

supplied with firearms by the French. They retreated north-eastward to the Strait of Belle Isle, where they maintained themselves until about 1760 in a fortified camp on an island near the western end. Here they were again attacked and completely routed by overpowering numbers of French and Indians. Tradition places this last battle at Battle harbour, and gives the number of Eskimo slain as a thousand souls, which is probably an exaggeration.

The Eskimo were at a distinct disadvantage in the fighting on land, as the Indians were in larger numbers and possessed superior weapons. But it is said that once the Eskimo could draw them away from the coast, the condition was reversed. The story still lingers in the vicinity that it was the practice of the Eskimo to lure bands of the Indians to the islands adjacent to the coast, by a single kayaker acting as a decoy, where the main body would descend on them when the Indians were off their guard, take possession of their canoes, and massacre the whole outfit. A certain island on the Labrador coast is said to take its name of Massacre island from such an occasion.

After their defeat on the south coast, the Eskimo retreated northward and established themselves at Hamilton inlet, then called Ivuktoke or Eskimo bay. A few stragglers remained in Sandwich bay, the next inlet south of Hamilton inlet. Some authorities are of the opinion that the Labrador Eskimo never settled permanently farther south than Hamilton inlet, and that the large bands encountered by early French and English explorers were summer voyagers from the north. It is true that after this date the Eskimo descended into the strait from their strongholds in the north, but it would appear that the presence of fortified settlements, camps, and burying grounds south of Hamilton inlet, as well as archaeological material extending as far south as the state of New York, were evidence of at least a scattered population. The Eskimo rarely inhabit a border country in heavy numbers, but prefer a screen of hunting territory between themselves and their inveterate enemies, the Indians, over which small bands wander with caution. This is true of northern Alaska, the Mackenzie and Coppermine districts, Hudson bay, and Labrador as well. So we may judge from the