

ISSUE 3, 2021

YUKON • NWT • NUNAVUT

moveuphere

TO CANADA'S TERRITORIES

GETTING TO THE TERRITORIES

Road and
plane routes

HOOKED ON THE NORTH

They came for a year
and stayed a lifetime





Issue number 3, 2021

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ON THE COVER:
 FORT SMITH, PIERRE EMMANUEL CHAILLON/NWT
 LEFT: GRACE WILK SCOTT, AURORA, NUNAVUT



Winter is just fine, thanks

Yes, the temperature can hover around -40 for days at a time. Yes, stiff winds can blow the snow into clay-hard drifts. And yes, daylight hours are few from November until February. But as a former Torontonian, let me tell you that a cold, windy, winter day in the North is not half as bad as a cold windy winter day at the corner of King and Bay in Toronto.

So why the difference? Well firstly, in the North we dress properly for winter. No fashion statements here. Just a heavy parka with a fur trimmed hood; a pair of properly lined boots and locally made mitts lined either with fur or stroud. And of course, we love to say "it's a dry cold up here". There's no uncomfortable dampness or slushy, salty snow ruining your car or boots. And in the north, for most of the winter the snow really is white, made more colourful by the slanted rays of light from the sun in its winter position low on the horizon.

Since winter lasts anywhere from four to six months, most northerners revel in the season. It's a time to snowmobile, ski, snowshoe, mush dogs, or spend evenings staring at the Northern Lights, visible on clear nights. Some northerners try weekend camping - trusting a piece of canvas and a space age stove to protect them from the elements.

But for those looking for something less rugged, there are comfortable wilderness lodges where you can spend a weekend outside at your favourite winter activity, or inside enjoying a hot drink in front of a crackling fire.

And speaking of fires, cutting wood is another winter activity. If you live in Yukon or NWT (apart from a few communities) you may have a small fireplace or airtight stove in your house...which means lots of exercise sawing and chopping wood. And if you live in treeless Nunavut and want a fireplace, there's still a lot of sawing and chopping, but the wood is mainly from discarded shipping palettes.

Different parts of northern winter have different recreational and entertainment opportunities. From late November until January seasonal lights enliven even the smallest communities. Then in February, as the days get longer, more and more people are skiing or snowmobiling on moonlit trails. Then comes March and April, harbinger of northern spring, and the height of carnival season with dog team and snowmobile races, fishing derbies, bannock making competitions and that's just for starters.

By April as the snow starts to melt, winter is forgotten and tune ups start on outboards, fishing reels, bicycles, as we enter our other favourite season. Summer.

Marion LaVigne
 Publisher



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Photo: Carson Asmundson, NWT Post-Secondary Student/ECE Intern

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GETTING HERE

There's no need for a dogsled these days to reach the Canadian North, though that kind of travel is an adventure everyone should have at least once. Instead, there are thousands of kilometres of all weather highways snaking into Yukon and the Northwest Territories from British Columbia and Alberta.

The Alaska Highway, the Dempster to Inuvik, and the new road to Tuktoyaktuk thread through the Yukon to the northern NWT coast. Scenic highways connect all Yukon communities except Old Crow. In the NWT, the Mackenzie Highway system connects communities around Great Slave Lake to Fort Smith on the Alberta border, west to Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie River and as far north as Wrigley.

Freight can travel by rail into the NWT at Hay River, and marine transportation delivers freight to coastal communities in Nunavut and coastal and river communities in the Northwest Territories.

But to travel north in style, airlines shorten the distance, for sure. Residents and visitors can fly by jet most days each week from Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa and Montreal to northern hubs in Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.



PHOTO COURTESY NWT

Whitehorse, Yellowknife, Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit have regular jet links to the south. Jets carry on from Yellowknife to Norman Wells, Inuvik and Cambridge Bay.

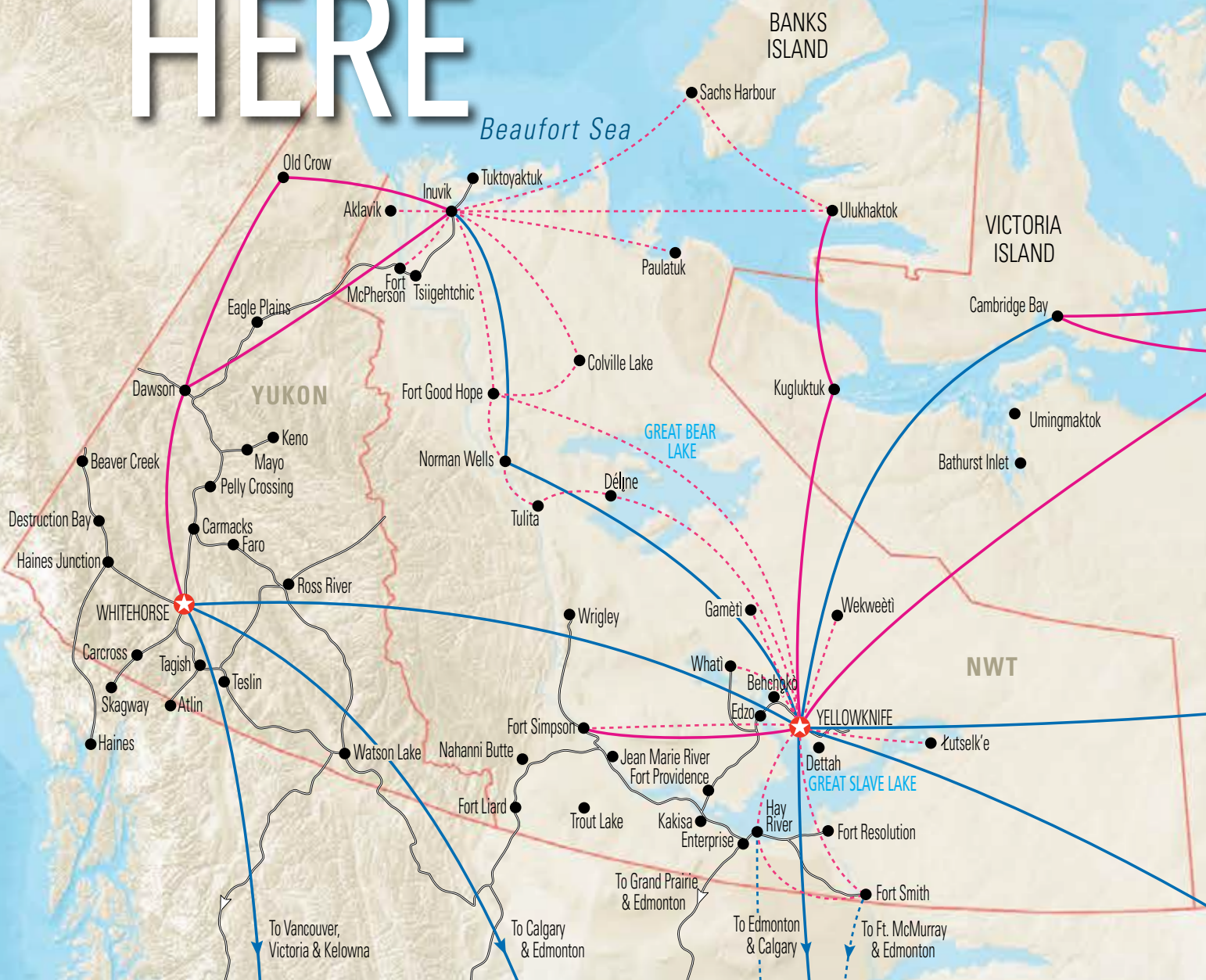
But from the four hubs, more fuel-efficient, turboprop aircraft of varying sizes fly scheduled flights to smaller communities across the territories. There are six regional airlines flying smaller aircraft, based in Yellowknife, Norman Wells, Inuvik, Fort Smith and Rankin Inlet.

When the weather is clear, there's a fine view from the air over vast areas of tundra, rivers and lakes - and passengers can trace routes that once took weeks to travel.

Though air connections are generally convenient, and airline crews are friendly and helpful, winter weather and summer storms can play havoc with air schedules. Usually there is plenty of warning, and flights are cancelled before boarding, but passengers do occasionally have to overnight in small communities somewhere along their route, or return to their departure point without reaching their destination. Experienced travellers take these delays in stride, and often make new friends while they wait. They'll all be booked on the next flight.



GETTING HERE





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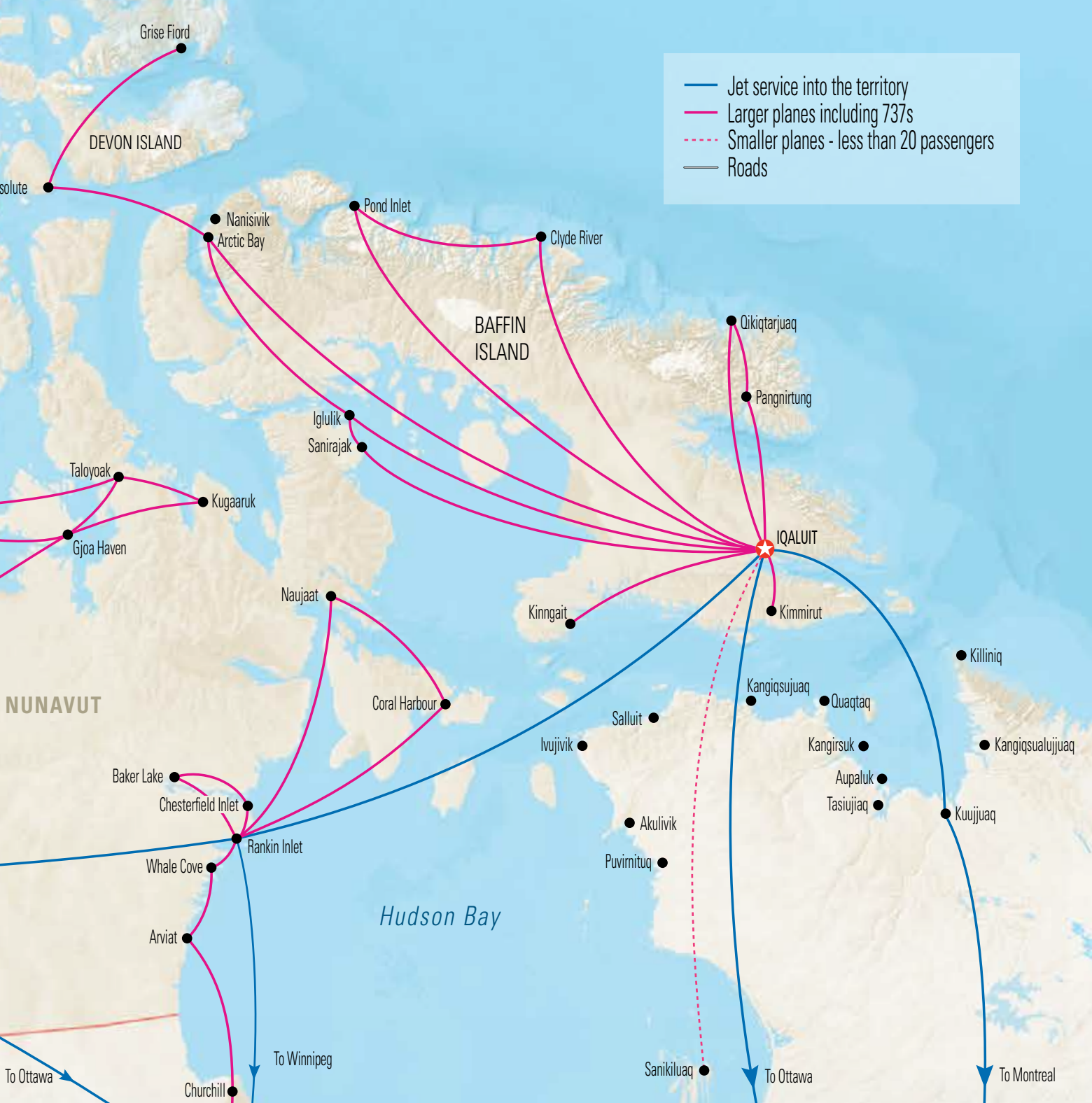
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Janie Hobart
FORT SMITH, NT

**CAME FOR: ONE YEAR
STAYED FOR: 40+ YEARS**

Although Janie Hobart and her late husband had lived all over the globe, nothing could prepare her for life in Tuktoyaktuk, NT.

The couple meant to move up north for one year in 1981 when Hobart's husband got a job as a school administrator. And although it took some time to get used to the small and isolated northern community after living in Greece, Australia and India, she says she enjoyed the experience.

"I'm really glad we went to Tuk first because I have a better understanding of what small communities are like," Hobart says.

Rather than moving back to Alberta the following year, the couple headed south to Fort

Smith, where her husband took a job teaching Grades 10 to 12 at the local high school.

While Hobart worked during that time, she was more focused on starting a family and becoming a stay-at-home mom. In Fort Smith, the couple raised two sons.

Fort Smith was much better suited for the family than Tuktoyaktuk was, because it was easier to go and visit family in Alberta when they wanted. "We liked the lifestyle," she says. "It's a nice area and a really nice place to raise children." There were always ample opportunities to take part in activities and hobbies outside of work, too. On her second day at work with the RCMP, for example, Hobart's boss invited her to join the Fort Smith Curling Club, where she has been playing ever since.

CAME FOR A YEAR, **STAYED FOR A LIFETIME**

The North really is a land of opportunity. When jobs draw people here, they often plan to only stay a year or two, pad their resume and then return home. But what they don't expect is to fall in love with the North's wild waters and lands, its tight-knit communities and friendly people. Once these newly-landed Northerners fall for the place, they end up exploring more of the territories. And the more they see, the more connected they feel to their new home.

BY DANA BOWEN

She's also the championship director for the NWT Curling Association.

Above everything else, Hobart loves Fort Smith most for its sense of community, and the fact that there are people from all over Canada living in one small place.

"I've learned more about Canada since moving to the North than I probably ever knew before," she says. In 2009, Hobart was elected mayor of Fort Smith—a position she held for more than three years.

Hobart's husband passed away in 2007, but she continues to live in Fort Smith part-time, while spending the winters in Edmonton closer to family. She's content to keep Fort Smith as her primary home because, after all, it's where some of her best memories were made.

Frank May

ARCTIC BAY, NU

**CAME FOR: 2 YEARS
STAYED FOR: 39+ YEARS**

In 1982, Frank May took a seat in the back of a cargo plane and began the journey North. As a recession hit hard across Canada, May decided to leave behind an engineering job in Ontario where layoffs were imminent. He turned his sights north in hopes of starting anew at the power commission, but as the plane neared Frobisher Bay (now Iqaluit), May began having second thoughts. He looked out the window at the neighborhood of Apex, which he said consisted of about 30 houses at the time.

"I thought, 'Oh my god what did I do to myself?'"

It was the middle of January and May had little idea of what the community had to offer. All he

knew was what workers from his new employer's head office, based in Edmonton, could tell him. It turns out, they knew very little.

"I asked 'What do people do in Frobisher Bay?' And you could hear them yelling around the office, 'What do they do in Frobisher Bay?' It finally came back that they're fur trappers. They're all fur trappers," they said."

Luckily, May's view of the North turned around after meeting Leah Qaqqasiq. May moved to Norman Wells, NT after a few years in Iqaluit, but all the while, the two kept in touch. He eventually flew back to Iqaluit for Qaqqasiq's teacher college graduation.

"And we got married a week later in Ontario," he says. The couple eventually moved to Qaqqasiq's home town, Arctic Bay, so she could start her career. "I came up here riding on her coattails because she got the job and the house. In 1986, we came up here and have lived here ever since."

The couple have two daughters together, including Becky Han, a singer, songwriter and social influencer.

While May and his wife often fly across the country to visit their children, May says they plan on staying in Arctic Bay for the foreseeable future. When the couple gets older, they may reconsider.

"As long as we're able to navigate, I think we're staying. We can't see a reason to go," he says.

"Everybody has to live someplace and it's a pretty good place to be."



Alexander MacKay

WHITEHORSE, YT

CAME FOR: 3 MONTHS
STAYED FOR: 20+ YEARS

Within a couple of hours of stepping off the Greyhound bus in Whitehorse, Alexander MacKay knew he had found home.

At 22 years of age, MacKay had just graduated from Concordia University in Montreal and set off to Calgary, ready to start his career.

"I figured I'd take my degree and conquer the world and all that," he says. "And then everything went wrong for me." MacKay applied for countless jobs in the city, where he faced rejection after rejection. Finally sick of it, he said he "needed to regroup," and he began to think about finding work elsewhere. That led him to follow another dream. Since childhood, MacKay had a fascination with

the North due to Ted Harrison's vibrant paintings of mountain peaks and winding rivers. So he headed north to Watson Lake, Yukon, where he landed a summer job at a hotel. There, he did a little bit of everything—from hauling luggage to housekeeping to manning the front desk.

Nearing the end of those three months, he took a weekend trip to Whitehorse.

"Everyone I ran into was really friendly and what I really noticed was the energy here felt different," he says. "It's also so clean, so healthy and I don't know—something just felt right."

It didn't take long for MacKay to accept a job in the city with an afterschool program, which is the type of work he continues doing today.

He is now celebrating 20 years in the North, where he has since

started a family. He and his partner Danielle run their own afterschool daycare centre together.

"I came here as a 22-year-old and now I've got a family and a business and established myself and I don't imagine I'm ever leaving," he says. "It always just felt right."



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Clarence Wood

INUVIK, NT

**CAME FOR: LESS THAN A YEAR
STAYED FOR: 51+ YEARS**

For the first three months of Clarence Wood's time in Iqaluit, he hated it. The recent college grad moved north from New Brunswick in 1970, after his brother convinced him to come up for work.

"I didn't really know what to expect. [My brother] hadn't told me much except that there was work there if you wanted to do it. There

was no work in New Brunswick," Wood says.

Within a few days of stepping off the plane, Wood got a job working as a casual for the power commission, but ended up working 12 hours a day, seven days a week.

During that time, Wood says it rained every day and he was working so much, he didn't get to explore the community. But when he found other work four months later, things started to turn around for him.

"I got to see what the community was like and got involved in things like playing ball, playing hockey and making friends," he says. "I really grew to love the North."

But in 1975, he got frustrated. Thinking he was done with the territories, Wood returned home to New Brunswick. It didn't take long for him to realize he had made a mistake.

"I found out when I got there that I missed the North and could

hardly wait to come back. There was nothing [in New Brunswick] for me," he explains. "You realize how good you actually have it in the North."

Less than two years later, Wood got a job with the territorial government in Cambridge Bay and then, in 1987, he moved to Inuvik. He fell in love with that community.

"The first thing I noticed was the price of groceries. I thought I died and went to heaven," he says. "I cut my grocery bill by at least 50 per cent and we had four kids at the time so it made a big, big difference. The services available for recreation and everything else made it a great place to stay."

Wood's children have since grown up and he is now enjoying retirement alongside his wife. Fifty-one years of living in the North and he has no intentions of leaving.

"I enjoy it. I'll die here," he says with a laugh.

Editor's note: In late September, Clarence was acclaimed as mayor of Inuvik after many years as a town councillor.



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Summer

	DAYLIGHT JUNE hours	AVG TEMP JULY degrees C	RAIN AUGUST mm
Whitehorse	19	9 to 21	40
Yellowknife	20	14 to 22	36
Inuvik	24	10 to 20	34
Cambridge Bay	24	6 to 13	30
Rankin Inlet	20	8 to 15	61
Iqaluit	20.6	5 to 12	59
Pond Inlet	24	4 to 10	40

Winter

	DAYLIGHT DECEMBER hours	AVG TEMP JANUARY degrees C	SNOWIEST MONTH * cm
	5.8	-11 to -19	December 13
	5.1	-22 to -29	November 9
	0	-22 to -29	October 7
	0	-29 to -35	October 8
	5	-27 to -33	May 17
	4.5	-23 to -30	May 15
	0	-28 to -30	October 11

* 8 times liquid equivalent
 Source: Weatherspark.com



PHOTO BY MICHAEL H. DAVIES

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