



APC

Photo: *The Visitor*, Kananginak Pootoogook, Stonecut. Reproduced with the permission of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Ltd., Cape Dorset, N.W.T.

THE INUIT

The Inuit (or as they're known in the south, the Eskimos) came across from Asia much later than the Indians, perhaps 4,000 years ago. There are about 80,000 now, spread out in Russia, the United States, Denmark and Canada. Canada has some 17,000. All except those who live on the Aleutian Islands speak dialects of the same distinctive language, and an Inuk from Greenland can understand one from the Bering Strait.

Little is known about the culture of the earliest Inuit, but traces of their successors, the Dorset people, have been found all over eastern Canada. The Dorsets were followed by the Thule people, who lived from Alaska to Greenland in stone houses and ate sea mammals. In recent years the modern Inuit have been encouraged to move from their small, scattered settlements into a few large ones with schools, nursing stations and wooden houses.

Prints

The Inuit have been carving statues since before they crossed the Bering Sea. In 1948 a 27-year-old Canadian artist named James Houston went to the eastern Arctic to paint. He stayed twelve years, mostly at Cape Dorset on West Baffin Island, and he taught native artists to make prints, with extraordinary results.

March/Mars 1983

CANADA
TODAY / D'AUJOURD'HUI

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