

VERBATIM

Anne Salluviniq Mullin

My name is Anne Itsivautalik Salluviniq Mullin, but people call me Anne. My parents came from Inukjuak Northern Quebec. They were relocated before I was born to Resolute Bay in 1953. I was born in Resolute Bay in 1962, I grew up there and as soon as I became 19 years old, I moved out of Resolute Bay.

Question 1: How was it growing up in Resolute Bay?

I remember because Resolute Bay had a bar and my parents used to go there even though my stepmother - well my dad had remarried after my mom passed away - so his second wife, even though she had a baby in her belly, she would go up to the bar and drink. And I remember when I was a little girl, I think I might have been seven years old or less, but after the baby was born, she and my dad went up to the bar leaving me to baby-sit. And the baby, during the night had passed away... I didn't blame myself. I know it's not my fault. I was only a little girl...

I just knew in my heart that it was not my fault. She already had lost two or three more babies that were still born, but she had one baby survive. She lives in Inukjuak now. Her name is Ida, Ida Salluviniq and we can tell that when she was in her mom's belly that she had alcohol syndrome and we grew up with alcohol up in Resolute Bay. We didn't mind it in the summertime, because you know in the summertime, it's not cold. We can go run away until they fall asleep and then we can go home. But when the winter hit, we had nowhere to run.

Well my grandmother Minnie, Minnie Allakariallak, well everybody calls her grandmother, she was the only safe place to go, to run away.

Question 2: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

I'm the youngest of my mother; so there is Allie Salluviniq, he's the oldest. Louisa Gillespie Salluviniq is the next one, David my brother, he lives in Iqaluit, Janice, she was adopted to Winnipeg, a couple in Winnipeg and she still lives in Winnipeg, and then myself. That is from my mother, Sarah. My father and... My parents have passed away in the eighties.

Question 3: How did you manage to survive in such a difficult environment?

My cousins, we would always get together, visit each other, like we would have to feed ourselves, we would be like seven years old. I'm not sure exactly how we survived, but we did.

As soon as they got old enough, like my brother, they would leave to go to residential school, so a lot of us were pretty young and we had to take care of younger... even though we're only seven and there were things like child sexual abuse and a lot of mental abuse. Physical abuse wasn't too too much but mainly mental and sexual abuse.

Question 4: Was school a safe place?

School was better than home. Even though our teacher was like... a lot of them were mean, but I think that it felt safer than our homes.

Question 5: When did you learn about the relocation?

I wasn't told like when I was younger and I knew something was not right, the things that were going on, all this drinking and all this abuse. I knew something was not right but I didn't know what and I couldn't figure what is happening and then one year finally my uncle's daughter, Anna Nungaq started talking about relocated and that's when, I think I was nineteen years old then... finally I knew why our family was like that.

I still didn't quite understand everything but I had at least started understanding that things were not right, but I didn't ask questions because Inuit way is like we were always told not to ask our elders questions. It's not polite.

Question 6: Why did you leave Resolute Bay?

You know three months darkness, that and it's too cold and still like people were still drinking lots, so I had to get out of Resolute Bay.

Question 7: Did you know your relatives in Inukjuak?

My father always told me, like after I realized, I mean he would always say , « Panik you have lots of relatives in Inukjuak, we left them» and that was even before I started realizing what happened, so I just thought like all the people in Inukjuak were my

relatives. And I would be like, wow, I didn't know that we're not just this small family but there is other people in my life that I'm related to. So I was excited. When you're going to Inukjuak and my three babies were just little, I didn't realize how many relatives like, I couldn't keep up. I'm not used to this, so I'm like it's still didn't sunk into me that I have that many relative.

Every time I go to Inukjuak, it's like a relief, like I'm starting to realize better now that relatives are so important. And I remember one year going to Inukjuak, it was like, because I'm not used to their dialect, because we had created our own dialect in Resolute Bay and everywhere we went we would be like, they would say « Ai, Ai ». And we would have to say « Aaah ». And I'm not used to that so I'd be so tired of it, I'd run to my room and close the door and just I want to be left alone, I'm not used to this many relatives and kindness and, it's just not. At first it didn't feel normal, kind of.

Question 8: What did you think of the government's apology?

We cried... We all got together and we cried. It was like, this is what my father wanted and he was not there to see it. But I'm sure he knows like, finally you know, an apology. Finally, he can settle down now. He is in peace now.

Question 9: Do you think it helped with the healing process?

I think so. Healing is very important in Inuit culture. In our last trip to Inukjuak, we did some healing, we did lots of crying, which felt so... something heavy came out from the inside and from the shoulders. So this time I'm looking forward to go back and get to know more of my family and how important. We probably won't be crying as much so we'll have more time to know each other better and do things together.

Some of my relatives that I grew up in Resolute Bay with that are living in Inukjuak, we would be talking and be like :« remember we used to go run out into the blizzard when our parents came home drunk? ». Like it would be blizzard in the winter and sometimes we would like huddle, trying to keep warm outside, outside the house.

Sometimes we would be in the porch until we could hear them sleeping and sometime they would lock us out, like they would lock the door, so we would be looking for houses to open so we could get in and get warm. In the spring time and summertime sometimes we would sleep outside.

Question 10: Do you talk to your children about the relocation?

I don't talk to my kids about relocation too much yet, but I know it's important for them to understand where their family came from. And it will be like a relief for them to know where their grandparents came from and where I came from and... It will make them stronger if they know about our history.

Question 11: Do you have an advice for young people?

The only advice that I would like for my children and young people is get to know family, family is important. Learn the history of this relocation and maybe go visit the family, get to know their ancestors. So next year we are going to get together, my family and I. I hope my grandson will come and three of my babies.

Minnie Allakariallak always gave us good advice, I don't think I would be here if she was not there so I thank her and even though my father did drink a lot, but I know... he gave me good advice too. There were some good little moments of course, like good memories, so I think that's about it.