Roundtrip:

*The Inuit Crew of the Jean Revillon*

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To G.B.N., born in Nova Scotia, Canada.

May this book inspire you to cherish memories and encourage you to share them with family and friends.

M.E.M.
first met Louis Taapatai when I lived in Qamani’tuq (Baker Lake) in 1973 and 1974. When I met him, he reminded me of someone my father used to describe in stories he would tell, when I was a little boy, about Savikataaq and Taapatai. (I use extremely accurate spelling of these four men’s names, so as to preserve the original pronunciations, the way Inuit pronounce them and promoted them.) I thought to myself then, ‘So, this is the famous Taapatai! When I told him I was the son of Angutitaq, Taapatai smiled and said, “Yes, we traveled together to the land of the Qablunaat” (White People).

While I grew up with people such as Jack Anawak, Lionel Angutinguaq’s son, I also went to school with the late John Taapatai. He became a friend of mine at Churchill Vocational Center in 1964 and 1965. John and I were sent to Clear Lake Cadet Camp in Manitoba in the summer of 1965 and we both were presented with cups for being the best cadets, me from my platoon, and John for being the best shot. Of course, we had really good teachers—our fathers and mothers. I had heard much about Savikataaq, but I had never met him. In later years, I learned that David Owingayak was his son and he also became a good friend of mine. In 1957, a Roman Catholic priest named Father Theophile Dedier decided that we, the Roman Catholic Inuit boys and girls, should take some lessons in English at the Mission. So, we learned words such as seal, house, box, hammer, harpoon, and ‘what is your name?’ and ‘My name is Peter.’ When I would return home later in the day, I would pronounce the English words that I had learned from Father Bernie Franzen, who was a colleague of Father Dedier. Upon hearing what I had learned, my father would remember the words and repeat some of the ones I pronounced. He would then tell us a story about how they had to learn English when the four of them were in the South for an entire year. He used to tell my mother, my brother-in-law, and my sister that Miriaq (a nickname he gave Lionel Angutinguaq that means ‘one who vomits,’ apparently because Angutinguaq would get sea sick very quickly and vomited, often), “Miriaq, had a much better teacher, than I did, and he learned a lot more English than I did.” He would also say, “My teacher was very impatient.” And it was obvious that Angutinguaq spoke more English than my father did. I think
they all learned to speak English quite well, because when I lived in Baker Lake, I would often hear Louis Taapatai speak English to non-Inuit in the community. And when I was growing up in Naujaat, I would hear Angutinguuaq speak some English to visitors to our community.

One point I want to make is that two men in particular, my father and Lionel Angutinguuaq, actually prepared me for the South. They painted a picture of the South, just the way I was going to experience it in later years, except that it was more modern by the time I traveled there. These men would talk about seeing airplanes with no roofs, flying over Montreal. They talked about seeing silent movies, and only when they came back North did they hear that movies finally had ‘voices.’ They used to talk about how the bosses would give them ‘this much of liquor’ every day, after work (probably an ounce of whiskey). In later years, my father would comment that he never fell in love with alcohol, as long as he had caribou broth or seal broth. That was how attached he was to his culture, and language.

I approached Michelle and Chris about this project when we organized NunaScotia at Saint Mary’s University. Working with Saint Mary’s University on the important journey of four Inuit men was challenging. For many years, I always wondered where they went, where they walked. I wanted to follow my father’s footsteps. So, to trace where our fathers had traveled, we journeyed to Shelburne, Nova Scotia when we were in the early stages of this project. It was also the first time David Owingayak went to see where his father had traveled in 1925. It was an emotional time for us, as we walked on the lands in southern Canada, where our fathers had been.

For many years, I wanted to see more credit given to Inuit for helping the explorers. In fact, Inuit had helped them survive! Many explorers have been given a great deal of credit for their experiences in the Arctic but none, in turn, really gave credit to the Inuit, whose contributions were very great. Many such as Martin Frobisher, Francis Hall, and Captain Rae became famous and were recognized for their contributions to their own countries, but I have always felt that without Inuit help, they would not have survived. Our women sewed all their caribou and seal skin clothing. Our men transported these newcomers to our homelands with their dog teams. Those we helped survived to tell their stories to the world. Such was the case with Raold Amundsen, a Norwegian, who went to Gjoa Haven in 1904 and lived with the Inuit for a number of years. He gained respect with the way Inuit helped them and in turn Inuit also taught these men about learning to speak Inuktitut. These explorers became members of Inuit families. Many of them even had babies with Inuit women. We are still helping the modern White Man, without ever asking for anything back.

But, at the same time, those who refused our help did not survive and perished in the Arctic. Such was the case with Sir John Franklin and his crew. Had he wanted Inuit help to find his peace within Inuit homelands, Inuit would
have gladly given. In more recent times, we also helped new(er)comers such as Roman Catholic and Anglican Missionaries. They not only learned to speak Inuktitut fluently but also learned to travel by dog team with the Inuit. One such good example was Father Theophille Dedier, who was in Naujaat (Repulse Bay) in the 1940s through to the 1960s. This was when I was a young boy, becoming a young man. I lived during that particular period of time, and I, too, have my own stories to tell about these newcomers to our lands.

We understood how much change our fathers went through going from the treeless tundra to the bush country. When they were taken South, these men were living the iglu (igloo) life, hunting and fishing for survival. When they first arrived in the South in St. John’s, Newfoundland, it must have been an awesome experience! They went from iglus to the large buildings of that time. In addition, they probably had to adapt to new ways and new rules of the Whiteman’s world. At home, they knew to go out hunting and fishing when the weather was nice. In the South, they had to get up early in the morning and work until probably late in the evening. This is not to mention the strange food they had to eat. At home, they were used to eating fresh caribou meat, seal meat, and fish. Down South, they had to acquire the new taste of beef, pork, chicken and probably Atlantic salmon. And yet, they survived the entire year! This shows that what they experienced was probably very traumatic, but it also showed Captain Robertson and his southern crew that Inuit are the most adaptable people in the world! Patience!

What can our Inuit youth learn from us, the Ambassadors of our Ancestors? Patience. Our youth and the modern Qablunaaq world need to learn from Inuit. We have lived here for some 10,000 years and survived. Can you imagine any other people, building something out of snow, like a snowhouse? Well, because we are very patient people, we survived in one of the harshest conditions in the world. We made use of what we had, and taught our children and our grandchildren how to use the land, the animals and fish. And, too, Inuit survived with their fellow-Inuit because of our generosity to others and ability to share what we had with others.

I can pretty much describe my fellow-Inuit this way: “I am a seal hunter, I can wait for a seal at a seal hole on the ice, at minus 40 and minus 50, and wait patiently, until I catch one! This means, I can at most times, outlast any government bureaucracy!” And we have shown such patience as Inuit. For example, we’ve suffered as a result of colonial practices by the Federal Government—the removal of Inuit from Northern Quebec to the High Arctic in the 1950s, the forceful relocation of Inuit into ‘settlements’ by the Roman Catholic Church and the Canadian Government in the 1960s so that we could be ‘assimilated’ into the European world at Residential Schools. We had no choice as to whether we wanted to live on the land or not. And it was a half a century later that the Prime
Minister of Canada had to apologize to the survivors of Residential Schools. Patience!

Another good piece of advice by an Inuit Elder is to always think before you speak or do. Think wisely, before you go out on the land, and see where the wind is coming from. If it is a westerly prevailing wind, you are guaranteed that it will be a good day, so you can prepare and go on the land and hunt caribou. Easterly and southerly winds are bad, as they can create a terrible rainy day or blizzard. Why are Inuit so aware of their surroundings? Well, we listened to our parents, our mothers and fathers. We also learned by observing. And we are very adaptable people. We never refuse change! Because we have the ability to adapt to new ways, we can make the changes for the better, to meet our own needs. But, we also need the knowledge and experience of our past to survive the future.

Sometimes, the Qablunaaq world is too eager to say or do things, without making a sound judgement. They forget to check the direction of the wind! I think it’s time for southern Canada to look northward to Inuit and learn something about how to do things better. I think southern Canadians and the world should embrace much of Inuit culture and language, so that we do not make life harder, but easier. Talking and communicating is always important to Inuit. It’s something that we need to embrace!

When we started working on this project, I thought to myself, here is an opportunity to tell the world about Inuit helping southerners, when they were taken on by Revillon Frères, traveling the very rough waters from Qamani’tuaq to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Inuit are the most natural actors within their own homelands. As Inuit, we know our lands and waters. So, it was not surprising that these four Inuit men from Nunavut were able to steer this ‘gigantic’ umiarjuaq (big ship) through the rough waters of the Atlantic. Since time immemorial, they had a great deal of experience paddling their narrow qajait (kayaks), hunting for seals and whales. As a result, they just knew how to steer this large boat through the rough waters, and Captain Robertson gave them a great deal of credit for doing so. I am so proud of them!

Now, their stories will live on forever. And I say to my fellow-Inuit, don’t ever lose sight of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Traditional Knowledge).

Peter Irniq
Inuit Cultural Teacher
In 1925, four Inuit men from the central Canadian Arctic boarded a Revillon Frères supply ship bound for the South. Stuck in the ice-pack during the winter of 1924-25, the Jean Revillon needed repair and a crew to make it back to its hauling location at Shelburne, Nova Scotia. Some Qablunaat (non-Inuit) involved in this voyage referred to it as an ‘experiment,’ since it was the first time Inuit would man a company ship on such a long journey.

Having brought the ship to safe harbour, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq, Louis Taapatai, and Savikataaq, spent the winter in the South and returned home the next spring. In relating their experience to people on their return they provided first-hand accounts of life in the South.

In the 1990s, the story of these Inuit sailors was still a topic of discussion in the North. However, memories about it were fragmented. Archival research and fieldwork provided missing information and a relatively complete account of their roundtrip is now available.

This monograph, based on collaborative ethno-historical research and fieldwork, relates the story, the collaborative process and its outcomes, both scientific (numerous conference presentations) and pedagogical. Their story was also adapted for use as teaching material for Inuit students participating in a university introductory summer program, called NunaScotia.

The trip from Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake), in contemporary Nunavut, to southern Canada also documents early relationships between Inuit and Nova Scotians. Various points-of-view contribute to the broadest possible understanding of the journey. Such diverse perspectives are expected since the Inuit sailors, the Revillon family and the people associated with the shipbuilding industry or the fur trade were involved in the event to various degrees. The reasons they were all engaged in this voyage are also, to some extent, quite disparate. Still, Roundtrip is a clear example of how people from very different backgrounds collaborated in the past, when Inuit sailed onboard the Jean Revillon, and more recently, when the research was conducted.
I am grateful to the editorial board of the CCI Press for encouraging me to produce a densely illustrated book. Each visual piece included in the volume has been carefully selected to express various aspects of the process of the research undertaken to arrive at our current understanding of the voyage. Authors, photographers, and individuals appearing in photos have been contacted for permission to use these images in the book. Almost a decade after the completion of this research project, it was particularly exciting to know all are still well and active in various parts of Canada or elsewhere in the world.

As the organizer of the activities that initiated this project, it has been especially fulfilling to prepare this book; in particular, it has been rewarding to look back and assess how we proceeded with the research (our methodology), and to see the outcomes of our collective work. It is my responsibility to acknowledge that the work was made possible with funds from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Nunavut Secretariat in Iqaluit and Nunavut Unified Human Resources Strategy) and by Saint Mary’s University (Senate Research Committee).

So very many people contributed in various ways to the reconstruction of this story that any list would undoubtedly be incomplete. I therefore apologize in advance to those who were part of this project that I may have forgotten to mention specifically. I am restricting my thanks here to those who have not been credited in the book in some way. Thanks to Marcel Fortier, Francine Gauthier Jones, Ken Osmond, and Michael Larsen for their administrative support; in Qamani’luaq, special thanks to Sally Webster, David Webster (Inuit Heritage Center) and David Tagoona (deceased). Thanks to A.C. Bryan Savege (Chairman of the Board) and Finn Bower (Curator) of the Shelburne County Museum on the south shore of Nova Scotia. At Revillon Frères in Paris, Denis Vignon, Anne Siméon and Simone de Haute-Cloque were very helpful and kindly provided access to the company’s archives at the head office. Thanks to my collaborators at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax: Christopher Fletcher, Lara Bishop, Karly Kehoe, Marni Amirault who contributed in various ways to the research; Denis Leclaire, Heidi Taylor, Zoran Kondali, Susan Lundquist, Margaret MacPherson, Maureen Woodhouse, all from International Activities, who

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In 1996, Peter Irniq traveled to Halifax, Nova Scotia to inaugurate an annual lecture series on Nunavut at Saint Mary’s University. At the time of his visit, he took the opportunity to approach his hosts to ask if they could help locate any information about a trip his father, Athanasie Angutitaq, had made to Nova Scotia in 1925. This request would mark the beginning of a very interesting collaborative research project.

This volume is one result of the research conducted to document a roundtrip from (present-day) Nunavut to Nova Scotia made by four Inuit men in the mid-1920s. The collective work undertaken to research this story led to various outcomes that ranged from joint scholarly presentations at scientific conferences to the development of curriculum for Nunavut students participating in a summer student program at Saint Mary’s University in Nova Scotia. But, perhaps the most important, was an event in which Nova Scotians, including some who had met the Inuit crew of Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq, Louis Taapatai, and Savikataaq in the 1920s while they were in the South, spent time with the latter’s descendants. In fact, this story is as much about historical linkages between Inuit and non-Inuit as it is about the relationships between those individuals who traveled and met at the beginning of the 20th century, or at its closing in the late 1990s. In that sense, the book is a clear example of the longevity of stories in peoples’ minds and lives.

Indeed, this research incorporates the experiences and stories of two distinct peoples: the Inuit from central Canada whose family members were involved in the early voyage; and the people of the Maritimes who have knowledge of the voyage or who were associated with it and the shipbuilding industry of that era.
In our conversations with people from both the South and the North, we found similar challenges in the interpretation and verification of memory and experience. For example, a major task involved dealing with personal accounts of the events remembered and the constraints on the recollection of those memories over time. In both the South and the North, first-hand memories of this time and the event are tenuous at best. Those who witnessed the trip are few, and the stories others have heard as second- and third-hand accounts can be fragmentary. Regardless, we have been able to piece together a great deal of information about the story as a result of collaborations in this project.

During the research, it also became apparent that the challenges taken up by the four daring individuals, these Inuit who took part in the roundtrip voyage in the early part of the century, resonated well with what modern Inuit were collectively about to face when this project started: that is, the unknown and untested journey toward the creation of a third Canadian Northern territory—Nunavut.

To successfully complete the research, we adopted an ethno-historical approach. Accordingly, our search for information relied both on historical documents and personal accounts about the trip. The point of departure was a child’s recollection of his father’s stories about a journey. Peter Irniq remembered being told about this voyage but, like us, he was about to learn a good deal more than he knew when he first approached us in 1996.

In retrospect, gathering evidence about the trip seemed simple enough at the time, but, in reality, it was the sharing of information found through painstaking searches of public archives, and details more serendipitously obtained through conversations, that made it possible to piece together the series of events that occurred during the roundtrip, with a certain degree of certainty. The first pieces that would set the direction for the research were the important material provided by three of the four Inuit travelers: the memories Athanasie Angutitaaq shared with his family, an audio tape made by Lionel Angutinguaq, and the published stories of Louis Taapatai (Taapatai 1972; Webster 1975). The project team also met with various people who knew of the travels of the Inuit crew and who had witnessed parts of their journey, including Vera Akumalik and Martha Taleroook in Qamani’tuq (Baker Lake) and Mary Archibald in Nova Scotia. As for historical material in written form, the team searched public archives in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, the Hudson Bay Company archives in Winnipeg, and the private Revillon Frères archives in Paris. Ship records were also searched. Of particular interest were personal journals and newspaper articles published in and around the year 1925 that could provide further details about the trip.

I will never forget the smile on Lara Bishop’s face when she knocked on my office door after a few weeks spent reading newspapers at the Nova Scotia
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Provincial Archives. For days, she had become increasingly concerned that she had not been successful in finding anything about the trip in the local newspapers of the period. I encouraged her to persevere, but one of the challenges was that we had only approximate dates of the crew’s departure and return. Of course, once Lara found a first piece about Inuit being in Nova Scotia, she was able to locate many others.

Peter Irniq was as just as elated when he began to tell us about the visit during which Lionel Angutinguaq’s recording surfaced. Hearing about our research project, one of Peter’s guests, Jack Anawak, mentioned having an audiotape about the journey, left to him by his father. Peter and Jack immediately sought out the tape Lionel Angutinguaq recorded in the 1960s, and listened to it together.

Of course, all the information we now have was there to be collected and interpreted. That is what research is about. Talking about issues that matter to us creates data, and makes family stories recorded on old stored tapes, and deteriorating newspapers suddenly relevant. Identifying different sources of information about the voyage and sharing the material we were respectively obtaining was essential to establish coherence in the accumulating facts related to the trip. The entire research process used in the project very much reflected the collaborative spirit under which it was initiated.

In 1998, when I traveled to Qamani’tuaq with C. Fletcher to search for answers to Peter Irniq’s challenge, there was a great deal of interest in pursuing the work. Peter Irniq had prepared the ground for our visit, and we were very enthusiastically welcomed by the community. People were quick to tell us what they knew about this story and they were equally intent on questioning us about what we had already learned through the research we had undertaken in the South. The conventional relationship of informant and researcher, so standard in academic work and especially prominent in northern research, had become blurred as a result.

Ethno-historical data about Aboriginal-Euro-Canadian interactions, and specifically the relationship between exploration and exploitation in the central Arctic in the first part of the twentieth century, can be interpreted in different ways. While we are not offering a definitive explanation of what this series of events meant at the time, nor about its interpretation now, untangling the nature of the power relations between peoples constitute a significant aspect of the questions at issue. However, matters pertaining to credibility and authorship take precedence in this story. For example, it was a telling moment when Fred Ford, who kindly hosted us for dinner in Qamani’tuaq, realized the stories he had been told about visiting Liverpool were true. Fred Ford is a descendant of Henri Ford, the Baker Lake Hudson Bay Company post manager. Through the years, he had always questioned how Inuit would have ended up in England at the turn of the century, but, in the course of our dinner conversation, it came to
light that the Inuit were talking about Liverpool, Nova Scotia, not the Liverpool that would later become associated with the music of the Beatles. All along, he had misinterpreted the location. It is highly likely the Inuit did not provide misleading hints about Liverpool. This is simply how cross-cultural interpretation works. Everyone relies on his or her personal knowledge in trying to understand and decipher what is being said. As researchers, it was very rewarding to witness a long-term resident like Ford finally able to frame stories he had heard in the appropriate context.

What was until then a very mystical voyage instantly gained accuracy. Some would rather say the story gained meaning, but I insist it had nothing to do with attributing meaning to a story. The story always had meaning, at least in the eyes of the storyteller and those who could properly understand it. It is credibility that is awarded to a story by those who hear it. This can happen retrospectively; it certainly happens routinely in our lives, for example, when we catch a joke after the fact, or when there is a delay between something said to us and our understanding of what was said. As far as I am concerned, credibility is attributed to the story itself, not the storyteller. A discussion of storytellers as contrasted with stories themselves leads to notions of authorship and authority. However, there is no reason to assume a person changes his or her opinion about storytellers based on their doubts about the accuracy of a story. In this particular case, there was absolutely no reason to believe Fred Ford changed his opinion of the Inuit from whom he had heard the stories. On the contrary, he lamented having too hastily disregarded the story he had heard a number of times in the past. If a judgment was implied, it was about the limited skills he had demonstrated as a listener. Mr. Ford’s reaction was very useful to us because through his realization, he was confirming the existence of multiple accounts of the trip. Our research team then had a great deal of work to do to collect every available detail on what both Inuit and non-Inuit agree is a fascinating story.

During the research process, the complementarity of the sources on which we relied became striking. For example, Peter Irniq recalled being told stories that the four Inuit visited Montreal, but it took some time before we were able to confirm this was indeed the case, with accounts of the visit in newspapers. In some instances, the oral source was the most accurate: the Shelburne Gazette and Coast Guard (November 12, 1925) suggested that the Inuit were likely working in the Quebec woods over the winter while Lionel Angutinguaq’s tape provided specific locations. It is clear that there are yet more details to be worked out than have been to date. Hopefully, the publication of this volume will trigger more material to be brought to light, and those parts of the story that remain vague will become better understood. For example, as we will see in Chapter 2, one detail that remains unclear is the actual number of Inuit who took part in the trip. It is possible that the crew of the Jean Revillon, the ship on which the trip began, included one or two more Inuit. These individuals might have completed
only a portion of the voyage, and it would be an important outcome of this book if it should contribute to learning more about these individuals, their part in the voyage, and their histories.

Roundtrip is about people, their stories, places where they live or visit; it is also about objects and methods used to remember the past, memory and knowledge. Each chapter of the book is a story in itself. The first describes the crew, the ship, and the voyage (Chapter 2); the shared memories of Inuit and non-Inuit regarding the 1925-1926 trip are presented in the next (Chapter 3); the way(s) in which the story was used as curriculum material for students from Nunavut follows (Chapter 4); and, finally, the book closes on comments about our collective past and future. The sources of information, that is, references to material about the trip, appear in parentheses throughout the text and refer to the literature cited at the end of the book.
Figure 1. The regular route of the Jean Revillon in the era of the Roundtrip—from Baker Lake to the English River (Sexé 1923).
To reconstruct the roundtrip, we start in the Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake) region where the Jean Revillon wintered. We then provide details about the vessel and its construction, followed by an introduction to the crew that successfully manned the ship back to its hauling port. What we know about the voyage itself and the return home is provided in the last two sections.

Setting the Stage

Thierry Mallet, a very influential intermediary between the Inuit and the European fur trade companies, provided highly valuable information about life in the central arctic region in the time period relevant to the Jean Revillon story (Mallet 1925, 1926, 1930). Other important sources are from reports of the 5th Thule expedition by Knud Rasmussen (1930a, 1930b), Kaj Birket Smith (1931) and Therkel Mathiassen (1945). The expedition, which occurred in the spring of 1922, traveled from the Repulse Bay area to Chesterfield Inlet, and inland to Baker Lake and down the Kazan River. Their objective was to locate the people they called the Caribou Eskimos. At that time, Inuit were still a nomadic people, living in various areas according to the time of year. They were dispersed on the land. The Baker Lake region, where the Jean Revillon ship wintered in 1925, is located inland. Mannik (1998) refers to the Inuit of this region as Inuit nunamiat.

While dates conflict in different sources, it seems the Hudson Bay Company had established a post on Ukpiktujuk or ‘Big Hips Island on the lake’ in 1914. In the early 1920s, the post manager was Henry Ford, who for a long time
Figure 2. Hudson Bay Company post locations at Qamani’luaq (Baker Lake).
(Inuit Heritage Center; see links to visual materials in References p. 99.)
Chapter 2: There and Back

had been working for the Hudson Bay Company establishing new posts. He spoke Inuktitut fluently and was part Inuk himself. An independent trader established another post from 1920 to 1922 at the Baker Lake Narrows to the east. In 1924 the Revillon Frères established their post at Baker Lake in the present-day location of the town of Baker Lake, Qamani’tuaq (Kigjugalik Webster 2001; Fitzgerald 1999; Harris 1976; Usher 1971).

The Revillon post was strategically positioned inland, at the source of the Thelon River, in order to maximise accessibility to the interior northern territory where Revillon Frères was buying furs from Inuit and other aboriginal groups. The location was particularly attractive because ships with heavy loads (carrying capacity) could reach Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake). It seems the Hudson Bay Company had satellite posts on the Thelon and Kazan Rivers in 1924 and they were in the process of building a new post on the north shore of the Lake close to the Revillon Frères site.

The Hudson Bay Company and Revillon Frères buildings have been converted into historical buildings in Qamani’tuaq. One currently serves as the Vera Akumalik tourist information center.

Eskimo or Inuit?

There are a number of references in the literature cited, in which Inuit regional groups or the Caribou Inuit specifically are discussed (e.g., Csonka 1995; Collignon 2006:5). In this book, we focus on the individuals who participated in the roundtrip from Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake) rather than on a geographical area or a regionally defined group of Inuit. As we will see later on, the four Inuit sailors were not all from a single location. If some Inuit would proudly call themselves Eskimos today, it would not be appropriate nor necessarily accurate to refer to the descendants of the Inuit sailors who contributed to the research as Caribou Eskimos. For the sake of clarity, it should be mentioned, however, that Caribou Eskimos were considered different from other Inuit in the western Canadian Arctic because they used inland portions of the territory while other groups inhabited coastal areas more prominently. Inland, caribou contributed more substantially to the food supply of the Inuit. In coastal areas, sea mammals were the main staple food. These matters are further discussed in Chapters 3 and 5.
The presence of the two competing fur companies in Canada remains in a number of locations today, including some in southern Canada. See Chapter 5, Fig. 53, p. 88 for information on Revillon Frères and Hudson’s Bay Company buildings in Edmonton, Alberta.

From the Hudson Bay Company records, it is apparent that the post in Qamani’tuap was a very active place. Sledges bearing furs and trade items were brought in almost daily in good weather and sometimes several arrived on the same day. The post drew people from as far as Hikuligjuaq (Yathkyed Lake) to the South, the Thelon River to the West and the Back River to the North (Fletcher 1998).

Having established its post, the Revillon Frères Company sent one of its supply ships, the Jean Revillon, to Baker Lake. The ship was due to return South before the winter, but did not because it was frozen in the lake from October 1924 until June 1925. Even though the schooner was sheathed in West Indies Greenheart wood to make it better able to withstand the Arctic ice, it suffered considerable damage, in particular to the stern, while stuck in the ice. Cunningham (1929:48) describes a similar incident with another vessel built in Nova Scotia:

Up in the seas of the Arctic regions a large cruiser built of oak was caught in the ice and pressed as if in a vice of terrible strength. But she did not crack. Her bow lifted, but her stern remained tight and was bent by the power of the ice. She sank. She was raised, repaired and again put in service. The ice could not
smash her. It was boats of her type that drew from Revillon Frères a tribute to 
John Etherington, Ltd., of Shelburne, ... “We would like to feel that all work 
which is done for our company is done as conscientiously as our work has been 
done by you.”

Figure 4. Regional map of Qamani’tuq (Baker Lake), the Kazan River, and surrounding area. 
(Kigjugalik Webster 2001:3 used with permission.)
Captain Jean Berthé, Revillon sub-district manager for Repulse Bay and Baker Lake (Harris 1976), wintered with the Jean Revillon in 1924-1925 (Hudson Bay Company Archives). Vera Akumalik, from Qamani’tuaq, saw the vessel stuck in the ice (1998 interview by C. Fletcher and M. Daveluy). On returning from some time on the land, she and other Inuit were invited to come on board the Jean Revillon for tea. She also recalled participating in a feast while aboard the vessel.
The community of Qamani’tuaq as we know it today, developed through the 1950s and 1960s when Inuit children were brought in from the land to attend school. Several groups of Inuit living in the area settled in Qamani’tuaq, while others established themselves along the coast as they did in Arviat (Kigjugalik Webster 2001:37).
The vessel

The Jean Revillon was built in 1923 in Shelburne, Nova Scotia, at the Joseph McGill shipyard under John A. Weingart for the Revillon Frères company of Montreal. It has been described as weighing between 95 and 125 tons; measuring between 100 and 115 feet long, 24 feet wide, and between 9 and 10 feet deep with a draft of 12 feet. Its 100 horsepower crude oil engine could reach a speed of 9 knots. It had electric lights. It was intended for an eight-person crew (Shelburne Gazette and Coast Guard, June 21 1923).

Obtaining contracts from Revillon Frères to build supply ships was particularly appealing, considering wooden shipbuilding decreased by seventy percent after World War I in Nova Scotia. The construction of the Jean Revillon provided work for a number of people: Amos Pentz prepared the lines of the boat but died soon after construction began; Frank Robart was the master builder and Colin C. King the shipbuilder; A. Conrad rigged the boat, Leo d’Entremont made the sails, and William Turpin fastened the boat (Shelburne Gazette and Coast Guard June 21, 1923 and July 12, 1923; Bishop 1997a). Additional information on the construction of the vessel is available at the Shelburne County Museum in Nova Scotia.

Figure 9. The Jean Revillon, presumably along the Labrador coast. (Archives Revillon in Paris photo #1453, undated, reprinted courtesy Revillon Frères.)
The Revillon Frères Trading Co. of Montreal used the schooner in its Hudson Bay trade. Louis-Victor Revillon bought the Parisian Givelet fur company in 1839, and in 1901, his grandson Victor took responsibility for supplying furs directly from hunters in Canada. From 1904 to 1914, Revillon Frères was the world leading fur company. The Jean Revillon was launched in early July 1923, when it sailed to Liverpool, Nova Scotia, for additional work on its engine. It was carrying two utility boats, materials for eight more of the same, three whale boats, and a passenger scheduled to be transferred to another boat. Roy Etherington was on his way to Fort Chimo (Kuujjuaq, in contemporary Nunavik in Northern Québec) to build boats; he stayed three years. The Jean Revillon was registered in Shelburne, under the British flag (Shelburne Gazette and Coast Guard, July 12, 1923).

Revillon Frères was in direct competition with the Hudson Bay Company in Canada, and by 1926, it had scaled down its activities, and ceded the majority of its shares to the rival outfit. Sexé (1923) provides more on the history of Revillon Frères. In 1936, the remaining shares followed, bringing an end to the Revillon

Figure 10. The Joseph McGill shipyard in Shelburne, NS in 1998. (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)
fur trade in Canada (Mallet 2000:7-8). Gentilhomme (1973) describes 250 years of Revillon Frères’ history because it encompasses the history of Givelet which was founded in 1723.

When the Hudson Bay Company absorbed the Canadian division of Revillon Frères, most vessels were renamed. This was particularly important for ships bearing the Revillon family name. The Jean Revillon then became the Fort James (McKay, n.d.:740). Financial difficulties encountered by the Revillon Frères Company beginning in 1922, led to the Hudson Bay Company purchasing 51% of its shares in 1926; the two companies co-existed until 1936, at which time the Canadian division of Revillon was completely absorbed by Hudson Bay (Csonka 2000:176). Meanwhile, Revillon remained active in other parts of the world but it is in this context that manning the Jean Revillon back for repairs was considered essential by Captain Jean Berthé, but probably also by the company itself since any ship would represent both a major investment and an asset for its owners. Like the entire shipbuilding industry after World War I (Archibald 1998), Revillon Frères, though, was in all likelihood already stretched to the limits when the Jean Revillon froze in Baker Lake in the fall of 1924. Reducing the fleet by one vessel was problematic in terms of fur transportation, but building new ships was not possible under the financial pressures the company was facing. Bringing it back to its hauling port was the best option.

The Fort James continued to be used in the North and won some fame in 1935 for being the second vessel to voyage through the Northwest Passage and reach the Magnetic North Pole (Shelburne Gazette and Coast Guard, April 18 1935; Shelburne County Museum, H2113). The early history of the ship that is related in this book is perhaps less well-known but it is just as extraordinary. That a vessel once piloted by Inuit would later successfully cross the Arctic would seem a matter of fate.

From a research perspective, it was important to realize individuals were sometimes talking about a single ship under its different names. Indeed, Inuit manned a schooner back to Shelburne when our Nova Scotian collaborators were very young. The 13 years between the sailing of the Jean Revillon and its renaming under new ownership correspond to their early childhood. At times, they remembered the arrival of the Inuit, but talked about it in relation to the Fort James rather than the Jean Revillon. We had to train ourselves to listen carefully when they were telling us about the Fort James, which we initially tended to perceive as less relevant to our research than when they were framing their recollections around the Jean Revillon.

In 1998, we visited the Revillon Frères headquarters on La Boétie street in Paris (Fig. 12) to study archival material to document the wintering of the ship in Qamani’tuqaq as well as the return of the Inuit to the region. Revillon Frères was still active then, with employees creating fur garments displayed on the ground floor of the building for customers to buy or order.
A picture of the Jean Revillon was even used in the publicity for Eau de Revillon, a perfume that was scheduled to be launched by the company. Indeed even though Revillon is clearly and sometimes exclusively associated with the fur trade, it in fact diversified early on, as illustrated by the five sectors (fur, finances, real estate, industries, perfumes) on the tree diagram of le groupe Revillon published for the 250th anniversary of the company (Gentithomme 1973, see also Fig. 13). Eau de Revillon was to be added to an already existing line of products: Revillon 4, Detchena, Eau fraîche, Partner and Crêpe de Chine which appear on the bottom right box in 1973 in the schematic.

When we attempted to pay a courtesy visit to inform the company of the results of our research in 2008, the situation was different. At first, we were unable to locate the building, but soon realized that it had been renovated and was no longer occupied by Revillon Frères. Enquiries at other fur stores in the neighborhood revealed that the company had moved a number of times in the ten years since 1998. The competition, though, was not very keen to inform us
of the current state of affairs of Revillon Frères. It turns out that the company was acquired by Otis, the elevator company servicing so many buildings in the world (M. Therrien, pers. com.). It is worth noting that Otis (Europe) was already connected to Revillon Frères as early as the 1930s, as shown in the Revillon timeline in Figure 13 (see the middle box on the right side of *le groupe*).

**Figure 12.** The Reveillon Frères headquarters on La Boétie St. in Paris. (Undated advertisement; reprinted with permission.)
Figure 13. Revillon Timeline
(Developed by Lisa Hareuther; adapted from work by Lara Bishop, 2007.)
Revillon in the tree diagram). Linkages between Revillon and Otis, then, date back at least 35 years. It is highly likely Revillon has been absorbed in a long-established relationship with a well-known partner. This process of appropriation by another company is reminiscent of the gradual dissolution of Revillon in Canada when it was slowly but surely integrated into the Hudson Bay Company.

The renaming of the ship on which Inuit sailed, and the various re-orientations through which the company that initially owned it went, provide clues to how challenging it can be to find accurate historical information. As we will see, even though we know a great deal about those who took part in the roundtrip, uncertainties also remain in this area.

We know for a fact that Captain Berthé considered a return voyage in the summer and fall of 1925 imperative, as he thought the ship would not survive another season of winter ice. In order to do that, he needed to find sailors, since the original crew had already been sent back South.
Chapter 2: There and Back

The Crew

Seven members of the crew that manned the Jean Revillon to Shelburne, NS, in 1925 are known. They include: Captain W.H. Robertson, Chief Officer G. Hunter, Engineer Clifford J. King, Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq, and Louis Taapatai. Since the schooner was intended for a crew of eight, it apparently was understaffed by one person for the trip back to its hauling port.

Louis Taapatai had a picture of the crew of the Jean Revillon that had been taken in the South, which he gave to Peter Irniq. Savikataaq is standing in the middle and seated from left to right are Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and, with his arms folded, Louis Taapatai.

When she was shown the photograph, Mary Archibald recognized the six individuals depicted as the four Inuit crew members, the captain, and the engineer. Mary Archibald is the daughter of John A. Weingart, manager and later owner of the Joseph McGill Yard in Shelburne, where the Jean Revillon was

Figure 15. The crew, most likely photographed in November 1925 in Nova Scotia. (Photo donated by Louis Taapatai to Peter Irniq, and used with permission.)
Roundtrip: The Inuit Crew of the Jean Revillon

built and repaired. This might suggest that the picture was taken in Shelburne, as the Shelburne newspaper says that Mr. King, the engineer, did not travel further with the rest of the crew, but remained in Shelburne while the boat was being repaired.

Inuit joined the crew in Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake) to take the place of some of the original crew members who had returned to England (Halifax newspapers: Evening Mail and Halifax Herald -November 11, 1925; and Lionel Angutinguaq’s audio tape). As per Louis Taapatai’s picture and other material, four Inuit were part of the crew. However, on November 4, 1925 both the Evening Mail (Halifax) and the Halifax Herald reported that the Jean Revillon left Baker Lake (Qamani’tuaq) with a crew of nine. There may, therefore, have been two additional unnamed crew members onboard. Indeed, according to Martha Talerook (1998 interview) her father-in-law, Natiloaq, would have been part of the crew. As for Peter Irniq, there may have been a fifth Inuk onboard who became homesick and left the Jean Revillon at Purvimituq (a.k.a. POV, in contemporary Nunavik in the northern part of Québec) to return home. His identity has not yet been established, but it could well be Natiloaq. According to Vera Akimalik, Natiloaq was an excellent hunter. It is possible that working onboard a ship was not particularly satisfying to him and this could explain his leaving the Jean Revillon. However, Vera Akumalik also expressed doubts he actually left Qamani’tuaq because he might have been discouraged or even prevented from leaving the community for such a long time considering his skills as a hunter and provider.

It is known for certain that Savikataaq and Louis Taapatai were at Qamani’tuaq when the ship left (Hudson Bay Company Baker Lake Post records 1924-25) but it remains unclear where Lionel Angutinguaq and Athanasie Angutitaq boarded. Even though the St. John’s Daily Globe (November 12, 1925) reported the four Inuit were from the Baker Lake district, Lionel Angutinguaq and Athanasie Angutitaq were from Naujaat (Repulse Bay), on the Melville Peninsula.

In the Hudson Bay Company archives for November 1924 to May 1925 there are a number of entries about both Taapatai and Savikataaq. It seems from the record that Savikataaq and Taapatai were connected to the Revillon Company and the Hudson Bay Company, respectively.

Taapatai is mentioned 14 times: he regularly went fox trapping, hunting, and fishing with post manager Henry Ford and with other non-Inuit. He was clearly working full-time with people at the post. In the six-month period from November 1924 to May 1925, Taapatai and others from the post made at least seven trips for fox trapping, one trip for caribou hunting and another for selecting the site of the new post. There is no personal information about him in the records, but it is clear that he was well trusted and relied upon extensively by the traders at the Hudson Bay Company.
On his grave in Qamani’tuaq, are both a wooden cross and a standing stone. The stone bears the Royal Canadian Mountain Police (RCMP) effigy and his title as special constable S/1742. Evidence that Inuit were vested with ‘a certain police authority’ (Mathiassen 1945:38) by the Canadian Government date to at least the 1920s when Rasmussen and Birket-Smith met Igjugârjuk, in Hikoligjuaq (Yathyked Lake), along the Kazan river. On the cross, Louis Taapatai’s year of birth is indicated as 1905 while April 30th, 1902 appears on the stone. Louis Taapatai passed away September 8, 1983.

Savikataaq is mentioned twice in the Hudson Bay Company records. The first was on February 7, 1925 where the entry says that Capt. Robertson (the Captain who was to bring the Jean Revillon back) arrived with Savikataaq for a ‘visit.’ The second is on April 20, 1925 when it is reported that Savikataaq arrived with someone named Albert and Albert’s boy. Five days before the first entry, there is a note about Albert and ‘his boy Tupik and Nalilok’ who spent...
Figure 17a,b. *Louis Taapatai’s grave in Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake), Nunavut; a wooden cross and a standing stone.* (Photos by Christopher Fletcher.)

Figure 18. *Savikataaq, chef of the Inuit crew.*
(Photo donated by David Owingayak, used with permission.)
one night at the Hudson Bay Company post. In this entry they are referred to as arriving from the ‘French Company.’ All other Inuit arrivals at the Hudson Bay Company where a place of origin is recorded are said to arrive from a place on the land. We can then assume that Savikataaq, Albert, Tupik (possibly Albert’s son) and Nalilok all worked closely with the Post employees and the Captain of the Jean Revillon.

In all accounts of the 1925 trip to Nova Scotia, Savikataaq is referred to as the chef of the Inuit crew (among others, by David Owingayak, one of his descendants). It is important to note chef—not chief or leader—is used in relating the story. As the crew was working for a French company, a word from the French language is still used to refer to the organization of the Inuit group. The word chief would not be appropriate since it would associate Savikataaq’s role with Indian (Deneh, Chipewayan) ways of organizing social and political activities. As for the word leader, it seems to be avoided by contemporary tellers of the story as it might lead us to think of Saviqataaq’s status in 1925 as equivalent to the current role it refers to today, in particular in the context of the implementation of Nunavut. Insisting on the French term indicates the title was most likely imparted by Revillon Frères representatives.

It may seem that information on Savikataaq and Louis Taapatai was more readily available in the records and sources we studied, but this is probably simply due to the fact that our research focused primarily on Qamani’tuaq. Additional work in Naujaat (Repulse Bay) where Lionel Angutinguaq and Athanasie Angutitaq were from would certainly yield important material on these two men as well. The tape from Lionel Angutinguaq became available while research was proceeding and it is highly likely to contain more details on the roundtrip than what is reported here. It is an invaluable document that should be preserved, as cassette tapes deteriorate over time and the equipment used to play them becomes obsolete. The four Inuit undoubtably told several stories about their journey. Interestingly enough, the impetus for the research project came from a descendant of Athanasie Angutitaq, the sailor for which oral tradition appears the most effective mean of transmitting information about the roundtrip. The next section clearly shows how such storytelling contributes to retrieving and maintaining knowledge about the past.

From Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake) to Shelburne (Nova Scotia)

The Jean Revillon was temporarily repaired but was still in a weakened condition before setting out from Qamani’tuaq in July 1925. The departure was probably on the 25th but may have been on the 7th. From Baker Lake, the ship sailed through Igluligaarjuk (Chesterfield Inlet) into Hudson Bay. The voyage from Igluligaarjuk to Shelburne in Nova Scotia is nearly 3,000 miles and took four months to complete.
Furs were collected for Revillon Frères on the way east along Hudson Bay, with a stop of about a month in Inukjuak (Port Harrison), from August 1st to September 2nd and a shorter stop at Kangiqsujuaq (Wakeham Bay) from September 9th to the 13th.

Poor weather was experienced during the journey, slowing the progress South to St. John’s, Newfoundland and in Labrador, where a stop was made for food and supplies. The Jean Revillon probably arrived at St. John’s on October 7th, or perhaps as early as the 3rd; it departed for certain on October 11, 1925. The seas were rough throughout October, but the worst weather occurred as the vessel approached Nova Scotia.

At fewer than 50 miles from Halifax, a great storm blew the ship back out to sea. A large wave crashed the deck, ripped the cover off the fresh water tank, and spoiled the contents. The schooner’s engine was also damaged by waves which smashed the gage, causing the vessel’s oil to be lost. The Jean Revillon would not reach shore for a week, during which time the crew had only spoiled water to drink.

Athanasie Angutitaq would talk about the drama of the voyage to his children. From what he said to Peter Irnirq, it seems that the four men who went South had both good and bad times. For example Athanasie was ordered to fix and light the lantern on the mast during stormy weather. The waves were so strong that he was thrown off the mast, and was only hanging by his feet. Somehow, he managed to grab the line again. He felt that if he would have fallen off, no one would have known. Colin McKay (1933 [1993: 36-37]) a famous author about sailing around this era vividly depicts similar situations:

If a sail blew away in the middle of the night, there was no waiting till daylight to bend a new one. It was all hands to rout out a new sail, hoist it aloft, and bend it as soon as possible—often a long and laborious job with the ship.
Figure 20. Le Jean Revillon sails down, three unidentified crew members.
(Archives Revillon in Paris, #1454 undated, reprinted courtesy Revillon Frères.)
pitching and rolling, the men on the swinging, shaking yard-arms, working in blind darkness, passing the lashings of the earings, reeving bunt and clew-lines stopping the head of the sail of the jack-yard, by the touch of fingers painfully sensitive because perhaps worn to the quick.

In heavy weather there was often something, the running or even the standing rigging, carrying away aloft to call all hands on deck to undertake in haste and sometimes in fear an emergency job.

Figure 20 gives a sense of the tight space on the Jean Revillon deck; Athanasie Angutitaq would have been all the way up on the mast during this delicate manoeuvre.

The Jean Revillon was able to reach Liverpool, in Nova Scotia on the first of November, 1925 where the crew could renew its supplies. The captain did not think they could have lasted much longer if they had not reached Liverpool when they did.

On November 4, 1925 the schooner and crew made it to its final destination of Shelburne, Nova Scotia (N.S.). Front page articles about the trip appeared in a number of newspapers (the Shelburne Gazette and Coast Guard, The Halifax Herald, The Evening Mail [Halifax]). Some are transcribed, and where possible, reproduced. The arrival of the crew was also mentioned in a number of gossip columns in which it was customary to report the whereabouts of local citizens including captains of vessels arriving in port. The challenges faced during the journey were reported as the feat of an Eskimo crew piloting the Jean Revillon through a perilous trip, which indeed it was. The term Inuit was not yet in use in that era.

Figure 21. The Jean Revillon and the Albert Revillon in Liverpool, Nova Scotia. (Archives Revillon in Paris, #1457 undated; reprinted courtesy Revillon Frères.)
Figure 22. Route from Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake) to Shelburne, Nova Scotia. (Produced by Lisa Hareuther 2007; adapted from work done by Lara Bishop.)
Montreal Nov. 3 – Unique in the annals of Arctic navigation is the bringing down from Chesterfield inlet bordering in the 64th degree to Liverpool, Nova Scotia, a distance of nearly 3,000 miles, of a northern trading schooner manned by full blooded Eskimos. The schooner Jean Revillon is a fur trading craft belonging to Revillon Furers of Montreal. It was built in 1923 and since then has plied the Arctic waters north and west of Chesterfield Inlet.

To overhaul the vessel, it was necessary to bring it to civilization to Shelburne, N.S. In charge of Captain W. H. Robertson, a Newfoundlander, and with C. J. King of Montreal, as engineer, the vessel left on August first with a crew of four Eskimos.

Taking the Hudson Straits route, the schooner plodded its way through fierce gales. The whole of the journey was a perilous undertaking. Only three weeks late the Jan (sic) Revillon arrived at Liverpool, N.S. on Sunday night, the Captain, engineer and crew thankful that the voyage was nearly at an end. The crew are stated to have been proficient and the experiment has proved successful. It has never been thought advisable to take Eskimos out of their own sphere, but this has proved that the feat can be done.

For about a year the native crew has worked on the vessel and they have had a good training. Although excellent seamen in their own water, it was thought that the voyage so far south would be too much for them. The climate south does not agree with them and their journey north is being arranged as expeditiously as possible.
Chapter 2: There and Back

Figure 23. ‘Bring Vessel from Arctic to be Overhauled in N. S.,’ The Halifax Herald, November 4, 1925, Vol. 50., No. 264, p.11.
(Courtesy Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management [NSARM].)
Schr. Jean Revillon, which arrived at Shelburne on Wednesday of last week, is in command of Capt. W. H. Robertson, and has been engaged in the Hudson Bay trade since she was launched from the yard of the Joseph McGill Shipbuilding and Transportation Co. three years ago. Capt. Robertson speaks highly of the vessel and says she has stood up splendidly in all the windy weather which she has encountered in the northern waters.

On July 25th last the Jean Revillon left Baker Lake, Hudson Bay, arriving at Port Harrison on the 1st of August. She remained there until September 2nd, and arrived at Wakeham Bay, September 9th. On the 13th of that month she sailed for St. John’s Nfld., arriving there October 7th. Four days later she left on the last lap of the long voyage for Shelburne - where she will receive a general overhauling and remain for the winter.

The Jean Revillon is owned by Revillon Freres of Montreal, who operate 107 trading posts in northern Canada, and with whom Capt. Robertson has been engaged for 13 years.

As members of the crew on the trip to Shelburne were four full blooded Eskimos, it being their first trip away from their northern home. The men are good workmen, quiet, and enjoy the life of the different communities visited very much. In Newfoundland where they first saw a railway train, one of them remarked, 'big sled.' They have a great respect for white men, and appear to almost worship Capt. Robertson, who acts more the part of a brother to them rather than master.

In speaking to Capt. Robertson concerning Eskimos and their mode of living, we learned that in that part of Hudson Bay where Capt. Robertson trades, the people have no religion at all, and no schools. They live in snow houses in winter and in tents during the short summer. In winter there are only about four hours of daylight. The only heat they have is that from the burning of oil. Their food consists of raw meat, and their drink is water. They must hunt to live. The hunter retains the skins captured while the meat becomes the property of the tribe—is this not socialism? There is no marriage ceremony. A man takes a mate and lives with her. When a death occurs, if it’s winter, the body is buried in a snow bank, and when the snow goes—if it does—then the remains are covered with earth. The morals of the people, Capt. Robertson, declares, are good. There are no doctors, and little or no sickness. They are a peace loving people, rarely quarrel, and have a wholesome respect for the white man. The only law officers in that far away land are the Canadian Mounted Police and the Captain says they are a fine lot of men.

Capt. Robertson with his four sailor Eskimos left here on Tuesday for Montreal. The men will probably work in the Quebec woods this winter and return home in the early summer. All four are good workmen and seemed quite tickled when dolled up in modern clothes. To watch them practice walking in heeled boots was amusing and one of the lads who invested in a watch—like all Canadian boys with their first timepiece—hauled it from his pocket a good many times in an hour.

The Jean Revillon is docked at the wharf of Mr. J. A. Weingart, where she will be overhauled and repaired by Mr. Weingart.
Chapter 2: There and Back

Figure 24. ‘Arrives from Far North,’ Gazette and Coast Guard, Shelbourne, NS November 12, 1925, Vol. 9, No. 26.
(Courtesy Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management [NSARM].)
Figure 25. 'Vessel from North Brings Tale of Hardship,' The Halifax Herald, November 11, 1925, Vol. 47, No. 268, p.1-2. (Courtesy Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management [NSARM].)
A tale of hardship at sea was brought to this port last night by members of the crew of the 95 ton schooner “Jean Revillon,” of the Revillon Freres Trading Company’s fleet, Montreal, who have only arrived here from Baker Lake, at the head of Chesterfield Inlet, Hudson Bay, after a trip that was at every moment fraught with danger and difficulty since July 25 last, when the schooner sailed from that point.

To live for an entire week on water, half fresh and half salt, while off the Nova Scotian coast, and almost within reach of that assistance so sorely needed, was only one of the experiences of the gallant little band of white men and four Eskimos who had been shipped as part crew at Baker Lake.

Captain W. H. Robertson of St. John’s, Newfoundland, told the Herald last night that he had reached within 45 miles from Halifax, only to be blown away from land by the terrific gales that recently swept the Atlantic seaboard. To make matters worse, a monster wave boarded the craft at that time, tore along the decks, and besides doing considerable damage, was responsible for rippling loose the cover of the large fresh water tank on deck, spoiling over 500 gallons of the liquid.

**Makes Liverpool**

For one week afterward they were forced to drink this water that had been deluged with the seas, and it was intimated that they could not have subsisted for a much greater length of time. But fortunately the vessel after the gales had subsided reached Liverpool, where a fresh supply was taken in, after which the Jean Revillon continued on to Shelburne, N. S., where she is now undergoing repairs that will once again fit her for penetrating into the vast expanses of the frozen north, and all attending perils. The members of her crew arrived here last night.

That the schooner was in no trim to battle the raging elements may be evidenced by the fact that she had been frozen by the enormous ice-packs at Baker Lake last October over a year ago, and only released herself in June of this year. She was badly damaged, but after temporary repairs had been effected, she set sail with her crew of nine, the Eskimos replacing white men who had been returned to England some months ago.
Although faced with great odds when she set out, the little band of men, all undaunted, were confident that they would come through all right. But at that time they were not reckoning with the fierce gales with which they would have to contend. They were battered about by mountainous seas practically all during October, and one day, while approaching the Nova Scotia coast they were unfortunate enough to have their engine crippled by a huge wave. All the oil of the vessel was lost after the gage had been smashed, and the captain and crew were knocked about like so many chips. Last night Captain Robertson, Chief Officer G. Hunter, of Moose Factory, Ont., and Engineer C. J. King, of Montreal, all bore striking evidence of what they had been through, but which they simply described as ‘quite a little blow.’

Praises Eskimos
Regarding the Eskimos, Captain Robertson stated that he would not have been able to sail for home if he had not secured their services. He would have had to remain at Baker Lake another year. This, he added, would have been disastrous for his vessel. She would never have survived the ordeal in the ice-packs, especially after her weakened condition from the previous winter.

As they had been done providing the Eskimos were unwilling to go, he stated: “We should have had to stay there, that is all, but [I am] more than glad to have had them with me. They are great workers.”

The Eskimos, whose names are Savakata, Anatota, Attatingwa and Tapita, are leaving Halifax this morning in company with Captain Robertson and his two companions for Montreal. There they will be handed over to the care of the Revillon Freres Trading Company, who will probably send them farther west where they will be more in their element than in a large city. They will be shipped on home next spring, according to the captain.

Slept On Deck
An idea of the natives’ stamina and their immunity from storms, was given by Captain Robertson, when he stated that they slept on the exposed deck of the vessel while weathering the gale on the Nova Scotia coast. They could not be prevailed on at times to ‘go below,’ even though everything moveable on the deck was being hurled into the sea when the monster waves boarded the schooner.

This is the first time, according to the captain, that Eskimos from the north country were ever brought here. He said they evidenced no surprise at what they saw. They were startled at certain times, but like all of their kin, they placed implicit trust in the wisdom of the white man. They described the train that brought them to Halifax from Shelburne as “the white man’s sleigh without dogs.”
Once again, Inuit had proven themselves to be competent sailors. Historically, the people from the Qamani’tuq area had a relatively long apprenticeship in seaman ship through seasonal employment as pilots of the whaling boats along the coast. This was especially true during the American whaling period until the late 1800s, at Marble Island specifically (Fletcher 1998) but also in various other locations as Captain Mallet (1925:17-19) reports in the tale entitled *A pilot*.

This story centers on the lower part of Ungava Bay and the Koksoak River which flows into it. Fort Chimo was about 15 miles up the river. The tides made it difficult to take a boat up the river to the post, and Revillon Frères employees needed a local pilot to know when to start up the river. They had originally used a 100-ton auxiliary schooner to transport supplies each year. One year they decided to introduce a new 2,000-ton steamer, but upon arrival, they discovered that their local pilot had died over the winter and that his 12 year old son (who knew no English) would guide them. By motioning, he was able to successfully guide them up the river. Captain Mallet concludes (1925:19):

*That boy is a grown up man now. He still pilots our ship up and down the Koksoak River.*

Sexé (1923:59) also clearly indicates that it was customary for Revillon Frères to rely on Inuit on a regular basis. For example:

*Messrs. REVILLON thought it advisable to send agents by way of the Albany River, with instructions to engage Eskimo pilots in Southern James Bay for the purpose of guiding the Stord through the dangerous passages of Hudson Bay.*

The eventful return of the *Jean Revillon* to Shelburne in Nova Scotia was but the beginning of a longer journey for Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Anasthasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai. To this day, Nova Scotians recall their arrival and stay in the area.

**Time in Nova Scotia**

The crew of the *Jean Revillon* stayed in Shelburne six days. There is little discussion in the newspapers of the Inuit crew members’ activities while on land. However, Captain Robertson told the *Shelburne Gazette and Coast Guard* (vol. 9, no.6, November 12, 1925: 1), that they “enjoy the life of the different communities visited very much.” The journalist describes the men trying on southern clothing, practicing walking in heeled boots, and checking the time on a newly purchased watch. These garments were purchased in Shelburne, at Cox’s store, located on the waterfront on Dock Street in 1925, not far from the office of the Joseph McGill Yard. Cox’s is still standing, in a modified form. The Joseph McGill office is still on Dock Street.
As a young girl, Mary Archibald remembers meeting the crew of the schooner when it arrived in Shelburne in 1925 (1998 interview by M. Daveluy). Mary is the daughter of John Alfred Weingart, the owner of the shipyard where the Jean Revillon was built. In October 1910, he married Edith Jane Rafuse, daughter of Norman and Cassie Rafuse of Conquerall Bank, Lunenberg County, in Nova Scotia. Edith’s grand-father, J.N. Rafuse, was a much respected shipbuilder, who had been in business for himself since 1878, building vessels for interests in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and the French Islands of St. Pierre-et-Miquelon. Shipbuilding was a family business as Edith’s father, Norman, worked for his father with his brothers Bowen and Stanley. During World War I, they leased an additional yard, at Salmon River in Digby County. In 1917, when the opportunity arose for J.N. Rafuse and Sons to lease two yards at Shelburne, Bowen Rafuse went to New York City, where Weingart had grown up and was currently living with his wife Edith, to talk to them about moving to Nova Scotia to contribute to the family business. The Weingart-Rafuse family moved to Shelburne in December 1917 and John Alfred Weingart became manager for J.N. Rafuse and Sons’ interest in the McKay Shipyard and of Joseph McGill Shipping and Transportation Limited (Archibald 1998).

Mary Archibald recalls that her mother had the crew of the Jean Revillon, including the Inuit, to dinner at their family home. She says they were dressed for dinner in the same manner as they appear in Louis Taapatai’s photograph. In the audio tape, Lionel Angutinguaq made, he also talks about that dinner (P. Irniq’s translation). According to Mary Archibald, other Inuit were in Shelburne later on. She particularly recalls Peterhead boats brought by water to their destination by crews, including Inuit, as would be the case for the Lake Harbour, which was built for the Royal Canadian Military Police (RCMP) for use in Baffin Island.

Lionel Angutinguaq and Mary Archibald both talk about going to the train station in Shelburne, in November 1925. They do so independently of each other, Lionel on the tape he made, and Mary in 1998 during an interview. This coincides with the time when the four Inuit started their return trip.

The Return Home

In his account of his travels, Louis Taapatai (1972:47) describes the way back home.

The summer of 1925, Saveekatak, Angutlituarq, Angutitak and I went down to Montreal and Halifax to work on the ships. We stayed down south for a long time and on the way back we stopped at Port Harrison. When I got back to Chesterfield Inlet my father again sent me to Repulse Bay to get married.
Figure 26. One of the few remaining original buildings in Shelburne that the Inuit would have seen in 1925. (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)
Returning home after such a long journey was an event in itself. In fact Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai were certainly not the first Inuit to leave the Arctic with Europeans. As many as 50 Inuit from the Canadian Arctic and Greenland would have traveled to Europe during the 400 years Europeans were ‘exploring’ the Americas: Poq and Qiperop from Greenland were taken to Copenhagen in 1724, presumably the two had gone willingly; Hans Zachaeus, from Greenland as well, stowed away with his qajaq, and stayed in Britain from 1816 to 1819; he died in Edinburgh. Eenoolooapik from Baffin Island, made a first trip to Europe in 1839; Tookoolito, his sister, and her husband, Ebierling eagerly accepted passage to Britain in 1853, they returned to Baffin in 1855 (Jones 2000). On November 13 1924, The Halifax Herald (volume 49, no 273, p. 11) reports that Knud Rasmussen retuned with Metek and Anarylunguak from Greenland. However, in many stories of Inuit leaving on journeys with Qablunaat [non-Inuit], they did not return: they died away from home (Berkowitz 1997:20; Harper 1986).

Based on our research, we now know that on November 10, 1925, Captain Robertson and the crew left Shelburne by train and arrived in Halifax in the evening. While in Halifax, the captain spoke to a journalist who reported on their visit in the Halifax Herald.

The next day the crew left for Montreal by train (Lionel Angutinguaq’s audio tape). The Halifax Herald and the Evening Mail (November 11, 1925) claimed that upon reaching Montreal, Captain Robertson would turn the Inuit over to Revillon Frères who were likely to send them further west during the winter rather than keep them in an urban area. Peter Irnirq recalls being told stories that Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai had indeed visited Montreal.

On November 3 and 4, 1925, a source from Montreal claimed in Halifax newspapers that the climate of southern Canada did not agree with the Inuit and that their journey North was being arranged as expeditiously as possible. The Shelburne paper suggested that they would return home in early summer (November 12, 1925). The Halifax Herald and Evening Mail claimed the captain had said the Inuit would be ‘shipped’ home in the spring (November 11, 1925). However, according to the (St. John’s) Daily Globe (November 12, 1925), the four were to return to their homes over land. The Shelburne Gazette and Coast Guard (November 12, 1925) suggested that they would probably be working in the Quebec woods over the winter.

On tape, Lionel Angutinguaq does indicate that they spent the winter and the spring of 1926 working in northern Ontario, in the area of English River. They were repairing shingle roofs in various locations where Revillon Frères had posts. As per the map, English River was close to the usual Revillon Frères supply routing described by Sexé (1923). While they were away, the Revillon
Figure 27: Roundtrip Timeline.

(Chapter 2: There and Back)

(June 1) Capt. J. Berthé is identified as master of the Jean Revillon

(July 9) Launch of the Jean Revillon (leaves Shelburne for Liverpool, from there to sail to the Arctic)

(July 7 or 25th) The Jean Revillon leaves Qamani’ujaq, beginning its voyage to Shelburne

(July 7) Jean Revillon leaves Igulmairjuk

(Winter 1924-25)

Capt. Berthé and Jean Revillon are stuck in Qamani’ujaq

(Aug. 1) Jean Revillon arrives at Inukjuak

(Sept. 2) Departure from Inukjuak

(Sept. 9) Jean Revillon arrives at Kangigaajuq

(Sept. 13) Departure from Kangigaajuq

(Oct. 11) Jean Revillon arrives at St. John’s

(Oct. 3 or 7) Jean Revillon arrives at St. John’s

The Jean Revillon and the Albert Revillon in Liverpool, NS (Archives Revillon in Paris, #4557 undated)

2009

Publication of Roundtrip

1997

1926

Research Project of the trip begins

Savikataaq, Lionel Angutanguaq, Athanasie Anguittiaq, and Louis Taqutatuaq board a ship to return to Inukjuaq

(May) Capt. Robertson arrives in Shelburne to pick up the repaired Jean Revillon

(late June) The Jean Revillon leaves Shelburne, heading for Quebec to get supplies to take to Hudson Bay

(June 1) Capt. J. Berthé is identified as master of the Jean Revillon

(Labor Day) Jean Revillon leaves Shelburne, from there to sail to the Arctic
Frères Company provided support to the families of the crewmates (Vera Akumalik, 1998 interview).

Very little information has been found regarding the time Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai spent in Southern Canada, only that at the end of their sojourn, they returned to the North by ship. The *Jean Revillon* returned North the following year, 1926. However, from Shelburne, it first went to Quebec City to pick up supplies. W.H. Robertson returned to Shelburne to captain the vessel, but there is no mention in the *Gazette and Coast Guard* (June 17, 1926) that the Inuit were with him. They were picked up, (we don’t know exactly where), and brought back to Igluligaarjuk (Chesterfield Inlet) and Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake). It is likely some of the Revillon company plans to bring the Inuit back North did not materialise. Sexé (1923:60) gives an example of such an attempt that did not work out:

*Meanwhile steps had been taken to advise the Eskimo pilots that the boat they were waiting for would be a month late. Unfortunately the Eskimos never received the notification and after waiting some time, went away.*

In the 1998 interviews, Vera Akumalik and Martha Talerook both clearly recalled the four men returning North the year following their departure. Taapatai mentions stopping at Port Harrison (Inukjuak) on their way home.

Even if the exact routing of their return remains vague, we can assume that Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai often related their experience to people at home. In so doing, they provided some of the earliest firsthand accounts of life in the South. Furthermore, these four explorers all became leaders in their respective communities. Their experience onboard the *Jean Revillon* and in the South contributed to their role as intermediaries between Inuit and Euro-Canadians in the years that followed the voyage.

In summary, we have sufficient evidence about the whereabouts of Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai during this time to call their journey a roundtrip, but much work remains to be done. For example, their winter activities in the South and the stops in Nunavik should be better documented. Input from the elders of Naujaat (Repulse Bay), the home communities of Lionel Anguntinguaq and Athanasie Angutitaq would also be useful. The following chapter documents the visit of descendants of two Inuit crewmates to the places their father traveled to in 1925.
Figure 28. Roundtrip Map, showing likely return route (in red).
(Produced by Lisa Hareuther, 2007; adapted from work done by Lara Bishop.)
Roundtrip: The Inuit Crew of the Jean Revillon
Chapter Three

Remembering
Shared History

It may seem that research on the 1925 *Jean Revillon* voyage from Qamani’tuaq to Shelburne relied to a great extent on fortuitous occasions, such as visits. It was during a dinner that Peter Irniq initiated the project when he asked if information could be found in Nova Scotia on the trip his father, Athanasie Angutitaq, had made so long ago. Lionel Angutinguaq’s important audio tape was also rediscovered by happenstance during a visit. As for Mary Archibald, she could still visualize the dinner her mother hosted in honour of the crew at their arrival in her hometown. And again, it was during a casual conversation at a dinner table that Fred Ford was able to make sense of a story he had heard as a child. In fact, get-togethers are memorable occasions that help us hold on to our memories. They anchor our memories of greater events into personal recollections. Most of the information people were able to contribute to the research was, in fact, based on something remembered of their early childhood. Given these circumstances, it is to be expected that particular occasions stand out in memory.

From a research perspective, these reunions are starting points from which to gather more information. What happened before and after such get-togethers is easier to remember. We can use a specific point in time as a framework or context in which to bring back details in relation to a given moment or event in which a person clearly remembers participating. Psychologists refer to such key moments as bubble memories. When pulled together, all these dinners place the 1925 *Jean Revillon* story in real time, when the Inuit crew traveled, to the present day, as we tried to reconstruct their whereabouts. In the process, history is maintained through the transmission of childhood recollections to grandchildren and their contemporaries. We will see an example of how the experience of Savikataaq, Athanasie Angutitaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, and Louis Taapatai was transmitted from one generation to the next in the following chapter. For now, we will focus on how single memories must be pieced together to build a story
that encompasses much more than individual recollections of family affairs. In reality, what each person remembers belongs to collective memory as long as a broader context is provided to fully appreciate their particular reminiscence. Using these memories, we recognise individual knowledge. We are also better placed to understand our own history.

This chapter relates a series of activities in which descendants of the Inuit sailors participated. David Owingayak and Peter Irniq contributed to a conference at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax and visited Shelburne, where Nunavut Awareness Days in Nova Scotia were hosted by the Shelburne County Museum. David Owingayak is the son of Savikataaq, chef of the Inuit crew who sailed from Qamani’tuaq to Shelburne in 1925. Peter Irniq is the son of Athanases Angutitaq, the sailor who had to climb the mast to light the lantern under extremely rough weather conditions. At that time, we were not fully aware of the fact that these activities occurred at the same time of the year when the Jean Revillon had faced a ferocious storm off the coast of Newfoundland. This is the kind of coincidence we understand retrospectively. David Owingayak and Peter Irniq were in Nova Scotia at the end of October 1998, 73 years after their fathers made it through their challenging journey.

Figure 29. Peter Irniq and David Owingayak in Shelburne, NS in 1998; in the background is A.C. Bryan Savege, Shelburne County Museum. (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)
The conference is discussed first, not so much because it marks the beginning of the 1998 series of activities, but because it represents the first occasion in which the descendants of the Inuit sailors were able to meet someone they had not met or known personally, but who had spent time with their fathers so many years before. Later, in Shelburne, they had the opportunity to visit sites and places where their fathers had spent some time. They also met many other people with whom they have family connections or who could recollect the presence of other Inuit in the town when they were young. David Owingayak and Peter Irniq were also in Shelburne as representatives of a delegation from Nunavut. Their objective was to provide information on the implementation of the new Canadian territory as much as they were hoping to learn about the voyage their fathers had made so long ago.

**The connections between our fathers**

An academic conference would seem like an odd setting in which to meet someone with whom your own father had been associated decades earlier. Indeed, scholarly reunions, in all their formality, do not often lend themselves to

![Figure 30. Peter Irniq, Mary Archibald and David Owingayak at Saint Mary's University in 1998. (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)](image-url)
a relaxed and pleasant encounter. Some academics tend to take their business so seriously that they downplay the social aspect of their work on such occasions. Still, the formality of this type of activity proved useful to gather recollections of the first time descendants of the Inuit sailors met someone from the South who had enjoyed the company of their fathers during their visit to Nova Scotia.

The Atlantic Association of Sociologists and Anthropologists (AASA) held its annual meeting in Halifax October 22-24, 1998. The theme of the conference was globalization. The Saint Mary’s Arctic Research Committee proposed and organized a session on the historical links between Inuit and Nova Scotians in the context of globalization. Six participants contributed to the session; two were historians—Mary Archibald and Lewis Jackson, and two others anthropologists—Christopher Fletcher and Michelle Daveluy, but the most popular speakers were certainly the two Inuit participants, Peter Irniq and David Owingayak.

Immediately before the start of the public session, Mary Archibald met Peter Irniq and David Owingayak. She quickly told them she remembered meeting their fathers when she was a young girl. Mary Archibald is the daughter of the builder of the ship on which Savikataaq and Athanasie Angutitaq had traveled. The return of the Jean Revillon was important for her father’s business and the local economy (see Bebb 1997 on the decline of the shipbuilding industry at that time in East Shelburne County). It is clear that John Alfred Weingart was appreciative of the Inuit for returning the vessel to Shelburne. It would be Edith Jane Rafuse’s duty, as Weingart’s wife, to host a dinner to honour them and thank them. Mary Archibald explained how highly impressed she was, as a child, by the Inuit crew.

In his talk on Inuit perspectives on the Jean Revillon voyage, Peter Irniq presented a few stories he and David Owingayak had heard about the trip. First he reported that Louis Taapatai often spoke about Liverpool; then he talked about how Athanasie Angutitaq had fun with a mirror he had obtained in St. John’s, Newfoundland. But he also addressed the theme of the conference in relating how the story of the roundtrip of the Jean Revillon is an example of how Inuit have always been world travelers. He explained how their way of life is threatened by international organizations like Greenpeace and their attempts to forbid hunting of animals the Inuit rely on as their staple food. To him, the Jean Revillon voyage is a success story in many ways; however, he focused on how learning to speak English was instrumental for the four sailors to continue to play an active role in intercultural relationships after their return home. According to him, they all spoke better English than what they could have learned at home, considering the tensed local teaching atmosphere at the time. He also noted that wearing southern garments like heeled boots and a tie as the crew members did in Shelburne at the dinner hosted by Mrs. Archibald’s mother, would not alter one’s Inuit culture which runs deeper than clothing.
Mary Archibald also addressed the conference theme in her talk about her own father, John A. Weingart, and his role in the Shelburne shipbuilding industry. She discussed linkages between France, the United States and the Arctic at the turn of the century. She believes Jean Berthé, the original captain of the Jean Revillon, alerted her father to the market for Peterhead boats, whale boats and trap boats for use by the fur-trading companies, and through them, by Inuit hunters and fishermen. Captain Berthé first came to Shelburne in 1922 and stayed there during construction of the Jean Revillon. John A. Weingart learned with him how to build ships strong enough to navigate the Arctic. Captain Berthé returned to Shelburne in 1940 and 1942.

In fact, there is considerable archival evidence at the Shelburne County Museum documenting business conducted with Inuit. For example, the correspondence of John Etherington Ltd. includes merchandise orders for the delivery of boats to Port Harrison (Inukjuak), Cape Dorset (Kinngait), Lake Harbour (Kimmirut), South Hampton (Salliq/Coral Harbour), Frobisher Bay (Iqaluit), Clyde River (Kangiqtugaapik), Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik), Arctic Bay (Tununirusik), Igloolik (Iglulik), Chesterfield Inlet (Iglugaarjuk), Churchill, Sugluk, and Fort Chimo (Kuujuuaq) between 1942 and 1948 (Bishop 1997a). Even more interestingly, six tax exemption certificates identify individuals with whom business arrangements were made. Of the names that are legible are Amagoaliik and Kakasheak, Jamassilaluk and Koto, and, on the one reproduced below, Joe Curley.

![Figure 31. Evidence of Inuit–Nova Scotian business transaction.](image)

(Courtesy Shelburne County Museum.)
Roundtrip: The Inuit Crew of the Jean Revillon

Obviously, contacts with the Atlantic Provinces through boat building, the fur trade and other economic activities played a role in the opening of the South to Northerners and vice versa. This was a process by which Inuit sought to develop the relationships they had established with traders. During the session, Christopher Fletcher illustrated how this occurred by describing the context of population movements in the Qamani’tuaq region before 1925. There were a number of events in the years prior to the Jean Revillon journey that had a considerable impact on the way of life of Inuit at this time. These, in turn, influenced the movements of different Inuit groups North and South of Baker Lake.

Inuit culture has always thrived on an intricate knowledge of the local environment, mixed with an implicit recognition that the Inuit world is a vast one. To Fletcher, the voyage of the Jean Revillon was part of an ongoing process of extending that world into new regions as yet uncharted by Inuit. Rather than the simplistic subsistence economy with little division of labour as is suggested in the classical literature on Inuit, a number of different economic role specializations had developed by the end of the 1800s. These include seasonal work with whalers in Hudson Bay, trade intermediaries between various Inuit groups and between Inuit and non-Inuit in the region, and resource harvesting specialization by Inuit sub-groups. Instead of an isolated existence, considerable communication seems to have occurred between several different groups of peoples in the Kivalliq region at this time, centered around Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake). These activities demonstrate that Inuit had interest in participating in diverse relationships with outsiders. For Fletcher, the Jean Revillon voyage is one manifestation of those relationships.

In his presentation on the Shelburne/High Arctic connection, Lewis Jackson concurred. He illustrated this with other cases of Inuit travelling South, including an account of a group of 57 Inuit from Labrador brought, as if objects on display, to the Chicago Fair in 1893. He noted the ship transporting them transited through Shelburne, constituting one of the earliest documented encounters between Inuit and Nova Scotians in this locality. He explained that after the Jean Revillon was returned in 1925, other Inuit were employed in Shelburne as craftsmen and to pilot other ships. For example, the 40’ Peterhead type auxiliary Lake Harbour, built for the Royal Canadian Mountain Police, set out in 1948 from Shelburne to Baffin Island, captained by Constable J.A. Doucet with a crew of three Inuit. As we will see in the next section of this chapter, there are many more instances of contact between Inuit and Nova Scotians as evidenced in Shelburne.

As the last speaker at the conference, I presented material from the Revillon archives on the 1925 Jean Revillon expedition, which is now incorporated in the telling of the story There and Back (Chapter 1). Even if it was not so clear to all involved in the research project at the time, a tremendous amount of informa-
tion was already available by 1998. But it was important to pull this information together, and the AASA conference organisers were very helpful in this regard. They provided a venue in which to meet and a ready audience for a story that we had not before told as a group. We also received constructive comments at another academic conference at which three team members (Daveluy, Fletcher, and Bishop) presented the work (Daveluy et al. 1998a). Finally, some members...
of the project team (Daveluy, Fletcher, and Irniq) had an opportunity to present the story at yet another occasion to an audience which included a number of Inuit in Nuuk, Greenland (Daveluy et al. 1998b). Of all these conferences, the participation of both Nova Scotians and Inuit at the AASA meeting in Halifax was particularly stimulating.

When we were all together in Halifax, I don’t recall having visited the train station with David Owingayak and Peter Irniq, which is unfortunate, because I know now that they would have appreciated seeing where their fathers had boarded the train to Montreal. I believe we did not go there because at that point in the research we did not really appreciate how important the return route was to Savikataaq, Athanasie Angutitaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, and Louis Taapatai. On the other hand, I am not too concerned about not having gone to the station on this visit, because I have learned that relationships are maintained through time, and other occasions will arise for the descendants of the Inuit sailors to visit the Halifax train station. Perhaps some might even do a commemorative roundtrip. For now, let’s return to Shelburne and to 1998.

Seeing places only heard of

Shelburne is located on the South shore of Nova Scotia. It is a well-preserved historical town that was founded in 1783. Peter Irniq and David Owingayak
arrived in Shelbune for the first time in 1998. Traveling with them to the port where Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai returned the *Jean Revillon* for repairs was like making a pilgrimage to a mythical place.

The visit was hosted by the Shelburne County Museum, where a number of people gathered to meet with the Nunavut delegation. In honour of their visit, the curator of the museum, Finn Bower, had mounted a temporary exhibit, displaying material related to the *Jean Revillon*. A feast was organised by the community.

A series of sixteen pictures of unidentified Inuit that had been donated to the museum were on display. Anxious to attach names and contexts to the photos, everyone was encouraged to volunteer any information that might help identify the individuals or their provenance. However, it was impossible to identify any of the subjects of the photographs during this short stay in Shelburne. In the hope that some information might be available from other sources, Finn Bower suggested that we include the photos as part of this volume, and so the 16 photos are reproduced and included in Appendix 1.

While at the museum, David Owingayak donated a copy of the picture of Savikataaq (see Fig. 17, p. 26) and Peter Irniq one of the *Jean Revillon* crew (see Fig. 14, p. 21). The photos of Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie

![Figure 34. Attima Hadlari, David Owingayak, Lewis Jackson (sitting), George Qulaut, Peter Irniq, A.C. Brian Sivege and members of the local community at the feast organised at the Shelburne County Museum, October 1998. (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)](image)
Nunavut delegation visits Shelburne

by CATHY HOLMES

"Two Inuit - Peter Ernserk and David Owangayak - walked the same steps that their fathers probably did in Shelburne in 1928 during a visit to the Shelburne museum deputized with St. Mary's University professors last Friday." by Peter Ernserk, is the deputy minister of the Nunavut Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. Nunavut, the eastern part of the current Northwest Territories, including the high Arctic, is to be declared a new territory on April 1, 1999.

Ernserk said that Inuit and Nova Scotians are "both mariners, both friendly people and both live in harmony with the rest of the country." Ernserk says his people have established a "good relationship with St. Mary's University" in Halifax through its Arctic Research Committee, which has a goal of encouraging cultural and student exchanges between St. Mary's and northern communities.

Last weekend was the third Nunavut Awareness Days at St. Mary's, which coincided with an international conference of anthropologists and sociologists. Peter Ernserk gave the keynote address to 300 delegates of the Atlantic Association of Sociologists and Anthropologists on Thursday.

St. Mary's professors Chris Fletcher and Michelle Daveluy have researched the story. Revison Fraser, the French fur-trading company that owned the boat, decided it should sail to Shelburne, where it built the year before, to be repaired.

Historians aren't sure how the decision was made about who was chosen to help sail the ship to Shelburne, but four Inuit sailors made up the crew of eight or nine with the captain, engineer and two or three others.

Ernserk, in an interview with The Coast Guard, said he was pleased to learn that Captain Robertson "recognized the contribution that the Inuit made" to the dangerous voyage from Baker Lake to Shelburne. Ernserk said the trip to Shelburne for the four, who were the first Inuit to leave Baker Lake would have been "extremely scary." Baker Lake, in 1928, was "primitive", its people, nomadic.

The Coast Guard asked St. Mary's anthropologist Chris Fletcher what would have been strange for the Inuit and he answered, "Everything. It would have been different in every imaginable way. Baker Lake is a flat area, no trees except little pockets of leaves, there were only two permanent dwellings in Baker Lake in 1928. the Revison Ficreys and Mosson family trading posts." Also, "the warmth, the people, the language would have been different." He said at least the food - fish - would be familiar to them.

After their week's stay in Shelburne, the sailors got on a train to Halifax and then to Montreal on their way back home.
Figure 36. Bill Cox explaining how to build a dory to Inuit visiting Shelburne, October 1998.
(Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)

Figure 37. Bill Cox and Nunavut Delegation with dories in hand.
(Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)
Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai are the first made available in a series that could document the presence of Inuit in Shelburne over time. As a result of these donations, the Shelburne County Museum now holds at least two pictures of Inuit who have been properly identified. The fact that the Inuit crew visited the town where the museum is situated certainly contributed to this exchange of historical material between Inuit and Nova Scotians.

Among the Shelburne residents who could provide recollections of the visit of the Inuit in 1925, was Bill Cox who was present at the feast. Mr. Cox recalled seeing Inuit working on the Fort Ross in the 1930s. He took David Owingayak and Peter Irniq to the dory shop on the water front. The Inuit were particularly interested in this excursion and tour as they were familiar with this type of flat boat typical of the Nova Scotia building industry. They were offered miniature dories to take back home as a souvenir of their own journey reconstructing their fathers’ historical voyage.

Afterward, Lewis Jackson guided a tour of town through places Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai would have visited in 1925.

The presence of these descendants of Inuit generated a lot of interest in town. Journalists from the press and television were eager to cover their visit. Articles appeared in The Shelburne Coast Guard (October 27, 1998, p. 5) and The Mail Star / The Chronicle Herald (October 27, 1998, A9).

Figure 38. Lewis Jackson (wearing cap) guides the descendants of Savikataaq (David Owingayak) and Athanasie Angutitaq (Peter Irniq) through Shelburne (foregrounded Attima Hadlari). (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)
During their stay in Nova Scotia, Peter Irniq and David Owingayak were accompanied by George Qulaut and Attima Hadlari. Together they formed a Nunavut delegation representing the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth (CLEY). In Halifax and Shelburne they made presentations on the implementation of the territory of Nunavut which would come into effect on April 1st, 1999. One year prior to the date of such an important change in Canadian history, public awareness about Nunavut was minimal (Daveluy 2009). Most of the energy devoted to explaining the upcoming changes had been spent targeting those who would be directly affected, that is, the Northerners themselves. Still, it became clear that informing the Canadian population at large would also be beneficial. The collaboration of Inuit was essential to inform peoples living in southern locations about the new configuration of the Canadian Arctic.

In Shelburne, the impending changes to the northern territory were being integrated with pre-existing knowledge about the Inuit. Several people had at least indirect contact with the Inuit through their parents or their own work in the shipbuilding industry. If they were not particularly aware of the details the new territory entailed, they certainly understood what was at stake for their long-established economic partners. In other locations where I have witnessed information sessions on Nunavut, connections between Inuit and non-Inuit were not necessarily as well known, so intensely felt, or overtly claimed.

Figure 39. Attima Hadlari, David Owingayak, George Qulaut and Peter Irniq explaining Nunavut in Shelburne, NS, October 1998 (Brian Savege in background). (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)
Roundtrip: The Inuit Crew of the Jean Revillon

Figure 40. Cathy Holmes from the Shelburne Coast Guard interviewing Peter Irniq. On the back wall are the framed pictures of unidentified Inuit (see Appendix 1). (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)

Figure 41. Peter Irniq (and Attima Hadlari) attracting media interest. (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)
Chapter 3: Remembering Shared History

On their return to Halifax, David Owingayak and Peter Irniq were very interested in stopping at what they knew was the safe harbour where their fathers were able to supply themselves after resisting a weeklong storm onboard the Jean Revillon (see Fig. 13). It was a beautiful day, typical of the fall on the East Coast. One can not help but wonder if they were smiling because their work as Nunavut delegates on this particular trip was complete, or if they were feeling the relief their ancestors felt when they reached Liverpool at the end of their perilous voyage in October of 1925. Perhaps one of us joked that they looked like the Beatles.

Figure 42. 'Shelburne Special to Inuit, The Mail Star, NS. (October 27, 1998, A9). Reproduced with permission.
Places ground our memories in the physical world. Going to places others saw years before us helps frame their stories in the context in which they actually occurred. That is partly why place names are so often the focus of research: they provide the context for stories (Basso 1988, 1996) and local knowledge (Harvaqtuurmiut Elders et al. 1997; Collignon 1996, 2006). However, as we have seen with the example of Liverpool, in inter-cultural encounters like this roundtrip illustrates, respective frames of reference for place names sometimes divert a full understanding of the related experience. Bringing Inuit descendants to locations Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai visited in 1925 gave the occasion for individuals associated in diverse ways to this voyage to meet and connect with one another. From their shared memories emerges a more complete account of the roundtrip. This shows how essential it was to bring various people together to properly document the story.

Objects, as much as people related to the Jean Revillon 1925 voyage, have circulated, sometimes through their own roundtrips. The picture of the crew was taken in the South, carried to the North, and brought back to what is highly likely its point of origin. It has been donated a number of times, from an Inuk (Louis Taapatai) to another (Peter Irniq) and to non-Inuit in various places in Eastern Canada. Where the picture of Savikataaq was taken is not known but it has also circulated in similar patterns in terms of geography and peoples. As for

Figure 43. George Qulaut, David Owingayak, Peter Irniq, and Attima Hadlari in Liverpool, NS, October 1998. (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)
the miniature dories, they seem to have replaced the Jean Revillon which stayed in Shelburne for badly needed repairs, when Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguiaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai left. These various objects materialise the memories that keep history vibrant in the life of so many individuals. Traces of the expedition there and back were in stories told and recorded on tape, in published texts, in newspaper articles, etc.; the objects exchanged by peoples in Shelburne underline relationships that have existed for decades between Inuit and Nova Scotians.

While Inuit and Nova Scotians were briefly together in Shelburne, information was also circulated about the future (for example about Nunavut). Relationships which had been established during the twentieth century were to continue in the next millennium. The following section describes another way such relationships can be maintained from one generation to the next.
Roundtrip: The Inuit Crew of the Jean Revillon
During the years preceding the implementation of Nunavut, discussions with young Northerners clearly revealed how daunting the creation of the new territory appeared to many of them. Young Inuit were very much aware that their elders had worked hard for decades for Nunavut to become a reality. With the date of implementation, April 1st 1999, fast approaching, they were feeling pressured to endorse a project so dear to previous generations and, even more importantly, of making it successful. To many young Northerners, it seemed the goals on which several elders, parents and other family members had focused for a long time were set in an indefinite yet reachable future, while for them, the future was becoming the present. This vision came with both joy and apprehension as was demonstrated during a panel discussion on Nunavut that included young Inuit and representatives of the Nunavut Implementation Commission in 1997 in Halifax (Daveluy 2009).

During the planning stage for the impending changes, young Inuit were strongly encouraged to stay in school and obtain a diploma in order to be adequately prepared to contribute to Nunavut to the best of their abilities. Historically, the residential school system had had a highly detrimental impact on some Inuit (Patrick and Shearwood 1999). As a consequence, not all Inuit correspond formal education with positive outcomes. On the contrary, some have suffered through mandatory high-school away from home. Arnaquq (2009) provides a telling account of the challenges Inuit face even when schooled locally, in her case in Iqaluit (Nunavut) where she grew up. Therefore, proposing to invest in one’s education consisted of a remarkable change of attitude in the North. In fact, many of the leaders challenging the youth to succeed in school had recovered to some extent and, sometimes benefited, from their own efforts to obtain degrees in the formal educational system.

To support young Northerners in their attempts to complete high-school and pursue their studies further, summer programs for students from Nunavut were organised in the South. One of these programs, NunaScotia (Daveluy and
Roundtrip: The Inuit Crew of the Jean Revillon

Fletcher 1997), is described here. One of the key issues of formal education for Inui and those who teach them is the type of knowledge which is valued, taught, and learned in schools, colleges, and universities. Often knowledge considered of interest in the formal school system does not necessarily lend itself to Inuit ways of learning (Nunavik Educational Task Force 1992; Vick-Westgate 2002; Petit 2003; Targé 2004; Daveluy 2008; Nulukturuk 2009; Arnaquq 2009). What is deemed relevant to focus on also greatly varies from an Inuit perspective and a non-Inuit point of view. One way of dealing with such matters is to try to incorporate relevant material in the regular curriculum. This is how in 1999, the roundtrip story was adapted for pedagogical purposes and used both in the classroom and as a research tool in the museum.

NunaScotia 1997-2001

NunaScotia was a short-term summer study program for students from Nunavut. Offered at Saint Mary’s University, the program was originally a joint initiative of Saint Mary’s Arctic Research Committee, the Nunavut Secretariat, and the Human Resources Unified Development Strategy of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (Canada). In 1999, the Nunavut Education Department assumed the administrative role of the Federal Government. Targeting high school students seriously considering post secondary education, the program exposed these prospects to university life. The curriculum proposed during the program included a balance between the acquisition of knowledge and its application to matters of interest to the students. Extra-curricular activities were also scheduled for students to learn how to cope with typical responsibilities of first-year university students.

For many in Nunavut, post-secondary education entails moving away from home; accordingly, getting acquainted with a mid-size university town like Halifax was also an objective of the program. Indeed many students from Nunavut go to colleges or universities in large cities and sometimes find it as difficult to adapt to the urban environment as tackling a new academic challenge. NunaScotia aimed to help students take into account the location of the institution they wished to attend, and to prepare adequately. Group leaders from
Nunavut accompanying students to Halifax were very helpful with this part of the program. For example, Jimmy Oualik and Qajaq Robinson could share their own experience as students in the South with participants. The complete list of group leaders who contributed to the program appears in Appendix two of this volume.

Finally, the program fostered the creation of a network of students from all over Nunavut. This is particularly important for students from small communities, where only a few complete high school every year. Student program assistants from Saint Mary’s University were other essential collaborators who could also share their personal experience with students from Nunavut. To this day, some remain in contact with Nunavummiut they met through the program. For example, Karly Kehoe, who is now a faculty member herself in Scotland, and Marni Amirault, who completed a Masters degree at the University of Alberta have continued such correspondence. The program was offered every summer from 1997 to 2001. The first cohort continued to refer to the program as ‘NunaScotia’; and the name stuck.

At least 45 Nunavummiut received a participation certificate for successful completion of the program. The participants were from 20 different localities: Sanikiluaq, Kinngait (Cape Dorset), Kimmirut (Lake Harbour), Iqaluit, Pannirtuuq, Qikiqtarjuaq (Broughton Island), Kangiqtaaqapik (Clyde River), Mittimatilik (Pond Inlet), Tununiq (Arctic Bay), Iglulik, Sanirajak (Hall Beach), Salliq (Coral Harbour), Arviat, Kangiqsuq (Rankin Inlet), Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake), Aqviligjuaq (Pelly Bay), Talurjuaq (Taloyoak), Oqsuqtooq (Gjoa Haven), Ikaluktutiaq (Cambridge Bay), Kugluktuk (Coppermine). A complete list of participants appear in Appendix two. A number of NunaScotians are quoted in the following Nunatsiaq News article.

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**Nunatsiaq News**

**Nunavut Edition Headline News**

**July 30, 1998**

*NunaScotia helps Inuit students test life at university*
For the second year in a row, young Inuit are spending part of their summer at Saint Mary's University in Halifax to find out what life is like at a southern university.

**STACEY CAMPBELL, Special to Nunatsiaq News**

HALIFAX - What do Peggy's Cove, university and Nunavut have in common?

They're all much on the mind of a group of young Inuit meeting at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia from July 14-30.

With Nunavut becoming a reality next year, these young Nunavummiut are preparing themselves for that day by getting an introduction to the technical and professional skills they'll require for jobs in Nunavut and learning about the place of higher education in gaining those abilities.

In this, its second year, the NunaScotia program welcomed 16 of Nunavut's best and brightest to the Saint Mary's campus.

Sheba Awa of Igloolik was one of the young people attending NunaScotia.

"I'm going to an accounting course this morning," Awa said, as people gathered in the lobby of the university's Loyola residence before heading off to class. "I've been studying business management with Arctic College at home, so it's good for me to see what they teach at a university level."

Students were able to pick courses of special interest to them as well as attend scheduled classes from each of the university's faculties of arts, sciences, and business.

**Learning about university life**

The program aims at providing the Inuit students with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with university life, become acquainted with Halifax and its surroundings, and learn about Atlantic Canada.

Some courses examined the environmental issues, history, politics, economy and culture of Atlantic Canada. The content focused on community and socio-economic development, with specific examples drawn from the fisheries.

Members of youth associations in each region raised money for their visit to add to funds provided by Ottawa's Nunavut Secretariat.

"I'm interested in science," said Noah Nashooraituk of Taloyoak. "Especially biology. It's interesting to see the size of the labs here and get to use some of the equipment we don't have in smaller places."

"These are actual university introductory classes we're attending," said Bernice Lyall of Cambridge Bay. "They're part of the regular summer courses taught here. I'm interested in studying sociology, so this is a good opportunity to see how they present it."
Chapter 4: A Story for the Youth

Dr. Michelle Daveluy, a professor of anthropology at Saint Mary's, says she still gets email from the 11 students who attended the first NunaScotia program last year, some of whom have gone on to further studies. Many have listed their attendance in the program on their resumes.

**Transition program**

"We're providing a transition program," said Daveluy, who co-ordinates the program at St. Mary's. "The idea is to give people some experience of university, the academics, as well as living in residence in a large urban campus."

NunaScotia participants spent time with laboratory technicians who are students at an advanced stage of their studies, assisting professors with their research. These young professionals provided their insights into studying and working in the academic world.

"A lot of what it takes to be a success in university is attitude," said aspiring chemist Laine Green during a laboratory session to sample phosphoric acid concentration in soft drinks. "If you have the right attitude, you've got half of what it takes right there."

As well as sitting in class and looking into books and microscopes, university life means meeting different people and informally exchanging ideas.

**Many cultures**

With a variety of age groups from around the world visiting and learning at Saint Mary's, the NunaScotia students had the opportunity to share experiences with people from a number of cultures.

"I met an elder with a group of people from China," said Nashooraatuk. "I told her about caribou hunting. She was really interested."

Cafeteria food, residence beds and a sweltering down east summer in the 30 degree range may have provided the biggest obstacles for the students to adapt to. But most were surprised at the similarities to home they encountered rather than the differences between their regions.

"People here are so friendly," said Lyall. "And when we were visiting Peggy's Cove sitting on the rocks above the ocean it reminded me of home."

After learning about university life, and meeting everyone from a costumed guard at the historic fortress of Citadel Hill to the mayor of the city, perhaps the best overall picture of the students' NunaScotia experience can be summed up by Nashooraatuk's comment about the popular astronomy course.

"It's really exciting stuff. There's just so much out there still to be learned."

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Figure 45. Nunatsiaq News Archival Piece on NunaScotia.
Even though all were from Nunavut, students who came to Halifax had different backgrounds, their expectations toward NunaScotia were not necessarily the same, and their plans regarding post-secondary education varied a great deal. However, the program proposed courses regularly offered at Saint Mary’s University rather than adapted versions. It would indeed have been counter-productive to do otherwise, since students from Nunavut must register in existing programs in order to pursue post-secondary education. Considering the fact that there is no university in Nunavut, those interested in acquiring a bachelor’s degree can only obtain one elsewhere. It was clear that NunaScotians were looking forward to experiencing what they would be facing in reality, on their own. So the types of courses offered through NunaScotia were as important as the topics the professors were addressing. For example, limited teaching facilities are available in the North, particularly for science courses that require laboratories. One of the assets of NunaScotia was to bring students from Nunavut to experience time in labs and to conduct their own experiments.

Some of the material used in the university context is also particularly challenging from a cultural perspective. For example, skeletal remains which are highly sensitive to Inuit, are commonly studied in archaeology and human evolution courses. Learning that casts are used rather than actual remains, participants...
were able to focus on the human characteristics associated with various groups. Understanding some of the science used in perhaps more relevant contexts, for example, in contemporary debates regarding museum artefacts that might be repatriated were part of the skills acquired at NunaScotia.

![Figure 47. Facing cultural challenges in a human evolution lab assignment at Nuna Scotia 2000. (Photo by Marni Amirault.)](image)

However, the most demanding transition for high-school students starting post-secondary education remains the move from an extremely closely guided approach to teaching and learning to a more creative and autonomous mode of knowledge acquisition. Most of the time in high-school, students are still expected to learn their lessons by memorization, in a context where there is limited room for questioning the study material. In post-secondary education, knowledge acquisition is associated with research in a continuous critical assessment of what we think we know. The following section describes how the Roundtrip story was integrated into NunaScotia to show students from Nunavut how research and knowledge inform each other in post-secondary learning institutions.

**Inuit researchers**

Every year a different program theme was adopted for NunaScotia. In the first year (1997), the focus was on regional studies, with many courses on the historic
and socio-economic development of Atlantic Canada. Then, in 1998, the program narrowed its scope to seafaring traditions and economic opportunities in Nova Scotia. In 1999, the theme was much more specific as indicated by the program title *Maintaining the Link: Early and Contemporary Contacts between Maritime and Northern Peoples*. The next year, 2000, watercraft of Nova Scotia was the theme, and finally, in 2001, the program was developed as a writing workshop.

The roundtrip story was particularly relevant to the 1999 theme and fully integrated into the NunaScotia program. A workbook was prepared (Daveluy and Kehoe 1999) for students to read prior to a field trip to Shelburne. A class was held at the Shelburne County Museum, where the exhibit panel originally prepared by curator Finn Bower for the 1998 visit of a Nunavut delegation, was updated with the most recent research findings and displayed again at the museum.

![Panel exhibit on the Jean Revillon at the Shelburne County Museum.](Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)

On site, students were required to complete a hands-on assignment designed to show how historical documents are used in a research project. First, students had to identify newspaper articles relevant to the 1925 voyage among a selection of original newspapers of the era that were available from records at the museum. Apparently a simple task, this required a clear understanding of the Roundtrip story, paying close attention to details, and reading print material published using entirely different criteria and technology. To manipulate rare
and fragile documents like the *Shelburne Gazette and Coast Guard*, wearing cotton gloves is highly recommended and the students graciously complied even though it was a particularly hot day, and to add another layer of clothing was uncomfortable (see Fig. 49).

Figure 49. Searching through original newspapers used at the Shelburne County Museum, July 1999. (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)

Identifying pertinent text on a large format page is not entirely intuitive in the beginning, because adjusting to the visual layout and formatting styles of the time takes a little while (see reproductions of articles and their transcriptions in Chapter 2). A magnifying glass can be useful to read more easily what we would consider very fine print according to current standards. The style typical of newspaper writing today is also different from earlier decades. The English language was generally written slightly differently seventy-five years ago, not to mention the nautical vocabulary commonly used, which may appear obscure for contemporary non-specialists. All these factors are particularly salient for those who now would peruse newspapers electronically, as many Inuit certainly do for *Nunatsiaq News*, for example.

The organisation of papers at the turn of the twentieth century differed from what we are accustomed to today in so many ways that we sometimes are misled in our interpretations of what was newsworthy. For example, Lara Bishop found one of the first items relating to the *Jean Revillon*'s return voyage to Nova Scotia in a section she was not paying particular attention to at first because she was not expecting to find valuable information in that part of the newspapers. Indeed, she claims she was relaxing her brain and eyes when she realised local gossip
Roundtrip: The Inuit Crew of the Jean Revillon

Figure 50. Gossip Column (Liverpool Advance, Volume 48, No.39, Page 5, November 4, 1925). (Courtesy Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management [NSARM].)
columns were providing details on the whereabouts of sailors which proved relevant to the voyage of Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai (see the last line in the right column of Fig. 50).

This situation speaks again to the relative credibility of information through time and space. Locally, the comings and goings of crews were of great interest to the community waiting for the return of family members, employees and business partners. But it was also important to monitor the dangers sailors faced, which were numerous, as shown in the account of the Jean Revillon return trip. From port to port, families could read reports on the well-being of crew members they knew. Sometimes, it was necessary to prepare for the worst eventualty: the return of a ship without some of its sailors. So gossip columns played an important role in news media culture of the day, and in the communities of the 1920s. Such a role has not been maintained through time. Clearly, it is misleading to think of gossip columns of the past as equivalent to contemporary ones.

For the second part of their assignment, the students had to search the museum exhibits for photographs that could also belong to the story they were researching. Lastly, they had to answer a few questions in writing. The answers could be found in the workbook they had read or in the presentations made by invited speakers: Peter Irniq had joined the group for the occasion and historian Lewis Jackson took the students on a walking tour of the town focusing on points related to their assignment. Some of the questions were as simple as “When was the Jean Revillon built?” Others requested a more elaborate answer: e.g., “Why was the Jean Revillon built?” “What was the main focus of the article?” “How were the Inuit described?” “What were some of their impressions?”

Admittedly, not all NunaScotia activities had such a deliberate scholarly endeavour. For example, a sea kayaking lesson was offered. While some participants were familiar with qajaqs at home, few had the opportunity to enjoy kayaking on a regular basis. However, as illustrated in Fig. 52, even if relaxation was the prime objective in extra-curricular activities, it should be noted that linkages with the roundtrip their ancestors completed in 1925-26 were never difficult to make.

Integrating material about the Inuit in NunaScotia enhanced the program for participants but also for all those involved in the research project on the Roundtrip story. For the students, it provided a very practical research opportunity on a topic to which they could relate. Experiencing first-hand how research is conducted, even at a fairly limited scale, the students from Nunavut became more aware of how rigorous work must be to produce results. Using the accumulated research results with an exclusively Inuit audience was also an excellent training opportunity for faculty, research assistants, and other collaborators. Occasions to incorporate research in the classroom remain few in the academic milieu since this is usually the mandate of specialists in the field of education, such as curriculum and program designers. Often, the input requested from
researchers is limited to validating the information used in the final product. However, disseminating results in the classroom is both highly beneficial and demanding for those directly involved in the research. For example, in the process of creating material on the Jean Revillon story for NunaScotia, it became clear there was a favourable prejudice toward the seafaring portion of the voyage. To a certain degree, this was inevitable, considering how and where we were working, but it needed to be addressed explicitly to ensure the proper direction in the continuation of the research project.

Comments made by Inuit students about our preliminary research findings and the questions they asked helped us shift our perspective and concentrate our

Figure 51. Sea kayaking lesson in Nova Scotia, 1999. (Photo by Christopher Fletcher.)

Figure 52. Three qajaqs coming to meet the Jean Revillon in the Kangiqsujuaq area. (Archives Revillon in Paris, # 1451 undated, courtesy Revillon Frères.)
efforts on the return portion of the trip. In that sense, the 1998 NunaScotians overcame difficulties associated with the formal education setting that does not always provide room for cultural exchange and mutual appropriation of research agendas and academic topics. Until then, we were routinely reporting the research as the Jean Revillon story, while Inuit students were particularly interested in how Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai managed to get back home. The fact that it was a roundtrip was important to them. As a consequence, it became relevant for all who were involved in the research project.

It is clear, then, that Inuit students contributed to a better documentation of the story of Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai. Today, most research protocols include a phase in the process wherein dissemination of results are extended to those most directly interested or affected by the information obtained in the process. In 1998, this was not yet the norm, and it is important to acknowledge that it happened in this project nonetheless.

In many instances, research results are brought back to communities when projects are considered completed. The use of the Roundtrip story during NunaScotia serves to illustrate how information and results can be shared while research is in progress. Even though we were not necessarily fully aware of it in those days, the NunaScotians of 1998 can certainly be viewed as collaborators in the research, since their input was instrumental in changing both the focus of the work already undertaken, and the direction of that which remained to be done. I am not sure the Inuit students would all accept the designation of research collaborators granted to them retrospectively here. Perhaps only a few individuals might feel comfortable claiming they asked questions or made observations that impacted the research agenda. Neither did all of them share my excitement for a confirmed piece of information about the trip. Certainly, many still likely question our contribution to the knowledge, since Inuit knew the story all along. Without going into the details of the methodological appropriateness of connecting, relating, or assessing various pieces of information garnered from research, it is important to stress that documenting such stories through our respective means is valuable. In any case, judging from the enthusiasm manifested by all those who were contacted for discussions related to the publication of this work, certainly none had a problem being associated with NunaScotia or the Roundtrip story. To the contrary, they eagerly agreed to appear in photos or to be quoted in some way.

As regards the transmission of stories, the Inuit students who attended NunaScotia in 1998 were not simply a passive audience receiving a well-established narrative of the past. Rather, they were involved as active participants in the ongoing development of a journey that had started long before they themselves had actually traveled to Shelburne, Nova Scotia. It remains a priority to bring the story as we now understand it back to its roots—to where it all started.
In due course, this will happen, no doubt. In the meantime, it was certainly worthwhile bringing young Inuit where Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai had been. We brought them there to learn about the story and take it back home themselves. Their involvement gave a completely different meaning to Roundtrip. For a long time, our work had been about places when it needed to be about people. We can only thank the younger generation of Inuit for this shift of priorities.

To our knowledge, none of the 1998 NunaScotians were directly related to Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq or Louis Taapatai. Perhaps they were distanced enough from both the research and the individuals involved in the roundtrip to view it for what it was—that is, a story about enduring relationships.

Hopefully, researching the Roundtrip of four daring Inuit was inspirational to the students from Nunavut who were preparing for a personal challenge in post-secondary education and a collective one at the territorial level. We know some successfully pursued post-secondary education or reached goals they had set for themselves. It would be very interesting to formally seek out information about the whereabouts of all NunaScotians, but that is another story.

From a research perspective, what the Inuit crew of Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai achieved at the turn of the century clearly contributed to the current state of affairs in the Canadian North. We will see how these are related in the concluding chapter.
Chapter Five

The Past as Our Collective Future

Everyone who was involved in this research project initially approached the story with a critical view. For example, Daveluy et al. (1998a) argued that some exploitation probably took place during the journey. Our judgement was based on 1) Qablunaat [non-Inuit] descriptions of the voyage as an experiment in newspapers articles of the era; and, 2) Inuit stories that emphasize the dangers the sailors faced (see Daveluy et al. 1998b).

For some time, our working hypothesis was that the company’s interest in having Inuit crew members was opportunistic in solving the problem of returning the Jean Revillon to the South. There was no rationale to assume the event was anything unusual in the company’s business strategy. Our attention was drawn to a phrase in an article which originated in Montreal the previous day, and appeared in the Halifax Herald on November 4th, 1925:

*The crew are stated to have been proficient; and the experiment has proved successful. It has never been thought advisable to take Eskimos out of their own sphere, but this has proved that the feat can be done.* [Our emphasis]

As a result, we wanted to document the Revillon Frères company’s approach to that trip. Diverging perspectives between the Revillon owners and their post managers existed (Therrien 1993), so it is likely other workers also had different views on their role and the company’s expectations toward them. In his publications, Victor Revillon (1980, 1948) certainly holds a romantic view of the exploration of the Canadian North that he depicts in highly dramatic tones. Christiane Thiollier, Victor Revillon’s granddaughter, candidly admits her grandfather was a man of his time and class (Mallet 2000:143) and barely recognizes him in the man he pictured in his own memoirs. Still, the following excerpt resonates with Athanasie Angutitaq’s telling of his hardships onboard the Jean Revillon.
The following day, under a radiant sun, we head out into Eskimo Bay, known for its beautiful scenery. The visibility is so good that we can see the Montagnais Indians hauling their salmon nets onto the beach. Forty hours later, the Annie, continuing along its course, nears the rocks around the lighthouse that signals the Strait of Bell-Isle.

Since morning, the wind had grown increasingly calm with every passing hour. We just barely manage to overcome the current coming from upstream:

“There’s not enough to fill a hat,” grumbled Bellanger, seeing the sails shiver along the mast. At eight p.m., the man on watch lights the sidelights and, powered by the ebbing tide, we clear the strait. On deck I come across the captain:

“Evening, cap.’ Nice night, isn’t it?”

“Humph!” mutters Bellanger. “This calm is of no use to me at all.”

And the old sea dog, his hands folded behind his back, resumes his walk with a worried look.

While crossing the deckhouse, I tap the barometer. It has fallen to 26 inches and the dial signals a storm!

The worried figure of the captain and the vertical drop of the barometer prompt me to take certain precautions. I secure the roll board to the frame of my bunk and wedge my carafe and my water glass with a towel. Reassured, I slide under the covers and soon, rocked by the slow and regular movement of the Annie, I sink into a dreamless sleep.

A great noise, caused by a stampede of clogs on the upper deck, wakes me with a start. My little clock, attached to a pair of suspenders, tells me it’s 5 o’clock. Outdoors, the rain pours down, pelting the deck. The downpour spatters against the porthole, screwed shut as tightly as possible, and I can’t make anything out. Quickly, I slip on my canvas overalls, put on my seal skin boots, my bad weather oilskins, and tightly knot the straps of my sou’wester under my chin. Now I’m ready for anything.

At the very moment that I emerge on deck, a brutal squall causes me to lose my balance. The wind knocked out of me, I crawl on my belly to take shelter behind the poop deck, just in time. A monstrous wave at least fifteen feet high tops the forecastle. Its white crest crashes onto the upper deck and sweeps away all in its wake: a veritable tidal wave at the equinox.

I am reassured by the captain’s calm: hooked to the helm, his beard dripping with water, he reminds me of the Neptune of the Versailles basin.

“Is it a hurricane?,“ I ask.

He spits out the water that fills his mouth and answers without looking at me: “Not yet… but it won’t be long.”

Then, with a commanding voice he adds: “Go back to your cabin, you’re not needed here.”
Chapter 5: The Past as Our Collective Future

Hypnotized by the grandeur of the spectacle, I had to disobey. Migratory birds, racing the clouds, sweep like a whirlwind above our heads. In an effort to escape, a satanic petrel, the bird of doom in a storm, catches its wings in a shroud.

"God dammit," Bellanger grumbles into his moustache. "There's a bloody bad omen for you."

Then he orders us to reef in the foresail and bring in the topsails. The sailors take to doubling the whaling boat's lashing and the Davit craft's mooring; then they tighten the sails and backstays and batten down the hatches. Having managed to stay on my feet, I struggle to help them. Our crew consists only of four men and a fifteen-year-old ship's boy. In rough weather that's not many for a high masted sailing ship weighing 125 tonnes.

"Hey Jackie!" shouts the captain to the cook who is taking cover in the storeroom. "Come give your mates a hand and be quick about it."

But the man pretends not to hear.

"Did you hear me, you lazy good-for-nothing?" yelled Bellanger. "Do I have to drag you over by the seat of your pants?"

"Everyone's got a job. I'm a cook—I don't have nothin' to do with the ship's handling" the cook retorts rudely.

The schooner strains visibly. With each crash of the waves it creaks and heels to the port side. With barely a sail, it isn't steering well and the shoreline begins to emerge through the fog, less than a mile away. Far from growing calmer, the livid ocean shakes us like a mastiff with a rat in its mouth. It is as though the raging elements have seized hold of our schooner making of it a wretched toy. To steer, we are entirely dependent on the storm sail hoisted on the mizzen boom. It is made of Bradford canvas and is supposed to withstand any wind. Suddenly I hear a terrible crack, and the sail on which our very lives depend, tears from its clew and starts flapping angrily. Two of our sailors try to grasp it, but before they can reach it, the tattered canvas slaps and flutters into a vertiginous whirlwind that carries it away like a crude kite. We now have nothing but the machine itself to distance ourselves from the breakers whose crests, white with foam, draw near.

"Dammit" swears Bellanger. "The chimney's come off. The funnel draught isn't working anymore."

In the infernal noise I can barely make out a single voice: "Well, what about the floating anchor? It's not there for nothin'."

Who said that? Astonishingly, it is the cook whose derisive face is peering out the port side of the lazaret.

"Holy Jesus!" shouts Bellanger. "You rascal, you know how to do more than just fry potatoes after all! Come on guys, let's give 'er a try."

The ship's boy leaps forward, but is knocked down by a squall that flattens him against the side of the quarter deck. His friends, clinging to the runner and tackle, don't dare move for fear of being swept out to sea. Without backup, the Annie rolls wildly gunwale under and takes on tonnes of water. The waves break against the girder and run off in torrent through the scuppers. Despite the danger, the foam having risen again, the ship's boy creeps along the guard rail, attaches himself to all the projections and winds his way between the lifeboats that are securely moored to their launching cradles.
When the wave breaks with a great crash, he lurks behind the girder and catches his breath.
As soon as it withdraws, he strikes forward, agile as a jaguar. Encouraged by his example, two of his mates take off after him. Locked to each other at hands and knees, they meet him at the hatch of the storebox and all three descend. After what seems like an eternity, they reappear, collapsing under the weight of the anchor and the stress of hauling it out. Staggering and teetering, they work their way toward the port side guard rail, reaching it with great difficulty and, with a quick snap of the shoulders, heave the heavy object overboard.

“Let it slack away,” Bellanger yells from the helm. “How many fathoms?”
“Sixty.”
“Okay.”
The schooner rights itself like a well-bred horse who feels his rider’s spur.
“Alright, boys! You done good.”

The strange instrument, reminiscent of a huge parasol, alights on the water and already it provides enough resistance to hold the stem head on the wind. Although we are no longer in danger of being submerged, we are still drifting toward the outcrops along the shores. At whatever cost, we must return to open sea by replacing as quickly as possible the lost storm jib with another sail.

Will the flying jib, with an area of barely three feet, be able to tow us along in the wind? Oh destiny! The boom to which we were going to hoist it breaks in the middle and the gaff sail boom, like a giant billy club, crashes down hard and haphazardly, threatening anyone attempting to get near it. The impact is so violent that all the tackles jump at once.

In a panic, I grab an axe and charge toward the foot of the mizzen. I haven’t taken three steps when the boom knocks me into a deluge of water. Blinded by the spray, I get up and swing wildly and randomly. I sense more than I hear the captain’s voice:

“For God’s sake! Move the damned gaff sail boom. It’s going to crush his skull.”

The last of his words are drowned out by the racket of the elements that conspire against us. Dieudonne Lessard, the senior crewmember, rushes forward and climbs the shroud. Before he reaches the tiller, I hear a roar that fills me with terror. It is the raucous and harrowing cry of an animal being slaughtered. Above me, trapped between the block and the runner and tackle, Lessard is swinging, hanging in the void.

“Dammit!” the captain bellows “His hand is caught. He’s going to lose his whole arm!” He hesitates a moment then, resolutely, takes the big colt that he always carries with him out of his back pocket. He fires it three times at the block. With the last shot, the block strap flies into pieces and the poor man, freed, collapses like a rag onto the deck.

The boom continues to crash with increasing violence against the side. Like a jack-in-the-box, a figure suddenly appears from the deckhouse, his head bare and his hair windblown. He is still wearing his white jacket. It’s Jackie, our cook. He grabs the axe out of my hands with brutal force and swears:

“Thundering Jesus! What the hell are you doing over here? Go look after that guy who’s hurt…. I’ll get the son-of-a-bitch.”
Bracing himself with his legs, he cuts the gooseneck with a single swing of the axe. The sea swallows up the boom along with all its tackle and apparel. There is nothing left on the mast but a scrap of canvas and two little gaskets that flap desperately in the wind.

Satisfied, Jackie pushes his chaw to the other cheek and goes back into his kitchen humming.

The mizzen useless, we have to hoist the flying jib to the foresail mast, which is still intact. The sailors get right to the task, but the relentless gales rip it out of their chapped hands.

“You idiots” roars the cook as he re-emerges on the deck. “Grab me the leech rope and stuff it under your belly.” Then, putting words to action, he grabs hold of the flying jib and secures it to the foot of the foresail mast. In two seconds, the sail is raised and unfurls with a dry snap. The Annie, instead of lashing about aimlessly, is carried forward of its own impetus. The deck is littered with sections of boom, bits of rope, broken blocks, and rigging screws, all tangled up. It looks like a cyclone had blown through. Thank God we got out of that mess!

I go down into the deckhouse to check on Lessard. Bits of broken bottles are scattered on the floor linoleum. A stale smell catches my throat. The captain, his head cradled in his fists, is taking stock of his sailor. The thick red nape of his neck contrasts sharply with the patient’s extreme pallor. Hearing the glass crunch beneath my feet the captain raises his head slowly and, with a wave of his hand, signals me to be quiet.

Dieudonne Lessard is lying on his back, his eyes rolled back in his head. Intermittent and halting breathing causes his oilskin to rise. Bellanger takes his pulse and murmurs in a voice charged with emotion: Come on, old man. Hang in there, goddammit.”

I approach on tip toe and try in vain to undo the injured’s collar with my hands, numb from the spray. A strong, rough hand pushes me off. It’s Jackie again. He pops off the collar button and cuts off the sleeve of the oilskin with his sailor’s knife. We see the hideous wound, bleeding like a piece of butchered meat. Lessard half opens his eyes and a helpless groan causes his hairy chest to rise. With all the authority of a physician, the cook declares:

“That has to be incised right away. Damned gangrene could poison the mate. He’ll be lucky if he keeps the arm.

I glance over at the captain. His big lower lip is trembling with fear. Before answering, he looks over at me as if to ask for my advice. I swallow hard and stammer flatly: “For the love of God, do it fast.”

The cook rolls his sleeves up over his tattooed arms and whistles Yankee Doodle. “Well, gentlemen, it’s settled. Since both bosses are agreed, let’s do it. You cap,’ hold his head, and you, Mr. Revillon, immobilize his legs. We can’t have the patient lashing about in the stretcher.

After cracking his knuckles, he takes a razor out of his pocket, sharpens it on the leather of his belt, sterilizes it in the flame of the stove and then straps down the patient’s arm with a ropeband at shoulder height. His movements are precise, his calm unshakable. A grin of satisfaction reveals his teeth. With his steel-blue eye, he judges the size of the wound. Then, with a decisive movement, he cuts into the flesh right to the bone.
The blood spurts out, Lessard screams, my head turns and I grab onto Bellanger’s arm to avoid fainting.

"Jesus Christ!" the ‘surgeon’ chuckles. “Just what I need! The boss getting sick.”

A gust of fresh air gets me back on my feet. The cook, stomping impatiently, has opened the door. He yells in a commanding voice as if he were the captain instead of the cook:

“You bunch of good-for-nothings, quick, get a bucket of sea water. It’s still the best disinfectant.”

Sea water is obviously not hard to come by. All we have to do is collect the spray that’s crashing onto the upper deck. Jackie, always sure of himself, starts to wash out the gaping wound in the middle of which I see the shining white of the humerus. The screaming intensifies. I can’t take it anymore and escape, plugging my ears.

On deck, my glance falls first on the storm jib. God bless the Bradford weavers! The canvas, stiff as a sheet of steel, still holds.

I feel a hand on my arm. The wound having been dressed, Bellanger has come to join me.

“It’s going better down below. The poor guy is resting.”

With that, he shows me the Hamilton Inlet promontory, far in the west, illuminated by a ray of sunshine. To enter into Aviktok Bay, we must avoid a long series of reefs from which the raging sea seems to be mounting an attack.

We have two equally perilous choices: we can stay at the cape until the storm subsides—in other words, stay and continue our struggle, or, alternatively, we could try to enter the mouth of the channel with our lucky storm jib in order to find shelter in the bay. Putting about in the middle of a storm with our limited means is a rash undertaking, but the men’s endurance has reached its limit. We must be done with it regardless of the cost!

Bellanger turns toward me: “Are you willing to take responsibility?” I answer without looking at him. “God help us.”

He signals to the sailors. “Let’s go... by the Grace of God!”

At once the sail is rigged and we try turning into the wind. The Annie, head on to the sea, rears up and won’t react to the rudder. We’re too slow and three feet of canvas isn’t enough surface to push us forward. The cook/surgeon has resumed his place in the lazaret. Amid the drunken dance of the wind and sea he is cocky.

“Will she make it or won’t she?”

“She’ll make it,” Bellanger growls, exasperated, and sure enough, the sail unfolds briskly once, twice, then the wind sweeps in and swells the sail, and flaps tight with a loud snap.

With each passing minute, the coast grows nearer. Before long, the first reefs loom to the port side. Quickly the noise of the surface becomes deafening. I feel like screaming: “Turn it around! Let’s get out of here while we still can.”

Bellanger raises his back against the squall and shouts sentences at me of which I only catch fragments. I think I make out the word ‘oil.’ The other men understand before I do and dash toward the hold where the barrels are stashed. Taking advantage of the lean of the ship to the port side, they haul down one of the heavy barrels, but they don’t have the strength to hold it up.
The large barrel escapes them and rolls heavily along the floor, knocking them down like bowling pins.

“Jesus, it’s hopping down there,” laughs Jackie, emerging from the steerage door. He looks the men up and down and says with scorn: “Come on, boys, toss that little cask onto my shoulder.”

He stiffens up his leg, takes in a noisy breath and doesn’t even teeter under the weight of the 150 litres that it took all his mates together great difficulty to hoist onto his back. Having arrived on the foredeck, he puts down his load between the windlass and the davit, fills the ladle to the brim, and, like a cordon bleu chef concocting a mayonnaise, deftly pours the liquid through the anchor pipe. A thin greasy film spreads across the surface of the water, but it’s not having enough of an effect: the waves continue to break.

Bellanger shrugs his shoulders: “We need to suspend the barrel from the front end of the boat, but with this bitch of a storm, who would dare risk their skin on the bowsprit?”

“I will, of course” snickers the cook. “I always do the dirty work. All right boys, pass me the barrel and moor it well. I’ll take my turn on the roller coaster.”

This time Bellanger hesitates. In the back of his head is he thinking that this would be a good way to dispose of a rascal? Who knows what goes on in the mind of an honest man in such moments. Finally he makes up his mind and, in a slightly hoarse voice, declares:

“Allright, then. Since you’re offering, go ahead my boy, but make sure to secure your feet to the bobstay and be careful not to let go of the staysail.”

In an instant Jackie straddles the rail and slides out to the end of the mast. Each time the bowsprit plunges, he disappears completely. I close my eyes to avoid watching this nightmarish spectacle.

Check out the acrobatics,” Bellanger bellows to me. “As laden-down as he is, he’ll get carried out to sea.”

Finally, there’s a lull in the storm and the cook, taking advantage of the auspicious moment, manages to hook the barrel, and with his teeth, rips out the deep set marlinspike from the bung. The viscous liquid—it’s seal oil—runs out, but a giant wave overwhelms him. He struggles, drenched to the bone, and after an amazing recovery is back straddling the bowsprit.

“Yee haw. There you go,” he shouts, proud as a peacock.

“Get back down here,” the captain yells. “Quit foolin’ around.”

This time he listens. He boldly slides in the reverse direction and collapses, out of breath, on the davit, still trying to show off. I take him by the arm. His teeth are chattering.

“Come on, Jackie, I have some warm clothes in my cabin. Now that you’ve risked being drowned, no point in risking pneumonia.”

I try to slip a reefer jacket on him. He’s shaking so hard that he can’t quite find the armhole. Huddled together, we reach the deckhouse door. Dammit! It opens to the outside and I have to fight the wind, which is pushing the door against us. Finally we make it to my cabin. A relative calm, which we find wonderful, replaces the deafening roar outdoors. Nevertheless, my books are dancing up a storm on my floor and my embroidered slippers prance from one end of the room to the other.
I help Jackie take off his wet clothes and I roll him up, completely naked, in my blankets. Reassured as to his condition, I return with haste to the deck. The oil did the trick and the waves are no longer breaking. Our situation is still critical, though. We are less than two miles from land and the surf sounds like a pack of lunatics all howling at once. At the helm, Bellanger, his expression impenetrable, doesn’t take his eyes off the narrow that opens up on the Aviktok Bay. I ask him anxiously: “Well cap, are we going to make it?”

“Yes, if the foresail holds,” he grumbles into the wind, which makes his moustache stand on end.

“And if it doesn’t hold?”

“If it doesn’t hold? Well, we won’t be able to steer; the Annie’ll be smashed against the rocks.”

“Lost with all hands and cargo?”

“You said it.”

I am overwhelmed by a paralyzing terror. Is it the prospect of dying? No, an inhuman fatigue keeps me from thinking. After 36 hours, everything is overshadowed by the need to fight on to the end. The Annie struggles magnificently against the storm. All of a sudden I hear the captain yelp: “Dump the oil from the second barrel over the starboard side (the side from which the wind is blowing).”

The sailors tip the barrel and the liquid gushes out. This time, the result is instantaneous. The sea levels off as if enchanted, and our schooner, taking advantage of the respite, continues on its way into the calm waters of the bay. On the rocks, flocks of penguins emit cries that sound to me like cheers. They seem to be applauding us with their flippers. Saved! We’re saved!

Deliriously happy, I leap into Bellanger’s arms!

Translated by Hilary Young, emended by Elaine Maloney
pline onboard vessels is often considered a necessary feature of sea life, associated with the risks faced daily by the crew. Very strict rules governing conduct onboard contrasted by a laisser-faire attitude on land is typically associated with values of the sailing world of this era. However, cruelty, abuse, exploitation and suffering could lead to rebellions and mutinies at sea (Judith Fingard in Ian McKay 1993:25).

It is in this context of brutality that we need to understand Victor Revillon’s telling of two Inuit hired to work on the Annie E. Geele. When the ship caught fire, one of them motioned to escape. Victor Revillon, who was onboard, describes how the Captain hit the sailor on the head with an axe to prevent him from abandoning the ship, thus causing the death of the Inuk (Revillon 1980:287 & 297).

Michèle Therrien (1993:104-106) compares words used in French and in the language of the Inuit to describe partners in the fur trade of this era. On the one hand, Victor Revillon was using the word client to refer to hunters and trappers. Considering goods were exchanged for fur, thinking of the hunters and trappers as clients may have been appropriate from the company’s perspective. Still, the Inuit were sellers in the fur trade. The chosen French word, client, did not emphasize the sale in the exchange. It rather positioned the Inuit as buyers and Revillon Frères as the provider of desired goods. In fact tea, sugar, flour, equipment, etc. were obtained prior to departure for a hunting trip and reimbursed, with furs, upon return. In this system, a debt was erased rather than a sale made. According to Therrien, it is possible these economical relationships influenced the vocabulary adopted by the Inuit in their own language. For example, in words like niuviaq (desired object owned by the seller), niuqruti (what the Inuk traded to obtain it), and niuviaq (the obtained object) there is no connotation of substituting items of comparable value. In other words like tauqsiguti (to be exchanged) and tauqsiaq (obtained), the notion of substitution of comparable items is clearly implied. Therrien argues an exchange upon arrival or when parties meet rather than a substitution of equivalent goods is associated with words like niuvirviq (place where one sells or buys) or niuviqti (the person responsible for selling or buying) which are commonly used today. It seems then that the vocabulary used by both European and Inuit traders underlines discrepancies in the status of those involved in the economic venture as well as in the value of the exchanged objects.

Based on the evidence from these various sources, we must consider respective expectations indeed may have differed in many respects, including manning a schooner. However, the specific story we are concerned with here does have a happy ending. The hardships the Inuit experienced during their roundtrip appear to fare in the range of typically unavoidable challenges lived on the ocean. A certain level of exploitation may be associated with the lack of communication about these risks to the Inuit, by representatives of Revillon
Frères in Qamani’tuaq, but there is no reason to think this was done maliciously. Like writers would later depict, the Revillon representatives in the North were probably not focusing on the dangers and difficulties such endeavours entailed. It is possible that this information was lacking because such things might have been taken for granted by the white crew members of the Jean Revillon. In fact, there is absolutely no evidence that any of the Inuit crew mates were coerced to take part in this ‘experiment.’ The 1925 roundtrip has nothing to do with press-gang, the kidnapping of men enrolled without their consent which was routinely occurring in Europe and Canada at the end of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth century (see Cordingly 2001). To the contrary, through discussions with Inuit who had first-hand knowledge or family lore about the story, it became clear that the Revillon Frères Company actually had a very positive reputation among the Inuit of that area.

Many factors were involved in establishing the relationship between Revillon Frères and the four Inuit sailors in 1925. In Qamani’tuaq, as in the Kivalliq region at large, trapping had increased in importance, drawing more Inuit families into its sphere. Thus, contacts with Qablunaat were becoming regularized. Additionally, in the decade prior to the voyage, caribou had been scarce, causing widespread starvation (Kigjugalik Webster 2001:34). It seems likely that Inuit would be looking for opportunities to expand their economic resources as a result. This voyage may very well fit within that effort and we have also argued that Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and Louis Taapatai were explorers in this story, daring people who ventured into areas largely unknown to them at that time (Fletcher 1998; Daveluy et al. 1998b). Indeed, this trip may be linked to the fact that these four men became leaders in their respective communities. The destabilizing effect of contact with Southerners, and particularly with governance, has been a prominent feature of understanding Inuit and Euro-Canadian relations, but the account of the Roundtrip shows that alternative readings of early historical contacts between the South and the North may be in order.

It is very difficult to determine the occupation of space in the interior of the Kivalliq prior to 1900. Archaeological evidence is sparse, as is written documentation. Csonka (1995, 1992), Burch (1986) and Birket-Smith (1931) all suggest that Inuit occupation more than two hundred kilometres inland from the coast was rare in the early 1800s. At this time, it seems the Chipewyan or Deneh peoples from the west used the area intensively in the summer for caribou hunting. In the first half of the 19th century, according to Burch (1986), Inuit rarely ventured far inland with the exception of the Baker Lake area. In the mid 1800s there were indications that epidemic illness decimated the Deneh population causing them to essentially abandon the caribou summering areas. The population decline of the Deneh coincided with a population increase among the Inuit. Consequently, they moved further inland and a cultural differentia-
tion of sub-populations occurred. New modes of adaptation were seen in these migrant populations. The harvesting of marine resources was abandoned for a year-round reliance on caribou, musk-ox and, to a lesser extent, fish. Thus, prior to 1900, the interior Kivalliq is a transitional zone between Inuit and Deneh occupation (Burch 1978).

The significance of the interaction between Inuit and the fur trading companies in the second half of the 19th century is in the effect it had on the specialization of Inuit economy. The Hudson Bay Company post at Churchill opened in the 1700s and attracted primarily Cree Indians in the surrounding area. Inuit visits to this post were sporadic until the 1800s when trade intensified. Prior to intensive trading, people hunted marine mammals and caribou seasonally and equally. With the initiation of trade at Churchill they were encouraged to trade marine mammal oil and blubber (not furs) for imported goods. As a result, the staple food for Inuit shifted to caribou and the economic foundation of society became precarious.

The Kazan River migration was in response to caribou depletion and focused on musk-ox—the only other large land animal available. Fish seem to have been a constant backup resource throughout the transitional period. However, catching enough fish to survive seems to have been difficult. According to Csonka (2000), there were spiritual constraints on fish consumption as well.

Birket-Smith’s volume on the expedition to the inland Kivalliq states that the Qaerniqtumiut, that is the Inuit at Qamani’tuac (Baker Lake) were, at that time, in contact with at least seven other groups. They were 1) Aivilingmiut at Roe’s Welcome who are a part of the Iglulingmiut people; 2) Utkuhigualingmiut and Haningajormiut at Back River, these people are Netsilingmiut; 3) Arviligjuarmiut from Pelly Bay (migrants into Aivilik territory); 4) Copper Eskimos from Bathurst Inlet and Ogden Bay who come to collect wood on the Thelon River; 5) Chipewyan (Deneh) Indians to the South West; 6) Cree Indians to the South at Churchill; 7) White traders at the Hudson Bay Company, Revillon Frères Company and independent trading posts. As mentioned earlier, they were also in regular contact with American whalers in Hudson Bay for whom they worked seasonally.

Roundtrip further documents differences between various Inuit groups and historical linkages with non-Inuit. I am certainly inspired by the need to address the co-existence of Inuit and non-Inuit in Canada while admitting differences among both groups of peoples in contact (see Daveluy 2007). It is worth noting that traces of the HBC and Revillon companies remain all over Canada. For example, to this day, buildings owned by these companies are still standing, and the proximity of these buildings in contemporary downtown Edmonton for example (as per Fig. 53), is striking. The presence of Revillon Frères in the capital of Alberta is documented in a film made in 1999 by Fitzgerald and on the buildings themselves (Ménard 1997).
In 2006, the University of Alberta purchased the Hudson Bay Company building on Jasper Avenue; it is now designated as the university’s ‘North Campus’ location. It would be interesting to complement this architectural heritage with the history of the peoples associated with them.

The population and territorial expansion of the 1800s sharply contrasts the rapid population decline of Kivalliq Inuit beginning in 1915. Ten years before the voyage of the Jean Revillon, 1915 marks the beginning of a period of severe hardship and population decline due to starvation in that part of the territory. The sole dependence on caribou that resulted from change introduced through trading was a fatal one. In the winter of 1919, Hudson Bay Company employees reported at least 100 people died of starvation (Csonka 1992:19). That year, a freezing rain storm covered the ground with a thick coat of ice, making it impossible for the caribou to feed. As a result, the animals migrated or died.

In the Revillon Frères archives in Paris, we found the original field report of Thierry Mallet who made contact with Native groups on behalf of the company,
Chapter 5: The Past as Our Collective Future

Figure 54. Plaque describing the Revillon Building in Edmonton, AB. (Photo by Lisa Hareuther, 2007.)

Figure 55. Plaque commemorating the Hudson’s Bay Company, Edmonton, AB. (Photo by Lisa Hareuther, 2007.)
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surveying the existing posts and breaking ground for new outlets (see Mallet 1925, but also 2000). In his report submitted in the fall of 1925, Captain Mallet describes his overland journey from Northern Manitoba to Nueltin and Windy Lakes in the southern Kivalliq. He discusses the disappointing number of fox furs collected that year, only 250, and states:

The poor hunt is due entirely to the lack of Caribou which did not migrate south by their usual route. The Eskimos waited in vain for them, then had to scatter on the Lakes and fish with bait through the ice for their lives. As it is, forty five died. The most harrowing stories were told to me by Mr. Simmons—who went, this winter, as far as fifty miles from Baker Lake—and by the natives themselves; eight families having waited to see me at Windy Lake last July.

(Mallet 1925:8)

It is clear there were a number of major changes in the Inuit way of life in the decades that preceded the roundtrip voyage. People from the Baker Lake area had learned to sail on whaling ships and had acted as intermediaries between the various Inuit groups in the Kivalliq region. Trading had influenced the distribution of people throughout the area and this had been a factor in the precipitous decline in population. Clearly, the decade preceding the voyage onboard the Jean Revillon was an extremely difficult one for people throughout the Kivalliq region. Savikataaq, Lionel Angutinguaq, Athanasie Angutitaq and

Figure 56. The University of Alberta bought the Hudson's Bay building in fall 2006. The building was renamed 'Enterprise Square' in October 2006 to recognize its history as a centre of commerce and its future as the home of creative and entrepreneurial activity of the U of A.
(Source: University of Alberta Website URL http://www.enterprisesquare.ualberta.ca/)
Louis Taapatai surely knew about this. We can only speculate on how this situation impacted their relationships with the traders of the area and their decision to board the schooner. However, we must look at their decision to go South in light of the difficulties faced by people throughout the region as a logical extension of the economic roles Inuit had been developing before the arrival of government representatives in the Canadian North.

This research suggests that a comprehensive understanding of the early contact period should consider Inuit as agents of change in their regions. It is also important to stress that in the process of finding out about their ancestors, the Inuit have provided an opportunity for Southerners to discover and better understand their own history as well. The creation of Nunavut was instrumental in this set of activities and in establishing an Inuit agenda as a research priority. Roundtrip may be about the past, but it certainly helps us understand the present. It even sheds light on the future. During the time it took to complete the research for Roundtrip, what may have appeared a daunting future is now unfolding fairly smoothly. Nunavut is a reality that all Canadians are beginning to recognize. In this account of the journey of four Inuit, we have had to use our imagination to fill in the blanks we knew were not void of significance. Like the fisherman’s reading of the ocean floor, we have acquired valuable experience that now belongs to our shared knowledge.

*A landsman who looks at the even surface of the sea and whose acquaintance with the bottom is limited to slightly pitched bathing beaches thinks of the seafloor as flat and level. Not so it appeared to the mind of David, who from frequent soundings with a cod line visualized it truly as composed of hills, mountain ranges, deep valleys, sharp canyons, buttes, and wide plateaus. It was futile, he knew, to drop his baited hooks in a valley, for on the tops of the ridges and shallow plateaus lay the cod, waiting for schools of herring and squid to drift over. The finding and exact location of these shallow plateaus called banks by the fishermen seems to the uninitiated, who sees only miles upon miles of waves that look everywhere the same, nothing short of marvellous. They are marked by alignments of distant islands, by cross bearings, and time courses run by the compass.*

Frank Parker Day reprinted in Bell (1995: 173)

Let us hope for many more journeys through research that will serve to strengthen the link between Inuit and Southerners.
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Tuesday October 27, 1998, A9 (Vol. 50, No 255)
Chapter 2, Figure 2, p. 8

*Hudson Bay Company post locations at Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake).* (Inuit Heritage Center)  http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/pm.php?id=record_detail&fl=0&lg=English&ex=299&rd=164302&hs=0

Chapter 2, Figure 5, p. 11

*Inuit and non-Inuit men standing outside the Hudson’s Bay Company post in Baker Lake in 1926* (Inuit Heritage Center) http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/pm.php?id=record_detail&fl=0&lg=English&ex=299&rd=164302&hs=0

Chapter 2, Figure 6, p. 11

*Inuit family arriving at Ukpikutjuq ‘Big Hips Island’, Baker Lake, 1926* (Inuit Heritage Center) http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/pm.php?id=record_detail&fl=0&lg=English&ex=299&rd=164302&hs=0

Chapter 4, Figure 45, p. 65-67

*Nunatsiaq News* Archival Piece on NunaScotia.
http://www.nunatsiaq.com/archives/nunavut980731/nvt80731_05.html

Chapter 5, Figure 56, p. 90

*The University of Alberta bought the Hudson’s Bay building in fall 2005. The building was renamed ‘Enterprise Square’ in October 2006 to recognize its history as a centre of commerce and its future as the home of creative and entrepreneurial activity of the U of A.* Source: http://www.enterprisesquare.ualberta.ca/
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Appendices

Appendix One

Sixteen photos of Inuit from the Shelburne County Museum

Sixteen photos of Inuit from the Shelburne County Museum are reproduced in the following pages with permission. In fact, the curator and director of the museum encouraged the inclusion of these photos as they are interested in receiving any information that might help identify these individuals.

Please direct all enquiries and/or submit any information you have to:

Fin Bower, Curator
Brian Savege, Director
Shelburne County Museum
20 Dock Street
Shelburne, Nova Scotia
(902) 875-3219 fax (902) 875-4141

or c/o
Shelburne Historical Society
P.O. Box 39
Shelburne, Nova Scotia
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(902) 875-3219
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Appendix Two

NunaScotia Participants 1997-2000

1997
Katherine Hauli, Igloolik
Daryl Kablalik, Kangiqsliq (Rankin Inlet)
Gabriel Karlik, Kangiqsliq (Rankin Inlet)
Nymon Killiktee, Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet)
Napatchie Kolola, Kimmirut
Romani Makkik, Igloolik
Matthewsie Nakashuk, Pangnirtung
Harvey (Qajaaq) Nutarak, Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet)
Samson Ootoovak, Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet)
Brenda Pilakapsi, Kangiqsliq (Rankin Inlet)
Leo Twerdin, Iqaluit

1998
Inukshuk Aksalnik, (no location given)
Seepoola Arnaquq, Qiktarjuaq
Winnie Arragutainaq, Sanikiluaq
Sheba Awa, Igloolik
Leanna Ellsworth, Iqaluit
Dorcas Evalik, Ikaluktutiat (Cambridge Bay)
Jeff Hart, Qamani’luxaq (Baker Lake)
Sheena Kamookak, Qoqsuqtoq (Gjoa Haven)
Allan Kunuk, Iqaluit
Amanda McLarity, Kangiqsliq (Rankin Inlet)
Noah Nashariktok, (no location given)
Angela Nutarak, Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet)

1999
Phillip Anguratsiaq, Sanirajak (Hall Beach)
Joshua Aqpik (Akpiq), Kimmirut
Marlo Attagutsiaq, Tununirusiq (Arctic Bay)
Andrea Carter, Qoqsuqtoq (Gjoa Haven)
Elissa Curley Arviat
Mary Ikkutisluk, Qoqsuqtoq (Gjoa Haven)
Joe Joanasie, Kinngait (Cape Dorset)
Jamie Kataluk, Salliq (Coral Harbour)
Julien Nasalik, Kugaaruk
Goretti Panika, Kangiqsliq (Rankin Inlet)
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2000
Jimmy Aipellee, Kangiqtugaapik (Clyde River)
Lorna Ell, Kangiqsliniq (Rankin Inlet)
Benjamin Hainnu, Kangiqtugaapik (Clyde River)
Cindy Kilabuk, Tununirusiq (Arctic Bay)
Genevive Killulark, Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake)
Jeff Kolaohok, Kugluktuk
Tina Muckpaloo, Tununirusiq (Arctic Bay)
Lucie Ottokie, Kinngait (Cape Dorset)
Sharon Owlejoot, Kangiqsliniq (Rankin Inlet)
Rick Oyukuluk, Tununirusiq (Arctic Bay)

GROUP LEADERS
Qajaq Robinson, Iqaluit
Kyle Tattuinee, Kangiqsliniq (Rankin Inlet)
Jimmy Onalik
Bernice Lyall
Elisapee Ikkidluak
Bernadette Dean
Terry Ma

PROGRAM ASSISTANTS
Karly Kehoe
Marni Amirault
Zac Meese
Brad Johnson