the period when Inuit were living entirely on the land was ending. Strong wartime and postwar interest in Arctic aviation, and a long period of challenges and adjustments followed. Interesting glimpses of the changes to come appear in a list of eastern Arctic settlements prepared in 1943 for military use. It named only two settlements on Frobisher Bay, following a standard government practice that called everything with wooden buildings a settlement. Places regularly occupied by Inuit, no matter how large, were called camps. One settlement identified on the list was the seasonal HBC store at Cormack Bay on the east side of the entrance to Ward Inlet. The second was Crystal Two, a USAF station constructed in 1941–42. The differences between them could not have been more striking.

The HBC post's population was listed as “1 white at settlement (seasonal), 183 Eskimos in district.”¹¹ Once a year the HBC schooner, Nannuk, arrived from

Kimmirut, and two contacts by sledge were noted. The RCMP came in on patrol each spring, and the HBC trader arrived by dog team in late December or early January and returned in late spring.

In contrast, Crystal Two (also code-named “Chaplet” or “Izoc”) was the North Atlantic wing of the Air Transport Command, USAF. It was an air base at the head of Frobisher Bay, between Koojesse Inlet and Sylvia Grinnell River at the present site of Iqaluit. Personnel included 12 officers and 144 enlisted men. The site had a twenty-five-bed hospital with three medical officers, frequent aircraft arrivals and departures on two paved runways of 6,000 and 5,000 feet in length, and occasional calls by ships of the US Army and Navy. The medical facilities alone exceeded anything else available in Baffin Island.

MILITARY DEVELOPMENT

The development of government services and the movement of Inuit towards the activities at the base followed these military operations. These changes reshaped the entire human and environmental



An Inuit patient is assisted into an RCAF aircraft to be flown to a hospital in Montreal, [1951].

Credit: Wilfred Doucette / National Film Board of Canada. Photothèque collection / Library and Archives Canada / PA-189642.

landscape of Iqaluit.¹² Official policy forbade military men from much contact with Inuit, but this rule was often broken. Working and social activities involving Inuit and qallunaat became frequent. The Inuit community grew quickly; as a result, many of the customary ways people had for dealing with each other became difficult to maintain. Inuit who were used to living in small, multi-family groups found themselves mixing face to face with hundreds of other Inuit, most of whom were, if not strangers like the qallunaat, not close relatives either.

This period of Sangussaqtauliqtilluta was a period of enormous changes in a short time. The main direction of change was to break up a life in which the efforts of whole families and kin groups were coordinated to produce food and maintain their social cohesion. In the earlier period, Taissumani Nunamiutautilluta, a centre like the Ward Inlet trading post on Frobisher Bay existed only to provide trade goods and other imported services to people who were continuing to live in dispersed settlements around their regions. During this period, many people became centralized at Iqaluit, and moved outwards from it to carry on their traditional activities. Not everyone stayed; some who migrated into Iqaluit for economic reasons or for a sense of adventure returned to their home bases after a few seasons.¹³ Incomers like this were particularly numerous from the south side of Cumberland Sound (near Pangnirtung) and from the coastal ilagiit nunagivaktangit near Kimmirut on Hudson Strait.

Because of the strong development pressures from military and central administrative activities, Iqaluit followed a unique path through the challenges of the 1950s and 1960s. Most other communities in the Qikiqtani Region began as isolated trading posts, lived through an intensive period of disruption, and settled down in a few years as home to those who had formerly hunted and trapped in the surrounding territory. Iqaluit was different. The surrounding population was small. Steady increases from migration within the region, as well as the arrival of non-Inuit from all over Canada, was due, in large part, to the airfield.

The steady pace of growth made Iqaluit both the largest mixed community and the largest non-Inuit community in Nunavut. There were four clearly defined moments when old patterns were

shattered. First came a military period, starting with the construction of the air base in 1941–42. This was followed by a period of less intensive contact. Second, the United States built the DEW Line across the Arctic in the mid-1950s with Iqaluit as an important shipping point, which led the Canadian government to try to separate Inuit from military personnel by setting up a separate community for Inuit at Apex Hill in 1955. Third, large-scale Inuit migrations from Cumberland Sound and Hudson Strait began in 1957. A government researcher concluded, “By 1960, there were no longer any permanent outlying Eskimo camps left in the bay region—all the Eskimos lived within the settlement.”¹⁴ Finally, the construction boom under the 1966 government development plan confirmed Iqaluit’s role as the biggest government–commercial settlement in the eastern Arctic.

In 1941, even before the United States sent troops to fight in the Second World War, Canada allowed the USAF to establish a strategic weather station and air base on Crowell Island, 56 km from present-day Iqaluit. The island was quickly abandoned for a site near the Sylvia Grinnell River. It was part of the Crimson Staging Route that was organized by the Americans during the war to transport equipment from the central United States to Europe.¹⁵ Inuit were involved in the military installations from the beginning by helping to find an appropriate location for the base.¹⁶ One Inuk in particular, Pauloosie Nakasuk, worked with the US military establishing the air base. Joe Tikivik told the QTC, “Nakasuk opened Iqaluit. He was one of the ones who came here by boat. He was one of the original persons with his wife and family. So from there, the Americans located here and they started Iqaluit.”¹⁷ Nakasuk Elementary School in Iqaluit is named after him.

More than five thousand American personnel descended into Iqaluit to construct the air base. Some Inuit recall being afraid when they first saw airplanes, either not knowing what they were or believing they were being invaded.¹⁸ The USAF hired over 50 Inuit to help construct the station, but it discouraged Inuit from settling in the vicinity by refusing to provide separate houses for Inuit workers.¹⁹ The RCAF, as “the controlling authority” in the agreement between Canada and the United States, allowed Inuit workers to live in their own tents

and snow houses on the base, and to make shelters from spare lumber.²⁰ The Crystal Two station was completed in December 1943, and included two runways. As soon as construction was finished, only one Inuit family was kept on to work.²¹ By that point, the US military realized that the eastern section of the Crimson Route, including Iqaluit, would be used less than anticipated due to technical advances in aircraft and safer marine routes.²² The base was kept open with minimal staff. As per the international agreements, the Canadian government bought the air base from the USAF for about \$6.8 million in 1944 (equivalent to \$91 million in 2013), with the RCAF taking over the few requirements for air base operations.²³

The Canadian government had assumed that Inuit working in construction would simply return to the land when work was finished. Some Inuit decided that they preferred to stay year-round in shelters they had built in what became the informal Ikhaluit village, but most families chose to come back only for seasonal work. Akeeshoo Joamie told the QTC in 2008:

In the '40s, there was a whole bunch of qallunaat; that is when we really came in contact with qallunaat. We would come into a community to seek some work for the summer. Perhaps for about three months, as part of the wage economy, during the re-supply season, we would come to work during the summertime. In October, we would go back to our wintering camps. We travelled by boat; it was the only way to get back to our camps.²⁴

In 1947, the USAF returned to refurbish the airfield's main runway. This operation included many African-American soldiers in an era of segregation,²⁵ which was also an era of openly racist sentiments towards most non-white groups, including Inuit. To ensure that African-American troops were kept separate from the local population, the USAF moved Inuit to Ukaliqtulik, a nearby island, for the summer. Inuit

men employed at the base travelled to work daily from the island. Some Inuit Elders told interviewer Mélanie Gagnon that this was the first time they did not feel in control of their own lives.²⁶ Simonie Michael told the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA):

Then we started hearing about the coming work force that were not white men! We were told that they would arrive from down south! They totalled about 200, but we didn't call them white, we called them Puatiki [Black] ... When they moved us to the Island, we started having major problems and we started to brainstorm as to what we should do ... We said, "This is impossible ..." There was no water and no harbour for our boats. They moved us there with no mode of transportation to get back and forth to work to the main land. When we started having these major problems, we started discussing what we should do!²⁷

Sammy Josephee also told the QTC, "There was a bunch of Inuit moved to an island so that they could make room for the Americans. There were no more Inuit in Iqaluit. They wanted us out of the way to make room for the army."²⁸ Inuit were familiar with dark-skinned people from their experience with Portuguese-speaking Azorean whalers before 1900, but very few people in the region—qallunaat or Inuit—completely understood that the US military was segregating its African American troops from all local populations.

When the second USAF phase ended in 1949, all but five of the 21 permanent Inuit employees and all of its twenty-five seasonal Inuit employees were dismissed. The cuts were serious for families in Iqaluit, especially since those permanent employees had been supporting seventy-nine dependents in the community.²⁹

In 1951, when Iqaluit became the northern terminal of the Pinetree Line, a new military building program was started on high ground away from the base. This program was a series of radar stations scanning Arctic skies to warn of a potential Soviet bomber attack. The line ran across the middle of Canada and arced north across Newfoundland and Labrador, ending at Iqaluit. The radar station, staffed by about 150 American personnel, became known as Upper Base to distinguish it from the air base, which was known as Lower Base. Fourteen permanent Inuit employees were hired to help construct and maintain Upper Base, and were provided with wooden houses and a day off per week for hunting.³⁰ The Frobisher Bay station also became an administrative, logistics, and distribution hub for a massive construction project, the DEW Line, in the summer of 1955, as well as the Polevault Station.³¹ Other Inuit workers from the area were transferred to DEW Line sites in Alaska or the Western Arctic.³²

The waves of military development were not without conflict. Tomassie Naglingniq recalled for the publication, *Memory and History in Nunavut: Inuit Recollections on the Military Presence in Iqaluit* that he and a few other teenagers had been hunting ptarmigan near Upper Base and had wandered too close to the base. They were apprehended by US soldiers who took away their ptarmigans and called the RCMP who then escorted them home. The next day, the soldiers gave the boys pop and chocolate, but did not return their ptarmigans.³³ Some contacts were friendlier. Inuit attended movies at the base and watched travelling entertainers.³⁴ Some soldiers also left bags of flour or other unspoiled foodstuffs outside for Inuit.³⁵ Generally, Inuit felt more comfortable living alongside American soldiers than they did being under the observation and control of Canadian officials.

The base was important for employment. As Iqaluit built up its infrastructure, on-the-job training was available for Inuit in construction jobs on the base and at the airport.³⁶ In 1957, the base and airfield came under the control of the Canadian Department of Transport, but numerous military flights continued to arrive and depart at the airfield. Inuit had fewer contacts with the restricted facilities of West 40,

where the Department of Transport operated a meteorological station and the Royal Canadian Navy had a communications base until 1968. This led to construction of the Composite Building in 1958, also known as the Federal Building or North 40.³⁷ When the Pinetree Line closed in 1961, the US presence in Iqaluit was further reduced.³⁸ Despite the irregular US presence, as Anugaaq Arnaqquq stated years later, many Inuit felt that “the Americans helped us a great deal.”³⁹

THE NEW SETTLEMENTS AND QIMMIIT

The military presence also provoked one of the most painful parts of the disruption period, namely, the process—carried out by the RCMP—of eliminating loose qimmiit^{iv} from the town. Until the late 1960s, qimmiit played a fundamental role in the daily lives of Inuit. They were primarily used for transportation and as hunting companions, but they also served as a source of food during times of famine. Their hide could also be used to make clothing. As hunting companions, qimmiit were used in multiple ways. They helped hunters track polar bears and find agluit (seal breathing holes) out on the sea ice. Qimmiit could also walk long distances, even with saddle packs, during inland caribou hunts. During storms or blizzards, they could trace scents to find their way home. Isaac Shooyook of Arctic Bay told the QTC how his qimmiit “could lead me home without me giving commands.”⁴⁰ As more Inuit moved to the settlements, more and more qimmiit were also living in close quarters with people, both Inuit and qallunaat. As a result, the potential for qimmiit–human conflict increased, spurring the development of policies to deal with loose qimmiit.

An ordinance of the Northwest Territories, known as the Ordinance Respecting Dogs, forbade dogs from running loose in built-up areas.⁴¹ In November 1956, the private contractors who managed the base forwarded complaints from the base medical officer about having to treat bites inflicted by “ownerless strays.”⁴²

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

These were, in fact, qimmiit belonging to Inuit employees of the military. The civilian authorities in Ottawa shied away from the problem, placing the responsibility on the shoulders of the RCMP, stating, “We prefer that such enforcement jobs be done by police. Our [Northern Service] officers cannot be successful in their efforts at community organization if they have to act as policemen.”⁴³

Authorities wrestled with the growing problem, which was dividing Inuit and qallunaat. One RCMP officer explained, “There are a number of dogs running loose about Frobisher Bay ... Most of these stray animals are owned by Eskimos who are employed by the United States Air Force at this point. The owners work full time and are unable to hunt seal to feed the dogs, yet they are reluctant to part with any of them.” He continued:

This dog problem does indirectly affect, for instance, the economy of the Eskimo. Destruction of an Eskimo's dogs after remaining unclaimed in the pound for five days may result in him quitting his job on the air base and returning to a life on the land. This would be just one of many reactions. Other Eskimos might show their dislike by offering active opposition in varied forms ...

*The Frobisher Bay Eskimo do not understand the dog problem which has developed here since the inception of the air base. Nor do they appreciate that this detachment must deal with it as outlined in the Dog Ordinance. Many of these Eskimos let their dogs run loose so they can feed in the disposal area while the owner is at work on the base. This is a perfectly reasonable explanation, and to these individuals no answer except one which will offer an alternative food supply, will have any semblance of being reasonable.*⁴⁴

The decision to let qimmiit forage by allowing them to run loose was explained to McGill University anthropologist Toshio Yatsushiro by employed Inuit in 1959. Yatsushiro recorded an Inuk identified as Joomi who explained:

*Eskimos like to have dogs to use in the winter for hunting. They don't like it when the RCMP kill them. Some dogs are left untied for a week or so because they get cross when they are tied. The Eskimos understand, if they are free they will be shot, but if they are tied they cannot get food, so maybe they will die anyhow. Eskimos bring food and water to the dogs when they have it, but often they don't have it. So when the dogs go free they eat garbage—when the RCMP saw it they shot them it is not good.*⁴⁵

RCMP officers posted to the north into the 1950s almost always relied on qimmiit to travel. They had experience handling teams with help from Inuit special constables and understood their importance to Inuit. Many officers who came later or lived in Iqaluit without having to travel outside the community, rarely, if ever, used qimmiit. They were not interested in finding solutions where conflict already existed. In November 1956, Superintendent Larsen commanding “G” Division (Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Arctic Quebec) in Ottawa reiterated that his men at the Frobisher Bay detachment “are responsible for enforcement of the Dog Ordinance in the area” and that they were “instructed to strictly enforce” the rules and prosecute lawbreakers. He also wrote, “As most of the Eskimos at Frobisher Bay have taken up employment at the Air Base and town site, and no longer need dogs to make a living, they should be discouraged as much as possible from keeping dogs.”⁴⁶ Civilian officials and RCMP officers in Iqaluit quickly put together a plan that included an information poster in Inuktitut on the law requiring qimmiit to be tied up and a public meeting where all adult Inuit would be lectured on qimmiit control. They also planned to build a dog pound to hold and feed up to twelve qimmiit at a time.

Over the next two months, enforcement of the Dog Ordinance proceeded and was duly reported to Ottawa as a success because twenty qimmiit were impounded, two men were fined for letting their qimmiit run loose, and “three or four dogs” were shot after five days. However, Inuit continued to be critical of the short chains that were supplied, and the administrator believed dog food was “an acute problem” because commercial food lacked essential nutrients, especially fat. This meant that Inuit who were chaining qimmiit were losing them to cold and malnutrition while other qimmiit, which ran free, grew fat at the air-force dump. The administrator concluded that the only solution to the problem would be a costly one—two large compounds near the air base, where qimmiit could be easily fed and watered.⁴⁷ A month later, the detachment reported that impoundments and prosecutions were continuing and loose qimmiit were no longer a problem in Iqaluit.⁴⁸

Between late 1956 and 1958, qallunaat authorities appear to have overcome any previous reluctance about methods used to enforce the ordinance, and at that point engaged in large-scale shooting. An RCMP officer told a visitor in May 1959 that 286 qimmiit were shot the preceding year (1958).⁴⁹ In September 1959, an official wrote from Iqaluit that, “Approximately two hundred dogs or more have

been destroyed in the past year and those that are left are valued by the owners.”⁵⁰ These 200 qimmiit supported between 14 and 24 teams, which means that transportation for hunting affected up to 100 people. When combined with the number of qimmiit shot the previous year, those numbers approach 40 teams supporting 200 people.

The impact on Inuit life was immediate and harsh, even if Inuit were naturally reluctant to tell authorities about how they felt or to take action against the shootings. One informant, named Pauloosie, explained to Yatsushiro in 1958 that Inuit “don’t like the shooting. In winter they like to go hunting and can’t if they have no dogs.”⁵¹ Another informant questioned whether:

*The [government] didn’t want Eskimos to have dogs anymore. Eskimos sometimes have dogs untied, they get hungry and run around looking for food ... The Eskimos can’t feed them regularly because the hunting around Frobisher Bay is no longer good. Everyone is working so no dog meat can be hunted for. But they need the dogs for hunting in the winter.*⁵²



Inuit boy photographed with qimmiit during the Governor General’s Northern Tour, [1956].

Credit: Gar Lunney / National Film Board of Canada.
 Photothèque / Library and Archives Canada / e002265640.

Enforcement continued for many years, but public information campaigns to explain the rules were completely inadequate. In 1963, for example, warnings of qimmiit round-ups were advertised on the local radio, but an American anthropologist heard warnings given only once in Inuktitut, while the warnings were repeated in English very often over several days.⁵³

LIFE IN THE 1950S

With and without qimmiit, Inuit tried as much as possible to fit themselves into a changing landscape and to create a sense of community in a new environment. The makeshift collection of houses built in Iqaluit, or simply “the village,” took on a permanent presence as more Inuit lived there year-round. Inuit also began settling around the HBC post. Three living patterns emerged in the 1950s, including about fourteen permanently employed

men living with their families year-round near the air base; a larger group of families joining them and doing casual labour in summer but returning to ilagiit nunagivaktangit in winter; and a very small number continuing to live year-round on the land and visiting the settlement only rarely to socialize or to trade.⁵⁴

Faced with American activity within Canada's borders, the Canadian government was determined to offer services to Canadians and demonstrate its sovereignty over the region. Iqaluit's RCMP detachment was established in 1945. A post office was soon in operation near the base, and in 1954, the government established a regional headquarters to serve the Qikiqtani Region. It also established a radio station called SKIMO that broadcasted from the Polevault facility at Upper Base. Some programs were in Inuktitut, including information about Inuit residents released from hospitals in the south.⁵⁵ Bell Canada established residential telephone lines in the settlement in 1958, and the Northern Canada Power Commission brought electricity in 1959. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) established a local radio station in 1961 with some Inuktitut programming.⁵⁶

The settlement was becoming a hub for qallunaat interests in the region. Commercial transatlantic flights by Pan American Airlines and others stopped at Iqaluit to refuel, usually in the middle of the night. When passengers disembarked, local entrepreneur Bryan Pearson and artists would wake up to meet the flight and sell art, crafts, and furs from local suppliers. This was an important source of local income; Bryan Pearson described to the QTC how actor Robert Mitchum once spent \$500 (equivalent to \$4,000 in 2013) on carvings and furs during a stopover in Iqaluit.⁵⁷ Religious denominations also raised their profiles in the community. An Anglican church for a large group of qallunaat and Inuit parishioners was built in 1957 and a Catholic mission was established in 1960.⁵⁸

During this period, one of the jobs of the RCMP was to maintain segregation between Inuit and qallunaat populations in the community.

They posted signs prohibiting qallunaat from entering Iqaluit or Apex Hill. As Simonie Michael told the QIA:

The white men were living up there and we lived down here [in Apex]. We didn't amalgamate in one place ... The RCMP made a sign stating "Do Not Enter Inuit Land" by anyone and when you go up a distance at the edge of [Iqaluit], there was another sign saying the same thing, that there were to be no entrance to Inuit land.⁵⁹

RCMP officers also took it upon themselves to act as deal-brokers between soldiers and Inuit carvers. They would take carvings from Inuit to the base, sell them, and then return with the proceeds, sometimes paid in cigarettes or foodstuffs.⁶⁰ It is unknown whether these exchanges were fair or not. Soldiers wanting handmade coats, mitts, or boots from Inuit also obtained products through Inuit men who worked at the base.

An information booklet for the USAF 926th division reminded personnel that "the [Inuit] village is off-limits to all military personnel at all times except when authorized by the RCMP. Tours through the village are conducted periodically during the winter months to allow you to take pictures of [Inuit]."⁶¹ Similarly, the base was off limits to Inuit, except for people who worked there, and for movies.

The segregation between qallunaat men and Inuit women was a critical part of the RCMP's duties. Terry Jenkin, a retired RCMP officer, told the QTC:

The military were not allowing fraternization. One of our duties was to monitor such activity to ensure that there was no collusion between airmen and young Inuit girls. If we did find that, we took the Inuit girl back home and reported the airmen to the authority.⁶²

In 1959, RCMP officer Van Norman spoke out against what he saw as the sexual and emotional exploitation of Inuit women by DEW Line employees.⁶³ Sexual and romantic relationships that occurred were fraught with racial and gender power dynamics. Venereal disease was first reported in Iqaluit in 1953, and there were reportedly Inuit women in town to exchange sex for food and other considerations by 1957.⁶⁴ As R. Quinn Duffy states, Iqaluit “was the main centre for Inuit-White contact in the Eastern Arctic and the place where prevention or reduction of the effects of that contact was most difficult.”⁶⁵

APEX HILL—THE GOVERNMENT DESIGNS A VILLAGE FOR INUIT

The subdivision of Apex was established as a government response to what it believed to be its responsibility to manage change in places where Inuit and military communities met. The overlapping and often irregular roles of the military and government in exercising control in Iqaluit concerned residents, churches, and government. Several solutions were considered, most of which created further barriers between groups. In 1954, RCMP Inspector Larsen proposed that the government create “Eskimo Villages” in places already inhabited by Inuit, such as Iqaluit. He envisaged that the government would provide villages with houses and services, while controlling the choice of location and development of the settlement.⁶⁶ Larsen and others imagined places across the territories where domestic life would be clearly separated from hunting life, following the southern pattern of keeping women and children at home while men worked. He wrote that women and children would be able to stay in the village while men hunted “unburdened.” The government could also ensure that Inuit remained separate from qallunaat as much as possible.

Apex (also called Apex Hill) was created in 1955 by the federal government on a site that Inuit called Niaqunnguut. Located about 5 km from the air base, Apex was built near the store that the HBC established there in 1948. It was also close enough to the base to allow people to commute there daily by motor vehicle.⁶⁷ Confusingly for newcomers, Apex came to be known as “the townsite”, while Iqaluit was known as “the village.”

Apex was deliberately established at a lengthy distance from the air-force bases. The government enthusiastically confided its plans for Apex to the HBC in 1955, just a few months before a shipload of building materials was due to arrive on their doorstep.

*The program for 1955 includes the construction of a school, a garage-workshop, a powerhouse and six small buildings, three of which are temporary dwellings for our staff. In addition, the Department of National Health and Welfare is going to erect a four-bed nursing station. The school, garage-workshop, powerhouse and nursing station will be built by contract, the six small buildings by local Eskimo labour under the supervision of our officers and with the assistance of such craftsmen from outside as may be necessary.*⁶⁸

Only people with jobs could afford the rent and it took several years for houses to be built. In 1957, seventeen families were living at Apex, compared with forty-two living at the air base due to employment of one or more members of the family and nineteen in Iqaluit living in self-built or moved homes. Many others stayed in Iqaluit seasonally in tupiit and qarmait.

In later years, Apex received more prefabricated houses, but the presence of the rehabilitation centre became the original cornerstone of the community. Built in 1956, the rehabilitation centre, also called the Transit Centre, was intended to assist Inuit and their families returning from southern hospitals and sanatoria. Treatment options for TB and other diseases had decreased mortality rates, but more people were sent home with chronic conditions resulting from earlier contagions. People listed as living at the centre in 1958 included eight families or individuals, for a total of 27 people from Kimmirut, Frobisher Bay, Arctic Bay, Resolute, and Quebec.⁶⁹ Of these, more than half were children. In addition to a residential program and a transient centre for

people waiting for yearly flights that would allow them to move back permanently to their home communities, the rehabilitation centre provided classes and workshops to teach typing, sewing, carving, carpentry, and cooking. The rehabilitation centre operated until 1965.

Several people spoke to QIA researchers and to the Commissioner of the QTC about the arrival of people in Iqaluit for medical reasons. Iqaluk Juralak, who was originally from Coral Harbour (on Southampton Island), explained that she moved with her husband and child to Apex after the government told them to move for treatment of her husband's heart condition.⁷⁰ The family left everything behind before boarding the *C. D. Howe* in July 1959. They only arrived in Iqaluit in September after going all the way to Resolute and back. When her family finally got to the house promised to them in Apex, it was completely empty, and they had no means to buy furnishings or other necessities.

Sytukie Joamie discussed this reality in the context of his mother's experience as a resident of the rehabilitation centre in Iqaluit.

Some people did not have resources and they ended up living in Iqaluit and Apex because they had no means to return home. It is the same picture of any relocatee from any other area. They were dumped for medical reasons or so-called health reasons ... There are a lot of people living today, descendants who are stuck where they may not want to live.⁷¹

For Juralak and others who were moved to Iqaluit due to the lack of medical facilities in other parts of the eastern Arctic, the difficulties of the moves were compounded by having to leave family members behind with no means of visiting them ever again.

UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Despite its investment in Apex and the airport, Canadian bureaucrats continuously expressed concern during the 1950s that Iqaluit's future was

uncertain. As a result, investment in infrastructure and services was done using a "temporary-only" approach. A 1958 government memo stated that Iqaluit's "economic potential is quite limited and we can see no prospect of it becoming a self-sustaining community in an economic sense in the foreseeable future."⁷² It did mention, however, that there would be a "presumed continuation and expansion of government activities" in the settlement. Government officials reported that Inuit were optimistic about potential changes, but the record was unclear about how well the consequences of development were explained and understood.⁷³ In the midst of all the changes, the government began to abandon the idea of Apex as an Inuit village. By late 1966, the HBC was convinced the federal authorities would withdraw services from Apex and increase them at Iqaluit.

By this time, Apex and Iqaluit were both mixed Inuit communities, bringing together Inuit with different dialects, traditions, and modes of dress. About one-third of those who settled here came from ilagiit nunagivaktangit within 160 km of Iqaluit. Almost everyone else came from ilagiit nunagivaktangit around Kinngait, Kimmirut, or the south side of Cumberland Sound.⁷⁴ A few arrived from elsewhere in the Northwest Territories and from Arctic Quebec. Probably the largest single group of incoming Inuit were people from Kimmirut who arrived in the late 1950s.⁷⁵ Between 1956 and 1957, the number of Inuit living in Iqaluit almost doubled, from around 250 to 500, with 225 living in Apex.⁷⁶ In 1958, the total jumped to 624 Inuit, but the number in Apex remained constant, meaning that most people were living in the unserved area of Iqaluit. By 1959, employment levels peaked.

A new pattern emerged as hunting remained an important activity, but at least for a time the hunters were all based in Iqaluit. These included quite a number of employed Inuit who could afford snowmobiles and powerful outboard motors. Some Inuit returned to the ilagiit nunagivaktangit where they had lived before.⁷⁷ People who lived year-round in the town sometimes found it hard to adapt to settlement life. While wages compared well with unskilled positions in southern Canada, it was not until 1960 that Inuit were paid Isolated Post Allowance in recognition of the fact that they,

as much as the qallunaat incomers, faced high prices for food and other necessities. Some Inuit also found that they could not find time or money to maintain hunting equipment, improve their homes or put aside savings.⁷⁸ Inuit also missed eating country food.⁷⁹

What emerged in Iqaluit in the 1950s was a blending of lifestyles for many Inuit. Simonie Michael, who was able to participate in hunts, told the QIA that:

The Hudson's Bay Company really helped us at that time; they moved here [Apex] from Iqalugaarjuit, [Ward Inlet] they had goodies for sale, like bullets ... The kayakers, men who worked and managed to keep their kayak and row boats, would go out hunting during the weekend during their time off work! When there was an abundance of seal in Frobisher Bay marine area—we

call this huge bay Tasiujarjuaq, [and] there is a place called Aulattivik, which is directly across from us—we'd travel across this vast area of sea and hunt for seal. We would hunt with our kayaks or row boats because we didn't have outboard motors yet.⁸⁰

The population ratio between Inuit and qallunaat also shifted. In 1960, the qallunaat population was 590, and the Inuit population was 800, roughly split evenly between Apex and Iqaluit.⁸¹ It is hard to judge the effect of changes to the qallunaat population, as the young men at the Upper and Lower Bases, sometimes hundreds of them, had little contact with Inuit. The Canadian Department of Transport workers living outside the bases and even other government staff who were more likely to live in Apex Hill dealt frequently with Inuit.⁸² The population figures given in Table 1 must be read in this light.⁸³

Year	Inuit	Non-Inuit	Total	Comments
1941	183	0	183	The 1941 census reported 183 Inuit in the district this year.
1943	0	156	156	Data from <i>J.L. Robinson Gazetteer of Eastern Arctic Settlements, 1944</i> .
1950	25	66	91	
1956	258	93	351	US Air Force returned in 1951, and the Pinetree Line and Polevault were established in 1954.
1958	650	441	1,091	
1959	654	437	1,091	
1960	770	983	1,753	
1961	761	1,040	1,801	
1963	906	713	1,619	US Strategic Air Command withdrew following year.
1966	1,036	566	1,602	
1969	1,174	530	1,704	

Nunalinnguqti- tauliqtilluta (1960–1975)

The term “Nunalinnguqti-
tauliqtilluta” means “
the time when we were actively (by outside force)
formed into communities.” Nunalinnguqti-
tauliqtilluta 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

Into the 1960s, the Canadian government continued its past patterns of paternalism by arguing within the bureaucracy and with church leaders about whether Inuit should be encouraged to follow a wage economy or continue living on the land. However, this was also a period when Inuit were being pressured to form villages with institutions and economies that were like those of small towns in southern Canada. The federal government launched and sometimes abandoned plans and experiments, some more fanciful than others. In Iqaluit, the government left much to Inuit themselves to find places to live in an area that was set aside for military purposes. In this area, officials knew that wastewater was lying too close to drinking water, and that Inuit were visiting the dump in search of discarded food.⁸⁴ The government also knew that housing was overcrowded and poorly built, since so few materials were available to people arriving in the settlement. In 1966, an internal government report described Iqaluit as “disjointed,” “a monstrous creation,” and a place of “moral degradation.”⁸⁵ The assessment was harsh, but not completely unfounded. In the previous decade, decisions, and a lack of decisions, had created an untenable situation for the growing community due to a lack of employment, insufficient infrastructure, and systemic racism.

The separate spheres of activities reinforced by physical divisions were carefully recorded by researchers, especially anthropologists John J. Honigsmann and Irma Honigsmann. Their book, *Eskimo Townsmen*, confronts the duality of life in

Iqaluit in 1963–64. In a chapter titled “People Under Tutelage,” they describe how Euro-Canadians assumed the role of tutors. The tutors included government officials in Ottawa and Iqaluit, clergy, nurses, police, bosses and schoolteachers. The Honigsmanns observed that qallunaat too often viewed Inuit as completing “a bad if not fatal bargain,” rather than as “inheriting perplexing choices.”⁸⁶ In Iqaluit (and elsewhere in the Qikiqtani Region) authorities took the position that their duty was to limit negative impacts of the “bad bargain” and ignore the alternative of consulting Inuit about options for the future. Government agents were tasked with improving the physical conditions of the town and providing alternatives to the traditional economy that government actions had disrupted.

After the last USAF personnel left Iqaluit in 1963, Iqaluit was fully in the hands of the Canadian government. At Lower Base, the federal government was left with an airfield and its former buildings, including the large Federal Building containing offices and barracks. A group of apartments and row houses accommodated around 450 qallunaat personnel and a handful of steadily employed Inuit and their families. The air base also had commercial and public services such as a post office, a curling rink, a liquor store, a recreational association, and a school. Iqaluit had a small school and Inuit housing. Apex included the rehabilitation centre, municipal storage building, community freezer, bathhouse, cadet building, HBC post, theatre, snowmobile repair shop, school, and permanent houses purchased through a housing co-op.

Iqaluit also continued to suffer from housing shortages. Every employer—HBC, government, missions, military, and contractors—provided housing to attract qallunaat employees. The federal government alone was responsible for Inuit housing, apart from a few houses for Inuit DEW Line employees. The first Inuit to receive housing in Apex were patients at the Frobisher Bay rehabilitation centre and Inuit working for the government.⁸⁷ Later, Ottawa began offering prefabricated rental housing or (after 1966) subsidized houses that Inuit could buy or rent.

The first housing co-op was formed in Iqaluit in 1961, when fifteen men came together to share the cost of fifteen three-bedroom houses, applying

for the \$1,000-per-house government subsidy then available.⁸⁸ The houses arrived in the fall of 1962, and the families built them that fall and winter, sharing labour. Accordingly, the co-op was considered a success, and two more Iqaluit-based housing co-ops were formed in 1963. This co-op housing was only available to those who could afford a monthly cost of \$120 for a mortgage and utilities. Only families with steady employment could seriously consider joining. In 1971, a Housing Corporation was established to help the community. The settlement's first public housing project was completed in 1974, offering twenty units with rents tied to income.⁸⁹ This was part of a program established by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for co-operative housing in all parts of Canada.

In contrast to conditions in Apex and certainly to the air base, residents of Iqaluit received only subsistence-level services until the mid-1960s. While Apex residents had fuel delivered directly to each home, people living in Iqaluit were required to fetch their own fuel from the Imperial Oil Company depot. Similarly, Apex residents enjoyed water delivery directly to their home, while Iqaluit residents were required to put open containers on the street and retrieve the water quickly. The situation was described in stark terms in a government report in the 1960s:

*In Apex Hill and the Air Base, electricity provides light in houses, street illumination, and power for radios, gramophones, refrigerators, and kitchen fans. Despite Iqaluit residents' one-time ingenious, if illegal, custom of tapping power lines, no electricity is led to their houses, but the streets are lit.*⁹⁰

The differences extended to waste and sewage. The air base apartments contained flush toilets, but Apex was served by sanitation trucks that visited each house daily to collect "honey-buckets." Iqaluit residents carried their human waste to communal bins.

Employment opportunities were either with the government or with the two large southern firms that provided services to the government. Only a few

small businesses offered wage employment, and only to those with skills or luck. John J. Honigmann studying Iqaluit in 1963 wrote:

*The openness of Frobisher Bay augments its dynamic potential. The stores import new goods, administrators arrive with new ideas, teachers come with new concepts, comic books bring new heroes, the radio injects new songs, and [Inuit] return from schools, hospitals, jails and reformatories with new technical skills.*⁹¹

These "new things" often clashed with Inuit traditional knowledge. As a result, Iqaluit was seen by Honigmann as a community in flux, with Inuit struggling to keep their families fed and trying to make good decisions without a clear path through a new economic, legal, and political system controlled by outsiders. Legal and illegal options, such as voting, press support, public demonstrations, favouritism, and bribery, used by people in the south to change or circumvent rules and governments, were not available to Inuit. Some Inuit defied authorities by refusing jobs, missing work, and skipping school, actions that caused problems but would not lead to time in a lock-up or to the harsh treatment of other family members.

Partly because Iqaluit's future was uncertain, the government invested in temporary rather than permanent buildings. Exceptions included the airport, the hospital, and the power and water plants. Even the Federal Building was a converted military structure. In 1966, the government realized it would be cheaper to build permanent housing and a permanent school in Iqaluit than to rely on poorly constructed temporary ones.⁹² It was also determined that the settlement would retain its role as a regional hub. With these decisions in place, housing became the new focus. By 1966, after three years of declining qallunaat population and increasing Inuit population, the Canadian government decided that it was too expensive to maintain. Separation also reinforced a tendency of Inuit and qallunaat to act in separate spheres of activity and avoid interaction.

A new town plan in 1966 put all major new developments on a slope rising above Iqaluit, along Astro Hill, while gradually eliminating services in Apex.⁹³ Apex students above grade six were offered to be bussed to the school in the Iqaluit subdivision and “minimal” maintenance was offered for existing government-owned homes.⁹⁴ The government moved some families from Apex to Iqaluit, and expected that more people would move. In 1968, the government threatened to stop maintaining the road to Apex in winter, claiming that it was costing \$250,000 annually (equivalent to \$1.68 million in 2013).⁹⁵ The government communicated its decision to the HBC, which decided to move as quickly as possible to set up a new store in the Iqaluit sector. The new store was open only three days a week and was mostly stocked with camping gear.

The decision to make Astro Hill in Iqaluit the focus of the community solidified with the building of the W. G. Brown Building, also known as the Astro Hill Complex or the Frobisher Bay Complex, in 1971. Built by Frobisher Development Ltd. with federal funding, it included a two-storey hotel and an eight-storey multi-use facility. A six-storey residential section, a building for the CBC, and a swimming pool were later added. The multi-unit residential complex commonly known as White Row was built as housing for territorial staff. Located below the Frobisher Bay Complex, the two were initially connected up the slope by a covered walkway that was later removed for safety and structural reasons.

By 1972, the population of Apex was down to half of its 1966 level. The government conceded that remaining Apex residents could stay, but no new residences and little other development would be allowed.⁹⁶

INUIT-QALLUNAAT RELATIONS

Canadian policy between 1950 and 1975 swung back and forth between preventing and encouraging acculturation. Almost all bureaucrats considered Iqaluit as a place where Inuit habits and outlooks would inevitably change quickly. Some observers were naive enough to believe that Inuit would absorb only what authorities considered beneficial values, mainly having to do with work habits and

morality. They certainly wanted to keep Inuit out of contact with “vices,” such as drinking alcohol, gambling, and extra marital sex.⁹⁷ Inuit leaders expressed some of these concerns as well.

Almost everyone, including government officials and Inuit, understood that Iqaluit was divided socially and culturally. While some of the divisions can likely be traced to the community’s birth in wartime, and the shared policy of the American and Canadian governments to keep military and local populations separate, other divisions emerged from the lack of knowledge and experience of the bureaucrats sent north, as well as the transient nature of the qallunaat population. In 1965, the Anglican minister wrote, “The turnover in white population is still nothing short of fantastic. You sometimes wonder why people bother coming here at all. Schoolteachers, welfare people, and all the rest are always coming and going with great rapidity. Somehow we survive, however.”⁹⁸

Historical research for the QTC revealed dozens, perhaps hundreds, of documents, as well as numerous testimonies from Inuit and others that show the extent to which qallunaat designing and administering services were either ignorant of Inuit culture or determined to make it conform to southern expectations and economic beliefs. In 1959, in reference to the rehabilitation centre, the Committee on Eskimo Affairs reported that the centre should “encourage qualities of self-determination and self-help in the Eskimo.”⁹⁹ Similarly, A. F. Fluke, the Northern Services Officer in Iqaluit in 1959 and a former archivist, toured a journalist around Apex and explained that “Frobisher Bay is being planned as a stable mixed community where wage-earning Eskimos can live and take their place beside white neighbors.”¹⁰⁰

Tensions also existed because many qallunaat men—military personnel, RCMP officers, and government bureaucrats—were sexually involved with Inuit women. This left government officials trying to sort out whether they should take the position that adults should be allowed to do as they wanted, or that Inuit women were vulnerable and needed protection from qallunaat men. In 1961, the Canadian Chairman of the Permanent Joint-Board on Defence took the step of approving a modification to the original Canada-US DEW Line agreement

to make it “clear that the Government of Canada would not wish to have any general prohibition of interracial contact.”¹⁰¹ The board was equally quick to point out, however, that all behaviour considered “illegal” (likely due to laws concerning sexual assault and the age of consent) would be a reason for dismissal. The impact of this change, for better or worse, on Inuit and society remains an area that could be studied more closely.

An important catalyst in providing opportunities for interactions was access to alcohol through the liquor store that opened in 1960, and a few licensed establishments. In 1960, a federal court ruled that Inuit were free to purchase alcohol because they were not bound by the prohibitions in the Indian Act.¹⁰² In the next year, the number of overall criminal convictions connected to alcohol consumption tripled from the year before, 40% of those convictions being for Inuit. General convictions rose another 20% the next year. The great majority of fines and charges were violations of the liquor ordinance.

The opening of the liquor store and general consumption of alcohol was a divisive issue for the community, with some members (Inuit and qallunaat) asking for more restrictions. In 1969, a report written by the Northwest Territories Board of Liquor Inquiry described Iqaluit as “an interesting example of a community which has had difficulty coping with the presence of a liquor store.”¹⁰³ It noted that “[three] deaths caused by intoxication” had occurred since the store opened, but that Inuit leaders and community council members said that the number was really eighteen in a population of less than two thousand.¹⁰⁴ The report also noted that Inuit continuously saw qallunaat men drinking to excess, well outside the bounds of behaviour that would have been considered normal when the men were living in family situations. The inquiry stated, “The point to be made, tentatively, is that these individuals have been influenced into adopting whatever drinking patterns they have, and in some ways continue to be subject to these influences.”¹⁰⁵

In 1973, fifty people participated in a public meeting about a liquor application for the Continental Restaurant. The newspaper *Inukshuk* again reported that Inuit “complained that liquor has been imposed upon the community without consulting the inhabitants.”¹⁰⁶ Finally, in 1976, a child was

killed when thrown from a snowmobile driven by his drunken father. The death galvanized Iqaluit residents and three hundred citizens successfully petitioned to close the liquor store.¹⁰⁷ In 2013, while bootlegging had become a problem, and people still could drink at many licensed commercial establishments and order liquor by obtaining permits, no liquor store had reopened.¹⁰⁸ (A beer and wine store opened in 2017).

With and without access to alcohol, a transient qallunaat population mixing with Inuit who were uncertain of their legal rights and the role of police led to greater number of assaults, even if evidence of charges are rare in the surviving archival record. It can be speculated that assaults against Inuit were either rarely reported by victims or never investigated, that evidence of “rape,” as sexual assault was called, was so difficult to collect that police officers were reluctant to undertake investigations, and that assaults may have been witnessed but not reported, especially when the victims were Inuit. Evidence that crimes were unreported can be gleaned from many records, including RCMP correspondence, but it is exposed openly in others. In 1958, for example, a Canadian worker at a military station (FOX-3 on the DEW Line) in the Baffin Region felt compelled to write an anonymous letter to the Minister of Northern Affairs, saying:

*Eskimos are getting a raw deal on the Dew Line. In one instance a Federal Electric officer is currently taking advantage of his position as Station Chief of Fox-3 to rape Eskimo woman. This man should be banned from Northwest Territories if law and order are to be maintained in this country. Apparently Federal Electric is aware of this fact because it is known to everybody on the Line.*¹⁰⁹

It is unknown if action was taken.

Senior officials and the RCMP discussed the challenge of limiting damage from interactions between Inuit and qallunaat, while also creating a more “integrated” community in Iqaluit. For Inuit,

of course, the term “integration” could have been interchanged with assimilation. Almost everything that mattered in daily life—language, policing, schooling, health care, commercial exchanges, family relations, and childcare—was controlled by qallunaat. In addition to threats to their diet and culture (including, of course, language), Inuit faced various forms of discrimination based on stereotypes about their capacities and interests. These were reinforced by the fact that they had only just begun to have access to schooling and post-secondary education or training. The workforce was racially divided, with most of the well-paying jobs in the hands of qallunaat who were often learning on the job, while many Inuit relied on seasonal work and social transfers (Old Age Pension, Family Allowance, and relief).

To qallunaat, Iqaluit was a place where high wages were almost assured. For Inuit, this was true only in comparison with other eastern Arctic communities. As a result, cultural and racial divisions were widened by differences in economic status and by the ability of people already living in Iqaluit, primarily Inuit, to get jobs that were available.

Surveys by Sheila Meldrum in 1966 revealed the complications of Inuit men’s employment patterns. Only a small proportion of Inuit over twenty-six were chronically unemployed. Her employment categories included 30% classified as permanently employed and 20% classified as rarely employed. The casually employed were those who worked for at least six months a year; another casual group working two to six months a year, and some who combined casual labour or carving with hunting. Certain patterns were typical of specific age groups. The largest numbers of chronically unemployed were those under thirty, and the rate of permanent employment was consistently at or above 50% for those in their thirties and forties. The backbone of the economy in this government town was, nonetheless, the employment of 165 men, out of a total Inuit population of about 1,000.¹¹⁰

Two solitudes developed, with Inuit and qallunaat living in the same town but rarely interacting at work or socially. The HBC, for example, used the term “local staff” to refer to qallunaat women, not Inuit. Bureaucrats noted that the same divisions

existed in the schoolyard.¹¹¹ Government employees shopped at a government-run store and ordered food through Nord air. According to R. Quinn Duffy, racial discrimination “had become part of the social environment” in Iqaluit.¹¹² The federal government responded by trying to combine previously segregated types of services from the 1960s with action that it hoped would spur the town’s development. Inuit living in Iqaluit had no facility nearer than Apex for dances, bingo nights, or movies. At times, Inuit and qallunaat did interact closely. As Celestin Enkidu told the QTC, “We had to help each other.”¹¹³ The establishment of the community festival Toonik Tyme in 1965 gave everyone a reason to participate in musical performances, traditional games, skill sharing, and feasts. In addition, as Abraham Okpik recalled, the Apex community centre used surplus funds at the end of the year to buy Christmas presents for all the children in Iqaluit, whether qallunaat or Inuit.¹¹⁴

While some activities were open to everyone living in the community, government-funded services, including clubs, housing, and CBC radio, were generally more relevant to the minority qallunaat population than to Inuit.¹¹⁵ The CBC’s first Inuit broadcaster based in Montreal and then Iqaluit was Ann Padlo. She appears to have used her communications talents to address local issues. In spite of a northern service with Inuit on-air, only a portion of the content was directed to the Inuit community. A study about native communications for the federal government in 1973, for example, noted that the CBC radio station in Iqaluit served a population that was 59.5% Inuit, but that it only provided programming directed to that audience for 25.2% of the airtime.¹¹⁶ Iqaluit resident Mary Panigusiq Cousins told the study’s authors that better communications and services were needed, explaining, “We Inuit people in the North feel so isolated. We never see each other to talk about problems that are the same for all of us.”¹¹⁷

A growing population at the head of the bay also put heavy pressure on the game and fish in the immediate region. After 1960, harp seal hunting was cut back because of scarcity, and a commercial char fishery on the Sylvia Grinnell River threatened to extinguish that resource altogether by 1966.

All this change made the town unattractive to some Inuit, and in 1971, eight families prepared to return to the land.¹¹⁸ In 1974, the Keenuyak Association asked Inuit to return to a more traditional mode of living because “youth are drifting apart from their Elders and are losing the Inuit ways and skills and the ability to survive from the land.”¹¹⁹

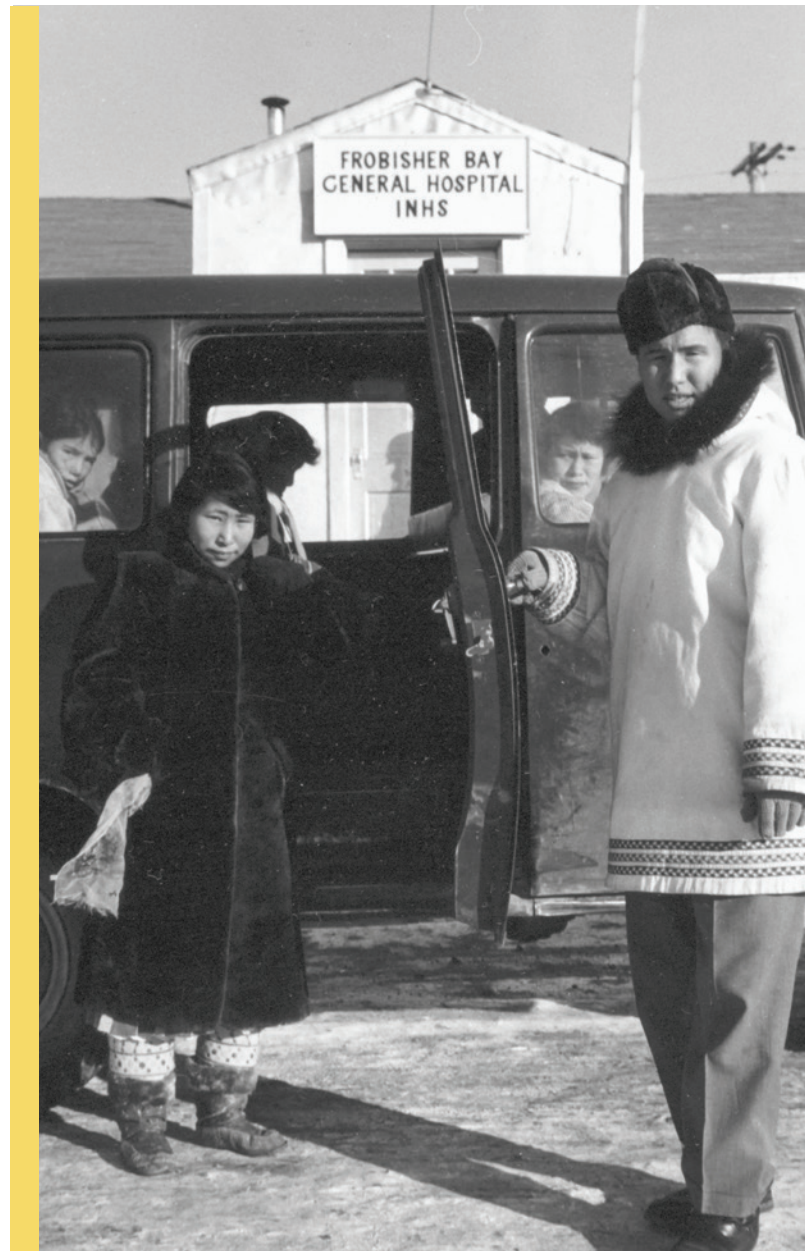
Through the 1970s, four *ilagiit nunagivaktangit* were established—two in Frobisher Bay at Minnguktuuq (Nouyarn Island in Hamlin Bay) and farther south at the mouth of Wiswell Inlet. A fourth *ilagiit nunagivaktangit* which had a population of 70 people at one time was located on Allen Island in Cornelius Grinnell Bay near the old whaling station at Singaijaq. The Frobisher Bay Hunters and Trappers Association shared polar bear quotas with outlying settlements and this, with other new adaptations, provided a rewarding cultural environment for a couple of decades.¹²⁰ While living a more traditional life than was possible in town, hunters also found work with biologists doing aircraft surveys of caribou on the Hall Peninsula.¹²¹ However, most Inuit living in Iqaluit were decreasing the time they spent hunting.¹²² By 1969, 95% of the entire population of the town was relying on the conventional wage economy at least part time.¹²³

Some of the hardships of an earlier era were avoided through technological change. As already mentioned, a large *qallunaat* presence ended the practice of keeping *qimmiit* loose in the town. While hundreds of *qimmiit* were killed off in the late 1950s, they were replaced. In 1965, most hunters still relied on *qimmiit*, but reliable snowmobiles were becoming available and affordable. By 1969, snowmobiles were so common in Iqaluit that residents were complaining about the number of children operating snowmobiles recklessly through the community.¹²⁴

SHAPING COMMUNITY LIFE

Community life in Iqaluit between 1960 and 1975 was influenced, as always, by government policies, by economic circumstances, and by local people and services. Locally, Inuit were assigned roles in town affairs, albeit within structures set by the government. In 1958, the government established an advisory town council composed of six Inuit from Apex, six from Ikhaluit, two from the air base, and two *qallunaat* civil servants.¹²⁵ It was disbanded

when the *qallunaat* involved left the settlement, but was later reconstituted in 1962. The council was secondary, however, to the government and its administrators. The government was the chief administrative body. Almost half of its employees were Inuit. While most of them were classified as labourers, they had a variety of pay scales and responsibilities.¹²⁶ The Department of Transport



Joe Tikivik holds open the door of a van containing Inuit patients parked in front of the Frobisher Bay General Hospital, [1950s].

Credit: Canada. Health and Welfare Canada collection / Library and Archives Canada / e004665169.

handled airport operations and weather services. Two RCMP offices were located in Iqaluit by 1966—one for the Frobisher Bay Area Detachment and one in the Federal Building for the Eastern Arctic Sub-Division, formerly headquartered in Ottawa. The Royal Canadian Navy operated a communications unit until 1968, and the CBC continued to produce both local and national radio in town.¹²⁷

Small-scale commercial enterprises also developed in Iqaluit. Bryan Pearson told the QTC about working as a teacher at the rehabilitation centre in the 1960s before going on to become the first mayor, and later a member of the NWT Legislative Assembly.¹²⁸ Pearson also helped to establish a factory, a janitorial and a construction service, a retail store, and a corps of interpreters, as well as Iqaluit's first taxi service. These types of businesses, as well as activities associated with transportation and construction, contributed to various job options for Inuit. Jonah Kelly told the QTC about life in the 1960s as a young man:

We started getting work as students. When school ended in spring or summer, we started working for Americans or DOT. That is when we started getting work experience. The only time I had real trouble was when I worked in the office. They said that if we wanted to take this training we could, so I went to school for three months. I went to the social services and told them I wanted a job. I said I wanted to work. I didn't want to work on the streets. I didn't want to work on heavy equipment. I wanted to follow what I learned from Borden in 1963. I was working in 1964 at the rehabilitation center where the patients used to stay. Abraham Ipolik [Ipeelee] was the supervisor and he used to teach me how to do my chores.¹²⁹

Unfortunately, jobs were never as plentiful as the number of men and women seeking work. Employment continued to be a serious concern into the 1970s. In 1975, South Baffin's member in the NWT Council wildly exaggerated numbers to make a point that "a thousand" youth were in school in Iqaluit, but only ten jobs were available in town.¹³⁰

One job option for Inuit was working at the Ikajurtauvik Correctional Centre opened in 1973 by the Council of the Northwest Territories. Inmates originally from the Qikiqtani Region who had been serving their sentences in Yellowknife were transferred to the new facility.¹³¹ Some residents argued that inmates should be located away from the community and separated from the inmates' relatives. The territorial government explained that it wanted to expose inmates to educational opportunities available in the community. When opened, the facility's program only served Inuit. It emphasized retraining and land-based outdoor programs, all of which were assisted by Pauloosie Kilabuk, the first superintendent.

Educational opportunities and the number of jobs associated with schools also grew in Iqaluit during this period, as the government began centralizing programs there. In 1955, Apex seemed to be an obvious place for one of the new government schools that were turning Arctic settlements into centres where the government could promote social and cultural change among Inuit. By 1958, it had three classrooms and offered grades one to eight, although all but four of the one hundred and twenty pupils were in grades one to three. The eight white pupils at Apex were children of government employees or the teacher.¹³²

This situation changed dramatically in 1971, when the long-planned composite high school and vocational school opened in Astro Hill. The former Federal Building near the airport was remodelled as a hostel, known as Ukkiivik, for students from all over the Qikiqtani and Kivalliq Region. At the end of the 1970s, Iqaluit had three schools. These were Nakasuk, with 23 teachers and just under 400 students in grades one to six; the much smaller Nanook elementary school at Apex, with four teachers and sixty-six students; and the high school, the Gordon Robertson Educational Centre (GREC),

where twenty-two teachers taught a little over three hundred students.¹³³ The new school and hostel complex had been introduced with only minimal consultation with Inuit, and throughout the 1970s and 1980s, many Inuit worked hard to have higher grades offered in all community schools.

In a pattern that echoed that of schooling, regional medical services also became more concentrated in Iqaluit. From 1931 until the Second World War, St. Luke's Hospital at Pangnirtung was the only hospital in the Qikiqtani Region. From 1941 onwards, military doctors were permanently (especially for injuries and infections) stationed at Iqaluit. While Inuit were not their formal responsibility, it is unlikely that treatment was ever refused to someone who asked for it. The RCAF's medical orderly provided care at the base from 1950 to 1953. During this period, the RCAF also helped out with the campaign against TB, airlifting patients to hospitals in the south and providing steady, if sometimes adventurous, service separate from the dreaded *C. D. Howe* for years to come.¹³⁴

Because of its unique position, Iqaluit was always high on the government's list of plans for a hospital, yet the availability of military medical care meant that it was not immediately built. As early as 1953, the Indian and Northern Health Service (INHS) publicly forecast a twenty-bed hospital, but all that resulted was a four-bed nursing station at Apex in 1955. During these years, the INHS also negotiated a long-term relationship with the McGill University Medical School that led to research opportunities for the school and clinical care for Inuit. The new hospital, repeatedly promised, was finally opened in 1964 to make hospital services more compliant with expectations of the Canada Health Act.¹³⁵ The new building was only slightly larger than the 1953 plan, despite the huge increase in the settlement's population in the meantime. It had 20 adult beds, eight children's beds, an operating suite, a maternity and nursing section, an outpatient department that included consulting and treatment facilities, an X-ray unit, a dispensary, a dental suite, and a public health lecture/demonstration area. It was initially staffed by three medical officers, one dentist, ten ward aids, and 17 nurses. In addition to the 1,500 people at Iqaluit, the hospital staff was expected to deliver services to a region with another 4,500 people.

No additional beds were added for at least another fifteen years, although the establishment of nursing stations in smaller communities all over the Qikiqtani Region may have provided some relief to the growing population.

While the hospital concerned itself with some public health questions, such as a survey of drinking water in 1969, nutrition was also a serious issue in a large, permanent settlement like Iqaluit. Food increasingly came from canned and other store-bought goods, rather than from hunts. The primary-care physician in Iqaluit in the 1970s was Dr. Alex Williams, Zone Director for National Health and Welfare in the region. During a national study on nutrition, Williams pointed out the nutritional deficiencies among Iqaluit residents. The local newspaper *Inukshuk* wondered whether a hunters' co-op was needed and whether the game supply around Iqaluit would be sufficient to supplement diets with game.¹³⁶ In 1975, a federal funding program for local economic development projects was considered to hire hunters to bring country food to Iqaluit. After extensive consultations, a not-for-profit community organization negotiated with three hunters to hunt seal for local families before deciding the project would be too expensive. Once again, the best that southern expertise and investment could offer was less than the unique conditions of northern life required.



High school students photographed at the Gordon Robertson Education Centre in Iqaluit.

Credit: NWT Archives/Northwest Territories. Department of Information fonds/G-1979-023: 1999

Conclusion

Iqaluit's history is a fragmented story. At the urban-landscape level, its haphazard planning under different military and government or public institutions is clearly evident. The Lower Base area has kept its commercial and institutional character, with the airport, hotels, and office buildings on the flat ground near the beach. Some of the old Iqaluit neighbourhood is still residential, though commerce and institutions such as the Elders' centre, and the museum and visitors' centre have changed its character along the waterfront. Astro Hill still stands out as a monument to 1960s town planning, with its initial institutional focus expanded by the construction of Nunavut Arctic College and Tammaativvik, a medical boarding home. Despite government policy in the 1960s to close down the neighbourhood, Apex Hill remains a distinct neighbourhood on the southeast edge of Iqaluit. Iqaluit's physical landscape also contains relics that are evidence of government intentions to control connections between Inuit and qallunaat. Although the federal government initially set out to keep Inuit and qallunaat separated as much as possible, as demonstrated by the construction of Apex in the 1950s, it began to pursue a policy of integration in the 1960s that can also be read as a policy of assimilation. Institutional developments along Astro Hill, White Row, and developments east of the airport resulted from the integrated approach.

The personal histories of Iqaluit vary, depending on experiences and backgrounds. Curiosity about Americans attracted some Inuit to Iqaluit.¹³⁷ Some family stories about the history of the community begin with descriptions of people moving across the sea, land, and ice for new opportunities, as described to the QTC by Jonah Kelly:

*It took us three days to come here from Kimmirut. There were seven separate dog teams. All our family, all my father's family, and my mother's son-in-law came. They probably had seven dogs each and we carried whatever we could to survive ... And we took all of our hunting gear. It was spring time when we came here by dog team.*¹³⁸

Kelly reflected positively on the reasons why his father moved from Kimmirut to Iqaluit in 1957, saying to the QTC, "I think my father knew that if we went to school we would have a better chance of living." He added, "I never thought about it, but he probably fixed it so we would survive." For others, however, they were left with painful memories about coping in a new community where they were sent for schooling or medical reasons, but were unable to move back to home communities due to the cost of travel.

Inuit faced opportunities and challenges, including a skeptical, inexperienced and colonial-minded bureaucracy, head-on and realistically. Inuit provided the bulk of the labour, energy, and leadership that built the city's infrastructure, businesses, and institutions that were such important factors in choosing Iqaluit as Nunavut's capital.

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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 Iglooliorte'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

