

# On Common Ground

## Nunavik Inuit in Nunatsiavut, 1763–1942

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Article abstract

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## **On Common Ground: Nunavik Inuit in Nunatsiavut, 1763–1942**

*Barnett Richling*

### **Abstract**

“On Common Ground” presents findings of research commissioned by Makivik Corporation in support of Nunavik Inuit claims to rights and interests in neighbouring Nunatsiavut, claims recognized in the 2006 Nunavik Inuit Land Claim Agreement. The original study examined Nunavimmiut patterns of use and occupation in Labrador during the pre- and post-contact eras. Here, the scope is limited to the period after 1763 and focuses on an area spanning eastern Ungava Bay and the Torngat coast. The paper argues that these patterns encompass linked social and economic dimensions of a centuries-deep adaptation to the different subsistence potentials found across the area and are not simply consequences of the rise of colonial institutions.

### **Introduction**

Rooted in age-old use and occupation of their ancestral homelands, Indigenous peoples’ inherent right in land was recognized in practice for the first time in Inuit territory under the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. Ushering in the era of comprehensive claims in Canada, the ground-breaking settlement benefited two different populations: Cree to the south of the 55th parallel, Inuit to the north in

Arctic Quebec, a vast region now known as Nunavik (Ülgen, 2008a). But their new treaty left Nunavik's people with unfinished business: a claim to lands across the provincial border in northern Labrador where, three decades later, Nunatsiavut would come into being. Settlement of this cross-claim, initially filed in 1992, was finally achieved in 2006 under terms of the Nunavik Inuit Land Claim Agreement, articles 20 and 30. While negotiations on that pact were unfolding, Makivik Corporation, representing the Inuit of Arctic Quebec, commissioned the author to provide an independent scholarly opinion of pre- and post-contact evidence underpinning their case. This paper is a much-revised abridgement of the original 170-page report, "Inuit Land Use and Occupation in the Québec-Labrador Peninsula" (2002). Limited in scope to the period after 1763, the year British imperial rule in this region began,<sup>1</sup> it draws in good part on Hudson's Bay Company and Moravian Mission sources to document patterns of Nunavik Inuit land use and occupation in an expanse stretching from the eastern half of Ungava Bay to the Labrador Sea coastline between Okak and Killiniq (see Figure 1). The evidence presented is used to argue that these patterns encompass social and economic dimensions of a centuries-deep adaptation to the different subsistence potentials found across this area. In other words, the patterns of occupation and land use are not simply consequences of the rise of colonial institutions after 1763.

### **Early Observations, 1763–1830**

In 1773, two sloops reconnoitred portions of the northern Labrador Sea coastline to gather intelligence on its inhabitants, topographical features, and resources. HMS *Otter*, with British naval officer Lt. Roger Curtis in command, travelled as far as Kivertlok, near where the Moravians' Okak mission station was to stand in three years' time. Missionary Jens Haven, aboard the sloop *George*, reached Nachvak Fjord, in the lee of the Torngat Mountains, some 200 km farther to the northwest. In addition to recording the names and locations of settlements visited along the way, Haven learned of numerous others from information

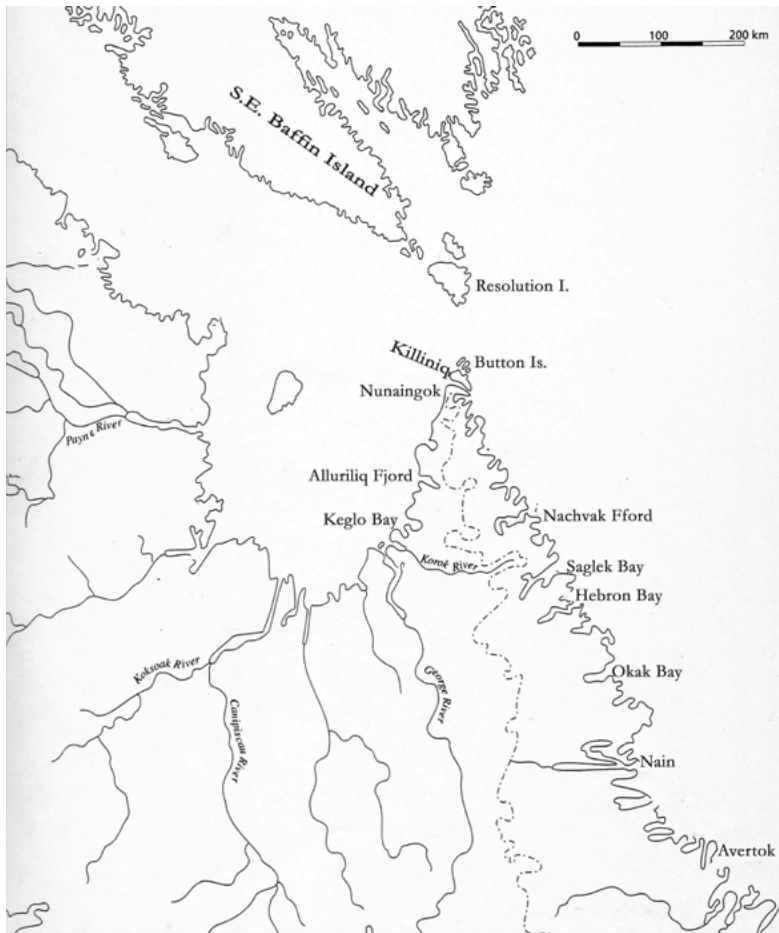


Figure 1. Study area.<sup>2</sup>

furnished by a pair of Inuit companions, both of whom hailed from Ungava Bay. In total, some 20 settlement areas were identified, a dozen on the length of coast from Avertok (near present-day Hopedale) to Killiniq, the rest scattered around Ungava Bay, across the Hudson Strait shore, and down the eastern side of Hudson Bay. This last, the missionary was told, “is where the innuits cease . . . and then a little bit off the land Indians begin” (Haven, 1773: 102). Their surveys also yielded population estimates. The number came to roughly 3,000

altogether, just over half — 1,660 people by Haven's calculations — spread along Nunavik's coastlines (Curtis, 1774: 387; Haven, 1773: 103). At 300 inhabitants, Aiviktok, on Hudson Strait, was the most populous locale, followed by distant Avertok with 270. Waters adjacent to each were prime whaling grounds, doubtless a factor contributing to their size (Haven, 1773; Taylor, 1974). Nullatartok, later site of the Moravians' Ramah mission, fell at the opposite end of the scale with only 30 inhabitants. Just one settlement area, Kangiva, was identified in eastern Ungava Bay. Described at the time as a six-day journey from Killiniq, modern sources put it somewhere between Alluriliq Fjord and the estuary of the George River. An estimated 170 people lived there at the time (Haven, 1773: 100; Taylor, 1975: 273).

The anthropological literature on late pre- and post-contact Inuit life in Quebec-Labrador, and elsewhere in Canada's North, refers to the inhabitants of places such as Kangiva and Nullatartok as local bands: semi-nomadic, socio-territorial groups whose members are known collectively as the people of such-and-such a place — Kangivamiut, for instance, literally, those who live near the land (Saladin D'Anglure, 1984: 477). Nuclear or extended families linked by ties of kinship, friendship, and economic cooperation and reciprocity comprised the band's core. Group composition itself was flexible, the number of households remaining together as a co-residential unit tending to fluctuate with the phases of the annual subsistence round. The result was a cycle of dispersals into smaller units and aggregations into larger ones geared to seasonal (and geographic) wildlife variability and to the workforce required to harvest these resources. In their early days in Labrador, Moravian missionaries observed temporary tent encampments in late spring whose typical size was only a fraction of semi-permanent settlements in late fall, the first associated with open-water sealing, an individualized pursuit, the second with whaling, an activity often requiring collaboration of two or more local bands (Taylor, 1974: 15–19). Okak's diarist described the communal distribution of meat that followed landing of a baleen (Greenland right) whale in 1778 by crews drawn from the station and two nearby settlements, Kivalek and Uivak:

The Harpooners cut off large pieces of the whale's flesh, of which they portion out to the people present, as the shares designed for their families, then the rest is cut off by other men & boys and brought to land and given to the women, who surround it with a wall of stones to preserve it from the dogs and other ravenous beasts. . . . We could not help remarking that if 150 Europeans were employed about dividing some great spoil, if they had no law to prevent quarrels, they could not do it without fighting and quarrelling [but] here, not even an improper word was used. (LAC/OD, 3 and 6 Nov. 1778)

Similar scenes doubtless occurred at Aiviktok, on the Hudson Strait shore, as they did at Avertok and other spots up and down the Labrador Sea coast where large whales were hunted into the early 1800s.

Without means to exert effective authority beyond the household level, a band's capacity to control its home turf was "weak and indefinite" (Smith, 1991: 111; Taylor, 1974: 80–84). Even in the absence of a shared conception of proprietorship over land and resources, however, conflict between groups over their use was far from inevitable. "The idea of restricting the pursuit of game is repugnant to the Eskimo, who hold that food belongs to everyone," Ernest Hawkes wrote in 1916, adding that "This does not preclude them from having intricate laws for the division of game, when hunting in parties" (1916: 25). A century later, Louis Jacques Dorais echoed Hawkes's observation: "Far from being closed units, the Inuit hunting territories were . . . open to everybody, provided the new arrivals behaved correctly and cooperated with the local population," the very situation described in the preceding passage about the 1778 joint whale hunt near Okak (Dorais, 1997: 16). Widespread kin- and friendship-based networks lay at the heart of these practices and sentiments, and these connections drew individuals and bands together in cooperative and reciprocal economic relations and in social solidarity (Graburn, 1969). Inuit are known to have engaged in conflict with Europeans over land and its resources, as

happened at sealing places in southern Labrador's Strait of Belle Isle region in the 1600s (Castro, 2018; Pope, 2015; Trudel, 1978; see also Fossett, 2001). However, historical sources give no indication that local groups contested use and occupation among themselves (e.g., Saladin d'Anglure, 1984; Taylor, 1974). In fact, they imply the opposite: interior and coastal areas were, by custom, common ground, and doubtless had been for centuries past.

Archaeological evidence indicates that long-distance travel spanning the length and breadth of northern Quebec–Labrador predated the contact era (e.g., Labrèche, 2012; Plumet and Gangloff, 1991). Early mention of the practice in the written record is found in Jens Haven's account of Inuit settlements beyond Nachvak Fjord, the final stop of his 1773 reconnaissance. "One may divide the Esk. who live on the East coast of Labradore into 2 parts," he reported, "for those of the S. seldom go farther N. than Kangertlorsoak [Hebron Bay] and those from the N. seldom lower to the S. than Nagvak. Seglek lies between Kangertlorsoak and Nagvak and are [*sic*] visited in the Winter in Sledges from the people of both these places" (Haven, 1773: 103). Nothing is said about the purpose(s) of these travels; judging by recorded observations from later decades, however, they doubtless included visiting family and friends, arranging marriages, bartering for necessities and exotic items alike, and joining in the hunt for whales, seals, and other game. In a separate passage the missionary refers to use of interconnected river valleys through the interior plateau to reach Ungava Bay. Kangiqsualujjuaq, a "Bay broader than one can see over," was the usual destination.<sup>3</sup> "Nagvacks and the Kangivaks often meet one another" here in early autumn to intercept herds of caribou migrating to their winter ranges inland (Haven, 1773: 100). Hunters coming from the Torngat coast would have followed the Koroc or Palmer rivers, while the George River, which flows into Kangiqsualujjuaq, brought others from more southerly locations. A full century later this practice remained intact. A missionary at the Moravians' Ramah station remarked on the later than usual return of caribou hunters who had summered in the interior "in company with a party of heathen natives from Nachvak.

They had wandered over to the George River in the Kangiva district,” the writer explained, but “had found great difficulty in making their way home, on account of freshly-fallen snow, and the absence of reindeer” (PA 31, 1878: 27).

A more detailed picture of Inuit mobility across the region emerged from Benjamin Kohlmeister and George Kmoch’s 1811 expedition to Ungava Bay, a Moravian-backed undertaking that made the missionary duo the first Europeans to explore and map this precinct. Accompanied by four Inuit families, they sailed northwest from Okak in late June, navigated the tricky waters of McLelan Strait, then followed the bay’s eastern shoreline to the mouth of the Koksoak (South) River, some 150 kms beyond Kangiqsualujjuaq. By their reckoning, the river’s lower course was the “outermost western boundary of the Ungava country.” With the season growing late, it was also the end point of their journey. From start to finish, the party covered roughly 2,000 kms, reaching Okak again in early October (Kohlmeister and Kmoch, 1814: 64, 83).

All along their route the travellers came upon seasonal camps whose inhabitants hailed from a variety of locales, including the distant Aiviktok, Haven’s “famous” whaling place on Hudson Strait and home to several families summering on the Koksoak. None of this group had seen white people before, the missionaries wrote, but following their initial “astonishment . . . took courage, and handled us, to discover whether we were made of the same material with themselves” (1814: 72). In the expedition’s early going the explorers visited an encampment of seven tents in Saglek Bay, five occupied by locals, the rest from Killiniq. Several days later they came upon a group camped on the western edge of Killiniq whose usual winter base was Saglek, and another whose members were from Kangiva. Some of the latter, the authors remarked, “had formerly dwelt in different places north of Okkak, and were known to the missionaries in former times . . . .” Things were little different once they entered Ungava Bay itself, a “whole company” of Inuit from Killiniq arriving at the estuary of the George River only days after the travellers reached the same spot. They soon learned that



boatloads of people from both coasts regularly converged on the caribou hunting grounds to be found between here and the Koksoak River, as did others who came overland from the missions at Nain and Okak. "All the Esquimaux declared that [the Koksoak] was the best provisions place in the whole country, and they constantly flock to it from all parts every summer, frequently protracting their stay during the winter." Permanent occupation of the area was deemed out of the question, however, the Inuit purportedly fearful of encounters with "land-Indians" (Innu) who sometimes made their way out to salt water from their territories deep in the interior (Kohlmeister and Kmoch, 1814: 36, 47, 53, 59, 71, 76).

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Had the two missionaries travelled in the colder months they probably would have encountered Inuit from eastern Ungava Bay encamped along the northern reaches of the Labrador Sea coast. The Moravians called these people *Nordländern* (Northlanders), a catch-all for inhabitants of *Heiden Plätzen*, heathen places on both sides of the *Torngats* where conversion to Christianity had not taken hold. Mission records from Okak, and later Hebron, make mention of the fairly regular appearance of Northlanders at the two stations, usually to trade pelts and other products of the hunt. Some returned home once their business was finished, while others, according to these sources, remained behind for months, sometimes longer, joining other Northlanders at their outlying winter camps. In 1845, missionary Jonathan Mentzel offered this observation of visitors from *Kangiqsualujjuaq*, regulars at the Hebron store: "The Esquimaux are a wandering tribe," he began:

... in summer they are engaged in the rein-deer [i.e., caribou] hunt, often till the month of October. In November and December, they are usually occupying their winter habitations. In January they not infrequently set out to bring wares to this place, on which occasions they travel

with their wives and families. From this place they proceed to Nachvak or Saeglek where they remain till the end of April . . . (PA 18, 1846: 81–82)

“To visit the heathen at Kangertluluksoak [*sic*] . . . would be to little purpose,” Mentzel wrote five years later by way of reply to inquiries regarding the dispatch of missionaries to that quarter. He went on to explain, “From January to April, none would be found at home. There are at most six families, and these visit us [at Hebron] every year, either in January or February, for the purpose of traffic [i.e., trade]; scarcely one family remains at home. Hence, they go to Nachvak, or to its neighbourhood, and remain there till April, after which they return home” (PA 20, 1851: 188–89). In a similar vein, a Hebron diary entry from 1850 described a large party of visitors from Ungava Bay, nearly 60 men, women, and children in all: “After they left here, their first stop is Saeglek where they often stay for weeks. Because they are home everywhere, they do not have to rush” (LAC/HD, Jan. 1850: 47,317). And this, from the same station, written a dozen years later:

These heathen who, previous to the removal of the people at Saeglek, for the purpose of joining the congregation of believers at Hebron [in 1848], had often resided there [Saglek] for some time, and buried several of their dead, had specially come from Kangiva in this early season of the year, to sacrifice at their graves, and thus to allure, with the aid of their dead friends, seals and reindeer which, according to their statement, seemed constantly to avoid the danger of being captured by them. (PA 24, 1863: 544)

In the decades immediately following the founding of the Nain and Okak missions (in 1771 and 1776), acquiring tobacco, metal implements, firearms, and other manufactures was clearly an incentive for yearly expeditions from Ungava Bay and remote parts of northern Nunatsiavut. But ancestors of today’s Nunavik Inuit had other, equally important reasons for travelling these considerable distances that were

indistinguishable from those behind the mobility of their ancestors over many centuries. These were central to their use and occupation of land and sea (e.g., Guemple, 1972; Rowley 1985). By all accounts, the most fundamental of these purposes was “long distance harvesting” (Fossett, 2001: 71), mobility necessitated by the uneven distribution of wildlife across the region, or to stave off hunger, or worse, when natural occurrences disrupted subsistence activities in a particular locality. This explains caribou hunters from the relatively caribou-poor Torngat coast traversing the interior to intercept large herds passing through the Kangiqsualujjuaq area in early autumn, as it does Inuit from Kangiva wintering on Saglek Bay and Nachvak Fjord where seals and walrus were more reliably plentiful. Access to another group’s territory depended on cultivation and maintenance of wide-ranging networks of family and friends: personal kindreds, in anthropological jargon. Put simply, making friends and allies of strangers (and potential foes) was a means to mitigate risk in an arctic environment rife with risk, not least the threat of starvation. In Nelson Graburn’s words, “It behoves Eskimos . . . to extend their circle . . . as far as possible for these were the people to be relied upon” in the face of danger, no less in pursuit of opportunity (1969: 64–65). In this light, Kangivamiut trade with Europeans is best seen as a post-contact accretion to a far-older pattern of use and occupation across the boundary in Nunatsiavut, a pattern, in turn, rooted in the subsistence potentials of the eastern Ungava Bay environment. The remainder of the present section examines this position in depth.

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A good place to start is with the spatial distribution of Inuit settlement areas identified in the 1773 Curtis and Haven surveys. Between them the men identified a dozen localities, including Killiniq, fronting the Labrador Sea, and another six in what is now Nunavik lying eastward of Cap Nouvelle-France, on Hudson Strait: two on the strait, three in western Ungava Bay, and just one, Kangiva, on the bay’s

opposite shores, the most thinly settled part of the entire region. Available archaeological findings point to a repeat of this pattern going back to pre-contact times. Known sites in eastern Ungava Bay are clustered around Alluriliq Fjord and, just to its south, Keglo Bay. But compared to the scope of occupation at places such as Tuvaaluk to the west or Saglek Bay in the east, the 400+ kms of shoreline from Killiniq to Leaf River amounted to little more than a marginal settlement area (e.g., Gendron and Pinard, 2000: 129–30; Plumet and Gangloff, 1991: 209. See Figure 2).

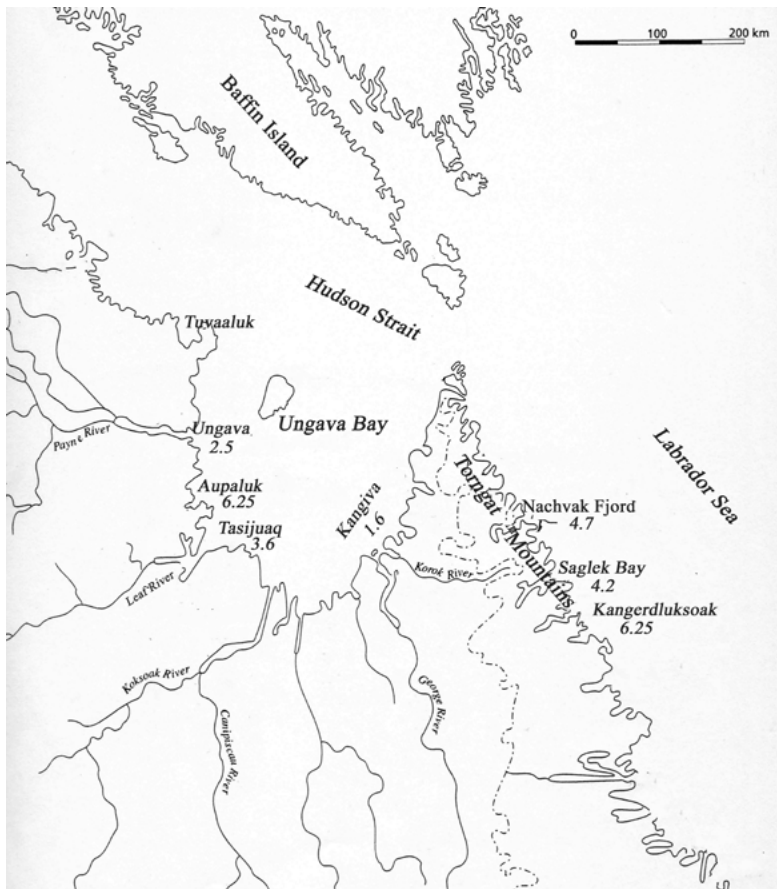


Figure 2. Winter shoreline population densities per kilometre of shoreline.

Kangiva stands out in another important respect: the number of people occupying the area relative to the size of the area itself. Pulling together various details from Curtis and Haven's investigatory missions and from Moravian records, Garth Taylor estimated that 170 Inuit lived there, just over twice the figure for Nachvak Fjord (80), 70 per cent more than for Saglek Bay (100), and about 40 per cent higher than the mean population size of 120 for all 12 settlement areas from Avertok to Killiniq. When looked at in terms of the ratio of people to land occupied at each locale, however, a different picture emerges. In view of the primacy of marine resources in early post-contact Inuit life, Taylor used the length of shoreline in the different localities in his calculations of population density. A "reasonable approximation" of this metric, he explained, "can be obtained by measuring the length of the coastal strip of fast ice in each area," a method whose justification rested with the observation that "almost the entire annual cycle was spent within an area . . . covered in the winter season with relatively permanent fast ice" (Taylor, 1975: 273).<sup>4</sup> At Kangiva, 170 inhabitants occupied roughly 105 kms of shoreline, a density of 1.6 persons per kilometre. Across the Torngats, the local ratios were 4.7/km at Nachvak, 4.2/km at Saglek, and 6.25/km at Kangerdluksoak (Hebron Fjord), where 120 people inhabited just over 19 kms of shoreline. The disparities are nearly as sharp when Kangiva is compared with settlement areas on the opposite side of Ungava Bay. At Tasiujaq, its nearest neighbour to the west, 200 people lived on 56 km of shoreline, or about 3.6 persons per kilometre. Farther on, Aupaluk's ratio was 6.25/km, and at Ungava, Haven's name for the Payne Bay area, it was 2.5 per kilometre (Taylor, 1975: 273–75).

Despite adjoining one of the Labrador Peninsula's best caribou hunting grounds, Kangiva encompassed a stretch of shoreline whose waters were devoid of large whales. Moreover, local topographical and climatological features made sea mammal harvesting in winter less productive, and less safe, than at Saglek and Nachvak, areas where hunting on the frozen sea and in open leads benefited from the presence of sheltering islands, deep bays, and more stable ice (Plumet and

Gangloff, 1991: 206–07). Given these constraints, it is understandable that the Torngat coast played an important part in Kangivamiut livelihood. Contrary to the general impression left by Moravian observers, then, trade with Europeans was neither the sole nor necessarily the main reason for the regular wintertime movement of families eastward from Kangiva. Rather, it was an integral aspect of their subsistence adaptation, long-distance harvesting boosting their chances of acquiring sufficient food and fuel to carry them through the harshest of seasons. And while yearly expeditions offered them no guarantee of full bellies and oil lamps, at least they could bank on the companionability and support of the people among whom they sojourned. “One must wonder how the Esquimaux agree so well together in all circumstances,” an admiring missionary noted in Nain’s station diary. “When they find that their friends, whom they visit, have no provisions in their Tent, they patiently suffer hunger in fellowship, and no one speaks an unkind word to the other about it” (LAC/ND, 28 Apr. 1781).

### **Shifting Patterns, 1830–1942**

Expanding the mission field beyond their initial trio of stations — Nain, Okak, and Hopedale (est. 1782) — was already on the Moravian agenda in the closing years of the eighteenth century. Their aim was to reach Inuit living northwest of Okak, a part of Quebec–Labrador believed to be more heavily populated than the section where missions already stood. Inhabitants of these outlying areas, including Kangiva, began visiting the stations to trade and socialize after Nain’s establishment, but very few were willing to stay behind as congregants. Early in the new century, a group of Northlanders stopping at Okak explained how “they were sorry they lived such a great way off, and could not well forsake their native country, but assured us if we could only come and make a settlement amongst them, many of their countrymen would be converted” (PA 3, 1805: 447). To that end they furnished an account of the whereabouts and size of their home districts, together with locations of adjacent rivers, bays, and serviceable anchorages.

When church officials in Germany authorized Kohlmeister and Kmoch's exploratory voyage, an expedition first proposed in the late 1790s, their overriding ambition was to find a site suitable for extending mission work into this uncharted precinct (PA 2, 1800: 468).

The explorers identified the outlets of the George and the Koksoak rivers as particularly promising for the purpose (Kohlmeister and Kmoch, 1814: 58, 73). Before proceeding, however, the Moravians' London-based mission agency, the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel (hereafter, SFG), prudently sought Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) consent to settle the region on the grounds that Ungava Bay lay within the limits of Rupert's Land, the storied fur trader's vast commercial *fiefdom* (MUNL/SFG Minutes, 15 Apr. 1813). The firm had yet to establish itself here or elsewhere in the study area, a step it eventually took in 1830 with the founding of Fort Chimo, on the lower Koksoak River. In the meantime, the favourable account given in the missionary-explorers' published journal induced its principals to invite their SFG counterparts to join them in opening up the area together. Negotiations between the parties soon faltered over the sticky issue of the latter's intention to trade on its own account, something it had been doing at its other stations all along (MUNL/SFG Minutes, 8 May 1815; see also Danker, 2002: 45–46).<sup>5</sup>

Designs on Ungava Bay thwarted, at least for the time being, the Moravians were not long in formulating plan B, setting their sights on expanding into the Torngat coast (MUNL/SFG Minutes, 28 Apr. 1818). But 15 years were to pass before a fourth station was up and running here, the growing threat of population pressure at Okak finally bringing the matter to a head. Situated at Kangerdluksoak, the Great Bay, Hebron opened its doors in 1830, the same year that Fort Chimo was established by the HBC. Its sister station to the southeast was then home to nearly 400 people. But within two years, 70 of Okak's inhabitants had chosen to relocate to the new mission, as had a dozen or so from Nain. At the end of its first decade the settlement boasted a population of 200, and by 1849 the figure had increased to 350, most of the growth coming from the surrounding Kangerdluksoak

and Napartok areas (MUNL/SFG Minutes, 8 Oct. 1827, PA 12, 1831: 59, 253; PA 12, 1832: 255; PA 19, 1849: 225).

Hebron quickly replaced Okak as the principal meeting place of missionaries and Northlanders who came to barter, keep up contacts with residents, and, now and then, accept Christianity. Among them were people from eastern Ungava Bay who continued making the long journey through the interior despite the HBC's presence on the Koksoak. Hebron station diaries from the period are peppered with references to these winter and springtime visitors:

On the 1st of May 3 sleds from Killinek loaded with furs arrived here to trade, under the leadership of one named Nikkeroak. Only one of these northerners visited a brother, the others, as soon as they traded goods, left immediately. (LAC/HD, 1 May 1832: 46,239)

Towards evening, several northerners arrived here to trade — Kannigaktannak [?] and Nukapiak [?] from Saeglek, and Atatkjoak [?] with two others from Killinek. [?] had a lot to relate about his travels by sled to Ungava last winter . . . (LAC/HD, 25 Jan. 1834: 46,344)

On the 5th, on three loaded sleds, 10 northerners — 7 men and 3 women — arrived here to trade. Among them was Atatasoak [?], already known to us, who had earlier lived in Killinek but who now chooses his residence, with a few Eskimo — several who were here with him — deep in the interior of the land at Kangertluluaksoak Bay. (LAC/HD, 5 Jan. 1835: 46,385)

On the 8th and 9th, distant-living heathens visited us, namely the very old Nukeroak from Nachvak, and Atatasoak, who as usual together with a small party undertook to come here from his very distant residence at Kangertluluaksoak. (LAC/HD, 8–9 Jan. 1836: 46,431)

On the 30th, Mataksoak [?], who lives very far from here in the interior, arrived with some companions, as he does every year, to trade fox pelts and caribou skins. (LAC/HD, 30 Jan. 1837: 46,482)



The Moravians welcomed all comers, taking every opportunity to offer a few words about Jesus once the day's business was complete. Naturally enough, the loss of business to the mission rankled the HBC's employees on Ungava Bay, chief trader John McLean complaining in a homeward report that "the natives proceed [to Hebron] with the produce of their Winter Hunts, a fact which they do not deny, declaring at the same time that they would prefer trading with us, but that they find it more convenient to visit the Moravians" (HBCA/CRD, 1837–38: 14). Even as they "admit that our Goods are cheaper," a bitter McLean added, they also:

say that the Brethren represent them to be of inferior quality. Now this is false, our goods are in every respect equal to theirs. I know not whether the propagation of falsehood be consistent with the propagation of Christianity according to the Moravian Creed. Be that as it may, such conduct does not accord with the profession of evangelical rectitude they publish in the World as the Rule of Life. (HBCA/CRD, 1837–38: 14–14d)

The Moravian's latest station was not a magnet for everyone. Numerous inhabitants of the coast beyond Hebron preferred to trade at Fort Chimo rather than endure the missionaries' preaching, no less the off-the-cuff evangelizing of local converts. Some even quit the area altogether, relocating to Ungava Bay (e.g., PA 12, 1832: 255; 16, 1842: 174). "You will be sorry to hear that the Esquimaux population living to the north of us is diminishing from year to year," missionary Jonathan Mentzel wrote at the time, a change said to be furthest along in the Nachvak Fjord area where the population had fallen from an estimated 300 in the 1820s to no more than 30 during the new station's second decade. "For some years, after we came to reside at [Hebron], Mentzel's letter continues, "we had from eight to ten sledges visiting us in the winter for purposes of traffic. Last winter, there were only four, three of which came from Saeglek. The tide, I

suspect, sets toward the Ungava country” (PA 16, 1841: 98–99). His colleague Frederick Erdman described the same state of affairs a few years later. On questioning a Northlander who hailed from Alluriliq Fjord, the missionary determined that “the number of inhabitants between this place and [that] . . . to be short of 200. This is remarkable, since five and twenty years ago there were at Saeglek alone above 200 Esquimaux and 300 at Nachvak, making in all about 800 to the southward of Ablorialik [*sic*]. Of this total,” Erdman concluded, “certainly not one-third have removed to this settlement or Okkak” (PA 17, 1844: 177).

Gauging the reliability of these numbers is difficult. Still, it seems unlikely that what decline had occurred was due solely to a general shift towards Ungava Bay. Sickness and starvation doubtless played a hand, claiming an appreciable human toll. Illustrating the point, Nicol Finlayson, Fort Chimo’s first chief trader, described how “a slight cold,” probably influenza, going around the post in July 1834 quickly spread among a group of visiting Inuit, many of whom had never encountered white people before. The disease “carried off seven in the course of 24 hours. . . . The poor people went away in a great hurry without burying their dead except two on which they threw a few stones. . . . They have a Superstitious dread of this River as they have often both starved and died on it” (HBCA/CRD, 1833–35: 6). Seven years later, the Moravians learned of numerous deaths in the Killiniq area owing to the concurrence of a disastrous fall hunt and outbreak of “vicious illnesses.” Not above casting aspersions on their trans-mountain rivals, one of Hebron’s missionaries wrote to the church’s mission department in Germany that “It was supposed that the infection had been communicated by means of old clothes, which [the victims] had received in barter from the Europeans on the Koksoak river” (PA 16, 1841: 174). Relying of necessity on mostly second-hand reports, mission annals tend to offer sketchier accounts of sickness, accidents, and other misfortunes in remote localities than is the case for similar episodes at the stations (e.g., Scheffel, 1980). That the cost in Inuit lives was substantial, however, is beyond question. During his stay at Fort

Chimo in the early 1880s, naturalist Lucien Turner estimated “there were but few families, some seven in all, embracing a population of less than 40 souls” along the coast between Hebron and Killiniq; from Killiniq west to Kangertluluaksoak, he added, “only about eight families live. These with the George river Innu it comprise less than 50 individuals” (Turner, 1979: 12). By Haven’s count a century earlier, three times as many inhabited the eastern Ungava Bay shore alone, one hundred at Killiniq, another 170 at Kangiva (Taylor, 1975: 274).

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Despite the mission’s competition, Fort Chimo managed to make its presence felt among Inuit dispersed across a sizable territory: furs and other country produce reached the Koksoak directly from both sides of Ungava Bay, from the Labrador Sea coast, and through intermediaries, from locales scattered along the eastern Hudson Strait shore (e.g., HBCA/CRD, 1833: 3; 1833–35: 11; Trudel, 1991: 99). From the outset, however, the district’s trade was beset by operational problems that boded ill for its longevity. The writing was on the wall as early as 1834 when Finlayson warned his superiors that “Until there is a regular mode of supplying this place adopted neither Indians nor Esquimaux will put any confidence in us” (cited in Davies, 1963: 240–41). After enduring a decade of middling returns, bouts of privation, and persistent transportation and supply problems, in 1843 the company’s directors pulled the plug on their Ungava Bay venture, ordering closure of Fort Chimo and its False River and George River (Siveright Fort) satellites, opened in 1833 and 1838, respectively (HBCA/CPJ, 1843: 63d; CRD, 1840–41: 3d–4; Morantz, 2016: 36–37). Traffic bound for the store at Hebron picked up almost at once. Station diaries and other writings from the 1840s–60s chronicle the comings and goings of small trading parties and entire families from eastern Nunavik as well as from outlying sections of the Torngat coast:

During these days a sled party of 52 persons from the Bay Kangerluluaksoak arrived here and a few days later on the [illegible] frozen [illegible] one of 13 persons made the difficult trip to trade. (LAC/HD, Jan. 1845: 47,014)

From the beginning to beyond the middle of February we again had visits from [illegible] sled parties, about 30 persons together from Ungava, Koksoak, as well as Kangerluluaksoak who, as usual, came to trade. (LAC/HD, Feb. 1847: 47,133)

At the end of April and the middle of May arrived here from the North several sled parties from Nachvak, Kangivak, and from Killinek. . . . They only came to trade and still had no desire to join the believers. Most of them had already been here often . . . . (LAC/HD, Apr./May 1852: 47,448)

As the cold was so severe, and long continued, we feared that not many Northlanders would visit us, especially as so many came last year, and not a few of them had perished. However, a great number came from the various places known to us between Nachvak and Ungava, but the most from the neighbourhood of the latter place. (PA 22, 1858: 325)

... several ... small parties of northern heathens from Kangiva arrived again, bringing their trade goods. All had already been here frequently and were, therefore, not unknown. We did not fail [to tell them] God's decree for salvation . . . but they stood by their usual statement that they already believed in Jesus . . . . (LAC/HD, Feb. 1861: 47,771)

Several heathen sled parties arrived here on the 1st of February, who lived in the area along the river Koksoak, together with 31 others, most of whom had already been here before. . . . Again 6 heathen sled parties arrived . . . on the 13th of February, mostly from Kangiva, Ungava and Koksoak, numbering 105 persons (LAC/HD, 1 and 13 Feb. 1865: 47,962–64).

Along with their goods for trade, Northlanders brought news of recent happenings in their home areas. A good deal of what they related found its way into Hebron's annals, making these records the principal documentary source on conditions east and west of the Torngats after Fort Chimo's closure. Famines factored prominently. In February 1847, missionaries learned of a disastrous famine that left 40 dead in the country west of the Koksoak during the previous autumn. Only weeks later, three of the families who conveyed these ill tidings returned to Hebron from Saglek "to find escape from hunger which had . . . started there among our people" and soon precipitated a mass influx of aspiring converts, 90 people in total. "You will rejoice with us when you hear that Saaglek is no longer a heathen settlement," diarist Jonathan Mentzel wrote of the famine and resulting exodus. "Saaglek is now a fishing place for our people, nor are any heathen allowed to reside there" (LAC/HD, Feb. 1847: 47,133; Mar. 1847: 47,139; PA 19, 1848: 224, 131). In the winter of 1855–56, the entire region, east and west, including Hebron, was plagued by scarcity causing a degree of misery, by one account, "without example in the history of the Mission in Labrador." "Not only was the considerable stock of provisions in our store consumed but it proved even insufficient to preserve our people from the pangs of hunger, few of them being accustomed to live on bread and flour. As natives of a northern region, they cannot exist, at least for a long period, without animal food" (PA 22, 1856: 109). Northlanders who came to the station "lament about hunger and buy as many provisions as they can get," a diary entry reported; "14 persons from Ungava Bay stayed here, afraid to go back because they anticipated that they would meet death from hunger. . . . How many of them reached their land again, God knows. Later we heard that several families had died" (LAC/HD, 14 Feb. 1856: 47,555).

Whatever else it represented to them, people looked to the mission station as a safe haven in hard times, a state of affairs the Moravians were at moral pains to discourage, qualms about promoting an arctic version of *rice Christianity* aside. On joining Hebron's congregation soon after its founding, a widow expressed relief at having escaped the "great hunger" then overwhelming Killiniq, her home place (LAC/HD,

Oct. 1835: 46,418). The situation at Fort Chimo had been different, corporate policy generally leaving little room for charity in the face of similar distress. Telling is chief trader McLean's callous post journal complaint that "the number of half-starved Esquimaux that keep prowling around the Establishment is very annoying," this despite his Christmas day admission that local conditions had reduced them to a "most wretched state of destitution." "I pity the poor wretches," he noted weeks earlier, "tho' I can do nothing to relieve them" (HBCA/CPJ, 1841: 34). Little wonder that many harbored ill feelings towards the HBC. As an Inuk from Kangertluluaksoak explained during a stopover at Hebron, it was better to undertake the weeks-long trip through the interior than the far shorter one to the Koksoak River because the Europeans at the fort "are hostile to the Eskimos" (LAC/HD, Jan. 1836: 46,431).

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After a 23-year hiatus, the Hudson's Bay Company resuscitated operations on Ungava Bay, reopening Fort Chimo and George River in 1866. Switching from sail to steam-powered ships played a prominent part in the move by vastly improving the speed and reliability with which supplies reached the posts and thereby strengthening their competitive position at a moment when the Moravians were reviving plans to settle on the bay (Cooke, 1964; Morantz, 2016; MUNL/SFG Minutes, Mar. 1863).<sup>6</sup> Before the decade was out, moreover, HBC management upped the ante by planting a pair of establishments on the Torngat coast: Fort Lampson, on Saglek Bay, in 1867 and Nachvak Post the following year. As was the case in 1830 when Fort Chimo first opened, these stores were meant to intercept Inuit furs headed to Hebron. And in settling amid two of the region's most productive sea mammal hunting grounds, they were also well placed to grab a share of the missions' lucrative trade in train oil.

Hebron's missionaries reacted to arrival of their new neighbours with predictable indignation, informing the SFG that the "evil influence thereby exercised on our people was speedily perceptible" (PA 27,

1868: 13): “the whole winter no northerner visited here,” the diarist reported, pessimistic about the future. “[T]he plan of the Hudson’s Bay Company to completely cut off northern heathens from us through both their trade stations . . . was unfortunately quite successful” (LAC/HD, 3 Jan. 1869: 48,138). As events transpired, the writer’s fears turned out to be overblown. Neither of the new posts gained much traction in the years to come. Lampson experienced the worst of it. Plagued by supply problems, including one in 1871 that prompted temporary closure there and at Nachvak, the HBC failed to divert any but a fraction of Hebron-bound trade (HBCA/CPJ, 3 Apr. 1871; HBCA/LPJ, Sept. 1874: 19d; PA 28, 1872: 351). Making matters worse, in 1874 the Moravians opened their own satellite store and fishing station right next door, a move that further weakened Lampson’s already tenuous situation. It closed for good four years later, a decade after corporate colours first flew over Saglek Bay.

Nachvak, located hundreds of kilometres northwest of Hebron, fared somewhat better than Lampson, and was a welcome alternative for the roughly 100 Northlanders who wintered in the area (PA 27, 1868: 14). Before long the Moravians intruded on the new post’s isolation, marking the Labrador mission’s centennial by opening Ramah, on Nullatartok Bay, a sparsely populated section of coast situated a modest distance from Nachvak to the southeast. As the following statement suggests, the decision to build this station was influenced as much, perhaps more, by commercial considerations as it was by evangelical zeal: “hitherto the heathen Eskimo from the north brought their furs to Hebron, and heard the Gospel preached . . . now they come no farther south than the nearest trading station, where they dispose of their goods . . . it is thus necessary that a station be formed in a suitable locality, higher up than Saeglek” (PA 27, 1869: 225). In the end, however, it was a different, more formidable opponent that sealed Nachvak’s fate, its 1905 closure coming as the HBC faced growing competition on Ungava Bay from Révillon Frères, newly arrived on the lower Koksoak two years earlier. Until that point Fort Chimo’s second incarnation had proved more durable than the first, its fortunes benefiting

from an improved system of supply, economic diversification, and a marked drop in the trade lost to the Moravians (Morantz, 2016).

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What turned out to be the penultimate chapter in their long-running rivalry with the Hudson's Bay Company began in 1904 when the Moravians established Killiniq, their northernmost station, at Port Burwell, on the eponymous island's southwestern shore. Plans to expand beyond Ramah had been on the drawing board for some time, the move seen as a final step to bring into the fold an estimated 80 or so Northlanders still scattered along the Nunatsiavut coastline northwest of Nachvak. Unlike the mainland's Komaktorvik Fjord, an early candidate for what was to be their eighth and last settlement, their eventual choice sat adjacent to prime seal, beluga, and walrus hunting grounds. No less important, it contained Killiniq's lone navigable harbour (Hutton, 1912: 39; MacGregor, 1910: 85; MUNL/SFG Minutes, Oct. 1894). "[E]xperience having amply shown that the trade and the mission should be in one hand and have one motive," the SFG struck a deal with Newfoundland merchants Job Brothers to acquire the premises it owned and operated at Burwell since 1898 (PA 5 ns, 1904: 543; MUNL/SFG Minutes, Apr. 1903). With Nachvak Post all but finished, the new station gave every indication of being well-situated to yield a harvest of souls for Jesus and, it was hoped, some much-needed revenues for the mission's coffers, ailing now for some years. As the last missionary at Ramah nicely summed up the prospects, "there will be no store and no regular European traders anywhere between Hebron and Killinek. And where the stores are, there, or near there, the natives will and do congregate as a rule" (PA 7 ns, 1908: 6). And so they did. Before its inaugural year was out the population in and around the settlement stood at nearly 50, and by 1908, one year after Ramah's closure, this population had doubled (MacGregor, 1910: 80).



Over the centuries, the game-rich waters surrounding Killiniq drew Inuit hunters from east and west, much as the caribou herds in the George River drainage had done. This wide-ranging pattern of land use, described by Jens Haven in the 1770s, continued into the twentieth century with the addition of a trapping component chiefly centred on the eastern shores of Ungava Bay (e.g., Val, 1976: 121; Vezinet, 1982: 133). Beginning in the late 1880s, Port Burwell became a place to trade with Europeans, too. Samuel Blandford, a Newfoundland sealing captain and merchant, had run a small business there before selling out to Job Brothers. When the premises passed into Moravian hands, 20 Inuit families were listed in their predecessor's account books (Burgess, 1967: 20–21; MacGregor, 1910: 85–86). Contemporaneous records from Fort Chimo rarely mention traffic heading from there to the new mission, although in 1905, just a year after the station's founding, trader Duncan Matheson informed his superiors that “some 4 or 5 families of Esquimaux have gone to [Killiniq], enticed by the Moravian Missionaries by promises of houses and high prices for their hunts” (HBCA/CRD, 1904–06: 4). Station annals provide more detail. One year later, for example, missionary Walter Perrett reported that:

We have lost some of the George River contingent, Nicodemus and his family, also his mother and her two younger children having deserted us. An addition has however come from Ablorilik [*sic*]. Lucy or Luisa (widow of Serlek I) with her child, her mother, sister and two brothers having come to live here . . . through the change our numbers have not decreased. The store has suffered somewhat but we hope Zacharias, Nicodemus's brother, will be able to pay off this debt. (LAC/KAR, 1906: 58,063)

Arrivals from the head of Ungava Bay garnered mention the following year, too: “as they came closer, we could distinguish a skin boat and a wooden boat. It was Anarak [?] with his family. They came in

[illegible] days from Koksoak, with the drifting ice without going on land.” And again, just months later: “at the beginning of Sept people from Koksoak arrived here with Koktok [illegible] who had been visiting there. Some probably will stay here, but some will return” (LAC/KAR, 1907: 58,072, 58,074). To these entries are added sporadic references to departures from Killiniq for places to the southwest. For instance, when the HBC supply ship reached the Koksoak in July, 1913, “three families from here took the opportunity to move to Fort Chimo. The two brothers Peter and Charley Nogalak originated from there . . . at that time 23 people moved from here to Fort Chimo” (LAC/KAR, 1913–14: 58,117–18).

Killiniq’s commercial prospects looked fairly bright in the early going, train oil and other sea mammal products comprising its main strengths. Moravian estimates put the average annual catch of seals at 250 to 300 per hunter, reportedly some five times greater than at Okak and about twice that at Hebron (MacGregor, 1910: 92). Along with oil, the harvest also supplied skins for boot-making, one of the few cottage industries developed under mission tutelage and a major source of employment for women. But the island’s remoteness made the station more expensive to operate than those farther down the coast, particularly the costs for landing freight. In the 1910s, moreover, Canada added to that burden by imposing duties on Moravian oil exports and merchandise imported for sale, a step taken on the then-contentious grounds that Killiniq lay within its national boundaries, not those of Newfoundland.<sup>7</sup> Officials in St. John’s saw things differently. Governor Sir William MacGregor put the matter this way: “Even if Port Burwell were under any arrangement with this Government to pass into the possession of the Dominion,” he wrote after a 1905 visit to Nunatsiavut, “it is very improbable that the Canadian Government would really compel the Mission to pay them Customs dues under the circumstances of the case” (MacGregor, 1910: 85–86). By “circumstances,” MacGregor was doubtless referring to Newfoundland’s long-standing practice of exempting the Moravians from paying similar duties, a concession that was seen as compensation for the Moravians bearing

the costs of relieving destitute families and educating children (MacGregor, 1910: 85; MUNL/SFG Minutes, Nov. 1905, Sept. 1912). Unwilling to follow suit, Ottawa's action stripped Killiniq's trade of an advantage enjoyed at the older stations for generations. Beginning in 1916, it also put the mission on equal footing with the Hudson's Bay Company, the year their archrival opened its own Port Burwell outlet just a stone's throw from the Moravian compound.

The two institutions operated side by side on the remote island for eight years, but the rising expense of doing business on Killiniq, coupled with rising Inuit discontent over high prices and mounting debt, steadily eroded the Moravians' capacity to manage, much as it did the people's willingness to stay put. In 1922 alone five families left for Hebron, a place where they expected to find cheaper goods and reliable supplies of heating fuel. Escalating costs, falling revenue, and a depleted congregation prompted the station's closure in 1924. A harbinger of things to come, two years after withdrawing from the island the SFG's financially-strapped commercial arm relinquished trade at the remaining stations — Hebron, Nain, Hopedale, and Makkovik (est. 1896) — and leased their premises to the Hudson's Bay Company. Unwilling to sever ties to the church, meanwhile, nearly all of the “old Killinekers” who had stayed to the last left en masse for Hebron (LAC/HD, 26 Aug. 1923: 40,393; 13 Feb. 1924: 49,398–99). Their arrival was timely, helping to rebuild a community whose population had been decimated by the Spanish flu in the autumn of 1918 (Budgell, 2018).

Land-use practices among hangers-on in the Killiniq area continued much as before. According to its post journals, Port Burwell saw a regular flow of people coming for trade or temporary employment, then returning to outlying sealing, trapping, and fishing places scattered around the island, the nearby Button archipelago, and along both sides of the mainland coast from Nachvak and Eclipse Harbour west to Kangertluaksoak (HBCA/BPJ, 26 Dec. 1926: 33; see also Vezinet, 1982: 136–43). A second, smaller out-migration to Hebron occurred in the early 1930s. “It will interest my readers to learn that some people from the north are coming to settle among us,” the resident missionary wrote

of the unexpected arrival. “These Eskimos are those (according to the Killiniq diary) who were indifferent to the teaching of our missionaries there” (PA 141, 1933: 260). No more than three or four families, they may well have been the very last of the Northlanders, descendants of Inuit who steadfastly clung to their independence in the Eclipse Harbour–North Aulatsivik Island area for generations (Loring, 1998).

The transition from the old to the new mercantile order at the mission stations was a rocky one, to say the least. Long inured to a system of Moravian trade that blurred the lines between charity and ordinary business practice, local families were forced to adjust to stricter rules practically overnight. As was the case in Ungava Bay, fur exports remained the new proprietors’ chief priority. With a view to keeping store debt to a bare minimum, moreover, traders encouraged the able-bodied to spend more of their time earning a living in the country and less at the stations, living on credit. While the international fur market remained buoyant, as it did through the remainder of the 1920s, any problems stemming from the switchover were manageable. But when the Great Depression caused markets to falter, harsher measures were implemented, including suspension of debt-making. Yet even then, account books were awash in red ink, and HBC management opted to withdraw from the northern Labrador posts while cutting back on operations at Fort Chimo and George River. Port Burwell was the first to close, in 1939, followed three years later by the former Moravian premises and Davis Inlet. In an unusual step, Newfoundland’s unelected Commission of Government, then administrators of the nearly bankrupt dominion, agreed to take over the HBC’s interests, establishing the first of several pre- and post-Confederation public agencies, the Northern Labrador Trading Operation, for the purpose (Murrice, 1977). And with that, the government in St. John’s began buying fish, selling groceries, and managing regional economic affairs, a function it was to keep up for decades to come.

In 1944, 30 newcomers arrived at Hebron, intending to settle down. All hailed from the Canadian side of the 1927 Canada–Newfoundland boundary line, some from Kangiqsualujjuaq, the rest from Killiniq. They

came for reasons no different from those that had guided their ancestors down the coast and across the Torngats for centuries past: being with friends and family, trade, and the prospect of finding good hunting in the area's game-rich waters. No one was turned away (PA 153, 1945: 52).

## **Summary**

Two main questions frame this paper, both of direct bearing on the (now resolved) issue of Nunavik Inuit land rights in Nunatsiavut. First, are contemporary Nunavik Inuit descendants of Inuit who were using and occupying the northern reaches of modern-day Nunatsiavut in 1763 continuing to do so? Second, did their ancestors use and occupy lands and waters in this quarter after that time? Considered in the light of the evidence presented in foregoing pages, the answer to each question is affirmative. As that evidence bears out, there was a marked degree of continuity in patterns of use and occupation throughout the successive phases of the post-contact era. These patterns were only partially altered by the presence of Moravian mission and Hudson's Bay Company establishments beginning in the late eighteenth century, and seemingly not at all once Canada and Newfoundland began contesting jurisdictional authority in the region in the early twentieth century. In effect, the whole of northern Quebec–Labrador was crisscrossed by social networks predicated on ties of kinship, friendship, and mutual aid. These networks facilitated critical practices such as the long-distance harvesting that lay at the heart of Inuit adaptation to environmental conditions west and east of the Torngat Mountains. And by their persistence, they effectively ensured that the geopolitical boundaries now dividing Quebec and Labrador between two provinces and two Indigenous homelands had no functional equivalent for Inuit before, and certainly not after British imperial rule began in 1763. Instead, the whole of their traditional territory constituted common ground. Reiterating the words of a Hebron missionary written nearly 175 years ago, Inuit “are at home everywhere” (LAC/HD, Jan. 1850: 47,317).

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## **Notes**

- 1 The idea of Indigenous title was acknowledged for the first time in the foundational Royal Proclamation of 1763. In establishing British rule over former French territories in the wake of the Seven Years' War, King George III decreed that "the several Nations or Tribes of Indians, with whom We are connected, and who live under Our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to, or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds" (Great Britain, 1927: 156). The Supreme Court of Canada finding in *Calder v. British Columbia* (1973) determined that this right in land is inherent and not a creation of statutory law (Ulgen, 2008b: 702).
2. Figures 1 and 2 are adapted from Badgley (2000: 3, Figure 1).
3. The name means very big bay. Situated in the southeastern corner of Ungava Bay, the Nunavik community of Kangiqsualujuaq (formerly, Port-Nouveau-Québec) is located here.
4. Taylor obtained his shoreline data in the 1960s from local residents, three of whom were from Fort Chimo, now the town of Kuujuaq.
5. Subsequent HBC proposals to cooperate with the mission in this and other districts ended in the same way, neither side given to compromise (e.g., MUNL/SFG Minutes, Jan. 1851, Feb. 1862).
6. The subject of an Ungava mission field arose yet again in 1868, just ahead of the Hudson's Bay Company's sale of Rupert's Land to Canada. "Should this [transfer] take place," the mission's London governors reasoned, "the Co. would doubtless remain in competition with us as a trading corporation. But its right to exclude other traders would cease."

- This might be of great bearing on the extension of our mission work in the north & north west” (MUNL/SFG Minutes, 8 Oct. 1868).
7. Further to its assertion that Killiniq lay within its jurisdiction, Ottawa established a police post at Port Burwell in 1920, seven years before the Privy Council of Great Britain issued its finding in the decades-old Canada–Newfoundland boundary dispute. The newly drawn dividing line put Cape Chidley, at the island’s far eastern end, in Newfoundland, the remainder in the Northwest Territories (now Nunavut) (Hiller, 1997).

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