

# Inuit Land Use and Occupancy in Northern Manitoba

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## *Abstract*

This paper documents the past and present Inuit land use in Manitoba and is intended to support the Inuit Aboriginal claim. Inuit, their direct ancestors the Thule, and their predecessors, the Pre-Dorset and Dorset, have occupied the northeast corner of Manitoba since c. 1500 B.C. Churchill has been one of the Inuits' focal points since 1717 when the post first opened. In 1958, the Regional Headquarters for the Keewatin, N.W.T., was established in Churchill. Later in the 1970s, when the administrative centre was relocated to Rankin Inlet, Inuit in the Keewatin were informed that they could no longer hunt in Manitoba. Nonetheless, hunting in northern Manitoba continues to be important for the Inuit of Arviat or Eskimo Point, N.W.T.

## *Preface*

That Inuit have used and occupied lands and waters of Manitoba and continue to do so is well known, but the evidence describing the actual extent and intensity of their land use has not been well documented.

In 1985 the senior author, seconded from the University of Manitoba, was contracted by the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) for two years to update Inuit land use information contained in a land use study conducted previously by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC). The ITC study, entitled the *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project*, was published in three volumes in 1976. The ITC study recorded on maps, the traditional and contemporary hunting, trapping and fishing territories of most of the Inuit hunters living in the Northwest Territories (NWT). The study also provided additional information on Inuit use and occupancy gathered from archaeological and archival sources. This study provided ITC with the evidence necessary for acceptance of its land claim by the federal government. Since 1982 the responsibility for the claim has been that of TFN.

The TFN land claims negotiations are gradually coming to a close. Only one major topic remains outstanding: the ownership of Inuit lands. Negotiations on this topic, when completed, will determine which lands Inuit will own. Although the ITC study documented the geographic extent of Inuit land use, it did not classify land use according to the intensity of use. Knowledge regarding intensity of use is critical if Inuit are to retain lands most important to them. Thus, the senior author who was one of the regional directors on the previous ITC study, was hired to update the land use information and to classify it according to intensity of use. This information will be used to assist TFN and Inuit in the communities in land ownership negotiations with government.

Today, as in the past, Inuit hunters in the Keewatin have made extensive use of the lands, waters and coastal regions of the Province of Manitoba. However, Inuit land use in the province has not been well documented. Indeed, except for the Inuit of Port Burwell, the previous ITC study did not document Inuit land use in any of the provinces. Before TFN reaches a final settlement, which must include the negotiation and protection of Inuit rights in Manitoba if it is to be comprehensive, it must have evidence of Inuit use and occupancy in the province. Thus, as an ancillary but important part of the overall project, the senior author was also asked to provide documentation of Inuit land use in Manitoba. He invited Luke Suluk of Arviat (Eskimo Point), N.W.T. and Lorraine Brandson of Churchill, Manitoba to assist him. Mr. Suluk, a hunter, a fieldworker on the main TFN project, and previously a fieldworker with the Keewatin Wildlife Federation Harvest Study, conducted interviews with hunters in Arviat (the Inuit community with the greatest land use in the province), and undertook archival research. Ms. Brandson, the Director of the Churchill Eskimo Museum undertook historical and archival research.

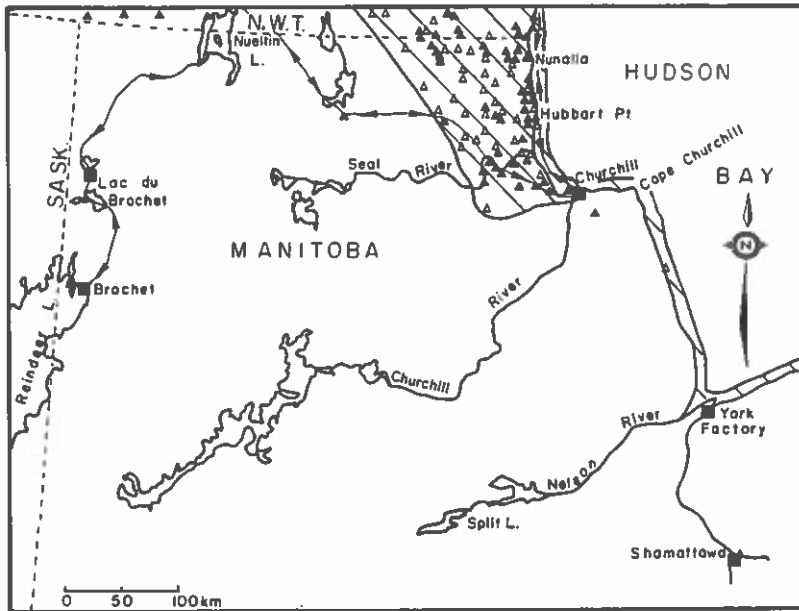
It is hoped that documentation of NWT Inuit land use and occupancy in the province will serve to bolster Inuit aboriginal claims.

#### *Prehistoric and Historic Record*

Inuit, their direct ancestors the Thule, and their predecessors the Pre-Dorset and Dorset have traditionally occupied northern Manitoba along the coast. The closed triangles indicate Inuit, Thule, Dorset or Pre-Dorset archaeological sites. Open triangles indicate recent campsites used by Inuit hunters. The shaded area depicts the area currently utilized by the Inuit of Arviat. The heavy lines with arrows indicate major trading routes used

FIGURE 1

## Historic and Prehistoric Inuit Land Use in Manitoba



The closed triangles indicate Inuit, Thule, Dorset or Pre-Dorset archaeological sites. Open triangles indicate recent campsites used by Inuit hunters. The shaded area depicts the land currently utilized by the Inuit of Arviat. The heavy lines with arrows indicate major trading routes used by Inuit between the early 1700s and the early 1900s. Sources include the literature cited in text and the elders and senior hunters of Arviat.

by Inuit between the early 1700s and the early 1900s. Sources include the literature cited in text and the elders and senior hunters of Arviat. the Hudson Bay coast and inland between Nueltin Lake and Reindeer Lake, and even as far south as Shamattawa. (Fig.1)

Despite the considerable amount of archaeological work carried out by Nash (1975) in the interior of northern Manitoba and by Giddings

(1956), Nash (1969), Meyer (1977, 1979) and others along the north-east, the archaeological survey of northern Manitoba is very incomplete (Clark 1979). Nonetheless, several Pre-Dorset, Dorset and Thule sites have been located, especially in the Churchill region (Clark 1977, Freeman 1976, Gidding 1956, Merbs 1964, Meyer 1977 and 1979, Nash 1972, Taylor 1976). The Pre-Dorset era in the Churchill region dates back to c. 1500 B.C. (Manitoba 1983, Nash 1972, Pettipas 1976). In 1967, a Pre-Dorset site was located near Shamattawa by Robert Anthony (Pettipas 1976). In regards to the Thule era, Clark (1979:97) believes that the ". . . archaeological sites on the barrens and coastal region of west Hudson Bay indicate . . . , a continuous occupation of the area from Thule to contemporary times. The Thule occupation may be temporally between c. A.D. 1200-1775." Burch (1978, 1979, 1986) on the other hand, believes that Inuit probably did not occupy the Churchill coastal region between 1619 and 1717. It is well known, however, that by 1717 with the founding of the trading post at Churchill, Inuit traded regularly at the post (Arima 1984, Copland 1985, Kenny 1932).

During this early trading period at Churchill, there were several incidents of hostility between Cree, Chipewyan and Inuit which led to blood shed (Smith and Burch 1979; MacIver and MacIver 1982). The Hudson's Bay Company attempted to alleviate these conflicts by trading with Inuit from a small sloop which was sent north from Churchill, stopping at Knapp's Bay, Cape Eskimaux, Nevill Bay, Whale Cove, Rankin Inlet and Marble Island. Trade with the Indians continued at Churchill (MacIver and MacIver 1982). The Company's preferential treatment of Inuit north of Churchill, unfortunately, intensified the animosity between the Indians and Inuit and instigated the Chipecyan massacre of Inuit in the Arivat (Eskimo Point) area in 1755 (Smith and Burch 1979).

The Company's whaling endeavours were largely dependent on the good will of Inuit. Whaling sloops were sent northward from 1765 to 1772. While beluga whaling was common near the Fort Prince of Wales, the sightings of black (bowhead) whales at Marble Island had encouraged the Company to initiate a black whale fishery in the northern waters. Equipped with small boats, harpoons and other whaling gear, a small sloop sailed the waters around Marble Island regularly for an eight-year period. The fishery, however, was doomed to failure. Inexperienced and incompetent crews resulted in very poor catches and the Company finally decided to leave the black whale hunt solely in the hands of skilled Inuit (Parks Canada 1978).

In 1764 the Company secured a lasting peace at Arviat between the Chipewyans and the Caribou Eskimo (Arima 1984). Northern sloop voyages from Churchill were terminated in 1790 as they became less profitable and the Inuit were encouraged to travel south to Churchill. Since that time, despite incidents of animosity or enmity, there has been considerable sharing and cooperation amongst the two native groups. One effective way of ensuring peaceful co-existence between the two groups was via cross cultural adoptions. “. . . Eskimos and Indians long ago have found a way to live in peace in our country, the adoption of a child was the token of lasting friendship. I lived in Churchill for more than ten years and lived well with the Indian people”. (Aningaat 1986)

Inuit travelled to Churchill in the spring to hunt seals and whales and to search for iron to be found in remains of the unoccupied stone fortress abandoned in 1782. The Hudson's Bay Company encouraged them to supply the post with white whales and seals and this became their primary function for the post. By 1801 they were asked to kill whales further north at Seal River for the post. In 1813, an Inuit party broke an agreement to whale in the Seal River, evidently marking an end to their involvement. The decline of the Company's whaling no doubt reflected an increase in the degree of the Inuit's land-oriented existence. Graham (c.1734-1815) implies that it may roughly indicate the period when the southern Caribou Eskimos began to live inland the year round. The mechanism enabling the development of a completely inland life was trade goods, particularly guns introduced in the late eighteenth century, although fish hooks and nets were also significant. (Graham, c.1734-1815)

Inuit were often hired as guides, labourers or interpreters by Arctic traders and explorers. (Newman 1985) In 1812, Augustus was the first labourer hired at the Churchill post. Sometimes the Inuit guides even travelled on expeditions south of their tundra homelands. Two Inuit, Augustus and Ouligbuck, in fact, accompanied the advance party of the second Franklin expedition to Cumberland House where they spent the winter of 1824-1825. (Houston and Houston 1986)

In the late 1840s and 1850s, when John Rae was searching for the ill-fated lost Franklin expedition he also employed Ouligbuck from Churchill as his interpreter. (Ross 1975) “Ouligbuck, my grandfather, used to tell us the time he went on voyages with Hudson Bay expeditions from Churchill. His father was Angayall and mother Atuat. They used to live in Churchill with many of the Eskimos in earlier years.”(Suluk 1987)

The Hudson's Bay Company censuses show that in 1838 there were 663 Inuit, 429 Chipewyan and 34 Cree frequenting the Churchill post. By 1881, there were still 515 Inuit and 160 Chipewyan, but no Cree, using Churchill. (Hudson's Bay Company 1881)

Churchill was not only important as a trading centre to the Inuit, it was also significant as a religious centre. It was at Churchill that Inuit were first received into full membership of the church in 1895 when four Inuit and several Indians were confirmed by Bishop Newnham. (MacIver and MacIver 1982)

In 1905, an agreement was signed between the Royal North-West Mounted Police and the Department of marine and Fisheries for police supervision on the western shore of Hudson Bay. In 1906 Major J. D. Moodie established a headquarters in Churchill which then resulted in regular patrols and mail runs north to their Fullerton detachment and south to York Factory and Split Lake. (MacIver and MacIver 1982) Inuit found a new market for selling locally caught fish, whales and eels necessary to feed the dog teams. (Royal North-West Mounted Police 1908a) Except for summer patrols by whaleboat to Fullerton or York Factory, police travel was conducted with dog teams and in 1911 the Churchill detachment recorded the use of 41 dogs. (Royal North-West Mounted Police 1911)

Inuit including "Pook" and "Tupearlok" from the Fullerton area and "Oolabuck" and "Uuayok" from the Eskimo Point are were hired as guides and interpreters. (Royal North-West Mounted Police 1907 and 1908a) Inuit were not completely restricted to the northern patrols but were also involved in the trips to York Factory and Split Lake. (Royal North-West Mounted Police 1912) A tent ring site near Knight's Hill or more recent finds at Gordon Point may correspond to a settlement known by the Arviat people as Sarpik. (Brandson 1978, Ducharme 1977)

Inuit also utilized the Reindeer Lake area in the past. Inuit were trading at Lac du Brochet by the 1880s. (Hoffman 1976, Tyrell 1897, 1975, Uhotoq 1979, Welland 1976) By the fall of 1881, 217 Inuit were recorded as "belonging" to the Lac du Brochet Post as well as 386 Chipewyan and 29 Cree. (Smith and Burch 1979)

The number of Inuit trading at the post on Reindeer Lake declined towards the end of the 19th century. A few Inuit traders, however, still regularly visited the post and other Inuit occasionally made the trip south to trade. (Harper 1964) Around 1920, a succession of small trading posts were established around the north end of Nueltin Lake (Harper 1964) which made it necessary for Inuit to make the long trip

south to Reindeer Lake. In the 1920s Chipewyan and Cree people acting as freighters between Brochet and these more northerly posts established friendly relationships with Inuit. (Smith and Burch 1979)

Kakoot, a well known Inuk entrepreneur, who used to travel long distances to trade for his band, had established contact with the Chipewyans in the early 1920s. He and his companions made a number of trips to Brochet and to other trading posts including Churchill. His group had lived in what was then called "Qiqut land" (Krekot Lake), west of North Henik Lake. He would take three weeks or more by canoe to reach the Brochet trading post from his Windy River campsites on Nueltin Lake. (Anowtalik 1986, Arnayuinak 1986, Uhotoq 1979) A series of posts continued to be built and operated in the Nueltin Lake area from about 1922 to 1950. (Usher 1971)

The Nunalla trading post established in 1927 became the home of many hunters. Inuit families occupied the Churchill area, Hubbard Point and Seal River during spring and summer months mainly for sealing and whaling. Trapping into the treeline was quite profitable in the 1920s, at that time a boat or canoe could be purchased from the proceeds of a trapping season. Families which secured sufficiently large seal caches to last their dogs and themselves through the winter, often resided in the Nunalla area in order to trap and to hunt the overwintering caribou.

In 1958, many Inuit families in the Keewatin who were experiencing hardships due to the lack of caribou were relocated to Arviat, Whale Cove, Baker Lake and Rankin Inlet. (Alikashua 1986, Gely 1986) During the mid-1950s, the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources also relocated Inuit from the Keewatin and Fort Chimo to an abandoned construction camp near Fort Churchill, about six kilometers southeast of Churchill. This camp, which became known as Akudlik was later replaced with cedar log homes. A transient centre was also built in Akudlik to provide facilities for the Inuit from the Keewatin who were utilizing the hospital services at Fort Churchill or in southern Manitoba. (MacIver and MacIver 1982)

In 1958, the Regional Headquarters for the Keewatin Region of the N.W.T. was established in Akudlik. In the 1960s, a vocational school for the Inuit was added to the community. Later in the 1970s, the school was closed, the Regional Headquarters relocated in Rankin Inlet and the Akudlik community site abandoned. A few Inuit remained in Churchill but most of them moved to communities in the N.W.T., including Arviat (Eskimo Point) which is approximately 120 km. north of Nunalla on the Hudson Bay Coast.

Arviat was a summer camp for the inland Pallirmuit for several centuries. (Outcrop Ltd. 1984) The opening of the Hudson's Bay Post in 1921 began to give this summer camp the status of a permanent settlement. It was not until 1959 when the school was established, however, that many Inuit lived in the community year round. Currently there are approximately 1300 residents in Arviat of which about 90-95% are Inuit. About 350 hunters in Arviat hunt over an area of roughly 110,000 km.<sup>2</sup> in the southern Keewatin as well as the 12,000 km.<sup>2</sup> of N.E. Manitoba depicted in Figure 1. This hunting range encompasses about 95% land and freshwater, the remaining 5% being a strip of marine environment extending along the Hudson Bay Coast.

During the existence of Akudlik, Inuit continued to hunt, trap and fish throughout the Churchill region as they had always done in the past. After the relocation of the Regional Headquarters to Rankin, however, the Manitoba Wildlife Officers in Churchill informed the Inuit in the Keewatin that they were no longer permitted to hunt in Manitoba. The Inuit could kill a bear only if it was on the sea ice (which belonged to the N.W.T.) but not if it stepped above the high tide line.

Nonetheless, hunting in northern Manitoba by Arviat Inuit continues to be important, particularly for caribou in winter and seals, whales and caribou in summer. In spring, goose hunters from Arviat often travel as far south as Hubbard Point. (Aningaat 1986, Arnalukjuak 1986, Siatalak 1986, Utsukpadlak 1986) Until the 1970s Inuit had hunted polar bears all along the Hudson Bay coast, as far south as Thompson Point. During the last few years, however, the Arviat hunters have been given only 48 hours in which to fill their bear tags; after two days the tags are reissued to other hunters. (Kovik 1987) Therefore, the hunters now usually do not have time to search for bears south of Nunalla. Occasionally, however, some hunters are given additional time if the bears have moved off the shore fast ice and the quota is difficult to fill. Under these conditions one hunter claimed to have travelled by skidoo as far south as James Bay in search of bears. (Pemik 1986)

Ringed seals are hunted in all seasons around Nunalla and are particularly plentiful along the floe edge during winter months. During spring and summer seals are also numerous near Hubbard Point and Seal River. Ranger seals used to be hunted at the mouth of the Seal River and up the river. Bearded seals are taken occasionally along the coast. (Arnalukjuak 1986, Kirkwa 1986, Siatalak 1986, Suluk 1986, Welland 1976) Inuit families living near Hubbard Point and Churchill used to fish in the mouths of rivers when Arctic char were plentiful all along the coast. Now char are seldom caught south of Churchill.



### *Summary and Conclusions*

In summary, Inuit and their predecessors have occupied northern Manitoba areas for almost 3500 years. They have lived and died in the Churchill, Hubbard Point, Nunalla, and Reindeer Lake areas from as far back as c.1500 B.C. up to the present time.

Inuit have most intensively occupied and continue to utilize the tundra and coastline encompassed by a triangle extending from Churchill north to Nunalla and inland about 130 km. The inland area around Reindeer Lake was used in the past primarily as a trading route but is not used today.

The recent hunting range of Arviat Inuit encompasses roughly 12,000 km.<sup>2</sup> in N.E. Manitoba; this area is approximately 10% of their total hunting range.

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## Disease and the Growth of Dawson City: The Seamy Underside of a Legend<sup>1</sup>

M.K. LUX

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The Klondike was the last great North American gold rush. Thousands descended on Dawson City driven by the myth of becoming the next 'Klondike King'. The legend of the gold rush celebrated the 'men who moil for gold', the Klondike Kings: Nigger Jim Daugherty and Swiftwater Bill Gates. It memorialized the dancehall girls, Diamond Tooth Gertie and the 'Turkish Whirlwind Danseuse'; and Sam Steele of the NWMP 'presiding at a bizarre and unforgettable moment in history' while the champagne 'ran as swiftly as the water in the sluice boxes on Eldorado.'<sup>2</sup>

This was the traditional view of Dawson City and the gold rush, but *London Times* correspondent, Flora Shaw, formed a different impression when she travelled there in 1898. According to her, Dawson City was a death-trap lying in wait for victims:

The insanitary conditions of Dawson, situated as the town is upon a swamp and devoid of the most elementary provisions for cleanliness and health, is a standing menace to the community. Typhoid is permanently in the town; the death-rate is abnormally high; and there are as yet no signs of any measures to be taken to avert the danger of a serious outbreak of epidemic.<sup>3</sup>

The legend of the gold rush ignored the stark reality of guileless and luckless people trampled in a stampede for gold; of the bent and broken and insane who were left behind. Their story is the seamy underside of the legend: a city forced to cope with the indigent and ill-prepared gold-seekers lured by the 'carnival of the Klondike'.

Dawson City's growth and decline, as seen through the prism of disease, allows a different Dawson City to emerge. Dawson's isolation was a cruel fact of life. It made living and working a difficult, and for some, an impossible task. Dawson's boomtown beginnings influenced the establishment and conduct of public health care for the next 20 years and more. The city burst forth, not allowed the slow, secure growth of most cities. It was born a city and became a village. Consequently, its development was stunted. Public health care only became an issue once