The archaeology of Eskimo Hütte (IkDb-2): Inuit sovereignty in the Torngat

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Résumé: L'archéologie du site Eskimo Hütte (IkDb-2): souveraineté inuit dans les monts Torngat

Cet article montre comment une recherche faite en collaboration entre les Inuit du Labrador et des archéologues a eu comme résultat la découverte de nouvelles informations concernant le mode de vie des Inuit du nord du Labrador à la fin du XIXe siècle. Cette découverte, qui ajoute un autre point de vue aux sources déjà existantes (celles des Moraves et de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson), documente aussi la souveraineté culturelle des Inuit du nord du Labrador qui refusèrent de déménager dans les missions.

Abstract: The archaeology of Eskimo Hütte (IkDb-2): Inuit sovereignty in the Torngat

This paper shows how a collaborative research by Labrador Inuit and professional achaeologists resulted in the discovery of new information on the way of life of northern Labrador people at the end of the 19th century. This discovery, which adds another viewpoint to other accounts (those of the Moravian Brethren and Hudson's Bay Company, documents the cultural sovereignty of the northernmost Labrador Inuit, who refused to move to the mission stations.

> To write of the Eskimos as they were in bygone days would be a fascinating thing, but it would mean building upon a slender foundation. No, the past of the Eskimo people must always remain something of a mystery.
>
> S. K. Hutton (1912)

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Introduction

With the successful establishment of the first Moravian Mission at Nain in 1771, the Moravian and Inuit identities became inextricably linked. At least that is the way the Qallusaat (*i.e.* the Whites) would have it. Notwithstanding the fact that the Thule Inuit ancestors had preceded the Moravians by at least three hundred years, mid-19th century eurocentric perceptions had reduced the Inuit to helpless wards from the wilderness, dependent on Moravian management and benevolence:

> By their [the Moravian's] means the Eskimos have been preserved from extinction, have been civilized, educated, and brought to the knowledge of their Creator and Saviour (Gosling 1910: 316).

The Inuit probably told a different story.

A collaborative archaeological research initiative on 19th century Labrador Inuit culture was launched by the author in association with the Labrador Inuit Association and the Torngâsok Cultural Centre in 1989 (Loring and Baikie 1992). Interest in the culture history of Labrador inevitably brings one into contact with two substantial corpuses of archival records pertaining to the social and economic relationships between colonial and post-colonial Europeans, and the Inuit of Labrador and adjacent Ungava, these being the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company (established in 1670) and those of the Unitas Fratrum — the church of the Moravian Brethren (in Labrador continuously since 1770). The Periodical Accounts of the Moravian missionaries (Taylor 1974, 1977) and the account books and post ledgers of the Hudson's Bay Company (Elton 1942; White 1926) provide a sometimes vivid insight into the dynamics of culture contact and the beliefs, aspirations and motivations of both Europeans and Inuit. Nevertheless, these records are inherently biased in that it is the perspective of European mercantile and parochial interests that tell the story. Theoretically it is believed that archaeology has the potential to provide insights on Labrador Inuit socioeconomics, philosophy, ideology and subsistence strategies that are not dependent on these obviously biased accounts. The archaeological record is derived from the material cultural residue of Inuit choices and actions. In the absence of Inuit written accounts and records, archaeology affords an opportunity to provide an Inuit voice in the construction of local history and to encourage northern Natives to participate in research that has cultural relevance to them.

Archaeological research on the Labrador Inuit and their immediate ancestors has for the most past focused on the earlier aspects of Inuit adaptation; on the conditions surrounding the Thule invasion and colonization of Labrador in the 14th and 15th centuries (Schledermann 1972; Kaplan 1980, 1983, 1997); and on the subsequent period of early contact dynamics between the Inuit and European fishermen (Bird 1945; Jordan 1978; Kaplan 1983, 1985). The appearance of communal longhouses at 17th and 18th century Inuit sites has been interpreted as signaling the emergence of a group of powerful "middlemen" or "Big Men," as Inuit entrepreneurs sought to consolidate social and political power by managing the flow of European manufactured products and raw materials (Jordan 1978; Jordan and Kaplan 1980; Schledermann 1976). Labrador Inuit territorial expansion into the Strait of Belle Isle

resulted in armed confrontations between the Inuit and the Europeans and attested to the aggressiveness with which the Inuit sought access to European goods (Auger 1991a, 1991b; Martijn 1980; Trudel 1978).

Throughout the late-18th and 19th centuries, as formerly autonomous Inuit communities gradually gravitated towards Moravian mission settlements, the Inuit found themselves increasingly participating in an expanding world economic system. Inuit labor and Inuit goods, including fish, furs and marine mammal products, were exchanged for European raw materials and manufactured commodities. Archaeological research at 19th century Inuit sites has been conducted at a number of localities including Hamilton Inlet (Jordan 1974, 1977), Saglek (Schledermann 1972), and along the north coast of Labrador (Kaplan 1983; Plumet and Gangloff 1991). Nineteenth century Labrador Inuit components have been excavated at a number of Moravian mission stations including Zoar (Loring 1985), Nain (Cabak 1991), Hebron (Loring 1990) and Ramah (Kaplan 1983).

The archaeological research initiated with this project seeks to broaden the study of the 19th century Inuit and European socio-economic relations. Specifically, it recognizes that the Inuit of Labrador and Nunavik (Northern Quebec) continued to advance their own agenda. The historical perspective provided by the Moravian literature, full of the conflict between Heathen and Christian Inuit, clearly attests to the presence of continued friction and resistance to the Moravians (Brice-Bennett 1981; Kleivan 1966; Richling 1978). The materialistic bias of an archaeological perspective has the potential to empower a new voice, that of the Inuit themselves, in interpreting Labrador Inuit history. Archaeological deposits contain materials that testify to the choices made by 19th century Inuit families, and shed light on the nature of "resistance," as well as accommodation, to Western manufactured products and trade. The Moravian side of the story is preserved in mission documents and records, but the Inuit side, if it is to be told, must be derived — at least in part — from archaeology.

It did not take the Moravians at Nain long to realize that the varied resources on which the Inuit depended necessitated a high degree of mobility (Kleivan 1966: 28). Not only did a wandering, rootless existence threaten the pastoral idyll that the Moravians envisioned for their "flock," it was readily apparent that once removed from the missionary presence the Inuit would revert to their "traditional," *i.e.* "heathen" ways. The Moravians sought to control these tendencies and practices by aggressively expanding their mission. Pushing out from their centre at Nain, the mission at Okak was founded in 1776, followed in 1782 by the mission at Hopedale. The expanded Moravian presence had several objectives: 1) it sought to extend the influence of the Moravian mission to areas where the Inuit could move in response to social and ecological factors; 2) it sought to counter the necessity for Inuit to travel down the Labrador coast to intercept European traders and fishermen; and 3) it provided a buffer for the "civilized" or "Christian Inuit" from their heathen, "barbarous" relatives in the north (Brice-Bennett 1981; Hiller 1971; Kleivan 1966). This last reason figured significantly in the 19th century expansion of the Moravian Mission in Labrador (Loring 1998).

By 1824, Nain and Hopedale were Christian communities, successfully isolated from neighbouring heathen influences. The Moravians brought social and economic pressures to bear on their Inuit congregations in order to encourage the Inuit to settle at or near the mission stations in an attempt to minimize the disruptive influences of their northern relatives. Despite the growth of the mission in the early 19th century, the Moravians at Okak were constantly being undermined by the visits of northern Inuit traveling south to acquire materials at the Moravian posts. In order to assure some tranquillity to Okak, a mission further north, at Hebron, was established in 1830 (Gosling 1910: 294).

In 1861, a Moravian census estimated the Inuit population along the Labrador coast at 1500 persons, of which 1163 were "Christian," that is affiliated with one of the mission stations (Gosling 1910: 303). The remaining 350 persons mostly comprised the small scattered family groups who lived and hunted in the Torngat Mountain region of northern Labrador, between Saglek and Cape Chidley. These were the "Heathen" Inuit who figure significantly in the Moravian documents as an affront to the basic precepts by which the missionaries constructed their life and by which their world view was affirmed.

The Heathen Eskimos (*Okpingetut Inuit*)

Throughout the 19th century, accounts of the winter visits of the "Heathen Eskimos" to the northern mission stations figure significantly in the pages of the Periodical Accounts (an ecclesiastical newsletter published continually since 1790, summarizing Moravian mission activities worldwide through excerpts from missionary letters and station diaries). On the one hand, the visits afforded a chance for scattered family groups to renew kin relations and acquire European manufactured products. They also provided the northern Inuit groups with an opportunity to observe the social and economic consequences of an intimate association with the Moravians.

The social upheaval and disruption caused by these visits was a stern trial for the Moravians, who saw the facade of their "civilizing" influences on their congregations severely tested. However the visits of the heathens was also seen as a challenge to the furtherance of their mission in Labrador:

> I have taken much interest in the Northlanders who occasionally visit this settlement [Hebron]. Among them are often men with long hair and beards, while others wear amulets, and the women usually carry the infant-children naked in their hoods. As they refuse to leave their native district, the only way by which they can be benefitted, would be, the establishing of some new Mission stations among them (Private correspondence from A. Ribbach at Hebron, Periodical Accounts, 23, 1858: 86).

> One man said, that they knew the same things of their Torngak, which we told about our Jesus, as the former had recalled to life not a few angekoks who were quite dead, etc. [...] Upon this, the man cut the conversation short, by saying, laughingly, that they had heard enough of such matters, and would like to see some of our European articles (Private correspondence from F. Erdman at Hebron, Periodical Accounts, 23, 1858: 300).

> As soon as they [Northlanders from the Ungava and Kangiva districts] had procured the articles they wanted, they hurried back, some of them declaring that the Torngak was angry with them for listening to what was told them of Jesus. "We want presents," said some of them; "of Jesus we do not want to hear" (Private correspondence from Hebron, Periodical Accounts, 24, 1861: 471).

One of the last heathen "strongholds" was the region around Eclipse Channel and North Aulatsivik Island in the Torngat Mountain region of northern Labrador (Hantzsch 1932; Kaplan 1983: 370, 788). Historical records describing the Inuit of this region are rare for the early part of the 19th century.

The first Europeans to visit the area and provide a description of it were Benjamin Kohlmeister and George Kmoch, a pair of Moravian missionaries in 1811 who, with the help of their Inuit guides, journeyed along the north Labrador coast and around Cape Chidley to Ungava Bay (Kohlmeister and Kmoch 1814). Their party met several Inuit families (50 people in seven tents) fishing for char at the mouth of the rivers and creeks in Nachvak Fiord and at Komaktorvik. They sailed pass Aulatsivik without stopping (except briefly, inadvertently, when they struck a rock) to rendezvous with some Inuit families from Saglek north of Kikkavik.

In the summer of 1860, the United States Government sent a small scientific party to northern Labrador to conduct observations during a solar eclipse (Alexander 1861). Like Kohlmeister and Kmoch, the Eclipse Expedition did not meet any Inuit during their stay at North Aulatsivik Island, however, in the course of their explorations in the region, expedition members did discover the remains of a recently abandoned Inuit winter camp. A description of the Inuit house survives in the journal of Oscar Lieber (Lieber n.d.), the expedition's geologist.

Oscar Lieber and the U.S. Eclipse Expedition to Northern Labrador, 1860

The U.S. Eclipse Expedition to Northern Labrador was comprised of some of the leading American astronomers and physicists of the day. The expedition was funded by an act of Congress and a steamship, the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey vessel Bibb, was made available to transport the scientists to northern Labrador.

Among the illustrious personages aboard the Bibb was a young man from Columbia, South Carolina, Oscar M. Lieber (1833-1863), former State Geologist for South Carolina and a remarkably gifted natural historian (Merrill 1924: 323-325; Krumpelmann 1965; Schuette n.d.). Lieber had no specialized astronomical experience to contribute to the expedition, but he was selected both for his willingness to assist the other members as needed, for his mapping and cartography skills, and for the opportunity to expand the science agenda of the expedition with geological and natural historical observations and collections. Lieber kept a detailed journal of his trip to Labrador, a journal which upon his return to South Carolina he was editing for publication (Lieber n.d.). Unfortunately, the American Civil War intervened. Lieber, an ardent believer in the South's cause, enlisted in the Confederate Army. He died in 1863 from wounds sustained in battle.

Lieber's journal provides a wonderful narrative of the Eclipse expedition. In addition to chronicling the events of the expedition, it provides a colorful glimpse of some aspects of Inuit life in Labrador beyond that derived from Moravian sources. The expedition encountered Inuit near Battle Harbour and outside of Nain, but it is his description of the Inuit winter house on Eclipse Channel that is of interest here.

Delayed by bad weather, the expedition reached North Aulatsivik Island, some seventy kilometers south of Cape Chidley, on July 14th and immediately set about building an observatory and setting up the tidal gauges and base lines needed for eclipse related measurements. In the fashion of 19th century explorers, the American scientists promptly renamed all the area's significant landmarks after patrons and friends; the large fjord-like bay south of their anchorage is today called Eclipse Channel, after their expedition.

July 18th, the day of the eclipse, dawned gray and overcast but cleared partially so that most of the desired observations were obtained. With the main goal of the expedition accomplished, several days were given over to relaxing, disassembling the equipment, and exploring in the immediate vicinity (Figure1). On July 20th a small party set off in the ship's gig to explore the head of Eclipse Harbour and the broad channel which had been spied out as lying beyond:

> [...] After unsuccessfully shooting at some wild swans(?) which looked like gigantic loons we took to the gig again and sailed westward to the mouth of a bold snow creek which dashed rapidly into the salt water inlet.
>
> Here we landed. The first thing we saw on the beach was what appeared to be a dead young seal. Kicking it over, however, we saw that it was something sewed up. One of the sailors split it open with his sheath knife, when its contents were discovered to be an Esquimaux sealskin shirt and a well worn very short pair of trousers of the same material. Not far off was seen one of the stone huts they build for killing seal and, while we were yet speculating on the fate of the owner of the bundle which was evidently washed up, we came upon an Esquimaux hut, the first we have seen. It was scarcely visible except at a very short distance. Built up against the low hill it seemed to form a part of it and a little bare earth and rock and a square black hole was all that betrayed its existence. The hut was deserted and thus admitted of our free inspection. The entrance was about 3 feet at the outside and 26 inches on the inside, so that we had to stoop and crawl in. 20 feet wide 16 ft. from inner entrance to back. 9 feet deep in the middle. Surrounding bench about 18 inches high. Over the centre of the regular floor in other words of the whole structure were two open square skylights along side of one another. The roof was fir poles the crevices stuffed with moss and grass and all covered with moss turf and earth. The benches and floor were of stone. Bones were sticking in every hole and cranny representing all the animals of this region, from the walrus and polar bear, to the wolf, fox and wolverine. Moose, deer remains, or those of rein deer were also abundant. Besides these we found cast off mokasins, half putrid skins of deer, bear, seal and wolf (white), an instrument apparently for music constructed similarly to a banjo and shaped like a pair of bellows, some walrus tusk spearheads, an iron ditto, a tin can, all and everything blackened and reeking with the rancid seal oil, covered with soot and filth, altogether the nastiest, dirtiest most greasy concern imaginable. Dry dirt is nothing to look at — wet dirt can be viewed without absolutely turning one's stomach but this greasy dirt is fearful. It is incredible that human beings can subsist in such terrible filth. No words can describe it. A hog-pen would be a parlour compared with it — greasy,

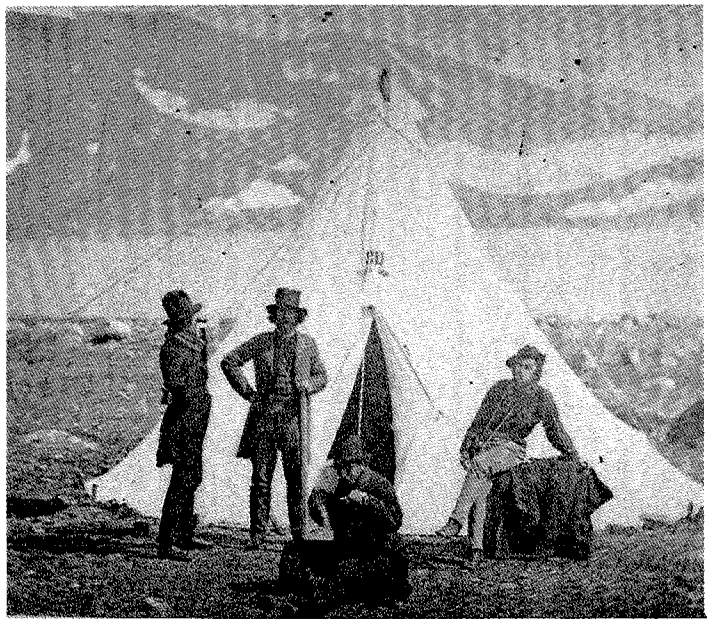

Figure 1. Oscar Lieber (right) and members of the U.S. Eclipse Expedition lounging in camp, North Aulatsivik Island, Labrador, 1860. *Photography Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Collection of Photographic History, National Museum of American History.*

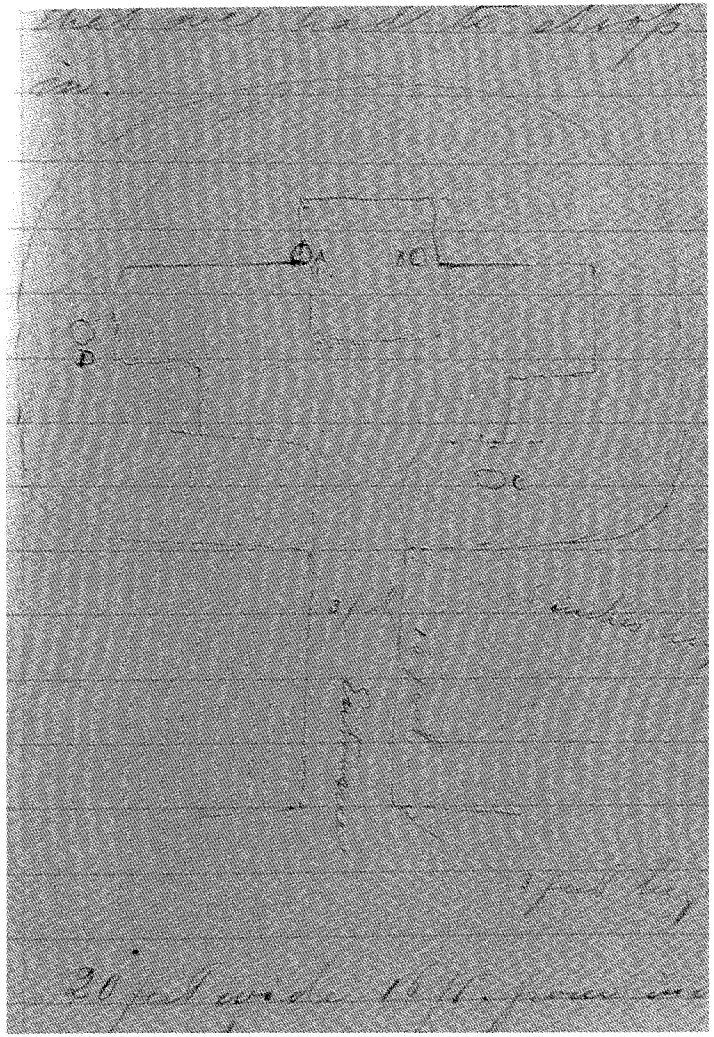

Figure 2. Oscar Lieber's plan drawing of the Eskimo house on the mainland west of North Aulatsivik Island, July 1860 (A and B are interior house posts, C and D are seal oil lamps). *Photograph of page in Oscar Lieber's journal, The South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina.*

> smeary, sooty, rancid, putrid as it was. A few things we selected to take on board and then hastened to enjoy the fresh air again. Very large excrements by some considered as of bear, by me though of large dogs (or wolves) lay scattered in profusion (Lieber n.d.).

The location of the Inuit house ("Eskimo Hütte") appears on the sketch map in Lieber's journal (Figure 2) and on a report Lieber wrote of the expedition that appeared in Petermann's, a distinguished European geographical journal (Lieber 1861). The ruins of the house Lieber visited in 1860 were rediscovered on the south side of Eclipse Channel by Patrick Plumet (Plumet and Gangloff 1991) during a preliminary archaeological reconnaissance of northernmost Labrador in 1967. Plumet's "LAB 4" was revisited by members of the Smithsonian's Torngat Archaeological Project (T.A.P.) in 1977. T.A.P. personnel named the site Goose Run, after the small flock of molting Canadian geese that held title to the grassy hillside and river. The site (IkDb-2) was found to contain the remains of six sod houses grouped around a shallow ravine overlooking the mouth of a small river (Figure 3). Several large stone cairns were found along the shore just below the houses. The results of the T.A.P. survey are contained in Susan Kaplan's dissertation (1983: 782-788). On the basis of test pits placed in four of the six houses, it was determined that the structures were the remains of 19th century Inuit houses.

It was not until 1985, when I had the opportunity to read Lieber's journal (at the University of South Carolina's South Caroliniana Library in Columbia), that I determined the connection between the site that Lieber visited and the sod house remains at Eclipse Channel. The site seemed to be an excellent candidate for initiating an ethnohistorical-archaeological investigation of 19th century Labrador Inuit culture. Up until the mid-century, the Inuit living around North Aulatsivik Island were among the most isolated groups in northern Quebec and Labrador. Given Lieber's detailed description of the house and his accompanying plan, it seemed a particularly appropriate structure to excavate in order to derive information from a "heathen" Inuit camp that was known to be occupied in 1860. It was anticipated that fieldwork at Eskimo Hütte — acknowledging the precedent and preference for the earlier site nomenclature — would provide an excellent opportunity to compile data which could be compared with coeval sites that maintained a closer affiliation with the Moravian missionaries.

1989 fieldwork at Eclipse Channel

Fieldwork at Eskimo Hütte was conducted between 30th July and 8 August 1989 (Loring 1989). We hoped to be able to identify the structure that Lieber visited and to determine the temporal relationship between it and the other structures at the site (Figure 3). Lacking the time to completely excavate a structure, we hoped to be able to assess the conditions at the site and sample enough of the structures to determine the nature of the household deposits and the extent and preservation of associated middens.

Figure 3. Site plan of Eskimo Hütte 1 (IkDb-2).

Because Lieber's account mentions only a single structure at Eskimo Hütte, he must not have noticed the already ruined remains of earlier houses, or the additional structures were built after 1860. We hoped to identify the 1860 structure by comparing Lieber's drawing with our own measurements and by limited excavations in the entrance passages of likely structures. Not surprisingly, none of the extent structures at Eskimo Hütte exactly coincided with Lieber's plan drawing, soil slumpage and collapsed walls having obscured the original dimensions. Furthermore, as our excavations revealed, many of the houses had more than one occupation, with subsequent renovations likely altering the original dimensions.

Excavation units

Comparisons between the ruined house remains and Lieber's drawing limited the possibilities of identifying the structure occupied in 1860 to one of three houses.

House 1 is a small rectangular structure built into the hillside, it has a short entrance passage and a rear sleeping platform. Walrus bones and iron sled runners were lying tangled in the grass on the surface in the house interior. Although House 1 is somewhat smaller than the structure described by Lieber, it was similar enough to warrant a test excavation. A 2.5 x 1.5 meter excavation unit was placed in the entrance passage immediately in front of a collapsed linteled doorway construction. The sterile overburden of fallen wall and roof sods was removed to expose a flat stone slab floor lining the entrance passage. A shallow midden composed of animal bone, fragments of wood (chips, chunks and cut pieces), and discarded artifacts was recovered from just above the floor.

Cultural materials included ceramic sherds, glass and iron fragments, nails, bullets and centre-fire cartridge cases, scraps of cloth, tin cans, tin cups, and beads. A celluloid (or vulcanite) mouthpiece for a pipe was perhaps the most temporally diagnostic piece recovered, as this was not invented until 1878 (Gradwohl and Osborn 1984: 154-155; Walker 1983). The House 1 assemblage is clearly later than 1860, a best guess for the date of the assemblage being between 1880-1890 (Figure 4).

House 1 midden, an 80 cm square excavation unit, was placed six meters from the end of the short entrance passage near the base of the knoll on which the house was situated. Beneath a shallow surface sod cover was a 6 cm thick pavement of well preserved animal bones intermixed with a few artifacts.

House 2 is a large rectangular structure with a six meter long entrance passage. Stone boulders are set at the mouth of the entrance passage which opens out directly on to the back wall of House 1. A lid to a large copper kettle which had been turned into a seal oil lamp was found on the surface in the interior of the house. An excavation unit was placed just inside the mouth of the tunnel extending into the latter for two meters. Excavation did not extend deeper than the top of the carefully prepared paved stone floor. There may be deeper deposits but we did not desire to disturb the existing architecture with our test unit. Bone and wood preservation was excellent.

Artifacts recovered included scraps of iron, porcelain and earthenware ceramics, fragments of bottle glass, centre-fire rifle cartridges and gun parts, wooden toggles, nails, three-pronged spear parts, beads, harmonica and toy trumpet parts, spoons, scissors, and clothing items like buckles and buttons (Figure 4). This assemblage also appeared to postdate the period of the Eclipse Expedition and is likely coterminous with House 1 or slightly earlier.

As House 1 and House 2 were clearly post-1880, we turned our attention to House 3. House 3 was a small square structure with 4.5 meter long walls, a raised rear sleeping platform and a seven meter long entrance passage. Just inside the house was a lamp stand, a built-up platform of sand and flat slabs encrusted with carbonized blubber.

Test excavations at House 3 were conducted in the midden in front of the house, in the entrance passage, and in the sunken area between the entrance passage and the sleeping platforms. Three one-by-one meter test units at the mouth of the entrance passage produced hand wrought iron spikes, kaolin pipe stems and a few small earthenware sherds from hollow ware vessel (large mugs or bowls) forms (Figure 4). The earthenwares were of two types, a yellow ware and a factory-made slipware (a banded mocha ware with dendritic decoration), both common mid-19th century British export ceramics (Sussman 1997). The absence of later transfer-printed or decal ceramics from the lower level of House 3 is further confirmation that the assemblage predates both House 1 and House 2.

Wall profiles of the House 3 entrance passage show that the house was reoccupied on at least two occasions. The earliest materials, those possibly associated with an 1860s occupation, were recovered from the lower levels of the midden in front of the house. The lower level assemblage from House 3 had significantly fewer artifacts of European manufacture than did the upper level in House 3 and the excavation units in House 1 and House 2, suggesting that it was derived from a period when the trade and economic interaction offered by the Moravians and the Hudson's Bay Company were less well developed. The lowest levels in the interior of House 3 were not reached, as to do so would have necessitated removing the cut wooden planks and stone slabs of the later (1880s) occupation.

Houses 4, 5 and 6 each had architectural features that precluded their consideration as the structure Lieber visited. Based on our analysis of the small artifact samples recovered in our excavation units, House 3 is the most likely candidate for the structure that was occupied in 1860.

Houses 7 and 8 on the north side of the river

The limited duration of our stay at Eclipse Channel afforded few opportunities to conduct additional surveys in the region. We did however discover two additional semi-subterranean sod houses on the north side of the river, which were quite interesting. Unlike the cluster of six houses at the river's mouth, these structures were

situated some distance upstream out of sight of salt water. House 7 was a kilometer up from the river's mouth, and House 8 was a kilometer and a half. The structures were similar in that they both had long entrance passages facing south towards the river, and a rectangular interior with clearly delineated rear and side sleeping platforms, lamp stands and box alcoves, all of which were very neatly defined by vertically set rock slabs.

House 7 was the less clearly defined of the two structures. The collapse of the exterior sod walls made the interior dimensions of the structure difficult to determine, but it appears to have been an oval structure with an internal diameter of about three meters. A distinctive feature of both House 7 and House 8 was a carefully constructed stone-lined box, set to one side of the sleeping platform. When capped by a flat-slab, these square stone boxes quite likely served as both a safe "locker" for food and / or equipment and as a stand for a steatite lamp. Alternatively, the stone boxes might have served as liners for iron stoves.

Test-pits in the interior recessed entrance passage and in the stone box revealed that both had carefully prepared floors of flat stone slabs. The House 7 floor was found to be cleared of domestic debris and refuse. No faunal remains were recovered from the house or from a test pit in the midden area at the end of the entrance passage. A small artifact assemblage recovered from between the flagging stones on the floor included the side-plate of a musket, several iron sled runners, a heart-shaped tin tobacco tag, a few pieces of iron scrap, nails, a percussion cap and a number of very small turquoise and white "seed" beads.

Percussion caps were readily available after 1825 (Johnson and Haven 1943: 34) and were in use in Labrador well into the middle of the 20th century. The absence of centre-fire rifle cartridges, which became available after about 1870 — and which were plentiful and of wide variety in the House 1-3 excavation units — supports an early attribution for House 7.

House 8 is unquestionably the most impressive structure at Eskimo Hütte. It is a large rectangular structure seven meters wide with sides five meters long (Figure 5). The house is entered through a four meter long entrance passage after crawling beneath a large flat lintel stone. The interior of the house has a carefully prepared floor of flat stone slabs, sleeping platforms along both side walls and the rear wall, a stone lined meat locker beside one platform, and a lamp stand near the very middle of the house. The house walls are constructed of as many as six courses of stones which rise up to 90 cm above the sleeping platform.

A one-meter square excavation unit placed immediately in front of the lamp stand yielded a fragment of a stem from a kaolin pipe, a wrought iron nail and a small fragment of a banded ironstone / whiteware ceramic vessel. A test pit at the mouth of the entrance passage and in the area between the house and the river did not reveal any faunal materials or midden deposits.

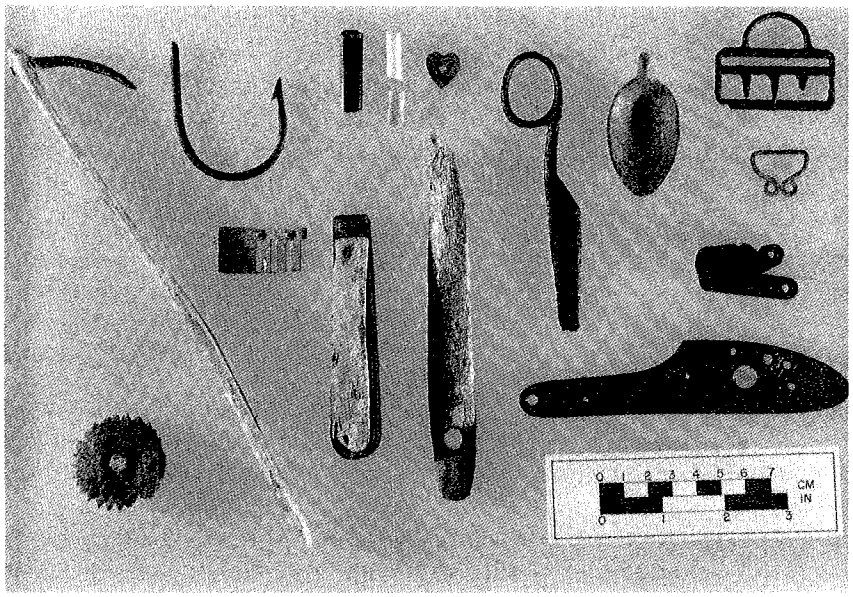

Figure 4. Artifact Assemblage from 1989 Excavations at Eskimo Hütte. left to right, TOP ROW: kakkivak (salmon spear) prong (H2), fish jigging hook (H3), vulcanite pipe stem (H1), 2 kaolin pipe stem fragments (H3), heart-shaped tin tobacco tag (H1), spoon bowl (H2), large buckle (H2), small suspender buckle (H1); BOTTOM ROW: wooden top (H3), harmonica part (H2), folding clasp knife (H3), scissors (H2), gun mechanisms (small H2, large H7).

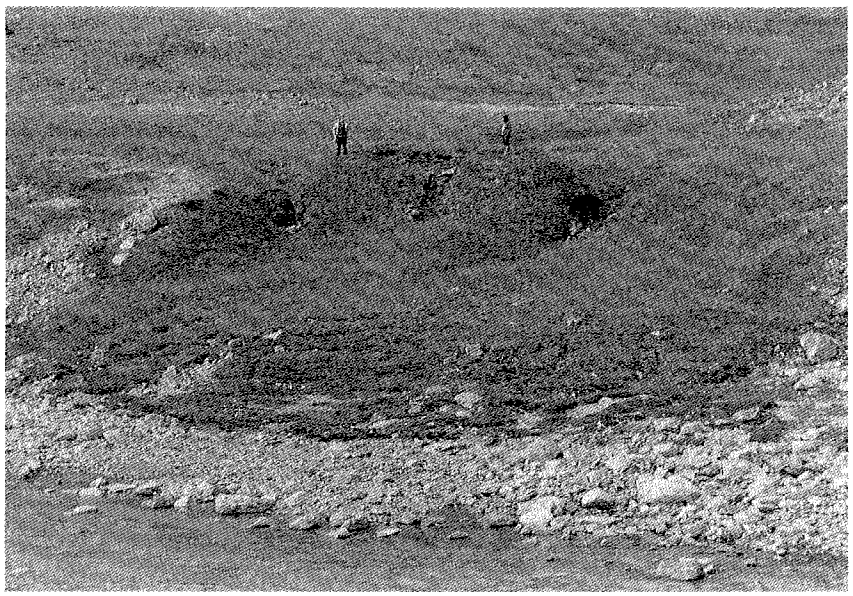

Figure 5. House-8 on the north side of the creek. *Photograph by Stephen Loring, 1988*.

The small size of the collection derived from the excavation units placed in House 7 and House 8 make chronological interpretations less than conclusive. The musket part and the percussion cap from House 7 and the sparse ceramic materials from both houses favour an interpretation that the structures are among the earliest at Eskimo Hütte, from a time when access to European manufactured products was limited. This impoverished assemblage is indicative of the relative difficulties of acquiring European goods and the consequence of choosing to live beyond the direct sphere of missionary control.

Analysis

Specifically, at Eskimo Hütte, we hoped to recover data that provided insight about the social activities and regional interaction of the Inuit along the northern coasts of Labrador and adjacent Ungava who had "resisted" the economic and ideological advances of the Europeans by maintaining their northern identity; data that could be compared with subsequent excavations at coeval Inuit houses at Moravian missions. The prospects of being able to specifically identify an Inuit semi-subterranean sod-house that was known to be occupied during the winter of 1859-1860 promised excellent chronological control over the material recovered.

In addition to identifying the 1860 house, test excavations at the site were conducted to determine the nature and the extent of middens associated with the different house structures. Whereas interior house deposits principally document the last occupation, associated middens, with their residues from house refurbishing and cleaning, would contain remains from the entire history of activities at the locality and help determine the chronological relationships between the different houses at Eskimo Hütte. We also needed to determine the state of preservation at the site in order to ascertain conservation and analytical needs should subsequent fieldwork be conducted.

Armed with a copy of Lieber's plan of the Inuit house he visited in 1860, we did not expect any difficulties in identifying it in the field. As described above, all of the houses examined had been reoccupied on at least one occasion and subsequent remodeling and soil slumpage had obscured the earliest wall outlines. Notwithstanding these difficulties, it is believed that House 3 at Eskimo Hütte was the structure visited by the American scientists.

Faunal preservation at Eskimo Hütte was not as good as had been anticipated. The midden that accumulated on the hill slope in front of the house entrance passage was not thick enough to allow permafrost to be sustained. As a consequence fragile faunal remains, particularly bones from bird and fish species, are not preserved. Animal bone was collected from the house floors in all of the excavation units (H-1, H-2, H-3) and from the only substantial midden deposit that we located in front of House 1. Given the small size of the faunal assemblages derived from these test excavations (altogether 434 faunal elements were collected) it is impossible to say much about seasonality or Inuit economic specialization for which larger samples would be necessary. The faunal material was examined by Dr. Arthur Spiess (Spiess 1991) and is summarized in Table

1. The small size precludes serious analysis and does little more than testify to the presence of the mixed marine and terrestrial economy of the Inuit at Eclipse Channel.

Table 1. Faunal remains recovered at Eskimo Hütte

Aves sp.	3
Canis (probably dog)	5
Alopex lagopus (arctic fox)	3
Erignathus (bearded seal)	4
Phoca hispida (ringed seal)	11
Phoca vitulina (harbour seal)	1
Phoca sp.	209
Rangifer	17
Ursus (polar bear)	8
mammal / unidentified fragments	173

A few fragments of bone from a large marine mammal, most likely a walrus, were found on the surface, eroding out of the House 1 midden. Many of the larger bones recovered at the site had pitted surfaces and gnawed epiphyseal ends, archaeological substantiation of Lieber's suspicion that dogs were present at the site. While the faunal remains attest to the significance of mammalian species in the Inuit diet, it is important to take into consideration how the differential preservation of species in middens influences reconstruction of subsistence practices. Although there is no faunal evidence to support the claim, it is believed that fish, especially char, was an important aspect of the subsistence activities conducted at the site. This interpretation is based on the number of prongs from fish spears which were recovered at the site, as well as on the presence of several large boulder caches along the river.

Kohlmeister and Kmoch provide an account of the late winter char fishery conducted by the northern Inuit:

> Like the salmon, they [salmon-trout, *i.e.* char] remain in the rivers and fresh-water lakes during the winter, and return to the sea in the spring. The Esquimaux about Okkak and Saeglek, catch them in winter under the ice by spearing. For this purpose, they make two holes in the ice, about eight inches in diameter, and six feet asunder, in a direction from north to south. The northern hole they screen from the sun, by a bank of snow about four feet in height, raised in a semicircle round its southern edge, and form another similar bank on the north side of the southern hole, sloped in such a manner as to reflect the rays of the sun into it. The Esquimaux then lies down, with his face close to the northern aperture, beneath which the water is strongly illuminated by the sunbeams entering at the southern. In his left hand he holds a red string, with which he plays the water, to allure the fish, and his right a spear, ready to strike them as they approach. In this manner they soon take as many as they want (Kohlmeister and Kmoch 1814: 28-29).

Char were also speared in August and September when they were especially prized for their high fat content (*ibid.*).

Wood is a crucial raw material for Inuit tool manufacture as well as for sled, boat and house construction needs. Nearly all of the excavation units at Eskimo Hütte contained scraps of preserved wood, much of it consisting of spruce chips and fragments of cut limbs. While a limited supply of coniferous wood could have been derived from local driftwood, the nearest source for standing timber is the Korok River valley — approximately 90 km to the south (Loring 1979) — or in the vicinity of Napaktok and Okak Bays (between 250-300 km away). Portions of hardwood poles and rough hewn planks were also encountered on the house floors in nearly all of the excavation units. While small amounts of such hardwood and milled lumber might have been recovered as drift, it is probable that these precious materials would have been acquired through trade with either the Moravian missionaries or Hudson's Bay Company traders. The excavated wood at Eskimo Hütte attests to extralocal resource procurement strategies that would have involved scheduling decisions predicated on the seasonal availability of resources and the means of travel employed. Inevitably such trips would have resulted in encounters with Inuit groups from one of the Moravian stations providing the "Northlanders" an opportunity to observe the consequences of mission affiliation. As late as 1908, Inuit hunters at Killinek traveled south to Okak to get the necessary timber for boat and sled construction (Hutton 1912: 32). Inuit acquisition of wood is indicative of the complex web of socioeconomic transactions that linked widely scattered Inuit bands.

Inuit seal-oil lamps were the principal means of heating the Eskimo Hütte houses. No traces of iron or tin stoves were recovered, in marked contrast to coeval historical deposits at Nain (Cabak 1991), Hebron (Loring 1990) and Ramah (Kaplan 1983: 621, 634), but the occasional piece of burned wood and a fragment of coal (obviously acquired in trade from Europeans at Nachvak or Ramah) suggest alternative sources of heat were used on occasion. Iron stoves were rapidly adopted by the Inuit, appearing in Hopedale prior to 1840 (Kleivan 1966: 37), and may have been available to Inuit in the north after the founding of Hebron in 1830 (Figure 6). It seems probable that the distinctive stone-lined boxes of House 7 and House 8 are designed to support or contain the heating apparatus for the structures.

Not surprisingly, the amount and variety of trade materials at Eskimo Hütte increases throughout the 19th century. The earliest occupations dating between 1840 and 1860 contain comparatively small amounts of European materials: beads, kaolin pipes, a few scraps of European ceramics and hand wrought iron nails. By 1880, both the quantity and variety of European manufactured products had increased dramatically. Competing European interests vied for the Inuit trade in the later half of the 19th century. The Hudson's Bay Company fearing the loss of the lucrative Inuit trade in Ungava to an expanded Moravian presence on the north coast of Labrador established a pair of trading posts north of the Moravian mission station at Hebron (founded in 1830). The company built a post at Saglek Fjord around 1865 and one further north at Nachvak in 1868 (Thomson 1992). The Moravians launched their assault on the last heathen stronghold in the Torngat with the establishment of a mission station at Ramah Bay in 1871 (Davey 1905). The Inuit in northern Labrador were not long in taking advantage of these opportunities to acquire manufactured products.

Figure 6. Cast-iron stove at the abandoned Moravian Mission settlement at Hebron. The fire-box of the stove is covered with a thick encrustation of burned seal blubber. *Photograph by Stephen Loring, 1990.*

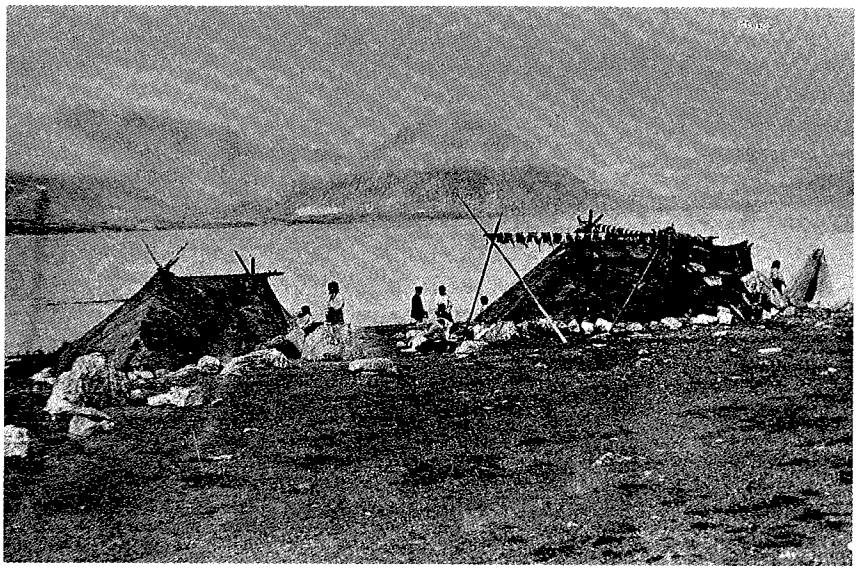

Figure 7. 19th-century Moravian photograph of Inuit encampment at North Aulatsivik Island, view to west across Eclipse Channel. *M-8186, Archiv der Brüder-Unität, Herrnhut, Germany.*

Evidence that the Inuit living at Eskimo Hütte were adroit at taking advantage of the competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Moravians is inferred from the recovery of artifacts attributable to the two sources. Heart-shaped tobacco tin tags, used to identify brands of plug tobacco (Roberts 1969; Schild 1972), were recovered from House 1 and House 7, and they are identical to ones recovered at mid-19th century Innu sites on Indian House Lake (Samson 1978) where they are undoubtedly derived from Hudson's Bay Company posts. Direct contact with the Moravians is implied by a small scrap of printed paper with German words and lettering recovered from House 3.

Inuit houses at the Moravian mission sites at Zoar (Loring 1985), Nain (Cabak 1991; Cabak and Loring in press), Hebron (Loring 1990) and Ramah (Kaplan 1983: 627-654) all have large amounts of imported European ceramics in their assemblages. Ceramics are conspicuously absent at Eskimo Hütte, being represented by only a few very small pieces. On the other hand, tin ware is very common, occurring as cups and plates and in a wide variety of cut shapes. Other common materials recovered during the excavations at Eskimo Hütte include iron nails and scrap. Gun related items (rifle parts, cartridge casings, melted lead, percussion caps) were the largest artifact class after nails and metal scrap, followed by items related to tobacco smoking.

In addition to using specific tools acquired from the Europeans (saws, drills, guns, etc.) the Inuit at Eskimo Hütte adapted and modified raw materials for their own purposes (nails made into fish hooks (Figure 4), lead melted into bullets, tin lids turned into seal oil lamps) and continued to use local materials in traditional ways (whalebone sled runners, bone whip handles, bone and iron fish spears, wooden mouthpieces for inflating a sealskin float, wooden toggles).

Conclusions

The archaeology at Eskimo Hütte offers insight to mid-nineteenth century Inuit lifestyles that is independent of that derived from Moravian, and later Hudson's Bay Company records. The detail available in the historical documentation has tended to slant perceptions of Inuit-European interaction to that that occurred south of the Torngat Mountains. Eschewing the inducements of traders and missionaries, the scattered Inuit families dispersed about the extreme northern tip of Quebec-Labrador retained traditional Inuit subsistence strategies, spiritual beliefs and lifestyles well into the late-19th century. The appearance of European derived raw materials and artifacts at Eskimo Hütte attests to some interaction with Europeans and kin-relations to the south, but the paucity of this material and the Inuit's evident determination to reside in the north affirm the economic independence and the "sovereignty" of the northern Inuit groups. Archaeology confirms the perception of a Moravian missionary at Hebron who, in 1864, noted that "It is harder for a native to leave his country than for a king to depart from his kingdom" (Periodical Accounts, 25, 1864: 321).

The journals from the Hudson's Bay Company posts at Nachvak and the Moravian mission archives are valuable sources for information on the Inuit from northern

Labrador. Unfortunately these records provide only a part of the story, tantalizing as it is, with just a faint echo of the voices of the "Northlanders" themselves. It is possible to gather together a few loose historical insights, like those of Lieber, but these are soon exhausted and the silence only deepens with the realization of the loss. It is for archaeologists and for the descendants of the people from Aulatsivik, the great-great-grandchildren of the people who were not at home when the Qallunaat visited, to reconstruct, remember and tell the story of those days (Figure 7).

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