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DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

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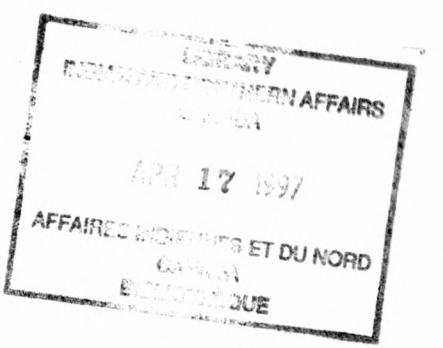

John Bennett
Rhoda Innuksuk
Susan Rowley
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Introduction

The purpose of this pilot project was to conduct a small number of interviews with Inuit concerning their perceptions of the role government has played in their lives, and their reactions to the policies of the Canadian government that affected their lives.

In the late 50s and early 60s the Government established schools, nursing stations, and administrative offices at most places where a trading post and often an RCMP detachment and or a mission already provided a permanent settlement. Many Inuit then abandoned their small winter camps and moved into these communities. What factors governed their decision? Did people feel coerced into making these changes and if so, in what way? Did some people decide to move to replace the uncertainty of life on the land in exchange for the amenities which in a few years expanded to include housing, electricity, air transport, postal services etc.? There were undoubtedly many reasons why people made the choices they made. How do they view the changes that have taken place in their lives as a result?

The eleven interviews presented in this document represent only a small exploration of a very large topic.

The informants were all residents of Igloolik who as adults experienced the hunting and trapping life of the camps, in the days before Inuit lived in modern communities. They were interviewed in 1996.

Eli Amaaq
Interviewed by Rhoda Innuksuk
Translated by Rhoda Innuksuk

E. A.: I am a traditional man who doesn't speak other languages or know other traditions, so I will talk about what I know of the Inuit way of life. Number one: survival of the Inuit is based on hunting and having knowledge of wildlife and the environment. This is of critical importance. It always has been essential for everyone to know that hunting means food and clothing – which in turn mean survival. These activities have continued because we live in an environment which is colder than one can describe. When the arctic is frozen it gets bitterly cold and very harsh. All of this has been part of the Inuit way of life. We cannot afford to lose the knowledge now or in the future. It has to be handed down to the next generation.

As children we were exposed to the activities of the adults, and we learned by watching or helping. We were curious, and even when we were too young really to be helping, we watched how they butchered their catch. Our education was an informal one: we were taught simply by being exposed to what the adults were doing.

I've written down a few things for reference – may I talk some more?

R. I.: Of course.

E. A.: I mentioned the importance of knowing how to hunt and knowledge of the environment, but that wasn't all. It is also important to know how to build a shelter and how to make tools and clothing. The children learned all that from their parents. The Inuit didn't have the resources to be documenting all that was important to them and had to be passed on to their children – there were no manuals or guide-books. We didn't appear to be students but we were, taught through practise and exposure.

Nowadays we are exposed to new things like money; but people can be poor when there is no money. The young people have alternatives which we didn't have before, but that's not to say that they became richer. When the young people themselves or their parents hold a steady job with an income it takes away the knowledge necessary for arctic survival. The governments who provide services to the people have an impact on the young people: they are now less exposed to what formerly was critical for all to know.

Modern education has taken away the traditional education young Inuit had before. Making time to take boys out on the land whenever there is an opportunity for them to go hunting would help ensure the knowledge is retained. More of that should be practised, as they learn everything they're exposed to. The same holds for girls: they cannot learn to make clothing if they're not taught or given an opportunity to learn. These should be included as part of modern education. I'm saying these things from my heart.

R. I.: Where were you from and when did you move to Igloolik?

E. A.: I was born in this area, just down in Qikirtaarjuk, so I am originally from here.

R. I.: Did you live here before the government established itself in this community?

E. A.: I wasn't in this exact community. I was in the outpost camp until there were buildings in Igloolik.

R. I.: Were the school, nursing station, RCMP, and the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches in Igloolik when you moved here?

E. A.: Yes, but I was here before many white people came up here. There was just the Catholic mission then. Saluktuq landed here to open the Hudson's Bay trading post. The other things came later.

R. I.: What made you decide to move to Igloolik?

E. A.: I cannot give one single reason; I was not keeping a diary, and I've misplaced bits of written information.

R. I.: Was the new life in Igloolik very different from the life in a family camp?

E. A.: Yes. There were no white people when I was a child. There was no money either. People lived in Avvajjar instead of Igloolik. Igloolik Island had no houses until the Catholics built the mission, but the first mission was up in Avvajjar – I don't recall what year it was built– but there were many families living up there at the time, before they moved to Igloolik.

R. I.: Has life in general been made easier for Inuit since governments came up here?

E. A.: Yes and no. The new way of life is all to do with having money, and as you know there is very little employment in Igloolik. Many live on welfare, depending on it as their only means of survival: but it doesn't go far enough for comforts, especially for those who cannot hunt because they can't afford equipment.

R. I.: Has the diet improved with the services provided by welfare?

E. A.: No. The young people are not as healthy, and they're not equipped to be independent. This is also a cause of losing the knowledge of wildlife and environment (and it is indeed harsh if you don't have proper clothing; it's simply too cold). This of course varies from one family to another. I'm sure they would be happier if they weren't trapped in a community.

R. I.: Are Inuit still in control of what happens to the younger generation?

E. A.: Inuit have lost a lot of control within recent years with regard to how they should live. There is definitely no more social control, and even if a person wants to do something about it or go off to the land as he pleases, he loses his house if he doesn't occupy it full time. You can't just walk out if

your belongings are in it, because you have bills to pay. Money has become a major problem.

R. I.: Why did so many families decide to move to Igloolik?

E. A.: Housing. I recall a government administrator coming to our camp making it sound very attractive. There was a guarantee of housing if we moved here – they made it sound so easy. They didn't say that the housing would only be cheap if you were on welfare. The cost of everything has gone up since – and how difficult it would be to make ends meet without a steady income. But housing was one of the main reasons for moving here.

R. I.: Do you remember the people who came to give you the idea of moving to Igloolik?

E. A.: I don't quite remember. I'm sure people remember who they were and what they said.

R. I.: Did it sound better to live here than to stay in the family camp?

E. A.: Yes, it sounded better to have a modern house than to live in a sod house, especially in spring when the snow is melting. Now if you look out the window you see all these houses which are mostly occupied by Inuit; but they need more employment because everything costs money. We have many items we didn't have before, but the jobs which make it possible to buy them are hard to come by.

R. I.: Did Inuit face unexpected results from moving in?

E. A.: Yes. There was no alcohol before but even younger people have their own homes now. There are other factors which contribute to social problems. The government spends a lot of money for housing, fuel, and other expenses to keep us, but they're also making money off us, so it must be worth it to them to provide services. It all revolves around money.

R. I.: Has life in general improved since moving to Igloolik?

E. A.: One thing we didn't have before was so much talk about other people. This has become common in the settlement, and many of us can well do without it – but that's also a result of gathering together. That's what happens when people get together with little else to do. We didn't have that kind of worry before.

R. I.: What do older people think of all the changes: for example, the wage economy versus hunting and what it means for their future?

E. A.: There is nothing more important than hunting and being able to make Inuit clothing, because from the way things look everything is going to get tougher, and the knowledge Inuit have is going to come in very handy. It doesn't sound like money will become any easier to get, and what with all the cutbacks, the future looks rather dim.

R. I.: Inuit had total control of their well-being and they paved the way for the younger generation. Is that very control going too?

E. A.: Very much so. We have a lot less to say regarding what happens to them and their future. We can't tell them what to do any more. The elders were one hundred percent in control before the governments started staying here. Their rules often conflict with our traditions and values. Inuit had self-government before; governments are making it difficult to continue this practice. There is also a lack of understanding and respect. Sometimes we don't even know what is going on within our families. Family control has been greatly damaged.

R. I.: Can you foresee better control by both parties if there is a joint effort to improve conditions within Inuit communities?

E. A.: We feel that respect could be restored if Inuit would continue to use their authority and knowledge, which comes from their ability to survive in this harsh environment: but Inuit are not trying hard enough, and are going along with the governments. Many of the values could be saved, perhaps through education, if the older people could agree to protect certain aspects of

their culture. We've made some progress by gaining cultural education. As for myself, I did my small part by being one of the instructors in tool making and igloo building. I did it for five dollars an hour, but everything was cheaper.

R. I.: How can Inuit work with the governments to protect the well-being of the next generation?

E. A.: We see the need to work with the governments, but our problem is not being able to communicate. I'm sure we could agree on certain issues if we were committed to working together.

R. I.: Do you think the Inuit in general would achieve a better life if they could work along with the governments especially in areas where Inuit are directly affected?

E. A.: This would not solve all the problems, but would definitely make things more acceptable if both parties had a say as to what happens to their people.

R. I.: Seeing as Inuit communities are here to stay, do you think the people in the community will eventually take action to protect and promote their culture within their society?

E. A.: Yes. Some people I am sure are documenting the traditional values – unlike myself, as I don't write very much – and if they are documented they would be recognised by Canada. The elders should sit down and make sure that their traditional values are written down, determine how these things can be implemented, and start putting them into practice.

R. I.: There are many younger people who would be willing to write down whatever elders are suggesting. Do you think the older people would be willing to provide necessary information to be documented for later use?

E. A.: What we need is somebody like yourself to communicate with the older people and start handing their recommendations to the appropriate government departments such as Education.

R. I.: Is there any particular aspect of Inuit culture that you feel it is important to maintain?

E. A.: Hunting, knowledge of the environment, clothes-making, patterns, and sewing – all the basic knowledge should be the foundation.

R. I.: How can today's young people be given the guidance, direction, and support that their parents had when they were growing up?

E. A.: We don't give that same support and advice to our young people any more. Life has changed so much that nobody seems to be comfortable enough to give them advice the way our elders did for us. The older people don't know what to do or say without the authority they once had, and seem just to let things be. They have been slowly squeezed out of their role as decision makers, and don't seem to have a rightful place as elders in shaping the community. Even myself – I don't give my honest opinion any more and all this is because of conflict. In the absence of positive direction none of us has a clear-cut role any more, unlike when our elders were in power. Life in a community is like life without leaders – without direction and support.

R. I.: Why is it that locally elected leaders are not seen as leaders by the community?

E. A.: Perhaps because their messages are not coming from Inuit even though they are directed at Inuit, they are not really taken seriously by people. If groups like the Inullariit Society, who are trying to preserve the Inuit language, could be given the responsibility of taking the lead – if there was a foundation where elders could contribute directly toward working for the best interests of the people, working along with education – more positive results could be achieved.

R. I.: You said earlier that you had guidance and support from the elders, which today's young people no longer have. Doesn't this contribute to uncertainties in today's society?

E. A.: Yes it does. You yourself must remember that there were rules you had to obey such as being home by ten o'clock, and we all looked out for our neighbours' children as well. Now it seems pointless to ask anyone to be home at any particular time. I thought people in the community would adjust to new rules, but instead it seems that there are not even any more house rules, because no one listens and no one seems to want to put his foot down, thinking that it's a waste of effort. Everybody is free to do whatever they please, because as the southern system tries to enforce its rules upon Inuit we pay less attention. We seem to be going backward instead of making progress. There is more destruction and more uncertainty.

R. I.: Is it because of the conflicting cultures that neither group is putting its foot down to provide the direction and support that everyone needs to move ahead?

E. A.: I don't know. Maybe somebody who is more aware of these issues can provide a better answer to that question.

I used to enjoy the outdoors, and spent a lot of time hunting. I'm provided with all the necessary hunting clothing, but I haven't gone out once this year. It's hard to go anywhere without a ski-doo. They are all so expensive, and it's harder and harder even to get hunting equipment. People who have a steady income can afford it, but those of us who lived off hunting have no other means. There should be a wage economy from our own resources and expertise to bring in some kind of income. I'm sure there is a way to make money that Inuit can take part in. The co-op is the only store that buys carvings and crafts, but it doesn't go far enough, and private buyers are few.

R. I.: There's all this talk about the creation of a Nunavut Territory for this region. Do you see Inuit having more say and control over Nunavut?

E. A.: They should; that is what is meant to happen. Nunavut is meant to improve conditions – if the people who are shaping it know and respect the desires and wishes of the residents of Nunavut. We elect people now to carry out the required duties, and we trust they'll do the best they can.

R. I.: What is important to the elders with respect to Inuit culture, tradition, and language?

E. A.: The original language of the Inuit is important. Speaking proper Inuktitut was important and still is. That's why the Inullariit Society (elders' society) holds Language Week, and so on, to ensure the original language remains pure – because when we go to other communities we hear more Inuit speaking other languages such as English. But they speak our language at the school here, unlike your age group, who did not study Inuktitut at all.

R. I.: Has Inuktitut language in school helped bridge the gap between children and elders?

E. A.: Not understanding English is a problem. For example, if I got sick and had to go south where the Inuit language is not spoken, I would be lost and helpless. I would lose all say in everything.

R. I.: The children are learning mostly translated material. Has this made a difference from the original language?

E. A.: I can't answer that; all I know is that the original language which was spoken by our ancestors is not the same. Those who learned it from the elders speak differently from those who are teaching it in school. It has changed forever.

R. I.: If you spoke the original language to your grandchildren and great-grandchildren would they all understand you?

E. A.: Yes, but we hear questions that we don't expect: they'll say "What does it mean?" What does it mean. And this comes from people who are not small children – it comes from bigger children, who in the past would already have

known all those things. It makes you wonder what they skipped. Also, the children of this younger generation are not all close to their relatives and parents because they spend a lot of time now in school. That is probably why they don't look up to their elders.

R. I.: Does living in a community make it harder for grandparents to know all their grandchildren or spend time with them?

E. A.: Definitely, because we're scattered all over the village. It's hard to know them all.

R. I.: This must make it hard for family leaders to hold them together if you can't get to see them. How are the changes dealt with in a community setting with regard to keeping family values intact?

E. A.: Many of us lost that role gradually, over the years. Some of us even appear as if we don't have any authority – I'm speaking for myself. I know that many of my grandchildren don't have that special attachment, though they know who you are.

R. I.: Who do they turn to now for advice, guidance, and support, if they don't seek it from their family elders?

E. A.: I am one of the older members now of the community of Igloolik, but it's hard to give advice if you're not informed about their activities.

R. I.: It is common knowledge that we still must respect our elders and give them their rightful place in society. Has this been carried out somehow?

E. A.: It's not the same, I know that. This must be dealt with by society. It's an outstanding issue.

R. I.: There are many groups and organisations now dealing with housing, education, health, justice, social issues, and so on. What kind of changes did this bring to the role of elders in a society?

E. A.: A lot. We are doing less. For example, I could easily sit here with nothing to do, because the governments are trying to provide for all our needs from housing to food to clothing.

R. I.: What message would you have for your descendants?

E. A.: Hunting, basic survival in the north. Health is also important, both mental and physical. Young girls should also retain knowledge about making winter clothing.

R. I.: Do elders get together to discuss their concerns?

E. A.: We don't have the kind of communication we had before. I don't have anyone to talk to. My niece's husband has been the only person who has been here to see me; he's been the only person to ask advice.

R. I.: Are elders lacking support too?

E. A.: In the old days the elders used to get together with the rest of the family to eat and discuss concerns, before the white people came into our lives with a whole new way of life. This was when Inuit were still self-governing, totally running their own affairs. All this has changed since we moved to Igloolik. We rarely get together now, and when we see each other it doesn't seem to be the right time to discuss anything. These changes changed us all.

R. I.: Do you think the elders would feel more comfortable continuing to play their role as leaders if they had support from other elders?

E. A.: What really changed our role as elders was caused by modern education. I know that I didn't give direction any more once school began, and now I don't even see it as my responsibility to do so, because they have taken over. I only occasionally talk to my grandchildren who live here. We know what kind of direction we are to give but the life style is in such contrast to the way we think that it doesn't seem appropriate to try to insert our views into the lives of those who think otherwise.

R. I.: I have a feeling I missed something. May I come back to ask more questions if I have to?

E. A.: Certainly.

R. I.: I'll just thank you for your time, for now, and I may be back if in fact I didn't cover enough.
Thank you.

Catherine Arnatsiaq
Interviewer: Nick Arnatsiaq
Translated by: Rhoda Innuksuk

N. A.: First of all, tell me your name.

C. A.: My new name is Catherine Arnatsiaq. My real name is Alulluuq.

N. A.: Why is it that you say your real name is Alulluuq?

C. A.: That was the name given to me at birth.

N. A.: Where were you born?

C. A.: I was born in Angmaluktualuk in late spring. My parents were on their way to meet some people who were on their way to Igloolik from Pond Inlet. I was born out there. Then my parents came back to the Igloolik area.

N. A.: Who were your parents?

C. A.: My mother was Alariaq and my father was Piugaattuk.

N. A.: Where did you live as a child?

C. A.: We spent the winters in Avvajjar and by spring we moved to Igloolik, not here but Igloolik Point. When the sun returned we would move there and live in an igloo until later spring. Then we moved to our spring tent.

N. A.: What did you do in Igloolik? Why did you move there for the spring and summer?

C. A.: They hunted walrus in summer, and seals in the spring. Some of the people went to Mogg Bay to fish.

N. A.: Who was your camp leader?

C. A.: The old man Ittuksarjuat.

N. A.: Who was he?

C. A.: My father's father.

N. A.: How was he a leader?

C. A.: He organised everything. He had authority over everyone: the families would go where he sent them, and did what he asked of them.

N. A.: What kind of things did you do as a young child?

C. A.: We used to return to Avvajjar in fall. We played hide and seek and in evening we played amaruujaq (wolf).

N. A.: What kind of responsibilities did you start out with?

C. A.: I chewed skins to soften them, and prepared skins for my mother to cut the patterns to make our clothing. Then I would mash seal blubber to get it ready for our seal oil lamps. I went to get ice to melt our drinking water.

N. A.: Did you have any items from the south?

C. A.: Yes – I thought we always had them in our history.

N. A.: What did you have?

C. A.: Flour, tea, molasses, rolled oats, and matta – I later found out that we were saying the English word, butter.

N. A.: So you were peacefully living out on the land. Why did you decide to move to this community?

C. A.: School. Ever since the school was built we had to bring our children to send them to school and be apart for the winter.

N. A.: Was the education a main reason for families to move here?

C. A.: Wanting to raise our children was the reason for coming here.

N. A.: Nowadays Inuit and white people are living in the same community. What changes have you noticed in Inuit culture?

C. A.: The fact that white people are coming up here to live has an impact on our culture, especially among the children. There are too many white people coming up here now.

N. A.: Did the change start from the young children who live in the same village as the white people? Is that how changes began?

C. A.: Yes. The children who live here don't play traditional games, right down to baseball. They are not playing it like Inuit, they play it like white people; and a new game is hockey, which we didn't play as young people.

N. A.: The young people are now living differently than you did when you were young. What do you think is the cause of changes in Inuit culture?

C. A.: Education. That's what changed it all, for sure.

N. A.: Is there something from Inuit culture you want to see protected?

C. A.: Inuit culture must continue because this country is very cold in winter. They must not let go of hunting and making clothing. The children don't wear caribou skins in town and don't have a chance to go out on the land because they are in school.

N. A.: What about the Inuit family values? What aspects of them would you like to see protected?

C. A.: I would like to see family values protected. I don't want to see our customs and traditions let go by anyone. I would like to see all of it protected and promoted as the community gets bigger.

N. A.: What aspect of family values - serving duty, children taking orders from their parents?

C. A.: Yes, things like that. The children are to obey their parents and honour them.

When I was a child we lived in Avvajjar where they trapped foxes and cached meat.

N. A.: Is the meat cached in summer?

C. A.: They start caching the meat in spring during the twenty-four hour daylight, and continue until the twenty-four hour daylight is gone, in summer. The summer was also a good time to go up inland to hunt caribou for winter clothing. Others went hunting walrus.

N. A.: Are the families still close to each other as in the past?

C. A.: This has been changing too as the community gets larger, because when they need something they will buy it even if it's from their relatives.

N. A.: They didn't buy from relatives before?

C. A.: That's right. Selling anything to a relative was unheard of. When relatives or friends knew they needed something they simply gave them whatever they needed, or if anyone asked for something it was delivered without any thought of payment. Now when they go on the radio to ask for what they need they even indicate that they'll pay for it. Nobody seems to want to get anything for free any more – though I'm sure their requests could be granted without cost if they didn't offer to pay.

N. A.: Do you want to add to or expand on any of the issues?

C. A.: Yes. I was mentioning earlier that we went up to the mainland in the summer to hunt caribou for winter clothing. They returned to the coast in fall. The people who went hunting for caribou supplied everyone else who didn't hunt. The women were invited to come and select the skins they needed for their families for the winter even if they didn't take part in hunting. That's an example of how they helped each other in the past. I'll stop for now.

N. A.: Thank you very much.

Therese Ijjangiaq
Interviewed by Sheila Otak
Translated by Rhoda Innuksuk

S. O.: What is your name and where you come from?

T. I.: Qitlaq is my name and I was born in Avvajjar.

S. O.: Who were your parents?

T. I.: My mother was Sarpisuk and my father was Qattalik.

S. O.: Where do you first recall living when you were a child?

T. I.: In Attanikuluk.

S. O.: Who was your main teacher when you were growing up?

T. I.: My mother.

S. O.: Anyone else?

T. I: No, just my mother.

S. O. Who lived in the same camp with you ?

T. I. Our relatives lived with us in Avvajjar.

S. O.: Do you remember who they were?

T. I.: Ittuksarjuat and his big family, my grandfather's relatives.

S. O.: Who was your camp leader?

T. I.: Ittuksarjuat.

S. O.: What kinds of items did you have?

T. I.: Probably many things. I don't remember enough to name them, but I know what kind of food we had, which was all derived from wildlife – food from the land and from the sea.

S. O.: Did you live in seal skin tents?

T. I.: Yes. Some people had canvas tents but we always used seal skins.

S. O.: What did you use for making boats?

T. I.: We used a large boat made out of walrus hide.

S. O.: Did you live in sod houses too?

T. I.: We used sod, but we covered that with skins both inside and outside, and used plants for insulation.

S. O.: What kind of store-bought food did you have?

T. I.: Flour, biscuits, rolled oats, and canned beans.

S. O.: Do you recall the days before there were councils and committees?

T. I.: Indeed. We had absolutely no outside control. The camp leaders called the meetings, especially if a conflict had arisen in the camp. Ittuksarjuat called every member of the family to the meetings to tell them what he wanted to see – how he wanted them to act. He was a very powerful man.

S. O.: When did you settle in Igloolik?

T. I.: Very recently.

S. O.: Do you remember what year that was?

T. I.: No – your grandfather used to make notes of events, which I don't have – but it was long after the Hudson's Bay Company and Catholic mission were built. I don't remember the year. *[RC mission established 1931, HBC in 1939]*

S. O.: Do you remember the reason for moving to Igloolik?

T. I.: Well, the camp leader ordered us to move away from Avvajjar because of the illness. He wanted nature to cure the cause of the sickness – to cool off the place, he said. I think that was when we left Avvajjar and scattered.

S. O.: Was it very different from what you see now?

T. I.: It was very different, completely different.

S. O.: How so?

T. I.: Life in this community is almost like living down south in a city, although they are all Inuit living here.

S. O.: What would you like to see survive from the Inuit culture?

T. I.: I would like to see boys and girls being taught the Inuit traditions like hunting and making Inuit clothing.

S. O.: Which life style did you enjoy the most?

T. I.: When I think back now, I realize that we had a good life then, when we were young. We travelled everywhere, anywhere we pleased, even in winter. We have a beautiful and peaceful history, and we enjoyed our life so much.

S. O.: What kind of changes would you like to see for Igloolik?

T. I.: This is the new way now, which is very different. I don't really want to see any more changes on top of what we've already seen. I think enough is enough.

S. O.: Who went to school from your family?

T. I.: My children, René and Monica. They were the first children to go to school.

S. O.: Did you notice changes in them?

T. I.: René didn't come home for two years, while Monica came home every summer. When René came home I noticed that he just wasn't used to country food any more, though he was basically himself otherwise.

S. O.: Why did you agree to let them go to school?

T. I.: I did not. I didn't agree to have them leave home to go to school, but I was told they must. I felt they were too young to leave home. They were just little children when they left to go to school.

S. O.: How different is the southern system from your traditional values?

T. I.: Very different. Inuit values are almost completely different from the southern laws and way of life.

S. O.: How so?

T. I.: I know the traditional values but I haven't learned the southern system, so I only know that we don't have very much in common.

S. O.: What was health care like in the old days?

T. I.: I don't really know about modern health care so I can't compare it to our traditional care.

S. O.: How were babies delivered?

T. I.: First of all they checked with the woman to see whether she was more comfortable sitting up or lying down. They let her decide on the position. Then the baby was born.

Worrying about someone is also new. In the past we didn't worry because they were all capable people.

S. O.: Is it because they spend more time in school than they do gaining experience on the land?

T. I.: I've gotten used to seeing children going to school so I accept that now as a new way of life.

S. O.: What kind of first aid treatment did you have before hospitals?

T. I.: We treated cuts with the thin-skinned round plant that looks something like a mushroom and is full of powder. That powder is good for healing cuts. We used some other plants too. I only knew of traditional medicine, not modern medicine.

S. O.: Is there something else you want to say?

T. I.: All marriages were arranged by parents, even if the girls didn't want any part of it. In the old days the men stayed with their parents, so it was the girl who had to leave home and go to live with his family. I've seen a girl having to be tied down on the sled to be taken away because she resisted. They wouldn't see their parents for a long time – sometimes they didn't return until they started having their own children and had adjusted to their new family and new life. Such was life for us all – a good one too, in the end. The decision, made by the elders, always had a good result.

And that's it. Thank you for your interest.

Alain Iyeraq
Interviewed by Rhoda Inuksuk
Translated by Rhoda Inuksuk.

My name is Alain Iyeraq.

R.I.: Where were you born?

I was born on Southampton Island near Aqiaruqnaq, maybe in Nakjuktuuq.

R.I.: Who were your parents?

A.I.: Uviluq was my mother and my father was Kappianaq.
Our oldest brother was Ujarak. Ijituuq was the second oldest. Qimmirjuaq was my parents' adopted son, from Tukturjuk. Agiaq (George Kappianaq) is my older brother and a sister was adopted by Akslunaaksaq and married Usak Then I came along, Alain Iyeraq. My other sisters are Simigaq, Pairngut, and Tutiktuq who is married to Tamnaruluk.

According to my family, I was born in very late spring on a windy, rainy day when the ice was just breaking up. But don't know the exact day or the month. The Hudson's Bay Company says I was born in 1921; the Roman Catholics say that I was born in 1922. The government wanted to give me an exact birth date for their record. They decided that I was born on January 1st, 1920.

My earlier days were in spent in Aivilik, in the Keewatin. The Hudson's Bay Company was at Nigirsliit, in Repulse Bay. I even remember the names of the people who lived there: there was Nalaganaaq, Pisiksit, Uttik and Inuksualuk, and I know the other people who worked for them. I also knew the people on the other side at Uangnarsliit. The people who lived there were Uungulik, Taimanairaujartuq and Tusaaji. I knew other people who lived there at the time – we were just small children. I used to go to the H. B. C. At Nigirsliit they had a workshop for repairing sledges, and I remember my father making himself one at that shop. I remember the big letters written in black, above the door of the H. B. C. , and later learned what it said. There is a well known

legend called Kiviuq, and that's what the store was called – Kiviuq and his brother.

The people of Igloolik used to stay on either side, Nigirsliit or Uanganarsliq, when they came to Repulse Bay to trade. The Hudson's Bay Company house had a huge porch which was not heated but that's where the guests would stay when they went to Repulse Bay – mind you they had to sleep on the floor, but they had skins to keep warm. They didn't have to build an igloo unless the post was full. The people staying at the post also used the porch to thaw out dog food.

The earlier staff who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company were very helpful and friendly. They had a big washbasin with handles on both sides, and they would fill it up with loose tea before they distributed it to the customers. The Hudson's Bay clerk took a cup of sugar and poured it into the loose tea and would sell it like that, with the sugar already added. This was called saccharine. They also sold pilot biscuits, individually or by the box. Those are my earlier memories of the people from Igloolik who travelled to the Keewatin region to pick up their supplies.

R.I.: Was this before there was housing for the Inuit?

A.I.: Long before we ever even thought of living in a wooden houses. This is when we were children.

I never knew the people who went to Pond Inlet but I knew all the ones who went to the Keewatin region from Igloolik because that is where my father chose to spend time then.

I have also told stories about being in Maluksita, where my younger sister Pairngut of Hall Beach was born. There were other people living there with us like Quviq, Qaunaq's son and his wife Arnaujaq; Kunuruluk and Kunigunaq, Aksagjuaq and her husband Annannguaq with their little boy Victor Aqaatiaq, and Kaagaq and his wife Nivviaq with their little boy Kipsigaq, their youngest, and their two older sons Ungaalaaq and Kalliraq.

I remember how the two women Aksagjuaq and Nivviaq used to race to the sled when we arrived from a hunting trip, each trying to be the first to touch either a seal or a fox. They were carrying their little boys in their amautiqs, and they were always full of laughter and so excited. I used to wonder what they were so excited about. I later came to the conclusion that they were training their little boys about the joy it brings when a hunter returns from his trip.

Jani's family was also with us in Maluksita. They had a daughter named Ipiksaut who was just getting together with Qajaarjuaq. Ukaliq was with us as well, and I was not so small anymore.

Qaunaq's family lived right on the trail to Repulse Bay, with Ujarak and Siqutjut. Quviq and Arnaujaq had a son named Qipanniq. Qaunaq was married to Usaaraq. Anyone heading to Repulse Bay passed through their camp but unfortunately that's not where we lived.

I was going to tell a story about one particular summer, when I was sent to Repulse Bay with a family going there by boat to trade – my first time away from my parents. I wasn't so little any more but I wasn't grown up enough to know what useful things to buy. My parents gave me a narwhal tusk to sell to the H. B. C, but it was the family who did the shopping for me. They picked up tea, tobacco, and so on. There was a lot of ice in the sea that summer, which made our boat trip long and difficult, and we took a long time to get back to Maluksita.

By the way, anyone who doesn't believe we lived in all those places can still see all our old sod houses where we wintered over the years as we moved on.

It was that summer when a bowhead whale came to Maluksita, when there were only three sailboats in our camp. We jumped in our boats and went after it. Annannguaq was the man who harpooned the whale, and when he did, it took off at great speed, pulling our boat along with it. Our mast broke in half and fell off. It was terrifying to be going so fast with no sail in rough seas. The harpoon reached the whale's kidney and the animal took a nose dive,

pulling us with it. One of the men had to cut the rope to free the whale before it sank us.

That was my chance to take part in catching a bowhead whale as a young boy, but we missed it. Otherwise I could have told you how Annannguaq harpooned a bowhead whale.

R.I.: Who else was hunting with you?

A.I.: Jani Qillaq, who my father used to go along with, and Annannguaq. The other boats were Palluq and Pilakapsi. It was Pilakapsi who picked up our sail. It was repaired as soon as we met up with them and we sailed back home without the whale that had caused us so much excitement.

Ungaalaaq was already a young man, old enough to go hunting on his own. He used to take one dog and hike up to the mainland to hunt caribou, and would be gone for a couple of weeks or so on his own.

Ava and I were still young boys but we use to hike out to set our traps. We had never watched anyone set up traps before but we had a rough idea. I remember the first time we went. Ava checked the wind direction before he put his bait in place, but he put it about six feet away from his trap, which he buried. I set mine not far from his, but my bait was closer to my trap. Neither of us ever caught a fox. The children who don't get to go out on the land wouldn't know what to do either, unless they were taught and exposed to it. We were just children trying to set our traps for the first time, before we had ever gone out with anyone who was trapping.

R.I.: Did your camp have a leader?

A.I.: I am not sure exactly who our leader was in Maluksita. All I know is that many dogs were dying and most hunters were left with only one – some lost all their dogs. Jani Qillaq had the most dogs, everyone depended on him, and so I guess he became a leader. He was able to travel where he needed to go.

There were quite a few young boys then, and that's when we learned to square dance. Ipiksaut was a very good accordion player, and used to play for us. We had many dances at Taututtiaq's sod house. I particularly remember dancing on Christmas night. We exchanged many gifts, and I remember receiving a cup, and a woman gave a huge rock she used for mashing blubber for seal oil lamps to another woman. All were very happy with the gifts they received. They said "Merry Christmas" as they shook hands and said that the gifts were with the holy spirit.

My father and older brother would leave early in the morning to go hunting and trapping and they often spent nights out there.

I meant to tell a story which my mother often told – I used to ask her to tell me stories at bed time. I always asked my mother for stories. She would call out the title of the story and whenever she mentioned the one about the grandmother and child I'd say, "No, not that one. It's boring," but I liked the story about Kukigaq and this is how it goes:

> Kukigaq was big and strong, and a very successful hunter. He also had a bad temper and didn't like anyone to cross him. All who knew him feared him, and would not dare confront him for any reason.
>
> He had murdered many people. Some of his victims had been from his camp, some he had been hunting with; others had just been passing through. When he counted all his victims they numbered as many as all his fingers and his toes. In the Inuit way of counting we call this avatit, that is, twenty.
>
> After he murdered his final victim – who happened to be his neighbour's highly respected son in-law, a man whose wife loved him dearly – it occurred to Kukigaq that his evil deeds might catch up with him. He thought of all the people he had hurt over the years, especially the relatives of the other nineteen people he had murdered. The realisation crept over him that,

despite his size and strength, he was no longer safe – that in fact, he was in deep trouble.

One cold, windy day Kukigaq decided to go seal hunting on the sea ice at seal breathing holes. For a companion he picked a young man who was becoming a successful hunter, and they set off for the day.

While Kukigaq was waiting at a seal hole a large group of people appeared. Pulling their sledges and carrying their drums, they headed straight for Kukigaq. Never before had anyone dared to confront him, for fear of his bad temper: never, that is, until now.

The group of Inuit approached Kukigaq, still carrying their drums, and surrounded him. He knew he had no chance of escape. But suddenly an old man, who was travelling alone, appeared. He stopped, and he ordered the group to make way for the man in the centre. He reminded them that each one of them desired to return safely home from a hunting trip. He ordered them to give way and, after what seemed a very long time to Kukigaq, two men moved aside. He had just enough room to get out.

Kukigaq moved slowly out of the circle, and walked backwards away from the group. No one chased him. He walked backwards until he was far enough, and then as they watched he parted his long thick hair away from his face, turned, and took off for home. He picked up speed, and ran so fast over the windblown snowy surface of the ice that all they could see of him was his head. The rest was smoke.

The group of Inuit had given Kukigaq fair warning that his actions must be put to an end, and they all went back home to report what had happened. The young man who had been hunting with Kukigaq returned home by dog team, and when he

arrived he was excited. He went straight into Kukigaq's sod house.

"Every single one of them was holding something," he repeated over and over.

Kukigaq replied, nervously: "They didn't touch me. They let me go."

But he and the young man both knew that it was just a matter of time before they would arrive to deal with him. Kukigaq spent that night at home with Kujagaksaq and the rest of his family, quietly and peacefully in his camp where he was the leader and main provider.

Early the next morning the whole camp heard voices from outside calling for Kukigaq to come out. They knew they were in for a bloody battle. Kukigaq and his group prepared to go out and face the avengers, who had completely surrounded the camp. Kujagaksaq was having difficulty getting ready. Finally he burst into tears, saying: "I don't think I will return from this battle! I don't think I'll return! My belt will not stay fastened!" Kukigaq got up to get ready to leave. Suddenly his bow and arrows, which were stored in the passage of the house, began rattling.

The people outside were all relatives of the twenty people Kukigaq had murdered over the years. Now the time had come for him to face them. A little distance away from Kukigaq's house, they waited. Both sides were prepared for a nasty battle.

The avengers did not plan on killing him as soon as he came out. Instead they planned to cripple him by shooting him in the legs.

A few people from Kukigaq's camp were killed. A smaller young man from Kukigaq's camp made his presence known to Kukigaq

by saying "I am here too." Kukigaq looked at him and asked him if he wanted to die right away. The young man looked startled and stepped aside without another word.

Kukigaq had been injured several times in the same place and he was in agony. He shouted at the crowd when he couldn't take any more pain, saying: "I never let anyone suffer when I took his life. This is enough suffering." His family and friends gathered to carry Kukigaq, whose legs were both badly injured, back to his house.

The avengers built their igloos not far from the camp. A little old lady came to see Kukigaq, even though one of her relatives had been one of his victims, and she was actually glad to see that the problem was finally being taken care of. Kukigaq was in a lot of pain. The old lady said to him: "How cruel it is of them to injure you so badly when they are not planning to kill you."

That is the end. Of all the stories my mother would tell at bedtime, it is one of my favourites.

R.I.: Was this a children's story?

A.I.: My mother told that legend when I was a child. Let me tell you another I found exciting. It's the legend about Tipaittuq and Iglingnagaarjuk, and it has been told for a very long time.

Iglingnagaarjuk was a young single man. One day he decided to spend the day in camp while the other men went hunting down on the sea ice. Another young man, about the same age as Iglingnagaarjuk and just married, also decided to stay in camp. He did this to protect his new wife. He didn't trust Iglingnagaarjuk.

The men went about their usual routine, getting ready to go hunting. After they had left, Iglingnagaarjuk went outside and ran into the other young man, who happened to be his step-cousin. Iglingnagaarjuk must have seen his chance to kill him then and there: but he realised the other man was quite prepared. He decided not to make the move just yet.

Instead he decided to be friendly, because he knew that the other man was feeling uneasy. He confessed to him that the thought of taking his step-cousin's life had occurred to him; and finally the other man became more relaxed.

Suddenly Iglingnagaarjuk stabbed him in the back and cut off his belt. Then he ran. The young man got up to chase him and was just catching up to him when he tripped on his pants and fell. Iglingnagaarjuk took advantage of this chance to finish him off, and then he went back to take the man's wife. He built a new igloo for the two of them and his two younger brothers.

The hunters returned that evening. Tipaittuq, the father of the murdered young man, walked over to the new igloo and called for his step-nephew: "Come on out!" he shouted. "All the men are outside, come on out!"

Iglingnagaarjuk replied by asking whether anyone was waiting to ambush him outside his igloo entrance. Tipaittuq assured him that both sides of the entrance were clear.

Tipaittuq moved down to the shore to join the other men while he waited for Iglingnagaarjuk to emerge from inside new igloo. Before he left his two brothers and the young widow Iglingnagaarjuk took a prepared piece of caribou fat and, cracking it in half, gave the pieces to his two brothers. He was in tears as he got ready to go outside. He came out very slowly, checking everything and talking at the same time. He started walking down to the shore where all the hunters were standing in a row.

"Is it Tipaittuq?" he asked as he came out. As he approached them, Tipaittuq stepped out from among the men, and said: "I am here!" He was an old man, but he was healthy.
Iglingnagaarjuk repeated: "Is it Tipaittuq?"
"I am here!"
The old man was ready for Iglingnagaarjuk, who was walking slowly toward them.
"Is it Tipaittuq?" asked Iglingnagaarjuk again.
"I am here!"
Tipaittuq was waving his hands in the air and jumping up and down on the shore shouting "I am here!" He had a knife with both edges sharpened. The old man was jumping up so high that you could see the sky between his legs as he made sure that Iglingnagaarjuk saw him.

Iglingnagaarjuk approached Tipaittuq and then suddenly dropped to his knees, coughing blood. The hunters didn't see the stabbing. Tipaittuq looked at Iglingnagaarjuk and said:
"I wonder what you have done this time? I wonder what you have done this time?"
He hit him on the face with the handle of his knife:
"I wonder what you have done this time?"

My mother used to end the story right there, and that is where I stop.

R.I.: I am sure you have many interesting stories to tell. Did you learn those before the formal schools were established?

A.I.: I told you a story about how Ava and I set our traps putting our bait too far away from the trap. That is uneducated behaviour: no knowledge or exposure. Everybody learns from what they see and do. They gain knowledge from experience. They don't say "I am going to start teaching this child" but the children learn about housekeeping, hunting, making things and how to behave. Most of the hunters have rifles, which they know never to point at a person, and every child learns that from the beginning.

R.I.: Did learning begin when you started going out on the land or by watching?

A.I.: One wouldn't know what to do if he had never seen it done or been told how it is done. All the children start to learn from the time they are able to recall what is going on and how things are done. You know what they are learning from the way they imitate what they see and hear. They learn from there on. It is hard to know what to do – building an igloo and so on – if you don't see how things are done.

R.I.: Do you know how to build the traditional homes?

A.I.: Yes we know how to build sod houses, stone houses, snow houses, and skin tents. We might be a little slow now, but we have all the knowledge. Our parents and their parents didn't know how to do it until they were exposed to it and they passed it on to one generation after another. It will be known by other generations. Our parents were once children and the knowledge of harpoons, kayaks and all that was passed on to them and they passed it on to us. It has been passed on for a long long time. It all takes learning and trying.

The people are learning all the time like these schoolchildren are taught to get up in the morning to go to school. I think some of the children could sleep until noon if they weren't in school.

R.I.: Has the new generation adjusted well to going by the clock?

A.I.: Yes. We had clocks too, but we went to sleep a lot earlier – around six or seven in the evening, and midnight was very late; but we didn't have radios and so on. We would be up by about five in the morning.

R.I.: What do you suppose your ancestors would think if they could come to Igloolik and see the way Inuit live now?

A.I.: Their first reaction would be that became white people. I think they would probably feel uneasy for the first day or so – they would notice how the

Igloolik dialect has changed. They would also notice that we are using money for everything, and that the Inuit diet has changed; but after that they would see how much of the tradition is unchanged.

R.I.: I wonder what they would think about the way young people live now.

A.I.: I think they would be very surprised to see how many young people are in town on a good day for hunting, and they would find that the young people don't respond instantly when asked to do something.

R.I.: What obvious change do you think they would notice in people?

A.I.: They would wonder why so many people stay in town instead of hunting, because there are a lot of young people just existing in Igloolik.

R.I.: What do you think they would say to all these changes?

A.I.: They would be shocked to see the way the young people have turned out; they would also be disappointed in the way the young people respond to them, and they would be surprised to see all the children going to school and learning English.

R.I.: What is different from the way Inuit were?

A.I.: Food – you wouldn't hear them say, "I want some liver" or "I want frozen meat or raw meat." Many young people are eating store-bought food.

R.I.: Did you have a role model when you were growing up?

A.I.: Yes, I admired people who had good dogs and were good hunters. I admired the children my age who got to go out on hunting trips, especially those who caught seals. I learned how to do all that but I never became as good as some of the people I admired for their special abilities.

I know how to build an igloo; I am not fast but I can complete one with only a knife, and I know how to light a qulliq [seal oil lamp].

R.I.: Was a qulliq one of the necessities?

A.I.: I always bring a qulliq whenever I go away; you never know when you might need it. In spring we always brought a small stove which burned bones, tied to the back of the sled. If we were stopping for while, we could light it – they were mostly made of larger cans like the earlier Klim milk powder cans. We could stop to cook our meals, burning bones with seal oil.

R.I.: Did you use only bones for the stove?

A.I.: Yes. The bones burn for a long time if you put blubber in them, as otherwise they dry up and crumble into ashes.

R.I.: What is the preferred bone for burning?

A.I.: Seal bones, walrus bones, bearded seals – any bone will burn. You start it with a small amount of wood. It will burn until you put it out.

R.I.: Is it reusable?

A.I.: They can keep for a long time if you keep adding blubber.

R.I.: Did many people use the stove that you are talking about?

A.I.: I know that the people who went out into the deep sea to hunt walrus always had stoves at the back of their boats, to cook their meat with. Walrus blubber burns for a long time.

R.I.: Did they use the same cans for the stoves?

A.I.: Some people cut a small barrel in half, as it makes a good bone burning stove. It can cook the walrus meat so that it is very tender.

R.I.: What kind of things were you expected to have when you left the camp?

A.I.: When I went away overnight I would bring a knife, harpoon, cord, rope made of hide, and caribou skins for sleeping. Blubber was necessary along with the qulliq, as most of us didn't use Coleman stoves. All Inuit used to bring a qulliq everywhere, as that was your heat and light. A small qulliq can thaw out something as large a piece of walrus meat. If I brought the meat in at night before going to sleep, by morning it would thaw enough to be chopped up for dog food. We chopped it into dog-bite sizes when we were ready to leave. The dogs would get excited at the sound of the chopping, as they knew their food was coming, and would start running around the igloo to see where the hole through which it would be thrown to them was going to be made.

That kind of living was fine; but in spite of the good life we had there were times that you just couldn't get the animal you needed, and without blubber there was no heat in the house. When hard times hit it was rough, but it was a wonderful life when all things were going well, especially hunting, which we still enjoy. We had store-bought items like tea and tobacco. I would feel rich if I had those two things, but I was not always rich.

Nowadays we have to have a lot of things all the time, like some foreigners – maybe like white people. I think so. Not everybody is like me, but I had everything I needed if I had some tea and tobacco and if I could catch seals and the dogs were well fed. Blubber was crucial, but it was useless if you didn't have anything to light it with – even a small stick of wood was hard to come by, as there was no wood until southerners started shipping all kinds of things up here.

R.I.: Are Inuit seeing more waste than before?

A.I.: The white people are always burning things at the dump, every day. We didn't have any more than what we needed, so there was no waste. Sometimes all we hunters would have was an extra harpoon head or a knife stashed at an inuksuk. That's not a lot, but we didn't need a lot of the things that we have now. The only things we had were a drum, knife, ivory, and sharp stones. We didn't have iron but we didn't think of ourselves as being poor because we had what we needed. When I think back to what our parents

were like and how true their words were, I realise that we have gone through many changes.

Look at how seriously white people take mining and oil and gas exploration. It is not an easy task I am sure, but they are just as determined as we are when we go hunting.

R.I.: What do you think about those changes?

A.I.: It seems like the white peoples' activities are becoming as part of our lives and we are feeling the changes. I think it's here to stay, and I know that some things have changed forever.

R.I.: Like what?

A.I.: Like heating our homes without blubber. We couldn't even find a small piece of wood before, and now the white people are burning it at the dump every day. If there was no store here the community would have to hunt a lot more if they had to provide light, heat, and food to everyone. Twenty seals wouldn't be enough; a man who caught twenty would be left with nothing after relatives picked up what they needed.

R.I.: Were you able to hunt anything you wanted?

A.I.: Yes, and I still do, like a lot of other people – but there are times when the animals just don't come around. This area once had no polar bears or caribou and sometimes seals were hard to get. Some stories say there were all kinds of animals. Something must have happened because if the animals had been everywhere there wouldn't be any stories about starvation. Animals have never been readily available. No matter how hard you want to find one, if they are not there, they are not there – and there is nothing you can do about it. Even the ptarmigan were hard to come by. The number of ducks is not increasing, but we see more snow geese and cranes in recent years. Qikirtaugaq was about the only place where the snow geese would be seen but now we see more – at least I've seen more.

R.I.: Is there a species that has disappeared?

A.I.: There has been a decrease in the number of aggiarjuk (ducks). They are not very close to Igloolik and Avvajjar, so you have to go further away to find them.

Times have changed. We watch movies on television, we listen to the radio, we have telephones, we live far away from some of our relatives. Before it would have taken a long time to pass a message to them: now we just pick up our telephones and call. We have adjusted to them and we carry on as if we always had them. The Catholic mission had a short wave radio and they said one day we would have all this technology, but I didn't believe it. I didn't even wish for it because I didn't think I'd end up having it myself.

R.I.: Has the attitude of the public changed in general?

A.I.: My mother used to get upset with me once in a while, and I remember her saying to me that I was controlled by something. That's what I think of today's society. They are controlled by outside forces. But it doesn't upset me. The only thing that would bother me would be if someone nagged at me every day. One hour is enough.

R.I.: Considering all the changes going on in the community what traditional knowledge would you like to see passed on?

A.I.: All of it, because we can't afford to lose any of it. I say that because I have lived in different places in the north but everywhere it is extremely harsh in midwinter and all our activities take place out there in the cold. People would die if they didn't know what to do or how to do things. They have to know how to build a home out of snow – they have to know about the snow. The only thing I wouldn't promote is walrus hunting in the moving ice, where many people have lost their feet from severe frostbite; but they will not give it up.

R.I.: Would they be safer if they brought all the items you mentioned before?

A.I.: They are often reminded of these things on the local station and CB radio, but not everyone listens.

I was in the Keewatin before, and then we came to the Igloolik region. I wasn't that small any more, but still young enough to cry for my mother. We travelled with another family on our way to Igloolik. I don't know what my parents had to do but they went while I was hunting for ptarmigan and were gone when I came back. The other family was there at the camp with a younger boy name Inuki. I started crying for my parents and the little boy Inuki who was quite a bit younger than me was consoling me and tried to entertain me. This was the family of Siglu, who was Inuki's father.

Two days later we packed and followed their trail. They caught a caribou and left some meat for us on the trail. On that trip I started meeting new people. I remember one particular trail we saw, the foot prints of Itikuttuk. His dogs had been running and so had he. His footprints were far apart showing how fast he was running. He ran for a long time. They hunted seals for couple of days before we moved on to Qarmat, where there were many tents. It was my first time seeing a walrus. We got to the camp where the walrus hunters were, and the floe edge was not far from the camp. Ducks were flying as far as you could see. This was before Hall Beach became a community. We went to Akunniq where we met Qaumauk and Qulittalik, who was known as Umilialuk (the one with the big beard).

They had a son named Qannguq who was catching lemmings with a 22 calibre rifle. He had two sisters, Qaapik, and Piunngittuq, your mother, a young girl at the time.

R.I.: What was he catching lemmings for?

A.I.: Probably for his sisters' wooden dolls, or what ever the girls wanted them for. Probably for pretend caribou skins. Later on Ikummaq came to pick us up. We travelled through Nirluguaq by land from Akunniq. There were ducks along the way. Then we got to Igloolik where there were many tents. A lot of strangers were living happily there, and hunting was good. We went to Ittuksarjuat's house. One morning I heard there was someone picking us up

to take us out seal hunting. One of the people traded a fox fur to Ittuksarjuat, who was a local trader. There was a big box of tea at his house. He used a cup to scoop out the loose tea and a couple of cups of sugar. Ittuksarjuat was trading goods at Igloolik before there was a store here. He probably got the supply from the Bay at Pond Inlet. He sold tea, sugar, ammunition, tobacco, and flour. He was the first trader because there were many people living in Igloolik.

It was around that time that Kupaaq and I went hunting with his father. There were many other dog teams as well – the ones I remember are Aarulaaq and Ivalu. We had travelled a long way to go hunting with them. Kupaaq was not old enough to pierce a seal skin with his harpoon, but I caught two seals with it. The hunters brought some of their catch back home but they cached everything else for the winter, and they brought many skins home to be prepared for other things. There were dog sleds loaded with seals, and they were also preparing all the meat and blubber. They cached some meat and removed the blubber and packaged it in seal skins to make oil. They were drying skins as well. It was the time of year when the seals shed, and they used those skins for tents.

Ivalu and Aarulaaq used to kid around with each other working and having fun during the seal hunting season. Angilliq, Attarjuat and Mamattiaq were very young. Attaguarjugusiq, Ikummaq, Piugaattuk of Qikirtaarjuk – they were all young. Kallukuluk looked old and Iqipiriaq and Aarulaaq; they couldn't have been that old if they were still hunting, and they were active and in good shape.

Qulittalik whom we called Umilialuk also looked young when we met them in Akunniq. He just had Qannguq, Qaapik and your mother. They were with Qaumauk and his family. There was me and Aipilik. Ijjangiaq, and Henry Ivaluarjuk were really young, and so was Kupaaq. There was also Tatigat, and Amakslaq. Your father and I were two of the older ones, older than Tatigat. We spent a lot of time together learning to do many things.

R.I.: Did Inuit have many dogs then?

A.I.: There were many men who had a lot of dogs, like Piugaattuk – he was a young man too – but they all had many dogs.

Angilliq, Mamattiaq and Ikummaq were all young – they kept getting older until they all died, but none of them ever seemed really to get that old. I am getting there too – but I'm not dead yet!

Avvajjar and Qikirtaarjuk were considered part of Igloolik because it was mostly the same group hunting in the same area.

R.I.: Who was considered a good hunter?

A.I.: Everybody. Even we ourselves were becoming successful as we gained experience and we didn't think of anyone in particular as the best hunter. I never became a walrus hunter like the Igloolik people, but I hunted seals, bearded seal, and whales whenever there any. There were no caribou until later on. My current wife is partially blind and doesn't sew very well and cannot keep up with the skins, so I no longer hunt them like I use to – I only catch what I need for a pot of seal meat. I still hunt caribou and I mostly fish and go for smaller game, not like a lot of the Igloolik hunters who go for larger game. In Igloolik we have the Hunters and Trappers association where some hunters sell their catch. This works well. The Renewable Resources now buy seal skins too, which helps a bit for those who have large families.

R.I.: You mentioned before that Inuit are living more like white people in a community. Have they lost all knowledge and practice of shamanism?

A.I.: No, we know about shamanism but they went underground after the introduction of Christianity.

R.I.: Are they still feared by Inuit?

A.I.: No – they are harmless if you don't do anything to upset them. They are like you and me. You yourself know how athletic Inuit can be, and very flexible and quick, with incredible physical abilities. Some people are very fast runners. Those are the people that shamans don't like to see show off. A

jealous shaman could destroy such a person with his spiritual powers, to put an end to his showing off.

R.I.: Is that why so many capable people hide their abilities and talent from the public?

A.I.: Yes, they are safer to be humble about their special abilities. I don't know why they are like that.

R.I.: Do you think that is one of the reasons why Inuit are often reluctant to show their abilities?

A.I.: Yes. We were always told to keep a low profile regarding any special abilities we have. I was told never to brag about anything.

R.I.: Nowadays, Inuit are encouraged to show the world the uniqueness of our people and environment, and to be proud of them. Do you think staying humble and having to keep a low profile have become an obstacle to promoting Inuit culture?

A.I.: Probably. Inuit have always been humble about their own abilities. I don't know about the ones who have been to school, as I don't understand their mentality. They don't tell much about what it is they are learning. In the old days if you didn't watch it they could do anything to destroy you. They can even blind or otherwise disable you. They can do anything they see fit – their powers are unlimited.

R.I.: Are there different levels of power possessed by the shaman: the good and the evil?

A.I.: Yes. The wicked ones are very vicious, and can stop or destroy anything. The people who died a long time ago still have their souls living and lingering, but only through the spirit. They are said to be very dangerous.

R.I.: Has all this changed since the arrival of Christianity?

A.I.: Many people got converted, but the rest of them went underground when priests started preaching against it. I think that is the reason why they mix in with Christians. It would be too obvious if these people didn't go to church. But I was never a shaman, nor was my father. I would know more about it if I had been allowed to listen to the adult conversations, but I was always told to play outside just when their conversations were getting interesting. There are many things that I've forgotten, many events and stories, so there are a lot of things I can't really talk about.

R.I.: Have you seen any positive changes since the move from more traditional times to community life?

A.I.: They are trying, but there seems to be more crime. From the past there are stories and legends about such people, individuals who lied or stole. Not everybody was perfect. Such people have existed throughout history, but they were few, and far apart – not like what we see now.

I've also heard stories about whaling ships coming up here, because there used to be a lot of bowhead whales. I know this, because there are a lot of bowhead whale bones up here. I heard a story about a man who stole a shovel from a ship. The captain was furious, because he couldn't have had that many shovels. This was sometime around 1818. The man who stole the shovel had special powers, and was just as upset with the captain. He cursed the passage to make sure no ship could use it again. To prevent the white people from using the passage he filled it with old ice, making it impossible for any ships to travel through.

That is why we were so late in getting the Hudson's Bay Company established here. Finally a ship came in with the supplies, but the conditions have not improved.

R.I.: Were they very powerful?

A.I.: Yes indeed, very powerful. And dangerous beyond words.

R.I.: Are they still just as powerful?

A.I.: Yes very powerful, very clever, and very wicked. They have more powers than all today's leaders put together. And they are like prophets – they can foretell the future.

I once met a person in Keewatin who could tell me things about myself that I've never told anyone about. He started making strange sounds, and then he burst out singing. Then he started saying that once when he was away hunting he started hearing a thumping sound; then he would sing again. Then he said he saw what was making the thumping sound, which was coming closer – and I could recognise the song – and suddenly the land felt like thin ice as the dark cloud came closer.

He loaded his gun and took a shot at it and then it disappeared. Then he turned to me and said: "Isn't that right?" This man knew things that I had never talked about.

R.I.: How long ago was this?

A.I.: When my daughter Anagalak was with me. I learned to tell some of those stories after that.

The weaker shamanistic power is more wicked than the strongest power, but they both exist.

R.I.: Can the shamans pass on their power to any members of the family or to any living person?

A.I. My adopted older brother Qimmirjuaq was given power by Tukturjuk before he died.

R.I.: Are these things talked about much in the open?

A.I.: No they are not talked about at all.

R.I.: Is this out of fear or respect that they don't talk about them?

A.I.: Probably out of fear. I don't think the young people feel the same way as we do because they are not as exposed to it, but we the older ones know about it. That's why I am telling you.

Siporah Piunngittuq Inuksuk
Interviewed by: Rhoda Innuksuk
Translated by: Rhoda Innuksuk.

I am Siporah Inuksuk of Igloolik, daughter of Qulittalik and Pakak. My father was originally from the Keewatin, while my mother was from the Baffin region. I am related to many Keewatin people through my father Qulittalik and I also have many relatives in the Baffin region through my mother Pakak. That is how my siblings and I got to have so many relatives in faraway places: our parents came from opposite directions.

R.I.: Where were they from?

S.I.: My father was from around Repulse Bay and my mother came from the Pond Inlet area. This was before the communities were established.

I have always been proud of my parents for the great distances they travelled by dog team, before the advent of snowmobiles, airplanes, and boats. They must have met in the Igloolik area because my oldest brother Noah Nasuk was born in Siuraarjuk which is in that region. My oldest sister Ulatitaq was born in the Keewatin region, as were the twins Qannguq and Angugaatiaq. The twins were born at the time of the Fifth Thule expedition. The Greenlander Knud Rasmussen interviewed both my parents and took photographs of them.

My sister Qaapik of Arctic Bay was also born in the Repulse Bay area before they headed back to Baffin island where the rest of us were born. I was born in Clyde River, and my younger sister Nuvvija was born after they returned to north Baffin Island by dog team. Then my younger brother Nathan Qamaniq was born, in the Pond Inlet area. I remember the summer he was born. We were there with the families of Ululijarnaat and Qaumauq, who hunted with my father. They hunted all summer long catching all kinds of whales by kayak, the only kind of boat they had. Then we travelled toward the Igloolik area, and my youngest brother Abraham Qaunaq, who was adopted out, was born in Qarmat.

When we first came this way we lived in a place called Iqaluit, in the bay. Then we went to Qarmat, where we lived with the late Inujaq, Siakuluk's father and Qaunaq, Inuaraq's younger brother. My oldest brother Nasuk and his wife had their first child that summer, my first niece Qamaniq, who was born in Iqaluit where we lived at the time. It was the same summer that my future husband and his family were in Qikirtaukak where they nearly starved.

We then moved to Agiupiniq, on the sea ice, where many people were spending the winter. Many people from Igloolik and Avvajjar used to have a huge camp there. Later that spring we moved to Qikirtaarjuk, which is up on shore, with Ivalu and Ukaliannuk, your father's adoptive parents, but they only brought their little daughter Aula. We lived alone with them for a while in Qikirtaarjuk before the families who had gone away to Pond Inlet and Repulse Bay returned. I remember when they all came back and I particularly remember everyone crying, but I had no idea what they were crying about. Then I saw two people being carried on a caribou skin, and I thought all the fuss was about those two people, but it turned out that Utak's wife had died.

R.I.: Was my father living with Ivalu and Ukaliannuk in Qikirtaarjuk?

S.I.: No, he was living with his sister Akittiq, (whom you are named after) and her husband Isigaittuq at the time. His adoptive parents only had Aula with them (whom your son Jonah Dewar is named after).

R.I.: Was this before you were married?

S.I.: Yes, long before we ever got together. My family and I went to Pingiqalik that summer by boat, after my father gave up his kayak in Qarmat when we came back from Pond Inlet. Eventually we went back to Qarmat near Hall Beach before moving on to Akunniq and Ugliit.

Mark Evaluarjuk was born in Ugliit, while my older nephew Caleb Apak was born the year before in Akunniq, and a year later the youngest, Josiah

Qalluttiaq, was born in Pingiqalik. We stayed in Siuraq until spring and then moved to Qaiqsut for the summer. Then we moved to Kapuivik.

We were the first of that generation to live in Kapuivik. We spent the next two years there with two other families: the family of Quassa, who was François Tamnaruluk's father, and Utak's family. I remember when Javagiaq and his wife Iqipiriaq were living in Majurtulikuluk for the fall season while the fish were migrating, when we had a short visit with them. When the fishing season was over, they joined us at Kapuivik. The families of Quassa, Javagiaq, and Utak were all living at Kapuivik with us.

Everyone used to move to a small island called Qauqsut just offshore from Kapuivik for the summer to hunt walrus, and then they all went back to their winter grounds, like Siuraarjuk and Kapuivik. The only family who came back to Kapuivik with us was Quassa's family, who spent the rest of the winter with our family. Then another couple arrived with a little granddaughter name Inujaq.

R.I.: How many children were there with my grandparents?

S.I.: When my older sister Qaapik got married and left for Arctic Bay, there were just myself and my younger brother Qamaniq until my parents adopted my nephew Mark Evaluarjuk.

We left Kapuivik to go to Ualinaaq, past Longstaff Bluff, where we spent the summer and winter. It was that spring that I got together with your father, who lived at Ikpik Bay with Malla and Utukuttuk. They came to pick up Arnaqiktuq and her daughter. Your father picked me up at the same time and spent the rest of his life with me.

Such was our life. For one summer and winter your father and I lived in Qairsukat, just past Ikpik Bay where he lived before. Until my brother Qamaniq took me there this summer by boat I hadn't seen it since.

We went to Kapuivik before we moved to Nirliviktuuq for another summer and winter. We travelled everywhere, and lived everywhere. We also spent

two years in Akimaniq. My daughter Qannguq was born in Manirtuuq. Then I had my first son John Nataaq near Qaggiujaq just off Manirtuuq, and then we moved to Iglurjuat.

R.I.: What about my oldest sister?

S.I.: Kigutigaarjuk was born in Kapuivik and was adopted by my parents. Leah was born in Iglurjuat and you were born in Qaiqsut, a walrus hunting camp where we used to spend our summers. Pakak was born in Iglurjuat, as was Qulittalik, and the last one, Julia, was born in Iqaluit.

I once had two beautiful twins, both girls, born in Iglurjuat but they didn't live. We lived in Iglurjuat for many years.

My brother Qamaniq got married in Iglurjuat and they had their first child Kuutiq there, where most of their children were born. Then they had their second son Pakak who was born in Qaiqsut. Their first daughter Sarah Akpaliapik was born in Iglurjuat as were Uvinik, Naisana, and Issa. My brother Qamaniq's wife Katuurainuk was a young girl when they got together and she has been with our family ever since.

We lived in Iglurjuat for many years. Then when the school opened in Igloolik we left you behind to send you to school. By the time we came to Igloolik to spend time with you, you already had gone south, but we stayed to send the rest of the younger children to school.

R.I.: Was Igloolik still small when you moved there?

S.I.: Yes it was. There were very few houses – only a few matchbox houses and some of the second style with slanted walls had been built the year we moved to Igloolik.

R.I.: Who was living here then?

S.I.: There were many people who already lived here but most of them have died: my uncle Annannguaq and his wife Aksugjuaq, Piugaattuk and Alariaq,

Angiliq, Attaguarjugusiq and his wife Taligvaaq, Ungalaaq and Angugaatiaq, and Nasuk and my sister-in-law Martha. There are lots of people living in Igloolik but they are mostly their descendants. Some other families moved to Igloolik after us, like Uyarasuk and his wife from Agu Bay.

Mark Evaluarjuk was the first person from our family to move to Igloolik. The summer my mother died he moved here and got a job at the Hudson's Bay Company. He married and they had their children here.

I went to the hospital down south in 1959 and my oldest brother Nasuk and his family returned to Igloolik while I was away. He had been in Pond Inlet for a long time because his wife was from that area. They left the year my daughter Qannguq was born, 1944. We were living in Akimaniq while they were living in Manirtuuq that winter. They left for Pond Inlet that spring and spent the next 15 years up there. They came back to Igloolik in 1959, but all their children were born in Igloolik area.

R.I.: Did things work well without having any formal councils?

S.I.: Councils were unheard of. It wasn't until we were living in Igloolik that the committees and councils were established. One of the first groups to be established in Igloolik was the co-op. Then other groups were created: the community council, housing association, education committee, hunters and trappers association, and so on.

R.I.: Did you have a leader in your camp?

S.I.: Yes, every camp had a leader. Leaders didn't abuse their power, and were respected and obeyed by their family who lived with them. People left all the major decisions to their parents and the elders, but they had a lot of freedom to do as they pleased. The only decisions the leader had to make concerned moving families to the seasonal hunting grounds.

We had a lot of freedom, but it was up to the men to decide where they would take us to shop. The stores were few, and far apart. The older people would stay back home while we travelled to places like Repulse Bay, Arctic Bay or

Pond Inlet, the only places with a store. We would leave in early spring and come back before the snow melted. We had so many enjoyable dog team rides.

The men would organise our trip by making sure that there was plenty of food for everyone, and the dogs, to get there and back. There were no caribou in this area, so we would drop off the dog food here and there on the land only, for use on the way back. There were always lots of seals once we got to the sea ice.

R.I.: I guess there was no such thing as crime back then?

S.I.: There was no such thing. The only thing close to that would be naughty children – which all of us have been at one time or another. I don't recall any fights or arguments in our family because we were made to understand that it wasn't right and we had no problems with that. We were all aware that any person who causes tension would be put on the spot in front of everyone, [the person would be given a lecture] and as none of us wanted to go through that we simply avoided anything that would put us there.

The only things which would not be tolerated were stealing or lying. Almost all sessions were successful; but it didn't always work for everyone.

R.I.: Were there any shamans?

S.I.: No, the elders never talked about things like that, in order to put that part to rest. They knew all kinds of legends and history. My father (Qulittalik) was a very talkative man and had a lot of songs, but I never heard him telling legends. Most of the legends I heard were from my sister-in-law Martha Nasuk. She was a good entertainer and told many stories.

R.I.: What about my grandmother?

S.I.: I don't think she had any legends because she was a very quiet person, and shy when she was younger.

R.I.: My grandfather?

S.I.: He was not at all shy, and he could talk to anybody and everybody any time.

R.I.: Has some of the practical and common knowledge changed since the move to the community?

S.I.: Indeed there have been changes. There was no modern technology; we didn't have telephones or CB radio. Anyone who was going away had to be very definite about his destination and how long he expected to be away. The elders didn't like anyone leaving without telling them exactly where he was going, what he planned to hunt, and when he expected to return. If something happened to him there was no way of knowing, as there were no other means of communication.

R.I.: Was there a lot of cooperation?

S.I.: Yes, and well organised. The elders would divide us up in spring to send us off to different hunting grounds and we wouldn't see each other again until after freeze-up. Our family was always encouraged to have more than we needed so we would be ready to help in case the other camps were not as successful.

R.I.: Have you ever experienced near-starvation?

S.I.: No, the closest experience I ever had was the people of Manirtuuq. I don't know if you were old enough to remember.

R.I.: Who?

S.I.: Amiimiarjuk's family whom we met up with on our way from Ikpikiturjuaq when they were all out of food.

R.I.: The man who ate out of the meat box for dogs?

S.I.: Yes, that was the only time.

R.I.: Mom can you tell me about the family values that you think could help improve community life?

S.I.: In the past families were close-knit: for example, when we had a new sister-in-law she was properly introduced to the whole family. She was made to know who her sisters and brothers-in-law were and she was accepted by the family and full rights were granted to her. She would be told to consider her in-laws as her own parents, and this means giving them the same loyalty and respect she would her own parents.

Women who gossiped about their in-laws were not popular because it tends to create tension within the family when they are aware of what she is saying about them. Couples with many sons had a harder time maintaining peace and order because it meant having many young ladies from different backgrounds around. The daughters-in-law were encouraged to treat each other like sisters, but things wouldn't always work out that way. The women were made to understand that talking too much or making remarks about others when they come home from visiting can upset people. We consider it undesirable to speak negatively of anyone who is not there to defend herself, because the word has a way of coming back to the person who was being talked about.

R.I.: Was it alright to talk as long as it was not negative?

S.I.: Oh, of course. And when you don't have those problems, having a sister-in-law is like having another sister.

Keeping everyone in line is important because if you tolerate gossip they might think there is nothing wrong with it: whereas if you let them know that some things are not tolerated because we value peace and order, they learn from it. I always feel bad about having to do it, but when they appreciate it and learn from it, everyone is kept closer. They feel more at peace when they know the facts and expectations and when they are told directly if they have failed.

R.I.: Was moving to Igloolik very different from living in Iglurjuat?

S.I.: I guess it was. It became next to impossible to be close to all our relatives and treat them equally because there are too many of them all living in the same village. What you end up with is the desire to retain the values, but it's hard to practice – to treat everyone equally in a big place. You simply can't get to see them all equally on a regular basis.

R.I.: Do you think the Inuit can make sure some of their basic values are reflected in community life?

S.I.: Yes. If they were accommodated within the society we would have a chance to do something worthwhile. We get told that the elders are not saying enough, or doing enough to pass on the tradition: but we run into conflict with the law. The younger generation can use the law now as their defence. They tell you frankly that times have changed, that Canadian law also applies to the Inuit, and that Canadian law is on their side. This takes away the power from the elders to rule and discipline, leaving them powerless and defenceless.

R.I.: Would the elders play a larger role if they had more chances and opportunities?

S.I.: Yes. If the public welcomed the traditional family structure and acted according to its principles, family and social problems would be fewer.

R.I.: Is there something you would want your descendants always to know about?

S.I.: Our family life has always been based on the importance of having a strong sense of unity and support within our family. I would want all that to be passed on to my grandchildren and their children for them to know the importance of being as close as if they were sisters and brothers. This extends to all my brothers and sisters and all my nieces and nephews and their children.

R.I.: Was Avingaq also adopted by my grandparents?

S.I.: Yes, his father Qannguq had originally arranged to have their first born adopted by our parents to give Mark Evaluarjuk a study companion, but he was adopted by someone else. They had not been planning to give up their second son Avingaq when my brother Qannguq failed to return from his hunting trip. My father went to pick him up when we lost my brother and adopted him. He was 3 or 4 years old. Then they adopted my oldest daughter Kigutigaarjuk and raised the three of them as if they were brothers and sisters.

R.I.: Were you all in skin clothing or were there any store-bought clothes?

S.I.: We always wore store-bought material for summer wear – mind you, the selection of material was limited. But we had the material to make all our dresses, pants, and under-clothing: nothing fancy, because the stores didn't carry ready-made clothing. There was also duffle which we used for making parkas with a white cover because that was all they sold. That's why even men wore white covering. When the stores first started selling manufactured clothing they were referred to as 'innalituqait' because they were ready made. My parents never had us in skin clothing in the summer as far as I can remember, though men often wore seal skin pants and so on – but the ladies and girls never wore seal skin clothing.

R.I.: Are the young people still able to make traditional clothing?

S.I.: If they would just give more time to it. They can still make all kinds of things. It sounds very odd to us – very untraditional – when we hear young women talking on the local radio station asking for things like parkas and kamiks for their children. These are the people they should be making things for, because all the resources are there including people eager to show them and help them. It takes practice, and it may not turn out perfect the first time but the second one always turns out better. There is no reason for not trying.

R.I.: Do the young people know that there is someone who can help them?

S.I.: We have offered assistance to anyone who wants to learn or is unsure, but not enough people take advantage of it.

R.I.: I wonder what your elders would have done if they saw Igloolik now?

S.I.: I wonder. They would probably resort back to the spirit of cooperation to deal with all the obstacles. All people need is direction, information, motivation, and guidance. Many families lack that, as well as enthusiasm; but we have many very capable people who would be able to help them, in any field. We have all these resources and capable young people who would develop well if they were motivated and had proper guidance. They are in the prime of their lives, but are not taking advantage of it.

R.I.: And about hunting too?

S.I.: Yes. The same thing applies to men.

R.I.: Do you think there would be fewer accidents out on the land or sea if the younger generation knew what to do?

S.I.: Yes. It is very important to know how to dress for the weather, especially in the fall when the sea is very salty, unlike in spring. The high concentration of salt in the water causes it to soak more quickly into everything. It's very important always to carry an extra pair of footwear in the fall. We were reminded not to throw away the spring footwear because it would come in handy in the fall. We would put away the spring footwear until fall just for the wet season, because they were more waterproof than a new pair which we have ready for after freeze-up.

R.I.: Were you always busy or was it boring sometimes?

S.I.: We were always busy and knew nothing of boredom. We always had a lot of things to do, and material to make things with. I never admired anyone who had nothing to do, or allowed herself not to have the skins she needed to make things with. The very thought of not having what you need always gave me the pleasure of giving things and helping those in need.

R.I.: What kind of things would you give to people? Did you make things for them?

S.I.: That too, as well as material and skins so they could make what they need. It was very important to take care of everything that men brought home, even if you didn't need it right away. It means drying the skins because that is your chance to prepare more material to work with as you need it. The material would go to waste if you didn't dry it while you had the chance. That was your only resource to make suitable clothing for the weather.

Even the greatest hunters could be unsuccessful if not dressed for the weather and eventually they could suffer hardship, especially if the animals didn't readily present themselves.

Some people lost their chances and opportunities of having what they needed if they allowed laziness to take control and ignored the responsibility of keeping up with what is brought home.

R.I.: One had to take care of all material as it came in?

S.I.: Skins spoil if they are not taken care of right away and they must be fit to wear.

R.I.: Can Iglulingmiut still have the outfits they need if the skins that are brought home are properly prepared?

S.I.: Of course. Nothing the hunters bring home should be wasted.

R.I.: Is it true that Inuit had no waste or garbage?

S.I.: There was nothing big to throw away.

R.I.: They used every part for something?

S.I.: There were times I could have thrown away some things that I got tired of because I was well provided for but I didn't, because there was always somebody else who liked them and could use them.

Sometimes I gave away some skins I wasn't particularly keen to work on, but they would be ready to use.

R.I.: So you dried all the skins and then gave them away?

S.I.: Yes, if people didn't have what they needed. While I had plenty of skins I could spare, yes. Some people didn't mind second-hand clothing.

R.I.: What kinds of traditional food did you have?

S.I.: We lived in areas where hunting was good. Caribou was not too far away and we had plenty of ringed seals, bearded seals, whales, walrus, and so on. Many people would come by our place when they were going out to hunt caribou. And sometimes some families would come to our camp when they needed food for themselves and their dogs. I don't think my family ever asked for help from anyone outside the family – or asked for anything.

R.I.: What do you feel about the use of the Inuit language?

S.I.: It should always be used. Sometimes I go on the local radio station to talk about the importance of speaking Inuktitut properly. It works out well to have a couple of people to back you up, when talking about the use of the language and its construction. Your sister Leah is starting the Inuktitut program again for the public this week .

R.I.: Inuit have always tried doing everything they are told to do. I am wondering why they are not responding the same way to the things the organisations are asking them to do?

S.I.: That's true. Inuit have always held meetings to lay out the strategy early in the morning at breakfast, chaired by their elder, but these meetings were all about hunting and conditions.

Hunting in midwinter is very hard, and requires careful planning and organising. At times the hunters would be divided up and sent to different locations to ensure that one of them would bring something back.

All did just as they were told and went to the places they were asked to go to by their elders, in whom they they had complete trust and faith.

R.I.: It sounds like they had great teamwork.

S.I.: They had to have, because it meant their survival under harsh conditions beyond their control. They to be well organised and prepared.

R.I.: Are there any big differences in the life style of the Inuit since moving into Igloolik?

S.I.: I guess there are, but we are so busy living it that we really don't notice the changes, as we've adjusted to them. I know that the Inuit who lived before us would be very surprised about a lot of things that are going on in this community. They would find a lot of fixing and lecturing to do.

R.I.: Did you know your grandparents?

S.I.: My father's mother was Nattiq and his father was Savviuqtalik,whom my oldest brother Nasuk was named after, but he was adopted by Iqallijuq. Rosie Iqallijuq is named after my father's adoptive mother whom he referred to as his mother. Rosie is my father's niece, his sister Nuvvija's daughter. My mother lost her parents when she was a young girl. Her father was Nasuk and her mother was Ataguttiaq.

George Kappianaq
Interviewer: Rhoda Innuksuk
Translated by: Rhoda Innuksuk

R. I.: Can you tell me about some of the drastic changes in Inuit culture?

G. K.: Marriage.

R. I.: Arranged marriages?

G. K.: I had never heard the term "aippariik" used in this region for couples until recently, though it is used by Uqqurmiut (Pangnirtung area) when referring to couples exchanging husband and wife. They were also referred to as "aipparjugiik;" but for one couple we simply called them husband and wife in our way of speech. The word aippariik has a different meaning in this area.

R. I.: Has the old practice of arranging marriages been completely given up by parents and elders?

G. K.: It seems like it. The practice was common – I had one arranged for me from birth, and she was my future wife throughout our childhood until we came of age, when she became my wife. This practice was always followed, as long as no one else came along who was determined to take her. Otherwise both were made to know that, according to plan, they would marry when they were of age.

I know my brother lost his future wife to another man, but we lived far apart. A man from Natsilik used his shamanistic powers to take her from my brother, who had planned all his life to marry her, and made her his daughter-in-law.

The young people can escape from that now because of the community setting. We didn't live in large groups when we lived in small family camps, not like now when so many Inuit are all living in one place and seem to have gone loose. Now the young people move in together without consulting

anyone and sometimes we hear that a couple whom we didn't even know were a couple, have just had a child . Yes, this has changed a lot. I don't hear "future wife" or "future husband" any more.

I think it has also been made impossible to continue the practice; I don't think we could get away with it even if we tried. It would mean trying to get them to marry somebody they don't want to marry yet, and when they have just come of age. This change resulted from accepting Christianity. We thought maybe they had a better way – but we see it only get worse than it ever was.

R. I.: Do people accept this change?

G. K.: No. In the past this behaviour would not have been acceptable, but I don't think Inuit believe they have a hope of keeping certain practices, so they don't try.

R. I.: They don't get the same results either, when they do try?

G. K.: That's right. The young people don't listen if you're not their parent. My grandson was very determined to move in with my daughter. We told him not to. We told him that he was free to have any other girl, but he wouldn't listen to us. Now we take him as our son-in-law. We told him that they were too closely related – but even that didn't work.

R. I.: Does not knowing whom they are related to and how contribute to close relatives moving in together as couples?

G. K.: Yes, certainly. First of all they are not sure how they are related; plus, they know they have the freedom to do what they want when they come of age. It's all part of change.

R. I.: Doesn't that hurt the family relationship when they get together against your wishes?

G. K.: It's awkward at first but when you see that they are in love and determined to keep each other you get to accept it and you keep loving them.

It doesn't split up relatives. I know that a long time ago people married relatives. Sometimes the parents arranged for their daughter or son to marry a relative in order to keep them from going far away to total strangers. It was acceptable for relatives to marry as long as they were not too closely related.

R. I.: How can relatives not be directly related?

G. K.: If they're not born of the same woman. There were only two people a man could not marry: a mother or a sister. Those are direct relations; others were acceptable. Igloolik people have been known to arrange marriages within the family when they hate to see the young person go so far away from all the relatives to start a new life with total strangers. That's probably true in other regions too. It was made acceptable to marry as long as the two were not born of the same mother, even though they seemed like close kin; and through the name relationship people were allowed to marry, especially if a person was not suitable to be with strangers.

R. I.: What makes a person unsuitable to be with strangers?

G. K.: Any girl with a sharp tongue could find herself in conflict. They worried about her well-being or how she would be treated by strangers. For that reason this type of person was kept among relatives.

R. I.: What other laws do you find most damaging to Inuit tradition and culture?

G. K.: We want to see our basic law included, which covers basic survival, such as hunting and clothes making, and being able to build either an igloo or a sod house. Basic survival was our foundation, but we don't see the governments working that way. It's reasons like this that most older people have a hard time taking governments too seriously – because of the laws we knew and believed.

R. I.: Could some of these values be maintained if the families made a greater effort to let the younger generation know more about their relatives and values?

G. K.: Yes. The families should assume their responsibility and let them know. They would have a better chance of not losing it all. Many of the people do know, including Inuit leaders who are aware of how Inuit tradition is disappearing, and are trying to do something about it at the government level.

R. I.: Are Inuit still shaping the future of their children? For example, say I don't want a particular child to be pushed around like the older one was: therefore I shape the child in such a way as to enable him defend the other one. Wasn't this so in the past?

G. K.: Very much so. These were all planned out for the children, so that they could be independent one day. That's part of the reason we don't want to see our culture abandoned by this new generation. Our elders wanted it continued because they had plans for them to be survivors. That's why we want to see them survive, even though we're going through changes.

R. I.: Some children are active, outgoing, and talkative, while others are quiet, shy, and reserved. Was it their character that determined how they were brought up?

G. K.: Yes, exactly.

R. I.: I know that throughout Inuit history the providers brought everything to their elder or leader. How does the wage economy fit into this culture? Or have they found new ways to continue the practice?

G. K.: Yes, in some ways. The members with a steady income cannot bring everything over to their elder or leader because they all have their own homes now. When food was shared before, it could be somewhat disappointing when they didn't bring you anything. Knowing that you have nothing at all, it does something to you as a parent when you are not thought of when a hunter has been successful.

R. I.: When Inuit take on more responsibility for governing themselves, what would you want to see included?

G. K.: If family values could be used as a base or foundation, it would definitely help retain them and the ways of caring properly for our families. It would help if proper family planning and patterns could be followed with respect to how we are to treat our children and their spouses, and how they are to be. It would help if this could be respected by our government.

R. I.: What you're saying is that the elders would like to see their government adopt the family and traditional values as their foundation?

G. K.: Yes. I think they are already trying. There are some things we will not let go, such as the way we guide younger people with regard to the values which have kept us together: sharing, disciplining, guiding them, hunting, food, clothing – all the basic values that everyone must have equally. Then things should improve.

R. I.: This would make it urgent to compile all the necessary information while we still have elders who can provide it.

G. K.: Yes, we have to be interviewed more about various topics because the tapes are kept and we can now use computers. That should make it possible to take whatever they can use to work toward a better future.

R. I.: Thank you.

G. K.: We are being ruled now by the foreigners (people from the south). For example, they set quotas on animals which in the past we freely hunted as part of our traditional diet. The bowhead whale, for instance, was an essential part of survival. We used the bones and food, and the blubber was good for a whole year of heat and light – until the bowheads were nearly wiped out on us. Now the population is increasing but I think the older people cannot accept being told what to hunt or what not to hunt. Inuit would be happier if they continued to put into practice their traditional knowledge with respect to wildlife because Inuit are not the ones that abuse nature and wildlife.

R. I.: What about traditional conservation and wise use of all the catch? Do you see the need to teach young Inuit about this?

G. K.: Yes, indeed it is necessary now because young people can go overboard if they find it easy and enjoyable. They could easily get too much now if they tried to hunt the way their elders did. It was necessary for us to catch as much as we could because not only did we have people to feed but we also had to feed our dogs, and not every family has dogs now. We know that wildlife can go a long way if the Inuit have a direct say, because our practice is based on wise use and conservation, and must be documented.

R. I.: This issue would also be considered urgent, would it not?

G. K.: Yes. Inuit government should reflect our basic values and tradition. This could be done through interviews and by computerising all documents, to get it working closer to home.

R. I.: Shouldn't the knowledgeable Inuit be setting priorities for what they want to see preserved through interviews, documentation, and whatever other means you have to pass it on to future generations?

G. K.: Yes – the young people read a lot now in English. It would be helpful if they could read about it and those who don't talk much to elders can know a little more; but the elders have to be asked now if they're going to be documented.

R. I.: Suppose that Inuit can entrench their values in the system. Would this help them gain a little more respect from the government?

G. K.: Definitely, because we live in a harsh environment which many experts have no idea about. Also, Inuit work in dangerous environments such as thin ice when it is just freezing up, and in strong currents which can crush the ice, and in spring when the ice is about to break up. They must also know the skills of hunting walrus in the deep sea and so on. Knowledge must be kept.

R. I.: Is there something else which is not being done by government or the community which is still important to the Inuit?

G. K.: Yes. I think the young people deserve to know some of the things we accepted from Christianity as well as what we still practice up to now – things that were not acceptable and still are not acceptable to Christians, that we continue to practice.

The other problem I see now is how young people dress when they go hunting – wearing store-bought parkas which are not designed for our weather. Because we get six months of extremely cold weather, the store-bought clothing can lead to further danger because of the simple fact that it freezes up or gets damp from body heat. Too many hunters, especially the young ones, are wearing store-bought clothing to go out hunting.

R. I.: Is that because the young people prefer the store-bought clothing or is it because no one is making the traditional clothing for them?

G. K.: Some women are not making traditional clothing at all, though it's still the safest clothing to wear because the store-bought clothes freeze up and break. I also know that some young girls can say outright that they don't know how to make them – or even sew, or even tan skins.

There are still many people who wear caribou skin parkas and seal skin boots, but only those who have someone making it for them.

R. I.: Is it important to teach young girls about traditional clothes making?

G. K.: That knowledge must stay and must be continued for as long as we have hunters. I think the Inullariit Society is working on that but they would probably cost money because those who can make high quality clothing are fewer and farther between.

R. I.: You say it's important to keep that knowledge alive?

G. K.: Yes, this is also urgent while we have traditional experts who are willing to share their knowledge. All must be documented and recorded. Graphics could go a long way.

R. I.: What you're saying is that all of those things could be preserved if only they were taught to the younger generation?

G. K.: Yes. Those who are interested can gain knowledge by being taught and practising it, and they can improve with time.

R. I.: Can you tell me about how the leadership was in the old days?

G. K.: The older people approached us even when we seemed to be doing alright – I guess when they had a suggestion to make something work better for us, or to correct our behaviour. My father would tell me that I must listen to my older brother and not push around the young ones like my younger brothers and sisters too much.

He also told us how we should be and how we should not be when going off on our own. He was concerned that my brothers and I would split up or go our own way if we didn't listen to what he told us. They were simple things like making a habit of sharing what we have with our relatives. We were also not to get upset or offended when a family member corrected or disciplined our children, because defending your children from your immediate family can cause tension, and only hurts the child.

I was not to pay attention to what my wife told me – not to take stories she told me too seriously.

My father started telling us all those things before we grew up, just so that we would have something to fall back on when we started living it. Food was to be shared because any unfairness can divide people .

R. I.: What did he mean by asking you not to take your wife's words seriously?

G. K.: What he meant was this: some men would go to great lengths to please their wives – try to do everything to please them, contrary to reason, especially when it involved their children. How I react to the way someone treated my child or children during my absence – what I say or do – could cause problems with my relatives. I never forgot that because the old saying is that if a child is over-protected it only hurts him in the long run. The elders also know how hard it can be trying not to be overly protective of your children, but it's only a sign that disciplining is required throughout your life, and it can be done.

R. I.: Was it because of the child's well-being that one was not to protect him too much?

G. K.: Yes, especially with little boys. If they are over-protected they don't turn out as decently when they grow up because they tend to get upset easily or talk back when someone is trying to correct them – like my younger brother, who was so special to my parents because he was named after a parent of both sides. We know that he is easily upset and was used to having one of them stand up for him. I got into trouble because I wanted him to listen to me, and if he tried taking a caribou leg I wanted, for example, I'd make sure I won. Then we had to be corrected.

I remember the old man Ittuksarjuat, the elder of Avvajjar. He used to invite everyone over when food was delivered and he would take the opportunity to air his thoughts as to how we should be, but I never heard any of the elders, such as our parents, ever talk back. He used to get his sons and nephews together and tell them how they should and should not be.

He would also tell the hunters like myself to make sure not to be greedy. I had to share with those who didn't get anything. We were not to boast about being a good hunter, because there would always be times when we didn't get anything while others did. I know I've forgotten some things that they said were important to know.

I was also warned that I should never abuse fish. Fish present themselves every season at the saputi (fishing weir) on the river where we gather to fish.

I was warned never to fuss if anyone were to take some fish that I had speared. They said I must accept the fish being taken, because if I or any other fishermen fuss about someone taking our fish without telling us, the fish will simply move elsewhere for a number of years.

R. I.: You said earlier that your younger brother had influence because he is named after both your grandparents. At the same time we're told that we must listen and respect our elders or people older than ourselves. How does being named after an elder fit into respecting elders?

G. K.: Naming a child after a deceased loved one helps you through the pain of loss. My younger brother was overly protected by both our parents. My brother and I often got ourselves into trouble if we teased him too much. The old saying is that it is damaging to a child's well-being when he is overly protected. It also shows because he turned out very differently from me and my brother. He tends to talk back to people older than he. Yes, he nearly died, more than once – you see, he was brought up before Christianity, and he has upset a few elders – I guess he could have been cursed. He's over that now, because he's becoming an old man himself.

The people who were overly protected and got away with things tend to show less respect for everyone, including elders, and they seem to forget what the elders have told them. Maybe they don't really forget, but they have less respect and talk back.

When we name a child after a loved one it helps us get over our grief. While over-protecting her damages her future, it is hard not to think of the person she's named after when you see her just learning to do new things. As for myself, I love my brother's daughter wholeheartedly. I even told her that I'm responsible for damaging her future because of the way I tried to defend her, and I admitted this to her.

Yes, there are many things we were told but I'm just telling you about some parts of Inuit knowledge. I can tell you some of what I know.

R. I.: Sure.

G. K.: I also know about rules Inuit had before Christianity. There are some things that we were not to do that we do now, such as overly protecting our children. I think many of us ignore the rules now, even those concerning the things our elders said were damaging. They were concerned about the future of the children; that's why these rules were in place, so that they may be decent people when they grow up. One has to meet their needs, but they also require discipline.

R. I.: Would it help to follow the old rules in today's society – if we were to be just as concerned about their well-being and their future?

G. K.: Certainly. It is our responsibility to protect our children but we're not to get upset when our immediate relatives discipline them. That only hurts our children in the long run. It would be fine to continue this, but here the governments have done more damage to our lives and the lives of our children. They got their way through their laws: Inuit children and youth have been told that they are free to do whatever they please once they come of age. In this way they nearly destroyed Inuit control over planning family matters.

R. I.: Are you saying that what the government calls coming of age is too young?

G. K.: Yes. Sixteen – a ten year old plus six years – is still very young. Schools and teachers say that at sixteen young people are old enough to decide for themselves, according to law. They are not mature yet but the young people take full advantage of that law. Also, many southern ways, laws, and practices are damaging and often conflict with our culture. That is doing further damage to our future.

R. I. What can the Inuit do to protect the Inuit family planning?

G. K.: We're hoping that some of these concerns can be dealt with through Nunavut, though we're concerned that it's getting late in the game to enforce some of the basic Inuit laws which have worked in the past. I don't know

whether Nunavut will capture and safeguard our traditional values; we don't know whether they are going to do their job or not. We shall see. The Inuit will have to work through children and young people and teach them about the values, and that way we can begin to save some of them who would otherwise have been made criminals by the system. If the Inuit take the time to teach what they taught before, and help guide our young people, at least they would learn what they are not to do, and know right from wrong. We can't expect them to change right away, but they would begin to improve as they mature.

R. I.: Did Inuit choose their leaders in the past?

G. K.: No, because families lived in small groups and the leader was a family member, say the father or his father. He had control only as far as making sure everything was done for the family's well-being and success; therefore the leader would decide where they would hunt.

If someone had been saying things others were not happy with the leader would speak to the whole camp in the morning when they had gathered together to eat (they ate in their own homes in the evening). He would let everyone know that it was not proper to spread words that cause ill-feeling. This was done to protect the person who might have said something wrong about a family member, so that he was not singled out or disliked for that reason. The leader kept them aware of what causes problems or tension within the family, in order to have the peace they so valued. It worked.

R. I.: Can this type of family planning still work in a large society?

G. K.: Yes. This can work if the organisations can put their efforts towards the same goal. It can work, but they are too scattered; each group has its own goal. The elders society is working towards improving things, and I support this because I know that they can reach more people, who would in turn recall what they had learned.

R. I.: Do the families still get together with their children and grandchildren to lead them in the right direction?

G. K.: Yes. In our case my wife does that when the whole family gets together once in a while. The elders were responsible for the well-being of their children, daughters and sons-in-law, nieces, and nephews – to ensure that they didn't behave in a way that caused tension. This can be and is being done by those who are more talkative than I.

R. I.: Did the Inuit elders or leaders check to see what everyone else thought about their decisions? Did the others have a say?

G. K.: Yes and no, because it wasn't necessary to find out who was thinking what; but when it came to teamwork, like hunting, they were open to letting anyone hunt where he wished. The younger hunters also checked with each other to find out what they were thinking, where they wanted to go, and what they wanted to hunt.

R. I.: Inuit never had a stranger for their leader before. Was that because the families were grouped on their own?

G. K.: Yes. The father or the grandfather made the decisions because they kept the families together, though families sometimes went to live in the same camp as their son-in-law. The son-in-law's parents were also considered immediate family, and they all shared food. That was part of survival.

R. I.: Was it mostly men who made the decisions?

G. K.: Only when it concerned other men; there were always women like you and my wife who didn't wait for the men to decide things, women who didn't hesitate to say what they thought. There were always women who were well known for their leadership, like Qangukuluk, who was very influential.

R. I.: Were families with strong leadership better organised?

G. K.: Yes, for everything. The people of Avvajjar stuck together until old age, and Ittuksarjuat's descendants and servants stuck together throughout their lives. My wife was exposed to that because her father was the main provider

of skins for women. He used to travel out to Piling because there were no caribou in the Avvajjar area.

R. I.: Are the Iglulingmiut making any efforts to carry this out?

G. K.: Yes, the Inullariit Society has been working on this. It will not be exactly the same but they try the best they can to retain their values. They don't quite lead like those who did before Christianity, but they are still pretty close to it because there are values that no one else can replace which they tend to keep. They are still passing them on to the younger generation, who in turn can pass them on to future generations.

R. I.: How can families stay as close in today's world, in this type of community setting?

G. K.: By sharing country food and helping each other, hunting together, and even helping with money when a family member needs it. My sons-in-law help me out, for example. We only need to teach them the traditional values and they follow them. But some family members, like brothers or sisters, are scattered because when they give them houses they don't necessarily try to keep them next door to each other. This makes it difficult for them to get together as often as they did in the past, but families have no control over that – it's the housing association that decides where they live. We all like to live closer to our sons-in-law and grandchildren, but they're not close neighbours and don't get to visit often.

R. I.: Do the housing arrangements have an impact on families? Some children or young people, for example, don't know who all their relatives are even though they live in the same community.

G. K.: Very much so. Some of the children don't even know the kinship terminology. I know this is happening to my own grandchildren. My wife's mother, for example (Iqallijuq) was moved way out to the other side of the community, which made it difficult for her sons, daughters, and grandchildren to visit with her. They had no say as to whom they wished to live near.

GK's wife (Annie Kappianaq, member of the Housing Allocation Committee): Housing has nothing to do with splitting or dividing any of the families. She was just too far away.

G. K.: What?

Wife: This has not been the cause of any family problems, in my view.

G. K.: What I'm saying is that the family members don't live close enough for them to drop in whenever they wish because of the distance.

Wife: They are distant only physically. They are not distant in terms of values. Families are still very close to one another.

Interviewer's Note:
Husband and wife then argued over the issue of housing: whether or not the way houses are allocated means that the elderly and disabled often live too far from their relatives, and as a result don't get visited enough.

They didn't didn't see any need to record their discussion. That is why the closing remarks and thank-you were not recorded – but it was a good argument.

Margaret Kipsigak
Interviewed by: Nick Arnatsiaq
Translated by: Rhoda Innuksuk

N. A.: What is your name?

M. K.: Sunak. I am now known as Margaret Kipsigak

N. A.: Why is it that you say your real name is Sunak?

M. K.: I was named Sunak at birth by my parents. Sunak was my father's father.

N. A.: Where were you born?

M. K.: I was born in Qaiqsukat past Iglurjuat, where people went hunting caribou, near Pillurujuk.

N. A.: Do you know who the camp leader was?

M. K.: My mother's father Ukumaaluk whom we lived with and whom my father worked with, was leader.

N. A.: Was he the oldest?

M. K.: He was a leader to the younger generation but he had a boss too: our leader took advice from his stepfather Ittuksarjuat.

N. A.: Can you tell me about your childhood?

M. K.: I recall being in the amautiq as a child. The only bits that I wouldn't remember were if I got scared or something but I basically remember everything since I was still carried up to now.

N. A.: How old were you when you started doing chores?

M. K.: I was six years old when I started helping my mother – the same age as little Kipsigak when I started helping around.

N. A.: What kind of things did you help with?

M. K.: The things that were light enough to carry. Anything that had to be taken out or in, moving things that were in the way, and so on.

N. A.: Were there any southern tools or food?

M. K.: We rarely had any southern food. The only time I recall having white man's food was when there was a priest who ate mostly beans and rice staying with us .

N. A.: After having a good life in your traditional lands what made you decide to move to Igloolik?

M. K.: Health. My father's legs were becoming paralysed. They were just starting to build houses for sick and disabled people. I had to move with my parents because my husband died. That was how we ended up in the hands of health and welfare in Igloolik.

N. A.: Was the education another reason?

M. K.: No. No one went to school – there were no schools. Our language Inuktitut was still getting richer when we moved here.

N. A.: Inuit tradition and culture has changed by moving here. Can you tell me any drastic change you've noticed?

M. K.: Our way of life has changed drastically and there are big differences between life here and the life we had before. We had a very busy life before we moved here with our chores and routine. Now all we do is wash dishes – forever washing dishes, sweeping floors, washing cups – and that's about it. We used to share whatever cups we had but washing them didn't take up our

time. We cleaned up too, but it wasn't our full-time occupation, and things never seemed messy.

N. A.: Has the social fabric changed too?

M. K.: There are a lot of changes – even the Inuit pattern. Now the children want to stay up late. We rarely stayed up late before – only in spring when we have twenty-four hour daylight, would we occasionally stay up all night, but no one wondered where you were because they knew. But in Igloolik there are so many houses that we are always wondering where our children went, and we tend to worry about them. In the old days we had respect for people older than ourselves. We obeyed our elders – we practically feared them when they told us anything firmly. There was no question of disobeying their orders. When they told us something in a disciplining or corrective way we would retreat for a while until we got over it before we could face them again.

Sometimes we had to spank or hurt some children for whatever reason as a way of correcting their behaviour. Then you went directly to the child's parents to let them know what you'd had to do, and gave them the reason. Now some children come home crying and nobody ever comes around to let me know why.

N. A.: Which of the Inuit traditions do you most want protected?

M. K.: They must not forget basic survival, because we live in a very cold place. I particularly want clothes-making continued. They must know how to make things like the sole of seal skin boots, because these things require skill and knowledge. The first stage of the process is using bearded seal skin and you cut the size you need. After the skins are dried all the way through you bend it and start chewing it to soften it. Once you've done it, line by line, lengthwise and then sideways, and it begins to soften up, then you start rolling it up to chew it. There are different stages to get it really soft.

They must also know about the qulliq, the seal oil lamp. Some Inuit children who don't get to go out on the land don't know anything about it. Now even Inuit children are curious about it – they will even check the flame to see if it

is hot. The flame is very hot; it can make a big pot boil. They must retain their knowledge because it means heat and light and should not be forgotten. We have qulliqs, our age group and older, even though we don't use them in the houses we have now. I have one I take with me to use in my tent when we go out camping in spring. The qulliq is an essential item for me, because I want all the children who live with me to retain the knowledge. They cannot know what they don't see, and it's very important to me to expose the children to that way of life. I cannot teach it to them by staying in a community, because it's a different setting. We don't go very far, but I try to take my children out on the land away from the community. I go with the kids as soon as we can be in a tent. They also have the desire to go camping, so I take them annually; I have this commitment to preserve part of our culture so that my children will also be able to pass it on. So that's the effort I give to my children so that they are also knowledgeable about basic values.

N. A.: Is there less communication between the older people and younger people?

M. K.: Yes, indeed this changed a great deal. As for myself it would be so good to have another person to talk to but I don't go out visiting, so I rarely talk with anyone. Having someone to talk to would be such a great support. When they wonder about something that we now face, talking to someone can really help a lot. I am not as wise as the older people, and I find that whenever I talk to them it really clears my mind.

N. A.: Are the older people ready and willing to help the younger people?

M. K.: Yes, we are ready and available, even those who are older than I are just waiting to be asked. If anyone isn't sure I would encourage the young people to find out from us, with regard to families. If they're not sure whom they are related to in this community, we would gladly inform them. The young people must approach theirelders and have their questions answered.

N. A.: Has the family kinship changed too?

M. K.: This has changed a lot: sisters, for example, were very close. They would have their own things but they always tried to make sure each had sufficient. Sometimes an older sister would end up getting something she needed from her younger sister, and sometimes the younger sister got what she needed from her older sister. There was no thought of having to pay for them. This also extended to nieces, nephews, cousins, and second cousins, but now it seems like we have to pay for everything we get. We can still do this with our relatives though. In the old days you would be known as my brother and I as your sister because your father was my mother's cousin, which would make you my brother. Knowing this I would give you what you needed without your having to pay for it. Then we would be a lot closer.

N. A.: You can speak more if you want.

M. K.: Children become friends with each other when they've been told they're related. Some children might dislike a relative if they don't know the connection, but they tend to be close when they know they're related and have been told how. And with our Inuit tradition of giving without asking for payment or for the object to be returned, children think they can do the same thing with money – that when a child has no money he can get it from someone who does with no obligation to pay it back. This is where we start running into conflicts among relatives, because we are in a society where nothing is free.

Lucien Ukalianuk
Interviewer: Nick Arnatsiaq
Translated by: Rhoda Innuksuk

N. A.: First of all, what's your name?

L. U.: Lucien Ukalianuk

N. A.: How did you get the name Ukalianuk?

L. U.: My mother named me after Ukalianuk, her adoptive mother, who used to say that she would like to return as a boy to help my father. After she died, I was born a boy as she wished, and that's how Ukalianuk started helping my father.

N. A.: Who were your parents?

L. U.: My father was Guy Mamattiaq and my mother was Rynee Iqualuk.

N. A.: Who were your grandparents?

L. U.: My grandfather was Arnatsiaq and my grandmother was Aapak. After Aapak died, my grandfather married Uriuqtuq. She was mother to Sabina, Annie Qanguq, Philomina, Madeleine, and Joseph Qimiqjuaq, all my grandfather's children. He and Aapak had my father Mamattiaq, who was the oldest, Mark Ijjangiaq, Peter Tatigat, Elijah Qamaniq, Arsakaat, and then Laura Qatuuranuk. From his second wife Madeleine is the eldest, then Philomena, then Annie Qanguq, Sabina Pauktuut, and Joseph Qimiqjuaq; then the late Charlie Ilupaalik, who drowned as a young man, was the youngest of Arnatsiaq's children.

N. A.: Who was your camp leader?

L. U.: Our family often had their own camp without other families so my father was our leader even when his father was still alive. His father only

decided where we would live; we went along with having my father make other decisions.

N. A.: What kind of person did one have to be to be a camp leader?

L. U.: A leader had to be responsible and able to organise day to day activities for the hunters. They were also responsible for distribution of food. All the hunters would unload their catch at the leader's home: what I am saying is, the hunter didn't take meat home to his family. Instead he delivered it to the leader who then distributed it equally to the entire camp. Hunters let the leader know if they were taking anything home.

N. A.: What did you do as a child and how old were you when you started going out on hunting trips?

L. U.: I was very young when I started going with my father, and going along was very important to me. I remember once trying to go after a boat that was leaving. One thing I regret when I think back is asking to go with my father when he was going on a long hike, because he would end up carrying me when I got tired. I liked playing in the water and would wet my kamiks, and there was no dryer. We had a qulliq but it would take a long time to dry them. I remember my father drying my socks with his body heat. I was six, seven, or maybe eight years old when I started going with my father when he went hunting.

N. A.: Was there any southern food when you were a child?

L. U.: Flour, biscuits, tea, sugar, and oats were the only foreign food, but we didn't always have them.

N. A.: Do you remember why your family moved to Igloolik?

L. U.: Our case was not quite the same as the rest of the families who moved here, because one year when we lived at Agu Bay we travelled to Igloolik to trade the ice conditions were very rough and we had a long qamutik. The front runners would get stuck in the rough ice, and so we would have to pull

it out to free them. My father was not too well, and we travelled through very rough ice for three days. He started vomiting blood after we arrived at Igloolik where he nearly died and could no longer work hard. Paniaq ended up guiding us back home because my father couldn't build an igloo any more, and later that spring we had to come back because of his health. He was then sent to Pangnirtung for medical treatment, because he couldn't do any more physical work or hunt. That was the main reason we stayed in Igloolik. After that it was the school. By that time my younger brother was old enough to be of some help but the younger ones like yourself had to go to school. Those are the two reasons we had for staying in this community.

N. A.: What noticeable change have you seen in Inuit culture since you've been here?

L. U.: When I was a child and growing up, and throughout my youth, we had one boat. Well, my uncle had one too, but we all owned it. Everyone worked to maintain everything for everyone. When we bought hunting gear, for example, it was for everyone: fuel, ammunition, and rifles – we shared everything all year round. That has changed because everybody wants to have their own things now. They look after only themselves. Now we no longer check to see if anyone other than our immediate family needs anything. The Inuit are living as if they have no leader. They don't have their traditional leaders any more; therefore people living in the communities are living like children without a boss or a guardian, and they are all trying to make decisions for themselves.

In the old days if I wanted something that belonged to someone else I just asked the mother, and then it was given to me. If anyone else wanted something I had they just asked my mother and then I'd give it to whoever wanted it. The woman used to throw in an extra parka or anything else so that if anyone got cold we would have it on hand to lend to them. All that has changed. Now our grown children can't even get to go hunting because they don't have anyone to go with, even though they have relatives who have everything. This shows that they don't share like they used to. Many young people are stuck in a community because they don't have hunting equipment or transportation, and so they don't get to go out on the land even

in spring when the weather is really quite nice. They don't have anyone to go with.

N. A.: Is this change a result of moving into a community?

L. U.: Yes. Helping each other is a tradition which we have always valued. I remember one time my father and I lost almost all our dogs: they all died but three, and we lived far away. Attarjuat sent us some of his dogs.

Another time my father and I lost everything down at the floe edge in the ivujut, the ice floes that pile up through pressure. The ivujut crushed everything – dogs, qamutik, and all our hunting gear. A few dogs survived along with us. When we managed to return home everyone chipped in and gave us all we needed: sled, dogs, harpoons, ropes, rifle, Coleman stove, ammunition – we had everything in less than a week. If this were to happen to me now, I would just lose it all, and people would practically laugh at me instead of helping. That's how much the attitude has changed since we started gathering in one place.

N. A.: Do you want to say any more about the conditions Inuit are faced with?

L. U.: Inuit have been going through some changes which they can't avoid. I also know that Inuit have it in them to want to help, but money has made it next to impossible to help their relatives. Especially if one has a job, the rent is very high, plus you pay taxes, income tax – even if you have the desire to help unemployed relatives it is difficult even to keep up with their bills, which makes it hard to practice our tradition of helping each other. The cost of everything is very high. They are controlled through money.

The first white people who came here were very domineering, and Inuit were very obedient, so the social fabric was easy for them to damage.

N. A.: Why is there such a generation gap between the young people and the elders?

L. U.: For a few reasons. One of them has to do with the kind of houses which we now occupy, with bedrooms. When we try to spend time at home with our children they go to their bedroom and close the door, and we can't talk with them when they isolate themselves. They also learn in school that they don't have to listen to their parents once they come of age. Also there are a lot of houses everywhere which they can visit. When you try talking to them they know they can get away with it if they don't want to listen, because the government says they can decide for themselves once they turn sixteen. So that in itself has created a problem within families, and it has been made acceptable to live that way.

N. A.: Are the elders still eager to help the young people if they're asked?

L. U.: Yes, they are more than willing to help or answer questions, but the young people are not seeking advice from their elders and the elders have half accepted the southern system but are not willing to accept it fully. The young people seem to be losing respect and are not bothering to seek advice, knowing that the elders don't have a formal education: but their attitude changes completely when you take them out on the land and start asking questions. There are too many distractions in a community.

N. A.: I don't have any more questions for now, unless you have more to say.

L. U.: No.

N. A.: Thank you.

Rosie Iqallijuq
Interviewed by: Rhoda Innuksuk
Translated by: Rhoda Innuksuk

I am originally from the Keewatin (Kivalliq). I was born in Qatiktalik near Chesterfield, and was raised in Chesterfield Inlet.

My real mother was Nuvvija and my father, who died shortly after I was born, was Ituliaq. I was born in the summer, and my real father died the following winter down at the floe-edge. He caught a seal down in the sea and used an ice pan to go and get it. The wind picked up and the ice chipped off, loosening his rope, and he drowned. That's how my real father Ituliaq died, near Chesterfield Inlet.

We ended up living with Kappianaq, my father's younger brother. Then when Pijausuittuq heard the news he sent for my mother, his niece. I was just a small child, not even a year old, when we went to live with her uncle. He had an adopted son named Kublu, whom I called Ataatakuluk. Kappianaq was worried about my mother and decided not to let her marry a stranger in case he abused her. He decided to keep us in the family and arranged for Kublu, his adopted son, to marry my mother. We lived with them from that time on, and moved to Chesterfield Inlet where my parents found employment. I don't recall this myself because I was still very young.

The Hudson's Bay Company built the first house in Chesterfield the year I was born. The Catholic church was also built the same year. *[HBC post and RC mission were built in 1912]* They said that I was born the year the Catholic priests got their house. As my parents worked for the Hudson's Bay Company, I spent my earlier years in Chesterfield Inlet.

I was ten years old when my father froze his feet. He was on holiday, and had gone across the Inlet to hunt seals and walrus when he was caught in a storm. Both heels were frozen so badly he nearly didn't make it home. We headed back to Chesterfield as soon as he returned to the camp, and he went south for treatment that summer when the ship came.

That summer, when I was eleven, my mother and I went to Coral Harbour. Your grandfather Qulittalik took us there, to Pituqqiq, so he could look after us while my father was away. I was thirteen by the time he returned from hospital and came to Pituqqiq.

R. I.: Who was in that camp with you?

R. Iqallijuq: Ava, Qulittalik, and Ivalaaq and his parents. Ava and his family went to Repulse Bay to buy ammunition and tobacco. That was the first time I heard the term "tavaaki" and "sunagaq", because we called it "tipaak" and "qarjuq. "

R. I.: What did the Hudson's Bay Company sell in those days?

R. Iqallijuq: I was brought up in Chesterfield Inlet where they had flour, tea, and sugar. We also got a ration every Saturday – plenty of everything. I don't even recall it item by item, because we had many things. All the workers in the settlement were very well looked after, given plenty of food every Saturday. I never even had much country food. I would have it once in a while when my mother served me some caribou or seal. I used to ask her whether it were good, or if it might be poisonous. I used to think that I would die if I ate it – I wasn't brought up on it.

R. I.: What kind of hunting equipment did they use?

R. Iqallijuq: In Coral Harbour I remember them making their own ammunition using gunpowder. I was ten, and it was the first time I had been anywhere they actually ran out of store-bought items – we always had everything in Chesterfield Inlet – but in Coral Harbour they ran out of things, like flour, sugar, tea, tobacco, and so on. And I certainly don't recall what they used for hunting, or the tools they used.

R. I.: Were they still travelling by dog team?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes. That was the only form of transportation in winter, but we went to Coral Harbour with Makik on his boat. Aulanaaq travelled with us.

When my father went south for treatment that was quite an experience for me. It was the first time my mother and I lived in an igloo. It seemed very cold, because my parents had had a little house at Chesterfield Inlet. This was my first exposure to the camping life – hunting and fishing – because life was very different when my parents were working and had everything they needed.

R. I.: The life you had must have been very different from the lives of your great-grandparents.

R. Iqallijuq: Yes, but I never lived with them. I was always with my mother as the only child; she raised me. I was ten when my mother and I moved to Coral Harbour. It was there that I started going out on hunting trips with the boys – and that change turned me into one of the boys like Pamiulik and Qusagaq.

R. I.: Were your grandparents from the Keewatin too?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes, we were all from there, but my grandparents died before I was born. My mother's great-grandparents were Qingailitaq and Ataguaqjugusiq, who had many sons and daughters. That's why so many people are related. They had many children who spread all over – that's why there are so many of us.

R. I.: Was the community small when you were a child?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes. The only people we saw were those who came in to trade, mostly men. Once in a while some families would come in with just a few dogs. The people of the Baker Lake area were often starving to death. Dog teams were the only means of transportation. We saw many people who were nearly starving. The Hudson's Bay Company established their posts in places where starvation was common. That's why Igloolik was one of the last places to have white people, because they always had food. Sometimes they ran low on supplies, but hunting was good in this area. The only people I ever saw

hungry here were my daughter-in-law's parents, Alexina's parents. Our family took them food, and then brought them to Avvajjar.

R. I.: Did your parents move here too?

R. Iqallijuq: They moved here before I had any children.

R. I.: Were all your children born in this area?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes, all of them were born up here, and I used to boast about the fact that I have become an Amitturmiutaq [a person from the Igloolik area].

R. I.: When you moved to the Amittuq region did you go to Igloolik?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes, we lived here but my husband and I quite often lived in Piling, in order to provide better for our families, because my husband was from a large family. He had many brothers and sisters – they are all gone now. They were well organized, and the family kinship was a lot closer. Every child knew exactly who his uncles and aunts and cousins were, and from which side of the family. Then all the cousins were made to know their roots and their relatives and their roles as family members, unlike today. Parents or in-laws don't have a chance to educate their children about all these things any more because children are spending a lot of time in school losing touch with their roots. That's why kinship is not what it used to be. We were told to work together and visit the elders as a matter of routine, and stay close to our relatives by providing them with what they needed, and our relatives did likewise.

The younger generation is less equipped with knowledge of their ancestors because in schools white people do not teach them about those things. The customs and the very social fabric are greatly damaged by the schools – to a point of confusion. Family doesn't seem to be a priority any more. They're more concerned about themselves now rather than their siblings, parents, and other relatives, and are mixing in the community with other young people. They seem to have lost their focus.

R. I.: Why did so many families decide to move to the community?

R. Iqallijuq: For medical reasons mostly. In our case we were in Hall Beach when my husband's parents and his older brother died, so we moved there to be with his older cousin. We joined him there before white people came up. My mother accidentally shot my husband in the leg and he was picked up by aircraft and taken to Nursurnarjuk, so we moved there. While we were in Nursurnarjuk the DEW line was built, and the Hudson's Bay Company and Catholic Mission were finally built in Igloolik that year. There were a couple of houses here but by that time I was working at the nursing station in Hall Beach, and more people came for treatment. Many people had skin disease and boils that year and moved to Hall Beach and Igloolik. All this happened after I had my last child. It was mostly for medical reasons that people gathered into these two communities and they grew from there.

R. I.: Were the health services like the nursing station the first to be established by the government?

R. Iqallijuq: No – the government came up but worked through the Catholic church, which first provided family allowances. Managayuk was the first government administrator to give out family allowances, which had been handled by the Catholic mission before that – just the family allowances, as there was no old age pension yet. I worked at the nursing station in the mornings and at the government building in the afternoons, then back to the nursing station. I used to go back and forth because they had never been exposed to white people. The white people didn't speak any Inuktitut. They couldn't understand each other. I worked until they said I'd worked enough years, and then I started receiving the old age pension.

R. I.: How different was life in the communities back then?

R. Iqallijuq: The people were healthier before, because there wasn't a lot of sickness. People died, but of normal causes. It was when the nursing station was built that many sick people got together and passed their illnesses on to people elsewhere – and illness in general increased.

R. I.: Gathering into communities had an impact on their health?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes – people caught germs from other people. Their health deteriorated from moving into communities. I don't notice it now because that's just the way things went, and these sicknesses are so common now that it's no longer a great concern to anyone. But some do recover.

R. I.: What seems to be the cause of all the social problems? Were these changes brought about by the government?

R. Iqallijuq: I can't say that these changes were brought about by the governments, because they've always been open and sincere when they know who you are. I honestly can't say that they are the cause of all the changes, because the problems arise just by people gathering together into a community. The internal problems began with gossiping about one another, which is the root cause of family breakdown.

R. I.: Are you saying that Inuit created their own social problems?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes – problems are caused by greed, jealousy, revenge, power, and vindictiveness. It is the attitude of the people which creates problems for the family and society. Inuit were very proud people. I've been criticized for having an interest in or an acceptance of white people. Some people who couldn't take criticism therefore created tension. I know that they're trying to deal with that problem and are returning to basic family values.

R. I.: Did Inuit know that they would be in for a lot of changes as they gathered together?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes, I am sure some of them knew. Take my grandson for example, who sometimes is called Ittijuaq. He wanted to get away, to leave Igloolik to be free of its social problems. I was still living in Hall Beach when he sought my permission to leave Igloolik's internal problems. He saw families dividing up. Men almost have to sneak around to have a woman, which is one of the main reasons for gossiping. I granted him permission to go, if he thought he would have a better life on his own out in Iglurjuat. I

told him: "just don't turn your back on society, and come back into the community whenever you need supplies. " He had a valid reason.

R. I.: Is there any particular aspect of Inuit culture that you feel should be retained?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes, the Inuit clothing must be kept and promoted. This country gets bitterly cold and the southern clothing, which is not meant to be warm, freezes up here. If it gets wet it's finished. Some get wet from the inside. But caribou skins and seal skins will not freeze. It is the highest quality clothing. The southern clothing is fine as long as the weather is not too cold, but it is not suitable for arctic storms – so it is very important to keep using what works best for this kind of environment. I highly recommend its continued use.

R. I.: How about being able to build a shelter – say an igloo for example – when you get caught in a storm?

R. Iqallijuq: This is something both men and women knew, and it is easy once you learn. I would encourage young girls to learn to build one. It is necessary for survival.

R. I.: Was igloo building common knowledge to all people?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes. The other thing was to know how to drive a dog team. This was also done by anyone except in cases where a girl had brothers and didn't have to help her father as much. The girls who didn't have a lot of brothers were very capable of doing everything such as hunting, driving a dog team, building an igloo, and so on. The girls who had brothers doing most of the work were less capable of looking after themselves because they had less experience.

R. I.: Who was your main teacher from childhood?

R. Iqallijuq: My father. He didn't act like a teacher but if I asked how things were done he would show me and say, "try it like this." After a while I was

able to build an igloo while he waited at a seal hole. He would just put up the first block and I would do the rest, and build small ones. It is just the same as learning to sew or make clothing: you may not be good at it but you get there with practice. Everything takes practice. That's how people learn to do things, and we cannot get good at anything unless we try.

R. I.: Inuit communities are big now, but seeing as they are rapidly growing, do you think Inuit will promote their culture and hold onto their values in the future as the communities take on more responsibilities?

R. Iqallijuq: I'm not too concerned with that issue because Inuit are now putting their priorities in place and slowly taking on more and more responsibilities. I know that the only way they will succeed is if it's the will of the creator, and if they put their effort into it. Even the people who seem wise or powerful can go wrong if they are not careful, and we can correct the problems too if we are willing. The family values can still work in a community if people enforce them and practice them. Anyone with the desire to make things work can have a good life and a good family. It's all there for those who don't allow themselves to get caught up with social problems or caught in the circle; but when there is no discipline their problems could get even worse, if they don't correct them.

R. I.: What seems to be the best way of putting family values in place in a large community?

R. Iqallijuq: The parents must take on their responsibilities and pass on their knowledge to their children so they continue to know who their relatives are and what the values are, because the knowledge is there. They are just not getting a chance – which could also be changed.

R. I.: Inuit have a history of helping each other and providing for each other's needs in the family. Do you see this continuing in a community?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes – many families hold together and work together, even today. Many families are not even shaken by today's social problems because, after all, the problems we hear about are caused by those who put their freedom to

do anything they want foremost, having no regard for anyone else. Those are the people who create tension and disagreements and don't care about their families. And in many cases the middle-aged assume the older people are senile and no longer reliable and they no longer take their elders seriously. Those are the people who are the cause of changes and instability in leadership.

R. I.: Do you have anything else you would like to add?

R. Iqallijuq: No, I don't think so.

R. I.: What Inuit values would you like your descendants to retain?

R. Iqallijuq: Helping each other: not only relatives, but people in general. Sometimes Inuit looked down on taking in strangers or helping out people who weren't relatives, but I tell my children this: a person can gain a sense of having a family if a family takes him in. Helping people and elders has been the routine I have practised most of my life. I used to get accused of fooling around as a young girl because I took people into my house; but I would not change, because I learned from the Catholic priest as a young child to help those in need, such as orphans and poor people. I went to church regularly as a child in Chesterfield Inlet. As well, my husband had no objection to my way of life, and so he supported me all the way. I realize that helping people has a far-reaching effect, and also helps one to live a peaceful life. This is not restricted to Inuit only. Other races are much alike: when a person gets sick, he becomes as helpless as a child. I will never change my way of accepting people of all races in my home, and I want the younger generation to know that. Being able to accept those in need of help is healthy for one's life.

R. I.: You feel that the basic values must continue being practised?

R. Iqallijuq: Yes indeed. Thank you for asking about them.

R. I.: You can talk more if you have messages for the younger generation.

R. Iqallijuq: Young people become uncertain when they don't get positive responses from their elders. For example: if they ask what would seem best in a situation, and are told to do what seems best for themselves, then they are not being provided with the guidance they are seeking. Those are the innocent victims of society. Inuit are very capable of changing the uncertainties if they so desire; even white people could have better lives if they knew the values which keep everyone together.

The weakness of Inuit is the fact that they rely on oral history, though they're staring to document the oral history, as you are doing. White people, like Inuit, can get along well if they're comfortable with the people they are with.

R. I.: Feel free to talk about anything of importance to you and society.

R. Iqallijuq: I'd like to stop now because I'm going to be giving you too much of a work load. I don't want to wear you out.

R. I.: You can talk all day or however long you want – you're the person who holds wisdom and knowledge which we must use to carry on the tradition.

R. Iqallijuq: I'm getting too hot now so let's take a break.

R. I.: May I come back for further information if necessary?

R. Iqallijuq: Certainly. You can ask me anything you want, any time.

R. I.: Thank you very much for your valuable time.

R. Iqallijuq: Thank you.

Tatigat (Peter Arnatsiaq)
Interviewer: Nick Arnatsiaq
Translated by: Rhoda Innuksuk

N. A.: What is your name:

P. A.: Tatigat is my birth given name, but since then I've taken the Christian name Peter, and my late father's name Arnatsiaq.

N. A.: Do you know how you were given the name Tatigat?

P. A.: Yes. My grandmother had a daughter named Tatigat who died before I was born and they named me after her when I was born.

N. A.: Who were your parents?

P. A.: My father, as I said, was Arnatsiaq; my mother was Aapak.

N. A.: I've heard you were adopted. Who adopted you?

P. A.: Yes, I was adopted by my grandmother, my father Arnatsiaq's mother.

N. A.: What was her name?

P. A.: Pauktuut, whom you are named after.

N. A.: Where were you born?

P. A.: On the other side of Igloolik, near Mogg Bay, at Avamaktalik.

N. A.: Who was your camp leader?

P. A.: My grandfather on my father's side. We used to have the same leader as long as he lived, and my grandfather was the oldest so he was given the honour of leading. They would take him wherever he wanted to go. We didn't live here in Igloolik but lived on the other side in Avvajjar in winter.

N. A.: What was your grandfather's name?

P. A.: Ittuksarjuat.

N. A.: Was he leader because he was the oldest?

P. A.: Yes, he was the oldest, and his sons obeyed him entirely. He organised everything for them and he was highly respected by his children. His sons worked according to his word: they hunted where he sent them, and there was no waste of their catch. Whenever sickness occurred more than usual he would decide to move to another location, to give nature a chance to take care of the illness and allow the place to cure itself. You could move back to it the following year after it had time to cool off.

N. A.: Has Avvajjar been left to cure?

P. A.: Yes, that was a regular practice. Sometimes everybody left and there were times when they would live elsewhere for a year but they would return there because it is a good location for seal hunting, better than anywhere in this region. Everywhere else is inferior, that is if you want something other than walrus.

N. A.: Can you tell me something about your childhood?

P. A.: Yes. I was raised by my grandmother and so I stayed in the camp as her helper. I didn't get to go out hunting – I wanted to, but I had to stay with my grandmother. I got to go only if they were returning the same day, but I helped unload and so on. I rarely overnighted with the hunters until my grandparents died. Then I started hunting on my own, guided by my grandfather's words. I recall him saying that if you are living alone and start hunting, you must think of those who live nearby. I had to have plenty in order to supply food to anyone in need.

N. A.: Was there any southern food?

P. A.: No, because we had to go the Hudson's Bay Company to get it, and it was used right away. On the rare occasions when they got things like flour, all the people living in spring camps, and there were many tents, would be called when tea and bannock was being served. Every single person was given a piece of bannock with tea, and then it was gone. Some people would save some flour for Christmas, but not all the time.

N. A.: Where did you trade?

P. A.: Myself, when I was a little boy, I remember my grandparents telling me that we were going to Repulse Bay by dog team, and I was told that we were going to the Hudson's Bay trading post. My grandfather told me there was a perfect grandfather for me there, and I had never seen white people and thought he was referring to a white man. It turned out to be an inuk.

N. A.: Do you recall the first time you saw a white person?

P. A.: Yes, but not vividly. We stayed in the place where visitors stayed in Nigirsliq. He spoke Inuktitut but in Uangnirliq there were more southerners. My main friends were Quassa's family because I was just a young boy, but I remember Piunguallaq working as a cleaner and dishwasher to the Company in Nigirsliq.

N. A.: Do you remember why you moved to a community?

P. A.: I don't know why, because I came this way when there was an establishment in Hall Beach, when people were just beginning to organise themselves. They were in the process of organising a local co-op. Then I went south to hospital. The governments were just coming up here, but I was south for quite a while. There was already a crowd when I came back. I took part in the establishment of the co-op by carving and became a member. I don't recall anyone calling them to move, but they would get picked up if they were sick. Some went back out to the land when they recovered, but ever since the community has been growing.

N. A.: Which life style do you prefer?

P. A.: They would still be more successful if they were on their own in groups. Even if they were scattered each of the families would still look out for each other's needs. Inuit have always helped each other. If one camp was not doing well another camp helped them by supplying food. We lived on country food, and if one family was not very successful, other families would pick them up and hunt with them in a better location where they could provide for themselves more successfully.

N. A.: Would I be correct by saying the families were closer together?

P. A.: It sure seems like it. Now they get together as if they are going to work together like in the old days, but instead they go off to do their own thing. In the old days the young people asked their elders for direction and they would do what they wanted, after getting an elder's approval.

N. A.: What traditional values do you want to see maintained?

P. A.: I want to see traditional values maintained, especially the practice of helping each other as relatives. It has always been important to know your relatives and acknowledge that you know by taking part in family activities.

N. A.: Is there any more you want to add to this interview?

P. A.: Not really. All I want to say is that since people moved to Igloolik I've always hunted further away, because when they moved here they all started hunting in the same areas nearby. There are too many hunters hunting in the same place. For that reason I go further away when I want to get something. I had to trap foxes to sell, and then I had to hunt to feed my family. Sometimes the hunters don't get anything because there are too many of them nearby– so I go to places where there is no one, to make sure I get what I need.

N. A.: I don't have any more questions, but go ahead.

P. A.: I'm finished too.

N. A.: Thank you.

Rachel Uyarasuk
Interviewed by Sheila Otak
Translated by Rhoda Innuksuk

S. O.: What is your name?

R. U.: Rachel Uyarasuk

S. O.: Where were you born?

R. U.: I was born in Amittuq, in a fishing camp called Iqaluit.

S. O.: Who were your parents?

R. U.: My mother was Illupaalik and my father was Inuaraq. I was adopted by Sarpinak and Panilluk.

S. O.: Where did you live as a child?

R. U.: Near Clyde River.

S. O.: Who was your main teacher when you were learning to do things?

R. U.: I never lived with anyone except my adoptive parents. There were no schools to go to, so I learned things from my adoptive parents, mostly by example.

S. O.: Who were the other people in your family camp?

R. U.: We never lived in large groups. My family used to hike up to the main caribou hunting ground for the summer. Then we returned to the coast in the fall to join Angutirjuaq and Inuguk, my father Panilluk's brothers.

Then there was Piugaattuk, his wife Qungaslaluk, and his father Apitak. They weren't directly related to us but we used to hunt with them inland. When we returned to the coast in the fall we met up with other families and stayed

with them until the sea froze, when we scattered again to go to our own individual hunting grounds. None of the families ever used to stay in one place; they moved around according to what game or fish they were after.

S. O.: Who was your camp leader?

R. U.: My father's boss was his older brother. Those who had fathers took orders from them, even when they got old.

S. O.: What kinds of things did you have in your camp?

R. U.: Everything was made from local materials. People made their own tools. Our clothing was made from skins and we used every part of every animal hunted from the land and sea. There was no quota on any animal. The only animals caught from time to time and not eaten were wolves; those we did not eat. When anything else was caught everyone was invited to come and share the food.

We never had tea until I was older, when we travelled to Pond Inlet where the Hudson's Bay Company had a trading post. That was where we bought tea, sugar, and flour; we probably had them before, but they would never last. We simply did without them when we ran out, and lived off wildlife.

S. O.: Did you have things like tents?

R. U.: Yes, we had skin tents.

S. O.: What about in winter?

R. U.: We lived in sod houses. We used sod with whale bones for beams and window frames. Once the beams were up and the window frames in place the house was covered with skin which was then sewn together. Before putting in the insulation it was covered by another layer of skin. The inside was also completely covered using skins. We split the inner skins in half because they go a long way when you do that and remove the hair. Then we used bearded seal intestines for our windows. That was our winter home.

S. O.: What about boats? Were they also made of skins?

R. U.: Yes, there were two kinds; the common one was a qajaq and then there was an umiaq. Both were covered with bearded seal skins and hunters used them to kill animals sometimes much bigger than themselves and their small boats.

S. O.: What kinds of store-bought food did you have?

R. U.: First of all we now commonly call Saturday "Sivataarvik"(the day you receive biscuits). Saturday is still called Sivataarvik; it used sometimes to be called Niqitaarvik (the day you receive food). That term is no longer used, and Sivataarvik stuck. It was started by those who found employment with the Company. Every Saturday the wife of the company helper was invited to pick up tea, sugar, flour, biscuits, and molasses, bringing the same containers back for refill. The rest of us who didn't live there only experienced a taste of these foods, as when we left the post we went back to our regular diet which consisted entirely of wildlife.

S. O.: Do you recall the days before there was any outside control?

R. U.: Oh yes. The outside influence is very new to us. We had been and still were largely independent. When I was a child we always used the sea mammal blubber for light and heat. We melted ice and cooked our own food all from ringed seals, bearded seals, and whales. We used seal oil lamps, and people hunted all the time in order to have food, clothing, heat, and light. No blubber meant no light or heat; there were no alternatives. White people just didn't exist. We never had any sweets – just biscuits, oats, molasses, flour, and sugar.

S. O.: When did you move to Igloolik?

R. U.: I think it was 1969. I'm not sure now, but it was the year Kanadice was born.

S. O.: What was the reason for moving here?

R. U.: We lived in Alarnaarjuk when we ran out of food. Some of our dogs starved – I guess the community got worried. The RCMP plane came to pick us up. We had Alaasuaq with us, but we left him behind. He later came by dog team.

S. O.: How different was it from today's society?

R. U.: We had no contact with the white people. There was no formal school for us to attend. We were taught basic survival; we were taught to be independent. There was no store-bought clothing or food or any other foreign items for that matter. We produced everything ourselves, all from what we learned from our parents. We all worked hard and were completely determined to survive. Inuit were their own bosses and they knew nothing about the white system. We hunted for everything we needed – clothing and food. They caught whatever they needed any time the game presented itself, all year round. We cached the meat for winter, and we ate aged meat from our cache without even thinking that there would be any germs of any kind – and we enjoyed our food.

S. O.: Is there anything in particular from Inuit tradition that you want to see continued?

R. U.: The older people have always taught us what was taught to them. Inuit believe in a relaxed peaceful life. Getting along with each other was important.

Inuit valued peace, and they instructed us how to achieve it. Those basic principles included not being lazy, and cooperation. We had to tolerate those older than ourselves, and not argue. We were taught to be caring, and by that I mean to always be willing to help those who can't look after themselves, like orphans, or old or disabled people. We were to have compassion and care enough to feed them and take them in as part of the family. We were taught these things long before priests ever arrived: not to tell lies, not to steal. And we took them as the natural law, as it stands even today, and should be

practised by this generation and generations to come. Women were also told to obey and honour their husbands, so they themselves would always be obeyed and honoured with peace and happiness. We were to get along with each other. We had no alcohol to influence stubbornness, selfishness, or cause distraction.

There are not many older people left. All would like to pass on the key to peace and happiness and they hope to pass it on to future generations.

S. O.: Which way of life do you prefer?

R. U.: The high school students are going through much tougher times today than we did, for one reason: they are exposed to southern education and are learning English, which we know nothing about. They are studying it while they live with parents like myself – and I am very traditional. We have more power and are more effective than the white influence, and so they are also having to accord with our rules and traditions. These will always be more important than what we don't know.

I would like them to learn English, and learn to survive with the white people: but we also want them to retain our values. We want our values and traditions to be their base and foundation.

S. O.: If you had the power to make changes, what would you do?

R. U.: We hear about how addictive drugs are, and once a young person starts taking drugs he gets out of control. Some people even give up trying to fix the problem. I would like to see a way found so that children and teenagers are no longer too eager to try it – in other words, if you haven't tried it, don't start. Most of us can't tell when young people are taking drugs.

In the meantime we continue to pray to keep that peace, and help each other even through prayers. Our prayers are heard and our needs are met. We are meant to live with fairness and honesty and not to exclude anyone – because we are all valued.

S. O.: Thank you very much.

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