

# WHALING: A Way Of Life

## Abvibich Iglaunifat Niginmun

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## INTRODUCTION



For numerous centuries, the indigenous peoples of Alaska's sea coasts eagerly await the annual northward spring migration of the bowhead whales. Thoughts of the spring harvest of these mammoth sea mammals have sustained the people in their various activities throughout the long winter months.

For the *Tikibabmiut*, the people of Point Hope, and other coastal Eskimos, their whole social structure was, and still is to a great extent, dependent on the capture of the bowhead whales and its associated activities. The whaling captain and his crew members become the core around whom life's activities revolve. From the preparation of their hunting gear, to the hunt, to the distribution of the whale shares, and to the various celebrations held throughout the year, the whaling captain and his crew play very important roles. Their roles with each activity have been prescribed by ancient customs and traditions to emphasize a spirit of sharing and caring for each other's welfare.

The whaling customs and traditions of the *Tikigagmiut* were passed on from generation to generation through oral repetitions done in community halls called the *qalgich*. Originally, when the point of the land now known as Point Hope, or *Tikibaq*, was larger and it extended further out into the ocean, six *qalgich* were located there. There was a name for each one. They were *Qalgibruk*, *Agraktabvik*, *Saugvik*, *Ufasiksikaaq*, *Qagmaqtuuq*, and *Kafixiqpak*.

It was to these halls that the older men and the younger men of each clan went to work on their various hunting tools, to relate stories of successful hunts, to recall comical events and to teach the young people through stories, songs and dances the value systems, and the history of their own people. Now the rough waves of the Chukchi Sea have eroded away much of the land upon which some of these *qalgich* stood, and thereby inadvertently dissolved their people. Only two out of the original six *qalgich* still remain today, *Ufasiksikaaq* and *Qagmaqtuuq*. The people of the other four *qalgich* have, over the years, joined themselves to the two remaining *qalgik*. Although the nonexistent *qalgich* have survived through the remnants of their people, they have all but lost completely their individual identities as expressed in their songs, dances, and other cultural information.

Today *Ufasiksikaaq* and *Qagmaqtuuq* are carrying on only a part of their original functions. The activities of their people are presently dictated by outside commercial and cultural influences. They have now evolved into ceremonial houses and function only during times of celebrations which are held at certain times of the year. They have ceased to be the great cultural centers they once were. How long will these *qalgik* remain intact? No one really knows. Only the old ruins of the *qalgich* can still be found at the old site on the point. The celebration ground still exists, but the people are now using a new place close to their new village site.

Any prediction as to the survival of the *qalgik* with their cultural heritage based on the ceremonial activities is made more difficult now with the current bowhead whale controversy. Up to the mid-1970's, the Eskimos have methodically gone about with their subsistence hunts. They were not aware of a mounting concern for the effective control of world wide whaling activities on the part of an organization called the International Whaling Commission. They were not aware of campaigns to end all whaling by some people from different parts of the world. They were not aware that something was going to interfere with their traditional way of obtaining their major source of food from the whales that come yearly to their shores.

In June, 1977, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) ruled to impose a zero quota on the bowhead for the Inupiat people, thus outlawing their hunting of the bowhead. Needless to say, the impact of such a proposal was devastating to all the whaling communities. How could an entity such as IWC impose a regulation that on the one hand preserves an animal species from extinction, but on the other, endangers the survival of a people and its culture?

In response to the moratorium on subsistence whaling proposed by IWC, the whaling captains from the Eskimo whaling communities formed the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC) in August of 1977. The organization is governed by a nine-member board. Some of the activities of this group in its efforts to halt what it perceives as a threat to the Eskimos' very physical and cultural survival are presented in a paper prepared by the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center for the Alaska State Legislature on the "Status of Bowhead Whales, Bowhead Research and Alaska Eskimo Whaling." Through the active work of AEWC, and the support given it by other agencies throughout Alaska which advocate for the preservation of subsistence lifestyles, IWC agreed in its December 1977 meeting to reinstate a limited subsistence quota for bowhead whales. This amounted to twelve whales killed or eighteen whales struck, whichever came first. The number of whales allowed were allocated among the nine whaling villages, and the quota was met in the spring hunt of 1978. The whaling captains still felt this was not sufficient to meet their community needs so they sought higher quotas but were allowed only two more. That is a total of fourteen killed and twenty struck. AEWC is currently involved along with other scientific and governmental agencies in the studies of the bowhead whales that will increase our knowledge of the species, and perhaps lead us to better management of the hunting of these animals.

Where the present bowhead whale controversy is taking the Eskimos and their culture is an issue that will take the cooperation of all people at different levels of the government, the local communities, and the scientific community to resolve. Perhaps some of the solutions can be derived from considerations based on the Resolution on Subsistence Lifestyles passed by the Friends of the Earth International in its meeting of November 1977 which reads in part as follows: "The preservation of endangered cultures is as important to the diversity and richness of life and to the health of the environment as is the preservation of species."

This book was written to preserve for a portion of Eskimo future generations the cultural knowledge of their ancestors who hunted the whales with gratitude and respect. Hopefully, others who read this book will come to a better understanding of the relationship of the Eskimos to the bowhead whales and their significance in the Eskimos' way of life.

The book is divided into different sections which are self explanatory. The English is followed by Inupiat. The Inupiat sections were transcribed directly from explanations given by David and Dinah Frankson of Point Hope. Students of the Inupiat language can study the Inupiat texts which are almost equivalent in content to the English. A glossary of Inupiat terms used in the Inupiat text is included to aid the Inupiat students.

There is a video tape accompanying this book on the activities of *nalukataq* in Point Hope. An audio cassette of the *nalukataq* songs in this book is also available. These should assist teachers in making the material more meaningful for students.

The following is a short biography on each of our great teachers, David and Dinah Frankson.

## David and Dinah Frankson

David Frankson, Umigluk, was born on the 30th of September, 1903 in the village of *Tikibaq* (Point Hope), Alaska. His parents were Abviqsiea (Frank) and Aqpayuk (Lizzie) Frankson. He had two sisters, Ipiixik (Annie) and Asaqpana (Rose). Both of these sisters have died. Only one of his two brothers, Qufuyuk (Alec) is still living today in *Tikibaq*. The other brother, Qalayuaq (Andrew), died long ago.

Umigluk had lots of fun when he was growing up in *Tikibaq*. He had lots of friends who went to school together with him. School was not very easy for them, however, as the teacher, Reverend Hall, spoke only English, and they spoke only Inupiat. Learning to read and write in a language that was very different for them did not make any sense. They took three years to study one book. It got to be very boring to look at the same thing year after year, but finally, they acquired some mastery of the content of the book.

On the 26th of October, 1924, David married Dinah Aviq Qalayuaq. She was the daughter of Bob and Alice Oviuk (Uvigaq and Tarruq). She also grew up in *Tikibaq*. She too had to study the same book for three years in school. She learned more, however, from listening to the fourth and fifth graders than she did from the book and the teacher. English language study was very difficult for Dinah. It just took along time to learn new words in English, especially when there was no chance to practice them.

Dinah's brother, Kirk (Tigluk) Oviuk still lives in *Tikibaq*. Her uncles, Samaruna and Isigraktuaq, who often took her hunting and fishing when she was growing up, have passed away.

The Franksons had four children but only one survived to adulthood. This is their son, Theodore (Teddy). Now they have fourteen grandchildren, and twelve great grandchildren. Most of their family live in *Tikibaq* close to them. They assisted in rearing seven of their grandchildren.

Umigluk worked at different jobs to obtain money for the welfare of the family. He worked as clerk for the native store in *Tikibaq*. He was an interpreter for the church, the Episcopal Church. He was a part-time teacher at the school. He was also the selective service agent for the public welfare assistance program. He was the clerk for the Reindeer Company in Kivalina and Point Hope. From 1928 to 1968, he served as the postmaster for *Tikibaq*. After his retirement from the postal service, he served as magistrate for five years in *Tikibaq*.

Whaling activities began for Umigluk in 1929. Long before this, however, he had many years of training from his own father and his father's crew on what gear to use, how to prepare them, and how to go out on whale hunting trips. He was an *aqpaaqtuaq*, or *qalugialguruq*, many times. Most of his learning was done through close observation and active participation in the activities connected with whaling. The rest of the learning about whaling came from listening to the stories, explanations, and instructions given by the experts in the *qalgi*.

The first two years of Umigluk's whaling hunts were unsuccessful. His success came in the third year, in 1931. His partner was James Nashookpuk, who was married to Dinah's sister, Jane. Umigluk and James bought their whaling equipment from Charlie Jensen, who is now living in Kotzebue but was originally from the village of Kivalina. They bought all the gear from Charlie for about \$250. This included the shoulder gun, two darting guns, tackle, harpoons, knives, and so on. Umigluk had a boat which was given him by his father, and that was how they got started.

The first whale in 1931 was caught on May 2nd. It was an *ifutuq* approximately twenty eight feet in length. Everyone was excited about the catch especially the captain and his crew. Unfortunately, Dinah was in the hospital when her crew caught the whale, but she did make it back for the fall celebration. Her sister carried out all of Dinah's responsibilities towards their crew for her.

After the first catch, Umigluk bought out James' share of their whaling equipment and went to hunting by himself and his crew. All together, he had a total of eleven whales. This is no small catch as very few whalers can boast of such a number. With all the excitement and the prestige one derives from being an *umialik*, Umigluk decided to give up whaling in 1966. Therefore, he gave his gear and boat to his son, Teddy.

Teddy took the gear and boat and hunted in 1966. He was not successful that year, but in 1967, he caught a whale. Unlike his father, however, Teddy ceased to continue with the whaling hunt tradition. Now the *umiaq* rests on the *umiivik* (the boat rack) without its skin, its bare ribs exposed to the harshness of the Arctic elements. How long will it be before the *umiaq* will get its needed new skin? Umigluk and Aviq wonder too.

Now, instead of mailing packages and preparing for the whaling hunt, the Franksons are teaching children the dances of their people; dances that were performed to celebrate the whale catch. They began doing this in 1975 with the school children in the Point Hope School. A dance group of young Point Hopers now performs regularly, and they often accompany Umigluk and Aviq to put on shows at other locations away from their village. The group has performed at the Dance Festival at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, Alaska, and at the Trade Fair in Kotzebue, Alaska. Some of the members went with the Franksons to Washington D.C. for the inauguration of President Johnson, and on a second trip there for Alaska Day in 1976 where they performed at the Kennedy Theatre.

Umigluk and Aviq have been generous with their wealth and their time. They were the first to have a boat with an outboard motor ordered from the Sears Store in 1935. When it came to *Tikibaq*, Umigluk gave everyone a ride in their boat during that summer. The people were excited about riding in a boat which was driven by a motor instead of using paddles or being pulled along the shore by dogteams. Umigluk took the boat on a hunting trip up the Kuuk River and their motor ran out of grease. He took caribou fat and used it, and it worked very well.

Aviq now enjoys a lot of leisure time, but in the early part of her life, she was very busy. Being the wife of a whaling captain is a very difficult job. She had to feed a lot of men and women who worked on the preparation of the gear. She had to prepare the skins and have them ready for putting on the frame of the *umiaq*. She put away all the meat from the shares her husband received from the whales he caught. She took care of the preparations of the food for the whaling festivals and the other celebrations in which her husband and her crew participated. With all this work, Aviq found time to be a midwife. She learned to do this very important work from her aunt, Nibuvana.

Umigluk and Aviq have given generously of their time to recording the information that is presented here in Whaling: A Way of Life. They represent the true spirit of the *Umialik* and his wife. Through their graciousness, we are all benefitting, and hopefully, will cease to be orphaned from the knowledge and skills of the Inupiat whale hunters.

## WHALING:

# A WAY OF LIFE

## THE BOWHEAD WHALE



The scientific name for the bowhead is *Balaena mysticetus*. It is also called by other names such as the Greenland right whale, the Great Polar whale, and the Arctic right whale. Its various names indicate where it can be found, that is mainly in the northern hemisphere. Its movements are largely dependent on the movement of the ice of the arctic seas.

Eskimos of *Tikibaq* (Point Hope) who have hunted the bowhead whales for at least a thousand years have different names for them. These names are related to sex, size, and age. The newly born calf which travels with its mother is called *abvaaq*. The baby female whale is called *ifutugrauraq* and the baby male whale is called *usiffuagrauraq*.

The next size female whale after being weaned is called the *abvalutauraq*. It is fat and its meat is not yet completely dark.

The next size of young whales which travel by themselves are called by two names. The young female is called *ifutuq*, and the young male is called *usiffuatchiaq*. The average length of these whales is twenty-five to thirty feet. The Native whalers estimated the age of these whales to be fifteen to eighteen months.

The oldest of the female whales is called *ifutualuk*. The older more mature male is called *usiffuabaaluk*. Another name for a very old male whale is *aapsavaaluk*. A mature male whale with white *afirruk*, the section of the tail between the base of the flukes and the anal pore, is called *qabixik*.

When a female whale travels with its baby, it is called *abvaalik*, meaning 'one with a calf'. An *ifutuvak* is a fat, mature female whale with a flat nose, not curved. When a pair of adults, perhaps a mating pair or a mother with a young whale, are sighted, they are referred to as *alupaabik*.

A group of whales which surface together and blow together is referred to as *puiyaqtuat*. The last group of whales to pass *Tikibaq* (Point Hope) in the spring as the animals migrate northward is called by the same name as the old male whale, *aapsavaaluk*. This group consists of large, mature whales.

When the people of *Tikibaq* hunt the bowheads, they prefer to catch the *ifutuq* and the *ifutualuk*, the young female, and the mature female respectively. These two have very tender meat. The *usiffuatchiaq*, the young male whale, as well as the older more matured whales are not as delicious and tender as the females. According to observations made by Foote in the spring of 1962 in Point Hope on two male whales which measured between twenty-six and twenty-eight feet, and being identified as one from each of the two kinds of whales, the *ifutuq* and the *usiffuatchiaq*, he noted the following:

### Igutuuq

**Body:** round, fat

**Head:** flat; no pronounced bow near the spiracles; perhaps shorter in relation to the body length

**Mouth:** more curved

**Ribs:** oval cross section; heavy dense bone

**Flipper:** less pointed

**Flukes:** less pointed on tips; smooth trailing edge

**Back:** a pronounced hump forward of the flukes

**Color:** greyish

**Skin:** soft; two layers; thick (2.2 cm)

**Blubber:** soft; two layers; thick (27cm)

**Meat:** soft; tender; thick

**Baleen:** short; most slabs about the same length; longest blade 81.3 cm

**Material between baleen:** extends higher into the mouth

**Tongue meat:** fewer nodules of meat within blubber

## Usirjrjuatchiaq

**Body:** straight, thing

**Head:** curved or bowed with a distinct hump near the spiracles

**Mouth:** more straight

**Ribs:** flat and thin in cross section; more porous bone

**Flipper:** more pointed

**Flukes:** more pointed tips; an irregular series of waves on trailing edge

**Back:** a straight back sloping forward from the flukes

**Color:** dark black

**Skin:** tough; one layer; thin (1.8 cm)

**Blubber:** tough; one layer; thin (16 cm)

**Meat:** tough; thin

**Baleen:** long; graded from very short in front and back of the mouth to very long in the center; longest blade 175.2 cm

**Material between baleen:** extends less into the mouth

**Tongue meat:** more nodules of meat within tongue blubber

Whereas Foote ascribed differences to possible differences in species, David Frankson insisted on these differences being based on sex. Results of preliminary biochemical-genetic studies, the analysis of blood protein, liver enzyme electrophoresis and karyotyping, suggest that *ifuntuq* is not a separate species from the *usiffuatchiaq*.

The bowhead can grow to sixty or seventy feet in length. According to the writers of the Alaska Whales and Whaling, Simeon Patkotak, of Barrow, caught a sixty-seven foot whale in 1970, and Amos Lane, of Point Hope, caught a sixty-four foot bowhead in 1964. The bowhead's weight when fully grown averages sixty tons. Some have suggested that a good rule of thumb for estimating its weight is to assume one foot in length is equal to one ton in weight. This is only a rough estimate of the bowhead's weight, however, as there are presently no available reliable weight data.

The bowhead's skin is dark black or bluish gray. Its chin and underbelly are slightly lighter in color than the rest of its body.

Unlike other whales, the bowhead has no dorsal fin. It has, however, a pair of flippers on the sides of its body, and flukes which measure up to twenty-four feet in width.

Its head is its biggest part since it takes up to about one-third of its total length. Located at this head is the huge curving jaw which forms the high bow or arch from which the animal derived its name of bowhead.

The two eyes are located one on each side of the mouth. There are no teeth inside the gigantic mouth of the bowhead, but it is filled with rows of whalebone or baleen plates that hang down from the top of the bowhead's arched upper jaw. Some of the baleen which hangs from the high center of the arch are as much as fourteen feet in length. Those that hang from the down-curving sides are not as long. All together there are approximately three hundred fifty hairy fringed baleen plates on each side of the upper jaw. The bowhead strains water through these baleen plates to get its food which consists mainly of krill. Krill is a form of crustacea found in cold waters close to the ice. The crustacea are chiefly those of copepods, amphipods

and euphausiids. According to studies made by scientists on further identification of species from the stomachs of the whales, the following were present: Calanus hyperboreus, Parathemisto libellula, Thyanoessa inermis and T. rauschi.

The bowheads usually move very slowly through water. They travel an average speed of three to four knots. During their travel, they spend some time on the surface of the water breathing through two slit-like blowholes. These holes are approximately eighteen inches long. They are located about half way along the head. The characteristic blow associated with these whales can reach a height of nineteen to twenty feet. What comes out through the blowhole as the whale blows is condensed water vapor and a mist of fine water droplets. These whales must have air to breathe since they are air-breathing mammals. They can stay under water for about twenty minutes but a longer time of up to an hour has been observed. At the end of that period of time, the whale must come up for air again. Eskimos have observed that baby whales surface more frequently than adults for air.

The skin of the bowhead whales is very thick. It has a layer of blubber approximately sixteen to twenty inches thick to protect it from the cold water in which it lives.

The bowheads are social animals. They travel in pods, and sometimes smaller pods join with others to form a large herd. They communicate with each other by sound. Scientists who are doing research with the whales in Alaska have made clear, high quality recordings of a bowhead vocalizing during an aerial survey- hydrophone test in the western Beaufort Sea in October 1978. Other sounds collected by these people during the spring of 1978 suggest that bowheads apparently make frequent vocalizations within the range of approximately 40 to 1900 Hz. No one has figured out yet what the whales are saying, but perhaps we will soon find out what all their sounds mean.

The mating of the bowheads take place in the latter part of the summer months. Babies are born after ten to twelve months. The exact length of the gestation period is not known. The female usually has one calf. When the calf is born, its approximate length is thirteen to fourteen feet. Then it feeds on rich milk from its mother for about a year. At the end of the year, the yearling is about twenty four feet in length, weighing close to twenty four tons. The mother whale and her baby are very close to each other. The baby plays a lot but always within touching range from the mother. Sometimes it slides off and on the mother's back and gets very excited. If the baby gets too wild with its activities, the mother rolls over on her back and holds the baby in her two flippers close to her until it quiets down before being released by the mother. A mother whale never deserts a wounded baby.

Because of the slow movement of the bowheads, they were among the whale species that were hunted to near extinction by the commercial whalers. The first whaler to bring news of the abundance of the whales in the Bering Sea and the Arctic was Captain Thomas Roys. Captain Roys entered the Bering and Arctic Seas to hunt in 1848 with his ship the Superior. With the publication of Roys' hunting success, commercial whalers, with some seventy ships or more, sailed into the Bering Sea to hunt in 1849. They were after the oil-rich bowhead which gave as much as one-hundred thirty-one and one-half gallon barrels per animal, and close to seven hundred baleen plates. A very good account of the history of commercial whaling is given in **Alaskan Whales and Whaling**.

How many bowheads are there in Alaskan waters? The present estimate of the number of whales in the Alaskan herd is 2,264. This number was arrived at during a whale count in the spring of 1978 conducted by Arctic Whales Research Program, National Marine Mammal Laboratory with funds provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The following verbatim account from David Frankson about the number of whales in Alaska has some relevance to this section:

Before contact with the Westerners, it is said that there were many whales. A man caught from one to as many as five whales during one season. The season included fall hunting, too, when the point was still extended further out. The whales were remembered to be numerous from the earliest times, from as back as anyone could remember. When a captain had caught two, or three, in the spring, he did not attempt to kill any more than he needed. Although a large whale would surface near enough to be struck, the hunter realized that he had caught enough and thinking that the whale was too large, he would merely throw a piece of ice at it, causing it to submerge. They did not kill whales merely for sport. They realized that they had enough food and never wanted to waste a whale by throwing away any useful part of it. Although they did not have 'designated authorities' to regulate their hunting, they used common sense and respect for the whales to preserve the species. I have also heard stories that a captain never caught more than five whales in one season. He no longer hunted after having caught five. After all, he was out of storage space by that time. All his ice cellars would be full. The people were careful about how many they caught in the old days because they did not wish to diminish the number of the whales. They did not hunt to waste and leave the whale unused. Today, they say the number of whales has diminished. This is perhaps due to commercial whaling.

Interest in getting much needed information on the bowhead whales regarding their distribution, food habits, reproduction cycle, how they age, the diseases that affect them, the sounds they use for communication, and other necessary data is presently very high. Information on migration routes during the northward spring migration, and the southward fall migration

is being gathered. The knowledge of the people of Point Hope, such as that relating to the three distinct waves of spring migration in the spring, with the first wave consisting of immature young adults, followed by a second wave of mature adults accompanied by suckling youngs, and the final third group of mostly more mature adults, can go a long way toward helping the scientists to obtain more accurate data on the bowheads. Only through gaining greater knowledge about the bowheads can everyone hope to establish a lasting co-existence with them.

## Uses of the Bowhead Whale

The uses of the bowhead whale are many. Chief among these of course is its use as the major source of protein in the diet of the people in whaling communities along the Alaskan arctic coasts. The best way to eat whale meat and muktuk is to have them frozen raw, but other ways of preparing the meat include the following:

**Half-cooked Meat:** The pieces of meat to be cooked are sliced and placed in water. A dash of salt is added to the water. Then the water is brought to a boil and kept boiling for a few minutes until the meat is done medium rare. The outside is cooked but the inside is only half-cooked. The medium rare part is juicy and moist, and very tasty. The whole thing is very delicious.

**Mikigaq (Fermented Meat):** Another way to prepare whale meat is to make mikigaq, a very favorite dish of the people. The meat is sliced about one-half inches thick and placed in an enamelled pot, a cast iron pot, or an earthenware pot. Muktuk and whale blubber are also sliced and placed in the container. Then the whole thing is placed by the stove and kept warm.

Once in the morning and in the evening the meat container must be checked and stirred. The meat starts to age and ferments a bit. As soon as it starts to make bubbles, it is ready to be taken out and placed in a cool place. Do not put it where it will freeze but leave it in the cool place for one night before serving it. It takes about four to five days to ferment the meat and have it ready for eating. It is really a very excellent dish.

**Whale burger:** Whale meat makes excellent burgers. Slice the pieces small and place them in a meat chopper. Chop the meat until it is all minced. Add flour, salt, pepper, small potatoes and onion to the whole thing and chop them together until they are well mixed. After they are mixed, make burger patties and fry them. They are really delicious to eat.

**Fried steaks:** Slice the meat very thin. Salt and flour the pieces. Fry them in a pan until they are cooked. Serve with one's favorite sauce.

**Boil Maktak and Meat:** Cut pieces into stew size pieces or bigger. Put them into a cooking pan, and cover it with water. Add salt, pepper, onions, and whatever is needed to make a nice tasting broth. Bring the water to a boil, and keep it boiling until the meat is cooked to the desired way.

**Pickled Maktak:** Maktak can be cut into small pieces and pickled. Sometimes the pickling is done by having the maktak in the seal oil poke to which seal oil is added. Then the maktak can be stored for a long time.

**Mamaaq:** Mamaaq is the base of the baleen. On the iputup, the mamaaq is very soft. It is usually eaten raw like most of the muktuk.

The bones of the whale are useful. The vertebrae is divided among the crews, who usually eat the meat frozen during hunting trips. In the old days before the introduction of the ladder, they were used as steps to climb out of the subterranean entrance hallway. They can still be used as work tables for cutting, chopping and carving.

The ribs are used for fences and as posts for tying things on to, but their main use was for rafters of the traditional sod houses and for fences around the graveyard. They were also used for arrow points and spear points. They can still be used for fish net sinkers, handles of *ulut* (plural for ulu, woman's knife, woman's knives) and other knives and as back ends of seal spears. Along with the shoulder blades, they were also used to pack down the moss and mud of the sod houses.

In the semi-subterranean sod houses of the old days, the shoulder blade played an important part in the ventilation of the home. As a *piiysi*, it was placed by the *pallichat*, the outside entrance into the iglu, and deflected the wind into the house when the house was too warm or humid. It was placed on the other side of the *pallichat* to prevent the draft from coming in. The position of the *piiysi* depended on the wind direction. The shoulder blade can also be used as a door mat outside of a house.

The lower jaw bones belong to the captain and were primarily used for sled runners. Today, they are used in the construction of the posts of the boat rack.



Baleen has many uses. Long ago, it was used for making nets and fish lines. It was also made into rope for tying and binding. Shavings from it were used as scouring pads, door mats or mukluk insulation. Today, they are used for scrimshaw and baleen baskets. They are also used with ivory in art and craft projects. Some people used them for decoration in their homes or sell them to tourists.

The lining of the lungs and livers are used in making Eskimo drum heads. Now the use of caribou skin is more prevalent, but the sound does not compare with the rich and deep resonant sound of a drumhead made from the linings of whale lungs and livers.

The blubber is used for food. Its other use was in the oil lamps which were used for light and heat. The pieces of blubber were skewered on a stick above the lamp. The lamp had a small wick made of moss called *maniq*. The oil from the blubber dripped down to the light below and the rendered piece that was left was called *tafibnieiq*. *Tafibnieiq* was delicious to eat. The burnt oil formed a gummy substance that ran down the side of the lamp. It was called *anfuk*. This was usually thrown away but sometimes it was mixed with goose down and chewed as gum by the children. According to legend, it was also the substance used to rub the gifts from the *Atallich*, the Sky People, in order to keep them. If the gifts from the *Atallich* were not rubbed with this substance, as soon as the *Atallich* left, the gifts disappeared. Today, blubber is used much like firewood where it is fed directly into a fire. With the scarcity of wood in the whaling camps, it is an important source of fuel.

All the internal organs of the whale are utilized with the exception of the bile, liver and the lungs. Nothing is wasted for to waste would be disrespectful to the whale. Everything must be used and used wisely for the benefit of all the people.

## PREPARING THE EQUIPMENT FOR WHALING



The preparation of whaling equipment was a task that most whaling captains and their crew members took very seriously. Without the proper equipment, whalers did not dare go out to hunt the largest mammal on earth. So everything must be in readiness before the hunting season arrives. If there is no boat yet for a new crew, that is the first thing they must try to prepare. The whaling captain is usually the owner of the boat. He is called *umialik*, the one with a boat, or the leader. *Umialik* also means a rich man.

### The Whaling Boat

The whaling boat is usually made from five walrus or ugruk skins. It is called an *umiaqtuun* and this is different from the nine ugruk skin boat called *umiavak*, the seven skin boat called the *umiavauraq*, and the smaller two skin, or one skin boats called *umiabiuraq*. The *umiaqtuun* is strictly a whaling boat without any sail.

The frame of the whaling boat, *umiam saunfa*, is made from wood, usually drift wood, but the skins are obtained by the prospective captain by going out and hunting for ugruk, or bearded seals. After he brings them home, his wife works very carefully to skin them so there will be no holes in them. After she skins the carcasses, she works on them again for about two to three weeks. She scrapes off all the fat and takes out the bones from the flippers. Then she hangs them up to dry partially. After that, she rolls them up from two sides to the middle and ties them. These bundles are taken and stored in the ice cellar, the *sibluaq*. There they will stay until March.

In early March, the captain's wife goes out and brings the skins from the *sibluaq*. She makes a hole in the ice on the water by the beach and immerses the skins there. She leaves the skins soaking in the salt water for about seven to ten days. She checks them only once before she takes them home to work on them again.

As soon as she takes the soft pliable skins home, she scrapes them and hangs them up to drain the water. Excess water is scraped off from the skins with an ulu.

Early the next morning, the captain's wife goes out and calls eight of the best skin sewers in the village to come and assist her in sewing the skins. The women are happy to assist so they take their sewing bags and go to the captain's house. There they soon busy themselves piecing together all the five ugruk skins. While they sew the skins, the captain's wife cooks and prepares a delicious meal for them. This meal usually has maktak, whale meat, and akutuq, or Eskimo ice cream. The seamstresses must be fed well as part of the compensation for their work. In the old days, the seamstresses were given, in addition to their meals, gifts of ugruk soles or caribou skins. Now they pay them with cloth, or whatever the captain's wife wishes to pay them with. The women usually work fast.

As soon as the women complete joining all the skins, the men come in and roll up the skin from two opposite sides to the middle. Then they carry it out to where they have the boat frame. Now-a-days they usually have the boat frame in the armory since it provides a nice warm place in which to work. In the old days, however, the boat frame was constructed in a long snow house. It was not very warm in there, but they were heated with at least two seal oil lamps. This was to keep the skins warm thus making their stretching work better. If the skin was cold, it would not stretch well at all.

When the men get the skin over the boat frame, they take out their seal hide lines, or ugruk hide lines which have been soaking in water to keep soft, and lash the skin to the gunwales of the boat frame. After the arrival of the whiteman, the Inupiat began using 1 /4 inch manila ropes. Presently, they are using nylon lines.

After the skin is lashed on, the men put two brace boards on each side of the boat running parallel to the gunwales and placed about half-way between the top of the gunwale and the center board on the keel of the boat. The brace board on the outside is called *tunusigaq*. The inside brace board which is placed exactly opposite the outside board is called *tuulvik*. When the men have lashed the skin on the boat, they are the *tuuttuat*. The name for the line is *tugrun*. The diagram below shows the parts of the boat.

When the boat is made, the first part to be laid in place is the keel which is called *kuyaaq*. Two boards are placed on either side of the keel. These boards are called *akkuk*. They are held in place by short braces that cross over the keel. These braces are called *nanmit*. The ribs are attached to the keel over the *akkuk*. They are called *tulimaat* now, as they are curved, but they used to be called *naparut*, which is also the word used to describe the straight ribs of a sled. The top runner, or gunwale, is called *quli*. The bow is called *sivu*. The stern is called *aqu*. There is a hole formed at the bow of the boat by the boards in the shape of a **v** or a **u**. It is called *kiglu*. When the boat is carried anywhere, one of the men puts his head through that hole and lets the poles rest on his shoulders. Two other men carry the back and they take the boat wherever it is to be taken.

Each of the seats in the umiaqtuun is named as in the diagram below:

The captain will sit in the *aqu* seat. The harpooner will sit in the *sivu* seat. The rest of the seats will be occupied by the rest of the crew members. Each one has his specific job to do during the hunt. The captain will give the commands. The harpooner will throw the harpoon. The paddlers will paddle.

As soon as the skin is on the frame and is completely lashed on, the men will take it to the *umiivik*. The *umiivik* is the boat place where the boat is placed upside down. It consists of four posts made from the jaw bones of the whales. These bones are buried with the curved part faced towards the center. Two drift wood pieces are laid on the long sides of the poles. The boat is placed upside down on the rack and lashed on to the wood to prevent the wind from blowing it away.

As soon as the boat is placed on the *umiivik*, the captain's wife gives candies, or doughnuts, and *maktak* to all children who play around that area either watching the men work on lashing on the skin, or following them over to the *umiivik*. Long ago, the children used to hang around outside the snow house where the men were working on the boat waiting for the captain's wife's treat. She used to give them *maktak*. The old people believed that feeding the children at this particular time brings them luck with their hunting endeavors. The children's 'wish' is powerful enough to bring success to the hunters who will use the new boat.

After the *tuuttuat* secure the boat on the *umiivik*, they go over to the captain's house for a feast. They are usually served some special thing like fresh fruit plus *maktak* and frozen meat. Now-a-days they are also served pies and cakes.

The paddles and the oars for the boat will be shaven to make them look new. This is called *nutaqsi-*. Each member of the crew works on his own paddle and completes it in a short time. Work on other needed equipment will also be done shortly.

### **Seal Skin Floats: Avataqpat**

The best time to get the seal skins for making the floats is in November or December. The skins are usually not scratched and full of holes at that time. Male seals of about four to five feet in length are most desirable for the floats. The color of the fur must be very dark. This is so it can be easily spotted among the moving ice when tracking a whale that has been harpooned.

After getting the male seals, care must be taken in skinning them. The captain's wife does the cutting of the skins by cutting below and around the blubber. This type of cutting is called *nayuk-*. She loosens the skin by cutting around it and pulling the skin back over the body and loosening the flippers. She scrapes off the fat from the skin. After that is done, she turns the fur out the right way, and dips the whole thing in cold water. She washes it really good. Then she ties a string to the head part and takes it outside.

She looks for soft, clean snow and puts the skin on it. She uses her feet, to slide the skin around in order to clean the fur well. After that, she hangs it up and she does this to all the skins that she will need for the floats.

In the *qanitchaq*, the skins will freeze and remain until March. On the first day of the new moon in March, that is the time of *avataqpagriubvik*, the time to make and prepare *avatqpak*, or floats. When the captain thinks it is time to make the floats, he brings the skins into his house early in the morning. His wife starts to work on them, and she hangs them up and thaws them out.

The captain sends for his crew members to come and work on the floats. The crew members are always happy and excited to begin the preparation of their equipment. They come to the captain's house without delay and start to work immediately on the floats.

First of all they work on the flippers to take off the bones. They do not remove all the bones; the ends, like the finger bones, are left there. While working on this, they turn the fur inside out. It is a very difficult job and they must be careful not to cut and leave any holes anywhere.

The second part they work on is the insertion of an ivory valve into the navel. They tie the ivory valve in place very tightly with a fine seal sinew. After this is in place, they take a piece of wood about six inches long and sharpen one end. They leave the other end plain. Then they tie this to the opening in the head. They make it very tight. The whole thing is then inflated and tested for air leaks by listening to it. Then the float is monitored very closely. If there are no leaks, the crew will hang it up and let it partially dry out. After a while, the float is taken down and the piece of wood is loosened from the head. This piece of wood is called *sannigugiaq*. The fur is turned right side out and the poke is filled up with air again. The wood is tied to it very tightly once more. The skin is hung up again to dry well. After it is dried, some of the air is allowed to escape. The remaining air is left in the float to prevent the sides of the skin from getting stuck together. Now the float is ready and is, therefore, put away until it is time to be taken to the boat for the hunt.

Two small floats and one big float are needed. The two small floats are called *kanasiqqak*. The big float is called *kirfu*. Only three floats are needed per harpoon. The crew members usually make two extra floats, however, in case they lose the others during the hunt. Today, most of the whalers are using commercially prepared floats. No longer do the wives of whaling captains work on seal skins for floats. No longer do the crew members work together during the *avataqpagriubvik* to prepare their floats in the old way. The magic of *avataqpagriubvik* and its spirit are almost gone, or can it be revived again?

## **Paddles: Aguutit**

Paddles and Oars:

Eight paddles called *afuutit* are made from drift wood. The blade is shaped very carefully about eighteen inches by eight inches wide at the base where it blends into the handle. The handle is about five to six feet long and two to three inches in diameter. Two pulling-oars with blades that are almost straight and much longer handles are prepared. The former are used for paddling around looking for whales, but the latter are used when the crew is in a hurry to get to where they are going. Where as the paddles with the wide blades are used without rowlocks, the oars must have rowlocks made of hides. There is also one steering-oar for guiding the boat in the direction it should go. This steering-oar is sturdier than the others. It has a six foot handle on it, and its blade is wider than the others. (See the diagrams below.)

After the paddles are made, the captain puts his identifying mark on the handles. David Frankson's marking is as follows:

This is called *ieeisauraq* 'a small drying rack'. Each clan used to have such markings on their hunting tools to distinguish them from other clans' markings. On a harpoon, the marking was placed on the head, and it became very important to have it there for this reason. When a man harpooned a whale and it got away, if another man captured the whale and the harpoon head with the marking of the first man who speared it was there, the whale belonged to the first man. Currently, the people are using their names' initials as identifying marks. Old ivory which are found by the people now show clearly some of the ancient clan markings, but no one knows much about them any more. It would be of great interest to make collections of the crafts made by certain clans by identifying them with their markings. Here are only a few of the markings that have been preserved in old ivory work:

## **Knives: Kaukkat, Sikuiyautit**

Two kinds of knives are taken as part of the tools for whaling. The first was used to be made from slate or jade long ago. It consists of a blade about 1 1/2' long and 3' wide. The end is attached to a wooden handle that is eight feet long. Since the coming of the whiteman, the Inupiat started to use steel blades for their knives. This butchering knife is called *kaugaq*. The second kind of knife is made of bone. There are two kinds; one has a blade that is long and thin, and the other has a rounded blade more like a spatula. The long bladed one is used for scraping the sides of the boat when the ice collects on them. The other is for digging under the accumulated ice on the sides of the boat. They are both called *sikuiyaun*. The knife blades are usually protected in sheaths. (See the diagrams below.)

### **Spades: Tuggautat**

Two kinds of spades are used. One is a cutting spade, and the other is a bone spade. Most often, these are not taken on the hunt. They are used ashore for butchering the whale. If they are taken, they can be used for killing the whale, and for cutting the flukes so as to paralyze the animal and retard its movement. (See the diagram below.)

### **Lances: Qalugiat**

The hand lance is made of a sharp piece of jade mounted on a long bone that is attached to an eight-foot wooden handle. It is used in killing the whale after it has been captured. The crew stabs the whale close to the heart, liver or lungs with the hand lance in an attempt to kill it. (See the diagram below)

### **Hooks: Niksigich, Algagruat**

There are two kinds of hooks needed for the whaling hunt. One is called the *niksik*, and the other is the *algagruaq*. The *niksik* has one single point. This point used to be made from bone, ivory, or jade. The hook point is attached to a wooden handle which is about eight feet long. On the opposite end of the handle, and on the opposite side from where the hook point is placed, a piece of caribou or reindeer horn is attached for the thrower to hold on to. Closest to the end of the long handle and behind the horn, a small hole is drilled. A rope is tied to the end of this hole, and that is how the *niksik* is retrieved after it is thrown at a target. All one has to do is pull back the rope, and the hook will return. The *niksik* is used for hooking up anything that has fallen into the water. It is also used for hooking up the fins to be morticed and reeved before towing the whale to the butchering place. It is very much like a gaff.

The *algagruaq* looks very similar to a rake with three six to eight inch prongs on it. The handle is made of wood and it is also eight feet in length. The hook points like in the *niksik* are lashed with fine seal sinew to the handle. It is used for pulling the meat off the vertebrae of the whale. (See the

diagrams below.)

### **Bailer**

Every boat must have a bailer to bail out water. Old bailers were made from mountain sheep horns. The horns were cut and shaped nicely for use as bailers.

### **Harpoons: Qialgun**

In the early days, a toggle-harpoon was used. The crew prepared this early in the morning but the bomb is not put on until they get to the lead. (See the diagram below.)

After the white whalers arrived, the Inupiat people began to use the bomb-lance gun with the bomb-lance. In no time at all, they learned how to use Pierces Harpoon-bomb-lance-gun. The preparation of these sophisticated pieces of equipment took place just before the hunt. (See the diagrams below.)

### **Shoulder Gun**

A shoulder gun is taken along to finish off the whale. It is not loaded until the hunters are in the lead.

Where as most of the equipment needed for the hunt was fashioned by the people from local materials, the use of foreign tools requires money. In David Frankson's whaling time, the cost of a Pierces harpoon-bomb-lance-gun was five dollars and the bomb lance another five dollars, the present cost for the same items are approximately three hundred dollars and seventy dollars respectively.

After getting the tools ready, the captain and his wife will call the crew together again to help shave all the handles of their equipment. Once again, they nutagsi-, as they did with the paddles. They shave the handles using a shaving knife called a *millik*. This *millik* is made of iron now but it used to be made from flint or jade. Jade was preferable. The handle was made from bone, and the lashing was done with sinew. (See the diagram below.)

When everything is ready, the crew members take them out and put them in the boat and tie them together. In the old days, the only thing left was for each member of the crew to make himself a fresh water bag.

The fresh water bag was made from the back flippers of the seal. The bag was called *imigagvik*. When a crew member was ready to go whaling, he filled it with cold water and put it inside his parka. Then he tied his belt tightly below it. By doing this, he kept the water from freezing, and he was able to drink it whenever he was thirsty. If the whaling crew stayed out very long, and he ran out of water, he filled his bag with fresh snow. He placed the bag inside his parka again. His body heat melted the snow so he had water for drinking again.

## Whaling Food

The crew also took along a big round bucket called a *gattag* which was whaling food. The bucket was about eighteen inches in diameter and twenty-four inches deep with a handle on each side. It was made from wood. The captain's wife cut *maktak*, fish, and whale meat and filled this container. This was the only food the crew took with them, for in the old days, the crew members did not camp out on the ice to do their hunting. They went out early in the morning and returned home at night. The only time they stayed away was when they killed a whale. They would stay out there then until they completed the butchering of their catch.

It was not an easy task to prepare the needed tools for whale hunting. It was a lot of hard work, but everyone enjoyed it. The captain, his wife, and their crew members looked forward with anticipation to the time when they started to work on their tools. Most often, the tool preparation occupied a great deal of their time in the winter. The companionship and the oneness of purpose in preparing the best tools on which they relied for obtaining most of the food they needed to feed their people were binding forces that molded them into one group of people. This same spirit is lost when commercial equipment is used. The wonderful feeling of working together is mostly gone. In terms of money and the cost of financing a whaling crew, the old way is far more economical. The old way also helped the people to perpetuate their skills in their traditional art of tool making, as well as giving them a sense of pride in the completion a job well done. It gave them, too, great joy in the cooperative work that went into the preparation of the necessary equipment for the whale hunt.

## BEFORE THE HUNT



The bowhead whales start appearing at *Tikibaq* (Point Hope) during their northward spring migration around the middle of April. Long before this arrival of the whales, however, the *Tikigagmiut* practiced *sigieeialiq*, the ritual of watching the sun rise over certain mountain peaks between *Imnaich* (Cape Thompson) and *Uivvaq* (Cape Lisborne) on its return journey to its northern summer solstice. The whaling captain would take his wife early in the morning and go out on top of their iglu to sit on the *pallitchat*, the drift wood frame of the entrance way. They would wait there, along with other captains and their wives at their own *pallitchat*, and in the stillness of the early morning await the first ray of the sun. A spirit of rivalry existed as each couple carefully screened the horizon at the expected place where the sun would rise for each couple would like to be the one to *qatchalaaq*. That means as soon as they saw the first ray of the sun, they would yell, "Ui! Ui! Ui!". This happy expression is also used by men when they are filled with happiness during dancing. Sometimes, a young son was taken along, packed on the back inside his mother's parka, to watch the sun rise. Boys of four to six years old were regularly taken along to *sigieeiaq*. After the sun rose, the little boys that were able to, were allowed to run around and relieve themselves. They were taken along for training as well as for praying during *siqinnialiq*. It was their parents' wish that they would grow up to be good and successful hunters. The parents wished for them that they would acquire the habit of rising with the sun and going out to hunt for whales and other animals. Successful hunts were often conducted in the early part of the morning.

## Supplicating the Moon

After *sipinnialig* in the old days, the man would go to the *qalgi*. His wife would return to their house and prepare a meal for her husband. Then she took this meal over to her husband in the *qalgi*. All other wives would do the same for their husbands.

Wives of the men in *Tikibaq* also carried out monthly supplication to the man on the moon at new moon. Each time there was a new moon beginning in the fall time, the woman of the house took her *immiun*, a small wooden bowl which she used for

giving drinks to animals which her husband brought home from his hunts. She gave water to sea mammals, and seal oil to the land animals. She did this because, even though the animals were physically dead, their spirits were still alive and must be given a drink when they come to her house. It was this same bowl that she filled with about an inch of water and taking it outside, held it up above her head with both hands towards the moon. She said something typical of the following while she held up the bowl to the new moon:

May you fill my *iinmiun* with a whale.

I want to catch a whale this spring.

May you fill my *immiun* with game animals.

I do not want my children to go hungry.

May you fill my *immiun* with game animals and good health.

I want my children to live.

These were called *qieeuagtuutit* and were mainly of those three types. The wives of the captains asked for whales in the spring before the whaling season. The other women asked for game animals and good health every new moon all year long.

The man in the moon was said to sit there with a skin covering the moon. New moon came about when this man, *Alifnaq*, uncovered the moon slowly by drawing the skin back a little at a time. When the women prayed to him, some of the bowls they held came up close to him. He took from his store of

goods and gave to them according to their prayers. Sometimes he gave more than they asked for. Some women's bowls were too far away and *Alifnaq* could not do anything for those people. Whatever *Alifnaq* put in a woman's bowl, that was what her husband would get during his hunting activities. If he put in two whales in her bowl, her husband would kill two whales in the next whaling season, and so on. Therefore, the people not only watched the sunrise and meditated in prayer as husband and wife, or as a family group, but the wife, sometimes joined by her children and grandchildren, also prayed monthly to the man on the moon for their daily needs and their health.

## Uivvaqtaaluk and Qiqiaq, Great Whale Hunters

All *Tikigagmiut* watched the position of the sunrise each morning, and points along the coastal hills were named identically with the appearance of the sun there. These points are *Ayapiqtuq*, *Imnaqpaksuqtuq*, *Saligvik* (*Saligvikun nuirug*), *lealurratigun nuirug*, *Auksaaqiakun nuirug*, *Qaiqsukun nuirug*, *Pugguk*. and *Qufisiuq*. Each of these place names has its own meaning as in the following:

*Ayapiqtuq* it's reaching up as if to touch the mountain

*Imnaqpaksuqtuq* it's travelling through Cape Thompson

*Saligvik* place for hopping along the plateau place

*Inalurratigun* along the intestines, through the *lealurrat*

*Auksaaqiakun* at the time it melts early, through *Auksaaqiak*

*Qaiqsukun* through the one that is smooth, or level; through *Qaiqsuq*

*Pugguk* two pokes for keeping meat and oil

*Qufisiuq* neck area

As soon as the sun approached its rising position at *Qufisiuq*, the people got very excited for it was at *Qufisiuq* that the earliest recorded whale of the whaling season was ever caught. This catch was made by *Uivvaqtaaluk*, and this solar position probably corresponds to mid-March. The occasion so impressed the *Tikibabmiut* that the story of *Uivvaqtaaluk* and his whale catch at *Qufisiuq* was told to every little boy when it got to be about that time of the year. It was the wish of every whaling captain to be so lucky as to catch a whale as early as when the 'sun comes up through *Qufisiuq*.' No one has ever caught a whale any

earlier than *Uivvaqtaaluk*. *Uivvaqtaaluk* and his brother, *Qiqiaq*, were great whale hunters. They caught a whale every season they hunted. They are still remembered today and their graves can still be identified at the old whaling cemetery in *Tikibaq*.

To catch the first whale in the season is called to *anuyaaq*-. Everyone wants to *anuyaaq*-, so he can fill the stomachs of the hungry people in the village. The people's food caches are usually very low at this time of the year. So an early catch of the whale can bring joy to all the people as they will eat their fill and replenish their low, or perhaps, empty food cellars. The coming of the whale is awaited with great anticipation and hope.

## Sighting of the First Whales

When the first whales are sighted, the person who sees them runs very happily to the village exclaiming at the top of his lungs, "Puiyaqpulguuq! Puiyaq-pulguuq! Puiyaqpulguuq!" This means 'the whales are blowing' out there at sea. Everyone picks up the call and excitement fills the whole village. The people rejoice and they holler loudly to let everyone in the village know that the whales have arrived. Once again the people will go out to harvest their major source of food.

## Weather and Ice and Snow Conditions for Whaling

The arrival of the whales acts as a catalyst. It sets in motion other activities which will occupy the minds of the people for the whole time the whales are to be hunted. The captains and their crew members get very busy planning when to go out. They check the weather and make sure that the conditions of the ice are known. The most important factor affecting whaling activities, however, is the wind. The direction of the wind determines whether hunting is possible or not.

Whaling takes place only on the south side of the land fast ice. If the wind is blowing from the south, however, the south side of the land fast ice is closed and the whales will migrate straight through on their way north without coming close to shore to be hunted. There were times, however, when there were small open holes in the ice during the south winds. Whales used these holes for breathing, and they were sometimes killed at these holes as they came up for air. These holes are called *imaurat*.

The north side of the point is open during a south wind but no one hunts whales there because the whales do not come around there. In the old days, however, when the point of the land was further out in the ocean, the people actually killed whales on the northern side. The following diagram shows the names of the winds that the *Tikigagmiut* recognize:

Whaling Is done when the wind is blowing from the north end the south side of the point is open.

Clouds and their movements are closely associated with the winds and the *Tikibabmiut* watch them too to determine the weather. All clouds are called *nuviyat*. Stratus clouds, described as being clouds that are stretched out and pulled tightly, are called *saffitchut* 'tightening up'. They are indicative of up-coming strong winds. Cumulus clouds are called *ugruurat*, described as looking like 'fat ugruks', and when they start to form, they are indicative of strong south, or north winds coming up soon. Altocumulus clouds, little feather clouds that are wavy and curly, are called *kixgaviurat*. They show that it is windy up in the sky. Cumulonimbus clouds are called *qaliquttat*. These are the kinds of clouds that seem to remain stationary over the hills even though the wind may be blowing very hard over the hills from Cape Thompson to Cape Lisburne. As soon as the clouds move out and dissipate from this area, the wind dies down.

Certain places are also watched in order to predict the weather. One of these places is the valley called *Kapittuuraq* which is between two mountains above *Aqalulik* Creek. It is above Cape Lisburne. It is a narrow valley and when it is filled with fog, a strong wind can be anticipated. Fog is called *taktuk*, and when one can see blowing snow through the fog, one can be sure that strong winds will soon hit Point Hope.

When big black clouds appear, bad weather is to be expected and strong winds will soon arise. If there is a cloudless sky but the wind is increasing in speed, soon the sky will turn color. This is called *isugluk*, and no one goes hunting.

Whaling captains must be very aware of the current and the tide. The word for current is *sabvaq*. Two tides are recognized: high tide is called *ulititkaa*, and low tide is called *ulinfaigaa* or *immaiqpakkaa*. Three types of waves are known: *ifuulikpaich*, or big waves, *ifuulik*, medium sized wave, and *ifiullaat*, or small waves. Hunting is done only when there are *ifiullaat*, or when the

seas are light, or relatively calm. If a strong current is running causing a whirlpool, the ice might break anytime so it is best to get out of the water. This kind of condition is called *utkusigauraq*. It is a very dangerous situation.

Another thing a captain must be aware of is the ice and snow condition. The most commonly recognized ice types are the following:

*siku*, a general term for ice;

*qinu*, slush or new ice in the fall time;

*kisitchat*, ice that piles up in shallow water on the point where the houses used to be located, about six feet deep;

*ivuniqpaich*, ice that piles up on the beach along the west coast of the point;

*tuvaq*, solid ice which extends out one to two miles into the ocean and it is found among the *ivuniqpaich*;

*sarrik*, pack ice which retreats along the edge of the lead;

*puktaat sikut*, big flat pieces of ice commonly known as icebergs;

*piqaluyaq*, a fresh water iceberg, or glacier.

The whalers have to keep a watch out for *sarrik* and move further back onto the landfast ice to avoid them. If they hit, there is no telling how much damage they can do to the edge of the landfast ice, and one better not be caught in such a dangerous position.

Snow terms that whalers must be acquainted with include the following: *aniu* or *apun*, general terms for snow that has fallen; *qannik*, falling snow, snowflake; *misulik*, wet snow sleet; *natatqubnaurat*, hail stones; *afniq*, blizzard, snowstorm; *natabvik*, blowing snow on the ground; *apuyyaq*, snow along banks or slopes used for building emergency shelters; *qimugruk*, snow drift, and *nikuvlalaq*, corn snow with ice crystals which makes it ideal for drinking snow.

## TO THE HUNT



On the day a captain and his crew plan to go hunting, the captain's wife calls the crew members to get them ready to go. When she informs them, they really feel happy and they assemble quickly at the captain's house. There they are served coffee, or tea, and some crackers while the captain's wife prepares breakfast for everyone.

## Final Preparations

The crew members take down the boat, the *umiaqtuun*, from its rack, the *umiivik*. Then they start checking the gear. They check the *niksik*, the *algagruat*, the knives, the lances, the spades, the harpoons, and tie these securely to the bottom of the skinboat. They prepare the bomb-lance-gun and the shoulder gun but they are not loaded until they are on the ice. The paddles and oars are also tied together and placed in the boat.

The floats are taken down and filled with air. After they are inflated, they are taken outside. A twenty-five fathom manila rope about 1 /2 inch in diameter is stretched and one end of it is tied to the *sitqut*, or the lower flippers. The other end is tied to the darting gun and the harpoon.

Then they measure nine fathoms from the harpoon and tie the two small floats there. They twist the rope around the middle of the *kiiju* and leave about four feet of rope length hanging loose while they take up the rest of the rope and place it on the hold in the boat to prevent it from slipping off. The rope of the two small floats is wound and placed behind the harpooner's seat, and the second seat, the bowman's seat. The big seal float, the *kigu*, is placed behind the bowman's seat and in front of the midship-oarsman, or the third seat. In Native, the second seat is *qugialik*, and the midshipoarsman's seat is the *qitiq*. *Qurgialik* is the name of the part of the boat next to the bow, and all its gear is ready to



Long ago, the boats were towed in sleds by men to the ocean. Later on they were hauled by dog teams. Currently, the craft are being taken by snowmobiles.

## Establishing the Whaling Camp

After the boat is on its way, the rest of the supplies and a tent are packed and taken along to set up camp in a place close to the open lead. The lead is called *uinig*. The captain determines where the camp is to be placed and that is usually about a few yards from where their *umiaqtuun* is going to be kept. This is usually in a little sheltered bay called a *kaffieiq*.

(diagram of *kaffieiq*)

All the trails from the village and the various camp sites meet at a place by the open lead. This place is called *pituqqiq*. It is usually a large flat place on the land fast ice where the captains can bring their tents to and set up camp as soon as the ice starts closing in in the lead.

No one has a designated place to put up camp. Camp sites are available on a first come first served basis. The bay like area is the most desirable as whales are most likely to appear coming around the ice point or land protrusion further down from the little bay area. The point that juts out into the lead is called *nuvugraurag*, a little point. If it is big, it is called *nuvugrag*.

Camp is established once the tent is firmly staked into the ice. Supplies are unpacked and stored away. There must be coffee, tea, sugar, canned milk, flour, salt, pepper, onion, rice, bread, oatmeal, or other cereals, and lots of other canned food. Every camp has a cook, who is called *kukik*. There is also a helper who was called *kivgaluurag*, but now called *boyyaaurap*. The *kivgaluurag* is usually a young boy who is old enough to wash dishes, chop wood for the fire, and get snow for water. The whaling crew used to take coal along with them for their fire. This was burned in a kerosene can which acted as their hearth. The sides were slit open through which a rack was placed about one foot from the bottom of the can. Then a hole about nine inches square was cut three inches from the bottom of the can on one side of it. This was where the fuel was fed into the fire. The top of the can was open. Before the fire was built in the can, dirt was placed on the bottom of the can. This acted as insulation, and it was also used to retard the fire when it burned too fast, especially when whale blubber was used as fuel. People now are using portable stoves.

There are many duties for the *kivgaluurag*. He is also the messenger boy. He keeps the whalers warm and happy by giving them coffee and tea every hour. He works constantly to keep the crew well fed while they are busy keeping a lookout for the whales in the open lead. He makes sure he has a warm place for the men that are not looking for whales. They need a warm place where they can rest. No one takes off his cloth during the rest period, though. The only thing they remove their *mukluks* which they remove and place in a certain way to dry out. They are put in a place where they can be quickly slipped on in case they are called to chase a whale.

## Chasing and Capturing the Whale

The watch for the whales is kept round the clock. Everyone takes his turn watching. In the evening, the younger crew members watch in the early hours while the older men sleep. They can wake up any one to replace them when they feel the need for some sleep. As soon as a whale is sighted, the crew closest to the ocean signals other boat crews by waving a paddle from the top of a small pressure ridge. The message is passed on in the same manner from crew to crew. Then the sleepers are awakened by being pulled on the arm. No words are spoken as they quickly slip on their *mukluks* and launch their *umiaqtuun* into the icy water. Everyone knows his place and in no time at all, the captain gives his command and away their boat speeds when the oars are skillfully dipped in and raised out of the water. If the whale is far away, the pulling oars are used. So into the quiet darkness of the open lead, the captain and his crew slip ever closer and closer to their prey.

Everything has been done in accordance with ancient customs up to this point to ensure a successful hunt. The crew members have all worn new *mukluks* and new mittens. They have been blessed by the priest. Anciently, they were blessed by their own *afatkuq* who sang a magic song full of power on their behalf. Upon sighting a mother whale with a calf, an *advaalik*, they sang a song called a *qagrugautaiyaun*. It was a song sung to the mother whale to cause her baby to slide off her back more often, and thus slowed down her progress so they could catch her. Today, no one sings the ancient songs anymore. All they do now is try to get within a few feet of the whale if they are using an ordinary harpoon.

Once they are within range, the harpooner pokes the whale with all his might. Then he twists the handle to break it off while the paddlers paddle furiously to keep the boat from being pushed back by the impact of the harpoon as it penetrates the whale. (With the darting gun and the bomb, the boat can be at a distance of fifty feet.) The harpooner hopes with all his heart that the harpoon had hit the whale below the rib cage, or some other place where the bones will not stop the penetration of the harpoon. (The best place to aim for is directly at the joint of the head and the spinal column.) So as soon

as he throws the harpoon, he sits down and says a silent prayer. In the old days, he, or the captain, untied their *mukluk* strings as the floats were thrown into the water. The untying of the harpooner's *mukluk* strings assured the whalers that the whale would not sound taking all the rope out until it was taut. The crew hoped that it would only run a short way and leave a lot of slack in their rope. Then the next thing that the crew did was to start singing an *avataqsium*, referring to means by which the seal floats were retrieved. This song was sung to weaken the whale and to slow it down, bringing it to surface closer to the hunters again. When the *avataqsium* was effective, the whale soon surfaced close to the hunters and it was killed immediately by the crew. They used their hand lances, or their *qalugiat* to stab the whale. Presently, no one knows any *avatagsiutit*, a very regrettable thing indeed.

As soon as the captain and his crew strike a whale, all other boats race towards them. They come to assist with the killing of the whale if it is not dead yet, or to help with towing it back to where it can be butchered. The order in which the boats arrive at the scene of the killing is of paramount importance. This arrival order determines the distribution of the whale.

As soon as the whale dies, the flippers are morticed and tied securely to the chest of the whale. The morticed pieces are given to the captain who killed the whale. He will throw them later on into the ocean along with the whale head. The whale is secured and the floats tied properly to buoy it up and the boats tow it to the land fast ice by the camp for butchering.

There are no signals used to show a boat has a whale. Whaling crews used to keep a lookout for each other and especially for a crew which was way out from the land fast ice. When the dart gun was used, no sound could be heard, but the loud singing of an *avataqsium* was a signal for the others that a whale was struck. Now the use of a bomb lance gun allows the other whaling crews to hear the explosion and go out as fast as they can to the scene of the kill. Everyone assists for the whale is not the killers' alone to keep. The whale will be shared and enjoyed throughout the coming year not only by those in the village of the hunters but by all their relatives and friends in other villages.

## DISTRIBUTION OF THE WHALE SHARES



Once the whale is towed into the place where it is to be butchered, the captain takes a knife and cuts a small piece off one of its flippers. He then requests one of the younger members of his crew to go to the village and inform his wife and the people that their crew has caught a whale.

### Alerting the Village of the Successful Hunt

Today, the messenger travels swiftly with a snowmachine. In the old days, the piece of *avarraq* was attached to the blade of one of the paddles. The messenger, or *qalugialguraaq*, now called *aqpaaqtuaq* or runner, took the paddle and quickly departed for the village. He took the paddle over to the skylight of the captain's house and poked it down partially through the skylight. The captain's wife took the meat from the paddle and licked it. Then she put it away. Meanwhile, the *qalugialguraaq* took the paddle and placed it outside by the door of the house. Then he entered the house and had something to eat. Today, the wife of the captain continues to only lick the piece of *avarraq*. Other people come to observe the piece of *avarraq* to determine whether or not it belongs to an *ifutuq* or another type of whale.

The word of the successful hunt spreads like crushed ice at breakup time. Everyone in the village gets his bag ready with the necessary knives, or *ulut*, that will be needed for cutting the meat. Sleds are taken along to be used in hauling the meat back to the *sibluaq*. Everyone, big and small, heads out to the place where the whale is to be butchered. In the old days, dog teams were not allowed over the ice while the men were hunting for the whale. The old people believed that the noise would scare away the animals. The only times they allowed them on the ice was when it was time to haul the whale meat. Today, they believe that the poor catches of whales lately are due to all the noise the snowmobiles are making over the ice.

After the people reach the whale butchering place, the whale has already been marked for distribution. Some lines divide two or three shares, as the line dividing the *tapsieaaq* from the *qimibluich* and the *sixviich*. The captains of the various whaling crews, or some people with authority representing each crew make sure that they all agree where the line will be marked. They do this by pulling the whale along side the ice bank and marking the dorsal side with their spades or knives. After the top is marked, they roll the whale over and mark the ventral half. Each captain marks his own share.

## The Flukes: Avarrak

The flukes, or *avarrak*, are cut and removed if they have not done this before towing in the whale. The *avarrak* are a part of the captain's shares. The captain saves them for the Spring festival when he will give them to the people. So after the flukes are removed, a block and tackle are attached to the tail and everyone has a tug-of-war with the whale. While the people are straining to haul their mountain of meat on to the top of the ice, they chant in time with their pulling effort, "*Kaapia! Kaapia! Kaapia! Kaapia!*" This means that they want some coffee to drink after their work. In the old days, the work chant was, "*Tirrabiiq! Tirrabiiq! Tirrabiiq!*" This was to indicate their desire to eat cooked *maktak* which the captain's wife and her lady helpers cooked and fed to all the people who helped with the whale. Now, the captain's wife and her assistants cook the *maktak* and serve it along with coffee and doughnuts or crackers. This beautiful custom of serving the food to all who lend a hand is still carried on today. The people enjoy this meal like a picnic on the arctic ice while they wait for the men to butcher the whale.

A seasoned captain's whale is divided differently from the one caught by a new captain. The diagram below indicates the whale shares and for whom they are marked:

(diagram of whale shares)

For the seasoned captain's catch, beginning from the tail, the captain receives the flukes, the *avarrak*, as it has been explained above.

### The Afirruk

The next share is the *afirruk*. This is the rest of the tail up to the anal pore. This is also the captain's share which he keeps for a feast which is held in the fall with the sighting of the first slush ice if he has caught fewer than five whales, or in the spring just before the whaling season if he has caught five or more whales.

### The Uatit

The captain also gets the *uatit*. This is the section that runs from the *ifi*, or anal pore, to about six inches below the navel. He keeps this too for the celebrations.

### The Tapsieaaq

A strip about one foot wide is cut six inches below the navel and six inches above it, and all the way around the girth of the whale. This is the *tapsieaaq*. This share is given to the two boats that got to the whale last after it was killed. They divide this share between them. In the absence of a measuring stick, the captain of the two boats with the biggest foot steps sideways on the whale to mark off their share.

### The Qimibluich

The next section of the whale is cut slightly behind the blowhole, all the way down in line with the eye to the bottom.

Then another cut is made slightly above the eye running parallel to the spinal column all the way to the *tapsigaaq* marking. The dorsal part is called *qimibluich*. The ventral section is called *sixviich*. (See the diagram below.)

(diagram of these two shares)

*Qimibluich* is the share belonging to the captain's crew.

### The Sixviich

*Sixviich* is the share of the first two boats that arrived at the scene of the kill, or who assisted in killing the whale. This is the Number One and Number Two boats' share.

### The Taliqquk

Small portions of the flippers, or *teliguk*, called *taliqqum iuvua*, are cutoff as indicated in the diagram above, and given to the crews of the Number One and Number Two boats. The rest of the flippers are given to the captain, who usually gives them to either an elderly or young crew member.

## The Ifi

In the old days, when the captain received the ifi, he gave half to his *afatkuq*. The rest he kept for *qakummisaaliq* and his crew, and they ate them during holidays. Since there are no *afatkut* now, the captain can give the ifi to anyone. Some give this share to their two oldest crew members. If the same crew is successful again on the next season, the next oldest crew members will get these parts, and so on.

## The Niksiutaq

The next section is cut from the corners of the mouth to the previous marking for *qimibluich* and *sixviich*. The top part includes the blowhole, *qifaaq*, and the upper jaw. It is called *niksiutaq*. It has only *maktak* without meat. It is given to the boat that has no other share in the whale.

## The Qaa, Qaglu, and Tirragiigraq

The lower part of the mouth is cut into three sections as shown in the diagram above. The part containing the tongue is given to the Number Three and Number Four boats. This part is called *qaa*. It is divided lengthwise and is a very good part. The *maktak* is delicious and the meat, called *utchik*, is different from the rest of the whale meat. It is mixed with fat and it is very tasty, especially that of the *usiffuatchiaq*.

The lower lip is shared by boats Number Five and Six. Their share is called *qablu*.

The third piece is the small part that looks like a triangle. It is called *tirrabiigraq*. This piece is cut up and distributed to all the various whaling crews who did not get anywhere near the kill. They get the *maktak* and meat to eat at their camp sites.

## Extra Shares

If there were not enough whaling crews numbering from one to nine, the share called *tapsilaag* is divided in half. One portion is given to the captain who got *uatit*, and the other is given to the Number Three and Number Four whaling crews who received the *silviich* share and also the captain's crew who received the *gimigluich* share.

The baleen is shared by the captain and his crew. The captain receives three-fourths, which is divided among the elderly during the whaling celebration, and the crew gets the rest. The captain also receives the two lower jaw bones. Everyone has a share of the vertebrae of the whale which is usually taken on hunting expeditions and eaten as frozen meat.

## Distribution for New Captain's Whale

The above way of distributing the whale shares holds true for whales caught by seasoned captains. If a new captain catches a whale for the first time, the distribution is different.

The new captain's whale is distributed in this way: the *uatit* share goes to the Number One and Number Two boats. These two crews cut off a piece one foot wide from the top of the *uatit* and give it to the captain. As soon as the captain receives this portion, he cuts it up into small pieces of *maktak* and blubber and distributes them to every house where the old people live in the village. This share he receives from the Number One and Number Two boats is called *tunmibaaq*. Number One and Number Two boats give the captain another piece from *uatit*. This piece is called *mikigagraq*. The captain will use this portion to make *mikigaaq* for his celebration in the spring whaling festival. These two crews must also give the captain a part of the intestine from their own share.

Boats Number Three and Four receive the *Sixviich* share. Boats Number Five and Six receive *qaa*, but they must give a piece of it to the captain. *Qaa* is the collective name for the *maktak*, blubber and the tongue of the whale's tongue. The piece that is given to the captain from the *qaa* share is called *utchik*, which is a piece of the tongue proper consisting of meat, and blubber but without the *maktak*. The captain is to cook this and feed it to everyone during the spring celebration.

Boat Number Seven receives one *qablu*. The captain receives the other *qablu* in addition to the heart, the stomach, and part of the kidneys which are his traditional shares of the new whale.

The last two boats, Number Eight, and Number Nine, receive *tapsieaaq*. This is how the new captain's whale is divided up and distributed among the whaling crews. Once again, in the event there are no number eight and nine boats, the *tapsinaaq* is split among those who received *uatit*, *sixviich* and *qimibluich*.

Long ago, it was permissible for the older women, widows, and older men to *pixaaq*- the captain's shares. This meant that the women with their fatherless children could cut off the scraps of meat that were hung on to the larger chunks of the shares as they were being dragged away from the whale carcass. For the older men, it meant that they could take their knives and rolling up their sleeves, reach down into the icy water and cut pieces from the meat shares which were exposed after the *maktak* was being taken off from them. They could cut as much as they wanted while the meat was still in the water.

## Freeing the Whale's Immortal Spirit

After the whale is all butchered, and the *maktak* removed from the head, the captain and his crew lower the head into the water, and sink it. Then the captain throws the morticed parts from the flippers to the water after the head. These pieces float on the surface of the water and the seagulls fight over them.

Returning the head of the whale into the water has to do with the old belief that countless small creatures which inhabit the deeps need food too. So they end up receiving a share of the whale. There is also the belief that the whale is never really dead. The whale has an immortal spirit which can never be killed. So returning the head into the water allows the whale to return to its home and put on a new parka. In other words, removing the *maktak* and the meat from the whale during flensing and butchering is similar to removing a parka, or an outer covering, from the whale. Further more, the whales determine whether they are to relinquish their 'parkas', or not, and to whom. They apparently have a choice, and the way they are believed to make this choice is by inspecting the underside of the skin boats as they float in the water. The whales are attracted to the skin boats with the brightest sides. They avoid the ones that appear darker in color. The brightness of the skin underneath the water is determined by a number of factors including the proper preparation of the boat and all the gear, the new whaling attire of the crew, and more importantly, the behavior of the captain and his crew. Whales allow their parkas to be removed by a captain who is kind and generous to his crew and all the people who are dependent on his hunting skills. The story of this belief is found later on in this book.

This beautiful belief of the eternal nature of the whale, and all other living things, accounts for the respect which the Ieupiat hunters exercise when handling the whale. Putting away all the meat, and wasting of no part of the whale is a basic part of this respect.

There is an Inupiat story told about a hunter who promised a mother whale that he would take care of her young whale which he killed. This care consisted of putting away all the meat and not wasting any part of it, and not boasting about the fact that he had killed a whale. The hunter did all he promised and for many years kept his promise about not boasting of his skill as a whaler. One day, however, the people gathered in their *qalgi*. The men sang and danced about their hunting activities. The whale hunter rose to his feet and began to tell the story of how he killed the young whale. At first, he was hesitant to relate the incident, but soon he really began to boast about the whole thing. He danced ever so vigorously when all of a sudden he dropped dead on the floor. The people wondered why he died suddenly. As they wondered out loud, a woman's voice was heard coming from the wall of the *qalgi* saying, "I killed him. I punished him for breaking his promise to me that he will never boast of how he killed my son, the whale. He showed no respect to my son. So I have punished him for his disrespect towards the whale." Above all else, the whaler must show proper respect to the whales he is privileged to kill.

## Putting Away the Whale Meat

At the completion of the butchering by each whaling crew, piles of meat are stacked on the ice for the women to prepare for storage. The first thing they do is remove all the sinews, the *ivalubluk*, from the meat. These *ivalubluich* are thrown away as they are big and tough. They are also too short to be used for anything. Sometimes, however, they are fed to the dogs. The next thing to do is to slice off all the *maktak* from the rest of the blubber. Then the *maktak* is cut into blocks of about thirty inches by twenty four inches each for storage.

The *maktak* consists of *qavausiq*, the black outer epidermis or skin of the whale; the *maktak* which is the part between the skin and the fat, and the *ugruq*, the two inches or so of blubber that is attached to the *maktak*. The whole thing is commonly referred to as 'muktuk' or 'whale blubber'. (See the diagram below.)

After the *maktak* is cut, the sled is made ready by putting a clean *ugruk* or bearded seal skin in it. This skin is called *sigraaq*. On the skin, the meat is piled up first, and then the *maktak* is placed on the top. A 1 /4 inch rope is used to lash all the load securely on the sled. Then the sled line is tied to the harnessed dogs, and the meat is hauled away to the *sibluaq*, or ice cellar. This process is repeated as many times as needed in order to put away the meat.

Most of the *sibluat* used today are old ones which were built long ago. They are being used but, unfortunately, some of these *sibluat* are being washed away by rough seas which keep on eroding the old village site. Those that are in use are usually

cleaned out first. Left over meat from the previous year is taken out and used before the new meat is stored there. If the villagers do not get any whale meat in a particular year, meat from the previous year, or two years ago, will be used.

The *sibluaq* was made by digging down into the ground where the permafrost is two to three feet from the surface. The hole is usually five feet in diameter with two storage areas inside. The top part is about two to three feet from the top of the ground. The bottom of the hole is approximately five feet from the underside of the top compartment. There is no special walling material, and the top, or entrance, to the *sibluaq* is covered with a rock, or *matu*. The name for this rock coverage is *uyagak*. No one steals anything so there is no need to fix a door with any lock at all.

The first level, or compartment, in the ice cellar is called *qulibuaq*. This is where a person can store *ugruk* meat, seal meat, and any other meat which could be tied in *ugruk* skins and stored for later use. Sometimes whale blubber and a little *maktak* for summer use are stored in this compartment. The biggest bulk of the whale meat and *maktak* are stored on the second level, however.

The second level is called *itibraq*. The *maktak* blocks are placed with their skins towards the wall all the way around the hole. They are placed on the bottom too with the skin parts on the ground. Then layers of meat, alternating with *maktak*, and whale blubber are packed down into the hole. One has to step on the whole thing to pack it very tightly. A layer of blubber is placed on the top of this pile of meat to prevent it from drying out, or losing a lot of moisture.

Meat from the second level is never touched until November, or December. The meat from there is saved for *qakummisaaq*, and the whaling celebration. The meat on the bottom of the heap is the best tasting of all for all the juices of the meat and blubber above have drained down to it. Everything will be left in the ice cellar to freeze.

Whenever the family wants to eat whale meat, the mother or woman of the house takes a small sled and goes to the *sibluaq*. She pulls the small sled herself. When she gets to the *sibluaq*, she removes the *uyagak*. Then she takes an ulu and cuts the pieces she wants to take home. If she does not use an ulu, she uses a small adze called *ulimaun*, and chips away the pieces she wants. These pieces may be small blocks six inches square. She puts them in a wooden bowl called a *pinalu*. Then she places these in her sled and taking the string of the sled it home. The blocks will be sliced later with the ulu.

The meat is not taken into the house once the woman gets home with it. It is kept frozen outside in a small wooden frame storage at the back of the house. This little storage place is just like a small freezer. It is called a *suvviuraq* or *niiqabviuraq*. Only the mothers cut the meat and bring to the house what is needed.

Eskimo children and young adults really look forward to a midnight snack of frozen *maktak* and *quaq*, or frozen meat. Mothers slice these and put them on a plate. The hungry children eat the delicious meat and then go to bed. They believe that as soon as the frozen meat starts to thaw in their stomachs, a lot of energy is released making them feel warm all over and drowsy. The whole thing relaxes them to have a good sleep. This thawing of frozen meat is very important and men who go hunting are advised never to go without taking frozen meat and especially frozen trout or herring. They are told to build a snow house if they are caught in a storm. As soon as they complete the house, they should put their food bag on the snow and eat the frozen fish for a little while, the fish will thaw and make them warm. In fact, they get heated enough from the thawing fish that they can actually sleep in the snow house without using their parkas. It may be stormy and cold outside, but the men will be warm and comfortable inside their snow house.

All the women and the children work on putting the whale away. They keep at it until everything is stored for use later. It is very hard work, but no one minds, especially when nothing compares with the taste of fresh *maktak*, and whale meat is preferred above all other food. Whale meat and *maktak* are the bread and butter of the coastal Eskimos. Some of them say that they cannot live without them.

## WHALING CELEBRATIONS



Most of the whale shares of the captains who catch whales are saved for celebrations. Two *afirruk* feasts and one whaling celebration are held. One *afirruk* feast is held in the fall and the other in the spring. The captains that *amu-*, pulling out the *afirruk* from the *sibluaq* for a feast, in the fall were those that had caught fewer than five whales. Every captain who caught five or more whales holds his feast in the spring before the whaling season begins. Everyone participates in the spring

whaling celebration during the month of June regardless of the number of whales caught. It is the celebration for the *avarrak*, or flippers, and the rest of the whale.

The fall *affirruk k* feast is not held until there is slush ice on the beach. As soon as the slush ice, called *qinu*, is seen, the person who sees it informs the people. The feast is then prepared. This usually takes place about the latter part of October or the first week of November.

The captains pull out their *affirruk* the night before the feast. Their wives take their ulu and clean the whole piece. Then they cut off the dry exposed part. Using the fingers as a measuring device, they lay them down on the larger end of the *affirruk* shares and cut all the way around it. This piece belongs to the captain. Its size depends on the number of whales he has caught. If he has caught only one whale, the width of the share he receives will be only one finger, the index finger. If he has caught two whales, his share will be the width of the index finger and the middle finger. For the third whale, he receives the width of the index finger, the middle finger, and the ring finger. From the fourth whale on, he receives the width of all the fingers excepting the thumb. The rest of the *affirruk* share is divided in two. One half is given to the crew members, and the other half is to be fed to all the people.

The spring festival must take place before the *qupalluich*, or sparrows, lay their eggs. These little birds arrive in *Tikibaq* when the snow starts to melt in May. In the old days, the captains did not want to hunt and kill whales before these sparrows lay their eggs. Often, they were anxious to go caribou hunting to the north and bring home fawn skins for clothing. So the celebration was prepared even though there may have been snow on the festival grounds. If there was any snow on the ground, the captains shoveled it off before the celebration. So the celebration used to take place in late May or early June. Now the whaling celebration is held in June, beginning on or about the 10th of June.

### **First Day of Celebrations: *Uyaulvik* (Boat Resting Place)**

There are three days of celebration activities now. On the first day, the captains who caught whales are notified to *uyaut*-. This means 'to pull the boat from the beach ice' to the celebration ground. The boats were left on the beach until this first day of the celebration when the captains go down and bring their boats to the ground.

At the ground, there is a special place for the boats to rest. This place is called *uyaulvik*. A whale bone head marker placed on the ground long long ago marks the place where each *qalgi* 'ceremonial house' places its boats. The boats must be left there over night before they are moved on the next morning to the celebration ground for the second day of activities. Perhaps this action of leaving the boats at *uyaulvik* is a way of letting the people know that celebration activities will be held the next day so they can prepare for them.

After the captains and their crew members move their boats to the first resting place, their wives and their wives' helpers bring them *mikigaq*, doughnuts and coffee to eat and drink. Now everyone can go and join in this feasting time. In the old days, however, women and non-crew members did not attend unless specifically invited by the captains. There is no dancing at this occasion, only the feeding of everyone that is there.

### **Second Day of Celebrations: *Avarriqivik***

(The Occasion/Place for Flipper)

On the morning of the second day, the crew members of each whaling team take their boat to the celebration ground. This place is called *qagrubvik* 'the occasion or place of the whaling celebration'. Then they prepare this place by putting up wind breakers made of canvas and cellophane sheets. The boats are turned on their sides and placed end to end. The rest of the wind breakers are attached to the ends of the last boats.

After the boats and the wind breakers are in place, tall posts, or poles, with flags showing the number of whales killed by each captain and his crew are placed in front of each boat. The United States flag is used for this purpose. The *qalgich* did not have any banners before.

In the middle of the ground, they have three small whale jaw bones tied together at the top. The same things are placed at three different places making a square with the first marker. A piece of plywood, or walrus skin, is put in the middle of this place. Then the whale meat, or *mikigaq*, is placed on it. Now the place is ready for the celebration.

The people start to come and they must go to the first ceremonial house which is the first *qalgi* on the point of land called *Tikibaq*. In the old days when there were six *qalgich*, and some of these were ahead of the two current remaining *qalgik*, those

*qalgich* celebrated first one by one. *Upasiksikaaq* celebrates before *Qagmaqtuuq* now by virtue of its position, or place, on that *Tikibaq* point.

It is now time for the people to arrive, and for the celebration to begin. All the people come and get seated. The captain and his crew members come all dressed up in fancy clothes and mukluks. They stand by the *mikigaq*, the flippers, and the *akutuq*, or Eskimo icecream. The city council, the priest, the health council and other dignitaries join them. Then the priest blesses everything and everybody. After this blessing, the people take their places, and the serving of the *mikigaq* begins.

The captain's wife and her women helpers start serving the people in this manner: the captain's wife serves her crew members while the women who assist her serve the other people. During the eating, the crews and the captains taste each other's *mikigaq*. Each *mikigaq* has its own particular taste depending on who made it. The captain's wife also takes handfuls of *mikigaq* and gives them to the older people and to all captains including those who did not catch any whales. That was the way they used to serve the people.

After the crew members eat *mikigaq*, they slice *avarraq*, the flippers. When they have sliced enough, the captain and his wife give them away to the people calling them by name, beginning with the crew members, *umiaq* skin sewers, the *tuuttuat*, family members and so on. Later, because there are so many people coming to attend that it is impossible to call individual names, they call village names. All people from the same village come together to receive a piece of whale flipper. This continues until all the cut slices are gone, then they quit. The piece of flipper that was left, called the *pixagraq*, is divided among the crew members along with the *saalbuuraq*. The *saalbuuraq* are the thin pieces on the edge of the flukes.

One half of the *saalbuuraq* is given to the captain. He takes this piece and distributes it to all the older people who are seated in front of his boat. Any old person in the captain's *qalgi* can sit in front of his boat if he wants to.

At the end of the whale flipper distribution, the other *qalgi*, *Qabmaqtuuq*, pull up its boats, and the ceremony is repeated once more. Short dances follow with everybody dancing together. At the end of the dance everyone is fed *akutuq*, the Eskimo ice cream. Traditionally, the *akutuq* is made from caribou or reindeer fat mixed with seal oil and berries. Sometimes cooked fish is shredded and added to the mixture. Today, a lot of people use Crisco to make their *akutuq*. It is not as tasty as the reindeer fat *akutuq*, but it is much easier and faster to make. This concludes the second day's celebration activities.

### **Third Day of Celebrations:**

#### **Igautagvik and Nalukataq**

#### **(Cooking Place and Blanket Tossing)**

Early in the morning of the third day, about five o'clock in the morning, both *qalgi* construct the wind breakers again, and all the meat is brought to the feasting ground. The *maktak*, heart, whale meat, stomach, intestine, kidneys, and the half-cooked tongue. Captains who did not kill a whale bring whatever they like such as soup, crackers, doughnuts, and so forth. Usually, captains of the same *qalgi* would bring white beluga tails if they did not kill a bowhead whale. Both *qalgiik* work together in making the third day's feast, but all the time a spirit of friendly rivalry exists between the groups.

The ladies come to the ground to do their cooking. They bring their meat and their sharp *ulu* to slice it. They bring dough, cooking oil, and whatever they are going to cook. Some use kerosene, gasoline, or gas stoves for their cooking fires while others use an open fire where they burn whale blubber. Whale blubber fires are preferred because they are the fastest burning ones.

Everything begins to have a very tempting aroma after the women in their colorful parkas start to prepare the food for the feast. Everyone is there from all over the state. Some to visit with relatives and old friends. Some are new and very curious about all they see and hear. Some are wondering whether they should eat anything at all while others can hardly wait for the feast to start. When everything is in readiness, everyone is fed a very delicious meal. There is enough food to satisfy the hungriest person, and left overs to take home for another little snack of the various whale dishes.



In the afternoon, *Upasiksikaaq* prepares the *nalukataun*, the blanket toss. This preparation was the responsibility of the younger whaling captains in the *qalgi*, but now, elected recreational officers are taking care of it.

In the old days, the blanket was tied to the posts made from the three whale bones. Today, the posts are not used because of their immobility. The blanket was also made of walrus hides but now *ugruk* hides are used. A good size blanket is made of four *ugruk* skins.

## Nalukataq

Men and women stand around the circumference of the blanket and hold the edge. A volunteer jumper gets on the blanket and stands in the middle. The tossers stretch the blanket tightly, and throw the jumper way up high into the air. Usually the jumpers are young people. A jumper can have many jumps. While the tossing is going on, drummers who are seated by the boat sing the *nalukataun* songs. Some of the *nalukataun* songs sung by the drummers of the *Ufasiksikaaq* are included in the collection at the end of this section of the whaling feast. *Qabmaqtuuq* has its own songs but they are not included in this book. The blanket tossers are called *naluaqtit*, and the jumper is called the *nalukataqtuaq*.

At the end of the blanket toss, a treat of *maktak* and meat is served to the tossers. During the blanket toss, some people practice *ivayaliq*. *Ivayaliq* is the act of giving a gift through *nalukataq* on behalf of a baby boy. This giving is supposed to bring luck to the little boy and make him become a good hunter. It will also bring success to him in later life. The gifts can be candy, or pieces of cloth. The jumper holds on to the bag containing the gifts. When he is tossed into the air, he opens the bag and allows the content to shower down all over the people below. Usually, the old people would *ivayaq*- the new captain, and he would do everything to get them whatever they asked for, the captain would do all he could to obtain it for them. However, the new captain holds his *nalukataq* on the second day of the celebration.

*Nalukataq* is carried on until everyone is tired. Then the people bring the skin and place it in front of the drummers. It is now time to *ubruiyaaq*-, meaning to remove the oil. The successful captains and their crew members of each *qalgi* dance a short dance, said to remove any oil that got on their clothing during the butchering and handling of the whale. The drummers will then sing and drum a number of *sayuutit* and everyone joins in the 'common dances' or *atuutipiat*. After a while, one of the captains who killed a whale during that season, stands up and invites everyone to come and do Eskimo dancing in one of the big roomy places that night. This place is usually the armory building or the school building. Since the blanket tossing ends on this last day of the celebration and the *umiat* are no longer needed as wind breakers, the *abvanbaqtuaq* has one more duty to perform. The *abvanbaqtuaq* is the first time whaling captain with only one whale to his credit. He asks his father, or one of his uncles, to cut the skin of his *umiaq* above the lashing lines. After his father, or his uncle, cuts the skin off, the *abvanbaqtuaq* calls out to the older people to come and receive a piece of his *umiaq* skin which they can use for making the bottoms of their mukluks. After that invitation is announced, everyone goes to his home for a little rest before dancing again in the evening.

At sunset, everyone assembles again at the appointed place and dance for a long time. Around midnight, *muktuk* and frozen whale meat are served to all the people. This brings the whaling celebration to an end with everyone going home to sleep on a full stomach of whale meat and *muktuk*, and once again to dream of the excitement of the hunt and next year's celebration of the goodness of the whale to the Inupiat.

## Qakummisaaliq

Qakummisaaliq, the messenger feasting ceremony, is one of the activities for which whale meat and *maktak* are really important. When the village still had six *qalgich*, two *qalgik* were able to celebrate *qakummisaaliq* a night. The two that were feasted the first night would entertain the other *qalgik* on the following night. Then two more *qalgi* would entertain the next two nights, and then the last two would finally entertain each other. Now-a-days, *qakummisaaliq* for the two remaining *qalgik* is held on one night that is designated by the Village Council for its celebration during the week long activities of the Christmas holidays. Both *qalgik* have to entertain each other on the same night.

One *qalgi* notifies the other *qalgi* by a messenger that the people are invited to be feasted and entertained. This invitation is always accepted. The time for *qakummisaaliq* is arranged.

After the announcement of the time, all the people who belong to the *qalgi* that is going to *qakummisaaliq* first start to prepare the food. The most important part of this food preparation is the readying of the stick on which the ceremonial food is skewered. This food stick is what is called *qakummisaun*.

The *qakummisaun* is approximately one foot long. One end is sharpened and meat is skewered on it. *Maktak* and whale meat are the most preferred food to be put on the *qakummisaun*. Fish is also more desirable than other kinds of food. When the food is all ready, all the members of the *qalgi* go together to the other *qalgi*.

The receiving *qalgi* accept the food from the *qalgi* members that are feasting them. The feeders must not allow their sticks to be taken away by the people to whom they are presenting the food. One must return home to his own house with his stick, or *qakummisaun*. The children are warned not to let their *qakummisautit* go and to bring them inside the house as soon as they come home. They must not leave the *qakummisaun* outside. Taking the *qakummisaun* into one's house assures the owner that his luck, in this case represented by the food that he gave away, will return to him again. It will not be lost. His stick, in other words, will be filled once more with food.

The feasted *qalgi* divides the food among its own people and eat while the feeders return to their homes to take their food sticks and to dress up in their dancing costumes. They return once again to the *qalgi* they have just feasted. Instead of entering the *qalgi*, however, they wait in the hallway.

While the feeders wait in the hallway, they, the men, make joyful sounds, *qatchala-*, to indicate that they are ready to dance. The dance they will do is called *yubaq-*. This is when a man and his wife will dance together.

As soon as the happy sounds are heard in the hall way, the people inside the *qalgi* hurry and get the drummers seated with their drums. Then the people outside will send in an older man and his wife to dance first.

First of all, the man will walk in front of the drummers. He will walk in one direction and then in the opposite direction. At the end of his walks, he executes a short jump kicking his leg to the side. This is an indication to the drummers and singers that he wants them to sing his *kimmun*.

The *kimmun* is a personal song, or namesake song, or ancestral song, of the dancer who is on the dancing floor. It was a song composed by his ancestors and passed on down to him. Each person has his own song which is very old. Some of the people now do not know their *kimmun*. This is most unfortunate for it represents a cultural loss. Perhaps an attempt can be made to save all the ones that are presently still remembered.

The *kimmun* song is sung with vocables first and then with meaningful words. The drummers sing the *kimmun* first with vocables only. On the second time through, they sing meaningful words and beat the drums in an exciting, rhythmic tune. The man and his wife dance to the husband's song. Any one of their children can dance with them, but no one else can join them as they dance the *yugaq* until they receive a gift from the ones doing the *yugaq*. During the first soft singing, the man and his wife will give presents to people in the *qalgi* and the people presented with the gifts must join them in the second dance. In the case of a widower, his daughters or daughter-in-laws may join him in the first singing because he no longer has his wife to dance with him.

Some of the presents are animal skins such as wolverine or parka trimmings, or mukluk trimmings, sinews, or ivory. The gifts are some times very expensive like guns. Some give away sacks of flour, a sled load of ice, soaps, towels, blankets, or whatever the feeders want to give to the other people. The gift giving goes on until that couple is done dancing their *kimmun* and sit down in the *qalgi*.

The next couple who are waiting with their people in the hallway enter. The same things that the first couple did are repeated. This whole routine is repeated until all the couples and their families have a chance to dance.

At the end of the *yugaq* of the last couple to their *kimmun* the drummers will start singing an *atuutipiaq*. The *atuutipiaq* is a "common dance" song. It is called a "common dance", or "invitation dance" song, because anyone is free to dance to it creating his own dance movements. So everyone in the *qalgi* is free to dance. All the people who received a gift must dance to show their appreciation for their gifts. Usually, drummers sing the *atuutipiaq* only once, but if there are too many people and the dancing floor is crowded, they will sing the song twice. This gives everyone a chance to dance.

At the end of the song, everyone leaves except for one of the older men who returns to the *qalgi* once every one of the feeders has left. He goes back and dances, or hops, on one foot while motioning with his hands and saying, "*Yugaisukpufaa! Yubaisuktufaa! Qavia ippaq!*" This means, "I'm inviting you people to bring some food and dance! Everyone, must be gathered like my hands are gathering all the sand, and come!" With that invitation speech, he departs.

The drummers and all the people of the other *qalgi* go out of their *qalgi*. The first feeders come in and sit down in the *qalgi*. The members of the other *qalgi* repeat the whole feasting ceremony for them. After the last *atuutipiaq*, everyone goes home filled with food and loaded down with gifts for the coming year when once again it will be time for *qakumisaag*.

Anciently, *qakummisaaliq* was held to share food with those who did not have enough to last them through winter. It was a way of making certain no one would starve. It was the Inupiat way of showing generosity to everyone who needed it. *Qakumisaag* is a very beautiful custom. It is one that is worth preserving in order to remind all of us of our responsibility to each other's welfare and happiness.

## Uifuraq



The celebration of the masquerading dance, *uifuraq*, is another time when *maktak* and whale meat as well as other food is shared among the people. *Uifuraq* was held in the *qalgich*. The first masquerading dance was held at the time of the new moon. All the men dress like girls and all the girls dress like boys or whatever they want to masquerade in. Each *qalgi* holds its own dancing, but the men from one *qalgi* must go over to the other *qalgi* until they find their *uumat*, the name sake of their spouse's, and they dance by them, around them, and even kisses them. Young men who are not married find their girl friends and dance around them. The drummers sing songs that have to do with fertility rites, wishes for successful hunting activities, and for good weather. They must sing and continue to sing as long as there are dancers. They can stop only when the last dancer leaves the *qalgi*.

When the last dancer leaves, the first night of the *uifuraq* is over. The next night of *uifuraq* is held on the night of the full moon. This is known as "letting the maquerading spirits go", or *aullaqtitchi*-, for they are supposed to represent spirits who have roamed around in the village. The same activites are carried out, and at the end of this second night of *uifuraq*, everyone is back to normal again and the spirits have been driven out of the village never to return until next year at the same time.

Each *qalgi* used to have its own *uifuraq* songs, but presently only *Ufasiksikaaq* still sing its songs. *Qabmaqtuuq* no longer remembers its songs, and the other four which no longer exist have faded away with their own *uifuraq*. There is still time now for the young people of *Ufasiksikaaq* to learn from their elders their ancient *uifuraq* songs. To allow the last *uifuraq* songs to disappear would be to lose one's inheritance from his ancestors.

## STORIES OF LONG AGO



The following stories were told by David Frankson as we discussed whaling activities at Point Hope. We feel they have a place in this book as they help us to understand some of the beliefs connected with whaling. They are recorded here in David's own words as they were translated from *Ieupiaq*.

### ITI VYAAT

When I had grown enough to become aware of what was going on around me, the old people of Point Hope spoke of many things. Although they had been introduced to Christianity, and no longer practiced such things, these things were not easily forgotten. They spoke of a place down there somewhere, which I guessed to be located around the new town site. They said that this place was where the Itivyaat were. In that case, we must now be living near the Itivyaat. What they referred to as the Itivyaat were people who lived under the ground. They had an umialik, a leader, a captain, or a rich man, named Pamiugyuksaaq. He had a human face, but he also had large ears and a long tail. He was able to speak like an ordinary human being. I wonder if that wasn't the devil? He had large ears and they called him Pamiugyuksaaq.

It is said they, the Itivyaat, are many. It is also said that during the spring, they travel below the ice and surface on the water to hunt for bowhead whales. It was said that because of his large ears, the leader, Pamiugyuksaaq, was able to hear every word the people of Pt. Hope said.

Whenever a person became ill and the people called for Pamiugyuksaaq to help, he heard them and was able to heal the sick. However, when a person was too ill to live and died, he took that person backwith him and made that person one of the Itivyaat. It is said that these'people' were of such a nature.

In some spring seasons, the Pt. Hoppers find that the lead in the ice does not open in time for them to hunt the whales. Before the hunters have had a chance to go down with their umiat, or catch any whales, and although the time is right for whaling, the ice does not open. When this condition continues, with the south wind blowing constantly, and where the men have not yet gone out in their umiat yet, their desire and need to eat whale meat and muktuk becomes so strong that they call on an *afatkuq*. The captains would say, "Why don't we send (this shaman) to the Itivyaat? That way, he, or she, would make it possible for us to catch whales again. The lead would open if we sent him, or her, to the Itivyaat." It was customary to pay the *afatkuq* for his, or her, favors.

I have heard one who went to the *Itivyaat*. It was our grandmother, Kataliuraq, whom I knew and saw. However, by that time, when I knew her, she had grown quite old. She was a widowed woman named Kataliuraq. She used to live with us. She was an *afatkuq* during the 'old days' when Tinuuraq was a young boy and had just moved to Pt. Hope. You all know who he is. John Tinuk's father who was originally from the Kobuk area. He was adopted into Pt. Hope and was our in-law. Well, Kataliuraq was an *afatkuq* who had once been chosen to visit the *Itivyaat*.

Whenever a male *afatkuq* was sent to the *Itivyaat*, the wife of a captain was sent to carry the *afatkuq*'s divining rod. She was taken for a specific purpose, but I'm not sure what that was. The men did not hesitate to give up their wives for this purpose because of the necessity to catch a whale. It is said that Kataliuraq was chosen to go to the *Itivyaat*. However, since she was a woman, a captain was named to follow her. In the case of a female *afatkuq*, a man is chosen to follow her, and the man who is named is actually happy to go. They went to any length in order to catch a whale, even to the extent of giving up their spouses to the *afatkuq*, or whatever have you. This was the truth. No spouse was too precious.

There is ice called *qiamnuq* which is right by the shore and is usually travelled on because it is smooth. Between it and the landlocked ice, *ipsinniq*, a crack is formed when the landlocked ice hits the ocean floor. However, a lead does not open here. The ice does not move like the pack ice does. Instead, it forms a crack. Upon reaching a particular place down there near such a crack, the *afatkuq* took his, or her, divining rod and summoned his, or her, power. After doing so, he, or she, dove into the water through the crack. After looking around down there, the *afatkuq* returned. Although he had just travelled in water, the *afatkuq* did not become wet. After returning from below the ice, and upon settling down, the *afatkuq* told his, or her, companion that the *Itivyaat* have already gone down with their *umiat* to hunt whale.

It is not said what they, the two people, do then. After getting up, they walk back to the entrance to the *Itivyaat*. It is covered with a boulder and has bones by it. However, no person other than an *afatkuq* can enter. Only an *afatkuq* was able to do so. Upon reaching the place, the *afatkuq* again summoned his, or her, power and after doing so, he, or she, went through the entrance to speak to the leader, Pamiugyuksaaq. The fact that the *Itivyaat* have already gone down in their *umiat* is mentioned and the *afatkuq* told the leader that the lead had not yet opened and that the Pt. Hope people were approaching famine because no whales had yet been caught. The *afatkuq* further informed Pamiugyuksaaq that he had come for help. "*Qinnuqatugiaq*", Pamiugyuksaaq replied that by the time the sun had reached its zenith the following day, the Pt. Hoppers would catch their first whale for the season. He said that the following morning while the sun was not yet too far up, the north wind would begin blowing and the lead would open. As soon as the lead opened, the whalers must go down with their *umiat*. By the time the sun reached its zenith, they would catch a whale.

After the encounter with Pamiugyuksaaq, the *afatkuq* and the companion headed home, their mission completed. As they neared the *afatkuq*'s home, many people gathered by the house to hear the news. Everyone came to listen. Upon reaching his, or her, home, the *afatkuq* told them whatever Pamiugyuksaaq said.

In this case, when Kataliuraq went, she told them that Pamiugyuksaaq had said that the north wind would begin blowing the following morning. Tinuuraq said that he listened as she spoke. She said that the lead would open with the north wind. If the people went down with their *umiat*, they would catch a whale by the time the sun reached its zenith. This was what Pamiugyuksaaq had told her. She further related that the *Itivyaat* had already gone down with their *umiat* although they had already caught a whale. After hearing this, the people went home. After all, the captains preferred to wake up early in the morning in order to leave with their *umiat* as early as possible. The next morning, sure enough, the north wind was blowing just as the *afatkuq* had said it would. By the time the sun had reached its zenith, the Pt. Hope people received news of a whale being caught.

It is said that Kataliuraq had been correct. She, too, was an *afatkuq*, and told them that they would catch a whale, which they did. Tinuuraq had wondered whether or not it would actually happen and found it to be just as she said it would. It is said that some *afatkuq* did not tell the truth and were not always correct in their predictions. These were weak *afatkut* who made guesses in order to impress people.

Today, we have a *Kataliuraq*. Bernard Nash is the namesake of that Kataliuraq. His grandmother was also my grandmother. She lived with my parents at our house as an old widowed woman.

It is also said that there are *Itivyaat* by the point. Pt. Hope had two groups of *Itivyaat*. However, it is said that a trip to those *Itivyaat* at the point was exhausting. Upon entering their abode, there is much rubbish and dust, so much that there seems to be no end to it. In order to enter, one had to clean out everything from the shed, the entrance tunnel and the main room of the house. Once that was done, it was then possible to enter. One had to clean for them but they, the *Itivyaat*, did not reward the efforts with a whale. It is said, those, *Itivyaat*, down there were not visited often, although they did exist at the point. However, the point has now eroded and the place where they were said to have been is covered with water. As for the ones at the edge of the cemetery, the place still stands. They say that they are good. Once again, this story ends here.

## KATAUQ

This is a story which happened at Pt. Hope. The story begins with a man in Pt. Hope. Most likely, it happened before the coming of the whiteman. The storytellers related it as happening in the recent past, but actually, it has been many years since it, the story, was said to have transpired.

There was an *afatkuq* named Katauq. It is said that he was a powerful *afatkuq*.

In those days, the *iglut*, the sod and earth covered houses, had a hole in the house floor which led to the entrance passage. The hole in the house floor was almost directly underneath the skylight. This hole in the house floor was called the *katak* and it led to the long, subterranean passage called the *tugruk*. This passage, or tunnel, led to an entrance from the ground surface, and there were steps which allowed one to climb outside. The subterranean passage was usually wide enough for one person, but the length varied. The main *iglu* itself was usually about twelve to fifteen feet long. There were rooms appended on either side of the passage. One room served as a kitchen, and the other was used mainly for storage, where skin bags were kept and fur blankets were hung on posts.

The steps led to the ground surface entrance which was framed so that it could be covered during foul weather. Climbing the steps led a person out. This entrance was called the *pallitchat*. The steps were usually made from bowhead whale vertebrae piled on top of one another. They used these before they were introduced to the Western ladder which is used today. Beyond the *pallitchich* was a small separate ditch where fish heads were kept. Whenever they, the people, ate fish, cooked or frozen, they did not throw away the heads. Instead, they saved them in this storage place. When food became scarce, they took these heads inside and ate them with whale oil. That was the structure of the traditional *iglut*.

So as Katauq sat on a bench, the other occupants of the *iglu*, probably his children, noticed something odd about him. They wondered why he did not move as he sat. He was breathing though. They noticed that he was sitting without moving a muscle. His eyes did not blink. His head remained motionless, and his arms were still, but he was breathing. The other occupants of the *iglu* then realized that his spirit had left him. Upon realizing this, they no longer paid any attention to him, nor did they try to feed him. After all, he was an *afatkuq*. It is said that his spirit had left him. However, they knew that it would return as long as his body continued to breathe. It is said as he continued to breathe, the *afatkuq*, Katauq, simply stopped moving while sitting on the bench.

It is said that what happened was that Katauq's spirit left his body. He was conscious when he left and soon he found himself travelling and travelling on. It is not told how long he travelled, but it turned out that his destination was with the bowhead whales. He found them gathered in a meeting. Upon his arrival, they gave him a 'parka' to wear. Upon putting it on, he turned into a whale. He looked the same as the rest of the whales

but his consciousness as Katauq was still intact. He knew what was going on around him, It was then that he became one of the whales. As one of them, he realized how it was to be a whale, including their eating and living habits. He spent that winter with the whales.

They, the whales, informed him that when spring came and the days became long, they would begin travelling north. They taught him about swimming and all the other things that a whale should know, and he learned them all. When the time for departure drew near, they further informed him that they would travel in the ocean along the coast. They would have to pass whalers. They said that upon reaching Pt. Hope, there would be whalers, who had travelled over the ice to the ocean, waiting in their umiat. He would see them upon surfacing for air. He would notice that some boats were dark and some light. Oh how nice the light ones would be. However, some would be dirty and dark while others clean and light. They told him that if he wished to be caught by a whaler, he must surface by the clean umiaq. He must never surface by the dirty, dark one. They told him that once he was caught and killed, his spirit would remove its whale 'parka' and return to put on another 'parka'.

They told him that was the way of the bowhead whales. In fact, they were all that way. They further informed him that the boats that were 'light' and clean belonged to considerate people who were not belligerent, or obnoxious. They were the ones who shared their whale catch with orphans, fatherless children, motherless children, old people, and others who had no one to hunt for them. They were not liars. They were not the ones who lived their lives speaking rudely to others, or ridiculing them. These were the kind of people who had 'light' boats, and they were, therefore, more desirable to the whales.

As for the umiat which appeared dark and dirty to the whales, they belonged to selfish people. They belonged to people who did not share their whale catches with anyone. They were lazy and did not help the needy. No whale thought such an umiaq as being desirable. The wife of the captain whose boat was bright was sure to have a clean cache for the storage of the meat, and the whales preferred this. That kind of a boat would be a good place for the whale's 'parka'. That is how they speak of them.

Those were some of the things they told Katauq. They said that once again, the people of Pt. Hope would eat whale meat and muktuk. They said that almost all of their umiat were bright when viewed by the whales. However, some captains' umiat appeared dark in the water and that was indicative of death which was about to happen either to his wife, his child, his father, or his mother. Although it would normally be bright, it would be dark because of the impending death in the family. This was not desired by the whales. The whale did not want to have a host like that. However, it was said that the darkness of that boat disappeared the following spring after the death had happened. These are some of the beliefs that are told.

That was what they told Katauq because he was one of them. He listened intently as they told him all this. They would soon be heading north. Finally, one day they told him that they would be leaving the following day. They said to him, "We have come for you." They said that they had come for his spirit because they wanted him to find out about their views of the umiat. "When you return, you shall relate your experience and advise them about what is required of their behavior in order to catch whales. As for you," they further instructed him, "if you travel with us as a whale and are speared by the umiat, you, your spirit, will not die. Instead, you will remove your 'parka' and return to put on another one. However, you will not return to your relatives. Your physical body will die. Once you are killed as a whale, your human body shall die and you will never return. Instead, you will become one of us forever. Even if you come back to life as a fur seal, a bearded seal, or a beluga, you will still be killed. Fur seal, or bearded seal hunters will kill you. You won't return to your body. Instead, you will keep returning as one of us. However, if you fly away as a duck and land near the people of Pt. Hope just as they fall asleep in the evening, you will become human upon landing, and return home." This was what they told him. Only by becoming a duck would he be most likely to escape death and be less cause for worry. They also said to him, "When we get close to Pt. Hope, you shall become a duck. We will attempt to turn you into a duck. (This would probably be near Aggutaq.) You shall fly as a duck and if you reach the place by evening, you shall return to your body."

When they reached the destined area, he became a duck. In fact, he became a king eider duck. That evening, he flew away and landed near Pt. Hope when all was quiet and his spirit removed itself from the duck and returned to his human form. As soon as his spirit had returned to the body that night, Katauq's physical form began to move. His body and his arms moved. He spoke. He told them he had been fetched by the whales. He told them what he was instructed so that the whalers would know. And so the Pt. Hope people knew from then on about the feelings of the whales. That is where this story ends.

## NANNUNA

One spring there was a group of men hunting with an *umiaq* and they caught a whale. I don't know the name of the man, but he and his wife and their paddlers caught a whale. In the old days, before the time of the block and tackle, when they killed a whale, they towed it to the shore, the edge of the ice pack, and as it floated in the water, they marked it with their hand lances before cutting it up to indicate which share belonged to whom. Whoever was to receive the silvich marked that area, and the same for the lip around the jaw, or any other portion.

It is said that Nannuna, this person, also had an *umiaq*. There was another person whose name I do not know, who was older than Nannuna. He, too, had an *umiaq*. It is said that one of them was to receive one half of the *sixviich*, and the other was to receive the *tapsinaaq* portion. One line divided the *sixviich* and the *tapsinaaq* portions. Nannuna was to receive one of these. One of the men began marking the line with his hand lance but he was shoved aside by the hand lance of the other, who said that the mark was in the wrong place. They each shoved the other's hand lance aside each time a mark was attempted, both accusing the other of trying to mark beyond his share. Soon the jostling grew serious as they continued to fight over the line, accusing the other of attempting to get a larger share than what he was supposed to have. In the old days, marking a mere inch over the line was cause for a confrontation between two parties. This was what was happening.

It so happened that Nannuna's opponent was older than him. The older man, however, had a younger brother who was resting at home after they had previously caught and butchered a whale. They had gone home to clean and dry their clothes and hunting gear as was their usual practice after completing the hauling of the whale.

Nannuna and the older man soon grabbed a hold of each other and began to wrestle in earnest in the *umiaq*. The people around them did not interfere in such conflicts. It was dangerous and they were afraid. Nannuna threw the older man overboard into the water, grabbed him by his *mukluk* straps, and held him upside down, forcing the man's head into the water. In spite of the old man's struggle to surface, Nannuna continued to keep him down, and soon the man suffocated.

When the man drowned, Nannuna pulled him up and carelessly dropped him on the ice, and disembarked from the boat, climbing up on the ice. No one made a move against him because they knew how angry he was. He was dangerous, and they were afraid of him. He was capable of harming, or even killing, anyone who dared to oppose him.

After a while, he, Nannuna, thought about the brother of the older man he had just killed and dreaded meeting him. Surely, he, the brother, would hear about it. He then took his butchering spade and hand lance and began walking up towards the village. As he neared the village, he sighted a group of men returning with their *umiaq* to the ocean in the early morning. He

also noticed that the brother of the one he had just killed was among them. He, the brother, was walking a good distance behind the rest of the men, packing hunting gear as he went. Nannuna met him and said something about his going home to repair his butchering spade. He remarked, "I am going home to repair the loose bindings of my hand lance which loosened as I was butchering the whale." The other man barely noticed him. Instead, he continued to walk with his back now turned to Nannuna. As soon as he had walked far enough so as not to turn back, Nannuna, taking his hand lance, ran after him and plunged it into the man's back. Once again he killed.

It is said that he killed two brothers and it all started from simply marking the whale into shares. That is why they, the old people, have always said to be careful about marking the shares correctly. It is a good idea to watch as a person is making the mark to divide the shares. The marks should always be placed exactly where they belong. They do not want anyone to do it incorrectly. That was the story of the two men who had an *umiaq* and how they got into an argument about

marking the line between the *tapsinaaq* and *sixviich* portions. That was how one man killed two brothers. It is a standard advice never to follow their example. Those stories are a way of explaining why people should not argue over the shares. They say never to extend beyond the lines of the allotted portions. That is the end of this story.

## APAKIINA

Many, many years ago when the population of Pt. Hopewas quite large, there existed six *qalgich*, or clans. This is a story of a man named *Apakiina* who was drowned by the slush ice that formed while he was out hunting at sea. He belonged to one of the original *qalgich* named *Kaniliqpak*. Therefore, he was *Kaniliqpanmiu*.

It is said that there was *Apakiina*, a man who had a wife but no children. His parents were both dead but his uncle was still living. His uncle, who lived next door to him, also had a wife but no children. It is said that *Apakiina* was a good hunter. He had an *umiaq* and caught many whales, catching several of them every spring. He was also a good hunter of other animals. Now about using the *kayaks*, the people of Pt. Hope hunted for bearded seal every fall. Young bearded seal, that is. It is said that was the way they hunted during the days when the *qalgich* numbered six and the people were many. Being a fine hunter, *Apakiina* fed those who did not have anyone to hunt for them such as widows, orphans, and fatherless children.

It is said that one fall day as *Apakiina* was hunting in his *kayak* for young bearded seal, a group of *afantkut* discussed what a fine hunter he was, causing themselves to become resentful of him. In fact, they became so resentful that they caused the weather to become windy while *Apakiina* was still down there at the ocean. Because of the wind, the loose slush ice got in his way. Although *Apakiina* tried to head towards home, the loose slush ice got very thick that it was impossible to paddle a *kayak* in it. It is said that he was forced further and further out into the ocean and could not make it home. This was caused by the *afantkut* and soon *Apakiina's* *kayak* overturned and he was forced to drown, leaving his wife behind with all the whale meat, *muktuk* and oil which he had caught.

It is said one night after several days had gone by since *Apakiina* had not returned home, as his uncle and his wife were sleeping, a strange cold mist came creeping from the entrance of the house, smelling strongly of the sea. Without moving a muscle, *Apakiina's* uncle kept his eyes on the entrance, and to his surprise, the ruff of a person's parka appeared. The head turned towards them and there was *Apakiina*, his nephew! At the corner of the house, there was shelf where a bucket of water was kept. Actually, it was quite a large bucket which was placed high on a shelf. Snow was used as water then. The snow was placed on a shelf above the bucket and allowed to drip into the bucket as it melted. *Apakiina's* uncle could see it across from where he was.

*Apakiina* entered the house and his uncle pretended to be asleep as he watched him. After checking to see if his uncle and aunt were asleep, *Apakiina* took the bucket and drank some water. After doing that, he went back out. All during that time, his uncle did not move.

The next night, expecting *Apakiina* to return, his uncle lay still as he kept an eye on the entrance of the house and the bucket of water. Once again, after all was quiet, the strange cold mist came creeping in, smelling strongly of the sea. Behind it appeared *Apakiina*. He looked carefully around, making sure that he did not startle his uncle and aunt, and after having done so, he took a hold of the bucket of water and drank from it. Having done so, he went back out. The next day, after observing what had happened, his uncle told his wife about him. They realized that their nephew had already drowned. However, in the words of the 'old ones', it is said that those who drown at sea do come back. It was possible to bring them back to life.

"Tonight, you must go to bed with your clothes and *mukluks* on. Take only your parka off and I will do the same. The bucket of water shall be placed further away from the entrance," *Apakiina's* uncle told his wife as they made plans. He further instructed her, "As he takes the bucket of water to take a drink, I shall get up and grab him and if possible, I shall force him on the floor and wrestle with him. As for you, when you get up, take the urine and spill it on the floor by us. By that time, we both shall

be wrestling hard as he tries to escape out the door and refuses to be held down by me. I will try to prevent him from going out. Your part will be to spill the urine on the floor where we are wrestling."

The 'old ones' said that urine and bodily wastes were effective in weakening a dead person in the process of trying to bring him back to life. That night, with her husband wearing his fur breeches and his wife still wearing their mukluks, the couple went to bed prepared, and pretended to be asleep. When the time came and all was quiet, once again Apakiina could be heard to enter. After successfully having come in to take a drink from the bucket without waking up either his uncle or his aunt, Apakiina was not very cautious this time. He moved faster in his thirst for water. He had returned because of his thirst. After noticing that they were asleep, he went towards the bucket of water. This time it had been placed further away from the door. As he took hold of it to drink, his uncle leaped out of bed and grabbed his nephew. He forced him down on the floor and they began wrestling in earnest. Immediately after he had gotten up, his uncle's wife quickly got up and spilled the urine and bodily wastes on the floor where they were wrestling. It was smeared all over their bodies. Still, they continued to wrestle. As they wrestled, Apakiina finally began to show signs of weakening, making it easier for his uncle to hold him down. Soon he had weakened to the stage of giving up. When he did this, his uncle released him and sat him up, realizing that he had succeeded in bringing Apakiina back to life.

When they got up from where they had wrestled, they found a mess of *igligiat* on the floor. *Igligiat* were described as 'sharp worms', about the size of a person's little finger, or half of it. These worms are capable of reducing a chunk of meat to mere bones in a matter of minutes. It turned out that Apakiina and his uncle had dropped many of these on the floor as they wrestled. The mess of *igligiat* was cleaned and Apakiina and his uncle changed their clothes.

In an iglu or sod house, there is a platform along the back wall. Apakiina's uncle and aunt placed some whole animal skins below the platform to form a curtain and made a place for Apakiina behind the curtain. That was where they kept him concealed and did not tell anyone about him. At first they fed him only a little at a time, but soon he was strong enough to eat regular meals. All the time, he remained hidden behind the fur curtain. Actually, no one came in there.

As time went on, it is said that Apakiina's uncle told his wife to fetch some whale meat and *muktuk* from Apakiina's wife. He said to tell her that he wanted to eat from Apakiina's catch. Whenever his wife went to Apakiina's wife for food, she always returned with something. It is said that Apakiina's wife did not let Apakiina's uncle down. She gave Apakiina's aunt whatever she asked for. That was how Apakiina was able to eat from his own catch. His aunt and uncle continued to strengthen him by fetching food such as young bearded seal, and whale meat from his catch.

Soon the days got longer. Still, Apakiina remained inside. His aunt and uncle were the only ones to whom he spoke. No one else knew about him as he continued to live behind the fur curtain. Even his own wife did not know about him. Everytime food was fetched from Apakiina's catch, his wife did not refuse them. The days had become quite long when Apakiina's wife called in from the skylight. She called in to Apakiina's uncle and told him that it was becoming increasingly difficult for her to continue to live by herself. She said that it was way past the time for Apakiina to come home. She also said that she had come to tell Apakiina's uncle that she wished to have another husband because it was very difficult to live alone. After a quick thought, Apakiina's uncle replied, "Come back tomorrow for my answer. I shall be thinking about it. Come back tomorrow. I shall have an answer for you then." Agreeing to do this, she returned home.

After she left, Apakiina's uncle discussed the matter with Apakiina. He wanted to know what Apakiina thought of his wife remarrying. Apakiina thought about it for a while and then replied, "She may remarry. Go ahead and tell her to do so." The next day, upon hearing his nephew's wife call out to him, Apakiina's uncle said to her, "Go ahead and remarry so that we may have food when he catches game." It is said that because the supply of Apakiina's catch was dwindling, his wife wanted to remarry. There just wasn't much food left.

The days grew longer still and whaling season was drawing near when Apakiina's uncle told his wife to fetch some whale meat. He said that, once again, he wanted to eat from Apakiina's catch. It is said that when his wife went to fetch the food, Apakiina's wife said to her, "That is the last of Apakiina's catch. We shall split it in half. You shall take one half of this last portion and I shall take the other." It is said this woman was praised because of her generosity to Apakiina's uncle and aunt. Upon returning, Apakiina's aunt told her husband about the sharing of the last portion and Apakiina heard every word. Once again, they ate with their nephew.

Soon the people were riding in their *umiat*, or skin boats. Still Apakiina had not stepped outside. He still had not revealed his presence to anyone. It had been a long time since the last autumn when he had disappeared. His wife had remarried with his knowledge. Soon they were eating whale meat and then the time came of *Qagrugvik*, or the Whaling Feast Celebration. The day before the celebration began, Apakiina's uncle told his wife to go and tell Apakiina's wife that he, the uncle, wished to participate in the celebration activities wearing the finest of Apakiina's garments. He said that he wished to wear the parka with the fur outside and the fancy trimming. After all, Apakiina would never wear them again anyway. When his wife came to



fetch them, Apakiina's wife complied with their wishes again and handed over Apakiina's fine clothes, complete with *mukluks*. However, they were not worn as the people ate the *avarraq*, or the whale's flukes.

It is said that the participants at the celebration began the blanket tossing, starting from the *qalgi* closest to the ocean. At that time there were six *qalgich*, and soon the last one, which was the *Kafiliqpak qalgi* began making preparations for blanket tossing. It was the *qalgi* to which Apakiina belonged. As they were making the preparations, Apakiina's uncle had him put on his fine garments which had been fetched by Apakiina's aunt. He put them on and what a fine young man he represented. After all, he had regained all his strength and was still young.

By the time the *qalgi* of *Kafiliqpak* had started their blanket tossing, the rest of the people had gone into their *qalgich* and the sun had almost set. His aunt and uncle walked along the shore, where they could not be easily seen, with Apakiina between them and took him to where the people were blanket tossing. The *qalgi* of *Kafiliqpak* was the one closest to the ocean and the blanket tossing must have been going on near the water. As a matter of fact, the *qalgi* was where the land was first eroded by the waves. When they were almost there, Apakiina's wife jumped into the blanket. Upon seeing her climb into the blanket, they walked up closer to where they were tossing the blanket and as they came nearer, the people stared at them and soon they recognized Apakiina. However, they did not stop tossing the blanket. His wife was still being tossed. When his aunt and uncle brought him close to the blanket, Apakiina lept on to the blanket and began to be tossed on the blanket with his wife.

After they were tossed on the blanket and they stepped down, his wife embraced him, her husband. Her second husband approached them and they began talking to each other. Apakiina explained that he was grateful that the man had helped his wife in her time of need while he was away, and had helped the woman when there was no one to help her. Because of this, he said that the man should keep her as his wife.

"I had died, but was brought back to life. It is better if you two remain as a couple," he told them.

However, the other man was not to be convinced. He replied, "I did not marry her first. She is your wife. You must take her back. She is yours. I am not her first husband. The help I gave her as I hunted for her should not be considered. You take her back!"

They argued as to who should have the wife, each offering to give her to the other. However, Apakiina did not convince the other man into taking the woman as his wife. Instead, the man convinced Apakiina that he had the right to her, being her first husband. After everything was settled, they all ate together.

It is said that it was at that time, when his *qalgi* began to toss their blanket that his aunt and uncle revealed him to the people. Although he had drowned, they had brought him back to life and he was able to participate in the celebration. Once again, he began to hunt. That is the end of that story.

