

Labrador Inuit and the World's Columbian Exposition

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Abstract

This thesis concerns itself with the experience of Labrador Inuit who attended the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893) as part of the ethnological exhibit known as the "Esquimaux Village" and with issues surrounding their representation. Its main argument is that the exposition's administrators, its scientific advisors, the concession's promoters, the journalists who wrote about the fair and the people who attended it, accepted broadly similar conceptual notions about the people on display in ethnological exhibits. Those notions did not reflect accurate representations of who those people were. Instead, they were based on concepts of who the people were thought to be in the context of a long and complex history of colonialism. Like others on display in ethnological exhibits at the fair, Labrador Inuit were cast in the mold of the "primitive" and promoted as living vestiges of an earlier stage of human evolution. These constructs were, of course, fictions that obscured more than they revealed. As the events in Chicago demonstrate, however lopsided the relationships between colonized and colonizing peoples, fictions deployed to justify colonial relations were distortions and misrepresentations that often broke down in the presence of the people themselves. This was the case with Labrador Inuit in Chicago. The divergence between fact and fiction became increasingly evident as Inuit failed to conduct themselves in ways that were expected. Tensions came to a head when Inuit rebelled against their treatment and sought resolution for their problems through the courts. Their capacity to take action in defence of their own interests led to a re-evaluation of who Inuit were, subverting previous assumptions and imaginings.

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Notes for the Reader

The term “Inuit” is generally used in this thesis when discussing the people from Labrador who attended the World’s Colombian Exposition. It means “the people” and includes the article. The term “Esquimaux” was more commonly used in the period under consideration. It is considered derogatory today, but is necessarily retained and used in its historical context. The two terms are also convenient when discussing the difference between who Inuit were and who they were thought to be.

Traditionally Inuit in Labrador did not use surnames. Inuit north of the Moravian mission communities, called “Northlanders” by the Moravians, identified themselves with a single name. Inuit associated with the communities of the Moravian mission also did not use surnames at the time of the World’s Colombian Exposition but began the practice, at the instigation of missionaries, shortly after the fair took place. In order to avoid confusion when two people had the same name, a person was identified by his or her association with their spouse. Thus, Abel was known as Abel-Helenab and conversely Helena was known as Helena-Abelib; the “b” being a form of the possessive in Inuktitut.¹ Inuit living south of Moravian communities, called “Southlanders” by the Moravians, had through their early association with European traders, adopted the use of surnames early in the nineteenth century. With regard to the spelling of the names of people and places, which vary widely in historical documents, I have mostly adopted Moravian or Hudson’s Bay Company spellings as they reflect the most common usage in the documentary records of the times.

¹ Periodical Accounts Relating to the Moravian Missions, Vol. 2 No.24, December 1895, pp.616

The original passenger list of the “Evelena”, the schooner used to recruit Inuit for the Esquimaux Village, is the most important document for identifying those who travelled from Labrador to America to attend the fair, however the document can be confusing.² This is probably because the crew member recording passenger names had no reference for spellings and most likely improvised on what was heard. Similarly, family groupings can be misleading. I have attached the original list as Appendix 1. Appendix 2, which is based on further research, reflects more standard spellings and more accurate family groupings.

I would like to acknowledge many of those who have encouraged and helped me throughout this undertaking. Without, Tom Gordon, former director of Traditions and Transitions, the joint research project of the Nunatsiavut Government and Memorial University of Newfoundland, I would never have embarked on this project and I am grateful to him for his early encouragement and enthusiasm. I am also grateful to Traditions and Transitions for their financial support and to its current director Lisa Rankin for her encouragement. I would also like to thank my thesis supervisor, Kurt Korneski for his insights, critiques and continued interest throughout the process.

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²This document was discovered by Jim Zwick and first published in *Inuit Entertainers in the United States*, (Infinity Publishing Co. West Conshohocken PA, 2006)

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Figure1: Esquimaux Village at the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893

Back Row: (l to r) Esther Palliser (?), Julia Hedwig Lucy, Thomasi Lucy, John Lucy, Abraham Lucy, Simon Lucy, Jonas Palliser, John Palliser, (?) Sam Pallicer (?), Peter Palliser (?) Simon Manak, Tom Palliser (?)

Middle Row: Katerina Lucy, Chrisopher Palliser, (infant) Susan Palliser, Esther, Nancy (infant), Helena Abilib. Abraham Manak, Sarah Manak, Mary Palliser (?)

Front Row: Susan Palliser, Lucy Palliser, Peter Manak, Maria Manak, Sarah Manak



Figure 2: Esther, Nancy, Lucy and Susan Palliser



Figure 3: Esquimaux Village at the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893

Chapter 1

Introduction and Historiography

The people in front of the grand stand could not hear, but it did not matter. They could see and feel and think on their surroundings. They knew they were a part in a memorable scene that was making history. They were in the midst of noble concepts wrought into visible shape. They watched and waited with the patience of those who knew that what was to come would be a study for all time.¹

Chicago Tribune, 2 May 1893

The Grand Opening

In the early hours of the morning on 1 May 1893, while the domes and towers of the fairgrounds were still enveloped in fog and “scarfs of mist brooded upon the waters of Lake Michigan,” a reporter from the *Chicago Tribune* arrived at Jackson Park eager to secure a spot from which he could witness the opening ceremonies of the World’s Columbian Exposition. All of Chicago and much of America had eagerly awaited the arrival of this day. It had taken a monumental effort, but in just two years, Chicago’s financiers, architects and engineers, had transformed a fallow marshland, a short distance south of the city’s centre, into an aristocratic city of ornate classical buildings, pavilions and exhibition halls, elegantly arranged around a network of artificial lagoons, canals and waterways, complete with innovative electric lighting, supplies of freshwater, and modern sanitation and transportation systems. The Exposition was conceived as a commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the landing of Christopher Columbus in America, the moment, as some would have it, when the torch of civilization was transferred from the old world to the new. Its stated theme was “civilization’s progress” but it was clearly

¹ “White City Half in Cloud Land,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 2 1893.

intended to be a declaration of America's arrival on the world stage and a celebration of its achievements as demonstrated by its scientific, technological, and industrial products on display in the vast exhibition halls of the fairground; locomotives, threshers, electric generators and lights, telephones, typewriters, sewing machines, refrigerators and early prototypes of automobiles and motion pictures. After years of lobbying, planning, building and promoting, the exhibition was now ready. As the sun rose higher and the fog began to dissipate, the world was about to get its first glimpse of the World's Columbian Exposition.

At 9 o'clock, the gates opened to the public for the first time and "a forest of humanity so dense that its progress was barely perceptible"² made its way toward the grand stand in front of the Administration Building in the Court of Honor, the centerpiece of the White City, as the fairground was called, where the President of the United States, Grover Cleveland would preside over the opening ceremonies. At the same time that the gates were opened, the President's procession departed for the fairgrounds from the business district of downtown Chicago. An elaborate parade had been organized. Squadrons of mounted police, Illinois national guard and troops of the United States 7th Cavalry, escorted 29 horse drawn carriages, carrying the President, his Vice-President, members of his cabinet, various state governors and diplomats, members of the fair's organizing committees, Chicago's mayor, city aldermen and various prominent business and religious leaders.³ The *Chicago Tribune* reported that thousands of people watched the procession from housetops, windows, trees and lampposts, describing "sidewalks choked with

² "How They Looked From Above", *Chicago Tribune*, May 2 1893

³ "How They Went", *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, May 2 1893.

people.”⁴ As the procession approached the fairgrounds, it turned down the Midway Plaisance, a corridor between Washington and Jackson Parks that had been set aside as the Exposition’s entertainment and amusement centre. Here the parade passed by the Dahomey and Chinese villages, the Algerian and Tunisian village, the great Ferris wheel, the Ice Railway, the Moorish Palace, the Streets of Cairo, the German, Turkish and Javanese Villages, Hagenbeck’s animal show and various other ethnological villages and amusement attractions. While the President periodically doffed his hat, representatives of the villages lined the Midway playing their native music and waving wildly at the passing dignitaries.⁵ By the time the parade reached Jackson Park, the crowd in front of the Administration building had spilled along the promenades outside the machinery and agricultural buildings on either side of the Grand Basin. The *Chicago Tribune* estimated that over 400,000 people attended the fair that day.⁶

After preliminary prayers, poems and speeches, President Grover Cleveland took to the podium and, in a brief speech, heralded the Exposition as a presentation of the “triumphs of a vigorous, self-reliant and independent people.”⁷ He then stepped forward and placed his finger on a golden key. The button closed an electric circuit starting a massive engine, in the machinery building a thousand yards away, immediately generating power to all the buildings on the fairgrounds. As a huge stars and stripes unfurled above the President, other flags followed suit and “from the top of every tower and parapet fell flags and ensigns and bunting.” At that

⁴ “Start Made From Lexington”, *Chicago Tribune*, May 2 1893.

⁵ “Heralded By Cheers”, *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, May 2 1893.

⁶ “Near Half a Million”, *Chicago Tribune*, May 2 1893.

⁷ “Formally Opened”, *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, May 2 1893.

instant, the drapery fell from the statue of the Republic at the far end of the basin and while steam whistles screamed and cannons boomed from the USS Michigan, anchored in the harbour, the electric fountains shot jets of water hundreds of feet in the air, “the mist falling on the faces of the cheering crowd.”⁸

From the topmost balcony of the Administration Building, some 75 Native Americans “bedecked in war-paint, feathered bonnets, and other holiday finery” watched the opening ceremonies. They were Lakota, members of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show, which had established itself just outside the fairgrounds where they would remain for the duration of the exposition.⁹ Some were veterans of the Indian wars and likely held opinions of Columbus’ legacy far different than those espoused by the President and the Exposition’s formidable publicity machine. Yet to journalists at the scene, when the flags unfurled and the steam whistles screamed, and a hundred thousand people cheered, the Lakota too appeared caught up in the moment. The reporter from the *Chicago Tribune* observed: “One of them started to yell, the others quickly took it up, and for a few moments the upper dome resounded with the yell that, from the eventful day in October 1492 to the present, has been more often, the cry of battle and death than a tribute to progress and civilization.”¹⁰

Also in attendance that day were Inuit from Labrador brought to Chicago by J.W. Skiles & Co., a group of businessmen from Spokane, Washington, who had won a commercial concession from the Exposition to create an ethnological exhibit of “Esquimaux” who would be displayed, “in a life-like setting” with families, kayaks,

⁸ “Springs Into Being”, *Chicago Tribune*, May 2 1893.

⁹ L.G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians 1883-1933*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996) pp.135

¹⁰ “Indians View the Scene”, *Chicago Tribune*, 2 May 1893.

sled-dogs and hunting implements. The story of Inuit in Chicago, however, did not begin that day in May 1893, but had started many months before. Because navigation on the Labrador coast is severely restricted by sea-ice in winter and was accessible to shipping only from June to December, the Spokane company had been forced to recruit Inuit a year in advance of the fair. As a result, Inuit were recruited during the summer of 1892 and had arrived in Chicago in October of that year. The “Esquimaux Village” had been open to visitors throughout the winter of 1892 and the spring of 1893, during the final frenetic months of the fairground’s construction. The long lay-over had not been kind to Inuit or their employers. Just weeks before the official opening, a series of confrontations over conditions and treatment within the Esquimaux Village had torn the exhibit apart and resulted in a number of families abandoning the village altogether and setting up a new venue just outside the fairgrounds. By the time the crowds gathered and President of the United States declared the Exposition open, two rival “Esquimaux” exhibits were competing with each other for the public’s attention and a number of court cases working their way through Chicago’s Cook County justice system.

This thesis discusses the experience of Labrador Inuit at the World’s Columbian Exposition within the context of the colonial assumptions imposed upon them. Like other ethnological exhibits at the fair, they were cast in the mold of the primitive and promoted as living vestiges of an earlier stage of human evolution. The Exposition’s administrators, its scientific advisers, the exhibit’s promoters, and the American press and public, all contributed to the construction of the conceptual

notions through which Inuit, and other indigenous and foreign peoples at the fair, were presented and perceived. Thus, on their arrival in America, Inuit were subjected to preconceived ideas and depictions of who they were. These constructs were fictions, but they were based on widely held beliefs supported by prevailing scientific and racist ideologies that permeated European and American society throughout the nineteenth century.

Although the conflict that transpired in the Esquimaux Village was not, in itself, a direct response to these ideas, it was a response to the mistreatment received at the hands of the concession's management whose attitudes and actions were informed and enabled by such assumptions and prejudices. However, as will be seen, not all Inuit responded in the same way to the challenges that confronted them. Inuit within the Esquimaux Village were not a single homogenous group but rather a complex assembly of people recruited from different parts of Labrador with different histories of colonial engagement. These different experiences help explain why different Inuit within the Esquimaux Village chose different strategies to deal with the problems they faced. I argue that these different responses were conditioned by the nature of their previous experience of colonialism in Labrador.

In order to understand the cultural, social and ideological context in which the fair and the ethnological exhibits took place, I have conducted research pertaining to the history of Chicago, the World's Columbian Exposition, nineteenth century anthropology, ethnological exhibits, and Inuit history in Labrador. My understanding and perspectives have been informed by numerous scholars and writers who have addressed many of these subjects before me. A review of some of

the principal work pertaining to the World's Columbian Exposition generally and to ethnological exhibits specifically, which I have reviewed, is discussed below. I am indebted to all of these scholars. Similarly I owe thanks to those who have contributed to the growing body of scholarship pertaining to Labrador and the history of Inuit in that region.

Historiography of the World's Columbian Exposition

The World's Columbian Exposition intrigued contemporary observers and has continued to attract the attention of writers and scholars since that time. In recent years, there have been a bewildering number of publications on all aspects of the event from its financing, planning and design, to its architectural and engineering achievements, its technological innovations, its imperialist and racist underpinnings, and its cultural legacy.

The Exposition owes much of its fame or notoriety, to its occurrence at a particularly transformative moment in American history. Much has been written about Frederick J. Turner's seminal paper "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," first delivered at a seminar of the American Historical Association at the World's Columbian Exposition in July 1893. While the essay was clearly an apology for the great American colonial enterprise that the exposition celebrated, it helped identify and define America's watershed milestone. The United States had reached the limits of its territorial expansion on the North American continent and was beginning to look outward. In the process, it was transforming itself from a rural based agricultural nation into an industrial behemoth, with a

population and economy that was shifting away from its rural roots towards rapidly growing urban centres. The expansion of railway networks, the development of new processes for the production of steel, innovations in finance and corporate management, and a plethora of new discoveries and inventions such as electricity, the telegraph and telephone, and the internal combustion engine, all contributed to this dynamic change. The United States would soon surpass Great Britain in its manufacturing output and was staking its claim to a place in the front rank of world nations.¹¹ The World's Columbian Exposition held to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' "discovery" of America was meant to recognize and celebrate this American moment.¹²

Contemporary Records

The earliest writing about the Exposition appeared even before the fair got underway. The fair's publicity department, run by newspaperman Moses Handy, was established in December 1890, well before the Exposition opened, and it produced enormous amounts of copy aimed at generating interest in the fair and favourable opinions about Chicago. The office created a newsletter, *World's Fair Notes*, which it sent to thousands of newspapers in the United States and around the world. It also printed the fair guide, *After Four Centuries*, in several different languages and tracked articles written about the Fair for re-circulation.¹³ Just prior to the fair's opening, independent guides were published; such as *Rand, McNally &*

¹¹ Richard White, "The Rise of Industrial America 1877-1900", *The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, <http://gilderlehrman.org>

¹² Reid Badger, *The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition and American Culture*, (Nelson Hall, 1979) pp.21

¹³ Lisa Krissoff Boehm *Popular Culture and the Enduring Myth of Chicago 1871-1968*, (New York and London: Routledge 2004) pp.43

Co.'s Handbook of the World's Columbian Exposition with its history of the fair and its maps and descriptions of the various buildings and their exhibits, as well as the various attractions along the Midway Plaisance, the fair's entertainment strip. During the fair, major newspapers from Chicago and other cities throughout the country and around the world maintained offices on the fairgrounds for the duration of the Exposition and these articles, particularly those of the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Daily Inter-Ocean* form the most detailed contemporary record of day to day events. At least one writer published a collection of her articles shortly after the exposition closed and these form a uniquely personal first hand observation of events.¹⁴

As well, a number of illustrated periodicals appeared at the time of the Fair. These monthly publications, such as Halligan's *Illustrated World's Fair* and Campbell's *World's Columbia Exposition Illustrated*, took advantage of a new technological innovation in printing photographs; copper plate half-tones, and proved extremely popular with the public. Halligan's *Illustrated World's Fair* was later collected and bound by its publisher and presented as a pictorial memento of the Exposition. Campbell's *World's Columbia Exposition Illustrated*, which had succeeded in winning official recognition and financial support from the exposition's directors, became the vehicle for official documents, and subsequently, an official history of the fair.¹⁵

¹⁴ Teresa Dean, *White City Chips*, (Chicago: Warren Publishing Co.,1895)

¹⁵ Herbert E. Fleming, The Literary Interests of Chicago, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.11 (1905) pp. 784-790

There were to be many other contemporary publications released in the immediate aftermath of the fair, intended to be both histories and souvenir mementos of the exposition. Much of the literature was official, consisting of reports and histories documenting every conceivable aspect of the fair's planning, organization and implementation, including biographical profiles of directors and shareholders, minutes of meetings, speeches, the design, layout and content of all the buildings, lists of exhibitors and exhibits, attendance figures, costs of construction, revenue reports and documents pertaining to special events and concessions. These were compiled and published as multi-volume histories, the two most significant being H.H. Bancroft's *The Book of the Fair: An Historical and Descriptive Presentation of the World's Science, Art and Industry as Viewed Through the Columbian Exposition in 1893* (in two volumes) and Rossiter Johnson's *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893* (in four volumes).¹⁶ At the same time, numerous portfolios of photographs were published, providing ready reminders of individual experiences of the event.¹⁷ These early publications and histories of the World's Columbian Exposition found little fault with the Fair. Their

¹⁶ H.H. Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair: An Historical and Descriptive Presentation of the World's Science, Art and Industry as Viewed Through the Columbian Exposition in 1893* (Vols. 1-2) (Chicago and San Francisco: the Bancroft Co., 1895), and R. Johnson, *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893*, Vols. 1-4, (New York: D. Appleton & Co.).

¹⁷ *Official Views of the World's Columbian Exposition*, (Chicago: Chicago Photo Gravure 1893), *Photographs of the World's Fair: The Columbian Portfolio*, (Chicago: the Jones Publishing Co., 1893); J.W. Pierce, *Photographic History of the World's Fair and Sketch of the City of Chicago*, (Baltimore: R.H. Woodward and Co. 1893); *Portfolio of Photographs of the World's Fair*, (Chicago: The Werner Co. 1893), *The Vanishing City: A Photographic Encyclopedia of the World's Columbian Exposition*, (Chicago: Laird and Lee 1893).

intention was to record and promote the event they were celebrating and to document and preserve its memory for current and future generations.

A Cultural Moment

The World's Columbian Exposition received little attention from American historians throughout most of the twentieth century, eclipsed as it was by far more significant events; two world wars, the Great Depression and the Cold War. This began to change in the 1960s with an emerging interest in cultural history, colonial history and issues pertaining to capital, race and gender. The 1960's and early 1970's, were turbulent times in the United States, politically, socially and intellectually. The resistance to basic civil rights for African-Americans and the increasing discomfort with the Vietnam war, broke down prevailing ideologies, and called into question traditional American narratives. With the breakdown of social consensus, there was lots of room for counter-narratives, a re-examination of prevailing myths and the writing of history from alternative points of view that sought to create a more comprehensive and inclusive version of the past.

The World's Columbian Exposition attracted the interest of historians in this period because it seemed to contain within itself clues to the riddle of the times. It occurred at a transformative moment in American history marking the rise of the United States as a global power. It seemed to sum up all that had come before and to indicate much of what was about to occur. It appeared to be America's coming of age, containing both promise and ambition; a demonstration of its emerging strength and potential. There were new products and technologies, new methods of publicity and mass marketing, and new forms of entertainment, all on display for the first

time, much of which would prove influential and long lasting. At the same time, the fair brought together people from all over America, from all walks of life, and it became a forum, both deliberate and accidental, for the transmission and reception of ideas about such things as nation, order, progress, cities, consumption, technology, entertainment and race. For the historian interested in any of these subjects, the World's Columbian Exposition offered rich rewards, particularly as there was such a wealth of primary source material.

One of the earliest historians to revisit the World's Columbian Exposition was Reid Badger who published *The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition and American Culture* in 1979. Badger explains in his introduction that he became interested in the fair not because he thought it was significant in itself, but because he became convinced that the people at the time thought it was. He wanted to know 'why they believed this to be the case.' Much of Badger's work is descriptive; a recapitulation of the planning, organization and construction of the fair and the nature of its various exhibits, the Midway Plaisance, and the World Congresses which were forums for academic discussions. As a cultural historian, he was interested in trying to understand the fair's meaning; not so much in terms of its overall legacy, but rather its meaning to the individual visitor to the fair. How was it experienced? What was its impact? In this, Badger reflected the general preoccupations of cultural historians of his period; a concern with the conditions of everyday life and common experience. Curiously, Badger suggests that the fair lacked a central theme which led to ambivalence and confusion. This, he claims, despite the continual barrage of publicity and newspapers referring to the

'Columbian' fair as a commemoration of America's discovery and a celebration of the progress of civilization since that time. He suggests that visitors to the exposition were overwhelmed with the sheer size and number of exhibits and attractions and with so much stimulation, were either unaware or unresponsive to the central nationalistic message. Perhaps reflecting on his own times, Badger places the exposition squarely in its turbulent historic moment of civic unrest, labour strife, urban dislocation and culture change. He concludes that visitors couldn't completely leave these realities at the ticket gate and that the conflicting messages of the fairgrounds simply reinforced a general sense of discomfort and insecurity. Badger sees the fair as a seminal moment of late nineteenth century America reflecting, "the confusing variety and conflicting cultural patterns that characterized what Henry Steele Commager called "the watershed of American history." ¹⁸

Cultural Hegemony and Racism

In *The Incorporation of America, Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*, published in 1982, Alan Trachtenberg develops a very different view of the World's Columbian Exposition. As the title suggests, he is interested in the development of corporate America and the processes by which corporations developed and extended their hegemony over American politics, society and in particular, culture. Trachtenberg was writing at a time when American corporations were expanding their leverage in Congress and on US foreign policy and their influence on the American democratic process was becoming increasingly obvious and disturbing. The idea of cultural hegemony, as used by Trachtenberg, is derived from the

¹⁸ Reid Badger, *The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition and American Culture*, (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979) pp.118

writings of Antonio Gramsci and refers to the domination of a society by the ruling class who manipulate the culture of that society so that their worldview becomes the accepted cultural norm.¹⁹ Trachtenberg believes the critical period in which the corporate elite achieved this control was the period between the American Civil War and the turn of the twentieth century; the so-called Gilded Age. Trachtenberg is principally concerned with ideas, myths, ideologies and the struggle for their meaning and ownership. He argues that by the time the fair came to Chicago, Corporate America was in full control of its partnership with Government over economic and social policy and had essentially usurped the very meaning of the word 'America'.²⁰ For Trachtenberg, the World's Columbian Exposition was the expression, not of America's triumph, but that of its new governing elite. Corporate America was by then in control, not only of the nation's political, economic and social agendas but also of its messages and symbols.

Chicago's industrial barons, financed, organized and constructed the World's Columbian Exposition. These were men who had made their fortunes in railways, grain, farm machinery, meat-packing, finance, steel, and retail; men like Philip Armour, Cyrus McCormick, Charles Schwab, Stuyvesant Fish, Charles T. Yeakes, George Pullman, Gustavus Swift and Marshall Field. Many of these same men were at the centre of the industrial conflict and violence that was a characteristic feature of the time. Trachtenberg argues that these men designed the fair, not only for the business opportunities on offer, but also to present a vision of the future of America,

¹⁹ Alan Bullock, Stephen Trombley, (Editors) *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (London: Harper Collins, Third Edition, 1999) pp. 38 7–88.

²⁰ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America, Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982) pp.8.

an alternative representation of urban life, one that offered stability, harmony and order for the benefit of all. Reassurance is what was behind the stately neo-classical architectural choices, and the carefully manicured landscapes and waterways. By design, the White City set itself up in contrast to the urban realities outside its gates. It was a utopian vision of what urban life could and should be, if the lead of the elite was followed. This was “how space might be ordered and life organized” with elegant buildings, clean water, reliable sanitation, efficient transportation and art.²¹ It also set itself up in contrast to the Midway Plaisance, the fair’s entertainment zone. The White City, as the embodiment of America, was refined and civilized while the Midway Plaisance, with its chaos, carnival atmosphere, and ethnic diversity, represented something more primal and primitive. Trachtenberg in summing up the meaning of the Fair concludes that the

White City seemed to have settled the question of the true and real meaning of America. It seemed... the victory of elites in business, politics and culture over the dissident but divided voices of labor, farmers, immigrants, blacks and women. Elite culture installed itself as official doctrine... claiming dominion over the “low” confined to the outskirts of the Midway. In retrospect, the Fair has seen not only a culmination of the efforts of ruling groups since the Civil War to win hegemony over the emerging national culture but a prophetic symbol of the coming defeat of Populism and its alternative culture, the alternative America it proposed.²²

²¹ Ibid. pp. 212

²² Ibid. pp. 231

Robert Rydell builds on this theme, viewing early American fairs as expressions of an emerging imperial ambition based on widely held racist assumptions which find full expression at the World's Columbian Exposition. Rydell claims that official messages reinforced generally held ideological presumptions that helped lay the groundwork for future American colonial expansion. Writing in the post-colonial period, Rydell is seeking to discover the ideological roots of America's own imperial history, at the precise moment it had completed its American conquests and was about to embark on its first overseas expansion.

Rydell is best known for his *All the World's a Fair* (1984), a study of American world's fairs from 1876 to 1915. Yet an earlier article "The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893: Racist Underpinnings of a Utopian Artifact", published in 1978, focuses more specifically on the Chicago fair and is more pertinent to this discussion. In this article, Rydell acknowledges that the central message of the World's Columbian Exposition was American progress and states that progress can only be determined by comparing American achievements to those of others. Rydell argues that the White City and the Midway were locked in a binary relationship where each defined the other. If the White City represented America, embodying the highest moral and cultural achievements of civilization to date, the Midway with its various ethnological displays of peoples from other nations provided a convenient racial yardstick with which to measure the difference.²³ Rydell claims that the Harvard professor, Frederick Putnum, who was put in charge of the Department of Ethnology

²³Robert W. Rydell, "The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893: Racist Underpinnings of a Utopian Artifact," *Journal of American Culture*, Wiley Periodicals Inc. Summer (1978), pp.255

and Archaeology had originally conceived of ethnological exhibitions as being educational and dignified presentations, but that their location on the Midway Plaisance, largely under commercial management, immediately degraded them, turning them into a source of amusement and reinforcing the stereotypes of non-white peoples as primitive, barbaric or childlike.²⁴

Racial prejudice was well entrenched in American society before the Exposition but Rydell argues that the endorsement of these ethnological displays, by Putnam and others, lent scientific authority to the presumptions of the age. American anthropologists such as Lewis Henry Morgan, building on the ideas of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, had argued that European civilization was the pinnacle of human evolutionary progress, representing humanity's highest biological, moral and technological achievement.²⁵ These ideas had been appropriated by Americans and were commonly held beliefs, rationalizing both the extermination of Native American societies and the slavery and segregation of African-Americans. Putnam himself seemed to endorse such notions when he wrote that the underlying purpose of his exhibits were to portray the stages of the development of man from prehistoric times to the present.²⁶ All this contributed to the perception of other races through the lens of white superiority. Rydell points out that this racial ideology found many explicit expressions in newspaper reports and other contemporary accounts and may actually have influenced the arrangement of the exhibits on the Midway. He quotes Denton Snider, a contemporary literary critic

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 271

²⁵ Elizabeth Prine Pauls, "Cultural Evolution", Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008 at <https://www.britannica.com/topic/cultural-evolution>

²⁶ Ibid. pp.269

who suggested that the Midway was organized as a “sliding scale of humanity” with the Teutonic and Celtic races closest to the White City, the Muslim and Asian races in the centre and the “savage races” of African and Native American at the farthest point from the White City.

Undoubtedly the best way of looking at these races is to behold them in the ascending scale, in the progressive movement; thus we can march forward with them starting with the lowest specimens of humanity, and reaching continually upward to the highest stage. In that way we move in harmony with the thought of evolution and not with that of the lapse or fall.²⁷

Although Rydell sets up the White city and the Midway Plaisance in opposition to each other; one cultured the other crude, one ordered, the other chaotic, one civilized, the other barbaric, he concludes that they are two sides of the same American coin; “a coin minted in racism in which the forbidden desires of whites were projected onto dark-skinned peoples, who consequently had to be degraded in order for an American purity to be maintained.”²⁸

Ethnological Exhibits

Curtis Hinsley's *The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893*, focuses on the relationship between the fairgoer and the participants of foreign and ethnological presentations. Hinsley identifies the two traditions of presentation for the display of human novelties as that of the German animal trainer Carl Hagenbeck who toured

²⁷ Denton J. Snider, *World's Fair Studies*, (Chicago: Sigma Publishing Co.,1895) pp.255-257, quoted in Rydell, pp.269

²⁸ Rydell, pp.271

Greenland Eskimos and Lapps through Europe in the 1870's and that of Phineas T. Barnum who as early as 1853, began presenting human oddities as well as exotic foreign 'primitives' and American Indian groups as 'sideshows' to his museums and circuses. Hinsley suggests that the difference between these two traditions is that the first was originally intended as public education while the second was for entertainment. However, both approaches proved to be highly profitable and by the time of the World's Columbian Exposition, the distinction between them was so blurred as to become virtually indistinguishable. On examining the relationship between the public and the people on display, Hinsley suggests that there was inevitably a distance and an awkwardness between the observer and the observed but that both sides recognized that the relationship was essentially commercial and that the fee paid licensed the intrusion and voyeurism of the observer. Hinsley concludes that the "magic of trade and exchange promised to resolve the troubling questions of human difference" and that public curiosity about other people was "mediated by the marketplace" which rationalized and legitimized the encounter.²⁹

In "Village Performance: Villages at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, 1893", Gertrude Scott undertakes one of the most interesting and effective approaches to understanding the identity, and character of the inhabitants of the ethnological villages at the fair, as well as the attitudes and responses of

²⁹ Curtis Hinsley, *The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893*, in Ivan Karp, and Steven D Lavine, (eds.) *Exhibiting Cultures: the Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991) pp.363

³¹ Gertrude Scott, *Village Performance: Villages at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, 1893*, PhD Dissertation, New York University, 1991, pp.23

audiences. Reacting against the methodologies and conclusions of earlier commentators, whose “studies take a theoretical approach” and “tend to select from the material those elements that support their underlying theories,” she embarks on a comprehensive study of each of the nineteen “ethnological villages” at the Exposition, carefully assembling and analyzing primary documents, such as fair guides and newspaper reports to determine what the villages looked like, who their inhabitants were, where they came from, what visitors saw there and how both the villagers and observers responded to each other.³⁰ Scott subjects each village to similar categories of analysis: village environment; including grounds, building structures, décor, and performance space; performances, including any activity presented to an audience either formal or informal, and perspective, including any response to the performances or the aesthetics of the village environment, as well as the attitudes of the audience towards issues of race or ethnic difference. Scott also provides the background for each concession; who ran it, how it came to be, and who was recruited to be a part of it. She applies her methodology across the spectrum of exhibits from the European Villages representing Germany, Austria, and Ireland, the Asian exhibits of the Japanese and Chinese, mid-eastern villages from Egypt, Algeria and Turkey, the Javanese and South Sea Island villages, the Dahomey village from Africa and those of the Lapps, Labrador Inuit and various exhibits featuring Native Americans.

What Scott finds is the extraordinary diversity, not only of culture but of sophistication and intent. Each village was unique in its history and mode of

presentation. Some offered traditional folk music and dance, and were essentially meeting places for American immigrants. Others recreated foreign environments and gave the illusion of foreign travel. Still others presented villages of “primitive”, “semi-civilized people” who demonstrated their life skills and were presented for their ethnological value. Some village inhabitants were seasoned professional performers, their time in Chicago, just one stop of an extended tour. Others had been recruited at the last moment and were completely unprepared for the demands and expectations placed upon them both by village managers and the public at large. And there were those who were simply fake; recruited from the streets of Chicago to fool the gullible. What Scott achieves is the breakdown of the monolithic nature that has characterized the analytical category of the ‘other’ as it pertains to the World’s Columbian Exposition. Each village embodies a unique experience, the differences being the key to its identity; each ethnic group having its own history prior to the fair, a different experience at the Fair and different notions of its own purpose, power and relationship to its audience. Although overarching narratives such as hegemony, colonialism, and racism may inform the general experience, Scott argues that it will often obscure the complexity and uniqueness of the individual experience, which in the case of the World’s Columbian Exposition did not conform to any single construct.

Heterotopia

Another complex and nuanced approach to understanding ethnological exhibits at the World's Columbian Exposition can be found in Rosemarie Bank's essay *Representing History: Performing the Columbian Exposition* (2002). Bank is a theatre historian interested in performance, representation and interpretation but disinclined to promote any one point of view over another, instead seeking a model that accommodates all of them as co-existing in time, space and value. She begins with the idea of the White City being, itself, as performance; a temporary illusion created not of stone but plaster, carrying messages for its intended audience. Within that performance are other performances with other intentions sometimes complementary and sometimes contradictory. The defining characteristic of the fair is the multi-dimensionality of both performance and interpretation. Bank looks at the fair as neither a utopian site suggesting an ideal future that benefits its citizens through art, culture and the products of industry nor as a dystopic site featuring exhibits that were fundamentally racist, but accommodates both these interpretations and much more. Bank challenges the legacy and legitimacy of binary thinking; the White City versus the Midway, the colonizer versus the colonized, the civilized versus the savage. All representations are performances open to interpretation and whether those performances are authentic or fake, whether those interpretations are true or false, they equally transmit ideas, attitudes and behaviours that become real in themselves.³¹

³¹ Rosemarie Bank, *Representing History: Performing the Columbian Exposition* *Theater Journal* Vol. 54 Number 4 December 2002, pp.590

Bank borrows from Michel Foucault the concept of 'heterotopia' in which multiple representations co-exist simultaneously, often contesting the same space; the authentic, the false, the educational, the entertaining, the state sponsored, the fair sponsored, the commercially produced.³² She is suggesting that all these points of view are valid or not depending on where you look or when and who is doing the looking. Even more complicated than performance were the predispositions and prejudices of millions of fairgoers who received and interpreted these messages individually. Bank suggests they were neither as naïve nor as passive as other commentators have suggested. She retells the tale of the public re-enactment of Columbus' discovery of America in which Lakota from Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, in full plains regalia, play the role of welcoming Arawaks; Indians playing other Indians. She finds it difficult to believe that audiences would not have understood the performative nature of the event. However there was often a blurred line between "the actual and the assumed, the real and the simulated."³³ In the case of American Indian representations at the fair, Bank believes that they were willing to occupy most of the spaces available to them, in response to commercial opportunity. Interpretations and questions of authenticity were not their concern and audience responses would have been varied and complex. In the same vein, Bank would contest the notion that any one message could dominate the fair, let alone be an effective instrument for establishing cultural hegemony. She argues instead that it was a crowded and conflicted site with too many messages vying simultaneously for the audiences' attention for any one of them to become paramount. Indeed other

³² Ibid. pp.599

³³ Ibid. pp.606

commentators have pointed out that the American fairgoer in Chicago in 1893 showed a definite preference for the adventure, unpredictability and entertainment of the Midway over the calm, considered and cultured vision of the White City.³⁴

Resistance and Agency

The final historiographical work I wish to consider is Melissa Reinhart's *To Hell With the Wigs: Native American Representation and Resistance at the World's Columbian Exposition*, (2012), which is concerned with understanding the experiences of Exposition performers; particularly those of Native Americans. Reinhart accepts the 'rampant exploitation' of indigenous peoples and of the ingrained racism that was the basis of both their presentation to a mass audience and of the perceptions of that audience. However, like Scott and Bank, she is interested in nuance; the particular rather than the general. Reinhart agrees that Native Americans were presented within the dialectic of the civilized and the primitive in the context of the White City, and perhaps even worse as the trophies of American conquest, but she maintains that they were neither submissive nor fundamentally victims and that they resisted the stereotypes and presented their own narratives wherever possible.

Native American representation was a battleground at the Fair. Anthropologists such as Frederick Putnam and Franz Boas wanted to present respectful presentations of pre-Columbian culture as a means of demonstrating cultural development, while Thomas Morgan, the Commissioner of the United States Office of Indian Affairs, wanted no demonstrations of traditional culture but rather

³⁴ Julie K. Rose, "World's Columbian Exposition, Reactions to the Fair", <http://xroads.virginia.edu/MA96/WCE/title.html>, 1996, pp.10

an Indian School exhibit where Native American children, stripped of their 'barbarian' past could be seen on the progressive road to assimilation. Neither of these presentations addressed the realities of Native American life at the turn of the century. Nor in fact did the presentations that proved the most successful – the commercial re-enactments of rituals, songs and dances, which catered to the expectations and imaginations of fairgoers. This came together in its most sensational form in “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show and Congress of Rough Riders of the World”, which, although technically not a part of the official fair, had set itself up just outside its gates and ran for its duration, performing to over 5 million people and grossing over a million dollars.³⁵ Although there were other exhibitions of Native Americans both on the fairgrounds and on the Midway Plaisance, the Wild West show employed nearly 200 Native Americans, mostly Lakota, and made the deepest and most lasting impressions on the American imagination. Reinhart maintains that although the show was sensational and underscored indigenous defeat, it provided a counter narrative to the official view of the Office of Indian Affairs demonstrating the resilience of indigenous people and showing off their equestrian and sharp shooting skills.³⁶

Reinhart points out that most Native American representatives attended the fair voluntarily, were there for the commercial opportunity that the event provided, and often determined the terms of their contracts. In the case of the Wild West Show, Native American performers were treated with respect and were well paid.

³⁵Melissa Reinhart , To Hell With the Wigs: Native American Representation and Resistance at the World’s Columbian Exposition, *The American Indian Quarterly* Volume 36, No.4, Fall 2012, pp.421

³⁶ Ibid. pp.420

Furthermore, many enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate and (in the case of some who had actually participated in the events re-enacted) to relive a past when they were still independent and free. Reinhart agrees with Hinsley that their role was not to educate but to perform and that their relationship to the fair and its audience was principally commercial. For the most part, they were able to assert some independence and agency; defying the submissive roles they were expected to play. In her discussion of Native American stereotypes, Reinhart addresses an idea intrinsic to understanding any of the ethnological representations at the fair which is the divergence between fact and fiction, performer and performance, perception and reality. Clearly as the commercial triumphs over the educational, there are demands to play directly to the imagination and expectations of the audience and the sensational is promoted at the expense of the authentic. Throughout Reinhart's work is the recognition, within the context of the fair, of Native American independence, and agency. The subaltern of post-colonial history is not the stereotypical silent victim but someone who has, within limits, the capacity to act and make free choices.

In summarizing the American historiography of the World's Columbian Exposition, I return to Reid Badger's observation of the White City as a potent symbol of its time. Although his writing predated much of the subsequent work which I have discussed here, it was prescient in the observation that

many individuals at the time, and many since then, found little difficulty... in selectively focusing upon this or that symbolic aspect of the fair to support a cultural theme or theory with which they were particularly concerned. Thus

the Columbian exposition could provide dramatic evidence for criticizing American culture as materialistic, repressive, senile, escapist, imperialistic, unjust, naïve, and imitative among other things, or for celebrating it as idealistic, liberating, mature, realistic, humane, progressive, powerful, spirited, and original.³⁷

In short, the World's Columbian Exposition was a symbol of its time, whose meaning continues to be, examined, debated and contested.

A Brief Note on Labrador Historiography

Although Labrador Inuit were cast in the role of authentic “primitives” at the World's Columbian Exposition, they were nothing of the sort. Labrador Inuit were among the first North American indigenous people to make contact with Europeans and there are numerous documents relating to them. Although these consist almost entirely of the records of colonial administrators, missionaries and traders and most often reflect the perspectives and preoccupations of those institutions, they contain invaluable information on Inuit life and culture throughout the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. Of these I have consulted principally the records of the Moravian Mission, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Methodist Church. First and foremost among these are the voluminous records of the Moravian Mission, an evangelical and commercial organization whose missionaries and traders, living at various settlements along the coast, engaged Inuit across the full spectrum of spiritual and temporal affairs on a daily basis for almost 200 years. Although Moravian records

³⁷ Badger, pp.122

reflect the organization's religious agenda, they provide valuable insights into Inuit daily life on an ongoing basis and particularly, when conflicts arose between Inuit and missionaries, they document Inuit opinions and perspectives on a variety of social and economic issues. The meticulously maintained church books have also preserved an invaluable record of Inuit births, baptisms, marriages and deaths that are indispensable in tracing the outlines of individual lives.

The Hudson's Bay Company records are more narrowly focused on corporate trade issues and are less directly concerned with Inuit. However, correspondence between the Chief Factor of the Labrador District and the HBC Board of Directors in London or Winnipeg, throughout the nineteenth century provide some insights into the territory and its people. Further to this, the reports and journals of individual trading posts often provide detail of economic conditions and the general welfare of the people and provide commentary on the comings and goings of individuals, the quantity and quality of their produce and the state of their accounts.

The records of the Methodist Church are more sporadic reflecting their on-again off-again presence in Labrador in the 19th century. Nevertheless, these documents are important for the insights they provide into Inuit life in Esquimaux Bay or Hamilton Inlet, known as Aivektok among Inuit.

In addition to these primary sources there is a growing body of contemporary literature concerning Labrador Inuit culture and history which include significant work by J. Garth Taylor, J.K. Hiller, David Zimmerly, Susan Kaplan, Carol Brice-Bennett, Marianne P. Stopp, Hans Rollman, Kurt Korneski, William Fitzhugh, Lisa Rankin, and Peter Whitridge.

At the World's Columbian Exposition, there was an ongoing tension between who Inuit were thought to be and who they were; between fact and fiction, perception and reality. This thesis examines that tension and brings together both American and Labrador historiographies in order to discuss the experience of Labrador Inuit at the World's Columbian Exposition and to clarify the differences between false representations as promoted by the fair's authorities, the scientific community and commercial interests, and their true identity as defined by their Labrador history, culture and experience. I have argued that Inuit identity is a complex matter in itself; that those who comprised the Esquimaux Village had been recruited from different regions within Labrador and had different histories and experiences. An appreciation of these histories broadens our understanding of the Esquimaux Village people, accounts for the misunderstandings that occur in Chicago and explains the different responses of Inuit to the indignities they faced.

The Inuit voice is largely absent from the historical record and it is difficult to accurately reconstruct the thoughts, motives and feelings of Inuit themselves, during their time in America. Much of what occurred comes to us is by way of newspaper reports and these most often reveal more about the observer than the observed. Despite this, there are traces, clues and insights; particularly when Inuit act to defend themselves and protect their interests much as they would have done in their homelands.

The thesis is presented in three parts, all dealing with issues surrounding representations of Labrador Inuit at the end of the 19th Century. The first part focuses on the experience of Labrador Inuit in Chicago, set within the historical and

intellectual context of the time. It explores the fictions and imaginings projected onto the people of the Esquimaux Village and examines the rebellion that takes place against injustices encountered within the ethnological exhibit. Through an analysis of the World's Columbian Exposition and its agenda, the prevailing intellectual environment, and the attitudes of the press and public, it explores who Inuit were thought to be.

The second part explores Inuit identity in its Labrador context in order to understand who the people really were. Inuit, who made up the Esquimaux Village, were not an homogenous group but were composed of families recruited from different parts of Labrador with different histories and different experiences of European colonial institutions. As well, the response of Inuit to the problems they faced in Chicago was not universal. Different people responded in different ways. I argue that to understand Inuit behaviour in Chicago, it is necessary to understand these histories which provide clues as to why some Inuit rebelled while others did not.

While some Inuit returned to Labrador after the World's Columbian Exposition, most remained in America for another year participating in other ethnological exhibits. The third part of the thesis returns to the narrative of Labrador Inuit in America and details their experiences in America after the Chicago fair. Clearly their resourcefulness, adaptability and the lessons learned in Chicago served them well in these later ventures, as they gained more favourable terms of employment, better living conditions and the respect of their employers. The thesis is supplemented by three appendices. The first is the original passenger list for the

“Evelena” most likely prepared for US Customs. It is a confusing document due to the misspelling of names and on occasion a misleading assembly of family groups. Appendix 2 is a reworking of this document with corrections. The final appendix, entitled “Postscript”, consists of a brief exploration of what happened to the people after their return to Labrador. While the purpose of this is largely to complete the narrative, it also serves to remind us that the Inuit who attended the fair were not a single generic unit. The collective that comprised the Esquimaux Village was made up of individuals from up and down the Labrador coast, each living and experiencing his or her life in their own specific time and place.

Chapter 2

CHICAGO AND THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION

Celebrations... impose a silence upon the events that they ignore, and they fill that silence with narratives of power about the event they celebrate.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past, Power and the Production of History* ¹

In 1890, Chicago won the right to host the World's Columbian Exposition, a national celebration of the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of America. By the time it opened on 1 May 1893, the White City, as the fairground was called, consisted of a vast complex of massive exhibition pavilions, housing thousands of America's most innovative industrial, technological and consumer products. In addition, there were art galleries, science exhibits, lecture halls and a separate entertainment park known as the Midway Plaisance made up of animal shows, amusement rides, and ethnological exhibits of people and races from all over the world. Among the many ethnological exhibits at the fair was the "Esquimaux Village", consisting of 59 Inuit from the coast of Labrador. This chapter sets the fair and its ethnological displays in historical context. It briefly discusses the meteoric rise of Chicago as the gateway to the American Midwest and the attendant rise of its political and economic elite who would develop the fair. Although this elite had little direct concern with ethnological exhibits, their prevailing ideology determined the character of the fair and they would be responsible for hiring those who created the

¹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past, Power and the Production of History*, (Boston:Beacon Press,1995) pp.118

scientific framework in which Inuit, among others, were placed. Fundamental to this ideology was the promotion of a national heroic narrative that lauded the achievement of American continental expansion and ignored the processes that had made it possible – the conquest and destruction of indigenous nations and slavery.

Chicago's Elite

Chicago had fought hard for the honour of hosting the fair, determined to establish its status as one of America's preeminent cities. It had succeeded largely as a result of the deep pockets and dogged determination of its investors. A committee of prominent citizens including Lyman Gage, president of the First National Bank of Chicago; meat mogul Philip Armour; industrialist George Pullman; financier Charles Schwab and farm implement manufacturer Cyrus McCormick Jr. had, together with others, raised an initial \$5 million in stock for the project. When the United States Congress made the award conditional on an additional \$5 million, Gage raised the sum within 24 hours, securing financial commitments from the likes of W.E. Hale, President of the Hale Elevator Company, O.W. Potter, president of the Illinois Steel Company, Stuyvesant Fish, president of the Illinois Central Railroad Company, and W.J. Huiskamp, owner of the Chicago Times.² The shareholders of the World's Columbian Exposition stock subscription were the who's who of Chicago's business elite. No doubt, they were motivated by the substantial business opportunities that the fair would offer. Hotels, steel mills, railways, banks, and printing presses all stood to profit from the construction and staging of the fair. But the fair was more than a simple commercial prospect. It was an opportunity for those who had grown

² Julie K. Rose, *World's Columbian Exposition: The Official Fair, A History*, xroads.virginia.edu/~ma96/wce/history.htm, 1996 pp.1

wealthy through the expropriation of the American midwest, to host a great international event which would provide them with the platform to recognize and celebrate their own achievement, having contributed so significantly to the extraordinary growth and prosperity of their city and nation.³

The Rise of Chicago

Chicago had its beginnings as a Euro-American settlement with the single homestead of Jean Baptiste Point du Sable in 1779. He had established himself at the mouth of the Chicago River to trade with the indigenous people of the region; the Potawatomi. In 1803, the United States army built the garrison of Fort Dearborn on the same site and after the War of 1812, it became a centre for the American fur trade.⁴ A hybrid village of American, French and Potawatomi developed around the post and prospered until the 1830's when the United States government, in response to indigenous-settler disturbances in other parts of Illinois moved to consolidate its control of the remaining Indian territory in the state and, in 1832, forced the Potawatomi to relinquish all claims to the region and move to new lands, west of the Mississippi.⁵

From that time forward, Chicago began to see rapid growth stimulated by talk of developing the Illinois and Michigan canal which would link the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River, making Chicago, at the head of the canal, the natural funnel

³ Lisa Krissoff Boehm, *Popular Culture and the Enduring Myth of Chicago 1871-1968*, (Routledge Press, 2004) pp.50

⁴ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis, Chicago and the Great West*, (W.W. Norton and Co., 1991) pp.26

⁵ Ibid.pp.29

for east-west trade.⁶ Construction of the canal began in 1836, and within a year the population of the town surpassed four thousand as canal labourers, lumber merchants, land speculators, and lawyers took up residence in the town.⁷ But it was the railway that was to transform Chicago from a small town into a metropolitan centre with an extended reach into the rich hinterlands of the American midwest, as far south as Kansas and Missouri, as far west as Iowa and Nebraska and as far north as Minnesota and Wisconsin. The railway would transform city and country alike, binding the two in a symbiotic relationship; providing farmers with inexpensive access to markets for their grains and livestock and emerging city businesses with access to new customers for its lumber and manufactured products.⁸ The first railway established itself in Chicago in 1848 and by the 1850's over 30 lines had entered the city. The main lines from the east ended in Chicago and those heading west began in Chicago. By the 1860's the city had access to a vast hinterland and had become the nation's principal trans-shipment centre.⁹

By mid century an increasing number of entrepreneurs with links to eastern capital markets were attracted to the city, establishing new businesses and factories, building stockyards, and grain elevators, sawmills, and furniture factories in response to the demands of ever growing numbers of immigrants occupying lands recently cleared of their original inhabitants. Access to nearby supplies of coal and iron ore led to the development of steel mills and an array of factories that produced

⁶ Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago, Volume 1, The Beginning of a City, 1673-1848*, (University of Chicago Press 2006) pp.46

⁷ Ibid. pp.49

⁸ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pp.92

⁹ History of Chicago, *Emergence as a Transportation Hub*, (Wikipedia.org)

rails, bridge trusses, streetcars, locomotives, and farm machinery.¹⁰ By 1880, Chicago had become, after New York, the second most important manufacturing centre in the United States and home to some its wealthiest businessmen. Chicago's ascent happened with remarkable speed. In 1830, the city had a population of just 70 people; by 1880, the population was 508,185, and by 1890, it had doubled to 1,208,669.¹¹ By far most of these residents were new immigrants to America, seeking respite from political or economic oppression in their European homelands and desperate for employment in order to establish a new life.

Many of the city's businessmen were also immigrants, but from the eastern states rather than Europe. Cyrus Hall McCormick of the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, came from Rockport County, Virginia; Gustavus Swift, patriarch of the meat processor Swift and Co., came from Sandwich, Massachusetts; George Pullman, President of the Pullman Palace Car Company, was from Brocton, New York; Philip Armour, head of the nation's largest meat packer, Armour and Co., was from Stockbridge, New York; and department store mogul Marshall Field came from Massachusetts.¹² These were some of Chicago's most successful entrepreneurs who had understood the opportunities on offer in the midwest and seized the initiative to build business empires; trading in grain commodities and futures, slaughtering and packaging animals, establishing steel mills, manufacturing farm equipment and railcars or establishing large retail enterprises.

¹⁰ Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago*, Volume III, pp.155

¹¹ Board of Trade of Chicago, *Annual Report for the Year Ending December 31 1890*, (JME Jones Stationary and Printing Co.,1891), pp.138

¹² Chaim Rosenberg, *America at the Fair, Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition*, (Arcadia Publishing, 2008) pp.47

Chicago and its hinterland developed together, and fed each other's expansion; "their mutual transformations in fact expressed a single system and a single history."¹³ That said, it did not mean that all benefited equally. The new wealth of the country tended to migrate one-way; to the city, where value was added, and the economies of scale left most of the profits in the hands of the few. Those profits were based on keeping the cost of both produce and labour as low as possible.

The disparities within Chicago's emerging society in the mid-1800's were clearly apparent in the contrasting living conditions of the rich and poor. The elite lived in their custom designed mansions along the shores of Lake Michigan, or along Michigan and Prairie Avenues, well away from the business district and industrial zones.¹⁴ And, while some companies constructed modest housing for their labour force, most of Chicago's new immigrants lived in crowded and hastily constructed neighbourhoods adjacent to their places of work, where living conditions were both unpleasant and unsanitary.¹⁵ By the 1890's, it was estimated that over 49% of the Chicago's population lived in houses with at least ten occupants and as late as 1886, it was estimated that over a third had no toilet facilities. Raw sewerage was a fact of everyday life and a major concern for Chicago's overburdened health authorities. Outbreaks of smallpox and cholera were common occurrences. In 1882, half the children of Chicago died before the age of five.¹⁶ In the City's Department of Health Report for 1882, the housing inspector made the following observation: "The whole

¹³ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pp.368

¹⁴ Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago*, Volume III, pp. 58

¹⁵ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pp.347

¹⁶ Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago*, Volume III, pp. 55-56

number of occupants of tenement houses is about equal to the foreign population, not because of their nationality, but because it is the wage workers of all nationalities who are compelled to occupy tenement houses.”¹⁷ This observation pointed to the root cause of both the housing and health problem; the working conditions of the majority of Chicago’s population.

Class Conflict

While Chicago’s expanding industrial and manufacturing base demanded workers in ever greater numbers, management completely controlled the terms of employment and working conditions. Hours were long, wages were low and engagement was unreliable, subject to fluctuating rates of pay, changing modes of production, and uncertain economic conditions. Unpredictable business cycles and depressions often precipitated widespread wage cuts or lay-offs¹⁸.

Business management would employ a variety of tactics to keep wages low. They would replace workers with new immigrants desperate for any position and willing to work for less money, and for similar reasons they would employ women and children. At the same time they were constantly looking for ways to make their operations faster and cheaper. Chicago businesses had a reputation for innovation, among the most famous was the introduction of the assembly line for the butchering of meat, which broke down the process into many smaller stages and enabled the companies to replace skilled butchers with unskilled labourers at cheaper wages.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Chicago Department of Health Report 1881 and 1882*, pp.47 quoted in Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago, Volume III*, pp. 56

¹⁸ *U.S.History in Context 1878-1899*, <http://ic.galegroup.com>, pp.6

¹⁹ Richard Schneirov, Shelton Stromquist, Nick Salvatore, editors *The Pullman Strike and the Crisis of the 1890's*. Cornell University, 1999.

The breaking of traditional craft guilds, with their systems of apprenticeship, gave employers greater control of the production process and put ever greater pressure on workers to make an adequate living.²⁰

At the time, industries were largely unregulated and most workers unorganized and unprotected. The organization of unions was opposed by management with whatever tools it could muster, asserting its powers to arbitrarily hire and fire, especially if workers showed union sympathies or questioned company policies and practices. Business owners strongly believed that labour's engagement should be determined by the laws of supply and demand and maintained their right to hire and fire whoever and whenever they wanted. Philip Armour, head of Chicago's largest meat packing company, put it succinctly when he said: "As long as we are heads of our own houses, we shall employ what men we choose, and when we can't, why we'll nail up our doors – that's all."²¹ Despite this practice or perhaps because of it, workers fought back, seeking better wages, job security, better working conditions and shorter hours. Chicago became a central battleground between labour and capital with both sides becoming increasingly militant.

Throughout the 1870's and 1880's, American business responded to economic downturns by cutting wages and laying off workers. Labour responded by organizing. The period saw a sustained growth in the number and sizes of unions and in the number of strikes, protests and demonstrations.²² Between 1887 and

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Encyclopedia of Chicago, *Anti-Unionism*, www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org

²² Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago*, Volume III, pp.245

1894, the United States Commissioner of Labour reported over 528 strikes in the city, costing 282,611 employees nearly \$9,000,000 in wages and their employers another \$5,000,000.²³ Chicago quickly became the vanguard of the American labour movement and, with the introduction of socialist and anarchist factions, a centre of radicalism. Chicago's capitalists responded using every tool at their disposal, including firings, black-listings, lock-outs, strikebreakers, court injunctions, spies, and private security agencies such as the Chicago based, Pinkerton Detective Agency.²⁴

In 1877, a series of strikes in the railway sector in Pennsylvania and Virginia received sympathetic support in Chicago. Walk-outs began throughout the railway industry and freight transportation was virtually shut down threatening to paralyze the city's economy. As strikers roamed throughout the industrial sector, violent confrontations occurred between demonstrators and police, culminating in running street battles. By the time peace was restored, at least 13 people had been killed and many more injured.²⁵ The events had a polarizing effect in Chicago with much of the press and public turning against labour and advocating greater police powers to suppress the violence. At the same time, suppression of demonstrations provided militants with stronger arguments for more radical action.²⁶

Chicago's developing reputation for class conflict and violence gained further notoriety in 1886 when workers striking for an 8 hour work day at the McCormick

²³ U.S. Commissioner of Labour *Tenth Annual Report, 1894*, I,22, quoted in Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago*, Volume III, pp.298

²⁴ Encyclopedia of Chicago, *Anti-Unionism*, www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org

²⁵ Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago*, Volume III, pp.251

²⁶ Ibid. pp.252

Harvesting Machine Company, one of the largest suppliers of agricultural implements in the country, held a rally outside the factory, protesting the use of police in support of strikebreakers. At the end of the work-shift angry protesters confronted the strikebreakers and police fired into the crowd killing two workers. The next day a protest rally was held at Haymarket Square. Just as labour leaders were finishing their speeches, police arrived, ordering the demonstrators to disperse. Almost immediately someone threw a bomb, killing one policeman outright and mortally wounding six others. Gunfire was exchanged and within a few minutes, four demonstrators were dead and another seventy injured. Blame centred on the anarchists, and 7 people were subsequently arrested and brought to trial. Despite questionable evidence, controversial witnesses and a flawed legal process, all 7 were convicted and 4 were later executed.²⁷

These events contributed to Chicago's national image as a violent and dangerous place, the inevitable result of unbridled capitalism, radical unionism, uncontrolled immigration and unplanned urbanization. In the public mind, Chicago seemed to embody all the negative characteristics of the new realities of modern urban America. It was an image that Chicago's business leaders were determined to change.

²⁷Ibid. pp.276-289

Civilization's Progress

The pretext for the fair was the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's "discovery" of America and its stated purpose was the celebration of "civilization's progress." But from the beginning it was intended to be a national celebration trumpeting American achievement and all that had been accomplished in America since the Columbus landing. This was an idea that the fair's organizers were deeply invested in. Nothing illustrated American achievement more demonstrably than the speedy evolution of Chicago, which had, within living memory, replaced an Indigenous village with a modern industrial city. Its business leaders were closely associated with this development and if the fair was to celebrate American achievement, then they intended that their own city and their own accomplishments would be closely linked to the narrative. Above all, they wanted the fair to embody class and culture to counter eastern assertions that Chicago was just a cattle town lacking all refinement and that its citizens were only interested in making money.²⁸ These considerations would determine much of the fair's character and development.

Immediately after winning the right to host the fair, the City of Chicago established a Board of Directors, known as the Directory, to plan and carry out the enterprise. In a glaring demonstration of its lack of confidence in Chicago's ability to pull off the project, the United States Congress demanded that a National Commission be established to oversee the work of the Directory. This was deeply resented by Chicago's management team who believed their abilities and resources

²⁸ Ibid. pp. 33

were second to none.²⁹ Despite the interference, and a tight time schedule, the Directory moved quickly to realize its vision.

Its first important undertaking was to select a site and hire architects to design and supervise the construction of the fair buildings. They chose two local architects Daniel Burnham and Elias Root to oversee the project as well as landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead who was to develop a system of lagoons and waterways on the chosen site of Jackson Park.³⁰ Burnham and Root were accomplished architects whose innovative building designs featured in Chicago's contemporary urban landscape but instead of using 'native' American designs, they turned to traditional European architectural forms associated with much older civilizations. The buildings were to be grandiose and aristocratic, based on the French Beaux Art style, itself derivative of earlier Greek and Roman forms. The fourteen principal buildings were constructed of steel girders overlaid with staff and stucco and decorated with elaborate facades of columns, arches, and domes. Designed as temporary structures, the buildings were nevertheless intended to project an impression of permanence, order and splendour. They were uniformly painted white, which gave rise to the fair's popular moniker "the White City." The architectural showpiece was the Court of Honor. Its imposing buildings and pavilions, laid out around the central lagoon, connected to Lake Michigan, were adorned with fountains and statuary and illuminated at night with innovative electric lighting.

²⁹ Lisa Krissoff Boehm, *Popular Culture and the Enduring Myth of Chicago*, (New York: Routledge, 2004) pp.36

³⁰ Stanley Appelbaum, *Spectacle in the White City*, (Calla Editions, 2009) pp.3

It was an impressive achievement of local managerial and engineering skill. It took three years to complete, cost \$28 million, employed 40,000 labourers, and used among many other things, 18,000 tons of steel, 75 million board feet of lumber and over 120,000 incandescent lights. The 14 main buildings had a total floor space of 63 million square feet in which to display over 65,000 exhibits.³¹ When it was completed it stood in stark contrast to the city outside its gates; an idyllic urban landscape complete with clean parks and waterways, electric lights, an elevated rail transport system, modern sanitation facilities, fire hydrants and clean drinking water.³² It was an extraordinary vision, melding the achievements of the past with a promise for the future.

The creation of the White City out of nothing but the swamp of Jackson Park was seen as something of a metaphor for America itself ; the proverbial 'City on the Hill' carved from the wilderness. Speaking at the fair's dedication ceremony, the President of the Directory, Harlow Higginbotham, lauded the accomplishment:

But yesterday these surrounding acres composed a dismal morass – a resting place for wild fowls in their migratory flight. Today they stand transformed by art and science into a beauty and grandeur unrivalled by any other spot on earth. Herein we behold a miniature representation of that marvelous material development, and that unprecedented growth of national

³¹ Julie K. Rose, *World's Columbian Exposition: The Official Fair, A History*, xroads.virginia.edu/~ma96/wce/history.htm, 1996, pp.3

³² Judith A. Adams, *The American Dream Actualized: The Glistening White City and the Lurking Shadows of the World's Columbian Exposition*, in the *World's Columbian Exposition: A Centennial Bibliographic Guide*, Ed. David J. Betuca, (Westport, CT, 1996), pp. xxiii

greatness, which, since the days of Columbus, have characterized the history of this New World.³³

In stark contrast to Chicago's harsh urban realities, the White City offered an opportunity to share in a vision of hope and harmony, of ambition and national purpose.

If the classical architecture of the Court of Honor suggested the achievement of American civilization, the irrefutable evidence of its ingenuity and accomplishment was on full display inside the massive exhibition halls and pavilions, demonstrating that in its genius for innovation and enterprise, the new world was indeed eclipsing the old. Assembled for all to see were the latest products, inventions and merchandise of American industry; telephones, typewriters, power looms, electric lights and generators, sewing machines, threshers, pumps, locomotives, and early prototypes of motion pictures and the automobile. These were the proof of progress, the fruits of American civilization. In the fair's dedicatory oration, Henry Waterson attributed American predominance in technology to the national character:

We are a plain practical people. We are a race of inventors and workers, not of poets and artists. We have led the world's movement, not its thought. Our deeds are to be found not upon frescoed walls or in ample libraries but in the machine shop where the spindles sing, and the looms thunder, on the open plain where the steam plow, the reaper and the mower contend with one another in friendly war against the obdurances of nature; in the magic of

³³ *Dedicatory and Opening Ceremonies of the World's Columbian Exposition*, pp.157

electricity, as it penetrates the darkest caverns with its irresistible power and light.³⁴

The American genius for invention, for commerce, and for technology on display in exhibit after exhibit was cause for civic as well as national pride. The pragmatic, hard working legacy of the early American pioneer was duplicated in the new frontier of manufacturing and technology.

Perhaps nothing illustrated the pre-eminence of this American achievement more than the spectacular development of electricity. Its power and potential were on full display at the Chicago fair. Thousands of lights lit up the fairgrounds at night, giant searchlights swept the sky, and a quiet elevated intramural electric railway transported visitors around the fairgrounds. There were displays of telephones and telegraphs, electric tools, conveyor belts, and elevators. And for the ease of living and the comfort of the home, there were electric lamps, stoves, and refrigerators.³⁵

The marvel of electricity was received with fascination and delight by most visitors to the fair and probably more than any other single factor reinforced the prevailing belief of civilization's promising advance under American leadership. The English writer Robert Anderton Naylor, a visitor to the fair commented: "Perhaps the portion of the World's Exposition which America is far ahead of all competitors is the Palace of Electricity; here she is seen in her natural splendour, eclipsing by her dazzling light, every other nation."³⁶

³⁴ *Dedicatory and Opening Ceremonies of the Worlds Columbian Exposition* pp.173

³⁵ Judith A. Adams, *The American Dream Actualized*, pp. xxiii

³⁶ Naylor, Robert Anderton, *Across the Atlantic*, (The Roxburghe Press, 1893)

It was progress made manifest and a comforting vision of the future in troubling times. Robert Rydell argues that visitors' identification with American achievement helped confirm a sense of belonging among the American public who attended the fair.³⁷ It affirmed a faith in the national project and a growing confidence in American institutions and social organizations not least of which was the business sector. Alan Trachtenberg goes a step further, asserting that America's industrial products, on display in the White City, were "emblems of a beneficent future" and that the central message of the fair concerned the method of making that future "through a corporate alliance of business, culture and the state."³⁸

Regardless, the agenda of the World's Columbian Exposition was complex and clearly more than a simple celebration of the anniversary of America's discovery. Michel-Rolph Trouillot has written: "Celebrations straddle the two sides of historicity. They impose silence upon the events that they ignore and they fill that silence with narratives of power about the event they celebrate."³⁹ This was certainly true of the celebrations surrounding the World's Columbian Exposition; Columbus hardly mattered at all. The interwoven themes of American achievement and civilization's progress did not allow for any critical examination of Columbus' legacy or America's history of genocide and slavery upon which the American achievement was based. The "discovery" was merely the pretext for the American business elite to celebrate themselves as the heralds of progress and prosperity and

³⁷ Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's A Fair*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1984) pp.52

³⁸ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America, Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982) pp. 217 and 230

³⁹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, (Boston,: Beacon Press, 1995), pp.11

to reap further commercial rewards in the process. The prejudices of the fair's white organizers denied the applications of both Native Americans and African Americans for their own exhibits and excluded them from any significant representation in the White City's sterilized image of modern America, sustaining and reinforcing existing attitudes about race.⁴⁰ When it came to Native American representation at the fair, the directory passed its responsibility to one of America's leading ethnologists, Harvard professor Frederic Putnum, who it placed in charge of anthropology and all exhibits pertaining to "the science of man." Putnum's scheme for ethnological exhibits would further limit and marginalize the role of Native Americans, and other races, at the fair.

To understand the social and intellectual context in which Labrador Inuit were exhibited in Chicago, we next examine Putnam's scientific framework for ethnology at the fair, its antecedents in nineteenth century scientific philosophy and the history of ethnological displays in both Europe and America. These various intellectual and cultural developments came together at the World's Columbian Exposition and largely determined how Labrador Inuit, among others, were presented and perceived.

⁴⁰ William De Wit, James Gilbert, and Robert W. Rydell, *Grand Illusions: Chicago's World's Fair of 1893*, (Chicago Historical Society, 1993) pp. 145

Chapter 3

ETHNOLOGY AND THE FAIR

There is nothing barbaric or savage in these nations... what happens is that everyone calls barbaric that which is alien to his customs.
Michel de Montaigne¹

Inuit in Chicago were presented and perceived in particular ways. These were determined by a number of ideological presumptions, philosophical ideas and cultural trends that were well established in European and American society by 1892. In the end, no single intellectual framework defined precisely the way indigenous and foreign cultures were portrayed at the fair. Rather, several traditions met and mingled there, some complementary, some contradictory. All these traditions were however deeply rooted in colonialist imaginings of the “other” and dependent on the public’s insatiable curiosity, which they both fed and sated. This chapter considers some of the central threads within this complex collection of ideas, presumptions, and ideologies that figured prominently in the representation of Inuit at the fair.

Putnum’s Vision

Frederic Ward Putnum, Curator of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University, was the first to suggest that the World’s Columbian Exposition include a comprehensive “ethnographical exhibition.” He had been impressed by the Village Negre, an assembly of over 400 indigenous

¹ Michel de Montaigne quoted in Jan Carew, “Columbus and the Origins of Racism in the Americas”, *Race and Class*, XXIX, 4 (1988), pp.4

people from various French colonies, which took place at L'Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889. He outlined his own ideas in an article written for the *Chicago Daily Tribune* and published on 31 May 1890.

To all who visited the World's Fair in Paris last year, the ethnographical department proved to be one of great attraction.... In this connection cannot Chicago secure and place in the Exposition a perfect ethnographical exhibition of the past and present peoples of America and thus make an important contribution to science, which at the same time will be appropriate, as it will be the first bringing together on a grand scale of representatives of the peoples who were living on the continent when it was discovered by Columbus, and by including as thorough a representation of pre-historic times as possible, the stages of the development of man on the American continent could be spread out as an open book from which all could read.²

The fair's Directors wanted the Exposition to be a great university; a place of learning and enrichment, a forum for the arts and science as well as industry.³ To achieve this end, and counter critics, who suggested that Chicago was a cultural backwater, they undertook a number of artistic and educational programs.⁴ A Palace of Fine Arts was built with 74 galleries filled with paintings and art treasures from around the world and a World's Congress Auxiliary was established, which

² *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 31 1890.

³ Chaim M Rosenberg, *America at the Fair, Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition*, (Arcadia Publishing, 2008), pp.245

⁴ Lisa Krissoff Boehm, *Popular Culture and the Enduring Myth of Chicago*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp.33

would hold daily presentations and lectures, 5,978 in all, covering a plethora of subjects including ethics, literature, history, economics, labour, as well as a week-long ecumenical Congress of Religions.⁵ Putnum's vision for a grand ethnological exhibit was endorsed by the Directory and on 5 February 1891, he was hired to head the Department of Ethnology and Archaeology at the fair, to be known as Department, M. Putnum envisioned his exhibit as twofold; the first part was to be a comprehensive display of archaeological and cultural materials from representatives of all pre-European American cultures; the second part was to consist of living exhibits of various native American peoples occupying traditional housing, wearing traditional clothing, demonstrating crafts and performing traditional ceremonies. For Putnam, the most significant of the two was the living exhibits. So important were they, that without them, he claimed, the entire fair would be deprived of its essential meaning:

The part of the ethnological exhibit... which will be regarded as an essential display, will be the out-of-doors exhibit of the native peoples of America... for what... is more essential than to show, in their natural conditions of life, the different types of peoples who were here when Columbus was crossing the Atlantic Ocean. The great object lesson... will not be completed without their being present. Without them, the exposition will have no base. It will show

⁵ Julie K. Rose, "World's Columbian Exposition": *The Official Fair-A History*, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma96/wcw/history.html>, pp.3

the material prosperity... of our race... but it will... be a monument standing upon nothing... for it will be showing simply America of today. ⁶

Essentially, Putnam claimed that the story of civilization's progress in America could not be told without reference to pre-European history and cultures. Anthropological exhibits and living cultural displays were needed to provide the baseline against which progress could be measured. The magnitude of the achievement of such things as steam engines, electric lights and elevators could only be fully appreciated when measured against the products and technologies of earlier societies. They could then be understood in their true historical context; as benchmarks of civilization's evolution and progress.

Putnum's philosophical ideas reflected the conventional scientific wisdom of the day. He was, like most anthropologists of his time, an evolutionist, who believed that humanity, both biologically and culturally, was in the process of evolving towards perfection. However, it was thought that different levels of cultural achievement among different races indicated that not all races had evolved at the same pace and that less developed races could shed light on earlier stages of human evolution. This had led to the widely accepted construct of a hierarchy of races that could be measured on a sliding scale; up to the most civilized or down to the most primitive.⁷ Such contemporary conventions were accepted by Putnum and influenced his thinking regarding the organization of ethnological exhibits at the fair.

⁶ Frederick Ward Putnam Papers, *Speech to the Committee of Liberal Arts, Chicago 21 Sept 1891*, (Harvard University Archives)

⁷ George W. Stocking Jr. *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968) pp.114

The Stages of Mankind

The nineteenth century was for Europe and America, a time of remarkable colonial expansion, international war, class struggle, and scientific and technological development. The achievements of the Enlightenment, and particularly the celebration of reason, as the principal tool for understanding one's place in the universe, had led to the development of a science of man and to a belief in the idea of progress as the defining characteristic of human history. Archaeological discoveries undermined entrenched biblical explanations for the origin of man and replaced the old orthodoxy with the belief that civilized states had evolved from ancient primitive societies which predated biblical timelines.⁸ As early as 1748, Montesquieu, in *The Spirit of Laws*, analyzed human cultural history as passing through stages of savagery, barbarism and civilization.⁹ He defined savages as hunter-gatherer societies made up of small clans, while the barbarians were small nations of herdsmen and shepherds. Civilized man was organized into states defined by government and law. Adam Ferguson in his 1767 *Essay On the History of Civil Society*, developed Montesquieu's ideas further and suggested the principal characteristic of civilization was the notion of property. The savage had no idea of property, while the barbarian had some, but nothing protected by law. Law was the defining achievement of the civilized state.¹⁰

⁸ Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological History, A History of Culture*, (Altamira Press, 2001) pp.145-149

⁹ Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, 1748, pp.176

¹⁰ Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological History, A History of Culture*, (Altamira Press, 2001) pp.

From the fifteenth century, Europeans had encountered numerous other peoples and societies during exploratory expeditions and colonial wars in Africa, America and the Pacific. None had been able to resist European military and technological superiority. This gave rise, in European societies, to a consensus that Europe was the seat of the most advanced civilization in the world and that Europeans were intellectually and morally superior to all the other races they encountered. The question arose as to why this was and European intellectuals began to analyze the characteristics and capacities of the different races. While some races appeared to evolve through the earlier stages of savagery and barbarism, others did not and were destined to live the life of their ancestors. The conclusion was that Europeans were encountering primitive societies, anachronisms within the human family; living examples of earlier stages in human evolution.¹¹

Ideas of socio-cultural evolution received their definitive intellectual expression in the writings of the English philosopher Herbert Spencer in the mid-nineteenth century. Spencer is credited with “biologizing history.”¹² He is considered to be the chief proponent of social Darwinism which held that the principal characteristic of human society is the struggle for survival determined by the “survival of the fittest” (a phrase coined by Spencer) and subject to the same laws of natural selection as Charles Darwin had proposed as a determinant among species of plants and animals. The process of natural selection ensured that those able to adapt to change in their environment survived while those who could not, died out. Humans were no different. Natural selection was how humanity as a whole

¹¹ Ibid. pp.145

¹² Ibid. pp.129

improved, evolved and progressed. Europeans had demonstrated their ability to adapt while others races had not. Spencer, wittingly or not, had merged cultural evolutionary theory with racial determinism.¹³ His ideas of natural selection and survival of the fittest would have huge influence. They were used to justify white superiority, colonial domination, slavery and the extermination of indigenous peoples the world over. The extinction of inferior races was simply natural law enacting itself for the overall benefit of the species. If indigenous peoples were simply remnants of some earlier stage of man's evolutionary development then their fate was inevitable. The primitive, the barbaric and the savage were destined for destruction. They were, in the end, anachronisms and impediments to progress.

While Spencer emphasized that human nature was an evolutionary product and that progress consisted of the fit replacing the unfit, his discussion of human hereditary traits also contributed to racial stereotyping. In *Principles of Sociology* published in 1876, Spencer referred to the "nature of social units" and discussed the characteristics of individual members within each human group. He identified the characteristics as both extrinsic and intrinsic, the former being physical and the latter being behavioural. The proposition that behavioural traits are hereditary and common within a given racial group, legitimized popular ideas prevalent within nineteenth century European and American society, which asserted rigid racial typologies: Indians were treacherous, Africans brutal, Esquimaux lazy.

Spencer's work was widely read and became profoundly influential on both sides of the Atlantic. In the United States, his ideas influenced the development of

¹³ Ibid.

American anthropology and particularly the work of Lewis Henry Morgan. Morgan adopted and popularized the general evolutionary concept outlined by Montesquieu and Ferguson, of humanity progressing through stages of savagery, barbarism and civilization and agreed with Spencer that all races moved through similar bio-cultural stages but not necessarily at the same time. While the Aryan race had advanced beyond the rest “because it produced the highest type of mankind and because it proved its intrinsic superiority by gradually assuming control of the earth,”¹⁴ Morgan speculated that there could be other cultures existing in “remote” corners of the world which represented people at earlier phases of the evolutionary process. These could provide insights into earlier eras of human history. Frederic Putnum shared Spencer’s and Morgan’s view of bio-cultural and racial evolution and these ideas underpinned his notion that ethnological exhibits of pre-Columbian peoples at Chicago could serve as a baseline for the measurement of civilization’s progress.

At the time of the World’s Columbian Exposition, evolutionary concepts of race were deeply embedded in European and American society and prevailing scientific theories profoundly influenced the presentation and the perception of people on display in ethnological exhibits. Although Putnum and his colleagues had hoped ethnological exhibits would be scientific in nature, designed to inform and educate, the scientific constructs used to contextualize the exhibits served to validate prevailing racist perspectives in which observers could see themselves as civilized and superior and the observed as inferior savages.

¹⁴ Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society, Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery, through Barbarism to Civilization*, (New York: Holt 1877), pp.6

Ethnological Exhibitions

At the same time as philosophers were defining concepts of evolution and race, a separate but concurrent development was taking place in Europe and America that would profoundly influence the ways that other races were perceived and understood. This was the development of ethnological exhibits; the public display of non-European people for mass education or amusement. Ethnological exhibitions have a long and varied history. There are innumerable examples of captive natives being taken from America to Europe for display, beginning with Columbus who returned to Spain after his first voyage with a number of Indigenous Americans, whom he presented at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella. Columbus' purpose was most likely to provide proof of his discovery and to interest the King in continued support for future colonial ventures.¹⁵ It had its desired effect. The people's presence at court created a sensation; their dress, language and appearance had never been seen before, and they helped validate the existence of a new world. However, this first meeting also established the essential nature of a relationship that would characterize such cross-cultural meetings for hundreds of years. It was that of captor and captive, conqueror and conquered, colonizer and colonized. The imbalance of power in the relationship allowed the ideas of the dominant ideology to define and subvert that of the "other." The silence and powerlessness of human trophies presented a *tabula rasa* upon which observers could project their own ideas onto the visitors. In a Europe defined by religious orthodoxies and sectarian conflict, it seems inevitable that they would be defined as "uncivilized" and "savage"

¹⁵ Christian F. Feest, *Indians and Europe, An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*, (University of Nebraska, 1989)

as a result of their ignorance of Christianity, among other things. It was even claimed that they were like animals and had no souls, an argument that rationalized both enslavement and extermination.¹⁶

Throughout the age of discovery, explorers and early colonists repeated Columbus' practice of transporting indigenous peoples to Europe usually through coercion. Inuit were frequently among those targeted. The first appears to have been a 20-year-old woman and her 7-year-old daughter captured by French sailors, probably in Labrador, and brought to Antwerp in 1566. After they arrived in the city, they were exhibited in their seal-skin clothing.¹⁷ Martin Frobisher brought Inuit to England following his voyages to Baffin Island in 1576 and 1577. Frobisher seems to have wanted to have something to show for his otherwise fruitless ventures. His pursuit of trophy Inuit was particularly brutal during his second voyage when his men fought a pitched battle with Inuit, killing 5 or 6 people, in an effort to take prisoners. A man, woman and child were eventually captured and taken to England. Their brief public display in Bristol included a kayak demonstration on the river Avon. All three subsequently succumbed to European disease.¹⁸ Inuit from Labrador were also transported to Europe by the British Governor of Newfoundland, Sir Hugh Palliser, in 1768 and by the merchant trader George Cartwright in 1773.¹⁹

¹⁶Jan Carew, "Columbus and the Origins of Racism in the Americas", *Race and Class*, XXIX, 4 (1988), pp.41-42

¹⁷ William C Sturtevant, and Quinn, David Beers, *This New Prey: Eskimos in Europe in 1567, 1576 and 1577 in Indians and Europe, An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*, (University of Nebraska, 1989) pp.61

¹⁸ Ibid pp.69 and 80

¹⁹ Marianne P. Stopp, *18th Century Labrador Inuit in England*, (*Arctic*, Vol. 62 No. 1) pp. 45-64

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, European colonial expansion created a new interest in foreign people and displays of “human curiosities” from distant lands became more common, attracting a more general audience. These exhibits developed somewhat differently in Europe and America. In Europe, they were initially staged as ethnographic presentations for educational purposes often with the support and endorsement of the scientific community. In America, on the other hand, human exhibits were part of an emerging entertainment industry and were presented as human oddities. Both forms of human exhibits became increasingly popular and as their commercial potential became more apparent, the differences between the two traditions became less distinct.²⁰

In America, ethnological exhibits initially found their home in dime museums, circuses and sideshows. Dime Museums had their origin in the early American museums of the 18th Century, with their “cabinets of curiosities.” These museums were mostly privately run, with the owners inviting the public in for viewings for a small fee. The displays would consist of collections of scientific interest such as stuffed birds and animals, books, military paraphernalia, maps and paintings, occasionally accompanied by lectures. The purpose of these exhibits was to inform and educate a curious public. As the museums proved a popular pastime, entrepreneurs began collecting material with the object of establishing commercial enterprises that could attract increasing numbers of paying customers.

²⁰Eric Ames, *Carl Hagenbeck's Empire of Entertainments*, (University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 2008), pp.70-71

P.T. Barnum, a pioneer of the American dime museum, established his American Museum in New York in 1841. This enterprise, a combination of museum, zoo, lecture hall, and theatre, began to provide more original and daring attractions, and shifted the focus away from the educational; creating an entirely new form of mass entertainment. Museums continued to display menageries of stuffed birds, and historic artifacts, but they also began to include musical and theatrical performances, magicians, jugglers and illusionists, waxworks, vaudeville acts, trained animals, and freak shows; anything to attract the general public in search of distraction and entertainment. Advertising was the key to success and promotions played to the public's imagination. Deliberate fictions and deceptions were employed to enhance an exhibit's appeal and commercial potential. Sensational claims, deliberate distortions and outright falsehoods became the tools of the trade.

By the mid-nineteenth century, dime museums had become entertainment staples across the United States with the more famous venues being Huber's in New York, Austin and Stone's in Boston, Herzog's in Baltimore, and the Kohl-Middleton circuit in Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati and Milwaukee.²¹ They proved to be exceedingly popular with America's new industrial working class and immigrant populations who sought cheap entertainment and respite from their lives in factories and slums.²² In the United States, ethnological exhibits found a home in the dime museums. Australian aborigines, Native Americans, and Sudanese Nubians shared the bill with ventriloquists and sword swallowers, bearded ladies, and

²¹ Andrea Stulman Denner, *Weird and Wonderful, The Dime Museum in America*, (New York University Press, 1997) pp.41

²² Ibid. pp.4

Siamese twins. The dime museum was Barnum's world, the world of show business not science. What sold tickets was the exotic, the strange, and the bizarre. Ethnic displays were in the general category of human curiosities and played to racial stereotypes; the primitive, the savage, the wild-man, the cannibal, and the last of a dying race.

When Barnum's American Museum burned down in 1865, he turned his attention to his travelling circuses but did not abandon his interest in ethnological subjects. Barnum had initially conceived of his circus as a travelling dime museum; his first circus, founded in 1872, was actually called "P.T. Barnum's Great Travelling Museum, Menagerie and World's Fair." From the beginning Barnum had seen the commercial potential of exhibiting exotic peoples from all over the world, but had not been able to pull together a major exhibition until 1884 when the Barnum and London Circus staged the first Ethnological Congress with "100 Uncivilized, Superstitious and Savage People."²³ Barnum had sent agents to "every part of our little ball of earth"²⁴ to find his exhibits and succeeded in assembling a collection of "Zulus, Nubians, Burmese, Afghans, Aztecs, and Hindus", among others.²⁵ The exhibit was hugely successful and, for Barnum, financially rewarding. What the Ethnological Congress clearly established was that there was a demand to see exotic people and that the staging of such exhibits could be extremely profitable.

²³ *Boston Daily Globe* 11 June 1884.

²⁴ P.T. Barnum, *Struggles and Triumphs, The Life of P.T. Barnum, Written by Himself*. (New York) pp.228

²⁵ *Chicago Tribune*, 4 June 1883.

In Europe, ethnological exhibits also became popular particularly in the latter half of the nineteenth century. At that time, the entrepreneur Carl Hagenbeck, who had specialized in trading and exhibiting wild and exotic animals, turned his attention to importing and exhibiting people from foreign lands. Hagenbeck's early exhibits of Laplanders and Greenland Inuit, which toured the German cities of Hamburg, Berlin and Leipzig in the 1870's, had created a sensation and proved to be both immensely popular and profitable. In an age of exploration and rapid colonial expansion, public curiosity and interest in exotic people and places had been stimulated by newspaper reports and the popular travel accounts of explorers. Exhibits, such as Hagenbeck's, enabled mass audiences to encounter foreign peoples and cultures without the expense, inconvenience, and dangers of real travel. Hagenbeck promoted his exhibitions as primarily educational in intent and staged them in respectable venues such as public parks and gardens. He frequently received the support and partnership of museums and the scientific community and used the endorsements to give the exhibits added authority and prestige.²⁶ Regardless of these pretensions the principal purpose of his enterprise was commercial.

Hagenbeck pioneered the concept of the "ethnological village"; the creation of a living space that simulated the homeland and natural environment of the people on display, in order to create a facsimile of everyday life. The people were often displayed against painted tableaux which reinforced the illusion of travel to a

²⁶Eric Ames, *Carl Hagenbeck's Empire of Entertainments*, (University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 2008), pp.64

foreign place. Against this backdrop, the inhabitants would wear traditional clothing, live in replicas of their native habitations, demonstrate the use of weapons, tools, or musical instruments and perform traditional ceremonies and dances.²⁷ Throughout the 1870's and 1880's, Hagenbeck mounted tours of Nubians, Sinhalese, Fugeians, Somalis, and Labrador Inuit, establishing mass audiences for ethnological exhibits throughout the capitals of Europe including Berlin, Paris, Copenhagen, London, Prague, and Vienna. Hagenbeck's village concept was adopted and amplified at L'Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889, with the Village Negre, a collection of ethnological villages representing people throughout the French colonial empire, including Gabonese, Congolese, Javanese, Senegalese, Arabs, and Melenisians. It was this exhibit that inspired Frederic Putnum to propose an ethnological display for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Putnum's Plan

Putnam's plan for a comprehensive ethnological exhibition was conceived as a non-commercial, purely scientific attraction in keeping with the stated intention of the fair's directory that the Exposition be a great university; a place of learning and enrichment.²⁸ With a budget of \$100,000, Putnum began to plan his indoor-outdoor exhibit. His indoor exhibit was to consist of a comprehensive display of artifacts from the material cultures of indigenous peoples throughout North, Central, and South America including weapons, tools, utensils, clothing, carvings, toys, and

²⁷Ibid. pp.74

²⁸ Chaim M. Rosenberg, *America at the Fair, Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition*, (Arcadia Publishing, 2008), pp.245

religious objects. To this end he solicited contributions from the federal and state governments in the US, foreign governments throughout the Americas as well private collectors and established museums. He also organized and directed hundreds of field workers, missionaries, and explorers to gather new materials in such far-flung places as Peru, Bolivia, and Chile.²⁹ The exhibit was somewhat a victim of its own success. The mass of materials that were accumulated required time and space to be properly organized and displayed. It was just five months before the opening of the fair that the Directory decided to construct a special Anthropology Building to house the collection and the fair would be a third over before its doors would finally open to the public on 4 July. Nevertheless, Putnum was proud of the achievement. In an interview after the fair he stated that the exhibit had “excited the admiration of scientists from all parts of the world” and that “never before had so much new material been brought together.”³⁰

Putnum’s out-door exhibit would prove far less successful. He had hoped to create a great “object lesson” by displaying representatives of pre-contact indigenous cultures living much as they had at the time of the Columbus landing. He envisaged people from all over the Americas in a series of living tableaux with weavers, silversmiths, and potters living in traditional housing and demonstrating

²⁹Curtis M. Hinsley, “Anthropology as Education and Entertainment, Fredric Ward Putnum at the World’s Fair”, pp17, in *Coming of Age in Chicago, The 1893 World’s Fair and the Coalescence of American Anthropology*, (University of Nebraska Press, 2016), pp.22

³⁰*Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, November 1 1893

ancient crafts.³¹ A year prior to the fair's opening he outlined his ambitious plans in a newspaper interview.

We have offered every possible inducement to native tribes in North, South, and Central America to make their own exhibits at the fair... These representatives will embrace families of Eskimos, Indian tribes of British Columbia and of various parts of the United States, a family of Maya from Yucatán, a family of Mosquito Indians from the Mosquito Coast of Central America, and natives of Guatemala. We will also have from Venezuela, a typical family living in the peculiar houses which they build upon platforms over the water - also several families of Caribs, the lowest of the races that met Columbus on our shores. From Bolivia and Peru are coming families of Amyras and Quichas. From the district further south, we will get a family of Patagonians and probably, a family of Tierra del Fuegians, lowest of all in the scale of humanity. In all cases these simple people will bring their own habitations with them.³²

During this planning period, Putnum stated that "schemes for private ends" would not be considered and that those "of a popular amusement character could not be tolerated."³³

Putnum's plans foundered almost immediately. Principally, he did not have the financial resources to bring to Chicago the number of peoples he needed for his "object lesson." Nor does it appear that those willing to come were prepared to pay

³¹ Hinsley, pp. 25

³² *Springfield Daily Republican*, August 20 1892

³³ Hinsley, pp.17

their own expenses or to play the role Putnum had assigned them. Putnum wanted to display indigenous people as they might have been at the time of Columbus's landing. They were not to represent themselves but rather their ancestors. His field workers had difficulty finding people willing to travel, or people in possession of the desired clothing and artifacts or with the knowledge and skills to demonstrate traditional trades.³⁴ As a result, Putnum was forced to adjust his plans. He put his resources into one or two groups and became dependant on government and private enterprise to supply the rest. Private investors, however, expected to make money. If anything was to be achieved, Putnum would need to compromise his ideals.

At the same time, the fair's Directory was making adjustments to its plans. Under increasing financial pressure, due to rising construction costs, they reluctantly compromised their vision of staging an exclusively elegant and cultivated experience and yielded to the demand for an amusement and entertainment venue to help alleviate costs. So as not to completely undermine the refined tone of the White City, they placed the amusement park outside the fairground along a strip of land joining Jackson and Washington parks known locally as the Midway. The Directory's President, Harlow Higginbotham explained the decision this way:

This narrow strip of land gave an opportunity for isolating these special features, thus preventing jarring contrast between the beautiful buildings

³⁴ Melissa Rinehart, "To Hell with the Wigs!", *The American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No.4, (2012), pp.408

and the grounds of Jackson Park and the amusing, distracting, ludicrous and noisy attractions of the Midway.³⁵

The Midway was proposed as the site of “Ethnology, Archaeology, History, Cartography, Latin American Bureau, Collective and Isolated Exhibits”³⁶ and was placed under the authority of Putnum. Putnum, however, showed little interest in commercial concessions and played no role in the Midway’s development. The Directory initially assigned management of the Midway to Sol Bloom, a theatrical impresario who was managing the Algerian exhibit at the fair and whose orientation toward ethnology had more in common with Barnum than Putnum. Bloom managed the construction of the Midway and helped organize the vendors while the Exposition’s Ways and Means Commission negotiated contracts and granted concessions. Neither paid much attention to Putnum’s vision of a pan-American indigenous exhibit. Concessions were granted for an ostrich farm, a hot-air balloon ride, a Hagenbeck animal show, the original Ferris wheel and numerous “ethnological” villages representing people from Egypt, Austria, Dahomey, Germany, China, Japan, Samoa, and Turkey. There were two Native American exhibits on the Midway both run privately and independent of Putnum. One was the Indian Village consisting of 60 individuals representing Potawatomi, Navajo, Iroquois, Winnebago, and Lakota who performed dances and songs and demonstrated crafts. The other, an exhibit known as Sitting Bull’s Cabin, included Oglala Sioux and Crow, some of

³⁵ World’s Columbian Exposition Chicago, *Dedicatory and Opening Ceremonies of the Worlds Columbian Exposition*, (Chicago: Stone, Kastler and Painter, 1893) pp.85

³⁶ Hinsley pp.66

whom were veterans of the Battle of the Little Big Horn.³⁷ Putnum's plans to exclude "schemes for private ends" had failed and exhibits of a "popular amusement character" were not only tolerated but actively encouraged.

Putnum's own out-door "living exhibit" turned out to be a modest affair. He had hoped that his ethnological village would occupy a place of prominence at the fair and attract widespread attention. In the end, it was assigned a place in the extreme southeast corner of the fairgrounds on a piece of land next to South Pond, well removed from the central attractions of the White City and the Midway. Putnum's assistant, Franz Boas, who would later become a prominent opponent of scientific racism and help overturn evolutionary theories of culture,³⁸ had organized an exhibit of Kwakiutl from British Columbia. Other exhibits came and went over the duration of the fair. The state of New York sponsored an Iroquois group; Canada, a contingent of Cree from Saskatchewan; Maine a group of Penobscots and the Government of British Guiana sent a delegation of Arawak. The state of Colorado had provided a small group of Navajo but these soon deserted for the Midway where, it was thought, they could make more money.³⁹ Putnum's plan for "a perfect ethnographical exhibition of the past and present peoples of America" as a defining

³⁷ Reinhart, pp.413

³⁸ Among Boas's main contributions to anthropological thought was his rejection of the popular evolutionary approaches to the study of culture, which saw all societies progressing through a set of hierarchic technological and cultural stages, with Western European culture at the summit. Boas introduced the ideology of cultural relativism which holds that cultures cannot be objectively ranked as higher or lower, or better or more correct, but that all humans see the world through the lens of their own culture, and judge it according to their own culturally acquired norms." From [http://en.wikipedia.org/Franz Boas](http://en.wikipedia.org/Franz_Boas)

³⁹ Hinsley, pp.38

feature of the fair and the means by which the public would come to understand the White City's meaning and message was a failure. In the end, the ethnological displays at the World's Columbian Exposition had no cohesive theme or organization but splintered into a jumble of exhibits spread throughout the fairgrounds and the Midway. Most had no relation to either America or Columbus. Any native American theme was obscured by exhibits from the Sudan, Egypt, Algeria and Java. Putnum's vision had been compromised. Science was usurped by commerce. Ethnology became a sideshow.

Frederic Putnum had been unable to impose his will on the presentation of ethnology at the fair. What would occur was a distortion of his vision and intention and instead reflected the influence of those other trends and developments surrounding the public exhibition of non-European races which had developed during the 19th century. What happened in Chicago was the unintended convergence of different traditions in one place at the same time; anthropological expositions, ethnological villages, dime museums, freak shows and circuses. All these traditions met and mixed at the fair shaping its character and determining the presentation of culture in different and often contradictory and unexpected ways. Ethnology became a hybrid of science, entertainment and commercial enterprise in varying degrees. No one tradition was dominant but each simultaneously added its voice to a confusing cacophony through which ethnological subjects were presented, explained and perceived. If these traditions had anything in common, it is that they were all rooted in a general ideology that traded on the racist presumptions and colonialist conceits of the day. The tangle of ideological threads and traditions that

created the framework for ethnological exhibits at the World's Columbian Exposition, were not confined to Chicago. The same perspectives informed the goals and conduct of the people who organized ethnological exhibits including those who set out in 1892 to recruit Labrador Inuit for the fair.

Chapter 4

THE VOYAGE OF THE EVELENA 1892

Among the many unique villages at the World's Fair there is one now established of the Eskimo. Two young men in charge, three companions and the captain and crew of the vessel sailed from Halifax last June. They made a four month cruise in Labrador waters to acquire the necessary number of Eskimo and to obtain everything of their make, wear, and use, for the establishment of this village. During the cruise they had ample opportunity to see and study the oddities and picturesqueness of the Eskimo and their country.

W.D. Vincent, *the Graphic*, 1892.¹

In June 1892, the schooner "Evelena" departed for Labrador to recruit Inuit for the World's Columbian Exposition's "Esquimaux Village." An examination of the voyage is useful for a number of reasons. First, it illustrates how the ideas and attitudes outlined in the previous chapter shaped the efforts of the American entrepreneurs behind the exhibit and how their efforts to recruit Labrador Inuit were guided by a desire to find "primitive" people who would satisfy the public appetite for encounters with the exotic "other." Second, it sets Labrador Inuit in their own historical, cultural and economic environment, providing the reader with a sense of who the people were and what their motivations may have been for agreeing to travel to Chicago. It also makes clear that Labrador Inuit, who attended the fair, were not a single monolithic group but a diverse assembly; differentiated by the distinct histories experienced in different geographic locations in Labrador.

¹ W.D. Vincent, "Home Life of the Esquimaux," *The Graphic*, 4 March 1893, pp.151

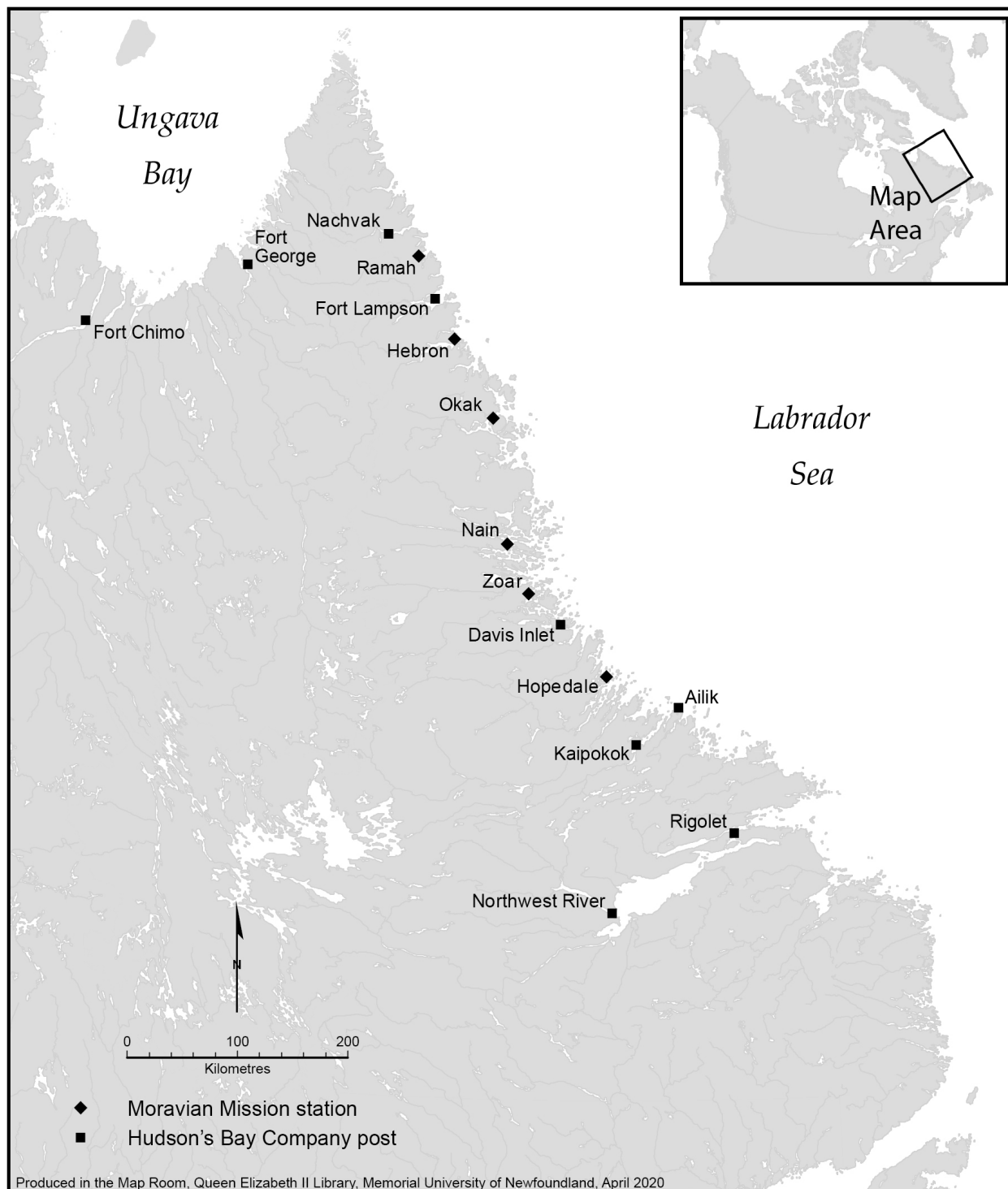


Figure 4: Moravian Mission Stations and Hudson's Bay company Posts 1771-1904

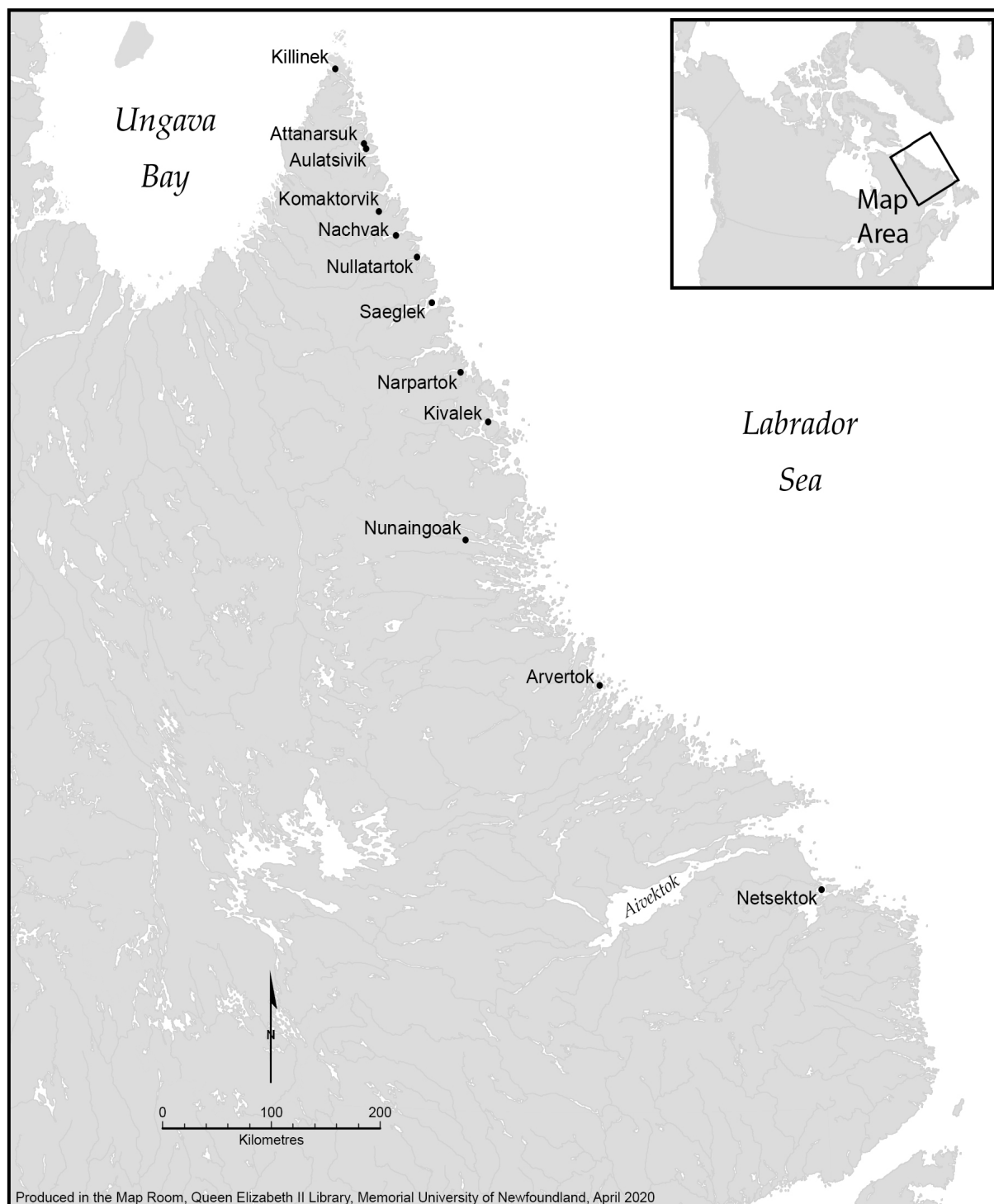


Figure 5: Inuit Communities, circa 1771

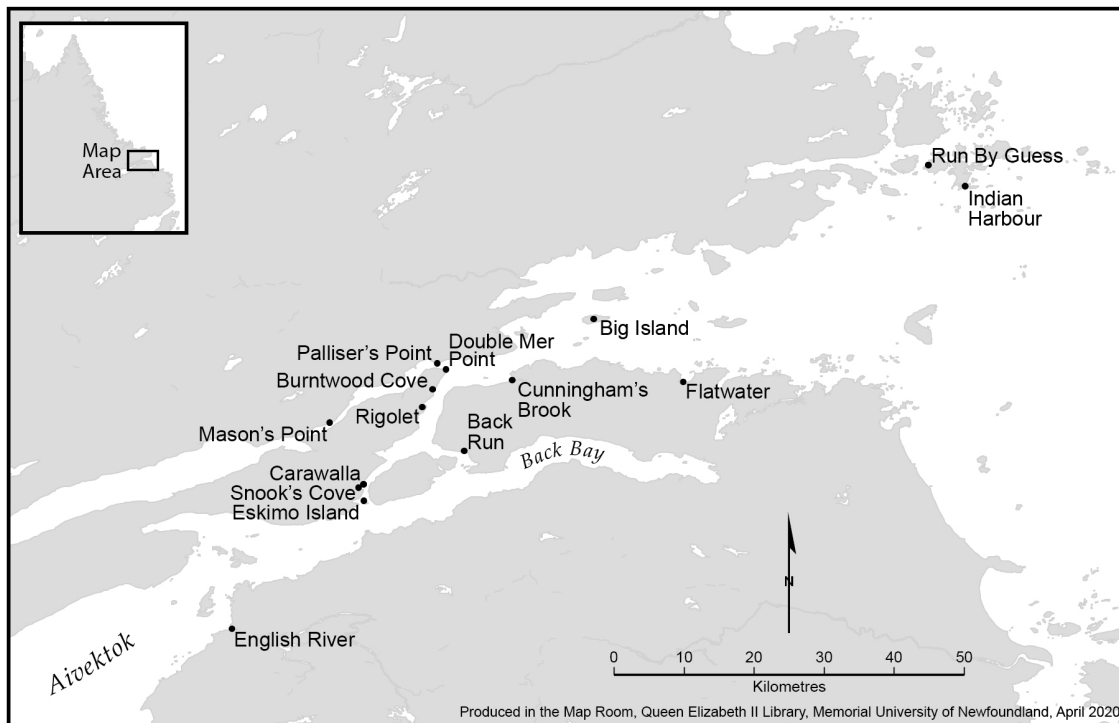


Figure 6: Avektok/Esquimaux Bay

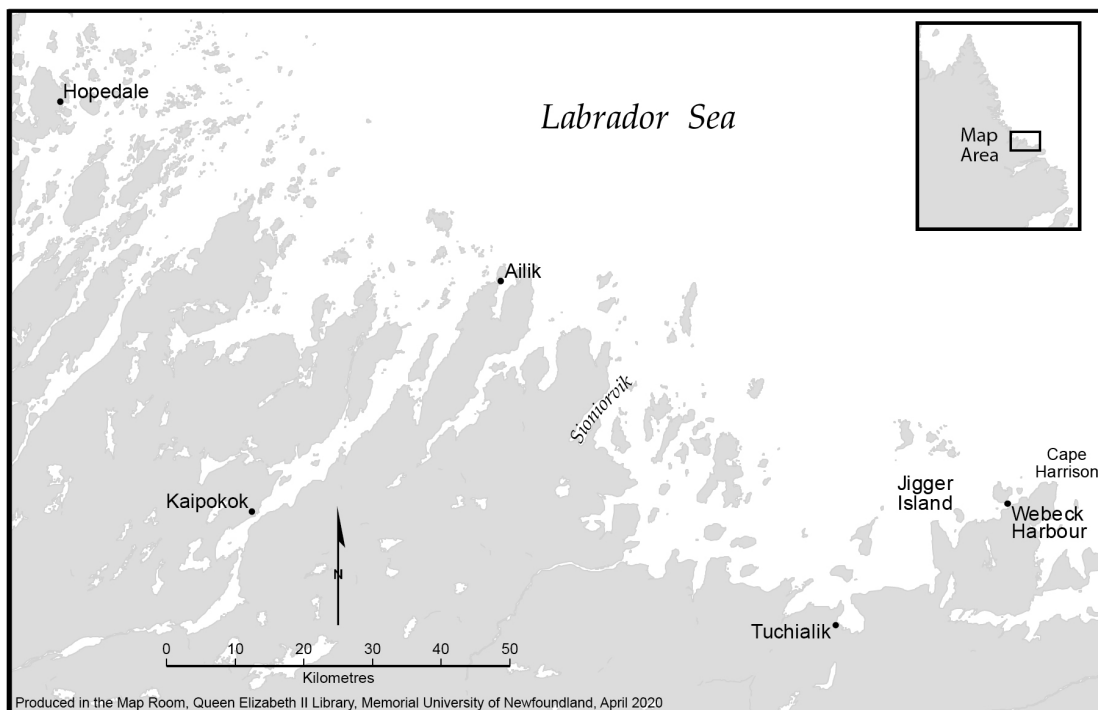


Figure 7: Cape Harrison to Hopedale

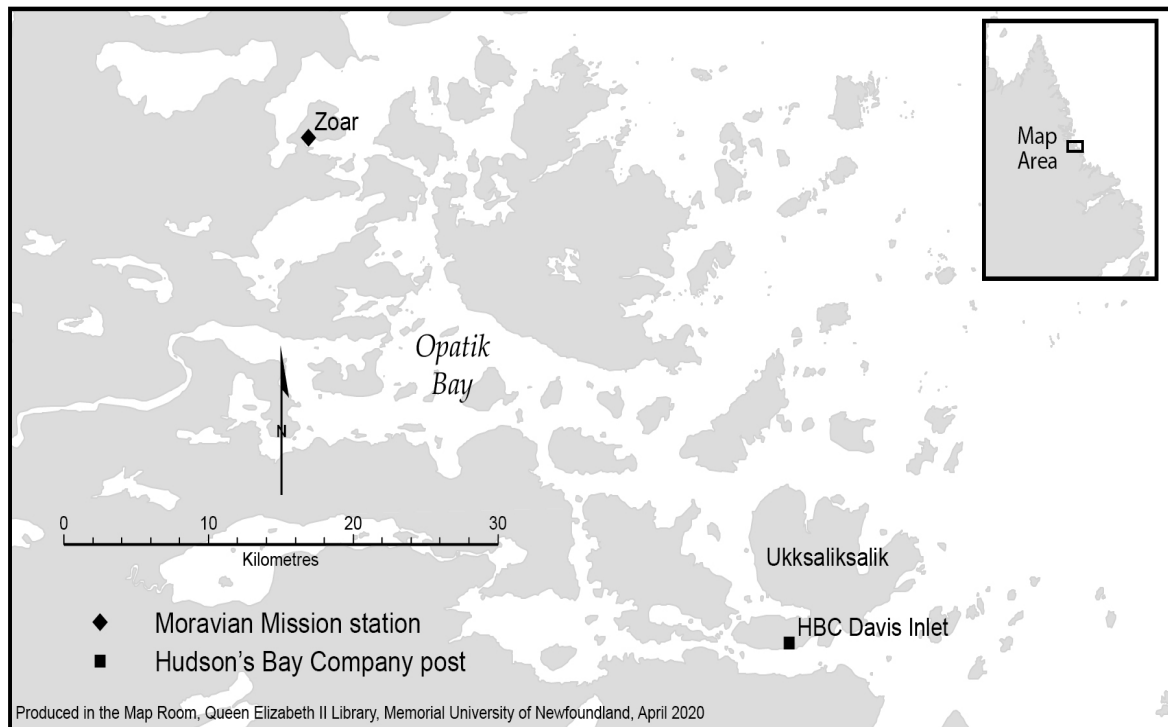


Figure 8: Zoar and Davis Inlet

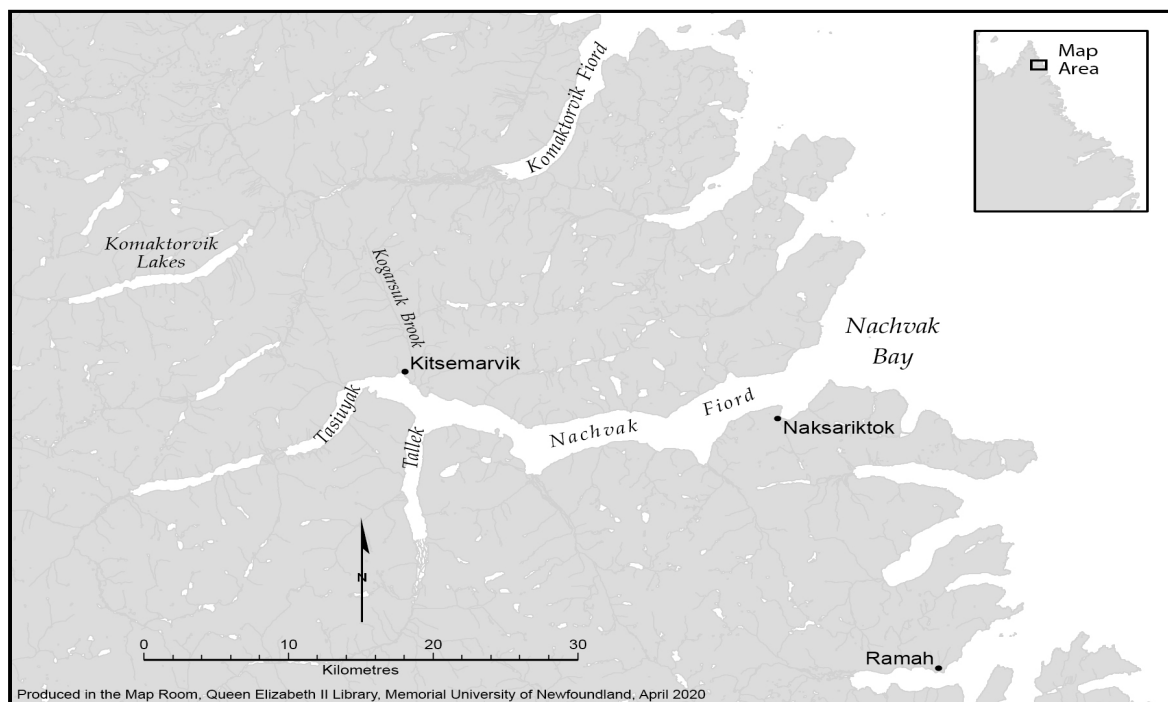


Figure 9: Nachvak Fiord

The Esquimaux Village

The concept for an Esquimaux Village at the World's Columbian Exposition, appears to have had some early connection to Putnum and his original scheme. A press report in 1892 suggests that Putnum's assistant, Franz Boas, who had done fieldwork among Inuit in Cumberland Sound on Baffin Island in 1883-84, intended to return there to recruit families for the fair.¹ Boas, however, appears to have dropped the idea in favour of an exhibit of Kwakiutil² from British Columbia and the project was subsequently taken up by a private company, J.W. Skiles & Co. of Spokane, Washington.³

On 9 March 1892, the World's Columbian Exposition's Ways and Means Committee granted J.W. Skiles and Co. the exclusive right to establish an "Esquimaux Village and Labrador Trading Post" at the fair. The Company promised to provide not less than 50 natives from Labrador, Greenland, and the Northeast Territory, with their "household utensils and furniture, wearing apparel and sledges, canoes, musical instruments and weapons of the chase." In addition, they agreed to erect "a true and life-like representation of an Eskimo village and Labrador Trading Post,

¹ *The Roanoke Times*, Eskimos for Chicago, July 16 1892

² One of Boas' first professional jobs was organizing Bella Coola artifacts brought to Germany's Royal Ethnographic Museum in 1885 by Johan Jacobsen who was working at the time for Carl Hagenbeck. It was after this that the people of the Pacific Northwest became the principal focus of Boas' ethnographic research. See Baker Lee D., *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture*, Duke University Press, Durham and London 2010, pp.96

³ Prior to their departure for Labrador to recruit Inuit for the Esquimaux Village a representative of the Skiles Co, soliciting assistance from the Moravian Mission presented himself as part of the "Ethnological Section of the Columbian Exhibition". Whether this indicated a direct relationship with Putnum or was simply a means to enhance credibility is not known. British Mission Board Minute Book Vol. 1, June 13 1892, Moravian Church Archive and Library, Muswell Hill London.

with its houses, including log cabins as is used by the Hudson's Bay Company... a Moravian Mission chapel, Eskimo huts, dogs and deer corrals." Inuit were expected to provide entertainments, such as musical performances and demonstrations of hunting skills with kayaks, dog-sledges, or spears, Eskimo games, and Moravian church services. In exchange, the Company was granted a tract of land inside the exhibition grounds, the right to enclose it, and the right to charge admission to the exhibit. There was, in the contract, a single clause relating to the treatment of the people which stated that the company should furnish their native employees "such sleeping accommodations as they have been accustomed to in their own country and supply them with such food as they usually eat."⁴ Having won a potentially lucrative contract for an exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition, the only thing the company needed was some bona fide "Esquimaux" to put on display.

It is not clear why a company based in Spokane, Washington focused on Labrador to recruit prospective Inuit. It may be simply a case of proximity to Chicago and logistics, as Labrador Inuit were the most southerly and accessible Inuit in the Americas. However, in *Prince Pomiuk, A Prince of Labrador*, a book written several years after the fair, William Forbush claimed that a businessmen associated with the Skiles company had previous knowledge of the area and used his contacts to facilitate recruitment from that region. He had apparently travelled to Labrador as a young man in the company of Rev. C.C. Carpenter, who later became a missionary in southern Labrador during the 1860's. The businessman is said to have

⁴ *Concession Agreement Between World's Columbian Exposition and J.W. Skiles and Company*, (World's Columbian Exposition Records, Chicago History Museum)

contacted Carpenter and asked for his help.⁵ Apparently, it was Carpenter who put the company in touch with the Nova Scotia schooner captain and trader, William McConnell, who had business interests in Labrador and was familiar with the region and its people.⁶

In June 1892, McConnell's schooner, the "Evelena," was under charter to J.W. Skiles & Co. and began its trip from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Labrador in search of Inuit for the proposed Esquimaux Village. On board were two young representatives of the company, William David Vincent and Ralph Graham Taber, as well as Vincent's brother Lyle and two companions Jewell Somburger and W.M. Reed. There do not appear to be any surviving journals from the voyage, but both Vincent and Taber subsequently published articles relating to their experiences in Labrador and these provide some insight into their perspectives and attitudes. It would take three weeks to travel from Halifax to Rigolet where they would make their first contact with Inuit.

Labrador Inuit

Inuit are thought to have first appeared along the Labrador coast sometime after 1400 AD, following sea mammals, such as whales, walruses and seals as they moved out of Davis Strait on their southern migrations. While some Inuit attached themselves to resource rich areas along the northern coast, others continued to follow game south, travelling beyond the Straits of Belle Isles, along the north shore of the St. Lawrence River and as far as the north-east and west coast of the island of

⁵ William Forbush, *Prince Pomiuk, A Prince of Labrador*, (Marshall Brothers, London, 1903), pp.48-49

⁶ Ibid. pp. 48-49

Newfoundland.⁷ With the coming of Basque whalers to southern Labrador in the 16th Century, and later French fishing enterprises, Inuit began a complex and unpredictable relationship with Europeans. Both groups were interested in trade but the relationship was made difficult by mutual suspicion and fear and it frequently degenerated into violence. This unstable situation went on for years and was essentially inherited by the British when they assumed responsibility for the territory after the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The British, in an attempt to pacify Inuit and make the territory safe for British merchants, enlisted the assistance of a German evangelical organization called the *Unitas Fratrum*, more commonly known as the Moravian Mission. With a series of land grants and a trading concession, the Moravians began, in 1771, to set up a series of mission outposts along the Labrador coast.⁸ By the latter part of the 19th Century, they had been active in Labrador for over 150 years and had succeeded in converting most Inuit on the coast. However, not all Inuit in Labrador, were Moravians. The missionaries themselves identified three groups of Inuit within the territory. There were the Mission Inuit; those who lived part of their lives in Moravian settlements and held accounts in mission stores, those who the Moravians called Southlanders who lived south of the mission station of Hopedale, some of whom had resisted or rejected mission overtures and chose instead to associate themselves with southern traders like the Hudson's Bay Company, and there were those the missionaries called Northlanders who lived beyond the reach of the mission in the most northern part of the Labrador peninsula.

⁷ Susan Kaplan, *Economic and Social Change in Labrador Neo-Eskimo Culture*, PhD. Thesis, (Bryn Mawr College, 1983), pp.29

⁸ J.K Hiller *The Foundation and the Early Years of the Moravian Mission*, Master's Thesis, Memorial University, 1967

It was the southernmost group that the American expedition first encountered when they arrived at Rigolet.

Recruitment

Rigolet, was the site of a Hudson's Bay Company trading post, established in 1836, and located just inside the narrows at the beginning of a long bay that cuts 150 kilometres into the interior of the Labrador Peninsula. The region was called Baie d'Esquimaux or Esquimaux Bay by early French and British traders and renamed Hamilton Inlet by British colonial authorities in 1821 but it was known as Aivektok among Inuit.⁹

The HBC post was the economic lifeline for those living in the region; one of the few year-round establishments where hunters and fishermen could trade their fish, furs, and seal fat for basic provisions such as tea, tobacco, flour and ammunition, necessary to sustain a livelihood. The people of the district consisted of a small number of Inuit families, as well as those known as planters, who were descendants of European settlers, many of whom had come to Labrador with the HBC or other European trading enterprises, had married Inuit women from the area and raised families of a mixed heritage. There were also Innu in the region, but they spent most of their time in the interior and tended to take their trade to Northwest River, the HBC post at the head of the bay.¹⁰

⁹ Esquimaux Bay was renamed Hamilton Inlet in 1821 by Captain William Martin after the Governor of Newfoundland who had sent him to report on the region. The Hudson's Bay Company retained the usage of Esquimaux Bay throughout the 19th Century.

¹⁰ W.H.A. Davies, *Notes on Esquimaux Bay and the Surrounding Countries*. (Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, Vol. 4 Part 1, 1842.), pp.70-94

By 1892, Inuit and planters in Aivektok, shared a similar lifestyle and culture. Inuit were using wooden boats, guns and nets, wearing European clothes and increasingly speaking English, while planters had adopted Inuit hunting strategies, skin clothing and boots, seal oil lamps, dogs sleds, and snowshoes. There were some notable differences however. Planters migrated seasonally from fishing stations in the summer to isolated winter homes up the bay where they could more readily establish trap-lines into the interior. Inuit showed less interest in trapping, preferring to rely more exclusively on seal hunting and remaining in the bay in winter, where they moved about in search of open water where seals might be found. During the summer both groups fished salmon, often under contract to the Hudson's Bay Company.¹¹ By the late nineteenth century, the number of Inuit in the region had declined significantly. Methodist Missionaries claimed this was principally due to Inuit women marrying white men. "The Eskimos in consequence had largely diminished and a half-breed race had grown up."¹² Around the time the "Evelena" arrived, it was estimated that there were only 7-10 Inuit families living in the area consisting of approximately 70 people.¹³

When the "Evelena" made its appearance at Rigolet on July 6, the season's salmon fishery was in full swing and company clerks were busy collecting, weighing and packing the annual catch of local fishermen. For both the company and

¹¹ David William Zimmerly, *Cain's Land Revisited: Culture Change in Central Labrador 1775-1972* (Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University 1975), pp. 85.

¹² Armenius Young, *One Hundred Years of Mission Work in the Wilds of Labrador* (London: Arthur and Stockwell Ltd., 1916) pp.24

¹³ Hans Rollmann, *Demographics and Literacy During the Second Half of the Nineteenth of the Rigolet Area* (unpublished)

residents, the salmon fishery was the most important activity of the year but, for several years previously, salmon catches had been poor and the people of the region had been undergoing severe hardships.¹⁴ The post's journal reported the "Evelena's" arrival in the region and noted that it headed "up the bay".¹⁵ Its skipper, Captain McConnell, was well acquainted with the region and familiar with the fishing stations of Inuit families, who were busy at their salmon berths.¹⁶ The "Evelena" remained in the region for about 12 days before leaving for the north. In that time, it would have visited a number of Inuit fishing camps at places like Back Run, Big Island, Burntwood Cove, Snook's Cove, Palliser's Point, Mason's Point, Double Mer and most likely, Carrawalla where a number of Inuit families maintained winter homes. Those they met and eventually recruited were Jonas and Susan Palliser and their children Lucy, Sam and John; Jonas' son Tom Palliser and his wife Esther and daughter Susan; Jonas' brother Peter Palliser and his daughter Mary; George and Maggie Deer and their 6 month old son Peter; George's brother Tom Deer; Jim and

¹⁴*Inspection Report, Rigolet Post*, P. McKenzie (Inspecting Officer) October 9 1889, HBC Archives Microfilm 1M1258 B.183/e/2, pp.10-11

¹⁵ *HBC Rigolet Post Journals*, B183/a/30, 6 July 1892, HBC Microfilm 1M1020

¹⁶ An extract from *HBC Rigolet Post Journal* in a framed document on the wall of the community museum in Rigolet lists the following people under contract: Jimmie Sugla, outfitted by HBC to fish salmon at Carrawalla/Portage Cove 1868, Jonas Peliceer HBC contract to fish salmon at Big Island 1863, Jonas Palliser HBC contract to fish salmon at Double Mer/Palliser's Point 1861, Jonas Palliser HBC contract to fish salmon at Mason's Point 1861, Ambrose Mesher HBC contract to fish salmon at Burntwood Cove 1867, George Chiquack HBC contract to fish salmon at Snook's Cove 1867, Peter Palliser HBC contract to fish salmon at Big Island 1867, Joseph and Joseph Palliser HBC contract to fish salmon at Double Mer and Palliser's Point 1867, Jonas Palliser HBC contract to fish salmon at Back Run 1867, George Chiquack HBC contract to fish salmon at Carawaller and Portage 1870, Jonas Palliser and brother Peter contract to fish salmon at Back Run 1870, Ambrose Mesher contract to fish salmon at Burntwood Cove 1870.

Salome Shuglo and their children Maggie, Augustina, Liza and Tom; and Peter Mesher.

On 19 July, McConnell's vessel headed out the narrows and turned north in search of other prospective recruits. They took Peter Palliser with them to act as interpreter.¹⁷ The Aivektok families were left to finish the fishery, with instructions to pack up their belongings, collect whatever items they had that could enhance the exhibit, such as kayaks, harpoons, winter clothing, and komatiks, and wait to be picked up when the schooner returned from the north.

As the "Evelena" rounded Cape Harrison and sailed northward, it encountered increasing numbers of fishing schooners. These vessels, which numbered in the thousands, made annual summer voyages from the island of Newfoundland to fish for cod.¹⁸ They had been visiting the north coast of Labrador in ever greater numbers since the late 1850's and increasingly merchant enterprises were establishing seasonal operations on coastal islands south of the Moravian Mission station at Hopedale, most notably at Webeck Harbour, Long Tickle, West Turnavik Island and Ailik.

Inuit families living on the coast also fished cod in the summer, often selling their catch to Newfoundlanders. Relationships were generally amicable but there were occasions when conflict arose if itinerant schooner-men set gear at fishing berths Inuit considered to be their own. With livelihoods at stake, disputes could deteriorate quickly.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ronald Rompkey, *Labrador Odessey: The Journal and Photographs of Eliot Curwen*, (McGill –Queen's University Press 1996) pp.152.

Some Eskimos were fishing in the neighborhood of the Newfoundlanders and one of the former finding his situation unfavourable moved nearer to them; he was roughly ordered back again, and as he did not obey, a man began to throw stones at his boat. Happily they did not reach, or they would soon have destroyed the thin framework covered with skins. The Eskimo took his gun and threatened to shoot, which had the effect of quieting the other.¹⁹

The Newfoundland fishery provided opportunities for Inuit; a number being employed by Newfoundland merchants; fishing, salting and packing the season's catch or maintaining stages, wharves and warehouses. Ailik was one such place where Inuit and Newfoundlanders worked alongside each other to their mutual benefit. For many years Ailik had been a summer outpost of the Hudson's Bay Company post at Kippokok and had attracted a number of Inuit families from the region. . Ailik Inuit were a people in transition. A generation before they would have been classified by the Moravians as Southlanders, and viewed with suspicion as people under the influence of southern traders, hostile to Moravian teachings and a bad influence on Inuit converts. By the latter part of the 19th Century, relations were shifting, as the Moravians moderated their opinion and increasing numbers of southern Inuit became church members.²⁰ Throughout, they remained closely connected to Aivektok Inuit families and some even maintained trading

¹⁹ Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren Established Among the Heathen, Vol. 33, December 1884, pp.190

²⁰ For a detailed examination of the relationship between the Moravians and the "Southlanders" see Carol Brice-Bennett, *Two Opinions: Inuit and Moravian Missionaries in Labrador 1804-1860*. (M.A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1981) pp.35-52, pp.171-177, pp. 310-325 and pp. 441-451

relationships with the Hudson's Bay Company at Rigolet.²¹ After the HBC abandoned Kippokok in 1878, Ailik remained an important fishing station and was taken over by Newfoundland merchants who maintained summer fishing premises there not far from Inuit homes.

The "Evelena" arrived in Ailik in late July. Ralph Taber described it this way:

There are several resident families of Esquimaux here, who speak fairly good English, and any of whom would make acceptable guides.... The Esquimaux at Ailik are Moravian converts and members of the mission church at Hopedale.

They are about the first pure Esquimaux to be met with on the coast.²²

It's an interesting observation and one that reveals as much of the observer as the observed. The search for the "pure" Esquimaux "untainted by the touch of civilization" was the expedition's unstated objective. It suggests that there might have been some misgivings about the recruitment of the southern Inuit; that their close association with settlers, their adoption of European culture, manners and language and even their physical features, might call into question their authenticity as true representatives of their race. Similar misgivings were held about Moravian Inuit, tainted as they were by their many years under the "civilizing" influence of European missionaries. These considerations would make the search for northern Inuit, living beyond the reach of European institutions, increasingly desirable, if the concession was to be seen to deliver on its promise of exhibiting authentic "primitives".

²¹HBC *Rigolet Post Journals*, B183/a/30, March 22 1891 and Jan. 30 1892, HBC Microfilm 1M1020

²² R.G. Taber, "Rugged Labrador", *Outing, an Illustrated Monthly Magazine of Recreation*, Feb. 1896, pp.388-389

At Ailik, Taber and Vincent met John Lucy, his brother Joseph and Simon Manak. In the winter John and his wife Katerina lived at Siorniorvik, a short distance south of Ailik. The Moravians baptised a number of their children there, including Simon and Jonas.²³ John Lucy was an active trapper and in the winter made frequent trips overland to the Hudson's Bay Company post at Rigolet to sell his fur. He appears to have been one of the more productive and respected trappers to trade there.²⁴ In the summer, he moved his family to Ailik where he fished and possibly worked for Newfoundland merchants. His brother Joseph and his wife Charlotte lived at Ailik year round as did Simon Manak and his wife Sarah. The Moravian missionary at Hopedale, Andreas Asboe, visited Joseph and Charlotte at Ailik in February 1890 where he also met Simon Manak. Joseph and Charlotte were already church members but Simon was not. Asboe reported at that time that the Manaks asked him to baptise their newly born child. On 11 February, after some hesitation, due to the fact that the parents were not church members, Asboe obliged.²⁵ The child was baptised Abraham John Manak.²⁶

²³ *Hopedale Church Book*, Baptismal Certificate pp. 173, entry No.733, Moravian Mission Microfilm 591

²⁴ *HBC Rigolet Journal*, B183/a/30, January 1891, HBC Microfilm 1M102016, "John Lucy and Toustachima arrived here in the morning bringing 5 foxes, 2 fine silver silvers among them", March 22 1891 "John Lucy and Toustachina arrived here with a load of venison, 4 foxes, 2 white a red and a cross.", December 18 1891, "Toutoushina and John Lucy in from the north with a few foxes.", January 30 1892 "Lucy and Toutuchina in from the north. They brought quite a bit of fur.", March 7 "John Lucy arrived with 1 silver fox." May 1 1892 "Lucy and Jim Toutoucchina with venison and fat."

²⁵ Travel Report as addendum to the German Diary of Hopedale for 1890 quoted in Hans Rollman, *Hermann Jannasch's Visit to Joseph and Charlotte Lucy in Aillek: National Helpers at Makkovik* (unpublished)

²⁶ *Hopedale Church Book*, MUN CNS Moravian Microfilm 591, Baptismal Register, pp. 114, No. 915

Three families from Ailik were recruited for the fair. These were Joseph and Charlotte Lucy (who had no children); John and Katerina Lucy and their children Julia Hedwig, Abraham, Simon, Jonas and Tomasi; and Simon and Sarah Manak and their children Maria, Jacobus Marcus, Peter and Abraham. In addition another young man joined the group, Abraham Tuktashina, who was most likely a relative of Charlotte Lucy who was born a Tuktashina.²⁷

From Ailik, the “Evelena” continued northward, into the Inuit heartland, stopping at the Moravian settlement of Hopedale. From the beginning, the Moravians were both an evangelical and trading enterprise; the trade being a way of attracting Inuit to the mission stations, as well as a means of paying mission expenses. By the early nineteenth century, the Moravians dominated Inuit life on the coast with most Inuit living at least part of the year in Moravian settlements and trading at mission stores. By 1892, there were six mission communities along the coast; Hopedale, Zoar, Nain, Okak, Hebron and Ramah, although at the time of the “Evelena’s” voyage, Zoar was in the process of being shut down due to disputes between the missionaries and Inuit over trade.²⁸

Prior to their departure to Labrador, W.D. Vincent had approached Moravian officials in London for help in putting together the ethnological exhibit for the fair. The Moravians offered letters of introductions to their missionaries on the coast but declined to assist with any recruitment of Inuit because of their previous

²⁷ Personal communication, Joyce Allen of Rigolet, May 2019

²⁸ see Chapter 7

experiences with such ventures.²⁹ In 1880, Abraham Ulrikab and his family, had been recruited from the Moravian community of Hebron and together with a family from Nachvak, had travelled to Europe as part of a Carl Hagenbeck exhibit. All had died of smallpox.³⁰ The Moravians requested that the Americans not recruit Inuit from “their” communities and it appears that this request was largely respected. As a result, visits to the Moravian communities at Hopedale, and later, Okak, Hebron and Ramah were largely courtesy visits for the purpose of gathering information and buying artifacts.

The “Evelena” was at Hopedale on Sunday, 31 July and the group attended the church service there, and also visited the store.³¹ By this time, the agents for the Esquimaux Village were beginning to form their own impressions of Labrador Inuit. They believed they were witnessing a people living in a state of semi-servitude and a race in decline. Taber would write:

War, famine, exposure, intermarriage of blood relations, the introduction of European food and frailties, and with these very likely the germs of pestilence and contagious disease which have made fearful inroads, have all

²⁹ Minutes of the British Mission Board, Vol.1 June 13 1892, Moravian Church Archive and Library Muswell Hill London “Mr. W.D. Vincent the official representative of the ethnological Section of the Columbian Exhibition has received from us letters of introduction to our missionaries in Labrador, whither he goes to collect curiosities for the exhibition. We gave him no sanction to the wish of his employers to engage Eskimos to go to the Exhibition.” Also Minutes of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel Among the Heathen, (SFG) May 6 1892, Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, Reel 3, paragraph 1004

³⁰ Hilke Thode-Arora, “Abraham’s Diary – A European Ethnic Show from an Inuk Participant’s Viewpoint”, *Journal for the Society for the Anthropology of Europe*, Fall 2002

³¹ *Liturgiit Upvalo*, the Moravian hymn book of Lyle Vincent, in which is noted the location of the Evelena each Sunday from June 12-October 9 1892, courtesy of Kenn Harper

combined to reduce the number of living descendants of these once numerous and powerful aborigines to a few hundred men and women, stunted in stature, blunted in natural intelligence, living in fear of their energetic creditors, the mighty Company or the dominant missionaries...³²

In a passage that is both admiring but critical, sympathetic and disparaging, Taber sums up his view of the Inuit character.

True communists in both theory and practice; unselfishly sharing their last morsel, with a smile; a simple, kindly, dirty, good-natured, child-like race, possessing no hope of betterment; giving no thought to the future; systematically forgetful of the past; living only in the present and making the heaviest burdens of that present light with irrepressible cheerfulness of heart!³³

The “Evelena” continued its journey north along the coast, anchoring at Daniel’s Rattle near the Hudson’s Bay Company post at Davis Inlet on 2 August.³⁴ The following day, Vincent and Captain McConnell visited the post to explain their purpose. The post was only a short distance from the Moravian community of Zoar but neither the Hudson’s Bay Company nor the Moravian trade was prospering. The region was generally poor for game and in recent years, the people had struggled to make ends meet. Increasing debts at both the Moravian and Hudson’s Bay Company stores exacerbated the situation and had led to a tightening of credit. At Zoar, a

³²Taber, *Rugged Labrador*, pp.391

³³ Ibid . pp.96

³⁴ *HBC Post Journal, Davis Inlet, August 2 1892*, Transcriptions of HBC Journals, Patrick McGrath Collection, Box 11 File 11, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador

series of protests resulted in the Moravians shutting down their trading operation there.³⁵ This left only the Hudson's Bay Company post at Davis Inlet as a source of provisions for the population but it was poorly supplied and struggling under its own accumulated debts. Its manager, John Olsen, openly wondered how the post and the people could survive another winter under existing conditions. "The future looks anything but bright so far as business is concerned and what the planters and Esquimaux are going to do to keep starvation away from the door is more than I can tell."³⁶

Daniel's Rattle, where the "Evelena" anchored, is at the southern end of Opatik Bay and was home to a number of settler and Inuit families including those of Robert Ford, and Abel Helenab. Ford had a long association with the Hudson's Bay Company through his family. His father John Ford had run the company's outpost at Paul's Island near Nain for many years and his brother George was at the time of the 'Evelena's trip, managing the HBC's northern outpost at Nachvak. Abel Helenab was originally from Nain but had moved south to Opatik and had been living with his wife Helena's family. They were members of the Moravian congregation at Zoar. His father-in-law, Itarsoak, who was baptised Jeremiah at Zoar in 1871, was said to have been the last "heathen Eskimo" to convert to Christianity in the region between

³⁵ Ibid. January 26 1888

³⁶ Ibid. April 11888 and October 25 1888

Hopedale and Nain.³⁷ Abel and Ford were friendly and occasionally hunted together but Olsen, the agent at Davis Inlet, had a low opinion of them both.³⁸

The “Evelena” departed for the north after a brief stay at Davis Inlet. It turned south again on 27 August. Vincent and Taber had by that time persuaded Robert Ford to accompany the group as its interpreter and translator and enlisted two Inuit families from the area consisting of Abel, his wife Helena and daughter Esther and Edward Brown and his family. Olsen’s replacement at Davis Inlet, William Swaffield, took credit for their recruitment and was happy to see them go. They were, as he put it, “no profit to the company.”³⁹ Brown would not get far; he abandoned the voyage at Rigolet, apparently due to sickness.⁴⁰ It would be weeks before the Moravians learned of these departures.⁴¹ Robert Ford, his wife Susan, and their children William and Mary, as well as Abel, his wife Helena and their pregnant daughter, Esther left Opatik Bay for Chicago.

After leaving Davis Inlet on 4 August, the Evelena continued its northward voyage. It arrived in Okak on 7 August. The group continued its search for Inuit artifacts; such things as carvings, dog-whips, kayaks, and komatiks. At a place called Cutthroat, possibly at Sillutalik in Okak Bay, they disassembled an Inuit grave and loaded it onto the schooner for later reassembly in Chicago. Vincent appears to have

³⁷ Extract of the Diary of Zoar, Sept. 1870-Sept. 1871”, Periodical Accounts, Vol. 28, pp.177

³⁸ HBC Post Journal Davis Inlet, February 6 1889, Patrick McGrath Collection Box 11 File 11, PANL :“Robert Ford made his appearance again having evidently exhausted the hospitality of Flowers and the people in Big Bay. Abel Helenab is with him, two idlers, who seem to agree well together.”

³⁹ *HBC Post Journal Davis Inlet*, 28 August 1892

⁴⁰ Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Zoar Diary, 55719-55720, courtesy of Hans Rollmann

⁴¹ Ibid.

recognized that Inuit did not approve of this action, but the prospect of adding a significant new attraction to the Esquimaux exhibit proved irresistible. He would later write:

There is now at the Eskimo Village on the world's fair grounds a grave that was taken up from its original place near a harbor known as 'Cutthroat' in Labrador. A photograph of it was made before disturbing it, then care was used in taking it aboard the vessel, for of all deeds unholy in the eyes of an Eskimo that of disturbing the grave takes precedence.⁴²

It is significant that Vincent understood Inuit feelings on the matter and chose to ignore them. It suggests that he viewed Inuit sensibilities as being different from his own. Inuit graves were not the resting place of loved ones but rather exotic relics of an ancient culture whose principal value lay in their ability to educate or entertain those attending a distant metropolitan spectacle. It is difficult to imagine him performing a similar act in a cemetery in Chicago. That he desecrated the grave while understanding that Inuit did not approve, indicates not only an overriding disrespect for Inuit opinions but a sense of his own entitlement.

A few days after this episode, the "Evelena" arrived in Hebron where its presence generated considerable interest. Residents of that settlement learned the crew of the vessel was recruiting for the fair, and several volunteered to go despite Moravian objections.⁴³ Taber and Vincent had no intention of taking anyone from Hebron but one man, Zacharius Naemib, was insistent and persuaded the Americans

⁴² W.D. Vincent, "Home Life of the Esquimaux", *The Graphic*, 4 March 1893, pp.153

⁴³ Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, *Hebron Diary* (1892), 48978-48979, courtesy of Hans Rollmann.

to allow his family to join the group. The Moravians stated that “he forced himself upon these people, and we could not hold him back” and commented “he will likely gain from his experience and realize that it would have been better for him to remain where he was.”⁴⁴ Zacharius left Hebron with his wife Naemi, their 4 year old daughter, Tabea and Justina, his 13 year daughter by an earlier marriage. Perhaps as a means of placating the Moravians and compensating for the disruption and potential ill-will, Vincent and Taber paid Zacharius’ outstanding debt at the mission store.⁴⁵

From Hebron, the “Evelena” sailed north to Ramah, arriving there on 15 August. The Moravian missionary recorded the visit in the station diary:

On 15 August, Mr. Vincent, agent for the world exposition in Chicago, arrived here in a schooner, and with him a few other gentlemen. They looked for archaeological ... artifacts as well as curiosities for the exhibition. Its purpose was to exhibit there the life and activities of the Eskimos. For that reason, they would like to have taken with them some Eskimos from our station, which we could not permit.... They went to sea from here without any Eskimos and wanted... to go to Nachvak & Aulatsivik, in order to get from there... some Eskimos.⁴⁶

Taber and Vincent still hoped to find their grail; Inuit living beyond the reach of Europeans who met their definition of “primitive”. Such a prize would ensure the exhibit’s popularity and guarantee its commercial success. With this in mind, the

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Minutes of the SFG, 4 November 1892, Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, Reel 3

⁴⁶ Ramah Diary, August 1892 to August 1893, Moravian Archives, Herrnut, Microfilm 690, R. 15.K.b.6A UAH, unpaginated

“Evelena” left Ramah and headed up Nachvak fiord. In his article published at the time of the fair’s opening and intended as publicity, Vincent described Nachvak as a mysterious and magical place.

Nachvak, has a weird uncanny... appearance... and everything is so entirely different than anything that may have been experienced in other mountainous countries that there cannot but be wondered what is the cause. It may be that Simigak exerts his influence over you, for he is among the Esquimaux a wonderful sorcerer. His tent is pitched near the waters edge and at the base of the mountain.... Near his tent is the old whalebone village of Igloosuit and still nearer are the old burial places used by the heathen for hundreds of years. These old graves and ruins make Nachvak a place of desolate oddity and readily satisfies one who wants a change from the ordinary.⁴⁷

Semigak was the brother of Tuglavina, at this time, the titular head of the Nachvak Inuit.⁴⁸ In his camp, Vincent and Taber would find their prize recruits.

Taber described them this way:

From Rama to Cape Chudleigh on the eastern slope of the height of land, the Esquimaux number barely three-score persons. These have not been visited

⁴⁷ Vincent, “Home Life of the Esquimaux”, *The Graphic*, 4 March 1893, pp.153

⁴⁸ Carol Brice-Bennett, *The Northlanders: a History of the Population and Socio-Economic Relations and Cultural Change of Inuit Occupying the Remote Northern Coast of Labrador*. (Unpublished manuscript written for the Labrador Inuit Association, 1996), pp.63 and 86

by the missionaries, as yet, and they are probably as primitive and uncivilized as any that exist on our continent today.⁴⁹

Taber clearly revels in the find; declaring the Nachvak Inuit superior in every way to the other Inuit recruits. They had at last found their “pure” Esquimaux.

These Esquimaux have no fixed residence, but are... nomadic... shifting from place to place in search of game, and dwelling in snow igloos eight or nine months of every year. They are much more healthy and hearty than their southern cousins, with their robust bodies and clear complexions, they bear an air of boldness, pride and confidence, in all of which the others are sadly lacking. Their language is scarcely intelligible to the men from Nain, and our interpreter made very difficult work of the simple questions we desired him to address to them.⁵⁰

They managed to persuade two families and a total of 10 people, to accompany them south. These included Kangerarsuk and his wife Tuglavina and an adopted 14 year old boy, Degouluk. As well, there was Kupper and his wife Kuttukitok and their children Mali, Tiguja, and Sikepa. Finally there were two adolescent siblings Kamialuit and Pomiuk who were children of the murdered northern chieftain Kaujasiak and his third wife Aniortama. They were living with Kupper and Kuttukitok at the time of the “Evelena’s” visit and accompanied them to Chicago. The Moravian missionary at Ramah reported on the departure of the Nachvak people expressing particular concern for Kamialuit.

⁴⁹ R.G. Taber, “Rugged Labrador” *Outing, an Illustrated Monthly Magazine of Recreation*, Jan. 1896, pp. 331

⁵⁰ Ibid. pp.331

We heard later from Nachvak that from there two heathen families went along to Chicago to have themselves exhibited there. Before their departure, they are supposed to have regretted this step, but too late. Unfortunately, also an unbaptized girl who had attended school here for a few years, went along; who just at that time stayed with her relatives.⁵¹

The voyage south was relatively uneventful. The “Evelena” returned to a number of places it had visited on its northward journey to pick up families it had previously engaged. It returned to Hebron on 21 August; and to Davis Inlet, on 28 August. One can only imagine the emotions of those about to set off for a two-year sojourn in the United States. Most would have felt a mix of anticipation and apprehension, excitement and fear. Vincent noted the solemnity with which some of them marked the occasion of their leaving:

At one station the departure of the family of Eskimo... was marked with considerable ceremony. The chief feature of this was the church service held on board the vessel by the missionary helper, who led the party of natives in their prayers and songs. It was a touching sight and one that called forth the thought that home, even in bleak, cold Labrador, is as dear to them as to those whose homes were then thousands of miles away.⁵²

The “Evelena” was at Run-By-Guess outside Aivektok on 4 September.⁵³ On 5 September, it returned to Rigolet where it spent two days gathering the last families on board and taking on supplies for the trip south. On the evening prior to

⁵¹ Ramah Diary 1892, Moravian Archives, Herrnut, Microfilm 690, R. 15.K.b.6A UAH, unpaginated

⁵² W.D. Vincent “Home Life of the Esquimaux” *The Graphic*, 4 March 1893, pp.153

⁵³ *Liturgiit Upvalo* belonging to Lyle Vincent

departure, the “Evelena” fired off a celebratory display of fireworks to the delight of those on board and on shore,⁵⁴ and early the following morning, with 60 men, women, and children, crowded on deck, together with dogs, tents, kayaks, komatiks, hunting gear, and numerous barrels of food and artifacts, the “Evelena” departed for America.⁵⁵

It is not known why Inuit families would choose to leave their homes for two years and travel thousands of kilometres to attend the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. When a reporter interviewed John Lucy in Boston he said he had always wanted to travel abroad and that this was an opportunity to do so with his whole family.⁵⁶ Indeed few had travelled outside Labrador and most would have had limited ideas of where they were going or what was in store for them once they arrived. Curiosity and a sense of adventure may have played a role, but for many the deciding factor was likely the economic challenges they were facing and the hope that two years of guaranteed employment would provide some respite from months of stress and uncertainty. The past years had not been kind to Labrador Inuit. Game had become scarce and it was increasingly difficult to pay down debt and acquire the necessary provisions to survive. At Rigolet, successive failures of salmon and seal harvests had resulted in severe hardship. The chief factor of the HBC for the Labrador District reported, in 1890, that only the intervention of the company and

⁵⁴ *HBC Post Journal Rigolet*, September 7 1892, B183/a/30, HBC Microfilm 1M1020

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* September 8 1892

⁵⁶ “Esquimaux Here,” *Boston Daily Globe*, October 14 1892

government relief, had prevented wide-spread starvation.⁵⁷ The summer of 1891 had brought some relief, but signs for the 1892 season had not been promising and the day the “Evelena” left the area and headed north, the factor reported the year’s salmon fishery to be another failure.⁵⁸ The situation was similar on the coast. In the years leading up to the fair, poor harvests and a tightening of credit had led to social unrest at the Moravian communities of Hopedale, Zoar and Hebron.⁵⁹ In 1890, the HBC agent at Davis Inlet reported that Abel Helenab had turned up at the post in near starving condition, begging for work⁶⁰ and the following year, Edward Brown had been so desperate that he had tried to sell his rifle in exchange for provisions.⁶¹

A further indication of people’s desperation is that the terms of employment offered to Inuit by Vincent and Taber were considered acceptable. For two years’ service, the head of each family was promised 500 Newfoundland shillings (equal to \$100 US dollars), and the promise of a hunting outfit on their return. In Chicago, they were to be fed, clothed and cared for and, after two years, provided with a return passage home.⁶² Once in Chicago, where a man’s labour was not sold so

⁵⁷ HBC Microfilm 1M1146 183/B/3 Vol. 2 pp. 82, *Letter from Keith McKenzie HBC Rigolet, to Robert Prowse and Sons St. John’s*, 28 July 1886, and HBC Microfilm 1M1146 183/B/3 Vol.2 pp.226 *Letter from PW Bell to William Armit*, 6 July 1890

⁵⁸ *HBC Rigolet Post Journals*, 19 July 1892

⁵⁹ “Esquimaux Here”, *Boston Daily Globe*, October 14 1892.

⁶⁰ *HBC Journal Davis Inlet*, 12 January 1890 “Abel Helina and Tom Tucheon (sic) came here with a team of skeletons. I scarcely saw such a sight in my life. The two Indians and these starving brutes would harmonize well together. The Esquimaux said they were starving, these two especially as they cannot get anything from the Mission. They were willing to work and requested for something to do in order to live.”

⁶¹ *HBC Post Journal, Davis Inlet*, 3 September 1891

⁶² “Exodus of the Eskimos”, *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, April 21 1893, mentions additional items such as 100 fish hooks and to each woman 30 yards of calico and 4 blankets.

cheaply, the terms of the contract would seem less attractive but in the current Labrador context they were good enough to entice Inuit to venture into the unknown.

Vincent and Taber, who had been tasked with gathering people and materials to form the basis of “a true and life-like representation of an Eskimo village,” had no previous experience when it came to organizing ethnological exhibits. It is not clear how or why they selected the people they did. The Esquimaux Village was conceived along the lines of a Hagenbeck exhibit where people would be seen wearing traditional clothing, living in facsimiles of traditional habitations and demonstrating crafts and skills. The principal requirement for this kind of ethnological experience was the family unit which created the impression of a real community of men, women and children going about their daily lives. Representation from different genders and age groups broadened audience appeal and infants in particular were proven crowd pleasers. So Vincent and Taber would have wanted family groups.

No doubt they had their own ideals as to what would make an attractive and commercially successful exhibit. These would have based on their own preconceptions and understanding of audience expectations formed by the stereotypes and clichés at play in the public imagination. For the American audience, Inuit were primitives of the far north, draped in the furs of wild animals, living in ice houses and hunting polar bears and seals. These notions would have been constantly in play as the concession’s agents toured the coast. The recruitment process was akin to a casting call where criteria was based not only on who was willing and able to play the role, but whether they looked the part. Physical

characteristics may have come into play in the selection process. It is possible that some people were selected based on distinctive physical features and racial characteristics that set them apart and reinforced suggestions of the alien and the “other.” Emblematic clothing, equipment and artifacts were additional symbolic indicators of the people’s unique identity as inhabitants of a remote and foreign place and possession of such items might also have had an influence on their choice.

However, practicalities also intervened. Vincent’s attempt to enlist Moravian assistance in the venture had been rejected and he was asked not to recruit from “their” communities. This may be one of the reasons that they enlisted a disproportionate number of people from the Rigolet area. Yet these people diverged sharply from the stereotype. They had long been in contact with Europeans, spoke English, could read and write, sing hymns and even play European musical instruments. This made the recruitment of northern Inuit even more vital to the success of the exhibit and accounts for the special effort made to acquire “heathen” Esquimaux from the north.

The people who left Labrador for the World’s Columbian Exposition were itinerant hunters and fishermen recruited at summer camps and fishing stations in Labrador. In Chicago their lives would be turned upside down. In the Esquimaux Village, they would become actors on a stage, their clothes would become their costumes, their tools and utensils would become props, and their lives would become daily performance to meet the expectations and imaginings of an inquisitive and intrusive public. Although they had gained respite from economic uncertainty, none were prepared for the radical transformation that would be expected of them.

Chapter 5

INUIT IN AMERICA 1892-1893

It was a strange and interesting site aboard the vessel and undoubtedly the bulk of the passengers were thinking the same thing when the lights of the great city were sighted and all the embellishments of civilization were unfolded to them for the first time.

Boston Globe, October 14 1892 ¹

The people recruited in Labrador for the Esquimaux Village exhibit arrived in Chicago in October 1892, seven months prior to the official opening of the World's Columbian Exposition. Their appearance coincided with festivities surrounding the official dedication ceremonies for the fair. They were the first of the ethnological exhibits to arrive and their presence generated widespread public interest and press attention. Early press reports were influenced by the scientific framework established for ethnological exhibits at the fair, as well as the promotion strategies of the concession's owners. These two influences would largely determine the ways in which Inuit were initially presented at the fair. Representations were defined by pre-existing stereotypes of indigenous people generally and "Esquimaux" in particular, as illustrations of the "primitive". These notions and imaginings would evolve over time as Inuit pushed back against the injustices and indignities they faced at the hands of their employers. This chapter describes Inuit experience at the fair, the public and press response to the exhibit and the events leading up to the rebellion and defections from the Esquimaux Village that took place prior to the

¹ "Esquimaux Here, Queer Lot, On Their Way to World's Fair", *Boston Globe*, October 14 1892

fair's official opening. I argue that these events were the response of Inuit to specific problems within the Esquimaux Village and while they were not directly a reaction to the fictions and caricatures projected upon them, by asserting their rights and interests and finding redress through the courts, their actions subverted many of the false notions and misrepresentations imposed upon them. Through a proactive response to injustice, Inuit broke free of the colonialist imaginings to which they had been subjected and asserted their fundamental humanity.

Arrival in America

When the "Evelena," dropped anchor in Boston harbour on the morning of 14 October 1892, a reporter from the *Boston Globe* scrambled on board to witness the extraordinary event. The schooner had departed Labrador on 29 August and after travelling 45 days had finally arrived in the United States. Inuit, most of them dressed in sealskin garments, were perched at prominent points along the vessel, curious to see everything that was happening around them. The deck was packed with sleds, kayaks, skin tents, snowshoes, stoves, lamps, barrels of sealskins, seal oil, blubber, dried codfish, deer meat, and kennels, containing 24 "howling" Esquimaux dogs. As the writer for the *Boston Globe* observed, it "furnished a strange picture to the innumerable passengers aboard crafts of all kinds that hovered around the vessel and gazed at the strange scene presented." He described the Inuit as "children of the north, the primitive people who inhabit the land of the midnight sun."²

Ralph Taber, the representative of J.W. Skiles & Co., which had commissioned the voyage, told the correspondent that the trip had been successful in securing

² "Esquimaux Here", *Boston Daily Globe*, October 14 1892

everything that was needed to create a complete representation of an Esquimaux Village for the World's Columbian Exposition. "We have with us," Taber said, "some of the best specimens of the race to be found in their country." He explained that the people had come from various points on the Labrador coast and included "representatives of half civilized tribes at the Hudson's Bay Company posts, converts from Moravian mission stations and heathen aborigines from Cape Chidley and the shores of Ungava."³

Taber went on to describe in detail the "heathen aborigines" whom he clearly considered his most prized acquisition. He described them as being "typical of the ancient race they represent" and "unsullied by the touch of civilization."⁴ Taking his lead from the Taber interview, and embellishing it with his own imagination, the reporter wrote:

When the party reached the extreme Northern point of their travels, they were met by the most ignorant class of Esquimaux who stood in terror of anything calculated to disturb the monotony of their dreary lives. Living in houses made of ice, propped up by chance pieces of timber which were washed ashore... they lived absolutely without the slightest semblance of civilization.... They were more primitive in every way than the early Indians of America.⁵

Taber also reported on the Inuit graves the party examined, with particular reference to the one they had disassembled and taken on board to include in the

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

exhibit. It was, he noted, complete with the bones and relics buried inside. The relics included “carvings of dogs and sleds and implements used by natives.” Taber stated that it had not been difficult to recruit people for the exhibit principally on account of there being a very poor salmon and cod fishery that year and that many people had been facing starvation.⁶

After speaking with Taber, the correspondent wandered among the people on the deck of the “Evelena” and observed that it was easy to distinguish between the heathen and his half civilized cousins, stating that while they all had similar features, the latter were not as fierce looking, appeared more interested in their surroundings, and could speak English. One such person was John Lucy, whose family was described as the most intelligent on board the schooner. Lucy explained his own reasons for coming on the trip:

Although I have followed the sea all my life, my trips have been short ones, never farther from my home than Newfoundland. I little dreamed a year ago that I should be able to do so, however, and with my family too. When Mr. Taber and Mr. Vincent made the proposition to me last June, I embraced the opportunity.⁷

The “Evelena” was boarded by US Customs in Boston. The Inspector took a list of the names of all on board as well as an inventory of the items that were to be trans-shipped to Chicago.⁸ There was some question as to the conditions under which the people were permitted entry to the United States, as they were neither

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ “Esquimaux Here, Queer Lot on Their Way to World’s Fair”, *Boston Globe*, October 14 1892

⁸ See Appendix 1

immigrants nor labourers. Delays occurred while US Customs consulted the Treasury Department to determine whether a bond should be required of the men who brought them to ensure that all would return home. The Treasury Department eventually determined that a bond was not necessary as long as the people were going on exhibition in Chicago.⁹

With permission to land, the “Evelena” tied up at Grey’s wharf and everyone was allowed on shore. It was the first time the people had stood on dry land for over a month. The dogs too were taken off the vessel and allowed to stretch their legs. The children, reportedly, ran wild.¹⁰ The next night, Vincent and Taber took a small delegation of Inuit, dressed in their sealskins, to the Park Theatre to see a performance of the play “1492”, most likely to garner a little more publicity. The group, consisting of John and Katerina Lucy, Tom and Peter Palliser, Mary Palliser, Kupper, Kamialuit, and Pomiuk, was accompanied by the reporter from the *Boston Globe*. As they drove to the theatre, the people were clearly astonished at all they saw. “Koooper, (sic) the young chief, had never seen a horse before his arrival in Boston, nor a house more than one story high. These and the electric cars interested him greatly.”¹¹ According to the reporter, the group found the play interesting but were more taken with the gas and electric lights that could be turned on and off.¹² After the performance, they were introduced to a number of the performers, one of

⁹ “Far Away Labrador”, *Daily Inter-Ocean*, October 15 1892

¹⁰ “Esquimaux Off to Chicago”, *Boston Sunday Globe*, October 16 1892

¹¹ “At the Theatre”, *Boston Sunday Globe*, October 16 1892

¹² “At the Theatre,” *Boston Sunday Globe*, October 16 1892 and “Esquimaux in Chicago”, *Baltimore Sun*, October 22 1892

which, was a child dancer named La Radioncitta, who, according to Taber, presented the young Pomiuk with a ring. He would treasure it for the rest of his life.¹³

The publicity, surrounding the presence of Inuit in Boston, brought crowds to the railway station the next day, as the group prepared to board their train to Chicago. Arriving at the station by barge, they passed through a double file of curious spectators to get to their coach. Amazed by the “house on wheels” and at first frightened by the steam locomotives, the party had to be reassured before they got on board and settled down. To keep the people comfortable during the trip, the steam was shut off in the coach and all the ventilators opened.¹⁴

On the evening of 17 October, the train carrying Inuit and all their belongings, arrived at the Polk St. station in Chicago. Although it was six months before the scheduled opening of the World’s Columbian Exposition, the city was preoccupied with the upcoming fair. It was Dedication Week and Chicago was about to embark on a week of festivities, which included a black-tie reception for luminaries, including the Vice-President of the United States, the entire US Supreme Court, the diplomatic corps, and a who’s who of Chicago’s political and business elite who had been responsible for the planning and construction of the fair. The reception would be followed the next day by a massive parade through the streets of Chicago and an official dedication ceremony at the fair site. The arrival of Labrador Inuit occurred just days before these events and attracted a good deal of press attention. Reporters from the *Daily Inter-Ocean*, the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago*

¹³ Ralph Graham Taber, *Northern Lights and Shadows* (London: Greening and Company, 1900) pp.193

¹⁴“Esquimaux Off to Chicago”, *Boston Sunday Globe*, October 16 1892

News-Record were all on hand when the train pulled into the Chicago station. These reports drew on myths and the deliberate misrepresentations by the exhibit's promoters to further establish and solidify the framework in which Labrador Inuit would be presented and perceived.

As Inuit stepped onto the platform dressed in their sealskins, they were variously described as "fat and jolly,"¹⁵ a "queer and picturesque lot," "short and muscular," and "phlegmatic but intelligent looking."¹⁶ One reporter wrote that they looked like "Indians loaded down with sealskins, except smaller" and that they were "exhausted" and "suffering from the heat greatly."¹⁷ It was reported that Jonas, the oldest, was 60 and that the youngest, Peter Deer, was a mere 7 months.

The press reported that there were two train cars transporting the party; one coach containing the Esquimaux from "the land of the polar bear and the midnight sun", and the other a freight car containing "20 Esquimaux dogs, 4 puppies, a number of seal skin kayaks, a komatik, a sealskin tent, several barrels of oil and blubber, a lot of green skins to be made into garments, dried deer and seal meat, and a lot of walrus and fish bones to be manufactured into trinkets."¹⁸ Inside the car, it was said, "the smell of walrus flesh and other delicacies was noticeable, to say nothing of the odor arising from the presence of three score fur-robed people. The excessive heat of the day had been exceedingly uncomfortable for the Esquimaux."¹⁹

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "Twelve Families Arrive", *Chicago Tribune*, October 18 1892

¹⁷ "Jolly Esquimaux", *Daily Inter-Ocean*, October 18 1892

¹⁸ "Twelve Families Arrive", *Chicago Tribune*, October 18 1892

¹⁹ "Chicago's Esquimaux", *Chicago Times*, and *Buffalo Morning Express*, October 20 1892

The party was led by Taber and Vincent and accompanied by the translator Robert Ford, and the “Evelena’s” Captain, William O’Connell. They were met by P.M. Daniels, the president and manager of the newly formed Arctic World American Exposition Company which had taken over the management of the Esquimaux Village.²⁰ In speaking to reporters, the agents for the concession presented their wards as exotic primitives. They again drew attention to the two “heathen” families from the territory “beyond civilization” and explained that they knew nothing about Christianity, did not speak English and were polygamous, typically kidnapping young women to be their wives or simply buying them with two or three sealskins.²¹ The reporters engaged various Inuit in conversation, even speaking to Kangerarsuk, headman of one of the “heathen” families, who was reportedly much impressed with the locomotives at the station. Another who captured the attention of more than one correspondent was Pomiuk, the young fifteen year old “heathen” described as “gay and intelligent” and “the liveliest member of the group,” “who loves to dance.”²² He is said to be “the son of a chief who was killed in an attempt to increase his number of wives.” Pomiuk was still wearing the ring presented to him by La Rigaloncita (sic) from his night out in Boston.²³

The Esquimaux Village

After their brief appearance at the Polk Street Station, and after the passenger and freight car had been transferred to the Illinois Central tracks, the party re-boarded the train and were taken to the fairgrounds where they were

²⁰ “New Incorporations”, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 November 1892

²¹ Ibid.

²² “Twelve Esquimaux”, Families Arrive, *Chicago Tribune*, October 18 1892

²³ “Jolly Esquimaux”, *Daily Inter-Ocean*, October 18 1892

expected to live until the close of the Exposition, in a year's time. There, for a fee of twenty-five cents, visitors would be able to see the natives, their "wolfish" dogs, sledges, spears and canoes and watch "the domestic life of this curious people."²⁴

The Esquimaux Village was located in the extreme north-east corner of Jackson Park, on 3 acres of land that included a grove of trees and a small stagnant lagoon. The grounds had been fenced in so that access could be restricted to paying customers. There was a ticket window in the fence and nearby, a turnstile, through which visitors came and went. Even though the official opening of the fair was more than six months away, and Jackson Park was still a construction site, the Esquimaux Village was immediately open for business. Initially, the people lived in canvas tents. Management provided materials to construct wood huts, meant to simulate winter homes that could be found in Labrador, but the men were expected to build these themselves and it would be mid-December before construction was completed.²⁵ In the meantime they were immediately put to work being "Esquimaux." The *St. Louis Dispatch* reported an account of one visit to the village, capturing well the method organizers used to attract visitors to the exhibit.

Just at the surface of the water an opening is made in the fence.... Persons using the 57th St. gate are obliged to cross the lagoon by a little rustic bridge, and on this the majority of them pause to gaze at the fence hiding this stumpy people from the Arctic regions. One of the Eskimos in full regalia has been trained by his Yankee importers to act as a sort of "capper." He floats upon

²⁴ Rand McNally & Co., *A Week at the Fair, Illustrating the Exhibits and Wonders at the World's Columbian Exposition*, (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co. Publishers, 1893)

²⁵ "The Esquimaux Village at Chicago", *St. Louis Post Dispatch* 18 December 1892

the hidden hand of the lagoon and ever and anon bends down in his canoe to peer through the aperture towards the bridge outside. When he sees it peopled by visitors, he gives his slender paddle a deft turn or two, shoots towards the hole in the fence and darts through it with a low bridge.... Once in sight of the people on the bridge, he goes through a series of evolutions in his tapering canoe, then wheels about and disappears into the fence hole again. This roly-poly little man is the bait for the show and when he shoots out of sight there's a rush for the ticket window and turnstile.²⁶

The Esquimaux Village was the only ethnological exhibit open for viewing throughout the fall and winter prior to the opening of the Exposition and it attracted considerable interest. Once construction of the permanent living quarters was complete, visitors to the Village could see twelve huts, one for each family, a number of sealskin tents containing kayaks, paddles, harpoons, whips, nets, sleeping bags, and other tools of the hunt, a dog pen containing the dogs not running wild in the village or hitched to sleds, and the reconstructed gravesite, with skeletal remains and burial relics. The women could be seen curing and tanning skins, crafting sealskin boots and clothing, or making dolls and grass-work for sale while the men carved small likenesses of people and animals in wood and walrus bone. Everywhere children and dogs ran free. When the lagoon froze over, the older boys harnessed their dogs to the sleds and took visitors on rides over the snow and ice around the pond. These rides were particularly popular.²⁷

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ H.H.Banroft, *The Book of the Fair The Book of the Fair: An Historical and Descriptive Presentation of the World's Science, Art and Industry as Viewed Through*

During the fall and early months of winter, the Esquimaux Village was well attended and the concession began earning revenue. Inuit themselves appeared to be content; stimulated by their surroundings and apparently as interested in their visitors and as their visitors were in them. One journalist wrote: "It seems to be one of the greatest of pleasures to the good-natured little people to entertain their visitors."²⁸ Another after speaking to a number of the men, stated that they

evinced a candor and good sense with regard to their situation at the exposition and their sojourn in the United States, which do great credit to their powers of observation and judgment. They converse sensibly and give one the impression that they accept the fact that they are part of the fair and hence must tolerate with patience and good humor the sometimes impertinent curiosity of sightseers.²⁹

With the onset of winter and the first snowfall, the Esquimaux Village took on an irresistible charm. If the village was a stage, winter provided the perfect set dressing. The people, clad in their sealskin clothing, appeared at their most picturesque, aligning perfectly with public expectations. There was even an 'igloo' at the edge of the frozen pond which visitors could crawl into.

the Columbian Exposition in 1893, (Chicago and San Francisco: the Bancroft Co., 1895) pp.879

²⁸ "Esquimaux Village at the World's Fair", *The Illustrated American*, December 24 1892

²⁹ *The Youth Companion to the World's Fair*, 1893



Fig.10 Esquimaux Village at the World's Columbian Exposition 1893, C.D. Arnold Photograph, by permission of the Chicago History Museum



Fig. 11/12 Esquimaux Village at the World's Columbian Exposition 1893, C.D.
Arnold Photograph, courtesy of the Chicago History Museum



Figure13: Esquimaux Village at the World's Columbian Exposition 1893, C.D. Arnold Photograph, courtesy of the Chicago History Museum

Figure14: Abel, Helena, Nancy and Esther at the Esquimaux Village, C.D. Arnold Photograph, courtesy of the Chicago History Museum



Figure 15: Peter Palliser at the World's Columbian Exposition 1893, from *Portfolio of*

The sealskin clothing was perhaps the Esquimaux's most emblematic feature, and the cause of continual public fascination. Almost every writer to visit the village would comment on the native garments¹ These sealskin clothes, beautifully crafted from the skins of wild mammals embodied all that was most alluring and exotic about the people who wore them and more than any other item, identified them, in the public mind, as "Esquimaux".

Babies

About two weeks after the arrival of Inuit in Jackson Park, the population of the village increased, as two babies were born within days of each other; one to Simon and Sarah Manak and the other, to Kupper and Kuttukitok. Much fuss was made over both babies; the first, christened Columbia Susan, because she was the first child born at the fair, and the second named Kotuktook, because she was born to 'heathens' and not christened at all. The births were widely publicized and were promoted by the concession as a new additional attraction in the village in the manner in which zoos promoted the birth of wild animals in captivity, although one of the Exposition's directors lamented that it was a pity an American child did not have the honour of being the first born at the fairgrounds.²

Sadly, Susan died after only a week of life. Although newspaper reports that had celebrated her birth described her as 'fat' and healthy, reports of her death

¹ "Esquimaux Village at the World's Fair", *The Illustrated American*, 24 December 1892 pp.653

² "In a Strange Land", *Chicago Tribune*, November 1 1892, also "Another Baby," *New York Times*, November 5 1892

stated that she had been frail from the beginning and speculated that perhaps “the climate was too warm for her arctic blood.”³ More likely the damp conditions in the tents that had served as temporary residences for the Labrador people contributed to her death.⁴

The funeral of Susan Manak was vividly described in newspapers the following day and the accounts of it make it difficult to believe that the event was not deliberately exploited for its commercial potential. The choreography of the ceremony reflects little of any Labrador tradition. Shortly after her death, she was taken from her mother and wrapped in deerskin. A tiny coffin was made and after she was placed inside it, it was put in a small skin tent erected near that of her parents. A few feet from the tent there was a small box covered in a polar bear skin. As the funeral ceremony began, each family gathered in front of their tents until Susan and Lucy Palliser, both 5 years old, acting as pallbearers, lifted the tiny coffin and placed it on the bearskin. With the parents at the head of the tiny coffin and the pallbearers at its foot, the families gathered around as an Episcopalian minister conducted a short service, at the end of which, they circled the coffin chanting and singing hymns. Susan Manak was then taken to Oakwood Cemetery, a short distance from Jackson Park, where she was buried.⁵ The exploitation of Susan Manak’s death and its transformation from a solemn ceremony into voyeuristic entertainment reveals a depraved single-mindedness among the concession’s owners toward their Inuit wards. Crass commercial considerations subverted all decency. Like the

³ “Lived But A Week”, *Chicago Tribune*, November 8 1892

⁴ “Esquimaux Don’t Like Rain”, *Chicago Tribune*, October 19 1892

⁵ “Shrouded in Deerskin”, *Democrat and Chronicle*, Rochester, NY, November 11 1892

desecration of northern graves, Inuit sensitivities were ignored. Underlying this was the racist presumption that Inuit feelings were somehow qualitatively different or didn't matter which permitted ethical considerations to be discarded and gave license to the transgression of all normal behavioural boundaries.

A week after Susan's death, a third child was born, this one to Jonas and Susan Palliser. It was the first boy to be born at the fair and was given the name Christopher Columbus. It was said her mother celebrated the birth by taking a kayak ride around the pond.⁶ This baby too was described as "fair and fat." The fourth and last Inuit child born in Chicago, was delivered early in the new year. On 16 January 1893, Esther, the daughter of Abel and Helena gave birth to Nancy Helena who would, in subsequent years, become widely known as Nancy Columbia.⁷

As the Chicago winter gave way to spring, the Esquimaux Village management sought new ways to attract visitors to the exhibit. The kayaks reappeared on the lagoon but the dog sled rides which had proved so popular were no longer possible. To overcome this, a small tramway was built with a sled mounted on rollers. Once the dogs were hitched, rides could again be taken around the village. Another attraction was called the 'Esquimaux whip'. What began as a simple demonstration of a hunter's skill with a dog whip evolved into a contest between Inuit men. A visitor would place a coin on edge in the dirt, 40 feet away from where the men stood and each in turn attempted to dislodge the coin from the ground with a flick of the whip. The one who was successful got to keep the coin. It

⁶ "Boy Born in the Esquimaux Village", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 13 1892.

⁷ For a sketch of Nancy's subsequent career as a performer and actress see Jim Zwick, *Inuit Entertainers in the United States: From the Chicago World's Fair Through the Birth of Hollywood*, (West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity Press, 2006)

became a popular form of entertainment and a way for Inuit to make a little extra money.

The most expert whip among the Esquimaux was a little man, not more than 4 feet high, with slanting eyes, and a spiky black beard that made him look very Japanese. A movement of his wrist sent the 40 feet of lash curving back in a straight line like a long snake. Another movement and it came forward, noiselessly shooting through the air just above the surface of the ground until, with a loud report, the tip end of the lash struck the precise spot where the coin was buried, dug it from the ground, and brought it spinning back to the Esquimaux artist. Such precision and such force are certainly unknown to any other whips in the world.⁸

Because the Esquimaux Village was the first ethnological exhibit to be established at the World's Columbian Exposition, it attracted considerable attention from the press. Although reporters varied in their perspectives and opinions, most leaned on preconceptions and stereotypes of Esquimaux current in the public imagination with little attempt to explore and investigate the particulars of Labrador Inuit histories or culture. There was a presumption that the Esquimaux were interesting by virtue of their difference and "otherness" and a general acceptance of the characterization of them as representatives of "savage" and "primitive" people. They were variously referred to as: "a strange race,"⁹ "queer

⁸ "The Wonderful Esquimaux Whip", *The Star*, Reynoldsville Pa., June 21 1893

⁹ Rossiter Johnson, *History of the World's Columbian Exposition*, (New York: D Appleton and Company 1897-98).

and picturesque,"¹⁰ "a peculiar people,"¹¹ and "children of the far north,"¹² from "the land of the midnight sun,"¹³ "where the days are six months long"¹⁴ or where "there are about ten days of summer and ice and snow the rest of the year".¹⁵ They were described as "oil drinkers,"¹⁶ "eaters of raw fish and flesh,"¹⁷ with "black hair and dark skin,"¹⁸ as "blubber-hunting, blubber fed people of the Arctic region,"¹⁹ and among "the oldest people on the earth, survivors of the stone age and the glacial epoch."²⁰ The useage of popular and familiar tropes drew upon and fed public notions in a kind of feed-back loop that perpetuated misrepresentations, providing both a language and set of concepts through which Inuit at the fair were perceived. The notion that the inhabitants of the Esquimaux Village were "primitives"; remnants of an earlier stage of human evolution, was determined in part by the promotion and publicity efforts of Taber and Vincent to create maximum interest in the exhibit. They tended to highlight the traditional and obscure the modern. The special attention paid to the Nachvak families was part of this strategy. Viewed through this lens, the Esquimaux Village fit neatly into Frederic Putnum's original plan for ethnological villages to be "object lessons" by which the public could,

¹⁰ "Twelve Families Arrive", *Chicago Tribune*, October 18 1892

¹¹ *Midway Types* (Chicago Illinois: the American Engraving Company, 1894)

¹² "Locked Up", *St Joseph Weekly Gazette*, January 12 1893

¹³ *The San Francisco Morning Call*, April 3 1893

¹⁴ "Jolly Esquimaux", *Daily Inter-Ocean*, October 18 1892

¹⁵ "Twelve Families Arrive", *Chicago Tribune*, October 18 1892

¹⁶ "Oil Drinkers Secured", *Daily Inter-Ocean*, September 23 1892

¹⁷ "Eaters of Raw Fish", *The Sun*, October 15 1892

¹⁸ "Esquimaux in Chicago", *Baltimore Sun*, October 22 1892

¹⁹ *San Francisco Morning Call*, April 3 1893

²⁰ *The Youth's Companion to the Worlds Fair* 1893

through observation of the “primitive,” understand civilization’s progress and their own racial superiority. One reporter put it this way:

Away to the north of the grounds a party of Eskimo immigrants have built their huts.... The shadows of these huts, when the sun is low in the winter afternoon, are thrown up on the walls of the Art building. Would it be possible for extremes to meet more appositely? The Eskimo is among the races of men nearest to the soil from which all men came. The lines of the Art building express the mature development of the spiritual part of the enlightened man, of the soul in search of ideal beauty. The visitor may comprehend in a glance, the Eskimo and the Art building and in an instant, his mind's eye will show him all that lies between.²¹

It is difficult to assess the attitudes and impressions of the public at large who visited the Esquimaux Village in ever increasing numbers in the days leading up to the opening of the fair. These would have run the gamut from the admiring and respectful to the contemptuous and disdainful, reflecting both a genuine fascination with people profoundly different as well as acquired prejudices towards people viewed as both ignorant and inferior. Visitors to the exhibit were mostly white Americans, the vast majority of whom probably accepted the view that on the ladder of civilization, they were a few rungs higher than the people they observed in the Esquimaux Village. But perceptions and opinions would have varied. The press was generally sympathetic. Although there was racism evident in much of the writing about Inuit, it was not generally malicious. On occasions, however, it could turn

²¹ “Measure of Progress”, *The World's Fair Update, Once a Week: An Illustrated Weekly*, March 18 1893

virulent. Julian Ralph correspondent for *Harper's Chicago and World's Fair* had this to say after visiting the village:

Whoever would imagine the face of an Eskimo belle without going to the painful extreme of looking at one, need only picture a Chinaman's visage which has been stepped on and flattened by an elephant's foot. The Eskimo face does not stop being flat - it is dished in the middle. Those polar belles have black horse hair on their heads, café au lait complexions and very soft fine skins. Their tone of voice is precisely like that of the Edison talking dolls.... Filing a saw produces dulcet strains beside the lullaby of such a woman to her child. It costs \$.25 to get into the Eskimo village but is worth \$25 to get out...²²

No doubt, the people inhabiting the Esquimaux Village would have seen and heard it all. The tropes, clichés and stereotypes that framed the understandings and expectations of both the press and public rarely managed to perceive Inuit as anything but caricature. By this time, Inuit themselves, were becoming increasingly impatient and restless.

The Spring of Discontent

As the snow and ice melted, the village lost much of its charm. Visitors began to comment on the increasingly sullen nature of the people - and the smell. The *Rand McNally Guide to the Fair* put it as follows:

There are men, women, and children in the Village, and their modes of life and the sanitary conditions (or rather the want of them) peculiar to them and

²² Julian Ralph, "In the Eskimo Village at Chicago", *Evening Star*, Washington DC, May 27 1893.

their crowded quarters do not “lade the pulsing air with the sweetest perfumes.”²³

This was not an isolated point of view. Early in the new year, casual observation had turned to widespread concern that the deteriorating conditions at the Esquimaux Village might actually harm the reputation of the upcoming Exposition and become a risk to the health of the general public. In an article published in the *Daily Inter-Ocean*, it was observed that the Esquimaux were not “the cleanest people in the world” and “delight to daub themselves with seal oil which often becomes rancid and very offensive.” The point being that the “primitives” in the Esquimaux Village did not have a civilized view of hygiene. It did not blame the situation entirely on Inuit however, pointing out that although the exposition grounds had developed state of the art sanitary facilities, the site of the Esquimaux Village was affected by “every unfavourable feature” including “a stagnant pond that every effort had failed to keep pure.” It also blamed the managers of the Village, who in an effort to recreate living conditions in the Esquimaux’s native land, had built houses that were impossible to ventilate and had failed to provide more sanitary quarters for the Esquimaux dogs. It went on to raise the possibility of an epidemic if conditions did not improve before the summer. The article concluded with the statement that attendance at the village had been “quite liberal,” suggesting, perhaps, that management could afford to do better.²⁴

²³ Rand McNally & Co., *A Week at the Fair, Illustrating the Exhibits and Wonders at the World’s Columbian Exposition*, (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co Publishers, 1893)

²⁴ “Esquimaux in Summer”, *Daily Inter-Ocean*, Chicago Illinois, January 27 1893

As the physical environment deteriorated, so did Inuit morale. The constant and unchanging routine of receiving the curious and intrusive visitors for months at a time must have become burdensome. Unlike the representatives of other ethnological villages who would later attend the fair, Labrador Inuit were not seasoned performers. Rather, they were itinerant hunters and fishermen who, despite the pressures of subsistence living and merchant debt, led relatively free and independent lives in an ever-changing environment. Nothing could have prepared them for the monotony of their confinement and the continual demands and expectations placed upon them, both by their employers and the public. They were becoming increasingly bored, irritable and homesick. Food was an issue as well, especially for northern Inuit. The supplies of country food; seal-meat, caribou and fish, which had been brought from Labrador, quickly ran out. The adjustment to a southern diet proved difficult and unsatisfying. One visitor to the Esquimaux Village was so moved by the apparent condition of the people that she expressed her outrage in a letter to the editors of the *Chicago Tribune*:

Scarce ever has it been my misfortune to see anything so pitiable as the condition of the Eskimo people at Jackson Park, in the World's Fair Grounds. The motives of the company which brought these poor creatures here, are the most mercenary and should be rebuked by all who respect one common humanity.... (The) helpless people who were brought here as a speculation... are only being demoralized. Some of the children are already becoming brazen, others... are becoming so shrinking as to be a constant rebuke to the staring crowd... As for the women, I have never seen so pitiful a sight. They

evidenced their humiliation in a dumb pleading of face and manner that would touch any heart not hardened by greed or vulgarized by curiosity.²⁵

The people were also beginning to chafe at the rules imposed on them by the Village management. Principal among these was the restriction of movement. It was one thing to have to remain in the village compound during the day to meet and greet visitors but management discouraged Inuit from leaving the compound. The fence, which was built to keep out non-paying customers, also served to keep Inuit in. There was a clause in the original contract between J.W. Skiles & Co. and the World Columbian Exposition which stated that the company would be allowed to board and lodge their native employees on the fairgrounds “provided that the said natives shall be confined to the said tract at such times during the night as said Exposition is not open to visitors.”²⁶ The Company appeared to be interpreting the contract literally and using it to restrict and control people’s movements. It may well be that this was also an attempt to limit the contamination of the village with articles and items that would compromise an “authentic” presentation; the acquisition of American fashion items, particularly skirts and scarves among the women, had received comment in the press. It may also have been a way of keeping Inuit from learning just how cheaply they had sold their labour, which, once learned, became a major cause of discontent. It was the attempt by management to impose its authority on all aspects of Inuit life that set in motion the sequence of events that would eventually tear apart the Esquimaux Village.

²⁵ Anna N. Kendall, “The Eskimo Village”, *Chicago Tribune*, April 1 1893

²⁶ *Concession Agreement between the World’s Columbian Exposition Co and J.W. Skiles and Co.*, March 9 1892, Records of the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago Ill.

The Revolt

Trouble began early in January 1893. According to one newspaper report, one Sunday, Zacharius (whom the reporter refers to as Oconomowoe) left the village without permission and Robert Ford, the village interpreter, and interlocutor between management and Inuit, had the 'delinquent' brought back and upbraided him for leaving. A few days later, the company president and manager P.M. Daniels was informed of the incident, and, in the presence of Ford began to lecture Zacharius. In the midst of the conversation, Zacharius turned on Ford and "proceeded to imitate the automatic vibrator on a big thrashing machine"; shaking him violently backward and forward and finally hitting him. Daniels, unable to stop the assault, called in the exposition police force, the Columbian Guard. By the time they arrived the village was in "a state of excitement approaching delirium. Dogs were howling, men were shouting and babies were crying."²⁷ Zacharius was taken into custody and initially held on the fairgrounds at the headquarters of the Guard. However, Daniels insisted that Zacharius be charged and he was transferred to the Chicago police at their Woodlawn Station where he spent the night, under indictment on several counts of assault. Daniels stated that the arrest and imprisonment was necessary to show the villagers that "they must observe civilized customs or else suffer legal punishment."²⁸

The following day Zacharius was arraigned before Judge V.R. Porter of the Hyde Park Circuit Court. Determined to make an example of him, Daniels asked the judge to have him locked up for two or three weeks. Porter, on listening to the

²⁷ "Locked Up", *St. Joseph Weekly Gazette*, 12 January 1893

²⁸ Ibid.

evidence, declined to do so and ordered Zacharius to be released. That night Zacharius left the village and the next day took a job with a contractor working on the Exposition grounds for \$2.25 a day.²⁹ Under the terms of their contract, Inuit were to be paid \$50 a year for their work in the Esquimaux Village. Working construction, Zacharius stood to make that much in a month. A short time afterwards, a second man, Tom Deer, quit the village. He too found work with a contractor. A third man Peter Mesher also quit. Mesher, who had attended Zacharius's court case, had been impressed with the sympathetic hearing given by Judge Porter and had approached the judge for assistance in finding outside work. According to later testimony, Porter took a deep interest in the Esquimaux Village after meeting Mesher. It was then that he began a closer investigation of their situation.³⁰

Ultimately, it was controversies surrounding clothing that brought matters to a head. As temperatures began to rise, the heavy skin clothes Inuit had brought with them became increasingly uncomfortable. Members of the group began to protest management's insistence that these garments be worn throughout the day. From the beginning, Inuit sealskin clothing had received admiring comments from the press and public alike and it was clearly one of the distinguishing and attractive features of the people. The managers of the Esquimaux Village believed that visitors expected to see Esquimaux dressed in furs and that the skin clothing enhanced the appearance of the villagers, making them appear more authentic and more in keeping with the public imaginings of the Esquimaux as a remote, exotic and

²⁹ "May Abate Itself", *Daily Inter-Ocean*, April 1 1893

³⁰ "Too Warm for Furs", *Atlanta Constitution*, March 31 1893

primitive people. Without the sealskins they feared the overall effect and commercial viability of the exhibit would be diminished. It was as though the sealskins had become the key identifier that set the people apart and made them special. In effect, only when they donned their sealskins, did they become “Esquimaux”.

The conflict came to a head on 15 February when Tom and Peter Palliser came out of their huts attired in blue jeans. The Esquimaux Village manager, P.M. Daniels, ordered them to put on their seal-skin furs and they refused. He then ordered them back into their huts, told them to stay there until they obeyed his orders, and told the Columbian Guard to enforce his ruling. While the Pallisers were still under confinement in their huts, Judge Porter visited the village, and learned of their situation. He contacted the Columbian Guard’s commanding officer, Col. Rice, and informed him that he was likely to find himself entangled in a lawsuit if he continued to enforce the confinement. As a result of Porter’s intervention, Rice withdrew the guard. Daniels countered by replacing the guard with private security agents. Then on 18 March, a particularly warm day, Jonas Palliser and John Lucy refused to wear their sealskins and they too were ordered back into their huts. Porter, who appears to have kept in touch with events at the village through Peter Mesher, thought that the company’s action constituted forcible confinement and illegal imprisonment. He and Mesher decided it was time to intervene in an attempt to see justice done.

On March 30, Mesher, acting on behalf of James Shuglo, Thomas Palliser, Peter Palliser and John Lucy entered the Dade County Circuit Court of Judge

McConnell and applied for a writ of habeas corpus against the Arctic World American Exposition Company and its representatives, including P.M. Daniels, W.D. Vincent and R.G. Taber.³¹ Mesher claimed that the residents of the Village were being detained against their will and in his complaint termed the village “a prison within the walls of which his countrymen are being coerced to remain.” A reporter from *the Daily Inter-Ocean*, who attended the hearing, later visited the village for a first-hand look and spoke to Robert Ford, the interpreter, who explained the background to the trouble.

Two of the natives have left already. The managers did not want them to leave but they are pretty well-educated and knew that they could not be held. Some of the others want to go but they can't. They are the ignorant ones and can be compelled to do just what the managers want them to. However, there are one or two who are getting ugly and they may run away any day. The trouble is they are not paid what they think they are worth. As a matter of fact they receive next to nothing and they have found out that good wages can be earned outside.”³²

The reporter went on to interview another person whom he identified as Jones, most probably Jonas Palliser. He is quoted as saying:

We are kept in here like so many thieves. We have no rights and are not treated like human beings. If any of us leave the enclosure, our pay is

³¹ The names of the plaintiffs as listed in the *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean* report of March 31 1893 are James Sugarloaf, Thomas Jones, Peter Pallacier and John Log. In the *Chicago Daily Tribune* of March 31 1893 they are named as James Sugarloaf, Thomas Jones, Henry and Peter Pallacier and John Log.

³² “An Esquimaux Revolt”, *Daily Inter Ocean*, 31 March 1893

declared forfeited. And some of us are really held as slaves, that is, we cannot really leave if we wanted to. Some sort of agreement was signed before we left the North that we are told makes it impossible for us to quit.

The reporter stated that the Esquimaux were compelled to wear the same thick sealskin garments they had worn in the winter and observed the people “sweating and lolling around as though it were mid-summer.” He thought that conditions in the Village were generally poor. The lagoon was “foul and full of debris” and from the dog pen “a stench arises that is enough to sicken the most hardy.”³³

Inuit returned to court on April 3. Peter Mesher was accompanied by Peter Palliser, Thomas Palliser, Sam Palliser, Jim Shuglo, John Lucy and Abraham Lucy. Newspaper reports stated that testimony was difficult because of the need for interpretation and that questions were constantly interrupted by the objection of opposing counsel.³⁴ Mesher testified that he had been put out of the village by Mr. Daniels and that he had contacted Justice Porter who had secured him a job with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show at \$1.50 a day. He said that Tom Palliser had been confined to his house since February 15 because he would not wear fur clothes all day.³⁵ He claimed orders were given to withhold food to those who would not wear their furs. Robert Ford, the village interpreter, corroborated Mesher’s testimony. Thomas Palliser testified that he was locked up in one of the houses in the Esquimaux Village while two guards stood at the door to see that he did not escape.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ “Court Proceedings”, *Chicago Mail*, April 3 1893

³⁵ “Exodus of Eskimos”, *Daily Inter-Ocean*, April 21 1893 reports that “the James Sugarloaf” family were shut up from February 15 to March 25 although this was most likely Thomas Palliser.

John Lucy also testified that Thomas Palliser had been locked up because he would not wear his sealskin clothes. He said that he wore his furs in order to avoid the same treatment. He is quoted as saying:

They did not treat us right. When they coaxed us from Labrador, they told us we would be fed well and only have to wear the skin clothes half the day, but when they got us here they made us wear them from 9 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock in the evening. No man can stand that here.³⁶

Finally Justice Porter testified, explaining that he had got Mesher a job and that afterwards he had visited the village and found Tom Palliser confined to his hut with a guard at the door who refused to let him enter. The company's response to the proceedings was to deny all charges of ill-treatment and to point out that the Esquimaux had obligations under their contract with the Company and that the Company had responsibilities for the Esquimaux under conditions set by US Customs which had permitted the group to enter the country in the first place. In order to clarify the obligations of both parties the contract was read into the court record. For two years' service, the head of each family was promised 500 Newfoundland Shillings (equal to \$100 US dollars), and on their return to Labrador they were to be given 200 lbs. of salt, 30lbs. of rice, 20 gallons of molasses, 10 lbs. of tea, 200 cartridges, a Winchester rifle, a reloading outfit, 20 pounds of powder, 20 pounds of shot, 80 pounds of lead, 1000 exploding caps, one barrel of pork, one barrel of pilot bread and other similar articles. At the end of two years they were to

³⁶"Esquimaux Win Habeas Corpus Cases", *Chicago Tribune*, April 4 1893

be brought back to Labrador and in the interim fed, clothed and properly cared for.³⁷

When Judge McConnell adjourned the hearing, he informed the plaintiffs that they could wear whatever they pleased and that no one had the right to deprive them of their liberty or to detain them in any way. He expressed the hope that the Esquimaux and the Company could resolve their differences and ordered a continuance of the case so long as the Esquimaux were allowed full liberty. He also granted the plaintiffs the right to come back to court without a new petition should they be restrained in any way in the future.³⁸

It was a clear victory for Inuit and a disaster in the making for the Arctic World's American Exposition Company. The ruling limited the Company's authority and granted Inuit freedom from constraint. They could come and go as they pleased or leave the village altogether if that is what they wished. As it turned out, that is exactly what many of them intended to do. Mesher and Porter proposed establishing a new Esquimaux exhibit where Inuit could share more equitably in the proceeds of the enterprise. Judge Porter, in the meantime, announced his plans to pursue a lawsuit on behalf of Inuit, demanding the Company pay damages.

Exodus

On 5 April, two days after the decisive court ruling, an outbreak of measles was reported in the Esquimaux Village with over 20 people infected, including most of the children. In a reckless disregard for public health, the Esquimaux Village

³⁷ "Exodus of the Eskimos", *Daily Inter-Ocean*, April 21 1893, mentions additional items such as 100 fish hooks and to each woman 30 yards of calico and 4 blankets.

³⁸ "Court Proceedings," *Chicago Mail*, April 3 1892, and "Courts of Record", *Daily Inter-Ocean*, April 4 1893

remained open for business and hundreds of visitors continued to wander about, interacting with the villagers and poking around the huts “in ignorance of the sufferings of the children who lay on the cots within.”³⁹ It would be weeks before fear of the disease spreading to visiting patrons prompted health authorities to close the village and put its inhabitants under strict quarantine. Teresa Dean, the *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean* correspondent to the fair, visited the village the day after the quarantine was imposed and wrote: “Between you and me... it is a bit like locking up the stable door after the horse is stolen – the disease is just departing. It arrived six weeks ago. The order to close the gates came in the lines of red tape yesterday.”⁴⁰ Dean reported that the quarantine made the village seem desolate and deserted. As she spoke with Robert Ford and jotted down stories of traditional Inuit beliefs and practices, she noted that the people who were out and about were not dressed in their sealskin clothes. “They were wearing suits made of white canvas after the style of the skin suits. These were trimmed with narrow red and blue braid and were attractive enough for summer resort suits.”⁴¹ Two days before the lifting of the quarantine another baby died, though apparently not from the measles. Peter Deer, the son of George and Maggie Deer had been the youngest of those to leave Labrador. It was reported that he had never been healthy and, despite medical care, had succumbed to a bad cold.⁴²

If the publicity surrounding the Esquimaux Village had not been bad enough for the concession’s management, a new and devastating article appeared in the

³⁹ “Measles and Chills”, *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 13 1893

⁴⁰ “Christopher Columbus Has the Measles”, *Daily Inter-Ocean*, April 14 1893

⁴¹ “Measles and Chills”, *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 13 1893

⁴² “Another Esquimaux Baby Dies”, *Chicago Tribune*, April 19 1893

New York Times on 10 April. Captain William McConnell, the skipper of the “Evelena”, which had initially brought Inuit to the United States, gave a scathing interview to a *Times* reporter in which he accused the Esquimaux Village managers of cruelty and abuse. He reported that the people had not been permitted to leave the village day or night and that many had suffered from colds that had developed into consumption. He predicted that a large portion of them would never see their homeland again and that the rest would be abandoned and, most likely, would have to fend for themselves after their contract expired. He reported that it cost the company about fourteen cents a day per person to maintain the Esquimaux in the village and suggested the World’s Columbian Exposition was complicit in the poor treatment of the people as it received 35% of the proceeds from the concession.⁴³

A number of Inuit within the Village had already decided to put an end to their mistreatment. They would act on their plans to establish a rival exhibit and were just waiting for the quarantine to be lifted before they made their move. Jimmie Shuglo, known to the American press as Joe or Jim Sugarloaf, slipped out one night to buy a trunk. This might have gone unnoticed had he not got into a fight and found himself in the papers the next day. According to the newspaper report, he was on 55th Street and Lake Avenue walking back to Jackson Park with “his four sons”⁴⁴ when his way was blocked by 8 Arabs from the Midway Plaisance. One of the men pushed the newly acquired trunk from his shoulders and Shuglo retaliated by knocking the man down. When he picked up his trunk and attempted to proceed on

⁴³ “The Esquimaux Village, A Story That the Strangers from Labrador Are Badly Treated”, *New York Times*, April 10 1893

⁴⁴ James Shuglo had 4 children with him in Chicago, only 1 boy and he was too young to have participated.

his way he was attacked again. This time his “sons” joined the fray and an all-out melee broke out, much to the delight of the spectators who had gathered around. All reports suggested that the Inuit were getting the best of it when the police arrived and used their clubs to break up the fighting factions before sending both parties on their way. Shuglo returned to the village bruised and battered but not seriously hurt. The trunk, however, caused uneasiness among the managers. Daniels was reported to have said that he wouldn’t be surprised to wake up some morning and find the Village deserted.⁴⁵ Just such a scheme was in the works.

On the evening of 18 April, Justice Porter and Abel Helenab met with Robert Ford. A reporter from the *Daily Inter-Ocean* also appears to have been present.⁴⁶ The decision had been made for the people to abandon the village as soon as the quarantine was lifted and the purpose of the meeting was most likely to let Ford know and to make sure that he was aware that, in accordance with the court ruling, the people were within their rights to leave. The quarantine was lifted on 20 April and that same night a number of the families made their move.

At 11 pm, as two newspaper reporters looked down into the village from the exposition’s elevated railway track, Peter Mesher jumped the fence into the Esquimaux Village, crept by the dogs and told his countrymen that it was time to go and that friends were waiting for them outside the Exposition gates. At that point, the five families who had chosen to leave that night; those of John Lucy, Jonas Palliser, Peter Palliser, Abel, and Zacharius, made for the village gate. Joseph Meyer,

⁴⁵ “War of the Races”, *Chicago Tribune*, April 15 1893

⁴⁶ A reporter from *The Daily Inter-Ocean* appears to have been present at every critical juncture of this story, suggesting advance knowledge of events, probably through the agency of Judge Porter.

the company's security guard, met them there and refused to let them pass until Robert Ford intervened and likely reminded him that the court had ruled that he had no authority to hold them. They passed through the village gate, laden down with their bags and trunks, and, accompanied by several dogs, "trotted along the gloom of the night and the fog laden atmosphere like so many gnomes away from their village." They made the short walk to the 57th Street fair gate where Justice Porter, accompanied by a policeman, was waiting for them with a number of carriages. Before allowing them to pass, a member of the Columbian Guard telephoned his superior officer for advice and was told to let the people go but to hold their luggage. This led to strong objections, especially from the women, but after some hesitation, they were persuaded to leave, boarded the carriages and headed to a local hotel for the night. A short time later their bags were released.⁴⁷ In a subsequent interview with the *Daily Inter-Ocean* reporter, Robert Ford said:

They will all go out tomorrow. They have been dissatisfied and misused ever since they were camped and hutted. Everyone feels that he has been duped, that he was misled when induced to leave home and that the promises then made them have been ignored and unfilled. They're all glad to get out and those remaining tonight will join the others tomorrow.⁴⁸

When P.M. Daniels woke the next morning, he did not find his village entirely deserted but its population was diminished; five of the families had left and more were about to go. Newspapers were reporting that his company stood to lose

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

\$30,000 if it was forced to close.⁴⁹ Daniels moved quickly. His first job was to stop other Inuit from leaving. By now the biggest issue was money. Inuit knew that they had sold their labour far too cheaply and that the contract, such as it was, was grossly unfair. They would have known by the attendance that the Esquimaux Village was making good money, while their share was a pittance. It had already been demonstrated that they could make far more money elsewhere and now the band of deserters were planning to set up a new village and include themselves in the profits. Daniels quickly entered into negotiations with the families still in the village in order to persuade them to stay. It took two days but, in the end, he succeeded. All six of the remaining families agreed to remain in the original Esquimaux Village until the end of the Exposition. They even consented to wear their sealskin garments throughout the summer. For this, Daniels was forced to renegotiate the financial terms of the Inuit contract. The Company agreed to pay the head of each family \$50 in gold and a further \$50 a month for the services of each man and his family. The previous commitment of an outfit of gun, ammunition, hunting and fishing supplies and food staples on return to Labrador was included in the new agreement.⁵⁰

After staunching the wound, Daniels went on the offensive. The day after the defections, he paid a visit to US Immigration. In a move calculated to undermine the ambitions of his new rivals, he demanded that the dissident Esquimaux be deported. The Arctic World's American Exposition Company claimed that when the Esquimaux left the Village, they broke the terms of their contract and were, as a result, no

⁴⁹ "Too Much Civilization", *The Dalles Daily Chronicle*, (Dalles Oregon), April 22 1893

⁵⁰ "Two Eskimo Villages", *Daily Inter-Ocean*, April 23 1893

longer protected by the law and should be forced out of the country. At the same time, Daniels waged war in the media responding to the widespread stories of ill treatment by claiming they were false and that the real reason for people leaving was the inducement of money by outside interests who saw an opportunity to profit themselves. This assertion seemed to gain some credence when a new company called the Esquimaux Exhibition Company was incorporated to exhibit Esquimaux. Charles F. Duke, Peter Mesher and Thomas Deer were listed as corporate officers. Justice Porter was the largest shareholder.⁵¹

On May 4, the Department of Immigration, responded to Daniel's submission. It ruled that the Esquimaux had complied with the law when they entered the country and that what had transpired since that time, was a private matter, one that did not concern the Immigration Department. It stated that the Government had no interest in the matter until the two year term of the contract was up, when a demand would be made on the company for the Esquimaux removal. The matter was referred to the United States District Attorney for further investigation.⁵² The District Attorney later stated that he was inclined to believe that the Arctic World's American Exposition Company was liable under contract labour law wherever Esquimaux labourers worked for wages in competition with American workers.⁵³ Neither the Department of Immigration nor the District Attorney's Office supported deportation. It appeared that Daniels and his partners were on the back foot and would have to accept the reality of two exhibits of Esquimaux in competition with

⁵¹ "New Incorporations", *Chicago Tribune*, April 26 1893

⁵² "A Loophole Found", *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, May 4 1893

⁵³ "Esquimaux Competition", *Once A Week: An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, May 6 1893

each other; one inside the World's Columbian Exposition fairgrounds and one just outside its gates.

The rebellion of Inuit within the Esquimaux Village occurred just weeks before the official opening of the World's Columbian Exposition on 1 May 1893. Despite the massive publicity surrounding the Exposition's inauguration, the rebellion, court case, and subsequent defections received widespread coverage in the Chicago press and throughout the United States. Public opinion was generally sympathetic to the plight of the Labrador people, but management also received support. The editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* claimed that "the sympathetic soul of Chicago had been touched by the woes of the Esquimaux" and that the way they had been treated was an "outrage on human liberty." At the same time, he understood management's position calling for sealskin clothes as well as Esquimaux to be shown. "One is useless without the other," the editor observed. "The company does not want to show an Esquimaux dressed like ordinary Chicago citizens." These comments underscore how closely Inuit identity was associated with their clothing in the public mind. The editorial went on to say that the constitution of the United States guarantees the inviolability of contracts and that if the wearing of sealskins was a part of the contract, justice and the law might be in conflict.⁵⁴

The rebellion of Inuit at the World's Columbian Exposition surprised and perplexed many observers and led to a reassessment of the nature of the exhibit and the identity of those within it. An editorial in the *Chicago Evening Journal* suggested that the actions of the Esquimaux undermined the very premise of the Esquimaux

⁵⁴ "Midway Plaisance", *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 7 1893

presentation as representatives of the primitive. It claimed that the way the Esquimaux had shown both intelligence and guile in addressing their grievances suggested that the public was being duped.

These Eskimo, after all, are not very primitive. When it transpires that many... are Episcopalians it is clear that the World's Fair Arctic Exposition Company (sic) has not procured the people we read about... who inhabit huts of snow, traverse ice flows on their dogsleds in winter and in summer pursue seals and walrus in the dancing kayak. Verily an Eskimo emerges from the glamour of romance when he confesses that he is an Episcopalian.⁵⁵

The *San Francisco Chronicle*, took up the same theme, musing that the behaviour of the Esquimaux might induce other groups at the Exposition to undertake similar actions. "If the other strangers from strange lands at the World's Fair follow the example of the Eskimo," it said, "there will be little left of native villages that are expected to give glimpses of barbaric life."⁵⁶

Seeking redress in the American courts for injustices perpetrated against them was not the behaviour expected of "primitive" people. Inuit had proved to be neither complacent nor ignorant but instead had demonstrated a capacity for rational action in defence of their own interests based on a strong moral sense of right and wrong. And yet rather than question the conceptual framework in which Inuit had been placed, the public response, at least in part, was to question their authenticity. The conclusion that many came to was that the Esquimaux must be

⁵⁵ "Exodus of the Esquimaux", *Chicago Evening Journal*, April 21 1893

⁵⁶ "Editorial", *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 22 1893, also, "Too Much Civilization", *The Dalles Daily Chronicle*, (Dalles Oregon) 22 April 1893

frauds. The problem, of course, was the fiction that was perpetrated in the first place. Inuit were never representatives of the “primitive”, and in not conforming to those preconceived imaginings, they simply exposed those notions for what they were; colonialist fantasies.

A writ of habeas corpus is a claim against unlawful imprisonment and when Peter Mesher made that claim in Dade County Court, he was concerned with the specific case of the illegal confinement in the Esquimaux Village of people who were forced to remain in their huts as punishment for not wearing their sealskin clothes. It is tempting, however, to see the ruling as much more. The court, in essence, recognized Inuit as equal under the law; not as primitives or aliens occupying some lesser category of the species, but as people with rights like all others. Through the court action, Inuit had essentially undermined the colonialist imaginings to which they had been subjected and freed themselves from the confinement of the ideological framework in which they had been cast. They had established, with the sanction of the court, their fundamental and equal humanity.

The rebellion, and the subsequent defection of Inuit families from the Esquimaux Village, marked a turning point in the Inuit experience in Chicago. It was both an end and a new beginning. The attitude of Inuit towards the exhibition, and the demands of their employers and the general public, had evolved from curiosity and acceptance, to irritation, dissatisfaction and finally rebellion. After the revolt and the schism, the attitude of those who left the Esquimaux Village as well as those who remained in it, changed to one of greater understanding and acceptance. Both groups decided to stay in America and make their livelihood in Chicago until the end

of the fair, and this meant making peace with their circumstances and the nature of their work. Although they were hunters and fishermen by trade, in Chicago they had to come to terms with being performers who were putting on a show. Regardless of who they were in reality, it was necessary to cater to public expectations and play “Esquimaux.” For those in the Esquimaux Village, this was the basis of the new contract to which they had agreed. And for those who were establishing the new exhibit, it was a necessity for survival and essential for the success of the new enterprise they had undertaken. Perception and reality, fact and fiction remained at odds but now they did so with Inuit compliance and participation. Management and workers now shared a common goal. It was clear to everyone that the principal purpose of the Esquimaux exhibits was to turn a profit so all concerned could make a living.

The Story of Two Villages

After its incorporation, the Esquimaux Exhibition Company opened its exhibit at 5710 Stoney Avenue just outside the Exposition fairgrounds. The whole region along Stoney Avenue, stretching for a mile between 56th Street to 64th Street, developed into a minor midway, complete with side-show barkers, merry-go-rounds, fortune tellers, acrobats, fire-eaters, pop-corn vendors and street musicians. All along this stretch were vaudeville theatres and beer saloons, dime museums and freak shows⁵⁷ as well the biggest concession of them all, “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World,” which had leased 14 acres of land near the main entrance of the fair, constructed an arena capable of housing eighteen

⁵⁷ “Outside the Gates”, *Daily Inter-Ocean*, May 8 1893

thousand spectators and was about to begin the most profitable season in its history.⁵⁸

There are few records of the Esquimaux exhibit at Stoney Avenue and one can only speculate as to the nature of the presentation. It is not clear whether Inuit lived on the site or whether it was simply a performance space. They would have had no pond and no kayaks, komatiks or skin tents. Publicity photos show the people with few props, other than their fur clothing and a single harpoon. In all likelihood, their presentation was more akin to that of a dime museum, where people paid to view them in a salon, and listen to an explanatory lecture. This would probably have been delivered by their new manager, Thomas Scott. Scott's *History of the Esquimaux Race*, published a short time after the fair, contains short descriptive passages on Inuit traditions and modes of living, and this could well have been based on notes developed for lectures.⁵⁹ The Stoney Avenue village competed with the world's fair village by charging only ten cents instead of twenty-five cents for admission.⁶⁰ There is no information as to how the concession fared financially or what payments were made to Inuit. It is doubtful, however, that it did particularly well and conceivable that when the people learned of the new contract Daniels negotiated with those in the Village, they may have regretted their decision to leave. It is quite possible that those who remained with Daniels were the only ones to have truly benefited from the rebellion.

⁵⁸ Moses, L.G., *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians 1883-1933*, (University of New Mexico Press, 1996), pp. 140

⁵⁹ Thomas Scott, *History of the Esquimaux Race*, (Erie, PA: Dispatch Print 1893)

⁶⁰ Carte de Visite, for Esquimaux Exhibit, Chicago, Personal Collection

The Esquimaux Village within the Exposition regrouped and carried on, although it was certainly diminished. One review written shortly after the schism and printed in a photographic portfolio wrote:

Our picture shows the nearly deserted settlement as it appeared after the revolt... the meager attendance of visitors is representative of the small patronage that rewarded their exhibition. Had the Esquimaux settled on the Midway Plaisance and held together, their remarkable ethnological character would have received earnest public attention.⁶¹

The *Daily Inter-Ocean* reported that six families remained with the original Esquimaux Village. The families which left we know, from newspaper accounts, were those of John and Katerina Lucy, Jonas and Susan Palliser, Thomas and Esther Palliser, Peter Palliser, Abel and Helena and Zacharius and Naemi.⁶² By elimination this would mean that those who stayed behind were the two families from Nachvak, belonging to Kangerarsuk and Tuglavina, and Kupper and Kuttukitok, two families from Ailik being Joseph and Charlotte Lucy, and Simon and Sarah Manak as well as George and Maggie Deer, and curiously, Jimmie and Salomie Shuglo whose adventure acquiring luggage suggests they had originally intended to leave. In addition, the family of the interpreter, Robert and Susan Ford remained with the Daniels' group.⁶³

It is not known why people chose to remain in the Esquimaux Village despite the conditions and mistreatment endured and one can only speculate. Kangerarsuk

⁶¹*The Dream City: A Portfolio of Photographic Views of the World's Columbian Exposition*, (St. Louis, Missouri: N.D. Thompson Publishing)

⁶² "Exodus of the Eskimos", *Daily Inter-Ocean*, April 21 1893

⁶³ "Two Eskimo Villages", *Daily Inter-Ocean*, April 23 1893

and Kupper, the northern Inuit, may not have understood all the discussions surrounding the court case and the plans for a new exhibit; they spoke no English and most likely felt much more isolated, vulnerable and insecure than the others. They may well have thought that remaining with those who brought them was their best hope of getting back home safely. Joseph and Charlotte Lucy on the other hand were older and possibly more cautious about the unknown. Their friends Simon and Sarah Manak perhaps chose to remain with familiar companions. George and Maggie Deer had just lost a child and were perhaps not prepared to be adventurous at that time. And Jimmie and Salomie Shuglo may have simply changed their minds once Daniels offered a new and more attractive contract. All had been expected to leave but Daniels intervention appears to have been decisive in persuading them to remain.

After the defections, management attempted to revitalize the Esquimaux Village and added at least one new attraction by purchasing two reindeer from the nearby Lapland exhibit and offering children cart rides, in spite of the fact that Labrador Inuit had never domesticated caribou or used them as a mode of transportation. The village eventually recovered from its crisis and subsequent reviews were more or less favourable.

The little people of the extreme North, in their enforced imitation of semi-tropic customs are not altogether in their proper elements, but they manage

to hang on to the ragged edge of existence and give a very faithful representation of their home life in the frigid zone.⁶⁴

The official Esquimaux Village could still boast the presence of the only “heathen” Esquimaux in Chicago and two of these, both young boys, proved especially popular among visitors. Pomiuk, in particular, seems to have been singled out in various press reports as a charming, cheerful and obliging young man; happy to pose for photographs and to show off his skill with the dog whip.⁶⁵ He is referred to as ‘Prince’ Pomiuk in the press which took its lead from the village publicists. The story promulgated and based in fact was that Pomiuk’s father was Kaujuasiak, a powerful leader in northern Labrador who had been murdered. The sobriquet “Prince” was of course an invention. Pomiuk was the son of Kaujuasiak’s third wife, Aniortama, and had been adopted after Kaujuasiak’s death by Kupper, with whom he travelled to Chicago. Pomiuk’s fair ended badly after he got into an altercation with his step-father. Kupper kicked Pomiuk and broke his thigh.⁶⁶ It was a disastrous injury which did not receive proper attention. It failed to heal, became infected and eventually would lead to Pomiuk’s premature death after his return to Labrador. The other young man, Degouluk, was the adopted son of Kangerarsuk and Tuglavina, and a year younger than Pomiuk. He too was known for his friendly nature and was often assigned to take visitors on sled rides or to demonstrate kayak skills. His fair also ended in tragedy. On 20 August, Degouluk was reported to have

⁶⁴ “Strange Structures”, *The Iola Register*, September 1 1893. Also, “People at the World’s Fair,” *the Cultivator and Country Gentlemen*, September 28 1893

⁶⁵ “The Midway Plaisance”, *The Princeton Union*, September 14 1893

⁶⁶ William Byron Forbush, *Pomiuk, A Waif of Labrador*, (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1903). Pp.57

been playing in the pond, and ventured out too far, falling into a deep hole. Unable to swim, he drowned before anyone could rescue him.⁶⁷ The next day, his funeral was held at the Esquimaux Village and appears to have been blatantly exploited for its commercial potential in a manner similar to the funeral of Susan Manak. The managers of the Esquimaux Village seemed either unable or unwilling to learn from recent experience and to treat Inuit with any degree of decency.

A reporter from *the Daily Inter Ocean* wrote:

There was a strange scene which was enacted in the Eskimo Village.... Several hundred persons paid the necessary admission fee in order to witness an Eskimo funeral service. Curiosity was stretched to the highest tension when it was learned that the boy who met an untimely death was an avowed heathen... the curious throngs listen to the howling of the sledge dogs for while and then press up close to the Chapel windows which were raised and listen to the funeral service.⁶⁸

The ceremony took place in the wooden chapel that had been erected on the exhibit site. The service was simple consisting of speeches, Moravian hymns and prayers offered by a Methodist minister. As Degouluk's body departed for Oakwood Cemetery, to join the other two Inuit who were buried there, the reporter covering the event noted that: "the rest at once resumed their games for the entertainment of the visitors in the village."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ "Esquimaux Boy Drowns in the Pond," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 21 1893.

⁶⁸ "Weird Funeral Rite", *Daily Inter Ocean*, August 22 1893

⁶⁹ Ibid.

The remaining days and weeks of the Fair passed without incident, with the possible exception of the efforts of employees of the Colonies Hotel, situated close to the Esquimaux Village, to break into the village compound and kill the noisy Esquimaux dogs which continually disturbed their guests. The invaders were intercepted and arrested before they carried out their intended task.⁷⁰ The other event of note was the international boat races held on the main lagoon of the fairgrounds and won, after numerous heats, by Kupper in his kayak.⁷¹

The End of the Fair

On 31 October 1893, the World's Columbian Exposition formally came to an end. The fair which had opened with parades, pageantry and cheering crowds closed without fanfare, overshadowed by the assassination of Chicago's mayor, Carter Harrison, two days earlier. The original plan for a jubilee day of elaborate celebrations was cancelled and instead the Exposition's president Thomas Palmer addressed a small gathering in Festival Hall with a few short comments followed by prayers.⁷² With this solemn ceremony, the World's Columbian Exposition passed into history.

Despite its somber end, the Exposition had been an enormous success. Attendance figures vary, but it is generally agreed that over 27.5 million people visited the fair. As a result, the Exposition paid off all of its operating expenses, even returning \$1 million to its 30,000 subscribers. The Exposition also profited from its

⁷⁰ "Attempt to Kill Esquimaux Dogs", *Chicago Tribune*, September 1 1893

⁷¹ "Boat Races", *Daily Inter Ocean*, September 21 1893

⁷² "Now a Reminiscence", *Daily Inter Ocean*, October 31 1893

concessions. Collectively the 450 companies granted concessions provided the Exposition with over \$4 million dollars in revenue. The Esquimaux Village contributed to this profit. According to Exposition records it paid the Exposition \$38,662. Concessions were expected to pay between 25 and 33% of their revenue to the fair. This would mean that between 19 October 1892 and 30 October 1893, the Esquimaux Village made between \$115,986 and \$154,648.⁷³

Summary

Under a photograph of the Esquimaux Village published in a portfolio of images of the World's Columbian Exposition shortly after the fair closed, the editor writes a short descriptive passage containing a wry and insightful observation about the Esquimaux Village Inuit attending the fair.

In the Fall of 1892, there arrived in Chicago, a colony of Esquimaux, taken from a point as far south in Labrador as Esquimaux could be found and labeled as denizens of the land as far north as could be reached.⁷⁴

This observation implied that the public had been deceived. But if deception had taken place, it was not the fault of Inuit. When Labrador Inuit arrived in America to attend the World's Columbian Exposition their presence generated widespread interest and curiosity but not because of who they were but rather because of who they were thought to be. From the beginning there was a divergence between

⁷³ "Profits On The Side", *Chicago Tribune*, July 15 1894

⁷⁴ J.W. Buel, *The Magic City, A Massive Portfolio of Original Photographic Views of the Great World's Fair and Its Treasures of Art Including a Graphic Representation of the Famous Midway Plaisance*, (Philadelphia: H.S. Smith and C.R. Graham, for Historical Publishing Co. Weekly from January 15 1894 through May 14 1894)

perception and reality; fact and fiction. The identity of Inuit at the fair was constantly misrepresented, and so inevitably, misunderstood.

The reasons for this confusion are multiple but essentially have to do with the ascriptions, imaginings, preconceptions and stereotypes projected onto the Labrador people from a variety of sources including the fair's organizers, its scientific consultants, the managers of the Esquimaux Village concession, the American press and many who visited or read about the village and the fair. Those in charge of ethnology at the fair wanted Inuit as an educational exhibit but set them up within the specific ideological framework of scientific racism, using Inuit, among others, to represent primitive people, examples of humanity at an earlier stage of human evolution serving as a useful gauge to measure the progress of American civilization as represented by the industrial achievements on display in the Exposition's massive pavilions. The agents for the village traded on this same characterization to enhance interest among a public with an insatiable appetite for the strange and the exotic, although their objective was commercial rather than educational. Press and public imaginings associated the Labrador people with Baffin, Greenland and Alaskan Inuit as they had appeared in recent accounts of polar explorers aiming to reach the north pole. These Inuit were commonly described as savage tribes inhabiting the coldest and most remote regions of the arctic with little or no contact with civilization, living in ice houses and surviving solely on the produce of the hunt. These were imaginings of primitive people living outside of time and history. Underlying these depictions of Inuit were deeply embedded views of race that informed perceptions not only of Inuit but of the participants of other

ethnological exhibits at the fair including Samoans and Dahomenyan and Lakota. Racism was the lens through which the subjects of ethnological exhibits were commonly observed.

Like others, Labrador Inuit were not who they were represented as being and difficulties arose whenever Inuit behaviour challenged the presumptions and preconceptions projected onto them. People were confused by some Inuit speaking English, being able to read and write, reciting biblical passages, singing hymns or playing musical instruments.⁷⁵ Similarly they were confused when Inuit stood up to injustices perpetrated within the Esquimaux Village and took their grievances to court. The response was never that Inuit identity could include and accommodate such knowledge and practices but rather that some kind of fraud was being perpetrated on the public as this kind of behaviour was outside the prescribed boundaries of what primitive people were capable of.

The response of Inuit to the challenges posed by the Esquimaux Village and its managers redefined Inuit representation at the fair. Their refusal to wear winter sealskin clothing in warm weather in the face of threats and intimidation, and their decision to seek justice in the courts, subverted the notion that they were passive, submissive or defeated people unable or unwilling to assert themselves in their own interest. Sealskin clothing had become emblematic of Esquimaux identity but the refusal to wear sealskins, in defiance of management's orders, became a rejection of this narrow definition. They saw themselves as having equal rights and demanded that they be treated accordingly. The writ of habeas corpus granted by the court

⁷⁵ *Portfolio of Photographs of the World's Fair*, (Chicago: Werner Co., 1893-1894), Art Series No.10, Musician from Arctic Regions.

subverted notions of their being primitives on a lower rung of civilization's ladder by recognizing them as human beings with rights equal to all. With the court decision in hand, Labrador Inuit stepped outside the prevailing fictions foisted upon them and took control of their own narrative.

Having established their new status and independence, Labrador Inuit were free to re-define their relationships with both their managers and the public. While some embarked on a new enterprise with the hope of greater financial reward, others took the opportunity to renegotiate more favourable terms of employment. After the revolt, there seems to have been a greater understanding and acceptance by Inuit of the performance aspect of their work. The old tropes and fictions were still in play; the public was still invited to see denizens of the far north who lived beyond the reach of civilization, but after their victory in the courts, it is with the consent and complicity of Inuit themselves. They had become willing participants in the commercial enterprise that was the essential feature of ethnological exhibits.

Part 2

INUIT IN LABRADOR INTRODUCTION

When the 'Evelena', dropped anchor in Boston harbour on the morning of 14 October 1892, Ralph Taber, one of the agents of the Esquimaux Village who had recruited Inuit for at the World's Columbian Exposition, told a correspondent from the *Boston Globe* that "we have with us, some of the best specimens of the race to be found in their country," and went on to explain that the people had come from different places along the Labrador coast and included "representatives of half civilized tribes at the Hudson's Bay Company posts, converts from Moravian mission stations and heathen aborigines from Cape Chidley and the shores of Ungava."¹

Taber was acknowledging that the people he had brought to America were a diverse group recruited from different regions in Labrador even though they would be presented at the World's Columbian Exposition as uniform stereotypes; "primitive" people from "the land of the midnight sun." Labrador Inuit would defy these fictions in Chicago. But if they were not arctic "primitives" then who were they? And why, did some Inuit within the Esquimaux Village rebel against authority while others did not? Why would some leave the Esquimaux Village and others remain? The answers to these questions can be found, in part, through a closer look at the different groups identified by Taber and by examining their unique histories in Labrador prior to their recruitment for the fair.

¹ *Boston Globe*, October 15 1892

Part 2 of this thesis is devoted to understanding Inuit identity in Labrador. I argue that the behaviour and responses of Inuit in Chicago were the result of the distinct experiences of the different groups in different regions of the territory and in particular of the different degrees of engagement with Europeans and European institutions. I conclude that Inuit who led the protest against conditions in the Esquimaux Village and sought redress through the American legal system, and those who left the village in search of better opportunities, were those with the longest engagement and experience of European culture and institutions and that those who did not participate in the revolt and remained within the Esquimaux Village after the defections were predominantly those with the least engagement. I examine the history of each group in turn, following Taber's categories which have been affirmed by modern scholarship. Writing of the disruption of traditional Inuit settlement patterns in Labrador in the 19th Century, Susan Kaplan has written:

With the coming of the Moravians and the HBC, Inuit settlement patterns changed based not on natural resource access alone but on access to mission stations and trading posts - as a result three populations of Inuit emerged along the north coast; those who expressed loyalty to the missionaries and lived in proximity to the stations, those who traded regularly with the HBC and lived near them, and those who wanted to maintain their distance from all settlers...²

² Susan Kaplan, *Labrador Inuit Ingenuity and Resourcefulness: Adapting to a Complex Environmental, Social, and Spiritual Environment*, in *Settlement, Subsistence, and Change among the Labrador Inuit* edited by David C. Natcher, Lawrence Felt, and Andrea Proctor, University of Manitoba Press, 2012

Chapter 6

HALF CIVILIZED TRIBES AT THE HUDSON'S BAY POSTS

The bay was formally the principal residence of the Esquimaux, from the facilities that it offered for a living, the seals frequenting it in great numbers, and remaining in the bay during the whole winter. But the number of seals has been gradually diminishing of late years and this has caused many of the tribe to leave the place... W.H.A. Davies, Notes on Esquimaux Bay and Its Surrounding Country, 1842¹

This chapter discusses the history of Inuit living in the region they called Aivektok, otherwise known as Esquimaux Bay or Hamilton Inlet. Inuit living in this region were the most southerly dwelling Inuit in the world and those with the longest continual contact with European colonial institutions. This experience provided them with both the ability to understand the challenges they faced in Chicago and the knowledge required to formulate effective responses. They would assume the leadership role in the legal undertaking against their employers and their comfort with Euro-American culture provided them with the confidence to leave the Esquimaux Village altogether and to establish a competing business venture.

Aivektok

When the "Evelena" made its trip to Labrador to recruit Inuit for the World's Columbian Exposition, the first region it visited was a place Inuit referred to as Aivektok, *the place of the walrus*. It is located about 300 kilometres north of the Strait of Belle Isle and consists of a large bay at the head of which begins a long

¹ W.H.A. Davies, "Notes on Esquimaux Bay and Its Surrounding Country, (1842)", *Transactions, Literary and Historical Society of Quebec*, Vol. 4-1, pp.89

estuary extending 250 km into the Labrador interior. The region was called Baie D'Esquimaux by the French and later renamed Hamilton Inlet by British colonial authorities. The Hudson's Bay Company, which arrived in the region in the 1830's, continued to refer to the district as Esquimaux Bay.

Inuit had occupied the area as early as the 1600's, finding the region at the mouth of the estuary a safe haven against intruders and an area rich in fish, marine mammals, and birds. With the coming of Europeans to southern Labrador, Aivektok became a convenient base for Inuit traders who grew prosperous as middlemen, exchanging the whale baleen and oil of more northern Inuit for the manufactured goods of southern European traders, including muskets, knives, pots, fish hooks, and axes.²

Over the years, the Inuit population in the area was devastated by disease, starvation, and out migration such that, by 1892, when the "Evelena" made its appearance, only a small number of Inuit families lived in the region. By then, they shared the territory and its resources with a growing number of planters; the mixed race descendants of European men who had come to Labrador as employees of European fishing and trading enterprises, and who had settled in the region, taking

² Richard Jordan, "Archaeological Investigations of the Hamilton Inlet Labrador Eskimo: Social and Economic Responses to European Contact," *Arctic Anthropology*, January 1978, Vol. 15 (2), pp.176

Inuit women as wives.³ Inuit who had previously dominated the territory, became a minority in their homeland.

By the end of the nineteenth century, both Inuit and planters were living a similar life-style; based on hunting, fishing and trapping; their fortunes dependent on the abundance or scarcity of seals, salmon, seabirds, caribou, cod and all manner of fur-bearing animals.⁴ The lives of both groups revolved around the Hudson's Bay Company trading posts at Rigolet and Northwest River which were the only year-round establishments in the area where people could sell their produce and acquire the necessary provisions to survive.

Over time, the HBC posts inadvertently became more than the economic life-line of the people. It assumed an increasingly important social function in the lives of Inuit and planters alike. HBC factors began to perform weddings, and funerals, to hold church services and mediate disputes. They began to rely more on local people to fill positions of servants and laborers and their system of contracts and credit established rules and practices that were adopted and accepted by the local people.

Although they were no longer dominant in the region, Inuit adapted to change and survived by maintaining the skills of their ancestors while at the same time acquiring knowledge of European culture, language, institutions and technologies. By the end of the nineteenth century, familiarity with Europeans and their institutions was part of the collective experience of Inuit in Aivetok. Inuit who would attend the World's Columbian Exposition, like the Pallisers, had ancestors

³ W.H.A. Davies, "Notes on Esquimaux Bay and Its Surrounding Country (1842)", *Transactions, Literary and Historical Society of Quebec*, Vol.4-1, pp.86

⁴ David, Zimmerly, *Cain's Land Revisited*, (Newfoundland Social and Economic Studies No. 16 Institute of Social and Economic Research, MUN, 1975) pp.74

(Mikak and Tutauk) who had travelled to Europe in the eighteenth century and met royalty. Others, like the Shuglos, had relations (Shuglawina) who had become wealthy traders. Many had years of contractual relations with the Hudson's Bay Company, exchanging salmon berths and nets for a share of the catch, and all had on-going relations with the HBC store, selling produce in exchange for merchandise, establishing credit and managing debt. This legacy provided experience and knowledge of European institutions and governance that would prove useful in Chicago.

Beginnings

It is not known when Inuit first occupied Aivektok but there is archaeological evidence at "Eskimo Island," about 10 kilometres inside the narrows, that establishes an Inuit presence in the seventeenth century.⁵ "Eskimo Island" was probably a winter settlement. The location was ideally situated as it offered protection from both the elements and intruders and easy access to areas rich in animal resources. In the winter the people could hunt seals in the open water of the narrows, which rarely froze due to the currents and tides. In the spring, the people would move to the outer islands of the bay, hunting birds, collecting eggs and fishing salmon and cod, remaining there in the fall to intercept the annual migration of harp seals and whales before returning inside the narrows to their winter homes.⁶

It is not known with certainty whether Inuit occupied the region prior to the establishment of trading relations with Europeans. The sod-houses excavated on

⁵ William Fitzhugh, "Environmental Archaeology and Cultural Systems in Hamilton Inlet Labrador," *Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology*, No.16, pp.123

⁶ Susan A. Kaplan *Economic and Social Change in Labrador Neo-Eskimo Culture*, PhD. Thesis, Bryn Mawr College, 1983, pp.190

“Eskimo Island” contained a mix of traditional Inuit items as well as European articles acquired through trade.⁷ The winter settlements at Double Mer point, and Moliak Cove are thought to have been established even later in the eighteenth century. It is apparent, however, that Aivektok became a convenient base for Inuit traders who, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, had set themselves up as middlemen in a prosperous trade system between Europeans in the south and Inuit farther north.⁸

Inuit contact with Europeans was initially with Basque whalers and later French fishing enterprises. While Inuit traders were visiting the French in the Strait of Belle Isle, French traders began to visit Inuit in the north. In 1702 the Seigneur de Courtemanche acquired a massive trading concession from the King of France that included Aivektok which he subsequently surveyed, claiming that “it is this place that the Esquimaux take as their abode because of the easy means of subsistence to be found there.”⁹ Courtmanche never settled in Aivektok but in 1743, another Frenchman, Louis Fornel, explored the area and sent men through the narrows to explore the bay and establish a trading post in the region. The post, established at the head of the bay, is thought to be the first penetration into the area by Europeans and the first year-round trading post in the district. It is uncertain how long Fornel’s establishment survived but it is believed that there was a French presence in the region until their rights were extinguished by the Treaty of Paris in 1763.¹⁰

⁷ Fitzhugh, pp. 123

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ P.C. No. 1417:3689 quoted in Zimmerly, *Cain’s Land Revisited: Culture Change in Central Labrador, 1775-1972*, pp.44

¹⁰ Zimmerly pp. 49

Palliser, Haven, Mikak and Tutauk

The Treaty of Paris affirmed the authority of Great Britain over the colonies of New France and the Proclamation of 1763 placed the coast of Labrador under the jurisdiction of the Governor of Newfoundland. The newly appointed British Governor, Hugh Palliser, wanted to develop the British fishery in the area. To do so, he had to resolve the unpredictable and dangerous relationship with Inuit traders which frequently turned violent. The solution came to him in the form the Society of the Unitas Fratrum or the Moravians, as they were commonly called; a German Protestant missionary sect that wanted to establish itself in Labrador to convert Inuit to Christianity. An earlier attempt by the Mission to open contact with Inuit had failed in 1752, when John Christian Erhardt and six others had visited Labrador, gone ashore to trade, and were presumed to have been murdered.¹¹

Jens Haven, who had previously been part of the Moravian mission to Inuit in Greenland and had learned the Inuit language, wanted to revive Erhardt's mission in Labrador. He received permission for the venture from Church authorities in Germany and had landed in England in 1764.¹² Once in England, Haven contacted the Brethren of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel (SFG), a Moravian organization set up in 1741 to assist missionaries passing through London on their way to British colonies overseas. Through the SFG's Secretary, James Hutton, a man

¹¹ Periodical Accounts, "*Retrospect of the History of the Mission of the Brethren Church in Labrador for the Past Hundred Years*," June 1871, Vol. 28, pp.5

¹²Ibid. pp.6

well connected in British government circles, Haven met with the newly appointed Governor of Newfoundland, Hugh Palliser.¹³

Palliser recognized immediately the potential of Haven's mission to pacify Inuit and in 1764, he offered Haven passage to Newfoundland.¹⁴ On this trip, Haven made his first contact with Inuit and met Segulliak, an influential Inuit leader and northern trader who was impressed by Haven's ability to speak Inuktitut. Haven read Inuit a letter, prepared by Palliser, expressing the good will and the peaceful intentions of the British Government.¹⁵ Both the Moravians and Palliser were encouraged by this first meeting, and under royal protection, Haven returned to Labrador in 1765, accompanied by Christian Drachardt, another missionary with Greenland experience and a facility with the Inuit language. This time Palliser joined them at Pitt's Harbour on the south Labrador coast. With Drachardt acting as interpreter, Palliser addressed some 300 Inuit, stating the peaceful intentions of the British and their desire for mutually beneficial trade. After Palliser's departure, the missionaries visited Inuit at their camps, preached the Gospel and solicited support for their proposal to live on the coast. They spent a night as guests in Segulliak's tent and in all likelihood, it was there that they first met Mikak who would play a central role in the establishment of the mission in Labrador and whose son Tutauk, adopting Palliser's name, would become one of the leading patriarchs of 19th

¹³ J.K. Hiller. *The Foundations and the Early Years of the Moravian Mission in Labrador, 1752-1805*, M.A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1967, pp.37-38

¹⁴ W.H. Whiteley, "The Establishment of the Moravian Mission in Labrador and British Policy 1763-1783," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 1, March 1964, pp. 31

¹⁵ Periodical Accounts, *Retrospect of the History of the Mission*, Vol. 28, pp.7

century Aivektok Inuit and the ancestor of a number of families who would attend the fair.¹⁶

When the Moravians returned to England they immediately entered into negotiations with the Board of Trade for a land grant to establish a permanent presence on the Labrador coast. Although the Moravians had proved their value to British colonial policy, the request for 100,000 acres of land and trading rights was greeted with suspicion.¹⁷ The Moravians insisted that their only aim was the salvation of souls and that the land grants were necessary to establish a permanent foothold in the territory and help settle Inuit into northern communities thus putting an end to their harassment of the southern fisheries. To grant land to the Moravians, however, was contrary to British policy prohibiting rights of settlement on the Labrador coast and would set an unwanted precedent.¹⁸

Things remained at an impasse until 1766, when relations between Europeans and Inuit reached a new low. British naval vessels visiting the coast that year reported numerous vessels from the American colonies fishing cod, destroying British fishing premises and “hunting and plundering Esquimaux.”¹⁹ Inuit in turn killed whoever came near them. In response to the threat from both the Americans and Inuit, the British built a blockhouse at York Harbour in Chateau Bay and manned it with a military garrison. A year later in an apparent reprisal for earlier killings, a party of Inuit attacked the fishing station of London merchant Nicholas

¹⁶ Marianne P. Stopp, “Eighteenth Century Labrador Inuit in England,” *Arctic*, Vol. 61, pp. 47

¹⁷ Periodical Accounts, *Retrospect of the History of the Mission*, June 1871, Vol. 28, pp.9

¹⁸ Whiteley, pp.36

¹⁹ Ibid. pp. 39

Darby, at Cape Charles, killing three men and burning the establishment to the ground. A detachment of the York Harbour garrison, led by Lieutenant Francis Lucas, was sent out in pursuit of the perpetrators, killed about twenty men and captured nine women and children. Among those captured were Mikak and her young son Tutauk. The captives spent the winter at York Harbour and the next summer Palliser had them sent to St. John's. In the fall of 1768, at the end of his tenure as Governor, Palliser decided to take Mikak, Tutauk and a young boy named Karpik to London, in the hopes that the "impressions of the power, splendor and generosity of the British nation" would impress her and her countrymen on their return.²⁰

The English were fascinated with Mikak. She was intelligent and charismatic and during her captivity had started to learn English. Palliser introduced her to many influential people including the King's mother Augusta, Dowager Princess of Wales who was said to have been particularly fond of her.²¹ The Dowager Princess provided Mikak with "a rich Esquimaux habit...of fine white cloth laced with gold and embroidered with many gold stars and a gold medal of the King hanging on her breast."²² This dress with its buttons and medals would remain in her family's possession for generations. In London she renewed her acquaintance with Jens Haven and learned that he was making every effort to return to Labrador. Mikak took up their cause wherever she went in London. Her celebrity and social connections are believed to have played a major role in the Moravians finally getting

²⁰ Ibid. pp. 40

²¹ Stoop, "Eighteenth Century Labrador Inuit in England", pp.48

²² Moravian Mission 1962b, 17 July 1770 quoted in Stoop "Eighteenth Century Inuit in England," pp. 50

their land grant in May 1769.²³ When Mikak, and her son Tutauk, returned to Labrador that summer it was with the knowledge that the Moravians would soon follow.

In 1770, the Moravians returned to Labrador with the objective of finding a suitable place for their first mission station. They seem to have recognized the importance of Mikak to the success of their venture as they spent considerable effort tracking her down. They suspected that her return from England would have increased her status and prestige and that she would prove useful in helping them broker friendly relations with other Inuit and finding a suitable site for their first mission outpost.

They found Mikak just north of Aivektok. She came on board in the dress she had made in London, accompanied by her new husband, Tuglavina, the brother of Segulliak and a man of influence in his own right. Mikak and Tuglavina agreed to help the Moravians and guided the ship to Nuneingoak where a large group of Inuit were gathered for the summer trout fishery and there, facilitated numerous meetings with Inuit where the Moravians preached the Gospel, sought approval for their plans and negotiated a treaty covering the “sale” of the required land.²⁴

The following year, 1771, the Moravians returned to Labrador with the intention of permanently settling among Inuit at Nuneingoak. Again Mikak greeted them warmly but although they continued to support the Moravians, Mikak and Tuglavina were now focused on their own hunting and trading activities in the south.

²³ Periodical Accounts, *“Memoir of the Life of Br. Jens Haven, the First Missionary to the Esquimaux on the Coast of Labrador”*, Vol. II pp.5

²⁴ Hiller *Foundations*, pp.73

They turned down the Moravians invitation to live with them and left them to find their own way. That summer, at the place they called Nain, the Missionaries erected buildings, and established their beachhead on the Labrador coast. When the ship that brought them departed, it left behind eight men and three women to experience the Mission's first winter in Labrador.

Cartwright, Shuglawina, Caubvick and Smallpox

George Cartwright, the English merchant and trader, began his tenure on the Labrador coast in 1770, at the same time the Moravians were searching for a site for their first mission station. He went into business with a Bristol merchant Jerimiah Coghlan and Francis Lucas in 1770, initially taking over Nicolas Darby's premises that had been destroyed by Inuit in 1767. Lucas had been in command of the garrison at Fort Pitt which had captured Mikak and Tutauk and had accompanied them to England with Palliser.²⁵ In addition to their own fishing and sealing operations, Cartwright and his partners hoped to develop a productive trade with Inuit. Cartwright and Lucas believed that if they could persuade an Inuit family to live with them, they could develop peaceful and lucrative trading relations. With this in mind, Lucas headed north in search of Mikak but he failed to find her. Instead, he returned with another family "from one of the Esquimaux settlements called "Auchbuktoke" where, as Cartwright reported, he had

prevailed upon the chief of the tribe, together with his family, to accompany him hither to winter near me in order to give me the opportunity of laying a foundation for friendly intercourse...

²⁵ Stopp, "Eighteenth Century Labrador Inuit in England," pp.49

The chief's name was Attuiok. His family included two wives, three children, a brother, Tooklavinia, a nephew, Etuiok and a maid-servant.²⁶ The location of "Auchbuktoke" is uncertain. It could refer to either Aivektok or the more northerly settlement of Arvektok.²⁷ Subsequent references in Cartwright's journal to Attuiok suggest a strong association with Aivektok.²⁸ Attuiok lived close to Cartwright for two years and he clearly helped establish trading relationships with other Inuit. Among these Inuit was Shuglawina, who Cartwright described as a chief; "whose tent and shallop was both larger and better than those belonging to any of the others."²⁹

In the Fall of 1772, Cartwright decided to take Attuiok, one of his wives, Ickcongoque, a daughter, Ickeuma, Tooklavinia and his wife Caubvick to England. The venture ended in tragedy. Just as they were leaving to return to Labrador in the summer of 1773, all Inuit contracted smallpox. Only Caubvick survived. Cartwright later wrote that he feared that Caubvick posed a real threat to other Inuit on their return:

Caubvick's hair falling off, it being matted with smallpox, I had much difficulty to prevail on her to permit me to cut it off, and shave her head.... I assured her the smell of the hair would communicate the infection to the rest

²⁶ George Cartwright, 1792 *A Journal of Transactions and Events During a Residence of Nearly 16 Years on the Coast of Labrador (1792,)*, Oct. 5 1770 Vol. 1 pp.41/42

²⁷ Cartwright usually spells Aivektok as Ivucktoke in his journal but in a letter to Joseph Banks in 1778, he spells it Iboucktoke more closely resembling Auchbuktoke. Subsequent references in his journal to Inuit associated with Attuiok suggest an association with Aivektok.

²⁸ A.M Lysaght, *Joseph Banks in Newfoundland and Labrador, His Diary, Manuscripts and Collections*, (Berkeley:University of California Press,1971), Letter from George Cartwright to Joseph Banks, 14 September 1778, pp. 268-269

²⁹ Cartwright, *A Journal of Transactions*, Vol.1 pp. 140

of her country folks on her return, yet I was not able to prevail on her to consent to its being thrown overboard.³⁰

When they returned to Cape Charles, they were met by “the whole of three of the most southernmost tribes of Esquimaux”, amounting to “five hundred souls,” all eager to greet their family and friends on their return from England, only to be told that all but Caubvick had perished. It was a pathetic scene of shock and grief described in detail in Cartwright’s journal.³¹ In the following days, Cartwright tried to normalize his affairs, carrying on whatever trade he could and making every effort to solidify his relations with Shuglawina.

Having found, by a variety of instances that Shuglawina, the chief of these tribes, is not only a man of superior understanding, but also one who fidelity and honesty may be relied on, I made him up a small cargo of goods to take home with him; and determined that he should go to the northward next summer, to trade with the whaling tribes of his nation...³²

Cartwright observed that Caubvick, who had initially been ostracized by Inuit, had finally been taken in by one of the other families. He would watch them all depart for their respective settlements.³³ It was the last he would see of Caubvick and it would be several years before he learned what happened. In 1775, Cartwright moved his operations further north to Netsektok, later called Sandwich Bay, to exploit previously untapped resources of seals and salmon and to be better positioned to intercept Inuit traders. It was there he learned of the tragedy that had

³⁰ Ibid, August 12 1773, Vol.1, pp. 273

³¹ Ibid. August 31 1773, Vol.1, pp274-276

³² Cartwright, *A Journal of Transactions*, September 16 1773, Vol. 1, pp. 278

³³ Ibid. Vol.1, pp.278

transpired at Aivektok (written Ivucktoke or Iboucktoke by Cartwright). In a letter to the naturalist Joseph Banks, Cartwright provided the details:

A little to the northward of this place is a bay, separated from Sandwich Bay by a neck of land of no great breadth, and runs forty or fifty leagues into the country, having many large rivers emptying into it; this place is called by the Esquimaux, Iboucktoke, and upon an island near the mouth of it was one of their settlements. A planter from Newfoundland went there last year in winter, and upon the island found an Eskimeau town with all the inhabitants dead, their boats thwarted up, and all their goods left in their houses and tents; among other things a suit of laced cloathes and a silver cup... and the carpenters tool-boxes, which my Lord Dartmouth and yourself gave the Indians I had, were found, from which I conclude that after they left me they reached that place in safety and intended spending the winter there, and that some of the infection of the smallpox remaining in Caubvick's cloathes, they caught that dreadful distemper and all died of it."³⁴

The "island near the mouth" of "Iboucktoke" was "Eskimo Island." It was reported that a hundred years after the epidemic, skeletal remains of the victims were still in evidence on the island.³⁵

Cartwright remained at Sandwich Bay and would continue trading with Inuit until his final departure to England in 1786. His journals continue to reference Inuit arriving and departing for "Ivucktoke," suggesting continued occupation of the area

³⁴ Lysaght, pp 268

³⁵ W.G.Gosling *Labrador: Its Discovery, Exploration, and Development* (London: Alston, Ltd. Rivers, 1910) pp.416-417

despite the disaster but the community would never fully recover. The Inuit “chief”, Shuglawina, makes no subsequent appearance in Cartwright’s journals, despite their previously close relationship.³⁶ It is likely that he too perished in the epidemic of 1773 although descendants appear to have survived.

The man who discovered Inuit remains at ‘Eskimo Island’, William Phippard is credited with being the first European settler to take up permanent residence in Aivektok after the departure of the French.³⁷ He was originally in the employ of Jeremiah Coghlan, Cartwright’s former partner but, with a number of others, is thought to have defected to start up trapping, fishing and trading operations on his own.³⁸ He chose to establish himself in Aivektok around 1778, initially at English River and later at the Inuit community at Double Mer³⁹ where he took a wife and, it is said, raised the first multi-racial family in the district.⁴⁰

The Coming of Europeans to Aivektok

European traders began moving into Aivektok in the late eighteenth century. Around 1784, Pierre Marcoux re-established the Fornel post at Northwest River and a year later opened another at Rigolet. He would also establish a post on the

³⁶ Cartwright took Shuglawina with him on a trip to Fogo Island in 1771 where Cartwright had business with Coughlan. See Cartwright, *A Journal of Transactions*, Vol.1 pp.155

³⁷ Patty Way, *The Story of William Phippard in History and Renewal of Labrador’s Inuit-Metis*, (Memorial University of Newfoundland, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 2014) pp.140

³⁸ John C. Kennedy, *Encounters An Anthropological History of Southeastern Labrador* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015) pp.56

³⁹ Armenius Young, *One Hundred Years of Mission Work in the Wilds of Labrador*, (London: Arthur Stockwell Ltd.,1931), pp.11-12

⁴⁰ For a full discussion of Planters and Inuit identity in Hamilton Inlet see Kurt Korneski “Planters, Eskimos and Indians: Race and the Organization of Trade under the Hudson’s Bay Company in Labrador, 1830-50,” *Journal of Social History* (2016)

Labrador coast at Kippokok south of Hopedale. Other traders, Dumuntier and Plante moved into the area at the same time. In the late 1780's and early 90's Slade and Co. which already had a history in southern Labrador is thought to have opened an outpost at Snook's Cove close to Eskimo Island. Around the same time, Joseph Bird & Sons established themselves at Tubb Harbour at the southern entrance of the Bay. All of these companies attracted Inuit clients and workers and brought with them an influx of European servants and labourers.⁴¹

The Methodists and Tutauk

Methodist missionaries visited Aivetok for the first time in 1824, when Rev. Thomas Hickson spent a summer on the Labrador coast to assess the prospects of establishing a more permanent evangelical mission there. Hickson had "a strong desire to see the poor Esquimaux" whom he encountered on the coast at Tub Harbour, Cuff Harbour, Cunningham Tickle and later Dumpling; some of whom were fishing independently; others who were employed by Newfoundland fishing enterprises. He observed that many European men had taken Inuit women as partners, "a practice which prevails to a very great extent in this part of the world."⁴² Hickson never ventured through the narrows but established himself at Cunningham Tickle and let the people come to him. He held numerous religious services and meetings addressing Inuit through a local interpreter. He was impressed with their enthusiasm and surprised by their knowledge of Christian teachings which had been acquired through contact with the Moravians. He was

⁴¹John C. Kennedy, *Encounter: An Anthropological History of Southeastern Labrador* (McGill Queens University Press, 2015, pp.91-92)

⁴² Thomas Hickson, *The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, (London J.Kershaw,1825), Vol. IV, the Third Series, pp.59

concerned, however, with the persistence of heathen practices, particularly polygamy. One individual he confronted turned out to be Tutauk, Mikak's son, who had travelled with her to England in 1768 and was now calling himself by the name of Palliser.

I found that two of them, father and son, had each of them two concubines. It was not difficult to convince them of the evil of their doings: and though it was generally supposed that the senior adulterer would have parted with his life rather than give up either of his concubines, the Lord applied what was spoken to his conscience, which caused him to tremble exceedingly, and he expressed a willingness to act in anyway that I should direct. This person was taken by Capt. Palliser to England, about 45 years ago, with his mother, who had a gown presented to her by the Queen. This gown richly trimmed with gold, and very fresh, was worn by one of the women. The man bears the name of the above mentioned Captain who took him.⁴³

Tutauk would have been familiar with Christian teachings from his mother's association with the Moravians. In January 1781, he had been baptized by them at Nain but appears to have become disenchanted, left the community and rejected his baptismal name, insisting instead that he be known as Palliser, the name he would pass down to his descendants. Before he departed the Labrador coast, Hickson put together a rough calculation of Inuit population in Aivektok. His census indicates a

⁴³ Ibid. pp.137

small number of Inuit and an increasing number of settlers: 160 “Real Esquimaux,” 60 “Half-Esquimaux,” and 106 “Settlers”.⁴⁴

As the result of Hickson’s enthusiasm, the Wesleyan Missionary Society sent another missionary to the region in the summer of 1825. Rev. Richard Knight also remained outside the narrows and made a census of the population. His numbers were slightly different from Hickson’s calculating the total number of Indians (Inuit) and half-Indians at Esquimaux Bay to be around 192 and stating that “several of these were not in the Bay last summer,” suggesting that the population was fluid due to movements in and out of the area. Knight also states that he was told that there had been a vibrant Inuit community of “many scores of people” at Indian Harbour, an island in the bay, but that “twenty years ago” severe weather had led to widespread starvation. In the midst of this crisis, rafting ice had released a dead whale which at first appeared to be the people’s salvation but proved to be contaminated, “the consequence was they died almost to an individual.”⁴⁵

In 1826, the Methodist Missionary Board assigned a third individual, Rev. George Ellidge, responsibility for the mission but this time the missionary remained in the area for a full year. Ellidge chose to base his mission inside the narrows at Snook’s Cove about 9 kilometres southwest of Rigolet, as “this place is considered to

⁴⁴ Ibid pp.137

⁴⁵ Richard Knight, *The Labrador Journal of Richard Knight (1825)*, Peter Laing editor, Provincial Archive of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) . Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Newfoundland M6-597, Correspondence, 1825-28 pp.27. In 1794, Inuit arriving at Hopedale informed missionaries that 40 Inuit had died at Netsektok (Sandwich Bay) and Aivektok after eating contaminated whale meat. Also Periodical Accounts, Vol. 1 Hopedale to SFG, Oct 10 1794

afford the most convenient access to the Indians.”⁴⁶ The proximity of Snook’s Cove to the old Inuit settlement at Eskimo Island suggests the area continued to be of importance to Inuit, most likely as a convenient base to access seals and fish both up and down the bay.⁴⁷ Ellidge reported that there were several winter homes at Snook’s Cove but discovered that they were rarely occupied:

The Indians had gone up the Bay about 60 miles to hunt seals; the seals regularly repairing to that part of the Bay at this time of year; the stay of the Indians is about six weeks or two months. When they return they commonly go to the Islands at the mouth of the Bay about sixty miles below Snook’s Cove to get eggs and game, after this the ice being all gone away they can live in those parts of the bay; in which they could not live for most of the winter; and they partly prosecute the fishery and partly wander in different parts of the Bay having no certain place during that season of the year; nor do they think of repairing to their winter quarters again till sometime in November.⁴⁸

The constant mobility of Inuit, necessary to procure a livelihood, frustrated Methodist evangelical efforts. Ellidge found himself frequently alone at Snook’s Cove with few people to preach to and no means of transportation to visit people at resource harvesting sites. The Esquimaux’s “migratory mode of life and the paucity of their numbers” were the principal reasons given for abandoning the early

⁴⁶ William Wilson *Newfoundland and Its Missionaries in Two Parts*, (Halifax N.S: Daikin and Metcalfe, 1866), pp. 302

⁴⁷ John Kennedy, suggests that Snook’s Cove was favoured by Inuit because of the occurrence of open water in winter that would have attracted seals. *Encounters*, pp.131

⁴⁸ Letter from George Ellidge to Rev. George Morley, Newfoundland Correspondence 1825-28.

Methodist missionary effort in Aivektok.⁴⁹ Ellidge estimated the Inuit population in Esquimaux Bay to be only 74 people. Before he departed Labrador, Ellidge witnessed the death of the Palliser patriarch, Tutauk.

I visited old Palliser, he is very poorly and no wonder considering that he, like the rest of the Indians, has been living on nothing but seals during the winter and that the air must be very confined with so many living in so small a place. He died on the 21st and was buried on the 22nd and his son and another came to get board for his coffin. Before he was dead, he had been taken to England by Sir Hugh Palliser when a small boy, from whom he took his name.⁵⁰

Despite Ellidge's experience, Snook's Cove continued to be an important base for Inuit. Angus Brownson, a Quebec City merchant, chose to establish a store there, as early as 1829, concentrating solely on Inuit trade. Although he later operated the post for the English firm Hunt & Co., he appears to have maintained a business at Snook's Cove until his death in 1860. The HBC would eventually buy out Henley & Co.'s operations in Esquimaux Bay.⁵¹

The Hudson's Bay Company

The Hudson's Bay Company established itself in Aivektok in 1836 after George Simpson instructed Simon McGillvary to establish trading posts at the head of the bay in the vicinity of Northwest River and to compete with the traders already

⁴⁹ William Wilson, *Newfoundland and Its Missionaries*. (Cambridge Mass.:Daikan and Metcalfe, 1868), pp.303

⁵⁰ Ellidge to Morley, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Newfoundland Correspondence 1825-28

⁵¹ For detailed biographical information on Angus Brownson see Hans Rollman, "Demographics and Literacy of the Rigolet Area Inuit" pp. 2-4

operating there. He began the process of buying out the Company's competitors and within a few years the HBC had a virtual monopoly in the area. W.H.A. Davies took over in the late 1830's and opened a number of new posts but reported the trade disappointing. Davies left behind an instructive memoir that described life in the bay and many of the changes that had occurred since the time Europeans first arrived. He classified the residents of Esquimaux Bay as being persons employed by trading companies, Planters, Mountineer Indians and Esquimaux. He described the Planters as persons who had come to Labrador in the service of various mercantile organizations and who had remained in the country after their term of employment to hunt and trap on their own account. He noted that many of these persons were now "the offspring of former planters with Esquimaux women." The planters tended to live in solitary families, close to the shore of the bay in the wintertime and to trap near their homes, and in the summertime move closer to Rigolet to net salmon and fish for cod outside the narrows. The Mountaineer Indians (Innu) tended to live in the interior of the peninsula, coming out to trade in the summertime usually at the Hudson's Bay Company post at Northwest River, at the head of the estuary.⁵² The Esquimaux, Davies wrote, had undergone many changes, "assimilating themselves to the whites," but still dependant on seals which they hunted most of the year. He reported that they tended to live in communities of several families and rarely hunted for fur but fished for cod in the summer to have something to trade. He stated that at the turn of the century there had been upwards of three hundred Esquimaux in the area but that now there were only eight families, consisting of

⁵² W.H.A. Davies, "Notes on Esquimaux Bay and Its Surrounding Country, (1842)", *Transactions, Literary and Historical Society of Quebec*, Vol. 4-1, pp.86

thirty-four people, nineteen male and fifteen females.⁵³ He attributed their decline to the diminishing number of seals which led many to abandon the area. He also blamed their decline on the increasing use of alcohol and “vices imported by Europeans.”⁵⁴

Davies was succeeded as Chief Factor in 1842 by William Nourse who reported pessimistically on prospects for trade, doubting whether the region had the resources to support a profitable operation. In 1848 Richard Hardisty took over, by which time the company had posts at Northwest River, and Rigolet in Esquimaux Bay, Michikamau, and Nascopi in the Labrador interior and Kippokok on the coast north of the bay. Under Hardisty, the Rigolet post was managed by Donald Smith who would take over as chief factor in 1852. Smith would pursue much more aggressive trade policies, buying out remaining competitors in the region and shifting the focus away from the Indian trade based on the fur resources of the interior to an Inuit trade based on marine resources. Smith would eventually turn his attention to the Labrador coast and compete vigorously with the Moravians for the trade of coastal Inuit.

Moravians at Aivektok

The Moravians, like the Methodists, investigated the possibility of establishing a mission to Inuit at Aivektok. They first visited the region at the invitation of Donald Smith, who believed the general welfare of the people would greatly benefit from religious instruction. It may be that he was also cultivating his

⁵³ Ibid. pp.89

⁵⁴ Davies, “Notes on Esquimaux Bay”, pp.93

relations with the Moravians with an eye to taking over their trade.⁵⁵ The Moravians responded to the invitation with an exploratory visit to the area by the Hopedale missionary Ferdinand Elsner in 1857. His conclusions, similar to the Methodists, was that a mission would be impractical as the population was too small and too scattered. Over the years, the Moravians would continue to visit the area, maintaining sporadic contact with the people there. James O'Hara visited in 1870, Inuit evangelists Jacobus and Salome in 1871, Friedrich Rinderknecht in 1873 and Peter Hansen and Frank Fry in 1894.⁵⁶ All of these missionaries, with the exception of Hansen and Fry, visited Snook's Cove, identifying it as the principal winter settlement for Inuit in the region and all made population estimates for the number of Inuit living in the area. Elsner estimated between 7-10 families lived at Snook's Cove in 1857; O'Hara, approximately 89 people in 1870; Jacobus reported 43 people regularly attending his services at Snook's Cove in 1871; Rindernecht reported 8-10 families living at Snook's Cove in 1873 and 56 people attending a service held there in the house of a trader; and Hansen and Fry stated that there were 70 Inuit in the Rigolet area in 1894 but noted that some were absent attending the Chicago world's fair.⁵⁷ It is clear from Moravian accounts throughout the nineteenth century that

⁵⁵ Carol Brice Bennett, *Two Opinions: Inuit and Moravian Missionaries in Labrador 1804-1860*. M.A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1981, pp.484

⁵⁶ For a detailed account of Moravian encounters with Inuit in Aivetok/Esquimaux Bay in the 19th Century see Hans Rollmann's "Moravians in Central Labrador: The Indigenous Inuit Mission of Jacobus and Salome at Snook's Cove", *Journal of Moravian History* 9 (2010) 7-40 and for a summary of population estimates for Inuit in Aivetok/Hamilton Inlet see Hans Rollmann's "Demographics and Literacy During the Second Half of the Nineteenth of the Rigolet Area"

⁵⁷ Keith McKenzie reporting on the Esquimaux Bay District in 1886 reported "...the number of Esquimaux is diminishing, and this is the case all over the Labrador coast.

while missionaries occasionally visited Aivektok, Inuit from the area constantly visited Moravians communities on the coast to trade, seek religious tracts and visit relatives.

Shugalough and Palliser

One of the more vivid accounts of life in Aivektok in the nineteenth century comes from the American author and sportsman Charles Hallock who visited the area in 1860 and published an account of his experiences in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* the following year. Hallock first met Inuit at Tubb Harbour just outside the narrows when a 60 ton schooner came into the cove and dropped anchor nearby.

There were quaint little people on board – umber colored folk, with Mongolian features, and long hair falling in unkempt masses – dressed in curious smock-frocks of seal-skin, trousers of woolen stuff and seal-skin boots.⁵⁸

The entire crew of the vessel were Inuit. The captain's name was Shugalough, who one of Hallock's companions immediately took to calling "Sugarloaf" a nick-name similarly adopted by the American press when writing of his son in Chicago, 30 years later.⁵⁹ Hallock learned that Shugalough had built the schooner himself and was working for the Hudson's Bay Company, transporting freight and produce between the posts at Rigolet, Northwest River and Sandwich Bay. It is not known precisely what his relationship might have been to Shuglawina, the trader and

There are now in the Bay about 13 families." Report of Keith McKenzie, Esquimaux Bay District (Rigolet), September 2 1886, HBC Microfilm 1M1258, B183/e/1, pp. 4

⁵⁸ Charles Hallock, "Three Months in Labrador," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, May 1861, pp.747

⁵⁹ Patty Way, personal conversation regarding the genealogy of the Shuglo family.

associate of George Cartwright but Inuit commonly passed down the names of family ancestors to their descendants. Shugalough's son Jimmie, would have been 18 at the time of Hallock's visit and could well have been among the crew on his father's ship.

A few days later, Hallock visited the nearby salmon fishing camp of Tutauk's grandson, Joseph Palliser at Flatwater. His camp, as described by Hallock, consisted of a large sealskin tent or "toupik," two kayaks drawn up on the shore, capelin drying on the rocks and salmon nets set in the water nearby. A troop of dogs wandered about the place, while outside the tent lay the carcass of a freshly killed caribou. The interior of the "toupik" was lit by a stone lamp suspended in the centre and fed with seal fat.⁶⁰ Hallock described Palliser as a clever man, and the head of a household of eight people. He spoke some English and could read and write, having attended school for a time at the Moravian settlement of Okak. He was said to be an expert hunter and fisherman and skilled with both dog-team and kayak.⁶¹

Impressions of Rigolet 1860

After these meetings Hallock headed for Rigolet. His narrative provides colourful descriptions of life at the post much as it would have been throughout the period leading up to the fair.

Now the setting sun glances over the hills upon the low line of buildings belonging to the post of Rigolette...with the Hudson's Bay Company's red flag flaunting from the tall staff in the centre. Esquimaux are darting hither and thither in their kayaks; dusky figures are grouped on shore; dogs howl out

⁶⁰ Hallock, "Three Months in Labrador," pp.750

⁶¹ Ibid. pp.750

their doubtful greetings; strange craft are at anchor or drawn up on shore, and one, larger than the rest is moored beside a little pier that runs out from a dingy storehouse.⁶²

Each of the 14 buildings belonging to the post, comprising houses for the officers and servants, store houses for furs and other goods, a sales house, cooper's shop, oil house, fish house, packing house and oven house etc., excited a degree of interest. Some of them were frame buildings and some of logs. Two were built more than sixty years ago by two French traders. In the center of the oil house, surrounded by tierces and puncheons, and a villainous smell, Esquimaux were busily cutting flaps of seal blubber into small strips and cubes which they threw into a tank, where they were to lie until they rendered into oil. The oven house is a detached building devoted exclusively to baking purposes. A barrel of flour is here used at a baking. There was a turnip patch before the house, fenced in with seines stretched on poles.... There are nets hung on pickets to dry and set nets for salmon sweep out into the cove in semi-circles, like mammoth necklaces of beads. Esquimaux toupiks dot the shore, swarming with their swarthy tenants, who have assembled to barter their season's catch of salmon, seal-skins and oil. The few white settlers on the bay are here for the same purpose.⁶³

This idyllic portrait of the Hudson's Bay Company's post at Rigolet belies the harsh reality facing the people Hallock observed in the tent camps along the shore or in the Company's sales room. With increased competition for declining resources,

⁶² Ibid. pp754

⁶³ Hallock, pp.755

it was becoming more difficult for Inuit, and planters alike, to secure a livelihood and poverty and hardship was becoming increasingly common and widespread.

Rigolet at the Time of the Fair

The importance of Rigolet to the Hudson's Bay Company and the reason for its location at the narrows was salmon. As stated in the company's annual report of 1886: "comparatively little fur is obtained at Rigolet – the return consisting chiefly of oil and salmon."⁶⁴ Salmon migrated annually each summer from the Atlantic ocean to spawn in various rivers along the Labrador coast. A large number moved into Esquimaux Bay each year, through the narrows and further up the bay. Inuit and settlers alike participated in the salmon fishery, setting nets along the shores to intercept the migration. For the fishermen, as well as the Hudson's Bay Company, it was commercially the most important season and success or failure at the fishery could make or break the year.

Unlike the traditional Newfoundland cod-fishery which operated on the basis of common property, permitting people to fish wherever they pleased as long as the fishing berth had not already been claimed by someone else setting gear in the water, the salmon fishery in Esquimaux Bay had developed its own system of exclusive rights based on past usage. These rights were acknowledged by local residents and recognized by the commercial establishments operating in the region, including the Hudson's Bay Company.⁶⁵ By the latter part of the nineteenth century,

⁶⁴ Report of Keith McKenzie Esquimaux Bay District (Rigolet) September 2 1886 HBC Archives, Microfilm 1M1258, B183/e/1, pp. 1-4

⁶⁵ The Labrador tradition of exclusive rights was contested by Newfoundland fishing interests both on the water and in the courts. See Kurt Korneski : "Troubles Down North Unsettling the Settler in Hamilton Inlet, 1871-1883" in *Conflicted Colony*,

many fishermen returned year after year to their traditional berths selling their catch to the HBC or other itinerant traders. Still others worked directly for the Company, which had, over time, bought up numerous berths and assigned them annually to local residents to fish on their behalf, usually for a 50/50 share of the catch, with the company supplying nets and gear.⁶⁶ Many Inuit, including those who attended the fair, fell into this category. For example Jimmie "Sugla" was outfitted by HBC to fish salmon at Carawalla and Portage Cove in 1867, Jonas Palliser was contracted by the HBC to fish salmon at Back Run in 1867, Peter Palliser at Big Island in 1867 and both Jonas and his brother Peter at Back Run in 1870.⁶⁷

Various factors could affect the success of the salmon fishery. The size of the annual migration had its natural fluctuations and seasonal conditions such as ice and wind could affect the salmon's movements or the ability of fishermen to set or tend their nets. But by the 1880's, it was apparent that the size of the annual salmon run was declining. This was due, in all likelihood, to the intensity of the fishing effort over the years, the targeting of salmon at the mouths of spawning rivers and a large by-catch in the crowded cod fishery just outside the narrows. Poor salmon catches meant economic hardship and an increasing dependency on the Hudson's Bay Company for credit to make it through the winter season.

Critical Episodes in Nineteenth Century Newfoundland and Labrador, (McGill-Queen's University Press 2016)

⁶⁶ In 1887, the HBC possessed berths at the following locations in the Rigolet area: Big Island, Cul de Sac, Callawalla, Burnt Wood Cove, Back Run, Mullin Cove, Turner's Bight, Whittle's Point, Palliser's Point, Summer Cove, Gourdoux Point, Dram Brook, Jewel's Point, Jewell's Head **see** Report of Keith McKenzie, Esquimaux Bay District (Rigolet), September 2 1886 HBC Archives Microfilm 1M1258, B183/e/1, pp. 1-4

⁶⁷ An attributed excerpt from Hudson Bay Co. Records displayed on the wall of Strathcona House, Rigolet Labrador.

The HBC maintained a virtual monopoly on trade in Esquimaux Bay, making it the only place where Inuit, and planters alike, could acquire provisions and supplies throughout the year. At the beginning of the trapping or fishing seasons, families depended on advances from the company to sustain them until they could repay their debts with the produce of their harvests. Failure in hunting or fishing meant accumulating further debt and the possibility of losing future credit. In 1887, Randle Holme, an English sportsman visiting the area in an attempt to see Grand Falls, observed:

When there is a good year for salmon, they make a considerable lot of money in the year, what with fish, and fur, and seals. But the price of things is so fearful that they do not really get half the money they earn.... The company's principle is to make good debts pay for bad ones, of which there are, it is true, a great number.... Thus in the winter, a planter comes starving to the post, receives flour at \$8, and swears – as a man with a starving family will swear anything – to bring them all his salmon next fall and pay his debt. If he honestly does so, he must clearly repeat the process next year, and so get probably deeper and deeper into the company's debt.⁶⁸

Inuit in particular were at risk, as apart from the summer salmon fishery, their well-being was largely dependent on the success of the seal hunt. Seals were their main food resource and apart from salmon, provided their principal products for trade; seal oil, seal pelts and skin boots. The failure of the seal hunt due to

⁶⁸ Randle F. Holme, *A Collection of Letters, Reprints and Photos*, (1887) Memorial university of Newfoundland, Centre for Newfoundland Studies, quoted in Zimmerly, pp.136

weather conditions or deviations in animal migration patterns meant serious difficulties. A combination of a poor seal hunt followed by a poor salmon fishery could spell disaster. Their last resort was the Hudson's Bay Company which might give out a little flour or biscuit on credit or provide a few days employment cutting wood, shoveling snow, or rendering seal fat.

Hunters and fishermen with outstanding accounts with the Hudson's Bay Company developed their own survival strategies to ensure that all of their produce did not simply vanish through debt payments. The influx of summer traders from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia presented an opportunity to trade a portion of their catch for full value behind the backs of Company agents. The Company was aware of the practice but could do little about it. Their complaints about the practices of the planters applied equally to Inuit.

The Salmon trade in Esquimaux Bay has been steadily declining for the past three years, mostly on account of the scarcity of that fish and partly by reason of the dishonesty of the Planters who deal with the Company... If the trader comes into the Bay, during the fishing, which they invariably do, these Planters smuggle salmon on board, at night, and sell all they can for articles that they do not absolutely require. When the Company's people go around to collect salmon they are shown a few puncheons which are represented as the whole catch, quite often it is not more than one third of it, the other two thirds having already been disposed of to the traders. I do not say that all the

Planters are guilty of this, but I can safely state that one half of them act in this dishonest manner, with their furs as well as their salmon... ⁶⁹

The decade prior to the Chicago fair, was a challenging time for the people of the Rigolet region, planters and Inuit alike. The salmon fishery throughout the period was largely a series of failures necessitating government relief to prevent starvation.⁷⁰ In 1886, Keith McKenzie, Chief Factor for the HBC at Rigolet, wrote to Robert Prowse and Sons at St. John's outlining the desperate state of affairs and appealing for their help in obtaining Government aid.

The salmon fishery in this Bay has turned out poorly again this summer and altho the nets are still in the water I have very little hope of the fishery improving. In consequence of the failure in salmon, the prospects of the people in this Bay for the coming winter are appalling; in fact I see nothing but actual starvation before them. Our own regular dealers will be looked after but there are at least 17 families in the neighbourhood who are not and never have been the Company's Planters and have not the shadow of a claim upon them and had it not been for the 30 barrels of flour and 30 bags of biscuit landed by... the Government at Grady last Autumn as poor relief for the people in this Bay, they could not have lived out last winter. It is quite out of the question for me to feed all these people and if the authorities in St.

John's will not do anything for them, they must starve.⁷¹

⁶⁹ *Inspection Report, Rigolet Post*, P. McKenzie (Inspecting Officer) October 9 1889, HBC Archives Microfilm 1M1258 B.183/e/2, pp.10-11

⁷⁰ Zimmerly, pp.136

⁷¹ Letter Keith McKenzie Rigolet, HBC to Robert Prowse and Sons, St. John's, July 28 1886, HBC Archives, Microfilm 1M1146 183/B/3 Vol. 2 pp. 82

In 1889, McKenzie's replacement P.W. Bell reported another failure of the fishery and provided a further grim assessment.

The salmon struck the Bay some three weeks later than usual, at no time did they push with any... force. This continued failure of the salmon fishery means in plain English, nakedness and starvation. The inhabitants of this region have apparently lost all heart and courage – no one can blame them under the present depressed state of affairs; their lot for the winter appears sufficiently dismal.⁷²

As he appraised the post's returns later in the fall, Bell warned his superiors that continuing failures of the salmon fishery threatened not only the welfare of the people but also the survival of Rigolet as a viable commercial operation.

... all I would say is that unless matters improve in this line it will be utterly impossible for the families to gain a livelihood in this (part) of the country nor could the Company be expected to maintain there any longer...⁷³

That winter proved equally difficult; no seals appeared in the bay, no ptarmigan, no rabbits, foxes seemed to have vanished and not a single caribou was killed.⁷⁴ Bell, writing again before the start of the 1890 salmon fishery, stated that there was little hope for the people should the fishery fail again.

⁷² Letter from P.W. Bell District Manager Esquimaux Bay District to William Armit, Secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company, London from August 8 1889, HBC Archives, A.11/58, pp.387

⁷³ Letter from P.W. Bell to William Armit, October 7 1889, HBC Archives, Microfilm 1M1146 183/B/3, Vol.2, pp.190

⁷⁴ Letter from P.W. Bell, to S.H. Parsons, February 25 1890, HBC Archives, Microfilm 1M1146 183/B/3, Vol. 2, pp. 205

The gales and storms commenced early in November and more or less continued until the month of January: the drifts and gales were something unusual: neither hunting or trapping could be carried on profitably, in fact the wild elements prevailed to the extent of driving all game out of the country. The cod-fishery as well as the salmon fishery was an entire failure last year; the consequence of all this was that want and starvation was an open question in the entire bay last winter and had the HBC withheld their support, dozens and dozens of families would have miserably perished. The question in debate with me was not one of profit and loss... but simply to keep the miserable wretches from starvation... if the salmon work up the bay this year... I will stand to secure most of the provisions (provided) by me: if the fishery again proves a failure; heaven pity the poor wretches – leave the coast they must or starve: there is no alternative.⁷⁵

As luck would have it, the salmon fishery of 1890 was an improvement over previous years and partially alleviated the poverty of the people. The HBC reported that “inhabitants will go into winter quarters with better hopes and under more favourable circumstances than they did last year.”⁷⁶ This was followed by a similar success in the summer of 1891. However, despite the catch being considerable, the price paid in the markets was poor and the post showed no profit. “With the greatest care in the world,” Bell lamented, “this post will never be made to pay

⁷⁵ Letter from P.W. Bell to William Armit Hudson’s Bay, July 6 1890, HBC Archives, Microfilm 1M1146 183/B/3 Vol.2 pp.226

⁷⁶ Letter from P.W. Bell to William Armit HBC London, October 7 1890, HBC Archives Microfilm 1M1146 183/B/3 Vol.2, pp.309

unless there is a good catch of salmon and fair prices realized for the same.”⁷⁷ For Inuit the success in salmon fishing provided only partial relief. The spring seal hunt in 1891 was poor. On 25 June 1891, it was reported that “the miserable cold and wintry weather this spring was seriously against the chances of seal hunting.”⁷⁸ A similar experience occurred in 1892; “the Esquimaux seal hunters came and brought in their spring hunts. They have on the whole done very poorly.”⁷⁹

Throughout the winters of 1890/91 and 1891/92, Inuit visited the post constantly. They came whenever they had obtained anything they could trade; a few seal pelts, a small amount of seal fat, a few feathers, a few trout, some skin boots and even when they had nothing at all, begging for credit or seeking work that they could exchange for a few provisions.⁸⁰ Some sense of the precarious fortunes of Inuit hunters at this time are contained in the daily records of the Hudson’s Bay Company for Rigolet for 1890-1891. Jim Shuglo who would later travel to Chicago as part of the Esquimaux Village, provides one example. On 8 April 1890, he showed up at the HBC post at Rigolet with a few feathers to trade. On 15 August, it is reported that he and his brother have done well at the salmon. On 21 October, he returned with a little seal fat to sell. On 4 December, he brought in a white fox. On 6 January 1891, he is reported begging for food as no seals had been killed for a long time and on 4

⁷⁷ Letter from P.W. Bell to Wm. Armit, HBC London, Oct 15 1891, HBC Archives Microfilm 1M1146 183/B/3 Vol.2, pp. 415

⁷⁸ Rigolet Post Journals, June 25 1891, P.T. McGrath Fonds, PANL

⁷⁹ Rigolet Post Journals, June 27 1892, P.T. McGrath Fonds, PANL

⁸⁰ see Appendix 2

March 1891 he is employed cleaning up around the store and shoveling snow.⁸¹ It was not only Jim Shuglo who was struggling. He had a wife and 4 children.

During the winter of 1892, seals were again scarce and hope once again focused on the salmon fishery. Initial signs, however, were not promising. Writing at the start of the season Bell stated:

The salmon fishery does not hold out any flattering hopes this year. They are certainly not rushing up with any force or vigor in fact they are simply creeping along by twos and threes...⁸²

That year's fishery proved to be another failure. The post journal reported "a good many salmon" on 4 July but by 19 July it had revised the prognosis stating that "the salmon seems to be a failure." On 25 July, the entry stated that the salmon "seemed to have disappeared altogether."⁸³ These last two entries were made at the same time the "Evelena" arrived in Esquimaux Bay. Inuit families had endured successive years of hunger and experience indicated that they were again facing a winter of severe hardship. Under the circumstances, the unexpected appearance of the "Evelena" and an offer of a two year contract to travel to America must have seemed providential; a fortuitous opportunity to escape yet another season of want.⁸⁴

⁸¹ HBC Rigolet Post Journals, HBC Archive, B 183/a/24-30, Reel 1020

⁸² Letter PW Bell to Charles McLaren at NWR Post, July 10 1892, HBC Archives, Microfilm HBC 1M1146, 183/B/3 Vol. 2 pp. 508

⁸³ HBC Rigolet Post Journals, June 25 1891 July 25 1892, P.T. McGrath Fonds, PANL,

⁸⁴ see Appendix 3 for details from the Rigolet Post Journals documenting the activities of Inuit who would later attend the World's Columbian Exposition in the years leading up to the fair.

Conclusion

Aivektok Inuit have their own unique history among Labrador Inuit. In Chicago they would be mistaken for their remote arctic cousins, dwellers of the land of the midnight sun. In fact they were the most southern dwelling Inuit in the world with the longest history of contact with European society. Some of their ancestors had been Inuit traders who had established relations with Basques and French fishing enterprises in the 17th and 18th Century. They would have been among the first to acquire European technology, such as wooden boats, nets, and guns, and to adapt them to their own survival strategies. Their role as middlemen in the trade between European and northern Inuit is thought to have made some of them among the most wealthy and influential Inuit of their time. Their continued contact with European traders would have given Inuit an early appreciation of European culture as well as an understanding of European business practices. They would begin to learn French and later English and likely would have learned something of European governance and law. This once thriving community was devastated by the smallpox epidemic of 1773. The families that were resident near the Hudson's Bay post of Rigolet in the late nineteenth century were either descendants of those who had survived the epidemic or later migrants from regions both north and south of Aivektok. Despite this enormous tragedy, the historical record indicates continuous Inuit occupation in the area and continued contact with European trading institutions.

Those who went to Chicago for the World's Columbian Exposition, among them the Pallisers, the Shuglos, the Deers, as well as Peter Mesher, were hunters and

fishermen who had grown up in a complex social world they shared with European traders and settlers. Although they had become a marginalized minority within their homeland, they had adapted to a changing way of life and through the process had acquired many of the trappings of the world around them. Many could speak English, read and write, had knowledge of religious teachings, and, at least one, could play a musical instrument.⁸⁵ This accounts, in part, for some of the confusion surrounding the identity of Inuit in Chicago as their appearance and behaviour continually contradicted the stereotype of public expectation.

The relationship with traders and in particular the Hudson's Bay Company was a central feature in their lives. William Shuglough had built his own schooner and with an Inuit crew worked for the Hudson's Bay Company transporting freight among the company's posts at Rigolet, Northwest River and Cartwright.⁸⁶ His son James like Jonas and Peter Palliser was among those fished in the summer under contract with the Hudson's Bay Company, exchanging access to berths and nets for a share of the catch. Peter Mesher's father and uncle had long histories of employment with the Company. And Peter Palliser worked many years at Rigolet as a servant and labourer packing salmon and rendering seal fat into oil.⁸⁷

The relationships with European traders developed over generations and resulted in a general understanding and working knowledge of European trade practice and basic systems of governance and law. Their familiarity with European

⁸⁵ Henry Collin Walsh, *The Last Cruise of the Miranda*, (New York: The Transatlantic Publishing Company, 1896) pp.36 also see photograph of "Peter Polliser" in *Portfolio of Photographs of the World's Fair*, (Chicago: Werner Co., 1893-1894), Art Series No.10, Musician from Arctic Regions.

⁸⁶ Hallock, pp.747

⁸⁷ HBC Rigolet Journals

culture and language enabled them to adapt easily to the cultural environment in America and their background and experience helped formulate rational strategies used to respond to the oppressive policies of the Esquimaux Village managers.

Chapter 7

CONVERTS FROM THE MORAVIAN MISSION STATIONS

Prosperity in spiritual things appear to be dependent upon external welfare. If all goes well, the Eskimo is very agreeable and apparently satisfactory to deal with. But if misfortune comes, and he cannot get what he wants at the store and on his own terms, difficulties and unpleasantness are sure to arise. Periodical Accounts, Relating to the Mission of the Church of the United Brethren¹

The American entrepreneurs recruiting Inuit for the World's Columbian Exposition had approached the Moravians for their help with their Esquimaux Village project but had been rebuffed. The Moravians feared a repetition of the tragic events that had occurred a decade earlier when Abraham Ulrikab and his family were taken to Europe, from Hebron, as part of an ethnological exhibit and perished after contracting smallpox. The Americans largely respected the Moravians' wishes and did not recruit from Moravian communities with the exception of two families; those of Abel Helenab from Zoar and Zacharius Naemib from Hebron.

By 1890, Inuit, living on the north coast of Labrador, had associated with European religious and economic institutions for over a hundred years, principally through their relationship with the Moravian Mission which was both an evangelical and commercial venture. The relationship between Inuit and the Moravians was complex and often contentious particularly when it came to matters of trade. In the

¹ Periodical Accounts, Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren Established Among the Heathen (PA), Zoar Diary, July 1877, Vol.30, pp.332

late 1880's, just a few years prior to the World's Columbian Exposition, Inuit dissatisfaction with Moravian trade policy came to a head resulting in a number of defiant confrontations between Inuit and the missionaries. These incidents were the result of longstanding grievances towards the trade system rooted in Inuit suspicion that the trade was being managed principally for the benefit of the mission. The spirit of resistance evident in these protests contradict the stereotype of Inuit passivity and submissiveness and indicate a preparedness to act against perceived injustice. Two of the most significant agitations took place at Zoar and Hebron. Abel Helenab may not have participated directly in the disturbance at Zoar, as he was living outside the community at the time, but he certainly would have had knowledge of it. Zacharius Naemib, on the other hand, was most likely a participant in the protest at Hebron. Although not specifically named in mission accounts, it was reported that all men were in attendance. When he departed for Chicago, against the wishes of the Moravians, the missionaries declared that they were glad to be rid of him as he was a "troublemaker."² The Moravian Inuit would have brought their own experience to Chicago; a familiarity with Europeans built up over a long period of time and a tradition of resistance to authority in matters that affected their interests. This chapter discusses the history of Inuit associated with the Moravian Mission on the Labrador coast in the years prior to the World's Columbian Exposition.

Missionary Traders

By 1892, most Inuit on the Labrador coast were members of Moravian congregations based in six settlements scattered along the coast at Hopedale, Zoar,

² Periodical Accounts, 2nd Series, Vol. 2, March 1895, pp.442

Nain, Okak, Hebron, and Ramah. The people tended to live in these communities from Christmas to Easter, at the coldest time of year, when hunting opportunities were limited. The rest of the year, Inuit were living in small camps, scattered among the bays and islands; hunting and fishing, and returning to the settlements periodically to sell their produce and acquire provisions from the mission store.

The stores had been a central feature of Moravian communities, since the establishment of the first mission station at Nain in 1771 and were of vital importance to Inuit and missionaries alike. For Inuit, they provided a ready market for their fish, furs and oil and a dependable year-round supply of imported trade goods such as rifles, ammunition, fishing gear, tools, cooking utensils and foodstuffs such as flour, tea and biscuits. For the Moravians, the trade, which had attracted Inuit to the mission in the first place, provided the means for paying the costs of the mission as well as the resources required to dispense charitable relief in times of want.³ The Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel (SFG), the London based Moravian organization which had helped the Mission broker its relationship with British authorities in the 18th Century, had assumed responsibility for managing the trade and continued in that capacity throughout the 19th century, acquiring ships, transporting missionaries, providing capital and materials for buildings, supplying produce for the stores and selling Inuit products on the London markets.⁴ It was the

³ Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel Among the Heathen (SFG), Letter to Newfoundland Government, Sept 2 1892, para 1014, Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS), Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, Reel 6,

⁴ J.K.Hiller *The Foundations and the Early Years of the Moravian Mission in Labrador 1752-1805* (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland 1967) pp.112-125

SFG that established trade policy and set prices for both Inuit produce and foreign merchandise. From the beginning, trade had been an essential component of Inuit – Moravian relations and it remained so throughout the 19th and early 20th Century. Indeed, it has been argued that while the Moravian's main objective was religious in nature, its principal relationship with Inuit was economic.⁵

Background

Almost from the start, the trade between the Moravians and Inuit was contentious. The barter trade was not a relationship of equals. The store set the price of Inuit produce and imported goods. Inuit had few alternatives to this system other than to take their business elsewhere, but in 19th century Labrador, there were few options particularly for those trading in more northerly regions. The terms of trade, as dictated by the Moravians, would naturally have been questioned and if Inuit suspected they were being treated unfairly, distrust and resentment would result.

The conflict over prices given for produce and demanded for provisions would remain a central feature of Inuit–Moravian trade relations but the issue that would cause the greatest rift was the matter of credit and debt. As long as game was abundant and Inuit hunters were doing well, provisions could be paid for and store accounts could be balanced. But even the most proficient hunters were at the mercy of circumstance. Storms, ice conditions, prevailing winds, or changes in the abundance or movements of animals could result in failed hunts. In times of want, Inuit turned to the stores for credit to sustain themselves and their families. The

⁵ Susan Kaplan, *Economic and Social Change in Neo Eskimo Culture*, PhD Dissertation, Bryn Mawr College (1983), pp.171

Moravian's response to credit requests was the same as other business enterprises. They would issue advances on account, and collect against these debts when Inuit next had produce to trade. The balance at the end of the exchange most often left Inuit in need of new credit; a cycle that was not easily broken and could lead to a perpetual state of indebtedness. This situation was the cause of continuous friction between Inuit and store brethren. The problem was discussed as early as 1802 when the Labrador missionaries turned to the SFG for advice.

The Esquimaux have sometimes suffered so much from want of provisions that they are obliged to run into debt at the stores so as not to be able to discharge their arrears in a year or two. This seems a great hardship, especially if their debts originated in real want and were not contracted by habits of idleness... Hitherto the Brethren have helped them with dried fish, pease, flour etc. It made them debtors for it but it sometimes happens that the Brethren having the care of the stores, got into a disagreeable dispute with the poor people when they brought their blubber and skins to barter for necessary things and were reminded first to pay their debts.⁶

The missionaries, seeking to avoid unpleasant confrontations that would compromise their relationship with Inuit, wanted to know if debt accrued under real hardship might be forgiven. The SFG, trying to balance Christian instincts with sound business principles, was concerned that Inuit might perceive the store as a means of support. In this case, it authorized missionaries to forgive a portion of the debt but asked that every possible means be applied "to promote diligence and

⁶ Minutes of the SFG, October 28 1802, MUN, CNS, Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, Reel 1 pp.364-367

suppress idleness among them and to give no encouragement to hope that distress occasioned by them would be relieved by their teachers.”⁷

Inuit in the south of the Moravian territory, around Hopedale and Nain, found alternatives to the Moravian’s trade monopoly as southern traders pushed northward in the early 19th Century. Independent traders did not carry the heavy overhead of the SFG and in many cases could afford to offer better prices for Inuit produce and cheaper costs for European products. The traders also provided Inuit with the opportunity of obtaining full value for their produce without the discount of debt and many took advantage of the situation. The Moravians viewed the southern traders as a threat to both their religious objectives and commercial interests.⁸ They blamed the traders for undermining Inuit confidence in the mission, by spreading rumors about the Moravian’s motives and they chastised Inuit for trading with them, especially if they had outstanding debts at the stores.⁹ For the Moravians this was both disloyal and immoral behaviour. Their response was to restrict the credit given to delinquent clients in order to make them aware of their responsibilities. The SFG told the Labrador missionaries that with regard to outstanding debt, discipline must be imposed;

...even at the expense of feelings and the risk of some temporary loss of mutual confidence and understanding. They must be shown the necessity of “proving their faith by their works,” and if need be, by the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Periodical Accounts, Extract of Private Correspondence of Adam Kunath, Missionary at Hopedale, 1831, Vol. 12, pp. 67

⁹ Carol Brice-Bennett, *Two Opinions: Inuit and Moravian Missionaries in Labrador 1804-1860*, Unpublished Master’s Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1981, pp.313

occasional exercise of church discipline against those who disregard the principle.¹⁰

The use of spiritual sanctions for temporal transgressions was a startling and unique weapon to employ in the management of the trade and it possibly alienated as many people as it disciplined. The dual role of the missionary as religious teacher and trader must have been deeply confusing and frustrating to Inuit. It was one thing to believe that the missionaries had Inuit interest at heart when discussing matters of the soul, quite another when they were on opposite sides of the counter, haggling over the price of fish or fur. When it came to trade matters, however, Inuit would continue to act in their own interest even when it meant the disapproval of the missionaries.

The problem of Inuit debt became a greater concern for the SFG by the mid-19th century. Not only were independent traders penetrating traditional Moravian territory and siphoning off valuable Inuit trade, but changing environmental conditions began to impede Inuit harvesting efforts causing serious reduction in catches and resulting in smaller shipments to the London markets. This resulted in increasing poverty among Inuit, and greater demands for credit at the stores.¹¹ This was particularly true in the 1850's as wind and ice conditions led to a scarcity of game all along the coast causing widespread hunger and hardship in all the Moravian communities.¹² The missionaries did what they could to alleviate the suffering, often depleting their own reserves to help people survive. As it became

¹⁰ Minutes of the SFG, April 12 1847, MUN CNS, Moravian Mission Microfilm 513 Reel 2, Section III, Trade, unpaginated,

¹¹ Brice-Bennett, *Two Opinions*, pp.452-465

¹² Ibid.

increasingly difficult for Inuit to make a living or pay off their debts at the store, the missionaries noted that many Inuit were becoming disillusioned and discontent.

“This has been the case with not a few of the Esquimaux here at Nain.

Murmuring against God for not having done any good for them, their dissatisfaction extends itself to us...”

That dissatisfaction led increasingly to overt acts of desperation and protest. In Hopedale, in 1856, a man accused of stealing from the store shot at the missionary who had accused him of the theft.¹³ Two years later, in the same community, a woman, also accused of stealing, set fire to a woodpile behind the mission residence, nearly burning down the Hopedale mission buildings.¹⁴ The relationship between Inuit and the missionaries was being tested. The Missionary at Hopedale observed:

The spirit of license, of frivolity, and of pride prevails increasingly among them, and it not unfrequently happens that affectionate remonstrances on our part are repaid with insolent behavior. In short, they will take no advice, an evil that may be said more or less to affect the whole nation. Great indifference in spiritual matters, and an increasing want of confidence in us, have made themselves evident. The cause of the latter is unknown to us, but may be sought, perhaps not incorrectly, in the increasing intercourse of our people with the traders in the South...¹⁵

As the result of the contact with southern traders, Inuit began to question the prices and practices of mission trade and to suspect the Moravians of prospering at

¹³Periodical Accounts, Letter from Hopedale to the SFG, August 10 1856, Vol.22, pp.103

¹⁴ Periodical Accounts, Letter from Hopedale to the SFG, July 12 1858, Vol.23, pp.50

¹⁵ Periodical Accounts, Letter from Hopedale to the SFG, July 30 1857, Vol.22, pp.317

Inuit expense. The disillusionment in the Inuit-Moravian relationship extended to the missionaries also. They believed that the root cause of the ill-will was the trade and many resented their involvement in it. They were in Labrador to save Inuit souls but were also tasked with making a profit on the labour of the people they were there to serve, in order to pay the overhead of the missionary effort. Many came to believe that the trade compromised the spiritual mission and unnecessarily complicated their relationship with Inuit.¹⁶ By trying to serve both God and Mammon, they were wriggling on the pin of a dilemma that many wished to be clear of.

In 1861, in response to rising tensions between Inuit and missionaries over trade matters, Br. Levin Reichel was sent to Labrador to study the problem and recommend solutions. He suggested modifying the trade system and creating a greater separation of missionary and trading functions by creating a separate trade entity with its own supervisor and dedicated staff whose sole purpose would be to manage the stores and conduct commercial affairs. This would enable the missionaries to focus exclusively on spiritual matters without the complicating entanglements associated with the trade. It was hoped that this new structure would clarify matters for missionary and Inuit alike.¹⁷

Reichel attempted to improve the welfare of Inuit by raising prices for fur, increasing Inuit share of seals caught in mission nets, encouraging and facilitating the acquisition of nets and traps and being more liberal in providing credit for items

¹⁶ Minutes of the SFG, October 8 1874, Nfld. Microfilm 513, paragraph 237

¹⁷ Periodical Accounts, "Retrospect of the History of the Mission of the Brethren's Church in Labrador for the Past Hundred Years, " Vol. 28 pp. 68

essential for a livelihood such as guns and ammunition.¹⁸ These policies may have helped ease the strain temporarily but environmental conditions conspired against any permanent improvement in the temporal welfare of Inuit. The continuing struggles to obtain a livelihood contributed to a renewal of unrest in a number of settlements. The store policy was again at the heart of the discontent.

As usual, outward trials affected the temper and disposition of the Eskimos and although the Lord graciously prevented anything like a general opposition or organized disaffection it was very evident that the deeply rooted distrust of the Kablunak or European was again stirred and ready to find vent in unreasonable complaints and angry charges without the least foundation.... In order to give an opportunity for staging their grievances, a meeting of the men was held, which was marked by some incidents truly Eskimo. Questions were answered, explanations given, and good resulted; but tempers were put to a very severe trial.¹⁹

The missionaries were often impatient with Inuit complaints. They commonly characterized “the spirit of discontent” as “sinfulness” with “deplorable consequences”²⁰ and dismissed protests as acts of disobedience. They attributed Inuit hostility toward the mission to ignorance or misunderstanding.

Trading, to be successful in its moral aim, demands the enforcement of strict regulations, especially with regard to the careless contracting of debts. But where a missionary, as such, is obliged to act strictly, his mode of dealing

¹⁸ Brice-Bennett, *Two Opinions*, pp.496

¹⁹ Periodical Accounts, Nain Diary, July 1880, Vol. 31, pp. 343

²⁰ Periodical Accounts, Zoar Diary, July 1877, Vol. 30, pp. 332

easily appears, at least in the eyes of the Eskimos, incompatible with Christian love and pity.²¹

Inuit were expected to be compliant and to trust that their teachers had their best interests at heart.

And yet the intractable conflict between spiritual and commercial affairs continued to cause soul searching among some of the missionaries. Carl Linder, who had been appointed trade supervisor after Reichel's visit and who served in that capacity for 10 years, despaired of ever reconciling the two branches of the mission and questioned whether the trade might not be corrupting its spiritual objectives by undermining the relationship with the people it had come to serve. His letter to the SFG in London, questioning the benefit of the trade, shocked his superiors and led to a further re-examination of trade policy and practice.

I despair entirely of the trade: it is too much for us, because we have not the men for it. We shall be more of a trading society than a mission society.... Firstly, the people keep away from us, they distrust us, they want to be free and consider us to be in their way by making money on their poverty for our own benefit. With these views, I cannot look at my calling as missionary service but as one who does more harm than good to the mission and I must desire to be freed from such position.²²

The problem for the Moravians and Inuit alike, was that, commercially, they needed each other. The Moravians had no other means of financing their mission and except

²¹ Periodical Accounts, December 1888, Vol. 34, pp. 379

²² Minutes of the SFG, October 8 1874, MUN CNS Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, paragraph 237

for a few months in the summer, Inuit had few alternatives for the sale of their produce or the acquisition of supplies. However, this mutual dependence did nothing to dispel the mutual suspicion and mistrust.

By the latter part of the 19th Century, the Moravians had expanded their missionary efforts, building new stations at Zoar (1865) and Ramah (1871) in an effort to extend their reach but at the same time they increased the Mission's overhead. The SFG became preoccupied with managing expenses and in 1876, Reichel returned to Labrador to find better ways of getting costs under control. Finding ways to reduce Inuit store debt was his first order of business.²³ The following year, the SFG devised a set of Store Rules and Regulations which it ordered to be posted in all its stores in Labrador. It hoped that these rules would explain and clarify the basis on which the SFG conducted its operations so that expectations could be managed and misunderstandings avoided. The reforms were supposed to resolve outstanding trade issues but in fact aggravated them. The frustration with the Moravian's store service which had simmered for years would boil over in the late 1880's, in a series of incidents at Hopedale, Zoar and Hebron.

Hopedale

In 1885, Br. Louis Kaestner was appointed store manager at Hopedale. Fearing that he would impose a stricter compliance of the Store Rules relating to credit and debt, Inuit began "an agitation against him." As a gesture of conciliation, Kaestner promised to maintain the status quo for a year but as the end of the year approached the agitation was renewed and at a heated men's meeting, "the

²³ Periodical Accounts, December 1876, Vol. 30 pp.93

Eskimo declared...that they did not believe that the rules emanated from the authorities at home” and “threatened to take their trade elsewhere.”²⁴ The Hopedale missionaries, discouraged by the episode, wrote to the SFG in London as well as their own superintendent at Nain, Br. Theodore Bourquin, recommending that the store at Hopedale be shut down, at least temporarily, in order to teach Inuit a lesson.²⁵ Br. Bourquin subsequently wrote to the SFG. He did not support the Hopedale missionaries in their request to close the store, noting that such an action could lead to a dispersal of the people from Hopedale and create a state of alienation and bitterness even among those who were loyal to the mission.²⁶ However, he reported that there were on-going difficulties when it came to the trade and suggested it might be time for the SFG to send another delegate to clarify store policies and in particular to explain to Inuit that the missionaries were not responsible for trade rules and regulations. The purpose of such a visit would be “simply to tell the people everywhere, in love, briefly and conclusively that the store rules... are really your wish.” He went on to suggest that the people at each station be asked to accept the rules and that where they did not “consideration be given to closing the stores at those places.”²⁷ The SFG was reluctant to close any stores but agreed to Bourquin’s request for a representative to visit Labrador. Br. Benjamin LaTrobe was selected for the task. He was to visit each mission station, assess the issues, solicit the advice of missionaries, and meet with Inuit. The new trade rules had been the means by

²⁴ Minutes of the SFG, Oct. 8 1886, CNS, Microfilm 513 Reel 3, paragraph 726

²⁵ Minutes of the SFG, Jan. 7 1887, CNS, Microfilm 513 Reel 3, paragraph 741

²⁶ Report of Theodor Bourquin to SFG, Library and Archives Canada, Moravian Brethren Fonds, Microfilm Reel M 492, pp.10856/7, paragraph 35, translation courtesy of Delf Hohmann

²⁷ Minutes of the SFG, December 2 1887, Nfld. Microfilm 513, paragraph 777

which the SFG hoped to re-establish sound fiscal management²⁸ and LaTrobe was to explain to Inuit “that they express our wishes and the conditions on which we are willing and able to trade.” As a gesture of good will, the SFG empowered LaTrobe to grant a 25% amnesty on outstanding debts if paid off within the year.²⁹ But as LaTrobe was preparing to leave London, a fresh crisis developed, this time at Zoar.

Zoar

Zoar had been established at Tappangayok between Hopedale and Nain in 1865, allegedly to serve the spiritual needs of both Inuit and settlers in the region but its true purpose appears to have been more temporal than spiritual. Br. Auguste Freitag, the missionary at Nain, who initially proposed the idea, admitted that the new station would serve “no missionary objective in the ordinary sense of the term.”³⁰ Indeed, most Labrador missionaries had opposed its foundation, pointing out that there were no “heathen” Esquimaux in the district and that the people living in the area were already members of the Nain or Hopedale congregations. The real objective was “chiefly for the purpose of keeping off southern traders” who were siphoning off Inuit trade.³¹ The Moravians were particularly concerned with the trading operations of Hunt and Henley which had establishments at Ukkasiksalik

²⁸ SFG to Labrador Conference, MUN CNS . Moravian Microfilm 513 pp. 8074: “The list of debts owing to us on the departure of the last ship in 1888 shows a total of £2388, far too large for all concerned.”

²⁹ Minutes of the SFG, June 8 1888, Moravian Microfilm 513, paragraph 804

³⁰ Minutes of the SFG, December 17 1862, Moravian Microfilm 513 paragraph 296

³¹ Ibid.

(Davis Inlet), north of Hopedale and at Paul's Island just south of Nain. These were both bought by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1869.³²

Zoar was to have a short and troubled history. It was a poor place for hunting and fishing and the people who moved there struggled to make a living. A review of Moravian mission records for Zoar between 1869 and 1888, indicate poor harvests of seals, codfish and caribou in all but six of those years.³³ The result was frequent economic hardship, increasing dependence on the stores and rising debts which led to grumblings from both sides of the ledger. When the SFG introduced its new Store Rules and Regulations in 1877, the people of Zoar were openly hostile.

The result of the rules promulgated last year with reference to the demoralizing credit system... was that a few set to work with energy and cleared off the balance against them. Others have taken no trouble in this direction. A large number, although deeply indebted here, took their produce elsewhere thereby depriving themselves of the right to procure any article on credit at the store. In accordance with the rule to this effect, of which they had a few weeks previously, publicly declared their approval... ammunition and provisions on credit were refused to those who had transgressed. Instantly the spirit of discontent broke out, very unbecoming speeches were heard and men's meetings were held, at which strong words were used with little consideration.... About seven families have openly separated from the

³² John C. Kennedy, *Encounters: An Anthropological History of Southeastern Labrador*, pp.73

³³ Periodical Accounts, Vol. 27-34. One is able to determine that the following years had poor harvests 1870-1874, 1876, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, and 1888, while those years with relatively good results were 1869, 1875, 1877, 1881, 1882, and 1883.

store without paying their debts, others take their produce secretly to the traders.”³⁴

The Moravians acknowledged the difficulties created by poor harvests but also questioned Inuit diligence, industry and honesty. They were particularly critical of the practice of taking produce to other traders instead of paying down debt.³⁵ Inuit felt little compulsion to trade at the Mission store. Hunt and Henley and later the Hudson’s Bay Company was nearby, and in the summertime numerous Newfoundland traders and fishermen provided further outlets for their produce. Disputes over prices, credit and debt eroded the trust between the missionaries and Inuit at Zoar. A few prosperous years in the early 1880’s calmed the waters temporarily but subsequent years of poor harvests led to a renewal of trouble.³⁶

The situation at Zoar came to a head in 1887-88. Accounts at the store were normally balanced at the end of the cod-fishery signaled by the departure of the mission’s collector boat, the “Gleaner.” That year, not one person among the 26 with accounts at Zoar paid their debts and four men, despite debt owing, chose to leave the community to establish trading relations with the Hudson’s Bay Company at Uksalik.³⁷ Hunting that fall and winter was a complete failure leading to an increased demand for credit which the mission store refused to grant. By the new year many people were becoming desperate and at a men’s meeting held in January a decision was taken to help themselves to store supplies the next trading day if the storekeeper again refused demands for assistance. The missionaries, however,

³⁴ Periodical Accounts, Zoar Diary, July 1877, Vol. 30 pp.332

³⁵ Periodical Accounts, Zoar Diary, July 1876, Vol. 30, pp. 97

³⁶ Periodical Accounts, Zoar Diary, 1882, Vol.32, pp. 582

³⁷ Report of Theodor Bourquin to SFG paragraph 36

learned of the plan in advance and confronted the men during a church service.

On January 7, the men planned to plunder the store, the very chapel servants being at the head of the conspiracy. Happily it was revealed to our missionaries by a settler and so frustrated by Br. Rinderknecht's warning them at the evening service, January 5, by no means to burden their consciences with such sin. After this meeting the men stormed into the mission house demanding to know who had betrayed their secret. Happily they appealed to Br Bourquin (the Superintendent at Nain) and the missionaries were well content that they should fetch him. His visit quieted the spirit of unrest for the time but there were only too many evidences that the moral tone was unchanged. On Whitmonday, the frequent impudent demands at the store culminated in three shots fired into the window at the part where our two missionaries were busy. They were unhurt and at that time unconscious of their danger. The culprit was Caleb and his motive was the expression of revenge for having to leave the store without getting his unreasonable demands. Banished from the station he is now wandering about like Cain."³⁸

Bourquin's response to the unrest at Zoar was to close down the store.³⁹ In his report to the SFG, he made it clear that the latest incidents at Zoar were not isolated occurrences but only the latest manifestations of unrest that had been an on-going feature of the community for many years. He saw no possibility of

³⁸ Report of Visitation in Labrador by Br. B.Latrobe in 1888, Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS), Moravian Mission Microfilm 690, Vol. 7, R.15.K.a.11.g, pp.29

³⁹ Bourquin Report para 38

improvement. The problem, he said, stemmed in part from the poor location of Zoar for hunting and fishing, resulting in a heavy dependence of the people on the mission for relief but the situation was exacerbated by poor leadership in the community and by the poor character of the people who lacked both the energy and will to work off their debts. "(This) occurs elsewhere... and is known to all store brethren, but in Zoar it is inherent in the people."⁴⁰ The result was the highest per capita debt on the coast and the greatest single expenditure of poor relief. Bourquin believed that there was no prospect of debts being paid and that there was only one way to ensure that the existing liabilities did not continue to increase.

Can we go on like this? The answer, as sad as it is, is no. Something decisive must happen and this cannot happen in any other way than by abolishing the trade and store in Zoar.⁴¹

The SFG 's emissary Benjamin LaTrobe arrived in Labrador the following summer and it was left to him to make the announcement to the people of Zoar that the store would be closing. He delivered a sober and stern lecture:

This is your own fault and we are very sorry that you have been so foolish and shortsighted. But it would not be right to you or to ourselves to let you go on using our money and our goods instead of your own... you have been living on debts. No man in all the world can do that for long. Everyman must pay his debts, if not, they must lie as a weight upon his heart and conscience. It is the same with you. Whether you trade with us at Nain or Hopedale or elsewhere, you have the responsibility of your debts. Fish

⁴⁰ Bourquin's Report paragraph 38

⁴¹ Ibid. paragraph 36

diligently, very diligently, so as to have enough during the winter both for a livelihood and for ammunition. Remember there will be no store here after the 'Gleaner' has left. So be diligent and honest and ask God to forgive your sins and help you.⁴²

LaTrobe began his tour of mission stations along the coast, consulting with the missionaries on trade matters and holding public meetings at each of the communities to restate his principal message; that the Store rules and regulations were the will of the SFG and the only basis under which the SFG was able and willing to carry on the trade. The implied threat, underscored by the decision taken at Zoar, was that if Inuit did not assent, the SFG would close the store in their communities just as it had done at Zoar. At all the stations he visited, Latrobe reported that Inuit accepted the SFG's terms for trade and promised to abide by the rules. But as LaTrobe himself stated, the compliance was less than enthusiastic.: "The Eskimoes have for the most part yielded, somewhat ungraciously, to the inevitable."⁴³

The closure of the store at Zoar in 1888, led to the departure of the people from the community. Some migrated to Nain, some to Hopedale while still others remained in the area trading at the Hudson's Bay Company post at Davis Inlet. The Moravians blamed the people for the failure of the community.

These people have learned no wisdom or thrift in spite of all the love and patience shown them and they have made the last winter a trying time for

⁴² Report of Visitation in Labrador by Br.B.Latrobe in 1888, MUN CNS Moravian Mission Microfilm 690, Vol. 7, R.15.K.a.11.g

⁴³ Ibid. pp.40

their devoted missionaries.⁴⁴

A final decision to close the station was taken in 1894.

While LaTrobe was in Labrador, Bourquin asked Br. Kaestner to draft revisions of the Store Rules. This he did. The new rules were presented to the Labrador missionaries at their annual conference and were endorsed by them unanimously. At the same meeting, the missionaries objected to the SFG's offer of an amnesty of 25% of Inuit trade debt, arguing that "the Eskimoes would say to them, "See it is as we thought; your superiors are more merciful than you".⁴⁵ LaTrobe, believing the Labrador missionaries were better positioned to assess the impact of such a policy, deferred to their opinion and withdrew the proposal.

Hebron

The SFG was pleased with LaTrobe's visit. It appeared that the trade had been re-established on a rational basis under clear guidelines and with the renewed support of missionaries and Inuit alike, both of whom had previously been dissatisfied with the trade system. But if the SFG and the Labrador missionaries hoped that LaTrobe's visit had put an end to Inuit unrest, they would soon discover their mistake.

Br. Bourquin, the Superintendent of the Labrador mission, reported to the SFG shortly after Latrobe's visit, that the trip had strengthened the hand of the store brethren and was showing positive results at all stations with the possible exception

⁴⁴ Periodical Accounts *n*

⁴⁵ Report of Visitation in Labrador by Br.B.Latrobe in 1888, MUN CNS Moravian Mission Microfilm 690, Vol. 7, R.15.K.a.11.g, pp.39

of Hebron “where the massive debt is very serious.”⁴⁶ LaTrobe had also expressed concern over the situation at Hebron, where “the successive years of hunting and fishing have impoverished the Hebron people and swelled the debt list.”⁴⁷ The SFG also heard directly from Inuit at Hebron. It had received a letter from Amandus, a former chapel servant, questioning the price of kerosene charged in the mission store.

We have noticed that for some years our oil is getting cheaper and cheaper and we are told that it is because other oils are in the market. But we do not find that you sell us kerosene oil any cheaper, how is this?⁴⁸

The matter was referred to one of the SFG’s committee members for further investigation.

Hebron Inuit took matters into their own hands on 29 September 1889. After church services at 1 o’clock in the afternoon, one of the Moravian missionaries, Brother Kahle, was approached by a delegation of three men, the two native servants Thomas and Johannes, and a third man, Amandus.⁴⁹ They were seeking a meeting with the store brother Hlavatschek but wanted the other missionaries Kahle and Wirth to attend. Despite misgivings, the missionaries agreed to meet in

⁴⁶ SFG Minutes August 30 1889, MUN CNS, Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, Reel 3, paragraph 854

⁴⁷ Report of Visitation in Labrador by Br.B.Latrobe in 1888, MUN CNS Moravian Mission Microfilm 690, Vol. 7, R.15.K.a.11.g, pp.13

⁴⁸ SFG Minutes March 8 1889, MUN CNS Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, Reel 3, paragraph 832

⁴⁹ Events relating to the Hebron “uprising” are described in detail in “Letter Concerning the Unrest at Hebron on September 29 1889”, MUN CNS Moravian Mission Microfilm Reel M510, pp. 041163-041181, translation by Larrass Translations, Ottawa ON.

the school room which was attached to the church and the missionaries' residence. There, they were joined by most of the Hebron men. Br. Kahle began by asking whether one or all of them had specific concerns and was told: "All of us!" Nathan was the first to speak and asked why unmarried men were no longer to be granted credit. Hlavatschek replied that it was one of the new store rules and that they had been told of it during Latrobe's visit. These rules, he reiterated, were set by London, and were the condition of trade. This statement, according to the missionaries, was met with anger and the meeting quickly erupted into a litany of accusations. "We stood all alone," they later wrote, "not one man stuck with us, and not one word in support or to calm tempers was heard." The door was barred and they were "held captive in our house for four hours" subject to all kinds of "insolence, coarseness and meanness." The discussion ran the gamut of trade issues: such things as the prices offered for produce, the method of weighing trout, the wages paid for labour, and the cost of kerosene. The response of the missionaries gave no satisfaction. They reminded the men that they had agreed to abide by the store rules and pointed out that if they had "we would not be here now." They were simply pouring fuel on the fire.

The main speakers paced up and down like angry bulls in their pent-up cages, to occasionally show us their clenched fist, as they leveled in our faces one accusation or another amid the applause of all those in attendance... it was as though we stood before a mad court of the inquisition.⁵⁰

The missionaries characterized the meeting as an "uprising." Kahle was told his

⁵⁰Ibid

heart had hardened into a rock, Wirth that he was without mercy and Hlavatschek that he must be rich enough by now to return home and that it would be best if he went. The Hebron men claimed that they had written the SFG about many of the issues they were raising but had, as yet, received no response. It was said that Latrobe and those in London were “merciless in their treatment of Eskimos,” that they were “liars and defrauders” and that Latrobe was “the biggest liar and defrauder in the world!” The men claimed that they were being overcharged for products in the store, that they had been told that prices were far cheaper in St. John’s and that they were being cheated and deceived. The missionaries attributed Inuit dissatisfaction to the “untutored and distrustful hearts of people” who were easily misled.

At the end of the meeting, Thomas declared that if the missionaries could not help them, then they would no longer help the missionaries. From that point forward, he declared, they would withdraw all services such as cutting wood, fetching water, sewing boots or carrying mail and that this withdrawal of services would include the work of the women in the mission kitchen, the girls tending the missionaries’ children and the helpers in the store. Then, on a sign from Thomas, the door was made free and the men led the way through the missionaries’ house taking with them the kitchen staff and the children’s maid.

For three days “the disgraceful spirit of rebellion” was sustained. The missionaries attempted to go about their business as usual; working in their garden to bring in the autumn harvest or fetching water but wherever they went they were “yelled at and mocked.” Then on the third day, Thomas led a peace delegation to the

steps of the mission house. The missionaries accepted the overture but treated it more as an act of surrender than a desire for reconciliation. They considered the rebellion to be an act of sin, fixed firmly on the “wrongdoing” and “disobedience” of the people and looked for signs of contrition; a “recognition of trespasses and repentance.” At no time in their lengthy report on the incident did the Hebron missionaries suggest that there may have been any merit to Inuit complaints. They focused instead on punishing the offenders. Both Thomas and Johannes were dismissed as native helpers, and an upcoming communal feast was cancelled along with choir singing and music “as all but two (of the choir) had been among the worst in the turmoil.”⁵¹

Thomas accepted his dismissal. He admitted to being the instigator of the meeting but reported that dissatisfaction towards the store had been prevalent throughout the community for over a year and claimed there were those who had wanted to make a more forceful demonstration against the store and that his actions had perhaps prevented a greater misfortune from happening. Johannes, the other native helper to be dismissed, appears to have been unrepentant. According to the Moravian’s account he

did not appear to understand in his heart his wrongdoing. In his eyes we continue to be the guilty party. Fourteen days having passed and he has not attended church.⁵²

As for Amandus, the third man of the original delegation, he appeared to be simply bewildered by the Moravian’s response to the affair.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

Amandus, who is regarded as among the most enlightened, came to us and spoke of his remorse that he had participated in the uproar. He belongs to the people of the choir and he immediately spoke about the cancellation of the communal feast and that the choir had been suspended. He said: we have erred greatly, but we have sinned because of the store, not on account of the church, that we are now punished by the church, we do not understand.⁵³

It was a fair point. The Moravians were using church discipline to punish a protest against store practices. Br. Wirth, in frank discussions with the SFG in London the following year, called it “spiritual weapons for temporal offences.”⁵⁴ But if the missionaries expected repentance and submission to their authority they were to be disappointed. They suspected that declarations of remorse had a more practical purpose. “We sense that improved heartfelt attitudes have to a lesser extent determined their yielding, than needs, in terms of the store, without which they cannot live.”⁵⁵

Three months later, at Christmas, people asked for the reinstatement of choral singing and suggested that not to do so signaled non-forgiveness. The Moravians bristled at the suggestion that they were somehow to blame for the situation in the community but fearing more trouble they yielded to the request. There was residual bitterness on both sides. In the concluding statement of their report to the SFG in London, the Hebron missionaries reported on the prevailing

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴ Minutes of the SFG, October 31 1890, Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, Reel 3, paragraph 915

⁵⁵“Letter Concerning the Unrest at Hebron on September 29 1889”

atmosphere in the community after the “uprising”. “There is peace,” they wrote, “but it is a foul peace.”⁵⁶

London

The response of the SFG in London to the Hebron disturbance was far more self-critical than that of the Hebron missionaries. Although they considered the incident “deplorable,” they also sought explanations and found that some of their own practices and policies had been contributing factors. They examined the unaddressed issue raised by Amandus; the price of petroleum charged in its stores, and discovered that it was sold at a profit “far exceeding the 150% (of cost) on articles laid down in the 1888 revision of the tariff.”⁵⁷ On further examination, the SFG acknowledged that the discontent was in part traceable to the revised trade rules of 1888, developed in Labrador during LaTrobe’s visit which “raised selling prices from 125% to 150% profit simultaneously with the reduction of prices paid for native products.”⁵⁸ The draft of the new tariff had been developed by Br. Kaestner, the storekeeper at Hopedale, at Br. Bourquin’s request, partly in response to letters from the SFG expressing concern over continued losses at the stores. The draft was then presented to LaTrobe, and tabled at the general Labrador Conference where it was endorsed unanimously by the local missionaries. The SFG, realized that these revisions contributed to the unrest, but partially absolved itself of the responsibility by stating that although it had failed to “perceive the gravity of these

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Minutes of the SFG, August 22 1890, MUN CNS Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, Reel 3, paragraph 909

⁵⁸ Minutes of the SFG, February 6 1891, MUN CNS, Moravian Mission Microfilm 513 Reel 3, paragraph 927

revisions,” the Labrador missionaries had “exceeded its wishes.”⁵⁹

The SFG sought to make amends in order to “relieve the strained relations of the native to our store brethren and remove the grounds of discontent on the part of the Eskimoes.” It enacted a number of reforms beginning with a return to the earlier tariff rate of 125%. The SFG also resolved to pay, when known, the equivalent prices paid for Inuit produce by the Hudson’s Bay Company, to increase the price paid for labour and to revise the share structure with Inuit who used store nets for sealing. Instead of a share of two thirds to the store and one third to Inuit, it was to be reversed. Finally, in a gesture of reconciliation and perhaps compensation for its own role in the store disputes, the SFG offered to gift its regular clients a special credit of £5. This would ease the debt burden of each individual struggling to balance his account at the mission store. Applied to the accounts of all 240 store clients, this would mean a write-down of £1400 on the total Labrador debt.⁶⁰ It was a gift that was never received. Br. Bourquin recommended against its implementation, suggesting that it would

tend to encourage and confirm the Eskimoes in their self-righteous and seditious spirit, by leading them to think that rebellion is the best means of extorting the concession of their unreasonable demands.⁶¹

In deference to Bourquin’s opinion, the SFG withdrew the offer. The missionaries also opposed the redistribution of the share structure for catches in mission sealing nets declaring that the mission’s share was principally used for poor relief and thus

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Minutes of the SFG, February 6 1891, Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, Reel 3, paragraph 927

⁶¹ Minutes of the SFG, April 3 1891, Moravian Microfilm 513, Reel 3 paragraph 938

a change would be of greater harm than good.⁶² Once again the SFG deferred to the Labrador missionaries and withdrew its proposal.

Despite the SFG's acknowledgement of some responsibility for Inuit unrest, the Labrador missionaries appeared unshaken in their view that they, not Inuit, were the victims of these incidents. As the editor of *Periodical Accounts* wrote:

Sorely at times do they (the missionaries) need all the comfort and strength that faith can draw from the Divine supplies. They labour in spiritual things among the people who have an unamiable side to their character, and sometimes, as especially at Zoar in 1888 and at Hebron last winter, they reward their best friends with ingratitude.⁶³

The incidents at Hopedale, Zoar and Hebron exposed the tensions that lay at the heart of the relationship between Labrador Inuit and the Moravians in the late 19th Century. In a time of resource depletion, Inuit were finding it increasingly difficult to secure an adequate livelihood. This meant a greater dependency on the stores and a greater demand for credit which the Moravians were increasingly reluctant to provide. Contact with non-Moravian traders; such as the Hudson's Bay Company and Newfoundland fish merchants, provided alternative markets for their produce and Inuit began to exploit these opportunities for their own advantage. Through contact with outside traders they were able to compare prices offered for their produce as well as prices demanded for imported merchandise and as a result, they began to question the fairness of the policy and practices of the Moravian's

⁶² Minutes of the SFG, April 1 1892 paragraph 997 and March 8 1893 paragraph 1056, MUN CNS Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, Reel 3,

⁶³Periodical Accounts, Dec. 1890, Vol. 2:1, pp.184

trade system. Although they were told again and again that the Moravians had their best interests at heart, many began to suspect that it was the Moravians who were the real beneficiaries of the trade.

The Moravians, for their part, were having their own economic difficulties. Costs of supporting the mission were increasing as income from the trade was falling; the result of less produce, lower market prices and greater competition. The SFG identified Inuit debt as a pressing problem that had to be managed more effectively if overall costs were to be controlled. As a result, credit was being tightened just when it was needed most. At the same time, the Moravians were losing trust in their Inuit clients. Many of them believed that Inuit economic difficulties were of their own making; that laziness, lack of diligence and dishonesty were the root cause of their economic problems. They were quick to dismiss Inuit grievances as disobedience, misunderstanding and ingratitude. And yet, as the rebellion in Hebron illustrates, the Moravians were capable of making mistakes that could exacerbate Inuit hardship. There were those in the mission willing to recognize that Inuit grievances could be justified and others who simply viewed them as sin.

The conundrum of balancing the needs of the spiritual and commercial missions would remain a source of debate and discomfort for Labrador missionaries for decades to come. In April 1890, a short time after the “uprising” in Hebron, the Labrador missionaries from all along the coast, met in their annual conference at Nain and discussed the relation of the mission to the trade. They concluded that changes had to be made and proposed that the mission get out of the business

altogether by finding a Christian company willing to undertake the trade or else completely separate the two branches of the mission “tangibly to the Esquimaux”, by such measures as separating the stores from the church buildings and hiring distinctively different nationalities for the two services. The SFG rejected both proposals as impractical.⁶⁴ The mission would not fully resolve its dilemma until the SFG sold its trading interests to the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1927.

Summary

As the records of Moravian-Inuit relations indicate, Inuit recruited for the World’s Columbian Exposition from Moravian communities had long-standing knowledge and experience of European religious and commercial institutions and had over time crafted responses to them based on their own perspectives and interests. Instead of passive acceptance, they sought their own solutions to problems, by exploiting alternatives to the mission’s trading system or by engaging in collective action against the missionaries when faced with perceived injustice. The Moravian Inuit who attended the fair carried this knowledge and experience with them. Their familiarity with European institutions and their tradition of resistance in the face of perceived injustice, helped inform the general response of Inuit to the circumstances they faced in the Esquimaux Village. The first act of defiance in Chicago was that of the Hebron recruit, Zacharius. His anger and opposition to attempts to place restrictions on his freedom of movement led to the altercation which set in motion the chain of events that led to the general rebellion of Inuit against the Esquimaux Village managers and to the final resolution of their

⁶⁴ Minutes of the SFG, January 2 1891, Moravian Mission Microfilm 513 Reel 3, paragraph 923

outstanding grievances through legal action.

Chapter 8

HEATHEN ABORIGINES FROM CAPE CHIDLEY AND THE SHORES OF UNGAVA

When we endeavoured to teach them wherein real faith in Christ consists, they were either silent, or attempted to turn the conversation to other subjects by asking such questions as: "Have you no tobacco?" "Have you not a pipe?"
Periodical Accounts of the Church of the United Brethren ¹

When the "Evelena" departed the northernmost Moravian settlement of Ramah in August 1892 and headed north, W.D. Vincent and R.G. Taber, the two Americans leading the expedition to enlist Inuit for the World's Columbian Exposition's Esquimaux Village, hoped to make contact with people "who have never before been brought into contact with civilization."² For the American entrepreneurs, the recruitment of "heathen aborigines", who were said to be living free of the influence of European missionaries and traders, would be the crowning achievement of their voyage and the fulfillment of its ambition of finding "primitive" people for public presentation. It was expected that such "specimens" would generate wide-spread interest and virtually guarantee the financial success of the venture. With this in mind the expedition left Ramah and travelled into Nachvak fiord where "the heathen" were thought to be engaged in the summer char fishery.

In fact, Nachvak Inuit had not been insulated from European contact. They had been travelling south to trade with Europeans for at least a hundred and fifty years and in the 1860's both the Hudson's Bay Company and the Moravian Mission had moved into their territory. By the time the Americans arrived in Nachvak, the

¹ Periodical Accounts, Dec. 1872, Vol.28, pp.355

² "The Labrador Expedition," *Decatur Daily Republican*, October 15 1892

lives of northern Inuit were already undergoing significant change. But if northern Inuit did not conform exactly to the stereotype of the primitive, for all intents and purposes, they could be made to fit the bill. The remoteness and isolation of Nachvak fit neatly into the fictions that the Americans would promote.

This chapter concerns Inuit living in the far north of Labrador who, at the time of the fair, had trading relations with both the Moravian Mission and the Hudson's Bay Company but had resisted overtures to abandon their traditional way of life, cultural practices and beliefs. Although far from ignorant of European institutions, they had largely expressed disinterest in adapting to their agendas and demands. Those recruited for the fair from Nachvak would have had the greatest difficulty in adjusting to the conditions of their life in America. They would have had little experience of the outside world beyond the few small trading posts set up in their midst. In all likelihood, they, more than any of the others, would have felt a greater alienation, disorientation and isolation, from their experience at the world's fair. It is quite possible that they even felt alienated from other Inuit within the Esquimaux Village. It was said that communication between them could be difficult.³ As a result, these families, with the exception of the adolescents who appear to have adapted well, were likely insecure in their new environment and almost from the beginning were eager to return home. It is not known whether they were included in the discussions leading to the departure of the Inuit families who left the village, but in all likelihood, the Nachvak people would have hesitated before embarking on

³ R.G. Taber, "Rugged Labrador", *Outing Magazine*, January 1896, pp.331 "Their language is scarcely intelligible to the men from Nain, and our interpreter made very difficult work of the simple questions we desired him to address them."

a new and unpredictable venture. They may well have concluded that remaining where they were was their best survival strategy and the best means to ensure a safe and early return home.

Nachvak

Nachvak is a long, deep fiord about 110 km north of Hebron. It is over 40 km long and surrounded by the imposing and magnificent Torngat Mountains. At its western end, it divides into two arms, one to the south called Tallek and the other to the west called Tasiuyak (see Fig.9). It had been home to Inuit for centuries, well before European records took note of their presence. There is archaeological evidence of pre-Dorset, Dorset and Thule occupation dating back thousands of years.⁴ Tent rings, sod house foundations, food caches and burial sites can be found throughout the region. The fiord was visited by abundant marine and land mammals which made it a reliable location for food resources throughout the year. Hunters would travel from the interior of the fiord to its mouth and back again depending on the time of year, and the migration patterns of whales, walrus, seals, char and caribou.

The earliest documented European visit to Nachvak appears to have been the Moravian missionary, Jens Haven, who, after establishing the mission station at Nain in 1771, led a fact finding expedition along the north coast of Labrador to learn what he could of Inuit population distribution and settlement patterns. Haven's numerous conversations with Inuit revealed the elaborate trade network that had developed

⁴ Susan Kaplan, *Economic and Social Change in Labrador Neo-Eskimo Culture*, Bryn Mawr College (1983), pp. 282-286; also Parks Canada, Torngat Mountain National Park, A Cultural Landscape, pc.gc.ca

since the arrival of Europeans in the south, which extended along the entire Labrador coast and stretched into Ungava Bay and Hudson Strait.⁵ Inuit traders carried European trade goods north and exchanged them for items sought by the Europeans; principally whale baleen and oil. The network had two main terminals, one at Napartok and the other at Nachvak. The Nachvak traders met Inuit middlemen at Saeglek and in turn, exchanged goods with people from northern Labrador, Ungava and Hudson Strait who would come to Nachvak to trade.⁶

When Haven arrived in Nachvak in late August 1773, he found Inuit living in four sod houses about midway up the fiord on the north side. This is thought, most likely, to have been at Kipsimarvik where the Hudson's Bay Company would later establish its trading post in 1868.⁷ From this central location, hunters could easily access resource rich areas at the mouth of the fiord, the head of Talluk and Tasiuyak arms and the Komaktorvik river to the north. Haven reported an abundance of "salmon," most likely char, in the fiord and hundreds of seals around his ship.⁸ At the time of his visit, only women were present at the settlement, the men most likely hunting caribou at that time of year. He found them good natured people, "neither too shy nor too familiar" and was impressed by their common sense approach to trading.

⁵ Carol Brice-Bennett, *The Northlanders: A History of the Population, Socio-economic Relations and Cultural Change of Inuit Occupying the Remote Northern Coast of Labrador*, Unpublished manuscript (Labrador Inuit Association, 1996,) pp.9

⁶ J.K. Hiller, *The Foundation and Early Years of the Moravian Mission in Labrador 1752-1805*, unpublished Master's thesis, Memorial University (1967), pp.31

⁷ Kaplan pp.284

⁸ Jens Haven 'Extract of the Voyage of the Sloop George from Nain to Reconnoitre the Northern Parts of Labradore in the Months of August and September 1773,' Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS), Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), pp.19

...they knew very well what they were about, what they should buy and what to buy first; for the first thing they dealt for was tools and clothes for the men; if they had where-with-all to buy something else, then they venture to buy women's knives and thimbles and if after that they had anything left, then and not before did they seek to purchase female ornaments, beads etc.⁹

Haven noted that Nachvak was known for its whale fishery, and also for walrus, whose tusks were valued for their ivory. As middlemen traders in the barter for European goods, they had no interest in whale bone themselves, having an ample supply of their own to trade. What they did not have was wood for boats and kayaks and this they exchanged with northern Inuit for ironware acquired from the south.¹⁰

Haven estimated the population at Nachvak to be about 80 people.

The Inuit trade network identified by Haven would not survive the arrival of the Moravians who effectively disrupted the system by establishing their own trading posts on the north coast. The year after Haven's journey to the north, in 1774, the Moravians established their second station at Okak, a short distance south of Napartok. Although Inuit trading missions to southern Labrador would continue for a number of years, they became increasingly dangerous and unnecessary. Okak would become the principal source of trade goods for northern Inuit, including the Nachvak people, until 1830, when the Moravians established a station further north at Hebron and the Hudson's Bay Company opened a post at Fort Chimo in Ungava Bay.

⁹ Ibid. pp.19

¹⁰ Ibid. pp.20

The Mission at Hebron

It was a long-standing ambition of the Moravian Mission to convert all Labrador Inuit to Christianity and if possible to extend the mission to Inuit in Ungava Bay. The missionaries Benjamin Kohlmeister and George Kmoch, together with their Inuit guides, Jonathan and his son Jonas, from Hopedale, had undertaken an exploratory journey to Ungava Bay in 1811 and had recommended establishing a Moravian station at the mouth of the Koksoak River.¹¹ However, the Hudson's Bay Company had exclusive trading rights in the territory and would not permit the establishment of rival traders in the area.¹² As a result, Moravian plans for an Ungava mission were abandoned but a renewed effort was made to extend the mission north in Labrador and in 1830, Hebron was established in Kangertluksoak Bay, 80 km north of Okak. The core population of the new station was made up of Okak residents, many who had originally migrated from the Hebron area. It was hoped that the community would also attract new converts from the north.¹³

Once Hebron was established, it received many visitors from the north who came to trade. Some came from Saeglek, a short distance away, some from Nachvak and still others from as far away as Ungava Bay. The Moravians made every effort to convert these northerners when they made their visits, but most expressed little interest in adopting Moravian beliefs, moving to Hebron or abandoning their own way of life, presenting all kinds of "excuses." As one Hebron missionary reported:

¹¹ Periodical Accounts, "Retrospect of the History of the Mission of the Brethren's Church in Labrador for the Past Hundred Years", Vol. 28, pp. 58-60

¹² Ibid. pp. 60

¹³ Carol Brice-Bennett, *Two Opinions, Inuit and Moravian Missionaries in Labrador 1804-1860*, Masters Thesis, MUN 1981, pp.279

“one has a long journey to perform, another cannot leave his birthplace; a third cannot act in opposition to his chief.”¹⁴

At Saeglek, some 30 km to the north, Inuit were openly hostile to the Moravian’s efforts to convert them. Their leader Joas stated he would never convert and discouraged others from having anything to do with the missionaries. This situation changed after his death in 1847 when successive years of hunger and hardship led to the people relocating to Hebron in search of greater economic security.¹⁵ The Moravians seemed aware that temporal rather than spiritual incentives led people to the mission but they were prepared to accept them whatever the reason.¹⁶

Northern Inuit visited Hebron throughout the 1850’s but continued to demonstrate a “spirit of opposition and contempt of all that is holy.”¹⁷ The Nachvak people in particular, were resistant to the ways of the Lord:

One man said, that he knew the same things of their Torngak, which we told about our Jesus, as the former had recalled to life not a few angekoks who were dead... he then remarked that some of our people were in their conduct little better than himself and his companions...This alas, I was obliged, to some extent to admit, adding however, that those who sought to be saved

¹⁴ Periodical Accounts Extract from Hebron Diary, Aug.22 1832, Vol. 12, pp. 255

¹⁵ Brice-Bennett “Two Opinions”, pp.419

¹⁶ Extracts from Private Correspondence from Jona Mentzel at Hebron 1849, Periodical Accounts, Vol.19, pp. 331 “Though some should be driven to us merely by the impulse of hunger, we will not the less cheerfully receive them, nor will we despair of their conversion. The ways of the Lord are not our ways.”

¹⁷ Periodical Accounts, Hebron Diary, Sept. 23 1859, Vol. 23. pp.242

must walk with the faithful followers of the Lord and not with those who are unworthy to bear his name. Upon this the man cut the conversation short, by saying laughingly, that they had heard enough of such matters, and would like to see some of our European articles.¹⁸

Although the missionaries found many of these discussions discouraging, northern Inuit often responded more positively when asked whether they would accept teachers going north to live among them. The missionaries understood this to mean that they would not be opposed to Moravian teaching as such; they just did not want to leave their homelands. No doubt, Inuit understood that if the Moravians came, they would bring their stores which would prove to be a great benefit and convenience. As a result of these discussions, the Moravians began to consider a further northward expansion.

The Competition for Inuit Trade

By the early 1860's, the Moravian's desire to reach northern Inuit led to a renewal of interest in establishing a mission station in Ungava Bay and they began to investigate the possibility of sending another exploratory expedition to the region.¹⁹ The Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel (SFG) which supported the mission with ships and supplies and ran the trade, understood that any such move would require the permission of the Hudson's Bay Company as their charter granted them exclusive trade in the area. The HBC had opposed the earlier application to

¹⁸ Extract from Private Correspondence of F. Erdman, Periodical Accounts, Vol. 23, pp.300

¹⁹ Renewed interest in an Ungava Mission was apparently the result of a number of murders of Europeans widely reported in the London newspapers. See Brice-Bennett, *The Northlanders* pp. 52-54

establish a mission in the territory, however, they had closed their posts in the region in 1848, and it was thought that a request at this time might result in a different outcome. Informal overtures were made in 1863, but again the Moravian's petition was rejected.²⁰ In fact, under the guidance of Donald Smith, Chief Factor of the Labrador District, the Hudson's Bay Company had been reviewing its entire Labrador operations with a view to improving its position by capturing more of the Labrador Inuit trade. In 1865, two years after the SFG's inquiry regarding Ungava, the Hudson's Bay Company presented the Moravians with an unsolicited proposal, offering to negotiate a buy-out of the Moravian's entire trading operations in Labrador.²¹ The proposal, coming at a time when the Moravians were struggling with trade issues, caused considerable consternation and debate. Trade policies and practices were at the heart of increasing discord between missionaries and Inuit and the source of mutual mistrust and suspicion. In 1861, the Mission Board in Germany had dispatched Levin Reichel to Labrador to investigate the situation and make recommendations.²² At his suggestion, the SFG enacted a number of reforms but despite these, there were still those within the Church who argued that the Mission should divest itself of trade matters altogether. The HBC's offer was an opportunity to resolve the matter once and for all. The SFG, however, argued against this, believing that private traders, such as the HBC, had no interest in the spiritual, social or economic welfare of Inuit and that acceptance of the offer would deprive the

²⁰ Minutes of the SFG, May 18 1863, Moravian Mission Microfilm 513, Reel 3, paragraphs 344-345

²¹ Letter to the SFG from Thomas Fraser, HBC, December 13 1865, Miscellaneous SFG papers, Moravian Church Archives and Library, British Province, London

²² Periodical Accounts, "Retrospect of the History of the Mission of the Brethren's Church in Labrador for the Past Hundred Years," Vol. 28, pp. 68

Mission of its ability to sustain itself financially. In the end, the SFG's arguments prevailed and the HBC's proposal was rejected.²³

The Hudson's Bay Company, however, was determined to have the Moravian's trade, if not by purchase, then by competition. In June 1865, the Board of the HBC authorized Donald Smith to reopen the post at Fort Chimo, and to take whatever actions were necessary to challenge the Moravians for the northern Inuit trade.

From the information which has recently reached the Board with respect to the operations of the Moravians.... The Board directs me to express their earnest wish that you should take early and effective steps to defeat this opposition and they authorize you to establish a post in any spot in that neighbourhood which may be convenient for the purpose... to enable the Company to secure the Fur trade of the district and for the prosecution of the Salmon and Trout fisheries.²⁴

The mandate given Smith was clear and he would be ruthless in its execution. In 1867, the Moravians authorized Carl Linder, their newly appointed trade-supervisor, to go to Saeglek, north of Hebron to set up a mission outpost. Saeglek, was strategically important to the Moravians as it was an important fishing area for the Hebron people, as well as the terminus of the overland route for Inuit travelling to and from Nachvak and Ungava.²⁵ That summer, Linder chose a site for the outpost

²³ Minutes of SFG, MUN CNR, Moravian Microfilm 513, Reel 3, Vols. 8-10 unpaginated – SFG minutes April 8 1861, November 6 1861 and June 3 1861

²⁴ Letter from Thomas Fraser, Secretary HBC to D.A. Smith, Chief Factor Labrador District, June 9, 1865, HBC Archives A6/39 pp.275

²⁵ Periodical Accounts, Letter from Hebron to SFG, London 1866, Volume 26, pp.100

and landed materials, with plans to build a blockhouse that would serve as a trade store and mission residence.²⁶ Two months after Linder had landed his materials on the island, the Hudson's Bay Company steamer "Labrador" arrived at Hebron en route to Fort Chimo in Ungava Bay. On board was Donald Smith. The Moravians reported a "pleasant intercourse"²⁷ between the trading rivals but, in all likelihood, they were unaware that Smith had learned of Linder's activities and planned to take countermeasures.²⁸ Shortly after leaving Hebron, the "Labrador" stopped at Saeglek and off-loaded building materials for its own post in the bay, which it would call Fort Lampson.

By reopening Fort Chimo in Ungava, and establishing Fort Lampson at Saeglek, the HBC had essentially cut off the trade of northern Inuit with Hebron. The Moravian response was to attempt to establish a new mission station farther to the north. It was deemed essential for both religious and commercial reasons. The Moravians explained it this way:

The necessity for a new Mission Station to the north of Hebron has become more apparent since the establishment of trading stations of the Hudson's Bay Company on that part of the Coast: hitherto the heathen Eskimos 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. In order to bring the gospel within their reach, it is

²⁶ Periodical Accounts, Extract of the Diary of Hebron 1866-1867, Volume 26, pp.373

²⁷ Ibid. pp.375

²⁸ Donald Smith to William Gregory Smith, HBC Secretary, October 18 1867, HBC Archives, A 11/58, pp.138

thus necessary that a station be formed in a suitable locality, higher up than Saeglek.²⁹

The Mission of Daniel and Gottlob

While the Hudson's Bay Company was establishing its post at Saeglek, a Moravian expedition to northern Labrador was already underway. Two Inuit evangelists, Daniel, a native helper from Hopedale and Gottlob, a native helper from Hebron, had volunteered to take the Christian message to Inuit on the far north coast of Labrador and Ungava Bay.³⁰ The records of this mission are among the first that provide some insight into the distribution, personalities, and perspectives of the people of northern Labrador in the last half of the 19th Century, including those at Nachvak.

In July 1867, Daniel and Gottlob travelled, with their families, kayaks, dogs and sleds to Saeglek where they met Seneraluk, a man familiar with the northern coast, who agreed to be their guide. From Saeglek, they travelled north, past Nachvak Bay, to Attanarsuk, at the north end of the strait separating Aulautsivik Island from the mainland. Here they met Siksiarsuk, the eldest brother of Kajuasiak, together with his family and Kajuasiak's three wives. Siksiarsuk was friendly and agreed to guide them to Killinek at the extreme northern point of the Labrador peninsula and to help find them a good place to winter. At Killinek they met Auek, the father of one of Kajuasiak's wives and Serkuak both of whom were receptive to the evangelists' message and open to the idea of 'teachers' coming to live among them, although they stated they had no interest in leaving their country "for there is

²⁹ Periodical Accounts, Dec. 1869, Vol. 27 pp. 225

³⁰ Periodical Accounts, Hebron Diary, Aug.21, 1867, Vol. 26 pp. 324

no other like it.”³¹ By early September, the group rounded the peninsula and travelled a short distance into Kangiva, the eastern region of Ungava Bay. They planned to remain there for the winter and here they finally met Kajuasiak, said to be a sorcerer. When they told him of their purpose and spoke to him about Jesus, they reported that he “was friendly and listened without contradicting us.”³²

Seneraluk, the guide from Saeglek, was persuaded to leave the Labrador group by a man named Sokortai who apparently didn’t approve of the Christians. Gottlob too left with his family, fearing the severity of the winter and in particular its effect on his invalid daughter who had travelled north with them.³³ They joined a trading party travelling overland to Nachvak and then on to Hebron. Arriving in Hebron in January 1868, Gottlob reported to the missionaries that there were 60 Inuit living at Nachvak and perhaps another 50 scattered between there and Killinek.³⁴ After a short stay at Hebron, Gottlob decided to renew his mission north, eventually returning to Aulatsivik to live with Auvek’s family near Kajuasiak’s camp at Attanarsuk.³⁵

Daniel remained in Kangiva during the winter of 1867/68 and had intended to spend a second winter there but the relationship between his family and local Inuit deteriorated. In a letter to the missionaries written in November 1868, he

³¹ Periodical Accounts, “Report of the Eskimoes, Daniel and Gottlob, on their Missionary Journey to the extreme north of Labrador and Ungava Bay,” Vol. 26, pp. 318, 324, 370 and pp. 373-374; Vol.27 pp. 3, pp. 13-14, pp.20-24, pp. 224-225, pp.233-234, pp.280-283, pp.419, 433, 479, 489 and 489, and Vol. 28, pp. 70-71.

³² Ibid. Vol. 27, pp. 23

³³ Periodical Accounts, Vol. 27, pp.3

³⁴ Periodical Accounts, “Letter to the SFG from Hebron” August 29 1868, Vol. 27, pp. 13-14

³⁵ Periodical Accounts, “Report of the Eskimoes”, Vol. 27, pp.20

explained that his family had lived in constant fear of their lives as their hosts had come to associate their prayers with shamanism and suspected that their true purpose was to bring them harm.

...when we pray, they believe that we wish to kill some one of them. They have therefore come three times into our house, to make an inquiry what we were doing. They said... "you design to make someone ill, and to bring about his death." When an old man was ill, they blamed us as having caused his sickness. We try to convince them that we did not come hither to do any person harm, but that we rather wish that they should all be saved from injury. But our words appear to have no effect.³⁶

In the end, Daniel and his family were forced to flee. Abandoning their boat, they travelled overland to Nachvak and then to Hebron arriving there on 30 April 1868. Daniel told the Moravians that he believed it to be unsafe to continue a mission in Kangiva without the presence of a European missionary but thought he might continue to work among the Nachvak people who appeared to be more friendly.³⁷

The journey of Daniel and Gottlob was remarkable for a number of reasons. It was the first major evangelical mission undertaken by Inuit on behalf of the Moravians and demonstrated a remarkable commitment under conditions that required considerable endurance and courage. Although it suffered from a number of misadventures and was considered by the Moravians as something of a disappointment, it provided them with valuable intelligence regarding the

³⁶ Periodical Accounts, "Daniel's Account of his Journey to Kangiva and residence there." November 15 1868, Vol. 27, pp. 280-282

³⁷ Periodical Accounts, Hebron Diary, Sept.3 1869, Vol. 27, pp.234

population and distribution of northern Inuit, and led directly to the decision to make Nachvak the site of the new northern mission station.³⁸

The Arrival of Kablunat

In February 1868, shortly after Gottlob's return to Hebron, Br. Johann Schneider embarked on a trip to Nachvak, in order to explore the prospects of establishing the new mission station at that location. A hundred years after the visit of Jens Haven, Nachvak remained the location of one of the principal concentrations of northern Inuit and home to a vibrant community under the authority of their headman, Tuglavina. Schneider travelled from Okak and arrived four days later at Naksariktok, a winter campsite near the entrance to Nachvak fiord, where he found between 20 and 30 of the Nachvak people living in snow-houses. When asked if they would be willing to receive Christian instruction if a teacher were to come and live among them, most responded positively; however, it was made clear that any final decision would depend on their chief, Tuglavina who had left for Saeglek the previous day. "...they could not ascertain what he would think but if he were willing all the rest would follow."³⁹ Schneider had already met Tuglavina at Hebron and thought that he would not be an impediment. Tuglavina, Schneider wrote: "appears to be not an opponent of the truth but clings to heathen custom, and is afraid that if

³⁸Periodical Accounts, Hebron Diary, August 28 1869, Vol. 27 pp,14: "One result of the intelligence at this time received was, that at the general conference held at Nain in March (1868), it was resolved to commence a new station not at Saeglek , as had been originally intended but at Nachvak, where most of the heathen are permanently assembled." See also PA Vol. 27, pp.3

³⁸ Periodical Accounts, Extracts from the Diary of Okak, 1867-1868, Vol. 27 pp. 65

he became a Christian he would lose his power.”⁴⁰ Based on this visit, and the report of Gottlob, Schneider would recommend Nachvak as the best site for the mission station, citing its abundant fish and game resources, as well as its numerous sources of fresh water.

In March of that year, Br. Samuel Weiz was commissioned to establish the new Moravian mission station at Nachvak, about 110 km north of Hebron.⁴¹ That summer, he travelled with Br. Ernst Beyer and found a suitable site for the mission station at Kitsemarvik where a number of Inuit were encamped. While Beyer, with the assistance of Inuit helpers, erected a blockhouse, Weiz travelled north along the coast to gather further information on the whereabouts of other Inuit encampments. At Attanarsuk, Weiz met Kajuasiak for the first time.

We found a man and his wife with her infant in her hood at her back and two elder children sitting on a rock. They had just returned from a reindeer chase, all laden with fresh meat, even the dog not excepted, and were on their way home further down the coast. The stranger proved to be Kajuasiak...a lively active man.⁴²

Weiz would also meet Auvek with whom Gottlob was living. Auvek expressed an interest in receiving Christian instruction but said he would spend the winter at Killinek before coming south to meet the Moravians. Kajuasiak was more reticent

⁴⁰ Periodical Accounts, “Extracts of the Diary of Okak from August 1867 to August 1868, Vol. 27, pp.64-66

⁴¹ Periodical Accounts, Hebron Diary, August 29,1868, Volume 27, pp.14

⁴² Periodical Accounts, “Attempt to Commence a New Station in Nachvak Bay, Diary of Br. Weitz, August 1868,” Vol. 27, pp.15-20

making it clear that “he would not leave his country.”⁴³ Weiz calculated that there were 21 persons at this location, including Kajuasiak, his three wives and six children. He learned that a further 9 persons had left Killinek that year and had moved south of Nachvak. Having acquired what information he could, Weiz returned to Nachvak where Beyer’s work on the house was virtually complete.

Donald Smith was in Saeglek when news of the Moravians activities at Nachvak reached him. He wrote immediately to his superiors in London informing them of his plans:

Mr. Linder is endeavoring to push the trade briskly in the direction of the company’s stations in Ungava Bay. We learn that they are now setting up houses at a place called Nachvak about 60 miles to the north of this bay with the view of intercepting the Esquimaux on their way to this post no doubt, also of drawing away some of those who now resort to Fort Chimo. To meet with this move on their part, I have provided building materials and other necessities for establishing another post...⁴⁴

Within days of Weiz’s return to Nachvak, the Hudson’s Bay Company steamer arrived and agents of the Company began erecting a trading post next to the newly constructed mission house. Weiz was understandably dismayed. Smith reported

⁴³ Ibid. pp.20

⁴⁴ Letter from Donald Smith to HBC Board of Directors, September 3 1868, HBC Archives, Microfilm 1M1252 , A11/58, pp.146

that “it is evident our visit gave him no satisfaction.”⁴⁵ Once again the Moravians were forced to re-evaluate their position and decided to withdraw.⁴⁶

Weitz would recommend moving the mission station to Nullatartok Bay, about a day’s travel south of Nachvak, believing it to be a better location as it was thought to be closer to places commonly used by Inuit.⁴⁷ It would be three years before the Moravians were able to reorganize themselves and return to the region. In 1871, Samuel Weiz and his wife, Adolphine, accompanied by a store brother, Adolphus Hlavatschek, and two native helpers from Hebron, Gottlob and Philip and their families, landed on the north shore of Nullatartok Bay, erected a single dwelling, which combined the functions of residence, church, and school, and founded the Moravian’s sixth mission station in Labrador, which was called Ramah.⁴⁸

Nachvak Inuit

At the time of the Europeans’ arrival, the titular head of the Nachvak Inuit was Tuglavina. A chief or angajokok. was usually the head of a family, an eldest son who inherited his position and power after the death of his father. His authority could extend over a number of families usually related by blood or marriage.⁴⁹

Tuglavina was well known to the Moravians as he had on a number of occasions

⁴⁵ Letter from Donald Smith to William G. Smith, Secretary HBC, October 26, 1868. HBC Archives Microfilm 1M125 , A11/58, pp.148

⁴⁶ Smith would continue to expand HBC operations in his district. In 1869, the HBC reopened Fort Severight on the George River in Ungava and in the same year bought out Hunt and Company’s operations at Ukkusiksalik (Davis Inlet) near Zoar as well as Paul’s Island near Nain. See John Kennedy, *Encounters, An Anthropological History of Southeastern Labrador*, pp.73

⁴⁷ Periodical Accounts Volume 27 pp.4

⁴⁸ Periodical Accounts, Nullatartok Diary, August 1871, Volume 28, pp.120

⁴⁹ Carol Brice-Bennett, *The Northlanders*, pp.93

visited Hebron and Okak on trading missions. He had also assisted Weitz when his small vessel got into difficulty in a strong current while travelling north to establish the mission at Nachvak prior to the arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company in August 1868.⁵⁰ While Weiz and Beyer were erecting their building at Kitsemarvik, Tuglavina was camped nearby. There were in total six tents and about thirty two people. Each of the married men had a kayak and Tuglavina had a skin boat as well, which Weiz reported was kept "for the benefit of all". The significance of Tuglavina's authority was perhaps made clear to Weiz when he tried to speak to one man about the condition of his soul. He was told: "You should say this to my chief, not me." Direct discussions with Tuglavina regarding salvation were always inconclusive; Tuglavina stating only that he would "gladly hear what they had to say."⁵¹ After the Moravians withdrew from Nachvak, Tuglavina continued to travel south on trading missions. One such visit to Hebron was recorded in the station's journal:

A company of heathen from Nachvak arrived here on the 3rd of January (1871), consisting of the chief Tuglavinek with his wife and daughter and two other men. They were on their journey to visit some relatives at Okak. We availed ourselves of this opportunity to speak with them of the necessity of conversion, upon which Tuglavinek replied that they neither could nor would leave their homes, but if a teacher would come and live among them, their conversion would follow.⁵²

⁵⁰ Attempt to Commence A New Station in Nachvak Bay, Diary of Br. Weitz, August 1868, Periodical Accounts, Vol. 27, pp.15

⁵¹ Ibid. pp.17

⁵² Periodical Accounts "Extract of Diary of Hebron August 1870-August 1871," Vol. 28, pp. 185

After the Moravians moved to Nullatartok Bay and established Ramah, Weitz would continue to court Tuglavina but to no avail. He rarely visited Ramah and when on occasion he did, he remained circumspect and aloof as the following account indicates:

On Tuesday in the Passion-week, a company of heathen from Nachvak arrived, intending to leave on the following day for Saeglek, where they wished to trade. But being detained here for a full week by the snowy and rainy weather, they had, contrary to their own wishes, a good opportunity for hearing the story... of our Lord's... glorious Resurrection... among them their chief Tuglavina. They listened to all they heard without contradiction, as something already known to them, but then came the old excuses for not being converted yet a while. Eventually they left without leaving upon our minds the conviction that anyone had taken with him a deeper impression.⁵³

Tuglavina would continue to resist conversion until his death. Simigak, Tuglavina's brother, would later explain the resistance as fidelity to their father and an attachment to their land. "I will tell you how it is. We promised our father, when he was dying, that we would never leave Nachvak to reside elsewhere."⁵⁴

Life in Nachvak

The life of the Nachvak people was based on a systematic exploitation of an abundance of wildlife resources which had sustained them for generations. The people moved back and forth between the mouth of the bay and the head of the

⁵³ Periodical Accounts, "Extracts from the Diary of Ramah, 1878-9", Vol. 31, pp. 249

⁵⁴ Periodical Accounts, Extract from the Diary of Ramah, Sept. 1874-Sept. 1875, Vol. 29, pp. 431

fiord hunting seal, walrus, char or caribou, according to the season, the migratory patterns of wildlife, and environmental conditions.⁵⁵ From October to January, they occupied sod-houses at a winter settlement, referred to in the Nachvak Hudson's Bay Company journals as 'Nklavi'.⁵⁶ The harp seal migrations began in October and from this base camp the people could hunt harp, ringed and bearded seals from kayaks throughout the fiord until freeze up. After freeze-up, they would live in snow houses at Naksariktok on the south side of the fiord close to the open sea where they would continue to hunt seals as well as walrus. This is where Schneider found Tuglavina's people in the winter of 1868. If ice conditions were poor and hunting unproductive, the people would frequently travel up the Kogarsuk River to Komaktorvik or up Tassiujak arm to Nachvak Lake to fish for char through the ice. In April they returned to the head of Tassiujak and Tallek arms, living in tents while fishing for char or hunting seals in the leads and open channels of the fiord. At the same time, they might make forays into the backcountry, to hunt caribou. In May, as the sea ice began to break up, the people returned to the mouth of the fiord to hunt seals in the open water, continuing to hunt them in the fiord in June and July before returning to Tassiujak and Tallek where they resumed fishing for char. At the end of July until early September, the men would turn their attention to caribou; the skins at this time of year being ideal for clothing and bedding. When the caribou hunt was over, the people returned to their sod-houses and prepared once again for winter.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Kaplan, *Economic and Social Change in Labrador Neo-Eskimo Culture*, pp. 134

⁵⁶ HBC Nachvak Post Journal, December 23 1871, HBC Archives Microfilm 1M1012, B138/a/2-10,

⁵⁷ Kaplan pp.134-137 and 199-203 and Brice-Bennett, *The Northlanders* pp.94-96

Seal, walrus, char and caribou were all vital sources of food for the people as well as their dogs. Seals, walrus and caribou also provided hides and sinew used for clothing, boots, tents, kayak covers and bedding. Surplus seal pelts as well as walrus and seal fat were major trade items which Inuit exchanged for guns, ammunition, tools and pots.

The Hudson Bay Company journals for 1868-1875 reveal that Tuglavina's group often split into smaller parties attempting to exploit different resources at the same time, some "down below" sealing while others were "up above" troutng.⁵⁸ This may have been normal practice but also suggest that resources were becoming increasingly scarce by this time, forcing people to hunt in smaller groups. The journals refer constantly to people hungry, and sometimes on the verge of starvation visiting the post often whenever they had anything to trade; a pelt, a few trout, some deer meat or a few pounds of surplus fat.⁵⁹

The Hudson's Bay Company and Moravian Mission were rivals in the region when it came to the trade and both organizations discouraged Inuit from trading with their competition. The HBC had the advantage when it came to Tuglavina's group as they were conveniently located in the heart of their hunting territory and could be visited easily on trips both up and down the fiord. The Moravian's store on the other hand required a greater effort and was only visited by the Nachvak people

⁵⁸ HBC Nachvak Post Journal July 21 1871 and July 23 1871, April 27 and 28 1873, HBC Archives Microfilm 1M1012B138/a/2-10,.

⁵⁹ HBC Nachvak Post Journal March 8 1872, April 19 1873, "Semminica (Semigak) arrived from the woods, I hear that no deer are killed since last anyone was out from there - the Eskimo are therefore starving and nearly all their dogs are dead from want food." See also: Oct 9 1871, Jan 11 and 28 1872, Feb 21 1872, Jan 14 1874, April 19 and 21 1874

on rare occasions, during trips to the south or when items were unavailable at the HBC post. The HBC referred to the Nachvak people as “our Esquimaux” and jealously protected their trading relationship. On one occasion when the Moravian native helper Gottlob travelled to Komatorvik to preach to Inuit encamped there, the HBC agent decided to accompany him “and see if they are doing anything else but preaching...”⁶⁰

The greatest threat to the HBC’s position in the region came from the Moravian’s efforts at converting Inuit to Christianity. The Moravians insistence on new converts living at their Mission station meant that Inuit would leave their traditional territories and base their hunting activities out of Ramah thereby transferring their commercial allegiance to the Moravian stores. In the first years following the establishment of Ramah this was not a problem as there were few conversions and consistent resistance to Moravian evangelical efforts. The situation began to change in the early 1880’s as Inuit faced greater hardship due to hunting failures.⁶¹ It became evident that the Moravian community at Ramah offered a greater degree of economic security. The missionaries provided access to medicine, a social safety net in times of economic hardship in the form of “poor relief” and after the introduction of seal nets in 1874, a greater degree of food security. These measures contributed to an increasing number of defections from the Nachvak community to Ramah between 1881 and 1887.⁶²

⁶⁰ HBC Nachvak Post Journal, April 16 1872, HBC Archives, Microfilm 1M1012.B138/a/2-10

⁶¹ Carol Brice-Bennett, *The Northlanders*, pp. 104

⁶² Ibid pp.96 and 104

The Hudson's Bay Company may have contributed directly to this process by carrying out an intensive char fishery in the fiord that began immediately upon its arrival. Unlike the Moravians, the Hudson's Bay Company employed its own crews to hunt and fish and each year they set nets in the fiord to intercept the annual migrations of char travelling to and from the ocean. The HBC journals for 1872, for example, report daily catches of hundreds of fish while Inuit at their traditional hunting locations at the upper lakes, using spears and weirs, "seem to do nothing..."⁶³ For the Nachvak people who depended on char as a vital food resource, relying on it especially when all else failed, the depletion of the resource would have strained their ability to remain self-sufficient, making relocation to Ramah an increasingly attractive alternative.

Despite the increasing number of defections of its core clients to the Moravians, and the attendant decline of revenues, officials of the Hudson's Bay Company continually made the case that Nachvak was of strategic importance to the overall operations of the company in the region. In 1886, Keith McKenzie, the Chief Factor of the Labrador District, wrote:

I attach much importance to this post as it prevents the Moravians from establishing themselves in the Bay and encroaching on the trade of the

Ungava District...For this reason, I think Nuckvak (sic) should be kept up...⁶⁴

⁶³ HBC Nachvak Post Journals indicate the following catches of individual char for a part of 1872: July 25-250, July 29-300, July 30-370, July 31 320, August 1-280, August 1-280, August 9-240, August 14-200, August 16-400, HBC Archives Microfilm 1M1012B138/a/2-10,.

⁶⁴ Report of Keith McKenzie Esquimaux Bay District (Rigolet) September 2 1886 HBC Microfilm 1M1258, B183/e/1, pp. 2

Within a year, however, Nachvak's declining revenues forced McKenzie to reconsider his recommendation.

At Nuckvak (sic), the trade has been small and I do not think that there is any probability of it improving, nearly all the Esquimaux have left the Bay and gone either to the missionary station or to George River, it would benefit this District very much if Nuckvak post were abandoned.⁶⁵

In an assessment of the operations of the Labrador District for 1889, Peter McKenzie, the Hudson Bay Company's Inspecting Officer, came to the same conclusion, reporting that the post had been operating at a loss for the past six years. He attributed the principal cause of loss to the near complete collapse of the trout (char) fishery which he blamed on the overfishing of Newfoundlanders "some years ago." Of the thirteen Inuit hunters or heads of families attached to the post, he wrote:

As a rule the Esquimaux of Nachvak Bay are very poor; they are not good trappers, and they do not care for fishing. As seal hunters they are very good, but somewhat indolent and improvident.⁶⁶

McKenzie further reported that the buildings were in bad state and in need of repair and concluded that

judging from the manner in which this place has been dealt with in the last few years, and the small amount of trade done, I am of the opinion that it is not worth while to keep it up much longer.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Letter from Keith McKenzie District Manager Rigolet to SK Parson, HBC Montreal, October 15 1887 HBC Archives Microfilm 1M1146 , B183/e/3, pp.134

⁶⁶ Report on Nachvak Post, 1889, P. McKenzie Inspecting Officer HBC Archives Microfilm 1M1257, B.138/e/1, pp.5

The Moravians were experiencing their own difficulties. At Ramah, hunting and fishing failures were becoming more common occurrences, possibly due to deteriorating environmental conditions which resulted in increasing poverty among the people.⁶⁸ A number of families decided to leave Ramah and move to Hebron which reduced the community's population by a third. This caused the Moravians to reassess their own situation and consider abandoning Ramah altogether in favour of a new mission station even farther north. This they would do eventually but not until 1904 when they established Killinek near Cape Chidley at the northernmost point of the Labrador peninsula.

Esquimaux for the Fair

The Americans recruiting Inuit for the World's Columbian Exposition, left Ramah in mid-August 1892 and travelled up Nachvak fiord in search of "heathen aborigines" for the Esquimaux Village. At that time of year, Inuit would be fishing char, or hunting seals in the fiord. Some may have already departed for the fall caribou hunt. At one of the encampments in the fiord, the Americans met Kupper and Kangergarsuk, and persuaded them to join the fledgling group bound for Chicago. Both these men were part of the Nachvak band with family ties to Tuglavina.

Tuglavina had inherited his position from his father. His father, as a powerful angajokok, would have had several wives resulting in Tuglavina having both siblings and half siblings. He appears to have had a younger brother named Simigak and two younger half brothers one named Paksaut and the other also named Simigak

⁶⁷ Ibid. pp.6

⁶⁸ Brice-Bennett, *The Northlanders*, pp.105

sometimes referred to by both the Moravians and the HBC as Simigak Jr.⁶⁹ The elder Simigak would assume leadership of the Nachvak group as Tuglavina aged. Simigak Jr and his wife Ikinak would move to Ramah in September 1881 and become converts taking the name of Paulus and Adolphine.⁷⁰ In the Ramah mission journal for 1896 there is an entry that reads: "On 4 October, Paulus and his family arrived here after a long absence....Paulus has taken care of his brother Kupper, who was a heathen, until his death in Nachvak."⁷¹ This entry suggests that Kupper is directly related to Tuglavina and is possibly another half-brother of the leader. In 1892, Kupper was 40 years of age and his partner Kuttukitok was 38. They had three children under their care: Mali who was 7, Sikepa also 7 and Tiguja who was 2.

Kangergarsuk was also part of the Nachvak group but possibly only through 'marriage'. His partner was Tuglavina and she was born in Nachvak.⁷² Inuit often named children after relatives⁷³ and the name Tuglavina would indicate that she had close connections with the principal family of the group, perhaps a sister or half sister of the chief. This would suggest that Kangerarsuk was living with his wife's relatives. Kangerarsuk was 38, and Tuglavina was 45. With them was Degouluk, a

⁶⁹ HBC Nachvak Post Journals, 27 April 1873 HBC Archives Microfilm 1M1012B138/a/2-10, see also Carol Brice-Bennett, *The Northlanders* pp.63-64 and 86-87

⁷⁰ Periodical Accounts, Extracts from the Diary of Ramah, July 1881-July 1882, Vol. 32 pp. 369-370

⁷¹ Ramah Diary (1896/97), Moravian Archives, Herrnut, Microfilm 690, R.15.K.b.6A UAH, unpaginated

⁷² Ramah Church Book, MUN, CNS, Moravian Mission Microfilm 591, pp. 74, entry No. 46

⁷³ Periodical Accounts; 2nd Series, December 1897, Vol.3, pp.372

boy of 14. His precise relationship to Kangerarsuk and Tuglavina is not known although at the time of his death in Chicago he was described as a foster-child.⁷⁴

There were two additional youths who travelled to Chicago from Nachvak; Kamialuit a young woman of 16 and Pomiuk a boy of 15. At the time of recruitment they were both living with Kupper and Kuttukitok but were the children of the northern chieftain Kajuasiak and his third wife Aniortama. Kajuasiak had been murdered sometime in the late 1880's. Adolph Stecker who took over as missionary at Ramah in 1893 reported that Kajuasiak was killed by a man named Koleligak during a hunting trip and that afterwards Koleligak had attempted to assume Kajuasiak's leadership position and made Aniortama and their children his own. Among them was Pomiuk who remained with Koleligak until he was 13 when he went to live with Kupper and Kuttukitok at Nachvak.⁷⁵ How and why the children of Kajuasiak ended up in Nachvak is not known. Koleligak was still alive in 1892, as was Aniortama. It is possible that Aniortama was a relative of Tuglavina, possibly another sister or half-sister. If so, her 'marriage' to Kajuasiak would have been a significant bond between two of the north's most powerful leaders. It would have been common practice to care for a relative's child after the death of a parent. Another child of Aniortama, Kippinguk, did not go to Chicago but lived with Semigak, Tuglavina's brother for most of his adult life.⁷⁶ The American entrepreneurs who recruited Nachvak Inuit for the Chicago fair learned of the children's connection to Kajuasiak and would make much of it in their promotions for the Esquimaux

⁷⁴ "Weird Funeral Rite", *Daily Inter-Ocean*, Chicago August 22 1893

⁷⁵ Stecker, *Prinz Pomiuk und sein Vater*

⁷⁶ Carol Brice-Bennett, *the Northlanders*, pp.125

Village. Pomiuk would become “Prince Pomiuk” son of a northern chieftain and sorcerer.

When the “Evelena” left Nachvak, they had on board a total of 10 people representing in their words “heathen aborigines” “untouched by the hand of civilization.” The Moravian missionary at Ramah reported that prior to departure the Nachvak people regretted their decision to leave but by then, it was “too late.”⁷⁷ They were to become the exhibit’s star attractions and would remain its core contingent after the revolt in Chicago split the village in two.

Summary

Inuit at the World’s Columbian Exposition were presented as a “primitive” race living in a remote region and practicing an ancient way of life typical of humanity at an earlier stage of evolution. From the beginning, Nachvak Inuit were the people most closely associated with this fiction. They were the exhibit’s star attraction and presented to the American public as true “primitives” “untouched by the hand of civilization.” No effort was made to correct these presumptions or to explain who the people really were.

For the Nachvak people, their experience in America must have been profoundly disorientating; far more so than for southern Inuit who had, over time, acquired a greater familiarity with European people and practices. Nachvak Inuit had little experience of the outside world and a limited ability to communicate. They could not speak English and may even have had difficulty carrying on conversations with other Inuit in the Esquimaux Village. They were unhappy from the outset, and

⁷⁷ Ramah Diary, 1892, Moravian Archives, Herrnut, Microfilm 690, R. 15.K.b.6A UAH, unpaginated

appeared unable and unwilling to take any risks that might jeopardize their own safety and security. The Nachvak people did not participate directly in the court case nor did they defect from the Esquimaux Village with the others. In all likelihood, they felt intimidated by their environment and dependent on the managers of the village for their safety and well-being, believing that was their best strategy for survival was remaining where they were. When the fair ended, and others negotiated contracts for new engagements, the Nachvak people chose immediately to return home.

Part 3

Chapter 9

Epilogue and Conclusion

A crowd gathered around the Esquimaux Village, gazed at the little men and women of the north, and insisted on inspecting the curious snow houses which will be their homes during the fair. The little people themselves were the objects of curiosity. They have donned American clothes and look anything but romantic in them... Before long they will be somewhat more picturesque but everybody knew them yesterday as they mingled with the throngs on the broad avenues.¹

San Francisco Chronicle, 1 January 1894

After the closure of the World's Columbian Exposition, a number of Inuit families returned to Labrador. Most, however, chose to remain in America participating in new fairs and exhibits around the country. Some headed to the west coast as part of a new Esquimaux Village at the Midwinter Fair in San Francisco while others embarked on a tour of dime museums and circuses in the eastern United States. The majority would return home in the summer of 1894. Others chose to remain. Abel, Helena, Esther and Nancy stayed in America until 1896, while Peter Mesher remained for 18 years. Two others, Tom Deer and Tomasi Lucy chose not to return at all.

A New Deal

As the World's Columbia Fair ended, both the Esquimaux Village in Jackson Park and the exhibit on Stoney Avenue prepared to close up shop. Yet, rather than

¹ "Scenes at the Fair" *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 1 1894

returning home immediately, many Inuit embarked on a new adventure, persuaded to do so by P.M Daniels and W.D. Vincent. Over the summer, Daniels had learned that plans were under way for another major fair on the west coast. The organizers of the California Midwinter International Exposition were looking for exhibits and he had applied for another Esquimaux Village concession. His troupe of Inuit however was getting smaller by the day. Weary of fair life, the families of Kupper and Kangerarsuk were eager to get home. They departed Chicago in October 1893. Another family is also reported to have gone home at this time due to illness, most probably that of John and Katerina Lucy.²

To make up a reasonable contingent for a west coast exhibit, Daniels entered into negotiation with the Stoney Avenue group which was then under the management of Thomas G. Scott.³ It appears that an agreement was reached whereby Daniels and Vincent would take one group to the Midwinter Fair in San Francisco while Scott would take another on a tour of dime museums throughout the eastern United States. In a publicity pamphlet entitled "*History of the Esquimaux Race*," Scott wrote:

The party, when they arrived in Chicago, numbered forty-seven. Of that number three had died from disease; one was drowned in the Lagoon; six were sent home on account of sickness; I have ten with me, and the balance -

² Thomas G. Scott, *History of the Esquimaux Race*, (Erie PA.: Dispatch Print, 1893) pp.8 The family that returned to Labrador was either the family of James Shuglo or John Lucy but there are records showing the Shuglo's passing through St. John's on their way home in July 1894, suggesting that they had remained in the United States over the winter.

³ Scott refers to himself as manager of the Esquimaux Village and states that he had been "connected with the Esquimaux Village in Chicago during the six months the World's Fair has been open." Scott, *History of the Esquimaux Race*, pp.3.

thirty- have gone to California for the Midwinter Fair; and are to be returned East and landed in Boston by June 1894 – my party meeting them there - when they are to be returned to their country and landed in their villages by the end of August, according to contract.⁴

After the close of the World's Columbian Exposition, it gets difficult to track the exact whereabouts of all the people who had originally arrived in the United States in 1892. Scott's numbers are unreliable. The original group, for example, consisted of 60 people (including Robert Ford's family) not 47. There had been three births, but two infant mortalities and one drowning leaving the number of people, at the end of the fair, still at 60. If one family of six was sent home and the ten northerners also departed⁵, then 44 people remained in the US. Early newspaper reports from San Francisco claim that the Esquimaux village there consisted of 29 people and this tallies with those who we have identified as attending the Midwinter Fair.⁶ If Scott had 10, there are still 5 people unaccounted for.⁷ We know, however, that Peter Palliser and his daughter Mary returned to Labrador travelling on Frederick Cook's ship, the "Miranda" which departed in July 1894.⁸ It is not known where they spent their time between the closing of the Chicago fair and their

⁴ Scott, *History of the Esquimaux Race*, pp.8.

⁵ These would have been Kupper, Kuttukitok, Mali, Tiguja, Sikepa, Evelina, Kangerarsuk, Tuglavina, Kamialuit and Pomiuk

⁶ These would have been Joseph and Charlotte Lucy together with Abraham Tukdashina, (3) Simon Manak's family (7), Zacharius family (4), Jonas Palliser's original family plus Christopher born in Chicago (6), Tom Palliser's family (3), George Deer's family less Peter who died in Chicago (2) and Robert Ford's family (4). See also pp. 264

⁷ These were Abel, Helena, Esther and Nancy and most likely the family of James Shuglo (6).

⁸ Henry Collin Walsh, *The Last Cruise of the Miranda*, (New York, London: The Transatlantic Publishing Company, 1896), pp. 36.

departure for the Labrador coast, although they may have been in New York. It is thought that Peter Mesher and Thomas Deer, both early deserters of the Esquimaux Village in Chicago, and shareholders in the new Stoney Avenue exhibit, as well as John Lucy's youngest son Thomas, headed out on their own after the Chicago Fair. Deer and Lucy most likely remained in the United States for the remainder of their lives, while Peter Mesher would eventually return to Labrador after a stay of 18 years.

The Midwinter Fair

In the spring of 1893, Michael Henry de Young, founder and publisher of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and California representative to the World's Columbian Exposition, was so impressed with the Chicago Fair that he began to develop plans for a similar exhibition to be held in California. It was time, he believed, to bring San Francisco to the attention of the world just as Chicago had done. His plan was to open the Fair in January 1894, to take advantage of the many exhibits and concessions currently in the country and on display in Chicago. Both the governor of California and the mayor of San Francisco thought it would be impossible to organize an exposition in the allotted time but de Young, deploying the considerable influence of his newspaper, forged ahead; raising funds and gaining the support of a number of San Francisco's leading entrepreneurs. At the same time, he secured the participation of a number of western States and California counties as well as the commitment of exhibits from Chicago such as the Esquimaux Village.⁹

⁹ Victoria Dailey, "California's First International Exposition: The Midwinter Fair of 1894", *Quarterly, The Book Club of California*, Vol.75, No. 1, Winter 2010.

By August 1893, a Board of Directors was established and was ready to proceed, having chosen Golden Gate Park for the location. In a break with previous fairs, the California Midwinter International Exhibition rejected classical architecture for a potpourri of eclectic styles: Moorish, Egyptian, Indian, and Mission, giving the fair an original exotic quality. The Central Court became the principal physical feature of the fair, while the foreign, state and county buildings, along with the private amusement concessions, surrounded it in a random and festive manner. Unlike Chicago, there was, from the outset, an acceptance that the success of the fair would depend on its entertainment as well as its educational attractions. The *Official History of the California Midwinter International Exposition* declared that it is a “conceded characteristic of human nature that mankind must be amused as well as educated”.¹⁰ As a result, the entertainment exhibits were integrated into the overall concept of the fair from the beginning and not assigned to its geographical and ideological periphery as in Chicago. The Midwinter Exhibition, nicknamed “Sunset City”, opened on 27 January 1894, and ran for five months, closing on 4 July. The entrance fee was fifty cents, while many buildings, exhibits, and attractions cost an additional twenty-five cents. Most concessions paid a fee in lieu of a charge for space and a percentage of gross receipts.¹¹ By the time it closed, the Exhibition had become both a popular and commercial success.

¹⁰ Raymond Clary Papers, *The Official History of the California Midwinter International Exposition*, Chapter XVII, The Concession (unpaginated manuscript). Compiled from the Official Records of the Exposition and published by Authority of the Executive Committee, (San Francisco: Press of H.S. Crocker Co., 1894), courtesy of Christopher Pollack and the Golden Gate Park Commission.

¹¹ Ibid.

The Esquimaux Village in San Francisco

Many of the concessions that appeared at the Midwinter Fair simply transferred their operations from Chicago to San Francisco in the manner of a travelling circus; among these were the Streets of Cairo, the Samoan Village, the Vienna Prater, the Hawaiian Village and the Esquimaux Village. The Esquimaux Village was similar to the establishment in Chicago with a few important differences. There was again a high fence enclosing the village, as well as a pond for kayak demonstrations. Gone, however, were the bark and moss covered cabins. In their place stood a semi-circle of six large white domes said to be “exact reproductions of the houses used by this tribe of Indians in their northern homes.”¹² Inserted into these were doors and glass windows for the greater comfort of the families who would live in them for the duration of the California winter and spring. The *Official Guide to the California Midwinter Fair* claimed that:

inside these artificial snow-houses, the Esquimaux household furniture is found in its primitive simplicity. There is the stone lamps burning seal oil and doing duty as cooking and heating stoves, and the few eating utensils and sleeping furs which are spread on banks of snow.¹³

This exhibit of the primitive was somewhat contradicted by a later newspaper story that reported the inhabitants’ rapid adaptation to their new circumstances.

Those white, glistening houses, built in imitation of the snow huts of their native land are furnished with an eye to comfort and even luxury. There are

¹² *The Official Guide of the California Midwinter Exposition*, (San Francisco: G. Spaulding & Co., 1894). pp. 124.

¹³ Ibid.

cook stoves, chairs, beds, tables and other conveniences of civilization in the use of which the Esquimaux have become well versed since coming to live in the home of the white folks.¹⁴

One feature of the “ice houses” was that the name of the head of the family occupying each structure was painted on the side. This has been a great help in identifying who, among the original group of Labrador Inuit, attended the Midwinter Fair. In photographs, the names are clearly visible on five of the six structures. The first is hidden but the rest; left to right, are Zacharius, Simon Manak, Tom Palliser, Jonas Palliser and George Deer. From a number of newspaper reports we know that Joseph Lucy was also present.¹⁵ One item refers to Charlotte who was Joseph’s wife.¹⁶ The Manaks, Deers and Lucys would have been among those who had remained with the original village after the revolt in Chicago while Zacharius and the Pallisers had been among the rebels and had now returned to the fold. Newspapers reported that the new exhibit consisted of 29 people, 34 dogs and some reindeer.¹⁷ The village opened for business on January 29.¹⁸

The Esquimaux Village continued to be advertised as an exhibition of remote and primitive people from the frozen zones of the far north and increasingly as an exhibit of “a diminishing race” on the verge of extinction. One publication of the fair wrote: “The fact of their decreasing numbers made the Esquimaux a novel as well as

¹⁴ “Night in Palm City”, *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 11 1894

¹⁵ “Strike in the Esquimaux Village”, *San Francisco Call*, April 29 1894

¹⁶ “To Travel Free”, *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 14 1894

¹⁷ Zacharius’ family numbered 4, Simon Manak’s 7, Jonas Palliser’s 6 (including Christopher, born in Chicago), Tom Palliser’s 3, George Deer’s 2 (since the death of Peter in Chicago), and Joseph Lucy’s 3 including Abraham Tukdashina. If we include Robert Ford’s family of 4, we have a total of 29.

¹⁸ “Seeing the Palm City”, *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 28 1894



Fig. 16 Esquimaux Village at the California Midwinter Fair, 1894, I.W. Taber photograph, courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

educational attraction.”¹ The presence of primitive “heathen” Esquimaux, who have “never come into touch with civilization”² continued to be promoted as a central feature of the exhibit despite the fact that all the northern “heathen” had returned to Labrador following the Chicago fair. In particular, there was reference to the presence of Kamialuits (sic) “the heathen princess” whose father “was a mighty chief among his people.”³ This was pure fiction. Kamialuit, the sister of Pomiuk, was on her way home at this time. She would die shortly after her arrival at Ramah in August 1894.⁴

In addition to the “ice-houses” built in a semi-circle around the pond, the Esquimaux Village included the skin tent with its display of hunting gear, a rail track for sled rides, a dog pound, and a reindeer corral. Visitors could see Inuit in their sealskin clothes going about their daily chores, watch demonstrations of kayak skills on the pond, go for dog-sled rides on the rail track, or reindeer rides in the back of a cart. And, by placing a coin in the dirt, they could witness the men’s skill with the famous Esquimaux dog whip.⁵ There is a reference to a stage being constructed at the village for singing and dancing, but there are no newspaper reports of any performances taking place.⁶

¹ *California Midwinter Exposition Illustrated*, January 20 1894

² Ibid.

³ Kamialuit is referred to by name in a number of newspaper articles. On March 5 1894, near identical stories published in two different newspapers tell of a young woman suffering heartbreak over a failed romance. In one, she is referred to as Kamealowik, the Esquimaux princess and in the other as Mary Palliser. *San Francisco Morning Call*, 5 March 1894, and *San Francisco Chronicle*, 5 March 1894.

⁴ Rama, Mission Diary August 1894, Moravian Archives, Herrnut, Microfilm 690, R.15.K.b.6A UAH, unpaginated, translation courtesy of Hans Rollman

⁵ “Scenes on the Midway”, *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 31 1894

⁶ “To Travel Free”, *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 14 1894

In Chicago, the Esquimaux Village was isolated on the periphery of the White City and outside the entertainment venue, the Midway Plaisance. In San Francisco, it was totally integrated into the mainstream of the Fair. It seemed a more comfortable fit there and suffered fewer problems. No doubt this was also due to the fact that Inuit had an acceptable financial arrangement with management and understood and accepted the role they were expected to play. Management made a further concession by agreeing to keep the village closed on Sundays in deference to the wishes of Moravian Inuit. It was the only concession at the Midwinter Fair to close on Sundays and over the course of the fair would have amounted to a considerable financial sacrifice.

Throughout its run at the Midwinter Fair, the Esquimaux Village was both positively reviewed and well attended. The following review, written mid-way through the fair, was typical:

Among all the concessions at the Fair there is, beyond a shadow of a doubt, not one that eclipses the Esquimaux Village as a unique, amusing and instructive exhibit. The strange little brown people in their odd habiliments, with their interesting dogs, their kayaks, and kometiks, attracted 488,046 paid admissions to their village at the Midwinter Fair, and if the large percentage of the Midwinter Fair's visitors that have already seen them here is a criterion, they certainly give promise of being a big paying adventure. The reason for their popularity lays in the fact that on the streets of any large city, at almost any time, any other race of people may be seen, and also in the fact that the public evidently realizes this will be the last opportunity they

will ever have to see this rapidly diminishing race of people. The village is unlike most propositions of its ilk at the Fair... it has none of the attributes that make up what is usually termed as a side-show and it is complete down to the smallest detail. It is, as a concession, an intellectual feast and a great source of amusement.⁷

If the figure of 488,046 paid customers is correct, the Esquimaux Village in San Francisco had, by the end of March, already grossed more than \$120,000 and there were still three months left to run.

As in Chicago, much fuss was made of births and babies and similarly joy was followed by tragedy. On 13 February, George and Maggie Deer, who had lost their son Peter in Chicago, celebrated the birth of a daughter. The occasion was a cause for elation throughout the fairground and the baby quickly became a major attraction for the Esquimaux Village.⁸ The child was baptized Francesca Deer, a name selected by a vote of San Francisco school children on Children's Day.⁹ Francesca however, lived only 44 days. Doctors said the cause of death was, in part, malnutrition.¹⁰ On the evening of her death, a wake was held in the village in the child's honour. Zacharius, it was reported, offered up prayers to Kekuk, the God of Water, because, it was said, the Esquimaux believes that a departed soul has to descend through the waters of the ocean to get safely into heaven.¹¹ A short two weeks after Francesca's death, Christopher Columbus Palliser passed away.

⁷ "The Esquimaux Village," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 24 March 1894

⁸ "A Brown Midget Arrives at Sunset City", *San Francisco Morning Call*, February 14 1894

⁹ "To Travel Free", *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 14 1894

¹⁰ "Notes of the Fair", *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 29 1894

¹¹ "A Woeful Feast", *San Francisco Call*, March 30 1894

Christopher was the child born in Chicago to Jonas and Susan Palliser. His mother was reported to have been devastated and wanted nothing but to return home.¹²

The time spent in San Francisco appears to have been generally quiet and routine. Inuit attended to their audiences at the village during the day but were free to wander about on their own time. They were often observed strolling about the fair or shopping, dressed casually in their 'American' clothes.¹³ The young people enjoyed attending dances at the neighbouring Arizona Indian Village.¹⁴

Although most of the grievances of Chicago had been resolved there was at least one occasion of labour unrest. It began on April 27, when Inuit refused to work, insisting that the village close its gates to visitors in order that they might celebrate a traditional feast, held each year to honour the return of hunters. Despite objections from management, they got their way and the village was closed for the day. As preparations for the feast were being made and before village officials knew what was happening, a number of men killed one of the village reindeer. The feast of raw fish and deer meat reportedly went on well into the night.¹⁵ The next day, with relationships strained, Inuit refused to go to work. Joseph Lucy was appointed spokesperson and informed management that unless salaries were raised by \$10 per month per man, there would be no exhibition. Management refused the demand, reminding the villagers that they were already receiving more money than their original contract provided for, that all their medical bills were being paid and that management had agreed to their request to keep the village closed on Sundays.

¹² "Death of Another Baby", *San Francisco Call*, April 11 1894

¹³ "News of the Fair", *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 28 1894

¹⁴ "Night in Palm City", *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 11 1894

¹⁵ "Notes of the Fair", *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 28 1894

Furthermore, the strikers were told that if they did not commence work by 1 o'clock that day, they would be removed from the village and made to fend for themselves.

As the deadline approached the strikers capitulated and the crisis passed.¹⁶

On June 8, a group of Alaskan Inuit joined the Esquimaux Village at San Francisco. The Alaskans had been in the country for about a year under the charge of a Captain Miner Bruce. Bruce had brought Inuit to the United States in an effort to raise political and financial support for a project establishing a colony of Siberian reindeer at Port Clarence in an effort to provide Inuit in that region with a more secure source of food. They had met with President Cleveland in Washington, and appeared before House and Senate committees from whom they received an appropriation of \$7500 for the project. They were now in the process of returning home but would take over the Esquimaux Village for the final weeks of the Fair.¹⁷ On June 16, the Labrador Inuit gave their last exhibition at the Midwinter Fair and departed San Francisco for Labrador on June 24.¹⁸

¹⁶ "Strike in the Esquimaux Village", *San Francisco Morning Call*, April 29 1894

¹⁷ "A Little Girl Lost", *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 27 1894

¹⁸ A month after Labrador Inuit left San Francisco, an article appeared in the *San Francisco Morning Call* claiming that a baby belonging to Simon Manak was buried illegally under a tree on the grounds of the Esquimaux Village. The child, it says, was born on the train en route from Chicago, had been sickly, never received medical attention and died that December. The source of the story was W.D. Sneathen, said to be a man connected with the concession. He claimed that Simon Manak had spoken to him at the time of the death of Francesca Deer, complaining that he did not see why his daughter had not received a burial similar to that of Francesca. He apparently referred to it again at the time of departure from San Francisco saying that he did not like to go and leave the baby there. Burial without a permit was illegal. The article blamed P.M. Daniel for breaking the law and accused him of inhumanity in violating accepted practices regarding the treatment of the dead. It suggested that he ignored the law to save costs associated with a burial. "A Baby's Grave" *San Francisco Call*, July 27 1894

Dime Museums

While P.M Daniels and W.D. Vincent took their group to San Francisco, for the Midwinter Fair, Thomas G. Scott took his on a tour of Dime Museums throughout the eastern United States. The group consisted of Abel and his wife Helena, their daughter Esther and her daughter Nancy and most likely the family of James and Salome Shuglo. Nancy, the last baby to be born in Chicago, was the star attraction for the party and is featured prominently in advertising and publicity.¹⁹ The Dime Museum circuit consisted of a number of commercial museums, theatres and lecture halls which catered to the public's curiosity in the strange, exotic, salacious and bizarre. Human oddities were the main attraction and ethnological exhibits shared the stage with freak shows and circus acts.

From October to December 1893, the group appeared at Dime Museums in Chicago, Boston and New York sharing the bill with the likes of Tocci, the two headed boy, Matthew Lee Price, the elastic skin man, and Mungo Park, the razor walker.²⁰ Little is known as to the exact nature of their performance but they may simply have appeared on stage in salon rooms dressed in their sealskins holding harpoons and dog-whips while the public filed in and out, content to feast their eyes on "real Esquimaux" and in particular to catch a glimpse of the famous "World's Fair baby." As on Stoney Avenue, these displays may have been accompanied by descriptive and explanatory lectures. The Dime Museum tour continued into the Spring of 1894.

¹⁹ Jim Zwick, *Inuit Entertainers in the United States*, pp.34

²⁰ *Daily Inter Ocean*, October 8 1893, also *The Evening World*, December 19 1893

The Ethnological Congress of Strange and Savage Races

Although P.T.Barnum had died in 1891, the Barnum and Bailey Circus continued to be one of the most popular and lucrative entertainment enterprises in the United States during the last decade of the nineteenth century. In 1894, largely in response to the opportunity presented by the presence of so many foreign peoples at the World's Columbian Exposition, the Barnum and Bailey circus renewed its featured Ethnological Congress, with a new assemblage of "savage, cannibal, semi-civilized and barbarous races."²¹ The Congress of 1894 consisted of "Esquimaux, Malays, Klings, Javanese, Nubians, Matabeles, Papuans, Samoans, Moors, Singhalese, Hindus, Cossacks, Burmese, Australians, New Zealanders, Numidians and many others."²² Representing the Esquimaux race were Abel, Helena, Esther and Nancy. The Shuglo family opted to return home.

The Barnum and Bailey Circus was a three-ring affair with performances happening simultaneously in all rings. The Ethnological Congress was presented as a pageant of nations in the opening ceremonies and except for this, it was not part of the main event; instead, it formed a kind of midway open to the public an hour prior to the main event. This took place inside the animal menagerie. Running down the centre of the tent, surrounded by animal cages was a long "street of nations" where the various people dressed in their native customs ("some with little or nothing to speak of upon them) and displayed their huts, canoes, weapons, and tools. At either

²¹ "Remarkable Sightings, Strange People, Two Gorillas, Trained Animals", *Buffalo Enquirer* June 14 1894

²² Ibid.

end of the “street” were raised platforms where performances of song, dances, games and religious ceremonies took place.²³ The principal attraction of the Esquimaux group was again the “World’s Fair baby,” Nancy Columbia.

At one end of the long enclosure a howling Dervish muttered an unintelligible prayer to Mohammed, while opposite two Turkish girls danced gracefully with curious swaying motions to the weird music of pipe and drums played by natives.... Below these in the dress of their country were... a little party of Esquimaux surrounded by the only American born child of this race who bears the unique name of Columbia Palmer in honor of the World’s Fair where she first saw the light of day.²⁴

The fact that the Ethnological Congress was set in the animal menagerie was perhaps no accident. It was promoted as an educational opportunity; a chance to see “the family of man” in all its diversity but these “strange and savage peoples” were clearly meant to illustrate the primitive stages of the evolution of human development. Placing them next to Chiko and Johanna, “the only living Gorillas in captivity” was not lost on either the press or the general public. As one reporter observed:

The Ethnological Congress is even more interesting than the collection of beasts, birds, and reptiles and with Chico and Johanna, there is presented a pretty good study in evolution from brute to man.

Abel, Helena, Esther and Nancy would tour with the circus for two seasons.

The Barnum and Bailey tour of 1894 ran from the end of March to the end of

²³ “Premium for Promptness”, *The Ohio Democrat*, May 22 1894

²⁴ “The White Tents”, *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*, May 24 1894

October and included stops in 138 American cities and towns across the eastern seaboard, mid-west and south. The 1895 tour ran from the end of the March to early November and visited 129 locations in the US and a further 13 in Canada.²⁵ During the 1894 tour a delegation from the Ethnological Congress, including Abel and Helena's family, were guests of President Grover Cleveland at the White House. Esther was reported to have presented Mrs. Cleveland with a photo of Nancy while Abel demonstrated the Esquimaux whip on the White House lawn.²⁶

At the completion of the 1895 tour, the Ethnological Congress was dissolved and Abel's family, among the last of the Esquimaux Village people still in the US, headed to New York where Abel and Helena were employed for a time by Franz Boas, Putnum's former assistant in Chicago, now the newly appointed curator of the American Museum of Natural History. They were hired to assist with the museum's growing collection of Inuit artifacts. It would not be until the summer of 1896 that Abel, Helena and Nancy, would finally return to Labrador. Despite working in the US for four years at the World's Fair, Dime Museums and Barnum and Bailey's circus, the family was broke and was only able to travel home with the intervention of Boas and a number of his friends.²⁷ Abel and Helena's daughter Esther chose to remain in New York where she married a drover by the name of Charles Bein. She would only

²⁵ "Barnum and Bailey Routes from 1891-1900," <http://www.classic.circushistory.org>

²⁶ "Heathen at the White House", *The Washington Post*, May 8 1894

²⁷ "Go Back to Labrador," *The Chicago Tribune*, July 26 1896. It is reported in this article that the family "travelled with Barnum at a salary...of \$110 a week" but made no profit as Abel was both generous by nature and "easy fruit" for hucksters. See also *Letter from John H. Winser, Secretary of the AMNH to Messrs. Bowring and Archibald*, July 7 1896, and *Letter from R.G. Taber to Franz Boas*, June 3 1896, American Museum of Natural History, (Library Box 16 Folder 5)

return to Labrador briefly in 1899, to reclaim her daughter and help organize a new tour of Inuit; this time for exhibition in Europe.

Three other Inuit remained in America. Peter Mesher who had initiated the court case in Chicago with the assistance of Judge Porter and who was one of the founding officers of the Esquimaux Exhibition Company that set itself up in competition with the Esquimaux Village, stayed in the United States for nearly 18 years. He would eventually return to Labrador and marry Lucy Palliser. Tom Deer who early on left from the Esquimaux Village for a better paying construction job and who is also listed as a founding officer of the Esquimaux Exhibition Company appears to have struck out on his own. He disappears from the Labrador records. Tomasi Lucy also appears to have remained in the United States.

The experience of Labrador Inuit in America was one of constant adaptation. They were hunters and fishermen, most of whom had never been outside Labrador and who, together with their families, had no experience of ethnological exhibits or contemporary American society. They started with little idea of where they were going or what was expected of them. They faced innumerable challenges, from the constant intrusions and transgressions of spectators, to the injustices perpetrated by the concession managers in Chicago. Once these issues were resolved, and particularly after Inuit felt that they were being fairly compensated for their labour, they accepted their circumstances and adapted more readily to the demands of the workplace. Thus there was relative peace within the groups that attended the Midwinter fair in San Francisco or toured the dime museum circuits.

Although promotions for the exhibits continued to lean on the sensational and used all the old tropes about witnessing primitive and savage people from the “land of the midnight sun” or “remnants of a dying race,” Inuit were by now indifferent as to how they were perceived. They were not the arbiters of truth and fiction. Their relationship with their audience was fundamentally commercial. By the end of their sojourn in America, they had adapted to their situation and were relatively content with their assigned function within the exhibition venues. They had accepted their role and become adept at playing the “Esquimaux”.

Summary

At the World’s Columbian Exposition, Labrador Inuit, as well as other indigenous peoples, were presented as representatives of primitive societies; living artifacts of an earlier age. Their prescribed purpose was to showcase the evolutionary processes that had brought about modern civilized life and to provide the means by which American social, cultural and technological achievements could be measured and appreciated. These ideas were fictions but reflected widely held beliefs about civilization, progress and race and reinforced colonial ideologies that justified the existing political, social and economic order that was being celebrated. The Chicago elites who built the fair, the scientists who lobbied for its ethnological component and the entrepreneurs who recruited “human curiosities” were all invested in these ideas and benefited from them.

However, these constructs, which initially defined Inuit representation at the fair, could not be sustained and eventually broke down as Inuit behaviour contradicted the imaginings and undermined the stereotypes. This was most

apparent in Inuit's response to their treatment within the Esquimaux Village in Chicago and their use of the American legal system to assert their rights and protect themselves against injustices. Not all Inuit responded to these challenges in the same way. Inuit within the village were not a single homogenous group but had been recruited from different regions in Labrador and had distinct histories with different degrees of engagement, knowledge and understanding of European institutions and culture. This resulted in some being more confident and proactive in seeking redress for their grievances while others remained more passive and insecure. Nevertheless, by the end of the fair, Labrador Inuit had collectively undermined the notion that they were representatives of the primitive. They were not artifacts from a different time but simply inhabitants of a different place, with different histories, language, cultural practices and experience.

APPENDIX 1

Passenger List of the Evelena¹

No.	Name	Age	Sex
1.	R.G. Taber	28	M
2.	Lyle Vincent	20	M
3.	Jewell D. Somberger	22	M
4.	W.M. Reed	21	M
5.	Robert Ford	38	M
6.	Susan Ford	35	F
7.	Wm Ford	3	M
8.	Mary Ford	7	F
9.	Kooper	40	M
10.	Kutukituk Kooper	38	F
11.	Mali Kooper	7	F
12.	Tigujak Kooper	2	F
13.	Pamiuk Kooper	15	M
14.	Kanggegatchook	38	M
15.	Tuklavina Kanggegatchook	45	F

¹ Jim Zwick, *Inuit Entertainers in the United States, from the Chicago World's Fair through the Birth of Hollywood*, (West Conshohocken PA: Infinity Publishing, 2006) pp.152

Zwick states that passenger list were made up by crew members and spellings were often inaccurate. Also of note Moravian Inuit and Northlanders did not have surnames at this time. In these cases the crew member designated the name of the patriarch of the family as the surname and assigned it to others in the family. These designations were also at times inaccurate.

No.	Name	Age	Sex
16.	Kamialuit Kanggegatchook	16	F
17.	Sikipa Kanggegatchook	7	F
18.	Degouluk Kanggegatchook	14	M
19.	Zacharias	35	M
20.	Naimi Zacharias	35	F
21.	Justina Zacharias	13	F
22.	Tabia Zacharias	4	F
23.	Abila	38	M
24.	Helina Abila	36	F
25.	Esthermiut Abila	15	F
26.	Joseph Locy	42	M
27.	Charlotte Locy	32	F
28.	Tomasi Locy	14	M
29.	Simon Manok	35	M
30.	Sarah Manok	30	F
31.	Maria Manok	14	F
32.	Jacobus Makus (?) Manok	18	M
33.	Peterusi Manok	8	M
34.	Abraha Manok	2	M
35.	John Locy	50	M
36.	Katatina Locy	48	F
37.	Hetvik Julia Locy	22	F

No.	Name	Age	Sex
38.	Abraha Locy	20	M
39.	Simon Locy	18	M
40.	Janasik Losy	16	M
41.	Jonas Peliceer	56	M
42.	Susie Peliceer	32	F
43.	Mary Magdaline Peliceer	18	F
44.	Lucy Peliceer	5	F
45.	Sam Peliceer	20	M
46.	John Peliceer	18	M
47.	Tom Peliceer	25	M
48.	Esther Peliceer	23	F
49.	Susan Peliceer	5	F
50.	George Deer	30	M
51.	Maggie Deer	28	F
52.	Sarah Deer	5	F
53.	Peter Deer	6 mo.	M
54.	Jimmie Sugla	50	M
55.	Salomie Sugla	45	F
56.	Maggie Sugla	18	F
57.	Augustinuk Sugla	16	F
58.	Liza Sugla	6	F
59.	Tom Sugla	1 1/2	M

No.	Name	Age	Sex
60.	Peter Peliceer	45	M
61.	Mary Magdaline Peliceer	17	
62.	Abraha Tooktoosina	17	M
63.	Peter Michaud	22	M
64.	Tommie Deer	25	M
65.	Sarah Manak (Jr.)	16	F

APPENDIX 2

Revised Passenger List of the Evelena Family Groupings and Associated Communities

Nachvak

- | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 9. | Kupper |
| 10. | Kuttukitok |
| 11. | Mali |
| 12. | Tigujak |
| 17. | Sikepa |
| 16. | Kamialuit (children of Kajuasiak) |
| 13. | Pamiuk |
| 14. | Kangerarsuk |
| 15. | Tudlavina |
| 18. | Degouluk |

Hebron

- | | |
|-----|-----------|
| 19. | Zacharius |
| 20. | Naemi |
| 21. | Justina |
| 22. | Tabea |

Zoar

- | | |
|-----|-------------|
| 5. | Robert Ford |
| 6. | Susan Ford |
| 7. | Wm Ford |
| 8. | Mary Ford |
| 23. | Abel |
| 24. | Helena |
| 25. | Esther |

Ailik

- 26. Joseph Lucy (brother of John)
- 27. Charlotte Lucy
- 62. Abraha Tuktushina

- 35. John Lucy (brother of Joseph)
- 36. Katerina Lucy
- 37. Julia Hedwig Lucy
- 38. Abraha Lucy
- 39. Simon Lucy
- 40. Janasik Lusy
- 28. Tomasi Lucy

- 29. Simon Manak
- 30. Sarah Manak
- 32. Jacobus Makus (?) Manak
- 65. Sarah Manak (Jr.)
- 31. Maria Manak
- 33. Peterusi Manak
- 34. Abraha Manak

Aivektok/Esquimaux Bay

- 41. Jonas Palliser
- 42. Susan Palliser
- 44. Lucy Palliser
- 45. Sam Palliser
- 46. John Palliser

- 47. Tom Palliser (son of Jonas)
- 48. Esther Palliser
- 49. Susan Palliser

- 60. Peter Palliser (brother of Jonas)
- 61. Mary Magdaline Palliser

- 50. George Deer
- 51. Maggie Deer
- 52. Sarah Deer
- 53. Peter Deer
- 64. Tommie Deer (brother of George)

- 54. Jimmie Shuglo
- 55. Salomie Shuglo
- 56. Maggie Shuglo

- 57. Augustinuk Shuglo
- 58. Liza Shuglo
- 59. Tom Shuglo
- 63. Peter Mesher

Appendix 3

POSTSCRIPT

Inuit who had gone to America to attend the World's Columbian Exposition, splintered into smaller groups after the fair closed in October 1893. Some headed home immediately. Many attended the Midwinter Fair in San Francisco or toured dime museums in the eastern United States and did not return to Labrador until the summer of 1894. Others lingered longer and still others chose not to return at all. This postscript follows the people back to Labrador and, as far as historical records permit, documents their lives after the fair.

Nachvak

The first families to leave for Labrador were the northern Inuit from Nachvak; those of Kupper-Kuttukitok, and Kangerarsuk-Tuglavina, along with their wards Kamialuit and Pomiuk. They would meet with a series of misfortunes on their journey home. The owners of the Esquimaux Village showed them little consideration. They were kept in Chicago until the very end of the fair on October 30; too late in the year to get them back to Labrador before the end of the shipping season. They arrived in Bonne Bay on the west coast of Newfoundland on the steamer "Harlaw" on 21 November 1893 and there, they appear to have been abandoned. The *Evening Telegram* reported that "a contingent of the Esquimaux colony en route from the World's Fair" consisting of 4 adults and 6 children – "one a

cripple on crutches,”¹ caused “much comment and some pity.” They appeared “much dejected” having to remain in Bonne Bay until spring. The *Evening Telegram* correspondent observed that they spoke no English and appeared to have no means of support. He feared what might happen to them over the winter and suggested an enquiry be made into the matter.² It appears that the people of Bonne Bay rallied around the Inuit families. They spent the winter in a house belonging to the Bonne Bay postmaster,³ and the following summer took the Newfoundland coastal boat to Nain. It is quite possible that this was the same boat that was returning the families who had left San Francisco in June 1894, stopping in Rigolet and Ailik on its way north. At some point en route, the Nachvak people were joined by Zacharius and Naemi’s family. At Nain, they transferred to the Mission vessel “Gleaner,” finally arriving at Ramah on August 12 1894. Unfortunately their ordeal wasn’t over. Br. Adolf Stecker writing in the Ramah station diary recorded the death of Kamialuit, a short time after their arrival:

With the “Gleaner” came also the Eskimos from Chicago, one family from Hebron, and two from Nachvak. The first went with the “Gleaner” to Hebron; the latter remained here a few days, then the one (family) went to Nachvak while the other remained here in order to convert.⁴ With the latter was also

¹ These would have been Kupper and Kuttukitok, their children Mali, Tigujak, Sikpepa and Evelina, Kangergarsuk and Tuglavina as well as Kajuatsiak’s children; Kamialuit and Pomiok.

² “The Harlaw Arrives at Bonne Bay,” *Evening Telegram*, November 22 1893.

³ William Forbush, *Pomiuk A Prince of Labrador* (London:Marshall Brothers, 1903), pp.57

⁴ Rama Mission Diary 1894, Moravian Archives, Herrnut, Microfilm 690, R.15.K.b.6A UAH, unpaginated, translation courtesy Hans Rollman. In the statistical part of the diary, there is the following note: “Moved here.... Kangerarsuk ,Tuglavina &

an unmarried 20-year-old female heathen as well as her 15-year-old brother. The latter had broken his left leg in America, but, when he embarked for Labrador, it was well enough again, that he could walk on crutches.... The unmarried female heathen... became sick... but no one believed that it would lead to her death. After three days, she sat up by herself, and a few minutes later, she was a corpse..."⁵

Another death occurred shortly after. The daughter of Kupper and Kuttukitok, named Kotuktooka but also known as Evelina, who had been born in Chicago on 5 November 1893, died soon after arriving at Ramah.⁶ Kupper and Kuttukitok returned to Nachvak with their other children, accompanied by Pomiuk.

Pomiuk's condition deteriorated. Wilfred Grenfell, who was establishing a medical mission for Newfoundland fishermen on the Labrador coast, visited Nachvak in the summer of 1895, and was told by George Ford, the Hudson's Bay Company agent there, that a boy at a camp nearby was dying. Grenfell found Pomiuk in Kupper's tent and saw that the thigh was broken and diseased. With Kupper's permission, Grenfell removed him from the camp, performed a preliminary operation on him at the Hudson's Bay Company post, and took him south where he had set up his first makeshift cottage hospital at Burnt Cove near Rigolet.⁷ There

Sikepâ from Chicago. As well Pamiok...." Which suggests that the family that remained in Ramah was that of Kangerarsuk-Tuglavina.

⁵ Ramah Mission Diary 1894

⁶ Ramah Mission Diary, 1897

⁷ Wilfred Grenfell, "How We Found Pomiuk," *Toilers of the Deep*, pp.113

Pomiok would undergo further operations but he never fully recovered. He died from his injuries in September 1897.⁸

Kupper died around the same time. The circumstances around his death are unclear but the one mission account that refers to it states that he was depressed and suggests he may have committed suicide.⁹ After his death, Kuttukituk, his widow, who had family at Ramah, wanted to move there but was prevented by Paksaut, one of Tuglavina's half brothers, who was said to be "feared by almost everyone."¹⁰ It would take two attempts to free her.

At the beginning of this year (1897), Ludwig drove to Nachvak to fetch his sister, the widow Kuttukitok... but this attempt... was a total failure. For Backsaut (sic), who wanted to take Kuttukitok as his third wife, foiled this undertaking.... Since the widow desired at the beginning of the past year... to be baptized... she tried her utmost to accomplish this. She therefore packed a suitcase with the most necessary things and had her brother take it before his departure to George Ford for safekeeping. She then went herself with her three children to Ford's and waited for the second attempt of abduction, which occurred one week later. This time, Johannes and Paulus drove with the full intention to do their utmost to get her here. They almost succeeded, but they had to drive past human houses, this they could not avoid. This Backsaut knew and lay in waiting for them. He then stopped the sledge, examined the little box in which she, Kuttukitok, had some food, took

⁸ Periodical Accounts, Vol.3 December 1896 pp. 175/6

⁹ Ramah Diary for 1896/97, R.15.K.b.6a, UAH

¹⁰ Periodical Accounts, December 1897, Series 2, Vol.3, pp.371

everything, even her bed, and let them drive on. Luckily, the widow had the suitcase, in which her better things were left behind, waiting for another opportunity, otherwise she would have lost everything she had.... Among other things, her child that was born there (in Chicago) received a silver and golden spoon engraved with the name of the child. The child was called Eveline after the little ship that had brought the family to the south. But the named child died soon after the return to Nachvak.... On the Day of Pentecost, the baptism of Kuttukitok and her daughter Sikêpa took place.... The widow Kuttukitok was named Eugenie and Sikêpa received the name Agnes. Tiguja received the name Kristine..."¹¹

Kuttukitok remained in Ramah and was among several residents who died there of "a kind of typhoid" in 1901.¹²

As for Kangerarsuk and Tuglavina, they remained for a time at Ramah where they became candidates for church membership before returning to Nachvak in 1896. Kangerarsuk appears in Moravian records in 1899, when the Ramah missionary, Adolf Stecker decides to investigate reports of a religious awakening among Inuit in the Ungava district. George Ford the HBC agent at Nachvak arranged for Kangerarsuk to guide Stecker overland to Ungava.¹³ He and Tuglavina spent the winter of 1902-3 at Ramah where the missionary writes: "The heathen family family, Kangerarsuk, behaved well at the station, and the diligence of these heathen when working or hunting put to shame many of the baptized Christians." That

¹¹ Ramah Diary 1897, R.15.K.b.6a, UAH

¹² Special Report from Ramah, Periodical Accounts, 1900, Series 2, Vol. 4, pp.583

¹³ Periodical Accounts, "Account of Br. Stecker's Tour to Kangiva and Ungava," 1899, Series 2, Vol.4, pp.327

summer Kangerarsuk acted as pilot for the captain of the Moravian mission ship “Harmony” which was carrying a delegation of missionaries investigating the possibility of establishing a new mission post at Killinek.¹⁴

In 1904, an epidemic of influenza swept through the Nachvak population at Komaktorvik. It was a devastating blow. Although only 10 people died, it was a significant proportion of the population and included Semigak, at that time, their most influential leader. Among the other victims of the flu was Kangerarsuk’s wife Tuglavina.¹⁵ The deaths of a number of hunters would contribute to the closure of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s post at Nachvak a short time later. Kangerarsuk left Nachvak following his wife’s death, returning to Ramah where he remarried in 1905,¹⁶ and was baptized the following year, taking the name Tomas.¹⁷ He moved with his new family to Hebron in 1906, survived the Spanish Influenza of 1918, which took 135 lives at Hebron and died at age 72 on 5 April 1927.¹⁸

Hebron

Zacharius and Naemi’s family returned to Hebron on the “Gleaner” in August 1894. When Zacharius had left the community, two years prior, the missionaries had been happy to see him go. They had called him a “troublemaker”¹⁹ and such he had proved to be. Zacharius’ opposition to restrictions placed on his freedom of movement outside the exhibition compound in Chicago was the first act of

¹⁴ Periodical Accounts, December 1903, Vol. 5, pp.358

¹⁵ Hudson Bay Company Nachvak Post Journals, September 26 1904 PANL: P.T McGrath Fonds

¹⁶ Rama Church Book, MUN CNS Moravian Microfilm 591, pp.168

¹⁷ Rama Church Book, MUN CNS Moravian Microfilm 591, pp.87

¹⁸ Hebron Church Book, MUN CNS Moravian Microfilm 592 No. 911, pp.456

¹⁹Periodical Accounts, Series 2, Vol.2, March 1895, pp. 442

resistance by Inuit towards their employers and initiated the series of events that led to the break up of the Esquimaux Village. The missionaries had expressed a certain apprehension on his return to Hebron, fearing that “his influence for mischief would be increased if he came back with big stories of America and if the large wages, promised him, should make him rich in the estimation of his countrymen.”²⁰ Zacharius had managed to save some money, depositing £30 into his store account on his return²¹ but, according to the Moravians, he returned a chastened man.

It seems that Zacharius has had to learn the lessons of adversity instead of being made proud by prosperity. On his way back to Hebron with his family, he landed at Nain, where his former missionary now lives. Almost his first words in entering Br. Kahle’s room were these: “I have returned quite a different man. Trouble has taught me to pray, and the only course left to me was to seek the Saviour, of whom you have so constantly taught us.” He fully recognized that he had sold himself into a sort of bondage, for he added: “We are glad to be once more at liberty, and not continually looked at as if we were animals. We shall never go again. Nowhere are we better off than with our missionaries.”²²

August Wirth, a former missionary at Hebron, writing several years after Zacharius returned home, reveals deeper reasons for the regret that Zacharius may have felt.

In 1899, when R.G. Taber began recruiting for a new Esquimaux exhibit for the

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Minutes of the SFG, February 6 1895, , MUN, CNS, Moravian Microfilm 513, para.1158

²² Periodical Accounts, March 1895, Series 2, Vol. 2, pp. 442

Exposition Universelle in Paris, Wirth wrote that Zacharius had no interest in going and that any who went would suffer as he had.

Morally there will be present much sin and misery, and they will be much damaged... The 11 or 12 year-old daughter of Zacharius was seduced at that time in Chicago by 4 Americans and used sinfully. God have mercy with the weak people and save their souls that they will not perish in sin.²³

According to Moravian records, Zacharius played a positive role in the community after his return.²⁴ He remained in Hebron until Naemi's death and in 1904 moved to Hopedale where he remarried in 1906. In 1910, he returned to Hebron. Justine also moved south to Hopedale. She married twice and died on 12 October 1938.²⁵

Ailik

John and Katerina Lucy's family most likely returned to Labrador in the fall of 1893, where they resumed their lives at Sioniorvik near Aillik. At some point they migrated further south to spend winters at Tichialuk and summers at Jigger Island just north of Cape Harrison. Both John Thomas and Katerina are buried at Jigger Island.²⁶

In 1896, the Moravians established a new mission station at Makkovik, south of Hopedale in order to better serve the growing settler population in that region. Makkovik was a short distance from Ailik and also attracted southern Inuit.

Information about the Lucys comes in part from Moravian church records at

²³ Letter of August Wirth circa 1900, courtesy of Hans Rollmann

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Hopedale Church Book, MUN CNS Moravian Mission Microfilm 591, pp. No.

²⁶ Personal Communication, Joyce Allen, Rigolet (Julia's great granddaughter)

Makkovik but also from oral accounts of the family's descendants; those still living and those who have passed but whose stories are preserved in the archives of *Them Days* magazine, a periodical of oral history dedicated to preserving the history of the Labrador people. From these sources we learn that John and Katherina's daughter Julia Hedwig became pregnant through a liason with the captain of the ship that brought the families home. Her son, John Thomas Lucy, was raised by her Aunt and Uncle, Charlotte and Joseph Lucy at Ailik. Julia would later marry John Broomfield but had no subsequent children.²⁷ She eventually went blind and died in Tilt Cove in 1949.²⁸ Abraham Lucy married Alice Tukdashina and had two daughters Kathleen and Julia.²⁹ He continued to live on the coast fishing and sealing at Dunne's Island in the spring and summer and moving to Makkovik in the fall. He would eventually die of cancer. Simon would marry Bertha Putalik and have a daughter, Nancy.³⁰ He moved to Makkovik where he worked for the Andersen family and died when he was struck on the head when a wood pile collapsed on him while he was working.³¹ Jonas would never marry and he too moved to Makkovik to work for the Andersens. He also died tragically when he slipped while rigging the mast of a bully boat, falling onto the deck of the boat and breaking his neck.³² Finally there is Tomasi who is a mystery to his Labrador relations. Although he was only 14 when the family left for

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Personal Communication, Muriel Andersen, Happy Valley/Goose Bay (Abraham's granddaughter)

³⁰ Susie Pottle "Reflections," *Them Days* Vol. 8, No.3, March 1983, pp.35

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Chicago, Tomasi chose to remain in the United States and never returned.³³ It is rumoured that he married and may have had a son named Charlie.³⁴

Joseph and Charlotte Lucy remained in Ailik after their return and became increasingly active members of the Moravian church community at Makkovik. In 1903 they were both appointed Native Helpers and Chapel Servants, helping missionaries to instruct Inuit members of the new congregation.³⁵ They spent a period of time living in Makkovik but later moved to Tilt Cove for the winters where they lived close to their niece Julia.³⁶ I have found little information on Charlotte's relative Abraham Tukdashina although photographs find him in Makkovik on church festival days.³⁷

Of the other Ailik family that attended the fair there is little documentary information except that Simon Manak died very soon after his return to Labrador³⁸ and two years later, on 14 April 1896, his widow, Sarah Kunnunak, married Andreas Amos Simon in Esquimaux Bay.³⁹ I have no information on the subsequent lives of their children.

Aivektok

Inuit from Aivektok arrived back at Rigolet in July 1894. The event, which must have caused considerable interest at the time, was barely noted in the HBC

³³ Personal Communication Joyce Allen Rigolet

³⁴ Susie Pottle "Reflections," *Them Days* Vol. 8, No.3, March 1983, pp.35

³⁵ "Extract from the Station Diary for Makkovik, July 1 1904-July 1 1905", Periodical Accounts, Series 2, Vol. 6, pp. 213

³⁶ Personal communication, Joyce Allen, Rigolet

³⁷ *Them Days*, Vol.11 No. 1 September 1985. pp.41

³⁸ Hopedale Church Book, MUN CNS, Moravian Mission Microfilm 591, Death Records, No. 915

³⁹ Ibid. Marriage Records No.253

post journals. A succinct sentence simply states “ World’s fair Esquimaux back.”⁴⁰ A short time later. Lydia Campbell, a long-time resident of Esquimaux Bay visited the summer encampment of some of these people and was surprised by what she found.

Well we has been over across to see Big Island and saw most of them - how changed, all can talk English and dress like the people in another country.

They has the picture of the World’s Fair in different forms.⁴¹

While the Moravians maintained a comprehensive record of Inuit life on the north coast, the Inuit of Aivettoke/Esquimaux Bay remain elusive as very few records exist. The correspondence and journals of the Hudson’s Bay Company at Rigolet continued to document general economic conditions but provide little detail of the lives of people in the region. In the months and years after their return, the Pallisers, Shuglos, and Deers make regular appearances at the post and appear to re-establish the lives they lived prior to their departure for the fair. It is clear that economic conditions had not improved in their absence and, once again, they were struggling to maintain a livelihood.

Church records for the region are also sporadic and incomplete. The Methodists and the Church of England established a more permanent presence in the region towards the end of the 19th century but their records relate only to their own congregations. Most Inuit at this time still identified themselves as Moravian. The HBC agent at Rigolet, James Wilson, urged the Moravians to visit the region and to attend to the people’s spiritual needs. “These Eskimos belong neither to the

⁴⁰ HBC Rigolet Post Journal, July 1894, HBC Archives, B.183/a/31

⁴¹ Lydia Campbell “Sketches of Labrador Life,” *St. John’s Evening Herald*, February 6 1895

Church of England or the Methodists; they look upon themselves as members of your church, and I will do all in my power to help you if you will only come to Aivektok Bay.”⁴² The Moravians undertook a series of visits to the region but were reluctant to take on a new mission despite a formal written request for a permanent teacher from Inuit themselves, signed by, among others, Peter and Tom Palliser.⁴³ The Moravians were currently establishing their new mission station at Makkovik as well as investigating the possibility of establishing a new station in the far north at Killinek to reach the last of the “heathen.” They likely believed they had neither the human nor financial resources to devote to a further extension of their evangelical enterprise. They would, instead, leave Inuit spiritual needs to those already in the field. Many Inuit accepted the inevitable and turned to the Methodists and Church of England for their spiritual and social needs.

It is clear that this was a time of transition for Inuit in Aivektok. The number of Inuit families continued to decline. Infant mortality was high but this was true of the planter population as well. The most common explanation for the continuing disappearance of Inuit in the region was inter-marriage with the settler and metis populations. It may well be that there were fewer Inuit men to marry but the tradition of Inuit women finding partners outside the Inuit community was well established. As a result of the patrilineal tradition whereby women and children assume the name husband and father, much identifiable Inuit lineage and history disappear from the historical record. As a result, a number of Inuit family names in

⁴² “Attempts to Establish a Moravian Mission at Rigolet,” *Them Days*, Vol.22, No.1, Fall 1996, pp.16

⁴³ *Ibid.* pp.20

the region also disappear; Kununnak, Ikey, and Punniguniak among them. In the 1911 Canada Census for Rigolet of 64 families recorded only 8 are identified as Inuit.⁴⁴

As for the families that went to Chicago only the Pallisers seem to have thrived. Jonas and Susie Palliser lived and worked with their son John until Jonas' death around 1913.⁴⁵ John married Sarah Kunnunak while Sam married Mary Kunnunak.⁴⁶ Both would raise families of their own whose descendants still live in the region. Lucy Palliser would eventually marry Peter Mesher after his return to Labrador.⁴⁷ They would raise a large family in the region.

Jonas' brother Peter resumed the life of a seal hunter and salmon fishermen and again worked odd jobs at the Hudson's Bay company depot at Rigolet. He died on 15 December 1903 at Kenemish near the head of the inlet.⁴⁸ His daughter Mary is possibly the Mary Palliser who married Mark Palliser.⁴⁹ at the same time as Sam Palliser married Mary Kunnuock on 18 September 1894.⁵⁰ Mark is said to have inherited Mikak's medal which was reported to have been finally lost by his son Jonas, when it accidentally fell from his boat into the bay.⁵¹

⁴⁴ Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, Unorganized Regions, Rigolet, Labrador Canada.

⁴⁵ "Grandfather's Stories," *Them Days*, Vol 24 No. 1, Fall 1998, pp.21

⁴⁶ United Church Archives St. John's, Marriage Records Northwest River

⁴⁷ see below pp.317

⁴⁸ Records of Burials, Northwest River, United Church Archives, St. John's.

⁴⁹ In the 1911 Canada Census for Rigolet Mark's wife Mary is listed as 35 years of age. According to the Evelena's manifest Peter's daughter Mary is 17 or 18 in 1892. She would be 36 or 37 in 1911.

⁵⁰ Parish Records, Methodist and United Church for Northwest River, Box 1 (R2-D-2), Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador.

⁵¹ Personal Communication with Henry John Palliser, Rigolet

The Shuglos and Deers are more difficult to track. Very few records of Jim and Salomie Shuglo's family exist. On their return to Labrador from the United States, the Shuglo's stopped in St. John's Newfoundland. A St. John's newspaper announced that the wife of James Thuglow (an Esquimaux) gave birth to a son at the Poor Asylum in St. John's.⁵² This is confirmed in the Birth Registers for the Labrador District.⁵³ The boy's name is given as John and his date of birth as 15 July 1894. He was to live only 5 months, dying the following autumn on 14 November 1894.⁵⁴ A year later on 20 December 1895, Jim Shuglo would die of erysipelas. He was buried at Back Bay.⁵⁵ I have found no subsequent records for Salomie, or the daughters Maggie and Augustina or their son Tom. The only reference for an Eliza Shuglo appears in the Labrador Marriage Records which records her marriage to Albert Broomfield on 13 December 1918.⁵⁶

George and Maggie Deer had two children after returning to Labrador. They had lost their son Peter in Chicago and their daughter Francesca in San Francisco. On 27 October 1895, a daughter Eliza was born.⁵⁷ I have seen no further records for Eliza. Kitty Esther Deer was born on 9 October 1900.⁵⁸ She would not survive, dying

⁵² **reference unavailable due to PANL closure for Covid-19**

⁵³ Registration Records, Labrador District, Birth Register, 1892-1895, Registration Number 626714, <http://ngb.chebucto.org.Vstats/post-1891-birth-1892-1895-620001-634463-lab.shtml>

⁵⁴ Register of Deaths, District of Labrador, 1892-1897, pp.167, <http://ngb.chebucto.org.Vstats/death-reg-bk-2-1892-1897-lab.shtml>

⁵⁵ Ibid. pp.168

⁵⁶ Registration Records Labrador District, Marriages 1917-1920, pp.503 <http://ngb.chebucto.org.Vstats/post-1891-vol-8-mar-1917-1920-lab.shtml>

⁵⁷ Hopedale Church Book, Births, 1004

⁵⁸ Parish Records, Methodist and United Church for Northwest River, Box 1 (R2-D-2), Baptismal Records 1884-1950, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador.

the following summer in July 1902.⁵⁹ George himself would die at Moliac on 3 May 1901.⁶⁰ His widow Maggie remarried Adam Mucko of Carawalla at Lester's Point, a short distance from Rigolet, on 14 October 1901.⁶¹ I have been able to find only one reference for George and Maggie's daughter, Sarah who attended the fair in Chicago. A Sarah Deer married Mark Marcouie (Mucko) in Carrawalla on 7 March 1912. George's brother Tom Deer is among those who disappear completely from the historical record but this is because he remained in the United States. He was the first to leave the Esquimaux Village finding better wages as a labourer on the construction crews rushing to finish the exposition buildings prior to the opening of the fair. He was also listed with Peter Mesher as a shareholder of the Esquimaux Exhibition Company that ran the new concession organised after the revolt later that Spring.⁶² He was obviously an independent and confident man and must have determined that he had a better future in the United States than Labrador.

Of the three men who remained in the United States following the Chicago and San Francisco fairs: Thomas Lucy, Tom Deer and Peter Mesher. only Peter Mesher would return. It was Peter Mesher's friendship with Judge Porter in Chicago that led to Porter's investigation of the Esquimaux Village and subsequently to the decision to take its owners to court. According to Ike Rich of Rigolet, some 18 years after the departure of Inuit for the fair, the Labrador coastal steamer pulled into Rigolet and a familiar face looked out over the railing. Someone called "My

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰ United Church Archives, Happy Valley/Goose Bay Labrador, Methodist Records for Northwest River, Labrador

⁶¹ Post 1891 Registration Records Labrador District, Labrador Marriages 1901-1905, pp.495 <http://ngb.chebucto.org.Vstats/post-1891-vol-4-mar-1901-1905-lab.shtml>

⁶² "New Incorporations", *Chicago Tribune*, April 26 1893

goodness is that you Peter?" "Tis." Peter said. "Well what happened to you?" he was asked. "I got caught out," he replied.⁶³ Peter was apparently known for his colourful story-telling but few were recorded and nothing is known of how he spent his time in the United States. He apparently wanted to return home and put down roots. He would end up marrying Lucy Palliser at Grand Village on 11 October 1912⁶⁴ and remained in the area for the rest of life, trapping, fishing and working in the lumber camps at the head of the bay. Peter and Lucy would have 7 children but three of them would die young. Harriet died on 7 January 1912 at 10 months of age.⁶⁵ Charles would die at age 7 on May 1 1920⁶⁶ and Samuel at 10 on 20 February 1929.⁶⁷ Four daughters, Alice, Emily, Nellie and Eva would all survive to raise their own families in the region.⁶⁸

Zoar

After their stint with Barnum and Bailey's circus, Abel, his wife Helena, daughter Esther and granddaughter Nancy continued touring Dime Museums along the eastern seaboard as late as the winter of 1895. In the Spring of 1896, Franz Boas, then curator at the Museum of Natural History in New York, engaged Abel and Helena to work on the museum's growing collection of Inuit artifacts. This most likely consisted of the preparation of clothing, tools and utensils, including repairs to

⁶³ Personal Communication of Ike Rich, as told to David Lough.

⁶⁴ Registration Records Labrador District, Labrador Marriages 1909-1912, pp.485 [ngb.chebucto.org.Vstats/post-1891-vol-6-mar-1909-1912,-lab.shtml](http://ngb.chebucto.org/Vstats/post-1891-vol-6-mar-1909-1912,-lab.shtml)

⁶⁵ Register of Deaths Labrador District 1910-1914, pp.500 [ngb.chebucto.org.Vstats/post-1891-vol-6-mar-1910-1914-lab.shtml](http://ngb.chebucto.org/Vstats/post-1891-vol-6-mar-1910-1914-lab.shtml)

⁶⁶ Register of Deaths Labrador District 1919-1922, pp.496, [ngb.chebucto.org.Vstats/death-reg-bk-8-1919-1922-lab.shtml](http://ngb.chebucto.org/Vstats/death-reg-bk-8-1919-1922-lab.shtml)

⁶⁷ Register of Deaths Labrador District 1925-1930, pp.536, [ngb.chebucto.org.Vstats/death-reg-bk-10-1925-1930-lab.shtml](http://ngb.chebucto.org/Vstats/death-reg-bk-10-1925-1930-lab.shtml)

⁶⁸ Personal communication Henry John Palliser of Rigolet

kayaks.⁶⁹ Abel and Helena were themselves subjects of study at the museum. They were photographed and “body casts” were made of them for study and display.⁷⁰

Abel’s family had, by this time, been in America four years and was ready to go home. R.G. Taber, one of the original organizers of the tour seems to have maintained some interest in the family’s welfare. However, it was the Secretary of the American Museum of Natural History, John Winser who made arrangements with Harvey and Co. in St. John’s for their passage to Newfoundland and transportation back to Labrador.⁷¹ Taber, in the meantime, put together an outfit of hunting equipment and supplies for Abel, and requested that it remain under wraps to ensure Abel did not “under any circumstances, part with any portion” of it.⁷² An article published in the *Chicago Tribune* at the time of the family’s departure for Newfoundland reported that at one time Abel was making as much as \$110 a week but that he was returning home “with nothing except some articles of clothing, a few utensils, and a hunting outfit that was provided by friends in New York.” Abel was apparently a man in need of being protected from himself. He had a reputation for being careless in practical affairs, overly generous and easily taken advantage of and his benefactors wished to ensure that he would have full use of his outfit once he returned home.⁷³ The newspaper further reported that Abel, Helena and Nancy, “remembered by those who saw the village at the Fair as the smoke coloured baby,

⁶⁹ “Apile, The Globe Trotting Eskimo”, *New York Times* January 8 1905

⁷⁰ Ibid.

See also Harlan Smith Photographs, American Museum of Natural History, File No.42910-42920

⁷¹ John Winser, Secretary AMNH to William Lash, July 7 1896, American Museum of Natural History, Outgoing Correspondence

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ “Go Back to Labrador”, *Chicago Tribune* July 26 1896,

who furnished the major part of interest to the women visitors,” now aged three, would not be accompanied by Esther who would remain behind in New York as she had just given birth to a baby girl. The group sailed on the “Silva” departing Johnson, New Jersey on 12 July and arrived at St. John’s on 20 July 1896.⁷⁴ The threesome then returned to their home at Okpatik near Davis Inlet. As Zoar had been closed down since their departure, they joined the Moravian community at Hopedale. At that time they were asked to select a surname⁷⁵ and they chose the name Jacko which was Abel’s father’s name. Nanji Jacko was entered into the Hopedale Church as being the “illegitimate child of the unmarried” Esther Jacko and David Edmunds and as having been “baptised by a clergyman in Chicago.”⁷⁶

Esther remained in New York for three years and appears to have maintained an association with Franz Boas and the American Museum of Natural History, being employed, for a time, as housekeeper and translator to a group of Greenland Inuit brought to New York by Robert Peary at Boas’ request.⁷⁷ In 1899, she was approached by Ralph Taber to help organize a new Esquimaux Village exhibit for the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris. It is unclear whether she returned to Labrador as part of the recruitment effort but among the first to be persuaded to join the new venture was Esther’s family; Abel, Helena and Nancy. The group began its tour in London, then attended the Paris fair, followed by exhibitions in Spain and North

⁷⁴ “The ‘Silva’ Arrives”, *Evening Telegram*, St. John’s NL, July 20 1896,

⁷⁵ Hans Rollman, *I was baptized this winter... and received a new name.* “The Adoption of Christian Names and Surnames in the Moravian Communities of Nunatsiavut/Labrador, unpublished manuscript, courtesy of the author, pp.7

⁷⁶ Hopedale Church Book, MUN CNS Moravian Microfilm 591, pp.119, No. 1040A

⁷⁷ Kenn Harper, *Give Me My Father’s Body: The Life of Minik the New York Eskimo*, (South Royalton, Vt.: Steerforth Press, 2000)

Africa before returning to the United States in time for the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901. After Buffalo, Taber dropped out of the Esquimaux Village business but the troupe continued on under new management attending the South Carolina Inter-State Exposition in Charleston before taking up residence in New York at Coney Island where they found employment as part of the “Journey to the North Pole” attraction and a new Esquimaux Village under the management of John Smith whom Esther would later marry.⁷⁸ At the recommendation of Franz Boas⁷⁹ part of the Coney Island group formed a new Esquimaux Village at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904 but returned to Coney Island at its closure. Throughout this period Abel and Helena attended all exhibitions playing the role of patriarch and matriarch to the group. By early 1905, Abel was in poor health; he had developed a “great tumour on his neck” and was scheduled for an operation.⁸⁰ He would die later that year and was buried in Brooklyn, New York. Shortly after, Helena returned to her home at Opatik in Labrador where she died in June 1918.⁸¹

Esther and Nancy would remain in the United States where they would continue remarkable careers as “Eskimo” performers for many more years, touring Europe, attending numerous state fairs, and amusement parks and eventually

⁷⁸ Jim Zwick, *Inuit Entertainers in the United States, From the Chicago World's Fair through the Birth of Hollywood*, (West Conshohocken PA:Infinity Publishing, 2006),

⁷⁹ Franz Boas to W.J. McGee, March 5 1904, Outgoing Correspondence, American Museum of Natural History,

⁸⁰ “Apile, the Globe Trotting Eskimo”, *New York Times*, January 8 1905

⁸¹ Hopedale Church Book, MUN CNS Moravian Microfilm 591, Death Records, No. 1197

embarking on a career in motion pictures.⁸² Esther would assume increasing responsibilities in the troupe as recruiter, performer, and business manager. Eventually they would set up a permanent Esquimaux Village display at Ocean Park in Santa Monica from which they also supplied props, costumes and dogs for a number of Hollywood movies.⁸³ Two films produced by the Zelig Polyscope Company in 1911, *The Way of the Eskimo* and *Lost in the Arctic* are considered to be the first films with a credited Inuit cast predating Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* by 11 years.⁸⁴ Nancy, who starred in both films, was credited as writer for *The Way of the Eskimo* and this is likely the first writing credit for any indigenous person in film history. The Esquimaux Village at Ocean Beach finally closed in 1923. Neither Esther nor Nancy ever returned to Labrador. Nancy died in California on 16 August 1959. Esther died there two years later on 29 March 1961.

⁸² Kenn Harper and Russell Potter, "Early Arctic Films of Nancy Columbia and Esther Eneutseak", *Nimrod: The Journal of the Ernest Shackleton Autumn School*, October 2010, pp48-105

⁸³ Jim Zwick, *Inuit Entertainers in the United States*, (West Conshohocken: Infinity Publishing, 2006) pp.136

⁸⁴ Ibid. pp.113-120

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