

Nunavut – A Chronology

4500 B.C. to 1000 A.D. : Successive waves of Inuit enter and move through-out what is now the Canadian Arctic.

1576-1578: English navigator Martin Frobisher explores the east coast of Baffin Island. Over the next three centuries, many navigators follow, seeking a Northwest Passage to Asia.

1670: King Charles II of England grants the Hudson's Bay Charter, giving the Hudson's Bay Company a trading monopoly over much of what is now the Canadian North. This area is named Rupert's Land.

1845: English explorer Sir John Franklin sets out with two vessels in search of the Northwest Passage. On the brink of success, he and his crew disappear after their ships become icebound. Franklin's disappearance spurs search missions that continue into the 20th century.

1870: The Government of Canada acquires Rupert's Land.

1880: The British government transfers the Arctic Islands to the Government of Canada.

1926: The Arctic Islands Game Preserve is established as an exclusive Inuit hunting preserve. The Preserve is subsequently expanded in 1929 and 1942 to cover most of the remaining islands and parts of the mainland.

1939: The outbreak of World War II leads to the establishment of military bases in the eastern Arctic.

1963: The Government of Canada introduces the first legislation to divide the Northwest Territories (NWT), but it dies on the order paper.

1966: The Carrothers Commission advises against division within the next 10 years, but recognizes it is inevitable, given the sheer size of the NWT.

1973: The Government of Canada establishes its first Comprehensive Land Claims Policy. The aim of the policy is to exchange undefined Aboriginal rights which had never been dealt with, for a clearly defined package of rights and benefits set out in a land claim settlement agreement.

1973: Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), the national political organization representing Inuit, begins a study of Inuit land use and occupancy which shows the extent of Inuit Aboriginal title in the Arctic.

1975: The first fully elected Government of the Northwest Territories takes office.

1976: ITC calls for the creation of a Nunavut territory as part of a comprehensive settlement of Inuit land claims in the NWT.

1977: The NWT Inuit Lands Commission proposes to the Government of Canada that a territory and government be established in Nunavut, along the lines of Inuit political institutions.

1979: A second seat for the Northwest Territories is created in Canada's House of Commons. The new parliamentary riding, called Nunatsiak, encompasses approximately the same territory as Nunavut.

1980: The Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly votes in favour of dividing the territory.

1982: A territory-wide public vote results in 56 percent of voters in favour of dividing the NWT.

1984: The Inuvialuit, Inuit of the western Arctic's Beaufort Sea region, finalize their land claim settlement agreement.

1990: Nunavut land claim agreement-in-principle affirms Inuit, territorial and federal government support for the creation of the territory of Nunavut "as soon as possible."

1992: A majority of voters in the Northwest Territories approve the proposed boundary for dividing the NWT.

1992: Inuit of Nunavut vote in favour of approving their land claim settlement.

1993: The Nunavut Final Land Claim Agreement is signed by Inuit, the Government of Canada and the Government of the NWT.

1993: The *Nunavut Act* to create Nunavut, and the *Nunavut Land Claim Agreement Act* are enacted by Parliament.

1994: The Nunavut Implementation Commission, a group established to advise the federal government on aspects of creating Nunavut, holds its first meeting.

1995: The Nunavut Implementation Commission releases *Footprints in New Snow*, a detailed plan for the design of the Nunavut government.

1995: In a public vote, 60 percent of Nunavut voters choose Iqaluit over Rankin Inlet for the new capital.

1997: The federal government appoints former Member of Parliament Jack Anawak to serve as Interim Commissioner of Nunavut. The Office of the Interim Commissioner is to follow up on the work of the Nunavut Implementation Commission, including recruitment of a public service for the new territory.

February 15, 1999: Residents of Nunavut hold their first election for members of their Legislative Assembly.

April 1, 1999: Nunavut and its new government are inaugurated; and the Nunavut coat of arms and flag are unveiled.

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