

VERBATIM

Rynee Flaherty

I am Rynee. I am originally from Inukjuak. I was relocated to Ajuittuq by ship. I was on the ship and I was in Grise Fjord for a long time. I moved here. I now live in Iqaluit for a while now. All my children are here and none of my relatives were up there anymore so I made the choice to move here. I wanted to see if I will get more support in Iqaluit.

When we were relocated up there by ship, we were very poor for a while. When I was trying to pick ice, I was axing rocks instead because I thought it was ice. That's how poor we were. It was like that but it was improving because school started. But students were poor too. I tried making food but food was scarce because the ship wasn't able to come. When it did arrive, it brought little supplies.

When school was starting, kids were growing, they were still small and I had very little food. Although I was poor, it passed. I always tried making food with the little that I had. Food was scarce. There was no store bought food. Animal meat was hard to get, it wasn't refused. That's how poor I was.

Question 1: How many children do you have?

Martha, Mary, Peter, Harry, Lizzie, William, Johnny, Elisapie and Jimmy. When we set up our tents up in Grise Fiord. When it wasn't named Grise Fiord yet. When it was only called Ajuittuq. It was frightful when we first set up our tents in Ujarasuk, when we passed through Ujarasuk. When we lived in our tent after we got up there, we were always hungry. That place up there was very hard although people of Mittimatalik followed us to teach the people who went up there.

There was small progression after the school opened. There was no school and no radio. We stayed up there without ever receiving news from others. Nowadays, people are capable so there is no more hunger. They learned and are now capable and they're working so there is no more hardship. Granting we go through hardship sometimes.

People clothes themselves and are surviving on their own so I don't ever go through hardship anymore, with support. When my uncle heard that I was leaving, he said: "I wish she wasn't leaving".

Those that were leaving by dog team didn't know the land up there in Aujittuq. They didn't know the ways, how the wind blows... So, we would worry about them. On top of it, they were hungry too. Then when we were living in Aujittuq, I would sometimes say: « I wish those who are making us stay in Aujittuq would spend time here and pick ice where there is no moon and see if they would give up ».

I was mad at those who relocated us all the way to Aujittuq. It was joyous when the sun never went down in the summer but there was always hunger. It didn't make any sense.

Question 2: What did you think of the government's apology?

I enjoyed it. I was grateful for it but not grateful for it at the same time. I ended up enjoying it when we were given money. I was overjoyed. I didn't like it because I was thinking about the time I was in poverty.

Question 3: How was the healing week in Inukjuak?

Summer? It was great. And there was Inukshuks the size of a man placed at the top of the hill. I think it was the most joyous thing when we all came together concerning this and there was bagpipes playing. Those bagpipe players were always present so that was the most joyous thing.

And all those that we left behind were happy. Those original people who were dear to us that we left behind, although some are missing now, were overjoyed. Our relatives who weren't present, many of them have passed on since we went through that experience. That's what made it unpleasant.

Question 4: You left your brother in Inukjuak in 1955, did you see him again?

Yes, I saw him when he was grown up. He was not really involved because he was not used to seeing me. I didn't really bother him because I am not accustomed to him.

Question 5: Is there something else you would like to talk about?

Her father wrote that when he was trying to hunt seals, this Martha here, was very young when she helped her father hunt seals.

The only neighbors we had were the police. They were the only Caucasian people. They were also our nurses.

Back in our little land, I was trying to learn so I made a sod house when I had never made one before. The sod house I built burnt down and we had no where else to go.

Question 6: Do you have a message to the youth?

They're restless. Our youth are restless. They only speak English.

They are not really making any sense. They are not listening to their parents' words. They only want to listen to the white people.