




Qikiqtani Truth Commission

Community Histories 1950–1975

Arctic Bay

Qikiqtani Inuit Association

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Qikiqtani Inuit Association

QIKIQTANI TRUTH COMMISSION

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Errata

Despite best efforts on the part of the author, mistakes happen.
The following corrections should be noted when using this report:

Administration in Qikiqtaaluk was the responsibility of one or more federal departments prior to 1967 when the Government of the Northwest Territories was became responsible for the provision of almost all direct services. The term “the government” should replace all references to NANR, AANDC, GNWT, DIAND.

Dedication

This project is dedicated to the Inuit of the Qikiqtani region. May our history never be forgotten and our voices be forever strong.

Foreword

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
Iqaluit, Nunavut
2013


Inuit Owned Lands
Community Area of Arctic Bay
Inuit owned lands
DEVON ISLAND
Lancaster Sound
Prince Regent Inlet
Admiralty Inlet
Brodeur Peninsula
Arctic Bay
Borden Peninsula
Bylot Island
BAFFIN ISLAND
0 10 20 30 40 50 Km
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic
Datum: NAD 83
Data supplied by QIA
Map produced by Strata360

Arctic Bay

Ikpiarjuk

The hamlet of Arctic Bay is also known as Ikpiarjuk, meaning pocket, which refers to the way in which it is nestled between tall hills. It is located on the north shore of Adams Sound, off the coast of Admiralty Inlet on northern Baffin Island. King George V Mountain, located a couple of kilometres east, is a predominant feature in the landscape. People call the region Tununirusiq, meaning that there is a big mountain in front of Arctic Bay that is facing south. The people of the region call themselves Tununirusirmiut.

Traditionally, Arctic Bay was of secondary importance to the region's Inuit and remained largely uninhabited until the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) established a post at Arctic Bay in 1936. At the same time, the federal government moved several Inuit families to the Arctic Bay area from Cape Dorset, Pangnirtung, and Pond Inlet. Over the following decades Arctic Bay grew, but remained largely a Qallunaat enclave. The majority

of Tununirusirmiut continued to live in traditional ilagiit nunagivaktangit, only travelling to Arctic Bay for supplies when the annual ship arrived, for medical attention, or for trade and other settlement activities.

In the 1950s, however, the federal government sought to bring modern services to Inuit in the area. By the end of the 1960s, the settlement included a school, hostel, twenty-two houses, and a small set of government offices.

Crew of the *C.D. Howe* at Arctic Bay in 1951
NWT ARCHIVES

As more Tununirusirmiut moved to the community, Inuit and government agents saw new problems arising, such as the potential for clashes between people and qimmiit. Residents formed a Settlement Council in 1967.

The mineral potential of Arctic Bay was known as early as 1910. In 1957, a large deposit of lead and zinc was discovered that eventually became the location for the Nanisivik mine. The predictions of mineral wealth were realized in the 1970s with the opening of the mine approximately 20 kilometres northeast of Arctic Bay at Strathcona Sound. Nanisivik had a tremendous impact on the community and its economy. Opportunities for wage employment transformed the role of money, affecting Tununirusirmiut hunting practices and social structures.

Arctic Bay received hamlet status in 1976. In 2011, its population was 823. Today, the community is renowned for the quality of its whalebone and soapstone carvings, which depict subsistence activities and locally known animals and birds. Hiking, camping, and fishing are popular local activities that can be enjoyed in nearby Sirmilik National Park.

Taissumani Nunamiutautilluta

ILAGIIT NUNAGIVAKTANGIT

The community of Arctic Bay is located on the northern shore of Adams Sound, off the coast of Admiralty Inlet. It is situated between high, glaciated cliffs and a small bay. Long, narrow fiords, inlets, and bays form the coastlines. Thaw generally occurs in mid-July, with freeze-up beginning in October. The area is technically located within a polar desert, which means that it receives very little precipitation in the form of rain or snow.

The people who lived on the north end of Baffin Island (areas near the present-day settlements of Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet) and those who

lived near Igloolik share a cultural unity based on geography. Early anthropological work identified all the people in this region as Iglulingmiut, although Inuit note distinctions among themselves. They point to differences in language and material culture that exist between the various groups dispersed through the area. Evidence suggests the primary population and cultural heart of the region was found west of Navy Board Inlet and south of Eclipse Sound. The Inuit of this area were known as Tununirmiut, meaning "the people of a shaded or shadowy place." The reference to a shaded or shadowy place reflects the mountainous landscape of the region.

Until recently, the Arctic Bay area had a very small population. In 1939, for example, an estimated population of 70 people were associated with six ilagiit nunagivaktangit. People coming from other parts of Qikiqtaaluk accounted for increases in the population from the 1940s onwards. In the same period, however, some families moved away to Pond Inlet, Iqaluit, and Igloolik. In 1967, after almost all ilagiit nunagivaktangit were abandoned or moved closer to Arctic Bay, and the population of the settlement had reached 168, with only 9 Qallunaat.

Traditionally, caribou were very important for Tununirusirmiut. Not only were they a preferred food source, but caribou hide was essential in the production of garments. Inland caribou hunting historically occurred on Bylot Island and in the interior of northern Baffin Island during the summer months when the hides were at their best for clothing production. In the winter and spring, caribou were hunted for food along the coasts or during the long overland journeys to Pond Inlet or Igloolik.

Ringed seals were another important species. They were primarily used for food and as a basic material for tents, heating and lighting, but their skins were also traded. Ringed seals were hunted throughout the region in fiords, bays, inlets and at the floe edge. While less abundant, the bearded seal was also hunted at the floe edge during spring break up and in the open waters during the summer months. Their skin was valuable to

Tununirusirmiut, as it was used to make rope and boot soles. Occasionally, in summer, harp seals were taken in the Admiralty Inlet area.

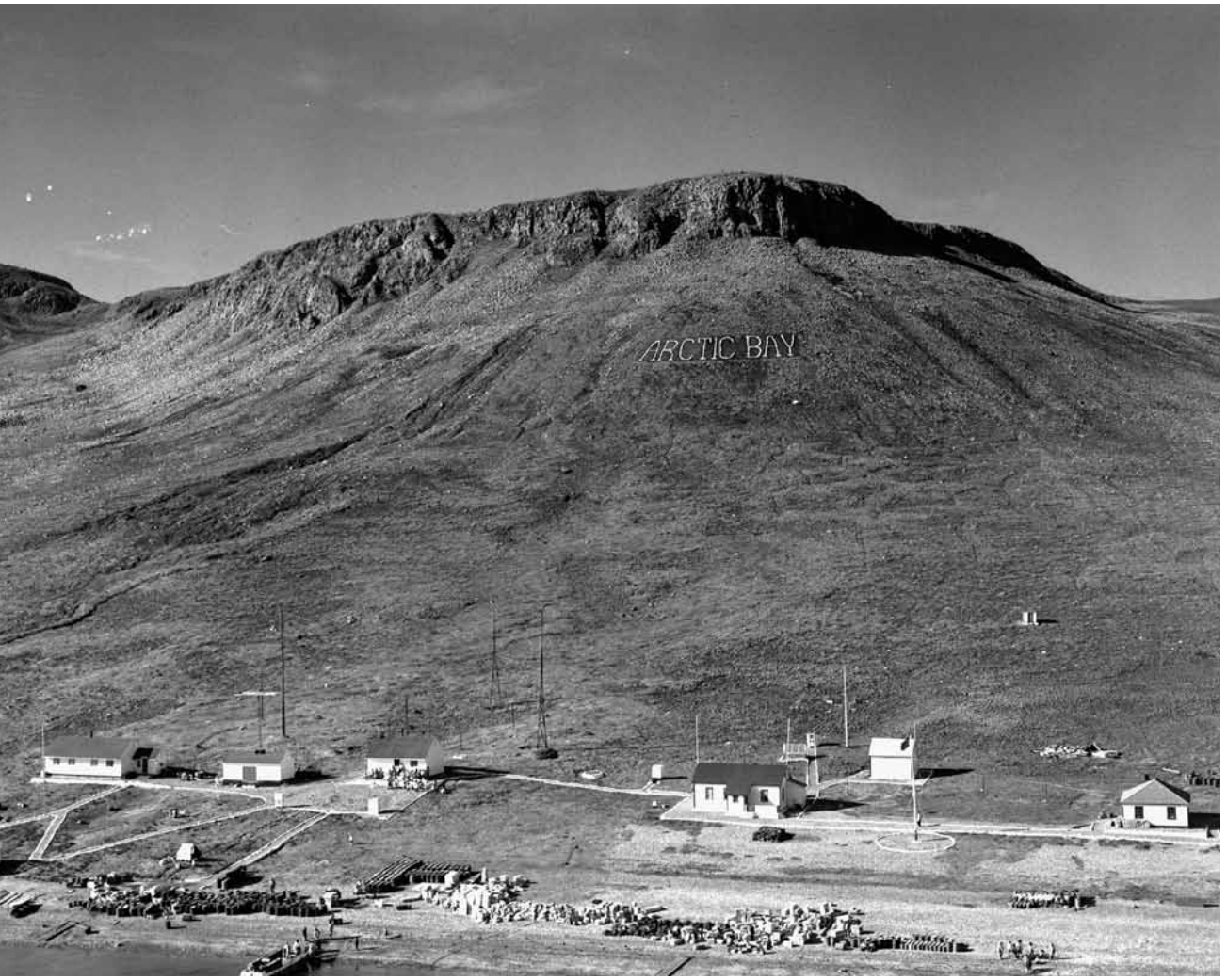
Narwhals, hunted primarily in the summer, were an important source of food for qimmiit while their tusks were used for trade with whalers and later with the HBC. Tununirusirmiut also considered the skin, fresh or purposefully aged, a delicacy. White foxes, wolves, and polar bears also played a role in Tununirusirmiut trading activities, with polar bears being an important source of income and prestige for hunters, as well as a source of materials for winter clothing. Arctic char was the preferred freshwater fish. Sculpin was only fished in times of scarcity. Birds, wildfowl, hares, eggs, and berries all supplemented the Tununirusirmiut diet.

EARLY CONTACTS

Sir William Edward Parry visited Arctic Bay in 1820. Its current name references the whaling vessel *Arctic* that surveyed the area in 1872 under the command of Captain William Adams. Until the twentieth century, however, there were relatively few interactions between Tununirusirmiut and Qallunaat when compared with other parts of the Eastern Arctic. Tununirusirmiut encountered whalers from Scotland, England, and America during the nineteenth century, but no whaling stations were set up in the area. Instead, a small station for hunting, securing supplies, rendering blubber, and trading with local Inuit was established at Pond Inlet.

The Canadian government expedition ship, captained by Joseph-Elzear Bernier and also named *Arctic*, was iced in over winter at Arctic Bay in 1910–11. Bernier's expedition named many places in the area. While there, the ship's crew spelled out "Arctic Bay" in stone on the cliffs overlooking the entrance to the bay. Their mark can still be seen today.

In 1926, the HBC established a trading post at Arctic Bay under the name Tukik, but it was closed the following year with the organization of the



Arctic Islands Game Preserve (AIGP). The AIGP was established in 1926 by an order-in-council and encompassed the High Arctic islands, northwestern Baffin Island, the islands as far west as northeastern Banks Island, and a small portion of the mainland. Created in association with other conservation initiatives at the time, the AIGP aimed to protect muskox in the region,

while restricting Qallunaat hunting, trapping, trading, and trafficking inside its boundaries. The game preserve also called attention to Canadian sovereignty claims in the North by demonstrating a form of functional administration in the Arctic Archipelago. The onset of the Depression and the drop in the price of furs led to a relaxation in AIGP restrictions because the government was focused on the economy. In 1936, the HBC returned to Arctic Bay, establishing a permanent post there. The AIGP was eventually disbanded in 1966 by the Northwest Territories Council when the area was brought under the same legislative framework as the Northwest Territories.

Loading furs to be taken to Montreal by *C. D. Howe* (distance), July 1951
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Department of Transport Radio and Meteorological Station and Hudson's Bay Company Post at Arctic Bay, July 1951
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

CHANGING PATTERNS OF LIFE

Participation in whaling in the nineteenth century led to changes in the hunting and mobility patterns of Tununirusirmiut and other groups of Iglulingmiut. The whaling station at Pond Inlet drew Inuit to the area while at the same time the whalers' demand for polar bear skins resulted in a northward drift as hunters followed the animals. Tununirusirmiut regularly made the trek to Pond Inlet in hopes of acquiring trade goods such as tobacco, guns, ammunition, and fox traps. These new technologies were eventually adapted into daily life, making continued trade necessary. The desire to travel to Qallunaat enclaves was further ingrained with the arrival of trade companies such as the HBC. Tununirusirmiut wanted to be near trading posts but they also relied on hunting for subsistence, which meant that they had to continue to hunt over large areas. Tununirusirmiut families travelled widely and often, adjusting their patterns of movement with that of their game and opportunities to trade. Today, many Tununirusirmiut still make long journeys for hunting and to visit relatives in Igloolik and Pond Inlet.

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Inuit children watching landing of helicopter from *C.D. Howe*, July 1951
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The reopening of the post at Arctic Bay in 1936 aimed to serve ilagiit nunagivaktangit in the area that had been trading in Pond Inlet. The new post significantly reduced the amount of travel time required for trade. It also freed up time for trapping, reduced the amount of time spent hunting for food for qimmiit, and enticed more families to establish ilagiit nunagivaktangit in the area.

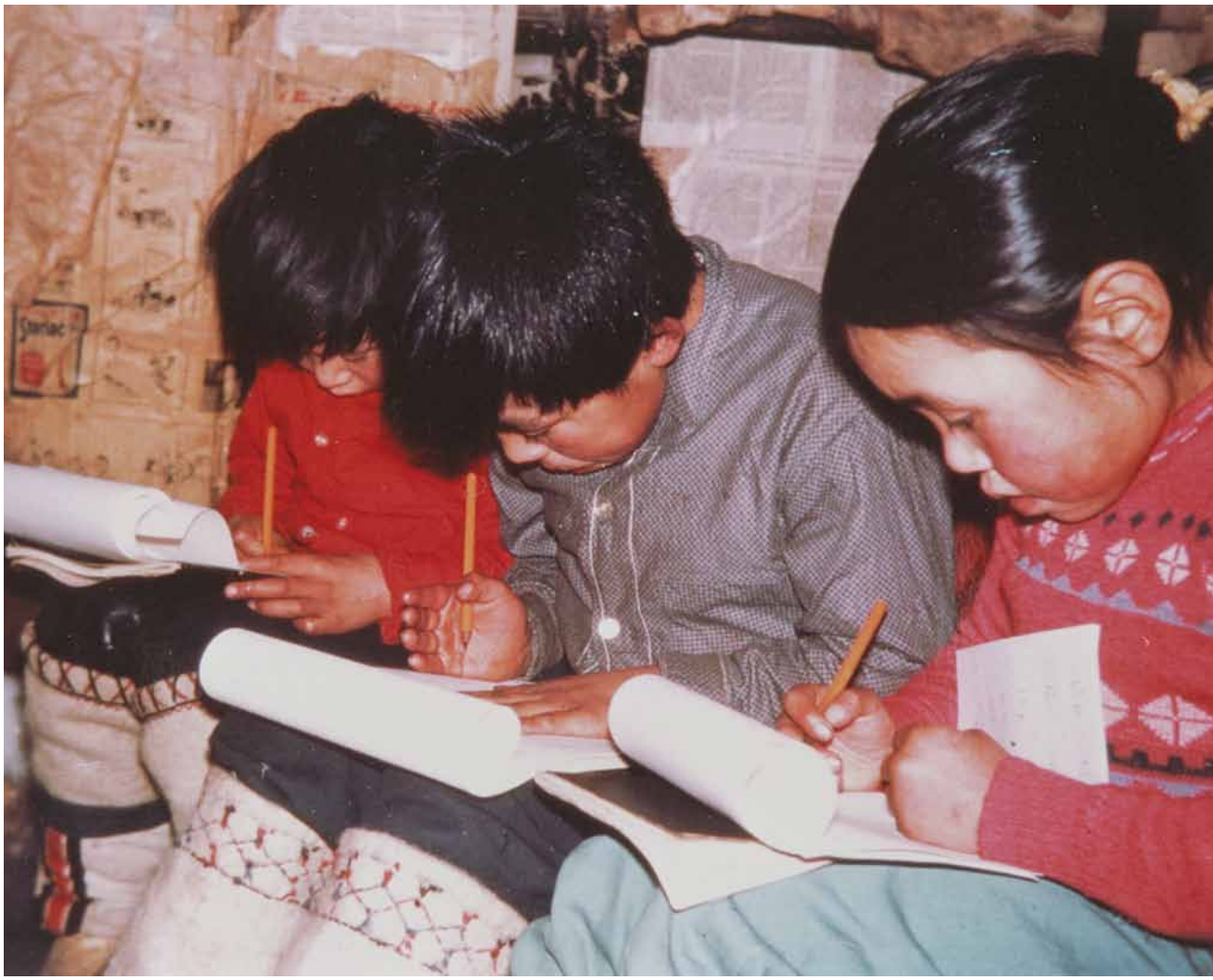
Sangussaqtauliqtilluta, 1936–1958

While the newly reopened HBC post at Arctic Bay attracted some families that had previously traded at Pond Inlet to stay closer to Arctic Bay, the overall population in the area stayed constant. However, it increased in 1936, when families were moved to the area by the HBC. In 1934, a government-approved relocation scheme, overseen by the HBC, saw 52 Inuit and 109 qimmiit from Cape Dorset, Pangnirtung, and Pond Inlet transported to a newly established HBC post at Dundas Harbour, on Devon Island. The government expected them to develop local trapping and trading economies in the area. However, the HBC found access to the post via the harbour problematic, and after two years, the post was closed. The Pangnirtung families were returned home, but the others were moved to Arctic Bay. In 1937, several families were once again relocated, this time to a new HBC post at Fort Ross. When this site also proved unsuitable, they were relocated to Spence Bay, on the Boothia Peninsula. Several of these families moved back to Arctic Bay.

The relocations had a lasting impact on the people. For Inuit, the loss of home is more than the loss of a dwelling; it is a disruption of the vital relationship between people, the land, and animals. The government failed to address the social and psychological impacts of these moves on the people, and many continue to suffer from feelings of displacement and loss today. In April 2008, Rhoda Tunraq spoke to the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) about her mother's experience with the relocations.

> They got moved to Devon Island, and they were happy there as a family. When they moved to Arctic Bay, the families started dying. There is a saying in Inuit, "they cut off the life," so I feel that they

were cut short in their life. My mother used to say that. . . . She wanted to go back, but her relatives—her husband and in-laws—died. Their happiness in the camp was cut off; when they moved here, she was sad. It was not her original place, and she did not want to live here.



Nunavummiut students take lessons at a camp near Arctic Bay

NWT ARCHIVES

The government had promised families the opportunity to return to their original homes. For the majority, these promises went unfulfilled. Juda Oqittuq's memory of his parents' experience reflects this. "They were told they were able to return. It seems to be just words, not carried out." Instead, many of the families from Cape Dorset and Pond Inlet were sent to Arctic Bay in an attempt to support the HBC post there. The HBC was encouraging "movement into a region that had little else to recommend it." This amplified the population in an area that had, historically, been largely unoccupied.

The influx of the relocated families corresponded with an increase in Qallunaat agencies at Arctic Bay. A Roman Catholic mission was established in 1937, which offered basic education to local Inuit children. During the Second World War, a US weather station was constructed. This station was the most northerly installation established by the United States in Canada's Arctic during the war. In September 1943, responsibility for the station was transferred to the Canadian Department of Transport (now Transport Canada), and it was eventually closed in 1958. By 1950, Arctic Bay had developed into a settlement, primarily populated by Qallunaat, and visited annually by the RCMP detachment out of Pond Inlet. The majority of Tununirusirmiut, however, continued to live in ilagiit nunagivaktangit throughout the region, but regularly ventured to the area when the annual supply ship arrived to trade or to give medical attention.

At this time, observers noted changes in the daily life and hunting patterns of Tununirusirmiut. In 1951, for example, an RCMP officer reported a transition from traditional to contemporary clothing was occurring. In his report, the officer wrote:

> Year by year the natives become more poorly clad in store bought [sic] clothes which are quite inadequate to withstand the rigours of the far north climate and which do not begin to compare with native skin clothing, that is, caribou skins and seal skins. Rarely

> nowadays does one find the Eskimos using native made [*sic*] clothing of seal skin. Rubber boots are being substituted for seal skin footwear. The Eskimos sell their seal skins to the traders and in some cases make up seal skin clothing in substantial quantities and donate it to the missions or dispose of it to other white residents for some very small remuneration perhaps in the way of tobacco and cigarettes or some trinket.

Some Qallunaat, especially government officials, RCMP officers, and missionaries, believed that the transition from primarily being hunters of meat to primarily being trappers of fur was having a negative impact on the lives of Tununirusirmiut. They believed that the rise of the fur trade economy and the subsequent small returns it yielded for Inuit resulted in a dependency on family allowances and relief, which were insufficient to sustain families with housing, fuel, and food.

RCMP Inspector Larsen argued that the family allowances should be distributed differently to reduce dependence. As he saw it, while many Tununirusirmiut still resided in ilagiit nunagivaktangit, they were increasingly dependent on family allowances. In 1952, Larsen wrote to the RCMP Commissioner explaining that Tununirusirmiut hunting patterns were being disrupted by their need to regularly come to the settlement. "This takes the Eskimos away from their hunting grounds, causing them to spend much time travelling to and from trading posts and police detachments, thus neglecting their hunting and trapping." The more that hunting patterns were disrupted, the more reliant Tununirusirmiut became on family allowances. Larsen argued that the hunting and travel patterns of Tununirusirmiut were being unduly restricted by the need to return to specific areas on a frequent basis to collect these allowances.

Traditionally, Tununirusirmiut were familiar with making long journeys to trading posts while effectively using large resource areas. The accessibility provided by the establishment of the trading post at Arctic Bay, how-

Unloading scow bringing supplies from *Nascopie*, anchored off-shore at Arctic Bay

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

ever, certainly made it easier to receive and spend family allowances. While the RCMP saw the trips to Arctic Bay as being problematic because of the travel time and energy required, the Tununirusirmiut saw the proximity of the settlement as a benefit to them. The HBC also saw it as beneficial, as long as they kept working traplines and buying goods. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1950s, Arctic Bay remained mainly a Qallunaat enclave, with only a small collection of Tununirusirmiut families living in the immediate area. The RCMP and HBC employed Inuit men at varying periods of time, and it was their families that made up the Inuit population of the settlement. However, even those families came and went. In the summer of 1958, 174 Tununirusirmiut lived in seven ilagiit nunagivaktangit situated throughout Admiralty Inlet. Over the following decades, Arctic Bay slowly absorbed these populations, as Tununirusirmiut that traded there were more and more inclined to move to the settlement.

Nunalinnguqtitauliqtilluta, 1958–1975

AGENDAS AND PROMISES

After the Second World War, the Canadian federal government developed a newfound interest in what it termed the "welfare" of Inuit. The first systematic attempt to update demographic records for Inuit in the area occurred in 1946–7. A number of programs were executed throughout the latter half of the twentieth century that allowed the government to exercise greater control over activities in the North, while also providing services that were considered essential for all Canadians. The most significant and far-reaching programs, in order of importance, were in the fields of education, housing, and

health care. The dramatic impact of these programs on enticing people into the settlement can be seen in statistics concerning the number of people living in Arctic Bay and those coming to trade. In 1961, 183 Tununirusirmiut were associated with Arctic Bay. Of these, only 44 (24%) were living in

the settlement; the rest (76%) were only coming in to trade. In 1967, these figures had completely reversed so that three-quarters of Tununirusirmiut were living in the settlement.

When it came to education, federal authorities believed they should offer training that would give Inuit access to more of the economic opportunities available to all Canadians. Implicitly, schooling was also considered an efficient way to assimilate Inuit to the broader Canadian society. A federal day school was established in 1958 in Arctic Bay. The teacher, appointed through the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (now Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, AANDC), was also assigned the responsibility of distributing social assistance, a service that had previously been delegated to the HBC. In 1962, a new school was constructed. At the same time, Qallunaat progressively encouraged Tununirusirmiut to send their children to school. By 1966, there was a 40% increase in the number of children attending. In response, between 1963 and 1967, the AANDC built another, larger school, three staff houses, a fourteen-bed hostel, and warehouses. By 1968, RCMP reported that there were two full-time teachers in the school and an Inuit classroom assistant.

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Residents of Arctic Bay wait outside Department of Transport Radio Meteorological Station for eye examination by members of Eastern Arctic Patrol
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The first housing programs were directed at improving the housing conditions of Inuit living in ilagiit nunagivaktangit. In 1956, two ilagiit nunagivaktangit, Koogalalek and Avartok, received four one-bedroom houses. These permanent, year-round shelters were ill-suited to the North and often had the effect of increasing infectious diseases. Four single-room houses for Arctic Bay arrived in 1963, and between 1966 and 1967, eighteen three-bedroom houses were erected. However, by this point, the more permanent population at the settlement had reached 159, which meant that many people were living in tents or crowding into the houses of relatives. The availability of houses rarely matched the need. In an interview, Koonoo Muckpaloo told Rhoda Innuksuk and Susan Cowen, “I know one family of five in Arctic Bay living in a one-room house . . . There are a lot of families who don’t have enough room.” In addition, there were many issues with the

quality of the houses and unexpected increases in rent. Ikey Kugutikakjuk discussed his experience with the QTC:

> We had been told prior to moving to [Arctic Bay] that we would have housing and pay $5.00 per month for it, that the rent would be very low. When we moved here in fact, the rent was that cheap and it felt as if it would stay that way when they were just starting to have housing. The rent was affordable at first but we started to realize afterwards that it was getting higher all the time.

Many Tununirusirmiut remember being promised low rent as an incentive to move to the settlement, but the rents increased year after year.

Health services were also expanded in the 1950s and 1960s. Until then, the RCMP, the HBC, and annual patrols had offered a narrow range of health services. The 1950s were a difficult decade for the Inuit of the Arctic Bay area. RCMP annual reports spoke of near starvation (1957, 1958), deadly influenza and disease (1957, 1959), and qimmiit disease (1952, 1955, 1956). Influenza and polio outbreaks in the 1950s also led to quarantines of the settlement. By the end of 1959, Indian and Northern Health Services (INHS) were using aircraft to examine and provide services to people in the Arctic Bay region. By 1962, this service had been replaced by an INHS field station located at the settlement. Unfortunately, the supplies for the station structure had been left on the beach for two years. When it was finally built, it was in such poor shape that it could not be occupied without extensive repairs, which were not completed until 1967.

Only two remaining ilagiit nunagivaktangit were identified in a 1967 Area Economic Survey—Koogalalek and Avartok. Each ilagiit nunagivaktangat was about 20 kilometres away from Arctic Bay. Koogalalek benefited from access to ringed seal year-round. Avartok was a particularly well-equipped community consisting of seven families living year-round on the northwest tip of Strathcona Sound, with additional families from Arctic

Bay joining the spring and summer hunts. The "camp boss" was described as being energetic and capable, with a capacity for hunting, maintaining motor boats, and supporting prospectors in the local mining exploration industry.

For individuals living comfortably on the land with income from well-paid casual labour, a move to the settlement would have been risky. Only a handful of permanent jobs were available for Tununirusirmiut in Arctic Bay in 1967—two HBC clerks, two janitors, and a female classroom assistant. All other income came from hourly jobs as labourers and guides, as well as from social transfers, especially from family allowance and old age security. Only mining development offered a means of providing a reliable source of employment at Arctic Bay.

SHAPING COMMUNITY LIFE

Unemployment was only one of the challenges faced by the people of Arctic Bay during the 1960s. Another problem that arose concerned the handling of qimmiit in the settlement. Over the following years, individuals and families worked to adjust to the many changes in their lives.

Until snowmobiles were in daily use in Arctic Bay, qimmiit lived in the settlement. Between 1964 and 1965, a rabies epidemic decimated the qimmiit populations, resulting in a shortage by 1966. At the same time, the increased number of Qallunaat in Arctic Bay raised the likelihood of conflicts between qimmiit and people. This resulted in strict enforcement of the Ordinance Respecting Dogs. As part of the ordinance, qimmiit were required to be tied up at all times. Muckpaloo, an Arctic Bay Inuk, was hired as the first dogcatcher and instructed to shoot any loose qimmiit. In a 1975 interview, Muckpaloo recalled: "When I think about it now I feel sorry, because it certainly wasn't right, but that was how it was set up and that was how we did it." Even when qimmiit were tied up, many Qallunaat were still

afraid of them and if they were considered vicious, they were shot. In an interview with a Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) researcher, Ikey Kugutikakjuk spoke about the day his father's qimmiit were killed:

> One late spring our dogs were tied up quite a ways from the community. An RCMP member and the social worker came over to us. They told us that they were going to give them a needle. I told them, "I don't want you giving them a needle. My father is away. If I'm going to be the only one keeping them from getting agitated, I may find them hard to control as they are aggressive." At the time, they were tied up where the tank farm is now. But they insisted that they give them a needle . . . When we got near them, I asked that they keep a safe distance from the dogs while I went to fetch them and then finally asked them to come over . . . When the dogs finally calmed down enough, I took a hold of one and it was given a needle. When it started to yelp, all the dogs surrounded us so I had to keep both men from getting attacked . . . The dogs were used to me so they listened. I asked both men to go for now and come back after my father had arrived . . . We left the dogs, but then both men came back, each holding a rifle. They said that they wanted to shoot the dogs. At the time, my father had 16 or 17 dogs altogether . . . I can't remember how many dogs they had shot that day.

The loss of qimmiit affected long-standing Tununirusirmiut hunting practices, so Tununirusirmiut did their best to comply with the ordinance. Muckpaloo spoke about these effects in 1975:

> When the dogs are tied and can't run around, they get very weak. Sometimes they freeze to death, sometimes starve. It's too cold here for that, so the dogs were in very bad shape . . . But the government had said that they should be tied down. Then they wanted

Man icing qamutik runners in Arctic Bay
NWT ARCHIVES

a man to look after the dogs on a full-time basis and Muckpaloo was the first to have the job. He had to make sure every dog was tied; whenever one got loose he had to shoot it. Of course the men didn't like their dogs being shot because they were so useful, and the only means of travelling around to hunt in the winter. The men tried to take very good care of their dogs and make sure they

Dog team in whiteout near Arctic Bay
NWT ARCHIVES

didn't get loose, but the dogs grew weaker and weaker from lack of exercise until finally it was hopeless to attempt long journeys … Eventually we ran out of dogs and we started losing our qamutiks too, so that after we had lost both our dogs and our sleds, all the adults in this community were living like women. That's how it seemed. Those men, who were supposed to be men, no longer had any way to go hunting in the winter.

Residents of Arctic Bay on fully loaded qamutik with dog team
NWT ARCHIVES

The combination of qimmiit disease and the ordinance resulted in a decline in qimmiit at Arctic Bay, and many Tununirusirmiut turned to newer technology such as the snowmobile. By 1967, RCMP reported ten snowmobiles in the community. However, snowmobiles could be unreliable and dangerous to run on the ice. Ikey Kugutikakjuk remembers how his family worried about him when he would use his snowmobile to go hunting:

Dogs were very important and very useful because if I was to go out on a Ski-Doo alone and if I was away one week to one month, they would worry about me. If I was to take my dogs out for the same period, they wouldn't have worried about me because the dogs were able to go anywhere and the Ski-Doo could break!

Mine at Nanisivik
NWT ARCHIVES

Until local co-ops were established, snowmobile owners were also fully dependent on the HBC for fuel and replacement parts. The reliance on the HBC for supplies also meant that Tununirusirmiut were subject to the whims of the HBC manager. An incident in 1967 illustrates this: One of the community's best hunters wanted to obtain cash from the HBC post to purchase some items at Pond Inlet that were not available at Arctic Bay. He was refused despite having more than ample credit.

In response to these issues, as well as to other challenges arising from community life, a Settlement Council was formed in 1967. At first, six Tununirusirmiut served on the council, with assistance provided by the community's schoolteacher. Over the following years, the council continued to develop. Qamanirq, an Inuk elected as secretary in 1972, spoke to the efforts of the council. "They meet frequently and are looking after things very well. They are working hard and doing their jobs properly so that people can listen to them." Following in the council's footsteps, a co-op, a health committee, a recreation committee, and a hunters' and trappers' association were established, demonstrating efforts on behalf of the Tununirusirmiut to adapt to the modern world. Unfortunately, Tununirusirmiut still found it difficult to have their voices heard by higher levels of government. During a 1975 interview, Kalluk talked about his time on the council and trying to get more housing in Arctic Bay:

> One of our jobs is to order the equipment and housing that we need in the community . . . But we find it hard to order anything now—we're not happy with how it's run. Maybe we're not strong enough yet, even with eight members . . . The bigger communities seem to be getting more things, while the smaller communities aren't getting enough.

These difficulties only increased with the arrival of the Nanisivik mine and townsite at Strathcona Sound in the 1970s.

The mineral potential of the Arctic Bay area was known as early as 1910. In 1957, Texas Gulf Sulphur Company discovered the ore body that eventually became the location for the Nanisivik mine. Mineral Resources International (MRI) acquired the option, and by the early 1970s had put forward three development proposals. One option called for a bunkhouse operation only, meaning solely workers would be housed at the site with little settlement development. Another called for the relocation of the Arctic Bay settlement to Strathcona Sound. The third option proposed, with government assistance, the creation of a separate townsite. Government approval was provided for the third option and construction of the Nanisivik mine and townsite was underway by 1974. A road, approximately 37 kilometres long, connecting the mine with Arctic Bay was built in 1976. This road proved a well-travelled route as the airstrip at Nanisivik received supplies for both communities.

Much of the rationale for the selection of the townsite option lay in expectations that the new mine and townsite would provide social and economic benefits to northern Baffin communities, and Arctic Bay in particular. In reality, development at Strathcona Sound made limited contributions to Arctic Bay. The community constantly struggled to get facilities and services as attention was focused on Nanisivik. As Kalluk also pointed out in his 1975 interview, the primary administrator for Arctic Bay was also responsible for the Nanisivik townsite. This was problematic because he was located at Strathcona Sound, not Arctic Bay.

> The problem here is that there is a man working at Strathcona Sound . . . He deals with us too. He comes to our Council meetings and he has told us that he would look after our needs too, and try to help us. He gets a lot of things, mainly for Strathcona Sound, but not enough for Arctic Bay. It's because there is one man looking after both and he works at Strathcona Sound.

Kalluk went on to explain that Strathcona Sound and Nanisivik did not have their own Settlement Councils, but rather the Arctic Bay Council

represented both sites. Kalluk hoped that Arctic Bay would receive hamlet status before Strathcona Sound so that it would give them more control. Arctic Bay became a hamlet in 1976 for this purpose. Unfortunately, the residents of Arctic Bay never felt they were involved enough in the decision-making processes and continued to work towards increased engagement between the two communities. In a 2006 study looking at the socio-economic impacts of the mine, the authors quote an unnamed Inuk:

> "I just wish that they consulted with the community and the elders especially during the operation of the mine. Things I think would have gone a lot better if they worked closely together with the elders and the community."

While the mine provided little to the development of Arctic Bay, it had a tremendous impact on the community's economy. Exploration activities between 1958 and 1970 provided sporadic wage employment, but Tununirusirmiut incomes prior to 1974 were primarily made up of trade-based activities. With the construction and subsequent operation of Nanisivik mine, many residents of Arctic Bay found full-time or temporary employment. Many Inuit from surrounding communities, including Pond Inlet, Igloolik, Hall Beach, Resolute, Clyde River, Qikiqtarjuaq, Pangnirtung, and Grise Fiord also came to the area for work. At the same time, the mine and the people it brought into the area provided a substantial market for local carvers.

In spite of these new opportunities, many Inuit struggled with the conflict of earning money to support their families and having time to hunt and provide meat for their families. Because of this, Nanisivik was only partially successful in maintaining the promised 60% Inuit employment rate. Despite offering on-the-job training, the mine often found that there was not enough interest in mine employment among Inuit to fill the available positions. Reports vary with regard to Inuit perceptions of the Nanisivik mine's hiring processes. While some Inuit report having no trouble finding

employment when desired, others argued that the mine was selective and did not fulfill their promise of ensuring a 60% Inuit workforce.

Nevertheless, the income afforded by the mine changed the economy of Arctic Bay. The total personal income for the community reached as high as $1 million annually during the mine's years of construction and operation. More money meant higher standards of living and Tununirusirmiut could buy newer equipment and supplies for hunting. This radically changed hunting patterns, as new technologies meant more efficient harvesting practices. By the mid-1970s, hunters were travelling to Agu Bay by snowmobile to mass hunt and fish. They would take tens of thousands of pounds of meat for the community, with the fish being brought back to Arctic Bay by snowmobile and the caribou meat being flown back by a DC-3 plane chartered out of Resolute. New hunting techniques provided for the continuation of sharing networks in the community. This also meant that fewer hunters were needed, and by 1977, the *Canada North Almanac* reported that hunting was no longer the main economic base of the community.

The impacts of the Nanisivik mine on the Arctic Bay community were far-ranging and extended well past 1975 to the closure of the mine in 2002 and even to today. Social impacts, such as the lax alcohol policy at Nanisivik, challenged family and marriage integrity. Many residents at Arctic Bay have since suggested that more Inuit may have worked at the mine, and for longer terms, had alcohol not been so readily available. The road that linked Arctic Bay to the Nanisivik mine made it easier for people to obtain alcohol. Nanisivik residents were also able to order cheaper alcohol because of the discounts on shipping costs provided to employees. On the more positive side, Arctic Bay residents had access to a number of recreational facilities, such as the restaurant and pool at Nanisivik, and were able to attain various employment-related skills through the mine. The Allurut School at the mine townsite was also known for the quality of education provided. The closure of the Nanisivik mine and the townsite at Strathcona Sound raised many concerns in Arctic Bay, but as a former worker from the Nanisivik

mine explained in 2002, "When the mine shuts, it will be hard for the first couple of years. As if we've lost someone important. But people will get over it. It will become a memory."

Arctic Bay had, historically, been a sparsely populated region. The people of the region, the Tununirusirmiut, were culturally associated with the Inuit of Pond Inlet and Igloolik. Prior to the 1930s, Tununirusirmiut had very little contact with Qallunaat. This changed with the arrival of the HBC in 1936. At the same time, the region's population was supplemented by the relocation of several Inuit families to the area. The relocations, approved by government but undertaken by the HBC, were designed to help further develop the fur trade economy. The Arctic Bay post provided a closer, more accessible avenue for trade, and over time Tununirusirmiut migrated towards Arctic Bay. Government modernization programs during the 1950 and 1960s resulted in more and more Tununirusirmiut moving to the settlement. By the end of the 1960s, there were only two ilagiit nunagivaktangit remaining in the area. Arctic Bay had gradually transformed from a Qallunaat enclave to an Inuit community. As Kuppaq pointed out:

> People began moving here when they built the Bay post, and the first to come were people who were working for the Bay. At the time, they were the only ones who were living here permanently; nobody else really did until they started building the houses. . . . Almost all the families now living in Arctic Bay lived quite close to this area.

The construction and operation of the Nanisivik mine and townsite influenced Arctic Bay's development, and drastically influenced the community's economy. In 1976, Arctic Bay received hamlet status. Today Arctic Bay is a vibrant Nunavut hamlet, known for its whalebone and soapstone carvings as well as for an annual dog-sledding race that draws the best teams from all over Nunavut.


Qikiqtaaluk Communities
ELLESMERE
ISLAND
Grise Fiord
Resolute
DEVON ISLAND
Lancaster Sound
Baffin
Bay
Arctic Bay
Pond Inlet
Clyde River
BAFFIN ISLAND
Davis Strait
Taloyoak
Igloolik
Hall Beach
Qikiqtarjuaq
Gjoa Haven
Kugaarjuk
Pangnirtung
Cumberland Snd.
Foxe
Basin
Repulse Bay
Iqaluit
Cape Dorset
Frobisher Bay
Kimmirut
Baker Lake
Coral Harbour
Hudson Strait
Chesterfield Inlet
Rankin Inlet
Whale Cove
Arviat
Hudson
Bay
Sanikiluaq
Qikiqtaaluk Communities
Other Nunavut Communities
Non-Nunavut Communities
1:10,000,000
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Much Canadian writing about the North hides social, cultural, and economic realities behind beautiful photographs, individual achievements, and popular narratives. Commissioned by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, this historical work and the companion volume of thematic reports weave together testimonies and documents collected during the Qikiqtani Truth Commission.

As communities in the Baffin region face a new wave of changes, these community histories describe and explain events, ideas, policies, and values that are central to understanding Inuit experiences and history in the mid-20th century.

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