

More Than Just Franklin Stories

Inuit Oral History Beyond Canadian Mythology

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On my first evening in Gjoa Haven, while out on the tundra that overlooks the bay and the downtown, I met a man and a woman out for an evening walk. Almost immediately, the man began describing a dream that he had recently had. In his dream he saw the last remaining survivors of the Franklin expedition of the mid-nineteenth century, crossing King William Island on foot, and he imagined their feelings of longing to be with their families, conscious of how far they were from home. I remember this, in part, because whenever he would reference Franklin he would say “200 years ago,” but when he talked of anything before that - before encounters with white people - he would say “300 years ago.” For some reason that stuck in my mind. And I also wondered, why was he telling me this?

Gjoa Haven is located along the southeast side of King William Island in Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut. Historically it has been one of the most difficult parts of the Arctic to access - at least by boat. Its Inuktitut name, Uqshuqtuq - which means “place of fats” - refers to rich marine wildlife in the waters surrounding. The name Gjoa Haven comes from the Norwegian Gjoa Havn, named for the *Gjoa* (pronounced yu-ah) a skiff captained by Norwegian explorer

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Roald Amundsen, who along with his crew overwintered in the inner harbour in 1904 and 1905 en route to the first successful transit of the Northwest Passage. A Hudson's Bay Company trading post was later established in 1927, and more permanent features of the settlement were expanded throughout the postwar years, as many Inuit transitioned from living on the land to living in communities. Today, Gjoa Haven has a population of roughly 1,500; two churches; a town hall; a hockey arena; an elementary and a high school, two grocery stores, two coffee shops, and a 9-hole golf course.

Recently, Gjoa Haven has become known for its relationship with the fated Franklin Expedition of the mid-nineteenth century, and its two ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, which were located nearby in 2014 and 2016. As it happened, 2015 was also an election year, and as the election was heating up, then Prime Minister Stephen Harper - a known Franklin enthusiast - earmarked nearly \$17M to invest in Franklin research in Gjoa Haven, to be spent over the course of a five-year period. Franklin has, in short, led to a surge in southern and international interest in Gjoa Haven. In retrospect, it makes sense that the man I spoke with would have told me his dream, perhaps thinking that the Franklin research was why I had come. After all, white people don't just show up in the Arctic; there is always a reason.

I had actually come to Gjoa for an entirely different reason. I was there as a facilitator for the Nanivara Oral History Project, which sought to engage youth in learning their history, particularly those of settlement in the years following the Second World War. The goal of working with youth was to address a wider sense of disconnection that many young Inuit today experience as part of the longer term effects of this change. Over the course of ten weeks, myself and a group of about twelve students conducted interviews, each roughly one hour long, with Elders to record the history of settlement. That the Franklin research had just begun to take off was purely coincidental, but Franklin stories - and Franklin narratives - have come to form part of the backdrop to this work.

Inuit are both part of Franklin narratives, and have stories about Franklin that they have shared with one another, and with Qablunaat - the term typically used by Inuit to refer to white people - many of whom who have looked to Inuit knowledge for clues of the whereabouts of the ships. The finding of Franklin's ships in 2014 brought Inuit knowledge to the fore. Details shared by Inuit assisted greatly in locating the ships, and the success has formed the basis for new research partnerships between the federal government and regional and local governments in Nunavut. These partnerships have been interesting and informative, but as the Franklin stuff was beginning to unfold in the community, I began to wonder about the scale of it all and its place in the community. Gjoa Haven was becoming known by its association with where the Franklin ships were found. But most of the Elders we spoke with during the Nanivara Project hadn't mentioned Franklin stories at all, and for most of the youth involved it was their first time hearing about Franklin entirely.

What I want to do in this talk is try to put Franklin in perspective, and to share what I've learned - and am learning - about Gjoa Haven at a time when Franklin stories have suddenly resurfaced in a significant way. To be clear, there are many different stories about Franklin, told by many different people - both Inuit and non-Inuit. In this talk, when I refer to Franklin stories I am referring to the national narratives and mythology that shape popular, southern knowledge, understandings and imaginings of the north. There are several books devoted specifically to Inuit stories of what might have happened to the Franklin expedition, most notably David Woodward's *Unravelling the Franklin Mystery: Inuit Testimony*. And there are many books devoted to the Franklin Expedition itself. It is not my intention to summarize those, or to try to add new details or theories as to what might have happened. My approach, instead, is to consider how stories - and in this case, predominantly Qablunaat stories - shape popular ideas about the north and the people who live there. First, I want to look at Franklin stories as Canadian stories - that is, as broad national narratives - and to highlight how Inuit fit within these. Second, I want to consider Franklin stories in

the context of Inuit history, by looking specifically at how these stories fit into present-day Gjoa Haven. Finally, I want to offer some thoughts on the meaning of the discovery of Franklin's ships for Inuit, and situate these amidst efforts by young Inuit to learn and know their history.

Franklin in Historical Context

While news of the discovery of Franklin's ships in 2014 was met with great national fanfare, there was also criticism. Someone at Nunatsiaq News tweeted:

Nunavummiut [people of Nunavut] could not care much less & wish Harper gov't would invest more in social programs.

Another (sarcastic) Tweet:

Amazing that gov't project found one of the Franklin expedition ships. Now let's turn those sleuthing abilities to find lost climate policy.

But the one that stands out to me comes from historian Adele Perry, who wrote:

I am a historian of 19th Century North America, I believe in studying colonial projects, I rely on Franklin & Company's archives, and I cannot see why this matters.

I can sort of relate to this Tweet. I didn't grow up knowing anything about Franklin, and I've been surprised to learn how much a part of the national mythology Franklin stories have been to prior generations. But that's a far cry from saying Franklin stories - or the discovery of the ships - don't matter. As I've learned, there *are* Inuit - including from neighbouring Kitikmeot communities such as Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk, Kugaruk and Taloyoak - for whom Franklin stories matter a great deal. So, rather than debate *if* the discovery of the ships

matters or not, perhaps we should think about *how* Franklin stories matter, and to whom?

Many details of the Franklin expedition are now well known. In 1845 Franklin and a crew of 128 men, departed England with two ships, Erebus and Terror, to navigate the then unmapped sections of the fabled Northwest Passage. All members of the expedition eventually died. Some of the very earliest to perish were buried at Beechy Island, and their graves are now a stop along for summer tourist routes. Franklin himself died early in 1847. The remaining crew likely abandoned the ships northwest of King William Island in 1848, to head south across the island in an effort to connect with fur trading routes. Scurvy, lead poisoning, and starvation are thought to be the main causes of their deaths. Numerous search expeditions - both naval and private - were launched to find the ships, and searchers from these eventually did map a Northwest Passage route. When the ships were found in 2014 and 2016, it brought to an end one of the great mysteries of the Franklin expedition: namely, where the ships were. But other questions remain, such as: what happened to the crew?; how did the ships come to their final resting place?; and where is Sir John Franklin buried?

There are many different themes of Franklin stories, but four in particular attest to and perhaps help to explain their appeal. These are death, mystery, maps, discovery. The first thing that comes to mind, of course, is death. Franklin stories, although they now branch off into many corners of Arctic imagination and lore, are ultimately morbid, perhaps uniquely so to the Victorian and Canadian imagination. It is the deaths of Franklin's crew that marks the tragedy. But death also marks the mystery of the Franklin expedition. David Woodman writes that: "The Franklin saga is a puzzle without the prospect of complete solution." The search for Franklin, in its present form, is a search for a complete narrative. And indeed the Franklin mystery has spawned a whole host of sub-mysteries, and generations of explorers and sleuths of all kinds and around the world. On Facebook, a Remembering the Franklin Expedition page has more than two-

thousand members, who post links and new “finds” in the hopes that they turn out to be something that might help solve the Franklin puzzle.

Directly related to this desire to know are maps. Maps serve an important role in the narrative; namely, maps merge the desire to know with the aesthetic and visual image of the north. Maps are also leveraged in support of truth, because of their associations with the meticulousness and rigour of science; and because they are written down, textualized. “As with the printed word,” the geographer Gwylam Eades writes, “the map-reader often assumes that because something can be read on paper it must be true.”

Finally, Franklin stories are discovery stories - the significance of which is greater than the material objects acquired. That is, discovery stories are about knowing, and they both inform what we know and set the parameters for how we process new information. The promise of discovery is to return with stories - even if they are tales of death, tragedy, or failure.

For these reasons, and others, Franklin stories endure. And by their endurance and longevity they have migrated from their British origins into the realm of a distinctly Canadian Arctic mythology. As Canadian English Literature professor Sherrill Grace writes, the manner in which Franklin stories are recorded and repeated now have distinctly *Canadian* cultural and national traits. Grace writes: "In a sense the Canadian far north is a site criss-crossed by the traces of our passing; it has become a text in which a key, central topos is Sir John Franklin - the lost, missing, absent centre where the final, corroborative traces simply disappear." Franklin stories, according to Grace, are quintessentially Canadian - stories that all Canadians - presumably - can relate to. Yet while Franklin stories have appeared through many artistic forms, they remain largely bound by the traits and features of the wider culture. Arguably the greatest barrier in tellings of Franklin is language - both English and conceptual, or a way of telling stories that not all cultures share. When Grace speaks of Franklin as “the quintessential interdisciplinary, diachronic, semiotic subject,” it is clear that she has a particular (ie. academic) audience in mind. But the language we use to tell stories matters,

and it especially matters when the stories, and the memories in which they are rooted, are not our own. When we recall Franklin stories, or when we seek to trace them across the “textualized maps of narrative discourse,” it is easy to forget that the pieces that make up Franklin stories do, in fact, come from *somewhere* and from *someone’s* experience; whether that be the experience of those crew who suffered, or Inuit who witnessed what happened and passed it on through stories.

Inuit knowledge has always been part of the Franklin story. In virtually all accounts from explorers from all time periods, Inuit knowledge is key to knowing what happened to the ships. But the manner in which Inuit and Inuit knowledge have been included is important. In the case of Franklin stories, there has been a clear shift in the broader narrative of who found Franklin, and who contributed to its finding - a shift that evolved from downplaying and refuting Inuit accounts, to embracing them as central elements of the Franklin story. To be sure, this is a pattern of Canadian storytelling that accompanies discovery stories, where Indigenous informants are not credited with their central role in directing Euro-Canadians to valued resources: the case of Skookum Jim of the Tagish First Nation, whose find set off the Klondike Gold Rush; of Dene, who not only showed Alexander Mackenzie the route of the river that now bears his name, but alerted him to the location of oil at what, many years later, became Norman Wells.

Inuit are not entirely absent from Franklin stories in the way that Indigenous peoples have been left out of other national narratives, but they have historically been cast in a supporting role to the explorer. Inuit are not just secondary characters in the Franklin stories; they often form part of the scenery. Their language, customs, mannerisms - and the veracity of their accounts - must all be navigated by the explorer (the narrator!) to arrive at the truth to solve the mystery. A key element of Franklin stories, as told by Qablunaat, is doubt of Inuit stories. Among earliest accounts, Inuit are recorded as the stories of “savages,” or - as in the case of Greenlandic Inuit translator Adam Beck, unreliable or untrustworthy. Like the truth-claims of maps - or texts - the absence or lack of a textualized account of Franklin from Inuit is held up as a source of doubt. As I

said, Inuit have always been part of Franklin stories. But doubt of Inuit knowledge constitutes part of the truth-claims of Franklin stories that non-Inuit have told; in other words, a perceived inadequacy of Inuit knowledge is part of how explorers - and how non-Inuit - have come to know Inuit lands.

The discoveries of *Erebus* and *Terror* marks a new chapter in the representation of Franklin stories in that Inuit are given a higher degree of prominence. To be sure, dedicated Franklin researchers have defended and demonstrated the validity of Inuit accounts for many years now. But the finding of the ships is the first time that Inuit knowledge has been widely celebrated as an integral part of Canadian mythology and national narratives. Inuit are now cast as partners in finding Franklin, and Inuit knowledge lauded for its ability to assist Western scientific research - a pattern that also extends to other areas of Indigenous research and knowledge. In the current context of reconciliation in Canada, there is an eagerness to partner Indigenous voices, stories and knowledge with broader, national, Canadian narratives like those about Franklin. I would suggest that the recasting of Inuit can be viewed in this light. But are these Canadian narratives the same for Inuit? And do they matter in the same way for people in Gjoa Haven?

Inuit Oral History and Gjoa Haven

I want to now turn to how these stories relate to the place itself: that is, Gjoa Haven. And I want to focus on what these broader narratives make invisible, or don't say about Gjoa Haven.

In her 2015 book, *Far Off Metal River*, geographer Emilie Cameron critically examines the relationship of national myth-making, northern Canada, and Inuit-Qablunaat relations. The site of her study - Kugluktuk, Nunavut - is located close to where the infamous Bloody Falls Massacre of the eighteenth century is said to have taken place. The story of a slaughter of Inuit families by a

group of Dene was supposedly witnessed by the explorer Samuel Hearne, who was commissioned by the Hudson's Bay Company to survey copper deposits in the area. Hearne's account, Cameron notes, is not just sensational for its detailed depictions of violence; the story also serves as a reference point for southerners, who come to know the north through the legend of Bloody Falls. Among her observations on the projection of Canadian history and mythology on the north, Cameron stresses the relationship of time and place, and how stories of violence influence southern understandings of northern history. She writes: "In a sense, for Qablunaat, history itself begins at Bloody Falls."

Having looked at some basic elements of Franklin stories, I want to turn now to what these narratives say about this particular place - Gjoa Haven - and how they shape popular understandings of the north and northern history. There are two things that I want to highlight that connect national narratives with the current placement of Franklin in the north. First, as discussed in relation to maps and texts, stories constitute claims to truth. As Cameron suggests, these truth claims are tied to events on particular lands that inform how outsiders come to know or imagine a place. Second, stories establish the timelines in which we imagine or understand the world to exist; timelines that indicate where things began and how far we've come since, but also against which we evaluate or assess new information. Similar to Hearne's stories, Franklin stories mark the beginnings - or at least the earliest stages - of what many of us in the south consider to be northern Canadian history. That is, a history that begins with the arrival of white people.

Stories, in other words, provide the setting in which we understand or locate ourselves historically and geographically, and I would argue that Franklin stories - and the broader narratives of northern mythology - contribute to a particular understanding of how Inuit are fitted into the wider fabric of Canadian history. But I think there are better questions than simply asking where Inuit fit into stories of exploration and discovery. Instead, we should ask how Franklin stories fit into Inuit stories, and how this history fits into present-day Gjoa Haven.

In the previous section I laid out some of the “textualized” features of Franklin stories - those of death, mystery, maps, discovery. Very briefly, I would note some comparable tropes in Inuit oral history. There are stories of mystics and shamans who transcend the earthly and spirit worlds, whose prophecies offer insights and guidance to Inuit. And while Inuit are not known to have had maps in the way Westerners think of them, Inuit geographies are represented and remembered through legend stories and place names. Many of these have been mapped extensively by Inuit over the past few decades, and were integral to locating the boundaries of Nunavut Territory.

Inuit also have stories of discovery, though discovery is not the right word here. Instead of discovery narratives, when it comes to people, Inuit stories speak of encounter or meeting. Whereas discovery narratives centre “newness” and champion previously unaccomplished feats - such as finding the Northwest Passage - Inuit stories come from movement through familiar lands. Inuit histories and legends are filled with travel and migration, typically along seasonal lines as families would move their camps, following the movements of animals. In the course of these, Inuit would meet with other Inuit, with Cree and Dene to the south; and much later, with white people - Qablunaat.

Inuit, of course, do not identify themselves as having *been discovered*, and Inuit origin stories and legends do not place them as characters in someone else’s story. Inuit have their own histories and their own ways of making sense of relations between the natural, spiritual and social worlds and their own genesis stories, fables, and parables that help them navigate these on a daily basis. And of course, they have their own language and dialects in which these knowledges are shared, and their own ways of sharing them: through the telling and retelling of stories, through demonstrations and lessons, and through singing songs. These stories, having been told many times over, vary across Inuit Nunangat - but they retain their core meaning and value. Inuit stories travel, and they reflect encounters and meetings that come with a traveling life.

In fairness, Anglo-European explorers of past generations did not claim to have discovered Inuit. But because Inuit homelands have often been a backyard for discovery fantasies, Inuit themselves have been cast as pre-historic; belonging to or of a time before history is thought to have begun. And this way of thinking continues to inform how many in the south think about northern Canadian history. The Wikipedia page for Gjoa Haven, for instance, documents things like the fur trade, the construction of the DEW Line, or histories of exploration. But these are histories of settlement in the community, and they don't entail the many strands and stories of which the community is comprised.

There are a couple of things to keep in mind, then, when talking about Inuit history and present-day Gjoa Haven. First, that Inuit histories, customs, laws, language, and lessons don't just come from the land - they themselves travel. When considering the history of the settlement of the community between the 1950s and 1970s, it is important to recall that many of these histories, languages and lessons came with people who were moving into the community. Although Inuit now live predominantly in settled communities, these ways remain vitally important to the culture, and to the transmission of knowledge between generations. A second point is that while life has changed over a short period of time, there are many people in Gjoa Haven who still have memories and knowledge of living on the land, and they are adamant that this knowledge must be passed on to the next generation. While words like "traditional knowledge" are often invoked in reference to knowledge held by Indigenous people, I think there is a tendency for non-Indigenous people to overlook one of the most crucial elements of what makes knowledge "traditional": that it be passed to the next generation.

The movement and transmission of Inuit stories and history forms a background to the oral history of Gjoa Haven. In 2015, when we were doing interviews for the Nanivara Project, we asked Elders to speak about their lives during the transition from living on the land to living in the community. We asked Elders why they moved to Gjoa Haven, and how that experience was different

from life before. And we asked them to share stories and lessons that they learned in their childhood that they thought were important to pass on to the next generation.

I want to give some examples of how the move into the community was facilitated by Inuit knowledge. First, many stories were from personal experience, much of which is tied to the fur trade. Hunters would have been drawn to the trading post to trade furs or to assist in their preparation for sale. Others cited personal relationships as reasons for coming to the community. Many Elders, for instance, made reference to George Washington Porter and his wife, Martha, who are considered founding members of the community. Porter was in fact Inupiat from Alaska, but he had a good reputation as one of the few Inuks who actually ran the trading post.

Gjoa Haven also became a meeting place at a time when things were changing very rapidly. To give you a sense of how fast, one Elder we spoke with described how she gave birth to her first daughter in a snow hut on the land - her second daughter was born at the hospital in Yellowknife. Living in the community also meant new diets and a different dialect. One woman, who grew up on the land near Back River, told of moving to the community when she was young, and seeing a seal for the first time - thinking it was a caribou with no legs. These were significant changes, but they could be adapted to and embraced. Even as the community was growing, Inuktitut was predominantly if not exclusively spoken among Inuit.

The biggest changes, however, were those that altered Inuit social structure and customs. Many of these occurred across Nunavut, and there are histories of the construction of the Distant Early Warning Line across the north in the early 1950s. The tragic story of Joseph Idlout featured in Barry Greenwald's film, *Between Two Worlds*, tells of a once renowned trapper who grew dependent on wages from working at the DEW Line, and who later committed suicide. His story stands as a marker of the depths of postwar construction on Inuit lifestyles.

Equally significant but perhaps with longer term effects, was the evolution of the school system; both residential schools and later, local day schools. Schools, too, brought people to Gjoa Haven, but involuntarily. Most of the Elders we spoke to did not attend residential schools - but their children often did. In some instances, we heard stories of planes landing on the tundra and taking children away. Gjoa Haven did not have a residential school, but because the trading post was known to be a place where Qablunaat visited, people would come and set up camp in the community in the hopes of learning information about their children and when they might be coming home.

Day schools also fundamentally altered the culture within the communities. Children there were exposed to southern curriculum, and were taught histories of Canada that were very different from the ones they would have heard from their parents. Schools replaced education on the land with education in the classroom, and learning from Elders and parents to learning from Qablunaat teachers. One Elder we spoke with described the effects of the high school, and shortly thereafter, the introduction of television. The high school, she said, meant that youth (teenagers) had new places to hang out, new activities, new culture, and took part in these instead of Inuit culture. Youth were not only educated in English, they learned to associate English with employment opportunities as well as authority.

Perhaps more than anything else, when recounting stories of Gjoa Haven, Elders we spoke with talked about their parents. They spoke of the lessons they heard, the experiences of life on the land, and the stories that were passed on. They told of living in snow huts and tents made of skins and, later, canvases. They told of hunting techniques, of how to raise dog teams, or how to shoot two ptarmigan with a single bullet. They told of how to sew caribou skins, and of what times of year the fur was best to harvest for making parkas. And they told how to stay warm - not just to keep yourself warm, but how to keep others warm. Many of the stories were funny, but also hard, because life on the land was often hard.

While some of the techniques and technologies have changed, the knowledge from Elders remains practical, skills that are still important for people to know. Inuit continue to camp, to hunt and fish, not just for recreation, but because caribou, seal, char, and trout - all organic, wild, fresh - are not just healthier than anything that can be bought at the store; they are cheaper, even when gas, netting and ammunition are included in the cost. People still travel great distances by boat, skidoo or ATV, and so knowledge of the land remains crucially important, not only to those who travel, but to members of the families who remain behind, who are concerned for the safety of their loved ones. As happens more and more as the ice and weather conditions change, there is a need to know this land to assist with search and rescue missions. And Inuit still rely on place names passed on from generations before.

While many of the Elders talked about hardships and challenges of growing up on the land, many shared the view that the challenges faced by the younger generations today are greater than those that they grew up with. Life on the land was hard, as it always had been, and because of this Inuit knowledge, lessons and guidance, equip young people - not to live the way Inuit once lived long ago, but to face the challenges of today. To not be discouraged; to endure difficult times; to know your culture; and to be proud of who you are.

Histories of settlement - of the fur trade, of the DEW Line, of the arrival of missionaries and police, and the construction of school - very much involve Inuit. They are rightly referred to today as core elements of the colonial history of northern Canada. But these histories of settlement do not encompass all Inuit history, and limiting views of history to these does not reveal much about how Inuit experienced these changes, or how these experiences shape the community. I think there is a parallel in the way Franklin stories, as southern stories, shape southern understandings and imaginings of the north, and of northern people. For southerners, Franklin stories offer particular ways of knowing lands and places to which they have never been. The fact that Franklin stories, and the broader national narratives that they serve, originate in the south does not mean that Inuit

don't have their own Franklin stories, or that Canada's stories are uninteresting or don't matter to Inuit. The point is that when asked what stories they recall, what informed their experience, and what the Elders felt young people today need to know, the subject of Franklin did not come up.

And it's not hard to imagine why. Compared with Inuit stories and experiences across the land, Franklin stories offer no guidance or advice for how to hunt, skin or cache meat, how to raise children, to teach them to sew or hunt, how to keep one another warm, to live a full life in lands where Inuit have lived for thousands of years. Franklin stories, on the contrary, are fleeting, momentary episodes of death amidst much longer histories of survival. For Inuit, there is little practical wisdom to be gleaned from stories of white men who got trapped in the ice 200 years ago.

Franklin and Gjoa Haven

In the late summer of 2017, Gjoa Haven hosted the first annual Umiyaqtutt Festival, a government-sponsored event honouring the 'discovery' of the ships. This is how I first got to go back to Gjoa Haven, to work with youth to document the Franklin research that was ongoing. Over the course of two weeks, a group of us - six in total - worked to document local perspectives in the community. Different from the work in 2015, this was an opportunity to talk more directly about Franklin stories, and to hear from locals what they thought about all the research that was taking place in Gjoa Haven. One of the people we spoke to was Louie Kamookak. Louie Kamookak - once called "the last great Franklin searcher" - remains the best known Inuit historian on the Franklin research. It was his research into Inuit accounts of Franklin, and his documentation of Inuit knowledge, that helped Parks Canada researchers locate the ships. For his efforts, he received the medal of honour from the Royal Canadian Geographical Society,

and in December of 2017, became an Officer of the Order of Canada. Sadly, he passed away in March of 2018.

Louie Kamookak's story is a reminder of the important role of oral tradition in locating the wrecks of Erebus and Terror, and of how accounts of Franklin do have meaning - and do matter - to local Inuit who are familiar with the subject. But what I would suggest, is that the way these stories matter to Inuit is quite different from the way Franklin stories matter to Qablunaat. Namely, that while Franklin stories are part of a wider national but predominantly southern mythology, at the local level Franklin stories - and the finding of the ships - are experienced in ways that are similar to how Inuit have experienced relations with Qablunaat more generally. Louie Kamookak's relationship to the Franklin research, ultimately, is deeply personal. His knowledge of Franklin begins with oral history, from a story he first heard from his great grandmother when he was young - as he described it, a story for entertainment. His great grandmother told of finding a fine, man-made gravel ridge on the northwest side of King William Island, and some metal artifacts nearby. It was not until much later when reading about the history of the Franklin expedition at school that he made connections between the history that he was reading and his great grandmother's story. Over the course of more than thirty years, he collected and traced details of Franklin stories, piecing together bits of information, interviewing Elders, and mapping out the many placenames that were eventually used to help Parks Canada locate the wrecks. When the wreck of Erebus was located in 2014, he was among the first to know.

In our interview with Marc-Andre Bernier, chief archaeologist for Parks Canada, he spoke of the excitement of finally locating the ships. He said: "When I saw the image [of the ship] and the remains, my mind went to the mind of the archaeologist, now it's found, we're going to learn so much." When asked the same question - what was it like when he learned the first ship had been found - Louie Kamookak's reaction was a bit different: "It was kind of emotional but happy but kind of sad in a way that the Elders that were involved were not around

and we found the ship and they'd been true all the time, talking the truth, so its almost like you wanted them to be there for the find.”

From speaking with him, it is clear that there is great pride in knowing and being able to share that history. But I also think it is a pride that comes not so much from finding Franklin, but in being able to validate Inuit stories - and Inuit ways of telling stories - such as those of his great grandmother. As he says, the feelings come from knowing that Inuit stories of Franklin were true all along. To recognize these feelings of validation, it must be remembered how Inuit stories have in the past been doubted, and how Inuit histories and ways, have been undermined.

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The discovery of the Franklin ships brings tourists from all over the world to Gjoa Haven from late August to early September, when enough sea ice has melted to allow for trips through the Northwest Passage. Tourism is thought to be a major draw to the region, as Gjoa Haven is not located near mineral or resources extraction sites. Monies earmarked for the Franklin research have gone to a number of initiatives in and around the community. There is a group of Guardians from the community, who camp out near the wreck sites to monitor for unauthorized traffic. Although both the wreck sites are restricted from public access, there is some concern that wealthy private outlets might launch their own dives on the ships. In the community, the week-long Umiyaqtutt Festival is a celebration of Inuit knowledge in helping to locate the shipwrecks. Even though the festival was initiated by Parks Canada, the goal is to transfer responsibility and control of it to the local Nattilik Heritage Society - to run it as a week devoted to Inuit social and cultural history.

At the local Nattilik Heritage Centre, efforts to place Franklin include plans to expand the heritage centre to accommodate more of the artifacts of the Franklin ships, which are viewed as a draw for tourists. Franklin-related tourism

is welcomed by many in the community because it is seen to have potentially positive economic benefits. In the summer of 2018, however, not a single cruise ship made it to Gjoa. Tourism is, of course, linked with Franklin stories and the history of the Northwest Passage, but it is also linked with environmental changes as a result of melting sea ice. Climate change, which brings changes in ice conditions, also alters our understandings of history. It is a reminder that we cannot separate histories we know from the means by which we access them.

Much of what I have learned about Inuit history, and much of how I speak about these issues, comes from conversations with the young people I've worked with. I want to mention, in particular, two of my good friends, Barbara Okpik and Jennifer Ullulaq. I met Barb and Jenni in 2015, and we have worked together on a variety of projects ever since. My understanding of Inuit history, and how to approach Inuit history, comes from working with them.

I want to quote at length here from Jennifer's talk at the recent Inuit Studies in Montreal back in October. I think it helps establish a proper perspective for what youth in Gjoa Haven would like to see, and helps bring together some of the things about Franklin stories that I've discussed here today. Jennifer writes:

It has been over 170 years since the crew members of the British ships had tragically perished. And I hope that their souls are peacefully resting on the nuna. The Franklin stories have been shared amongst Inuit for the past century. There are stories that come and go between time. These stories came from nomadic Inuit who interacted with the crew back then. Sometimes they were afraid of them, sometimes they would help them. The information Inuit shared to the search parties who were searching for the crew members were bits and pieces of clues that eventually led to some findings of some of the crew members, their belongings and documents that they have cached. Still today, Inuit are finally talking about what had been going on with the Franklin expedition. The stories about it have been passed down from generation to generation. They're not big stories like Nuliayuk or Kivuiq amongst Inuit myths and legends. It is just small talk. And that is just my thought, and I'm not representing what all Inuit think about this.

Among Inuit who I've met and spoken with, there are varying levels of interest in the Franklin research, and many different opinions about what should be done. Some people stress the potential economic benefits of embracing the Franklin research. Others feel the research threatens to disturb the graves and the spirits of Franklin's crew, and they have concerns about that. Beyond that, though, I think most people recognize that Franklin stories are Qablunaat stories - stories that are not only about white people, but stories that shape white people's understandings of Inuit. In this regard, I think the recent sharing of knowledge about Franklin by Inuit should be seen not so much as an effort to participate in Canadian stories, but as a gift of knowledge to what Qablunaat want to know.

What Jenni said, then, reminded me a lot of that first conversation - my first encounter on the tundra back in 2015. Of Franklin's crew, she says, "I hope that their souls are peacefully resting on the nuna" - the land. It reminded me of the dream of Franklin's crew lost in the north, longing for home. For all that I have highlighted differences in the way we share knowledge and stories about the north, and the distinctiveness of Inuit stories and ways from those of Qablunaat, people in Gjoa Haven today are intimately aware of how the sailors of the Franklin expedition, who once hoped to make quick work of the Northwest Passage, now share an eternal resting place with their own ancestors.

But history is not about the past, rather history - and especially Inuit history - is about the next generation, and the one after that. In closing I want simply to note this. Not only is Nunavut the newest of the territories and provinces in Canada, it is by far the youngest, and its sole member of parliament is one of the youngest in Ottawa. I mention this because rather than think of Inuit history as something of the past and for the old, to know that Inuit history is for the youth of today, and for the future of Nunavut.