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**ECONOMY** Art, craft, food, and many other cooperatives date from the late 1950s. The Torngat Fish Producers Cooperative Society runs local fisheries operations. The Makivik Corporation, set up under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) (see "Daily Life"), manages tens of millions of dollars in development funds and represents the Inuit of northern Quebec on environmental, resource, and constitutional issues. Other JBNQA corporations manage interests in air transport, construction, communications, and cultural activities. Many people depend on government employment and assistance. Subsistence, especially fishing, is most important in northern Labrador. Associated cultural behaviors and traditions, such as sharing, remain correspondingly relatively strong.

**LEGAL STATUS** Inuit are considered "nonstatus" native people. Most Inuit communities are incorporated as hamlets and are officially recognized. The communities listed under "Government/Reservations" are provincially and federally recognized.

**DAILY LIFE** The Northern Quebec Inuit Association (1971) approved the JBNQA in 1975. It provided for local and regional administrative power as well as some special rights in the areas of land use, education, and justice. There was also monetary compensation. This controversial agreement divided the Inuit on the issue of aboriginal land rights. The opposition, centered in the locally based cooperative movement, formed the Inuit Tungavingat Nunami (ITN). This group rejects the JBNQA, including the financial compensations, carrying on its opposition activities through local levies on carvings.

A cultural revival beginning in the 1980s led to the creation of museums, cultural centers, and various studies and programs. Newspapers, air communication, television, and telephone reach even remote villages. Education is locally controlled from grades 1-12, although the curriculum differs little from those in non-native communities. Issues there include mineral and other development versus protecting renewable resources. Many local committees and associations, such as the Labrador Women's Group (1978), provide needed social, recreational, and other services. Many Labrador Inuit still experience some ongoing racial conflict.

Traditional and modern coexist, sometimes uneasily, for many Inuit. Full-time doctors are rare in the communities. Housing is often of poor quality. Most people are Christians. Culturally, although

many stabilizing patterns of traditional culture have been destroyed, many remain. Many people live as part of extended families. Adoption is widely practiced. Decisions are often taken by consensus.

### **Inuit, Mackenzie Delta**

See Inuvialuit

### **Inuit, North Alaska**

See Inupiat

### **Inupiat**

Inupiat (In `ū pē ut) "the People," an Inuit name covering the Eskimo or Inuit groups formerly known to anthropologists as Bering Strait, Kotzebue Sound, sometimes West Alaska, and North Alaska Eskimos. The last group has also been divided into two groups: coastal people, or Tareumiut, and the land-oriented Nuunamiut.

**LOCATION** The Inupiat lived in northwest and northern Alaska, from about Norton Sound and the Seward Peninsula (with offshore islands) north and east to about the Canadian border, including the North Slope-Barrow region. This is considered to have been one of the world's most productive sea mammal regions. Many Inupiat still live in this area.

**POPULATION** There were perhaps 9,500 Inupiat in the mid-nineteenth century. The population in the early 1990s was approximately 12,000.

**LANGUAGE** Inupiat people spoke dialects of Inupiaq (Inuktitut), an Eskaleut language. Some Bering Strait Inuit spoke Yup'ik dialects.

### **Historical Information**

**HISTORY** The historic Nuunamiut (interior North Alaska people) moved into their region from the south and west from circa 1400 through about 1800. Russian explorers and traders arrived in the early to mid-eighteenth century and remained for the next 100 years or so. Whalers and traders from other countries plied the local waters from about the 1840s on (1880s in the far north). Among other things, they introduced alcohol, tobacco, and non-native diseases. Traditional patterns began to break down as well after that time.

The Nuunamiut began a sharp decline from the mid-nineteenth century on, largely owing to disease and starvation (smaller caribou herds). Most families had left the interior by 1820, drawn to the coast, although a few families began moving back around 1840. There were severe epidemics throughout the region in the 1870s and 1880s. A severe famine struck the Kotzebue Sound region in 1880-1881.

Mining began in the Bering Strait area in the

1880s. Meanwhile, imported reindeer herding, fur trapping, missionaries, and schools began to attract people to local settlements from the mid- to late nineteenth century on. Reindeer herding proved ultimately to be unsuccessful in the area. The Nome gold rush of 1898 saw the migration of many Inuit to the Nome area to sell crafts and, eventually, to work and to attend school. Anti-Inuit sentiment remained strong in Nome for some time thereafter.

Fur traders arrived around 1900, about the time of a severe measles epidemic and the near-depletion of the caribou herds. Another severe influenza epidemic struck in 1918. In the early twentieth century, the federal government assumed responsibility for Inuit education. To a greater extent even than the churches, the government increased the pressure to acculturate. For instance, government schools punished people severely for speaking their native language. The only high schools were located away from Inupiat-speaking centers.

The people experienced a general population growth after World War II, attributable to the return of the caribou, the introduction of moose into the region, and government efforts against disease. The far north took on strategic importance during the Cold War, about the same time that vast mineral reserves became known and technologically possible to exploit. Oil was discovered on the North Slope in 1968. Most jobs that Inuit were able to obtain were unskilled menial. Furthermore, with radical diet changes, the adoption of a sedentary life, and the appearance of drugs and alcohol, their health declined markedly.

In the late 1950s, Inupiat people began organizing politically over the U.S. government's threat to use nuclear weapons to build a deep-water port as well as over bird hunting restrictions. The Seward Peninsula Native Association, Alaska Federation of Natives, Inupiat Paitot, Northwest Alaska Native Association, and North Slope Native Association formed as a result of this activism. Land issues also gave rise to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971. The settlement gave the people legal rights to millions of acres of land and shares in corporations worth millions of dollars in exchange for their cession of aboriginal title. Major land conservation laws were enacted in 1980.

**RELIGION** Religious belief was based on the existence of spirit entities found in nature. In particular, the spirits of game animals allowed themselves to be caught only if they were treated properly. Respect was expressed in behaviors such as maintaining a separation between land and sea hunting, opening the head of an animal just killed in order to allow its spirit to escape, speaking well of game animals, offering sea

mammals a drink of cold water and land animals knives or needles, and many other taboos, rituals, and ceremonies as well as certain songs and charms.

Among whale hunters, personal spirit songs that were purchased or inherited were used to make the hunt more successful. Whale and caribou hunters and their wives were required to observe many rituals and taboos. Whaling ceremonies along the north coast and caribou ceremonies inland were the most important rituals, representing a sort of world renewal.

Male and older female shamans (*angakok*) provided religious leadership by virtue of their connection with the spirit world. They also participated in regular economic activities. They could cure disease and see into the future. Illness was seen as owing to soul loss and/or violation of taboos. Curing methods included interrogation about taboo adherence, trancelike communication with spirit helpers, and performance, including singing and sucking. (Non-spiritual ailments included infected eyes and respiratory problems, stomach diseases, boils, and lice.) Shamans might also be accused of and killed for causing a death.

**GOVERNMENT** Nuclear or small extended families were loosely organized into fluid local groups (*-miuts*) associated with geographical areas. These local groups occasionally came together as small, fluid, autonomous bands (family groups; tribes) of between 20 and 200 bilaterally related people. The bands were also geographically identified but were not political entities; their names carried the *-miut* suffix. People within them depended on each other for subsistence support and spoke the same subdialect. Several distinct societies of bands had formed in the interior north by the mid-nineteenth century.

Family heads (*umialik*, literally umiak captain, or whaling leader) were usually older men, with little formal authority and no power. Leaders generally embodied Inuit values, such as generosity, and were also good hunters. Within the context of a basically egalitarian society, they were relatively wealthier (owing to their following) and had more status than other men. Their main responsibilities included directing hunt, trade, and diplomatic activities. The *umialik* and his wife were also responsible for food redistribution.

Among the northern Inupiat, leaders might also impose their will on women as well. Potential leaders often competed with each other to hold their crews or hunters by such means as wife exchange and gift giving. Additional wives generally meant additional followers, wealth, and power. Leaders there might oversee not only the hunt but also religious ceremonies, festivals, and trade.

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larger hunting (sea and land) forays, but mainly they remained in family groups. The Bering Strait and Kotzebue Sound tribes had principal winter villages. Each had one or more chiefs for each local group residing in the village. The chief(s) and a council oversaw local and intertribal affairs.

**CUSTOMS** Kinship networks were the most important social structure as well as the key to survival in terms of mutual aid and cooperative activity. This arrangement also led to ongoing blood feuds: An injury to one was perceived as an injury to the whole kin group and called for revenge.

Nonkin men teamed up for hunting or trade purposes. Such defined partnerships might include temporary wife exchanges, which were considered as a kind of marriage (interestingly, at least among the Bering Strait people, relations considered adulterous were harshly dealt with). Joking relationships between unrelated men also furthered mutual aid and support and served to reduce tension and conflict. Nonkin relationships also included adopted people and people who had the same name.

In some Bering Strait Inuit villages, family groups lived on patrilineally inherited plots of land. In larger groups, food was generally turned over to the *umialik* and his wife, who redistributed it according to various priorities. Generosity was highly valued. When hunters brought in a whale or caribou, no one went hungry. Hard work and individual freedom were other key values, the latter within the context of kinship associations.

Southerners especially celebrated fall and winter Messenger Feasts, in which a neighboring group was invited to feast and dance. Social status was related to largesse on these occasions, which were similar to potlatches. They brought some north Alaska Inuit together with some Athapaskan Indians.

People married simply by announcing their intentions, although infants were regularly betrothed. Marriage was considered to be mainly a kinship-building exercise. Successful hunters might have more than one wife, but most had only one. Divorce, or the end of cohabitation, was easy to obtain, especially before many children had been born. It was also the case that men might try to dominate women, including raping them, in their or another's household. In this endeavor the "bully" was usually backed by members of his kinship group (as, in fact, older women might occasionally, by virtue of their supposed magical powers, capture a young man for a husband).

Infanticide was rare and usually practiced against females. Children were highly valued and loved, especially males. They were raised by the women with a great deal of liberty. Names, usually of dead relatives,

were associated with specific food taboos. The sick or aged were sometimes abandoned, especially in times of scarcity. Death was attended by a minimum of ritual. Corpses were removed through skylights and left on the tundra. A mourning period of four or five days ensued, during which all activity ceased, and a feast was often held a year after a relative's death.

Tensions were relieved by playing games, joking, and competitive song duels, in which men took turns insulting each other in witty songs. Ostracism and even death were reserved for the most serious cases of socially inappropriate behavior, although punishment by death often led to blood feuds. Amusements included competitive gambling games, song contests, dancing, wrestling, and storytelling, especially in midwinter in the men's houses called *kashims*.

**DWELLINGS** The regular winter dwelling was a semiexcavated, domed, driftwood and sod house, roughly 12–15 feet long. Moss was placed between the interior walls and the sod for insulation. There was a separate kitchen with a smoke hole and storage niches off the entrance tunnel, which descended into a meat cellar and ended at a well that led up to the main room. The houses held from 8 to 12 people (two families). Inside were raised sleeping platforms and suspended drying racks. Stretched gut or ice served as windows.

Some groups also used a dome-shaped wooden structure covered with skins or bark and also temporary snow or ice houses. Interior groups also used willow-frame dome tents covered with caribou skin, bark, or grass. Some Bering Strait people built wood frame summer houses.

Larger men's houses (*kashim*) were present in communities with more than a few families. Reserved for men and boys by day, they became a family social center at night. They were also used for ceremonies and other activities and, along the coast, were associated with whaling crews.

**DIET** The Tareumiut and some Bering Strait and Kotzebue Sound people depended mainly on marine life such as seals, bowhead and beluga whales, and walrus, whereas the Nuunamiut hunted mainly caribou. Whale meat was stored in the permafrost and generally provided a reliable food source from season to season. Northern groups hunted whales from umiaks in spring and seal and walrus through the ice in winter.

The Kotzebue Sound and some Bering Strait people had a mixed land and marine hunting economy. Game animals included fowl, mountain sheep, bear, wolves, wolverines, hares, squirrels, and foxes. Men and women fished year-round.

Game was generally divided among the hunting party according to a precise set of rules. Food was

often boiled, often with fat or blubber, although fish was also eaten frozen. Dogs were often fed walrus or human feces mixed with oil. The Bering Strait and Kotzebue Sound people also gathered a variety of greens, berries, and roots in summer.

**KEY TECHNOLOGY** Stone-tipped, toggle-headed harpoons were attached to wooden floats and inflated sealskins to create drag on a submerging whale. Floats were also used to keep a slain whale from sinking before it could be towed to shore.

Hunting equipment included spears, bow and arrow, bolas (strings attached to stone balls to bring down birds), deadfalls, traps, and snares. The atlatl was used to throw sealing darts or harpoons. Fishing equipment included hooks, weirs, nets, traps, and spears. People used a variety of mainly stone and ivory butchering tools; some were fashioned of antler and driftwood as well. The key women's tool was a crescent-shaped knife. The Bering Strait people made some grass baskets and mats.

Boiling pots might be made of driftwood or pottery. Other important items included baleen seal nets; bone needles and sinew thread; carved wooden trays, dishes, spoons, and other objects; a bow drill to start fires and drill holes; sun goggles; and carved soapstone (north) or pottery (Bering Strait and Kotzebue Sound) cooking pots and lamps (the latter burned seal oil using moss wicks). Local stone around Kotzebue Sound included chert, slate, and jade. There was also some birch bark around Kotzebue Sound that the people made into containers.

**TRADE** The two groups of northern Inupiat were mutually dependent, trading whale products, such as skin, oil, and blubber, for caribou skins on a regular basis. Other trade items included fish, driftwood, other skins, and ivory labrets.

Summer trade fairs were widely attended. The one at Sheshalik, on Kotzebue Sound, may have attracted 2,000 or more people. The other large northern Alaska trade fair was held in Nigalik (Colville River Delta) and was attended by Yup'ik people as well as Athapaskan Indians. In addition to trade, fairs included private contact between various partners, dancing, feasts, and competitions.

Kotzebue trade fairs were also attended by Siberians, who exchanged jade, pottery, reindeer skins, and beads for local products. Native Siberians (Chukchi) also provided Russian goods from the late seventeenth century on.

**NOTABLE ARTS** Most art objects were ceremonial in nature. They included carved wooden and ivory objects, such as labrets, masks, and marionettes.

**TRANSPORTATION** The basic hunting vehicle was the one- or two-person closed skin kayak. Several men could hunt whales in umiaks (skin-covered open

boats with a driftwood frame between 15 and 50 feet long). Umiaks might also hold 2,000 pounds of cargo. The people also used wooden sleds with iced runners. Dogs pulled (or helped pull) the sleds after about 1500. Some interior people used snowshoes.

**DRESS** Women tanned skins and made sealskin and caribou-skin clothing, some with fur trim. In winter, people wore two suits of parkas and pants. The inner suit was worn with the fur turned in, whereas the outer had the fur turned out. Other winter clothing included mittens and hoods (women's were extra large for carrying babies). Clothing in the Kotzebue Sound area was sewn from untanned skins.

Other items of clothing included skin socks, boots of caribou skin and chewed seal-hide soles, and waterproof outer jackets of sewn sea mammal intestine. Men wore labrets, the lip being pierced around puberty. Many women had three lined tattoos down the chin. Babies wore moss and ptarmigan feather diapers. In general, clothing in this area exhibited considerable regional diversity.

**WAR AND WEAPONS** Fighting was generally a matter of kin group involvement and remained limited in scope if not in time. Strangers outside of the kinship or alliance system were considered potential enemies and could be killed on sight, their goods and women taken. Blood feuds were the result of the lack of overall conflict-resolution structures. Fighting also took place among rival trade groups. Also, territory was defended against neighboring groups. The enemies of the Bering Strait people included Siberian Inuit and also nearby Athapaskan Indians. Some interior north Alaska groups were friendly with Athapaskan Koyukon and unfriendly with Athapaskan Kutchin. Hunting equipment generally doubled as weapons, except that some groups also wore armor.

**Contemporary Information**

**GOVERNMENT/RESERVATIONS** Regional political structures include the North Slope Borough (1972) and the Northwest Arctic Borough (1986). There are 11 permanent villages of the Kotzebue region, all of which have electricity and telephone service. Government is by elected mayors and city councils. There is also a northern interior village of Anaktuvuk Pass, which has been settled mainly since the early 1950s. Barrow and Kotzebue are far-northern cities.

**ECONOMY** Important sources of income among Northwest Arctic Borough people include the Red Dog Mine, the school system, and the government. Among people in the North Slope Borough, sources of income are mainly local government and the oil industry. Employment opportunities also exist in the cities of Kotzebue and Barrow. Many people also

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count on government assistance. Chukchi Sea Trading Company is a cooperative of Inuit women from Point Hope who sell arts and crafts on the World Wide Web. In general, because most subsistence activities take place in winter, and most wage work is available in summer, the Inupiat have made a relatively successful adaptation to new economic opportunities while maintaining traditional subsistence activities.

**LEGAL STATUS** The regional corporations under ANCSA are Arctic Slope, Bering Straits, and Nana. Other ANCSA entities include the Maniilaq and Inupiat Community Nonprofit Corporations of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation.

**DAILY LIFE** In response to severe problems with substance abuse, several communities have restricted or eliminated the sale of alcohol. Other efforts to remedy the problems are ongoing. Severe radioactive pollution exists around the Cape Thompson area. This is caused by the use by the Atomic Energy Commission (predecessor to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission) of the area as a nuclear dump and its conduct of nuclear experiments using local plant and animal life as well as by Soviet nuclear waste dumping. Negotiations over cleanup are ongoing.

Curricula and, in fact, control of education, shifted to local authorities beginning in the 1970s. Preservation and instruction of native culture are part of this effort. The native trade fair in Kotzebue follows the Fourth of July celebration, and the Messenger Feast is held in Barrow in January.

Most Inupiat people have access to all modern air and electronic transportation and communication. Most speak English as a first language, although most adults are bilingual. With the construction of roads from Anaktuvuk Pass to the North Slope oil fields, many people think that that town will some day be abandoned.

### Inuvialuit

Inuvialuit (I'n ū v ē a 'l ū it) is the Inuit name for the people formerly known as Mackenzie Delta Eskimo or western (Canadian) Arctic Eskimo.

**LOCATION** The homeland of this group is the Mackenzie Delta region, specifically from Herschel Island to the Baillie Islands, northwest Northwest Territories.

**POPULATION** From between 2,000 and 2,500 people in the mid-eighteenth century, the Inuvialuit population was reduced to about 150 in 1910 and perhaps 10 in 1930. The mid-1990s Inuit population was about 5,000.

**LANGUAGE** Inuvialuits speak a dialect of Inuit-Inupiaq (Inuktitut), a member of the Eskaleut language family.

### Historical Information

**HISTORY** The people offered a generally friendly reception when they first met non-native traders in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. However, relations soon soured. Missionaries were active in the region by mid-nineteenth century, although few Inuvialuit accepted Christianity before 1900.

The heyday of the whaling period began in 1888, when some 1,000 non-native whalers wintered near the Mackenzie River; the region soon became a trade center as well as a haven for "frontier living" that included alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity, and death from firearms. Traditional life declined sharply, as did the population, which was further beset by a host of hitherto unknown diseases such as scarlet fever, syphilis, smallpox, and influenza. By 1920 the Inuvialuit had all but disappeared from the Yukon. Most modern Inuvialuit are descended from Inupiat groups who moved east from Alaska about that time. Indians and non-natives moved in as well.

The far north took on strategic importance during the Cold War. In 1954, the federal Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources encouraged the Inuit to abandon their nomadic life. The department oversaw the construction of housing developments, schools, and clinics. Local political decisions were made by a community council subject to non-native approval and review. In 1959, the "government" town of Inuvik was founded as an administrative center.

Inuits generally found only unskilled and menial work. They also survived through dependence on government payments. With radical diet changes, the adoption of a sedentary life, and the appearance of drugs and alcohol, health declined markedly. The Committee for Original People's Entitlement (COPE), founded in 1969, soon became the political voice of the Inuvialuit. Oil and gas deposits were found in the Beaufort Sea in the 1970s.

**RELIGION** Religious belief and practice were based on the need to appease spirit entities found in nature. Hunting, and specifically the land-sea dichotomy, was the focus of most rituals and taboos, such as that prohibiting sewing caribou skin clothing in certain seasons. The people also recognized generative spirits, conceived of as female and identified with natural forces and cycles.

Male and female shamans (*angakok*) provided religious leadership by virtue of their connection with guardian spirits. They could also control the weather, improve conditions for hunting, cure disease, and divine the future. Illness was perceived as stemming from soul loss and/or the violation of taboos and/or the anger of the dead. Curing methods

