

The 1996 Thule Project: Phase I

Interim Report

Department of Archaeology

AVATAQ CULTURAL INSTITUTE

Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Center, NWT

Inuit Heritage Trust

Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec

DECEMBER 1996

Table of contents

Figures	ii
Tables	iii
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 The study area	2
3.0 Survey results	4
3.1 Drayton island	7
3.2 Frazier island	10
3.3 Harrison island	13
3.4 Patterson island	13
3.5 Kit island	15
4.0 Discussion	18
5.0 References	20
6.0 Photographs	
7.0 Appendix	

Figures

Figure 1. Localisation of the islands surveyed in 1996.	3
Figure 2. Localisation of the sites found on Drayton island.	8
Figure 3. Plan of the IbGk-3 site.	9
Figure 4. Localisation of the sites found on Frazier island.	12
Figure 5. Localisation of the sites found on Harrison, Patterson and Kit islands.	17 19

Tables

Table 1. Sites inventoried during the 1996 survey.	6
Table 2. Structures observed on the IbGk-3 site.	10
Table 3. Structures found on the IbGl-2 site.	11
Table 4. Structure observed on the IcGn-7 site.	14
Table 5. Structures observed on the IcGn-10 site.	15

1.0 Introduction

During the 5 days in the summer of 1996 the Avataq Cultural Institute conducted a archaeological survey on 5 islands in the vicinity of the community of Inukjuak on the east coast of Hudson Bay.

The main purpose of this survey was to locate Thule winter sites with semi-subterranean dwellings, since no such sites had been identified on the mainland in the area surroundings Inukjuak.

The present report summarizes the results of the survey.

2.0 The study area

The area selected for the survey was a series of islands easily accessible by canoe from the village of Inukjuak. The islands are, from south to north, Drayton, Frazier, Harrison, Patterson and Kit (fig. 1). They are part of what is called the Hopewell Archipelago. Drayton is the farthest at 30 km south of Inukjuak, Kit is the farthest to the north at 10 km north of the village.

Inukjuak itself is located near the top of the Hudson Bay Arc. All along this arc are a series of island chains paralleling the coast at about 1 km offshore. The Hopewell Islands, 93 km in length, stretches from the south to several kilometers north of the village. These islands are characterized by a seaward tilt, such that the inland-facing sides have cliffs of 50-75 m in height, while the seaward sides slope gently toward sea level.

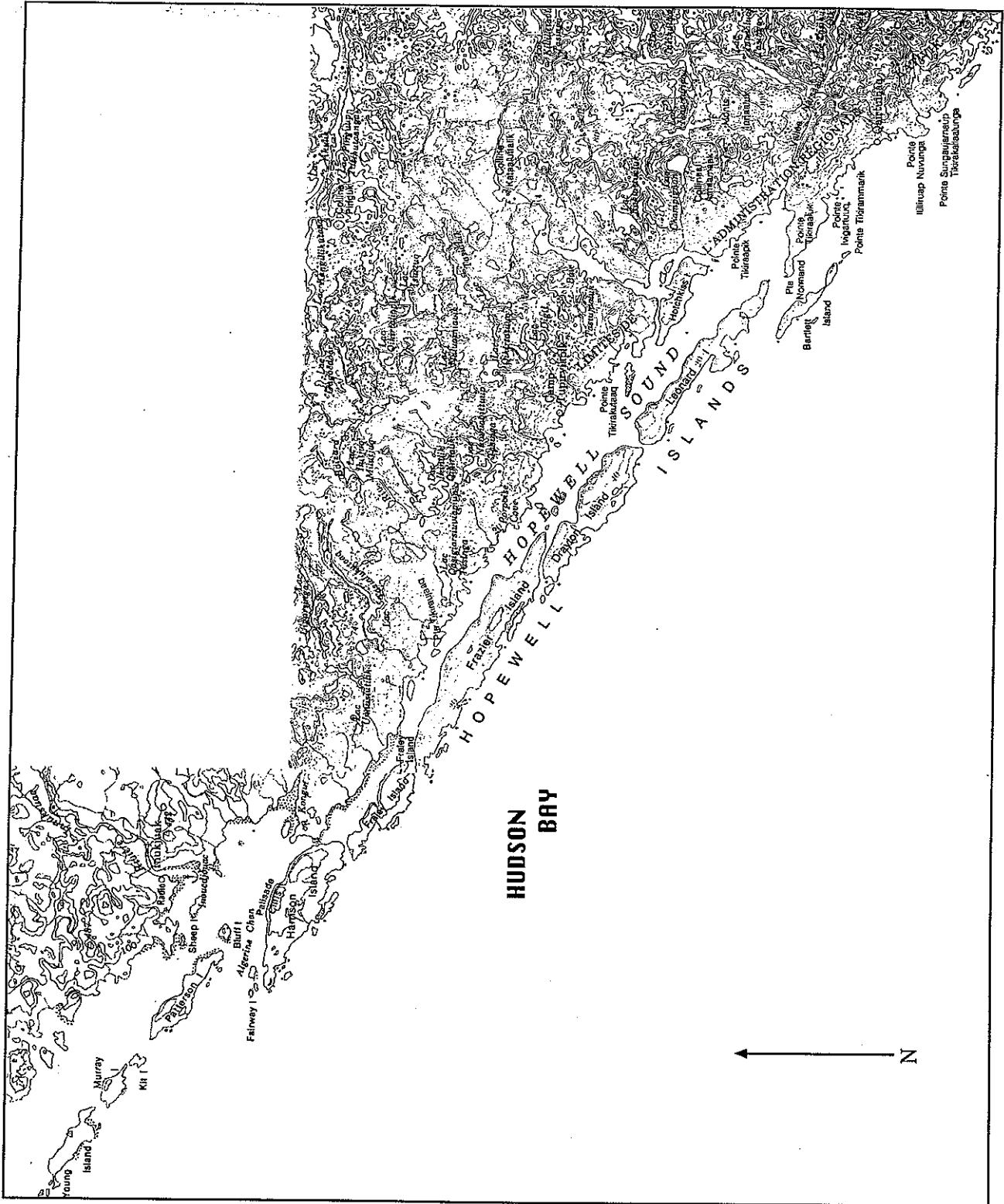


Figure 1. Localisation of the islands surveyed in 1996.

3.0 Survey results

Originally, the survey was supposed to be held during a two weeks period, but problems with the availability of canoes and bad weather conditions only allowed five days for the survey.

The method of survey was to walk as much of each island as possible to find archaeological sites or features. Since the time was short and we want to cover as much ground as possible the sites were not mapped (with one exception), only their precise location using a GPS, and the number of structures and their dimensions were registered as well as the identification of other features.

The outcome of the partial survey of the islands is the addition of 19 sites to the 80 sites previously known on the mainland in the vicinity of Inukjuak. Of these 19 sites, 15 are habitation sites, 2 are specialized storage sites kayak cache pits, caches and cache pits, and 2 are siltstone quarries (table 1).

The majority of the new sites are associated with a Neoeskimo occupation, including 2 with semi-subterranean dwellings. The Palaeoeskimo occupation is represented by 3 sites, one with shallow semi-subterranean structures. According to the elevation, the occupations of these sites are probably associated with Middle or Late Dorset culture. The 2 siltstone quarries were exploited during the Dorset period. The siltstone is the principal raw material on the Middle Dorset IcGm-5 site located near the village of Inukjuak (Avataq 1996) and on some other Dorset sites

tested in the vicinity of the village (Avataq n.d.). This raw material is also present on all the Dorset sites observed during the survey of the islands.

We did not find any site associated with the early Palaeoeskimo period, the altitude of most of the island surveyed is too low for such an occupation. The exception being Harrison island, which presents an elevation above 80 m on its eastern side. The presence of sites in boulder fields at this altitude was reported to us, but we did not have the time to verify this information. Farley island, south of Harrison also presents boulder fields above 45 m toward the mainland side, but time and the weather prevented us from going back to this island.

Site	Altitude (m.a.s.l.)	Cultural Features	Cultural Affiliation
IbGk-1	15 m	2 tent rings, 3 caches, 2 graves	Neoeskimo
IbGk-2	10 m	8 tent rings, 2 caches	Neoeskimo
IbGk-3	16 m	9 semi-subterranean structures	Thule
IbGk-4	10 - 15 m	30 tent rings, caches, cache pits	Palaeoeskimo - Neoeskimo
IbGk-5	10 - 15 m	caches, cache pits, 1 kayak cache pit, 2 stone fox traps	undetermined
IbGk-6	20 m	2 tent rings	Neoeskimo
IbG1-1	18 m	5 tent rings	Dorset
IbG1-2	12 m	3 heavy tent rings	Neoeskimo
IbG1-3	12 m	2 heavy tent rings	Neoeskimo
IbG1-4	20 m	kayak cache pit	Neoeskimo
IcGn-6	15 m	4 tent rings, 2 small structures probably doll house	Dorset
IcGn-7	10 m	3 tent rings	Neoeskimo
IcGn-8	20 m	siltstone quarry	Dorset
IcGn-9	20 m	tent rings, artefact concentrations	Dorset
IcGn-10	20 m	2 semi-subterranean structures	Dorset
IcGn-11	15 m	2 semi-subterranean structures	Thule
IcGn-12	15 m	50 heavy tent rings, 6 tent rings, 1 ceremonial structure, cache pits	Neoeskimo
IcGn-13	20 m	siltstone quarry	Palaeoeskimo
IcGn-14	20 m	1 heavy tent ring	Neoeskimo

Table 1. Sites inventoried during the 1996 survey.

3.1 Drayton island

On Drayton island, the survey was limited to portions of the northern section, where three sites were observed (fig. 2).

The IbGk-3 site is a large Thule winter site (fig. 3) located at a place called *ILLIUVIGARTALIK*, which means a place where there are houses. Nine semi-subterranean structures were found (table 2); the outline of tent rings were also observed at the southern extremity of the site, but were not included in the plan. Only one test pit was excavated in house 4, and yielded animal bones only. The IbGk-4 site is composed of over 30 tent rings, some of them heavy tent rings, and caches and cache pits. On the IbGk-5 site no habitation structures were identified, but numerous caches and cache pits, one kayak cache pit, two stone fox traps, one of them is shaped like a beehive; the other one is rectangular with a sliding trap door were identified.

Figure 2. Localisation of the sites found on Drayton island.

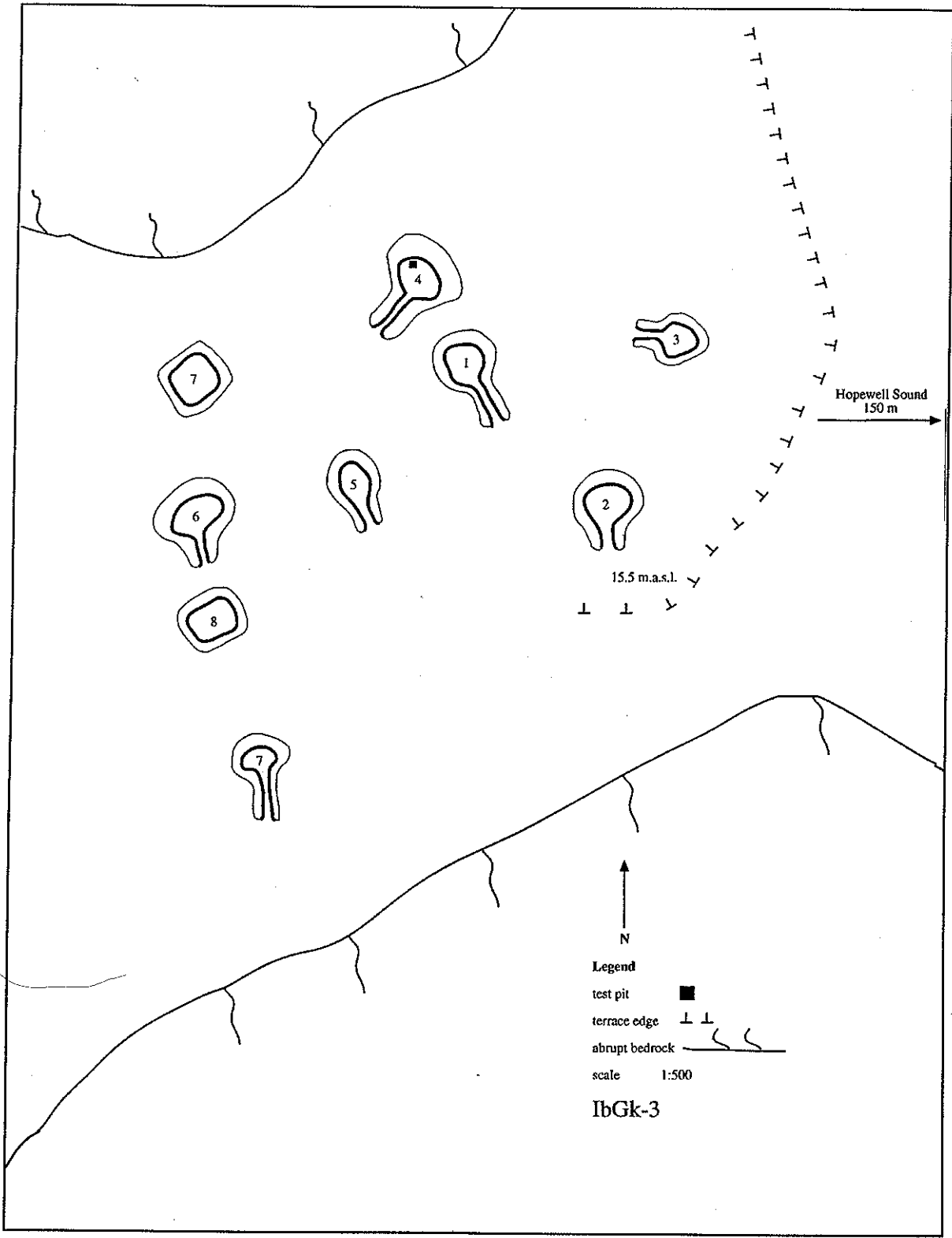


Figure 3. Plan of the IbGk-3 site.

Structure	Interior dimensions	Entrance passage
1	5.0 x 5.0	1.0 x 6.0
2	5.5 x 6.0	1.0 x 2.5
3	5.0 x 5.0	1.0 x 4.0
4	5.0 x 6.5	1.0 x 5.5
5	4.0 x 6.0	1.0 x 4.0
6	5.5 x 8.0	1.0 x 4.0
7	4.0 x 5.0	1.0 x 6.5
8	4.5 x 6.5	-
9	5.0 x 6.0	-

Table 2. Structures observed on the IbGk-3 site.

3.2 Frazier island

This island is located north of Drayton, from which it is separated only by a narrow channel. In the southern part, three sites were found and three on the northern part. A kayak cache pit was localized also in the northern section (fig. 4). Distributed over the interior of the island, 12 stone fox traps was observed; all the fox trap were rectangular with a sliding door. On the IbGk-1 site two oval tent rings with dimensions of 3.0 x 3.5 m were observed. Also, in a boulder field near this site, 3 caches and 2 graves were found. The IbGk-2 site is located at the southern tip of Frazier island; 7 circular tent rings with average dimensions of 3.0 m of diameter are visible on this site. Two oval tent rings, 2.0 x 3.0 m, were found on the IbGk-6 site. This site is on the west side of the island near a pond.

On two of the sites located in the northern section of Frazier island (IbGl-2 and IbGl-3), the structures observed were heavy tent rings. The heavy tent rings are defined by low walls composed of 2 or more courses of rocks, and incorporating large boulders. These two sites are associated with a Neoeskimo occupation.

Structure	Shape	Dimensions	Orientation
1	rectangular	3.1 x 6.5	E-W
2	oval	2.2 x 3.2	N-S
3	oval	2.0 x 3.5	N-S

Table 3. Structures found on the IbGl-2 site.

On the IbGl-3 site two heavy tent rings were observed, both are oval with average dimensions of 3.0 x 3.5 m.

The IbGl-1 is associated with a Dorset occupation. In and around the structures artefacts in siltstone were observed. On this site, 5 tent rings have been identified, they are oval in shape and are measuring 2.5 x 3.0 m. This site is located near a large pond.

On the IbGl-4 site a kayak cache pit and some cache pits were found. The kayak cache pit is 5.0 m long by 1.0 m in width the average depth is 0.5 m.

Figure 4. Localisation of the sites found on Frazier island.

3.3 Harrison island

Only part of the northern section of Harrison island was surveyed, but one large site and a siltstone quarry were identified (fig. 5). The IcGn-12 site is a large site composed of 50 heavy tent rings and 6 tent rings, one of these heavy tent rings is interpreted as a ceremonial structure (*qaggiq*). Its dimensions are 7.40 x 7.80 m. The interior wall is bordered by a continuous bench 35 cm in height. There is a boulder field at about 300 m south-east of the site where there is numerous cache pits and possible tent rings. The siltstone quarry, IcGn--13, is located 200 m east of the IcGn-12 site. Around the quarry a lot of debris can be found.

3.4 Patterson island

On Patterson island, 4 new habitation sites and one quarry were found (fig. 5). In 1958, Matthew Wallrath (n.d.) noted the presence of the IcGn-1 site, in 1986 a site plan was done by archaeologists from the Avataq Cultural Institute (Avataq1992). On IcGn-1 site 27 stone dwellings, 29 tent rings, 20 heavy tent rings and 2 semi-subterranean dwellings were registered. Features in stone dwellings include partitions, caches and hearths. Well-defined entrances are discernible in many of the stone dwellings and some of the heavy tent rings. Last summer, we decided to separate the two semi-subterranean dwellings from the IcGn-1 site and identify them as a new site, IcGn-11. This decision was taken because the two dwellings are located over 100 m to the east and are separated from the IcGn-1 site by an expanse of bedrock. Moreover they represent a different type of occupation than

the one identified on IcGn-1. Structure 1 is oval, and 4.0 x 6.1 m in dimensions; Structure 2 is rectangular 4.7 x 5.1 m in dimensions. No other sites were found in this part of the island.

On the northern part of the island 4 sites were found, 3 of these sites are composed of tent rings and one comprises shallow semi-subterranean structures. The IcGn-6 site is located in a boulder field, and 4 oval tent rings with average dimensions of 2.5 x 3.5 m were observed. The presence of more structures in the boulder field is to be expected. On the IcGn-6 site, near the observed tent rings, 2 small structures were found. These small structures are interpreted as doll house. they are both oval with dimensions not exceeding 1.0 x 1.25 m. This site is associated with a Dorset occupation.

The IcGn-7 site is located near a large pond on the western side of the island. Three structures were found, including one heavy tent ring (Structure 1).

Structure	Shape	Dimensions	Orientation
1	semi-circular	2,1 x 2,5	N-S
2	oval	6,5 x 7,1	N-S
3	rectangular	3,2 x 6,8	N-S

Table 4. Structure observed on the IcGn-7 site.

The IcGn-9 is located on a palaeo beach at 17 m. a. s. l.. No definite structures were found. However, all along that beach stone alignment can be seen through the vegetation, and several concentration of siltstone artefacts are visible at the surface.

The siltstone quarry, IcGn-8, is quite large, over 400 m spreading continuously on two faces of a tabular cliff. The thickness of the visible siltstone vein varies from 0.50 m to 1.50 m. All along the vein, traces of extraction can be seen and chipping debris in enormous quantity are covering the immediate vicinity. The quarry is situated at a elevation of 20 m. a. s. l.

Near the quarry, 300 m to the east, are located 2 shallow semi-subterranean dwellings (IcGn-10). In and around these structures artefacts made of siltstone have been observed.

Structure	Shape	Dimensions	Orientation
1	rectangular	4.5 x 5.0	N-S
2	rectangular	3.5 x 4.5	N-S

Table 5. Structures observed on the IcGn-10 site.

3.5 Kit island

On Kit island the smallest of the islands surveyed, only one prehistoric site was found. The IcGn-14 site is located on the highest part of the island. This site is comprised of a single square heavy tent ring, 2.0 x 2.0 m in dimensions. However,

on this island many modern campsites can be seen.

Figure 5. Localisation of the sites found on Harrison, Patterson and Kit islands.

4.0 Discussion

The Hopewell Islands were considered as likely candidates for the identifications of Thule winter sites. This hypothesis stemmed out from the fact that no such sites has been identified on the mainland in the vicinity of Inukjuak. Moreover, the only known winter dwellings in eastern Hudson Bay generally occurred on islands, or mainland sections having a direct sea access. Some of these sites had been documented by D. Weetaluktuk on the Sleepers and Ottawa Islands (Weetaluktuk 1980, 1981). Thus, the results of our survey came as a surprise. Obviously, the Hopewells inventory is far from being completed, but the last summer's exercise did help us identify a numbers of reasons that would explain the absence of winter sites.

The 2 sites identified (IbGk-3 and IcGn-11), are situated in well protected environment, and strangely, both are facing the inner bay (Hopewell Sound). When looking carefully at the larger portions of all 5 islands that we surveyed, no other location actually qualified as "protected". Additionally, all other known sites in eastern Hudson Bay are likely situated in well-protected areas. All sites occurring on the seaside are non-winter occupations or are specialized locations for storage mainly. The situation appears to be similar for the Palaeoeskimo winter sites, which are located also in protected areas.

However feeble, the 2 sites identified should permit the realisation of phase II of the project, i. e., the excavation of at least one semi-subterranean dwelling. It

will also be important that survey work be pursued more extensively in both directions along the Hopewell Archipelago.

Even though the survey was disappointing for winter Thule sites, it did permit us to locate 2 important sources of siltstone, a new material heavily used on a number of sites in the area, and more significant, the identification of structures nearby.

5.0 References

AVATAQ CULTURAL INSTITUTE

- 1992a *Archaeological survey of the eastern coast of Hudson and Ungava bays, Nunavik.* Rapport présenté au Ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec.
- 1992b *Inventaire archéologique, Inukjuak, Nunavik, 1991.* Rapport présenté au Ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec.
- 1993 *Analyse des sites IcGm-2, 3, et 4, Inukjuak, Nunavik.* Rapport présenté au Ministère des Transport du Québec.
- 1996 *Fouille de sauvetage, site IcGm-5, Inukjuak, Nunavik.* Rapport présenté au Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec.
- n. d. 1996 Field notes, IcGm-36 site.

WALLRATH, MATTHEW

- n. d. *1958 Field notes, Povungnituk, Quebec, National museum of Man,* Manuscript no. 1420.

WEETALUKTUK, DANIEL.

- 1980 *A report of preliminary archaeological survey on Kidney Island, Sleeper Islands, N. W. T., central eastern Hudson bay, summer 1979,* Service de l'Inventaire, Direction de générale du Patrimoine, Québec.
- 1981 *A archaeological report on the Ottawa Islands, archaeological, natural and wildlife survey in central eastern Hudson Bay, summer 1980,* Research Department Makivik Corporation, Inukjuak, Québec.

6.0 PHOTOGRAPHS

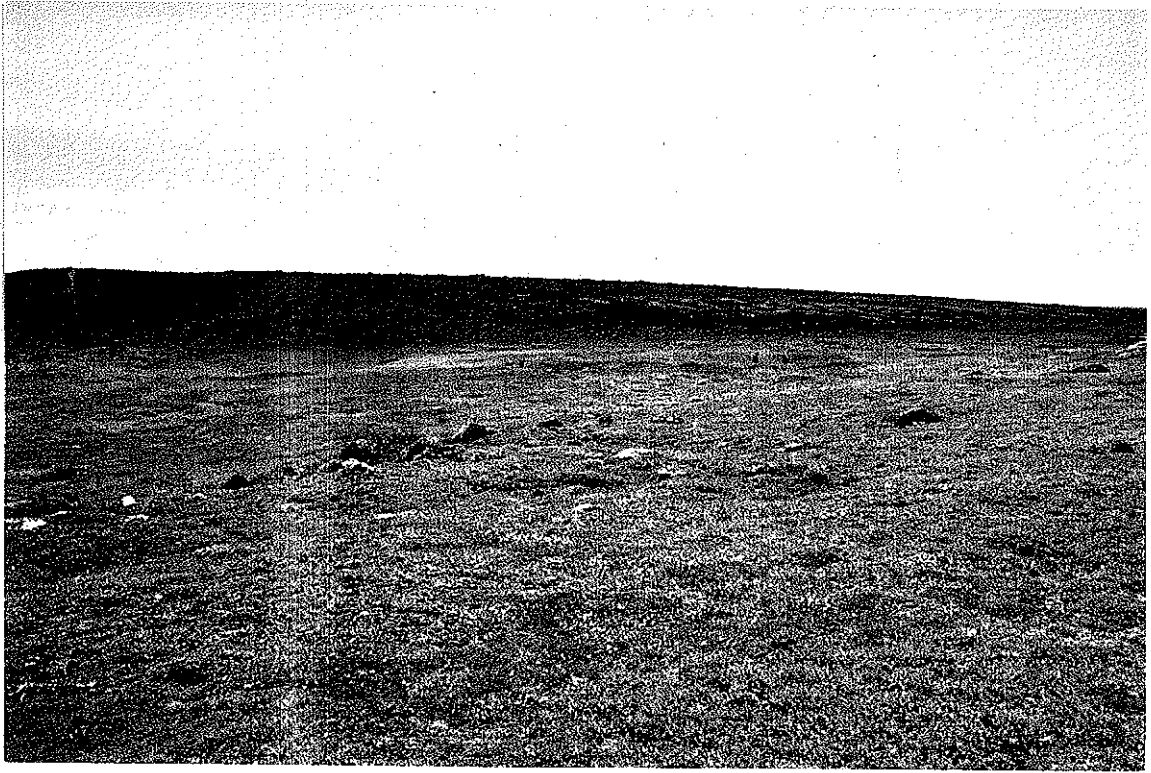


Photo 1. General view of IbGk-3 site, toward the south-south west.



Photo 2. IbG1-3, structure 1, toward the south.

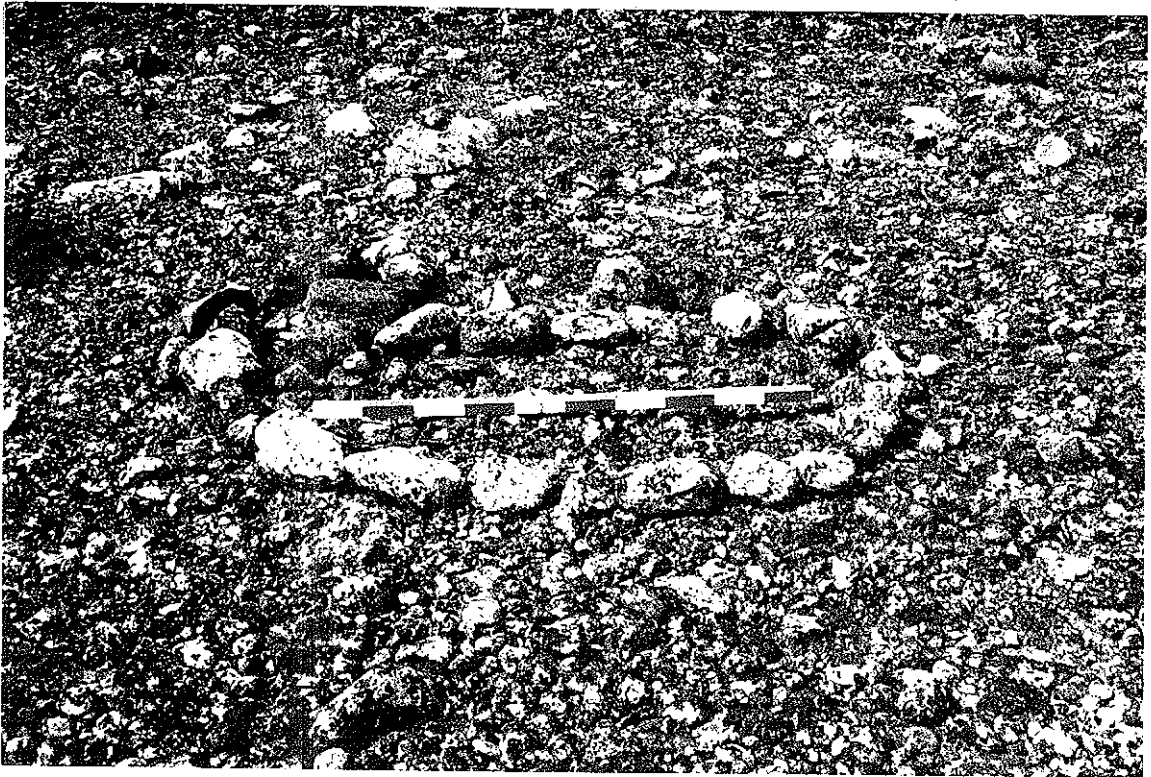


Photo 3. IcGn-6, doll house I, toward the north-west.

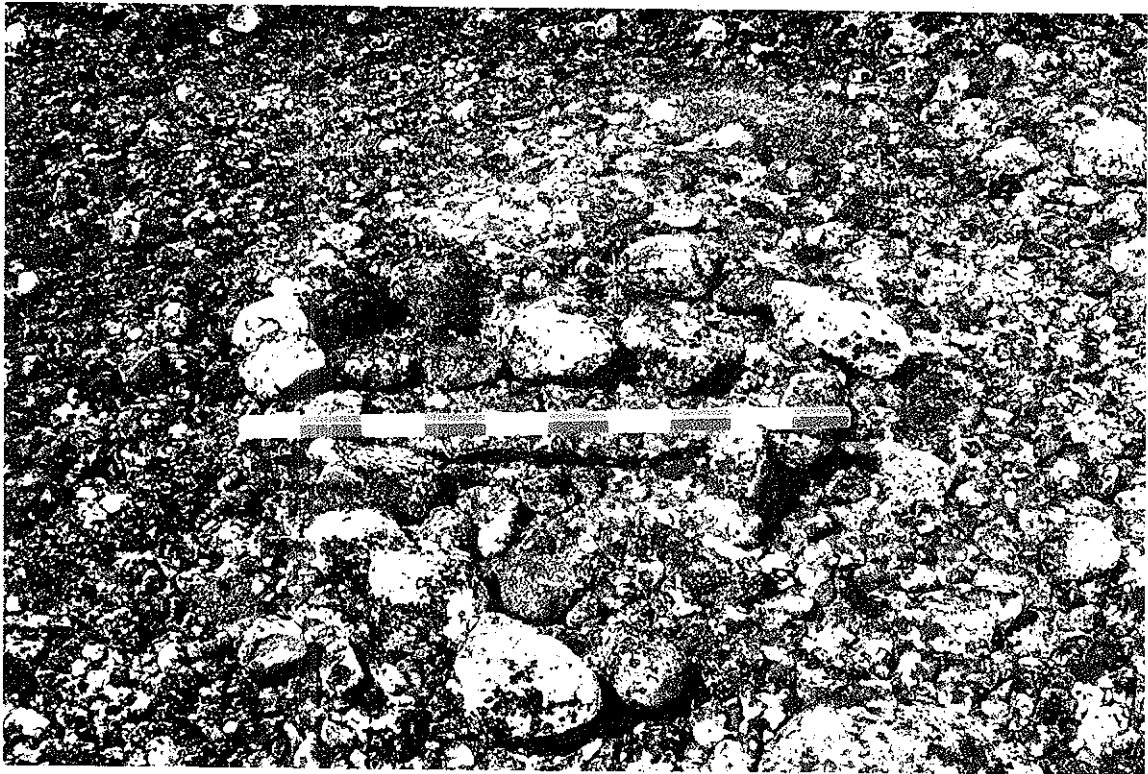


Photo 4. IcGn-6, doll house II, toward the north-west.



Photo 5. IcGn-8, silstone quarry, view of the vein on the north face, toward the south-east.



Photo 6. IcGn-8, siltstone quarry, view of the north face, toward the south.

7.0 APPENDIX

Film	Negatif	Sujet	Orientation	Date	
C9602-1	22	IbGk-3, structure 1	N	26-07-96	
	23	IbGk-3, structure 1	S	26-07-96	
	24	IbGk-3, structure 1	O	26-07-96	
	25	IbGk-3, structure 1	E	26-07-96	
	26	IbGk-3, structure 1, couloir d'entrée	S	26-07-96	
	27	IbGk-3, structure 2	N	26-07-96	
	28	IbGk-3, structure 2	S	26-07-96	
	29	IbGk-3, structure 3	ENE	26-07-96	
	30	IbGk-3, structure 4	SE	26-07-96	
	31	IbGk-3, structure 4, intérieur	O	26-07-96	
	32	IbGk-3, structure 4, couloir d'entrée	NE	26-07-96	
	33	IbGk-3, structure 5	NNO	26-07-96	
	34	IbGk-3, structure 6	N	26-07-96	
	35	IbGk-3, structure 7	S	26-07-96	
	36	IbGk-3, structure 8	E	26-07-96	
	C9602-2	1	IbGk-3, vue générale	SSO	26-07-96
		2	IbGk-3, structure 9	SE	26-07-96
		3	IbGk-3, vue générale	ESE	26-07-96
		4	IbGk-3, vue générale	NE	26-07-96
		5	IbGk-3, vue générale	NNO	26-07-96
		6	IbGk-4, vue générale	SE	26-07-96
		7	IbGk-4, vue générale	E	26-07-96
		8	IbGk-5, vue générale, centre	S	26-07-96
		9	Île Frazier, piège à renard, devant	NE	31-07-96
		10	Île Frazier, piège à renard, profile	NO	31-07-96
		11	IbG1-2, structure 1	O	01-08-96
		12	IbG1-2, structure 1	S	01-08-96
		13	IbG1-2, structure 2	S	01-08-96
		14	IbG1-3, structure 1	O	01-08-96
		15	IbG1-3, structure 1	S	01-08-96
		16	IbG1-3, structure 2	O	01-08-96
		17	IbG1-3, vue générale	O	01-08-96
	C9602-3	4A	IcGn-6, structure de surface miniature I	NO	07-08-96
		5A	IcGn-6, structure de surface miniature II	NO	07-08-96
		6A	IcGn-7, structure 2	S	07-08-96
		7A	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	S	07-08-96
8A		IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	SE	07-08-96	
9A		IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	SE	07-08-96	
10A		IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	SE	07-08-96	
	11A	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite, détails	S	07-08-96	

Film	Negatif	Sujet	Orientation	Date
S9602-1	13	IbGk-3, structure 1	N	26-07-96
	14	IbGk-3, structure 1	S	26-07-96
	15	IbGk-3, structure 1	O	26-07-96
	16	IbGk-3 structure 1	E	26-07-96
	17	IbGk-3, structure 1, couloir d'entrée	S	26-07-96
	18	IbGk-3, structure 2	N	26-07-96
	19	IbGk-3, structure 2	S	26-07-96
	20	IbGk-3, structure 3	ENE	26-07-96
	21	IbGk-3, structure 4	SE	26-07-96
	22	IbGk-3, structure 4, intérieur	O	26-07-96
	23	IbGk-3, structure 4, couloir d'entrée	NE	26-07-96
	24	IbGk-3, structure 5	NNO	26-07-96
	25	IbGk-3, structure 6	N	26-07-96
	26	IbGk-3, structure 7	S	26-07-96
	27	IbGk-3, structure 8	E	26-07-96
	28	IbGk-3, vue générale	SE	26-07-96
	29	IbGk-3, vue générale	SSO	26-07-96
	30	IbGk-3, structure 9	SE	26-07-96
	31	IbGk-3, vue générale	ESE	26-07-96
	32	IbGk-3, vue générale	NE	26-07-96
	33	IbGk-3, vue générale	NNO	26-07-96
	34	IbGk-4, vue générale	SE	26-07-96
	35	IbGk-4, vue générale	E	26-07-96
	36	IbGk-5, vue générale, centre	S	26-07-96
	37	Île Frazier piège à renard, devant	NE	31-07-96
S9602-2	1	Île Frazier piège à renard, profile	NO	31-07-96
	2	IbG1-2, structure 1	O	01-08-96
	3	IbG1-2, structure 1	S	01-08-96
	4	IbG1-2, structure 2	S	01-08-96
	5	IbG1-3, structure 1	O	01-08-96
	6	IbG1-3, structure 1	S	01-08-96
	7	IbG1-3, structure 2	O	01-08-96
	8	IbG1-3, vue générale	O	01-08-96
	30	IcGn-6, structure de surface miniature I	NO	07-08-96
	31	IcGn-6, structure de surface miniature II	NO	07-08-96
	32	IcGn-7, structure 2	S	07-08-96
	33	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	S	07-08-96
	34	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	SE	07-08-96
	35	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	SE	07-08-96
	36	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	SE	07-08-96

Film	Negatif	Sujet	Orientation	Date
S9602-3	1	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	SE	07-08-96
	2	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	SE	07-08-96
	3	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite, détails	S	07-08-96
	4	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite, détails	SO	07-08-96
	5	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	S	07-08-96
	6	IcGn-8, carrière de siltite	S	07-08-96
S9602-4	1	IcGn-8, carrière, escarpement nord	S	31-08-96
	2	IcGn-8, carrière, escarpement nord	S	31-08-96
	3	IcGn-8, carrière, escarpement nord détails	S	31-08-96
	4	IcGn-8, carrière, escarpement nord détails	S	31-08-96
	5	IcGn-8, carrière, escarpement est	O	31-08-96
	6	IcGn-10, structure 1	SSO	31-08-96
	7	IcGn-10, structure 2	SSO	31-08-96
	8	IcGn-10, vue générale	ESE	31-08-96
	9	IcGn-8, carrière, escarpement est détails	O	31-08-96
	10	IcGn-8, carrière, escarpement est détails	NO	31-08-96