

**The Life Story of the Inuit Woman Mikak**

**Submitted to:  
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## Preface

The Inuit woman Mikak lived in Labrador during the late eighteenth century. She is one of the earliest and only Labrador Inuit mentioned many times in colonial archival documents, and is one of the earliest Aboriginal figures in Canadian history whose life is relatively well documented. Mikak is certainly one of the earliest women in Canadian history to generate an unusually rich and captivating historiography that includes an oil painting of her with her son. Mikak was, moreover, not a passive entity. She lived a life of historical consequence that included capture by the British, a sojourn in London where she met with the royal family, strong ties with Labrador's first Moravian missionaries, equally strong ties with an Inuk who adhered to traditional beliefs, and she had a key role in shaping British presence in one of its earliest colonies. Mikak is the ancestor of some of today's Labrador Inuit and the subject of a still unstudied body of oral history.

In these respects, Mikak meets the key criteria of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) for designation as a National Historic Person of Canada; she has historical significance because both "individually and as the representative of a group [she] made an outstanding and lasting contribution to Canadian history" ([http://www.pc.gc.ca/culture/proj/rec/reco10\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/culture/proj/rec/reco10_e.asp) - viewed Nov. 2006).

The scope of this research paper includes presenting the story of Mikak and generating this information in a form acceptable to the HSMBC submissions criteria. As such, the work includes:

- Telling the story of Mikak using available published and archival material
- Identifying the criteria for compiling a National Historic Person submission
- Framing the story of Mikak for a National Historic Person submission following HSMBC criteria
- Identifying stages of future research

## Introduction

This presentation of Mikak's life is based principally on six main sources that include:

- J. Garth Taylor's two-part article in *The Beaver* (1984a, b) entitled "The Two Worlds of Mikak". This document is the most comprehensive available source of information about Mikak and forms the backbone of this presentation. Taylor's work is based on primary research that included the original Moravian material as well as government documents. Due to the nature of this publication, the source materials for Mikak's story are unreferenced. In the paragraphs below I rely heavily on Taylor's work, especially for Mikak's life history after the establishment of the Nain mission, but I insert references wherever possible.
- A Moravian document entitled "Journal of the Voyage of the Jersey Packet to Labrador and Newfoundland from the Papers of Jens Haven and Chr. Drachardt 1770" (Moravian 1962). This account provides information on Mikak's ties with the missionaries after her return from England in 1769 and before the establishment of the Nain mission in 1771.

- A Moravian document entitled “An Account of the Moravian Mission Upon the Coast of Labrador in 1773” (Moravian 1962). This source provides a brief description of Mikak written after her return from England.
- The entry on Mikak in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB-Mikak). A brief but thorough account of Mikak’s life history.
- The *Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren, Established Among the Heathen*, Volumes I and II. These accounts are summaries in English of diary and letter excerpts from Labrador. They were published as bound books to inform the English Brethren congregation of the church’s activities in Labrador.
- The Nain Diary between 1771 and 1791 and other Moravian documents on microfilm at the Library and Archives Canada. Only the English documents were checked.

All consulted sources were available in published or electronic format or in this author’s research files. The work scope did not include examination of the Moravian material written in German or on file at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies or further afield. Also outside the scope of this study was the collection of an oral history about Mikak, which constitutes a potentially valuable body of material.

The paragraphs that follow begin with the story of Mikak and conclude with a repetition of some of this same information in the form of a submission document to the HSMBC for nomination of Mikak as a National Historic Person of Canada.

## **The Life of Mikak (birth date ca. 1740 – died October 1, 1795 at Nain – buried in Nain cemetery)**

Mikak's story unfolds in late eighteenth century Labrador. This was a time of colonial impact in eastern North America that was felt by all Indigenous peoples. When Mikak<sup>1</sup> was very young, both shores of the Strait of Belle Isle were seasonally populated by French fishing crews and to a lesser extent by winter sealing crews. Shore stations for drying cod and sealing occupied most of the good coves and harbours as far north as Chateaux Bay (Figure 1). After 1763, the Labrador stations passed to the British under the Treaty of Paris, and by the 1780s the British had expanded into Sandwich Bay with merchant stations dotting the entire south-central coast and operating all year long. Britain's plans for expansion and resource exploitation of southern Labrador included shifting Inuit away from these areas. The Inuit were considered a hazard to merchant success because of their long history of pilfering equipment and boats and skirmishing with work crews. For Europeans, the costs of time lost to protection, of stolen goods, and even of bodies, seemingly outweighed the benefits of acquiring Inuit baleen, whale bone, and seal and whale oil – all valuable commodities on the European market. Attracting Inuit away from southern Labrador was chiefly effected through an arrangement between the British government and the Moravian Church, which established mission *cum* trade stations along the coast north of Hamilton Inlet that in a relatively short span of time brought an end to significant Inuit presence in the southern region.

In the years immediately following the 1763 Treaty of Paris, Inuit presence in the south was still substantial. Hundreds of Inuit stationed themselves in the area of Cape Charles each year to trade with merchants at Chateaux Bay and with French fishing crews on Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula. Conflicts between Inuit and Europeans were a constant part of these proceedings, fuelled on the one hand by the thefts of European shallops and other goods by the Inuit, and on the other by many forms of violence perpetrated on Inuit by work crews and by American whaling crews who also combed these waters.

Mikak stepped onto the stage of history at a time when Britain wished to transplant the Inuit away from the coast, when tensions between the two peoples had reached a flash point, and, fortuitously, at a time when the new governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, Commodore Hugh Palliser, considered it of utmost importance to protect the Aboriginal inhabitants under his jurisdiction from growing depredations (CO 194/27:78; 194/30:173; Whiteley 1969, 1977).

Mikak was a woman of about twenty-five years of age when she first met the Moravian missionaries who figured so largely in her later life. In 1765 the Moravian Church sent four missionaries to Chateaux Bay to make contact with the Labrador Inuit. Mikak was part of a group who hosted the Brethren one night when they were forced by bad weather to stay in the tent of Segullia, where they also witnessed his shamanic dance (Moravian 1962a). Segullia, described as a noted "sorcerer" by the Moravians, was the brother of Tuglavina who in the late 1700s appeared many times in the Nain mission

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<sup>1</sup> Variant spellings include Mykok, Mecock, and others

accounts. In 1765, Mikak had a partner but his identity remains unknown and she had a young son named Tutauc.

One of the merchants trading at Chateaux Bay at this time was Captain Nicholas Darby, who owned a fishing station at Forteau in the Strait of Belle Isle, a sealing station at Cape Charles, and a salmon post at Charles's Brook. Charles's Brook (today's St. Charles River) was a sizeable establishment with several outbuildings as well as a small battery of swivel guns on an overlooking hill that served as defence against the Inuit (Cartwright 1792, Vol.1: 20, 34). Darby abandoned his entire Cape Charles enterprise in August of 1767 following an altercation with Inuit in which several Inuit were killed as well as three of his men. It was this incident that resulted in the capture of Mikak along with two other women and six children, all of whom were taken to York Fort in Chateaux Bay for the duration of the winter.<sup>2</sup>

During Mikak's lengthy stay at York Fort she befriended Captain Francis Lucas, second-in-command, and began to learn English, while Lucas learned something of Inuktitut. In hopes of establishing better communications with the Inuit and potentially "for extending the oil and whale bone trade with these people, which are become very considerable articles of commerce," Palliser directed Lucas to bring Mikak to England in the autumn of 1768 along with her six year old son Tutauc and a fifteen year old orphaned boy named Karpik (Retrospect 1871, Whiteley 1969:159, Taylor 1983:5)<sup>3</sup>. Following a short stay in St. John's in the autumn of 1768, Mikak and Tutauc sailed to England with Lucas on one vessel, Karpik in another, while other Inuit stayed in St. John's.

Mikak's time in England was relatively well documented by a number of contemporary observers such as the Moravians, members of British society, and by government officials. Mikak impressed the English tremendously. She seems to have been a charismatic, intelligent woman, aware of her impression on people, and sensitive of its impact. Her ability to speak some English led to many connections with well-known personalities of the time. While in London she befriended an old acquaintance from Chateaux Bay, the Moravian missionary Jens Haven who was in London petitioning for the right to establish a Moravian mission station in Labrador. She also met with

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<sup>2</sup> These figures, three women and six children, are from Palliser's records (CO 194/28:25). Accounts of this skirmish, however, vary. Cartwright (1792, Vol. 1:2), for instance, recorded only that three "servants of Cape Charles", probably referring to Darby's men, were killed, which is confirmed by a confession by Segluinak and Ikkiunak to Haven and Drachardt in 1770. These two Inuit men also admitted to having stolen two boats (Moravian 1962b, entry for July 16; also in PC 1927:1364). An English translation of Moravian records state that three Europeans were killed, two boats stolen, and twenty Inuit killed (Anonymous 1833:74-75). Anick (1976:630) sets the number of Europeans killed at three, and the Inuit deaths at twenty, with the capture of nine women and children. Jannasch (1958:84) quotes the figure of Inuit killed at twenty, as does W. Whiteley in the DCB entry for Francis Lucas. That the number of Inuit killed must have been high was also noted by Haven (Memoir n.d.) who wrote, "many of them having been shot in an affray which happened between them and the English" but no toll is given.

<sup>3</sup> Some secondary sources contain errors/omissions: Savours (1963:338) states that Mikak's "son remained in England to be educated as a Moravian missionary" (Karpik, who remained in England, was not her son); Plischke (1960:103) mentions that only Mikak and a boy Karpik were brought to England (omitting Mikak's son Tutauc). Plischke (ibid.) assumes that the boy shown next to Mikak in the oil painting is Karpik (but it is probably her son Tutauc); Jannasch (1958:84) mentions only that Mikak and "her small son" were brought to England (omitting Karpik).

Governor Hugh Palliser, with the famous portraitist John Russell, also the Duke of Gloucester, the Earl of Bathurst, and many others.

The Earl of Bathurst has left us with a first-hand description of his meeting with Mikak:

There is so much to be said in relation to the Esquimaux lady, that I shan't be able to go through it. She has an admirable understanding. She has been twice with the princess, who is as fond of her as I am. Twice she has dined with me, and tho' I had very good dinners, she would eat nothing but Salmon...The Princess of Wales<sup>4</sup> ordered me to bring her to Carlton House and there would have something handsome made up for her in her own country fashion. I was to undertake it, with the assistance of the sea-officer who brought her over, and with whom she lives. I got red and white leather for her boots, black velvet for under breeches, and white shag for upper. All these she would make up herself, not suffering any man to touch her. We then got a cloth which was white on the outside and blue within. This was finely laced with gold lace, and a pike before which came down to her knees, with a gold fringe. Behind there was a large cape which might come over the head, but was for another use, viz. to carry a child in. They can bring the child round to give it suck, and then clap it behind upon their back. From the shoulders down to the ground there was a tail, not unlike a fishes [sic] tail. This is what distinguishes the woman from the man. We added fine embroidery upon breast and tail, and she was much pleased with it. I carried her to Carlton House. She would go in a chair, that with curtains drawn she might not be seen. She loves pictures and music extremely, but thinks it indecent to see the pictures of naked men and women.

When she was coming away from the Princess, she talked with the officer, who understands her language, and is perhaps the only man in England who does; for it is the Greenland, not the Indian language.<sup>5</sup> She seemed uneasy. The Princess enquired what the matter was. She said she wanted to go home and change her dress, for she could not dine at my house in that dress with company, and be seen by servants. She could not bear to be laughed at. All women here wore petticoats. Upon this the Princess took her into another room, put on her a head-dress, a damask petticoat, and a mantle, and she came out very well satisfied, and dined at my house. The ladies with me had some difficulty to make her shew her own dress.

What you have been told is true as to the Esquimaux, which makes it the more extraordinary that this woman should discover such marks of sense. She has her son with her, who is extremely like her, and about eight years old. Another boy is just come over, who was brought in another ship, but taken prisoner at the same time. They are all to be sent back in May, and it is hoped they may be assistant in making some Treaty with those people, and open a trade for whale fishing" (letter from Earl of Bathurst to Reverend Joshua Parry,

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<sup>4</sup> This refers to Augusta, the dowager Princess of Wales, mother of George III.

<sup>5</sup> The Earl of Bathurst was unaware that at least two of the Moravians, Haven and Drachardt, spoke fluent Inuktitut, learned during their years at the Greenland mission.

Parry collection, Scott Polar Institute, Cambridge, quoted from Savours 1963:337).

Joseph Banks, the British botanist and zoologist, had spent part of the summer of 1766 at Chateaux Bay collecting plant and animal specimens. His scientific curiosity extended to the world's people and cultures but he met few Inuit while in Labrador. He was doubly disappointed when his researches took him away from England and onboard the *Endeavour* with Capt. James Cook at the same time as Mikak arrived in London. Banks nevertheless commissioned a portrait of Mikak and her son Tutauc to be painted in his absence by John Russell (Lysaght 1971:84). The portrait shows Mikak in traditional dress with pendant strands of white, red, and black trade-beads hanging from her ears. She has fine horizontal tattoo lines across each cheek and over each eyebrow, and vertical lines from lower lip to chin. She wears a gold and pearl bracelet given to her by the Duke of Gloucester and holds a gold George III coronation pin while young Tutauc looks out from behind her left elbow.

Joseph Banks eventually gave this portrait to his friend and colleague at the University of Göttingen, the anatomist and anthropologist Johan Friedrich Blumenbach, also a Fellow of the Royal Society.<sup>6</sup> Blumenbach expressed his interest in obtaining copies of Banks' various ethnographical portraits in 1794, and specifically asked for a copy of the Mikak portrait in December 1796. From their correspondence we learn that Banks sent several pictures to Blumenbach in April of 1797. These included the original Russell portrait of Mikak and Tutauc as well as a pair of watercolour copies of Caubvick and Attuioick, two of five Labrador Inuit who were taken to England by Captain George Cartwright in 1772. The latter two portraits are based on the remarkably well executed life-like, full-figure drawings of Caubvick and Attuioick made for Banks by Nathaniel Dance, a well-known portraitist of that day.<sup>7</sup> Blumenbach's watercolour copies show the head and upper torso of each Inuit that were made in 1792 by a Mr. Hünne-man.<sup>8</sup> These, and the portrait of Mikak and Tutauc, still hang in the Ethnological Museum at Göttingen with the rest of Blumenbach's extensive ethnographic collection. A copy of this portrait was obtained by M. Stopp following a visit to the Ethnological Museum, Göttingen, in 1992 (Figure 2; cf. also Cartwright 1792, Dawson 1958: 113-115, 203, Lysaght 1971).

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<sup>6</sup> This is the only known portrait of Mikak. Pearson (1978) incorrectly assigns the name of "Mecock" (a variant spelling) to a portrait of an unknown Labrador Inuit woman in the Hunterian collection at the Royal College of Surgeons of England. He compounds the error by describing her as the woman who was ill with smallpox, whose hair was cut off and sent to her village where several hundred died of the disease. This is actually a somewhat garbled version of the history of Caubvick (Stopp 2007).

<sup>7</sup> These may still be in the private collection of Lord Brabourne, as determined by A. M. Lysaght, who was given permission to reproduce them in *Joseph Banks in Newfoundland and Labrador* (1971). Many reproductions of the Attuioick and Caubvick full-figure drawings appear in publications and electronic media but fail to cite that their source is Lysaght (1971).

<sup>8</sup> The back of Caubvick's portrait carries the following hand-written note: "An Esquimaux woman brought from Cape Charles on the coast of Labrador by Cartwright a. 1773. Her name was Caubvic which in her language signified wolverine. This copy was made by Mr. Hünne-man 1792 from Nath. Dance's original drawings in the possession of Lady Banks." The back of Attuioick's portrait carries the note: "An Esquimaux man who was brought over from Cape Charles on the coast of Labrador by Capt'n Cartwright a. 1773. He was a priest in his country, his name Ettuioick. The original drawing in the possession of Lady Banks was made by Nath Dance a. 1773. This copy by Mr. Hünne-man 1792."

While in London, Mikak lived with Francis Lucas. Jens Haven visited her frequently with the purpose of obtaining her help and support in petitioning the British government to allow the establishment of a mission among the Inuit. Lucas appears to have had little liking for the Moravians and Haven had to show written orders from Governor Palliser in order to gain entry into Lucas' home. Lucas seems to have been jealous of Mikak's interaction with the Moravians and others, yet mindful of the social doors that she was opening for him. The Moravians, on their part, referred to Lucas as a "fleshly" and unsavoury opportunist and from their accounts it appears that Mikak also came to mistrust him. To quote from Taylor (1983:8) on these dynamics:

Mikak and Lucas were invited to the residence of Governor Palliser. On that occasion, the Governor asked Haven, who was also present, to tell Mikak that 'she should get to know about the Lord'. Haven tried to put off the request until a later time, suggesting that for the moment such a discussion could only lead to problems. He probably anticipated interference from Lucas, who had tried to tell Mikak that there was a God, but had done so amid 'much lightheartedness' and apparently, with little success.

Fully aware that Mikak 'did not understand Lucas at all in this matter', Palliser was curious whether or not Haven would be more successful and urged him to try. Haven finally gave in and was encouraged when Mikak not only understood him quite well, but promised, 'I shall certainly get to know the Lord because I want to get to the eternal joy'. Then Mikak asked whether this was the message that Lucas had been trying to tell her. After Lucas owned that it was, she turned on him with this sharp and spirited attack: 'Oh, you miserable person! You know God and you live worse than the Inuit. I do not believe that you know God.'...When [Palliser] learned what Mikak had said, the Governor added to Lucas's discomfiture by saying: 'There you have it. A heathen woman can judge well who is a child of God and who is not. From the fruit you recognize the tree.'

Mikak had several further meetings with the Brethren and espoused the Moravian cause wherever she went in London. Shortly before her return to Labrador she learned that the Moravian's had been successful in their petition and that government had granted the establishment of a mission station.

Mikak and Tutauc sailed from London in the company of Francis Lucas in the summer of 1769. Karpik stayed behind in the care of the Moravians, to be educated at the Moravian school in Fulneck, Yorkshire, in hopes that he might return to Labrador and "be of use to the Mission" (P.A., Vol. II, pg. 170). Sadly, Karpik died of smallpox shortly after the departure of Mikak, who did not learn of his death until 1770. A brief document about Karpik's life written in Inuktitut, possibly by Drachardt as a sort of study primer, forms part of the microfilmed Moravian papers at Library and Archives Canada.<sup>9</sup>

Mikak left London with Haven's promise that he and other Brethren would be coming to Labrador, and with the continuing task of promoting the Moravian's cause, this time among her own people. In November, Lucas wrote the Earl of Hillsborough

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<sup>9</sup> "Relation of the Eskimo boy Karpick, July – 5 Oct. 1769 – life, education, conversion, baptism, death." LAC Microfilm Reel M-521, pp. 58319-58525.



that “I am arrived from the coast of Labrador where the Indians were landed in the 55<sup>th</sup> degree of north latitude by Capt. Chapman of the *Nautilus* sloop, but we had not the good fortune to see any of the natives” (CO 194/28:91).

We can only imagine the effect that Mikak’s return had on her people, who undoubtedly never expected to see her again. Whether the other Inuit captured at Chateaux Bay in 1767, and then left in St. John’s during the winter of 1768/69, ever returned to Labrador is unknown.<sup>10</sup> It is remarkable indeed that Mikak and Tutauc succeeded in returning to their homeland without succumbing to European diseases, especially smallpox. We will also never know the full effect that this journey across the ocean, to a different people, had on Mikak and her son, but there are some indications that Mikak at least had been affected by the experience. Although not the first Inuit to be taken to Europe from Labrador, they were quite possibly the first to ever return.

Mikak’s homecoming by no means marked the end of her ties with England. She single-handedly lobbied among her own people for their acceptance of a Moravian presence. When Jens Haven and Christen Drachardt returned to Labrador on an initial reconnaissance voyage to find a place to build the mission, on July 15, 1770, arriving near Hopedale and with the goal of going southwards to Hamilton Inlet, the first Inuit they met inquired whether what Mikak had told them was true, that they intended to live in Labrador. “We told them it was at which they rejoiced greatly,” wrote Haven (Moravian 1962b: entry for July 15, 1770). Mikak’s father, Nerkingoak, was among the first Inuit they met. He “made a terrible outcry as he approached us [then] came on board. He had an Officer’s breast plate on and a pair of English Wash leather Gloves, in other respects he was dressed like another Esquimaux” (*ibid*: entry for July 16, 1770). The Moravians learned from Nerkingoak that he had given his daughter a new name, Nutarrak, signifying “changed or new born” because he found her so different upon her return from Europe. They also learned that Mikak had a new husband named Tuglavina<sup>11</sup> and that she was camped nearby.

Mikak and her family arrived the next day. To meet her old friends she wore the “rich Esquimaux Habit which the Princess Dowager of Wales got made for her in London of fine White Cloth laced with Gold and embroidered with many gold Stars & a Golden Medal of the King hanging at her Breast. Her Cloaths were quite clean and neat. She could use some English words very properly, as How do you do Sir, very well Sir, I thank you Sir. She was welcomed and invited on board with many English Complements and she knew very well how to return them” (*ibid.*).

Mikak expressed her pleasure at learning that the Moravians would come and live with them. Since last seeing them in London she had effectively prepared the way for their acceptance among the Inuit. But the Moravians remained cautious and demanded evidence of Inuit approval, even going so far as to admonish, “I must tell you that if your

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<sup>10</sup> Upon reaching Labrador in 1770 to find a place for a mission station, Haven records “I also saw the woman and her daughter who were left in Newfoundland. She is a good simple Creature who likes to hear of our Saviour” (Moravian 1962b:entry for July 17, 1770). This woman was living with Mikak’s people at the time and may have been one of the Inuit held in captivity in Chateaux Bay in 1767 and then taken to St. John’s in 1768.

<sup>11</sup> The Dictionary of Canadian Biography has an entry for Tuglavina. Variant name spellings in the Moravian writings include Tuglavina and Tugluina.

Country People attempt to Steal, Murder or do us any other mischief Our Captain, whom you see here, will not let it pass unpunished but will make use of his Guns in his and our defence” (*ibid.*). Mikak showed strength of character and a negotiator’s skill when she countered that “she was not pleased that we had such bad thoughts of her Country People, whom she assured us loved us and would rejoice at our living among them and their behaviour would be such as to give us no cause to alter our determination to come and settle here another year.” To the accusations that there were known thieves and murderers among the Inuit, she was quick to point out that the same existed among the English.

A pilot was needed to bring the ship through unknown inner coastal waters and Mikak and Tuglavina agreed to the task rather than voyaging southwards to trade at Chateaux Bay, as they had planned. Had they travelled to Chateaux Bay, Mikak would have encountered Francis Lucas again, who was sailing the coast in search of her. Had Lucas found Mikak we would never have heard of Caubvick, Attuiock, and the other Inuit whom Lucas brought to St. Lewis Inlet to live with George Cartwright, and who eventually travelled to England with Cartwright in 1772 (Stopp 2007). By 1770, Lucas was no longer with the navy but was in partnership with Cartwright, who had recently taken over Nicholas Darby's abandoned posts in St. Lewis Inlet.

On the reconnaissance voyage with the Moravians, Haven recorded several observations concerning Mikak, such as “her husband is very fond of her and extremely cautious not to leave her alone with the Europeans...Mikack now Nutarrak...appears as a great Lady among them [the Inuit]” (Moravian 1962b, entry for July 16, 1770). Mikak facilitated many meetings between the missionaries and her people during this trip. The Brethren preached to large numbers of Inuit in Mikak’s tent, which had been a gift from Governor Palliser. She aided the Moravian cause by telling the Inuit how well she had been treated in England and by openly expressing her interest in the Moravian teachings. On board ship, Br. Drachardt preached to Mikak, Tuglavina, and Tutauc on a daily basis. Among the Moravians, Drachardt was the avowed and determined proselytizer while Haven was less inclined to preach than to interact with the Inuit over everyday affairs, and to handle the duties of mapping and of sailing (a third Moravian was in charge of trading with Inuit, which was done on board ship). Opportunities for preaching to the Inuit arose wherever they landed as did several chances to challenge the often displayed performances of the *Angakok*, or Inuit shaman. At one point in the voyage, Mikak expressed fear of one of these individuals and stated her wish to stay with the Moravians until they had reached Esquimaux Bay (today’s Hamilton Inlet). At an unnamed spot north of Esquimaux Bay, Mikak received permission to bring aboard her nephew who had no one to care of him, “who appeared in a wretched condition being lousy scal’d headed and dirty. He was directly stripped of his cloaths and ... the woman [Mikak] with all her finery cleansed him from his vermin, on which she had a delicious repast (namely, she ate the lice)” (*ibid.*, entry for July 27, 1770).

When they finally reached the area of Esquimaux Bay on July 28<sup>th</sup> and found the Inuit settlement there, Mikak “put on a fine silk gown and every thing suitable according to the dress of an English lady and begged I would protect her from any insults, which she was afraid the [Inuit] might offer to her.” This interesting passage suggests that Mikak wore her European clothing less for reasons of vanity than to acknowledge the

Europeans' presence and possibly even as a sign of respect for them. Clearly she was conscious of judgements yet willing to brave belittlement on their behalf, a quality that may not have been fully appreciated by the Moravians. She once again set up her tent so that Drachardt could preach indoors to the roughly 300 Inuit in this harbour, and the next day allowed the Moravians the use of her boat to reconnoitre the area for a suitable place for the mission station.

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, after settling on a building site, the Moravians prepared to return to England for the winter. Mikak gave Haven five fox skins to deliver to friends in England; two for the Dowager Princess of Wales, one for the Duke of Gloucester, and two for Governor Palliser. She and Tuglavina gave Haven their final assurances that the Inuit wished them to live in Labrador, "they assured me that they would explain it to, and remind their Country people both at their hunting and in winter of what they had heard from us, and the promises they had made" (*ibid.*, entry for Aug.4, 1770). The next day Tuglavina helped to pilot the *Jersey* out of the islands but was anxious to return to his camp, "lest any one should in his absence run away with his wife" (*ibid.*, entry for Aug. 5, 1770).

The following year, 1771, the Moravians returned to the Nain area of Labrador, not Hamilton Inlet. They determined to build their mission station here on the grounds that it offered a better opportunity to live near the Inuit, who spent more of the year in this region than in Hamilton Inlet. The Moravians also thought the location would be closer to food sources for themselves, such as salmon, seals, caribou, and cod, than the location chosen the previous year in Hamilton Inlet.<sup>12</sup>

Fourteen Moravians came to Nain in 1771, including Jens Haven and his new bride, as well as other veterans of the Labrador coast such as Christen Drachardt and Andreas Schloezer, all under the leadership of the surgeon Christoph Brasen (Rollman 2002:8). As before, Mikak was their necessary link with the area and its Inuit inhabitants. Although Haven and Drachardt could communicate in Inuktitut, it is uncertain and even unlikely that they could have integrated themselves quite as readily without Mikak's efforts as interlocutor and ambassador, and without her having prepared the Inuit for the Moravian arrival. Upon reaching the northern coast in early August of 1771, the Moravians immediately inquired of Mikak's whereabouts, an issue important enough to record in their diary: "Mikak and her family waited for us to the north". When the two parties met Mikak was once again "dressed in her fine embroidered gold Dress" but, rather spitefully, the diarist further noted "it looks very silly, when one compares her with the other Esquimaux". The Moravians had brought presents in the name of the Royal Family for Mikak in return for the fox skins she had sent the previous year; Mikak's ties with English ruling families, however distant, undoubtedly served the Moravians' well.

Once they had begun building the mission at Nain, relations between the Moravians and Mikak and Tuglavina shifted dramatically (Nain Diary, Aug. 3 – Aug. 25, 1771). The earliest sign of discontent, as recorded in the Nain diary, occurred when Tuglavina

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<sup>12</sup> The suitability of the Nain location was contested by the Inuit, who are recorded as having said that, "they could not earn their living here, some said they did not stay in their houses here above 2 months in the Year and that they went from hence to the Continent, where they build themselves little Houses in the Woods, make great Fire, & in the Day time hunt Rain-Deer, Bears & Wolfes" (Nain Diary, Nov. 6, 1772).

became angry with the Moravians for not trading him a sail for 6 whale fins (*ibid.*, Sept. 11, 1771; the term ‘fin’ may refer to baleen).

Over the next two years Tuglavina and Mikak continued to follow a traditional Inuit way of life, travelling inland for caribou hunting in late summer to the upper reaches of the Tasisuak Lake/Fraser River drainage, and to winter encampments in the outer islands of the Nain archipelago, at a place named Kangartlorsoak, but especially Nuchasusotok, where seals, sea birds, and other marine resources could be hunted.

Traditional summer settlement patterns shifted dramatically in these years for many of the Inuit in the Nain area because of the dual pull of remaining near the mission station or travelling southwards to trade with British in the Chateaux Bay area. The Moravians were in turn also pulled in several directions: they wanted Inuit to remain close to the fold but not so close that they had to be their arbiters and caregivers. They did not wish Inuit to live far from mission land because of the tendency to lapse into traditional social practices that included violence, wife swapping, and practicing shamanic rituals for healing or increasing the harvest. Yet, they wished the Inuit to remain self-sufficient and economically viable and especially not to become dependent on mission foods without trading for it, which in turn meant that Inuit would have to keep to their traditional resource harvest patterns.

Over the next many years we learn from the Moravian writings that Mikak held to traditional ways, especially with respect to remaining self-sufficient and travelling extensively. She is recorded as returning from interior hunting forays with her family, of coming to Nain from her outer island winter camp, and also as returning from trading forays to the south (a life-choice for which the Moravians judged her severely). For a time she still had good personal ties with the missionaries, expressing great joy in the spring of 1773, for instance, that they had made it through the winter in good health, that she had looked for the smoke from their chimney when she arrived from the outer islands.

She learned of the death of the Dowager Princess of Wales that spring and stated that she had no more desire to go to England. Her husband and his brother Segullia, a man the Moravians considered a “sorcerer” and charlatan, together with Mikak, had in the previous year horrified the Moravians by stating that they wished to go to England. This news was brought to the attention of the government and the British Moravian Church, both of whom discouraged it. James Hutton, a leader in the Moravian Church, wrote the following letter to Lord Dartmouth pointing out that such visits had the purpose wealth accumulation and could only lead to dissolution. His remarks on Mikak are harsh, and very likely based on information received from the Nain mission, and it is clear that she has been transformed in Moravian minds from a necessary ambassador of goodwill among her people to an example of what could no longer be undone of their earlier experiment in bridging cultures:

Mikak the Eskimaux Woman who had been taken so much notice of in England, wanted to return hither with her new Husband & son in order to get a new Boat, etc.

As Government had repeatedly expressed their Dislike to these savage Apparitions in England, on account of the staring, gaping & rude behaviour of many people towards the Savages, offensive to their peculiar Turn for Modesty

& Humanity, and preventive of every respectfull Idea of the British Nation which it were to be wished the Savages might have, and as Lord Hillsborough had mentioned it to us, our Missionaries prevented the Return of Mikak to England.

Those Eskimaux who had heard of the fine Presents Mikak had received in England were envious of her Riches & she was obliged to hide them in Holes and Corners. [H]er presents are now spoild & good for nothing; & she Herself is far from being happier by what She received in England. She is prouder, more wretched and miserable than she was before, less contented with the Station she must however submit to & less fit to enjoy for the future, what other Eskimaux call Enjoyment of Life.

We can not but look on such voyages as highly undesirable, not only on account of the scandalous Immorality they become Witnesses of & subject to, not only on account of the Expense which is not provided for, but on account of their being spoil'd for that State of Life to which God has called Them.

If the Presents given to some do not equal those given to others, if these are less than those given before to Mikak, whatever is given is lost & becomes a Means of Ill-Will instead of a better Impression of the English Nation & of Jealousy, Envy & possibly Murther at home.

The Scandalous Life Mikak led, at least for a great part of the time, after she came into European hands, ought not to make in her mind any favourable Idea of the Religion of that Nation where she had lived. She must have much to unlearn, and may probably be one of the latest to embrace Christianity in earnest (Dartmouth fonds, Letter of James Hutton, Jan. 5, 1773).

The changing sentiments toward Mikak are best described by the idiom “tarred by the same brush.” Her relationship with the Moravians began unravelling as early as the spring of 1773 due to the actions of Tuglavina. Tuglavina had, among other things, waged a feud with a branch of Mikak’s family, a group led by a young Angakok named Kaminguse who was married to Mikak’s sister. Mikak was quite sickly at this time and her legs swelled with scurvy, but still “cheerful in her way” (Nain Diary, April 12, 1773). Late in April, however, she came to Nain accompanied by her brother-in-law Kaminguse and her father Nerkingoak and was feeling “much grieved at her husband’s bad treatment of her” for Tuglavina had stolen the wife of a man named Pualo, had left Mikak, and gone northwards (*ibid.*, April 23, 1773).

Perhaps the most recurrent thread of information that arises in researching the life of Mikak in the Moravian writings is that recorded about Tuglavina, not Mikak. Tuglavina is ‘Odysseus ever returning’,<sup>13</sup> an Inuk feared by many, who transgressed on a grand scale every edict set by the Moravians, but who is nevertheless allowed back to the mission time and time again after many adventures. Over the course of the years we realise that Mikak’s ‘sins’ are minor compared to Tuglavina’s yet it is she who fades from the Moravians’ sphere of interest while Tuglavina regularly appears in diary entries, is actively wooed by them time and again, is accepted as a Candidate for Baptism, and is

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<sup>13</sup> Taken from the book title *Odysseus Ever Returning, Essays on Canadian Writing and Writings*, George Woodcock, 1970. Toronto, McClelland and Stewart.

eventually even baptised. Mikak, on the other hand, faces rejection on these fronts until her last days.

After stealing Pualo's wife for a month, Tuglavina returned to Nain. When Haven and Brazen visited him they also found Mikak in his tent, looking very cast down. The brethren admonished him for his treatment of Mikak and for taking another man's wife and shortly thereafter Tuglavina and Mikak left for Kangerlorsoak. She returned to Nain by the end of July quite ill of a "dropsical Disorder" and came under the care of the Moravians. At this time the mission station received a visit by Lieutenant Roger Curtis under orders of Governor Shuldham to record the state of the mission and to map the coast between Nain and Chateaux Bay. Curtis also recorded a description of Mikak while at Nain, as follows:

The missionaries frequently call upon her to corroborate their representations of the Power and Grandeur of our kingdom, and in this particular she is found to be very serviceable. She has a very sickly appearance, and is troubled with a dropsical complaint, which is most probably the consequence of the changes in her manner of living, which her being carried from her own country inevitably occasioned. She has lost nothing of any value, that was given her in England. I saw the coronation medal that was presented to her by the Princess Dowager, the bracelets which the Duke of Gloucester gave her, and several other trinkets. The missionaries told me that when she was informed of the Princess's death, her grief was excessive, and she seems to retain great gratitude for all those who were civil to her during the term she was in England. She is not very happy with her present husband, because it is her misfortune to have no children by him, and for that reason he considers her rather as a burthen than a blessing to him (Moravian 1962a:64).

In the spring of 1774 both Mikak and Tuglavina wished to be converted. At this time we learn that Mikak had a second son, which the Moravians refer to as "her" son, implying that the father may not have been Tuglavina. The diaries suggest that Tuglavina again abandoned Mikak for Pualo's wife, Nochasok, on May 1, 1774, and once again "by force and violence" on September 29, 1775. After each incident the Moravians determined that they would have nothing further to do with him but their resolutions are short-lived. After Tuglavina's third departure, Mikak took her son Tutauc, who was also known as Palliser in honour of her friendship with the former governor, and began a partnership with Pualo, which lasted until his death around 1784. Over the next several years Mikak and Pualo returned to Nain several times, often in company with Tuglavina and his family, and continued to live a traditional lifestyle that involved hunting for caribou in the interior (as part of a group of families that included Tuglavina), and moving to Nuchasusatok for the winter.

We next learn of Mikak in the winter of 1779/80. She and Pualo, along with Tuglavina and family, and several others, decided to stay inland rather than move to their usual camp near the ice edge because of a surfeit of venison stored under the snow that would last them until spring. Their hunting fortunes, however, had a reversal when wolves rooted up most of the cached venison and Tuglavina became dangerously ill. An Inuk from that camp reached Nain in late January to tell of these events and in early

February two sleds left the mission to fetch the families. This journey inland is well known to Labrador researchers through the account of Brother Turner who travelled with Samuel, Nerkingoak (probably Mikak's father), and two other Inuit to rescue the stranded party (*ibid.*, entry for Jan – Feb. 1780; also Taylor 1969).

The following winter of 1780/81, Mikak and Pualo were determined to go to their usual winter place at Nuchasusotok but were convinced by the Moravians to remain at Nain, despite their concerns that they would starve there because it was far from good sealing places. The Brethren persisted, giving as their reason that they wished to “see won for our Saviour” Mikak's two sons Nerkingoak<sup>14</sup> and Palliser (Tutauc). The boys themselves wished to remain in Nain and this convinced their parents. Mikak expressed her heartfelt wish that her entire family become Candidates for Baptism and impressed the Brethren with her reasoning:

Mikak, who always speaks for her husband, gave us to understand, that her whole family were desirous to obtain the knowledge of our Saviour, which was the reason, why they wintered here; they desire also to be among the Candidates for Baptism. After she had talked a good while, she was asked, whether she believed in her own mind, that she was quite corrupt and good for nothing. She said, after a little pause, “I do not know myself, and therefore I do not know it.” We were much pleased with this her upright answer; for else the Esqx. like to speak what they think will please us (Nain Diary, entry for Nov. 13, 1780).

A few weeks later, however, the diaries indicate that Pualo, Palliser, and others were chosen as Candidates for Baptism and baptised a short while later, but Mikak was not included by the Moravians (Tuglavina shortly thereafter also wanted, and received, the same favour). In keeping with Moravian practices of giving Christian names upon baptism, Pualo received the name Abraham and Tutauc/Palliser was given the name Jonathan.

Many Inuit at Nain suffered from famine that winter and by February Mikak and Pualo had shifted residence to the outer islands (the diary states that they went to the “North Islands towards the sea, about 7 leagues away”). Their move away from the mission station was undoubtedly spurred by Mikak's rejection for baptism for after this she began to distance herself from the mission on a more serious scale. In 1782, for instance, she and Pualo formed part of a large group of Inuit who caused the Moravians great anguish when they travelled to Chateaux Bay to live and trade. While there, Mikak and Pualo purchased a large boat on credit, while Tuglavina and Pualo each received a gun, shot, and powder<sup>15</sup>, becoming some of the first Inuit to have firearms in northern Labrador. The Moravians' concerns about trips to the south were partly because Inuit presence in Chateaux Bay was illegal under the edicts of Palliser in 1770 and Shuldham in 1771, but also because it represented loss of trade and loss of souls for them. In the south the Inuit would live traditionally and would be subject to European diseases such as smallpox and venereal disease, and alcohol.

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<sup>14</sup> The diaries contain a confusing reference to another possible name for this son., Manumina (Nain Diary, entry for April 12, 1774).

<sup>15</sup> Another record of this trip states that the men received a gun, a sword, and a fox trap (Letters, Oct. 7, 1783).

Upon their brief return to Nain a year later, Pualo approached the Moravians on behalf of Mikak asking that she might soon be baptized “in order to be received more kindly when she goes to the South.” But the Moravians were adamant that he “has lost all Grace which was to be received in him some time ago; and all his thoughts are taken up with the Europeans that live in the South” and rejected the request absolutely (*ibid.*, entry for Jan. 23, 1783).

That summer, over 180 Inuit travelled to Chateaux Bay, including many from further north, Mikak and Pualo among them. Many remained there for a year, some for two years, and those who returned to Nain confirmed the Moravians’ predictions of disaster: Five of the nineteen baptised Inuit who had gone south died, among others; Nerkingoak, Mikak’s father, had ordered the death of woman in order that she might keep her dead brother company; A young man by the name of Sirkoak took Mikak, was shot by Pualo, but survived after receiving treatment upon reaching Nain; Pualo may have died of an infection at this time; two Inuit men were shot dead by Tuglavina and others; one woman hanged herself; and many wives were stolen (*ibid.*, entry for Sept. 6, 1784).

The Moravians’ worst fears had come true and for many years thereafter they struggled with a continuing exodus of Inuit southwards. Many Inuit rejected their former Moravian ties and were “grown so wild”. Tutauc, for instance refused to be called by his baptismal name, “Mikak’s Son, who as a Child had been with his Mother in London & was presented to their Majesties, and named Palliser after the Governor of Newfoundland at that time, now always goes by that Name among the Esquimaux and will not be called otherwise though he was baptized Jonathan” (Letters, August 25, 1790).

Little more is learned about Mikak’s life after her rejection for baptism and the first trips to the south in the early 1780s. For many years she continued to trade in this manner, probably still travelling south in 1790. She may have spent only brief periods in Nain while occasionally en route to her main winter camp at Nuchasusotok (P.A., Vol.1, pg. 90; Nain Diary, entry for Oct. 27, 1785).

Mikak returned to Nain for a last time, at about the age of 55, in 1795. She was ill and died on October 1, 1795 after finally being baptised, and was buried in Nain. She received the rare distinction of being remembered and in effect commemorated by the Moravians in an epitaph dedicated to her life in the Moravian Periodical Accounts, which reads as follows:

About the time that the Brethren were consulting how to begin a mission on the coast of Labrador\* a skirmish took place in 1768, between the English and some Esquimaux, who came, as was supposed, with hostile intentions, to annoy the former. Some were killed, but a woman called Mikak, with her son, and a boy of the name Karpik, were taken prisoners and brought to England. Sir Hugh Palliser, then Governor of Newfoundland, presented Karpik to the Brethren, by whom he was sent to Fulneck in Yorkshire, to be instructed, hoping that if it pleased God to convert his heart, he might be of use in the Mission, on his return to Labrador. However, after showing very promising dispositions, he fell sick of the small-pox, and departed this life in the faith of Christ, under the care of that venerable Missionary, Christian Lawrence Drachart. Mikak was introduced

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\* See Crantz’s History of the Brethren, p. 606



to many persons of high rank in London, and returned, loaded with presents, in 1770, where she rendered essential services to the Missionaries on their first arrival, in 1771. She was then married to the noted Tuglavina, now William, and accompanied the Brethren to the place where they first settled. She even became an attentive hearer of the Gospel, expressed a desire to be converted, and was admitted to the class of candidates for baptism in 1782. But in 1783, she went with others to the South, where she mostly resided. Thus she lost the advantage of hearing the gospel, and indeed seemed indifferent about it. The last ten days of her life, she spent at Nain. Immediately on her arrival, being very ill, she sent to Brother Burghardt, to request assistance and advice. He found her extremely weak, hardly able to speak, and apparently without hopes of recovery. However, after giving her some medicine, he took occasion to speak seriously with her concerning the state of her soul, advising her to turn as a repenting sinner to the Lord Jesus Christ, who will surely receive poor prodigals if with all their hearts they confess their deviations. He also reminded her of the promises she made formerly, to devote her whole heart to him. She assented to the truths of all he said, and exclaimed; "Ah, I have behaved very bad, and am grieved on that account, but what shall I do! I cannot find Jesus again!" Brother Burghardt encouraged her not to desist from crying to Him for mercy, for he came to seek and save the lost, and would not cast her out. In the following days she seemed to receive these admonitions with eagerness, and declared, that she had not forgotten what she had heard of her saviour in former days, nor what she had promised him, when she became a candidate for baptism. She departed this life, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1795, and was buried in our burying ground. We trust in our Saviour's mercy, that he has also found this poor straying sheep (P.A., Vol. II, pp. 170-172).

## Conclusion

Mikak's role in history extends far beyond that of many Indigenous individuals who figured in European records. Hers was not a passive presence in historical documents for she had an influence on the success of the British colony by lobbying the Moravian petition to establish a mission in Labrador while in London. Jens Haven visited her frequently there, in the full knowledge that the Moravian proposal would benefit both from Mikak's ability to communicate and her access to people of influence. She was an able and willing lobbyist for the establishment of a Moravian mission in Labrador and upon her departure from England in 1769 she learned that the mission had indeed received approval. Perhaps most significantly, upon returning to Labrador she laid the conceptual groundwork among her own people for the planned Moravian enterprise. Unlike the reception of earlier Moravian predecessors in 1752, who had attempted to begin a mission but were murdered by Inuit, when the Moravians returned to Labrador in 1770 they were welcomed and anticipated because Mikak had prepared the way by telling her people of the intentions of the Brethren (possibly with an emphasis on access to trade goods) and of the kindnesses she received while in England.

The story of Mikak merits researching and re-telling if only to align the facts. As earlier footnotes have shown, published accounts of her life show certain confusion, often

with the stories of Attuoick and Caubvick who were taken to England by Captain George Cartwright in 1772. The historic record can be altered easily in the absence of fact-checking, even in academic writings such as the following statement:

As early as A.D. 1770 ... [George Cartwright] and two of his merchant partners had established good relations with an Inuit woman, Mikak, captured by the Newfoundland governor Hugh Palliser, in A.D. 1769. They employed Mikak as their interpreter on a journey in A. D. 1770 along the south Labrador coast (Cartwright 1792, 1:1-5). Their relationship with her appears to have helped persuade the first Inuit family group to live at Cartwright's Lodge Bay post (McAleese 1989:184).<sup>16</sup>

The oral history surrounding Mikak was first brought to my attention in 1996 after presenting her life story at the Tenth International Inuit Conference in St. John's, Nfld. A woman from Rigolet in the audience indicated that much was still known about Mikak in her community. Although oral history is recognised as being highly changeable and unreliable as to historic facts, it nevertheless constitutes a body of data that should not be ignored. Oral history often tells us more about ourselves and the present than about the past; the nature of individual and collective memory is impermanent and we remember the details that suit contemporary interests. Oral history's worth lies in its comparative value; it can be used to test historic accounts and other oral accounts, and potentially to solidify a body of documentary data. We learn from these comparisons that the past is continually being transformed but oral history often contains useful nuggets and when pieced together with other stories and with written records can contribute to a richer presentation of the past. Above all, however, oral history is mutable, and on its own must be used with caution.

Two examples of how the history of Mikak has changed over time were first presented in *Them Days Magazine* although here I pull them from Lynn Fitzhugh's *The Labradorians* (1999). In the first oral account, originally given by Edna Campbell, Mikak's story is transformed in a number of ways. Among other forgotten or mistaken details, no longer remembered are Mikak's name and where she was taken, while the gifts that she received are, in this telling, transformed into buttons and a crown given to the baby Palliser by the Queen:

They took this Eskimo Woman and her baby to teach her right from wrong. They wanted to see if the Eskimos could be civilized. They took them away somewhere, I don't remember now where it was they took them. They had to give them a name so they called them "Palliser," which was the last name of the ship's captain. This is the story that I heard of how the Pallisers got their name. This Eskimo woman and her baby stayed away a long time. I heard that before they took them back home that the Queen give the baby some gold buttons to

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<sup>16</sup> Errors in this statement abound: Cartwright never met Mikak, but Francis Lucas, one of the merchant partners, had; Mikak was captured by Francis Lucas in 1768 while he was second-in-command at Chateaux Bay, not by Palliser; In 1770 Mikak and Tuglavina were north of Hamilton Inlet piloting the Moravian vessel while Francis Lucas unsuccessfully sailed more southern waters searching for her, and she therefore did not act as an interpreter for them. The reference to Cartwright 1792 contains no information on Mikak.

put on his coat when he got big. She also gave him a crown and many other things before he come home. It wasn't so very long ago that Joe Palliser had that same stuff, 'till once his house burned down and it got burned except for the crown, so I heard, oh, not so very many years ago, no more than twenty years ago (Edna Campbell, *Them Days* 3:1:56, in Fitzhugh 1999:324).

The second account appears to be a compilation of several historic events, but the reference to the white fabric with gold trim matches very well with Haven's description of Mikak's coat, while the information that the "gold drops" were given away gives an extended life to both the story of this garment and possibly to the garment itself:

Captain came to Rigolet on a schooner. Queen Victoria [Charlotte] had wished to see Eskimos from Labrador. So he made the old man drunk and got two women and a little boy on board and carried them to England, where they stayed all winter. They did not like living in England. They found it all too sweet when they had been used to seals and fish. One of the women died but the little boy and his mother came back all right. I remember seeing a very pretty dickie, a present from the Queen to the woman. It was made of white cloth all trimmed with little gold hangings all around the lower edge. I remember seeing them, the shape about this size. They found it too pretty to wear. She never took it with her. I don't know what became of it. My mother had two of the little gold drops someone gave her. There are some Pallisers still living yet (Margaret Campbell Baikie, *Memories*, pg. 51, in Fitzhugh 1999:325, square brackets in original).

As a closing note, with reference to her bloodline, Mikak's son, Tutauc/Palliser, lived for many years after Mikak's passing and had children of his own. One early nineteenth century account by a Methodist missionary named Reverend Thomas Hickson tells of a meeting with Inuit in the area of Cullingham's Tickle, Hamilton Inlet. While there Hickson met several Inuit who had once lived among the Moravians and who still remembered something of God and in some cases could read. Among them was Tutauc/Palliser and who continued to live a traditional lifestyle after having renounced his many years of Moravian teachings many years previously. This brief account also tells a little of Mikak's famous coat that was made for her by Augusta, Dowager Princess of Wales:

I found that two of them, father and son, had each of them two concubines. It was not difficult to convince them of the evil of their doings, and though it was generally supposed that the senior adulterer would have parted with his life rather than give up either of his concubines, the Lord applied what was spoken to his conscience, which caused him to tremble exceedingly, and he expressed a willingness to act in any way that I should direct. This person was taken by Captain Palliser to England about forty-five years ago, with his mother, who had a gown presented to her by the queen. This gown, richly trimmed with gold, and very fresh, was worn by one of the women. The man bears the name of the above-mentioned captain who took him (Young 1931:32).

Mikak's bloodline continues in Labrador and there is a body of oral history that concerns her life. Both the genealogy of Mikak's family and the oral history merit recording.

## References

### Abbreviations:

CO	Colonial Office archives
Letters	Letters from the Little Congregation in Nain
Moravian	Moravian Mission Paper Selections
PA	Periodical Accounts

### Archival:

*Library and Archives Canada:*

-Colonial Office Archives, CO 194/27, 28, 30

-Letter of James Hutton to Lord Dartmouth, Jan. 5, 1773. Dartmouth fonds, MG 23, A-1, Vol. 2, pp. 2339-2484, pg. 2358.

-Letters from the Little Congregation in Nain in Terra Labrador to the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel Among the Heathen (microfilm reel A-568).

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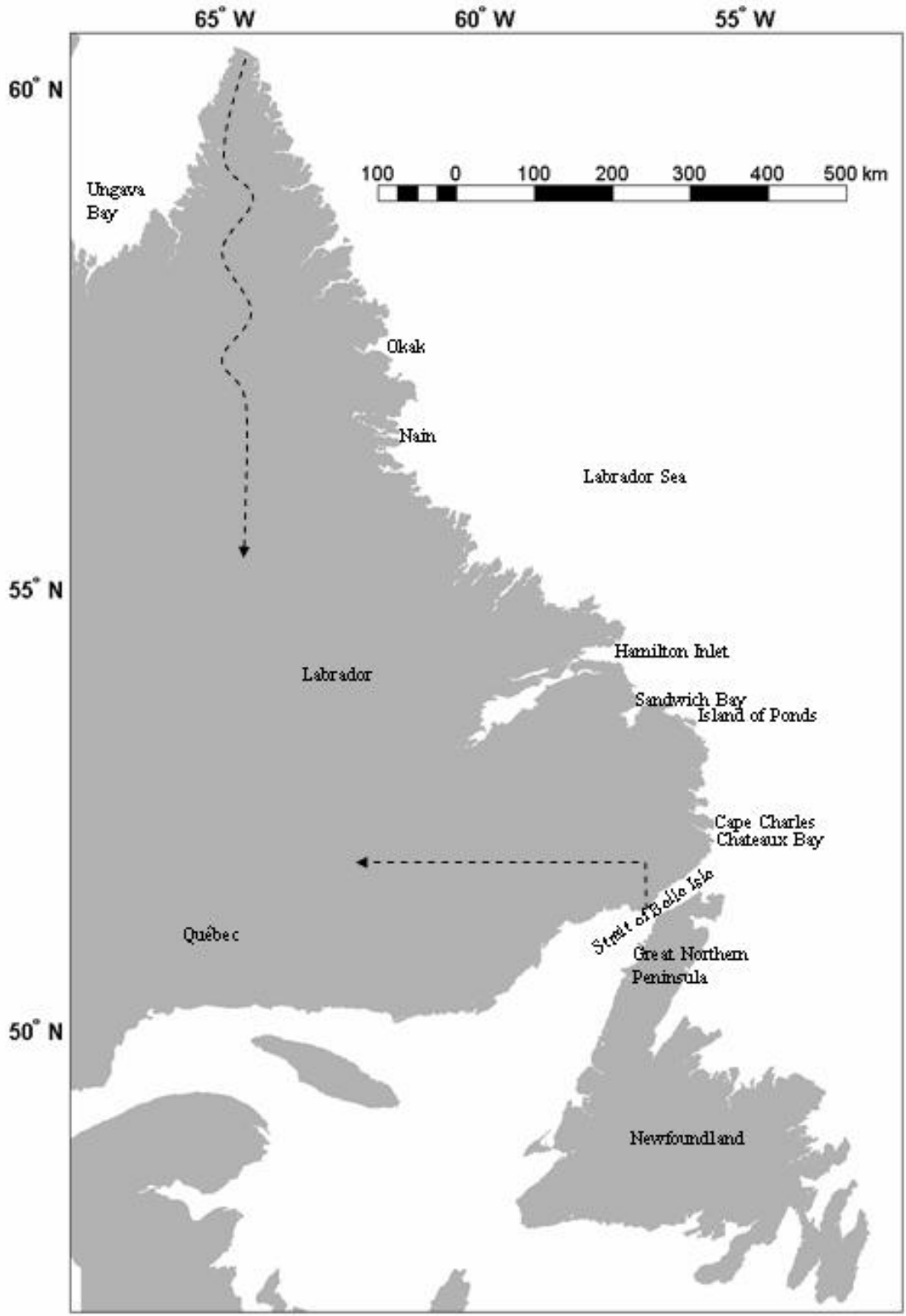


Figure 1: Key places named in text





*Figure 2: Mikak and Tutauc, painted by John Russell, 1768/69, for Sir Joseph Banks. Portrait in the collection of the Ethnological Museum Göttingen, Germany (Slide to M. P. Stopp courtesy of Ethnological Museum Göttingen ).*

## Submission for Nomination of a National Historic Person

**Date:** April 4, 2007

**To:**

The Executive Secretary  
HSMBC  
25 Eddy Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Gatineau, Quebec, K1A 0M5

**1. Identification of applicant:**

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**2. Identification of the subject:**

Submission is a person: the Labrador Inuit woman Mikak (b.ca. - 1740; d. Oct. 1, 1795 at Nain, Labrador)

**3. Criteria:**

Criterion #2 in *Criteria and Guidelines* applies: **A person** (or persons) may be designated of national historic significance if that person individually or as the representative of a group made an outstanding and lasting contribution to Canadian history.

As an individual, the Labrador Inuit woman Mikak contributed to Canadian history as follows:

- While in England, Mikak helped representatives of the Moravian Church and Newfoundland Governor Hugh Palliser in their efforts to receive permission to establish a Moravian mission station in Labrador
- Following a promise made to the Moravians, once she returned to Labrador Mikak prepared her people for the arrival and acceptance of the Moravians
- Mikak was, in effect, central to the successful establishment of the Moravian mission in Labrador

As the representative of a group, Mikak contributed to Canadian history as follows:

- Her life story is representative of the Labrador Inuit during the early contact period and from it we learn how Labrador Inuit were active players in early trade, settlement, and colonial expansion in Labrador

**4. Existing Historical Recognition:**

Entry in Dictionary of Canadian Biography under MIKAK

## 5. Specific Considerations for a site:

NA

## 6. Documentation:

- The documentary details of Mikak's life are based principally on seven main sources that include:
- *The Nain Diary* between 1771 and 1791 and other Moravian documents. An annual account kept by the missionaries at Nain, originally in German but much of it translated into English.
- A Moravian document entitled "Journal of the Voyage of the Jersey Packet to Labrador and Newfoundland from the Papers of Jens Haven and Chr. Drachardt 1770" (Moravian 1962). This account provides information on Mikak's ties with the missionaries after her return from England in 1769 and before the establishment of the Nain mission in 1771.
- A Moravian document entitled "An Account of the Moravian Mission upon the Coast of Labrador in 1773" (Moravian 1962). This source provides a brief description of Mikak written after her return from England.
- *The Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren, Established Among the Heathen*, Volumes I and II. These accounts are summaries in English of diary and letter excerpts from Labrador. They were published as bound books to inform the English Brethren congregation of the church's activities in Labrador.
- J. Garth Taylor's two-part article in *Beaver* (1983, 1984) entitled "The Two Worlds of Mikak". This document is the most comprehensive account of Mikak's life and is clearly based on primary research of Moravian material and archival documents. Due to the nature of all *Beaver* publications, however, the article is unreferenced.
- The entry on Mikak in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography. A brief but thorough account of Mikak's life.
- A research paper entitled "The Life Story of the Labrador Inuit Woman Mikak", by Marianne P. Stopp, 2007. On file, Nunatsiavut Government, Nain, Labrador. This paper outlines the life of Mikak using the above-listed sources and includes citations.

Other documentation includes the oil portrait of Mikak and her son Tutauc painted by the famous portraitist John Russell in 1768/69 for the naturalist/botanist Sir Joseph Banks.

## 7. Suggestions for further research:

Two potential future research projects include collecting the extant oral history on Mikak and to develop her genealogy. Her descendants continue to live in Labrador.

## 8. Federal riding:

Labrador

**9. Proponents/Interested parties:**

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