A Short History of the Moravian Brass Bands of Northern Labrador¹

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On 7 April 1776, the Moravian missionary Jens Haven (1724–96) recorded the first written evidence of the playing of brass instruments in Northern Labrador in the *Nain Church Diary*:

[F]or the first time in Labrador, Easter was celebrated at Nain in the traditional Moravian manner with the playing of French horns and the dawn service at the burial ground; this service, almost as much as the [first] baptism, had a "singular effect" on the Eskimos and helped maintain the enthusiasm and interest started in February.²

Minutes from a meeting of the Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel (SFG) five years earlier support Haven's claim. In 1771, those records indicate he departed London with a band of missionaries on the ship *Amity* with "provision for one and a half years, 131 guns and powder from the government, two surplices and a pair of French horns." Haven and his brethren's objective was to establish Nain, the first Moravian mission station constructed in the Labrador Mission Province of the Moravian Church.

These early records are representative of the chronicle of the Moravian brass bands of Northern Labrador. In one regard, they provide us with exacting detail. From Haven and his colleagues in the SFG, we not only know which brass instruments were first played in this Mission Province and the precise date and community in which they were played, we also know when these instruments departed Europe, their routing across the Atlantic Ocean, and the amount of time they spent at sea. The Moravians' predilection for meticulous record-keeping has been widely observed; documentation of their work in Labrador keeps with this custom. Yet, for all the details Haven and generations of successive Moravian missionaries and their associates recorded about these brass bands, there is a noticeable absence of the Labrador Inuit voice within this chronicle.

It would be simplistic to think of this absence as solely a product of the Moravians' missionizing agenda. Certainly, these missionaries had a clear understanding of the role music served in that work. Above, Haven notes the "singular effect" of this Easter sunrise service with French horns upon the Inuit. But as the later-day missionary Frederick William Peacock (1907–85) suggests, after 1821 the missionaries no longer took an active role in training Labrador Inuit in any of the musical traditions they imported. Successive generations of musicians were taught by fellow Inuit. In

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the absence of Inuit-authored sources, what survives is a chronicle of a brass band tradition that is, at best, a sketch. Seldom in this chronicle are there references to instrumentation, repertoire, or style. Fewer still are references to personnel. Never is there mention of training. Any detailed historical account of the Moravian brass band tradition in Northern Labrador must begin by recognizing these gaps in the record and the reasons for it.

Documentation

The surviving chronicle of these bands takes the form of textual documentation, photographs, sound recordings, sheet music, and surviving instruments. The most voluminous of these is the textual documentation authored by Moravian missionaries and their associates. While there are scattered references to these ensembles across genres such as church diaries, missionaries' biographies, Unity Elders Conference Minutes, and the SFG Minutes, the most consistent source of information is the SFG-published Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren, Established Among the Heathen. Printed in London and published in English between 1790 and 1970, the Periodical Accounts provided an overview of the Moravians' missionary work around the world through an edited assortment of annual station reports, correspondence (including correspondence from non-Moravians), financial reports, and diaries. Among the Periodical Accounts, references to these ensembles are concise but, by the mid-nineteenth century, become commonplace and tend to focus upon how these ensembles operated on days of church or civic importance. By the 1910s that record is supplemented by a photographic record, created by missionaries and an increasing number of visitors to Northern Labrador. Photographic documentation tapered off by the 1970s and there are few circulating images of these ensembles between 1972 and the present. Despite their obvious shortcomings, text and photography provide us with the greatest detail.

Sound recordings, sheet music, and surviving instruments make for more complex forms of evidence. Though it seems likely that the first sound recordings of these bands were prepared during the 1950s and 1960s by amateur recordists, there is little supporting evidence to indicate exact dates. Complicating matters, many of these early recordings were prepared at unknown tape speeds, making playback and digitization difficult. A small number of field recordings and performances given for documentary film between the 1970s and 1990s capture the Nain Brass Band in a variety of *in situ* performances, but there are no recordings of bands from other communities during these decades. Sheet music and surviving instruments present similar issues. While sheet music prepared for the Hopedale and Makkovik bands survives, as do instruments from the Hopedale and Hebron bands, there are no complementary documents that allow for detailed interpretation of these materials.

My approach here is to draw from these records to create a portrait of how Labrador Inuit came to experience, interpret, and ultimately command an imported

form of instrumental music. Appendix 1 provides a rough timeline for the brass bands active in each of the Labrador mission stations, noting, when available, instrumentation, ensemble size, performance convention, and repertoire. Appendix 2 provides an inventory of the types of performances given by these bands. Similar to the choral, organ, and stringed instrument traditions that developed within this outlying Mission Province in the Moravian world, the brass band tradition is hybridized. It is constructed with western European repertoire, but over the course of two hundred years of transmission from Inuk to Inuk in relative isolation, Labrador Inuit agency over this tradition is unmistakable. It is distinct within the Moravian world.

Textual and photographic sources

The Unitas Fratrum, or Unity of the Brethren, is widely recognized as one of the oldest Protestant churches in existence. The church traces its heritage to Moravia and Silesia where, in 1457, the followers of Jan Hus (1369–1415) organized themselves as the "Bohemian Brethren." In 1722, followers of Hus were invited by the German nobleman, Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-60) to take refuge on his estate in Saxony. After constructing a new home at Herrnhut, missionaries from the church began to travel west, arriving in Greenland in 1733. Receiving reports from Greenland Inuit of Inuit even further to the west, Moravian missionaries traveled to Labrador in 1752 under the leadership of Johann Christian Ehrhardt (1720-52). There they constructed a station at Ford's Bight, south of the present-day community of Makkovik. Their attempt to settle there was cut short when Inuit killed Ehrhardt and six of the ship's crew over a disagreement regarding the trade of a piece of whalebone. After further exploration of Labrador's north coast led by Jens Haven, and with a land grant supplied them by King George III, the Moravians established a permanent presence at Nain in 1771. Under Haven's leadership, additional mission stations were also established at Okak in 1776 and Hopedale in 1782. Later, stations were also constructed at Hebron in 1830, Zoar in 1865, Ramah in 1871, Makkovik in 1896, Killinek in 1905, and Nutak around 1919. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Moravians had established a network of mission/trading stations that extended across all Labrador's north coast (see Figure 1).

In Northern Labrador the brass band tradition began and was disseminated within this network of mission stations. Music was a defining aspect of the Moravian Church, but for early missionaries in the region, it also served a practical function. Haven learned Inuktitut during his time at the Lichtenfels station in Greenland and, during his 1764 reconnaissance mission to the Labrador coast, was able to use Greenlandic Moravian hymns to assist in preliminary contact with Labrador Inuit:

Among them [the Inuit who greeted Haven] was Seguliak, the *angekok* or sorcerer, who seemed to have the authority of a chief. He was particularly friendly. Once when they began a dance in honour of their guest, accompany-

ing it, in true heathen fashion, with terrible noises, Br. Haven sang a hymn in Greenlandic, whereupon they instantly ceased, and listened attentively to the end.⁷

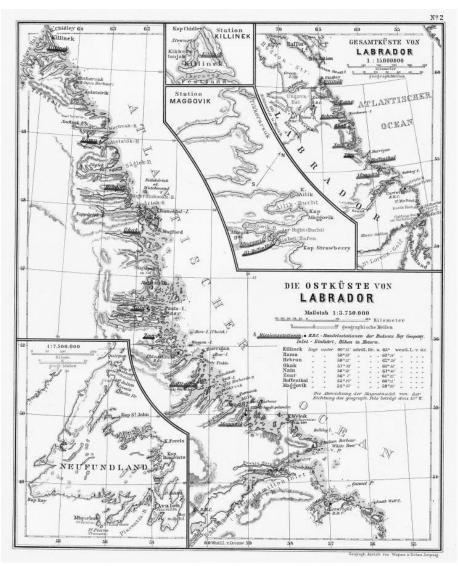


Figure 1: Moravian mission stations on the north coast of Labrador. From *Missions-Atlas der Brüdergemeine: Achtzehn Karten mit erläuterndem text* (Herrnhut: Missionsdirektion der Evangelischen Brüder-Unität. Missionsbuchhandlung, 1907).

By 1793 Inuit at Nain had begun to sing Moravian hymns in Inuktitut⁸ and by 1807, at Okak, the singing of hymns by Inuit was observed as a common practice.⁹ In 1821 the missionary Benjamin Gottlieb Kohlmeister (1756–1844) provides the first evidence of Inuit playing instruments in support of these nascent choirs. In a retrospective of his work in the missions at Okak, Nain, and Hopedale, he observed that the Inuit

also delight to join in hymns, of which they easily learn the tunes. Many of the women and children having sweet voices, their singing is very delightful and affecting, nor is there any danger of their abusing this precious gift for improper purposes, as the use of music is altogether confined to the service of religion. Many of them show great capacity for learning to play upon any musical instrument. Violins have been introduced, and French horns, and a few of them accompany the voices with great precision and devotional effect.¹⁰

Though Kohlmeister does not assign his comments to any one community, it seems likely that he is describing the community of Nain, as we know French horns had arrived there as early as 1771. In correspondence from Nain dated 24 August 1821, Kohlmeister et al. note the playing of wind instruments in the Nain church in observance of the semicentennial celebrations of the Moravian Church in Labrador:

Several musical instruments helped to enliven the singing of the congregation on this festival-day, and, early in the morning, some hymn-tunes played upon them, announced the day. But in very cold weather, wind instruments cannot be used in the church, as the breath freezes in them. An organ would be of essential service to us, and help much to keep the voices to the proper pitch.¹¹

Kohlmeister's observations mark the beginning of the practice of instrumental music on Labrador's north coast and the first steps towards the establishment of brass bands in every Moravian station in the area with the exceptions of Ramah and Killinek.

In recent commentary on Kohlmeister's description, Tom Gordon has made the point that for this generation of Labrador Inuit, French horns and violins would have been the only instruments available. This idea of utility is useful in interpreting the early phase of development of Moravian instrumental ensembles in Labrador. Unlike other parts of the Moravian world where certain instrumental traditions could be transplanted in ways that would maintain existing conventions, here limitations upon shipping and extreme climactic conditions shaped emerging local traditions. In these early years, the choir served as the primary vehicle for musical expression. Instrumental ensembles emerged to accompany them.

Beginning in 1824, the relevance of these instrumental ensembles within the walls of the church began to wane. That year, the Nain church received a gift of an organ from the congregation at Herrnhut.¹⁴ By the time Hebron opened in 1830

with this essential feature installed, both Hopedale and Okak had procured organs as well.¹⁵ These organs did not immediately drive all other instruments out of the church. Even today, strings accompany the organ and choir in Nain. But their arrival created conditions under which these other instruments could begin to operate outside of these churches and independently of the choirs. The first evidence of such an ensemble comes from Nain in 1850. In an "Extract of the Diaries" published in the *Periodical Accounts*, the anonymous author records that

[t]he Weather proving favourable on *Easter-Sunday* morning, we were enabled to pray the Easter-Litany in the burial-ground, which had not been the case for several years. The congregation, having assembled at an early hour in the chapel, proceeded from thence, in procession, to the burial-ground, accompanied by our musical band, consisting of violins, flutes, and clarionets.¹⁶

The description is important as it suggests Labrador Inuit were willing to experiment with the composition of these emerging instrumental ensembles. Easter Sunday 1850 fell on 31 March, a time when Northern Labrador is still in the grip of sub-arctic winter. The successful and sustained operation of violins, flutes, and clarinets in these conditions is unlikely. The contemporary brass band at Nain is able to perform in these conditions relatively unimpeded because of the introduction of instrument coverings, colloquially referred to as "duffles," after the material from which they were traditionally constructed.¹⁷ These duffles prevent the condensation inside brass instruments from freezing by shielding valves and slides from the ambient temperature while simultaneously keeping valves, slides, and hands warm. Not only are such duffles impractical to construct for such instruments as violins, flutes, and clarinets, reeds would have been particularly difficult to both maintain and acquire under these circumstances. In spite of their apparent impracticality in this context, both flutes and clarinets were used in ensembles at other mission stations during the nineteenth century. In The Fall of Torngak, Reverend J. W. Davey's account of Moravian missions in Northern Labrador, he quotes an anonymous 1837 report from Okak stating that "There are few of our hymn tunes, even of the more difficult ones, that the people do not sing with facility and correctness. Our company of violin players is complete, and we have two clarionets, by the help of which the performance of chorales and anthems at our festival and liturgical services is rendered more perfect."18 And in 1838, Nain-based missionary Johannes Lundberg (1786-1856) lamented that "[t]he clarionet which was sent me last year I forwarded to Hopedale, where they were in want of one; and I am again without this useful instrument."19

Three years later, in Hopedale, there is evidence of a different type of ensemble. In private correspondence published in the *Periodical Accounts*, missionary A. F. Elsner reports that

[o]ur church-music [in Hopedale] has been greatly improved by the present of three trombones, sent us from Zeist. The band have made such progress, that they were able to play several chorales at Easter, and on the arrival of the ship. Unfortunately, the tenor is still wanting. We lately performed several new anthems, in which the Esquimaux evinced their progress in taste and expression.²⁰

Though the reference is fleeting, Elsner's commentary provides the first indication of a dedicated instrumental ensemble welcoming an arriving ship. The custom of greeting ships with music was first observed by Anna Elizabeth Kohlmeister (1762–1838) in 1821 at Hopedale, but it is unclear if the musicians welcoming Kohlmeister and her party belonged to a choir, band, or both:

As we approached Hopedale, the Brethren and the Esquimaux, not having received any account of the arrival of the sloop of war, were rather alarmed at its appearance; but we found means, before we cast anchor, to send them word, that all was peace and friendship, upon which the music began to play that hymn, "Now let us praise the Lord," &c. and the Esquimaux afterwards to fire a salute with their pieces." 21

Continuing well into the twentieth century, the custom of playing for arriving (and later, departing) ships mark the first regular secular performance to be given by these ensembles. Only after this point did these ensembles begin to give other secular performances, many of which are detailed in Appendix 2.

The custom of welcoming ships would become a preoccupation for successive generations of commentators. Between Elsner's 1853 report through the last reference to the Moravian Labrador Inuit brass bands in 1960,²² the chronicle provided by the *Periodical Accounts* alternates between descriptions of performances given for arriving ships and those given for church festival days and important community events. During this period, each ensemble expanded their role as community emissaries in both church and civic contexts. These new performances made indelible impressions upon their commentators. Missionary Christian Trauelsen Barsoe (1810–93) recorded this account of his return to Hopedale in 1855, published as private correspondence in the *Periodical Accounts*:

On the 5th [August], we at length reached the usual anchorage, being welcomed with shouts of joy, and the discharge of fire-arms. As soon as we had dropped anchor, the band, standing before the Mission House, played several hymn-tunes. I cannot express our feeling in words. Yesterday evening, before the preparatory meeting for the Holy Communion, they also played, and awoke us this morning in the same pleasing manner. The choir in this congregation is admirable and, I think, not surpassed in Germany. I wish you could hear them sing and play.²³

Stationed at Hopedale for many years, it is unsurprising that the Barsoes' return from Europe would have been such a festive occasion. It was customary to mark the arrivals and departures of missionaries from these stations. What is interesting is that Barsoe saw fit to record two additional performances by the Hopedale ensemble after disembarking: one prior to Holy Communion and the other directly for the Barsoes the following morning. Part of the extended festivities marking their return, these performances appear to have been given at the discretion of the Hopedale band. The latter of the two is also the first recorded performance without any directly associated church function.

Though rarely mentioned in any genre of church literature, anecdotal evidence suggests that each of these ensembles had developed unique standing para- and extra-liturgical performance practices. Many of these are described in Appendix 2. In Nain, for instance, fiftieth birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and elders' house visits all became regular performances within the repertoire. In each case, the band would travel to the home of the given audience, and at the band's discretion, would perform any number of selections outside or inside the dwelling. Contemporary practice suggests these selections were drawn from the band's regular liturgical repertoire, specifically in the form of hymns and chorales that generally complemented the liturgical season. A traditional Easter hymn such as *Ernîk erligidlarpagit* ("By These Acts"), one of the few pieces in the repertoire believed to have been composed by an Inuk,²⁴ would not be performed outside of the Easter season.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, extra-liturgical performances had become commonplace and completely at the discretion of the ensembles. In 1905 Bishop Carl Albert Martin (1861–1934) had even observed the Nain band giving what is likely one of the first performances by these ensembles for visiting Innu, another of Labrador's Indigenous cultures:

A number of Indians, who reside in the interior but come down regularly to the Coast to trade at the Hudson's Bay Co.'s post at Davis Inlet, last winter stayed on the Coast, as there was a scarcity of reindeer in the uplands. In consequence of this, the supply of goods at Davis Inlet gave out after a time, and these Indians came to Hopedale and Nain in order to have their wants supplied. Our missionaries and people not knowing their language, and the Indians being unacquainted with either English or Eskimo, it was next to impossible to hold intercourse with them, and everything had to be done by means of signs. The Eskimoes at Nain were greatly taken up with the two who came to their station, and a number of them were continually to be seen sitting or standing round the strangers. The station band even went so far as to serenade them with several hymn tunes, whilst they were being entertained in the house of one of the station people! ²⁵

This performance is an important one. While the range of extra-liturgical performance had been expanding, those performances were still largely given for church and community members or arriving ships. This is also the first written evidence of a performance given for visitors *within* a community rather than for visitors on the wharf.

It is during this period of expanded performance practice that the photographic record begins, providing us with a clearer understanding of the composition of these ensembles and the contexts in which they performed. The first published image of these ensembles appeared in an 1899 pamphlet written for the Colonial and Continental Church Society by the Anglican clergyman William Pilot (1841–1913) (see Figure 2). Pilot provides an image of musicians from Hopedale, identified by the caption as "The German Band," which would be reproduced by later authors such as Fred Ward. Representative of the various active musical traditions in Hopedale, the portrait depicts the wind ensemble, the choir, a cellist and organist Ambrose Assa (far left, second row). Here, there is no evidence of the three trombones from Zeist reported by Elsner in 1853, but according to Fred Ward a year later, at least some of the instruments depicted here had arrived from Germany just before the picture was taken. 27



Figure 2: "The German Band." Second row, far left is the organist Ambrose Assa. This picture of various musicians from Hopedale was first published in William Pilot's 1899 pamphlet, *A Visit to Labrador*.

The next images of these ensembles and the texts that accompany them shed more light on their performance practices from the period. In 1905 J. W. Davey published the first image of the Nain Brass Band under the caption "The Nain Brass

Band" in his book *The Fall of Torngak* (see Figure 3). As the image is undated, it is difficult to know with certainty if this would have been the ensemble performing at this time. It does, however, provide visible evidence of the wardrobe worn by many of these ensembles. Here, most of the men are wearing a ceremonial *silipâk*, a white, hooded garment with decorative rings at the cuffs and base.



Figure 3: "The Nain Brass Band." First published in J. W. Davey, *The Fall of Torngak* (1905). Reprinted by permission of the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem.

Six years later, in 1911, Hesketh Hesketh-Prichard (1876–1922) published another picture of the Nain ensemble with the caption "Eskimo Band at Nain" in his book *Through Trackless Labrador*. Taken by Hesketh-Prichard himself, the picture shows what is decidedly now a Nain Brass Band performing for the dedication of a new church on 19 October 1910 (Figure 5). Interspersed among the ensemble in the second, fifth, (possibly sixth), tenth, and twelfth positions from the left are boys and young men holding sheet music for the musicians. Hesketh-Prichard's pictures provide the only visible evidence of this custom as it was practiced in Nain. In his biography of missionary Walter Perrett, *A Shepherd in the Snow*, Samuel King Hutton provides textual evidence of the tradition as it was practiced in Hopedale:

You are curious to see the bandsmen; and as the tune comes to an end you open the window and look out. If you are wise you have wrapped yourself

up, for the air is chilly indeed, and a biting wind is coming from the east. You look down; there is whispering among the bandsmen; they are making ready for another tune. You can only see some shadowy shapes in the darkness: a small boy is there, with a candle flickering in an iron lantern: he casts a light on Benjamin's book—for Benjamin is the leader of the bandsmen and has the slide trombone. A Whisper from Benjamin, and the band bursts forth into a triumphant Chorale.²⁸

There is little evidence outside of these sources to help interpret this particular tradition and there are no records to suggest these boys and young men would have taken on this role as part of their training to join the ensemble. This is the first published image of any of these ensembles giving a performance.

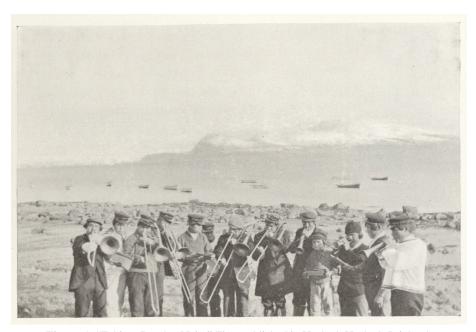


Figure 4: "Eskimo Band at Nain." First published in Hesketh Hesketh-Prichard, *Through Trackless Labrador* (1905).

On 16 July 1937 at Hebron, the first moving imagery of these ensembles was taken from the deck of the Hudson's Bay Company ship *Nascopie*.²⁹ Shot by Richard Finnie (1906–87) and released as part of the film *Patrol to the Northwest Passage* (1937), this footage depicts the Hebron Brass Band (two cornets, two althorns(?), one trombone, one euphonium, and one tuba) giving two performances whose manner became increasingly common in the twentieth century. The first performance

Finnie captured was given on the deck of a launch (boat) fitted with an outboard motor that would allow people from the station to visit larger ships unable to dock at smaller community wharves (see Figure 5). The second was given on the deck of the larger vessel (in this case, the *Nascopie*) for the crew and passengers. In the latter instance, the Hebron Brass Band is also giving the first broadcast performance by one of these ensembles, in this case for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Figure 6). Unfortunately, the audio for this performance no longer survives. What is evident from this two-minute passage is that whatever repertoire the Hebron Brass Band is performing, all but one trumpet and the euphonium are performing from memory.



Figure 5: The Hebron Brass Band performing on a launch, 16 July 1937.

Digital frame enlargement from Patrol to the Northwest Passage/ISN 5670

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The early twentieth century marked the pinnacle of the Moravian brass bands of Northern Labrador as a distinct tradition with its own performance conventions. As early as the late nineteenth century, the overall number of these ensembles had begun to decline, a by-product of the closure of many stations. The first to be shuttered by the Moravians was Zoar in 1889. Little is known of this ensemble save for a



Figure 6: The Hebron Brass Band performing on a launch, 16 July 1937. Digital frame enlargement from Patrol to the Northwest Passage/ISN 5670 © Estate of Richard S. Finnie. Reproduced by permission of Library and Archives Canada.

handful of references. Decimated by the Spanish Flu in 1919, Okak ceased to exist. That community was home to one of the longest-running ensembles in Labrador. In 1956 and 1959 the provincial government forcibly resettled Nutak and Hebron, respectively, leaving the only active ensembles in Makkovik, Hopedale, and Nain. While the influx of players from Nutak and Hebron temporarily bolstered these remaining ensembles,³⁰ bands in each of these communities stopped performing in the last decades of the twentieth and first decade of the twenty-first century. Since 2013, however, Nain once again is home to an active ensemble.

Both textual and pictorial evidence in the latter half of the twentieth century is scant, but one of the last images of the band from the historical period comes from a 1990 episode of a Labrador Inuit-produced television show called *Labradorimiut* (*The People of Labrador*). Produced by the Nain-based OKâlaKatiget Society, the episode called "Moravian Mission" contains some of the only footage of these ensembles captured by Labrador Inuit. The episode begins with a section on the church festival of Young Men's Day, observed on January 25. In it, the Nain Brass Band marches in processional to the house in which the young men have gathered as they perform *Jesus Tessiunga* ("A Mighty Fortress is Our God"). ³¹ Speaking over the sequence, an unidentified Inuk man recalls the festival as it was observed in Nain:

Early in the morning, before the sun comes up, right after the young men finish their breakfast, the brass band comes in the house and plays. They have always come to play at the house the young men are celebrating in.

The image gives a clear sense of the close quarters these ensembles would have performed in when giving indoor performances. It also provides a clear image of the duffles (coverings) for these instruments (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Nain Brass Band performing for Young Men's Day.

Digital frame enlargement from the 1990 *Labradorimiut* episode, "Moravian Mission."

Reprinted by permission of the OKâlaKatiget Society.

Sound recording, sheet music, and historical instruments

As already mentioned, sound recordings, sheet music, and historical instruments present us with more challenging forms of evidence due to an absence of contextualizing, complementary materials. In spite of these limitations, some mention must be made of these records, if only for the purpose of identifying future directions for research into these ensembles.

The earliest sound recordings of these bands are commensurate with the earliest moving images. In a 1977 article on the musical tradition of Nain Inuit, the missionary Frederick William Peacock suggests that the first broadcast of one of these ensembles was by the Hebron Brass Band, for American radio on the deck of Donald MacMillan's schooner *Bowdoin*, prior to the 1937 broadcast on the *Nascopie* for the CBC.³² There is no additional evidence to support Peacock's claim, and it seems likely that the reference is an apocryphal account of the Nascopie performance described above. If recordings of either performance were made, they are no longer extant. The earliest surviving recordings were likely produced by Moravian missionary Siegfried Hettasch (1915-2007) of the Makkovik brass band during the 1960s. These recordings are publicly available through the Digital Archives Initiative of Memorial University of Newfoundland. Unfortunately, errors with tape speed during playback in the digitization process make them flawed examples as the digitized files run much faster than the performances they capture. Also, there is no information regarding the context of performance; we do not know if these performances were the results of recording sessions or merely documented on tape. What the recordings of IlannâKakKa Jesutut ("What A Friend We Have in Jesus") and Jesus tatigijara ("Jesus, Be Our Chief Delight") do reveal is a noticeably cohesive ensemble. The lead trumpets drive both hymns, and the lag between the beginnings of their phrases and the rest of the ensemble is brief. It is very likely that additional recordings of the Makkovik ensemble survive among the documentary legacy of Makkovik elder James Robert Andersen (1918–2011).33

Apart from Makkovik, the only other ensemble for which audio recordings survive is that of Nain. The first of these date to 1971 and was taken by a film crew from the Extension Service of Memorial University of Newfoundland, documenting the bicentennial celebrations for the founding of Nain. The one audio-visual recording of unknown repertoire from this batch of unedited footage shows the band marching through the community. Each member is wearing their traditional *silipâk*, and nobody appears to be assuming any kind of pre-determined physical position. The performances are decidedly unhurried. Like the Makkovik band, it is the lead trumpets that drive these songs. But the gap between their entrance and the rest of the bands' is perceptibly longer. Often, the upper voices uncouple from the middle and lower voices, creating a distinct phase effect, exacerbated by the uniform slowing of the ensemble before the end of each phrase. The dynamic range is consistently forte and the preferred timbre emphasizes the tinny quality of each instrument, generated by shallow breaths from the mouth. Performances captured in films such as Roger Hart's Labrador North (1973) of Jesus tatigijara and Anne Budgell and Nigel Markham's Last Day of Okak (1985) of Jesus Tessiunga confirm these tendencies, as does the performance of the latter hymn in the Labradorimiut episode "Moravian Mission." An exception to these, however, are the field recordings of the Nain Brass Band made by Lutz in her research for Musical Traditions of the Labrador Coast Inuit. Taken as the band is walking though the community during the pre-dawn hours of 25

December 1978, her recording of *Sorutsit* ("O Come Little Children") in particular captures a noticeably cohesive ensemble with a warm, string-like timbre. Here it is likely that context plays a mitigating factor. Unlike many if not all of the recordings that come before and after, Lutz's does not capture a performance given for tape. As the sounds of her walking through snow attest, here she is attempting to keep up with the band as they perform for the community. Her recordings suggest the possibility of different styles of performance for different events, if not for different environmental conditions.

One thing that remains curious about the audio record generated by the Nain Brass Band is that it does not capture a current convention observed by the ensemble. With each song, a designated member first calls the band to readiness with the word *taima!* ("ready" or "finished"), which cues the band to move instruments to mouth level. Second, they mark the beginning of the performance with the word *nâla!* ("listen" or "hark"), which cues the ensemble's first breath. It may be that this convention was either edited out or simply missed by earlier recordists, though the band opted not to record the convention on its 2016 self-titled release. There is no mention of it in the descriptive record either.

Sheet music and surviving instruments present us with even greater challenges. Of the thousands of pages of hand-written scores that survive in Nain, Hopedale, and Makkovik, few pages appear to be music for these ensembles. Unlike choir music, which was held collectively, individual band members seem to have responsible for maintaining their own music. Recently Tom Gordon discovered among the collection of music at Makkovik a collection of books belonging to the Hopedale Brass Band of the 1960s. The selection of hymns and anthems from this period is consistent with the current repertoire of the Nain Brass Band, though one notable difference here is the presence of *God Save the Queen*. With almost no textual records of the Hopedale Brass Band from the 1960s, it is difficult to tell whether this repertoire was all actively performed or if it represented a notional repertoire. Notice the fingerings written in (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Melody 146, *Jesus Tessiunga* ("A Mighty Fortress is Our God"), soprano part, Hopedale Brass Band Books. Printed by permission of Tom Gordon.

More problematic still are instruments from the historical period. The Archives & Special Collections of the Queen Elizabeth II Library at the Memorial University of Newfoundland house two horns likely from either Hebron or Okak. One of these is possibly an althorn (Figure 9), made by Edwin Koch of Markneukirchen, the other, an unsigned euphonium (Figure 10). Another ten instruments are housed at the



Figure 9: Possibly an althorn from either Hebron or Okak. Signed "Edwin Koch / Markneukirchen." Photo by the author.



Figure 10: Baritone horn from either Hebron or Okak. Photo by the author.

Moravian Mission Complex in Hopedale: one trumpet, one tuba, two althorns(?), two trombones, and four euphoniums. With little information regarding provenance or manufacturer and with no supporting textual records of any kind, these instruments are potential forms of evidence rather than immediate, practical ones.

Future directions for research

In writing the first study dedicated to the development of brass bands in the Labrador Mission Province of the Moravian Church, my intention has been to consider this tradition through the closest possible documentation of its source. As it exists, this surviving descriptive record places noticeable emphasis upon certain larger mission stations in Labrador, such as Nain, Hebron and, later, Makkovik. There are few references to bands operating in other stations, such as Zoar. Without any detailed record, it is difficult to tell how much they would have adopted performance conventions that had taken hold in larger stations. There are few references to the personnel of these bands, and often when mention is made, naming convention resulted in the missionaries recording only the given names. And since pedagogy is not mentioned in this record there is little context with which to understand the development of repertoire (both musical and performance) and style. More and different primary documents are needed.

A more fundamental problem is the absence of an Inuit voice in this descriptive record. But it is a problem that also presents itself as a unique opportunity within this context. Beginning in 2013, Labrador Inuit became actively involved in the revival of the brass band tradition through the Tittulautet Nunatsiavuttini / Nunatsiavut Brass Bands workshop. Operating annually from 2013 through 2015, the workshop provided brass training to Labrador Inuit interested in participating in re-formed community bands. Because of this training, Nain is once again the home of a thriving ensemble that has performed on stages in Europe and North America and has expanded its range of liturgical and extra-liturgical performances in the community (Figure 11). In 2017 the Nain Brass Band / Nainip Tittulautingit released a selftitled album, the only self-directed recording of a Labrador Moravian Inuit brass band. The work of these Inuit musicians in reviving this tradition has been aided by historical research, but by no means has this research served as the sole mechanism for this revival. Every one of these players draws from knowledge of this tradition that broadly remains within living memory, and it is this knowledge that shapes the course of the research as well as the repertoire and style. The challenge is how best to represent the knowledge.

A concrete example of this manner of knowledge is the process by which the ensemble decided upon an ambience for their self-titled album. Over the course of two days in the spring of 2016, a small number of players recorded performances of *IlannâKakKa Jesutut* at various traditional and non-traditional performance locations



Figure 11: Nain Brass Band / Nainip Tittulautingit on the roof of the Nain church, performing for the German television program *mareTV* in July 2017.

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throughout Nain: the community wharf, the church bell tower, the church choir loft, school classrooms, and even the school gym. After much thought and deliberation, the band settled upon an ambience created with a distant microphone placement in the school gym. This, it was reasoned, provided a good balance between a controlled recording environment and enough natural reverb so that the recording would activate Labrador Inuit audiences' memories of these ensembles. The final recording was prepared by St. John's-based engineer Stephen Lilly in the Great Hall of Memorial University of Newfoundland in the fall of 2016, a large, tiled room that provided analogous acoustics to their spring demo.

The decision taken by the band was shrewd as it demonstrated a clear preference for the production of a recording whose function clearly extends beyond posterity while also serving a certain set of their audience's expectations. The final product is neither documentary nor apocryphal—it is Labrador Inuit actively interpreting this tradition for us. As they continue with this process of interpretation, it is essential to find new ways to give voice to this process.

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APPENDIX 1

This appendix provides a rough timeline for the brass bands active in each of the Labrador mission stations, noting, when available, instrumentation, ensemble size, performance convention, and repertoire.

Nain. Established in 1771. French horns were first played in this community on Easter Sunday 1776, most likely by Moravian missionaries. In 1821 the first instrumental ensembles were observed by Kohlmeister. On Easter Sunday (31 March) 1850 an ensemble of violins, flutes, and clarinets performed at the Nain cemetery. In 1905, the Nain band performed for Innu visiting the station. In April 1908 the band performed *God Save the King* on the wharf during a visit by the Governor of Newfoundland, Sir William MacGregor (1846–1919). ³⁴ Photographic documentation from around the same time suggests that the band may have had one clarinet as late as 1908 (Figure 3, middle row, far left). On 19 October 1910 the band performed for the dedication of the new church³⁵ (Figure 4). During Easter in 1930, members of the Nain band performed for services held in Hebron. ³⁶ The band is one of the best-documented ensembles in Labrador. In 2016, the revived Nain Brass Band / Nainip Tittulautingit released its first, self-titled album.

Hopedale. Established in 1782. The first reference to an instrumental ensemble in the *Periodical Accounts* was made by A. F. Elsner in 1853 when he recorded the arrival of a gift of three trombones from Zeist, Netherlands. In 1855 Christian Barsoe observed performances given at the wharf, to summon the community for Holy Communion, and for Barsoe and his wife. On 4 August 1859, the band performed the hymn *Now Let Us Praise the Lord* for the arrival of the *Harmony*.³⁷ On 29 August 1903 the Hopedale band travelled on the mission-owned boat *Sybil* to perform for the consecration of a chapel at Uviluktôk (Double Island).³⁸ On 27 February 1921 the band performed "hymn tunes, old and new" inside and outside the church during a service celebrating the sesquicentennial of Nain.³⁹ On 1 July 1930 the band performed the hymns *Jesu Lover of My Soul* and *Safe in the Arms of Jesus* in a launch for the ship *Kyle*.⁴⁰ On 22 and 23 August 1934 the band performed in a launch for the Prime Minister of England, J. Ramsay MacDonald, visiting on the ship H.M.S. *Scarborough*.⁴¹ On 17 July 1951, the band performed on the wharf for the Lieutenant

Governor of Newfoundland, Leonard Outerbridge (the Hebron band would also perform for Outerbridge during his tour). ⁴² In 1957 funds were raised to purchase five new instruments, which were first used on 31 December of that year. ⁴³ By 1960, Inuit displaced from Hebron had begun performing with the ensemble. ⁴⁴ Members of this ensemble appear in the first published photograph of such ensembles in 1899 in William Pilot's *A Visit to Labrador*.

Zoar. Established in 1873. A trombone choir performed for the dedication of the church on 6 January 1873. One of their selections for the occasion was a chorale identified as *Praise God for Ever*.⁴⁵ There are no other references to a brass band performing in the community. Zoar closed in 1889.

Makkovik. Established in 1896. While there are undated photographs of Makkovik brass bands that are likely earlier, the first textual reference to a Makkovik brass band comes from 1939. 46 Above, I have noted surviving recordings of *What A Friend We Have in Jesus* and *Jesus*, *Be Our Chief Delight*, likely prepared by missionary Siegfried Hettasch in the 1960s. Joase Onalik, originally from Nutak and resettled to Makkovik, suggests this band stopped performing by 1982. 47

Okak. Established in 1786. Clarinets were used in the community as early as 1837.⁴⁸ The first reference to the Okak band comes from the journal *Moravian Missions* in 1915, which records that the *Harmony* was greeted with the firing of guns, singing of hymns, and the band performing on a hill.⁴⁹ The Okak Brass Band was documented photographically by S. K. Hutton. Many of these images are available at the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem. Okak was closed in 1919 after being decimated by the Spanish Flu.

Hebron. Established in 1830. The first reference to a Hebron band comes from 1913, when it is noted that the band traditionally performed one of two hymns for the departure of the *Harmony*, *God Be with You till We Meet Again* or *Shall We Meet beyond the River?* ⁵⁰ In 1921 Bishop Martin noted there was no band in the community to assist in the celebrations for the Nain sesquicentennial. ⁵¹ In 1930 missionaries C. and S. Waldmann noted again there was no band in the community, their instruments having been destroyed as a precautionary measure after the closure of Okak in 1919. ⁵² On 27 July 1933 the band performed on the wharf to greet Inuit from the north who had traveled to Hebron to be baptized. ⁵³ In 1934 the band performed *From Greenland's Icy Mountains* to welcome returning missionary F. M. Grubb. On 16 July 1937 the band performed on the deck of the Hudson's Bay Company ship *Nascopie*, where they gave a performance for broadcast by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and were filmed by Richard Finnie for inclusion in *Patrol to the Northwest Passage*. On 15 July 1938 the band once again performed on the deck of the *Nascopie*. ⁵⁴ On 8 May 1945 members of the band performed *God Save the King, Now Thank We All*

Our God, and "many other tunes" to mark the armistice in Europe. ⁵⁵ For the Watch Night service for 1959, the band accompanied the organ for the congregation's singing of Now Thank We All Our God. ⁵⁶ In 1960 Inge and Gerhard J. Vollprecht note the presence of Hebron band players in the Hopedale band. Siegfried Hettasch created silent moving imagery of this band which is available at Library & Archives Canada. Hebron was forcibly resettled in 1959.

Nutak. Established around 1919. Nutak served many Inuit displaced by the decimation of Okak the preceding year. The only reference to an active band comes from 1939 when they performed on a launch for the passenger ship *Kyle*.⁵⁷ By 1956 the band was no longer performing, and the missionaries had taken the decision with the congregation to scuttle fundraising plans for new instruments.⁵⁸ Nutak was forcibly resettled in 1956.

APPENDIX 2

This appendix is a rough inventory of public performances traditionally given by brass bands, presented here in the known order of their introduction.

Easter Sunday. The earliest recorded instance of such a performance by Inuit comes from 1851 at Nain.⁵⁹ Later, Easter performances expanded, with each community observing different components that could include: (i) a solo trumpet calling the congregation to the sunrise service; (ii) a processional, led by the ensemble, to the cemetery; (iii) the playing of hymns at the cemetery; (iv) a recessional, led by the ensemble, back to the church; (v) the playing of hymns from the church roof.

Arriving ships. The earliest recorded instance of such a performance was that given for Christian Barsoe on 5 August 1855. Initially, these performances would have been given for the Moravian Mission ship *Harmony* on the community wharf. This tradition would see a number of variations, including (i) bands playing for departing ships; (ii) bands boarding arriving vessels for performances on deck; (iii) bands boarding launches to play for larger ships unable to dock; (iv) bands boarding larger craft in the harbor for performances on deck.

Christmas. The earliest recorded instance of such a performance comes from 1912 at Okak,⁶⁰ though without question Christmas customs were observed earlier by these bands. As documented by Lutz's description and field recording, it is likely that bands would have played seasonal hymns while marching through the community.

Church Festival Days. Generally, these would have been observed with marching performances.

Watch Night Service. There is only one reference in the written record to the Hebron Brass Band performing the Watch Night Service in 1959 inside the church. That same year, Joan Stedman, a nurse stationed at Nain, observed the band marching through the community on the morning of the 1st.⁶¹

Elders' visits. Since the revival of the tradition in 2013, elders' visits represent an important part of the performance repertoire. Visible evidence in the form of the *Labradorimiut* episode, "Moravian Mission," suggests that such performances find their origins in the walking performances of Christmas and Church Days. In recent years, these performances tend to be given outside of elders' houses. However, performances could also be given inside as well.

50th birthdays. There are no indications of such performances in the descriptive record, though they continue to be given since the 2013 revival. These performances could be given either outside or inside the recipient's house.

Wedding anniversaries. There are no indications of such performances in the descriptive record and their status today is unclear. Colloquial evidence from Nain indicates that as late as the 1970s, performances could be given to recipients in their beds.

NOTES

- ¹ I owe debts of gratitude to Tom Gordon and the current membership of the Nain Brass Band/Nainip Tittulautingit for assistance in the development of this research. This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.
- ² Nain Diary, entry for 7 April 1776, cited in J. K. Hiller, "The Foundation and the Early Years of the Moravian Mission in Labrador, 1752–1805," (M. A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1967), 202.
- ³ Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel Minutes, Committee, 9 April 1771 and 3 May 1771, cited in ibid., 84.
- ⁴ According to Hiller, Haven and his party departed London 8 May 1771, calling at Deal, Kent and Poole, Dorset before landing at St. John's on 1 July. They arrived in the Nain area on 9 August. Ibid., 84–85.
- ⁵ F. W. Peacock, "Music of Nain Inuit," Inuttituut (Winter 1977): 54.
- ⁶ Hans Rollmann, "Hopedale: Inuit Gateway to the South and Moravian Settlement," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 28, no. 2 (2013): 153.
- ⁷ "Retrospect of the History of the Mission of the Brethren's Church in Labrador for the Past Hundred Years (1771–1871)," *Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren, Established Among the Heathen* 28 (1871): 7.
- 8 "From Nain, dated September 1st, 1793," Periodical Accounts 1, no. 10 (1794): 214.

- ⁹ T. Martin, et al., "From Okak, September 23, 1807," *Periodical Accounts* 4, no. 50 (1807): 211.
- ¹⁰ Benjamin Gottlieb Kohlmeister. "Letter addressed to the Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, by Benjamin Gottlieb Kohlmeister, on his return from Labrador." *Periodical Accounts* 9, no. 106 (1821): 238.
- ¹¹ Benjamin Gottlieb Kohlmeister, et al. "Letters addressed to the Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, in London. Received in 1821. From Nain, August 24, 1821." *Periodical Accounts* 8 (1821): 96.
- ¹² Tom Gordon. Booklet to CD *Ahâk, Ahâk! Moravian Music of the Labrador Inuit* (Back on Track, 2018), 46.
- ¹³ See, in particular, Stewart Carter, "Trombone Ensembles of the Moravian Brethren in America: New Avenues for Research," in *Brass Scholarship in Review: Proceedings of the Historic Brass Society Conference*, ed. Stewart Carter (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2006), 77–109.
- ¹⁴ "Retrospect of the History of the Mission of the Brethren's Church in Labrador for the Past Hundred Years (1771–1871)." *Periodical Accounts*, 28 (1871): 61–62.
- ¹⁵ Tom Gordon, personal correspondence, 25 June 2017.
- ¹⁶ "Extract of the Diaries of 1849–1850," Periodical Accounts 20 (1851): 68.
- ¹⁷ There does not appear to be any consensus for a Labrador Inuktitut word for these coverings. The current membership of the Nain Brass Band believes either *matuk* (cover) or *mattutik* (bandage) may have been the term used in that community.
- ¹⁸ J. W. Davey, *The Fall of Torngak: or, The Moravian Mission on the Coast of Labrador* (London, Partridge, 1905), 231.
- ¹⁹ Johannes Lundberg, "Extracts of Private Correspondence from Nain," *Periodical Accounts* 14 (1836–1838): 428.
- ²⁰ A. F. Elsner, "Extracts of Private Correspondence," *Periodical Accounts* 21, no. 226 (1853): 299.
- ²¹ "Extract of a Letter from Sister A. E. Kohlmeister. Dated, Nain in Labrador, August 11, 1821," *Periodical Accounts* 8 (1821): 185.
- ²² Inge and Gerhard J. Vollprecht, "Annual Report for the Year 1960," *Periodical Accounts* 169 (1961): 11.
- ²³ Christian Barsoe, "Extracts of Private Correspondence," *Periodical Accounts* 22, no. 234 (1855): 168.
- ²⁴ Tom Gordon. booklet to CD Ahâk, Ahâk, 53.
- ²⁵ "Nain," Periodical Accounts, vol. 6, no. 64 (1905): 219.
- ²⁶ Fred W. Ward, "Mission Life in Far Labrador," *The Sunday Strand* 1, no. 3 (March 1900): 340.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 340–41.
- ²⁸ S. K. Hutton, *A Shepherd in the Snow: The Life Story of Walter Perrett of Labrador* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1936), 121–12.
- ²⁹ George Harp, "Hebron Annual Report for 1938," Periodical Accounts no. 147 (1939): 122.
- ³⁰ Inge and Gerhard J. Vollprecht, "Annual Report for the Year 1960. Hopedale," *Periodical Accounts*, 169 (1961): 11.

- ³¹ In the Labrador Inuit Moravian tradition, the hymn known in Inuktitut as Jesus Tessiunga is translated into English as *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*. This is especially confusing as the tune for this particular hymn is widely known as *Now Thank We All Our God*.
- 32 F. W. Peacock, "Music of Nain Inuit," Inuttituut (Winter 1977): 56.
- ³³ I arranged and described a collection of Andersen's materials in 2011–12. The collection is housed at the Archives & Special Collections of the Queen Elizabeth II Library at the Memorial University of Newfoundland.
- ³⁴ W. W. Perrett, "Visit of His Excellency the Governor of Newfoundland to Nain," *Periodical Accounts*, vol. 7, no. 76 (1908): 192.
- ³⁵ W. W. Perrett, "Miscellaneous Intelligence. A 'high' day in Nain," *Periodical Accounts*, vol. 8, no. 85 (1911): 38.
- ³⁶ C. and S. Waldmann, "Report from Hebron From July 1st, 1929 to June 30th, 1930." *Periodical Accounts*, 139 (1931): 72.
- ³⁷ F. Kruth, et al. "Letters received by the Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel from the Missionaries at Hopedale, Nain, Okak and Hebron, in the year 1859. Hopedale, August 15th, 1859," *Periodical Accounts*, 23, (1858–61): 233.
- ³⁸ "Hopedale. Opening of the Chapel at Uviluktôk, or Double Island," *Periodical Accounts* 5, no. 56, (1903): 368–69.
- ³⁹ S. J. Townley and A. H. E. Asboe, "Hopedale," *Periodical Accounts*. 11, no. 2 (1921): 83–84.
- ⁴⁰ George Harp, "Annual Report from Hopedale. July 1st, 1930," *Periodical Accounts* 139 (1931): 70.
- ⁴¹ W. W. Perrett, "Annual Report, July 1st, 1934–June 30th, 1935," *Periodical Accounts* 144 (1936): 82.
- ⁴² Siegfried P. Hettasch, "Hopedale," Periodical Accounts 160 (1952): 36.
- ⁴³ F. M. Grubb, "Hopedale," Periodical Accounts 166 (1958): 22.
- ⁴⁴ Inge and Gerhard J. Vollprecht, "Annual Report for the Year 1960. Hopedale," *Periodical Accounts* 169 (1961): 11
- ⁴⁵ "Extract from the Diary of Zoar, from August 1872 to July 1873," *Periodical Accounts* 29 (1873–76): 58.
- ⁴⁶ Earl Winsor, "The Kyle Was Many Things to Many People," *Them Days* 9, no. 4 (1984): 53–54
- ⁴⁷ Joase Onalik, "Nutamiongovunga / I am from Nutak," trans. Bertha Kairtok Holeiter, *Them Days* 7, no. 3 (March 1982): 24.
- ⁴⁸ Davey, The Fall of Torngak, 230-31.
- ⁴⁹ Nurse Walmsley, "A Warm Welcome in a Cold Land," *Moravian Missions* 13, no. 3 (March 1915): 37.
- ⁵⁰ H. Simon, "Hebron," Periodical Accounts 8, no. 96, (1913): 638.
- ⁵¹ A. Martin, "Hebron," Periodical Accounts 11, no. 2 (1921): 90.
- ⁵² C. and S. Waldmann, "Report from Hebron From July 1st, 1929 to June 30th, 1930," *Periodical Accounts* 139 (1931): 72.
- ⁵³ George Harp, "Annual Report for Hebron for the year 1933," *Periodical Accounts* 142 (1934): 90–91.

- ⁵⁴ George Harp, "Hebron," Periodical Accounts 148 (1940): 64.
- ⁵⁵ Siegfried P. Hettasch, "Annual Report for Hebron, 1945," *Periodical Accounts* 154 (1946): 46.
- ⁵⁶ "Hebron," Periodical Accounts 168 (1960): 14.
- ⁵⁷ Winsor, "The Kyle Was Many Things to Many People," 53–54.
- 58 Siegfried P. Hettasch, "Hebron," Periodical Accounts 164 (1956): 43.
- 59 "Labrador. Extract of the Diaries of 1849–1850," Periodical Accounts 20 (1851): 68.
- ⁶⁰ Samuel King Hutton, Among the Eskimos of Labrador: A Record of Five Years' Close Intercourse with the Eskimo Tribes of Labrador (Toronto: Musson, 1912), 65.
- 61 Joan Stedman, "Nursing at Nain," Them Days 19, no. 1 (October 1993): 17.