Wager Bay Oral History Project

1996

Passing the Traditions On
Introduction

The land and the human being has something in common. Because a living person, when we see as people living in the north, this is our land, this is our home, which means that it actually ties with our lives and becomes one. With the two working together, it actually becomes one thing. I never even thought of it this way before until just recently, when I became an elder.

Sometimes the land will produce, meaning that it will have a lot of wildlife and some years we may not have any. Even though the people used to live around Wager Bay for the longest time, not all of them survived. Because of that, it's so important to document the names of the areas around Wager Bay, not Wager Bay alone, but the land. I believe it's important to document it so people will remember and people will know that people used to live there, and some survived and some did not. (Pelly 1992a, p,85)

Mariano Aupilarjuq

Rankin Inlet, 21 Nov 1991
Mobility & Survival

Nobody knows when the first person walked on the shores of Wager Bay. Francis Kaput, who was born near Wager Bay nearly 70 years ago at Qamanaaluk and now lives in Rankin Inlet, claims that "Inuit always lived in that area, long, long before our time." (Pelly 1992a, p.102) It is impossible to argue with him.

When the first qablunaat (white men) sailed into Wager Bay - and named it thus - in 1742, while searching for a Northwest Passage, they encountered Inuit. That is the beginning of the area's documented history. The oral history, however, goes back further, although without the same precision for dates.

There are general impressions of an early people coming and going through the area of Wager Bay, and the archaeological evidence found to date supports this suggestion back approximately 1000 years. (Gray 1995, p.95) Inuit, and possibly their Eskimo predecessors, who lived and hunted around Wager Bay were a mobile people. As Mary Nuvak, an elder in Chesterfield Inlet, said: "People used to travel to survive. They had to travel." (Pelly 1992a, p.29) As a result, it may be fair to say that there was never a long-term resident population in Wager Bay, but rather a flexible population that grew and diminished, came and went, as conditions dictated. As Nuvak said, "People were nomadic. They travelled to survive, to hunt, so it wasn't all the time that people lived there. People had to move to survive. It was not like today, when we live in one community." (Pelly 1992a, p.16) Peter Katokra, 65, originally from Pelly Bay but now living in Repulse Bay, whose family lived and hunted around Wager Bay when he was a teenager, agreed: "Inuit, before the white men or the trading post, lived where there is game. They didn't necessarily stay in one area. They just moved according to where they could survive." (Pelly 1992a, p.215)

It would not be surprising if the patterns of those movements persisted through the centuries, repeated in some rough approximation generation after generation, in accordance with the ebb and flow of various wildlife populations. Felix Kopak, who was born about 1918 and now lives in Repulse Bay, recalled how this phenomenon was described to him many years ago. "There would be times when game would be plentiful, and other times there would be nothing. It fluctuated. At that time [pre-contact], animals were our only source of livelihood, so what we did was hunt all the time. Our elders used to tell us when the game got scarce, it was not that they were going extinct, it was just that they
had gathered in another land, be it seal or caribou or what have you. They were not here because they were there, in another place. The ones before us used to say that if they [the animals] are not in the immediate area, that does not mean that this land is not good for anything. They used to say that the animals will come back to this place again, sometime in the future." (Pelly 1992a, p.161)

Wager Bay was particularly extreme in its fluctuations, according to several older Inuit. Antonese Mablik, 56, from Repulse Bay, said that when he went there as a young man, "game was scarce in Wager Bay and that's why we moved back to Repulse Bay." (Pelly 1992a, p.269) But a few years later, when he returned again to Wager Bay, he found ample wildlife in the area, especially seals. Leonie Sammurtok, the oldest surviving elder in Chesterfield Inlet claimed that Wager Bay had that reputation for seals in particular, that even when seals were difficult to catch elsewhere, "they always hunted seals through the ice at Wager Bay." (Pelly 1992a, p.9) Mablik, however, had a different explanation of why he found more wildlife on his second visit. "It's the tradition of Wager Bay. If there's people there living, the game will get scarce. Once there is no more people there, they will go back. It's a phase where it's just waiting for people to show up and if they live there a long time, the game will just go right out and when they are gone will just come right back again. The way I think is that Wager Bay is so narrow, at the mouth and at the bay itself, when there is too much snow on the ice the seals will get scared and start going away." (Pelly 1992a, p.271)

To deal with this phenomenon in the past, Inuit had unwritten rules for survival, as described by Mablik: "It is something that has been going on in the past and something that will probably be going on in the future too. One of the unwritten policies was respected by the younger people too and the older people made sure that they were going by this policy. That is, get enough to last you a whole year, no more, so that you won't waste the meat at all or so that there won't be too many bones littered all over the place. If the oldest people figure that there is enough to last them a whole year, they will tell the other people that's enough, no more, and that's when they will stop hunting." (Pelly 1992a, p.271)

Notwithstanding all the uncertainty of life on the land, the Inuit who lived around Wager Bay probably maintained a centuries-old pattern of mobility. Elders today, who are in effect only one generation removed from a pre-contact lifestyle in Wager Bay, have shed some light on the patterns followed by their forefathers.
In the winter months, the Ukkusiksalingmiut, the Inuit of Wager Bay, seem to have gathered into two loosely associated groups. Each group reflects a somewhat distinct lifestyle. One was located not far from the mouth of the inlet, near Nuvukliit, where an open water polynya nearby facilitated the seal-hunt. The practicality of that arrangement endured right up to the 1960s, as explained by Elizabeth Aglukka of Repulse Bay: "This [Nuvukliit] is where we had our winter camp, to be close to the floe edge, to hunt seals." (Pelly 1996, p.58) Even after Aglukka's family had access to a trading post (in Repulse Bay) and some imported foods, they still depended on seals for much of their food, and on seal oil for their heat and light. In earlier times, the seals' meat, skin and oil were all absolutely essential for the Ukkusiksalingmiut wintering at Nuvukliit.

A second group was located farther inland, to the west, around Qamanaaluk [Brown Lake], where caribou and musk-ox sustained them through the winter. Guy Amarok, 64, of Chesterfield Inlet, pointed on the map to an area 100km northwest of Qamanaaluk, an area he called Kugajuk and said, referring to a time in the late 1930s: "In the wintertime we moved up to where other people were living. I remember that we were eating musk-ox for food. There were musk-ox in that area. We travelled by dog-team from the post [Tasiuyaq] up to where the Inuit were. We slept one night and then reached the other Inuit the next day." (Pelly 1992a, p.30) Others told stories of men going caribou hunting in that direction.

This is not to suggest that the two groups - centred around Qamanaaluk and Nuvukliit respectively - did not intermingle. They did, probably often. People from the more inland group sometimes moved down to the fruitful seal-hunting location during the winter. (HBCA B492/a/8, 15 Jan 1932) And the more seal-dependent people from closer to the coast occasionally came inland in search of caribou, most often in summer. (HBCA B492/a/10, 20 July 1933) There are stories which suggest this pattern of mobility was in place before the Hudson's Bay Company established a trading post at Tasiuyaq. (see for example Ilumigarjuk's story in Pelly 1996, p.99) Notwithstanding all this evidence, nothing about the patterns can be described as rigid. People and families moved individually and intermixed with one another at will, although according to Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce of Coral Harbour, Aivilingmiut tried to make sure their daughters married within their own group, avoiding in particular Netsilingmiut men. (Pelly 1996, p.103)

In the spring, often, there was a large gathering of people from far around at Aklungiqtautitalik. Octave Sivaniqtoq, 72, from Repulse Bay, remembers gatherings there during his youth and remembers hearing stories of people
coming together there for some years before his time: "Not all one clan, some were from Ukkusiksalik and Aivilik and some from Netsilik. Apparently a lot of people used to live around here because there is an abundance of young seal in the spring and they would hunt them here. ... That's the stories told to me: people from Pelly Bay, from other areas, Gjoa Haven, from that area, the original Aivilik people. That's what I can say, but this area was mainly used in the spring for camping. ... Sometimes there were not that many Inuit to gather to hunt in the spring, at seal holes in the ice. If they were not that many, then they had trouble getting enough seals. But if they had enough hunters, they would catch more seals. For that reason they would have these celebrations in spring time when they had more people in the camps. The main idea was hunting for food. That's how they got to meet each other most times." (Pelly 1996, p.22)

It was principally for the seal-hunt that they gathered at Aklungiqtautitalik, but they took advantage of the assembly to hold games and dances. Today on this rocky point, there are some huge standing stones that once served as the uprights for a sort of gymnastic high-bar. (see illustration in Pelly 1996, p.23) That structure, the many tent-rings, one particularly large tent-ring, and a *quqvik* remain as evidence of the activities which once accompanied the spring hunt in this location. A *quqvik* is a depression in the ground surrounded by stones, where Inuit would put a seal-skin, as a basin to contain seal fat. After laying another skin over the top, it was left for the sun to heat up, and thereby render oil for use in a *qudliq* (oil lamp). (Gray 1995, p.98)

Sivaniqtoq remembers what he heard happened at this site a generation or two before him. "Many of them from different clans, they first started making this by rolling rocks together. I'm telling what I have heard. Then they started challenging each other. ... It was our ancestors that were using it for contest among themselves. They were from different camps and each had competition on their minds to find out who was best at these games. ... There is a place somewhere here where they used to hold drum dances in a big tent. ... Inuit knew when to get together in one place by word of mouth, others telling others where to gather. I guess they planned to meet in one area for games and competitions. That's the only way they knew when to get here, and other areas of good hunting -- gathering places for Inuit, for food and survival." (Pelly 1996, p.22)

Before the ice broke up in early July, Inuit at Akluniqtautitalik dispersed to various summer camps, some back to more remote homelands and the Ukkusiksalingmiut to various camps around Wager Bay, often at the mouths of
rivers where the char fishing was reliable. Later in the summer, hunters made long treks inland, especially to the north, in search of caribou, another mainstay of the diet and a principal source of skins for clothing, in prime condition at that time of year.

As summer ended, and winter approached, Inuit waited for the sea-ice to form so that they could travel easily, to return to their chosen winter-camp, and the cycle began over again. Throughout the cycle, as inexact as it may have been, the principle of maintaining mobility for the sake of survival underlay life for the early Ukkusiksalingmiut.

* * *

The Qablunaat Arrive

As the story goes, there were ships around the Cape Fullerton area, I think. The captain of one ship was told about the whirlpool [at the mouth of Wager Bay], and the captain went to go in to investigate the whirlpool. But what they did was they made sure they got the ship watertight, so that it won’t get in any water. They checked the hull in all the places. So what the captain did was he got all the crew inside the ship, all of them, and watertight, and he himself was just at the mast. And they went to the whirlpool. The ship was pulled down, right down to the bed of the sea. It wasn’t very deep, so it went down to a certain point where it just stopped, and the ship was inside the water at the whirlpool and the captain was just on top of the sail, the mast. And they were there until the whirlpool started turning the other way around. It was either during high tide or low tide. When the whirlpool started turning around they went out of it. They went back afloat and then he knocked on the mast and the crew was happy to get out of there. (Pelly 1992a, p.203)

Octave Sivaniqtoq
Repulse Bay, 16 February 1992

A handful of explorers, whalers, policemen and traders were the only qablunaat to enter the lives of the Ukkusiksalingmiut until the early part of this century. Felix Kopak remembers being told that when he was a little boy, "still on my mother’s back," two men from Greenland passed by the area near the mouth of Wager Bay in the spring one year. (Pelly 1996, p.55) One of them, he recalled, was named Knute.*

* Presumably Knud Rasmussen, who passed here in the early 1920s.
Octave Sivaniqtoq documents that his mother, Navaq, lived with some early traders, originally as "the cleaning lady" and later as a companion, before he was born. (Pelly 1996, p.55) The traders were trying to establish a post near the mouth of Wager Bay; one of them, Sakuaqtironiq (George Cleveland) eventually moved everything farther north along the Hudson Bay coast, to build the post at Repulse Bay.

Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce, who grew up in Wager Bay and lived there to age 20, recalled an account her mother told her repeatedly as a young girl, which describes a party of qablunaat involved in a search for some other qablunaat explorers.* Mrs. Bruce's grandmother had accompanied the expedition. The story offers many diverse insights.

There was Tasiuq and Maliki used to be Inuit helpers on a ship. Tasiuq was Iqungajuk's father [therefore Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce's grandfather]. Maliki was his nephew. There were these people on the ship, one named Henry the cook, and I'm not sure who the other guy was, but he was the leader. Maliki and Ujagalaaq had two qablunaaq with them and their guide was from Netsilik -- I think his name was Ikusik. I think they sailed from Cape Fullerton.

When they left from Cape Fullerton, they went by dogteam up north. I think there was one dogteam or two - I'm not sure. I guess they were close to Wager Bay, but the rest didn't know -- just the guy from Ukkusiksalik (mouth of the Back River) and apparently their dogs got hungry along the way and they found some caches along the way because their guide knew where there was caches of fish and they got some food from the cache. They said that the fish were cleaned very neatly and prepared very neatly, even the cheeks of the fish were skewered. That's where they got their dog food from.

I'm not sure if they stopped here in this lake [Tasiuyaq] or where they travelled through. That was before there was any settlement here or people here [at the HBC post], even before my mother was born.

* This coincides nicely with the expedition of Lt. Frederick Schwatka, who in 1879 led an American search for clues to the fate of Sir John Franklin's missing party.
After they got the food from the cache, perhaps the camp was close by. They were kind of nervous or scared of getting murdered to go to a camp so they brought along guns -- even the woman was given a gun, pistols.

But apparently the Ukkusiksalingmiut were a lot more friendlier than Netsilingmiut and they were very nice and friendly. The first people they met anyways.

After staying there for awhile, they paid or traded for the food, perhaps with other items that they got. And they left from this area [to go] farther north.

Perhaps they camped along the way and they encountered another camp and the people in the camp were expecting their relatives to come in from hunting. There was a child with two dogs on a leash who came to meet them. When the kid came closer to the sled, the dogs in the sled got nervous because they did not recognize the other dogs, and the kid let go of the dogs and the dogs took off back to the camp. Even though the kid was surrounded by dogsled, he just stood there when he realized that he was not supposed to meet these people, and the people put him on the sled.

When the two dogs came back to the camp, the people at the camp became nervous because they knew that these guys that came in were strangers. And right away, you can see the two men preparing themselves. At that time people didn't approach a camp right away. You stopped not too close to the camps, at that time, because you didn't want to approach a stranger's camp, so they have lots of room to move in either direction when something strange happened.

There were two men getting themselves prepared and ready. Apparently they were readying their weapons for killing. The Netsilik man knew right away the two men wanted to kill.

As the two men approached the sled, the other man who had a weapon apparently started to stoop down right away. The people that just arrived by sled stood by the sled and the qablumaqs stood still as well and watched those two men who were coming towards them.
The Netsilik man was given a pistol by the qablunaaq leader that was already loaded. He was going to fight with the man approaching.

One of the men who came from the camp was stooped down and coming towards the Netsilik man, as soon as he stepped aside to challenge the man who wants to fight because the rest of the men with the dogteams had guns as well. When the man from the camp stooped down to fight, the Netsilik man also stooped down.

And the other man from the camp was just standing farther away and the other man came to fight and the Netsilik man said go ahead and kill me. As soon as the man from the camp harms him, the other man would shoot him. Back then whenever they were challenging each other they used to stoop down to fight. Whenever the man from the camp would strike the other man, caribou hair would fly off because it was being cut by the knife.

That's the way they fought. And so this went on for awhile -- they would back away and charge again. After backing away, the man charged the other man again. He looked at the men with the dogteams and when he saw the child on the sled he stood up very quickly -- I guess he thought the child was dead.

And when he stood up, the people in the sled beckoned the child to go to the camp people and they took him home without anything else happening and the people on the dogsled went on their way farther without camping there.

I guess they overnighted somewhere and after that they met some more people at a camp, so they went to the camp (but not too close to the camp) and spent the night there again because those people were not as vicious as the first camp.

And in that camp there were kids playing around the iglu -- going in and out and the strangers didn't seem to bother them and they spent the day there. Apparently one of the qablunaaq men (the leader) lost his knife, and he couldn't find it anywhere - someone had taken it - and the man said that if he didn't find his knife, he would kill someone. And my grandmother, who was travelling with the dogteam got very scared -- she
figured that if the man kills someone, they would all start fighting. She was also easily scared. So the man said he would kill someone if he didn’t find his knife. My grandmother told of the lost knife and someone returned the knife right away.

After spending the night there, they were packing to continue their journey and one of the men starting shaking. Either he wanted to kill someone or they weren’t sure what was wrong with him. He was in the porch of my grandmother’s — she didn’t quite know what was the matter with the man.

So they took off on their journey and it was spring time and very warm after leaving the boats in the winter. And the person named Henry would walk all over the place looking for something. He went off a distance and he found something because ships used to get lost up north.

Some people might remember somewhere around Gjoa Haven’s shores he found a grave and apparently someone made a cairn or an inuksuk beside the grave and someone put papers in between the grave and he found them. When he found the papers it said that the doctor of the ship had died from sickness.

Henry and others would walk around and search all the time and they also found a shoulder part of a human being in a pot, but they couldn’t figure out whether it was a skeletal remains of a person that died from hunger or whether the guy was murdered or not and they didn’t find any other letter saying what he died of.

And apparently one of the men, Henry, found money or coins that was stashed away for someone to find.

My grandfather walked and search around with them and he found something buried underneath the moss or earth but he didn’t tell the others knowing that he would have to dig it out so he didn’t tell the white men about it.

My grandfather was sorry later on for not telling the others because he figured there might have been valuable stuff in there.
I'll go back to the story about the finds. Apparently Henry was always talking and he was very loud -- this is about the grave and the letters in the grave that he found. Apparently, when he found the grave with the letters, you could hear him shouting from quite far away because he was so happy he found the letters and the money tucked in between the grave. I think the letters and the money were contained in the same bag.

Apparently, the other qablunaaq person, who was the leader, seemed to be embarrassed about Henry's action and his loudness.

From the location of the find, they left for lower ground and Henry wore caribou clothing all this time and didn't want to get rid of them and apparently he got on to a ship wearing caribou clothing from the time he put them on.

I'm not really familiar what happened to them on their way back to the boat. But, I've heard stories told about the time they arrived back to the ship. Apparently, Henry was talking very loudly as usual and very excited and he wore his caribou clothing all this time.

Apparently, my mother was born after they had returned to the ship, I guess her father is the qablunaaq leader.

They didn't find a lost ship but they found a grave with letters and money. (Pelly 1996, p.74)

Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce

7 August 1996

*     *     *
A Fatal Accident

There is one early incident in the history involving contemporary Ukkusiksalingmiut that is thoroughly documented. About 1920, when John Ayaruak was five or six years old, his family was travelling south along the coast from the Repulse Bay area toward Chesterfield Inlet. It was July, so there was still ice, although break-up had begun. There were three boats in total; Ovinik, Ayaruak's father, had 12 people in his boat. All three boats were blocked by ice while trying to cross the mouth of Wager Bay. One pushed on south; the other two turned back and ended up trapped in some ice floes near a small island on the north side of the entrance. They pulled the boats up onto the ice, in order to survey the situation. Ayaruak remembers, as a child, sitting in the boat looking down into the water at the rocks and seaweed on the bottom, when suddenly the ice shifted, a big ice floe overran and crushed the two boats, submerging them and throwing everyone into the water, some of them beneath the ice. Some died, including both of Ovinik's wives, and several were injured, including a man named Siksaaq, who spent a considerable length of time trapped beneath the ice until others were able to chop him free. (Pelly 1992a, p.321) It was a gruesome event, dramatically demonstrating the power of the ice and the currents at the mouth of Wager Bay.

Inuit to this day travel through that area with extra caution and particular respect for the power of the tidal currents which operate there.

* * *

Life Around Tasiuyaq

Beginning in 1925 the history of Ukkusiksalik is quite thoroughly documented, for two reasons. First, it was about that time the oldest people still alive today, who hunted and lived around Wager Bay, were born. Second, it was in that year that the Hudson's Bay Company established a trading post at the head of the inlet, at Tasiuyaq. Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce was present at that time.

"We went to Wager Bay. Toota and Jimmy Thom, Iqungajuk and Niaqukituq, and Iqungajuk's brothers [Ipkarnaq (also Samson), Siulluk (also Deaf Johnny), Talituq (also Tami Taqaugaq)]. They started building houses and the Hudson's Bay post. Iqungajuk's mother went along too.
"My mother was Toota. My real father was Jimmy Thom. First of all Iqungajuk and Toota were husband and wife; they had one child [a daughter Avaqsaq]. Kupak and Niaqukituq were another couple. When Kupak, the husband of Niaqukituq, died, Iqungajuk went to get Niaqukituq. That's how Iqungajuk and Toota separated. That's how Toota ended up with that white man, the Bay manager (Jimmy Thom). My real father was Jimmy Thom. I have heard that my real father left when I was a year old. My Inuit father was Iqungajuk." (Pelly 1992a, p.47) Iqungajuk came to be known as Wager Dick.

The first buildings at the new post were completed in the autumn of 1925. Mrs. Bruce, although she does not remember the time of Jimmy Thom of course, does remember some of the later managers and clerks. Her mother worked for many of them as cook and dishwasher. As a little girl called Tuinnaq, a derivative from the word for "looks like a doll," she had free run of the house and store, although initially her family lived in a tent on a slight rise behind the buildings. "I used to come through here for a bath -- the white man would give me a bath," recalled Mrs. Bruce standing in the kitchen door of the traders' house. Much of the contents of that house was familiar to her, although she found many things had been displaced, when she visited it 70 years later in 1996.

Outside, she pointed across the water to the east, to a giant boulder overlooking the bay where a young man, Amitnaq, laid the dead body of one of his dogs, a measure of respect for his late father and the dogs that had carried him and his mother to safety at Tasiuyaq after his father's death. (see Pelly 1996, p.100) Just south of that, along the hillside, is another grave, where Samson Ipkarnaq buried his young wife within a year of the post's establishment, before the couple had been "married" long enough to produce any children. Mrs. Bruce turned to look toward the north end of a ridge lying alongside the post, where a pile of large stones stood out against the horizon -- her grandmother Arnnagruluk's grave. Iqungajuk and his brothers entombed their mother there, protected from marauding animals by the huge stones. Mrs. Bruce visualized visitors, Inuit from far away, walking into the post from that direction during the summer. One of those she remembered was Siksaaq, a Netsilik man who some years earlier was lucky to escape with his life from the boat accident at the mouth of Wager Bay.

Siksaaq's death a few years later provides one of the many spiritual stories of the Ukkusiksalingmiut. His son, Francis Kaput, who now lives in Rankin Inlet, described his father as from Netsilik originally, and said the family moved gradually south to the Chesterfield Inlet region. In that process, they
spent several years around Wager Bay. (Pelly 1992a, p.96) In the late 1930s, they were living near Qamanaaluk when, in need of food for his family, Siksaaq set out for the post at Tasiuyaq. Mrs. Bruce, by then a teenager helping with the work at the "store," remembers his visit.

"Siksaaq's family they were owing too much to the store in Naujat [Repulse Bay], so they couldn't buy from the store in Tasiuyaq. So our family, Iqungajuk's family, had to supply some food for Siksaaq. We were doing it out of love. It was all from our own supplies. So we gave a little bit of food to them. And he was going back to his family. He was walking at that time. He got to Kapik [one of his sons] in Qamanaaluk and after Kapik's he walked to Kreelak [his oldest son*]. He never got there.

"He was not found until the snow melted the following spring, and we figure that he had built an iglu. Some say he was attacked by a polar bear." (Pelly 1992a, p.65)

Kreelak's son Guy Amarok, who was 6 or 7 years old at the time, remembers his grandfather's death. "The story behind that was he was taken by evil spirits. People looked for him for a long, long time. What had happened was, he had built an iglu. But he was pulled off the bed. His feet were on the high part [sleeping platform] and his body was on the floor, but he was pulled down and killed by spirits. There was nobody else in that area. My grandfather was an Angagok [a shaman]. It looks like he was killed by another Angagok, another spirit." (Pelly 1992a, p.37)

Siksaaq's youngest son, Francis Kanut, confirmed the involvement of shamanism in his father's death. "He didn't die of starvation. He didn't die because of illness. Nobody attacked him or anything. I can recall in those days, there were medicines and shamans. I remember, when we walked from Chesterfield Inlet, the first night when we got to where my brother Kreelak was staying [near Qamanaaluk], early in the morning, I heard him [my father] say when he was getting ready to go out hunting again, 'I'm tired of being around Wager Bay and I'm tired of these demons, the shamans trying to get at me. Next time I see this person again I'm just going to give up and not even fight back.' It was Udlut's wife's brother that was always after him; I guess he was a shaman. That's what my father was telling my older brother. I guess that's

* There is actually conflicting information as to whether Kreelak or Kapik was the oldest son. They were probably close in age and almost certainly were the two oldest of Siksaaq's five sons: Kreelak, Kapik, Okpik, Taparti, and Kaput. (see Pelly 1992a, pp.37,65,179)
what got him, a demon or a shaman. I guess he never fought back, like he told my brother. That following winter, that's when he never came back.

"I can only assume that, after what I heard from him, saying that he was tired of these demons and shamans trying to get at him and if they tried him again, he was just not going to fight back. I can only assume that that's what got him. My mother knew too, that some day this would happen. I assume that this is what happened." (Pelly 1992a, p.99) There is no doubt in either Kaput's or Amarok's mind about what happened.

The next winter, after the body had been found, young Guy Amarok remembers travelling past that place. He fell off the sled and when he looked up a giant raven-like bird was coming toward him. No one else saw the bird, but he remains convinced to this day that "it's associated with that particular incident," the death of his grandfather, Siksaaq.

In some ways, incidents like this one were simply taken in stride by people in the area, and life at the post went as usual. Mrs. Bruce has a lot of happy memories. "When we were children, we would fish for those small ugly fish that come out from under the rocks. We used to look for sik-siks and pick berries. We never used to be bored, even though there weren't that many people living in that area." (Pelly 1992a, p.52) And some special events stick in her mind. "I remember when they used to have square dances. Tommy was really good at the accordion. Even though he had an injured arm, he was really good at playing accordion." (Pelly 1992a, p.55) Nevertheless, she often wishes she knew more of what happened during those years at Tasiuyaq. It was all recorded, she remembers, in a diary kept by her father Iqungajuk, but that diary has been lost.

* * *

Fox Trade

The presence of a trading post nearby changed the life of most Ukkusiksalikmiut. Mary Nuvak of Chesterfield Inlet explained why the post was established: "The reason why they opened the post up in Wager Bay was for fox skins, fox fur. They wanted to be accessible to trappers. That's what they were going after. They had competition, so they wanted more people to trade with them. That was the reason they opened that post there. They wanted
to make sure they got the business." (Pelly 1992a, p.14) For people in the area, the post was a source of trading goods, of supplies to supplement the hunt. It provided access to market for the highly valued white fox skins, as well as a few pelts of other animals. And it was a source of help in times of need. For the most part, it was a straightforward exchange, furs for goods.

"When I was in Wager Bay," recalled Octave Sivaniqtoq, "we never traded with seal skins at all. It was only foxes and wolves." (Pelly 1992a, p.192)

The trapper laid his furs out for the trader's appraisal, and received so many HBC tokens, which he then immediately "spent" by selecting trading goods from the shelves. "What the traders used as money was a piece of wood about half an inch thick and four inches long [1.25cm x 10cm], sometimes cut in half," described Felix Kopak. "That is what we used as currency. This is how they used to trade, with a block of wood. My parents used to trade them, first of all, for bullets, and then for powder and the other stuff you need for the rifle, and they used to trade tea and biscuit, and sometimes sugar. The fox price used to vary from year to year. On a good year, you could buy a hundred pounds of flour with one fox. In a bad year, you would buy it with two." (Pelly 1992a, p.156)

"Tea, tobacco, sugar, biscuits, flour, porridge oats, those are the foods that I remember," said Guy Amarok, who traded at Tasiuyaq with his family in the 1930s. "They weren't using food that we have today, that are perishable when they're frozen. It was basic food that was being traded." (Pelly 1992a, p.33)

Occasionally the trader was called upon to do more than barter for furs. In the absence of greater expertise, he became doctor, dentist, nurse, and priest when necessary. Felix Kopak was once so sick that he "could not see - I became blind." The HBC manager at Tasiuyaq fixed him up. "Ikumaliriyialuk [W.E. "Buster" Brown] got a tablespoon and he mixed equal part of that - a white liquid, one that is really stinky, rubbing on the skin, it feels hot - with molasses, and he made me swallow it. I thought I was going to die. Fortunately, shortly after that, I started feeling better." (Pelly 1992a, p.160)

For the Ukkusiksalingmiut, in more ways than one, life came to focus more and more on the trading post. "The people from Wager Bay did their trading mostly at Tasiuyaq," said Sivaniqtoq. "We used to go up to Repulse if
we needed something that was not at Tasiuyaq, but we did our trading with Iqungajuk most of the time." (Pelly 1992a, p.190)

Mrs. Bruce, Iqungajuk's daughter, remembers people coming in to trade from different directions, by different means of travel - by foot, by dog-team, by boat - and at different times of year. Most memorable to her were the other Ukkusiksalingmiut, from near the mouth of the Back River. "I remember one time, people came from Ukkusiksalik, those people came with those wooden sunglasses that they made and I was wondering what kind of people those were. Because that was the first time I saw people like that. They seemed different people. Their dialect was different from ours. How they dressed was different from us. Those people from Back River, they used to steal whenever nobody was at the post. They would come in through the windows or they would break in to those houses. I still think about that [my father's] diary that I never went back to get. I would know everything that happened then, if I had kept that diary." (Pelly 1992a, p.53)

In 1933, the HBC withdrew its qablunaat staff and left the operation of the post in Iqungajuk's hands. "I have heard, I might be wrong, but I have heard, there weren't enough foxes and not enough people were going there. And there wasn't enough trappers to get foxes for the post," offered Mrs. Bruce, by way of explanation. It was a reluctant transition, as she remembers. "Iqungajuk didn't want to take over because he didn't know what to do. Some people came to us and asked Iqungajuk if he could take over when we were at Qamanaaluk fishing. They persuaded him." (Pelly 1992a, p.54) By then aged 18, Tuinnaq was to become more directly involved in the post's operation, often helping out in the store. "When winter was almost over and it wasn't that cold, then my father would go to Repulse Bay by dog-team to get more supplies for the store. In summertime he would go by boat. Then I would do the trading. I would write down in Inuktitut things that were sold or traded. I really didn't like trading because some people weren't happy." (Pelly 1992a, p.58) Iqungajuk, or Wager Dick as he was now almost universally known, managed the store more profitably than his qablunaat predecessors. He wrote everything down meticulously, in Inuktitut syllabics.

* * *
Policemen & Priests

Traders and explorers were not the only qablunaat to visit the Ukkusiksalingmiut. Both the RCMP and the RC missionaries passed through with some regularity.

Mary Nuvak, 89, of Chesterfield Inlet remembers both: "There were police patrols going up there. They went up by boat and they went up by dog-team. They would go up to Repulse Bay, but I don't know if they went in [to Wager Bay] a lot. I remember the first bishop for this diocese, that he was here and there were other priests here and they travelled up to Wager Bay, to conduct baptisms, stuff like that. They priests did travel a lot. They travelled up to Wager Bay." (Pelly 1992a, p.15)

The RCMP never established an outpost in Wager Bay. "There was no RCMP there," confirmed Guy Amarok of Chesterfield Inlet. "The only time that they ever came was if somebody did something wrong. That's when they would come up. But there was no post, no permanent RCMP there. They just went in for patrols, or to work on a case." (Pelly 1992a, p.37) One of those occasions was the death of Amarok's grandfather, Siksaaq.

"The RCMP came by dog-team in winter," recalled Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce from her childhood at the Tasiuyaq post. "I am not quite sure for what reason they came, but I think they were sort of investigating the deaths of two men, Siksaaq and Sutuqsi." (Pelly 1992a, p.67) Like Siksaaq, Sutuqsi had disappeared while out hunting and was found some time later lying on the ground.

As a young man, Octave Sivaniqtoq actually worked for the RCMP, although not in Wager Bay. "I was working for the RCMP before and then I was told that my wages were too small and they didn't have enough money to give me at that time, so what they did was they asked the headquarters, in Winnipeg or some place, if they had heard about this building that had belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company - it was that warehouse at Tikirajuaq - and they asked the Hudson's Bay Company if I could get that building and they said yes, so I was told to get that building. When I was going to go and get it, Father Didier found out and he told me that I was not going to use that building and he was going to take it himself. I gave this building to the priest. We took it apart and even helped him bring it down to Nuvukliit." (Pelly 1992a, p.195)
From that time on, through the 1940s and 1950s, the priest from Repulse Bay made occasional trips down to Nuvukliit in order to visit the people there, using the small building that remains today as his base, his outpost mission. Elizabeth Aglukka, who spent the winters there from 1951 onward, remembers his annual visit. He stayed approximately two weeks. "They used to come by dog-team. When the priest came, we would have services, and he would teach us when he was there." (Pelly 1992a, p.309) Elizabeth was baptized in that little mission.

During Theresie Tungilik's early childhood in Wager Bay in the 1950s, the priests' visits were a highlight. "I remember Father Didier, who was the one who arranged for my parents to be married to each other. He would come in by his own dog-team. He had his own set of husky dogs. The priests knew how to provide for themselves. They were well taught and they knew how to make their own iglu, hunt their own food. They didn't need a guide. He would travel and come and visit us and I remember rejoicing then because he would bring me some candy. And butter. Those two I remember the most. I remember one time one of them brought me a wind-up toy mouse and we had it running around on the floor in the iglu." (Pelly 1992a, p.137)

Today, although the need for visits to the outpost mission has vanished, there still hangs a small cross just inside the door of the building at Nuvukliit, as a reminder of its history.

*     *     *

The End of an Era

On one of his annual trips by Peterhead boat to get supplies, in 1946, Wager Dick's whole family went with him to Repulse Bay. For Tuinnaq, now 21, this was her first trip out of Wager Bay. The boat was old, the engine failing. On the way back down the coast of Hudson Bay, they were beset by early freeze-up. The feeble engine could make no headway; in fact, they only barely made it to shore. Looking back now, Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce remembers: "The ice was scraping on the sides of the boat. My parents got scared so we landed on shore and got our supplies on land. So our boat wasn't wrecked. We had to put our tents in that area where we beached and we spent the winter there." (Pelly 1992a, p.57)
As winter set in, the decision was made to stay put. Wager Dick (Iqungajuk) and his son Robert Tatty cut blocks of ice from the sea to build an ice house. The walls were high enough for a man to stand up inside. The boat’s sail was pulled over the top as a roof, and the family moved in to spend a fairly comfortable winter. "It was really nice to live in that ice house for awhile," reminisced Mrs. Bruce, "because we could see through [the walls]." (Pelly 1992a, p.57)

That incident changed the course of history. The family had planned to stay at Tasiuyaq, with the thought that Tatty would take over as manager of the store. But as he recalled, "we had more business there [at the ice house beside Hudson Bay] than before in Wager Bay. There was a lot of fox that year. During that winter, I went back [by dog-team] to the Wager Bay post to do an inventory and to pick up the remaining supplies. That was the end of the HBC in Wager." (Pelly 1992a, p.334)

* * *

The Cycle Continues

It was not, however, the end of Inuit living in Wager Bay. In fact, the cycle of life continued much as before. Some families moved into the area for just a short while, a year or two, and then moved on. Not long after the post at Tasiuyaq ceased operation, Peter Katokra’s family moved down to Wager Bay. He was about 16 at the time. "We moved to Wager Bay to be near game. In those days, it used to be hard to stay alive. You had to go from day to day with whatever you catch. The main reason why we moved to Wager Bay was to survive and also to be able to hunt caribou. The immediate area of Repulse Bay didn’t always have caribou; caribou was our main reason why we moved to Wager Bay, because there is caribou in Wager Bay year round. And also there’s seal there and also there’s fish there. I know we moved to Wager Bay so we can have a better living and so that we can be happy.

"I had my grandfather Akkiutaq, my grandmother Kinakuluk, my mother Arnarqriaq, and my father Ulikataq, my uncle Mark Tungalik, my sister Qiluk, my brother Aqiutaq, also my grandparents' adopted son Iyakak. Also there at that time was Sivaniqtoq, Tavok, Sangnirqtaq - I think there was about five families. This occurred after most people left Wager Bay. Before our time there used to be a lot of families in Wager Bay area. I am quite sure it was because of the trading post, when it shut down, that people left there. Although
there was not as many people there, there was always somebody in Wager Bay." (Pelly 1992a, p.214)

Other families, like Tungilik and Tavok, stayed in Wager Bay for the longer term. In the mid-1950s Mark Tungilik moved his family back down to Wager Bay, when his daughter Theresie Tungilik was just old enough to remember. "We had been travelling by dog team, and it was getting dark, so we stopped for the night. I saw my father building an iglu and he was getting all frosty on his moustache from hurrying. Finally he finished the top and we got in there and I remember being too small to climb on the bed.

"I just remember my mother telling me that we used to live mostly around Wager Bay when the Hudson's Bay and the missionaries would allow only working people to live in the settlements. Every time I think of Wager Bay, I see beautiful landscape, mountainous and hilly and fast rivers flowing." At age seven, Theresie went away to school in Chesterfield Inlet. "That was the first time I didn't sleep in caribou bedding - it was sheets, and it was just too hot. I really had a hard time sleeping that first night." (Pelly 1992a, pp.130-39) At that point, Tungilik moved his family back up to Repulse Bay. Several other families made a similar move about the same time, as the community living around the trading post and the R.C. mission at Repulse Bay began to grow. By 1960, there was only one family left living in Wager Bay, Tavok.

Tavok's daughter, Elizabeth, was born on the shores of Wager Bay in 1950. She grew up there, to age 18, when her ailing father decided it was time to move the family up to the growing settlement at Repulse Bay. That marked the end of an era of occupation in Wager Bay. Tavok had lived there most of his life. "The main thing that my father did when we were in Wager Bay was gathering food all the time, to make sure we had enough meat and enough fish. Also he was constantly hunting for our clothing and to make sure the dogs had enough to eat. The clothing we had were totally out of caribou skin; be it summer or winter, we had nothing but caribou clothing. The other main thing that we did as well was my father was constantly trapping foxes and also seal skin because there was a demand for those. He usually used to come about twice a year [to trade in Repulse Bay]. He would come in about December, because November the ice is still too thin. He would come in December and in May, and those would be the only two trips." (Pelly 1992a, p.310)

To maintain this livelihood, Tavok followed a pattern similar to the long-standing cycle of life in Wager Bay. Every winter he took his wife and children
to Nuvukliit, where he built an iglu for the winter and he hunted at the aukanaaqjuq, "the place that does not freeze" (polynya), for seals to provide meat for his family and his dogs. When Elizabeth Aglukka returned to the site of her family's camp some thirty years later in 1996, she was filled with emotion: "I felt a lump in my throat and I felt like crying but I held it back. It was to do with the fact that I haven't been here for many years and I felt the overwhelming joy in me to see it again." (Pelly 1996, p.10) No place in Wager Bay offers a stronger attachment for her. This is where we had our winter camp, to be close to the floe edge, to hunt seals. In those years, we had no Coleman stove. We used only a qudliq; that's why we had to be near the seals." (Pelly 1996, p.58)

From about November to May they lived in an iglu on that island. When the days began to get warmer in May, they moved a few hundred metres east on the island, to set up their canvas tent on a gravel beach. The seal-hunting continued. When the ice started getting "bad," it was time to move onto the mainland, initially to the peninsula and, once the ice cleared, around to the mouth of the Piqsimaniq River, where they usually spent the summer.

"In the summer months we used to have to walk by foot to look for caribou out in the land, due to the caribou being scarce. The caribou were not in a particular area - they would be all over the place, not near our camp." (Pelly 1996, p.17) Hunting caribou inland, occasionally catching seals near the rivermouth, and fishing for char kept the family well occupied during the summer. When the char started to run upriver in August, attention shifted to the fish weir a few kilometres upstream. For a week or two, there were lots of fish, and the family would work together every day to empty the trap, clean the fish, and put them away in a stone storage cache. "We went all together to check the weir. When we got close we could see lots of splashing in the water. That was the best time. We enjoyed arriving to see that." (Pelly 1996, p.65)

Most years Tavok stayed in his summer tent until there was enough snow, usually in December, to build an iglu upriver beside the fish weir, for ease of access to the stored food. One year, 1962, because there was a new baby girl in the family, they built a qammaq [sod house]. "It seemed really warm when we moved in here from the tent," remembered Elizabeth. "When we got low on seal oil, it was time to move back to Nuvukliit." (Pelly 1996, p.65) And the cycle began over once more.

Finally in 1968, Tavok decided the time had come to move on. "During the winter time he got very ill to a point where he almost died," recalled
Elizabeth Aglukka, his daughter, now 46. "After that, he feared that he might have left us behind, so he headed back to Repulse Bay." (Pelly 1996, p.11) Tavok was the last to abandon what was left of the traditional way of life in Wager Bay, to leave behind the pattern that he and countless generations of Inuit before him had lived so successfully in Ukkusiksalik.

* * *

The Future

Faced with the proposal that their former home may become a National Park, most of those asked were broadly supportive, although a few reservations were expressed.* An almost universal concern expressed the need for Inuit to retain access to the area for hunting and other traditional activities. Many reasoned that if it were to become a National Park, Inuit should benefit economically in various ways. Several hoped that National Park status would not lead to any "disturbance" of the natural systems in Wager Bay.

During a return visit in 1996, her first in nearly 30 years, Elizabeth Aglukka said "I can't think of any place that should not be visited, all over Wager Bay area, except I am concerned about the prospectors taking samples. As long as they [visitors] keep it clean and leave it the way [it was when] they came in, I don't mind visitors coming to it." (Pelly 1996, p.17) As she sat on the ground at the site of her family's old spring-camp in Nuvukliit, examining the artifacts they left behind, she said "I would like these things left here, alone, untouched." It's acceptable for someone to pick an item up to look at it, so long as they "put it back where it belongs" afterward. "I would not like to see someone take something from here to put in a museum, or to sell. I'd rather leave all the things here." (Pelly 1996, p.59) Even Elizabeth left the site of her childhood home without taking a souvenir.

There was nowhere around Wager Bay that any of its former residents, when asked, thought should be off-limits to tourists, with the important provisos always that they not harm the land or the old sites, and that they not interfere with Inuit use of their traditional hunting ground. On the other hand, some of the old camps - particularly Masivak and Piqsimaniq - were identified as potentially of particular interest to visitors. "The old sod houses [qammaq]

* For a complete report on opinions regarding National Park status, see the Wager Bay Oral History Project Final Report (Pelly 1992b, p.77)
would be of interest to the visitors to see," thought Elizabeth Aglukka, "so that they could see how our ancestors survived and lived, and have more understanding about how Inuit lived." (Pelly 1996, p.17)

* * *

Conclusion

Today Wager Bay is one of those spots, found frequently in the North, where a wild and rugged landscape opens the visitor's eyes to a new sort of beauty and appreciation of natural splendour, and yet somehow remains in complete harmony with its depth of historical occupation by other humans. The duality is a difficult one for the typical visitor from southern Canada, or the United States, or Europe, where the experience of human occupation has typically meant the destruction of the natural setting. Here in Ukkusiksalik history is everywhere and yet it is only apparent upon close inspection. Once discovered, it is captivating. Like the wildflower, you can't see it from the air, but once landed on the shores of Wager Bay, when you look down at the ground beneath your feet, the colour and detail and enduring nature of the tiny flower - and the history of that land - will enter your soul.

As Mark Tungilik said only weeks before he passed away in 1986, reflecting back on his life, "People are always happy to go to a plentiful land - that is how I felt about going to Ukkusiksalik." (Pelly 1987, p.25)

* * *

David F. Pelly, author of this paper, first visited Wager Bay in 1986, and has returned several times since. He began interviewing Inuit elders with historical connections to the area in 1986, and continued that work in much greater depth on a Parks Canada contract in 1991-92. In 1996, he spent a month with Inuit elders and their families returning to their old campsites and hunting grounds around Wager Bay, collecting more stories and site-interpretive information. On personal trips to Wager Bay, he has hiked and sea-kayaked along both shores, north and south, and participated in some of Sîa Lodge's day-outing excursions. This paper is based on all these experiences plus the knowledge gleaned from reading all the relevant documents held in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives; however, the author wishes to acknowledge his chief source, the Inuit elders who have been so enthusiastically co-operative throughout the ongoing research programme. This is their story.
References Cited


Index of People & Places

Aglukka, Elizabeth 4,19,21,22,23,24
Aivilik 5
Aivingimiut 4,5
Akkiutaq 20
Aklungiqtautitalik 4,5
Amarok, Guy 4,14,15,16,18
Amitnaq 13
Aqiutaq 20
Arnarqriaq 20
Arnnagruluk 13
Aupilarjuq, Mariano 1
Avaqsaq 13
Ayaruaq, John 12
Bruce, Mrs. Tuinnaq Kanayuk 4,7,11,12,13,14,15,17,18,19,20
Cape Fullerton 6,11
Chesterfield Inlet 3,4,12,13,14,15,18,21
Coral Harbour 5,
Didier, Fr. 18,19
Franklin, Sir John 7
Gjoa Haven 5,10
Greenland 6
Hudson Bay 7,19,20
Ikumaliriyialuk (WE Brown) 16
Ikusik 7
Ilumigarjuk 4
Ipkarnaq 12,13
Iqungajuk 7,12,13,14,15,17,20
Iyakak 20
Kapik 14
Kaput, Francis 2,13,14,15
Katokra, Peter 2,20
Kinakuluk 20
Knute (Knud Rasmussen) 7
Kopak, Felix 2,6,16
Kreelak 14
Kugajuk 4
Kupak 13
Mablik, Antonese 3
Maliki 7
Masivak 23
Navaq 7
Netsilik 5,7,8,9,13
Netsilingmiut 4,8
Niaqikutuq 12,13
Northwest Passage 2,10
Nuvak, Mary 2,15,18
Nuvukliit 4,18,19,22,23
Okpik 14
Ovinik 12
Pelly Bay 2,5
Piqsimaniq 22,23
Qablunaat [white men] 2,6-11,17,18
Qamanaaluk 2,4,14,17
Qiluk 20
Rankin Inlet 1,2,13
RCMP 18
Repulse Bay 2,3,4,6,7,12,14,16,17,18,19,20,21,23
Sakuaqtironiq (George Cleveland) 7
Sammurtok, Leonie 3
Sangniqtqaq 20
Schwatka, Lt. Frederick 7
Siksaaq 12,13-15,18
Siulluk 12
Sivaniqtoq, Octave 4,5,6,7,16,18,20
Sutuqsi 18
Talituq 12,15
Taparti 14
Tasiuq 7
Tasiyuaq 4,7,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,20
Tatty, Robert 20
Tavok 20,21,22,23
Thom, Jimmy 12,13
Tikirajuaq 18
Toota 11,12,13
Tungilik, Mark 20,21,24
Tungilik, Theresie 19,21
Udlut 14
Ujagalaalaaq 7
Ukkusiksalingmiut 4,8,12,13,15,16,18,20
Ukkusiksalik (Back River) 5,7,17
Ulikataq 20
Winnipeg 18
## Contents

### Elders from Repulse Bay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackie Nanordluk - Piqsimaniq</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Aglukka - Piqsimaniq</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felix Kopak &amp; Octave Sivaniqtoq - Aklungiqtautitalik</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felix Kopak - Masivak</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octave Sivaniqtoq - Masivak</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Notes</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Bruce Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce - Tasiuyaq</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikitok Bruce</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Notes - Tasiuyaq</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
26 July - 3 August 1996

Elders from Repulse Bay
1996 Wager Bay Oral History Project

Informant: Jackie Nanordluk

Interviewer: David F. Pelly
Interpreter: Steve Mapsalak
Date of Interview: 29 July 1996
Location during Interview: Piqsimaniq
Home community of informant: Repulse Bay
Translator/Transcriber: Veronica Dewar

Jackie Nanordluk has signed the consent form and understands that the information provided will be made public.
Q. To start with Jackie I would like you to describe for me the whole process from start to finish, in as much detail as you can, of building of a qammaq, a sod house.

A. I have known and seen Inuit making qammaq, sod houses. I will explain to you what I know. First of all, before they started making sod houses, the weather and the ground had to be colder. Most of the people had similar way of building sod houses. Some made it just on the land and some dug into the sand first and made a ditch for the sod house. When it is on the sand they try and make it simple as possible for everyone that is making it. The wall of the sod houses usually were sod and some made it out rocks, and these are the differences in the building of these sod houses.

If they are going to make sod houses just out of sod it had to be little bit frozen in the fall and the inside is thawed. This is the process in the fall.

The sod houses couldn't be done in one day. Some made it for few days, due to that fact that they needed to make it like an igloovigaq in preparation, being careful not to make the sod too thin, and they had to make it quite thick in order for it to hold. They could not use the sod for the roofing. They needed to make the siding of the walls higher using the sod, and when it got to the height they wanted it, it varied from builder to builder on how high they want it. As soon as they finished the bottom part of the walls, then they would put the canvas over the top for the roof and set it up like a tent with poles. Some were made slanted and varied as well from builder to builder. I guess from the owners who is building, each owner had their own custom in building sod houses, some slanted, because they will be just using it to sleep in. The bed would be at the end and in the slanted part. Some built their sod houses higher too, even though it was slanted.

Once they put the canvas tent over it, then they would also put poles to make it more even. If they had enough wood around for that time, this would make it a good frame for the sod house with canvas in it. This is the way I saw sod houses being built. They would make it according to the height they wanted for the sod houses and it would be done by looking at the walls of the sod houses. In the past they did not have measuring tapes to use, and they did it by sight, and for that reason they had different sizes in heights. They would decide if it was the right size by looking at the height they've created. They would use different kinds of wood to make it more reliable in the frame of the sod house. The canvas tent was put inside it and put in last. Lastly, they would collect bushes to put in as insulation and that would be in between the
tent and the sod, and on the top of the sod house they would put more of the material on top to finish it up.

The door would be quite narrow so that it would bring less wind through it and the foundation of the bed would be rocks. This is what I saw when they made sod houses.

Q. Was there any usual orientation to the sod house, did the door usually face in any particular direction?

A. No, it was not done in such a way that it would just face any direction. The wind usually comes from the south. It was done in such a way that it would not face a snow bank. They would make the door to face the south wind and also they tried facing the doorway where there would not be a snow build up.

They would make the sod house by looking at the landscape. If the land is facing down then they would make the doorway facing down instead of making the doorway on a higher level, like this old qammaq [Aglukka's] was made by looking at the landscape.

Q. What about the size of the rocks that were used -- was there a standard size that people tried to use or how did they pick what size rocks to use?

A. Yes, they use to use rocks that would fit best in the sod houses and make them fit accordingly to each rock that is beside it. They would try and collect rocks that were more square and level, even if it is larger and flat was best to use that would make it much easier to build it and get it done faster as well. The height would be done faster too, even if it is not that big it would be okay.

Q. What size of rocks did they use?

A. Yes, they used any size of rocks, yes, as long as they are not too heavy to carry and if it is a good rock to use for the sod house to build it up with.

Q. Did the sod house go higher than the rocks, was there more sod on top of the rocks?

A. I don't know, as long as they were good rocks and good size, I'm sure they were much higher too when they built them. It's very hard work to build
them up. They tried making the inside more carefully than the outside of the sod house. You will see the old sod house that was built so you can see how it was done.

Q. Did they use more rocks or more sod?

A. No, they used lot more sod than rocks, because the rocks are so heavy to use and hard to work with. If there is enough sod around, they could figure it out more how high they want to build the walls.

Q. What height of walls did people build? How high did the walls go?

A. I don't really know how high they made them, maybe the way we are standing now, this high. They were not that high, they were more or less built like tents in the size enough for us to stand in it, but lower on the side. When you see them from outside they looked quite low. Even if it is low, once you go inside it is higher, because they have dug in to the sand to make more space in height and make it more comfortable to live in. Like I said, it looks low from outside, but once you get inside, it is high.

Q. If people could not find wood, like two-by-fours today, what did they use for the beams of the roof?

A. I have just heard about this and have not seen it with my own eyes: they used bowhead whale bones especially the ribs and the bones if they were usable. They had to use things that were long enough for beams. I have never seen them though, but I have heard they used them for beams.

Q. The sod house [Aglukka's] that we looked at together today, do you think that was a big one, or an average size, or small size? Do you have any idea the usual dimension of sod houses?

A. It is one of the smallest size.

Q. This one [Aglukka's] we looked at here, south of Piqsimaniq River, you think is a small size?

A. Yes, in the small size category.

Q. How big could they be?
A. Perhaps they be much bigger than this [10x12 tent] in size -- that other one [Aglukka's] is much smaller than this [tent]. It's obvious, that they made some of the sod houses much larger according to the size of families they had. There is one over the rocks there that is much larger than the one we saw. Yes, they had to go according to the size of the families.

The old sod houses that were in Repulse Bay, were larger ones in size, but today they have been destroyed by bulldozers to get the gravel for the community. I have seen my uncle's large sod house. He had a large family. He used a Peterhead boat's poles to frame it with.

I forgot to mention the windows of the sod houses. I have seen them being made out of bearded seal's throat skin.

Q. Is it actually a mirror that you could see yourself in or a window you could see through?

A. A window. This kind of a window was more used in Repulse Bay. I have seen it rarely, but the Inuit from Igloolik used more of the walrus' skin. I don't know exactly which part of the animal they used.

The way they used the skin of the bearded seal's throat is by carefully peeling it off the layer of the throat while it is still damp or soft. It's hard enough to peel it off and it's thin so that it could be used for the window and it made the light come in to the sod house and you could see little ways but not far off. In those days they did not have anything else to use for window.

The process of peeling off the throat skin is like the way you prepare the intestines of the animals for processing. I have watched some preparing it that way with the throat of the bearded seal.

Q. Could you actually see through it? See things on the outside? Or was it just effective to let light come in?.

A. Yes, it was just to let the light come in, you couldn't see far with it except close. You couldn't see far with it. It could work to see far with if it was done very well. It was used for the light to come in only.

Q. What is it about the bearded seal throat, do you think, that makes it work? Why won't a natsiq [ringed seal] throat work, for example?
A. I think because the bearded seal is much larger than a ringed seal and it is much tougher than it and tears less. They would put them all together from more than one throat skin to make it large enough for a window and sew it together.

Q. Bearded seal was much larger than ringed seal.

A. Little seal might work, but it would be a small window.

Q. They could use ringed seal too?

A. Probably, I don't know. I'm sure it could work.

Q. What about a walrus throat?

A. Inuit from Igloolik used it a lot more than us, and Ukkanguq could tell you more about it than I can.
1996 Wager Bay Oral History Project

Informant: Elizabeth Aglukka

Interviewer: David F. Pelly
Interpreter: Steve Mapsalak
Date of Interview: 31 July 1996
Location during Interview: Piqsimaniq
Home community of informant: Repulse Bay
Translator/Transcriber: Veronica Dewar

Elizabeth Aglukka has signed the consent form and understands that the information provided will be made public.
Q. Elizabeth, I'd like to ask you first how you feel now after spending 3-4 days visiting Nuvukliit and Piqsimaniq, coming back to these places 30 years after you left them. What are you feeling?

A. I'm very happy that I was brought here, but once we were descending to Nuvukliit I felt a lump in my throat and I felt like crying but I held it back. It was to do with the fact that I haven't been here for many years and I felt the overwhelming joy in me to see it again. I started to remember what it used to be like. I am so grateful and happy. We also went to Ikpiguaq and this place. I was very happy to get to these places again.

Q. Do you feel a closer connection to any one place, of the ones that we visited? Is there any stronger attachment for you?

A. That place, Nuvukliit.

Q. Why?

A. It's been many years since I have not seen it, many years since I have not been back to it and I've just come back. It was just few days ago and it brought back many memories and I felt emotional. I remembered my relatives once I got to Nuvukliit and I started to remember the people that lived with us then, especially my past brother, the only brother we had, but I am okay now. I feel good.

Q. There is still a little question in my mind, why Nuvukliit was more emotional for you and more important than Piqsimaniq?

A. Yes, there's an old house and I know that house. My past [deceased] brother never came back home after he drowned. [She shows emotion at this time.] And I use to think that he was around the area, maybe it was just me who thought like this, I don't know if my relatives thought the same, but I found out he was no longer with us, that's when I got emotional, because of the memories I had of him being in this area.

Q. Can you explain to me why your family stayed here longer than other families, after all other families left here?

A. We tried to be in a place where there was more abundance of wildlife. My father [Tavok] didn't want us to be hungry, for that reason he wanted us to stay. He tried to provide for us where there was more wildlife so that we could not go hungry, so he tried to stay behind. And we had a house up there,
further up, but during the winter time he got very ill to a point where he almost
died. After that he feared that he might have left us behind, so he headed back
to Repulse Bay.

It was not just for food. In those days the hunters got more fox furs in
money wise and he tried trapping for a while to make income for the family.

Q. What's your Inuktitut name?
A. Inutuinar.

Q. Does that have a meaning?
A. Yes, it was my mother's father's name. It was just his nickname, not his
real name. It was given to him when he was a baby, like when Inuit love their
children they give them babyish names and little sayings and all. I don't know
what it means and I don't know where it came from. It could have been
anything at all. That is how he got the name.

Q. Yesterday when we went to the qammaq [sod house] over here, you
were able to walk straight to it. It seems to me you knew where it was. Am I
right?
A. Yes, I knew exactly how it was, so I went straight to it.

Q. Was there a feeling for you that everything around here was very
familiar or did it seem a little bit different?
A. It looks exactly the same. But the only thing is that there is some debris
left around - lumber, barrels - otherwise the landscape has not changed.

Q. After 1962 you were the only family here, but I'd like to know what
families you remember being camped around you before 1962?
A. We were not the only family only in 1962. 1959-60 was the year that
we were the only family left. The families that lived in the camp with us
started leaving.

Q. Before 1959-60 what other families do you remember, which ones do
you remember?
A. The families were Amaroalik, Angugatiaq, Inuksatuajuk and Kaunak, Amaroalik’s brother. These are the families I remember. One more family I forgot was my father’s older brother Sangnirqtaq. [Asked to write the names down later, she provided this list: Amaroalik, Inuksatuajuk, Tungilik, Kaunak, Itturiliraq, and Sanertanut.]

Q. How much interaction was there between the families: visits, talk, etc.?

A. We didn’t see each other that much, because we were apart from each other in springtime, but we would see each other more in winter months in Nuvukliit.

Q. What about as children, did you and your brother want to play with other children in the other camps?

A. No, we wanted to play with other children ... only time would be once all the families got together. Then we played with them, like sliding and other games, like hide and seek. It was a great time for us to play together.

Q. What did you do then in summer camp here -- when you couldn’t play with other children, what did you and your brother do for fun?

A. We would play around the camp, sliding, play baseball, in summer-time we would do lot of exploring around on the land. We never seemed to have time for boredom.

Q. Did you have any toys?

A. We had wooden Inuit dolls and seal flipper bones for games call *Inuujait*.

Q. What did you do with the seal flipper bones?

A. We’d have a bag with the bones in it and get a string and put them in the bag and you try and catch as many as you can with the string without looking inside the bag and pull out as many as possible. And we would make an igloo with the bone game and put them on the ground and also make *qamutiks* out of them and dog teams. Each bone has its identification, what it stands for. We would play with them.

Q. What about once you got to Nuvukliit at winter camp and you have lots of children around -- were there any different games?
A. Only things I mainly remember when we played with other children were sliding, hide and seek in winter months.

Q. Elizabeth, could you explain to me women's work, on the seals or sealskins once a hunter brought them back to the camp at Nuvukliit?

A. All women work on the seal skins. They would cut it up, prepare the meat, clean the skin after scraping the skin properly from fat. Then they would put it in hot water and later scrape the fur off and scrape it again to get rid of the other unnecessary stuff. Then they would make kamiks [boots] out of it. And the tool is Saliguut [A kind of scraper]

Q. Is that same tool used for caribou?

A. To my knowledge, No.

Q. Mainly used for seal and bearded seal skin?

A. Yes.

Q. The tool itself -- what did it look like, what was it made out of?

A. I grew up when they made them out of metal. They used metal out from barrels. The handle was wood and the scraper made out of metal and the shape of it is square.

Q. This process, I want to find out if I understand correctly, was this the way to produce black seal skin?

A. They used another tool to process the black skin. It was the ulu that was used to make the black skin by scraping the fur off the skin. You can see the elders wearing the kamiks that have black skin on them.

Q. Was one boiled and the other not boiled, or are they both boiled?

A. The black one was not boiled.

Q. What's the difference between the two skins, why do you have some of one kind and some of the other and how are the two used?
A. The one that is boiled, which is white, is for women’s kamiks and the one that is not boiled, which is black, is for men’s kamiks. The black skin is used to make waterproof kamiks for men. When they are black skin they are more waterproof and do not soak as fast as white skin.

Q. What about the skin from ugjuk [bearded seal]? Is it treated differently from skin from natsiq [ringed seal]?

A. How? When being used for kamiks? Yes, it is the same process. They either can make kamiks out of them if white or black skin. They are mainly used for soles of the kamiks.

Q. Is the quality of the skin different in any way?

A. It's the same type of skin except it's thicker than [ringed] seal skin, so that it will not wear out faster, because they are used for walking around. They [bearded sealskins] are mainly used as soles for kamiks and some of it used to make rope out of, and this part is bearded seal skin as well.

Q. Did your father catch bearded seals close to Nuvukliit?

A. Of course, they were the only source that we made kamiks out of, therefore they hunted them regularly and catch as many as possible.

Q. What about for the tents? For a seal skin tent, which skins were used?

A. Yes, certainly, I myself have never seen one, my mother used to tell me about it, a little. The best time to get them was in spring time, that is when they are moulting and the skin is much thicker when moulting in spring time. They would split it when it's thicker, to use it for tents. This is what my mother use to talk about.

Q. What about for other purposes, for clothing or kamiks or anything else, were there different uses for skins in different times of the year or is it always better to get it in springtime?

A. It's better to get in summertime after they moulted and in wintertime. These seasons were the best time to get the seals to make things with.

Q. What about the process of drying the skin, initially when it first came off the animal -- how did you do that?
A. After you skinned the seal you do the regular process of scraping off the fat. Then you lay it flat on the ground and you use pegs to stretch it around and put them to the soil to hold it flat.

Q. For how long?

A. When it is sunny they dried much faster, maybe half a day to get it dry or in one day.

Q. So then after drying it was ready for scraping?

A. No, scraping was done before drying it.

Q. What happened next after the drying was finished?

A. After drying, once it's dry enough to use it to make things with, then you can use it anytime after that. Next you make it soft by chewing on for hours with your teeth.

Q. How long would it take doing that on one skin?

A. It would take only about a day to make them soft by chewing on it.

Q. What about the blubber, the seal oil, what was the process of getting the oil?

A. In winter, when there's blubber available, we used to store it in snow -- in a high place where dogs won't get at it. And if they need more they would just go out and get more oil for the lamps and for other things.

Q. Elizabeth, is there anything else about the use and preparation of seals that you can think to tell me that you know?

A. *Ugjucks* [bearded seals] are used for making ropes and *kamiks* -- that is what I know they are used for. But the seal was used a lot for its oil and the skin to store the blubber also, and for *kamiks*. The whole seal was utilized for everything.

Q. When people sewed together skins for making *kamiks* or anything, what was used for a needle and thread?
A. I didn't make it to a stage when they used traditional tools such as needles to make kamiks with. I was born when they had more modern tools. They can't use regular thread to make kamiks with. They had a thread that was made out of caribou sinew, from the back tenderloin area.

Q. Was it hard for you or was it fun for you to learn the proper way of stitching to make kamiks?

A. I found it hard to sew at the beginning, but I kept trying and I learned how to sew later on by practicing with small kamiks. I learned how to sew on my own, to make kamiks even though it was hard. Our parents were strict with us and persistent for us to make things on our own. They made sure we learned. We had to try on our own when we were quite young to make kamiks for ourselves.

They used to teach us properly by saying, "try it yourselves -- that is the only way you'll learn" and we had no choice but to obey them, in reverence, not of fear. We learned to sew by trying. We obeyed them too, in order that we may survive on our own later on in years.

Q. I don't understand how it's possible to put a stitch into the skin, to put a hole through, and still -- at the end when it's finished -- it's waterproof, so no water can go through?

A. If we had an example of a seal skin here, you would be able to understand it. This part is [ringed] seal skin and the bottom sole is bearded seal skin. This part here, you try not to sew it right through the skin, so it does not make a stitch through it making a hole. This part is easy if you are going to make waterproof kamiks, but the skin should not have a needle go through the skin so that it does not go through the skin.

The bearded seal skin for the bottom sole part, you make a stitch going up and down again. It's easier, but this skin down on the bottom sole and the edge should not have a stitch through it, otherwise it will not be waterproof.

Here is the skin of bearded seal and you place it in a certain way, then you try and sew it very carefully. At times it was not easy to sew. You had to stitch around the sole part as well right to the edge. One of the people here has kamiks like that, that are waterproof. You could see how they were made which are waterproof.
You can't tell just by looking at kamiks if they are waterproof or not. I can't give you an example because I don't have a seal skin around to show you how they are made at the beginning.

Q. What do you think about all of the Wager Bay area? Is there anywhere in this area that for some reason you think visitors should not be allowed to go?

A. I can't think of any place that should not be visited, all over Wager Bay area, except I am concerned about the prospectors taking the samples of Wager Bay. As long as they keep it clean and leave it the way [it was when] they came in, I don't mind visitors coming to it.

Q. What is your concern?

A. Leaving debris and waste.

Q. Is there any place that you think is particularly important for visitors to see?

A. The old sod houses [qammaq] would be of interest to the visitors to see, so that they could see how our ancestors survived and lived, and have more understanding about how Inuit lived. Also to see what kind of wildlife we have up here in the Arctic.

Q. Are you saying that you think it's important for visitors see old sod houses or that you think visitors would be interested to see old sod houses?

A. Yes, visitors would be interested to see them.

Q. Well, Elizabeth, over the last 5 or 6 years I've asked you over a hundred questions about Wager Bay and I really appreciate your patience in answering them all. Nevertheless, I'm sure there are many more things that you know about Wager Bay that I did not think to ask you? So being the last chance for me, is there anything else you would like to say on the record?

A. One thing that I thought you were going to ask about was hunting caribou. Many years ago in summer months we used to have to walk by foot to look for caribou out in the land, due to the caribou being scarce. The caribou were not in one particular area -- they would be all over the place, not near our camps. Near the lakes there are lots of inuksuks, and they were the pathways for [forcing] the caribou to go across the lakes and they are called
nalluts. When they were swimming across, people were waiting for the caribou on the other side of the lake with a bow and arrow. In those days they didn't have any other means of hunting wildlife.

If you have no more comments or questions, I'm very thankful for all of you people that I was able to take part in this trip to Wager Bay and paying my way to here. I never thought I would ever come back again in my life time. I am so thankful and grateful I am now very content, happy. Even my body is more relaxed and less weary and tired. I'm very happy.
Octave Sivaniqtoq and Felix Kopak have signed the consent form and understand that the information provided will be made public.
Q. Could you just talk for awhile about this place?

Sivaniqtoq: Which one of us will start first?

Kopak: I think we each have to speak one at a time.

Q. You can both talk together, we will just record it. Just tell us your experiences and ideas.

Kopak: Are you ready?

Q. Go ahead.

Kopak: Ever since the time I became an elder, I didn't live here all of the time, although I lived around here when I was a child. We used to live at the point near the ocean down there when I was a child. We used to go to a place called Tasiuqaq when we lived down at the point. When we got to Tasiuqaq we would camp there for a few days and then return to our original place at the point by going through the shores and into Repulse Bay, when I was a child. And I didn't really remember, when we used to go camping in the springtime, coming from Repulse Bay to this area, but I remember being in Wager Bay. I remember one particular summer - all summer - going through Masivak to Iriptaqtuq. We were very hungry - that I remember very well. From Iriptaqtuq, with my cousin and stepfather, I remember going to another area around here. Perhaps we walked slowly but we camped on the sea ice that time. After we broke camp and went to Nuvukliit and stayed for a while and I don't quite remember where we went to next.

Q. Do you remember hearing stories about Wager Bay and what they did in those days and who were the people who camped in tents here at this site? I also saw some graves, do you remember anything about that?

Kopak: This tent ring looks like there have been a grave, but it isn't. This entrance area was used for child-bearing women. This was in the days when women had their babies and they used to put them there in the little tent and leave them there for 5 days. Then she would get back with her husband. She would stay there for 5 days straight by herself and get fed and someone would get her a drink, but they would not enter her tent for 5 days because the tent or the area was very small - that's what I heard they used to do.
And there's another thing call "roping." I remember it being inside a hut or a sod house. That's where clothes and things use to be and where people unclothed themselves when they're coming into the sod house or tent. They would kneel down and take their coats off and if they're going to fall they grab for the rope - that's the way they use to do it. Those are some of the things I have heard that our ancestors use to do. I would have remembered a lot more if we were allowed to listen to conversations of our ancestors but we were not allowed to do that.

Q. What about that thing that looks like a grave? Is that the way they use to bury the dead, just by surrounding the body and not covering it?

Kopak: Yes, just by surrounding it, but some buried them with stones. Some people just surround their dead with rocks. I remember as a child there was a person by the name of Kukik from Repulse Bay. He is buried up there at a place called Amittuarjuk and his grave is just surrounded by rocks - not totally buried. Some of our ancestors did that. That's the way that thing is - it looks like a grave - and as well down there is another grave. It's buried,
perhaps a child little older, a child perhaps. I just saw it a while ago and it's a grave.

Q. Could you talk about what you know about this area and what you remember, especially about this place here, Aklungiqtautitalik? What you remember and what you have heard.

Sivaniqtoq: Yes, perhaps I'll make mistakes but... [It's hard to hear exactly what he is saying here because of an outboard motor noise]... these people were not all one clan, some were from Ukkusiksalik and Aivilik and some from Netsilik. Many of them from different clans. They first started making this by rolling rocks together. I'm telling what I have heard. Together they rolled this rock and put it in its place. Then they started challenging each other. In this particular area, there were a lot of shamans in those days too.

There was once a young man with a horn who was very vain, who killed his older brother with his horn. The shamans tried to bring the older brother back to life but couldn't revive him. They brought another shaman from the tent to revive the dead brother and he had a horn as well. When the shaman with the horns charged and hit the young vain man, he fell to the ground. And they circled the dead older brother and he came back to life. They tried to bring the young, vain man back to life as well and two more shamans came to him and tried to revive him and then circled him. He came back to life and started running around with the rest of the men. Those men who use to get horns were very scary in those days although they couldn't keep up with real mortals. They use to get rock from this area and to get their bottom of the kamiks done here and it's where they use to have games - that's what I heard. These stones here - apparently they tried removing or moving of them.

Apparently a lot of people use to live around here because there is an abundance of young seal in the spring and they would hunt them here. And they would look for areas where they could lay their tent.

We also use to live here briefly, and we use to hunt young seals up in that area, west of here. That's what our elders long ago did by dogsled. They told us that we missed the best places or areas for seal hunting -- that is the areas or places where our ancestors use to seal hunt. That's what I have heard, not much beyond that. That's some of the stuff I heard about this area and about this "rope-tying thing." They use to put a rope here as we watched. The young people were Nauja, Anawak, Okpik - they were the ones who watched
the stone removal when they were younger. And Angootenguak used to be with them.

There's been other stories that have been told to me but I really don't quite remember them much anymore. I have heard the stories being told other times but I never really paid any attention when I was young. That's the stories told to me: people from Pelly Bay, from other areas, Gjoa Haven, from that area, the original Aivilik people. This placed stone area was built by different clans this way. That's what I can say, but this area was mainly used in the spring for camping, that's why this surface looks like this. This area was occupied a lot. That's what I heard but there's probably more I don't know. I just remember it being told that way. That's it.

Q. When you were both camped here, was that structure here? If so, did you use it?

Sivaniqtoq: Yes, I remember it. I'm not sure whether my parents were alive when this structure was made, but they were probably very young and they have seen it and lived in this area but they were not around this area when it was built. They told me about this structure from stories they have heard themselves.
Kopak: This is my first time here. I'm familiar about this place from stories told but this is the first time I'm here. I am not too sure about it myself, how the story goes.

Q. Did you, Sivaniqtoq, or anybody who was here with you, try to use it?

Sivaniqtoq: Yes, we tried to use it, but rope was scarce and the men did not really want us to use the longer rope. We tried using other types of rope. We were children. We didn't really know how to do it well. But we tried.

Q. In the old days before your time, what was used for the rope.

Sivaniqtoq: They didn't have real rope at the time. They only used bearded seal skin rope. It was the only kind they had.

Q. Was it a contest between men or was it just for fun? And what age groups?

Sivaniqtoq: Our ancestors? Yes, it was our ancestors that were using it for contest among themselves. They were from different camps and each had competition on their minds to find out who was best at these games. They were from various places that entered the contest.

Q. Would it only be the men?

Sivaniqtoq: Just men. I don't remember women or kids being involved.

Kopak: When I was younger, I barely caught up to this game but not quite. We use to try it out - not tied to a rock - but inside an iglu. My step-parents and Puujuutit family use to live in one iglu with other families and Anaqtuunik family. We lived in one big huge iglu with a high ceiling. We use to put a rope across the ceiling -- perhaps they had a lot of rope then. They use to put together pieces of rope and tighten it and made a hole on each side of the iglu when it iced up in the winter. Made a hole in and outside the iglu and put each end of the rope through the holes and put piece of wood to hold the rope from the outside. They tighten it and put a reinforced rope again in between and tighten that equally on both sides, by shortening the ropes. That's what I remember.

When they played the rope game, even though they were relatives, but if they're not related, they would compete and relatives or not they would also
compete. They would compete with each other by kneeling down on the tight rope and try taking their parka off and some would fall down. That's the way they use to do it and once I watch Aarulaaq demonstrate the game in a place call Quinijulik.

I once watched Aarulaaq. The rope was very tight - he was asked to demonstrate the game once he was passing through our camp. He stated "maybe I'm unable to do it now." Uqtuqsi wanted to borrow his wife's parka. You know how women's parkas (amautik) looks like - he put it on and put a stool of some sort and roped himself to the rope. They sometimes used caribou hides from the front legs and called them 10-[something?] and they put them here and tighten them. When he got ready to play the game, he straighten right up and started twirling or going around. The hood and the back end of the parka were just straight because he was going so fast -- that's what you called qulaugaat -- and he said he was going to qariqtaq so he straighten his legs and arms like this and he bends his legs like this from here and he position himself this way he did gymnastics and he repeated this a few times back and forth. That's how I watched him and it was just so amazing that he was even funny with the parka he was wearing.

Sivaniqtoq: They called it a 10-[something?]. They had different games on the rope back then. The competition has 10 rounds when they competed on the rope gymnastics. Sometimes they would sharpen a snow knife and tie it to the ropes and they would get on the rope and go around it somehow and if his arms loosen he could kill himself. When different people from other communities would get together they would compete that way and people would practice amongst clans or people within same community for games with other communities.

Just the same as people nowadays play hockey between communities -- it's the same idea back then. It was a competition between communities to see which community was better than the other.

As well they used a caribou hide and tie it to the rope and skip on it and a small piece of sealskin with sand loose inside was another game.

Kopak: Our ancestors use to have competitions back then and when I was young I use to join in the games. Qablunaaq people have a similar games of gymnastics -- we Inuit have similar games such as skipping -- it's similar to dancing, that's what I know. That's simple to use just a rope but if you bundle up a bull caribou skin and attach it to the middle of the rope and twirl it, it's called avataaq, a form of skipping competition in an Inuit way. It's very
dangerous, especially when the skin is dried and bundled and you have to skip with it on. They twirl the rope with the skin in the middle and it’s a dangerous game called avataaq.

Q. If there is nothing more to say about this one, my other question would be, are there any other competitive games around here, are there any other of these things? Are there any other places?

Sivaniqtoq: There is a place somewhere here where they used to hold drum dances in a big tent. I didn't see it. Maybe they destroyed it. It was a tent ring.

Q. A seal skin tent?

Sivaniqtoq: Yes, made out of sealskin and caribou skins -- that's what they used to make the big tent because they didn't have canvas back then. They only had harpoons to hunt with in those days. Some people who could not get seal didn't have a big tent but good hunters had bigger ones. But everyone made tents out of sealskins and caribou skins.

Q. Now how did it develop that this would be a meeting place for people? It looks like they had drum dances, big tents for drum dances, and this gymnastic thing for competition. Why here?

Sivaniqtoq: Sometimes there were not that many Inuit to gather to hunt in the spring, at seal holes in the ice. If they were not that many, then they had trouble getting enough seals. But if they had enough hunters, they would catch more seals. For that reason they would have these celebrations in spring time when they had more people in the camps.

Q. How did they know when they were going to gather together for celebrations?

Sivaniqtoq: Inuit knew when to get together in one place by word of mouth, others telling others where to gather. They also tested each area or place, whether it would be easier to camp than another place. Some Inuit living in coastal areas, when there is not enough food, would move on to other camps where food was plentiful, to other Inuit camps. When they parted, then they would tell one another where to go for games and they would get acquainted that way.
Q. Did they just come together by accident when they were hunting or was it planned in such a way that they were planning to celebrate?

Sivaniqtoq: I guess they planned to meet in one area for games and competitions. That's the only way they knew when to get here, and other areas of good hunting, such as plenty of caribou and fish in the river when they go up river, and seal hunting with harpoons -- those were the gathering places of Inuit, for food and survival. The main idea was hunting for food. That's how they got to meet each other most times.

Q. So it was sort of a combined thing? It was a practice to have lots of people together for hunting and that allowed them to have fun together at the same time?

A. Yes.
1996 Wager Bay Oral History Project

Informant: Felix Kopak

Interviewer: David F. Pelly
Interpreter: Steve Mapsalak
Date of Interview: 2 August 1996
Location during Interview: Masivak
Home community of informant: Repulse Bay
Translator/Transcriber: Veronica Dewar

Felix Kopak has signed the consent form and understands that the information provided will be made public.
Q. Felix, maybe you could start by telling if are any other Inuktitut names by which you are know?.

A. Yes, I have other names in Inuktitut - I have quite a few names - Kopak, Amaruq, Aalu - those are my real names.

Q. Is it correct that most people know you as Kopak?

A. Yes.

Q. I wonder if you can give me a reaction to this trip coming back to Wager Bay for you. I think it's been a quite a long time since you were here the last time in Wager Bay and I'm wondering now that we've been here almost a week if you have any reaction to this?

A. Yes, having lived here when I was a child - seeing it again reminds me of my step-parents, Eqijut and Tigvariaq. It seems they are right here with me.

A. Yes, I knew my step-parents when I was a child and I had two step-sisters. We had a tent across from this location. It seems they are here with me right now. I'm thinking about them right now as if they are here with me.

We lived in the same area with people named Qingaqtuuq and Attariit. They took off up there by boat and as for our family, we didn't have anything so we crossed the river and went up as well to the land. We killed one bull caribou and when the meat was gone we went back here and we got a little bit of aged meat from here and went back up on the land and we didn't get another caribou and we stayed up there and got hungry.

When we were up there along with my step-sisters and my step-mother, my step-father went over to where we had our tent to get qamutiks and he spent the night out there. From there we went by dog team and we must've gone a long ways up to Iriptaqtuq and met up with other Inuit families.

It wasn't like today where you can buy food and supplies from the stores. We didn't have anything to trade with -- but it's different life we lead now. Back then we couldn't buy tea or foodstuff. Even small amount we couldn't get sometimes, because wildlife was not plentiful. That's the way it was. Yes, that's the way we lived back then when I was a child and the qablunaat didn't give us small amounts of food even, we had to always pay for it. But nowadays food and stuff is given to us, for nothing it seems.
After spending some time in Iriptaqtuq in the winter we went to Nuvukliit. Part of the winter was spent in hunger. When we went to Nuvukliit, my step-father went to the floe edge with other hunters for seals. We were no longer hungry.

From Nuvukliit, in the spring, partly in the winter, we headed off to Repulse Bay.

We went to Umiuyarvik and met a family - same name as Mapsalak - when we arrived there.

Right now I don’t know what else to say. If you want to know anything about my ancestors' ways, I can tell you, from what I have heard.

Q. When you are here now at Masivak, and you look around, does it seem to look the same to you as it did when you were here as a young boy?

A. Yes, the land is still the same as it was back then.

Q. Are there any places in all of Wager Bay that you think are, or would be, important for visitors to see, if visitors come from down south to see Wager Bay?

A. Here [Masivak] and the place we were at yesterday [Aklungiqautitalik]. Looking at the map of this area - the first set of maps you have - I'm not sure exactly where the land is located.

Q. Because of the old camps?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there any places, on the other hand, in Wager Bay that you think tourists or visitors should not be taken to or not be allowed to visit?

A. For visitors coming into Wager Bay -- as long as they don't ban the Inuit from doing things and hunt whatever they have been doing, I wouldn't mind visitors coming into Wager Bay at any time as long as they don't tell us what to do.

I didn't like it when they said that Tiniittuktuq was going to become wildlife park. All that area up there beyond a place called Tuktu could be
wildlife park or sanctuary and have the wildlife around here accessible or can be hunted. I didn't like that when I heard it said that way. That's what I didn't like. From Southampton Island, because it has a lot of char. I went to Coral Harbour one time and there's lots of fish in the ocean just like it is here. And along the shore there's lot of char. From Southampton Island on to here, they could only fish around here -- I didn't like that idea.

Our community Repulse Bay area has less fish around its ocean. The fish is not as plentiful as other areas or communities. There's not as many char as other communities.

I'm not sure what else I should talk about.

Q. You said when we talked a couple of days ago, that you had some stories about seal hunting - some of which you didn't think other people would want to hear directly - but perhaps now you could tell me some stories about seal hunting?

A. Seals and skins of seals were useful for everything back then but they are not as useful today. Years ago they used them to make tents -- they slit one seal skin's back in half and make it identical pieces and they slit it again to make them identical again (into four) and make it a hole up at the top of the tent. There would be about 8 seal skins. The entrance would be here and this here is our front -- that's what I have heard. And that's the *tuglirutiiit* [sides] -- that's what it is called but I'm not familiar what they called the back of the tent. And part of it was called *mamitaq* -- that's what they use to say about tents. And this part called *qanaq* and a thing called *sukaa, saniruta* [ribs] and *tukimurutaa* -- and *kalikuak* [poles] were made this way in the entrance. That's what they called them.

The top piece, if it's an adult seal, would be just one skin. And if it's going to be a narrow tent, it would be one piece up at the top. This piece that is bent is called *sanirutaa* and the two pieces that are like this [rafters or beams, running from front to back] are called *tukimugutiignit* and the skins around the tent are called different names. The two on each side of the tent are called *tuglirutiiit*. That's what I have heard them called by my step-parents.

Q. What about the ones in the front?

A. You mean at the entrance? Those are *qanak* and these are *qanak* and these are called *paaqtaujak*. They are positioned this way, straight, called *paaqtaujiangit* [door frame].
Q. What material was each of these?
A. All seal skins.

A. The sanirutaa is made out of wood as well as the ones to hold the tent up were made of wood.

Q. What about before they could find wood?
A. Before there was wood they used something else for a tent. Perhaps they just sort of had it this way. I don't know what they used for poles. Perhaps twigs or caribou antlers for poles. Maybe they just had it drooping this way. Before wood was used, I think the tents were very low.

Q. What's the reason for cutting these side ones in half?
A. The skins on opposite sides of the tent were split because they had to do it that way to sew them together. That's why they split them that way.

Q. I don't really understand.
A. So the front at the top was put this way straight towards that direction and from the split it went down. That's how they make it.

Q. Were the other ones cut in half also, or only the sides?
A. Yes, only the sides. [Apparently for purposes of symmetry.]

Q. That's very interesting. Something about the seal hunting you said before?
A. In Nuvukliit? What I wanted to tell you in Nuvukliit was ... I forgot it.

Oh yes, I was talking about the secrecy of what I was going to talk about because it was embarrassing and distasteful. Yes, I wanted to talk about it without being heard because when people go out seal hunting -- by looking for seal hole long ago, when we were children -- whenever a seal is caught from out there, when they start butchering the seal we would go and watch -- and there's meat on the side of the seal around the rib area -- they would cut a very thin strip of it and cut it up. They would give it to us and we would put it in our mouth and leave the strip outside of our mouth without putting it inside.
our mouth and take it home that way -- that was called sanirainiq -- that's what is a tradition. And that's what I wanted to talk about.

When the seal is butchered they would take a piece of it that way -- meat from the area of the ribs -- cut it up and give us each a piece to put in our mouths. And we keep it hanging in our mouth and take it home that way.

Q. What does sanirainiq actually mean?

A. We each have a side here [pointing to his rib cage]. They call it saniraq and when they take a piece of meat from the side of the seal, it's from the side of the seal and it's called sanirainiq. That's what it is.

Being given a piece from the side of the seal like that -- that's called sanirainiq. To me that's what they call it.

Q. How come you had to take it home like that?

A. We had to take it home hanging that way, so when we grow up we can be great hunters of any animals -- whether it be seal, or any animal. If we take home meat from the seal that way, it means they want us to be great hunters.

Q. When you grew up?

A. That was the way, but they only did it with seal meat. With anything else, including seal and land animal, before they start putting the meat inside the iglu, the hunter with a catch would take meat from the hindquarter or head -- if he's very successful with a big load -- they would give us some meat from the hindquarter or the head to take home. The person who takes meat from the kamotik is ignored and he can go ahead and take whatever he wants to take home. That was the Inuit law -- law of our ancestors back then -- the hunter with a catch will not say anything to the person who takes meat whether it be hindquarter or a head -- same thing with fish that are caught by a hunter and they are frozen -- people can go ahead and take it home. That's the way their law was, because if a young child is able to hunt later on, when he grows up, the child was able to get whatever he wanted to take from the hunter without asking and the hunter didn't bother with him so he can become a great hunter. That was our law.

Q. Can you tell me about the uses for seal skins?
A. Seal skins are also used for everything -- we use them to make kamiks, with or without the fur. Bearded sealskin is used to make bottoms in kamiks and soles.

Q. And these ones [Kopak's], for example?

A. This is ugiuk, and this part too is ugiuk. Yes. These are waterproof and as long as you don't get this part wet it won't get wet. The kamiks with fur on them can't be used for wading in water here.

Q. How many seal skins, how many seals are here?

A. That's one sealskin, one sealskin for kamiks like this. Sealskins are used for everything. You can use them for display as well and you can use them for kamiks, and other things as well.

Q. How long does it take an experienced woman in sewing to make kamiks?

A. Yes, as long as this part is tanned, they can complete it in one day, both sides. Women who are used to sewing complete their sewing in one day, whether it be kamiks or whatever, but caribou skin parkas were not completed in one day though.

Q. How long, in the old days, when you lived out on the land, did a pair of kamiks last?

A. Years ago I use to have kamiks and they would last a long time and sometimes not. I would have more than one pair -- that's the way it was.

Q. Back to seal hunting, can you remember any other stories connected to seal hunting yourself?

A. About seal hunting? Yes, nowadays people don't go seal hunting in the winters. Years ago when they went out seal hunting, from what I can remember, some people got lots of seals, some would use caribou sinew from the foot and make a miniature figurine out of it with legs and all and arms and the head of the figurine would be looking up to the sky and they would attach a white feather to it, and they called it qiviutaq -- but today they don't use this qiviutaq. They use just qiugattaq. Years ago they used qiugattaq and qiviutaq - they used both - those are the things they used. Also, I have heard but have not seen it, there's a tool for seal hunting about so long and they called it illaq -
- they use to put it into the seal hole -- something like a thing stuck together. They use to make it similar to that. They put it in the hole and they would wait for a seal and the string would be loose. When they put it that way, they called it *illaq*. It would make a motion in and out and that means a seal is trying to surface and when the tool starts to go down, the hunter would harpoon the seal in the hole when it starts to move.

Q. Where was the feather in all this?

A. The figurine is called *qiviutsirvik*. They would put a *qiviutaq* here - they can see it as very big - but I haven't seen this being done before and I haven't used it before. When you can see it in motion going up and down, as soon as it seems like it's going to stop moving and there's a sudden upwards motion of the water, that means the seal is coming up for air and there would be a jerking motion downwards and upwards motion and the second motion is when you strike your harpoon.

You don't cover the entire hole - just up to the hole. That's the way they use to do it. There are three ways to hunt seals. This is called *qipqattaq* or *ajautaq*, that's the way you spear a seal.

Q. What is this tool made of?

A. The short tool - before the Inuit used metal, perhaps it was made out of caribou antler by shaving it very thin. I think it was made out of caribou antler. But later on what they used was a tool made out of metal.

Q. It seems to me, to hunt for seals, Inuit had to understand the animal very well, had to really know this animal. I'm interested in that knowledge?

A. Yes, they really had the knowledge. They went out to look for seal holes with their dogs on their leash. The dogs knew where to find a seal hole. The Inuit, when they go out to find a seal hole, they knew when it will have seals in the hole. When they went out with dogs on the leash, when they found a seal hole, the dogs would sniff at the hole and when they smelled a flipper scratch mark that means their fresh seal scent. It has recently surfaced from the hole and it would surface to breathe again.

Q. Do you know how that told them this?

A. The reason how they know is by scratch marks beside the hole and build up of the hole. If the hole has fresh scratch marks, the seal would
surface to breathe. That's how they use to know whether the seal will surface again. And if it has deep scratches in it, it is not going to be used for seals to breathe for awhile yet.

Q. Why would they not come to the aglu [seal hole] if it's not smooth?

A. It won't be used by a seal because Inuit walk around the hole. The seals can hear the people walking around above them just like humans hear things. Say that I'm a seal -- I wouldn't want to surface in that hole. But I would go to another hole where there's not as much noise -- seals are very smart.

People, when they went out seal hunting this way, were very knowledgeable about seal holes - but some that don't know how to seal hunt this way were not as knowledgeable as the ones that go often. But the ones that go out hunting like this -- they knew what to look for. Some would say, there's nothing in here because they knew. The hole has a upper crust of ice with air in between -- those were the ones they look for because the seal will probably go there to breathe. If the seal hole at the upper part is not crusted with ice, and if it opens easily, that means seals will come to it right away.

When there's a build-up in the hole and if it has not had a seal for sometime during the seal hunt, it will not have any seals during the hunt.

Q. Amazing -- this is really interesting -- can you think of other sorts of old traditional knowledge about seals that Inuit used to know, that are getting lost now?

A. I don't know because I have not heard about all the stuff. But I have heard this particular thing - after seals have been up there and when the winter is coming and just before spring the hunters would go to Wager Bay to hunt seals and as soon as they see the waters of Wager Bay it would be bright and white on the sea ice - and if it's like that, that means there wouldn't be many seals. In the spring time when they go out to seal hunt, when the days are longer, they would look over the sea ice and if the colouring is reddish, there would be a lot of seals that season. That's what I have heard and nothing else.

Q. Can you explain why the reddish colour means that there are lots of seals?

A. I'm not sure, but they said if there are going to be lots of seals in Wager Bay, is what I have heard.
Q. That's especially true in Wager Bay? Does it not happen in Gore Bay or some other place?

A. That's all I heard and I'm not sure why.

Q. Are there any old traditional ways connected with seals? Any old Inuit traditions that have something to do with seals?

A. Yes, years ago Inuit had to follow certain traditions, but when I was a child traditions were not passed on to me because my step-father didn't have any, I guess. I did not follow any traditions when I was a child. But when I moved south, that's when I found out about traditions. Some of the traditions were: you couldn't eat seal heart and caribou heart -- that's what I found out, only when I got to the south.

Q. Why is that?

A. Because otherwise they could not catch seals or caribou, or they would get sick -- that was the reasoning behind that tradition and Uqsuqtuq was made to do that.

I have heard of other traditions where Inuit could not eat certain parts of an animal, but I don't know them personally although I have heard of some. Sometimes when they catch a seal or a caribou, you could not chew on their bones. And sometimes some people could not eat parts of caribou legs, but I'm not sure by whom or when. But I have heard that if you caught a caribou you could not pound the leg bones to get to the marrow -- if you do, you could no longer catch caribou or some might get sick, you could not break the bone to get to the marrow.

Q. You're such a good story teller, can you think of any old stories about seals or famous stories about a seal hunt or ...?

A. I haven't heard any unusual things happening about seals. I have heard other things, but unusual things, no.

Q. What about yourself ... is there any memorable seal hunting you yourself encountered?

A. In seal hunting, for myself I have experienced great happiness once in the spring at the time of Katokra's death. All day and part of the early evening, my wife and I went out seal hunting. I must have caught at least four lengths
of qamutiks of seal. Qamutiks are not very long and we had four dogs. We were loaded to the full length of our qamutiks and piled on top as well and my wife put another one, loaded into the qamutik in between the other seals and she couldn't get them all in. She shouted at me because there was no room left to load them -- that was a happy experience.

That was my good seal hunting experience -- my wife could not keep up with me. She was following me from behind with a qamutik and loading up the seals as I caught them. I was just walking at a regular pace and shooting seals and would wave at her to get the seals and load them up -- that was a happy experience for me.

And twice when we were hunting seals again, another way, in the spring time, when the seal holes did not have top ice-crust in them. Twice I was terrified of seal holes. I had caught quite a few seals from this one particular hole and the hole was quite big and dark -- and I didn't see anything but there was a splash from the hole. It was quite big. When you see a seal in the hole it doesn't do that. I became quite terrified of the hole so I backed away from it.

Q. Back to the other one with the sled-full: where did that happen?
A. Around Harbour Island near Repulse Bay.
Q. And they were on the ice, in the springtime?
A. Yes in the springtime.
Q. So you were hunting at an aglu?
A. They were on the surface of the ice, and not with a harpoon, but above the ice.
Q. So you were hunting by yourself, with dog team?
A. When we were towards the south, my wife and I were out seal hunting again with Aggaks. Aggak and I use to hunt and have fun together while hunting and we would hunt and try to outdo each other by trying to get to the hole first. Aggak and I use to have fun hunting. We would race to each hole to see who would get there first and I got to the seal and harpooned it and pulled it out of the hole and killed it -- and got another right after and did the same thing, although I was waiting at the hole for a long time and my
companion caught a seal as well. There was a little wall built around the hole but not too high. In front of me I had not seen a seal but I saw a pair of eyes and there seemed to be no seal at all in the hole -- so I stopped and all I saw were pairs of eyes. Aggak was close by and I told him about what I saw: "I only see a pair of eyes, so I don't want to seal hunt anymore." He said yes, and I left that hole -- when I left it, it moved -- and it was very wide hole. So I went to another hole which was more shallow, and I saw a seal and I harpooned it. I tried pulling it and the hook came off and the seal was right there in the hole and Aggak came running because I was stabbing it with my harpoon and it sunk -- that was so disappointing.

Q. I'm sorry, I have to go back to it again, I just want to know one more thing about that great seal hunting time with your wife: how long was it, one day of hunting or two days of hunting?

A. Yes, in one day.

Q. And what did you do with all that meat and all those skins?

A. Dog food because I had dogs and wanted food for them -- I use to have to do that at that time.

Q. And the skins, what would you do with the skins?

A. Sometimes skins are useless so I just feed the dogs with the skin attached.

Q. Any other things that you would like to say?

A. I'm running out of things to say, but sometimes I don't believe what people tell me. I was told long ago, when I first started learning how to hunt, they told me that when you take the bearded seal by the flippers you fall backwards -- and I didn't believe this. I thought as long as I get a good grip of both the flippers, I can just pull the bearded seal right out faster, I didn't believe what people were telling me so when I caught a bearded seal by our tent, and it was upside down with it's head downwards, I grabbed it by its flippers and pulled it as hard as I could and I suddenly fell right down fast to the ground -- that's what happened to me. Because the seal is very slippery when they are moulting -- that's why it's so easy to fall backwards because they are slippery and easily comes out.
1996 Wager Bay Oral History Project

Informant: Octave Sivaniqtoq

Interviewer: David F. Pelly
Interpreter: Steve Mapsalak
Date of Interview: 2 August 1996
Location during Interview: Masivak
Home community of informant: Repulse Bay
Translator/Transcriber: Veronica Dewar

Octave Sivaniqtoq has signed the consent form and understands that the information provided will be made public.
Q. I wonder if you could start by describing for me a little bit how you feel coming back to Masivak and seeing Masivak again, walking around your old place, over by the fish weir, your old camp? What reaction do you have to this return?

A. Yes, I feel happy about going back to Wager Bay after being alone [his wife had passed away just a few days before]. I even wanted to visit the place myself if I wasn't invited here -- just to take a quick look around and afterwards take a long look around. I figured it would be better and happier feeling for me. I wanted to go here myself on my own anyways but I'm happy I have been brought here today. Seeing the area again since the time I was younger gives me emotional feeling inside, but now I have seen it, it'll be less emotional for me. I really recognize the places and know the places so I'm very happy to be invited here. I would stress that the younger generation get to know the places and the area in Wager Bay. For this reason I'm glad that I've been brought here to do history for the benefit of my children and grandchildren, and others to get to know.

Q. How long ago was the last time that you were here?

A. I don't remember exactly when, but I stayed all summer and winter. I don't remember exactly when it was but it was for hunting in this area, but I remember living in this area. I thought when I come here again I would feel emotional about it. That's why I wanted to come here soon as I can. It feels a lot better and next time I come to Wager Bay, it'll be much better next time. I can't remember either the years that I lived here, but thinking back, I adopted a child by the name of Agatha Kukik. She was born around that year -- she would know the year, and I should know, but I can't say what year right now.

Q. Have you visited Masivak since then?

A. I've been here in Wager Bay by snowmobile.

Q. Do you have an Inuktitut name that you are known by other than Sivaniqtoq?

A. Yes, I have several names in Inuktitut - Sivaniqtoq, everybody knows. Some people call me Tusiatuq (means "limping") and Ubluriaq (means "star") and Puvupuq (does not have a meaning). I have lots of names.

Q. Do you know the reasons for having any of these names?
A. Yes, I have heard Sivaniqtoq is not really the name of my namesake. Do you know the small birds when they make noise? When he [my namesake] watched those little birds, while he was fishing, he would say "Sivaniqtunnuaq," so people started calling him Sivaniqtoq because of that. My namesake's real name is Puvupuq and he was named Tusiatuq because he walked with a limp when he was younger. If he doesn't want people to call him by his real name, he would use Tusiatuq. Sivaniqtoq and Tusiatuq are not my real names -- it's Puvupuq and Ubluriaq are my real names.

Q. Where did the name Sivaniqtoq come from?

A. From the Netsilingmiut people is where the name came from. Apparently Netsilingmiut had a person by the name of Sivaniqtoq but I'm not sure what they called him as his real name. But they called him Sivaniqtoq. Puvupuq came from that area as well and he use to limp when he walks -- that's how I got to be called those two names -- they are just nicknames.

But with Ubluriaq -- a while after I was born, this older lady wanted a boy to be named after her and she was from the Amittuq region. She wanted me to be named after her Ubluriaq.

Q. Before she passed away?

A. The reason why she wanted to have a boy named after her is because whenever she saw a polar bear, being a woman she was very afraid of polar bears, and she figured that if a boy has her name, then even if she is afraid she can kill a bear. That's how I got this name.

I would like to talk about Masivak, how it got it's name.

Q. Okay.

A. Yes, about Masivak, Steve Mapsalak's mom's father -- he was my grandfather -- he use to tell me stories and things that happened. When he was asked a question, "Why is that area called Masivak?" he apparently knew exactly how it got it's name. When the fish go up river, just before winter sets in, Inuit use to bury their cache of fish, when the weather [is such that they] can no longer dry fish. There [at Masivak] they buried their fish, many of them, all over the area, to be used for food for winter. Apparently in a certain direction when the wind was right you can smell their gills from afar because there were many caches. Because of the smell -- that is how it got its name.
Masivak. There used to be a lot of fish in this area long ago and the river was wider.

Q. What is your mother's father's name?

A. Piyausuituq. They called him Piyausuituq although he has another name. His real name is Arnar'naaq but when other kids pester him in Netsilingmiut dialect they use to say, when they mean pestering or bothering, they say "pigattartuq" instead of "qanugnasaqtuq". He was trying to say I don't want to be pestered, "piyausuitunga" -- that's why his nickname is that but his real name is Arnar'naaq. It's also Angotealuk's grandchild's name.

Q. Are you related to Arnar'naaqs in Baker Lake?

A. I don't know if we are related to Arnar'naaq from Baker Lake. I haven't heard it. I don't know if we are, I don't know at all.

What I was telling you about is that Piyausuituq Arnar'naaq use to tell us that the stone weirs at the end up there, at the far end, use to be used for fishing in the spring. Before ice break-up, apparently, people use to fish there. But he wasn't around then, when they fished there. But the stone weirs closer to here is where he use to fish and there's no longer any water. It dried out over time, that's what he said -- I think there's three stone fish weirs around here. They use to be in water but with the water drying out they are quite far from water now. This area was used for camps before guns were brought to Inuit. People used them if they were poor, and cannot have bow and arrows and kayak, or have trouble walking, and they couldn't hunt caribou so they fished at the stone weirs mostly for fish for winter's food. And there were plenty of fish back then.

Q. I'm not certain what you mean when you say they had trouble walking -- in what way did they have trouble walking? What was the reason they had trouble?

A. Some had difficulty because of old age. Some had difficulty seeing because of old age and people who didn't have older children to provide food for them -- this area was a fishing place for those people without kayak and other hunting implements, because of old age and poverty.

Q. What else can you tell me about Masivak?
A. Some Inuit had disabilities, such as long term illness, such as back aches, leg injury and others -- so they lived and fished at the weirs here. The other rivers were too strong so they used this river because some people were bodily handicapped, so they fished here. It was the easiest.

Even after Inuit started having guns, the main reason for camping in this area was fishing and abundance of caribou and food for their dogs. Mainly for abundance of wildlife.

And around here at the small bay fish go up river as well and have bigger fish because the river is bigger but Inuit didn't stay in that area as much.

But they camped and lived mostly in Masivak because of abundance of fish and caribou even after guns were introduced. Not just for coastal wildlife but inland and lakes surrounding this area.

This is what I heard, as well I know by experience that when I was still a child, there were a lot of caribou and fish going up river. Other than that I don't know what else. But if it had a lot of beluga, that would be nice with an outboard.

Q. But there was no outboard, is that right? Were they able to get buluga somehow?

A. During high tide when the beluga hung around the bay, you shoot a rifle toward their rear and even though they look like they're sleeping, when they hear a shot they would scramble to shore and the Inuit would rush to shore and they would land a beluga sometimes. When you don't have a boat, it's hard to get them from the open water. I have experienced this and have seen it done and heard it done this way.

Q. Could you describe for me how to build a fish weir and how it works?

A. In the river -- building of stone fish weirs when the fish start climbing up river. When you cannot get them with a fishing hook, you make a stone fish weir by putting rocks around the water and making sure you don't have any holes for fish to get trapped into while they're climbing up river. Make it like an iglu with an entrance facing down river so as they go up -- they go through the entrance and they get trapped. You measure the entrance with your foot to make sure it's wide enough or narrow enough so fish don't escape back down river. That's the way they use to do it.
Once they get inside the stone weir they get into the qagiq which is the main round swimming area where fish are trapped. Than you plug the entrance when there's enough fish trapped. That's the way they did it back then and you can spear as much as you want.

If a fish is fully grown, the entrance is just right. You have to make sure there's no holes in the weir so fish don't get out. They can try to escape on either side, but as long as it's plugged, there's no way out for them. You make the trap with rocks and lay them out higher than the water. And the open trapped area, called qagiq, you have to make sure to put stones higher than the water flowing, so it's not moving and fish don't escape. It's okay to keep the bottom of the weir lower. That's why the top of the stone weir has to be higher than the water, because fish try to continue to climb.

They can go right to the tip of the weir as far as they can, but they can't escape as long as the stones are all there and any holes are plugged. We put a light flat stone to plug the entrance of the weir [after the fish are in].

Q. Can you give me an idea how many fish sometimes are caught in one of these weirs?

A. I can't say for sure how many fish might be inside the trap. Sometimes the trap is filled right up and sometimes there's not very many. I can't estimate how many there would be. Sometimes fish are so many they are just stacked one on top of the other and they are so crowded they can't move hardly. You can spear them starting from anywhere in the weir. But I can't say what the number would be.

Q. When it's really full, it must be 100 fish or more?

A. Yes, I'm sure there are over 100. Inuit spearing the fish bonk them and string them together as they keep spearing them. Some get so many on a line or string and when the string gets full of fish they go to the land and dump them and go back again and spear some more. I'm sure the numbers are over 100.

The spears are made out of caribou antlers. It's oval shaped, with a prong in the middle and a string put in like a harpoon. Some make spears out of the front leg of caribou bone and some make polar bear foreleg bones for spears. They could be different -- some have strings to thread the fish from the mouth and some spears have things to kill the fish.
With the string, you can't ruin the fish or lose it, because you're stringing it as you spear it. If there's say five people in the weir spearing fish, that's okay because that was their only source of food and they use to fight over who speared the fish so they started using string to keep tally of, or ownership of, the fish.

Nowadays they don't fish at the stone weirs. Today if a person catches a fish and you throw it on land, anyone who takes it can have it. But it wasn't like that long ago because they had a string to make sure the person catching the fish has the ownership of the fish caught -- however many there are on their particular string.

Q. You mean there's more sharing of food now than there used to be?

A. Yes, I guess they wanted more fish to cache for themselves -- they could not have ownership of someone else's catch. Come winter if others don't have any left, they share their food or fish.

Q. I found this thing [a toggle-like piece of bone or tusk, an oval ring shape] lying flat on the gravel here. Can you explain to me maybe what it is and what it was used for?

A. This thing was discarded because it's too thin. I'm not sure what they used this thin part for first, probably fish hook. This part was probably used for dog harness or something else -- but this one was probably thought to be too thin and cut up for something else but it's useless the way it's made. They are used for dog leash, or harness to keep the ropes or strings together, to keep the ropes from getting tangled. It is used to keep the dog lines from getting tangled too much -- it's call putusiut. It's better to use this to keep the ropes

Approximately 2” long
from getting tangled. It's got two holes and it holds dog strings or lines together. This one is too thin so they just discarded it or cut it -- if reinforced it would be better.

Walrus tusks were used for anything. Even if they used a piece of wood, they would use this at the tip of the harpoon head. They used the ivory for anything.

When used for harpoons, they called it qaatiqaq. The ivory piece would be locked with a piece of short wood with four strings attached here and it has holes at the end here and this is where it attaches again with four holes and the string is tightened as hard as you can and the string attached to the harpoon is bent a bit and you put it this way. The string is very tight and you can't do this, but you can put it this way. You throw the harpoon to the bearded seal or a beluga and if the animal moves it will pierce the animal. If you finish using it you just put it back into place -- that's the way we used to use it. If you don't want it snapping in half -- that's the way you put it back.

If the string to the harpoon is loose, when you throw it, then it'll go out of place. The spear would fall off the harpoon. That's why it has to be really tight and that's the way it use to be done.

Q. Was the spear or head attached?

A. The spear is separate -- this part would spear into the animal and it's called qaatinga.

Q. That sort of a harpoon was used for hunting which animals?

A. The harpoon was used mainly for walrus and bearded seals. But the ones made out of caribou antlers were mainly used for ringed seals.

Q. Why the difference? Why would they use caribou antler?

A. Because they're weaker [caribou antler spears]. That's why they used different ones for each animal. Bearded seals are much stronger and you didn't want the harpoon to snap in half.

Q. So are you saying that the kind of harpoon head used on a natsiq [ringed seal] harpoon couldn't be used on bigger animals because it was not strong enough.
A. You can use the harpoon on bigger animals but you didn't want to lose the harpoon -- once you harpoon a heavier animal and it snaps because it should be used for ringed seals -- the reason is that you didn't use them for heavier animals because you don't want to lose the animal.

And the harpoon used for ringed seals -- you couldn't use it on beluga because it'll tear easily and too fragile to use on beluga.

They're not too bad using them for bearded seal and walrus but they're too small to use.

Q. What was the harpoon head for the smaller one made of? The bigger one, you said they like to use walrus task?

A. I don't know -- I'm not aware of it. For walrus we use to use different spears, specially made for them. It is set a different way -- with the end here and the tip here. And the ones used for walrus, the tail end is this way and the tip is here and it's made out of straight metal. I think they made them different back then but they use the same one today. The spear tips that are bigger are called sanniqtuq.

Q. Let's talk a little bit more about seal hunting. Maybe you could describe for me the process at a spring seal hunt, of the sort that would have been held at Aklungiqtautitalik?

A. Yes, hunting for seal in the springtime -- from what I have heard -- back then they didn't have any canvas for tents. They would hunt for seals that are shedding and use the skins for making a tent. They hunted seals in the spring for making a tent and for preserving the blubber to use later in the winter for heat, preserving the blubber because it was a precious commodity back then. That's why they hunted seal in the springtime, whether it's shedding or not. They didn't throw away even the smallest bit of blubber -- they saved it all. And they will not throw away the meat. That's when they hunted seal, all spring before breakup. For making skin tents, to preserve the blubber for heat in winter, and meat, and if it's a good skin they would use it for making kamiks. That's the way they did it.

Q. How did the hunt work and how did all these people work together to do the hunt?

A. Yes, people hunted together because when you hunt alone you were not as successful. In the spring they would be gathered at one seal hole when
there were not enough seal holes. So they hunted in one seal hole and divided the catch. So when they find a seal hole they would gather at one hole and wait for the seals. When there's not enough seal holes around. That way also you would have a better chance of someone catching a seal.

Q. About how many men? What sort of numbers are we talking about?

A. Sometimes a lot of people in one hole. In Aivilik, when I became an adult, there would be quite a few people at one seal hole. But if there are not many people, there wouldn't be very many hunting at one seal hole, hunting in the spring time.

There's three different kinds of spears they use -- the one used for ringed seal is small, called sakku, but the sakku we use today when we hunt in the canoe is bigger. It is called sanniqtaq. And the other one has a tail this way. The tail is straight. That is used for walrus and is called tuukkaq. That's the way we called them. There use to be quite a few people in one seal hole, or sometimes not very many, depending on the number of people in camp.

Q. How are the harpoon heads made?

A. The harpoon that use to be used for walrus was shaped as a knife and sharpened as a knife. That was the only difference for the tougher meat.

Q. When you said everybody in the camp would participate, did you mean men and women?

A. No, women were not included in a hunt for seals -- just men.

Q. Did I understand one man per hole?

A. Yes, one man would be in a seal hole and others looking around for other seal holes, even as much as a whole day. Sometimes there would be two, only if they are good friends.

In the springtime when the seal holes are open, they never use to call the hunt mauliq. It was called qulangiqsijut [meaning "there's no snow"].

When they went out waiting for seals in the hole that's called mauliq, which is a correct term when you have to look for seal hole in the winter with a harpoon. Today mauliq [the term] is used when they should be using the term qulingiqsik because there's no snow covering the seal hole.
Q. When we have all these men out on the ice, one man at each hole, would they do this all day and all night? How long would they stay out there waiting for seal?

A. It depends -- they stayed at the seal hole different times. Some would start looking for a different hole and abandon the first one. Others stayed at one hole longer. Some stay for a long period of time.

Q. Approximately how long do you think?

A. As long as the seal doesn't come out -- that's how long some stayed. Some all day long at one hole.

Q. In that time of year, there is always light, even at "night." Does it make a difference what time of day it is when you do this?

A. I think so. Even the seals that are usually on the floe edge usually go further out in the spring and some holes get added because seals start coming in so it's easier in the spring to catch seals.

We get it for the blubber, skin without the fur -- skin it real good and get the flippers -- dry out the blubber -- there's also some here. They make it in the rocks and put them inside a seal pouch and bury it and it's good to eat in the winter time. It's inside a sealskin, that's the way they age the blubber, inside the sealskin. After it's been aged you put it in a rock [pile], but don't let the sides touch anything and put it in a pebble area to make sure it doesn't get wet. If it happens to get wet then the blubber pours out and it goes to waste. When you put it away, bury it, you cannot touch the sealskin with anything. It has to be suspended on either side. When you go and get it even in the wintertime it wouldn't have been moved and will be full. That is the reason why people hunt seal to preserve it that way.

Q. I wonder if there is a particular hunting-time, or one occasion, that you remember? Any story from a hunt that you can tell? From your own experience, that you have seen.

A. [One time] I was listening and almost went to sleep. People use to hunt seals with a harpoon because there was no rifles. They used a piece of polar bear hide here and another one right here [under their hip and elbow] and they would go out to seal hunt that way and would try to distract a seal for the seal to get used to the noise the hunter is making. And the seal would look at the
hunter and get used to the hunter and when the seal is looking up the hunter would quickly walk forward towards the seal. If the hunter hiding behind the polar bear skin keeps on walking towards the seal and the seal thinks he's not moving.

And the hunter would keep on making different sounds to distract the seal. When the seal looks at the hunter quite often that means they think they're not in danger. Some hunters used to get really close to the seal before harpooning it even. You just had to hide your face from the seal. Even if the hunter makes sounds, the seal would not even bother to look up. You can get real close because he's used to the sounds the hunter is making by this time. You run and harpoon it before he gets a chance to dive into the hole. That's the way people hunted seals.

I tried hunting seals that way but I couldn't do it. I figured I could so I tried. I can get close but it's really hard.

And that's the way they used to hunt bearded seals too but I didn't experience it. I only started hunting when they have rifles. They walked just like ringed seal hunting, behind their shield made out of polar bear skin, and get bearded seals that were out on cracks in the spring. They would distract the bearded seal the same way as they did a ringed seal by making sounds with the harpoon rope. In the spring time the ice is very solid and the hunter would get his harpoon dug into the ice and reinforce his harpoon before he strikes the bearded seal. Some would go into the holes. Some people, they say, would dig a grove to put their foot in, some would wind a rope around themselves.

I used to hear stories too. The person that I use to see, whose father was hunting bearded seal in spring hunt and caught a bearded seal at night time and the ice was frozen as well and when he harpooned the bearded seal, he had the rope around himself. Men had to be prepared to pull the strong seal in case they get dragged down. He speared the bearded seal and the ice was slippery and he got dragged down into the ice hole and was never seen again and died.

Q. They never saw him again?

A. That hunter that was pulled down into the ice hole, and I have heard this story, was Uqsuktuq's father's father. It was his grandfather. It would have been Kringayak's grandfather too today, Uqsukittuq's grandfather and Kringayak's. Siulluk's father and Nuqqaut's were pulled into the seal hole.
Field Notes

Mattuq, looking south
Octave Sivaniqtoq

- 2 or 3 years before OS was born
- OS' mother, Navaq, lived here with traders at post, originally as "cleaning lady" for the qablunaat
- there were three qablunaat here starting the post, trying to start a company
- from here, they went south, then one, Sakuaqtironiq (means "person who harpoons the whale" -- George Cleveland), came back the next year to start the HBC post at Repulse Bay
- house at Mattuq was burned by whalers while trader(s) away in a boat, probably because of jealousy (OS thinks)
- Igalik ("person with glasses") was one of Sakuaqtironiq's assts., who left after the burning, but he did not come back. He was 2nd "husband" for OS' mother. She was previously married to an Inuk, Nakungayuk ("cross-eyed") was his nickname, Patirniq was his real name (which refers to the space left in a bone after the marrow is eaten). When Nakungayuk died, Navaq started living with Igalik.
- initially the "post" consisted of one building
- lots of Inuit came to visit for trading
- lots of garbage was put across the bay, to the SE
- Sakuaqtironiq used to mix local plants with the rolls of tobacco
- just before Igalik went south, after house was burned, he told Navaq he was not coming back and he gave her clothing and lots of supplies. She never heard from him again.
- OS' father was Manilak

Felix Kopak

- camped here in late spring one year long ago, when Kopak was "still on my mother's back" although he says he remembers the event
- two people came through, going to Repulse Bay -- two men from Greenland, one named Knute [Rasmussen]
- hardly any snow left, so the travelers were following along the shore on the ice
- They stayed one night at Mattuq, in a tent, and then continued on. They were coming from Baker Lake, traveling along the coast.
- Kopak's family was already camped here, with other people. They were watching over the traders' big tent and their stuff (flour, biscuits, tobacco, sugar cubes). Uqsuqtuq had been hired by the qablunaaq to watch the stuff --
his nickname was Titiraqtialuk ("the one who writes") because he was keeping records for the traders, noting down everything that was traded. 
- Kopak thinks this must have been after the building was burned down. He never heard of the traders again.

The Post

- walked over to the site of the old post with Sivaniqtoq and Kopak, in NW corner of bay 
- main building (burned) was closest to the water, with three smaller buildings behind it, all of which they think were disassembled later and taken to Repulse 
- lots of tent rings & old artifacts (one old ulu) 
- lots of stone apparently worked, perhaps used for scraping skins 
- lots of tin cans & some bottles, incl. baking powder & tobacco 
- one "play" ring: about 1m. in diam. with several old tin cans in it -- Sivaniqtoq says kids played there 
- Sivaniqtoq brought his mother back here in the 1940s, when he was a young man, not yet married, because she wanted to see the place again. At that time, she told him everything about this place. 
- Sivaniqtoq thinks Inuit came to camp here because traders set up here, not the other way around.

Nuvukliit - 27 July 1996

Octave Sivaniqtoq

- long time ago, Donat Anawak came from Duke of York Bay, first to Repulse Bay to pick up Fr. Didier, then down to Wager Bay, by boat. They went to Masivak to pick up Sivaniqtoq, because he had a canoe, and then up to Tikirajuaq to pick up a building and bring it back to Nuvukliit. The building at Tikirajuaq was round. They took it apart, and rebuilt it as a square structure [still standing] at Nuvukliit.
- the building was actually owned by HBC, but RCMP (in Chesterfield) asked HBC if they could give it to Sivaniqtoq, because he had worked for them previously. The RCMP told Fr. Didier in Repulse Bay this plan, but the priest said Sivaniqtoq would never use it, so he would take it. Hence the plan to move the building to where Fr. Didier wanted it. Since there were always people in this area, Fr. Didier wanted to establish a mission here.
- The following people helped erect the building at Nuvukliit: Donat Anawak, Octave Sivaniqtoq, Charlie Tinashlu, Silisitaq (OS' brother), Qailitaq Manilak (OS' younger brother), Philip Nukapiaq (Anawak's son)

**Felix Kopak**

One time, before the building was put up, Kopak was passing through here with two other men. Siulluk and Amauyak and their families were staying here. From here, Kopak took Donat Anawak up to the HBC post at Tasiuyaq where Anawak actually was living then. Kopak stayed there for awhile. Kopak was very young. He had traveled to Nuvukliit with two other men, but this was when he went off on his own. Later, from Tasiuyaq, Kopak, Anawak, Tattuinee and one other man all traveled up to Repulse together and stayed there for awhile. When they were getting ready for that trip, they put steel runners on a sled, and to test it out, they took it up a hill and slid down, with all four on board. One after another, they jumped off as the sled picked up speed, until only Kopak was left, and he rode it right out onto the ice. He finally came off and rolled, tumbling over the ice, laughing. [much laughter as he tells this story]
Elizabeth Aglukka

- "I thought I would be very emotional arriving here, but I just feel happy."
- she was baptized in this little "church"
- walked to site of their winter camps, in IGHLUS, and spring camps in tents
- en route she saw a board used, she says, for drying fox skins
- "This is where we had our winter camp, to be close to the floe edge, to hunt seals. In those years, we had no Coleman stove. We only used a QUQLIQ; that's why we had to be near the seals."
- Elizabeth remembers winters in Wager Bay only at Nuvukliit. Before she was born, her family sometimes wintered at Tinittuktuq.
- other families she remembers at this winter camp: Tavok (her father), Sanertanut, Inuksatuajuk. 3 families = 3 IGHLUS
- three families camped close together in winter [advantages for seal hunting], but spread out a bit in spring, and then each moved to their own summer camp: Piqsimaniq, Tinittuktuq, Masivak
- Eliz. family: when ice started getting bad here, moved to the peninsula, and then when ice cleared, on to Piqsimaniq
- family stayed in the same IGHLU all winter, from November to May
- "We used only dogteams then, no snowmobiles."
- in 1961, someone came to get Elizabeth and she went up to Repulse by boat, by sail and paddling only, no motor: "All I remember is I wanted to go back to my mother."
- en route to old spring camp, walking, found old pot, once used for cooking on a willow fire
- found old pile of blubber -- must have been site of old iglu, she said
- at spring camp, lots of her family's old possessions:
  - old axe
  - cough medicine bottle, Fr. Didier gave them for Eliz' sister
  - fish spear
  - part of her father's smoking pipe
  - mouth bow drill
  - old pana (snow knife)
  - willow sticks - used to be tied together with caribou sinew to make a lower mattress, to go under caribou skins, to prevent the skins from getting wet.
  - saccharin bottle
  - fox trap
  - file
  - old flashlight
  - part of seal harpoon
  - fish lure made of whalebone, for jigging
  - old brass lighter
  - Jew's harp
  - beaded bracelet
  - inside an old baking powder tin, a string with a small piece of caribou shin bone on each end, used for carrying fish
  - inside an old tobacco tin, lots of little treasures, including nails, bullets, pieces of soap, colouring pencil, little piece of sandpaper, an old pen, sewing needles (carefully folded up inside a paper with writing on it, from England), a pull-through for cleaning a rifle

- "I would like these things [her family's possessions] left here, alone, untouched."
- says she wouldn't mind someone picking up something to look at it and putting it "back where it belongs" -- "I would not like to see someone take something from here to put in a museum, or to sell. I'd rather leave all the things here." [Eliz herself took nothing.]
- says she doesn't mind visitors coming to look
- likes the idea of a sign saying "This is where the Tavok family lived ..."
- moved here in May, because it was the only place close by where a tent could be set up (same canvas tents as now -- Eliz never used a skin tent)
- when Honore & Pie came to help move them up to Repulse, they were camped at winter site, in a tent, in the snow
- decision to move: father (Tavok) got really sick, at Piqsimaniq, but they moved over to Nuvukliit when he got well enough. During that winter, father traveled up to Repulse, and right after he returned, Honore & Pie came to help move the whole family.
- "I knew Honore and I were a future marriage, but I didn't want him. That's how it was; as soon as a lady got pregnant, they were committed."
- Tavok's father is buried on another island at Nuvukliit

Piqsimaniq

Jackie Nanordluk - 29 July 96

On a walk to an old qammaq (sod house), in line with the upstream edge of the first lake going up the Piqsimaniq River, 200m. inland to the south, Nanordluk related the following:

- not that old, built earlier this century
- meat and qudlig [oil lamp] were kept in the NE corner, to the right as you enter through the doorway
- "Years ago people were never really fat because they were busy all the time, walking" -- said as he looked at the narrow entrance
- sleeping platform across the back [west side, away from the entrance], lined with stones
- mother slept at north end, closest to the aki, the kitchen area where meat is stored and qudlig is
- father slept next to mother
- when they had a baby, it would be right at the end, outside the mother, then when it was a bit older, the baby moved to between mother and father, while still breast-feeding
- then other children arranged in rest of the sleeping platform -- if one of the children became an adult and got a partner (but had no children yet), they would be together
- usually grandparents at far end
- only source of heat was qudliq, therefore all the family stayed in one qammaq, to economize on the amount of seal oil used
- maybe in this house, mainly char fat used in qudliq -- char get fat in summer, so they used to cut out and save the white, fat part of the belly, then boiled it to render the fat [Nanordluk remembers Tungilik's wife telling him this]
- fish oil used mostly in fall
- seal oil used mostly winter and spring (at Nuvukliit)

Walking away from the qammaq, back generally toward camp at the mouth of the river, but slightly diverting up over higher ground, we saw a similar walled structure, but without sod, only rocks. And other structures. Nanordluk said:

- looks like it was made by Tunniq people (those here before Inuit -- what archaeologists call paleoeskimos) -- all things made by Tunniq are called Tunniqtaq
- they had very small sleeping platforms, because they slept with their legs up - that's why they were such fast runners
- they used to "throw" their harpoons by putting the end of the shaft on top of their foot, bending the shaft, and then kicking their foot up to propel the harpoon through the air
- an old grave: oval of rocks with no cover, left open so that animals would eat the body and keep the area clean. BUT, if the person had been murdered, they would be completely covered with heavy rocks to be sure they [their spirit] did not rise again. People were scared the dead person might be dangerous and fight back [seek retribution].
- there were a lot of shamans then -- so if one shaman killed another shaman, they would be worried that the dead shaman's spirit might rise and be dangerous.
- hunting blind
- another tunniqtaq -- two tents put together with a shared space in between, and a shared entrance
- fox trap in shared space of one e.g. of above -- foxes attracted by old fat, from people eating, so when tent was vacated someone probably built the fox trap
- food storage: shape of cache suggest for fish
- rock house, with walls 1m. high, and one entrance: probably built by a group of men here fishing who built it to stay in just for a night or two
Felix Kopak - 29 July 1996

Sitting in camp beside the mouth of the Piqsimaniq River, Kopak related:

- he remembers coming here, traveling with two people from Nuvukliit, and meeting Tungilik who said he'd spent the winter here in a sod house; he thinks in the one we visited this morning with Nanordluk [but I think he's wrong on this point -- Tungilik told me his house was across the river]
- says he usually traveled alone -- traveled a lot all over, alone -- sometimes joined up with others traveling for awhile, then carried on alone.
- he once brought coal from Repulse to Nuvukliit for the priest Fr. Didier to use in the little building there
- 5 bags of coal, all on his sled, pulled by 9 dogs
- traveled with another man, Leo
- Fr. Didier asked him to take coal since he was going anyway, for which Fr. Didier paid him with some chewing tobacco and tea
- as a child, Kopak stayed in Wager more than three years -- as an adult he never really lived here, but came through and hunted many times.

Elizabeth Aglukka - 29 July 1996

On a walk to the same qammaq visited with Nanordluk earlier in the day.
- her family used this house, built by her father, in the fall of 1962 before there was enough snow to build an iglu
- used only that once
- built by Tavok in September, mostly because they had a new baby (Elizabeth's youngest sister)
- "It seemed really warm when we moved in here from the tent."
- their tent was farther west, about 1km, by the lakeshore
- about two weeks work to build: "not very long"
- everybody in the family helped: mother and father did the rocks and everybody helped with the sod
- could build iglu in December; enough snow
- then moved up the valley, to other side of river -- good snow, good place for iglu and close to good place for nets under the ice of the river
- only Tavoks were living here then -- Eliz. thinks after 1962 they were the only ones left living in Wager Bay
- inside qammaq
  - ground frozen, flagstone floor laid by Tavok
  - still used only qudliq
  - meat platform was rocks
  - sleeping platform was sand and willow branches
  - slept in order, viewed from entrance, right to left (i.e. north to south): baby, mother, father, younger sister, Eliz., brother
- roof was canvas tent on top of a layer of willow branches, on top of seal and caribou skins, on top of wooden rafters
- doorway was about 1m. high, with a stone across the top of the standing stones, and a caribou skin for door
- used seal oil in qudliq; used cotton grass for wick
- stored/saved seal oil
- usually had enough to last; very few times had to use fish oil, which burns a lot faster
- most years went straight from tent to iglu, but this year wanted to see if it would be warmer in a qammaq

Then we walked from the qammaq to the site of her family's summer tent camp, by the lake about 1km from the qammaq.

- "This is where we spent every summer."
- stones that once held up their tents still in place
- inside the tent-ring, she found a half-finished soapstone carving of a bird that she remembers, either her mother or father did, she is not sure which initially, but then realizes only her father ever carved, so it must have been him
Map Session - 30 July 1996 (at Piqsimaniq)

Aukanaqjuq - "place that does not freeze"
- i.e. a polynya?
- ref. to one between two islands off Nuvukliit
- sometimes it's there for the whole winter, but sometimes it freezes over
- location for most of the seal hunting from Nuvukliit

The old travel route from Nuvukliit to Piqsimaniq goes over the peninsula (Tikirajuq), starting from Qakiaq, then heading overland across two lakes: Tudlilik ("place where there are common loons") and Saningayuq ("facing sideways" i.e. across the route)

Qaqsauq Kajulik = arctic loon

Tuulikjuaq = common loon

Elizabeth Aglukka - 30 July 1996

On a walk upriver, north bank (across from camp, and Tavoks' qammaq, etc.)

- past qammaq of Inuksatuajuk, who was father of Lorne Uttak who, more recently, built a plywood shack just beside his father's old qammaq. Uttak used this as a fishing and hunting base in mid 1980s, traveling down from Repulse by snowmobile. He died at the floe edge near Repulse sometime around 1989-91.
- Eliz. just barely remembers Inuksatuajuk but he was living here when she was at Piqsimaniq
- tent ring adjacent to qammaq, also Inuksatuajuk
- Eliz. remembers Tungiliks being across the river from her camp, downriver from Inuksatuajuk, in a tent in summer. They may have also been in a qammaq, but she doesn't remember it.
- 300m. farther upstream from Inuksatuajuk's, beside a small widening of the river, standing on the bank 6m. above the water, sweeping her arm back and forth, Eliz. said: "Our iglu was along here." They made their winter camp here because there were fish all winter. No apparent sign of it left - ice and snow melted and riverbank eroded into river.
- 50m. farther upstream: fish storage cache
- inuksuk behind iglu site: Eliz. does not remember it being there
- Tavoks stayed here early winter, then went to Nuvukliit for the rest of the winter. The year of the qammaq (1962-63) was an exception. "When we got low on seal oil, it was time to move to Nuvukliit."

- Fish weir
- used to be a stone weir just below small rapids, upstream from iglu site, by sand flat
- caught fish, cleaned them, and put in fish storage (2) by river for later use
- for about 1 1/2 weeks, lots of fish coming up
- "we went all together to check the weir. When we got close we could see lots of splashing in the water. That was the best time. We enjoyed arriving to see that."
- caught lots of fish here
- this weir for catching fish going upstream
- block off most of river
- leave one channel open, leading into trap
- arrive, close off escape route, & harvest fish
- "when we were kids, it seemed a long way to walk up to the fish weir"
[walked from summer camp by inlet, along south side of river, up to weir, and crossed there]
Map Session - 31 July 1996 (at Piqsimaniq)

- overland travel route from Hudson Bay coast cut inland at Mattuq, headed WSW to Arnakjuk Lake, east of Nuvukliit -- Kopak says he traveled this route as a small boy

- group says there is soapstone accessible somewhere in Savage Islands at low tide

- along south coast of Wager Bay, by highest hills, there is a red "paint" in the soil that people used for colouring (painting) the hull of their boats

Aklungiqtautitalik - 1 August 1996

Octave Sivaniqtoq & Felix Kopak

- both say the "pillars" (the inner pile of stones in the gymnastic apparatus) used to be higher. One of the top stones is on the ground at the base of the pillar farthest away from the shore.

- adjacent, only 10m. away, is a tiny tent ring. FK was eager to explain it:
  - a family stayed there when a woman was giving birth in the small compartment on the south side of the tent ring. She gave birth alone in there, then stayed in there with the baby for five days, being handed food and water through the small opening on the east side.
  - sometimes the baby, if a girl, was left to die "They were crazy like that a long time ago."
  - also adjacent to the tent ring, on the east side, is a grave, of an adult (or near adult) size -- a simple oval of stones delineating the area for the corpse, left lying on the ground.
  - Kopak says this birthing place was used before he was alive

- also a big tent ring nearby, about 15m. away from gymnastic apparatus, used for drum dances -- because this site was used for spring seal-hunt, including many families -- therefore games and dances.

- lots of tent rings around, because spring camp used by many families
Masivak - 2 August 1996

Octave Sivaniqtoq and Felix Kopak

On a walk upriver (on west bank, i.e. river left):

- FK, first time he came here, camped on gravel on east side of river mouth, just around the corner. When he was a young adult, he passed through here one time from the south (Chesterfield Inlet), headed to Nuvukliit and then Repulse Bay. Nobody else was here then. Only Tavok and two other families were still at Nuvukliit.

- OS pointed out the path they used to use between the beach and their *qammaq*, somewhat upstream, which we followed: "This was our trail; we walked along here."

- OS says all the features uphill right beside the river mouth were already there when he lived nearby, he knows nothing about them.

- OS first lived with his wife, as a young man, on the gravel beach where we camped (beside mouth, river left). His wife died only shortly before our visit, so he preferred not to talk about that time and place. The tent ring where they lived is still there, apparently untouched.

- OS headed to a large prominent rock several hundred metres up the path to an elevated area, overlooking the river valley farther inland

- OS pointed up a valley to the east, across the river, where he said there was a fish weir in the spring. No water flow evident now. Used only in spring when fish go up at high tide. The other fish weir, in the main river, was used in August.

- second weir farther upriver for use when fish coming downriver in spring

- passed a big tent ring on a mid-level plateau: OS says it was already here when he lived here.

- at the big rock (above) OS sat down to tell a story (as interpreted by Steve Mapsalak):
  Years ago, even before my time, people had their own personal feeling about some things. Years ago, we said when you're in the river and you broke your
spear, you had to get away from the river to work on it, to fix it. This rock was where we did that work, away from the river. Otherwise, there would be no more fish. The fish would move somewhere else and there would be no more fish going up this river. It was a law made by Inuit years ago.

- FK: all rivers were treated in the same way. If someone broke the law, the fish would stay away for exactly a year, and return on the anniversary of the infraction.

- OS (as interpreted by Steve Mapsalak):
  "Those years there used to be shamans. Whatever a shaman said to do, or not to do, we would follow. But if someone didn't obey, the shaman would search for the person and make him confess. That done, the fish would return a year later. If the shaman did not find the person, perhaps the fish would never return.

  "If the shaman finds him but he refuses to confess, that person would get ill and stay ill until he confessed, then start getting better. People who confessed would be okay."

- work was always done on side of rock away from the river, so you can not see any of the water in the river as you work

- fish weir was down slope beyond rock, straight ahead (away from our beach camp) in river -- now destroyed by years of ice damage in spring break-up
- OS' *qammaq* was somewhere just east of this big rock; he remember sit was a lot of big rocks

- found part of a [much more recent] frame for a blind for seal-hunting lying beside big rock

- several fish storage caches downhill from big rock toward river
  - one small rock *iglu*-shaped cache, about 1m. high, 1.5m. in diameter, with sod in cracks between rocks; used for storing dried fish -- saved for winter.
  - when all fish were dried, they were put together inside a seal or caribou skin, then inside the *iglu*-shaped cache; then they put sod on top and around it to close it in
  - OS: "sometimes it would spoil, but a lot of the time it worked well -- you had to be careful to put lots of sod"

- OS only lived in one *qammaq* here: used it all winter long, one winter, but when it got warmer in spring, they moved to Repulse Bay

- rock structure that looked like a grave with a cover: possibly a one-night shelter
  - OS: "Twice I slept in a shelter like this for the night."

- some caches used to keep fish for short-term, even just overnight - always had layer of stone in the bottom, to keep fish off dirt

- FK: always tried to have tent behind rocks away from river [respect for river & fish] -- even children were told not to play in the river -- to make sure maximum number of fish came upriver into weir

- old tent ring: big rocks with circle of smaller rocks outside, to be placed against inner (larger) rocks to hold up seal-skin tent: FK says not high enough for him to stand up
  - neither OS or FK used old style like this -- don't know how they held up the roof; OS heard they used caribou antlers

- FK remembers his father using a sharp point of musk-ox horn, scraping caribou antler in order to cut through it - instead of a saw.

- across the river, several piles of rocks [caches] where everyone used to store fish and leave it to become rotten fish. They would be smelly, so when the wind blew from the east, you could smell it. It was the gills that got really smelly. Fish Gills = *Masik*. That's why this is called Masivak.
- FK pointed up the valley at cut through hills, and said that was his route from Chesterfield Inlet

- OS says he went up into those hills caribou hunting

- en route back to camp, saw large structure of about six big standing stones in 4m. long oval; FK thinks it was made by Tunniq people, not by Inuit. "Tunniq were like us but had their own language, were bigger and stronger and were rarely seen by Inuit."

- Inugaruligaqjuit -- little people, less than 30cm. high. So tiny, as you approach, they look at your feet first and then raise their eyes, and grow as they look up at you, until they are the same size. Then they fight. If you lose, you'll die. If you manage to win, by putting them down on the ground, they'll stay there until you escape. If you go down, they killed you by putting their knee on you.

- OS: Years ago, Siutinuaq had those little men help him put a very big rock up on top of some smaller rocks. He was looking for caribou, and when he heard something to one side, he looked and saw an Inugaruligaqjuk (little man) pushing a big rock with his shoulder, to put little rocks under it, just to let Siutinuaq know how strong he was. Then he picked up a rock as heavy as Siutinuaq, and then told Siutinuaq to do it too -- and he could because the small man made it really light for him.

- FK saw footprints before of Inugaruligaqjuit, about 10cm. long
- Some of the Inugaruligaqjuit wanted to help and were very thankful to Inuit for sharing food. Others would fight.

- FK: one time a hunter caught a caribou and as he was cutting it up an Inugaruligaqjuk came and asked if he could have some meat. The Inuk said take it all and then walked back to the Inugaruligaqjuit camp with the Inugaruligaqjuk (small man). He stopped just short of the camp and watched. When the Inugaruligaqjuk arrived in camp, everyone got meat. In return, that Inuk had no problem hunting all through the summer and next winter.

- the Inugaruligaqjuit children are so tiny, they are no bigger than mice. One time an Inuit dog ate one of them.

- OS: there's a place inland beyond the hills behind Masivak, like a cave, built of rocks, where Inuit used to put bait, arranged so a bear would climb in and once he bit the meat, it triggered a door to fall down behind the bear, trapping him. [Looks like picture no. 10 in Wager Bay Final Report 1992.]
4 - 11 August 1996

Tasiuyaq

The Bruce Family
1996 Wager Bay Oral History Project

Informant: Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce

Interviewer: David F. Pelly
Interpreter: Manitok Thompson
Date of Interview: 7 August 1996
Location during Interview: Tasiuyaq
Home community of informant: Coral Harbour
Translator/Transcriber: Veronica Dewar

Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce has signed the consent form and understands that the information provided will be made public.
Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce (called Tuinnaq when she was young, now called Kanayuk in her hometown, and married to Mikitok Bruce) grew up at the HBC post at Tasiuyaq at the head of Wager Bay. Her mother was Toota. Her father was the HBC trader Jimmy Thom. When Thom left in 1926, Toota and her baby daughter Tuinnaq were left with Iqungajuk, also known as Wager Dick. The connection goes back further: Wager Dick's father, Tasiuq, and Toota's father, Maliki, had worked together previously for the whalers. This is where Mrs. Bruce picks up here story:

Mrs. Bruce: There was Tasiuq and Maliki used to be Inuit helpers on a ship. Tasiuq was Iqungajuk's father. Maliki was his nephew. Okay? There were these people on the ship, one name Henry the cook, I'm not sure who the other guy was, but he was the leader. Maliki and Ujagalaaq had two qablunaaq with them and their guide was from Netsilik -- I think his name was Ikusik. I think they sailed from Cape Fullerton.

Yup. When they sailed from Cape Fullerton, they went by dogteam up north. I think there was one dogteam or two - I'm not sure. I guess they were close to Wager Bay, but the rest didn't know -- just the guy from Ukkusiksalingmiut (mouth of the Back River) and apparently their dogs got hungry along the way and they found some caches along the way because their guide knew where there was caches of fish and they got some food from the cache. They said that the fish were cleaned very neatly and prepared very neatly, even the cheeks of the fish were skewered. That's where they got their dog food from.

Q. Did they stop here [Tasiuyaq] along the way or...?

A. I'm not sure if they stopped here in this lake or where they traveled through. That was before there was any settlement here or people here [at the HBC post], even before my mother was born.

Can I talk about the others? Yup, after they got the food from the cache, perhaps the camp was close by. They were kind of nervous or scared of getting murdered to go to a camp so they brought along guns -- even the woman was given a gun, pistols.

But apparently the Ukkusiksalingmiut were a lot more friendlier than Netsilingmiut and they were very nice and friendly. The first people they met anyways.
After staying there for awhile, they paid or traded for the food, perhaps with other items that they got. And they left from this area [to go] farther north.

Perhaps they camped along the way and they encountered another camp and the people in the camp were expecting their relatives to come in from hunting. There was a child with two dogs on a leash who came to meet them. When the kid came closer to the sled, the dogs in the sled got nervous because they did not recognize the other dogs, and the kid let go of the dogs and the dogs took off back to the camp. Even though the kid was surrounded by dogsled, he just stood there when he realized that he was not supposed to meet these people, and the people put him on the sled.

When the two dogs came back to the camp, the people at the camp became nervous because they knew that these guys that came in were strangers. And right away, you can see the two men preparing themselves. At that time people didn't approach a camp right away. You stopped not too close to the camps, at that time, because you didn't want to approach a stranger's camp, so they have lots of room to move in either direction when something strange happened.

There were two men getting themselves prepared and ready. Apparently they were readying their weapons for killing. The Netsilik man knew right away the two men wanted to kill.

As the two men approached the sled, the other man who had a weapon apparently started to stoop down right away. The people that just arrived by sled stood by the sled and the qablunaags stood still as well and watched those two men who were coming towards them.

The Netsilik man was given a pistol by the qablunaag leader that was already loaded. He was going to fight with the man approaching.

One of the men who came from the camp was stooped down and coming towards the Netsilik man, as soon as he stepped aside to challenge the man who wants to fight because the rest of the men with the dogteams had guns as well. When the man from the camp stooped down to fight, the Netsilik man also stooped down.

And the other man from the camp was just standing further away and the other man came to fight and the Netsilik man said go ahead and kill me. As soon as the man from the camp harms him, the other man would shoot him. Back then whenever they were challenging each other they used to stoop down
to fight. Whenever the man from the camp would strike the other man, caribou hair would fly off because it was being cut by the knife.

That's the way they fought. And so this went on for awhile -- they would back away and charge again. After backing away, the man charged the other man again. He looked at the men with the dogteams and when he saw the child on the sled he stood up very quickly -- I guess he thought the child was dead.

And when he stood up, the people in the sled beckoned the child to go to the camp people and they took him home without anything else happening and the people on the dogsled went on their way farther without camping there.

I guess they overnighted somewhere and after that they met some more people at a camp, so they went to the camp (but not too close to the camp) and spent the night there again because those people were not as vicious as the first camp.

And in that camp there were kids playing around the iglu -- going in and out and the strangers didn't seem to bother them and they spent the day there. Apparently one of the qablunaaq men (the leader) lost his knife, and he couldn't find it anywhere - someone had taken it - and the man said that if he didn't find his knife, he would kill someone. And my grandmother, who was traveling with the dogteam got very scared -- she figured that if the man kills someone, they would all start fighting. She was also easily scared. So the man said he would kill someone if he didn't find his knife. My grandmother told of the lost knife and someone returned the knife right away.

After spending the night there, they were packing to continue their journey and one of the men starting shaking. Either he wanted to kill someone or they weren't sure what was wrong with him. He was in the porch of my grandmother's -- she didn't quite know what was the matter with the man.

So they took off on their journey and it was spring time and very warm after leaving the boats in the winter. And the person named Henry would walk all over the place looking for something. He went off a distance and he found something because ships used to get lost up north.

Some people might remember somewhere around Gjoa Haven's shores he found a grave and apparently someone made a cairn or an Inuksuk beside the grave and someone put papers in between the grave and he found them.
When he found the papers it said that the doctor of the ship had died from sickness.

Apparently they had some sort of plastic inside the letter.

Henry and others would walk around and search all the time and they also found a shoulder part of a human being in a pot, but they couldn't figure out whether it was a skeletal remains of a person that died from hunger or whether the guy was murdered or not and they didn't find any other letter saying what he died of.

And apparently one of the men, Henry, found money or coins that was stashed away for someone to find.

My grandfather walked and search around with them and he found something buried underneath the moss or earth but he didn't tell the others knowing that he would have to dig it out so he didn't tell the white men about it.

My grandfather was sorry later on for not telling the others because he figured there might have been valuable stuff in there.

I'll go back to the story about the finds. Apparently Henry was always talking and he was very loud -- this is about the grave and the letters in the grave that he found. Apparently, when he found the grave with the letters, you could hear him shouting from quite far away because he was so happy he found the letters and the money tucked in between the grave. I think the letters and the money were contained in the same bag.

Apparently, the other qablunaaq person, who was the leader, seemed to be embarrassed about Henry's action and his loudness.

From the location of the find, they left for lower ground and Henry wore caribou clothing all this time and didn't want to get rid of them and apparently he got on to a ship wearing caribou clothing from the time he put them on.

I'm not really familiar what happened to them on their way back to the boat. But, I've heard stories told about the time they arrived back to the ship. Apparently, Henry was talking very loudly as usual and very excited and he wore his caribou clothing all this time.
Apparently, my mother was born after they had returned to the ship, I guess her father is the qablunaaq leader.

They didn't find a lost ship but they found a grave with letters and money.

Q. Did they take the letter back with them?

A. They probably kept it and brought it back to their homeland.

I'm not really familiar with the story about people searching for the lost ship and what route they took and so on, but they had Inuit guides as well.

I think that was Ujagalaaq or her adopted father who use to tell the stories. She was not quite old enough when her father died. Maybe my grandmother used to tell stories about this to my mother after my grandfather passed away.

My grandfather passed away and my grandmother probably told my mother these stories to keep her occupied. I think too that my grandmother was very good at telling stories.

My mother probably was like my grandmother -- that's why she used to tell me these stories.

Q. During the time of the trading post here, during the time when the qablunaaq traders were here, the first part when traders were here before they all left -- in the journal they wrote, one of them wrote that an Inuk came from Ukkusiksalik [Back River] and told them he had found some papers under some stones up on the coast. They wrote that in the journal. He never brought the papers here. I'm wondering if you remember hearing about that one.

A. I have seen them. Nauja has seen them along with me. There was this Inuksuk and a rock on top and there is a writing on the rock and it's up there. It's quite a ways up there somewhere. I can't remember exactly where. My mother thought maybe Henry wrote it.

I haven't heard about letters in the paper. Maybe they're lying. Maybe they wrote in the daily journal -- I see. Maybe the Inuit people, because they couldn't read them, didn't bother or didn't care about them. For sure, because they're not important when you can't understand them. I haven't heard about that other part of the story you told. Maybe my mother never heard of it.
Q. That's a fantastic story, the first one, the main one -- very interesting.

A. And this old lady named Annaqtuusi didn't have anyone to care for her so my parents looked after her because her son was murdered by Ukkusiksalingmiut. This guy by the name of Ilatnaq found his body. Apparently Ilatnaq looked after Annaqtuusi but after Ilatnaq passed away, Amitnaaq and Katlaq left.

Annaqtuusi was being looked after by my parents and she told us a story one time. Apparently two priests went up north and when they were up north they were mistreated.

The people told the priests to leave and they left with an Inuk but I don't know who the Inuk is. They packed up and were leaving and they got murdered right after they packed up. Apparently one priest was running away but they shot him anyways.

One of the priests shouted something, but they don't know what he said and there was another man out somewhere hunting caribou, not knowing what was happening. And the priest shouted so loud, there was an echo that scared the caribou away.

He was from down south, Qiuraarjuk. I think he's from Igloolik or Ammituq area or from the Tununiq area or from Pond Inlet. I'm not sure which community he was from.

Q. How do you know?

A. I've heard of it.

I have also heard about Annaqtuusi's son and how he was murdered.

Q. Just as a matter of interest, while were on this, there is a lady living in Baker Lake with the name Annaqtuusi. It's not the same one but I wonder if there's any connection?

A. I think they are related.

This woman Annaqtuusi had one child, a son [Ukpitalajaq] -- no, apparently she had a daughter as well same age as my mother. There were different camps here and there. Annaqtuusi and Ilatnaq lived in one camp and Itirijuk lived in another camp. Itirijuk was a young man and he would come and visit the other camps to Ukpitalajaq's.
Apparently, Itirijuk used to come to camp quite often because Annaqtuusi's son was getting married and because Itirijuk was interested in the woman.

Itirijuk would be very nice to Annaqtuusi's son because apparently he was "seeing" his wife.

So Itirijuk asked Annaqtuusi's son to go with him and get supplies from Gjoa Haven.

I guess Annaqtuusi's son wasn't very smart. I guess because he was much younger than Itirijuk. So Itirijuk told Annaqtuusi's son to pack up saying they will be leaving at a certain day and meet him at a certain area.

So they left and camped the first day, and in the morning Ukpitaujaq, the son of Annaqtuusi, was getting his sled runners ready.

And Itirijuk shot him.

When he shot him, he just left him where he was. I think I'm telling it wrong. Sorry, I'm not telling it right. When they were on their way back from trading.

Q. After they traded?
A. And Itirijuk went home after he shot Ukpitaujaq, after they traded.

Because Itirijuk was so bad that he pretended to write him a letter and send him a jackknife and something else he had bought from the traders.

But in the meantime Ilatnaq had already found the dead body.

Ilatnaq didn't know how to break the bad news to Annaqtuusi, the boy's mother, and said that he found a dead body and he wanted his wife and the mother of the dead man to come with him to check the body out.

Ilatnaq's wife is named Katlaq.

Q. What was the relationship with Annaqtuusi?
A. I'm not sure what the relationship was.
Because she didn't have a husband. And Annaqtuusi recognized her dead son -- and she thought that the person that went trading with him sent him a jackknife and a letter.

When Annaqtuusi recognized her dead son, she got really mad at Iturijuk. Ilatnaq was quite well known by the qablunaaq people because he was close friends of them. They didn't touch the body and reported it to the RCMP.

So the RCMP went to question Itirijuk and Itirijuk's father told him "I have always told you not to be like this."

I guess it was known that he wanted the woman.

And Itirijuk was arrested.

He must have died in jail. It was told that he became a shaman, but I don't know how. And there were stories going around where apparently whenever they lock him up or chain him, the chains or locks fall off from him.

It was probably not true.

But Annaqtuusi said that if she ever sees Itirijuk again, she would carry a heavy club, and she would club him.

I don't blame her.

Annaqtuusi was taken by Taparti's family to be cared for by the nuns in Chesterfield Inlet.

Q. From here?
A. Somewhere from here. Because Taparti's family moved to Chesterfield area at that time.

Q. How did Annaqtuusi get here, because Ilatnaq is the one who died.
A. I'm not sure how Annaqtuusi got here but I know that she was being looked after by a family named Arnalukitaq. But she was always hungry with that family and was not happy with them, so she was brought over to our family to be taken care of.

Q. Where were Arnalukitaq's family living?
A. They lived around Qamaniquluk and Qamanaaluk area. And camps around Nuvukliit area.

Q. Did Annaqtuusi come to this area before Katlaq and the 13 year old boy?

A. After. Arnaluktitaq. Maurice's grandfather's grandfather Siksaaq got lost around this area and died.

Q. That's it?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay there was -- didn't you write down another ...

A. Do you want me to tell the story now? Siatsiaq from Aivilik and Ujarasugjualuk -- his name was just Ujarasugjuk, but he was so proud that they called him Ujarasugjualuk.

Siatsiaq was from Aivilik and he came to Netsilik and they built a big iglu and when Netsilik people see people from Aivilik they would want to challenge them. They started building a big iglu to have a game of fighting or challenging.

Ujarasugjualuk wanted to challenge Siatsiaq to be his takutsaq, which means that he wanted to fight him by punching him. So they can look at each other in the eye whenever they will challenge each other.

That's what Siatsiaq said when he was going to be a challenger. He was happy. His wife had just passed away and he wanted to feel pain and he wanted someone to feel pain as well.

After they built a big iglu and on one side of the iglu were people from Aivilik and on the other side were the people from Netsilik, they put snow blocks in between with women and men from Netsilik and women and men from Aivilik sitting on the opposite sides. These two men were going to fight in the middle.

Because Siatsiaq was so anxious that he would hide behind his people and he watched what his challenger wanted to do.
The challenger on the floor stood up and looked for his opponent and he would sniff at the direction of Siatsiaq and he said "If there is an adult ready over there, come down and fight me".

Siatsiaq pretended that he didn't want to fight. In fact he really wanted to fight. And Ujarasugjuk said "All I ever fight and challenge are children. If there is an adult ready up there come and fight me."

Ujarasugjuk called the adults in the audience children because he thought he was very powerful and they weren't.

So Siatsiaq went to the middle of the floor and Ujarasukjuk was very happy. Ujarasukjuk was to have the first punch, so he punched Siatsiaq on the shoulder. They did this for awhile and Siatsiaq was feeling pain from being punched and he had a dislocated shoulder. So he stopped punching and he challenged Ujarasukjuk to punch him on the head instead. So they started punching each other again. Netsilngimiut punch their opponents with the first knuckle, whereas Aivilik people use the part where the finger joins the hand.

Ujarasugjuk punched the other guy very hard and dislocated his finger. Aivilik people knew that if an opponent uses this certain finger, the opponent's finger will get dislocated and they will weaken.

After punching each other like that for awhile, Ujarasugjuk got knocked out. Even though Ujarasugjuk never said he was hurt, you can tell he was weakened and couldn't fight anymore.

Ujarasugjuk got up and asked Siatsiaq "Did you punch me?" but would not fight back at Siatsiaq and just took his punches because he was halfways unconscious and Siatsiaq would punch him over and over again.

I should have said this before but I'll tell you now. When Siatsiaq dislocated his shoulder the first time the Netsilingmiut women would cheer loudly and started singing Ajaja songs because they were happy, but when Ujarasugjuk got knocked out all Aivilik women started singing ajaja songs.

So Ujarasugjuk was getting weaker all this time and couldn't fight back and would just say "Did you punch me?" So his son went over to the middle of the floor and said that he can't fight back and took him off the floor because his son knew that the only time he would feel his consciousness is when he touched the snow on the floor.
My mother and Qugnuliq were outside the *iglu* looking at this performance through a hole in the top of the big *iglu*.

And what happened was, Ujarasugjuk was taken home as well as Siatsiaq and they had to challenge each other again in the morning to see who would get up first and whoever wakes up first had to go and see the other, that was the tradition. Siatsiaq got up and went to Ujarasugjuk's *iglu*. He found him sleeping and his wife said to him "Your challenger is in." Ujarasugjuk tried to get up. During the night he also had vomited and was unable to do anything. He was badly hurt.

He was okay for the winter but in the springtime he died. He probably died of brain damage.

My mother was watching the whole performance and she said whenever Ujarasugjuk fell down, his pants would balloon up and would deflate.

Q. This happened somewhere in Aivilik?

A. I think so; I'm not sure exactly the name of the camp, I wasn't told.

Siatsiaq is Angoo's younger brother, Ekwalaak's father, I think, Kalujak's grandfather.
The following are stories told by Mikitok Bruce.
Orphan Boy - Qupliruarjuk

There was this young orphan boy, Qupliruarjuk, who did not have a mother and a father, that lived in a camp with other people. He was able to go along with the rest of the hunters when they went seal hunting with harpoons in the seal holes. Once again he went along when the men went seal hunting on the ice. Once they were done seal hunting they started heading home, but they left him behind on the ice. They would always leave him by himself, then he would start to walk home by himself.

Towards springtime, the men caught a polar bear after their hunt. They started to head home without the orphan boy again. The orphan boy saw a polar bear liver on the snow that the men had left behind and he started to kick it around while walking home alone. While he was still walking home, a polar bear appeared from behind and pushed him forward as he turned to look at what it was. It was a huge polar bear. The orphan boy got up and started to run away from the bear. The bear pushed him to the snow again and he fell down once more. Then the bear regurgitated in front of the boy and it was Qupliruarjuk’s mother’s hair. Apparently his mother was not supposed to have combed her hair while she was alive, and for that reason he regurgitated her hair. The boy got up to his feet and started to run away from the bear. Once more, the bear pushed him to the ground. This time, the bear regurgitated old blubber oil from the lamps that was thrown away by his mother. His mother was not supposed to have cleaned the oil lamps. Once again the boy got up and tried running away. This time the bear did not regurgitate. The bear said to him, "Why don't you follow me to the floe edge?" So the boy started following the bear. The bear was walking too fast for him. Qupliruarjuk had a sakku with him and the bear asked him to hook up the sakku to his rump. So the boy speared him, and then he took the rope and held it while the bear was running. He was able to keep up with the bear after that.

Once they got to the floe edge, the bear asked Qupliruarjuk to take out the sakku from his rump and asked the boy to get on top of him when he got in the ocean. Qupliruarjuk did what he was told to do. They started heading way down to the ocean and they could not see anything in sight. Apparently the polar bears had a camp there. They kept traveling for a long time in the water heading to the camp. Finally, they saw the land, the polar bear’s home. They got very close to the camp and saw many homes of the polar bears. Once they were in the camp, the polar bear took Qupliruarjuk to his home and adopted the orphan boy.
He found out the polar bears also went seal hunting with harpoons, and he was able to take part in that. He caught many seals. There was this one particular polar bear which was not an old bear, a young adult, but huge. It charged at the boy and he got very afraid of it, so he would just give him the seals that he caught each time the bear came to him. After he got home he told the bear that adopted him what was happening to him during his seal hunting, that one of the polar bears was taking his seals as soon as he caught them. Even before he could get it out of the sea hole, the bear would start to charge at him, so he ended up giving it to that bear. His adoptive polar bear told him "Okay, if you catch a seal, before he gets to you, very quickly try and get the seal out of the seal hole. Once the bear gets close to you, try and kill him with your harpoon. If you don't kill him, he will attack you and kill you."

Once again he got a seal. Very quickly he pulled the seal out of the hole, thinking he would cut it up and prepare it the way it should be. The young bear started coming towards him again and this time he was prepared to kill him. He harpooned the bear! The bear tried to get at the boy, but it went to the ground and started to die. Once the bear was dead, the boy did not bother taking his sakku out of the polar bear, he just left it in the bear. He went home and stayed home. After three days passed, the bear that was killed came back to life and went home. The bear yelled to the door of the boy, saying "Nowliktuningiaq" meaning "harpooner, here his your harpoon head," and threw the sakku into his house.

The boy kept going seal hunting with his harpoon, and that bear never bothered him again, and would not charge at the boy ever again.

The boy Qupliruarjuk started to get homesick for his homeland, and he asked if he could be taken home. His adopted polar bear father told Qupliruarjuk to get on top of him and started heading to the boy's camp area. They got close to his camp. Before they got there the bear started giving the boy advice. He said always clean the windows very carefully and keep them clear of snow and make snow out-houses for the women and make sure the door is always fixed properly and in good working order. This was his advice to the orphan boy. After this the boy was able to catch many seals. Qupliruarjuk would catch seals instantly as soon as he went out hunting.
Polar Bear

There was a man that was seal hunting on the ice. Without knowing it, or hearing anything, a polar bear was sneaking up on him. This polar bear kept sneaking up on hunters while they were seal hunting. This same polar bear started to enjoy catching these hunters and started boasting about it to other polar bears. While at home, he was talking about this to them, he said, these Qanakiarjuit are very easy to attack from behind. When you push them they fall very easily. While the other bears were listening, one of them, who was a huge bear, said to him "Yikes, don't talk like that. These people are very scary and dangerous. Don't do that," this huge male polar bear told him. He continued to tease this huge bear, and still sneaked up on the people. He went to the people and there again showed himself to them. The people saw him and they started running towards him. This huge bear started to pretend to run away from them. Once they got close to him, he would take a bite out of them. He's still running. They got very close to him, and they had two dogs with them, also running after the bear, and they got close to the bear too. The one dog had eyes and the other, with no eyes, caught up with the bear and it did not do anything to it. This dog that had two eyes, that were one above the other, caught up with the bear. Once it got there, the dog really had to shit, so he did, and stopped. The bear was still waiting for the people. Once they get close to him, he would snatch them. He would turn his head behind him to see where they were and once close enough he would stand up and spread his front legs wide open like a wing. This was his plan. He did that. Once he did that, he started to get really warm and hot all over him and lost consciousness and died.
There was this Inuk who died and became a seal. Once a seal, he joined the other seals in the sea. He was having a great time being a seal, biting his flippers while swimming around. It was great fun being a seal. While swimming in the deep ocean, they could not get to a seal hole because they were all gone and being used. There was this lazy hole. It was a dark hole and the other holes were very bright, and this dark hole was empty so he was told to go there. He said "No, I don't want to go there because it's too dark!" But they kept saying for him to go there, so he went. It got brighter and he went up in the hole, and up he went and someone spoke to him. It sounded like shooing a dog at him, this person speaking to the seal, and the seal got really hot all over. They caught him and he died. Once they took him home to the iglu, they did not take him in right away into the iglu, but the seal was trying to keep warm where the harpoon was put in the corner. He was very cold. The hunter decided to take his harpoon in and took the seal in too, and he finally got warm. He was there for awhile and he died.

After a number of days, he turned into a bearded seal, and he was with the bearded seals. He said the bearded seals never smiled. They were intimidating to him and he was afraid of them. After the hunters caught him, he turned into a walrus. Once in the group of walruses, he was very happy being a walrus because they were a lot of fun to be with, except that they were very rough on you, because they would bump into you very hard with their tusks. That was the only part that was not fun in being a walrus. But otherwise he was happy being a walrus. Once again someone caught him as a walrus and killed him and after a few days he turned into a wolf. After being a wolf for few days, he said that he was always sleepy and tired all the time, because they were only allowed to sleep a few hours and had to get up again and travel. He said again being a wolf makes you a very sleepy type. He also said that in order to stop being so sleepy, he had to walk around and arouse himself to keep awake.

He also had to take part in hunting caribou, running after caribou by foot. But he could not keep up with them, and by the time he caught up with the other wolves that had caught a caribou, there would not be any more meat for him. Only a carcass was left over for him, and he was starving. Then he started asking around how they keep up with the caribou. "How is that you can keep up with them and how do you run after them?" He was told that his feet, his paws, should be turned outward and run that way -- then he would keep up with the caribou. This is what he should do in order to keep up. Then he started practicing it that way every time there was caribou. He started keeping up a little more and was able to reach a dead caribou that had little bit of meat
left. After awhile he was able to eat with the rest of the caribou. He got much faster as days went by, then he finally was able to take part in the hunt soon after they killed a caribou and joined the other wolves in eating a whole caribou. He then was able to keep right up with the other wolves.

Somehow this wolf was caught and killed soon after. Then he turned into a dog. While being a dog, he constantly got beaten up, even though he did want to be hurt. This became his daily life. One day he was beaten again although he did not do anything wrong to deserve it. Then he died, and then he turned into a fox. He lived near the shore most times and looked for food around the beach area. He would find old log woods and old seals, old bearded seal meat -- that would be his source of food. After awhile he would go after lemmings and sik-siks and eat them, as well anything that was edible he'd eat it along the shore.

While on his hunts, he fell into a den, deep into it and he could not get out. He had not seen it along the way. The den did not have a doorway to get out. The only hole was very high up. Finally the owner of the den came home, and he got killed. He turned into a rabbit this time. He would live near rocks and sit still and he would only eat a little bit. The only way he eats his how the rabbits hunt by hopping along looking for food out on the land. Soon after, he was caught and killed again, then he turned into a ptarmigan. He said it was a lot of fun being with other ptarmigans, but their chicks and eggs were too many. That was the only thing he was not happy about. He got caught again, then he became an owl, and he lived in the mountains. He would stand on top of the mountain or a hill and watch out for sik-siks, rabbits and ptarmigans and watch where they would be coming out from. This is how he lived being an owl. Something happened again and he got caught as an owl. After that no one knows what became of him.
Ilimasugjukjuaq

Ilimasugjukjuaq was a very strong man. He would go out seal hunting, and he would catch bearded seals and ringed seals and he would take them home by pulling them with rope from the ice. Once after seal-hunting, he caught one and started heading home by pulling it with a rope. He got home to his igloo and just before coming into the igloo his wife was inside, he yelled inside to his wife "Hey wife, pull this seal in!" His wife said to him "I had a bad delivery of my baby and I'm all torn up." The baby was not suppose to come yet, and the wife said that she could not come out. The husband Ilimasugjukjuaq got very angry and yelled again "Wife, pull this rope!" and his wife got very afraid of him and pulled the seal in by the rope. Later on the husband couldn't catch any more ringed seals during his hunts, nor bearded seals and the rest of the people included that were in the camp with them and they were getting very hungry and started starving. The rest of the people starved to death. Ilimasugjukjuaq started having the human bodies for food, and he ate them for himself. he ate his brothers-in-law and his sisters, his relatives that starved to death. Ilimasugjukjuaq just kept them to himself for food and once they were all gone, his wife was the only one left but was still alive and was the only one left for food. He went out again to go seal hunting and he told his wife to go pick bushes for fire. Once he gets back home he had planned to kill his wife and have her for food.

The wife went out to pick bushes for fire and when she got back home, she took some of her clothes and packed them up with the bushes that she picked, and her kamiks as well, and made it look like a human body. I guess like a mummy. She placed it at the far end of the bed as far as possible from the doorway. The igloo was very dark because they didn't have any blubber for fuel for the lamps. She told the mummy "If Ilimasugjukjuaq stabs you, yell to him that it hurts." The wife had made some aged meat, which she had hidden outside the igloo, which could make you shrink into a small human. It was aged rotten meat. She hid herself. Ilimasugjukjuaq came home, and soon after he stabbed the stuffed mummy. It made a sound, like ouch, pretending to be hurt. Ilimasugjukjuaq took the mummy and noticed that it was a stuffed mummy. "You are not a human! You are not a human!" he yelled. "Why, you are not a human, how can you say you got hurt?" He threw it towards the end of the bed. Ilimasugjukjuaq started looking for his wife around the igloo outside. He would see a little thing around the igloo, but he could not find her. Ilimasugjukjuaq went into the igloo and his wife took off and left. She went to the beach area by the shore. The husband saw her down there and started going after her. She quickly made aged rotten meat and put it in between the snowdrifts and she went inside them and hid there. Ilimasugjukjuaq arrived there and started looking for her and he saw a little thing and kicked it around
but could not find his wife. He went back to his igloo and went in. Ilimasugjukjuaq's wife left again and took off. She tried not to leave any footprints around and she walked very carefully trying not to make any footprints. She came into a day camp, and it had some food, some meat in it. She started to eat. The owner of the day camp arrived home and scared himself and ran off a bit from the day camp. He was looking at her from far away and said to her "If you are alive, follow me. If you are not alive, don't follow me!" He said those words to her. So since she was well alive, she started following him. They walked back to the igloo together. They were quite suspicious of Ilimasugjukjuaq [that is the meaning of his name]. Soon after they saw Ilimasugjukjuaq coming towards the day camp, they hid the wife. They put out rump of the caribou meat and packed walrus aged meat in its skin that had been prepared and started thawing them. Before he arrived they made some ropes to tie him with, called roping. They made sure they were very tight. Ilimasugjukjuaq started to eat. He ate the whole piece of the rump of the caribou and more than that of the aged walrus meat. He almost finished too. He was very full in the stomach and was not eating any more. "Ilimasugjukjuaq, why don't you do the game called roping up there?" He said "But, I'm too full!" "Never mind, just play." So he agreed to it and started to play. They tied his arms to the rope up in the ceiling after that, and they said to him "Ilimasugjukjuaq, you eat your own relatives!" He asked "Who did it? Who said that?" "Ilimasugjukjuaq, your wife!" "Who is my wife?" He answered "Puplaligaq." He asked again "Can I see her?" So his wife showed herself. He saw his wife. "I used to give you the hands and feet of your brothers to eat, and I also used to give you the hands and feet of your sister-in-law!" said Ilimasugjukjuaq. "No, I did not eat any of those human bodies. I only ate their head lice and the lice of the mattresses and bedding. I did not eat any of the hands and feet of the relatives!" answered his wife. Ilimasugjukjuaq was at this time being stabbed with knives. During this stabbing, he was only hanging from the rope by one arm left. Then he died.

The wife had said she was only eating lice and nothing else. But the rest of the people did not believe her story, so they killed her too. They opened her up and slit her stomach up so that they could see what she had in her stomach. Once they did that, there were millions of mosquitoes coming out of her stomach. Ever since then there's been mosquitoes around up to today.

Taima!
Grandmother with two grand children

There was this grandmother with two grandchildren. They were a boy and a girl. This young girl was able to see and the boy was blind. This blind boy got older and bigger. Actually both of the grandchildren did. The children were alone in the sod house by themselves. All of a sudden the window was pushed by a polar bear and it broke it wide open. This young blind man was told by his grandmother to use the bow and arrow and get the polar bear that was above the sod house upward. So he used the bow and arrow and said "I got the bear with the bow an arrow!" The grandmother said to him "You hit the window instead, around the edge, and you did not get the bear." But he insisted he got the bear. The bear died. They had dogs as well. The grandmother decided to put the young man in the porch, and make him eat dog meat, and the granddaughter was given polar bear meat to eat. The sister started putting polar bear meat which was cooked into her sleeves and hid it, so that she could give some to her brother who was living in the porch. The grandmother started asking her questions: "Why are you eating so fast? Your food disappears very quickly." The young girl said "I've been very hungry lately," but she was putting some of it away in her sleeves for her brother to eat. When she got to her brother, she would give him the polar bear meat and he'd eat it.

Springtime now was coming and the loons were starting to appear. The brother asked his sister if the loons were back and she said "Yes, they are here and they are up there." And the brother said "Let's go up." So they went out to the lake to see them and they arrived there where the loons were. The brother said "If you make from here to down, down, down, small pieces of Inuksuks, I'll stay here while you reach them to our sod house. He told her to make them so that the Inuksuks had arms that stretch out. So he told her to get going and head home while making them.

The sister did not want to go. So she cried, because she did not want to leave her brother alone. But he kept insisting that she go, so she left. She made the little Inuksuks right along the way to their sod house. She got home. He heard a thump noise and heard a kayak. He was told to get in the kayak and got in. After he got in, they kayak submerged under the water with him in it. Of course he started to feel as if he was suffocating and in few minutes they got out from underwater. "Can you see?" he heard. Again they went underwater, and this time he felt the suffocation much stronger. His eyes were being licked by someone while under water. Once more he felt like suffocating, much more, and they got up again from under water. He could see with his eyes the mountain and land. Again they went under water and again his eyes were being licked. And he is feeling worse, like he can't breath. They got up again,
and he could see very clearly now and he was asked "Can you see the grass on
top of the mountains?" Although he could see them clearly, he said he
couldn't see them very well, and then he was taken under water again.

While under the water he was feeling the same way like he did the other times,
can't breath properly and worse. They got up again, and he was asked "Can
you see them now? Can you see the farthest mountains and the things that
grow on top, like the grass?" He said "Yes!" because he could see everything
clearly. They started heading to the shore, and the thing told him not to open
his eyes yet, till he gets to the land. They got to the land, and he tried not to
open his eyes. He opened his slightly, and this loon was walking towards the
water with its back to him and his back had no fur. He saw it for a few
seconds because he was told not to open his eyes yet. The loon went
underwater. He opened his eyes and looked for it, but he couldn't see it again.

He started to walk home and while walking, he took some of his seal-skin
_kamiks_ and made it into a sling shot. He was using it as he walked, following
the little _Inuksuks_ that his sister made. He got close to home and he saw a
polar bear skin stretched on the ground drying and a dog skin. He asked "Who
got the polar bear?" and he was told that he caught it. "Who caught it?" he
asked his grandmother. His grandmother went and said "Ah! Ah! these boats
that went by," and she kept saying that. The grandson asked again who caught
the dog? "Ah! Ah! these boats that went by caught the dog! These boats that
went by got it for me," she lied to her grandson.

It was now springtime. The beluga whales were going by the camp very close
to the shore. He tied a rope around his sister on the waist, tied the rope to a
rock, and started harpooning the beluga whales. He was catching many
whales. The grandmother was watching them and she decided to take part in it
because it looked like so much fun, watching them catching the whales,
especially the sister being attached to the rope and then to the whale. The
grandson did the same to the grandmother -- tied a rope around her waist.
They went to the shore, and they saw a whale close by. It was a black whale.
They started yelling "Here! Here! _Isuqattiaq! Isuqattiaq! Here, Isuqattiaq!"
The grandmother was saying this to her grandson, and there was this huge
white whale behind the smaller black one. The grandson was pretending to
aim at the small black one. Then all of a sudden he took aim at the big white
one and hit it with the harpoon. He hit it and the grandmother seemed to run
very fast to the water, while being pulled by the big white whale for a few
seconds. She went in the water. After she got up for a few seconds, she yelled
"My son!"
My son! Left me a boy, the one I cleaned from his shit and wet diapers without complaining how hard it was!" While she was still yelling these words, she got underwater and no one ever heard her voice again.

The brother and sister were now alone. They left the place by walking. They arrived to a place where it seemed like there were people jumping up and down, so they arrived there by jumping around to their camp, and found out these were ravens. They walked only by jumping around. They were there for a couple days and then left the place. Then they came into a place of people with long nails. These people apparently kill people by scratching them. The brother made an igloo, and he got thirsty. He told his sister to get some water from the other people in the camp, and she went to get some water. The neighbors told her that their door was dripping, that she has to open it very slowly, for a long time backwards coming in. That is the only way that she'll get water from them. She started opening the door very slowly going in backwards. While she was doing that, the people started scratching her. "My brother, here! My brother, here!" she was yelling. He heard her yelling, and he got a big piece of wood and took it and hit one of the people and got him off his sister. He hit them too with the big stick and killed them. There was this old man scratching the sister too and he was licking his finger nails full of blood, and he said her brother brought his sister to you - that's why he is hitting you! The brother hit this old man and killed him.

They were there for awhile then left the place, and they came to a place where there were people that had no assholes. They were there now with the people. The sister got married to one of the men from this clan. The brother had no wife now. They gave him a place to live, because the sister was going to have a baby, a child, and he had to get his own place. The sister was going to have her child and she had to keep it. She delivered the baby. The people were so amazed that their daughter-in-law delivered a baby with a hole, an asshole, and with a penis, they were yelling all this out loud in the camp. So all of the people in the camp decided that they wanted an asshole too. So they started to punch a hole with a sharp object in the right spot. They would place it where there should be a hole and if they got it in the right place they would make a hole, and make it into an asshole. If they didn't hit it in the right spot they died.

The sister was living in her igloo and one night she knew she was going to be attacked again. This person would turn out her lamp and fight her in the dark. Before she got attacked again she reached for her oil lamp that had a lot of soot and smeared her hands with it. She got prepared ahead of time. She was right. This person came in and attacked her again. She smeared that soot on the face, and that attacker left her place. He went next door and got in to the
place. People started yelling at him, "Taqiq's face is full of soot!" and they all laughed at him. Apparently he had been attacking the sister, who put out her lamp, and now his face was full of soot and he was being laughed at. "Taqiq's face is full of soot!" they laughed at him again and again. The sister came in to the place where everybody was.

The sister took a wick, and dipped it into the oil, and split it into two: one for the sister and one for the brother. They lit them and the sister told the brother, who ever dries fastest and puts the fire out first will become a moon, who ever stays on fire the longest without going out first will become the sun. They lit them at the same time, they went around the house with the wicks on fire. The brother's wick dried first and started going out, and he became a moon and the sister became the sun. The sun is known as a woman and the moon a man.
Field Notes

Tasiuyaq
Tasiuyaq

Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce

5 August 1996 (as interpreted by Manitok Thompson)

Ilumigarjuk's story:

- his father was Niqqi, from Gjoa Haven area

- three young Aivilingmiut men went caribou hunting in August and happened to meet two men from Pelly Bay area, Netsilingmiut, who said "there's caribou behind that hill."

- made a plan to catch the caribou -- each Netsilingmiut man took 1 or 2 of the Aivilingmiut and headed opposite way round the mountain, leaving their Aivilingmiut wives behind [in camp]. In a short while, the wives saw two men coming back. They recognized by their walk that the two men were the Netsilingmiut, "who were known to be murderers." Probably, they killed the Aivilingmiut, thought the women. One of the young ladies had special powers and she went behind a small rock. [Her powers must be the sort that allow her to become very small.] The men came into camp and took the two, but the other (with special powers) was behind the rock and they didn't see her. She appeared again and returned to the older people back in her own camp, and that's how the story was available to be passed down to Aivilingmiut. One of the two captured was Wager Dick's (Iqungajuk's) father's sister, Arnaqtauyuq. [Here's the connection to Mrs. Bruce.] Arnaqtauyuq had a daughter, who had a son named Ilumigarjuk (who was therefore Iqungajuk's cousin).

- Ilumigarjuk was with Fr. Buliard in Garry Lake later

- Iqungajuk (Wager Dick), when traveling up to the Arctic coast once, met a young woman who told him she was the child of one of the captured women, with one of the captors, so "I'm related to you!"

- Ilumigarjuk and Putuaq (two brothers) came to trade at Wager Bay post, Tasiuyaq, -- Mrs. Bruce remembers them -- Putuaq's wife was called Wamayasi, meaning "outrageous, aggressive"
Ilatnaq's story:

- Ilatnaq was another cousin of Iqungajuk's: Ilatnaq's mother and Iqungajuk's mother were sisters.
- Ilatnaq's wife was Katlaq; they had a 13-year-old son, Amitnaq, and a new baby.
- he was very sick; they were living at Garry Lake [Back River], at Saningayuq. He had sores all over his body, and he thought he was going to die, so with his family he started walking east, toward a meat cache he had made. He thought, when he died they could take the meat and the dog team and go to Wager Bay.
- as he died, Ilatnaq told them that they had relatives in Wager Bay, to go there.
- There was much sadness when they arrived at the Wager Bay post -- everyone was crying, Mrs. B. remembers. Shortly after, the little baby got sick and died. That spring Amitnaq killed his first seal and the mother, camped beside Toota's tent behind the post buildings, started quietly singing her dead husband's song, as she watched her young son becoming a man.

When one of his father's dogs died, Amitnaq took the dog's body up the hill across the small bay from the post and put it on top of a huge rock that sits alone up there still today -- out of loyalty to his father and the dogs that brought them there safely.

Katlaq later remarried and left with her new husband to Chesterfield Inlet.

- somehow, it follows, Amitnaq and Ilumigarjuk were cousins

Quilltalik's story:

- Quilltalik: "person with a coat"
- his wife was Ojaralaaq
- Quilltalik and Ojaralaaq had two children: a son Ajaruq and a daughter Aqanaaq
- there was another couple: Maliki (m) and Natsiq (f)
- the men traded wives, so now we have:
  - Quilltalik with Natsiq
  - Maliki with Ojaralaaq
  - Ajaruq stayed with his father; Ajaruq is the father of John Ayaruaq who wrote his autobiography, published by DIAND in 1968 (see vol. of Wager Bay oral history transcripts 1992).
- Quilltalik and his younger brother were hunting and encountered a Netsilingmiut man also with his younger brother -- the four of them started
crawling toward a bearded seal. The older Netsilingmiut man was crawling behind the other three. Somehow he crept up behind Qulittalik and sneakily pulled the trigger on Qulittalik's rifle. The shot killed the younger Netsilingmiut brother and wounded Qulittalik's brother. The older Netsilingmiut man blamed Qulittalik for this and attacked him, trying to kill him, but failed. So instead he used his shamanistic powers to make Qulittalik lose his mind. He got crazy, and even tried to ill his other brothers.

Later Qulittalik, his new wife Natsiq, and his son Ajaruq left from Iriptaqtuq (south shore of Wager Bay), headed inland toward Tasiuyaq. Ajaruq remained very attached to his father. Along with them traveled two of Qulittalik’s brothers, their wives, and one small child (a girl) about four years old. They saw some caribou beside Tasiuyaq, just west of where the HBC post was later built. Qulittalik went hunting and came back -- with no caribou and no explanation. At that point the others started to think he was becoming strange, because they knew he was actually a very capable hunter.

After this unsuccessful hunt, they made camp, built two iglus. Natsiq had a miscarriage that night so Qulittalik built a little annex on one side of their iglu for her to be alone in there, in accordance with the custom. Later that night he started to fix his rifle. They were relaxing in the iglu; the younger brother was lying down with his head on his wife's lap. Qulittalik fired his rifle, hitting his brother and just nicking the young wife. The brother did not die, however. Then Qulittalik grabbed his snow knife and went toward them. The young wife took her ulu and tried to defend them -- she could have been successful if she had managed to cut him over the eyes, but she missed. Qulittalik stabbed them both with the snow knife.

Natsiq, confined in the annex, heard all this but did not know what to do. We know about this today because Ajaruq was there and he survived. Qulittalik began to butcher the two bodies: his brother and his sister-in-law, and he said to his son, Ajaruq: "I've just killed two wolves; you go tell my younger brother." But Ajaruq was too anxious to use this opportunity to get out, so his father suspected something and stopped him.

Qulittalik went to the other iglu the next morning. His brother was icing his sled runners. Qulittalik stabbed his younger brother. The little four-year-old girl, who was watching, ran to the iglu. Qulittalik followed and stabbed both the little girl and the mother, with his snow knife. He started eating them like animals. He saw them as animals, because he had lost his mind.

Then Qulittalik went back to his iglu and asked his wife to come out. After that, he never slept. When, later, Qulittalik went out of the iglu, Natsiq said to Ajaruq: "I'm going to make your father sleep, and you're going to kill him." (She had that special power -- there are two kinds of powers that some people had back then: (1) ability to hide behind even a very small rock, and (2) ability to put people to sleep.)
After several days, Qulittalik became tired, lay down and went into a deep sleep. Natsiq gave the sign to Ajaruq to take the snow knife out from under Qulittalik's bed and to stab Qulittalik in the chest. The boy started crying. [Remember, he was so attached to his father.] Natsiq whispered "We must, or we will be killed and eaten like the others, and no one will know what happened to the others." The boy continued to cry, but nonetheless he did it -- he stabbed his father.

Qulittalik felt the knife going into him and grabbed it with both hands. Natsiq said "Pull the knife!" Ajaruq did and cut both his father's hands. All this was very difficult for Ajaruq, because he was so attached to his father.

Afterwards, Ajaruq made a little sled out of a caribou skin. Natsiq was very skinny, having spent several days starving in the iglu annex. Natsiq kept saying "Just leave me here to die. Go on yourself to tell everyone what happened." But Ajaruq did not listen to her; he just kept dragging her, sitting on the caribou skin, for miles and miles. Later, when he stopped for a rest, she insisted he must go on alone. They cried together. Then he left, but she said as he left that her wish for him was that he would find a seal on top of the ice - one that had lost its hole - far enough away that it would be too late for him to turn back to her, but soon enough to save him.

He found a seal, killed it, and the sight of the blood made the faces of all those his father had killed appear before him. But he ate some seal and continued on toward Iriptaqtuq. As he approached, he was afraid to face the people and thought of killing himself; he actually tried but failed.

When he arrived in camp at Iriptaqtuq, Ajaruq found his real mother Ojaralaaq and her husband Maliki. They believed his story, but others camped there thought maybe he did all the killing, since he was the only one to survive. But he was telling the truth, his mother could tell. She said "This child was brought up with love all around him, and could not have done that."

Ajaruq later married a woman named Iquaq and they had a son named Uppaqtuq, later known widely as Tommy Bruce. Tommy Bruce was the father of Mikitok Bruce [Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce's husband]. When Uppaqtuq was only two years old, Ajaruq committed suicide, because he was still so upset at having killed his father. The shaman in camp tried to help save him, but his mother did not understand what the shaman was saying, so he died.

After finishing the above story, Mrs. Bruce looked straight at me and said: "I am saying the same words to you that Ajaruq said to his mother when he told this story. It is not a legend. It is a true story."

The precise story, as recorded above, was passed from Ajaruq to his mother Ojaralaaq to her daughter Toota to her daughter Tuinnaq, who told me through translation by her daughter Manitok.
- After Ajaruq died, Iquaq got a new husband and her first born she named after Ajaruq: John Ayaruq [see above]. Tommy Bruce always called that boy, actually his younger step-brother, by the name for "my little father."
- Meanwhile, Maliki and Ojaralaaq produced a baby, called Toota [ultimately Tuinnaq Kanayuk Bruce's mother].
- Ojaralaaq's grandson Tommy Bruce and her daughter Toota (although each descended from different husbands of Ojaralaaq) are significant here. Tommy Bruce is Mikitok Bruce's father. Toota is Tuinnaq's mother. Mikitok and Tuinnaq, Mr. & Mrs. Bruce, today living in Coral Harbour, are the chief informants on this project.
- Aivilingmiut tried to marry within their group like this, according to Mrs. Bruce, in order to avoid Netsilingmiut. They were afraid their daughters would be mistreated among the Netsilingmiut, especially in times of famine. The Aivilingmiut wives would surely be the first ones left to starve. Also, keeping their daughters within the Aivilingmiut group helped avoid infanticide of little girls, they felt.

9 August 1996

Walk up the Brown River to Qamaniquluk.

- walked past the first big bend in the river, upstream from Tasiuyaq, past Qamanik, where (Mrs. Bruce remembers) Iqungajuk liked to camp with his family for fishing, with kakivak.
- arrived at Qamaniquluk, the scene of [some of] the murders described in Qulittalik's story above.
- one iglu was on the side of the river where we walked ["south" side] close to rapids where we stopped
- second iglu was downstream somewhat, on other side of river
- only evidence we found of former human activity was part of an old snow knife
Index

The Index is arranged in three categories:

- People
- Places
- Topics
Index - People

* indicates also included in index of 1992 transcripts
(alternate spellings shown in italics)

Aarulaaq 24-25
Aggak 39
Aglukka, Elizabeth (*) (also Inutuinar) 5,6,9-18,58-60,62-65
Aglukka, Honore 59,60
Ajaruq 100-103
Amaroalik (*) 11
Amauyak (*) 57
Amitnaq 79-82,100
Anaqtuunik 24
Anawak, Donat (*) 22,56,57
Angoo (*) 84
Angootenguak (* Angotinguaq) 22
Angotealuk (* Angotiayuq) 44
Angugataiq 11
Annaqtuusi 78-82
Aqanaaq 100
Arnalukitaq 81,82
Arnaqtayuq 99
Arnarnaaq 44
Attarit 30
Ayaruq, John (*) 100
Bruce, Mikitok (*) 71,74,85-95,102,103
Bruce, Tommy - see Uppaqtuq
Bruce, Tuinnatq Kanayuk (*) 71-84,99-103
Buliard, Fr. 99
Cleveland, George (*) 55
Didier, Fr. (*) 56,62
Eqijut 30
Ekwalaak 84
Igalik 55
Ikusik 74
Ilatnaq 78-82,100
Ilumasugjukjuaq 91-92
Ilumigjarjuk 99
Inuksatayuq (* Inusatuajuk) 11,58,64
Iquaq 102
Iqungajuk (also Dick, Native Dick & Wager Dick) (*Iqungayuk) 74,99,100,103
Itirijuk 79-81
Itturiliraq 12
Kalujak 84
Katlaq 79-82,100
Katokra 39
Kaunak (*) 11
Kopak, Félix (also Amaruq, Aalu) (*) 19-25,29-40,55-57,62,66-70
Kukik 21
Kukik, Agatha 42
Maliki 74,100-103
Manilak (*Manilaq) 55
Mapsalak 31,43
Nakungayuk 55
Nanordluk, Jackie (*) 3-8,60-61
Natsiq 100-103
Nauja 22,78
Navaq (*Navak) 55,56
Niqqi 99
Nukapiaq, Philip 57
Nuqqaut 52
Ojaralaaq 100-103
Okpik (*) 22
Piyausituq 44
Puplaligaq 92
Putuaq 99
Puujutit 24
Qailitaq Manilak 57
Qingaqtuq 30
Qugnuliq 84
Qullitalik 100-103
Qupliruarjuk 86
Rasmussen, Knud (also Knute) 55
Sakuaqtironiq - see Cleveland, George
Sanertanut 12,58
Sanertanut, Pie (*) 59
Sangnirtaq (*Sanitaq) 12
Siatsiaq (*Siatsiak) 82-84
Siksaaq (*Siqsaq) 82
Silisitaq 57
Siutinuaq (*) 70
Siulluk (*Siudtluq) 52,57
Sivaniqtoq, Octave (also Tusiatuq, Ubluriaq, Puvupuq) (*) 19-27,41-52,55-57,66-70
Taparti (*) 81
Taqqiq 96
Tasiuq 74
Tattuinee (*) 57
Tavok (*) 10,58,59,62-65,67
Thom, Jimmy (*) 74
Tigvariaq (* Tigvariaq) 30
Tinashlu, Charlie 57
Toota (*) 74,84,102,103
Tungilik (*) 12,62,64
Ujagalaaq 74,78
Ujarasugjuk 82-84
Ukpitaujaq 79-81
Uppaqmq 102,103
Uqsuqtuq 38,52,55
Uqtuqsi 24
Uttak, Lorne (* Utaq, Laurent) 64
Wamayasi 99
Index - Places

* indicates also included in index of 1992 transcripts
(alternate spellings shown in italics)

Aklungiqtautitalik (* Aklungiqtarvik) 19-27,31,49,66
Amittuarjuk 21
Aivilik (*) 22,50,82,84
Aukanaqjuq 64
Baker Lake (*) 55,79
Brown R. (*) - see also Qamanaaluk 103
Cape Fullerton (*) 74
Chesterfield Inlet (*) 67,70,81,100
Duke of York Bay (*) 56
Garry Lake 99,100
Gjoa Haven (*) 22,76,80,99
Greenland 55
Ikpiguaq 10
Iripaqtuq (*) 20,30,31,101,102
Mattuq (* Mattok) 53,55,56,66
Masivak (*) 20,31,42-45,56,58,67-70
Netsilik (*) 22,43,74,75,82
Nuvukliit (* Nuvukliq) 10,12,13,20,31,33,56,57,58,59,62,64,65,66,67,82
Pelly Bay (*) 22,99
Piqsimaniq (* Piqsimanik) 4-18,58,59,60-66,69
Qakiaq (*) 64
Qamanaaluk (* Qamanaluk) 82
Qamaniquluk (*) 82,103
Quiniulik (* Quiniulik) 24
Repulse Bay (*) 7,11,20,21,31,32,39,55,56,57,58,59,62,64,67,69
Saningayuq 64,100
Savage Islands (*) 66
Southampton Is. 32
Tasiuyaq (* Tushuyak) 20,57,71-103
Tikirajuaq (*) 56
Tikuqjaq 64
Tinittuq (* Tinittuq) 32,58
Tudlilik 64
Tuktu 32,
Ukkusiksalik [Back R.] 22,74,78
Umiuyarvik (* Umiyarvik) 31
Index - Topics

caribou 17,38
char 32,61
fish weir 42-47,65,67-70
Hudson's Bay Company 56,57,74,99,100
Inugaruligaqjuit 70
qammaq 11,17,21,60-65,67,69
  method of construction 4-8
RCMP 56,81
rope game 21-27,92
seals, seal-hunting 7,13-17,22,24,26,32-40,48-52,61,86-91,100,102
soapstone 66
sod house - see qammaq
Tunniq 61,70
visitors (to Wager Bay) 17,31