




Qikiqtani Truth Commission

Community Histories 1950–1975

Cape Dorset

Qikiqtani Inuit Association

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Qikiqtani Inuit Association

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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
Inuit Owned Lands
Community Area of Cape Dorset
Foxe
Basin
BAFFIN ISLAND
Amadjuak
Lake
Foxe Peninsula
Cape Dorset
Mill
Island
Salisbury
Island
Nottingham
Island
Hudson Strait
0 10 20 30 40 50 Km
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic
Datum: NAD 83
Data supplied by QIA
Map produced by Strata360

Cape Dorset

sikusilaq

Cape Dorset is known to have been inhabited for at least two thousand years, originally by Tuniit or Dorset people, and then by Inuit. The region was home to many multi-family groups whose hunting patterns were guided by game and environmental conditions. Generally, mainland ilagiit nunagivaktangit were occupied in winter; in summer, they were moved to offshore islands. The Inuit named the area Kingnait, which describes the high, undulating hills surrounding the community's small, protected harbour. People of the region call themselves Kinngarmiut. The place has also been known as Sikusilaq and the people as Sikusilarmiut, a reference to the place of open water in winter.

Before 1900, contacts between Kinngarmiut and non-Inuit were infrequent. Trading and whaling vessels rarely came closer to Kingnait than the islands off Kimmirut. Still, trade was rewarding for those Kinngarmiut who made the journey, which was up to 300 kilometres for some families.

After the whaling companies declined, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) established a trading post in 1913 on Dorset Island, one of a cluster of small islands connected at low tide to Baffin Island's Foxe Peninsula.

Initially, only a few Inuit families came to Cape Dorset to live year-round and work for the trading post, but throughout the period covered by the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) (1950–75), Kinngarmiut began abandoning the ilagiit nunagivaktangit that surrounded Cape Dorset and establishing themselves in what had been a Qallunaat enclave at the site of the present community. This movement towards centralization was caused in large part by the consolidation of government services in the settlement.

Unloading cargo at Cape Dorset, September 9, 1958
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

It was during this period that a nursing station was opened, schools and schooling programs for children and adults were established, and houses were built. Another factor that encouraged the centralization of Inuit in Cape Dorset was the establishment of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Limited. The co-operative had a profound effect on the number of people choosing to move to the community, on artistic production, and on the development of Inuit-owned businesses.

Centralization was not without its consequences. People began to adapt to the stern realities of an unstable wage economy. During the 1960s, the number of hunters decreased, and those who remained had to deal with game regulations about which they were never consulted. During the same period, the number of Kinngarmiut working for wages increased. However, wage employment was often seasonal and was accessible only to a few. Arts and crafts also provided a source of income for some, but many had to rely on government assistance. The consolidation of government services in the settlement also brought in Qallunaat and, with them, alcohol. The RCMP had to establish a new detachment in the settlement to deal with an increase in criminal infractions. Centralization also led to a decrease in the qimmiit population caused by the prevalence of disease, the strict control of loose qimmiit exercised by local authorities, and the arrival of the snowmobile and more motorboats in the mid-1960s.

The population, almost entirely centralized in the hamlet of Cape Dorset itself, has continued to grow steadily, reaching 1,363 in 2011. Cape Dorset is currently known as one of the most important cultural centres in Canada. It has a worldwide reputation for art production, and has been home to some of Canada's most important artists, including Nuna Parr, Pudlo Pudlat, and Kenojuak Ashevak. It is also recognized for successful tourism initiatives. Tourists come to Cape Dorset on cruise ships and many use Cape Dorset as a base to visit snow geese nesting grounds protected at the Dewey Soper and Bowman Bay bird sanctuaries, about 275 kilometres northeast of the community. Cape Dorset is also situated near some of the

finest Thule culture archaeological sites in the Arctic regions of Canada. Mallikjuaq Territorial Park, with its numerous cultural features, is located across the inlet from the hamlet by boat, or on foot at low tide.

Taissumani Nunamiutautilluta

ILAGIIT NUNAGIVAKTANGIT

Cape Dorset is favourably situated on Hudson Strait. Extensive land-fast ice forms along the coast in winter, and sea mammals can be hunted in the area from boats almost all year. The hamlet is located on the north side of Dorset Island facing Mallik Island across Cape Dorset Harbour. At low tide, the two islands are joined by a barrier beach located to the west of the settlement.

View of Cape Dorset settlement, 1960
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

The south coast of Foxe Peninsula is characterized by high, rugged hills, known as the Kingnait Range, which reaches their highest elevation (260 metres) on Dorset and Mallik Islands. Most hills have been rounded by glacial action.

The area traditionally used by Cape Dorset hunters extended from the Hantzsch River in the north, inland to Nettilling Lake then south past Amadjuak Lake to Hudson Strait around Markham Bay. The cluster of islands lying westward from Amadjuak Bay to Cape Dorset provides the most important and diversified hunting grounds, while to the southwest, Mill and Salisbury Islands have important populations of walrus. Kinngarmiut hunted whales during the fall as the pods moved southeast along the Baffin coast. Geese and ducks were also hunted throughout the islands. Ringed and bearded seals were usually abundant throughout the area and traditionally provided a staple to the people's existence throughout the year. During the spring and summer, seals were available along areas of fast ice and tidal cracks. Inuit harvested Arctic char throughout the region's many inland lakes, rivers, and coastal inlets, primarily in the fall and winter. The coast and interior mainland between Cape Dorset and Cape Dorchester was mainly used for hunting polar bears.

Caribou hunting occurred over a vast expanse of inland territory including all the territory except the western and northern regions of the Foxe Peninsula. The eastern boundary was located at Markham Bay north to Nettilling Lake. Caribou hunting shifted annually within this region depending on herd sizes and animal migrations. As Nuna Parr told the QTC, hunting trips could be lengthy. "[Hunters] would be away for a month if they were out caribou hunting. We would expect them to arrive anytime . . . It used to last a whole month." During this period, caribou hunting locations were also largely in the same areas as inland fox traplines.

Up until the early 1950s, the Kinngarmiut diet was largely seal meat, supplemented by caribou, fish, wildfowl, and by a few imported foods from the trading post. Qimmiit were usually fed seal and walrus. In the early

Josie scraping a seal skin to condition it for the making of boots, July 1951
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

1950s, the settlement of Cape Dorset provided services to approximately five hundred persons. Most lived in sixteen ilagiit nunagivaktangit stretched along 500 kilometres of coast east and west of Cape Dorset. Their locations shifted occasionally, but they were concentrated on the coast and on inshore islands.

The annual routine of Cape Dorset Inuit continued with many long-standing features of pre-contact life in the 1950s. The majority of ilagiit nunagivaktangit were located on the mainland during the winter and then moved to the offshore islands or close to shoreline to take advantage of the

marine mammal resources. The area was the most intensively trapped area in all of southern and eastern Baffin Island. Traplines extended far into the interior and out on to the ice floe.

EARLY CONTACTS

Until the early twentieth century, contacts between Cape Dorset Inuit and Qallunaat were limited. The first documented European visit to western Hudson Strait was Captain Henry Hudson's Northwest Passage search in 1610–11. Since Hudson followed the southern coast of the strait, contact with Cape Dorset Inuit is unlikely. The first encounter around Cape Dorset likely took place during Captain Luke Foxe's 1631 voyage, during which he named Cape Dorset for the fourth earl of Dorset, an English courtier, diplomat, and promoter of colonization.

During the eighteenth century, HBC ships regularly sailed the strait to supply trading posts in Hudson Bay and James Bay. The ships' captains were equipped with trade goods, mainly tools and hunting implements, to exchange with Inuit along the southern coast of Baffin Island. Some of these goods probably reached Cape Dorset by trade among Inuit groups. In 1860, American whalers began entering Hudson Strait en route to Roes Welcome Sound, west of Southampton Island. Whalers sometimes fished in the waters of the Strait but very few wintered there. Nevertheless, by 1900, Scottish whalers were visiting the coast every year near present-day Kimmirut, and Inuit from all along the south Baffin coast met them there to trade. Before the HBC opened posts at Kimmirut in 1911 and Cape Dorset in 1913, Kinngarmiut sometimes travelled all the way to the HBC at Kuujjuaq, now part of northern Quebec, through the Tujjat Islands (Mills, Salisbury, and Nottingham Islands). Sometimes whole families chose to stay away for years. With the Kinngarmiut becoming accustomed to contact with Europeans and their trade goods, the stage was set for a permanent Qallunaat presence at Kingnait.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF LIFE

Father Trinell with a group of Inuit children in front of the Roman Catholic Mission, October 1951
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The establishment of the HBC in Kimmirut in 1911 and then in Cape Dorset in 1913 changed the hunting, settlement, and mobility patterns of the Cape Dorset Inuit. Contacts between Kinngarmiut and Qallunaat became more frequent, though Inuit continued to live dispersed across the region. Missionaries followed the HBC. In 1939, a Catholic mission opened, followed by a permanent Anglican mission in 1961. Scientists also came into the area. In 1925, a visiting anthropologist, Diamond Jenness, was the first to recognize

the tiny artefacts of the Tuniit as evidence of a very early population, which he called the Dorset culture in recognition of the place. Naturalist J. Dewey Soper arrived in 1929 searching for the nesting grounds of the blue goose, which he located with the help of a large party of Kinngarmiut—Kavivau, Ashuna, Shappa, Powlusik, Nunaswetuk, Eliak, and Putugak. Although RCMP members visited regularly, it did not establish a detachment here before 1950.

The Cape Dorset trading post was established in association with the post at Kimmirut. There was a third post midway between the two at Amadjuak, from 1921 to 1933. Game was plentiful and so were foxes. Cape Dorset was at first supplied from Kimmirut by the schooner *Nanook*. Inuit in the area recall building an inuksuk at the Cape Dorset inlet to help mark the passage for boats that hauled timber and supplies for the HBC post. In the 1930s, the HBC received permission from the federal administration to relocate people from Cape Dorset to new trading posts further north. In 1934, the HBC supply vessel ship *Nascopie* took twenty-two people from Cape Dorset to Dundas Harbour on Devon Island, but their venture failed. Most of them were relocated to Arctic Bay in northern Baffin Island two years later, and some went on from there to a new post—Fort Ross, on Somerset Island—in 1937. In 1947, Fort Ross also closed and people moved further south to Spence Bay, now Taloyoak.

Competition came briefly to Cape Dorset when an ex-HBC trader founded the Baffin Trading Company and built a post at Cape Dorset in 1939. This short-lived operation closed after the Second World War. Because most Kinngarmiut by this time were Christians, visits from the ilagiit nunagivaktangit to the settlement to celebrate Christmas and Easter were common. Fox furs were also traded at these times.

In the 1930s and 1940s, non-traditional health care was delivered by trading posts and once a year by medical personnel from the Eastern Arctic Patrol (EAP). Cape Dorset suffered through a major typhoid epidemic in 1945 that was brought under control through a combination of inoculations

and improved procedures for limiting infections in the community. In 1947, the *Nascopie* ran aground near Cape Dorset. Inuit in the area salvaged as much as possible, including wood that they used to construct homes.

Sangussaqtauliqtilluta, 1950–1965

During the 1950s, the life of Kinngarmiut began a dramatic shift as families relocated to Cape Dorset. By 1965, they had abandoned most of the ilagiit nunagivaktangit, starting with the ones furthest from the trading post and mission. In 1950, most families still lived in sixteen ilagiit nunagivaktangit that stretched along 500 kilometres of coast east and west of Cape Dorset. Eighteen years later, centralization had reduced this number to two.

The fate of Cape Dorset's Inuit families was closely tied to individual agents of government, church, and trade who tried to balance the objectives of their respective organizations with what they believed to be the well-being of Inuit. Following the introduction of family allowance payments in 1946, the federal government sought more uniformity in communications and control over Inuit activities. RCMP officers reported regularly to superiors in Ottawa and to other central government agencies, such as the Canadian Wildlife Service, that tracked changes. Government services and responses—game regulations, schools and school hostels, increased health care services in particular—were almost always decided without consultation with Arctic residents, whether Qallunaat or Inuit, and were always based on southern administrative approaches.

Life in the region was also tied closely to environmental conditions. In May 1950, the RCMP reported food shortages throughout the area. There had been little fresh meat available for families since winter 1949 and food

for qimmiit was fast disappearing. Conditions at the end of January were "very adverse" to seal hunting. In most of the ilagiit nunagivaktangit Inuit were eating food that had been cached for qimmiit. By the end of February, qimmiit were dying of starvation and "there were many instances of the largest dogs eating the more feeble ones." These conditions continued through March. Inuit who relied on the HBC for rations complained of stomach pains. By April, RCMP reported that Inuit were in "semi starvation condition and a [parachute] drop of fresh meat and dog food [was] absolutely necessary."

In 1950, at the height of the food shortage, the federal government established a small nursing station in the abandoned Baffin Trading Company

Inuit women with children, unloading cargo, September 1958
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

facilities. The nursing station proved useful to deal with various illnesses, especially the widespread influenza outbreaks that occurred after the annual visits of the *C. D. Howe,* a vessel that carried supplies and personnel across much of the Eastern Arctic. *C. D. Howe*'s visits were awaited with anxiety in part because they brought influenza, but also because Inuit were tested for tuberculosis onboard. Those infected were transported at very short notice to southern hospitals and sanatoria where they were treated for months and

Five Inuit boys playing on ice, September 1958
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

even years. Some people never returned, having died while away. Quppirualuk Padluq told the QTC about his experience when his grandfather never returned from the south.

> I am not exactly sure, but he probably died from illnesses. I do not know which hospital he was at. Our family used to wonder how he died. They felt so much for him because he wasn't with his family when he passed away. . . . I only know he is buried down there but not the exact location.

The year 1950 also saw the arrival of the first school building in Cape Dorset. Classes began in September for three students. Instruction was suspended in 1952 until 1954 when a new welfare teacher, Margery Hinds, arrived after several years in northern Quebec. As a welfare teacher, Hinds was also responsible for administering the welfare and physical well-being of Inuit in the settlement in the absence of other government agencies. Hinds had a remarkable career as a teacher in the North, where she tried to find ways to teach students in their own homes. She visited ilagiit nunagivaktangit and distributed educational materials to eighty-two children. Her experiment in distance learning lasted only a few years and formal schooling soon became limited once again to children living in the settlement or coming there for long periods.

By 1957, the school at Cape Dorset had twenty-eight registered students and in 1962 claimed to have seventy-six in grades one to six. This growth was a direct consequence of government policies. Until the mid-1950s, the government expected the Inuit to live off the land and did not force families to send their children to school. Then, the government reversed its policies and decided to involve Inuit in industrializing and modernizing the North. In order to do so, the government encouraged parents to send their children to the newly built school. Federal authorities believed they were doing young Inuit a great service by offering schooling and training that would

give them access to the same economic opportunities as other Canadians. Implicitly, schooling was also considered an efficient way to assimilate Inuit to broader Canadian society. Quppirualuk Padluq told the QTC that students were discouraged from speaking Inuktitut in school: "It was very scary to speak Inuktitut. We were punished if we spoke Inuktitut, unexpectedly. Our teacher always told us not to speak Inuktitut in class."

Many families believed their children needed to be educated if they wanted to take advantage of the new northern economy and for this reason decided to send their children to school. As Quppirualuk Padluq recalls, "Back then, the Qallunaat had more authority and my parents had no choice but to say yes . . . They were probably intimidated and probably too scared to say no." Many parents were reluctant to leave their children for many months at a time, however, and decided to follow their children to Cape Dorset. Thus, the opening of the first school building in the settlement played a significant role in the centralization process that brought Inuit to Cape Dorset in the 1950s. The centralization process was accelerated by the belief held by many families that they would lose their family allowance payments—which, in the Qikiqtani region rivalled the fur trade as a source of Inuit income—if they did not send their children to school.

In 1952, the RCMP reported an improvement in the conditions among the Inuit, citing better cache systems, the introduction of handicrafts as a supplement to income, the receipt of relief payments, and fewer qimmiit. However, circumstances changed from year to year. A measles epidemic struck southern Baffin Island in the winter of 1952, killing almost twenty people in the Cape Dorset area alone. In 1953, an influenza epidemic killed another twenty. Famine conditions during the winter of 1956–7 resulted in the death of many qimmiit in the area. This event, coupled with fluctuating fur prices and increased economic opportunities in the settlement, encouraged further migrations from ilagiit nunagivaktangit to Cape Dorset despite the fact that administrators were not yet pressing people to move.

Among the best-known economic opportunities offered to Cape Dorset Inuit in the 1950s was the production of carvings, and later, prints. The federal government became increasingly interested in promoting artistic production in the area after 1949, when James Houston visited the east coast of Hudson Bay as a representative of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild. He and his wife, Alma Houston, travelled to the south Baffin coast during the summers of 1951 and 1952. They encouraged Inuit artists to produce works

Printmakers at work in the art centre, August 1960
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

LEFT: Renowned artist Pisteolak in the art centre RIGHT: Solomonie, watched by his daughter Annie, working on a model kayak for the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, July 1951
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

that could be purchased by the HBC posts for resale by the guild. Although some people warned him that a shortage of stone would reduce the impact of the venture, Houston was supported by other officials in the Department of Northern Affairs (now Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, hereinafter cited as AANDC) and went forward with the initiative. In 1956, the Houstons retuned to Cape Dorset, where James was employed as a Northern Service Officer. His residence was constructed during the late summer and fall of 1956, along with another new building that came to be known locally as sanaunguabik, "the place where things are made." The number of people employed to construct the buildings grew to such an extent that the welfare teacher thought that hunting was being ignored in the community.

Some of the first printmakers to work with Houston at the new craft shop were Kananginak Pootoogook, Eegyvudluk Pootoogook, Lukta Qiatsuq, and Iyola Kingwatsiak. In December 1958, they had their first public showing and sale at the HBC store in Winnipeg. It was a sell-out success, and the craft shop received the go-ahead to continue work and start planning for the next "collection." Subsequent exhibits were also successes, and official openings for the Cape Dorset collections had far-reaching effects for Inuit art. By 1961, as part of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Limited, the print shop was then under the direction of Terry Ryan and had grown to employ more artists, including Pudlo Pudlat, Pitseolak Ashoona, Napachie Pootoogook, Kiakshuk, Nuna Parr, Joanasie Salomonie, Eegyadluk Ragee, Kenojuak Ashevak, and Lucy Quinnuayuak. In the following years, interest in the studio grew, and by 1967, two residences and a second studio were built, with more than one hundred people being employed there. In 1993, Kenojuak Ashevak wrote for the *Annual Graphics Collection* catalogue:

> I will never forget when a bearded man called Saumik (James Houston) approached me to draw on a piece of paper. My heart started to pound like a heavy rock. I took the papers to my qamak and started marking the paper with assistance from my love, Johnniebo. When I first started to make a few lines, he smiled at me and said, "Inumn," which means "I love you." I just knew inside his heart that he almost cried knowing that I was trying my best to say something on a piece of paper that would bring food to the family. I guess I was thinking of the animals and beautiful flowers that covered our beautiful, untouched land.

Kenojuak drawing inside her tent, August 1960

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Nunalinnguqtitauliqtilluta, 1965–1975

AGENDAS AND PROMISES

The intensity of the centralization process increased in the 1960s. In 1965, there were 155 individuals in five ilagiit nunagivaktangit. By the end of 1966, there were only 55 people living in three ilagiit nunagivaktangit according to RCMP reports. By the end of 1967, only 41 Inuit out of the area's 505 were still living in ilagiit nunagivaktangit. In 1968, as few as 36 people lived in two ilagiit nunagivaktangit (Shartooweetook and Ahkeeatoollaoolavik).

One of the noteworthy moves to Cape Dorset was the migration of a family group under Kupa (or Kopak) from Salluit, Nunavik. After the death in 1965 of his father Tayarak, Kupa chose to lead his relatives to a new home where economic conditions would be better. In September 1968, they arrived in Cape Dorset. The Tayarak group was initially settled in a segregated section of Cape Dorset, but soon relocated into the centre of the community.

The centralization process did not have one single cause. Kinggarmiut explained this to researchers for the Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project in 1974–77. Their report focussed on the growing attractions of the settlement, singling out the co-op in 1959, the Anglican Church in 1961, and the RCMP detachment in 1965. Usually it was a combination of things that resulted in a family moving to Cape Dorset. Many families moved in response to pressure exerted by teachers telling them their children had to go to school. Others moved to be near medical facilities (there was a succession of sicknesses), and others moved at the promise of jobs. Some people said they moved to be with their families and others because they were lonely without their children. In many cases, there was something negative about the move, and in almost all cases, people stated that they would rather live

In Hakka's home, April 1968
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

out in the camps (1974). Ejetsiak Peter and his wife moved to the community around 1960 after the new co-operative opened, for employment. Once they arrived, they discovered how difficult it was to live in the settlement. "Everything was different when we moved. It was harder for everyone. By-laws started to be enforced."

Although Inuit moved into Cape Dorset for many reasons, the establishment of the West Baffin Co-operative in 1959–60 had a profound effect. Kananginaaq Pootoogook told the QTC that the co-operative made a big difference in his life. He first started working on various jobs with the government. He explains, "Then I started to help building the co-op in 1956–58 . . . I used to make $2 a day in 1957–58 and once the co-op was

established I really started making money . . . I gained so much knowledge from the co-op." Social transfers—family allowance, welfare assistance, and pensions—were also important sources of income for Inuit, but the most dramatic change in the 1960s could be seen in handicraft production and wages, a key to which was the Co-operative.

The Co-operative was originally created in early 1959 as the West Baffin Sports Fishing Co-operative. This tourism initiative was also designed for the promotion and operation of an "art, handicraft and/or cottage industry." Financing for its creation came from the federal government's Eskimo Loan Fund, as well as from revenues from the 1959 print collection. That inaugural collection was launched to critical acclaim and started an art boom that has lasted many years. This boom was in large part the work of Terry Ryan, who arrived as temporary arts advisor for the Co-operative in 1960 and stayed close to forty years in the community as its general manager. Ryan, an arts student who had already worked in Clyde River, put years of effort into marketing Dorset Fine Arts and encouraging artists to develop their talent.

In 1961, the Co-operative was reincorporated as the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Limited. Its retail trade store, built in 1961, ended the HBC monopoly over consumer supplies to the community. In addition to strengthening the economic position of the community and options for its residents, the Co-operative helped fund community infrastructure and became responsible for the delivery and distribution of fuel and other initiatives. The following table illustrates changes in income sources in Cape Dorset in the critical 1964–6 period and the importance of arts and crafts to the community's incomes.

CAPE DORSET SOURCES OF INCOME

Community	Years	Hunting & Trapping ($)	Handicrafts ($)	Wage Labour ($)	Social Transfers ($)	Total ($)
Cape Dorset	1950–1	14,711	nil	2,645	20,363	40,978
Cape Dorset	1962–3	22,000	38,000	29,000	22,000	111,000
Cape Dorset	1966–7	38,000	158,000	153,000	43,000	392,000

Table 1: The figures do not include the value of country food. "Social transfers" include family allowance and social assistance.

Another factor that led many Inuit to Cape Dorset was the presence of an upgraded nursing station. Staffed by a husband-and-wife team, the new station with four beds and a refrigerated storage area was built in 1960 to replace one established ten years earlier. The nursing station dealt with immunizations as well as fractures and other minor ailments. It attracted many Inuit who came to Cape Dorset to receive services and stayed in the settlement. For example, the artist Kenojuak Ashevak recalled moving to Cape Dorset in 1966 for health care during a pregnancy.

In the early 1960s, the federal government introduced hostel schooling into the community for children of Inuit families who had not yet settled in Cape Dorset. Three hostels were built, but were never popular among students or families. Children ran away or were taken home to ilagiit nunagivaktangit by their parents. Teachers noted that the most successful programs were those that housed children from very distant places, such as Kimmirut, because they could not leave. Parents of students from near by often opted instead to establish themselves in Cape Dorset to live where their children were going to school. As a result, the population of the community grew. By 1967, a three-room schoolhouse was in operation in the settlement and four teachers were employed full-time. Classes, however,

only went to grade seven and students wishing to attend high school had to move to Yellowknife or Iqaluit. In 1970, the community school had nine teachers instructing 163 students in grades one to eight.

By the early 1960s, adult education courses were being routinely taught in the settlement. They were divided between domestic skills, chiefly for women managing households in the new wooden houses, and a mix of mechanical and clerical skills. Courses were offered in food preparation, hygiene, dressmaking, baking, economics, law, government, firefighting, English, arithmetic, social studies, carpentry, and tool maintenance. Adult programs, just like children's schooling, were part of the government's strategy to prepare Inuit for the expanding sectors of the Northern economy and integrate people into mainstream Canadian society. The objective of the government was to provide Inuit with a training that would allow them to take part in the development of resources in the Arctic. At the time, many Inuit were eager to try out imported ways of living. Qallunaat feared that Inuit culture would be overrun, and individuals would be impoverished, if they were not prepared rapidly to take part in the new economic activities in the North. Most government authorities believed that the Inuit way of life was bound to disappear and that Inuit needed to adapt as quickly as possible to new economic and political circumstances if they wanted to survive as a people.

It seems likely that access to schooling and involvement in the Co-operative contributed to community activism in Cape Dorset. When the Council of the Northwest Territories met in Cape Dorset in 1962, community members presented two petitions, one from the "[Inuit] mothers" and the other from "the men." The mothers were concerned with training, schooling, and interpreters' services at the nursing station. The men supported the mothers' petition and added requests for a seniors' home, better housing, an RCMP detachment, a community-controlled liquor bar, playground and recreational equipment, better reporting about family members in southern hospitals, and protection of the syllabic writing system. Both petitions

raised issues about protecting Inuit culture and language, while also ensuring a good economic future for the community.

In 1970, the territorial government in Yellowknife gained authority over education throughout the Eastern Arctic. In the following years Inuit, through the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, demanded more of a voice in the education of their children and advocated effectively for changes to curricula and the hostel system in order to protect young people's access to traditional knowledge and skills. Inuit leaders in Cape Dorset were fully aware that youth needed to learn how to hunt, fish, and travel over land and ice. This was noted in official reports and played a role in the decision of some families to return to former ilagiit nunagivaktangit and seek funding through the Northwest Territories Outpost Camp grants. In 1977, a group of Cape Dorset residents made plans to live at an ilagiit nunagivaktangat and to invite youth to stay there for extended periods "to learn about traditional camp life." According to the *Nunatsiaq News*, youth chose the ilagiit nunagivaktangat over the option of having a new recreation centre built in the community. Intensive efforts like this life on the land enriched the children's experience from the use of Inuktitut in primary grades and the regular presence of Elders in classrooms.

Housing also encouraged the centralization process in Cape Dorset. In 1958, the RCMP reported that there were five igluvigat (snow houses) used in Cape Dorset. In 1959, there were none. Instead, Kinngarmiut began moving into low-cost housing units developed by the federal government in the late 1950s. These houses measured sixteen feet square. At first, they were one-room homes without toilets, stoves, baths, or porches. RCMP officers and other Qallunaat often condemned the new houses as being inferior to traditional snow houses and certainly well below the expectations of housing for anyone in the south. Few Inuit had enough cash to buy or build permanent homes. Game ordinances restricted the number of caribou skins available for shelter and Inuit were increasingly relying on purchased clothing that did not provide the warmth required to live in

snow houses. Cape Dorset received twenty new housing units in 1965 and another twenty-four the following year. These new units now included a heater, sink, water-storage tank, electric fixtures, and basic furniture. New housing was an important factor in encouraging more Inuit to settle in the community. In speaking to a Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) interviewer in 2004, Sheojuke Toonoo, who was born in 1928 and moved to Cape Dorset in the 1960s before the birth of one of her children, said moving "didn't really bother me because I thought we were going to get a house with lots of space." Not until the late 1970s, however, would housing be designed and erected in the North that met the basic needs of the Inuit by including rooms or outbuildings for processing country food and maintaining hunting equipment and vehicles.

Through the efforts of residents and AANDC staff, Cape Dorset also attracted infrastructure investments earlier than many other Arctic communities did. By the mid-1960s, the community had almost two miles of roads, a public bathhouse, a community freezer (reported to be used almost entirely by Qallunaat in the early 1970s), a powerhouse, and heavy equipment for haulage of sewage, water, and fuel. A landing strip was built for the community in 1973, and satellite telephone service began a year later.

The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE) community hall was erected in 1961 with support from the Co-operative and the Handicrafts Guild. The provision of many community services was gradually taken over by the Co-operative, although more recently these duties were shifted to local community councils, allowing the Co-operative to focus on artistic productions and retail trade.

A final factor encouraging Kinngarmiut to move to the community was the active community life. In 1963, RCMP reported, "more and more of the camp [Inuit] are moving into the settlement to live for reason of a more modern living and to enjoy the entertainment which the settlement life provides." Anthropologist David Damas has noted this report as one of only a few statements by government agents about the importance of socialization

and recreation to an Inuk's choice to move to a settlement. Inuit themselves have also acknowledged the social value of settlements to be a factor in their decisions.

SHAPING COMMUNITY LIFE

By 1974, centralization was fully underway in Cape Dorset. The community had a population of 690, though one in ten were still considered to be hunters. The settlement had an airstrip and twice-weekly flights from Iqaluit. A primary school, an adult education centre, a nursing station, an RCMP detachment, a church, a community hall, telephone service, a post office, and five general stores, including the Co-operative, served the community. Along with the new community spirit was a growing criticism of the impact of modernization—Cape Dorset hunters spoke out vigorously during the seventies against the hazards of unregulated mineral exploitation, and the doubtful legality of the government taking control from Inuit. As Oshoweetok Ipeelee stated in 1974, "Inuit have a legal right to the country. We came here many years ago as our permanent country." The purpose of this position was simple to Kananginak Pootoogook: "Exploration should cease until land claims are settled."

People continued to adjust to the new economic system. In 1965, the RCMP reported that thirty Kinngarmiut worked full-time for government and private agencies, and that twenty to twenty-five were employed seasonally. Women, men, and youth also earned incomes through arts and crafts production. The Co-operative remained successful, although economic, technical, and artistic innovations required federal financing that was never consistent. New quarries for soapstone had to be found and exploited; instructors were needed to teach new techniques; and printmaking and typography equipment required renewal. After some experience with centralized marketing by Canadian Arctic Producers, the community

established its own distribution through Dorset Fine Arts, a marketing office in Toronto.

Kinngarmiut also had to adapt to an increasing number of Qallunaat who arrived in the community to serve its growing population. In 1965, the RCMP established a new detachment in Cape Dorset to deal with an increasing number of infractions committed by the younger generation, who were thought to show no desire to hunt but were not finding employment in the community.

While taking advantage of increasing economic opportunities, many Kinngarmiut continued to hunt. Country food (seal, caribou, char, walrus, and so on) remained the most important source of nutrition for Inuit in the area throughout the 1960s. Higgins estimated that for 1966–67, 224,318 pounds of meat, edible internal organs, and blubber were obtained from the hunt. Throughout the 1960s, however, the number of "eligible hunters" in the area decreased significantly. In 1967, 104 of the 120 eligible hunters in

Terry, Peter Pitseolak, Pat, Kananginak, Elli and Tommy at the Friday night dance, April 1968
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

the area were living in Cape Dorset. In 1969, only 49 eligible hunters were reported as living in Cape Dorset and 13 more in ilagiit nunagivaktangit. The number in the early 1970s remained around 70. These hunters also needed to cope with strict game-management laws. Wildlife officials and Inuit agreed that game was generally abundant in the Cape Dorset area. Hunters took moderate numbers of the three main monitored species, caribou, polar bear, and walrus. They were issued game licences and were required to record kills for the Canadian Wildlife Service in Ottawa. Responsibility for managing wildlife was transferred to the Northwest Territories government in 1968.

Another consequence suffered by Kinngarmiut following their moves to Cape Dorset was the decrease in the qimmiit population through disease and enforcement of the Ordinance Respecting Dogs. Until the early 1960s, outbreaks of rabies and distemper led to temporary decreases in the qimmiit population. In some cases, officials mistakenly attributed the poor health of these qimmiit to starvation, rather than to disease. At various points in the late 1950s and in the 1960s in particular, the RCMP, government employees, and local residents killed qimmiit in Cape Dorset. In testimony to both QIA and the QTC, Ejetsiak Peter recalled that he kept a small team. "We always tried to keep them tied up, but sometimes dogs would become loose on their own." Peter said that qimmiit were shot by the RCMP, by other government agents, including social workers, and by Peter himself as a member of the settlement council. Pudlalik Quvianaqtuliaq told QIA interviewers that he moved into Cape Dorset in the late 1950s with other families so children could attend school. He remembered that qimmiit were killed, likely by the RCMP, soon after families moved into the community. It caused great hardship for people and no explanations for the killings were given.

Quvianaqtuliaq and other people who spoke to QIA and the QTC recalled that Inuit living in Cape Dorset increasingly relied on snowmobiles from the mid-1960s onwards for hunting and social travel. Mechanized transportation became more reliable and available in the 1960s. The first

Inuit women cleaning walrus hides, 1929
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

successful snowmobile for Arctic travel was introduced by Bombardier in 1964; Twin Otter aircraft were by then used across the Arctic; and oil for outboard motors was more consistently stocked by the HBC. In 1962, the RCMP reported that Inuit were being accused of poor maintenance of engines, but that the problem had largely been overcome when the HBC brought in more engine oil. With these improvements, fuel supplies also became more dependable, but many hunters continued to use qimmiit into the early 1970s, although it was difficult for qimmiit to keep up with snowmobiles under good conditions.

By 1976, Cape Dorset's population was already at 688 people, according to the federal statistics. Population growth no longer depended on people

migrating from the ilagiit nunagivaktangit—it was now based on natural population increase, which also explains the doubling of the population in the following thirty years.

Inuit have lived on the north shore of Hudson Strait for centuries. Contact with non-Inuit was very limited and slow to develop, but before 1900 some Kinngarmiut were making lengthy journeys to trade with whalers around Kimmirut. People in the region were highly adaptable to the new fox-trapping opportunities after 1913, but usually carried this out with more traditional hunts, especially for ringed seal and caribou. After 1950, Kinngarmiut felt the same pressures and attractions as other inhabitants of Qikiqtaaluk. They responded by leaving the land to live more or less permanently around the trading centres and the growing set of other services, such as schools and nursing stations, and places where wage employment was available for some. By 1970, this centralization was virtually complete.

Preparing for the trip to Enukso Point
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

Kov preparing to go off on his fox line-packing up the meat, April 1964
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

However, Cape Dorset had an exceptional opportunity in this period to develop a local industry and earn worldwide recognition as a centre of artistic production where Inuit celebrate, mark, and practice Inuit knowledge and experience. The financial and cultural benefits, and the business skills developed through the West Baffin Co-operative, are still important parts of community life into the twenty-first century.


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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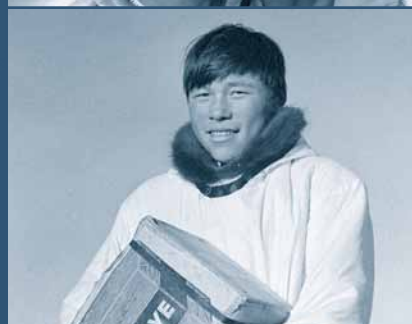
Much Canadian writing about the North hides social, cultural, and economic realities behind beautiful photographs, individual achievements, and popular narratives. Commissioned by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, this historical work and the companion volume of thematic reports weave together testimonies 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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