

VERBATIM

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I am Louisa Elijassialuk. We are from Inukjuak. We were relocated to the High Arctic in 1960. I was twelve years old when we arrived in Resolute Bay. When the ship went to unload, I had my thirteenth Birthday. Then we went to Grise Fjord.

Question 1: Do you know what RCMP'S officers told your parents to convince them to go?

I don't recall hearing but I just knew. The RCMP were relocating. So my father was probably relocated to Grise Fiord so he could have work to Grise Fiord, a very far place. He was a laborer for the RCMP. I remember feeling...

It had only a few buildings. Very hilly and bitterly cold. We came from summer to a very cold place. Few buildings and large mountains. I was away for 18 years. We met on the first relocation ship. Our lives were otherwise normal. We got married and children. That's all.

Samwillie had a very hard experience; when he was relocated, he was already a young man. Therefore he physiologically had problems adjusting. He had loved his parents very much. That's what my late husband Samwillie went through.

How did we live? It was very dark, very dark. It was new to me. The sun never came up. My body had to learn how to cope. We also had to have something to eat. So our hunters had to keep going out. My father worked for the RCMP. I missed our foods. I was always thin.

Question 2: Do you remember the C.D. Howe ship?

The waters were very rough, when we were in the ship, everything was moving. Here to there. I couldn't sleep. I had a younger sister whom I had to care for. It was very rough. And when it was calm, we saw animals which we had never seen before around Inukjuak. We saw people living in their villages, that was us, then.

The things in the ship just rolled around. In the rough waves. They came aboard for x-ray, for medical reasons. I just kept throwing up. I had Tuberculosis before we were relocated. I was still a child in Inukjuak.

Question 3: Why did you decide to go back to Inukjuak?

When my husband decided to move back, we did. I didn't say 'let's move back' first; he wanted to move back as he still had relatives, in Inukjuak. He wanted his children to live here. So we moved back. I was happy. This is my home. I knew I was from Inukjuak. I knew I wasn't really from there (High Arctic). I was glad to come back.

Question 4 : Did you feel welcome when you came back to Inukjuak

It was difficult for Samwillie at first. He didn't feel welcomed by some of their words. It was difficult. And our children, who were from up there (High Arctic), had a hard time getting used to their new realities. The ways of Grise Fiord and Inukjuak are different. Even their bodies had to adjust. Samwillie and I were warmly welcomed.

We were very welcomed but, our children at school, since they are kids, behave in all kinds of ways. My husband Samwillie had already passed away, when they apologized. I thought it would have been better, if they apologized while he was still alive... they were still alive.

I was happy when they finally apologized. Very much. I had to be there to hear it. I was there. The apology went, was given to us. How do I see the future of Inukjuak? I see Inukjuak. Those who were left behind want to be remembered too. I want them remembered and apologized to as well. They still might get an apology when the statue gets installed here. Our children, my daughters have children now who are also growing up.

The experience of Samwillie and I, I don't want it for them. Their children will stay here, hopefully. I can't see into the future but I still said it.

Question 5: Something else you would like to talk about?

My late husband's word of pain, I felt with him. The anguish as we were relocated by the police, especially when they were still new to the High Arctic. He was hurt by these and so was I. When he was still living, after we had left Grise Fiord, it took our children a long time to adapt too. I

used to wonder if they would ever adjust. And those we had left behind in Grise Fiord, took a long time get over it.

I used to hope they would just get over it. My mum was still alive when we arrived. I had mum. I had mum so it was mostly all right. But my poor husband was of many minds and he had difficulty expressing himself. He kept all his feelings inside. He wanted an apology which was not coming. He was hurting. He was in pain and I felt it with him. That's all.

Question 6: What are your hopes for the young generation?

The new generation, have been just as hurt as their parents. Seeing the pains of their parents. I want them to heal, and become truly united with this community. I wish the (Fed) government would honestly inquire about all aspects of the people they relocated. They should come to the High Arctic for a period. It's very expensive up there. Even here is getting pricey. The nasty government should have a representative there. The "nasty" government... So they can see how their policy precipitate expensive living for those they relocated. So they too will know.