HBC agents gave no credit. During this period the outside world intervened with the news of the war. In addition, the slow move to Puvirnituq and other settlements began, and prefabricated houses replaced the traditional tents and igloos. Employment at the trading post and the sale of stone sculptures began to alter Inuit lives.

Part three documents significant changes to Inuit life from 1953 to the late 1960s. Central to these changes was the introduction of federal aid: old age pensions, disability allowances, and family allowances. The Bay began to purchase Inuit sculptures, though the author notes that each manager had a different concept of their value (p. 81). Their attitude changed with the arrival of manager Peter Murdoch in 1955. Under his management, there was a certain stability, even though the Bay would still not allow Inuit to purchase on advanced credit, and they still had to depend on hunting for subsistence. Qumaq indicates the important role of René Lévesque in Nouveau-Québec. Another development was the introduction of a federal school and later a missionary school by Father André Steinmann, whose own autobiography has been published (Steinmann, 1977). Qumaq indicates Steinmann’s role in helping to establish the co-operative that eventually competed with the Bay: the Federation of Co-operatives of Nouveau-Québec. Established in 1966, with the assistance of the province, the Federation was a step toward autonomy. A village council had also been established in 1961, with an election in which Qumaq, without campaigning, received the largest number of votes.

The fourth part of the book covers the years 1969 to 1978. A key development was the James Bay project, and the consequent James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (La Convention de la Baie James et du Nord Québécois), which for Qumaq and the people of Puvirnituq, Ivujivik, and Salluit was a betrayal, symbolizing a loss of autonomy. A minority organization, called Inuuatitigiit Tungavangit Nunammimi (ITN), emerged. On the other hand, the people voted for the merger of the Direction générale du Nouveau Québec and the Commission scolaire du Nouveau-Québec.

Two projects signaled Qumaq’s belief in autonomy for the Inuit. In 1977, he completed an encyclopedia of traditional life, which he entrusted to Bernard Saladin d’Anglure; however, it was not actually published until later and then only in syllabics. In 1979, Qumaq began to create a dictionary of Inuktut as spoken in Nunavik, which he completed in 1981. Interestingly, the latter project received federal government support through the intervention of two southern supporters, George Filatas and filmmaker Maurice Bulbulian, who arranged for Qumaq to visit Ottawa. The resulting grant of $18,000 allowed him to hire a secretary. Qumaq obtained three more years of funding from the Quebec government, which earlier had provided a computer and funding for publication of the encyclopedia of traditional life. Qumaq continued to regret the divisions in Inuit society, as well as social problems such as alcohol abuse. These concerns, among others, led him to write his autobiography.

The final section of the book deals with Qumaq’s reflections from the vantage of age—changes, importance of hunting and fishing, the divisions over James Bay, his difficulties as he aged and experienced illnesses, the friends who helped him, and his family, who had figured throughout the narrative.

As befitting an individual with little formal schooling, yet writing in syllabics, the style is relatively simple and straightforward. Besides the observations on changes in lifestyle, a strength of the book is the discussion on the evolution of autonomy, whether in co-operatives, villages, or region, and especially the opposition to the James Bay agreement. In translating this work, Louis-Jacques Dorais has done a great service by bringing Qumaq’s story to a wider readership. This book complements the work of people such as Nelson Graburn (1969). Though there are some photographs in the introduction, a map of the region that included the older names of communities might have been useful. However, this lack does not detract from the usefulness of these reflections of a remarkable man.

REFERENCES


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Since Pangnirtung and Cumberland Sound were my first major field research destinations in 1971, I read with special interest the author’s account of his participation in the 1953 Baffin Island Expedition to Pangnirtung Pass and the Penny Ice Cap. Today the area is known as Auyuittuq National Park.

The author of this diary, published in German, is Fritz Hans Schwarzenbach, who was the botanist on the expedition, one of four participating scientists from Switzerland. The leader of the Second Baffin Island Expedition, sponsored by the Arctic Institute of North America, was Dr. Patrick D. Baird, then director of the Montreal office of the Arctic Institute of North America. Co-sponsors of the expedition were the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research and the Canadian Geographical Society.
Schwarzenbach’s diary begins with the May 8, 1953, arrival of the expedition participants in Montreal. The following days were spent assembling and packing the expedition supplies and gear in the front yard of the Arctic Institute headquarters at McGill University. By May 12, everything was ready and 4000 lbs of gear were transported to Frobisher Bay (now Iqaluit) courtesy of the Royal Canadian Air Force. A year earlier, 13 tons of expedition supplies had been shipped to Pangnirtung by sea. From Iqaluit, men and gear were flown to Pangnirtung in a Norseman aircraft, chartered from Arctic Wings of Churchill, Manitoba. The first of the four flights that landed on the sea ice below the hamlet was met by a large number of inquisitive Inuit. The expedition members were housed temporarily in the Hudson’s Bay Company buildings, while they again sorted supplies and gear for transport to the designated field locations. In 1953, Pangnirtung consisted of little more than the Hudson’s Bay Company post, established in 1921; the RCMP post, established in 1923; the Anglican mission, moved from the Blacklead Island whaling station in 1926; and St. Luke’s Hospital, the only hospital on Baffin Island at the time, which was built in 1930 and run by the mission.

Initially the Inuit of Cumberland Sound had been reluctant to settle in Pangnirtung, a location far removed from good hunting areas. Thus the Inuit greeting the expedition members were mostly visitors to Pangnirtung themselves, who had come to trade sealskins at the Bay and visit others who were there for the same purpose. In the early 1950s, there were still 16 winter camps in Cumberland Sound; however, with the establishment of a Department of Northern Affairs office in Pangnirtung, increasing numbers of camps moved to the settlement on a permanent basis. In the mid-1960s, a devastating dog epidemic drove all but one Inuit group at Krepishaw to relocate to the settlement.

In his diary, the author describes his time spent with the Inuit as he attempted to master a few rudimentary Inuit words and experience the challenge of sledding with dogs. By May 25 everything was ready, and the flights to the field camps commenced. Base camp was established at Summit Lake in the centre of Pangnirtung Pass. Camp A-1 was located on the Penny Ice Cap and camp A-2 at the head of Highway Glacier. The Norseman left for its base in Churchill, and the 13 expedition members were on their own.

During the flights, the author had ample opportunity to notice the magnificent mountain and glacier landscape of Pangnirtung Pass. Mountaineering and first ascents of prominent peaks were important elements of the expedition. When their busy scientific schedule allowed, various expedition members set out to climb the highest peaks within reach of the base camp. They climbed a total of eight peaks and measured their elevations. On July 13, the author and his three fellow Swiss scientist-mountaineers started their ascent to the top of the prominent Mount Asgard. By the author’s account it was an arduous climb, but successful; by 17:45, they had planted their banner on top of the 2011 m high mountain.

When they returned to base camp in the early morning hours of July 14, they heard disturbing news from Pat Baird: Ben Battle, the McGill University geomorphologist, was missing. Following tracks in the snow and ice and knowing the area of Ben’s scientific investigations, the expedition members concentrated their efforts on a lake with newly broken ice. On July 15, they recovered Ben Battle’s body. They buried him in a stone grave and erected a large stone cairn nearby.

Zoological work was carried out from the biological camp on the Owl River, which drains the northern part of Pangnirtung Pass. Having spent four weeks assisting with the seismic work, the author joined McGill University zoologist Adam Watson on the Owl River, where they made a detailed survey of flora and plant communities. The work entailed some rather dramatic river crossings and living with soaked footwear for extended periods of time. Finally a rope “bridge,” suspended over the rushing meltwater streams, made for drier crossings. During the expedition, remarkable film footage was taken by the Swiss geophysicist Hans Weber, supplemented with still photography by the technical assistant John Thomson. The resulting documentary was the first colour film made of an Arctic expedition. In September, the field parties gathered at the base camp to prepare for their home journey. Expedition gear was flown out with an amphibious plane, maneuvering rather precariously between floating blocks of ice. The field party then spent three days hiking out to the head of the fiord, and from there traveled by boat to Pangnirtung, where they were later picked up by the Canadian Coast Guard vessel C.D. Howe.

For the German reader, the book is an interesting and descriptive personal account of the difficult, but exhilarating daily adventures experienced by all field researchers working in remote regions. It is well illustrated with colourful photos of scenery and expedition members. I should think that an English translation would be well received and worth the effort.


The exhibition Inuit Modern, which opened at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) on 2 April 2011, ambitiously aims to document the artistic responses of Inuit to traditional life on the land, to the transition to urban living, to a conscious post-colonial aesthetic. It also hopes to do this within the context of a single collection, the gift of 175 works from collectors Sam and Esther Sarick. It is a magnificent and