

The Arvia'juaq And Qikiqtaarjuk Oral History Project

Lyle Henderson

This paper is the result of two years of research on the island of Arvia'juaq and the associated peninsula, Qikiqtaarjuk, in the Northwest Territories, Canada. Thousands of cultural features, including kayak stands, tent rings, graves, meat caches, oil caches, and cooking areas are found at Qikiqtaarjuk and Arvia'juaq. Unlike many archaeological papers, scientific descriptions and explanations of these cultural resources are not provided here. The focus of this report is on those cultural features that are the physical testimony to the oral histories and traditions associated with these areas. This focus will demonstrate that significance of resources to local Aboriginal communities can easily be missed when research is directed only by archaeological method and theory. It will also demonstrate how oral histories can enhance archaeological research by incorporating traditional knowledge, which is ignored by, or unavailable to archaeologists.

BACKGROUND

Since 1977, the Historic Sites Directorate of Parks Canada has attempted to commemorate Inuit history. In 1986, a thematic framework was presented to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to consider a number of Arctic sites as being nationally significant. This list, however, was established by scientific and historic experts, with little input from the Inuit. Recognizing this, the Board requested that consultations with Inuit groups be conducted. As consultations progressed, it became obvious that the 1986 list did not consider Inuit culture from an Inuit perspective. It was also suggested that if Inuit history was to be commemorated, then consultation should begin in the communities.

Consultation with the community of Arviat, Northwest Territories, began in 1991 with the secondment of David Webster to Parks Canada. Mr. Webster's objective was to work with Arctic communities to identify local sites that might be of potential national significance. In Arviat, Mr. Webster consulted with Luke Suluk of the Arviat Historical Society and other community representatives. As a result, Arvia'juaq and Qikiqtaarjuk were identified as locations that chronicled the history of the people associated with this area of the Keewatin, Northwest Territories.

In January, 1993, the National Workshop on the History of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada was held in Hull, Quebec. At this workshop, Aboriginal groups outlined specific points of concern that they felt needed to be addressed before Aboriginal sites are designated and commemorated as national historic sites. These concerns include:

1. the fundamental importance of Aboriginal traditional knowledge to the understanding of the culture and history of all Indigenous Nations... and the importance of documenting this knowledge;
2. the on-going desecration or deterioration of important Aboriginal historical sites, in regards to which it was suggested that Parks Canada should work with Aboriginal groups to develop appropriate inventory strategies to monitor and record these sites;
3. the need to work in partnership with Parks Canada, but with the recognition that successful partnerships can be achieved only through meaningful, participatory consultations with Aboriginal groups; and
4. the manner in which the history of Aboriginal peoples has been represented by government heritage agencies in their public programs; it is very important to involve Aboriginal people, not only in the collection and preservation of the knowledge, but in the dissemination and presentation of the knowledge about the respective cultures to the public (Canadian Heritage, Parks Canada 1994: 2).

To develop a working relationship based on good faith with the community of Arviat, these suggestions were incorporated into the project's research design. All aspects of the research were directed by elders and members of the Arviat Historical Society.

THE HISTORIC INUIT IN THE KEEWATIN, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

During their travels across the Canadian barrenland in 1922/23, Knud Rasmussen and Kaj Birket-Smith of the Fifth Thule Expedition named the group of Inuit who occupied the southern barren lands west of Hudson Bay the "Caribou Eskimo." This group was described as sharing many cultural attributes with other Inuit groups; for example, the use of *inuksuit* to mark locations of specific interest, and the use of snow houses during the winter. However, these people were distinct among the Inuit. They utilized mostly inland resources, their primary food source being caribou. During the summer, some families inhabited the coast of Hudson Bay to harvest marine mammals and fish, but the group as a whole did not depend exclusively on a sea-based economy. This reliance and exploitation of inland resources distinguished these people among the Inuit as a whole.

The Caribou Inuit include five groups (Figure 1): the Ahiarmiut, Pallirmiut, Hauniqtuurmiut, Harvaqtuurmiut, and Qainirmiut (Darren Keith, pers. comm. 1995). The people have always attempted to maintain their traditional cultural and social identity. The Pallirmiut are the most traditional of the five Caribou Inuit groups. Smith (1970: 8) notes that, as late as 1958, the Pallirmiut did not completely replace the use of the lance and kayak with firearms when caribou hunting, and was still being practised by youths. And until 1967, 15 families continued to follow traditional subsistence pursuits (Smith 1970: 176). The Pallirmiut are the most southerly group that exploited the coast of Hudson Bay. Among the Pallirmiut, a distinction is made between coastal Tareurmiut and inland Aheararmiut (Birket-Smith 1929; Smith 1970). The Tareurmiut, or "people of the seashore," exploited the inland resources during the winter and fall, and moved to the coast of Hudson Bay during the spring and summer. Families who summered at Arvia'juaq are known as the Arviargmiut, "the people from an island shaped like a whale."

Milton Freeman (1976) contends that three specific periods transposed the Inuit culture. The pre-1924 time period marks the years before the arrival of traders. The people followed their traditional life, although occasional European contact and goods undoubtedly influenced their material culture. Between 1924 and 1959, the traditional lifestyle changed significantly because the Inuit participated in the fur trade, and later became wage-earners working on government projects. By 1959, the community had become dependant on the fox trapping economy and the Hudson Bay Company. Trappers would be given credit with the store, and not cash. Therefore, they were always dependant on the store and the manager responsible for the store's activities." (Vanstone and Oswalt 1959: 10).

The lifestyle of the Inuit experienced even more dramatic change beginning in 1959. A terrible famine occurred because of a decrease in the number of caribou. The Canadian Government's response was to establish permanent communities with schools and access to medical facilities. This relocation "essentially ended the development of the Caribou Eskimo culture" (Clark 1977: 134), although traditional subsistence activities such as whaling, fishing, sealing, and hunting continue. The community of Arviat is located in the Pallirmiut's traditional area of occupation and has become the principal community.

Environmental Setting and Site Descriptions

Qikiqtaarjuk and Arvia'juaq, approximately five kilometres northeast of Arviat, are within the Central Tundra region. The landscape is described as, "tundra superimposed on the Canadian Shield...and remarkably uniform..., (and) the vegetation consists of dwarf birch, willow, Labrador tea, dryas, and various species of the blueberry clan" (National Parks System Plan 1990: 46).

Qikiqtaarjuk and Arvia'juaq are summer occupation areas where the people returned each season. Their attractive features include good landing places, and good fishing and whaling locations. The island is also close to inland hunting grounds and crucial water sources, a critical requirement because suitable drinking water does not exist on the island, and is scarce along the southwest coast of Hudson Bay. The island also offers relief from the perpetual swarm of aggravating mosquitos found inland.

Qikiqtaarjuk is a peninsula approximately 4.5 kilometres northeast of Arviat. Translated, Qikiqtaarjuk means "a small island," which at one time it was. Today, it is joined to the mainland, the result of isostatic rebound. At the end of the peninsula is a plateau that slopes seawards to the north and west, and which is bordered by steep cliffs to the south and east.

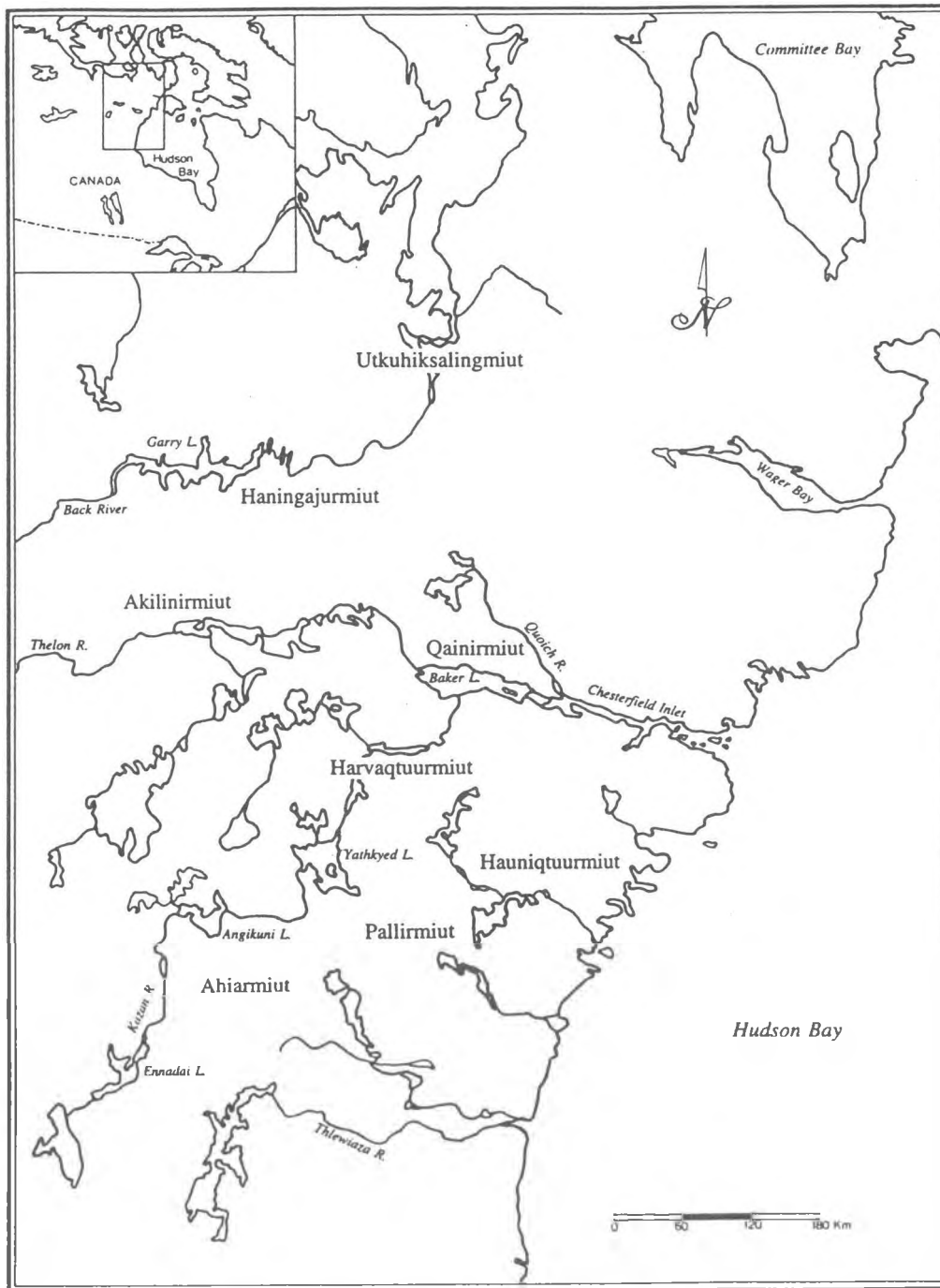


Figure 1. Pre-settlement distribution of Inuit groups in the Keewatin District.

One-half a kilometre northeast of Qikiqtaarjuk is the island of Arvia'juaq. The Inuktitut translation for the island means "the greater Arviat." The local Inuit describe its shape as being similar to a bowhead whale. The island comprises two large tracts of land connected by a sandy isthmus. It is approximately 4.5 kilometres long and is only 0.5 a kilometre at its widest point. Like most of the islands along the western coast of Hudson Bay, it orients northwest to southeast.

In the middle of the island, a plateau rises to 14.3 metres above sea-level. To the west, the plateau slopes towards a flat, sandy plain that covers most of the island. The south shore rises from the sandy plain to become a steep cliff. Eleven successive beach ridges descend from the top of the plateau to the east. These beach ridges surround the plateau as they extend towards and parallel the north shore.

The quantity of cultural features on the island is accurately described by Birket-Smith (1929) of the 5th Thule Expedition, as being "so full, right up to the top, it is so covered with remains of habitation..." Most of these features are found on the plateau and successive beach ridges, confirming the island's importance to the people who returned each year. Many features are associated with past events and traditions, remembered through oral tradition over generations.

ORAL HISTORIES AND TRADITIONS

Most people don't even bother revealing their traditional knowledge these days, even though they are full of knowledge. People have a lot of memories of their tradition, but never talk about it (Margaret Uyauperk Aniksak).

This chapter describes the oral histories and traditions of archaeological features found on Qikiqtaarjuk and Arvia'juaq. Because cultures and their oral histories are constantly evolving, how they are described today illustrates "that no particular time period in the history of a cultural group is more valid or authentic than any other time period" (Brink 1991:16). The oral histories and traditions related to Qikiqtaarjuk and Arvia'juaq as they are told today demonstrate that they are as valid and concrete to the people as they have been in the past. Documenting ethno-archaeological information is dependant on the informant's knowledge, interest, and recall. Informant reliability was addressed in the Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project, coordinated by Milton Freeman. It was noticed by researchers interviewing Inuit throughout the Arctic that:

A man is strongly criticized for making a mistake, for misremembering. It is not surprising, therefore, that respondents took enormous pains to be accurate. Nor would it be surprising, in a society that has depended so acutely on detailed knowledge of the land and highly accurate recall. If cross-checking and overall consistency are tests of truth, then it can safely be said that accuracy and honesty were in virtually every case beyond doubt. When a hunter was unsure he often checked with someone who might be more sure. Where he remained unsure he was inclined to leave it out (Freeman 1976: 56).

The oral history of Arvia'juaq was documented through narrations by Luke Suluk and other knowledgeable people to Parks Canada staff. Mr. Suluk is a Pallirmiut cultural heritage authority who has participated in numerous Arctic archaeological projects. Mr. Suluk is also the project manager of the Arviat Historical Society, and was chosen as the community's liaison with Parks Canada staff regarding the research. Mr. Suluk's knowledge regarding the oral histories and traditions of Arvia'juaq is extensive. He has interviewed many elders and recorded their stories and experiences associated with the island, particularly those of Margaret Uyauperk Aniksak. Ms. Aniksak lived in the area for most of her life, and before Arviat became a permanent settlement.

A certain power is attributed to the island of Arvia'juaq. Each time a research team (especially archaeological) plans to work on the island, Luke Suluk expects some type of inconvenience or hindrance, and a certain degree of caution is exercised when staying on the island. However, Arvia'juaq and Qikiqtaarjuk are not sacred sites in the sense that they are hallowed. They are special sites because they chronicle local Inuit history, and possess cultural features that depict local Inuit oral histories and traditions.

ORAL HISTORIES AND TRADITIONS RELATED TO QIKIQTAAARJUK

Kivioq

The story of Kivioq is known to many different Inuit groups, and there is usually some type of physical feature associated with Kivioq that can be found in the area inhabited by these groups.

Although the story varies slightly in different areas, the theme is consistent. Kivioq gets lost and tries to return home. During his journey, he overcomes a number of obstacles, but perseveres and finally returns to his waiting parents.

The legend of Kivioq told by elders in Arviat begins at Qikiqtaarjuk. The physical testimony found at the point are two small impressions on a flat rock. These impressions are the heel marks of an old woman who stood on the rock for long periods of time as she waited for Kivioq to return. The rock's significance would have been missed if only archaeological methodology was applied in the research. However, the rock's cultural significance is obvious when incorporating traditional knowledge, and is demonstrated by the following version of Kivioq as told by David Issumatarjuaq in the summer of 1994:

The story of Kivioq was told to me by my mother and I will tell it as I heard it from her. A long time ago, people use to spend spring at a place called Iratuk. People camped at Iratuk to hunt seals and other sea mammals. On a calm summer day, the sea was so calm it was like a mirror. A group of hunters headed far out to the sea, but the land was still in sight. While they were still out hunting, it started to get windy and before long it became a gale. The hunters started heading for the camp, and it was so windy that the water was going right over their heads. Kivioq followed for a while, but decided that he would try to stay afloat by paddling sideways to the wind in no particular direction. Every time he headed upwind the water would go over him, and every time he tried to go downwind his kayak would start going down into the water. So he paddled sideways to the wind with no particular destination in mind. He paddled all night and at dawn he was still paddling. It was still very windy and he rode the waves sideways since his kayak was best balanced going in that direction. He kept going in the same direction for three days, and at the dawn of the fourth day, the wind started dying, so he started going in a direction that he felt he should go. Using the moon to navigate during the night and the sun during the day, he rode the swells towards the land. He was very tired and started to fall asleep when he sighted what appeared to be a small black dot emerging out of the sea. He paddled towards the black dot, and on the afternoon of the second day [after spotting the dot], it became obvious that it was land that he was paddling for. He paddled for another day and at dawn it became very obvious that it was land he was headed for. He kept paddling and during the early evening he reached it. This piece of land was Arvia'juaq and he beached on the side of the island opposite to the direction of the wind. Since he hadn't slept for days, he carried his kayak far enough inland and used it as a wind break to rest.

After he awoke, he went on top of a hill and it became clear to him that he was on an island. Not far in the distance to the west was land. He paddled to this land, landed on the east side, and again went on top of another hill to look around. There was nothing in sight, so he went back to his kayak and rested and slept again. He woke in the early evening and went back on top of the hill to look around. To the north he saw the upper half of a human being disappearing, but it was obviously a human being he had sighted. He walked on the lee side of the hill until he was certain that if he went in the general direction where he had sighted the human he would see the person. Again, he saw just the upper half of the person disappearing and started walking towards it. After walking a short distance, he sighted the upper tip of a tent and started walking towards it. When he got close, there sat a woman outside the tent and when she saw Kivioq, she went into the tent and came out with another person. When Kivioq reached them, it turned out that it was an older woman and her daughter.

Kivioq stayed with them and hunted for them since they did not have anyone to hunt, so they lived together as time went on. Living together proved to be successful for all three. Each performed a necessary duty to live a fairly comfortable life, and in time Kivioq took the daughter for his wife.

One day he headed out to the sea and hunted all day. In the evening he returned to the camp. He sighted the tent but there was only one person standing outside. As he approached closer to the land, it became obvious to him that the person that he had seen was the old lady. She had stabbed her daughter to death, scalped her, and was wearing her hair, attempting to pretend to be her daughter. Even though Kivioq knew her scheme, he

remained calm. She wanted to be Kivioq's wife and Kivioq played along with her and kept going out to hunt.

He started to pretend to lose one kamik [a boot] each time he went out, and each time the old lady would make one kamik for the one missing. Then she became suspicious. She questioned Kivioq whether he would be leaving her or not. Kivioq replied that he had no intention of leaving her because he loved her. The old lady replied by saying that she would put a curse on Kivioq so that he would have a hard and trying life if he left her. Again, Kivioq replied by saying that he would not leave her and that he loved her.

So once more, Kivioq went out and again lost one kamik, and again the old lady made another one. The next day Kivioq pretended to go out hunting, but instead went to the place where he had stashed all the missing kamiks and counted them. There were enough kamiks and they were in the right number of pairs, so he went back to the camp and spent a day pretending that he wasn't up to anything.

Early the next morning he explained to the old lady that he would be going out to hunt and would spend the night out. He started to paddle north, picking up all the kamiks that he had stashed away, and kept paddling north until the evening when he camped. The next morning it was calm and he decided he would keep going and then camped again.

The next morning it was still calm, but he knew that the old lady was now aware that he had left her. He decided to keep travelling north, away from the old lady's camp and towards the direction of the place where he originated. He knew that by now the old lady had placed a curse on him for leaving her, but decided that he would keep going anyway. Just then, a fierce gale appeared out of nowhere and carried his kayak off with it, but he decided to keep going by foot.

He walked and walked until he sighted two hills that were hitting each other as if they were clapping. The two hills were too high to climb, so there was only one way to go through them and that was in between. Kivioq waited until the point came when the two hills were separating and made a dash to run between them before they hit each other again. He barely made it across and the fringes on his parka got caught by the two hills colliding.

After he got through the two hills he kept travelling north for a while and camped. The next morning he started north again until he sighted two grizzly bears that were growling and were appearing to start a fight. He turned in different directions to see if he could lose them, but no matter where he turned, they would still be in front of him growling at each other. It became obvious to him that there was no other way to get across except to go in between the two of them, and so he ducked low and dashed in between the two growling grizzlies. He then kept going and camped again.

As he walked on he came upon a huge, boiling pot. Like all the other obstacles, there was no way to get past this boiling pot. He ran around the pot a few times and when he was facing the direction he wanted to go, he jumped away from the pot and that is how he got past it. He kept going north and saw the big buttocks of a human being. Again, there was no other way to get past these buttocks except to tackle them and slip past them.

When he got through, he kept walking and in a short time he sighted his home camp at Iraktuk. As he approached the camp, he saw on the south side that his father and mother were sitting on a rock. They were still looking in the direction where they had last seen Kivioq. They had been sitting there so long that the place where they were sitting was starting to get hollow. When his father heard his voice he recognized his voice right away and told his wife, "that is the voice of Kivioq!" and then fell over and died.

So this ends the story of Kivioq; to this day at Iraktuk you can see the hollow marks where his parents sat and waited for his return; at Qikiqtaarjuk'jug you can see the hollow marks where the old lady use to stand and wait for his return. According to the tale, the old lady would stand there and wait for Kivioq to return for long periods at a time.

Graves Found at Qikiqtaarjuk

Although many features representing occupation are found at Qikiqtaarjuk, a number of graves located at the east and west ends of the site give the impression of a graveyard. According to local history, most of the graves resulted from the influenza and bronchitis epidemics that

occurred during the 1920s and 1940s. The cause of the epidemics was not a mystery to the people.

It seems lately that the number of graves along the coast have increased. This happened after wooden houses were erected. When Inuit and Qablunaat [the Inuit name for white people] began to live together some Inuit developed illnesses and some died because of it. Maybe sickness came because of people coming together.

It seems that a lot of people have died since the buildings were put up. In the beginning, there were hardly any graves along the coast... What I am trying to say is that I hardly remember people dying of illness. There were more deaths because of starvation than any other cause.

We started to notice people getting sick every time someone came back after going into the settlement to do some trading. People would get a very bad cold or become ill in numbers... (Aniksak, cited in Arviat Historical Society [AHS] 1992: 15).

The epidemics, and the death that they caused, were obviously a time of great distress for the Inuit. Margaret Aniksak recalled that, "it was a time of sorrow... The sound of stones being placed could be heard across the bay one calm evening" (AHS 1992).

The Grave of Hilu'naaq

The grave of Hilu'naaq differs from all others found at the point. The personal belongings do not differ greatly from other graves: a basin, a cooking pot, and a tea kettle. But there are an extraordinary number of eight drinking cups. According to Emil Arnaluk (pers. comm. 1994), instead of being entombed, Hilu'naaq requested that his body be left exposed so that he can watch boats go by, and so that people could stop by his grave to have tea.

ORAL HISTORIES AND TRADITIONS RELATED TO ARVIA'JUAQ

***Tunnillarvik*—Offering Cairns**

The main *tunnillarvik* on the island (Figure 2) sits on top of the island's plateau, and was visited almost immediately after the people arrived at the island. The scene was described to Luke Suluk by Margaret Aniksak (AHS 1992: 2):

As the boats and kayaks approached Arvia'juaq, one could hear the sound of Qinggaqtut, a pleading gesture wishing for a good fortune during their stay at Arvia'juaq. As the boats land, everyone was to leap to land backwards, hoping to reach the main land again. Then the Nugluktaq was placed in the tree post where men began to Ungataqliq driving away the evil forces of the island. Meanwhile, women would continue to chant Qiaqpaq, making throat sounds and would walk towards the Tunillarvik to give to the main cairn. The rest of the day and sometimes onto the next day is spent celebrating and feasting at the island.

At one time, the cairn was approximately four metres high and may have also served as a look-out for game and enemies. After the ship *Qulaituk* (Luke Suluk, pers. comm. 1993) wrecked near the island, the Inuit were forced to build a navigational beacon over the cairn using wood from the wreck sometime during the early 1900s. As a result of this contamination or infringement, the site was relocated. It was described and photographed in its new location by Birket-Smith during his visit to the island in 1923 (Figure 3). Tony Utuk described how and why this stone was placed where it now sits, and described its significance during a visit to the island in 1994:

My grandfather... would walk with me on Arvia'juaq, hand-in-hand, when I was still a boy. My grandfather used to tell us a story about a strong man contest that took place here on Sentry Island. There were two men that were competing, possibly for the right to marry a woman. Back then, it was common for women to cause a competition to start.



Figure 2. The main *Tunnillarvik* or offering cairn. (Photo: L. Henderson)

The first man went down to the shoreline and dug from the sand a slippery stone for himself. This stone was so big that no one man can carry it, but he carried this stone on the steep side of the hill to the top.

The man who carried the stone to the top of the hill challenged his opponent to carry a large piece of slippery stone from where he was standing to the point of the island, back again to where they were standing, and finally to put it down at the point of the island. The man who carried the stone to the point won the competition and after his opponent died, his spirit became his property and he won the right to marry the woman. Back then there were no laws. During a competition competitors might very well push each other to death.

Now the stone I mention that was put down at the point there is more to add. Sentry Island, if you see it, you will notice that there is a break on the island. Some time ago, this area would have some water going through it, but now it remains dry all the time. It is at the point of this island that the stone that was put there became a spirit and it is because of this people who came to Sentry Island would bring a gift to leave behind at this stone. Keep in mind that during the old days people would be very poor, and did not have very many belongings, but they still left something behind. At one time it is said that this stone had an amulet consisting of different skins of seals, polar bears, etc. It was because the amulet was a sign to signify that the spirit within this stone was owned. This is how I know this story, from my grandfather.

***Arnaqatirjuarjugiik*—Competing Cousin Stones**

The competing cousin stones are physical testimony to the tragic story of two cousins who became rivals when one tried to steal the others wife. The rocks, as seen today, were placed when the competition became a feat of strength, each cousin lifting the rocks into place. The competition ended ...

...at the next drum dance, the single man entered the drum dance procession with a hunting spear in hand... Of course, the other began to run away from him since he wasn't armed yet. He might have obtained one eventually, but never-the-less, the one with the



Figure 3. The stone used to place offerings after contamination of the main cairn. (Photo L. Henderson)

spear began throwing it at the man inside the tent. The other man ran around behind the people in the tent. Sometime he would squeeze himself between the tent and the poles as he attempted to escape from being hit... Finally, he slid under the tent which was weighted down with stones, and escaped outside. He ran as fast as his legs could carry him to the top of the hill.

The person with the hunting spear spotted him running up the hill and pursued him some more. The other man had a knife or a spear head which he (found) somewhere along the way. The other man ran straight into the sea without being caught, but the man with the hunting spear speared the man from above the water. He pulled the man up ashore. It must have been a frightening experience as the crowd followed the man after he had speared the other person. The other person also had [received] a stab wound [during the fight].

Both of them were still alive at this point, with spear and knife wounds. The other man told the crowd to go ahead and bury him since he knew he was going to be dead soon anyway.

The crowd was sad about the whole thing, but had to follow the dying man's wish despite their feeling against it. They got a bull caribou hide that was stretched out to dry and put the dying man on it face up. As they folded the skin casket with the dying man in it, the person who stabbed him was standing next to the dying man. He was wounded too, and was in great pain. The dying man called to the other wounded man and demanded him to seal up the skin casket with a piece of rope.

As the casket was being sealed up with a rope, he called out to say they missed one hole on the edge of the skin. He said [to his cousin], "My poor cousin, here is another hole." This was a dying person talking to an opponent who was sealing up his own skin casket. The man died eventually, while they were still fastening the seal rope. The other man died too, a little later, and they were buried side-by-side (Aniksak, cited in in AHS 1992: 5).

Graves Found on Arvia'juaq

There are two types of graves found on the island. One is an open-type grave, where the body was covered with caribou skin, and the skin held down by stones. This type of graves is not prevalent on the island. This may be due to the fact that the island was a summer occupation area,

and this type of internment was used primarily during the winter (Debbie Webster, pers. comm. 1994).

The second type of grave found on Arvia'juaq and Qikiqtaarjuk is coffin-style graves, where the body is usually surrounded by flat rocks to form walls. Smaller rocks were used to complete the walls, with the grave then covered with a large flat rock or a stretched skin. On Qikiqtaarjuk, the tops of some graves were covered with *komatiks* to prevent any crushing of the body. Although it is clear that the coffin-type grave was used at Qikiqtaarjuk to intern those who died during the influenza epidemic, others have described similar graves as being typical "Thule stone-box burials" (Clark 1977: 48).

The practice of using white quartzite stones to mark the location of a person's head after internment is represented at many graves on Arvia'juaq. Birket-Smith (1929: 302) noted that this had, "something to do with the position of the body, as men and boys must be laid with their heads to the west, whereas women and girls lie head to the north." The oral histories indicate that the significance of this practice was to indicate a relationship with the land or sea. The elders at Arviat indicate that men are laid to rest in a southeast direction, facing the sea, and women in a north-west direction, facing land. This practice is found to a lesser extent at Qikiqtaarjuk.

Sometimes a pole extends out of a grave. Birket-Smith (1929a: 302) mentioned that this was, as a rule, practised, but was unable to find out why. Smith (1970: 144) mentions that "a small hole is left in the grave for the spirit to exit; a pole is set into the grave to mark its location." Around Arviat, this is common because long poles can be found either as drift wood or obtained through a journey to the tree line, and was another method used to mark the location of a person's head in the same manner the white stones were used (Luke Suluk, pers. comm. 1995).

The Grave of Kiluvigjuaq

The oral history associated with the grave of Kiluvigjuaq tells of the Inuit practice of suicide among the elderly. When the group experienced difficult times, the elderly became a burden because they could not contribute to the groups' survival and required caring. Suicide was an accepted response to alleviate the situation. This was the case with Kiluvigjuaq. Her family was starving and she required considerable care, so she elected to be left behind to ensure that she would not be a burden to her family (Luke Suluk, pers. comm. 1992):

After everybody had gone over to the mainland, people started saying that an old lady was left behind. As soon as my father's older brother, Piglerniq, heard about it, he went back right away to bring her.

He began searching for her everywhere. He looked on top of the ridge all over. When he didn't see her there he started walking down the slope of the ridge back to his kayak. As he reached low land, there she was, laying on the ground, completely naked. She apparently rolled down the slope completely naked. It was evident she did it purposely...

He stopped there and wondered what to do next. He climbed back up the slope to pick up her skin mattress and skin cover to use as a casket and bury her on top of the ridge. Since darkness would not come for a while yet, he began to make a proper burial for her. He wrapped her into her skin mattress and covers and attempted to carry her on top of the ridge. He found her to be very heavy, especially as he attempted to climb up the slope with her on his back. Piglerniq claimed the little old woman was extremely heavy and took all his energy to bring her to the top. He took her back to the lean-to, dug the sand and buried her on the spot. He knocked the tent down and used it to cover the grave. He also used the bits of wooden poles and placed them over the grave and weighed it down with stones (Aniksak cited in AHS 1992:4).

The grave of Kiluvigjuaq endures on the island's plateau, only a few metres from the steep cliff.

Kapu'naaq Angakuksabvia—Kapu'naaq Stones

Religion is an important aspect in all cultures. It can also be a sensitive issue, especially when addressing shamanism which is not practised today (Luke Suluk, pers. comm. 1994) primarily because of Christianity's influence. However, shamans did exist as recently as one generation ago, and the capabilities and accomplishments attributed to these shamans are still respected.

To become a shaman, an apprentice had to undergo a rigorous undertaking. Acquiring the status of shaman meant that person had attained the required wisdom and strength. The oral history associated with the Kapu'naaq stones reveals the tribulations one man endured to achieve this goal. One apprentice shaman named Kapu'naaq was made to sit on one of three stones, and would only move to the next when ordered. "The process was painful for him and took many days. After days without a drink of water, Kapu'naaq's lips became dry and cracked" (Aniksak in AHS 1992: 2). Kapu'naaq was hallucinating and likely near death, when the shaman overseeing the initiation could no longer bear seeing Kapu'naaq's torment, and ended his suffering by recognizing him as a shaman.

Kattaujaq—The Shaman's Healing Cairn

Shamans were expected to be mediators between the spirit world and the real world. Disorder in the real world meant there could be disorder in the spirit world. The shaman had the power to remedy the situation. According to Minor (1991: 36), the shaman:

...was to ascertain the cause of personal ill fortune, which could affect not only the individual but also bring misfortune to the whole group. The Inuit believed that non-harmonious spirits caused disturbances that upset the balance of the soul. A release of the spirit from the inflicted soul would result in harmonious well-being. Various approaches were used to discover the evil spirits, and once the source of causation was determined.



Figure 4. Shaman's healing cairn. (Photo: L. Henderson)

The shaman prescribed a way to rid the soul of these spirits. It was generally expected that the results would be a return of the soul to its normal, natural balance and a restoration of emotional and psychological harmony among the group. This restoration of harmony would in turn allow the energies of the group to be centred upon the processes of physical survival.

According to oral history, the shaman's healing cairn found on Arvia'juaq was one method used to help restore stability. The cairn comprises two walls one-half a metre apart, each approximately four metres long and one metre high. A large, probably flat rock was placed across the cairn to form a tunnel. A sick person was made to crawl through the tunnel, and if they safely made it to the other side, they were expected to recover from their ailment (Figure 4).

Gaming Areas

Some of the stones arranged many years ago to play some of these games are still left the way they were put in place at Arvia'juaq. Inuit used to enjoy playing games greatly. Now it seems that all of the traditional games have been forgotten. All the games played these days are ones introduced by the Qablunaat. People have completely turned their heads away from the traditional games (Aniksak, cited in AHS 1992: 9).

Arvia'juaq's access to abundant food and water enabled the people to find time to participate in recreational activities. This is evident in the different types of features identified that are described through the oral histories as game and play areas. Adult games were meant to keep hunting skills and strength sharp. Childrens' games imitated the adult's world. Adults would participate in these games to help teach the lessons that were intended to develop hunting skills needed for survival.

***Kivvakaatait*—Weight-Lifting Stones**

A number of weight-lifting stones are found on Arvia'juaq (Figure 5). One area in particular contains a concentration of stones of different size and weight, the larger one being exceptionally heavy. The competitors began by lifting the smaller stones first. If successful, they would try to lift a heavier stone, and would continue until they failed. A person won the competition after they successfully lifted a stone that their opponent could not. According to Margaret Aniksak (AHS 1992: 11), the game originated as a means of friendly competition between two men:

Aijaranniiralaajuaq and somebody else. I think it was my father's uncle or somebody by the same name as my son. He was my husband Aniksaq's father's name sake. He and his companion used to joke a lot amongst themselves and devised a game. It was a game of challenging each other's strength. They would lift various sizes of rocks to out-do each other. They came up with two large stones that were suitable to test one's strength. The other men got interested in their game, and it wasn't long until other people began using the stones every time they came to the island. The stones look impossible to lift. It makes me wonder if Inuit men were stronger then.

Collecting information regarding weight-lifting stones is a good example how oral histories can contribute to the archaeologists' lexicon. Weight lifting stones are usually not considered to represent cultural features. The fact that many of the boulders on the island were identified as such during the survey is the result of collecting the oral histories of the island.

***Qillalugaujarvik* —Beluga-Kayak Game**

The beluga-kayak game (Figure 6) is an excellent example of a children's game that developed skills that they would use as an adult. The stone outlines represented kayaks. Behind the kayaks is a semi-circle of stones, in which there are six piles of rocks that may represent the hunters' base camps. The game was played when children sat in the kayaks, and a rope with a loop tied at the end was dragged around the outlines. The children would then try to spear the "beluga whale" (Luke Suluk, pers. comm. 1993).



Figure 5. *Kibvakaatait*—Weight Lifting Stones. (Photo: L. Henderson)

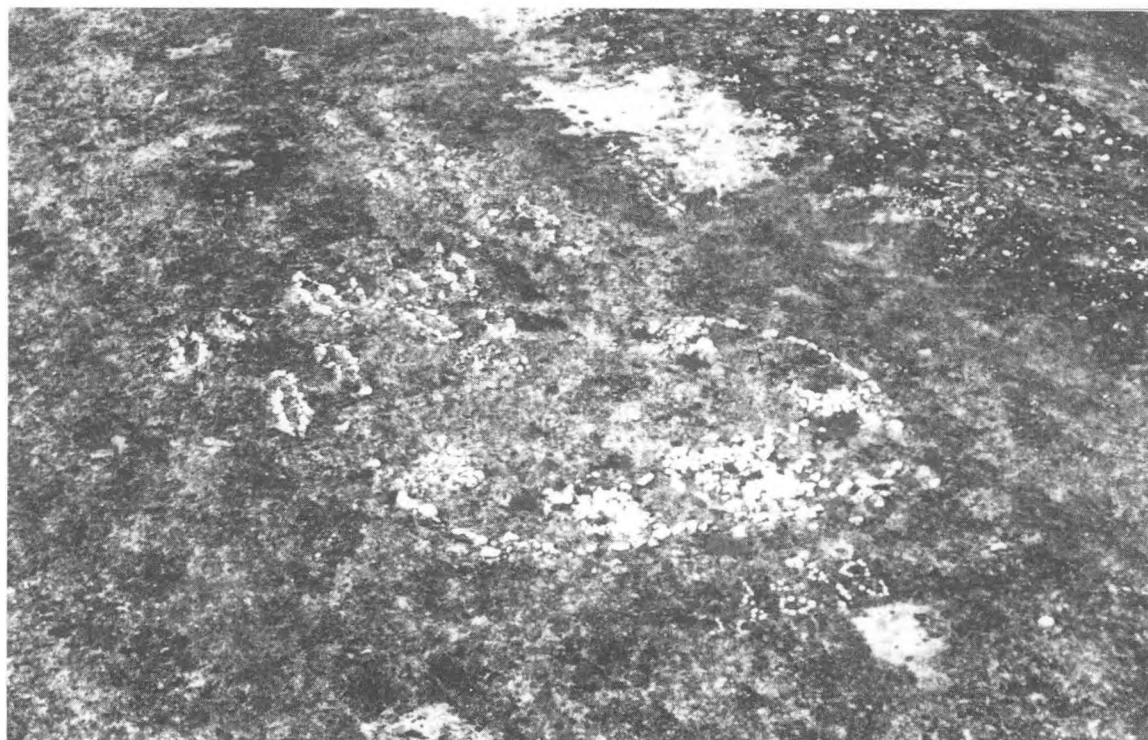


Figure 6. *Qillalugaujarvik* —Beluga-Kayak Game. (Photo: L. Henderson)

An adult version of the game was described in 1994. A player would sit in a kayak behind the small ring of stones at the top of the game. This ring was a target into which a competitor would try to throw a harpoon. If successful, he would move to a kayak that was further from the target, so that the degree of difficulty increased. After a person missed, the next competitor would begin his turn. After all of the contestants had missed the target, the first person would once again try to hit the target from the kayak where he last missed. This would be repeated until a winner was declared. Birket-Smith (1929: 289) attributed the stone outlines of the beluga-kayak game to belonging to "an earlier period." Oral tradition tells that the game was played until recent memory. This is also indicated by the fact that Birket-Smith reported ten kayak outlines were visible when he was on the island. Today, fifteen kayak outlines are visible, evidence that five more were added to the game since his visit.

***Nallujarviit* —Caribou Crossing Game**

The caribou crossing game imitated the hunting of caribou. Two long rows of rocks represented the edges of a river. People imitating caribou would attempt to cross the river. The purpose of the game was to try to catch the caribou before they reached the other side:

Another game was a caribou crossing game where stones were placed in a parallel form. They [people] would form a group standing side-by-side across each other in a parallel form. A person would drag a thick rope, with a tiny loop on the end and walk along inside the parallel while people try to poke the loop much like the game called nugluktuq. People would remain standing in their position as they try to poke the loop. They held an item in their hand to give away to the winner (Aniksak, cited in AHS 1992: 9).

The parallel lines of stones may also have been used as the start and finish lines for foot and hopping races.

HABITATION AND STORAGE FEATURES

***Tupirviit*—Tent Rings**

Because Arvia'juaq was a summer occupation area, tent rings visibly dominate the landscape. The rings are remnants of caribou skin tents usually only used during the summer months. Stones secured the tent bottoms to prevent them from blowing away during high winds and to keep out poor weather. When it was time to leave the island, the tents were pulled from under the rocks, leaving a distinct stone ring and clearly indicating a habitation area. Most of the tent rings are located on the successive beach ridges, further testimony to the oral histories that the island was occupied each summer for generations. The ridges not only offer an abundance of rocks to secure tents, but also operated as a drainage system when a tent was built over them (Smith 1970: 123). This proved to be a useful function if the snow had not completely melted by the time the people arrived to the island, as well as in heavy rain storms during the summer.

Two distinct types of rings attributed to different cultural groups. Birket-Smith (1929: 5) and Bertulli (1989: 3) designate tent rings made of larger and tightly placed stones to be Thule. Tent rings that are made of stones that are spaced further apart are designated as being Caribou Inuit. Single tent rings are most common, but double, triple, and even quadruple tent rings are found. "Internal features were rarely visible except for the occasional cooking area or hearth and tent rings were often associated with an adjoining storage area or cache. On the average, tent rings are about 4m in diameter" (Bertulli 1990: 3). Among the numerous tent rings, Luke Suluk identified particular rings that were associated with families that experienced some type of distress:

During another famine at Arvia'juaq, people were going through a period of no food shortly after they arrived there. They couldn't get any seals and apparently caribou were very scarce at the time. So all the food was gone and people started peeling off each stone to brew up some sort of soup. There were many people down there and each one of them was out peeling stones.

One time my mother's father got two seals east of Amaroqtalik [Wolf Esker] shallows and Tarpani'juaq claimed both of the kills but then died shortly [after]. She was my father's sister. My mother's father told her to come over with her cooking pot after he got the two seals. He asked her to skin the seals and fill her cooking pot with seal meat. He also asked her to collect fire wood and get some water for the pot.

The old lady was overjoyed, picked her big cooking pot with no handle and rushed over to skin the seals. My mother's father killed the seals and left them there for others to pick up since he didn't bring his sled and didn't bring any rope to pull the seals with. Other men were out seal hunting, but none of them got any. My mother's father was the only one to get the seals but left them where he killed them. As a marker, he took off his outer parka and pulled it over ice that was sticking up.

Getting back to the lady who claimed two seals. She went out and brought the seals back. When she arrived she started preparing the food to cook for the people. She had a big square stone cooking pot which she filled with food and blood from the seal. As she proceeded to carry the full pot inside, she tripped over a huge stone they had placed as a step at their entrance. She fell on the edge of the big pot face down and fractured her chest bone. One of the people saw her as she fell and ran to her quickly. She tried to move her to save her but she was already gone. Her husband was out seal hunting at this time in the area of Ihatik, but wasn't getting anything. People were wondering how they could get a message out to him and were scared of breaking the news.

They saw the man coming in their direction from his seal hunt east of Ihatik. He didn't get any seals. People just stood there watching him come walking home. They wondered who would break the news to him and coaxed each other to be the one to break the news. They finally decided that her husband's brother be the one to break the news. They did this knowing that he would be respected more than anyone else. As he started walking out to meet him, naturally he expressed his apprehension. He approached him very slowly, crying at the same time. He looked into his face and said, "I have caused death to Taqpaniq. When Naqsingayooq got two seals, I asked her to help herself to the kill and cook some food. She fell and fractured herself in the chest and died."

The man just nodded and said that he will not weep over her since she smashed up his double barrel rifle when they lived in Churchill. She did it because she was mad at another woman. The man said that it was very hard to own a rifle such as the one she smashed up, so he will not weep. When he said that the other man was relieved of his apprehension. He explained to him that she smashed up his brand new rifle one time by pounding it with a rock, so he has no reason to weep for her (Aniksak, cited in AHS 1992: 13).

Larger tent rings allowed people to gather for special occasions. Birket-Smith (1929: 270) noted that a tent 25 feet (7.6 m) in diameter and 12 feet (3.6 m) high could accommodate fifteen people and still have plenty of room. The largest tent ring on Arvia'juaq is approximately 45 feet (13.7 m) in diameter, and may have been the location where the competing cousins began their fight for a woman (Luke Suluk, pers. comm. 1993)

When people did gather together, one of the evenings highlights was drum-dancing. The purpose of drum-dancing was described by Alice Suluk (AHS 1992):

There are different forms of dancing and drum-dancing of Paalirmiut Inuit. Most of the songs composed are to be used for expressing ones innermost feeling and experiences in the person's life. They are used mostly during drum-dances and often by an elder singing alone in the evening. This is the time to remember the highlights of his life and to express one's joy and thanksgiving. These songs express the innermost feeling of a person and sometimes is a way to express in song that could not be said in words.

One particular tent ring was identified as a ceremonial tent used after a boy had caught his first seal. The family would organize a feast in the boys honour and everyone would attend (Luke Suluk, pers. comm. 1993). The ring is significantly different from other rings in that it has two distinct sitting platforms.

Caches

Caches are the most abundant feature found on the island. Access to an abundant food supply allowed the people to cache for the coming winter. Most caches are found along the beach ridges because they are not usually covered by snow, and any snow that does accumulate quickly melts in the spring. Meat and oil caches are found on Arvia'juaq. Oil caches are easily noticed because oil that has spilled on the rocks has prevented the lichen from growing on them (Luke Suluk pers. comm. 1994).

SITE INTEGRITY

The cultural resources found at Arvia'juaq and Qikiqtaarjuk are extremely well preserved, although there are some modern intrusions; such as using rocks to write personal names and the date the person was there. Fortunately, this practice is not extensive at either site. Erosion is destroying features on the island. The sandy plain that covers most of the island is encroaching upon cultural features such as the beluga-kayak game. As a result, one play kayak is almost gone. Also, as sea-ice melts each spring, it pounds the south shore due to wave motion. Therefore, cultural resources located close to the shore are being destroyed.

Arvia'juaq is still a centre of activity during the summer. The excellent fishing and whaling that attracted the Inuit to Arvia'juaq for generations still attracts fishermen and whalers from the community, and temporary camps are usually erected in the summer. During August, people from Arviat visit the island for a day or weekend to collect berries. Although subsistence activities continue on and around the island and point, the sites' integrity has not been compromised.

CONCLUSIONS

Parks Canada has worked in partnership with the people of Arviat to create a national historic site to commemorate local Inuit significance. By consulting with the people before, during, and after the process, their concerns were incorporated into research designs and reports.

Arvia'juaq and Qikiqtaarjuk were chosen by the community of Arviat as sites to conserve and depict local Inuit history and culture, and were documented using the oral histories and traditions as told by elders and other knowledgeable Inuit. It is clear that documenting Inuit oral histories and traditions is essential to appreciate and interpret Inuit culture. Explaining oral histories and traditions at sites specifically chosen by Inuit groups demonstrates that their culture is significant within the nation's framework. As a result, we established an equal partnership, working together to achieve this goal. This project also demonstrates that archaeological research is enhanced by incorporating Inuit knowledge of cultural features. Cultural resources, such as weight-lifting stones, would have been misidentified using only the scientific knowledge of archaeologists. Other cultural resources, such as the stone associated with the story of Kivioq, would have been missed altogether.

Including Aboriginal perspectives into archaeology provides insights that are not always available to archaeologists. Oral histories and traditions document past events that are not evident in the archaeological record. For example, a tent ring that is identified with an oral history is no longer an object only to be measured and recorded. It is a place where a family celebrated life, or where they experienced a personal tragedy. It now has meaning.

Acknowledgements

This paper is dedicated to the people of Arviat, and to the memory of those elders who shared their knowledge in order to complete this report, including Margaret Aniksak, Alice Suluk, and David Issumatarjuaq. Sincere thanks are extended to Tony Utuk, Luke Suluk, Emil Arnaluk, the Arviat Historical Society, David Webster, Darren Keith, Ellen Lee, and Robert Harrold.

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