



# Qimmiliriniq: Inuit Sled Dogs in the Qikiqtani Region

Qikiqtani Truth Commission  
*Thematic Reports and Special Studies*

Published by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association

200-922 Sivumugiaq St. Iqaluit, Nunavut, X0A 3H0

Email: [info@qia.ca](mailto:info@qia.ca)

Design and layout copyright © 2024 Qikiqtani Inuit Association

Text copyright © 2024 Qikiqtani Inuit Association

Originally published in *Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Community Histories 1950–1975*  
by Qikiqtani Inuit Association, April 2013.

All rights reserved. The use of any part of this publication reproduced, transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, or stored in a retrievable system, without written consent of the publisher, is an infringement of copyright law.



## 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.

# Table of Contents

## 3

### Introduction

## 6

### Understanding Qimmiit

- 6 Origin and Description
- 6 Hazards and Socialization
- 7 Qimmiit and the Traditional Inuit Economy
- 9 Myths and Symbolic Culture
- 9 Laws Affecting Qimmiit

## 11

### Qimmiq Diseases

- 11 Types of Diseases
- 13 Managing Qimmiit During Periods of Sickness
- 13 Epidemics

## 15

### Attacks by Qimmiq

- 15 Attacks on Qallunaat Culture and Memory
- 17 Attacks during the 1950s and 1960s

## 18

### Killings of Qimmiit

- 19 Timing
- 20 Community by Community Events

## 30

### Motives

## 31

### Who Killed the Qimmiit

## 32

### Inuit Knowledge

- 34 Managing Qimmiit Around People

## 35

### Consequences for Inuit

- 35 Snowmobiles

## 37

### Inuit Inquiries

## 39

### Conclusion

## 40

### Endnotes





***Six dog teams and sleds head west over the ice of Pond Inlet towards the settlement [June 1953].***

**Credit:** NWT Archives, Northwest Territories. Doug Wilkinson  
fonds, N-1979-051: 0092.

# Introduction

For countless generations, Inuit and their qimmiit (sled dogs) lived and hunted together in Qikiqtaaluk.<sup>i</sup> During that time, qimmiit provided the only means of winter transportation. The practical uses for qimmiit were enormous—they pulled sleds in winter, carried packs in summer, sniffed out seal holes, avoided ice cracks in fog and darkness, and warded off polar bears or surrounded them and held them for the hunter's harpoon or rifle. Qimmiit were the only animals given individual names by Inuit and were constant companions, even in childhood. Children raised puppies, and being able to take care of a team of qimmiit helped signal the beginning of adulthood.

Pauloosie Veevee spoke to Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) researchers about the importance of qimmiit to Inuit identity and culture:

If one has a dog team with many dogs, not hungry, content dogs and able to go for miles, ... at that point the owners' masculinity is heightened. Now his extent of his masculinity is interpreted by how healthy and fast his dogs are. That is how much the dog teams were important to our lives as Inuit. For instance, if an Inuk man cannot keep dogs in his team, he has to walk everywhere he goes. Not all Inuit men living in traditional camps had dog teams. If an Inuk man does not have a team of his own, it is interpreted that he is yet not quite a man. This is how much the dogs were important to us. An Inuk was judged in accordance to the dogs' performance, appearance, health, and endurance. If the dogs looked well-fed and well-mannered, the owner was seen as a great hunter and admired by others. If an Inuk man's dog team were notably happy and well-fed, they would be able to take him long distances, aiding his independence and masculinity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>i</sup> This report uses current geographical place names, with Inuktitut place names added.

In the early 1900s, Inuit lived in more than 100 small *ilagiit nunagivaktangit*<sup>2</sup> made up of between two and 15 families, who were generally related to each other. They traveled the distances necessary to sustain themselves and enjoy visits with other families. Trading the began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century changed travel patterns and distances for Inuit.

Around 1910, opportunities arose for Inuit to trap and trade white fox pelts for imported manufactured goods. This trading made larger teams of *qimmiit* necessary to hunt and travel to nearby trade centres, which often involved much longer trips than families would normally expect to do. Depending on distance, the lead hunters visited trading posts from once to a dozen times each year. In 1910 there were only two reliably supplied trading centres. By 1950, there were seven, and by 1961, there were ten centres in place. At each of these places, Inuit came to the centre with their large teams of *qimmiit* to trade, gather and visit. *Qallunaat* traders, officials and missionaries also had *qimmiit* and employed Inuit to handle their teams and to hunt for dog food.

The significance of the disappearance of *qimmiit* through killings and changes in the economy cannot be separated from the government's desire to take control of the Arctic, a desire that was largely neglected until the 1940s.<sup>ii</sup> In 1939, the Supreme Court ruled that Inuit were a federal responsibility under the British North America Act. The effects of the ruling were not felt until after the Second World War, when resource exploitation and the Cold War stimulated federal interest in the Arctic. In 1950, the chief of the Arctic Division in the Department of Resources and Development advised his deputy minister to resist the transfer of Inuit affairs to the Department of Indian Affairs stating, "There should be a uniform policy for all Eskimos in regard to education, welfare and economic problems accompanied by an integrated development of the whole Eskimo group."<sup>3</sup>

The phrase, "integrated development", captured the government's growing desire to set objectives for social, economic, and cultural changes in Inuit communities. Every Inuk felt its effects in every aspect of life—language, religion, food, clothes, shelter, transportation, health, community structure, marriage, governance, and childhood. The policy of integrated development was never applied consistently from the 1950s until the early 1970s, when the policy ended because of resistance among Inuit and the property-based economy in the north that put hunting clearly into corners marked "recreation" and "cultural identity".

One of the many consequences of government policy and actions, as well as increasing access to new technologies, was the elimination of thousands of *qimmiit* in *Qikiqtaaluk*. Between 1950 and 1975, the number of *qimmiit* in *Qikiqtaaluk* fell from three or four thousand to a few dozen. This was a direct result of Inuit movement off the land into settlements.

As settlements grew, families brought their *qimmiit* with them resulting in a large number of *qimmiit* living in close proximity to people they were unfamiliar with. More importantly, settlements attracted increasing numbers of *Qallunaat*, including women and children, who were unsure how to stay safe around *qimmiit*. As the potential for *qimmiit*-human conflict increased, more and more *Qallunaat* began demanding that *qimmiit* be controlled. At the same time, Inuit became more sedentary. They now lived in housing that was more permanent and seldom travelled far from the trading centres. Above all, Inuit children were sent to schools where centuries of knowledge concerning the management of *qimmiit* were not taught and were not needed.

---

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.



As a result, once in the settlements, thousands of qimmiit were shot by the RCMP, other government agents, military personnel, Inuit special constables and hired dogcatchers acting under what they claimed to be the authority of the Ordinance Respecting Dogs (hereafter cited as the “Dog Ordinance” or “ordinance”). This territorial ordinance offered authorities a degree of justification for letting police and other officials shoot qimmiit they considered dangerous. The same groups also killed qimmiit unlawfully, due to the misinterpretation of the Dog Ordinance or during out-of-the-ordinary episodes. Some officers extended their own power, and shot dogs they considered inconvenient or unnecessary. This often happened against the will of their owners.

Inuit protested that their traditional ways of managing qimmiit were the safest. Inuit understood that people living year-round at the settlements, including those who worked for the government, were especially vulnerable to the loss of qimmiit. Even though many appreciated the benefits of settlement life, they did not believe that it offered a secure future. The destruction of almost every dog team in the region was a particularly painful part of the injustice and cultural loss that Inuit experienced during the disruptions of the 1950s and 1960s.

During discussion of this period in recent years, many people have asked how it happened that the RCMP would shoot qimmiit at the same time as they were vaccinating them against rabies and other canine diseases. Retired RCMP members have been particularly vocal, saying the reports of qimmiit killings did not make sense. The answers are rooted in the complex social policies of the Canadian government at the time. One goal, strongly held by the RCMP at least until the 1960s, was to encourage Inuit to continue living off the land and stay away from the social influences of military bases and settlements. To achieve this goal, Inuit required qimmiit. This resulted in publicly financed vaccination programs. However, the RCMP were always concerned that Inuit were keeping more qimmiit than could be easily supported through hunting. As a result, many officers found opportunities to kill qimmiit they considered to be surplus to Inuit needs. Simultaneously, federal authorities

had a longer-term goal to provide as many Inuit as possible with a southern-style education and standard of living. This also included integrating them into the wider Canadian society and economy through housing, schooling, health care and jobs. The pursuit of these two incompatible goals is well expressed in this formal statement of policy on economic and cultural change in 1954:

*Where primitive [Inuit] in remote areas are relatively free from contact with white civilization, it is planned to leave their present economy as undisturbed as possible. In those areas where there is already permanent contact, integration with the white economy will be encouraged. Between these two extremes employment of Eskimos will be encouraged, provided it does not interfere unduly with their normal life. It is also planned to diversify the Eskimo economy and to continue to transfer families from unproductive areas to regions where game is more abundant or employment is available.<sup>4</sup>*



**Inuit Family preparing to travel, Arctic Bay, [1969].**  
**Credit:** NWT Archives/Northwest Territories. Department of Information fonds/G-1979-023: 1385.

Today this policy statement seems incoherent, naive and oppressive in the way it offered Inuit no choice—their opportunities would be determined by how close they lived to Qallunaat enclaves. In reality, this policy never worked well. By 1970, the pressures on Inuit to conform to southern ways resulted in most living in 13 large settlements. Nobody had planned to meet the challenges of keeping qimmiit in these larger communities, and they suddenly became a risk more than a necessity or an asset. As a result, many qimmiit were killed and Inuit bore the costs of a shift that many were not prepared to make. This helps to explain, if not to justify, why the RCMP were both immunizing and destroying qimmiit during these difficult years of transition. A lot depended on the state of development of the individual communities where these activities took place.

This report for the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) describes the role of qimmiit in Inuit economy and culture, the management of qimmiit during the periods of disruption in the 1950s and 1960s, and the harm done to relations between Inuit and the RCMP and other government agencies during the period when qimmiit were being eliminated. The suddenness of the change and the lack of consultation and resulting lack of trust led to a great deal of anger, shame and feelings of powerlessness among Inuit. Eventually most people acquired snowmobiles in place of qimmiit, but issues of trust remain part of a legacy of rapid transformation of Inuit social and cultural relations with each other, with incomers, and with their land. In this report, the human dimension—the effects of these changes on peoples' lives—has been documented through the words of witnesses, official records, and other research studies.

# Understanding Qimmiit

## ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

Qimmiit, the plural form of the word qimmiq, are Inuit sled dogs. Qimmiit have been documented through archaeology as first appearing in Alaska among the Thule, ancestors of the Inuit, who migrated towards Arctic Canada around one thousand years ago.<sup>5</sup> The qimmiq is one of four North American Arctic dog breeds, along with the Siberian husky, the Samoyed, and the malamute.

Qimmiit are pack animals. Qimmiit often fight to establish the status of each qimmiq within a pack. This is especially true when new animals are introduced to a pack. Once the status of each qimmiq is set, however, fights are rare, except when the status of one is challenged or when a female is in heat. Usually, but not always, the alpha dog (angajuqqaataq) is also the leader of the dog team (isuraqtujuq).<sup>6</sup>

## HAZARDS AND SOCIALIZATION

Inuit developed a number of strategies to control qimmiit and reduce risks. They socialized qimmiit at an early age by putting puppies in the care of children. Kananginaaq Pootoogook of Kinngait told the QTC that, “when we were children we used to ride around with small dogs or puppies as soon as they were weaned.”<sup>7</sup> Ikey Kugitikakjuk of Arctic Bay said, “Children used to play with puppies as the mother was friendly towards all the children.”<sup>8</sup> Qimmiit were also allowed to move freely around camps to conform to pack behaviour. This made them less aggressive than qimmiit tied up in settlements.





***Man and boy being pulled by qimmiit, [1950].***

***Credit:*** Gavin White / Library and Archives Canada / e004665233.

Qimmiit are working animals, not pets. In certain circumstances, they can pose danger to people, although attacks are rarely fatal. Inuit were very aware of the dangers. Qimmiit may attack when hungry or threatened or when in the presence of people with whom they are not familiar. Inuit know that vulnerable people, such as children and Elders, have more chance of being attacked. Traditionally, however, Inuit clothing (skin and fur) helped protect them from bites, while their familiarity with individual dogs gave them information needed to know when to remove dogs from a pack.

During the QTC hearings, many (about 10%) testimonies referenced hearing about, witnessing, or even experiencing some level of qimmiit attacks. Such attacks are also documented in the literature and historical records. For example, Simonie Michael of Iqaluit recalled that even adult men were occasionally attacked. He confirmed a widely reported incident when qimmiit near Apex killed the child of a government health worker.<sup>9</sup> Ikey Kugitikakjuk mentions that his own father had been attacked from behind by a lone female qimmiq. The qimmiq “had gashed his throat and ripped his scalp open.”<sup>10</sup> David Mickiyuk of Sanikiluaq recalled being attacked when he was five years old. “I remember a dog coming to me and biting me on the leg. It was shaking me like a piece of paper. I remember crying. That is all I remember about the attack.”<sup>11</sup>

## QIMMIIT AND THE TRADITIONAL INUIT ECONOMY

Until the late 1960s, qimmiit played a fundamental role in the daily economic activities of most Qikiqtani Inuit. They were primarily used for transportation and as hunting companions, but they could also be a source of food in times of famine, while their hide could even be used to make clothing. On snow and ice, Inuit harnessed qimmiit to qammutiik through a fan-hitch, with each qimmiq having its own trace. During storms or blizzards, qimmiit could track scents to follow paths. Isaac Shooyook of Arctic Bay mentioned that during blizzards, qimmiit “could lead [him] home without giving commands.”<sup>12</sup> Qimmiit were also able to recognize dangerous areas on ice and could walk long distances with saddlebags for hunting caribou inland. During the summer, qimmiit were generally left to fend for themselves near the ilagiit nunagivaktangit.

As hunting companions, qimmiit were used in winter to find the agluit (seal breathing holes in the sea ice). During late winter and early spring, qimmiit were integral to the seal hunt. Peter Akpalialuk of Pangnirtung explained in an interview with the QIA:

*Since time began, the dogs have been the most important possession of Inuit, such as for searching wildlife, and have been a testament for our survival as human beings. The dogs can sense seal holes even when they are covered in snow and not visible at all, due to thick ice. When the hunters were preparing to wait for the seals to pop up, the dogs would start sniffing for non-visible breathing holes for seal and with their help—we were always usually successful in our hunts.<sup>13</sup>*

Pauloosie Ekidlak of Sanikiluaq expressed some of the joys of travelling with a well-trained team:

*The dogs used to be really helpful, they used to know and obey when they realized where they are going. Then they would get really fast to reach their destination as they would know where they were going and seem to understand the Inuit language. Just by talking to them one could steer them ... Also if I stopped to wait for a seal at the seal hole then they would just leave me alone and wait. They had a mind of their own and would wait for their master. If I had stopped to brew some tea, my dogs would wait till I finished ... They would hear me putting my teacup down than all my dogs would get up and prepare to be on the road again ... If you stop using the dogs then, yes, sure their manner will change in short time.<sup>14</sup>*

Qimmiit were good polar bear hunters. When they smelled a polar bear track, they followed it. When they got close to the bear, the hunter uncoupled the toggles, the buckle between the line and the harness, and the qimmiit dashed towards it. When the bear was weak from the qimmiit attacks, it was harpooned or shot by the hunter.<sup>15</sup> Qimmiit still protect travellers in polar bear territory.

Peter Akpalialuk described the importance of qimmiit to QIA interviewers:

Owning a dog team was very crucial to our survival. The dogs were the only transportation when searching for wildlife and for transporting meat to other camps far away that needed food to avoid starvation. It was still the same during the summer and one would always be accompanied by dogs wherever they travelled, and with dogs' help we would bring back a lot of meat for consumption. The dogs were like people, and they were treated as such. When we went hunting and came empty-handed, as an owner you would feel badly for the hunger they were experiencing and that was a fact of life for us. It is quite different today but there is still a need to have the dogs around, especially when travelling to the polar bear country. We start missing having dogs for safety purposes, especially at night when one cannot see what is approaching our camp. The dogs would alert us if a polar bear was near since the bears like to roam at dark searching for game. It is easier when it is daylight. The dogs are still very useful today as they were yesterday.<sup>16</sup>

Isaac Shooyook of Arctic Bay reinforced this in his testimony to the QTC:

*They also protect their owners. If any vicious animals such as polar bears came unexpectedly, the dogs would notify the owner. That way they protected their owner.*

*I just want to say again how knowledgeable the dogs were. My father was a polar bear hunter, and I will tell you the truth of how knowledgeable the dogs were.*

*He was using binoculars and told me there was a polar bear. The dogs who cannot speak knew what “nanuq” means; they sat down and started looking for a polar bear. I tried to keep them calm, and they started looking. That is how knowledgeable they were.<sup>17</sup>*

Inuit only ate qimmiit under tragic and exceptional circumstances, when there was absolutely nothing else to eat.<sup>18</sup> Eating a qimmiq was the last step before eating leather from clothing, tents, or qamutiik lines. While qimmiit were rarely bred for their hides, when a qimmiq died its hide could be used to make clothing. In Mittimatalik (the region around Pond Inlet), qimmiq fur was used to make kamikpait, the socks that were worn between the inner socks and the kamik [the boot].<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Cumberland Sound Inuit use qimmiq skin to make mitts because it does not freeze.<sup>20</sup> In the southern Qikiqtani region, qimmiq fur was used around hood collars to protect the face from the wind. Around Kangiqtugaapik, the hide was used to make parkas.<sup>21</sup>

## MYTHS AND SYMBOLIC CULTURE

Qimmiit play a central role in several Inuit stories and legends. One of these explains the origins of Qallunaat. It began when a young woman married a qimmiq and gave birth to qimmiit. Because she was poor and could not take care of them, she “made a boat for the young dogs, setting up two sticks for masts in the soles of her boots, and sent puppies across the ocean ... They arrived in the land beyond the sea and became the ancestors of the Europeans.”<sup>22</sup> In other versions, this myth also explains the origin of Inuit. Qimmiit also play a prominent role in the story of Sedna or Nuliajuk. In a version collected by Rasmussen among the Ammiturmiut (Inuit from the region around Igloodik), the woman who eventually became Sedna first married a qimmiq and gave birth to both children and children in the form of qimmiit. The children in human form became the first Allait (First Nations people), and the qimmiit-children went across the sea to become skillful in making weapons. Their descendants were Qallunaat.<sup>23</sup>

The importance of qimmiit is not limited to traditional stories. They also have special significance in Inuit culture, as seen in naming and the centrality of qimmiit in daily life. They are the only animals to which Inuit give names or atiit. In that case, qimmiit would integrate the atiit’s social attributes because atiit are autonomous entities with their own attributes and kinship relations. Hence, qimmiit could be fathers, grandfathers, mothers, grandmothers, uncles, aunts, and so forth to their Inuit families. Jimmy “Flash” Kilabuk (Nowdluk) explained that “dogs were like a member of our team as a family unit, as well as our companions.” He added that his “father would treat his dogs like he would treat individuals.”<sup>24</sup> This explains the extremely tight bond that unified Inuit with their qimmiit. It also explains why, during the QTC and QIA hearings, some people said simply that qimmiit were “everything.”<sup>25</sup> The community as a whole consisted not only of people, but also of the dogs they owned.<sup>26</sup>

## LAWS AFFECTING QIMMIIT

Across Canada, laws at the provincial and territorial level<sup>27</sup> had long been in place to protect dogs from random or unjustified harm, and to protect people and their animals from dangerous or diseased dogs.<sup>28</sup> The Ordinance Respecting Dogs was one such law, and it was enacted without information or advice from Inuit and with little understanding of traditional practices in Inuit Nunangat. All Inuit in Qikiqtaaluk felt its impact.

The Ordinance was modelled on southern Canadian laws. It was first introduced in 1928, thoroughly revised in 1949, and has remained in force, with amendments, ever since. While earlier discussions had brought forward options for an ordinance to address sick and abused dogs, the 1928 ordinance focused on preventing dogs from hurting people. It arose from an incident described by the Health Officer and Indian Agent at Fort Resolution. He wrote a letter to the Council of the Northwest Territories (NWT) about the killing of the young daughter of the local trader by two loose dogs belonging to the RCMP.<sup>29</sup> The letters prompted the Council to enact the Ordinance Respecting Dogs, which became effective on October 1, 1928.<sup>30</sup>

The new law made it illegal for dogs to run loose in prescribed areas.<sup>31</sup> Dog owners who violated the Ordinance could be prosecuted and fined up to \$25 or jailed for up to thirty days. The ordinance was to be enforced by dog officers appointed by the Commissioner of the NWT, who were required to “take in charge” roaming dogs and keep them for a period of five days. Owners could get their dogs back if they paid the expense of catching and feeding them—otherwise the dog officer could hold an auction for the dogs and unclaimed dogs would be destroyed.<sup>32</sup> On May 31, 1929, all RCMP members in the NWT were appointed ex officio as dog officers.<sup>33</sup>

The federal Department of the Interior and the RCMP had different opinions about how the ordinance should be implemented and whether it should apply equally to settlements and to smaller places where people lived on the land.<sup>34</sup> Some understood that a strict implementation of the ordinance could cause undue hardship for Dene and Inuit. This was especially true for people in Qikiqtaaluk, where very few Inuit lived at settlements.<sup>35</sup> In February 1930, the ordinance was put in effect in twenty-three NWT settlements, almost all of them in the Mackenzie District. In November 1930, Kimmirut became the first Qikiqtaaluk settlement to come under the ordinance; in May 1938, Pangnirtung became the second.<sup>36</sup> In both places, the presence of Qallunaat women may have been an important factor in enacting the ordinance. In 1930, Kimmirut had an Anglican mission and a house occupied by a government scientist and his wife; by 1938, Pangnirtung had a small hospital with a married doctor and four Qallunaat nurses. In 1946, the ordinance was extended to the US Army Air Force (USAF) base at Iqaluit, though not to surrounding places where Inuit were living on the land.<sup>37</sup>

The government continued to monitor dog incidents in the western Arctic, noting an attack on an 18-month-old baby by tethered dogs in Yellowknife in 1942, and the injury of a six-year-old girl by sled dogs driven by an older child near Fort Smith in April 1945.<sup>38</sup> In both cases, the owners had been complying with the ordinance. A set of amendments were then proposed by Ottawa officials to strengthen the ordinance

by requiring that dogs be kept muzzled when working and setting a minimum age for the person controlling the dogs.<sup>39</sup>

In 1949, the ordinance was thoroughly revised to add these new requirements, along with an exemption (as requested by official in Aklavik) that allowed municipal governments to enact local bylaws with similar requirements. The 1949 ordinance also introduced Section 9(6), which stated:

Where, in the opinion of the officer, a dog seized under this section is injured or should be destroyed without delay for humane reasons or for reasons of safety, the officer may destroy the dog as soon after seizure as he thinks fit without permitting any person to reclaim the dog or without offering it for sale by public auction and no damages or compensation may be recovered on account of its destruction by the officer.<sup>40</sup>

Almost as soon as this passed, amendments were requested to deal with complaints that dogs were still being left loose in Aklavik. The RCMP also explained that they were only succeeding in catching sick or young dogs. It was also noted that some RCMP suffered severe dog bites and were mocked by trappers for their failures.<sup>41</sup> In November 1950, an amendment passed to allow officers to kill loose dogs that they were unable to seize. The amendment stated, “Where an officer is unable to seize a dog that is running at large contrary to the provisions of this ordinance, or of any order, rule, and regulation made hereunder, he may destroy the dog.”<sup>42</sup> In 1951, another amendment allowed magistrates or justices of the peace to order the destruction of any dog belonging to an owner convicted under the ordinance.<sup>43</sup> Until then, convicted owners could recover their dogs after they had paid their fine.

In 1950, two orders extended the geographical scope of the ordinance beyond prescribed settlements, including Kimmirut, Iqaluit, and Pangnirtung, to “within a radius of one quarter of a mile from any dwelling.”<sup>44</sup> The geographical scope received a decisive extension again in 1955 during activation of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, after which it included the entire Mackenzie District and the immediate



locality of all other settlements and military stations in the NWT.<sup>45</sup> This order forced dog owners at these places to tie up their dogs at all times. Qimmiit owners in Qikiqtaaluk who lived in ilagiit nunagivaktangit were still exempt, except when they approached or stayed near a DEW Line station or one of the settlements.

In 1966, Simonie Michael of Iqaluit, one of the first Inuit appointed to the Council of the NWT, introduced new amendments that greatly increased the freedom of the police under the ordinance. The most significant amendment concerned Section 10, which was originally designed to protect farm animals. It allowed almost anyone to kill any roaming qimmiit. It read:

*A person may kill any dog that is running at large and in the act of pursuing, attacking, injuring, damaging, killing, or destroying: (a) a person; (b) another dog that is tethered; (c) a food cache, harness, or other equipment, or (d) cattle, horses, sheep, pigs, poultry, or animals on a fur farm.*<sup>46</sup>

The ordinance was rarely amended after 1966, and no amendments were substantive. A consolidation of the Ordinance in 1974 introduced no new amendments, and was replicated almost word for word in the Nunavut Dog Act of 1999.<sup>47</sup>

The dog ordinance had tremendous impacts on the life of Qikiqtaaluk Inuit. It had been designed for the Mackenzie District, and before 1955, was amended in answer to events that occurred there. In fact, initially the Ordinance was only applied in the settlements of the Mackenzie District, where there was a significant non-Aboriginal population. Amendments to the Ordinance, and particularly the orders extending its geographical range, accurately reflect the changing geography of the Qallunaat presence in the Arctic.

# Qimmiq Diseases

## TYPES OF DISEASES

At times qimmiit were vulnerable to contagious diseases that existed in their Arctic environment. Inuit who testified to the QTC or were interviewed by the QIA were very aware of the existence of separate diseases that others have labelled “rabies” and “distemper.” Inuit explain that rabid qimmiit have runny mouths, are not scared of anyone, and act as if they have lost their minds. Simonie Michael of Iqaluit explained that qimmiit do not catch rabies every year, but that “after so many years, every so often someone would lose their dogs to rabies but maybe it would happen every five, six, seven years.”<sup>48</sup> According to many Inuit witnesses, qimmiit catch rabies from sick foxes. Rabies is feared because it causes whole teams to die off and because sick qimmiit represent a threat to Inuit. As Jacobie Iqalukjuak of Clyde River explained, “A lot of dogs died in a short period when they had rabies. I witnessed it more than once.”<sup>49</sup>

In reviewing records from the time, it is possible that rabies was being named while a different disease—distemper or canine hepatitis—was being described. Translation may also be a factor in interpreting oral evidence, but the written record may also be confusing. Rabies was a fatal disease when transmitted to people, and it seems that the RCMP applied the term rabies generally to all seriously ill qimmiit. Frank Tester has documented two episodes in 1961 that raised awareness and fear of rabies in the Arctic—a qimmiq at far-off Mould Bay (a weather station on the Arctic Ocean) caught rabies from a fox and at Chesterfield Inlet an Inuk trapped a fox that turned out to be rabid. In both cases personnel had the disease confirmed by sending the animal’s head south for laboratory analysis. By making people more aware of rabies, these incidents also made them less tolerant of distemper and canine hepatitis, two diseases that were not transmitted to people but had similar symptoms.



The Inuktitut word for distemper is niaqqirilutik<sup>50</sup> or niaqunnguquq,<sup>51</sup> terms that literally mean, “He has a headache.” According to Neomi Panipakutuuk of Sanirajak and Igloodik, “Dogs with head sickness would just lie down, trickling saliva and not get up.”<sup>52</sup> Ipeelie Koonoo of Arctic Bay also mentions the two diseases:

At certain times, dogs would get rabies or become sick with a head illness. When dogs had a head illness, they would salivate but they wouldn’t become aggressive. They were in so much pain that they would salivate. They would probably feel a lot of pain in their head. People would lose their dogs through that kind of sickness as well as rabies. Foxes get rabies. Dogs may have caught rabies from them. Not all dogs would get it though. Just a few dogs would get either rabies or a head illness. Sometimes when a lot of dogs are sick, some people would lose a lot of dogs.<sup>53</sup>

Distemper frequently infected qimmiit in Qikiqtaaluk, temporarily reducing the size of teams so that hunting became difficult, though not impossible. Inuit managed these diseases mainly by observing and culling sick animals when necessary. Although Inuit knew they could survive disasters of this kind, Qallunaat took a different view. Epidemics sometimes interrupted their plans for trade or long-distance travel. They attacked most of the severe diseases as a threat to public health, and saw eradication as a scientific challenge. As a result, qimmiit were immunized; when this failed, they killed all infected animals and sometimes all qimmiit in affected teams. Based on public health grounds, and on the assumption that a sick qimmiq was a dangerous qimmiq, the RCMP have since defended officials who shot qimmiit during the 1950s and 1960s. These killings were usually done without considering whether the approaches used in earlier generations would work.

Generally, Inuit used the experience gained from long observation of qimmiit to decide how to manage sick ones. Some were recognized as dangerous or certain to die, and were quickly dispatched. In others, the disease was allowed

to run its course in the expectation that most would die, but enough would survive for rebuilding teams. This view distinguished between “rabid” qimmiit and those with the more prevalent but contagious forms of distemper or canine hepatitis. The southern view, at least by the 1950s, was that every sick qimmiq was a public health risk and should be shot.

Qallunaat and Inuit hunters alike experienced the inconvenience of cyclical qimmiit diseases.

In one well-documented early case, the German geographer and anthropologist Franz Boas had to scrap a planned sledge trip in 1883 when his qimmiit died. In his work on “The Central Eskimo,” he stated:

*The Eskimo of all these regions are very much troubled with the well-known dog’s disease of the Arctic regions. The only places where it seems to be unknown are Davis Strait and Aggo [North Baffin]. Here every man has a team of from six to twelve dogs, while in Cumberland Sound, in some winters, scarcely any have been left.*<sup>54</sup>

In a footnote, he said he had since learned that the disease had spread to Davis Strait as well.

In 1932, Canadian researchers for the Department of Agriculture found evidence of distemper among qimmiit along both shores of Hudson Strait.<sup>55</sup> Helped by long-term residents of the region, they wrote a detailed survey of the incidence and severity of recent epidemics. The report is not entirely useful, because there is some confusion between the diseases being described. The report references both distemper and “an entirely different disease” described by the local term, “fox encephalitis.”

The two main points were that diseases were cyclical, and that they could move through districts leaving some places untouched.

The 1932 research was aimed at prevention, but it also documented the process of natural recovery, usually within a year or two, that allowed the breed to survive. Typically, in even the worst-hit locations, two or three qimmiit would survive from teams of up to fifteen. It was consistently reported that the best-fed and healthiest qimmiit were likely to survive, and those that survived “the disease” were immune to it afterwards. This explains the reluctance of Inuit to kill sick qimmiit, since enough would survive to maintain a minimal ability to travel and the capacity to re-establish the teams within a few years.

## MANAGING QIMMIIT DURING PERIODS OF SICKNESS

Inuit say that qimmiit suffering from rabies have to be killed right away, and that these sick qimmiit rarely recover. They also knew that some sick qimmiit posed a danger to people around them.<sup>56</sup> This is especially true of rabid qimmiit who become wild and try to bite every qimmiq and person they can catch.

For other diseases, some Inuit also believed it was important to kill sick qimmiit to protect the people around them. Neomi Panipakutuuk of Sanirajak and Igloodik recalled, “It was said that if a sick dog is not killed, that sickness will go to human beings and they will die instead of the dog. I think this still stands today. I can still recall when one of your uncle’s dogs was sick. I advised that it be killed.” The uncle did not follow this traditional belief, and “did not kill it. Shortly afterwards, their young son died. The dog got well.”<sup>57</sup> Also on Melville Peninsula, the term for a qimmiq that is falling ill is “qimmijjaqtuq,”<sup>58</sup> which literally means “he deprived himself” or “he disposes of his dogs.” This term highlights a strong connection that exists for some people between a qimmiq’s illness and the need to get rid of it. This appears to have been an old belief, but one that agreed with Qallunaat preferences for killing sick qimmiit without allowing time for some to recover.

## EPIDEMICS

Over the past 140 years, northern explorers, traders, missionaries and other visitors to the Arctic have also witnessed qimmiq disease in Qikiqtaaluk, yet the data documenting its prevalence before the 1920s is scarce and anecdotal at best.<sup>59</sup> In 1931, Charles Elton published one of the first exhaustive studies of qimmiq diseases in the Canadian Arctic.<sup>60</sup> Elton reported that distemper—which he called “fox encephalitis”—killed almost all qimmiit near the trading post at Iqaluit in 1924, and then again between June and September 1927. The same disease affected qimmiit in Pond Inlet in 1915 and 1924, and in Kimmirut in 1926. Elton also wrote that no qimmiit had died from the disease in the Belcher Islands during that period, but fox were found dead there during the summer of 1926. In the following years, qimmiit continued to die from disease in Qikiqtaaluk.

The 1931–32 survey of Hudson Strait and Baffin Island offers a glimpse of the state of non-Inuit knowledge of qimmiq sickness in this period. It is not clear how many of the police and Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) informants obtained most of their knowledge of the subject from speaking to Inuit. Probably the majority of the information, including information about the danger of letting qimmiit eat sick foxes, owed a good deal to Inuit. The ability to detect patterns over long distances, on the other hand, was based on researchers’ travel in ocean-going vessels. It is interesting that the investigators claimed there were important differences in the symptoms and behaviour of different sick qimmiit but did not label either variant as “rabies” or claim it endangered humans. The correspondence at this time also signals a good deal of confusion or experimentation about immunization. Some informants firmly believed that healthy animals became sick and died because of being inoculated. In other cases, anti-rabies serum was used to vaccinate RCMP qimmiit uselessly following what was thought to be cases of distemper. Other approaches were more scientific, including efforts to inoculate Inuit-owned qimmiit as well as police qimmiit, and to develop a vaccine tolerant of the cold conditions in the north.<sup>61</sup> The importation of vaccines from the south became quite common, especially with the advent of air freight in the late 1950s.<sup>62</sup>

In 1947, the Department of Agriculture reported, "For many years there has been coming out of the north reports of a disease, or perhaps more than one disease, affecting dogs and bringing about considerable loss." The department realized this posed great dangers for a culture in which dogs were of "paramount importance".<sup>63</sup> However, it was not until 1955 that the department and the RCMP implemented an anti-rabies campaign in a few areas of the western Arctic and Yukon.<sup>64</sup> The program was later extended to Baffin Island, although the number of vaccines sent north was insufficient to inoculate the entire canine population.<sup>65</sup> The RCMP distributed vaccines to trading centres and to qimmiit still being used on the land.

The most important epidemic after 1950 travelled slowly around Baffin Island from Kinngait to North Baffin between 1957 and 1965. It had especially devastating effects around Kimmirut in 1959–60 and Cumberland Sound in 1962. The spread of the infection, either by diseased foxes or more likely through contact between infected teams, also passed through Iqaluit. The first report of a serious outbreak appeared in Kinngait. In 1957, James Houston, the settlement's Northern Service Officer and dog officer<sup>66</sup>, reported that more than 100 qimmiit had died in the area from an unknown disease, thought to be distemper.<sup>67</sup> There seems to have been a lull in the spread of the disease: at the end of 1958, the RCMP noted just two deaths that year from an unidentified disease at Kimmirut. A few months later, the number of qimmiit from Kinngait to Aberdeen Bay (northwest of Kimmirut) was described as follows: "There would appear to be a sufficient number of dogs at each camp to meet the needs of the people. The dogs were noted to be in good condition, and free from disease."<sup>68</sup>

This situation changed as the disease spread east, and in December 1959, "a severe dog disease began to appear at Lake Harbour [Kimmirut]. To date approximately fifty per cent of the total dog population has died." At Aberdeen Bay, halfway from Kimmirut to Amadjuak, the losses were severe. On 23 March 1960, "only seven dogs were noted, two of these animals being sick. Approximately eighty percent of the total dog population of this camp have died. This being the result of the dog disease which swept through the Frobisher Bay [Iqaluit] and Lake Harbour [Kimmirut] area during the past five months." These families may have received some replacement qimmiit from Kinngait.<sup>69</sup> In mid-January, it was reported that all of the Inuit "camps trading into the Lake Harbour [Kimmirut] post can muster at least one dog team (i.e. 6 to 8 animals. ... Members of this detachment are keeping a close check on this matter, and if anything further develops, the necessary action will be taken." Constable Pallister did not say what the necessary action would be, but the following year's round up of news showed a continued deterioration. At worst, in one ilagiit nunagivaktangat, 21 people shared just four qimmiit. While food supplies remained adequate, the disease threatened cash earnings:

*Due to the lack of dogs the Eskimo trappers have been unable to take full advantage of a good fox season. In most cases the dogs are pooled so that two men can travel over a lengthy trap line, but this means the other men have to remain home waiting their turn with the dogs, consequently the traps are unattended over a long period of time. The Eskimo, however, have caught enough fur to support their immediate needs and buy a few extra household and hunting items.<sup>70</sup>*

Anthropologist Nelson Graburn was in the region during these troubles and summarized events in a report: In the spring of 1960, an epidemic killed 78% of the qimmiq population, and the number of qimmiit in the area went from 5.9 per Inuk to only 1.3 in less than a year.<sup>71</sup> “This was a severe blow to many families and limited their travel, trapping and, to some extent, their hunting.”<sup>72</sup> With sealskin prices rising to \$5 apiece and “with seal in abundance”, the qimmiq disease did not cut too heavily into earnings and the local economy survived intact, as did the little communities along Hudson Strait. The epidemic appeared to be over in 1961. “The dog population which has been a problem during the past three years is now on the increase and should be back to normal next year.” Only 30 qimmiit died in the spring of 1961, far less than the two previous years.<sup>73</sup>

There is no similar chronicle for Iqaluit, but it seems to have been affected by the qimmiq disease about the same time as Kimmirut— spring 1959. It is generally believed that it then passed on to Kingmiksok, a large settlement on the south side of Cumberland Sound, through a party that went to and from Iqaluit to visit a sick relative at the end of 1961. Here the disease did not run its natural course and it is impossible to reconstruct, even with abundant written and oral records, what actually happened. The disease spread rapidly, as people all over the area were in constant movement among each other’s settlements, and to and from the trading centre at Pangnirtung. By the middle of February, authorities at Pangnirtung had almost given up on the sick qimmiit, and were very concerned about the future of the people. As a result, most people were evacuated from their ilagiit nunagivaktangit to Pangnirtung. This included 141 evacuations by aircraft between 3 and 6 March, and another 56 by dogsled between 27 February and 6 March, primarily from the places close to Pangnirtung.<sup>74</sup>

Although the official record is silent on the matter, Inuit accounts relate large numbers of qimmiit, some of which might have survived, being shot during police visits to the ilagiit nunagivaktangit. A detailed survey of official correspondence by Frank Tester for the QTC concluded that the administrators were “very anxious” and “overly cautious” in taking the drastic steps they did. Despite these multiple disasters, the qimmiq population stabilized to about 20% to 25% of its former numbers. Unlike Kimmirut, however, the Pangnirtung area did not have a recurrence of the disease, which, despite inoculations in the Cumberland Sound area, continued its course towards Qikiqtarjuaq, Clyde River and North Baffin. Interestingly, this is the same direction of disease dispersal that Franz Boas had reported more than 70 years before.

## Attacks by Qimmiq

### ATTACKS ON QALLUNAAT CULTURE AND MEMORY

The reported dangers of keeping qimmiit in settlements played a major role in the long discussion of Inuit, qimmiit, and the law. The fact that many of the attacks were on white children or women indicates how unprepared many of those people were for life in Inuit Nunangat. Inuit who had been raised with qimmiit were simply not at risk in the same way as newcomers. To make matters worse, the new communities around the trading centres and police posts were much larger than most ilagiit nunagivaktangit, with a resulting increase in the number of qimmiit who were facing new and unfamiliar people and dogs. Most Qallunaat were probably not aware of these new developments. They just assumed that qimmiit were dangerous and should be tied up when not actually working, or shot when they got loose.

The result was that great pressure was put on Inuit to accept all the costs and burdens of managing qimmiit in a new social setting where people and qimmiit were more numerous and Qallunaat were a much larger presence than before. Officials appear to have assumed that Inuit would tolerate changes in their practices in exchange for the presumed benefits that would come with a Qallunaat presence.

No detailed list of attacks by qimmiit in Qikiqtaaluk exists. The general view is that serious mauling was rare, but any attacks that were reported were so severe that southerners believed that qimmiit were unnecessarily putting people at risk. Dangerous qimmiit became a standard part of Qallunaat beliefs about the north, and stories of maulings and the rare cases of deaths, especially those of children, were told repeatedly. Pond Inlet resident Rosie Katsak told the QTC about an experience her father Ishmael had. An RCMP officer destroyed his dog team when Ishmael moved his family into the settlement, probably in the late 1960s.

*[A]ll of his dogs were killed by RCMP. He told me that an RCMP's wife was attacked by a dog team and then that the police [were] shocked, so he asked the police to shoot all the dog teams—that is what he told me. All of his dogs were killed by police. Somewhere in Nunavut, a police's wife was killed by the dog team. ... I think it was when they [were] starting to move people to a larger community when that lady was killed.<sup>75</sup>*

The story told to Rosie Katsak's father had some truth to it, but the police officer's wife did not die in the 1960s. Maggie Agnes Clay died of her wounds more than 30 years before and 1,200 kilometres away. Nevertheless, her tragedy became a vital part of the oral and written culture of Qallunaat in the north and Inuit, sensationalist evidence that qimmiit can be lethal. Maggie Clay was possibly the only adult killed in Nunavut by qimmiit in the

past century, but her story lives on, reinforced by other evidence of the dangers of misunderstanding qimmiit.<sup>76</sup> In 1960, members of the RCMP were shocked by an attack at Arviat, when a family's pet husky with pups hurt the missionary's small son. Senior officers turned this into a widespread warning against dogs in general. The attack was turned into a stern warning to Inuit about the need to control their qimmiit.<sup>77</sup> The following year an improvement was noted:

*Particularly gratifying is the fact that during the past year there was a reduction in attacks by vicious dogs [across the whole territorial North] ... Only two children were attacked resulting in one death in comparison to the previous year when six such incidents resulted in two deaths.<sup>78</sup>*

Not all incomers regarded qimmiit as a complete danger and liability. Anthropologists Frank and Anita Vallee wrote in 1963 during fieldwork in Puvirnituq:

*We have written about the development during recent years of relatively large settlements in the Arctic, settlements to which hundreds of Eskimos are now attracted. Among the problems of daily living in such settlements, none is more serious than dog control. To the Eskimos who continue to trap and hunt, a large and strong dog team is a much more important possession than is, say, a wooden house, and many Eskimos expend more energy and money on feeding their dogs than [they do] on feeding themselves and their families. Dog health is a much more vital matter here than it is where dogs are kept only as pets.<sup>79</sup>*



Few southerners in the north showed this sensitivity to the cultural issues at stake, but the rest of the article was not complacent; the rabies virus was already believed to be present at the time, and seventy of the town's four hundred qimmiit had already been shot to slow the spread of the disease. The qimmiit, so important when people were living on the land, became a source of anxiety and risk in larger settlements.

## ATTACKS DURING THE 1950S AND 1960S

A few incidents crystallized the official view that there was a dog crisis requiring strict management. This came to a head from 1959 to 1961, not coincidentally at the same time as the Qallunaat population of the north was booming with the appointment of teachers and area administrators.

A. P. Wight, an area administrator at a number of places, including Igloolik and later Inukjuak, was notoriously hostile to qimmiit being loose, and began shooting them even before his own daughter was mauled at Igloolik in the late 1950s.<sup>80</sup> A fatal incident at Apex in 1959 had a particular impact, because the victim's mother was a well-known government employee and health worker. While the immediate official reaction was to demand stricter enforcement of the Ordinance Respecting Dogs,<sup>81</sup> the impact on public opinion was also significant. Gordon Rennie, an HBC manager, witnessed the Apex attack and told the QTC many years later:

*Then I heard this terrible racket down on the beach there and I went out. There was a pack. The dogs ran in packs then, six, eight. You know you didn't bother counting them, you just knew it was a pack of dogs.*

*Unfortunate thing was they had got this little boy and they tore him apart, they went right up inside his body and made a terrible mess of him.*

*And I know because I had to go on the coroner's inquest after that as a witness, and look at the body. It was scary. My love affair with dogs ended then.<sup>82</sup>*

Frank Tester documented a similar case at Pangnirtung about the same time, in 1961–62. In this case, a missionary's five-year-old daughter was attacked while playing outside her parents' home. This led to a series of dramatic airplane and helicopter flights to reach medical care that saved her life.<sup>83</sup>

A seasoned Arctic administrator, W. G. "Moose" Kerr, observed in 1960 that dog bites and maulings were part of a general pattern of avoidable risk in the Arctic:

From experience in the north I personally do not think that "wandering" dogs create any greater hazard than does the normal automobile traffic of southern Canada. In the south we warn our children of the necessary safeguards and there is no reason why we can't do the same in the north. It is also my experience that a tied-up dog, if approached by children, is more dangerous than a "wandering" one.<sup>84</sup>

Modern communications meant that incidents anywhere in the Arctic made newcomers very fearful, without giving them adequate preparation or training for the very real dangers they faced. Frank Tester concluded his passage on the Pangnirtung event by linking it to larger events in the communities:

At the same time, undergoing phenomenal social and cultural change not of their making, and being experts at dealing with matters in camps and with camp life, it is not difficult to understand the confusion and problems created by trying to adapt to another living environment where conditions and resources were not always conducive to successful adaptation. For Inuit, these were hard times, made all the more difficult by the colonial attitude of many northern administrators and the lack of resources directed at meeting rapidly changing Inuit needs.<sup>85</sup>

# Killings of Qimmiit

The history of the killing of qimmiit is not a simple story. Over the course of 20 years, qimmiit were killed at many different times and by different people, mostly RCMP. There was a range of different motives for the killings, but the main effect was to prevent Inuit from keeping qimmiit if they were living at places where there were many Qallunaat. Most Inuit felt acute pain and loss, although some were more accepting of what happened. Some of the witnesses who testified to the QTC recounted deeply upsetting experiences connected to the killing of their families' qimmiit in the 1960s and 1970s. Eventually qimmiit were eliminated everywhere, though the major incidents always happened close to a trading centre or military station.

Generally, RCMP monitored the killing of qimmiit, even when it was not clear who killed them. For example, a report from Pond Inlet described events in 1954:

*Eleven dogs had to be destroyed in the Pond Inlet area due to some disease [that] was thought to be distemper. At the first sign of this disease, the dog was shot in order to save the rest of the team. As these eleven dogs were shot over a period of one year and at widely scattered camps, an epidemic was not considered, therefore specimens were not forwarded for examination by the responsible department. Twenty-four other dogs had to be destroyed in this area for other various reasons.<sup>86</sup>*

Throughout the period 1950–75, qimmiit were killed in the larger communities when they were deemed sick or a nuisance, or posed a threat to public safety.

Shooting qimmiit that escaped from harnesses, ropes, chains, or pounds was widespread and was considered by the authorities to be a justified way of enforcing the Ordinance and educating Inuit about it. At times other methods were used to convince Inuit to tie up their qimmiit. Pauloosie Veevee told the QIA of a common practice at Pangnirtung, which was probably seen wherever the RCMP managed the post office:

*At that time, we did not have a post office so even then children's welfare cheques [i.e., family allowance] were handled by the RCMP post. They were the only officials living here then, so we would pick the child welfare cheques from them. The last official RCMP officer was posted here before the government administrators were located. It was not a priority of the police; they would not even make an effort to hand them out to the families. Every time the cheques arrived we always had to approach and request the cheques. Every time before he handed [out] the cheques, he would ask every one of us that arrived if our dogs were tied up. That became a normal reaction. I believed he would not hand us our children's welfare cheques if we responded that they were loose and not tied up. His main concern was always whether our dogs were tied up during our stopover. Every single time we saw him, his first question and concern [was] whether or not the dogs were tied up.<sup>87</sup>*

This was not limited to specific occasions. Mosesee Qiyuakjuk described a general situation at Pangnirtung both before and after the population began to relocate there during a distemper epidemic in 1962:

*The RCMP started killing off Inuit dogs way before the dog distemper epidemic. The RCMP shot dogs all of the time. Even when the Inuit came to trade here and were planning to go back to their camp, the RCMP would quickly kill off their dogs that were waiting for their owner to come back from the trading post. And whenever the dogs got loose, even when they were behaving, the RCMP would shoot and kill them as if for no reason.<sup>88</sup>*

## TIMING

The timing of the killings was not random, but was determined by external factors, notably the arrival of Qallunaat at the settlements. It is also important to note that at first, Inuit replaced their qimmiit that were destroyed. A government policy at the time encouraged most Inuit to stay on the land where they needed dog teams, but also to limit the numbers of their qimmiit and to give up their qimmiit once they had homes in a settlement. This explains why the RCMP took great efforts to keep qimmiit healthy through immunizations, but also led the campaign to rid communities of loose qimmiit. Jobs, houses, and schools all worked against the keeping of qimmiit. However, because employment was unreliable, the authorities also saw value in qimmiit. The snowmobile was a complicating factor as well. For many years, qimmiit were being shot when there were no viable snowmobiles to replace them. After about 1966, snowmobiles were more reliable, though very expensive to buy, run, and maintain.

The reduction of the number of qimmiit to almost zero in twenty years moved at the same pace as the growth of the Qallunaat presence. The government tolerated customary Inuit ways of managing qimmiit until there were large numbers of American and Canadian servicemen in Iqaluit.

The killings did not happen all at once. The first systematic killing of loose qimmiit occurred at Iqaluit during the period after 1956. This was at the same time as large numbers of Inuit were attracted to the area by opportunities to work at the airport and radar stations. A small town, Apex, was built at Niaqunngut to provide them with services and housing.

The second major episode of killings took place in the ilagiit nunagivaktangit around Cumberland Sound in 1962. The RCMP responded to a serious epidemic of canine distemper or hepatitis by systematically killing almost the entire canine population in the region.

The third major episode occurred piecemeal after the construction of schools and the resulting relocation of almost the entire population into thirteen communities. This wave of killings is the hardest to document because it started earlier in some communities (such as Kinngait); involved many different people firing the shots, including Inuit who were compelled to shoot their own qimmiit before relocating; and was generally carried out in stages, except at Pangnirtung where more than four hundred qimmiit were shot around the settlement in 1966–67.

Finally, there is some evidence that qimmiit were deliberately harmed to intimidate their owners. For example, Levi Evic of Pangnirtung recalled travelling from Illunguyat to Pangnirtung with his parents to trade in 1955 or 1956. While camping near his aunt's qammaq in the settlement, they were warned by the HBC manager:

Someone came over and told my father that they were going to shoot his dogs tomorrow, kill all his dogs. It was winter at that time. In the middle of the night when it was dark, really cold, we left this community. He did not want his dogs to be shot. So in the middle of the night they took off, towards our home.<sup>89</sup>

The HBC manager was accompanying a police officer and acting as his translator. Considering the date and the circumstances, it seems that the RCMP had decided that Jaco Evic (Levi's father) had stayed too long at the trading centre and needed to be pressured to return to Illunguyat.

Some shootings were also designed to intimidate people and warn others, as in the case of an incident at Igloodik around 1961–62. Louis Uttak told QIA researchers about a particular memory. “Lucian Ukkalianuk’s dogs being killed by the ‘Boss’ all in one day. He arrived to the community of Igloodik by dog team, when he got his dogs off the harnesses they went all over the community. Without hesitation the ‘Boss’ shot them all with a rifle.”<sup>90</sup>

## COMMUNITY BY COMMUNITY EVENTS

By the mid-1970s, almost every team of qimmiit in Qikiqtaaluk had been destroyed. The killings, however, did not occur in the same manner everywhere. Most of the killings occurred at town dumps, near DEW Line sites where mess-hall waste was dumped, on beaches, or on the fringes of settlements. Many Inuit remember qimmiit being hunted and killed among the settlement buildings or even in spaces under houses. These events were traumatic, but they must have also been very confusing. When the RCMP visited people in their ilagiit nunagivaktangit, they did not harass the qimmiit, and when people visited settlements, the killing of qimmiit was sporadic and not always preceded by warnings.

This section contains a brief survey of some examples of how qimmiit were killed in different communities. In many cases, an exact knowledge of community history and the personalities involved would provide a richer understanding, but in general, the differences between communities were minor and were due to the different pace of two kinds of events—the installation of government and commercial services, especially schools, and the pace of centralization of the population. Justice Jean-Jacques Croteau’s inquiry found similar patterns in Nunavik.



**Shappa clearing dog traces, Kinngait, [1929].**

**Credit:** Joseph Dewey Soper / Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development fonds / Library and Archives Canada / a101386-v6

## Kinngait

Kinngait had a Northern Service Officer by the early 1950s, and most of its population centralized quite early around the activities of the artists’ co-op. Killings are recorded from a time before there was a resident RCMP. Ejetsiak Peter told the QTC about qimmiq control in the 1960s, and linked it to the growing numbers of incomers:

RCMP officers were not the only ones who slaughtered dogs. I saw that the social workers would help them out, maybe they assigned them. I am sure they were asked to do that. And it was very sad to lose the dogs because I looked after the dog team for a long time ... After they shot the dogs you were left with nothing. I wasn’t able to get a snowmobile right away when they shot my dogs so I was left with nothing. When I was a Board member, I was assigned to shoot dogs when non-Inuit started to come in more.<sup>91</sup>

Nuna Parr had a similarly emotional experience during the period between 1958 and 1964:

*The RCMP killed the dogs tied up by the beach. One of my dogs was right beside me. I tied him up beside the hut. I heard a shot, so I ran up towards where the shooting was. When I reached my dog, it was dead beside the hut. I went to the police because I was really mad ... When the dogs were slaughtered, the police were not telling the truth. They were shooting dogs right under the houses, breaking the laws. I witnessed them. They shot them with a shotgun. The RCMP used to shoot dogs anywhere around the houses. And I wanted to bring that up because I remember those things.<sup>92</sup>*

Here as in other communities, the growth of the settlement and adoption of snowmobiles created more trouble for people who were not ready to give up their qimmiit. RCMP member Al Bunn told an RCMP questioner in 2005, "There were no dog teams in Cape Dorset, but lots of dogs in Cape Dorset." During his time there in 1970–72, Bunn "shot many loose dogs."<sup>93</sup>

## Kimmirut

The QTC received testimony from five people who witnessed qimmiq killings in Kimmirut or on the land near it. During the 1950s, the population of Kimmirut fell substantially because of migration to Iqaluit, and the qimmiq population suffered very badly from disease in the late fifties. By the early 1960s, these situations had both stabilized, with Kimmirut recognized as the trading centre of a small region with enough game to feed the people. This was also the decade when the school opened (1963)<sup>94</sup> and was enlarged (1968). Pressure mounted on people to send their children to school, which led many to leave the land. Predictably, not everyone

came in enthusiastically. Their accounts show that people were forced to give up their qimmiit in order to be accepted in the community. For the QIA, Taqialuk Temela recalled:

*When we moved to Kimmirut, the police started coming back and forth again wanting to kill the dogs while they were tied up near a small hill. I didn't want to let them go because they were my only source of transportation in the winter time. Again, I never said "Yes" for a while, but the police interpreters kept coming back so I finally said "Yes" when they were coming in every day. They said that they would be replaced by better things, not dogs. They said that they would give us Ski-Doos and that we should kill the dogs. They were all killed by the police and I was never given anything for them, not even a Ski-Doo.<sup>95</sup>*

## Iqaluit

Iqaluit was the first place in Qikiqtaaluk to have a serious confrontation between government and Inuit over qimmiit. The situation here was exceptional because, from the early 1950s onwards, there were literally hundreds of Qallunaat living under semi-military discipline at the air base and weather station, and employment opportunities were a magnet for Inuit from as far away as Kimmirut and the southern shores of Cumberland Sound. The federal government fostered the movement of Inuit into Iqaluit by building a separate town site for them at Niaqunngut (Apex Hill), with housing and a school. Here, as at Kuujuarapik on Hudson Bay, the combination of a military presence with a growing Inuit settlement led to a conflict over the qimmiit that people needed when they returned to the land, either on short trips, or seasonally, when jobs were scarce in winter.



In the 1940s, fifty-three Inuit moved to Iqaluit to work as labourers during construction of the military airfield. The RCMP soon began reporting problems with qimmiit in the predominantly Qallunaat community. The USAF commander complained to the RCMP that qimmiit running around the base were becoming a nuisance; he warned that in the future all loose qimmiit would be shot.<sup>96</sup> Safety was not cited as the concern; it was the nuisance caused by qimmiit tipping garbage cans and congregating in packs around the rear of the mess hall.<sup>97</sup> In response, the US airport was designated an area in which no qimmiit were allowed “to run at large unless muzzled.”<sup>98</sup>

Iqaluit’s Inuit population grew from just over fifty in 1950 to almost six hundred and fifty by 1956.<sup>99</sup> Iqaluit’s later qimmiq problems became apparent in this decade—qimmiit roaming loose were a problem for Qallunaat residents, Qallunaat in positions of authority were shooting qimmiit, and the solutions proposed by Qallunaat were impractical.<sup>100</sup>

While there are crucial gaps in the written record collected to date, there is little doubt that the events here were a template for what happened on a smaller scale elsewhere. Qallunaat tried to apply the rules, and many Inuit tried to comply, but efforts to keep qimmiit tied or impounded generally failed. This led to wide-scale shooting, often without warnings to individual owners, and embittered relations between Qallunaat and the permanent residents of the region.

In Iqaluit, as in other communities, dog teams were being replaced by snowmobiles in the second half of the 1960s.<sup>101</sup> There were fifty snowmobiles and only nine dog teams in the community in 1965. By 1967, the RCMP reported that “the days of the dog team are about gone in this area and the majority of hunting is done by Ski-Doo.”<sup>102</sup> An Inuk was hired as dogcatcher in 1968, but the position was difficult to keep filled. In later years, when it was vacant, the task of shooting loose qimmiit was once again left to the RCMP.<sup>103</sup> The Settlement Council often discussed the problems posed by loose qimmiit, the shooting of qimmiit, and the disposal of their remains.<sup>104</sup>

Throughout the 1970s, local newspapers frequently carried letters to the editor and articles about the Ordinance and the shooting of qimmiit. A new bylaw was passed around 1973. It required the owners to license, water, and feed their qimmiit, and prohibited them from running loose in the community. Qimmiit would only be shot “when necessary, such as packs that cannot be caught.”<sup>105</sup> Notices were posted in a local newspaper in both English and Inuktitut advising owners that unless they tied up their qimmiit they would be impounded and the fines to get the qimmiq back could be as high as \$200.<sup>106</sup> The notice went on to instruct qimmiq owners in the proper care of their animals. Qimmiit, it said, were to be walked daily.

In 1976, the town’s dogcatcher bought a tranquilizer gun to use on qimmiit that could not be caught.<sup>107</sup> However, qimmiit were still being shot. On a single day in January 1977, the dogcatcher shot thirty-five qimmiit. The RCMP accompanied him for protection, but did not participate in the shooting of any qimmiit.<sup>108</sup> As late as 1973, it does not appear that a dog pound was set up.<sup>109</sup> By 1976, however, there was a pound, but it was reportedly in very poor condition.<sup>110</sup>

## Pangnirtung

Pangnirtung residents remember two particularly traumatic incidents involving qimmiit, towards the beginning and end of the 1960s. The first was the government’s reaction to an epidemic of distemper that swept through the South Baffin region in 1957–62. The second occurred in 1966, when Constable Jack Grabowski decided to crack down on qimmiit in the settlement. He reported:

The dog population decreased rapidly over the past year. Some Eskimos disposed of their own dogs when they were able to purchase Ski-Doos, while a good number were destroyed in contravention to [sic] the Ordinance. Referring to the latter, numerous requests were made by myself and members of this Detachment to the Eskimos to keep their dogs adequately tied, or penned. When these requests went unheeded, I gave instructions that all dogs at large were to be shot, and in the period of

slightly over one year, I would estimate that some two hundred and fifty dogs have been shot. This too, does not seem to have the desired effect, as almost daily dogs are still seen at large. A new approach to the apparent passive resistance of the Eskimo has been taken, whereby the owner will be sought out, and he will be prosecuted.<sup>111</sup>

While both episodes are remembered with clarity in the region, the earlier one had a more profound impact. What happened in Cumberland Sound in this period is highly significant and, with respect to the history of sled dogs in the history of the Qikiqtani region, as well as being central to understanding the history and formation of Pangnirtung as a community.

While the hunters and trappers around Kimmirut had dealt with epidemics in customary ways by sharing qimmiit and building up their teams after disease passed, the situation at Pangnirtung was very different. Using a new RCMP aircraft and all the resources of a much larger bureaucracy than most other settlements possessed, the epidemic unfolded differently here than anywhere else. The RCMP visited many of the ilagiit nunagivaktangit by aircraft, concluding essentially that it would be hopeless for hunters to try to rely on qimmiit in the near future, and made plans to evacuate as many people to the trading centre as wanted to or could be persuaded to go. In a very short time, more than half the people from around Cumberland Sound were evacuated to Pangnirtung, leaving behind their homes and property and crowding into tents in a community that lacked the supplies to feed them. As Levi Evic told the QTC, his family felt worse off in Pangnirtung than when living at Illunguyat and hunting on foot in the nearby tide cracks:

Looking back today, that has affected me a lot, and also to my parents. When they moved us there were changes in us, even in myself, I changed ... Our hunting practices were disrupted, looking for food by our fathers, they even lost some of that and experienced hunger when we were living in this community, whereas in the camps we never experienced hunger...<sup>112</sup>

The written and oral records, taken together, suggest that the police might have killed more qimmiit than necessary and might have overreacted when they brought almost everyone off the land. People who remained did not starve, and those who were evacuated were almost entirely cut off from country food and were hungrier, colder, and more demoralized than those who stayed behind in their qarmat. Two of the more isolated and independent inhabited places were never re-occupied.

The second crisis affecting qimmiit in Pangnirtung occurred in 1966 when, with the new amendments to the Ordinance giving police a freer hand against loose qimmiit, Constable Jack Grabowski set out to eliminate them altogether. In 1967, he reported to Ottawa that he had killed two hundred and fifty qimmiit in 1966 belonging to hunters who had left the land to live in the settlement, and that he planned to do the same thing in 1967. Although he was criticized by his superiors for overreacting, the number of qimmiit dropped dramatically. People remember that not all the qimmiit shot in Pangnirtung in the 1960s were loose. Adamie Veevee told the QTC in 2008:

When we were here in Pangnirtung, they didn't want the dogs to be alive. There used to be a dog pound over there. When they were inside the cage, they were shot inside the cage. My father's dogs were shot inside the cage. They were used for transportation. We had no Ski-Doo. That was all we had for transportation. And I was getting to be a young man. The RCMP were getting to be my enemy. I hated them. Yes. We were watching when our dogs were being shot inside the cage. The three men's dogs were shot. That was what I really remember. That was our only means of transportation. I was learning to use my own dogs.<sup>113</sup>

Asked if any reason was given for the shootings, he replied: "They tried to give us a reason. They said that they were too skinny, that they were too hungry. But they weren't like that. But in that time, even the dogs that were tied up were shot. It seems that they didn't want to see any more dogs alive."<sup>114</sup>

That trend continued. In 1968, only three hunters were reported to be using dog teams, and the settlement and two remaining ilagiit nunagivaktangit had seventy snowmobiles altogether. In 1968, the RCMP switched to snowmobiles and disposed of their own dog team. This led them to abandon the annual fall walrus hunt at the mouth of Cumberland Sound that had been an important source of meat for the qimmiit of the area.<sup>115</sup>

## Qikiqtarjuaq

There was no year-round settlement on Broughton Island before 1960, but the place was seasonally useful to Inuit. In 1955, DEW Line stations were set up there and nearby at the traditional dwelling place of Kivitoo. A third good hunting centre, Paallavik, had been the site of weather stations since the Second World War. Many years later, a former Marconi operator at the Kivitoo site recalled how qimmiit were poisoned in the 1950s:

*Loss of dogs could mean famine for all concerned. Such was the situation that faced one of the families at Kivitoo when its dogs, allowed to roam freely at the construction camp, were fed raw meat laced with Gillettes Lye. We then witnessed several victims in ghastly distress, wandering aimlessly with froth and frozen drool hanging from their mouth. This senseless, cruel act arose from frustration at failed appeals to the family to tether their dogs. That a member of the catering staff left FOX-D on the next available aircraft was no coincidence. RCMP were never contacted and those of us who observed this barbaric act and failed in our duty, have had to live with our conscience.<sup>116</sup>*

However, around the same time the American chief of the Broughton Island station boasted of having shot qimmiit that belonged to Inuit who were camped near his radar installation. A visiting federal official wrote:

*The Station Chief, Mr. Al. Watson, said that there was a dog problem in the area because the dogs were breaking into the food supplies. He had warned the Eskimos to tie up their dogs or else he would have to shoot them. He had already shot several and received no complaints from the Eskimos.<sup>117</sup>*

In the context of the time and place, it would have been pointless and difficult for Inuit to complain to anybody.

In this period, there was no trading centre or police post at Qikiqtarjuaq, only the DEW Line auxiliary station. In short order, the HBC, school, the government, and RCMP arrived, and people came under pressure to centralize. In many cases, Qikiqtarjuarmiut testified that their qimmiit were slaughtered to tie their owners forcibly to the settlement. Jacopie Nuqingaq talked of this kind of experience:

*After re-supplies [in Qikiqtarjuaq] we would go back [home], when we still had our route to go back on our team, planning to go back before the ice broke up, then they slaughtered our dogs. I grieved for them, they were our only means of transportation. If I [knew] what I know then, I would never have agreed to come here. They made it impossible for us to go, we were stuck.<sup>118</sup>*

Leah, Jacopie's wife, also spoke about her experience:

*When we were starting to go, [the Qallunaat] told Jacopie our dogs are going to be shot [because] no dogs [are] allowed in Qikiqtarjuaq. Our dogs were tied out on the ice. We were getting ready to go back home, back to [Paallavvik] ... We didn't want to talk back ... Our dogs were slaughtered. We had no choice but to stay here.<sup>119</sup>*

Kakudluk, a member of one of the seven families relocated from Paallavvik recalled how strictly the Ordinance was interpreted in Qikiqtarjuaq. She had travelled to the area by dog team with her family. She said, "Once they got there, the dogs were shot because dogs were not allowed in Qikiqtarjuaq."<sup>120</sup> These killings occurred quite close to the time when the epidemic passed through the Davis Straits region, and the two things together made it hard for Inuit to re-establish their teams. By this time, snowmobiles were available for those who could afford them, but they represented a cultural loss. As Jacopie Koosiaq wrote in a local newspaper while re-establishing himself at Paallavvik, "This year, 1974, I'm living in my old home of Padloping [Paallavvik]. I have known this place since I was a child ... I have discovered that children are forgetting our ways. I am trying to be an Eskimo, but I have no dogs."<sup>121</sup>

## Clyde River

There were several ilagiit nunagivaktangit in the region of Clyde River, some stretching along the coast to the north and a few further south, towards Home Bay. There were some employment opportunities at the DEW Line sites, and those places are mentioned by witnesses who spoke to the QTC about qimmiq killings.<sup>122</sup> Other instances of killings involved qimmiit belonging to people who were just visiting the community to trade, as recounted by Jason Palluq:

*There was a person who came in at one time. His dogs were slaughtered. He did not have a Ski-Doo. The RCMP came up*

*right there and then three dogs were killed. I saw that. I thought, "Ho my God, how is he going to get back home? He probably has family waiting for him at the camp." I did not know which camp he was from. I assumed he was from a southern camp because I did not know him. I saw it myself. He came in and he [hadn't] even unharnessed his dogs. They shot three of his dogs.<sup>123</sup>*

The police might have stopped at three because the owner argued forcefully with what they were doing. "I know that the Inuk was verbally trying to fight back or say something to him to stop it. That is what I saw." Joanasie Illauq spoke of a problem that was probably common throughout the region. In about 1966, his qimmiit got free after being tied up for the night on a visit from Igluaqtuuq to trade at Clyde River:

*When we arrived in Clyde River, we were told that our dogs were to be tied up. The community was right across from here. We used pieces of rope to tie them down on the sea ice ... As soon as we got our supplies we were going to head right back. We had to buy lots of things, not just for our family, but for everyone in our camp. We bought lots of supplies and loaded them on our sled. We had to overnight. When we woke up in the morning, I went to check on the dogs because they were to be tied down. As soon as I went to our qamutik, I realized that some of them were missing. Our lead dog and some of the middle dogs had chewed off their rope and gotten loose. We were missing them. I ran back to my brother to tell [him] that they were missing.*

*When we started looking around, we couldn't find them. We finally found them right in front of the store and they were all dead. Apparently, the RCMP and the store employee killed them. And right there and then, it was almost impossible for us to go back to our camp.*<sup>124</sup>

The trip home with only six qimmiit took three days.

### Pond Inlet

Pond Inlet was a major point of contact between Inuit and Qallunaat in northern Baffin Island for the whole of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but only developed as a centralized community quite rapidly in the 1960s. In 1962, the settlement had a one-room school and most people still lived on the land. A bigger school, with hostels, brought a rush of people to the settlement a couple years later. In 1965, half the people of the area lived at the trading centre. By 1970, almost everybody had made the move. As a result, the authorities had become very conscious of qimmiit, and conflicts resulted.

Frank Tester described events in the late 1960s. By 1967, there was a persistent problem with loose qimmiit, and the authorities hired an Inuk as dog officer. At a meeting of the Pond Inlet Council in May 1967, Councillor Jimmy Muckpah complained that the new dog officer, Komangapik, was overzealous “about his job and on occasion was not warning dog owners before shooting. It was also suggested that certain dogs owned by white people lead charmed live[s].” A discussion followed in which it was decided that strict enforcement of the Ordinance was necessary, but that owners should be given one warning before any qimmiit were shot and that the Ordinance should apply to all qimmiit, regardless of who owned them.<sup>125</sup>

As usual, the main burden fell on Inuit, and particularly those who were newly arrived in the settlement and who did not have snowmobiles. Paomee Komangapik moved with her husband and two children directly from Igloolik to Pond Inlet in 1966. In 2008, she told the QTC about her husband's team:

*I am a widow and I would like to speak about the dog slaughter. In 1969, my late husband's dogs were shot. Eventually, every one of them was shot. In those days, my husband's dogs were killed off. We had no means of transportation and we were put in an untenable position. We [could not] catch a seal. That is my permanent story about dogs.*<sup>126</sup>

Also in 2008, Rosie Katsak shared with the commission a story her father had told her before passing away. Ishmael Katsak moved with his family into Pond Inlet where an RCMP member promptly shot his qimmiit. “When they came to Pond Inlet, he had a dog team. All of his dogs were killed by the RCMP ... He was sad. He couldn't go out hunting. He had no snowmobile so he had to walk on the ice to go out hunt for us to have food.” The shooting seems to have been a pre-emptive move. “My father's dogs weren't sick. They were killed by the RCMP.”<sup>127</sup>

### Arctic Bay

The QIA and QTC received twenty-nine statements from Inuit at Arctic Bay, many of whom had spent their lives in the immediate area surrounding the community. Several people spoke of qimmiq killings. One of the most informative recollections was by Mucktar Akumalik, whose deep knowledge of qimmiit is revealed in his interview with QIA about the time he spent as the community dogcatcher.



When we moved here in 1966, everybody had a dog team, at least all the hunters did. They were all required to keep their dogs tied up. When the RCMP came in, I was selected by the Council to be the dogcatcher. I signed up at the RCMP station. When the RCMP came in each year, he would ask me how many dogs I had shot, how I was treated by the local people, and names of people who didn't like me as a result of my shooting their dogs. That's how well I was treated by the RCMP. They would ask me questions. We wanted everything to be done in a responsible manner. The Council would advise the public to be responsible for their dogs. When a dog became loose I would be responsible for notifying the owner. I was a dogcatcher for five years.<sup>128</sup>

Mucktar Akumalik drew the same conclusion about qimmiit and schooling as Judge Croteau found across Nunavik.

It was the school system that seemed to be the reason for all dogs getting killed. After we had arrived here in Arctic Bay, they didn't want the dogs getting stray and hanging out in the community. The community was just starting out and they didn't want dogs getting into people's food.

In an important and revealing remark, he stated that the Ordinance was not in effect in Arctic Bay until the time of his appointment, in 1967.<sup>129</sup>

A review of documentary sources produced no reports of specific events related to qimmiit in Arctic Bay, except a reference in the RCMP's 2006 report noting that in 1965 about 10 to 15 qimmiit in Arctic Bay were lost to what was suspected to be rabies.<sup>130</sup>

## Grise Fiord

No archival records were located documenting conflict between Inuit and Qallunaat authorities in Grise Fiord over qimmiit and no instances were mentioned in the QTC hearings.

## Resolute

Resolute, like Grise Fiord, was one of the new communities created in 1953 by relocating Inuit from Nunavik and Pond Inlet. It had a relatively small population (less than one hundred and seventy in 1981), but it experienced the same problems as larger centres with the police reaction to qimmiit. Simon Idlout was a young adult when he saw qimmiit being shot around the community:

*I used to see the police officer. He just opened his window and he would shoot the dogs with his pistol as if he was just having fun. These dogs were owned by people. The police were just playing around with them. He just opened his window and just shot the dogs. The owners weren't around and were never asked or told, "Your dogs have been loose for too long." They started shooting any dog they saw. I didn't like that at all. We used to travel long distances by dog team and that is the only thing we had for survival. When the dogs were shot, it was very painful for me. They were just playing around, maybe they were target practicing. That is what it seems like. Here we were growing the dogs to use them in the future.<sup>131</sup>*

Frank Tester's survey of qimmiit described the situation in Pond Inlet as similar to the one in Grise Fiord:

*In 1954, the Officer in Charge suggested that he had interested relocated Inuit in improving the dog strain by bringing in dogs from Eureka, Greenland.*

*By 1960, Inuit at Resolute Bay were reported to have teams of eight to twelve dogs in good condition.*

The following year (1961) the Officer in Charge reported that: There are about one hundred and ten dogs in the settlement. Each family has its own team of about eight to ten dogs. These dogs are well-fed all year round and seem to be of better disposition then [sic] some of the dogs the writer has seen in other settlements.<sup>132</sup>

In 2008, Ludy Padluk testified to the QTC about the loss of his qimmiit in 1964, when he had an accident and lost his toes while working for Polar Shelf. While he was in hospital in Edmonton, he decided that he would give his dog team to his brother. However, when he recuperated enough to come back to Resolute he found his qimmiit had all been shot. He made an interesting observation about ownership of qimmiit, “They were family dogs. My wife and my kids owned the dogs. One person doesn’t own those dogs. If I talk to my brother today, he has a dog-team; he would say ‘our dogs.’ If I say ‘my dog,’ a lot of people say ‘our dogs.’”<sup>133</sup>

## Igloolik

In 1965, there were twenty-one dog teams and just seven snowmobiles in the settlement itself.<sup>134</sup> By 1968, the RCMP reported that there were almost as many snowmobiles as dog teams, but unlike other settlements, people were keeping their qimmiit even while they were buying snowmobiles. The ability to store walrus and the supplies of dog food in a designated warehouse may also have led Inuit to retain teams.<sup>135</sup> Well into the 1970s, many Iglulingmiut preferred the dog teams to machines for safety reasons.<sup>136</sup> The use of qimmiit at Igloolik has never been completely abandoned, although now the main use is to earn revenue from tourists, with outfitters keeping dog-team skills alive.

Neither the RCMP (2006) nor Frank Tester’s report for the QTC offered much documentation relating to qimmiit around Igloolik. It was clear that once people began to come into the settlement in large numbers with their qimmiit, the situation was little different from other settlements. Thomas Kublu spoke to the QTC about his troubles with his employers when he began working for the community in 1967:

*A by-law had been imposed in the community to chain all dogs in Igloolik. All loose dogs were shot, not that we wanted our dogs shot.*

*We were vigilant about keeping our dogs tied up. My dog team began to decrease in numbers, and at this time we had the police and the government overseeing and controlling our lives. What they ordered us to do, we had to listen. I may not have worked as much as the agent wanted me to; I still had to hunt to feed my family and dogs. As a wage earner I could not do it without supplementing the food source as a hunter. Eventually my dog team dwindled to six and I still hunted. If dogs accidentally became loose, they were shot. Six dogs made a slow journey. This was not an easy task when my hunting was reduced to weekends and evenings. I arrived in Igloolik with thirteen dogs ... In the spring of 1965 while I was at work, all my dogs which were chained up were shot. I was not around when this happened. I saw the government agent after that, he did not say anything but was very embarrassed and red in the face. I was informed later on that the police had shot all the dogs, possibly as instructed by the government agent. I never understood why they were shot.*<sup>137</sup>

Thomas Kublu’s experience suggested that his qimmiit would not have been shot if the government official had realized who owned them. Many of the other reported shootings seem to have been similarly random, and carried out without warning and without considering the consequences for qimmiq owners. Eugene Ipkaq spoke with feeling about the number of people in the community—trading-post staff and civilian government officials—who kept their rifles handy and killed many qimmiit, a few at a time, over several years.<sup>138</sup> The legacy of loss and mistrust remains strong in Igloolik.

## Sanirajak

While there are no accounts in Sanirajak of systemic killing of qimmiit, whether loose or not, several Inuit testified to having their qimmiit killed without their permission. Jake Ikeperiar also testified to being made to kill qimmiit under orders from a Qallunaaq. The experience of Jake Ikeperiar showed how accepting government employment could make difficulties:

*There were seven dogs that were together ... They would go to the dump or other locations. The owners didn't know that this was happening. The owner of the dogs was out of town. I am not a dog catcher, I was not appointed. I knew that they were running around ... There was no area administrator here. There was a power corporation engineer who was the boss. I know this because I was here to work with the government. He told us to come over because the dogs were bothering [him]. He asked what kind of a gun we had. We had .222 and .22. He asked how many bullets were needed to fill up a .222. We gave him a box. We were young. We were asked to deal with the dogs. He was told to do this by the area administrator ... The person who told us to kill the dogs put aside some gas. When he came over to us, he told us to kill the dogs and burn the dogs. We didn't really want to do it but we had to.<sup>139</sup>*

One Elder, Moses Allianaq, described the loss of his eight dogs on the orders of an Inuk who was employed by the territorial government. The order came from the RCMP. The result was an almost total loss of mobility, a dependence on others for

transportation, and a lack of meat in winter. "It was very difficult after the dogs were killed. We had to stay in one place. It was hard. It was good before the dogs were killed. And it cost a lot ... [how would I] provide country food to my family members?"<sup>140</sup>

## Sanikiluaq

Inuit in the Belcher Islands had a different experience from many other places in Qikiqtaaluk. The islanders had no RCMP detachment until the 1970s. Teachers at the South Camp School (1960) seemed to have a good relationship with Inuit, and if any qimmiit were killed during the regular winter trading excursions to Kuujuarapik, this information has not been handed down. What really stands out is how qimmiit were treated when people were obliged to abandon South Camp for relocation to the slightly larger North Camp.

A detailed and moving statement was given to the QIA in 2004 by Pauloosie Ekidlak:

*I know first-hand about this issue of dogs being killed, we keep hearing about this issue for a long time now. I was told that better mode[s] of transportation [were] being made so it [was] okay to kill the dogs even though I did not want to do this, they were the only way for me to hunt to look for food ... I killed my dogs but the government was saying that they would provide better mode of transportation and I did not feel that it was up to me whether I wanted to do it or not. I felt pressured to kill my dogs by the government saying they have better mode of transportation. My dogs were the only way for me to hunt and to this day this hurts me. There was nobody to kill the dogs like the police so the Inuit were told to kill their own dogs.<sup>141</sup>*

The killing was carried out as the people were preparing, very reluctantly, to leave South Camp (which had a school, hostel, generating station, and tank farm) and resettle in North Camp. "I killed my dogs at the South Camp," said Ekidlak, "I couldn't leave them behind so I had to kill them ... I killed my dogs with a gun. I shot my dogs maybe two days before we were relocated to North Camp. Because I realized I couldn't come back for them." The order to kill the qimmiit was passed from an unnamed government official through an Inuk, Joe Kumarluk. No order came directly from an official, but Ekidlak knew he had no choice. The same was true for everybody else at South Camp awaiting relocation by boat. As Ekidlak continued:

*Everybody was shooting their own dogs and knew that this had to be done because the government was telling them to kill the dogs. As you can imagine, killing all those dogs, shots going off all around and people knowing what is going on. All those dead dogs. I covered my dead dogs with rocks; it was the only thing I could do.<sup>142</sup>*

## Motives

Qimmiit were killed mainly by Qallunaat or by Inuit acting under orders from Qallunaat for only a few reasons. The principal reasons were described as public health and public safety. Since rabies was difficult to diagnose and extremely dangerous to people, sick animals were likely to be shot without waiting for confirmation that they had this frightening disease. The public safety issue was more complex. Certainly when large packs of qimmiit ran through a settlement, they were extremely frightening and occasionally harmful. However, they were usually found foraging around a dump or breaking into storage areas, more a danger to property than to people. The "public safety" argument was often used to justify shooting qimmiit more for what they might do in the future than for what they were actually doing at the time.

Inuit found these arguments unconvincing, especially since they had lived with qimmiit for centuries. To some, it appeared that qimmiit were being killed to reduce people's mobility and force them to leave the land and live year-round in settlements under the control of officials. That seemed plausible, especially before snowmobiles offered an alternative, but in fact compulsory school attendance and threats to cut off family allowance seem to have been the main forms of coercion. There were also some potentially positive attractions to settlement life, including health care, housing, and the possibility of employment. One Inuk also suggested that there was a commercial motive behind the shootings, telling researcher Lorne Smith in 1969–70 that police were shooting stray qimmiit so that people would have to buy Ski-Doos.<sup>143</sup>

A few Inuit agreed that there might be some truth in the official explanation that qimmiit were being killed in the name of health or safety. A more common view was that the killings were part of the government's ambition to control Inuit and to bring about rapid change. At Igloodik in 2008, sixty-two-year-old Abraham Ulayuruluk told Commissioner Igloliorte, "It was a form of manipulation by the government so that we would be less independent and so that we would rely on its resources."<sup>144</sup> He contrasted this with the period when there were still qimmiit, explaining, "My father had a boat or a canoe and we traveled everywhere. We never experienced starvation. Dogs helped us hunt fish or caribou. They were well-mannered and well-behaved. They listened to us when we scolded them. The only diet we had was country food."<sup>145</sup>

While these perspectives were expressed in public and to the QTC, what struck Inuit was not just the strange motives, but the sheer wastefulness and cruelty of killing qimmiit. At the time of many of the killings, qimmiit were essential for families wanting to return to the land to hunt. Without qimmiit, people found themselves struggling with half a dog team or tied to a settlement, often without work or any other kind of productive activity, and unable to feed their families with nutritious country food.

## Who Killed the Qimmiit

Between 1955 and 1975, RCMP, who were ex officio dog officers under the Ordinance, killed a large number of qimmiit. This would include qimmiit shot by Inuit special constables. In communities where there was no police detachment, a settlement manager, HBC trader, or other Qallunaaq with a particular concern about loose qimmiit usually carried out these shootings. A lot of Qallunaaq, including RCMP officers, avoided shooting qimmiit themselves and would try to pass the task on to someone else. On the other hand, even fewer wanted to go through all the legal steps of warning owners and trying to catch qimmiit and impound them before shooting.

Before the appointment of the QTC in Qikiqtaaluk and the Croteau Commission in Nunavik, many RCMP members angrily denied having shot qimmiit. Those who admitted to the shootings insisted that they only shot them when they were a danger to people, or when they acted under the authority of the Ordinance. However, a great deal of other evidence suggests that loose qimmiit were shot when they were not a danger to anyone, and that the warnings required by the Ordinance were often not given. Because of this, and a lack of written records of such local matters, it is difficult to estimate how many qimmiit were actually shot by police officers.<sup>146</sup>

With the increasing concentration of people into settlements, municipal officers were appointed, and these often included a dogcatcher. This was a difficult and unpopular task because owners understood that qimmiit kept tied up did not travel as well as those who were constantly exercising. Despite the difficulties, Mucktar Akumalik of Arctic Bay, who worked as a dogcatcher, believed that Inuit respected him for doing his job in a sensitive way. He explained, "Because they were well-informed by the police, nobody was against me. They would probably have been angry if they had not been informed. They didn't get angry at me because they were informed."<sup>147</sup> Akumalik once shot as many as thirty-two qimmiit in a single day. He gave up the job when he moved to another community. He told the QTC that he was not paid for this work, but did it as a service to the community.

Anthropologist George Wenzel also gave the QTC his perspective on his brief term as a dog officer at Clyde River in the 1970s:

*[George Wenzel]: In Clyde, loose dogs by and large were shot ... We would give a warning. But if a dog was seen as constantly being loose it was shot. One summer I was asked to be the dog catcher and I shot a couple of dogs after giving warning ...*

*[Interviewer]: How did they take the warnings?*



*[Wenzel]: They would say OK, but if I saw the dog the next day and it wasn't tied up then I shot it ... There was an awful lot of rancour if somebody shot somebody's dog. I can understand. Even though the dog should have been tied up and was stealing the meat and so on and so forth. That was the summer I was one of the few Qallunaat around ... After about three weeks, that was it, I was never doing that again. It was like being the guard at the jail. I am never doing that again.<sup>148</sup>*

Some of the saddest or most upsetting incidents are those in which people were coerced into shooting their own qimmiit. This seems to have happened more towards the end of the period, when, as previously mentioned, the inhabitants of South Camp were ordered to kill all their qimmiit as part of their relocation to North Camp (now Sanikiluaq) in 1970. In 1968, Goteleak Judea of Kimmirut also recalled that the uncle who was raising him was pressured to move into Kimmirut to retain family allowance benefits, and was ordered to shoot his qimmiit before making the move.<sup>149</sup> What stands out in these accounts is the sense of Inuit being powerless against a high wall of bureaucratic and legal resolve.

## Inuit Knowledge

Inuit sensibly believed that when they lived in their own traditional territories they had the right to look after their own economic interests and live according to their own laws and customs. At a time of rapid change, Inuit might be convinced or coerced into changing their ways, but they did not recognize the validity of laws that were made elsewhere and made no practical sense. On the opposite side, Qallunaat believed that Canadian sovereignty included the

right of administrators in Ottawa to make laws for places they had never visited and change the laws as they saw fit, often (or almost always) without proper notice. These conflicting beliefs influenced how Inuit listened to instructions about handling their qimmiit and the resulting demoralization that came with having armed strangers behave as they wished.

Inuit knew that qimmiit needed constant exercise; tying them up weakened them. Qimmiit should be allowed to run loose when they were not working, as they did when on the land, because to pen or chain them—even if this were possible—was dangerous to their well-being and the well-being of Inuit who depended on them for transportation. It was also very hard to keep qimmiit restrained, whether the owners lived in the communities or were just visiting for a few hours to trade. There are many reports of dog pounds or compounds being built in communities, especially after 1960, but often these reports describe their poor condition and the tendency of qimmiit to escape. Qimmiit that were chained or tied also frequently escaped by chewing through their harnesses or by pulling at weak chains. In some communities, notably Arctic Bay, the hunters who kept qimmiit near the settlement during the summer often tried to keep them in secluded areas. As Ikey Kugitikakjuk explained:

*We tried to put our dogs in a secluded area where there were no people because there were about fifteen dogs. We just go and feed them so that they won't be loose around the community and they couldn't stay near our houses anymore, so we had to put them in a place where people wouldn't be walking about.<sup>150</sup>*

There may also have been a political side to the decision by many Inuit to stick to their old ways. One police officer thought he saw “passive resistance” in the decision of some Pangnirtormiut not to tie their qimmiit,<sup>151</sup> and an Inuk in Iqaluit spoke frankly to anthropologist Toshio Yatsushiro about the evident desire of the authorities not just to control qimmiit, but to dominate Inuit as well:

*First I thought of killing the policemen ... Maybe afterwards there won't be so many dogs, since the police are shooting them. In five years, there may be none at all. Maybe the police will kill Eskimos then, just like the dogs.<sup>152</sup>*

Simon Idlout of Resolute was forthright in comparing traditional Inuit practice with the questionable aspects of the Ordinance:

*The puppies were not allowed to be tied up because of the muscles in their legs. If you tie them up, they would become very weak. According to the way Inuit used to feel, they would never tie up dogs in the camp. They need to exercise. No puppies were ever to be tied up. That was the law of the Inuit. We get new laws from the federal government and because it doesn't make any sense, we don't agree with it but we have to follow it.*

*That law is not coming from the community, it is southern law. This law is not right in Nunavut. These laws were made down South. It is very different in Nunavut ... Am I going to follow that law from [England] in the High Arctic, is that right? No it is not right! It should be made in the Arctic.<sup>153</sup>*

Until 1966, the Ordinance set out a list of requirements that had to be met before loose qimmiit could be killed. These requirements involved warning owners, rounding up and impounding the qimmiit unless they were an immediate threat, and releasing them if their owners paid a fine. In practice, most of the qimmiit that were killed were shot with little or no individual warning and with little or no effort to catch rather than shoot them. The crucial change in 1966 was to remove many of the protections for qimmiit and their owners, protections that were not being applied anyway.

The important change was allowing people to kill, without trying to capture, qimmiit that were simply acting in a threatening manner or destroying “a food cache ... or other equipment.”<sup>154</sup> With these much looser rules, the authorities moved more quickly to reduce the number of qimmiit. Many Inuit recall seeing qimmiit that were tied or impounded also being shot, a clear violation of the Ordinance.

The official record and other written records show that Inuit were rarely consulted and believed it was not feasible to change traditional ways of keeping qimmiit. Records also show that Inuit had no influence with government administrators on this issue, and that administrators knew that their policies and regulations would cause hardship, yet nevertheless thought it was necessary and justified to apply them. Furthermore, the Ordinance did not apply where the majority of Inuit lived before the mid-1960s. Even where it was in force, it was erratically applied, causing considerable confusion among Inuit. The government offered very little support to help Inuit change their ways of controlling their qimmiit.

## MANAGING QIMMIIT AROUND PEOPLE

There were a few bitter, open conflicts between Inuit and Qallunaat in Qikiqtaaluk; the worst of these generally involved qimmiit. In fact, a local politician, speaking in the mid-1970s, traced much of the prevailing mistrust between Inuit and Qallunaat to the Ordinance. Speaking about the late 1950s, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Bryan Pearson told the NWT Legislature:

And then this conflict went on for many, many years, because the hunters who were then the Eskimo people were coming into the community and bringing their families in from the camps. They were coming in with their dogs and dog teams and these regulations were being enforced in all of these communities. Regulations said, "Tie up your dogs or we will shoot them," to which they would reply, "Well, we cannot tie them up, they have nothing to eat, they have got to scavenge around to get food." That is where one of the greatest conflicts that ever happened in the North began when the Eskimo people, I do not know if the same applies here, but the Eskimo people in the Eastern Arctic then began to wonder about the wonderful white man and his wonderful system.<sup>155</sup>

The conflict over qimmiit went far beyond a question of food—there was a complete difference of experience and views about how to handle qimmiit when they were not working. Although qimmiit sometimes ran away and occasionally bit people, mainly children, the safest and simplest way to keep them was to leave them to run free except when they were in harness. One practical reason for this was the ability of qimmiit to warn of approaching polar bears. An everyday reason was that qimmiit were more even-tempered when allowed to move around, forage for food, and socialize among themselves.

This aspect of managing qimmiit was based on the well-being of the qimmiit themselves. A great deal of evidence came out on this subject during early efforts by the RCMP and settlement authorities to negotiate a truce in the battle over loose qimmiit. Many Inuit were willing to try to tie up their qimmiit, though some were not.

The first of many qimmiq restraint initiatives began in 1957. It soon proved impractical, as the primary means of restraining qimmiit that were caught was with chains. Northern Service Officer Flucke reported:

*The Eskimos have pointed out that the chains do not give the dog enough room to exercise, and this is a pertinent point since presumably they will be tied up three hundred and sixty-five days a year, except when actually in team. Chains do not allow them to seek sheltered spots nor huddle together for warmth. The heavy ruff around their necks allows them to work their collars over their heads and escape. Moreover, on a large scale it is difficult to feed them, as each dog must be fed separately.<sup>156</sup>*

The chaining of the qimmiit was completely impractical. Flucke reported that Inuit who did comply with the rules to tie their qimmiit often lost them to freezing. Additionally, qimmiit that were allowed to forage were reported to be fat and sleek while the tied animals were poor and thin.<sup>157</sup>

# Consequences for Inuit

The killing of qimmiit was one of the most traumatic elements of the changes that happened as the Canadian government tightened its hold on the everyday life of Inuit. The killings deepened the mistrust many Inuit were already feeling towards the government. Senior officials clearly understood this, but gradually lost control of the situation in the late 1950s.

The loss of qimmiit generally, especially in the years before snowmobiles could replace them, disrupted traditional values and routines. It also changed the social hierarchy. If ownership of large teams was a sign of full manhood and superior competence, loss of qimmiit made those relationships uncertain.

Joined to other aspects of settlement life, the loss of qimmiit fed harmful trends and practices. As the Commissioner of the QTC said in his final report:

*Those Inuit who lacked qimmiit or snowmobiles to access the land felt that life in the settlements was a form of imprisonment. For many people, alcohol and gambling provided a temporary, but often unhealthy, distraction from boredom and worries about life in general. By the end of this period, illegal drugs were also entering settlements.*<sup>158</sup>

The effects were also economic. Although keeping a team of qimmiit demanded time, effort, and money for rifles and ammunition, the cost of buying, fuelling, and maintaining a snowmobile was beyond the resources of many Inuit. Hunting became linked much more closely to the wage

economy, as the people with money, rather than time, to run a snowmobile were primarily the ones with long-term employment. In addition, especially in the earlier years, snow machines often broke down and were less useful than qimmiit in many aspects of the hunt, especially navigation, working across thin or broken ice, and scenting seal holes and bears. Overall, it seems clear that over time Inuit would have converted from qimmiit to snowmobiles, as a handful did very willingly as soon as reliable machines were available.<sup>159</sup> However, the transition, especially before there were reliable snowmobiles, and when qimmiit were shot without the owners' consent, was cruel and unnecessarily disruptive.

## SNOWMOBILES

As government policies and settlement conditions made it difficult or impossible for people to keep qimmiit in communities, certain hunters were able to replace their teams with snowmobiles. For many families the transition was very hard, because the killing of hunters' qimmiit began about six or seven years before reliable snow machines became available in Qikiqtaaluk. Many others lost their qimmiit unexpectedly, could not plan for the purchase of a snowmobile to replace them, and were forced to spend two or three years, at least, with no means of winter transportation of their own. At Pond Inlet, Jaykolasie Killiktee told the QTC:

*Even up to today, when I do not go to Guys Bight, if it has been a fairly long period, I get the pang of homesickness. After a number of years here, my dogs were shot off, prior to being able to purchase snow machines. Other people had bought snow machines. It was distressing as it was the only mode of transportation and it was shot off. You are left with nothing.*<sup>160</sup>

Mary Iqaqrialuk told how her husband's and son's qimmiit were shot by police at Clyde River before they could afford to replace them with a snowmobile:

*We were not told why. They were our only form of transportation. It was very hard on my husband. He had the responsibility to feed us, but he did not have the means of transportation ... It was a lot later that my husband was able to get a snowmobile.<sup>161</sup>*

Government and industry purchased the earliest tracked vehicles.<sup>162</sup> Early versions of the one-person tracked vehicle were sent to the Arctic in the late 1950s, but only limited numbers were manufactured and even fewer saw use.<sup>163</sup> The vehicles provided transportation within and to near settlements. Hunting and long-distance travel still required dog teams.

Advantages and disadvantages of each type of travel—snowmobiles and dog teams—were recognized and debated. The greatest advantage of the snowmobile was its speed. The first models were able to travel at speeds up to 20–25 miles per hour, five times the speed of a dog team, and faster than caribou and polar bears.<sup>164</sup> Hunters could check traplines more often using snowmobiles, thereby reducing the loss of pelts to ravens and owls. Above all, hunters could spend less time hunting for dog food and more time on other things, such as wage employment.

Throughout the 1960s and most of the 1970s, however, snowmobiles were not entirely reliable for Arctic use. Mechanical failures were common, parts were expensive, stock of parts was limited, and snowmobile manuals, directed at southern recreational users, failed to provide information useful for trailside repairs. The manuals were also exclusively available in English and French until 1972, when the first Inuktitut translation appeared.<sup>165</sup> In addition, snowmobiles could travel faster, but not as far, as dog teams, and the machines made noise that could alert seals and bears of an approaching hunter. Inuit also noted that qimmiit were integrated



***Break time on the way to Tunu's camp using a snow machine and qimmiit, [1964].***

***Credit: Charles Gimpel / Library and Archives Canada / Charles Gimpel fonds / e011211941-v8.***

into hunting by assisting with the location of seal holes in the ice, providing advance warning of cracks in the ice and of polar bears, guiding hunters towards home in whiteouts, and helping with polar bear hunting. As a last resort, qimmiit could also be eaten by hunters when supplies ran out.

The introduction of snowmobiles altered hunting patterns. Speed triumphed over stealth when hunting polar bear and caribou. The need to hunt for dog food gave way to the need to hunt for ivory and skins that Inuit traded for cash, which in turn was spent on gasoline, parts, and replacement snowmobiles. Travelling by snowmobile necessitated travelling with a partner for safety reasons in case one of the machines broke down. Traditionally Inuit hunters were free to travel on their own. The noise of the snowmobiles also caused health risks. A team of researchers from Montreal discovered in one Eastern Arctic Community, six out of ten people had suffered partial hearing loss because of the constant use of snowmobiles. Almost 83% of men in the community suffered from at least partial hearing loss by the early 1970s.<sup>166</sup>



# Inuit Inquiries

The shooting of large numbers of qimmiit began in Qikiqtaaluk no later than 1957, and it was never a secret in the region. Inuit at Iqaluit spoke candidly about their losses to anthropologist Toshio Yatsushiro, who published their words in a national magazine in 1962.<sup>167</sup> Local politician Bryan Pearson was vocal too, sharing his thoughts with the mass-circulation *Star Weekly* in 1966, and again in the NWT's Legislative Assembly in 1973.<sup>168</sup> By then very few dog teams were left. The killings were not prominently discussed during the decades when major events such as the Nunavut Land Claim and the creation of Nunavut were consuming public attention. Yet individuals guarded their memories. Often, as witnesses told the QTC, those memories were silenced by feelings of shame and hurt.<sup>169</sup>

Public discussion resumed in February 1999, at a meeting in Iqaluit of community members with senior RCMP officials. A month later, at a Makivik Corporation meeting, Nunavimmiut brought their memories forward and called for an inquiry, an apology, and compensation.<sup>170</sup> The QIA quickly repeated this call on behalf of Nunavummiut. The QIA also considered bringing charges against the RCMP and federal government for the negligence and general harm done by limiting people's mobility. However, the Iqaluit meeting in February was already stirring a backlash among retired RCMP members, who vigorously denied reports of misbehaviour in the 1950s and 1960s.

Over the next five years, major Inuit organizations in Nunavik and Qikiqtaaluk interviewed Elders, interpreted the evidence surrounding the “dog slaughter,” and developed strategies for redress for the harm caused by the government's past failures to consult or to respect its own fiduciary obligations to Inuit. In 2000, the campaign became national: Organizations wrote to federal and Quebec Ministers and to Members of Parliament. By the end of that year, leaders of Inuit organizations were convinced that the killings had been centrally organized and all parties involved took their respective positions. The Canadian Government admitted that some qimmiit had been killed, but insisted this was always justified on the grounds of public health and safety. Inuit insisted that healthy qimmiit were killed, that the government had recklessly disregarded the importance of qimmiit to Inuit culture, and that the documentary record had been tampered with to conceal government wrongdoing.

The following years were spent on research, interviews, and quiet efforts to gather support for a public inquiry. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference supported this call in 2002.<sup>171</sup> Research, interviews, and analysis continued. Increasingly close attention was given to linkages between the qimmiq shootings and the general government policy of moving people into centralized settlements. In 2005, Makivik Corporation brought the subject back to public prominence, releasing its video treatment of the period, *Echo of the Last Howl*. In short order, this caught the attention of the national press and was aired in Parliament.

In March 2005, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development heard numerous Inuit witnesses describe the killing of qimmiit in the two regions between 1950 and 1970. The Standing Committee called for a public inquiry by a superior court judge “to get to the bottom of the matter.”<sup>172</sup> *The Nunatsiq News* was calling for an independent inquiry as early as August 30, 2002, and on June 17, 2005 reported the generally unfavourable reaction to the government’s decision to conduct an internal inquiry.

The Government of Canada did not set up the requested inquiry. Instead, it asked the RCMP to review its own actions regarding qimmiit. The Force presented a preliminary report later in 2005 and a twenty-six-page “final” report to the Minister of Public Safety in 2006. At the same time, the Force collected media reports and letters from many different sources, and carried out intensive research, gathering these into a much longer compilation of research and interviews printed the same year. The reports were concerned with issues of law enforcement and the needs of the growing non-Inuit populations, and did not consider the effect of the Ordinance on cultural practices of Inuit or the rules of Inuit society during the period of greatest disruption. Inuit recognized that the RCMP’s investigation of itself was part of a badly flawed process, and only a handful

of individuals provided information. Instead, in 2007, QIA created a more open process, the QTC, to hear witnesses and investigate records of the times, seeking a more inclusive social purpose than the RCMP report. There has been little response from federal officials.

Makivik Corporation and Quebec took a similar direction, commissioning a retired superior court judge, the Honourable Jean-Jacques Croteau, to inquire into the dog killings in Quebec.<sup>173</sup> Judge Croteau’s findings mirrored those of the QTC: Reports of widespread killings were substantially true, the killings began around military establishments, and elsewhere they were linked to the establishment of schools and the sedentarization of the people. The main difference was the overlap between federal and provincial government roles, with the Sureté Québec taking a lead in shooting qimmiit between 1963 and 1965. Judge Croteau found that the concentration of people in fewer and fewer settlements made the number of loose qimmiit problematic, but that the government’s process of getting rid of them was cruel and violated the rights of Inuit. Makivik Corporation and the province of Quebec signed a redress agreement on August 8, 2011.<sup>174</sup>

# Conclusion

Inuit have always understood the killing of qimmiit within a pattern of government domination and interference with Inuit decision-making. This was evident from the 1999 Iqaluit meeting, and, though often missing from headlines, from the framework for the QTC's work. The importance of the broader picture is therefore made clear in both the mandate and the Final Report of the QTC Commissioner, who recommended that:

The Government of Canada formally acknowledge that the high rates of suicide, substance abuse, incarceration, and social dysfunction among Inuit are in part symptoms of intergenerational trauma caused by historical wrongs. This symbolic first step will clearly signal its commitment to help correct the mistakes it made over many decades.<sup>175</sup>

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Paloosie Veevee, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, July 2006
- 2 The Inuktitut term *ilagiit nunagivaktangit* is a more accurate name for places that are generally 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.
- 3 Peter Clancy. “The Making of Eskimo Policy in Canada, 1952–62: The Life and Times of the Eskimo Affairs Committee.” In *Arctic*. Vol. 40, no. 3. (September 1987): 192.
- 4 Advisory Committee on Government Activities in the North, “Government Activities in the North—1954.” Ottawa: Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, p. 46.
- 5 Unless otherwise noted, the data used in this section comes from: Ian MacRury. *The Inuit Dog: Its Provenance, Environment and History*. (Darwin College, Scott Polar Institute: University of Cambridge, 1991); Geneviève Montcombroux. *The Canadian Inuit Dog: Canada's Heritage*. (Winnipeg: Whipoorwill Press, 2002); Peter Freuchen. “The Eskimo Dog.” *Mammals, Part II*, Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921–1924, vol. II, no 4–5 (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1935): 141–187.
- 6 Both are terms used by Cornelius Nutaraq of Mittimatalik quoted in Jarich Oosten and Frédéric Laugrand, *Travelling and Surviving on Our Land. Inuit Perspective on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College/Nortext, 2001), 104.
- 7 Kananginaaq Pootoogook, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 30 January 2008.
- 8 Ikey Kugitikakjuk, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, n.d.
- 9 Simonie Michael, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 26 January 2005.
- 10 Ikey Kugitikakjuk, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, n.d.
- 11 David Mickiyuk, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 20 January 2009.
- 12 Isaac Shooyook, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 22 April 2008.
- 13 Peter Akpalialuk, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 1 March 2006.
- 14 Pauloosie Ekidlak, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 19 February 2004.
- 15 Simonie Michael, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 26 January 2005.
- 16 Peter Akpalialuk, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 1 March 2006.
- 17 Isaac Shooyook, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 22 April 2008.
- 18 Bernard Saladin d'Anglure says Belcher Island Inuit used to eat qimmiit flesh until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but he does not quote evidence supporting his claim (Bernard Saladin d'Anglure, *Être et renaître inuit. Homme, femme ou chamane* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), 111. footnote 59).
- 19 Agiaq in Oosten and Laugrand, *Travelling and Surviving on Our Land*, 59.
- 20 Simon Saimaiyuk in John Bennett and Susan Rowley, *Uqalurait. An Oral History of Nunavut* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 328.
- 21 George Wenzel Animal Rights, Human Rights: Ecology, Economy and Ideology in the Canadian Arctic (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1992), 15.
- 22 Franz Boas, “The Central Eskimo”, Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1884–'85 by J. W. Powell (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), 637.
- 23 Knud Rasmussen, *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*. Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921–24, vol. VII, no.1 (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1929), 63–68.
- 24 Jimmy Kilabuk. Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 2 December 2004.
- 25 Pauloosie Ekidlak, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 19 February 2004; and Peter Akpalialuk, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 1 March 2006.
- 26 Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten “Canicide and Healing: the Position of the Dog in the Inuit Cultures of the Canadian Arctic,” *Anthropos* (St-Augustin), 97, no. 1 (2002), p. 101.
- 27 A federal Act of Parliament, the *Animal Contagious Diseases Act*, gave the Minister of Agriculture and representatives, such as police and game wardens, authority to order the destruction of animals suspected of carrying rabies in agricultural areas.
- 28 The earliest example of laws designed to control the spread of rabies in the Common Law tradition date from 1759 and 1760 when the City of London issued orders for the destruction of all loose dogs and the confinement of other dogs. For a full history of rabies see George M. Baer, Ed., *The Natural History of Rabies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 1991).
- 29 LAC, RG85, Northern Affairs Collection, Volume 1404, File 530–25, part 1, 4 November 1927 and 12 November 1927.
- 30 LAC, RG85, Northern Affairs Collection, Volume 1404, File 530–25, part 1, Memorandum, 9 February 1928.

- 31 Northwest Territories Council of the Northwest Territories, "An Ordinance Respecting Dogs", 1928, (Ottawa: Frederic Albert Ackland, King's Printer, 1929)
- 32 One reference to the sale of a dog at auction was found. It dates from 1955 when Father Binake purchased a dog in Inuvik for \$1. Upon the sale, the RCMP forwarded an invoice to the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources for the cost of feeding and housing the dog (\$3). See Northwest Territories Archives (NWTa). Canada. Northern Administration Branch, G-79-003, Box 163, File 3, Miscellaneous Correspondence re: Dog Ordinance, 1954-1957, RCMP report by Constable W. Yakemishin, Aklavik Detachment, re: purchase of impounded dogs, 7 June 1955.
- 33 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, 31 May 1929.
- 34 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, *Letter to the Director of the NWT & Yukon*, 5 April 1929 and Memorandum, 7 May 1929.
- 35 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, *Memorandum*, 3 April 1929.
- 36 Corp. R. G. McDowell of the Pangnirtung RCMP detachment asked for the settlement to be placed under the *Ordinance* because he felt the four Qallunaat children living there needed protection. LAC, RG85, Northern Affairs Collection, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, RE—Dog Ordinance in the NWT, 10 August 1937.
- 37 LAC RG85, Northern Affairs Collection, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, *The Commissioner, RCMP Police*, 1 April 1946.
- 38 LAC RG85, Northern Affairs Collection, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 2, *Injury to Helen Whiteford*, 6 April 1945.
- 39 LAC RG85, Northern Affairs Collection, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 3, *Regulation under the Dog Ordinance*, 26 March 1946.
- 40 Northwest Territories, Council of the Northwest Territories, "An Ordinance Respecting Dogs", Chapter 2, 1949, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1950).
- 41 LAC, RG85, Northern Affairs Collection, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 4, NWT Dog ordinance—Aklavik N.W.T.: Enforcement of-, 7 February 1949; and LAC, RG85, Northern Affairs Collection, Volume 1404, File 530-25, parts 4, N.W.T. Dog Ordinance Enforcement of-: Aklavik N.W.T., 13 January 1950.
- 42 Northwest Territories, Council of the Northwest Territories, "An Ordinance to Amend the Dog Ordinance," Chapter 18, 1950 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1953 [Assented 30 November 1950]).
- 43 Northwest Territories, Council of the Northwest Territories, "An Ordinance to Amend the Dog Ordinance," Chapter 1, 1951 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1953 [Assented 13 December 1951]).
- 44 LAC, RG85, Northern Affairs Program, Volume 1321, File 530-25, pt. 5, Dog Ordinance—NWT, Ordinance re: Dogs by R. A. Gobson, Deputy Commissioner, Northwest Territories, 16 January 1950, and 2 February 1950.
- 45 LAC, RG85, Northern Affairs Program, Volume 1321, File 530-25, Northwest Territories, Dog Ordinance, 19 August 1955.
- 46 Northwest Territories, Council of the Northwest Territories, "An Ordinance to Amend the Dog Ordinance," Chapter 2, 1966 (2<sup>nd</sup> session) (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967 [Assented 17 November 1966]).
- 47 Northwest Territories, Council of the Northwest Territories, "An Ordinance Respecting Dogs," Chapter D-8, 1974 (Revised, Volume 1) (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1974). ; Consolidation of Dog Act (Nunavut), R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c.d-7, as Amended by Statutes Enacted Under Section 76.05 of Nunavut Act, S.N.W.T. 1998, c.34.
- 48 Simonie Michael, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 26 January 2005.
- 49 Jacobie Iqalukjuak, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 23 March 2004.
- 50 Johnasie Apak, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 2 April 2004.
- 51 Agiaq in Oosten and Laugrand, *Travelling and Surviving on Our Land*, 61.
- 52 Neomi Panipakutuuk, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 17 February 2004.
- 53 Ipeelie Koonoo, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, n.d.
- 54 *Central Eskimo*, Project Gutenberg version, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/42084/42084-h/42084-h.htm>, 538-39.
- 55 1932 report on the Department of Agriculture Inquiry: LAC, RG 17, Department of Agriculture fonds, Volume 3006, File 37-5-7, Diseases of Animals, Disease Affecting Dogs, In Arctic Coastal Regions [Inoculation of Dogs re: Distemper], Letter from J.R. West to E.A. Watson, re: Dog disease investigation, 9 November 1932.
- 56 Elijah Mike, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 25 January 2005.
- 57 Neomi Panipakutuuk, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 9 February 2004.
- 58 The term 'qimmijjaqtuq' is used by Agiaq in Oosten and Laugrand, *Travelling and Surviving on Our Land*, 60.



- 59 For example, Ludwig Kumlien, mentions that during the year he spent in Cumberland Sound in 1877–1878, he has seen many dogs “affected with the much dreaded rabies” (Ludwig Kumlien, Contributions to the Natural History of Arctic America, Made in Connection with the Howgate Polar Expedition, 1877–78 (Washington: Govt. Print. Off, 1879), 50). Anthropologist Franz Boas, who spent a year in the same region in 1884–1885, also witnessed similar occurrences (Boas, “The Central Eskimo”, 667, note 2).
- 60 Charles Elton study: Charles Elton, “Epidemics Among Sledge Dogs in the Canadian Arctic and their Relation to Disease in the Arctic Fox”, *Canadian Journal of Research*, vol 5, no. 6, (1931), 673–692.
- 61 LAC, RG 17, Department of Agriculture fonds, Volume 3006, File 37-5-7, Diseases of Animals, Disease Affecting Dogs, In Arctic Coastal Regions [Inoculation of Dogs re: Distemper], Letter from J. R. West to E. A. Watson, re: Dog disease investigation, 9 November 1932.
- 62 Many of the recorded immunizations noted by Frank Tester in “Inuit Sled Dogs” (2008) occur after 1955, though some were earlier.
- 63 LAC, RG 17, Department of Agriculture, Volume 3006, File 37-5-7, Diseases of Animals, Disease Affecting Dogs, In Arctic Coastal Regions [Inoculation of Dogs re: Distemper], Letter from Chas. A. Mitchell to Dr. K. W. Neatby, 6 May 1947.
- 64 Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), *The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs* (Nunavut and Northern Quebec: 1950–1970), unpublished report (Ottawa: 2006), 262, which cites Council of the Northwest Territories Reference for Advice No. 1, Second Session, 1964, Re: Inoculation of Dogs in the Northwest Territories, 25 September 1964.
- 65 RCMP, *The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs*, 262.
- 66 LAC, RG85, Volume 1220, File 530-25-2, 10 April 1957.
- 67 RCMP, *The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs*, 201, which cites LAC, RG85, Northern Affairs Program, File 1000/167, pt. 4, Memo to Dr. K. F. Wells, Veterinary Director, General, Dept. of Agriculture, from B. G. Sivertz, Director, Northern Administration and Lands Branch, DNANR, re: Dog Sickness in Cape Dorset, 20 August 1957.
- 68 Cst. C.P. Pallister in LAC, RG18, RCMP Fonds, Volume 55, File TA 500-8-1-10, Conditions Among Eskimos, Cape Dorset, 11 May 1959.
- 69 LAC, RG 18, RCMP Fonds, Volume 55, File TA 500-8-1-10, Conditions Amongst Eskimos, Cape Dorset, 28 March 1960.
- 70 LAC, RG 18, RCMP Fonds, Volume 55, File TA 500-8-1-10, Conditions Amongst Eskimos, Cape Dorset, 28 March 1960.
- 71 Nelson Graburn, *Lake Harbour, Baffin Island* (Ottawa: Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, NCRC 63–2, 1963), 13.
- 72 Graburn Lake Harbour, Baffin Island, 13.
- 73 LAC, RG18, RCMP Fonds, Volume 55, File TA 500-8-1-10, Conditions Amongst Eskimos, 8 January 1962.
- 74 Tester, “Inuit Sled Dogs,” (2008).
- 75 Rosie Katsak, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 19 December 2008.
- 76 The tragedy of Maggie Clay is explained in the QTC report in response to the RCMP (2006) final report on Inuit Sled Dogs, 30–33. See: Qikiqtani Truth Commission, *Analysis of the RCMP sled dog report*, (Iqaluit: Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 2013), 30–33.
- 77 For the RCMP senior officers’ warning against dogs, see RCMP, “The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs (Nunavut and Northern Quebec: 1950–1970),” (2006), 328, which cites W. G. Fraser, Memorandum to Each Member of “G” Division re: Enforcement of the Dog Ordinance, RCMP “G” Division File: 60G 1088-4-35, 7 October 1960.
- 78 For the reported improvement in qimmiit attacks, see RCMP, *Report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police*, Fiscal Year Ended 31 March 1962 (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1963), 28.
- 79 RCMP, “The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs,” 474–76, cites 1963-02-15 “A Dog’s World” Frank and Anita Vallee Povungnituk Newsletter #7.
- 80 Maurice Arnatsiaq quoted in RCMP, “The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs,” 495.
- 81 RCMP, “The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs,” 226, cites C. M. Bolger, Administrator of the Arctic, DNANR, To: Regional Administrator, DNANR, Frobisher Bay, NWT Re: Enforcement of Dog Ordinance—Death of Roger Michael Anerodluk, 3 November 1960.
- 82 Gordon Rennie, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 17 June 2008.
- 83 For Frank Tester’s account of the 1961–62 Pangnirtung attack, see Tester, “Inuit Sled Dogs”; His discussion of its link to larger community events is quoted from pp. 12–13.
- 84 RCMP, “The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs,” 225.
- 85 Tester, “Inuit Sled Dogs”, 12–13.
- 86 LAC, RG18, RCMP Fonds, 1985–86/048 55, Volume 55, File TA 500-8-1-12, Conditions Amongst Eskimos—Generally, by D.S. Moodie, 12 July 1955.
- 87 Pauloosie Veevee, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 1 July 2006.
- 88 Mosese Qiyuakjuk, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 1 April 2006.
- 89 Levi Evic, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 15 May 2008.

- 90 Louis Uttak, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 12 July 2004.
- 91 Ejetsiak Peter, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 31 January 2008.
- 92 Nuna Parr, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 30 January 2009.
- 93 RCMP, "The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs," 534–35.
- 94 G. M Higgins et al., *The South Coast of Baffin Island: An Area Economic Survey* (Ottawa: Industrial Division, Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1968), 92–93.
- 95 Taqialuk Temela, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 24 August 2004.
- 96 Pitsuelak's dog had already been shot by a Major Ballerine, although the officer commanding "G" Division did not feel that any "good purpose" would be served following up on the incident. See LAC, Northern Affairs Branch, RG 85, Vol. 1404, File 530–25, pt. 3. Dog Ordinance—NWT (animal diseases). RCMP Report re: N.W.T. Dog Ordinance. Compl. Of Officer Commanding U.S. Army Airport, Frobisher Bay, N.W.T., 15 March 1946.
- 97 Northern Affairs Branch, RG 85, Vol. 1404, File 530–25, pt. 3. Dog Ordinance—NWT (animal diseases). RCMP Report re: Officer Commanding, 1386–6R Operating Location. Frobisher Bay, N.W.T. Dogs Owned by Employed Eskimo. 8 February 1946.
- 98 Northern Affairs Branch, RG 85, Vol. 1404, File 530–25, pt. 3. Dog Ordinance—NWT (animal diseases). Public Notice signed by Charles Cansell, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, 19 February 1946.
- 99 Sheila Keith MacBain. The Evolution of Frobisher Bay as a Major Settlement in the Canadian Arctic. (MA thesis, McGill, 1970), 58.
- 100 See letter illustrating the impracticality and hazards of muzzling sled dogs. Northern Affairs Branch, RG 85, Vol. 1404, File 530–25, pt. 3. Dog Ordinance—NWT (animal diseases). E.G. Oldham to Deputy Minister R.A. Gibson, 18 March 1946.
- 101 LAC, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Fonds, RG 18, Acc. 1985086/048, Box 55, File TA-500-8-1-8. Conditions Amongst the Eskimos. Annual Report ending 31 December 1965.
- 102 LAC, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Fonds, RG 18, Acc. 1985086/048, Box 55, File TA-500-8-1-8. Conditions Amongst the Eskimos. Annual Report ending 31 December 1967.
- 103 "Hamlet Council News," *Inukshuk*, 4 May 1973.
- 104 Frank Tester, "Inuit Sled Dogs", 38.
- 105 "Letters to the Editor: New Dog Control," *Inukshuk*, 18 May 1973, 9.
- 106 Lea Langlois, "Letters to the Editor: Appeal for Dogs," *Inukshuk*, 21 September 1973, 6.
- 107 Romeo Latreille, "Letters to the Editor: Open Letter to All Dog Owners," *Inukshuk*, 25 February 1976, 6.
- 108 "35 Dogs Shot," *Nunatsiaq News*, 26 January 1977, 3.
- 109 Lea Langlois, "S.P.C.A. in Frobisher Bay," *Inukshuk*, 29 June 1973, 25.
- 110 Monica Connelly, "34 Dead Dogs in Pound," *Inukshuk*, 31 March 1976, 3 and 7.
- 111 RCMP, "The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs," 435–36; see also Tester, "Inuit Sled Dogs."
- 112 Levi Evic, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 15 May 2008.
- 113 Adamie Veevee, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 15 May 2008.
- 114 Adamie Veevee, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 15 May 2008.
- 115 LAC, RG18, RCMP Fonds, Accession 85–86/048, File TA-500-20-10-14, A. Huget to Director, Conservation and Protection Service, Dept. of Fisheries, 22 October 1968.
- 116 John K. Leslie, "Marconi in FOX Sector," [www.lswilson.ca/warstories3.htm#E](http://www.lswilson.ca/warstories3.htm#E). The official comment on dogs shot by the American contractor is in: LAC, RG85, Northern Affairs Program, Memo from R A J Phillips to Mr. Brown, re: attached extract, re: Broughton Island dog shootings, 2 December 1958.
- 117 +A. Stevenson for RAJ Phillips, Ottawa, Memorandum for Mr. Brown, "Eastern Arctic Patrol Report Pangnirtung District, 2 Dec. 1958. RG85, Northern Affairs Program, Series D-1-A, Volume 1473 File 201-1-8, pt. 6. Arctic Inspection Reports—General file.
- 118 Jacopie Nuqingaq, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 30 September 2008.
- 119 Leah Nuqingag, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 30 September 2008.
- 120 Gleeson, Richard, "Reliving the Relocation: Residents Return to Camps they Once Called Home." *Northern News Services*, 2 August 1999.
- 121 Jacopie Koosiaq, "Letter to the Editor," *Inukshuk*, 10 April 1975.
- 122 See for example testimony of Joanasee Simonee, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 19 December 2008,
- 123 Jason Palluq, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 8 September 2008.
- 124 Joanasee Illauq, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 8 September 2008.
- 125 Tester, "Inuit Sled Dogs.", 40.
- 126 Paomee Komangapik, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 19 December 2008.
- 127 Rosie Katsak, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 19 December 2008.
- 128 Mucktar Akumalik, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, n.d.

- 129 Mucktar Akumalik, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, n.d.
- 130 RCMP Report 2006, 424, in reference to the Conditions Amongst Eskimos annual report from Pond Inlet.
- 131 Simon Idlout, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 14 April 2008.
- 132 LAC. RG 85, Vol. 1951, File A-1000/169, pt.1. Re: Conditions Amongst Eskimos Generally, Annual Report—Year Ending 31 Dec. 61. from Cpl. R.R. Gordon, officer in charge, Resolute Bay Detachment, Resolute Bay, N.W.T., 12 January 1962. to The Officer Commanding, “G” Division, R.C.M. Police, Ottawa, Ontario. 3.
- 133 Ludy Padluk, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 16 April 2008.
- 134 Gerhard Anders. *Northern Foxe Basin: An Area Economic Survey*. (Ottawa: Industrial Division, Northern Administration Branch, Dept. of Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1965), 80.
- 135 Walrus meat: Claire Posen, “20 Years of Co-operation in Canada’s Arctic,” *North* 16, no. 3 (1979), 2–7.
- 136 Milton Freeman Research Limited. *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project: Report*. (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1976), 164.
- 137 Thomas Kublu, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 26 January 2009.
- 138 Eugene Ipkamak, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 19 August 2004.
- 139 Jake Ikeperiar, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 9 September 2008.
- 140 Moses Allianaq, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 25 February 2004.
- 141 Pauloosie Ekidlak, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 19 February 2004.
- 142 Pauloosie Ekidlak, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 19 February 2004.
- 143 Lorne Smith. “The Mechanical Dog Team: A Study of the Ski-doo in the Canadian Arctic.” *Arctic Anthropology*, XI-I, 1972, 8.
- 144 Abraham Ulayuruluk, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 12 September 2008.
- 145 Abraham Ulayuruluk, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 12 September 2008.
- 146 RCMP, “The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs,” especially the summary at pp. 151–53 and the replies of “Persons Contacted—RCMP members” at pp. 514–615. The RCMP paid particular attention to the shooting of dogs by people who were not police officers.
- 147 Mucktar Akumalik, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 22 April 2008.
- 148 George Wenzel, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 18 June 2009.
- 149 Goteleak Judea, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 15 September 2008.
- 150 Ikey Kugitikakjuk, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 22 April 2008.
- 151 Jack Grabowski quoted in RCMP, “The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs,” 435–46.
- 152 Toshio Yatsushiro, “The Changing Eskimo,” *The Beaver*, Summer 1962, 20–21.
- 153 Simon Idlout, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 14 April 2008.
- 154 Northwest Territories, Council of the Northwest Territories, *An Ordinance to Amend the Dog Ordinance*, Chapter 2, 1966 (2<sup>nd</sup> session) (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1967 [Assented 17 November 1966]).
- 155 Northwest Territories, Council of the Northwest Territories, *Debates: Official Report*, 49<sup>th</sup> Session, 7<sup>th</sup> Council, 15 June 1973 (Yellowknife, NWT: The Assembly [i.e. Council], 1973), 212–13.
- 156 RCMP, “The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs”, 214–215, citing Correspondence To: Chief, Arctic, Division, DNANR from A. F. Flucke Northern Service Officer, Frobisher Bay, DNANR Re: Restraint of Dogs—Frobisher Bay, 5 February 1957.
- 157 RCMP, “The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs”, 216, citing Correspondence To: Chief, Arctic, Division, DNANR from A. F. Flucke Northern Service Officer, Frobisher Bay, DNANR Re: Restraint of Dogs—Frobisher Bay, 5 February 1957.
- 158 Qikiqtani Truth Commission, *QTC Final Report: Achieving Saimaqtigiingiq*, (Iqaluit: Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 2013), 16.
- 159 Lyle Dick, *Musk-Ox Land: Ellesmere Island in the Age of Contact* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2001).
- 160 Jaykolasie Killiktee, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 10 December 2008.
- 161 Mary Iqaqrialuk, Oral History, Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 30 March 2004.
- 162 Lorne Smith, “The Mechanical Dog Team: A Study of the Ski-doo in the Canadian Arctic.” *Arctic Anthropology*, XI-I, (1972), 2–6.
- 163 L. Allister Ingham. *As the Snow Flies: A History of Snowmobile Development in North America* (Lanigan, SK.: Snowmobile Research Publishing, 2000), 163.
- 164 Smith, “The Mechanical Dog Team”, 2.
- 165 Smith, “The Mechanical Dog Team”, 3.

- 166 LAC, Department of Health fonds. RG 29, Vol. 2939, file 851-1-X600, vol. 3. "Quote ... Unquote," *Calgary Herald*.
- 167 Toshio Yatsushiro, "The Changing Eskimo; A study of wage employment and its consequences among the Eskimos of Frobisher Bay, Baffin Island," *The Beaver; magazine of the north* (Summer 1962), 19–26.
- 168 Walter Stewart, "The shameful way we treat our Eskimos," *Star Weekly* (25 June 1966); also Pearson speech in Council of the Northwest Territories Debates, 15 July 1973, 49<sup>th</sup> Session, 7<sup>th</sup> Council, 212–213.
- 169 See for example, testimony of Eena Angmarlik, Testimony, Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 15 May 2008.
- 170 Francis Lévesque, *Les Inuit, Leurs Chiens et l'administration Nordique, de 1950 à 2007. Anthropologie d'une revendication inuit contemporaine* (PhD thesis, Université Laval, 2008). This paragraph draws extensively on chapter 1, pp. 68–109. The redress agreement was announced on 8 August 2011; see La site de la première ministre du Québec, "Communiqués," [www.premierministre.gouv.qc.ca/actualites/communiqués/2011/aout/2011-08-08-en.asp](http://www.premierministre.gouv.qc.ca/actualites/communiqués/2011/aout/2011-08-08-en.asp), accessed online 7 May 2012.
- 171 Jim Bell, "Solid oral research needed on dog slaughter issue," *Nunatsiaq News* (August 30, 2002), <http://www.nunatsiaq.com/archives/nunavut020802/news/editorial/editorial.html#aug30>, accessed online 7 April 2010.
- 172 RCMP, "The RCMP and the Inuit Sled Dogs," 5. Also available on the House of Commons website, <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=1688732&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=38&Ses=1>, accessed online 30 April 2010.
- 173 Judge Croteau reported on 3 March 2010; an English translation of the text at <http://homepage.mac.com/puggiq/officialreports/Final%20Report.pdf> accessed online 7 May 2012; also at <http://thefanhitch.org/officialreports/Final%20Report.pdf>
- 174 Government of Quebec, "Première ministre du Québec," <http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.qc.ca/actualites/communiqués/2011/aout/2011-08-08-en.asp> accessed online 7 May 2012.
- 175 QTC, Achieving Saimaqatigiingniq, 45.



# 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 Kadtutsiak.

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

