



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

## Guide to the David Irwin films of the Canadian Arctic, circa 1935-1960

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Human Studies Film Archives
<b>Title:</b>	David Irwin films of the Canadian Arctic
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1935-1960
<b>Identifier:</b>	HSFA.1993.16
<b>Creator:</b>	Irwin, David, 1910-1970
<b>Extent:</b>	Film reels (black-and-white color silent sound; 5543 feet) Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	Undetermined .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Received from Zachary Irwin in 1993.

### Processing Information

Titles are supplied by the archivist for untitled films.

### Preferred Citation

David Irwin films of the Canadian Arctic, Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution

### Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Please contact the archives for information on availability of access copies of audiovisual recordings. Original audiovisual material in the Human Studies Film Archives may not be played.

### Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

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## Scope and Contents

Arctic exploration and dog sledding footage from David Irwin. Contains dog sled rescue training and footage from the 1964 Worlds Fair's Eskimo exhibit organized by D. Irwin. Collection includes scrapbooks, biographical materials, and maps.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or Anthropology Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Eskimo/Inuit

Cultures:

Eskimo/Inuit

Types of Materials:

Sound films  
silent films

Places:

Arctic regions  
Canada  
North America

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## Container Listing

Eskimo Seal Hunting, circa 1940

Film reels (black-and-white sound; 733 feet)

Notes: Edited film shot around the hunting territory of Alukseevee Island, . Narration establishes the film as a document of the Eskimo way of life from winter to May, told as Idlouk, an Eskimo, would have told the story. Footage includes: dancing, dog sled and hitching dogs on separate traces, young girl cutting blocks of snow to put in bucket, boys playing with model boats in a pond, a family group removing snow from open water to put in seal nets, catching seals, butchering seals, making rock/meat caches, family packing belongings into boat which is on a sled in preparation of moving, girl eating biscuits, snow goose, murren nested in cliffs, putting seal skin boots on dog's paws, and blooming spring flowers. Film ends with seal hunt where the father uses a telescope to locate the seals and then, using a screen, stalks and kills them.

HSFA 1993.16.2

Fur Country, circa 1950

Film reels (black-and-white sound; 640 feet)

Notes: Edited film chronicles a week in the life of a fur trapper in James Bay, Canada.

HSFA 1993.16.3

Angotee: Story of an Eskimo Boy, 1953

1 Film reel (30 minutes; color sound; 1062 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film, produced by National Film Board of Canada, chronicles the life of Angotee (who is from near Baffin Island) from birth to age 20, when his own child is born. Film shows scenes of his mother, father, and grandmother; Angotee as a baby; his first caribou skin clothes; playing with sled dogs; his sisters learning to chew seal skin for boots and mitts; death of his mother; killing his first seal at age 12; his marriage in the Catholic Church at age 18; and Angotee with his wife and son leaving the family igloo at age 20.

HSFA 1993.16.1

Fort Nelson, B.C., Army Operations, circa 1938

Film reels (black-and-white silent; 727 feet)

Notes: Footage taken near Fort Nelson in British Columbia, Canada, documenting Irwin's strategy of rescuing downed pilots in the Arctic during World War II. Film appears to be a staged rescue including parachuting of trained sled dogs ("parapups") from airplanes, dogs being hitched to sled, and rescuing pilot.

HSFA 1993.16.4

Footage of Canadian Sportsmen's Show, circa 1941

Film reels (black-and-white silent; 381 feet)

Notes: Footage was probably taken at either the Canadian Sportsmen's Show at the Texas State Fair, Dallas or in Pittsburgh at the Armory. As a showman, Irwin featured Eskimo families in his "Eskimo villages" which toured to various fairs and other organized shows. Footage, shot of one of Irwin's villages, shows a kayak roll-over, a seal doing tricks, dog sled (on wheels), and log rolling. Also included are some shots of Irwin's parachuting dog sled rescue team.

HSFA 1993.16.5

Footage of Arctic and World Fairs, circa 1935-1960

Film reels (black-and-white color silent; 2000 feet)

Notes: Footage shot in the Canadian Arctic during Irwin's 1934-1935 dog sled trek includes: eating blubber; using an ice/water dip to get a drink of water; interior igloo scenes (nursing and sewing); fishing; making an ice cache; spearing fish and making a fish cache; polar bears; shooting birds; skinning seal; taking a boat to sea on dog sled; woman singing, drumming, and dancing; girl with baby; grave of Johan Svendsen; sealing with dogs and boat; using an ulu; ivory carvings; ship trapped in ice; stampeding musk oxen herd; two boats, the Polar Bear and the Shumagen; Gjoa Haven, King Williams Land; Haktuk and son; Irwin with Eskimos; scenes of dog sledding including feeding and dog fights; woman in elaborately embroidered parka; Eskimo smoking pipe; hunting seals with a screen; moose; making igloo; reindeer race; box drummer with other drummers and dancers; sea lions; mountain goats; and sod houses. Documented is a reindeer round-up in the early to mid thirties probably near Mackenzie River, Canada, with dancing using a box drum. Hunting and butchering of seals in the central Canadian arctic was filmed. Footage taken possibly at either the New York World's Fair or the World's Fair in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in the early to mid sixties documents "Dave Irwin's Eskimo Village," a show Irwin toured to various fairs which included Eskimos from the Canadian Arctic.

HSFA 1993.16.6