DOCUMENTING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE RELATING TO LABRADOR INUKSUIT AND OTHER STONE MARKERS

Inukshuk on a hill overlooking the Inuit community of Nain

Final Report
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Submitted to the Torngâsok Cultural Centre
April, 2011
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**Introduction**

This report is the direct result of a suggestion made by elders during the 2010 Nunatsiavut Heritage Forum which was held in Nain in February of that year. The primary focus of this project is to record traditional knowledge from Inuit elders regarding inuksuit (Pl. for inukshuk), along with their meanings. In addition, an attempt has been made to map locations of inuksuit known to the elders who participated in this study.

During the 2010 Nunatsiavut Heritage Forum, elders who were in attendance voiced their concerns about how inuksuit were not being constructed in the way that they used to be. A lot of the inuksuit that are recently made in Labrador lack the meaning that the elders of Nunatsiavut are accustomed to. They were concerned that the inuksuit were losing their meanings and pointed out the potential dangers associated with randomly building inuksuit which have no meaning but may appear to. The elders used the inuksuit for many different things, for example, there were some inuksuit that pointed the way to good hunting grounds, while others warned of unsafe places like bad ice. Youth at the Forum said that they did not realize that inuksuit were used for communication, nor did they know the meanings behind the inuksuit.

In a recent article concerning the protection of the integrity and authenticity of inuksuit, Heyes (2002:152) writes:

> Legislation cannot protect inuksuit from ongoing tourism marketing campaigns, but public awareness of their importance to the Inuit may reduce their fate of becoming exclusively a garden folly or collectable trinket. With the increased attention paid to inuksuit, one may speculate that the rebirth of inuksuit stories and songs may be immanent.
The inukshuk has become an emblem of the north and appears on the official flag of Nunatsiavut. An inukshuk construction scene is pictured on the cover of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (2004), and is clearly an important symbol of Labrador Inuit identity. The inukshuk is also used to represent the Inuit of Nunavut and is shown on both the Nunavut flag and coat of arms. It has also become symbolic of Canada and was used recently as the logo for the 2010 Winter Olympics, held in Vancouver, British Columbia.

This project is an attempt at preserving some traditional knowledge relating to inuksuit and other stone markers in Labrador so that the information will remain available to younger generations.

Methodology

Jamie Brake, who is the Archaeologist for the Nunatsiavut Government, designed the project and secured funding which allowed for the completion of this study though the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Program and the Tasiujatsoak Trust Fund. Grant money was used to hire a researcher and a coordinator as well as to cover the costs associated with interviews and focus group sessions. A critical aspect of the project involved the researcher travelling to each of the five Labrador Inuit communities and so travel and accommodations for the researcher were also included in the budget.

Amalia Jararuse was hired on as the Project Coordinator. She was responsible for finding interviewees in each of the five communities, for scheduling and advertising the focus group sessions, and finding an interpreter/translator when their skills were needed. She was also
responsible for making travel arrangements and she made sure that everything ran as smoothly as possible.

I was hired on as the Researcher for the project and was responsible for conducting background research on inuksuit from across the Arctic before travelling along to the five Labrador Inuit communities to conduct the interviews. For this part of the project sources were acquired from the Torngāsok Cultural Centre, Avataq Cultural Institute, as well as the Melville Public Library at the College of the North Atlantic Library in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. It quickly became apparent that most of the information that is out there on inuksuit come from places further north like Baffin Island. The background research that was conducted is described in more detail in the Previous Research section of the paper.

Prior to the start of the project a list of questions was compiled to ask during each of the interviews and at times additional specific questions were asked depending on what the interviewee knew. An Olympus Digital Voice Recorder was used to record the interviews. If the interviewee chose not to be recorded answers would be written up during the interview and typed afterwards. Maps of the areas around each community were also used so that people could mark in locations for inuksuit and other markers.

A total of twenty-two people were interviewed in the Inuit communities of Rigolet, Makkovik, Postville, Hopedale and Nain, nineteen of whom were male and three female. The interviews lasted between eleven minutes and sixty one minutes. Some of the difficulties experienced during the interviews involved very short answers provided by some of the participants. Trying to get them to elaborate on different types of inuksuit, stone markers and other travel aids became a bit of a dilemma, but after re-wording the questions a few times they
gave more details. There were also a few people who seemed to be a bit nervous at the beginning of the interview and said that they did not know much about inuksuit, but in my opinion they were in fact very knowledgeable on the subject. They seemed to “warm up” and relax very quickly and were able to give some wonderful information about inuksuit. Another one of the difficult things, but yet one of the most rewarding, was interviewing people who only spoke Inuktitut. It was difficult because I did not know exactly what was being said. It was rewarding because I was able to hear Inuktitut being spoken fluently. Securing a translator in one of the communities also proved to be a difficult task, but before too long we found someone and the interviews went great.

Interviewees were given the choice of where to be interviewed and for the most part interviews were conducted in the participant’s house because this was more comfortable for them than going to another location. A few of the interviews were done at the Nunatsiavut Government building in some of the communities. Before the interview started it was made clear to them that it was the participant’s choice if they wanted to be recorded or not. The consent form was read out and we talked about the project and how it came about so that they knew what to expect.

Jamie had prepared maps of the areas around the communities for people to mark where inuksuit or stone structures were located. These maps were huge and sometimes took up the whole kitchen table of the person’s house. The maps were taken out at the end of the interviews so that they were not a distraction. Some of the elders, were asked if they wanted to see the map because some of the interviews were long and a few of the interviewees seemed tired afterward.

For one interview, with a married couple who spoke fluent Inuktitut, we had a book by Norman Hallendy (2010) on the table. It was just chance that the book was there because I
showed it to the man before the interview so that he could take a look at it. It ended up being a great help when describing inuksuit because they would look at the pictures and talk about inuksuit like a particular one shown, or talk about why the inuksuit in Labrador do not look like ones shown in the picture.

In one of the communities the translator would tell me what the interviewees said in English and this was great because this allowed more specific questions to be asked. Sometimes if they told her something, she would ask them more questions in Inuktitut before telling me what was said in English, another great way to conduct the interview because she might have, and probably did, think of questions to ask them that I might not have.

**Labrador Inuit Culture**

The Labrador Inuit are descendants of people who belonged to what archaeologists refer to as the Thule Culture. “The Neo-Eskimos, bearers of the Thule culture, arrived in northern Labrador superbly equipped to exploit the highly seasonal and dispersed marine and terrestrial resources of this Arctic-subarctic area” (Kaplan 1983:1). The Thule arrived in Labrador sometime after 1250-1300 AD and probably sometime between 400 and 600 years before present (Hood 2008:11, Kaplan 1983:219). The location of their houses, which were on the outer islands and made of sod, as well as faunal material collected from archaeological sites, provides evidence that the Thule depended heavily on sea mammals, especially bowhead whales and walrus (Kaplan 1983: 218).

Material culture associated with the Thule culture includes soapstone artifacts, harpoons, lances, seal scratchers, ulus, slate tools like harpoon endblades, and darts and floats related to
hunting on fast ice. During the 18th century their material culture changes to include a larger proportion of European goods to traditional goods than in earlier times. During the historic period this culture is no longer referred to as Thule by archaeologists, but as Inuit instead (Hood 2008:11; Kaplan 1983:224; Woollett 2003:43).

A wide variety of archaeological features are known at Thule/Inuit sites such as graves, inuksuit, caches, boulder pits, sod houses, tent rings, kayak rests, stone fox traps and hunting blinds (Fitzhugh 1977:35). Thule graves are generally stone cairns built on top of the ground. According to Kaplan (1983:230), inuksuit are “…stone arrangements made to resemble people, [which] are used as part of caribou drive systems”. Furthermore, there has been some speculation that ‘pinnacles’, which are “…large rectangular stone slabs that have been placed vertically upright by people”, were made by the Thule (Kaplan:1983, 230).

During the winter months the main form of transportation was by dog sled. Dog teams allowed for relatively quick travel over the land and sea-ice during the winter months (Woollett 2003:44). During the summer the Thule/Inuit travelled by boat, both kayaks and umiaks were used.

Labrador Inuit culture changed significantly through time and has been described as going through three historic phases: the Early Phase (1450-1700 AD), the Communal House phase (1700-1850 AD) and finally the Recent Phase (1850-present) (Fitzhugh 1977:34). During the Early Phase, “seventeenth century semi-subterranean houses appear to have been identical to Thule structures, and in some cases were Thule structures” (Kaplan 1983:234). These were found near the flow edge, had long paved entrance passages, could be single, or multi-roomed, were made using sod, and had cold traps and raised sleeping platforms (Fitzhugh 1977: 34,
Kaplan 1983:234). It was during the *Communal House phase* that use of European materials by Inuit increased and during this time there is a change in Inuit society as a whole. Houses became bigger and multiple families were living together, and the location of the houses changed to sheltered places in the inner bays. These houses were made of stone, sod, whale bones and wood. (Fitzhugh 1977:34; Kaplan 1983:238; Woollett 2003:49). By the beginning of the *Recent Phase* there was more trading going on between Inuit and Europeans, and the Moravian missionaries, the first Europeans to settle permanently in northern Labrador, had well established mission stations along the north coast where many Inuit families were living (Fitzhugh 1977:34).

**Previous Research**

Although research has been conducted on inuksuit in other parts of the Canadian arctic, no attempt to document traditional knowledge relating to inuksuit in Labrador has previously been made. Norman Hallendy, who has written extensively on inuksuit, has broadly categorized these features in two ways. The first way he categories inuksuit is by their general types and the second is by their functions (2010).

Hallendy has been going to Baffin Island to conduct research on inuksuit since 1958. Up into the 1950s, Inuit on Baffin Island, as well as other parts of the Arctic, were still making the change from their nomadic way of life to living in permanent communities. This meant that Hallendy was able to learn firsthand the importance of inuksuit from the Inummarit, who are “the people who knew how to survive on the land living in a traditional way” (Hallendy 1994: 365).
Most of the information that Hallendy obtained came directly from interviews with the Inuit of Baffin Island. He also did field work travelling around to see the inuksuit for himself with Native guides (2010).

As mentioned above, Hallendy categorized inuksuit in two different ways: the first classification system of general types has five different kinds. On Baffin Island these are called innunguaq, nalunaukkutaq, tikkuuti, inuksummarik or inuksukjuaq, and private message centres. We were unable to find corresponding Labrador Inuktitut terms for these words. A casual observer should be able to distinguish between these five different types of inuksuit.

The first type innunguaq which in English means “in the likeness of a human.” This is what the majority of people think about when they think of an inukshuk. When inukshuk is translated into English it means (Hallendy 1999: 28) “that which acts in the capacity of a human” and as mentioned above innunguaq (Hallendy 1999:28) “refers to an image or object in the likeness of a person”. Innunguat (plural for innunguaq) have arms, legs and always look like a human. Hallendy describes innunguaq as something the Inuit would construct during the nineteenth century to let whalers know that Inuit were nearby (Hallendy 2009: 29). Innunguaq could have also been made before the arrival of Europeans for other purposes.

The second type in this category is nalunaukkutaq which simply means something that is made out of one stone. Hallendy (2000:46) states that it usually made as a reminder to the builder of where he stored something or where people who have gone separate ways are supposed to meet.
The third type is called tikkutti, which is translated into a pointer. The tikkutti inuksuit can be made out of several different stones and in many different shapes, but they all indicate the direction you have to go (Hallendy 2000:46).

The fourth general type of inuksuit is known as inuksukjuaq. These inuksuit are generally round in shape. These are unique in their own way because there are not many different forms of inuksuit that you can make with round boulders. They are usually shaped to look like a pyramid and are larger than the other types of inuksuit, so that they can be seen from a great distance (2000:117).

The fifth and final general type of inukshuk is those that are used as private message centres. This type of inukshuk has already been built and serves secondly as a message centre as well. Hallendy (2000:48) describes messages which “…may indicate the location of a cache or where an object had been hidden, may signify a change of direction from an intended course, or may serve as a warning…”. The shapes of these inuksuit vary, since their main purpose is not specified, their second purpose is as a personal message centre.

The second way that Hallendy classifies inuksuit has to do with their functions and related features and there are five different types of inuksuit in this classification system as well. There is a ‘general type’ category within this system which is different from the broad classification system with the same name. It includes types such as inuksuit that are old, made by someone who is not Inuit and beautiful inuksuit. Inuksuit related to hunting, such as those used to mark good hunting or fishing areas, or those used to drive, or frighten caribou, make up the second type. The third is related to travel and navigation, the fourth is inuksuit-like figures and finally the fifth is inuksuit-like objects of veneration. Markers related to travel and
navigation include things like stone alignments, directional markers, or inuksuit which indicate that a route is safe or dangerous. Inukshuk-like figures would include features that would be used for drying fish or meat for example. Inukshuk-like objects of veneration could include inuksuit that were believed to house a spirit, or those that were made by shamans, or those that were believed to hold power. For instance, some inuksuit were located in places where shamans were initiated, and some stone markers were believed to have healing powers (2000:118).

Although there are five different categories in this system, inuksuit could fall into more than one category. There are many different kinds of inuksuit in this classification system, a total of sixty five, so because of the large number, not all of the inuksuit will be described in detail here (Hallendy 2000, 116-118).

Although all of these inuksuit are very important, as well was interesting, there are two main types of inuksuit that people have written about. These two types are inuksuit related to travel and navigation, and inuksuit related to hunting (Bennett and Rowley 2004; Graburn 2004; Hallendy 1994, 1999, 2000; Heyes 2002; Stelzer 1982; Woollett 2003). Graburn states “In the Arctic winter, with blowing snow, very little at ground level can be seen, and something on slightly raised ground acts as a marker to guide the traveler’s way” (2004:71). As mentioned previously inuksuit were also used for hunting. “Rows of inuksuit forced caribou onto the path favoured by the hunters. These inuksuit were frequently constructed so as to form two gently converging lines.” (Bennett and Rowley 2004:258).

Not all stone markers in Labrador were made by Inuit, and some early twentieth century informants told E. W. Hawkes that some of the inuksuit in northern Labrador were made by the Tunnit, or people who were there before, and some of those inuksuit were said to be used for
hunting caribou (1916:144). Hawkes provides the following example: “They did not hunt like the Eskimo, but erected long lines of stone ‘men’ in a valley through which deer passed. The deer would pass between the lines of stones, and the hunters hidden behind them would lance them. Remains of these lines of rocks may still be seen” (1916:144).

Inuksuit were also used in aya-yait, which is Inuktitut for the songs that are passed through generations to help travellers remember a series of directions for long trips. Although inuksuit were very important when it came to travel and navigation there were other things that the Inuit used as well, such as ice formations, wind driven snow, the position of the sun and moon, and the stars. As Heyes (2002 electronic document) states, “The travelling Inuit frequently used “cognitive maps”-a library of accumulated images and events forged through repetitive travel, experience and interaction with the land”.

As mentioned above, the age of inuksuit is important. There are many different kinds of inuksuit, which have been made by many different generations of Inuit, as well as non-Inuit. In order to understand how the role of inuksuit has changed, it is useful to have at least a general understanding of when they were made. Hallendy was able to break down local ideas on when inuksuit were made in the Baffin Island area into nine different time frames:

1. Before there were humans
2. The time of the earliest humans
3. The time of the Tunnit
4. The time of the Inuit’s earliest ancestors
5. Before the arrival of white people
6. After the arrival of white people
7. Within living memory
8. The time when all Inuit lived on the land
9. When most Inuit moved into settlements [Hallendy 2000:60].

It is obvious that inuksuit that are made now-a-days are constructed for different reasons from when they were built in the past. Because of this they may look different and may be found
in areas where inuksuit were not found before. Not only can the reason why they are constructed and their appearance be different, but their meaning can change over time as well. An excellent example of this is the innunguaq which were made to indicate that someone was there. For example, Hallendy (2009:30) writes that nineteenth century Inuit would construct an innunguaq so that Europeans would know that there were Inuit in the area to trade with, but today similar looking inuksuit are constructed all over the Canadian north for completely different reasons.

Another type of stone feature that has been recognized at archaeological sites in Labrador that could fit into the stone marker category is the pinnacle, the vertically placed slabs mentioned in the previous section. Although Kaplan (1983) speculates that these are the work of Thule groups in Labrador, this is not a certainty. Gélinas and Merkuratsuk write that “Because little research has been done on the subject, and also because they do not seem to figure in Inuit oral tradition, few things can be said about these peculiar features” (2009:19).

There has not been any major research conducted on inuksuit in Labrador, although there are many archaeology sites where inuksuit or stone markers have been recorded. These features have not been the primary focus of any archaeological projects in Labrador and so inuksuit have generally been simply described when recorded by archaeologists (for example: Badglet 1997; Brake 2010; Brice-Bennett 1977; Fitzhugh 1978, 1980; Fitzhugh W., R.H. Jordan, S.L. Cox, C. Nagle & S.A. Kaplan 1979; Jacques Witford Environment Limited 1991, 1992, 1996, 2002, 2003; Jacques Witford Environment Limited, Mushuau Innu Band Council and Torngâsok Cultural Centre 1996, 1997; Kaplan 1983, 1993, 1997, 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Taylor 1974; Thomson 1996; Woollett 2003, 2007, Zutter 2000).
Research Results

During the course of the project, twenty-two interviews were conducted in the five Labrador Inuit communities. This fieldwork took place between March 14th and March 28th, 2011. The results of this research are provided below, the information from each community constituting a separate section. Similarities noted between the communities and changes in inuksuit along the coast are presented as separate sections as well. Participants are identified in the text only when informants consented to this.

Rigolet

In Rigolet there were four people interviewed. Out of the four of them, one talked in detail about inuksuit around the Rigolet area, while the others acknowledged that there were some around but said that the people of the community never used them. One individual said that there were no inuksuit around the Rigolet area and that community members did not use them there. Figure 1 shows the locations of inuksuit that participants identified in the Rigolet area.
Two of the participants from Rigolet, Derrick Pottle and Paul Jararuse, talked a lot about inuksuit, and they both said that you see more inuksuit the further north that you go. During the interview with Derrick he gave many examples of how they use inuksuit which include marking the sina, which is the edge of the ice where people sometimes wait for seals. He said that this is done by making a pile of rocks about four or five feet high on the land. Another interesting thing that he said was, “And it wasn’t always stone you know. It wasn’t always stone ah, there were markers that were made outta tress too you know” (Derrick Pottle, March 14th, 2011). The

*Figure 1:* Map showing identified inuksuk locations in the Rigolet area. Background data source: Department of Natural Resources, Canada.
example that he gave was of markers made along the road, meaning the winter trail, to Makkovik. There are trees in the shape of a wood pile as a marker. Derrick gave an example of a stone marker indicating a good fishing place, and another that marked a good area to hunt birds. These can be found around Alliuk Bight, it is a good place for shore ducks and you see a lot of inuksuit there. “They used to make Inukshuks ah, to kinda make them look like a person to guide the birds to where people were waiting for them” (Derrick Pottle 2011). He also mentions that inuksuit were made to mark a trail and were usually made up of two or three stones. This is very interesting because we hear stories and examples of these types of inuksuit along the coast, and more detail will be given when we discuss the other communities. He also remembers seeing inuksuit with windows or a space in the middle of them where you could look through, but says that he does not quite know how they work. He also explained that inuksuit had sometimes been made in the past to frighten gulls away from fish.

Another informant, Paul Jararuse, has spent time living in Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik and Rigolet. He said that there are not as many inuksuit around the Rigolet area as there are north. He has seen maybe seven or eight around the Rigolet area and he mentions that you see more markers made out of trees around this area. “When you leave from Rigolet to go north, that’s when you start seeing Inukshuks, going north from here in Rigolet. But other than that, down around the Rigolet area on to Goose Bay or Cartwright there’s tripods” (Paul Jararuse, March 15th, 2011). A tripod is made out of three trees. The trees are all tied together at the top and then stuck into the snow in the shape of a cone. He also talks about the inuksuit made of two or three stones which were used to mark some of the bad places in the country, like at the edge of a cliff or to show bad ice. In addition he explains that single stones could be placed upright on an angle to show which direction one should travel in (Figure 2).
Paul has spent a lot of time going in the country and had many examples of inuksuit farther north than Rigolet around places like Nain. One example of how he used inuksuit in the country was very interesting. He said that when they would go into the country on dog team sometimes someone would be farther ahead then the rest of their hunting partners. The person who was leading would put a stick into an inukshuk pointing the way that he went (Figure 3). That way when the rest of the hunting crew saw the inukshuk they would know which way to go, and they would take the stick out of the inukshuk before passing. This way if another hunting group were coming behind them, they would not get mixed up.
All of the informants from Rigolet mention using trees as markers more than using stone markers. Hubert R Palliser talked about going to the Mealy Mountains with his father and they would chip a bit of the bark off of the trees with their axe to mark their trail. Sam Palliser also mentions doing the same thing to mark his trail. Not only were trees and sometimes stone markers used for navigation, the way the wind was blowing, and the sun and the moon were also used as travel aids. They also learned from the older people when they were growing up, most of the informants from Rigolet said that they never heard their elders talking about inuksuit when they were growing up.

The area around Rigolet consists of dense woods, which is probably why people seem to use trees as markers more than they use stone markers. Not only would trees have been easier to mark, they would also have been easier to spot. Looking for an inukshuk in a wooded area would be difficult, since it would blend in with the color of the tree bark. But when you are looking at a heavily wooded area, it would be easy to spot bark chipped off of the trees because the light color would show up well against the dark bark of the trees.

Makkovik

There were three people interviewed in Makkovik and they talked about inuksuit, stone markers and using trees as markers. A Map showing the Makkovik, Postville and Hopedale regions was shown during interviews so that people could draw the locations of inuksuit onto it (Figure 4). Nellie Winters, who had lived in Okak Bay when she was younger, talked about inuksuit and stone markers that she had seen around that area. She said that people used stones for markers but they did not call them inuksuit. Some of the structures were a pile of rocks that
would be shaped like a cone with a stick placed in the top of it. Some of these would be used for direction, and some were just piles of rocks. In the summer and spring you would sometimes see smaller rocks on top of a big rock in the shape of an arrow; this would be pointing the way that you had to go. Others marked a good place to stay overnight, these structures were a lot bigger.

A long time ago, when she was going to do a painting of an inukshuk, someone told her that an inukshuk has to be made of seven stones. She is not quite sure who told her that, but remembers that they said it had to be made out of seven stones. She did help make an inukshuk before, up in Okak Bay. It was a good place for fishing that her dad used to go to. She said that they spent some time at it, to make it big and nice and it was shaped like a cone with a stick in the middle. Someone told her not too long ago that it was still there.

Most of the examples that she gave were of farther north than Makkovik. Her father was the mailman years ago when people still used dog teams, and he would travel long distances with the mail. She travelled with her father sometimes, and said that she cannot remember him talking about inuksuit. But he did use them, as well as her brothers when they went caribou hunting in the country. One thing that her father did do was keep a seal’s eye on him when he travelled. They used to say that you were safe if you had a seal’s eye with you no animals would come close to you, and she said that in the dark the eye would light up too.

Tony Andersen from Makkovik also said that he never heard his father or the other older men talk about inuksuit when he was growing up. But Tony did make inuksuit, with his wife Mary. They have a cabin south of Makkovik at Big Bight. A lot of people take the same trail that Tony takes to his cabin to go to their cabins or to get dry wood, just south of Big Bight. There are three roads to Big Bight. One is what they call the winter road, the other is the spring road and the third is another, older spring road that was used by people when they travelled by dog
team. But now that people travel by snowmobile they normally use the “new” spring road. Over the last four to five years, Tony and Mary have made inuksuit along all three roads (Figure 4). Tony said that there are about four or five along each road and are made in places where there are no trees. They made them for people to use in case the weather is bad and it is hard to see. Tony said that they used them once in recent years when it was bad out, even though he would have still known the way if the inuksuit were not there.

![Figure 4: Photograph of inuksuit made by Tony and Mary Andersen near a tripod, south of Makkovik (photo credit: Mary B. Andersen).](image)

All three informants said that they did not see a lot of inuksuit around the Makkovik area. Again like in Rigolet, we heard stories of people using trees as markers. Trees were sometimes stuck straight up to indicate that you had to keep going straight, or stuck up on an angle to show which direction you had to go. Nellie talked about how, when she was growing up, men would crack trees. They would crack them just enough so that you could notice it, but not enough for it to break off. This would be made along a trail. She said that they would also use the sun and her father would use the big dipper, depending on which way it was in the sky. She also heard that people cannot rely on the sun anymore because it is changing. Snow ridges and chipping the bark
off a tree with an axe was also used. Another thing that Nellie mentioned was the dog team. They would use the dog team for travel a lot. The team, especially the lead dog, could really take people home. She heard a lot of people say that they would not have made it to where they were going without their dogs. The older people would also give advice to the younger ones when it came to travelling. Tony said that he heard the older people say that in the country, inside of Makkovik, there are no branches on the north side of all, or most of the trees, because the wind from the north is the strongest. They would use this to aid in navigating in the country.

The areas surrounding Makkovik, like Rigolet, are mostly wooded. It would be difficult to see inuksuit and so it seems that people used materials other than stone markers instead. They used markings on trees, the sun and stars, and knowledge passed down from the older generation to help them travel the land.

Postville

In Postville four people were interviewed and all four informants said that there were not any inuksuit around the Postville area when asked at the beginning of the interviews. However, when presented with a map showing the Makkovik, Postville and Hopedale region all of them marked, pointed out the locations of stone markers as well as tree markers (Figure 5). Some did say that they had seen stone markers on the islands like Pigeon Island, West Turnavik and Antone’s Island but they were not sure what they were put there for. All participants from this community said that the inuksuit around Postville were ones that people put up for decoration purposes and were mostly constructed on people’s own property.
Instead of using inuksuit, people could chip the bark off of trees, use ridges in the snow or they could tie knots in Juniper trees when they were small so that they would grow with a bump in them. Tripods were also used here, mostly along the new groomed trail to Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Douglas Jacque talked about how he would mark good ice when he used to travel by dog team. He would cut the tops off of trees, leave his dogs along the shore and walk across the ice checking for bad spots. He would place the tops of the trees where the ice was good, then go back to his dogs and go across. Today they still mark good ice with trees, but now the trees are a lot bigger. The whole tree is cut and they are stuck in the snow on good ice. Jamie Jacque said that there are trees marking the good ice going into Makkovik and so far along the groomed trail to Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and are about one hundred feet or so apart. These days people also put reflective tape on trees to mark a trail and they use GPS.

The area around Postville is heavily wooded and there used to be a saw mill in the area. According to the informants from this community, stone markers were not commonly used in the area, instead trees were used as markers. When they needed to mark the ice people would still use trees to mark the trail. According to the examples from two informants Douglas Jacque and Jamie Jacque, it seems like marking the ice with trees is something that was passed along through generations. One informant said that they could mark trails better with trees than inuksuit, because you can mark trees a couple of feet apart while inuksuit would be further apart.
Hopedale

In Hopedale six men were interviewed, three were audio recorded and the other three interviews were written up. According to these participants, the people in Hopedale used inuksuit more than those in Rigolet, Makkovik and Postville. This could be because the area surrounding Hopedale is not as heavily wooded as the areas around the other three communities. Five of the six people interviewed previously lived further north in places like Hebron. They moved to Hopedale as a result of the 1959 government relocation program, which could also have something to do with the information they gave. All of the informants said that there were inuksuit further north. By ‘north’ they are referring to northern Labrador usually north of Nain. The people interviewed in Hopedale and Nain would probably have travelled to these places further north more frequently than the people from the other three communities, due to the fact that it would not have been as long of a distance, and because of the connections that some of the informants had to previously occupied communities like Hebron, Okak and Nutak.
There were nine different types of inuksuit that the six interviewees talked about in Hopedale. Those were inuksuit used for travel and direction, inuksuit used for hunting and fishing, stone markers, old inuksuit, inuksuit on islands, inuksuit with one arm, inuksuit with two arms, inuksuit up north, and inuksuit marking settlement areas. Participants also discussed the making of inuksuit, and stories about inuksuit.

All six of the interviewees talked about inuksuit being used for travel or direction. Gus Semigak gave a few examples, for example, he said that sometimes an inukshuk would be pointing to the place that you had to go. These would only have one arm. Another shape of
inukshuk would be two rocks on the bottom and one on the top. This inukshuk shows you which way you have been going. When you are travelling you notice it as a rock that you have seen before and you know that you are on the right trail. Dick Kairtok said that sometimes an inukshuk could be made up of one stone. If the stone was straight up, it meant that you had to go straight and if the stone was leaning one way it meant that you went that way. He also talked about inuksuit that have a hole or window in the middle of it (Figure 6). These ones are special to the country and when you look through the hole you will see another inukshuk, you then have to go in the direction of the inukshuk that you see. Abraham Nochasak said that you see a lot of inuksuit for travel in the country and they are in the shape of a pile of rocks. Andrew Piercy Sr. said that he used them for travel in the country when he would go in by dog team and still uses them today when he goes into the country on snowmobile. Boas Kairtok gave examples of inuksuit in the country as well. He said that the inuksuit in the country have arms, the long arm points to the sea and the short arm points to the country. So if you want to go back home you go in the direction of the big arm, and vice versa. He said that he has seen three or four of these types of inuksuit in the country. Henry Winters talked about the inuksuit that Dick Kairtok talked about, the ones that are made up of one stone and used for direction.

Three people talked about inuksuit which were used for hunting and fishing. Gus Semigak gave a few examples. He said that the inuksuit with a hole or window in it shows where there is good fishing. Usually these inuksuit are on top of a hill, you have to look through the hole to find where the good fishing area is, but you have to know what you are looking for (Figure 7).
Figure 6: A 'window inukshuk' near Nain. Another stone marker, made up of two stones, one on top of the other, can be seen through the centre of the inukshuk in the foreground. This window inukshuk also has a pointer (photo credit: Jamie Brake).

Figure 7: Another 'window inukshuk', this one points towards a popular fishing location and was built on a hill top (photo credit: Jamie Brake).
The other example that he gave was about an inukshuk around the Hopedale area at place called Shore Tickle. He said that there is an inukshuk there to mark a good seal hunting place, and this inukshuk consists of a pile of rocks. Another example was of inuksuit in the country where big square stones have been used to mark good places for caribou hunting. Boas Kairtok said that some inuksuit are a stone stuck straight up and these mark either a good place for seals or caribou. Henry Winters and Boas Kairtok also said that there are inuksuit to mark good hunting and fishing areas which they described as one stone placed vertically upright.

Not only did the interviewees talk about inuksuit marking good hunting areas, but two participants talked about inuksuit being used to help kill caribou. Gus told a story that he had heard from his father years ago. He has never seen it but north of Hebron there are a lot of inuksuit in one area. “They used to be waiting for caribou and when the caribou started comin’ they’d go from one inukshuk to the other to get closer to the caribou” (Gus Semigak, March 23rd, 2011). This was back when bows and arrows were still being used. The other story about using inuksuit to help hunt caribou came from Abraham Nochasak. He said that he thought his grandfather made inuksuit in the shape of a “V”. At the narrow end of it was a hill and they scared the caribou in there and killed them. That is what his grandfather told him. Abraham does not know where this happened but said that it was somewhere north of Hebron.

Not only did people make inuksuit out of stones, but they also made stone markers. Gus talked about stone markers being used to mark the trail in the country, on the barren lands. He said that there are big boulders in the country, and you would mark them by putting a rock on top of the boulder. It did not matter the size of the rock that you put on top of the boulder, the size simply depended on the types of rocks you had around you. By putting the rock on top of the big boulder you were marking the trail and when someone saw a big boulder with a rock on top they
knew that they were going the right way. Both Gus and Andrew talked about using stone markers to show where seals sunk in the spring. They said that when you killed a seal in the spring and it sank, if you could not get out to the seal right away you would make a marker on the land. A pile of rocks would be made on the land straight in from where the seal sank and that way when it came time to go and get the seal, you knew where it was. This was also practiced in Northern Quebec. "When a hunter shoots a seal from the land and the seal sinks in deep water, the hunter will place one or two rocks to indicate where the seal sank. I only know about this since I have done it myself" (Unpublished manuscript, transcript from Inuktitut, document presented to Norman Hallendy. Avataq Cultural Institute Archive number: CI081F, 001 Inukshuk).

Three of the interviewees also talked about old inuksuit. Dick said that the older inuksuit do not have any arms or legs, and are shaped like a pile of rocks. Abraham said that most inuksuit are shaped like a pile and you see a lot of these when you go in the country. Gus said that there are old piles of rocks on the islands to indicate a dangerous spot, but it does not tell you exactly where the dangerous spot is. You have to find it on your own.

Three participants talked about inuksuit on islands. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Gus said that there are inuksuit on islands, sometimes on the flat land. Besides showing dangerous places, some stone markers on islands indicate that there are settlements or camping sites nearby, and are often associated with tent rings. Boas Kairtok said that he has not seen many inuksuit on the islands but those that he has seen are along the shorelines where the good hunting grounds are. Henry Winters said that there are a lot of inuksuit on the islands, usually on the eastern sides of islands.
As mentioned above, three of the interviewees talked about inuksuit with two arms. Gus said that an inukshuk with two arms meant that people were there before and that there will be tent rings around, like how he described inuksuit on the islands. Abraham also said that inuksuit with two legs, not arms, represent a permanent settlement, and that these are found further north and were made when the Inuit were still nomadic. Boas said that inuksuit that were shaped like humans were used to show good hunting places, or were used for finding direction, like the example he gave of inuksuit with one long arm and one short arm.

All six of the interviewees from Hopedale talked about inuksuit up north. Dick said that there are a lot of inuksuit around the Nutak and Hebron areas. Gus said that around Hebron the inuksuit are cone shaped (Figure 8). In stories, he heard of people adding a rock to human-made piles of stones as a way of showing how many people were in that spot. But he only heard this from stories though he did add a rock to a marker like this once. He also heard of inuksuit around the Hebron area having human names. One of them is named Henrietta, and there were two more there too that had names but he could not remember what those names were. He said that he did not think that inuksuit having human names was something that was specific to Hebron. Abraham said that the inuksuit up north that are shaped like a pyramid, or a pile of rocks, indicate good hunting or fishing places. He said that one time he set out his net by one of these inuksuit and the other people that were with him set their nets elsewhere. He had the most fish out of them all. Andrew noted that you do not see many inuksuit around the Hopedale area and that most of them are north of Hopedale. Boas said that big inuksuit show where the permanent settlements were and are shaped like a pyramid. He said that you find this type of inukshuk in far northern Labrador, and that there were only a few old inuksuit around the Hopedale area. Henry Winters also said that you see more inuksuit further north.
As already mentioned, several informants talked about inuksuit marking settlements, such as the large cone shaped markers near permanent, or formerly permanent communities. A different type of marker was described by Henry who said that people would put up an inukshuk to mark where they camped. These consisted simply of one placed rock, usually about a foot or so high (Figure 9). Sometimes instead of a rock the marker would be an upright stick with one end forced into a crack.

Three interviewees talked about making inuksuit. Dick said that he made inuksuit going to his cabin, which is not far from Hopedale. Abraham said that LIHC (Labrador Inuit Health Commission) made inuksuit on the hill by Hopedale about three or four years ago. Andrew said that he made one sometime in the 1990's. Him and a whole bunch of people, were trying to stop
the Voisey Bay mine from going ahead. They blocked the road and stopped it for a while. At
that time a lot of the people there made inuksuit, about three feet high or so.

Several of the interviewees had heard stories about inuksuit. Dick, Andrew and Henry
never heard the older people talking about inuksuit while they were growing up, but they said
that the older people did use them. Henry had a story about a very unique inukshuk on Okaliak
Island. He said that there was a rock stuck straight up there and underneath the rock was a glass
jar. When people were going to Hopedale for something but could not make it due to bad
travelling conditions, they would go to the inukshuk, write down their name and what they were
trying to go to Hopedale for, and put the note into the glass jar. When people from Hopedale
could get out to the island, they would go and check to see if anyone had tried to visit the
community and why.
Boas also had a very interesting story about inuksuit. Boas said that before people used inuksuit for navigation, they got direction from their shaman, their god. “Before there was any Christ, before there was any white men. That was their god, the shaman, which was their direction before the inukshuks came around” (Boas Kairtok, March 24th, 2011). Boas went on to say that inuksuit began to be used “…when the shamans died away…”, after Europeans and missionaries came around (Boas Kairtok 2011). According to Boas, inuksuit began to be used between the 1940s and 1950s. The older people, who were hunters, built these inuksuit.

A great deal of information on a number of different types of stone markers was collected through the interviews in Hopedale. According to informants, inuksuit have been used more often on this part of the coast, and further north, than in the more southerly Labrador Inuit communities. It seems clear from this fieldwork that there is a substantial amount of traditional knowledge relating to inuksuit and other stone markers in Hopedale. Several informants knew stories about inuksuit, and all were aware of different types of inuksuit that were used for different purposes.

Nain

In Nain, four people were interviewed during two sessions and nearly fifty inukshuk locations were identified in this region by participants (Figure 10). A husband and wife were interviewed during each of the two sessions, Edward and Louisa Flowers and Minnie and Jacko Merkuratsuk. Both spoke and understood Inuktitut better than they spoke and understood English. Fran Williams was the translator for both of the interviews and she did a great job. Two
others were lined up for interviews in Nain, however, one person was sick and had to travel and was unavailable.

During the interview with Louisa and Edward, they said that the shape of an inukshuk cannot determine the meaning of it, instead it is the number of rocks that have meaning. The example that they gave was if you were up on top of Mount Sophie (a high hill in front of Nain) and were trying to make an inukshuk, you might not be able to find the rocks to make a shape that had meaning. However, you could still convey a message by constructing a marker using a particular number of stones.

Figure 10: Inukshuk locations identified in the Nain region. Background data source: Department of Natural Resources, Canada.
Edward and Louisa explained that three rocks indicate a dangerous route that you should stay away from, and that two rocks mean that the path is safe. About half way through the interview they corrected themselves and said that it was two rocks that warned of a dangerous trail and three rocks meant that it was safe for travel. All of the participants from Nain said that inuksuit would also be constructed around cliffs to point out the danger.

Louisa said that her father would make an inukshuk that was one big flat rock stuck straight up. She was young at the time and cannot remember what he said it meant. Edward said that people would sometimes make an inukshuk with three rocks almost like the one Louisa was talking about. There would be one rock stuck straight up and two on the sides holding the rock up. These would be found on each side of the road or trail, and if they were matching it meant that this was a safe road. If the rocks on each side of the road were not matching it meant that it was not safe to travel over.

The stone markers described by Edward sounded a lot like the mysterious pinnacles that were discussed in the Previous Research section above. The Labrador pinnacles were not discussed by the interviewer, and no information specifically on these features was provided to participants during any of the sessions. This is interesting because the cultural affiliation of the pinnacles in Labrador remains unclear, and although there has been speculation that they were constructed by Inuit (Kaplan 1983), researchers have questioned this suggestion, and have stated that “...they do not seem to figure in Inuit oral tradition...” (Gélinas and Merkuratsuk 2009:19).

The use of two or three stones for travel was mentioned not only by Edward and Louisa, but also by Minnie and Jacko Merkuratsuk who acknowledged the same shape inukshuk when Fran Williams told them what Edward had said in their interview. Derrick Pottle and Paul
Jararuse both mentioned that two or three stones marked a trail, although they did not go into detail about the shape. Gus Semigak from Hopedale mentions that two rocks on the bottom and 1 on top shows you which way you have been going (2011).

Inuksuit were also made to mark where igloos and snow houses were. They were made somewhere where you could see them when it was rough out and where they would not get covered over with snow. These were a pile of rocks, and you would not get these mixed up with the other kinds of inuksuit. Edward had to use an inukshuk like this once long ago, when the weather got bad and when he saw this type of inukshuk he knew that he was close to where people were staying.

When asked if inuksuit were used for hiding behind while caribou hunting they said that none were made for that purpose, but that it was possible to use them, and if there was a big boulder or an inuksuit close by you were going to hide behind it.

The inuksuit that show a good road or a bad road, and the inuksuit that show that an igloo, or snow house, was close by, are the inuksuit that Edward and Louisa spoke about. They said that the important thing that was taught to them was that two rocks meant a dangerous place or a dangerous route (Figure 6).

Minnie and Jacko said that they were not too familiar with the different shapes of inuksuit. They also said that inuksuit were different sizes and heights because in some areas there were not enough rocks for people to make a tall inukshuk.

The types of inuksuit that they know about are the ones that were used for direction. Minnie said that when you were travelling you would come across some with a rock that was
longer and pointing to the way that you had to go. The inuksuit that were made to show the direction would be high with one arm, but she did not say how high they were.

Jacko has made inuksuit before. He knew where inuksuit were to indicate a good road and so he made inuksuit marking the trail, which would lead to where the other, older inuksuit were already.

Louisa learned about inuksuit from going off on the land with her father. He would build inuksuit on the road that they took by dog team. He would put them up on higher ground so people would know that this was a windy place.

Minnie also learned about inuksuit from her parents, when they were travelling by dog team. They told her that inuksuit were put up to guide people. They would also travel by foot and Minnie’s father would tell her about inuksuit then too. They would come across all different shapes and sizes of inuksuit and sometimes they would be covered with black lichen. Some were different shapes and heights and her father would explain to all these differences to her. He would also tell her that inuksuit were very important, they had meanings and showed where there was danger.

While the inuksuit project was underway, one of two sets of the original Moravian land grant markers for Nain happened to be recorded after a community member (who wished to remain anonymous) mentioned at an unrelated meeting that he had seen them years before (Figure 9). He also provided an approximate location for the stones. These were placed to mark the northern limit of land claimed for the mission “…to occupy and possess, during his Majesty’s Pleasure…” on August 7th, 1770 (Hillier 1977:85). One stone is inscribed “G.R. III 1770”, the G.R. meaning George Rex, or King George, in whose name the land was claimed. The other
marker is inscribed U.F. which stands for Unitas Fratrum, which means United Brethren, or Moravian church. Another set of these markers was placed south of Nain on August 6th of that year (1977:86). Nain was the first successful Moravian mission station on the coast and these stone markers are extremely significant as they represent a pivotal moment in Labrador history. Today Nain is the oldest presently occupied community in Labrador (Penney 2009:8). The land grant markers are discussed here because of their historical significance and because they clearly fit into the Labrador stone marker category.

Figure 11: One of two sets of original Moravian land grant markers for Nain. “G.R. III” on the left stone stands for King George III, and “U.F.” on the right stone stands for Unitas Fratrum, which means United Brethren, or Moravian Church. These were placed in August of 1770 (Photo credit: Jamie Brake).
Similarities along the Coast

From all of the information collected from the five Inuit communities we are able to distinguish eleven different categories of inuksuit in Labrador. Some of the different shapes of inuksuit could fall into more than one of the categories. These types are listed as follows:

1. An inukshuk to mark a sina or a good place to hunt seal. This type of inuksuit is described as a pile of rocks about four or five feet high.

2. An inukshuk to mark a trail or for direction. Ten different shapes were identified within this category: the first was a pile of two or three rocks, some participants provided more detail saying that two rocks indicate danger and that three rocks indicate that it is a safe way to travel. The inukshuk could also be shaped like a cone with a stick placed upright in the middle of it, or it could be a pile of rocks of an undetermined number. Small rocks could be put onto a big rock in the shape of an arrow and some directional markers look like a human with no legs. The inukshuk could have one arm pointing in the right direction, or in the country you could find inuksuit with a window or hole in the middle. If you look through the inukshuk you will see another inukshuk in the right direction. Another shape of inuksuit that is in the country has two arms, the long arm points to the sea and the shorter arm points into the country. Another type in the country is big boulders with a rock put on the top. They could also be one stone.

3. An inukshuk could indicate a good fishing area. These inuksuit take on many different shapes as well. They could be shaped like a cone with a stick in the middle, a pile of rocks, an inukshuk with a window or hole in the middle, or one rock struck straight up.
4. An inukshuk to indicate a good place for birds. These inuksuit would look like a human and were used to help guide the birds to where people were waiting.

5. An inukshuk to mark a dangerous place. These were found on islands and near cliffs. The inuksuit on islands would be a pile of rocks and one informant said that they would not necessarily point to the dangerous area. You would have to keep watch for it. The inuksuit on cliffs would also be a pile of rocks, more specifically they would be two rocks.

6. An inukshuk used as a personal message. When travelling in the country you could put a stick in the inukshuk indicating which way you went. The people who were travelling behind you would know which way you went and would take the stick out once they got to it. This way it would not confuse another travelling group.

7. An inukshuk indicating a good place to overnight or a settlement. These inuksuit are described as having two legs, or two arms, or as big pyramids sometimes reaching eight feet, or it could be a single rock placed upright about a foot high.

8. An inukshuk showing a good hunting area. These inuksuit could be one rock struck straight up or, in the country they could be a big square stone.

9. Inuksuit which were actually used for hunting. The shapes of these inuksuit were not described. One account was of going from one inukshuk to the next. The other account did not give the shape of them but explained that a number of them would be constructed which together would form a “V” shape that would force caribou towards a particular place.

10. A stone marker indicating where a seal had sunk. In the spring when people killed a seal they sometimes could not get the animal before it sank into the water. Stone markers made up of
a pile of rocks would be made on land straight in from where the seal sank. This way, when they could get out in the water, they would know where the seal was.

11. An old inukshuk. These inuksuit were described as a pile of rocks which were never in the shape of a human and which could fit into any of the categories above. Some people described these inuksuit as having black lichen on them.

Out of the twenty-two people interviewed along the coast, sixteen of them said that inuksuit were used for travel and direction and eight said that inuksuit were used for hunting. The people who did not acknowledge stone markers being used for travel and navigation were living in communities to the three more southern communities: Rigolet, Makkovik and Postville. Instead, the people in these communities talked about trees and other travel aids being used for direction and hunting. The people who did talk about who made inuksuit said that it was Inuit who made them or started making them first.

One type of inukshuk that came up a lot was the inukshuk made of two or three rocks. Derrick Pottle, Paul Jararuse, Edward Flowers, Minnie and Jacko Merkuratsuk all talked about this type of stone marker. Paul, Edward, Minnie and Jacko said that these inuksuit were at the edge of a cliff and were put there as a warning. Derrick, Edward, Minnie and Jacko said that these inuksuit marked a trail. Edward gave more detail and said that two rocks mark a dangerous route while three rocks mark a safe route. The inukshuk with a window or hole in the middle was also mentioned by a few of the interviewees. Derrick mentioned that he had seen them but was not quite sure what they were for. Gus said that they were used to indicate a good fishing place, you would look through the window or hole for the fishing spot, but you would have to know what you were looking for. Boas Kairtok said that these inuksuit were special in the country.
When you looked through the window or hole you would see another inukshuk and you would go in the direction of that marker. Inuksuit were also made to indicate a permanent settlement. Gus said that these were made with two arms. Abraham said that the inuksuit had two legs; Boas said that they were found up north around places like Hebron and were shaped like a pyramid. Edward and Louisa said that piles of rocks had been used in the past to show where to find an igloo, or snow house, because they did not have cabins back then.

All of the interviewees said that there were more inuksuit further north or talked about inuksuit in places farther north, like Hebron for example. When talking about inuksuit in the country, some interviewees did not acknowledge the types and shapes that others did. Some said that only certain shapes were found in the country while other said the opposite. This does not necessarily mean that one person was correct and the other was not. There are many different roads leading into the country and not everyone will be going along the same road. There may even be a few different shapes of inuksuit along one trail, but people may notice the ones that they were taught to notice.

**Recent Use of Inuksuit Along the Coast**

Some of the people talked about how inuksuit have changed throughout the years. In particular these people were Derrick, Paul, Gus, Dick, Louisa, Edward, Minnie and Jacko. Jamie and Donald also talked about why they think inuksuit were not used in the Postville area. Derrick made some interesting points in his interview, for example, he said that at one time inuksuit were used as navigational aids and had no monetary value, but that now they have come to symbolize Inuit and he felt that they are almost being taken over from a commercial aspect. During Paul’s
interview he said that the inuksuit will always be here but we do not do the same things we did years ago, for example, travel far inland. Gus said that today people go so fast by snowmobile that they do not concentrate on them. Dick talked about how we do not use them very much anymore and how they were once used for hunting. “They used to be used by older people before when they use to have dog teams and that” (Dick Kairtik 2011). He also said that people do not use them anymore because they have GPS today, but they could still use inuksuit if they wanted to, or needed to. Louisa and Edward took note of the changes in inuksuit over the years, saying that the ones that are made today are shaped more like a human and that the older ones, which have meaning, were a pile of rocks. Edward said that people in his age group are still using inuksuit today, but that other people are making them just for creative purposes. Louisa and Edward do not think that the “newer” inuksuit pose a threat because they have not heard of any tragedies from misreading inuksuit, which they say is mainly because most people today do not know what the different types of inuksuit mean.

During the interview with Minnie and Jacko they said that they do not know when people started making inuksuit with no meaning, but that there are people still alive today, like Jacko, who could make an inuksuit that have meaning. Jacko said that inuksuit are not being used anymore and that maybe it is because people are not being told why they are there.

At the end of their interview, Minnie said that she is happy that we are asking questions about inuksuit. She and Jacko go off often and sometimes they have younger people with them. The younger people sometimes go off on the land on their own, without an adult. Minnie and Jacko said that that younger people are not always aware of dangerous areas (for example places where there is bad ice) and they are also not aware of where the inuksuit are and what they mean.
Because the younger people do not have the knowledge of the land, like Minnie and Jacko, they are scared that something will happen to the younger people when they go off on the land.

**Conclusions**

From the interviews we have learned about a wide variety of inuksuit and their meanings, and more than 120 inukshuk locations were identified by informants during the course of the project. It seems as though sometimes inuksuit with the same shape could have different meanings depending on which areas the inuksuit are in. Participants felt that there are more inuksuit further north of the permanent communities of today, in places like Hebron for example. They played a role in the lives of the older people who were interviewed when they were growing up. Inuksuit were used to mark safe trails, dangerous trails, and good places to hunt a variety of animals as well as to mark good fishing areas. Informants indicated that they were also used to convey messages, for caribou fences, to hide behind while hunting, to mark camps or settlements or to show where a seal had sunk.

Although there has been limited research conducted on inuksuit in Labrador there are references to inuksuit and other stone markers in archaeology site records and reports. Usually inuksuit are simply described or mentioned in passing by archaeologists, but some features that could fit into the stone markers category, such as pinnacles, have received some attention in the archaeological literature and have been a subject of speculation. Questions about who made the Labrador pinnacles and what they were used for remain, but it is very interesting to note that more than one informant described stone markers which sounded very similar to these mysterious features during project interviews. Those informants discussed meanings associated
with these markers, and the discussions were not prompted by images, descriptions or questions about pinnacles.

The interview with Edward and Louisa appears to show that oral tradition relating to the construction and purpose of pinnacle-like features does exist in Nain. We must always, of course, be aware of the possibility that traditional knowledge has been influenced by academic research and writing (Symonds 1999; Nicholas and Andrews 1997; McGhee 2008). However, this seems unlikely in this situation as Louisa actually remembers her father building pinnacle-like features long before they would have been described in the archaeological literature. Kaplan wrote that someone in Nain did suggest that pinnacles were used as ‘...”highway” markers...’ (1983:523), however, this idea did not fit with the particular features she was describing that exist on an island in Okak Bay. Although the information derived through the present project does not prove one way or the other what the pinnacles discussed by Kaplan were used for, or who built them, it does add weight to the idea that Inuit constructed features like this, and that there is some Inuit traditional knowledge that relates to pinnacle-like features. Other cultural groups may have built pinnacles, or pinnacle-like features as well, and the reasons for doing so would almost certainly have changed through time.

It is clear that the role of inuksuit has changed since people started using snowmobiles and GPS. Some interviewees also talked about how people do not go off on the land as often anymore, and that they do not go as far inland as they used to. When people do go off, they are travelling faster on their snowmobiles than when they travelled by dog team. Gus said because of this they do not concentrate as much on inuksuit anymore because they can barely take notice of them due to the fact that they are travelling faster. Although the role of inuksuit has changed, there are still people in northern Labrador today that use them and who are able to erect inuksuit
that have meaning. Hopefully this information does not get lost... you never know when you might need to rely on inuksuit.

Acknowledgements

We would like to say thank you to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Program as well as the Tasiujatsoak Trust Fund for their financial support. To Amalia Jararuse, the Project Coordinator for doing a great job of setting up interviews and finding translators when needed, for advertising the project, for arranging travel and accommodations as well as space for interviews and focus groups sessions. To the people who agreed to be interviewed in the five communities, Derrick Pottle, Hubert R. Palliser, Sam Palliser, Paul Jararuse of Rigolet. Tony Andersen, Nellie Winters and Simeon Nochasak of Makkovik. Douglas Jacque, Donald Jacque, Morris Jacque and Jason Jacque of Postville. Boas Kairtok, Andrew Piercy Sr., Henry Winters, Gus Semigak Dick Kairtok and Abraham Nochasak of Hopedale. Edward Flowers, Louisa Flowers, Jacko Merkuratsuk and Minnie Merkuratsuk of Nain. To Fran Williams and one translator who wished to remain anonymous for translating for the Inuktitut speaking interviewees.
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