

NUUTAUNIQ : *MOBILITY AND INUIT LIFE, 1950 TO 1975*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inuit of the Baffin Region were often “on the move” between 1950 and 1975 as a direct result of Canadian government policies and programs. This paper discusses the relocation, migration, dislocation and evacuation of Inuit within a framework of moved groups, moved individuals and the closing of communities.¹ Whereas Inuit had been moving for centuries to follow seasonal rounds, for trading or to maintain kinship networks, the moves that occurred during the period under study were very different. Groups of Inuit were transferred to distant areas where they had no experience with the environment or game conditions. Many Inuit were sent out of the Baffin Region during this period for health services, schooling or vocational training. The government exerted pressure upon Inuit to abandon their *ilagiit nunagivaktangat*² and move into settlements.

The planning, resources, mechanics and post-move implementations were inadequate and caused unnecessary suffering and hardships. In many cases, the enticements and promises made to Inuit to encourage them to move went unfulfilled after the moves.

People spoke to the QTC about the impact moves on Inuit of the Baffin Region. Individuals expressed frustration that the government arbitrarily made decisions without asking them and without addressing the expected consequences of their decisions on Inuit. Inuit felt deep cultural and personal losses resulting from family separations and ties to the land. They expressed anger about losses, including: divides within families; fewer opportunities to exercise traditional knowledge; and a diminishment in the richness of their practices and languages. There were also feelings of both regret and frustration from people who believe they should have either resisted moving or done more to change conditions under which they moved.

An analysis of the archival record demonstrates that Inuit were not consulted and that informed and voluntary consent was not given; that Inuit had little influence with government administrators; that government agents and decision makers believed that decisions affecting Inuit were necessary and justified. Furthermore, the documents reveal that the many different government agencies involved the moves of Inuit had at times very contradictory goals for Inuit futures, often resulting in approaches to the moves that were – and still are – confusing and convoluted. There was very little was done to address the negative impacts of moves, especially with respect to housing; and that relocations fundamentally altered Inuit life and made people vulnerable and more reliant on government services. The documents also show that Inuit shared a human desire to improve their lives so they were willing, when necessary, to take risks about “unknowns”. Nonetheless, many Inuit appreciate the amenities and benefits offered in

¹ *Relocation* refers the planned movement of people to a location that has been chosen by an exterior agent. *Migration* refers to moves that were or appear to have been voluntary or by enticements. *Dislocations* refer to coerced moves undertaken by Inuit who felt pressure from *Qallunaat* (non-Inuit), usually government representatives to move either permanently or for a specific reason, such as schooling. *Evacuations* refer to the temporary movement of people by government in response to imminent threats, either real or perceived.

² For the purposes of the QTC reports, the English term “camp” has been dropped in favour of the term *ilagittununagivaktangat* (plural *ilagiit nunagivaktangit*). The English translation (and meaning of the term in English) is based on the Inuktitut definition: “A place used regularly for hunting, harvesting and gathering.” Implicit in this meaning is the concept of home before the settlement period. The choice of the term was determined through a terminology/linguistics workshop organized by the QTC in April 2010.

settlement life and accept that their life has forever been altered; the manner and effects of government-directed moves are still remembered and felt today.

Some Inuit told the Commission that they feel ‘stuck’ or imprisoned in their communities, and that they are still waiting, with hope, for opportunities to become more self sufficient and to support themselves and their families.



Map 1: Qikiqtani Communities, 2010.

INTRODUCTION

Mobility, within set geographic areas, has always been and is still part of Inuit culture, albeit quite different today than when Inuit were nomadic hunters and harvesters. Until families moved into settlements, the seasonal cycle of harvesting saw Inuit move to take advantage of weather conditions, animal migrations and cultural linkages. Anthropologist Hugh Brody explains that, “hunting families travel familiar routes and reoccupy sites that have been important to their people for generations. The seasonal rounds occupy grooves of cultural history, and draws upon archives of experience and knowledge.”³ Even into the late 1960s, RCMP explained that many Inuit visited settlements in the summer and “returned to their respective camps during the early fall.”⁴

While Inuit seasonal rounds are not part of this study,⁵ the impact of all types of moves on Inuit as individuals and on their relationships with one another cannot be understood without an appreciation of the profound difference between moving as part of a rich, semi-nomadic culture, and government directed moves. The differences are discussed briefly in the section on kinship and place, below.

This paper is focused on government-supported or –directed relocations, evacuations, removals and resettlements, but it includes various voluntary moves of Inuit into and out of settlements between 1950 and 1975.⁶ While the archival record establishes the dates, policies and objectives of government programs that expedited moves, the human dimension – the effects of these moves on peoples’ lives – is drawn from testimonies of Inuit and ex-government witnesses appearing before the QTC, as well as from statements collected by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) and from various research studies.⁷

For the purposes of this paper, moves are broadly divided into three categories: groups, individuals and community closings. Within the category of groups, the paper examines the Dundas Harbour relocations, the High Arctic relocations and the Cumberland Sound evacuations to Pangnirtung. The section on individuals considers people evacuated on an urgent basis for medical treatment in the south, removal of children to attend school, adults sent south for vocational training, and those who found themselves attracted by various kinds of opportunities – usually employment or education – to settlements. It also considers why some families decided to leave settlements for life on the land. The closing of communities covered in the final section are Kivitoo, Padloping and South Camp on the Belcher Islands.

In an effort to standardize terminology used in this paper, the report uses four terms to help

³ Hugh Brody, *Living Arctic: Hunters of the Canadian North*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987. p. 89

⁴ Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG 18 (RCMP), Vol. 55, File TA 500-8-1-10, “Lake Harbour Conditions Amongst Eskimos,” 11 January 1967.

⁵ For a discussion of the seasonal rounds see: John Bennett and Susan Diana Mary Rowley. *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004. And Milton Freeman Research, Limited. *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project Report*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1976.

⁶ For detailed analysis of these movements see: David Damas. *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002 and R. Quinn Duffy. *The Road to Nunavut: The Progress of the Eastern Arctic Inuit since the Second World War*. Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988.

⁷ The Qikiqtani Truth Commission and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association conducted almost 500 interviews with Inuit and Qallunaat in the Baffin Region and in Ottawa between 2002 and 2008.

distinguish types of moves in the context of motivation. *Relocation* refers to the planned movement of people to a location that has been chosen by an exterior agent. *Migration* refers to moves that were or appear to have been voluntary or by enticements.⁸ *Dislocations* refer to coerced moves undertaken by Inuit who felt pressure from *Qallunaat* (non-Inuit), usually government representatives to move either permanently or for a specific reason, such as schooling. *Evacuations* refer to the temporary movement of people by government in response to imminent threats, either real or perceived.

A discussion of the cross-cultural challenges in seeking and communicating consent is included because it helps explain why officials may have mistaken a pressured “dislocation” from a voluntary “migration”.

Moves between 1950 and 1975 affected every Inuit family in the Baffin Region. Every Inuk who appeared before the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) had experienced the long separation from family members because of relocations, medical evacuations, or children sent away to school. The QTC heard about the lingering effects of a previous generation’s experience of unexpected moves to and from schools, settlements or hospitals. Each move adding to the harmful impacts the separation of an individual from family and cultural practices central to a worldview rooted in the land and its resources. The trans-generational effects of these moves are still being felt by Inuit today.

The paper recognizes that the growth of settlements cannot be understood without acknowledging that many Inuit chose to move off the land because they believed life in the settlement would prove to be a positive experience, as they were repeatedly told by government and by some Inuit already working in settlements.⁹ In the words of Gene Rheaume, active as both a politician and a bureaucrat in the period, “it was a [sometimes] a subtle pressure, but it was coming at you from everywhere!”¹⁰ New arrivals expected any sacrifices they made in moving to benefit their children and family in the long term. Access to housing, healthcare, schools and wage employment was explicitly promised to Inuit. The reality, however, was much often much harsher than they could have imagined, especially during the first years in a settlement. Even over time, however, improvements were either very slow to arrive or were never fully realized. Other papers, including the histories of individual communities and those on the topics of settlements, development, housing and education consider the problems with settlement life in more detail.

KINSHIP AND PLACE

Recognizing the importance of both kinship and place in the Inuit worldview is crucial to understanding the impact of all types of moves on people.¹¹ Inuit kinship systems are different

⁸ Damas (2002), p.3.

⁹ For the purposes of the QTC reports, the English term “camp” has been dropped in favour of the term *ilagittununagivaktangat* (plural *ilagiit nunagivaktangit*). The English translation (and meaning of the term in English) is based on the Inuktut definition: “A place used regularly for hunting, harvesting and gathering.” Implicit in this meaning is the concept of home before the settlement period. The choice of the term was determined through a terminology/linguistics workshop organized by the QTC in April 2010.

¹⁰ Gene Rheaume. Telephone interview with QTC staff. (March 16, 2010) Ottawa.

¹¹ Kinship patterns were not uniform among Inuit groups. Anthropologists during the last century have studied individual groups and raised important distinction about cultural practices, including kinship. Further information can be found in David Damas, ed. *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 5. Washington: Smithsonian

than the traditional immediate and extended-family connotations in European/Western cultural traditions. As Christopher Trott has explained, the concept of *ilagiit* (kindred) is based on the root *ila-* which simply means “to be with” or “accompany”. In contrast, modern European/Western family relationships are interwoven into many aspects of the legal system, to the extent that it is almost impossible to disown a family member. For Inuit, families are the combined result of birth, circumstance and choice. Kinship has practical implications for security, psychological well-being, hunting, food sharing, material resources, intra- and inter-group relations, education of children and leadership.¹²

Central to the Inuit worldview is the interconnectedness of kinship and place. Anthropologist Jean Briggs clearly describes the impact of physically separating a person from a kinship group: “When I inquired about relatives who had moved away, I was told, ‘We don’t use kin terms for those people; they don’t live here.’”¹³ The testimony of anthropology professor Robert Williamson before the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP) explores another dimension of the relationship between kin and place, demonstrating how difficult it must be for an Inuk to leave the places associated with his or her kin. Williamson said:

Every geographic feature...has names and the name is a metaphor for the totality of the group remembrance of all forms of land relatedness, of the successes and failures in hunting, it recalls births, deaths, childhood, marriage, death, adventure. It recalls the narrations and the ancient sanctified myths.¹⁴

In sum, as Inuit physically travel pathways across the land, sea and ice, they strengthen their relationships with each other and deepen their understanding of their own pasts and kin.

Qallunaat often mistook and continue to mistake the semi-nomadic history of Inuit as evidence of a lack of attachment to place. In fact, however, the ability to move to follow game while also maintaining connections with kin living over a wide geographic area is the result of an intimate experience of place. In interpreting what he witnessed while living with Inuit, Williamson commented: “The attention to this habitat is as strong as the attachment of kinship. It is a love of a very profound kind.”¹⁵

CONSENT

Consent implies the act of giving ascent or approval.¹⁶ As a legal concept, consent can be either expressed or implied, but must be obtained voluntarily and with a full understanding of the

Institution, 1984. Damas, David. *Igluligmiut Kinship and Local Groupings: A Structural Approach*. Ottawa: Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1963. Jean L Briggs. *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970.

¹² William Kemp, “Baffinland Eskimo”. In David Damas, ed. *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 5. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1984. p. 470.

¹³ Briggs, p. 39.

¹⁴ Robert Williamson. Testimony in front of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). *The High Arctic Relocation: A Report on the 1953-55 Relocation*. Ottawa: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994. p.11.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ The aim of this paper is not to determine the validity of consent obtained by government agents for various relocations, evacuations, and dislocations involving Inuit in the Baffin Region between 1950 and 1975. The reader should be aware, however, that intercultural communication problems often complicated Inuit and government understandings of the purpose, outcomes and effects of movements as well as Inuit willingness to move.

proposed action and possible effects. The greater the risks or impacts, the greater the need to obtain real consent. Northern agents (government staff, RCMP, missionaries, nurses, ship stewards) who facilitated relocation, evacuation or dislocation programs may have believed they received consent from participants because Inuit never said “No, I will not go.” Inuit acquiescence however, was likely a culturally appropriate form of dealing with Qallunaat who, in the perspective of Inuit, were not asking for consent – they were demanding it. When Commissioner Iglooliorde asked Gordon Rennie, a former HBC Manager, “Did anybody ever question you personally or did anybody ever question the dog laws in those days at the time when the dogs were running loose?” Rennie replied, “They wouldn’t dare.” He went on to explain, “nobody questioned me...I was a person in authority then.” This acquiescence occurred within an established power relationship and psychological context that manifested itself in a deep sense of *ilira*.¹⁷ Rosemary Kuptana, former President of Canada’s national Inuit organization Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) explains in the historical period “a challenge to the authority of the Qallunaat or defiance of their requests was almost unthinkable.”¹⁸ Because of *ilira*, people ended up agreeing to do things they did not want to do.¹⁹

The capacity of government to obtain consent was complicated by *ilira* and the reality of delivering services in the Baffin Region. For a variety of reasons, administrators were unable to adequately predict or inform Inuit of the possible outcomes of relocations, evacuations, migrations and dislocations. The region and its people (Inuit) was isolated from decision makers and planners because of insufficient representation, poor communication and transportation infrastructure. Administrators planning the moves neglected - or were ignorant of - Inuit cultural practices that were affected by the moves. The intercultural communication issues between Inuit and Qallunaat (language barriers and differing cultural perceptions) further precluded the obtainment of valid consent prior to moves.²⁰ Lastly, the government consistently failed to provide adequate funding or resources for planned or sponsored moves.

¹⁷ The concept of *ilira* was a predominated characteristic of many Inuit/Qallunaat relationships. The concept is explored in detail in the QTC report on Intercultural Communications.

¹⁸ Rosemarie Kuptana. 'Ilira, or Why it Was Unthinkable for Inuit to Challenge Qallunaat Authority.' *Inuit Art Quarterly* 8, 3 (Fall 1993): 7.

¹⁹ Brody, Hugh. Testimony before the QTC. (10 March 2009) Ottawa. [QTOT17]

²⁰ For a detailed discussion of the problems of intercultural communication in the period see the QTC issue report on Intercultural Communications.

MOVED GROUPS

THE DUNDAS HARBOUR RELOCATIONS

The Dundas Harbour relocations (1934-1947) are early examples of government-directed moves of Inuit. While the relocations fall outside the QTC's temporal focus, they are included in this report because they demonstrate a pattern of government practice. Other examples of this pattern include the Endai Lake, Garry Lake and Whale Cove relocations.²¹ People were moved by government because the government assumed that all Inuit were similar. They government generalized that all Inuit were semi-nomadic hunters who could live anywhere in the Arctic. It neglected the subtle nuances of regional identity; differing seasons, linguistics, wildlife, geography, food preferences, technological adaptations, and survival strategies. Despite the specialization of culture within specific regions, the government transferred Inuit from areas where they had no knowledge of animal patterns or environmental conditions. In many cases, the survival strategies they had relied on for centuries were unusable in the new locations. The Dundas Harbour relocations are an early example within the Baffin Region of this type of government action.

Dundas Harbour is located on the southern shore of Devon Island in the High Arctic. The Canadian government created the Arctic Islands Game Preserve in 1925 to protect Arctic mammal species and to further Canadian sovereignty.²² Devon Island, and other islands north of Hudson Bay and the Hudson Straight, was included in the preserve.²³ An improvement in the previously strained relationship between government and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), as well as increased concern about Inuit welfare in the 1930s, prompted the government to relax restrictions on the establishment of HBC posts within the preserve. The HBC was anxious to re-establish posts in the High Arctic obtaining government permission to open a post at "Dundas Harbour and 'stock' the district with impoverished natives from Baffin Island."²⁴ In 1934, the Deputy Minister of the Interior signed an agreement whereby the HBC assumed responsibility for the welfare of any "natives" it relocated. Additionally, the agreement stipulated that "in the event of the company withdrawing from Devon Island the company agrees to return the natives to their homes at its own expense or to transfer them to such other trapping grounds as may be designated by the Department."²⁵

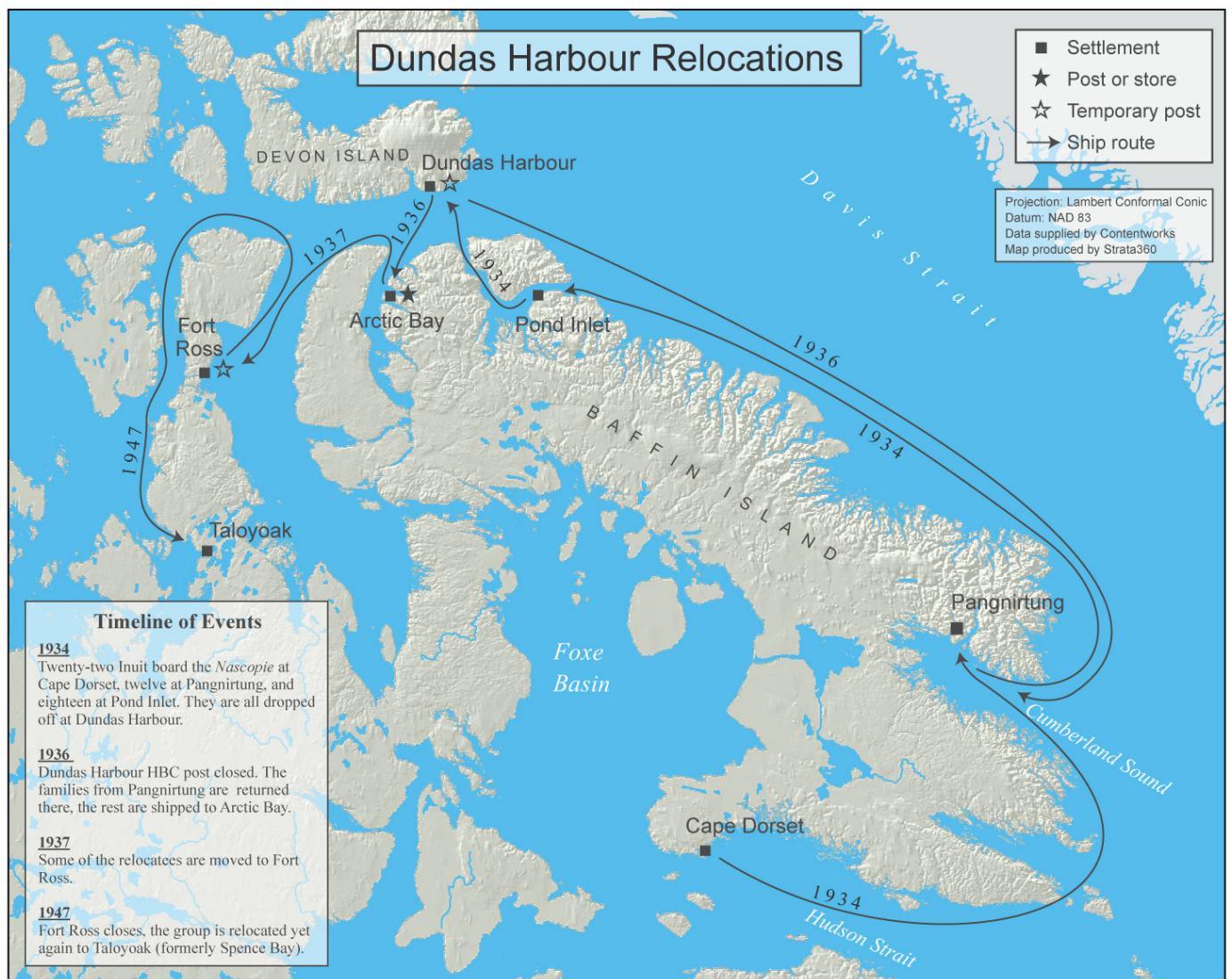
²¹ For a detailed discussion of these relocations see: Tester, Frank J., and Peter Keith Kulchyski. *Tammarniit (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic, 1939-63*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994.

²² Lyle Dick. *Muskox Land : Ellesmere Island in the Age of Contact*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2001. p. 286.

²³ Marc Denhez. *Aboriginal Rights and the Sovereignty of Countries*. N.p.: Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. 1982. Available online at: www.cwis.org. Accessed January 27, 2010.

²⁴ Diamond Jenness. *Eskimo Administration: II Canada*. Montreal: Arctic Institute of North America, 1962. pp. 56-57.

²⁵ It is unclear to what extent the government was involved in "designating other trapping grounds", if at all. As the Dundas Harbour relocations fall outside of the QTC temporal mandate, the research team did not conduct in-depth archival research into the Dundas Harbour Relocations. Further research should be conducted at both LAC and the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg to provide a complete and accurate history of the relocations and the level of government involvement. Quote taken from Jenness, p. 57.



Map 2: The Dundas Harbour Relocations.

In August of 1934, the HBC ship *Nascopie* picked up the post manager along with 52 people and 109 *qimmiit* (Inuit sled dogs) from Cape Dorset, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. The 52 people, along with 109 *qimmiit* (Inuit sled dogs) were transferred to Dundas Harbour where they were expected to trap and trade for the following two years. The relocation was a failure. The harbour was choked with rough ice and proved exceptionally difficult to navigate in the small boats available. The HBC post closed after two years and the *Nascopie* returned to pick up the relocatees. The families from Pangnirtung were returned home, but the others were transferred to the Arctic Bay area.²⁶ By keeping the relocatees in the Arctic Bay, the HBC was better

²⁶ Library and Archives Canada. RG 85, Vol. 2145. *Nascopie Diary*. 12 September, 1936.

positioned to attempt another resettlement experiment the following year.²⁷ In 1937, some of these relocatees in Arctic Bay area were moved to the new Fort Ross HBC post on the Bellot Strait. It also proved unsuitable and the group was relocated yet again in 1947 to Spence Bay (now Taloyoak), on the Boothia Peninsula. In approximately a dozen years, the people had been relocated four times. Some eventually went back to Arctic Bay.

Susan Singoorie is one of the few Dundas Harbour relocatees still living. She was sent to Dundas Harbour when she was eight years old. More than 75 years later. She shared her experience with the QTC:

We set camp on the other side. We experienced a lot of cold. We were just in a tent. There was no snow to build iglus there. It became very windy. Before the ice melted, we would move by dog team and my mother walked well. They were not hungry because there was lots of wildlife up there. Once, the tent was drooping from the cold. We used only *qulliit* for heat and light. Once it became very windy. We could not keep the camp because it was so windy in the tent. We started walking, my father tied up ropes around our waists. We would stand for long time. It was very painful. I wanted to share my experience with you. When we got to RCMP shed, we were brought to the HBC store and we all stayed in there. It was crowded. Once ice set in we started moving again. Once we got an iglu built, it seemed to be so much warmer.²⁸

Others testified about the Dundas Harbour relocation on behalf of deceased relatives. Rhoda Tunraq told the Commission about her parents move to Dundas Harbour and how the subsequent relocations had grave effects on her mother:

They were living in Arctic Bay when they were moved to Devon Island. Then when they got used to Devon Island. After a while they were happy there as a family. When they moved back to Arctic Bay, the families were dying off even while they were living here. There is a saying in Inuktitut that they “cut off the life” so I feel that they were cut short in their life. My mother used to say that. [Interviewee too emotional to talk] My mother was never happy because she always spoke about being homesick for Devon Island.²⁹

The effects of the relocations were felt for generations by those who were moved and their descendants. Some relocatees longed for the rest of their lives for their families and ancestral homeland which they had been made to leave behind. Tagoona Qavavouq told the Commission that her mother in-law Ajau went “insane” after the relocations and died prematurely. She explained to Commissioner Igloolior:

When the elders are moved to a different area, when they return home, they can

²⁷ Another possibility, suggested by Historian Philip Goldring, was the people were deposited in Arctic Bay because of shipping logistics. Because of ice conditions, Pangnirtung was generally the last stop on the ship’s itineraries during the short summer sailing season. The ship would not be able to reach the Hudson strait posts late in the summer, so the relocatees from Dorset would have had to spend the winter in Montreal before being returned the following year. Rather than provide for the relocatees in the south, it was much easier to send them to Arctic Bay. Source: Personal Correspondence Dr. Philip Goldring to Ryan Shackleton, Contentworks. March 24, 2010.

²⁸ Singoorie, Susan. Testimony before the QTC. (27 November 2008) Ottawa. [QTOT08]

²⁹ Qavaouq, Lisha. Testimony before the QTC. (23 April 2008) Arctic Bay. [QTAB12]

heal and feel better when they return home. Because they came from Cape Dorset, they were like orphans here. They were different, being different people from a different land, people did not really communicate with them in the same way. We always feel it, those of us who are the wives.³⁰

Others, who spoke to their children and grandchildren about one day returning home to Cape Dorset have since passed away.³¹

The Dundas Harbour relocations serve as an early example of government relocation programs that moved Inuit around the Arctic. They demonstrate a pattern of government action and perceptions about Inuit: they were adaptable and moveable. Additionally, the relocations provide evidence the government was interested in developing the Arctic economically through the HBC, all the while attempting to reduce its administrative burden. Nonetheless, as a result of the relocations, the relocatees became increasingly dependent on the government. With no way home and no strong kinship support network in place the relocatees had no choice but to adapt and accept their imposed situation. The legacy of the relocations continues on both the northern and southern coasts of Baffin Island, especially in Cape Dorset, Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet. The children and grandchildren of those relocated, while closely connected to their current communities, want to learn more about family members living in other communities and experience the land that sustained their ancestors.

THE HIGH ARCTIC RELOCATIONS

While the QTC's mandate excludes an investigation of the High Arctic Relocations³², the events cannot be ignored in a report on the history of mobility and Inuit life.³³ The High Arctic relocations provide another example of the government's pattern of moving Inuit. Inuit were expected to be adaptable but insufficient resources were provided for the relocation and poor planning created further hardships for the relocatees. Additionally, Inuit were insufficiently informed about the moves and the possible consequences.

Planning for the move started in early 1950. The plan originally developed with the dual purpose of improving upon the welfare conditions of Northern Quebec Inuit and strengthening sovereignty claim in the arctic islands.³⁴ Families from Northern Quebec would be relocated to the Devon Island where the game conditions were thought to be better. The populating of the area demonstrated use and occupation. The plan was also considered an experiment to to determine "if Eskimos can be induced to live on the northern islands."³⁵ Throughout the planning

³⁰ Qavavouq, Tagoona. Testimony before the QTC. (23 April 2008) Arctic Bay. [QTAB21]

³¹ Kaujak, Paulosie. Testimony before the QTC. (23 April 2008) Arctic Bay. [QIAB17]

³² The Qikiqtani Truth Commission will not investigate matters relating to the "high arctic relocations" and "residential schools" or other matters that have been or are subject to other processes, including judicial or quasi-judicial processes. *The High Arctic Relocation: A Report on the 1953-55 Relocation* by René Dussault and George Erasmus, produced by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, published by Canadian Government Publishing, 1994

³³ Due to the fact that RCAP dealt with this issue in detail the QTC did not focus its research on the High Arctic relocations.

³⁴ Tester and Kulchyski, p. 21.

³⁵ LAC, RG 85, Vol. 316, file 20-1, part. 29. Cantley, J. Memo to the Director, Northern Administration, and Lands Branch. 12 November 1953. Quoted in Marcus, Alan R. *Out in the Cold : The Legacy of Canada's Inuit Relocation Experiment in the High Arctic*. Copenhagen: IWGIA, 1992. pp. 13-14.

stages there was concern that the experiment might not work, Inuit might not like it in the High Arctic. To alleviate these concerns, The Federal Administrator of the Arctic, Alexander Stevenson, stated that after two years if the relocatees were “dissatisfied or unhappy in their new environment they could return to Port Harrison [*Inukjuak*.]”³⁶ A similar promise had been made by the RCMP involved in the planning and implementation of the relocation. Henry Larsen, the Officer Commanding “G” Division, promised, “Families will be brought home at the end of one year if they so desire.”³⁷ These promises were never honoured.³⁸

During the summer of 1953, seven families from Inukjuak in Northern Quebec and three families from Pond Inlet on Baffin Island were sent to Cornwallis and Devon islands aboard the Arctic supply ship *C.D. Howe*.³⁹ Upon arrival at Craig Harbour on Devon Island, the families were broken up.⁴⁰ Some were to be offloaded at Craig Harbour, while others were to be moved to Alexandria Fiord or the military weather station at Resolute. They had never expected that they were not all going to the same place, the first time they heard they would be forcibly separated from one another came aboard the *C.D. Howe*, when they were already in the High Arctic waters.⁴¹ Samwillie Elijahsalak, who was relocated to Grise Fiord in 1953, testified before RCAP about the enforced separation. His “mother was told that her children were going to go to Alexandria Fiord. She was not happy at being told that her children would have to go where the government people told her they would go.”⁴² The forced separation of families demonstrated to the relocatees they were pawns in the government’s relocation plans. The plan to distribute some of the relocatees at different point in the high Arctic demonstrates that the welfare of Inuit was not the government’s primary concern. Instead the government was concerned with populating the High Arctic and providing workers to the base at Resolute.

After disembarking some passengers at Craig Harbour, the *C.D. Howe* then met up with the icebreaker *D'Iberville*, which was to transfer some people to the RCMP post at Alexandria Fiord. The ship could not reach the post, however, due to ice conditions. Two families were dropped off at Craig Harbour to join the relocated group while the remaining families were delivered to Resolute.⁴³ By this point, the relocatees had been on board the ship for weeks in substandard living conditions. Martha Flaherty was eight years old when she and her family were relocated to Grise Fiord. She spoke to the Commissioner about her experiences on the *C.D. Howe*:

I had nightmares for years because of the ship experience we had. It was dark and rainy. We wore life jackets. That was scary. I used to be picked up by an RCMP officer and he would hang me in the water. I kept that memory for years. I had nightmares about that. I fought so that they would not brush cut my hair because

³⁶ RCAP, p. 6.

³⁷ RCAP, p. 6.

³⁸ It was only in 1996, following RCAP recommendations and other political initiatives, were relocatees given compensation and an opportunity to be returned home.

³⁹ The Pond Inlet families were sent along to help the Inukjuaq people adapt to the High Arctic.

⁴⁰ Originally, a third group of Inuit from Fort Chimo had been included in the plan and were slated for relocation to Resolute where they were expected to be employed at the airbase. The Fort Chimo Inuit, who had experience working at an airbase, were dropped from the plan in 1953 and the relocation was reorganized so that Inuit from Inukjuak would take their place in Resolute.

⁴¹ RCAP, p. 72.

⁴² Samwillie Elijahsalak, Testimony in front of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People. RCAP, p. 43.

⁴³ Dick, p. 433.

they thought we had lice. I ran upstairs and locked myself with my mother and I don't remember after that.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Martha Flaherty. Testimony before the QTC. (27 November 2008) Ottawa. [QTOT06]



Map 3: High Arctic Relocations.



Figure 1: Helicopter at Grise Fiord [on beach, RCMP officer ducks under blades, Canadian Coast Guard Ship C.D. Howe in bay beyond]. Taken by Lynn Ball, 1967. Source: NWT Archives, G-1979-023: 0117.



Figure 2: Philapusie E9-718 and his wife, Anna, both from Fort Harrison originally, now at Grise Fiord. Taken by Lynn Ball, 1967. Source: NWT Archives, G-1979-023: 0214.



Figure 3: Family in Kivitoo, c 1959. Source: L. Wilson, *DEWLine "War" Stories, Volume 2*. Online at: www.lswilson.ca/foxd49.jpg. Photograph courtesy of Martin Allinson.

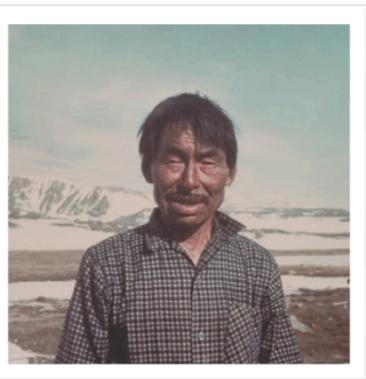


Figure 4: Inuit man Milkoalik, husband of Akootook (G-1979-023: 0361). Photograph taken by Kenn Harper at Padloping Island. Source: NWT Archives, G-1979-023: 0360.

From Craig Harbour, people were soon moved approximately 60 km away from the RCMP post to the Lindstrom Peninsula. A government official said that it was to reduce the “tendency to look for handouts.”⁴⁵ In 1956, the RCMP detachment moved to the current site of Grise Fiord, although only two families lived at the post. The rest remained at the camp on the Lindstrom Peninsula until the arrival of the federal day school in 1961.⁴⁶

Living conditions at both Resolute and the Lindstrom Peninsula (the site of Grise Fiord) were exceptionally harsh.⁴⁷ It must be remembered how different the High Arctic was from Inukjuak in northern Quebec. The distance between the two locations was approximately the same distance between Miami, Florida and Toronto, Ontario. There was a three-month period of darkness, much colder temperatures, completely different landscapes and ice formations, and different animal patterns. Additionally, cultural and language differences created difficulties between the people of Pond Inlet and Inukjuak. One anthropologist recorded that “indifference, ridicule, and even hostility were not uncommon features of intergroup relations.”⁴⁸ At Resolute, Inuit were provided with inadequate supplies, substandard housing and a broken boat. The Craig Harbour Inuit had limited building supplies and no access to goods and services. In 1955, 34 more people were relocated from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet to Resolute, while another family of four was relocated from Inukjuak to Grise Fiord.

The High Arctic relocations affected more than those individuals moved north - it also affected the families left behind, as well as succeeding generations born in the High Arctic. RCAP discussed some of these effects in its final report:

The relocation had an immediate impact on some people and a longer term impact on others, leading to depression and despondency. Family relationships were disrupted in various ways. Families were broken up as a result of the initial departure from Inukjuak. There was further disruption when the families were unexpectedly separated onto different ships and sent to different places. These separations continued for years and were compounded by the departure of people to hospitals in the south for treatment of tuberculosis. Young people had great difficulty finding spouses.⁴⁹

RCAP condemned the government for the manner in which it handled the relocation:

The Department proceeded with the High Arctic Relocation without proper authority. The relocation was not voluntary. It proceeded without free and

⁴⁵ RCAP, p. 450.

⁴⁶ Tester, Frank J., and Peter Keith Kulchyski. *Tammarniit (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic, 1939-63*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994. p. 195.

⁴⁷ Inuit dropped off at Craig Harbour were moved almost 70 kms away from the RCMP posts to reduced contact between the Inuit and the police.

⁴⁸ Milton Freeman, “The Grise Fiord Project” In David Dumas (Ed.), *Arctic*, volume 5 in the Handbook of North American Indians series. Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1984. 678.

⁴⁹ RCAP, p. 27

informed consent, there were material misrepresentations, and material information was not disclosed. The true nature of the relation – that is, a rehabilitation project – and the inherent risks were not disclosed...Moreover, many Inuit were kept in the High Arctic for many years against their will when the government refused to respond to their requests to return.⁵⁰

Fundamentally, RCAP found “The government was negligent in its planning and implementation of the relocation. It did not keep the promises made to the relocatees.”⁵¹ Nonetheless, in 1996, the government signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Makivik Corporation (working on behalf of individuals relocated to the High Arctic) which acknowledged the contributions of the relocated Inuit to a “Canadian presence” in the High Arctic and the “hardship, suffering and loss” encountered during the initial years of the relocation.⁵² \$10 million was awarded to the individuals, but no apology was offered or given.

The High Arctic relocations stand out in the history of the Baffin region partly because of the publicity generated by RCAP investigation but also because of the sheer magnitude of the experiment and the lasting effects of the relocation. Relocatees were moved to far-off and remote locations creating a dependency on government for the provision of services and travel.⁵³ The moves stand out vividly in Inuit memory and history. The horrific travel aboard the *C.D. Howe*, the painful separation of families, and difficult conditions – especially hunger, depression, profound loneliness and poor shelter – continued for some years as a result of poor government planning.

THE CUMBERLAND SOUND EVACUATIONS

In the winter of 1962, the Pangnirtung evacuations were undertaken by federal authorities who feared starvation among Inuit of Cumberland Sound after disease killed more than half the qimmiit population.⁵⁴ Concerned that Inuit would be unable to hunt due to the loss of qimmiit, the Department of Northern Affairs (DNA)⁵⁵ believed that only two support options existed: supply provisions to the ilaglit nunagivaktangit or temporary relocation to the settlement until the dog population recovered.⁵⁶ The government preferred the precautionary approach of moving

⁵⁰ RCAP, p. 142-143.

⁵¹ RCAP, p. 143.

⁵² Memorandum of Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada as represented by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and, Makivik Corporation. March 28, 1996. (On File at Contentworks)

⁵³ Even today, Inuit in the small settlements of Grise Fiord and Resolute do not have access to same level of services that are provided in the other Qikiqtani settlements. See Jaypeeetee Akeeagok. QTC Public Consultation Interview. March 26, 2010. Grise Fiord.

⁵⁴ Archival documents reveal the disease which killed between 600 and 800 was likely canine hepatitis. The Pangnirtung dog deaths and the government response to the perceived crisis is explored in detail in the QTC background Report, *Qimmiit*. LAC, RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File A-1000/170, pt. 1, Memo from J. Coleman, Director to B.G. Sivertz, Director, Northern Administration Branch, re: control of diseases of dogs in NWT. May 15, 1962.

⁵⁵ The government of Canada department responsible for Northern and Inuit programs evolved throughout the period under study. For ease of reading, this essay will use the term Department of Northern Affairs (DNA), when referencing the various manifestations of the department including : Department of the Interior, Department of Mines and Resources, Department of Resources and Development, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

⁵⁶ LAC. RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File-A-100/170, pt. 1. Memo from C.M. Bolger, Administrator of the Arctic to Director re: dog deaths. March 7, 1962. (A03636)

people into the settlement. Officials were concerned that poor weather conditions and the limited transportation infrastructure in the region would make it difficult to deliver relief to the ilagiit nunagivaktangit.⁵⁷ Government also worried providing Inuit with relief until the dog populations recovered would result in too many people losing interest in hunting and a corresponding a rise of dependency. Harold Zuckernman, the local welfare officer said:

Although several of the camps close to Pangnirtung are in no danger of starvation they have suffered seriously through the depletion of their dogs. This has reduced both their meat procurement and their cash income through the sales of the skins. The situation is normal. During this time many of the camp members will be idle as their hunting activities are restricted. We could provide relief assistance to the camps, however, it is felt by the people at Pangnirtung [Qallunaat] that this would not be appreciated as relief during a crisis. There would most likely develop a dependence on relief assistance which would be hard to terminate. Rather than have the camp members idle in their camp and receiving relief issued we feel it is preferable that they move to Pangnirtung where they can take part in the work programme now in progress. They can also participate in the crafts programme which is now getting under way. Such a programme, if successful would enable them to return to their camps and supplement their hunting by the production of crafts.⁵⁸

The logic in this quotation is confusing. The establishment of a make-work program enticed Inuit into an artificial and unsustainable wage economy. While the government supported dependency on a make work project, it was not willing to support the ilagiit nunagivaktangit with relief.⁵⁹ The quote also demonstrated a lack of cultural understanding. Zuckerman's concern about relief neglects the understanding of hunting; for Inuit it is a way of life, not just a means to procure nourishment.⁶⁰ Additionally, the use of the term "idle" connotes unproductive time and fails to acknowledge important cultural activities that were occurring during seemingly "idle" times such as socialization, storytelling, and preparing hides.

The decision to evacuate anyone willing to move to Pangnirtung came in March 1962. The coordination of the evacuation was tasked to Peter Murdock, Superintendent of the Rehabilitation Center at Frobisher Bay.⁶¹ Inuit living close to Pangnirtung were moved using the remaining dog teams; the ilagiit nunagivaktangit further afield were evacuated by aircraft. DNA Regional Administrator, R.J. [Bud] Orange, reported to the Administrator of the Arctic "In every

⁵⁷ LAC. RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File-A-100/170, pt. 1. Memo to R.J. Orange, Regional Administrator to Administrator of the Arctic, re: Dog Epidemic in Pangnirtung. April 15, 1962.

⁵⁸ LAC. RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File-A-100/170, pt. 1. Memo from H. Zukerman, Superintendent of Welfare to Regional Administrator, re: welfare conditions at Pangnirtung. March 14, 1962. (A03634)

⁵⁹ Despite the large number of qimmiit lost to disease, hunting would have continued in a ilagiit nunagivaktangat. People would have pooled their remaining qimmiit to make teams, while others would have walked to nearby flow-edges or harvested other species. Dog disease was prevalent throughout the region during this period, but ilagiit nunagivaktangit in Cumberland Sound area were the only ilagiit nunagivaktangit which was evacuated.

⁶⁰ Caribou food was nutritionally rich and preferred by Inuit to the types of foods provided at the posts or stores.

⁶¹ LAC, RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File A-1000/170, pt. 1, Pangnirtung NWT - General File (incl. Padloping & Padloping Island, NWT), Memo from R.J. Orange, Regional Administrator to Administrator of the Arctic, re: dog epidemic in Pangnirtung. April 05, 1962

situation, plans were discussed with the people and only then did evacuation take place.⁶² The authorities left rations behind for those who refused to move.⁶³ By the end of April 1962, only 83 people remained on the land; 464 had either been evacuated by the government or had voluntarily moved into the settlement. The three ilagittununagivaktangit that remained in May of 1962, Kingmilksoon, Ikaloolik and Avatuktoo, each still had enough qimmiit to make up a team.⁶⁴ According to the archival record, almost a fifth of the population of Cumberland Sound decided to remain on the land.

Many Inuit at the QTC hearings in Pangnirtung spoke about evacuations of 1963. In many cases, Inuit stated, there was no need to be evacuated. Despite the death of many dogs, some dog teams did survive, and besides, Inuit were able to walk to the flow edge to hunt. Inuit felt that government acted too hastily. The rushed evacuations resulted in the loss of personal property, such as boats, motors, skins and clothing, that were irreplaceable in the settlement. It also lead to the temporary separation of families. Norman Komoartuk, who was 13 when he was taken ahead of his family to Pangnirtung, remembered, “the RCMP grabbed and took me to the plane.” He was loaded on top of the cargo and flown to the settlement. Arriving in Pangnirtung without his parents he recalled “I had no relatives here then. I didn’t know where I could stay because my mother was never picked up. I had no parents. I was going through a struggle because it was over a week and my parents were not here.”⁶⁵

Pangnirtung did not have the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the large influx of people arriving from the ilagittununagivaktangit. While DNA reportedly “worked out plans for housing, employment, community hunting, relief, welfare, etc.” the plans for housing were wholly inadequate.⁶⁶ The government planned to house people in:

Accommodation now occupied by the Eskimos who reside permanently at Pangnirtung. Houses will be constructed for the new arrivals using a snow wall with a duck [canvas] roof. It is considered by the Eskimos at Pangnirtung that this type of dwelling is mot [sic] suitable for March and April. When the warmer weather comes they will be moved to tents.⁶⁷

Inuit that agreed to relocate to the community found the pre-existing housing overcrowded and the temporary shelter, a combination of canvas tent and snow-house, were not warm enough without the proper equipment. The organizers of the evacuation were either unaware, or indifferent towards, the significant differences between a summer tent and a well-insulated qarmaq. Leah Eovic, shared with the QTC memories of arriving in the settlement in March 1962:

We had to leave in March. The weather was very cold. We arrived with just our

⁶² LAC, RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File A-1000/170, pt. 1, Memo from R.J. Orange, Regional Administrator to Administrator of the Arctic, re: dog epidemic in Pangnirtung. April 05, 1962. (A03629)

⁶³ LAC, RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File A-1000/170, pt. 1, Memo from R.J. Orange, Regional Administrator to Administrator of the Arctic, re: dog epidemic in Pangnirtung. April 05, 1962. (A03629)

⁶⁴ LAC, RG 18, File TA-500-8-1-11. Memo regarding dog disease, evacuation of people in camp to Pangnirtung. April 03, 1962.

⁶⁵ Norman Komoartuk. Testimony before the QTC. (13 May, 2008) Pangnirtung [QTPA20]

⁶⁶ LAC, RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File A-1000/170, pt. 1, Letter from W.G. Fraser, Superintendent, re: Conditions among Eskimos, March 20, 1962. (A03631)

⁶⁷ LAC. RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File-A-100/170, pt. 1. Memo From H. Zukerman, Superintendent of Welfare to Regional Administrator, re: welfare conditions at Pangnirtung. March 7, 1962. (A03637)

bedding. We were told that we had to come here. The plane came and we had to pack very quickly. It was very hard. My older sister was living in Pangnirtung because we didn't have anywhere else to go. There was a lot of people staying there. We had to stay on the floor. Because there were so many people we had to get help from social services. We had to get canvas and to pitch our tents. In our camps, we had qarmaqs, but they're winterized. It was now hard to keep the children warm. There was only a Coleman stove. We put up a frame. We put some cardboard inside. It was very cold. We were brought here but back in our camp we had everything. We had food. But the only meat that was provided was Klic meat in cans...when you are not used to it, it wasn't easy to eat.⁶⁸

The government's primary concern was not housing needs, but instead, developing work programs that would lessen the likelihood of Inuit becoming reliant on relief. Some Inuit were employed to build houses and public works, while others took part in carving and handicraft production. The organized community hunting project transported the "better hunters" to the flow edge by autoboggan or the remaining dog teams.⁶⁹ The hunters were paid by \$20 per week with their catch distributed the Inuit gathered at Pangnirtung.⁷⁰

The Cumberland Sound Evacuations were rushed and inadequately planned. Inuit, who moved into the settlement expecting to be adequately sheltered and fed were cold and hungry. The government, anxious to avoid the tragedies of nearby area where Inuit starved, temporarily intensified its services so that it could monitor conditions amongst the Inuit of Cumberland Sound.

For many, the evacuation to Pangnirtung was temporary. Population statistics indicate that by the following year the majority of people returned to the land.⁷¹ The Cumberland Sound evacuations were not initiated by government to centralize Inuit in settlements, or to have them abandon traditional practices. Rather, the government undertook the evacuations to stave off potential disaster. The government, anxious to avoid the tragedies of Keewatin famine of 1957-58 and concerned about its ability to provide services in ilagiit nunagivaktangit, temporarily intensified its services in the settlement so that it could monitor conditions amongst the Inuit of Cumberland Sound. Inuit expected when they relocated that they would be adequately housed and fed, but in many cases these expectations went unfulfilled.

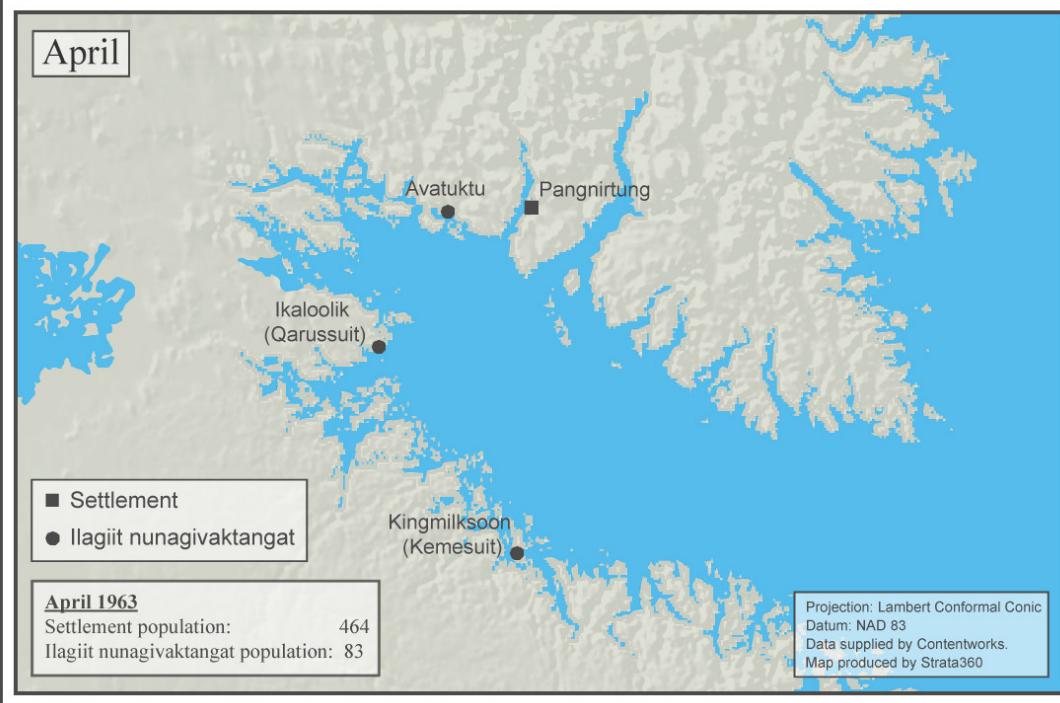
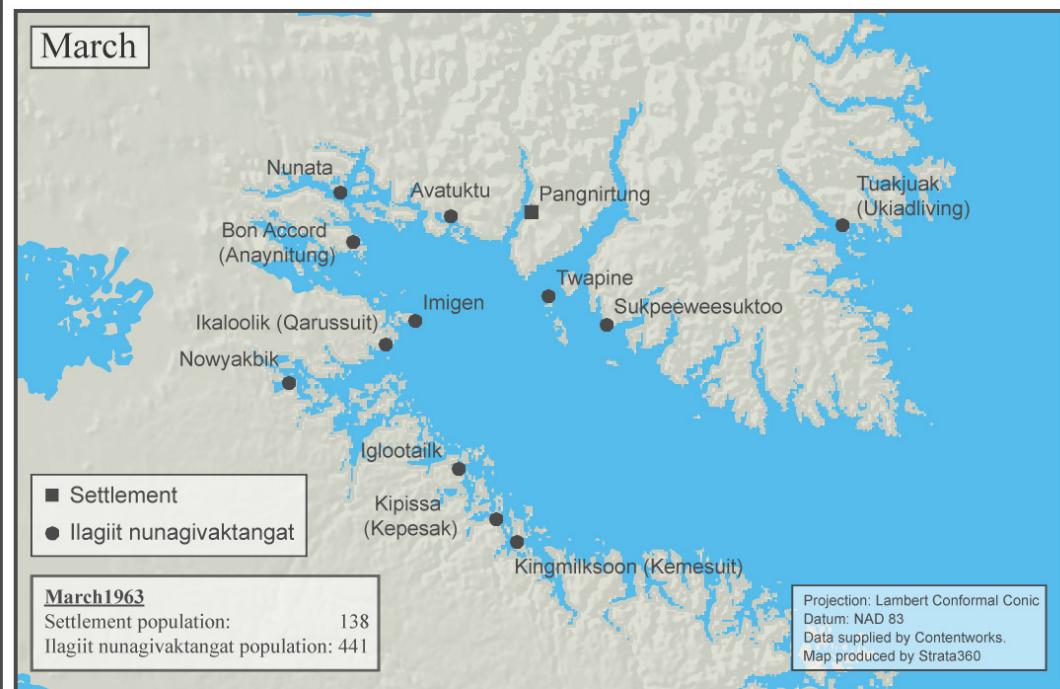
⁶⁸ Inuit relocated to Pangnirtung were expected to be sheltered by the Inuit who already lived at Pangnirtung. The overflow was to be housed in shelters consisting of snow walls and canvas roofs. These shelters would have been considered inappropriate for the cold months of March and April. LAC. RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File-A-100/170, pt. 1. Memo from H. Zukerman, Superintendent of Welfare to Regional Administrator, re: welfare conditions at Pangnirtung. March 14, 1962. (A03634)

⁶⁹ It is unclear how the agents defined who was a "better hunter". It is possible that "better hunters" may have been those best known to officials, or the Inuit most proficient in English. Another possibility is that those hunters selected to hunt for the community were the only ones who had any equipment left after the evacuations, other hunters may have had to abandon their equipment when they were evacuated.

⁷⁰ LAC. RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File-A-100/170, pt. 1. Memo From H. Zukerman, Superintendent of Welfare to Regional Administrator, re: welfare conditions at Pangnirtung. March 7, 1962. (A03637) and LAC, RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1952, File A-1000/170, pt. 1, Memo from R.J. Orange, Regional Administrator to Administrator of the Arctic, re: dog epidemic in Pangnirtung. April 05, 1962. (A03629)

⁷¹ Robert G. Mayes. "The Creation of a Dependent People: The Inuit of Cumberland Sounds, Northwest Territories." PhD. Department of Geography, McGill University, 1978. p. 215.

Cumberland Sound Evacuations, 1963



Map 4 Cumberland Sound Evacuations in 1963.

MOVING INDIVIDUALS

The QTC heard about students and families moved for schooling and medical treatment, or simply because they wanted to live in a settlement. Keeping in mind the importance of kinship in Inuit culture, and the vital role each person played in ensuring survival of the group, every move and an impact on a family. While a more detailed history of government-sponsored healthcare and education is described in other QTC background papers, this paper considers decision making, the mechanics, and the impacts of moves made for medical and educational reasons.

MEDICAL EVACUATIONS

Most communities in the Baffin Region had substandard medical facilities during the 1950-1975 period. The government relied on RCMP, missionaries and traders to deliver rudimentary first aid. Inuit needing medical attention for more acute medical conditions were evacuated outside of their community. Many of the evacuations that occurred during the second half of this period seem to have provided palliative care. Evacuations for medical care are emphasized in Inuit testimony, historical literature and popular culture.⁷² The majority of these evacuations occurred in response to Tuberculosis.

During the 1950s and early 1960s the Baffin Region was ravaged by tuberculosis. Between 1953 and 1964, almost 5000 Inuit from the Northwest Territories (almost half the Inuit population) had been institutionalized for treatment. The majority of Inuit from the Baffin region went to southern sanatoriums; a few people were treated in Pangnirtung at St. Luke's Mission Hospital.⁷³

The Eastern Arctic Patrol (EAP) began in 1922, bringing doctors, scientists, administrators and RCMP officers and supplies to various posts in the Eastern Arctic. After 1950, the annual patrol, through the vessel *C.D. Howe*, expanded its operations to battle the health crises facing Inuit. A key objective of the EAP was to "reduce tuberculosis to an absolute minimum, to conduct dental and medical surveys and immunization programs, to repatriate former patients to their homes and to evacuate patients requiring treatment in hospitals and sanatoriums in the South."⁷⁴ Each summer, the EAP would patrol to the points in the Eastern Arctic where it had previously been arranged for Inuit to gather. The visit to each point was short, often only a day or two, owing to the limited navigation season in the Eastern Arctic. The annual arrival of the EAP was looked upon with great trepidation by Inuit. Author Pat Grygier tells us, "Sometimes a priest would connive at hiding people who were afraid they would be sent south, and sometimes Inuit in outlying camps would flee when they saw the ship coming or when they heard the helicopter."⁷⁵ In some cases, the helicopter would fly to the nearby ilagiit nunagivaktangit where Inuit may have been hiding and take them to the ship.⁷⁶ One can only imagine the shock experienced by Inuit as helicopter dropped down, stopping only long enough to remove Inuit to the ship.

Once aboard the ship, Inuit were hastily examined by teams of doctors, dentists, radiologists and

⁷² The 2009 film *The Necessities of Life*, directed by Benoît Pilon, tells the story of an Inuit hunter who is sent to a southern sanatorium to recover from Tuberculosis.

⁷³ P.G. Nixon. Nixon, P.G. 'Early Administrative Developments in Fighting Tuberculosis Among Canadian Inuit: Bringing State Institutions Back In.' *Northern Review*, 2 (Winter 1988) p. 67. (B00663)

⁷⁴ F.H. Hicks, "The Eastern Arctic Medical Patrol", *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. (15 March 1969) 100(11): 538.

⁷⁵ Grygier, p. 95.

⁷⁶ LAC, RG 85, D-1-a, Vol. 1473, File 201-1-8, part 6. M. Onslow to Stevenson, Memorandum, 8 Jan. 1959, "Extract from Mr. Gould's Report on Arctic Bay Eastern Arctic Patrol 1958".

nurses.⁷⁷ Those suspected of having tuberculosis were identified and marked. Former NSO, and later NWT M.P. Gene Rheaume was aboard the *C.D. Howe* in the early 1950s:⁷⁸

It was so primitive even when I was on there. They marked a red arrow on his [an Inuk's] hand right after he had been x-rayed. That meant he wasn't allowed off the ship. So they got to learn. They tried to erase that ink because they knew. They took the parents- mother and father- and the ship would pull away and the kids were left standing on the beach.⁷⁹

Some evacuees were given just a few hours to gather their belongings and to say goodbye to family before boarding the ship and then trains to be transported to a sanatorium in Manitoba, Ontario or Quebec for an unknown amount of time. Others were given no time. They were identified, separated, and sent down into the hull of the ship. Walter Rudnicki, former Head of the Welfare Division of DNA, recounted to the QTC, "If it was a mother with a baby in the hood, the radiologist would pick the baby up and give it to whoever was standing closest."⁸⁰ Robert Williamson vividly described the horrible conditions aboard the medical ships:

The ship was deep in misery. It was terrible because it was the ship which carried the Inuit away from their homes to the sanatoria in the south. And they were herded together in the foc'sle, in the hold of the ship in three-tiered bunks, mass-fed, mass-accommodated. In the stormy seas they were sick, they were terrified, they were demoralized. They were frightened of what was happening to them, of what was likely to happen to them.⁸¹

Patients were kept on board the ship for the remainder of its summer long journey and were delivered at the end of the season to southern hospitals for treatment. Jonah Apak shared his childhood memories aboard the *C.D. Howe* with the QTC:

I was one of the people sent out on the *C.D. Howe* for TB [tuberculosis]. I did not want to leave my parents behind but we had no choice but to go for medical purposes. ... There was a section up front where the segregated the Inuit to that section where it was the most bumpiest. It was like we were treated low class, we were put there where there was a lot of movement.

Bryan Pearson, a long time resident, business owner and former politician in Iqaluit, spoke to Commissioner Iglooliora about the coercive nature of the evacuations. When the *C.D. Howe* arrived in Iqaluit one year in the early 1950s, Phyllis Harrison a social worker with DNA was visiting the qarmaqs in Apex. In one of the houses she visited Nuturaluk and his wife. Their two year old adopted son Atame was sick with tuberculosis. Phyllis tried to get the father to agree to send the baby south to receive medical attention but his father refused "because he knew he

⁷⁷ X-rays were also provided to Qallunaat stationed in the north. There was however a significant difference in the way Inuit and Qallunaat patients were x-rayed and treated.

⁷⁸ The *C.D. Howe* was a ship used to transport the E.A.P. around the Eastern Arctic after 1950s. Previous patrols had travelled aboard HBC supply ships and government ships including the *Nascopie*.

⁷⁹ Gene Rheaume. Telephone interview with QTC staff. (March 16, 2010) Ottawa.

⁸⁰ Walter Rudnicki. Testimony before the Qikiqtani Truth Commission. November 25, 2008. Ottawa (Quote taken from interview notes)

⁸¹ The "foc'sle is the sleeping or congregating area in the bow of the ship. Quote from "R.G. Williamson, Interview by A. Grygier, Saskatoon, November 1988. In Grygier. p. 86.

would never see him again.” Phyllis told Nuturaluk and his wife “that it was compulsory, that he had no choice. The kid had to go. He had TB and that was it.” Naturaluk still refused. Harrison then threatened that if Naturaluk refused she would fetch the RCMP. Eventually Naturaluk agreed and Bryan Pearson carried Adame out to the car.⁸²

Some of the witnesses who spoke before the Commission spoke of loved ones who had died in the southern sanatoriums and who were never returned north. Thomas Kublu spoke of his father’s death, “it was the most emotional and difficult time for me. One of the major hardships I’ve had in my life.” His father had been sent aboard the *C.D. Howe* to a hospital in Québec City for Tuberculosis treatment. There, he was confined to a bed. “He was emotionally very unhappy being confined and with the loss of freedom of movement. It bothered him emotionally and he became very depressed. He died shortly after... in the spring of 1952.” No one informed the family that he had died. When the *C.D. Howe* returned in August Kublu and his family expected to welcome back their father but “there was no sight of my father but his belongings were handed over to us.” Thomas explained that not being informed about his father’s death was “disheartening and you feel minimised as a human being because they do not bother to follow-up or inform you about death in the family; your own father especially.” He went on

It makes me realise that we Inuit were not important enough to be given the courtesy to be informed about the death of our father. I began to realise that the authorities, the Qallunaat, did not value us as worthy human beings. This was very hurtful to us to be lied on and waiting my father’s return home. The shock of learning about his death when we expected to welcome him home is one of my painful memories; it is one of the first experiences when the colonizers treated us very poorly as human beings. I began to see that there was no respect or concern for us as human beings.

Government attempts to provide Inuit with medical services were reliant on Inuit leaving the north for treatment. The government struggled to introduce suitable policies or standards that would ensure Inuit were sufficiently informed about their loved ones who had been evacuated.

Many evacuated Inuit eventually did return north, however, some of them were unable to return to “their traditional way of life.” DNA recognized the need to provide rehabilitation services for people who had become disabled as a result of their injuries, or who were “discharged from hospital to their homes but were unable to make the necessary adjustments because of the effects of their illness or length of hospital stay.”⁸³ Rehabilitation centers were established in Iqaluit and in Rankin Inlet to help Inuit adapt to post-sanatorium living conditions. The goal of these centers was to train returning Inuit how to be self-sufficient in modern economy. Such things as trades, money management, home economics, sanitation, and business skills were taught. These centers, while playing a necessary role in caring for returning patients, also played an important role in integrating Inuit into the wage economy and western practices.⁸⁴

⁸²Pearson, Bryan. Testimony before the QTC. (17 July 2008) Iqaluit. [QTIQ32]

⁸³ Northwest Territories Archives (NWTA), 279, Canada, Northern Administration Branch. Acc G-1979-003, Box 45, File 3, Rehabilitation of Eskimo Patients General and Policy [A-252-4, vol. 1]. Memo to the Administrator of the Arctic from Director, re: Rehabilitation Program Admissions Procedures, August 1, 1962.

⁸⁴ For a more detailed discussion see Tester (1995).



Map 5: Proposed itinerary of the *C.G.S. C.D. Howe* in 1957.

Other people who were returned to the Baffin Region from southern sanatoria were sent to the wrong communities instead of being sent home. Often the misplacement of Inuit was a result of language difficulties and bureaucratic bungling. With Inuit who spoke little to no English and Qallunaat in hospitals and vessels who spoke no Inuktitut, there were many opportunities for things to go wrong. Inuit were labeled with tags that they could not read. So although their homes were in Cape Dorset they may have been tagged for delivery to Clyde River. They would have been unable to explain or protest their own misplacement. Grygier reported that one man committed suicide after being delivered to a place he did not know and with no way to get home.⁸⁵

The QTC has heard more stories about the misplacement of Inuit. Martha Flaherty was part of the High Arctic relocations. She and her family were moved to Grise Fiord while her sister, Lucy, was in a southern sanatorium receiving treatment for tuberculosis. Lucy was returned to Northern Quebec but no one realized that her family was no longer there, they were in the High Arctic. Lucy was then shipped to Resolute but her family was in Grise Fiord. It was not until the following year that Lucy, Martha and the rest of the family were finally reunited in Grise Fiord. The mistakes caused emotional angst for her father.⁸⁶

Temela Opik's story is equally as disturbing. Opik told the QTC that he had been sent from his camp near Kimmirut in 1956 to a southern hospital where he was treated for Tuberculosis. He spent the next three years down south before finally boarding the *C.D. Howe* to be sent home. A measles outbreak occurred in the southern Baffin region that year and the passengers, including Opik, destined for Kimmirut were diverted to Resolute, over 1600 km away. The following winter Opik was again transferred, this time to Iqaluit. He was finally returned to his camp when an Inuk passing through Iqaluit by dog team agreed to bring Opik home. In total, Temela Opik had been away almost six years; his journey home from the sanatorium alone had taken more than two.⁸⁷

EDUCATION

By the late 1950s the government abandoned earlier attempts to provide schooling in the ilagiit nunagivaktangit and started building and staffing schools in the settlements. Some Inuit moved to the settlement so their children could pursue education and have an opportunity to participate in the wage economy. To accommodate children in the settlements, the government began building school hostels. The hostels, supervised by Inuit, were intended to be a gentler alternative to sending young children to far off residential schools.

Not every parent wanted their children to abandon traditional learning for western schooling; many of them were coerced into sending their children to settlement schools. Almost every family in the Baffin Region was affected by the dislocation of their children for education purposes, prompting one witness to comment. "Our children were disappearing."⁸⁸ Inuit felt they had no choice but to send their children into the settlements when the social worker, teacher, or RCMP officer came to their ilagiit nunagivaktangit and told them "children have to go to school." In most cases the coerciveness of authority was more pervasive. Both the written record

⁸⁵ Grygier, 1994. p. 188ff.

⁸⁶ Martha Flaherty. Testimony before the QTC. (27 November 2008) Ottawa. [QTOT06]

⁸⁷ Okpik, Temela. Testimony before the QTC. (1 January 2008) Kimmirut. [QTKM11]

⁸⁸ Ruth Sangoya. Interview with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association. (8 April 2005) Pond Inlet. [QIPI26]

and Inuit testimony demonstrated that some Inuit were threatened with the loss of family allowance if they did not send their children to school. Gordon Rennie, long-time HBC post manager and a resident of Nunavut, told the QTC, “Back when the Federal Government was here they were encouraging the people who lived in the camps to move to town so that the kids could learn English. There was an unspoken directive that if they did not move into town then they would have their family allowances rescinded.”⁸⁹ Government archival records reveal that the threat of the suspension of family allowances was an accepted method, albeit a largely unsuccessful one, of deterring truancy.⁹⁰ Geographer Milton Freeman has referred to the family allowance payment as the government’s “economic hammer”. In some cases when this didn’t work, people were threatened with incarceration. Annie Shappa’s father was one of these people:

When we were moved to Arctic Bay, we were picked up by ski-doo... I remember being taken to the community to go to school. My father was advised that if there was any social assistance, they would be charged or sent to jail, if he didn't comply with us going to school.⁹¹

Parents handing their children over to the education system did so trustingly, they expected that the Inuit children would be treated well and taken care of. They did not expect that children would be mistreated or abused. Children taken away to school lost opportunities to learn Inuit cultural practices. Others had been away so long that they had forgotten their language. Paul Quassa, told his family’s story to the QTC:

As I said, I went to the sanatorium as a child. I am not even sure exactly where. I know I was out for probably a year because when I came back, my mother had also left for the sanatorium. My father was the only one here. My brother and sister were already in Chesterfield Inlet when I came back. My father was living in Manitok. He was pretty much alone, so I went back to Manitok to be with my father. I think I almost lost my Inuktitut language then. I remember that they couldn't understand me when I came back. And then probably a year later, I was sent to Chesterfield Inlet, it was about 1959 or 1960.⁹²

The cumulative effect of the government’s education and health programs was devastating to Inuit culture. The dislocation that occurred under these programs tore families apart and created considerable confusion and instability in Inuit society. What is most striking about the health evacuations and education dislocations is the number of Inuit affected by these programs.

Thomasie Panniluk told Commissioner Igloolioro about how his family was torn apart by dislocations and evacuations. Panniluk and his step-father had been sent south for tuberculosis treatment in 1956. Although Panniluk was sent home a year later, his step-father was not. Panniluk was too young to support the family at that point so the government moved his family to another settlement where they would have easier access to social programs. Panniluk’s mother was then evacuated in 1959 for medical reasons and Thomasie was sent to live in Qikiqtarjuaq so

⁸⁹ Gordon Rennie. Testimony before the QTC. (18 June, 2008) Iqaluit. [QTIQ07]

⁹⁰ See Chapter 6: Getting the children to, and into, school: Consent of Coercion. King, David. The History of the Federal Government of Canada's Education and Residential School System for Inuit in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Northern Quebec and Churchill Manitoba, 1955-70. Unpublished Research Notes.

⁹¹ Annie Shappa. Testimony before the QTC. (17 May 2008) Iqaluit. [QTIQ03]

⁹² Paul Quassa. Testimony before the QTC. (12 September 2008) Igloolik. [QTIG03]

that he could attend school. The impact on his family was devastating:

That was a hard time for me because I didn't have my parents with me. I had to go to school, stay in some sort of hotel. It was called residential school at the time. So, not too long after that there was another incident during which my brother and my step-brother Noah died in Cape Dyer. His place burned down. It was burned down with the fire of course. I was without my parents, my brother was gone. My real father had died. Those kinds of things ... it was so hard.⁹³

Returning north for many Inuit they found members of their family had been removed for education or health reasons. The close kinship groups that defined many Inuit ilagiit nunagivaktangit were ravaged by the relentless removal of family and friends. Removing even one member of the small kin-based camp could be devastating for the whole family or ilagiit nunagivaktangit. Severe emotional trauma was caused by medical evacuations and education dislocations.

VOLUNTARY MOVES

Similar to other volunteer migrations that have occurred around the world, some moves were undertaken by Inuit searching for a better life for themselves or their children. They were attracted to settlements for a variety of reasons, including schools, living closer to already-moved family, employment, health services and permanent housing. In many communities, promises were made to Inuit about what they could expect if they lived in the settlements. When Moses Kasarnak by was asked by QIA interviewers if he was "forced" to move to a settlement he replied, "We were never told to move. Since we were coming back here often, we decided to stay here," he went on to say "we were just very happy that we were going to get a house here... We were directly told that if we moved we would get a house and that it would have a table and dishes. It was like Christmas that we were going to get all these."⁹⁴

For some Inuit, the relative ease of settlement life was appealing compared to the difficult conditions that could exist in ilagiit nunagivaktangit. On the land, periods of plenty were contrasted by times of hunger; the economy was dependent on the volatile fur markets; and access to modern health care facilities was limited. Peter Akpalialuk told Commissioner Igloliorte about the challenges of subsistence living in camps, "When food was scarce it was stressful times worrying when the next food will come from and when. It was how we lived and it was a hard life but we did not know any other lifestyle so it was still a satisfactory life for us." People admit that although camp life could be hard, they also recall the sense of belonging and connection to the land that was part of everyday life.

Some Inuit who voluntarily moved into the settlements may have initially believed their moves to be temporary, even seasonal, but they found themselves living for more extended periods, and then permanently, in a settlement. When their dogs were killed or when they could not afford to maintain a snowmobile for long-distance hunting, a further barrier was placed between them and life in ilagiit nunagivaktangit. An examination of the population of the Northern Foxe Basin in 1970 showed that the number of year-round ilagiit nunagivaktangit in the region had been reduced from 11 in 1950 to only five by 1970. There were, however, seven seasonal ilagiit

⁹³ Panniluk Thomasie. Testimony before the QTC. (9 September 2008) Clyde River.[QTCR28]

⁹⁴ Moses Kasnarnak. Qikiqtani Inuit Association Interview. (17 February 2005) Pond Inlet. [QIPI21]

nunagivaktangit – places to where hunters who were not steadily employed in the settlements travelled during the summer to hunt and fish.⁹⁵ For these Inuit, and almost everyone else, the decision to move into the settlement was not a decision to abandon traditional practices, it was a way to relieve some of the pressures of life on the land, while also taking advantage of settlement services. While Inuit were willingly enticed into the settlements, they did not accept or expect the impact on their culture, language or nutritional intake that came with settlement living.⁹⁶

Perhaps the greatest difference in the experience between those who voluntarily moved and those who were coerced or forced to move is the lingering feeling of powerlessness. One witness told the QTC, “The government had already prepared our future. That is why life is completely different from what life used to be.”⁹⁷

CLOSING COMMUNITIES

The closing of communities in the Baffin Region occurred in three different places – Kivitoo, Padloping and the Belcher Islands. While Kivitoo has been inhabited by Inuit for centuries, no government services were delivered there. In contrast, both Padloping and South Camp on the Belcher Islands were the sites of government-constructed schools and homes prior to the closings. The closing of these communities and the centralization of services in larger settlements eased the government’s administrative burden and reduced the cost of delivering services. In the case of Padloping, the government had pressured people to move for several years, but finally made the decision itself by terminating all services in the community in 1968. In all closings, people severed or diminished ties to places where they had deep connections, knowledge and better access of the land’s resources.

KIVITOO AND PADLOPING

Inuit along the Cumberland Peninsula had been in contact with Qallunaat since the 18th century when whaling vessels patrolled the waters of the Davis Strait. A trading post had briefly operated at Kivitoo in the 1920s. The USAF established a weather station on Padloping Island during the Second World War but there was limited contact between the base personnel and Inuit.

Beginning in 1955, the Qallunaat presence in the area greatly expanded with the construction of several DEW Line facilities along the Cumberland Peninsula. An auxiliary site was established at Broughton Island, while intermediate sites were established at Kivitoo and Durban Island. The government, anxious to avoid Inuit becoming dependent on temporary employment in the area, actively discouraged “loitering” by any of the families not directly employed at the DEW Line. Government policy towards Inuit at the DEW Line is confusing. On one hand, the government wanted to continue its policy of dispersal that encouraged Inuit to pursue “traditional” activities, and stay away from the settlement. On the other, the government believed the DEW Line needed Inuit workers and helped identify (via RCMP) which Inuit would be most suited to jobs.

The auxiliary site on Broughton Island was the main terminal for transportation to and from Iqaluit and became the administrative centre of the region. The government erected a school

⁹⁵ LAC, RG 109, Canadian Wildlife Service, Acc. 1993-94/451, Vol. 19, File WLT 300-5, pt.2. Memo from RCMP Igloolik to Frobisher Bay Sub-Division Re: Annual Game Conditions in Igloolik area. August 25, 1970.

⁹⁶ For a more detailed discussion of the incompatibility of traditional cultural practices with settlement life see the QTC background report on Settlement Life.

⁹⁷ Taqtu, Juda. Qikiqtani Inuit Association Interview. (Unknown Date of Interview) Arctic Bay.

there in 1960 and a school hostel in 1962. The HBC opened its post on the island in 1962. From this point forward, Qikiqtarjuaq developed at the regions administrative center.

Disaster struck the community of Kivitoo in 1963 when four hunters went missing during a return trip from trading at Qikiqtarjuaq. Three of the hunters died, while the legs of the fourth were amputated because of frostbite.⁹⁸ The government decided to evacuate the remaining Kivitoo residents to Qikiqtarjuaq as “there were insufficient male hunters in the area to support the community.”⁹⁹ Some residents who were evacuated felt the government actions were unnecessary and that the government failed to provide sufficient time to grieve.¹⁰⁰ Angawasha Poisey, who agreed with the need to move, also spoke about the rushed removal from Kivitoo:

It was unbearable; these women who had just lost their husbands going through a grieving process and then having to be moved to a different place. It was a terrible experience they had to endure right after losing their families... Perhaps they should have given us time to grieve and accept the fact that we were moving, perhaps they should have told us in advance and given us some time to prepare mentally and physically what we needed to bring. Perhaps it would have been easier for us if they would have given us advanced notice.¹⁰¹

The hasty dislocation of these people from their homes added to the burden on a grieving community. Government representatives promised people that food and housing would be provided for them so they left many of their possessions behind. Some thought that the move was only temporary and that they would be returning home before long. Soon after they arrived in Qikiqtarjuaq, the qarmaqs and all of their possessions were bulldozed. Eliyah Kopalie was 12 when the relocations occurred, remembers the shock of returning to his former home:

All our belongings, we had to take only what we can carry, that is what we brought here. Winter came, my father went back to Kivitoo to pick up our belongings, there was nothing left. Not one little bit. They tried to get their belongings, even my father’s guns, everything was bulldozed to the ground, our primus stove, everything we had in the qarmaq. Once that happened later on, I tried to find out what they did with our belongings, we start questioning, when we looked over where our qarmaq was, it was obvious bulldozer flattened everything. Apparently used bulldozer to bull doze everything. Everything was flattened, destroyed. There was nothing left. My toys was inside the qarmaq. I had madness inside as a child.¹⁰²

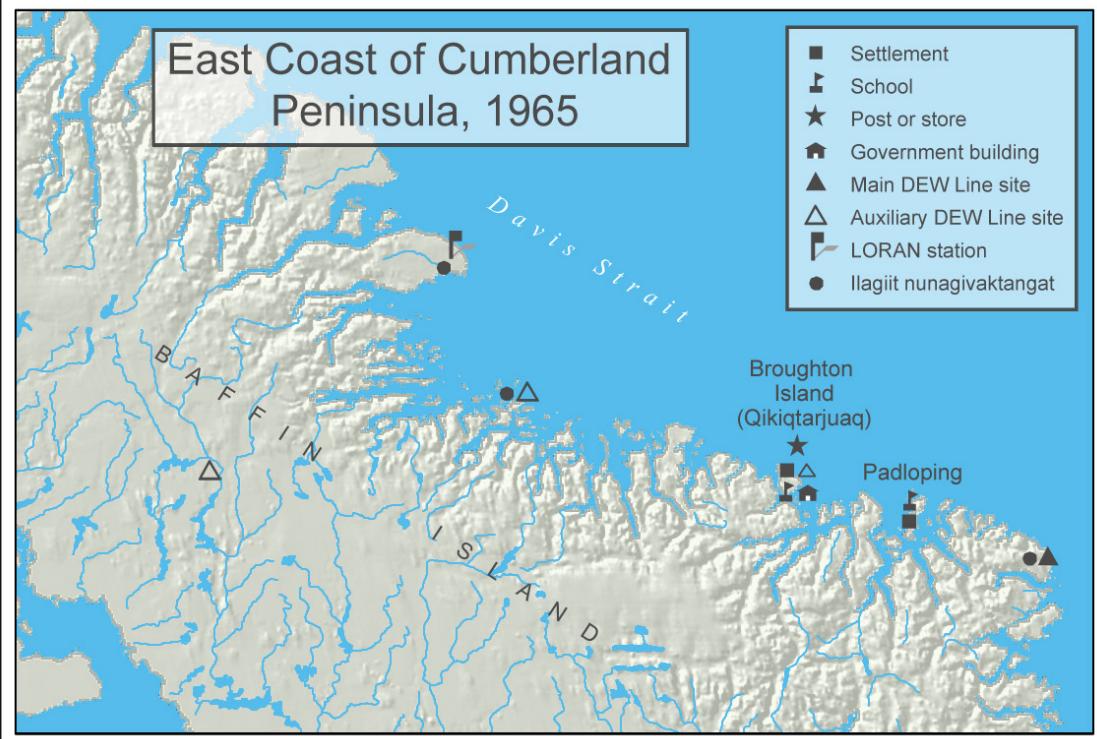
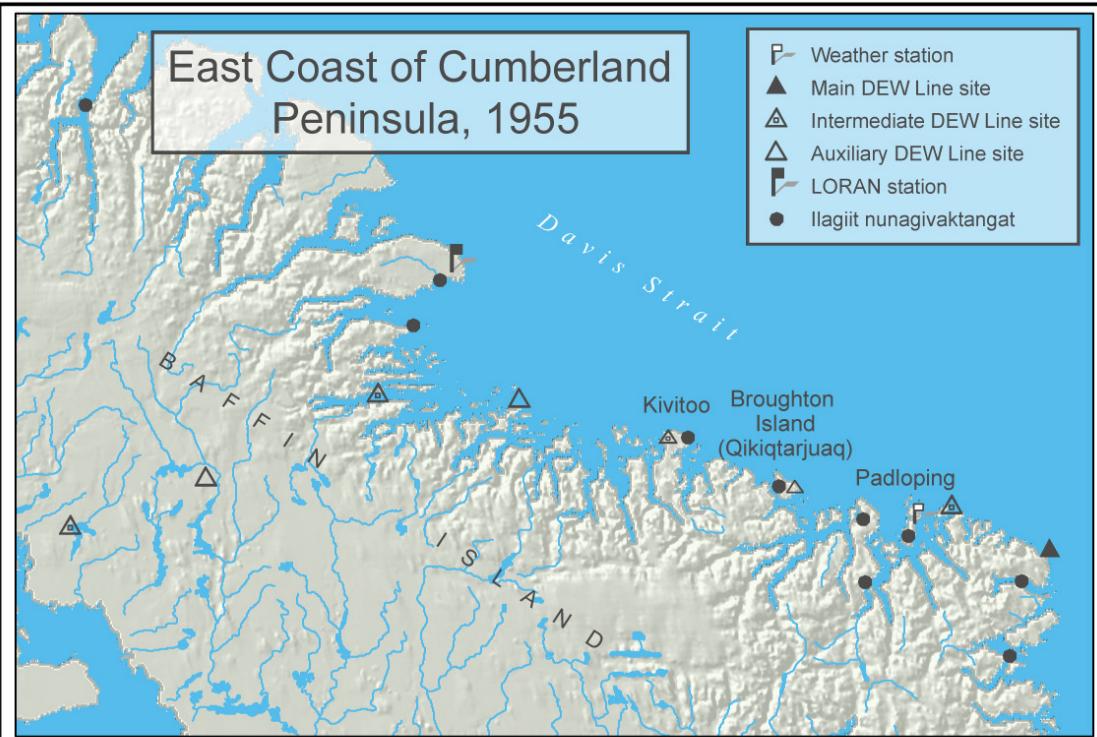
⁹⁸ Cpl. C.B. Alexander, “A Journey into Death.” *RCMP Quarterly* 30, 3 (January 1965). p. 47.

⁹⁹ LAC, RG 85, Acc. 1884-85, Vol. 1931, File A207-3, pt. 2, Eskimo Housing - Dew Line, Memo from R.J. Orange, Regional Administrator to Administrator of the Arctic, re: Dew Line Eskimo Housing. 15 March 1963. (A01429)

¹⁰⁰ The evacuations occurred the same year that the DEW Line site at Kivitoo closed. To date, QTC researchers have not found records that positively show a connection between the closings of the community and the DEW Line station. It is possible, however, that the death of the hunters was a catalyst for decisions about the community’s future.

¹⁰¹ Angawasha Poisey. Testimony before the QTC. (8 September 2008) Clyde River. [QTCR02]

¹⁰² Eliyah Kopalie. Testimony before the QTC. (2 October 2008) Qikiqtarjuaq. [QTQK21]



Map 6: East Coast of Cumberland Peninsula in 1955 and 1965.

The archival record provides additional details about the closing of Kivitoo. A note written by DNA Welfare Officer Annette Shalburg in 1963 explained that Inuit had approached her concerning the destruction of the qarmaqs. The Federal Electric Company (builders of the DEW line) had carried out the bulldozing of the homes after receiving permission from the DNA.¹⁰³ “The Eskimos concerned feel that in injustice has been done,” noted Shalburg, “the sense of last winter’s disaster is still very strong with them, and bears a relationship to this protest. Is it possible to consider compensation of some sort?”¹⁰⁴ The archival record failed to reveal any further discussion about compensation for the destroyed homes and personal belongings.

A few years after the closing of Kivitoo, another nearby community was closed. A small group of 34 Inuit lived at Padloping, 100 km south of Qikiqtarjuaq. The community had a one-room school house, a generator and seven low-cost houses. According to Kenn Harper, a teacher who arrived in Padloping in 1967, the government had been intent on closing the community in 1967. A group of government representatives arrived in Padloping in the spring of 1968 and met with the community to explain that the school in Padloping was to be closed and the power turned off. Residents had the option of moving to Broughton Island which, according to the government representatives, had better housing, a store, better medical care and easier transportation outside of the community.¹⁰⁵ After the summer hunting season, the families of Padloping moved to Qikiqtarjuaq. Harper described the moves as coerced, not forced. He contends the government wanted “badly to close Padloping” to increase administrative efficiency.¹⁰⁶ People who spoke to the QTC agree. Jacopie Nuqingaq told Commissioner Igloliorte:

They came in to ask us and pressure us to move. They used to have someone come from Qikiqtarjuaq to encourage us to move to Qikiqtarjuaq. They had an Inuit who was the middleman. He was there to encourage us to move on behalf of the Qallunaaq. I realize that we were passive. We were scared of Qallunaat so we did whatever they said. We are passive. We are not retaliating people. We were scared of the Qallunaaq. We didn’t want to move because we had no plans to move here. When we got here, our dogs were slaughtered and we had no choice. My father had a ski-doo at a later time.¹⁰⁷

Another person, Joshua Alookie said his parents were promised running water, good housing, good schooling and employment opportunities in Qikiqtarjuaq. Mr. Alookie’s parents had to wait almost 20 years after relocating before they had indoor plumbing.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ NWTA, 279, G-1979-003, Box 42, File 16, Note to Eastern Arctic Patrol from Annette Schalburg. 29 September 1963.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Kenn Harper, “Taissumani: The Closing of Padloping, Part 3.” Nunatsiaq News, (7 November 2008).

¹⁰⁶ Kenn Harper, “Taissumani: The Closing of Padloping, Part 2.” Nunatsiaq News, (31 October 2008).

¹⁰⁷ Jacopie Nuqingaq. Testimony before the QTC. (30 September 2008) Qikiqtarjuaq. [QTQK02]

¹⁰⁸ Joshua Alookie. Testimony before the QTC. (1 September 2008) Qikiqtarjuaq. [QTQK12]

BELCHER ISLANDS – SANIKILUAQ AND SOUTH CAMP

Sanikiluaq (formerly known as North Camp) is a settlement located on Flaherty Island, one of the northern islands among the Belcher Islands where Inuit have lived for centuries. In 1959, a school was delivered to the southern part of Flaherty Island at a site that would become South Camp. More than a dozen children were enrolled in the school by 1960-1961, even though the government was simultaneously determined to keep Belcher Island ilagiit nunagivaktangit as dispersed as possible. When the HBC abandoned its “camp trade outfit” on the west side of Tukarak Island, it established a permanent trading post on the northern part of Flaherty Island. In line with the government’s policy of dispersal, the local federal Area Administrator felt that it was “unwise to have the school and store located together as this would encourage the Eskimos to congregate in one locality, resulting in a depletion of game resources.”¹⁰⁹ With the arrival of low-cost housing units in Sanikiluaq and South Camp in the mid 1960s, however, the process of centralization had begun.

In 1967, John Cann, the newly arrived Area Administrator, organized an adult education program in which community members gathered to discuss local governance. Part of these discussions focused on the possibility of centralizing services in one community. Cann reported that Inuit “unanimously” agreed that the “creation of one larger community from the present two would solve many problems and hasten progress.”¹¹⁰ In 1968, Don Bissett, an area survey officer, submitted a report to DNA that advised, “The available data on social and economic factors is of limited value. However, on the basis of available data, it appears that the existing school site [South Camp] is inadequate in terms of available resources.”¹¹¹ In using the term “resources”, Bissett was referring to marine mammals in the area.

A meeting was held in Ottawa in March 1969 to determine whether the development of the Belcher Islands would occur at Sanikiluaq [North Camp] or at South Camp, and to identify the priorities for development. Without explanation, the memo stated that “the meeting agreed that all future expansion of facilities would be carried out in the northern settlement.”¹¹² From other documents, it seems the ease of administering a single settlement was the primary motive behind government efforts to move all services to Sanikiluaq.¹¹³

People spoke to Commissioner Igloolioré about meetings held to determine which community would be developed. While no record of these meetings was found during archival research, it is known that Sanikiluaq was preferred as a location by the government and that the families already living in the area, who outnumbered the population near South Camp, were likely supportive.¹¹⁴ In 1969-1970, however, the people near South Camp felt under enormous

¹⁰⁹ NWTA, 279, Acc G-1979-003, Box 80, File 3, Belcher Islands, March 1, 1968.

¹¹⁰ LAC, RG 85, Acc. D-1-a, Vol. 1462, File 600-101, pt. 23, letter from John Cann to Mr. Simonie, re: Adult Education program for Inuit on Belcher Islands, January 15, 1968.

¹¹¹ NWTA, 279, Acc G-1979-003, Box 80, File 3, Belcher Islands, March 1, 1968.

¹¹² NWTA, 279, Acc G-1979-003, Box 80, File 3, Forward Planning—Belcher Islands, by R. Tinling, March 28, 1969.

¹¹³ See NWTA, 279, Acc G-1979-003, Box 80, File 3, Town Planning – Belcher Islands [303-174, vol. 1] and LAC, RG 85, Vol. 1443, File 130/174, part 1.

¹¹⁴ A combination of QTC testimony and archival documents demonstrate that people chose Sanikiluaq as the preferred location to develop a single settlement. There is no indication that residents were ever presented with the

pressure to move quickly to Sanikiluaq. People told the QTC: “The government officials came to us, social worker came to us. We were living in a tent. Every time I think about it, I shiver. He told us that we were being relocated to North Camp and that if we didn’t the government was not going to assist us in any way.”¹¹⁵

The relocation to Sanikiluaq was a topic widely discussed during the QTC hearings in Sanikiluaq. The government did not provide any assistance for the relocations so people moved on their own by boat, snowmobile and dog team. People remember that some groups became separated, while others became stuck in the ice or had to carry a boat over land. With no radios, limited food rations and boats laden with relocatees (including elders and young children), the move was dangerous. Upon arrival in Sanikiluaq, promised housing had not arrived. Many of the relocatees had left what little possessions they had behind, expecting the necessities of life to be provided for them in Sanikiluaq. Lottie Arratutainaq told the Commission about her experiences of relocation.

I was almost the last one in South Camp. Everybody had moved here [Sanikiluaq] but I refused to move. On the way here we ran out of supplies because of the fog during the day we tried to move here. ... We left our houses with only our clothes that we were wearing, we left everything else behind...thinking that we were coming back. When we moved here there was no assistance of any kind. We just walked out of our houses. It was a very sad event for me.

Other residents also testified about inappropriate and insufficient number of houses in Sanikiluaq (North Camp). “We did not move all at once due to housing shortage so the people moved as the housing became available because the construction was going on way into the late fall of that year. But still there wasn’t enough houses for everybody so some people had to spend the winter in a tent or shacks made out of building material crates.”¹¹⁶ Emily Takatak experienced great uncertainty and confusion about the details of the move.

We didn’t even know we were relocating here, we just thought we were coming here for a short time. We didn’t take any belongings. Even my babies didn’t have anything; nothing to comfort them. During the night, my children were cold. We thought we were going to go home right away and then we realized we were moving here. They didn’t give us any sort of transportation to pick up our belongings. We were put in a homemade shack. In the evening, in that house, we didn’t even have a pillow to sleep on, we didn’t carry anything. All our belongings we left behind. We took only necessary clothing, changes for the children. We thought we were going back home right away, we didn’t know how long we were going to be here, nobody informed us how long we were coming here or why. I felt very poor here. In the evening, when they realized we didn’t have anything to sleep on, people gave us stuff to sleep on.¹¹⁷

In sum, witnesses who testified before the QTC believed they had no option but to move. They blame the government for failing to assist them in that move or explain that South Camp would

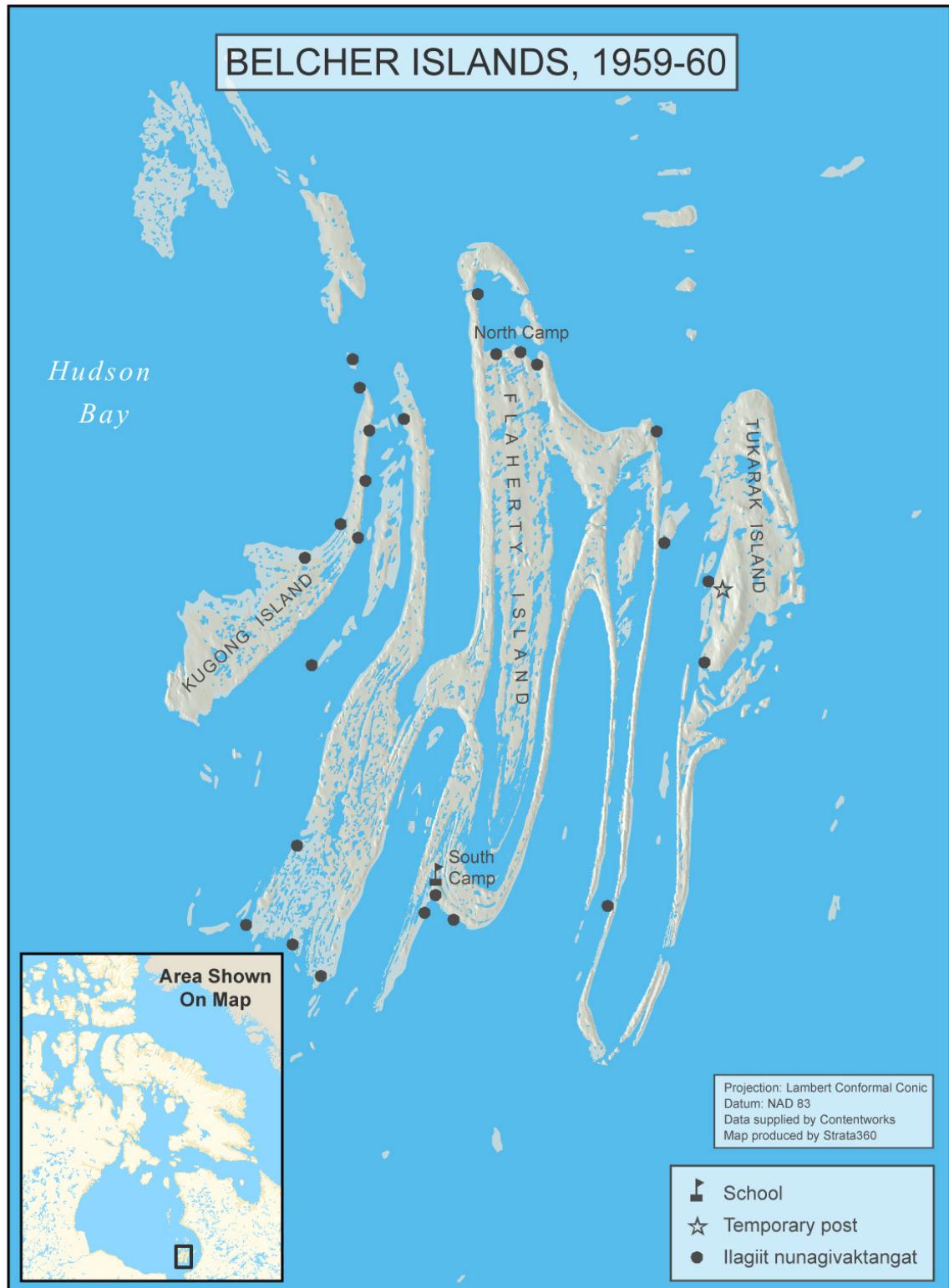
option of receiving services in both South Camp and Sanikiluaq.

¹¹⁵ Mina Eyaituq. Testimony before the QTC. (4 March 2008) Sanikiluaq. [QTSA21]

¹¹⁶ Annie Appaqaq-Arragutainaq. Testimony before the QTC. (5 March 2008) Sanikiluaq. [QTSA04]

¹¹⁷ Emily Takatak. Testimony before the QTC. (5 March, 2008). Sanikiluaq. (QTSA28)

be permanently closed.



Map 7: Belcher Islands in 1959-1960.

CONCLUSION

Inuit moves in the Baffin Region between 1950 and 1975 were a mix of voluntary, pressured and forced moves, usually in response to government priorities. The federal government's primary and often-contradictory goals were to keep Inuit self-sufficient through hunting or wages, while also ensuring that they lived within physical and social boundaries of government-created permanent settlements that would ensure easier administration of education, health and government services. When Inuit chose to move, they were often given assurances that they would find housing, proper schooling, income support and health care in settlements. Some people misunderstood what they were told, but others were given empty promises.

Many Inuit in the Baffin Region suffered the loss of their home (including place and family) when they moved to settlements or when their communities were closed. For Inuit, the loss of home is more than the loss of a dwelling; it is a disruption of a critical relationship of people with the land and animals. It represents the loss of independence and replacement of a way of life. Cultural geographers Douglas Porteous and Sandra Smith use the neologism *domicide* to describe the loss of home because of the actions of outside agents pursuing specific goals.¹¹⁸ Porteous and Smith explain:

The loss of home may bring sadness and grief. Some mourn the loss of ancestors' graves and ancestral land, while others lose friends, extended family relationship, and local social networks. Some may suffer physiological, psychological, or social distress, and they can feel anger or sense of helplessness. Some may accommodate their grief by focussing more strongly on kith and kin, while others will idealize their lost home. Some, particularly the elderly, may die or commit suicide.¹¹⁹

Further, the loss of home and corresponding place creates a high level of stress that can create "long-term mistrust of government, and worldviews emphasizing powerlessness may emerge."¹²⁰ In the context of the QTC, "powerlessness" was a common theme. During one QTC workshop, participants agreed that the government "took advantage" of the fact that Inuit lived in a difficult environment. Because transportation and communications in the Baffin Region were so limited and exclusively dominated by Qallunaat, Inuit were left with few, if any, options to return to ilagiit nunagivaktangit after moving into the settlements. The mass dislocations, removals and evacuations of people for health, education, or economic reasons forced the dependency of Inuit on Government and diminished Inuit self-sufficiency, self-esteem and personal autonomy.

The impacts of movements on Inuit society is inextricably linked to Inuit sense of place and kinship. An entire generation of youth lost contact with the land and, as a result, a fuller understanding of Inuit culture, language and practices. In the period, the government failed to address the social and psychological impact of multiple moves or traumatic moves on people.

¹¹⁸ Porteous and Smith define *domicide* as "deliberate destruction of home by human agency in pursuit of specified goals, which causes suffering to the victims." They provide an extensive examination of the concept of home which encompasses more than a physical structure where one resides. It includes place, emotional attachments and sense of security. See J. Douglas Porteous and Sandra Smith. *Domicide: The Global Destruction of Home*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001. Chapter 2.

¹¹⁹ Porteous and Smith, p. 192.

¹²⁰ Porteous and Smith, p. 192.

This paper has not dealt with current problems facing the Qikiqtani people. Emerging scholarship in the field in trans-generational trauma clearly demonstrates the strong linkage between the events of the past and the problems of the present. It is hoped that a better understanding of these linkages can provide a starting point to remedy current problems born out of the relocations, evacuations and dislocations the Qikiqtani people experienced.

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