The Inuvialuit Smithsonian Project: Winter 2009-Spring 2011

The Project Comes Into Being

Inuvialuit take great interest in their past, as a source of identity to serve the present, and as a foundation to look to the future. The project described in this report came into being through the work of many people with knowledge of an important but little-known collection of objects housed at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. Called the MacFarlane Collection after the Hudson's Bay trader who assembled the objects (see details, p. 2), the collection includes nearly 5000 natural history specimens, such as birds eggs and animal skeletons, and an additional 300 cultural objects collected from Anderson River Inuvialuit in the 1860s. Few people have ever seen the collection in its entirety, as it has been in the Smithsonian’s care for nearly 150 years (p. 16-17).

In 2009, we sought to change this situation. Stephen Loring (Smithsonian Institution), Catherine Cockney (Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre), Charles Arnold (former Director of Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre), and Natasha Lyons (Ursus Heritage Consulting) raised funds to take a small group of Inuvialuit to Washington for a week-long workshop with the collection. This modest start brought much interest from the Inuvialuit and museum communities, and from the local and national media. The trip launched a much broader program of outreach with Inuvialuit youth, Elders, and community members described in these pages. At the same time, our team grew to include a wider variety of members with many skills and talents (p. 3). This report is not a final word on the project, but a summary of our work in progress. Enjoy these pages—we welcome your feedback!

Our Goals

The main goal of this project is to create greater access for Inuvialuit people to the MacFarlane Collection, which represents a rich record of their history. We are actively documenting Elders’ knowledge and youth interest in the collection and developing different ways to share this knowledge with the Inuvialuit community, and with the wider Canadian public. One of the primary ways we are accomplishing this is through the development of an interactive and educational website about the collection and the project. Our ultimate goal is to bring items from the collection to the Western Arctic for display and use in community workshops. Stay tuned!
The short life of Fort Anderson

In 1857, Roderick MacFarlane journeyed to the Anderson River with Dene guides from Fort Good Hope to look into the possibility of trading with local Inuvialuit. In his report on this expedition, he noted abundant game in the area and described the Anderson River people as “tall and well formed, active in their movements, lively in their conversation, good-humored, with smiling open countenances” (MacFarlane 1890-91:34). MacFarlane and his guides ran into some trouble, as the locals did not appreciate the arrival of Dene into their territory. MacFarlane’s guides quickly abandoned him, and MacFarlane had to leave behind a quantity of his travel rations and stores. However, MacFarlane decided that there were good trade prospects with this group of Inuvialuit, and with their relations along the coast, and it was decided that a fur trade post would be built approximately 50 km downstream of the forks on the Anderson River. The fort was completed in 1861 and was run by MacFarlane for the next five years. During this time he met naturalist Robert Kennicott, who convinced him to start collecting specimens of the region for the new Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. MacFarlane soon became an avid collector of natural and cultural artifacts, and organized lengthy expeditions to search for birds, eggs, plants, mammals, and rocks, in addition to trading many objects of daily life with the local people. These activities came to an abrupt and sad end when the post was closed due to outbreaks of measles and scarlet fever.

The MacFarlane Collection

MacFarlane assembled a collection of 5000 natural history specimens, and purchased or traded nearly 300 artifacts from Anderson River Inuvialuit. The ethnographic collection is one of the earliest from Inuvialuit territory and shows the vibrant, land-based lifestyle of the local people. The objects are very diverse—a full range of skin clothing and bags; hunting and fishing gear; domestic tools, personal jewelry, and a wide range of pipes; carving tools and artworks; and model umiats, sleds, and kayaks—and show remarkable skill by their makers. Smithsonian museum anthropologist Stephen Loring said that “MacFarlane wanted one of everything so he collected as much as he could...That is what makes this collection so unique: how extensive it is. Most museums may have one or two pieces that were given to explorers while they were on their journeys, but this was the first collection that had breadth.” The wonderful preservation of the collection has helped our team of researchers start to puzzle out many questions about the objects. For instance, while most of the objects were made locally, some also show evidence of trade networks at work (p.9). Other objects have not yet been identified (p.7). Still others are clearly Inuvialuit-made, but have fallen out of use and memory (p.10).
This project is a community-based research project derived from Inuvialuit goals to create greater access to and knowledge about the MacFarlane Collection. As a research team, we strive to have open, honest, respectful and effective communication in our working relationships. We aim to be flexible in our thinking, accept other’s ideas, and to come up with ways to integrate different viewpoints into the products we produce. We aim for each team member to contribute to project planning and to give input and feedback on the products we are developing. We have consulted extensively with Inuvialuit community members throughout the project on planning and product development (see below). Our goal for our research participants—including Inuvialuit Elders, youth, and community members—is to make them feel comfortable and safe, and to put their health and well-being first in our research activities with them.

We are pursuing a range of outreach activities in the Inuvialuit community in order to gather and share Inuvialuit knowledge about the MacFarlane collection. Following our trip to the Smithsonian in November 2009, we shared our experiences through school and community meetings (p. 6), documented Elders’ knowledge about the collection and the Anderson River area (p.7), and engaged youth interest in the collection and the project (p.8). In the winter and spring of 2011, we developed the design, structure, and content of the project website, and worked to gain feedback from community members in the ISR. The MacFarlane Collection was also launched on a museum web portal called the Reciprocal Research Network (p. 11), where it can be viewed and knowledge added by community members to each of the objects. The process we followed in putting together the various parts of the website—such as developing classroom activities (p.13) and patterns for sewing objects in the collection (p.10)—are described in these pages.

**Project Team (in alphabetical order)**

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Inuvialuit Elder and hunter, Tuktoyaktuk

“WE ARE PURSUIT A RANGE OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES IN THE INUVIALUIT COMMUNITY TO GATHER AND SHARE INUVIALUIT KNOWLEDGE.”
In November 2009, members of our delegation boarded planes in different parts of the continent to meet in Washington, DC. From the North, our group included three Inuvialuit Elders (James Pokiak, Albert Elias, Helen Gruben), two youth (Karis Gruben and Shayne Cockney), a seamstress (Freda Raddi), along with Brett Purdy, Maia Lepage and David Stewart (then of Inuvialuit Communication Society), and two of the trip organizers, Mervin Joe (Parks Canada) and Catherine Cockney (Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre). The southern contingent included anthropologists Natasha Lyons, Charles Arnold, Kate Hennessy and Stephen Loring. Our goal: to conduct an extended workshop with the MacFarlane Collection. Each day, we gathered in the climate-controlled conditions of the Smithsonian’s artifact storage facility and looked at several groups of artifacts, such as gloves, mitts, boots, and skin clothing; hunting bags and hunting gear; fishing tackle; pipes and labrets (lip plugs); sewing implements; fire starter kits; scale model kayaks and sleds. As each set of objects came out, you could see each individual light up in anticipation, ready to handle, discuss, and ponder over the items. Many of the items were familiar, while others were not. We engaged in lively discussions about how items were made, what materials were used, and if objects and materials came from near or far. Many stories were told about land-based activities and memories of the use of some of these objects (see below).

The 150 year-old artifacts in the MacFarlane Collection set many of the participants on personal research odysseys. Albert Elias said: “A lot of the objects that we saw, we haven’t seen before. I think [the collection] is a living document: a living project.” Albert was amazed by the sinew-backed bows, a technology not used for over a century in Inuvialuit territory and requiring a great deal of skill to make. Albert Elias, Mervin Joe and James Pokiak were interested in all of the hunting equipment. Because of the care provided by curators at the Smithsonian Institution, organic objects such as scoops, hoof rattles, and a firebag (all pictured left), and the bait made of scrunched baleen with pointed tips, are in near perfect condition. They were keen to talk more with Elders back home, who had knowledge of the old ways and who had trapped, fished, and hunted in the Anderson River area (p. 7). Catherine Cockney and Freda Raddi were likewise excited to re-create the skin clothing patterns, especially objects such as gloves that had fallen out of Inuvialuit memory (p. 10). After Washington, there was no shortage of work to do!

**Personal Research Odysseys**

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Documenting the workshop

The Smithsonian workshop was a start towards a much larger documentation project. We knew that this first visit with the MacFarlane Collection would lead to a program of outreach and interviews in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. However, we also sought to record the knowledge, activities, ideas, thoughts, feelings, and interactions of our group as we together discovered the collection and Washington itself. Our two youth interns, Karis Gruben and Shayne Cockney, along with many of the other participants, wrote field notes about what they saw and experienced each day. Shayne Cockney conducted interviews about the experience with several of the Elders (R). Brett Purdy also interviewed each participant as part of the two half hour documentaries that Inuvialuit Communication Society is producing about the project for APTN. Kate Hennessy, Maia Lepage, and Dave Stewart shot many of the still photos of the workshop, but of course every group member took photos and personal videos of their trip.

The work ahead

While we were in Washington, Albert Elias noted: “When we go back home and we do our presentations and we show these objects to schools and communities, their input it going to be very important too.” The various media produced about our trip are currently being transcribed, analysed, and edited for the project website (p. 12). The formal records will be housed, and copyright held, at Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre (p. 16). However, the broader goal of our current outreach work with youth, Elders, and other Inuvialuit community members is to bring wider awareness of the MacFarlane Collection, to integrate knowledge about the collection into classroom activities, and to have students and other community members and their families using the website as a place to learn more about their history and heritage. The sharing of knowledge about the collection has only just begun, and will hopefully make it part of the active lives and memories of today’s Inuvialuit.
June 2010: Outreach in the ISR

Our project team gave presentations in Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk in June 2010 to share our experiences in Washington and to consult Inuvialuit community members about the next steps of the project. On June 4th, we set up a booth at Inuvialuit Day to showcase our video work and talk with Inuvialuit beneficiaries. On June 6th, we held a public meeting at Ingamo Hall in Inuvik, attended by about 20 people (see community and teacher responses below). On June 7th, we gave school presentations to grades 4 and 5 students and teachers at Sir Alexander Mackenzie School in Inuvik, and met with Principal Janette Vlanich and teacher Margaret Gordon about how our work could best be used in classroom activities. Several students mentioned visiting the Anderson River area with their families, and visiting the Prince of Wales Heritage Centre in Yellowknife. On June 8th, we gave a presentation to grades 7 and 9 to 11 at Samuel Hearne Secondary School in Inuvik, which was also attended by Aurora College students and instructors. We also met with SHSS Principal Roman Mahnic about how our work could best be adapted to highschool curriculum. On June 9th, we gave a presentation to grades 9 to 11 at Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk with teachers Betty Elias, Janie Jones and Paul Yanchus, and talked to Mr. Yanchus about the website we were planning and how it could be integrated into classroom activities. On the evening of June 9th, we gave a public presentation at Kitty Hall to about 40 community members (see their responses below).

Responses to our presentations

Everywhere we travelled, we received a very warm reception. Our presentations resulted in lively discussions and many great questions and follow-up conversations. Educators suggested using the stories of the objects to build games, lessons, and art lessons, and the real need for ‘hands-on’ activities, no matter what grade. They mentioned that websites are actively used in classrooms, especially when they are integrated with classroom activities. Community members in Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk were interested in all aspects of our project. They wanted to know if there would be return visits to Washington DC. They were very interested in the collection: how it was collected (is there proof that items were purchased, were any re-sold, and will the collection be repatriated? p.16-17 ), information about specific objects (including much interest from seamstresses, p. 10), questions about copyright of the clothing styles and patterns (p. 16), items potentially ‘missing’ from the collection (p. 9), and evidence for trade with neighbouring Inuit and other regional groups or for scavenging from shipwrecks. Community members were keen to know more about Fort Anderson, and the families and trappers that once lived there (p. 7). Students, teachers, and community members recommended making replicas for use in school programs and exhibit (p.8, 10). The primary concern of all community members, however, is with the passing on and sharing of knowledge about the collection with younger generations of Inuvialuit. Time and again, we heard the importance of teaching Inuvialuit youth their history, and of giving them the opportunity to touch and engage with objects that represent this history. We are doing are best to address the ideas, questions, and concerns of the Inuvialuit community as we go about our work.
Elders Interviews: October 2010 & February 2011

In October 2010 and February 2011, we conducted interviews with Elders in several communities of the ISR. Our goal is to record knowledge about the artifacts in the MacFarlane Collection, such as how they were made, with what materials, and what people called them in Inuvialuktun. We are also interested in collecting knowledge about the Anderson River area and Fort Anderson, and in Elders’ perspectives about how to learn more and share knowledge about the collection. In October 2010, our team put together an interview kit with our questions and goals, as well as audio, video, and camera equipment and instructions for them. We did group training on interviewing and using the equipment. Albert Elias and Rachel Nakimayak interviewed 13 Elders in Inuvik, Paulatuk, and Tuktoyaktuk, listed at right. In February 2011, Mervin Joe and Natasha Lyons interviewed Billy Jacobson, who still today spends most of his time in the Anderson River area (below). The interviews are currently being transcribed by Letitia Pokiak and analysed by the project team. With the Elders’ consent, excerpts of text, audio, and video will be used in the project website (p. 12). We would sincerely like to thank all of the Elders we have worked with, for their knowledge, patience, and humour. We also thank the Tuktoyaktuk Elders Committee—Julia Cockney, Lucy Cockney, Jean Gruben, and John Noksana Sr.—for their interest and input in the project.

Billy Jacobson on the Anderson River

Billy Jacobson has been going to the Anderson River area since he was fourteen years old in 1949. There he met Silas Palaiyaq, an Inuvialuk who had trapped in that area for many years, who was near the end of his life (d. 1954, and see p. 15). Palaiyaq taught Billy how to make the most effective deadfalls, which he’s used for trapping ever since. Palaiyaq’s parents had known the Hudson’s Bay trader Roderick MacFarlane and told stories of him, most of which have been lost from memory. Not being able to pronounce his name, Inuvialuit called MacFarlane ‘MacPauluk’. The graves of those who died in the epidemic that caused Fort Anderson to close in 1866 are buried on the hill behind the remains of the fort. Many of the old objects have been dispersed by the eroding river and the collecting of passing trappers, hunters, and canoers. Billy remembered a time, circa the late 1930s to early 50s, when the Anderson River was once again populated, by Inuvialuit and Metis families and white trappers. Those living at Stanton included the families of the Kimiksana brothers, Edgar Kotokak, Donald Silastiak, Edward Elias, Paul Steen, and Gus Tardiff. White trappers in the area included Finlay McInnis, Earl Maranda, and Tom Lessard. In 1954, when Father LeMeur left his mission at Stanton and the store that served the area, the remaining families at Stanton moved to Tuktoyaktuk.

At age 75, Billy and his wife Eileen are out on the land nine to ten months of the year. They have moved camp locations from time to time, but have been at Rendezvous Lake, 60 miles east of the Anderson River, since 1983. What remains of Fort Anderson is upstream of Stanton, at the mouth of the Anderson River, and about 30 miles downstream of the forks of the river. Billy likes the quiet of being out alone on the trapline. He and Eileen recount many stories of monitoring and tagging game throughout the region. Today, they trap mostly marten and some wolverine. They guide sports hunters and have taken out many naturalists, including a number of well known birders, over the years. Birds, fish, and game are plentiful in the area, though they too go through cycles of abundance. These days, there are few others in the Anderson River area.
Elders often say that their main interest in telling stories and remembering the past is to pass this history onto future generations. We have worked to engage the interest of Inuvialuit youth in the MacFarlane Collection and in the larger project through classroom visits (see below) and student internships. Student interns Shayne Cockney and Karis Gruben, of Inuvik, each wrote an essay to be awarded their positions to come to Washington with us. There they learned about documenting their Elders’ knowledge using ethnographic techniques. Shayne conducted video interviews with several of the Elders that will be incorporated in the documentaries produced by Inuvialuit Communication Society (p.18). Karis participated in some of the follow-up public outreach events in Inuvik. Rachel Nakimayak, of Paulatuk, joined the project to videotape outreach meetings and Elders interviews. She helped to log this video in preparation for the website, along with a student research assistant named Karen Truong from Simon Fraser University (p. 12). Rebecca Pokiak helped to organize the meetings and interviews with students and teachers at Mangilaluk School in Tuksayaktuk for the website. Maia LePage, of Inuvik, traveled to Washington with ICS to participate in and take still photographs of the Smithsonian workshop. She produced the article ‘Museums and Mukluks’ that appeared in the Winter 2010 edition of Tusaayaksat. Maia has continued to produce media and organize logistics for the project from Inuvik. We are always happy to hear from youth who are interested in the project—perhaps we’ll even have a male intern one of these days!

Students and teachers from Samuel Hearne Secondary and Mangilaluk school have been very enthusiastic about the MacFarlane Collection. They have given us feedback on our plans for website, selected objects that they would interested in making in their classes, and gave us a range of ideas for classroom activities that would tie the website to their curriculum. Students indicated that they would like to do hands-on activities such as: building models; playing games related to trading, treasure-hunts, land knowledge, and puzzles; and, handling artifacts (p. 10). They were interested in learning more about MacFarlane himself and Fort Anderson, in tying Inuvialuit history and artifacts to present-day life, in hearing old-time stories, and in talking about ethics and repatriation issues surrounding the collection. Their teachers indicated the ties in the Grade 8 curriculum with ancient cultures, such as Egypt, and the popular units on archaeology. Senior grades were interested doing projects related to local and family history, using the Inuvialuktun language, traditional games, and using interactive maps to explore the Anderson River (and other) areas. We will address as many of these interests as we can as we develop lesson plans that tie the collection to the project website and share these resources with teachers and students throughout the Inuvialuit community (p. 13), and beyond.
Curatorial Research on the MacFarlane Collection, by Charles Arnold

Since most people are not able to travel to the Smithsonian Institution to see and hold the objects in the MacFarlane Collection, a team of museum curators is busy preparing descriptions of each of the items to go along with the photographs that will appear on the website. Joanne Bird from the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre is describing the clothing. Charles Arnold, former Director of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, in Yellowknife, and Stephen Loring, museum anthropologist at the Smithsonian’s Arctic Studies Center, are preparing detailed descriptions of the other artifacts. Darrel Nasogaluak, an Inuvialuit expert on traditional materials from Tuktoyaktuk, is advising us during this process. Darrel’s knowledge (p. 10) is like having an encyclopedia of traditional Inuvialuit technology available to us.

We are trying to identify what each of the objects was made of, how it was made, and how it was used. Inuvialuit elders have already provided much of that information, but to fill in gaps we are examining Inuvialuit artifacts in other museum collections for clues, and searching through books written by traders, priests and others who travelled to the Inuvialuit area in the 1800s and saw some of the objects while they were in use. Those sources of information will also tell us about objects such as scrapers that are not found in the MacFarlane Collection. We will also be analyzing iron, copper and other foreign materials used to make some of the artifacts in the collection, hoping that we can learn if those materials came from trade with the Hudson’s Bay, or if they can be traced to trade networks with Alaskan Inupiat and Copper Inuit.

Among the objects in the MacFarlane Collection are parts of wood boxes that have scenes of various activities drawn on them. Elders recognized the activities, but we were all amazed by the drawings. Were they made at the request of MacFarlane, or were drawings of this kind an Inuvialuit tradition? Searching for answers took us to the writings of Émile Petitot, a Roman Catholic priest who visited Fort Anderson in 1865 and travelled with Noulloumallok-Innonaraana to his home near the mouth of the Anderson River. Father Petitot wrote the following about Noulloumallok when he was staying in his house:

Taking from the shelf a round covered box ... he made drawings on it with ochre and carbon mixed with oil. He depicted a scene of the caribou hunt and one of a whale hunt and gave me the box.

Each of the artifacts in the MacFarlane Collection is interesting in itself, but stories about the artifacts from Elders and from historical documents help to bring the artifact to life. These drawings on box lids perfectly illustrate stories by Bob Cockney, in his autobiography ‘I, Nuligak,’ and Inuvialuit oral histories about traditional ways of hunting caribou and beluga whales.
Re-creating old-time objects

A major goal of this project is to pass on knowledge about the items in the collection. Beneficiaries throughout the Inuvialuit Settlement Region—from school-age children to Elders and educators—have shown interest in the objects as part of their heritage and history, but also as items that they would like to make for use today. Some of the items of specific interest include traditional gloves (pictured and discussed below), spear throwers (which have been of special interest to modern-day hunters), and snow goggles (which have been particularly intriguing to highschool students). To serve these various interests, we are producing: (1) colour pamphlets describing and illustrating skin clothing and tools from the collection to be distributed to Inuvialuit households; (2) patterns for a range of skin clothing pieces for distribution; and (3) re-creations (or replicas) of a number of objects for use in edu-kits in schools and also for exhibit. Darrel Nasogaluak, who is re-creating several of the objects in the collection to make school kit replicas, said: “This collection answers a lot of questions that I had regarding the artifacts that I’ve seen before, which were fragmentary. They came from archaeological collections, collections that locals have, or oral histories passed on from Elders. I have re-created some of the objects in the collection already, but looking at these complete objects helps to clarify the steps of how things were once made. These items bring us memories of a time when Inuvialuit were proud and self-sufficient; I would have loved to live then!”

Skin clothing & the pattern-making project, by Catherine Cockney

While at the Smithsonian Institution, the group had the pleasure of examining a number of clothing items made by our ancestors. What is unique about the clothing is that since they were made in the 1800s, they are adjgaat ingilraanittat, kamngit ingilraanittat and atigit ingilraanittat or real, traditional clothing (translation by Beverly Amos), including Inuvialuit gloves, mukluks and parkas! We were fortunate to have Mrs. Freda Raddi on the trip. She is an expert seamstress, using the skills she learned from her mother. Freda immediately put her knowledge to work by making patterns of the clothing out of paper and cloth. Freda took great pride in her role, as she knew that the clothing is ancient and that there are very few examples of this style of clothing. One of the objectives of the project is to take the information and share with all Inuvialuit. Seamstress Heather Scott is currently making patterns of several of the skin clothing pieces to share with Inuvialuit seamstresses. Graphic designer Irine Pras-tio is helping us produce brochures about traditional sewing to be distributed in the Inuvialuit community and posted to our website (p. 12). By making clothing patterns and examining the stitching and decorations used in the past, we are able to continue to live and share our traditional Inuvialuit heritage.
The Reciprocal Research Network (RRN) is a website that was co-developed by the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia and four northwest coast First Nations. It allows users to access the digital collections of northwest coast artifacts in partnering museums around the world, including the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, the Oxford Pitt-Rivers Museum in the United Kingdom, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. The RRN also allows users (researchers, curators, community members, students) to use social networking to collaborate and communicate with other, and to exchange knowledge about collections and artifacts. While the Smithsonian Institution originally only made their northwest coast collections available through the RRN, our project team requested that they also make the MacFarlane Collection available so that we could use this exciting tool to help us develop our own website project. Now we are working with the RRN web developers, Nicholas Jacobsen and Ryan Wallace, to use the digital information in the RRN to build our own virtual exhibit, which brings the video, audio, photographs, and curatorial media from our project together with the Smithsonian’s records of the MacFarlane Collection. The Reciprocal Research Network can be found at [http://www.rrnpilot.org](http://www.rrnpilot.org) All you need is an email address; follow the links to request a user name and password; just let them know that you are interested in researching the MacFarlane Collection and in exploring the digital records.

Aboriginal Peoples in Canada and around the world have a common issue with museums: their material cultural heritage was often collected by foreign museums and taken far away to show to the rest of the world. While these artifacts are usually well conserved by museums, and are of great cultural value today, they have been taken out of their original context and away from their use in everyday life. Many Aboriginal peoples want to access these collections, and have even begun the process of repatriating objects to their communities of origin. Many museums also want to build relationships with the communities that their collections came from; a great number of museums are now making their cultural collections available over the Internet by digitally photographing objects and digitizing what they know about the objects. Being able to see these collections over the Internet means that community members far away from museums can learn more about where their heritage has gone, and begin to reconnect their local cultural practices to collections in museums. Digitization of cultural collections also opens up possibilities for Aboriginal communities to use these digital resources in their own cultural life, in local educational programs, and to define how knowledge of their history is represented. In the course of our project, our team has visited the MacFarlane Collection in person, but has also looked for ways to use digital tools to make the collection available to all Inuvialuit, in a new form, and from an Inuvialuit point of view. This includes representing the MacFarlane Collection as a “Living Collection”—Inuvialuit Pitqisiit Inuuniarutait—as the knowledge in the objects themselves is made a part of Inuvialuit lives once again.

Cultural Collections and the Digital World, by Kate Hennessy

Aboriginal Peoples in Canada and around the world have a common issue with museums: their material cultural heritage was often collected by foreign museums and taken far away to show to the rest of the world. While these artifacts are usually well conserved by museums, and are of great cultural value today, they have been taken out of their original context and away from their use in everyday life. Many Aboriginal peoples want to access these collections, and have even begun the process of repatriating objects to their communities of origin. Many museums also want to build relationships with the communities that their collections came from; a great number of museums are now making their cultural collections available over the Internet by digitally photographing objects and digitizing what they know about the objects. Being able to see these collections over the Internet means that community members far away from museums can learn more about where their heritage has gone, and begin to reconnect their local cultural practices to collections in museums. Digitization of cultural collections also opens up possibilities for Aboriginal communities to use these digital resources in their own cultural life, in local educational programs, and to define how knowledge of their history is represented. In the course of our project, our team has visited the MacFarlane Collection in person, but has also looked for ways to use digital tools to make the collection available to all Inuvialuit, in a new form, and from an Inuvialuit point of view. This includes representing the MacFarlane Collection as a “Living Collection”—Inuvialuit Pitqisiit Inuuniarutait—as the knowledge in the objects themselves is made a part of Inuvialuit lives once again.
Goals of the Project Website, by Kate Hennessy

*Inuvialuit Pitquisiit Inuuniarutait* (Inuvialuit Living History) is designed to create access for Inuvialuit people and the interested public to the Smithsonian’s MacFarlane Collection. We are designing the website to provide a view into the dynamic relationship between Inuvialuit peoples and the MacFarlane Collection, and to promote the collection as a place for learning and teaching. The website will feature teachers’ resources and lesson plans tailored to suit the NWT curriculum, so that Inuvialuit youth can reference their own culture and history online. We will use artifact descriptions from the Smithsonian, and those that were developed in the course of this project, as well as video and photographs of our workshop with Inuvialuit elders, youth, cultural workers at the Smithsonian, and our team’s consultations in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, to show how the MacFarlane collection is becoming a “living collection” once again through its reconnection to Inuvialuit people. We will use interactive maps to connect the artifact records and related community media to places in the Andersen River area, and show how knowledge of the collection is being applied in every day life. The website will provide a history of the collection, including a short biography of Roderick MacFarlane and Fort Anderson; information about the Smithsonian Institution, and how it came to be in possession of these invaluable artifacts; and information about ownership and intellectual property rights to the collection. We also want the website to reflect the collaborative spirit in which the website is being built, by including video and photographs of our production process. Our goal is to create a website that showcases the relationship between community members and the collection by showing ongoing educational and cultural programs about the MacFarlane Collection.

The Production Process, by Kate Hennessy

We are now in the production phase of our project website. Based on input and discussion with our team, and the feedback that we have received through community consultation with the Inuvialuit community (see p. 4-8), we are working to make a website that meets the goals of creating community access to the collection, learning, and representing the collection from an Inuvialuit perspective. Currently, the video and audio recordings documented in October 2010 and February 2011 are being logged and transcribed by Letitia Pokiak (Vancouver Island) and Karen Truong (Simon Fraser University). Albert Elias will transcribe selections of our Inuvialuktun recordings, and the knowledge of elders that we interviewed will be displayed with artifact types (for example, tools or clothing) from the MacFarlane Collection on our website. We will display a large numbers of photographs taken during our workshop with the MacFarlane Collection at the Smithsonian in Washington D.C., identifying specific artifacts in the photographs, so that in our website, Inuvialuit engagement with the MacFarlane Collection will be visually connected to the objects in our virtual exhibit. We will create video galleries that tell the story of the trip to Washington D.C., in November 2009, and our consultations with elders, teachers, and students in the ISR. We plan to launch our first complete draft of the website at Inuvialuit Day in Inuvik, June 2011. We can’t wait for your feedback and suggestions for making this as valuable a resource for Inuvialuit communities as we possibly can.

URL: [www.inuvialuitlivinghistory.ca](http://www.inuvialuitlivinghistory.ca)
The Project Website: Tying into Northern Curriculum

Our team has gone through an extensive program of community consultation focused on the audience, content, and orientation of the website (p. 6). A major response from community members was to integrate knowledge about the collection into northern curriculum. We talked to both students and teachers about how best to do this, and some of their responses are seen on page 8. Myrna Pokiak, originally of Tuktoyaktuk, in addition to several students from UBC-Okanagan, is working with us to prepare lesson plans that tie the collection and with website to fun and engaging classroom activities. For instance, Robyn Mulligan and Samantha McCrae developed a board game called ‘Anderson River Survival’ that requires students to assemble the appropriate tools and clothing from the collection for each season of traditional land-based activities, such as trapping, fishing, and whaling. Selena Gaudet and Megan Dear developed a lesson plan on climate and species changes seen by both Elders and scientists in the Anderson River region. Other lesson plans—following requests by students and teachers—will focus on MacFarlane himself, the fur trade that he was a part of, the changing collection practices of the Smithsonian Institution, and many hands-on activities involved in making objects from the collection (p.10). The website will also feature interactive maps (see below) that link to on-the-ground images of the landscape of the Anderson River, artifacts that come from the area, and camps and place names documented with Inuvialuit Elders. As our project progresses, we will be able to add photographs and videos to the map produced by students and community members traveling in or doing projects about the Anderson River area.

Screen shot of the interactive map page on the project website
Words of our team members: Mervin Joe

Mervin Joe says: “When I first did archaeology work with Max Friesen on Herschel Island, the first few days were kind of boring, not finding anything. Lower down, I started getting really interested as we started finding artifacts. Since coming to Parks Canada, I continue to do archaeology. I now have some background and experience and know the process of how things come out of the ground, how they get recorded, and how they go into museums. In the North, archaeology projects have to be reviewed by Elders Committees, Hunters & Trappers Committees, and Community Corporations, and sometimes they say that ‘they’re just taking our stuff away.’ I used to think that too, but now that I know the process, and I know how well taken care of the artifacts are in the south, especially those that need special climate-controlled conditions, I think that for now, they are best housed down south. But, it’s important to return knowledge to the communities, and good replicas are the best thing we have for sharing artifacts around—some Elders can’t even tell the difference! The MacFarlane Project can lead students into learning about science and archaeology—we never had that when I went to school. Young Inuvialuit students will have the chance to investigate our website, and it will be of great benefit to them, showing them what we used to use, how we made things, how we lived, etc. They can go to school and become archaeologists themselves. I’m really happy I’m part of this project. It makes me feel good that I’m doing something good for my community. My goal is to see this through from the beginning to the end.”

Words of our team members: Stephen Loring

“As a Smithsonian curator there is no greater honor or responsibility than that of caring for and respecting the cultural treasures in our custody. Even the most mundane objects—a dull knife, a broken doll, a harpoon head or stone pipe—carry stories of long-ago days and bare witness to the lives of extraordinary people if only we know (or learn) how to listen. The Inuvialuit material that MacFarlane was able to assemble is a unique and priceless legacy that attests to a powerful and ancient way of life when human beings and animals and the land they shared were much more attuned to one another than they are today. These old things really are gifts of the ancestors and they serve as a powerful means of connecting the past with the present and the future. My colleagues and I are tremendously honoured that such a distinguished group of Inuvialuit elders, scholars and young people would come to Washington to share with us their knowledge and appreciation of the collection. It is hard to imagine that the Inuvialuit that worked with MacFarlane to assemble the collection could have imagined the importance of it for their descendants more than 150 years later. We hope that this is the beginning of a new era of cooperation and interaction between Inuvialuit leaders, educators and community members and the Smithsonian in exploring the significance and meaning of the Inuvialuit collections at the Smithsonian and furthering an understanding and appreciation of their history, culture and homelands.”
Words from Our Project Elders: James Pokiak

James Pokiak is very interested in the MacFarlane Collection, and has enjoyed being part of this project for a number of reasons: “Mainly, it’s my interest in how our people managed to survive in those days with just the tools and weapons they had. I’ve always been interested in Inuvialuit culture. All the people that I met out on the Anderson River taught me the basics of bush-life, such as Gordon Agnaviak and my uncle John Kikoak. Gordon first showed me the Anderson River area, how to get around out there, how to build a sod shelter, and how to trap. This started me out on my life as a trapper. I was always interested when the bush trappers were out for the entire season—you waited to see when they would come in and hear their stories. These days, they arrive out at their camp and you hear from them an hour later!”

Words from Our Project Elders: Albert Elias

Albert Elias told us about his time in Stanton, at the mouth of the Anderson River, as a boy. This experience is closely connected to his interest in the project: “Palaiyaq was my grandfather Raddi’s brother, making him my grandfather [in Inuvialuit kinship] as well. He was known to be a good hunter, trapper and provider, a sharp shooter. He adopted my uncle John Raddi, but had no kids of his own. I saw Palaiyaq when I was a kid in Stanton in 1948. Palaiyaq probably came from Kitigaaryuit, and traveled east to trap. He was around Anderson River for a good part of his life. He traveled with Diamond Jenness as a guide and provisioner, so if you read Jenness’s diaries, you’ll find many references to Silas Palaiyaq. My interest in this project was based on the fact that I spent a winter with my parents at Stanton, on Wood Bay, in ‘48. We built a cabin there. The old-timers, such as the Kimiksanas, Kotokaks, Tardiffs, and Johnson Uqsuasiaq, were there. What struck me as a boy was that their dialect (Siglitun) was old-fashioned. When they talked about something good to eat, like fish or berries, they used the expression ‘mamarviksairusimayuq’, referring to really special foods that were really tasty. You don’t hear that expression any more, but my wife and I sometimes use it. When I saw the artifacts in Washington, I was amazed at the similarities with what I saw as a child—I saw that style of clothing and the bows and arrows, made by the old-timers. At that time, they use a lot of metal tools, but they still used some of the old ones too. Another striking thing was the crimping of the toes of the kammak in the collection; ladies don’t do that anymore, as it was done with the teeth. I think the knowledge gathered from this project is important to pass on to our youth, by teaching them through doing: they learn the names of things by watching and doing and trying it themselves. I want to make some of those spearpoints and harpoon heads myself!”
The Inuvialuit Smithsonian Project received its initial seed funding from the Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage project (IPinCH), housed at Simon Fraser University and led by Dr. George Nicholas. Our project is interested in questions of access related to the MacFarlane Collection, particularly how greater awareness of and access to the collection can be fostered in the Inuvialuit community. Below is a discussion of intellectual property issues raised by members of the Inuvialuit community during community outreach sessions, which is presented in a Question & Answer format. We welcome your feedback and further questions on these issues.

Q: Is there proof that the collection was purchased?
A: The correspondence between Mr. MacFarlane and the Smithsonian reveals that MacFarlane relied tremendously on his Inuvialuit associates to acquire objects, including both cultural items and natural history specimens (birds, rocks, fish and mammals), that he sent to the Smithsonian in Washington. MacFarlane and the Inuvialuit were economically linked through the fur trade. With respect to MacFarlane’s collection, he had a team of Inuvialuit collectors, as well as individuals from the Anderson River community who brought items to trade. They were reimbursed for their things with trade-goods such as clothing, tools, tobacco, guns and ammunition.

Q: Were any of the items in the collection re-sold by the Smithsonian?
A: As was common practice at the time, a portion of the Inuvialuit material that MacFarlane collected for the Smithsonian (about 170 items) was subsequently exchanged with other museums, who were also working to build their collections. For the most part these were duplicate items and they were sent to museums as far away as New Zealand and Holland. One of the largest exchanges was to the National Museum of Denmark which received about 40 Inuvialuit items in exchange for a similar collection of objects from Greenland Inuit. Unfortunately, over 50 Inuvialuit artifacts loaned to the Chicago Academy were destroyed in the great Chicago fire of 1871. With time and the realization that the Smithsonian’s ethnographic collections were a priceless and irreplaceable heritage, the practice of exchanging collections was abandoned. Today, items in the collection are often loaned out for short-term exhibitions before returning to the collections-care and conservation facility that houses them.

Q: Can the collection be repatriated?
A: Under the North American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990), the everyday sort of objects that MacFarlane acquired for the Smithsonian do not come under the category of objects subject to repatriation. The Smithsonian’s policy on repatriation seeks to return “sacred items” and “items of cultural patrimony” as well as any items associated with burial rituals to descendant community members. As best as we can tell, the Inuvialuit collections are composed of day-to-day items from domestic and subsistence contexts that do not have a special “sacred” context. However, it is in the spirit of repatriation that the Inuvialuit Smithsonian Project seeks to figure out ways to make the collections accessible to the communities in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region from which they were derived (p. 17-18).

Q: Who holds copyright of the clothing patterns (& other objects) produced by the project?
A: The Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre holds copyright of all knowledge and patterns for objects developed by the Inuvialuit Smithsonian Project. However, we very much welcome seamstresses, tool-makers, students, and other beneficiaries to re-create objects in the collection and share them with us. There will be various opportunities for displaying re-creations and posting them to our project website.
MacFarlane’s role in 19th C. Smithsonian collecting, by Stephen Loring

The Smithsonian Institution, essentially the national museum for the United States, was founded in 1846 for the “increase and diffusion of knowledge”. At the time the Institution was founded the United States was expanding rapidly and beginning to emerge as an international power. It was an active period of growth for the country as settlers, miners and ranchers streamed into the western territories and the newly acquired lands in Alaska. Seeking knowledge about these new lands, the people who lived there, and the potential for economic development, agents of the United States government, including the military, the Geodetic and Coastal Survey, the U.S. Signal Corps, and scientists from the Smithsonian, traveled extensively and compiled a wealth of scientific observations, natural history specimens and cultural artifacts. It was Spencer Fullerton Baird, who came to the Smithsonian in 1850, who was instrumental in fostering the collecting zeal of the Institution. With Roderick MacFarlane, Baird found a remarkably capable field naturalist and an opportunity to acquire an extraordinary array of over 5000 natural history specimens and hundreds of articles of Inuvialuit and Dene tools and clothing. From surviving letters and records it is clear that MacFarlane relied extensively upon his native contacts to find and acquire the specimens he desired. Already knowledgeable about the trading economy MacFarlane’s Inuvialuit collectors took payment for the collections acquired on behalf of the Smithsonian in a wide array of non-native commodities including clothing, tools, tobacco, and even guns. Spencer Baird was so pleased by the materials and collections that MacFarlane sent that he arranged for parcels of special clothing and fabrics as gifts to some of MacFarlane’s native collectors. MacFarlane’s collections have, by the miracle of preservation and the passage of time, become treasures passed down from the ancestors to the modern day.

The MacFarlane Collection on display, by Stephen Loring

While the Inuvialuit material that Roderick MacFarlane collected has never been exhibited in its entirety some of it has been on display almost continuously from about 1870 until just recently. The photograph at right shows manikins of an Inuvialuit couple wearing clothing that MacFarlane collected and sent to the Smithsonian that were on display at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876. The seated figure with the rifle is the Arctic explorer Elisha Kent Kane (1820-1857) one of the most celebrated men of his day. In addition to exhibits at the Smithsonian, part of the MacFarlane Collection of Inuvialuit artifacts was exhibited in the ‘Across Time and Tundra’ exhibit of 2003, which relied on Ishmael Alunik’s knowledge. A few of the objects were also displayed at the 1992 Inuit Circumpolar Conference in Inuvik.

Currently, there are no immediate plans at the Smithsonian to put any of the Inuvialuit objects that MacFarlane collected on display, but they are always available for research and for future exhibitions. The Smithsonian is absolutely committed to making items in its collections available to the descendant communities from which the collections originated and we welcome the possibility that some of the objects might make a return trip to the Inuvialuit Settlement Region as part of a traveling exhibition. In fact, that is exactly one of the long-term goals of the partnership created by the Inuvialuit Smithsonian Project (p. 18).
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Next Steps

The Inuvialuit Smithsonian Project currently has several activities underway and others on the horizon. A brief summary of our ongoing activities and future plans is listed below:

**Ongoing activities:** We have a number of projects underway: producing colour pamphlets that describe and illustrate skin clothing and tools from the collection; preparing patterns and instructions for making skin clothing objects from the collection; re-creating objects for use in school programs and edu-kits (p. 10); conducting ongoing curatorial and community-based research about the collection (p. 9); and developing classroom-based activities that integrate the collection with the interactive features of the website (p. 13). Inuvialuit Communication Society is producing two 1/2 hour documentaries about the trip to Washington and the ongoing project for APTN. Lastly, we are in the midst of producing the project website (p. 12), which will house many of the resources described here, in addition to their being distributed in the Inuvialuit community.

**Project plans:** We are developing the project website as a site to showcase ongoing processes and activities related to the project. For example, we will produce and post short videos showing and explaining how certain objects in the collection are made; in collaboration with Parks Canada, we are discussing the possibility of creating a ‘MacFarlane Kit’ that can be presented in community outreach work and in schools; Parks Canada is installing climate-controlled cabinets in their Inuvik Visitor’s Centre and is interested in sharing, circulating, and displaying MacFarlane re-creations and actual objects from the collection. Stay tuned for further plans!

Learn More: Publications & Links

The following publications and links and many other resources about the MacFarlane Collection, the Anderson River, and the project will soon be available on our project website (URL below).


**Links:** Reciprocal Research Network: http://www.rrnpilot.org/

MacFarlane Collection online at Smithsonian: http://collections.nmnh.si.edu/search/anth/

Smithsonian’s Arctic Studies Center: http://www.mnh.si.edu/arctic/

Project website: www.inuvialuitlivinghistory.ca
Our sincere thanks to the Inuvialuit community:

INUVIALUIT SMITHSONIAN PROJECT

Our project team would like to sincerely thank the Inuvialuit community for your ongoing interest, enthusiasm, participation, and support of this project. It has been a real pleasure to help bring the MacFarlane Collection back to the Inuvialuit community, and to learn about it from Inuvialuit perspectives. We hope you have enjoyed this report, and we invite your feedback on its contents. If you have additional information, corrections, ideas, criticisms or requests, we would like to hear them. Contacts are below, or feel free to contact any member of our project team. We are very much looking forward to the future of the project as it unfolds.

Sincerely,

Natasha Lyons

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February sunset on the pingos, Tuktoyaktuk. Photo: N.Lyons.
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