



Early Inuit Studies: Themes and Transitions, 1850s-1980s

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This collection of 15 chronologically arranged papers is the first-ever definitive treatment of the intellectual history of Eskimology—known today as Inuit studies—the field of anthropology preoccupied with the origins, history, and culture of the Inuit people. The authors trace the growth and change in scholarship on the Inuit (Eskimo) people from the 1850s to the 1980s via profiles of scientists who made major contributions to the field and via intellectual transitions (themes) that furthered such developments. It presents an engaging story of advancement in social research, including anthropology, archaeology, human geography, and linguistics, in the polar regions. Essays written by American, Canadian, Danish, French, and Russian contributors provide for particular trajectories of research and academic tradition in the Arctic for over 130 years.

Most of the essays originated as papers presented at the 18th Inuit Studies Conference hosted by the Smithsonian Institution in October 2012. Yet the book is an organized and integrated narrative; its binding theme is the diffusion of knowledge across disciplinary and national boundaries. A critical element to the story is the changing status of the Inuit people within each of the Arctic nations and the developments in national ideologies of governance, identity, and treatment of indigenous populations. This multifaceted work will resonate with a broad audience of social scientists, students of science history, humanities, and minority studies, and readers of all stripes interested in the Arctic and its peoples.

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