

VERBATIM

Moses Kyak

I am Moses Kyak. Yes, to Craig Harbour. I was perhaps 7 years old along with my parents. I had siblings, well, there were 5 of us children along with my father and mother there were 7 of us in total. When we were leaving on the C.D. Howe that was the sum of our family.

Perhaps in 1951 or in 1950 we were taken away as my father worked for the RCMP as a Special Constable, we were to be the caretakers. He first went up there to look over the location, I think we were sent up to prepare for the people before their arrival, they said that area needed to be populated and we were sent up there.

The things I remember when we went aboard the ship and were leaving our community, I was 7 years old perhaps, my mother and father and older brothers were outside so we could look at Pond Inlet that we were leaving and the blaring of the ship's horn was especially noticeable, we experienced that.

When we left here through the open ocean we went to Tallurut the first time. From Tallurut, at Tallurut they disassembled the buildings there and put them aboard the ship and they became our homes.

My father's older brother too had five children along with his wife and they too were RCMP employees. And the Ningiuq family, they arrived here and we left with my uncle's family to there, he too had five children, I think we were fourteen in total. We stopped at Tallurut and picked up their inhabitants by ship. I used to be scared of Southerners and we were leaving for foreign lands so we did not know what to expect.

From Tallurut we then went onto Craig Harbour by ship. There the ship offloaded and the buildings that had been picked up from Tallurut were offloaded to Craig Harbour. When we arrived at Craig Harbour we arrived to an isolated post, the RCMP buildings were there, the old ones that had not been inhabited for a long time.

While there the small building we lived at while they were building us a house, my father and his older brother, my mother and older siblings would help, it was hard as we had to hunt for food too, we did not have food. And they would hunt for dog food too, the dogs needed food as well as us and then return to building the house. That was the situation when we first arrived, I knew of people going through hardships.

Yes, it was not too bad as they were working together, they were all working hard. And the RCMP officers had been posted at Tallurut and had been among the Inuit for I don't know how many years and they worked well with each other. They were paid a small salary, I'm not sure of the details, in 1951 they were paid a monthly fee of \$15.00.

So we lived down there. It was the heart of winter and we did not know the area as we had not lived there before.

And the men would never stay still, as winter approached it was very dark and they would hunt for food, build houses and it would be very cold, sometimes the wind would blow very fiercely during the fall. We would sometimes have to flee to the bigger house.

And the first small house we inhabited when we got off the ship was very small and completely full, it had been a shed or something and we could only use the stone lamps, that was the situation we were in.

So when winter arrived and the houses were completed. We were able to take residence, the houses they built were old houses they took apart and reconstructed, we then lived in them but they were heated with a coal stove so they were okay.

All winter they would travel by dog team and go to different places, up to spring they were scouting out the whole area to understand the land and animals. They would also travel to Eureka, Resolute, other places, Tallurut too.

They were never rested, they were always on the move. I remembered this, when the ship left it felt like we were the only people left on that island up there, only next year when the ship arrived would we see others. That was the situation, it was difficult, our family members too would go through hardships.

The RCMP had radios and they would contact other communities and keep in touch but sometimes when my mother and father would lose relatives in Pond Inlet and wanted to be there they could not and that would be hard to deal with sometimes.

So, for two years, almost three years we lived there. And my father's older brother Panipakoocho's family lived there for one year and were moved to a different site, perhaps to Sanngannguarvik or Pond Inlet. No, they had returned to Pond Inlet first and we were then stationed with a different family, the Ningiuq family.

That was our situation. Then... In 1953 they had planned the arrival of people with the ship. As people would be coming, they built houses and a small shop and a big boat was offloaded, they received two boats, the one with points at both ends they offloaded first, a more sturdy boat. We would travel by boat everywhere even when the waves were very rough before their arrival.

And they travelled all over by dogteam before their arrival to look for sites that the arrivals would live at, that what they were doing. While they were away 8 dogteams with Greenlandic people arrived and that was the first we saw of others, that was the situation we were in.

They kept scouting the area for a suitable site, they worked very hard to plan for the upcoming arrivals. Shall I continue? So as summer arrived, during summer the ship arrived and Inukjuak and Pond Inlet families, two families from Pond Inlet and the Inukjuak people arrived to our camp and we then lived with them. They did not come to an uninhabited place, we were living there. After staying there they were dropped off to their community site and were assisted, they worked together.

That era was different from today, you could not just walk into a building you first had to build your sodhouse, they lived in tents in the beginning. They worked together and were assisted in building sodhouses, they used stone lamps.

It must have been a terrible hardship for them to be relocated, we too suffered greatly being relocated to a foreign land, we too were relocated to a foreign land for the first time. And those people must have suffered hardship being relocated and leaving their families behind now that they lived down there now.

We would visit them in their new camp, they kept looking for a new site as the Craig Harbour site was rocky, we then moved to Grise Fiord and they built homes there. My father had wanted that to be the community site, a small plane could land there, a ship could harbour there and there were hunting grounds.

Shall I continue? My father and them would be away for long periods, they travelled to Resolute, Eureka and Greenland and we would be alone for long periods and would need food of course as we may alone for a whole month. We would wait for them, they had no radios and we wouldn't hear from them. We did hear from them if they went to Resolute or if they left Resolute but they were away for long periods.

We would listen outside trying to hear the dogteam's noises, when we heard them we were very excited, we were very happy when our father came home after being away for a long time with the RCMP. They had many duties to fulfill down there, the area needed close surveying.

So when we relocated to Grise Fiord, they transported the buildings from Craig Harbour, everything by dogteam and started building in Grise Fiord and people started to get homes but they lived across from us, we were not together, we were with the RCMP. That was how we moved to Grise Fiord.

We became close with the Inukjuak people, we would get together during spring, we would have spring vacations sometimes. And the place is now called Aqsarvik as people would play ball there.

We became a strong community but there were hard times as we had left our relatives behind, and the Inukjuak people were in the same situation, that was the situation we were in down there.

Although we were getting used to the area we now lived at. I was a child and grew up there, I learned to drive a dog team perhaps at age 14, I was now able to take care of my own dogs and could hunt on my own, I was able to do that around 13, 14 years of age.

Our father would be away for long periods and we had no choice but to travel. I was always with Okookoo, hunting with him. We would get together, put our dogs together, we were very young, perhaps 14, 15 years old and we would go on overnight trips, happy that we were together. When we first met I was so very happy to meet him, Okookoo, we would hang out together and he was my age.

That was how it was with us two. I grew up in isolated places as we had lived with just my family down there. We did have another family with us but I grew up in isolated places.

We left here when there were very few people here by ship and lived the whole time with very few people in isolated camps and it was the same for the families who worked for the RCMP.

Shall I continue? Down there, they would travel by dog team everywhere, to Resolute and they would hunt as they survived only on animals. And they would trade for goods with what they made as they were not making money, that was the situation they were in. With their carvings or fox skins, we trapped foxes extensively during the winter.

We lived in an area with wildlife, we did not go hungry, it was okay and we started to get used to it after some years. Down there they would travel by boat to everywhere also, sometimes it was very hard.

From near Tallurut, we came from an island and went through very rough seas and I would bail the boat. The land would disappear due to the giant waves, whitecaps were everywhere and the wind was blowing very fiercely. We had to lash ourselves to the boat and I helped bail, I was a child, a young boy. That was a terrifying experience. Our pilot was lashed to the boat and covered with skins as we were very wet, that was the situation. Afterward we went to Craig Harbour.

There were many hard times and the boat was anchored with my father sleeping in it as he was worried for the boat. The wind was blowing very hard and it's anchors released

and he was drifting alone in the boat. There is an island down there and the boat was nearly washing ashore there when he woke up because he got to rough waters. He was headed for the island and having a terrible time and the anchors were on chains and he used all his strength to haul them in with his bare hands.

And we would take dog team trips to past the island to where only the shoreline had rough ice piled up and we had to use harpoons and axes to make a trail as I would go on trips.

We travelled through ice like that a lot. That point would have the floe edge come up right to it and the frozen ice on the shore was very rough and sometimes it would take us days to chop through the ice to make any headway sometimes.

And that great glacier on route to Eureka, they would not be able to get any higher travelling on it so they would take the dogs up through another way, poke a hole in the ice and haul their stuff up with the dog's help. After they got all their stuff to the top they would pitch a tent and rest for the night and start off again.

They did not give up under any circumstances, they had no choice but to keep going, they worked very hard down there. They took dogteam trips everywhere, they had to use dogteams as we did not have any other forms of transportation, we did not have snow machines and there would never ever have been an automobile at that time.

Sometimes we were happy, sometimes we went through tough times and sometimes there were hardships. That was how it was. But they never stopped working during the cold dark winter, they hunted constantly even though it would stay dark out, looking for seal holes or catching walrus.

We caught a caribou in the dark too, we were travelling and the dogs took off after caribou and when we got near the caribou he shot one and we stopped, we experienced that.

There were no people other than us the first time. Later on it was better as we had the people from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet with us. We could visit each other back and forth and could be with other people.

I am giving you the condensed version, I could tell you about many other events. They would travel far by dog team during the spring, beginning in February, March. Building igloos out of snow every evening. That was our routine, when we would be camping for the night we would always build igloos, but during spring we would stay in tents.

When it was time to leave Grise Fiord, it then became hard too. I became capable down there.

And when we were leaving Okookoo and his family and the Inukjuak people and others it was very difficult. We had gotten used to the people, they became our friends. We got along well and it became hard to leave them and return here.

I appreciate this event very much and am grateful for it, it was a very good event. It was like seeing our relatives again, we had been community members. That Elisapee Nutaraq and the others, our past fellow community members, Moses and the others. But many people have passed away, those who were the parents. When we older people got together it was a joyous event, I appreciated it very much. We are very grateful to those who came here to our community, it has helped improve our lives here.

Let me add another comment. When we were living down there in Grise Fiord there was a small shop and Inuit would go shopping and when the ship was expected they would arrive and it seemed like we were well populated. We enjoyed each other's company, we were close friends and we would share meals together.

We would be welcomed by the Inukjuak people when we travelled to their community, they would bring us food, bannock. And we would stay with the Pilipoosie family and others, the Akpaliapik's, Arnakallak's and others. We would be welcomed when we arrived there and would be well taken care of. They would feed us, their long stick bannock were very delicious. We got along very well with each other, for that reason we remember them. They and our Pond Inlet community people worked very hard together and I wanted to add that.

I'll make it very short. Akpaliapik wanted his younger brother to join him, he was sick and was medivaced, I think the plane arrived from Churchill, Manitoba perhaps via Resolute, a military plane. I was pretty young, perhaps 14 years old.

I went by dogteam to their camp as the officer told me to go tell them that the aircraft would be arriving. After I returned from telling them his older brother was brought over by Okookoo for departure by aircraft. He returned during the summer completely better by ship. When I first met Okookoo I was glad as there weren't many youth my age, well, he was my age, my friend. We would travel all over, camping. We were very young, aged around 13, 14, 15 years old.

We could camp out, we would hunt as that was what we had been taught by our parents. That was how it was for us, that is all.