

THE LABRADOR INSTITUTE OF MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY
& THE COLLEGE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

present

LABRADOR/ANS ON FILM

2016-17 SEASON

NIGEL MARKHAM RETROSPECTIVES

Traditionally, our program notes focus on the materials at hand. But given the nature of these screenings, we felt it more appropriate to say a few words about all of Markham's work in Labrador. In some cases, we have reproduced program notes. In others, we have reconsidered original statements. And in other still, we have prepared new notes. As I have said elsewhere, Nigel Markham's films provide a space for us to hear. Over the course of 35 years, those spaces have advanced considerably.

1. *Land & Sea "Them Days"* Parts 1 & 2 (Dir. Dave Quinton, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1981). Coming out of Markham's work with the magazine during the mid- to late-1970s, these episodes engage as much in the mission of the magazine as they work to profile it and its editor, Doris Saunders. Both episodes convey a range of stories from across Labrador. Particularly striking, though, is the range of voices and accents the episode captures. It is an expression of the diversity and sonority of Labrador's storytellers.
2. *Mirage* (Dirs. William B. Ritchie and Nigel Markham, 1983). Difficult to come by, *Mirage* is the only of Markham's work in Labrador that falls under the banner of experimental filmmaking. Shot by Bill Ritchie with Markham's Bolex camera, the film is made up of point of view footage from a dog sled (piloted by Gilbert Haye) and a drum/vocal score by Thomas Noah. Markham, who also served as the film's editor, renders the final product across two screens.
3. *Land & Sea "Mushuau Innu"* (Dir. Dave Quinton, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1984). Though heavy on Quinton's narration – union regulations prevented the extensive use of location sound recorded by Markham – this episode is important because of its timing and access. Unlike a range of other productions by outsiders, this episode devotes equal time to life on the land and in Davis Inlet, creating a broader picture of a strong culture in a moment of transition. Markham's intimate depictions of winter life on the land are remarkable. We are left to wonder what words were meant to accompany these images.
4. *The Last Days of Okak* (Dirs. Anne Budgell and Nigel Markham, National Film Board of Canada, 1985). When first programmed in *LoF*, I suggested that *Last Days* was one of the most iconic films about Labrador. It is a claim I maintain. The film is one of the most celebrated coming out of Labrador and has screened as far afield as Taiwan. The significance derives from its directness. In it, interviews with Maggie Saunders, Rosie Ford,

Emelia Merkeratsuk and Martha Joshua are paired with the voices of the Moravian Missionaries. All work to describe the decimation of Okak by the Spanish Flu.

5. *Hunters and Bombers* (Dirs. Hugh Brody and Nigel Markham, National Film Board of Canada with Nexus Television, 1991). As I suggested when we first programmed the film, in *Hunters and Bombers*, there is a certain confluence of media and history, of filmmakers and subjects here that defies reproduction. Arising out of a chance meeting between Markham and Brody in the field – both were preparing separate films on Innu resistance to low-level flying – the pair came to pool their resources to create one film that is both comprehensive in its scope and intimate in its focus. Today, the practice of resistance we see here echoes loudly.

6. *Place of the Boss: Utshimassits* (Dir. John Walker, National Film Board of Canada, 1996). *Place of the Boss* was shot in the wake of the 1992 Davis Inlet People's Inquiry. Its subject is a difficult one, but as its title suggests and as we come to understand, it is difficulty precipitated by colonialism. In addition to serving as cinematographer, Markham worked alongside Camille Fouillard to broker the interviews that make up the film. Like *Hunters and Bombers*, it is a film that listens.

7. *Eye of the Storm* (Dir. Nigel Markham, National Film Board of Canada with Lazybank Productions, 1997). *Eye of the Storm* examines the connection between encroaching mining development and the then in-process Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement. It is, in one sense, a film about the process of communication. Focussing on the work of organizations such as the OKâlaKatiget Society, the Labrador Inuit Association and the various mining interests in the area, the film examines the value of information in the process of development and the process by which it is conveyed.

8. *In Caribou Country: The Adventures of William Brooks Cabot in Labrador, 1903-1910* (Dir. Nigel Markham, Lazybank Productions, 1997). William Brooks Cabot meticulously recorded his travels in northern Labrador and experiences with the Mushuau Innu in both written word and still photography. *In Caribou Country* retraces and examines Cabot's journeys through these surviving records. Markham uses Cabot's photographs as the basis for creating his own visuals. Often a still taken by Cabot will fade into Markham's recreation of that same shot. No mean feat! What is important to remember that the words presented are those of Cabot himself – they are not Markham's.

9. *Forever in Our Hearts: Memories of the Hebron Relocation – Ommatimmiutagennaniattavut: IkKaumset Hebaronimit Notitausimanningit* (Dir. Nigel Markham, OKâlaKatiget Society, 2001). An audio-visual document of the 1999 reunion at Hebron, this film serves as a companion piece to Carol Brice Bennett's book *IkKaumajannik Piusivinnik – Reconciling With Memories* (Labrador Inuit Association/ Torngâsok Cultural Centre, 2000). *Forever in Our Hearts* stands as the only known audio-visual document of the reunion of a resettled community in this province. As such, it is extremely rich in that it engages and records people, who, after the title of Ms.

Brice-Bennett's book, are reconciling with their memories – of people looking to understand their own disrupted histories. The emotions generated by such a reckoning are, as you will see here (and as you may know first-hand), are extremely difficult.

10. *Without Consent: The Resettlement of Inuit of Northern Labrador – Angimajuka Tinnagu: Notitausimanningi Inuit Labrador Tagganimiut* (Dir. Nigel Markham, OKâlaKatiget Society, 2003). This film provides us with one of the most comprehensive examinations of the events that up to the resettlement of Hebron. While you will immediately notice his signature technique here – the extensive use of still photography – which is supplemented by two other techniques that we have yet to see in one of his films: the use of historical film footage and historical re-enactments. Does this affect our understanding of the events that led to the resettlement of Hebron? Does the use of historical re-enactments perhaps humanize those people that made the decision to resettle?

11. *Till We Meet Again: Moravian Music in Labrador* (Dir. Nigel Markham, Lazybank Productions, 2012). A deceptively straightforward film, *Till We Meet Again* does the complex task of telling the story of a tradition. Pairing together the voices of historians, musicians, tradition bearers and local audiences, we come to understand the vitality of Moravian music in Nunatsiavut in terms that are, at the same time, historical and immediate, local and cosmopolitan.

Coordinated by Morgon Mills

Curation and program notes by Mark Turner

With sincerest thanks to the organizations that produced these materials.

