



HJØRTHAMN

By Leif Johnny Johannessen



Coal mining under difficult conditions



The Governor of Svalbard is the Norwegian government's supreme representative in Svalbard. One of the Governor's most important tasks is the management of Svalbard's natural and cultural environment.

Cultural monuments in Svalbard

Svalbard possesses a special attraction. We would like as many people as possible - both today and in future - to experience the almost undisturbed natural and cultural environment of Svalbard. Even the oldest remnants lie exposed on the fragile soil; buildings, facilities and equipment are well preserved. Cultural monuments are therefore rich encounters with the past. But the limits of what the undisturbed can tolerate are easily surpassed by visitors.

Special adjustments made for visitors can distort the pristine picture most have come to experience. We would therefore like to leave both the environment and the cultural monuments as they are - with no pontoon bridges, no picnic tables or outdoor grills; with as few signs and guide posts as possible. This places great demands on visitors, but it probably gives most of them greater satisfaction and a more profound experience.

Traffic generally entails wear and tear and deterioration of landscape and cultural monuments. If you turn a single stone, it will stand out as a bright stranger among its grey relatives for decades. The piece of bone you took with you from the slaughter ground may be fun to show off, but it will nevertheless remain a stain in your souvenir collection. Rumaging through and picking up moveable objects is an insult to the past and a theft from the future which destroys primary sources and the experience of fragile cultural environments. Rules and regulations are therefore necessary - as much for visitors as for the environment.

The Regulations Concerning Cultural Heritage in Svalbard establish that all traces of human activity predating 1946 are protected cultural monuments. This applies to all types of buildings or remnants from houses, work and hunting/trapping facilities, bone remnants at slaughter grounds, graves, crosses, inscriptions, not to mention the large number of moveable objects: remnants from traps, bones, tools, ammunition and cartridges, pieces of ceramic and glass, broken handles, pieces of chain and cable, heaps of iron filings, shoe soles, tent pegs, barrel hoops, oven rings - all this and all you may come across along the coast of Svalbard. Loose cultural monuments may be waste, but they are not worthless. They can tell us more about people's every day lives, activities and habits and about where they were from and what they were like than the remnants of buildings.

Destruction, removal or defacing of fixed or moveable cultural monuments is forbidden. The regulations provide for a 100 metre protection zone. Within this zone it is forbidden to camp, build a fire or in any other way leave traces of one's visit. Violation of these regulations is punishable by fines or imprisonment up to one year.

Hiorthhamn

- Coal mining under difficult conditions



The Hiorthhamn facility seen from the quay mid 1920s.

Photo: Store Norske

At *Hiorthhamn* by *Adventfjorden* we find remnants of one of the many attempts at extracting coal in Svalbard.

During the period 1903 to 1908, coal was mined at the *Advent City* facility. In 1917, this plant was moved to what is today known as *Hiorthhamn*. Mining ceased in 1921, but the plant was used sporadically for a few more years. A new attempt was made in 1938 to 1940.

The history of *Hiorthhamn* or *Moskushamn* - which the area is officially called - brings to light a characteristic feature of activity in Svalbard: how existing settlements or materials from former settlements have been used as the basis for new activity.

This leaflet will examine the history of a cultural monument situated in the vicinity of *Longyearbyen*. The main emphasis will be on mining operations, but we will look briefly at remnants of other types of activity too.

Venturing into the mining industry

Today we see only reminders of the activity at Hiorthhamn. The buildings, the mine, machines and loose objects can nevertheless tell us a lot about operations in different periods.



The mine entrance at Hiorthhamn is more than 580 metres above sea level. Due to difficult access, the miners lived at this elevation for extended periods. The mess hall and the living quarters at Sneheim in 1924 are shown.



There are over twenty large buildings in the area (see map page 23). We can see that some of the cabins were set up after mining was discontinued, while some of the older buildings are rented out as cabins. Please, remember this

cable railway stations which *De Norske Kulfelter Spitsbergen* built from 1917 to 1919 and which was used until mining was discontinued in the autumn of 1921. The plant was sporadically used by master bricklayer *Hans Hansen* who extracted

Above the station towards the mine are remnants of cable railway foundations and a coal dump and storage site. This was the original end station for the cable line. At this point the coal was transferred into carriages on rails which extended down to the quay. The two cable lines lead to two different entrances into the mountain. During the summer we can follow the remains of a dual track tram railway down to the shore line. Unfortunately the quay is gone.

The tram railway was constructed in 1917 and 1918. In total there are approximately 3,000 metres of rails at Hiorthhamn. We see remnants in several places.

On the bluff we can spot the foundations of several small houses - the remains of eight barracks which were moved from Advent City in 1917 as part of the process of relocating operations to Hiorthhamn. Today three of these houses remain. One has been partly rebuilt (P), whereas another (N) has been moved below the bluff. All three are used as cabins.

At the tip of the bluff is a large building (F). This house probably served as the administration and residence of the head of operations. It also contained the telegraph.

The mess hall (E) is located just below the bluff. The bakery and the cafeteria were housed here.

The building further down by the shore line was the living quarters (C). Next to it lies the tail section of a German plane shot down by the Norwegian forces in Longyearbyen in July 1942. This barracks was also used as storage room for provisions and the kitchen during the construction period prior to WWII.



Photo: Berge

as you walk around Hiorthhamn.

The Hiorthhamn Facility

The overhead cable railway station is situated at the extreme southern end of the area (I). The building was erected by the *Norske Kulfelter A/S* company shortly before the Second World War. However, the station was built on the remnants of one of the

small amounts of coal from 1923 to 1935. The coal was transported in carriages from the end station out to the cargo facility.

Next to the cable railway station is a smithy. We also see a variety of loose carriages and coal dump cars. The cable line was 2,200 metres long and extended up to the Hiorthfjell mine situated 582 metres above sea level.



The house above and closer to the mountain (B) was used as telegraph station, general store and provided storage room for provisions.

Building (A) was used for storage and smithing and housed the machine shop and a generator. Today we still see the electrical cable that led to the sawmill which was in use in the early 1970s. Inside the building there are also reminders of the operations from the inter-war period.

Below the machine shop we see the remains of a fox farm.

The small white house (D) below the living quarters was the sick bay.

Sawmill

The sawmill was in operation from 1972 to 1976 and was built on the foundation remaining from a cargo facility which Norsk Kulfelter A/S had planned to build before WWII. Today the saw is located at Hitra



Cargo facility and terminal for both cable railways, 1924.

in Sør-Trøndelag, on the Norwegian mainland. Between the machine shop and the sawmill are the remains of the foundations to the cable railway which led to the planned cargo facility.

Other objects

Between the sawmill and the cable railway station lie several machine parts which have yet to be unpacked. Operations at Hiorthamn clearly never

became as large nor as permanent as the companies had intended. Otherwise a number of tools, glass, ceramic items as well as other loose objects are littered around the plant, reminders of the people who once worked here.

Quite often it is the small items which provide cultural monuments with meaning. A tool or other small object is just as important for understanding the cultural



Photo: Berge

monument as the more obvious buildings, and therefore of equal importance.

Hiorthfjell mine - Sneheim

The mine itself lies 582 metres above sea level. In recent years many have begun to call the site *Eagle's Nest*, inspired perhaps by the well known suspense novel. The official name is Hiorthfjell gruva (Hiorth Mountain mine) although the mining company



Photo: A. Wilse

The facility at Advent City was established in 1905 and grew rapidly, but already in 1908 operations ceased. This photo shows a number of buildings in Advent City in 1908.

itself used the name *Sneheim*.

Located next to the mine is the mess hall, in relatively good condition. In addition, we see the sites where five houses stood, the remains of an outhouse and a mine gallery. While working in the mine the miners lived at this elevation.

The difficult access has led to a good deal of speculation and a number of stories. It has been said that the miners were stationed up on the mountain side throughout the entire polar night; one man, it is claimed, remained up there for 7 years.

During operations in the 1920s the miners commuted on a weekly basis between the encampment down below and the living quarters at the mine gallery. Sunday was the day off. The time it took to walk up was not recorded as working hours and, as a result, was unpaid. It could be that not everyone found it worthwhile to make

the round trip for just one day?

During the short period of operations in 1939-40, the miners lived here for longer intervals during the summer.

Advent City

About 2.5 km further out in Adventfjorden are the remains of Advent City.

The buildings were moved to Hiorthhamn in 1917, but we can still see evidence of the brake railroad up to the mine, the foundations of several houses and the walkway between the buildings. Strewn about are several loose items from the operations which help us to envisage something about the type of activities at the facility.

Construction of the site was begun in 1903 and operations continued until 1908. At the time operations ceased there were 13 buildings in Advent City.

The mining industry in Svalbard

The plant at Hiorthhamn is one of many abandoned settlements in Svalbard. In order to understand the background of the expansion, we shall look at developments in the mining industry in Svalbard from the beginning of the 20th century.



Bjørn Haug and Agnar Pettersen prepare the last explosive charge in Store Norske's mine nr. 3 in Longyearbyen, November 1996. This mine was operated in the same way as the mine at Hiorthhamn.

Photo: S. Haga



Coal is easily accessible many places in Svalbard. As early as the 17th century whalers knew of the existence of coal here. Hunters who spent winters in Svalbard, expeditions and other visitors have exploited the resources, too. However, it is only in this century that attempts have been made at commercial enterprise.

Coal pioneers

It is customary to cite the polar sailor *Søren Zachariassen* from Tromsø as one of the first coal pioneers in Svalbard. In 1899, he extracted coal at Isfjorden and brought it to Tromsø for sale.

Zachariassen continued his activities, and several others followed in his footsteps. From

the turn of the century onwards people from several nations travelled to Svalbard looking for coal, marble, gypsum, gold, iron and other minerals. Many had more optimism than knowledge, but the pursuit of fortune kept them going.

Svalbard was a no-man's-land until Norway gained sovereignty in 1920. Anyone who wished to lay claim to an area was free to do so, something which happened on a large scale.

The first companies

In Norway several companies were established to raise capital in order to launch enterprises. In Trondheim the *Kullkompagniet Trondhjem-Spitsbergen* was formed in 1900, whereas Bergen witnessed the founding of the *Bergen-Spitsbergen Kulgrubekompani* the following year. These two companies and their territorial claims are the predecessors of Longyearbyen and Hiorthhamn, respectively.

The Norwegian companies had neither the knowledge, the competence nor the capital necessary for production. The companies outfitted several expeditions which laid claim on large tracts of land, but not one mine was founded.

Mining begins

Within a short time foreign capital became involved. In 1903, the Trondheim company sold its claim to an American company. One year later the British *Spitsbergen Coal and Trading Company Ltd.* was founded. This company merged with the Bergen company and took over its claim. That same summer the company sent an expedition to Adventfjorden and started working at the facility which in time became Advent City.

Eventually, several companies seeking to exploit the archipelago's resources were formed. A number of nationalities were represented among them: Norway, Sweden, Russia, Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands.

As mentioned, not all the projects were based on realistic

In the later 1920s, however, most Norwegian and foreign companies ground to a halt. International interest for the region cooled and the economic depression led to less activity. Since then the Norwegian settlements of *Longyearbyen*, *Svea* and *Ny-Ålesund* and the Soviet/Russian settlements of



Photo: R. Gaarde

Since the early 1900s coal mining has been the principal industry in Svalbard. Often the mines are located far from the port of shipment. Transportation has thus been as important as mining itself. Remnants of the transport-system are still visible in both Longyearbyen and Hiorthhamn.

assessments of the availability of natural deposits or market possibilities. Several companies were merely "paper tigers" founded to attract investors and buyers. Many of them were forced to suspend their activities on short notice.

Mining and foreign policy

The First World War led to high coal prices, and activities as well as interest in Svalbard increased. At the same time the significance of the archipelago in international politics grew, and with this, factors other than profit came to serve as reasons for maintaining plants and settlements.

By the time Norway assumed sovereignty of Svalbard in 1925, authorities had spent over 20 million kroner on supporting Norwegian mining companies. Swedish and in time Soviet authorities generously funded their Svalbard companies in order to secure national interests.

Pyramiden, Grumant, and Barentsburg have been the only sites of mining activities of any significance.

Mining continues to constitute a significant economic activity in Svalbard.

Hiorthhamn

The remnants of the operations at Hiorthhamn and Advent City reflect some of this history and can be viewed as representative of the great optimism which has characterized parts of the economic activity in Svalbard.

Advent City – the first year round operation facility in Svalbard

The facility at Reveneset was given the somewhat pompous name Advent City. Today we can see the remains and imagine the great activity which took place here early in this century.



Advent City 1906.

Photo: A. Wilse



The brake railway and mine entrance in Advent City, 1908.

Photo: A. Wilse



Advent City as presented by its new owners to prospective shareholders.



The founding

The Spitsbergen Coal and Trading Company was founded in 1904. The company took over a claim where a fair amount of work already had been done. During the first years, however, activity was confined to summers.

When the company arrived



Photo: A. Wise

in the summer of 1904, a provisional cable railway was set up. It extended up to the mine situated 120 metres above sea level. A mess hall was also built.

During the 1905/06 season, the mines were operated throughout the winter for the first time. Not very much work was accomplished, due to a

number of conflicts between labour and management.

Summer 1906, the facility was extended. Several buildings were set up, including a club house and a bar.

During the winter of 1906/07, some 70 people remained in Advent City under the command of a former British army officer. Relations between labour and management were tense throughout the winter, and, as a result, not much work was accomplished this winter either.

The following winter between 30 and 40 people worked in Advent City. The British had begun to lose substantial amounts of money and were interested in selling the plant, but did not succeed initially.

Liquidation

After the 1907/08 season, operations ceased. The company maintained guards until 1909. However, the two hunters were not paid the promised salary. Therefore they hired two polar vessels from the mainland, took with them as much as they could from the plant and sold it at auction in Tromsø.

Exaggerated optimism

In the aftermath, one wonders how it was possible to set up a plant of this size, only to have it come to a halt after a short period. In reality, few of the industrial adventures in Svalbard were destined to survive.

The American who gave his name to Longyearbyen, *John M. Longyear*, did not think very highly of the British company's activities at Advent City. One issue was their relation to alcohol - Longyear was a teetotaler and morally appalled at Scandinavian workers' use of alcohol. More importantly, he felt that

sufficient research had not been done to establish whether there was a basis for profitable operations. Finally, the company had spent large sums establishing a plant before operation had even started, and many of the buildings were oversized.

This criticism is applicable to



Photo: A. Wise

Advent City at its founding in 1905.

other facilities in Svalbard at the time. Expeditions would report huge findings, and investments were made in relatively large plants, but the preliminary research was not thorough enough. A new world had been discovered, and many thought there would be opportunities for quick profits. Most, however, were to have quite a different experience.

Today we can see the remains of activities in several places and try to imagine the people who were met by an unknown climate, difficult working conditions, and months of isolation. One is immediately impressed by the magnitude of the work done with tools and technology which predated World War One. But at the same time one can ask how this was possible?

Hiorthhamn – a large plant with small output

For several years Advent City was deserted and decay quickly set in. In 1917, the buildings were moved, and a new facility was established. However, this enterprise did not last long either.



The facility at Hiorthhamn was established in 1917 and remained in operation until 1922. From 1922 to 1935, master bricklayer Hans Hansen of Bergen was responsible for sporadic extraction activity. The photograph shows some of his workers posing at Sneheim.



The founding of a new company

In 1912, manager *Fredrik Hiorth* from Kristiania took an option on the claim and plant at Advent City. He outfitted an expedition to what is now Hiorthhamn in 1914. A year



Photo: Berge

later another expedition was sent. The skipper onboard the vessel was the huntsman *Daniel Nøis*. The close connection between mining and hunting is another characteristic trait of the activities in Svalbard.

The plant is built

In the spring of 1916, a Norwegian company was formed and took over the claims belonging to the Spitsbergen Coal and Trading Company.

The Norwegian company consisted largely of people from Bergen with shipowner *Jacob Kjøde* at the forefront. The company took the name A/S De Norske Kulfelter Spitsbergen. Fredrik Hiorth continued as manager for one period, with headquarters in Kristiania.

In the summer of 1917, new barracks and houses were built, and the construction of a provisional quay and a workshop were begun. Orders were placed for coal cutters, a cable railway and large quantities of materials and supplies.

More than 60 people spent the winter of 1917/18 at the facility. Most of the houses had been moved from Advent City.

The company wanted to have the plant ready for operation by the summer of 1918. They did not succeed in this, but work continued during the summer of 1918 and the winter of 1918/19. Due to the Spanish influenza epidemic and the fact that the plant had not been sufficiently developed, little coal was extracted this winter – a mere 838 tonnes. By comparison, Store Norske Spitsbergen Kulkompani A/S on the other side of the fjord produced more than 50,000 tonnes of coal.

State sustained production

By spring 1919, the company lacked funds. The share capital had been exhausted, and it proved impossible to secure loans from private banks. The company turned to the state. The Ministry of Trade concluded that there was no basis for profitable operations and consequently rejected the application. The company did not give up and submitted another application in the autumn of the same year. By that time the situation was different. It seemed likely that

Norway would gain sovereignty over Svalbard. In addition, several foreign companies were interested in getting established in the archipelago.

At the same time that negotiations were being conducted between the State and the company, an offer to purchase shares was received from the British company *The Northern Exploration Company Ltd.* (NEC). NEC was already active in Svalbard, and would later claim ownership of 1/6th of the archipelago's total area.

NEC was one of many companies, Norwegian as well as foreign, which speculated in claims and in the buyers' optimism regarding potential profits. During a period when there was more money in circulation than investment objects and there were signals that Svalbard contained great reserves of coal, gold, diamonds and petroleum, obtaining capital was not a difficult task. However, the balloon soon burst. Until 1926, however, the Norwegian authorities viewed NEC as a constant threat to Norwegian domination in the archipelago, and thereby also as a threat to efficient execution of sovereignty.

In order to prevent the sale of the Norwegian company to foreign interests, the Ministry agreed to enter a sales contract whereby the Ministry would buy 10,000 tonnes of coal. In exchange, the company was required to maintain a majority Norwegian shareholding for the ensuing three years. The state would pay up to NOK 750,000 in advance. In May 1920, the contract was signed. The company delivered no coal, nevertheless an additional NOK 400,000 was advanced in the summer of 1921.



When operations were discontinued the facility was simply abandoned. Tools, cars, and other equipment were left standing as a reminder of the people who worked at Hiorthhamn. It is of equal importance to care for these loose objects as for the more prominent buildings.



Bankruptcy

Early in the winter of 1922 the company again applied for state support, but this time the Ministry determined that support was no longer necessary.

On May 9, 1922 the Board decided to initiate bankruptcy proceedings.

The Ministry of Trade paid

for guards and maintenance of the company's sites until the issue of ownership had been clarified in 1925. In this way the Ministry secured that the areas remained under Norwegian control.

Even after the bankruptcy surveys of the areas were conducted. The company sent

people up in the summer of 1922. For a few weeks they worked at a hectic pace to ship out some of the coal which had already been extracted.

Continued activity

As the 1920s progressed, one



Photo: Berge

expenses tied to the investment, this turned out to be a favourable arrangement, and this time there were greater opportunities for extended operation.

Eight people stayed the winter of 1923/24 and extracted approximately 4,000 tonnes of coal. In the spring of 1924 they were joined by more workers. All together 7,193 tonnes of coal were extracted and shipped out in the summer of 1924. The company's contract was renewed, and 11 people worked the winter of 1924/25. Some coal was extracted, but most of it remained in Svalbard. Thereafter sporadic work was done and the last coal was shipped out in 1935. However, a great deal of work can hardly have been done - during the entire period from 1922 to 1935 just over 10,000 tonnes of coal were shipped out.

Another attempt

The bankrupt estate attempted to sell the company, but did not succeed until 1937 when Jacob Kjøde paid NOK 50,000 at an auction for a mortgage deed with the nominal value NOK 1 million. Kjøde in turn founded the company Norske Kulfelter A/S. The state was co-owner of the company and thus ensuring that the company could not be sold to foreign interests.

In 1937, the company had 24 people at its plant. The following year this was reduced to one half as many.

In 1938, the company changed the name of the site to Moskushamn. This stemmed from the 1929 release of a herd of 17 young musk-ox in the area. Perhaps the name Hiorthhamn was too closely tied to the former owners?

A total of 73 people were

employed for the 1939/40 season, but some went back to the mainland in the autumn due to the unstable situation in Europe. Work continued even after the German invasion of mainland Norway on April 9, 1940. During the summer of



Map of the mine shafts in Hiorthfjellet.

Drawn by the Commissioner of Mines of Svalbard

1940, twenty-one people were at Hiorthhamn, but these returned home early due to the uncertainties surrounding the occupation.

Some coal was shipped out in 1939 and 1940. The bulk of the work was concentrated on building the plant. The company had great aspirations. Yet again, a large facility was built only to stand idle.

The solution

Hiorthhamn was abandoned during the Second World War. A few people stayed at the plant after the war, but little work was done. An extraordinary general assembly in November 1953 decided to dissolve the company and final settlements were made in 1960. The real estate by Adventfjorden was transferred to Jacob Kjøde's daughter, Elin Horn, who remains registered as owner of the area.

of the company's Board members, Hans Hansen, continued to make use of the plant.

In exchange for a state fee of 1 krone per tonne extracted and shipped coal, Hansen was allowed to take the coal that he wanted and use the facility. As Hansen did not have any

Strikes, class struggle and the Spanish flu

During the early years of operations at Advent City there were many conflicts between workers and management. Labour conflicts were not an unknown phenomenon during this period, but the dimensions they reached at this plant require that explanations are sought in local factors such as cultural differences between management and workers, food, living conditions and the special circumstances created by mining in the Arctic.

Muscamp – the “Boer General”

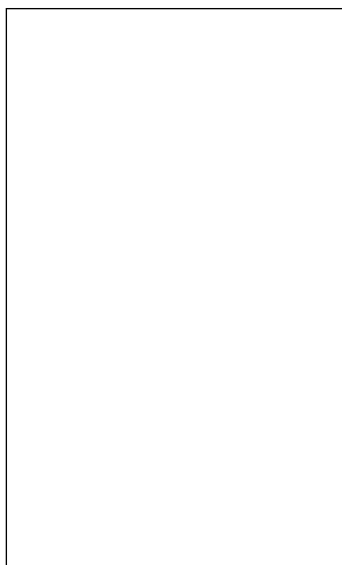
During its first winter of operations at Advent City (1905/06), the company hired a former British officer, P. Muscamp, to serve as managing director. Muscamp had experience as an officer during the Boer War in South Africa, something which effected his leadership style. He treated the workers as recruits and threatened them with weapons in order to get the work done. It is said that he had a variety of weapons on his desk so that visitors to his office were none too aware of who was in charge.

Working conditions were poor. Shifts were 10-12 hours long, and the salary was four kroner per day with a deduction of 1.50 kroner for food and lodging. The living quarters were not suited for the Svalbard climate.

Muscamp was determined to make money during his stay in Svalbard. He confiscated furs from trappers and sold alcohol to the workers. The winter supplies included 14,000 bottles of beer and other alcoholic beverages. In order to have their salary paid out workers were required to buy a certain amount of beer in the bar, otherwise they got no more cash.

The big strike of 1907

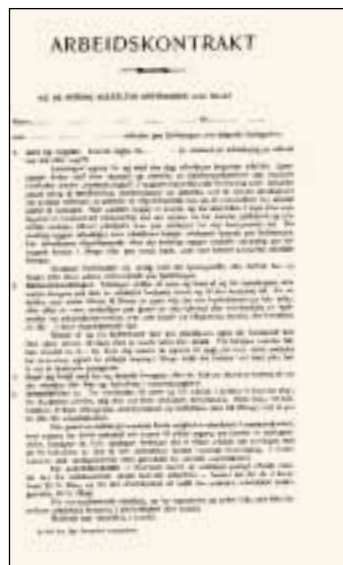
Muscamp was again managing director during the winter of



This picture of a coal miner from Hiorthhamn was taken inside the mine in 1920, and is one of a few known to exist.

1906/07. This winter relations between labour and management became so tense that Muscamp eventually found it necessary to entrench himself in his house until the first boat arrived from the mainland.

In a diary from the winter of 1906/07 we can read the workers' account of the strike. After the baker had been fired and food rations cut in half, the workers went on strike. Muscamp answered by closing the mess hall and the kitchen. The striking workers were holding a meeting when Muscamp entered:



Labour contract at A/S De Norske Kulfelter Spitsbergen (Norwegian Coal Fields Spitsbergen, Inc.)

“The boss comz in and wanna shoot us. The boss dida wanna get us no cook, we haz ta take hiz gun away.”

Muscamp was thus disarmed, as were his guards. After some discussions over whether or not the workers were to be given a cook and food - something Muscamp refused to go along with - he was sent outside to stand in weather of minus 25 degrees Celcius. He remained out of doors for three hours until he agreed to re-open the kitchen. One of the workers later said that he had never seen such a “stubborn son-of-a-bitch”. Following this

Photo: Aftenposten

incident Muscamp found it best to stay indoors.

Alcohol or class struggle

Adolf Hoel and *Nathan H. Dole* write about massive alcohol consumption among the workers and that the company had not been particularly careful in selecting its employees. This in turn led to unrest and to little work being done. According to Hoel and Dole, the police should have been happy that they no longer had to deal with several of the workers who seemed to work at the British facility in Svalbard. But working conditions were so poor that most likely there would have been strikes and tensions regardless of alcohol consumption and hooligans.

We must remember that this was a time when workers all over the country were in the process of organizing themselves. Several places they were met by weapons and threats from management.

The fact that the miners were sued in the courts at Hammerfest is also part of the story. The court ruled that the workers had broken the contract with the British company and thus forfeited their right to salary. The workers were even forced to pay for food and lodging for the winter season.

Conflict at Hiorthhamn

Even though there were fewer conflicts between workers and management at Hiorthhamn, there were tensions and strikes there as well.

The labour contract states that the work day lasted for ten hours above ground and nine hours in the mine. The salary was between NOK 10 and 15 per day with a deduction of NOK 1.50 for food and lodging. The work week was six days long. There were deduc-

tions for explosives, oil, carbide, drills and other equipment. The journey to Svalbard was not considered work unless it lasted longer than ten days. In case of strike, miners were deducted three kroner per day for food, and each risked an additional fine of up to NOK 50 per day.

Even so, conditions were far better at Hiorthhamn than in Longyearbyen. The workers were better paid there than on the other side of the fjord. Higher salaries probably contributed to less tension, but also to reduced profitability.

The winter director's May 1918 report relates that relations between labour and management here were not particularly good either:

"As regards the workers, conditions are appalling. It is simply impossible to get some of the men to work regularly, they only work now and then, and most of them talk of nothing but "the boat". Some of these people are almost like children. Health conditions are still good."

Spanish Influenza

Spanish influenza was a world wide epidemic from 1917 to 1920 which claimed the lives of 11 people in Svalbard. On mainland Norway more than 7,300 people died in 1918 alone.

Above we read that health conditions were good at Hiorthhamn in the spring of 1918. During the course of the summer the situation changed.

In a situation report reprinted in the newspaper *Nordlys* on August 21, 1918, we read:

"Things have looked very grim here recently, especially the last few days. The Spanish influenza has gained territory."



Ill.: Arbeidsmanden

Muscamp kept his desk covered with weapons to convey his importance.

Only 6 or 7 out of 80 men have been working for the past fortnight. The others have all been attacked by the flu."

The miner also wrote of poor working conditions and warned others against seeking employment with the Norwegian company.

Conditions in Norway at the time were nevertheless such that many had no choice. One season in the mines of Svalbard meant a few months' worth of food and lodging. In addition, one could save up a few kroner thus making it possible to get established on the mainland.

Mining and hunting

The development of mining is closely tied to the development of the hunting trade. Hiorthhamn served as a meeting place for these enterprises in Svalbard.



Huntsmen often took over the cabins which had been built by the mining companies. The hunting lodge at Bjonahamna seen here was acquired by Hilmar Nøis from a Swedish company.





Photo: M. Nordmo

There are several examples of these ties. Hunters would work as watchmen at the plant. In the early years the company's representatives sailed to Svalbard on the vessels of Norwegian hunters.

Hiorthhamn also served as a place to stay during visits to Longyearbyen. The Store Norske company was not always interested in having hunters stay in town, and there was a lack of overnight accommodations. At Hiorthhamn there were several buildings which could be used freely. Perhaps Hiorthhamn was closer to the freedom the hunters were used to in their huts?

Possibilities and limitations

The watchmen would usually borrow housing at the plant thereby saving the expenses of establishing main depots. In addition to a fixed monthly salary, the hunters could make money on the sale of meat and other products to the mining towns. At the same time, the increased level of activities provided greater possibilities for transportation to and from Svalbard.

Working in the mines or as a watchman was also a possibility in case the hunt failed, which it often did. Even the famous hunter *Hilmar Nøis* spent one season working in the mines and several as a watchman.

However, mining also involved limitations on the hunter's freedom to hunt wherever they wanted. Increased levels of activities influenced the animals' behaviour, and the companies demanded exclusive hunting rights in their claims.

Hiorthhamn during and after the Second World War

Svalbard contains several cultural monuments from the Second World War. At Hiorthhamn we see reminders of German and Norwegian activity.



Following WWII, a Norwegian peace garrison was established at Hiorthhamn. The Norwegian soldiers secured the peace on the archipelago and performed general clean-up work in Svalbard until the autumn of 1947.



Svalbard was not occupied in the same way as the rest of Norway. Operations in Longyearbyen and Ny-Ålesund continued almost unchanged, even though the population



Photo: Unknown

was concerned for the well-being of their mainland friends and relatives.

Evacuation

In the autumn of 1941, it was decided in London that both the Soviet and the Norwegian settlements were to be evacuated. The transportation ship *Empress of Canada* first brought the Russians to

Archangel and then returned to Longyearbyen to take the Norwegians to Great Britain.

In early September 1941, the vessel left Svalbard. In Longyearbyen 160,000 tonnes of coal (about 50% of an annual production) were set fire to, and machines and other equipment were rendered useless so that the occupying forces could not benefit from the plant.

Most of the remaining buildings in Longyearbyen, Pyramid-en and Barentsburg were destroyed during a German show of strength in September 1943. The plant at Hiorthhamn remained unscathed except for one oil tank which was destroyed.

Both German and Norwegian soldiers remained in Svalbard until 1945.

Weather service war

Accurate weather forecasts were of great significance to the Allies and to Germany, but also to Norwegian fishermen and farmers. Information from the weather stations in Svalbard, Greenland and Jan Mayen provided important data concerning weather developments in the Barents Sea, the Norwegian Sea, the North Sea and in northern Norway. Meteorological stations in these places therefore had strategic importance.

The Germans operated a *Kröte* automatic weather station at Hiorthhamn from May to July 1942.

Following the German attack in September 1943, the Allies moved one of their meteorological stations from Heerodden, further out in Isfjorden, to Hiorthhamn.

The plane wreckage

There are remnants of a German plane at Hiorthhamn.

Norwegian soldiers had maintained a position with two heavy machine guns in Longyearbyen. On July 23, 1942, a German reconnaissance plane took fire from this position. The plane crashed in a field close to Hiorthhamn because it hit a cable as it was about to make a turn at Hiorthfjell.

The Norwegian soldiers buried the crew of four at Hiorthhamn. Some bones, however, are alleged to have been brought to the graveyard in Longyearbyen after the war. Dr. *Hermann Ziegler* of Longyearbyen apparently took some bones with him across the fjord and left them amidst the stones at the cemetery.

The peace garrison

After the war, a Norwegian peace garrison was stationed at Hiorthhamn. The soldiers did some work on the buildings as well as some general clearing up.

In their free time the soldiers made cigarette holders of materials from the plane wreckage. They also caught beluga which streamed into Adventfjorden in great schools. Both the blubber and the hides could be sold. The garrison was stationed at Hiorthhamn until the autumn of 1947.

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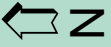
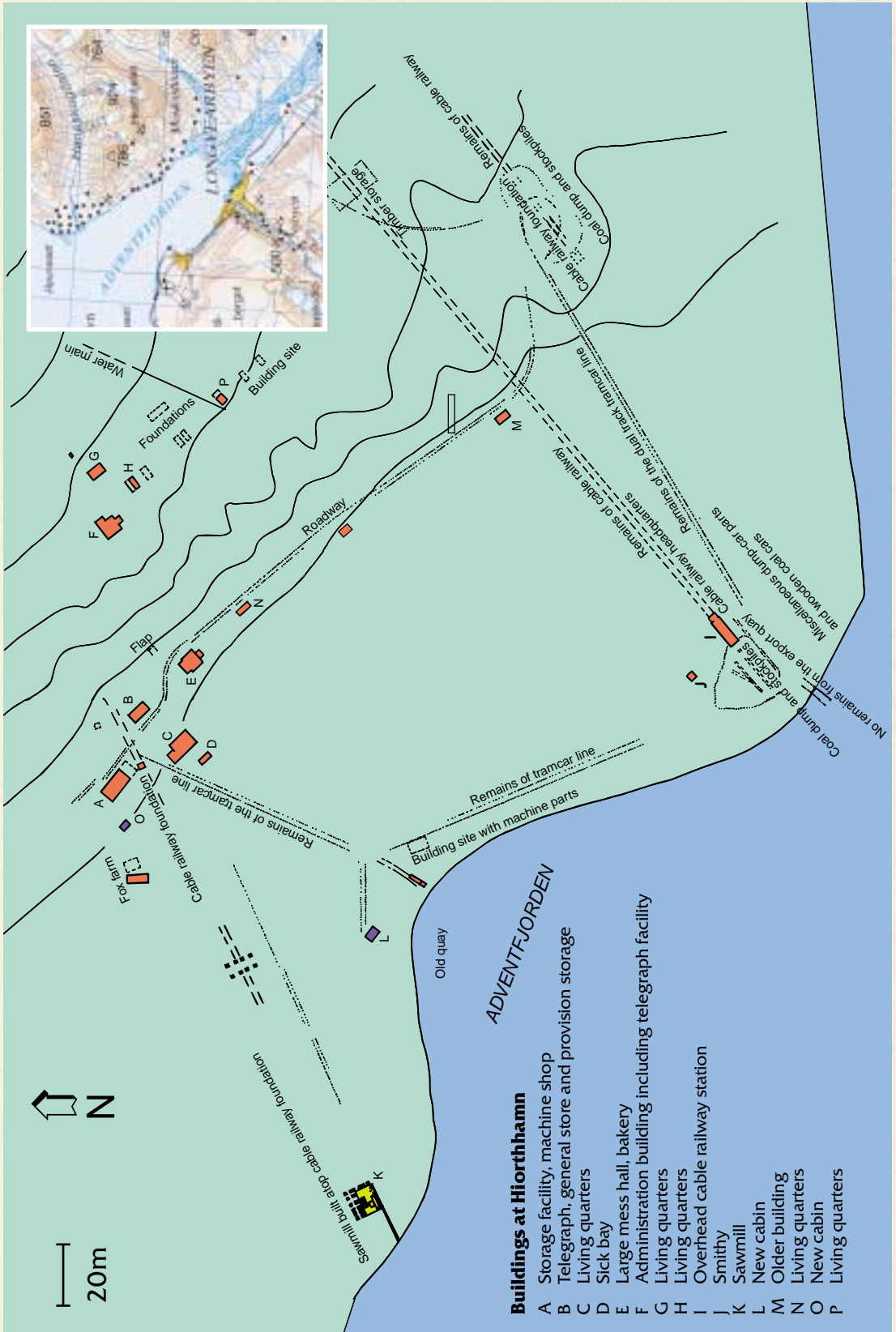
In addition, materials from Svalbard Museum and a number of public and private archives which have been handed over to the State Archives in Tromsø and to the National Archives have been used.



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Buildings at Hiorthhamn

- A Storage facility, machine shop
- B Telegraph, general store and provision storage
- C Living quarters
- D Sick bay
- E Large mess hall, bakery
- F Administration building including telegraph facility
- G Living quarters
- H Living quarters
- I Overhead cable railway station
- J Smithy
- K Sawmill
- L New cabin
- M Older building
- N Living quarters
- O New cabin
- P Living quarters

Map of buildings drawn by G.L. Løkken after Hoel 1966.



GOVERNOR OF SVALBARD

ENVIRONMENTAL SECTION

9170 LONGYEARBYEN
NORWAY

The cultural monument of Hiorthhamn consists of the remains of one of many attempts at establishing a mining industry in Svalbard. This leaflet looks at the foundation and operation of the mining facilities at Hiorthhamn and Advent City, at class struggles and labour conflicts, at the relations between the mining industry and the hunters and at Hiorthhamn during the Second World War.

