IN THESE LATITUDES:
AMERICAN AND INUIT STORIES OF SURVIVAL, 1850-1922

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In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a stream of popular narratives celebrated the struggles of European and American explorers who pushed out to the edges of their known worlds. Many of these adventurers travelled through Inuit homelands in the North American Arctic, recording their surroundings as inherently forbidding and desolate. These explorers are part of an arctic survival mythology that extends much further and deeper. In this environmental and cultural history, I consider lesser-known survival narratives drawn from oral histories and archival sources, namely stories of American whalers in Inuit territory, Inuit families in the United States, American and Inuit polar expedition members, and Inuit who remained in their homeland as it changed around them. I compare the strategies these individuals employed to survive physically, psychologically, and culturally when they faced hardships such as starvation, malnutrition, and disease. My four chapters are structured around different ways of marking ecological and social time, and they are centred on the rich maritime region of Cumberland Sound on Baffin Island, in what is now Nunavut, Canada. I argue that Inuit and Americans often saw each other’s latitudes as inhospitable, and that divergent cosmologies shaped their perceptions of unfamiliar sites. Together, these unconventional arctic narratives demonstrate that the definition of a harsh environment is relative, and they offer alternative ways of thinking about individual and cultural survival.
When I think of the land I think of everything else, 
like survival, living, future, everything.
It’s not just the landscape, it’s not just how it looks, 
it’s alive for me.

-Louee Mike¹

¹From a 1989 interview between Karla Jessen Williamson and Louee Mike, as transcribed in the Karla Jessen Williamson fonds, G91-005, Prince of Wales Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT. This portion of the interview dealt with ideas about “nuna,” which Inuit usually translate as “land” although the Inuktitut concept is much broader. When I asked Louee, now the Anglican minister in Pangnirtung, for permission to use this quote, she tried to remember why she had said it over twenty years previously. She speculated that maybe she really wanted people to understand how much the land is a part of Inuit lives and ways of life. She added that the land and the air and the sea give Inuit a great deal of information about how things will be in the near future. For the results of Karla’s project see Karla Jessen Williamson, “The Cultural Ecological Perspectives of Canadian Inuit: Implications for Child-Rearing and Education,” (University of Saskatchewan, Masters Thesis, 1992).
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# Table of Contents

Abstract ............................................................................................................................... ii

Quotation ........................................................................................................................... iii

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................... iv

Table of Contents ............................................................................................................. ix

List of Illustrations ......................................................................................................... x

Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter One: American Whalers in Cumberland Sound, 1851–1868 ....................... 37

Figures for Chapter One ............................................................................................... 85

Chapter Two: Hannah and Ipiirvik in the United States, 1862-1878 ....................... 90

Figures for Chapter Two ............................................................................................. 158

Chapter Three: The Lady Franklin Bay Expedition, 1881-1884 ............................... 163

Figures for Chapter Three .......................................................................................... 222

Chapter Four: Inuit and Commercial Whaling in Cumberland Sound, 1860-1922 .... 234

Figures for Chapter Four ............................................................................................. 292

Epilogue ......................................................................................................................... 307

Bibliography .................................................................................................................. 330
List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Map of North America. ................................................................. 6
Figure 2: Contemporary satellite image of Cumberland Sound. ................. 7
Figure 3: Map of Cumberland Sound ............................................................ 8
Figure 4: Cumberland Sound in upingaaq .................................................... 85
Figure 5: Contemporary Inuit print showing summer sealskin tent. .......... 86
Figure 6: Lancing a Whale ......................................................................... 87
Figure 7: Whaling logbook ........................................................................ 88
Figure 8: Cumberland Sound in floe-edge whaling season ....................... 89
Figure 9: Promotional image of the Inuit family, 1862 .............................. 158
Figure 10: Hannah and Ipiirvik with Charles Francis Hall ...................... 159
Figure 11: Barnum’s American Museum .................................................... 160
Figure 12: Signed portrait of Hannah ......................................................... 161
Figure 13: Signed portrait of Ipiirvik ............................................................ 162
Figure 14: American members of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition .......... 222
Figure 15: Constructing the expedition cabin at Lady Franklin Bay, August 1881 .... 223
Figure 16: Lieutenant Greely’s corner ........................................................ 224
Figure 17: The Expedition Cabin, March 1882 .......................................... 225
Figure 18: Hampden Sidney Gardiner ......................................................... 226
Figure 19: Paleocrystic Ice in Robeson Channel ........................................ 227
Figure 20: Prøven or Kangersuatsiaq, July 1881 ......................................... 228
Figure 21: Angutisiak and Dr. Octave Pavy skinning a seal ...................... 229
Figure 22: Angutisiak returning from a seal hunt, June 1882 .................... 230
Figure 23: The Lady Greely................................................................. 231
Figure 24: Francis Long................................................................. 232
Figure 25: The tent from which the survivors were rescued ............... 233
Figure 26: Etuangat, 1936................................................................. 292
Figure 27: Evie Anilniliak, 1946 ....................................................... 293
Figure 28: Angmarlik handing out biscuits, 1946 .............................. 294
Figure 29: Aasivak, 1946................................................................. 295
Figure 30: Unirsagaaq and Keenainak............................................... 296
Figure 31: Beluga processing in Pangnirtung, 1929............................. 297
Figure 32: Beluga herding, 1936....................................................... 298
Figure 33: Qaqqaqtunaaq, July 1951 ............................................... 299
Figure 34: Angmarlik, 1946............................................................ 300
Figure 35: Qikiqtat, August 1897.................................................... 301
Figure 36: Women at Qikiqtat, September 1911............................... 302
Figure 37: The *Easonian* burning at Qikiqtat, 1922......................... 303
Figure 38: The shipwrecked crew of the *Easonian* with Inuit at Qikiqtat, 1922 ................................. 304
Figure 39: Captain John Taylor........................................................ 305
Figure 40: Andrew Dialla and John McGuinn................................. 306
Introduction

In 1872, during a ferocious storm off the northwestern coast of Greenland, nineteen men, women, and children abandoned ship. They clambered out onto the pack ice, desperately throwing dogs, food, and supplies overboard as they jumped. Their ship – the leaking American expedition vessel *Polaris* – was sucked away in the wind, into a night that was “fearfully dark” with intense blowing snow and sleet. When the storm finally abated, the party used a small boat to gather themselves together on an ice floe. They took stock of their salvaged food: fourteen cans of pemmican, fourteen salted hams, eleven and a half bags of flour, one can of dried apples, and twenty pounds of chocolate.¹ It was not enough to feed nineteen people for long. They were marooned on an ice island, abandoned on one of the broken pieces of frozen sea that shift and scrape and groan their way southward every year.

The party was picked up six and a half months later by a sealing ship off the coast of Labrador, nearly 3,000 kilometres southeast of their starting point. Their ice floe had melted and broken apart; they were clinging to fragments and soaked by each large wave. They had eaten all their dogs; they were hungry and feuding with each other. Yet all nineteen people had survived.

Although the *New York Daily Graphic* interpreted the drift as “a war of civilized knowledge against the elements,” it was clear that everyone owed their lives to the presence of two Inuit couples hired onto the expedition as hunters and interpreters. The Inuit had hunted seals, shared cooking and heating techniques, mended clothing, and supervised the building of shelters for the entire party. This had been a terrifying and unfamiliar experience for them as well, and they had displayed tremendous effort and ingenuity in keeping everyone alive. The two Inuit men had presumably been stranded on ice floes before, but not all winter, not so far from their homes, and not with foreigners to feed. This six-month drift occurred within a late nineteenth-century culture of polar exploration, in which large groups of outsiders tried to get as far north as possible.

Furthermore, although the ice was dangerous to everyone, for some of the Inuit, the United States proved to be even more so. Following the rescue, one of the Inuit families settled near whaling friends in the town of Groton, Connecticut. Within four years, the young mother Hannah and her daughter were buried next to each other in the same Connecticut cemetery. They were neither the first nor the last Inuit to perish in a foreign country.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a genre of immensely popular survival stories recounted the journeys of metropole adventurers who forced their way to the edges of their known worlds. Many of these explorers travelled to the northern reaches of the North American continent: to the coastal areas above the treeline historically occupied by the Inuit, and to uninhabited polar spaces that could not sustain human life

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indefinitely.⁴ Their accounts have helped to justify other imperial ventures, to define
what constitutes a hostile environment, and to cement notions of national identities.⁵
These explorers have ended up at the centre of a survival mythology that extends much
further and deeper. In the pages that follow, I recover and analyse competing cultural
notions and experiences of survival from 1850-1922. I consider the lives of American
whalers and enlisted men in the Arctic, and the experiences of Inuit families who
encountered, worked, and travelled with Americans. This is a work about individuals
who were pulled into arctic explorers’ and industrialists’ networks of power, and who
managed to survive in these difficult spaces.

Based primarily on oral histories and archival sources from the United States and Canada,
this environmental and cultural history investigates two interlocking issues: why Inuit
and Americans often saw each other’s homelands as undesirable and inhospitable, and
what strategies they used to survive in new places and situations. I consider survival
stories from three different types of environments: northern homelands where Inuit lived;
northeastern cities and towns in the United States where they frequently perished; and

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⁴ Inuit (Eskimos) are also referred to by more specific local names such as Iñupiat or Eskimos in Alaska,
Inuvialuit in Canada’s western Arctic, Kalaallit in West Greenland, and Inughuit in North Greenland. In
1971, the Inuit Tapirisat Council elected to use Inuit as the collective term to designate all of these local
groups. All of them speak dialects of the Inuktitut language, although in some communities English or
Danish or French are more commonly used today. They share a homeland that, with some exceptions, is
above the treeline and along the arctic coasts. The Aleut-Eskimo peoples of southern Alaska are not
considered Inuit; they have similar origins but speak different languages and live in a somewhat more
temperate climate. My focus is on the Canadian Eastern Arctic Archipelago, but since Greenland is
geographically and culturally part of this region, my project crosses the Davis Strait occasionally.

⁵ For the meanings and uses of arctic survival stories see for example Lisa Bloom, Gender on Ice:
American Ideologies of Polar Expeditions (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Beau
Riffenburgh, The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism, and Geographic Discovery (New
(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Francis Spufford, I May Be Some Time: Ice and the
English Imagination (London: Faber and Faber, 1996); John McCannon, Red Arctic: Polar Exploration
and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998);
Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin, eds., Narrating the Arctic: A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific
polar sites where living off the land or sea was exceedingly difficult for anyone. I use these narratives to demonstrate that the definition of a harsh environment is relative, and that the failures of nineteenth-century travellers to adapt to northern sites helped to shape misconceptions of the Arctic as an inherently desolate and inhospitable place.

This project engages with the work of arctic anthropologists, arctic geographers, environmental historians, postcolonial theorists, and scholars of Indigenous cultures. Although most people will never travel to the northern reaches of the planet, the Arctic remains among the “most emotionally laden of topographies.” Much thought-provoking scholarship addresses the cultural response to polar explorers in their own homelands. Historians, literary critics, and theorists argue, in short, that the fringes of a culture help to define its centre, and that tales of arctic survival enjoyed a wide popular audience in metropole societies precisely because they embodied larger perceived truths about male Anglo-Saxon supremacy over exotic, feminised peoples and places. While I do not dispute these claims, most of this work lacks analysis of Inuit discourses. Discussing how the Arctic was historically constructed as a “blank space on the map” is not enough to recover it as a real place. Scholars who study the Arctic for its own sake often lament that it remains more of a mythical site than a physical one to most North Americans.  

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7 See sources listed in n4.
Since focussing on a somewhat smaller geographical area makes it easier to present the Arctic as a real and complex place, I have chosen case studies that intersect around a specific site: Cumberland Sound. This is a large body of water in the Canadian Eastern Arctic, approximately 250 kilometres long and 80 kilometres wide. As is shown on the maps in the following pages, it lies between the Hall Peninsula and the Cumberland Peninsula on South Baffin Island, along the Davis Strait that separates Canada from Greenland. Its concentration of resources has attracted people for at least 3500 years, and many of the people I study encountered each other there for the first time.

The ancestors of contemporary Inuit, known to archaeologists as Thule, reached Cumberland Sound approximately 800 years ago as part of migrations from Alaska to Greenland.9 Here and elsewhere they encountered the earlier Tuniit (Dorset) people, who disappeared through either assimilation or warfare, but who are recalled today in collective memory.10 Inuit established themselves along the shores of Cumberland Sound where they harvested marine resources, at first primarily whales.11 Family and trade connections extended between Inuit camps around South Baffin Island and beyond, and many Inuit migrated in and out of the Sound. In 1585, the English navigator John Davis visited briefly, but the area remained relatively unknown to non-Inuit until 1840, when a young local man named Inulluapik led Scottish whaling captain William Penny

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Figure 1: Map of North America. This map shows Cumberland Sound on the Arctic Circle, as well as two regions to which it is compared in the following chapters: the northeastern United States, and the polar expedition site of Lady Franklin Bay. *Map by Bill Perry, map data from the United States National Park Service.*
Figure 2: Contemporary satellite image of Cumberland Sound. Note the scale in the bottom-right corner; this is a large body of water. NASA’s Earth Observatory, 11 July 2009.
Figure 3: Map of Cumberland Sound. Select places mentioned in the text are overlaid on the contemporary satellite image. Satellite image from NASA’s Earth Observatory, 11 July 2009.
into his home territory. Cumberland Sound became one of the most popular and profitable bowhead whaling grounds for American and Scottish companies, with the whaling increasingly contracted out to Inuit crews. Following drops in demand and supply, commercial bowhead whaling interests pulled out by 1908, although Inuit harvested and traded occasional bowheads into the early 1920s. In the 1960s, the vast majority of Inuit in Cumberland Sound were resettled into the government-established hamlet of Pangnirtung. Most people in town today retain strong connections to their traditional hunting territories. Cumberland Sound is the nexus of this dissertation, but I often leave its shores because the people I write about were highly mobile, travelling through the Davis Strait from the polar regions to Washington DC and beyond. Writing the complex history of any place involves contrasting and connecting it to other locations.

In considering the Arctic as a diverse region, my work is inspired by environmental historians, most notably William Cronon, Donald Worster, and Richard White, who have demonstrated that the idea of “untouched wilderness” is an historical construct, that most people’s primary connection to nature is through the consumption of its resources, that nature is a causal force in history, and that places can only be fully understood in terms of their links to other sites, people, animals, natural resources, technologies, and ideologies. Like most environmental historians, I discuss some human-induced environmental changes and their consequences, most notably the decimation of the

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bowhead whale population in Cumberland Sound in the nineteenth century. However, while North American environmental history has often focussed on the transformation of nature, this study also considers adaptation to nature, which is ongoing but has often been overlooked. As Finnish environmental historian Timo Myllyntaus points out, much earlier histories often discussed how the natural world forced humans to “reconcile and adapt to or to resist and fight against nature.”

I argue for a return to this idea of adaptation, but with the recognition that it can also be a conscious strategy rather than simply a forced reaction. Although some of the people I study refused to take their new surroundings seriously until it was too late, other Inuit and Americans effectively anticipated and adapted to unfamiliar places, often avoiding the direst predicaments before they occurred.

I believe that these processes play out all the time, but they are simply more obvious in the instances I write about, which involve small groups of people in vast landscapes.

In part, skills of anticipation and adaptation are necessary in the Arctic because little is static there. The limitations of traditional maps are especially obvious in a place where each year, much of the blue on the map freezes into a land-like surface. The Arctic is marked by the criss-crossing trajectories of migratory people, animals, birds, and fish. People who live off the land must travel and anticipate the movements of animals to take advantage of shifting resources. This mobility does not imply a lack of permanence, but

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15 On anticipation see Mark Nuttall, “Anticipation, climate change, and movement in Greenland,” pp. 21-37 in Études/Inuit/Studies (2010 34:1). I will return to this concept in Chapter four.
16 On sea ice see Gita Laidler, “Ice through Inuit Eyes: Characterizing the importance of sea ice processes, use, and change around three Nunavut communities,” (PhD Dissertation: University of Toronto, 2007)
rather a permanence of shifting patterns, of animals and names and seasonal campsites. Inuit still travel today for a wide variety of reasons, including procuring food and resources, trading, visiting relatives, geographic curiosity, exploration, social pressure, or visiting culturally important sites such as one’s birthplace. In the nineteenth century, dozens of American ships – most of them whaling ships – also travelled to and through Arctic waters. Whaling crews often became rooted in place once the ice froze, because they lacked the knowledge and equipment to travel lightly and live off the land. Inuit could and did leave these outsiders’ spheres of influence, as long as they themselves were comfortable in the surrounding area. In short, Inuit and Americans were both on the move, but their trajectories only sometimes intersected.

There is an extensive theoretical literature on how humans interact with their home cities, but much less on latitudes above the urban centres. For scholars such as Yi-Fu Tuan, Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and Gaston Bachelard, these “wild places” remain largely an unproblematic counterpoint to the city, ultimately unknowable by humans. These theorists have contributed much to our understanding of settled temperate places, but wild nature remains for them in the realm of the mythical and the oneiric. Tuan

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18 There are good anthropological studies of Inuit and space that discuss the processes by which attachments to place are formed. See for example Claudio Aporta, “Trails and Tracks”; Beatrice Collignon, Knowing Places.
20 De Certeau and Yi-Fu Tuan offer conflicting definitions of the terms space and place. For de Certeau, place is the physical world (including the built environment) and space is the use of it, somewhat akin to the difference between language as a structural system and language as an act of speech or writing that both reproduces and subverts that system. (Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117). For Tuan, space is a new and chaotic-to-us environment, which
once asserted that Inuit must have a “weaker” attachment to place than sedentary peoples; this reflects the common stereotype of the arctic landscape as barren and monotonous, and ignores the fact that Inuit frequently returned to the same sites.\textsuperscript{21} Inuit stories demonstrate that the Arctic landscape is full of landmarks, life, and supernatural beings; to them it is anything but an undifferentiated mass of ice.\textsuperscript{22}

The Arctic also remained very important to many Americans who spent time there. Many continued to write about the hold it had on them for the rest of their lives. Some visited it only in nightmares, but for others, attachment to the landscape was so powerful that they referred to the Arctic as “home” and would do almost anything to return.\textsuperscript{23} This mnemonic impact of the Arctic makes sense when considered in terms of Gaston Bachelard’s model of memory. While we usually think that we remember ourselves “in time,” what we really remember is a “sequence of fixations in [space].” Our memories only make sense chronologically by being situated in different or changing spaces.\textsuperscript{24} This is part of the reason why exotic experiences can be so powerful: they provide a stark and striking break in memory, whereas everyday recollections tend to blur together. An

\textsuperscript{21} Yi-Fu Tuan, \textit{Landscapes of Fear} (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), 48. For Inuit discussions of attachment to the land, see John Bennett and Susan Rowley, eds., \textit{Uqalurait: an oral history of Nunavut} (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), 11, 118-126. For Tuan on greater attachments to cities and everyday places over less built up places we visit, see Tuan, \textit{Space and Place}, 107, 158.

\textsuperscript{22} Julie Cruikshank has argued that Tlingit elders in the Yukon have a network of roots that spread out across their traditional territory, rather than being fixed in a single permanent plot of land. Julie Cruikshank, \textit{The Social Life of Stories: narrative and knowledge in the Yukon Territory} (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998).


\textsuperscript{24} Bachelard, \textit{The Poetics of Space}, 8. See also David Harvey, \textit{The Condition of Postmodernity}, 218.
extraordinary experience in a dramatic place can take up far more space in memory than the time spent there would suggest. In moving across landscapes and nations, both Inuit and Americans call into question – albeit in different ways – the notion that people who stay in one place develop the strongest ties to the land.

Chapter Breakdown

I have chosen to open my dissertation around 1850 with the approximate end of the Little Ice Age, as the northern hemisphere warmed slightly after several centuries of colder temperatures. During this decade, a group of Inuit travelled hundreds of miles across land, sea, and ice from Baffin Island to northern Greenland, reconnecting ancient Indigenous trade and social networks. At the same time, American and Scottish whalers began deliberately overwintering in Cumberland Sound, which increased their contact with the local Inuit population. The 1850s also brought an unprecedented number of British and American expedition ships to the Arctic; they were looking for Sir John Franklin’s party, which had failed to return home in 1847. The searchers found no survivors, but ironically sparked further interest in Arctic exploration in the United States and elsewhere. Most of the stories I tell occur between the 1850s and the 1880s. Still, I continue to discuss the history of Cumberland Sound until 1922, the year that one last shipwreck marked an end to commercial bowhead whaling there, as the Hudson’s Bay

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25 Julie Cruikshank, Do glaciers listen? Local knowledge, colonial encounters and social imagination (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 5. The start of the Little Ice Age is debated but nearly everyone seems to agree that it ended around 1850.

26 On the Qitdlarssuaq migration see Guy Mary-Rousselière, Qitdlarssuaq, l'histoire d'une migration polaire (Montréal: Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 1980).
Company was rapidly establishing a fur trading monopoly and a new economy in the region.  

My first chapter examines the experiences of American whalers in Cumberland Sound from 1851-1868. Arctic whaling was a major economic activity in this period. At the height of the search for Franklin in the 1850s, there were ten times as many whaling ships as expedition vessels in arctic waters. As many as thirty ships a year visited Cumberland Sound. Some crews deliberately froze their ships into the ice, lived on them throughout the winter, and got an early start on spring whaling. Captains hired local men and women to hunt and sew and whale, and many American whalers had relationships with Inuit women.  

This chapter is based primarily on whaling logbooks and journals from overwintering American ships. I use these sources in conjunction with anthropological and scientific studies of Cumberland Sound to analyse what American whalers feared and believed about the Arctic, and why many suffered and died there. I argue that American hardships had more to do with an inability to appreciate and adapt to local conditions than with the inherent “hostility” of this particular arctic environment.

Chapter two investigates the lives of Inuit men, women, and children from South Baffin Island who came to the United States on whaling ships in the second half of the nineteenth century, with a focus on one couple in particular. In 1860, the American explorer Charles Francis Hall boarded a whaling ship headed for Cumberland Sound. He eventually overwintered just south of it, where he encountered Hannah and Ipiirvik. This

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27 The exact end of commercial whaling is debatable. See Chapter 4 for an explanation.
Inuit couple had spent much of their lives in Cumberland Sound but had also lived for two years in England with a whaling captain. Hall convinced the couple to come to the United States with their son, where they toured and helped Hall raise money for his next expedition. They returned to the United States several times and were among the nineteen people trapped on the ice floe during the *Polaris* expedition. Chapter two is about the couple’s time in the United States and is based largely on the their unpublished letters held by various archives, on Charles Francis Hall’s correspondence and notes and publications, and on critical readings of American descriptions of this couple and other Inuit visitors. Hannah’s experience was quite different from her husband’s, in part because of their different personalities and priorities, but also because of nineteenth-century Inuit and American conceptions of gender. I argue that for all Inuit, survival in America was a difficult adaptation to a harsh environment, and that their experiences in many ways paralleled those of American visitors to arctic homelands. To Inuit, life in the United States could be as strange, as lonely, as confusing, and as dangerous as American encounters with the arctic world.

The focus of Chapter three is an American army station at Lady Franklin Bay, situated at the far northernmost reaches of the earth’s landmass, in an area now known as the High Arctic. In 1881, ten European countries and the United States sent ships to scattered circumpolar sites to conduct scientific observations in honour of the first International Polar Year.²⁹ There was a German station in Cumberland Sound, but Americans chose a site much farther north, hoping to break polar records as well as compile observations.

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The expedition members were dropped off in a year of very little ice, and ships failed to reach them through the ice pack for the next two summers. The men eventually retreated south down the coast of Ellesmere Island, where most of them starved to death in 1884.

Chapter three examines the experiences of several enlisted men who left behind remarkably candid and detailed diaries, as well as the recorded behaviour of the West Greenlandic expedition member Jens Edvard Angutisiak, whom the commander hired after the cancellation of an earlier plan to take Inuit families from Cumberland Sound. I analyse the fears that the men had about this High Arctic environment and how this affected their actions and their written accounts. I look at how class and race had an outcome on whose stories were told and argue that these surviving stories shaped American views of the Arctic.

Chapter four returns to Cumberland Sound to consider the Inuit experience of commercial whaling, mostly as it was winding down in the early twentieth century. Before the advent of air travel, the vast majority of Inuit never travelled south of the treeline. Instead, they remained in their home region and experienced a different kind of survival story: learning to adapt to their own homeland as it changed around them. This chapter is based mostly on a variety of oral histories from Pangnirtung, Nunavut, including published interviews, recordings held in Canadian archives, tapes loaned to me by members of this arctic community, and interviews the interpreter Andrew Dialla and I conducted with local elders in 2008 and 2010. Inuit and American stories of whaling are strikingly different, in part because oral histories are a very different type of source from relatively dry whaling logbooks. As Julie Cruikshank has argued, published histories
tend to reconstruct chronologies and events, whereas oral histories are more concerned with expressing social relationships and processes. Most Inuit testimonies speak of Inuit lives, marriages, deaths, seasonal rounds, hardships, and joys. Because Inuit stories were generally about a later period of whaling in the early twentieth century and featured foreigners only on the periphery, I have decided to tell the Inuit and American whaling stories in separate chapters. Too often, histories that combine oral testimony with archival records end up structured around events and personalities identified in the archival sources. In this chapter, I argue that without discounting the tremendous changes that have occurred in the past 150 years, Inuit stress continuity and adaptation across generations, and have developed strategies for keeping their world recognizable.

In an epilogue, I examine more closely three Inuit “survival stories” from Cumberland Sound that continue to be retold today. The narratives deal with three tropes central to nineteenth-century American arctic survival stories: a famine, being adrift on the sea ice, and long-distance travel into unfamiliar territory. I use these stories to show that while Americans typically stressed the inherent hostility of the arctic environment, Inuit instead talk about humans making unfortunate – if sometimes unavoidable – decisions that temporarily isolated them from people and animals. I argue that these Inuit stories from the whaling days present a powerful framework for how Inuit can work with outsiders while still maintaining a vibrant Indigenous culture, and that the ways in which these stories are retold offer advice for surviving in a rapidly changing world.

With the exception of the epilogue, each of my chapters is structured around a way of
marking time that was central to that particular environment. Chapters one and four pass
through six Inuit seasons in Cumberland Sound; Chapter two investigates a series of
events that occurred on Sundays in the northeastern United States; and Chapter three
follows the path of the sun in the High Arctic, with its annual appearances and
disappearances. I wanted to convey the sense that in unfamiliar places, people’s previous
understandings of time and space often seem inadequate. Even ecological markers like
seasons and the sun vary drastically from place to place.

I do not mean to suggest that seasonal and clock time never overlapped, nor that these
were the only ways of imagining time. American food production continued to be highly
seasonal, and Inuit who never left the Arctic learned the concept of weeks through
encounters with whalers and missionaries.31 “Temporal discipline” – a work ethic
regulated by time – was widely respected in both places.32 Inuit also recognized linear
time based on important past events, and a “mythic time” linking people to the very
beginnings of human life.33 Americans would have situated themselves in various
permutations of “sacred time,” of which Sundays were only the most superficial of
markers for Christians. Longue durée factors like shifting climates and animal migration

31 Pamela Stern, “Upside Down and Backwards: time discipline in a Canadian Inuit town,” pp. 147-161 in
Anthropologica (2003 45:1), 152.
32 As western Europe and the United States industrialised, people internalised a new sense of time that
distinguished between work and leisure, and which could regulate the activities of large groups of people.
Other systems of time came to seem wasteful. Stern, “Upside Down and Backwards,” pp. 147-161 in
Anthropologica (2003 45:1), 148. See also John MacDonald, The Arctic Sky: Inuit Astronomy, Star Lore,
and Legend (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1998), 192, 208. Macdonald notes that Inuit made a
connection between time and economic activity, but Inuktitut had no word for “abstract, regulated” time, as
evidenced by his story of the interpreter who translated a government official’s declaration of “Time is
money!” by “A watch costs a lot!” Similarly, when asked to define time, a young Inuk in Iglulik recently
replied, “Time is nine to five.”
33 Macdonald, The Arctic Sky, 194-195
routes also had an impact on human journeys. These multiple conceptions of time must have shaped how the people I study thought about their place in history, and how they told stories about the past.

Ideas about time were also undergoing rapid change in the nineteenth century. Even mythic or sacred time was not immutable: countless Americans changed the way they thought about religion in the Second Great Awakening, and Cumberland Sound Inuit likely adapted their origin myths and rituals to deal with the changes brought by commercial whaling.\(^{34}\) Furthermore, when Inuit converted to Christianity in the early twentieth century, they entered into Christian conceptions of time, including an eschatological sense of movement towards the end of days. Americans and Inuit would also have seen their recent history as unfolding quite differently.\(^{35}\) There was so much that was new in the United States: advances in science and technology, rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, intensive immigration, territorial expansion, new peoples and mountains and icefields drawn over blank spots on maps. These modern developments also changed Inuit lives, but the Arctic and its resources were not new discoveries to them. Their homeland was ancient and tied to ecological time and space. The land and sea and ice were always changing, but they remained at the centre of the Inuit world.\(^{36}\)


\(^{36}\) Thanks to Jackson Lears, Susan Schrepfer, Ann Fabian, Paul Clemens, and Chris Trott for discussions about the various concepts of time.
Sources and Methodology

This study has been based on a wide variety of Inuit and American primary sources that reflect the various conceptions of time and history held by both societies. American materials include whaling logbooks and journals, photographs and sketches, explorers’ and soldiers’ diaries, published memoirs, and expedition reports. Many of the stories I retell were also described in newspapers, periodicals, books, and pamphlets. I have found enough first-hand accounts from American enlisted men and whalers to base chapters around them, but as might be expected, expedition employees usually penned fewer records than commanders, and the vast majority of whalers have left no trace except a name on a crew list. The stories I have been able to piece together represent only a fraction of what occurred; the opinions only a fraction of what was thought.

Primary sources about Inuit in the United States are even sparser. Much of my work on nineteenth-century Inuit consisted of reading non-Inuit sources against the grain. Outsiders’ descriptions of Inuit are not in short supply: the anthropologist Franz Boas did his first fieldwork in Cumberland Sound in 1883-1884, and scholars, missionaries, scientists, explorers, and whalers were all intrigued by people who could survive in a landscape that often proved lethal to their countrymen. *Esquimaux*, as they were generally called until the late nineteenth century, had the dubious distinction of being the most studied Indigenous people in the world in the Victorian Era.37 To analyse these

sources I draw on the work of scholars like Lyle Dick, Julie Cruikshank, Dorothy Harley Eber, and Tom Lowenstein, who have sensitively juxtaposed oral histories of Indigenous northern cultures with written historical sources; Kenn Harper, who has written a thoughtful biography of an Inuk in New York City as well as countless other columns and articles about northern history; and David C. Woodman, who recovered fragments of Inuit oral testimony about the Franklin Expedition from published nineteenth-century accounts. These authors are among the few seriously to consider nineteenth-century northern history from the point of view of more than one cultural group, even though the Arctic was a meeting-place for people of many different origins, and its history is a product of their interactions.

There is also a vast literature about South Baffin Inuit society and culture in the twentieth century, including several excellent Inuit-authored memoirs. I selectively draw on this contemporary ethnography and read it backwards in time, while recognizing that it was not created with this type of use in mind. Inuit ethnographers are generally very careful not to extrapolate beyond their own experiences, and anthropologists record their own sense of a specific time and place. Nevertheless, much of the new material is so rich, and many of the nineteenth-century accounts so sparse and unreliable, that I feel it is worth

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7. Without having done an exhaustive study of the term, I have noticed that the spelling “Eskimos” seems to have become popular in newspapers around the time of the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893.
attempting cautiously to combine the two, while noting throughout how anachronistic sources might skew my interpretations.

In collaboration with Inuit elders and youth, some anthropologists and social scientists have recently published books and theses that represent a real dialogue with Inuit researchers and that reflect Inuit priorities and concerns. I draw on much of this material here, and I appreciate the wealth of topics it addresses. As a graduate student in history, where grants are generally given to support archival research, I did not have the funds to undertake this kind of community-directed project. Working with the interpreter Andrew Dialla, I conducted more traditional oral history interviews in Cumberland Sound in 2008 and 2010. Meeting with these elders and working with Andrew has proved invaluable for giving me a personal sense of local history, but I recognise that there are better, more collaborative models for producing oral histories than the one I used. In citing oral histories, I also consider who the Inuit were speaking to, and what questions they were answering. It is always part of the historian’s job to fill in and wonder about what lies beyond the page, regardless of whether the source material originated as speech or text. All storytelling is a social activity, and tales are spun

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differently depending on the context and the listener.\textsuperscript{40} I tried to expand the range of what I could hear and understand by spending three summers in the region. Although I remain an outsider, by the time I conducted my interviews, many of the elders recognised me as someone who enjoyed spending time in their community, who had friends there, and who was likely to return. I still heard stories shaped for me, but I believe they were different ones than I would have heard if I had quickly flown in and left again. Certainly what I heard meant more to me because of my time in Cumberland Sound.

In conducting oral histories, it also became apparent that I was not the only historian working on this project. The elders I spoke with had spent a lifetime collecting narratives and interpreting them in the context of Inuit history and their own life experiences. Because my own education and historical framework are so different, I have no doubt that there are many subtleties and interpretations that I failed to hear or grasp. Any errors remain my own, but much of what I do understand I owe to Andrew Dialla, an Inuk who grew up in Cumberland Sound, and whose grandfather was a Scottish whaling captain. I officially hired Andrew to interpret for me during the interviews, but he was far more than a language interpreter. Individual interpreters play a powerful and often under-examined role in academic work, government services, and the daily life of monolingual inhabitants in Canada’s North.\textsuperscript{41} Andrew was part of the first generation of

\textsuperscript{40} Julie Cruikshank, \textit{The Social Life of Stories}, 40.

Inuit children educated in government schools with southern Canadian curricula, which taught English but left little time for learning Inuit words and skills. Since then, Andrew has put remarkable effort into mastering both English and Inuktitut languages and discourses. He has also extensively researched the whaling period – both through oral histories and written accounts – and he suggested elders to speak with, questions to ask, or sources to read. The elders we interviewed mostly told stories aimed at me, but when Andrew interpreted earlier recordings that had been intended for an Inuit audience, it took him longer to answer my questions than to translate the tape. He patiently explained to me how sea ice forms, how ringed seals were hunted in various seasons, where place names were on a map and what he knew about them. He introduced me to Inuit supernatural beings and legends, told me about his memories of the deceased elders whose voices we were hearing, and described some of the old words and narrative structures in their stories. He evocatively brought the world of whaling stations into the tiny windowless room in the Angmarlik Visitor Centre, where we sat with a tape player for many afternoons in August and September 2008, as the hillsides of Pangnirtung Fjord turned a brilliant autumn red outside. When I reference Andrew Dialla, as I frequently do in the chapters that deal with Inuit history, I am referencing the work of another historian.

Nearly all of the Inuit oral histories I have encountered, through Andrew and elsewhere, were initially told in Inuktitut. The anthropologist Louis-Jacques Dorais comments that present-day Inuit repeatedly tell him that Inuktitut is deeply connected to their land and
way of life, and the “only way to freely express our thoughts and our heart.”42 The language of elders contains many concepts that have no equivalent in English. For example, the contemporary South Baffin elder George Agiaq Kappianaq recently tried to explain the behaviour of an *ijiraq*, a spiritual being that lives inland. He used the Inuktitut word *qajaaksaqtuq*, which he defined as “when the [sea] ice is thin and the waves make the ice ripple,” to explain that “an *ijiraq* is able to make the land ripple.”43 Direct, simple translations of such terms do not exist in English, and full comprehension is contingent on familiarity with the arctic landscape and its animals. Skilled interpreters can do a tremendous job of explaining and contextualising Inuktitut stories, but much of the poetry and layers of significance are lost.

English and Inuktitut also reflect two very different concepts of the Arctic environment. When I interviewed Pangnirtung elder Inuusiq Nashalik in 2008, he spoke about the importance of stone markers, *inuksuit*.44 Especially when caribou were scarce, he said, his father would use these ancient cairns to direct him to inland hunting areas. Andrew Dialla struggled to express Inuusiq’s statements in English, saying that the *inuksuit* “point all the way out into the land, way out into the middle of nowhere.” He paused and continued, “…but into somewhere, because they always pointed to a place where there’s usually caribou.”45 In English discourse, the Arctic is often “the middle of nowhere.” In Inuktitut, relationships to animals and the land define specific places as “somewhere.”

43 Kappianaq in *Travelling and Surviving on our Land*, 71.
44 Stone “inukshuks” (*inunnguaq*) that resemble human beings are well known in Canada and were the symbol of the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, but these structures may be a modern development. Inuusiq would have been referring to other types of stone cairns.
45 Andrew Dialla in Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008.
Expressions like the “middle of nowhere” also conceal the fact that Cumberland Sound is a part of the modern world and has been instrumental in creating it both materially and culturally. In the nineteenth century, material resources like whale oil were exported south to light American cities and grease trains and heavy machinery, while baleen cinched in upper-class waistlines and helped to define respectable womanhood. Culturally, stereotypes of the Arctic shaped industrial civilisations by their perceived opposite. It is this tension between the “middle of nowhere” and the “middle of somewhere” that is at the centre of my dissertation, but it remains a challenge to reconcile and understand such different ways of thinking.

My dissertation is built upon precarious layers of translation: from Inuktitut to English and vice-versa, from Kalaallisut to Danish to English, from French to English, from semi-literate whalers’ English to contemporary academic English, from voice to print. The true meaning of any source is questionable, but the connotations of translated sources are even less penetrable, especially when the translations were done by people long deceased. It is not just scholars and experts who have translated my texts; all of the people I study acted to some degree as interpreters. When the Inuk woman Hannah wrote letters to American friends, she had to transform her thoughts from Inuktitut to English, then into


47 See Grace, Canada and the Idea of North, 235-237 for a critique of oral history being manipulated, edited, and transformed. I have done some of the European language translation myself and have noted this in the text, but most translations were done by others.
concepts that her friends could understand, and finally to pen and paper. When reporters looked at Hannah, they rendered her words and clothing and gestures into sentences aimed at American audiences.

As an historian, I am also struggling to translate unfamiliar places and people into my own cultural and emotional frameworks. Of the nineteenth-century sources I work with, some are so shrouded in stereotypes that they reveal almost nothing about the people or landscapes being described. Other accounts of cross-cultural encounters are suffused with a sense of curiosity, mystery, and empathy; the observers are somewhat aware of their preconceptions and are fed by a desire to learn something important, however incomplete. This second kind of author is, I think, all that historians can strive to be.

**What is Survival?**

Some of the people I study would also have been aware of a now-obsolete meaning of the word “survival.” In the late nineteenth century, the term denoted what social Darwinists considered extant evidence of earlier stages of humanity. In 1882 some ethnologists believed that “the Esquimaux are…the ‘survivals’ of the Cave Men of Europe,” meaning that they were early humans who had been pushed further and further out by the state, until they were “pressed within the Arctic regions.” The idea of survival thus connoted the idea of primitivism; and the Arctic a place where people would never choose to live, where they became trapped or “pressed within” the past.48

As Mary Black-Rogers has argued, even words that seem to denote the most basic and universal of human needs have varied cultural contexts. When Black-Rogers investigated the term “starvation” in fur trade journals, she found it referred to states ranging from mild hunger to famine-induced death. Fur traders also used “starving” to denote Indians who had enough to eat, but who could not pay their debts because they had hunted “to fill the belly” rather than trapping for furs. Indians who called out to traders that they were “starving” were not necessarily dying from lack of food. They may also have been expressing humility, making a standard request for food sharing, or establishing their power relationship with the trader.49

The root word “survive” appears only very infrequently in my nineteenth-century sources, even though many of the writers vividly convey their struggles for life amidst grief and dire predicaments. The few written Inuit records do not use the term at all, and Americans use it in a very literal sense. In one account, a little boy was so ill that he “could not long survive.”50 In another, four rescued men were too weak to walk and “could not have survived exceeding 24 hours.”51 One dying man thought of his sons at home and wrote, “If I do not survive this ordeal it will be a sore disappointment to

51 Adolphus Greely to the Chief Signal Officer, 17 July 1884, Greely Manuscript Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
them.”52 Of course, when people fell ill or began to starve, they were deeply concerned with dying. Yet in all of my case studies, people cared about far more than just their own physiological survival. They fought not just for the continuation of life, but also for the continuation of their way of life. Americans and Inuit clung to their values even when they accepted the need to adapt to their new surroundings, and they worried about the fate of their loved ones and children. Dying men on the Lady Franklin Bay expedition were terrified of what “uncivilised” measures the party might take to survive; they seem to have feared the underbelly of human nature more than death. One member brought a Bible as part of the eight pounds of survival gear he was allowed when the expedition retreated south to look for a rescue ship. Similarly, Inuit in Cumberland Sound insisted on perpetuating local skills and language and ways of being. Even when outsiders declared Inuit expertise outdated and unnecessary, Inuit sang the old songs in secret, and taught their children to hunt and sew and speak Inuktitut. I am thus concerned with three definitions of survival: obtaining basic physiological needs; keeping oneself and one’s world recognisable; and passing cultural knowledge onto future generations. Inuit and Americans cared about all three, although priorities and survival strategies could vary widely across cultures and between individuals.

Returning to physiological survival for a moment, the requirements for sustaining life in Cumberland Sound and the northeastern United States are fundamentally similar, although quite different in specifics. People in temperate and arctic regions require the basic necessities of water, food, clothing, shelter, and fuel. In times of scarcity, they must

52 Lieutenant Frederick Kislingbury, “Journal,” 22 February 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.
find creative ways to secure these basic needs, while keeping calm and applying existing knowledge to new situations. It is not always easy to predict who will be successful. As one American commented of his starvation experience in the twentieth century: “It undressed us…those who we thought would be strong were weak; those who we surely thought would take a beating held up best.”

Across the Arctic, Inuit mostly lived above the treeline, and relied on whales, seals, caribou, walrus, and other animals for the majority of their food, clothing, fuel, tools, and shelter. Ivaluardjuk told Knud Rasmussen in 1929 that “the greatest peril of life lies in the fact that human food consists entirely of souls.” In Cumberland Sound, marine mammals and especially ringed seals were the dietary staple, and their blubber was burned in lamps for heating and cooking. Inuit families had deep connections to specific places but were also mobile, travelling long distances by dog team, on foot, and in boats. By 1850, they were making use of select imported tools like guns and metal needles, which made securing and processing local resources easier. They traded for and consumed new foods such as biscuits, but these supplemented their local diet rather than replacing it. Among other things, Inuit children were taught to hunt, to prepare skins, to sew, to work with commercial whalers, and to show proper respect for animals and the land. There were not vast disparities of wealth and poverty, but some people lived more comfortably than others.

53 Sharman Apt Russell, *Hunger: An Unnatural History* (New York: Basic Books, 2006) 114. This comment was from a participant in the so-called “Minnesota Experiment,” a WWII experiment that starved conscientious objectors and then slowly re-fed them, in an attempt to learn more about what would be needed to save people starving in European concentration camps.

54 Ivaluardjuk, quoted in Bennett and Rowley, eds., *Uqalurait*, 43. He was referring to the risk that dead animals’ souls would avenge themselves on hunters; great care was taken to show respect to non-human creatures.
Early encounters across the Canadian Arctic described Inuit as generally healthy, with worn-down but strong teeth, and problems with eye inflammations and nosebleeds. The eye troubles may have been from snow blindness, and the nosebleeds from polyunsaturated fatty acids from marine fats. The Arctic presumably had some indigenous contagious diseases but nothing as severe as the germs brought in on ships, which were a major health concern in Cumberland Sound by 1850. Archaeological evidence suggests that dental health declined somewhat after contact but remained decent into the twentieth century. Even with good overall health, Inuit life could still be violent and dangerous. Major hazards included drowning, and bodily injuries from animal attacks or accidents. People seldom died of starvation but they did go hungry at times. Inuit rarely froze to death, but it was the kind of environment where warm clothing made of animal skins was critical, and good seamstresses were highly valued.

The carrying capacity of the arctic environment is quite low, but this does not inherently indicate a harsh or hostile place. Some northern ecosystems are highly resilient and able to absorb change and disturbance, and boundaries between arctic ecosystems are often extremely biologically productive. Arctic marine ecosystems – on which Inuit primarily rely – also cope far better than terrestrial ones with environmental change such as temperature fluctuations. Fewer species live in the Arctic than in temperate climates,

56 On starvation, hunger, and protocols of food sharing in traditional Inuit societies, see Bennett and Rowley, eds., Uqalurait, 50, 89, 218-219, 432.
but this lack of competition means that huge numbers of individual species can survive there.\textsuperscript{58}

The temperate regions could support much denser human populations, and in a nineteenth-century American city, food and housing and a wide variety of consumer goods were available on every street, but only for a price. Children were taught employable skills, where to buy what they could afford, and whom they could trust. Contagious disease was common, and most of the population worked long hours for little pay. Families in working-class New York City lived on an agricultural diet consisting largely of bread, potatoes, corn, peas, beans, cabbage, and milk from cows fed on “swill” (distillery by-products). Items like salt, meat, cheese, butter, sugar, coffee, and tea were infrequent luxuries, but were thoroughly enjoyed.\textsuperscript{59} Scientific studies of income and nutrition did not become popular in the United States until the turn of the twentieth century, but anecdotal evidence of misery among the poorest abounded. An American investigation in 1892 estimated that an average urban labouring family spent ninety per cent of their income on basic food, clothing, and rent, leaving only ten per cent to cover old-age savings and all other discretionary and unanticipated expenses.\textsuperscript{60} On the other hand, people with disposable income did not go hungry or homeless even if no one in their family could produce clothing and shelter. This equation of money with the necessities of life was reflected by an American who sat gazing at a bank bill while

\textsuperscript{58} McGhee, \textit{The Last Imaginary Place}, 35-36.
starving in the Arctic in 1884. His comrade commented, “What a bitter mockery in our present situation, to look at money, when we have nothing to eat.”\textsuperscript{61}

Across the United States and Europe, radical but influential thinkers ranging from Henry David Thoreau to Karl Marx criticised their own societies for a fixation on profit and accumulation far beyond the basic necessities of life. Thoreau commented, “I cannot believe that our factory system is the best mode by which men may get clothing…the principal object is, not that mankind may be well and honestly clad, but, unquestionably, that the corporations may be enriched.”\textsuperscript{62} He believed that many people overworked themselves to acquire more than they truly needed, and derided his fellow Americans for having “no time to be anything but a machine.”\textsuperscript{63} Thoreau frequently invoked a vision of hunter-gatherers leading fulfilling and idyllic lives, in contrast to Americans whom he claimed worked too hard to enjoy their material goods. In the twentieth century, anthropologist Marshall Sahlins would argue that hunter-gatherers generally do work fewer hours than agricultural or industrial labourers. Since nomadic hunter-gatherers have no incentive to accumulate goods beyond what they can carry, they have more time to enjoy life and leisure.\textsuperscript{64}

Survival is about the intersection of humans and the natural world, or the inseparability of humans from nature. The resources that fulfil basic human needs are drastically different from place to place. Everywhere, the ability to secure these resources depends at least as

\textsuperscript{61} Octave Pavy, “Notes,” Correspondence of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Box 19, RG-27, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.

\textsuperscript{62} Henry David Thoreau, \textit{Walden, or Life in the Woods} Vol. 1 (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1854), 44.

\textsuperscript{63} Thoreau, \textit{Walden} Vol. 1, 12.

much on social relations, local knowledge, and ways of seeing as much as on any particular climate. In all places, cultural ideas influence which resources are considered edible or what clothing is acceptable. Although huge numbers of nutritious harp seals swim into Cumberland Sound each summer, Inuit generally leave them alone because they do not like their taste. Wealthy Victorian American women donned whalebone corsets, which reinforced their status and perceived femininity but caused them great personal discomfort. Inuit and Americans who visited each other’s homelands in the nineteenth century were at least as bewildered by the unfamiliar culture as by the unfamiliar climate. Emotions, family networks, the sharing of resources, religion, gender roles – all of these confounded visitors and made survival in a new place more difficult.

It is still debatable whether it was better to be born above the Arctic Circle or below the forty-ninth parallel in the nineteenth century; certainly it depended on who you were born as. People in both places knew discomfort and deprivation. Nineteenth-century Inuit had to focus considerable energies on obtaining the basic necessities of life, and similarly, most Americans worked very long hours to obtain money for often-marginal food and housing. Personal security was also tenuous in both places. There are many tales of revenge killings and other violent assaults in pre-contact Inuit societies, and in the United States, this era was bookended by the Civil War and the Great War.65

Despite frequent hardships, people everywhere found ways to enjoy aspects of their labour, to relax, to create art and music, and to form meaningful relationships. Indeed,

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65 On revenge killings see for example Etuangat Aksayuk, interview with Margaret Nakashuk (née Karpik), 1994. Original recordings on file at the Angmarlik Visitor Centre, Pangnirtung, Nunavut, Canada.
such pleasures were arguably as necessary to long-term survival as basic necessities. Recent research suggests that survivors often have only one advantage over others: an unshakeable conviction that there is something worth surviving for.66 This is where the physiological and cultural aspects of survival meet. People willed themselves to stay alive for many reasons. They wanted to provide for loved ones or to see them again. They remembered comfort or health or delicious meals. They drew on a faith in God or outside powers. They hoped to eventually return to better times and pass on their new knowledge to others. More negative motivations – but no less powerful ones – included a desire for revenge, or a will to outlive an enemy who would no doubt recount a different version of events.

For all of the individuals I write about who travelled far from their homes, it is important to remember just how difficult the process of adjustment to someone else’s homeland must have been. At its most successful, adaptation involves not just thinking creatively and learning from local people, but also imagining and comprehending and welcoming the richness of the new place. It necessitates breaking and reorienting one’s preconceptions about what is natural, about what is right and wrong. In the most desperate circumstances, both Inuit and Americans in these pages often found they could bend much further than they might originally have imagined. Americans consumed the flesh of dead companions. Inuit who had been whalers for centuries found themselves with no bowhead whales left to hunt. These ordeals were haunting, horrifying, and devastating, but many people were able to survive them without feeling they had completely lost themselves. Yet to study these survival stories is invariably also to study

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death, because for all those who live, there are many others who perish. The present-day
North Baffin elder Cornelius Nutaraq described learning to live off the land in this way:

To my way of thinking, people never know everything about something immediately…We never know everything about anything immediately. This is especially true for things that are going to affect our lives. Knowing the characteristics of the land is not that easy…You have to know about surviving on the land and you have to know how to live in it, for example how to hunt for food to survive. In order to do this, there are many things you have to know. You have to follow what you are taught about living here, especially outside the community if you are alone in the winter when it is cold. You have to know how to survive on the land.  

Nutaraq was speaking of Inuit gradually learning the landscape of their homeland as they grew up in it, over the span of their lifetimes. But this was, and is, equally true for people who encounter a new land anywhere, at any time of their lives. No one can understand a place immediately; everyone who truly attempts to survive in a new place is deserving of compassion. The stories told in these pages reflect people reconciling dreams and preconceptions with reality. They are about the adaptation and survival of both individuals and cultures, the tenacity and the fragility of life in a certain time and place.

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67 Nutaraq in Travelling and Surviving on our Land, 160-161.
It was a calm day in the Arctic waters of Cumberland Sound. On July 3, 1860, the American whaling bark Antelope slid slowly alongside the pack ice, cruising for bowhead whales. On deck, the ship’s officers were attempting to deal with an insubordinate crew member, recorded only as Peter. Peter had been told to climb up into the riggings, but he repeatedly refused to go aloft. Instead he jumped out onto the ice and shouted that he “would not come aboard again.” Eventually the third mate had to clamber off the ship and drag Peter from the ice, probably with the entire crew watching. We can never know what Peter hoped to accomplish with this brief act of defiance, but it is possible that he actually wanted to be left behind on the ice.

Peter’s decision to abandon ship in the Arctic would have struck most of his contemporaries in urban North America as insane and suicidal. In the mid-nineteenth century, persistent Arctic stereotypes were gaining widespread currency, propelled largely by the ongoing search for the lost British explorer Sir John Franklin. Icebergs and polar bears adorned silverware, buttons, postcards, playing cards, cigar bands, and

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1 The officer could have been sending Peter aloft either as punishment or as a standard watch duty. That fact that he was sent up for two hours suggests that it was his watch, as shifts in the cross-trees were generally of two-hour lengths. Margaret S. Creighton, *Rites and Passages: The Experience of American Whaling, 1830–1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 61.

2 Antelope 1860–1861, 3–5 July 1860, ODHS 771, New Bedford Whaling Museum. After the mate brought him back on board, Peter was sent aloft for two hours. He was then put in irons and permitted to return to his berth, to walk about the deck, and presumably to perform his duties. On the following day, the ship moved away from the ice, and the first mate removed the irons.
textiles. The Arctic was written, painted, and imagined as a bleak, harsh expanse covered in snow, with the odd lonely ship trapped in its icy darkness.³

The environment into which Peter jumped bore little resemblance to such ideas. This was the Inuit season of upingaaq: the warmest, wettest, lightest, most verdant time of the year. In this season it was never dark, not even at midnight. Cumberland Sound in early July could be drizzly, chilly, and damp, but it could also be warm and sunny. On the day Peter jumped ship, another whaler described the weather as “pleasant.”⁴ In 1860, there was still pack ice moving out of the Sound on its way south, but most of the area was easily navigable. The mountainsides were carpeted in greenery and flowers, and the waters and shorelines full of whales, seals, caribou, Arctic char, eider ducks, clams, and a variety of migratory birds. Peter had probably already met many of the local people.

Hundreds of Inuit inhabited Cumberland Sound in the mid-nineteenth century; many had relocated there specifically to trade with the whalers.⁵ Inuit families approached arriving whaling ships in boats, bringing furs and fish to trade, as well as their dogs, which let out


⁵ In 1857, the missionary Mathias Warmow roughly estimated the population of the Sound at 350. This number may be low, since he probably neglected to count families who were away caribou hunting at the time. W. Gillies Ross, ed., This Distant and Unsurveyed Country: A Woman’s Winter on Baffin Island, 1857–1858 (Montreal: McGill–Queen’s University Press, 1997), 181–82. See also Philip Goldring, “Inuit Economic Responses to Euro-American Contacts: Southeast Baffin Island, 1824–1940,” Journal of the Canadian Historical Association: Historical Papers 21, no. 1 (1986): 153.
an “unbelievable howling.” One captain recalled that upon arrival, his “cabin was soon crowded [with Inuit visitors], and not only the cabin, but the cabin-steps, the companion-way, and the after-part of the deck.” There were also many of Peter’s countrymen in the vicinity. Thirty American and Scottish whaling ships visited that spring, and several of them were in sight when Peter took to the ice. These ships frequently exchanged equipment, provisions, letters, and employees with each other. Peter was one of more than ten thousand American whaling hands at sea in July 1860. Yet unlike most of these workers, who crisscrossed oceans with only brief stops in port, Peter’s crew was about to take up semipermanent residence in someone else’s homeland. That winter, along with ten other American and Scottish vessels, the Antelope’s captain would anchor next to Inuit camps in Cumberland Sound and freeze his ship deliberately into the ice, anticipating an early and profitable start on spring whaling. When Peter jumped ship, he must have been aware from his surroundings that this was not a deserted place, and that he would not be left alone to die, even in the unlikely event that his captain

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8 Philip Goldring, “Inuit Economic Responses to Euro-American Contacts: Southeast Baffin Island, 1824–1940,” Journal of the Canadian Historical Association: Historical Papers 21, no. 1 (1986): 152. Only eleven of these would overwinter; the rest either returned home or spent the winter in a different whaling ground. It was always only a minority of ships that spent the winter. W. Gillies Ross, ed., Arctic Whalers, Icy Seas: Narratives of the Davis Strait Whale Fishery (Toronto: Irwin, 1985), 154; Antelope 1860–1861, 3 July 1860, ODHS 771, New Bedford Whaling Museum.
9 One estimate for the mid-1850s sets the number of men on whaling ships at 20,000. Eric Jay Dolin, Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America (New York: Norton, 2007), 221. Even allowing for one-third fewer vessels shipping out after 1858, the number could hardly have been less than 10,000, especially since many of the earlier ships would still have been at sea. Whaling was a multimillion dollar industry in the United States on the eve of the Civil War. Lance E. Davis et al., In Pursuit of Leviathan: Technology, Institutions, Productivity, and Profits in American Whaling 1816–1906 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 70, 513. On the impact of the war on the whaling industry in general, see Creighton, Rites and Passages, 36–37, 89; Davis et al., In Pursuit, 179–80.
abandoned him on the ice.\textsuperscript{11} A person alone in Cumberland Sound could have turned to any number of others for assistance.

This chapter will argue that American whalers in Cumberland Sound were confronted with visceral year-round evidence that the region was a rich and thriving homeland. What they encountered there contradicted American preconceptions of the Arctic as desolate, empty space. Yet it is one of the most difficult tasks in the world to truly see a new place as home, and Arctic stereotypes proved difficult for most of the whalers to abandon. Quality of life on overwintering voyages improved according to the extent to which whalers were able to adapt to their new surroundings. When American whalers were miserable, fell ill, or perished in Cumberland Sound, it had more to do with an inability to appreciate and adjust to local conditions than with the inherent “hostility” of the Arctic environment.

Part of living in Cumberland Sound involved getting used to different seasonal patterns. This chapter presents the yearly cycle of overwintering voyages in terms of six Inuit seasons: upingaaq (late spring), aujaq (summer), ukiaksaaq (early fall), ukiaq (fall), ukiuq (winter), and upingaksaaq (early spring).\textsuperscript{12} At least six seasons are self-evident to many Inuit, just as four seasons are perceived in most temperate regions and three in

\textsuperscript{11} Desertion rates in the Arctic were lower than elsewhere. In temperate or tropical regions, they were as high as two-thirds. Ross, ed., Arctic Whalers, 175.

\textsuperscript{12} Throughout this paper, unless otherwise specified, information concerning the characteristics of each season is taken from Department of Environment, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit of Climate Change in Nunavut: A Sample of Inuit Experiences of Climate Change in Nunavut ([Iqaluit]: Government of Nunavut, 2005); Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Final Report of the Inuit Bowhead Knowledge Study ([Iqaluit: Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, 2000], 81; and personal communication with residents of Pangnirtuq. The names of the seasons are spelled using the orthography in Alex Spalding, A Multi-Dialectical Outline Dictionary (with an Aivilingmiutaq Base) ([Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College, 1998).
many tropical ones. There is no evidence that any of the American whalers who kept the logbooks and journals used in this study considered there to be more than four seasons. For many record keepers, winter was the only season worth noting in Cumberland Sound. Yet their journals and logbooks evidence the Americans’ passage through these Arctic seasons, with distinct events occurring as each one turned.

**Aujaq (Summer)**

Peter was neither the first nor the last whaler to abandon ship in Cumberland Sound. Nine years previously, on September 1, 1851, the American vessel *McLellan* sailed into the Sound. It was then *aujaq*, or summer, the season when the waters are freest of ice. It was drier than in *upingaaq*, and the air was crisper. The sun dipped below the horizon, although it did not get dark enough for stars until mid-August. Arctic flowers were still abundant and berries were ripening; the leaves of some of the plants that clung to the shorelines had begun to change color. Cumberland Sound Inuit harvested the downy seedpods of the Arctic willow in this season; when mixed with dried moss, these provided the wicks for the stone lamps that were the source of light in their winter

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13 Seasonal distinctions are somewhat arbitrary in all societies, and it should be noted that some Inuit consider there to be more than six seasons, or use more or less specific seasonal terms depending on the context of the conversation. Meeka Mike, director of the Tusaqtuut Core Indigenous Knowledge Project, mentioned eight recorded seasons in the South Baffin communities of Kimmirut and Kingait (Cape Dorset), but said there are more commonly six in Iqaluit and Pangnirtung (Meeka Mike, public lecture at the University of Calgary, November 5, 2010). The late South Baffin elder Pauloozie Angmarlik named seven seasons in Aaju Peter, “Moon, seasons and stars,” pp. 125-131 in Saullu Nakasuk et al., *Interviewing Inuit Elders: Volume I: Introduction* (Iqaluit, Nunavut Arctic College, 1999), 127-128.

14 A whaling logbook was kept by the first mate and was the official record of the voyage. Logbook keepers were supposed to record daily navigational and weather information, whaling catches, disobedience, desertions, serious illnesses, and deaths. Most seem to have complied with these standards but did not record much else. Journals were private diaries kept by various crew members. They are often far more descriptive, although their entries can be sporadic and/or undated. See Stuart C. Sherman, *The Voice of the Whaleman, with an account of the Nicholson Whaling Collection* (Providence: Providence Public Library, 1965) 32–33, 39.


16 On flowers at the end of August, see Boas, in Müller-Wille, ed., *Franz Boas among the Inuit*, 73.
houses. Inuit also made an arduous trip inland to hunt barren-ground caribou, primarily to get the skins necessary for winter clothing. During aujaq, the whales began to migrate out of the Sound, but occasional sightings kept nineteenth-century whalers busy and hopeful throughout the season.

In 1851, however, the crew of the McLellan was unlucky. In a month of hunting, they saw only four whales and caught none of them. A local Inuk told the crew that whales were most numerous earlier in the year, when the entrance to the Sound was still too choked with ice for foreign ships to enter it. The only way to hunt these whales would be to spend the winter in the Sound, in order to be there when the whales returned. No foreigner had ever before attempted to overwinter in Cumberland Sound, but the crew of the McLellan were in no hurry to return home with a “clean” or empty ship.

Whalemen’s wages consisted only of a share of the catch; if they sailed home now, they would receive nothing. Captain William Quayle asked if twelve men—probably about half the total employees on board—would consider spending the winter on Qimmiqsut, an island on the Sound’s west shore. Quayle promised to return to pick up the men, along with their anticipated mother lode of blubber and whalebone, no later than July

17 Page M. Burt, Barrenland Beauties: Showy Plants of the Canadian Arctic (Yellowknife, NT: Outcrop, 2001), 56–57.
20 On the lay system, see, for example, chap. 5, “Labor,” in Davis et al., In Pursuit, 150–213.
21 A whaling crew generally included a captain, three or four mates, four boatsteerers, a cook, a steward, a cooper, possibly a blacksmith, and about fifteen seamen. Creighton, Rites and Passages, 42; Qimmiqsut (sometimes written Kingmiksoo or Kingmiksok) is officially designated as Nimigen Island today, although whalers in the nineteenth century knew it by various corruptions of its Inuit name of Qimmiqsut, meaning “the place that looks like a dog.” Philip Goldring, “Whaling Era Toponymy of Cumberland Sound,” Canoma 11, no. 2 (1985): 32.
1852. Twelve men including the first mate volunteered.\textsuperscript{22} After a month of experience with Cumberland Sound and its inhabitants, all were apparently confident that this was not the kind of Arctic landscape where outsiders starved and froze to death.

While these men must have been among the more adventurous of whalers, they seem to have been fairly representative of mid-nineteenth-century crews. Eight of the twelve men were single; all were described as “young.”\textsuperscript{23} Two of the volunteers were foreign citizens: Thomas Evans was English, and Frank Rogers spoke Portuguese and was probably from the Azores or Cape Verde Islands.\textsuperscript{24} The first mate, Sidney Budington, was one of four married men and among the oldest in the party. He was twenty-eight. A New Londoner from a whaling family, Budington was spending his second \textit{aujq} in the Davis Strait region.\textsuperscript{25} Greenhand George Tyson had no previous arctic experience.

Before setting sail on the \textit{McLellan} at the age of twenty-one, he had spent his life in New York City, where he worked in an iron foundry.\textsuperscript{26} As was typical for hard-working whalers of English descent, Tyson would only have to sail this one time as a low-paid, unskilled whaling hand. With repeated voyages he would become an officer and finally a

\textsuperscript{22} E. Vale Blake, ed., \textit{Arctic Experiences: Containing Captain George Tyson’s Wonderful Drift on the Ice Floe . . .} (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1874), 89.

\textsuperscript{23} Charles Francis Hall, \textit{Journal}, February 1860–March 1860, Charles Francis Hall Collection, box 1, Smithsonian Archives of the National Museum of American History. (Unfortunately most of Hall’s journal entries from New London are not dated). Hall does not specify the ages of the men, but most nonofficers on whaling ships were under the age of 24. Few were willing to make a career out of life in the forecastle. Creighton, \textit{Rites and Passages}, 42.

\textsuperscript{24} Hall, \textit{Journal}, February 1860–March 1860. This percentage of foreigners was low compared with most American whaling voyages. American law in this period required ships to have a majority (two-thirds) of American citizens aboard, but this rule was routinely flaunted. Lisa Norling, \textit{Captain Ahab Had a Wife: New England Women & the Whalefishery, 1720–1870} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 134.

\textsuperscript{25} Barnard L. Colby, \textit{For Oil and Buggy Whips: Whaling Captains of New London County, Connecticut} (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1990), 95.

\textsuperscript{26} Blake, ed., \textit{Arctic Experiences}, 77. Tyson was actually born in New Jersey, but his family relocated to New York City while he was still an infant.
captain, and he would end up spending over a dozen winters in the Arctic. The African American cook, recorded only as Bill, did not have the same opportunities for advancement as Tyson. Often men of color, cooks were among the lowest paid of crew members. Salvaging meals from monotonous, often spoiled, and sometimes inadequate supplies could be a thankless job. The unnamed crew members were likely either farm boys, factory hands, or unskilled laborers from northeastern states. One or two of them may have fulfilled the contemporary stereotypes of whalemens as being “gamblerr[s] on the run” or “vagabonds just from the clutches of the police.” But most of them probably had other reasons for signing on, which could have ranged from a longing for adventure, to a desire to keep one’s temperance pledge (most ships were “dry” by the 1850s), to the goal of saving enough money to marry and buy a small farm. This last ambition would have been difficult but not impossible to achieve. Whaling did not offer great financial incentives to new recruits; indeed, nearly all unskilled shore labor paid better than the average twenty cents per day that whaling hands took home at the end of a voyage. However, unlike many laborers, whalers were employed full time year-round, and they received food and lodgings of a sort. Furthermore, Anglo-Americans could expect to rise

27 Ibid., 92. On the promotion of white Americans, see Norling, Captain Ahab had a Wife, 134.
28 Creighton, Rites and Passages, 28, 30, 128. Apparently, many captains and/or agents kept costs down by spending as little on food as possible. Dolin, Leviathan, 260.
29 Charles Nordhoff, quoted in Davis et al., In Pursuit of Leviathan, 180; unspecified Nantucket newspaper in 1836, quoted in Dolin, Leviathan, 222.
30 Creighton, Rites and Passages, 53–56 (reasons for going), 102 (dry ships).
31 Dolin, Leviathan, 271. Most studies comparing wages for whalemens and shore laborers do not appear to factor in the room and board provided on whaling ships. (For an extensive one, see Davis et al., In Pursuit, especially 180–84). In the 1860s, agricultural laborers were charged between $96 and $156 per year for food and lodgings. Carroll D. Wright, Comparative Wages, Prices, and Cost of Living (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1889), 47. This is low compared with the $208 minimum for room and board for a single adult male in 1860 in New York City. See Jeanne Boydston, Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 134. If one adds even the lowest of these estimates to the wages of whalemens, it makes their wages more comparable to those of other onshore laborers.
quickly through the ranks, and since whalers received a share of their ship’s profits, there was always the dream of an extraordinarily successful voyage.

This dream must have encouraged the twelve volunteers as they unloaded their personal belongings and ship’s supplies, landed on Qimmiqsut in two small whaleboats, and watched the *McLellan* sail away. *Aujaq* was drawing to a close; the days were getting shorter and the nights colder. In an attempt to transpose their sense of order onto this unfamiliar world, the men immediately “pre-empted a section of land whereupon to build a hut or house.”32 They had taken some lumber from the ship, but it was not enough to build a cabin. Instead, the men constructed a shelter out of the “stone of the country,” of which there was certainly plenty—stone is one of the predominant features of Cumberland Sound. They stuffed the gaps in the wall with turf and erected a roof made of sealskins sewn together, incorporating a skylight made “of the entrails of the whale.”33 This roof design seems to have been modeled after Inuit dwellings, which were also covered in sealskin, with a translucent section made of dried membranes.34 Inuit women presumably sewed the roof of *McLellan* house; if not, it almost certainly leaked. After the snow came, the crew would bank walls six feet thick around their house.35

The men of the *McLellan* fared better that winter than many, if not most, of the whalers who would follow them in the years and decades to come. Their captain had given them all the food he could spare, but it was not nearly enough to sustain twelve men for eight

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32 Blake, ed., *Arctic Experiences*, 89
33 Interview with George Tyson, in Hall, *Journal*, 20 February 1860.
34 Ross, ed., *Arctic Whalers*, 230. Both summer tents (*tupiq*) and winter dwellings (*qammaq*) could have translucent “skylights.”
or nine months. Out of necessity, they made extensive use of local resources and knowledge, and they almost certainly ate more nutritious food and lived more comfortably than on a whaling ship. When their coal ran out, they burned whale skeletons, which Inuit helped them bring to the hut on dog sleds. The bones were easy to chop and full of oil; they apparently made a good fire. The men had limited success with hunting. They “occasionally secur[ed] a seal” but were in large part dependent on the Inuit, who shared game with them throughout the year in exchange for trade goods. The men did not suffer from this diet; according to one of them, they “never were more healthy” and actually “increased in weight.” No one contracted scurvy or any other illness. And finally, when spring came, the two boat crews caught seventeen bowhead whales between them, an extremely impressive number considering most summer voyages hoped to return with two or three.

The McLellan never came back for the twelve men at Qimmiqsut. It was caught amidst ice floes “in terrible conflict” and wrecked in Davis Strait. The men waited through upingaaq and well into another aujaq. Having long since exhausted their supplies, they were kept from starvation by the generosity of Inuit hunters and perhaps by provisions from other whaling vessels. On September 4, 1852, with summer drawing to a close,

36 Pangnirtung elder Pauloosie Veevee had never burned bowhead whalebones himself, but he confirmed that there is lots of oil inside the ribs when they are fresh, so he thought they would make a good fuel. Pauloosie Veevee, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, interpreted by Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008. Charles Francis Hall noted: “The bone is very porous, and filled with oil; the heat from it is great. One cord of bone must be equivalent to four cords of live oak.” Hall, *Arctic Researches*, 461.

37 Sidney Budington, quoted in Colby, *For Oil and Buggy Whips*, 96.


41 Ibid. In his memoirs, Tyson stated outright that he doubts they would have survived had the Inuit not supplied them with food. Blake, ed., *Arctic Experiences*, 90.
the twelve men loaded themselves and their whales onto a departing Scottish ship, which took them to Hull. There, they sold the oil and baleen and individually found their ways home. The owners of the *McLellan* likely found a way to claim most of the voyage’s profits for themselves; if not, the twelve men had a tremendous windfall. The unprocessed products of seventeen bowhead whales would have fetched, at a conservative estimate, approximately $72,000 in 1852 currency, at a time when $250 per year was sufficient for a single man to live on in New York City.

These men had proved that outsiders could live enjoyable, reasonably comfortable lives year-round in this part of the Arctic. At least three of the volunteers—George Tyson, Sidney Budington, and William Sterry—would choose to spend several more winters in Cumberland Sound. A decade later, Sterry declared that he had “never enjoyed himself better” than when he was living among the Inuit and that he would “like a piece of raw seal meat right now.” The news traveled quickly among whalers that if they overwintered in Cumberland Sound, they could count on the help of local people and on an excellent profit. Other American and Scottish captains began deliberately freezing

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42 Sidney Budington, quoted in Colby, *For Oil and Buggy Whips*, 96.
43 The baleen would have brought in $9,280. This is a fairly exact estimate since Budington recorded that they took 16,000 pounds of whalebone, and whalebone was selling for 58 cents per pound in New Bedford that year. Unfortunately, Budington does not state how much oil they rendered from the whales, but assuming twenty tons from each of seventeen adult male bowheads (a conservative estimate since they presumably took some female bowheads, which are larger and can yield up to thirty tons apiece), and 240 gallons of whale oil to a ton, this is 81,600 gallons of oil, which would have sold for 77 cents per gallon in New Bedford, bringing in $62,832. The totals combine to equal over $72,000, an incredible return on investment even considering the total loss of the *McLellan*, which was likely insured anyway. Buying, outfitting, and provisioning a ship for whaling cost between $40,000 and $50,000 in the 1850s, and this was not the *McLellan*’s first voyage. Colby, *For Oil and Buggy Whips* (whalebone amount); Davis et al., *In Pursuit*, 377 (whalebone prices); Kenn Harper, *Pangnirtung* (Arctic Bay, NU: s.n., 1972) 12, 14 (oil from male and female bowheads); William Scoresby, *An Account of the Arctic Regions with a History and Description of the Northern Whale-Fishery*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Co., 1820), 403 (gallons of oil to a ton of blubber); Davis et al., *In Pursuit*, 374 (oil prices); Creighton, *Rites and Passages*, 33 (outfitting costs); Boydston, *Home and Work*, 134 (New York City living costs in 1860).
their ships into the ice. Yet the exploits of these crews failed to enter American popular consciousness. Nine years later, Arctic aficionado and would-be explorer Charles Francis Hall interviewed whalers in New London, Connecticut, before embarking on his first journey north. He recorded in his journal, apparently with some relief, that “every Whale Capt . . . is confirmed in the opinion that White men can live with the Esquimaux—It has been done time & again.” Hall was certainly more knowledgeable about the Arctic than most Americans; he had read every piece of Arctic literature he could find. The fact that, before talking to whalers, even Hall was not sure that outsiders could subsist in Inuit camps suggests that whaling stories failed to break down stereotypes about the Arctic’s bleakness and hostility. Nor were whalers immune to this discourse. As aujaq drew to a close in Cumberland Sound, many inexperienced whalers also wondered if they would survive an Arctic winter.

_Ukiaksaaq (Early Fall)_

_Ukiaksaaq_ is the onset of snow, ice, and darkness. The sun begins to rise later and set earlier than in temperate regions. Freshwater ice skins the lakes, thaws, reappears, and gradually strengthens. Seawater becomes thick and slurry along the shorelines. Snow covers and uncovers the ground before finally settling in for the season. This was the time of year when another group of American whalers, even less well equipped than the men of the _McLellan_, found out how diverse the Arctic was, how quickly seasons could change there, and how crucial it was to have the support and assistance of local people.

45 Hall, _Journal_, February 1860–March 1860. Emphasis in original. Hall made another comment similar to this one in the same journal, writing that Captain Allen of the _Black Eagle_ “believes men can live with the Esquimaux.”

46 See Hall’s list of his Arctic books in Charles Francis Hall, _Journal, with Preparations for the First Expedition_, Charles Francis Hall Collection, Box 1, Smithsonian Archives of the National Museum of American History.
One month after Peter jumped ship and was dragged back onboard the *Antelope*, nine other American sailors made a furtive and unquestionably serious attempt at desertion in Cumberland Sound. On the night of August 4, 1860, these men—seven from the *Ansel Gibbs* and two from the *Daniel Webster*—packed up their few possessions and rowed away in a twenty-eight-foot open whaleboat. All nine of them disappeared into the night. This was no easy feat just south of the Arctic Circle in early August. It was still *aujaq*, so there was no real night. The sun set around 10 p.m., rose around 3 a.m., and provided substantial twilight in between. The escape was possible largely because the men of the *Ansel Gibbs* were the crew supposedly keeping watch at the time.\(^47\) They also made their break while their captain was away from the ship, smoking cigars with a friend on a neighboring vessel.\(^48\) Nevertheless, the captain returned within the hour, noticed the missing men, and immediately set out in a second whaleboat to bring them back. There are many small rocky islands around the mouth of Kingnait fjord, and in the foggy twilight, the captain could not discern the boat from the shoals. He returned to his ship but did not give up. Crews from both ships continued to comb the Sound for the next seven days, but the men had simply disappeared. The rumour—which turned out to be true—was that they were headed for home.\(^49\)

According to the logbook keeper of the *Ansel Gibbs*, the two captains consoled themselves with the conviction that the deserters “will never like to get anywhere.”\(^50\)

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\(^47\) This means the men would have known each other fairly well, since they would have had all their watches together, and made up one of the ship’s four whaleboat crews. Creighton, *Rites and Passages*, 60.

\(^48\) Hall, *Journal*, July 1860–November 1860. The notebook containing John Sullivan’s original testimony is part of the Charles Francis Hall Collection, Box 2, Smithsonian Archives of the National Museum of American History. It is also reprinted in full in Ross, ed. *Arctic Whalers.*

\(^49\) *Ansel Gibbs* 1860–1861, 6–12 August 1860, log 304, New Bedford Whaling Museum.

\(^50\) Ibid., 11 October 1860.
This choice of words—“never get anywhere”—reflected the popular notion that the Arctic was not a part of the liveable world, that it was nowhere. The deserters would have resented the captains’ dismissal of their abilities, but they shared this view of the Arctic as undifferentiated, unknowable space from which one should escape as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, their desire to get “somewhere” would cost three of them their lives.

One of the survivors, John Sullivan of South Hadley Falls, Massachusetts, later wrote up an account of their journey at the request of a magistrate. According to Sullivan’s testimony, during the first night, the men left the Kekerten area and rushed more than fifty miles across the Sound to Qimmiqsut, the island where the McLellan men had overwintered. They kept their distance from settlements and ships and passed unremarked, simply one of more than a hundred whaleboats in the region that season. They hurried out of the Sound, presumably fearful of being arrested and returned to their ships. Desertion was a criminal offense, punishable by law or by unofficial methods such as flogging, which was illegal yet common throughout the mid-1860s. It was, however, not just fear of reprisal that kept the men rowing south. When a ship just outside the Sound offered the nine men jobs and amnesty, they refused, primarily because they

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51 “A Harrowing Tale,” *St. Johns Daily News*, December 6, 1861. The understated eloquence of this deposition, which according to the magistrate was written in Sullivan’s own hand, suggests that Sullivan was better educated than most foremast hands and indeed more literate than most of the officers keeping logbooks. Sullivan’s full testimony has also been reprinted in Gillies Ross, *Arctic Whalers, Icy Seas.*

52 Creighton, *Rites and Passages*, 94, 108–9, 144, 146. Desertion was common, perhaps as high as 29 percent between 1843 and 1862. However, this is the only instance of it in the surviving American logbooks for Cumberland Sound. This is presumably for two contradictory reasons: most whalers considered the region barren and inhospitable, and there were so many whaling ships staying for long periods that it would have been difficult to either leave or hide out.
feared they would die if they had to spend a winter in the Arctic.\footnote{John Sullivan, quoted in Charles Francis Hall, \textit{Life with the Esquimaux} (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1864), 93.} The men apparently presumed they could live off the land in the summertime. They also had little understanding of how soon \textit{aujaq} would turn into \textit{ukiaksaaq}, or of how Arctic resources are localized in particular seasons and places.

The men would have had no way of acquiring the knowledge, skills, and gear that could have kept them all alive. Only two of the nine deserters had ever been to sea before, and none had been to the Arctic.\footnote{Hall, \textit{Life with the Esquimaux}, 89.} They were all from the northeastern United States.\footnote{Hall, \textit{Journal}, July 1860–November 1860. Presumably all were white. Hall does not actually say this, but he describes them as “Americans” and identifies with them. Previously in his journal, he had listed the African American cook under the category of foreigner.} They had few personal possessions and had not been able to steal many more. Whaleboats were usually equipped with a small sail, a hatchet, a glass lantern, a flint, candles, a compass, and perhaps bread and water to last a few days.\footnote{Creighton, \textit{Rites and Passages}, 61. (Except flint and candles, listed in Davis et al., \textit{In Pursuit}, 285).} Apart from the equipment on the boat and their personal clothing, they had taken two guns, ammunition, five blankets, twenty pounds of bread, and all the cooked provisions they could find.\footnote{Sullivan, quoted in Hall, \textit{Life with the Esquimaux}, 92. The blankets are only mentioned in Hall, \textit{Journal}, July 1860–November 1860.} They had no maps, no charts, and no navigational instruments apart from the whaleboat’s compass. None of them knew how to use such equipment anyway.\footnote{It was common for only the captain and the first mate to know how to navigate the ship. This had the side effect of discouraging mutinies (Creighton, \textit{Rites and Passages}, 111). After questioning the men, Charles Francis Hall recorded that none of them knew how to use navigational instruments. The steward did know how to navigate, and he was supposed to accompany them, but as the captain’s servant, he was out visiting on the other ship and could not get away (Hall, \textit{Journal}, July 1860–November 1860).} When asked about the route they were planning to take, the only answer they could give was “South.”\footnote{When Budington asked them where they were headed, they replied simply, “South.” Upon further interrogation, Hall discovered they had only a very vague idea of northern geography. Hall, \textit{Journal}, July 1860–November 1860.}
Nevertheless, within a month, they had crossed Hudson Strait and were descending the coast of Labrador, having covered a distance of over three hundred miles. All was not well. For the past fortnight their only food had been scanty amounts of berries and mushrooms, which they had gathered ashore in between arduous periods of rowing. Early on, the men had been able to supplement their provisions with two ducks and the hindquarters of one polar bear – they shot the bear but were unable to drag the entire carcass onto their boat. They had killed nothing at all since leaving the region of Cumberland Sound, and had encountered no people. The scarcity of food matched the scarcity of local inhabitants. By now the men must have understood just how vast, and how variable, the Arctic landscape was.

The men were desperate with hunger. On September 3, Warren Dutton of the Daniel Webster died of exhaustion and lack of food. Before nightfall, Samuel Fisher “took his knife and cut a piece of the thigh, and held it over the fire until it was cooked.” The other men hesitated but all followed suit; they ate every edible part of Dutton’s body, even breaking up the bones and boiling them. A few days later, Samuel Fisher and his cousin Joseph tried to murder John Sullivan, sneaking up behind him and clubbing him over the head. They told him they “wanted some meat” and planned to kill him. In the ensuing fight, Sullivan fatally stabbed Samuel in the throat, then warily approached him and noted that he was still alive. Looking at the dying man, Sullivan began to cry. He “did not know what to do.” The other survivors found him there, and together they waited an

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1860–November 1860. In his book, Hall says that the George Henry gave them some salt beef and pork, powder and shot, and a chart. Hall gave them some ammunition and caps. Hall, Arctic Researches, 92.
entire day until Samuel Fisher finally died. Then Joseph Fisher butchered his cousin and the men consumed the body.

The next day, the men arrived at what they thought was the mainland. Unwisely, they decided to abandon the boat and walk inland. Marine mammals are the staple of food, clothing, and shelter in the majority of Inuit communities. In most places and seasons of the Arctic, it would be impossible to survive away from the coast. But these men were inexperienced sailors, and they came from a society that lived off the land more than the sea. It took them four days to walk four miles, and then they saw water again. They were on an island. They camped out despondently by the shore, where they planned to, in the words of John Sullivan, “remain until we would die or be picked up.” It began to rain, and then the rain turned to snow. For several weeks they had been “suffer[ing] very much from the cold”; now it was getting worse.\footnote{Sullivan, quoted in Hall, \textit{Life with the Esquimaux}, 93–94.} \textit{Ukiaksaaq} had arrived. Without transport or know-how, the men could not find anything to eat in this country and this season. Instead, they consumed every leather object they had, including their boots and their belts.

This environment was not devoid of sustenance; there were local inhabitants. A boatload of Inuit picked up the party when traveling past the island and dispersed the men among various settlements, where they were cared for throughout the winter. Finally, in July 1861, John Sullivan found a passage home to Massachusetts, ironically around the same time he could easily have gone south with any number of ships leaving the whaling grounds.\footnote{Ibid., 95.} The deserters’ utter failure to live off the land once they left Cumberland...
Sound demonstrates the extent to which it was a bountiful part of the Arctic, and just how crucial it was to have local people around to provide the resources and knowledge that the whalers lacked. Particularly in the colder months, visitors to the Arctic needed help.

**Ukiaq (Late Fall)**

As John Sullivan and the other deserters were waiting to die five hundred miles to the south, their old shipmates were choosing their winter harbors in Cumberland Sound. Most of the whales had left; they were migrating south along much the same route that Sullivan had taken.\(^62\) **Ukiaq**, or late fall, was the season when the sea ice formed in Cumberland Sound. In most years in the mid-nineteenth century, **ukiaq** seems to have begun in early to mid-October and lasted until late November or early December, when whalers recorded walking across the ice to visit neighbouring ships.\(^63\) It was the time when Inuit congregated in larger groups in their winter camps, and it could be a period of scarcity.\(^64\) Hunting was uncertain and risky during freeze-up, when the ice would neither support a person nor allow for the passage of a kayak.\(^65\)

**Ukiaq** could be treacherous for whaling crews as well. Shipwrecks often occurred during freeze-up and were common in Cumberland Sound; there were at least eight of them from

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\(^{62}\) Wynn, *Canada and Arctic North America*, 46.


\(^{64}\) Most Cumberland Sound Inuit did not build snow igloos except while out travelling. Their usual winter dwellings were *gammatit*, sod huts with whalebone or salvaged wood frames, covered with sealskins and insulated with heather. Evie Anilniak, conversation translated by Margaret Nakashuk, July 26, 2006; Leah Nutaraq, quoted in Eber, *When the Whalers Were Up North*, 9–10; Boas, quoted in Müller-Wille, *Franz Boas among the Inuit*, 131. Boas noted the Inuit moving into their winter camps on October 15.

\(^{65}\) Hunting was especially difficult for those Inuit who had migrated to the islands at which whaling ships typically harbored because they were stuck on the island during freeze-up instead of being able to travel further afield on the mainland. Ross, ed., *This Distant and Unsurveyed Country*, 30.
1859 to 1870. In 1866, Peter’s ship, the *Antelope*, was driven into the rocks during a snowstorm and had to be abandoned near Naujaqtalik. Two years later, on November 15, the American bark *Andrews* ripped open its hull just a few miles away at Harrison Point. The ship was irreparable, but since the ice could not yet withstand heavy loads, the *Andrews*’ men were unable to move their supplies ashore. The crew lived on board for eleven days, waiting for the sea to freeze, even though the tide was “ebbing and flowing in the whole part of the berths in the forecastle.” Inuit from surrounding camps were able to cross the ice with dog teams on November 26, and they evacuated the men to Blacklead Island. The *Andrews*’ men lived out the winter in a shelter that was poorly insulated, but the mate planned to keep it liveable by burning copious amounts of lumber from the ship. Everyone survived. In Cumberland Sound, men rarely died when their ships ran aground, and they invariably received passage home the following summer on another vessel. Ships were not the safest place to be during freeze-up, but the communities that connected and surrounded them kept the notorious Arctic calamities of shipwreck and starvation at bay.

For those whose ships remained intact, accommodations were only slightly more luxurious than in the *Andrews*’ poorly constructed hut. Men did what they could to make their ships warm and comfortable. They took down the sails and fastened them over the

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69 See also *Ansel Gibbs* 1860–1861, 11 October 1860 (takes some of the *Hannibal*’s men and bone); *Antelope* 1867–1868, 8 October 1868 (arranges for passage for its stranded sailors). While captains were not going to deny shipwrecked men a passage home, providing such passage did cut into their own profits because it left them less room aboard for oil and bone. *Milwood* 1867–1868, April 1868.
decks like tents. They banked snow around the hull, both as insulation and to protect it from ice. Nevertheless, living on a ship throughout the winter was not cozy at the best of times. Even George Tyson, one of McLellan overwinterers who returned several times to Cumberland Sound, was unable to keep his captain’s state room entirely comfortable on one of his last Arctic voyages in 1877–78. When he climbed into his berth in the colder months, he frequently found his blankets frozen to his bed. During spring breakup, the cabin dripped with water that found its way in through the wood that had been contracted by cold temperatures. All ships had a coal stove on board for heat, but its use was kept to a minimum, and the warm air did not spread through all of the living areas, particularly the windowless cabin below the ship’s prow. This part of the ship, known as the forecastle, was where the majority of whalers ate, slept, and socialized. Forecastles were anywhere between sixteen and twenty-five feet long, and many had ceilings so low that only short crewmen could stand upright in them. Most of the forecastle space was taken up by the whalers’ sea chests of personal belongings and by double-decker rows of narrow berths built into the walls. On many voyages, there were not enough berths to go around. Since one quarter of the crew was on watch at any given time, owners reasoned that they could sleep in shifts. The forecastle was dark even during the constant summer daylight. Its source of natural light was a single hatch in the ceiling, which was open only when the weather was good and presumably rarely if at all in the

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70 Kowjakaluk, interviewed in Dorothy Eber, “Inuit Memories of the Whaling Days,” Ms. IV-C-138M, 48, Archives of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Ottawa, ON. There were no American steam whalers in the Eastern Arctic. Davis et al., In Pursuit of Leviathan, 46. Sometimes the crew did not use the actual sails but rather other cloth they brought for that purpose. Ross, ed., This Distant and Unsurveyed Country, 102.
72 Tyson, Cruise of the Florence, 60–61.
73 Ibid., 123.
74 Ross, ed., Arctic Whalers, 156.
75 Creighton, Rites and Passages, 30.
winter. Considering that the roof hatch was also the only source of ventilation in the room, the air must have been rank through the colder months, when the only light came from a malodorous whale oil lamp on a table in the center of the room. These lamps released a thick, oily, black smoke, and the stench of whale oil was legendary. One man recalled that even years after a whaling ship had been decommissioned, it still reeked with “that whale oil stink.” Inuit on northern Baffin Island considered whale blubber too repulsive to use in their lamps except in emergencies. Cumberland Sound Inuit mostly tolerated it and adjusted to the smell, as the whalers presumably also did, since they lived with it day in and day out. Compounding the stench and smoke of the whale oil, most foremast hands washed only irregularly. This was practical aboard an overwintering whaleship, given that nineteenth-century soap did not lather at all in saltwater, and freshwater had to be chopped as ice from bergs or frozen lakes, sledded to the ship, and then melted. Conditions in the forecastle revealed as ethnocentric and hypocritical the notorious complaints of dirt, close quarters, and lack of privacy in Inuit dwellings.

As unpleasant as the forecastle may have been at times, for many men, spending time outside was worse. Not all whalers arrived in Cumberland Sound with adequate clothing. A first mate described some of the men on his ship as “shaking shivering nearly

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76 Davis et al., In Pursuit of Leviathan, 47.
77 George A. Comer, interview with Fred Calabretta, 16 February 1983, Tape #OH 83-2, Mystic Seaport Library, Mystic, CT.
78 Christopher Trott, personal communication.
79 Boas, quoted in Müller-Wille, Franz Boas among the Inuit, 61.
80 The pervasiveness of this stereotype was alluded to by Franz Boas when he wrote of his first visit to an Inuit tent, “Not as dirty as I thought.” Boas, quoted in Müller-Wille, Franz Boas among the Inuit, 73.
froze[n].” The deserter John Sullivan had feared that he was “very badly fitted out for such a cold climate,” and he probably was. Agents and outfitters often sold greenhands substandard goods at inflated prices, and most first-time whalers would have had little money to purchase clothing beyond the bare minimum. Some men, particularly those who overwintered multiple times, brought trade goods to exchange for Inuit winter clothing, which was adequate protection in almost any weather. A complete outfit consisted of “deerskin [caribou-skin] coats and trousers, deerskin stockings with the hair next to the skin, duckskin covering outside, sealskin slippers with the hair outside, and knee-length sealskin boots.” Captain George Tyson forbid those of his crew members without Inuit-made skin clothing from leaving the ship for extended periods. The ship might not have been comfortable, but it served its purpose of keeping ill-equipped men from freezing to death. Men who could not afford good clothing could hardly be expected to find the colder months anything but forbidding. Whalers’ financial resources, so important to their survival back home in the United States, also affected their experiences in Cumberland Sound.

Interactions between whalers and local people intensified with the arrival of ukiaq and the sea ice. Inuit came and went “continually” from the ships after freeze-up, and at least

81 UD 1864–1869, undated, log U11, Providence Public Library. This is not actually an Arctic logbook. Ambrose Bates used the back of the book to transcribe some of the poetry he wrote in Cumberland Sound in 1867–68, including the above line.
82 Sullivan, quoted in Hall, Life with the Esquimaux, 92.
83 On clothing, see Ross, ed., This Distant and Unsurveyed Country, 105–6.
84 Colby, For Oil and Buggy Whips, 148. Ambrose Bates also mentions men with skin clothing in a poem (UD 1864–1869, 28 February 1868).
85 Tyson, Cruise of the Florence, 36.
in some cases, they lived in parts of the hold that had been cleared out for them.\textsuperscript{86} The log of the Scottish ship \textit{Emma} reported as many as fifty Inuit consistently on board.\textsuperscript{87} According to one logbook keeper, men sought “to lavish upon [local Inuit] the greatest favours possible.”\textsuperscript{88} With motives that could have ranged from friendship to lust to profit, the men on the \textit{Isabella} stole bread out of the hold during the night, either “selling it or giving it away by the Bagful” to Inuit who would come across the ice from the camp known as Molly Katernuna.\textsuperscript{89} The presence of the whalers arguably impacted the lives of Inuit women more than those of their husbands, brothers, fathers, and sons. When Inuit men were not whaling for the ships, they traveled and hunted even more intensively than before, offering or trading any surplus game to the visitors. Women and children became more sedentary than previously, remaining with the whalers to mend, sew, interpret, and prepare skins for them. Many whalers also had sexual relationships, and sometimes children, with local women.\textsuperscript{90} The crews, who had little to do until the return of the whales the following spring, were generally grateful for the companionship, help, and diversion the Inuit provided.

Even though many Americans developed close relationships with local communities and particularly with local women, most of the whalers never returned a second time to Cumberland Sound.\textsuperscript{91} They persisted in believing that Cumberland Sound was somehow “nowhere.” George Tyson, after choosing to spend more than a decade of winters in the

\textsuperscript{86} Ansel Gibbs 1860–1861, 27 January 1861; Ansel Gibbs 1860–1861, 11 September 1860; Andrews 1867, 30 September 1867.
\textsuperscript{87} Ross, ed., \textit{Arctic Whalers}, 158–62.
\textsuperscript{88} Milwood 1867–1868, February 1868.
\textsuperscript{89} Isabella 1867–1868, 13 October 1867.
\textsuperscript{91} By one estimate, only half of all American greenhands signed on for a second whaling voyage, and not all who did would have returned to the same whaling ground. Creighton, \textit{Rites and Passages}, 42.
Arctic, wrote that whalers were “isolated from all the world,” and they “must make a
world of [their] own.”92 The world the whalers tried to create was not particularly
innovative; it was rather an attempt to transplant their own world several thousand miles
north. Various crews hosted dances on board ship, held a “Grande Masquerade Ball,”
and built a stage where they performed plays in front of as many as 200 people.93
Christmas dinner on board the *Milwood* in 1867 would not have seemed out of place in
New England: it consisted of clam chowder, boiled ham, roast pork, boiled potatoes and
onions, gravy, cranberry sauce, plum pudding with sugar sauce, plum cake, and apple and
cranberry pies.94 Inuit attended most if not all of the whalers’ leisure activities, where
they learned songs, words, dances, games, and other traditions that remain integrated into
local Indigenous culture today.95 Whalers inevitably also absorbed elements of Inuit skills
and culture, sprinkling Inuktitut words and place-names throughout their journals and
bringing home walrus tusks, animal skins, pressed flowers, and countless other found and
traded Arctic objects.96 In their attempts to make “a world of their own,” the whalers
were actually making a new world with the Inuit. Yet within a few decades, this world
would end up almost entirely without whales, and the very reason for its creation would
be gone.

*Ukiuq (Winter)*

92 Tyson, *Cruise of the Florence*, 57.
93 See for example Ansel Gibbs 1860–1861, 2, 26, 28 December 1860; 23 January 1861; 1, 20, 22, 28
February 1861; *Antelope* 1860–1861, 22 February 1861.
95 Kowjakaluk, interviewed in Eber, “Inuit Memories of the Whaling Days,” 59. By the 1880s, nearly all
the Cumberland Sound Inuit encountered by Franz Boas understood some English. Boas, quoted in Müller-
Wille, *Franz Boas among the Inuit*, 91.
96 *Milwood* 1867–1868, 11 September 1868.
By the time the men were eating their Christmas feasts, *ukiuq* had set in. This was true winter. It was very cold and dark. 97 The sun did not come up at all throughout most of December and early January, although the *ukiuq* sky was often streaked with undulating tails of northern lights. 98 Toward the end of the season, severe snowstorms could continue for days and make hunting impossible. Without outside provisions such as those found on whaling ships, Inuit sometimes went hungry in *ukiuq*. 99 It was probably the season that whalers feared the most, although it is hard to be sure since most logbook keepers considered “winter” in Cumberland Sound to extend for at least eight months of the year. Even during the warmer months of constant daylight, many journal keepers described the North as a “barren, snow clad land,” where the winds “blew drear and stark.” 100 Whalers saw themselves as braving the “desolate shores of a frozen zone” and venturing into “icy solitudes” from which they feared they might never return. 101 This anxiety was somewhat justified; *ukiuq* was cold and icy, and Arctic whaling was a dangerous job. With the exception of the McLellan overwinterers, at least one crew member died on every one of the mid-nineteenth-century journeys in this study. For the voyages with complete logbook records, the average was 1.9 deaths per ship, which meant that one’s chances of dying were approximately one in ten to fifteen, depending on the size of the crew. 102 Dozens of men also suffered from nonfatal illnesses or injuries

97 Mean temperatures could vary quite widely from year to year, but certainly temperatures below −30°C (−22°F) were common, with Franz Boas recording the coldest temperature in 1882–83 as −48°C (−54°F). Boas wrote that he “easily tolerated” these temperatures in the caribou-skin suit Inuit women had made for him. Boas, quoted in Müller-Wille, *Franz Boas among the Inuit*, 212.

98 The exact dates depended on where in the Sound the ships were moored. See, for example, *Milwood* 1867–1868, January 1868; *Ansel Gibbs* 1860–1861, 15 January 1861; *Daniel Webster* 1860–1863, 7 January 1861.

99 On winter hunting difficulties, see Ross, ed., *This Distant and Unsurveyed Country*, 120.


101 Ibid., May 1868; Tyson, *Cruise of the Florence*, 58.

102 The 1.9 average does not account for many men who were shipped home on other vessels because they were seriously ill; presumably not all of them recovered. Nor does it include John Sullivan and the other
incurred from accidents, fights, or in one case, being run over by a sled load of meat.\textsuperscript{103}

Yet it was not the Arctic winter that was dangerous to whalers. \textit{Ukiuq} was, statistically speaking, the safest season to be on a ship in Cumberland Sound. In all the surviving logbooks, there is not a single employee death recorded between the months of November and March.\textsuperscript{104} Whaling ships carried plenty of provisions. It was impossible to drown. The ice was solid and safe. No one could be knocked overboard or accidentally lanced while chasing a whale. Few men on American ships even got sick during \textit{uikiuq}, presumably since bacteria could not multiply very effectively in the cold air. It was possible to freeze to death, but this would have been a very rare occurrence.

Unlike Arctic explorers, whalers mostly stuck close to their ships and did not take unnecessary risks.\textsuperscript{105} They were concerned with catching whales, not with mapping or exploring or carrying out scientific observations in subzero temperatures.

Still, at least some whalers reserved a special abhorrence for Arctic winters. One of the most vehement examples of this is the 1867–68 journal of Ambrose Bates, the first mate

\textsuperscript{103} Isabella 1867–1868, 12 June 1868.

\textsuperscript{104} All recorded deaths of any kind occurred from April through October. For all deaths in surviving logbooks from Cumberland Sound in the 1850s and 1860s, see the following: \textit{Milwood} 1867–1868, May 1868 (drowning, one possible food poisoning); \textit{Antelope} 1865–1866, 4 May 1865, ODHS 110, New Bedford Whaling Museum (drowning); \textit{Andrews} 1867, 20 June 1867, ODHS 504a, New Bedford Whaling Museum (unknown disease, does not seem to be contagious); \textit{Black Eagle} 1860–1861, 22 September 1860, log 34, New Bedford Whaling Museum (unknown disease, seems to be contagious), 1 August 1861 (cause unknown), 1 September 1861 (disease, probably contagious); \textit{Daniel Webster} 1860–1863, 24 April 1861, 20 March 1862, 19 July 1862, 9 August 1862, ODHS 540, New Bedford Whaling Museum (all scurvy); \textit{Ansel Gibbs} 1860–1861, 29 October 1861 (consumption) and 18 April 1860 (drowning); \textit{Antelope} 1860–1861, 18 September 1861 (drowning); \textit{Isabella} 1867–1868, 24 May 1868, log 111, New Bedford Whaling Museum (drowning).

\textsuperscript{105} It is likely a few winter deaths were recorded in other logbooks that have not survived. South of Cumberland Sound in Frobisher Bay, a French whaler known as John Brown died of frostbite in March 1861. He was unwisely trying to return to his ship alone after his Inuit companion had refused to accompany him due to bad weather. See Charles Francis Hall, \textit{Arctic Researches and Life Among the Esquimaux...} (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1865), 225-242.
on the *Milwood*. Bates had begun whaling at the age of nineteen and would spend most of the next twenty years at sea, traveling all over the world. He overwintered at least twice in Cumberland Sound and once among the Inuit of Hudson Bay. Bates, however, never learned to see the Arctic as anything approximating a homeland. His journals consist largely of letters and poems to his wife, in which he complains about his surroundings and longs for New England.

As a first mate, Ambrose Bates did not have to write his journal in a shared berth in the forecastle. He had his own small stateroom, which was probably no larger than six feet by four feet but which accorded him privacy—a true luxury on board a whaling ship. Unlike the windowless forecastle, it had a sort of skylight in the roof and a porthole on its outside wall. Bates described his room as a domestic, personal space. On one wall hung a small mirror, a case containing a brush and comb set, and some articles of clothing, including slippers. A berth was built into another wall, and over it Bates stored his rifle and pistol. The room was too small for a chair. Bates composed his poetry while seated on the sea chest that presumably contained, among other things, mementoes of his wife and son.

Bates and the other descriptive American record keepers in Cumberland Sound had much to say about the Arctic landscape, and little of it was flattering. Whalers were firmly

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106 This was a standard length of time for a Pacific voyage. The one- or two-year cruises to Cumberland Sound were among the shortest in the fishery. Crew list of the *Kutusoff*, New Bedford Free Public Library database. www.ci.new-bedford.ma.us/SERVICES/LIBRARY/whalingproject/crewdetail.asp. Accessed September 19, 2007. For the rest of Bates’s voyages, see *Milwood* 1867–1868, 4 July 1868.
108 The men usually went through the mementoes and personal belongings in their sea chests once a week, on Sundays. Creighton, *Rites and Passages*, 173.
appreciative of one local resource: whales. But they judged the region’s capacity for subsistence by northeastern American standards and found it sadly lacking. Ambrose Bates could only see that there was no farmland, no forests; the soil was “scanty” and produced only “weeds and sorrels.”\textsuperscript{109} “What a country this is,” he wrote in 1868, “where rocks will not burn and there is no wood nor coal or anything else that I know of.”\textsuperscript{110} This is a particularly oblivious statement, considering that Bates had been sent to Cumberland Sound to accumulate whale blubber, which Americans burned and which was probably at that very moment fueling a lamp in his stateroom. He must also have been aware that Inuit burned seal blubber for heat, light, and cooking purposes. While Bates and most career whalemens spent only a small fraction of their adult lives in the United States, it was still difficult for them to see such a different climate as potentially hospitable, as providing the same necessities albeit in different ways.

What the whalers saw, thought, and wrote must have been limited by the discourse of a barren, hostile Arctic to which they were accustomed. They may also have embraced this existing language of desolation because it was such a good reflection of their own homesickness. And indeed, to sailors whose loved ones could only be reached by water, being frozen in for the duration of \textit{ukiug} was both a symbolic and a literal marker of isolation. Ice cut them off. “The ice field holds me fast,” wrote Bates in 1868, and he lamented that his letters could not travel over the ice to reach his family.\textsuperscript{111} Ice had very different connotations for the Inuit: freeze-up was a time of renewed connections. It was easier and faster for Inuit to travel over ice than water, so much so that some Inuit refer to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{109} Milwood 1867–1868, 11 September 1868.
\item \textsuperscript{110} Ibid., January 1868.
\item \textsuperscript{111} Ibid., May 1868, 25 December 1867.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
November as *tusaqtuut*, or “a means to hear.”¹¹² This was the time that “people began to hear from each other after the ice had formed.”¹¹³

Even though Bates continued to describe the ice as isolating, he did learn to use it as a mode of transportation: he journeyed up and down the Sound, paid visits to other settlements and ships, and broke up the monotony of the winter months. But as he expressed it, coming back to his ship was “not getting home.”¹¹⁴ He measured his time remaining in Cumberland Sound not with Arctic seasonal markers but with New England ones. He would see his wife again “when twice the maple trees have been clothed in red. And twice in green . . . And twice the harvest shall be gathered to the store-houses.”¹¹⁵ Even though many New Englanders found their own winters desolate, for Bates they had become a symbol of warmth and family. In Cumberland Sound, thought Bates, the cold was almost unbearable. In New England, it was “sweet to lounge on winter’s night / By the hearth stone blazing bright.”¹¹⁶ For Bates, the physical landscape was indissoluble from the landscape of the mind; each flowed into the other.

It is important to note the extent to which most whalers’ descriptions of the Arctic only skinned its surfaces. It would be unfair to expect them to fully appreciate such an unfamiliar place as Cumberland Sound when they inevitably lacked both the words to describe it and the knowledge to understand it. Yet the region appeared neither empty

¹¹² Jacopoosie Peter, public lecture at the University of Calgary, 5 November 2010.
¹¹⁴ *Milwood* 1867–1868, April 1868.
¹¹⁵ Ibid., May 1867. Other whalers also spoke of missing specific seasonal events, such as certain flowers, the ripening of corn, and the fall harvest. Ross, ed., *Arctic Whalers*, 183.
¹¹⁶ *UD* 1865–1869, “What Do We Love” [undated poem].
nor desolate to local Inuit; it was home. Physical and mental landscapes also converged in Inuit minds, but in different ways. The land, sea, ice, animals, and people of this region were, and continue to be, enduring repositories of history. To use the Arctic anthropologist Mark Nuttall’s term, the region was and is a “memoryscape” to its people, a physical expression of local culture.\(^{117}\) Stories—most of which were unknown to the whalers—filled up the rocks and earth and water. These stories made the landscape familiar, tied people to place, and created a homeland.\(^{118}\) Inuit had names for every recognisable topographical feature.\(^{119}\) Cumberland Sound Inuit used these place-names as both navigational aids and landmarks for stories.\(^{120}\) The Inuit themselves were also part of a larger network of name-souls, which consisted of a given name and the personality attributes associated with it. Passed down from person to person over generations, name-souls were a permanent connection between people and this place. Nineteenth-century Inuit parents began giving the name-souls of whalers to their children, thereby incorporating Americans into the bodies and culture of the Sound. And finally, while some whalers wrote of this region as a godforsaken place, Inuit perceived hundreds of supernatural beings known as *tuurngait*, the vast majority of which were helpful and benevolent. *Tuurngait* were individually identifiable, with names, homes, and specific


\(^{119}\) Kappianaq and Nutaraq, *Travelling and Surviving on Our Land*, 141.

spheres of influence. They were everywhere.\textsuperscript{121} In the face of this abundance, the formulaic icy descriptions of whalers seem particularly void and cheerless.

\textit{Upingaksaaq (Early Spring)}

When spring came, the Americans’ failure to appreciate the richness of the land would have more tangible consequences than discomfort and homesickness. John Sullivan, the deserter who had fled south in the whaleboat, had not only been worried about the cold weather. He had also heard that “so many men” had died of scurvy in Cumberland Sound the previous winter, and he and his fellow deserters were “afraid to remain there, for fear that we might get it.”\textsuperscript{122} John Sullivan’s chances of survival would have been better had he remained on board the \textit{Daniel Webster}, but his fears were not unjustified. Scurvy results from a long-term deficiency of ascorbic acid, or Vitamin C, which was not present in the monotonous staples on board most whaling ships. As a result of consuming a daily diet consisting almost exclusively of salted meat, hard bread, coffee, and a bit of molasses, four of Sullivan’s former shipmates would indeed die of scurvy, and many more would be debilitated with it for months at a time.\textsuperscript{123}

John Sullivan had been wrong about one thing though: men did not usually die of scurvy in the winter but rather in \textit{upingaksaaq}, or early spring. It was a beautiful time of year in Cumberland Sound for those who were healthy and well fed enough to enjoy it. Captain

\textsuperscript{121} Frédéric Laugrand, Jarich Oosten, and François Trudel, eds., \textit{Apostle to the Inuit: The Journals and Ethnographic Notes of Edmund James Peck, the Baffin Years, 1894–1905} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 405–7.

\textsuperscript{122} Sullivan, quoted in Hall, \textit{Life with the Esquimaux}, 92.

\textsuperscript{123} The logbook of the \textit{Daniel Webster} 1860–1863 contains a provisions list at the back, listing quantities consumed of bread, pork, beef, and flour. This list is probably not complete because it is almost inconceivable they would not have also had molasses and coffee, but forecastle diets often were unvaried. See Creighton, \textit{Rites and Passages}, 126–27; Davis et al., \textit{In Pursuit}, 48.
George Tyson did not think that “any climate in the world” was better than the Arctic during late upingaksaaq and the season that followed. The days became longer than they were in the United States. The sun rose high in the sky with a “peculiar silvery whiteness, like a burnished silver mirror.”124 It began to melt the snow, and eventually, pools of water the color of sky appeared on the surface of the sea ice.125 The soft hum of running water returned, running through the background of young seal hunting and preparations for spring whaling.

As water became easier to obtain and temperatures rose above freezing, the captains ordered their crews to scour off the grime that had accumulated over the winter months. This could be a substantial task. In May 1861, the entire crew of the Ansel Gibbs spent three days “cleaning up the filth about the ship” and “carving off the dirt from around the ship.”126 On some vessels, however, many men would have been suffering from scurvy and unfit for such work.

It took time for whalers’ bodies to use up their stores of Vitamin C. Initial symptoms of scurvy—diarrhea, weakness, and fever—did not appear until at least three months after the last intake. Early sufferers also complained of irritability, foul breath, and loss of appetite; but it could be hard to determine how much of this was due to scurvy and how much to eating similar food every day in a filthy, cramped forecastle. The American logbook keepers typically did not record instances of scurvy until its more serious

124 Tyson, Cruise of the Florence, 104. In 2006, Pangnirtuq elders Inusirq Nashalik and Joanessie Karpik also named upingaksaaq, or its related activities, as their favorite time of year (personal communication).
126 Ansel Gibbs 1860–1861, 9, 11 May 1861.
symptoms appeared after five to seven months: sore joints, purple blotches on papery skin, bleeding swollen gums, loose teeth, the reopening of old wounds, and severe pains and paralysis in the legs. After eight to nine months without ascorbic acid, victims were susceptible to fatal cardiac hemorrhages. Scurvy was not usually noted in American logbooks until sometime between February and May.

All of the deaths from scurvy in the nineteenth century could potentially have been avoided. Even the most severely afflicted scurvy patients make quick, full recoveries if they are given anything containing Vitamin C. The effectiveness of lime juice as an antiscorbutic had been established in the mid-1700s and it was carried on all the ships of the British navy after 1795. Yet it seems that the American whaling ships, or at least those with scurvy outbreaks, still did not carry or routinely administer any source of Vitamin C. There was widespread confusion about the prevention and treatment of scurvy throughout the commercial whaling period. As late as 1911, a naval surgeon on Scott’s first Antarctic expedition declared the causes of scurvy to be “tainted food . . . damp, cold, over-exertion, bad air, [and] bad light.” In this man’s opinion, a Cumberland Sound forecastle would have been a scorbutic hell. The surgeon had heard that fresh meat could cure scurvy, but he doubted its effectiveness. He was wrong. Whalers could have avoided scurvy by consuming more country food: raw or lightly cooked meat.

128 Stephen R. Bown, Scurvy: How a Surgeon, a Mariner, and a Gentleman Solved the Greatest Medical Mystery of the Age of Sail (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2003), 35.
129 Kiple, ed., Cambridge Historical Dictionary of Disease, 297.
contains Vitamin C. Any ship that had been at all successful in the previous whaling season had also taken on board large casks of blubber, a rich source of ascorbic acid.\textsuperscript{132} However, whalers were trained to see whale blubber as money rather than as food, and they do not seem to have consumed it unless out on the land and desperately hungry. Most captains who spent any length of time in Cumberland Sound would try to procure fresh meat for their crews when things got desperate, but being unsure of the root cause of scurvy, they tended to put more faith in other preventive measures. First mate Ambrose Bates believed that while a good diet was beneficial, the best way to remain healthy in the Arctic was to exercise, guard against exposure, remain cheerful, and avoid becoming constipated.\textsuperscript{133} Many overwintering captains agreed with him at least as far as exercise was concerned. The \textit{Ansel Gibbs}' men were ordered to run around outside every day. If they became too weak to leave the ship, they walked between decks.\textsuperscript{134} The men of the \textit{Gibbs} also spent much time tobogganing, but as the logbook records, this was not merely for their personal enjoyment; rather, it was “sleighing down hill for the Scurvy.”\textsuperscript{135} When May came and some men were still crippled with the disease, the captain ordered them all put on a sledge and taken ashore. There, the swollen parts of their legs were covered in earth. The mate concluded, “We think it helped them.” Indeed, within two weeks, the men were all healthy again. This presumably had more to do with

\textsuperscript{132} Ross, ed., \textit{Arctic Whalers}, 85–86. American whalers generally processed their blubber before putting it into casks. They would have had to preserve some of it in its raw state in order to take advantage of its Vitamin C. Given the cold temperatures, however, this would have been possible. Scottish ships did not immediately boil their blubber down into oil, and there are cases where desperate sailors consumed it months later, with no apparent ill effects.

\textsuperscript{133} \textit{Milwood} 1867–1868, April 1868.

\textsuperscript{134} See, for example, 28–30 January; on walking between decks, see 7 March.

\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Ansel Gibbs} 1860–1861, 9 February 1861.
something else recorded in the logbook: during those weeks and for the first time in months, Inuit began bringing large quantities of fresh meat to the ship.136

Oddly enough, the same mate who proposed the earth cure noted four months earlier that his “men that has got the Scurvy is soon better” after he fed them “the blood and meat that came off the seal” that the Inuit had brought to the ship.137 So why did he and the captain not do everything possible to ensure their crew ate fresh meat throughout the winter? First of all, as Arctic whaling historian William Gillies Ross notes, supplying that many sailors with meat was no easy task. Seal catches could be disappointing at any time for any number of reasons. Pressure to keep costs down by hiring as few Inuit as possible was likely also a factor, especially if captains believed that other methods could also keep scurvy at bay.138

Hiring Inuit really was the only option for securing fresh meat. Whalers possessed a wide variety of trades and skills, including dispatching sixty-foot marine mammals from twenty-eight-foot boats, but they were unable to steadily procure food for themselves in Cumberland Sound.139 Officers shot the odd eider duck or Arctic hare, familiar animals whose temperate counterparts they may have hunted in New England. It seems that the foremast hands could—in the right time and place and presumably with Inuit advice—

136 Ibid., 16 May 1861 (earth cure), 19 May 1861 (deer and seals).
137 Ibid., 31 January 1861. Nineteen years later, the experienced Captain Tyson certainly recognized the importance of seal meat, explicitly stating that the reason his men had not come down with scurvy was because they ate as much seal meat as did the Inuit (Tyson, Cruise of the Florence, 89).
138 Ross, ed., This Distant and Unsurveyed Country, 158–59. Even when captains offered their crews fresh local meat, some of them may have refused to eat it, especially if they did not understand its value in preventing scurvy. I have not seen any recorded evidence of this, but it was certainly true of American ships in Hudson Bay in the same period. See Ross, ed., This Distant and Unsurveyed Country, 156.
139 Bowhead whales could be even larger. Ross, ed., This Distant and Unsurveyed Country, 84.
return to the ship with “a mess” of Arctic char or clams. But when it came to larger mammals, to caribou and especially to the seals that could be hunted near the ships for most of the year, whaling ships were utterly reliant on Inuit labor.\(^{140}\) Most commonly, captains hired a boat crew of Inuit whalers and their families upon arrival and then kept them on when the whaling season ended. Inuit were paid in kind for their various services, receiving biscuits, coffee, tobacco, salted meat, clothing, guns, ammunition, metal objects such as knives and pots, and sometimes whaleboats.\(^{141}\)

Despite the costs associated with hiring year-round Inuit hunters, experienced captains figured out just how important fresh meat was in preventing scurvy. George Tyson was certain of it by the 1870s. He ensured that his ship was kept supplied with seal meat throughout the winter, even though he was required to provide weekly rations of American food to more than twenty Inuit in exchange.\(^{142}\) William Sterry, who had overwintered with Tyson off the *McLellan* and shared his approval of the Inuit diet, simply left his fellow crew members when he felt himself weakening. For two months in the spring of 1855, he lived in a small camp with three Inuit families. Here, thirty miles away from his ship, he quickly recovered and was healthy. Sterry moved in with an Inuit woman and declared himself so content that he would not have returned to his ship at all.

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\(^{140}\) References to char appear in nearly all the logbooks from late July through September. See, for example, *Daniel Webster* 1860–1863, 1, 10 August 1860; 20 August 1861; *Ansel Gibbs* 1860–1861, 31 July–3 August 1860. The *Ansel Gibbs* is the only ship that records clamming, but it did so from August to November of 1860 (e.g., *Ansel Gibbs* 1860–1861, 20, 23 August 1860; 18 September 1860; 14 November 1860). For the shootings of small game, see, for example, *Ansel Gibbs* 1860–1861, 8 March 1861; *Andrews* 1867, 26 August 1867. On the failure of whalemen to catch seals, see *Black Eagle*, 12 December 1861; Tyson, *Cruise of the Florence*, 82.

\(^{141}\) Laugrand, Oosten, and Trudel, eds., *Apostle to the Inuit*, 305; Ross, ed., *This Distant and Unsurveyed Country*, xviii–xxii.

\(^{142}\) Tyson, *Cruise of the Florence*, 70–71. Tyson’s crew was about half the size of a regular crew, so presumably a standard whaling ship would have required even more hunters.
if his captain had not come to fetch him when the ice broke up. His labor was certainly required on board, since fourteen of his shipmates died from scurvy that year.\textsuperscript{143} Scurvy must have been emotionally as well as physically devastating for men who lived and died in such close quarters, watching each other becoming weaker, not knowing exactly how to stop the progress of the disease or whom it would strike next. On board the \textit{Daniel Webster} in 1861, the first mate, Charles Frasier, was showing signs of scurvy by mid-February. A week later, he had “a lame leg.” By mid-April, there were seven men on the sick roll, and on April 24, Frasier died. The men who were still able to work made a coffin and climbed the hill behind their harbor on Kekerten Island to dig some kind of a grave in the frozen ground. The next morning at 8:30 a.m., they took Charles Frasier’s body ashore and buried him in the earth. Two days later, the desperate captain set out across the Sound to “try to get some seals for the men to eat.” By now, six of the men were “lame,” and eight had “some scurvy in gums,” meaning that their gums were rotting and spongy and perhaps swollen enough to completely cover their loosened teeth.\textsuperscript{144} The captain returned with eight seals, and somehow the men must have swallowed the meat through their injured mouths, because there were no more deaths. By the middle of May, all were recovering well.\textsuperscript{145} Yet the following year, again in \textit{upingaksaag}, scurvy returned to the ship. This time it claimed three lives: the second mate Emil Bessuell, the boatsteerer George L. Wiser, and the steward Samuel Watson. From the time they were first noted as being “quite lame” or “down with Scurvy,” it took

\textsuperscript{143} This was the voyage of the \textit{Georgiana} in 1855, and the crew actually overwintered in Frobisher Bay, the next major inlet south of Cumberland Sound. The crew was too weak for spring whaling, so the ship sailed home empty (apart from 200 sealskins) as soon as the ice broke up. See Colby, \textit{For Oil and Buggy Whips}, 97. The account of Sterry’s sojourn is taken from an interview he had with Charles Francis Hall in 1860, recorded in Hall, \textit{Journal}, February 1860–March 1860.

\textsuperscript{144} Bown, \textit{Scurvy}, 33–34.

\textsuperscript{145} \textit{Daniel Webster} 1860–1863, 14, 23 February 1861; 22–25, 27–28, 30 April 1861; 16 May 1861.
approximately two months for each man to die. They were buried next to each other, one by one, on Brown’s Island, just across the mouth of Kingnait Fjord from their shipmate Charles Frasier.

These deaths were unnecessary. For unknown reasons, the Daniel Webster’s captain seems to have been particularly nonchalant about obtaining fresh meat. The logbook contains far fewer mentions of trade with Inuit than do other ships’ records in the same years. There are only two recorded instances of trading for seal meat during more than two years spent in Cumberland Sound.\footnote{146} By contrast, during February, March, and late May of 1861, the Black Eagle’s Inuit boat crew brought as many as eight seals a day to the ship; in June, they began arriving with caribou.\footnote{147} The captain of this ship had overwintered in both Cumberland Sound and Alaska before, and had perhaps learned the value of local provisions on these voyages.\footnote{148} In any case, presumably all the men of the Black Eagle ate of this meat and did not overcook it, since none of them seem to have suffered from scurvy, even as men were dying on the Daniel Webster and at least three other American ships in the Sound.\footnote{149}

\footnote{146} Ibid., 10 December 1860, 30 April 1861.  
\footnote{147} Black Eagle, February–May 1861.  
\footnote{148} Colby, For Oil and Buggy Whips, 136; Hall, Journal, July 1860–November 1860.  
\footnote{149} Daniel Webster 1860–1863, 24 April 1861; Pioneer (no log but see Ansel Gibbs 1860–1861, 23 April 1861); Syren Queen (Ross, ed., This Distant and Unsurveyed Country, 154); Hannibal (no log but see Ansel Gibbs 1860–1861, 17 April 1861). The Black Eagle was not an entirely healthy ship. Various men are recorded as having been “sick” in the warmer months (May–September) of both 1860 and 1861. However, the late spring and summer were not the standard times for men to die of scurvy, particularly not at the very beginning of a voyage. Furthermore, sailors recognized scurvy and knew it by name. It seems far more likely that the sick men aboard the Black Eagle suffered from unidentified contagious diseases, which would explain their illnesses being confined to the warm weather, when bacteria could more easily multiply and spread.
Scurvy would continue to plague American whaling ships in Cumberland Sound at least into the 1880s.\textsuperscript{150} Since the staple of the Inuit diet was fresh meat, scurvy was unknown to Inuit, and they seem to have remained immune to it throughout the whaling period. Unfortunately, the same could not be said for contagious diseases.\textsuperscript{151} At Kekerten station today, the graves of Charles Frasier and the other whalers are not alone. The bodies of Inuit men, women, and children also lie under stones and pieces of ships’ casks, a testament to the fact that everyone connected to the whaling ships was encircled by signs of death as well as life.\textsuperscript{152} Indeed, simply to live in the nineteenth-century Arctic was to be surrounded by evidence of death. Inuit fed, clothed, and housed themselves from the products of everything from lemmings to whales. The whalers, of course, had a more single-minded but insatiable goal in mind. As upingaksaaq drew to a close, they finally prepared to do the job for which they had been hired.

\textit{Upingaaq (Late Spring)}

The whale hunt was in full force by upingaaq, the spring season when Peter had jumped ship.\textsuperscript{153} As the ice broke into floes and bumped and jammed its way out of the Sound, it crossed paths with the bowhead whales streaming in from their early spring feeding grounds. Several kinds of cetaceans visited Cumberland Sound at this time of year, but


\textsuperscript{151} Diptheria, cholera, syphilis, measles, and various pulmonary afflictions swept again and again throughout Inuit camps in the period of commercial whaling. Food shortages, caused in part by the increased pressure on local resources, exacerbated the effects of disease. Stevenson, \textit{Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence}, 74–76, 84.

\textsuperscript{152} Inuit did not traditionally bury their dead and could immediately tell when a grave belonged to a white person because it was below ground. Kowjakaluk, interviewed in Eber, “Inuit Memories of the Whaling Days,” 50.

\textsuperscript{153} Stevenson, \textit{Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence}, 80.
the whalers were looking for the bowheads. Approximately sixty feet long and 220,000 pounds when fully grown, *balaena mysticetus* live in northern waters year-round and have the longest baleen and thickest blubber of any whale hunted in the nineteenth century.\(^{154}\) While the whaling vessels were still frozen into their harbors, men clambered out onto the ice and dragged whaleboats, sailcloth tents, and provisions to outlying islands or to the floe edge, the place where the shoreline ice met the open springtime waters.\(^{155}\) In the days of commercial whaling, this floe edge ran approximately between Kekerten Islands (Qikiqtat) and Blacklead Island (Umanarjuaq).\(^{156}\) Most ships also had an Inuit crew working for them by the 1860s. At least one Inuk, Tessuin, ran an independent operation in this period, fielding his own boats and offering their catches to the highest bidder.\(^{157}\)

The killing and butchering of whales by hand was extraordinarily violent and prolonged. George Tyson of the *McLellan* described a particularly lengthy whale hunt on his second Arctic voyage in 1855. The hunt began as it usually did: the men spotted a whale, approached it in their open boat, and harpooned it. The harpoon was not designed to kill the whale. It was attached to a line, which joined whale and boat together. The injured whale would generally attempt to dive or flee, but would remain attached to the boat until exhausted and weakened. When the whale eventually faltered, the head of the boat crew would attempt to lance its vital organs and kill it. As soon as Tyson harpooned this

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\(^{154}\) Davis et al., *In Pursuit of Leviathan*, 22, 24.

\(^{155}\) Ross, ed., *Arctic Whalers*, 162.

\(^{156}\) The accompanying image (fig. 6) shows the floe edge much closer to Pangnirtung fjord. In recent years the floe edge has shrunk back from where it used to be. See Gita Laidler, “Ice through Inuit Eyes: Characterizing the importance of sea ice processes, use, and change around three Nunavut communities,” (PhD Dissertation: University of Toronto, 2007), 312.

particular whale, she dove and stayed down for an hour. When she resurfaced, “she
began to beat the water with her flukes, and swirled around.” Eventually, she broke the
line and swam away, perhaps as fast as twelve miles per hour, the harpoon still
protruding from her side. Unwilling to give up, Tyson and his crew rowed after her.
The moon rose, but in upingaaq, the night and day were hardly distinguishable, and it
was easy to keep the injured whale in sight. It took nearly twenty-four hours for her to
tire enough for them to approach her. Tyson struck a second time, recalling that “the
water all around [was] covered with blood, and we knew she was done for. Three or four
lances were hurled into her ponderous bulk, and at last our exertions were rewarded by
seeing her roll over on her side. She was dead.”

The men attached another line to the dead whale, and towed her to the edge of the pack
ice. The chase had taken them nine miles away from their frozen-in ship. They did not
have the means to transport tens of thousands of pounds of bone and blubber back from
the floe edge. In an attempt to get some sort of return for their labor, the men forced
open the whale’s mouth and began hacking out the whalebone, known today as baleen; it
is the thick black fingernail-like material that hangs down in slats from the upper jaw of
non-toothed whales. Living whales use their baleen as a food strainer, scooping up tons
of seawater and tiny plankton organisms and then allowing the water to drain out between

158 Bowheads can swim 10–12 miles per hour when chased. Davis et al, In Pursuit, 25.
159 Blake, ed., Arctic Experiences, 87.
160 Other crews regularly relayed tens of thousands of pounds of blubber across such distances on sleds (or
later in the season, by towing the whale with multiple whaleboats), but Tyson does not explain why he
could not do so with this whale. There was presumably a good reason since by abandoning the whale, they
were losing a substantial portion of their wages for the entire voyage. The average distance from floe to
ship was about eight miles, and since a bowhead whale could yield 30,000 pounds of blubber, getting the
blubber to the ship was at least as much of a job as killing the whale. Ross, ed., Arctic Whalers, 163.
Regarding towing with boats, see Ross, ed., This Distant and Unsurveyed Country, 83.
the slats. After filling their empty boat with a small fraction of this whale’s baleen, Tyson and his shipmates abandoned the immense carcass and hauled their boat and its cargo up onto the ice. Already exhausted, they dragged their load all the way back to the ship, where they would have painstakingly split, cleaned, washed, polished, and dried the whalebone before stowing it away in the hold.\textsuperscript{161} That, wrote Tyson, “is what I call a fair day’s work.”\textsuperscript{162}

The baleen and blubber were the bowhead whale’s only saleable parts. In many ways they were nineteenth-century precursors to petroleum products. Americans found all kinds of uses for baleen: it was strong, flexible, and when heated became a kind of natural plastic that could be reshaped at will. Most famously, it was formed into corset stays, whips, canes, and umbrella frames. A dealer’s advertisement listed fifty-three lesser-known whalebone products, including questionable novelty items such as “tongue scrapers, divining rods, plait raises, shoehorns, billiard cushion springs” and “probangs,” which were flexible rods “used especially for removing obstructions from the esophagus.”\textsuperscript{163} The oil rendered from bowhead blubber was a relatively low-grade lubricant and illuminant, but was nevertheless hugely important to the American economy. In 1850, the whale fishery supplied most of the nation’s industrial grease and light. Whale oil lit the homes of Americans who could not afford more expensive alternatives. Even though its market share dropped steadily with the discovery of coal oil

\textsuperscript{161} Creighton, \textit{Rites and Passages}, 72.
\textsuperscript{162} Blake, ed., \textit{Arctic Experiences}, 87.
\textsuperscript{163} Unidentified source, quoted in Davis et al., \textit{In Pursuit}, 17 n. 19.
and better processing techniques for lard and tallow, demand remained high because America consumed so much oil.\textsuperscript{164}

There was nothing easy or detached about hunting and processing whales. Usually, whalers spent several days after a kill wading through the whale’s gore. Everything but the baleen and blubber was left to rot, although the meat was quite edible. Inuit often salvaged as much as they could.\textsuperscript{165} Even considering the fact that whalers were only butchering the surface of the carcass, the scale is hard to imagine. A single bowhead could be more than half the length of the ship.\textsuperscript{166} Thick, purplish-black blood stuck to the men’s skin, matted their hair, and soaked into their clothing. It pooled on the ice and poured into the cold waters of Cumberland Sound. Sometimes, in order to remove the baleen from the jaw, the men simply climbed into one of their whaleboats and floated into the cavernous mouth.\textsuperscript{167} Extending back about sixteen feet, the mouth was as long as some forecastles and at least double the height.\textsuperscript{168} Several men could easily stand upright in it while they cut away the baleen from the upper jaw.\textsuperscript{169} To remove the blubber, the men “cut in” through the whale’s skin and peeled off the fat in long, quivering, blanket-like sheets as much as two feet thick. Kowjakaluk, an Inuit elder, recalled that foreign whalers drove nail spikes into pieces of wood and tied these boards to their boots, providing a sort of crampon that enabled them to walk around on the whale without

\textsuperscript{164} Davis et al., \textit{In Pursuit}, 351, 362, 368.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 90. Some of the meat would still spoil. Cumberland Sound Inuit had previously harvested 10–12 whales per year, but now there were simply too many whales being killed to use all of them. See Agee Temela, interviewed in Eber, “Inuit Memories of the Whaling Days,” 73.
\textsuperscript{166} Most whaling vessels were 100–150 feet in length, and the Arctic vessels tended to be on the smaller end of the range. Creighton, \textit{Rites and Passages}, 28.
\textsuperscript{167} Blake, ed., \textit{Arctic Experiences}, 85.
\textsuperscript{168} Scoresby, \textit{Account of the Arctic Regions}, vol. II, 455.
\textsuperscript{169} Blake, ed., \textit{Arctic Experiences}, 85.
slipping.\textsuperscript{170} The Americans then chopped up the blubber and minced it into small enough pieces to throw into their smoking try-pots, where the fat was melted down into pure oil. Everyone and everything in the vicinity of the try-pots became slimy with smoky grease.\textsuperscript{171}

Professional whalers had to inure themselves to the sounds and smells of the hunt. They seemed to learn, to some extent, to view the whale as an enemy to overcome in order to feed themselves and their families. For many whalers survival went beyond returning home alive. Since their wages were tied to the voyage’s profits, their future well-being and that of their loved ones could depend on the number of whales they caught. This does not mean that they killed dispassionately or that the hunt had no meaning to them beyond wages. On the contrary, for career whalermen, chasing whales was deeply tied up with their very identity and breath. The hunt gave meaning to their lives and, every time, threatened to take them away. Perhaps it was the dangerous nature of the hunt that most disinclined whalermen to feel pity for their prey. Whalers not infrequently expressed regret or sadness over the killing of smaller animals, such as seals.\textsuperscript{172} But they seem to have taken whales wherever and whenever they could, even when they could not use them. If they encountered a whale without the means of killing it, some whalers tried to inflict violence on it anyway.

\textsuperscript{170} Kowjakaluk, interviewed in Eber, “Inuit Memories of the Whaling Days,” 42.
\textsuperscript{171} Creighton, \textit{Rites and Passages}, 69.
\textsuperscript{172} George Tyson took in a small seal as a pet and was devastated when another whaler killed it. Blake, ed., \textit{Arctic Experiences}, 89–90. Another Arctic whaling captain (James Buddington, uncle of Sidney Buddington of the \textit{McLellan}) signed on to a sealing voyage once and never went again, reportedly saying, “Those little seals are almost human.” James Buddington, quoted in Colby, \textit{For Oil and Buggy Whips}, 86.
Ambrose Bates, the first mate of the *Milwood*, described one such incident in 1868. It haunted him so much that he had “neither slept nor thought of anything since.” Encamped on Blacklead Island, near the place where just a few months later the *Antelope* would run aground, Bates headed out across the ice with neither boat nor crew. When he reached the floe edge, he came upon whales. Not just a few but “armies of whales.” Bates stared at them, growing increasingly frustrated as they nosed up to him—tauntingly, imagined Bates—as if to say “look and weep.” Growing angry, Bates took out his pistol and ineffectually shot one of them four times, while kicking another with his foot. Among the bowheads were smaller beluga whales, whistling loudly. Bates hollered back in frustration. He wrote, “It seemed that it would have been some consolation to me had I had a lance that I might [have] killed a few whales even though there was no hope of saving them.”

For Bates, whaling had become a kind of personal war, and the whales were commodities that served his considerable personal ambition.

Since the whalers worked for profit rather than sustenance, their killing was limited more by their abilities than by their needs. In the 1850s and 1860s, the American demand for whale products was virtually without bounds. The number of whales was not. By the late 1860s, after less than three decades of commercial whaling, Cumberland Sound had been “fished out.” The bowhead whale population had declined enough that most captains

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173 *Milwood* 1867–1868, April 1868.
174 Stevenson, *Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence*, 81. See also Ludwig Kumlein, *Contributions to the Natural History of Arctic America, made in connection with the Howgate Polar Expedition, 1877-78*... (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1879), 64. The remaining whales also became more wary of Inuit hunters. Oshaweetok Ipellie of Cape Dorset (in another region of South Baffin Island frequented by whalers) recalled how the whales used to come right up to Inuit camps, but they started staying out at sea. Oshaweetok Ipellie, interviewed in Eber, “Inuit Memories of the Whaling Days,” 107. The bowhead population is now recovering but is still nowhere near early nineteenth-century levels. For a detailed assessment of bowhead stocks based on interviews with Inuit elders, see Nunavut Wildlife Management
were already looking for better whaling grounds in Hudson Bay and the Western
Arctic. A few ships continued to visit, particularly around the turn of the twentieth
century, when whalebone prices were so high that the baleen of a single whale would
bring a good return on a voyage. By moving through various circumpolar whaling
grounds, American whaling agents continued to turn profits from bowhead whaling
voyages until demand for their products fell away. Inuit remained in Cumberland
Sound; in many ways, American culture was more nomadic than theirs.

**Conclusion**

In the mid-nineteenth century, the American whaling industry treated Cumberland Sound
as a rather unfortunately situated repository of whalebone and blubber, not as a hospitable
place that could sustain people year-round and for generations to come. Here as
elsewhere, this commodity-focused outlook had real consequences for the local
environment and its people. As stories of scurvy and loneliness and desertion make clear,
the failure to grasp and appreciate the non-commercial wealth of this part of the Arctic
also resulted in much American suffering and death.

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175 By 1871, few whaling ships visited Cumberland Sound, and in many years, only one whale was taken. Most ships moved on to other whaling grounds, which had not yet been decimated. Goldring, “Inuit Economic Responses,” 153.
177 Davis et al., *In Pursuit*, 138–48. Intensive commercial whaling almost certainly depleted the world bowhead population, but it was the reduced demand for bowhead oil and baleen in the early twentieth century that shut down the American whale fishery.
There is no denying that Americans assumed considerable risk by signing on for an arctic whaling voyage. When they set out from their New England ports, they could reasonably expect that at least one person on their ship would never return home. Yet the biggest risks American whalers faced in Cumberland Sound – contagious disease, malnutrition, and horrific accidents on the job – were dangers that would have been familiar to labourers in the United States. For most working-class Americans in this period, survival entailed consuming a cheap monotonous diet and accepting dangerous and difficult employment for little pay. Yet to the limited extent that American whalers recorded their fears in Cumberland Sound, it was the unfamiliar location that inspired the most terror: its perceived bleakness, its distance from their loved ones, its lack of forests and farmland and wooden houses. Some Americans defined the potential for survival by the availability of familiar resources. They associated scurvy with the supposedly inhospitable climate more than with their insufficient imported foodstuffs.

Not all American whalers in Cumberland Sound reacted in the same way. For all the men like John Sullivan and Ambrose Bates who recoiled from their surroundings, there were others like George Tyson and William Sterry who were highly successful at keeping themselves and their crews alive. They traded for local food and clothing, learned from the Inuit communities around them, and in some cases acquired Inuit kin. These survival strategies were extremely effective in a thriving homeland like Cumberland Sound. In between Tyson and Sullivan lived a continuum of more moderate men, who would have hesitantly sampled seal meat, or traded some of their meagre belongings for pieces of
fur clothing, or returned home from their only whaling voyage with a tale of surviving an arctic shipwreck.
Figures for Chapter One

Figure 4: Cumberland Sound in upingaaq. Whales were hunted for centuries at this site of Illungayuit, or Bon Accord Harbour. *Photo by the author, July 2006.*
Figure 5: Ikalsuqajuk. Contemporary Inuit print showing summer sealskin tent. Pauloosie Karpik and Enookie Akulukjuk, Pangnirtung 1985 37/50. Courtesy of the New Bedford Whaling Museum.
Figure 6: Lancing a Whale. This pen-and-ink sketch from a Cumberland Sound logbook illustrates the type of whaleboat in which John Sullivan made his escape. It also shows the relative size of a bowhead whale next to the twenty-eight-foot boats. The sketch depicts a single whale, with the top of its head and part of its back above water. *Timothy C. Packard logbook, F6870.3*F, Houghton Library, Harvard University.*
Figure 7: Whaling logbook. A page from the Black Eagle whaling logbook for 1860-1861. Photo by the author. Courtesy of the New Bedford Whaling Museum.
Figure 8: Cumberland Sound in floe-edge whaling season. This contemporary photograph was taken in mid-May from the mouth of Pangnirtung Fjord, looking out towards the Kekerten Islands in the far distance. The floe edge – the line between sea ice and open water – usually would have been much closer to Kekerten at this time of year during the commercial whaling period. *Photo by the author, 2010.*
On November 16, 1862, it was a busy Sunday afternoon at Barnum’s American Museum in New York City. Thousands of customers funnelled into the brightly painted museum, which sprawled out in both directions from the corner of Ann Street and Broadway. Many had come expressly to see the new living exhibit of Esquimaux that Phineas Taylor Barnum, with typical showmanship and hyperbole, declared to be “beyond all controversy, THE GREATEST CURIOSITY IN THE WORLD.”¹ The six floors of the museum were crammed with patrons of all social classes, and cluttered with thousands – Barnum claimed hundreds of thousands – of curiosities.² Cages and aquaria were stocked with shimmering tropical fish, boa constrictor “monster snakes,” performing bears, and bovines declared to be “the sacred bull and cow of the Hindoos.”³ Crowds gathered around a packed Happy Family cage, a popular attraction in which predators and prey were forced to coexist, supposedly without eating each other. From 1861-1865, Barnum also exhibited a string of unfortunate arctic qilalugait, or beluga whales, but the latest of these had recently perished in its glass tank on the second floor.⁴ In addition to living animals, the museum’s display cases, floors, walls, and halls held such authentic and charlatan miscellany as autographs, paintings, historical artefacts, trick mirrors, suits of

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² Andrea Dennett, *Weird and Wonderful: The Dime Museum in America* (New York: NYU Press, 1997) 35; Barnum’s museum was patronised by all social classes but African Americans were not regularly allowed in until after the Civil War. James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 139.


armour, and wax figures. There were also numerous skeletons and taxidermied animals, supplied in part through the steady stream of deceased menagerie inhabitants. As usual, Barnum offered several live human exhibits, most of whom he marketed as controversial figures who bent societal notions of race and normalcy. That Sunday in 1862, Barnum had engaged the dwarf Commander Nutt and the so-called Madagascar Albino family, who Barnum claimed to be African but were actually Danish. In the midst of this heat and clamour wandered two Inuit from the Cumberland Sound region and their baby son, all dressed in fur clothing. In a city that was constantly being torn down and rebuilt, the Inuit seemed to offer contact with a supposedly frozen and unchanging world. Yet they knew their world was changing too, so what did it mean for them to be seen, over and over again, as so unintelligible and strange and anti-modern? What did it mean to perform difference, while at the same time trying to understand and fit into a new culture?

Many museum patrons imagined that the Inuit family’s lives had improved upon leaving the Arctic, but in many ways this was not true. This chapter will examine the ways the couple on display at Barnum’s Museum addressed five challenges that Inuit faced when travelling abroad: constant scrutiny and judgement by strangers, frequent travel, an authoritarian leadership style, a new type of economy, and devastating illnesses. Underlying all of these obstacles was the constant struggle of adjusting to a new

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6 Until the end of the Civil War, Barnum marketed the Lucasie family as Black Africans born with white bodies, helping to construct idea of whiteness and playing on his predominantly white patrons’ fears and questions about race and its supposedly inherent characteristics. Charles D. Martin, *The White African-American Body: A Cultural and Literary Exploration* (Rutgers University Press), 101-103. Barnum also slotted the Inuit into existing racial frameworks, noting in several of his ads that they were a “distinct race of men.” Classified Advertisement, *New York Times*, 17 November 1862.
landscape, climate, language, and ways of thinking. To Inuit, life in the United States could be as strange, as lonely, as confusing, and as dangerous as American encounters with the Arctic.

At least twenty-nine Inuit visited the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, mostly as passengers on arctic whaling ships.\textsuperscript{7} This was a miniscule number of people by northeastern American standards, but given the smaller Arctic populations and the fact that many of the visitors were picked up from the same sites, it was enough to shape a culture of overseas travel in those communities. Inuit in the United States also received far more attention and press coverage than most foreigners; they had an impact beyond their small numbers. I focus primarily on Ipiirvik and Hannah, the couple exhibited at Barnum’s Museum in 1862. They stayed in the United States much longer than most Inuit visitors. Hannah’s letters to her American friends, in conjunction with dozens of newspaper articles, diaries, letters, and explorers’ accounts, allow for a remarkably detailed reconstruction of the couple’s daily life in the United States. Unfortunately, nearly all of the words that Ipiirvik and Hannah spoke to each other in Inuktitut have been lost. Using the sources that exist, I try to corroborate accounts of an event wherever possible, and I assume that observers frequently embellished their descriptions with their own preconceived notions about “Esquimaux.” I also try to consider how the couple may

\textsuperscript{7} It is impossible to tell exactly how many Inuit visited the continental United States in this period (ca. 1850-1885), since many times they are confused with each other in the newspaper accounts, or called by widely varying names. I have also found cases where whaling captains mention having brought Inuit back to New England, but I cannot find any mention of these particular Inuit in other records. I have found 29 clearly distinct individuals; I assume there were more. There were Inuit arriving from all across the North American arctic, but especially South Baffin Island, Greenland and increasingly, the new American territory of Alaska. While this chapter focuses on the experiences of Inuit in the US, I also use some supporting examples from Hannah’s older brother, Inulluapik, who travelled to Scotland in the mid-nineteenth century.
have deliberately shaped their English comments and public personas for an American audience. Nevertheless, as with all colonial encounters, much was lost in translation and can never be recovered.

It was not easy to decide how to refer to Ipiirvik and Hannah in this chapter. First of all, I repeatedly call the couple and their children a “family” for the sake of convenience. To American audiences, their father-mother-child performances likely served to support an emerging middle-class assertion that nuclear families were universal and natural. As I discuss in more detail later, however, Hannah and Ipiirvik’s own conceptions of family and kinship extended far beyond this tiny group. Secondly, there is the issue of names. The couple answered to both English and Inuktitut names, and very likely had other names they never revealed to outsiders. The Inuktitut names were of utmost importance to them – they were name-souls and carried vital traits from others who had borne them – but Hannah and Ipiirvik would not usually have called each other by any proper name. Like many Indigenous peoples, Inuit generally addressed other Inuit through a complex and contingent set of kinship terms. Thus, they expressed their identities as contextual parts of a larger community, rather than as fixed and isolated individuals. For example, to Hannah and Ipiirvik, speaking their daughter’s name would have been unnecessary,

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8 Chris Trott has made this argument about turn-of-the-century missionary portrayals of Inuit, in which the adoption of the nuclear family model and monogamy were seen as key evidence of conversion. Christopher G. Trott, “The Dialectics of ‘Us’ and ‘Other’: Anglican Missionary Photographs of the Inuit,” pp. 171-190 in *American Review of Canadian Studies* (31:1, 2001), 186-187.

9 Chris Trott argues that in part, multiple names can serve the purpose of tying an individual to specific communities and lands, as well as across larger geographic scales (in the case of less site-specific names). Christopher G. Trott, “Ilagiit and Tuqluraqtuq: Inuit understandings of kinship and social relatedness,” Conference paper presented at *First Nations, First Thoughts* (Centre of Canadian Studies, University of Edinburgh, 2005), 15.
disrespectful, and potentially aggressive. They instead called her panik, the word for daughter. Americans usually assumed this was the child’s name, and it appears on her tombstone alongside a Christian name. Nevertheless, Hannah and Ipiirvik understood that proper names were important in the United States, and they often used names when speaking to people outside their kinship system. I have chosen to use Hannah’s English name because the correct spelling of her recorded Inuktitut name-soul – rendered as Tookoolito, Tackritow, Taquilltuoq, and many other variations – is not known today. She spoke English well, and usually introduced herself as Hannah to Americans. Her husband either chose or was given the English name Joe, but one of his Inuktitut names was most likely Ipiirvik, mistakenly spelled by his contemporaries as Ebierbing, Eberbing, and Epiopee. The use of Hannah’s English name and Ipiirvik’s Inuktitut one reflects the greater extent to which Hannah seems to have felt at home in the United States. In referring to the people the couple encountered, I sometimes use the Inuktitut term qallunaat (singular qallunaaq), which denotes most outsiders who would today be considered “white.” I use it because American “whiteness” was a shifting category in this period, and because Hannah and Ipiirvik would have seen the world through Inuit ethnic categories rather than American ones.

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11 Another of his names may have been corrupted as Hackboch, Harboch, or Harkbah – these were the Inuktitut names he went by in England. Wiliam Gillies Ross, ed., This Distant and Unsurveyed Country: A Woman’s Winter at Baffin Island, 1857-1858 (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1997), 57.
12 See for example Matthew Frye Jacobson, Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), Noel Ignatiev, How the Irish Became White (New York, 1995). It is possible that qallunaat also had different meanings in the nineteenth century, but if so I am not aware of it. Note that qallunaat seems to be more of a cultural than racial term for Inuit, perhaps in part because so many Inuit are of mixed descent. People who are raised as Inuit, or who are fluent in Inuktitut and familiar with Inuit ways of life, can be considered Inuit regardless of heritage. Like many other aspects of Inuit society, cultural identities can also be contingent on the situation.
Hannah and Ipiirvik first came to the United States on the whaling bark *George Henry*, with the American adventurer Charles Francis Hall. Hall was not a typical explorer for this period, having no scientific training and professing little interest in the natural sciences. He was a middle-aged newspaper editor who became obsessed with the search for Sir John Franklin. Hall believed that Inuit would have rescued Franklin and his crew, and he thought that if he travelled through the Arctic and interviewed enough Inuit, he would eventually locate the survivors. He left his job, wife, and children in Cincinnati and headed for New York, where he had little success in attracting wealthy patrons. Eventually he secured free passage on a whaling ship, and sailed north with little funding and no employees. He was completely reliant on Inuit guides whenever he left the ship; his trademark as an explorer would be living “among the Esquimaux.” He was therefore greatly relieved to encounter the accommodating Hannah and Ipiirvik soon after his arrival in 1860 just south of Cumberland Sound. Hall described Hannah as gentle, graceful, “remarkably intelligent,” and possessed of a “calm intellectual power”; and he noted that Ipiirvik was “intelligent-looking,” and renowned for his hunting and navigational skills. The couple was already well acquainted with *qallunaat* culture. They had previously visited England on a whaling ship, and had grown up with overwintering American and Scottish whalers in and around Cumberland Sound.

When Hall returned south in 1862, he asked the Inuit couple to accompany him. He was not simply trying to return their hospitality – he needed their help to raise money for his

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next trip. Hannah and Ipiirvik remained in the United States from 1862-1864, then went on a five-year expedition with Hall to an unfamiliar part of the Arctic, still within Inuit territory but hundreds of kilometres to the west of their homeland. They adopted a daughter there, returned to the United States from 1869-1871, and then departed once again, this time as employees of the government-sponsored Polaris expedition towards the North Pole. Charles Francis Hall was the expedition leader, but he died a few months after setting sail. In 1873, the couple returned to the United States as celebrities, after having become separated from the Polaris and surviving their six-month drift on an ice floe. Although the government offered them free passage back to Cumberland Sound, they declined. They lived mostly in Connecticut until Hannah’s death in 1876.

When Hall first invited the couple to come south, they agreed only on the day of departure “after some conversation.” The couple may have felt intimidated by Hall’s repeated requests, but if they had had no interest in visiting his homeland, they presumably would not have stayed where he could easily find them. They may have hoped to secure future employment prospects with American whalers, and to obtain valuable trade goods. Hannah also seems to have enjoyed many qallunaat foods and traditions, and sought them out on whaling ships. Apparently, Hannah also told Hall that she wanted to come so her husband would not be able to take another wife. Hall disapproved of Inuit sexual mores and may have fabricated this statement, but decades

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17 Hall, Arctic Researches, 562
18 For other Inuit who left camp to avoid getting on a ship see George E. Tyson, The Cruise of the Florence: or, extracts from the journal of the preliminary arctic expedition of 1877-78 (Washington DC: J. J. Chapman, 1879), 158.
19 Hall to Edward A. Chapel, 10 December 1864, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
later, similar factors reportedly influenced at least one woman’s conversion decision in the early days of missionary activity in Cumberland Sound.\textsuperscript{20}

In any case, it appears that the couple had a personal interest in travelling abroad. They took numerous trips, and they made a clear decision not to leave the United States after the \textit{Polaris} expedition and Hall’s death. However, this did not mean that they unequivocally preferred the United States over Cumberland Sound, that they both had the same opinion of America, that they never felt pressured to comply with demands to travel, or that they necessarily saw their decision to live abroad as permanent. Every time they set sail, it must have been a difficult choice.

This chapter does not pass through each season, but is instead structured around a chronological series of Sundays, in order to reflect one of the fundamental ways in which Hannah and Ipiirvik reordered their lives in the United States. Their own language had no word for linear time; but among the \textit{qallunaat}, days and nights marched on in regular, numbered succession, with dates and engagements scheduled on a calendar weeks or months in advance. Sunday became the central point around which their weeks were scheduled.\textsuperscript{21} Ipiirvik and Hannah adapted their routines to fit the weekly rituals of Americans. As entertainers, they occasionally had to work on Sundays, a day of rest for


\textsuperscript{21} This is not to say that pre-contact Inuit had no sense of the importance of time. Children were taught to rise early, and in the long winter nights, hunters would use other markers to tell when it was morning, such as stars (seen through holes made in the iglu for this purpose), crying infants, or the need to urinate. Inuit also had a sense of linear (although not numerical) time, as revealed in stories of important events that had happened in the community over the past several generations. John MacDonald, \textit{The Arctic Sky: Inuit Astronomy, Star Lore, and Legend} (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1998), 192-194, 199, 204, 208.
most workers. Sometimes they went to church, and they enrolled their daughter in Sunday school. Upon arrival in the United States, their lives were no longer chiefly regulated by ecological time.

**“THE GREATEST CURIOSITY IN THE WORLD”: Part I, Scrutiny**

**Barnum’s American Museum. Sunday, November 16, 1862.**

On Sunday, November 16, 1862, a large cotton banner of an arctic scene hung outside Barnum’s American Museum in New York City. Similar images peppered the city in handbills, posters, and newspaper advertisements (see Figure 9). They all depicted Barnum’s latest headline attraction, a living group of “Esquimaux Indians.” Every day for three weeks, customers thronged the museum, seeking an encounter with these people advertised as “living illustrations” of arctic stereotypes. Even in a city that was absorbing five thousand new immigrants per month, this foreign couple and their son attracted attention. Yet Hannah and Ipiirvik were, like other New Yorkers, struggling to find their place in the modern world. They would spend much of the next fifteen years in the United States, reacting against images like Barnum’s that froze them into a timeless place.

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23 Barnum’s American Museum was open from sunrise until ten p.m., seven days a week. A. H. Saxon, *P. T. Barnum: The Legend and the Man* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 108.
New Yorkers who paid twenty-five cents to enter Barnum’s Museum could expect a close encounter with the Inuit. For at least part of the day, the family and the other human exhibits were neither up on a stage nor cordoned off from the public. Instead, they wandered the “crowded salons” of the museum, where they would have been constantly surrounded, jostled, and ogled by patrons. In the museum halls, people could have easily approached them, talked to them, touched them. The family’s schedule was gruelling: they were on display over seven hours a day, seven days a week. Here, in a single day of work, they would have encountered more people than they saw in a year in Cumberland Sound. Every day except Sunday, they also appeared onstage after the theatrical performances in the lecture hall, an ornate cavernous space that could seat three thousand people.

Most people who encountered the Inuit would had little time for anything but a quick gawk, a swift passing of judgement, a short anecdote to relate to friends. Hannah, Ipiirvik and their baby became a canvas onto which museum-goers could indulge their curiosity about the larger world and project their fears, beliefs, and desires about American culture. While the American obsession with Inuit culture was relatively new, Inuit were slotted

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27 “The Esquimaux,” New York Times, 21 November 1862. At least by 1865, the ground floor also housed podiums where many of the living curiosities sat, so it is possible the Inuit spent part of their time in this milieu, next to the other live performers. “Disastrous Fire,” New York Times, 14 July 1865.

28 “Advertisement for P. T. Barnum’s Museum, featuring an Esquimaux family, brought from Greenland by Hall, 3 November 1862,” no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. The Inuit were on display from 10 a.m. to noon, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., and at the end of the theatrical performances each afternoon in the lecture hall. It is possible that they only appeared for two weeks, not three. The handbill states that they were to appear beginning 3 November, but New York Times advertisements for Barnum’s museum that week make no reference to the Inuit until 9 November.

into existing stereotypes about other Indigenous peoples in North America, with some specific descriptors added. According to nineteenth-century reports, Inuit visitors were instantly recognisable by their abnormal appearance, behaviour, and habits. They were as short as children; they dressed entirely in furs and skins. They either lacked emotion, or were overly emotional. They exchanged wives; they sold their children. They consumed pounds of butter while sitting on the floor, and it was “unsafe to leave oil cans about the house.” These exaggerated or entirely fanciful descriptions served, in part, to highlight what kinds of behaviour, appearances, and gender roles were acceptable in American society.

Inside the museum walls, Hannah and Ipiirvik seem to have been under considerable pressure to look like their caricatures in the advertisements. Despite the stifling, stuffy heat of the museum, they appeared in arctic clothing, probably caribou and/or seal skin outfits. These suits, when sewn by a skilled Inuk seamstress like Hannah, could keep the wearer warm and comfortable in some of the coldest weather on the planet, but they were not designed for Barnum’s Museum. The explorer Charles Francis Hall, who had

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31 “The Esquimaux,” *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco, CA), 18 July 1873; “When an Esquimau gentleman eats half a dozen tallow candles for his lunch and washes it down with a pint of lamp oil, can he be said to have made a light repast?” *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin*, 4 June 1875. These stereotypes became more entrenched as the nineteenth century went on. See for example “Many visitors; visit Peary’s ship and see the Esquimaux,” *Boston Daily Advertiser* 28 September 1897; “Our Interesting Esquimaux Visitors,” *Denver Evening Post* 12 February 1899.
32 Indigenous peoples were both idealised and denigrated; outsiders tended to imagine them as whatever middle-class urban society was not. See for example, Ann Fienup-Riordan, *Eskimo Essays: Yup’ik lives and how we see them* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990); Trott, “The Dialectics of ‘Us’ and ‘Other’”.
arranged their contract, recognised and pitied the couple’s discomfort at appearing day after day “in hot furs & in hot rooms.”

Patrons, however, had little interest in paying to see Inuit wearing cotton dresses or wool trousers. Nearly all newspaper articles about the couple stressed that they made public appearances dressed in “Arctic Costume,” “the costume peculiar to their country,” or a “most outrageous tout ensemble.” When Hannah showed up for one hotel interview wearing a calico gown, the reporter made sure to mention that at the upcoming lecture, she would be introduced “in her native costume.” It was largely this clothing that made Ipiirvik and Hannah seem exotic enough to be worth the price of admission. In a museum full of strangers, and in a vast anonymous city that increasingly relied on apparel to denote status, fur clothing allowed Barnum’s patrons to easily recognise and judge the Inuit. As one reporter noted, were it not for his “North Pole uniform,” Ipiirvik could have been mistaken – at least by some Americans – for a short Italian immigrant. Hannah and Ipiirvik had appeared in public venues during their visit to England, so they presumably already knew that their audiences expected arctic clothing. Hall was certainly aware of this; he stressed when booking engagements that the Inuit would be wearing furs and skins. He even brought furs to the United States, with the intention of

33 Hall to Sidney Budington, 15 November 1862, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
36 Cook, The Arts of Deception, 160
38 Ross, ed., This Distant and Unsurveyed Country, 55.
having Hannah sew them into traditional clothing for the Inuit to wear at his lectures.

Two weeks before the Inuit appeared at Barnum’s Museum, Hall urged Hannah to “work as fast as she can” to “make up fine…dresses of the rein-deer skins which I brought.” He stressed that the caribou clothing be “made Esquimaux style” – a necessary stipulation, since up North, Hannah had frequently sewed skin dresses and bonnets modelled after the ones she had worn abroad in England. In another letter the following week, Hall worried that Hannah was not working quickly enough, and that she would not finish the traditional clothing before coming to New York.

Hannah may have been trying her best to finish her sewing. Turning caribou skins into full winter suits is a highly skilled, arduous, and time-consuming task. Yet it is also possible that Hannah purposefully delayed completing the garments because she did not want to wear them. She would not have been the first Inuk to object to wearing fur clothing abroad. Her brother, Inulluapik, had to be talked into wearing his skin clothing for a kayaking demonstration during his visit to Scotland. He overheated and stated he would never wear it again until he returned to the Arctic. Hannah was an impeccably polite and gracious woman, who seems to have respected both the nineteenth-century

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40 Hall to Sidney Budington, 22 October 1862, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center; Ross, ed., This Distant and Unsurveyed Country, 138; Hall, Arctic Researches, 158. In 1883, Franz Boas also commented on the combination of European and Inuit dress in Cumberland Sound. See Franz Boas, “In the Ice of the North – Kikkerton,” Berliner Tageblatt 14 September 1883, translated and reprinted in Norman F. Boas and Doris W. Boas, eds., Arctic Expedition 1883-1884: Translated German Newspaper Accounts of My Life with the Eskimos (Mystic CT: privately published, 2009), 19.

41 Hall to Sidney Budington, 29 October 1862, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.

42 Alexander M’Donald, A Narrative of some Passages in the History of Eenoolooapik: A young Esquimaux, who was brought to Britain in 1839... (Edinburgh: Fraser & Co, 1841), 25
American notion of female deference, and the Inuit abhorrence of direct conflict.\(^{43}\) She would have been unlikely to refuse Hall directly. Although she may have delayed making the garments in the hopes Hall would not insist on it, she seems to have finished them. Reporters remarked on the Inuit wearing “the regular costume of the Esquimaux” at public appearances that fall.\(^{44}\)

Ironically, skin clothing was not the couple’s “regular costume” in the United States. One reporter who visited the Inuit at home disappointedly noted them “dressing and eating as we dress and eat.”\(^{45}\) The family had adopted American dress upon arrival, and wore it nearly all the time when they were not performing. Along with the letter asking Hannah to make fur garments, Hall had forwarded a package of expensive cloth dresses, gifts for Hannah from a wealthy New York woman and her daughter. In addition to receiving presents of clothing, Ipiirvik occasionally shopped for garments in New York, and Hannah presumably sewed much of her family’s cloth apparel.\(^{46}\) Cloth clothing was simply more practical for everyday living in the United States, and much easier to sew or acquire. Perhaps most importantly, American clothing allowed the Inuit to blend in, to be seen as potential friends and equals rather than simply as curiosities. Most Euro-Americans imagined Inuit as primeval, inferior versions of themselves. For Hannah,


\(^{44}\) “Scrapbook of newspaper clippings, 1858-1863,” no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. The clothing was reported to be made of caribou and seal skins. “Kad-lu-nah,” *New York Times*, 7 November 1862.


\(^{46}\) Hannah eventually acquired a sewing machine and made clothing for neighbours, so she presumably also made it for her family. J. E. Nourse to J. J. Copp, 14 December 1876, Ms Eb47 M1183, Indian and Colonial Research Center. Hall to Henry Grinnell, 8 June 1870, Coll. 8, G. W. Blunt White Library.
Ipiirvik, and generations of other immigrants, dressing to conform to local norms served as a superficial but persuasive indication that “civilisation” could be learned.

By contrast, caribou-skin winter suits would have suggested to the museum’s patrons that Inuit were incapable of understanding or adapting to American ways. Traditional clothing worn in stuffy rooms encouraged visitors to see the Inuit as alien, stolid, unchanging, and perhaps even dim-witted. At least one group of Americans later commented on the stunning design and intricacies of Hannah’s garments – “they wondered that an Esquimaux could do such nice work”47 – but as beautiful as fur clothing was, it marked the Inuit as anachronistic curiosities, out of time and place. Caribou-skin attire belied the fact that Hannah and Ipiirvik had been encountering modernity since childhood. Hannah and Ipiirvik had already demonstrated an exceptional ability to live everywhere from iglus to whaling ship cabins, from sealskin tents to English houses. They would have been justifiably proud of their adaptability: Inuit placed a high value on flexibility and adjusting to environmental change. To be judged negatively for wearing unsuitable clothing must have been a particularly biting and offensive insult to Hannah and Ipiirvik.

If clothing was the most immediate and visible marker of difference, language was perhaps even more critical. Many Americans imagined that Indigenous languages like Inuktitut lacked the vocabulary for expressing abstract or complex thoughts.48 Without sophisticated English skills, Inuit and other immigrants were unlikely to convince native

47 Hall to Sidney and Sarah Budington, 22 April 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. These were some “fine gentlemen” commenting on gloves Hannah had made, and wishing they could have a pair too.

nineteenth-century English speakers that they shared the same human depths of emotions and intellect. Yet, for reasons that remain unclear, the Inuit seem to have spoken exclusively in Inuktitut while at Barnum’s. According to reports in the *New York Times*, they conversed only in “uncouth gibberish” or “non-understandable gibberish.” One of the articles reported Charles Francis Hall acting as their interpreter at the museum.49 This was illogical and unlikely. After two years in the Arctic, Hall still needed Hannah to translate conversations for him. Her spoken English was so good that the first time Hall overheard her, he mistook her for an Englishwoman.50 Ipiirvik displayed less of an interest in learning English, but he was capable of carrying on lengthy if stilted conversations with Hall and with other interested Americans who spoke no Inuktitut.51 Yet, the two separate reports that the Inuit spoke unintelligibly suggest that they really did speak in Inuktitut while at the museum. Furthermore, they were introduced by their “unpronounceable” foreign names, even though they often referred to each other as “Joe” and “Hannah” when speaking or writing to Americans.52 It is unlikely that the couple were deliberately avoiding conversing with patrons. Hannah in particular was proud of her language skills and seems to have enjoyed surprising foreigners by addressing them in English. By speaking only in Inuktitut, the couple would also have been subject to countless jeers and erroneous statements voiced by visitors who assumed they could not

52 “Personal – Important Arrival,” *New York Times*, 11 November 1862; Hall, “Journal kept by Hall while preparing for his second expedition, January 1863 to April 1864,” 22 April 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. For examples of Hannah using English names see Hannah to Sarah Budington, 12 December 1863 (Ms Eb47 M1160), 14 April 1870 (Ms Eb47 M1166), Indian and Colonial Research Center.
understand their words. It seems probable that Barnum, who routinely created identities for his performers, and who usually directed them to behave in ways that played into existing pseudo-scientific theories about race, instructed the Inuit to speak only in their own language.\textsuperscript{53} Visitors could then encounter them as unintelligibly foreign, and feel satisfied with a brief encounter that confirmed their stereotypes.

If this was the charade, it succeeded. Visitors believed they were seeing authentic people uncorrupted by artifice. They described the Inuit as “curious specimens of humanity” or as “three of the queerest-looking specimens of humanity this side of the North Pole.”\textsuperscript{54} Barnum’s museum was notorious for fraud and humbuggery, but the \textit{New York Times} urged its readers to go see the Inuit, because unlike many of Barnum’s living curiosities, they were “genuine.”\textsuperscript{55} Presumably this meant that they looked and behaved as the reporter had envisioned they would. Inarguably, the Inuit were genuine in a way that albino Danes masquerading as Africans were not. They were authentic compared to the mentally challenged boy that Barnum presented as the missing link between man and beast.\textsuperscript{56} But what did authenticity mean in this context, when its most obvious markers of appearance and behaviour were exaggerated, fabricated, and performed?

\textsuperscript{56} Cook argues that Barnum’s living curiosities played on the liminal space between categories of race, age, gender, etc. This does not seem to have been the case with the Inuit, who were presented as typical examples of their people. Supposedly isolated from the modern world, they perhaps offered a counterpoint from which Barnum’s patrons could define themselves. Cook, \textit{The Arts of Deception}, 121.
In Cumberland Sound, Hannah and Ipiirvik had been on their way to becoming *inummariit*, true Inuit. To Inuit, authenticity is a process rather than a birthright; it is the path of becoming tolerant, generous, stoic, skilled at living off the land, and respectful of the traditions and stories of one’s ancestors. Successful *inummariit* are actively involved in building the world through their actions and relationships to it, through their travels across their home territory, and through their participation in the cycles of hunting and redistribution of wealth. By leaving the Arctic, by distancing themselves from these networks of interdependency between people and animals, Hannah and Ipiirvik never ceased to be Inuit but they would have been distancing themselves from becoming *inummariit*. Apart from the extraordinary patience and tolerance the couple displayed at their public appearances, what Americans imagined as “genuine Esquimaux” were hardly *inummariit* by Inuit standards.

Hannah and Ipiirvik, on the other hand, had plenty of opportunity to observe “genuine” Americans. They also got to traipse through and puzzle over Barnum’s Museum. Unfortunately, the Inuit left no record of their impressions of the museum or its patrons, of what they thought of the captive and mistreated animals, of their interactions with the other humans on display. We can infer that they were unhappy. Even Charles Francis Hall, who was constantly on the verge of penury and appropriated most of the Inuit

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income for himself and his expeditions, stated that the Inuit must never again be “subjected to such trials.” He refused Barnum’s offers to engage the family again.58

Two days after the end of their engagement with Barnum, the Inuit boarded a train for Boston, to complete a contract Hall claimed he regretted having signed. The family spent the next two weeks on display at the New Boston Aquarial and Zoological Gardens, the brainchild of James Ambrose Cutting, an inventor who had already made and lost several moderate fortunes.59 The Inuit were once again billed as “The Greatest Curiosities in the World.”60 They appeared alongside “two gigantic Japanese salamanders,” “a superb black African ostrich,” a pair of beavers, rebel battlefield relics, an aviary, and yet another “immense Happy Family cage.”61 With no other humans on display, the Gardens implicitly linked the Inuit with the natural, animal world. Ipiirvik and Hannah probably did not feel demeaned or humiliated by this, since they would have considered animals and humans to be spiritual equals. However, they would have seen, and probably been

58 Hall to Sidney Budington, 26 November 1862 and Hall to Sarah Budington, 7 December 1862, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
59 Cutting invented a new kind of beehive, and then more famously, the ambrotype – a popular photographic technique of the period. According to his obituary, he first became interested in ocean life when cruising around on the yacht he had purchased with his ambrotype patent earnings. “Death of an Inventor in an Insane Asylum,” The New York Times, 14 August 1867.
60 Louis Agassiz to Hall, 29 [October?] 1862, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. Agassiz was one of the best-known scientists of the mid-nineteenth century; he was also a strong proponent of scientific racism, and an opponent of Charles Darwin.
61 Classified Advertisement, The Boston Post, 1 December 1862. Reprinted in Ryan, The Forgotten Aquariums of Boston, 39. See also Classified Advertisement, Boston Daily Advertiser, 29 November 1862. Counter to some accounts, this Aquarial Garden was not owned by Barnum. Barnum had recently purchased the Boston Aquarial Gardens from James Cutting and a Mr. Guay. This pair became disenchanted with Barnum’s focus on popular entertainment, and opened a second site, the New Boston Aquarial and Zoological Gardens. The Inuit were the first – and only – major exhibit there. The site seems to have closed after less than a month in operation. Given the rift between Barnum and Cutting, it is unlikely that the Inuit would have visited the Barnum-owned gardens, where that month, a beluga whale and the famous “What Is It” were on display. (Ryan, The Forgotten Aquariums of Boston, 38-40). The Inuit were never paid the bulk of their salary for this engagement. When Hall’s agent Caladon Daboll visited the Gardens on 18 December 1862 in an attempt to collect the debt, Cutting told him he had no money to pay, and Daboll confirmed that there were “perhaps half a dozen” patrons at the Aquarium and that the concern was on its “last new legs.” (Caladon Daboll to Hall, 18 December 1862, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center).
appalled by, such behaviour as a trainer poking a bear repeatedly with a stick.\textsuperscript{62} Inuit who unnecessarily tormented an animal were taught to expect direct and visceral repercussions.\textsuperscript{63} Following this engagement, Hall signed no more contracts to exhibit the Inuit in museums, aquaria, and other flashy establishments of the period.

This did not mean that Charles Francis Hall stopped asking Hannah and Ipiirvik to appear in public. Unlike many explorers, Hall had little money of his own and needed financial backers to underwrite his expeditions. He gave public lectures to attract wealthy patrons, and to cover his own living expenses while in the United States. The Inuit frequently appeared at these lectures, which offered a far more sedate environment than the museums, but which still placed them under intense scrutiny. The Inuit must have increased Hall’s audiences. Newspapers reported that “all other attractions of the evening were thrown into the shade” whenever the family took centre stage. They “created quite a sensation” and “every eye in the audience…turned upon them with interest and pleasure.” On at least one occasion, Ipiirvik and Hannah “held a \textit{levee} of some duration, until they were almost deprived of breath.” Sometimes, audience members stayed around long after the end of the lecture, simply to observe “the interesting family.”\textsuperscript{64}

Before introducing the Inuit to the public, Hall retold his account of his latest expedition, pointed out his course on large maps and charts, and displayed Inuit tools and a sled dog.

\textsuperscript{63} Personal communication with residents of Pangnirtung, NU in present-day Cumberland Sound. See also Pauloosie Angmarlik, as cited in Jarich Oosten and Frédéric Laugrand, eds., \textit{Interviewing Inuit Elders Volume I: Introduction}, 122. Pauloosie said, “We were told when we were children that if you mistreated or made fun of animals, they could seek revenge, especially the ones that could be fierce.”
\textsuperscript{64} “Scrapbook of newspaper clippings, 1858-1863,” no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
He recounted his impressions of Inuit society, sometimes with Hannah and Ipiirvik already present on stage. Parts of his script were sympathetic and complimentary. He vaunted Ipiirvik as an expert and patient hunter, a “man of iron” who had endured untold hardships. He told his listeners that Hannah was an excellent seamstress and the best interpreter in the North. Yet Ipiirvik and Hannah would also have heard Hall tell audiences that while Inuit were fond of their children, “their affections are not [otherwise] strong.” Since Inuit marriages were generally arranged, argued Hall, husbands and wives could not truly love each other. Hall spoke briefly on Inuit religious beliefs, but concluded that these beliefs were so “enwrapped with superstition” that Inuit could not even explain them properly – as if it were not Hall who lacked the language and discourse to understand their explanations. Hall also bizarrely claimed that Inuit could go without food or drink for weeks. He stated that they had no real interests beyond securing clothing, food, water, and shelter – indeed, they did not even think about much else. Furthermore, and perhaps in an attempt to persuade potential patrons of the viability of his future plans, Hall told his listeners that all Inuit were “readily induced” to be his guides in exchange for a few cheap knives and other metal tools. As anthropologist Julie Cruikshank has pointed out, some stories are “statements of worldview” more than statements of fact. Unfortunately, Hannah and Ipiirvik left no record of their impressions of Hall’s outrageous claims, but they would have been exposed to such stereotypes over and over again.

Hannah, Ipiirvik, and other Inuit visitors disproved preconceptions about “Esquimaux” through their behaviour in the United States. Most Americans who met visiting Inuit expected to find strangeness, but Inuit often strived to appear as normal as possible. They were “quick to learn” and “endeavoured to do as other people did.” Many observers were fascinated by the Inuit ability to imitate American manners and customs, and to absorb unusual sights without displaying any outward signs of surprise. When Kudlargo, another Inuk from Cumberland Sound, saw a locomotive engine for the first time, he “expressed no words & exhibited no signs but what were consistent with the fact of his having seen the same a thousand times before.”68 This lack of reaction would have been astounding to nineteenth-century Americans, who were often still overwhelmed by the speed, power, and noise of trains. Similarly, when Inulluapik, Hannah’s older brother, visited Scotland, he was invited to a fancy dinner party. His hosts apparently hoped that his strange eating habits would provide some entertainment, but Inulluapik surprised them by so exactly copying the other guests that no one would have known he had not been eating at British tables his entire life.69 Americans who heard Hannah speaking fluent English, or who met the Inuit at home drinking tea in western dress, must also have questioned their notions that the Inuit were fundamentally different from themselves.

Yet even when they dressed and spoke like Americans, Hannah and Ipiirvik could not escape scrutiny in the United States. They attracted attention everywhere they went.70 Hall’s potential patrons were frequently thrilled to meet Ipiirvik, who sometimes

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69 M’Donald, A Narrative of some Passages in the History of Eenoolooapik, 21.
70 Hall, Arctic Researches, 565. In Groton, Hannah made arctic clothing as gifts for some of her neighbours’ children. Charles White later recalled this, saying he and his brother loved their fur clothing but every time they went out, people stopped them in the street to examine it. Eva Lutz Butler, “Notebook [with collected local history on Hannah and Ipiirvik],” Indian and Colonial Research Center.
accompanied Hall on his errands. At least once, Hall stopped on the street to give people “the opportunity [to see] their first Esquimaux.” The scrutiny became even more intense following their rescue from the ice floe in 1873. Upon landing in Newfoundland, the Inuit were bombarded with visitors, and the children became ill from eating too many gifts of candy. When they spent the following summer in Wiscasset, Maine, they received several hundred visitors a day.

Much of the attention Inuit received – or at least the attention that American observers chose to record – was well intentioned. Americans encountering Hannah or Ipiirvik for the first time expressed delight, excitement, and wonder. They invited the Inuit to come visit them anytime. They asked Ipiirvik to spend the night in their home. They wrote to Hall, thanking him for introducing them, describing the meeting as a “red-letter day” or “a treat which rarely occurs.” Hannah and Ipiirvik were presumably warmed and comforted by this hospitality from strangers, by the invitations into homes, the sharing of food, and the gifts of fine second-hand clothing. Inuit did the same for American whalers who arrived on their shores. But at times, the constant attention must also have been intrusive, tiresome, and irksome. Like many of their American counterparts, Hannah and Ipiirvik would not have been used to much privacy, but nor were they used to meeting new people almost every day, to being the constant centre of attention, to having every word or gesture scrutinised. Furthermore, they must have heard plenty of insulting and

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73 Henry Baldwin Jr. to Hall, 20 Feb 1864; J. W. Allen to Hall, 22 Jan 1863; Louis Frobisher to Hall, 17 August 1863; Hall, “Journal kept by Hall while preparing for his second expedition, January 1863 to April 1864,” 21 April 1863, all from no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
ignorant comments about their behaviour, abilities, and homeland. And while most adults who were introduced to the family socially might have been too polite to make negative judgements face-to-face, what would Connecticut children have repeated to Ipiirvik and Hannah’s child in the schoolyard? Inuit frequently, even to this day, criticise gallunaat for being sulky or losing their tempers, and for allowing negative emotions towards other people to surface in ineffectual ways. Hannah and Ipiirvik seem to have behaved impeccably as Inuit. There is no recorded instance of either of them displaying anything but cheerfulness and generosity towards Americans who were eager to meet them. Still, their patience must have been sorely tried.

‘Wandering Restlessly from Place to Place’: Part II, Rootlessness

Ferry Terminal, Bank Street, Groton, CT. Sunday, March 1, 1863.

At midnight on 1 March 1863, three dismal figures disembarked at the ferry terminal in the town of Groton, Connecticut. A cold winter rain began to fall; it would continue through all of Sunday.74 Ipiirvik, Hannah, and Charles Francis Hall had been travelling since Saturday afternoon, and the Inuit couple were both sick. They huddled miserably at the dark terminal on Bank Street, waiting for the whaling captain Sidney Budington to meet them. Budington had given Hall and the Inuit passage on his arctic whaling ship the previous summer, and he remained in close contact with them. When Budington arrived at the terminal, he took the visitors one and a half miles northeast to his house in Pleasant Valley, where they found Sidney’s wife Sarah in a state of shock, completely

74 Inuit from the North Baffin region discussed the association of bad weather with recent or impending deaths in Michèle Therrien and Frédéric Laugrand, eds., Perspectives on Traditional Health (Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College, 2001), 134-135. However, traditions and beliefs varied across time and regions, so this may not have been a common belief on South Baffin in the mid-nineteenth century.
“overwhelmed” with grief. Hannah was even worse; she alternated between periods of anguish, delirium, and unconsciousness. She carried with her the remains of Tarralikitaq, her eighteen-month-old son pictured in the Barnum portraits. He had died in New York City the previous morning.75

Tarralikitaq had first fallen ill over five weeks previously, just after the family and Hall had returned to New York City from a fund-raising lecture circuit. This tour had taken them to five different cities and nine different venues in a little over two weeks. Between these lectures, their museum engagements in New York and Boston, and their interim stays with the Budington family in Connecticut, the Inuit were far more mobile in the United States than they would usually have been on South Baffin Island.76 The constant transience seems to have taken both a mental and physical toll on the family. Hannah in particular reacted frequently and negatively against requests for the couple to relocate, especially following the death of her son.

The loss of Tarralikitaq was immense to both parents. It was something they had feared from the moment they boarded the ship to go south. Hall recorded that when he had first asked the couple to accompany him to the United States, they told him that they worried their son would die on the trip south.77 From their own journey to England, and from the stories of their friends and relatives who had gone abroad, Hannah and Ipiirvik knew how risky it could be to venture outside of their home territory. One of the biggest dangers

75 Hall, “Journal kept by Hall while preparing for his second expedition, January 1863 to April 1864,” 28 February 1863 [entry date, although he must have added to it later], no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
76 On hunter-gatherers being less nomadic than farmers see Brody, The Other Side of Eden.
77 Hall, Arctic Researches, 562. Hall recorded it as “they were fearful they should lose their infant boy while on board the ship.”
was the travel itself, with its confined quarters and exposure to germs. Yet the Inuit
continued to travel almost constantly after they disembarked from their whaling ship in
New London harbour.

As an agricultural and industrial society, Americans held grossly simplified and often
incorrect ideas about what it meant for Inuit to be nomadic. R. W. Seager, a travelling
entertainer in Ohio, implored Hall to “lend” him the Inuit family despite knowing all
three of them were seriously ill. He argued that “the kind of life I am leading, exciting,
active, moving about continually…[would] keep them in such good spirits that they could
not get sick.”78 Seager believed that as hunter-gatherers, the Inuit would be healthier if
they were forced to be constantly on the move. Tarralikitaq had recently died when Hall
received this letter, and it seems he never responded to it. Yet Hall betrayed a similar
misconception about Inuit in his lectures, when he announced:

They seldom remain permanently in distinct settlements, since there is no
agriculture among them, but wander restlessly from place to place, seeking where
they may find the best hunting grounds, and thus supply their only wants – food
and clothing: therefore the explorer is liable in any locality, and at any time to
meet parties of them on their travels.79

This was wishful thinking on the explorer’s part. Despite popular misconceptions, Inuit
and other nomadic peoples have a strong sense of home and affinity with specific
landscapes. Inuit moved according to distinct seasonal patterns, intersecting with the
movements of animals, and most often through sites well known to their ancestors. Their
home territory was vast by American standards, but they did not live everywhere; they

78 R. W. Seager to Hall, 18 March 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History
Archives Center.
79 Hall, “Notes for Lectures on the First Expedition, 1863-1864,” no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of
American History Archives Center.
did not wander everywhere; there were many places where polar explorers would never encounter them. Furthermore, Inuit generally returned to the same sites, or at least to the same areas, during the same season each year. Family groups did relocate, sometimes over hundreds of kilometres, for a variety of reasons. These could include seeking trade goods from explorers or whalers, visiting other Inuit, tracking animal migration patterns, or moving closer to a dead bowhead whale (in pre-contact times, it was often easier to move the camp than to tow the whale). Families also relocated at least temporarily during epidemics, to allow the land to “cool off.” Yet even today, many Inuit who have been resettled in permanent communities prefer to hunt in the specific region where they grew up, because it has history and significance to them, and because it is there that they know the land and the animals.80

In the United States, however, Hall expected the Inuit to “wander restlessly from place to place.” The couple arrived at a moment when new methods of transportation and communication were disrupting, enabling, and forever altering the lives of Americans. In the winter of 1862-1863, the Inuit criss-crossed the northeastern United States by train at a speed that would have been unthinkable to previous generations. Hall referred to his surroundings in awe as “this new, living, lightning-moving-world.”81 Nowhere was this more evident than in Elmira, the final stop of Hall’s lecture tour. Elmira was a booming community in upstate New York at the crossroads of two canals and two railroads. Hall does not seem to have known anyone in town, but Ira F. Hart, a local physician and the

80 Therrien and Laugrand, eds., Perspectives on Traditional Health, 140; Personal communication with residents of Pangnirtung, Nunavut.
81 Hall, “Speech given by Hall in Cincinnati upon his return from the 2nd expedition, 1869,” no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
chair of the local YMCA lecture committee, had read about the Inuit in the New York Herald. He had written to Hall, urging him to give a lecture in Elmira, stressing its easy accessibility as a transportation hub, and offering accommodation for him and the Inuit at Brainard House, a new hotel that had been built to coincide with the arrival of the Erie railroad. Hall accepted, and eagerly added two Elmira lectures to the roster.

While in Elmira, Ipiirvik was the first to succumb to what Hall called a cold, but which was likely a more serious pulmonary illness. Hall completed the lectures, but then ushered Ipiirvik and his family onto a train to New York, and through the city streets to a impoverished overcrowded district where he could afford accommodation. The Inuit and Hall moved into an inexpensive suite of rooms – likely a tiny “parlour” backed by a windowless bedroom – on the fifth floor of a building at 33 Bowery. The Inuit and most Americans would have been unaccustomed to living so high above the ground, in these new densely packed tenements built to house the thousands of people making their way to New York City monthly on trains and steamships. When Sidney Budington visited the apartment, he wrote excitedly to his wife that he was “5 stores [storeys] above the streat.” Budington did not tell his wife that he was staying less than a block south of the raucous Bowery Theatre, and along the edge of the Five Points district, then the most notorious poor immigrant neighbourhood in New York City. Five Points was safer
than it had been in the antebellum period, but President Lincoln was still shocked by it in 1860, and it remained a centre of gambling, petty theft, drunkenness, filth, and grinding poverty. Just a few blocks away from Hall’s rented suite, nearly all of the buildings would have housed cheap brothels, and women solicited sex along the Bowery at all hours. In 1863, at the height of the Civil War, there would also have been soldiers and crippled veterans in the streets, and an endless stream of funeral processions.86 The Inuit had known of hunger, prostitution, and disfigurement in their home camps, but the Five Points district still must have shocked them with its intensity and concentration of desperation.87 Human and animal waste would also have clogged the side streets – the hogs that had efficiently scavenged the neighbourhood had recently been driven uptown, and there were over twenty thousand horses in New York City, hundreds of which died in the streets every year.88 Hall spent most of his first night in the room awake, listening to the noise of the rowdy street below, hearing words shouted in languages he could not understand, and watching Ipiirvik. The Inuk’s condition continued to worsen.89

Two days later, Hannah and the baby Tarralikitaq were also “prostrate with severe sickness.” Hall was stricken with fear. The three Inuit were so ill they could not get out of bed. Hall knew little about caring for the sick, and a fetid walk-up tenement connected to neither water nor sewer mains was not the ideal place to learn. Hall described himself as

86 Burrows and Wallace, Gotham, 484, 827, 876, 881; Tyler Anbinder, Five Points: The 19th-century New York City neighborhood that invented tap dance, stole elections, and became the world’s most notorious slum (New York: Free Press, 2001), 208, 213, 220, 235.
87 The Inuit would probably not have been familiar with the exchange of sex for money, but growing up around communities of foreign whalers, they would have witnessed both long-term intercultural relationships and more explicit exchanges of sex for goods or privileges. This sex trade does not seem to have had the same stigma as prostitution increasingly did in the mid-nineteenth century United States.
88 Burrows and Wallace, Gotham, 786-787.
89 Hall to Henry Grinnell, 23 Jan 1863, Coll. 8, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport.
“in the midst of the deepest anxiety and trial.” On Tuesday, January 27, he wrote in desperation to whaling captain Sidney Budington, begging him to “come at once.”

The Inuit recovered temporarily, and Budington seems to have taken them to his home in Connecticut. However, two weeks later, Hall brought them back to New York City, where he had to break an engagement because Tarralikitaq was too sick to go out. The toddler was then eighteen months old, and according to Hall, he was usually an “animated, sweet-tempered, [and] bright-looking” child.” He charmed onlookers by trying to imitate everything he saw and heard. The boy had learned to run two months previously, but by February 23 he was so ill he was unable to walk. Hannah and Ipiirvik’s language had a variety of terms for sickness, but they probably would have described their son as *qanimajuq*: a verb used for those who were bed-ridden and who might die, but who still had a chance at recovery. A physician recorded only as Doctor Gay visited the child daily and accepted no payment. On February 27, Hall informed Sidney Budington that he thought it would be too risky to once again move Tarralikitaq to

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90 Hall to Sarah Budington, 29 January 1863; Hall to Sidney Budington, 27 January 1863, both in no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. Hall does not discuss the apartment’s amenities, but in the Bowery district, it is likely that all it had was a stove. Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 747.

91 Hall to Sarah Budington, 29 January 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.

92 Hall to “Mr. Farie or Peale,” 15 February 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.


94 On different words for sickness, see Therrien and Laugrand, eds., *Perspectives on Traditional Health*, 77. *Qanimajuq* was used on South Baffin and has more recently spread to other regions.

95 Hall also spells the man’s name once as Gaye. No first name is ever given in the records I have seen. At one point, he was visiting Tarralikitaq five times a day. Hall to Sarah, 29 January 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
Connecticut, where the Budington family had offered to care for the Inuit.96 The boy died at 8:30 the next morning.

In the days following Tarralikitaq’s death, Hall described Ipiirvik as “disconsolate” and “afflicted,” but Hannah, already seriously ill, became suicidal with grief.97 Everyone at the Budington household thought that Hannah would not survive long.98 She was *kipiniaqtuq*, or grieving to the point that her physical health suffered.99 She was unconscious much of the time, and when she awoke, she often asked for her son, calling out heart-wrenchingly, “Where’s my ‘Johnny’?”100 She expressed a desire to die.101 Her condition worsened after Groton’s Presbyterian minister buried the child.102

Hannah and Ipiirvik’s grief was almost certainly intensified by being far from home and other Inuit. They were likely mourning the death not just of their son, but of all Inuit who had carried his name. Since Tarralikitaq perished in a foreign country, where they had no roots and where no other Inuit families lived, his name-soul would likely not be passed on to a new child. The return of name-souls often softens grief, but the couple would never know this part of their son again in a new person.103

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96 Hall to Sidney Budington, Feb 27 18[63] [letter mistakenly dated 1862]; no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
97 Hall to Grinnell, 4 March 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
100 Hall to Grinnell, 4 March 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
101 Hall, *Life Among the Esquimaux*, 569
102 Hall “Journal kept by Hall while preparing for his second expedition, January 1863 to April 1864,” 2 March 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
103 Christopher Trott, personal communication; Briggs, ed., *Childrearing Practices*, 11, 35.
Somehow, Hannah regained the will to live. Her health slowly began to improve. She sewed gloves for Doctor Gay, who had tried to save her son. She refused to leave Groton, however, and gave the gloves to Hall to deliver in New York City. Nearly two months later, Hall visited the Budingtons and watched Ipiirvik paint the fence, while Hannah walked gingerly around the yard. Her legs were weak and she had serious pain in the small of her back. She was recovering physically from her illness, but mentally she was still suffering. Hall was trying to persuade the family to go north with him again. Ipiirvik was willing – perhaps even eager – but Hannah did not want to leave her son’s grave. Nevertheless, in June of 1863, Hall demanded that Hannah and Ipiirvik come and stay with him on a farm in Nyack, north of Manhattan.

The historical record says little about Ipiirvik’s opinion of the family’s many relocations in the United States, but it is clear from Hannah’s letters to Sidney Budington’s wife Sarah that she wanted to stay in Groton. Hannah wrote to Sarah from 1863 to 1873, whenever they were apart. Her letters were penned from New York City; from the farm in Nyack; from Hudson Bay while on expedition with Hall; and from Wiscasset, Maine, where she spent a summer. Even though Inuit had no written form of their language in the mid-nineteenth century, Hannah must have realised that literacy was a skill highly valued in the United States. She spent considerable time improving her reading and

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104 Hall to Sidney and Sarah Budington, 10 March 1863, 14 March 1863, 31 March 1863, all in no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
105 Hall, “Journal kept by Hall while preparing for his second expedition, January 1863 to April 1864,” 22 April 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. Gay tended to the Inuit through numerous illnesses, and Hannah wrote that he was “so kind to us always.” Hannah to Sarah Budington, 12 December 1863, Ms Eb47 M1160, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
106 Hall, “Journal kept by Hall while preparing for his second expedition, January 1863 to April 1864,” 27 April 1863, 4 May 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
writing abilities, sometimes practicing every day. These efforts helped her to develop a close and lasting friendship with Sarah Budington. In their letters, the two women retained their own cultural identities but focussed on issues common to both of them, especially children, family, and the mourning they experienced following the deaths of loved ones. While Hannah always remained an Inuk and this identity influenced her choices and her sufferings, she also managed to get at least one American to see her as a person.

All of Hannah’s letters to Sarah are marked by sadness over their separation, and often by a sense of resignation at having to travel. When Hall took the Inuit away to Nyack, Hannah forced herself to get up and sew every day, but she confided to Sarah that she could not escape her sad thoughts, her fears, and her desire to see Tarralikitaq’s grave. “Down hearted,” she wrote to Sarah, “worry and worry…my little Jonny I lost…I like to go now see [his grave]…wish to all time.” Hannah was still grieving deeply a year later in 1864, when she told Sarah that she often still wept over her dead child: “I cry an cry. Sometime feel better,” she wrote. Hannah may have been concerned that she was grieving too much for her son: some elders on South Baffin Island have heard that if Inuit do not let a deceased person go, their soul, or tarniq (distinct from the name-soul, or atiq) is compelled to roam the earth. Inuit considered it vital to talk to others about one’s loss; Sarah clearly served this purpose for Hannah. When Sarah reported that she had

107 Charles Francis Hall and Hannah to Sarah Budington, 17 August 1863, letters on same sheet of paper, Ms Eb47 M1159, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
108 Hannah to Sarah Budington, [Summer 1863 – undated letter from Nyack, NY], Ms Eb47 M1186, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
109 Hannah to Sarah Budington, 24 August 1864, Ms Eb47 M1161, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
110 Therrien and Laugrand, eds., Perspectives on Traditional Health, 245
visited Tarralikitaq’s grave, Hannah broke down into tears and longed to go herself. She urged Sarah to take care of the toys left on the boy’s grave.\textsuperscript{111}

Hannah seems to have been particularly concerned about her son’s gravesite, perhaps because it was located in a strange land where the inhabitants did not show proper respect for the dead. When in Groton, Hannah had visited the cemetery regularly, and she was devastated when she found that someone had taken a painted tin pail from Tarralikitaq’s grave.\textsuperscript{112} I have heard that the objects on an Inuit grave belong to the dead person, or alternatively that the essence of the dead person becomes attached to them. Hannah may have considered that the thief had taken part of her child away; she may also have been anxious about harm that could come to unwitting local people. Removing property from Inuit graves could invoke supernatural retribution, not just on the perpetrator, but also on his or her family members.\textsuperscript{113}

While Hannah was refusing to leave her son’s grave, Charles Francis Hall was eager to depart on his second expedition, this time to a new place hundreds of kilometres west of Cumberland Sound. He remarked in surprise that Hannah “does not want to go to her Northern Home.”\textsuperscript{114} Home is a complicated concept in English, linked to ideas of shelter, safety, emotional attachment, and identity. Hannah did not, as many Americans

\textsuperscript{111} Hannah to Sarah Budington, 24 August 1864, Ms Eb47 M1161, Indian and Colonial Research Center. She wrote, “I hope I go there where little Johnny was,” which I interpret in the context of the letter to mean she wanted to return to his gravesite.
\textsuperscript{112} Hall, \textit{Arctic Researches}, 574
\textsuperscript{113} Bernard Saladin d’Anglure, ed., \textit{Cosmology and Shamanism} (Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College, 2001), 27-28, 128. Andrew Dialla told me about people’s essences being attached to grave objects (personal communication).
\textsuperscript{114} Hall, “Journal kept by Hall while preparing for his second expedition, January 1863 to April 1864,” 27 April 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
supposed, feel at home anywhere there was ice and a midnight sun, although she probably would have considered anywhere within the Inuit homeland to be nuna, a concept that is loosely translated as “land” but that also encompasses the idea of living off the land and the sea. When she did finally go with Hall, it was to a part of the Arctic unknown to her, which she described as “nune” but also as a “new land, low wind, very cold,” and not nearly as warm as “her country” in Cumberland Sound. On a later expedition to yet another unknown part of the Arctic, she cried in the carriage as she left Groton. In other letters, she referred to the Budington house as home, and said she missed Sarah and was “Home sike [homesick].” She expressed a stronger sense of home in Groton than she did in parts of the Arctic unfamiliar to her.

Yet Hannah struggled to see the United States as home, and she sometimes longed for the region where she had grown up. A year after her son died, when she was once again ill and bedridden in New York City, she wrote that she was “far from my home [of] ice and snow.” She does not specify what she was thinking of as she wrote those words, of which place or places around Cumberland Sound, or of which relatives. It was likely the relationships with the people in her old household, the specific camps she had lived in, and the site where she was born that Hannah considered home in Cumberland Sound. Yet the type of dwellings she had lived in, the qammaq (sod and skin house) and the tupiq (sealskin tent) and the igluvigaq (igloo), would also have been important. A century

115 Dorais, Language in Inuit Society, 95
116 Hannah to Sarah Buddington, 24 August 1864 and 27 August 1864, Ms Eb47 M1164, Indian and Colonial Research Centre.
118 Hannah to Sarah Buddington, [Summer 1863 – undated letter from Nyack, NY], Ms Eb47 M1186; Hannah to Sarah Buddington, 10 July 1864, Ms Eb47 M1164, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
119 Hannah to Sarah Buddington, 18 April 1864, Ms Eb47 M1162, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
later, Inuit elders resettled into wooden houses would often feel they could not truly communicate inside the new architecture. Hannah’s husband Ipiirvik may have felt the same way; he often talked about snow houses in the United States. One winter day he made an *igluvigaq* in the yard, with a piece of pond ice for a window, and the family slept in it that night. Building this temporary house was a way for Ipiirvik to bring his family home. It provided a space for him and his wife to speak Inuktitut, using the specialised words that no longer had meaning in their everyday life in the United States. There is no way to know what they said inside the *igluvigaq*, what emotions they expressed, how they felt to wake up and see the snow ceiling above them. But the igloo in the yard was more than just the curious spectacle recorded by onlookers.

Hannah and Ipiirvik’s sense of being between two worlds is a feeling familiar to many immigrants. Homesickness, dislocation, and malaise were also increasingly common among many native-born Americans of the Civil War era, when so much of the population was at war, displaced, or on the move in search of opportunity. Even Hall once reported feeling so “Home-Sick” in New York that he “could stand it no longer.” For Hannah and Ipiirvik, the process of making a home in the United States was

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120 Michèle Therrien, personal communication about the concept of home and the importance of traditional dwellings for communication. Home is usually translated by the Inuktitut term *angirraq*. In recent years, at least in the Iqaluit area, *angirraq* has also been used to designate places with evidence of traditional habitation, places with emotional history, in opposition to the permanent hamlets founded by the Canadian government where most Inuit live today. Louis-Jacques Dorais, “La toponymie religieuse et l’appropriation symbolique du territoire par les Inuit du Nunavik et du Nunavut,” *Études/Inuit/Studies* 28:2 (2004), 117.

121 Butler, “Notebook,” Indian and Colonial Research Center.

122 Susan J. Matt, “You Can’t Go Home Again: Homesickness and Nostalgia in U.S. History,” *The Journal of American History* 94:2 (September 2007), 479, 482. It was during the Civil War that the American medical community first took a serious interest in the problem of homesickness.

123 Hall to Sidney Budington, 10 March 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. Hall said he felt at home at the Budington and Grinnell residences, but nowhere else. He conspicuously left out the residence of his wife and child in Cincinnati.
undeniably complicated by their itinerant lifestyle and its attendant emotional and physical traumas. In one of Hannah’s first letters to Sarah, she asked a question that throughout her life would only have contingent and shifting answers: “Where is my home?”124

“Strange and Unaccountable Treatment”: Part III, Authority


The 1863 summer solstice found Charles Francis Hall in a dark and furious mood.125 He sat in the depths of Manhattan, in a city simmering with resentment over the Civil War draft. Hall was too old for the draft, and he seems to have taken remarkably little interest in the war. His foul mood was due to a personal feud with Sidney Budington. In the posh apartment belonging to his wealthy patron, Henry Grinnell, Hall penned an outraged letter. As if ending relations with a lover, he wrote that he was sending Budington a shawl that Sarah had loaned to Hannah, and that his agent would go to Groton to collect any items the Inuit had left behind. Hall declared that neither he nor the Inuit would ever visit the Budingtons again. “Confident am I,” asserted Hall, “that the time will come when you will deeply regret the strange & unaccountable treatment you exercised toward the writer of this & the Esquimaux during the last week.” Sidney Budington had offended Hall by offering the Inuit passage to Cumberland Sound on a whaling ship.126

124 Hannah to Sarah Budington, [Summer 1863 – undated letter from Nyack, NY], Ms Eb47 M1186, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
125 Hannah and Ipiirvik certainly would have been aware of the summer solstice, but they probably did not attach as much importance to it as they did to the winter solstice. See John MacDonald, The Arctic Sky: Inuit Astronomy, Star Lore, and Legend (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1998), 130.
Hannah and Ipiirvik had both agreed to go with Budington. In Hall’s opinion, this was an intolerable betrayal by three people he had considered his friends, and in the case of the Inuit, his subordinates. Hall believed that the Inuit couple had entered into an “agreement” with him, namely to accompany him on his next expedition.\textsuperscript{127} The death of the couple’s son, their persistent illnesses, the preparatory delays and lack of funding that threatened to keep Hall in the United States for a second year – none of this voided the indenture in Hall’s mind. To make matters worse, Budington had approached Hall’s patron Henry Grinnell, and had secretly asked for two hundred dollars to outfit the Inuit for their trip home.\textsuperscript{128} Hall rushed to New York upon hearing of this plan, and promptly collected the Inuit. He took them to a farm north of the city for several months, ensuring they remained far from the whaling ports during the season of arctic departures. Spending another year in the United States was extremely risky for the Inuit, but Hall offered them no choice in the matter.

To Hannah and Ipiirvik, Hall’s aggressive authoritarianism would have been one of the most upsetting and alarming aspects of living in the United States. Antebellum Americans grew up within a cultural system that exalted the rights of some individuals over others. This is not to say that Americans universally accepted these inequalities, as working-class New Yorkers would violently attest less than a month later during the Civil War Draft Riots. However, African Americans, women, Indigenous people, some immigrant and religious minorities, and many others in the United States would have

\textsuperscript{127} Hall to Budington, 21 June 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
\textsuperscript{128} Hall’s note above his copy of a letter from Grinnell to Sidney Budington [June 1863], in “Hall’s Letters to Capt. Budington, June 1860 to October 1863,” no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
experienced continual discrimination and forced subordination in a way that Inuit in Cumberland Sound did not. There were powerful people in Inuit society, especially shamans and camp leaders, but the boundaries of Inuit authority were more fluid; its hierarchies less absolute. In Hall’s opinion, these Inuit leaders were generally respected but had “no authority whatsoever.” “An Innuit,” Hall grandly declared, “is subject to no man’s control.” Presumably Hall meant no control by other Inuit, since he clearly wanted to control Hannah and Ipiirvik’s actions.129

It was not just American societal inequalities that would have alarmed Hannah and Ipiirvik, but also the forceful ways in which Hall and others displayed their power. Authority existed in Inuit society, but Hall likely failed to recognise it because it was rarely flaunted or expressed directly. After his first two years in the Arctic, Hall reported that he had witnessed few disagreements, and that the people invariably “[dealt] justly and kindly with each other,” usually by keeping their distance until the quarrel was resolved, often through a mediator.130 Inuit abhorred open conflict, and they also defined aggression and hostility much more broadly than did Euro-Americans. Harsh words and even angry thoughts could sometimes kill.131 Adults did not generally shout, lose their tempers, or show sulkiness towards others. Loud outbursts of negative emotions, which

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129 Hall, *Arctic Researches*, 571
131 The recently deceased Cumberland Sound elder Etooangat recounted a story about his father and the dangers of angry thoughts. The morning after his father became a shaman, when he was extremely powerful, he made the mistake of thinking somewhat meanly about another man, Tasha. Tasha was the leader of another camp and he had asked to hunt at a seal hole that Etooangat’s father had found. That night, someone arrived to say that Tasha could not speak; he never spoke another word. Etooangat said his father used to regretfully think of what he had done to poor Tasha. Etooangat Aksayuk, Interview with Margaret Nakashuk, 1994 interview on file at the Angmarlik Visitor Centre, Panniqtuuq, Nunavut, Canada. Translated from Inuktitut by Andrew Dialla in September 2008.
Hall’s society viewed as fairly routine and sometimes necessary, suggested to Inuit that an adult was not rational and was liable to turn violent at any time. Faced with an aggressive authoritative demand, Inuit would often comply in order to avoid open conflict with a clearly immature, unpredictable, and dangerous person. Anthropologist Hugh Brody and others have argued that this is why Inuit so often obeyed intolerable requests from colonial authority figures.

Both Hall and Sidney Budington seem to have lived up to the Inuit stereotype of qallunaat who lacked control over their negative emotions. They both made enemies easily, and they were opinionated, argumentative, and even belligerent with people they disliked. When the doctor on one of Hall’s expeditions resigned, he cited Hall’s “bad temper and his quarrelsome and jealous disposition” as the reason. More serious charges were also levied against both Hall and Budington. George Tyson, a whaling captain who grew to despise Budington, accused him of repeatedly raping an eleven or twelve-year-old Inuit girl on board one of his ships. This claim has not been substantiated elsewhere in the historical record, but even if false, it suggests that Budington was ornery enough to inspire such vitriolic attacks on his character. According to the same possibly unreliable letter by Tyson, Budington was also frequently “beastly drunk” while in command, and so desperate for drink that he consumed pain.

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132 A Central Arctic Inuktitut term for physical aggression, ningaq, also refers to visible displays of anger, regardless of whether any physical violence had occurred. Briggs, Never In Anger, 332-334
133 Brody, The Other Side of Eden. There is a word, ilira, for the emotion that leads to compliance. Brody characterised it as a fear, but Rachel Attituq Qitsualik says it is “not quite fear,” but rather just “a feeling that it is better to yield.” Rachel Attituq Qitsualik, “Nunani: Ilira [3-part series]”, Nunatsiaq News, November 12, November 19, November 26 1998; http://www.nunatsiaq.com/archives/nunavut981130/nunani.html (accessed 5 November 2009).
134 “The Polaris, The Course to Be Pursued with the Buddington Party…” [Clipping, unknown newspaper and date], George E. Tyson Papers, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.
killers, “spirits of nitré,” the pure alcohol destined to preserve specimens, and the “soporified camphor” lotion that Ipiirvik had brought for easing his sore back.

As for Hall, it is certain that he killed a man. During his second arctic expedition in 1868, he murdered a whaler named Patrick Coleman. Hall shot Coleman in a fit of anger, when the men were quarrelling over a perceived breach of authority. Hall claimed that Coleman had interviewed local Inuit without Hall’s permission. Hall was at once remorseful, and seems to have made sincere attempts to nurse the man back to health by applying poultices of pounded hard bread to his wound, and by “bleeding” him by cutting his wrists. Coleman died after two agonising weeks. Hall was never charged with murder: the Canadian government declared it an American matter, and the American juridical system declined to follow up. Instead, the United States Congress approved the sum of $50,000 for Hall’s third expedition. Hannah and Ipiirvik had watched Coleman suffer and die. Their suspicions that Hall’s verbal aggression could lead to physical violence would have been confirmed, and for the most part, they continued to do what he wanted.

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135 George Tyson to Noah Hayes, 4 April 1874, George E. Tyson Papers, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.
137 Hall, “Journal kept by Hall, April 1868 to June 1869,” 31 July-4 August 1868, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
138 John A. Macdonald to Henry Grinnell, 13 December 1869, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. The first Prime Minister of Canada, Macdonald was then serving as Minister of Justice for the new nation.
Nevertheless, the Inuit did not always obey Hall and other gallunaat authority figures, especially in the Arctic. Ipiirvik and other Inuit hunted whenever conditions were good. This aggravated Hall no end. The “burning indignity” of Inuit making travel decisions without him led Hall to exchange harsh works with a man he called Koojesse, and then to write angrily in his journal that “I never took such insolence from any white man.” Out on the land alone with the Inuit, Hall could not command the authority he felt he deserved by virtue of his race, and he feared Inuit would murder him if he tried to enforce it.140 Hall also recorded Ipiirvik’s uncle, Uugaq, deserting a whaling ship for another hunting camp. Hall branded Uugaq “a man on whom little dependence could be placed.”141 This quote says much about Hall’s own dependence on Inuit goods, skills, and labour, and it also demonstrated that in their home territory, Inuit like Uugaq were able to gain benefits from men like Hall without becoming subservient to their economy and culture. Similarly, Ipiirvik later went on an expedition with the American explorer Frederick Schwatka, who complained that the Inuk would not pass on his commands to other employees. Schwatka recounted that he gave Ipiirvik an order about feeding the dogs, and Ipiirvik replied that he would talk it over with the other hunters later. Schwatka became frustrated: “There is no necessity for talking it over, ‘Joe;’ just tell them what I say.”142 Even after years of working with Hall, Ipiirvik refused to adopt a gallunaat style of dictatorial authority, instead continuing to rely on discussion and consensus decision making. In the United States, however, Ipiirvik could not so easily contradict or flee authority figures.

140 Hall, “Journal by Hall, August to October 1861,” 15 September 1861, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. See also Hall, Arctic Researches, 416.
141 Hall, Arctic Researches, 329.
Hall did not see himself as controlling. He seems to have believed that Hannah and Ipiirvik were devoted to helping him achieve his dreams of arctic glory, and irrevocably loyal to him. He drew on the longstanding American discourses of servitude and slavery to justify and characterise his authority over the couple. Upon reaching the United States, Hall referred to “the family of Esquimaux now under my control,” language that he repeated in official contracts for their public appearances. Hall often called Ipiirvik “my Joe,” or “my boy Joe.” Like many slaveowners who infantilised their charges to justify their domination over them, Hall’s letters expressed concern over Ipiirvik’s supposedly childlike innocence: he must not be allowed to drink, or to spend money foolishly, or to choose his own clothes. New York was a “bad place for ‘Joe’” because he was naïve, and “there [were] so many ways he unthinkingly might be led astray.” While it is true that Ipiirvik and Hannah had much to learn about the United States, Hall portrayed them as incapable of functioning as intelligent adults.

Hall’s equation of the Inuit with children was explicit. They were his “dear children of the North,” “almost [his] adopted children,” and “almost as dear as my own little ones at

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143 Contract naming Caladon L. Daboll as Hall’s attorney, 13 December 1862. A letter from Louis Agassiz to Hall also referred to the “Esquimaux…over whom you have control.” Agassiz to Hall, 29 [October?] 1862. Both in no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
145 Hall to Grinnell, 16 June 1870; Hall to Grinnell, 8 June 1870; Hall to Grinnell, 27 January 1871; all in Coll. 8, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport. See also Hall to Capt. and Mrs. Budington, 15 April 1863, in no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. Hall to Secretary of the Navy George M. Roberts, 21 October 1871, reprinted in “Captain Hall and the Polaris,” Harper’s Weekly, 5 July 1873, 573.
Hannah and Ipiirvik may have questioned the worth of Hall’s parental devotion, since he rarely visited his biological children in Ohio. Nor does Hall seem to have noticed the irony of his Inuit “children” feeding him, clothing him, and ensuring his survival in the Arctic. On expedition, Hall had to be provided for and often watched over like a child, and his displays of emotion were childlike to Inuit. Ipiirvik once remarked that the American whalers were “all same as small boys,” meaning they lacked the arctic survival skills and stoicism that marked Inuit as adults.

Nevertheless, Ipiirvik and Hannah began referring to Hall as “Father,” and in later years, their daughter would call him “Grandpa Hall.” This pleased Hall, to whom parental forms of address indicated deference and subservience. Kinship vocabulary did not have the same connotations for Hannah and Ipiirvik. Family ties, however distant or imaginary, placed people in the world and decreed how they should be addressed. Not having a family was unthinkable to Inuit. Like many other Indigenous peoples, they sometimes adopted foreigners who lived with them in their dwellings, and began referring to them in familial terms. Nineteenth-century Inuit likely viewed such adoptions, like all personal identities, as contingent: they may have addressed Hall as a father at some moments and not others.

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146 Hall, *Arctic Researches*, 442; Hall to Sarah Budington, 3 August 1863; Hall to Sidney Budington, [Undated, probably December 1860 or January 1861], both letters in no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
147 On Hall’s reliance on Inuit hunters and sewers see for example Hall, *Arctic Researches*, 181, 217.
148 Hall, *Arctic Researches*, 482.
150 Hall once referred to his wealthy patron Henry Grinnell as “father.” Hall to Grinnell, 16 April 1871, Coll. 8, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport.
151 These varied identities are the norm in Inuit society where people have many name-souls: an individual can be both father (through name-soul) and daughter (through biology) to the same person, and may be addressed in either way depending on the circumstance. The situation appears to be further complicated in
Hall often spoke and behaved like a child, but it would not have been appropriate for the couple to consider him a son. Hall was almost forty years old when he first met the couple, old enough to be their father. In any case, Ipiirvik and Hannah would not have thought about children in the same patronising way that Hall did. Because Inuit children inherited name-souls from deceased members of the community, they were in a sense already full people as soon as they were named. Good parents recognised that children needed special care and helped them develop their understanding of the world, but they also treated their children with the respect worthy of their ancestors who had shared the same name. Furthermore, Hannah and Ipiirvik were already adults when Hall adopted them, so perhaps they saw their responsibilities towards him as more akin to those of adult children towards an aging parent.

Hannah and Ipiirvik would certainly not have envisioned their adoption as a form of indentured servitude or ownership. Indeed, they may have expected Hall, as a devoted father, to put their needs ahead of his own desires. This Hall did not do. When travelling...
in the Arctic, he seems to have taken it for granted that Inuit would assume the greater risks, such as going first over thin ice.\textsuperscript{154} Even after the Inuit couple’s horrible experiences at Barnum and Cutting’s museums, and even when Tarralikitaq was near death, Hall wrote to an Ohio entertainer, offering the Inuit family for a few weeks and asking how much he would pay.\textsuperscript{155} In short, Hall seems to have been unable or unwilling to admit that Ipiirvik and Hannah’s best interests did not always coincide with his single-minded passion for arctic fundraising and exploration.

The Inuit were likely motivated to acquire more American relatives on whom they could rely for support. Hannah soon began referring to Sarah Budington, a woman seventeen years her senior, as her mother. Sarah fulfilled her family responsibilities far better than Hall. In a letter to Sarah in which Hannah repeatedly referred to her as “Mother,” Hannah said she was grateful to Sarah for having taken care of her the spring after her son died, and told Sarah she would never forget this generosity as long as she lived.\textsuperscript{156} Hannah was more tempered in her feelings for Hall, which she summed up with, “I like my father sometimes.” She lamented that her father and mother did not live together, because she could only be with one of them at a time, and she longed to see Sarah.\textsuperscript{157} Unfortunately, this letter must have sounded to many Americans as if the Inuit woman considered herself subordinate, childlike, and unworthy of addressing other adults by

\textsuperscript{154} Hall to Budington, [2 June 1861?], no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
\textsuperscript{155} Hall, draft of a letter sent to R. W. Seager, “Journal kept by Hall while preparing for his second expedition, January 1863 to April 1864,” 12 February 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
\textsuperscript{156} Hannah to Sarah Budington, 1 April 1864, Ms Eb47 M1161, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
\textsuperscript{157} Hannah to Sarah Budington, 17 August 1863, Ms Eb47 M1159, Indian and Colonial Research Center. In this letter, Hannah also said that Hall was “kind to her,” but in her letters she is far more effusive about Sarah.
their “proper” names and titles. When conveyed in English words to an American audience, Inuit ideas about kinship played into negative American stereotypes of Indigenous people, and could be used to justify continued authority over them.

“Matters Connected with Money”: Part IV, A New Economy


On this Sunday in 1870, the Inuit couple were once again at the Budington residence in the Pleasant Valley area of Groton. Hall and Sidney Budington had resolved their feud following Sarah’s mediation. In accordance with Hall’s wishes, the Inuit couple had accompanied him on a second gruelling arctic expedition. They had adopted a daughter in the Iglulik area, and had recently completed yet another lecture circuit. This tour had taken them as far away as Stentonville, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Washington, DC, where they had visited the White House and met President Ulysses S. Grant. Hall was now lobbying Congress to allocate him funds for a third expedition. The Inuit were lobbying to stay put.

Hannah regularly attended church in Groton, and it is not difficult to guess what she prayed for that Sunday. Three days previously, Hall had written a letter to his patron, the wealthy retired merchant Henry Grinnell, informing him that there were two acres of land, a house, and a barn for sale for $600 near the Budington residence. Hall imagined that the Inuit would only occupy it until it was time for his next expedition. He asked

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158 Sidney Budington left on a whaling voyage but Sarah wrote repeatedly to Hall, and he responded that he forgave her husband. Hall to Sarah Budington, 20 October 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
Grinnell to send him the money owed for “[the Inuit couple’s] time & assistance rendered me on my last voyage” so they could purchase this “Homestead.” In addition to being the benefactor of Hall and several other arctic explorers, Grinnell also acted as a kind of autocratic bank, doling out his donations, and safe-keeping the proceeds from the lecture tours. In 1870, Hannah and Ipiirvik seem to have had no access any money of their own. The following day, a cheque arrived from Henry Grinnell. It was for less than Hall had requested, but it was enough for a down payment. On Tuesday, 18 October, the Inuit became homeowners – or almost. Their new neighbour, John Joseph Copp, retained control over their mortgage and power of attorney on their property. By 1870, the Inuit had been working for Hall as interpreters, guides, hunters, and performers for a full decade, yet they were still not being paid directly for their own labour or controlling their own funds.

Hall doubted the Inuit couple’s ability to manage their own finances. In the published account of his first expedition, he recounted two incidents involving Inuit and money. In the first, Uugaq, Ipiirvik’s uncle, coveted a deckhand’s fiddle and offered one American cent for it. In the second, the Inuk known as “John Bull” or Johnnibo tried to pay for a one-dollar shirt with two pennies. Hall maintained that these two incidents showed “the

159 Hall to Grinnell, 13 October 1870. For other transactions from this account, see Hall to Grinnell, 24 June 1870; Hall to Grinnell 30 June 1870. All in Coll. 8, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport. 160 Hall to Grinnell, 17 October 1870, Coll. 8, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport. 161 Hannah and Joe’s house is at 616 Route 184 in Groton today. At the time, it was at the corner of Center Groton Road and Pleasant Valley Road. Kenn Harper, personal communication; Barnard L. Colby, “Joe and Hannah, Famous Eskimos, Lived in Groton” New London Day, 18 March 1939, accessed in a scrapbook with articles about Inuit, Indian and Colonial Research Center, Old Mystic, CT; Sheila B. Nickerson, Midnight to the North: the untold story of the woman who saved the Polaris expedition (New York: Putnam, 2002), n154.
simplicity of the Inuit character in matters connected with money.\textsuperscript{162} However, these men must have obtained the money by trading with Americans. If the Inuit believed that their coins were worth far more than market value, this suggests not that they were simple-minded, but rather that they had been cheated when they traded for the money in the first place. When Ipiirvik returned to the Arctic with an understanding of the cash value of whale products, he protested the rates of exchange. Later generations of Inuit would voice strong disapproval of new trading posts where “everything had a price” and nothing was disbursed relative to need, but they quickly understood the unfamiliar cash system and learned to function within it.\textsuperscript{163}

Observers who commented on the relief the Inuit must have felt upon arriving in the United States – for example to be eating roast beef and strawberry shortcake instead of raw meat and blubber – failed to take into account many cultural differences, including the fact that American food needed to be purchased, and that wage earning was especially problematic for groups like Indigenous people, newly freed African Americans, non-English-speaking immigrants, or women.\textsuperscript{164} Deemed inept at handling money by those seeking to keep them subservient, such individuals were often forced into ties of dependence to survive. With Hall in charge of their finances, the Inuit couple had little control over where they lived, what they ate, what they wore, or what kind of work they did.

\textsuperscript{162} Hall, \textit{Life with the Esquimaux}, 422
\textsuperscript{164} “Current Mention,” \textit{Independent Statesman} (Concord, NH), 17 July 1873, 36.
Hannah and Ipiirvik would have had far more autonomy in their dealings with whalers in Cumberland Sound. The couple worked for the whaling ships to obtain goods like guns, ammunition, metal tools, tea, and tobacco; but this new market would probably not have been the main focus of their lives. In this early period of commercial whaling, they would likely still have supplied most of their basic needs by hunting and processing seals and caribou. In the United States, the Inuit could no longer slide in and out of a foreign economy. They could not live off the land; they could not build a house without buying land. They were not offered direct access to the cash economy.

As a hunter living in an agricultural and industrial cash-based society, Ipiirvik suffered intensely from the devaluation of his skills. He seems to have had a much more difficult time adapting to American life than did Hannah, whose expertise as an interpreter, mother, cook, and seamstress was appreciated and considered appropriate to her gender. In one letter, which he likely dictated to Sidney Budington, Ipiirvik said he wanted to return to the Arctic because in the United States there was “nothing to do.” “I want something to do,” he said. “[In] my country I hunt all the time. Don’t like to be lazy.”\(^{166}\) Perhaps recognising that Americans ascribed negative traits like laziness to Inuit, he had

\(^{165}\) Hannah and Ipiirvik drank tea nearly every day in 1860. Hall, *Arctic Researches*, 162.

\(^{166}\) Joe Ebierbing to Henry L. Brevoort, 20 June 1870, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center. The handwriting and misspellings resemble Budington’s other written records, so I suspect that Ipiirvik dictated the letter to him. Using Budington as an intermediary must have impacted the letter’s content – for example, I am distrustful of the postscript, “Got good home heare. The old man [Budington] is a good friend long time know him.” I am also hesitant to put stock in the criticisms of Hall in this letter, since although there was just cause for them, they may have come from Budington. However, the letter appears to have been mostly composed by Ipiirvik. It is full of news about his life, repeatedly expresses a desire to see Brevoort, and says he regrets not being able to write himself. Such matters would have had little bearing on Budington’s agenda. Furthermore, other accounts stress Ipiirvik’s discomfort with being idle, see Hall to Grinnell, 8 June 1870, Coll. 8, G. W. Blunt White Museum, Mystic Seaport.
Budington sign the letter with “Eberbing” and “Joe,” and added that he did not wish to be addressed any longer as “Esquimaux Joe,” explaining cryptically that he was “haff wite.” Ipiirvik remained proud of his arctic skills. In addition to building the IGHLUVIGAQ in the yard, he carved toys, including small ivory arctic animals, for neighbourhood children. Yet he longed for work that would be recognised and rewarded, work that would support his family.

Most of the jobs Ipiirvik performed in the United States were not what he would have considered useful work, but he and Hannah should have earned more than enough to live on. They served Hall for years in the Arctic; they drew large audiences to his lectures; and their three weeks at Barnum’s museum likely paid at least three hundred dollars plus expenses, half the cost of their house and land. In Nyack, Ipiirvik did so much farm labour that the landlady stopped charging Hall for the man’s room and board, but Hall still refused Ipiirvik money for a trip to Connecticut. Hall used the excuse of the couple’s “childlike” capabilities, and of their unfamiliarity with a cash economy, to maximise the amount of money he put towards his arctic expeditions. On at least one occasion, he explicitly used money earmarked for the Inuit to pay off his expedition debts.

167 The letter was also signed with a third name, “Elonder,” but I don’t know what it referred to. The postscript reads: “Pleas call haff wite man no Esquimaux Joe.” Ipiirvik may have been stressing that he was making an effort to adopt white customs, and that he should be considered partly white. He also may have had a white father, although this is fairly unlikely given that no other records mention it, and since he was born in the 1830s. Joe Ebierbing to Henry L. Brevoort, 20 June 1870, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
169 The contract with Barnum does not appear to have survived, but this is how much they were promised to work at Cutting’s aquarium in Boston. Draft of a letter from Hall to William Guay, 11 November 1862, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
170 Ipiirvik also ran errands for Hall, who found him “very useful.” Hall to Sarah Budington, 17 August 1863, MS Eb47 M1159, Indian and Colonial Research Center. Hall to Sarah Budington, 20 October 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
to another man.\textsuperscript{171} By controlling the couple’s finances, he also made it difficult for them to abandon him.\textsuperscript{172} In nearly every letter Hannah wrote to Sarah, she commented on how she wanted to visit Groton. In the spring of 1864, she wrote, “I like to go see my mother...I like to get dogs sleigh. That times I come see my mother.”\textsuperscript{173} Hannah was very ill and her writing more enigmatic than usual, but presumably she was wishing she had a dog team, because then she could visit Sarah without needing money.

Even after Hall’s death in 1871, Hannah and Ipiirvik remained dependent on others to give them what should rightfully have been theirs. When the couple returned to the United States following their drift on the ice floe, Hall’s friend Henry Brevoort assumed control of most of their finances. New investors were eager to hire the Inuit for lecture tours. It seems that Joe made some public appearances in New York City in 1875, but Hannah remained in Groton.\textsuperscript{174} She obtained a sewing machine and worked hard as a seamstress.\textsuperscript{175} Ipiirvik, having never really adjusted to life in the United States, began accepting employment on shorter sea voyages, two of which took him back to Cumberland Sound. On at least one of these trips, his salary was paid directly to Brevoort, although on two other occasions it seems that Hannah received small advances directly.\textsuperscript{176} The couple’s financial situation was at first precarious. Friends told Hannah

\textsuperscript{171} Hall to Grinnell, 30 June 1870, Coll. 8, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport.
\textsuperscript{172} Hall’s notes before his second expedition confirm that he did not pay the Inuit a salary. Hall, “Expenditures of Hall While Preparing for his Second Expedition,” no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
\textsuperscript{173} Hannah to Sarah Budington, 18 April 1864, Ms Eb47 M1162, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
\textsuperscript{174} Wells Publishing Company to George Tyson, 14 May 1873, George E. Tyson Papers, National Archives at College Park, Maryland; “Personalities,” \textit{Cleveland Daily Herald} (Cleveland, OH), 25 June 1874; J. Morrison to Hannah Ebierbing, 13 February 1875 (Ms Eb47 M1176) and 2 March 1875 (Ms Eb47 M1172), Indian and Colonial Research Center.
\textsuperscript{175} J. E. Nourse to J. J. Copp, 14 December 1876, Ms Eb47 M1183, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
\textsuperscript{176} [Colonel J. Lupton] to Hannah, 4 November 1874 (Ms Eb47 M1171B); H. Merriman to Hannah, 19 July 1876 (Ms Eb47 M1180), Indian and Colonial Research Center.
to come visit them, reassured her not to worry about money, and petitioned the
government for funds or equipment on the couple’s behalf. The couple also intervened
directly: Ipiirvik maintained publicly that the government still owed him money, and
Hannah wrote repeatedly to at least one government employee in Washington DC, asking
him to help them. In the end, the government granted extra pay to all of the survivors of
the Polaris expedition in the United States including “the two Esquimaux,” but it seems
that this money went “into their good friend Brevoort’s hands.”¹⁷⁷ Indeed, the frequent
“gifts” from Hall, the Grinnell family, and the Brevoort family lose much of their
significance when one considers that all of these people at various times had control over
the Inuit couple’s earnings. Many of the “gifts” were likely paid for out of money that
should have belonged to Hannah and Ipiirvik.¹⁷⁸

‘I Take Good Care of Her Night and Day’: *Part V, Illness*

**Corner of Center Groton Road and Pleasant Valley Road, Groton, CT. Sunday,**
**March 14, 1875.**

On Sunday, 14 March 1875, Hannah was at her house in Groton. She was writing a letter
to a “Mr. L. Brovent Sir,” presumably Henry L. Brevoort, the man who then controlled
some of their finances. Ipiirvik had just returned to Groton from New York City because
the couple’s nine-year-old daughter was seriously ill. Hannah worried about the child in
her letter: “I take good care of she hur [her]…night and day…but she coff [cough],” she

¹⁷⁷ Mrs. George W. Bailey to Hannah, 9 September 1873 (Ms Eb47 M1167); Joseph Warren to Hannah, 9
September 1873 (Ms Eb47 M1168); [Colonel J. Lupton] to Hannah, 4 November 1874 (Ms Eb47
M1171B), all at Indian and Colonial Research Center. See also “Esquimau Joe: The Man who Loved
Captain Hall and who Saved Captain Tyson’s Party,” *Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago, IL), 1 January 1876;
“What was Done by the Law-makers Yesterday,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* (Milwaukee, WI), 23 May
1874.
¹⁷⁸ J. J. Copp, “Handwritten Article About Sylvia Grinnell Little Punny,” Ms Eb47 M1187, Indian and
Colonial Research Center.
wrote. She ended on a more hopeful note, writing that her *panik* (daughter) was still eating and sleeping.\footnote{179} Despite Hannah’s efforts, the little girl died four days later.

According to a neighbour’s recollection, the mother at first hugged the dead child to her, refusing to let anyone take the body away.\footnote{180} The girl was buried in Starr Cemetery in Groton, next to her brother Tarralikitaq.

Accounts of Inuit abroad almost invariably describe repeated bouts of sickness, all too often fatal.\footnote{181} Illness was the most serious environmental hazard that faced Inuit who travelled outside their homeland. Statistically speaking, it was far more dangerous to be an Inuk in the United States than a whaler in Cumberland Sound. Furthermore, while being sick in an unfamiliar place is invariably distressing, the Inuit were sick in a strange place with new diseases, different concepts of medicine, and unfamiliar rules for survival.

\footnote{179} Hannah to Mr. L. Broven, 14 March 1875, Ms Eb47 M1178, Indian and Colonial Research Center. (The letter is mistakenly identified as having a date of 14 September 1875, but this was after the girl had died). For more information about the daughter, see Kenn Harper, “March 18, 1875 – the Death of a Daughter,” *Nunatsiaq News*, 17 March 2006. Many earlier accounts made much of the fact that Hall “bought” the girl for Hannah and Ipiirvik. In fact, adoption is extremely common in Inuit society, and it is appropriate for the adoptive parents to give a gift of appreciation to the birth parents, as an assurance that they love and want the child, and will give him/her a good life. The term for this gift is *ikauti*, which is not the same as the word for payment (*akillii*). Briggs, ed., *Childrearing Practices*, 91.

\footnote{180} Barnard L. Colby, “Tells Intimate Stories about Groton Eskimos,” *New London Day*, [?] March 1939, accessed in scrapbook of articles about Inuit, Indian and Colonial Research Center, Old Mystic, CT.

Hannah and Ipiirvik’s daughter suffered from several illnesses in her short life, mostly
diseases that attacked the lungs.\textsuperscript{182} She probably died of either influenzal pneumonia or
pulmonary tuberculosis. Both of these infections can cause bloody coughs, fevers, chills,
weight loss, pallor, difficulty breathing, and chest pains. Influenzal pneumonia is a
bacterial complication of an influenza virus, and it often strikes after the victim appears
to be recovering. Pulmonary tuberculosis – known and dreaded in the nineteenth century
as consumption – is an allergic reaction to tubercule bacilli. The body can generally
destroy the disease’s bacteria, but in the process, proteins and fatty acids are released that
irritate surrounding tissues. Pulmonary tuberculosis can kill children quickly, but it is
most often a chronic condition that lies dormant for long periods. In some cases it never
reactivates, but people under mental or physical stress – like Inuit travellers must have
been – are particularly vulnerable to relapses.

It was not only Inuit who died of pulmonary illnesses in the United States. Nineteenth-
century cities were rife with microbes that physicians could not treat effectively. In 1850,
long before the development of antibiotics, nearly one quarter of all American deaths
were attributed to consumption. Tuberculosis was epidemic in Europe as well: the
disease spread so easily through crowded cities that virtually all nineteenth-century
Londoners and Parisians were infected with it. Hannah and Ipiirvik were almost certainly
exposed to it on their trip to England, and may have caught it there. By the mid-

\textsuperscript{182} Hall to Grinnell, 7 February 1871, Coll. 8, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport; Hannah to Sarah
Budington, 22 June 1873, Ms Eb47 M1169, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
nineteenth century, the disease had also spread to their arctic homeland through the bodies of whalers. Hannah and Ipiirvik had friends in the Arctic who died from it.\(^{183}\)

Inuit in Cumberland Sound recognised that their traditional medicinal strategies often failed to cure new *qallunaat* diseases, even if they could still provide comfort and relief. In an unfamiliar landscape, Hannah and Ipiirvik must have felt even more overwhelmed by these new illnesses. They would have been raised to believe that good health followed from maintaining proper relationships with their geographical, animal, and human surroundings. In the United States, they must have questioned what their relationships with the outside world were supposed to look like.

Explorers’ descriptions of the Arctic verged on the sublime and the magical. It was a place where the sun did not always rise and set, where compasses could not be relied upon, where strange lights danced in the winter sky and mirages appeared on the horizon, and where nature’s laws did not seem apply. To Inuit, the temperate world must also have been disorienting, with its wider variety of stars, a relatively short twilight, a more closed-in landscape, different wind patterns, a relatively dense population, and a focus on terrestrial rather than marine resources. Inuit visitors were surprised that people could

live so far back from the sea and still obtain the necessities of life. In a more humorous anecdote, Hannah’s uncle Uugaq’s reported reaction to the density of New York was, “God damn! Too much horse – too much house – too much white people. Women? Ah! Women great many – good!”

The Greenlandic Inuk Uisaakassak, when describing his time in New York City to Knud Rasmussen in the early twentieth century, clearly displayed how the only way to interpret a new landscape is through the words and concepts of one’s home territory, and how such descriptions can often sound surreal and unbelievable:

The ships sailed in and out…like eiders on the brooding cliffs when their young began to swim. There weren’t that many free drops of water in the harbour itself; it was filled with ships. You’d risk your life if you tried to go out there in a kayak, you’d simply not be noticed…People lived up in the air like auks on a bird cliff. The houses are as big as icebergs on a glacial bank, and they stretch inland as far as you can see, like a steep chain of mountains with innumerable canyons that serve as roads…and the streetcars, big as houses, with masses of glass windows as transparent as freshwater ice. They raced on without dogs to haul them.

Hannah and Ipiirvik must also have struggled to understand and express what they saw abroad; they would not have known what kind of rules might pertain here. Back home, they had at least occasionally relied on angakkuit (shamans) to heal their bodies and reaffirm the order of the world, but they knew no shamans in the new country. As later

184 Alexander M’Donald, A Narrative of some Passages in the History of Eenoolooapik: A young Esquimaux, who was brought to Britain in 1839... (Edinburgh: Fraser & Co, 1841), 13
185 Kenn Harper, Give Me My Father’s Body: The Life of Minik, the New York Eskimo (South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press, 2000), 34, 170; Dorothy Harley Eber, ed., When the Whalers Were Up North: Inuit memories from the Eastern Arctic (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 53. This may not have been a universal belief about shamans – there is a legend told in Cumberland Sound about an Inuit shaman who went to Scotland and astonished people there with his powers.
186 Hall, Life Among the Esquimaux, 102-103
187 Rasmussen, quoted in Harper, Give Me My Father’s Body, 166-167
Inuit visitors commented, shamans were powerless in the United States in any case, because there were no *tuurngait* (helping spirits) there.\(^{188}\) Hannah and Ipiirvik would have known treatments for pulmonary illnesses that used parts of the seal and arctic plants like *qunguli* (mountain sorrel) and *paunnat* (dwarf fireweed).\(^{189}\) These ingredients were not available to them in the United States.

Hannah recognised that she needed help to understand the rules for survival in this new landscape, which clearly had different animals, different sicknesses, different remedies, and a different God than the place she was used to. She turned to Sarah Budington, who had previously taught visiting Inuit about her own language, customs, and religion.\(^{190}\) American middle-class ideals of proper societal behaviour often differed from Inuit ones, but the two nineteenth-century societies shared a belief in the holistic connection between good health and social order. In instructing Inuit about Christian beliefs and literacy and middle-class manners and domestic tasks, Sarah would almost certainly have believed she was helping them to stay healthy.

Sarah Budington also told Hannah the best ways she knew to specifically avoid pulmonary illnesses. The study of microorganisms was still in its infancy, and Sarah would probably not have believed tuberculosis was contagious. Americans did not know what caused these illnesses. As late as 1854, some men in Connecticut dug up the body of a tuberculosis victim, and burned his heart to stop him from infecting others from

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\(^{188}\) Despite Hall’s proselytising attempts, Hannah and Ipiirvik used an *angakkuq* at least once in his presence, when the female shaman “Jennie” tended to Ipiirvik. Hall, *Arctic Researches*, 346-347. On later Inuit see Harper, *Give Me My Father’s Body*, 37.

\(^{189}\) Therrien and Laugrand, eds., *Perspectives on Traditional Health*, 1, 149, 159, 269.

\(^{190}\) Hall, “Journal for the months preceding the first expedition, w/ newspaper clippings, Feb - March 1860,” 16 February 1860, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.
beyond the grave.191 Most American doctors would have scoffed at post-burial transmission, but nor did they believe tuberculosis was contracted through airborne contagion, since relatively few people showed symptoms immediately after contracting the disease. Instead, the major factors were thought to be heredity, poverty, dirt and dampness, the excessive consumption of alcohol, and cramped and uncomfortable working conditions. Most of these stresses could indeed have caused the reactivation of the disease.192 In keeping with these beliefs, Sarah advised Hannah to “never sit down the ground and never get [her] feet wet and never sit down in the wind.” Hannah took this advice seriously, confessing to Sarah in a letter that she sat down on the ground one hot summer day. Soon afterwards, she caught a cold and regretted having failed to heed Sarah’s advice.193 This was evidence to her that she needed to follow at least some American rules to survive in this new place.

Sarah presumably gave Hannah other medical advice as well, some of which would not have been surprising to the Inuk. Both of the women’s societies stressed the importance of remaining physically active, of eating wholesome and simply prepared foods, of wearing appropriate clothing, and of breathing open air. Both knew that negative emotions could lead to illness, and that it was best not to allow oneself to “[brood] over past misfortune or sorrow.”194 In other ways, however, Sarah and Hannah’s views would have differed. If Sarah followed the advice of health experts of the period, she would

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192 Henry I. Bowditch, “Is Consumption Ever Contagious” (1864) and “Consumption in America” (1869), in *From Consumption to Tuberculosis*, 43-56 and 57-96
193 Hannah to Sarah Buddington, 17 August 1863, Ms Eb47 M1159, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
194 Bowditch, “Consumption in America,” 94; Therrien and Laugrand, eds., *Perspectives on Traditional Health*, 112.
have encouraged Hannah to wash daily, and she would have linked lice to filth and poverty. Inuit lived constantly with lice, and at least some believed that the insects’ relationship to humans was symbiotic rather than parasitical: in draining blood, they cleansed the body of impurities.\textsuperscript{195} It seems that in the United States, Hannah adopted Sarah’s ideas of propriety and healthfulness. Hall commented that she was “pleasing and refined in her style and manners,” implying that in his presence, she followed American rules.\textsuperscript{196} Indeed, by the end of her time in the United States, Hannah had acquired the three main characteristics that Americans like Sarah would have associated with “civilisation”: private property, Christianity, and fluency in English.\textsuperscript{197} This allowed her to obtain acceptance, respect, and aid from Americans who might otherwise have shunned her.

Cultural adaption also presumably made sense to Hannah, who had always understood her identity as contingent on her surroundings. Even her language inextricably bound people to local animals and weather and seasons. Inuktitut contains many words, such as \textit{ikullaumijuq}, that can be used to denote both weather (getting calmer) and people (recovering from illness). When questioned about this overlapping vocabulary, contemporary North Baffin elder Aalasi Joamie considered it self-evident, stating, “No wonder! We are part of the earth.”\textsuperscript{198} Hannah would likely have understood that rules for living changed depending on one’s local environment, and believed that the best path to survival was to learn from local people and adapt, at least to some extent.

\textsuperscript{195} Therrien and Laugrand, eds., \textit{Perspectives on Traditional Health}, 200. On cleanliness and disease see Bowditch, “Consumption in America,” 94.
\textsuperscript{196} Hall, \textit{Arctic Researches}, 160.
\textsuperscript{197} Maddox, \textit{Removals}, 22-23.
\textsuperscript{198} Aalasi Joamie, in Therrien and Laugrand, eds., \textit{Perspectives on Traditional Health}, 205.
Both Hannah and Ipiirvik expressed gratitude for Sarah’s help and advice. Ipiirvik reportedly commented that Mrs. Buddington was a good friend to Hannah because she “come to see her – help her – tell her what to do.”\textsuperscript{199} At least in matters of sickness, they did not view help as condescending; they were desperately ill and they needed aid. When Hannah was bedridden in New York City in 1864, she wrote to Sarah, recalling her generosity and help after Tarralikitaq’s death. “When I was sick you take care of me,” she remembered. “So good to me, you take care of me many weeks.”\textsuperscript{200} Hannah probably was not the first woman Sarah had nursed or helped through grief: living near a major whaling port, the local wives would have taken care of each other while their husbands were away or after they were lost at sea.

Not all immigrants in the United States were as well looked after, as Hannah and Ipiirvik might have suspected from witnessing poverty in New York City. Decades later, long after slavery had been outlawed in the United States, a notice would appear in the San Francisco Examiner, stating that “any person wishing to possess eight Esquimaux – three women, two men and three children – can purchase them…The owners of the wretched beings of the Far North have been trying to sell them to the midwinter fair people for $2500.”\textsuperscript{201} These Inuit from Alaska were living with their dogs in a dark basement with no amenities, in conditions so squalid and appalling that no one visited them.

\textsuperscript{199} “Esquimau Joe: The Man who Loved Captain Hall and who Saved Captain Tyson’s Party,” \textit{Daily Inter Ocean} (Chicago, IL), 1 January 1876.
\textsuperscript{200} Hannah to Sarah, 1 April 1864, Ms Eb47 M1162, Indian and Colonial Research Center.
\textsuperscript{201} “The Arctic Esquimaux: They Are Faring Very Poorly in San Francisco,” \textit{Portland Oregonian}, 17 October 1893
Hannah and Ipiirvik’s gratefulness does not imply that they accepted all of Sarah’s advice uncritically, or that it replaced their old ways of thinking. It seems that they tried, as much as they could, to incorporate Inuit methods of healing along with American cough syrups and doctor’s visits. Contemporary Inuit elders from Baffin Island have recounted how sick people should be given whatever food they most wished for. In her letters, Hannah wrote of her husband trying to do this for her, by obtaining wild birds, like partridge, that she requested while ill in New York City. When Hannah’s daughter was ill, she bought her raw meat. It seems that Hannah also sought substitutes for seal oil, which Inuit fed to people with lung infections, and sometimes rubbed directly on the chest. She bought castor oil at the local store when her panik was sick. Still, she and her husband sometimes longed for their known remedies. Ipiirvik reportedly spoke of wanting seal to cure his cough. Perhaps even more importantly, the couple were no longer surrounded by the Inuktitut words, Inuit spirits, and Inuit companions that they would have considered crucial to maintaining good health back home.

Americans noticed that Inuit seemed susceptible to serious illnesses. One article pointed out that “hardly one of the Esquimaux brought either to England or this country escapes

202 On American remedies see Hall, “Journal kept by Hall while preparing for his second expedition, January 1863 to April 1864,” 15 April 1863, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center; Hall to Grinnell, 6 February 1871, Coll. 8, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport.
203 Therrien and Laugrand, eds., Perspectives on Traditional Health, 20. For a nineteenth-century example of sick people requesting specific foods and the efforts to provide it, see the story recorded by James Mutch in Franz Boas, “The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay,” Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History Volume XV, 1901, 276-279.
205 Therrien and Laugrand, eds., Perspectives on Traditional Health, 51; Nickerson, Midnight to the North, 160.
206 “Esquimau Joe: The Man who Loved Captain Hall and who Saved Captain Tyson’s Party,” Daily Inter Ocean (Chicago, IL), 1 January 1876.
some very serious sickness, if not death.” Yet most Americans were so persuaded by the notion of the Arctic as a harsh environment that they could not imagine the United States as inherently less healthy. Instead, they came up with convenient explanations for Inuit deaths abroad. Some accounts blamed earlier privations, such as the horrifying months of deprivation on the ice floe. Others argued that Esquimaux must be fundamentally, unalterably different from Euro-Americans. Inuit, they reasoned, were an odd strain of humanity somehow better suited to cold than to heat, to raw over cooked. Newspaper articles and other accounts repeatedly stated, implicitly or explicitly, that Inuit visitors were sick because they could not live without ice and snow: the summer weather destroyed them, the dense ocean fog killed them, the “wet and changeable” climate did them in. They were presumably unaware that Cumberland Sound summer weather was nothing if not wet and changeable. Even Hall seemed to think he was gambling with fate every time he brought the Inuit south: “Take the Esquimaux away from the arctic regions,” he wrote, “and they would soon cease to exist from the face of the earth. The bounds of their habitations are fixed by the Eternal, and no one can change them.”

209 Hall, Arctic Researches, 131
Hannah and Ipirvik would not have repeatedly travelled to the United States if they believed they were doomed outside the Arctic. However, it does seem that Hannah, so often ill with diseases over which no one appeared to have any control, at least questioned whether she could survive in this place. Two of her letters made mention of the warm climate and its negative effects on her.\textsuperscript{210} In another letter, in which she complained about having been bedridden both winters she had spent in New York City, she wrote cryptically, “No like black eyes dark face and fat face all time sick.”\textsuperscript{211} This seems to be a comment on Inuit susceptibility to illness, and also suggests that she had absorbed American racial stereotypes of Inuit physical traits. In other words, Hannah seems to have associated being an Inuk with being sick.

This was likely true in part. Inuit must have had less biological immunity to tuberculosis, which had existed in much of North America for millennia, but not in Inuit territories. Nevertheless, as David S. Jones has argued, historians should also take into account other causational factors, like poverty, malnutrition, poor access to health care, and the stress of colonial encounters.\textsuperscript{212} Hannah and Ipirvik were relatively well cared for and certainly fared better in the United States than did many poor Americans. Nevertheless, the family’s immersion in a foreign landscape and culture almost certainly weakened their immune systems. The emotional stress from dealing with public scrutiny, constant travel,

\textsuperscript{210} Hannah to Sarah Budington, [Summer 1863 – undated letter from Nyack, NY], Ms Eb47 M1186, Indian and Colonial Research Center; Hannah to Sarah Buddington, 19 August 1866, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.

\textsuperscript{211} Hannah to Sarah Buddington, 12 December 1863, Ms Eb47 M1160, Indian and Colonial Research Center.

aggressive authority figures, and a new and discriminatory economy would have compounded any lack of immunity they may have had.

**Conclusion**

**Hannah and Ipiirvik’s residence, Groton, Connecticut. Sunday, December 31, 1876.**

On Sunday, December 31, 1876, Hannah died at home in Groton of “disease of the lungs,” almost certainly pulmonary tuberculosis.\(^ {213}\) She was thirty-eight years old. Ipiirvik was at sea until November of that year, on a voyage with the United States Fish Commission, so it must have been Sarah Budington who tended to Hannah as she “[suffered] greatly from consumption.”\(^ {214}\) Hannah had probably been infected with tuberculosis for years or decades, and had weakened following the death of her daughter. Several newspapers published articles about her death, recounting the arctic exploits that had made her a minor celebrity in the United States. Much less was said about her life in Groton. An immigrant seamstress succumbing to tuberculosis was hardly remarkable in 1873.

Following Hannah’s death, Ipiirvik remained in town for another year and a half, often weeding the grass on the graves of his wife and children. However, his sense of home in Groton had been contingent on his family’s presence there. According to one report, he had tried to convince Hannah to return to Cumberland Sound after their daughter’s death.\(^ {215}\) In June 1878, he sailed on another American expedition, to a part of the Arctic.

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\(^ {213}\) “Death of Hannah, the Wife of Esquimaux Joe,” *Arizona Miner* (Prescott, AZ), 16 February 1877.

\(^ {214}\) Hall, *Narrative of the Second Arctic Expedition*, 445

\(^ {215}\) Barnard L. Colby, “Tells Intimate Stories about Groton Eskimos,” *New London Day*, [?] March 1939, accessed in scrapbook of articles about Inuit in Indian and Colonial Research Center, Old Mystic, CT.
that he had once visited with Hall, but that was far from his homeland. He voiced an ongoing distrust of the Inuit who lived there, but apparently said that with Hannah and his daughter gone, he no longer cared if he put himself in danger.\textsuperscript{216} He must have developed a more favourable opinion of at least some members of the local population, because he married a woman recorded as Neepshark, and never again returned to the United States.\textsuperscript{217}

It was no easy feat for Hannah and Ipiirvik to survive abroad for as long as they did. As with the American whalers in the Arctic, Inuit survival in the United States hinged on adjusting to new and bewildering surroundings. Inuit survival strategies included adopting Americans as family members, wearing local clothing, following the advice of American friends, avoiding confrontations with dangerous people, and generally trying to appear relatable and intelligent to \textit{qallunaat} they encountered. Some of these strategies were similar to those employed by American whalers in Cumberland Sound, while others reflect the fact that Inuit were so far outnumbered in the United States. Inuit did not live aboard ships full of their countrymen; their survival depended on fitting in and not causing offence to local people.

There would have been other differences too. As a people who relied on hunting to survive, Inuit learned to study, anticipate, and quickly adjust to changing weather and conditions.

\textsuperscript{216} Sarah Bolton, “Hannah and Joe: Two Faithful Little Eskimos,” [1895, unknown newspaper], in “Sylvia Grinnell Ebierbing & her family, Groton, Conn., Articles about them, late 19th century,” MR 58, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport. This was not the first time Ipiirvik had expressed concern over travelling to the Central Arctic. In 1870, Joe dictated a letter which read, “try go King Williams Land spring…make me afraid…next time I go like a soldier.” Joe Ebierbing to Henry L. Brevoort, 20 June 1870, no. ACNMAH 0702, National Museum of American History Archives Center.

\textsuperscript{217} Gilder, \textit{Schwatka’s Search}, 52
surroundings. Hannah and Ipiirvik probably considered it self-evident that they needed to alter their behaviour in a new place with different animals. Some other Inuit values served them less well, including addressing other adults in kinship terms, and yielding to qallunaat authority figures who were probably not as volatile as they seemed. Yet even if Hannah and Ipiirvik could have imagined a different way of fitting into the world and expressing their place in it, actually doing so might have made them ashamed what they had become.

Given their trials, it is difficult to imagine what made Hannah and Ipiirvik stay in the United States for so long, especially following the death of Charles Francis Hall. Yet Hannah wrote her letters to Sarah when she was sad and lonely, and qallunaat records most often reported on the Inuit when they were in public forums or suffering from illnesses. We can only assume that in the gaps between the words, in the long periods of silence in Groton, Hannah found real friends and a life she could accept. By the end of her life, she had spent so many years abroad that it is doubtful she would have felt at home in Cumberland Sound. Ipiirvik was less content, and may have stayed primarily for Hannah and their daughter. When he went north following his wife’s death, he frightened a young Inuk out of travelling abroad by “telling him of the great mortality attending those of his people from Cumberland Sound who had gone to England and America.”

Among the small percentage of Inuit who travelled overseas, Hannah was exceptional for having wanted to stay so long in an unfamiliar country, for having wanted to stay until it

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218 Gilder, Schwatka’s Search, 266.
became familiar. Hans Hendrik, a Greenlandic Inuk who was stranded on the ice floe with Hannah and Ipiirvik, told government officials that he absolutely did not want to remain in the United States. It was too hot; his children were sick; he wanted “to go home right off.” Similarly, when Hannah’s brother Inulluapik was asked if he would ever return to Scotland, he said no, there was “too much cough” for him there. Like most Americans who signed onto an Arctic whaling voyage, few Inuit visitors stayed in the United States longer than they had to, and nor did they clamour to return a second time.

Unfortunately, for Inuit who did travel abroad, going home on the next ship often meant waiting the better part of a year, long enough that many of them did not survive. In 1860, Kudlargo, an older Inuk from South Baffin Island who would have known Hannah and Ipiirvik, fell ill with tuberculosis in the United States. He was put on a whaling ship that spring, and may have hoped that the familiar diet, friends, and spirits of Cumberland Sound would save him. He died on the journey north. In a poignant reminder that the Arctic is a homeland, his last reported words were: “Do you see ice? Do you see ice?”

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220 M’Donald, Narrative of Some Passages in the History of Eenoolooapik, 41
221 Nickerson, Midnight to the North, 17-18.
Figure 9: Promotional image of the Inuit family, 1862. From a classified advertisement for Hannah, Ipiirvik, and Tarralikitaq’s appearance at Barnum’s American Museum on Sunday, November 16, 1862. This stereotypical arctic image was produced from an original “stereotype” – a metal plate that the family’s agent purchased from a printer, and used over and over again in promoting various public appearances. *New York Times, 16 November 1862.*
Figure 10: Hannah and Ipiirvik with Charles Francis Hall. C. F. Hall, Life With the Esquimaux... (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1864), frontispiece.
Figure 11: Barnum’s American Museum. The museum stood at the corner of Ann Street and Broadway. Phineas Taylor Barnum, The Life of P. T. Barnum, written by himself (London: Sampson Low, 1855), 224.
Figure 12: Signed portrait of Hannah. She is shown here in American clothing. Nourse, ed., Narrative of the Second Arctic Expedition, follows p. 448.
Figure 13: Signed portrait of Ipiirvik. The editor chose an image of him in Inuit clothing. *Nourse, ed., Narrative of the Second Arctic Expedition, follows p. 442.*
In July 1881, an American expedition ship anchored off the coast of northwest Greenland. The men on board were mostly soldiers in the U.S. Army on their first trip to the Arctic. They were en route to a three-year deployment to Lady Franklin Bay in Grinnell Land, now northern Ellesmere Island at the uppermost reaches of the Canadian arctic archipelago. Their destination was about 4000 kilometres north of New York City – almost twice as far as the distance from New York to Cumberland Sound. Few travellers, Inuit or otherwise, would ever venture there. The Americans were stopping in Upernavik to buy dogs and fur clothing, and to hire Kalaallit – West Greenlandic Inuit – to accompany them. They could not find anyone willing to sign up. The local Danish Inspector recommended two men from another nearby settlement.\(^1\) These two Inuit joined the expedition, but the Commander wrote vaguely that they had “only been obtained through strenuous exertions.”\(^2\) With everyone aboard, the ship headed further north.

Three years later, this small crew would make headlines around the world. In August 1883, after resupply ships failed for two successive years to reach them, the twenty-five men began a desperate retreat southwards. They encountered no ships or people. By the

\(^1\) A. W. Greely, *Three Years of Arctic Service*, Vol 1 (London: Richard Bentley and Sons, 1886), 52-53. The local governor accompanied the American contingent that picked up the two men.

\(^2\) Greely to Chief Signal Officer of the Army, Upernavik 28 July 1881, in Letters Received, Box 18, Office of the Chief Signal Officer, RG-27.4.5 Records of the Weather Bureau – Records of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (hereafter NARA MD). The stated rate of pay was twenty-five dollars per month each, but I do not know how much of this their families ever received. On Prøven/Kangersuatsiaq as a stopping point for expeditions see Dick, *Muskox Land*, 347
time the party was finally rescued in June 1884, there were only seven survivors. The others had all died, mostly from starvation.

This chapter will examine how two of the Lady Franklin Bay expedition members, Jens Edvard Angutisiak from West Greenland and Sergeant Hampden Gardiner from Philadelphia, coped with an environment in which most of their party slowly perished. The historian Lyle Dick has presented a brief but cogent explanation of some reasons why the expedition failed, including a lack of local knowledge, poor ice conditions, overconfidence in western technology, a hierarchical military structure, and individual foibles of certain personnel.¹ I consider at length what these factors meant for Gardiner and Angutisiak. Their recorded opinions and actions demonstrate that there is no universal way to react to a specific place. Their experiences on Ellesmere Island hinged on their own preconceptions and cosmologies, as well as on the interplay between individuals and cultures. Not everyone had the same fears when they looked out the window of the expedition cabin. They were not all spoken to and treated in the same way. And they did not live and die on equal terms.

The High Arctic environment remains as vital to this story as the dreams and anxieties that people spread over it. At its core, this expedition was about individuals desperately trying to survive and adapt in an unfamiliar place. There is no question that living off the land was difficult on northern Ellesmere Island in the 1880s. Unlike Cumberland Sound, this region had not supported year-round human life on a significant scale for centuries, not since the start of the Little Ice Age. Inhabitants of northern Greenland made hunting

forays across the Davis Strait, but they rarely seem to have remained on Ellesmere Island for long. The Lady Franklin Bay expedition members encountered no other humans during their three years away.\(^4\) The sparse resources do not make the place responsible for the death of nineteen men, since Inuit and *qallunaat* came and went at other times without serious mishap.\(^5\) Nevertheless, any group of 25 people would have had a very difficult time surviving on northern Ellesmere Island without imported supplies, especially if they were told to live together year-round in a fixed location.

How did these men end up steaming towards Lady Franklin Bay in the summer of 1881? The idea of a long-term American “colony” on Ellesmere Island had been brewing for over a decade, as part of exploration’s move from the Northwest Passage towards the North Pole. American explorer Isaac Hayes had first suggested the colony in 1868 as a means to provide support for polar explorers. In 1877, the old whaling captain George Tyson returned to Cumberland Sound, on orders from the US government to purchase dogs, sledges, and fur clothing – and to hire ten Inuit families. Tyson was to take the Inuit to Greenland, and from there they would be shipped further north to found a colony at Lady Franklin Bay. Expedition planners, to whom the entire Arctic was unknown and inhospitable, imagined that Cumberland Sound Inuit would be just as happy in one icy region as another. A century later, Canadian authorities would make the same fateful mistake when they relocated Inuit families to Ellesmere Island to strengthen Canadian

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\(^4\) Although inhabitants of northern Greenland made hunting forays across to Ellesmere Island, they seem to have rarely remained in the region for long during and after the Little Ice Age. Lyle Dick, *Muskox Land*, 113.

\(^5\) See Lyle Dick, *Muskox Land*, 213-214 (superiority), 221-265 (Peary)
claims of sovereignty in the region. In 1878, many of the Cumberland Sound families who had agreed to the trip made unannounced hunting trips just before the departure date, but Tyson succeeded in bringing fifteen seasick men, women, and children to Greenland. When he arrived, he discovered that the expedition had been postponed, and he returned all of the Inuit to Cumberland Sound on his way home.

By the time the Lady Franklin Bay expedition became a reality in 1881, the federal government had scaled back their plans for Inuit involvement and no longer expected a self-sustaining colony. Rather than enlisting entire families so the women could help with skin preparation and sewing, they hired only the two West Greenlandic men as hunters and dog-drivers. They did not seek out North Greenlanders (Inughuit) who would have been more familiar with High Arctic conditions. The purpose of the expedition was officially to make scientific observations concurrently with other stations around the Arctic in the cooperative spirit of the first International Polar Year. As the historian Michael Robinson argues, many people believed that such scientific observations might be crucial in understanding world climatic systems. On the side, the Americans planned to use the Lady Franklin Bay station as a base for launching sledge trips towards the North Pole.

6 Dick, Muskox Land, 425-440
7 Tyson, The Cruise of the Florence, 8-9 (expedition goals), 158 (“disappearance” of families), 160 (total number on board for Greenland), 176 (return to Cumberland Sound).
9 Lyle Dick Muskox Land, 185-186
The expedition commander, First Lieutenant Adolphus Greely, had been twice wounded in the Civil War and then supervised the construction of military telegraph lines in Texas and the West. At 37 years of age, he was the army’s top meteorologist. The other soldiers on the expedition, two other lieutenants and nineteen enlisted men, came from regiments and towns all across the country and were as young as twenty years of age. Several were first-generation immigrants from Germany. All had apparently requested this “much coveted detail,” sometimes through imploring letters to Commander Greely himself. Greely received far more applications than he accepted, although he also approached some people who turned him down. The successful applicants’ stated qualifications were generally limited to physical hardiness, a good work ethic, and a willingness to learn. The vast majority of the soldiers had never worked at sea before, and none had been to the Arctic. The party was rounded out by the two Inuit from West Greenland, and an ambitious French-American civilian doctor, Octave Pavy, who had had a taste of arctic exploration and was eager for more.

To expedition members, the dominant temporal feature of the High Arctic was arguably the appearance and disappearance of the sun. On northern Ellesmere Island, the sun did not set all summer, but it dipped below the horizon for good in October and did not rise again until February. The expedition records and diaries show that the sun regulated many activities and that the men fixated on it: how many days until it would disappear or

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11 Private Charles Henry to A. W. Greely, n.d., Box 65, A. W. Greely Papers, LOC. It was “expressly understood and so stated by [the enlisted men] that they volunteered for this service,” see Telegram from War Department, Adjutant General’s office, 8 April 1881 [ordering the enlisted men to report for duty], Box 65, A. W. Greely Papers, LOC.
reappear, and what would the darkness do to them? The High Arctic solar patterns were presumably extreme and distressing even for the Inuit employees, who came from further south and were not accustomed to such long periods of darkness and light. This chapter passes through four solar occurrences and discusses events related to them: the first disappearance of the sun in October 1881, the December 1881 winter solstice, the final reappearance of the sun in February 1884, and the June 1884 summer solstice when the survivors were rescued. The first two sections will examine what Angutisiak and Gardiner feared during their first winter in the High Arctic and how this affected their behaviour. The final two sections deal with a time when some of their fears were realised and the party was starving to death. Here I consider how the men tried to live off the land, why some individuals lived while others perished, and how the surviving stories affected American views of the Arctic.

“Shrouded in Continual Darkness”: The Disappearance of the Sun in 1881

The men arrived at Fort Conger in Lady Franklin Bay in August 1881, when there was still 24-hour daylight.\textsuperscript{12} They constructed a large cabin out of wood and other supplies carried onboard, and then settled into their routines of scientific observations, daily chores, and occasional sledge journeys.\textsuperscript{13} The days quickly grew shorter. Northern latitudes are characterized by summer light and winter darkness, with the Arctic Circle (just north of Cumberland Sound) marking the line where the sun neither rises on the

\textsuperscript{12} Guttridge, \textit{Ghosts of Cape Sabine}, 55-56
\textsuperscript{13} They visited some sites renowned in arctic exploration literature on the way up, including the harbour where the \textit{Polaris} had overwintered while Hannah and Ipiirvik drifted south on the ice floe Greely, \textit{Three Years} Vol 1, 84-85.
winter solstice nor sets on the summer one.\textsuperscript{14} Fort Conger was so far north that on 14 October 1881, Greely reminded the men that this was the last day they would see the sun that year. The expedition members rushed outside to witness the sunrise. A crescent of sun slid over the horizon, “sprinkling the ice and snow with silver and crystals, and then [sinking] back in a beautiful glow of warm rosy colours.” It was a dazzling sight but left “a twinge of sadness...to think this was the last view we had of the sun for 136 days!”\textsuperscript{15}

In the weeks that followed, there were decreasing periods of ambient light as at dawn or dusk, but within days bright stars could be seen at noon. An expedition member reflected that, “With [the sun’s] departure, a cloud seemed suddenly to have been thrown over our lives; the loud merry voices were hushed, and each appeared lost in his own reflections.”\textsuperscript{16} The absence of the sun ushered in a period of fear and melancholy in the expedition cabin.

The soldier who best recorded the shock of that first winter was Sergeant Hampden Sidney Gardiner. Gardiner was born in Philadelphia to native Pennsylvanian parents. His father, an army major, worked as an upholsterer before and after serving in the Civil War, and later had a job at the Philadelphia post office.\textsuperscript{17} Sergeant Gardiner was relatively well educated; he attended public school before being apprenticed to a scientific instrument

\textsuperscript{14} In practice this can vary due to topography. Phenomena such as refraction can also make the sun appear to rise when it is actually below the horizon. Just as the sun always does at dawn and dusk, it will provide some light on clear days when it is close to rising.
\textsuperscript{15} George Rice, Letter, LFB Collection, ECAMC.
\textsuperscript{16} Sergeant David Brainard to his mother, Fort Conger 1 August 1882, Box 8, Lady Franklin Bay Expedition Collection (hereafter LFB Collection), Explorers Club Archives and Manuscripts Collection, New York, NY (hereafter ECAMC).
maker. He then enlisted in the army, joined the Signal Corps, and was posted to North Carolina. Just before leaving for the Arctic, he married Minnie Lou McMillan, the young daughter of the prosperous farming family he boarded with in North Carolina. Gardiner was twenty-two years old when he joined the expedition. He worked hard as a meteorological and tidal observer, fixed instruments, did his share of tedious chores, and produced skilled naturalist drawings. He proved to be one of the sicklier members of the expedition, but seems to have been well liked by everyone.

At nearly 5’9”, Gardiner was tall and considered of strong build. He was very active at first, being sent out on various exploratory trips in the vicinity of the station. Yet in November 1881, after the sun had set for the winter and all light from it had vanished, he was making tidal observations in the early afternoon when he slipped and fell on the dark icy pathway leading from the cabin to the tide-gauge. He broke his left leg just above the ankle. He called out for help, but no one heard him. Gardiner eventually succeeded in

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18 “Two Philadelphians who perished in the ice of the Arctic regions,” The North American (Philadelphia, PA), 19 July 1884; US Census of 1880, Grant Township, Pender County, NC, 3 June 1880, Page 7, Supervisor’s District 3, Enumeration District 159, Dwelling 63, Family 69. Minnie Lou McMillan was 19 years old in 1880.

19 Greely, Three Years, Vol 1, 65 (collecting fossils and flowers), 419 (fossils), 113 (sketches), rebuilds chronograph (130), assigned to meteorological and tidal work (132).

20 Throughout the part of the expedition when most were healthy, Gardiner was treated for or diagnosed with: a broken leg, severe headaches, a painful carbuncle on his finger, and “anemia and derangement of the digestive organs.” See for example Octave Pavy in Adolphus W. Greely, Report of the Proceedings of the United States Expedition to Lady Franklin Bay, Grinnell Land (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), 336; Hampden Gardiner, “Journal 1881-1882,” 1 March 1882, Box 1, LFB Collection, ECAMC; “Extract from Sergeant D. C. Ralston’s diary, covering Aug 10, 1883 to Jan 27, 1884 incl.” 28 September 1883, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.

21 R. Schneider, “Journal 1 July 1881- 6 August 1883,” Box 69, Greely papers, LOC, 1 Sept 1881, 5 Sept 1881, 11 Sept 1881.

22 Greely, Three Years, Vol 1, 166
crawling to the cabin door. He lay in the snow, exhausted and crying out, until the cook found him.\textsuperscript{23} He was off duty for several months while his leg slowly healed.

In early November, days before his injury and less than three weeks after the sun had set, Gardiner was already concerned about the winter ahead. He wrote:

\begin{quote}
Our day is now as one long night and for the last month we have been burning lights all through the 24 hours. We have all long since commenced to count the weeks and months to the time when old \textquotedblleft Sol,\textquotedblright will reappear to us in the spring, I do not think we have had a chance yet to feel the depression of spirits arising from being shrouded in continual darkness.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

His notes reflected a common worry: what would the darkness do to the party? By the 1880s, enough polar explorers had returned safely for Americans to know that arctic visitors could survive the darkness. Yet many people had also perished or disappeared or gone crazy on Arctic expeditions, including Britons and Americans who had set out in the greatest confidence and health. Some contemporary authorities believed that the arctic night could cause scurvy, even with daily lime-juice rations.\textsuperscript{25} Several of the expedition members had read works of earlier explorers like Elisha Kent Kane, who claimed that the most trying thing in Arctic exploration was \textquotedblleft this constant and oppressing gloom, this

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[	extsuperscript{23}] R. Schneider, \textquotedblleft Journal 1 July 1881- 6 August 1883,	extquotedblright 29 November 1881.
\item[	extsuperscript{24}] Gardiner, \textquotedblleft Journal 1881-1882,	extquotedblright 2 November 1881.
\item[	extsuperscript{25}] Sir Clements Robert Markham, \textquotedblleft The Arctic Expedition,\textquotedblright in \textit{The Geographical Magazine} Vol. 4, January 1877 (London: Trübner & Co, 1877), 5. Current medical theory rejects this notion yet concurs that some individuals are deeply affected by long hours of winter darkness, to the extent that they can be severely troubled by depression, anxiety, hopelessness, and oversleeping. It can progress to a \textquotedblleft major depressive syndrome.\textquotedblright See \textquotedblleft Seasonal Affective Disorder,\textquotedblright PubMed Health, \url{http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0002499/} [Accessed 4 May 2010]
\end{enumerate}
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unvaried darkness.” Isaac Israel Hayes, the first major proponent of a colony at Lady Franklin Bay, described the dark season this way:

For say what you will, talk as you will of pluck, and manly resolution, and mental resources, this Arctic night is a severe ordeal. Physically one might get through it; but it is a severe trial to the moral and intellectual faculties. The dark and drear solitude oppresses the understanding; the desolation which everywhere reigns haunts the imagination; the silence, dark, dreary, and profound, becomes a terror.

It is of course possible that many polar explorers exaggerated the winter hardships they encountered. They could assume most of their readers would never experience a polar night, which left them freer to embroider its terrible effects. The Greely expedition members were nevertheless left to wonder how they would react to these long months of hushed darkness. By early February, Lieutenant Lockwood noted that everyone had become very pale, and hoped “the darkness has had no worse effect.”

Gardiner was less hopeful than Lockwood. In February 1882, soon after returning to work and to his diary, he wrote that he had passed through a “strange experience” of four months without the sun, and that “this continual darkness is terrible in its effects on man and beast.” His fellow expedition member Sergeant David Brainard agreed, stating that after a few weeks of darkness, the “effect…on the men is very apparent,” with most of

28 Lieutenant James Lockwood to his father, Fort Conger 9 January 1882, Box 4, LFB Collection, ECAMC.
them either depressed or irritable.  

Although people tried to hide their low spirits and put on a show of cheerfulness, Brainard believed the lack of sunlight affected everyone. Greely later called it “darkness so continuous and intense that the unsettled mind is driven to wonder whether the ordinary course of nature will bring back the sun,” and claimed that the arctic winter “almost [unsettled] the reason” – no small concern for a nineteenth-century scientist.

The men’s depression and irritability may have been related to the lack of sunlight, but it cannot solely be blamed on the outdoor environment. Expedition policy restricted travel and confined the men in close quarters throughout the winter. Hunting and exploratory sledge trips ceased. Everyone was generally kept at the station except for scientific observations, short walks, and outdoor chores such as ice-cutting. All of the enlisted men slept in a single room, four to a double-tiered bunk. According to Lieutenant Lockwood – who as an officer had his own bed in a private corner – such conditions were “tolerable” during the summer months but “to pass an Arctic night under such circumstances must be experienced to be described.”

As soon as the days became warm enough, one man moved bedding and a desk into a tent outside, where he could “sleep in purer air and be by [him]self.”

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31 Greely, “The Scope and Value of Arctic Explorations,” *Report of the Sixth International Geographic Congress* [n.d.], Box 92, Greely papers, LOC.
32 Brainard to his mother, 1 August 1882.
33 Lockwood to his father, 9 January 1882.
The claustrophobic winter living arrangement was particularly trying for reserved and quiet individuals like Gardiner. In his diary he records his annoyance at the revelry in the men’s quarters that often continued well past the official bedtime of 11 p.m. Growing up in one large family and then boarding in the home of another, he was unlikely to have been used to privacy, but he would have been used to more opportunities to leave the house. The repetitive nature of the winter tasks also grated on him. “Our life is very monotonous,” wrote Gardiner, “usually the same thing over and over, day after day. Most every day some allusion is made to the ship coming next year and as to who will be the lucky men to return in her.” That ship never came. The party had been dropped off in a year of particularly clear seas; the ice pack would be too thick for any more ships to enter Lady Franklin Bay in the succeeding two summers. Yet Gardiner’s statement reveals that only a few months into the expedition, many men were already disillusioned with their arctic adventure and hoped to flee this place as soon as possible.

It was not just the darkness, the cramped quarters, and the monotony that bothered the men, but also the silence and the vastness of the wintry world outside their cabin door. All the soldiers on this expedition had volunteered to be stationed on Ellesmere Island; they deliberately sought out contact with what was to them a mythical place. Now that they were there, they couldn’t ignore this seemingly endless landscape with its endless weather. It seeped into the expedition members’ drafty house during the long hours they spent inside. It blew through their inadequate clothing whenever they had to work outside. Most terrifyingly, it got into their minds.

The men were sometimes in awe of the view, and like so many people seeing northern landscapes for the first time, they were overwhelmed by the beauty and wonder of northern lights and ice. One sergeant described the aurora borealis as “something wonderful to behold, [possessing] a fascination which leaves one speechless with surprise and wonder – impossible to describe.” “The beauty of the sky was incomparable,” he noted, and the ice “glistened with a cold splendor like the illumination of a thousand fairy lamps.”36 Yet these sights soon wore thin – by December 1881, another man noted that auroral displays occurred almost daily and had “ceased to be objects of attraction.”37 Even as the expedition photographer commented on the beauty of ice floes in 1882, he nicknamed one with particularly large icicles “an Arctic prison.”38 At least in their diaries and letters home, the soldiers seem to have quickly found their surroundings more disturbing than thrilling, even while they were still well fed and expected to return safely to the United States.

Sergeant Gardiner’s most striking critique of the arctic landscape, and of expedition work, came on a beautiful day in March 1882. The sun had recently reappeared, and Gardiner stood outside and gazed up a stunning azure sky with cumulus clouds “tinted by the rays of the sun to all colors.” After describing the magnificence of the scene, he moved onto the sombre thoughts it had inspired, writing in his diary:

36 Brainard to his mother, 1 August 1882.
37 Charles Henry, “Journal written as a letter to the Gatter family,” [entry n.d., early December 1881], Box 3, LFB Collection, ECAMC.
The air calm and still as death, not a thing stirring with life. All this makes the scene one of terrible sublimity. When out alone and with no living thing in sight I have often stood quite still and listened to try and catch some sound, but not the faintest was to be heard, and by and by having lost my self in thoughts and wonder at “God’s” work, which in these latitudes is forced upon one’s mind at every step, I have started suddenly as though affrighted, and hollered with all the power of my lungs to try and break the awful stillness and quiet which is so oppressive. But how vain are my efforts; my voice dies away quickly and at its greatest effort sounds like some infinitely diminutive creature lost in space. But enough of this if I allow my self to continue in this strain any longer I will certainly get a fit of blues, so back to plodding work, which is the only available preventive in these regions. My impressions of my life in the North are lasting and I can write and think of them when I return to the states, where they will not be so likely to bring on unpleasant thoughts and feelings.39

For Gardiner – a man so devoutly religious that he later brought the party’s only Bible among the eight pounds of gear he was allowed on the retreat – the questioning of “God’s” work was particularly damning.40 Gardiner characterized the High Arctic landscape as a terrifying void, lifeless and noiseless. Other American expedition members concurred, calling the region the “land of desolation”41 and commenting on its silence. Commander Greely noted that even his quiet rural home in New Hampshire was enlivened by the constant “indistinct hum of insect life.” In the Arctic, the snow absorbed sound, and he heard nothing except the grinding of the ice.42

It is not surprising that the lack of noise disturbed the Americans at Fort Conger. More recent cultural theorists have posited that sound is largely what denotes vitality and movement through time; its absence is death, monotony, and perpetuity. Jean Baudrillard

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40 Greely, Three Years Vol. 2, 208. Gardiner also read aloud from the Bible each night in the starvation camp. David Brainard, diary entry for 29 October 1883, in Greely, Report of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition, 462
41 Lieutenant Frederick Kislingbury, “Journal,” 16 August 1883, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD
42 “A Talk with General Greely: The Awful Silence of the Arctic Region,” Atlanta Constitution, 7 Dec 1888, in Box 73, Greely papers, LOC.
links utter silence to a sense of timelessness, and Yi-Fu Tuan ties it to calmness and lifelessness. These theorists, like the American expedition members, live in an urbanized temperate world that associates wealth and progress with high levels of ambient noise. On Ellesmere Island, the two Inuit employees must have missed some sounds from their homeland: their language, laughing children and family members, their neighbours’ dog teams, the calls of some Greenlandic animals and birds. Yet they probably would have been far more “affrighted” by nineteenth-century urban soundscapes than by the relative silence of Lady Franklin Bay.

For the American expedition members, Lady Franklin Bay was a threat to their deep-seated cultural beliefs. They lived in a nation that seemed to be speeding up, pushing out, rushing inexorably forward in a cacophonous stream. Even those soldiers previously stationed in isolated posts in the western United States were linked by steel and horses to the clamour and hustle of a modernizing world. All of them had at least visited metropolises like Philadelphia, New York, or Chicago. They may have had ambiguous feelings about such cities, but they all benefitted from ever-faster mail and shipping services that connected them to commercial and governmental urban networks.

In 1881, the outlying men had moved quickly from their western or southern posts to their gathering point in Washington DC, mostly by train. They had then steamed north to the edge of their known world. Geographer David Harvey has characterised the modern

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era as a series of “time-space compressions” that make the world seem smaller. The men’s initial travel embodied the modern annihilation of space through time. When they disembarked at Fort Conger, they found that time was annihilated – or at least skewed – by the vastness of space. Once the ship left, they were indefinitely cut off from the United States. Familiar markers of time and distance, like trees and buildings and the daily circuit of the sun, were absent. Lady Franklin Bay, with its almost inconceivable immensity and apparent permanence, reminded expedition members like Gardiner that they were small and weak and alone, that they were still “infinitely diminutive creature[s] lost in space.” In his diary entry, Gardiner demonstrates how this perceived desolation seeped into him, and how it reinforced his loneliness and his fears of personal insignificance. The High Arctic landscape – not least the polar cycle of the sun – helped to shape the men’s moods, emotions, behaviour, and sense of identity.

In his 1962 work *Earth and Reveries of Will*, Gaston Bachelard analysed experiences where massive scenery concords with vast, transcendent, dream-like thoughts. For Bachelard the word “vast” had positive connotations, and immense landscapes invariably opened the mind to new dimensions of beauty, perfection, and the sacred. Other theorists have echoed Bachelard’s enchantment with the vast. In cultural theorist Jean

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45 This is not necessarily always negative. At least one man, the second-in-command Lieutenant Kislingbury, joined the expedition because he sought to alter his emotional state. His second wife had recently died and he wrote that he wanted to “come back a new man” by “leaving a world that has been so cruel to me.” (Kislingbury to Greely, 13 January 1881, Box 65, Greely papers, LOC.) But he could not control how he would be changed. Kislingbury quarrelled with Lieutenant Greely almost immediately and was ordered to return to the departing ship, but he just missed it, and was left in the Arctic jobless and in debt. Like most of the others, he would starve to death in the spring of 1884, dreaming of American food and weather and his children, chastising himself for allowing his thoughts to “wander too much towards home.” (Kislingbury, “Journal,” 1 May 1884. For another entry about missing home see 23 April 1884.)

Baudrillard’s road trip through the American Southwest in the 1980s, he found the desert landscape “alive with a magical presence.” It was a place “where the air is so pure that the influence of the stars descends direct from the constellations.”47 For Baudrillard, “space there is the very form of thought.”48 But vast landscapes such as deserts or the Arctic can only remain mythical at a safe distance, when witnessed from the air-conditioned interior of Baudrillard’s moving vehicle, or described from the comfort of Bachelard’s office chair. To spend years in such a starkly foreign place is to become all too aware of the basic needs of life, of one’s inability to supply them, and of attachment to home. It is to realise that if space is the very form of thought, thought is also the very form of space.

In the end, however, the Americans emerged relatively unscathed from their first Arctic winter. Their spirits mended along with Gardiner’s broken leg. That spring, the crew gathered to watch the sun rise and “roll along the horizon like a huge ball of flame.” They let out a spontaneous collective shout and Brainard commented, “A great load appeared to be lifted from our hearts.”49 Several men remarked that they never again intended to let the sun set on them for longer than a night.50 Gardiner wrote, “May it never go down again…[the sun’s return] affected me very much. I fully realized how much joy its light is capable of bringing anyone. In future the nearer I can get to it, the more I can feel of its effects the happier I will be.”51

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47 Baudrillard, America, 3, 6.
48 Baudrillard, America, 16. Baudrillard is referring to the vastness of the entire American continent with this comment.
49 Brainard to his mother, 1 August 1882.
That first winter, the party remained relatively healthy through the dark period. They ate well; many of them probably far better than they had at home. They consumed a varied diet consisting of imported food mixed with some local meat, especially muskox. No one developed scurvy, although the doctor kept his eye on a few weaker members. Sergeant Brainard wrote encouragingly to his mother that although the darkness had subdued some exuberant spirits, at least to his knowledge “we were never visited by melancholy thoughts or the feeling of despondency in the exaggerated manner usually described by those who had preceded us.”52 Unfortunately, the Inuit members of the party did not fare so well. They were at least as dissatisfied and concerned about their own situation at Lady Franklin Bay, but for somewhat different reasons.

“They pulled the landscape together”: Winter Solstice 1881

The winter solstice occurred on 21 December 1881, a fact not lost on the party, who welcomed the passing of the shortest day of the year.53 The expedition newspaper, the Arctic Moon, stated that it had “made complete arrangements to have the Sun interviewed on his return to the country the latter part of February.”54 For Christmas a few days later, the men decorated their quarters with whatever they had on hand: American flags, crossed swords and guns, and homemade paper flowers.55 They also lit the room more brightly than usual, and the decorations served to cover up the coal soot that covered the

52 Brainard to his mother, 1 August 1882.
53 Brainard to his mother, 1 August 1882; Greely to his wife Henrietta Greely, 27 November 1881 and 15 December 1881, Box 14, Greely papers, LOC.
54 Arctic Moon, First Edition, 24 November 1881, in Box 1, David L. Brainard Papers, RG-27.4.5. The paper was so named, the editors explained, because the moon gave them light and solace in the darkness, and as a feminised celestial body, it reminded them of the women they missed at home. Note that in Eastern Arctic Inuit cosmology, the moon is the brother and the sun is the sister, but the (masculine) moon is also of great symbolic and practical importance during the darker periods of the year. Bordin, “La nuit inuit,” 6-7
55 David Brainard to Wilkens, [n.d.], Box 8, LFB Collection, ECAMC.
walls. On Christmas Eve presents were distributed. Some men had brought gifts from
home, and everyone received small items from donors, primarily pipes and tobacco.
Greely wrote that some of the lonelier men cried when they received these gifts from
strangers. 56 The Christmas dinner menu, which had eight courses, was a mix of treats
from home like Mrs. Greely’s plum pudding and exotic dried fruits, and local food such
as eider ducks and musk-ox tongue. 57 It was by anyone’s standard an elaborate and
luxurious meal. “Every one is happy,” recorded Private Schneider. 58

Yet there is considerable evidence that the two Inuit employees, who also would have
celebrated Christmas back home in Greenland, were not happy that December. Greely
wrote to his wife on Christmas Day that “the Eskimo did not know what to make of it
all.” 59 He often wrote about the Inuit in his diaries and notes around this winter solstice,
because of a disturbing event that had occurred a few days earlier.

On the cold dark morning of 13 December 1881, the Inuit expedition member Jens
Edvard Angutisiak disappeared. It was one of the darkest mornings of the winter: a dim,
overcast day with no moon or stars, with “a dense fog covering & enveloping

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56 Greely, “Our First Christmas in the Arctic,” pp. 287-291 in Book Buyer, December 1885, 288, in Box 81,
Brainard letter to mother, 1 August 1882.
57 “Dinner menu Christmas 1881,” Box 7, LFB collection, ECAMC. By contrast, their final Christmas
meal in 1883 — the result of two months of scrimping and self-denial of the few luxuries in camp —
consisted of minimal amounts of stewed rice, raisins, condensed milk, hot chocolate, and hot rum. See
Greely, “When I Stood Face to Face with Death,” Ladies’ Home Journal, October 1898, in Box 80, Greely
papers, LOC.
58 Schneider, “Journals 24 November 1881-8 March 1882,” 24 December 1881, Box 3, LFB collection,
ECAMC
59 A. W. Greely to Henrietta Greely, 25 December 1881, Box 14, Greely papers, LOC
“Angutisiak walked away from the soft lantern glow of the expedition cabin without taking any source of heat or light. He left without eating breakfast, and without any food, weapons, or ammunition. The temperature was about -34°C (-29°F), but he left without his mittens and warmest clothing.”

Like Sergeant Gardiner and so many other expedition members, Angutisiak was desperately homesick on Ellesmere Island. This was not home to him either. His settlement of Prøven was an island community of around 100 inhabitants, nearly all of whom were Kalaallit (West Greenlandic Inuit) living in sod houses heated with seal-oil lamps. Today known as Kangersuatsiaq, Prøven hosted commercial beluga whaling in the nineteenth century. Most local people subsisted primarily on seals, hunted from kayaks, and ate and clothed themselves with many of the same arctic mammals and birds found in Cumberland Sound. When the Lady Franklin Bay expedition hired him on in the summer of 1881, Jens Edvard Angutisiak was 38 years old. He had four children, and his wife, Anna Maria, was two months pregnant. He would later speak to Commander Greely about how much he missed his “pickaninnies.”

Northern Ellesmere Island was a place that was utterly unfamiliar to him, and like Gardiner and the other Euro-Americans

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60 Greely, “Journal [copies for Henrietta],” 13 December 1881, Box 71, Greely papers, LOC; Greely, “Journal [original],” 13 December 1881, Box 70, Greely papers, LOC.
61 Greely, Report on the Proceedings, 13; Brainard to his mother, 1 August 1882.
62 The 1870 Danish census records 112 individuals living in 16 households in Proven. Only three of the inhabitants were listed as Danish colonists living in European-style homes, although several of the Kalaallit (including Thorleif Frederik Christiansen) had some Danish ancestors. Census information available online from Dansk Demografisk Database, http://www.ddd.dda.dk/soeg_person.asp. Thanks to Søren Thuesen for telling me about this source.
65 Greely, “Journal [originals], 13 December 1881, LOC.
on the expedition, he struggled to understand his new surroundings and to reconcile what he saw with what he had expected to see.

It is unclear exactly why Jens Edvard Angutisiak and the other Inuk Thorleif Frederik Christiansen joined the expedition. Apart from Greely’s statement that they were “obtained through strenuous exertions,”66 I could find no explanation in either American or Danish records of how they were persuaded to join up. They would have had some idea of what expedition work entailed. Another Inuk in their small community, Hans Hendrik, had worked for four arctic explorers; he and his family had spent six months on the ice floe with Hannah and Ipiirvik on the Polaris expedition. Perhaps Angutisiak and Christiansen were willing to risk dangers, inconveniences, and indignities for a promised salary and future opportunities. More likely, they were reluctant to refuse the local Danish inspector, who had recommended hiring them specifically. Inuit often felt they had little choice but to comply with powerful authority figures, fearing repercussions for themselves and their families if they did not. In his memoirs, Hans Hendrik recorded a lack of enthusiasm in joining all four of his expeditions. On the last one, in 1876, the local Danish trader simply told him he was to go, and Hans “reluctantly agreed” and joined the foreigners, giving the appearance to them that he welcomed the employment.67

Whether Angutisiak and Christiansen joined willingly or felt coerced, they also ended up

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66 Greely to Chief Signal Officer of the Army, Upernavik 28 July 1881.
67 Hans Hendrik, Memoirs of Hans Hendrik, the Arctic Traveller, serving under Kane, Hayes, Hall, and Nares, written by himself... Hinrich Rink, trans., George Stephens, ed. (London: Trübner & Co., 1878). He volunteered for the first expedition after no one else did (22); he joined the second one, where he knew the men, only after they agreed he could bring his wife (36); he left on the Polaris expedition when the local Danish trader was behaving angrily towards him (48); but it seems it was the fourth – after the ice floe incident – which he was the most reluctant to join. (83)
far from their homes, in a place where they – as well as the Americans – struggled to understand and live within their new surroundings.

Angutisiak was probably not overwhelmed by the vastness of the land like Gardiner was. As an Inuk, he would have already learned to feel small in the world. But it is probable that the darkness affected him too. Guy Bordin argues that Inuit generally find the solar patterns around their own homes to be unremarkable. Those who live in areas far enough north to have lengthy periods of winter darkness still perceive circadian days and nights; they do not linguistically speak of “one long night” as outside observers often do. However, the Inuit were not at home in Lady Franklin Bay. Months of sunlight followed by only moon- and starlight were new to them too. Other Inuit have reported feeling intense dislocation and homesickness in the High Arctic. In his memoirs, Hans Hendrik recalled that the first time he encountered the constant darkness of the High Arctic, he “fell a weeping, I never in my life saw such darkness at noontime. As the darkness continued for three months, I really believed we should have no daylight more.” More recently, Anna Nungaq, an Inuk from northern Québec who was relocated to the High Arctic by the Canadian government in the 1950s, recalled that she also feared the sun would never rise again. She said she “hardly slept for years, cried, wanting to go home.”

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69 Unfortunately neither Inuk on this expedition survived to leave accounts of their personal experiences. Americans attributed some Inuit behaviours to the darkness but it is difficult to know whether this is true, or simply a case of them extrapolating their own fears onto others.
70 Hans Hendrik Memoirs of Hans Hendrik, 24
70 Anna Nungaq, as cited in Dick, Muskox Land, 438.
In some ways, this landscape would have seemed empty to Angutisiak, because there were no Inuit there, and because he was forced to navigate it without known landmarks. But precisely because it was empty, dark, and unfamiliar, it may have fit into existing legends about supernatural beings. In West Greenland, Inuit often associate their precursors in the Eastern Arctic – the Tuniit (Dorset) people – with giants and dwarves who are said to live inland.\textsuperscript{71} Tuniit had occupied northern Ellesmere Island before the Little Ice Age, and the expedition collected a few Tuniit artefacts. Angutisiak may therefore have recognised extant signs of Tuniit habitation around him.\textsuperscript{72} He also would have been familiar with a second type of West Greenlandic supernatural being known as a \textit{qivittoq}, which was reported to move far to the North in its old age, to a landscape where it was always dark – perhaps to a place like northern Ellesmere Island in December.\textsuperscript{73}

\textit{Qivittoq} stories have been well documented in Angutisiak’s home community of Prøven, both in the nineteenth century and today.\textsuperscript{74} Unlike many other supernatural beings, \textit{qivittut} (plural of \textit{qivittoq}) start out human; they are people who have fled human society due to mistreatment. Some West Greenlanders tried going \textit{qivittoq} on nineteenth-century expeditions. Hans Hendrik, the veteran of four arctic expeditions who lived in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{71} I do not know to what degree Angutisiak would have equated the spiritual landscapes of inland Greenland with northern Ellesmere Island, but on supernatural creatures of inland Greenland, see Gronnow, “Blessings and Horrors of the Interior.”
\item \textsuperscript{72} Most of the artefacts were Thule (pre-cursors to present-day Inuit) but at least one, a harpoon head, was Dorset/Tuniit. On Dorset artefacts found by the expedition, see Moreau S. Maxwell, \textit{An Archaeological Analysis of Eastern Grant Land, Ellesmere Island, Northwest Territories} (Ottawa: Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (Canada), 1960), 26, 79-80.
\item \textsuperscript{73} Vittoralak cited in Petersen, “Om qivittut,” 207-208
\item \textsuperscript{74} See Mark Nuttall, \textit{Arctic Homeland: Kinship, Community and Development in Northwest Greenland} (London: Belhaven, 1992), 113-114; Janne Flora, “Relatedness, Loneliness, and Longing in Qeqertaq, Greenland” (Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge: PhD Dissertation, 2009).
\end{itemize}
Angutisiak’s home community of Prøven, ran away from an earlier expedition in Lady Franklin Bay. His motives were multiple: he heard the men gossiping meanly about him; he thought he heard crew members discussing who should flog him; he missed his wife and chidren and other Kalaallit; he was unaccustomed to military discipline. He decided to “go away to the wilds,” deciding, “if I should freeze to death it would be preferable to hearing this vile talk about me.” It is notable that he wrote *if* he should freeze to death. To the other expedition members, the question would presumably have been not if, but when. Hendrik travelled five miles and then changed his mind. He dug a hole in the snow near the ship and lay down in it, waiting to see if the others would come and look for him. They found him, and he returned to duty.75

Going *qivittoq* was always an act of desperation. In a society that was strongly communal, the *qivittoq* was a terrifying figure of “loneliness personified,” a rejected figure doomed to wander the inland mountains and never dwell on the life-giving coast again.76 It was nearly impossible for an Inuk to survive in isolation, so *qivittut* generally left only when they were severely abused and could see no other alternative but to flee their human communities. Common reasons for leaving included not being allowed to marry; losing face; being physically, sexually, or mentally abused; or being scolded harshly and unfairly.77 They often sought revenge on those who had wronged them.

75 Hendrik, *Memoirs of Hans Hendrik*, 89-90. Hendrik also experienced another Kalaaleq, Umarsuak/Peter, going *qivittoq* on the Hayes expedition of 1860-61. He did not know Umarsuak’s precise reasoning, but before he fled, the man had voiced concerns that others were saying mean things about him. (37-38).
77 For *qivittoq* stories see Birgitte Sonne’s database of Gronlandske fortellinger (Greenlandic stories), [http://tors.ku.dk/biblioteker2/eskimologi/datasamlinger/sonnesbase/](http://tors.ku.dk/biblioteker2/eskimologi/datasamlinger/sonnesbase/). Note that these stories appear as Danish summaries and translations; stories would originally have been told (and sometimes recorded) in Greenlandic and kept in archives. Due to language and financial constraints I have used the Danish
They were able to avenge themselves by acquiring abilities to speak with animals, to run like caribou, to fly like birds, to turn invisible, or to see magically what was happening back home in their coastal settlement. Once they had acquired supernatural talents, there could be no return to their family – at least not in the Greenlandic Christian tradition, which equated this with making a pact with the Devil and losing the Christian element of their soul. Qivittut were very rarely “re-socialised,” although there might have been faint hope. In one story, inland creatures helped a runaway woman to return home safely to her family: when she became tired, two dwarves “pulled the landscape together, so the distance became less to the land that she was going to, which was so far away it had a bluish colour. The whole trip took only one day.”

There is evidence that Angutisiak was trying to go qivittoq himself. Greely wrote that the man had run away in an attempt to become a “kivigtok.”


78 Robert Petersen, “Om qivittut – fjeldgængere,” pp. 203-215 in Gronland (2006, nr. 5); Sonne and Kleivan, Eskimos Greenland and Canada, 21-22, Hendrik, Memoirs of Hans Hendrik, 50-51. Angutisiak was at least nominally Christian; nearly all Kalaallit in Prøven learned some basic Christian teachings and hymns. He had been baptised when he was less than four months old, and his father-in-law was a lay preacher. Still, Angutisiak made his living from hunting and would have spent a great deal of time out on the land. He was also one of the very few Prøven residents to have his non-baptismal name, Angutisiak, recorded on the census in 1870 along with his Christian name of Jens Edvard. It is likely that in addition to being Christian, he held other beliefs about the local world, beliefs that probably seemed less fantastic to him than the sheep, grapevines, and other agricultural symbols in the Bible. (Vital statistics information for Jens Edvard, http://inuit.upernivik.gl; Censs information from Dansk Demografisk Database, http://www.ddd.dda.dk/soeg_person.asp)


80 Greely, “Our Kivigtok,” 560 Greely writes in this published article that Angutisiak told him he sought the inland country of Greenland and wanted to be a “kivigtok,” but this conversation was not recorded in his original journal. Perhaps Angutisiak said it, or perhaps Greely inferred.
familiar with qivittoq stories from other arctic literature, so he may have only inferred this, not heard it directly. He told himself that it must have been Angutisiak’s childhood dream to become a qivittoq.\textsuperscript{82} Greely – who was subsisting in an overcrowded cabin among men he disliked, and who came from a more individualistic society bursting with Romantic ideals of mountainous nature – envisaged a solitary life inland as potentially preferable to life in an Inuit coastal camp. Angutisiak would never have seen it this way.

To West Greenlandic Inuit, qivittut stories are horror stories; they are usually full of suffering and violence and grieving for everyone involved.\textsuperscript{83} They serve in part as a cautionary tale, a warning to avoid mistreatment of others.

Nevertheless, the frequency of qivittut legends implies that there were individuals for whom going qivittoq felt like the best possible alternative. Angutisiak seems to have been one of these people. Like other qivittut, he left without mittens or supplies – perhaps so others would assume he was dead, so they would not suspect he was out there in the wind and snow, alive and seeking revenge.\textsuperscript{84}

Greely seems to have completely disregarded the revenge aspect of qivittoq stories. In a letter to his wife, he said that “Eskimo...are just like children & if they think they

\textsuperscript{82} Greely, “Our Kivigtok,” 561-563. Greely claims that Angutisiak said that his father had told him about a wonderful inland country where people who “boldly” and “bravely” fled society could go, but I suspect that this was greatly embellished, since all other Inuit accounts I have heard stress the horror of going qivittoq. Greely admits that he came up with this “childhood dream” explanation after deciding that mistreatment was not a factor on his expedition. He also invented other aspects of this narrative. For example, he claims that Angutisiak’s father died in a kayaking accident (555), but in fact he died of complications of lung disease (“sting”), see genealogical data for Hans Immanuel Asarpak on \url{http://inuit.uperivik.gl}.

\textsuperscript{83} Petersen, “Om qivittut”

\textsuperscript{84} Nuttall, \textit{Arctic Homeland}, 112.
are…disliked instead of killing you run off & so kill themselves.”

He simply did not see how Angutisiak could feel mistreated on the expedition. He proudly and repeatedly stated that his men all treated the Inuit “in the kindest and most considerate manner.”

At the beginning of the expedition, he had ordered the men not to joke about or insult the Inuit employees. Yet racial stereotypes continued to be a basis for humour among the Americans, and one that Greely accepted. At the Christmas pageant in 1881, after the troupe put on an “Indian War Dance” and sang “Plantation Melodies,” Private Schneider performed as an “Eskimo Belle,” complete with fur clothing and a puppy instead of a baby in his hood. It made the white employees laugh raucously. According to Greely, Frederik Christiansen said the performance was “very good, very good,” and Angutisiak cried. Greely assumed this was because Schneider reminded Angutisiak of his wife. It is possible that the Inuit did appreciate this particular performance, but it seems highly improbable that other stereotypes about “Eskimos” were not tossed around the cabin within earshot of the Inuit.

Greely himself clearly viewed the Inuit with paternalism and some contempt. He referred to Angutisiak in his expedition account as a “simple-hearted native,” and the other Greenlandic employee as a “wily and cunning” “half-breed.”

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85 Greely to Henrietta Greely, 16 December 1881, Box 14, Greely papers, LOC.
86 Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service, Vol 1, 169.
88 Humour was also sexualized. Nearly every item on the Christmas Pageant program was based on impersonating either women, Indigenous people, or African-Americans. The main exception was Private Jewell, who advertised his act as a “Select Reading,” and then walked on stage and read the aneroid barometer to the appreciative crowd. See “Lime Juice Club at Dutch Island Opera House, Programme, Monday Dec 26 1881,” Box 7, LFB Collection, ECAMC.
89 Greely, “Journal 1881-1882,” 26 December 1881, Box 22, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
90 Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service, Vol 1, 164.
segregated bunks, off to one side of the cabin. He called the enlisted men by their last names, but he always referred to Angutisiak as “Eskimo Jens” and Christiansen as “Eskimo Frederick.” It also appears that enlisted men could “volunteer” Angutisiak or Christiansen to accompany them on sledge trips, suggesting that they were treated as the “Eskimo servants” described in one newspaper article. When Sergeant Rice and Angutisiak went on a harrowing trip together, Greely named the strait they had visited “Rice Strait.” Sergeant Cross commented then that he was “a little weary about Rice not returning,” as if Angutisiak did not count. Such racialised discourse was common at the time, but what Greely considered impeccably fair treatment of the Inuit may not have appeared so to them.

Greely also wanted to prove to himself that Americans were harder than the Inuit. When Angutisiak returned completely exhausted from a sledge trip, Greely declared that he had less “moral force and mental determination” than the Americans. In truth, since at least one Inuk was needed on nearly every venture far from the station, Angutisiak and Christiansen were pushed more consistently than the other men. Later, Greely commented that Christiansen lagged behind on the sledge trip on which Lieutenant

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91 Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service, Vol 1, 90
93 Charles Henry, “Diaries,” 9 October 1883, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
94 William Cross, “Journal 1883-1884,” 8 October 1883, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
95 Some other expedition members did appreciate the Inuit employees more than Greely. Gardiner praised Angutisiak in particular, saying he was “very industrious and works hard.” Kislingbury said the two Inuit were “worth their weight in gold.” (Gardiner, “Journal 1881-1882,” 15 March 1882; Kislingbury, “Diary,” 2 September 1883, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD)
96 Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service, Vol 1, 246-247. Sergeant Rice, who was on the sledge trip, said that “doubtless Jens’ exhaustion was due to the greater exertions he made” (cited on 247) For an example of Jens’ frequent travel see Gardiner, “Journal 1881-1882,” 8 Nov 1881. On Greely’s condemnation of Inuit endurance see also Greely, “Journal 1883-1884,” 18 March 1884, Box 12, RG-27.4.5.
Lockwood and Sergeant Brainard claimed the “furthest north” record among polar explorers. Yet Brainard’s published field notes noted that the team had only two pairs of snowshoes. The unfortunate Christiansen did not get a pair, so he frequently broke “through the crust to his hips” and had to be dragged out by the dogs and officers. He could hardly have been expected to keep up.

The same month as Angutisiak’s disappearance, in December 1881, Christiansen told Greely he believed the men were plotting to kill him. It is doubtful that the soldiers had any murderous intentions, but it was understandable that Christiansen felt threatened by their behaviour. As discussed in regards to Hannah and Ipiirvik in the previous chapter, Inuit societies in the nineteenth century valued getting along with others above almost anything else. A mild display of anger by American standards could be read as a warning of physical aggression and loss of control. In the expedition cabin, men frequently raised their voices, showed anger, and criticised others in threatening language, both openly and behind their backs. Sergeant Cross – one of the more outspoken members who sometimes mocked Greely within earshot – commented in his diary after Angutisiak ran away that, “it was the opinion of most all of us that he ought to have a good flogging.” Surrounded by this kind of hostility, the Inuit were exceptionally reluctant to do anything to make trouble. One night on a sledge trip, when Angutisiak’s sleeping-bag partner fell asleep before the Inuk finished his work, he slept outside rather than disturb the American, and got a frostbitten toe. Greely believed this was evidence of

97 Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service, Vol 1, 245
98 David Brainard as cited in Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service, Vol 1, 341
99 Greely, “Journal,” Dec 15 1881, Box 22, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
101 William Cross, “Diary,” 13 December 1881, Box 3, LFB Collection, ECAMC.
Eskimo Jens’ “kind heart,” but Angutisiak was more likely terrified, using submissiveness and self-deprecation in an attempt to avoid anger and possibly violence.¹⁰²

While everyone on the expedition was dealing with an unfamiliar environment, Angutisiak and Christiansen were also dealing with an unfamiliar culture. Greely’s military discipline, and his meting out of privileges according to military rank rather than ability or need, would have seemed arbitrary to the Inuit employees. Officers sometimes ate better food, and they had larger salaries with which to purchase luxuries such as blackberry jam, pineapple, and blueberries.¹⁰³ Greely harshly criticised Lieutenant Kislingbury for spending hours playing cards “with the enlisted men whom he treats as equals in every way.”¹⁰⁴ These men, who had been issued inadequate clothing and especially footwear, were forbidden even from taking extra hospital blankets to sew into warmer clothes for themselves. Nearly all of them purchased blankets to make woollen underwear. When Gardiner asked Greely if he could have a small piece of buffalo skin to sew a warm collar on his coat, Greely refused him even though, according to Gardiner, “we have many piece however which will never [be] used for any other purpose not being large enough.”¹⁰⁵ The expedition surgeon, Octave Pavy, reported that he had to

¹⁰² Greely, *Three Years of Arctic Service* Vol. 1, 228-229.
¹⁰⁴ A. W. Greely to Henrietta Nesmith Greely, 12 May 1882, Box 14, Greely papers, LOC.
give Angutisiak a pair of his own boots because the man was nearly barefoot.\textsuperscript{106} Refusing to distribute stockpiles of skins and woollens to those in need would have been counterintuitive to the Inuit (and indeed to many of the enlisted men), yet it seemed necessary to Greely who felt he needed to act on orders to protect government property.\textsuperscript{107}

It was obvious to many of the men that Angutisiak was unhappy, especially before he ran away. Private Schneider wrote that Angutisiak was “[showing] signs of fear” before he disappeared.\textsuperscript{108} Greely recorded in his journal that Angutisiak was “downhearted,” and said that he kept telling people he was “no good” and “weak.”\textsuperscript{109} When he failed at hunting, he became “gloomy” and “despondent” and was sometimes found “crying or moaning [at] night.”\textsuperscript{110} Greely had tried to give him small gifts, but the man kept saying he did not deserve them, because he was bad. He had repeatedly asked several of the party to beat him or kill him, and take his property. Perhaps these were submissive gestures to people he viewed as aggressive and volatile, or perhaps he was trying to be mistreated so badly that he would have clear justification for going \textit{qivittoq}.\textsuperscript{111}

The morning that Angutisiak disappeared, Lieutenant Adolphus Greely, the expedition commander, ordered four enlisted men to light turpentine torches, harness the dogsled, and go search for him. The men soon found his footprints, and caught up with him in the
early afternoon. Angutisiak had travelled about twenty miles in a winding route, first south along a well-trodden path, then east and north. When the men found him, he was plodding slowly northward through falling snow. As soon as the men spotted Angutisiak, they called out to him over and over again, but he showed no signs of hearing them. He didn’t turn around; he didn’t answer. When the men reached him, he surrendered passively and allowed himself to be put on the dogsled. He was given mittens, and fed some hard bread. For most of the way home, Angutisiak said nothing at all. The only time he spoke was to insist a frostbitten searcher run beside the sled rather than ride on it, for fear the man would freeze to death. In this short half-day trip away from the cabin, one American fractured his shoulder, and another was brought back to the station in a frostbitten and delirious state.112 It was a grim foreshadowing of what was to come.

The Americans assumed that Angutisiak’s actions were rash and suicidal, that he was “a man who had deliberately turned his back on light, warmth, plenty, and comfort, to risk darkness, cold, want, and death.”113 Angutisiak was undoubtedly taking a very large risk by wandering off into an unfamiliar environment without taking food or proper clothing, but I do not think he suffered from delusions about his ability to survive ill equipped and alone. He saw the landscape in a different way than the American expedition members did. He may not have cared if he lived or died, but I do not believe that he was simply trying to commit suicide. The landscape he saw contained different possibilities and connotations than it would have for any of the Americans.

113 Greely, “Our Kivigtok: An Episode of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition,” [published article in unknown source], 560, in Box 73, Greely papers, LOC.
Interlude: the Retreat

A year and a half later, in the continual daylight of 9 August 1883, the expedition abandoned Fort Conger in their steam launch, the Lady Greely. They had spent 721 days at the station, 268 of which “had been marked by the total absence of the sun.” For two summers, a resupply ship had failed to reach them through the pack ice. In retreating south, Greely was following orders issued in 1881. He hoped to encounter a relief expedition and large stores of provisions left by previous resupply ships. Many of the men thought, with much justification, that it would be safer to remain at the station. Everyone was still in fairly good physical condition. Greely had written earlier that winter that “nearly all the men weigh more eat more and look better than in 1881.”

Even though the second year’s diet had lacked some of the imported luxuries of the first, they still ate fairly elaborate and large dinners that consisted of soup, meat, vegetables, and dessert every night. Greely had sharply denigrated Angutisiak for running away the first winter, but given the group’s limited abilities, lack of room to carry supplies, and uncertainty surrounding the movements of the rescue operations, this officially sanctioned attempt to flee was hardly less suicidal.

The group left most of their gear and supplies at the station. In addition to the 30-foot steam launch Lady Greely, they brought a dinghy and three other small boats. They carried only 60 days’ provisions, four dog-skin sleeping bags, and several three-man buffalo-robe sleeping bags, which expedition members had dismissed in the first year as

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114 For a description of the launch see Guttridge, Ghosts of Cape Sabine, 47
115 Greely, Report on the Proceedings, 50
116 Robinson, The Coldest Crucible, 93
117 A. W. Greely to Henrietta Nesmith, 25 December 1882, Box 14, Greely papers, LOC.
“very cold and cheerless” in low temperatures.\textsuperscript{119} They left their dogs behind, ultimately to starve; Greely did not want to kill them in case the party was forced to return to the station.\textsuperscript{120} The men were allowed only eight pounds of clothing and personal gear. The officers took sixteen, and Greely attracted criticism for taking more than the allotted amount, perhaps as much as 48 pounds.\textsuperscript{121}

Sergeant Cross, an alcoholic firebrand who was always critical of the commanding officer, became increasingly venomous in his diary during the retreat. He stated that Greely did not know how to navigate, that he refused to take advice, that he yelled at the men for no justifiable reason, that he burned blubber in the boiler that might be needed for food later, and that he spent his days huddled next to the heat source barking orders while the men were inadequately clothed and “some nearly barefooted.” Cross’s complaints culminated with the statement, “He has once or twice tried to regulate our bowels, but I think I have him there.”\textsuperscript{122}

Cross’s grumblings were likely exaggerated, yet more sober voices corroborate his major grievances. Gardiner complained that the party had left cases of sheepskins at Fort Conger, which Greely had forbidden the men to sew into better sleeping bags. “Every one shaking with cold,” wrote Gardiner. He also worried that Greely was rashly


\textsuperscript{120} Greely, \textit{Three Years of Arctic Service} Vol 2, 71-72

\textsuperscript{121} William Cross, “Diary,” 29 July 1883, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD. Cross was Greely’s biggest antagonist so his account should not be considered fully reliable.

\textsuperscript{122} Cross, “Diary,” 24 Aug 1883; 11 Aug 1883; 12 Aug 1883; 23 Aug 1883; 8 Sept 1883. Cross may have been unable to regulate his own bowels on the retreat. Presumably due to a combination of stress and diet, one-third of the men came down with a bad case of “the flux.” See Brainard, diary entry for 26 September 1883, in Greely, \textit{Report on the Proceedings}, 453.
distributing rations with no concern for the future. Sergeant Ralston concurred about the poor state of their equipment, stating that he and two sleeping bag partners had sewn pieces of sail to their bag to cover the holes, and that men were making desperate attempts to repair their boots. At one point, unbeknownst to Greely, the other officers seriously contemplated a mutiny and a return to the station.

During the retreat, the expedition members were haunted and troubled by the unfamiliar sights and sounds of the ice. Sergeant Brainard was convinced that he heard the barking of Inuit dogteams, but after hearing walruses bellow multiple times, he conceded that he mistaken one sound for the other. During a whiteout, Brainard demonstrated the fluidity between landscape and mental state when he wrote: “The weather is still wretched in the extreme; the atmosphere is so thick and hazy that the coast cannot even be sighted; consequently we have no definite idea of where we are, or whether or not we are yet drifting with the pack. We are certain of only one thing, and that is our terrible sufferings. Everything else is indefinite.”

Strong winds and then the ice pack resulted at times in the party floating north rather than south. Eventually they were forced to abandon their launch, setting out across the ice on foot for the nearby coast of Ellesmere Island. They reached shore on 30 September, and on 9 October decided to move 33 kilometers north to Cape Sabine on the small Bedford

123 Gardiner, “Journal 1883-1884,” 12 August 1883 (cold), 14 August 1883 (bags), 15 August 1883 (Cross drunk and removed from duty), 17 August 1883 (rations), Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
124 “Extract from Sergeant D. C. Ralston’s diary,” 6 September 1883 (bag), 21 September 1883 (boots).
Pim Island, because Angutisiak and Sergeant Rice had located caches totalling 1300 meal rations in the vicinity.

At Cape Sabine, the men built a dwelling of one-meter high stone walls, roofed with an overturned whaleboat and canvas. Some of the taller men nearly touched the roof when they sat up. With twenty-five people and their essential gear inside, the party sat elbow-to-elbow with only a narrow passageway and cooking space in the centre. The historian Lyle Dick points out that this hut, like the larger expedition cabin at Fort Conger, showed little knowledge of or concessions to Inuit architectural styles. The dwelling was cold. Sleeping bags froze solid whenever the men vacated them, and ice glued the bags to the ground for seven months. The crew were more verbose about hunger than cold in their diaries, but they must have been freezing. Other research on starvation indicates that sufferers feel unable to get warm, even in the summer or under layers of blankets. Many men also manifested typical famine symptoms of irritability, emotional instability, and depression. They probably had no idea how long they could go on living, since many of their contemporaries believed that humans could survive no more than ten days without food. In a statement that captures the dejected mood, freezing temperatures, and general discomfort that suffused the hut, Greely ordered that

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127 Copley, “The Struggle for the Meat,” 254-55
129 Greely, “Lieutenant Greely’s Supplementary Report on Hygiene,” in Report on the proceedings, 345. The medical report from the rescue party’s doctor said the temperature of the hut was between 5 and 10 degrees Fahrenheit. See Edward H. Green, MD, “Medical report on the condition of the survivors of the Greely party, when rescued by the relief squadron,” pp. 260-264 in Medical News, 6 September 1884, 261. In November Brainard put it as -10C at its coldest, see Brainard, diary entry 20 November 1883, in Greely, Report on the Proceedings, 468.
130 Sharman Apt Russell, Hunger: an unnatural history (New York, Basic Books, 2005), 100, 124, 127
131 In 1880, the medical doctor Henry Tanner disproved a common notion that humans could only survive ten days without food by completing a forty-day fast at Clarendon Hall in New York City, but many scientists believed he had cheated. Russell, Hunger, 53.
all men were to keep their heads out of their sleeping bags between breakfast and
dinner.\textsuperscript{132}

Over the winter, the party began to starve and deeply suffer. An arctic army ration was 46
ounces of solid food per man per day. On 1 November, after the sun had set for the year,
the men re-divided their rations to a daily issue of less than 15 ounces.\textsuperscript{133} That same
month, Corporal Elison was carried in from a trip to a nearby cache, his “feet and legs
frozen nearly to the knees.” Despite concerted attempts to treat him, he lost the use of all
his fingers and thumbs. His foot fell off in January, although the tissue had been dead so
long that he failed to notice.\textsuperscript{134}

On the solstice, 21 December, Sergeant Cross wrote, “Thank God this is our longest
darkest day. We will have the sun commencing to come back tomorrow.”\textsuperscript{135} Cross was
the first to die a few weeks later; he perished of undernourishment and perhaps scurvy.
The others all lived long enough to see the sun’s return in February. However, by this
time, their resources were severely depleted, and some members of the party would soon
be called upon to assume a disproportionate level of risk.

\textbf{“Life is Now Ten Times Sweeter”: The Reappearance of the Sun in 1884}

\textsuperscript{132} “Extract from Sergeant D. C. Ralston’s diary,” 4 February 1884.
\textsuperscript{133} Green, “Medical Report,” 260
\textsuperscript{134} For Elison’s story see Elison [via Schneider], “This Account is Written by the Dictation of Sergt Joseph
Elison at Camp Clay, June 8 1884,” Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD. On food for Elison see Greely,
Proceedings}, 346. Elison asked to be killed so that his rations might be saved for the others, but they
refused, and even continued to give him extra bits of food and chocolate from their very limited stores.
Considering the famished condition of the camp, the majority of the men went to extraordinary lengths to
provide for the weakest Americans.
\textsuperscript{135} Cross, “Diary,” 21 December 1881, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD
The sun returned to Cape Sabine on 17 February, but it was not visible from the hut, and no one saw it. Greely commented in his journal that just knowing the sun had returned cheered up several of the men. Kislingbury called it “the good old friend.” People showed more optimism and hope. Yet they were disturbingly frail. George Rice, an energetic grey-eyed man in his late twenties, was perhaps the strongest member of the party that spring. He commented in early March that no one had yet walked to a point where they could view the sun. They were too weak, and their rations too paltry “to allow [for] any exertion not absolutely necessary.” Three days later, Rice climbed to the summit of a nearby hill and was the first to view the sun that year.

On 11 March, the sun shone on the hut for the first time. When David Brainard saw his first sunrise, he wrote in his diary that he “lingered among the rocks to enjoy the warmth and comfort which it brought. To use the apt expression of [Arctic explorer] Dr. Kane, ‘It was like bathing in perfumed water.’” In late March, the men made some holes in the boat roof and covered them with canvas, so they could see each other in natural light again. On 24 April, they stripped more of the boat and took the snow off part of the roof. Sunlight flooded through the cracks and holes, and rays reflected off some tin cups inside the hut. Joseph Elison, the invalid who had lost his foot and some fingers to frostbite, “thoroughly enjoyed the scene and brightened up considerable both in spirit and...

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136 Kislingbury, “Diary,” 22 February 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD
137 Greely, “Journal,” 17 February 1884, Box 12, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD; see also Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service Vol 2, 275.
138 George Rice, “Journal,” 4 March 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD. For a physical description of Rice see “Descriptive List and Account of Pay and Clothing of George W. Rice,” 17 November 1884, Box 72, Greely papers, LOC.
139 Brainard, diary entry for 7 March 1884, in Greely, Report on the Proceedings, 490.
140 Edward Israel, “Diary,” 11 March 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
141 Brainard, diary entry for 16 March 1884, in Greely, Report on the Proceedings, 494
142 Brainard, diary entry for 25 March 1884, in Greely, Report on the Proceedings, 498
temper.”143 Another man was grateful that the sun was shining brightly and “the backbone of winter [seemed] to be broken for good.”144 By May, the men were placing a sleeping bag outside during the day so “those able to crawl out” could engage in “a glorious sun bath.”145 At times the sun provided them with a different kind of bath, as it thawed ice that had accumulated in the hut. Clothing became saturated. “The melting of the frost from the roof renders our condition positively wretched,” wrote Brainard.146 Another officer commented that his first thought upon seeing the “utter squalor and misery” of the hut in natural light was, “How have we ever passed through this hell on earth and kept our reason?”147 Nevertheless, most if not all of the men felt their spirits lift from the return of the sun.

In cheering up the men, the sun may have provided some of them with a renewed will to live. It certainly prolonged their lives. That spring the party became viscerally aware of the most fundamental human connection to the sun: its ability to produce and sustain life. Back at Fort Conger, they had welcomed the lengthening days mostly as a chance to bask in natural light, to escape the cabin, to get out on exploratory sledge trips, to collect and press local plants, and to eagerly await the arrival of a ship that never came.148 Many had tried their hand at hunting and fishing, but their interest in local wildlife had been largely

143 Henry, “Diary,” 24 April 1881, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
144 Henry, “Diary,” 26 April 1881, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
145 Henry, “Diary,” 16 May 1881, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD. The men connected sunlight with joy and health, but they do not seem to have advocated heliotherapy as specific medical treatment the way later generations would. It was in the 1890s that sunlight was first directly connected with rickets. By the 1920s heliotherapy was a popular treatment for many diseases. See Haven Emerson, “Sunlight and Health,” pp. 437-440 in American Journal of Public Health (1933).
146 Brainard, diary entry 18 April 1884, in Greely, Report of the Proceedings, 507
147 Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service, Vol 2, 275
scientific and recreational. Now, everyone became desperately focussed on sustenance and on the resources the sun might provide. The stockpiled rations had almost been exhausted, making the party reliant on what they could hunt and gather. They were forced to live – or die – off the land.

Just as the strengthening sun grew crops in the United States, so it heralded an intensifying of life at Cape Sabine. Hunting became easier in the daylight and more creatures headed north. “Before Sun returned only five hundred pounds meat obtained,” wrote Greely in his first major correspondence with Washington after the rescue.\(^{149}\) In mid-March black guillemots began to appear, and seals became more numerous. The men also began to net small crustaceans.\(^ {150}\) Other birds returned; Fredericks heard a snow bunting singing on the roof of the hut in early April.\(^ {151}\) These migratory birds and the odd raven were eagerly devoured when they could be shot. The birds also connected the men to home, reminding them they were not alone in the world. Their calls broke “the silence and gloom which has surrounded us so long.”\(^ {152}\) “All are much delighted at the game and feel much encouraged,” wrote Greely.\(^ {153}\)

The greatest triumph of the season occurred on 11 April. As several members of the party lay on the verge of death, Angutisiak and Private Long pursued and killed a polar

\(^{149}\) Greely to Chief Signal Officer from St John’s, Newfoundland, 17 July 1884, Box 66 [?], Greely papers, LOC.
\(^{150}\) Green, “Medical Report,” 261
\(^{151}\) “Extract from Sergeant D. C. Ralston’s diary, covering Aug 10, 1883 to Jan 27, 1884 incl.” 14 April 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
\(^{152}\) Henry, “Diary,” 18 May 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
\(^{153}\) Greely, “Journal,” 16 March 1884, Box 8, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD. Note that Greely called the most common birds dovekies but the described size (over a pound of meat per bird) suggests they must have been black guillemots. See Jan Marcin Weslawski and Joanna Legezynska, “Chances for Arctic Survival: Greely’s Expedition Revisited,” pp. 373-379 in Arctic (December 2002 55:4), 374
bear. After ensuring the bear was dead, they knelt down and gulped the “inspiring and life giving blood” flowing from its wounds. When they returned to camp with the good news, Angutisiak rushed to the bedside of Elison, the frostbitten man who had been bedridden since November, and “with a voice full of emotion told him, ‘You all right now Elison.’” The few men who were still strong enough went to fetch the bear; they “carefully chopped from the ice every bit of the precious blood.” The butchers passed small pieces of meat and fat to the men in the tent as they were cutting it up. One man wrote, “What words are adequate to express the rejoicing manifest in our little party tonight?...Life is now ten times sweeter than at any former period of our existence.” He and others felt that the bear signified their salvation, that it would see them through until they were rescued. This proved to be overly optimistic, but the bear did provide 300 pounds of meat, and nothing was wasted. The following day, Long shot a seal which Angutisiak secured with his kayak.

As in most arctic regions, it was the large sea mammals that offered the party’s best chance of salvation. Seals were far more plentiful than bears. Back in Lady Franklin Bay, Angutisiak had harvested whatever was available year-round, but had taken particular pride in his seal hunting. Many men had resisted eating seals at Fort Conger, but they began to applaud the Inuit efforts as soon as they felt the first pangs of hunger on

154 Official expedition accounts and diaries portrayed the effort as joint, with Angutisiak wounding the bear and Long delivering the fatal shot. See for example Greely, *Three Years of Arctic Service* Vol 2, 290. In his own published account years later, Long portrays himself as the hero and leader, and Angutisiak as a hindrance. Francis Long, “An Arctic Bear Hunt,” in Rudolf Kersting, ed., *The White World, life and adventures within the Arctic Circle portrayed by famous living explorers* (New York: Lewis, 1902), 103-108.
155 Henry, “Diary,” 12 April 1884, Box 8, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
157 Israel, “Diary,” 13 April 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
158 Greely, *Three Years of Arctic Service* Vol 1, 355.
the journey south. One man noted on the retreat that “those who disliked [seal meat]
before ate it with relish.” Another wrote that “even the blood is now considered a
luxury, and is eagerly sought for by almost all of us.” For most of the party, eating
seal meat was a fairly easy and live-saving adaptation.

Angutisiak and Christiansen were skilled sealers, and they had brought a kayak on the
retreat to Cape Sabine. On their own, they would have stood a far better chance of
survival than any of the Americans. Yet their hunting skills did not save them. If
anything, they put them more at risk. They were expected to hunt for the party, and
hunting was an exhausting and risky endeavour.161

The West Greenlander Frederik Christiansen was the second member of the party to
perish, after Sergeant Cross. On 18 March, the expedition doctor recommended that
Christiansen not be sent out hunting anymore; he was too exhausted and his feet were
swollen. A few days later Angutisiak’s feet also swelled up. The doctor recommended
letting both of the Inuit rest, but Greely insisted they hunt on alternate days. On 25
March, Christiansen was “half-carried” in by his hunting partner Private Long. Six days

159 Kislingbury, “Diary,” 14 August 1883, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD
160 Brainard, diary entry for 1 September 1883, in Greely, Report of the Proceedings, 443. The “nearly all”
of us presumably referred to Sergeant Ralston, who commented to his diary that the “vampires were turning
out for a drink of blood.” See “Extract from Sergeant D. C. Ralston’s diary,” 4 September 1883.
161 The Inuit had at least sometimes been expected to take on riskier assignments before that spring, such as
finding the best route over young ice. Brainard, diary entry for 13 October 1883, in Greely, Report of the
Proceedings, 459.
162 Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service Vol 2, 269.
163 Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service Vol 2, 270.
later he fainted, and despite being given extra food that week, he became delirious and died of “insufficient nutrition” on 5 April.\footnote{Greely, \textit{Three Years of Arctic Service} Vol 2, 275, 278.}

Of course, individual personalities and strengths also helped determine who lived and who perished. Angutisiak was able to go on hunting long after Christiansen died of exhaustion and undernourishment. The unflagging Private Long performed far more than his share of physical labour and was one of the six survivors. But unlike Christiansen, the weaker Americans could choose to rest as much as possible to prolong their lives. Some of them nevertheless worked beyond their capabilities. George Rice, who consistently volunteered for the most exhausting and dangerous duties, died only four days after Christiansen. He collapsed from exhaustion while trying to retrieve food from a cache. He had worked himself to death.

Rice and Christiansen’s deaths made the party even more dependent on Angutisiak, and daily hunting took its toll. As the weeks passed, Angutisiak also became fatigued and pitiful. Described just before his death as a “faithful and indefatigable worker,” he had begun to lament aloud that “Eskimo no good.”\footnote{Brainard, diary entry for 27 April 1884, in Greely, \textit{Report of the Proceedings}, 510} He was greatly weakened, constipated, and “in bad spirits”; he complained to the doctor of feebleness in his legs. He and his hunting partner Private Long were issued four ounces of extra pemmican to keep up their strength.\footnote{Schneider, “Diary,” 27 April 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD; Greely, “Journal,” 28 April 1884, Box 12, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD; Octave Pavy, “Notes,” 24 April 1884, Box 12, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD} The other expedition members, reliant on Angutisiak as a hunter, looked
ahead to a time when their salaries would be worth something and began to promise him all kinds of things upon their safe return: a boat, a watch, a new kayak.\footnote{Brainard, diary entry for 28 April 1884, in Greely, \textit{Report of the Proceedings}, 511.}

Francis Long and Angutisiak continued to hunt together until 29 April, when Long returned with tragic news. They had spotted a seal sunbathing on a pan of ice, and Angutisiak began to approach it with his kayak. Sharp ice cut the boat. Angutisiak drowned “without uttering a single cry for assistance.” Long tried and failed to reach him over the surrounding ice floes. The body sank from view before he was able to recover it.\footnote{Brainard, diary entry for 29 April 1884, in Greely, \textit{Report of the Proceedings}, 511-512.} This event must have been particularly horrifying for Long, since several weeks earlier Angutisiak had risked his own life to rescue Long from an ice floe, reportedly calling out to him, “You go, me go too!”\footnote{Greely, \textit{Three Years of Arctic Service Vol 2}, 299} Angutisiak’s death, and Long’s inability to help him, reflects the disproportionate level of risk that Inuit employees assumed on expeditions, and the ways in which they faced perilous situations while others, sometimes desperately, looked on.

The news of Angutisiak’s death was a “terrible blow” to the men.\footnote{Henry, “Diary,” 29 April 1884, Box 8, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.} It is unclear how many of them could have been called his friends. His hunting partner, Long, was never much of a journal keeper and did not record his reactions to the event. Yet the men mourned the loss deeply. No matter what their feelings may have been about Inuit at the beginning of the expedition, by this time they recognized that Angutisiak’s skills, especially in a kayak, were keeping them alive. One man tried to make light of the news,
saying it was “bad” but that “no one was discouraged yet.” Others disagreed; they described the news as “sad and dispiriting,” a “heavy loss.” Sergeant Brainard feared it would “prove fatal” to them all. “The death of Jens has left us in a bad predicament,” summed up one private, “as we have no chance whatever to procure a seal in the water.” In desperation, Long – who was an excellent shot – continued to kill seals whenever he saw them, hoping their bodies would drift towards the shore or a reachable piece of ice. They never did. The seals that could have saved lives were out of reach.

Angutisiak was survived by his wife and four children, and his widow received a pension of four American dollars per month, half of what the widows of American privates received. Drowned at sea, his body was never returned to his community, although news of his death was. Jens Edvard Angutisiak lived on in Kangersuatsiaq. In 1886, his brother’s family baptised their new baby Jens Edvard. The name-soul, consisting of a name and aspects of the dead man’s personality, had been passed on.

“As If They Were Two Different Worlds”: Summer Solstice 1884

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171 Schneider, “Diary,” 29 April 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
172 Brainard, diary entry for 29 April 1884, in Greely, Report of the Proceedings, 511-512; Gardiner, “Diary,” 29 April 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
173 Henry, “Diary,” 4 May 1884, Box 8, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD; Gardiner, “Diary,” 3 May 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
174 Greely to Chief Signal Officer (draft letter), 11 December 1884. Greely clarifies that this was half the pension of private soldiers. Another piece of correspondence reveals that a draft of 3£ Sterling (approximately $14.60, see “Measuring Worth,” http://www.measuringworth.com/exchange/) was sent to Copenhagen for distribution to Jens Edvard’s family in Prøven in December 1885. Whether this was an instalment or the only payment remains unclear. (Hugo Hörring, Direktoratet for Den Kongelige grønlandske Handel, Copenhagen, to A. W. Greely, 18 April 1885, in Box 66 [?], Greely papers, LOC.
175 He was possibly given the name Angutisiak as well, but the Danish record notes only his Christian names. Danish genealogical data for Jens Edvard Frederik Simon Thorleifsen (son of Jens’ brother Jakob Severin Thorleif Jeremias) on http://inuit.upernavik.gl.
On 21 June 1884, David Brainard made the last entry in his expedition diary. He noted that it was the longest day of the year, and that Private Connell could no longer use his legs below the knees. By this summer solstice, there were only seven men left alive. Hampden Gardiner was not among them, although he had died only days before, clinging to life for two months after the doctor predicted his demise. He had been reported dead at 11 a.m. on 12 June, but then showed faint signs of life and died that afternoon. On his last morning he had called out, over and over again, “Mother! Wife!” He died with family portraits clutched in his hand.

The surviving men were on the verge of death themselves. Some of them now fainted “from sheer exhaustion” after moving their bowels, and were so weak they had to defecate indoors. In need of fuel, they had burned the boat that formed the roof of their old hut. They were now living in a canvas wall tent, which was partially collapsed and full of holes that the wind blew through.

The following blustery morning, the dying men heard a sound like ship’s steam whistle, but saw no boat. They discussed the noise and decided, dejectedly, that it had probably just been the wind blowing on a tin can. The hunter Francis Long stumbled up the hill and saw a black speck in the distance. He raised the “flag” – some old underclothes tied

\[176\] Brainard, diary entry for 21 June 1884, in Greely, *Report of the Proceedings*, 529
\[178\] Henry Biederbick, “Diary,” 12 June 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
\[180\] Biederbick, “Diary,” 11 April 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD; Green, “Medical Report,” 261; Schneider, “Diary,” 16 June 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
\[181\] Greely, *Report of the Proceedings*, 88. They pitched the wall tent on 22 May 1884.
to an oar – and saw a steam launch approaching the shore. Then he “tumbled rather than ran” down the hill to meet the rescuers.\(^\text{182}\)

As the rescuing party approached the tent, they saw what they thought was a corpse outside, which turned out to be a barely alive Maurice Connell, “cold to the waist” and barely breathing.\(^\text{183}\) Inside were five men in rags, covered in filth, skin hanging “in flaps” from their bodies. They emitted a “sickly, offensive odor” of stale urine and had “wild and staring” eyes.\(^\text{184}\) One of them, Elison, had missing fingers and blackened remains of feet, with a spoon lashed to the stump of his hand.\(^\text{185}\) The men were loaded onto the ship. Four of them were unable to walk and Greely later stated he felt they were within a day of death.\(^\text{186}\) Despite receiving help and medical care, Elison died within days. The other six men returned safely to the United States. Their rescue created a sensation. The survivors’ riveting accounts would help to shape how present and future generations of Americans viewed the Arctic. But in so doing, they would overshadow contradictory narratives from other members of the expedition and from around the Arctic world.

The last months at Cape Sabine had been desperate ones. By 17 May, the party had consumed all their rations and were subsisting solely on what they could gather from the land. With no kayak or other watercraft, they could not access any marine resources apart from those in the tidal zone. Ingeniously, they found a way to harvest small crustaceans

\(^\text{183}\) “Schley’s Story: Some New and Interesting Facts Relating to the Finding of the Greely Expedition,” in scrapbook in folder labelled “Personal Items 1881-1905,” Box 1, Greely papers, LOC.
\(^\text{184}\) Edward H. Green, “Making Lieutenant Greely Well,” 14 April 1885, in scrapbook in folder labelled “Personal Items 1881-1905,” Box 1, Greely papers, LOC; Green, “Medical Report,” 262.
\(^\text{185}\) Newspaper article entitled, “Schley’s Story,” in Box 73, Greely Papers, LOC.
\(^\text{186}\) Greely to Chief Signal Officer from St John’s, Newfoundland, 17 July 1884, Box 66 [?], Greely papers, LOC.
that they referred to as “shrimps,” or sometimes less optimistically as “sea flies.” These creatures, *onisimus edwardsi*, were described by a crew member as being “about the size of half a grain of corn.” One of the men counted that 1300 shrimp fit in a half-gill measure (approximately ¼ cup). “Shrimping” was a painstaking task, largely borne by Sergeant David Brainard from the time he first proposed it in mid-March. He collected these crustaceans by lowering bait – bearskin, seal bones, sealskin clothing – through the ice at low tide, pulling them up every few minutes, and shaking off all the animals. Each person’s daily portion was meticulously weighed out, and often it “would barely cover the hollow of his hand.” The men had to force the shrimp down. In the words of Private Long, “they were very gaggy.” Still, the crustaceans provided a reliable source of desperately needed sustenance. Brainard wrote in his diary that his primary motivation to stay alive was the other starving men, “the poor fellows, who…look to me to provide them with food.” It has recently been estimated that these crustaceans supplied nearly half of the calories consumed by the expedition members for the last three months of their stay.

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187 They had a small amount of tea remaining, but given the negligible amount of calories in tea I consider them to have been living – or dying – off the land. “The Extreme North: Sergeant Brainerd’s [sic] interesting story of his trip there,” in scrapbook in Box 73, Greely papers, LOC (food and “sea flies”); Weslawski and Legezynska, “Chances for Arctic Survival,” 374-375 (food); Kislingbury, “Diary,” 30 April 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD (corn quote)
188 Henry, “Diary,” 25 April 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD
190 “Extract from Sergeant D. C. Ralston’s diary,” 26 April 1883, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
191 Charles H. Harlow, “Greely at Cape Sabine: Notes from a member of the relief expedition,” 87, in Box 80, Greely papers, LOC.
194 Weslawski and Legezynska, “Chances for Arctic Survival,” 375
The “shrimps” were not enough to sustain life. The men began to eat their sealskin clothing rather than use it as bait. At the end of May, one private roasted and ate his sealskin boots, commenting that he went against Greely’s orders but “hunger is so great that one can hardly resist.” Others sampled caterpillars and ptarmigan droppings. They picked and ate saxifrage greens. Nothing that could possibly provide nutrients was passed up. Sergeant Brainard wrote, “Crumbs of bread which are occasionally exposed…through the melting snow are picked from heaps of the vilest filth and are eaten with avidity and without repugnance.” After some debate over whether or not lichens were poisonous, the party began boil black lichens called rock tripe or *umbilicaria*. When stewed, the rock tripe “made the water resemble thin mucilage.”

Not surprisingly, the men spent vast amounts of time at Cape Sabine dreaming and talking about tastier foodstuffs. Presumably the Inuit had their own dreams of food and family, but these were not recorded. The Americans had eaten some lavish dinners in their first years in the Arctic, but their longings led them back to the United States. They spent hours making up delectable menus upon which they hoped to feast after they were rescued. They planned to consume these elaborate meals with old friends, or to invite their current sleeping-bag mates to dine with them at home. Sergeant George Rice recorded many of these banquets in his diary before he died. After a disappointing breakfast in March, he wrote simply, “I must now record my imaginary bill of fare. Place, Washington. Breakfast, broiled mackerel with baked potatoes, mutton chop and

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196 Schneider, “Diary,” 27 May 1884, Box 70, Greely papers, LOC.
poached eggs on toast, apple pie and chocolate.” In a newspaper article published after the rescue, survivor Maurice Connell claimed that he “used to lie awake thinking of food until [he] was crazy,” and then he would fall asleep and dream about it. In one dream, he snatched a fresh-baked loaf of bread from a kitchen shelf, then woke up and found himself “grabbing the empty air” inside the hut. Waking life was a nightmare from which they could not escape; this place was to them the antithesis of home.

It was a shock for many of the men, particularly the officers, to become so feeble and powerless. Before he died, Lieutenant Lockwood wrote of an “impotent and maddening rage at our utter helplessness.” When Sergeant Brainard collapsed into his bag with exhaustion, he cried and wrote in his diary, “I was once so strong and self-reliant that it seems almost incredible that my strength should have been diminished until it will scarcely equal that of a child.” After returning home, Greely wrote, “We were…inclined to the thought that of our own powers we could move the world and control the future. How vain it all was!” The survivors learned that anyone could be stripped and withered down to nothing. But even as they deteriorated individually, they believed in their culture. They kept faith in the powers of their civilization to save them from this environment. As Brainard wrote in his diary, “Our wan, pinched faces and

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200 Rice, “Diary,” 2 March 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
201 “Sergeant Connell, A Talk with the Survivor of the Greely Expedition,” 31 May 1885, Morning Case? [handwritten provenance], in Box 73, Greely papers, LOC.
202 Lockwood, as cited in Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service Vol 2, 275.
204 General A. W. Greely, “When I Stood Face to Face with Death,” Ladies Home Journal October 1898, in Box 80, Greely papers, LOC.
hollow, lustreless eyes are turned wistfully towards the southern horizon in hope of succor.”

The rescue ship eventually arrived, but it was a long time coming. Men died “by inches” during the last three months of the expedition, with a brief respite in late April and early May due to the influx of game. For those who kept on living, death became an everyday matter rather than a terror. After witnessing the process of death by starvation multiple times at close quarters, several concluded that it was “not so painful or terrible,” especially compared to their own daily sufferings. Just before death the men generally lost all appetite and began calling insatiably for water; then they became delirious and later unconscious. Often the process of sliding into death was so gradual that it was unclear exactly when it happened. Sergeant Brainard recorded that everyone became “utterly indifferent to the presence of death.” When his friend Lieutenant Lockwood was among the first to die, it “affected him deeply” to pass his grave and see the buttons on the officer’s shirt sticking above ground and glinting in the sunlight. “But this feeling soon wore away,” Brainard reportedly said. “We had so many other horrible things to think of.” A few weeks later, men would die in shared sleeping bags and their comrades would fall asleep next to them, only mustering the energy to move the bodies the following day. Later, safely on board the rescue ship, Brainard would stand

205 Brainard, diary entry for 1 April 1884, in Greely, Report on the Proceedings, 500.
206 Schneider, “Diary,” 15 May 1884, Box 70, Greely papers, LOC.
207 Henry, “Diary,” 15 May 1884, Box 13, RG-27.4.5, NARA MD.
210 Brainard, as reported in Charles H. Harlow, “Greely at Cape Sabine: Notes from a member of the relief expedition,” 87, in Box 80, Greely papers, LOC.
211 Brainard, diary entry for 6 April 1884, in Greely, Report on the Proceedings, 502; Guttridge, Ghosts of Cape Sabine, 270.
quietly, watching the galley scrapings being emptied down a chute. When asked why he was staring, he replied, “I have seen enough good food thrown away since I have stood here to have saved the lives of our nineteen dead.”212 Through heartbreaking comments like these, the Arctic became linked even more to desolation and suffering, and the United States to abundance.

There were numerous factors that seem to have contributed to who lived and died: strength, will, endurance, optimism, adaptation, a sense of purpose, and faith in external powers, to name just a few.213 However, the survivors did not generally bring up an important variable: not everyone received the same amount of food. Some men like Gardiner and Elison generously received extra rations because they were sick; others found alternative ways to get additional provisions. Private Henry, the most notorious and brazen thief, gobbled half a pound of the party’s precious bacon and gave himself away by vomiting it back up again.214 After repeat offenses, Henry was finally shot on 6 June on Greely’s orders. Authorities later concurred that it had been justified.215 Yet Greely had also appropriated food for himself with at least some degree of secrecy. On 15 April, he confided to the hospital steward that he had begun issuing himself an extra two ounces per day “as he saw the necessity of keeping himself up for the well of the party.” Greely was forthright enough to mention this in his official report, but argued that he did it selflessly, out of a not-unfounded fear that the party might fall into worse hands.

212 Charles H. Harlow, “Greely at Cape Sabine: Notes from a member of the relief expedition,” 87, in Box 80, Greely papers, LOC.
213 See John Leach, Survival Psychology (New York: Macmillan, 1994), especially the chapter on long-term survival, for an assessment of contemporary survival psychology.
214 Brainard, diary entry for 25 March 1884, in Greely, Report on the Proceedings, 497-98
215 Guttridge, Ghosts of Cape Sabine, 292-294
if he died. It is impossible to know how much these extra rations contributed to his eventual survival, but they could not have hurt in a place where every ounce of food counted. As with many survival situations, living and dying was as much a tale of hierarchies and relationships as it was of individual fortitude.

In the end, the men simply could not eat enough lichens, crustaceans, and mouldy crumbs to stay alive. The rescue party found that some of the bodies had been neatly cut into and butchered. An official report later offered the dubious explanation that the flesh had “no doubt” been used as shrimp bait. Recent nutritional research has deemed that all the men would have died without an additional source of food, and has concluded that at least some of the crew ate the dead. The survivors forever denied their complicity, and no extant diary discusses cannibalism outright. The only possible references are some vague allusions on 4 June to an “arrangement” to prolong life, and Henry’s notation the same day, “Esq Fred to be ___. “ Nevertheless, American reporters jumped on the rumours. The *New York Times* broke the story with a front-page headline that read, “Horrors of Cape Sabine: Terrible Story of Greely’s Dreary Camp. Brave men, crazed by starvation and bitter cold, feeding on the dead bodies of their comrades.” Some bodies were exhumed that indeed proved to be less than whole.

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216 On extra rations for other party members see Brainard, diary entry for 14 April 1884, in Greely, *Report on the Proceedings*, 506. On extra rations for Greely see Biederbick, “Diary,” 15 April 1884, Box 13, RG-27.5.4, NARA MD; Greely, *Three Years of Arctic Service* Vol 2, 291. Greely also reported that he did virtually no physical work that last year, see Greely, “Supplementary Report on Hygiene,” in *Report on the Proceedings*, 346
217 Lyle Dick also noted Greely’s allotment and drew a similar conclusion in *Muskox Land*, 205-206.
218 Weslawski and Legezynska, “Chances for Arctic Survival.” On shrimp bait see Guttridge, *Ghosts of Cape Sabine* 299
219 Guttridge, *Ghosts of Cape Sabine*, 271. Pavy also went to a “meeting upon the ridge” with a secret agenda on 21 May 1884, right after he noted “prospects very black.” See Octave Pavy, Correspondence, Box 19, RG-27.5.4, NARA MD.
The cannibalism story opened up a national debate, but many if not most of nineteenth-century Americans sympathised with the survivors. Individuals from explorers to ministers to doctors published vehement defences of this particular act of cannibalism. Readers were appalled that New York reporters victimised men who were only just recovering from starvation. They stated that in a similar situation, they would want their own bodies eaten to prolong the life of their companions. They argued that cannibalism, when it was limited to eating those who had already perished, was justifiable and certainly not unheard of.221

Supporters blamed the cannibalism on the men’s surroundings. They tended to agree with the substance of the original New York Times headline, which implicitly argued that the horrors of the arctic environment had driven rational, respectable men to cannibalism. One doctor wrote, “It is all very nice for us down here, able to procure all the necessities of life…to shudder at these reports.” He continued, “This is not the first time that cannibalism has been resorted to in dire extremity by civilized and intelligent men.”222 The Chautauquan claimed simply that “cannibalism is one of the remote possibilities of arctic exploration,” but that this should not discourage explorers because “the world needs a moral gymnasium – a field in which courage, endurance, heroism, may be trained.”223 Another writer commented, “You can’t judge men in their condition as you could if they were in civilization. Just think of it – going for months without having

222 “Cannibalism,” Medical and Surgical Reporter 20 September 1884.
water to wash their faces in.” Cannibalism was portrayed, here and in other southern accounts, as a potential consequence of venturing into such a barren, unhygienic, and uncivilized environment.

Inuit have somewhat similar attitudes towards the act of cannibalism: a mixture of horror and pragmatism. As the Inuk interpreter Andrew Dialla put it to me, “Cannibalism is wrong, people don’t like it, but we know it’s necessary sometimes.” Yet instead of declaring the land inadequate, Inuit stories tend to focus on people’s limited mobility: what factors prevented the starving people from catching game, or from moving on to a richer place? Why could they not contact other groups to help them? When explaining an Inuit story of starvation and cannibalism, elder Saullu Nakashuk explained, “When they starved it was because the animals they were expecting to be there or go there did not go there.” In other words, the Inuit homeland can provide what is needed, but only if people are free to move around in it, and only if they can correctly anticipate the movements of animals. The American critique of its government’s abortive attempts to resupply and rescue the Lady Franklin Bay party is also about movement, but in this case it is movement out of the region. Far less attention is given to the restriction of local mobility when the party lost Angutisiak’s kayak and burned their boats for fuel.

224 “New Tale of Arctic Horror,” Indianapolis Journal 16 August 1887[? handwritten date], in Box 95, Greely papers, LOC.
225 Andrew Dialla, personal communication. In telling a twentieth-century cannibalism story in Cumberland Sound, he stressed that people had struck off to form their own camp, and “the weather and everything turned against them and they couldn’t hunt.” Others eventually came looking for them and found only one starved girl, who had eaten human flesh to survive. Andrew said that people, particularly Christians, might have been shocked by the cannibalism, but when I asked if the lone survivor was ostracized, his response was, “No, no, she was so pitiful.” For an Inuit view see also Rachel Attituq Qitsualik, “Cannibal,” Nunatsiaq News August 1999 (four part series), available online at http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/archives/nunavut990827/nunani.html (Parts Two, Three, and Four) and http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/archives/nunavut990730/nunani.html (Part One).
What of the survivors themselves? It is impossible to know the ways in which Cape Sabine marked them. Physically they recovered quite well, and they spoke proudly of their accomplishments: the Furthest North record, the reams of scientific observations, their proven ability to survive and provide for others. If they were haunted by personal failures and doubts and flashbacks, they did not say so. Outwardly at least, they were successful upon their return to the United States, where the spectre of cannibalism had some impact but did not destroy their reputations. The federal government would in future shy away from funding large-scale polar expeditions, but the enlisted men were promoted, and went on to have successful careers in the army or other government employment. The hunter Private Long, a German, became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1888. He joined the agricultural department’s weather service and was posted to the New York City station. He married and had three children, one of whom he named Sabine, after the cape where they had suffered and been rescued. Alone among the survivors, Long embarked on another polar expedition. As for Sergeant Brainard, the shrimper, he ended up a Brigadier General. Commander Greely retired as a Major General and received a Congressional Medal of Honor for his lifetime of military service. Both he and Brainard are buried in Arlington Cemetery.

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227 For more analysis of how they retold their story as one of masculinity, self-sacrifice, and will, see Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*, 98-106.
228 “Greely Arctic Explorers: eight years since they were brought back dying,” [clipping without provenance], Box 73, Greely papers, LOC
229 US Census of 1900, New York State, Kings County, City of New York, Borough of Brooklyn, Ward 28, Supervisor’s district 2, Enumeration district 503, Sheet 26 (daughter Sabine); Francis Long, naturalisation certificate, County Court, Kings County, NY, 10 October 1888, L-520. Long was on the Baldwin-Ziegler expedition of 1901-1902.
federal government, and they were at least theoretically responsible for spreading its values and objectives. By all appearances, the survivors successfully claimed credit for their achievements, and blamed the tragic end of the expedition on inadequate rescue operations and the barrenness of the region.

Some of the Lady Franklin Bay expedition members seemed particularly concerned with personal notoriety. Presumably this was a major reason they had volunteered for such a remote and dangerous posting. In a sprawling and increasingly anonymous society like the nineteenth-century United States, the main path to immortality was to “make a name for oneself” by doing something remarkable. Inuit already had immortal names – a name-soul that they had inherited, that carried a dead person’s history and certain personality traits. Anyone who remained a part of their small communities was guaranteed to be remembered. As in Jens Edvard Angutisiak’s case, Inuit name-souls always outlived individuals as long as their death became known and they did not achieve too much notoriety of the wrong sort.

There is no doubt that the Lady Franklin Bay rescue made the survivors famous. In addition to a plethora of newspaper and periodical articles about them, at least one survivor appeared in a drama at the Union Square Theatre in New York City. Entitled Storm Beaten, the show dealt “with the Arctic regions and its frozen horrors.” Four of

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232 William Goetzmann, Exploration and Empire: the explorer and the scientist in the winning of the American West (New York: Norton, 1966), xi
233 The Oxford English Dictionary records use of the phrase “to make a name” as early as 1853. The equating of “a name” with “a good or distinguished reputation” and “personal fame” is much older; the OED includes a reference to this in Old English.
the survivors toured and gave short lectures for a thousand dollars a week. In one interview, survivor Maurice Connell reportedly referred to being “back in civilization,” and the reporter commented: “It may be observed that Mr. Connell, in common with the other survivors, has learned to distinguish between populated countries and the isolated Arctic regions as if they were two different worlds, and invariably refers to the former [as ‘civilization’].” Greely had been much closer to the truth when he commented in his report that the party was “apart from and yet a part of the great civilized world.” Yet the journalist’s statements reflected how many Americans who read about the expedition perceived the Arctic: as a terrifying, separate, empty place that could strip anyone down to skin and bones.

Conclusion

The Lady Franklin Bay expedition has captivated readers for over a century. It has been retold as a heroic tale of self-sacrifice, a tragedy, a scientific quest, and a cautionary tale. It continues to be featured in articles, books, and documentaries; in 2011 it was the subject of an American Experience episode on PBS. The survivors’ accounts remain gripping. Hunger and death are universal human experiences; and there is no denying the
fortitude, compassion, and inventiveness that some of the men showed in the face of suffering and misery. Yet the survivors’ stories, while perhaps valid representations of their own experiences, obfuscate differences of race and rank. The High Arctic landscape was foreign to all the expedition members, but not everyone had the same chances for survival there, and nor did they all imagine their surroundings in the same way.

The factors that set the expedition in motion and caused it to fail so catastrophically were tied to 1880s American society far more than to the High Arctic environment. News of the expedition also gained a disproportionately wide audience in part because it reflected American stereotypes. Stories like this one overshadowed countless other tales being told in this period by Inuit and Americans who were criss-crossing arctic landscapes by ship and whaleboat and kayak and dog team. Polar expeditions reinforced a view the Arctic as the alien antithesis of the United States, not as a homeland where Inuit were working alongside American whalers, smoking tobacco, consulting shamans, eating hard tack, participating in modern commercial economies, and hunting seals and caribou as they had always done. Through repeated retellings of gruesome events like the final months at Cape Sabine, American conceptions of the Arctic became haunted by the spectre of seven incapacitated men starving in their own filth, cutting flesh from the bodies of their dead friends. The Arctic became known as a place where good American men like Gardiner did everything they could but still lost their lives, where they cried out for home into a vast silence that was “as calm and still as death.”
Figure 14: American members of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition. A few men’s heads have been added over the heads of initial expedition members who dropped out for various reasons. Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service, Vol. 1, 14.
Figure 15: Constructing the expedition cabin at Lady Franklin Bay, August 1881. The dwelling was not well suited to its arctic location. Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-136209.
Figure 16: Lieutenant Greely’s corner. The original caption for this image notes that it was taken the day the sun disappeared, on 14 October 1881. Unlike the enlisted men, who slept in an open room, Greely had a personal space of approximately 7'x7' that could be closed off by the curtains seen in this image. Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-136204.
Figure 17: The Expedition Cabin, March 1882. This was the same month that Gardiner recorded in his diary that he screamed into the silence. Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-136199.
Figure 18: Sergeant Hampden Sidney Gardiner.

Brainard Collection of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition, NARA, DLB-LFB 110.
Figure 19: Paleocrystic Ice in Robeson Channel. This is probably the “Arctic Prison” described by the expedition photographer, George Rice. Greely, Three Years of Arctic Service, Vol. 1, 246.
Figure 20: Proven, July 1881. Known today as Kangersuatsiaq, this was the hometown of Angutisiak and Frederik. From a photograph by George Rice. Greely, Report on the Proceedings..., Vol. 1, 4.
Figure 21: Angutisiak and Dr. Octave Pavy skinning a seal. Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-136197.
Figure 22: Angutisiak returning from a seal hunt, June 1882. *Library of Congress LC-USZ62-136201.*
Figure 23: The Lady Greely. The party used this steam launch to head south in 1883. This photograph was taken in August 1882, when the men were hoping for the arrival of a relief ship. *Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-136205.*
Figure 24: Francis Long. One of the survivors of the expedition, Long was also a skilled and dedicated hunter. Rudolf, ed., The White World, 102.
Figure 25: The tent from which the survivors were rescued. Brainard Collection of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition, NARA, DLB-LFB 71.
In 1994, the Cumberland Sound Inuit elder Etuangat sat down with a young woman, Margaret Nakashuk, to record stories and legends on tape. He chose to begin with a tale about the first time his father encountered white people. This event occurred in the mid-nineteenth century on the Cumberland Peninsula, north of Cumberland Sound.\textsuperscript{1}

Etuangat’s father had told this story to him, he told it to Margaret, and the interpreter Andrew Dialla later translated the tape into English for me.\textsuperscript{2} The story begins:

\begin{quote}
When my father was a boy he never saw any white people; he only lived the traditional Inuit way of life with absolutely no contact with outsiders. Finally a ship [carrying white people, presumably whalers] arrived. Nothing bad happened and nothing bad was done to them. People started going visiting to the ship, and the ship people welcomed them, and so people started going down to the ship. One time the ship people gave them gifts: a small barrel and some matches…and a clock.\textsuperscript{3}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1} All quotes and information about Etuangat are, unless otherwise noted, from Andrew Dialla’s translations of his 1994 interview with Margaret Nakashuk (née Karpik). The original recordings are on file at the Angmarlik Visitor Centre in Pangnirtung, Nunavut, Canada. Etuangat anchored this story and its original telling using more personal markers of space and time. He first explained that when he was old enough to start remembering, his father, who told him this story, was already an old man. His father was too old to hunt then but still very active, walking around all the time. His father had been a boy at Qatiggiq, a small fjord near the island of Qaqordluin, in the Padli area. Etuangat mentioned to Margaret that he had been to Qatiggiq; he had been able to visit it because his father had told him the name of the place. Archaeologist Marc Stevenson sets the date in the 1860s and says that the whalers were Americans. See Marc Stevenson, “Kekerten: Preliminary Archaeology of an Arctic Whaling Station” (Yellowknife, NT: Prince of Wales Heritage Centre, 1984), 10.

\textsuperscript{2} There are severe limitations involved when working with translations between languages as different as English and Inuktitut, even translations done by an interpreter as skilled as Andrew Dialla. Andrew often had to explain a great deal of context and the narrative structure to me, especially for the stories that were originally recorded for an Inuktitut audience. These translations were done “on the fly” during interviews or while listening to recorded tapes. For a critical discussion of working with translated sources, see Murielle Nagy, “Time, Space, and Memory,” pp. 71-88 in Pamela Stern and Lisa Stevenson, eds., \textit{Critical Inuit Studies: An Anthology of Contemporary Arctic Ethnography} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

\textsuperscript{3} For the sake of brevity in this introduction, I have left out three parts of the story that arguably are important to the original narrative structure. First of all, Etuangat interjected in the tobacco section, “He was yearning for tobacco!” (He was commenting on change: later in life, when his father yearned for tobacco, he would think back to when they had thrown it all away). Secondly, in the middle of the story, he concluded that they had thrown all the \textit{qallunaat} gifts away, before returning to explain what they did with the clock. Thirdly, at one point in the clock section he spoke “to the tape” rather than to Margaret, saying...
Etuangat explained that the barrel contained tobacco. His father kept the barrel and the matchbox, but threw the tobacco and matches out before he even reached the shore. The tobacco stunk and tasted horrible, and all that fall, tobacco washed up along the shoreline. The Inuit eventually threw the clock into a nearby pond, because it disturbed them by making a sound like a heartbeat when it was not a living thing. Etuangat summed up his father’s story by saying, “That was the very first time they saw *qallunaat*, and the very first time they received gifts. They basically threw them all away.” He laughed, concluding:

> But [my father] lived to a very old age...he lived through all the old ways and then he worked as a whaler...That’s what I’m talking about. These are the stories that my father used to talk about.

At first glance, this story of a cross-cultural encounter evokes the narratives so often told by newcomers, which argue that Indigenous peoples are naïve and ignorant of superior imported technology. Etuangat does include an element of humour and self-mockery; he comments that later in life his father would yearn for tobacco and think back to when he had thrown a whole barrel of it away. But this story is not the same as the versions told from the other side. While most English stories about the Arctic in the nineteenth century emphasise the foreignness of Inuit culture and landscape, Etuangat’s father’s...
story focuses on the foreignness of the *qallunaat* and their possessions, and on Inuit self-sufficiency in their own homeland. The story implies that no matter how much Inuit rely on imported goods today, no matter how often they might be treated as unsophisticated or inferior, they once survived and thrived in this place without any help. They “lived the traditional Inuit life with absolutely no contact with outsiders.” They made fire without matches; they lived well without tobacco; they had no need for clock time.

Yet Etuangat’s father’s story is also, crucially, a story of adaptation, change, and continuity. It is about learning to incorporate new customs into old traditions, without losing a sense of cultural identity. Etuangat’s father “lived through all the old ways,” which would have included hunting bowhead whales from kayaks.\(^5\) He later migrated into Cumberland Sound and became a successful commercial whaler. He profited from trade goods while teaching his children how to live off the land.\(^6\) Such challenges continued and intensified for his descendants. Etuangat, his son, was born in Cumberland Sound at a commercial whaling station. When whaling ended in the early twentieth century, his family moved to a series of small hunting and trapping camps.\(^7\) In the 1960s, nearly all Inuit in the region were resettled into the permanent community of Pangnirtung, which now has shops, a post office, a radio station, two churches, a hockey

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\(^5\) Many people in Pangnirtung have told me stories they have heard about hunting whales from kayaks; the most detailed information I have heard came from Joanasie Karpik. See also Peterooseie Karpik (8 Sept 2008), Jamesie Mike (29 Aug 2008), and Pauloosie Veevee (28 Aug 2008), interviews with the author and Andrew Dialla. I hear these stories as descriptions of ancient hunting techniques, but also as a way to reinforce continuity: Inuit here have always been whalers; they will always be whalers.

\(^6\) Later in the recording, Etuangat tells Margaret that his father was “a great whaler.”

\(^7\) Etuangat was born at Qikiqtat whaling station (now a Canadian National Historic Site) and moved as an older child to the prosperous Cumberland Sound outpost camp of Illungayuit (Bon Accord). He later lived in the Padli (Padloping Island) area before moving to Pangnirtung to work for the doctor. He died in 1996. Etuangat’s death date is in Ludger Müller-Wille, ed., *Franz Boas among the Inuit of Baffin Island, 1883-1884*, trans. William Barr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), xii.
rink, an airport, a health centre, two schools, and a college. Pangnirtung is where Etuangat and Margaret both lived when they recorded Etuangat’s stories. For Inuit, being able to tell a story to a young person in one’s own language is a feat of cultural survival, or as some scholars have termed it, evidence of survivance. The Inuit have changed, but they are still here, and still Inuit.

In this chapter, I return to Cumberland Sound to examine what commercial whaling meant to Inuit in the region. I present evidence from oral histories recorded with elders in Pangnirtung from the 1970s to the 1990s, and from interviews Andrew Dialla and I conducted in the same hamlet in 2008 and 2010. When I began this project, I hoped to hear an “Inuit side” to the history of whaling in Cumberland Sound, and to find out how Inuit reacted when the whale population was decimated. People spoke about these things, but they also talked about whaling before and afterwards, about the wide variety of activities conducted alongside bowhead whaling, and about connections between whales and the larger world. Alongside heart-wrenching stories of changes resulting from overwhaling, I heard about how the whales are coming back, about how Inuit always had a diversified economy, and about how the early twentieth century was neither

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8 Etuagat was born in the summertime around the turn of the twentieth century, possibly in 1901. Although he was still a child when the ship the *Arctic* visited in 1909, he could remember quite a bit about it. He explained to Margaret that this was how the Canadian government dated his age for the purposes of collecting a pension.

9 Survivance is a French term for survival, which has long been used by Québec nationalists. It is also a combination of the words survival and resistance. Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor has defined survivance as, “more than survival, more than endurance or mere response…survivance is an active repudiation of dominance, tragedy, and victimry.” In other words, survivance stresses the active, creative and intelligent strategies of colonised peoples. Gerald Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses: Native American Indian Scenes of Absence and Presence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 15. Regarding language, Inuktitut has changed to reflect the new ways of living. The interpreter Andrew Dialla pointed out that all languages change, but also commented, “A lot of the words they [the elders] use are not really used at all anymore, and because they’re gone we can’t really ask them what do you mean. A few people still know some of the old words. I know a lot of them but I don’t know all of them.” Personal communication, August 2008.
the first nor the last time they had dealt skilfully with environmental and climatic shifts. 

In short, I asked the elders how Cumberland Sound had changed. While acknowledging the drastic and often painful transformations that occurred, they told me how they have kept their world recognisable.

In calling for more histories of sustainability and resilience, the environmental historian Richard C. Hoffman has commented that “stories relate change very well, less so its absence.” But many Inuit elders are able to tell stories of social and environmental changes that would shock most southern communities, while still stressing continuity of culture and recurring events. The elders I spoke with are not “informants,” but rather historians presenting their interpretation of the past based on their own years of experience and opinions about the present day. They reminded me that while environmental historians generally focus on the unintended consequences of the human impact upon nature, people are also anticipating and adapting to environmental changes, often by drawing on a deep and specific knowledge of place, and a sense of being part of it. Nature itself is always shifting, fluctuating, impossible to pin down; and for everyone, life is at least as much about working within our circumstances than it is about controlling them.

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The interviewees, the eldest of whom were born at the end of the commercial whaling period in the early twentieth century, spoke primarily of a different whaling structure than that described in Chapter one. By 1900, commercial whaling was winding down. There were fewer bowhead whales left in Cumberland Sound, and fewer qallunaat. The baleen and blubber were still shipped out, but Inuit did the vast majority of the whaling, since companies had realized there was no need to ship in crews of often-reluctant outsiders when Inuit were at least as skilled at killing whales. American companies had withdrawn from the Sound by 1900, leaving the whaling to Scottish interests. These Scottish companies now based themselves on land rather than overwintering ships. Their official employees were often limited to a cooper and a manager who worked closely with local leaders.

Most people in Cumberland Sound today have ancestors from two main permanent stations, Qikiqtat (Kekerten) and Umanarjuaq (Blacklead Island). Inuit once spent much of the year at one of these two locations, where they not only worked on the whale hunt but also traded sealskins and other saleable commodities. As the twentieth century progressed, plummeting commodity prices devastated the bowhead whale trade: a pound of baleen fetched five dollars in 1900, but sold for ten cents in 1912. By the close of

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12 Many Inuit did migrate into and out of the Sound either on whaling ships or on their own, with some Cumberland Sound families eventually ending up in the present community of Mittimatalik and Iqaluit (among others). Marc G. Stevenson, Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence: Structure in Cumberland Sound and Central Inuit Social Organization (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), 74, 91.

13 The Americans sold their last station in Cumberland Sound in 1896, although they kept some other stations in the South Baffin region for several more years, including two just outside the Sound at Cyrus Field Bay and Singaijaq (Cape Haven). People in Cumberland Sound today tend to say their ancestors came from either Qikiqtat or Umanarjuaq; I believe that most of the people from these American stations eventually relocated to Frobisher Bay/Iqaluit. On migrations see Stevenson, “Kekerten: Preliminary Archaeology,” 27-29; Bernhard Adolph Hantzsch, Leslie H. Neatby, ed., My Life Among the Eskimos: Baffinland journeys in the years 1909 to 1911 (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1977), 38. For baleen prices, see Stevenson, Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence, 91-92.
the First World War, the Scottish whaling stations had been taken over by trading companies, whose representatives visited and traded for bowhead whales when available, but no longer supervised the hunt.\(^{14}\) Inuit families began to scatter out and spend more time away from the stations; even as early as 1910 the German explorer Bernhard Hantzsch noted that some people lived permanently at a distance throughout the winter, coming in only occasionally to trade.\(^{15}\) Throughout the period, Inuit continued to suffer from various illnesses, especially when the ships arrived each year bringing new germs as well as supplies. Although the full extent and long-term consequences of epidemics are unclear, the Inuit population of Cumberland Sound was devastated by disease – particularly tuberculosis, venereal disease, and influenza – throughout the commercial whaling period.\(^{16}\) In short, Inuit had a multi-generational tradition of commercial whaling by the early twentieth century, but they had also passed through great societal and environmental changes.

Above all, it is the memories of children that populate this history of Inuit whaling, since the earliest oral histories I have heard are from people like Etuangat who were children or at most young adults at the whaling stations. This has presumably shaped the stories they tell. The historian of childhood Neil Sutherland comments that “children have a different

\(^{14}\) The German-American trader and long-time resident William Duval continued to run a beluga whale operation up the Sound at Usualuk into the early 1920s. To my knowledge his station did not take any bowheads. He died there around 1932 but elders still remember him and his name-soul, Sivutiksaaq, is alive today. Peteroosie Karpik, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 8 September 2008. On the trading era see Stevenson, *Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence*, 92-93

\(^{15}\) Hantzsch, *My Life Among the Eskimos*, 40

relationship than adults with their physical selves, with animals, with aspects of the physical world.”

Although Inuit children were respected for their name-souls and given more autonomy than most qallunaat children of this era, they were still not adults. They speak from the perspective of adulthood and decades of lived experience, but their memories are of a time when they had a child’s view of the world. Many of them had little direct contact with the station managers, coopers, and traders, and their Inuit parents probably sought to protect them from many of the stresses, hardships, and injustices of life at the station. In one respect, it is fitting that the children’s stories have endured so well, since children are strikingly absent from the American whaling records. Adult men pass in and out of logbooks as hired hunters and whalers; women as seamstresses and sexual partners. The stories of Inuit childhood remind us that these stations were places where everyday family life went on.

Like Chapter one, this chapter will run through six Inuit seasons, this time focussing on how Inuit in Cumberland Sound encountered and dealt with the last decades of commercial whaling. The annual cycle still dictates many activities in the region today. North of Cumberland Sound in the hamlet of Qikiqtarjuaq, near where Etuangat’s father was born, Billy Arnaquq recently described how integral seasonal changes remain to Inuit life:

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18 Inuit children were often scared of qallunaat. Elisapee Ishulutaq mentioned being terrified of German-American whaler-trader William Duval. She said that many children probably felt the same way about him, recalling, “I knew Duval, he used to be my hallo, which means like halloraluk, I used to be deathly afraid of him, like really really scared of him.” She said that Duval used to tell her that he wanted her to be his daughter, and she finally stopped being scared of him one day when he gave her a huge biscuit and told her he wouldn’t ask her to be his daughter anymore. Andrew Dialla explained that qallunaat were often called hallos; Elisapee meant Duval was her special hallo. Elisapee Ishulutaq, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 13 September 2008.
Elders have a passion for spring, because the winter is so long and cold. People always have a passion for when the spring is coming, the birds are coming, the animals are more plentiful...It is like that season comes for you to enjoy it. It is inside the people. Some men have a passion for early fall, when the harvest is plentiful and animals are migrating through. Some have a passion to go out seal hunting in the winter. Some of them cannot wait until the ocean is frozen...Once you are part of that, it just becomes part of you.19

This chapter begins where the Inuit year traditionally does, with the winter solstice during the season of ukiuq.

**Ukiuq (Winter)**

“My late mother once ate qalupalik,” began Etuangat in a story told to Margaret Nakashuk.20 It is an attention-grabbing opening line. *Qalupaliit* are walrus-sized sea monsters, sometimes considered to be part human, that lurk under the ice or by the shoreline. They are feathered, or in some tellings wear clothing made out of eider duck skin. They steal children away by stuffing them into their hoods, like Inuit mothers carrying their babies. *Qalupaliit* have two flippers: one is pointed and can make a shrill sound that paralyzes anyone who hears it; the other is bulbous, deformed, and

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“globby…like jello.” As they move around under the water, they make a low beeping sound.21

Etuangat continued his story, explaining that a hunter had once returned to his mother’s camp bearing chunks of whale blubber and skin. The man claimed to have found a dead beluga – a small white whale that lives in Arctic and sub-Arctic waters. His story seemed plausible, since the animal skin was scarred and full of holes, as if seagulls had been picking at the floating carcass. But the man had simply rubbed the skin over the rocks to rough it up. The meat was not beluga; it was qalupalik.

It was impossible to kill a qalupalik in its regular form, Etuangat explained. When faced with one, a hunter would ask it to change shape. The hunter would say, for example, “nettiuniakutik,” please turn into a ringed seal. When the hunter in Etuangat’s mother’s camp threw the spear, he asked the monster to become a beluga, and it did. “That’s how [my] mother ended up eating a qalupalik,” Etuangat explained.22 “In the old days,” he continued, “when they saw a qalupalik they would very slyly go after that qalupalik by pretending not to go after it.” As they threw the harpoon, they would make their request, “and when it died…it would emerge from the water again as whatever you wanted it to

21 This description of qalupaliit comes from Andrew Dialla, who also recounted that when he was growing up, occasionally “somebody would be really scared and tell other adults that he heard this ‘beeee, beeeep’ out in the middle of nowhere.” Pangnirtung elder Inuusiq Nashalik said he had heard them, see interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008. Etuangat (interview with Margaret Nakashuk) said that sometimes they were part-human, and called the eider-duck feathers “clothing” rather than the “skin” that Andrew had previously heard. For more on qalupaliit (known as qallupilluit in North Baffin and Kivalliq regions), including Franz Boas’ notes about them, see Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten, The Sea Woman: Sedna in Inuit Shamanism and Art in the Eastern Arctic (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2008), 113-115.
22 Etuangat, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translated by Andrew Dialla.
turn into.” Etuangat gave an old word for this shape-shifting, *pilutaminik*. These were the kinds of stories he heard when he was young.

*Ukiuq*, when the nights were long, the ice was solid, and people gathered together, was a particularly good season for storytelling. It was also the season when the shamans were most active; they had a special connection to night and often worked in darkness, where they could see literally and metaphorically. This was the world the foreign whalers overwintered in, whether or not they were aware of it. It was a place where things were not always what they seemed, where people could move back and forth between the human, animal, and supernatural worlds. It was a place where a whale might not even be a whale. As the anthropologists Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten express it, “The Inuit world is never fixed or permanent, but always open and flexible.”

Etuangat was born in a tumultuous time in Cumberland Sound, likely in the summer of 1901. He came into a world struggling between Christianity and shamanism. A shaman held him at his birth, because his older brothers and sisters “kept dying,” and the shaman

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23 There are other stories of humans and animals shapeshifting. For three Cumberland Sound examples (where a man appears to turn into a killer whale, a woman and her child change into geese, and a woman succeeds in turning a huge – possibly supernatural – polar bear into geese), see Boas, *Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay*, 273, 257.

24 Hantzsch described *ukiuq* as “when all land and sea are hard-frozen, and the wildlife which has not migrated is in its full winter dress, when the seals no longer come out of the water, and the caribou antlers are ossified.” Hantzsch, *My Life among the Eskimos*, 218.

25 Bordin, “La nuit inuit,” 57-58. Shamans could acquire a special light, *qaumaniq*, that allowed them to see things hidden to others, both supernatural phenomena and everyday ones that were just obscured or out of sight. They could use this light year-round, not just in the winter. Today some elders use the term *qaumaniq* to refer to, among other things, the aura of Christ (Laugrand cited in Bordin, “La nuit inuit,” 58).

26 Note that the categories of non-human beings are also blurred, with there often being no clear distinction between various kinds of spirits and creatures. Laugrand and Oosten, *Inuit Shamanism and Christianity*, 191.
wanted to protect him. But a few months previously, after approximately seven years of effort, the local Anglican missionaries had obtained their first known Christian converts. Across Cumberland Sound from Etuangat’s camp, at the whaling station known as Umanarjuaq or Blacklead Island, Reverend Edmund Peck had first baptised an elderly sick woman, Atterngouyak. A few weeks later he held a large public ceremony and baptised Arane, Immukke, and Nooeyout. Present-day elder Evie Anilniliak recalled the three women’s baptismal names: Mary, Maria, and Evie.

The first converts were all women. In part this was likely because the missionaries focussed on teaching women and children, since the men were often away from the station hunting or whaling. Women may also have turned to Christianity earlier because shamanism imposed particularly strict rules regarding female behaviour and food consumption. Daisy Dialla, an Inuktitut teacher who has worked to collect and record many old stories, discussed events surrounding conversions at Qikiqtat whaling station, particularly of the leader Angmarlik and his wife Aasivak. According to Daisy, who heard it directly from Aasivak, Angmarlik was reluctant to convert because “he wanted to stay with the old ways, and that was because he could have any woman he wanted any

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27 Etuangat Aksayuk, interview with Jaypeeetee Akpalialuk, March 1984, Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Servicesonds, G-1985-007, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT.
28 Peter Pitseolak recounts a short-lived, Christian-based Inuit religious movement in Kinngait in 1901 that the missionaries were not aware of; there may have been others. Cited in Lauagrand and Oosten, Inuit Shamanism and Christianity, 38-40.
29 Immukke was Evie Anilniliak’s grandmother; they used to sleep together when she was a little girl. Evie Anilniliak, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 3 September 2008. For Reverend Edmund Peck’s account of the baptisms see Frédéric Lauagrand, Jarich Oosten, and François Trudel, eds., Apostle to the Inuit: The Journals and Ethnographic Notes of Edmund James Peck, the Baffin Years, 1894-1905 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 144-145.
30 Lauagrand and Oosten, Inuit Shamanism and Christianity, 68.
time he wanted, that was part of the old ways.” 31 Angmarlik began preaching a syncretic religion that drew on Christianity but retained many Inuit practices, including spousal exchange. 32 Aasivak converted to Christianity; she learned to read the Bible and became very knowledgeable about the new religion. Daisy and others say that she divided her household, refusing to sleep with her husband until he became a Christian. I have also heard of some alternate versions that claim he refused to sleep with her. 33 In any case, Angmarlik eventually gave in and converted to Christianity along with the rest of Etuangat’s camp. 34 As Angmarlik’s followers would later say on North Baffin Island, they were “coming up Jesusy.” 35

Etuangat was raised Christian, but he heard about shamanism in his youth. He stated that he “became a young man when they were still able to tell the old stories,” although not as openly as before. Kudlu Pitseolak, a woman from across Cumberland Sound who Etuangat reportedly wanted to marry when they were young, told Andrew Dialla before she died that her parents used to go for walks away from the mission station to tell the old legends. 36 By the time Etuangat was old enough to remember, most of the shamans practiced in secret, and children were often not allowed to listen to adult conversations on

31 Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008.
32 Greenshield, 1902 Annual Letter to the CMS, *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, XXVIII new series, 1903, p. 61, as cited in Christopher G. Trott, “‘There have been grave disappointments’: reading Inuit agency through missionary texts,” Presentation for the Native Studies Department Colloquium Series, University of Manitoba, 18 January 2006.
33 Trott, “‘There have been grave disappointments,’” 10.
34 Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008.
35 Henry Toke Munn as cited in Frédéric Laugrand, *Mourir et renaître: la réception du christianisme par les Inuit de l'Arctique de l'Est canadien (1890-1940)*, xv-xvi. I am guessing that Akko-molee referred to here is Angmarlik.
36 Andrew Dialla, personal communication.
such topics. His mother would sing the old songs, rather than hymns, when she was alone. His father, who had thrown away the gifts from the whalers in his youth and who was now an old man, had been a shaman. He used to walk “back and forth…muttering strange things.” Etuangat later realized that his father had been speaking polar bear language; he must have had a polar bear spirit helper. Etuangat had also heard that new shamans were exceedingly powerful, and that even their bad thoughts could have serious repercussions. The morning after his father had become a shaman, a man called Tasha from another camp had asked to wait at a seal breathing hole that Etuangat’s father had found. The father moved aside, but had a fleeting thought that the man should find his own breathing hole. That night, dog teams arrived to say that Tasha could no longer speak, and he never spoke again. According to Etuangat, for the rest of his life his father used to think about what he had done to poor Tasha.

Given the immense power accorded to shamanism, it is perhaps not surprising that shamans often mediated the difficult decision to convert to Christianity. Some of them became lay preachers. Inuit met in secret and visited other camps to discuss whether or not to follow Christianity. On Umanarjuaq, most Inuit reportedly made the decision to convert en masse, based on extensive community meetings to which the missionaries

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37 Etuangat cited in Laugrand and Oosten, eds., Inuit Shamanism and Christianity, 47. An exception was one woman, Kopanoa, who was not shy about her shamanic powers. People used to consult her in late summer, to ask her if the ship would arrive. “She would not actually see the ship,” explained Etuangat, “but she could see it through her big light.” This light would probably be the qaumaniq discussed in fn28.

38 Etuangat, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translation by Andrew Dialla.

were not invited.40 Daisy Dialla described what she had heard about the conversions at
Qikiqtat, Etuangat’s old camp:

At Kekerten [Qikiqtat] when a whole bunch of people became Christians all at the
same time, some people did not want to become Christian and they moved their
camp somewhere else. And three shamans kept an eye on what’s happening at
Kekerten to make sure that what they’re converting into it’s a good thing…so
three shamans were kept there to keep an eye on things. The people tried to make
sure that at least three shamans were active even though they became Christians,
and one day these shamans looked at Peck [the Anglican minister] and there was a
light shining over him and that was when they knew that he was good, like his
message was good.41

The missionary Julian Bilby seems to have entered into the middle of this situation while
Reverend Peck was away in the winter of 1903. He arrived at Qikiqtat to find two camps
living about twenty miles apart. One held Christian converts, and the other followers of
Angmarlik’s syncretic religion.42

When Cumberland Sound Inuit eventually converted, most took their new religion
seriously. They brought their Gospels to the floe edge and observed the Sabbath even
during whaling season.43 The Anglican mission closed in 1913 but Inuit lay preachers
continued to spread Christianity – and the syllabic writing system introduced by Edmund
Peck – throughout and beyond the South Baffin region.44 Although the missionaries
drew a sharp distinction between shamanism and Christianity, a wide-ranging history of
syncretic religious movements in the early twentieth century suggests that Inuit did not

40 Trott, “There have been grave disappointments,” 8-9.
41 Daisy Dialla, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 15 September 2008
42 Trott, “There have been grave disappointments,” 9.
43 Trott, “There have been grave disappointments,” 6.
44 Laugrand, Oosten, and Trudel, eds., Apostle to the Inuit, 6-27; Laugrand and Oosten, Inuit Shamanism
and Christianity, 68
hold a similarly exclusive view. Etuangat suspected that despite embracing Christianity, some elders had grown old and died without losing any of their powers. He laughed when telling Margaret that he had been to a big conference, where he “saw a lot of old people, and I could sort of suspect that some of them were shamans.” Today, both shamanism and Christianity are a part of Inuit cultural heritage. Still, while aspects of shamanistic tradition continue to be influential, it is not the central force it once was, especially in the cradle of Inuit Christianity that is Cumberland Sound. Not all Inuit in Pangnirtung are religious, but I have rarely been in a place where Christianity so suffuses everyday life. Some old shamanic practices and stories continue to be circulated, but many have gone to the grave.

The qalupaliit sea monsters, however, are still freely talked about even by very devout Christian South Baffin elders. They are a point of continuity with the pre-Christian past. Perhaps qalupaliit remain less in conflict with Christian beliefs than other non-human entities, since they are considered physical creatures rather than spirits. Today, qalupaliit seem to hover somewhere between everyday lived experience and the mythical. They are not like other animals; people do not claim they exist the same way they would claim that seals or narwhals exist. Maybe some Inuit would outright deny the existence of qalupaliit, but I have not heard anyone do so. Qalupaliit remain possible if not plausible. Some Inuit alive today have returned from trips out on the land, shaken up,

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46 Etuangat, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translation by Andrew Dialla
47 Oosten and Laugrand, “Qaujimajatuqangit,” 37. One unnamed elder stated, “We have to put shamanism and Christianity together if we are really to follow the Inuit way of life” (31).
48 For other testimonies about qalupaliit see George Agiaq Kappianaq, Travelling and Surviving on our Land, 75-76; Nutaraaluk in Jarich Oosten, Frédéric Laugrand, and Wim Rasing, eds., Interviewing Inuit Elders 2: Perspectives on Traditonal Law (Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College, 1999), 183-184.
having heard the sound of a *qalupalik*. The contemporary Inuit scholar and leader Peter Irniq, from Naujaat on the shore of Hudson Bay, believes they are invisible to anyone but shamans. The soundscape of Irniq’s homeland was alive to him, in a way that it was not to most outsiders. He remembers that when he was a child, “when you were going to sleep at night, as long as there was ice around, you could hear *qalupaliit* pounding against the ice.” Etuangat concluded his own story by saying that he had never seen or heard a *qalupalik*. “Even though I went alone all over the place,” he said, “I’ve never seen anything like that.” But he added, “From what [I’ve] been able to ascertain, *qalupaliit* probably exist.”

When Inuit today talk about *qalupaliit* as if they could exist, it is not evidence of their gullibility, but rather the opposite. These stories of sea monsters attest that Inuit have not fully accepted a scientific worldview despite over a century of attempts to convince them they should do so. Inuit elders remain aware that there is a lot they don’t know, that knowledge specific to their land is still valuable and does not always fit easily into outside categories, and that it is best to constantly plan for a range of eventualities. Outside rules and worldviews may have their place and command some obedience in town, but they do not apply to the land. Out in a small camp in the vastness of Cumberland Sound, with the sounds of shifting ice and the immensity of the water, it is much harder for anyone to state categorically that such creatures could not exist, much harder for anyone to believe that humans can control and catalogue nature. It is arguably

49 Andrew Dialla, personal communication.
50 Irniq also calls them spirits, but I have not heard this on South Baffin. I wonder if they took on a more defined physical presence in the more heavily Christianized region of South Baffin.
52 Etuangat, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translation by Andrew Dialla.
this relationship with the land, this openness to possibility, this belief that shapeshifting is
a natural order of things, that has enabled Inuit to cope so well with a world that has
changed and in many ways, closed in around them.

_Upingaksaaq (Early Spring)_

Etuangat and his childhood friend Qatsu Evic returned to Qikiqtat whaling station in their
old age. Etuangat remembered sitting beside Qatsu at the station when they were
children. She was the daughter of the camp leader Angmarlik and his wife Aasivak, the
couple who had temporarily separated over Christianity in the early twentieth century. \(^{53}\)
In 1985, Qatsu and Etuangat visited Qikiqtat whaling station as part of a group of elders,
researchers, and interpreters documenting the site’s archaeology and human history.\(^{54}\)

Qatsu spoke about the parts of the whaling economy she remembered, such as the women
catching baby and adult seals in _upingaksaaq_, the season in which seals pup and birds
begin to arrive. The whaling season would begin perhaps in late March or early April,
around the time when the baby seals were getting too wary and fast to be caught in the
dens, and when there were still blizzards on the ice.\(^{55}\) At this time, nearly all the men left

\(^{53}\) An interview with Qatsu done for the Qikiqtat archaeology project states that she was born in 1889. The
Germaine Arnaktauyok collection _Stories from Pangnirtung_ (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1976) lists her as having
been born in 1898 (p. 76). I suspect that the 1898 date is more accurate, since she says that Christianity
began in the Sound when she was still on her mother’s back. Still, she would likely have been in her
nineties during the interview at Qikiqtat. She stated that she used to have documents related to her birth,
but they had burned in a house fire, so she was now dating her birth based on surrounding events. Qatsu
Evik, interview with Jaypeetee Akpalialuk, March 1984, Northwest Territories Department of Justice and
Public Services fonds, G-1985-007, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT.

\(^{54}\) That same year, the station was designated Qikiqtat Island Whaling Station National Historic Site of
Canada. See “Qikiqtat Island Whaling Station National Historic Site of Canada,” _Canada’s Historic

\(^{55}\) Hantzsch, _My Life with the Eskimos_, 218 (description of season). There is some dissension as to exactly
when floe edge whaling began each year; it presumably would have been dependent on ice and weather.
camp to go whaling at the floe edge. They were still encouraged to hunt when there were no whales in sight, but they were expected to turn over their sealskins and blubber to the whaling station.\footnote{Etuangat, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translation by Andrew Dialla.} The Inuit women worked for the station as well: scraping the blubber off the men’s sealskins, sewing for the foreign employees, and cutting up bowhead whale blubber if a whale was brought in.\footnote{Etvie Anilniliak, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 3 September 2008.} Yet the station managers apparently did not consider seal hunting part of a woman’s job, because according to Etuangat, whatever the women killed, they could keep.\footnote{Etuangat, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translation by Andrew Dialla.} The women’s hunt was necessary because adult seal fur became prime for summer tents while the men were away.\footnote{Qatsu Evic, interview with Marc Stevenson, 24-25 August 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-012, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT.} Inuit also constantly required seal blubber for heating and cooking.

At least at Qikiqtat, the majority of the women hunted seals with their husbands’ harpoons while the men were at the floe edge.\footnote{It is unclear if this happened to the same extent on Umanarjuaq. Kudlu Pitseolak said that it was mostly the young boys there who hunted seals; she had never been a hunter although some women were. Kudlu Pitseolak, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-010, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT. See also Nowyook, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-012, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT.} Qatsu became a good hunter as she grew conditions, so there is no exact date. Etuangat said they would go after the baby seals were getting too big to catch in the dens but when there were still blizzards on the ice, which Andrew estimated as the end of March or beginning of April. Peteroosie Karpik said probably around April or sometimes May, and said the women would hunt seal pups in the dens while the men were gone. Pauloosee Veevee said March. Markosie Pitseolak said May. Franz Boas said that the main time for floe edge hunting was historically May and June, and said the hunt started as soon as the baby seal hunt was over, but this was in 1884 and could have changed by the early twentieth century or varied year by year. Sources: Etuangat, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translation by Andrew Dialla; Peteroosie Karpik, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 8 September 2008; Pauloosee Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 8 August 2008; Markosie Pitseolak, “Markosie Pitseolak’s Real Life Stories,” (Pangirtung, 1973), obtained from Rosee Veevee and translated by Andrew Dialla; Franz Boas, “Whaling in Cumberland Sound,” \textit{Berliner Tageblatt} 19 October 1883, translated and reprinted in Norman F. Boas and Doris W. Boas, eds., \textit{Arctic Expedition 1883-1884: Translated German Newspaper Accounts of My Life with the Eskimos} (Mystic CT: privately published, 2009), 22.

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56 Etuangat, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translation by Andrew Dialla.
57 Evie Anilniliak, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 3 September 2008.
58 Etuangat, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translation by Andrew Dialla.
59 Qatsu Evic, interview with Marc Stevenson, 24-25 August 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-013, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT.
60 It is unclear if this happened to the same extent on Umanarjuaq. Kudlu Pitseolak said that it was mostly the young boys there who hunted seals; she had never been a hunter although some women were. Kudlu Pitseolak, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-010, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT. See also Nowyook, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-012, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT.
up; she used to come back with sleds full of seals. Most Inuit women in the early
twentieth century did not hunt frequently year-round; they were responsible for many
other tasks including skin preparation, sewing, and cooking. However, the Inuit system
of gender is conceptually very different and far more ambivalent than the *gallunaat*
equivalent. Inuit children who bore one or more name-souls of someone of the opposite
gender could be raised as that gender – with its clothes and hairstyles and activities –
until puberty. These individuals could (and in some cases still do) slide between gender
roles as adults. It was also possible for Inuit to have several genders, as they generally
had several name-souls. This acknowledged distinction between biological sex and
socialised gender seems to have made Inuit quite willing to cross gender lines when the
situation demanded it. Of course this also happened in *gallunaat* societies, particularly in
times of war, but not without a degree of social unease. In the whaling period, Inuit
gender flexibility allowed women to retain access to local goods while their husbands
worked for imported technologies and foodstuffs.\(^61\)

The men also found a way to provide food for their families who missed them.\(^62\) Most of
the men would stay out at the floe edge for as long as four months, returning only when
the ice broke up. Every two weeks they sent sealskins back to the station for the traders,
and they would also package goods for their families. Present-day elders Daisy Dialla and
Inuusiq Nashalik have both heard that before syllabic writing was adopted, Inuit would

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30:1), 94-96

\(^62\) Kudlu Pitseolak, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice
and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-011, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT
tie pieces of string to the bundles of food, and the pattern of knots in the string indicated which family it was intended for. Alternatively, Daisy has heard that Inuit coded gifts with items that recalled people’s names. For example, the name Nettiapik means baby seal, so his items might arrive with a baby sealskin attached to them. The packages would have included seal meat, which did not interest the whaling companies, and imported food, especially hardtack “biscuits.” The men, who were allotted two or three “qallunaat-style” meals a day of rations, would put aside part of each day’s supplies, presumably by supplementing their own meals with country food or by eating less themselves. “Imagine that,” smiled Andrew Dialla when he translated this. “Getting biscuits from the floe edge!” The men’s frugality enabled their families to enjoy imported foodstuffs, and also presumably kept everyone eating a varied and relatively healthy diet.

During the onsite interview at Qikiqtat, Qatsu asked to go down to see the site of her old qammaq. Qammait are semi-permanent dwellings framed with whale ribs or wood; Cumberland Sound Inuit lived in them for much of the year in the early twentieth century. Paulosie Veevee speculated that the whale ribs would sometimes still be “smelly” and “meaty” when they were being installed. The roof was made of two layers

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63 Etuangat says there was a dog driver who was responsible for ferrying the meat; they did not return home even for short visits (interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translation by Andrew Dialla). Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008.
64 Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 27 August 2008.
65 They lived in sealskin tents in the summer and lived in snow iglus while travelling in the winter. At least some winters, they spent significant time on the ice seal hunting and living in snow iglus. Kumlein said the people around him lived in snow iglus from approximately October to June in 1877. Franz Boas, “The Eskimos of Cumberland Sound and Davis Strait,” Berliner Tageblatt 21 November 1883, in Boas and Boas, eds., Arctic Expedition 1883-1884, 27, Qatsu Evic, interview with Jaypeeete Akpalialuk, 1985; Ludwig Kumlein, Contributions to the natural history of Arctic America: made in connection with the Howgate Polar Expedition, 1877-1878 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1879), 31.
66 Paulosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008.
of sealskins, insulated with a thick layer of heather that was replaced each year. Inside
the new dwelling, as soon as the ground had melted underneath it, the family would dig
out a floor area. The sleeping and eating platforms would remain slightly above ground
level, and therefore stay warmer.\textsuperscript{67} Evie Anilniliak explained that the roof had skylights
made of pieces of dried and scraped bearded seal intestine, and gave me a small piece of
it. These skylights were sewn together with caribou sinew, which expanded when wet
and made them completely watertight.\textsuperscript{68} There were a range of \textit{qammaq} sizes, but they
were all limited by their family’s ability to heat them with seal blubber lamps.\textsuperscript{69}

Qatsu told a horror story that took place in her family’s \textit{qammaq}. When she was a small
child, a ship was unexpectedly stranded in Cumberland Sound for the winter. The
\textit{qallunaat} had alcohol, which Qatsu was aware of because they often invited her parents
Angmarlik and Aasivak onboard to drink. One night, the station cooper stole some
alcohol, drank it, and shot himself in the entryway of her parents’ \textit{qammaq}. “I saw it,”
Qatsu recalled, “the foam from his mouth reached to the floor.” Some time after the
cooper’s death, her father was out hunting, and the dogs began to bark. Aasivak heard
footsteps outside, and suddenly the dead cooper flung open the door. His face was white
with frost. Aasivak yelled to her daughter to wake up. She charged at the door, and the
cooper backed away but she could still hear the sound of his frozen skin boots walking
around outside. Then suddenly the noise stopped. “This happened after he was dead.”

\textsuperscript{67} Etuangat, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and
Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-007, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT
\textsuperscript{68} Evie Anilniliak, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 3 September 2008
\textsuperscript{69} Etuangat, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and
Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-007, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT
Qatsu concluded. The story is still told today; Andrew Dialla told it to me. Over time, whalers became and have remained integrated into the Inuit supernatural world.

The qammaq site that Qatsu most wanted to see was not her family’s qammaq where the cooper had died, but her own little one. It was unusual for young women – or indeed anyone – to have their own qammaq, but Qatsu’s mother moved her daughter into her own dwelling when she became of marriageable age. Qatsu recalled that her mother had always been protective of her, to the point of making her play inside at night instead of running around with the other children. She had always told her not to get too close to men. Then suddenly her mother asked her to marry a man named Evic. Qatsu refused. She was scared. The terror and surprise she felt at being told to marry were not uncommon for young Inuit women in her era. When Qatsu refused to be convinced, her mother moved her into this small qammaq, apparently the family’s old house. Qatsu said her mother did it so Evic could “catch her.”

Clearly, however, Qatsu retained a degree of choice over whether or not to be “caught.” She spent three years in the qammaq before she finally agreed to marry Evic. In retrospect, she concluded, he was a good hunter and a good provider. They had a good marriage. She joked that she had been scared of men until she married Evic, and then

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70 There are several tellings of this story, see for example Qatsu Evic, interview with Jaypeetee Akpalialuk, 1984. The most detailed one is from a short unidentified typescript entitled “Relations between White and Inuit/Alcohol and Death” that Andrew Dialla took a picture of (provenance unknown). In it, Qatsu also recalls that her cousin and another woman were both “broken inside” and later died after a particular RCMP man slept with them. She comments that the same winter as the cooper shot himself, one night her parents became drunk and her mother Aasivak “lost her caribou skin underwear, heh!” I am not sure whether this is a story of rape, consensual sex, carousing, or something else. Qatsu does not elaborate.

ever since he died she had gone back to being afraid of men again. “Even now!” she laughed.

Qatsu was audibly moved by the return to the site of her old qammaq. It was smaller than she had remembered as a young woman. The interpreter explained that Qatsu was happy because she was back in this place and she was managing not to cry, which she hadn’t thought she would be able to do. She was enjoying herself, and the weather was good. It had been a long time since she had been to Qikiqtat, and she had given up trying to come here because she was so old.72

Qatsu also remembered games from her early childhood at Qikiqtat, including using a dog whip as a skipping rope.73 Pauloosie Angmarlik, Qatsu’s adopted brother, recalled hunting lemmings and small birds. “We didn’t realise it,” he said, “but we had been learning how to hunt…all the skills you learn in creeping up on a little bird or a lemming, you can apply that to all the other animals.”74 Etuangat remembered playing other games like the tag-based “Wolf,” and a game called “Shipwreck,” that involved one team trying to keep their balance while the other team ran at them.75 He recalled that during the long days of summer, the children would never want to go to sleep. After the adults went to

72 Qatsu interview, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-0013, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT.
74 Pauloosie Angmarlik, 1994 interview with Margaret Nakashuk, on file at the Angmarlik Visitor Centre, Pangnirtung, NU. Translation by Andrew Dialla. For a similar discussion of learning to hunt, see Markosie Pitseolak, “Markosie Pitseolak’s real life stories.”
75 Etuangat Aksayuk, interview with Jaypeeete Akpalialuk, 1984.
bed, they would just roam the hills. They would make play houses out of rocks, and use large flat rocks as play kayaks.

Rosee Veevee, Etuangat’s daughter born after the end of commercial whaling, knew the games that Qatsu and Etuangat described because she had played them herself. When she was on the steering committee for the archaeological investigations at Qikiqtat, she recognized the extant play structures easily. She said generations of children would have used them, the same ones. And later, when she moved to Pangnirtung, she and her friends “would use old food containers from the qallunaat [instead of stones] and make…the same thing.”

Like Qatsu’s stories of playing and hunting seals and getting married, most of the narratives I have heard about the commercial whaling period do not directly involve whaling. In part this is presumably because most recorded oral histories were from people too young to have been on a whaleboat crew. However, the hunt took place intensively for only about a third of the year. Despite the widespread impacts of commercial whaling, and the close friendships and sexual relationships that developed between many whalers and Inuit, individual foreigners and their activities were not the focus of most Inuit lives. Inuit altered their seasonal round to devote more time to whaling, but they continued to hunt caribou and seals for personal use, to sew clothing and tents, to get married, to raise children, and to visit family and friends. Most of their

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76 Etuangat, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translated by Andrew Dialla.
77 Rosee Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 11 September 2008
78 This is despite my opinion that Inuit elders went to special effort to tell me many of the stories they did know about qallunaat whalers, or to mention their qallunaat whaler-ancestors, in order that I might feel more connected to the storytelling.
daily activities, while often incorporating new imported equipment, were fundamentally the same activities their ancestors had performed.

**Upingaaq (Spring)**

The story of the time Unirsagaaq caught a whale has been told many times; Pauloosie Veevee told it to me. Some Pangnirtung residents still remember Unirsagaaq as a “great whale hunter” who later worked at the mission hospital. Like many of the most powerful men at the whaling stations, he learned to work with *qallunaat* and remained influential after the end of commercial whaling. He also assisted the Anglican minister in the early days of Christianity.79 One day in the early twentieth century, likely in *upingaaq* which was the main floe edge whaling season, Unirsagaaq was out with his whaleboat crew near the floe edge when they fastened onto an extremely large bowhead whale.80

By this time, whaleboats were equipped with harpoon guns and explosive darts, but the whaling process was still full of risk. Experienced Inuit whalers deemed some whales – especially those whose blowholes became sharp and elongated when they were approached – too dangerous to pursue.81 Everyone on the boat had a defined role, and young men would hear a year in advance that they had been chosen to work on a whaleboat the following season.82 During the hunt, one crew member would shoot the

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79 Jamesie Mike said he worked at the hospital; Inuusiq said he knew him and other “great whale hunters”; Evie could name him in a photograph. Jamesie Mike, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 29 August 2008; Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 15 September 2008; Evie Anilniliak, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 3 September 2008.

80 Hantzsch described *upingaaq* as “when the snow begins to melt steadily and fast, when the flowers appear and most of the wildfowl arrive and begin to nest.” Hantzsch, *My Life with the Eskimos*, 218

81 Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 15 September 2008.

82 Markosie Pitseolak, 1973 interview in possession of Daisy Dialla, translated and emailed to me by Andrew Dialla in December 2008.
harpoon gun at the whale. When the whale dove, the line attached to the harpoon would play out so quickly that another man would have to stand in the bow of the boat and pour water over the friction points. At the stern, others played out the rope and, if needed, spliced on extra lengths of rope from the neighbouring whaleboats. If the rope was not long enough, it could tauten and pull the boat under. If it became tangled or caught, the boat could flip. In one gruesome case, a man’s arm was ripped off when it became caught between the rope and the boat. “That was when they started saying that humans have a lot of blood,” elder Jamesie Mike commented. He had heard that the bottom of the boat became filled with the man’s blood, but that he survived. Jamesie speculated that they had probably tied off the stump with a tourniquet.

The whale attached to Unirsagaaq’s boat dove under the ice, stretching the rope, perhaps smashing the boat briefly up onto the ice. “Sharks started attacking [the whale] under the ice,” Pauloosie recounted. The whalers “could see globs of fat coming up from under the ice.” This alarmed them in part because they did not want any of the valuable oil to go to waste. Then the whale surfaced, perhaps desperate to escape the sharks. The men presumably then shot it with their explosive dart, which was designed to explode inside the whale. If that did not kill it, they would shoot it again. If they were able to approach this whale, they might also have lanced it by hand, in the heart. Some whales “started

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83 Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 27 August 2008. His father, Attagoyuk, was a rope handler.
84 Jamesie Mike, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 29 August 2008. For earlier stories of Inuit whaling injuries, see Hannah’s stories recounted in Hall, Arctic Researches, 246-247.
85 Enoosie told a story of a whale pulling a boat onto the floe edge; this may have been the same whale, or a different one. Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 27 August 2008
thrashing their tails around” near the end, others rolled and writhed around.87 From stories he had heard, Pauloosie Veevee commented, “The happiest moment for the whaler...[was] once the whale starts spouting blood from its breathing hole.”88 That meant it was near death.

When the whale died, the dangerous part of the hunt was over, but the work was not. Unirsagaaq had caught the whale close to an island with two names. Inuit call it Umanaq, reflecting the fact that it is shaped like a sea mammal’s heart. Foreign whalers, using imagery more familiar to them, referred to it as Haystack Island.89 The island was about twenty kilometres away from Qikiqtat whaling station. Depending on the time of year, the men may have towed the whale directly into the station, or dragged it to the ice, where they would butcher it and then transport it to the station with dog teams, on giant sleds made specifically for floe-edge whaling. When the meat was butchered on the ice, it used to arrive at the station in bags, and Elisapee Ishulutaq had heard that the blood that pooled at the bottom of the bags would be “really thick but very delicious.”90

It seems likely that this particular whale of Unirsagaaq’s was towed directly into Qikiqtat. Qatsu Evic recalled the arrival at the station of an enormous whale caught by Unirsagaaq, “so huge that my father and others looked as if they were children beside it.”91

87 Etuangat, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-012, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT. Etuangat provides the additional information that they would sometimes shoot multiple exploding darts.
88 Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008
89 Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008
90 Elisapee Ishulutaq heard this from her mother, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 13 September 2008.
91 Unirsagaaq is written as “Uniukshagak” in this interview but I assume it was the same person. Qatsu noted that this whale was larger than most. Qatsu Evic, interview with Jaypeeeteek Akapialuk, 1984.
butchering would take days, just as it had for the *qallunaat* whalers in the mid-nineteenth century. If the whale was at the station, it would be left on the shoreline and every low tide, people would go down and work on it again. It would take two days just to chop up the tongue, which was larger than a beluga whale.\(^92\) According to various reports, the men would tie burlap sacks onto their boots, or have boots with spikes on the soles, to enable them to walk on the whale while they were butchering it.\(^93\) The baleen came out easily as soon as the whale began to rot.\(^94\) Pauloosie Veevee laughed and commented that the whalers “might not have been too clean” while they were butchering. He said that whale meat soon becomes “soft and soggy” out in the open. People would eat it at first, he said, and they would feed it to the large number of dogs at the station. They would also cache it for later use.\(^95\) Markosie Pitseolak of Umanarjuaq station recalled that whenever a whale was brought in, they could have all the *qallunaat* food that they wanted, which was not usually the case. “Sometimes we would even throw biscuits at each other like snowball fighting, thinking about how hard it was to get this food,” he said.\(^96\)

Killing a bowhead whale was, by this time, a rare and major event. Etuangat remembered only six whales brought into Qikiqtat during his childhood, and he had heard that every whale that was spotted was taken. Across the Sound at the other station of

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\(^92\) Markosie Pitseolak, 1973 interview in possession of Daisy Dialla, translated by Andrew Dialla. See also Rosee Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 11 September 2008

\(^93\) Pauloosie Veevee said burlap, and Markosie Pitseolak said spikes. Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008; Markosie Pitseolak, 1973 interview in possession of Daisy Dialla, translated by Andrew Dialla

\(^94\) Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008.

\(^95\) Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008.

\(^96\) Markosie Pitseolak, “Markosie Pitseolak’s Real Life Stories.”
Umanarjuaq, Etuangat’s childhood crush Kudlu Pitseolak remembered five. The occasions when a whale was brought in “used to be very happy times.” There would be great celebrations at the station whenever a whale was killed, even before the carcass arrived, because the news of the kill would travel. Nowyook, a young man at Umanarjuaq station, recalled decades later that he had never seen people happier.

Commercial bowhead whaling trailed off in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and the last whaler-trader visited Cumberland Sound in the early 1920s. New technologies and women’s fashions left little demand for baleen, and there were so few whales left that the Cumberland Sound fishery was unprofitable. Inuit must have noticed the changes that were occurring, but as people who had always been whalers, it seems that they did not expect it to end, at least not so suddenly and for so long. In the 1990s, the elder Pauloosie Angmarlik, Qatsu’s adopted brother, remembered that when he was a child in the early twentieth century, his father Angmarlik used to take him to the floe edge when they were waiting for the whales. Pauloosie later understood that his father was probably trying to teach him about whaling. He speculated that Angmarlik thought whaling would continue, and that he thought bowhead whaling would be an important skill for his son. But only one bowhead whale was caught in Pauloosie’s adult life: in 1946, Angmarlik headed up one last hunt using a carefully maintained 84-year-old...

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97 Kudlu Pitseolak was approximately the same age as Etooangat; he had secretly wanted to marry her but she married someone else first. Andrew Dialla, personal communication.
98 Markosie Pitseolak, “Markosie Pitseolak’s Real Life Stories.”
99 Nowyook, interview with Jaypeeete Akpialailuk, March 1984, Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT.
100 Pauloosie Angmarlik, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translated by Andrew Dialla.
harpoon gun.\textsuperscript{101} Elisapee Ishulutaq, who was living close to Qayaqtalik where this whale was killed, went up to investigate. Dead whales were no longer a common sight in Cumberland Sound. Elisapee was surveying the shoreline with a spyglass and kept telling her husband, “There’s nothing there, except a big boulder.” It was the whale.\textsuperscript{102}

Still, Inuit took their whaling skills and equipment and put some of them to use in the changed environment and economy that followed. As several elders explained to me after they finished telling the bowhead whaling stories they knew, Inuit began to herd beluga whales commercially at the head of Cumberland Sound. This annual event had its roots decades earlier, but reached a peak in the 1920s and 1930s under the encouragement of the Hudson’s Bay Company and the management of Angmarlik, who was used to organizing large-scale activities since he had also been the Inuit manager for bowhead whaling at Qikiqtar.\textsuperscript{103} Post records note as many as 800 belugas caught in a single drive, with 5100 whales brought in between 1923 and 1940.\textsuperscript{104} Inuit used all the available boats – many of which were bowhead whaleboats – to encircle the belugas and drive them into a bay where they would be beached as the tide went out. The hunters


\textsuperscript{102} Elisapee and her husband were on the boat right behind the whale when it was being towed in. She remembered her husband would cut small pieces of the whale for them to eat on the way. “He actually jumped onto the whale when they were dragging it!” she remembered. Angmarlik supervised the cutting up of the whale in Pangnirtung. Peteroosie Karpik remembered clearly that Angmarlik said only the men who were going to live a long time could cut the whale. I asked if he thought this was because he wanted the tradition to live on for a long time. Peteroosie said he thought it was because he knew just how difficult it was to butcher a whale, and he wanted the strongest men. Elisapee Ishulutaq, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 13 September 2008; Peteroosie Karpik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 8 September 2008.

\textsuperscript{103} Stevenson, “Kekerten – Preliminary Archaeology,” 132

\textsuperscript{104} See table in Stevenson, \textit{Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence}, 97. Pangnirtung Post records provide limited descriptions of the events at the post. Pangnirtung Post, 1921-1939, B.455/a/1-8 and B.455/a/8-15, Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, MB.
would wade around the bay in tall waterproof boots and kill the whales with a shot to the head. They would have to be really careful with their shots, Inuusiq Nashalik recalled. “There would be people and whales all over the place.”105 The next several days would be spent bringing the whales back to the post. “Some boats would only have two people and a pile of whales,” recalled Elisapee Ishulutaq.

Nearly everyone from the camps around Cumberland Sound would gather for the beluga herding event; they would know to come to the trading post at the highest and fastest tide in July. At least in the early years of beluga herding, most of them would travel in their old whaleboats, although some of the wealthier families acquired new boats and motors in this period. Archaeologist Marc Stevenson has argued that whaleboats were conducive to cooperative hunting and maintaining extended family camps, since they were such a scarce and valuable resource that not every nuclear family could own one.106 Elisapee Ishulutaq remembered crossing Cumberland Sound in a whaleboat, with the man in the stern setting the rhythm of the oars with his voice. She also had strong memories of being in camp on quiet nights, when it was dark and a rowboat was approaching. She wouldn’t be able to see the boat, but she could hear the oars dipping into the water as the boat came close to shore.107 Some of the old whaleboats continued to be in use well into the mid-twentieth century.108

105 Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 27 August 2008
106 Stevenson, Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence, 113
107 Elisapee Ishulutaq, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 13 September 2008
108 Andrew had seen Jamesie’s father’s boat when he was growing up. Andrew Dialla, personal communication. Several were still in use in 1946. George Anderson, “A Whale is Killed,” 21
The processing of belugas also recalled days at the old bowhead whaling stations. Evie Anilniliak remembered the beluga drives in detail, and how the path leading from the shore to the blubber station would be slippery with oil. Families now lived in smaller camps, but the gatherings in Pangnirtung would resemble the larger settlements at the whaling stations, except that families from Qikiqtat and Umanarjuaq both participated. They lived in sealskin tents and spent two or three weeks hauling and processing the whales. They ate as much of the outer skin as they wanted, and they cached meat for dog food, but they rendered the blubber into oil and packed it in barrels for shipping. The women carefully scraped the hard cartilage between the skin and blubber, which was then rolled up and salted in huge half-beluga pieces. When Inuit caught belugas for personal use, they used this cartilage, majja, to make ropes.109

Belugas are small in comparison to bowheads; they grow to a maximum of six metres long. Although they were different animals killed with a very different hunting technique, the influence of bowhead whaling was clear. Once again, women worked at the station, processing the blubber, while men chopped and hauled the carcasses. Social events were also similar. During the bowhead whaling period, men from two stations had met up and held friendly wrestling matches at the floe edge; they now began to do this during the beluga processing time.110

I wondered if herding whales in this intensive way was a qallanaat idea, but Inuusiq Nashalik did not think so. He thought it was probably the brainchild of the whaleboat

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110 Evie Anilniliak, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 3 September 2008
leaders, because they “knew how to hunt all the animals around here.” They were the ones who “knew the easier way to get the animals.” In his opinion, the *qallunaat* knowledge of the land was too sparse to come up with an idea like that. Jamesie Mike concurred, and said he had heard that the first time beluga herding was done in Cumberland Sound, it was done by a group of women armed with stones, a legend reflected in the name of the area, Milurialik, which means the place where stones are thrown. The men had left to go looking for caribou, and were surprised to return to a camp full of food. The women knew the area. They knew that the water was shallow there and that beluga could be driven far inland during the highest tides. In stories about beluga herding and bowhead whaling, imported technologies like motorized boats and guns are used to great effect, and skills that people have learned in the past are applied to new activities, but the most important criteria are ingenuity and knowledge of the land.

Contemporary arctic climate change scholarship often mentions that Inuit have adapted successfully to past environmental shifts. The anthropologist Mark Nuttall has argued for expanding these discussions of adaptation to include the idea of anticipation, which he defines as “the ways of making choices or decisions based on predictions, expectations, or beliefs about the future.” Inuit have done far more than simply react to changes in their environment. As hunters and travellers they have creatively used their knowledge to

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111 Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 27 August 2008
113 Jamesie Mike, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 29 August 2008
predict possible outcomes and to stay alert to potential dangers or opportunities. To me, the concept of anticipation is particularly helpful because it also embraces doubt, uncertainty, and fear. Even as Inuit voice a strong and justified faith in their cultural ability to adapt, they view with apprehension the myriad issues facing their communities. Anticipation also contains the kernel of imperfection: no one can fully anticipate the consequences of all their actions. To most nineteenth-century Inuit and Americans, whales were so powerful and numerous that a population collapse seems to have been unimaginable, and certainly it would not have occurred without intensive commercial exploitation.

_Aujaq (Summer)_

During the days of bowhead and beluga commercial whaling, most Inuit left for an annual caribou hunt around August, in _aujaq_ (summer). It was the time of year when caribou coats were at their prime for winter clothing and bedding. Although the introduction of the repeating rifle led to more caribou being taken year-round, this

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115 Nuttall’s argument analyses anticipation in hunting, a male-dominated activity. It would be interesting to see the degree to which this also applies to female-dominated activities like skin preparation, sewing, and childcare – and how Inuit apply these strategies to town work.

116 Nuttall, “Anticipation,” 33

117 Scientists and Inuit seem to agree that the bowhead whale population plummeted by the 1920s. Marc Stevenson says it is also possible that the ringed seal population dropped in the 1890s; at least, catches declined steadily year by year in that decade. Stevenson, “Kekerten: Preliminary Archaeology,” 46. Andrew Diailla had heard that the beluga population had been affected by the drives in the 1920s and 1930s.

118 Ludwig Kumlein said “July and August,” in the late 1870s. In 1903, A. P. Low said the whaling season extended into the summer so they could not leave until later in the summer to hunt caribou for winter clothing. There was less whaling in Cumberland Sound in the 1870s, so it is likely that when it picked up again at the turn of the century, the trip was shortened. Kumlein, _Contributions to the natural history of Arctic America_, 14; A. P. Low, _Report on the Dominion Government Expedition to Hudson Bay and the Arctic Islands on Board the D. G. S. Neptune_, 1903-1904 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1906), 160.

119 Hantzsch, _My Life with the Eskimos_, 218
longstanding seasonal hunt remained crucial for clothing. Only a few Inuit would stay behind at the whaling stations to unload and reload the incoming ship, clean up the station, and prepare it for the winter. They would later trade with other families for the skins they needed. The annual caribou hunt was one of the greatest points of continuity before, during, and after the whaling period. It had ceased to be a community-wide annual tradition by the early 1960s, but caribou hunting and the regions associated with it continue to be important in Cumberland Sound.

It was still possible to catch bowhead whales in *aujaq*, and after the caribou hunt Inuit would return to the station and whale until the ice formed. The year-round *qallunaat* managers presumably accepted and supported the hiatus in whaling, since they also wore Inuit-made caribou clothing throughout the winter and appreciated its warmth. They probably could not have stopped the caribou hunt anyway. Mid-nineteenth century accounts and logbooks record Inuit quitting whaling employment when they needed to hunt. Since most *qallunaat* lacked transportation skills and the knowledge necessary to live off the land, Inuit were able to literally move in and out of their sphere of influence.

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120 Stevenson, *Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence*, 44
121 Nowyook, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-010, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT.
122 On annual hunt being discontinued see Stevenson, *Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence*, 102
123 Hantzsch, *My Life with the Eskimos*, 40
124 Missionaries, whalers, anthropologists, and explorers all adopted it if they were going to spend any time in the region. See for example Trott, “The Dialectics of ‘Us’ and ‘Other’,” 180; Hantzsch, *My Life with the Eskimos*, 212; Tyson, *The Cruise of the Florence*, 24.
126 As James Scott has argued about other parts of the world, independence on the margins of states would greatly decrease in the mid-twentieth century, with the advent of new forms of transportation and technology that have enhanced state control over far-flung, sparsely populated areas. James Scott, *The Art
When the whalers first arrived, Inuit travelled to caribou country on large boats made out of bearded seal or walrus skins. By the end they were travelling in wooden whaleboats. They were not allowed to take the companies’ regular whaleboats on the trip, and instead used wooden boats they had acquired outright over generations of commercial whaling. Both wooden and skin boats were invariably crowded. In the years that I have heard and read about, it seems that most family groups headed to the vicinity of Nettilling Lake. Located inland from the head of Cumberland Sound, it is the largest lake in the Canadian arctic archipelago. In 1910, the German explorer Bernhard Hantzsch commented, “The Eskimos prefer big Lake Nettiling…best for hunting caribou. There are numerous herds of caribou along its banks.” He noted that while most trails he travelled on with Inuit were indiscernible to him, he could easily follow the Nettilling Lake trail to the first portage, since it had been so well travelled that a beaten-down track was clearly visible. Different families had distinct areas they preferred to hunt in, and many of them followed trails that would have been invisible to Hantzsch, but the region around Nettilling Lake was rich in stories and history. As the anthropologist Claudio

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128 Etuangat Aksayuk, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translation by Andrew Dialla. Qatsu talked about the skin boats but said they were before her time, see Qatsu Evic, interview with Jaypeetee Akpialaluk, March 1984, Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT.
130 Hantzsch, My Life with the Eskimos, 197. Stories of caribou hunting at Nettling also occur in James Mutch’s collections of stories for Boas, although not all caribou-hunting stories take place there. Franz Boas, The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay: Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol XV, 1901, 278.
Aporta has argued, for Inuit, travelling on such long-used trails is an act of memory and of engaging with an environment that contains the past.\textsuperscript{131}

The full route up to Nettilling Lake requires four portages.\textsuperscript{132} Some families would go all the way to the lake and pitch their sealskin tents there, while others would camp closer to the fjord. This may have depended in part on how plentiful the caribou were that year.\textsuperscript{133} Inuit who routinely headed to the lake would store pieces of wood or whale ribs along the trail to help them slide their boats.\textsuperscript{134} Dogs would carry packs.\textsuperscript{135} Usually the men would take minimal supplies and leave the main family camp, roaming for days or weeks to accumulate enough caribou.\textsuperscript{136} If all went well, they would end up with a huge pile of skins. They would pack all of this into one tight bundle, which also contained sinew and fat and dried meat, and which they waterproofed by wrapping it with two more caribou skins. One man would carry it down to the water. When they returned to the whaling station, they would break the bale of skins apart and begin to work on clothing after the first sea ice had formed.\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{131} Claudio Aporto, “Routes, Trails, and Tracks,” 15. Aporta talks specifically about breaking old/new trails across the sea ice each year, which also would have applied in Cumberland Sound but not in the ice-free caribou hunting season.
\textsuperscript{132} Elisapee Ishulutaq, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 13 September 2008
\textsuperscript{133} Archaeologist Doug Stenton has noted that before contact, there seem to have been two main types of annual hunts. When caribou were plentiful, women and children stayed in various coastal areas and men made forays inland to hunt for days or weeks at a time. When they were scarcer, entire communities headed up to Nettilling lake in the spring and early summer and stayed there, with some people even overwintering. Douglas R. Stenton, “Caribou Population Dynamics and Thule Culture Adaptations on Southern Baffin Island, NWT,” pp. 15-43 in \textit{Arctic Anthropology} (1991 28:2), 21-25. On the suitability and importance of summer/fall caribou skins for clothing, see also Stenton, “The Adaptive Significance of Caribou Winter Clothing for Arctic Hunter-Gatherers,” pp. 3-28 in \textit{Etudes/Inuit/Studies} (1991 15:1).
\textsuperscript{134} Andrew Dialla said his father had wood (personal communication); Hantzsch noted whalebones in \textit{My Life with the Eskimos}, 197.
\textsuperscript{135} Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 15 September 2008
\textsuperscript{136} Andrew personal communication
\textsuperscript{137} Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 15 September 2008. Inuusiq said that in his days, each outpost camp ended up with a pile of skins; I’m not sure how it would have been divided in
In 1883, Boas described Inuit returning contentedly from the hunt in mid-October:

Many of [the groups] brought whaling boats which they had obtained from a whaling vessel. They were filled to the gunwales with skins obtained during the summer. Men, women, and children laughed, sang, and talked in the boats. The dogs howled, often one or the other went to the kettle filled with chow that was standing in the middle of the boat. The man steering the boat sat alone on an elevated seat, looking serious and majestic while navigating his boat. If the wind was unfavourable, it became necessary to row. If a seal popped its head out of the water and there was no particular reason to hurry along, they would stop and every gun was ready to greet the seal should it come up again for air.\(^{138}\)

The Inuit abandonment of the stations during whaling season denotes the importance of caribou. The animals provided meat, marrow, and fat; their sinew was used for thread, bowstrings, and bow backing; and their bones and antlers for numerous tools and games. Some of these uses were supplanted by imported technology during the whaling period, but there was no imported material that compared to caribou skins for winter clothing, and each adult needed six or seven skins a year for their outfits. Skins were also prized for sleeping robes or blankets.\(^{139}\) As Hantzsch noted, “The caribou hairs spread all over the Eskimo households, even over what we eat and drink…[they] are so unavoidable that one barely notices them.”\(^{140}\) If the annual caribou hunt failed, it could seriously compromise a group’s ability to provide for itself throughout the winter.\(^{141}\) Winter the whaling days. Andrew Dialla said it was taboo to work on caribou skins until after the first sea ice was forming (personal communication).

\(^{139}\) According to Stenton, caribou was useful partly for the meat, marrow, and fat, but also for bone and antler (for tools), “teeth (clothing decoration, amulets, games), scapulae (skin scrapers), astragali (bowdrill mouthpieces), ribs (bowdrill), sesamoids and phalanges (games), metacarpals/metatarsals (scrapers). Sinew was used for thread and bowstrings and bow backing. Stenton, “Caribou Population Dynamics,” 18-19.
\(^{140}\) Hantzsch, *My Life with the Eskimos*, 196
\(^{141}\) Stenton, “Caribou Population Dynamics,” 20
hunting consisted largely of waiting at seal breathing holes, and no one wanted to do that without proper warm clothing.

Yet caribou are one of the arctic’s most potentially unreliable resources. They frequently change their migration patterns, and populations seem to fluctuate every 60-100 years. As Hantzsch put it, the caribou’s “migrations are not fully understood by the Eskimos, usually so good in observing such things.” Inuit have eagerly combined their longstanding knowledge with new technologies like firearms, radios, and powerboats to help them locate and kill caribou. They are adept at recognizing areas that have been disturbed by grazing caribou, and areas that have plants that caribou like to eat. In a perfect example of using existing knowledge to anticipate the unexpected, the hunter Pauloosie Angmarlik recalled being up near the Penny Icecap in the summer and recognizing winter caribou droppings. He knew then that he should return that winter, when he found and killed many caribou.

Because caribou migrations are so erratic, Nettilling Lake was a particularly valuable place. As Andrew Dialla put it, Nettilling Lake is the caribou’s “land”; at most times they can be found there. Inuit have been hunting caribou around Nettilling Lake for

142 The name of the hamlet of Pangnirtung (Panniqtuq) means “place of bull caribou,” but caribou ceased to frequent the region in the early 1960s and are only now returning. Andrew Dialla, personal communication.
143 Stenton, “Caribou Population Dynamics,” 18
144 Hantzsch, My Life with the Eskimos, 195
145 Andrew personal communication; Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 15 September 2008
146 Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008
147 Andrew Dialla, personal communication. Twentieth-century wildlife scientists, while often in conflict with Inuit over caribou management, concurred on this particular issue. In the 1920s, when caribou rarely ventured down to the coasts and scientists believed they were going extinct, they could still be found at Nettilling. Stenton, “Caribou Population Dynamics,” 25
centuries, and the Tuniit (Dorset) people did so before them. When Hantzsch arrived in 1911, he recorded that his Inuit travelling companions were “running hither and yon, viewing the old tent sites used from time immemorial.”\textsuperscript{148} Nettilling Lake was a meeting place that drew Inuit from all over South Baffin Island.\textsuperscript{149} In the past, some Inuit had even overwintered there; they obtained seal products from the population of landlocked ringed seals for which the lake is named.\textsuperscript{150}

With the rise of commercial whaling, trips to Nettilling tended to be limited to the annual \textit{aujaq} hunt.\textsuperscript{151} Etuangat recalled that the Inuit whalers were not supposed to hunt caribou at all during the winter months. They were told to focus on obtaining seals, which had valuable skins and blubber.\textsuperscript{152} Restrictions on caribou hunting would become far more severe later in the twentieth century, when the Canadian government increasingly sought to impose wildlife management policies on South Baffin Inuit. In the 1940s, the government condemned the number of caribou kills at Nettilling Lake and officials told some Inuit in Kimmirut to remain on the coast. Inhibiting Inuit from travelling to Nettilling struck at the core of Cumberland Sound society.\textsuperscript{153} Many Inuit remain

\textsuperscript{148} Hantzsch, \textit{My Life with the Eskimos}, 214
\textsuperscript{149} Cumberland Sound Inuit frequently met other Inuit from Kinngait/Cape Dorset there as well; they all went caribou hunting there. Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008
\textsuperscript{150} Stenton, “Caribou Population Dynamics,” 21-25. Some people said these seals did not taste very good, although Hantzsch thought they were acceptable, and his Inuit companions ate them.
\textsuperscript{151} Hantzsch, \textit{My Life with the Eskimos}, 216-217
\textsuperscript{152} Etuangat, Interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translated by Andrew Dialla.
\textsuperscript{153} As part of a pattern of increasing government intervention in Inuit lives, Canadian government scientists and policy-makers decided in the 1920s that Inuit were killing too many caribou. Inuit concur that there were fewer caribou, although according to archaeologist Doug Stenton, they believe the weather conditions had a lot to do with it. A series of laws and regulations limited caribou hunting to what was deemed by government officials to be required for subsistence. The RCMP was enforcing the regulations and patrolling by the 1930s. In 1943, a report was issued condemning the number of caribou kills at Nettilling Lake by fox trappers from Kimmirut who had overwintered there. Inuit were told to stay on the coast, and the Hudson’s Bay Company, at least in Kimmirut, stopped outfitting hunters who planned to winter inland.
sceptical of scientific survey methods and policies that claim to know better than they do how to manage animal populations.

The Nettilling Lake area was not just life sustaining to Inuit in the whaling period; it also seemed to have more than its share of death. Qatsu Evic knew that her grandparents had disappeared there. When her mother, Aasivak, was newly married, she had said goodbye to her parents as they were setting off for their annual caribou hunt in the Nettilling Lake region. The entire party disappeared while on the hunt.\textsuperscript{154} Qatsu had heard that their \textit{qamutit} sleds were later discovered facing towards home, but their bodies and other possessions were never found. When Qatsu was young, every year her family would follow the same path her grandparents were supposed to have taken. Her mother wanted to find some trace of them.\textsuperscript{155} As in many other places, if people die on the land, Inuit keep looking until their bodies are found.\textsuperscript{156}

In 1947, two Iglulik North Baffin hunters who had travelled all the way to Nettilling to hunt were coercively persuaded to relocate to Clyde River. Pressure continued into the 1950s with educational materials that attempted to teach Inuit “better” hunting practices. Although there were only two actual convictions for hunting caribou, both thousands of kilometres away on the shores of Great Slave Lake, oral histories suggest that Inuit were very aware that regulations were in place and did not make a practice of flaunting them except perhaps in cases of need. Pauloosie Angmarlik, who grew up hunting caribou, repeated that he had been told not to hunt more than five caribou, and that even though there were lots of caribou around, they had to “try to follow the law.” John Sandlos, \textit{Hunters at the Margin: Native People and Wildlife Conservation in the Northwest Territories} (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) 170, 177-79, 189-190; Stenton, “Caribou Population Dynamics,” 25; Pauloosie Angmarlik, interview with Margaret Nakashuk, translated by Andrew Dialla. On caribou policy see also Peter Kulchyski and Frank James Tester, \textit{Kiujjut (Talking Back): Game Management and Inuit Rights, 1900-1970} (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); Natasha Thorpe, Kitikmeok Elders, et al., \textit{Thunder on the Tundra: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit of the Bathurst Caribou} (Victoria, BC: Tuku and Nogak Project, 2002); Welfare Division, Northern Administration Branch, \textit{The Q Book} (Ottawa: Ministry of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, Government of Canada, 1964) 274-276. For a humorous critique of \textit{The Q Book}, see the film \textit{Qallunaat! Why White People are Funny} (Beachwalker Films/National Film Board, 2006).

\textsuperscript{154} Qatsu interview, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-0014, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT

\textsuperscript{155} Qatsu Evic, interview with Jaypeeete Akpialuk, 1984. Andrew Dialla (personal communication) explained that whenever an Inuk dies on the land, people always do whatever they can to recover the body.

\textsuperscript{156} Andrew Dialla, personal communication.
The Nettilling Lake district has been linked to other catastrophes. After the end of
whaling, another family went off on their caribou hunt and starved to death. Inuit later
went up and found the place where they had died, near the lake. “It’s a beautiful spot,”
said Andrew Dialla. “I call it paradise that will kill you.” Andrew’s father, Joanasie
Dialla, went looking every year for another family that had disappeared. Finally, behind
a huge boulder next to a river, he found skeletons of a woman holding a baby. He
thought they must have been trying to cross the river when everyone drowned except the
woman with the baby in her amauti hood. She had managed to get to the riverbank with
her child, but they had died there.157

I include these stories in part to avoid giving the overall impression that only qallunaat,
not Inuit, die tragically in the Arctic. There are hazards no matter where one lives, and
sometimes no amount of knowledge and experience can mitigate disaster. Sometimes
people still disappear. But notably, these stories of death also contained an element of
continuity: people searched for dead loved ones, continued to hunt caribou, returned over
and over again to the same place. Starving or drowning were risks associated with going
out on the land, but like the risks of tenement fires or disease in nineteenth-century
industrial cities, people generally did what they could to prevent them, but accepted that
they continued to occur.

Although caribou hunting patterns changed over time, the activity remained important.
Saullu Nakashuk spoke about the ritual of her father going caribou hunting and her
mother making clothing with the skins, and added that she had learned to sew from her

157 Andrew Dialla, personal communication
mother and had made “many, many” caribou-skin parkas in her lifetime. Inuusiq Nashalik, who was born at the very end of the whaling days, clearly recalls following his father on the annual hunts. Sometimes they would be out for a month, with just the clothes on their backs and their knife and their gun. They would live off what they caught. Inuusiq’s father would make him walk such a long way that sometimes he would cry, hoping his father would stop and rest. Later he realized that his father had been effectively training him to hike long distances, giving him the skills necessary to feed his family. Most families no longer go on the summer hunt to Nettilling annually; it seems to be more common to spend limited time and resources on returning to the shoreline camps around Cumberland Sound. But they still continue to hunt caribou. Inuusiq, in his nineties, shot a caribou from a boat in aujaq of 2008. Referencing the huge bundle of skins that each family would carry down the trail after the annual hunt, he commented that he “would not be able to carry all the caribou he’s caught over the years.”

**Ukiaksaaq (Early Fall)**

In September 1922, probably around the beginning of ukiaksaaq, the Easonian burned to the ground at Qikiqtar. The ship had already broken down multiple times. When it began causing trouble again, the captain, John Taylor of Dundee, decided to beach it, remove the propellor, and navigate home by sail. While the ship lay on the shoreline, a

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159 Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 27 August 2008
160 Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 15 September 2008
161 Kenn Harper, “The Burning of the Easonian,” *North/Nord*, May/June 1974, 31. Hantzsch described ukiaksaaq as the time of year when there were snows and night frosts, plants were dying, and migratory birds were heading south. Hantzsch, *My Life with the Eskimos*, 218.
faulty generator caught fire in the engine room. The crew could not break through the hull to put out the flames. The fuel tanks exploded, and the ship burned up within six hours. Inuit camped 50 kilometres away at Illungayuit saw the flames. The Inuit at Qikiqtat sheltered Taylor and his crew of nine men – most of whom had lost their possessions – in their own homes.

Captain Taylor was well known in Cumberland Sound, having visited on whaling ships since he was a child, long before he became a captain. The previous year, in 1921, he had arrived to find that the people at Umanarjuaq had caught a whale. Everyone celebrated with a feast of country food, and they played music for hours on the ship’s gramophone. Taylor traded ammunition, food, tobacco, whaling gear, and other provisions in exchange for the blubber, baleen, and other goods people had accumulated throughout the year.

In 1922, however, the fire consumed Taylor’s supply of trade goods, including all the ammunition. Inuit must have been anxious about the coming winter; they had recent memories of ammunition shortages. During the First World War, the lone remaining Scottish trader at Umanarjuaq, James Law, had been cut off from his homeland. He ran out of trade goods, and was kept alive by gifts from Inuit hunters. The late Nowyook recalled how during the war Inuit retrieved shells from the animals they killed. They

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162 Jamesie had heard from his mother that it was the generator. Jamesie Mike, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 29 August 2008
163 “Ship fire that ended an era,” Dundee Telegraph, June 25 1966; “The Esquimaux and Harry Lauder,” Dundee Advertiser, 13 Oct 1921; “From Dundee to Trade with the Eskimos,” Dundee Evening Telegraph, 2 October 1954. Other goods apparently included reindeer, bear, wolf, walrus, and sealskins. Thanks to Andrew Dialla for sending me copies of the above articles.
164 Stevenson, Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence, 90-93
made new bullets out of tin cans, the tips of matches, and cannon gunpowder.\textsuperscript{165} Some Inuit far from the whaling stations began hunting with bows and arrows again.\textsuperscript{166} In the early twentieth century, an observer had predicted that a withdrawal of the Cumberland Sound whaling companies would be devastating to Inuit, who he claimed were completely reliant on trade goods and “fast ceasing to be expert in the use of their old-fashioned weapons, such as spears, small harpoons, bows and arrows, etc.”\textsuperscript{167} Inuit certainly preferred to hunt with guns and ammunition, but during the First World War, they proved able to combine old and new knowledge in inventive ways.

When the \textit{Easonian} burned, the Inuit lost out on some trade goods but the situation was not dire. Taylor and several Inuit whalers travelled by whaleboat up Cumberland Sound, looking for the \textit{Albert}, another Scottish trading vessel. They found the ship within 48 hours, and its captain picked up the entire \textit{Easonian} crew and took them home.\textsuperscript{168} The wreck of the \textit{Easonian} can still be seen at low tide at Qikiqtat.

The burning of the \textit{Easonian} is one of several possible places to mark the end of commercial bowhead whaling. It was the last whaling-trading ship to travel to Cumberland Sound from Dundee, and it was never replaced. As Etuangat recalled, “after Taylor…nobody came back, and there were just Inuit people living here [at Qikiqtat].”\textsuperscript{169}

\textsuperscript{165} Nowyook, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-0012, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT
\textsuperscript{166} “The Esquimaux and Harry Lauder,” \textit{Dundee Advertiser}, 13 October 1921. Courtesy of Andrew Dialla.
\textsuperscript{167} Keenleyside, “Euro-American Whaling,” 3
\textsuperscript{169} Etuangat, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?], Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-007, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT
Bowheads seem to have been hunted sporadically for a few years following the Scottish companies’ departure. Saullu Nakashuk recalled that she was born after the 1923 arrival of the RCMP, at the same time as a whale was brought in. Families continued to disperse from the old whaling stations, spreading out to outpost camps around Cumberland Sound and beyond. In the mid-1950s, grass began to grow on the trampled areas of Qikiqtat again.

Around 1922, the establishment of a trading monopoly by the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) also marked a sea change in Cumberland Sound. In terms of financial exploitation, the HBC were probably no worse than the whalers. Inuit were compensated disgracefully during commercial whaling, given that the baleen of a single bowhead whale could fetch $10,000 at the turn of the twentieth century. Charles Francis Hall estimated that $15 million worth of baleen and oil had been taken from Cumberland Sound between 1840-1869. From the whaling companies, Inuit generally received weekly basic rations of supplies like hardtack and coffee and syrup and tobacco each Saturday, with bonuses such as a gun or a boat at the end of the season or whenever they

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171 The Hudson’s Bay Company, already in the process of establishing a monopoly in the area, bought the station in 1923 and soon closed it, seeking unsuccessfully to turn the Inuit into fox trappers. Within two years, the island was no longer permanently occupied, although Inuit did return there off and on throughout the twentieth century. Stevenson, “Kekerten – Preliminary Archaeology,” 105
caught a whale.173 Women would also receive goods in exchange for their work on the blubber, and presumably also when they sewed or mended clothes for the qallunaat.174 In the 1970s, the elder Markosie Pitseolak said, “Today we can only imagine all the money we held in our hands [when we butchered a whale].”175 He also commented, “But we were used to that system so nothing seemed to be wrong then.”176 Indeed, although there were staggering inequalities in the whaling economy, the main profits flowed to owners down south and were not apparent at the stations, where Inuit were not told the monetary values of oil, baleen, and the southern goods they traded for. The men on board the early whaling ships, and later the whaler-traders at the stations, lived fairly meagre lives and were dependent on Inuit for basics like fresh food and warm clothing. In years when Inuit did not catch whales they continued to receive rations, and in years when ships failed to arrive Inuit continued to work.

In contrast, the Hudson’s Bay Company introduced a system wherein “everything had a price.”177 At least officially, Inuit were not entitled to trade goods unless they brought furs to the post, no matter how hungry they were, or how much food was stockpiled in the warehouse. The new system did not account for the lean times and hard years that Inuit knew were part of living off the land. Nor did it fit with Inuit ideals of food sharing.

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173 Franz Boas, “Whaling in Cumberland Sound,” Berliner Tageblatt 19 October 1883, translated and reprinted in Boas and Boas, eds., Arctic Expedition 1883-1884, 22-23. Also notes the traders would barter these goods and matches for sealskins. “more seal was paid more”; Hantzsch, My Life with the Eskimos, 36-37. (basic supplies)
174 Markosie Pitseolak, “Markosie Pitseolak’s Real Life Stories.”
175 Markosie Pitseolak, 1973 interview in possession of Daisy Dialla, translated and given to me by Andrew Dialla.
176 Markosie Pitseolak, “Markosie Pitseolak’s Real Life Stories.”
177 Pauloosie Veevee, 28 Aug 2008, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla.
in times of need.\textsuperscript{178} The Hudson’s Bay Company also receives strong criticism today for the methods by which they established a monopoly in the Sound. It is widely told in Pangnirtung that the first year the HBC was in the Sound, they gave out all kinds of goods for free.\textsuperscript{179} To people who were used to a system of continuous rationing with productivity bonuses and gift-giving, this must have made the HBC appear to be exceedingly generous. The one aging white trader who lived permanently in the Sound, William Sivutiksaq Duval, reportedly tried to warn the others that the HBC’s generosity would not last.\textsuperscript{180} Yet most of his workers left him for the new company. The next year, according to Inuit, the HBC no longer had a policy of giving anything away for free.\textsuperscript{181} In an unflattering assessment of the profiteering and self-interest with which white people have often become associated in the North, elder Pauloosie Veevee deemed these early Hudson’s Bay Company employees “the perfect qallunaat.”\textsuperscript{182}

The foreign whalers had offered another way of relating to qallunaat. When asked if she had heard of any differences between American and Scottish whalers, Daisy Dialla commented that even though there were some cultural distinctions, “There’s never any stories of unfriendly qallunaat, like when we go south [today] we’ll pass a lot of qallunaat and none of them will look at us, there are no stories like that.”\textsuperscript{183} Especially in

\textsuperscript{178} Stevenson, \textit{Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence}, 90.
\textsuperscript{179} See Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008; peteroosie, Andrew personal communication
\textsuperscript{180} Stevenson, \textit{Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence}, 91
\textsuperscript{181} Peteroosie Karpik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 8 September 2008. Peteroosie Sivutiksaq Karpik is an example of how Inuit nicknames or corruptions of qallunaat names passed into the name-soul system. Pauloosie Veevee also spoke of Duval losing his workers to the HBC and about Duval not being much of a hunter. Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008
\textsuperscript{182} Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008
\textsuperscript{183} Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008
the later whaling period, whalers often learned to speak at least some Inuktitut, had Inuit partners and children, and acquired Inuit names that sometimes became incorporated into the system of name-souls after their deaths.\footnote{184} In 1909, there were about 168 Inuit living at Umanarjuaq station. Nineteen of them had a \textit{qallunaat} father, and presumably there were many others who had whaling grandfathers or great-grandfathers, or who carried the name-souls of whalers.\footnote{185} It was these children who intertwined whalers and whaling history permanently into their families and communities. The relationship was marked by sadness and longing though, since most whalers eventually returned to their home countries.\footnote{186}

Although Taylor never returned to Cumberland Sound after the wreck of the \textit{Easonian}, he had family who remained in the area. On one of his visits, Taylor had begun a relationship with an Inuit woman, Arnaaqoq. \textit{Daisy Dialla}, one of Taylor’s Inuit grandchildren, recounted how women like Arnaaqoq would put seal oil in their hair and make themselves as beautiful as they could to attract men they desired.\footnote{187} Many men asked for Arnaaqoq’s hand, but Taylor was the first and only man her father ever approved of. The couple had a child together, Joanasie. He was born in 1913, just after a ship was wrecked, when people were fishing tobacco and other goods out of the wreckage. When shipwrecks occurred in shallow water, they could be a boon to Inuit, who salvaged wood for houses and tools, and removed the nails, which they would sometimes melt down for

\footnote{184} I’m not sure if they actually had to die in the region for this to occur. \textit{William Duval} was given the name Sivutiksaaq, the harpooner. He died in Cumberland Sound and his name-soul was passed on. Peteroosie Karpik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 8 September 2008.
\footnote{185} Hantzsch, \textit{My Life with the Eskimos}, 39
\footnote{186} Jamesie spoke of Inuit longing (\textit{unga}) for their whaling relatives and partners. Jamesie Mike, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 29 August 2008
\footnote{187} \textit{Daisy Dialla}, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 15 September 2008. Daisy also told the story about Aasivak below; Aasivak had told it to her.
bullets or make into harpoon tips.\textsuperscript{188} This shipwreck, which Daisy noted is still there today, became a \textit{niriujaq}, or omen, in Joanasie’s life: whenever he dreamed of people hooking tobacco out of a wreck, he would catch a seal the next day.\textsuperscript{189} Whaling history – from its physical artifacts to its individual people – has remained deeply integrated into Inuit lives and traditions.

John Taylor acknowledged Joanasie as his son and brought many gifts from Scotland for him, including a gramophone, clothing, food, and candy. Joanasie didn’t like the candy because he was not used to sweets. He may also have received an accordion, because when the HBC store later began stocking accordions, Joanasie bought one and to his family’s surprise, he knew how to play it right away.\textsuperscript{190}

In many ways Joanasie had a difficult life. Arnaqoq died soon after Taylor left for the last time in 1922, leaving their young boy Joanasie an orphan. He was adopted by two uncles. He later married and had eleven children of his own. The family lived in five different outpost camps before relocating to Pangnirtung in the late 1940s, where Joanasie worked as a special constable for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Working for the RCMP has always been a difficult job, in which Inuit employees are expected to bridge the cultural divide but can often feel trapped within it. When Joanasie began working for the police, the vast majority of Inuit still lived out on the land, but Pangnirtung was home to the HBC store, the mission station, the hospital, and the RCMP.

\textsuperscript{188} Jamesie Mike, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 29 August 2008 (wood for harpoons and nails for harpoons), Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008 (nails into bullets)
\textsuperscript{189} Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008.
\textsuperscript{190} Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008.
It was not prime marine hunting territory. Daisy remembers her mother’s reaction – “Ewwww” – when Joanasie told the family they were going to move to Pangnirtung. He was based in the settlement but used a dog team to travel around the Sound for work. Daisy recalled the sound of her father’s dog team returning home: “There would be at first no sound at all coming from the land, [then] our local dogs would start howling, that means there is a dog team coming…even before the people knew, the dogs knew, so they would start howling. It was great when the dogs started howling because that means Dad is coming back.” Joanasie’s life story will, I hope, one day be published by his son, Andrew.

Joanasie’s children grew up knowing that their grandfather was a whaling captain, but they didn’t know his name. At the end of the 1960s, when the Canadian government assigned Inuit surnames, Aasivak announced that Joanasie’s father’s name had been “Dialla” – an Inuktitut pronunciation of “Taylor.” Joanasie and his children took that name. Many of Taylor’s descendents – the Dialla family – still live on South Baffin Island today. After decades of searching, one of Captain Taylor’s Inuit grandsons, Andrew Dialla, tracked down some Scottish relatives, among them a qallunaat grandson of Taylor’s, John McGuinn. John visited Pangnirtung in 2007 to a warm and generous welcome at the airport packed largely with his relatives, and the event was filmed for the Canadian television program Ancestors in the Attic. During the show, Andrew

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191 Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008
192 Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008
193 Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008
194 Ancestors in the Attic (Season II, Episode 2027) made it look as though they had helped Andrew find John McGuinn, playing into the stereotype that Inuit have been and remain cut off from the outside world. In fact it was Andrew who found John. As any visitor to Nunavut can attest, Inuit use all the tools at their
addressed John in English kinship terms (“cousin”), thanked him sincerely for coming, and spoke about the importance of family, saying that Inuit rely on their families for comfort, companionship, and support.

Inuit have a long history of migration, and it is not uncommon for branches of families to be separated for long periods. When Inuit from different communities meet today, they often try to find out how they are connected to each other. Family ties are very important for survival and also for keeping alive a sense of history and possibility. In finding his Scottish relatives and welcoming them into his extended family, Andrew reestablished ties that had once connected Cumberland Sound with Dundee for generations, but that had been dormant for almost a century.

**Ukiaq (Fall)**

*Ukiaq*, the fall freeze-up period, was the hardest time of the year at the Cumberland Sound whaling stations. Both Umanarjuaq and Qikiqtat were located on islands. They were surrounded during freeze-up by unstable forming ice, which prevented Inuit from moving around in search of game.\(^{195}\) *Ukiaq*, as will be discussed further in the epilogue that follows, was sometimes a season of hunger. In terms of overall nutrition, Daisy Dialla speculated that Inuit were probably better off after the whaling days were over, because they became much more mobile. They lived in smaller camps and could move disposal, and especially the internet (despite painfully slow connections), to find and keep in touch with friends across the territory and around the world.

\(^{195}\) Hantzsch, *My Life with the Eskimos*, 218
more freely to their preferred seasonal hunting areas.\textsuperscript{196} The population of Cumberland Sound seems to have increased in the 1920s and 1930s.\textsuperscript{197}

However, the decades that followed commercial whaling were often marked by a different kind of hunger – craving for food that was no longer available. Many elders spoke of older people who had constantly longed for bowhead products. Pauloosie Veevee had known elders, like his grandmother, who had died yearning for bowhead whale meat, longing for a taste of the food they had remembered as children and that ran back into their culture for centuries.\textsuperscript{198} Etuangat also mentioned this craving, and Elisapee Ishulutaq recalled old people being nostalgic for \textit{mattak}, the outer layer of skin. She commented, “it would be their absolute favourite yummy food,” along with the cartilage from the whale’s throat.\textsuperscript{199} The whales had provided non-food products too, for which Inuit now had to devise alternatives. Enoosie Nashalik said that when there was no more bowhead whalebone, Inuit began using a type of moss under the runners of their sleds to make them glide.\textsuperscript{200}

Elders today stress that Inuit have always been whalers, and they have many stories about how their ancestors used to hunt whales in pre-contact times. \textit{Qallunaat} archaeologists

\textsuperscript{196} Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 September 2008
\textsuperscript{197} Archaeologist Marc Stevenson speculates that in large part, this was due to the success of beluga whale herding, which provided access to meat and \textit{maqtaaq} as well as new boats and equipment, and to the fact that Inuit focussed on sealing, ate lots of country food, and lived in small camps where they limited their interactions with disease-carrying foreigners. Stevenson, \textit{Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence}, 96. Also cited a likely increasing immunity to infectious diseases.
\textsuperscript{198} Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008
\textsuperscript{199} Elisapee Ishulutaq, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 13 September 2008; Etuangat, interview with Marc Stevenson, 1984 [?]. Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-004, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT
\textsuperscript{200} Inuusiq Nashalik, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 15 September 2008
agree, arguing that bowhead whales seem to have facilitated early Inuit (Thule) migrations across the Arctic from Alaska about 1000 years ago. The movement eastwards may have been motivated by the whales themselves, or perhaps by the availability of Norse trade goods in Greenland. By the time of contact, probably due to environmental changes, ringed seal became a more important dietary staple than bowhead whale in most Inuit territories. Still, bowheads continued to frequent Cumberland Sound, and pre-contact Inuit would have taken them opportunistically.

Jamesie Mike and Inuusiq Nashalik told me that they believe that the whale population is on the rise today. Policy is changing to reflect this. After decades of being forbidden to hunt whales, Nunavut as a whole is now allowed three bowhead whale hunts per year, and the meat and mattak are distributed by plane around the territory. Pangnirtung

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203 A 1935 League of Nations Whaling Agreement banned all killing except Aboriginal subsistence hunts; the 1937 Whaling Agreement banned Aboriginal hunts as well. The post-WWII International Whaling Commission, which resulted in regulations enacted in 1954 in Canada, exempted Aboriginal subsistence hunts, but only as long as the hunters used “traditional whaling crafts and weapons.” A licensing system was likely established along with the 1954 regulations. Although a recent scientific article complains that the early regulations were “never enforced” and points out that Inuit communities “have continued to take whales illegally and legally,” oral history suggests that Inuit were aware of the regulations and often took them very seriously even when they did not concur that they were wise. Pauloosie Veevee commented that “Inuit were told not to hunt whales anymore, the big whales, because they’re running out.” (Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008). A recent bowhead traditional knowledge study concluded that Inuit in the Canadian Eastern Arctic were well aware that bowheads were scarce after the end of commercial whaling, and that they also believed that they were banned from harvesting them. For the most part, they did not harvest bowheads after the end of commercial whaling even when they were presented with the opportunity to do so. K. J. Finley, “Natural History and Conservation of the Greenland Whale, or Bowhead, in the Northwest Atlantic,” pp. 55-76 in Arctic (54:1, March 2001), 62, 66; Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Final Report of the Inuit Bowhead Knowledge Study (Iqaluit: Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, 2000); Mitchell and Reeves, “Factors Affecting Abundance,” 70. According to this last article, one Cumberland Sound hunter had a previously existing permit to kill a whale in the 1953-1954 season, but he had been dead for two years. This was possibly Angmarlik.
hunters towed a whale into Qikiqtat whaling station in 1998.\textsuperscript{204} This gave the current elders a chance to try \textit{mattak}, many of them for the first time. Pauloosie Veevee was not so impressed. He thought his piece of \textit{mattak} tasted like an “old rubber boot.” He didn’t care whether he ever had it again, “but if he was very hungry, it would be a different story.”\textsuperscript{205} Jamesie Mike agreed that the \textit{mattak} from the top part of the head supposedly does taste like a rubber boot, and wondered if this was the piece that Pauloosie got. He enjoyed his piece.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The period when Inuit did not hunt bowhead spanned most of the twentieth century, but it was only a blip in Cumberland Sound history. Inuit were whalers before they met \textit{qallunaat}, they were whalers with the \textit{qallunaat}, and now they are whalers again. By continuing to tell stories of whaling and keeping the great whalers alive through name-souls, Inuit anticipated and prepared for whaling’s eventual return. Despite the many changes that have occurred – the most profound of which arguably came in the late twentieth century with government policies of resettlement and assimilation – Inuit have proven remarkably resourceful at adapting and anticipating over the past century and a

\textsuperscript{204} In 1998, Pangnirtung had its first bowhead whale hunt in over fifty years. Three bowhead hunts are now allowed in Nunavut, with parts of the whales being distributed to communities not involved in the hunt. See for example, “Nunavut will hunt three bowhead,” \url{http://www.sikunews.com/News/Canada-Nunavut/6156} (accessed 31 May 2010).
\textsuperscript{205} Pauloosie Veevee, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 28 August 2008; Jamesie Mike, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 29 August 2008
half. As Marc Stevenson has noted, old forms of cultural and social organisation still remain strong in Cumberland Sound, despite external appearances of transformation.206

The tales told by Cumberland Sound elders highlight a more communal kind of arctic survival story, about people struggling to keep their world familiar in times of tremendous change. Their success has hinged on tradition, anticipation, and adaptation. Once Inuit grasped the potential of outside technologies, they eagerly embraced them and turned them into useful survival tools. Since foreigners with the same imported goods were often unable to procure food for themselves in Cumberland Sound, knowledge of place was clearly crucial to survival. So was the Inuit understanding that the world is neither fully knowable nor always what it seems. As the anthropologist Mark Nuttall describes it:

> Over the years…I have come to appreciate that [Inuit in Greenland] see the world around them as one of constant motion, uncertainty, flux, and surprise because such a perception is key to ensuring daily survival, and negotiating and understanding the social world.207

This perception – that change is the natural order of things – has arguably also been key to ensuring long-term Inuit survival.

I witnessed the persistence and flexibility of Inuit culture my first night away from Pangnirtung townsite in 2006, when I ate caribou stew cooked over Coleman stoves and then moved down to the “palauga tent,” a modern mesh structure common in Canadian campgrounds and suburban backyards. Inside, three Inuit women were busy cooking

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bannock, or fry bread, known as *palauga*. *Palauga* is an imported food – its name is the Inuktitut pronunciation of “flour.” As Oleepa Ishulutak fried the bannock, Saila Nakashuk played “Oh Susanna” and “Frère Jacques” on the harmonica, while Evie Anilniliak sang along in Inuktitut. Later I would see that accordions and jig-type dancing are also common at Inuit gatherings. Almost nothing about this scene could have existed in Cumberland Sound two centuries ago; so many things had been imported from what is historically my own culture. Yet I was clearly in a foreign place, and I felt that there were more layers of meaning in this world than I could ever hope to see, hear, or understand.
Figures for Chapter Four

Figure 26: Etuangat, 1936. A. G. McKinnon / Library and Archives Canada / PA-102076.
Figure 27: Evie Anilniliak, 1946. Evie is one of the elders Andrew Dialla and I interviewed in Pangnirtung in 2008. She is pictured here when she was nineteen years old. George Hunter / National Film Board of Canada / Library and Archives Canada / PA-166471.
Figure 28: Angmarlik handing out biscuits, 1946. Pauloosie Angmarlik, Angmarlik’s adopted son, is in the far back by the tools. The tall young man to Pauloosie’s right is Inuusiq Nashalik, now the oldest man in Pangnirtung. George Hunter / Library and Archives Canada / e002213355.
Figure 29: Aasivak, August 1946. Shown here hanging boots to dry, Aasivak was Angmarlik’s wife, Qatsu Evic’s mother, and Captain John Taylor’s friend. She told Taylor’s descendents that their surname should be Dialla, an Inuktitut pronunciation of Taylor. George Hunter / Library and Archives Canada / e022213361.
Figure 30: Unirsagaaq and Keenainak. Both were whaleboat captains. J. Dewey Soper fonds, University of Alberta Archives, 79-21-33-111.
Figure 31: Beluga processing in Pangnirtung, 1929. Here, women are removing blubber after the whale carcasses have been towed into town. L. D. Livingstone / Canada, Dept. of Indian and Northern Affairs / Library and Archives Canada / e008440809.
Figure 32: Beluga herding, 1936. The old whaleboats are being put to use in the beluga drive. A. G. McKinnon / Dept. of Indian and Northern Affairs / Library and Archives Canada / PA-101941.
Figure 33: Qaqqaqtunaaq, July 1951. Qaqqaqtunaaq, shown here walking away from the camera in Pangnirtung, is Andrew Dialla’s name-soul. She used to warn Andrew’s father of the dangers of hunting at polynyas, but she stopped after he returned from a polynya with a huge male seal, at a time when they had no blubber in camp. Note the mix of traditional Inuit styles and imported materials in the clothes and dwellings in the photograph. Wilfred Doucette / National Film Board of Canada / Library and Archives Canada / PA-166461. Information on Qaqqaqtunaaq from Daisy Dialla.
Figure 34: Angmarlik, 1946. Angmarlik was the old whaling boss at Qikiqtat and the manager of the beluga drives in Pangnirtung. He is shown here the summer he hunted his last bowhead whale. George Hunter / Library and Archives Canada / e002213366.
Figure 35: Qikiqtat, August 1897. This image conveys that the whaling station was home to families and dogteams. Inuit dwellings and drying arctic char are visible in the background. *NWT Archives/William Wakeham/N-1983-002: 0024.*
Figure 36: Women at Qikiqtarjuaq, September 1911. It is likely that these women remained behind while most of the settlement was out caribou hunting. Library and Archives Canada / PA-061527.
Figure 37: The *Easonian* burning at Qikiqtat, 1922. Andrew Dialla, personal collection.
Figure 38: The shipwrecked crew of the Easonian with Inuit at Qikiqtat, 1922. Andrew Dialla, personal collection.
Figure 39: Captain John Taylor. Andrew Dialla, personal collection.
Figure 40: Andrew Dialla and John McGuinn. Both are grandsons of Captain John Taylor. They met in Pangnirtung in 2007. Andrew Dialla, personal collection.
Epilogue

The stories of Inuit and whalers in Cumberland Sound received little play in the Victorian press. From the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, the most popular qallunaat stories about the Arctic were adventure tales of exploration: the ongoing searches for Sir John Franklin, the Polaris expedition’s astounding drift on the ice floe, the horrifying ordeals of the Lady Franklin Bay expedition, and the race for the North Pole. As Michael Robinson and others have argued, these disturbing tales enjoyed extraordinary and broad appeal in part because they engaged with larger Victorian debates, as well as indulging a Romantic fascination with the sublime and the grotesque. Directly or indirectly, arctic survival stories spoke to ideas about masculinity, progress, science and technology, struggles against nature, imperial projects, racial superiority, and national identity. According to Robinson, the arctic stories of explorers “gave voice to hopes and fears that seem, at first glance, far removed from the Arctic regions.”¹ I would like to expand this argument to Inuit narratives of the same period, and ask, why have certain stories of survival endured in Inuit communities across time and space? What do these tales speak to that is larger than the stories themselves?

Like American stories of polar exploration, Inuit stories from the whaling period also engage in debates and fears about the survival of their people. Most important, I argue, they tackle the issue of how to survive, as Inuit and as humans, in a changing world. Three recently recorded Inuit stories about the whaling period, which I will retell here, represent knowledge passed through at least one generation and still remembered to some degree in the present day. I therefore infer that they have been of enduring value to the Inuit who have told them, although I do not claim they are the most important or iconic stories from that period. They offer a strikingly different take on three stereotypical elements of Victorian arctic tales: starvation, being marooned on an ice floe, and a long-distance journey into unfamiliar territory. These stories about the past are told by people who lived through what followed; they are tales consciously told for a contemporary audience. They are history and historiography in the same breath. In the memories of Inuit, these harrowing events are retold today as lessons about being patient; listening to the land; listening to elders; using traditional knowledge in creative ways; and cooperating with others, including outsiders, animals, and the spirit world. As Jack Anawak has argued, Inuit stories about the past “ensure a way of life and survival into the present and for the future.”

Because the context of storytelling is always very important, I will explain a bit more here about how each main story was told: The story about famine was told to Margaret Nakashuk by Etuangat in 1994; it was not told in response to a question from Margaret, so we can infer that Etuangat chose it as appropriate and important to tell to Margaret and/or to be recorded. The other two stories were told to me in the context of interviews in 2008 and 2010. Inuusiq Nashalik offered up the ice floe story as a hunting story, and on another occasion I asked him directly about it. I believe that Inuusiq, an expert interviewee, is well aware that this is the kind of story that qallunaat find fascinating. As for the migration stories, I asked Jamesie Mike about travelling on whaling ships and he responded by telling his father’s story.

There are certainly other survival stories that could be told from Cumberland Sound, many of them about experiences that seem far more central to Inuit struggles today. Illnesses have been particularly devastating, as have suicides, domestic violence, coerced relocations, residential schooling, religious disputes, unpleasant encounters with powerful outsiders, anti-sealing campaigns, and canine epidemics and shootings. Some of these topics get quite a bit of coverage in the southern Canadian press. One reason I do not analyse such stories here is that I have not conducted research on them. The versions I have heard directly have often been related by friends rather than through formal interviews, and as such are personal rather than public information. Testimonies of abuse, persecution, and sickening catastrophes – which of course are told in gallunaat societies as well – can lead to social change and can be empowering and encouraging to others who have suffered similar horrible experiences. But they belong to a different genre than the stories I will tell here. The widespread appeal of nineteenth century arctic adventure stories hinged on the distance between the harrowing experience and the reader. Time has created that gulf for these old Inuit stories today: elders have kept them highly relevant to today’s world, but there is now a distance there.

“A Lot of Tongues Were Available”: Famine

4 For a recent, widely read article that discussed social problems but that was quite dismissive of Inuit culture and traditions, see Patrick White, “The Trials of Nunavut: Lament for an Arctic Nation,” Globe and Mail, 1 April 2011.

5 On testimony see Danielle McGuire, At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance – A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power (New York: Knopf, 2010).

6 I believe anyone can understand the notion of distance being created either by time or space. However, time and space have a much closer relationship in Inuit languages and thought than in English. For example, it is not uncommon for researchers to ask “when” questions and receive “where” answers. The suffix –vik can mean either “a time for ___” or “a place for ___” depending on context. See Nagy, “Time, Space, and Memory,” 76. In South Baffin dialect, tuksiavik is a church, lit. a place for praying. Sivataaqvik is Saturday, a time for receiving biscuits (as Inuit did on Saturday in the whaling days).
White men slowly starving to death in arctic “wastelands,” as embodied by the fate of the Lady Franklin Bay expedition, is possibly the most gruesome disaster scenario in Victorian arctic adventure narratives. Yet, in archival accounts of nineteenth-century Cumberland Sound, Inuit hunger and famine are also frequently mentioned. Inuit are reported as coming to the whaling ships in desperate search of food; entire families are starving and eating their skin clothing; dogs are crawling about and dying in camp; the hunters are returning empty-handed day after day. Scholars such as Marc Stevenson and William Gillies Ross have argued that at least some of these food shortages could be attributed to outside factors. Commercial whaling and trading resulted in the overhunting of animal food supplies; whaling or trapping cut into necessary hunting time; and the whaling stations were not located in prime hunting areas, particularly at certain times of year.\(^7\) One inflammatory letter, from the Anglican minister Julian Bilby in 1905, goes further. Bilby accuses the whalers – who by then had diversified into trading for other commodities – of appropriating Inuit sealskins and blubber and sometimes meat even in times of dire shortage. He also claims they provided the Inuit with too little ammunition, in order to keep them tied to the station. Bilby writes:

> It is no uncommon sight in Blacklead [or Umanarjauq, one of the two main whaling stations in Cumberland Sound] to see a whole family lying in bed all day long in the winter to keep warm because they have no oil for their lamps, and no meat to eat. Their clothes are too thin for attempting to hunt, while there are large hogsheads of this oil alongside the tents which the traders are waiting to

\(^7\) Marc G. Stevenson, *Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence: Structure in Cumberland Sound and Central Inuit Social Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 75; W. Gillies Ross, ed. *This Distant and Unsurveyed Country: A Woman’s Winter on Baffin Island, 1857-1858* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 120-121, 158-159. On late fall famine and dangerous hunting conditions see also Bernhard Hantzsch, *My Life Among the Eskimos: Baffinland Journeys in the Years 1909 to 1911* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1977), 43. Note that Hantzsch was there in a particularly difficult year since supplies had failed to arrive at the station.
ship to Scotland, and in their storehouse are hundreds of seals while the Eskimo sometimes are starving in their tents and no help given.\(^8\)

Bilby’s letter was written in the context of poor relations between missionaries and whalers, but even if exaggerated or somewhat misconstrued, records like this one make a strong case that Inuit sometimes experienced severe hardship at the whaling stations.

When I conducted interviews about whaling in Pangnirtung in 2008, I wanted to learn what stories Inuit had passed down about hunger and its causes at the whaling stations, but this was not a topic that people seemed interested in discussing. I cannot be sure, but I did not get the sense they wanted to avoid the subject. It seemed that it was not something they had been told about, and they did not want to speculate on it.\(^9\) Daisy Dialla did confirm that the whaling station of Kekerten has few seals in the fall, and the ice often takes a long time to freeze there. She said that she had heard there would be “lean times” in the late fall before the ice froze over.\(^10\) Other elders spoke of good times during other seasons. Paulooseie Veevee said he had heard that Inuit would continue to hunt seals during whaling season, and that the Inuit were “not hungry at all” while whaling at the floe edge in the spring.\(^11\)

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8 Julian Bilby to Baring-Gould, December 1905. Letter transcription from Christopher Trott, personal communication.

9 All of the elders I interviewed were very careful to state whenever they were speaking of second-hand knowledge, and often expressed reluctance to do so at all. For Inuit, denying knowledge is often preferable to making mistakes or to negatively impacting a social relationship. I do not think in most cases it was about not wanting to speak badly of foreigners to me – several of the interviewees made extremely negative comments about the Hudson’s Bay Company and how they cheated the Inuit. See Frédéric B. Laugrand and Jarich G. Oosten, *Inuit Shamanism and Christianity: Transitions and Transformations in the Twentieth Century* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2010), 22..

10 Daisy Dialla, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 15 Sept 2008. Peterooseie Qappik made a similar comment, remarking that “the only reason why Inuit lived at Kekerten was because the whalers were there.” Interview with the author and Andrew Dialla, 8 Sept 2008.

11 Paulooseie Veevee, 28 Aug 2008, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla.
It seems that experiences of starvation and exploitation at the whaling stations – which may or may not have been as severe or constant in Inuit terms as many qallunaat records suggest – have not been passed on as important stories to remember in Inuit culture. In part, I suspect this may be because Inuit perceived relations with Hudson’s Bay Company, the main twentieth-century trading company in the area, to be far worse. It may also be because hunger is occasionally a part of life for almost everyone in hunter-gatherer societies. Animals are often abundant in Cumberland Sound, but as on any hunting ground, there are times when they do not appear. Neither Saullu Nakashuk nor Elisapee Ishulutaq had heard stories about hunger in the whaling camps, but Elisapee told of personal experiences of hunger later on, and Saullu had heard stories of people who starved in other camps in the twentieth century. Andrew Dialla elaborated on one of the stories that Saullu knew, in which two or three families relocated to a new camp. When they were not heard from for two years, a search party set out. They found two houses covered in snowdrifts with no human tracks around them. The first dwelling was empty; it had been abandoned. When the searchers scraped the snow off the second and peered through the skylight made of intestines, it also looked drifted in and full of snow. Then one of the men noticed finger tracks, as if someone had been clawing at the snow and eating it. They dug out the entrance and found a young girl still alive; she was horribly skinny with long teeth and scraggly hair. She had eaten human flesh to survive. The


rescuers’ first reaction was to laugh (not unkindly), because she looked so ridiculous and pitiful. They took the girl home and reintegrated her back into Inuit society, where she told the story of the hunger. Inuit searched the area until they found the bodies of the hunters.  

The only Inuit story I have heard about starvation at a whaling station was told by Etuangat Aksayuk to Margaret Nakashuk. Unlike the elders I interviewed in 2008, Etuangat had been an older child at the end of the whaling days and could remember a famine in the first person. His recollections reflect others’ assessments of Kekerten whaling station as a poor fall hunting site. He commented that “in the late fall and early winter there used to be a lot of blizzards and gales.” Etuangat related that in the fall, Inuit didn’t always have a lot of meat, but he stressed that they would still receive tea and other goods, presumably including bread, from the whalers. The fall when he experienced the bad famine, the ice did not become safe for travel until after Christmas. He called the famine “a dark time,” which it literally was. Without blubber to burn in their oil lamps, Inuit would have enjoyed neither heat nor light in their homes. Etuangat lamented that while there had been lots of blubber that summer, it had been taken away by the supply ship months ago. He believed that if the blubber had been in the storehouse, “they might have been able to access a little bit of that.” His words suggest that the whalers were not exactly generous with stockpiled supplies, but at least in this retelling, he did not place blame.

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14 Sowdloo Nakashuk (14 Sept 2008) & Elisapee Ishulutaaq (13 Sept 2008), interviews with the author and Andrew Dialla; Andrew Dialla, personal communication.  
15 Unless otherwise noted, all parts of this famine story are from Etuangat Aksayuk to Margaret Nakashuk, 1994, tape recording at the Angmarlik Visitor Centre, Pangnirtung, NU, translated by Andrew Dialla, August 2008.
Etuangat instead explained the strategies his camp used to find food when they could not hunt. They ate bowhead whale tongue, which takes a long time to rot:

> During that summer, before the famine in the fall, they caught four whales at the same time, and it was at that time that a lot of tongues were available. [laughter]. They knew the tongues would last a long time and they were saving them for dog food.

Here, Etuangat emphasises Inuit knowledge of local resources, and preparedness. They hunted the whales; they knew the meat would keep; and they saved it. Foreign whalers saved only the whale baleen and blubber, but the American whaling captain George Tyson recorded Inuit caching whale meat – perhaps the tongue – in sealskin bags. He and his men were sometimes grateful to find these bags months later when they were out on unsuccessful hunting trips. In joking about the number of tongues available, Etuangat also uses humour to describe a time of suffering. I have rarely heard hardship described by an Inuk without at least a smile. As Peter Kulchyski has argued, the smile in such cases “does not mean one is happy. it means that one can carry one’s burdens.”

Etuangat’s conclusion of the famine story places emphasis on Inuit patience and creativity:

> But a favourable wind finally blew from the northwest…and a big huge chunk of ice that had formed over there beached at Kekerten, a big huge slab of new ice. All the men got their harpoon ready and their paddle.

According to the interpreter Andrew Dialla, the paddle was a small piece of wood they could attach to their harpoon. If they shot a seal, a hunter would chop off a piece of the

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ice floe and paddle this “ice boat” out to retrieve the seal. It is not safe to take boats out in the late fall because ice can form around the boat. In this situation, Inuit used new guns and wooden and metal tools, combined with traditional Inuit hunting techniques, to end the hunger. Etuangat continued,

And they were catching a lot of seals then and a lot of them were dragging seals back and that was a very happy time that I remember….that was the one extreme famine that I remember when I was a child. Every year whenever the ice freezes over, any kind of famine or hunger would end. From the ice freezing until the late summer, there would be no hunger. Only in the late fall would there be hunger times.

In Etuangat’s story of a famine, the resolution is presented as a communal achievement: no one hunter is singled out as the hero; everyone is sharing the seals. In another telling of the same story, Etuangat stressed that “when hunters caught their seals the women would distribute portions to those families that didn’t have any,” explaining that the whole community knew each other and knew who was in need. He described how the late fall could be difficult at Kekerten, but enumerated all the ways Inuit tried to procure food, and stated that he did not remember anyone dying of starvation.\(^\text{18}\) Hunger is portrayed as an unwelcome but cyclical event. Like many challenges, it will come and go, but if you can wait it out and be prepared, you may survive.\(^\text{19}\)

In a separate section of the interview with Margaret, Etuangat relates another strategy that Cumberland Sound Inuit would have used to combat famine before most of them

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\(^{18}\) Etuangat Aksayuk, interview with Jaypeetee Akpalialuk, March 1984, Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT

\(^{19}\) For other stories of starvation written down by Cumberland Sound whaling captain James Mutch in the early twentieth century see Boas, *The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay*, 275-279. Some people die or are found dead in these stories but others survive through ingenuity, hunting skills, or travelling to known caches of meat.
converted to Christianity in the early twentieth century. Etuangat talked about what he had heard shamans [angakkuit] would do in times of hunger:

I used to hear about shamans and the things that shamans knew… I only know this from stories, I didn’t experience this myself, but whenever the weather was very bad for a long time, they would try to make the wind tired. They would try to take the muscles away from the wind [takaijaijualuk]… and a lot of blood would flow out of the weather.

Shamans would wear long mitts and carry a seal hook while they were working on the wind. To observers, it would look as if the shaman was cutting air. Etuangat had heard that they would levitate a bit while they were doing it. In the 1970s, the elder Rose Iqallijuq from Iglulik described this process as “cutting the tendons of the wind.”

Etuangat, a Christian, may have told this story because he was nearing the end of his life and did not want the stories of shamanism to disappear. Yet this story of shamanism also speaks to the power of religion in general. Inuit in Cumberland Sound today retain fewer of the old shamanistic practices than most other Inuit communities, but many of them continue to place faith in the power of prayer and other religious activities in times of hardship.

“I Listened To What My Father Told Me”: Ice Floes

One of the best-known arctic survival stories took place in 1872-1873, when Hannah and Ipiirvik returned briefly to the Arctic, and lived through their six-month drift on an ice

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20 Isidore Ijituq and Johanasi Ujarak, also from Iglulik, said that it was the shamans from South Baffin (Etuangat’s area) who had this custom. Bernard Saladin d’Anglure, ed., Interviewing Inuit Elders, Volume 4: Cosmology and Shamanism (Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College, 2001), 182-183.
floe with other members of the Polaris expedition. This was horrifying by anyone’s standard, but the idea of being stranded on an ice floe for a few hours or days is quite commonplace to Inuit hunters. Inuit rely on marine resources in a region where the sea freezes, so being out on the sea ice is inevitable. As Pangnirtung hunter Joanasie Maniapik recently expressed it, “[The sea ice] is very very important to Inuit, because it’s our qaujjiti, which means we were born to it and we’ve always lived in it.” In sharp contrast to English concepts of being “ice-bound,” many hunters today express joy when they hear that the ice is becoming solid and safe for travel.

Hunting on the sea ice still contains inherent risks. When I asked the Pangnirtung elder Inuusiq Nashalik if he or anyone he knew had ever been stuck on an ice floe, he just smiled and replied, “Many times…many times I’ve drifted out into the open ocean.” Some days, he said, he had spent days out on the ice before he was able to get to shore.

Inuusiq, the oldest man in Pangnirtung, was born at a whaling station but grew up after the whaling days were over, in an outpost hunting and trapping camp. His personal

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21 One version of this story is told in Blake, ed. Arctic Experiences. For a few other stories of ice floes, see Peter Pitseolak and Dorothy Eber, Peter Pitseolak’s Escape from Death; Hans Hendrik, Memoirs of Hans Hendrik, 165-167; Charles Francis Hall, Arctic Researches, 245, 308, 556; Lyle Dick, Muskox Land, 101.

22 An 1887 article by explorer William Gilder commented on how Inuit seemed to take being stranded on an ice floe in stride, and considered it “a matter of yearly occurrence.” He related one story where a man was adrift in Hudson’s Bay for a month. W. H. Gilder, “Dangers of the Ice Pack,” pp. 276-281 in The Cosmopolitan (Vol. IV, No. 4, December 1887), 278.


24 Joavee Alivaktuk, Lazarusie Ishulutak, and Mosesee Keyuajuk reported in Laider, “Ice through Inuit Eyes,” 217.

25 Inuusiq Nashalik, 27 Aug 2008, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla. Unless otherwise noted, all quotes and references to Inuusiq in this section are from this interview. In a 1984[?] interview, the now-deceased elder Nowyook talked about a time when he had been marooned on an island for three weeks after being caught on an ice floe. Nowyook, interview with Marc Stevenson, Northwest Territories Department of Justice and Public Services fonds, G-1985-007-010, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife, NT.
stories do not date from the whaling period, but the way he talks about ice floes indicated his connection to this history. When I asked how he returned to safety, Inuusiq couched the answer in terms of listening to his father, Attagoyuk, who had worked for the commercial whalers and was also a successful hunter:

I listened to what my father told me. My father always said, “If the piece of ice you’re on breaks off, don’t even bother looking at where you came from, forget that, you’re not going back there.” What my father told me to do was to take my dogteam and go to the other side, go to the other end of the floe. That is why you see me here today, because I always went to the other side of the floe, where that floe touched land or touched landfast ice.

He continued:

It’s survival if you’re stuck on a piece of ice. Patience is your number one thing. My father used to always say, you have to be very patient. People have been lost because they had such a strong urge to get to safe ice. You always wait until the ice freezes over again or the piece of ice you’re on touches another piece of ice.26

Like Etuangat talking about famine, Inuusiq stressed that crises like these will come and go. Risk is part of life. It is important to be aware of what other people have done in this situation, to listen to one’s elders, and to listen to the land. In both Inuusiq’s and Etuangat’s narratives – and I would argue in a hunting culture in general – it is vital to be patient, but to be ready.

Many Inuit who have narrowly escaped death on the ice – either on floes or by falling through thin ice – also drew on their religious faith. Inuusiq focused on secular strategies when speaking to me, but at a revival in Pangnirtung in 2006, he spoke of a time when he

26 Inuusiq went on to explain how he knew when it was safe to cross to shore. When cracks appeared in the new ice next to the floe; that meant the floe was pressed up against something solid. That’s when you could make your dash to land over the new ice. If you go before cracks appear, “you’re doing it too soon and you probably won’t make it.” Other hunters have stressed the importance of bringing extra snow or ice for drinking water when hunting at the sinaaq (floe edge), and of being aware of currents and wind conditions in order to better be able to predict where a broken off piece of ice might touch land again. Laidler, “Ice through Inuit Eyes,” 253
was out seal hunting in the spring near one of the polynyas in Cumberland Sound. Although he was carefully testing the ice with his harpoon as he walked, he fell through into the open water and felt the current dragging him down. He was able to hook his chin on the edge of the ice, and quickly offered a prayer. A piece of ice floated up beneath him, pushing him back to safety. These types of miraculous rescue stories are not uncommon. Chris Trott argues that even though missionaries have embraced them as conversion narratives, they do not follow the standard Christian conversion formula, and actually run back much further into Inuit culture. People today pray to God, but their ancestors would have called on animals or spirits for assistance on the ice.27

Neither the famine nor the ice floe stories centre on interactions with qallunaat. When Etuungat talks about famine, the foreign whalers are peripheral. They have inadvertently made the situation worse by shipping off last year’s blubber, but it is the land that provides; it is shamans who cut the muscles of the wind; it is Inuit who hunt the seals that ultimately feed the people. In Inuusiq’s ice floe stories and lessons from his father, foreigners are irrelevant. As Inuusiq expressed it, there were no qallunaat out whaling with the Inuit at the floe edge in his father’s time, so he cannot imagine that any of them ever would have been trapped on the ice.28 Being stuck on the ice is part of Inuit life.

When Inuit tell stories about the whaling period that are not about whaling or about qallunaat, they speak to the idea that Inuit can benefit from their traditional skills while

28 In the period Inuusiq’s father would have remembered, the foreigners were primarily managers and coopers who stayed at the station. In the mid-nineteenth century, there were foreign whaling crews who did whale at the floe edge and who at least occasionally became trapped on ice floes.
still working intensively with gallunaat and profiting from what the outsiders have to offer. This is a more difficult line to walk in the present day of wage employment and increased government regulations, but through whaling stories, the precedent is there.

Inuusiq, like all Inuit hunters I have met, is also deeply aware that the rules are changing. He stressed that the ice today is not following the same patterns as it used to; even in the winter it can be dangerous and unstable. He has also expressed concern that many hunters today are not as knowledgeable about the ice as the old ones were, and that the weather is not as predictable as it used to be. Still, most Inuit I have met, including Inuusiq, are not as pessimistic about climate change as I expected. I have heard Inuusiq invoke religious faith in the context of warming temperatures, but I have also heard from him and several others that Inuit are skilled at adapting to change. In the 1970s, the now-deceased Pangnirtung elder Qatsu Evic commented, “We shall always do things, different things, now and for as long as we shall live.”

When asked recently if changing ice conditions might make it impossible for Inuit to continue to live off the land, Pangnirtung hunter Tommy Qaqqasiq responded similarly: “We’ll use other equipment. People will still hunt. It’s part of our life. When things change, you just have to go with it.”

Film director and climate change researcher Zach Kunuk said, “We have to get used to it. We have to use our weather like we always do.”

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“It was very common in the old days”: Migrations

29 Katsoo Evic in Germaine Arnaktauyok, ed. Stories from Pangnirtung (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1976), 89.

30 Tommy Qaqqasiq (2008 interview), cited in “The Sea Ice is Our Highway: An Inuit Perspective on Transportation in the Arctic,” (Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada, 2008), 11.

31 At Q & A session at screening of Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change documentary at the ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting, 15 December 2010, Toronto, ON. The film and Q&A are available at http://www.isuma.tv/hi/en/inuit-knowledge-and-climate-change.
Attempts to travel long distances across the North American Arctic put an end to many nineteenth-century expeditions, and led to frustration and hardship for many more. From the retreat of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition in 1883, to the less notorious death of German explorer Bernard Hantzsch on South Baffin Island in 1911, explorers who tried to deviate from established travel routes often did not fare well.

Long voyages of any kind usually involve risk, and Inuit have died while travelling, just as they have starved to death, or perished when their ice floes drifted away from shore.32 But extended arctic journeys are also a part of Inuit culture. Jamesie Mike stressed this when he told me the story of his father, Mike or Kanajuq, who travelled widely over what is now Canada’s Nunavut Territory, and once went as far as Scotland.33

As Jamesie heard the story from his father, Kanajuq was born at Talurjuaq (Spence Bay). Kanajuq’s father was a qallunaq whaling captain, and his mother was an Inuk. Most if not all Inuit elders I interviewed had a known whaling ancestor; when qallunaat do appear in the whaling stories, it is often as family members. The captain acknowledged Kanajuq as a son, but when Kanajuq was still a child his Inuit family moved to Salliq (Coral Harbour) in Hudson’s Bay. This was a major relocation: Talarjuaq and Salliq are over 500 km apart as the crow flies, and farther by sea.34

32 For a relatively well-known example of Inuit perishing on a long journey one of them initiated, see Guy Mary-Rousselière, Qitdlarssuaq, l’histoire d’une migration polaire (Montréal: Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 1980).
33 Jamesie Mike, 29 Aug 2008, interview with the author and Andrew Dialla. Unless otherwise stated, all further references to Jamesie’s story of his father are from this interview.
34 This was not the only time Inuit relocated around the Eastern Arctic on whaling ships. See Harper, “The Collaboration of James Mutch and Franz Boas,” 64 (from Cumberland Sound to Pond Inlet), Hantzsch, My
As an adult at Salliq, Kanajuq encountered a group of people from Cumberland Sound who had travelled there on a whaling ship. When they returned home, Kanajuq sailed with them, making another journey of well over 500 km. He was the only one from Salliq who came back with the ship. He agreed to go because he wanted to marry one of the visiting Cumberland Sound women, Kilabuk. As Jamesie commented, “Vaginas have a very strong pull.”

When I asked if it was common for Inuit to move across such vast distances, Jamesie replied, “Oh yes, it was very common in the old days. Even from here [Cumberland Sound], they used to go visiting to Mittimatalik. By dog team. By dog team, not by whaling ship.” He wanted, I think, to make sure that I understood that long-distance travel was an Inuit tradition. Although whaling ships did take Cumberland Sound Inuit to Mittimatalik, also known as Pond Inlet and located hundreds of kilometers away on northern Baffin Island, this connection was not something the whalers introduced and made possible. Jamesie did not make it sound like such trips were desperate or strange occurrences. They could travel hundreds of kilometres just “to go visiting.”

I asked how long it would take to get to Mittimatalik, and Jamesie laughed and said, “It would take a very long time. There was no hurry, and along the way you’d have to hunt

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35 They had come with the German-American trader William Duval, known to the Inuit as Sivutiqsaq. Sivutiqsaq has descendents in Pangnirtung today, and Peterosie Karpik “is” Duval – he shares his name-soul, Sivutiqsaq.
36 Kilabuk was the daughter of the whaling leader Veevee and his wife Imaqi.
37 Charles Francis Hall also recorded Inuit who had travelled from Cumberland Sound to Igloolik via Nettilling Lake. See Hall, cited in Davis, ed., _Narrative of the North Polar Expedition..._ (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1876), 206.
and feed the dogs, so it would be slow.” He continued, “They would have taken somebody who had done the trip. There would be absolutely no maps; it would all be from somebody’s memory. The only time any family group or anybody would go on these long-distance travels is if there is someone in the group who has taken the trip before, so they would have a guide.” Jamesie’s answer stands in stark contrast to most explorers’ arctic travel tales: entire families are present; there is no hurry; they go only along known trails; they go to visit people they know. The journey may be new and exciting to most of the travellers, but the path and the connections have become part of collective history and experience.

Jamesie Mike’s father Kanajuq went on at least one long journey without an Inuit guide. In 1919, at the very end of the whaling days, he and his son Akpalialuk travelled to Peterhead, Scotland on a qallunaat ship. Jamesie said his father was a friend and guest of the captain – it made sense that the son of one whaling captain would have a friendly relationship with another. Jamesie had never heard whether or not his father was ill overseas, but he was seasick on the Atlantic crossing. Kanajuq didn’t tell his son much about what he ate, but he “spoke about the yearning for Inuit food, really wanting to eat Inuit food over there and not being able to.” Jamesie added, “He even learned how to speak the Scottish language.” Other Inuit elders have emphasized this point as well: by living in close quarters during the whaling period, Inuit and qallunaat often learned how

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38 Akpalialuk was Kanajuq’s son from his first marriage in Salliq. After Kanajuq’s wife died, he married Veevee’s daughter Kilabuk and came to live with her in Cumberland Sound. He had several children but only Akpalialuk came with him. Kanajuq was widowed twice; Jamesie is one of his sons from his third wife, Atchina. Jamesie and Akpalialuk are therefore half-brothers. Jamesie didn’t date the event in calendar years. He said it happened before his father married his mother (Atchina), at the end of the whaling days, when families were dispersing from the stations into outpost camps. Kenn Harper gives it the date of 1919 in ‘Taissumani – The Albert Lost off Greenland,’ Nunatsiaq News, 27 May 1995. Harper mentions that they also stopped in Pond Inlet, and went on Henry Munn’s ship Albert.
to speak each other’s languages, “even though they didn’t go to school.”

Kanajuq gained more than language skills in Scotland. The main purpose of his journey was to learn how to operate and repair coal-powered steam engines. After he came back, he maintained a small coal-powered boat that was used in the beluga herding operations in Cumberland Sound. By 1925, the Hudson’s Bay Company had established a trading monopoly in the region, and they purchased the boat. Jamesie added, “The Hudson’s Bay Company bought it…and something on it broke and they couldn’t fix it, so they went and got my father to work on it again.”

Kanajuq was able to fix the qallunaat machine when the Hudson’s Bay Company employees could not. Many Inuit today are experts at tweaking and fixing outboard motors, skidoos, canvas tents, and Coleman stoves. Using and maintaining this technology has become central to their life on the land, especially now that most of them live in Pangnirtung and have to travel long distances to their traditional camps, often during limited holiday time. The literary critic Craig Womack has argued that the definition of “traditional life” should include, “anything that is useful to [Indigenous] people in maintaining their values and worldviews, no matter how much it deviates from what people did one or two hundred years ago…Only cultures that are able to adapt to change remain living cultures, otherwise they become no longer relevant and are abandoned.”

Inuit I have met do not seem concerned with becoming “inauthentic”

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39 Apphia Agalakti Awa in Wachowich et al., *Saqiyuq*, 120.
40 This was at Usualuk in Cumberland Sound.
41 Craig Womack, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 42. Thanks to Keavy Martin for this quote.
through the adoption of outside technology, not as long as they continue to hunt and prepare skins and travel on the land and eat country food. In telling his father Kanajuq’s story, Jamesie made it clear that his father remained an Inuk even as he adopted *qallunaat* technology. His long journeys fit within a tradition of Inuit travel, and he mastered new tools to continue hunting the same animals as his ancestors.

While survival draws on past knowledge, it is ultimately about imagining and anticipating and preparing for the future. This is why Jamesie’s father went abroad, but he learned about far more than fixing boats while he was there. Jamesie related:

> From what my father saw [in Scotland], he was able to tell the people over here what the future probably holds for us. He said that eventually there will be many houses in certain areas…[he foretold] about things that will come up here, and many more people are going to be coming over here as well, and new things that people have over there that we don’t have, that will be coming.42

In seeing some of the “things that will come,” Kanajuq was able to anticipate some of the twentieth-century changes that he could not otherwise have imagined. He foresaw some of the serious challenges that the future would hold for Inuit, but the future was not something that could ever be fully imposed from outside. Inuit continued to imagine their own futures in Cumberland Sound; they continued to combine local and outside knowledge in novel ways.

**Conclusion**

Nineteenth-century Inuit and Americans had very different ways of thinking about survival, and usually found themselves in divergent types of survival situations. The two

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42 Jamesie Mike, interview with Andrew Dialla and the author, 29 August 2008.
groups conceived of animals, family, gender, children, individuals, history, the afterlife, and the human place in nature in conflicting ways – so their definitions of survival could hardly have been identical. Neither the local resources Americans and Inuit needed to survive, nor the ways in which they harvested them overlapped very much. The main exception was bowhead whales, but even if the actual whaling was similar, the motivations and structures that underlay the hunt were less so. No wonder it proved so difficult for Americans and Inuit to adjust to and appreciate each other’s homelands.

Twentieth-century Canadian “welfare” programs have disastrously laid bare some key differences between qallunaat and Inuit conceptions of survival. Canadian government spending has largely focussed on qallunaat markers of the “good life”: permanent wooden houses, schools, health centres, radio stations, airports, and grocery stores with fresh produce. Inuit can and do appreciate most of these amenities, but they recognise that adopting them has entailed giving up other things – like local mobility and an everyday connection to the land – that are integral to their own definition of the “good life.” The relocation of Inuit into permanent settlements with compulsory English schooling has also torn holes in the transmission of traditional knowledge. As Inuk filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk expressed it, Inuit alive today have witnessed a “death of history.” 43 Many stories vanished altogether, and those that survive remain important: for how they got here, for what they tell us, and for what they cannot tell.

I chose the particular stories in this dissertation to try to convey a wide range of arctic survival situations – both Inuit and American – that have not received equal coverage in the past. They are pulled from sensationalised expedition narratives, terse whaling logbooks, private letters written hesitantly in a second language, and stories passed down orally through generations. These sources mirrored and influenced the different ways in which Inuit and Americans saw their own stories, as well as the stratified levels of importance that have been accorded them in print.44

There is little that is common or comparable between all of these survival stories. It seems that Inuit were generally more flexible, but they had little choice but to be adaptable in the situations I describe. Most Americans carried stockpiles of imported foodstuffs and travelled with large numbers of their own countrymen, making it possible to transfer more of their world to a new place. Of course, these varied styles of travel were also linked to cultural beliefs and priorities. Americans zealously pursued wages and scientific discoveries and notoriety; they considered their system of knowledge to be incomplete but ultimately universal. Inuit sought new ideas and technologies to integrate with their knowledge and way of life, which they saw at least to some degree as contingent on their surroundings.

Despite all these differences, people’s basic concerns were fundamentally akin when situations turned dire. They worried about dying, about compromising their values, about

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44 In large part this is probably because they did not die in Cumberland Sound, so their name-souls were not passed on there. Ipiirvik is likely remembered in the Central Arctic region where he died. It’s also possible that I didn’t talk to the right people or ask the right questions – but still, the couple’s experiences are clearly not legendary in Cumberland Sound, even though Ipiirvik returned there several times.
not being able to pass knowledge onto their children. They tended to disproportionately fear unfamiliar discomforts and causes of death, while accepting the risks that they had grown up with. Successful individuals of both cultures valued stoicism, endurance, creativity, religious faith, patience, and compassion – although they did not always live up to these ideals. For everyone, survival proved dependent on other people and animals, and on knowing how to live off the land or move through it.

Of course, people could hinder each other’s survival as well. Patrons, hosts, employers, or governments sometimes prevented Inuit and Americans from effectively adapting to local conditions or moving on. Captains retained significant control over the diets and activities of low-ranking whalers. Hannah and Ipiirvik were rarely allowed direct access to the money they earned. Lady Franklin Bay expedition members had to obey an entrenched military hierarchy. Inuit were increasingly subject to the rules and regulations of *qallunaat* individuals and states. Power relations mattered, but they were complex and people looked for creative ways to work around them.

Most of the individuals in these pages did not have conventional lives, but in a way they retold a familiar story. The history of North America is largely a history of people on the move. From early Inuit peoples moving east across the Arctic; to French fur traders canoeing into the oldest topography on the planet; to millions of African slaves being captured, transported, and sold in a New World; this continent is layered with legends, myths, and stories about survival in unfamiliar landscapes. By the mid-nineteenth century, nearly everyone in North America was living through a time of tremendous
upheaval. Farmers moved into cities, immigrants poured out of ships, whalers sailed off in all directions, and settlers fanned out across the West. The future was uncertain, and full of possibilities both electrifying and petrifying. New factories and commodities and technologies and infrastructure made the world spin even for people who remained in one place, and many people who wanted to stay put were displaced. Hunter-gatherers had more to fear than most from these changes, but they were not alone in their sufferings. Agricultural and industrial North Americans also lived through great societal and environmental transformation in the nineteenth century, and not all of them felt in control of their situations or benefitted greatly from the changes. There is no doubt that people have irrevocably altered North American ecosystems, but at the same time they have been forced to creatively adapt to new situations and surroundings, often bending more than they would have thought possible, struggling not to lose themselves or the parts of their world they most valued.
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