

unaware that any men existed except themselves. Their isolation helps explain why they called themselves Inuit -- "The People", the only people.

#### Coming of the whalers

In some places the first extended contact was with the crews of whaling ships. As early as 1821, British whalers ventured north into Davis Strait and Baffin Bay; whalers from the United States soon followed. By the 1860s the whale hunt had spread into nearly all the navigable waters of the Eastern Arctic. During the next decade, the hunt took such a toll of whales in this region that the American whalers began to turn their eyes westward, and so came into contact with the nomadic Eskimos of the Western Arctic.

From the Scottish and American whalers the Eskimos acquired a knowledge of wooden boats, firearms and tobacco, as well as European clothing, food, tools and utensils.

Trade brought with it disease; it also resulted in a certain amount of racial intermixture. Among the more practical innovations for the Inuit were the skills of the deep-sea sailor and a new manner of hunting, which differed greatly from that with which they were familiar.

An important change in their way of life resulted for those Inuit families who were employed by the whalers in manning boats and helping to run shore stations. When a ship was about to venture into areas where there were no Eskimos, large numbers of native men, women and children were taken aboard during the early summer. In the autumn, if the whaler did not winter on the new whaling-ground, the Inuit were returned to their home territory. If the ship did winter, the natives either remained on board or lived nearby until the following season. Though they received little payment for their services, they were assured of plenty of meat so long as the whaling was successful. Even during an unprofitable season, they were usually given sufficient food and other supplies to tide them over. Some fell heir to whale-boats. Most of the men acquired rifles, ammunition, clothing and tools, while the women obtained knives, cooking utensils, needles and matches. When, after about a century of prosperity, the whaling industry came to an end in the Canadian Arctic, the Eskimos emerged better equipped in many ways to make a living in their own country.

As the bottom dropped out of the whaling market, the value of white-fox fur soared to a level that made the operation of Arctic trading-

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