

Ajjiliurlagit: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Through the Photographs of Joseph Idlout

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How to use this guide:

This guide was designed to be used as a resource for educators in the classroom as they go through the online exhibition *Ajjiliurlagit*. A corresponding PowerPoint presentation has been developed that can be used in conjunction with this guide.

Exhibition Overview:

Ajjiliurlagit is an online exhibition which showcases the photographs taken by the Inuk hunter and camp leader Joseph Idlout (1911/12 – 1968). These photographs were taken between 1951 and 1958 and are selected from the Douglas Wilkinson fonds in the Nunavut Archives. The photographs include shots of family, friends, camp life and hunting scenes in the northern Qikiqtaaluk Region near Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik), most at Idlout's camp Aulatsivik between 1951 and 1954 as well as some photographs taken during a tour of Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaat) in 1958. The photographs in the exhibition, *Ajjiliurlagit: The Photographs of Joseph Idlout*, are organized thematically around Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) principles. These photographs offer viewers a chance to see what this period was like for the Inuit of Aulatsivik, through the eyes of an Inuk. Idlout's photographs let us see what life was like for some Inuit during the 1950s through the eyes of a skilled hunter, leader, and Inuk, during a time when Inuit were going through a lot of changes.

Joseph Idlout Bio

Joseph Idlout is one of the best-known Inuit of the 1950s. Idlout was the star of the film *Land of the Long Day* that was filmed in 1952. The film was directed by Doug Wilkinson, the man who gave Idlout his camera. The film made Idlout one of the most recognizable Inuit of his time. At one point, a picture of Idlout and his family was on the former Canadian two-dollar bill. In his camp Aulatsiivik, Idlout was known as a great hunter and leader. When the High Arctic relocation occurred in 1959, Idlout helped Inuit families adjust to their new surroundings in Resolute, Northwest Territories (now Nunavut). In 1954, due to the lack of foxes in the Pond Inlet area, Idlout requested that he move to Resolute.

Further information on Joseph Idlout can be found on the exhibition website on the section titled 'Joseph Idlout.'

Context:

During the period that these photographs were taken rapid changes were occurring in the North. Contact between Inuit and Qallunaat was becoming more frequent and with them came new food, styles of clothing, materials, and new types of technology, such as the camera. Many of these changes are captured in Idlout's photographs. It was also during this period that the Canadian government began moving Inuit into permanent settlements and away from their Ilagiit Nunagivaktangit or seasonal camps such as Aulatsiivik. It was also during this period that the Canadian government forcefully relocated many Inuit into the High Arctic, and the RCMP dog slaughters occurred.

Photographs of Inuit taken by Qallunaat

Joseph Idlout's photographs are especially unique because they present Inuit and Inuit culture from the perspective of an Inuk. During this time many of the photographs of Inuit circulated in the South were taken by Qallunaat (non-Inuit), showcasing Inuit through their perception of Inuit and their culture. Oftentimes these photographers wanted to document Inuit to show how "primitive" Inuit were in comparison to their own culture and lifestyle.

Karine Duhamel's article "Life on The Land" further explores this theme through an examination of photographs of Indigenous people taken by Qallunaat that were published in the Canadian magazine *The Beaver*.

<https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/first-nations-inuit-metis/life-on-the-land>

Questions:

While going through some of the photos in this article, or in the PowerPoint, use the discussion questions below, or your own, to encourage students to discuss what they see in these photographs and what they can tell us about the people in it, the time period, and what the photographers might have tried to convey.

What do these photos tell us about this time? (How Inuit lived, etc.)

What do you see in these photographs? (Have students describe what is happening from their own perspective.)

What did Qallunaat think about Inuit at this time? What might they have thought about these pictures? Is it different from what you think of when you see these photographs?

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

As you dive into Idlout's photographs you will notice that the photographs have been organized according to the Inuit knowledge system known as Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) which is comprised of eight guiding principles which apply to different aspects of life.

The section of the website 'Ajjiliurlagit Exhibition' will introduce you to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, its purpose, and each of the eight guiding principles.

Guiding questions:

What is Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit? What are its goals?

Why are they important?

What are some Inuit values?

Why Organize the Exhibition through IQ?

This exhibition is organized through Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles because we found that when we looked at Idlout's photographs, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles could be identified within each image. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit would have been a big part of Idlout's life because it shapes the way Inuit look at the world. By looking at the photos through the lens of IQ it gives viewers a deeper look into these photographs, and into the lives of Idlout and the Inuit at his camp. If you don't have this understanding of Inuit and Inuit culture, you might see things differently.

Discussion questions to go through while viewing Idlout's images:

- What do you see in these photographs? What stands out to you?
- What do you think Idlout wanted to show in these photographs? What do you see in the picture that makes you say that?
- Why do you think he chose to photograph these images in particular?
- What do they tell you about Inuit? Our relationships? What's important to us? How Inuit raise their kids?
- Do you see Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles in these photographs? How/Where? Would you organize the photographs a different way?
- What differences can you see between the photographs of Inuit taken by Idlout compared to the photos taken by Qallunaat?

Take-home activity:

Have students choose one Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principle and have them take a photo that represents that value in action.

Questions:

What principle did you select? How is this principle presented in your photograph?