The History of Baker Lake (Sanavik) Co-operative

May 1, 2010

The following brief history of Baker Lake is a draft written by Jennifer Alsop, a SERNNpoCA Resarcher, in collaboration with Dr. Ian McPherson at the University of Victoria.*
Introduction

The community of Baker Lake is located near where the Thelon River connects to the north-east portion of Baker Lake, in the "barren plains" of the Kivalliq region of Nunavut. Its Inuktitut name is "Qamani’tuaq", aptly meaning, "huge lake adjoined by a river at both ends"[1]. The waters of Baker Lake flow to the south, via the Kazan River. The strong winds of the barren plateaus of the Kivalliq, in combination with extremely cold winters, make it one of the most climatically harsh places in North America, in which to live.

The history of this community and the Sanavik co-operative is unique to the north for a number of reasons. Baker Lake is the only inland community within Nunavut, and it is the geographical centre of Canada. Its Inuit inhabitants are originally from a culturally distinct segment of the Canadian Inuit population, most commonly referred to as "Caribou Inuit", and they are themselves a culturally diverse group of people, with geographically dispersed origins throughout the Kivalliq. In addition, the community-based co-operative in Baker Lake, focused almost entirely upon the production of arts and crafts in the first 15 years of its existence, only diversifying products and services offered after several challenging years during the economic recession in the mid-1980s. This is unlike many other community-based co-operatives in the north, which began their operations through a combination of retail and the provision of other services. The story of Baker Lake is a fascinating example of the determination and fortitude of the people living in this region of Canada, people who for millennia lived a life of great endurance and whose culture continues to inspire millions of people around the world, through their production of unique prints, carvings and others arts and crafts.

Caribou Inuit, the "Barren Lands" of the Keewatin and Early Visitors to the Area

In 1921, Knud Rasmussen, who grew up with a Danish father and a Greenlander mother, began the Fifth Danish Thule Expedition across the Canadian Arctic. With an ability to speak and understand Inuktitut, he and his crew were able to collect and preserve a huge amount of ethnographic information about the Canadian Inuit. Rasmussen spent a good deal of time with the Inuit of the inland regions of the Kivalliq. Called "Caribou Inuit", they relied solely upon migrating Caribou and fish for sustenance, and didn't migrate to the coasts during the winter in order to take advantage of seals and other sea mammals. They lived in simple domed iglus in the winter and conical skin tents in the summer. In his
journals, Rasmussen documented four separate groupings of Caribou Inuit, who occupied the interior regions around the Kazan and Thelon Rivers[2].

Qaernermiut (today, referred to as Qainigmiut) traditionally occupied the area along Chesterfield Inlet, and Baker Lake. Qainigmiut had the most frequent contact with Europeans and were hired along with the Aivilimiut, by whalers in the late 19th and early 20th century to work aboard their ships. Harvaqtormiut (today, Havautomiut), lived in scattered camps along the Kazan River. The Padlermiut (Padleimiut) lived further south on the Kazan. The Utukhikjalingmiut, known as "people of the stone for cooking pots", lived in the Back River area. The Utukhikjalingmiut had a fairly impoverished material culture in the early 20th century, for example, without seal oil for lamps or fuel for the fire in the winter. However, Rasmussen describes them in a warm light, noting that they were the "most handsome, elegant and hospitable people I met on that long journey; indeed the healthiest and happiest I have ever lived with"[3].

There were numerous European visitors to the coastal area around Chesterfield Inlet from the early 17th century onwards, with which several groups of Inuit had contact. In 1612, Sir Thomas Button reached Chesterfield Inlet, and in the 1630s, Captain Luke Foxe mapped the west coast of the Hudson's Bay. In 1670, the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) was formed, and an active fur trade was established between Aboriginal groups around the Bay and British fur traders[4]. In 1688, a permanent HBC trading post was established at Churchill. In 1761, Captain William Christopher of the HBC became the first European to sail up Chesterfield Inlet as far as the point where the Thelon-Debawnt-Kazan River systems merge. He named the area "Baker Lake", in reference to Richard Baker of the HBC[5]. In 1771 Samuel Hearne, also of the HBC, along with Chipewyan guides, reached the Arctic coast at Coppermine. He coined the phrase "barren lands"[6]. His journals contain among other details, description of the massacre of a group of Inuit by his Chipewyan guides, near the mouth of the Coppermine River. In 1883, Captain George Back, reached the Arctic Coast at Coppermine[7]. The failure and loss of the Franklin Expedition in 1848, and resultant search expeditions ultimately led to a more detailed mapping and subsequent knowledge of the inland areas of the Central Arctic, although Franklin's ship and crew were not located.

From about 1860 to the early 1900, there was a heavy presence of American and Scottish whalers along the west coast of Hudson's Bay, particularly in the Roes Welcome Sound area. Many Inuit along the northern coast of Hudson's Bay and on the south-eastern tip of Baffin Island had significant and sustained contact with these whalers. The whalers had a great impact on the Inuit, who grew increasingly dependent upon imported goods, such as rifles and ammunition; they even adopted a style of Scottish square dancing, which some elders practice to this day in communities along the northwest coast of Hudson's Bay. Inuit worked for the whalers as pilots, guides and harpooners during the summers. In 1870, the newly formed Canadian government sent an expedition of the Geological Survey into the region, the first formal indication of southern Canadian interest. Led by JB and JW Tyrell, its goals were to advance scientific knowledge of the area and to assert Canadian sovereignty along the artic coast. In
1903, the first permanent RCMP post was established at Cape Fullerton, just north of Churchill[8].

**Development of the Community of Baker Lake**

The decline of whale hunting closely coincided with increasing efforts by the Hudson Bay Company to establish a fur trade in the Arctic. In the early 20th century, as a precursor to northern outposts, HBC sailboats would travel annually to trade with smaller groups of Inuit. From 1916 to 1926, the HBC operated a trading post on Okpikooyk, or "Big Hips" island, on the south side of Baker Lake, until the HBC post moved to the current site of the community[9]. The Hudson Bay Company’s longest competitor, the Revellon Frères, operated a trading post at Baker Lake from 1924 to until 1936, when the company was bought out by the HBC.

Prior to the establishment of Arctic settlements in the 1950s, contact between cultural subgroups was limited to chance meetings at 'trade fairs', at Akilineq in the central Kivalliq area near Aberdeen. These fairs generally occurred peacefully, at which inland Inuit would trade for supplies picked up at HBC outposts.[10] The 1940s and 1950s were challenging ones for the various groups of Caribou Inuit. By that time, they had become relatively dependent upon the fur trade, and when declining/ out-migrating caribou coincided with a drastic drop in fur prices, Inuit in the Kivalliq region of what is now Nunavut, in particular, experienced starvation and sickness. The Canadian government resultantly stepped in to assist, and established centres for medical, educational and social services in several Arctic trading posts. From 1950 - 1965, Baker Lake grew from an isolated trading post to a permanent community of several hundred people.

It was a period of profound and fundamental change for the people of the interior regions of the Kivalliq. The Department of National Health and Welfare built a nursing station in Baker Lake in 1950, and government subsidized housing, along with a federal day school, were constructed at about the same time[11]. The various subgroups of the Caribou Inuit suddenly found themselves living in a permanent location, together, when normally they would be spread out upon the land, following the resources of the land in step with the seasons. Right from the beginning, numerous distinct, extended family-units/groups settled in Baker Lake. There were four groups with ancestral identity from Netsilik Inuit, including the Uqusiksilingmiut, Ualingmiut, and the Saningayukmiut (from Garry Lake area), and the Iluiliaqmiut from coastal area to the north around Gjoa Haven. In addition there were five groups with heritage stemming from inland Caribou Inuit, including, the Qainigmiut, Akilingiaqmiut, Havautomiut, Tariaqmiut, and a few Padleimiut[12]. There were also a number of Aivilimiut individuals, from around Repulse Bay. Change was in the air, as newly settled
Baker Lake residents began to acclimatize to their new reality, of life in town, with not only whites, but also with a diversity of Inuit cultural backgrounds.

**Development of Arts and Crafts**

Like other Arctic communities, most notably Holman Island, Cape Dorset, Pangnirtung and Povungnituk, a government-sponsored arts and crafts program was developed in Baker Lake, during the 1950s and 60s as a means of encouraging community economic development. The development of carving and printmaking activities in Baker Lake occurred over an uneven trajectory. In comparison to Cape Dorset - a community that was able to reap the benefits of a full-time, long-term co-op manager and print-maker, in Terry Ryan - Baker Lake's program developed in fits and starts, through the varied influence of a number of different managers. The formal arts program was instituted in Baker Lake in 1963, yet it wasn't until 1971 that the Sanavik co-op was incorporated. From 1961 to 1971, eleven different government sponsored crafts officers worked in Baker Lake, each for a short period of time[13].

One rather influential arts and crafts officer was Gabe Gely, who traveled from France in 1952 and soon found work as a cook with the Department of Transport. His work with the Department throughout the Arctic took him to numerous settlements across the North, and he quickly became relatively fluent in Inuktitut. Trained as an artist in Europe, he was immediately drawn to painting the tundra landscape, and he became famous for his sketches and paintings of Inuit portrayed in a traditional way. In 1963 he was stationed in Baker Lake as the incoming Arts and Crafts Officer, and he managed to have a great impact on Inuit artists in the area, who gave him the Inuit name "Umiliq" or, "the one with the beard"[14]. He made an effort to introduce soapstone sculpture, sewing projects, caribou hoof jewelry, and tapestry - arts and crafts projects which were quickly picked up by Havautormiut and Padliemiut members of the community. He resultantely started a small craft facility in the community, a place where carvers could come together to share their ideas and work on their art. Gely remembers the conditions of the first craft facility in Baker Lake:

*The first craft shop was a cooler, a walk-in freezer which had stenciled in large letters 'CAPE DORSET'. Those were the only available premises for the craft shop; it was not wired, we had two oil stoves. I remember my first helper could not stand the heat and fell asleep from the moment he was inside ... in the fall of 1963, we moved out from the freezer into the former RCMP's subdivision buildings. These quarters were spacious enough to accommodate the display area, as well as the purchasing of carvings*[15].

The fledgling arts and crafts industry in Baker Lake during the 1960s was highly
dependent upon the knowledge and competency of the Arts and Crafts Officer, in place at any one time. Resultantly, Baker Lake Inuit artists received conflicting instructions with regards to what would sell "best" down south. This pattern of artistic development was certainly uneven. It has been argued that, as a result of the implementation of the arts and crafts program in Baker Lake, "Inuit lost their creative freedom. Their choice of subject matter, materials and personal expression [became] subjected to outside forces, manifested both within and outside the community"[16]. On the other hand, it has been said that Baker Lake art has a vitality and "independence of artistic spirit" and "an almost startling resistance to the imposition of traditional Western aesthetic standards. From that perspective, in that it is considered "tougher", "rouger" and "less accessible" to the Western viewer than is the more immediately appealing work of other Inuit communities"[17]. Jackson argues that this aesthetic sensibility in Baker Lake is due in part to the numerous distinct groups of Caribou Inuit that settled in the area during the 1950s. At any rate, a distinct aesthetic style is noted in Baker Lake art. This distinct style was represented at an important 1964 exhibit at the Winnipeg airport, organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Entitled *Eskimo Carvers of the Keewatin*, it prominently featured Baker Lake[18].

Boris Kotelewetz, a graduate of the Central Technical School of Art in Toronto, arrived in Baker Lake in 1966[19]. Much like Gely, Kotelewetz established a great rapport with the elders of the community, and he played an active role in securing local sources of soapstone for the carvers. He was very generous with his tools, supplies and art books, sharing them with local carvers. He re-established the printmaking program, which had been introduced by Roderick McCarthy, Gely's successor (who had stayed in the community for only a few months). In addition, noting Jessie Oonark's skill, he provided a small room in the back of the craft shop, where she could concentrate on her drawings. Kotelewetz left the community in 1969. The next Arts and Crafts Officer was an unmitigated disaster. Ken Krassweiler worked in the community during the summer of 1969, when he convinced artists to convert linocut prints to stone. All prints were printed backwards and were unfit to be sold[20].

Jack and Sheila Butler arrived on the scene in 1969, soon after Krassweiler's tenure. Recommended by George Swinton, an Inuit art specialist, they brought with them a great deal of energy and ideas as they began to revitalize the print-making program in Baker Lake[21]. Within the first 6 months, they managed to reorganize the print-shop enough to begin purchasing drawings from local artists and hiring printmakers. By November of the same year, the local artists had developed a portfolio of prints for review by the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council.

In addition to drawing and print-making, the Butlers encouraged women sewers in town to attempt more 'wall-hangings'. Most importantly, perhaps, was the Butler's approach to the management of the arts and crafts program. They focused on collaboration and local management. To foster this sense of collective decision-making, weekly meetings were held, at which artists and management could get together to discuss work being produced in terms of what was working, and what was not. As the art program began to take off once again, the Butlers
slowly withdrew their outright management support and assumed a more consultative role. With their guidance, and a loan of $50,000 from the Eskimo Loan Fund, the Baker Lake Inuit established the Sanavik Co-operative, in order to "Foster and coordinate the art activities in the settlement, and to be able to contract for other community services."[22] It gradually took over all administrative tasks of the art program. Sanavik Co-op became a sustained project, encouraged by many people.

Development of the Sanavik Co-operative

An economic survey completed by John Stager in 1977 illuminates the state of the Baker Lake economy in the mid-1970s - at about the time when the Sanavik Co-operative was beginning to find its legs. Stager calculated that 118 people were employed in "some gainful activity", full-time in 1975, out of a population of approximately 700 people[23]. This meant that forty-six percent of the population between the ages of 20 and 40 was being engaged in full-time work of some sort at the time. 57% percent of the work was government-related, while 27% percent was non-government/casual and 14.6% was through transfer payments[24]. Despite the emerging wage economy, a wage differential was certainly in effect; Inuit occupied 57% of the salaried positions, but earned only 39% of the total salary of the community[25]. In other words, Inuit salaried employees, on average, earned $9,700 per employee, while white salaried employees earned $19,900[26]. Newly settled Inuit simply did not have the administrative skill-set required for government jobs, as the adult population in Baker Lake at that time, had grown up and survived on the land. Despite this skill shortage, through consultation and guidance from the Butlers, Baker Lake Inuit came to control the affairs of the Sanavik Co-op.

Casual, or part-time employment, through arts and crafts development, had a tremendous impact upon the Baker Lake Economy. Crafts reportedly added $195,000 in wages to the local economy, for 175 people[27]. This was by far, the greatest sector of the economy in which local Inuit found wage work. The focus of the Sanavik Co-op, in its first decade or so, was entirely upon the arts and crafts sector. This focus is in contrast to other, longer-standing northern co-operatives, which tended to diversify the services offered right from the beginning. At its conception, with the help of the Butlers, the focus of Sanavik was upon stabilizing and supporting the development of arts and crafts in Baker Lake.

The arts and crafts program in Baker Lake in the 1970s flourished with a combination of initial organizational help from the Jack and Sheila Butler, and more importantly, with great support from the community at large. The leadership of the co-op developed relatively quickly. Ruby Angrna’naaq served as the Co-op's first manager. In 1976, he considered the influence of the Sanavik Co-
op upon the Inuit of his community:

Eskimos are confused and have lost a lot of their unique way of life, but that is not to say nothing is being done about it. There are board meetings, general meetings and council meetings trying to cope with the problems of today. In some areas there will be workshops to try to explain and converse, and maybe some will understand this specific area of concern...[28]

The development of Co-op was certainly helped along by the tremendous artistic talent present in the community. Jessie Oonark is perhaps one of Baker Lake’s most famous exports. She was originally from the Back River region of the Kivalliq, an area which was considered one of the most "materialistically deprived" of all the Caribou Inuit. She was born in 1916 and she was married when she was 14 in the Inuit tradition. She had eight children with her husband, who died in 1953. The 1950s were a period of great upheaval for many of the Inuit in this region. Declining caribou stocks, and a less influential fur trade found many Caribou Inuit in dire straits. Jessie Oonark, like most of her extended family and friends, moved into the rapidly developing settlement of Baker Lake in order to secure housing and obtain medical services. Oonark took the initiative, after seeing pictures drawn by her children at school, to begin drawing herself. Edith Dodds, the wife of a Northern Service Officer in Baker Lake, sent some of Oonark's drawings to the West Baffin Co-operative where they were subsequently made into prints. With the influence of the Butlers, and the development of the Sanavik Co-operative, Jessie Oonark was able to begin her life as an artist, in earnest, at the age of 54. The Co-operative provided her with a studio, where she could spend her days concentrating on her craft. She spent the money she earned through sale of her art to support her family[29].

It has been said that Oonark's art is informed by a strong, bold, graphic sense. Traditional dress, women’s facial tattoos and shamanistic themes are common, but they usually "appear as isolated, fragmentary forms, shaped into graphically bold images rather than comprehensible narratives"[30].

Much like other co-ops in the system, the Sanavik Co-operative, encountered great financial turmoil during the late 1970s and 1980s because of internal management issues and the challenging external financial environment of that time. This turmoil felt by Sanavik is documented in a number of sources. In 1972, the Butlers left Baker Lake,[31] although they continued on as consultants to it until 1976. For a number of years, the Baker Lake Inuit continued the print-making program, and they received great praise for the art being developed in the community at that time. In 1977, tragedy stuck. Fire destroyed the Co-op building, including the 1978 print collection, along with all the drawings, print stones and other necessarily materials owned by the Co-op. Fortunately, the federal government was able to come to the aid of Sanavik, and numerous grants, representing "extraordinary assistance", were provided to rebuild the facilities[32]. Despite the help, the next several years were challenging ones for
Operational and financial records passed on to the NWT Co-operative Association during that time indicate the financial challenges faced by Sanavik. As can be seen in Graph 1, employment figures dropped drastically in 1979-1980, from 16 full time staff members to 2. Membership numbers also peaked at 90. Employees were let go in order to help drive down operating costs, and a membership recruitment drive was undertaken as a way in which to help augment the government grants to rebuild after the fire. Annual reports from the NWT Co-operative movement, and from Arctic Co-operatives, during the period between 1981 and 1986 note that Sanavik's financial status was "not in good standing", four out of the previous six years[33]. Those in 'good standing' had submitted all reporting requirements, inclusive of annual returns, while those 'not in good standing' had annual returns outstanding.

This was a period of great change for the co-operative system, as a whole, in the Arctic. In the late seventies, the Federal government began to pull out of the "Eskimo-loan business", as private operators in the north began to complain about the special status reserved for co-operatives, which received federal tax dollars necessary to operate. In 1981, Canadian Arctic Co-operative Ltd. and the Canadian Arctic Co-operative Federation Ltd joined together to form Arctic Co-operatives Ltd. In an open letter from the Presidents of CACFL and CAP, member co-ops whose "major business is the production of arts and crafts" were asked to "put small doubts aside in the interest of native unity...."[34]. The objectives of the amalgamation were to create a central coordinating agency to provide managerial services to member co-operatives, as well as to coordinate measures for the distribution and marketing of northern arts and crafts, within the same organization[35].
Previous to the amalgamation of these two co-operatives, operations were in both Ottawa, and Yellowknife. In 1985 the decision was made to consolidate operations in Winnipeg. This decision was primarily made on the basis of cost-effectiveness, in terms of staffing requirements and access to supply, both networks and distribution. [the preceding sentence is still awkward. Can you improve?]

Up until the mid-1980's, co-operatives in the Arctic relied almost solely upon government for their financing. Northern co-operatives in the 1970s were unable to access financing arrangements through the banks because they had few assets they could use to leverage for loans and lines of credit. Due to these structural limitations, the system relied heavily upon government support, up until the mid-eighties and the creation of the Arctic Co-operative Development Fund (ACDF). It is a fund of pooled financial resources, owned and controlled by the co-operative businesses receiving funding[36]. The Fund received a one-time shot of source capital equaling $10 million in 1986 dollars. $4.9 million was through INAC and the Eskimo Loan Fund, who provided a loan guarantee and through the transfer of existing loans to the system. In addition, the Government of Canada provided $5 million in new cash, and the Government of the NWT provided $300,000.

Arts and crafts in Baker Lake built the Sanavik Co-op. Despite the large number of Baker Lake residents active in the creation of arts and crafts, this portion of the Co-ops business did not earn the community much of a profit, especially during the recession of the early 1980s. 1983 was the first year since its incorporation that Sanavik did not issue an annual print collection. A financial analysis was undertaken of the Sanavik Co-op in 1985, in which the organization’s dire financial state was made clear: "For carving purchases of $53,500 and overhead costs of $101,790, a mark-up of 190% is required to break-even"[37]. The same economic development plan points out issues the co-op had with paying staff wages which kept pace with inflation. It was during this period that Sanavik began to refocus its efforts in other sectors of the Baker Lake economy, away from arts and crafts. In 1987, the Canadian Eskimo Art Council - the organization in charge of deciding upon standards in Inuit art - rejected 9 editions of Baker Lake prints[38], Sanavik was unable to sustain the financial losses which resulted. In 1988, the rebuilt co-op continued on its operations without an arts advisor, and they converted their operations to a grocery business. In the late 1980s, Sanavik purchased a building, which would become the Iglu hotel, and in 1990, they began offering cablevision.

**Print-Making Revival and Later Years of Sanavik**

Despite a several year respite, the production of arts and crafts continued in Baker Lake, without the support of the Co-op. In 1992, the Jessie Oonark Arts and Crafts Centre opened, offering workspace for local carvers, seamstresses, jewellery makers and printmakers. The Jessie Oonark centre is now run as a subsidiary of the Nunavut Development Corporation; however, in the 1990s the Nunasi Corporation - an Inuit Beneficiary Corporation, ran the centre[39]. [this
In 1995, Nunavut Arctic College sent Kyra Vladykov-Fisher to Baker Lake to set up its drawing and printmaking program at the Jessie Oonark centre. Upon her arrival, she found that all the equipment used by Baker Lake printmakers in previous decades had been boxed up. Some of it had been sent south to the Arctic Co-operatives headquarters in Winnipeg. She found that her 'students', were former well-known and celebrated Baker Lake printmakers. They included: Victoria Mamnguqsualuk, Janet Kigusiuq, and Irene Avaalaaiaq (all daughters of Jessie Oonark); Thomas and Phillipa Iksiraq; Hatti Amitnaaq; Magdalene Ukpatiku; Janet Ikuutaq and Nancy Sevoga. All but three of them were over the age of 45. Unfortunately, however, charged with teaching printmaking for a limited duration, Fisher, and the print-makers were inevitably faced with closure of the program. The Keewatin Chamber of Commerce, supported the Baker Lake Printmaking Society in its need to obtain its own building in 1997, and in 1998, the first Baker Lake Print Collection was released in a number of years. In 2007-08, print collections were released under Sheila Butler's guidance, and in 2008, a new Baker Lake Printmaker's Co-operative, was incorporated. This new print-making co-operative is independent of Arctic Co-operatives Ltd.

**Table 1 - Sanavik Co-operative Sector Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Arts and crafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Arts and crafts, retail, agencies, rentals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Retail, hotel, cable, big ticket (Yamaha), restaurant, property rentals, HTA Nunavut, calling cards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today, arts and crafts is still a vital portion of the Baker Lake community; however, the Sanavik Co-operative has deferred this portion of the economy to others in the community. In fact, it can be argued that, because it focused so heavily upon art in the first 20 years of its existence, Sanavik C-op had a slower start in developing portions of its activities, in comparison to other co-ops across the north. As noted by Terry Thompson,

Sanavik began by being heavily involved in the arts, and it had been very much support by government programs. Revenue from arts and crafts built the coop. In the old days - artists made the biggest contribution back in the day and when didn't know what to spend money on, they put money back into coop. The territorial government had provided support to arts and crafts. Prints from Baker Lake were well recognized as high quality. But, unfortunately this was not enough to sustain a business [in Baker Lake].
In the late 1990s, Sanavik took over ownership of the Iglu hotel, and they gradually expanded operations. Sanavik has always used the same store for retail, which was originally built expressly for the production of arts and crafts, although they have made an addition. Today, the Sanavik Co-op's business serves a number of different vital functions within Baker Lake. The retail store's profits form the lion's share of its operations and profits. In addition, Sanavik offers cable TV service to Baker Lake residents. Today, the Iglu Inns North Hotel is owned and operated by the Sanavik Co-op. They offer 13 rooms with double occupancy, 7 single rooms and 4 suites, each with a private bath and cable TV.[43]. The Sanavik Co-operative also rents property at several locations around Baker Lake, and it sells ATVs and snowmobiles (Big Ticket). The Hunters and Trappers Association in Baker Lake, is run through the Sanavik Co-op.

**Conclusion**

The Inuit of Baker Lake have demonstrated throughout their history a type of resiliency in the face of extenuating circumstances, uncommonly harsh even for the Canadian Arctic. Previous to the introduction of Western culture with all its trappings, many Caribou Inuit lived the most basic of lifestyles. With dwindling caribou and a non-existent fur trade that they had become reliant, in the 1940s, upon government benefits once they became available. However, many Inuit of Baker Lake sought out wage earnings through arts and crafts production once a federal program had been established. Eventually, the idea of a Co-op gained currency and the Sanavik Co-op was incorporated in 1971. The years that would follow were never simply "easy", and yet, with determination and significant hardship, the Sanavik Co-op continues to thrive, and to support the Inuit of Baker Lake.

**Appendix 1:**

Individual influences on the Baker Lake arts program:

- Josiah Nuilaalik (1945) Early Baker Lake artist, who, in 1945, sold miniature harpoons, snow knives and chisels made from caribou antler with he traded for fuel with DND officers from "Operation Muskox"[44], who were stationed near Baker Lake for a number of months.

- Major J.D. Cleghorn (1947): During his involvement with "Operation Muskox", informed the Canadian Handicrafts Guild that Keewatin Inuit should be encouraged in their efforts regarding arts and crafts production.

- Colonel D.P. Baird: worked with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in the late 1940s and encouraged all white women residing in the Keewatin to gather
neighbouring Inuit men and women and then encourage them in basket weaving, parka sewing carving etc.

- Douglas Wilkinson: a Northern Service Officer with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Department of Northern Affairs and Northern Development, who, in 1958 introduced to Inuit in the Baker Lake area the concept of "commodification" through the sale of traditional items once produced as toys. Having a background in art, himself, he advised Inuit to translate what they saw in life around themselves into the carvings they created.

- Edith Dodds was the wife of a Northern Service Officer stationed in Baker Lake, who in 1960 initiated an informal handicraft program among Inuit women in the settlement. She was the first to observe the artistic talent of Jessie Oonark, who would grow to be one of Baker Lake’s most famous artists.

- William Larmour was Baker Lake’s first federally appointed Arts and Crafts officer (1961-62), was sent to the community to explore the potential for developing an arts program similar to the one existing in Cape Dorset at the time.

- Gabe Gely: Arts and Crafts Officer from 1963 to 1965.

- Roderick McCarthy was Gely’s immediate successor, spent several months in 1965 guiding local stonecarvers in the production of stonecut prints.

- Robert Paterson was a Toronto printmaker, with previous experience at Cape Dorset, who spent 10 weeks in Baker Lake, assisting the printers in completing the editions. When he arrived in Baker, he found much of the stone, print-making equipment in disrepair, he decided to abandon the stone-cut method. Instead, he introduced linocut methods to the community.

- Boris Kotelewetz (1966-1969) Boris Kotelewetz: arrived in Baker Lake in 1966, as a graduate of the Central Technical school of art in Toronto. He had helped Gabriel Gely to develop the Eskimo Gallery at the National Museum of Man in Ottawa. Established an immediate rapport with the elders in the community, and played active role in securing new local sources of good soapstone. He provided good quality stone tools, and his art books, art magazines, and technical knowledge with the Inuit of Baker Lake. He re-established the printmaking program, and resumed the practice of purchasing drawings. Provided Jessie Oonark with a separate small room in the craft shop where she could concentrate on her drawings. He resigned in the spring of 1969.

- Jack and Sheila Butler (1969-1972) Arrived in the spring of 1969. Within the first 6 year they reorganized the printshop and began purchasing drawing from local artists, and hiring printmakers. Their management style focused on collaboration and local community economic development.
They are responsible for introducing the co-op concept to Baker Lake.

- Michael Amarook (one of the first directors of Sanavik). Described his responsibilities in the early 1970s as follows: "And now I am printmaking director. I have to talk to my printers sometimes; I have to tell them what paper to use, or what color of ink; help them pick drawings for prints and say if the print should be a stone-cut or a stencil. And we have a meeting every Monday to discuss what is good, or what is not so good about our printmaking project".

- Jessie Oonark (1906 - 1985) is one of Baker Lake's best known, and prolific artists. She produced numerous prints and wall-hangings from the mid-1950s through 1979 when she lost dexterity in her hand due to a neurological operation. She was elected as a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1975, and she was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1984. The Jessie Oonark Arts and Crafts centre opened in 1992, bearing her name in honour of her years spent making art in Baker Lake.

- Ruby Arngna’naaq is an Inuk from Baker Lake, Nunavut, now residing in Ottawa. She was a founding member of the art-producing Sanavik Inuit Cooperative in Baker Lake, in 1970, and one of Sanavik’s first printmaking shop managers and art directors. She co-produced *Inuit Myths and Legends* for the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), and co-directed *Ikajurti: Midwifery in the Canadian Arctic*, for IBC in 1990. She has worked in the Inuit cultural sector as a political activist, a representative on arts boards and marketing agencies, and as Northern Liaison for "The First Minister's Conference on Aboriginal Rights and Aboriginal Consultation on Justice Issues."

- John Evans (1977) appointed as art advisor to the co-op in 1977.

- Bogus Zydb - served as arts advisor to the Sanavik Coop from mid 1979 - 1982. Brought energy to his role; eager to introduce new materials, and techniques such as lithography. An exciting collection of original drawings was released by the co-op during Zydb's tenure, but "local repercussions of the pervasive economic recession of the 1970s weakened morale among co-op personnel, limiting the resources and energy for pursuing new directions.

- William Eakin artist/photographer - appointed as new arts advisor to Sanavik. Baker lake printmaking program was revived under his guidance (1983)

- Grace Eiko (1985 - 1988)


- William Noah: was born in a traditional Inuit camp on the Back River, at a place known as Kitikut, in the central Canadian Arctic. The youngest of
thirteen children in a family facing starvation on the land, he moved with his mother (the artist Jessie Oonark), into the settlement of Baker Lake in 1958. As a way to earn money in the settlement, Oonark encouraged him to draw. Now exhibiting internationally as a graphic artist, Noah’s drawings, stone cut/stencil prints, and watercolour paintings reflect his cross-cultural life experience. In his daily life he combines traditional Inuit hunting with art making and settlement life. Noah has twice been elected Mayor of Baker Lake. In his use of materials, form, and content, Noah’s visual production reflects the progressive urbanization and Westernization of Baker Lake.

NOTES

[8] Jackson, Marion Elizabeth, ibid, 1985 pg 75.
[13] See list of people who played role in arts/ crafts program and the Sanavik Co-operative in Appendix A.
[17] Jackson, Marion Elizabeth ibid, 1985, pg 76.
See appendix A: List of individuals who influenced development of arts and crafts industry in Baker Lake.

Art Gallery of Ontario, June 24 - August 4, 1976. "What it is like being an Inuit Artist".


The 1979 Annual Report of the NWT Co-operative Association, notes that "It is also to be noted that $156,531 of the miscellaneous income or government grant figure represents extraordinary assistance provided to the Sanavik coop in Baker Lake from numerous government sources to assist the coop in recovering from the total loss of its facilities due to fire."

All co-ops in the NWT system were listed alternately as "in good standing", "not in good standing", "inactive, not in dissolution process" and "dissolved and in final liquidation".


"Arctic Co-operative Development Fund, notes to financial statements", ACDF Financial Statement, pg 7.


[39] Jessie Oonark Centre website:


[42] Interview with Terry Thompson, January 27th, 2010.

[43] Private bathrooms, a gift shop, a full service dining room, conference facilities, business support services, in-room phones, cable TV and radio, a guest lounge with a big screen cable TV and fire-place, catering, laundry and wireless internet are several of the services offered by the Iglu Hotel. Please see [http://www.bakerlakehotel.com/baker-lake-hotel-services.htm](http://www.bakerlakehotel.com/baker-lake-hotel-services.htm) for more information.

[44] Operation Muskox was one of the Canadian military's largest military operations in the Canadian Arctic. It consisted of 48 officers which drove 11 4 1/2 ton snowmobiles through the arctic tundra. Military exercises in the Arctic in general date back to the Second World War, through due course, Canadian military planners became convinced that combat operations may need to occur in such challenging conditions. These concerns were helped along by escalating geopolitical strife between the USSR and Western countries after the war. [http://www.ucalgary.ca/arcticexpedition/muskox](http://www.ucalgary.ca/arcticexpedition/muskox), accessed April 20 2010