Stories About Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk

Interpretive Resource Manual

Yukon
Government

STORIES ABOUT HERSCHEL ISLAND- QIKIQTARUK

INTERPRETIVE RESOURCE MANUAL

prepared by:
J.S.Peepre and Associates
Patricia Halladay Graphic Design
and
Bufo Incorporated

with

Helene Dobrowolsky
Murielle Nagy
Northern Biomes Ltd.
Rob Ingram
and contributing authors
Leslie Cole
Jill Pangman
Karen McKenna

Resource Specialists for Stories About Qikiqtaruk

(Used with permission from Cultural Study carried out by Inuvialuit Social Development Program and conducted by Murielle Nagy)

Ishmael Alunik
Hope Gordon
Persis Lennie Gruben
Kathleen Hansen
Fred Inglangasuk
Jimmy Jacobson
Christina Klengenburg
Dora Malegana
Sarah Meyook
Joe Nasogaluak
Albert Oliver
Jean Tardiff
Peter Thrasher

March 1992

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people helped in the preparation and review of this manual. We are grateful to the Inuvialuit Social Development Program and the Inuvialuit elders for allowing the use of stories from the recent oral history program. We would also like to acknowledge:

Doug Olynyk (Project Manager), Heritage Branch, Yukon
Finlay McCrae, Renewable Resources, Yukon
Dave Ladret, Renewable Resources, Yukon
Brent Riley, Heritage Branch, Yukon
Ruth Gotthardt, Heritage Branch, Yukon
Graham Baird (Former Park Ranger), Renewable Resources
Billy Day, Herschel Island Technical Committee
Donald Aviugana, Herschel Island Technical Committee
Gloria Allen, Inuvialuit Social Development Program

Cover photos:

Above: Herschel Island Harbour, circa 1913. Canadian Arctic Expedition. (G. H. Wilkins, National Museum of Canada)

Below: Eskimo schooners from Banksland (Banks Island) and Mackenzie Delta at Pauline Cove, 1930. (Finnie Collection, Yukon Archives)

CONTENTS

"Eskimo family at Herschel Island, 1925. Standing in front of small canvas-covered structure." (D.W. Gillingham, Finnie coll.; Yukon Archives)

HERSCHEL ISLAND IN THE BEAUFORT SEA

WHAT IS INTERPRETATION?

Interpretation is a way of communicating information. It passes on information in such as way as to reveal meanings and relationships to the audience.

The best interpretation is a first-hand experience. In interpretation, the number of facts is not as important as giving a sense of meaning to the participant. For example, on Herschel Island, the exact number and names of flowers may not be as important as understanding how the arctic environment affects plant life. Or interpreters could demonstrate how marine mammals and hunters are affected by ocean currents.

Interpretation is different from education because it takes place in an informal setting for a volunteer audience. The audience on Herschel Island, for example, will not usually visit the park just to be informed.

Another important part of interpretation is to affect people's attitudes. Interpretation can help park managers protect the environment. Interpretation can be combined with recreation and tourism to provide an additional service for visitors.

So What Does That Mean?

It means that interpretation is more about ideas and feelings than facts. When a visitor leaves Herschel Island, the interpreter does not really care whether they remember all the names of the wildflowers or when the people gather to hunt belugas or the dates when the whalers visited. The interpreters will have done their job well if the visitor leaves with the feeling that Qikiqtaruk is a very special place; a homeland for the Inuvialuit, a sanctuary for wildlife, a fragile piece of living history.

It also means that, ideally, interpretation is done right there — beside what is being talked about. Teachers often have to describe their subject or use books as references. Interpreters have the advantage of being there: beside the bird, the flower, the house, the ocean...whatever is the subject.

OBJECTIVES OF INTERPRETATION

Objectives for Interpreters on Herschel Island/Qikiqtaruk *could* be:

(1) to educate the visitor in the purpose of this Territorial Park: how to use, know and enjoy the park and how to develop a sympathetic attitude towards the park environment;

(2) to create an awareness of the historical role of people within this landscape and the long and continuing relationship of the Inuvialuit to their island in the Polar sea;

(3) to create an understanding of the natural environment of Herschel Island/ Qikiqtaruk and of the fragile relationships of humans, plants and animals;

(4) to provide a chance for park visitors to gain knowledge and skills in ways which are appropriate to a park setting;

(5) to reduce the number of problems and potential conflicts between visitors and the park environment or park management policies.

METHODS OF INTERPRETATION

Historically, a wide variety of techniques have been used to achieve the goals of interpretation: the revealing of information, meanings and relationships through first-hand experience. No single method ever achieves all of the objectives for interpretation. As a consequence, a combination of techniques is generally used. Some

ways of interpretation lend themselves to presenting information to large groups of people at one time, such as the interpreter-led event or a visitor centre. Other options are better for the interpretation of single features to small audiences, like signs or displays.

Options such as trail walks provide a recreational experience as well as interpretation. Books, brochures or videos are well-suited for interpretation which is not first-hand; that is, not in the presence of the feature being interpreted. Mass media can also be a very flexible tool. For example, a brochure might be read in the course of a visit (on-site interpretation) or might be consulted before or after a visit (off-site interpretation).

Personal Interpretation...

...is the original form of interpretation that probably offers the best way to achieve interpretation objectives. Personal interpretation offers three advantages over other techniques: the personal touch (we like talking to other people); flexibility (interpreters can easily modify their message in response to changing information, audiences, or circumstances), and mobility (interpreters can go to the audience if the audience is not inclined to come to them).

Any number of specific techniques are available to an interpreter, like guided walks, formalized lectures to adults or families,or programs geared specifically for children. We will discuss these techniques through the course of this manual but first we must talk about personal interpretation from the visitor's perspective.

WHAT IS AN INTERPRETER?

Most visitors will not know what an interpreter is, but they will know what they expect of that person in the park uniform. They will expect that person to be:

- An **Information Officer** who will provide them with accurate information about a wide variety of subjects, for example: How cold does it get in winter? Where are the washrooms? What kind of bird is that? When does the plane leave? How big is the island? Where is a good restaurant in Inuvik? Where can we see a polar bear? Why doesn't the sun set? How far is it to Whitehorse? Interpreters quickly learn that they can expect the unexpected in terms of questions. They rarely know all the answers but they soon learn where to go to find out.
- An **Entertainer** or storyteller who will charm them with stories about the natural and cultural history of the place they're visiting. Interpreters must be at least part entertainers for they are dealing with a volunteer audience who will leave when they get bored.
- A **Teacher** who will increase their knowledge. Visitors attend interpretive programs ***to learn***. People really are curious about their surroundings; the challenge for the interpreter is to increase their knowledge in an entertaining fashion. School children will also see the interpreter as a teacher.
- A **Recreation Director** who will provide them with things to do during their visit and, often, instructions in how to do it. An example: visitors may wonder about the many wildflowers that they see. An interpreter can not only satisfy their curiosity by telling them the plant names but can — more importantly — open their eyes to a whole new activity by teaching visitors how to find and identify plants themselves using a field guide.
- A **Public Relations Officer** who will help them behave properly during their visits. While parks often suffer from damage by visitors, only a small fraction of the damage is deliberate. Most visitors *want* to act in a way that does not hurt the

environment. Interpreters have the chance to protect the park with information and persuasion. This can significantly reduce the number of times that enforcement is necessary.

• A **Host and Cultural Ambassador** who will make visitors feel at home, and who will help explain the Inuvialuit way of life.

WHAT DO INTERPRETERS DO?

There are a great many interpretive techniques that are used by interpreters. Some of the common ones which could be used at Qikiqtaruk include:

1. Orientation Talks

Often visitors do not know what to expect or what to do when they arrive. The interpreter can meet the airplane or boat and make visitors aware of things to do, as well as providing basic information on campsites and washrooms. Because visitors are often in a hurry to begin exploring, orientation talks are usually kept quite short (5-10 minutes).

2. Guided Walks

An interpreter can lead a group on a walk which visits specific areas of interest. The walk may be formal; in other words, scheduled for a specific time and location and dealing with a specific subject. A walk may be informal: if a number of visitors express an interest in a certain subject, such as the guillemots nesting in the old mission building, then the interpreter may lead the group to the site and give a talk on the subject. (See map # 3 for suggested walking routes.)

3. Roving

Visitors may be curious about the park but may not wish to take part in a formal event. Interpreters can reach this audience by roving around the area and making themselves available to answer questions. They could station themselves in a prominent place that most visitors will visit. Many visitors are shy and often the interpreter can help by making simple clarifying statements which help break the ice, like "those are the graves of the American whalers."

4. Prop Talks

Prop talks can be part of roving, of guided walks or of formal presentations. "Props" are any objects that are related to the interpretive themes or stories for the park. Props — such as a caribou antler, whale tooth or archaeological remains — are often chosen because they arouse curiosity in the visitors. (See the checklist of "props" later in this section.)

5. Formal Presentations

Formal presentations or storytelling take place at a specific time and place and are concerned with a specific theme. Formal presentations are often advertised well in advance by word-of-mouth, by poster, or by bulletin board. Advance notice allows visitors to plan their day around the event. Most formal presentations take place in the evening after the final meal of the day. "Formal" is only meant to indicate that these are scheduled events with specific subjects. Any number of techniques apply to formal presentations or storytelling: slide programs, prop talks, campfire sing-alongs, etc., or combinations of these.

6. School Programs

School groups may visit Herschel Island but most school programs will probably take place in the communities during the winter. Children are a special audience and need different techniques than those used with adults or family groups. School programs often involve a combination of formal presentation or storytelling and prop talk techniques.

TIPS FOR STORYTELLING

- **Select stories that mean something to you and that you like to tell.**
- **Research the facts of the stories — you have to know your subject to do more than simply entertain.**
- **Select a point of view. Will you tell the story from an Inuvialuit point of view? Will you use the third person or the first person, as if it happened to you?**
- **Memorize the sequence of the story, but not the words.**
- **Make eye contact: everyone should feel you are talking directly to them.**
- **Stick to the point: avoid over-illustrating and giving too many details.**

from Regnier et al, 1992

HOW TO DECIDE WHICH TECHNIQUE TO USE

The decision about which technique to use is really a matter of finding the best way to tell the story. Suggestions on techniques are provided throughout the stories portion of this manual. Selecting a technique also means determining what the visitor wants. If the only visitors on a particular day have arrived on a four-hour excursion, then there is obviously no chance for a formal evening presentation. The important thing to remember is that no one expects the interpreter to stand in front of them and recite a prepared script. Visitors have come to Qikiqtaruk because it is a *real* place with *real* things to see and do. Interpreters can use this to their advantage in selecting props and techniques. For example, with the American Whaling Period, take visitors through the buildings, let them see and touch baleen and hunting tools that were used by early peoples. Take them to the graves and let them find their own experience as they read the names. For formal presentations, use slides or photos to show the boats and the appearance of the island during its heyday. Make people feel, see, touch, hear and smell and they will make their own discoveries and arrive at their own understanding. This is the essence of interpretation.

PLANNING AN INTERPRETIVE EVENT

This manual is designed to make planning an interpretive event straightforward and simple. The stories are organized in much the same way as a formal interpretive event might be presented. The main elements of planning are:

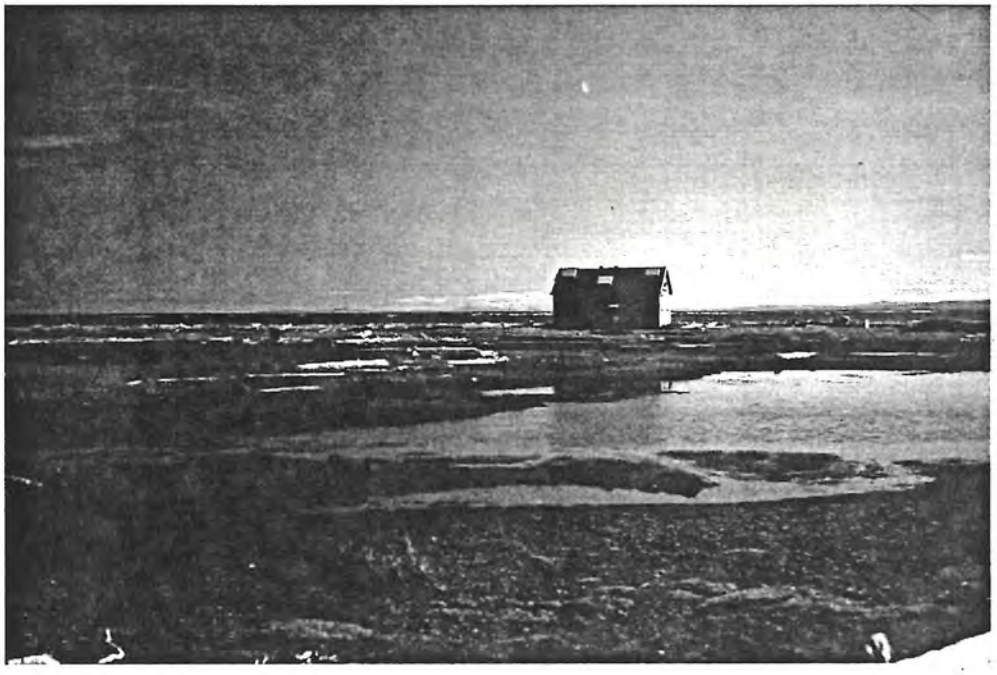
Determine Your Message

What do you want people to remember long after they have left? Realistically, most people will only retain a few facts. Interpreters should be able to summarize their message in one or two sentences. For example, a formal presentation on the American Whaling Period might have the following focus:

"Commercial whaling lasted for less than twenty years but had a profound impact on the aboriginal peoples, on the whales, and on the development of Canada."

In most cases, the message for an interpretive event can be drawn from each story's summary.

Black Guillemots on their old Mission House perch. These photogenic birds with red feet and mouths attract many visitors. Natural and cultural history themes blend together at the Mission House. *Missionaries and Mounties* as well as natural history stories could be told here. (C. McEwen)



The Mission House is reached by walking near a wet marshy area, by old ruins and sod house mounds. Nesting birds, wildflowers and archaeological artefacts make this a fragile site. A set walking route is recommended, using driftwood to help guide visitors. Wet spots could be bridged with natural appearing boardwalks, preferably made in part of driftwood. Almost all visitors will visit this area and there are many interpretive stories to be told. (J. Peepre)

Know Your Audience

(See also the visitor profile in Appendix 4)

The level of information to be presented and the techniques to be used vary with the audience. The Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk Interpretive Strategy provides considerable information about the summer visitors to the park. While the majority of visitors from the south are well-educated; for most, this will be their first trip to the north. They will probably have little if any knowledge of the island and its history but may find it easiest to relate — at first — to the whalers' perspective. Most visitors will be very interested in learning about Inuvialuit history and culture.

Visitors from Inuvik or Aklavik will have more knowledge and may be more interested in how the Qikiqtaruk story fits in with the history of other areas in the Northwest Territories. School children are a special audience; story content and techniques for students vary with age and grade. Generally, younger students relate to simple, participatory programs. Older students will want more content.

Organize Your Information

List the points that you want to make in the order that you want to make them. These can often be drawn directly from the stories presented in this manual. A good interpretive program has a natural flow; the visitor can easily follow the information that is presented because each part relates to the one preceding and the one following. Writing down these points helps the interpreter to organize information and remember it. If the interpreter has trouble remembering what comes next, it may be because the order isn't natural.

Research Your Program

Each story includes references for additional information. If interpreters have chosen a story to form the basis of the program, they will probably find enough information in the story outline and in the related stories that are listed at the end of each outline. If interpreters choose one of the major themes for the subject of their presentation, then they should read each of the stories under that theme until they are comfortable with the information. Knowing the material is the easiest way to avoid being nervous.

Pick and Choose

A common problem with new interpreters is a program with too much information and not enough fun. The interpreter needs to know a great deal of information, both to choose what is important and to fully understand the subject. But if the visitor is given a long list of events and dates they will soon lose interest in the presentation.

Choosing what to tell and what to leave out is one of the most important challenges interpreters face. Interpreters can get help in this area in many ways. Give your presentation to friends, family and other workers. Listen to their comments and see if they are losing interest. Drop the sections that cause boredom or change the story to make it more interesting.

Practise

Practise relieves nervousness, increases confidence, improves programs and adds to the enjoyment of interpreter and visitor alike. Practise. Try giving your talk to another ranger, or to friends.

THE BASICS OF INTERPRETATION

While every interpreter will develop his or her own style with an audience, there are a few basic elements which have proven to be valuable in a wide variety of circumstances.

Introduce Yourself

Introduce yourself as interpreter and host, even if you are wearing a name badge. If visitors know your name they are more comfortable, for they then feel that they can speak to you as a friend rather than as an authority figure.

Smile

Remember that you are in a uniform and uniforms can sometimes be intimidating. A smile reassures everyone that this is going to be fun and that you welcome their comments and questions.

Tell Them Where They Are

Don't forget that they may only be vaguely aware of where they are. "Welcome to Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park" should be a part of the beginning of every program. This simple information reminds the audience that they are in a park, and that they are in an area that includes the stories of two cultures.

Tell Them What's Happening

If a walk or story is scheduled, be sure to mention this to visitors so that they can plan their visit around the program. For example:

"If you're interested, I'm going to be giving a talk tonight on the American Whaling Period. It will begin at 8:00 o'clock in the display building. Hope to see you there."

Get to Know Them

An excellent way to make people comfortable is to ask them about themselves: their names, their hometowns, where they've travelled. Besides creating a friendly atmosphere, this achieves two other goals. First — and most important — it provides you, the interpreter, with information you can use in your program. If, for example, you find that all of your audience is from California, you might wish to contrast the landscape they see before them with the one they left. You don't have to have been to California yourself; let them tell you the differences. Casual conversation is also a good way to put in time while waiting for your audience to assemble.

Many visitors are on vacation and will have lost some of their sense of time. This is fine. You should arrive early to wherever the program is starting — so early arrivals know that a program will take place — and wait at least ten minutes after the scheduled start time to ensure that late arrivals have a chance to catch the program. This time interval can easily and pleasantly be filled with finding out about your audience.

Tell Them What You're Going To Tell Them

The third part of your introduction (after telling them your name and where they are) is the subject for the presentation. This should include your message and some basic details so that visitors will know what to expect. For example:

"Hi, I'm _____ and I'm a ranger here at Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk Territorial

Park. This afternoon, we're going to take a walk around this portion of the island to find out about commercial whaling. While the American Whaling Period only lasted about twenty years, it had a great impact on the aboriginal peoples, on the whales, and on the development of Canada. Our walk will take about an hour and will finish right back here. It's easy walking but I hope you all have waterproof boots on. If you don't, we can wait while you get some."

Tell Them When It's Over

The end of a program is as important as the beginning. It is your last chance to get your message across (*...we have learned about the American Whaling Period, which had a profound impact on the aboriginal peoples, on the whales, and on the development of Canada).* It is an opportunity to let everyone know that they can go on their own way without appearing to be rude. It is also a chance to remind visitors of other activities (*"don't forget about the talk tonight on Arctic wildlife. It will begin at 8:00 in the display building").* Finally, always thank people for coming.

Invite Questions

While the audience has the chance to ask questions during the presentation, always invite questions after the event is over, as well. Some people are very shy about asking questions in public; they are afraid that they will appear stupid. These people will wait until the rest have left. Be sure they know that you will wait as well. It is also important to remember that the questions you receive are honest ones, even if they may appear a little "unusual". Interpreters must make a special effort to make people comfortable and to not embarrass them. There are no stupid questions except the ones people are afraid to ask.

TOOLS AND GADGETS

- **a BOOK of Inuvialuit legends and myths, to help show how people lived and how they viewed the world**
- **QUOTES from the journals of explorers**
- **obsolete TOOLS can be used to create interest**
- **historic MAPS remind people where they are and show trade and travel**
- **an historic BIBLIOGRAPHY helps visitors who want more information**
- **SILHOUETTE chart of birds in the region, to help visitors identify them**
- **pressed and mounted FLOWERS show the diversity of the island's vegetation**

SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES

Interpretation is not a rigid process. Every interpreter develops new techniques that blend with their personal style. In this section we will introduce some of the common techniques including examples of how they might be used in interpretation on or about Herschēl Island.

Orientation Talks

Interpreters are often faced with providing repetitive information; that is, answering the same questions repeatedly. The challenge is to give the information in an interesting manner. Remember, although it is not the first time you have answered that question, it is the first time that person has asked it. Interpreters must always remind themselves what it is like to see the park for the first time.

A common technique is for interpreters to greet the visitors upon their arrival and provide a basic introduction to the site. This introduction must be brief because people are often in a hurry to begin exploring and their attention spans are short. Nonetheless, it is an excellent opportunity to achieve a number of goals:

1. to introduce visitors to the natural and cultural history of the site;
2. to introduce yourself to visitors so they have a personal contact on site;
3. to provide visitors with some ideas of what to do;
4. to tell visitors about interpretive events that may be scheduled;
5. to provide visitors with some basic information, such as the location of the campsite, and;
6. to remind visitors that they are in a park and they should respect the environment.

This may seem like a lot of information but it can be transferred easily and effectively if proper care is taken in preparation. An example of an orientation talk might be:

"Welcome to Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park. My name is _____ and I'm one of the park rangers. These buildings behind me are left over from the American Whaling Period, which ended over 85 years ago. But the island has been used by my people, the Inuvialuit, for hundreds of years, and is still used by us. If you are interested, I'm going to lead a walk around the settled portion of the island. I'll be talking about the history of the island. We'll leave in about half an hour from in front of the display building; that's the building with the big flag. Here is a map of the site to let you do some exploring of your own. A reminder for everyone — birds in the north nest on the ground. Please stay on the routes shown and watch where you step. And one last but very important point: the toilets are just behind this building. Thank you and have a great visit. Any questions?"

This is, of course, only an example. Interpreters should develop their own orientation talk which they feel comfortable delivering, and which has enough variation that they will not become bored with it.

Guided Walks

While some visitors prefer to explore on their own, many like to travel with a knowledgeable guide. Guided walks can take many forms: they can be formally structured with specific stops of interest; they can less formal, with the audience largely determining where they go and what they find out. Guided walks can last an hour, or a day, or anywhere in between. The form the walk takes varies with the type of audience. At Herschel Island the majority of walks will probably take less than an hour in order to meet airplane schedules, which only allow visitors a few hours on site. When visitors are staying overnight or are weathered in, the interpreter may wish to offer longer trips. An example of a formal, one hour, guided walk is included. (*See also Map # 3 in the Appendix.*)

Preparation

After deciding on your subject and message, pick an appropriate route. Choose the route by the presence of logical stops; places to gather visitors in order to present a brief message. A total of 10-15 stops is a good number for a one-hour walk. Don't make the stops too close together; people really do enjoy walking. Nor is it necessary to talk all the time.

The most effective technique seems to be to stop periodically at appropriate locations, let people gather together so everyone can hear, give a short talk (one-

three minutes), then proceed to the next stop. Some people will want to walk alongside of the interpreter and ask questions — that's fine. Others will want to walk in silence, absorbing the information and the landscape. That too is fine. Remember to give the walk a clear ending so that people know that they are now on their own.

A guided walk on the subject of the American Whaling Period might have the following format: Visitors assemble near the welcome area and display building. The interpreter tells them what the talk is about, where they will be going, how long it will take, and any special considerations (like footwear). The interpreter gives a brief introduction to the subject. The group then proceeds along the route selected by the interpreter, which may have the following stops and subjects:

1) Pacific Steam Whaling Co. (bonehouse)	the whale fishery
2) Northern Whaling and Trading Co. Store	the Herschel community
3) RCMP Headquarters (not standing)	sovereignty concerns
4) McKenna House	life for officers
5) Sodhouses	Inuvialuit activities on Herschel
6) Drift logs along eastern shore of cover	source of fuel
7) Icehouses	meat storage, even today
8) RCMP graves	abandonment of post
9) Inuvialuit graves	effect of period on Inuvialuit
10) Whalers' graves	people from far away

The last stop could be along the shore of the cove, where the interpreter could summarize the walk and invite visitors to continue exploring on their own.

Roving

Roving is a very effective technique for reaching visitors who do not wish to join an organized walk or event but who may still want information. Roving may involve just wandering through the site or being available in an area where most visitors will pass. It could also be a combination of these techniques.

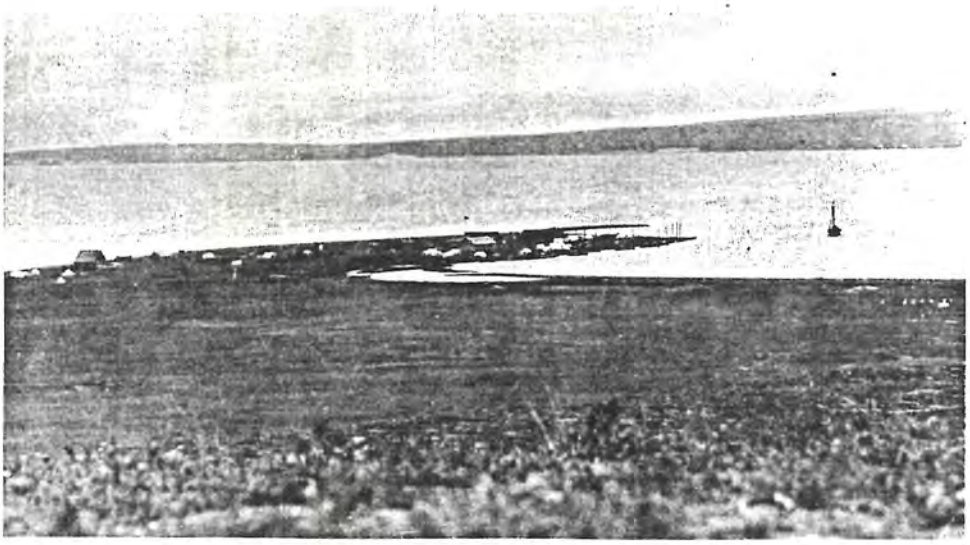
Preparation

Roving is often most effective when the interpreter uses props which have a high curiosity factor. Examples of such props are antlers, baleen, bird feathers, hunting implements, or tools. The interpreter should test which are most effective in drawing a crowd.

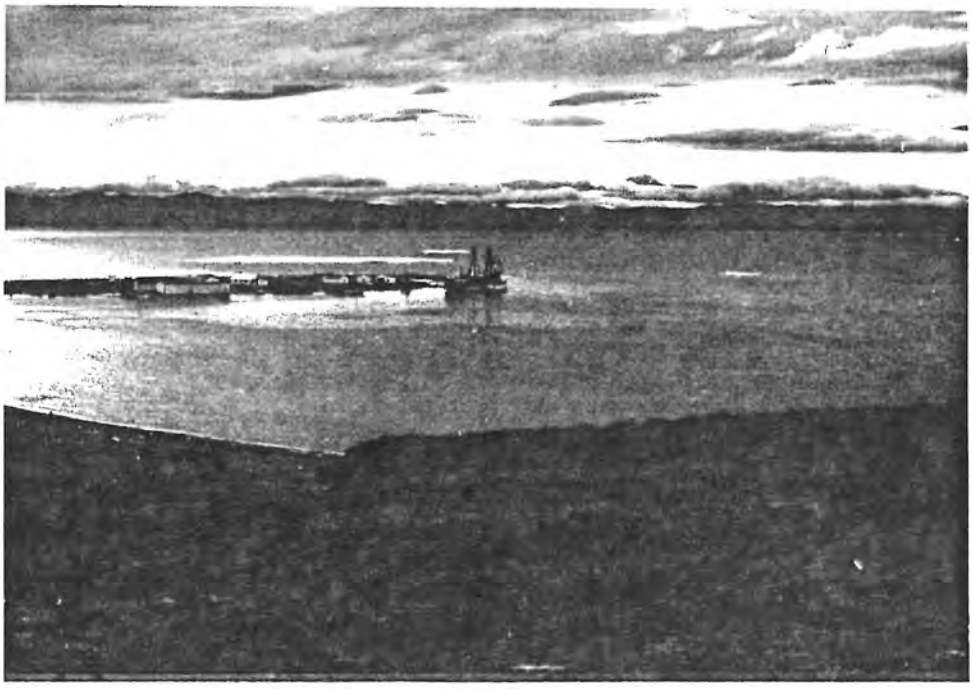
If the interpreter chooses to wander the site, they must be sensitive to people who do not wish contact. This is usually indicated by body language: people look directly at them then look away and/or move away. Sometimes, however, people do this because of the uniform which makes them uneasy. This is the point where a smile goes a long way. Interpreters should feel free to approach visitors and strike up a conversation. It is generally easy to tell if the visitors would prefer to be left alone. If this is the case, then by all means grant the visitor's wishes.

A second common technique is to station yourself at a prominent location, like the mission house with its black guillemot colony, and do some simple task, such as counting the birds. If approached by visitors make it clear to them — by smiles and greetings — that you welcome the "interruption".

In many cases, it is not necessary to trick a visitor into asking questions. Just being visible and friendly is often enough to encourage visitors to approach. In many cases, there will be enough questions to initiate an impromptu guided walk.



Pauline Cove in 1913. Note schooners on beach, whaling ship in harbour, and white canvas tents on shore. Photo by G.H. Wilkins. Canadian Arctic Expedition. National Museums of Canada. Stories on *Marine Life, Transportation, American Whaling Period.*



Settlement and Pauline Cove at Herschel Island, 1936. Stories on *An Island Changing Shape, Transportation, Fur Traders and Schooners, Missionaries and Mounties, Forces From the South.* (Keith Smith Collection. Old Dartmouth Historical Society Whaling Museum).

Prop Talks

Prop talks are often combined with other techniques to improve the presentation. Interpreters may use props while roving or during their formal presentations. The best props are not only attention-getting but are also indestructible, so that they can be passed around from hand to hand. For roving, a single prop is usually most practical. For formal presentations, a variety of props may be placed in view of the visitors to arouse curiosity.

An important concern with props is the message that the visitor may receive unintentionally. It is not acceptable for visitors to help themselves to "souvenirs" of their trip. It is very important that interpreters make it clear that their props are being borrowed from the park strictly for use in educating visitors, and that visitors must take only pictures so that others will be able to enjoy Herschel Island.

Formal Presentations and Storytelling

Formal interpretive presentations can bring the highest quality of experience for visitors. In a formal presentation, the interpreter has time to carefully plan the contents and format. For the visitor, there is a very real sense of anticipation. Most formal presentations last about one hour, although special presentations may last twice as long.

Preparation

As is the case with all interpretive events, it is crucial that the interpreter carefully plan what is to be said and then select appropriate ways of saying it. One approach that has proven to be very successful in park locations is combining a variety of techniques so that the visitor is always being surprised. It is important to note that visitors must be made aware of — and reminded of — the starting time and location for a formal presentation. This can be done by word of mouth, by posters, or by a sign outside of the meeting place.

An example of a formal talk

The Theme is the American Whaling Period

The interpreter arrives at the meeting place (the display building) 20 minutes before the 8 pm start time to greet early arrivals and to complete preparation for the event. Preparation includes checking that all props are available, starting a fire, putting on the kettle for tea or coffee, and — in this case — checking that the slide projector is working, with a spare bulb available in case of emergency. Interpreters should introduce themselves to visitors as they arrive and chat with them about their travels, etc. until approximately 8:10, when they should be confident that most visitors have arrived.

In introducing a program, interpreters again introduce themselves and the park. They then summarize the subject for the presentation and let visitors know that it will be over in about an hour.

The presentation begins as a prop talk. The interpreter holds up a piece of baleen and asks the audience to identify it. This leads to a discussion of the natural history of bowhead whales and the Inuvialuit method of hunting the whales. The interpreter illustrates the traditional hunting methods by passing around a sealskin float and/or a handmade harpoon.

(*this portion takes approximately 10 minutes*)

The subject switches to why whales were so important to southerners. The interpreter shows pictures of buggy whips, skirt hoops and other products made of

baleen. Methods of hunting are discussed.

(approximately 5 minutes)

What made Herschel Island so important to whalers? A map is necessary for this part, to indicate the location and significance of Herschel Island relative to the mouth of the Mackenzie. The interpreter may tell the story of the crewman from a whaling boat who was sent off with Inuvialuit guides to confirm the suitability of the island for over-wintering. The map may be prepared in advance at a size that lets people see easily, or the interpreter may use the old trick of first lightly drawing the map carefully, and in detail, with pencil. These light pencil lines will not be visible to an audience sitting ten feet or more away. During the program, the interpreter will appear to draw a detailed map freehand using a felt pen, while in fact merely tracing.

(5 minutes)

Herschel in the boom days is the subject of the next portion. This features a description of life on the island and the role of the Inuvialuit in helping the whalers survive. The talk should contrast the quality of life for officers, crews and Inuvialuit. This may be illustrated by pictures or by reading selected passages from captains' journals.

(5 minutes)

What was the effect of this activity? The next portion will discuss the effects on wildlife from hunting, effects on Canada (police post established) and most important, the tremendous effects on the aboriginal people. The same map should be used to identify NWMP posts and routes and the traditional homelands of the native people. This portion could end with the crash of the whale populations and the market for baleen.

(10 minutes)

What about Qikiqtaruk — the real Herschel Island? This final portion will summarize the long relationship of the native people to the island and this portion of the northern coast. It could end with a selections of stories from the elders about the island. This might be accompanied by a selection of slides, both current and historical, showing native communities and way of life.

(15 minutes)

The program ends with a thank-you to the audience, an invitation to ask questions, and a further invitation to join the interpreter on the next day's guided walk.

Notes on storytelling:

This is only one example of format and content for a formal presentation. Other options include storytelling, songs, puppets, and other techniques or combinations of techniques. The most important part of developing a formal presentation is the interpreter's creativity and imagination. Interpreters should first of all have fun and enjoy the program themselves — the audience will always follow.

School Programs

School programs are a common part of interpretation. It is unlikely that many school groups will be able to visit the island, but interpreters can play an important role in educating children about their heritage by presenting programs in the community schools. There are a few important points to remember about school groups, regardless of age or grade:

1) You have one advantage over the teacher: you are a new face in an interesting uniform. As such, you have a special credibility and will probably be providing the children with an important role model. It is a major responsibility.

2) Show how your presentation fits into the life of the children. They may have never been to Qikiqtaruk but their parents or grandparents may have. Why did they go there? Encourage the children to ask their parents about it.

3) Develop an appreciation for Qikiqtaruk as part of history and as a living example of their environment.

4) Teach them respect for special places. It is easy to understand why Qikiqtaruk is special — help the children understand the importance of where they live.

5) Create exciting learning situations. Give them things to touch, see, and smell. Invent games that let them try to catch a whale, or lead them to understand the relationship between people and the other animals.

6) Have fun. Having fun with the children is important for both of you. It creates a great learning environment and encourages all of you to learn more. Be adaptable: not everything will work. Understand what happened and change your program for the next audience.

Preparation

There are many books, articles, and publications on educating children and the different learning styles of children at different ages. It is unlikely that interpreters will have time to read more than a few of these. But there is a short-cut. The teacher who invited you to speak will probably have read many of these publications and — more importantly — knows first-hand what her class or classes like and do best.

Before any presentation, contact the teacher to find out about his or her classes. Ask them specifically about the size of class, ages, interests, learning preferences, and anything else you should know. Ask the teacher for some hints on what might or might not work. Ask what they have been studying prior to your visit; you may be able to relate your subject to other material that is fresh in their minds.

In many cases, you should reduce the length of your presentation unless it already includes plenty of variety and activities. An hour is a very long time, especially for someone who is five years old!

Once you have enough information about your audience, it is usually possible to modify an existing presentation into a format that is suitable for children.

Some Final Thoughts

Be yourself. This manual can provide you with examples of programs that have worked for others. They may not work for you. That is because you are an individual with your own strengths and weaknesses. Use them. If you are a good storyteller — tell lots of stories. If you play guitar, sing songs. If you can draw, draw during your programs.

The wonderful part about interpretation is the variety of forms interpreters come in: quiet and reserved, noisy and outgoing. The only truly common feature of interpreters is their enjoyment of people and their delight in sharing knowledge with others.

Experiment.

Interpretation is a wide open field with few, if any, rules. The only real rule is: if it works — that is, if peoples' hearts and minds are opened — then it was a good idea.

Keep notes.

Write down how many people you met, what they said and what they did. Note what worked during your programs and what didn't work. It is especially useful to keep a record of questions asked. Ask other interpreters to do the same thing or have a notebook for everyone's use. Consult it regularly when developing new programs.

Don't snow them under with facts.

Interpreters accumulate a lot of facts in the course of creating their programs. Don't yield to the temptation to tell them everything you've learned. It won't make them think you're really smart — they'll just think you're boring. Remember, interpretation is fun!

Remember — the visitors and school children are your biggest fans.

They are on your side. They are not expecting Frank Sinatra or Madonna. They are on vacation and they are looking to have fun. Just do your best and they will be delighted.

YOUR AUDIENCE LIKES:	YOUR AUDIENCE DOESN'T LIKE:
• to touch, feel, smell objects	• dry lectures
• humour	• talks that are too long
• new information explained clearly	• information that is too technical
• enthusiasm	• lack of enthusiasm

HELP!

You are not alone. Two professional organizations in North America publish magazines and host workshops and seminars on interpretation. A third organization organizes and hosts international conferences on interpretation and related subjects every three years. At the time of writing, a workshop has been organized by the Government of the Northwest Territories, Arctic College and several private firms directed at northern interpreters. A second one is planned for April 22-24, 1992 on the theme of "Northern Landscapes, Northern Heritage". There is an intention to form a Northern Section of Interpretation Canada. Anyone interested in the workshop or the Northern Section should contact:

Jimm Simon
Visitor Centre and Interpretive Project Planner, Parks and Visitor Services
Economic Development and Tourism
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories X1A 2L9
Phone 403-920-3179 Fax 403-873-0101

Associations of Interpreters

Interpretation Canada
Box 2667, Station D
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5W7

National Association of Interpretation
P.O. Box 1892
Fort Collins, Colorado USA 80522

Heritage Interpretation International
P.O. Box 6116, Station C
Edmonton, Alberta T6B 4K5

A number of colleges and universities in western Canada offer courses in interpretation and related fields.

Grande Prairie Regional College
Attention: Lawrence Michaels
10726 106th Avenue
Grand Prairie, Alberta T8V 4C4
Phone 403-539-2974 or 539-2911

Lethbridge Community College
Attention: Brian D. Mertz
Recreation Management Program
3000 College Drive
Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 1L6
Phone 403-320-3488

University of Alberta
Attention: Peter Heron
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2H9
Phone 403-432-5171

Selkirk College
Attention: John Adams
P.O. Box 1200, Castlegar, British Columbia V1N 3J1
Phone 604-380-4514

Simon Fraser University, Faculty of Education
Attention: Dr. Charles Hamilton or Dr. Milt McClaren,
Burnaby, British-Columbia V5A 1S6
Phone 604-291-3111

Reference Manuals

Cornell, Joseph B.
Sharing Nature with Children
Nevada City, California Dawn Publications (Crystal Clarity), 1979

Edwards, Yorke
The Land Speaks
Toronto, Ontario National and Provincial Parks Assn. of Canada, 1980

Fazio, James K. and Douglas Gilbert
Public Relations and Communications for Natural Resource Managers
(2nd Edition)
Dubuque, Iowa Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1986

Ford, Phyllis M.
Principles and Practices of Outdoor/Environment Education
New York, New York John Wiley and Sons, 1981

Grater, Russell K.
The Interpreter's Handbook: Methods, Skills and Techniques
Globe, Arizona Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1976

Link, Michael
Outdoor Education: A Manual for Teaching in Nature's Classroom
Englewood, New Jersey Prentice-Hall Inc., 1981

Machlis, Gary F. and Donald Field (editors)
On Interpretation: Sociology for Interpreters of Natural and Cultural History
Corvallis, Oregon Oregon State University Press, 1984

National Association of Interpretation
NAI Journal of Interpretation
Fort Collins, Colorado National Association of Interpretation

Regnier, K. M. Gross, and R. Zimmerman
The Interpreter's Guidebook: Techniques for Programs and Presentations
University of Wisconsin Press, 1992

Tilden, Freeman
Interpreting Our Heritage
Chapel Hill, North Carolina University of North Carolina Press, 1977

Tourists mostly arrive by plane, and rafters always depart this way. Charter tour companies have an important role to play in interpreting the island. Rangers usually greet the planes and help tourists eager to make the most of their brief stay. (C. McEwen)

Jaegers perch on drift logs along the beaches. Man has used these logs for building shelters. Birds and small mammals also depend on them for shelter. (J. Peepre)

HOW THE STORIES ARE ORGANIZED

The main interpretive theme for Qikiqtaruk (Herschel Island) is *Our Island in the Polar Sea*. This main theme paints a picture of the island and is one way to link all the other interpretive themes and stories together. A theme is also the overall "plot" for the stories.

Interpretive themes are a way to organize the many stories in this manual. These themes show four different, but connected parts of Herschel Island: the land, the water, and the people. A fourth element, time, influences the others. The main themes for Qikiqtaruk (Herschel Island) are shown below, followed by the suggested way to organize all the stories:

THEME: OUR ISLAND IN THE POLAR SEA

The overall theme for Herschel Island- Qikiqtaruk is *Our Island in the Polar Sea*. This phrase describes the strongest parts of the Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk experience: the island, the ocean, the north, and the role of the island in the culture and history of the Inuvialuit. As an overall theme, *Our Island in the Polar Sea* sets the mood and perspective for interpretation of this special site.

"Our" implies both possession and sharing and this is truly the case with Herschel Island. The land is part of the final agreement, but is also part of the Yukon and is a park to be shared. "Our" also implies a shared responsibility amongst guests and residents alike.

"Island" is a crucial image. The word suggests isolation; a remoteness from the rest of the world. However, as we explore our themes for interpretation, we will discover the connections between Herschel and the rest of the world.

"Polar Sea" is a powerful image for southern visitors who associate the phrase with frostbitten explorers, dog teams, icebergs and blizzards, vastness, power, storms and danger. There is some truth in those images but the visitors' Herschel Island experience will introduce some new ideas which, probably for the first time, associate "polar" with home.

Sub-theme: STORIES ABOUT QIKIQTARUK

Stories About Qikiqtaruk are the voices of the Inuvialuit elders. The stories have not been edited or summarized, since they speak for themselves. These stories are part of the oral history of Qikiqtaruk (Herschel Island). Stories were gathered during the Inuvialuit Social Development Program's Cultural Study, which started in 1990. Many more stories exist, but these are just some of the stories recorded. More stories may be added to the interpretive manual as they are collected.

Stories About Qikiqtaruk gives the Inuvialuit perspective on Herschel Island's history and natural resources. These stories are linked to all of the other interpretive themes and stories about the island. In many cases the stories are interesting contrasts to information as recorded by scientists and others. Hearing both the Inuvialuit stories and the European version of events would be appealing to many park visitors.

Most of the stories were translated from Inuvialuktun to English. Round brackets () are added where extra information is needed, and square brackets [ ] are used to help understand the texts.

Qikiqtaruk is used in the texts, as told in Inuvialuktun, but *Herschel Island* is used if that was the term used during the interview. A word in Inuvialuktun might be spelled differently in different stories because two dialects were used by the people interviews. The term *Eskimo* is used only when used during the interviews, otherwise the terms *Inuit* and *Inuvialuit* are used.

Resource specialists interviewed (*see biographical notes in Appendix 5*):

Ishmael Alunik (b.1922)
Hope Gordon (b. 1916)
Persis Lennie Gruben (b.1918)
Kathleen Hansen (b. 1915)
Fred Inglangasuk (b. 1922)
Jimmy Jacobson (b.1923)
Christina Klengenburg (b. 1915)
Dora Malegana (b. 1916)
Sarah Meyook (b. 1925)
Joe Nasogaluak (b. 1906)
Albert Oliver (b. 1920)
Jean Tardiff (b. 1916)
Peter Thrasher (b. 1930)

Sub-theme: CURRENTS OF WATER AND TIME

These stories are about water and ice moving past an island. They show how water and ice affect the weather and all life on the land and in the sea. Time has created and changed Herschel Island and the island continues to change.

The island is a refuge from the cold polar sea though not a complete one. The currents bring the pack ice and influence the unpredictable Arctic weather. The currents of time bring different seasons and different cultures to Herschel Island.

For the Inuvialuit these currents bring resources that they depend, on such as seals, whales, and fish. Currents bring the logs from the Mackenzie River, for fires and for shelter. The currents themselves, to experienced travellers like the Inuvialuit, provide transportation routes to the different resources of the Arctic coastline.

It is these currents that brought, and continue to bring, people to and from Herschel Island from communities in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and in Alaska.

Sub-theme: PEOPLE FROM FAR AWAY

People from different cultures view Herschel Island in different ways. Currents of time and water brought the Inuvialuit ancestors to this area long ago, and some have made the island their home. Also visiting the island, in the near past, have been a steady stream of "people from far away".

There have been many visitors: other aboriginal people, European explorers, American whalers, missionaries, police, fur traders, gas and oil exploration companies, government representatives, scientists and researchers and, now, park visitors. The missionaries came to save souls; the NWMP came to establish sovereignty; some came to trade and many others came to get rich; today's tourists come to see, to experience, and to learn. Most past visitors were from far away; because of changing times and the fact that they were far from "home", most returned to families and friends who nearly always were a long way from Herschel Island.

Contrast this with the Inuvialuit, who came and still come to Herschel Island. They have long used the island as a place of refuge, for social contact and for the seasonal abundance of food. Trade for groceries, and work for the whaling companies or government were, in the past, an important reason to come to Herschel Island. It has always been an important part of the regional resource base.

These stories are linked to the Inuvialuit perspective on Herschel Island as told in *Stories about Qikiqtaruk*.

Sub-theme: EDGE OF THE CONTINENT

Herschel Island is only an island in the technical sense of the word: land entirely surrounded by water. Because of the nearby land, and as a result of the changes in transportation, Herschel Island is affected in many ways by the continent that lies to the south.

Biologically, Herschel Island is comparable to parts of the nearby Northern Yukon National Park with the same arctic climate, tundra, and fauna. It behaves more like a spit of land projecting out from the coast than an island and is connected to the mainland by ice during the long winter. It is, in fact, a small part of the larger land mass.

From the perspective of the Inuvialuit, this link between island and continent is the reason for many of the changes to a special place. Culturally, the island was used in the same way as the nearby coast, as a source of resources.

Being an island does not protect Herschel Island from the influence of the south. Inuvialuit life is affected and influenced by an entire continent rather than by just the land nearby. The demand for resources (baleen, furs, oil and gas), the influence of many levels of government, and more recently, tourists, mostly originate from the land far to the south of Herschel Island.

From the tourist's perspective, Herschel Island is indeed an island separated from the nearby mainland. It has a place with a distinct character. And yet one of the most powerful images that visitors can experience on the island, comes from looking at a polar region map. From where you stand on the island, all the rest of the continent stretches out below you. You're on the very edge of the continent. Visitors are from this land far to the south. On Herschel island, visitors can learn about the Inuvialuit perspective on why this island is so closely linked to the rest of the continent.

HOW TO USE THE STORIES

(see also "Planning an Interpretive Event")

The interpretive themes shown above help organize the features of Herschel Island so the many stories may be more easily told. Each theme has many stories, some of which are included in this manual. This collection of stories is not complete; it will almost certainly be added to and modified.

Each story is organized the same way. There is a summary of the information at the top, followed by the story text. At the end of the story is a list of related stories. For example, stories about whales (Marine Life) are related to how they were hunted (Stories About Qikiqtaruk and American Whaling Period). Interpreters can use information from many different related stories for any talks or interpretive programs.

Each story outline suggests a few ways to tell the story. Ways to tell stories include the use of photographs or maps, walks around Pauline Cove, or other events described in the manual.

At the end of each story, you will find a list of further reading. This list can help visitors find out more on their own by using the books at Herschel Island. Or, the reading list can help the interpreter dig up more facts about a story.

FINDING INFORMATION

To help you find and use information, the stories are shown in a chart on the next page. This chart shows how each story fits into a sub-theme. Also included in this section is an outline of each story.

This outline shows what the story is about. For stories about the ocean, currents, weather, migrations and sea life, use the sub-theme "Currents of Water and Time". For stories about people and history use "People from Far Away". For stories about the Inuvialuit use "Stories about Qikiqtaruk". And, for stories on wildlife, birds and animals on the island, use "The Edge of the Continent" sub-theme.

At the end of this section is a list of props and resources that will give you some ideas on what's available to help tell the stories. The appendix has a list of historic events, names and dates of buildings and a checklist of all the fish, wildlife, plants and landforms you may want to talk about. Maps are also included in the manual, including walking routes, natural features, and place names. Not all the information is in the manual. If you need more detailed information, use maps or reference books.

THEME:
OUR ISLAND IN THE POLAR SEA

Sub-theme:
Stories About Qikiqtaruk

First Visitors
Whaling
Trading
Social Life
The Police
Kublualuk, The Shaman
The Anglican Mission
Influenza
Resources
Moving to the Delta

Sub-theme:
Currents of Water and Time

Polar Sea
Weather
Marine Life
Currents
Migration
Island Changing Shape
Transportation

Sub-theme:
People From Far Away

Early Peoples
Scientists and Explorers
American Whaling Period
Missionaries
The Police
Fur Traders and Schooners
The New North

Sub-theme:
Edge of the Continent

Origin of the Island
Part of the Mainland
Arctic Sanctuary Brimming with Life
Forces from the South

STORY OUTLINES

The sub-themes each have several stories related to them. Here is a quick check list of the main points in each story:

Sub-theme: STORIES ABOUT QIKIQTARUK

The First Visitors at Qikiqtaruk

The Whaling Period
- General Description
- Whalers wasting whale meat
- Inuit working for the whalers
- Inuit/whaler interactions
- Whalers go Gold Mining at the Firth River
- Measles Epidemic
- End of the Whaling Period
- Getting Named After a Ship

Trading Furs for white peoples's goods
- Captain Pedersen trading for furs
- Going to Qikiqtaruk in the summertime

Social Life at Qikiqtaruk in the 1920s

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
- Inuvialuit and Indians working for the RCMP
- Hanging People at Qikiqtaruk

Kublualuk, the Shaman from Qikiqtaruk

The Anglican Mission

The Influenza Epidemic of 1928

Resources from Qikiqtaruk
- seal and walrus
- caribou
- whales
- trapping in the 1950s
- fishing
- getting water
- plants
- wood in the 1920s

Moving to the Delta

Sub-theme: CURRENTS OF WATER AND TIME

The Polar Sea

• the currents and changing nature of the Beaufort Sea, including the characteristics and behaviour of the ice pack and leads of open water

Weather

• the climate of the area and how it is influenced by cold seas, currents and the adjacent land mass

Marine Life

• the Arctic Ocean supports surprisingly diverse flora and fauna, with the Herschel Island waters being one of the richer areas

Currents

• the source of the currents that bring logs to Herschel and fresh water along the coast, favoured by many fish and waterbirds

An Island Changing Shape

• erosion at work on Herschel: waves, currents, wind, sun and ice (both the ice pack and frozen in the ground)

Transportation

• how the Inuvialuit designed their ocean-going craft,
• the many different modes of travel used by different cultures

Migrations

• caribou migrations, char in the freshwater rivers emptying into the sea, marine mammals, birds and sea currents

Sub-theme: PEOPLE FROM FAR AWAY

Early Peoples

• Theories and oral traditions concerning the first peoples in the area
• Qikiqtaruk ("island")
• the importance of Herschel Island in pre-contact Inuvialuit life
• refuge from storms, excellent hunting, sealing, whaling and fishing, social gatherings

Explorers, Scientists and Other Passersby

• Franklin, and others who passed by, in the quest for the Northwest Passage,
• the naming of the island after the astronomer, Herschel

American Whaling Period

• the Beaufort Sea and the island as an important whaling area in the Western arctic; the rise and fall of the whaling period
• the island as a safe harbour for over-wintering whalers
• the interaction with the Inuvialuit, impacts on life
• the settlement on Herschel Island, what life and death was like, the buildings and their use

Missionaries

- missionaries arrive at the community

The Police

- mounties arrive in western Arctic to establish sovereignty, the most northerly outpost of the NWMP
- St. Roch and other expeditions still pass by

Fur Trade and Schooners

- trade expansion after the collapse of whaling, brought prosperity for many Inuvialuit, allowing for exotic purchases such as schooners
- depressed fur prices leading to northern hardships

The New North

- radio communications on the island
- DEW Line proposed across the north
- movement of people into communities
- search for oil and gas includes consideration of Pauline Cove as a permanent harbour
- government interest in the area for sovereignty and revenues
- land claims and settlement agreements
- establishment of Herschel Island Territorial Park
- tourism develops as an industry bringing southerners to the island again

Sub-theme: EDGE OF THE CONTINENT

The Origin of Herschel Island

- marine sediments excavated by glacial action created the only island of substantial size along the Yukon coast

Part of the Mainland

- the wildlife and vegetation of Northern Yukon National Park can also be found on the island.

Arctic Sanctuary Brimming with Life

- although the island shares features with the mainland in its flora and fauna, the island ecology is unique and diverse
- many species reach a high abundance in this area, and the island provides an excellent and accessible example of tundra
- the visitor will see a concentration and diversity of wildflowers and birds including the black guillemot

Forces from the South

- the demand for baleen and furs came from the south, as does the principle demand for gas and oil
- the establishment of parks on Herschel Island and the North Slope follow southern ideas for land management and resource protection,.
- pollution and greenhouse effect
- as has been the case in the past, the Inuvialuit must deal with circumstances created by southern activities and ideas, e.g. opposition to the fur trade

CHECK LIST OF "PROPS" AND OTHER RESOURCES

(To help in telling stories: see also the Appendix, which gives more detail)

Natural Features

- tundra and associated wildflowers, easily accessible,
- beaches, easy to stroll along,
- land forms, erosion, effects of permafrost (ice lens, slumping)
- wildlife: some easily observed such as guillemots, shorebirds, seabirds
  some rarely observed like caribou, seals, whales
- driftwood, including birch bark for fires
- views of icebergs and the ice pack, sea and waves
- view of Northern Yukon National Park
- weather: easily changeable, sun, fog, storm, winds
- sunlight: 24-hours in summer

Cultural Features

- buildings and their limited furnishings
- remnants of sod houses
- cemeteries
- driftwood camping shelters
- dog kennels
- ice houses
- artifacts on beach and settlement area, tools, bones, iron, machinery
- tower and cable to north side of island
- abandoned boats; mast and spar of shipwreck
- underwater archaeological resources like the wreck of the Triton
- houses, hides and nets
- driftwood hunting blinds
- evidence of subsistence harvest, skulls, hides, fish
- oil rigs and exploration ships
- monuments, Canadian Parks Service and Government of Yukon
- existing interpretive sign
- evidence of researchers activities
- radio communication system
- Nodwell tundra vehicle
- methods of dealing with waste and water
- arctic experience, sense of time, distance and "strangeness" (for southerners)

Other Props and Resource People

- Photos, film, and written materials, particularly of whaling period
- artifacts or copies in Whitehorse, Yellowknife, Ottawa, some casts available
- Schooners in Tuktoyaktuk and Aklavik
- Oral histories
- Inuvialuit elders
- Researchers
- Tour companies: plane, raft, kayak, cruise ships
- Native organizations
- Government agencies
- Environmental groups
- Oil companies
- Schools
- active whaling camps along coast
- Northern Yukon National Park

Barbara Allen and grandson, Peter, from Aklavik, visiting Herschel Island, summer of 1989. (C. McEwen)

OUR ISLAND IN THE POLAR SEA

Stories About Qikiqtaruk

First Visitors
Whaling
Trading
Social Life
The Police
Kublualuk, The Shaman
The Anglican Mission
Influenza
Resources
Moving to the Delta

THE FIRST "VISITORS" AT QIKIQTARUK

These stories talk about the early peoples as recorded by oral history.

STORY

Fred Inglangasuk told that Herschel Island's name in Inuvialuktun is "Qikiqtaraluk" (which means "island"). So, "Qikiqtaruk" must be a shorter version. The Firth River is "Qikiqtaraluk Kugaluk" ("island's river").

"They say once there was a big flood all over Qikiqtaruk. You could see nothing! There was nothing then. Old Irish (Keogayuk) always told stories about when Qikiqtaruk was flooded." *(Sarah Meyook)*

"...[Shao(r,^)uaq] said that [once] Qikiqtaruk was part of Nunaluk land (Nunaluk Spit?) That is how they hunt caribou by walking all the way up all the time. He said they never hunted whales there at Qikiqtaruk, just over at around Tikiraq (Kay Point). I guess because it's deep there." *(Jean Tardiff)*

"While there was a connection from the Island to mainland they called them Nuvuraqmiut (the "Point people"). They called them that when the island was part of the mainland and Nunaluk. And after it became an island, they called it Qikiqtaruk. Then, the Sigilit called them Qikiqtarukmiut (Qikiqtaruk people)." *(Jean Tardiff)*

"They said before this place was only Siglit, before we came from Alaska." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

"And I heard too that long ago my grandparents used to make a living here with the Siglit." *(Dora Malegana)*

"They say the first people on Qikiqtaruk never grow. The very first people there...And the first people that went there were visitors...They were there all the time because they were Qikiqtaruk people. The only people I knew at the time was Thomas Umauq (*spelled Umaok in Anglican Church records*) and the Shiko(r,^)ikgaluks and others were the first visitors there. At that time they never grew...They said Roland and others were first visitors there. That was their land, those people there." *(Albert Oliver)*

"The people at Qikiqtaruk never grew because there was war between Inuit and Indians at the time. That's what my parents say...Tuyurmiut ("visitors") was their name." *(Albert Oliver)*

"...before the early 1900s, lots of people died [because] there was a strong flu. The Inuit people who lived there, their name is "Tuyukmiut", they were a little different from the Siglit. Some of these Tuyukmiut were Roland Sakyuak (Shao(r,^)uq), also Kaaniq that (became known as) Cockney, Louie Kaglik, Philip Naoyak and Thomas Umauq.

After all the other Tuyukmiut died off, some moved to Kittigazuit. Those days nobody lived in Tuktoyaktuk. After the mission school at Tapqak (Shingle Point) [closed down] and after the traders left Qikiqtaruk they left for Aklavik." *(Ishmael Alunik)*

Related Stories
The First People

WHALING PERIOD

These stories talk about the American whalers, a time that influenced the Inuvialuit in many ways. The Inuvialuit provided food and offered northern skills to many of the whalers.

STORY

What It Was Like Then

"Herschel Island was my dad's old place when he was working for the Hudson's Bay Co. I don't know for how many years. Those people they hunted bowhead whales." *(Peter Thrasher)*

"Even sometimes when they used to hunt whales, my dad used to tell me [that] he'd seen so many ships, he knew. He'd seen lots of ships when he was younger. And he remembered the *Belvedere* (a whaling boat), it was on the coast too. He said he has seen some of those whale ships. They get up to 500 white whales (belugas) a day." *(Peter Thrasher)*

"Those big ships they came, they made a big slaughter. Well, there was no oil companies those days, those people they used to call those (whales) "white people oil" because they used that oil for their light and their machines. They wanted that oil, there was lots of it there. The steamship companies and those people that buy, really buy lots of fur from natives, [and at the] same time, lots of oil." *(Peter Thrasher)*

"There was two of them (steamship companies) but they were together all the workers; engineers, skinners, tanners, boilers, oil workers, steam operators and also the [ones working at the] machines and the ones on the engine. You know that time, there was a steamship that went with the steam. It had two pipes like my dad had told me about. There was lots of them. When they were at the [Herschel] Island...there is about 30 or 50 of them. Those that are whalers...Qikiqtaruk is the place where they always stop. And they named it Herschel." *(Peter Thrasher)*

"When they used to hunt bowheads, the white men, right along the beach on coast...On coast [there was] quite a few. Do you know of suqka (baleen)? They sold them for $500 for one suqka. It was heavy, with blubber about one foot thick, then it was about little over $3,000. For one suqka it was $7 a pound. Silk and nylon, that's what they used it for." *(Joe Nasogaluak)*

"At that time, they [were] whaling for baleen or [what] Inuit called "sukaak" (baleen). They said over 30 whaling ships wintered [at Qikiqtaruk]. "*(Ishmael Alunik)*

"There was so much of the blue whales, they would get about one to two hundreds a day sometimes! They filled their ship right away and went right back...The meat is good. The Inuit would get some for their food, [the] oil too." *(Peter Thrasher)*

"The women with their ulus (women's knives) would skin right away the whales...also seals, right away they would work at it." *(Peter Thrasher)*

"There is lots of them...They say when they lived in winter, at [the] time down at Qikiqtaruk with whalers, there is just like lots of trees because of the masts on the ships, there is so many of them." *(Albert Oliver)*

"Sometimes they (the whalers) would stay there for long time. Waiting when the boats freeze in. But when they come this way they would bring stuff like flour, tea. That time, they used to have tea in big cases and flour in big boxes, butter in barrels. Things to drink [too]. Come from the ships first, long time ago. Hudson's Bay's rum was the one, I think." *(Peter Thrasher)*

Whalers wasting whale meat

"...those boats come long long ago, the whalers. And they (the whalers) always go winter there at the Island and when it froze up on them they stayed there or somewhere up east. I heard most of them got lots of whales but I don't know which ones. And they would just cut the head off and take them...they never take anything but heads!" *(Albert Oliver)*

"Their heads, that was all they hunted whales for those people. And also their baleen. Everything on their head they took because at the time they (the heads) costed lots of money...And they say long ago they would braid it (the baleen) and make rope with it and also make string for the hooks and it don't freeze. That's the reason [why] long ago they hunt blue whales for the things on their heads like the baleen and they costed lots." *(Albert Oliver)*

"...when they killed a whale, they would hang it on along [the] side of [the] boat, cut the head off [and] put them in the ship and let go the rest of whale. The Inuit would always find the rest on shore. I know it from those whalers long ago. People would use them too. The ones that need them because the inner part doesn't spoil, just the top of the whale spoils. And they used it for dog food too." *(Albert Oliver)*

Inuit working for the whalers

"...the whalers would get people from out there to hunt for them, the whalers. Inuit from Alaska." *(Albert Oliver)*

"[the] whalers...they brought Inupiat from Alaska. They picked up Alaska's people for hunters. And when they (the Inupiat) got to Qikiqtaruk they did hunting around there...The Alaska people never went back. They lived in the Delta, and our parents too never went back. My dad and them are from Alaska." *(Albert Oliver)*

"They (the Inuit) never sold meat they just traded with shells (ammunition) and some food. They were the hunters for them (the whalers), they hunted caribou too for them. They would come down those Inuit. They were only hunters and they never hunted whales." *(Albert Oliver)*

"...my dad lived around there [at Qikiqtaruk] long ago before us. They stayed at Qikiqtaruk and Qao(r,^)gialuk (Ptarmigan Bay). They wintered there always. When the ships wintered there, they say there was lots of them Inuit when they wintered there. They didn't know about Christmas at the time." *(Albert Oliver)*

"...there was lots (of Inuit at Qikiqtaruk)! They had houses all the way to the point "Nuvuraq". All houses were "stand up logs" ones (sod houses) all the way down to Nuvuraq and at the river there at Qikiqtaruk and on [the] top of the hill. When the ships [used to] come there, it was flat on top there. They would use it for playing ball. That was what Shao(r,^)uaq (Roland; Jean's adopted mother's second husband) said. The woods are still standing there on top there. There is also lots of rhubarbs around there." *(Jean Tardiff)*

"When someone first saw a whale, the Captain would pay them too...A gold watch. The Captain would tell them, the first one [who] sees a whale shall have the watch. At that time a watch was so valuable, it was big money. They would say to each other that they saw them first and take the watch, because the watch those days was so high price." *(Albert Oliver)*

"My dad too, he had been east with the ships, with the whalers. Also his brother was there at Qikiqtaruk long before...He was there too with the whalers. My dad went with him with the whalers long ago. Before my dad was married, he was just 14 years old. He was washing dishes for (Captain) McKenna (whaling merchant and whiskey trader, near Herschel Island ca. 1893 to 1906). He went with him to go see his brother at the beach of Qikiqtaruk." *(Hope Gordon)*

Inuit/Whalers interactions

"...You know that time when they first started to come, they had no priest...they started drinking, they try [to] kill each other, [they] fought [and] drank. Their wives, they lost them to those white people...When that preacher came, just like that, all the bad people they stopped. Bishop Stringer, yeah!...That's the time when those Inuvialuit got nothing....animals were dying off, even caribou. Everything was finishing, polar bears, beluga whales." *(Peter Thrasher)*

"...sometimes when it's big days they (the whalers) would be boxing, wrestling around and they would show the Eskimos how to box and wrestle. One time they say down at Herschel Island that three white people tried to teach the Eskimos how to wrestle. They let them watch the three of them. The Eskimo man said "no" and one white man he win. So one Eskimo say he wants to try. Now they (the Eskimos) are going to try Manisuk, he's a big man. And everyone know he's a strong man. All the Eskimos they know it. He was there watching too. He says it's nothing for him, he thinks that way, so the Eskimos tell him "try, go down there and try". He was lazy at first because he think it's nothing for him so them boys force him into it, so he went down. He got hold of one of them and just throw him down just like a little child. So the white man again he tries again. It's "no", they can't stand Manisuk [who is] too strong. So then no more teaching!" *(Albert Oliver)*

"It was at Qikiqtaruk, that's where my parents find out (about Christmas) when they wintered there. When the ships and whalers wintered there at Qikiqtaruk, they didn't know too much about Christmas. But when new year came, they started hearing noise little after midnight, coming from the ships. They were making loud noise with lots of tin cans [while] they (the Inuit) were already in bed. So, they came going around the houses making all kind of noise, while the people were sleeping already. All this time they were wishing everyone "Happy New Year!" And they were shooting too...from then they knew about Christmas and New Year. That's what my mother said; only then they find out." *(Albert Oliver)*

"When the ships were freezing in (at Qikiqtaruk), my dad used to go there to trade with dog team from over here (coming from Eskimo Lakes, east of Qikiqtaruk)...When he go down he would also get whale oil from those big blue whales. He would get big piece of muktuk from them. He says when he goes down to the ships and load his sled he would wait for the north wind and then would "sail" home...He said one time he went [to] the ships [but] he never knew anything about money. They give him a paper. He didn't know it's money and didn't know how much was that money. He would bring it to the ships. When he went there to the ships and got some stuff and he gave them the money and then they fill his sled with enough food. He never expected that much because he didn't know about money; how much was what. He said it was one dollar. At the time long ago, they used to go to Qikiqtaruk to get things and food. With dog team to the ocean when the boats are there." *(Albert Oliver)*

"Just meat, fish, caribou and whales; that's all they (the Inuit) had. They tell stories about when the ships first unloaded. They would just pile lots of stuff and food. All kind of white man food, some roll [of] oats, corn meal, flour, rice, sugar, they would unload them and with cloth bags at that time. It was like that with cloth bags, now everything is with paper. Those Inuit didn't know anything about them they didn't know how to cook that kind of food, they didn't know what they were. They would go there and spill everything on ground and make a big pile and try and take the cloth only. They wanted them for cover of parka or [to] use for something... They say when they first learn how to eat with flour they mix it with water and put blubber on it and eat it uncooked. But later on, they learned [how] to cook it, put oil, and eat them like that. Also they learned [how] to make bread with it on top [of a] stove. They just cooked and baked them." *(Albert Oliver)*

"I think only when the ships and whalers came, only then they really started smoking or mostly chewing tobacco too. Only [then], that's [what] I guess. The tobacco was different long ago, you had to make it or [to] fix it for smoke. They were very hard, just like wood. You had [to] cut them to fill your pipe. They were so big and they were strong too. The twisted black ones were very strong; they used it for chewing." *(Albert Oliver)*

Whalers go Gold Mining at the Firth River

"And from there (Qikiqtaruk) lots of them (the whalers), they hear of gold in Firth River. Now they have trouble. Those white people now want to go gold rush...They run away!...They got the gold but can't find too much in Firth River...I think one guy he find a big piece but I think he died then right there. That time lots of them run away. Some see others and bring them back. Some [were] just about starving, no food. [They] bring them all back, some don't want to go back. They shoot them. Some Eskimo's daughters, they run away with. Even stole lots of grub from the boats. They take off at night time." *(Albert Oliver)*

Measles epidemic

"Well then, there was always lots of ships gathered there long ago. They were the whalers then, looking for whales. And then sometimes too, they say everyone got red...They were lots of Inuit people there at Qikiqtaruk long ago. In the summer they went and waited for the ship to come there. Most of them died and every day they would bury someone. Already there was a minister and my dad was there

helping with the funerals. He was helping the minister there, digging graves there, at the time at Qikiqtaruk, long time ago in 1902. Everyone was red. There was lots sick with flu. It was measles, you know?" *(Hope Gordon)*

End of the Whaling Period

"They (the Inuit) hunted, went trapping and made [a] living there. And when summer came they helped the whalers. They say there was not too much whales long ago. They were hard to see. One time they saw two blue whales only. For long time, they looked for them. When they saw these two, they went to them but they (the whales) were just playing. They would just like jump up and stand up and come up from under and turn around and lay on their sides and all day long. They (people) waited for them to stop. They wanted to go to them but they were scared of them because they made big waves where they were playing. So, they just left them." *(Albert Oliver)*

Getting named after a ship

Peter Thrasher (b. 1930) tells how his father got the name "Billy Thrasher".

"I would have been a Kimisana. If it was not for the boats that came, they would be no Thrashers. So we got the name "Thrasher Whaling Steamship Company". Oh! They made millions with those companies. I know that company had lots of ships. Oh! Yes! They had lots of those, what you call? Lots of masts. What you call them barrels? Big wooden barrels, you know, the one they boiled [whale oil] and they put them in barrels those whale oil." *(Peter Thrasher)*

Related Stories

American Whalers
Polar Sea

TRADING FURS FOR WHITE PEOPLE'S GOODS

These stories are about the period from the late 1910s to the early 1930s, after the whaling, when Inuvialuit traded furs for a variety of goods.

STORY

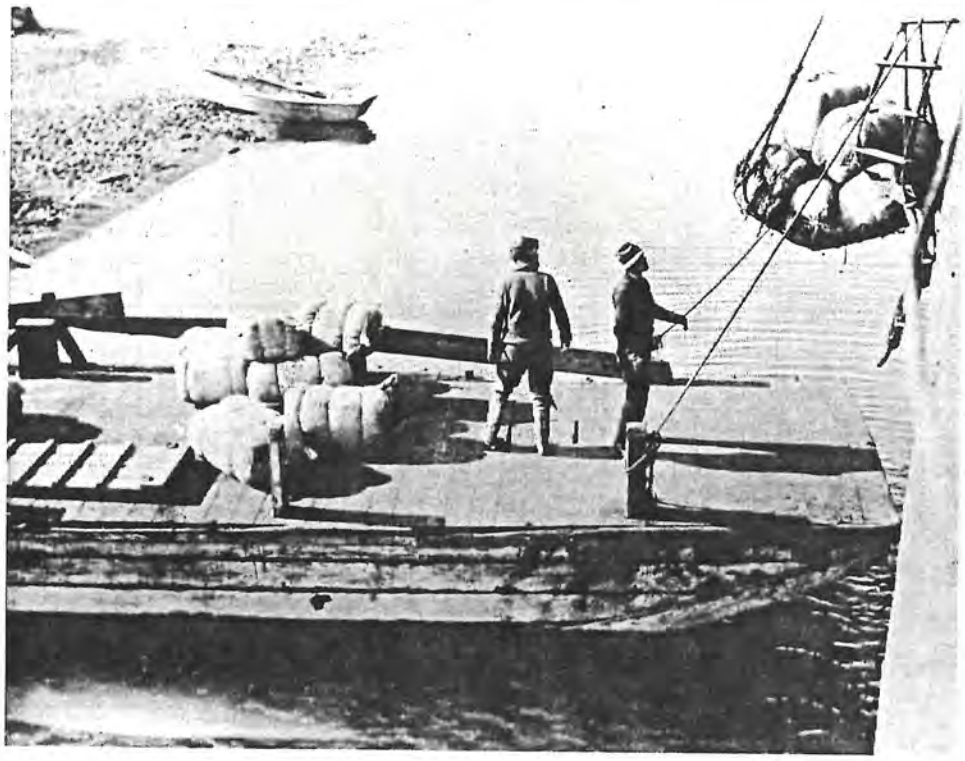
Captain Pedersen trading for furs

"Later on when the whalers were gone, Captain Pederson start coming around and he was hauling stuff by down there. That's before anyone ever come down by these rivers with boats. Only by the coast Captain Peterson would bring stuff and food." *(Albert Oliver)*

"[Pedersen] was a trader, he had a big ship and a little store on the land...Always had white people working for him even black people. He [had] black people as cooks." *(Christina Klengenburg)*

"[Captain Pedersen] was a white man. He was always handling freight for the ships. White man food. He would bring them by the ocean. When he bring the boats, they were like little toy boats, he just lined them up on the ships and brought them like that. They would be quite a lot of them on his big ship. And when he reached

Avumnuk and his wife at Herschel Island. *The First People* story. (Stringer Photos. Anglican Church of Canada General Synod Archives).



Taking on bales of white fox skins at Herschel island. *Fur Traders and Schooners* story. (R. Finnie, ce late '20s. Yukon Archives).

Herschel Island, he would unload them there. He would work with them toy boats. The North Star and these other boats were big boats you know." *(Albert Oliver)*

"The boats would hang on the big ship on the sides...The ones that Captain Pedersen brought were very strong ones, the ones that...travelled by ocean all the time. And the ones that came by [the] Mackenzie [River] were not the same, those ones that came later on, they brought them by [the] Delta...That time, people always get stuff from Qikiqtaruk, long ago. By boats, all the way by ocean." *(Albert Oliver)*

"Captain Pedersen started to trade before I was born. [It] could be 1922 [or] after the first World War. He used to sell some muktuk in the big seal skins where the fur is inside like a big balloon. He sold [that] to Canadian Inuit..." *(Ishmael Alunik)*

"When we arrived in Qikiqtaruk, there was all kinds of schooners. Sometimes, we'd get there ahead of schooners. We knew there were schooners coming in. Used to be a lot of people that travelled to Qikiqtaruk, maybe it was cheap for groceries. Pedersen's boat would anchor toward the point. I was old enough [so I] can remember Pedersen's boat. Next to it, there was a three masts schooner, I think the name was Nanuk, then [there was the] Beach Chimo (may refer to the Bay Chimo). They were side by side docked on the beach, in the harbour.

Then from there on, I never saw Beach Chimo again, it must [have] sink. It always travelled east, so that three masts, I never saw it again. We [would] see Pedersen's boat every summer hauling freight and groceries, [and also] the schooners North Star and Reindeer. When Pedersen's boat arrived, the schooners would be sitting right on the deck, sometimes side by side or else across from each other sitting, on both sides of his boat. His ship was so big!" *(Persis Lennie Gruben)*

"There was lots of them with boats. Lots of whale boats. Hudson's Bay Co., also Northwest Trading Co. They would give the hunters lots for white fox. Sometimes, it's five thousand [dollars], sometimes ten thousand [dollars]!...Sometimes just in one year when there is lots. My grandfather's boat...he bought that boat within one year. [He had got] lots of fox that time." *(Peter Thrasher)*

"[My dad] would get flour. We always go to the store and get everything that we need because Captain Pedersen has everything that we need...Down there [my dad] would trade fur for food." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

"[Flour] was very cheap then. Those that came by the sea were cheaper. That's why we went to Captain Pedersen to pay everything, mostly food...Even muktuk (whale skin with blubber) in a poke (container made out of seal skin)." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

[The Blue whale's muktuk] came from Utiavik (Point Barrow) and further that way. [Captain Pedersen] bought them $5 a poke (container made out of seal skin) and sold them $10 at Qikiqtaruk." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

"There was lots of people there (Qikiqtaruk) coming to Captain Pedersen's store. There was sugar, tea...The pennies were as big as five cents." *(Sarah Meyook)*

"There was not much money that time, there was no money that time. They would give, just like getting grub boxes ready enough for a year, just like when someone is leaving. They would get one year outfit, also about a hundred traps sometimes two hundred, lots of ammunition and knives." *(Peter Thrasher)*

"...We didn't know about money then. They would trade with white foxes. Us children never knew or used money then. What they get from the store, that was what we had. Biscuits and other white man food was good enough for us. There was butter and oranges too then. In them days we never had everything they have now. Only later at Qikiqtaruk there was some candies that is hard to break." *(Dora Malegana)*

"In my days, I hardly saw money. Once in a while I would see money. I never saw my grandmother or my mother handling money." *(Christina Klengenburg)*

"Also there was pickles in wooden barrels, then. When [the container was] empty we would use [it] for making sourdough. They were very good! Also [we would use the] butter containers, those large cans. Long ago, they were all wooden boxes or containers, not papers. They say some people around here [still] have [these kind of] containers...That is how we lived long ago we didn't have everything they have [now]. Also there was rice and no potatoes or bananas, no other fresh stuff [like] we get now. Only rice, raisins and dry apples to cook. They was lots of dry fruits then, they would come in wooden boxes too. There was hardly [any] can containers then, no jars containers too. The coffee would be in tin cans, you [would] have to open them. That is what they had then, when I could remember." *(Dora Malegana)*

"They used real traps then and trapped white foxes and other foxes and anything they get...when we need white man food we would go to Qikiqtaruk when I could remember...The Hudson's Bay had a store there and there was an older man working there...Just with furs [like] trading white foxes and other foxes. As soon as they get some foxes they would go down to Qikiqtaruk to trade. [They] would get flour and they always went to get their supplies there. [When there] was no other furs to trade with they would go home." *(Jean Tardiff)*

"Captain Pedersen and Pete Saimalut [?] when they came, they would throw away lots of oranges and apples, the ones that were spoiled. Well they would bring them from long way around [and that] made them spoil. When they got here, they would divide the bad ones and good ones, then they would throw the bad ones away. In this little cove, all the [bad] oranges and apples [would] go. We would go there and pick some. Well, [even if] they were a little spoiled they would throw them away. Some didn't get salty and some did get salty. "*(Kathleen Hansen)*

"With Ole Anderson we would go to Qikiqtaruk. We'd dock right beside Captain Pedersen's boat...Hauling freight from Captain Pedersen. [Pedersen would also bring] kamiks (boots) with bearded seal for the bottoms, parkas, outer parkas, caribou skin pants, long mukluks and women shoes with bearded seal bottoms. He brought all that over...Trying to sell them, real nice ones...I don't know where he brought those from. Captain Pedersen put them in his store. "*(Christina Klengenburg)*

"...I remember when every summer Captain Pedersen come and people come with schooners....I must have remembered because I used to eat fresh apple and orange when that boat come. We had to do little work on the road or something, but yet they used to give us oranges and apples. Herschel Island that time before that 1928 was I remember..." *(Jimmy Jacobson)*

"...we lived there on the Yukon Coast. The Hudson Bay had a trading post there with general food, dry goods, shells for guns and fish nets. Also Captain Pedersen had a general store too. I think [it was with the] Canalaska Company (Pedersen's company from 1925 to 1933)." *(Ishmael Alunik)*

Going to Qikiqtaruk in the summer time

"After we go whaling at Shingle Point, Captain Pedersen would be coming to Herschel Island. All the schooners go down there to get outfits for winter." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

"Once a while we [would] go to Qikiqtaruk but not to stay. We [would] go there for a while but we never wintered there." *(Dora Malegana)*

"Edward Arey used to bring people...that didn't have a boat down to Qikiqtaruk and whoever wanted to follow to get groceries." *(Dora Malegana)*

"There were schooners and whale boats, mostly whale boats. If anybody didn't own whale boats, they would haul them all the way to Qikiqtaruk without [letting them] pay." *(Persis Lennie Gruben)*

"At the time, I'm telling stories now, when we first came, we used to live at Qikiqtaruk when I was staying with my grandparents. There was lot of people here, they used to hunt seals. At the time, my grandad used to bring stuff for the Hudson's Bay store, so we would come here only in summer. When I stayed with my grandparents I didn't stay here in wintertime..." *(Sarah Meyook)*

"We never came here in wintertime but summertime we would come here sometimes with someone with a boat." *(Dora Malegana)*

"Yeah there was [people at Qikiqtaruk], but only in the summer time. Must be people come from all over I guess, by boat I guess that time, travel by." *(Jimmy Jacobson)*

Related Stories

Fur Traders and Schooners

SOCIAL LIFE AT QIKIQTARUK IN THE 1920S

These stories tell about life on the island during the fur trading days.

STORY

"...they had houses mostly made of moss. You never saw wood outside, you could only see wood from inside. All outside of it [was] made of moss. I never knew how many families had houses there. Only Thomas Umauq (who was the first Inuvialuk Anglican Minister) had a real house (*which was also the transmission station*). But when the schooners went down, some stayed in boats and [some] set up tents on the land." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

"I didn't stay here during winter but in summer my dad brought us here. At the time, there was lots of houses with people in them. There was lots of people here when my dad first brought us here. We came here to wait for the boats to come. Some would put tents on their boats because their was not enough room in their boat. There was lots of them, and then they would have a big drum dance. There was lots of fun that time and would [they would] play ball while waiting for Captain Pedersen." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

"When we first got there, I was always afraid to go with the other girls, when they had dances on this side of the church. After having drum dances they would have square dances. Me I was very young at that time....we would have lots of fun, we always played. We would bring [...] and go outside of the Hudson's Bay Co. and put out little cloths." *(Sarah Meyook)*

"They always danced square dances, hardly drum dances just once in awhile." *(Christina Klengenburg)*

"There was a lots of Inuit people there. Long ago there was lots of them...That was the reason [why] there was a dance hall...All the time people [would] come. They would have a big dance there. Little over the church this way, there was a big dance hall. Before there was a big house (the "dance hall") now is no more." *(Sarah Meyook)*

"At Qikiqtaruk I was raised good by my parents and when the ships [would] come I would go dancing lots...Elias would play the guitar and Itqililuk (Jim Kalinek) would play the fiddle and as soon as they got there we would start. Sometimes we didn't bother sleeping, we just kept on dancing." *(Jean Tardiff)*

Related Stories

American Whalers
Fur Traders and Schooners

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE (RCMP)

These stories are about the police at Qikiqtaruk and some of the work the Inuvialuit did for the police.

STORY

Inuvialuit and Indians working for the RCMP

"As I can remember, there was always RCMP there (at Qikiqtaruk). Hudson's Bay Co. and their people lived there too." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

"RCMP used only dog team to visit each other. There was no plane that time. Only by dog team. They would travel from Aklavik to Herschel Island only by dog team, even the ministers." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

"Long ago, also old Lazarus Sittichinli and them would help and guide the police at that time long ago and would travel over 500 miles over the mountains with them...they would just make short cuts. That trail over the mountains have kill lots of people also police. They would freeze to death or starve too...They would always try themselves that's why. They always want to go alone even when some Indians or others want to help them. And [they] always said they could [do it], then they would have trouble travelling by themselves! There was lots [of] natives that would help them, even Big Louie (Cardinal)." *(Albert Oliver)*

"Naoyak (Jimmy Jacobson's adopted father) was at Herschel Island. He was working, later on he was working for the police, like shooting seals for police dogs and working for police dogs. Cops had a lot of dogs. [He] used to feed them and work for the police." *(Jimmy Jacobson)*

Hanging people at Qikiqtaruk

"I remember that time them two Kangmalik (Eastern Arctic Inuit), they make them dig their own grave the day before they hang them. Made them visit the people the day before they hang them. One of them, I remember, he didn't say, didn't like it when people ask him he was going to get dying because he figured he never, he didn't deserve to be hanged. But the other one didn't mind because he killed enough men." *(Jimmy Jacobson)*

"So they take them to Qikiqtaruk to hang them up. They hanged them two guys. There's a place at Qikiqtaruk where they hanged people." *(Albert Oliver)*

Related Stories

The Police

KUBLUALUK, THE SHAMAN FROM QIKIQTARUK

These stories are about Kublualuk ("Kuvlualuk" in the Delta dialect), the magic man at Qikiqtaruk.

STORY

"I think he (Kuvlualuk) spoke like Thomas Umauq. He must come from the same place." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

"They say this guy Kuvlualuk, when someone is sick he would just touch him and sing a shaman song in Inuit [and] he just make them better. Sometimes, he would just think when someone is sick long ways [from him] he would just say or send a word right in his house. That way he just think and with his thoughts he would touch them. That person would get well. But he never did take anything or steal. But some people would give him little tobacco, flour, sometimes ammunition, matches." *(Peter Thrasher)*

"...Kublualuk used to watch prisons, he never hardly hunt. They say they always put him in prison when it got quiet (during the night?) he always got out [and] just unlocked the keys there. He was a shaman and [would] go home. When they checked for him he was always gone home, so they stopped putting him in jail." *(Jean Tardiff)*

"I used to see Kublualuk. We stayed at Ole Anderson's schooner Olga. From the schooner I would see him outside or taking a walk. They put him in jail [but] next morning his was out walking around with his hand in his pockets." *(Christina Klengenburg)*

"I remember Kublualuk because I used to go to his sod house and he used to make bannock and I know once or twice I steal his bannock and he pretend to sleep. The next day he walk along with me holding my hand and he told me he was watching me when I was stealing his bannock but he pretend to sleep again...At that time he was my next door neighbour. I know him real good because he walk around with me all the time. But all this time I never know I was walking around with a medicine man, eh? Because [he was my] next door neighbour, eh? After that, I found out he was a medicine man [when] I come back with schooling." *(Jimmy Jacobson)*

"Long ago when we used to live here Kuvlualuk was there too. He was a real magic man. He could turn into feathers and come out...Every time the police locked him up in the jail, he's just gone and staying in his home! Somebody asked him "How you go out?" He said "I turn into, like a little owl feather...He was a shaman that man. Somebody see a hawk, he turned into a hawk also. "I'm gonna kill that bird Kuvlualuk" someone said. He started to pull the trigger, his bullets busted!" *(Ishmael Alunik)*

Related Stories

Missionaries

THE ANGLICAN MISSION

These stories tell about the church at Qikiqtaruk.

STORY

"They say they used to have service in a big round tent. Before [there was a] church at Qikiqtaruk." *(Jean Tardiff)*

"Already there was a minister and my dad was there helping with the funerals. He was helping the minister there, digging graves there, at the time at Qikiqtaruk, long time ago in 1902." *(Hope Gordon)*

"I saw this guy (Thomas) Umauq when he visited...I used to see Umauq at Qikiqtaruk...When I lived in Qikiqtaruk they were ministering for church, that church down there." *(Christina Klengenburg)*

"I went to school to Tapqak (Shingle Point) around 1929. Before that, around at Qikiqtaruk I think they say they had been teaching a little at the Anglican mission, around 1905. At that time the whaling was going on." *(Ishmael Alunik)*

Related Stories

Missionaries

THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC OF 1928

These stories tell about the sickness and death brought by the flu.

STORY

"...Everybody died off in 1928 because every house we went to, me and Pat Kilik and kids, older elders died off. The whole village got cleaned out. I remember when I was looking for something to eat, I must have been pretty hungry looking for something to eat, I went to Kublualuk. I was hungry. He fed me good, that's why I never forget that meal, eh?" *(Jimmy Jacobson)*

"I only stayed there for summer. [The] only time I can remember is when people died of the flu. The ones I knew were Jimmy Jacobson's parents...They died that summer. There were so many [dying], we just got there from Banks Island. Mom and dad wouldn't let us go around there to visit there, afraid we might catch the flu. There were so many [that] passed away. Naoyak stayed in my mind, their two children were so small!" *(Persis Lennie Gruben)*

Related Stories

Fur Traders and Schooners

"Typical modern Eskimo dwellings at Herschel Island. Wooden structure covered with canvas, ca late '20's". Stories about *Forces From the South, Missionaries and Mounties,* and the *American Whaling Period.* (R. Finnie, Yukon Archives).

A turn of the century dwelling could be opened to the public for interpreting the way people lived. The *People From Far Away* theme could be highlighted here. (J. Peepre)

RESOURCES FROM QIKIQTARUK

These stories are about how the Inuvialuit used the plants and animals of Qikiqtaruk and the north coast.

STORY

Seal and walrus

"When they go to Qikiqtaruk they hunt seal...they hunt them for dog food." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

"My grandfather used to get seals from Herschel Island. They just used them (the seal's guts) to make window." *(Peter Thrasher)*

"...We always had nets there [at Qikiqtaruk]. For seals too they had nets right at [the] Qikiqtaruk's cove there. Yes, they were really working there at Qikiqtaruk!" *(Jean Tardiff)*

"[At Qikiqtaruk] we really hunted seals that time long ago (in the 1940s and 1950s)! We skin the seals for sale. We set nets for seals. Sometimes they would be over ten and we would skin them. At the time, one skin cost over one hundred dollars. That's how we used to live." *(Sarah Meyook)*

"Also we would come here by dog team in winter time to get some seals for our trip to the Delta." *(Dora Malegana)*

"When the men came [back]...they came back with walrus each time. That was all we had for food with fish and seal. We made dry meat with them and tried eating time like. We also that also let the (walrus) feet [get] old. That is how we ate, when we come around here long ago (in the 1940s). Well, there was no welfare. When we had flour or sugar and a little of other white man food with that. That's all we had.

We all stayed here and there was so much seal then. They were all over but we never had seal nets then. They shot them [with] .22 rifles. That is how they hunted them...When the seals were close, they [would] shoot them from shore. After they got them, we played card games.

We were never lonely in those days...When we were here with our boat...we stayed here all summer and in September we went back to Delta where we wintered.

Every summer we would come here...The seal meat [was] all we had sometimes, seal and fish. We never had sweet food. That is what I told; how we used to live here long ago at Qikiqtaruk." *(Sarah Meyook)*

Caribou

"...that's how it was in the coast. Some years you were well off. Maybe well off one year, next year nothing, nothing to kill, just the ptarmigan, ptarmigan [are] around all the time. Hard to catch anything, no caribou, can't get seals late in the winter...When there was caribou hunting...we used to kill caribou in summer time." *(Fred Inglangasuk)*

"When we didn't know about white man, we lived on coast line, way down there. There was fish and oil, no reindeer just caribou...Long ago it was pretty hard, we walked inland hunting for caribou, just walking, looking, walking...Not too much caribou from Qikiqtaruk, before reindeers ever came this way. There was no caribou so they sent for reindeers in 1931." *(Joe Nasogaluak)*

"And I remember quite a bit, we used to go to the mainland (in the 1920s) and we didn't like hunting geese and caribou, I guess, from Herschel Island. At certain time of the year we'd live right at Herschel Island and in the spring I remember that we used to build house in the mainland because it was good hunting, I guess, in the mainland." *(Jimmy Jacobson)*

Whales

"Sometimes we would go down to Qikiqtaruk and stay there for quite some time...People lived there and hunted to survive. With Umauq's boat they went out hunting whales." *(Christina Klengenburg)*

Trapping in the 1950s

"But there was no one here (Qikiqtaruk) at the time in winter. In winter we stayed at the police house here. They would get few white foxes, wolverines and wolves. That is why my husband hunted here every year. He would put dogs in harness and use them to go camping. Sometimes he would stay for four days to one week and then when he came back, he would start skinning the white foxes then." *(Sarah Meyook)*

Fishing

"They fish when the fish were around. They made pits with logs on the top, like a little house. They [would] put some [fish] in the ice houses. Some got lots of fish, some for themselves and also for dog food, for a long winter. There is arctic char at Qikiqtaruk, also fresh water salmon goes there from the fish holes in the mountains. Some come from the Babbage River. The arctic char, some say they go to the Firth River." *(Ishmael Alunik)*

Getting water

"You know there is little spring water there at Qikiqtaruk, that's where we got water from. It flows from the lake up there, where we used to get ice from. We [would] walk to get water from behind the old ice house. [It was] in winter before the ice went [away]. We filled our big barrels with ice from up there. We used our dogs then in winter to carry our barrels." *(Jean Tardiff)*

"Sometimes we were short of water, when it was big wind for long time. When the wind went down, they would get water from where they always get water from." *(Kathleen Hansen)*

"These barrels here they are the ones they used for water then. When they used to have good belts on. And before the snow melt here they [would] go up to the lake to get ice. They fill them up when they are not busy, on spare time. When the summer came they had water then after putting ice in them first and get them ready. These barrels here used to be good when they have ice and water. They used to use them in those days but the belts are loose now. That is why we didn't use them (in the 1950s). That's what I know." *(Sarah Meyook)*

"This lake here (in front of the Mission House) too we used to use it (from the 1940s to the 1960s)...There is no more water now...It used to be big and now it's almost gone with lots of grass on it every summer...Over there, there was a little spring water. When it rained it would run and this place would fill up then...In August when it started raining, it ran water there then. And us we kept fixing the way the water ran. Then it ran good and started. Now there is no water...Some years there was no water. And one time they got us water with helicopter. For me and Liz, in 45 gallon barrels." *(Sarah Meyook)*

Plants

"I'll never forget Qikiqtaruk, we'd go picking greens called "guogulit" [?] with pillow case bags that we filled up and took home...Sometimes we cooked them with sugar, they were really tasty....We put them in oil too; [it's] really good in oil." *(Christina Klengenburg)*

Wood in the 1920s

"Qikiqtaruk didn't have too much wood in those days." *(Persis Lennie Gruben)*

Related Stories

Marine Life
Currents of Water
Arctic Sanctuary
Migration

MOVING TO THE DELTA

These stories are about the move to Aklavik in the 1930s.

STORY

"By 1929 [or] something around [that], the [Hudson's Bay Co.] stopped trading. Maybe [there was] not much fur. Even Captain Pedersen stopped trading there too. The R.C.M.P., the Anglican mission and the Wallace radar operator [left] left also around 1929 or 1930." *(Ishmael Alunik)*

"That's the time all those Alaskan people started coming this way. It was too far where we lived to get groceries. That's the time Captain Pedersen's boat quit coming around. They all started coming this way. Captain Pedersen had quit bringing freight down to Qikiqtaruk. When he quit coming around all those people started moving to the Delta, right to Tuktoyaktuk, even to Kittigazuit." *(Dora Malegana)*

"When my dad had nothing around here for him, he moved to Aklavik. There was no more white man food around here, not even at Qikiqtaruk and Kaktovik (Barter Island). There was nothing, not even flour. Even at Yuruyaq; most people had only rice over there. There was no white man food, no biscuit even!" *(Dora Malegana)*

"Not too long ago, when Qikiqtaruk had nothing, when everyone went up to Delta and stayed there and when there was nothing at Tapqak (Shingle Point), people had a hard time. [That was] when there was no more stores around; down there everyone had moved into Delta." *(Dora Malegana)*

"Our grandparents, both my father's parents and their family and also my mother's parents, when the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canalaska Company, that was Pedersen's store, moved away, [they moved to the Delta]. The Hudson's Bay had a store for maybe two years [at Qikiqtaruk].

And when the Tapqak (Shingle Point) Anglican school moved in 1936 to Aklavik there were few families that also moved to the Mackenzie Delta. My parents went to Delta to hunt muskrats in the spring 1938. Only Roland and his wife Katie were the last to move to Inuvik, in the late 1950s." *(Ishmael Alunik)*

Related Stories

The New North
Fur Traders and Schooners
Forces from the South

Ways to Tell the Story

- show photos of elders
- show historic photos of Qikiqtaruk people
- read these quotes as part of the story
- play tape-recorded oral histories
- contrast these stories to European version of events

Further Reading

Oral history tapes are available
Oral history transcripts done by Murielle Nagy are available; a book will follow

Cobble beaches are often piled high with drift logs from the Liard River. *Currents of Water and Time* themes are well told along these beaches leading to the graves and uplands beyond. (C. McEwen)

Camping shelter built of drift logs. These practical and welcome shelters offer a good interpretive story linked to *Weather* and *Currents* stories. (C. McEwen)

OUR ISLAND IN THE POLAR SEA

Currents of Water and Time

Polar Sea
Weather
Marine Life
Currents
Migration
Island Changing Shape
Transportation

POLAR SEA

This story describes the Beaufort Sea, including the polar ice pack and ocean currents. Ice pack behaviour played a big role in the human history of the north. Ice continues to influence life in the arctic.

Summary

- the Beaufort Sea is part of the Arctic Ocean, where Pacific and Arctic waters meet and mix
- the polar sea and ice pack affect climate in the north and regions far to the south
- Beaufort Sea waters and ice move clockwise in what is called the Beaufort Gyre
- moving ice destroyed many ships over the years

STORY

Arctic Ocean

Herschel Island lies in the Beaufort Sea and is part of the Arctic Ocean. Some say the Arctic Ocean is not really an ocean, but a sea of the Atlantic Ocean. Whatever name you choose, the Arctic Ocean is about four times larger than the Mediterranean Sea.

Arctic Ocean waters surround the North Pole and affect the climate of much of North America and the whole northern hemisphere. Beaufort Sea waters are cold and have a low salt content in comparison to southern seas.

Polar ice and northern winds and currents are what make the Arctic Ocean so different from other oceans. In many ways, northern history followed the many moods of shifting ice, storm winds and ocean currents. Now they influence every aspect of life in the far north, including Scandinavia and Russia over the horizon, on the other side of the ocean.

Beaufort Gyre and Winds

Ocean currents in the Beaufort Sea move in a vast clockwise gyre (a circle motion). Waters flow in from the Bering Sea, bringing with them a chain of life that has sustained humans in the region for centuries. Ocean currents flowing by Herschel Island bring marine mammals, marine fish, ice, wind and weather patterns.

Inshore currents are variable and wind-driven, with northwesterly and easterly winds most common. The northwest winds cause the Mackenzie River discharge to turn west toward Herschel Island. Offshore, in the region of permanent ice, the Beaufort Gyre takes over from wind driven currents and moves the sea waters in a circular and clockwise direction.

Ice Pack

The Arctic Ocean has 40 per cent of the earth's sea ice, known as pack ice. Permanent pack ice lies about 90 kilometres north of Herschel Island. The pack ice moves slowly in a clockwise direction, following the Beaufort Gyre. In summer, large ice floes often drift near the island and can be seen from the hills near Pauline Cove.

Pack ice in the Beaufort Sea forms over several years. Young ice is less than 30 centimetres (12 inches) thick, year-old ice may be 30-200cm thick, and old ice is thicker than 200cm, (close to 7 feet). As water freezes, most of the salt is excluded from the ice, increasing the salt content below the ice pack. When ice packs come together, pressure ridges result. Where the ice moves apart, leads of open water are formed. When these recur on a regular basis, they are called polynyas. Knowledge of polynyas was critical in early navigation, particularly in the Eastern Arctic. Almost every year, a shear in the Beaufort Sea ice creates an open water lead for whales to follow toward Bank's Island.

All along the northern coast, ice scours the sand spits and lowlands. In summer, storm surges also erode the coast. Even though the waters around Herschel Island are frozen more than half the year, the crushing forces of moving pack ice cannot penetrate Pauline Cove. In years past, this safe harbour provided native people a refuge and allowed ships to over-winter, earning Herschel Island a prominent place in the history of the north. Pauline Cove also features an early spring thaw from the grips of the polar ice. In spring, open water leads, such as those found in Workboat Passage between the island and nearby mainland, attract migrant birds, particularly seabirds and waterfowl.

The Ice Pack and People

Inuvialuit designed small light boats that were tough and flexible — perfect craft for dealing with ice floes. The ice brought seals closer to Herschel Island, making hunting easier, and the Inuvialuit knew how whales used open water leads through the ice. But the treacherous ice still claimed many Inuvialuit lives.

Polar ice moves at an angle of about 30 degrees to the right of the wind direction. This hard lesson was learned in 1871, when an entire whaling fleet was trapped at Point Belcher in Alaska. The whalers thought the winds would drive the ice along the coast, keeping channels open behind the floes. But the ice pack closed around the ships, and only seven out of 40 ships returned to the south. All the crews were rescued.

In 1876, winter came early and trapped a whaling fleet near Point Barrow, Alaska. Twenty vessels were caught in the ice. Most of the crews sought refuge on shore, but 70 who tried to over-winter on the ships were never seen again. Some say the ships are still drifting in the ice of the polar seas, carrying corpses frozen in time. These stories show how the ice pack affected historic events.

Ocean Layers and Salt

The Arctic Ocean is deep, extending down 4000m (2.5 miles). The inshore waters extending out to the edge of the continental shelf are only about 200m (650 feet) deep. In the Beaufort Sea, the shelf is about 50-90 km (30-55 miles) offshore. Herschel Island is close to the mainland and sits on this shelf.

The sea is made up of three distinct layers of water. Cold surface layer waters (known as Arctic Water) receive fresh water from northern rivers, are moved around by winds, lose heat to the atmosphere, and influence our climate. As ice freezes over surface waters, the salt content of the water increases, since most of the salt is excluded from the ice. Open surface waters may be as warm as one or two degrees Celsius (34-35° Fahrenheit), but temperatures just below the surface are typically minus one Celsius (30°F).

Waters in the middle layer, known as Atlantic Water, are a little warmer and a little saltier. The Bottom Water comes from the Greenland Sea, is colder and has a

uniform salt content.

Waves and Tides

Tides occur about twice a day in the Beaufort Sea, but are fairly small, with a range of .3-.5 metres (1-1.5 feet). Wind-driven surface waves differ from those in other oceans, because the pack ice damps down the size of the waves. For the same reason, large ocean swells, like those in the Pacific, do not occur to the same extent in the Arctic Ocean. The waves along the open shoreline are still large enough to swamp small boats, and many lives have been lost in stormy weather.

Oceans and Boundaries

The Alaska-Yukon border follows the 141st Meridian, which extends north into the Beaufort Sea, and eventually converges with all the other meridians at the North Pole. Canada claims that it should have sovereignty over the eastern side of the wedge-shaped sector all the way to the pole. This "sector principle" of sovereignty is not generally accepted as a legal basis for sovereignty claims. Ownership of the Beaufort Sea is still an issue, because of the potential for oil wealth in the region.

Related Stories

Weather
Currents
American Whaling Period
Marine Life
Migrations

Ways to Tell the Story

- hike to the hills to view the ice floes
- show how Pauline Cove is protected from the ice pack
- show pictures of the many whaling ships caught in the ice
- look at a map of the polar regions
- read historic accounts of ice conditions

Further Reading

Herman, Yvonne, (ed.). Marine Geology and Oceanography of the Arctic Seas. Springer-Verlag, New York. 1974.

Stevenson, A. "Herschel Haven", in North. Vol. 15, No. 6. Nov.-Dec. 1968.

Bockstoce, John R. 1986. Whales, Ice and Men. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

WEATHER

Cold seas, the polar ice pack and ocean currents all affect northern weather. The nearby land affects the weather at Herschel Island, and the sea in turn influences weather on the mainland.

Summary

- the low angle of the northern sun and the polar ice cap influence the weather,
- the polar ice cap produces a cold winter air mass that sometimes moves south,
- temperatures at Herschel average about 6-7°C (43-45°F) in summer and -29C° (-20°F) in winter
- arctic temperature inversions trap air pollution

STORY

Northern Weather

Herschel Island has typical arctic weather: cool summers and long cold winters. Since the angle of the sun is low in the far north, Herschel Island receives less direct sunlight than southern lands. Low levels of sun radiation and the year-round sea ice result in cold arctic air masses that influence the climate. The nearby mountains of the Yukon's north slope also affect weather at Herschel Island. For example, breezes blowing down out of the mountains can be felt at the island.

The arctic is famous for its 24-hour summer daylight but also for its total darkness in mid-winter. The growing season is short — July and August — but the amount of daylight during this time is enough for the tundra plants to flourish. At Herschel Island, some light is available even during the long winter nights as moonlight reflects off snow and ice. A long twilight also brightens the polar night.

Polar Ice Pack

In winter, a dome of cold arctic air forms over the polar ice pack. This air mass often descends south, taking clear cold weather with it. Pacific storms seldom break through the arctic air, but a few storms originating in the Aleutian Islands penetrate the cold air and cause blizzards. The cold air mass retreats in the spring.

Sea ice reduces the moisture available for rain or snow, and this is one reason why the Beaufort Sea is part of a "polar desert". Also, cold air holds less moisture, so less is available for precipitation.

Temperature

Herschel Island temperatures average about 6-7 degrees Celsius (43-45°F) in July, but may typically be 10 degrees (50°F), or even sometimes as warm as 30 degrees (86°F). The air temperature offshore is cooler, at about 2-5 degrees C. (35-40°F). During the fall, sea water is a source of heat and the temperature can be warmer over water than on the coast.

Temperatures plunge to a mean of -27 to -30 degrees Celsius (-17–22°F) in January, but can get as low as -50 degrees Celsius (-58°F) Some parts of southern Canada are at times just as cold or colder, but few experience the persistent low temperatures of the high arctic.

Temperature inversions are an important feature of arctic weather. Inversions occur when air temperature increases the higher you go; usually the opposite is true. Arctic temperature inversions result in a very stable air mass, especially in

the fall and winter. This means that pollution, often from far away, is trapped near the earth's surface. The inversion is like a lid keeping pollutants inside.

Rain, Snow and the Polar Desert

The Beaufort Sea receives about the same amount of precipitation as some southern deserts. The "polar desert" receives most of its precipitation as snow. Snow may fall any time of year, but winter lasts from October to May.

In summer, open waters around Herschel Island provide moisture for precipitation. Rain is usually light, but comes in a steady drizzle. Fog, mist and low clouds are common. Sea fog forms when warm moist air cools down as it passes over colder water or ice, then condenses. In summer, visibility in the Beaufort Sea can be poor up to 30 per cent of the time. In the fall, water cools more slowly than the land, and steaming from the warm water causes cloudiness and snow flurries.

Wind and Storms

Storms come at all times of the year at Herschel Island. Most of the strong winds are from the west and northwest, but the dominant summer wind over the Beaufort Sea is easterly. When normal arctic air circulation changes, storms often follow. Thunder and lightening are rare at Herschel Island, because there are few cyclonic storms (rapid counter-clockwise air circulation around a low-pressure centre).

Strong winds and low temperatures create very severe conditions at the island. When moving air is colder than skin temperature, humans lose heat. This is called wind chill. The "rule of thirty" says that at -30° Celsius, with a 30 mph wind, exposed flesh will freeze in 30 seconds. Blizzards form when blowing snow combines with high winds and low visibility. Whiteouts happen when an overcast sky makes the light appear uniform and it's hard to perceive depth

On Herschel Island in the late 1800s, whalers strung out ropes from the buildings to the ships, so that the crew could find their way back aboard through winter darkness and blizzards. One year a storm descended on a group of whalers and Inuvialuit playing baseball. Five people, including two Inuvialuit, froze to death after losing their way.

Related Stories

Polar Sea
Transportation
Arctic Seasons
American Whaling Period

Ways to Tell the Story

- observe the changeable daily weather: sun, fog, storm, winds,
- talk about sunlight; 24 hours in summer,

Further Reading

Burns, B. 1974. The Climate of the Mackenzie Valley-Beaufort Sea Volume II. Environment Canada, Climatological Studies Number 24, Toronto.

Dome Petroleum Ltd. 1981. Compilation of Climatological Data for the Beaufort Sea, Chukchi Sea, Parry Channel, Baffin Bay, Davis Strait, and Bering Sea Regions.

MARINE LIFE

The marine environment is a major part of the resources of Herschel Island. The Inuvialuit have always depended on marine life. Marine animals will not be apparent to many summer visitors from the south, because they may not be found in the area during the summer.

Summary

- the Arctic Ocean is not as productive as other oceans
- arctic marine fish have adapted to life in the polar sea
- Marine mammals of Arctic Ocean food chain include polar bear, bowhead whale, beluga whale, ringed seal

STORY

Arctic Ocean Ecology

Arctic seas are less productive than other oceans. The Arctic Ocean is the same size as the Antarctic Ocean, but only one tenth as productive. Productivity in oceans is influenced by upwellings of nutrients, which are not that common in the Arctic environment. However, the Mackenzie River discharge waters that extend along the Yukon coast enrich the coastal waters with nutrients, making local waters fairly fertile.

Arctic waters are not as productive as temperate waters and have fewer types of fish. Arctic food chains are shorter. Low light levels in winter, extended ice cover, low water temperatures and low nutrient levels all influence productivity.

Adaptations of Arctic Marine Fish

Arctic marine fish are better able to deal with reduced light and colder temperatures than their southern counterparts. Their eye size is generally larger and their other senses are also enhanced. Their bodies tend to be longer and more streamlined. The greater density of cold water makes swimming more difficult and a streamlined body is critical.

Growth is slower in arctic waters. Fish reach maturity later and have a longer life expectancy. Arctic marine fish species include Arctic cod, Pacific herring, fourhorn sculpin, and Arctic flounder.

Ringed Seal

This is the most abundant and widespread marine mammal in the Canadian Arctic. Before break-up, a visitor would witness hundreds of ringed seals sun basking on the sea ice. Thousands more could be seen at the ice edge along the open water leads.

Ringed Seals feed on fish and zooplankton in the water. They over-winter under the ice and have the ability to maintain breathing holes. Their main predator is the polar bear. Arctic fox scavenge seals killed by polar bears and kill seal pups in their lairs. Single pups are born in March or April in lairs in land-fast sea ice. Break-up occurs during June and July, and most seals then move with the northward retreat of the ice pack. Some may remain near the coast.

Animal remains excavated at the Washout Site on Herschel Island suggest that great numbers of ringed seals were taken by the Thule.

Polar Bear

Polar bears feed mainly on seals. The main area for polar bears within the Beaufort Sea is southern Banks Island, although Inuvialuit polar bear hunters use both the Yukon coast and Herschel Island as a staging point. Polar bear dens are found in the lee of the coastal hills of Herschel Island's north coast. Both sexes den but pregnant females do so more regularly. Females den from October to April and cubs are born in December. Females and young return to the sea ice after leaving the den.

Barry Lopez, in Arctic Dreams, describes the polar bear: The polar bear is a creature of arctic edges: he hunts the ice margins, the surface of the water, and the continental shore. The ice bear, he is called. . . . He dives to the ocean floor for mussels and kelp, and soundlessly breaks the water's glassy surface on his return, to study a sleeping seal. Twenty miles from shore he treads water amid schooling fish. The sea bear. In winter, while the grizzly hibernates, the polar bear is out on the sea ice, hunting. In summer his tracks turn up a hundred miles inland, where he has feasted on crowberries and blueberries.

As an example of how far inland a polar bear may venture, there is record of a Gwich'in shooting a polar bear on the Old Crow Flats.

Bowhead Whale

The bowhead whale is a baleen whale, reaching 20 metres (65 feet) in length. In order to feed, it skims the water, straining small animals (zooplankton) from large volumes of water through its baleen. Although capable of diving to depths of 500 - 600 metres (750 yards) when struck with a harpoon, most of the time they feed close to the water surface. Short dives of only five to ten minutes are typical.

Commercial whaling left the species on the verge of extinction and was in sharp contrast to traditional use. Bowhead whales have been hunted traditionally for centuries. Aboriginal hunters used local materials and implements and caught only enough whales to supply community needs. Commercial bowhead whaling, which lasted only decades, almost exhausted the populations of bowhead whales. The western arctic population has been estimated to once number as many as 40,000 prior to commercial harvest. Today that same population is around 3000.

As a result of commercial hunting, the bowhead whale is now listed as an endangered species, in Canada and internationally. All commercial harvest is banned and there is only limited subsistence hunting.

By the end of the whaling era, only the head was utilized and the rest of the whale was left to waste. Traditional users knew not to waste and would likely have found this waste confusing and wrong.

Beluga Whale

Among the smaller whales, averaging 540-765 kilograms (1100-1600 pounds), the beluga whale feeds on fish and invertebrates (animals with no skeletons). They concentrate in large numbers in traditional areas. The Mackenzie River estuary is a major summer concentration area. Archaeological evidence suggests that people hunted the beluga at the mouth of the East Channel of the Mackenzie River for at least 500 years.

Other Marine Mammals

Walrus have been reported in the Herschel Island region. They have always been an sporadic visitor to the area, although some say the commercial whalers may

have decimated the local walrus population. Bearded seals also visit the area occasionally and there is a report of northern fur seals in the region.

Related Stories

Stories About Qikiqtaruk
The Polar Sea
The Arctic Seasons
Currents
Migrations
American Whaling Period

Ways to Tell the Story

- walk the beach, watch for whales, seals or fish carcasses
- walk to the northeast cliffs, beyond the telecommunications tower, and watch for whales
- look at photographs of whales

Further Reading

LGL Limited. 1982. The Biological Resources of the southeastern Beaufort Sea, Amundsen Gulf, northern Mackenzie Delta and adjacent coastal areas: a selected bibliography. Arctic Petroleum Operators Association Project No. 173.

Davis et al. 1980. Arctic Marine Mammals for Science Advisory Board, Report No. 3.

Lopez, Barry. 1986. Arctic Dreams London: Macmillan Limited.

Yukon, Renewable Resources. Yukon Mammal Series.

CURRENTS OF WATER

In the arctic marine environment, Herschel Island is enriched by the currents flowing past. The Mackenzie River discharge extends the entire breadth of the Yukon coastline. For the Inuvialuit, this current brings vital resources, such as fish, whales and logs.

Summary

- Mackenzie River discharge waters affect Herschel Island;
- Mackenzie River logs are deposited at the island;
- Inuvialuit food, like fish and whales, are influenced by the discharge waters.

STORY

Mackenzie River Discharge Waters

It is no exaggeration to describe the Mackenzie River as mighty. It drains approximately one third of the entire country. Regions of the Western Cordillera, Interior Plains and the Canadian Shield all drain into its basin. Its length of 4600 kilometres (2,760 miles), including one of its longest tributaries, makes the Mackenzie one of the ten longest rivers in the world. It is no wonder then that, although Herschel Island lies more than 130 kilometres (78 miles) to the west of the river's mouth, the island is not beyond its influence.

Mackenzie River Logs

Discharge waters flow westward along the entire Yukon coast. They carry logs from southern forests and scatter them along the treeless arctic coast. The Inuvialuit and their ancestors used these logs for shelter and firewood. Driftwood log homes are common today along the coastline. The Thule also constructed driftwood, sod or turf homes. Their counterparts in the eastern Arctic, however, did not have the advantage of wood.

The American whalers who over-wintered at Pauline Cove used the logs mostly for firewood. When the islands fuel supplies were used up, driftwood along the coastline was collected before winter set in. A daily chore of the whalers was to gather and haul driftwood from the woodpile on shore back to the ships.

Characteristics of Discharge Waters

The discharge waters of the Mackenzie River are warm and productive in comparison to the cold marine waters of the Beaufort Sea. River water is fresh, and mixes with the saline marine water, offering brackish water habitat for fish. The discharge waters carry nutrients to the coast and the current mixes them. This results in more productive waters than in most parts of the Beaufort Sea.

Fish

Due to the tremendous discharge of the Mackenzie River, the large plume of fresh water extending along the coast allows some freshwater fish species, like Arctic grayling and round whitefish, to enter coastal areas where salinity is low. Marine fish such as fourhorn sculpin and Arctic cod, which can tolerate brackish water, feed in the nearshore waters. They feed on the abundant invertebrates (animals with no skeletons).

Finally, anadromous fish (those that spend part of their life in freshwater and part in saltwater) like Arctic char, feed in the near-shore waters. Because of the richness of these coastal waters, the char do not migrate seaward as is common with other char populations in the arctic.

Whales

Bowhead whales summer in the southeast Beaufort Sea and Amundsen Gulf, another area influenced by the Mackenzie River discharge waters. By late summer, they move into the Mackenzie River estuary, eventually heading west along the coast toward their wintering grounds in the Bering Sea. The coastal waters between King Point and Shingle Point are believed to be feeding grounds. There the discharge waters and the marine current from west of Herschel Island converge and create a productive habitat. The Mackenzie River estuary is a traditional summering area for beluga whales.

Related Stories

Stories About Qikiqtaruk
The Polar Sea
Marine Life
Migrations
The First People: use of driftwood
American Whaling Period: use of driftwood for fuel
The Arctic Seasons: fishing & whaling, driftwood homes

Ways to Tell the Story

- take a beach walk among the driftwood, possibly find fish carcasses cast up, or fish nets used by Inuvialuit staying at Island
- look at relief map or topographic map
- show pictures of Thule site and walk to where it once was

Further Reading

LGL Limited. 1982. The Biological Resources of the southeastern Beaufort Sea, Amundsen Gulf, northern Mackenzie Delta and adjacent coastal areas: a selected bibliography. Arctic Petroleum Operators Association Project No. 173.

Ingram and Dobrowolsky. 1989. Waves upon the Shore. Government of Yukon, Heritage Branch.

MIGRATIONS

The predictable changes of the seasons bring a rhythm to Herschel Island that enriches life. On the land, in the water and from the air, migrations are the pulse of life in the region. They have nurtured lives of different cultures and eras and today remain important in the traditional lifestyle.

Summary

- the Porcupine caribou herd has always been a part of Herschel Island life
- water birds come to Herschel because of open water and plentiful food
- Arctic char from the nearby Firth River have always been an important food
- bowhead whale migration through the area has always been an important event for Inuvialuit

STORY

Porcupine caribou herd

The cows arrive first at the coastal plain and foothills, after a long journey from southern forests. Seeking the snow-free areas of the herd's traditional calving grounds, the cows arrive in late May, for birthing in early June. In late June, once the tundra has greened, the bull caribou of the herd range through the coastal lowlands and northern mountains. These bands unite with the cows of the herd. Together they make up a herd of more than 200,000 animals. Only together briefly as a herd, the caribou soon segregate themselves, dispersing into bands of cows and calves, and bulls.

Caribou summer on the northern tundra, feeding on sedges, willows and other tundra plants. During winter, most of the herd ranges below treeline in the forests to the south, where their main winter diet is lichen. Some groups will stay year-round in the northern part of their range.

During the whaling period on Herschel Island, caribou of this herd were a critical food source to the over-wintering crews. Inuvialuit and Gwich'in hunters kept the whalers supplied with fresh caribou meat during the winter months. The whalers brought their own food supplies, but sought fresh meat, which prevented scurvy. No doubt the taste was also a vast improvement over salt beef or beans.

By the 1890s, over 1500 people were wintering at Herschel. Whalers carried out an active business buying and trading fresh meat from the Inuvialuit and especially the Gwich'in. The Gwich'in would arrive at Herschel Island two or three times per year, sometimes with as many as 22 toboggans laden with caribou, moose and fish. Competition was high among the whaling captains to procure these fresh meats.

Water birds

During July, thousands of oldsquaw and surf scoters make a moult migration to Workboat Passage (and coastal lagoons). After breeding with nesting females, male seaducks congregate at communal moult areas. The hens, on the other hand, moult as they are raising their young, who are flightless for much of their development. During the several weeks of flightlessness, avoiding predators is critical. So too is the need for a ready and abundant food source while growing new feathers.

Workboat Passage is in calm waters and is sheltered by sand spits at both its mainland and island ends. The water is shallow, ranging from .9 to 7.6 metres (3-25 feet), and averaging 2.2 metres (7 feet). Rip tides occur between the sandspits at

both ends of the passage. Tides create strong currents and upwellings, and enhance the water's productivity. The Mackenzie River discharge also enriches the waters, as does the discharge of the Firth River delta. Invertebrates (animals with no bone skeleton), the food source for some seabirds and fish, are abundant.

These conditions make Workboat Passage an important staging area for fall migrants, particularly Oldsquaw and Surf Scoters. The fall migration of waterbirds is longer than the spring and moult migrations. It is most pronounced in mid-August, when Brant ducks are westbound; loons and oldsquaw travel through later. Workboat Passage serves as a staging area prior to migration for oldsquaw, surf scoter and common eider, to name a few.

Migrations are not all in one direction, either. On the mainland, white-fronted geese from Alaska migrate east to the coastal staging area of the Mackenzie River delta. Snow geese also stage there before journeying south to snow-free wintering grounds.

The migration period is a good time for spotting rare or unusual birds, including yellow-billed loons, black bellied plovers, sanderlings, and longbilled dowitchers.

Arctic Char

By late July, Arctic char begin gathering at the mouths of rivers draining into the north coast, like the Firth and Babbage. The fish spend the summer feeding in the productive coastal waters and ascend the rivers for spawning and over-wintering. Arctic char are anadromous fish — they spend part of their lives in freshwater, part in the ocean — and are repeat spawners.

Young char hatch out in May and spend several years in freshwater before starting annual spring movements to the ocean. A char will make these annual movements between the river and ocean for several years before actually spawning. Once mature, a char will spawn several times in its lifetime, though not every year. Some populations of char do not migrate, and as a result are smaller. The Firth River supports probably the largest anadromous char populations in Canada west of the Mackenzie River. Arctic char are an important food for the Inuvialuit.

Bowhead Whales

Bowhead whales migrate annually from their wintering grounds in the Bering Sea to their summering grounds in the Beaufort Sea. In their spring migration beyond Point Barrow, Alaska, they follow the open water leads in the ice cover. This is the only route available for them at this time of year.

There is a consistently recurring east/west shear in the pack ice, yielding an open lead connecting to the north. This leads the whales to Banks Island and eventually to their early summering grounds in Amundsen Gulf. It is in late August and September when there is the chance of seeing a bowhead whale near Herschel Island. The whales are then travelling westward along the coast, on route to their wintering grounds.

Bowhead whales have always figured significantly with the inhabitants of the region. Archaeologists speculate that about 1000 A.D., a warmer climate allowed for an open water lead. This allowed the bowhead whales to migrate to the Beaufort Sea and caused the Thule people to follow this marine resource.

A cooler period known as the Little Ice Age (1600 A.D. to 1850 A.D.) probably closed open water leads from the Bering Sea into the Beaufort Sea, restricting the seasonal movements of marine mammals. The resulting changes in their distribution may have forced the Thule to adjust their subsistence patterns, returning to ice

edge whaling techniques and perhaps making greater use of caribou and fish.

Traditional users of the area continue to hunt bowhead whales. In 1991, the Inuvialuit harvested one bowhead whale, which they butchered at Shingle Point, near Herschel Island.

Related Stories

Marine Life
The Polar Sea
Currents
American Whaling Period
The Arctic Seasons

Ways to Tell the Story

- On-site natural resources, i.e. caribou, seaducks at Workboat Passage
- Hydrophone to listen for migratory whales in area
- Subsistence use of char

Further Reading

LGL Limited.1982. The Biological Resources of the southeastern Beaufort Sea, Amundsen Gulf, northern MacKenzie Delta and adjacent coastal areas: a selected bibliography. Arctic Petroleum Operators Association Project No. 173.

Talarico and Mossop.1986. Herschel Island Avifauna and Interpretive Report Yukon Department of Renewable Resources

Ingram and Dobrowolsky.1989. Waves upon the Shore. Government of Yukon, Heritage Branch.

Yukon Renewable Resources. Yukon Mammal Series.

The Aklavik Museum could be a good place to tell Herschel Island stories. Tourists stopping here on their way to the island should be made aware of the strong connection between this community and the north coast. *The First People, Transportation, Currents, Fur Traders and Schooners,* and *Forces From the South* are a few of the story topics that are well suited to Aklavik. (C. McEwen)

"Dogteam and drivers between RCMP HQ and warehouse, 1923" (E. Pasley Coll. Yukon Archives) Stories about *Arctic Seasons* and *Transportation.*

TRANSPORTATION

The Inuvialuit designed boats and sleds to suit their hunting and transportation needs. Many different types of boats visited Herschel Island over the years.

Summary

- umiaks and kayaks were skin-covered wood-frame boats
- dogsleds were the means of transportation in winter
- whaling ships visited the western part of the Beaufort Sea long before they came to Herschel Island
- steam whalers visited Herschel Island in the late 1800s until the early 1900s
- sailing schooners and then motor schooners were used for trade
- modern transportation is mainly by aircraft, but small open boats still travel the arctic coast and snow machines are used in winter

STORY

Skin boats were used for early migrations to the eastern arctic, and for seasonal travel as well as hunting. As new settlements were established, boats were modified to suit local conditions. European explorers observed that one kayaker with a paddle could easily overtake a ship with twenty crew.

Umiaks

Inuvialuit hunters needed a boat to carry them close to sea mammals. Large driftwood-frame boats covered with sealskin, called umiaks, were well designed for the polar sea. They were easy to build, needed no centre-board, and the flexible frame could be tied together. Umiaks did not sail well, but were tough, easy to carry, fast to paddle, and quiet. These features were well suited to ice-filled waters and the pursuit of whales. It took about six skins to cover one boat and covers were changed every other year. Modified umiaks were built later by whalers, who framed the boats with steamed and bent hardwood ribs.

Kayaks

Kayaks originated in the Bering Sea about 4,000-5,000 years ago. These craft were also made of skins over a narrow wood frame, but were designed to carry one person. Decks covered the craft completely, except for a cockpit. Round hulls were needed to move in quickly on swimming caribou. Flatter, larger, and more stable kayaks were needed to hunt sea mammals. Stealth was more important than speed, and hunters also had to able to carry or tow the sea mammals back to shore.

Dog Teams

Dogs have been used by the Inuvialuit and earlier peoples for about 2,000 years. The breed has been called the Canadian Eskimo dog, and is also popularly known as the husky. Dog teams served the Inuvialuit in winter and traders often arrived at Herschel Island by dogsled. Dogs became pack animals in the summer, usually on the mainland. The police used dog teams in their travels to Herschel Island from Aklavik and other communities. The police dog kennel is still standing, just behind the original headquarters building.

American Whaling Ships

American whaling ships in the mid-1800s were called "barks". Each bark had five 30-foot whaleboats and a crew of 35. Barks were slow sailers, but were the most common boat of the time. These types of boats, without motive power, did not visit Herschel Island, but worked north of the Bering Strait.

American whale boats — small boats that were loaded on the larger ships and used for the hunt — were well designed for the polar seas, since they were light, fast, seaworthy, manoeuvrable, and inexpensive. The boats were double-ended, made of cedar planks, and outfitted with a sail and oars. Under sail, the boats were quiet. When there was no wind and oars had to be used, oarlocks were muffled during the hunt.

Steam Whalers

With the introduction of steam-powered whaling ships in the early 1880s, American whalers extended their season and increased their range into the Beaufort Sea. Catches in the arctic seas had declined, and steam technology, in combination with a new market for whalebone, made whaling economical again. The whalers learned of a safe harbour at Pauline Cove on Herschel Island at the end of the 1880s.

Using coal-fueled steam power, ships could stay in close contact with whales, making hunting more efficient. The first season of whaling with steam power was very successful for the American companies.

Schooners

After the decline of whaling in 1908, the rise in maritime fur trade led to more use of small schooners. Schooners are ships with two or more masts, with the taller mainmast behind the foremast. These craft were prized by many Inuvialuit traders and came to be known as "Eskimo schooners".

A small motor schooner called the *St. Roch* was built in 1928 to assist police work in the Arctic. It completed the first west-to-east navigation of the Northwest Passage in 1942. The vessel has a saucer-shaped hull, allowing it to rise up over ice that pressed against its sides. Impressive layers of timber planks were designed to withstand arctic ice. But one sailor said it was the most uncomfortable ship he had ever been in.

Modern Transportation

In 1969, the huge oil-tanker *Manhattan* duplicated the trip of the *St. Roch*. Then Pauline Cove was temporarily used as a safe harbour for drill ships in the 1970s. And in 1988, a small sailboat traversed the polar seas for the first time.

Today most people visit Herschel Island by float plane. The island is still visited by people from Aklavik. They take about three days for the journey in small open motorboats. In winter, snowmobiles are the preferred way to travel.

Related Stories

Stories About Qikiqtaruk
American Whaling Period
Stories about Qikiqtaruk
Fur Traders and Schooners
Polar Sea
The Police

Ways to Tell the Story

- look at photos or drawings of each type of craft
- view displays or replica umiaks
- view the old boat which belonged to the late Frank Rivet of Aklavik, as well as several smaller boats abandoned in Pauline Cove
- refer to the nearest schooner from the early 1900s that can still be seen at Tuktoyaktuk
- see the wreck of the Triton
- visit the RCMP dog kennel

Further Reading

Bockstoce, John R., 1986. Whales, Ice and Men. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Roberts, K.G. and Shackleton, P. 1983. The Canoe. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada.

Bockstoce, John R. 1991. Arctic Passages. New York: Hearst Marine Books.

"me-me-oa-ne in Kayak". Herschel Island, 1909. Stories on *The First People, Marine Life, and Transportation.* (R.C.M.P. Archives).

"Sod houses on "Main St"., Herschel Island". Stories on *The First People, American Whaling Period, The Arctic Seasons*. (R.C.M.P.Archives).

OUR ISLAND IN THE POLAR SEA

People From Far Away

Early Peoples
Scientists and Explorers
American Whaling Period
Missionaries
The Police
Fur Traders and Schooners
The New North

EARLY PEOPLES

This section relates the story of the various peoples who lived on and around Herschel Island up to the time of contact with the Europeans.

Summary

- there have been several waves of people through the Herschel area, perhaps beginning as far back as 9,000 years ago
- ancestral Inuvialuit populations first appear in the Western Arctic at about 2200 B.C.
- the oldest occupations of Herschel Island date back about 1000 years — these are sites of the Thule ancestors of the Inuvialuit
- at the time of European contact, the island was occupied by the Qikiqtarugmiut, descendants of the Thule

STORY

The Earliest People

Since the last Ice Age, waves of people have migrated across the Arctic. It is thought that they crossed the Bering Land Bridge, connecting Siberia and Alaska, to follow the animals they hunted for food. Over time, technology and lifestyles became regionally diversified, developing into distinct "cultures" in the archaeological record.

There are archaeological sites on the mainland near Herschel which show the presence of people in the area as far back as 9,000 years. These people were hunting bison! It is difficult to say whether they ever settled on the island itself because portions of its land mass have washed away over the millennia.

The earliest culture that archaeologists can identify as ancestral to the Inuvialuit in the Western Arctic is the Arctic Small Tool tradition, which dates from about 2200 B.C. to 1600 B.C. Apparently developing out of this were later cultures like Norton Tradition (1500 B.C.-900 A.D.) and Bering Sea Cultures (900 A.D.-1000 A.D.).

The Arctic Small Tool people were not a marine-based culture. Instead, they ate mostly caribou and fished the rivers of the coast to supplement their diet. Gradually, later cultures turned to the sea for their food and materials. By the time the Bering Sea culture emerged, they relied almost exclusively on the sea.

The Thule People

At about 1000 A.D., the North American Arctic witnessed a major eastward migration of peoples, identified by archaeologists as the Thule culture. The impetus for this rapid migration was apparently the onset of a period of climatic warming in the north, which brought about an increase in bowhead whale in the Beaufort Sea and optimum conditions for whaling in open water. The Thule peoples' perfection of these whaling techniques (by kayak and umiak) gave them the initial advantage in adapting to new conditions.

Thule houses were constructed with stone floors and driftwood walls covered with hides. In the summer they left their villages for fishing and caribou hunting on the coast and Mackenzie Delta. Artifacts and bone in their houses show that they used dogs and sleds, ate mostly seal and supplemented their diet with birds and fish. The lack of whale remains is odd because the Thule in other parts of the Arctic

used whale extensively for food and building. The Little Ice Age that occurred around 1600 A.D. to 1850 A.D. may have closed the open water in the Bering Sea and forced the marine mammals elsewhere.

Qikiqtarugmiut

When Franklin arrived at Herschel Island in 1826, the people living there were the Qikiqtarugmiut, descendants of the Thule. They took their name from the Island and were literally the "small island people". They had three villages there at the time, the largest being at Pauline Cove called Qigirktayuk.

The Qikiqtarugmiut were one of four closely-related regional groups of Inuvialuit who were centred around the Mackenzie Delta called Siglit. The territories of this larger group extended from Herschel Island in the west to Cape Bathurst in the east. Close ties also existed with the north Alaskan Inuvialuit. The people of Herschel were, therefore, familiar with Russian trade goods long before they ever saw a European.

Contact

Within thirty years of the whalers arriving, many of the Qikiqtarugmiut and their kin had died from the diseases brought by the whalers, to which they had no resistance. By the turn of the century, much of their traditional territory was being used by north Alaskan Inuvialuit, who had come east to participate in the extraordinary events of the whaling industry on Herschel Island. Today, descendants of both peoples live in Inuvik, Tuktoyuktuk and Aklavik.

Related Stories

Stories About Qikiqtaruk
Scientists, Explorers and Other Passers-by
American Whaling Period

Ways to Tell the Story

- show drawings of Thule houses.
- show casts or copies of artifacts from the Herschel Island sites
- read historic quotes

Great care should be taken that people do not disturb the archaeological sites. Collecting artifacts should be actively discouraged: it is illegal.

Further Reading

Friesen, Max. 1990 and 1991. Archaeology Field Season Reports.

Rob Ingram and Helene Dobrowolsky. 1989. Waves Upon the Shore. Heritage Branch, Government of Yukon.

J.S. Peepre, et al. 1990. Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk: Interpretive Strategy. Heritage Branch, Government of Yukon.

Peter Usher. 1971. "The Canadian Western Arctic: A Century of Change," Anthropologica, N.S.,Vol. 13, Nos. 1-2, 1971. Available at Yukon Archives.

Brian Yorga. 1980. "Washout: A Western Thule Site on Herschel Island, Mercury Series, Canada, National Museum of Man, Archaeological Survey of Canada, Paper No. 98, Ottawa. Available at Yukon Archives.

SCIENTISTS, EXPLORERS AND OTHER PASSERSBY

This section tells several stories of European and North American explorers, scientists and travellers in the Herschel Island area from 1826 through to the present.

Summary

- on a mapping expedition in 1826, John Franklin becomes the first European to see Herschel Island and its inhabitants. names the island for his friend, Sir John Herschel, a noted English scientist.
- Peter Warren Dease and Thomas Simpson pass by on a mapping expedition in 1837.
- Roald Amundsen, travelling the Northwest Passage aboard his sloop Gjoa, winters at Herschel Island, leaves his ship at King's Point in 1905-06.
- Vilhjalmur Stefansson visits Herschel regularly from 1908 on as part of his study of the Arctic and Inuit lifestyle.
- there are regular visitors over the years, usually stopping on their way to somewhere else.
- Air travel and ease of access to the Arctic brings more visitors beginning in the 1920s.

STORY

The Island as a Crossroad

Herschel Island was not a focal point for explorers or scientists until quite recently. Because Herschel was the only safe port for hundreds of miles, it did become a centre and transportation hub for merchants, government and travellers. Those scientists and explorers who visited Herschel were usually just stopping by or using Herschel as a supply depot for trips elsewhere. Many of them checked in here with the police. Others, such as Roald Amundsen, were "stranded" for the winter either at Herschel or one of the points on the nearby mainland.

What Were These People Looking For?

There were several types of scientific activity around Herschel over the years, but most related to mapping the uncharted arctic regions, studying the Inuvialuit, or trying to find or sail the Northwest Passage. Some of them were trying to find those who were trying to find the Northwest Passage. There were a few reports made on the flora and fauna of Herschel Island, but these were part of other studies. One of the most notable exploration ventures was the Canadian Arctic Expedition 1913-18. It was a general study of life in the Arctic, funded by the Canadian government and led by Stefansson. Stefansson wrote The Friendly Arctic after this adventure, a book which attracted many people to the far north. In recent years, scientists have found that there are birds, animals and plants on Herschel that are worth studying in their own right.

Others

There were those who stopped on Herschel for reasons other than science or exploration. During the 1920s, the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals built a wireless station on Herschel that ran until 1938. In 1932, the Porsild brothers arrived on Herschel Island. They were part of the Lomen reindeer drive, transplanting rein-

deer from Alaska to the Mackenzie Delta. They bought their supplies on the island. In the 1920s–30s, air travel made the Western Arctic far more accessible and Herschel was visited regularly by bush pilots, travellers and even miners looking for gold on the Firth River.

And Now...

After the police left the island in 1964, visitors were mostly police or government personnel coming to check on the conditions of the buildings. The 1970s saw the return of Herschel as a safe port and supply base when various oil exploration companies wintered their ships and rigs in Pauline Cove. Government crews preserving the buildings, conducting archaeological digs and studying soils, flora and fauna are now visitors to Herschel. More frequently, however, tourists stop in at Herschel. Usually, however, they are going to or coming from somewhere else.

Travellers and the Inuvialuit

Due to a lack of written records, we cannot be entirely sure just how the Inuvialuit viewed these travellers and explorers. The mixed reception given outsiders by Inuvialuit in various areas had a great deal to do with the local commerce of the time. The Delta Inuvialuit perceived Franklin as a threat to their lucrative trade with the people up river; Delta people were the sole source of European goods at that time via the Barter Island trade. Herschel people saw Franklin as a potential new source of European goods that could be cheaper than those supplied by the Alaskan people at Barter Island. They were therefore happy to encourage potential trade relations with Franklin.

Related Stories

Stories About Qikiqtaruk
American Whaling Period
Missionaries
Fur Traders and Schooners

Ways to Tell the Story

- show photocopies of the early maps showing explorers' travels and excerpts from their journals and diaries
- look at photographs, taken by later explorers such as the Canadian Arctic Expedition
- visit R.C.C.S. wireless station, which still stands.

Further Reading

Rob Ingram and Helene Dobrowolsky. 1989. Waves Upon the Shore. Heritage Branch, Government of Yukon.

Vilhjalmur Stefańsson. 1921. The Friendly Arctic. New York: Macmillan.

Ken S. Coates and William R. Morrison. 1988. Land of the Midnight Sun: A History of the Yukon. Edmonton: Hurtig. Available at Whitehorse Public Library.

Captain John Franklin. 1828. Narrative on the Second Expedition to the Polar Sea in the years 1825, 1826, and 1827. London: John Murray. Available at Yukon Archives.

"Eskimo Schooners from Banks Is. and Mackenzie Delta at Pauline Cove, 1930." View of warehouse, fuel drums and various gear on shore. Stories about *Fur Traders and Schooners, Transportation, Forces From the South.* (R. Finnie. Yukon Archives).

S.S. Beluga, probably at Herschel Island. (1) Capt. G. Porter, (2) Ist Officer Hagh Mackey, (3) Ist Officer Cahill. Stories about *Missionaries and Mounties.* (John Bockstoce Photo Collection. R.C.M.P. Archives).

AMERICAN WHALING PERIOD

Commercial hunting of bowhead whales in the Beaufort area lasted from approximately 1890 to 1910. The industry had a profound effect on whale populations and on the indigenous Inuvialuit.

Summary

- commercial whaling lasted for less than twenty years but had a profound impact on the area
- Bowhead whales survived centuries of subsistence hunting, but commercial whaling depleted them almost to extinction
- Inuvialuit's lives were changed irrevocably; whalers exposed them to new social customs, new technology, a market economy, alcohol and disease
- the presence of American whalers in Canadian waters eventually set in motion the Canadian government's assertion of sovereignty over the island

STORY

Whales

The whales hunted in the waters off Herschel were bowheads. The commercial potential of harvesting them in the Chukchi Sea, north of Bering Strait, was proved in 1848 by Captain Thomas Roys. It is in the fall, on their westward migration back toward Alaska, that bowheads feed along the Yukon's north coast and pass by Herschel Island.

Their summering grounds are south and east of Banks Island, which they reach by following leads in the polar ice pack from their wintering grounds in the Bering Sea.

Although belugas also migrate through the area, it was the bowhead that was commercially exploited as an exceptionally rich source of oil and baleen. Baleen was used for skirt hoops, buggy whips and fishing rods, and whale oil as a lubricant for fuel.

Hunting

Early hunters used handmade harpoons with sealskin floats that slowed the whale's progress. When the animal was exhausted, hunters severed its tail tendons and cut into its chest cavity so it would bleed to death. Inuvialuit hunters took 5 or 6 whales per community per year for subsistence use.

Non-native whalers used bomb guns; on striking the whale the bomb was discharged, driving the shaft farther into the whale and killing it. Natives now take bowheads using this method. Beluga whales are killed with rifles.

The whale was processed on the ship; blubber was boiled for oil, and baleen was extracted from the head, washed, dried and tied in bundles.

One ship could take 25-30 whales per season. In 1900, with whale oil at $15 per barrel and baleen $6 per pound, one bowhead whale was worth $15,000. One season could bring in $400,000, the modern equivalent of over $4 million.

Heads — the source of baleen — became so valuable that only the baleen would be harvested and the bodies left to rot. In later years, smaller boats — capable only of transporting heads and referred to somewhat gruesomely as head-hunters — were sometimes used.

Whaling Companies

The discovery of bowheads near the Mackenzie Delta created a resurgence in the whaling industry, which had been slowing due to depleted stocks.

The whaling companies, American-owned, were based in New England and San Francisco. These commercial whalers, who had hunted in the Bering Strait and off the coast of Alaska, came farther and farther east as stocks were depleted in Alaskan waters. A contemporary noted that "Beaufort sea (sic) is about the only ground left to them." (*Howard, in NWMP Annual Report, 1905*).

In 1889 the first seven ships headed to the Beaufort, after reports of plentiful whales and a safe harbour at Herschel. The ships did not over-winter this year.

The distance from San Francisco to the Beaufort and the long season of ice at Point Barrow meant that ships had to over-winter in the north. It was not possible to travel north, put in a season and travel back in one year. Steam whalers made access to the Beaufort Sea more viable.

The season itself was extremely short; generally lasting only from early July to early September, with the best hunting in late August. In one year (1894) the season lasted only 16 days.

Ice was a constant hazard, even with the added speed and manoeuvrability of steam-powered vessels. In the winter of 1905-06, five boats were caught by early ice and forced to over-winter, without sufficient supplies and with near-mutinous crews. In 1871, early ice had crushed 32 ships off the Alaska coast.

After 1890, the whalers adopted a new strategy to avoid the perils of ice and take advantage of a full season of whaling. By October, all ships would anchor in Pauline Cove.

The Herschel community

Two Pacific Steam Whaling Company (PSWC) boats, the *Mary D. Hume* and the *Grampus*, arrived at Herschel Island in August 1890 with food and supplies for a two-year season. The crews first built a storehouse at Avadlik Spit with lumber they had brought with them.

At the end of that season the ships were accidentally frozen in at Pauline Cove. The crews moved their supplies there and rebuilt their storehouse. This was the beginning of Herschel's whaling settlement.

Whalers

In what is undoubtedly an understatement, one observer described the feeling between officers and crews as "not of the best".

Officers' status and salary allowed them to alleviate winter's harshness; in later years, some even brought their families with them.

Because of the pay structure (men received a "lay" or percentage of the catch), crew members might receive little or no money after two years of difficult and dangerous work. Advances given on leaving port had to be repaid, and the company had to be reimbursed for supplies and clothing bought in port and from the "slop chest" on board ship. Costs of supplies were also inflated by the companies.

Many crew members had never been to sea before signing on, and most had little or no experience with the trials of an arctic winter.

As whaling grew less profitable and its rigours better known, it became more and more difficult to find dependable crews for the ships. In 1899, the situation was so bad that the fact that all hands were sober was noted with surprise in one Captain's journal.

Daily life

During the 1890s there were up to 15 ships and 1500 people wintering at Herschel.

Driftwood was burned in 100-gallon drums for heat. Gathering it, mostly in the fall, was a full-time chore. As supplies close at hand were exhausted, the men had to travel farther and farther afield. Wood was also brought to the island when the ships returned in the fall. Ships required 100-300 cords per season, which was stored on the beach and cut through the winter as needed.

Because of the difficulty in finding local fuel, whaling companies learned to bring their own supply of coal with them. The ship's boilers were shut down over the winter to save on fuel and blocks of snow were piled against the ship to provide insulation.

Water was also scarce. It was usually obtained by melting ice from the island's pond. An oil drum, filled with water and connected to the stove, provided hot water.

Most of the men lived on board ship, although some lived ashore. Sails could be stretched across the deck to form an enclosure or a roof would be brought north ready to put on the ship.

The combination of climate and boredom caused a variety of complaints, including scurvy, consumption, neurasthenia and alcoholism. While a certain amount of drinking seems to have been tolerated, drunkenness was not. The extreme conditions could be life-threatening; suicide and desertion were not uncommon.

The men survived the harsh winter by skiing, sledding and even playing soccer and baseball. In later years, when families accompanied some of the officers, social activities increased. People participated in everything from fancy dress parties to musical groups.

Relations

Ships employed Inuvialuit hunters to supply them with meat. These hunters were paid for out of a joint fund to which all ships contributed.

Captains would feed families of hunters while they were gone; the women would live ashore but have meals on the ship.

Whalers traded with the Mackenzie Delta Siglit, as well as the Alaskan Inuit and the Gwich'in. They would trade tea, sugar, knives and other staples for caribou, skins, game birds and fish. Caribou meat was especially valued. Trade could involve sale (at six to seven cents per pound), barter or even credit notes, which were honoured by all ships and their parent companies.

The whalers' southern dress wasn't adequate for Herschel's extremes of weather and they hired Inuvialuit to make traditional skin clothing for them. On the journey north ships would hire Alaskan Inuit to travel with them and make clothing.

Crews helped with the construction of traditional sod houses for the Inuvialuit they employed. These had driftwood frames roof and walls covered with sod. Some of the whalers had Inuvialuit companions, with whom they lived on shore, either in sod or frame houses.

Word of the whalers' activities reached the Hudson's Bay Company and the Anglican Church and started the Canadian government's slow process of asserting its sovereignty over the island. The NWMP post was established at Herschel Island in 1904, at about the same time as the post at Fort McPherson.

The Decline

Several factors combined to bring about the end of Herschel's whaling industry. By 1895 the decline had started; the bowheads had been hunted almost to extinction and their scarcity was driving the whalers farther and farther east. Bockstoce notes that, at their easternmost, the Pacific whalers came within 500 miles of Britain's Greenland-based whaling operations.

Ships started to over-winter at Baillie Island. Although there was no fresh water and little protection from the ice, it was closer to the whaling grounds than Herschel.

Several exceptionally harsh winters followed each other at the turn of the century and in 1897, when four ships were crushed by ice, this capital investment was not replaced.

The growth of the petroleum industry meant there was less demand for whale oil. The final blow to the industry came from Paris, as women's clothing changed from a boned, artificial silhouette to a more natural shape. By 1906, Herschel's commercial whaling period was effectively over.

Related Stories

Stories About Qikiqtaruk
The Missionaries
The Police
The First People
Marine Life

Ways to tell the story

- explain structures from whaling period, i.e. Pacific Steam Whaling Co. Building
- visit cemeteries
- visit ice houses
- explain driftwood on shore
- see photos, old journals, artifacts
- read quotes from diaries

Further Reading

Canada. Various years. Sessional Papers.
Annual Report of the Northwest Mounted Police.
Zaslow, Morris. 1971. The Opening of the Canadian North 1870-1914. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
Ingram, Rob and Dobrowolsky, Helene. 1989. Waves Upon the Shore: An Historical Profile of Herschel Island. Heritage Branch, Government of the Yukon.
Bockstoce, John R. 1986. Whales, Ice and Men. Seattle: University of Washington.

THE MISSIONARIES

This storyline summarizes the history of the missionaries on Herschel Island, from their first visit in 1893 until Anglican missionaries stopped visiting the island circa the late 1920s.

Summary

- Bishop Bompas of the Anglican Church hears of American whalers' activities on Herschel Island
- the first missionary, Isaac Stringer, visits Herschel in 1893; he returns with his new wife a few years later to set up a mission
- Thomas Umaok is ordained as the first Inuit deacon
- after the whalers move east, there is little missionary activity for 10 years
- Herschel becomes a summer mission but is abandoned by the mid 1930s

The Missionaries Come to Herschel

From the mid 1800s, both Catholic and Anglican missionaries travelled farther and farther north in their quest to convert natives. It was not until the arrival of the American whalers, however, that an Anglican missionary was sent to Herschel Island. In 1891, Bishop Bompas reacted to reports that the whalers were selling guns and liquor to the Inuvialuit, and debauching native women. He sent many letters to government officials urging that they assert Canadian authority in the region, but it would be eleven years before Ottawa took any action. In the meantime, Bompas arranged for a young missionary from Ontario to set up a mission at Herschel Island. Isaac Stringer paid his first visit to Herschel in the spring of 1893, the start of a lifelong interest in the island and its people.

The Early Years

Although Stringer and his new wife Sadie visited the island several times, they did not actually move there until 1897. They moved into the Pacific Steam Whaling Company Community House, which served as living quarters, church, school, and sometimes hospital. Stringer seems to have got on well with the whaling captains and persuaded most of them to sign an undertaking to stop trading liquor with the Inuvialuit. During their stay, the Stringers ministered to both the whalers and Inuvialuit. They set up a school, taught their faith, and tended people during illness. As well, Stringer periodically visited and travelled with the Inuvialuit on the coast. The Stringers left in 1901, after Isaac began suffering from snow-blindness. In later years, he visited the Arctic and Herschel Island as the Bishop of Yukon.

After the Whalers

Stringer was relieved by Charles Whittaker, who stayed on at Herschel until 1906. By then, however, there were fewer whalers and most had moved eastward as the supply of whales lessened. Many of the Inuvialuit followed and fewer people over-wintered at Herschel. After Whittaker left, there was no full-time missionary at Herschel for another 10 years. There were regular visits, however, including one from Bishop Stringer in 1909 when he baptised six Inuvialuit, including Thomas and Susie Umaok, and James Atumiksana and his wife.

The Mission Reopens, Briefly

When the Hudson's Bay Company opened a post on Herschel Island in 1915, Bishop Stringer took advantage of their presence to re-open the mission, and arranged to build a church on the island. William and Christina Fry arrived the following year and found there was only enough lumber to build a two-storey mission. The Frys stayed at St. Patrick's Mission for three years, living upstairs and using the lower floor as a church and school. Although the Frys were deeply committed to their Inuvialuit parishioners, they suffered from life in a drafty house, the high cost of fuel, and a sense of isolation from living on an island without a boat. After William Fry left the north, he strongly recommended that the mission be moved to Shingle Point. Stringer agreed and Herschel became a summer mission only.

Thomas Umaok and The Later Years

Thomas Umaok (*spelled Umauq by Inuvialuit elders in "Stories About Qikiqtaruk"*) was a steady presence at Herschel during a long period when other missionaries came and went. He attended the Herschel day school as a boy and later, with his wife, the Hay River residential school. When his family were visiting the area, Umaok held church services and later taught school. He had a close relationship with Bishop Stringer, who ordained him as the first Inuvialuit deacon at Herschel Island on July 30th, 1927.

When Theodore Pedersen began trading at Shingle Point, many of the island's seasonal residents moved to the mainland. In 1922, the Anglicans built their first church in the Arctic here, then in 1929 opened a residential school. They soon followed the Inuvialuit and government east to the Mackenzie Delta.

By the 1930s, both Catholics and Anglicans had opened facilities in Aklavik and St. Patrick's Mission was listed as abandoned.

Related Stories

Stories About Qikiqtaruk
American Whaling Period

Ways to Tell the Story

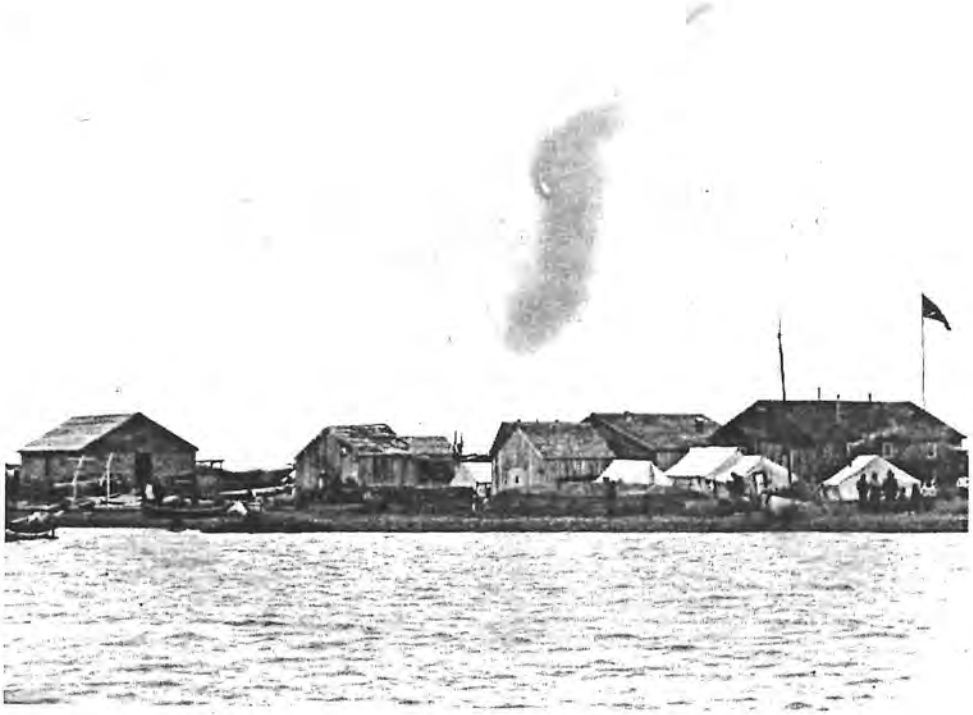
- visit Pacific Steam Whaling Company Community House — the Stringers and their successor, Archdeacon Whittaker, occupied this building for nine years after the whalers moved east in 1897
- visit St. Patrick's Mission House — William Fry built this as a dwelling for himself and his pregnant wife — the building also served as the church and school for the next several years
- explain Bone House — according to one police report, the Inuvialuit were using this building for Anglican church services circa 1912 — there is a photo showing group of Inuvialuit with a missionary outside the building
- show historic photographs — there are many excellent photographs illustrating missionary history, especially the Stringer collection, which is notable for showing many local residents
- view artifacts, such as the church book

Further Reading

Rob Ingram and Helene Dobrowolsky. 1989. Waves Upon the Shore. Heritage Branch, Government of Yukon.

Frank Peake. 1966. The Bishop Who Ate His Boots. Don Mills, Ontario, The Anglican Church of Canada.

"Herschel Island,1905-06," (RCMP Photo Archives). Stories about change on the island are suggested in these photos.



"Herschel Island, 1913-16," Canadian Arctic Expedition, (G.H. Williams, National Museums of Canada)

THE POLICE

This story relates the history of the police on Herschel Island from their arrival in 1903 to the closing of the post in 1964.

Summary

- police come to Herschel Island to "show the flag" and ensure American whalers and politicians know the island and its people are Canadian
- Herschel becomes headquarters for Western Arctic and acts for various government departments
- their work includes maintaining Canadian presence in the Western Arctic, seeing to the health and welfare of the Inuvialuit on behalf of the government, and collecting customs duties
- police have a fairly quiet time on the Island, with tne notable exception of the trial and execution of two Inuvialuit
- the detachment eventually closes because patrols are made by boat and airplane and the Inuvialuit of the area move away

STORY

Why the Post Set Up

The police[1] knew that American whalers were fishing Canadian waters as early as 1890. Even though the whalers were known to be fishing and trading illegally, as well as debauching Canadian Inuvialuit, police action was delayed by the political climate of the day. The situation was not considered serious enough to go to the expense of establishing a post. When there seemed to be a threat that the United States would grab Herschel Island and part of the Western Arctic along with the Alaska Panhandle in 1903, the Canadian government decided it was time to "show the flag" and establish a post on Herschel Island. By this time, most of the whalers had moved far to the east.

[1]The police were known by different names throughout their history on Herschel Island: the Northwest Mounted Police (pre-1904); the Royal Northwest Mounted Police (1904-1919); and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (after 1920).

The Early Years

The post was set up by Sergeant Francis J. Fitzgerald and Constable Sutherland. They first visited Herschel in 1903 and returned in 1904 to set up the first post in a sod hut. The police were expected to control the import of liquor, collect customs and prevent the whalers from abusing the Inuvialuit. While the police did have some run-ins with the American whalers, the Island was fairly peaceful after their arrival and most of the whaling captains helped in keeping the peace.

The district was patrolled by dogsled in the winter months but, in the early days, the police had no boat to follow the whalers in the summer. Oddly enough, they were able to talk the whalers into letting them ride on their ships. It was not until 1928, and the coming of the police patrol boat *St. Roch*, that the police had any way to travel long distances by water.

Relations with the Inuvialuit

The police also had charge of Inuvialuit welfare and tried to right some of the wrongs white society had brought to the Arctic. They gave the Inuvialuit medicines

to treat the many diseases brought by the whalers. In 1928, for example, they quarantined an influenza epidemic on Herschel and treated the sick. The police also provided food to the Inuvialuit when times were hard. They acted in many ways as teachers and councillors to prepare the Inuvialuit for the changes brought by white government and society. For a short time in the 1960s they set up a store on the island. By 1964 the store had closed.

It was police policy at the time that members of the force should distance themselves socially from the community they were policing. The one notable exception to this on Herschel was the annual Christmas party they gave for the community, which was largely made up of Inuvialuit. Another less celebrated exception to this rule was that some police, including Fitzgerald, had a common law Inuvialuit wife. Many police also retired to the north and became members of the communities they had once policed.

Since there were no other government representatives in the area, the police on Herschel represented many agencies. They carried the mail, collected statistics and acted as both health and welfare workers and fish and game officers. They performed these duties while on the patrols they ran regularly to Fort McPherson. Over the years,they also made very long patrols under gruelling conditions to Rampart House (near Old Crow) and Fort Yukon. It was not until after 1911, when Fitzgerald and his men died on the famous Lost Patrol between Fort McPherson and Dawson, that patrol cabins were built.

The Later Years

During the 1920s and 1930s, Herschel regained some importance due to increased trapping and trading. It became a customs and excise outpost. The police used a bonded warehouse and had increased responsibilities for other government agencies.

The Big Cases

Over the years on Herschel, there were only a few big criminal cases which involved the detachment.

Christian Klengenberg, suspected of murdering half of his mutinous crew, escaped from Herschel Island before he could be arrested. He was captured in U.S. waters, tried and acquitted in San Francisco, and returned to the Arctic and established a trading dynasty.

Sinnisiak and Uluksuk were Inuvialuit arrested by the Herschel detachment for the murder of two Catholic priests. They were convicted but treated leniently by the courts. In 1921 they were released after serving only two years of a life sentence.

Tatamagama and Alikomiak were arrested in 1922 for the murder of five other Inuvialuit. They also killed the arresting officer and a Hudson's Bay Company factor. They were captured and tried on Herschel where they were hung, in the Bone House, February 1, 1924.

Closing the Post

After the introduction of the *St. Roch* for Arctic patrols in 1928, and the increased use of aircraft in the late 1920s, there was little need for a post at Herschel Island. Headquarters for the Western Arctic was moved to Aklavik in 1931 and the Herschel post closed in 1933. It was used as a summer detachment from 1933 to 1937. It reopened in 1948 to deal with the numbers of Alaskan Inuvialuit coming across the border to receive family allowance cheques. During this time, the police

started a dog breeding program and built the kennels. The post was kept open irregularly until 1964 when there were not enough Inuvialuit in the area to justify having a police outpost. The post closed for good that year and the buildings were given over to Crown Assets Disposal in 1968. The closest RCMP post is now in Aklavik, but the detachment in Old Crow is responsible for Herschel Island.

Related Stories

Stories About Qikiqtaruk

American Whaling Period-for influence of the police on their activities.

Ways to Tell the Story

- visit Pacific Steam Whaling Company Community House, headquarters for the police on Herschel Island for 62 years
- visit police graves
- visit Bone House, which was used for storage by the police; it also displays a cut away rafter, reputedly where Tatamagama and Alikomiak were hung
- historic photographs, showing police, sod headquarters, court, prisoners, etc.

Further Reading

Vernon A.M. Kemp. 1958. Without Fear, Favour or Affection; Thirty Five Years with the RCMP. Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co. Available at Yukon Archives.

Rob Ingram and Helene Dobrowolsky. 1989. Waves Upon the Shore. Heritage Branch, Government of Yukon.

William R. Morrison. 1985. Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty in the North 1894-1925. Vancouver: UBC Press. Available at Whitehorse Public Library.

Stelle, Harwood. 1936. Policing the Arctic: The Story of the Conquest of the Arctic by the Royal Canadian (formerly North West) Mounted Police. London: Jarolds. Available at Yukon Archives.

THE NEW NORTH

Since the early part of this century, there has been much technological change in the north, affecting military and defence issues, transportation, hydrocarbon development and politics. These technological advances have contributed to fundamental social change as well.

Summary

- change in the type of transportation on the Mackenzie and the advent of airplanes in the north
- later missile technology put the arctic on the front line of defence
- technology also bought hydrocarbon development to the Beaufort
- road access from Inuvik, south
- technological change contributes to political and social change, especially settlement of land claims
- parks and new types of resource management were established in the north, partly as a result of land claims

STORY

Technology

Technology brought two major changes in the 1920s and 1930s. Diesel barges and boats on the Mackenzie River gradually replaced the less expensive but more dangerous coastal shipping route. The Hudson's Bay Company lost ships due to poor weather and ice. More importantly, the advent of airplanes in the 1920s meant that transportation was possible ten months of the year. Distances that had once been prohibitive were now manageable, and Herschel was no longer the isolated outpost it once was. Inuvialuit became affluent enough selling furs to buy motorboats and schooners.

In the 1950s the strained relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the development of inter-continental missiles made Canada's north no longer an isolated and largely-forgotten region, but very important for defense and sovereignty. The Distant Early Warning (DEW) line was built across the north to detect incoming missiles as early as possible, but even this technology was short-lived; the stations were outdated as soon as they were built. Now they are being replaced with new radar sites.

Although the military presence in the north was greatly reduced by the 1960s, at the same time the Canadian government was putting a greater emphasis on roads and northern development. The construction of the new community of Inuvik, and, later, the Dempster Highway, brought significant changes to living and working patterns in the north. Herschel Island was used less for subsistence and more as a place to visit.

Scientific Exploration

Changes in technology also had an effect on scientific research. The north had drawn scientists for many years; Soviet scientists had been active in the Arctic Basin since the 1930s. American study teams also came north; using ice islands as floating airfields and mobile bases from which to study oceanography, meteorology, radio and radar. They would drift with the ice for some time, being evacuated when their ice island drifted into Soviet waters. Soviet scientists followed the same procedure in their part of the Arctic basin.

In Canada, the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys (now called EMR) established the Polar Continental Shelf Project in 1958. Government agencies sent employees to conduct studies; these employees were supplemented by university scientists and students working either under contract to agencies or funded by research grants. By the 1970s as many as 150 projects per year were underway and work is still being done.

By the 1960s technological advances had combined to bring about a third big change: hydrocarbon development in the Beaufort Sea. Aerial reconnaissance and scientific studies indicated the presence of large deposits of crude oil and natural gas.

A huge number of mineral claims were staked in the 1950s in the Arctic. Development permits were issued for tracts sized in the millions of acres. The area was prospected, mapped and studied. Even at the going lease rate of five cents per acre, though, exploration work was expensive and difficult; to combine resources and offset expenses, a consortium of companies called Panarctic was formed in 1966.

The first well was drilled in 1973 and by the mid-1980s the Amauligak project was in production. Mobile drilling platforms — either drilling ships or semi-submersible rigs — were used because of the threat posed by ice. Pauline Cove and the waters around Herschel Island were used as a temporary safe harbour for drill ships and other vessels in the 1970s and 1980s.

Although hydrocarbon development brought dollars and jobs to the north, there were growing concerns about the effect of these activities on the north's fragile environment. An oil spill in the Beaufort Sea would be difficult to control, and could have a long-lasting effect on ecology at the edge of the continent. The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, among others, recognized the threat posed by such activities to the arctic environment and people. Its report stressed the need to settle the outstanding issue of aboriginal land claims.

Land Claims and Social Change

Advances in technology and changes in lifestyles ushered in a new era for the Inuvialuit. In the early years they were hired as guides, hunters, or seamsters by the commercial whaling operators. Their own subsistence hunting techniques adapted to the changes brought by the outsiders. By 1919, one police constable noted that "practically every native on the mainland is the owner of a rifle now" (Cornelius, in Zaslow).

Fur trading was a relatively consistent activity over the years, although success was tied to the fortunes of the fur prices. Much later, in the 1980s, international environmental and animal rights groups contributed to the decline in demand for furs. These groups reduced the income that could be earned from trapping and affected the lives of many people in the north.

In the 1950s, hydrocarbon development and exploration work in the Beaufort brought jobs and training for native people. Local enterprises like stores and hotels were also supported by the development work.

Gradually the Inuvialuit felt the need to assert more power over their own lives. In 1977, feeling the pressure from heightened hydrocarbon exploration work in the Beaufort, the people of the Western Arctic filed a land claim separate from the central and eastern arctic Inuit. By 1978 they had signed an agreement in principle, and by 1984 the Inuvialuit Final Agreement was in place.

Modern land claim agreements follow the pattern of treaties, but are more complex and thorough. In the view of the aboriginal people, they are a means to recognize their historical position as Canada's first peoples, with inherent rights.

Parks and Resource Management

With the land claims agreement — Herschel Island Territorial Park is part of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region — the Inuvialuit share, with the Government of the Yukon, responsibility for planning, managing and protecting Herschel Island. Northern Yukon National Park Reserve, just across the passage on the mainland, is also part of the land claim settlement. Wildlife, fish and other resources are now managed on a cooperative basis throughout the northern Yukon.

Life in the North Today

Most of the people who once lived at Herschel Island and along the north coast now live in Aklavik, in the Northwest Territories. Modern schools and other facilities are located there. Many families from the Mackenzie Delta still visit Herschel Island, and the Mackenzie family stll has a seasonal home on the island. Hunting, sealing, trapping, fishing are some of the traditional activities that are still very much part of the Inuvialuit culture. The parks and ongoing resource development provide employment for local people, but the Inuvialuit still rely on the land and sea.

Related Stories

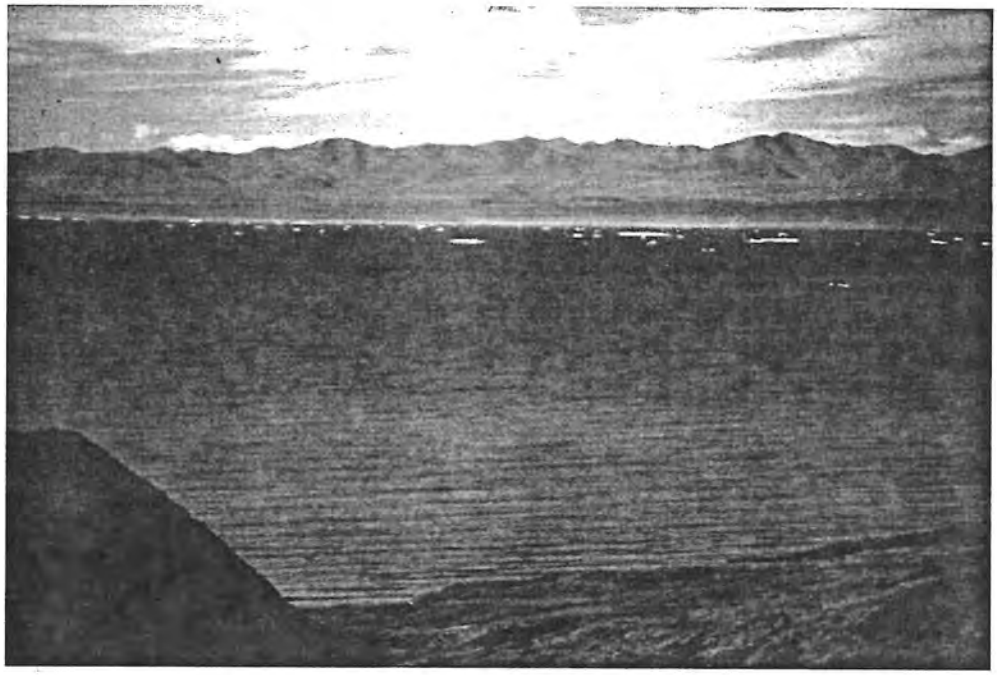
An Island Changing Shape
First People
Forces from the South

Ways to tell the story

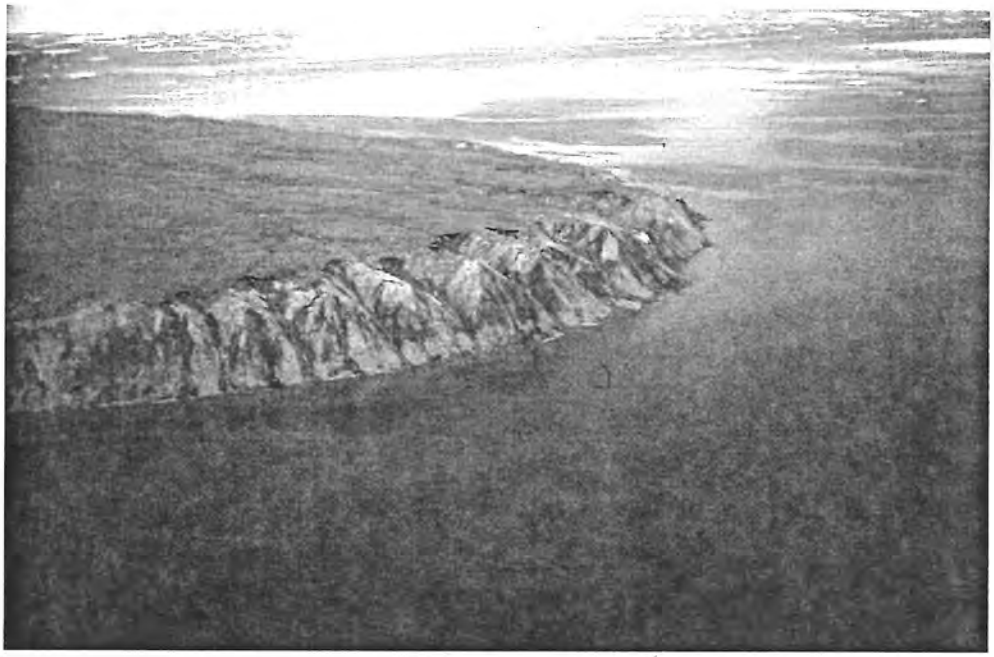
- look at drill rigs, sometimes found in Pauline Cove
- show maps of transportation routes
- explain geological features from maps or actual sightings
- show photos

Further Reading

Zaslow, Morris. The Northward Expansion of Canada
Canada. Indian and Northern Affairs. Looking North: Canada's Arctic Commitment
Herschel Island Territorial Park Management Plan
Coolican et al. 1986. Living Treaties: Lasting Agreements
Report of the Task Force to Review Comprehensive Claims Policy. Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.



Looking across to the mountains of Northern Yukon National Park. You can see icebergs in the bay from this spot, about a half hours walk from the settlement. *Edge of the Continent* themes could be presented here. (J. Peepre)



Aerial view of Herschel Island. The visitor is struck by the barren tundra, the slumping bluffs, and the polar ice floes to the north. The effects of permafrost, and the landforms creating the natural harbour at Pauline Cove are visible when approaching by aircraft. This is *Our Island in the Polar Sea.* Stories on *An Island Changing Shape* and *The Polar Sea* could be told. (J. Peepre)

OUR ISLAND IN THE POLAR SEA

Edge of the Continent

Origin of the Island
Part of the Mainland
Arctic Sanctuary Brimming with Life
Forces from the South

ORIGIN OF THE ISLAND

This story shows how sediments excavated by glacial action created the only island of substantial size along the Yukon coast.

Summary

- glacial origin of Island
- marine and Yukon north slope sediments from Herschel Basin form the island
- old and new ice in soil
- first life

STORY

Glacial Origin of the Island

Geological evidence shows that Herschel Island was created by a tongue of glacial ice that pushed up frozen sediments into a pile where the island is today. This happened when the Laurentide ice sheet advanced to the northwest. The huge Laurentide ice sheet covered much of North America during the Pleistocene period (about 10,000 years ago).

Recent evidence from sea floor sediments shows that the ice extended just beyond Herschel Island. Scientists are not exactly sure when this advance happened, but it probably dates from about 25,000 years ago .

Where did the sediments come from?

The glacier advanced from the southeast over land and ocean. At that time the sea level was about 140 metres lower than present, and much of the area where the Beaufort Sea is now was land. The sediments pushed up by the glacier consisted mainly of marine clays and silts and silty soils of the Yukon Coastal Plain.

Some mixed sand, gravel and organic deposits from near-shore and shoreline environments are also found. These sediments probably came from Herschel Basin (the part of the Beaufort Sea southeast of the island). The volume of sediment forming Herschel island would more or less fill Herschel Basin.

Old and new ice

The ice in the sediments of Herschel Island probably comes from two main sources. The original frozen sediments pushed up by the glacier contained ice, possibly even some glacier ice. Most of the ice has formed since that time and is still forming. Bands of ice grow between layers of sediment. Ice wedges grow as surface water flows into cracks in the surface of the soil. Other ground ice probably comes from buried snow banks.

First Life

Conditions during the late Pleistocene (ice age) period were not limited to the island itself. We can estimate what things were like from the mainland, since Herschel was probably part of the mainland at this time. The climate was likely cold and dry. The vegetation of the unglaciated portion of the North Slope probably consisted of sedges, grasses and herbs, which also pioneered the barren glacial landscape surrounding Herschel.

This treeless grassland supported the large herbivores: the mammoths, woolly rhinoceros, steppe bison, yak, saiga antelope, reindeer and muskox. The cave lion probably preyed on these large herbivores.

Related Stories

Inuvialuit Oral Tradition
Island changing shape
Part of the mainland
Soil and vegetation

Ways to tell the story

- climb to top of hill overlooking Herschel Basin
- look at map showing glacial limits

Further Reading

Dyke, A.S. and V.K. Prest. 1987. Late Wisconsinan and Holocene history of the Laurentide ice sheet (map1703a, sheet 1). Geographie Physique et Quaternaire XLI:237—263.

Hegginbottom, J.A., J-S. Vincent (editors). 1986. Correlation of Quaternary Deposits and Events Around the Margin of the Beaufort Sea: Contributions from a joint Canadian-American Workshop, April 1984. GSC Open file report 1237. (INAC map office Whitehorse.)

Rampton, V. 1982. Quaternary Geology of the Yukon Coastal Plain. Geological Survey of Canada, Bulletin 317, Ottawa.

Smith, C.A.S., C.E. Kennedy, A.E. Hargrave, K. McKenna. 1989. Soil and Vegetation of Herschel Island, Yukon Territory. Yukon Soil Survey Report No. 1. LRRC Contribution No. 88-26. Agriculture Canada, Whitehorse, Yukon.

PART OF THE MAINLAND

Only two kilometres of shallow water separate the northern Yukon mainland from the closest point on Herschel Island.

Summary

- Herschel Island may have been part of Beringia during the last ice age
- Arctic tundra, with its permafrost features, is common to Herschel Island and the mainland

STORY

Beringia

During the last ice age, when the sea level was 120 metres lower than it is now, Herschel Island was likely part of the mainland. Lower sea levels meant that North America was connected to Asia by a broad land bridge across what is now the Bering Strait. Plant and animal species migrated across this bridge; today there are still many species common to both sides of the Bering Strait.

The entire land mass stretching from Siberia into western North America was called Beringia. It was not glaciated during the ice ages that spanned the last 500,000 years. Beringia was a refuge for animals and plants that were eliminated elsewhere by advancing ice. These ice sheets buried the rest of the continent under hundreds of metres of ice.

After the retreat of the ice, many species that had been confined to Beringia recolonized nearby areas. Some species are still found only within this limited geographic area.

Scientists believe early peoples also came to North America by the Bering land bridge, perhaps following the large animals that roamed the dry treeless landscape. Some, like the muskox, the barren-ground caribou and the grizzly bear, still thrive in this environment. Others are long extinct, such as the woolly rhinoceros and mammoth, the steppe bison and saiga antelope. Their fossils remain to tell the story of their passing.

Arctic Tundra

All of the northern Yukon mainland, as well as Herschel Island, is underlain by permafrost, or permanently frozen ground. The heat of the summer sun melts the top layer enough to allow plants to grow, but the depth of this melting varies, depending on slope, soil composition and ground cover. The thicker the vegetation, the more insulated the ground is from the sun.

When heat penetrates the soil on a hillside the ground can slump, creating a wealth of micro-habitats for plants. Occasionally a piece of ice that has wedged in the ground is exposed and melts out, creating a mud slide. There are some spectacular examples of this on Herschel Island.

Tundra Vegetation

Arctic tundra plants are affected by low temperatures, short summers with long days, low precipitation, poor nitrogen supply and strong winds. The frozen ground prevents the soil from draining and restricts the rooting depth of plants. The cold soil environment also slows plant growth. Cottongrass is a common plant of the arctic tundra, growing in tussock formations and allowing other plants to grow. Cottongrass provides a layer for other plants to keep their roots away from the permafrost. Caribou feed on small cottongrass flowers in early spring.

Tundra Birds

Many species of birds do not distinguish between the coastal plain on the mainland and Herschel Island. The tundra, the ponds, the marsh lands and the shingle beaches are a magnet for birds during the summer months. Many have migrated thousands of kilometres to breed in these fertile lands north of the Arctic Circle. Some, like the arctic tern, the golden plover and the red-necked phalarope have come from as far away as South America and the Antarctic.

Baird's and semi-palmated sandpipers are at home in the tundra ponds and uplands of the mainland as well as on the island. Common eiders nest among tufts of grass and driftwood logs on coastal or island beaches. Glaucous gulls are busy marauding eider nests for their eggs. Jaegers are always on the lookout for prey, soaring low over the tundra or perched on top of logs or small hills.

The sheltered waters between the island and the mainland attract thousands of old squaw ducks and surf scoters, as well as other seaducks, during late summer and fall. These waters are shallow enough to allow the birds to feed while they are moulting.

Tundra Mammals

In mid summer, it's not uncommon to see caribou grazing on the windy uplands on the north side of the island, trying to find relief from insects. Brown lemmings and hares are year-round residents of the island and the mainland. Their numbers, along with those of their predators, such as the arctic and red fox, fluctuate in three- to four-year population cycles. Grizzly bears have been seen swimming across from the mainland, stopping on route on sandspits and islands to scavenge off seal carcasses or forage for eider duck eggs. Some bears stay for the summer.

From November to July Herschel is locked in ice; there is no distinction between island and mainland. Arctic fox, muskox and any barren-ground caribou that didn't migrate south can easily cross to the island over the ice.

Related Stories

Migrations
Arctic Sanctuary
The Origin of Herschel Island
Island Changing Shape

Ways To Tell The Story

• walk along the beach and into the uplands and describe how the plant and animal life is similar to North Yukon National Park, seen just across the waters

Further Reading

French, H. 1976. The Periglacial Environment. Longman Group Ltd.
Jingsfor K. Wildlife of the Northern Yukon. Canadian Parks Service.
Renewable Resources Department. Yukon Mammal Series.
Smith et al. 1989. Soil and Vegetation on Herschel Island. Agriculture Canada.
Talarico D. and D. Mossop. 1986. Herschel Island Avifauna and Interpretive Report. Yukon Department of Renewable Resources.

Wildflowers draw many visitors to the island. These daisies are one of dozens of species growing in profusion within easy walking distance of the settlement. Stories on *The Arctic Seasons* could be told. (J. Peepre)

Ground nesting birds like this Common Eider are found in many places. Guided walks, set routes, or seasonal closures of some nesting sites are recommended as ways to minimize disturbance. Birds, wildflowers and arctic fox are appealing for telling interpretive stories about ecology and arctic climate. (C. McEwen)

ARCTIC SANCTUARY BRIMMING WITH LIFE

Herschel Island is an oasis — a sanctuary brimming with life in the few months of summer. The tundra comes alive with colourful wildflower species and a variety of birds, many busy taking advantage of the short but intense breeding season. Many species of mammals live on the island and in the surrounding ocean waters.

Summary

- the combination of location, climate, and topography creates many different habitats that are the "arctic sanctuary"
- the area around Pauline Cove offers visitors a rich experience in arctic natural history, where diverse habitats include upland tundra, sandspits and beaches, willow flats, mudslumps and fox dens

STORY

A Sanctuary

This small island, barely a hundred square kilometres in size, hosts a great variety of plant and animal habitats and species. Many things contribute to this diversity: the northern latitude; the island's location; the intensity of the summer sun and the power of erosion have all shaped the Herschel Island sanctuary.

Sediments, gouged out of the ocean floor and deposited here during the last glaciation, erode away and wash out to sea. As a result, the island is constantly changing and creating many different small habitats.

This far north, the ground just under the surface is permanently frozen. Over most of the island the soil is insulated from the heat of the sun by a layer of vegetation. Occasionally entire hillsides slump when the sun's heat penetrates to the frozen ground. Mud slides also occur after ground ice is exposed. The ice-rich sediments of the coastal cliffs erode easily, at a rate of up to two to four metres a year.

The permafrost does not allow water to drain into the ground. Water either collects on the surface, forming marshes or ponds, or flows off, carrying island sediments with it. The deep gullies so common on the island result from this rapid erosion.

Winds off the ocean and pack-ice bring moisture and cool temperatures to the island, creating a better climate for flowering plants.

Sandspits And Beaches

Sediments eroded from the island and carried by ocean currents form the Pauline Cove sandspit. Grasses and sedges, as well as salt-tolerant plants like the sandwort, grow in the beach sands.

Common eiders build their nests among tufts of grass or driftwood logs. A thick layer of down plucked from the mother's breast lines the nests and provides excellent insulation for the eggs and chicks. The Inuvialuit people have collected this down for years to use in clothing insulation. The well-camouflaged female eiders spend most of their time on the nests, only leaving when disturbed. The males are distinctively marked by black and white and often fly low over the ocean, looking for fish.

Black guillemots return to the island each spring after a winter of fishing in the open ice leads far offshore. Although the guillemots nest by the thousands on rocky cliffs of many eastern Arctic islands, Herschel hosts the largest breeding colony in the western Arctic. Since there are no bedrock cliffs here, the birds nest in the abandoned buildings at Pauline Cove.

Semi-palmated and Baird's sandpipers and red-necked phalaropes winter in South America, then nest on Herschel sandspits, often in grassy areas. The Baird's also nest in the upland tundra, preferring higher drier areas with less vegetation. The phalaropes swim in circles on the ponds and create currents that carry food up from the lower depths.

Snow buntings are among the earliest arrivals in the spring. They nest among driftwood piles as well as in the eaves of buildings at Pauline Cove.

Willow Flats

Shrub willows grow just inland from the beach, ponds and salt marsh. These low lying bushes create an effective wind barrier. Common and hoary redpolls find shelter for their nests among the willows and in the driftwood zone.

Mudslumps

A variety of small habitats form when the ground slumps; for example, at the edge of the cove on the hillside behind the Ice Houses. A host of wildflower species have adapted to the varying conditions of moisture and exposure to the sun, and grow on these earthen mounds. Snow buntings nest in the mud cavities.

Upland Tundra

Arctic willow, cottongrass, dryas and vetches grow mainly in the gently rolling uplands of the island. Many colourful pockets of wildflowers also flourish: purple lupines and monkshood, yellow poppies and arnicas, pink louseworts and paintbrushes, white heather and avens. They have all adapted to the short growing season and harsh environment.

The woolly lousewort and glacier avens bloom early, flowering soon after the snow melts. A dense covering of hair protects them from icy winds and low temperatures. Arctic poppies and mountain avens protect themselves by growing closer to the ground than more southerly varieties. They rotate their petals towards the sun, concentrating the available heat on their seeds. The semi-evergreen leaves of the avens allow this plant to start photosynthesis (a chemical reaction to the sun that causes plants to grow) as soon as it is exposed to the light. A few species are true evergreens, like arctic heather. Heather grows in low-lying mats to avoid wind movement and trap warm air.

The upland tundra is home to several species of birds. The "tud-a lik" calls of the golden plover, another South American immigrant, can be heard across the tundra, along with melodic songs of the Lapland longspur. Sandhill cranes visit the island sometimes and display their dramatic courtship rituals.

Red-throated loons nest on the upland ponds. Pacific, common and yellow-billed loons all visit the island. The population of snowy owls and rough-legged hawks fluctuates with the three- to four-year population cycles of brown lemmings and red backed voles. At their peak, rough-legged hawks have one of the highest breeding populations in North America; up to one pair per four square kilometres at Herschel Island. They build their nests on the side of gullies or on top of coastal mud cliffs, adjacent to their upland hunting areas. Occasionally a nest disappears into the ocean when the mud slumps away.

Fox Dens

The lemmings and voles also support a healthy population of arctic fox, who have one of the highest breeding densities in the western arctic. Several fox den sites are on the uplands within easy walking distance of Pauline Cove. Dens are found on south-facing knolls in well-drained coarse-grained soils. They can be spotted by the colourful and profuse growth of wildflowers that thrive on these soils. Flowering plants thrive around the fox dens because of the fox excrement, urine and food remains. Many different plant species grow around den sites.

Passage Between Mainland And Island

Barren-ground caribou of the Porcupine caribou herd and muskox also cross on the ice. Some stay on the island all summer. Grizzly bears may swim out, undeterred by the narrow strip of ocean separating the island from the mainland. Polar bears sometimes den on the island, but by spring they are hunting for seals along open leads in the offshore ice.

The waters between the mainland and island are important moulting and migratory staging areas for seaducks and some shorebirds. Thousands of oldsquaw and surf scoters find food and shelter from storms in the shallow and protected waters of Workboat Passage.

Related Stories

Migrations
Part of the Mainland
Marine Life
The Origin of Herschel Island
Island Changing Shape

Ways To Tell The Story

- take visitors on a walk from the settlement at Pauline Cove along the beach, past the ponds, salt marsh, and driftwood, out past the graves and ice houses and the willow flats, up the mud slump behind the ice houses and on to the upland tundra. Continue on the flats toward the backside of the island to include upland ponds and fox den sites and along the coastal bluffs and some small examples of mud slumps or head back via the flats, beach, and Mission House
- direct visitors to the large mud slumps located west of the settlement along Thetis Bay
- see walking routes map in the manual

Further Reading

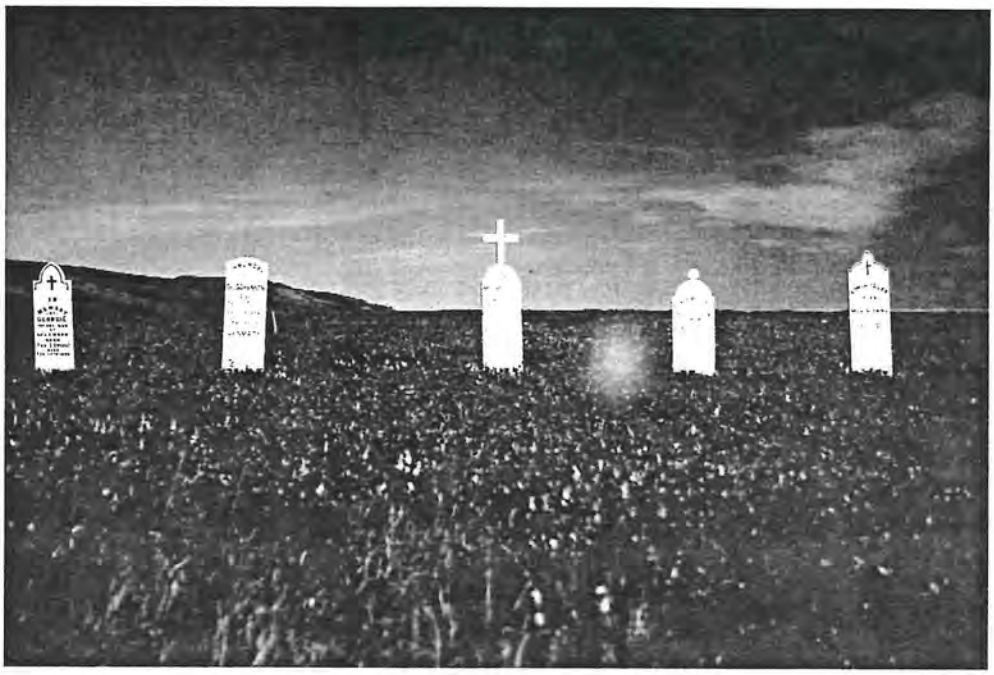
Agriculture Canada. 1972. Savile Arctic Adaptations in Plants.

Amundsen et al. 1982. Northern Mackenzie Delta and Adjacent Coastal Areas: a selected bibliography. Arctic Petroleum Operators Association Project No. 173.

Smith et al. 1989. Soils and Vegetation of Herschel Island. Agriculture Canada.

Talarico D. and D. Mossop. 1986. Herschel Island Avifauna and Interpretation Report. Yukon Department of Renewable Resources.

Renewable Resources Department. Yukon Mammal Series.



The graves on Herschel Island speak of human hardship. Most visitors are drawn to these graves and want to know who the people were and why they died. These are family graves to many and must be treated with respect. The routes to the graves cross bird nesting sites. Guided walks and planned routes are recommended. The theme *People From Far Away* could lead to stories on *The First People* or the *American Whaling Period*. (J. Peepre)

This boat belonged to the late Frank Rivet, a well known personality in Aklavik. Stories about travel to the island across the polar sea would be intriguing to visitors. The boat contrasts with the floatplanes often moored just behind it. Stories from the theme *People From Far Away* could include *Fur Traders and Schooners* or the *New North.* (J. Peepre)

FORCES FROM THE SOUTH

Herschel Island is not protected from the influence of the south. Inuvialuit life is affected by an entire continent, not just the nearby land. Whaling, fur trading, mineral exploration and park development all resulted from southern ideas and southern demands.

Summary

- the demand for baleen and furs came from the south, as did the principle demands for gas and oil
- the establishment of parks on Herschel Island and the North Slope are southern ideas for land management, and resource protection
- pollution and greenhouse effect
- as for the past 100 years, the Inuvialuit must deal with circumstances created by southern activities and ideas, e.g. opposition to the fur trade

STORY

Maps

When visitors to Herschel Island look at a map of the polar regions, they see that the rest of the continent lies far to the south. For many people, it's like standing on the roof of the world.

For the Inuvialuit, the north coast is home. Even so, much of the history of the island was shaped by forces from the south since the first visit by explorer John Franklin in 1826. The idea of finding a Northwest Passage and mapping the polar seas led to new names for places that were known by the Inuvialuit for centuries.

Resources

For 100 years the Inuvialuit have dealt with circumstances created by southern activities and ideas. During the American Whaling Period, the demand for baleen came from the south. Although commercial whaling lasted for less than 20 years, it changed the lives of the Inuvialuit and altered the face of Herschel Island forever.

Missionaries came to save souls and the police came to establish sovereignty. Later, the desire for white fox furs allowed many Inuvialuit to buy luxury goods and even own schooners.

The demand for gas and oil also came from far away and the idea of setting up a park followed southern concepts of land management. And now, pollution and the greenhouse effect has changed the air that is breathed on Herschel Island, even though the factories and cars are thousands of miles to the south. Recent opposition to the fur trade once again changed the lives of many Inuvialuit.

Related Stories

all other stories

Ways to Tell the Story

- weave the Forces From the South idea into other stories
- look at polar regions map while looking south for a dramatic impact on visitors

Further Reading

See other stories for more details

APPENDIX 1

Herschel Island: Chronology of Historic Events

1826 In July, Sir John Franklin stops on his second expedition and christens Herschel Island.

1837 Peter Dease and Thomas Simpson pass by Herschel Island while mapping the Arctic coast from Return Reef to Point Barrow.
This was an H.B.Co.-sponsored venture.

1888 Little Joe Tuckfield travels east of Point Barrow to scout whaling prospects and finds good whaling in the eastern Beaufort Sea and a safe harbour at Herschel Island.

1889 Seven whaleships and the USS *Thetis* drop anchor on the east side of Herschel Island. Stockton makes first map of Island and names many of its features, including Pauline Cove. The map is published the following year.

1890 The *Grampus*, the *Nicoline* and the *Mary D. Hume* reach Herschel Island prepared to overwinter.
J.A. Drayton dies and becomes the first occupant of whalers' cemetery.
Mackenzie River Diocese is split in two; the new Yukon District is christened Diocese of Selkirk and Bompas becomes its Bishop.
Canadian government notified of the presence of whalers in western Arctic.

1891 Bompas writes government authorities complaining of treatment of Inuvialuit by American whalers.

1892 The *Mary D. Hume* arrives in San Francisco with a record catch, a cargo of 37 whales worth $400,000.
The *Jeanie* arrives as the first tender (supply ship) for the remaining PSWCo. vessels.
Isaac Stringer ordained May 15 in Toronto, then travels north to mission among the Inuvialuit of the Mackenzie Delta and Arctic Coast.

1893 The most profitable year for whaling, with 286 whales taken.
PSWCo. community house built.
Stringer leaves Fort McPherson for first visit to Herschel Island on April 2nd; arrives May lst and stays three weeks.
Returns to Herschel Island in November and conducts first service in PSWCo. house using the billiard table as an altar.

1894 Edouard de Sainville and Frank Russell arrive at Herschel Island.
The first game of baseball is played in the Arctic.
Stringer visits Herschel Island in September, stays with Captain Murray, who is caretaking the PSWCo. property. Sleeps on the billiard table in the company house and helps shingle the roof.
First season for the wives and families of the captains to over-winter at Herschel Island.
Stringer, McDonald, Firth and Camsell sign a petition requesting an end to the liquor trade between whalers and Inuvialuit.

1895 Stringer arrives at Herschel Island April 16 and holds a large service the following Sunday in community house.
In May, Stringer holds christening service for Helen Herschel Sherman on board the *Beluga*.
Captains of the whalers sign an undertaking to "suspend the liquor traffic" as it relates to area natives.
Arrival of Charles Edward Whittaker in the Arctic.
In June, Bishop Reeve, Stringer and Whittaker visit Herschel Island. Over $650 is collected from whaling captains toward establishment of a mission on Herschel Island.
Sod house and small store are purchased for temporary accommodation.
Isaac Stringer leaves north on furlough via the *Jeanie*.
Captain Weeks dies.
Whittaker visits Herschel Island while Stringer is Outside.
John Firth, Hudson's Bay Company trader at Fort McPherson, threatens to cut off the whaler's mail if they don't cease trading for fur.

1896 Stringer marries Sarah Ann "Sadie" Alexander on March 10 and returns to the north. After a few weeks at Herschel Island, the Stringers spend the winter in Fort McPherson, where Sadie gives birth to Rowena Victoria.

1897 Five die in a sudden blizzard during baseball game.
Four ships are crushed in the ice: *Navarch*, the *Jesse H. Freeman*, the *Rosario* and the *Orca*.
Most of the fleet begins wintering at Baillie Island.
Stringers and W.D. Young return to Herschel Island to establish mission.
The building supplies ordered from San Francisco for church and residence are appropriated by whalers. PSWCo. give the Stringers use of community house for use as residence and chapel.
Andew Jackson Stone arrives at Herschel Island.

1900 No ships overwinter at Herschel for the next two years.
Birth of Frederick Herschel to the Stringers in May.
Comptroller White begins inquiry into establishing police post on Herschel

1901 Stringers leave Herschel Island on the *Narwhal*.
Whittaker takes over Herschel mission.

1903 Sgt. F.J. Fitzgerald, Cst. F.D. Sutherland and an interpreter arrive at Herschel Island to set up a NWMP post.
Stringer takes up work at Christ Church in Whitehorse at invitation of Bishop Bompas.

1904 Fitzgerald and Sutherland return to Herschel and open the detachment in a sod hut rented from the Anglican Mission.

1905 Amundsen arrives at Herschel and stays with Captain Tilton aboard the *Alexander*.
Most of the whaling fleet is trapped by pack ice; six ships unexpectedly forced to over-winter at Herschel.

Crews are near mutiny; they are iced in at time when their ships' articles had run out.
Stringer is elected Bishop of Selkirk upon resignation of Bishop Bompas.
Klengenberg disappears with the *Olga*.

1906 The market for whalebone collapses; price drops from over $5 per pound to 40 cents.
Whittakers leave Herschel Island after the death of their youngest daughter and move to Fort McPherson.
Amundsen leaves Herschel Island and completes the first navigation of the Northwest Passage.
The police on Herschel receive authority to act as magistrates.
Klengenberg returns to Herschel and makes statement to police about the deaths of four of his crew.

1907 End of commercial whaling in the western Arctic.
Jarvis makes 2000-mile patrol on the *Beluga*.

1908 No ships, scarce game and near-famine conditions on Herschel.
Police feed the 47 Inuvialuit on the island from their own stores.

1909 Stringer pays visit to Herschel Island, baptises six Inuvialuit including Thomas Umaok and wife Susie Atoogaok, James Atoomikchina and wife Hanna Nashoogaloak.
Wedding of Thomas and Susie.
Vilhjalmur Stefansson arrives in district.
First special constable mentioned in Herschel police reports.

1910 Herschel Island becomes official headquarters for Mackenzie River subdistrict.
Police implement rural mail delivery along Arctic coast.
Fitzgerald returns to Herschel as an Inspector.

1911 "The Lost Patrol": Inspector Fitzgerald and his party die of starvation while on patrol from Fort McPherson to Dawson.
H.J Knowles (shipping and commission, marine & fire insurance) sell PSWCo. bldgs to RCMP for $1500.
W.D. Young visits Herschel Island.

1912 Thomas Umaok and wife confirmed by Stringer at Fort McPherson.

1914 Hudson's Bay Company fails in first attempt to set up post at Herschel .

1915 Hudson's Bay Company establish trading post on Herschel Island.
Police arrest Uluksuk and Sinnisiak for murder of Catholic priests Rouvier and LeRoux at Coronation Gulf.

1916 Anglican Church returns to Herschel Island; Reverend and Christina Fry come to re-establish mission.
Construction of mission house by Whittaker and crew of Indians.

1917 Birth of Walter Fry in May.
Bishop Stringer visits Arctic Coast, including Herschel Island; 47 Inuvialuit confirmed; Holy Communion held with 83 communicants and an offering of 37 pounds.
Bishop brings two Eskimo boys, Frederick Amegrak and Alex Inyunak, to the Carcross Indian residential school.
The *Herman* is the only whaler to visit Herschel Island this year.
Whittaker supervises construction of a woodshed for the Herschel mission.
Stefansson at Herschel Island ill with typhoid.

1918 Severe typhoid epidemic at Herschel Island from Christmas 1917 to April 1918. Const. Lamont of RNWMP dies and Stefansson has to be evacuated to hospital at Fort Yukon.
In January, Fry and Umaok visit the mountain Inuit.
Whittakers leave Fort McPherson for posting at Whitehorse.
April 5th, arrival of Archdeacon Stuck during a trip along the Arctic Coast.
The police whaleboat sinks during a storm when harbour entrance iced in.
Pedersen sets up trading station at Shingle Point.
Birth of Herschel Noel Fry on Christmas morning.

1919 Departure of the Frys from Herschel Island.

1920 Weather station is established on the island ; coldest day that year is -54 F.
William Young builds mission house at Shingle Point.
Typhoid epidemic is especially serious at Herschel Island. Thomas Umaok very ill,Geddes (and Dr. Doyle?) visit and stay at RCMP barracks.

1921 Death of William Henry Fry.

1922 Rev. W.A. Geddes and Young begin building church at Shingle Point.
Police given the power of government agents to enforce ordinances, collect taxes and issue licenses.
Police arrest Alikomiak and Tatamagama for murder of police officers Doaks and Binder.
Suggestions of moving district police headquarters to Aklavik.

1923 Hoares living on Herschel Island.
James Atumaksinna dies at Herschel Island in June.
Bishop Lucas visits Herschel Island; spends 10 days with Mr. Hoare.
Capt. Pedersen no longer working for Liebes Co.
The *Tiliyak* is dismantled and broken up.
The *Lady Kindersley* arrives with church furniture.
Alikomiak and Tatamagama convicted of murder with execution date set for December 7. Bishops Stringer and Lucas write Ottawa, recommending clemency.
Police become timber agents for Herschel.

1924 Four members of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals travel north to establish radio stations at Herschel Island and Aklavik. They winter at Herschel in the RCMP-HQ.

Execution on Feruary 1 of Alikomiak and Tatamagama.
Poor year for white foxes. HBCo. no longer giving credit to natives.
Bishop Stringer visits Arctic coast and attempts to visit Herschel Island but is prevented by ice floes and fog.
Stringer dedicates new church (St. John's) at Shingle Point.
Cpl. Pennefeather in charge of RCMP detachment.
Inspector and Mrs. Wood return to Herschel Island in summer and live in a residence of their own.
The *Lady Kindersley* sinks after being caught between two ice floes on north coast (with outfit of signals men wintering on Herschel Island).
Geddes on furlough for part of 1924 and 1925.
Capt. Klengenberg's crew over-winter at Herschel Island
Anglican Church applies for land to build church on Herschel Island.

1925 Post Office opens on April 17, first postmaster is Inspector (later Assistant Commissioner) Thomas Benjamin Caulkin, RCMP.
Office administered by Edmonton Postal District.
Police appointed to receive immigration applications.
Bishop Stringer purchases Liebes buildings at Shingle Point for $750.
Col. Leonard donates $10,000 to Bishop Lucas for hospital at Aklavik.
Repairs made to Anglican warehouse at Herschel Island.
Pedersen trading at Herschel Island during summer.
McCullum joins Geddes at Shingle Point, brings radio set.
In November, Geddes travels west. Only encounters five families between Herschel Island and boundary line with Alaska.

1926 Herschel established as customs-excise outport with bonded warehouse.
Installation of radio equipment at Herschel Island by Lieut. H.D. Cluff for communication with Aklavik, where main station was installed in 1925.
Bishop Lucas resigns from Diocese of Mackenzie. .
Whittaker appointed commissary for diocese for summer.
In November, Bishop Stringer appointed commissary, as endowment fund overdrawn and no funds for new bishop.
McCullum transferred to Rampart House & Old Crow missions. Is ordained at Old Crow.
Hospital completed at Aklavik.
Geddes headquartered at Aklavik, in charge of Shingle Point and Herschel.
Thomas Umaok conducting services at Herschel Island.
Insp. and Mrs. Caulkin at Herschel Island; Murray is HBCo. post manager.
HBCo. planning to close post at Shingle Point in summer.
Pedersen applies for land to build his warehouse at Herschel Island.

1927 67 natives and 10 whites at Herschel Island for Christmas festivities.
Thomas Umaok ordained in St. Patrick's Mission Chapel at Herschel Island on July 30th. First Inuit deacon.
Geddes made Archdeacon of Yukon at Herschel Island, July 30.

1928 Geddes becomes engaged to Miss Terry from the hospital.
Geddes elected fourth Bishop of Mackenzie River.
Inspector & Mrs. Kemp stationed at Herschel Island.

Umaok writes Stringer about scarcity of white foxes and seal at Herschel Island that winter.
Influenza epidemic kills six at Herschel Island

1929 Anglican residential school opens at Shingle Point.

1930 RCCS substation built at Herschel Island.

1931 Administration of p.o. transferred to Yukon gov't and B.C. Postal District.
H.B.Co. trader on Herschel Island, Fred Ware, is fired for inefficiency.
The H.B.Co. supply ship *Baychimo* is lost in the ice.
Police HQ for Western Arctic subdistrict moved from Herschel to Aklavik.
Death of Charlie Klengenberg.
Isaac Stringer is made Archbishop of Rupert's Land.

1932 The Porsild brothers visit Herschel Island.

1933 The RCMP detachment closes September 7. Subsequently opens as a summer detachment for six- to eight-week periods from 1934 to 1937.

1934 Death of Archbishop Isaac O. Stringer in Winnipeg.

1936 New residential school opens at Aklavik.
The Officers Quarters building moved from Herschel to Aklavik.
Pedersen makes last trip to the Arctic; sells out to the HBCo.

1937 No furs traded at Herschel Island.

1938 P.O. at Herschel Island closed September 14 and not reopened when the RCMP detachment again operates (between 1948 and 1968).
RCCS substation closed down.
HBCo. post at Herschel Island closes; sets up operations at Shingle Point.

1940 RCMP schooner *St. Roch* sails Northwest Passage from west to east, stops at Herschel Island on August 12.

1944 *St. Roch* sails Northwest Passage from east to west, becoming the only vessel to have navigated it in both directions.

1948 Herschel detachment re-opens.

1964 RCMP close the detachment on Herschel Island.

1968 RCMP buildings handed over to Crown Assets Disposal, who pass them over to the Polar Continental Shelf Project, Energy, Mines and Resources.

1972 Historic Sites and Monuments Board recognizes national significance of Herschel Island and places a plaque on the island.

1977 Parks Canada assumes control of police buildings.

1987 Herschel Island designated as the Yukon's first Territorial Park.

APPENDIX 2

A Checklist of Cultural Heritage Features To Use For Telling Stories (*See Story Outlines*)

The cultural heritage features on Herschel Island include historic buildings in varying states of repair, archaeological sites on land and underwater, four graveyards, Inuvialuktun and English place names, several boats and many artifacts scattered about the beach and around the buildings. Here are some of the more prominent features:

Northern Whaling and Trading Company Warehouse

- built by Captain Pedersen in 1926 to store trade goods for his Canadian subsidiary (Canalaska Company) and used after 1936 by the Hudson's Bay Company
- Bill Cashin of R.C.M.P. patrol boat St. Roch painted his initials on back of door (May 21, 1948)
- in good repair and appears to be close to original state, although threatened by erosion and ice because of location close to shoreline
- sign has been restored by Heritage Branch
- building is now used for storage of Park Rangers' equipment
- seasonal use by guillemots for nesting and possible occasional use by foxes.

Northern Whaling and Trading Company Shed

- small tin/wood building with arched roof (perhaps reused ship deck cabin roof) needs repair.

Canada Customs Bonded Warehouse

- built by Northern Whaling and Trading Company to store goods, later used by R.C.M.P.
- some fire damage inside.

Newport House Site

- new house constructed to resemble a building from the historic period
- the original Newport House burned in 1973, was used from the 1890's to 1964

R.C.M.P. Headquarters

- only outline of building remains, now an archaeological site; used circa 1926

The Community House

- built by the Pacific Steam Whaling Company circa 1893, originally used as whaling officers' recreation hall, had a pool table
- also used after 1896 by Reverend Isaac Stringer to preach first Anglican services on the island
- after 1906 until circa 1965 occupied and altered by N.W.M.P./R.C.M.P. to serve as residence, barracks, office and jail
- in late 1960s-70s used by Polar Continental Shelf researchers

Pacific Steam Whaling Company Building

- built circa 1893, often called "The Bonehouse"; may have been used to store baleen; after 1906 used by police for storage and side additions for dog kennels
- location of gallows where two Inuvialuit men were hanged in 1924

• outside are large wooden water casks used by police to store ice blocks for fresh water supply.

Mackenzie House

• driftwood log house built in the 1970s by Mackenzie family as residence and still occupied by family members on seasonal basis

• associated smokehouse and outbuildings nearby

Royal Canadian Signal Corps Building

• built circa 1930 to house R.C.S.C. officers and radio telegraph equipment; later may have been used by R.C.M.P. Special Constables as residence

The Blubber House

• built circa 1894, may have been used by whalers for storing and rendering blubber, but this is so far unsubstantiated, research is continuing on this building

Unnamed Small Houses

• two small frame houses appear in early photos dating from circa 1894, may have been whaling officers' quarters; smaller house may be Karluk House purchased by explorer V. Stefansson

McKenna House

• Small frame house circa 1895

Sod House and Mounds

• approximately 30 sodhouse mounds and canvas tent frame foundation remains from circa 1895-1930; one mound has been excavated which yielded post-contact artifacts

Building Foundations

• an unknown number of foundation remains, circa 1895-1930

Anglican Mission House

• built circa 1916 and occupied to circa 1927, used as living quarters and for services

R.C.M.P. Dog Kennels

• small dog houses and wire enclosure built circa 1940s

Cemeteries

• whalers' cemetery, two Inuvialuit cemeteries, and N.W.M.P. cemetery, some with original grave fences, others with replicated head boards, a few in poor state with skeletal remains exposed

Ice Houses

• used for food cold storage by whalers, continuing use by Inuvialuit families and Park Rangers

Archaeological Sites

- Pauline Cove, Avadlek Spit, Lopez Point, and Osborn Point have been mapped and excavated to varying degrees by archaeologists over past two decades
- underwater archaeology sites include site of the Triton in bay
- artifacts and ship timbers scattered along beach waterline

Place Names

- Inuvialuktun and English place names for significant land features on Island and adjacent mainland

Artifacts

- Nails, ship cable, other unidentified metal and wooden items, fishnet remnants, floats, subsistence harvest remains (bones), coloured glass shards, all scattered profusely throughout settlement area and along beaches
- other artifacts stored in Northern Trading and Whaling Company Warehouse

Boats

- need identification if possible through oral history

APPENDIX 3:
A CHECKLIST OF NATURAL HERITAGE FEATURES TO USE FOR TELLING STORIES

(See Story Outlines)

Climate
- effect of northern latitude on angle of sun
- seasonal day length, length of growing season
- extremes in temperatures
- influence of polar ice pack, winds and ocean currents

Origin of the Island
- glacial origin of island
- unglaciated during last glacial advance, effect on ecological diversity
- thermal erosion of coastal bluffs, accumulation at spits

Soil and Vegetation
- variations in plant communities
- sensitivity of terrain and vegetation
- arctic tundra
- slope and exposure to sun has important influence on vegetation

Permafrost
- soils have more than 50 per cent ice
- formations - hummocks, non-sorted circles, etc.
- ice wedges underlie most of island,
- ice-houses

Vegetation
- high plant diversity and abundance is a result of no glaciation and meeting of land and ocean
- arctic adaptations
- common plants
- traditional subsistence use of plants

Mammals

Small Mammals
- collared and brown lemmings, tundra voles
- importance in arctic food chain
- mammal habitat
- population cycles

Arctic and Red Fox
- denning sites and density
- differences in behaviour
- trapping industry - past and present
- incidence of rabies
- importance to Inuvialuit
- predators: seals, lemmings
- den sites and wildflower diversity
- scavengers at polar bear kill sites

Caribou
- Porcupine Caribou Herd summer life history
- some caribou over-winter in Herschel area
- importance to Inuvialuit
- market hunting during commercial whaling period

Grizzly Bear
- common predator of caribou calves
- northern grizzly populations different from southern; slow reproductive rate

Wolverine
- some chance of seeing this species, especially in late winter, early spring
- high profile wilderness species

Muskox
- muskox numbers continue to increase in northern Yukon, chances of seeing one at Herschel Island may be possible in future
- representative species of Arctic

Birds
- arctic adaptations
- diversity and abundance
- behaviour of birds on breeding grounds
- importance of Workboat Passage

Rough legged Hawk
- island supports one of highest breeding densities
- large raptor, life history

Black Guillemot
- nesting habitat, especially Mission building
- easily observed at Herschel settlement
- only breeding colony in Canada's western arctic
- life history

Other Birds (See below for water birds)
- those commonly observed at Pauline Cove, Avadlek Spit
- tundra breeders
- significance of area to migrant birds
- life history of northern breeders, significance of arctic nesting grounds

Marine Ecology

Ocean Currents
- influences of pack ice (on people and animal migrations, on island weather, on accessibility to island)
- erosion dynamics
- influence of Mackenzie River waters

Fish
- importance of Mackenzie River waters to coastal fish
- freshwater and saltwater mixing, estuary waters
- changes in annual and seasonal abundance of fish

Herring
- important food fish for Inuvialuit, seals and beluga whales

Arctic Char
- excellent source of food, Inuvialuit fish camps
- historic and present methods of fishing
- sport fishing appeal
- life history of fish, seasonal availability

Inconnu, smelt, whitefish and flounder
- food fish, uses, seasonal availability

Waterbirds (Seabirds, Waterfowl)
- importance of Workboat Passage for moulting & staging
- habitat use - staging, moulting, also breeding
- variety of birds
- distance of southern wintering areas from Herschel Island
- sensitivity of birds, of region

Marine Mammals

Ringed Seal
- once the basis of resource harvesting economy, affected by anti-sealing activity
- hunted by polar bear and arctic fox
- very important food source to polar bear
- life history (permanent resident, breeding adults associated with pack ice)

Bearded Seal
- not as common as ringed seal in area
- life history - e.g. bottom feeder, distribution determined by presence of shallow water
- historical and cultural importance (e.g. hide for dog harness, boot soles, lashes)

Harbour Seal
- present in low numbers

Polar Bear
- species of arctic wilderness well known to public
- life history
- use of Herschel Island area for den sites
- associated with pack ice, move with ice
- unified management of an international population, between Inuvialuit Game Council and North Slope Borough Fish and Game Management Committee: "Polar Bear Management Agreement for the Southern Beaufort Sea"
- hunting, quota system

Beluga Whale
- life history - migration patterns
- traditionally used areas, concentration areas
- Inuvialuit whaling camps - cultural significance
- methods of hunting - historic and present
- Beluga Management Plan

Bowhead Whale
- life history - migration patterns
- decimation of population by commercial whaling
- management - International Whaling Commission
- historic Inuvialuit use
- current subsistence hunting

APPENDIX 4

Visitors to Herschel Island

The typical or most frequent Herschel Island tourist visitor is likely to:

Origins and Planning

- be a Canadian from the Northwest Terrritories, or less often from southern Canada
- have made the decision to come to the Herschel Island area before leaving home, probably within the last year
- have found out about Herschel Island through friends or relatives; through adventure travel company literature through aircraft tour company; and finally by reading about it in a magazine or other source
- if a tourist, be travelling as part of a commercial trip

Destination

- be travelling with a commercial group to Herschel Island, either as a side trip from Inuvik as the original destination, or as part of a Firth River trip

Activities and Interests

- come to have an arctic wilderness adventure, see wildlife and experience the cultural heritage and with an interest in flora and fauna
- have a stronger interest in natural or cultural history than the average tourist
- take lots of photographs
- appreciate the wildflowers
- ask questions about native life; did anyone live here long ago, who were they?
- want more information and interpretation on landscape, people, flora and fauna, see the need for printed materials
- want some personal contact or guided activities with staff or interpreters, but want some time to themselves; enjoy contact with friendly staff, but some don't want contact with officials unless necessary,
- be generally satisfied with the trip and consider coming back to see and do more, or at least recommend trip to others

APPENDIX 5

Biographical Notes on Elders

These excerpts are part of the Cultural Study (1990) carried out by the Inuvialuit Social Development Program and conducted by Murielle Nagy. For full biographies of the elders quoted in this manual, see the Qikiqtaruk (Herschel Island) Cultural Study: Final Report.

Ishmael Alunik (born1922)

- born in Old Crow Flats
- parents were Isaac Alunik and Sarah Suluk Kurugaq
- spent time with his grandparents at Niakolik Point along Yukon Coast
- raised three children with Ruth Drusilla Sikrikak
- still does translations of Inuvialuktun for local newspaper

Hope Gordon (born1916)

- born in Alaska
- married Alec Gordon in 1932, raised 14 children
- lives in Aklavik, sings for the drummers of Aklavik

Persis Lennie Gruben (born1918)

- born at Peel river to a Dene family
- went to Banks Island with her family in 1925 and 1929
- went to mission school at Shingle Point in 1930
- married Charlie Gruben

Kathleen Hansen (born 1915)

- her father was an Anglican layman who worked for the Shingle Point mission school
- attended school at Shingle Point
- married Danish trapper/coalminer Han Peterson Hansen in 1937, raised 14 children
- in Aklavik has been involved in teaching drum dancing

Fred Inglangasuk (born 1922)

- lived with his family at Ptarmigan Bay, Niakolkik Point and Whale Bay
- went to school in Aklavik
- went to Herschel Island in 1940s when no one was around anymore
- married Lucy Cockney, raised 10 children in Aklavik

Jimmy Jackson (born1923)

- born at Baillie Island
- lived at Herschel Island until flu epidemic of 1928
- at Herschel Island, Jimmy's neighbour was Kublualuk, a shaman mentioned in the stories
- went to school in Hay River
- married Bella Williams, raised 12 children
- an accomplished carver in whale bone

Christina Klengenburg (born 1915)
- raised at Shingle Point
- married Diamond Klengenberg
- lived at Herschel Island and travelled along the coast

Dora Malegana (born 1916)
- born near Demarcation Point
- father was a storekeeper at Qaniarovik
- married Johnny Malegana with whom she had nine children

Sarah Meyook (born 1925)
- born near Baillie Island
- travelled mainly in Paulatuk and Tuktuyaktuk areas
- married Jonas Meyook, raised fifteen children
- lived at Herschel Island in the 1950s, 60s and 70s
- a gifted storyteller and teacher of Inuvialuktun

Joe Nasogaluak (born 1906)
- born near Baillie Island
- went to school at Kittigazuit
- spent the summer of 1930 at Herschel Island

Albert Oliver (born 1920)
- born near Inuvik
- parents were from Alaska, had come to hunt whales
- married Rachel Kurugaq and had two children

Jean Tardiff (born 1916)
- travelled along the Yukon coast as a child
- lived at Herschel Island
- married Gus Tardiff, had nine children
- Jean lived in Aklavik until her death in August 1990

Peter Thrasher (born 1930)
- his father came from Alaska, and worked for the Roman Catholic ship, the Lady of Lourdes
- married Mary Greenland and had seven children