

Ahiarmiut Inuit Elder Interview Working with the Traders

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Donald Uluadluak: I just said those Inuit who worked for Qallunaat as guides have never been recorded. They needed an Inuk guide, and these guides fed them and did a lot of work for them. And they went places where there were no houses and stayed for the night. The guide had to build an iglu from snow; it seems he should have been the one as a boss.

Today it is clear that those Inuit guides, the ones working for Qallunaat,--I'm talking about Qallunaat helpers for people like Arngnaraujaq, because he used to be trader's worker, and also Inuit used to be traders too.

They were hired by Qallunaat, perhaps by traders. In fact it was well known that Qiquti'juaq used to be a trader, as someone told a story about him.

Joe Karetak: Their names do appear in Qallunaat records, their names at least are recorded rightly so because they were the ones taking them places, and also looking after them. Maquk's name appears often in books and also Ullibbaq, and another person by the name of Ullibba'naaq who was also known as Isumatarjuaq.

Donald Uluadluak: Yes, wasn't he the grandfather of Sulu'naaq's, Ullibba'juaq?

Joe Karetak: There is also someone by the name of Tanujaq. This name also keeps popping up. There is no story about who they are in Qallunaat writings.

So it would be nice if you could describe who they were, to make reading material from the way you heard about them, and what they use to do, and other things they did. If you could describe how you heard about them is something we are trying to gather.

Donald Uluadluak: Maqu'juaq apparently spent some time with the Ahiarmiut people and he was skating.

Job Mukyunik: Yes, this in Ima'juaq. The sun was shining brightly and there were no caribou to be seen. But in the fall some caribou were crossing a lake on ice. Maqu'juaq was there late at night. The men were encouraging each other to go after

the caribou. The men in the camp saw caribou further down and the sun had almost disappeared into the horizon. They spotted the caribou by telescope that were crossing on the ice. They coaxed each other to go and no one agreed to go because it was already night and it was impossible for any of them to go. No one seemed to want to go.

As everyone wouldn't go, Maqu'juaq who apparently had a pair of skates, put them on, and put his boots in his back sack, and picked up only his knife, and took off as the sun was just disappearing. Maqu'juaq put on skates and started to walk down and disappeared into darkness. The only thing he picked up was a knife. He started skating, and there was no snow at all on the ice as it had just frozen.

Apparently he killed a lot of caribou during the night and he never came back. The following day, they went out to look for him. They discovered that he had killed a lot of caribou. He took off heading south along the shore of the lake without even taking his gun along. The following day when they went out to look for him, he had a lot of caribou that he had killed.

Eva Mukjunik

Ukkaa'naaq: Long ago, we never saw any Qallunaat at all as far as I can remember. There were only us Inuit as far as I can remember. When I got my first child, that was when I started seeing Qallunaat when we were living at Ennadai Lake.

We never saw any Itqiliit Indians, or Qallunaat, but lived totally on our own. But when Qallunaat came to Ennadai Lake, we served them without getting any pay, and of course it was our first sight of them and we were afraid.

We sewed all kinds of things, while others worked. And Mary Aajaaq, my sister-in-law and I used to sew a lot of clothing for them to wear without getting paid.

When we came here, we started seeing Qallunaat a lot more. We grew up only among Inuit at Ennadai Lake. That is how we as Ahiarmiut (Inlanders) lived.

And we usually looked for places where there were a lot of caribou, and traveled towards it. This is something that is well known when you have lived it all your life; men have a lot more knowledge of it.

Just like you are writing notes, we knew exactly where caribou were more plentiful. When we were in danger of starvation, we moved to where food could be obtained, places where you could cache meat. That is how we were. Men knew exactly where to go.

We normally carried our belongings on our back when we were moving elsewhere, I'm not the only one to speak, but I'll just talk when I have to. You just go ahead and talk too. This land is very easy to understand when you have been looking at it all the time, that area further up inland.

We didn't do very much when we moved down for the first time, there was no wood at all and no material to work with, totally bare. So we just lived on the land knowing it.

Donald Uluadluak: That person by the name of Qiquti'juaq, I don't think anyone noted his name, I mean that person Qiquti'juaq, I always admired him and wondered if he was an Inuk.

He used to have items for resale - some items that I'm not aware what they were. He was probably an important person helping the traders. Yes, he was known as Qiquti'juaq.

Job Mukjunik: Yes, he was an Ahiarmiut (inland person). Have you seen people like Uhutuuq and his family? Qiquti'juaq was the father of Uhutuuq's wife. And also Aumauk's, Puulik's wife. Wasn't he their father? Because Nanuq and Aumauk were sisters.

Joe Karetak: Were they the people that helped in the store or one's that helped in their work?

Job Mukyunik: Qiqut was a lone person, he was all alone. There were 7 Unaliit Indians that hauled his trade goods down from Churchill by canoe, up to far end of Qikiqtariaktuq where traders were. They used to haul Qiqut's trade goods in the summer by canoe.

Unaliit Indians from Churchill would haul the trade goods up from Churchill, trade goods that belonged to Qiquti'juaq up in Qikiqtariaktuq to sell. It is close in the winter and you wouldn't overnight going there.

From Qikiqtariaktuq, Qiqut's land, they would haul stuff in the springtime by dog team from Qikiqtatiaktuq (place of many island) down to Qiqut.

Joe Karetak: Oh, Unaliit Indians would haul the stuff during the summer, but in winter time Qiqut would travel by sled; he would come down to get them?

Job Mukyunik: In the summer? In the summer going so close you don't need to overnight. You can stay over night though but it's not that far to warrant an over night stay if you are in a rush.

Donald Uluadluak: Qikiqtariaktuq (place of many islands) is a very long lake, it's very long.

Inuit from the central coast at Chantry Inlet and Baker Lake and even as far as Ennadai would come there to trade. Even Indians would go to trade at his big tents at Qikiqtariaktuq.

Joe Karetak: How about Maquk and Uluadluaq or was it Ullibbaq? The one who acted as a geologist guide, do you know anything about them?

Donald Uluadluak: Well those people were coastal people, but these other people were from inland, people like Ahiarmiut.

Joe Karetak: Oh, so they might not have come across them or have seen them?

Job Mukyunik: But Maqu'juaq, did live with the Ahiarmiut though at one point.

Everyone talking: Yes, a long time ago. Yes, a long time ago which I don't remember. Yes me too, I don't remember, was it after he took a wife or before he had a wife? This Maquk, who were his relatives? Was he related to Nanuq?

Donald Uluadluak: He was my grandfather's, dad's father. He is from very long ago. My grandfather's dad was Unngajaaq, he was Unngajaaq's father.

He was not originally from this region. He came over from Labrador a very long time ago and than married a Pallirmiut woman. His wife lost a son whose name he mentioned before, but it totally escaped my mind. Luckily Uluadluak knows the story about them.

Eva Mukyunik: What was his wife's name?

Job Mukyunik: We have never seen him so it is not known, but I have heard about his adventure with the caribou.

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Donald Uluadluak: Let me say something very briefly. Inuit have done a lot of things, but they were not recorded. When Qallunaat came long ago, they thought the Inuit teachings were not important anymore for Inuit. We regarded Qallunaat skills very highly. When they came, we immediately offered to help them, certainly those Inuit that lived in the past.

Women made free clothing for them, and made outer caribou parkas things like that. Where are we going, when they ask, they would take them to the exact spot. Inuit knew. And when they made a mistake, Qallunaaq would simply make note of it. When the iglu is completed and warm, he would make it look as if he went alone when he wrote his notes, completely disregarding the person he was with.

Job Mukyunik: When he made his notes he would write, I went by here and made camp over here, and all along he never went there on his own. He made it look as though he went there on his own by his notes.

Joe Karetak: We are trying to correct all of these things, because no one is making any effort to correct them. We are talking about things that have really happened. If it weren't for us they would never have made it.

Donald Uluadluak: My grandfather was a real talker, he used to really talk to people. I have heard this quite a bit, and those people that worked after him, people like your father. Qallunaat had to be cared for as if you are caring for children. They didn't know it was cold, because it was extremely cold. Women had to sew warm clothing for Qallunaat.

An Inuk was the major knowledgeable person, and they had to use all his dogs, his gamutik (sled) and dog food. And Inuit had to give them free dog food. That is how it was with Catholic priests, Anglican Ministers and Police.

I remember when they used to make visits to Inuit camps, with Inuit being the ones guiding the way. I knew them perfectly. And it is told that before I was born, they would sail the ships down to Kitigarmiut,-my grandfather used to accompany them. He used to say it is very shallow seawater over in Kitigatmiut and it was all sand. They would stop way out at sea, I don't know what it's called in English; it is on the other side of Winnipeg River.

Joe Karetak: Yes, that sea over there, the windside of the sea, not it's windside but the middle of it is all sand, it's also a very long shallow sandy area. It is a very long shallow water, the sea area is all sand and very shallow.

Donald Uluadluak: Yes, that is what I have heard about it.

Job Mukyunik: Even the animals which can't speak, do indicate to any person where animals are. If you travel along an icy lake, if you come across a lot of fox excrement in any number, like say four droppings, it indicates there are a lot of fish in that area.

Donald Uluadluak: They always make their droppings somehow in areas that have a lot of fish. They can smell the fish somehow.

Job Mukyunik: They tell you that there are a lot of fish in this area.

Donald Uluadluak: They could usually tell where animals are, like say, if a scrap of something is blown down wind, then there must be a herd of caribou up wind. That is how they tell it.

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Joe Karetak: Do you know like today, they send hunters up here, for people to take them out polar bear hunting or caribou hunting, they do that.

In the past, they did almost identical things, only it involved more work with less pay. I think the work was much harder because the groups of people couldn't understand each other. They depended mostly on the knowledge of the Inuk person if they were going any place. There were no airplanes, no maps, no communication equipment. They also had a lot of people to look after. There was only one Qallunaaq who had many workers.

Even though they had so much to do, something that is almost impossible to do, they were able to complete the work, and able to keep everybody well and safe. Even though this is well known, and easy to imagine, if you could just talk about these things, we can try it in a way that is suitable to you.

Phillip Kigusiutnak: They used to give us a lot of talk and instructions. So I always considered his abbaq (his name sake) to be able to remember many things, and his abba'juaq (his name sake) who was also able to speak in English.

He was a great helper to the RCMP and HBC and helped many white people, because most of us could not speak in English at all, and still can't speak it.

I think he has a lot of memories, because he has a very good memory and is the oldest. He would be able to tell you the most accurate details, because we always want to tell things that are accurate.

Joe Karetak: Yes a lot of things are from a long time ago and we can only go by our recollections as we know them. We can explain right away if some of them are only from hearsay. Are you talking about Ullibbaq?

Phillip Kigusiutnak: Yes. His abbaq the one who is closest to him.

Donald Uluadluak: About Ullibbaq, Donald Ullibbaq.

Joe Karetak: Were there other Ullibbaq's before him?

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Donald Uluadluak: Yes. William. William Ullibbaq who was also known as Isumatarjuaq.

Joe Karetak: No. Your grandfather was Ullibbaq right? Were there other Ullibbaqs after him?

Phillip Kigusiutnak: I think there were five of them. There was one up among Ahirmiut people, and another one around this area. These are the only two that I know and I did not quite get to know the other person.

But his abbaq (name sake) used to tell us quite frankly, that we refused to look into his face because we don't want to listen. That is what his abbaq used to say as we all remember.

Joe Karetak: So which Ullibbaq are we talking about now, are we talking about Ullibbaq who assisted the geologists, is it him we are concerned about? Or was your grandfather's father also named Ullibbaq?

Donald Uluadluak: Maybe it was Maquk. People like Akallakaa used to tell a story about hearing something like the sound of mosquitoes, and then they saw an object that looked like a mosquito. It was making a lot of noise, but they discovered it to be a helicopter.

It appeared and was coming directly and the people were frightened. It landed next to their tent. When they discovered the people, they came the next time to bring them a lot of food.

They were geologists. I am wondering if Maquk was also known as Ullibbaq? I'm not quite sure as to who he was. But this is something I have heard from Akallakaa. He used to talk about it.

Joe Karetak: But Maquk, wasn't he around even before there were any helicopters, right?

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Donald Uluadluak: But this is from way back, even before there were any flying machines. I mean this story Akallakaa used to tell was from long ago. Helicopters have only been around fairly recently.

Joe Karetak: Yes. Around before 1900.

Donald Uluadluak: Yes, maybe that is how it was, but the geologist I saw had a helicopter.

Luke Kiniksie: I know when we were on the land this side of Kuuvik and the northside, we heard a helicopter was going to arrive. We were going down to the river and your grandfather Airua'juaq said, it was coming towards us. It looked like a person with its feet folded up. He tucked me under the covers and I went out only after it left, because I was so scared.

Joe Karetak: The story, the book written by a white person, I think Shirley has the year it was published, we will get it and find out exactly when it happened.

Or we could try to find out what the workers had to do while they were assisting the geologist, how much work they did.

If you can think of anything, this could also help a great deal. If you can remember incidents how they were able to save people and how they helped them to survive.

If you can think of anything you have heard, they will certainly help to complete the story.

Joe Karetak: I'm referring to Isumatarjuaq, Was his name Isumatarjuaq? So Isumatarjualaaq is someone fairly new?

Donald Uluadluak: Yes, the one who just passed away. He is called Isumatarjualaaq, He is named after Isumatarjuaq.

Joe Karetak: Oh yes, he was called Isumatarjualaaq. I was confused, I was calling him Isumatarjuaq. But the real Isumatarjuaq was someone who worked for the traders, is that right?

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Donald Uluadluak: Yes. Anyway he was originally from this area, but he traveled further north and people there started calling him Isumatarjuaq, somewhere near the river of Baker Lake. This is just a something I've heard. They just started calling him Isumatarjuaq because they admired him. Because he had some items to sell, things like tobacco, matches and other things like the traders.

Phillip Kigusiutnak: Was he the grandfather of Sigjariaq, the person we are talking about?

Donald Uluadluak: Yes, that person.

Joe Karetak: Do you mean Bobby's mother? Sigjariaq, her?

Luke Kiniksi: I don't think I ever saw him.

Donald Uluadluak: Well, I have seen him.

Luke Kiniksi: I have seen your father, old Ulualluaq, but I don't remember another person by that name after him.

Donald Uluadluak: There is a picture of him around here somewhere, because I'm older I barely remember him. He was a real kind person and liked talking to children, but a very old man.

Joe Karetak: Oh, he went alone to sell goods without any Qallunaat to help him?

Donald Uluadluak: Yes. I think he had a traders' boats, ones without the deck (York Boat), to bring the trade goods, something like that.

Phillip Kikusiutnak: They did it by trader's boats and by dog team. I think they had other people helping them too. At least that is what we had to do and we had to transport the traders as well.

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He used to sell to people like the family of Murjungniq, Alikasuaq, Pinguqsat. He used to trade with those Ahiarmiut. That is how me and my father used to do it, transporting trade goods by way of Qamanaarjugjuaq to bring them closer to the actual site. My father and I used to bring trade goods from Maguse River and from Qamanaarjugjuaq up to Siuralik.

Donald Uluadluak: But there was also a different trader whose name was Qiquti'juaq. It is said he was a smart person and had a number of great big tents.

Joe Karetak: Oh, the traders had a number of people working for them operating on their own?

Donald Uluadluak: Yes. There were several of them, Murjungniq might know him quite well. Yes, they operated on their own, they went and got their own trade goods by dog team. (Inuit Middlemen)

Phillip Kigusiutnak: There were two separate traders up there. There was a man by the name of Qiquti'juaq, and also there was another man who Qatuq lived with, as her concubine husband, who lived at Siuralik.

The other person lived to the south, in the western region who traded to Murjungniq's people. He was an Inuk.

There was also another Qallunaaq trader, who was a member of people at Maguse River, who hauled his trade goods by dog team.

Joe Karetak: Is that how Usuganarnaat (Maguse River) got started because there were traders there, and because it was close to the river?

Joe Karetak: Was it also a good trapping area? I mean the point? How about now?

Phillip Kigusiutnak: Yes.

Joe Karetak: There has never been too many foxes in this area, is that right? The foxes have just begun to return I assume.

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Phillip Kigusiutnak: You know there are a lot of shacks along the (sea) shore as well as further north and up in the tree line.

Some people stayed where weather was not too extreme it doesn't drift as much on the tree line and there were quite a few Qallunaat trapping up in those areas.

Joe Karetak: Did the Inuit working for the store visit outpost camps to sell their goods or were there stores up in those regions? Taking for example Isumatarjuaq?

Donald Uluadluak: I have not heard about him; all I know is that he used to sell goods. That is how I heard it as my grandfather told it.

Joe Karetak: Did they take all the trade goods somewhere to sell them or did they have a specific place where people could come to buy?

Phillip Kigusiutnak: I think this is how it went: they bought the stuff on credit to sell to Inuit. At least that is how it seemed to work for the Qallunaat we had. People would bring their furs, they would get to keep them and apply it to their debit.

Joe Karetak: So they had to haul the goods to a place where they would be sold, and people would come to buy with the furs they got, or did they go and buy the stuff first and begin to trap?

Phillip Kigusiutnak: Yes. Exactly the same way we buy on credit. They have always tried to help each other; they would buy the stuff on credit to a certain limit. I think that is how it worked.

Joe Karetak: This is how I imagined it: a trader would haul his trade goods around to sell them. That is how I thought it worked.

Donald Uluadluak: I wonder if it wasn't like that?

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Phillip Kigusiutnak: I think that is how it was in certain cases. I know the boats would come from the south with trade goods to try to sell, in order to try to get the fur.

Luke Kiniksi: Inuit and traders gradually began establishing trade goods, when they heard there were things to be sold at a certain place; they began going there to buy.

Joe Karetak: Yes, Inuit went there to buy? When it first started, Inuit began going to that place and later the store was established, I think that is how it started.

Luke Kiniksi: Yes. The store remained there then and people began coming to trade and the traders just waited for people to come. That is how it has always been. That is how I remember the store began, it was already established as I remember it and I wasn't able to buy anything yet at that time.

Joe Karetak: They never used money in those days did they, only fox pelts for goods, is that how it operated in those days?

Luke Kiniksi: Yes, exactly they used to use wooden chips.

Phillip Kigusiutnak: Yes, they traded caribou skins, bear skins and anything that had fur like seal skins, walrus, and seal oil, things like that.

Joe Karetak: Oh, they also sold oil?

Phillip Kigusiutak: Yes, whale hunters would sell the oil. At least that is how my father used to tell me in places like Chesterfield Inlet and beyond. It is said that whalers used to handle oil, they wanted the oil and they came by sail boats without the engine. They would buy any oil that was available.

Donald Uluadluak: I just remembered a story about Isumatarjuaq possibly, who took people by a boat without a top to visit other communities as he knew there were some people along the shore of the sea, living in camps.

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When they came upon a camp everyone had gone inland, although it was evident there were people there. When they came to a camp where there were some people, they bought prepared seal oil (uqsuutit), these were seal oil contained inside sealskin- the kind we used to dip our food to eat. They also bought sealskin boots and sealskins. He used to buy these kinds of things long ago, this person Isumatarjuaq used to buy them I think.

One time there were two old people walking down to the coast in hopes of meeting a ship they hoped that had arrived. They saw it leaving, they saw the sail going away since they had already arrived and were now leaving.

The old people began to cry, as they were craving to have a smoke. They turned to each other and broke out crying. They had missed the ship and had to wait until the ship came back the following year to fetch the seal oil buried in rocks in their abandoned tent rings. There weren't too many polar bears than.

Luke Kiniksi: It's true, there were hardly any polar bears around here. It's just in the last few years polar bears started coming, but before that there was none at all in this region.

Joe Karetak: It's true, even in my childhood there were no polar bears at all. And what about, when Inuit had to bury their meat with rocks to preserve them for food. Did they have to bury a lot of meat in order to have enough meat for themselves and the Qallunaat?

Donald Uluadluak: Yes, we knew that they would come around and we expected a visit from them. I remember, perhaps a big boss, was in the boat with no top (York boats), traveling along the shore looking for Inuit.

The person knew where Inuit normally camped and he acted as a guide. He was called Isumatarjuaq. He normally went along on these trips as a guide because he knew where Inuit had their camps. He used to be the boss for trade goods.

Joe Karetak: The topless boats, did they at least have an engine, even the ones with the sails?

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Donald Uluadluak: Yes, they traveled by sail because they had no engine.

Phillip Kigusiutnak: That is why Inuit tried to keep track of other Inuit. If you had food, I would come to your camp to be saved because I was out of food. That is how they tried to be aware where other Inuit lived. If one person had a cache of caribou meat that can be shared with other people, for example one person could have a cache of 20 caribou. Because there was still enough to be shared, I would come and get you. That is how useful it was, looking for other people who needed help. Go ahead and share your memories.

Donald Uluadluak: That was the time when trapping began. He wanted to buy fox pelts. He thought perhaps commercial traps could be used to make trapping more profitable. Traps can capture foxes, and they began purchasing traps. Even though he didn't have any money, he tried hard to get seal oil and waterproof seal skin boots.

Joe Karetak: Steel traps were not around perhaps when they first began trapping. Did Inuit use stones called pullatit to trap foxes, is that right? Can you build an ice trap also?

Luke Kiniksi: I don't know, maybe not. I think you would have to use water, pour it on snow and freeze it.

Donald Uluadluak: The ones I heard about are not called pullatit. They used owl wing feathers. A lot of foxes would fall in. They would catch a lot of clean (I think he said clean) foxes.

They would dig a hole on the ice, and a lot of foxes would fall in. They would step on the feather and fall in, and the feather would seal up again after they fell. That way a lot of foxes would fall into the ice pit.

Phillip Kigusiutnak: When the ice thickened that is how they used to set traps. When you think of the top of a cup, with a wing over it. That is how the trap worked. The foxes would not be able to jump out. The hunter would make more space around the inside (Hollowing out a bigger space in the snow than the entrance) so the fox will not be able to jump out. That is how it was set up.

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Joe Karetak: I think we will have to show how it is done.

Donald Uluadluak: Yes. I have made a drawing of it though.

Joe Karetak: I think I have seen one like that on the land though. I was traveling along Tingmiaqtalik along a very rocky rough terrain, I spotted some stones on the land arranged neatly. It was quite high, almost high. It was something like this, could that have been used to trap foxes?

Donald Uluadluak: Perhaps it was a pullat (fox trap).

Joe Karetak: I think that is what it was, a pullat. I don't know what it was. It was still quite intact. When you are looking at it from the top, it had a little hole, inside it had neatly fixed stones. I happened to come across it one time.

Donald Uluadluak: Pullatit usually had one bait. When a fox bit the bait, it would fall in and the feather coverings would close again. It is said that a pullatit would usually get one fox.

There is another trap, I forgot the name of it, that uses owl wing feathers. It is said that these kinds of traps could get a lot of foxes. But you have to check them quite frequently and right away, because trapped foxes tend to fight and bite each other.

They would become extremely stinky and dirty when too many foxes were trapped inside. You would wait until the ice gets thick, you made the inside so the foxes would not be able to jump out and escape and made sure they would not be able to climb out.

Luke Kiniksi: You would chop the ice inside, making fairly large space around the floor.

Joe Karetak: You would have to wait until the ice was suitable so it was easier to do?

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Donald Uluadluak: Yes, perhaps you would have to make a small igu somehow.

Joe Karetak: I think so. I think you would have to pour water so it forms into ice. I don't think you would be able to fit two foxes. You would have to make the inside into ice.

Luke Kiniksi: Some people called it Pullat, is that what you are referring to?

Donald Uluadluak: I thought pullatit were made from stone. No, perhaps these ones were called pullait.

Luke Kiniksi: Myself, I used an old drum to make a pullat. I just made a hole in the bottom to make a trap for a wolverine. I tied a rope at the bottom and put the bait on top of a rock.

I made sure the wolverine would not be able to get out, and sure enough I trapped one. I used an old 10 gallon drum and turned it upside down. I used a chisel to make the trap.

The wolverine bit the bait and trapped itself. So that's how I caught the wolverine but I had to take the whole drum and the wolverine home, because it was too hard to take the wolverine out. But wasn't that what we call a pullat, I wonder?

Donald Uluadluak: Perhaps it was a pullat.

Luke Kiniksi: Siatalaaq asked me to make one like that when we were at Aqiarurnak, he asked me to puncture a hole on the bottom of a keg, turn it upside down and secure it with a stone, put the bait on top of the stone, just enough for the snout to fit it. When it dropped, the wolverine would try to bite it again and go right inside to get it.

Joe Karetak: Do you tie the bait, when he tried to bite it, the bait would drop and he would try to get it again?

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Luke Kiniksi: Yes, the fox would get in deeper inside. The lid would close when the fox tried to get out. It would become hard for it to escape because it was trapped.

Joe Karetak: Oh, did that metal bend?

Luke Kiniksi: Yes, it was already partially bent. The fox went all the way in and got trapped.

Joe Karetak: The wolverines were a real nuisance, weren't they?

Luke Kiniksi: They were no good, they usually follow by tracing tracks.

Donald Uluadluak: Wolverine are very bad for stealing, they are no good. They usually do follow tracks.

Phillip Kigusiutnak: Yes, the wolverines were known to follow tracks and also the wolves. Bigger animals were bad for stealing foxes from traps.

Joe Karetak: Oh, the wolves were too?

Phillip Kigusiutnak: Yes, some trappers always ended up with partially eaten foxes in their traps.

Joe Karetak: Maybe that is why they had to poison the wolves because they were a nuisance to trappers?

Luke Kiniksi: They were a real nuisance, wolverines and wolves. But you can follow wolverines by their tracks on snow, and they usually hide their steal under the snow at the entrance of their den.

One time I found four foxes by following the tracks. When I found a spot where the wolverine had dug in the snow, I found the foxes under the snow and recovered them. They were covered up so nicely, stolen by a wolverine.

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Phillip Kigusiutnak: When you find a tiny spot where the wolverine had started to dig, and you suspect it might be there, it would cave in, and that is how hidden foxes were found. We never wanted to return empty handed when we worked so hard to trap foxes to buy the things we needed.

Joe Karetak: Well, in the old days people depended so much on steel traps, they were the only ones available then, eh?

Luke Kiniksi: Yes, as long as I can remember they were the only ones to trap foxes.

Phillip Kigusiutnak: You know, wolves and wolverines knew about traps.

Joe Karetak: Maybe because they were watching, they knew they were designed to trap animals?

Phillip Kigusiutnak: Yes they are very smart, sometimes they would follow the tracks and snap the traps or sometimes they would turn them face down. They are very smart.

Luke Kiniksi: You know, they can even look around by putting their paws like this, like human beings, I think they are really little evil things.

Phillip Kigusiutnak: One time I got a wolverine with an axe. I was following it and we were going down the hill and I was catching up to it very quickly. When the dogs caught up with, it started to dig under the snow on the flat tundra, with very little snow.

I quickly grabbed my axe, and started to break the snow, I could see the end of its tail. There was hardly any snow at all and I could see its tail for a long time and tried to hit it with the blade of my axe. I hit the snow with my axe in circular pattern and stood still. It appeared next to my feet growling. I hit it so hard with the back of my axe and knocked it dead.

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After knocking it dead, I pulled my caribou mitt off and pulled it out and started to pound it some more. They can dig very fast, I was breaking the snow on top but it was still literally running away by digging under the snow.

Joe Karetak: Big weasels, those big ones, Qablunaat claim that they are a family to weasels, biggest kind of weasels. They claim that otters and weasels are a family.

They can dig very quickly and stay in their dens. They can go into their dens with ease those weasels. I think wolverines are very strong; they are the strongest amongst all the animals similar to their kind.

Luke Kiniksi: In fact they can even pound stones on caribou caches and remove the stones to expose the cache.

Phillip Kigusiutnak: Those little weasels, I know them to be very strong. My younger brother was camping for the night at Palliq, under a boat by putting two sticks to keep the boat on its side.

We put two big caribou skins in the stern and the front to sleep in. We ate a great big fish and left it when we finished eating it.

After a while the left over fish started to disappear. My younger brother whispered to me and asked, whether the thing pulling the fish out is a fox. And I said I assumed it was. Then later the boat started to move.

My younger brother said, maybe it's a person doing it. When the boat eventually started to rock, I said to him, maybe it's that weasel. He weasel stood up upon his pillow.

He quickly went over on the other side of the boat. I wanted to shoot the weasel but was afraid of hitting my brother, because there are a lot of stones at Palliq. I know the weasels as small as they are, are very strong.

We used to be frightened of them, and we were easily frightened anyway when weasels are running around near the dogs.

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Maybe they were thinking of attacking the dogs because they were moving around and barking. The dogs really started to bark at weasels when they smell their scent.

Luke Kiniksi: I wonder why they are so frightened of them, maybe because of their scent?

Phillip Kigusiutnak: Yes indeed, when anything was moving, we were easily frightened even though we were full grown adults. We used to be scared of anything that moved; we had to see and examine what it is, that is how we were.

But today we can easily see what it is that is moving. Just ask us anything you wish to know, any one of us might be able to answer I think.

(Nunavusiutit, 2008 pp. 1-12)

Donald Uluadluak: Can I change the subject a bit to people who worked for the traders? I just remembered something about Isumatarjuaq.

Anyway, every year he would travel north to look for people. He did not have a store, but he stayed around and he would travel north by boat. The communities he visited in other areas really knew the time he would come around again. When next year came around he would buy fermented seal oil, sealskin waterproof boots and other sewn goods.

They would trade goods with Isumatarjuaq, being the head master. He really knew the area because he was an Inuk. Then he would buy furs that were not taken to the traders that year. People were not able to travel very far because there were no ships.

He would also let the people know what he would want when he came back again the next year. Now I recall things very clearly. He did not have a store, but he traveled the coast along the shore.

He would go by ship without a deck or top and sailed up the coast in several nights. He really knew where the people camped for the summer along the shore.

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Joe Karetak: Well it's very easy to tell and imagined how he traveled.

Donald Uluadluak: That is how he operated, people would buy stuff from him. He would travel during the summer to collect his trade goods and people would buy from him.

Joe Karetak: I can imagine how anxious he was to haul his trade goods when the ice went out.

Donald Uluadluak: That is when those two elders broke out crying, because the missed the boat.

Luke Kiniksi: It must have been really sad having to wait another long year.

Donald Uluadluak: Both of them were grown up men, they could see the boat in a distance leaving. How pitiful to see them cry. They broke out laughing at each other as they were crying.

That was Isumatarjuaq, the trader, I am talking about, I was only a child as I can remember.

Luke Kiniksi: My goodness, what a strong desire. They should have left earlier because they missed the boat. They should have sent a smoke signal.

Joe Karetak: Well they should have left earlier, why didn't they send a smoke signal?

Donald Uluadluak: They should have put out a smoke signal for the ship to see.

Luke Kiniksi: If the ground was dry, they should have collected fire moss or berry twigs, wet them and create a big smoke.

Donald Uluadluak: I think they made a big smoke but they were never noticed.

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Donald Uluadluak: The Inuit traders never went alone in those days. My grandfather used to go along on trips to Kitigarmiut. He often spoke of Aupaa'naaq who was also known as Qutngiaq.

And also Ullibbaq, who was also known as Isumatarjuaq, that person, spent a lot of time with Qallunaat because Qallunaat were not able to look after themselves, and they needed a lot of help.

They would simply say what they wanted to do, or tell them where they wanted to go, and so the Inuit helpers took them to a certain places of their wish. They took Qallunaat to certain points where they wished to go.

Luke Kiniksi: To Kitigarmiut? My goodness.

Donald Uluadluak: They took them to places of their wish. They treated them as if they were treating children when weather was cold, to help the Qallunaat.

Phillip Kigusiutnak: Of course they would write notes only about themselves, writing notes about their own accomplishments and of course this was part of their work.

Like we do things for ourselves, exactly the same way. We worked hard at trapping and getting food; they were doing their own work as we do, those former Qallunaat.

Luke Kiniksi: Because they couldn't manage on their own, they had to be moved around by Inuit, that is how it was.

Donald Uluadluak: Yes. The Inuk acted as a guide, and all his dogs which the Inuk had to feed and keep alive. He was an expert at finding animals, keeping the place warm and quickly building igluit to sleep in for the night.

They would simply ask where they wished to go, and they would take them to the exact spot. An Inuk would know if it was going to be a clear day or foul drifting weather. He knew all these things, and the Inuk would watch out for everything to make sure things were in order.

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An Inuk was a guide because the Qallunaaq who he was going with would not know; all he did was write notes; that was the way of the Qallunaat.

Phillip Kigusiutnak: The comment I'm about to make is something I know when traders first began at Maguse River. Angalik was just a baby then, so the incidents might be very close together.

Angalik was adopted by his father Aliqut. I am talking about something from my own personal memory. The traders started and they built houses for themselves.

The following year, we went to Kapurvik together with Aliqut family. So the time when Angalik was born and the time when the traders started might be very close together.

But incidentally, Angalik is now more knowledgeable than me because his memory is a lot clearer than mine. Some Inuit people can hold a lot more vivid memories. pp.17-20