Read on October 20, 2014 (highlights, no annotations) | This article describes a case study in which a crew of anthropologists, filmmakers and Aboriginal Canadian delegation memebers went to the Smithsonian to reconnect with their objects. It demonstrates the changing relationships between instituions, people and objects as a result of technology and shifting access. In terms of "digital repatriation," this paper argues that "virtual exhibits" allow for beneficial reconnections/interactions with heritage, but that the difficulty comes with issues of public access (see also Hennessy 2012, Cultural Heritage on the Web). This paper is relevant to my own project in terms of creating a virutal platform for a collaborative community ethnography. Although, it focuses more on a reconnection with objects rather than the collaborative process at the ground level of the exhibit in the way that Hennessy put forth in her 2012 article.

The Inuvialuit Living History Project: Digital Return as the Forging of Relationships Between Institutions, People, and Data*

Kate Hennessy, Natasha Lyons, Stephen Loring, Charles Arnold, Mervin Joe, Albert Elias, and James Pokiak

*Abstract: Digital return is described in this paper as a process of creating and maintaining relationships between heritage and cultural institutions, people, and digital data. Our project reflects a rapidly shifting technological context in which the creation of access for originating communities to their heritage in distant museum collections and the collaborative multimedia production are increasingly parallel projects. In 2009, a delegation of Inuvialuit Elders, youth, seamstresses, and cultural experts from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the north traveled with a group of anthropologists, archaeologists, educators, and media producers from the south to research and document the Smithsonian's MacFarlane Collection. In the years following this initial visit, the project team collaboratively developed a virtual exhibit and community-based digital archive called "*Inuvialuit Pitqusiit Inuuniarutait*: Inuvialuit Living History." This project features the digital MacFarlane Collection, documents the delegation's visit to the Smithsonian, and connects contemporary Inuvialuit interpretations of the collection to ongoing cultural practices in Inuvialuit communities. Through the lens of this virtual exhibit, we explore central issues of access to Aboriginal cultural heritage, ownership of digital heritage, and new forms of collaboration between holding institutions and Aboriginal communities that digital practices are facilitating. We demonstrate how new digital networks connecting heritage institutions and their data are creating opportunities for Aboriginal recontextualization of heritage, while presenting significant challenges for the long-term preservation of digital materials.*

[Keywords: Collaboration, *Museums*, *Information Technology*, Virtual Exhibits, *Data*, Museum-Community Relationships. Keywords in italics are derived from the American Folklore Society Ethnographic Thesaurus, a standard nomenclature for the ethnographic disciplines.]

Introduction

In 2009, a delegation of Inuvialuit elders, youth, seamstresses, cultural experts, and media producers from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Canadian North traveled with a group of anthropologists, archaeologists, and educators from the South to research and document the Smithsonian's MacFarlane Collection at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington,

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DC (Figure 1). This collection is arguably the most significant assemblage of Inuvialuit material heritage in a museum or private collection. Purchased by Hudson's Bay Company trader Roderick MacFarlane[1] at Fort Anderson in the Canadian western Arctic in the 1860s, it became one of the Smithsonian Institution's founding collections (Morrison 2006). Only a small portion of the collection had ever been exhibited: a selection of objects in the now closed North American Indian Hall of the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), a single pipe loaned for inclusion in the controversial "The Spirit Sings" exhibition at Calgary's Glenbow Museum in 1987,[2] and several objects loaned for exhibition at the Inuit Circumpolar Conference in Inuvik, Northwest Territories (NWT), in 1992. The collection remained virtually unknown and inaccessible to the descendant Inuvialuit from whom it had been derived. With the goal of bringing knowledge of the collection back to Inuvialuit communities, the delegation spent a week at the Smithsonian's Museum Support Center and handled, photographed, and documented responses to many of the collection's 300-plus ethnographic objects, such as skin clothing, hunting tools, and artwork. The group viewed selections of the collection's natural history specimens, such as bird eggs, animals, and skeletons, that MacFarlane, with his Inuvialuit and Dene collaborators, had collected almost 150 years ago (Lyons et al. 2011). The delegation also worked with Smithsonian curator Stephen Loring and Smithsonian digital collections expert Carrie Beauchamp to negotiate possibilities for creating Inuvialuit representations of the collection.

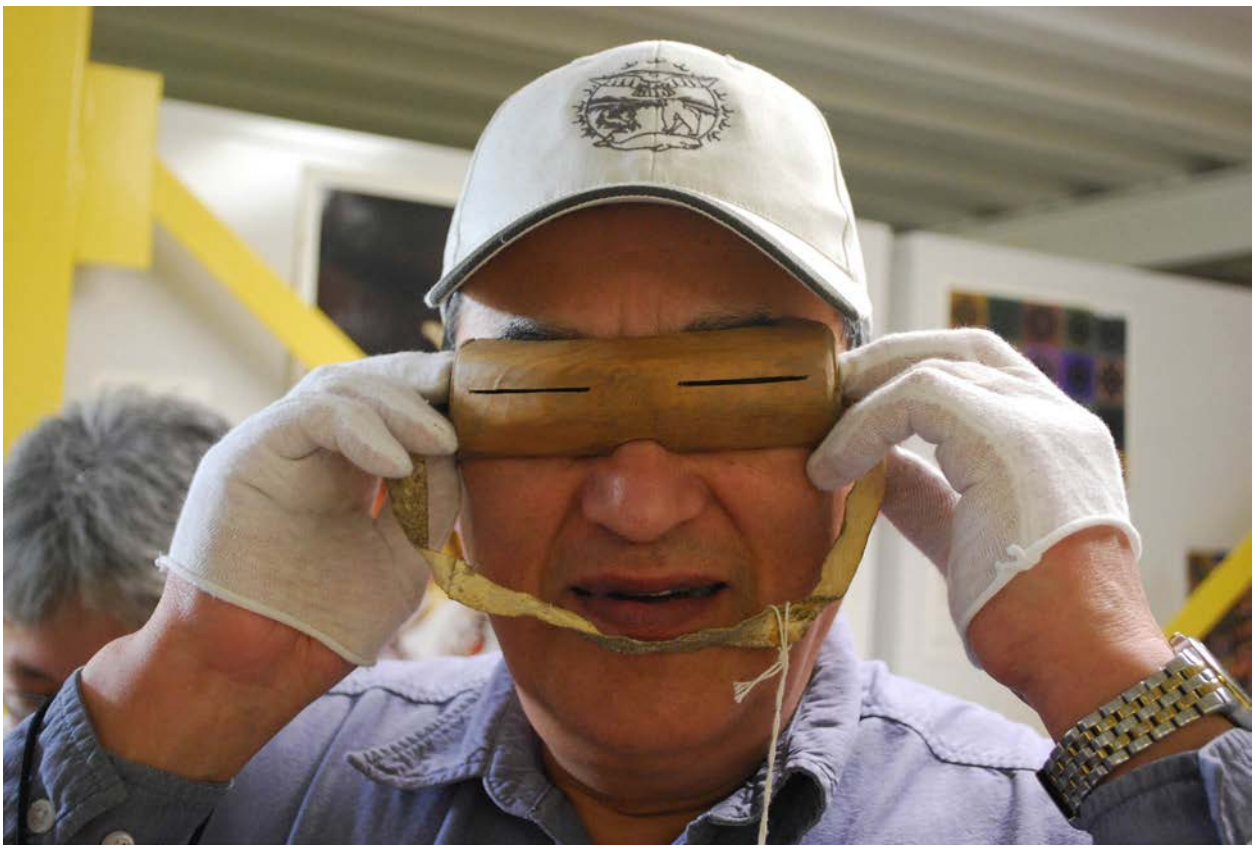

Figure 1. Albert Elias tries on snow goggles at the Smithsonian's Museum Support Center. Photo by Kate Hennessy, 2009.

Inuvialuit and anthropologists worked for many years to bring together the MacFarlane Collection and community members. This process took a great deal of time due to costs and institutional requirements that created challenges for all who were involved. Several personal connections and events finally helped move this objective forward. Charles Arnold first encountered the MacFarlane Collection while pursuing graduate studies in the 1970s. In 1992, while he was employed by the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC) in Yellowknife, NWT, Arnold arranged for a small number of items from the collection to be exhibited in Inuvik, NWT, when the Inuvialuit hosted the Inuit Circumpolar Conference. Plans for a larger exhibition were discussed, but faltered due to the high costs and conservation challenges involved in preparing some of the more fragile objects for display. In 2001, as part of a broader knowledge repatriation program that connected Aboriginal peoples to their heritage stored in museums outside the NWT, the PWNHC and the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies Center sponsored the Inuvialuit Skin Clothing Project. This project brought a small number of Inuvialuit seamstresses and a museum curator to the Smithsonian to study and make patterns of garments in the MacFarlane Collection in preparation for a community-based replication project which took place in Tuktoyaktuk, NWT, in fall and winter 2002.

Natasha Lyons met Arnold during the course of her doctoral research, which focused on documenting and contextualizing Inuvialuit elders' knowledge of archaeological objects from the Yukon North Slope (Lyons 2007, 2010b, 2013). She became aware of the MacFarlane Collection and of its potential for engagement with the Inuvialuit community through Loring, a museum anthropologist at the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center who was the external examiner on her doctoral dissertation. Her Inuvialuit colleagues Catherine Cockney and Mervin Joe were equally interested in moving this idea forward. When Lyons began postdoctoral research at Simon Fraser University, the Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage project (IPinCH, housed at Simon Fraser University) put out a call for case study applications. In 2008, our burgeoning project team decided to apply for this funding and travel to the collection instead of trying to bring the collection north. We received seed funding through IPinCH and from there launched a broader fund-raising campaign to conduct the 2009 workshop. At this time, Kate Hennessy (assistant professor at Simon Fraser University's School of Interactive Arts and Technology) joined the team, as did the broader delegation for the workshop, which included James Pokiak, Albert Elias, and Helen Gruben (Inuvialuit elders); Karis Gruben and Shayne Cockney (Inuvialuit youth); Freda Raddi (an Inuvialuit seamstress); and Brett Purdy, Dave Stewart, and Maia Lepage (documentary producers from the Inuvialuit Communications Society). This initial workshop at the Smithsonian launched the research and community consultations that led to the development of the Inuvialuit Living History website.

The Smithsonian's Inuvialuit collections were acquired at a time of rapid western (and northern) expansion of Canadian and American economic and territorial interests (Morrison 1998; Hodgetts 2013). Smithsonian naturalists and their agents, such as MacFarlane, were eager to collect and describe the biological and cultural worlds they encountered in the North. The prevalent belief at the time was that the Indigenous peoples and cultures of the North would disappear. This salvage paradigm is a partial explanation for the apparent avariciousness and expansiveness of the collecting zeal that resulted in the museum's holdings (Levere 1993; Lindsay 1993). Almost all of what MacFarlane collected pertained to day-to-day household objects and clothing, presumably what Inuvialuit were willing to trade. The collection includes

many small-scale replicas of larger objects, which appear to have been created specifically for trade with MacFarlane.[3] Their preservation through conservation and curation over time has transformed them into extraordinary objects of heritage and symbols of Inuvialuit culture and continuity.

With the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990 and of the National Museum of the American Indian Act (NMAIA) in 1989, the relationship between U.S. museums and Native American, Inuit, and Native Hawaiian peoples was fundamentally transformed. The legislation mandated that museums consult with representatives of Native communities about the disposition of human remains and certain cultural materials (including associated mortuary objects), certain sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony. A consequence of this legislation and resulting practice has been a sea change in Aboriginal interest in museums and museum collections. Where Native communities previously had seen museums, for the most part, as agents in the dissolution and disruption of traditions and practices in tribal communities, under the impetus provided by NAGPRA and what we call the "philosophy of repatriation" (predicated on reciprocity and respect), the roles of and relationships between museums and descendant communities have been transformed (Brown 2003; Christen 2011; Mihesuah 2000; Peers and Brown 2003).

"Digital return" for the Inuvialuit Living History website project team has therefore involved the creation of relationships between the Smithsonian's NMNH and the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre (ICRC); and among members of our interdisciplinary team of Inuvialuit cultural experts, anthropologists, multimedia designers and producers, and community partners. It has been characterized by outreach and consultation with communities in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, and by the creation of media that extend and support these ongoing relationships.[4] Digital return for us has involved the negotiation of ownership and authority over digital collections data and its creative re-presentation by the ICRC. Our production efforts, in this way, have been deeply grounded in the team-based production of documentary and publicly available online media that communicate the significance of the MacFarlane Collection through Inuvialuit self-representation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. For example, in the years following our initial visit to Washington, members of our group from the Inuvialuit Communications Society produced a two-part documentary about the research trip called *A Case of Access* (2011), which premiered on the Aboriginal Peoples' Television Network. Our team also collaboratively developed a virtual exhibit and community-based digital archive called "*Inuvialuit Pitqusiit Inuuniarutait*: Inuvialuit Living History" (Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre 2012). It currently features ethnographic objects in the MacFarlane Collection; the addition of a representative sample of natural history objects is planned for the coming year. The virtual exhibit also documents the delegation's visit to the Smithsonian, features the documentary *A Case of Access*, and connects contemporary Inuvialuit interpretations of the collection to cultural practices in Inuvialuit communities while inviting ongoing knowledge contributions.

We have been inspired by large-scale digital heritage projects such as the Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures (GRASAC) (Phillips 2010), the Mukurtu Content Management System and the related Plateau Peoples' Portal (Christen 2011), and the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN) (Rowley et al. 2010; Rowley *this volume*), for the potential they bring for increased access to collections and for Aboriginal control over their representation

and circulation in digital contexts. Our project has explored how community stakeholders—here, the ICRC—can leverage the tools that these larger initiatives provide for Aboriginal communities to make use of institutional digital collections data. How can these digital records and networks support local goals for self-representation and cultural continuity beyond online access and contributions of local and traditional knowledge to museum databases? As we explain in more detail later in the paper, the development of the Inuvialuit Living History virtual exhibit was made possible through a partnership with the designers of the RRN, who worked with us to explore how we could leverage software developer toolkits such as the Application Programming Interface (API) to bring the NMNH's MacFarlane Collection into an Inuvialuit-controlled digital space.

In this paper, through the lens of these projects, we explore central issues of access to Aboriginal cultural heritage, ownership of digital heritage, and new forms of collaboration between holding institutions and Aboriginal communities that digital repatriation practices are facilitating. We demonstrate how digital networks such as the RRN are connecting heritage institutions and their data, creating new opportunities for Aboriginal contextualization of heritage and the creative re-presentation of Aboriginal collections by originating communities in which access to, and ownership of cultural heritage are being negotiated and reconsidered. We further describe our process of virtual exhibit production, which included extensive outreach and research with Elders in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, consultations with teachers and students in schools in Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk, and exhibit reviews and presentations with the Inuvialuit community more broadly. We discuss our team's exploration of our ongoing research relationship, particularly our efforts to create "space" for negotiating the nature and outcomes of our collaborative work (Lyons 2011). While the Inuvialuit Living History project has been designed as a living archive, one that will be enriched by diverse contributions from users and Inuvialuit community members, facilitated by our Inuvik project partners, we are aware of the challenges of sustaining the momentum of the project into the future. In the conclusion to our paper, we address these challenges in a discussion of our impressions of digital repatriation after the return, and of future directions for our project.

Overview of Project

The Inuvialuit Living History project has been a multi-year collaboration between a range of community, academic, and institutional partners. It has transformed our relationships with one another and our ability to access and re-contextualize information at the center of the Inuvialuit digital repatriation effort, including Inuvialuit control over the representation of the MacFarlane Collection. However, the relationship-building at the heart of our project goes back to the 19th-century fur-trade expansion into the Canadian Arctic. MacFarlane was a Hudson's Bay Company trader who travelled much of the western Canadian Arctic in the mid-19th century. In the 1860s, he established the short-lived Fort Anderson trading post at the southern edge of territory that was used by Inuvialuit of the Anderson River area. While managing the post, he purchased a substantial collection of items that would form one of the Smithsonian Institution's earliest collections (Figure 6).

Figure 6. The Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Map courtesy of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

Inuvialuit and Dene assisted MacFarlane in this process, helping to collect, preserve, and prepare both cultural and natural history items for shipment south by canoe.[5] The ethnology collection represents an impressive array of more than 300 subsistence-based and domestic objects made and used by Inuvialuit in the mid-19th century: parkas, mukluks, bunting bags, sewing kits, fishing tackle, hunting gear, fire starters, pipes and items of personal adornment; models of umiaqs, kayaks, and paddles; and natural history specimens including birds' eggs, animals, and animal skeletons. This collection constitutes one of the earliest and largest ethnographic collections from Inuvialuit territory, yet it has been little studied or exhibited by either Inuvialuit or museum professionals (Morrison 2006).

In November 2009, our delegation boarded airplanes in different parts of the continent to meet at the NMNH, Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, DC, for a week-long workshop with the MacFarlane Collection (Hennessy et al. 2012; Lepage 2010; Lyons 2010a; Lyons et al. 2011). Inspired by projects such as Ann Fienup-Riordan's explorations with Yup'ik elders at the Berlin Etnologisches Museum (2003) and by *Looking Both Ways*, Aron L. Crowell, Amy F. Steffian, and Gordon L. Pullar's Alutiiq project in Alaska (2001), our team felt that it was important to bring the Inuvialuit delegation to the collection itself. Our primary motivation in coming together

was to create greater access and information sharing related to the collection: access to knowledge, interpretation, and meaningful engagement with the artifacts and, alternatively, access to the control and dissemination of information. Intellectual property is centrally implicated in this research, as the cultural items while purchased have long been removed from the control of the Inuvialuit people who were their makers (Nicholas and Bannister 2004; Bell and Paterson 2009; Bell and Napoleon 2009). Inuvialuit sought to both learn more and generate knowledge about the collection, to better understand how these objects came to be cared for so far away from their place of origin, and to transmit these findings within their communities, particularly to youth, who will be the primary recipients, users, and managers of Inuvialuit cultural heritage knowledge in coming decades. While our group recognized the museum's title to the artifacts in their care, we also asserted the legitimacy of Inuvialuit control over their knowledge of the use and meaning of the materials examined, and we sought to make this a central tenet of our collaboration.

A critical part of this process was to build relationships between Inuvialuit culture-bearers and the Smithsonian museum anthropologists who care for their heritage. The workshop formed one step toward developing a more personal and equitable relationship between the community and the institution. Our delegation to Washington included descendants of the Inuvialuit who had traded at Fort Anderson, who had a great desire to view, engage with, and document their own knowledge about objects in the collection. The workshop brought together Inuvialuit elders, seamstresses, students, and cultural practitioners alongside a host of anthropologists and media specialists. Two Inuvialuit student research assistants learned techniques of anthropological and videographic documentation from three producers from the Inuvialuit Communications Society. We spent four days studying the collection and an additional day touring Washington. As each set of objects was brought to our worktables within the Smithsonian's Museum Support Center, many sets of eyes would light up, and many voices would fall to exploring, discussing, questioning, and remembering. Individual Inuvialuit were drawn to particular objects: Elias studies sinew-backed bows (Figure 7), Pokiak throwing boards and spears (Figure 8), and Raddi Inuvialuit footwear (Figure 9). (View a chapter of *A Case of Access* to see more of our delegation at work with Curator Loring.)

As is well illustrated in Fienup-Riordan's explorations of artifacts with Yup'ik elders in the Berlin Museum of Ethnology (2003, 2005), by the Smithsonian's *Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage* Alaska Collections Project (Crowell et al. 2010), or in James Clifford's description of Tlingit elders telling of oral narratives inspired by objects at the Burke Museum (1997), museum collections represent significant repositories of intangible forms of knowledge that are encoded in tangible objects. Workshop participants later returned home to conduct research with other elders and cultural specialists in their communities and to try their hand at recreating objects seen in the collection. In this way, the workshop engendered new directions for our research and questions about the changing histories, meanings, and significance of objects from an Inuvialuit perspective through time. These questions provided direction for our subsequent community consultations and the content produced for the Inuvialuit Living History website (Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre 2012).

The documentary *A Case of Access* (Purdy 2011) was an excellent way to communicate the experience of our delegation to the Smithsonian and built on the legacy of Inuvialuit Communications Society filmmakers who have been producing and broadcasting Inuvialuit

media in Inuvialuktun and English for more than 20 years. But our team wondered if there was a *complementary* way to share knowledge of the MacFarlane Collection. While members of our small delegation had been able to share and document their knowledge of the collection while handling the objects themselves in the Museum Support Center, would it be possible to digitally extend this experience to Inuvialuit communities more broadly and to the general public? We decided to investigate methods for the development of a virtual exhibit for which further knowledge of the collection could be elicited, curated, and represented in an Inuvialuit-owned space. As we discuss below, the negotiation of permission to use the Smithsonian Institution's MacFarlane Collection digital data was central in this process. As with our project as a whole, our request to re-contextualize institutional collections data as a digital repatriation of the MacFarlane Collection required the rethinking of relationships between the NMNH, the ICRC, and the data themselves.

Figure 7. Albert Elias studies a bow from the MacFarlane Collection, while Stephen Loring, filmmaker Dave Stewart, and Shayne Cockney document the moment. Photo by Kate Hennessy, 2009.

Transforming Institutional Data

In 2009, the Smithsonian's NMNH had recently become an institutional partner of the RRN, an online research environment that provides access to primarily First Nations collections from international heritage institutions. The RRN was co-developed by the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia (UBC), the Musqueam Indian Band, the U'mista Cultural

Society, and the Stó:lō Nation/Stó:lō Tribal Council as a part of the UBC Museum of Anthropology's *A Partnership of Peoples* project (see Rowley et al. 2010; Rowley *this volume*). It was officially launched in 2010. According to RRN project lead Sue Rowley and her co-authors,

> Our goal was to develop a new research tool for accessing information housed in geographically dispersed locales as well as providing networking functions for effective engagement and collaboration among researchers with diverse backgrounds. Most significantly, the creation of the virtual research space emerged from the desire of all participants to base the project on principles of respect for the originating communities' different knowledge and value systems as well as for the partner museums. [Rowley et al. 2010:15]

In keeping with the original focus of the RRN on bringing together dispersed Northwest Coast collections, the NMNH had already contributed data documenting its Northwest Coast and some of its Arctic collections. The RRN mapped its collections data so that users would be able to search the NMNH collections seamlessly along with those of 19 other partner institutions.

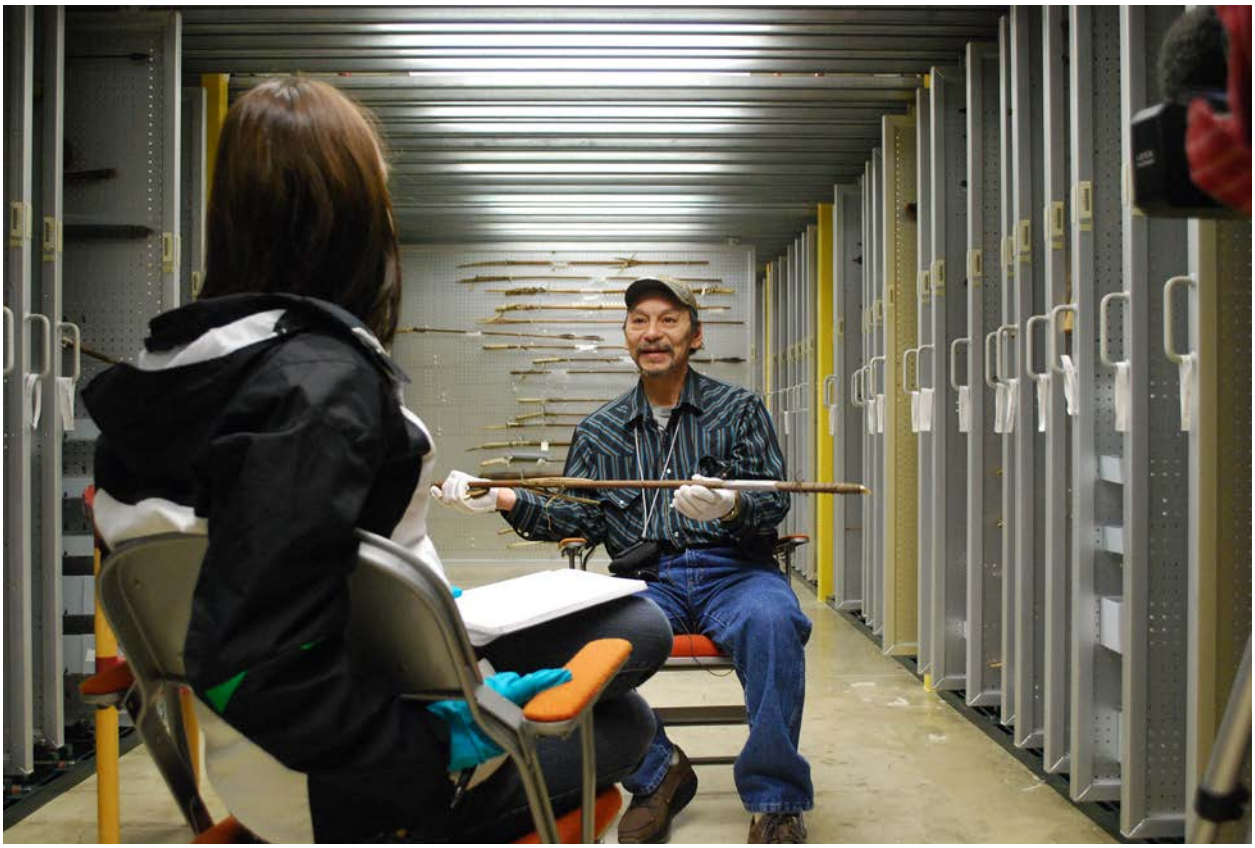

Figure 8. James Pokiak is interviewed by Shayne Cockney about an Inuvialuit spear. Photo by Kate Hennessy, 2009.

Our team's first step toward the development of the Inuvialuit Living History website was to request that the MacFarlane Collection data be made available in the RRN; essentially this meant

that RRN developers added the list of MacFarlane records to their existing data feed into the RRN. Once this material had been added to this data feed, the RRN's data mapper automatically processed these new records and made them available in the system where they could be viewed, commented on, and added to the personal research collections of registered RRN users.

Our second step was to obtain permission from the NMNH to re-contextualize and alter the MacFarlane Collection records for use in our Inuvialuit project (while not changing the original records themselves). This step, in effect, negotiated the digital return and the terms of respect for alternative yet complementary institutional and community perspectives on the collection. Central in this shift of control over the representation of the MacFarlane Collection was the reconciling of Inuvialuit priorities for mobilization and contextualization of the collection with lingering institutional resistance to relinquishing control over curatorial authority. We suggest that our project and similar initiatives are reducing institutional reluctance to open collections to reinterpretation by source communities, and demonstrating the cultural, intellectual, and curatorial benefits of sharing control over representation.

Once NMNH staff granted permissions, we embarked on the third phase of the digital return. In order to republish the Smithsonian's MacFarlane Collection data in an Inuvialuit-controlled virtual space, we harnessed the potential of the RRN's API. An API is a publicly available software toolkit that makes computer code, documentation, and terms of service relating to an organization's data available for republishing online (Hennessy et al. 2012). The RRN's API is an easily accessible interface that simplifies access to its publicly available digital collections records, which enables developers to make use of those records in new works and applications. Working with RRN developers Ryan Wallace and Nicholas Jakobsen, we were able to query the RRN for all MacFarlane Collection item records and then bring this digital information into our web project. There, we could adapt and build on the Smithsonian's documentation of the objects. New information generated in this process (for example, new curatorial descriptions and user contributions from the Inuvialuit community) can be added to the RRN's parallel records. These additions are automatically sent back to NMNH curators, who decide whether or not to augment their original records. For our project team, museum APIs represent new opportunities for originating communities to republish and re-contextualize institutional and colonial archives of their cultural heritage in new digital forms. The Inuvialuit Living History project tests this new digital dynamic, making the RRN central in our process of transforming the Smithsonian's collections data into an Inuvialuit-owned virtual exhibit.

Our process of bringing Smithsonian institutional data into a media space owned by the ICRC and combining it with documentary media and other user-generated content made it clear to our team that our site needed to creatively represent variable approaches to ownership of digital content that had been contributed by a range of institutional, community, and individual actors. We created an upload system in which media that were added to our exhibit (photographs, videos, sound files, and documents) could be assigned a range of copyrights and ownership licenses. These range from "All Rights Reserved" to specific identifiers and watermarks such as the Inuvialuit Communications Society or Smithsonian Institution to Creative Commons (non-commercial, no-derivatives) 3.0 licenses. Our research team also plans to pilot the Traditional Knowledge (TK) licenses that are under development now by Jane Anderson and Kimberly Christen in the context of the 2011 Mukurtu project (see Anderson and Christen 2012, *this*

volume). TK licenses draw attention to documentation of traditional and Indigenous knowledge as dynamic and collective forms of expression, for which Western copyright schema do not adequately represent ownership paradigms. Our team will experiment with the use of TK licenses, applying them to appropriate media as Inuvialuit community members contribute to the exhibit. Acknowledging and representing the complexity of ownership of media and cultural documentation in the digital age is yet another way in which originating communities are asserting authority over the representation of their cultural heritage in the contexts of digital return.

Figure 9. Freda Raddi traces patterns from Inuvialuit footwear in the MacFarlane Collection. Photo by Kate Hennessy, 2009.

Recontextualizing the MacFarlane Collection

Once the Smithsonian had granted permissions, our team was able to proceed with researching and re-writing the curatorial descriptions of objects in the collection. This work was central to the re-presentation and contextualization of the MacFarlane Collection in the Inuvialuit Living History website.

When the project team first examined representative selections of the ethnographic and natural history collection, it became apparent that identifications of some of the objects as recorded in the Smithsonian Institution's records are incorrect or at least questionable, and that more could be added to the "bare bones" information contained in the catalogue. The misidentifications are puzzling. MacFarlane is known to have made notes and lists of items he collected at Fort Anderson when he prepared the collection for shipment to the Smithsonian Institution. He would have been aware of the function of many of the objects that he collected, and there is evidence to suggest that he was assisted in documenting the collection by a Roman Catholic Church missionary, Émile Petitot, who visited Fort Anderson in 1865 and subsequently wrote the first detailed ethnographies of the Anderson River Inuvialuit (see Petitot 1878). Unfortunately, MacFarlane's documentation has not been located, but it can safely be assumed that the sparse information in a hand-written ledger in the curatorial files and on tags that remain affixed to some of the objects was transcribed from MacFarlane's notes.

The sparseness of the extant information about objects in the collection is also of concern. To cite one example, there is an extraordinary set of drawings on small wood plaques described in the artifact catalogue simply as, "Series of Pictures," with "Cut in outline on wood and colored. 8 wooden plates," as the only added remarks (Figure 10); see objects at http://inuvialuitlivinghistory.ca/items/307, accessed October 30, 2013. These "Pictures" depict domestic, hunting, and fishing scenes; activities at Fort Anderson; and possibly images of mythical creatures, all from the hand of an anonymous Inuvialuk (Morrison 2006). As such, they provide unique windows through which we can peer at the life and culture of the Inuvialuit who traded at Fort Anderson, yet information that MacFarlane might have provided about their genesis and context is absent.

A curatorial team consisting of curators and anthropologists Arnold, Loring, and Joanne Bird and of Inuvialuit cultural expert Darrel Nasogaluak worked with the collection to verify or correct identifications and to provide descriptive and interpretive information for the objects. They brought complementary perspectives to their task. For example, with reference to the aforementioned pictures, a curator might be concerned mainly with identifying the materials and techniques employed in creating the object, and an anthropologist would comment on the role of graphic art in traditional Inuvialuit culture, while the Inuvialuit cultural expert could explain the activities depicted; in practice, however, no such compartmentalization took place, and the information that is presented for the object is the result of collaboration. In preparing the descriptions, the curatorial team utilized information found in ethnographic literature, including writings of Father Petitot (Savoie 1970).[6] We also had the advantage of having input from Inuvialuit elders and cultural experts who examined many of the objects either in person at the Smithsonian Institution or through photographic documentation.

We consider this task to be ongoing. In offering opportunities to view the objects and our descriptions through the website, we are inviting comments from the Inuvialuit community and intend to add to or revise our contributions as additional information is offered. Our experience so far is that, even if specific information about some of the objects in the collection is beyond the experience and knowledge of elders, seeing the objects will evoke memories and information related to the activities that the objects represent and thereby breathe new life into the collection. However, our continuing challenge is to facilitate opportunities for engagement with the virtual exhibit that lead to contribution of information from Inuvialuit participants outside of the project team, which to this point has been limited.

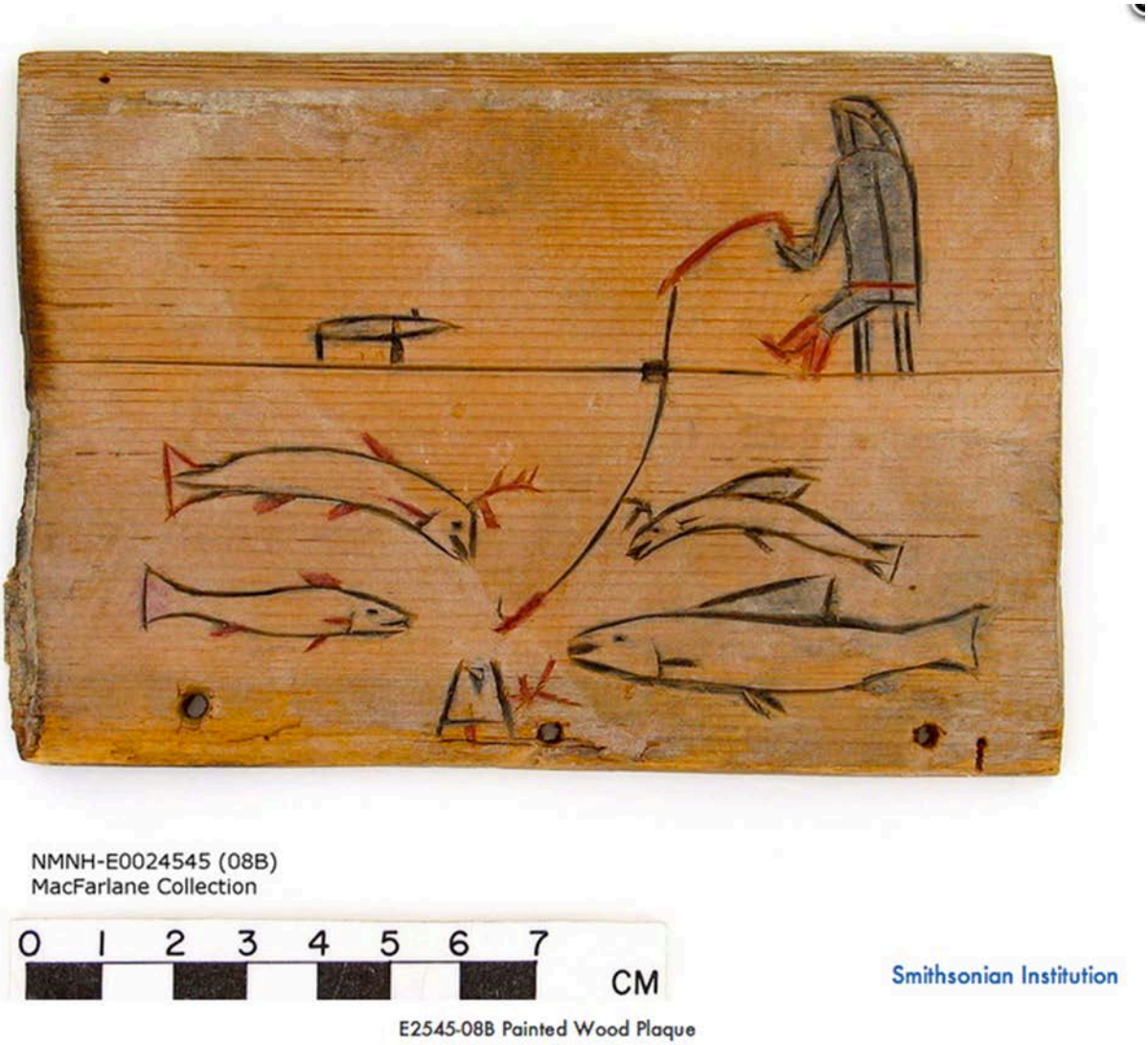

Figure 10. A carved and painted wooden panel from a series in the MacFarlane Collection (NMNH-E2545-08B).

The Inuvialuit Living History Project

The Inuvialuit Living History project website was officially launched in spring 2012 as a work in progress (Figure 11). While the project's core information, context, and the MacFarlane Collection are presented, the website is designed to grow and change as users contribute knowledge of the collection and related activities to the site.

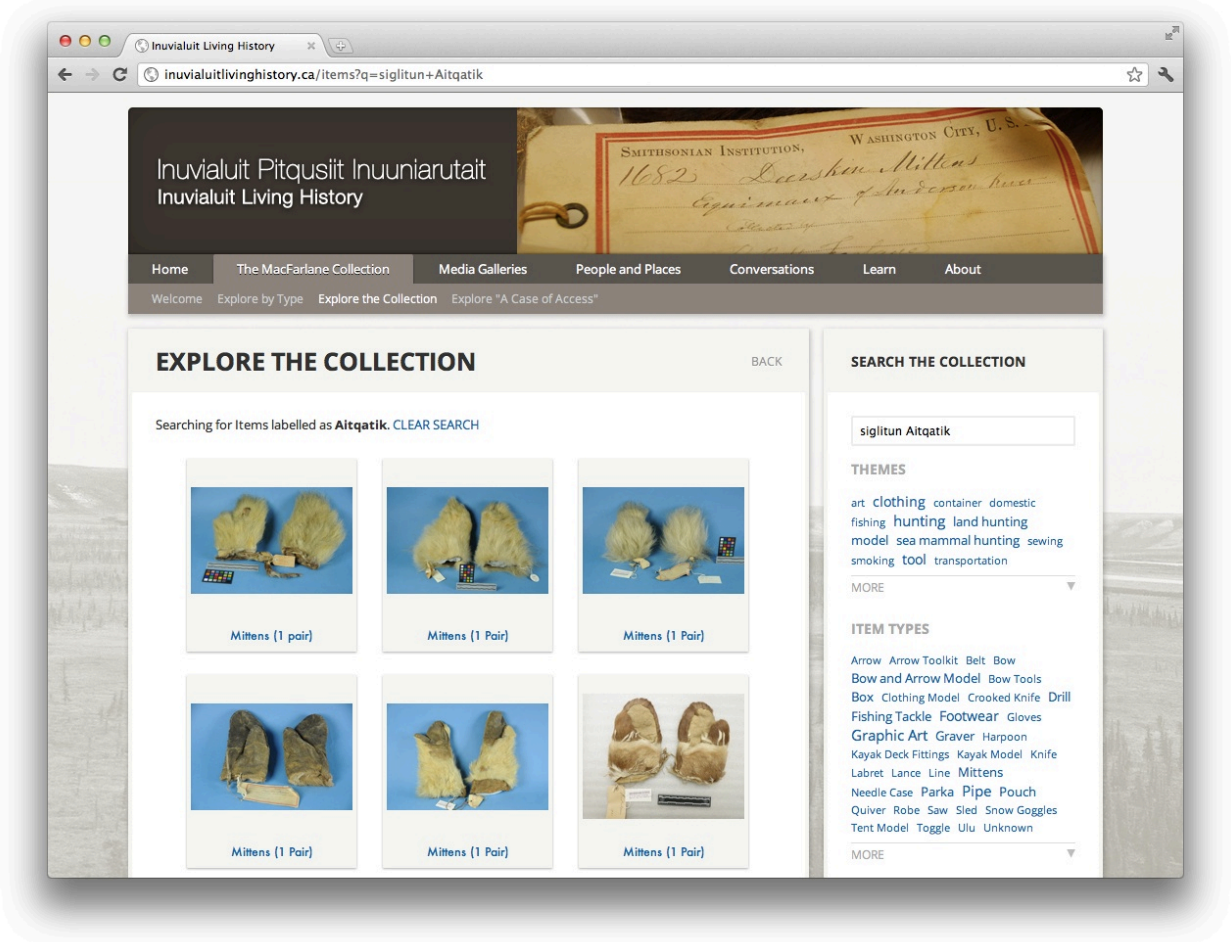

Figure 11. Screenshot from Inuvialuit Living History.

The website is divided into seven key sections. The project home page features a blog that updates viewers on the activities of team members and on news about the website, and that offers a changing presentation of featured objects, photographs, and video. The "About" section provides background on the Inuvialuit people and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the history of the MacFarlane Collection, issues related to intellectual property and the Smithsonian Institution, the RRN, and project credits and acknowledgments. "Media Galleries" presents photographs and videos that were documented or curated in the course of our project. These media, which can be browsed by tag or by media type, include our visit to Washington, DC, our experiences with the MacFarlane Collection, and media recorded during our project consultations in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Users also can view Petitot's illustrations of Inuvialuit material culture from the late 19th century and media contributed by community

participants. All media in this gallery are cross-referenced with item records, so that exploring these photographs also creates links to the collection.

The "Learn" section offers resources for further study of the MacFarlane Collection and Inuvialuit culture and heritage. We describe how the project has facilitated the development of a new sewing project inspired by objects in the MacFarlane Collection. Interactive lesson plans developed by Myrna Pokiak for elementary and high school students are designed to complement NWT school curriculum. Reports and articles related to our project; the MacFarlane Collection; and to Inuvialuit heritage, culture, and rights are available for download.

The "Conversations" section presents comments from a selection of our team members about their experiences working on the project as well as an extensive interview with Elder Billy Jacobson about his life on the land in the Anderson River region. This section includes descriptions of the community outreach in Inuvialuit communities that our team conducted in the course of producing the website. It also includes a feedback page for visitors. Feedback is not made public but is directed to the project team to review.

"People and Places" contextualizes the MacFarlane Collection with a detailed exploration of the region from which MacFarlane collected the objects. It includes maps of the Anderson River region, Inuvialuit place names, and information about the Inuvialuit group who used to inhabit the Anderson River area. It provides some history of Fort Anderson and information about MacFarlane and Petitot, the Catholic priest whose eyewitness accounts and illustrations of the Inuvialuit represent valuable documentation of that time, place, and material culture.

"The MacFarlane Collection" represents the heart of the Inuvialuit Living History project. This section features object records sourced through the RRN's API, but then transformed by our team to represent the generation of new knowledge of the collection facilitated by our collaborations. Objects can be explored by "Type" or by categories of objects in the collection that were developed by our Inuvialuit and non-Inuvialuit team of curatorial researchers. Each general description of a Type (for example, "Adze," "Sled," or "Pipe") is linked to a slide show of all objects of that type as well as to contributed community and documentary media relating to that type of object (for example, the Inuvialuit delegation handling an adze at the Smithsonian Museum Support Center or a video interview with an elder about that type of object). Users can also "Explore the Collection" using a series of tags: "Item Types" (for example, "arrow," "footwear," "graphic art," "parka"); "Materials" (for example, "antler," "bone," "hide," "sinew"); "Manufacturing Techniques" (for example, "cutting," "drilling," "scraping," "weaving"); and "Siglitun Terms," representing vocabulary for item types in the Inuvialuktun dialect of the Anderson River region. These tags were created in the process of re-writing and re-categorizing object records. Users can request password-protected access to the site and, with this access, can contribute new tags; however, this function is not available to general visitors to the site at this time.

Finally, users can "Explore *A Case of Access*," the documentary that the Inuvialuit Communications Society produced about our visit to Washington, DC, as a way of learning more about the collection. The documentary has been edited into web-friendly segments, each of which is time-code tagged with object records for artifacts that appear in the video. As a viewer

watches a clip, artifact records appear to the right of the video window. These records can be clicked on to access information about the object in the video, making the video-viewing an interactive experience.

Building Relationships

We reflect here on a set of interrelated negotiations of relationships that this project has required: first, among members of our research and media production team, including curators at the NMNH; and second, with our project and community partners. We view the creation, negotiation, and maintenance of these relationships as central to our experience of digital return and as essential for the continued momentum of our digital projects and community initiatives.

Research Relationships

Our project team came together with a specific focus on creating greater access to the MacFarlane Collection for both Inuvialuit community members and the interested public more broadly. We made effective communication a priority for our project team and couched the project within a participatory methodology (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Part of our commitment to process involved creating space for negotiating different elements of our work, from setting our intentions to developing work plans to achieve our evolving set of goals, decide how and where to apply for and disburse funds, and decide where to place our individual energies (Lyons 2011; Lyons et al. 2012).

The concept of "communicative space" as a means to conduct such transactions between partners derives from Jürgen Habermas (1996), who closely considered the question of how groups of people communicate in the public sphere. Building on his "theory of communicative action" (Habermas 1984, 1989), Habermas recognized that establishing the groundwork for clear and meaningful communication creates a kind of theoretical and literal space between people. This communicative space must be cultivated and nurtured as part of a group's negotiation process. Habermas (1996) observed that laying this kind of foundation facilitates trust, respect, and solidarity between group members.

As part of our commitment to effective communication, our project team drew up a group charter (Lyons 2011, in press). The charter involved collectively setting the terms for our project team interactions. It describes the kind of atmosphere we are interested in cultivating; specifies individual and collective roles and responsibilities; establishes protocols for resolving, reconciling and/or negotiating different perspectives and opinions; and outlines how we would seek input and provide feedback on project deliverables. The charter recognizes that the ICRC holds copyright to the data we produce and gives partners latitude to produce articles, presentations, and media that support project goals. We consider the charter to be a living document, subject to ongoing revision and re-consideration.

Relationships with Community Partners and Stakeholders

In addition to the cultivation of personal and research relationships, the digital return of the MacFarlane Collection has depended on the development and maintenance of relationships with community partners and stakeholders. The ICRC has been central to the Inuvialuit Living History project since the project was first conceived. ICRC is a program of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC), the organization that has the overall responsibility for managing the affairs of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region as outlined in the Western Arctic Claims Settlement Act (Department of Justice, Canada 1984). ICRC's mandate includes preservation and promotion of Inuvialuit culture and history with a specific focus on the Inuvialuktun language. ICRC Manager Cockney was instrumental in the planning, implementation, and administration of the project. She has taken a hands-on approach, participating in the 2009 visit to the Smithsonian Institution and carrying out community consultations, presentations, and other outreach as well as bringing her unique perspective and knowledge as an Inuvialuk anthropologist with long and diverse experience in community-based culture and heritage projects. ICRC will also be key to future developments and activities that grow out of the Inuvialuit Living History project.

Parks Canada conducts a large amount of the heritage work in northern Canada. Parks endorses a broad spectrum of outreach initiatives within cultural communities, such as oral history research, and supports a variety of school and on-the-land programs related to archaeology, ecology, and art (Parks Canada 2004; Lyons 2004). It also supports many Arctic researchers through on-the-ground support; sharing knowledge and research materials; and fostering relationships between academic, government, and other institutions (see Lyons in press; Friesen 1998). Several of our team members are or have been employed by Parks Canada. Lyons, Joe, and Cockney met in the early 2000s working for this agency. Cockney subsequently became manager of the ICRC, Lyons pursued doctoral research at the University of Calgary, and Joe continued to engage with local student groups through his work at Parks Canada. These individuals worked closely together during Lyons' dissertation research, which was supported and partly funded by Parks Canada, Inuvik; and which engaged with many elders in the community. The Inuvialuit Living History project has followed in the course of these relationships and benefited greatly from its connections to Parks Canada. Our project mirrors many of Parks Canada's outreach and curriculum development goals in the Western Arctic. Our project team has maintained close communication with Parks staff through ongoing consultations and presentations of our activities and through Joe's important contributions to the project. The relationship between our project and Parks Canada was solidified in a partnership agreement in 2011.

The PWNHC, which is the central museum and heritage facility of the NWT government, became a partner in the Inuvialuit Living History project when Arnold was director of that institution. Subsequent to his retirement in 2009, Arnold continued with the project in another capacity, and Bird, curator of collections, became the PWNHC's liaison with the project as well as participating as a member of the team that prepared curatorial descriptions of the ethnographic objects. The PWNHC also provided financial support for the development of the website, including support for community consultations and outreach that informed the website's format and content.

Simon Fraser University's School of Interactive Arts and Technology is another partner. Financial support and technical resources have been provided through Hennessy's Making Culture Lab, where software developers, research and media preparation assistants, and designers worked to realize the project team's evolving vision of the virtual exhibit. This included an ongoing collaboration with the developers of the RRN (Rowley *this volume*), who facilitated the transformation of the Smithsonian's MacFarlane Collection data, thereby playing a fundamental role in the technical process leading up to a digital return.

The production of the Inuvialuit Living History website also included a broad spectrum of outreach and consultation activities within the Inuvialuit and other Western Arctic communities (see "Community Work"). We have given many presentations focused on sharing our experiences with the MacFarlane Collection and at the Smithsonian Institution, and have solicited Inuvialuit feedback on project directions. These presentations were given in schools, colleges, and local hamlets; with research organizations and elders groups; and at successive Inuvialuit Day celebrations. Elders, community members, and educators expressed interest in having us produce a website that would create visual access to the collection, feature community knowledge and use of the collection, and provide a variety of interactive resources. A later set of presentations sought to gather input on website prototypes and related deliverables, such as lesson plans suitable for NWT curriculum and interactive maps of the Anderson River area showing both past and present uses. The feedback gathered in the course of these consultations guided subsequent iterations of the site design and organization of content; questions raised by students were important in guiding areas in need of additional research for website content.

We conducted interviews with close to 20 elders as well as with many students and educators that focused on creating a dialogue about Inuvialuit cultural heritage and on building awareness and gauging local significance of the collection. Our team collectively developed an equipment-and-interview kit with guidelines for recording interviews and cataloguing media and with a guiding set of interview questions revolving around the themes of memory, objects, land, and language (Hennessy 2010). Elders looked at images of the collection and talked about their knowledge of specific objects, about how they were made and used, and about making a living on the land in the Anderson River region (see, for example, Pokiak's interview from February 2010 in Tuktoyaktuk where he discusses trapping in the Anderson River area). We asked both elders and other interviewees what kind of impact knowledge of the collection is making and how they would like the collection to be used in their communities (see, for example, Rebecca Pokiak discussing the project and the potential for the MacFarlane Collection as an educational resource, and Elias discussing his interviews with other elders for the project). The information gathered in these interviews and in many more that were not posted on the website was used to help our team write Inuvialuit descriptions of objects to complement those written from a curatorial perspective; both perspectives are featured in the object gallery of the Inuvialuit Living History website.

Due in part to the mounting community interest in the Inuvialuit Living History project, Aurora College (the NWT post-secondary educational institution) invited our project team to inaugurate its new "Northern Speaker Series" with campus and community presentations in Fort Smith, Yellowknife, and Inuvik in November 2011. The project team selected Arnold and Joe to make the presentations, which were based on the theme "Inuvialuit at the Smithsonian: Connecting the

Past to the Present" (see http://inuvialuitlivinghistory.ca/posts/8). Feedback on the presentations was highly positive. One of the college students remarked, "Mervin, you are like a superhero for bringing your culture back—thank you!"

This level of engagement with the Inuvialuit community has built considerable interest in both the MacFarlane Collection and the ongoing project. Our northern project partners are frequently fielding questions from community members and website visitors about our activities, the products we are creating, and the collection itself. This regular, informal level of feedback provides us with a barometer of community members' thoughts, feelings, and ideas about the project. Our consultation process has also attracted media attention, in both the South and the North, helping to create and sustain interest in our activities. With its official launch, the website itself is now propelling this interest, but we will be challenged on a number of fronts to sustain momentum. Outside of school programs that facilitate online access and learning, Parks Canada programs that use the website as a pedagogical resource, or media-based documentation projects specifically related to our website and the MacFarlane Collection, it is difficult to predict how much engagement we can expect from the Inuvialuit community at large.

Conclusion

Our project team has experienced digital return in large part as a process of forging relationships. We have viewed the creation, negotiation, and maintenance of these relationships as central to the realization of our project to date and to its continued activity into the future. As we have described in this paper, these relationships have been among the Smithsonian's NMNH and Arctic Studies Center, a range of community and university partners, and our project participants. New relationships also have been created between the digital data that represent the MacFarlane Collection and expressions of Inuvialuit knowledge, positioning digital return as a process of re-contextualizing institutional collections data to better represent contemporary interpretations of Inuvialuit tangible and intangible heritage. This process of relationship-building has played a role in an increasingly visible institutional shift towards greater openness and flexibility that is grounded in growing recognition of the value of curatorial collaboration with originating communities. The developing relationship between the Smithsonian's NMNH and Arctic Studies Center and the ICRC has required the Smithsonian to relinquish curatorial authority over the representation of the MacFarlane Collection and to allow the collection to take on a new life in an Inuvialuit-controlled space. This has enabled the re-writing of curatorial descriptions and the reorganization of object records into new semantic, classificatory, and linguistic categories. It has further required a collective re-thinking and recognition of variable approaches to digital media ownership and the development of flexible options for demonstrating different modes of sharing and circulating these media online.

Parallel with the direct activities of our project team in the development and production of our website, we have prioritized community consultation and outreach. From visits to school classrooms in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region to oral history interviews with elders in Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, and Paulatuk; from presentations at Inuvialuit Day celebrations to a lecture tour in the NWT to publicize the project, we see the long-term success of the project depending on continued interest from the Inuvialuit community and our northern partners. What is the meaning

of a digital return if the website is no longer used or if its content does not grow and change over time? With this in mind, we are aware of central challenges in keeping the project alive into the future. First, travel in the North is expensive, both for our northern and southern participants; funding is limited, and we will be challenged to continue to raise funds to continue our collective research and media production. Second, the preservation of digital data generated in the course of the project will require financial support and technical expertise to ensure that the website is archived for access by future generations of Inuvialuit and the general public. To this end, we aim to support the ICRC in developing its approach to archiving digital materials and its digital infrastructure over time. The Inuvialuit Living History project will ideally continue as one element in a range of digital and community-based projects that are focused on the documentation and transmission of Inuvialuit culture and language.

Several projects related to the Inuvialuit Living History project are already in progress. Our team has been working to photograph representative samples of MacFarlane's natural history collection, which will be added to the Inuvialuit Living History website and cross-referenced both with objects in the collection and with documentation of related contemporary community activities (for example, hunting and fishing). We also are working on adding a section to the website that features the natural history photography and mapping initiatives of naturalist Joachim Obst, whose extensive and ongoing documentation of the Anderson River region, environment, and wildlife add significant context to the MacFarlane collection.

The Inuvialuit sewing project that our project team initiated during our workshop at the Smithsonian in 2009 will soon result in the publication of print-based clothing patterns and information brochures that will bring knowledge of clothing in the collection to Inuvialuit seamstresses. It was determined in the course of the project that these patterns should be kept offline to protect them from appropriation by commercial sources; instead, the patterns and brochures will be available upon request and mailed (or picked up) from the ICRC. We hope to be able to represent some of the resulting clothing re-creations on our website, while emphasizing that not all outcomes of the digital project need to be circulated online to support the continuity of local practices.

Finally, we continue to liaise with our partners at Parks Canada and in schools in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region to develop cultural, environmental, and educational programs that both support local learning initiatives and generate documentation that will enrich the content of the Inuvialuit Living History website. These projects all depend on the maintenance and strengthening of the relationships formed in the course of our work with the physical and the digital MacFarlane Collection. We look forward to ongoing exploration of the meaning of a digital return in Inuvialuit communities, at the Smithsonian Institution, and in the Internet-connected world beyond.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank all of the members of the Inuvialuit Living History project team, highlighting the central role of Catherine Cockney, Manager, Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre. We also acknowledge all of the members of the 2009 delegation who viewed the MacFarlane Collection.

Thank you to the Inuvialuit Communications Society, to producers Brett Purdy and Dave Stewart, and to photographer Maia Lepage. Thank you to Mike Ananny at Microsoft Research New England and to research and media assistants Irine Prastio and Karen Truong at Simon Fraser University's School of Interactive Art and Technology. Thank you to Ryan Wallace and Nicholas Jakobsen of Culture Code and to Kyle MacIntosh.

Our special thanks also go to Sue Rowley at the UBC Museum of Anthropology and to the members of the Reciprocal Research Network Steering Committee (Rowley, Dave Schaepe, Leona Sparrow, Andrea Sanborn, and Sarah Holland) for their consistent support of this project. Thank you to Carrie Beauchamp at the Smithsonian Institution for her guidance and technical assistance in making the Inuvialuit Living History project possible. Thank you to the Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage project at Simon Fraser University and to Kim Christen and Jane Anderson for conversations relating to Traditional Knowledge licenses.

Thank you to Christen, Joshua Bell, and Mark Turin, the organizers of the workshop, "After the Return: Digital Repatriation and the Circulation of Indigenous Knowledge," at the NMNH in January 2012. Our project team was honored to participate and to have the opportunity to contribute this paper to this special issue of *Museum Anthropology Review*.

A range of partners supported the Inuvialuit Living History project. They include: The Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre, the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center, the Reciprocal Research Network, Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Parks Canada, Making Culture Lab at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology at Simon Fraser University, the Museums Assistance Program, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the International Polar Year, BOREAS and the European Science Foundation, the Aurora Research Institute, and Canadian North Air.

Notes

1. Roderick Ross MacFarlane's life and contributions are summarized in the Smithsonian Institution Archives as follows: "Roderick Ross MacFarlane (1833-1920) was born in Scotland, but joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1852 and spent most of the rest of his life in Canada. MacFarlane had charge of a number of fur-trading posts in western and northwestern Canada between 1852 and 1894. These posts were the only settlements in these areas and, as a result, were used as headquarters by a number of naturalists who explored and collected in the region. In 1859, Spencer F. Baird sent Robert Kennicott to the Mackenzie River area to collect for the Smithsonian Institution. Kennicott's work there stimulated MacFarlane's interest in natural history, and MacFarlane began to collect specimens from the areas where he was stationed. He made a number of important collections for the Smithsonian in this manner, chiefly of birds and mammals. He also published a few works on the birds and mammals of western and northwestern Canada" (Smithsonian Institution Archives 2012).

2. A pipe (Catalog # E1648-0; Figure 2) was loaned to the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta, for the exhibition "The Spirit Sings." While popular with the general public, the exhibition was ultimately boycotted by the Lubicon Cree and supporters and some international organizations

because of exhibit funding by oil companies who were drilling in lands claimed by the Lubicon Cree. The exhibit raised significant questions about relationships among anthropologists, museums, and communities (Harrison 1988).

Figure 2. An Inuvialuit pipe from the MacFarlane Collection (NMNH-E001648). Smithsonian Institution.

3. Examples of small-scale replicas in the MacFarlane Collection include this kayak model (E1097-0; Figure 3); this bow and arrow model (E1632-0; Figure 4); and this clothing model (E1689-0; Figure 5).

4. Members of our project team conducted interviews and consultations with elders, schoolteachers, students, and community groups in Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, and Paulatuk in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in 2010 and 2011. An overview of these outreach efforts can be viewed at: http://inuvialuitlivinghistory.ca/wiki_pages/Community%20Work, accessed October 30, 2013.

5. These trade relationships likely echoed those described in Alison Brown, Nancy Wachowich, and Tim Ingold's online project, *Material Histories: Scots and Aboriginal Peoples in the Canadian Fur Trade* (n.d.), which uses artifacts from that period to explore the histories and experiences of people involved in the fur trade. The project can be viewed at: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/materialhistories/index.php, accessed October 30, 2013.

Figure 3. A model kayak from the MacFarlane Collection (NMNH-E1097). Smithsonian Institution.

6. Father Émile Petitot lived between 1838 and 1916; he was a French Roman Catholic priest in the congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He visited Fort Anderson in 1865 and, in his time there, documented invaluable eyewitness accounts of the Inuvialuit who traded there. For more details and to view Petitot's illustrations of people he encountered and objects traded at Fort Anderson, see the Inuvialuit Living History website page about Father Petitot.

Figure 4. A model bow and arrow from the MacFarlane Collection (NMNH-E1632). Smithsonian Institution.

Figure 5. A clothing model from the MacFarlane Collection (NMNH-E1689). Smithsonian Institution.

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