

The Inuit archaeology of the Quebec Lower North Shore L'archéologie inuit de la Basse-Côte-Nord du Québec

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Article abstract

This paper summarizes a decade of archaeological research demonstrating evidence for periods of year-round Inuit occupation of the Quebec Lower North Shore in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Excavations at several winter villages replicate settlement patterns at sod house sites in central Labrador, including continuation of a traditional Inuit subsistence and domestic economy while incorporating European materials and artifacts. Finds at the Hare Harbour site on Petit Mécatina Island suggest active Inuit collaboration with a European (probably Basque) whaling and fishing station. The Hare Harbour site is a unique early instance of Inuit-European economic and social enterprise. In the early 1700s the Inuit occupation of the Quebec Lower North Shore came to an abrupt end due to economic competition and hostilities with European and Indian groups that forced Inuit to abandon the coast and retreat north to the core area of Inuit settlement on the central Labrador coast.

The Inuit archaeology of the Quebec Lower North Shore

William W. Fitzhugh*

Résumé: L'archéologie inuit de la Basse-Côte-Nord du Québec

Cet article récapitule une décennie de recherches archéologiques qui démontrent l'occupation permanente de la Basse-Côte-Nord du Québec par les Inuit à la fin du XVII^e et au début du XVIII^e siècles. Les résultats des fouilles de plusieurs villages occupés l'hiver ont démontré des modes d'établissement dans des maisons de tourbe similaires à ceux du centre du Labrador, incluant une continuation du mode de subsistance et de l'économie domestique inuit traditionnels incorporant des matériaux et artefacts européens. À l'île du Petit Mécatina, le site de Hare Harbour suggère une collaboration inuit avec une station européenne (probablement basque) de chasse à la baleine et de pêche. Le site de Hare Harbour constitue un exemple unique d'une des premières entreprises socioéconomiques inuit-européennes. Au début des années 1700, l'occupation inuit de la Basse-Côte-Nord s'arrêta brusquement à la suite d'une concurrence économique et d'hostilités avec des Européens et des groupes amérindiens. Les Inuit furent alors contraints d'abandonner la côte et de se retrancher vers le nord, leur territoire d'origine sur la côte centrale du Labrador.

Abstract: The Inuit archaeology of the Quebec Lower North Shore

This paper summarizes a decade of archaeological research demonstrating evidence for periods of year-round Inuit occupation of the Quebec Lower North Shore in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Excavations at several winter villages replicate settlement patterns at sod house sites in central Labrador, including continuation of a traditional Inuit subsistence and domestic economy while incorporating European materials and artifacts. Finds at the Hare Harbour site on Petit Mécatina Island suggest active Inuit collaboration with a European (probably Basque) whaling and fishing station. The Hare Harbour site is a unique early instance of Inuit-European economic and social enterprise. In the early 1700s the Inuit occupation of the Quebec Lower North Shore came to an abrupt end due to economic competition and hostilities with European and Indian groups that forced Inuit to abandon the coast and retreat north to the core area of Inuit settlement on the central Labrador coast.

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Introduction

The dynamics of cultural borders, along with the origins and disappearances of cultures, are among the most interesting topics of anthropological research and are among the most difficult to resolve. This theme is particularly relevant in the culture history of Labrador, Newfoundland, and the northeastern Gulf of St. Lawrence, where Arctic and Subarctic zones overlap and where environmental borders have shifted under changing climate regimes. Cultural responses to these changes have been explored previously in Labrador, by Fitzhugh (1987) and again beginning in 2001, this region being a focus of the Smithsonian's St. Lawrence Gateways Project (Fitzhugh 2006). The present paper explores Inuit cultural expansion at the southern limit of the Arctic-Subarctic transition and the questions of whether, when, and how Labrador Inuit occupied the Quebec Lower North Shore (QLNS).

Charles Martijn and Norman Clermont were the first to initiate scholarly interest in clarifying the history of the little-known "Southern Inuit" (Martijn and Clermont 1980). While Inuit frequently visited southern Labrador, northern Newfoundland, and the Quebec Lower North Shore in the 17th and 18th centuries (Gosling 1911), evidence of the nature and timing of their presence, initially thought to have been as far west as the Mingan Islands (Wintemberg 1939), has been inconclusive. Except for a regional geography (Frenette 1996) and a prehistory (Pintal 1998), QLNS history has been so little studied that a recent book was titled *The Forgotten Labrador* (Belvin 2006). The information gap results from many factors, including a European migratory fishery that left few written records (Innis 1940), late inception of permanent European settlement, and ambivalent national commitments to stewardship from European governments. Labrador Moravian Mission records beginning in 1771 speak only indirectly of Inuit events south of Hamilton Inlet, and by that time the episodic 200-year Inuit use of southern Labrador and the QLNS had already ended (Barkham 1978, 1980; Gosling 1911; Hawkes 1916; Packard 1891; Tanner 1944).

Early accounts make frequent mention of Inuit in southern Labrador and the Strait of Belle Isle (Stopp 2002) but provide few specifics. An exception is Louis Jolliet's description of Inuit sites and people he met in 1694 around Chateau Bay and Cape Charles (Delanglez 1948), which is more detailed but dates one hundred years after Inuit began appearing in the Strait of Belle Isle. His information on QLNS Inuit was obtained second-hand from Innu (Montagnais) who reported Inuit villages as far west as "Mekattina" (probably Gros Mécatina Island, e.g., La Tabatière):

They told us that several Eskimo had wintered in this place. These Eskimo had built three wooden houses coated with mud, one of which was still intact. They had no fire inside, but had a special place for it in the open. In the autumn they store up seals and game for the winter; and when the snow permits it they hunt caribou [...]. Our Mingan Indians found four Eskimo here last spring and defeated them. It is probable that the others had fled, for they have no firearms, although they are expert bowmen [...]. [Later] we entered a cove of the Eskimo River [St. Paul River]. This river is thus called because the Eskimo used to live here. They left because of the fights they had with the St. Malo fishermen (Delanglez 1948: 213, 215).

Reaching latitude 52° at Chateau Bay, Labrador, Jolliet described an abandoned Inuit winter camp:

Landing near a point, we caught sight of an Eskimo house in a little cove with three hills around it. We found that it looked exactly as our Indians had described it to us. It had a room and an anteroom built of logs eight, twelve, and fifteen feet in length, fastened to a beam supported by posts. These logs were set alongside one another, with turf on top and a foot of mud covering them. There was one door to the anteroom on the south end, and two large windows for the room, slanting skyward which served as chimneys in fine weather and apparently as doors too, besides the small door three feet high which was the entrance from the anteroom.

They had made a fire, but just a small one, although the household apparently consisted of more than twenty persons and many dogs. They seem to have spent several winters here. Outside the house chunks of fat of recently killed seals could be seen on all sides; inside, in both rooms, there were many bones: heads of foxes, hares, martens, bears, caribou, seagulls, and ravens. All around the house and in the harbor there were chips of wood and shavings. The remnants of plankings of their biscayner ships showed that they had fashioned them with care and skill. Near the house we saw bricks, tiles, and charcoal, and four or five staves of barrels which had contained lamp-oil. We also found a piece of twill sewn on linen cloth as well as a small fishing net. Inside as well as outside the house, there were iron and wooden nails, some of which were serviceable. The Eskimo had left this place not long ago and all these things led us to believe that they were trading with Europeans (Delanglez 1948: 217-218).

Jolliet's account of this abandoned dwelling could have served as the description of the Inuit houses described below at the Petit Mécatina Island, Little Canso Island, Belles Amours, and Hart Chalet sites. As Jolliet observed, Inuit contacts with Europeans resulted in learning new skills and using new materials and technologies, including the use and construction of European boats even as their traditional subsistence economy and social structure remained largely intact (Kaplan 1985; Woollett 2007: 403; Woollett et al. 2000):

The three [Inuit] Biscayner ships and the *charoüet* at anchor in the roads were a pleasant sight. All these ships were new, with grapnels [anchors] fore and aft, masts, sails, and oars; there was a keg of nails of various kinds, a barrel of black colophony [resin or pitch], an empty barrel and a trunk [...] everything looked new, well painted and in good shape. We were unable to learn where, and how they had obtained all these things, or what they had given in exchange for them (Delanglez 1948: 228).

In summary, when Inuit began to systematically exploit the natural and European-contact resources of the Strait of Belle Isle around 1600, they encountered a disorganized field of European stations and posts whose locations were constantly in flux. European vessels operated independently; company allegiances shifted frequently; claim-jumping and raiding among European outfits was common; and, if records were kept, few survived or have been found and researched. Furthermore, European operators were confronted with an Inuit cat-and-mouse strategy of trading and raiding: Inuit would trade when outnumbered and raid if they sensed vulnerability. As

anticipated by Martijn in 1980, with little archival documentation and no known Inuit oral history, the task of developing a southern Inuit history has fallen largely to archaeology (Auger 1993; Dumais and Poirier 1994; Fitzhugh 2006, Fitzhugh et al. 2011; Lévesque 1968, 1972; Martijn 1980a, 1980b; Rankin 2012; Stopp 1997, 2012). Contrary to the seasonal or sporadic raiding occupation theory (Taylor 1980), our research shows region-wide, year-round—but not necessarily continuous—Inuit occupations of the QLNS between ca. 1650 and 1730.

Notes on methodology

The principal purpose of this paper is to report on Inuit sites and finds by the Gateways Project (2001-2014) and by Martijn (1974) and Dumais and Poirier (1994). Certain caveats are necessary when it comes to interpretations of culture contact and ethnicity and gender assignment. (1) This paper does not explore theoretical issues of cultural contact or details of social and economic relations that can occur at culture borders. Rather we are concerned more with the geography of Inuit settlement on the QLNS and how the Inuit adapted to the presence of Europeans and Indian groups also utilizing this region. (2) Our data do not, at present, permit refinement of Inuit occupation periods between 1650 and 1730. (3) Present work cannot demonstrate long-term Inuit occupancy of the QLNS throughout this period; rather the sites identified may have been used at different times and only for brief periods. (4) Tent rings, graves, and cache piles are not sufficient indicators of year-round Inuit residence, since they may represent seasonal Inuit forays. Instead, permanent residence requires indicators like winter dwellings, winter-use stone fox traps, and winter faunal remains. (5) Determination of Inuit versus European or mixed ethnicity has been a persistent theme in southern Inuit archaeology due to extensive European contact. We assume that presence of traditional Inuit winter house architecture (sleeping benches, floor pavements, entrance passages, cold traps), use of soapstone vessels, and methods of disposal such as breaking or making holes in stone vessels or placing certain objects in house entranceways (an Inuit ritual protecting against spiritual harm) are Inuit indicators. (6) Further, since soapstone vessels are generally associated with Inuit women's activities and since glass beads are common on Inuit but not European clothing and body decoration, such finds can signify the presence of Inuit women. (7) It remains to be seen whether the formal term "Southern Inuit," which implies a degree of cultural autonomy and distinction from "Labrador Inuit," is appropriate for the brief types of occupation currently known from archaeological evidence. For that reason "southern" is used here in the lower case.

A note is needed on European ethnicity at Hare Harbour (Petit Mécatina Island). This site was first occupied in the late 1500s or early 1600s by Basque whalers, who left a rich inventory of underwater archaeological material here and on the adjacent land site (Fitzhugh 2014a; Fitzhugh et al. 2011). A later European component dates from ca. 1700, and from the abundance of Iberian ceramics (Argüelles 2015; Herzog 2011) this occupation, which coincides with an Inuit presence, is believed also to be

Basque (most likely French Basque). Although no contemporary historical record has yet been found, Basque is the most likely identity based on the ceramic evidence.

The excavations reported below leave open many questions about the Inuit occupation of the QLNS. Although taking place during the historical period, we have no archival or historical information that identifies the Inuit sites known from archaeological excavations, or that explains more precisely than Jolliet's description the relationship between the QLNS Inuit and Europeans.

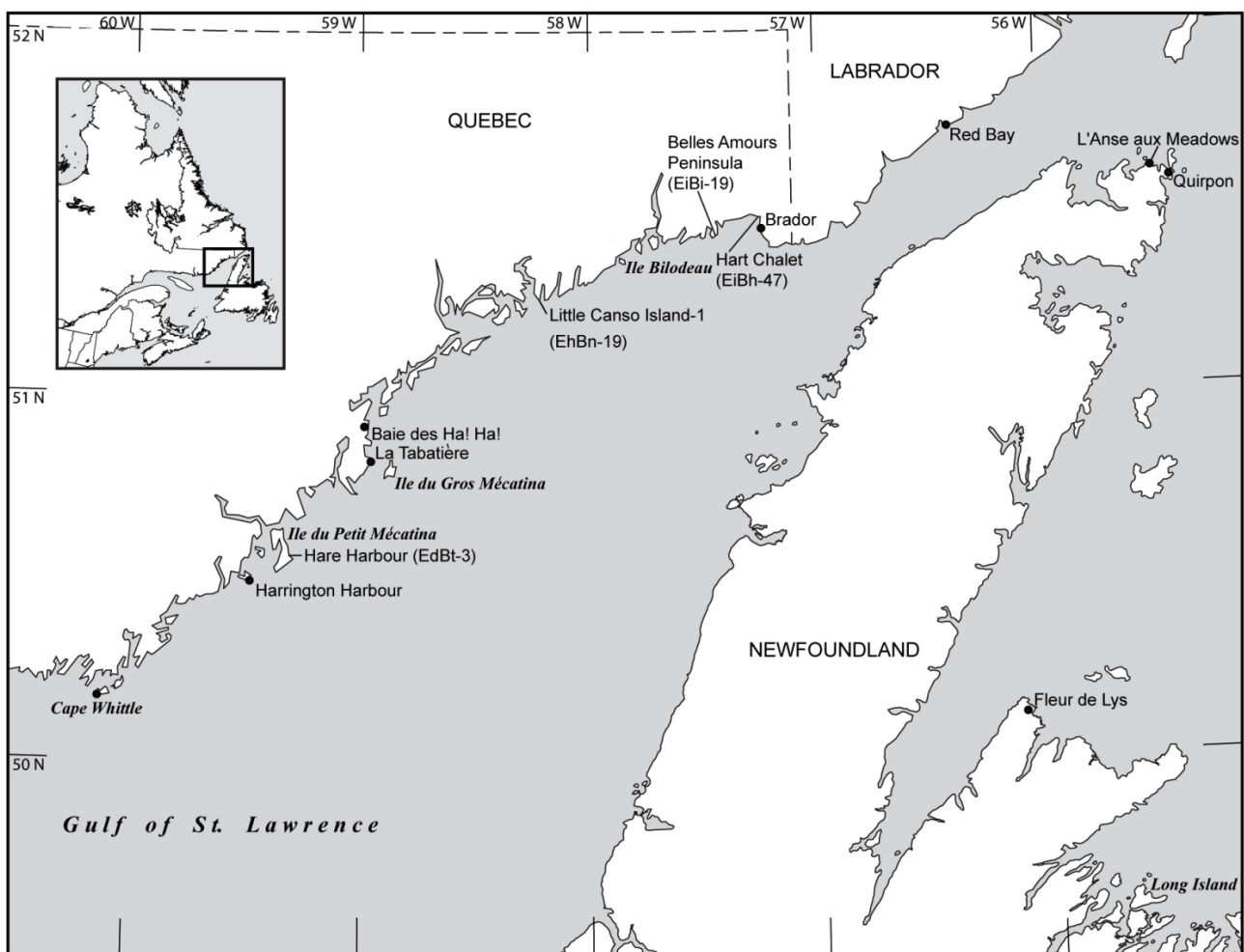


Figure 1. Map of Quebec Lower North Shore with Inuit site locations.

The Gateways Project: Inuit archaeology

From 2001 to 2013 the Smithsonian Gateways Project explored the northeastern Gulf for the entry, meetings, and transmission of cultures. Owing principally to the Labrador Current and its chilling influence as far west as Cape Whittle and Natashquan, the QLNS coast shares a geography (part of the region known as “The Labrador”), climate, and marine fauna similar to central and southern Labrador, making it an ideal “Eskimo” habitat (Fitzhugh 2014a; Martijn and Dorais 2001; Martijn et al.

2003). Gateways surveys were concentrated in outer coast regions between Cape Whittle and Brador (Figure 1).

Little Canso Island

Today, St. Augustine has a small Inuit population whose ancestors came from central Labrador in the 1840s (Charest 1998). Some of them may be descendants of a person known from a grave that is near the St. Augustine fishing settlement of L'Anse au Portage in Jacques Cartier Bay that contained an Inuk woman's skeleton and a stone lamp (Fitzhugh 2006: 59). In 2004, Nicholas Shattler of St. Augustine noted boulder pit seal meat caches at Canso Island-1 (EhBn-7) and Canso Island Tickle-1 (EhBn-10), where we later found stone fox traps with sliding slab doors that are common at food caches near pre-19th century Labrador Inuit villages. In 2011, Shattler identified an Inuit site on Little Canso Island-1 (EhBn-9) with three sod houses (Figure 2). We excavated House 2 and found it to be a classic Labrador Inuit dwelling with a 5 m stone-paved entrance passage, a paved interior floor, raised sleeping benches, and a lintel door and cold trap. The house produced several hundred Inuit and European artifacts (Table 1), and its midden contained harp seal and caribou bones. A caribou tooth from House 2 produced a radiocarbon age of 100 ± 30 years BP (Beta-419380); cal AD 1680-1735, 1755-1760, 1800-1935, and post-1950 (2 sigma).

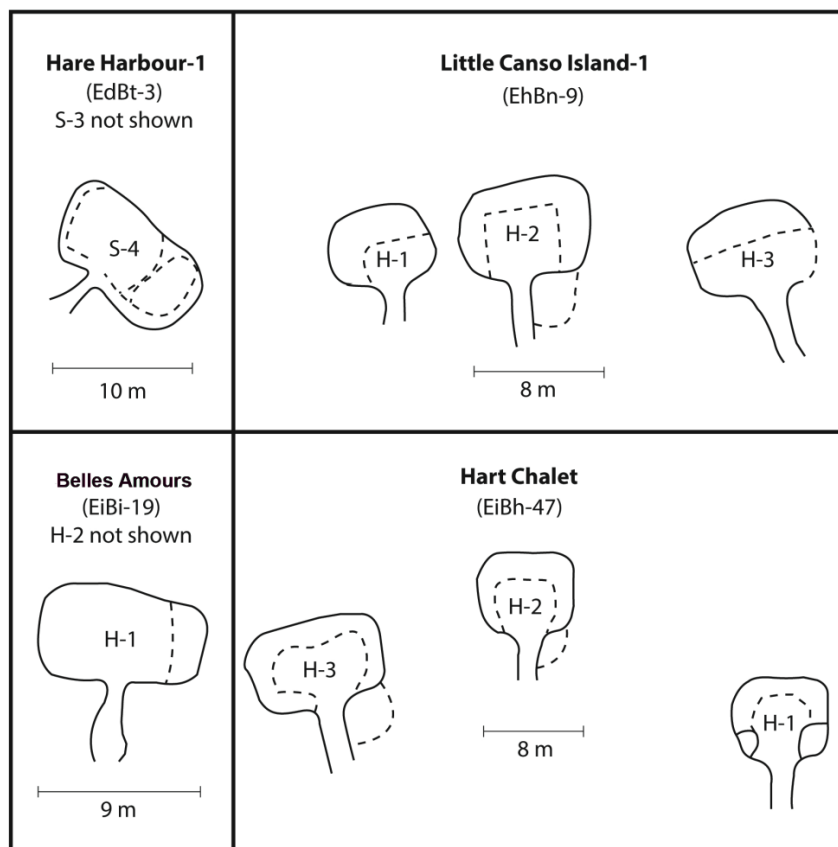


Figure 2. Settlement maps of Hare Harbour-1 (Petit Mécatina Island), Little Canso Island-1, Belles Amours, and Hart Chalet Inuit winter sites.

Belles Amours Peninsula

In 1983, Pierre Dumais and Jean Poirier (1994) were the first to discover Inuit winter sites on the QLNS, at Baie des Belles Amours (EiBi-12; Figure 2). Known as Balsamon or Belsamont on 17th and 18th century maps (DeLanglez 1948: 216), Belles Amours is a low, tundra-covered peninsula between Brador Bay and Middle Bay. Its two Inuit houses were roughly 8 x 10 m and had rear and side sleeping benches and 5-6 m entrance passages (Figure 2). Test pits yielded forged iron nails, two iron harpoon points, glazed earthenware, glass, and an Inuit soapstone cooking pot fragment. Seal and caribou bones were also recovered. In 2007, a Smithsonian team tested the site and recovered nails, sheet iron, earthenware, roof tile, clay pipe stems, and seal bones. The artifacts from 1984 and 2007 are similar to those found at the Hare Harbour site's Basque/European component dated ca. 1700 and at the Hart Chalet site at Brador. We also noted a disturbed Inuit cairn burial in the nearby ledges.

Hart Chalet

In the late 1960s, René Levesque and Clifford Hart tested what they thought was a Basque site in a grassy clearing at Jack's Cove (EiBh-47), a half-km west of the Brador River mouth, finding seal bones, nails, and ceramic roof tiles. At the invitation of Clifford and Florence Hart, who have a cabin at the site, we returned and found the artifacts were from middens outside three Inuit winter dwellings (Figure 2). Excavations in Houses 1 and 2 in 2013 and 2014 produced 87 artifacts, including Normandy stoneware, earthenware, glass stemware, bottle glass, nails, spikes, and tiles as well as Inuit artifacts including soapstone vessel fragments, whalebone sled runners, an ivory needle-case, harpoon foreshafts, iron harpoon and arrow points, a ground stone bead, glass beads, and seal and caribou bones (Table 1). Similar finds were recovered from House 3 in 2015. All three houses had plank floors rather than stone pavements, short entrance passages, and anteroom hearths like those described by Jolliet. The artifact and faunal collections were similar to Little Canso Island and Hare Harbour; clay pipes were absent from Hart Chalet and Little Canso Island. A caribou tooth from House 1 gave a radiocarbon age of 330 ± 30 years BP (Beta 419381); cal AD 1465-1645 (2 sigma). In House 3, a caribou tooth returned a radiocarbon age of 180 ± 30 years BP (Beta 419382); cal AD 1655-1695, 1725-1815, 1835-1840, and 1855-1865 (2 sigma).

Hare Harbour-1

In 2001, we found Basque tiles at Hare Harbour-1 (EdBt-3) near the southern tip of Petit Mécatina Island at a place known to local French-speakers as Baies des Esquimaux. Our initial curiosity about this name made sense after we found Inuit soapstone vessels and glass beads on the floor of the site's Basque cookhouse. Hare Harbour was described in July 1833, by John James Audubon, who took refuge here during a storm and described the location as "the wildest place I ever was in" (Audubon

1897). Eight years later Samuel Robertson of La Tabatière also wrote about Eskimo Bay:

[...] three years ago, at Little Mecatina, in the cove called Esquimeaux Harbour [...] a person [...] found an iron instrument, about eighteen inches in length, of a crooked form, which I conjectured to be a *cerp*, such as were used 300 years ago in Spain [for trimming grape vines]—if my supposition is right, the remains must have been those of the Basques, as the Norman and Breton countries are not vine countries (Robertson 1843: 28).

Robertson mentioned the presence of Basque and Inuit “mounds and tumuli” on the LNS. His *cerp* was more likely a Basque whale flensing tool rather than a vine pruner. To date, this is the extent of historical information known for Hare Harbour, despite searches in Quebec archives (Mémoria Historiens 2013) and Basque archives in Bilbao (Oyarbide 2013). However, soon after beginning to excavate what we thought was simply a Basque site, we discovered it contained Inuit components as well (Figure 4). The Basque components have been reported elsewhere (Fitzhugh 2014a), and a hardwood twig charcoal in one of its hearths returned a radiocarbon age of 230 ± 30 years BP (Beta-419378); cal AD 1640-1680, 1765-1800, and 1940-post 1950 (2 sigma).



Figure 3. Hare Harbour Basque/Inuit site viewed to northwest, 2007. Photo: William Fitzhugh.

Structure 1, Cookhouse: This rectangular 50 m² feature, once tile-roofed, had a three-metre-wide hearth pit and a rough stone pavement on which we found roof tiles, Normandy stoneware, glazed and unglazed earthenware, and large quantities of nails

and spikes (Table 1; Fitzhugh et al. 2004: 45-51). Other finds included glass beads, clay pipes, bottle glass, glass goblet stemware, chips and nodules of European flint, pyrite lumps (fire starters), and fragments of rusted iron knives and other tools. A midden containing earthenware, stoneware, an iron axe and adze, and thousands of broken tiles from multi-year roofing episodes had formed outside the pavement. The ceramics and pipes date to the late 17th to early 18th centuries, and chemical analysis of beads produced dates from ca. 1680-1730 (Herzog and Moreau 2006). The most unusual finds were Inuit soapstone pot and lamp fragments, including a small lamp with a hole cut through its bottom (Figure 5b) and charred oil encrustations on the floor slabs. Glass beads were found in scattered locations, an indication they were lost from clothing. Except for the soapstone, everything was of European origin. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Labrador Inuit clothing often carried extensive beaded decoration, while beads are not common at Basque sites like Red Bay (Grenier et al. 2007) or on European clothing decoration generally. We infer that the structure functioned as a Basque cookhouse or bathhouse operated by Inuit women.

Structure 2, Smithy: A smithy was found at the eastern end of the site. Finds from its paved floor include gun parts, an iron anchor tine and hammer, a sounding weight from a ship's lead line, lead sheeting, bags of rusted nails, slag concretions, clay pipe fragments, barrel staves, and a few ceramic fragments.

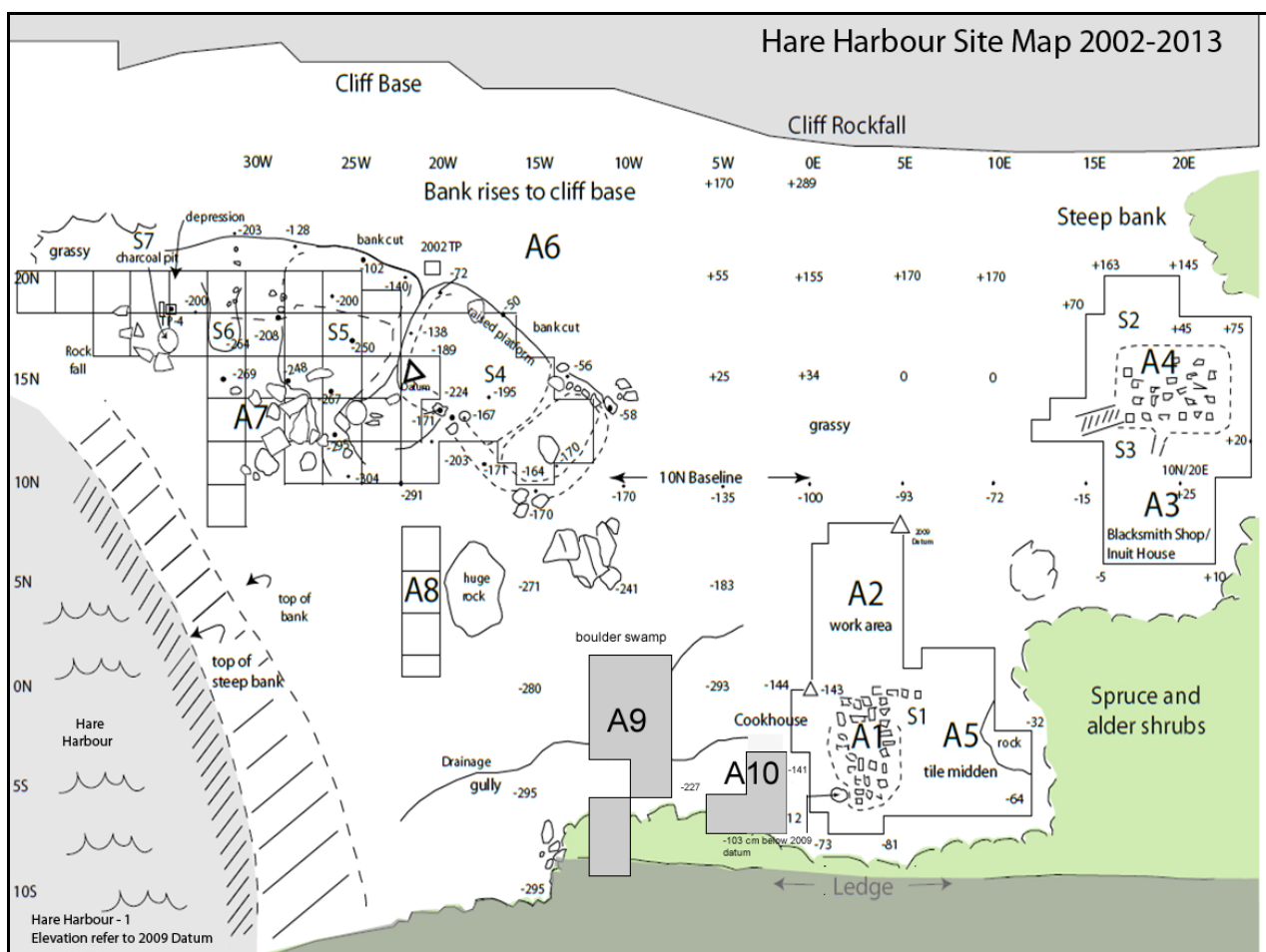


Figure 4. Map of Hare Harbour-1 site.



Figure 5. Hare Harbour-1 soapstone artifacts: a) toy lamp from S3; b) holed lamp from S6; c) fragmented pot from S4/5; d) perforated lamp from S6; e) pot fragment from S4. Photos: W. Fitzhugh and W. Richard.

Structure 3, Burned Inuit Dwelling: Immediately beneath the smithy pavement was a floor composed of charred branches and European barrel staves. A cluster of large stone blocks proved to be the remains of an Inuit winter house lintel doorway with a cold trap and a stone-paved subsurface entrance passage (Fitzhugh 2006: fig. 6.4). Beneath the fallen lintel stones we found a toy Inuit shooting bow, a boy's bow, a girl's miniature (toy) soapstone lamp (Figure 5a), and a European-style toolbox made of sawn planks fastened with bone and iron nails. Patches of unidentifiable calcined bone on the burned house floor suggested the house had been destroyed by a fire that may have consumed its Inuit residents.

Structure 4, Inuit Winter Dwelling: In 2009, the foundation of a second Inuit dwelling was discovered. A doorway in its southwest wall was framed by two fallen stone uprights and a lintel, and its entrance passage was paved with flat slabs, as was the house floor. Its architecture was similar to that of Little Canso houses and Labrador Inuit communal houses dating to ca. 1700 (Figure 6). More than 500 artifacts were recovered, half of which were nails. A steatite cooking pot fragment (Figure 5e) lay on the house floor next to an oil-stained slab. On the house threshold was a large bag of nails and an iron axe (Figure 7f).

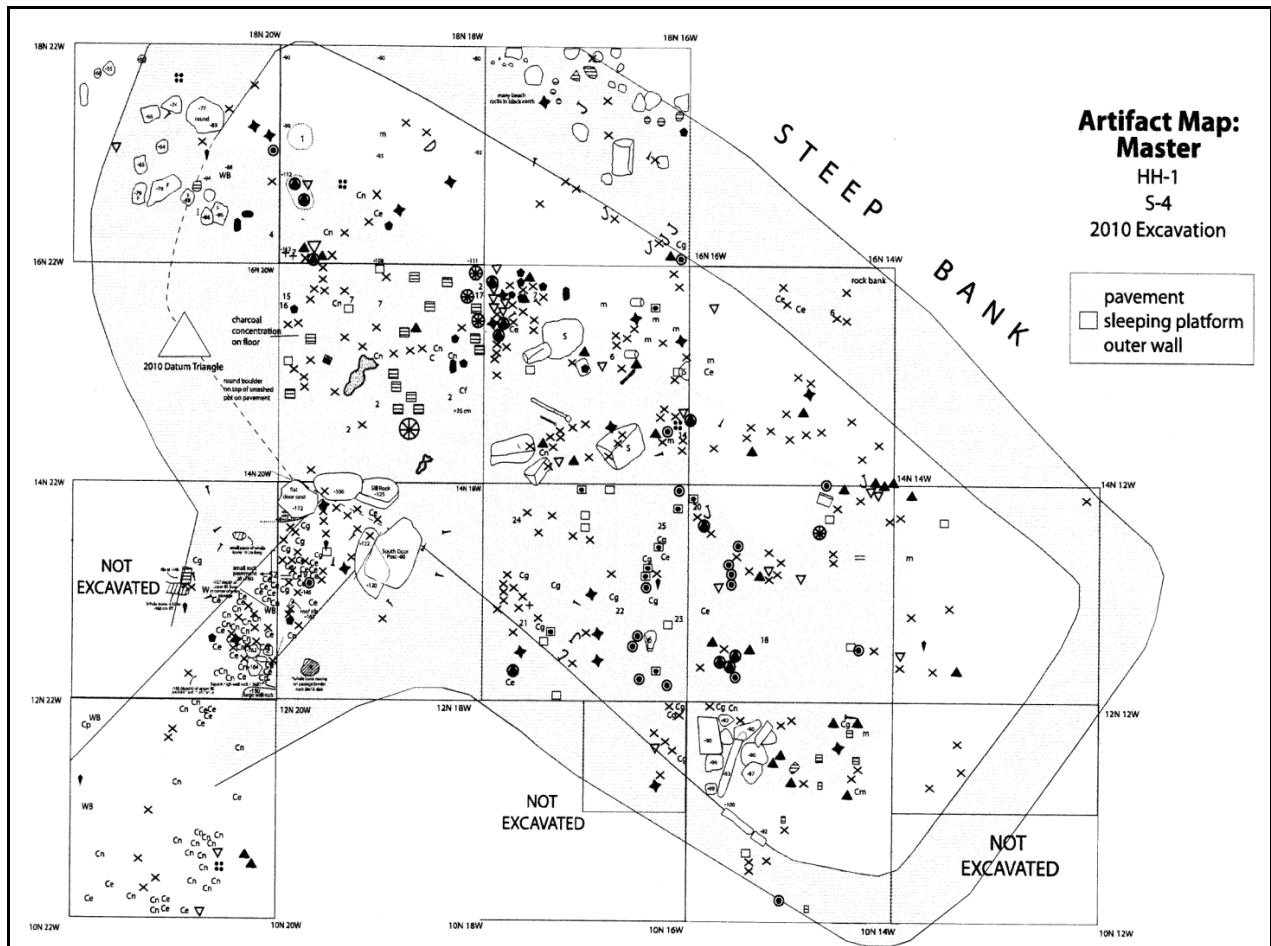


Figure 6. Excavation map with artifact distribution in Structure 4, Hare Harbour-1 site.

Table 1 shows the principal artifact classes recovered from the S4 house and entrance passage. Most types duplicated those from the cookhouse (S1), the smithy (S2), and the destroyed Inuit dwelling (S3). More than half were nails. Like the ceramics, many of the nails were broken, and many were clenched. Iron and organic objects and bones were rarely preserved, except for a few whale bones and baleen. Some roof tiles were used as floor pavement, and flint chips (fire-starting flakes) common in the site's Basque components were rare. Interesting because of their abundance were beads, pipes, homemade lead fishing sinkers, and European navigation sounding leads. Two types of stoneware (grey and brown) were common, as were several types of earthenware: unglazed marmite cooking pot fragments, glazed yellow and greenish vessels, and white glazed faience vessels with painted designs (Herzog 2011). The iron axe was identical to one found in the cookhouse tile midden. Except for a single decomposed ivory or bone arrow foreshaft with a rusted iron blade, all finds were of European manufacture or, like the lead fishing weights, had been refashioned from European materials. Poor preservation of organic remains accounted for the near total absence of traditional Inuit material culture or faunal remains here and in other Hare Harbour land site structures.



Figure 7. Selection of Hare Harbour-1 (HH-1) and Hart Chalet artifacts: a) bottle glass and Normandy stoneware (HH-1, S4); b) iron hook (HH-1, S4); c) clay pipe (HH-1, S4); d) glass beads (HH-1, S1); e) pocketknife made from lead and iron (HH-1, S4); f) iron axe (HH-1, S4); g) ivory needle-case from Hart Chalet (H2); h) lead fishing sinkers and jigger hook weights made from sounding leads (HH-1, S4). Photos: W. Fitzhugh, W. Richard, and A. Herzog.

Like the house architecture, the distribution of artifacts was distinctively Inuit (Figure 6). Finds on the rear sleeping bench were mostly nails from collapsed roof timbers, bench plank fastenings, and pipe fragments. Floors and entrance pavements were the sources of most artifacts. In addition to the nails and axe inside the doorway, a dense cluster of finds came from the front edge of the sleeping bench opposite the door and consisted of nails, a group of homemade lead fishing sinkers, several pipe fragments, and other objects. This location is typically an Inuit man's storage area. Glass beads and pyrite fire starters found around the stained hearth slab suggest Inuit women activity. A wide variety of ceramic fragments—relatively rare inside the house—were present on the entrance passage floor along with nails, pipe fragments, and other trash. A similar assemblage was present in the midden (A8).

Compared with the lightly-occupied and burned S3 dwelling, S4 was intensively occupied. More than half of the finds were nails and ceramic sherds, while other finds represented a host of domestic and subsistence activities utilizing European materials, most of which were also present in the cookhouse and smithy.

Table 1. Major classes of artifact finds at Hart Chalet (EiBh-47), Little Canso Island-1 (EhBn-9), and Hare Harbour-1 (EdBt-3).

Sites	SW	EW	SS	Bead	Pipe	Sound weight	Fish sinker	Flint/Chert	Whet-stone	Pyrites	Axe/Adze	Stem-ware	Bottle glass	Knife blade	Musket ball	Nail	Mica	Total	Notes
Hart Chalet H1, H2	13	7	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	2	0	48	0	87	1
Little Canso Island EhBn-1	39	6	6	1	0	0	1	3	1	2	0	4	0	8	0	60	0	131	2
HH-1 EdBtm 3 S-1 Cookhouse	267	234	2	9	26	0	4	54	5	9	1	2	159	129	0	751	10	1662	3
HH-1 A3, S2 Smithy Bog	0	36	3	0	3	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	4	1	7	0	59	4
HH-1 A3 Smithy	0	11	0	1	7	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	24	1	89	3	143	5
HH-1 A3, S3 Inuit House	0	11	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	69	0	93	6
HH-1 A2 Beach	0	25	0	1	6	0	0	40	1	1	0	0	17	36	0	220	10	357	7
HH-1 A4, S4 Inuit House	22	45	2	9	22	3	8	0	6	20	1	5	11	11	2	276	5	448	8
HH-1 A8 Midden	22	234	0	8	23	0	0	29	0	3	0	9	26	12	2	275	1	644	
HH-1 A9	0	154	0	0	0	0	0	18	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	9	18	205	
HH-1 A10	10	41	2	2	3	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	6	13	82	9
Total	373	804	20	32	99	3	14	147	20	38	3	20	234	228	6	1810	60	3911	

Acronyms: SW= Stoneware, EW= Earthenware, SS= Soapstone

Notes on additional unique types not included in tabulations:

1. Bronze button, pewter spoon handle, sled runners (2), iron washer, iron loop, iron arrow points (2), ivory needlecase, cylindrical stone bead.
2. Whale bone sled runner, harpoon foreshaft, knife handle (2), baleen (7), iron rod (5), whale bone (5), iron tools (2), iron rings (2).
3. Baleen (7), iron rod (5), whale bone (5), iron tools (2), iron rings (2).
4. Wood barrel staves and tub bottoms, soapstone pendant, iron hammer, iron bar stock.
5. Iron hook, soapstone top lamp, sounding lead, yellow glazed plate, iron ring and staple, baleen, gun frison, gunflint, wood bowl.
6. Baleen.
7. Iron oil lamp, baleen (8).
8. Iron axe, key, boat hook and rod, folded copper and lead sheet, lead rod and fish jigger, bone arrow foreshaft with iron point.
9. Porcelain cup-base and foot fragment.

Charcoal Production: A remarkable feature of the S4 dwelling is that its foundation front and side walls were constructed primarily of local coniferous charcoal (rather than of sod or earth) in which sod, earth, rocks, and whale bones were embedded. The charcoal is explained by other activities taking place nearby. Northwest of S5 (an uncompleted Inuit house) we found a charcoal-filled pit (Figure 4, S7) whose stratigraphy indicated multiple fillings, burnings, and excavating episodes of charcoal production. The pit fill contained an oval blue glass bead and roof tile fragments. A few metres to the east, a soapstone lamp with a small hole drilled in its interior surface (Figure 5d) was lying upside-down on a raised hearth platform (S6), recalling the exterior hearths at the Inuit sites described by Jolliet (Delanglez 1948: 213). Nearby, behind the northern corner of House 4, were the remains of two highly-fragmented soapstone cooking pots (Figure 5c), apparently broken purposefully in place behind the S4 house wall. This unusual disposal and the presence of ‘killed’ steatite vessels in the cookhouse (Figure 5b) and on the S6 hearth platform, like the iron axe and nail pile inside the S4 entrance, may indicate a site abandonment ritual, such as observed at Eskimo Island in Hamilton Inlet (Jordan 1978: 181) and in the placement of quartz rocks in the doorways of abandoned Late Dorset sites in northern Labrador.

Charcoal was also being produced in open fires amidst a group of large boulders (A7) near S4. These boulders were heat-spalled and embedded in a half-metre thick matrix of charcoal containing nails, beads, and pieces of Normandy stoneware. Several factors suggest that the Hare Harbour Inuit and Basques were involved in producing this charcoal: the close physical association of the S4 Inuit house with the charcoal facilities; beads and stoneware in the charcoal deposits; association with soapstone vessels; absence of fire-starting chips of European flint; and charcoal fill in the S4 dwelling foundation walls. Presumably, charcoal was either a fuel for Basque shipboard try-works, heating, or food preparation or a product for the European market along with whale oil, timber, and processed codfish.

The S4 Midden: South of the S4 entrance passage a trail of cultural debris broadened into a midden (A8) extending across the terrace front. Here we recovered 644 artifacts (Table 1), of which 234 were earthenware sherds and 275 were nails or nail fragments. Other finds included stoneware, glass beads, clay pipe fragments, pyrite nodules, stemware, bottle glass, iron blade fragments, musket balls, mica, painted faience ware, and two fitting fragments of a Thule culture ground slate flensing knife. The stone knife probably was an Inuit heirloom. The midden contained the same tool types and classes found in the cookhouse, smithy, and S4 dwelling.

Faunal remains

Faunal remains were recovered from Little Canso Island-1 (EhBn-9, House 2) and Hart Chalet (EiBh-47, Houses 1 and 2), but not from Hare Harbour, and were analyzed by Claire St-Germain (Ostéothèque 2015). EhBn-9 produced a sample of 797 bones including the following: cetaceans (5), carnivores (1, possibly black bear), mustelids (1), phocids (60: 1 ring seal, 13 harp seals), 23 artiodactyls, 139 cervids, and 155

woodland caribou. Bones that could not be identified to species included 14 marine mammals, 129 terrestrial mammals, 145 large mammals, 111 medium-size mammals, and two indeterminate specimens. Minimum number of caribou was six or possibly seven, including young and adult animals, with most skeletal elements present. Most seals (31 ear bullas) were harps, including one young animal.

Hart Chalet produced a larger (2,875 bones) and more diverse assemblage: Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*) (126), unidentified fish (357, probably mostly cod); a wide range (but small numbers) of birds including divers and ducks, gulls, alcids, raven, and ptarmigan; mammals including rabbit (1), cetaceans (6), unspecified carnivores (65), dogs or wolves (56), foxes (11), black bears (1), phocids (191), including grey seal (1), ring seal (1), harp seals (7); unspecified cloven hoof mammals (160), unspecified cervids (313), and woodland caribou (492). Bones that could not be further identified included 6 marine, 310 terrestrial, and 352 large mammals, 22 medium-large mammals, one medium mammal, and 299 unidentified mammals. All parts of caribou were represented, including heads and antlers. At least eight caribou, including a young animal, were present, and ages ranged between 2.5 and 5.5 years old. Butchering and skinning marks were present, and all long bones were cracked for marrow extraction. All parts of seals were present, and at least 6 to 7 seals were represented. At least four canids were present: two dogs and two wolves. House 1 (1,556 bones) was dominated by caribou and seals and included a wide range of other mammals and birds, and cod. House 2 fauna (257 bones) was almost exclusively caribou. Caribou would have been mostly fall and winter kills. Harp seals were present in early winter and spring. Ring and grey seals were present locally throughout the year. Ducks, alcids, gulls, and divers were present from spring to fall, and some all winter near open water.

Small amounts of whale bones (but not baleen) were found at both sites, where these materials were used for tool handles, mattock blades, sled runners, and house construction members. A large whale mandible roofed the entrance passage of Harp Chalet House 2. In general, whale bones and vertebrae were not used in house foundations or roofs at Hart Chalet or Little Canso Island, although they were common in the foundations of the Petit Mécatina Island S4 dwelling. On the other hand, large numbers of whale bones were associated with the 16th century Basque occupations at Petit Mécatina Island's underwater and land sites, and the land sites contained significant amounts of baleen. Absence of baleen at Petit Mécatina Island's S4 dwelling and A8 midden suggests that baleen whales were not being hunted at the time of the 17th century Basque/Inuit occupation at this site. While these QLNS sites contain large amounts of fall season harp seal remains, they differ from Labrador Inuit sites in their equally high dependence on fall and winter caribou (Woollett 2007, 2010).

Analysis and interpretation

Inuit occupation of the Quebec Lower North Shore

The data described above substantially advance the previous sketchy knowledge of Inuit presence on the QLNS. Winter village sites are now known in Brador (three houses), Belles Amours (two houses and a grave), Jacques Cartier Bay (three houses and cache and trap structures), and Petit Mécatina Island (two houses). In addition Inuit villages mentioned in historical literature but not yet found archaeologically are located in Ha! Ha! Bay east of La Tabatière (Stopp 2002: 77) and in the St. Paul and St. Augustine archipelagos (Martijn 1974). It would appear that during the late 17th and early 18th centuries, Inuit villages existed in almost every modern settlement niche between Blanc Sablon and Cape Whittle. Such a distribution establishes the QLNS Inuit as a short-lived demographic and territorial subdivision of the Labrador Inuit. Jolliet's data from 1694 mentions recent Innu attacks on Inuit around Gros Mécatina Island, possibly involving the Inuit village in Ha! Ha! Bay (Delanglez 1948: 213). Thirty years later, François Martel de Brouague, superintendent of the Courtemanche's establishment at Brador Bay, reported a 1728 incident in which Indians and French attacked an Inuit settlement near Mécatina (probably Gros Mécatina Island), this attack resulting in the deaths of two Inuit families and the capture of a woman and a young boy (Brouague 1923[1729]: 384). Hostilities were probably a constant concern during the Inuit occupation of the QLNS.

The archaeological sites and finds sampled or excavated suggest dates similar to those known from historical records. Inuit architecture resembles the early communal house phase dwellings of late 17th century Labrador Inuit (Jordan and Kaplan 1978, 1980; Kaplan 1985), although with shorter entrance passages, exterior hearths, and wood-paved sleeping benches and floors. As in Labrador, each of the four known Inuit villages had two or three houses, rear and side sleeping benches, and short entrance passages with external hearths beside the entranceway. Most dwellings would have accommodated two extended families. Jolliet commented that houses in Inuit villages he visited near Chateau Bay housed 20 people and many dogs (Delanglez 1948: 218). Such a settlement pattern would produce a village of ca. 40-60 persons. If all 10 of the Inuit houses currently known from QLNS sites were occupied at the same time, the regional population would have been ca. 200, and with sites expected in Ha! Ha! Bay and St. Paul, this figure might be doubled, indicating a maximum potential QLNS Inuit population of ca. 400-500 individuals. Indeed, Brouague (1923[1729]: 384) mentioned that on September 20 1728, his men saw 300 to 400 Inuit at île au Bois (in Blanc Sablon Bay).

The archaeological collections recovered from the villages so far excavated contain similar material assemblages. Precise dating is a subject of ongoing research (see Herzog 2011; Fitzhugh et al. 2011); chemical analysis of glass beads and ceramics suggest ca. 1650-1730 (Herzog and Moreau 2006). This range agrees with the historical evidence for the region and is compatible with dates for clay pipes, stoneware, and

earthenware (Argüelles 2015). Poor preservation at Hare Harbour precluded the recovery of bone and ivory implements commonly associated with traditional Inuit culture, although rare finds of bone scrapers and snow knives, sled runners, a few harpoon and arrow shafts, wooden bow parts, and an ivory needle-case have been recovered. Soapstone vessel fragments, glass beads, house types, and perhaps pyrite nodule fire starters are by far the most common indicators of Inuit site identity in these southern regions where organic preservation is poor and European material culture is abundant and complicates assignment of ethnicity (e.g., Auger 1993; Stopp 2002; Woollett 2007).

Unresolved issues

A second issue in southern Inuit research is the question of Inuit responses to Europeans and how these interactions influenced the Inuit culture, perhaps in ways that differed from what occurred in central and northern Labrador. By the late 1700s, the QLNS Inuit lacked resources like ivory, baleen, eiderdown, and some fur and hide resources that were still available in northern Labrador and sustained a strong middleman trade with Europeans in the south. By contrast, European materials were available directly by trade or plunder along the Quebec coast, resulting in a structure of Inuit-European interaction unlike that of Labrador. Some of these issues are illuminated by finds from the Hare Harbour site, where quantities of nails, ceramics, and fishing gear are much larger than at contemporary Labrador sites.

Cooking, heating, and lighting with soapstone vessels seem to have been as entrenched in QLNS Inuit life as was the case further north. Yet the disposal of broken or “killed” soapstone vessels at southern sites raises interesting questions. As usual, many fragments show evidence of charred fat, scarring and polishing, mending repairs, and re-purposing for other tasks. A toy soapstone lamp was recovered from the burned Hare Harbour S3 dwelling, and fragments of soapstone pendants were recovered in the S4 midden and outside S3. In addition to evidence of domestic use, some soapstone finds, such as the perforated lamps from the S1 cookhouse, the Feature 7 perforated hearth vessel, and the cache of broken cooking pots behind S4, suggest ritual activity. Could the unusual context of these finds—holed or broken—be related to the intrusion into Inuit society of European earthenware cooking pots? Were European domestic wares changing Inuit household rituals and traditions with respect to soapstone vessels, which had religious significance in Inuit society? Was the disposal of soapstone vessels in S1 and S4 related to events that left the iron axe and nail cache in the S4 entrance? And might all of this have some bearing on the final abandonment of Hare Harbour, which coincided with a large rock fall from the cliff that buried some of the site’s features and middens?

An Inuit-Basque joint venture?

Another issue raised by the Hare Harbour finds relates to gender and Inuit-Basque contemporaneity and relationships. Basques first used Hare Harbour as a whaling station in the late 16th century, but there is no evidence of Inuit presence at that time. However, in ca. 1650-1730 Basque activities resumed, this time with an emphasis on cod fishing rather than whaling. From archaeological and written records we assume this was a largely male operation; and yet the presence of Inuit soapstone vessels and beads on the floor of the S1 Basque cookhouse cannot be explained without there being a presence of Inuit women. These soapstone finds, including a lamp with a “killed” hole, could not plausibly have resulted from Basque fishermen scavenging fragments from Inuit vessels or from Basque use of soapstone lamps. Further, the nine beads found here are most likely losses from Inuit women’s clothing, earrings, or facial ornaments. Beads were not part of Basque clothing or material inventory.

The Inuit house (S3) with its burned barrel-stave floor and children’s toys suggests that an Inuit family living in this winter house had their house burned, and that immediately following its destruction a Basque smithy was erected upon the ashes. Finds on the smithy floor (no beads or soapstone, but numerous clay pipes) are probably contemporaneous with the cookhouse. The well-preserved S4 Inuit dwelling shares many artifact types with the cookhouse and the smithy (axes, lead-line weight, clay pipes, similar ceramic types), and S4 and its midden produced Inuit-adapted lead fishing gear. These finds provide reasonable assurance of contemporaneity between the Basque and Inuit structures and lead to the hypothesis that Inuit here were engaged with the Basques in a face-to-face commercial relationship, as opposed to the more remote connections suggested by the limited European materials found at Little Canso Island, Belles Amours, and Hart Chalet. Inuit at Hare Harbour may also have participated in charcoal production for shipboard cooking and soup warming using charcoal-fired chaffing vessels found at the underwater site, if not for rendering of whale blubber or for export to Europe, at the same time that Inuit were using masses of charcoal to build the S4 house foundation.

Alternative interpretations may exist for specific details, but it is difficult to imagine how the large volume and diversity of European materials found in the Hare Harbour S4 and midden could have fallen into Inuit hands without an active partnership. Scavenging is not an option for acquiring such valuable and fragile European materials. Basques could not have used Inuit stone vessels for heating or light (they had their own iron oil lamps), and Inuit could not have acquired the amounts of lead, beads, and intact ceramic vessels without direct exchange, presumably as compensation for goods (fish, charcoal?) or services (cooking/washing/site protection?). Nails can be scavenged for producing iron implements (found at many Labrador Inuit sites), but unbroken pots would not be found in quantity at abandoned European sites. Similarly, it is difficult to explain fragments of several soapstone pots and lamps, and glass beads on the floor of a tile-roofed cookhouse that contained the same assemblage as the Inuit House S4 and midden, without direct Inuit-Basque interaction. In fact, there would have been strong incentives for such cooperation on

both sides. Basques would have benefitted from Inuit assistance in their fishery, at their washhouse, and perhaps also in charcoal and timber production, the latter being best represented in the Hare Harbour underwater collections that contain large masses of wood chips (Fitzhugh et al. 2011). Inuit collaboration provided the Basques with an additional advantage—protecting their facilities and fishing rights from European competitors and claim-jumpers when Basques returned to Europe in the fall and winter. For such services, the Inuit could have received quantities of European goods and materials in addition to access to wooden boats and ship gear, iron hardware like nails and knives, and possibly even muskets (musket balls were common in S4). Evidence of such collaboration is not evident in finds from Hart Chalet, Belles Amours, and Little Canso sites, whose collections are more compatible with a trade or scavenging interpretation.

Inuit decline and retreat

Samuel Robertson was aware of Inuit history on the QLNS and in his 1841 lecture to the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec recalled events leading to Inuit abandonment and expulsion:

[The Eskimo] maintained their conquest along the Gulf Shore until about the year 1600 [*sic*, 1700], when the Mountaineers [Innu], having received firearms from the French [...] soon turned the scale [...] and the Esquimaux were forced to give ground, retiring downwards to the Straits, and concentrating themselves on Esquimaux Island, about one mile from the house of the late Mr. N. Lloyd, of St. Paul's. Here they fortified themselves in a camp, with walls composed of stone and turf, with a ditch outside, in circuit more than half a mile; which remains almost [intact] to this day. In this fort they maintained themselves till about the year 1640, when they were assaulted by the Mountaineers aided by the French, and either totally extirpated or expelled; the few that escaped retiring to the North, outside of the Strait of Belle Isle. In this assault, it is said, more than 1,000 were slain, and by the quantity of human bones scattered over the island, I should think the number not over-rated. After the expulsion from the Gulf Shores, they occasionally made predatory excursions against the French—coming into the Straits, early in the spring, in skin-boats—burning fishing rooms, boats, etc., killing the guardians or making them fly. Twice they assaulted Bradore during the time of the Courtmanches; in one of which they lost four hundred men; indeed, they continued this warfare until three years before the conquest [1763]; when, after destroying several fishing vessel stands along the Straits, they were repulsed by some sealing crews, at Pennoyer River (Robertson 1843: 45-46).

[...] Mr. Lloyd, of St. Paul's River, told me that he knew an old Montaineer [Innu], who related to him that in his youth, he had often formed one of these [raiding] parties [...] and described the manner of their assaults on the Esquimaux encampment [on the Lower North Shore] [...] [as it] always ended with the destruction of the whole [camp] without regard to sex or age. These wars only ceased when the Mountaineers were converted to Christianity by the Jesuits about the year 1720 (Robertson 1843: 41).

Robertson or his informants probably overestimated the numbers of Inuit involved, although the QLNS population could have been augmented by northerners. In any case, despite the positive relationship that seems to have existed at Hare Harbour, the Inuit

occupation of the QLNS ended in the early or mid-18th century. At that time the Inuit numbered only a few hundred people, who were made vulnerable by geographic isolation from their more numerous Labrador relatives. A further liability, one not experienced by the Inuit of northern Labrador, was that the QLNS Inuit were on the wrong side of the flourishing European-Inuit trade system that fueled the economy and social life of Labrador Coast Inuit. As the European presence increased, Inuit living on the QLNS already had access to European goods but had fewer economic resources to barter. Baleen, ivory, polar bear skins, eiderdown, and other products that sustained the social and economic hierarchies of Labrador Coast Inuit were missing or no longer available due to extirpation of walrus and whales, leaving as their main resources harp seal skins, fish, oil, and possibly charcoal, for which they were already in competition with a growing group of European actors. Their other assets—knowledge of subsistence methods, service work, and year-round presence—were insufficient to ensure long-term survival in the competitive and dangerous world the Gulf of St. Lawrence had become.

The 1703 Delisle map of the Courtemanche fort in Brador shows a village with scores of Innu tents. The growing engagement of Innu with Europeans and the rivalries and external economic forces resulting from rapidly-shifting alliances between European operators in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Strait of Belle Isle must have been another factor in the decline of the southern Inuit. Like their Groswater and Dorset predecessors, the southern Inuit occupied the QLNS during a cold climate regime (Fitzhugh 2014b) that provided suitable marine mammal necessities but exposed them to considerable new social and cross-cultural pressures. Incentivized by the presence of European trade, small groups of Labrador Inuit successfully colonized the QLNS for at least several decades. The sites so far do not indicate lengthy occupations, and some like Little Canso Island seem to have been briefly occupied. In at least one instance, at Hare Harbour, Inuit broke new ground in forging a constructive relationship with Basque fishermen—whose days on the LNS were also numbered—a century before harmony could be achieved with the coming of the Moravians.

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