



*The Ulrikab family: (l-r) Ulrike, baby Maria, Tobias, Abraham, Sara*

## Abraham's Diary (Part Two)

Length: 52.00



*The Fox family: (l-r) Terrianiak, Paingo, Nachasak*



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## SYNOPSIS:

This is a story about the gulf in comprehension between white Europeans and North American Inuit, a gulf which spans more than two centuries.

In 1880, two Inuit families from Labrador were exhibited in European zoos. While European spectators gaped at them, the Inuit gazed back. And one of them kept a diary. It is the earliest known Inuit autobiography.

Late 19th century Europe fostered scientific racism, and spectators who flocked to the zoo exhibit expected to gape at "exotics" from some "primitive race". What they found instead were Labradorimiut who had been schooled by German missionaries for a century, spoke 3 languages, played German hymn tunes on violin, and who were keeping their own ethnographic notes on the "uncivilised" Europeans.

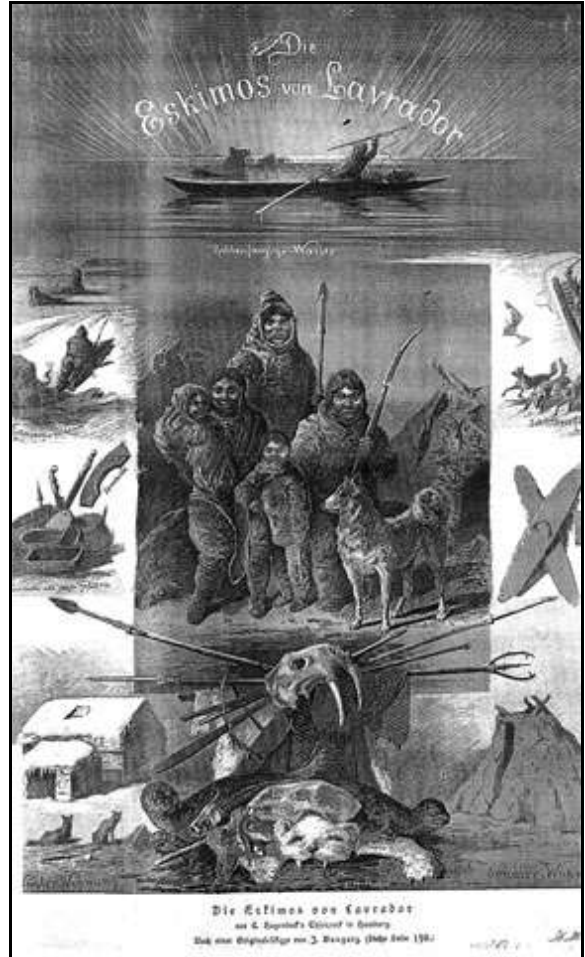
The feature ends with a 21st-century journey by Canadian Inuit who find European attitudes surprisingly unchanged in 130 years.

### **ABRAHAM'S DIARY broadcast as a 2-part series.**

Part One describes the relationship between Labrador Inuit and German Moravian missionaries which began in the 18th century. The missionaries brought their music, and banned the indigenous Inuit music as "heathen".

A century later, many Labradorimiut spoke some German, played German brass and string music, and had adopted the Moravian protestant religion. In August 1880, despite the missionaries' protests, a German zoo agent convinced two Labrador Inuit families to sail to Europe to participate in "ethnographic shows." They were to be paid and provided passage back to Labrador the following Spring.

Part One ends as their ship, captained by the Hagenbeck Zoo representative Adrian Jacobsen, sets off for Europe.



Berlin Zoo poster, 1880

**This Prix Marulic entry is Part Two of the series.** It picks up their 1880 journey in mid-Atlantic.



### **The feature is based on two 19th-century texts:**

- *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab* (Inuktitut 1880, German translation 1881, English publication 2005)
- *The Diary of Adrian Jacobsen*, 1881, unpublished.

MUSIC: *Abraham's violin*

ABRAHAM: I didn't want to act like a fool, but I know I have wished to see Europe, and some of the communities over here, for a long time.

BROOKES: The diary was written 130 years ago.

ABRAHAM: Our way is destined by the Lord.

BROOKES: Back in 1880, European fascination with life in the north was fixed on two Inuit families from northern Labrador. They'd been brought across the Atlantic to be exhibited in zoos.

ABRAHAM: I will have faith in god, here in Europe, that nothing bad will come across.

BROOKES: Unbeknownst to all the spectators gaping at them, the Inuit were gazing back. And one of them was keeping notes. This is his diary.

ABRAHAM: Pray for us.

SOUND: *Airline inflight announcement*

BROOKES: If you're flying to Europe today, you can't miss the health warnings about swine flu.

SOUND: *"Flu viruses can spread if you don't catch your coughs or sneezes hygienically, passing the flu from person to person. To prevent the spread of flu, when you cough or sneeze, catch it in a clean tissue, bin it, and kill it by washing your hands as soon as you can. Catch it... bin it..."*

BROOKES: Back in 1880, when Abraham, his wife Ulrike, their children Sara and baby Maria, their nephew Tobias - along with the Fox family: Terrianiak, Paingo and their daughter Nochasak – when they travelled to Europe, they went by boat, trusting the agent from the Hagenbeck Zoo who engaged them. And there was no in-flight video warning them about a far more deadly disease awaiting their arrival: smallpox.

LUTZ: They forgot to vaccinate. I wouldn't say it was callousness or neglect, but uh... they were not vaccinated.

SOUND: *Waves*

JACOBSEN: Johan Adrian Jacobsen, sea captain and trader. My diary: September 22, 1880. The eskimos are very seasick.

ABRAHAM: Yes. We are amazed at the Teachers' *[Moravian missionaries]* desire to come to us poor people, whereas we already had enough of just one sea voyage.

JACOBSEN: We have Helegeland in sight.

BROTHER KRETCHMER: Report of the congregation at Hebron, Labrador, 1880. We regret having to inform the community of Brethren that a number of Christian eskimos from Hebron and three heathen natives from Nachvak have been brought to Europe to be exhibited at the Zoological Gardens at Berlin.

JACOBSEN: September 24<sup>th</sup>, Friday. Arrival at Hamburg at 6 a.m.

MUSIC: *Marching band*

BROTHER KRETCHMER: The prospect of seeing something of the world, and earning plenty of food and

money without hard work was more powerful than the arguments and exhortations of the missionaries.

JACOBSEN: The eskimos were landed at once, with their luggage, where the arrangements for the eskimo show were made.

BROTHER KRETCHMER: For the degrading sight of such an exhibition of themselves, they had no feeling. Still less was it possible for the missionaries to open their eyes to the moral dangers to which they would be exposed in Europe.

JACOBSEN: Igloos were constructed, and tents erected. Their possessions were put on display, and we opened our exhibition October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

BROTHER KRETCHMER: The future of such persons is very gloomy. Unaccustomed to daily toil for their food in the fashion of the country, such travellers return to their home all but incapacitated for the resumption of their old life. As long as his money lasts, the eskimo will, on his return, probably revel in idleness, and then sink into poverty and misery. In view of these present and future dangers, the anxiety of the missionaries on behalf of these members of their flock can not be surprising, and we may be sure they will be the subject of many prayers at Hebron. The head of the Christian family, Abraham, is an unusually clever eskimo who plays the violin and has already picked up some knowledge of German. He is said to have impressed on his employer the condition that during his stay in Germany he shall be taken to visit our Brethren in Hernnhut.

ROLLMAN: I'm Doctor Hans Rollman, professor of religious studies at Memorial University. (*opens paper*) You see, we don't have the original Inuktitut diary. And the diary has been preserved in German translation. (*rustles paper*) (*reads the diary in German*) Diary of the Hebron Inuit Abraham about his stay in Europe 1880, translated by Brother Kretchmer. And it starts here with an introductory part, and then it goes to Berlin. And it goes on chronologically.

SOUND: *Steam train whistle.*

ABRAHAM: Now we will travel to different cities. Therefore pray for us, especially when we are in Catholic countries.

ROLLMAN: Abraham had an idealised version, presumably through the Moravian missionaries, of what European Christian culture was about, and encountered something quite different. He also reflects somewhat the Moravian Protestant fear of Catholics. Catholics had persecuted Moravians, so that that faith actually in the 17<sup>th</sup>, early 18<sup>th</sup> century, went underground.

JACOBSEN: October 4<sup>th</sup>, Monday. Went into hospital. I have been ill for a long time, and tried to recover by resting. Meanwhile, my old friend Adolph Schoepf from Dresden went with the people to the Berlin zoo.

ABRAHAM: Saturday, the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> of October. We arrived in Berlin by means of marvellous steam. At 9 o'clock we had left Hamburg. At 6 o'clock we arrived in Berlin, at our house that we built ourselves: a beautiful house, although only of boards.

SOUND: *Train stops*

ABRAHAM: Between some trees nearby to us is a music house. It is a cause for astonishment, really!

MUSIC: *Brass ensemble: Six German dances (Mozart)*

BAEHRE: I'm Dr. Rainer Baehre, at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, at Corner Brook, Newfoundland. The one

poster that I've seen for their exhibit at the Tiergarten when they arrived in Berlin – it's almost like looking at a comic book cover. The photographs that were taken show people who are very, if you like, normal looking: handsome and dignified. What you see in the poster is a deliberate attempt to present them as not only primitive, but prehistoric peoples. They're put into this imagined Arctic world, you know, with the Northern Lights and they have spears and so on. And again, it's not like those elements didn't still exist, but it's trying to present them as primitive human beings, and this was part of the appeal, of course.

SOUND: *Children's voices*

ABRAHAM: A lot of people wish to see our house, but it is impossible to be seen by all of them. Our fence is often broken by the crowds.

SOUND: *Crowd of voices, whistles.*

LUTZ: My name is Hartmut Lutz, at the University of Greifswald, Germany. For Abraham and his family, they probably expected a fairly civilised, fairly rich, well-organised Christian society. What they found was unruly crowds, incredible noise, enormous amounts of people compared to what they were used to, probably a lot of dirt, a lot of smoke, a fairly polluted environment by their standards, I would think.

SOUND: *Factory whistles, laughter.*

LUTZ: And people not like the missionaries – good Christians, trying to set good examples – but people who were trying to survive in an urban, capitalist society.

ABRAHAM: In Berlin, it is not really nice. The air is constantly buzzing from the sound of the walking and driving.

SCHOEPPF: October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Berlin. Dear Jacobsen, I would be glad when you come here, because the eskimos are no longer the way we expected.

ABRAHAM: It is impossible because of all the people and trees...

SCHOEPPF: Is it because they are already spoiled by their visitors?

ABRAHAM: So many children are coming...

SCHOEPPF: Is it that they don't want to come out?

ABRAHAM: ...our enclosure is filled up immediately.

SCHOEPPF: In short, I have a hard time making them work. Hopefully this will change when you are here, since you know what you have agreed on with these people. Yours, Adolph Schoepf.

LUTZ: So I think it must have been quite a culture shock that the people were not as "civilised" as the Inuit probably would have expected or hoped them to be.

JACOBSEN: October 27<sup>th</sup>. Travelled to Berlin where the eskimos had been since the 12<sup>th</sup>. My illness has subsided.

LUTZ: On the other hand, the Europeans - the Germans there and then later in France, in Prague – they wanted to see the exotic. They wanted to gape at exotic people. You know, people who go into zoos to look at animals, I think it was that type of attitude. I don't think that the majority thought of them really as human beings, as people who have a family and people who are

human, like everybody else. But rather as exotic objects.

- BAEHRE: On a Sunday when the price of admission was reduced, and we see the working classes, if you like, coming to take a look, there were as many as 16,000 paying customers in one day. And Abraham in his diary describes the unease that he felt by being this constant object of other people's gazes. It was, you know, probably a very demoralising sensation.
- ABRAHAM: Some kablunat [*white people*] make fun of us, but this did not make us tired, because their souls are also to be laughed at. I even answered some of them who were talking about us, since they could understand English. Some of them were horrified.
- LUTZ: People thronged around so much that there was a visit in the zoo of... we don't know whether it might have been actually the German emperor or somebody very high up from court... and there was such a throng that the police and some officers couldn't control the crowds.
- MUSIC: *Marching band*
- ABRAHAM: One day, an important gentleman came to see us, and had many gentlemen with him. They all came inside our fence to see the kayak, but then immediately everything was filled with people and it was impossible to move.
- SOUND: *Police whistles.*
- ABRAHAM: Both our masters, Schoepf and Jacobsen, shouted with big voices and most of them paid no attention. Since our two masters could not achieve anything, they came to me and begged me to drive them out. So I did what I could. Taking my whip and the harpoon, I made myself terrible.
- SOUND: *Shouts, whip cracks.*
- ABRAHAM: Some quickly shook hands with me when I chased them out. Others went and jumped over the fence because there were so many of them. Several thanked me for doing this, and our masters also thanked me very much. Ulrike had locked our house from the inside and plugged up the entrance so that nobody would go in, and those who wanted to look in through the windows were pushed away with a piece of wood. Our fellow companions, the Fox family, Terrianiak, have stopped being cheerful because they are tired of all the people, and we in the other house have been very patient although we are very tired, too. Constantly, when evenings come, we pray to be helped. Our praying seems to achieve some peace in us.
- MUSIC: *Edler Waltz*
- VOICE: Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung – Berlin, October 18, 1880: The Eskimos started their show on Sunday in the zoological garden to massive applause from an audience of almost 7000. The most interesting part of the show was probably the seal hunt, but the hunt on water is just as interesting. As well, they go on sledges pulled by dogs and show their talents at snowshoeing. All of which highly amuses the audience.
- VOICE: Morgenausgabe/Morning Edition, Berlin. October 23, 1880: The Eskimos put the polar bears of the Zoological Garden -- which has always been a place of tranquillity -- in truly hot excitement. As soon as an Eskimo comes close to his cage, it bursts to the bars in loud grunts and tries to break through them to attack his natural enemy, whom he recognizes despite the long captivity.
- VOICE: Berlin Abendausgabe-Evening Edition: The Eskimos from Labrador, who are now presented to us at the Zoological Garden, are representatives of a rapidly dying people. There are only 1100 Eskimos in all the missionary stations of the Moravians together. The population of Hopedale,

Labrador alone has decreased by 18 in the last six months. So one can almost predict the year when the people of the Labrador Eskimos will be entirely gone from the earth.

VOICE: Neve Preussische Zeitung, Berlin, Oct 23, 1880: In the Berlin Zoological Garden, Abraham of the Eskimos especially draws the attention of the visitors. Shortly before his departure to Europe he mapped the coastline of Labrador with its many bays and courses of rivers upon his own journeys. The sketch of the map is currently in the hands of the director of the botanical garden in Paris who wants to present it to the Geographical Society there. Abraham is also very skilled in drawing figures. Among other things, he did his self-portrait in watercolours, an achievement that – clumsy as it would seem – would nonetheless satisfy higher expectations in regard of likeness. Abraham also reads and writes the language of his country, and plays the violin.

VOICE: Morgenausgabe/Morning Edition, Berlin. October 23, 1880: The Labrador Eskimos do not seem to have any songs from their native country. When singing they appear to use German tunes which have been translated into their language, like "*Jarit dreissig inkasat, atik ulikatigi vagit*" which means "You are already 30 years old and have survived many storms."

MUSIC: *Edler Waltz ends*  
*Abraham's violin plays "Ich bin ein kleines Kindelein"*

ABRAHAM: I am constantly asked to write my name. At times there were so many voices clamouring. One person took it away from the next. There were so many requests, it was impossible to complete them all. On some days I have even played my violin outdoors, because the kablunat, the Europeans, desired it so greatly. Even if I'm not a perfect player, they don't mind.

GORDON: I'm Tom Gordon, the director of the School of Music at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I can't imagine what the Europeans expectations were, but they seem to have been very surprised by Abraham's musical abilities. I don't think that they would have suspected that he was as able a player on the violin as he was. Now, Abraham seemed very impressed with music that he heard in Europe, and there was a music pavilion across from where he was being displayed in the Berlin zoo, and he was quite delighted, obviously, with the fact that there were concerts there every Sunday. I don't think that he saw himself, at least from what I've read in the diary, as being a musician in any way different from the ones he encountered in Europe. What the Europeans thought, I don't know.

BROOKES: I mean, it seems to me, the Europeans who visited the zoo must have expected to see a bunch of savage people from some strange place in the world. The last thing they would have expected was somebody speaking German, English, and playing German music on a violin.

GORDON: Yeah. I think it was no less astounding that it would have been if the polar bears had picked up the violin and played it as well. I mean, just from the very fact that they were displayed in the zoological gardens suggests that the expectations were not that these would be fully formed musicians.

MUSIC: *Abraham's violin begins, interrupted by fairground music.*

VOICE: The Eskimos!  
Hurry up Berliners, great and small,  
Hurry up to the Zoo, one and all!  
Where Real Live Eskimos wait for you,  
Fuzzy headed and fishy too!  
The Man, the Wife, and the Little Brat  
Wearing sealskin furs and a caribou hat.  
But while they still walk around in wild animal furs, the Goldene 110 Shop is offering the following fashion selection:  
Over 8000 overcoats and Kaiser coats now half-off! Priced to go at only 5 to 9 thaler! 6000 very



exquisite English fall suits, the noblest for parlour and promenade, now for only 4 to 9 thaler! Trousers and vests, just 2 to 5 thaler! A huge stock of reduced winter coats! Erstes Deutsches Vereins-Magazin (Goldene 110). Leipzigerstrasse 110. Remember – that's number 110, the number for bargain values! No one beats our prices!

MUSIC: *Fairground music finishes.*

LUTZ: They were a craze, yeah. The thing is, if you have a...I don't know, a rock star.. coming to a town, a lot of people will try to cash in, you know. This is where he or she is staying this is like the clothes they wear, and this is exactly like the... If you want to study advertising and capitalism functioning, anything to make money, this is a good study. They were a big hit, yeah.

MUSIC: *Caliope*

VOICE: Hey! Hey! Mrs Ulrikey!  
Mister Abraham and Mrs Ulrike, Eskimos from Labrador  
Feel very odd indeed with harpoons and furs in Berlin!  
Mrs Ulrike just said to her spouse: "Your sealskin is so out of fashion! Your fur pants are so baggy! I'd like to see you dressed as a dandy!"  
And Mister Abraham immediately went to the Goldene 110 Shop, Leipzigerstrasse 110.  
Remember – that's number 110, the number for bargain values!

Station Break here during broadcast

MUSIC: *"Knut ist ein Kuschelbär..." (Knut the polar bear song)*

BROOKES: If you go to the Berlin zoo today, you'll find crowds lined up to see the zoo's star attraction: a young polar bear named Knut. He has his own hit song – this is it – as well as Knut teeshirts, videos, toys, and a whole line of merchandise catering to Europeans fascinated by life in the north.

MUSIC: *"Knut, Knut..." (Knut the polar bear song)*

BROOKES: In 1880, it was eerily similar. Arctic exotics, the star attraction of the Berlin zoo. The public stared at them; the scientists studied them.

SOUND: *Lecture hall.*

JACOBSEN: November 7<sup>th</sup>, Sunday. Approximately 16,000 people have visited them in the zoo. Professor Virchow gave a talk today on the eskimos.

VIRCHOW: Good evening, gentlemen of the Berlin Anthropological Society. My talk for this evening is entitled "The Eskimos at the Berlin Zoo." My examinations of the subjects included aspects of...

LUTZ: Rudolf von Virchow was really the foremost physician in Germany at that time, and the founder of the ethnological society.

VIRCHOW: ...anthropometric measurements of the face and body proportions, to determine whether they are deviant, as classified by Dr. Zeising's ratios for civilized races...

LUTZ: You should think of that period as a very prominent period in the development of scientific racism. Starting with applications of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, applying that to human "races", and trying – I mean that was a time of positivist research. You measured, you weighed, you counted everything, and tried to classify it into groups. And this is exactly what he tried to do with the Inuit, who were just objects.



- VIRCHOW: ...The colour of the hair is black without exception. Very thick, shiny black, similar to the manes of horses...
- BAEHRE: In the 1860's for example, I think in the wake of the Franklin disaster, we begin to see an interest in northern polar regions. Geographers and anthropologists wanted to know about Arctic people's skulls, their features, their stature, their intellectual and moral state, and so on. There was a sense that these people represented the human race in an earlier stage of development, and they were now verging on extinction. At least that's what was thought, and it was becoming increasingly important to collect this type of information before it was lost forever.
- VIRCHOW: ...Nothing has more forcefully strengthened the impression that the Eskimos are of a lower race, than their clumsiness in using numbers...
- BAEHRE: The assumption was that primitive peoples couldn't count more than the fingers on their hands, right? Similarly the assumption was that more primitive peoples had a degree of perception, an ability to perceive, that was inferior to the more physiologically advanced races in the world. So, not surprisingly, people of European descent at the top of the racial hierarchy, and other groups beneath them.
- VIRCHOW: . . .In any case, the Christianised eskimos prove that their brains are indeed able to develop, as evidenced by their artistic achievements in numerous...
- LUTZ: The long-term project would be to have a classification of major "races" of people on earth, and he wanted to find out whether the Inuit were a race in themselves. You know when I say "race" it gives me goosebumps because if you think of the Nazi period, of trying to classify races to establish an "aryan" race as superior, and then use pseudo-scientific data to substantiate that, this is like a prelude to that type of thinking. But then of course, it's easy for us today to interpret it like that. Similar things happened throughout the Western world. Read the Canadian Indian Act of 1951. How are aboriginal people defined? They're not seen as human beings, they're not seen as citizens. So the callousness of Virchow was not just his callousness. I think it was the callousness of Europe at the time, and he's unfortunately not an isolated example
- VIRCHOW: ...You will probably be interested in learning about the fit that I observed with Mrs Paingo the other day. While I was spreading her arms horizontally, because I wanted to take her fathom length – which seems never to have occurred in her entire life – she suddenly had the fit. She slipped underneath my arm and started carrying on all over the room with great fury, in such a way that I've never seen before, comparable to what people perform in a state of highest rage. She jumped from one corner to the other, and was screaming with a crying voice. Her ugly face looked dark red, the eyes were glowing, there was a bit of foam at the mouth. To sum it up, it was a highly disgusting sight.
- BROOKES: You know, if he'd walked up to a perfect stranger, a German woman on the street of his day, and demanded that he wanted to measure her body, surely he'd expect a similar angry response, wouldn't he?
- LUTZ: I don't know. If you did that today, you'd probably get a slap in the face or the woman would just turn around and say "What do you think?" you know. But at that time I don't think it was like that, and obviously he didn't dream of meeting such resistance.
- BROOKES: It's interesting, isn't it? Here's the Labrador Inuit being studied and gaped at by Europeans, and all the while one of them is writing his own observations of the Europeans.
- LUTZ: Yes, it's an inversion of the "colonial gaze." The colonised looking at the coloniser, and doing their ethnography of Europeans.
- VIRCHOW: ...newspapers. That concludes my presentation this evening. Thank you very much for your

attention.

SOUND: *Applause.*

MUSIC: *Abraham's violin plays "Jesu Geh Voran (Jesus Lead the Way)"*

ABRAHAM: On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, two friends of Father Hawatschek came to visit us. They were two Teachers, and they were so pleased to see us.

BROTHER DEWITZ: With shining eyes our Christians especially welcomed Dr. Kern, to whom Abraham had already sent a letter a day before.

ABRAHAM: They recognized us immediately and called our names and urged us to sing.

BROTHER DEWITZ: "The great teachers are sending us to you" -- that is about how Dr. Kern addressed Abraham in their language. "They are very sad that you have been so foolish as to come here, it will not do you any good. But now you are here anyway, and so they send you their best regards as our brothers and sisters, and admonish you to walk as Christians and to remain faithful to the Saviour".

ABRAHAM: When the teachers arrived they came in, but not immediately, because it was impossible due to all those people.

BROTHER DEWITZ: Much to our delight we heard from the director of the Zoo Dr. Bodinus, who was also present, that we had his generous permission to pick up our Eskimo brothers and sisters for a meeting in the Hall of the Brethren next evening.

MUSIC: *Church organ picks up same tune "Jesu Geh Voran (Jesus Lead the Way)"*

ABRAHAM: We went to church and prayed and sang together.

Brother DeWitz: That evening the Eskimos did not wear their seal fur but their white Communion dress.

ABRAHAM: We were all very greatly cheered, also all the kablunat. Together with all the people we sang together in the church "Jesu geh voran -- Jesus lead the way".

BROTHER DEWITZ: And it was a sight to see their moving faces after singing in German and receiving the Word preached to them by Dr. Kern in their tongue. Especially the moment when the whole community went down on their knees with them, and a heartfelt prayer closing with the Lord's prayer in Eskimo language rose to the Lord who watches over his foolish lambs in this place.

ABRAHAM: And again, there was choir singing. We were so full of feeling because of all the blessings, even the kablunat too. When the choir stopped, the leader of the assembly -- the man at the table -- called out, and then the trombones began to play: "Come ye Jesus, down from heaven to earth" and other melodies.

MUSIC: *Moravian trombone ensemble plays "Holy Lord" (Gianini Brass)*

BROTHER DEWITZ: The joy in their faces when they heard German choral singing and the sounds of the trombones of the Kirdorfer brass band -- those are all images that will be unforgettable for all those who witnessed this evening. We gave thanks to the Lord to have these souls among us. They are weak children, but nevertheless children of the one Lord, who paid for them with his blood.

SOUND: *Steam locomotive*

BROTHER DEWITZ: We hope to have the same impression of them when they visit us around the end of March in the Moravian community at Herrnhut, after their long travel to Frankfurt, Paris, Vienna, and St. Petersburg via Dresden. We grew very fond of them.

JACOBSEN: November 15<sup>th</sup>, Monday. Left Berlin at 8 a.m. Arrived in Prague in the evening. There our eskimos were in the Kaufmann's menagerie. Two huts had been built, one for the Christian family and one for the pagan, as in Berlin.

SOUND: *Train brakes.*

JACOBSEN: The working hours for the eskimos are 11 to 12, 3 to 4, and 6 to 8.

MUSIC: *Czech Polka (Quator de Cuivres de Friburg)*

JACOBSEN: As eskimos could never before be seen in Prague, the interest in us is great.

ABRAHAM: November 26<sup>th</sup>. I am writing here in Prague, here far away in a country of catholics, in a big city. We are here for two weeks, inside a big long house. It is impossible to go out in case we would be caught by the Catholics. One day in the afternoon at 4 o'clock,. Countless soldiers came. The big streets were completely filled. They carried fire lights, as well as lanterns provided with handles, and the horses had fire lights as well. But oh! They made such beautiful music with trumpets! It was most delightful to hear!

JACOBSEN: One day we did a mock hunt of some seals, which had been brought to a pond near the city.

ABRAHAM: I have caught a seal in Prague in a pond! An enormous crowd was watching, really an unbelievable number of people.

SOUND: *audience sighing and clapping*

ABRAHAM: When I harpooned it with the seal harpoon, everybody clapped their hands loudly, like eider ducks.

MUSIC: *Smetana: Ten Czech Dances*

ABRAHAM: When I finished, the musicians started up with violins, drums, trumpets and flutes.

SOUND: *music continues, steam locomotive begins.*

ABRAHAM: We went away from Prague to Frankfurt, where there are many people. But there we paddled the kayak often, even on a pond. From there, we went away again in the night, all of us, to Darmstadt.

SOUND: *music and locomotive*

ABRAHAM: In Darmstadt we had a beautiful house in one huge round house, which is a playground for skating in with wheels. We often drove the sled round and round inside the house, with all of us sitting on it!

SOUND: *music and locomotive stop.*

ABRAHAM: In Darmstadt one of us, Terrianiak's daughter Nochasak, stopped living.

SOUND: *locomotive whistle*

JACOBSEN: Imagine our dismay. The doctor attributed the cause of death to a sudden stomach ulcer. The

poor parents did not stop weeping from morning to evening. Naturally, this is deeply depressing for the others as well as ourselves.

MUSIC: *Moravian trombone ensemble: Requiem (Gianini Brass)*

JACOBSEN: December 16<sup>th</sup>, Thursday. The burial took place at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Officials had let the news be known to the public, so on our arrival at the cemetery several thousand curious people had come to look on. We had brought the parents and Abraham in a carriage, which I had driven to the graveside to avoid the crowds. I guided the parents to the grave, and the mother broke out into a loud wailing. I let her climb back into the carriage, and had her brought home.

SOUND: *steam train*

JACOBSEN: December 17<sup>th</sup>, Friday. Departure for Krefelt at 8 in the morning. The parents were remarkably composed, and even became talkative while we covered the scenic stretch from Mainse to Krefelt. Arrived at Krefelt at 7 o'clock in the evening. I was welcomed by Mr. Schoepf and the director of the zoological garden Mr. Stickmann.

December 24<sup>th</sup>, Friday. Christmas Eve, Krefelt Zoo.

MUSIC: *Moravian trombone ensemble ends*

JACOBSEN: Had order from Mr. Hagenbeck to buy various Christmas presents for the eskimos. The dining hall was made available to us, and there we had a very nice Christmas tree which we decorated and when all was ready, we let the eskimos come in. They enjoyed themselves very much, and were entertained as much by the tree as by the presents. These gifts consisted of underwear, a fiddle for Abraham, and a guitar for Tobias. We had wine brought in, and remained together until 11 o'clock, never suspecting what a cruel blow fate held in store for us.

December 25<sup>th</sup>, Saturday. Krefelt. In the zoo, Paingo fell suddenly ill tonight.

MUSIC: *Moravian trombone ensemble: Eisleben*

JACOBSEN: The symptoms were the same as her daughter's. We called for a doctor at once, Dr. Jacoby, who assured us that it was only rheumatism and we need not worry.

December 26<sup>th</sup>, Sunday. This morning two doctors came to examine the woman very thoroughly, but they could not conclude it was anything other than rheumatism. The doctors came in the morning and in the afternoon. Today little Sara also fell ill, complaining of chills and vomiting. I was invited to the home of Mr. Muhler, the owner of the zoo. We had a pleasant evening.

December 27<sup>th</sup>, Monday. The woman is very ill. If only it does not turn out the same as her daughter! How will this all end? We should have left today, but cannot under the circumstances.

December 27<sup>th</sup>, Monday evening. Tonight old Paingo died. We had been with her ten minutes earlier. The doctor examined her and assured us that it was not dangerous. We went downstairs to the carriage but Mrs. Jacobs came and told us to come quickly because the woman was dying! A moment after our return, she died. The husband of course is very sad with her dying, and said he wished he could follow his wife and daughter soon.

December 28<sup>th</sup>. Still in Krefelt, in the zoo. Today there was an autopsy by three doctors. Nothing was found to indicate a specific disease. The doctors lifted the top of her skull with its hair, in order to examine the brain. After the autopsy, I took this skullcap with me, and kept it. In

the evening Paingo was buried in Boschum cemetery, with many curious people present. Her husband and Tobias were there. This is a terrible time for us. I feel directly responsible for these people.

MUSIC: Abraham's violin: *"Jesu Geh Voran (Jesus Lead the Way)"*

JACOBSEN: December 29<sup>th</sup>. Our collection was packed, and in the evening everything was delivered to the railway station. Today the doctors have discovered that little Sara has smallpox, and she must be brought to the hospital, which happened this evening. At first I had a great struggle with her parents, who did not want to be separated from their child. I had to call upon Mr. Schoepf for help. Finally, Abraham was persuaded to give his child to the hospital. He brought her there himself, prayed with her, and left in tears.

ABRAHAM: She still had her senses while I was there. She even sang the hymn *"Ich ben ein kleines Kindelein"*: "I am a child so small".

MUSIC: Abraham's violin: *"Ich ben ein kleines Kindelein"*

ABRAHAM: When I was about to leave, she sent her greetings to her mother and little sister. When I left her, she was sleeping. From then on, she did not wake up anymore. For this we both had reason to be thankful.

MUSIC: *finishes*

ABRAHAM: While she was still alive, we went away to Paris and traveled the whole day and the whole night through.

SOUND: *locomotive whistle*

JACOBSEN: December 30<sup>th</sup>, Thursday. By 8 o'clock in the morning, we were at the railway station. I was astonished by the eskimos' equanimity. At 5 a.m. We finally arrived in Paris.

SOUND: *Train arriving, locomotive bell*

JACOBSEN: At 11 o'clock, Mr. Schoepf received a cable from Hagenbeck, announcing the death of little Sara.

SOUND: *Train brake, steam.*

JACOBSEN: I must admit it had a devastating effect on us all. For the first time I was completely at a loss. For one thing now was very clear: it is smallpox which had affected our unfortunate eskimos, and surely the other two had also died of it. The outlook is not hopeful. The first thing we will do tomorrow is to have the people vaccinated. On our arrival in Hamburg in September, none of us had thought of having the people vaccinated. I had had the Greenlanders I'd brought in 1877 vaccinated, but here it had been forgotten. Thus ended the Old Year.

MUSIC: *Moravian trombones: "Zurich" (Gianini Brass)*

JACOBSEN: We gave performances every day from January 1<sup>st</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup>. During this time all went well, and we started to believe that our run of bad luck was over.  
January 7<sup>th</sup>, Friday. Today, little Maria fell ill with smallpox.  
Saturday. Today, Tobias and Terianiak fell ill. What a dreadful prospect!

ABRAHAM: January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1881. My dear Teacher Elsner. I write to you in a very despondent mood, and I am very distressed about my family because our child Sara, whom I love so much, is also not living any more. She died of the evil smallpox four days after the outbreak of her sickness. She died

in Krefelt. Although she had many doctors, all of them really could not do anything.

JACOBSEN: January 9<sup>th</sup>. Today, Abraham fell ill as well.

ABRAHAM: Oh, my dear Teacher Elsner! All day we cry together that our sins will be taken away by Jesus Christ.

MUSIC: *St. John's Cathedral Choir: "Jesu geh voran" in English: "Jesus lead the way"*

ABRAHAM: We do not doubt that the Lord will hear us.

JACOBSEN: All the eskimos were brought to St. Louis hospital, and I got a room there too, in the same wing. So far, it seems that I have only 'Wechsel' fever. The doctors confirm that all four eskimos have smallpox.

ABRAHAM: We especially wanted to have Jesus as our doctor. Even Terrianiak, who is now alone, when I say to him that he should convert, desires to give himself to Jesus, sincerely, it seems. He constantly takes part in our prayers all day, as well as my child Maria. But even her life is doubtful, because her face is very swollen. Tobias is sick too, and although many doctors come they cannot seem to help.

JACOBSEN: Now the disease was thoroughly unmistakable: the face very red, the eyelids very swollen as well as the lips. They all suffered great pain. I felt terrible.

ABRAHAM: I know very well that there is only one who can help when our death time comes, and I trust in God every day that he will answer my prayers and will dry my tears.

JACOBSEN: January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1881. Monday. This morning at 11 o'clock little Maria died. She was everyone's darling.

ABRAHAM: I do not desire earthly possessions but this I long for: to see my relatives again who are back home, to speak to them of the name of the Lord as long as I live.

JACOBSEN: Poor Terrianiak has asked for a rope so that he can strangle himself for he is suffering terribly. With this disease dying is very hard.

ABRAHAM: My dear Teacher Elsner! Pray for us to the Lord that the evil sickness will stop if it is his will. But God's will be done.

JACOBSEN: January 11<sup>th</sup>. Today old Terrianiak has been freed of his pain. Tobias lay in a bed next to Terrianiak and the moment he died, Tobias got up and covered the corpse with a sheet, although he was so very ill that he might die at any moment himself.

ABRAHAM: I am Abraham, Ulrike's husband. I send you my regards, and my wife sends hers.

JACOBSEN: January 13<sup>th</sup>, Thursday. This morning at 2 o'clock Tobias died after the most terrible suffering. Ulrike has fallen ill but does not want to leave her husband.

ABRAHAM: If you write to the great Teachers, tell them that we send our greetings to them. The Lord be with you all. Amen.

JACOBSEN: This evening at 9 o'clock our dear Abraham died. I can hardly express what I feel. He, as well as Tobias, have asked us to deliver their earnings to their relatives in Labrador.

ABRAHAM: I am a poor man who is dust.

MUSIC: *choir finishes*

JACOBSEN: When I came to see Ulrike shortly after midnight, I tried to comfort her, but she put me off with her hand, as if she did not want to see anything more of me. At 2 o'clock this morning she died, the last of the eight. How dreadful! In the beginning it went so well -- how has it come to pass so differently from my intention?  
The Museum in Paris has bought all the objects from the graves in Labrador. Also Paingo's skullcap, which the doctors had removed in Krefeld during their search for the cause of the disease and which, wrapped in paper, I had stuffed into my suitcase between my clothes. When I left hospital, a professor from the museum had come to assess our material from the graves. I offered him this skullcap, as I wanted to get rid of it. The professor accepted it gladly, put it under his topcoat and marched off with it.

MUSIC: *Nain Inuit choir isings Moravian hymn in Inuktitut: "Jesusipta Saimaninga"*

BROTHER KRETCHMER: Hebron Mission Station, Labrador, 1881. To the Moravian United Elders Conference: Of course, we never expected at all that the local Eskimos would have to pay with their lives for their undertaking. But we are glad (*lieb ist es uns!*) that finally the situation became so serious that Abraham was able to see his mistake and feel ashamed of it. Abraham was our best violin player at church and we will miss him a lot. Now the Lord has decided according to his own will. He has placed the homesick ones in a better land, saved them from sin and earthly misery, and at the same time taught the locals -- the ones lusting for Europe -- a lesson. Because if they had come back healthy and rich, the craving to go to Europe and to get rich quick would have become an epidemic among the other Eskimos. Many of them who were looking at Abraham and his companions in envy last year, are now silent and happy not to have gone with them.

Best wishes to you and all your colleagues.  
Your humble brother, Kretchmer.

MUSIC: *Nain choir finishes.*

BROOKES: If there's a postscript to this story, we might look for it in our 21<sup>st</sup> century.

SOUND: *EU Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas in press conference:  
"According to our proposal, we are going to ban all seal products..."*

BROOKES: Europeans still view life above the tree-line with great interest. For many, it's a view that understands Northern wildlife less as a source of food and income, and more as exotic companion animals; that approaches Northern peoples less as equals in a discussion about renewable resources and sustainable hunting, and more as unenlightened primitives to be instructed.

SOUND: *Stavros Dimas: "...European citizens find these practices repugnant..."*

AIJU PETER: My name is Aiju Peter; I live in Iqaluit. And in 2007 we went to The Hague to tell the Europeans that their proposal to ban seal and sealskin products into Europe would have serious consequences for us. It was a bit difficult for me to get my point across because they didn't seem to want to hear that. They were very patronising. They were still thinking of the Inuit as "little eskimos" from a hundred years ago, and they looked like they wanted to keep us in that state, and we shouldn't take part in any commercial selling of the seal, and stuff like that. I think I was getting a bit upset about that, because we didn't need the Europeans to tell us that we should remain in a picture that they had of us a hundred years ago.

MARY SIMON: I'm Mary Simon, I'm the president of the Inuit Tapirat Kanatami, which is the organisation for the



Inuit of Canada. The parliamentarians that we were meeting kept saying that "Oh, we will, yes, Inuit are going to be exempt from these bans." But we don't buy that. I mean, even if there's an exemption, if there's no market we're not able to sell our products. And you know they say that the exemption is for Inuit who hunt traditionally. Now, we're not sure what that means. Is it by harpoon, if you...? We just don't know what the lines are. You know?

PETER: They say "If you use a dog team, if you use a harpoon, if you hunt seals in the traditional way, then we'll exempt it." Traditional - to them - they would like to define as a hundred years ago! And my response to that is: Okay, I can agree to that if the Europeans go back to using horses and carts, and if they will stop using electricity and all those modern conveniences, then maybe we could talk.

SIMON: Cultural bias is when people say there is only one way of living. They're not even making an effort to understand that we still depend on hunting and fishing as a way of life. It's not just about the economy, it's about our culture, it's about our way of life. That's who we are. That's what I mean by cultural discrimination. So it was pretty offensive. You know, some people in Europe, I'm sure they still think Inuit live in igloos, and that we're still going to sit there and obey everything that other people are telling us. It doesn't work that way.

PETER: I'm thinking it comes from years of romanticising the Arctic. The noble savages, the Eskimos, the idyllic, beautiful, "far north" people. I think it is patronising, it is... It is in my opinion cultural colonialism. And that is unacceptable.

MUSIC: *Abraham's violin (quartet): Ich bin ein kleines Kindelein*

-- END --

Abraham's violin played by: Christina Smith  
Abraham's diary read by: Solomon Simiak  
Adrian Jacobsen diary read by: Aiden Flynn  
Other Voices: Waldo Scharwey, Volker Meija, Delf Hohmann.  
Written & recorded by: Chris Brookes  
Recorded and produced at: Battery Radio  
[www.batteryradio.com](http://www.batteryradio.com)



*The mission at Hebron, Labrador, around 1860  
Drawing by Moravian Bishop Levin Theodor Reichel (1812-1878).*