# Ethnohistory of Appaarsuit

- An archaeological survey and qualitative interview research about the coastal island in Avanersuaq

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# Introduction

I have been part of a project called *"Living with Change at Pikialasorsuaq: Inughuit Sensory Awareness and Environmental Responsiveness through time in NW Greenland"* since the first fieldwork in summer of 2018. In the beginning, there were only three of us: My project managers Matthew Walls and Pauline Knudsen, and I. The fieldwork became possible with the qualitative data collected by Pauline Knudsen in 2017, because she has been doing interviews regarding different topics about Inughuit, such as former settlements and current, - or previous hunting places in Avanersuaq.

The fieldwork is a combination of archaeological survey and local interviews with community members. As the title of the project reveals, it is about cognitive ethnography of Inughuit's environmental knowledge and traditional practices, in the regions around the Pikialasorsuaq polynya, with combination of archaeological survey, to further understand a deeper history of Inughuit's subsistence and practices of the archaeological sites in Avanersuaq. It is highly important to mention that we have formed a partnership with the locals so they can share their knowledge with us and travel with us in specific places around Avanersuaq.

The effects of Pikialasorsuaq polynya are observable in Avanersuaq region because the open sea area is dynamic in nature. Therefore, it is crucial to let the Inughuit community know about what we have gathered and observed in our fieldworks, because the information we collected should be in any form beneficial to them. Thus, gathering the community members in Qaanaaq are important with presentations of what we have surveyed in different archaeological sites. Furthermore, an article was published this year: *"Hydrological instability and archaeological impact in Northwest Greenland: Sudden mass movement events signal new concerns for circumpolar archaeology"* (Walls et. al. 2020).

In summer of 2018 and 2019 some of the archaeological sites we surveyed in Avanersuaq were: Itilleq, Ujarasussuk, Isu, Qeqertarsuaq, Kiatak, Natsilivik, Kitsissut, Appaarsuit, Neqi, Pitoraavik, Kangeq, Appalersoq, Umiivik, Siorarsuit. The periods of archaeological sites range from paleo-inuits to neo-inuits in Avanersuaq.

We have surveyed many archaeological sites in Avanersuaq within the last two summer fieldworks. I'd like to mention that we became a group of 5 archaeologists and students in the second summer fieldwork of 2019. Our project managers were Matthew Walls, Pauline Knudsen, Mari Kleist all of them from the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology in University of Calgary. I wasn't the only student from Ilimmarfik anymore, Pia Egede joined

us too from the same department as mine: Cultural and Social History in University of Greenland.

We couldn't continue our fieldwork in the summer of 2020, because of Covid-19 restrictions, but we did start our digital field season as a substitute, by making a Facebook page about our work, called: *'Pikialasorsuaq itsarnisarsiornerlu/ Pikialasorsuaq and Archaeology'* that is easily accessible for anyone online. We have been posting some of the archaeological sites we have surveyed in the last 2 years in three languages: Greenlandic, English, and Danish, including certain interviews of Inughuit, mostly about the specific archaeological sites and their current connection to the archaeological site landscape[1].

## Problem formulation

It hasn't always gone according to plan with our fieldworks because there were occasionally former settlements we already had in mind on surveying, but did not come in fruition, since the weather can be unpredictable on a day-to-day basis. It has always required some flexibility and occasionally some waiting, which is the case for the coastal island Appaarsuit. We were supposed to survey the former settlement – Appaarsuit in the first fieldwork in 2018, but only managed to survey the other neighboring coastal islands - Qeqertarsuaq and Kiatak. From Kiatak, we were going across the small strait to Appaarsuit but the wind picked up and the waves became higher, it suddenly started storming dangerously. We had to return to Siorapaluk immediately.

In the second summer field season in 2019, we definitively managed to arrive in Appaarsuit in great conditions with regards to the weather. We archaeologically surveyed two sites in the island, and I am sure there might have been more archaeological features we did not inspect. Nonetheless, it was the trip I never forgot, and I have decided to focus on the coastal island Appaarsuit on my master's thesis. Although, Appaarsuit was never my intention on writing about in the beginning, but an interest grew in me, because I started wondering about Appaarsuit's history, which is almost non-existing in comparison to other former settlements in Avanersuaq in written sources.

Appaarsuit is still underexposed in historical context, for example, there is no such book sorely about Appaarsuit, but there are snippets about the coastal island in various written sources about Avanersuaq in general. I want to enrichen the current historical existence about

[1] https://www.facebook.com/pg/Pikialasorsuaq-itsarnisarsiornerlu-Pikialasorsuaq-and-Archaeology-112181643873825/posts/

Appaarsuit, with a combination of results of archaeological survey and qualitative interviews about the island.

My colleagues and I have embraced qualitative interviews with contemporary Inughuit and their use of archaeological landscapes and Appaarsuit has been one of the many topics, which I will only use in this paper. Also, the Inughuit's knowledge regarding the history of Appaarsuit has raised some interesting turns, because all the interviewees have told us about a tragic accident that presumably has occurred during the time Appaarsuit was a settlement, but the stories were in different versions with the same ending. I will research the written sources and archives in Nunatta Allagaateqarfia, to uncover if there ever was an accident that could connect with the oral stories told to us about Appaarsuit, because I want to prove if there is some truth in the stories.

Overall, the methods to enrichen one of the former settlements in Avanersuaq and supplement the history of Appaarsuit will be:

- Archaeological survey.
- Qualitative interviews.
- Research the written sources about Appaarsuit.
- Examining archives in Nunatta Allagaateqarfia to find anything that supports the oral stories about a specific tragic event.

## Fieldwork methods

In the following, I will briefly clarify several methods applied on studying Appaarsuit archaeological sites and history. The first one is archaeological survey, and methodology of qualitative interviews among Inughuit.

### Archaeological survey

Archaeology is the study of ancient or recent human societies and past material remains through excavating, - recovering, - or examining materials, any objects, or archaeological structures that previous people used in terms of creation and modification. Those material remains or archaeological structures will be interpreted on cultural, - and historical context on how the peoples were living in ancient or recent societies (Renfrew et. al. 2016: 12-29).

The first methodology before excavation in archaeology is a fieldwork called *archaeological survey*. This means, going to specific places and have a firsthand experience in looking for

traces of human activities on the surface of the ground. It could be in a place known as former hunting place, a place with house dwellings, tents rings, kitchen middens etc. that could eventually indicate how the landscape has been exploited by humans from the past historical cultures. These material remains are known as the *archaeological records*, as Brian M. Fagan has formulated in his book *'Archaeology A brief Introduction'* from 1991, as quoted: *The archives of human history before written records* (Fagan 1991: 86-91).

The material remains are limited depending on the natural conditions in the location, because the possible downside matter is - how the material remains are naturally preserved in the archaeological landscape. The state of preservation is always different from wet, dry, humid, or frozen conditions in different places. For instance, bones, leather, or wood or other organic materials would deteriorate faster in comparison for clay or soapstone materials visible on the ground (1991: 86). The bigger archaeological features, such as house dwellings are effectively damaged or completely destroyed because of climate change in such a short notice, which I have witnessed in firsthand in southern and northern Greenland in different archaeological fieldworks since 2016. Climate change is such a wide concept, that I want to use a single example, which is how climate change in terms of hydrological cycle can impact an archaeological landscape in extreme ways in Avanersuaq. The house dwellings - nearby the northernmost village Siorapaluk have been damaged or completely wiped-out because of sudden floods and debris flows occurring in Avanersuaq with massive and destructive impact to the archaeological features (Walls et. al. 2020).

It is highly important to know what kinds you are looking for, since archaeologists tends to be aware and have the explicitly knowledge of what kind of material remains, they could be finding on the spot (especially if the site have been already surveyed previously and document their current states), because sometimes the archaeological records could be hard to detect and identify (Renfrew et. al. 2016: 73-109). Only durable material remains that have survived the natural conditions could be found on archaeological sites, whereas many sites unbeknownst to us have already vanished. So, surveying the small fragments of imprints of past human activities can be challenging in many ways (Fagan 1991: 86-101).

Since our project is community focused by involving Inughuit on doing archaeological survey with us – it was crucial in many levels, not only in regards to interviewing them subsequently about their knowledge of certain places or certain practices, but we also rely on them to travel with us because they know their environments better than we do. The project's community collaboration values the Inughuit perspectives and builds a good relationship and partnership

hopefully for many years to come, also on documenting the history and epistemology of Inughuit (Hogan et. al. 2015).

I should also point out that we were in and around the coastal island of Appaarsuit for almost 5 hours, this includes the boat rides as well, on doing observation and survey from the boat. We managed to survey and find numerous archaeological features on eastern side of the island, where we GPS coordinated them and took pictures by camera and sometimes by drone. I will be dividing the archaeological sites into two parts on this paper and I will be calling them as:

- Appaarsuit site 1.
- Appaarsuit site 2.

## Qualitative interviews

Qualitative research has a number of variety methodologies, depending on the purpose of the research. The approach could be through participant observations with insightful personal accounts including their descriptive ethnographic research of peoples and their culture within a society (Taylor et. al. 1984: 15-75). This kind of approach can be characterized by the works of Knud Rasmussen and Peter Freuchen, because they have conducted their stays and expeditions in Greenland numerous times.

Although the 2019 fieldwork only lasted from 24$^{th}$ July to 16$^{th}$ of August (22 days), we have used a distinctive qualitative methodology on collecting information from Inughuit, and we had to be flexible on the interviews we conducted, not only was the time on the essence (because we travel a lot), the Inughuit who were able to be interviewed were also limited. There were several people who declined at the last minute, because they had to go out hunting or travel with their families to their summer camping places. Sometimes they would not tell us why, and most of the time they'd say: *"We did not have time".*

Instead of using structured interviewing, the approach had to be unstructured, non-standardized, and open-ended interviewing with the people who can participate at the moment. This technique for qualitative research was the type that is called *in-depth interviewing*. This approach demands individual interviews normally about specific topics in mind, that could range from everyday experiences regarding hunting, - to their knowledge about a specific place, normally about the archaeological landscapes we have surveyed, because those places can link to their family stories and specific events they deemed to tell. Here is the definition for this method: *By in-depth interviewing we mean face-to-face encounters between the researcher and*

*informants directed towards understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words* (1984: 76-77).

There were four Inughuit interviewed with the approach of in-depth interviews about Appaarsuit. Their names are: *Uusaaqqaq Qujaakitsoq, Qalaseq Sadorana, Otto Simigaq and Aimannguaq Peary.*

Another kind of interviewing method conducted was the one called: *Group interviews*. Although, the results from this kind of method probably cannot match the approach known as in-depth interviews, but group interviews offer great potentiality for collecting information about specific topics. We have done group interviews after we have been presenting Inughuit about the project and the work we have done so far in Qaanaaq's public school and old people's house couple of times. After we have presented our collected archaeological survey data, we would ask questions regarding the specific place and about if they know the specific archaeological features' stories. The questions regarding Appaarsuit came after we have surveyed the area and I will be using only one group interview event in Qaanaaq's old people's house answered by one of the elderly - named *Taliilannguaq Peary*, because one of many questions regards the coastal island and he had an input about what had happened concerning the tragedy that occurred that haven't been written before.

The conversations in group interviews have always been free-flowing and goes as open-ended discussions with the elders. Group interviews haven't only let us collect insightful information, but the people we met had also recommended us to interview someone they know for later, which was the case for *Aimannguaq Peary*. It was also about to socially connect with Inughuit and hopefully for later meetings to come in near future (1984: 111-112).

I'd like to point out that the interviews were in Greenlandic and Inughuit dialect known as Polar Greenlandic - those have been transcribed and translated into English, for this paper.

## Written sources

I will then clarify the use of written sources I used on analyzing the ethnohistory of Appaarsuit and interpreting the archaeological features from the island. The methodologies were ethnohistory and cross-dating.

## Ethnohistory

Ethnohistory is about looking at a variety of human existence by plunging deeper through the sources of indigenous documents and historical accounts. It is by piecing together different kinds of historical and ethnographic evidence to form a narration and structure to find plausible explanations about certain ethnic group's history, - culture or lives. The modern approach of ethnohistory began in the United States before the mid-20th century, with the attempt to understand the Native-American's customs and history from the inside (Claus et. al. 2017: 375-376). However, the incorporation of history and ethnographic fieldwork have been done by former lawyer, who became ethnologist Lewis H. Morgan - who wrote *'League of the Ho-de-ne-sau-nee or Iroquois'* in 1851, by incorporating his ethnological text with historical sources, such as, secondary works, documents from the Indian Department, treaties made with the Iroquois, and oral traditions by several Native-Americans (Chavez 2008). The way Lewis H. Morgan should be considered as an example, on how this methodology approaches historical and ethnographical sources.

I have approached this interdisciplinary method of ethnohistory, by combining history and ethnographic sources as a foundation to research the historical point of view of Inughuit living in Appaarsuit, this will further be incorporated with archaeological survey and qualitative interview results. This methodology progresses on diverse historical sources and considers them as essential about the given research, because applying ethnohistorical method, I will get a useful insight about the former settlement in broader way. It will be a work done by piecing information together in incorporating variety of valid historical sources with the collection of archaeological and qualitative data I have done with my colleagues (Claus et. al. 2017: 375-379). The written sources can furthermore be used as a useful tool on dating the time periods, in this case, dating the times Appaarsuit was visited or functioned as a settlement by using historical written accounts (Fagan 1991: 63-65).

I have also researched the archives from Nunatta Allagaateqarfia to try to expand the ethnohistory of Appaarsuit, for example, about finding any signs of a tragic event that presumably took place there, by looking through Gustav Olsen's church books and diaries (he was the first pastor in Avanersuaq, which later I will discuss).

As again, the results of data collected from archaeological survey and qualitative interview will also provide an extension of history about Inughuit's subsistence and how the living conditions in living in Appaarsuit were in specific time periods. The oral stories have been

interrogated in a way, if the written sources complement each other, so the history of Appaarsuit can better be understood authentically in academic level.

## Cross-dating

In analyzing the collected data from archaeological surveys, the methodology called cross-dating will be helpful to estimate the historical chronology between the archaeological features from Appaarsuit by comparing them to other similar analyzed or historically recorded archaeological features. I will be able to use this cross-dating methodology to estimate the date of archaeological features by examining the chronological linkages with other relative and similar evidence – hence the name cross-dating was given for this method (Renfrew et. al. 2016: 142).

The accuracy of the date can vary and sometimes the archaeological record could have a known date, because it depends on the method approached for dating the object, artifact etc. The ones with a known date are more reliable and effective when seriating archaeological records (Fagan 1991: 57-72).

Although, we did not find any visible artifacts or objects on the surface in and around the house dwellings on two archaeological sites, except the kayak nearby the shore of Appaarsuit, which will be useful with closer inspection since the use of wood or use of nails can distinctly characterize the time period of the feature. The house dwellings are also great candidates for me to approach the methodology of cross-dating to seriate and determine the relative chronology of the house dwellings we inspected in Appaarsuit.

## Limitations on finding written sources:

Literatures, articles, reports and other written sources are my way to the past of Avanersuaq and the region's inhabitants Inughuit, especially about the history of Cape York/Uummannaq are plentiful. Specific written sources that only concerns about Appaarsuit does not exist, except for the documents written down by Knud Falk.

I have looked into Nunniffiit[2], which is an online map-based database for registered archaeological features all around Greenland from Nunatta Katersugaasivia's website. Here I looked through Appaarsuit registration and I could see the island has three sites registered. By activating the 'site inspector' and clicking the sites one by one, I could see the written sources

[2] http://nunniffiit.natmus.gl/spatialmap

for the archaeological sites shared from Nunniffiit. Although, some of the sources were one click away to get the documents on my own seat back home, two of them did not. The documents were written by Knud Falk with the titles of *'Ruinfund, Hakleuyt Ø. Avanersuaq kommune'* from 1996 and *'Ruinfund på Hakluyt Ø, Thule kommune'* from 1997. Since I could not get the documents online, I went down to Nunatta Katersugaasivia and talked to my former teacher and museum inspector in Nunatta Katersugaasivia - Hans Lange, to ask him if he could find the exact documents for me at their archives in the museum. He approved and told me he'd find them, and it would take a few days. Hans Lange emailed me few days later and he told me that he has approached a colleague of his from the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen, because he could not find Knud Falk's documents at the Nunatta Katersugaasivia. Later on, the same story, the optional documents could not be found, which is a shame for my researching purposes.

I looked through online and applied on the website ResearchGate, because Knud Falk has an account, where I wrote to him about the documents. Unfortunately, he did not respond to me. Despite this obstacle and limitation, I can use the available written sources I could find in Ilimmarfik's and Nunatta Atuagaateqarfia's libraries.

An unpublished manuscript by Rolf Gilberg called *'Polareskimoerne i Thule Distriktet, Nordgrønland: Økologiske Betragtninger over Bosætning og Demografi'* from 1971, was highly beneficial for my research, since the manuscript concerns about the overall history of Avanersuaq and Inughuit, where Appaarsuit was mentioned numerous times.

## Historical context

Initially, I want to explain the historical context surrounding Appaarsuit, therefore Avanersuaq and the inhabitants in the region known as Inughuit will be first explained. There are reasons why Pikialasorsuaq polynya was included because the open sea area is interconnected with Inughuit in Avanersuaq. The coastal island Appaarsuit is inside the polynya itself, which Inughuit has inhabited as a settlement at some point in time. The combination of Avanersuaq, Inughuit and Pikialasorsuaq polynya will be my first steps to form Appaarsuit's ethnohistory. Later, I will be able to cross check my own data to historical sources and see if the results are supporting each other.

## Avanersuaq – the northwest Greenland

*'Avanersuaq'* is a Kalaallisut word for '*the place in the farthest north'* or *'the Great North'* and it is the Northwest region of Greenland. The Europeans mostly calls the region as *'Thule district'* (Vaughan 1991: 1-11; Itkonen 2003), after the fact that Knud Rasmussen has founded the most northerly post, called the Thule Trading Station in the center of the hunting region in Uummannaq, also known as Cape York, in 1910. It is worth mentioning the station became the base camp for Thule Expeditions (Gilberg 1971: 28-30; Rasmussen 1927).

Avanersuaq have a high arctic climate, far within the arctic circle, with extreme isolation, and harsh environment, a frozen arctic desert of ice and rock (Vaughan 1991: 7), where you can become powerless of sudden change in weather, as Peter Freuchen has also numerously experienced. For instance, in his book *'Arctic Adventure'* from 1935, he wrote:

*"And there we were, powerless in the gale, when the wind increased suddenly, as it often does in the far north…"* (Freuchen 1935: 38).

The summer in Avanersuaq is chilly, and it only lasts for a short period of time and has a hard and long winter. Polar darkness lasts approximately 4 months, and the average temperature in January can be down to -29$^{o}$ C (Kronqvist 1988: 88). Thus, the year is divided into two seasons by the inhabitants in Avanersuaq - the Inughuit: The dogsledding season for 9 months, from October to June, and only 3 months of kayaking season during July to September (Gilberg 1976: 5). However, the month June is also known as *'nesting birds'* by Inughuit, because numerous significant seabirds species starts to migrate to Avanersuaq (Ekblaw 1919: 5).

Avanersuaq's landscape is immense. Fjords that reach the inland ice, and distinctive coastal islands are far away yet traces for human activity can be seen in different forms. The Inughuit have divided Avanersuaq into four districts, within those districts 78 settlements have been documented from north to south (Gilberg 1971: 54). The districts are called as:

1) *Avannarliit* - the people who live closest to the north wind.
2) *Oqqorliit* - those who live in shelter from the southwest wind.
3) *Akunnaarmiut* - the people living in the middle region.
4) *Nigerliit* - those who live closest to the southwest wind. (1971: 7-8, 12-17).

Those places have prehistory, - and – more recent history that needs closer inspection. Although, archaeological and ethnographical studies have been conducted, mostly in forms of expeditions by various explorers in the 19$^{th}$ and 20$^{th}$ century (Mathiassen 1944), even though the purposes of the expeditions were mainly for geographical obligations, such as, to find the

Northwest Passage, or to reach the North-pole and even mapping the northern Greenland, the ethnographic collection has been embraced (Gilberg 1971).

In archaeological perspective, the imprints of previous human lives and activities can be identified through ground observations near the narrow coastlines; or on top of high and steep mountains; even in small islands in Avanersuaq. It could be in a form of circles of stones on the ground with specific characteristics that determines which archaeological culture that is, also known as tent rings, or winter house dwellings in different sizes made by turfs and stones.

There was a special attention for archaeological sites in Avanersuaq because Avanersuaq was, as Helge Schultz-Lorentzen has described, the *'main doorway'* from paleo-, and neo-inuits (Schultz-Lorentzen 1990) from Canada that obviously settled in northwest Greenland. For example, the Danish National Museum approved to send back obtained thousands of archaeological objects, also hundreds of ethnographical texts back to Nunatta Katersugaasivia Allagaateqarfialu - Greenland National Museum and archives in 1989. There were approximately 6600 archaeological objects and 339 ethnographical studies that were collected in Avanersuaq during the 20$^{th}$ century alone. The objects were excavated by the geologist and arctic explorer - Lauge Koch from his *'Bicentenary Jubilee Expeditions'* from 1920 to 1923, including Erik Holtved's archaeological excavations from Cape Kent between 1935 to 1937, additionally the objects excavated in Nuulliit between 1946 to 1947 were included. Furthermore, the 339 ethnographic studies were mostly obtained by well-known arctic explorer - Knud Rasmussen in several expeditions between the years 1903 and 1937 (Schultz-Lorentzen 1990: 113-120).

These archaeological sites are significant not only as proof that previous people had settled or been there, but they are very important to the present Inughuit, since the particular archaeological landscapes are still active in use as they were for centuries ago (Walls; Kleist; Knudsen et al. 2020). It is no different in the coastal island – Appaarsuit as well. However, Appaarsuit cannot be considered as an ordinary place in Avanersuaq.

## Introducing Inughuit

The people living in Greenland call themselves as Inuit. The inhabitants in Avanersuaq call themselves specifically as *'Inughuit'*. Inughuit are the minority people in Greenland, living in the town - Qaanaaq, and four villages. The villages are, from the northernmost village: Siorapaluk, Qeqertat, Moriusaq, and Savissivik (Itkonen 2003 147).

Inughuit have their own dialect – polar Greenlandic - which is different compared to the official West Greenlandic language in Greenland (2003: 143). To put this in another perspective: It was very difficult for me to transcribe the interview recordings that contains Inughuit talking in their own dialect, and I had to use an app that slows down the playback speed. Sometimes people I know from Qaanaaq were nice enough to help me to understand what the interviewees were actually saying, since I could not fully understand them. Also, because Inughuit expressions can be so different than I am accustomed to. It also means the population in Avannaata Kommunia, has two dialects within the same municipality, even though the municipality have only a few thousand population numbers.

The western Greenlanders calls Inughuit as *'Avanersuarmiut'* too – that means the inhabitants of the Great North (2003: 141), and they are self-sustained people living traditionally from the roots of their ancestors (Gilberg 1976: 4-6).

However, modern times have come, and yet the traditional livelihood of a hunter is well respected. The practice on hunting on a kayak is still present, as it doesn't exist anymore in other places around Greenland, except for practicing for annual kayaking competitions. Hunting on a kayak is famously part of Inughuit's culture (Itkonen 2003: 145-147).

Inughuit's unique distinctions and characteristics in comparison to the rest of Greenlanders can be explained by their long isolation that began in 1600's, where their distinct characteristics were first documented in 1818, and henceforth. Jørgen Melgaard has reported the historical period from 1600 to 1818 as: *"Arkæologisk Mørketid"* in Avanersuaq, because there are no such archaeological findings that could be dated between those time periods (Gilberg 1971: 19-20) - yet. However, the migrated people from Canada made a huge impact as well to Inughuit's subsistence from the 1860's (Mary-Rousseliere 2002), in which I will discuss later on this paper.

According to journalist Philip Lauritzen is Avanersuaq the most known region part of Greenland in the world, because there are remarkably many literatures about the region and its inhabitants (Lauretzen 1983). This is thanks to, as I have said, to the numerous expeditions during the 19th and 20th Century. For instance, the unexpected first contact with Inughuit was written down on August 10th, 1818 by Sir John Ross. In his surprise, he saw people in their dog sleds in poor conditions. He called the inhabitants of Cape York as the *'Arctic Highlanders'* – the Inughuit, who thought they were the only people in the world, because they have been living in isolation for so long and never had contact with outsiders, including to their fellow Greenlanders from the south. The 'arctic highlanders' admired the ship, at the same time being frightened by the massive ship they were witnessing, nonetheless they eventually came onboard

after the Greenlandic interpreter Sakæus convinced them to come up - the western Greenlander that had joined the arctic expedition in search for the Northern Passage (Gilberg 1971: 10, 20-21).

One oral story has Knud Rasmussen reflected upon while approaching an uninhabited settlement in Cape York in winter 1903. They could see *'besynderlige'* and *'primitive'* winter house dwellings that seems to be recently abandoned. As they were approaching the house dwellings, they started to smell them, as he describes as the house dwellings smells of *'hedenskab'* and *'åndeviser'*. The oral story he reflected upon goes like this: A man hunts polar bears every spring and curiously travels further north than he usually does by dogsled, because he has seen imprints of unusual dog sledding marks on the untouched snow previous year. The hunter came across uninhabited settlement that look so different compared to the ones he is used to, and yet he did not meet the people who lived there. Next spring, he generously brought a supply of wood as gift, because he could see they needed much wood for their roofs, since they only used narwhal tusks as roofing. Again, he did not greet anyone at all, because nobody else was around. In the third year, he brought his finest bucket as a gift and once again left his gift outside one of the house dwellings. Nobody was there to greet him, again. The settlement seemed to be already abandoned, but this time around the Inughuit have left him puppies as a thank you for the supply of wood he left the previous year. The hunter has never met the Inughuit though, but he can always tell, the settlement was inhabited a short time ago. Knud Rasmussen had the same feeling when they arrived at the settlement in Cape York for the first time (Rasmussen 1905: 1-4), is another example, how secluded the Inughuit had been to the rest of Greenland.

Knud Rasmussen was part of the Greenland Literary Expedition in 1903 to 1904 in Avanersuaq. His observation to his new surroundings seemed to be surprising to him and he kept imagining how the people he is soon to meet would look like, because they are in *'Polar-Eskimo region'* therefore any *'Polar-Eskimos'* would eventually turn up in front of them. Finally, they saw a dogsled with two people in it. An Inughuit hunter named Maisanguark with his polar bear skin pants and his hooded wife of fox skin, named Mekro. The *'new people'* Knud Rasmussen describes them (1905: 4-8), and calls Inughuit as *'Polar-Eskimos'* (Mylius-Erichsen, Moltke 1906), which is the same way Robert E. Peary did in his time in Avanersuaq between the years of 1891 to 1909, with his mission to reach the North-pole (Gilberg 1971: 25-27).

*'Polar eskimos'* was the most prevalent name to define Inughuit in historical texts, other than the least used names were, for example, the *Smith Sound Eskimos* and *Cape York Eskimos*

(Gilberg 1976: 5), as different authors almost idealistically and closely have observed Inughuit's culture and lifestyle. For instance, how Inughuit relies on Pikialasorsuaq polynya, and how vital the polynya is to Inughuit families, where the locals from Avanersuaq have their own local knowledge in and surrounding the polynya and animal pattern seasonality for their game (Andersen et. al. 2016).

Numerous authors published books about their everyday accounts in Avanersuaq and the interest was high, to say it at least. So, Philip Lauritzen's claim about Avanersuaq being the most famous part of Greenland, isn't farfetched statement – thanks to many expeditions during the 19th and 20th Century. However, I have noticed how the coastal island Appaarsuit haven't been visited many times by the authors, but the neighboring islands Kiatak and Qeqertarsuaq have been written about plenty of times.

## Pikialasorsuaq Polynya

This is where the Inughuit's game originates from in Pikialasorsuaq Polynya. Pikialasorsuaq is the most biodiverse area and largest polynya located in the High Arctic at the top of Baffin Bay between Ellesmere Land and Nunavut in Canada and Avanersuaq in Greenland (Eegeesiak et. al. 2017). The polynya was known as *'the North Water'*, and it is a region where an open water area is recurrently unfrozen throughout the whole year. In winter, the polynya would be circumscribed by sea ice. Different factors is involved in this, including strong winds, - and ocean currents in different seasonality, but recent periods of erratic seasonal changes have raised concerns, in which ultimately, the polynya have been closely observed. The climate change and warmer temperatures is threatening the whole environment and ecosystem of the area that could be consequential for all living things in and around the polynya. Drastic and irreversible changes have seemingly already occurred (Christensen et. al. 2017), for example, stable hunting areas are becoming unpredictable and unstable, where animal populations have been impacted. This also means the frozen ice boundaries are retreating closer and faster to the coastlines and the thickness of sea-ice is getting thinner (Andersen et. al. 2016).

Regarding the current issue, the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) have urgently taken action and consulted local Inuit communities in Pikialasorsuaq Commission in 2016. The purpose of the commission was to monitor and make a plan on safeguarding the vulnerable and culturally important polynya for future Inuit generations from Canada and Greenland (Eegeesiak et. al. 2017).

Historically in written texts, the polynya has always been regarded as rich and remarkable by nature. It was first mentioned by the English explorer – William Baffin in his expeditions that ranges from the years of 1612 to 1616 in hopes to find the Northern Passage. The polynya was acknowledged and written down as *"the open sea in the latitude of 75º 40"* in William Baffin's journals (Markham 1881: 144). More than 200 years later, American explorer Elisha Kent Kane named the region, as the 'North Water' for the first time, hence the name was cemented. *"The North Water, our highway to Smith's Sound, is fairly ahead."* (Kane 1856: 39).

The name of the polynya in Kalaallisut is *'Pikialasorsuaq'* meaning the 'great upwelling'. This meaning can refer to the unique and precarious ecology in the region, where an upwelling of nutrient rich water from the bottom of the sea rises up to the iceless surface (Eegeesiak et. al. 2017) – which are the phytoplankton and zooplankton that blooms earlier in the springtime because the open sea is getting significantly more sunlight than usual. The arctic food chain continues higher to fish and attracts bigger migratory marine mammals, such as walruses, seals, and polar bears. This natural condition creates an exceptional ecosystem and refugium for numerous species, to name a few- beluga whales and bearded seals overwinter in large quantities in and around Pikialasorsuaq (Heide-Jørgensen & Laidre 2006: 72; Rosing-Asvid 2010). It is also an important breeding area for millions of seabirds with the largest seabird populations in Greenland (Davidson et al. 2018).

The Inuit communities around the polynya, such as Inughuit, are still dependent on the natural resources the Pikialasorsuaq provides for hunting, - fishing and harvesting in both Canadian and Greenlandic sides (Eegeesiak et. al. 2017). Even so, the interconnected human relationship between the polynya has not changed for 4500 years, where paleo-inuit and neo-inuit archaeological sites have been surveyed and excavated in Avanersuaq alone (Mathiassen 1944; Hastrup et. al. 2014).

## Ethnohistory of Appaarsuit

Appaarsuit, the coastal island we have surveyed in 2019 was previously known as *'Hakluyt Island'*. Appaarsuit is the westernmost, - and smallest coastal island among the other two islands, from the closest one towards the east, Kiatak, - and Qeqertarsuaq that is closest to the populated town, Qaanaaq. Appaarsuit is the outermost among the coastal islands in the Oqqorliit district. Since it is between the sea passageways called Smith's Sound on the north, and Whale Sound on the south and the west part of the island being the open sea area - the

Appaarsuit area storms a lot, making it not easily accessible for anyone (Gilberg 1971: 14; Markham 1881: 145-146).

Robert E. Peary's book *'Northward over the Great Ice -Vol 1'* (1898) has stated the strait between the two islands that separates Appaarsuit and Kiatak has a strong current noticed by Robert E. Peary's fellow companions (Peary 1898: 108).

The reason for the strong current around Appaarsuit is because of the movement of warmer water current called '*the West Greenland Current'* that travels from southern coast of Greenland along the west coast to all the way northward to Pikialasorsuaq Polynya. The current creates an upwelling of warm ocean water until the movement outflows in northern part of Pikialasorsuaq area, then the movement starts going southward along with the Baffin Current, therefore keeping the area partially ice-free all year around, thus the Pikialasorsuaq Polynya is created (Vincent 2019).

As said, the coastal island Appaarsuit is in the district of Oqqorliit - those who live in shelter from the southwest wind. This district could be considered to be the midpoint out of the four districts, because there were more settlements on this district. The living animal resources are abundant in this region. For example, the Inglefield Gulf provides plenty of animal game to Inughuit hunters. Another reason is that the coast from the Cape Alexander to the south to Cape Parry (nearby Cape Leiningen) is the sea-ice never standstill all year around, but extension of the sea-ice varies in seasons, which is another reason to be a great place to hunt at the edge of the sea-ice (Gilberg 1971: 14). This further explains the location of Appaarsuit is uniquely situated in Avanersuaq, because the coastal island is inside the biggest arctic polynya in the world – Pikialasorsuaq.

Appaarsuit is a Kalaallisut word for the *'Thick-billed Murres Mountains',* because thick-billed murres have nesting colonies on the steep and perpendicular cliffs, which in some places seemed to overhang (Peary 1898: 105), that extends the whole northern and eastern side of the island (Falk, Kampp 1998: 1-9).

There are many more different species of birds in Appaarsuit, including very important little auk nesting colonies on the island (Mosbech et. al. 2018). These bird nesting colonies can be easily exposed for predatory animals, for example arctic foxes, which the island inhabits too (Gilberg 1971: 65).

The European name was Hakluyt Island, and it was named by William Baffin on his voyage in Avanersuaq on July 5$^{th}$, 1616, specifically as *'Hakluit Ile'*, immortalizing and commemorating one of his generous patrons, Richard Hakluyt (Markham 1881: 145, 181).

William Baffin had to sail around Appaarsuit, because the weather became bad with gale-force winds. He did not see any inhabitants on the island (Gilberg 1971: 21; Markham 1881: 145).

I'd like to mention the European whalers who have been around Appaarsuit, because of Pikialasorsuaq polynya. Especially, after 'North Water Polynya' became widely popular during the 19th Century after Clements Markham published William Baffin's journal in 1881 (Hastrup et. al. 2018: 163-164). There are signs about Dutch whalers being in Appaarsuit. David Boertmann has written down the archaeological findings on his journal *'Arkæologiske Fund fra Thule og Melville Bugt august 2007'*, including the finding on Appaarsuit. He has written that Knud Falk and Kaj Kampp have found an inscription on a rock done by Dutch Whalers. The graffiti was found on the western part of Appaarsuit around edge of the island on a rock, that says: *"Hap Viles."* They had commented on the graffiti, since the whalers might have been bored on the day when the weather was densely fogged, so he/they wrote it down while waiting for the weather to be clear again. The meaning though, was unclear, Hap Viles might have been a name. The GPS coordinate was written by Knud Falk, as: Latitude: 77.443200. Longitude: -72.730720 (Boertmann 2007).

In Inuutersuaq Ulloriaq's book *'Beretninger om Qillarsuaq og hans lange rejse fra Canada til Nordgrønland i 1860erne'* from 1985 (Original Greenlandic version was published in 1976), contains oral stories about Qillarsuaq and his long journey from Baffin Land to Avanersuaq in 1862, including his experiences in Avanersuaq until his passing in 1870 (Ulloriaq 1985; Mary-Rousseliere 2002). Among Qillarsuaq's many experiences was a conflict between his fellow shaman, an inughuit man named Avatannguaq, whom he befriended before an argument that turned violent separates them from within the same household. Avatannguaq and his family had to leave the household and move somewhere else. Afterward, we found out that Avatannguaq and his wife – an inughuit woman, also a shaman named Tulugalik, with their daughter Kulapak had moved to Appaarsuit.

*"Den store Avatannguaq viste sig nemlig aldrig mere. Man mente, at han og familien bosatte sig på den yderst beliggende ø, Appaarsuit, der ligger længere til havs end Kiatak. Der tog folk ikke normalt ud, fordi isen var farlig at forcere i mørketiden. Stedet var dog et eldorado for hvalrosser ved lysets tilbagekomst"* (1985: 63).

Thereafter, one day Avatannguaq came to visit Pitoraarfik in Qillarsuaqs surprise. Qillarsuaq had been plotting to kill Avatannguaq beforehand, and ultimately did on his short stay in Pitoraarfik. After Avatannguaq was killed, Tulugalik and Kulapak moved to Kiatak from Appaarsuit (1985: 64-69).

These stories were told by the elderly woman, named Ittussaarsuaq, she is the grandmother of Inuutersuaq Ulloriaq's wife - Naduk. Ittussaarsuaq was among the group of people who followed the shaman Qillarsuaq and walked over from Baffin Land to Avanersuaq in 1860's (1985: 9-70). Her oral story implies that Appaarsuit was inhabited by a family although she didn't mention without mentioning the specific period, but it can be predicted to be between 1862 to 1870, which are the years Qillarsuaq was living in Avanersuaq. But no proof for early settlers in Appaarsuit has been archaeologically recorded. However, Ittussaarsuaq's oral story is one of the stories about Qillarsuaq killing somebody else, where the worth of human life in Qillarsuaq's eyes wasn't that important (Mary-Rousseliere 2002: 26-29). This could very well be the meaning of the oral stories about how Qillarsuaq can be, about his character, because the difference between history and oral history is that oral history tells us less about events than about their meaning (Perks et. al. 2006: 36).

Back to Robert E. Peary's book *'Northward over the Great Ice -Vol 1'* from 1898 does not document any traces for human settlers in Appaarsuit, but only evidence for human activity. The date was August 12th - 1891, Dr. Frederick A. Cook, J. M. Verhoeff and Eivind Astrüp supplied their whaleboat, called *Faith*, to the islands with five purposes given by Robert E. Peary (Peary 1898):

1) To obtain as many birds as possible in Appaarsuit.
2) To document any kinds of Eskimo dwellings and villages in three coastal islands: Herbert Island (which is Qeqertarsuaq), Northumberland Island – Kiatak, and Appaarsuit.
3) To communicate with the natives and obtain their furs and clothing.
4) To inform the natives about the location of Peary's lodge in Red Cliff. The lodge is in MacCormick Fjord (Peary 1898: 71-77).
5) If possible, to induce a family to come and settle near Peary's lodge from those coastal islands.

Within the next day, on the morning of the 13th of August, they reached Appaarsuit's rocky shores. The waves were high and breaking with much force. They finally found a smooth, shelving rock facing towards the south. Later on, they unloaded the whaleboat before making camp. They surveyed alongshore and looked for any signs for human activities on the island, and it was raining. They found no one except a few fox-traps. One of the fox-traps seemed to be recently constructed at the altitude of eleven hundred feet. On the 14th August, they left Appaarsuit with birds caught from the steep cliffs of the island (1898: 105-108).

### Inughuit inhabiting Appaarsuit

You can see statistics of counted settlement populations and families from 1923 to 1935 in Thule District in Erik Holtved's report *'Archaeological Investigations in the Thule District'* from 1944 in *'Meddelelser om Grønland'*. The report points out that Appaarsuit was listed and registered as a settlement from 1923 up to 1935 (Holtved 1944: 8-14). According to this, the coastal island wasn't a settlement for a long time, but for merely in 12 years.

The reasons could be different, because Inughuit were known to move around to variate their needs in food deposit or raw materials for their house dwellings and clothing. Another reason could be the Inughuit family would want to change their diet, or they needed a certain animal skin that could be caught in a specific place, where the living animal resources were sufficient enough for their requirements. The decision on settling on a summer or winter settlements was always an ongoing process on what kinds of the household family needs (Gilberg 1971: 50-55).

Appaarsuit can be expected to have been frequently visited by Inughuit before 1891 and between up to 1923 - to forage and hunt on the island's natural resources and continue to do so even after the island was considered to be abandoned as a settlement in 1935. These time periods incredibly narrows down when Inughuit were specifically on the island. But also raises a question on why, the island wasn't a settlement anymore.

## Archaeological survey in Appaarsuit

The date was July 26$^{th}$ - 2019. The plan was to survey the fjord of Siorapaluk, but instead we went to Appaarsuit. Just before we leave, the curious elderly couple suddenly came inside and sat with us. They started asking all kinds of questions – about why we were there or what our work was etc. We told them about the purpose of this project and the ideas on investigating different archaeological sites for the next few days in Siorapaluk area, including an impression on finally reaching out the previously planned island – Appaarsuit.

Right away, the elderly couple started insisting that we should survey Appaarsuit today before the weather worsens as the weather forecast has predicted. They were saying we should imagine the conditions around Appaarsuit area would be a lot worse in comparison to the bad weather in Siorapaluk. They kept saying today was our only window of opportunity to reach

Appaarsuit and that we should value since we only have limited days in Avanersuaq. The elderly Inughuit couple immediately convinced us.

The next hour, we were already on our way towards Appaarsuit from Siorapaluk. We were in two boats, with three Inughuit accompanying us: Genoveva Sadorana, Otto Simigaq and his son Gustav Simigaq. They were the same people who accompanied us from 2018 field work.

The boat ride was about 4-5 hours, until we reached the first site: 'Appaarsuit site 1', which is the south site between the two sites we ended up ground surveying. 'Appaarsuit site 2' is in the north site.

We have been taking pictures of the archaeological features in both sites, including GPS coordinates (Decimal degrees) with elevation above sea level in meters, except only 3 of 25 archaeological features doesn't have elevation coordinates due to different GPS usage ('in Appaarsuit site 2').

I'd like to mention the notes my colleagues wrote are also used to describe the archaeological features on this paper, especially about the measurements, because we normally split up in groups and survey the area to cover the ground as vast as possible[3].


*Figure 1: Here is the coastal island Appaarsuit taken from report of Thick-billed murres colonies, where A, B, C, D, E shows their nesting colonies (Falk et. al. 2018: 8). However, I have edited this photo, by including the numbers 1 (Appaarsuit site 1) and 2 (Appaarsuit site 2) on the eastern side of the island.*

[3] Unpublished notes by Mari Kleist, Matthew Walls, Pia Egede, and Pivinnguaq Mørch.

## Appaarsuit site 1

This site is a sloping hill and a cliff with mass of fallen stones on top of the hill. The highest elevated archaeological feature is the second fox trap. Additional noteworthy remark: Nearby the caches, and up towards the hill to the single house dwelling from this site, there are signs for hundreds of preceding little auk nesting grounds. The soil ground is rich in vegetation.

We were investigating the area for approximately 2 hours. The site is on the south side from the second site in Appaarsuit. Right across the site you can see the island Kiatak.

Here is the list of identified archaeological features: Two fox traps, seven clustered caches, one tent ring, and one house-dwelling have been inspected.

Type: Fox trap (I)

The fox trap is in good conditions. It is positioned around the edge of a small butte and there were several caches nearby the vicinity. This archaeological feature is a trap door type. The rocks on top have fallen, although some of the rocks on the side are still standing.

The opening can be identified to be towards the southeast, but there aren't any items that could relate to the fox trap aren't visible on the surface. Black lichen is growing around the fox trap, but not on the exclusive rocks of this trap.

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude | Elevation |
|---|---|---|
| 77.415033 | -72.617568 | 7.927062 |

*Figure 2: Fox-trap (I). You can see the coastal island Kiatak on the background. Picture was taken by Pivinnguaq Mørch*

Type: Caches

There are seven opened caches in different sizes in close proximity to each other, therefore one GPS coordinate has only been positioned. The caches are clustered to each other and five of them are built up against bigger boulders, while one of the caches was an ordinary cache of rocks in circular pattern. Sizes range approximately from 1 x 1,5 meters, except the biggest cache that we haven't measured. The biggest of the caches is situated underneath a natural opening of a butte that has been previously closed and covered with rocks by Inughuit, as you can see the picture of the cache down below. The cache cavities were empty with no bones visible.

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude | Elevation |
|---|---|---|
| 77.41736 | -72.613144 | 6.484831 |

*Figure 3: One of the caches underneath the butte. Picture taken by Pivinnguaq Mørch.*

Type: Tent ring

Disturbed tent ring, big stones seem to have been fallen down in and around the tent ring, although the circular pattern of stones is still clearly visible. The entrance is unclear and could not be specified.

The location for the tent ring is in the high hill, if you go further up the sloping hill towards the northwest, you will locate the house dwelling from this site.

The condition of the tent ring is somewhat sunken covered by moss and grass. There are no visible objects and artifacts in and around the tent ring. The size ranges 2 x 2,5 meters in diameter.

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude | Elevation |
|---|---|---|
| 77.416265 | -72.619646 | 18.48711 |

*Figure 4: Genoveva Sadorana, an Inughuit woman who accompanied us to Appaarsuit is walking away from the tent ring. She was the one who found the tent ring. Picture taken by Matthew Walls.*

Type: Fox trap (II)

This fox trap is in worse conditions compared to the 'Fox trap (I)' from this site. This is the most elevated archaeological feature we have surveyed from both sites in Appaarsuit, because it is situated up in the hill with elevation coordinated as 45,52 meters above sea level.

It is a trap door type, but the rocks have collapsed down making the opening unidentifiable. No used items are visible either.

The surrounding is high in vegetation, where foxtail grass and chickweed are growing.

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude | Elevation |
|---|---|---|
| 77.417663 | -72.615872 | 45.524445 |

*Figure 5: Fox trap (II). Picture taken by Matthew Walls.*

Type: House dwelling

The only semi subterranean house dwelling can be located around the highest ground of the sloping hill. The house dwelling is situated at the bottom the cliff with sloping masses of fallen stones that stretches the whole site. The House dwelling is facing towards the sea and Kiatak in the southeast.

The shape of the house dwelling is rectangular, instead of two rounded annexes as a clover leafed shaped winter dwellings are. The shape makes it look like a crucifix in a way, since the annexes are rectangular. The annex with the probability of being a kitchen niche has 1 meter in breadth. The other have 1,5 meter in breadth but enclosed with flat stones. The length between the two annexes is 4 meters long. The length of the entrance passage is 2 meters and 1 meter in width. The breadth of the sleeping platform is 2 meters.

The whole length of the house dwelling from the back rear to the tip of the entrance passage is 7 meters, with the inclusion of the width of the walls. The same with the greatest dimension of the breadth is 4,5 meters. The highest height of the walls is over 1 meter, which is the wall between the sleeping platform and probable kitchen niche.

The interior of the house dwelling is crowded with jumble of flat stones with moss and grass. There is a sunken skull with the characteristics of a walrus visible at the edge of the smaller

annex - on the probable kitchen niche. The construction detail: Five large whale bones have been used in the construction of roof and walls, especially around the probable kitchen niche, because there are four whale bones visible on the walls. The bigger annex is enclosed with fallen flat stones, but one whale bone on the wall of it is visible.

A single cache is approximately 1 meter away from the entrance passage. On the exterior of the house, there are whale and seal bones visible and walrus skull without the tusks[4].

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude | Elevation |
|---|---|---|
| 77.416163 | -72.623713 | 41.967648 |

*Figure 6: On the side of the smaller annex, that is probable kitchen niche, there are four whale bones on the walls. Here are two of them. Picture taken by Pivinnguaq Mørch.*

[4] Unpublished notes by Pivinnguaq Mørch

*Figure 7: House Dwelling. Picture taken by Pivinnguaq Mørch.*

## Appaarsuit site 2:

The second archaeological site in Appaarsuit has more archaeological features. We surveyed and registered the site for almost 2 hours and 30 minutes. The archaeological features are mostly situated on a plateau, situated on the north side from the first site. The site has a high density of peat towards the bottom of the cliff. There were thousands of flying little auks everywhere, which is also worth mentioning their breeding nest were on the cliffs over the site.

There are three house dwellings clustered next to each other, with six caches in near vicinity. One burial. The man-made stairs and two kitchen crevices. You can also see the island Kiatak on the other side from this site.

Type: Kayak

The first archaeological feature is spotted by Otto Simigaq, right after we off-loaded our gear from the boats. Otto Simigaq leads us to the large rocks, nearby the rising plateau, where it ultimately will lead us towards the clustered house dwellings on the northeast from this location. Here on out, the archaeological feature can easily be identified as fragments of old kayak gunwales, with a single cross piece visible - overall in bad condition, since the rest are

partially rotten. All pieces have the sign of scarfing, where you join small pieces to make a larger gunwale.

There is a long thin wood, with right angled smaller wood-piece around the middle, situated on the southwest from the frames of the kayak. This perpendicular wood turns out to be another fragment of the same kayak that isn't attached anymore. The perpendicular wood is specifically the kayak's underside of a gunwale with attached cross piece.

There are six gunwales in total in near vicinity. Here are the largest three measured: 2,25 meters; 1,69 meters; 1,25 meters[5].

After inspection, the bits of mortises for the ribs of the kayak are recognizable, where small holes can be seen. These pieces are evidence for scarfing.

Upon further observation, we noticed the different kinds of iron nails have been used on building this kayak, which I will elaborate in the next chapter.

This frame of the kayak is sheltered between the large rocks, and it has been damaged severely through time. The ground is high in vegetation. Lichen and moss have started growing on the frames of the kayak, especially around the tip (seemingly the bow of the kayak) where this archaeological feature has sunken a little bit, covered with foxtail grass and chickweed.

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude |
|---|---|
| 77.4203546 | -72.6040475 |

[5] Unpublished notes by Matthew Walls.

*Figure 8: A piece of gunwale and kayak frame. Pictures taken by Pivinnguaq Mørch.*

Type: House dwelling I

Semi subterranean house dwelling with the structure similar to: 'House dwelling II', although slightly smaller in size. The structure of the house dwelling is shaped like a clover leaf in good condition. The outline exterior is high in vegetation, because the exterior is covered with chickweed, foxtail grass and moss, it is the same with the interior, but mostly of moss and foxtail grass. The thickness of the walls is noticeably visible and still intact.

The entrance passage is 2,44 meters long. The flat stone on the rear end of the entrance passage on the interior is still attached. The interior length starting from the end of the entrance passage to the sleeping platform is 3,6 meters. The overall length with inclusion of the entrance passage is 6,04 meters. The greatest dimension of the interior of the house is the breadth with 3,75 meters between the sides. Well preserved sleeping platform with flat rocks has a breadth of 2 meters. The height of the tallest wall is 1,24 meters, between the sleeping platform and the smaller sleeping platform[6].

The sides have fallen flat stones most likely from the walls, except the bigger sleeping platform at the end across the entrance passage. The closest small platform to the 'House dwelling II' seems to be a side alcove with messy of stones, while the other alcove on the opposite side was a smaller sleeping platform, but not in a good condition, since flat rocks from the walls have collapsed.

No visible artifacts or objects in and around the house dwelling, but two caches are close by. There is a cache in the southwest side also one more cache on the north side from the house dwelling.

I'd like to mention the big boulder - northeast from the bigger sleeping platform, that is attached on the outline exterior of this house dwelling is significant detail for the upcoming chapters on this paper. This little detail is significant from Aimannguaq Peary's interview regarding the tragic accident in Appaarsuit. According to her, the family of Sisso have lived here, which will be discussed later.

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude | Elevation |
|---|---|---|
| 77.421134 | -72.603348 | 12.251199 |

[6] Unpublished notes by Mari Kleist.

Type: House dwelling II

Best preserved semi subterranean house dwelling on this site. The shape of the house dwelling is similar to 'House dwelling I' although bigger in size. It is built between the other two house dwellings. The structure of the house dwelling is also shaped like a clover leaf. The same with the 'House dwelling I', this house is rich in vegetation. The entrance passage is almost passable by crawling through, only a few big stones have fallen down from the walls. Best preserved narrow entrance passageway. Few big stones have also fallen from the walls on top of the two sleeping platforms. There is no visible kitchen niche. No objects or artifacts visible either.

The entrance passage is 3,65 meters long, the length from the rear end on the interior of the house to the sleeping platform is 3,7 meters. The overall length with the inclusion of the entrance passage is 7,35 meters. The greatest breadth across the main platform is 4,15 meters. The breadth of the bigger sleeping platform is measured as 2,35 meters[7].

This house dwelling was indicated by Aimannguaq Peary, where her mother, Ane-Sofie, used to live with her parents and family on this specific house dwelling. Then again, I will discuss this later on.

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude | Elevation |
|---|---|---|
| 77.421106 | -72.603017 | 14.751824 |

Type: House dwelling III

The smallest semi subterranean house dwelling among the three is in good condition. The shape of it is almost round, with an offshoot at the east side in prolongation of the front wall. This house dwelling is sharing the wall of the side alcove of 'House dwelling II'. There are walrus and whale bones visible on the construction of the walls. This particular house dwelling has the most whale bones on the walls in comparison to other house dwellings from this site. It is rich in vegetation, the same way as the other house dwellings. There are no visible objects or artifacts on the surface.

The walls of the entrance passage have collapsed, the length though is 2,9 meters. The length from the main room towards the sleeping platform is 3,56 meters, but with inclusion of the entrance passage, it is 6,46 meters long. The breadth of the sleeping platform is 1,96 meters.

[7] Unpublished notes by Mari Kleist.

The breadth of the front room is 2,8 meters. The highest point is 1,2 meters, which is between the main room and the sleeping platform[8].

A cache is visible on the east side of the house dwelling, and further that way there is another boulder, but bigger in comparison to the one attached to the walls of 'House dwelling I', with another cache made against the wall of this boulder.

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude | Elevation |
|---|---|---|
| 77.421148 | 72.602787 | 14.882454 |


*Figure 9: Drone picture of the three house dwellings. There are a total of five well-preserved opened caches around the houses. Drone picture by Matthew Walls.*

Type: Burial

The only burial structure is located south from the house dwellings. An opened burial has been built up against the cliff with big and large stones as coverage. There are human remains inside, with a human skull and probable fibula and tibia can be identified from the small opening. There are no visible grave goods though.

[8] Unpublished notes by Mari Kleist.

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude | Elevation |
|---|---|---|
| 77.420803 | -72.603855 | 16.505995 |

*Figure 10: The burial. Picture taken by Mari Kleist.*

Type: Man-made stairs

We came across this unusual archaeological feature - the man-made stairs. This feature is located at the side wall of this site's plateau. The stairs are situated at the east from the house dwellings after passing the biggest boulder closest to the 'House dwelling III' towards the edge of the plateau.

The stairs are compiled big stones interlocked to each other against the wall of the plateau with the height of over 2 meters. The way these stairs are built is similar to how cairns/inussuks

are constructed - solid and firm with bigger stones used overall. It is noteworthy to say, after climbing up and down on them the stones did not fall down or collapse at all.

We later found out that these stairs lead down to the crevices that have been used as kitchen crevices.

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude |
|---|---|
| 77.4212114 | -72.6015059 |

*Figure 11: The man-made stairs. Picture taken by Pia Egede.*

Type: Kitchen crevices

Here are two natural narrow crevices. I climbed down to observe the surface and found out that the crevices were used as kitchen crevices. There were different kinds of animal bones visible on the surfaces. However, the closest one towards the stairs has more (the first crevice), where the second crevice has only a few animal bones to be seen.

As said, these crevices were used as kitchen crevices, the animal bones indicate this, especially the couple of dog skulls can be found in the first crevice. I also saw three seal skulls.

There was a walrus, - narwhal skull without the tusks visible on the surface, including beluga whale skull. There were numerous whale scapulars in different sizes, including vertebras. Some of the animal bones are hard to identify, because the bones are sunken down by green algae or covered by rocks and stones and sea water.

GPS coordinates:

| Latitude | Longitude |
|---|---|
| 77.4210442 | -72.6016335 |

*Figure 12: Here is an example of a seal skull found in one of the kitchen crevices. Picture taken by Pia Egede.*

## Summary of finds:

Here are the following archaeological features we found in Appaarsuit from both sites.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Fox-traps* | 2 |
| *Caches* | 13 |
| *House dwellings* | 4 |
| *Tent ring* | 1 |
| *Kayak* | 1 |
| *Stairs* | 1 |
| *Kitchen crevices* | 2 |
| *Burial* | 1 |
| **Total of finds** | **25** |

## Cultural heritage structures

This section will be an overview and discussion about the registered archaeological features in both sites. Upon observation on our short stay, we have managed to find 25 cultural heritage structures from a prehistoric culture that has greatly innovated to their surroundings. The archaeological remains revealed to be from neo-Inuit period – the Thule-Culture that existed from 1200 to 1900 AD in Greenland. The Thule people are the ancestors for modern living Inuit in Canada and Greenland as of today (Gulløv 2005: 281-343). The people from Thule-Cultural era in Avanersuaq were later known as Polar Eskimos and ultimately Inughuit.

### Fox-traps:

According to written sources, few fox-traps have been spotted mostly on the shores of Appaarsuit in 13th of August -1891 by Robert E. Peary's companions – they even remarked that one of the fox-traps seemed to be recently constructed with a fresh bait inside - a seal blubber, in an altitude of eleven hundred feet (estimate: 335 meters) (Peary 1898: 105-108). Conversely, Peary's book wasn't specific on which part of the island they saw the fox-traps or descriptive enough about the features. However, Appaarsuit is considered to be main hunting area for polar foxes in Oqqorliit district, where the carnivore mammal would be caught in large quantities (Grønnow 2016: 11-12).

We surveyed two fox-traps only in *'Appaarsuit site 1'*, where the highest elevated fox-trap is a little more than 45 meters. The first fox-trap closest to the shore, we saw, might have been one of the fox-traps Peary's companions have observed as well. I am not going to deny the mere possibility, but also should assure we only ground surveyed the eastern part of the island.

Both fox-traps are trapdoor types, meaning there'd be a bait inside, a seal blubber is a great example, knotted into, it could be a small stick at the rear end steadily put between rocks. The small stick with bait is attached to the raised front door of a thin rock with proper length of binder twine with tension between them. In which by touching the bait only, would be able to let go the tension instantly and the raised thin rock would drop down and block the entrance. The unsuspecting land mammal entered would be trapped instantaneously because the release mechanism was triggered successfully. That is how Greenlandic hunters from different villages and towns have explained on how the most common fox-trap operates according to the book about hunting tips and experiences called *'Piniarnilersaarutit'* from 1982 edited by Hans

Anthon Lynge. According to the same hunters, the ideal size of the fox-trap is 85 cm in length and 20 cm in width and 17 cm in height (Lynge 1982: 47-51).

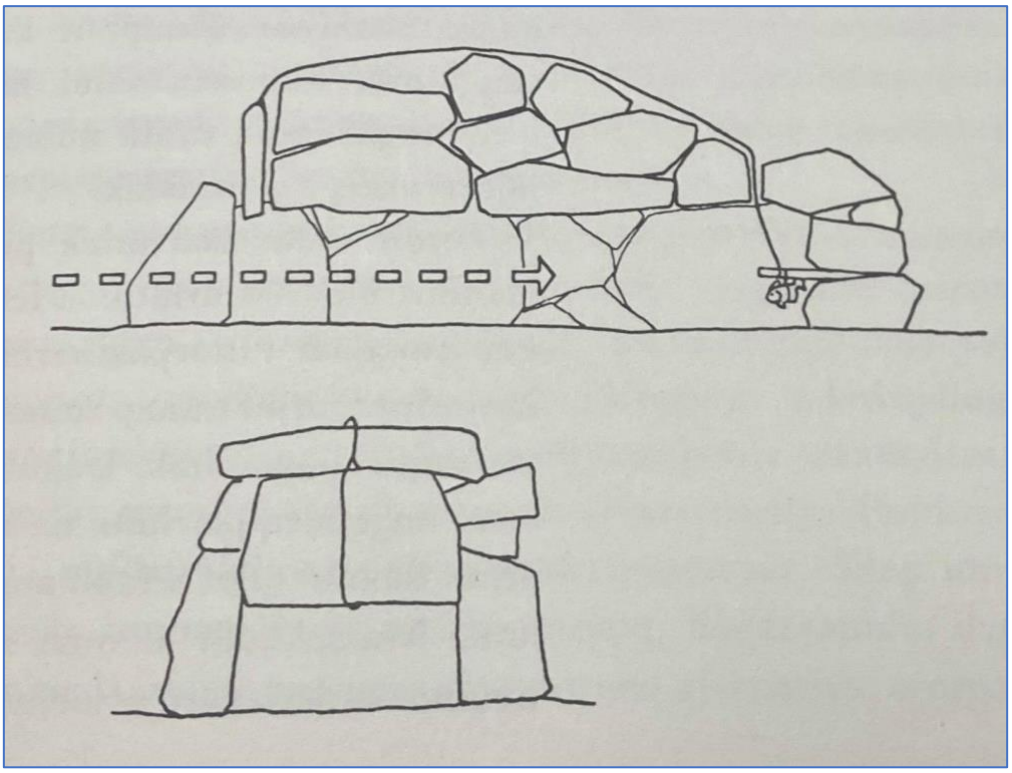

*Figure 13: Here is a drawing of a fox-trap by Jens Rosing (Lynge 1982: 51).*

The traps are set nearby the hundreds of little auk nesting grounds, the small holes are all over the rich vegetated hill on this site – the arctic foxes (including silver foxes) can be better lured in nearby bird nesting areas (Gilberg 1971: 41; Mosbech 2018: 238). This site is without exception. Thus, the fox-traps are intentionally well placed.

To survive the harsh and cold climate environments in Avanersuaq, the Inughuit needs to wear warmest and best suitable of clothing to their surroundings. Fox furs are greatly valued natural materials for that matter, the fur must be intact as possible before killing the caught fox. Arctic, - and silver foxes' thick fur can be made into gloves, women's trousers and kapataks - the children's and men's and women's outfit (Chemnitz 2001).

Obviously, the fur is a great material for sewing clothes, and it was only the women's job to kill the trapped foxes. However, the establishment of Thule Trading Station in 1910 changed the status, the men started to retrieve and kill the foxes from the traps as well to sell them afterwards (Gilberg 1971: 41).

While I was researching in Nunatta Allagaateqarfia, I found a diary that mentioned about arctic foxes' meat. The meat of foxes can be eaten too, although not fulfilling as Doctor Mogens Holms has mentioned on his diaries from his travels in Thule area in 1919 (P 10.00.52 - 07.80).

However, the polar fox's meat has been appreciated, since the mammal would be caught in large quantities during winter by Inughuit (Grønnow 2016: 12). The arctic foxes' meat has always been an important source for food in Late Dorset period from 8th Century to Ruin Island Phase from 13th to 15th Century, because the arctic fox bone specimen has always been excavated in large portions from archaeological sites in Avanersuaq (Mosbech 2018).

## Caches:

Summer is the time to prepare for the long and dark winter - it is extremely crucial to stockpile the food supplies efficient enough to support household families for the long winter times. Therefore, Inughuit families would move to their preferred summer encampments in form of skin tents, usually in a resourceful area (Gilberg 1971: 31), such as Appaarsuit – an island inside Pikialasorsuaq Polynya. The area of Appaarsuit sustenance populates small and large mammals, from arctic/silver foxes, - and arctic hares, seals, walruses, different types of whales and polar bears, including many species of birds.

Basically, caches are naturally refrigerated food storages that were purposefully blocked with big rocks to prevent animals, such as foxes, - dogs or polar bears getting in and eat the stored food for future consumption by settlers. Inughuit's subsistence, as mentioned, is to fill their caches with much needed provisions that will hopefully support their whole families in their winter settlement by building their caches nearby summer and winter places, as Rolf Gilberg has written: *"Så kan man se den kommende mørketid i møde med god samvittighed"* (Gilberg 1971: 14, 40-43; Ekblaw 1919: 3-4).

We have surveyed thirteen various caches in total, where seven caches with bigger storage capacities were found in *'Appaarsuit site 1'*, and the rest are situated outside house dwellings. I think some of the Inughuit families stayed on the island during the summer and stashed their food supplies in both sites, especially in the bigger caches in *'Appaarsuit site 1'*. Then later on, around the beginning of September, the Inughuit families would move to *'Appaarsuit site 2'* for winter with great aspirations and can easily obtain their provisions again by going to the first site if required.

## Kayak:

Avanersuaq's history of kayaks is unique, to say it at least. In 1818, the first contact with Inughuit was realized by Sir John Ross, when he came to Avanersuaq, they found out about the Inughuit does not possess the highly important kayak (Gilberg 1971: 19-20). The Inughuit

have *'forgotten'* the technique and practice itself on making sea vessels, because they were so remote and so isolated to the *'outside world'*. The written sources usually call it as the loss of technology and knowledge, in comparison to the rest of Greenland in those time periods. For example, in western Greenland the kayaks and the hunting tools have been drawn and mentioned back to early as 17th century. Not to mention, the Dutch whalers have collected kayaks from western and southern Greenland in 17th and 18th century that are currently located in National Museum of Ethnology (Museum Volkenkunde) in Leiden, Netherlands. The kayaks were built completely of organic materials without any European influences (Petersen 1987: 82-86; Gilberg 1971: 19-27; Jensen 2018: 129-131), except the kayak frame we found in Appaarsuit.

We know the existence of kayaks was valid, ever since the people of Thule-Culture migrated to Greenland around 1200 AD, but during 1600-1818 AD, there have never been archaeological finds, as Jørgen Melgaard calls it *"Arkæologisk Mørketid"* in Avanersuaq. It was also during those times in 1600 AD the contact with west Greenlandic people evaporated with the people in Avanersuaq. As the long isolation progressed, the people have gained their own special characteristics as Inughuit later on, as the first contact was first written down by Sir John Ross (Gilberg 1971: 19-20).

The practice on building and hunting on kayak was reintroduced back to Inughuit during 1860's, the time Qillarsuaq and his small group of Canadian-Inuit migrated from Baffin Land to northwest Greenland - Avanersuaq. The new people were integral to Inughuit communities in cultural and genetical level, because Inughuit also learnt about bows and arrows, leisters, and building snow-igloos with sunken entrances. All of them with specific characteristics unlike other in the rest of Greenland. After the end of immigration, the Inughuit population in Avanersuaq district grew and the new settlers were gradually absorbed by Inughuit communities through marriage (1971: 22-23; Gilberg 1976: 38).

There were oral accounts on how Inughuit had lost their elders from an awful epidemic that unfortunately brought the technical knowledge on building kayaks with them to their graves, but professor emeritus Robert Petersen doesn't think that is the most likely the case, because there must have been a time period, where the kayak wasn't as much as important as it previously has been in Avanersuaq, since Inughuit knew about the word kayak and the technical aspects of the sea vessel beforehand. Robert Petersen states:

*"De unge, der var tilbage, havde ikke lært den kunst at lave kajakker, og efter den tid havde polareskimoerne ingen kajakker. Sådan fortaltes det, men det var sandsynligvis ikke nok som begrundelse. Vi må nemlig regne med, at dersom kajakken dengang havde været nødvendigt*

*fartøj, ville de unge have skabt den igen. Derfor er det højst sandsynligt, at kajakken havde mistet en stor del af sin betydning."* (Petersen 1964: 385).

The only kayak frame, specifically six pieces of decomposing gunwales with signs of scarfing, we were able to find was in location I called *'Appaarsuit site 2'*. We can instantly observe the kayak frame have European influences, the type of nails and the type of wood used to be precise. For example, the introduction of iron nails was provided by Robert E. Peary in anno 1891 in Avanersuaq (Gilberg 1971: 25-26; Chistensen et. al. 1985: 7).

Firstly, the specific structure and physical characteristics of the nails can estimate the time the kayak was built, since the nails have identifiable and chronological features historically. The gunwales have hand wrought nails and wire nails embedded, indicating the different time periods. According to Tom Wells' article *"Nail Chronology: The Use of Technologically Derived Features"* from 1998, the hand wrought nails are older and were used throughout 17th century. The presence of wire nails indicates the time period to be around 19th century (Wells 1998: 79-87). However, the shank and shaft of the nails can also provide more determined dating approach, because the wire nails have rounded shanks with rather thinner shafts, which are more improved and modern counterpart kinds of nails that were distributed around the end of 19th century (1998: 89-98).

Secondly, the type of wood used weren't a collection of driftwood, but lumber milled wood. Meaning the wood used for the kayak gunwales must have been commercially bought. The lumber milled wood was probably bought from the Thule Trading Station, as the store was founded in 1910 at Cape York – Uummannaq. The flow of constant stream of materials and tools began to be progressivily available to Inughuit and gradually became each hunter's equipment in time (Gilberg 1971: 28-30; Gilberg 1976: 47).

A reasonable educated guess for the time period of the kayak is probably after the Thule Trading Station was founded in anno 1910 based on the materials the kayak gunwales were built from with lumber milled wood embedded with hand wrought, - and wire nails.

The Inughuit's history with kayak is not even two hundred years old, and it is essential hunting equipment for Inughuit today. Inughuit are the only people who still hunt in traditional manner on kayaks in present day Greenland.

## Burial:

Thule-Culture burials are often found nearby settlements. There are different types and shapes of burials scattered all around Greenland. For example, there can be multiple humans remains

in one burial, and upon examination you could find the signs of reusage of the same interment. A burial can contain artifact assemblages that were closely related to the deceased, that could be equipment, tools or even toys (Grummesgaard-Nielsen 1997: 202-206; Lynnerup 2015: 1001).

The specific burial in *'Appaarsuit site 2'* was the only one we found. The burial was constructed up against the cliff, sheltered with large stones. The burial context has a single human remain, with a skull and possibly fibula and tibia (the human bones between the knee and the ankle) visible through the opening.

We did not find any associated artifact assemblages and the lack of it could mean two most likely instances. The human curiosities and natural circumstances could be taken to consideration. The burial could have been disturbed by people and the artifact assemblages could have been uncovered subsequently. Or a burial with an opening, like this burial, the organic or inorganic context would deteriorate faster than untouched and unopened burial would do, from wind, snow, rain and unquestionably animals can further disturb the context inside (Grummesgaard-Nielsen 1997: 198-199). T

The lack of artifact assemblages in and around the burial does not provide any significant insight about the material culture and lifeways of Thule-Culture people, specifically Inughuit. In the meantime, the burial might not have any artifact assemblages to begin with.

However, this specific burial proves someone had passed away in Appaarsuit, who wasn't baptized. Inughuit began to be baptized first around anno 1909. I should point out, the first Christian burial for a deceased Inughuit happened in August 1925 in Avanersuaq (Gilberg 1971: 157, 250). Although, this does not prove the burial was specifically built in anno 1909, or even in anno 1925, and thereafter. Nonetheless, I am sure the burial does not affiliate to Christian burials in any shape or form.

### Man-made stairs:

In our big surprise we saw the feature that only looked like a cairn in the first sight. A structure of compiled big stones unusually but solidly situated up against the wall of *'Appaarsuit site 2's'* plateau. I carefully stepped on the rock on top and to the next down. After I came down from the plateau, I immediately analyzed the two crevices in front of me. We later understood this feature is a man-made stairway that leads down to the kitchen crevices, hence the connection between these archaeological features was linked.

I, and my colleagues have never seen such stairs before, yet alone in Thule-Culture or Inughuit archaeological features in our history books. This is completely new archaeological feature to us. An interview of Uusaaqqaq Qujaakitsoq came to my mind, that supports our finding of such stairs, as he has said:

*"Strange structures out on that island, of a kind that Inughuit have not heard of."*

This quote is from a transcribed interview by Pauline Knudsen from September 2017 in Qaanaaq[9]. Uusaqqaq Qujaakitsoq might have directly referred to this archaeological feature, but he might have also referred to something else entirely in an area we did not get a chance to explore.

### Kitchen crevices:

The two kitchen crevices are basically old dumps for domestic waste, consisting of seal, - dog, - walrus, - narwhal, and beluga whale skulls. I also saw numerous whale scapulars and vertebras. Still, there were plenty of bones visible on the surface which were unidentifiable without closer inspection. The bones that I did not inspect were the ones under the rocks that were sticking out or the bones under the sea water barely visible covered in green algae. Yet, the skulls and bones are useful resources for archaeological research, regarding the previous settler's diet and habits in Appaarsuit.

Sled dogs or husky dogs are hunting companions of Thule-Culture people, and the current living Inuit in Greenland. Our findings of three dog skulls could be explained like this: Huskies can live up to more than ten years. The weak ones or the ones that are too unruly are usually killed. The worst-case scenario for the settlers is, when there is a necessary time to kill off the most prized possession of a hunter – is to kill their dogs to ward off starvation during winter (Herbert 1981: 62-75; 154-155).

The sea mammals are obvious part of the larger and more complex part of the ecosystem in Appaarsuit, since the coastal island is situated inside the naturally rich Pikialasorsuaq polynya. Although, the relationship between the people and the polynya is not a passive one, but it is an unavoidably dedicated attempt to exploit particular species available at the time being in communities' coastal areas (Andersen et. al. 2018).

The animal skulls give us a portion of an idea about the people's aspirations and activities on eventually moving to the farthest coastal island among the three from Qeqertarsuaq to Kiatak and Appaarsuit.

[9] Unpublished interview with Uusaqqaq Qujaakitsoq by Pauline Knudsen (2017).

## Tent ring:

The single tent ring in *'Appaarsuit site 1'* indicates the island had summer residences probably between the months of May and September. The structure of the tent would have looked generally rectangular or conical in shape with a short ridgepole around the entrance, covered in seal or caribou skins, weighed down by rocks on the ground that later leave the traces in perceptible circular pattern. Ordinarily, a single family would live on one tent. However, a big skin tent could consist of up to unbelievably 50 seal skins (Gilberg 1971: 38-39).

Rolf Gilberg has stated that summer settlements in Avanersuaq are mostly settled nearby bird nesting areas, since birds are essential components on Inughuit's nutrition and is an important part of Inughuit's subsistence. In this case, we have noticed *'Appaarsuit site 1'* have hundreds of small holes on the ground up towards the sloping hill. After quick inspection, we understood those were little auk nesting grounds. Inughuit elderly and women can easily catch little auks in considerable quantities, and that is one of the main reasons why the Inughuit have settled in a place like Appaarsuit (1971: 38-40).

*'Appaarsuit site 2'* have also little auk nesting grounds, but those were situated over the narrow cliff, which is more inaccessible.

*Figure 14: The Inughuit outside their tent in Kiatak (Peary 1898: 103).*

## House-dwellings:

When the weather gets too cold in September, families would move to warmer house dwellings. We have registered four semisubterranean house dwellings from both sites in Appaarsuit in different sizes and variations. Two of them shaped like a clover leaf with extensions from the main room, one almost round with an offshoot at the east side in prolongation of the front wall, and one structure is rectangular with the similar form of a crucifix instead of a clover leaf. The house dwellings commonality is the fact that all of them are semisubterranean and their long narrow entrance passages are dug a little bit deeper in comparison to the main floor inside, because the purpose of this is to keep the coldness outside and minimum inside. The underground entrance passages are oriented towards the sea, which is east. All of the four house dwellings have also used whale bones upon construction on the walls, where the smallest *'House dwelling III'* in *'Appaarsuit site 2'* have the most. These are the common winter house dwellings characteristics in Appaarsuit, also in Avanersuaq derived from Thule-Culture – the classical phase that take place in 11$^{th}$ and 12$^{th}$ century (Gilberg 1971: 37). Although, the rectangular shaped winter house in *'Appaarsuit 1'* is a renewed type from the common characteristics as rounded/clover-leafed/oval/trapezoid prior 18$^{th}$ century. The rectangular house dwellings emerged during 18$^{th}$ century and this type of winter houses became predominant afterwards in Greenland (Gulløv 2005: 328-337). However, the different sizes and shapes of house dwellings during Thule-Culture varied, because in some areas there'd be clover-leafed shaped winter houses and rectangular shaped house dwellings within the same area also in the same time span in Avanersuaq, because Inughuit reuses the house dwellings (Gilberg 1971: 37, 43-46). Thus, making it hard to determine which century the house dwellings were constructed.

The only house dwelling in *'Appaarsuit 1'* is unusually situated because it was built on top of the hill and the house is registered as the second highest elevation from our findings, which might have connected to the mountain top of Appaarsuit for bird hunting or collection of eggs. However, according to Rolf Gilberg, the house dwellings in Avanersuaq are usually built nearby the shoreline with an easy in and out accessibility to their transportation devices (1971: 42-43). The house dwellings in *'Appaarsuit 2'* are much closer to shoreline and fits to Rolf

Gilbergs description from his manuscript *'Polareskimoerne i Thule Distriktet, Nordgrønland: Økologiske betragninger over bosætning'* from 1971.

Robert E. Peary's fellow companions has called the clover leaf shaped semisubterranean winter house dwellings from Kiatak as *'stone igloos'* and *'Eskimo igloos'*, after they unsuccessfully observed Appaarsuit to find inhabitants but successfully caught birds from the island's cliffs (Peary 1898: 105-108).

Ordinarily, a single house dwelling is for a single Inughuit family occupancy and sometimes with relatives or future families in marriage staying with them (Gilberg 1971: 55; Gilberg 1976: 35-36).

## Short assessment about the sites:

The archaeological features in eastern shores of Appaarsuit are consisted of winter and summer structures. The two sites are close by, and based on the evidence, I think the sites are interconnected to one another. All of the archaeological features strengthen the narrow margin of survival in a place like Appaarsuit. Avanersuaq in general is precarious, therefore the notion of Appaarsuit's surrounding was deeply evaluated before settling in. The archaeological features verify the settlers were doing their best to fully benefit their natural resources in the outermost coastal island. Even the man-made stairs in *'Appaarsuit site 2'* is an example how ingenious the former Inughuit settlers were, by making Appaarsuit's challenging or unreachable nature more easily accessible for them - which is the same way for the rest of the interconnected archaeological features.

I have been cross-dating the archaeological features to determine and get the idea of the time period in Appaarsuit. The only valid archaeological records at my disposal to cross-date were the kayak and fox-traps in addition of the burial. Let me explain why. First of all, the fox-traps might have been the ones Robert E. Peary mentioned in his book *'Northward Over the Great Ice Vol. 1'* from 1898. Robert E. Peary's companions were in Appaarsuit in August 1891 without finding anything else, except the fox-traps. This means, by using Robert E. Peary's book as basis, the other archaeological features we surveyed must have been built after anno 1891.

Then, the kayak was a little more unambiguously detailed, also a proof for a time period that has shifted for a time with commercial use. Upon closer look to the kayak frame in *'Appaarsuit site 2'*, the features minor characteristics, such as different kinds of nails and the type of wood, determines the time period to be at least from anno 1910 and hence forth, because based on the

associated materials used on building the kayak frame doesn't originate from Greenland entirely, most likely from Europe that could have been bought from Thule Trading Station.

Thirdly, the burial we found doesn't have anything related to Christian burials, that was first adopted in anno 1925 in Avanersuaq. However, since the written sources have stated Appaarsuit was a settlement between the years of 1921 and 1935, and Robert E. Peary's companions were on the island in August 1891 without seeing any signs for a settlement, except the inhabited settlement on neighboring island Kiatak during that time.

The written sources of Avanersuaq's and Appaarsuit's history and the evidence of archaeological features we collected are intertwining to each other, in term of cross-dating the evidences with written sources. In short, the window range between anno 1891 and 1935 from written sources are within timeframe complementarily based on the cross-dated archaeological features we surveyed.

## The important seabirds in Appaarsuit

Different species of birds have been observed in Appaarsuit - puffins, black guillemot, kittiwake gulls, eider ducks and burgomasters. The most significant bird species have been reported to be the thick-billed murres and little auks, because these birds can form a bulk resource for Inughuit's caches on the coastal island, especially the little auks (Peary 1898: 107; Mosbech et. al. 2018; Gilberg 1971; Ekblaw 1919), which is the most likely the reason why Inughuit moved to Appaarsuit and settled in the first place.

### Appa (Uria lomvia):

I have previously described '*Appaarsuit'* means *'Thick-billed Murres Mountains'* in Kalaallisut, fittingly so, since the island inhabits an intact, stable and growing colonies of thick-billed murres (Uria lomvia) of breeding nesting colonies on several cliff faces (Falk, Kampp 1998). Appaarsuit is also the main hunting area for the seabirds in Oqqorliit district (Grønnow 2016: 11).

According to Pinngortitaleriffik, there were 37.000 estimated population of thick-billed murres in Appaarsuit in 1987. Ten years later, any major changes could not be evaluated in 1997. Nevertheless, seven years later - the population grew to 42.000 in 2006 (Egevang et. al. 2012), because the colonies are probably the least hunted thick-billed murres in all of Greenland (Falk, Kampp 1998: 17).

Historically, Robert E. Peary's companions were ordered to collect thick-billed murres as much as possible in Appaarsuit. Although uncertain about the existence of the nesting colonies on the island, they proceeded on and found the breeding colonies in large numbers on August 13th, 1891, and started procuring them, as quoted:

*"By eight o'clock, we had gathered about forty birds, averaging more than one bird to the cartridge, in spite of the fact that we were unable to get much over seventy percent, of the birds killed, as they would fall on the little projections of rock on the cliffs and there lodge."* (Peary 1898: 105-106).

They crew only procured dozens of birds that fell at the foot of the cliffs with much difficulty, since the waves were high and breaking with much force. They nearly hit the rocks several times. Although the next day, they have eventually procured total of 132 thick-billed murres in four trips to the bird colonies from the sea (1898: 105-107).

The large size of thick-billed murres' body is bigger than other seabirds, making this species vital food resource for people in centuries (Ekblaw 1919: 3-4).

*Figure 15: Thick billed murres cliff in Appaarsuit. Picture taken by Matthew Walls.*

### Inughuit foraging eggs and catching Appat:

The next day after we surveyed Appaarsuit, we interviewed Otto Simigaq in Siorapaluk on 27th July 2019. He commented on the quantity of thick-billed murres immediately, even though we saw thousands of appat on the steep cliffs of the island, he said:

*"There can be so much more during spring. The chicks have jumped off the edge of the cliff to the sea, and this might be the explanation for the few we saw."*

Otto Simigaq continued and told us that a group of hunters used to use ropes instead of nylons as Inughuit do nowadays and climb the cliffs to collect thick-billed murress' eggs, and keep in mind, the highest point of the island is 460 meters (Geodatastyrelsen 2018):

*"People used to be hoisted down on ropes to collect eggs of the seabirds. Two ropes would be used, one for the person, and the other for the bag or bucket. After it was full, the person would gently pull the other rope attached to the bucket couple of times to let them know it was full. The others on top would pull it up and lower it down again for refill… They used to leave their eggs nearby the big inussuks (cairns) on top of the island's plateau."*

Seabird eggs are considered highly valuable resources, since a group of men would put themselves in harm's way and can collect hundreds of eggs in one day as L. Mylius Erichsen's and Harald Moltke's 'Grønland' from 1906, has written down about how hunters would be hoisted down with seal thong to collect bird eggs from steep cliffs:

"*Hvilke Eskimoerne under stor Livsfare lader sig hejse ned I Kobberemme oppe fra Plateauet. Der er 2-3 Mand om at hejse en enkelt Mand ned"* (Mylius-Erichsen et. al. 1906: 386; 411).

The worst-case scenario would be death. However, some men are lucky enough to be alive. For example, an Inughuit man, Arrutsak, had a fortunate accident while collecting seabird eggs, and he got himself a wooden leg as a result:

*"Arrutsak var en Mand med Træben. Han var en Gang faldet ned fra et Fuglefjæld, fik vi senere vide, og havde faaet sit ene Ben knust. Hans Moder havde da skaaret den kvæstede Del af Benet bort og lavet ham et Træben, der kunde surres fast til Benstumpen"* (Rasmussen 1905: 30).

Another life-threatening account was also written down by Knud Rasmussen from his book called 'Nye mennesker' from 1905, about an Inughuit man named Sorkrark, who was catching seabirds on the cliffs and from a misfortune jump, he fell to the ground after the seal thong he was attached to broke:

*"Han var gaaet til et Fuglefjæld paa Alkejagt og kunde naturligvis ikke tage Alkene nede fra, som andre dødelige, men var gaaet et Tusind Fod til Vejrs. Her havde han bundet sig en Kobberem om Livet og hoppede saaledes om mellem Fjældhylderne. Under et Hop glemmer*

*han Remmen og springer for langt. Linen løber ud, inden da faar Fodfæste; et Øjeblik hænger han dinglende over Afgrunden, saa brister Linen, og Sorkrark styrter ned"*.

Sorkrark was later found by his fellow hunters from kayak, and brought him back to his wife to die, because his shoulders were *'knuste'* and he had a big hole on his head. Luckily, Sorkrark survived and: *"Ud paa Vinteren var han atter en af de første Slæder."* (1905: 49).

According to Otto Simigaq, their ancestors used to catch thick-billed murres the same way, as catching Appaliarsuks – the little auks. They used a paddle, so it won't break easily for bigger seabirds:

*"I have also heard about our ancestors used to use pole nets to catch thick-billed murres the same way you do for little auks but using a paddle as a pole. They used to save their catches to the biggest cache on top of the island, was I told by Inuutersuaq Ulloriaq."*

However, we couldn't confirm the caches mentioned because we were never on top of Appaarsuit, but Otto Simigaq pointed out where the inussuk is, and there was a undeniably a feature that looks like a cairn from a far distance.

### Appaliarsuk (alle alle):

Little auk (alle alle) in Kalaallisut is Appaliarsuk – these seabirds are the smallest species among the seven auk species in Greenland. Little auks in Avanersuaq are in millions (Gilberg 1971: 40), and the small seabirds were everywhere we go in Avanersuaq, we saw thousands of them in Appaarsuit as well in both sites. The immense abundance of little auk colonies is estimated to be around 33 million breeding pairs in Avanersuaq during summertime (Mosbech et. al. 2018: 226-227).

The most common way Inughuit catches little auks are with a catcher - a long pole (approximately 3 meters long) with a half a diameter width net nearby the seabirds nesting areas, for example, on steep cliffs or mountain slopes. A single person can catch 10 in one swing towards the flying little auks. A well-skilled person can catch up to 1000 little auks in over 10-12 hours, and the caught bird would be killed by squeezing through the heart or breaking the neck (Gilberg 1971: 40-41). Here are some examples on how Inughuit catches the tiny-sized seabirds in neighboring island Kiatak:

*"Under Opholdet paa Northumberland-Øen var Jørgen og jeg hver Dag en Tur til Fjælds for at skyde Søkonger til Hundenes og vor egen Ernæring. De indfødte laa der oppe mellem Stenene, og naar en Fugleflok strøg lavt hen over Fjældsiden, blev der svunget nogle Ketscherere i Luften, og hvert Ketschernet indeholdt da gerne indtil en halv Snes Søkonger,*

*der enkeltvis blev tagne frem og kvalte. Alle Mennesker der paa Pladsen spiste Søkonger og tyggede paa Fugleskind og tørrede dem"* (Mylius-Erichsen et. al. 1906: 325).

Knud Rasmussen compared this kind of approach on catching little auks for catching butterflies at home in Denmark, as quoted:

*"Man lægger sig i Stenrauserne, bevæbnet med en Ketser; og naar Fuglene i Tusindvis suser hen over ens Hoved, strækker man Nettet ud og øser dem op, ganske som man herhjemme fanger Sommerfugle…"* (Rasmussen 1905: 47).

According to W. Elmer Ekblaw's article *'The Food-Birds of the Smith Sound Eskimos'* from 1919, states the little auks are the most important food-birds in comparison to thick-billed murres or other seabird species, because little auks can be caught easier, therefore can be collected in large quantities. These small little auks can have the biggest roles, in terms of surviving the winter. The Inughuit men, often women would catch many quantities as possible, and they would fill their caches full of hundreds little auks. They would also prepare little auks as their traditional food – kiviaq (Mosbech et. al. 2018: 231; Gilberg 1971: 40-41). Let me make this clear, kiviaq (singular) is Inughuit's traditional fermented little auk delicatesse. The way you prepare them is quite unique. You stuff the freshly caught little auks (with feathers and all) inside freshly caught seal. You stitch the seal pelt up, after you are making sure the air was out, so the little auk's fermentation doesn't go bad. The last step was burying the kiviaq on preferred landscape because the kiviaq's surroundings affect the taste. Mostly, Inughuit families would bury their kiviaq to the places where their parents and grandparents used to bury their kiviaq (Mosbech et. al. 2018: 231).

In the times of stress in winter, when the other food supplies turn scarce, the role for the frozen thick-billed murres, particularly little auks stored in caches have often warded off people from starvation as the last resource, making the seabird species of little auks so meaningful in the name of survival among Inughuit. The eggs of numerous bird species stashed nicely in the caches have the same role too (Ekblaw 1919: 5).

The soft feathers of the little auks can be made into inner linings for both sexes (Gilberg 1971: 41; Chemnitz 2001: 86).

## Little auks as ecological engineers:

The small sized little auks are crucial in bigger perspective in terms of Avanersuaq's seabird ecosystem services, because the seabirds leave their highly nutrients from the sea to the land that greatly affects their environments in a long-term perspective. Not only are the seabirds

vastly in great numbers and can substantially fill Inughuit caches, - or the feathers can be made into inner linings for people, but most importantly are little auks the *ecological engineers* for their surroundings in Avanersuaq. Because the bird's natural deposits called guanos are highly nutrient excrements that fertilizes the landscape with great impact. The landscape in little auk breeding colonies have a much higher vegetation in comparison to the places without nesting colonies by the tiny seabirds. The density of peat is higher and can easily be seen from the distance. This leaves foraging possibilities for other animal species, such as arctic hares and polar foxes that can be found in Appaarsuit and later be hunted by Inughuit, whereas the concept of seabird ecosystem services fits perfectly, as it has been defined as: *"The benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living"* (Mosbech et. al. 2018; Gilberg 1971: 41).

In short, the little auks create an ecological foundation for other species to come to Appaarsuit, as arctic hares and polar foxes have been mentioned in history books. A human activity of trapping foxes has been written since in summer 1891 in Appaarsuit, and the coastal island was registered as a settlement first in 32 years later in 1923.

## Oral stories about the tragedy in Appaarsuit

Telling stories is considered to be a traditional and immaterial heritage in Greenlandic culture, that has survived from generation to generation. Oral stories about myths and legends have been collected by, to name a few: Hans Egede, Poul Egede, H. J. Rink, Christian Rosing, Jens Rosing and, of course, Knud Rasmussen and many more, mostly polar explorers, have collected stories all-around Greenland. For example, Knud Rasmussen has famously collected oral stories about Inughuit's perspectives on creation of life and death in his book *'Nye Mennesker'* from 1905 (Rasmussen 1905: 115-243).

Oral stories about Qillarsuaq are also interconnected from oral stories collections in both Greenlandic, - and Canadian Inuit, as Inuutersuaq Ulloriaq has also written Ittussaarsuaq's oral stories about certain events on Qillarsuaq's life. However, the oral stories usually reflect upon the harsh lifestyle the people face in their lifetime. About upholding the taboos and what kind of consequences there could be, in case if you break them. About survival or revenge, or even about beliefs in mythical creatures and how the shamans can handle them. Sometimes the oral stories are for the sake of entertainment only, although it depends on the storyteller too, because telling stories is a skill that needs to be properly learned and taught. On what kind of gestures,

- or facial expressions the person is doing or how loud is the storyteller speaking, not only does it depend on the context of the story, but also the current situation, because it needs to be lived and heard in the moment. Storytelling can also be considered as a performance, since it is about captivating the listeners and keep their attention to create a certain kind of emotion out of them (Berthelsen 1976).

It should be point out that oral stories can be lacking in detail or changed in some ways because of different reasons, but in the end, it depends on the storyteller and the way the listener perceives the stories. Intergenerational oral stories have continued to be passed on by Inuit and most importantly, if such stories have been written down and recorded, it means they are going to be never forgotten (Engelbrechtsen et. al. 2014).

In my case, in interviewing Inughuit about Appaarsuit, one terrible event has been told more than once. It is about a tragedy that presumably has happened, but the period of when it has happened is unclear, except which month of the year the tragic event occurred. Every time I, or my fellow colleagues from the fieldwork, have asked about the coastal island, the interviewees would tell the tragic event, but in different versions with minor changes about how the tragedy really happened.

I want to make this clear, the importance of oral stories is the possibility of how the interviewees can cast a new light on unexplored areas and reveal unknown events or even the unknown aspects of known events (Perks et. al. 2006: 36), may very well be the case for the tragic accident told to us. Furthermore, I will research the pattern of the stories and try to verify if there ever was, indeed an accident that costs human lives has occurred in the history of Appaarsuit.

Here are the four stories told by four different people from the interviews we have done in Qaanaaq and Siorapaluk.

## No transportation vessel on the sea:

In this version, the reason for the accident was because there wasn't any transportation vessel available to save the people from dying. This is from the interview of *Qalaseq Sadorana* by Pivinnguaq Mørch in Qaanaaq[10]:

*"I've heard about the story. It might have happened during summer. Maybe they don't have an umiaq, or kayak. They tried to make a cross with an ice floe away from the island– as I was told. The small strait has powerful sea currents, and they did not make it. I was told long time*

[10] Unpublished interview of Qalaseq Sadorana by Pivinnguaq Mørch (2019).

*ago, and I don't really remember when it actually happened. A tragedy happened; I do know that… Someone watched the accident occurring from the island. Someone witnessed it. But someone could not have done anything else, other than just watch, because there were no kayaks. "*

## The icefloe tipped:

The interview with *Otto Simigaq* in Siorapaluk, specifically by Pauline Knudsen, Pia Egede, Mari Kleist, and myself[11]. The interview was conducted the day after we were in Appaarsuit with Otto Simigaq in Siorapaluk:

*Otto*: *"When the accident occurred, then they survived on eating eggs from the island… The female Elder… perhaps someone would know? Maybe Taliilannguaq and Aamannguaq? Although she was already onboard, she got off, because she saw that she would leave the children behind without adults to take care of them. Then once the others left, the accident occurred before they even reached the ice-edge."*

*Mari*: *"The female Elder gets off the ice before the accident?"*

*Otto*: *"She did not let the children get hurt. She was the one who went out and listened [after people fell to the sea]. When the voices were no longer to be heard, she understood they had all been lost… The children were left behind with one elderly at the houses we saw. All the rest were lost. This is how Inuutersuaq [Ulloriaq] used to tell me. There are different versions though. I don't know if the version I told you is the truth one. Or if the stories told by other people about the accident were complete... They used an ice floe that has been broken off as a float. They probably tipped as the ice floe melted that they floated on. Some people think they were in an umiaq and somehow the accident happened. The story I know was told by Inuutersuaq [Ulloriaq].*

*Mari*: *While they were on dog sledges or not? Did they travel with dog sledge?*

*Otto*: *"No, as this is an island that does not get well-covered by sea ice on the outer side. Maybe it was just about to get covered by sea ice. Appaarsuit has strong currents, over there. The ice edge was probably a bit too far away when they tried to cross and were lost.*

*Pauline*: *"They got on top of the ice floe and then started crossing."*

*Otto*: *"Trying to get on to the ice floe the accident happened."*

[11] Unpublished interview of Otto Simigaq by Pauline Knudsen, Pia Egede, Mari Kleist, Matthew Walls and Pivinnguaq Mørch (2019).

Comment: Qalaseq Sadorana's and Otto Simigaq's stories are similar, and I must add, they are brothers. The exclusion of transportation vessels could be with the knowledge that Inughuit haven't had kayaks or umiaqs before people from Canada walked across and shared their knowledge to Inughuit around 1860's. Sir John Ross in 1818 had pointed out kayaks were unknown to the *'Arctic Highlanders'* (Ulloriaq 1985: 104). The stories could suggest the tragic accident in Appaarsuit happened before Qillarsuaq in 1860's crossed over to Avanersuaq, because the people were trying to make a cross with just an ice floe in both stories.

## They might have been killed by animals:

This version was told by ***Taliilannguaq Peary*** from the arrangement we held in Utoqqaat Illuat (old people's house) in Qaanaaq, to present our archaeological findings to them[12]. This gathering was a group interview with the purpose of sharing and obtaining information about the specific places we have been already into and going to (as I have said, Appaarsuit wasn't the only place we have surveyed in our fieldworks).

In this version, the adults were crossing with an umiaq made of walrus skin and they were going to get their dogs back and then the deathly accident occurred in the small strait:

*"They were crossing, and they didn't know they were heading towards an accident… The Elder took care of the children [back in the settlement]. Before the accident happened, the cause might have been walruses or beluga whales, since there were plenty of them and they must have caught many of them prior. Beluga whales with black spots around here, people would call them: 'Nujalissuit'. Those might have been their kinds of whales in their time periods. Those kinds were the terrifying ones – people would say. It is because those whales have black color on top of their heads, since their appearances look like that, people would call them as Nujalissuit - 'the ones with the hair.' Those [whales] were the most aggressive kinds among them all. Those whales might have been the reason for the accident to happen, those might have tipped the umiaq after all.*

*The others [from the settlement] heard them, and they occasionally would cry back, maybe because they were only in their minds. The Elder calmed them down. And it might have been those horrifying [whales] that killed them. That is how I have heard of the tragedy [in Appaarsuit]."*

[12] Unpublished group interview by Pauline Knudsen, Mari Kleist and Pivinnguaq Mørch (2019).

Taliilannguaq Peary has also mentioned, about: *"The former pastor, the one who worked here back then, has made a memorial on their behalf. 'Ane-Sofie' and 'Itullak' have remarked their thankfulness to him."*

The former pastor he was referring to, was Gustav Olsen. It was unclear where the memorial had been placed. The other elders from the gathering were saying the memorial is situated in Kiatak, while the others were saying it is in Qaanaaq. They did not describe how the memorial looks like.

Comments: This version about the tragedy was like a fable that involves mythical creatures called Nujalissuit - the beluga whales with black spots on top of their heads that are known to be scary and most aggressive among species of whales. I never heard about Nujalissuit before, until Taliilannguaq Peary told us. There is no such species of beluga whales with the appearance he told us, but if beluga whales and walruses were the case, the tragic accident might have happened between winter, since walruses and beluga whales overwinter in Pikialasorsuaq polynya (Heide-Jørgensen & Laidre 2006: 72; Rosing-Asvid 2010). I have two educational guesses, the whales might have been killer whales, but their distinctive black and white color extinguishes my presumption. My second guess was simply the walruses were the case, because they are known to be exceedingly aggressive, dangerous, and lethal. Walruses are known to attack and kill hunters and suggested that walruses doesn't fear anything at all. For example, one such account was told by hunters from a village called Nuussuaq (situated north from Upernavik), who has seen a solitary walrus attacking migrating killer whales. The hunters saw the walrus again, when it came into sight to the surface of the sea and the walrus was hanging on the biggest killer whale from the group (Hansen 2008: 224). The aggressivity of walruses could be the reason for the tragic accident to happen. One or several walruses could have attacked the umiaq without any hesitation.

### My mother was one of the children:

We were given a tip from Otto Simigaq and Taliilannguaq Peary from old peole's house in Qaanaaq, to interview Aamannguaq Peary (she signs her name as *Aimannguaq*, which I will do as well on this paper), because we were informed about her ancestors used to live in Appaarsuit, which she later confirmed. Surprisingly so, she immediately confirmed her mother used to live on the coastal island as a child. Her mother's name is Ane-Sofie. She explained that her mother was named after the wife of Gustav Olsen, the former pastor in Avanersuaq.

Her story about the tragedy is the most personal among the other interviewees and it could tell. Her oral story has more details than the other interviewees did, even though she never been in Appaarsuit in her entire life. Here is *Aimannguaq Peary's* version of the tragedy, interviewed by Pauline Knudsen and Pia Egede in Qaanaaq[13]:

*"I haven't been in Appaarsuit in my life, but my mother used to live there. They were living in two houses; did you see the old houses? The other one was by my mother's parents' house, and the upper house was by the family of Sisso. And here was the rock - a big boulder.*

*It is before Christmas… It happened near the settlement. Appaarsuit is the outermost, [one might say] at the tip towards the open sea… It is before Christmas. The sea water was frozen, but around Appaarsuit, it wasn't. My mother's parents and brother, including the siblings of the family of Sisso, I should let you know - there were two houses [on the island], and all of them tried to go to the store in Uummannaq. The family of Sisso left one of their children behind, the others were with them. My mother's brother is called Uhukitaarsuk - they called him 'Usukitaaq', even though his real name was Masauna. They left to cross the strait and two of the daughters were left behind, and their grandmother too. They were going through the small strait in total darkness, because it usually gets really dark before Christmas. The light would come back first in January and the sun would shine again first in February. It was before Christmas; they would go out to check on them. The ice edge wasn't far away, suddenly the screams of people and the cry of dogs could be heard. Before this happened, they had a small light with them, we call them as 'naneruaq' – they were holding on to a small torch as a light nearby the ice edge on the way [to Uummannaq]. The others would come out and see, and the other who was outside would come in back inside the house because it was very cold, and they could not be outside for a long period of time. They heard them, and the small light turned off. The others understood [of what has happened].*

Aimannguaq Peary repeated the story:

*They left with their umiaq and crossed the sea to the ice edge. They raised their umiaq up from the sea on the edge of the ice. The loud screams of people, and dogs could be heard. Really, really loud noises of distress. Just like that, the children and the elderly became all alone in an instant. One-woman elderly, and the rest were children. Eventually, someone came by dogsled in February, and they have been all alone for many days since December. They were alone for many months, those poor things. They (the rescuers) came first later (in*

[13] Unpublished interview of Aimannguaq Peary by Pauline Knudsen and Pia Egede (2019).

*February) because they did not know what had happened and the children had lost their parents. That is my story without a doubt – a story that connects to my mother.“*

Pauline Knudsen asked Aimannguaq whether she knew when her mother was born. Aimannguaq doesn't remember, and she did not recall asking her mother about it and said: *“Maybe you can check in to the church to look it up.”*

Comment: This is the second version of a story surrounding an umiaq, instead of an ice floe. It is also the most personal among all the versions we know so far, because it involves Aimannguaq Peary's own mother named Ane-Sofie, hence Ane-Sofie was mentioned for the 2nd time, by Taliilannguaq Peary as the first one to mention her name. In the last two versions and the involvement of an umiaq, those only indicate the tragedy happened after Qillarsuaq people came to Avanersuaq, because the Inughuit were taught by them to make kayaks and umiaqs after their arrival in 1860's. Another detail should not be missed, because Aimannguaq mentioned the group of people who left Appaarsuit were going to the store, Aimannguaq was referring to the Thule Trading Station – meaning the tragedy happened sometime after anno 1910. The group was large enough to bring their dogs with them, and their purpose was important enough to leave their children behind. Probably, to buy more valuable commodities from Thule Trading Station.

## The common ground:

Whether the accident happened on an ice floe, umiaq or killed by Nujalissuit, the beluga whales with black spots on top of their heads that are scary and aggressive - one thing is for sure, it is about a tragic accident that wiped out every adult from the settlement, except one Elderly - whom alone, took care of the children that were left behind. The details for the tragic accident have another common ground, which is – it happened right after the people left Appaarsuit. The accident happened on the strait, between the two islands. These analogies shares and anchor the their similarities the oral stories.

## 'Den store Brædulykke':

I searched for anything similar to the stories told about the tragic accident from the written sources in Avanersuaq in general. I did not find anything specifically that connects to the stories from our interviews, but I found something that resembles the events that took place in Appaarsuit. In Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen and Harald Moltke's *'Grønland'* from 1906, the book contains their experiences in Avanersuaq during 1903-1904. Asayuk's wife, named Arnafik,

told them about a tragedy that was similar in terms of, people tried to cross the strait, but did not make it, and the survivors were left behind. But this tragedy happened in neighboring island Kiatak, not in Appaarsuit, as quoted:

*"Af mærkeligt Nyt, der var hændet heroppe, siden vi sidst hørte herfra, berettede man mig følgende: Enken Alleka, der sammen med sine Børn var de eneste overlevende fra den store Brœulykke forrige Vinter, hvor blandt Tornges Fader, Krumangâpik, frøs ihjel, havde i Vinter dræbt et af sine Børn, en Dreng paa 12-13 Aar. Hun og en anden Enke med deres Børn var eneste, der havde villet leve Vinteren igennem paa Kiatark, hvor de havde store Forsyninger af Søkonger. Men i forrige Uge, netop som den drivende Is mellem Kiatark og Netschilivik et enkelt Døgn var passabelt, kom begge Enkerne og deres paarørende kørende over til Netschilivik og slog sig ned her. De var blevne kede af Ensomheden Derovre, maaske havde ogsaa Barnedrabet trykket dem. Enken Alleka havde dræbt sin Søn, fordi han „var bleven uden Forstand". Hun troede ham besat af en ond Aand, og tilsidst turde hun ikke være sammen med ham og havde, medens han sov, listet en Kobberem om Halsen paa ham og kvalt ham…"* (Mylius-Erichsen & Moltke: 1906: 524-525).

I'd like to include this part too. Later one within the same book, it became inconsistent, because this time around the killing of the child took place during the summer, instead of winter as previously cited, but it could be because someone else was telling the story. This time by an individual named Majark:

*"17. December… Majark fortæller følgende Nyhed: En Moder fra Kiatark (Northumberland Ø) har i Sommer dræbt sin sindssyge Søn, da han begyndte at blive farlig for sine omgivelser."* (1906: 573).

Comparison: The tragic event called *'den store Brœulykke'* that wiped out the men from the island Kiatak is parallel to the stories we were told about Appaarsuit tragedy, specifically leaving the people from the island vulnerable in a sense that they don't have no more providers (hunters). The men from Kiatak and men and women from Appaarsuit died within the straits between the islands. The widows and children survived by eating their supply of food for a long period of time. In Kiatak they survived by eating their supplies of little auks, which is the similar way, although by eggs from Otto Simigaq's story in Appaarsuit. In Kiatak, they left the island by themselves as the possibility sufficed, while in Appaarsuit, according to Aimannguaq Peary, the survivors were picked up and retreated away from the coastal island to a populated area.

These tragic events are definitely comparable with similarities. Could it be, the tragic accident in Appaarsuit was the same accident called 'den store Brœulykke' that originally happened to

the inhabitants in neighboring island Kiatak between 1903-1904, but over time few details have slightly changed through intergenerational storytelling? Both could be the case, since oral stories can undergo alterations and changes through time depending on the storyteller of course. The reason for the changes could be distortions of faulty memory by the storyteller, or the storyteller's subjectivity could have changed minor details of the specific occurrences, because the storyteller could compensate chronological distance with a much closer and similar event with personal involvement, hence the subjectivity becomes the reason (Perks et. al. 2006: 36-38).

Nonetheless, without further research, it doesn't really mean 'den store Bræulykke' was the same tragic accident that happened in Appaarsuit, but it is the closest tragic event revealed from the written sources within the time window of 1891 to 1935 nearby Appaarsuit.

Whether the oral stories about Appaarsuit have truly occurred, there must have been some truth in them. However, these kinds of tragic events can be indicators on how dangerous and unpredictable to cross the straits between Kiatak, or Appaarsuit can really be, that could terribly wipe out hunters or families and put the remaining people in harsh and enduring situations back on the coastal islands.

## Researching the archives in Nunatta Allagaateqarfia about Appaarsuit Tragedy

The specific year of when the tragic event happened in Appaarsuit was never mentioned, except the months of December and February, I can try to estimate when it happened by putting the puzzle of information together. So far, my clues are the names of: Sisso, Itullak, and most prevalent of them all - Ane-Sofie with an uncle named Mausana – Usukitaaq was his nickname according to Aimannguaq Peary's interview.

Here are the approaches I did, on researching if Appaarsuit tragedy really did happen:

- Firstly, I need to confirm Aimannguaq Peary's ancestry, because I will be able to pinpoint and research the archives with this knowledge as my lead.
- Secondly, if possible, to estimate or narrow down the date of the tragic accident, and who the victims were could be put in place, by knowing when Ane-Sofie was born.
- Thirdly, cross-check the qualitative interviews and written resources.

## Finding out about the family tree:

I looked through the family tree written thoroughly down by Inuutersuaq Ulloriaq in his book about Qillarsuaq, and double checked it with the same subject matter on Guy Mary-Rousseliere's book, because both books contain Inughuit lineages. I can confirm Aimannguaq Peary's parents were Ane-Sofie and Imiina, and I found out that they were descendants of Qillarsuaq himself. Ane Sofie's uncle indeed was Masauna, with inclusion of his nickname but written down as Usukutaaq (Ulloriaq 1985: 38; Mary-Rousseliere 2002), instead as Usukitaaq as Aimannguaq Peary has mentioned on her interview. This validates the connection between Ane-Sofie's uncle, and the names of her parents become known to me.

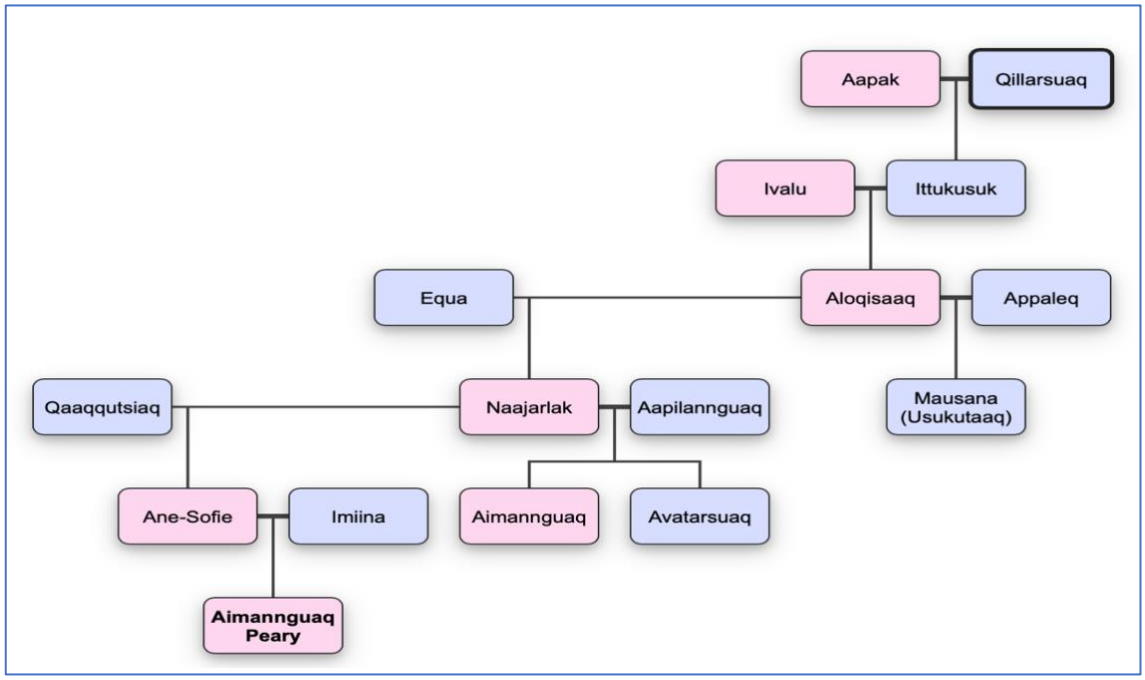


*Figure 16: Aimannguaq Peary's lineage. Pink = women. Blue = men.*

## In Nunatta Allagaateqarfia:

Short history about the first pastor in Avanersuaq: Gustav Olsen was the first pastor in. He came to Avanersuaq in 1909 and established the mission station called 'Nordstjernen'. Gustav Olsen first settled on the settlement Uummannaq. Three years after his arrival to Avanersuaq, the first baptism of an adult happened at last on 4th of February in 1912. In 1914, Gustav Olsen moved to Kangerlussuaq (Oqqorliit district). In 1920's pastor Gustav Olsen moved to Qaanaaq, and the first church building was inaugurated on 18th May 1930 in Uummannaq, where he moved back. Through his duties, it is worth mention about his last adult baptism happened to

be on 13th of May 1934, which is the very last on baptizing adults according to Rolf Gilberg (Gilberg 1971: 34; Gilberg 1977: 249-250).

I went to Nunatta Allagaateqarfia and was granted access to look through archives from Avanersuaq. Specifically, *'Thule Præstegæld'*, *'Kirkens designationer'*, *'Ministeriel bog fra Thule Præstegæld'* and diaries from 1909 to 1923 by the first pastor Gustav Olsen. In my specific findings I used the church books with the title of: *'Designation 1935-1942'*, and *'Mandtalsliste over Kap York Distrikt anno 1925'* (22.17.01 – 31.10) also *'Kontra-Ministeriel bog for Thule Præstegæld'* about deceased men and women from 1910 to 1939 (22.17.01).

Since I know Ane-Sofie's family tree, I can look for her through the church books and get the information I needed to solve the question, if there were in fact, a tragic accident that got her parents killed.

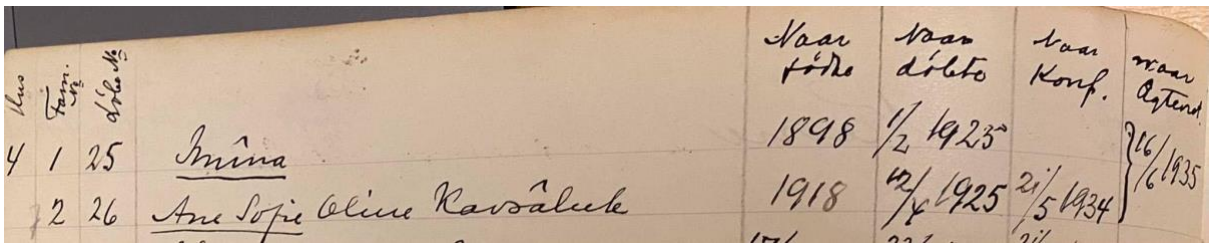


*Figure 17: Shows the birth, the baptism, confirmation and marriage of Imiina and Ane-Sofie from the chuch book. Picture taken by Pivinnguaq Mørch.*

My first step was to confirm and find Ane-Sofie and I found her almost in an instant. Ane-Sofie's full name was Ane-Sofie Olina Kavsâluk and she was born in 1918, but it was unclear where. She was baptized as a 7-year-old child by Gustav Olsen on April 12th, 1925 in Thule. On the 21st of May 1934, it was the day of her confirmation (konfirmation). Next year on June 16th 1935, Ane-Sofie was 17 years old when she married Imiina, who was 37 years old at the time (22.17.01 – 31.10).

## The census lists:

'Mandtalsliste' or censuses were annual obligatory work for missionary stations under the Royal Greenlandic Trade (KGH) in all missionary stations in Greenland. There had been censuses done by different authors, who had been in Avanersuaq since 1854. Censuses done by different authors normally do not match with Gustav Olsen's Inughuit censuses while he was in Avanersuaq. For example, in 1926 the Inughuit population was counted as 267 by Erik Holtved (Gilberg 1976: 15). In the same year Gustav Olsen's Inughuit census results were a little higher, as: 272 (22.17.01 – 31.10). These inaccuracies were common at the time, it could

be with many reasons, for example, Inughuit move about a lot or tragic accidents can happen anytime.

The good part of Gustav Olsen's censuses were Inughuit's families categorized in terms of their household in specific settlement each year with personal documentation on the sides, such as the person's date of baptism, confirmation, or marriage. I can follow through where the household family member has moved, and who the new family member is from which household in Avanersuaq quite easily, which is very useful for me on cross checking the Inughuit household family members in long term perspective. For example, it is possible to cross check someone who wasn't living with her/his parents anymore and has moved on to another household and got married.

But the bad side of pastor Gustav Olsen's censuses were, that he only wrote Inughuit, who has been baptized since 1909 in the first place (Gilberg 1977: 250). This means, there could be Inughuit with the same household that were excluded on his censuses and church books, because they were never baptized in the first place. Hence, another reason for inaccuracy for the totality of Inughuit inhabitants between different authors and pastor Gustav Olsen's censuses.

In this research, I looked through the consistency of Ane-Sofie's household and found out about who she has been living with for many years. Ane-Sofie's parents were Qaaqqutsiaq and Naajarluk and her brother was Avatarsuaq - if they were not written down on the same household and are not in the census list of the year - in theory, it would mean that they have passed away. In this way, I can massively narrow down the dates of the tragic event that took place nearby Appaarsuit according to the interviews we conducted.

You can see an example, of the census list from 1923 by Gustav Olsen's church book down below:

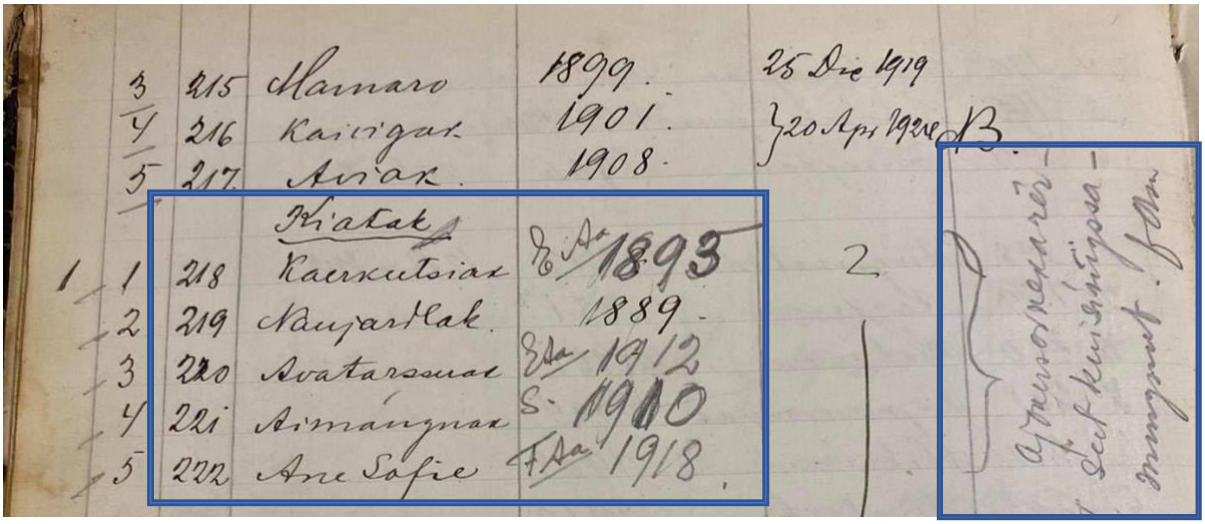


*Figure 18: Here is an example of Ane-Sofie household with 5 people in total. Her parents: Qaaqqutsiaq and Naajarlak. Her sister Aimannguaq and brother Avatarsuaq. This was when the family was living in Kiatak in 1923. The note on the right is written as: "ajoqersorneqarnersut kuisinnissaminnut G. Olsen." Meaning: [ They are] being taught before baptism. Picture taken by Pivinnguaq Mørch.*

In anno 1923 the household was living in Kiatak. Anno 1924 the household moved to Qassisalik. In anno 1925, 1926, 1927 and 1928, they were living in Qaanaaq. Suddenly, in the list of Inughuit population in 31st of December in 1929, Ane-Sofie has moved to a different household to Thule, because she was living with the elderly couple Moses and Marie, with a person named Norsaaq. She is not living with her parents anymore. Next year in 1930 on the census list, she is still within the same household in Thule as well without the inclusion of the names Avatarsuaq, Qaaqqutsiaq, and Naajarlak. I also want to point out Ane-Sofie's sister, named Aimannguaq had moved to another household in 1926 and soon after got married to Qajunannguaq (22.17.01 – 31.10). Eventually, Aimannguaq passed away in 1930, presumably because of tuberculosis (22.17.01).

This information further indicates Qaaqqutsiaq and Naajarlak had passed away, with Ane-Sofie's big brother - Avatarsuaq around the years of anno 1929 and 1930. Those years should be available in the church books about deceased men and women, and since the family was baptized in 1925, it is highly likely they are on the list.

## Deceased men and women:

The year anno 1929, of Qaaqqutsiaq's and Naajarlak's death should be on both for *"Kontra-Ministerbog for Thule Præstegæld"* of deceased men and women.

It turns out in the end of January in 1929 three men perished on an accident. First one on the list was Sisso. Sisso was 57 years old, and he was Nalikatsiaq's husband. Qaaqqutsiaq was 40

years old, and Avatarsuaq was 17 years old, both of them were Naajarluk's husband and son. The reason for their passing is because: *"Ulykketilfælde Forlis I Baaden"*. Direct translation: *Accident on boat* (22.17.01), as you can see below:

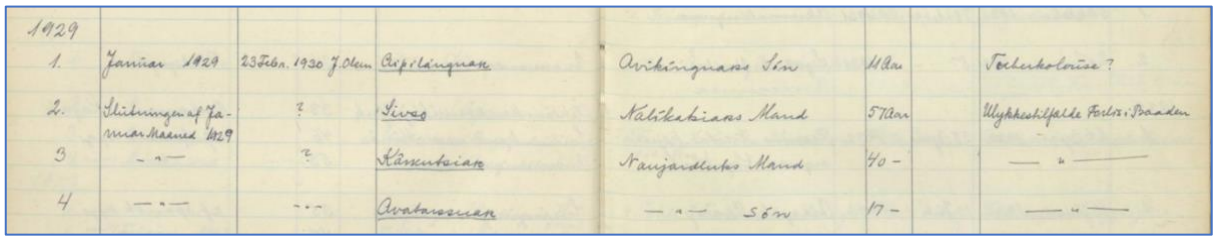

*Figure 19: The church book for deceased men in 1929. Picture taken by Pivinnguaq Mørch.*

In the same year, 1929, three women had passed away with the same description. *"Ulykketilfælde omk. i Baaden".* Meaning: Accident around the boat.

Atangana was 59 years old – she was the mother for Qaaqqutsiaq, the grandmother of Ane-Sofie and Aimannguaq. Naajarlak was 41 years old, and she was the husband of Qaaqqutsiaq. Qiajunnguaq was 20 years old, and she was the wife of Qalaseq.

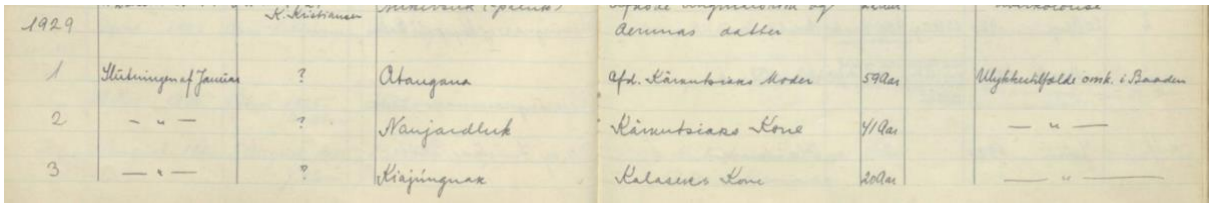

*Figure 20: The church book for deceased women in the year of 1929. Picture taken by Pivinnguaq Mørch.*

According to the church books about deceased women and men, the tragic accident resulted in 6 people perished on and around their boat, four of which were Ane-Sofie's family: Grandmother - Atangana, mother - Naajarlak, father - Qaaqqutsiaq, and brother - Avatarsuaq.

New names have emerged for example, Qalaseq, which I will elaborate later. Let me investigate Sisso's family first by researching the archives deeper.

## The family of Sisso:

According to the census from 1928, the household of Sisso, was living in Neqi with his wife, Nalikatsiaq, who was born in 1880, and two daughters: Nivikkannguaq born in 1915 and Tukumminnguaq born in 1919. The family of four were baptized together on the same day on December 25th in 1919, and they had been living together consistently for years (22.17.01).

In census anno 31st of December 1929, Nalikatsiaq, Nivikkannguaq, and Tukumminnguaq were living in Qeqertarsuit (Akunnaarmiut district) in a different household of 6 people in total (22.17.01).

This info can be assumed that the wife of Sisso – Nalikatsiaq aged 49 years old, and their daughters Nivikkannguaq aged 14 years old and Tukumminnguaq aged 10 years old were among the survivors, who accompanied Ane-Sofie in Appaarsuit when the tragedy occurred.

## The family of Qalaseq:

According to the census from 1928, the household of Qalaseq were living in Illuluarsuit (Oqqorliit district), with Qiajunnguaq, Mikisuk, Inaluk, and Ululik. His wife Qiajunnguaq was born in July 1910 – she was one of the people who perished from the tragic accident. The new name that emerged was Qalaseq, born in 1901. He was 28 years old when the tragedy occurred (22.17.01).

It turns out Qalaseq, Mikisuk, Inaluk and Ululik were siblings and their mother was Aeruna and father Ammalortoq according to the family tree (Ulloriaq 1985: 35; Mary-Rousseliere 2002). All of them were baptized on 12th of December 1918 (22.17.01).

I should exclude the sister, Inaluk from this, because she passed away at the age of 18, on June 7th in 1928 and was buried in Kiatak, as Gustav Olsen's notes: *Hun blev begravet nærheden af en Bræ Nordfor Kiatak* (22.17.01).

I also want to exclude another sister of Qalaseq - Mikisuk, because she died at the age of 22 and the reason was tuberculosis on December 1st in 1928. She was first buried in May 1929 (22.17.01).

Ululik was Qalaseq's little brother, he was born on May 16th in 1918 and was confirmed (konfirmeret) on April 17th in 1933. Qalaseq and Ululik lived in Kangerlussuaq (Oqqorliit district) in another household in the year of 1929. In the next year they were living in Qaanaaq in 1930 (22.17.01 – 31.10).

This could be assumed that Qalaseq aged 28 and Ululik aged 11, were also the survivors in Appaarsuit, since Qalaseq's wife, Qiajunnguaq' was among the deceased people from the tragic accident. Another explanation should be that the respective husband and wife usually live together in Inughuit customs (Gilberg 1971: 123-129).

## The people back in Appaarsuit

In retrospect, before the end of January in 1929 - Ane-Sofie was one of the children left behind, and she might have been 11 years-old when she lost her whole family, except her sister Aimannguaq, who was 19 years old at the time but lived in a different household in a different place. They lost her grandmother, parents, and brother. I can assume the other children back on the coastal island could have been

Sisso's children: Nivikkannguaq aged 14 and Tukumminnguaq aged 10. The brother of Qalaseq – Ululik was 11 years old by the time the tragic accident happened. This adds up to four children over the ages of 10 were left behind in Appaarsuit.

According to the interviewees the narration about the tragedy was an elderly person, who took care of the children back in the coastal island, and the person they were referring to was Nalikatsiaq, the wife of Sisso. She was 49 years old. Nalikatsiaq though, she can be defined as a middle-aged woman, but the reason to call her as an elderly was fitting, not only because she was the oldest person on the island, but because the whole lifespan of Inughuit rarely reaches beyond 60 years old in early 20$^{th}$ century in Avanersuaq. There were many young Inughuit in their 20's that had passed away during 1930's and 1940's, because their lifestyle in everyday life in their environments can be exposed to dangerous situations (Gilberg 1976: 26-27), such as the tragedy in Appaarsuit can be another proof.

Nalikatsiaq was the elderly on the island, and she took care of the children, but there was another addition for the group, one who wasn't mentioned from the interviews, a young man named Qalaseq, who was 20 at the time of the tragic event.

Comment: All of these names and their ages were cross-checked through Gustav Olsen's church books from Nunatta Allagaateqarfia. Therefore, it should also be mentioned that there might have been people who were excluded from the censuses and church books written by Gustav Olsen, because they haven't been baptized by him. There could have been more deceased children, men and women who also survived in Appaarsuit. In the end, it was about the consistency of every household census before and after 1929 and 1930, that has gotten me to assume and find the other survivors instead of Ane-Sofie alone, who was one of the names mentioned with Sisso from the interviews only.

Another reason were the names of brides and grooms from the church books about deceased women and men from the boat accident that can be linked with the data of our interviews. The boat accident happened after leaving Appaarsuit. It was normal, if the married couple can provide themselves, they would start living in their own house dwellings in Avanersuaq

(Gilberg 1971: 123-129), which perfectly adds up to the three house dwellings we surveyed on the site I called 'Appaarsuit site 2', because on this archaeological site there are three house dwellings, for Qaaqqutisaq-household - presumably *'House dwelling II'*, Sisso-household presumably *'House dwelling I'* and Qalaseq-Household for *'House dwelling III'*.

Another verifiable detail in Aimannguaq Peary's interview was that she mentioned the big boulder next to the house where the Sisso family was living. It was a detail she remembers from the day she was told and maybe numerously so, since she never been in Appaarsuit in her life. As Aimannguaq Peary has said that Sisso was among the deceased men from the tragic event with Aimannguaq Peary's grandparents, and great uncle.

The motive on leaving the island in the first place must have been in greatly importance, because it wasn't like hunters alone, who were the only ones deceased because an accident occurred while hunting, which were the circumstances for another tragic accident called: 'Den store bræulykke', that happened in Kiatak in Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen and Harald Moltke's book *'Grønland'* from 1906 (Mylius-Erichsen & Moltke: 1906: 524-525, 573). The difference on the tragic accident in Appaarsuit was the women and men were going away and left the island. According to Aimannguaq Peary's interview, they were going to the store in Uummannaq, that could only be assumed to be Knud Rasmussen's Thule Trading Station in Cape York/Uummannaq in the time.

## Surviving Appaarsuit:

According to the censuses and church books by pastor Gustav Olsen, the inhabitants in Appaarsuit before the tragedy occurred were in total of 12 Inughuit. Once the unexpectedly terrible accident happened, they lost devastatingly six of them, half of the inhabitants on Appaarsuit. I can only imagine how extremely has affected the surviving people back on the coastal island, by losing your loved ones so suddenly and could hear them screaming, before it became eerily silent.

They were alone from December until rescue came in February, as Aimannguaq Peary said in her interview. Little difference though, on church books about deceased women and men was the accident written down at the end of January, indicating the knowledge of what had happened reached first thing after the survivors were retreated most likely to Qaanaaq. Hence, the survivors were alone before Christmas in December until (around) the end of January.

They survived via caches from both sites in Appaarsuit, for the time being. The Inughuit summer encampment is commonly close by the winter habitation, because anywhere in

Avanersuaq region, the nature is precarious. Therefore, the caches are usually built nearby the winter settlements in case for emergency.

In the time of stress, the seabirds usually play out as significant and ward of starvation (Ekblaw 1919: 5). Otto Simigaq mentioned the survivors must have endured from bird eggs, because he also knows the island's natural resources of birds can be assumed to be unlimited, especially during summer – the kayaking season as Rolf Gilberg has pointed out (Gilberg 1976: 5) or as W. Elmer Ekblaw has written that the Inughuit would call the month June as: Nesting birds (Ekblaw 1919: 5).

Two bird species could have been the better candidates as rescuers for prevention of starvation, called thick-billed murres (appat) and little auks (appaliarsuit). The thick-billed murres can be caught on steep cliffs in Appaarsuit and Inughuit considers them as vital, because their large size can compensate troubling times for whole families, and they would catch as many as possible to store them in their caches for winter (1919: 3-4). Even the name of the island - Appaarsuit derives from the thick-billed murres.

Little auks are small, but there are so many I thought they were uncountable in Avanersuaq. First of all, I am going to use Doctor Mogen Holms' private diaries from 1929 in Thule as an example (I looked through the papers in Nunatta Allagaateqarfia – the box was written as *'Privatarkiv Mogens Holms Dagbog Fra Thule 1929'*), he has written how fulfilling little auks can be, specifically kivissat (plural), the traditional fermented little auks. Doctor Mogens Holms was travelling on a dogsled with Inughuit hunters towards Thule, when he wrote this, as quoted:

*"Ud paa dagen fik vi selvfølgelig rævekød (1/13 ræv pr. mand) og – heldigvis – kivissat, det eskimoiske navn for de spæksyltede søkonger. Saa mandog med undtagele af mavesækken, som smager surt. Indvoldene havde jeg ikke haft mod paa tidligere – jeg er gaaet gradvis frem! De smagte udmærket og jeg spiste (eller aad) saa ivrigt af de lækre sager at jeg slet ikke opdagede at holde paa de meget kolde frosne fugle! Selvom fuglene er frosne, hindrer raaddenskaben og spækket fra sælskindet dem i at blive haarde som andet frossent kød."* (P 10.00.52 - 07.80).

Little auks can make a person's stomach full, and as mentioned before, there has been reported to be 33 million little auk pairs breeding in huge colonies in Avanersuaq during summer. There are little auk colonies in Appaarsuit too (Mosbech et. al. 2018: 226-227), the colonies were in both sites, also situated on the cliffs over the three house dwellings in *'Appaarsuit site 2'*.

The thick-billed murres and little auks must have played a significant role for survival within a couple of months in Appaarsuit prior the end of January 1929. Just like little auks had for

*'den store Brœulykke'* in Kiatak around the beginning of 20th century (Mylius-Erichsen & Moltke: 1906: 524-525, 573).

Someone must have also had a significant role for survival, and it might have been the young man Qalaseq, the only man and hunter in Appaarsuit at the time. He could have hunted if he had to, as the role of the Inughuit man was. But in the end, the productivity of the men and women before the accident happened, can be the primary reason. Although, there are plenty of animal resources to be caught in and around Appaarsuit, it only depends on how much food they have stored their caches during the summertime, because the household family's needs to have enough food supplies in their caches to survive the winter in the outermost and harshest coastal island among the three coastal islands in the Oqqorliit district, a place where a sudden storm can start so unexpectedly was Appaarsuit known in historical written texts too.

### Itullak and memorial:

I don't find anything that connects between Ane-Sofie and Itullak. The name was mentioned in Taliilannguaq Peary's interview, because he said that Ane-Sofie and Itullak has remarked their thankfulness to Gustav Olsen, because he evicted a memorial on behalf to the deceased men and women from the tragedy in 1929. Nonetheless, there was a person named *Ittullak*, who was born in 1898. He was baptized in Janury 1st in 1918 and got married with Paninnguaq (who was born in 1901 and baptized on 1st January 1924) on February 8th, 1931 (22.17.01 – 31.10). Both of which I could not find any relation with Ane-Sofie whatsoever through the archives.

Itullak might have been a mispronunciation for Ittullak, or Itullak might have been a nickname by one of the survivors that I did not know of, which could easily be the case. Any lead in that case wasn't available to me, as Masauna (Usukutaaq) was.

I did not find anything concerning a memorial about the Appaarsuit tragedy either, mentioned again by Taliilannguaq Peary. Gustav Olsen's diaries were from 1909 to 1920 in Nunatta Allagaateqarfia, whilst the tragedy happened around the end of 1928 and beginning of 1929, if there were more diaries after 1920, they weren't available to me.

## Historical judgement

No matter how the tragic accident was told from qualitative interviews, it was revealed, nonetheless. I can firmly say, it did happen. It was written down as an accident on, - or around

the boat by Gustav Olsen at the end of January in 1929 (22.17.01) and by linking my data to historical data deepened the ethnohistory of Appaarsuit. One can speculate about the specific details on how the tragedy unfolded, but the explanation for the accident occurring might possibly be because of the strong currents (West Greenland Current) between the small strait of Appaarsuit and Kiatak (Vincent 2019: 2-3). In historical written texts, the current between the two coastal islands was already commented on how strong and noticeable it was while sailing on a boat in Robert E. Peary's book *'Northward over the Great Ice -Vol 1'* (Peary 1898: 108). Appaarsuit area storms a lot too, and the area can become inaccessible for people was written by Rolf Gilberg in his unpublished manuscript about Inughuit from 1971 (Gilberg 1971: 14).

I'd like to further add and mention - between the years of 1927 to 1973 there had been 52 accidental deaths documented among Inughuit. According to Rolf Gilberg between 1928 to 1929, there had been 12 Inughuit died of tuberculosis and many accidental deaths happened in the same period, although without a total number (Gilberg 1976: 29), and I can prove some of the accidental deaths happened nearby Appaarsuit during those specific time periods mentioned.

You can see a sudden spike of deaths among Inughuit between 1928 and 1929 from the figure on the next page. The Inughuit population growth between 1928 and 1929 was in jeopardy since the death toll was higher in comparison of live births (Gilberg 1976: 30).

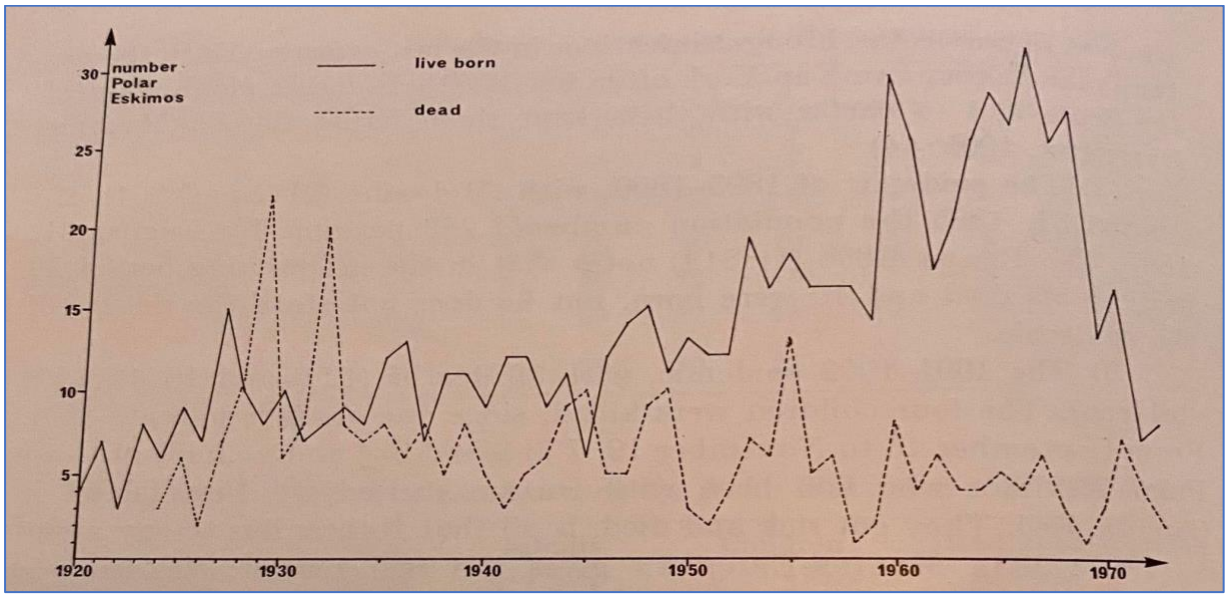


*Figure 21: This graph shows the relation between live births and deaths among the Inughuit from 1920 to after 1970. You can see there had been a sudden spike of deaths of Inughuit in the year of 1929. This graph was made by Rolf Gilberg (Gilberg 1976: 30).*

## Some of the faces of survivors in Appaarsuit

I found Aage Gilberg's book called *'Avanersuarmi nakorsaq'* from 1986, which is the Greenlandic translated version for his original book *'Verdens nordligste læge*. The book was about his work and experiences as the northernmost doctor at the time in Thule during 1938 and 1939, where he sometimes treated Inughuit on the sea ice nearby settlements in Avanersuaq. He also came back to Thule in 1963, 24 years after he left in the first place (Gilberg 1986). Aage Gilberg's health services were one of the reasons for Inughuit death rate was in decline, also since trading and health services were established about the 1930's (Gilberg 1976: 23).

Aage Gilberg has taken pictures of Inughuit on his travels in Avanersuaq, and underneath the pictures, their names and date of birth were written, in which I have cross-checked with the church books by Gustav Olsen from the archives. In many of his pictures I found three photographs, and I'd like to show them, because in the first photograph you can see Ane-Sofie, her husband and son, in the second photograph you can see Nivikkannguaq and Tukumminnguaq with their children. The third photograph was with Ululik's family (Gilberg 1986: 148, 154, 185).

The photographs show how their lives have moved on and raised families on their own.

*Figure 22: The family of Ane-Sofie.*

Ane-Sofie Olina Kavsâluk (1918) is the woman standing up, with Imiina (1898) next to her, the husband. Imiina is holding their son, Qaaqqutsiaq, who was born in 1936. They have given their son, the name of Ane-Sofie's deceased father. This photograph was taken in august 1939 in Siorapaluk (1986: 154).

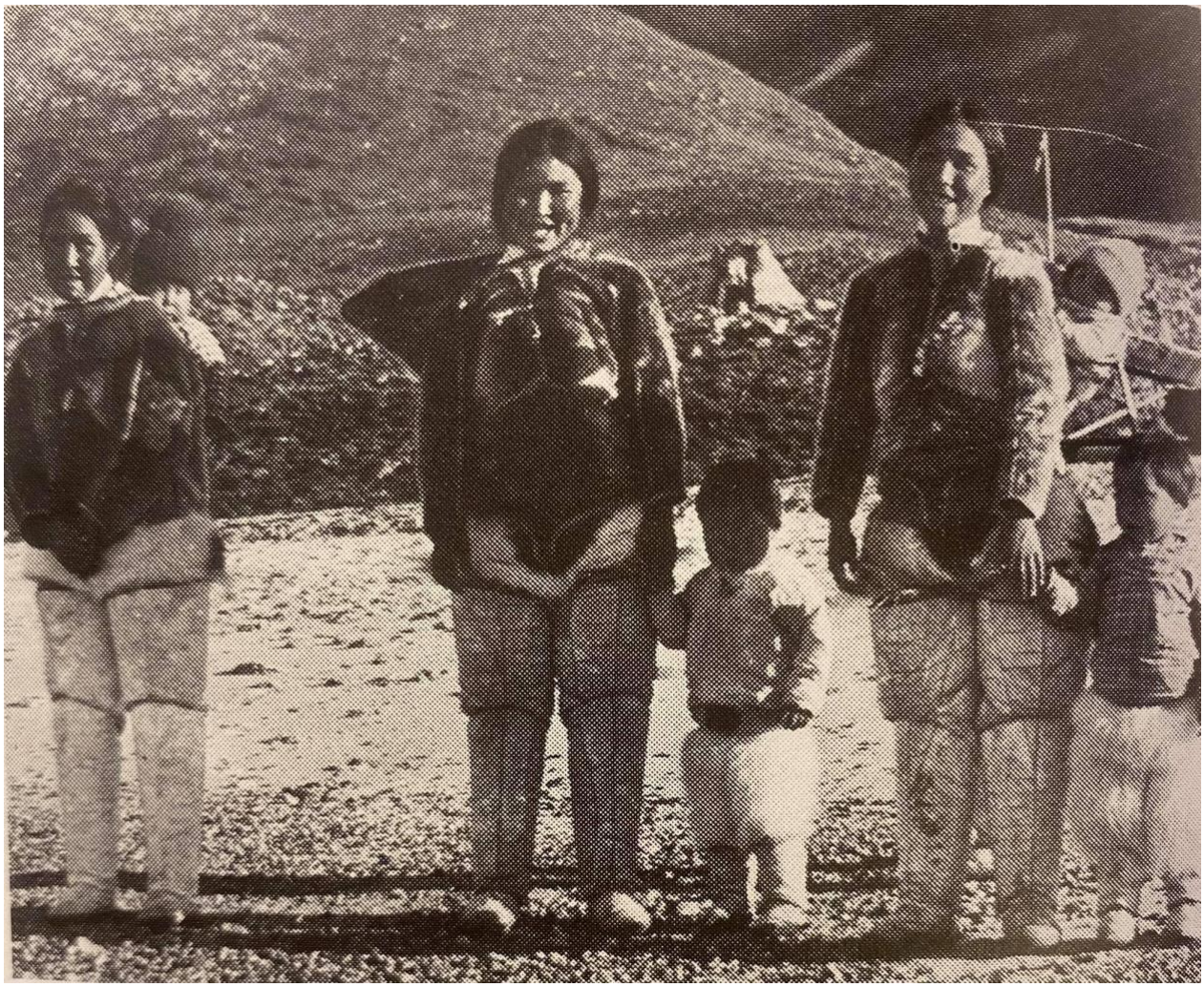

*Figure 23: The siblings Tukumminnguaq and Nivikkannguaq. Ilaatsunnguaq in the middle.*

I'd like to point out the woman in the middle of the picture is named Ilaatsunnguaq and she has no relation with the tragedy in Appaarsuit. The woman on the left is Tukumminnguaq (1919) and on the right her little sister Nivikkannguaq (1915) with their children. The names of the children weren't included in the book. This photograph was taken in August 1939 in Siorapaluk (1986: 148).

*Figure 24: The family of Ululik.*

The family of Ululik. From the left: Naduk (1951), the child's name wasn't included in the book, and Ululik's wife named Aqattannguaq (1924), Ululik himself (1918), the was the younger brother of Qalaseq), and Oodaaq (1955). This photograph was taken in June in Qaanaaq 1963 (1986: 185).

## Conclusion

I am fortunate enough to be part of a project that has gotten me to so many archaeological landscapes in Avanersuaq. One of them was obviously Appaarsuit. As I have said previously, the coastal island wasn't my first choice for my master's thesis, but due to cancellation of fieldwork 2020 because of Covid-19, I had to reconsider a different archaeological landscape. I had to look through our existing data in both archaeological surveys, - and qualitative interview results from our previous fieldworks. After looking through our cognitive research, it became easier to choose Appaarsuit, because I thought I had sufficient data to start from.

The lack of written sources about the coastal island Appaarsuit was intriguing, because it means I can add something new or supplement existing knowledge, sorely about the ethnohistory of the island. The small island hasn't been visited as much as the other two coastal islands (Kiatak and Qeqertarsuaq), through numerous expeditions from 19th and 20th Century. Despite of that, the recuring Appaarsuit's characteristics from written sources and from our interdisciplinary cognitive research were:

- The small island has plenty natural resources from both land and sea that explains the means of subsistence of the settlers.
- The strait between Kiatak and Appaarsuit have a strong sea current.
- The weather in Appaarsuit is known to be a place that suddenly storms to great extents.
- The sea-ice does not stand-still during winter because it is inside Pikialasorsuaq Polynya.
- Overall, the island is not easily accessible for people, yet it was a former settlement.

We have surveyed 25 archaeological features in two sites in eastern part of Appaarsuit and I only used four of them on determining and narrowing down their time periods through the method of cross-dating, which were: The kayak, the burial and the two fox-traps, because it is the only dating method available to me. I had to be careful though since the archaeological features in general have specific characteristics, therefore, I must rely on historical context of the given environment – a combination of Avanersuaq's prehistory and Appaarsuit's prehistory in my case. For example, the cloverleafed-shaped house dwellings alone can indicate their 'classical phase' of Thule-Culture, that could be dated back to 11th and 12th Century only through the way the house dwelling looks like, but those types of house dwellings have been used and reused up to the 20th century by Inughuit. The rectangular shaped house dwelling is also an indication for newer types from 18th Century, but those were not the case for Appaarsuit, because the coastal island is relatively recent settlement from the last century. The best way to use the method of cross-dating is to inspect closely and observe little details through identifiable historical and chronological features, by combining the historical background of the environment as a supplement.

The kayak's hand wrought, - and wire nails embedded on the gunwales gives me an educated guess for the period to be from the end of 19th Century, however, the lumber milled wood used on building the kayak designates it to be after 1910, because this type of wood were only available through commercial trading - most likely through Thule Trading Station in Uummannaq.

The first Christian burial in Avanersuaq was in summer of 1925. The burial in Appaarsuit does not have any affiliations to Christian burials, but more like a traditional Thule-Culture burial. So, the burial is open to interpretation, but due to written sources about Appaarsuit, it is most likely between the years of 1891 to 1935 – inside the timespan before the coastal island was registered as an inhabited place to former settlement. It is the same way with the two fox-traps from the first site we surveyed and those might have been the oldest archaeological features we observed after all. Those fox-traps might have been the same fox-traps written by Robert E. Peary's companions in summer of 1891. The significance though, is the indication about Appaarsuit was frequently visited before 1891 by Inughuit for foraging or hunting the natural resources the island can provide, most likely from the settlers of Kiatak.

Aspects of animal life at Appaarsuit is teemed of seabirds on the cliffs, and sea mammals on the sea, those aspects have attracted Inughuit families to move and settle on the coastal island with the means of tremendous subsistence mainly provided from Pikialasorsuaq Polynya. The island was also a hotspot for arctic foxes as well, being the main hunting area by Inughuit from Oqqorliit district, and it was the first written documentation for Inughuit activity on the coastal island.

The archaeological features in Appaarsuit were fascinating and can be linked with qualitative interviews we have done, mostly from Fieldwork 2019. The in-depth interviewing and group interviewing have provided remarkable linkages of Inughuit's oral history of the coastal island with archaeological features.

We were told about an intergenerational story about a tragedy in Appaarsuit, in different epistemologies but with the same ending that later reveals on an actual tragedy that happened under 100 years ago in Avanersuaq. Where Nalikatsiaq was the elderly and the young man named Qalaseq, took care of six children that also lost their families from the unforeseen accident. The different tragic circumstances in the strait between the two coastal islands were:

- the story about how people had to use an icefloe to cross due to non-existing transportation vessels at their disposal;
- the aggressive walruses or beluga whales or even mythical creatures of *Nujalissuit* caused the accident to happen and tipped the umiaq;
- the accident occurring at the ice-edge and people falling to the freezing sea and tragically ending the lives of everybody, who was about to cross the strait from Appaarsuit to Kiatak.

The tragedy told is a sign of reflection on what kind of Inughuit's are facing dangers in their lifetimes and how alterations of oral stories can go through over time from speculation/interest or entertaining aspects of storytelling in general. The different versions of oral history of Appaarsuit can be linked to different time periods – from prior 1860's to after 1860's.

Yet, the significance on oral storytelling was signified by Aimannguaq Peary because she gave me clues and connections about the archaeological site we surveyed, to her detailed story of what happened back then. Aimannguaq Peary's oral history of the island was personal, because it involves her own mother, Ane-Sofie, being one of the children that lost her family to the tragic accident, and yet Aimannguaq Peary has never set foot on Appaarsuit in her life, but she did describe the house dwellings and their surrounding exactly reminiscent of two house dwellings in 'Appaarsuit site 2'.

From my deep dive to Gustav Olsen's censuses and church books in Nunatta Allagaateqarfia, I can truly confirm Ane-Sofie's family tragically passed away from the boat accident, where six people died before Christmas, all of whom were family related to the settlers. The survivors back from the island were retreated to safety at end of January 1929, whereas Gustav Olsen has written to his deceased men and women church books.

The unexplored event is now included in ethnohistory of how the settlement Appaarsuit was like, while it was still registered as inhabited coastal island. Although, the addition of ethnohistory is a tragic one, but further proves the coastal island's unpredictability and dangerous locality, of an open sea area in Oqqorliit district in Avanersuaq. Even the graph made by Rolf Gilberg in my section of 'Historical judgement' shows a sudden spike of accidental deaths in 1929, because some of the deaths were from the tragedy itself. This also supports the reason why, the Appaarsuit was no longer a settlement, because it is so risky, even though it is rich in natural resources.

Appaarsuit is not an ordinary place, because it is in an open sea are in Pikialasorsuaq Polynya with a strong sea current around the island, we did notice the strong current in firsthand experience. The thick-billed murres are growing in population and the island is still an active archaeological landscape for contemporary Inughuit, because the surroundings of Appaarsuit is so rich in natural resources. For instance, personally, I have never seen so many seals on the way to Appaarsuit before in my entire life or at least hundreds more right after we left the island.

The ingenuity of Inughuit adapting to their surroundings is astonishing. For example, the man-made stairs in 'Appaarsuit site 2' is the newest kind of archaeological feature observed by our group, even though my project managers were experienced archaeologists, they were surprised

about this particular feature. Although, the appearance of the man-made stairs is quite similar structure on how inussuks (cairns) are made, but there isn't any context of such in Greenland's prehistory about this kind of archaeological feature before. When you think about it, it was necessary to have stairs from the high plateau the site was located in, and down to the kitchen crevices. It is purely a shortcut to the kitchen crevices. This again, links to Pauline Knudsen's interview with the late Uusaqqaq Qujaakitsoq from 2017, because as he had said, this is a proof of the kinds we have never seen before. Yet again, there might have been more unforeseen archaeological features in Appaarsuit, that could be considered to be unique, since we ground surveyed the eastern side of the island only.

We wouldn't have gotten these kinds of data if our project wasn't community focused in the first place, and if Inughuit haven't openly shared their knowledge to me and my colleagues. Let this cognitive interdisciplinary research be an example, on how collaboration with the locals can enrichen the research immensely, by simply and openly inviting the local's knowledge and perspectives about a given place by merely embracing the locals in their own environments. Because the locals know their surroundings so much better than us.

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Thule Præstegæld
22.17.01 – 31.10

Ministerielbog for Qaanaaq/Thule
Kontra-Ministeriel bog for Thule Præstegæld
22.17.01

Privatarkiv Mogens Holms Dagbog Fra Thule
P 10.00.52 - 07.80

## *Unpublished notes and interviews*

Unpublished notes:

- Notes by Matthew Walls (2019)
- Notes by Mari Kleist (2019)
- Notes by Pivinnguaq Mørch (2019)

Unpublished interviews:

- Interview of Uusaqqaq Qujaakitsoq by Pauline Knudsen (2017)
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