

**Ross, W. G. 1975.** Whaling and Eskimos: Hudson Bay 1860-1915. National Museums of Canada Publications in Ethnology 10.

(Author's summary)

British and American vessels pursued the bowhead whale in Hudson Bay for just over half a century before bringing the whale stock close to extinction. During this period whaling exerted a powerful, sustained influence upon the Eskimo, who had hitherto enjoyed only sporadic and irregular contact with passing explorers and distant trading posts.

Most of the whaling activity was concentrated close to the mainland coast in northwest Hudson bay, where whales were abundant from may to September. Because restrictive ice conditions in Hudson Strait made voyages to the whaling grounds long and hazardous, most of the 146 vessels entering the Bay wintered over, in order to profit from a second summer on the grounds. The long (ten-month) period of inactivity in the several winter harbours facilitated prolonged contact with the Eskimos, in particular with the Aivilingmiut and Qaernermiut. The natives became indispensable to the whalers, assisting in whaling, hunting and overland travel, while the whalers came to be essential to the new Eskimo way of life – a way of life in which firearms, whaleboats and a wide variety of imported goods played an increasingly important role. This economic interdependence constituted the foundation of the Eskimo-whalers relation.

Relying heavily on ships' logbooks and private journals, the only substantial first-hand records of events on the whaling grounds, this monograph examines whaling operations, trade, employment, the introduction of guns and whaleboats, and their impact upon Eskimo numbers, distribution, economy and health.