An Arctic Soliloquy on Inuit Placenames and Cross-Cultural Fieldwork

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In this article, I summarize the achievements, inadequacies, and breakdowns that occurred during an intensive five-week placename survey of Inuit toponyms in the Keewatin District, Northwest Territories, Canada. This is a firsthand, first-person account by the field leader, using personal journal entries as the substance for an Arctic soliloquy in two acts. The play begins with a prologue setting the spatial and logistical context, moves quickly into the halcyon days of the survey's first act, and then plunges into the frustrations and mixed emotions of the second act before arriving at the denouement in an epilogue. The logistical and emotional complexities of fieldwork are laid bare in this story of how (not) to structure a cross-cultural placename survey. Personal and professional foibles of both author and cast are punctuated with more than a little financial suspense—all of which is suffused with the energy of Inuit elders calmly pursuing perpetuation of their toponymic system under challenging conditions.

Prologue

In 1989, I had what I now realize was the enormous good fortune to be involved in a systematic placename survey of a portion of the Keewatin (Kivalliq) District, Northwest Territories (NWT), Canada. The Keewatin District includes seven Inuit hamlets, one of which is Arviat (officially known as Eskimo Point until 1987), a community on the west coast of Hudson Bay approximately 270 kilometers (168 miles) north of Churchill, Manitoba. At the request of the Inuit elders of Arviat, and under the auspices of their Inuit Cultural Institute (ICI), a comprehensive placename survey was conducted during a five-week period in the summer of 1989.

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Distracted by television, popular music, drugs, and other "southern" influences, many Arviat youth had become reluctant to travel on the land and water and were not listening to their elders' travel stories—stories rich in geographical information about places, animals, historical events, weather and water conditions—and how a human being can thrive in the Arctic. To help offset deterioration in inter-generational transfer of this knowledge, the elders decided that their placenames and associated information should be written down and mapped. The goal of our project was to produce a computerized list and detailed map locations of all placenames known to the approximately 1,200 residents of Arviat and the 250 residents of Whale Cove (Tikirarjuaq), the next community north along the coast.

The project was funded primarily by ICI, with a small fraction granted by the Science Institute of the Northwest Territories. In contrast to most placename surveys, this one was conceived as a massive, laborintensive, systematic enterprise using an exogenous project structure operated by five "key personnel": a coordinator, a team leader, an interviewer, an interpreter/translator, and a secretary/records clerk. I was the team leader—the one who leads the field survey, schedules interviews, directs the team, and maintains liaison with participants and native organizations. These positions and the entire survey organization and methods were developed by the coordinator who is listed in the "cast of characters" below; they are described in the current provisional edition of the Guide to the Field Collection of Native Geographical Names (CPCGN 1992). What follows is, among other things, an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of that complex set of procedures. For example, one of the problems we experienced was turnover in personnel. By completion, twelve individuals had been employed in the five positions. Only three worked through the entire project.

In brief, Inuit elders were interviewed indoors for their knowledge of placenames. Initially, they were paid a daily fee set by ICI; that was changed later to an hourly wage that paid more. All key personnel were salaried, and the project operated on a "southern" work-week model: five days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with one hour for lunch and coffee breaks as needed.

The interview language was Inuktitut, and at least half the key personnel were Inuit at any time during the endeavor. Two Inuit researchers, Oscar Qirnaluk and Hanna Natsialak, worked throughout the entire project, as I did. As a result of my experience, I would recommend strongly against a colonial language as the "project language," and against any restriction of project personnel to non-natives or academics when working among indigenous peoples. All Qallunaat, i.e., non-Inuit southerners like myself, lived with different Inuit families, another very positive practice.

Biographical data sheets were filled out for each participant and each interviewer, and detailed data were collected for each placename.² Each name was given a number, and its location was color-coded on a 1:50,000 government topographic sheet. Inuit participants were encouraged to follow a mental travel route, naming places along the way at a pace that project personnel could follow. Under ideal conditions, everyone would work in concert and the project would achieve a kind of synergistic balance on a daily basis. The work would develop a rhythmic flow to which everyone would be attuned. Such a sublime tableau was rarely achieved in this five-week project.

In preparing to write this article, I re-read in detail my own personal journal from that summer of 1989. As I did so, I once again became immersed in the project and the swirl of events in which it was embedded. What I wrote began to take on the character of a play, or more accurately, a soliloquy. Both comedy and tragedy, it has high moments of exhilaration, low periods of despair and self-pity, and a cast of characters constantly moving in and out. It was often a blur; and it still reads that way, I'm afraid. But that is an important aspect of this sort of project, and it begs for representation.

I have decided to reproduce these journal entries here with a minimum of editing. In doing so, I explain some elements of the Inuit toponymic system, and I address a number of issues crucial to (un)successful placename fieldwork in cross-cultural contexts. What also becomes apparent is what is unfortunately omitted from most academic writing: the importance that personal and professional relationships have in effecting the course of such projects.

I am aware of some risks posed by this writing technique. I could be criticized for ugly egoism, a disingenuous exhibition, and descent into rank confusionism. But I think anyone who has conducted crosscultural fieldwork recognizes the emotional indivisibility of person and work that occurs under those circumstances. It is not as if there were a choice in that matter. Moreover, I can report that confusion was the norm in Arviat, and denying it would only confirm my disingenuousness. What is amazing is that effective results can be achieved under such conditions! In short, I am charged with writing about appropriate field techniques for cross-cultural placename surveys, and I can think of no better way to explore the relevant issues and nuances.

I have kept the unrefined and often ungrammatical structure of the original entries. But I also have done some light editing: inserting punctuation to improve readability; changing names; dismissing inessential topics; and, frankly, removing selected expletives. I have tried to minimize insertions, but brackets (not parentheses) are used where I feel compelled to briefly clarify or define. A few endnotes are used for lengthier explanations. I left all emphasized words as I found them in the original entries. Most of the accounts were written late at night just before falling asleep inside my rented accommodations.

The first act opens during the flight north on a warm July day. Thereafter, with one exception, the performance is set entirely in the confines of a big blue rectangular building with sealed windows in Arviat. That building was the home of ICI. The exception—a weekend spent camping and hunting on the land and waters of the region—demonstrates how important it is to visit places with participants during placename fieldwork. Unfortunately, this is impossible as general practice in the Arctic, due to rugged topographic and climatic conditions, the advanced age of many knowledgeable elders, and sheer expense. However, there is no question that the highest quality placename data available is obtained by travelling outdoors from site to site.

The cast of researchers and other project-related personnel is listed below. Missing from this list are the many Inuit of Arviat who came to ICI and talked and mapped with us. They are prominent in my journal entries, nonetheless, because it was with them that I learned and thrived the most. Indeed, the most enjoyable parts of this project, perhaps any placename project, were the times spent talking and mapping with local residents. To protect their privacy, I have changed the names of all players who did not hold public office at that time.

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A Qallunaat Soliloquy Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

Inuit workers on the project:

Oscar Qirnaluk, hunter, interviewer, and interpreter/translator throughout the project

Hanna Natsialik, interviewer, interpreter/translator, and secretary throughout the project

John Angujjuaq, hunter and key participant/consultant throughout the project

Charlie Pangniq, a hunter who had made his own placename lists and maps over the years and who took an active interest in the project

Sandy Pangniq, project secretary for two days; Charlie's daughter

Ramona Siggaq, interpreter and secretary in the latter days of the project

Laura Immiqqutailaq, a local resident who worked on computer dataentry near the end of the project

Leo Nakturalik, a linguist also working for ICI

Inuit working for Inuit Cultural Institute (ICI):

Paul Falcon, ICI Co-Director

Sammy Tikkalik, ICI Director

Linda, ICI secretary

Qallunaat (non-Inuit "southerners"):

Helen Kerfoot, Head, Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (Ottawa)

Randy Freeman, Territorial Toponymist, Government of the Northwest Territories (Yellowknife)

Karl, project coordinator, Canadian professor who designed the initial survey techniques

Klara, Karl's co-worker and wife, who helped design the survey

Alain, a young university student from southern Canada who worked on the project for two weeks

Amy, my wife at the time

Act 1: Transitions and Boundaries

July 11, on the plane from Minneapolis to Winnipeg: Because of my visit last year,³ I know to bend with the flow of life in northern settlements. I do have goals, however, for the project, for achieving answers to my questions, but I try hard to smile at those goals, realize them for what they are—my goals—and prepare to wait and see what happens. In the end, the data and the conduct of the project are the responsibility of the Inuit. The word "facilitate" may best describe my role. My feelings this afternoon are a combination of self-enforced patience, anxiousness to be up there and getting going, and excitement at my good fortune at being able to tackle something like this!.... I could reach into my bag now and try to plan the work days, but I think I know better.

July 12: We went to ICI and met Paul Falcon and Oscar Qirnaluk who is to be our other research assistant. He looks good. Randy Freeman is already here. Everyone expected us yesterday for some reason.... Some of the maps had arrived, the hydrographic charts had not, nor the air photos or land use maps.... We are thinking of asking Helen Kerfoot to trade a fresh set of unfolded maps for the folded ones Randy gave us. It's ticklish, and I proposed we blame it on ourselves (me) so that Randy isn't embarrassed. We must be politic.⁴

There is a rumor the sea-lift barge arrives this weekend. If true it will be a major event. It would be fun to see its effect on the community. On the other hand, the project would stop for four days! We do what we can I guess. I'm just not at all sure yet what the community reaction will be to our surveys.

July 14, 10:30 p.m.: What a day. Very tiring. I can see how this work can go. More than one hour at a time without a break wears you out. It's intense. You remain very alert. Have to keep track of everything. We did some training this afternoon. In three hours, Oscar Qirnaluk gave us forty-seven names. I see what's involved now. Hard work. Some tedium—checking, re-checking—trying to think of everything.... I can see the advantage of experience and a little Inuktitut.

Many problems became apparent. First, there is a dialect difference between Oscar (51) and Hanna (21). She will have to learn quick. There were some terms she didn't know what he meant or couldn't spell. She has to develop speed too. Second, when Karl and Klara leave, we are *all*

inexperienced at this. It will be a very *interesting* project to carry out. Third, there are conceptual differences in naming places. But this is what we are after. However, it is sometimes difficult to "break through" to understanding. It's not an Inuit problem, it's my problem. For example, a generic, 'river lake' [qamanaugaq], came up today.⁵ Fourth, the logistics can be overwhelming at times. Much juggling. Finally, I found we were missing about eighty maps.

But all in all, I feel it went well, especially for a first day.... The officialization process was clarified and agreed to by all parties. But we still haven't a clear sense of accounting procedures.

Tonight after dinner we unfolded and organized all those damn maps and found the gaps.

Weeks ago a communique [announcing the project to Keewatin hamlets] was demanded from me by ICI and then filed. Now we have to do another one. It was never sent to the communities.

July 15, 11:30 p.m.: Long sunset just beginning. What a day! We got another seventy-seven names today in about six and a half hours work. At times it's tedious and slow, [at] others it's faster and still tedious. Meticulous detail work and clear head are required. Even the [Inuit] participants get tired after an hour. So we say "Tima, kafe" ['It's over, coffee'] and take a break. I'm picking up some other phrases as well. I have to learn some Inuktitut fast in order to facilitate the work. Mostly I sat, watched, and fetched maps today. But the training is for me, too. I just have to learn quicker than anyone else.... About four o'clock I just ran out of gas—mental fatigue, trying to get up to speed ASAP.

Concerns about \$\$ deepened today. ICI is apparently deficit-spending now. Our initial \$10,000 was funny money loaned from a bank. The feds are not the problem they say, but the GNWT [Government of the Northwest Territories]. We have to take a hard look at matters next week and see if we can even continue! What a disaster that would be if we couldn't! Sometimes we are so dismayed. I'm trying to roll with things but tired of getting jerked around. ICI seems very unreliable and doesn't attend to details. Repeatedly, I get the feeling that they sort of believe the project will just happen without \$\$. Karl [is] having [a] terrible time finding out about financing. And now the family he's staying with needs \$ and we asked ICI for a check and they said

they would cut one but didn't by five o'clock today, and Paul says they couldn't anyway 'cause there's only "vapors in the fuel tank." I can see Karl getting less tolerant, and [I] figure we may have to threaten to quit if things don't start being done in better fashion.

July 16, 10 p.m. [Saturday]: After lunch at home I headed out to ICI and worked on the maps, stamping and coloring from 1:00-7:00 p.m. I felt good about it—doing that. I'm great at grunt work! Big deal. Funding nags me, and I can't help feeling suspended in air with no ground underneath. The \$ questions have to be resolved. But it's likely they won't. Families and workers have to be paid however. I don't care for [paying] myself.

July 17, midnight [Sunday]: While at ICI tonight, gave some more thought about \$. I just don't know what to make of the situation. There appears to be some internal bickering and maybe.... [one person] has been released. Paul might be being groomed for Sammy's job, and so I might have stepped into the middle of an awkward transition in leadership when no one knows what's going on. Will there be \$ soon or not? Can we bill the project and get people paid (participants, interviewers, families).... or not? It's so unresolved. We'll see tomorrow.

July 18, midnight: Things seem to come together somewhat today. We met with Sammy first thing and allayed some concerns of his and satisfied my own \$ worries. After a detailed financial statement of the first \$10,000 and requisition for a lump sum of \$9,000 and a letter assuring Sammy we were not a company but a "joint venture," we got a check for \$9,000 late today! I opened an account at The Bay. Easy enough. I hope it can be withdrawn as easy.

So today was a real mix of activities. We were on radio over CBC North and in the community on the CB [citizen-band radio]. Three participants came in; one we asked to come back. Eric Kigiaq was in again for a couple hours after he got paid at noon for yesterday. Magic. But the fun was with Edward Qavvik who went up the Maguse River to Imikula Lake with us and gave many names. He really seemed to enjoy the memories and doing the work. He laughed and got comfortable quite soon. At first it was hard because he wanted to jump all over the place, but we got him to settle in. It's a thin line we must follow between letting the Inuk do what they want and exercising some discipline and structure to do the job. We're also asking Hanna to do scheduling if possible so we don't get blitzed at one time by many people! They're

starting to come in now—the response is better. Soon, we will post signs and copies of some of the work. There was a complaint that \$50/day (ICI rate) was too cheap, so we go with straight \$10/hour for everyone now, even all day. They were only coming in for a couple hours, then leaving. Very smart.

We are asking Hanna to do more now as we get into the pattern, but she is well paid now at \$500/week.

Alain, the student from... [southern Canada], arrived in the late afternoon and was immediately immersed in the project. Seems to fit in easily.

Soon, tomorrow, it becomes fully my project. It feels good finally to be in control more instead of a "trainee." But I have needed to learn the process and get my feet wet. I need to learn even more, but now it is my ball game as well.... The only thing I am leery about is handling large sums of \$ and financing. I know I am not a whiz at it, and this is somewhat complex. It just doesn't come natural to me. I even feel less skilled with increasing age, instead of more. Even straightforward accounting procedures are not clear to me at times, and I find my attention soon wandering. I just hope I don't get the project in trouble because of this limitation. K. and K. operate doing everything at once and can be quite impatient at times—so it's good to have fewer distractions in that sense. Time to think in a more considered way than I have to this point. It gets hectic during the interviews, so you need the other time to organize your thoughts. They reflexed [i.e., behaved automatically] a lot, which is natural—but I can't do that. At times, I got frustrated with Klara who would go off into immense detail about a seemingly minor or unrelated point, or one I fully understood already. But I'm exercising patience and tolerance throughout. It's good discipline for me. But you also have to know when to get on the stick.

I feel confident in all aspects but the accounting. I'll just do the best I can.

Meanwhile, we await the Manitoba maps still⁷—and whatever other points needs clarification. But we appear to be off and running. Do I have the reins or the tail of this speeding thoroughbred?? Yiiiieeeee! Need sleep.

July 19, midnight: Midnight again. Stayed up talking.... eleven different dialects in Arviat alone. More mixing than in Nunavik. She was teaching me some Inuktitut words I asked about.⁸

Big day. 122 names in six and a half hours from John Angujjuaq. We were flying. And several times he would stop to say he was sweating and laugh. I was too. Warm day, especially inside. I finally feel like it's my project now.... I'm paying out from the second installment of \$9,000 now and doing accounting. Ugh. But we should be OK for the field season.

I called Amy tonight. Good to hear her voice. I hope she is not apprehensive about coming up.

Oscar Qirnaluk, my assistant, was up on Maguse River hunting all night. Bagged 3 tuktu [caribou] and a half hour of sleep. Didn't do much today—really sagging in the afternoon. I didn't mind at all, as Hanna and I got on well with John. I'm beat. Got to get sleep to stay sharp.

July 20, 11:30 p.m.: Had another good day on the project. John Angujjuaq gave us ninety-nine names today. We went through the Maguse River country and up the coast to Dawson Inlet. He is sharp! Great memory and eager to give information. You can't stop him. He'd go all night if we let him. Clearly he enjoys the "travelling".... John is very patient, waits for Hanna to finish writing. I try to push ahead to let him go faster by saying "Ati," but he won't until Hanna is ready. He clearly understands maps and our numbering scheme and even anticipates my questions. All this from an old hunter...a "great hunter" once, but he got shot accidentally and one leg is bad. Still, he goes hunting a lot.

I impressed everyone in the room today by putting the stick through the bone on the first try! Everybody went "Oooooh" and I was as surprised as anyone. My jaw must have dropped 'cause John imitated my face and laughed. Oscar said, "That's enough. No more." They didn't know I'd tried it yesterday several times with no luck. Oscar had made a motion to show how you do it and I immediately tried to imitate it...and...presto! I don't know what ramifications it will have, but I'm sure others will hear. Interestingly, one of the "nuna attinga" [placenames] we heard today had to do with this game: a needle-shaped point (nuvuk) aiming toward a small cove.

The most interesting thing today was the five of us discussing regional toponymy in front of the posted wall map in ICI's hallway. ¹⁰ It turns out there are broader regional names linking a group (band) of people to a region, and all the larger-scale toponyms in that area to that

region as well. I think a hierarchy may exist based on dialect zones and culture. Essentially, I might have touched on the formation of culture regions in southern Keewatin. Clearly, there are several names for different regions.

I discussed mapping these regions as areas on a map, knowing that might be problematic and that firm boundary lines were out of the question. Anything more than a broad transition zone would be impossible. But that's reality and I would like to see if it can be done. While recognizing their existence, Oscar and John at first said they couldn't map them because they didn't know where one changed to another. There was no line. At one point, John said it's not like the boundary between Manitoba and NWT. I assured them I understood the difference quite well. Although I could be too confident on this point, and may not really be close to understanding their problem with defining large regions. Yet I feel I can grasp the difference and work toward trying to understand how they conceive it. I then tried to understand how they see it by asking questions in various ways—posing problems (e.g., if you were travelling from Arviat, would you cross regions? where?. etc.) and making comparisons (Winnipeg and Churchill are in Manitoba. but [in] quite different regions of Manitoba). I deliberately avoided using Dene [Athapaskan Indian]/Inuit regional boundaries because that has also been a transition zone of great fluctuation, but it is on the verge of being fixed cartographically, and the air is politicized with the issue of where to fix that boundary line. 11 Dynamics are so much safer and natural; as soon as you make something fixed it causes a problem. Which brings up the dilemma with recording toponyms of course, but I'll save this for later. 12

Then Oscar and John said they wouldn't draw any regions. At one point, the comment that they weren't "supposed to do that" may have come out in Hanna's translation. I gained the impression that they clearly knew the political implications, the symbolic power, that any such lines would have on maps. They were still congenial. But they made comments like, "Inuit don't feel separated, but united," and that there is no sense of owning property and land, etc. All of which served to tell me that although these concepts are absolutely familiar to me, they were probably behind the problem they had with drawing dialect or culture boundaries on maps. I wonder how they'd feel if asked to do it for Dene/Inuit regions. In any case, I was not willing and will probably

never push the point to where I create an adversary situation. As a Qallunaat, I don't *need* the information that badly. But it is all part of a naming "system." I let it slide and we returned to the smaller maps on the library tables. I will bring it up again later perhaps. It has to be handled delicately, but I think I can do that. I'd like to allay their fears about my intentions, while getting the systematic or hierarchical aspects of spatial conceptions better defined, in a roundabout manner. But it has to be volunteered.

All of this confirms, of course, my belief that non-literate traditions give indigenous people a sense of the value and pitfalls/limitations of maps—a form of written expression that carries a power they are eager to use at times and want to avoid at others; they have been burned enough by what "southerners" write.

In addition to all that, John and Oscar *insisted* that a large-scale placename (for a small feature) would be known and used by *all* Inuit sub-groups. There is agreement, they said, on what a place is called, and those who know it use the same name. So if Harvaqtormiut [band] name a place in that dialect, Paalirmiut [band], for example, would use the same name, not another one. There is agreement across bands and regions. And the name is recognized as being in the Harvaqtormiut "region." And you can get identical names in different regions, but the regional identity will define precisely which place is meant.

If this is all correct, and it's just preliminary right now, then it might be possible to establish the regions via hearing names pronounced, so as to hear dialect differences in the name reflecting the "parent" dialect of that toponym.

Interestingly, I did get John Angujjuaq to confirm that, while he thought Qaminuriaq [a lake] belonged to the Harvaqtormiut region and Qaminaq [another lake] belonged to another [region], O'Neil and Victoria Lakes in between were places he knew names of in Inuktitut, but didn't know which region they belonged to. I also think he understands the concept of "overlap." So in there may be the transition zone of the two regions. Very broad (two hundred kilometers?) but important.

Finally, Oscar said he and his dad walked from Hiquligjuaq to Arviat in seven days once. I was amazed. 13

July 21, (written on July 22, 7:30 a.m.): Today was very hectic. We made four signs for posting at Hamlet Council, radio station, The Bay, Co-op [grocery store]. That took all morning but they look nice. Hanna wrote my name in syllabics.

Quick lunch and then back to ICI with Edward Qavvik. He had real trouble orienting himself on the maps out by Ennadai Lake. We were rotating them every which way. For two hours we got nowhere. Very frustrating. He couldn't get his bearings, and at one point insisted Yellowknife was near Arviat. He had a name for the Revillon Freres post at Brochet, but no precise travel route or names along the way. Then back over near Henik Lakes he gave us four names.

Charlie Pangniq was in for his "going away" party, and stopped in to talk and help. He knew places where Edward had lived. He knows personal histories so well, and English names. He said he'd be willing to help without pay.

Amy came in at 4:45 and I picked her up by Honda. 14 Night came and all the questions started coming.

Act 2: Hot Air, Bitter Wind

July 22, 10:45 p.m.: I don't want another day like today. Work was out of control and I got frustrated and edgy and was short with people. Too many things going on. Too many roles to play. Someone kept calling and interrupting on the phone. Then I had to call him back. Then I got five more things needing "immediate" attention. All the while the work lies dead in the water. No flow. No continuity. I didn't know when to call coffee breaks. People kept coming to be paid: Edward, then [the woman of the house where Alain is staying] for Alain's billet. Everyone was heading for The Bay. It's Friday. I was quickly overwhelmed with everything I was charged with doing, while no one else does anything but waits for me. So I'm flying around the room like a headless duck and everyone else is sitting there. This is impossible and cannot happen again. Alain is good but didn't receive any knowledge from Karl on what the hell this is all about. He tries, but Hanna is always waiting for forms. Yet we're not comfortable with Klara's complicated system either. May work fine if you've been doing it 10+ years, but it evolved to that for them. We must operate more simply, and maybe more slowly, if need be. Yet I want to move, the machinery to be going, when the Inuk is ready to travel. Too much waiting and asking for names repeatedly. And I have to check their (Alain's and Hanna's) work, answer phones, pay people, back and forth, back and forth, and think about what we are not doing, what still needs to be done, etc. etc.; all the while trying to interview Inuit elders??? Oh, and there's my wife there [in the room] too. What's she thinking? Does she require my attention too??

Lessons learned and new structure to impose before I drop dead or end up hating this work for crissakes:

- 1. Have Linda take messages and I will call back at lunch 12:00-1:00, after 5:00, or the following a.m. unless an emergency. Absolutely. The phone...[stuff] pulls my head right out of Inuktitut and the work going on. And everything grinds to a halt and we pay people to sit around. We get nowhere and I get frustrated. Eliminate distractions.... We also have to contend with construction next door!
- 2. Simplify interview/field process. The complexity level is too high for novices. I know what to do and how to do it, but I can't do everybody's job. Hanna is sharp and picks up. But she tires and things go slooooowww. Alain is also smart but doesn't know why he's doing things. Review procedures and discuss.
- 3. I'm not sure, but I think Oscar might be out of the loop. He needs to work more closely with Hanna, and learn the maps and colored pencils. If they're to have any chance at continuing this on their own in the fall! Give him a color code sheet. I think he's learning the map system and location numbers some.
- 4. Too many maps accumulate. Yet when Alain spends time putting them away, then Hanna doesn't get forms. And if they are put away, inevitably the [Inuit] participant wants them again. Two solutions: Alain must have some forms pre-numbered and ready for Hanna to grab. He waits for me now. Also, I must get participants to be more systematic. Richard Natsiq today was jumping around like crazy, giving one or two names for every two sheets, insisting that he was wanting to get to a lake but he couldn't recognize it at 1:250,000 and we don't know [it], so we're folding [back the map margins] and fitting damn maps, and he just motions for the next one—no, still farther upstream. Finally, we get there and he says "maa" [yes] and gives the Inuktitut name for Edehon Lake and sits back. He's done. Well damn. What happened was I let him control the situation. I need to do this:

- (a) Tell participant who we are and what we are after, why we are doing this. This hasn't been done in three days. Although we've pretty much been with John and Edward.
- (b) Instruct participant that we want to be systematic and follow a travel route. We find it helps the memory and is more fun for them, instead of jumping all over the place. This will allow Alain to be more organized and in control too. It's just too frenetic now.
- (c) After getting rolling, control the pace so Hanna and Alain can do their work thoroughly and properly. If we go more slowly and take longer, so be it. The Keewatin is different from Nunavik. That much is clear to me. The "terra cognita" is more massive. It will proceed differently too, because communities are more mixed and people know [places] all over. Not just their immediate area. Ask for stories at key points so Alain can get caught up.
- (d) Stick to directions and sheet sequences, and suggest that too much watershed jumping will confuse. Promise to come back to *that* area when we are done going down the river or the section of coast you're on. Make a note of that.
- (e) Ask about new names, regional names, and "Keewatin" periodically. That helps adjust pace. Rhythm is crucial.
 - (f) Conclude at 4:30 if possible so there is time to sort and wrap up. I don't want to go through this again.
- July 23, 9:15 p.m. [Saturday]: Just finished making notes for.... [Monday]. Preparing to implement changes, or rather, to try to get back, recapture, what was lost on Friday, while also getting some other work done on the names we have, and getting Oscar familiar with the color coding and maps more, etc. All in an effort to get Hanna and Oscar more into the body of the research process, so that when Alain leaves on August 4th we have a chance of continuing without a replacement, and so that when I have to leave the room for the moment everything doesn't grind to a halt like it did Friday.
- July 25: Lots of payments to [Inuit] participants, and those are in receipt book. Everyone at ICI soon found out I wasn't requiring an hourly time sheet from Hanna. All of a sudden everyone wanted to work for me! But I can't see why she needs them. I know her hours. She works when I work. I can't see [that] we need to do it on an hourly basis for her. But if necessary it could be easily reconstructed to a 40-hour work week.

We had a meeting and got back to square one, reorganizing and recapturing the intent here. Then Hanna and Oscar did some translating. She won't do the obscene ones, but we can get someone else to do it I am sure. Amy was scornful when I told her this, but I figure it's no big deal. A's comment was, "She's not very professional." Maybe so. But this is who I'm working with, and I'm not going to force a minor issue when there's other resources. Hanna seemed to get by OK with the Schneider dictionary of Quebec/Labrador/Baffin. There were some Qs that arose in making a good English translation. But we tackled and solved them.... Hanna may not be as skilled and experienced as other linguist/interpreters but she learns quickly, and it is my hope that the quality will be there in the end.

Lots of loose ends tied up this a.m. Then I sorted the land use maps and found one missing and another duplicated. We got the air photos today and they are disappointing in one respect: very small scale (1:60,000—1:88,000) and old (early 1960s) for the settlements. I had been told otherwise. So calls to both the map office and air photo library have to go out tomorrow. Sigh. It's always like this.

Had a good interview with Job Tulugaq this afternoon - forty-seven names north and east of Ennadai Lake.

The map begins to fill, but slowly.

Amy seemed mad at me at 6:30 p.m. when she got home from her long walk. Couldn't tell me where she was or what she saw and didn't care to. I can tell she's miffed. She seems to be retreating a bit—staying up in the room at night. She may have come to her conclusion about things, and having done that, is ready to leave. Maybe I'm not paying enough attention to her? I offered to have her help me this morning, but she was testy and went on the offensive. Then she made a long, leisurely breakfast out of it, sat down with a book to read while eating, just as I had to go open up ICI. Once again, I don't understand and we don't communicate. I think the food "thing" is getting to her. Who knows.

July 26: Today was a record day. John Angujjuaq covered 126 names, and after having gone through Maguse River a few days ago, he was able to retrace, and pick up more names a second time. The question that occurred to me today was: how do I know when I have all or ninety-nine percent of the names known in the community? This was prodded, in part, by Karl's query as to when I'd estimate we could leave

Arviat. 15 I suppose the elders in the community should decide when there is no more. But this is not Nunavik. There are no persons pointed to as authorities, and no alliance of name systems with respective settlements. No one says here, "You should go to ____. They know those places better." We went right on past Whale Cove today, and John even said he knew more names than the residents there did of that surrounding area. When they reach the end, they simply say, "I don't know any in that area." There doesn't appear to be the assignment of regions to settlements as in Nunavik. There's not anything like the clear sense (I gathered from Karl) in Nunavik of defined use areas or occupancy areas where names are known in a given community, and others in other communities defer to that community. No deference here.

I suppose Charlie Pangniq could function as a kind of final source. I had already been thinking of going to him when most of the elders who were going to come forward had had their say. He knows the land very well, English very well, and has made it his business to be involved in recording placenames. He seems to be feeling better these days.

I remain disappointed in the level of leadership/assistance coming from ICI. We've been on the radio, CB, phone, ads in four locations, paying fairly, and still no one comes in, but instead we have to phone or CB people. Maybe they expect to be invited, but that's not the Inuit way. In addition, the \$9,000 check I deposited at The Bay last week bounced!...funds are frozen for a week. Sammy didn't get bank authorization as he had for the payroll checks. DIAND is still "processing" funding. ¹⁶ I can't pay Hanna or Alain's billet 'til then. Fortunately, I have enough to pay participants, but that's it. So we keep going. But I wouldn't call this a smooth operation!

July 27, written July 28, midnight: This trip is infinitely more complex than last year. Not a vacation. I'm trying to do everything all the time. As a result, it's less enjoyable too. Partly, I'm already familiar with the place, and the newness has rubbed off. But there is still a less enjoyable aspect to it all. It's been unusually hot, too. And the windows don't open at ICI. Good thing, too, for ninety-five percent of the year. But this week it was unruly in there. So the upshot is I feel pressures and difficulties as if I was back home.

We traversed from Ennadai Lake to Arviat with Job and Edward. Several differences in naming appeared as they disagreed on places. Generally, Job felt places were more northerly than Edward. We got Eric to come back and square some differences, but he's not a vigorous participant. Three names for Ennadai Lake were unresolved.

The secretary, Linda, suggested some participants, and discussed street and neighborhood names with me. Areas of town are apparently affiliated with gravesites near them.

July 28, midnight: Sixty-three names today from Thomas Ukpik starting at Hiquligjuaq. [He] couldn't go beyond Nahigtartorviq, except for Kazan Falls. Many of the Rasmussen names are remembered. ¹⁷ We still need more participants for the Kazan River and lakes and rivers to the west, more Ennadai Lake people, and Manitoba experience, and to fill in some gaps here and there. We also need women. The microtoponymy around campsites has not been discussed yet. Thomas mentioned the same names when I asked about regional names, as John did, and also claimed to not really know where they are.

Very hot today. Thirty degrees Celsius! Oscar had his shirt off at ICI. Very stuffy there and the work really slowed this afternoon. At times, Alain and Hanna just sat back and nothing happened. Thomas was giving a name, and they sat there oblivious. Then I asked Hanna if he had given a name, and she said yes, but still sat there motionless. Ohhkayy. There's not much I can do when the "team" doesn't swing into action.

Karl claimed we would feel closer bonding as we go along. But I don't see that happening. I think I am tense, for other reasons related to Amy, and I am not as easygoing and congenial as I should be. Plus I feel hurried and pressed to get Arviat "done." It came about because we set a minimum goal of doing Arviat, and now it looks like it'll be a rush to even do that much. Plus Karl keeps advising me [by phone] of numerous administrative details and the shortening time. And finally there is the lack of help from ICI and continuing financial difficulties. It's like I'm doing this work and I'm going to complete it right through to publication despite everyone else, not with everyone else. I'm put in an isolated position again because I'm the lightning rod for everything. It's hard to find enjoyment in it under these conditions.

July 31 [Sunday, reflecting on a weekend spent boating, hunting, and camping with an Inuit family]: The more I ride in boats, the more I see how the land and water looks to the Inuit. At least the outlines of it. I don't have their perception of it. But I can see why some names are

given for the shape of a place. And why certain currents or areas of water are recognized and not others. Also, the "barren grounds" are not so flat and barren as to show no relief at all; at least not from what I've seen. While the lower Uhuganarnaap Kuunga [Maguse River] is mostly even terrain, there are a number of isolated ridges and hills, some quite striking given the context. Many are named. Look-out places are near the river or lakes, and quite distinct from hills used as landmarks and guides. Without the forest cover of the south, I believe it is easier to remember distinctive landforms and shapes. Trees soften contours. For example, how many Sugarloaf Mtns. are there in the Appalachians? Or Smoky Mtns.? Without tree cover they would show as differentiated hillforms. But of course the land here presents its difficulties too. Many places look so similar. And the typically deranged drainage makes naming more crucial. 18 Yet the Inuit have it all sorted out as corridors of travel which cross caribou paths. When I see how they give names in our sessions, their travel paths, it becomes easier to understand the fluvial system. In this sense, perhaps the toponymic system makes the fluvial system more comprehensible, even to non-Inuit, than the non-Inuit habit of commemorative naming. Inuit names have relationships to the land and to each other that essentially "spell out" the structure of the landscape. Semiotics ought to help reveal this structure. The "system" of non-Inuit names doesn't do this. It also doesn't approach the kind of density in coverage of the Inuit names.

August 1, written August 2, 7:45 a.m.: Back in the saddle. Henry Qugjuk gave us fifty names in the lower Kazan River and upper Qamanuriaq area. At one point he and John Angujjuaq couldn't remember which names applied to Tebesjuak, Mallery, and Princess Mary Lakes on the Kuunuaq River. I asked who could help and John thought of a guy in Baker Lake, so I said to make the call. Michael Tulugaq in Baker Lake couldn't remember either, but what I didn't know was that Henry told him to call back collect. When he did, Linda came running to see who authorized it. Everything turned out OK, and I promised no more collect calls. We got the names right, apparently.

Amy finally got the flight yesterday at 1:45, and I assume wound up at Winnipeg satisfactorily.

I went in to work again until 10:00 last night, making up the transparent grid and sending Karl two faxes. And doing some accounting. Oscar came in to say that Charlie Pangniq and Luke Tiriganiaq will be in today.

August 2, written August 4, 11:45 p.m.: Great. I'm way behind on my diary. I can't remember what day it is. This is work! I just got in from ICI tonight at 11:30 p.m.! I should keep hours so I get paid for everything. I haven't stopped since Tuesday a.m. What happened Tuesday? I can't recall. Luke Tiriganiaq and Charlie Pangniq came in. Luke was disappointing and contributed maybe twenty-five names. Charlie went through most of his list for Ennadai with me and Luke. Hanna was sick and so Charlie's daughter, Sandy, subbed for the day. That, plus Charlie's nosebleeds caused us to go slow. Plus, Charlie seemed less concerned with precise locations of places and working with 1:50,000 sheets than he was with telling stories and giving histories. Oral tradition and respect for elders runs quite strong in him. And it's important and very interesting to listen to. But it's frustrating to try to keep him focused on the task at hand. Other participants were better in this respect. Plus his inland names are mostly whole lakes so he jumps watersheds like crazy. He follows his [own placename] list by number but they jump all over. Not systematized by area so much as by sequence from the tape he listened to, or his conversation with someone, or how they were said at an elder's conference. So, with him, it is best to do most names at 1:250,000. Yet sometimes I have to jump to the 1:50,000 when on occasion he gets to a small feature. Consequently, his data ends up on both scales, making screw-ups in numbering easy and other problems. But to use 1:50,000 all the time with someone like this is impossible. I just have to be very careful when changing scales. Also, he doesn't pause long before he's off somewhere else looking up another name. And it's hard to bring him back. Probably the most difficult participant. We are trying to wind it up, but I feel I'm taking on more of the tasks as we do. I have doubts Oscar and Hanna could carry this on alone. Perhaps it is my fault in not letting Oscar do more of the interviewing. I've put him outside the loop somewhat, I fear.

August 3, written August 4: We had John and Henry back again and followed the Ferguson and Copperneedle Rivers to the coast and came down to Arviat.

We hired Ramona Siggaq to replace Alain. There's a lot of "training" that still has to be done what with new personnel, and Oscar still not involved in map drawing and interviewing (my fault). Yet, I feel *pressed* all the way to August 18 now. And with people floating in and out of the project, it's doubly hard to stay up to speed. Plus,

naturally, no one is quite as committed to the project as I am. With the possible exception of John. Even Charlie went off hunting today when he said he'd come in. But certainly Alain, Hanna, and Oscar are not. Hanna is good but likes to sleep and take long breaks. And when she tires, she doesn't have any reserve. She just konks out, and quality goes down. I find myself wishing I had at least three clones of myself. Playing roles of administering, banking, politicking, as well as interviewing and troubleshooting, etc. is a little too much. Possibly, Karl and Klara forgot there were two of them working on the project. When 5:00 p.m. rolls around, no one wants to work late here. For his part, Alain has stayed later many times, but today he left early without finishing up his part of the jobs. So we have to end early to get "wrapup" work done, which cuts into interview time.

I'm openly bribing Oscar and Hanna now. It didn't work with Oscar. Monday's a holiday in Canada and he's taking it. \$100 means nothing to him; [he] wants to go on a three-day hunt. He asked for Friday off too. Hanna may come in Monday, and I'm hoping she needs \$ enough she'll come in Saturday. Ramona will if Hanna will. They're friends. I hope giggles don't get in the way here. I guess I'm not much at selecting employees. I could be really good at cultural geography and cartography here—if I only had the time! This overly complex process has taken over everything.

August 8, 5:30 p.m. [next entry]: This is a job! Complete with stress southern-style. I feel in a vise, almost paralyzed, caught between cultures and getting almost nothing done; in fact, going backwards. So today Helen Piviniq, James Piviniq, and John Tuugalik get begged to come in and give names around Hiquligjuag and go over the Rasmussen names; which was OK, in between chats and giggles between Ramona and Hanna (a mistake to let Hanna determine who to hire). But then we get down to Henik Lakes at 4:45 p.m., and they disagree with Job and Edward about the names there. They say those "guys" weren't born there and don't know it like they do. So now we've got to have the whole bunch in to settle this and go over an area again. My response is: where the hell have these experts been for the past four weeks? We have begged, pleaded, and announced. Should we have canvassed door-todoor? How many other experts have not come forward? How many will be upset because they weren't "consulted"? Damn, this is really upsetting. There's no protocol here [for the project]. It's a mess and I'm sick of the strain, the pressure to wrap-up, and the whole damn project. And then Hanna hits me up for us to fly her buddy Ramona.... [south] too because she'll be lonely for two months. It was almost a threat. She said to tell Karl she might not be "able" to stay two months without Ramona there. 19 Suddenly, I'm somebody's rich uncle!? I'm friendly, but now I feel I'm being abused. Got to be something really wrong with me if Inuit are walking all over me.

...Now Karl said today he might come up in the fall to see about and prepare for Whale Cove. Sounds to me like something I wrote made him think I've lost control and not getting the team to function properly. Fine. I've failed. I've had it. I know I did my best but now everything works against me, from all sides, and I can't do this alone. Even Amy was a hassle when she was here.... I'm the bone everybody's chewing on; this is ridiculous.

August 9, 9:30 p.m.: Time is running out. I've decided to take the lid off the pressure-cooker. We may not finish before I leave. Progress on the ICI wall map is very slow, Charlie P. hasn't been in town for a week now, and Hanna is taking even longer breaks. I think the team is tired. I know I am. Even Oscar seemed tired and frustrated today; he was just back from a three-day weekend with no caribou, fish, or anything else. Clearly, he was frustrated about that. I made notes on changes for future operations.

We began the computer-entry today with Laura Immiqqutailaq. She was in one room, Hanna and John at the wall map, Oscar and Ramona in the library doing translations, and I was dancing between them all taking photos, trouble-shooting, etc. More disagreements came up resulting from the wall map. But I could handle the stress today for some reason. Hanna couldn't, however, and got fed up by late afternoon. The subject of dialect and spelling came up, and after that the day seemed to go downhill for her. I wasn't ready for the role of "linguist" either, but I should have anticipated better. Laura is entering the names in syllabics only, with changes as she goes, but I think that may take too long. Better to copy Hanna's writing?

August 10, 10:00 p.m.: Today it was more like yesterday. Laura on computer, Paul and Leo Nakturalik helping, John and Hanna at the wall map, and Ramona and Oscar translating. Are all these people on my payroll? I was dancing and bopping around among all three areas. Somehow work progresses, but if ever there was a need for two clones

of myself—or someone lots *better*—this is it. Several times, everyone had questions at once. Grace and elan are my watchwords.

Laura is very fast, even with converting Hanna's syllabics to ICI standardized. How accurate, I have no idea. Together, we are learning how to use MacWrite in Inuktitut. Paul has "Mactitut" and a hard disk—nice set-up. He was helpful all day.

Hanna does well alone with John and the wall map, although she's frustrated by the tedium and makes errors. We found five such after 4:30 today, but fixed it all. It's tough though, and I count her as doing well.

Ramona does OK with base-level translations, but lots of refining has to be done. It's a start. We interviewed John Amaruq a little but not much came of it.

Twenty-nine new names out of seventy-two came...[from] the wall map and John Angujjuaq's memory triggered by the map, so Hanna sees it works. It is tedious.

Epilogue

There is where my journal ends, or more accurately, where my ability to record events was finally overwhelmed. I left eight days later, having completed the Arviat project successfully in some respects, but feeling that I had failed in my idealized role as team leader, as a facilitator. I was naïve in proclaiming to myself on the flight north that I would not seek to exert a controlling influence. During the project, I thought external and internal forces, many beyond my control, were compelling me to take on some aspects of all five roles defined by the survey method. That was a perfect recipe for personal exhaustion if not complete disaster. One result was that the Whale Cove project had to be postponed until later that fall. Another, I fear, is that there are lingering stories in Arviat about the abusive Qallunaat who came for the placenames. But these are Qallunaat worries.

On the positive side, more than one thousand placenames were recorded, mapped in detail, and approved by the Arviat community and by hamlet council resolution before the project disbanded. The names were written in both Inuit syllabics and Roman orthography and checked for accurate correspondence with color-coded locations on the maps. Laura completed her computer work, so all the names in both orthographies were available in digital format on diskette. An "open-house" was

held one day for local residents of all ages to come and review the work that had been accomplished, and to check for errors. My only disappointment was based on our inability to get more than a few names translated into English, a process that eventually would take months to complete.²⁰

On August 18, all project materials were crated and shipped back south. Exhausted, I went home feeling as if I had done everything I could under the circumstances to produce an accurate and thorough names survey for the elders of Arviat. I remember thinking I probably would not know what had really occurred until months, maybe years later. Since then, I've often been asked if I would ever work on such a project again. My answer is, "You bet. But not that way."

Notes

- 1. Officially, ICI was empowered by and responsible to the Inuit elders of the Northwest Territories. In practice, ICI was most influenced by Keewatin elders, particularly those in Arviat. Thus, most projects conducted under their auspices were of local or regional concern.
- 2. See the manual produced by the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for more details (CPCGN 1992).
- 3. I visited Arviat briefly in 1988, following completion of my Ph.D. dissertation on historical Inuit maps. I had wanted to see something of the region and people after studying it so long in libraries and archives. ICI personnel indicated an interest in a placename survey at that time.
- 4. Rolled maps are recommended because folding produces small ridges along the creases that can snag pencils drawn across them, leading to unintended marks on the map. Also, repeated folding frequently erases geographical features along the fold.
- 5. A qamanaugaq appears to be a sub-class of lake, a large body of fresh water with a well-defined river current running through it. Leo Nakturalik, a skilled linguist in both English and Inuktitut, translates qamanaugaq as "a lake between a river." There may be more to distinguish such places that escapes me.
- 6. The Hudson's Bay Company; in the North, it is now Northern Stores, Ltd. Although not a bank, The Bay was the only institution resembling one in most Arctic communities. It was the only place in Arviat where large sums could be "deposited" and "withdrawn," but no interest accrues and fees are taken as a matter of course.
- 7. Inuit geographical knowledge extended for thousands of kilometers around Arviat, including parts of northern Manitoba. 1:50,000 maps for the entire area were needed for accurate mapping.

- 8. The woman of the house I lived in taught Inuktitut in the Arviat school. Nunavik is the name for the northern Quebec region of Inuit settlement. Directly east across Hudson Bay from the Keewatin, Nunavik's cultural geography and demography are both similar and different.
- 9. The place and the game are called ajagaq or ajagarniq. Boas (1964, 157-59) spelled it ajegaung. The game has many variants. Typically, a narrow piece of bone or antler approximately twelve centimeters (almost five inches) is attached to another thicker piece of bone or antler by a piece of sinew perhaps ninety centimeters long (three feet). The thicker bone piece has numerous holes drilled into it. The object is to toss this piece in the air and stab it with the long narrow "spear." This is done repeatedly until failure. The thick piece is often carved in the shape of an animal. See also Malaurie (1982, 273-74).
- 10. ICI had an immense 1:250,000 map of the southern half of Keewatin in the main hallway, on which many Inuit over the years had written placenames. We considered it a "community resource" and spent several days extracting names from that map. These were corroborated in interviews for locational and orthographic accuracy. John Angujjuaq was the primary interviewee because he had travelled the entire region many times in different seasons.
- 11. This is a reference to the formation of the new territory of Nunavut. For more about the significance of lines and names on maps and in the Inuit world, see Pelly (1991) and Rundstrom (1992).
- 12. I never did return to it, but what I had in mind was the moral issue of converting what are dynamic cultural-geographical systems like placenames into fixed, static entities frozen on maps and in government databases. Also preoccupying me was the "one place—one name" principle obeyed by names authorities, which disallows the multiple naming that might naturally occur in these regional transition zones.
- 13. Hiquligjuaq (Siquligjuaq) 'big, ice-filled one' (Rasmussen 1930a, 145) is a very large lake 240 kilometers (150 miles) northwest of Arviat on the Kazan River. On maps it is often labelled "Yathkyed Lake," a Chipewyan name in origin.
- 14. "Honda" is the generic name for all three- or four-wheeled all-terrain vehicles commonly found in the North, regardless of manufacturer.
- 15. Karl, the project coordinator, was in touch by telephone three or four times a week starting at this time.
- 16. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is the equivalent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the U.S. Our project depended on ICI funding, and ICI is dependent on DIAND for its financial support.
- 17. This refers to the extensive toponymic lists and maps published by Knud Rasmussen (1930a; b).
- 18. "Deranged" is the term used by fluvial geomorphologists to describe typical Arctic channel patterns.

- 19. Because time was running short, plans were being made to fly Hanna south to finish working on translations of the Arviat names with Karl and Klara.
- 20. More disappointment was soon to come. In retrospect, we should have recognized the financial problems plaguing our project all summer as glaring warning signs of an imminent debacle. In the fall of 1989, ICI was closed by the federal government and investigated for misuse of federal funds and embezzlement. Tens of thousands of Canadian dollars were unaccounted for. Their "accountant," a Qallunaat, had suddenly disappeared with his family. All ICI-funded projects, including ours, had to demonstrate an accounting. Fortunately, we'd kept receipts for every possible transaction, no matter how small. ICI was shut down for about a year, then later reconstituted with different personnel, in a different hamlet, and with much stronger federal oversight. Meanwhile, the Inuit elders who empowered ICI were understandably livid, and declared all material gathered through ICI-funded projects "cultural property." For this and other reasons, the results of the Arviat project have not been published.

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