

Curling NWT Style

History of Curling

Curling is described as the "Roarin' Game" because of the sound curling rocks make as they travel over ice. Curling is widely believed to be one of the oldest team sports in the world. As with other games played on ice, Canadians have embraced the game of curling. The Montreal Curling Club opened in 1807 and was the first curling club outside of Scotland.

Rocks and Ice

Today, the curling stone that counts is the granite rock. Virtually every curling rock comes from a wave-lashed island in Firth of Clyde, Scotland.

Originally curling took place on what is referred to as 'natural ice.' Today, almost all curling rinks have 'artificial ice.' Cooling pipes running under the playing surface permit ice to be made artificially. A four-sheet club has approximately six miles of pipe under the ice.

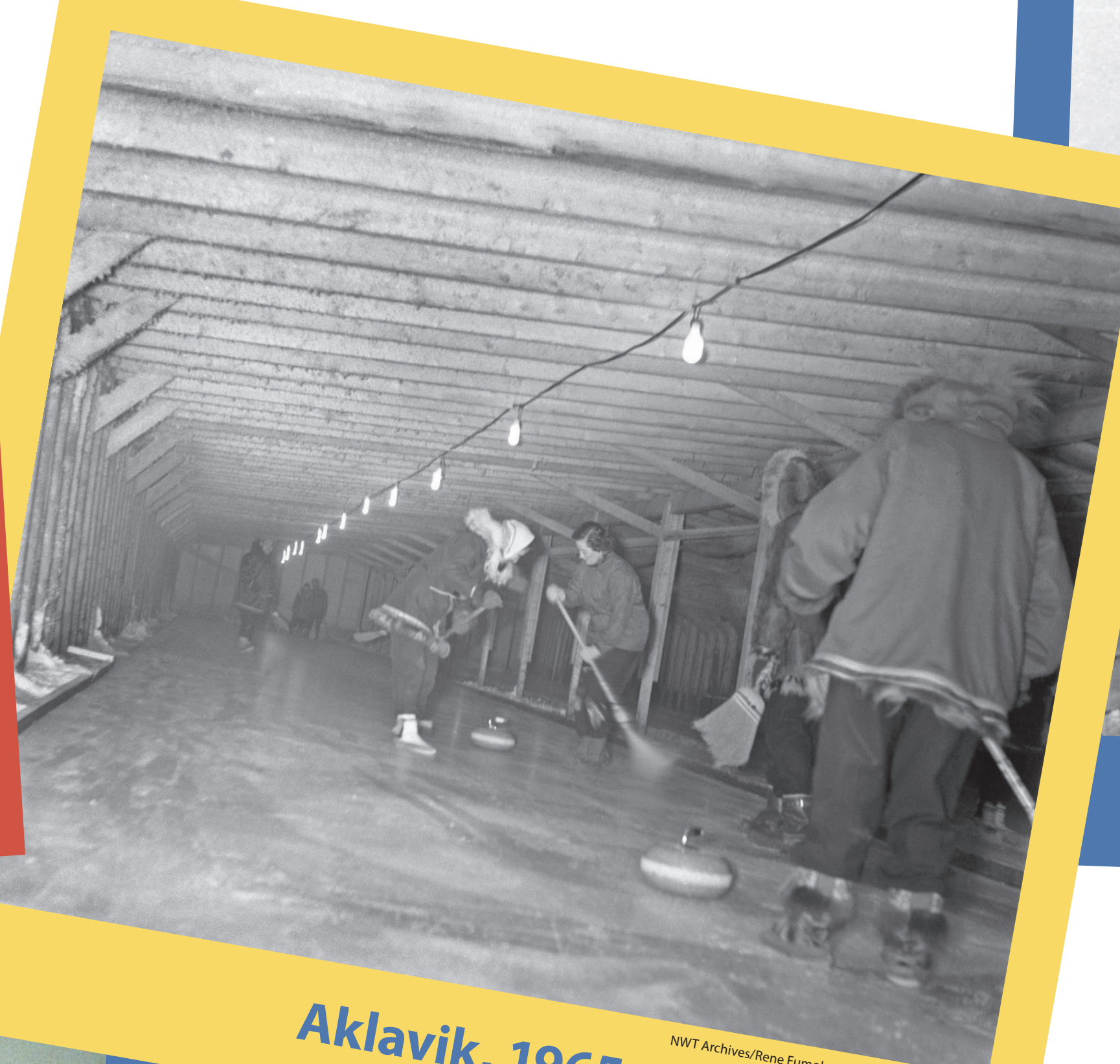
Curling in the North

In the NWT, there are still four curling clubs that use only natural ice. If you are looking for a taste of the old game, you can visit the curling clubs in Fort Simpson, Aklavik, Norman Wells or Fort McPherson.

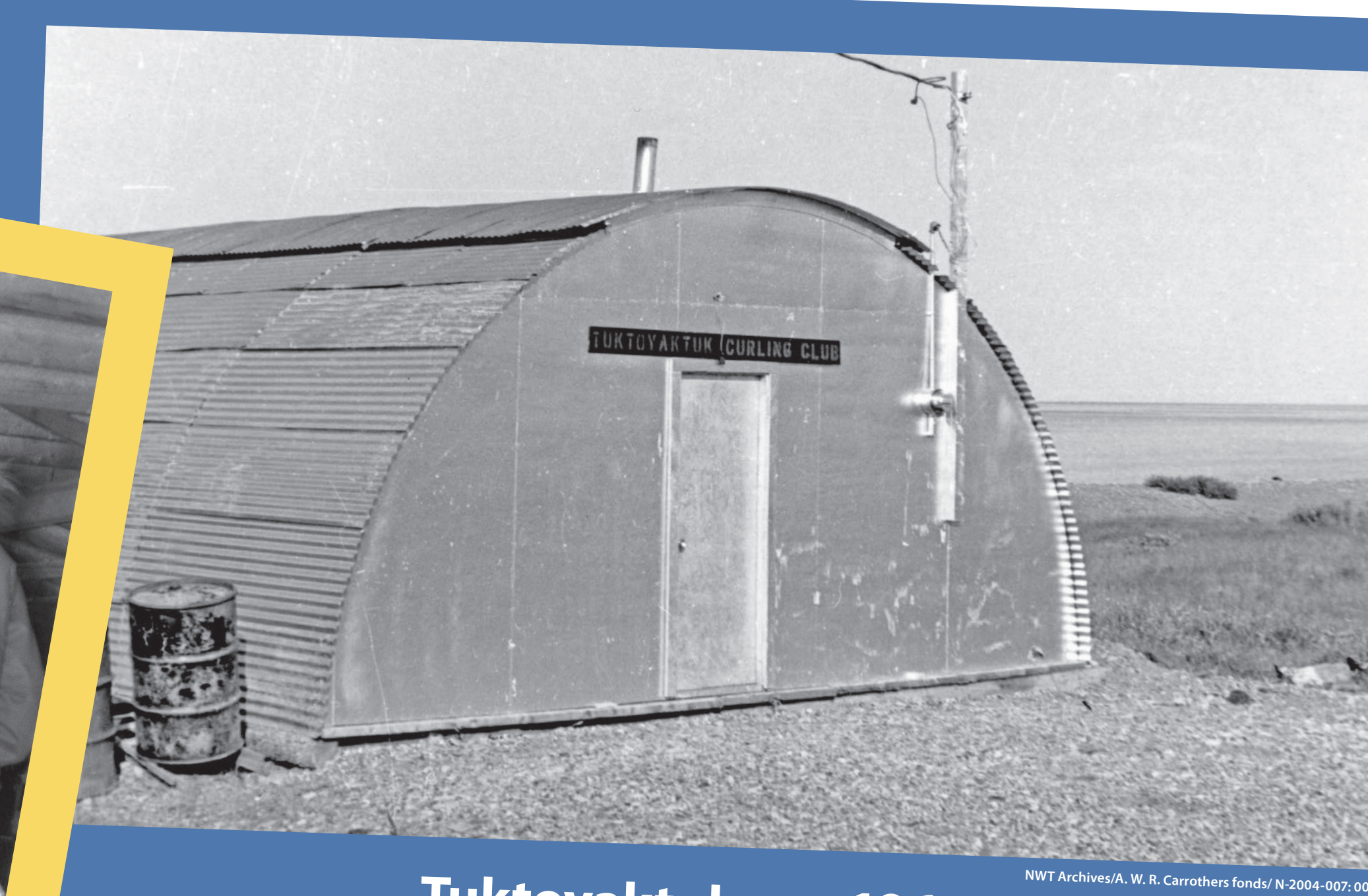
There are eight clubs in the NWT Curling Association. They are located in Aklavik, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Fort McPherson, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells and Yellowknife.



Yellowknife Bay, 1961



Aklavik, 1965



Tuktoyaktuk, ca. 1965



Inuvik, 1962

Men curl on an outdoor curling sheet on Yellowknife Bay, 1961.





Curling at the Mines

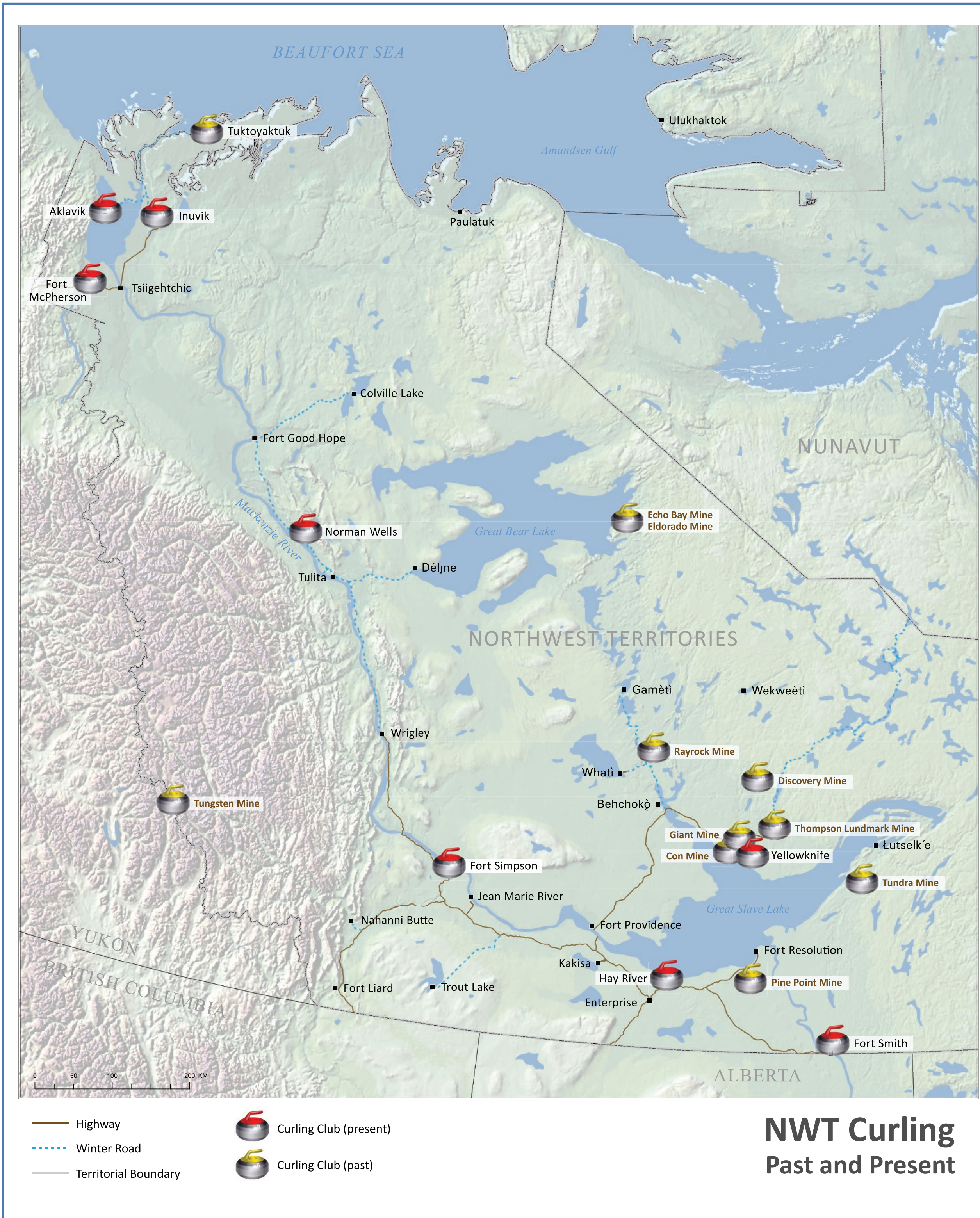
The mining industry played a substantial role in the development of curling in the NWT. Virtually every mine had a curling facility. At that time, there was no artificial ice to be found and all the mines curled on natural ice.

Mines with curling facilities:

- Tundra
- Eldorado
- Echo Bay
- Con
- Giant
- Discovery
- Pine Point
- Rayrock
- Thompson Lundmark
- Tungsten



Pine Point, 1965



Eldorado mine men's curling team, Yellowknife, 1955.

Eldorado



A women's curling team from the Eldorado Curling Club, Yellowknife, 1953.

The Wardair Cup

Max Ward sponsored the Wardair Cup for the mines in the NWT. Each year a different mine site would host the championship and Wardair would fly in the teams to compete for the Wardair Cup.

The Guzzlers' Cup

At Con Mine, the most popular curling event was the Guzzlers' Cup. The cup could be contested every Saturday night. Any team issuing a challenge for the cup was required to supply several bottles of over-proof rum. It was not sufficient to merely win the curling match, all the rum also had to be consumed before completion of the game! It has been noted that "possibly the worst thing you could do was to win (as you would then have to defend the trophy)."

- Our First 50 Years - Modernization of a Great Frontier. Nerco Con Mines Ltd. 1988



Yellowknife Curling Club next to Gerry Murphy Arena, ca. 1970

Curling in Yellowknife

In addition to the curling rinks at Giant Mine and Con Mine, Yellowknife itself has been home to three curling facilities. The first was built on the corner of Franklin and 44th Street next to the old fire hall in 1947. In 1952 a new four-sheet operation was attached to the Gerry Murphy arena. Curling was so popular in those days that the club hosted draws at 6:00 pm, 9:00 pm and 11:00 pm Monday to Friday! The first rocks at the current club were thrown in January 1989.



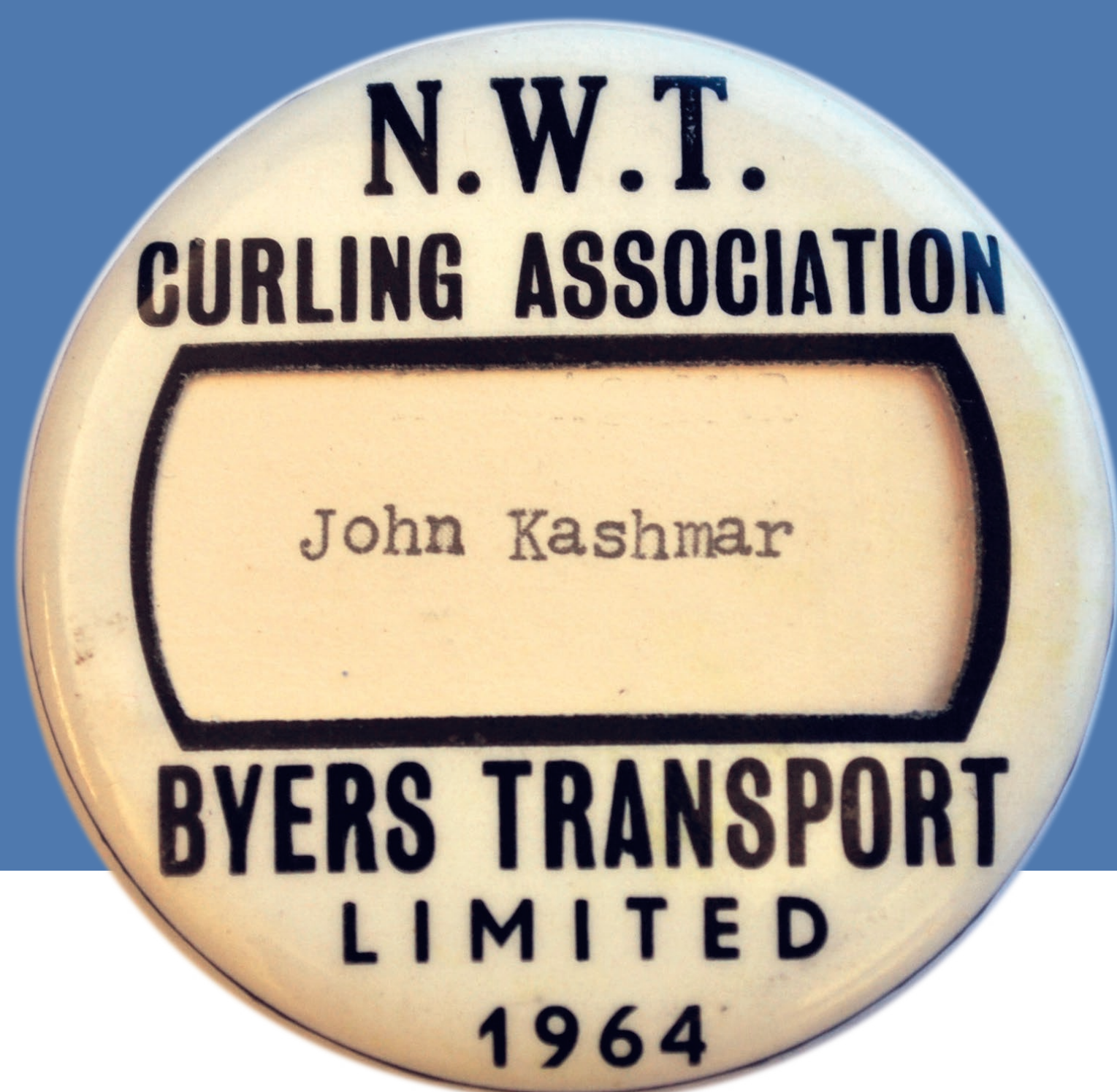
Women curling in mukluks, Yellowknife, 1951.



Women's curling team wearing plaid jackets and Scottish tam hats, Yellowknife, 1951.



Pins courtesy Ryan Silke



Perfect Games at the Brier

Since 1985, when scoring of shots was recorded, two NWT players have had “perfect” games.

1987 – Ron Kapicki

1993 – Scott Alexander

Curling marathons

In April 2010, curlers in Yellowknife played continuously for 55 hours, unofficially breaking the Guinness Book of World Records mark of 50 hours and 3 minutes.

Although not officially recognized as a record, in 1979, curlers from the former mining town of Pine Point curled more than 64 straight hours.

Sportsman Spiel aka the Polar Bear Skin Spiel

The Yellowknife Curling Club introduced the Sportsman bonspiel in 1971. In its first year, the spiel attracted so many southern Canadian curlers that a special air charter out of Edmonton had to be arranged. The winners of the inaugural event were from Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta and were awarded four Winchester 30-30 Canadian Centennial rifles.

In 1973, the organizers awarded the signature prize that defined the event. The winning team was presented with four polar bear skin rugs. Such a unique prize drew world class curlers to Yellowknife, including such notables as Hec Gervais (1973), Randy Ferby (1980) and Jeff Stoughton (1987). The first Yellowknife team to win the Sportsman Spiel was skipped by Al Delmage in 1975.



Kevin Koe, Jamie Koe and Kerry Koe (Galusha). In 1994, all three represented the NWT at the Canadian Junior Championships.

Koe family dynasty

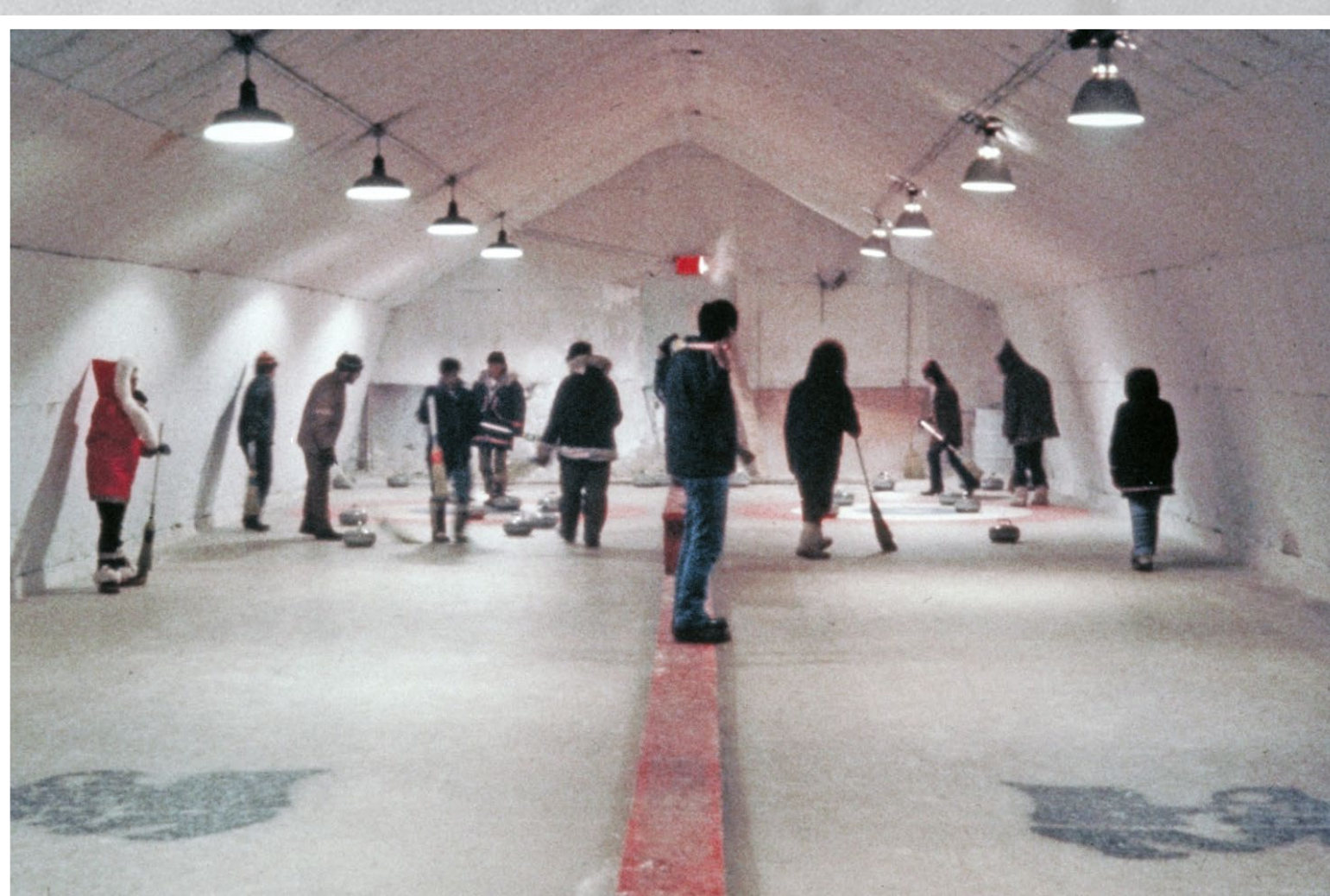
The Koe family is probably the most well known curling family to represent the Northwest Territories. Brothers Kevin and Jamie and Jamie’s twin sister Kerry (Galusha) have curled in numerous national and international events including Juniors, the Brier Men’s Championship and the Scotties Ladies Championship. The Koe brothers will face each other in the 2014 Brier Championship when Kevin’s team will represent Alberta and Jamie will lead Team NWT.

Kevin Koe skipped Team NWT to the final of the 1994 Canadian Junior Championships. He later moved to Alberta and in 2010, defeated Ontario’s Glenn Howard in dramatic fashion to win the Canadian National Championship. Kevin followed that victory that by winning the World Curling Championship in Cortina, Italy in April 2010.



Jim Lambert, Ed Boone and Tony Kozak are holding the “Crying Towels” at a curling banquet in Aklavik.

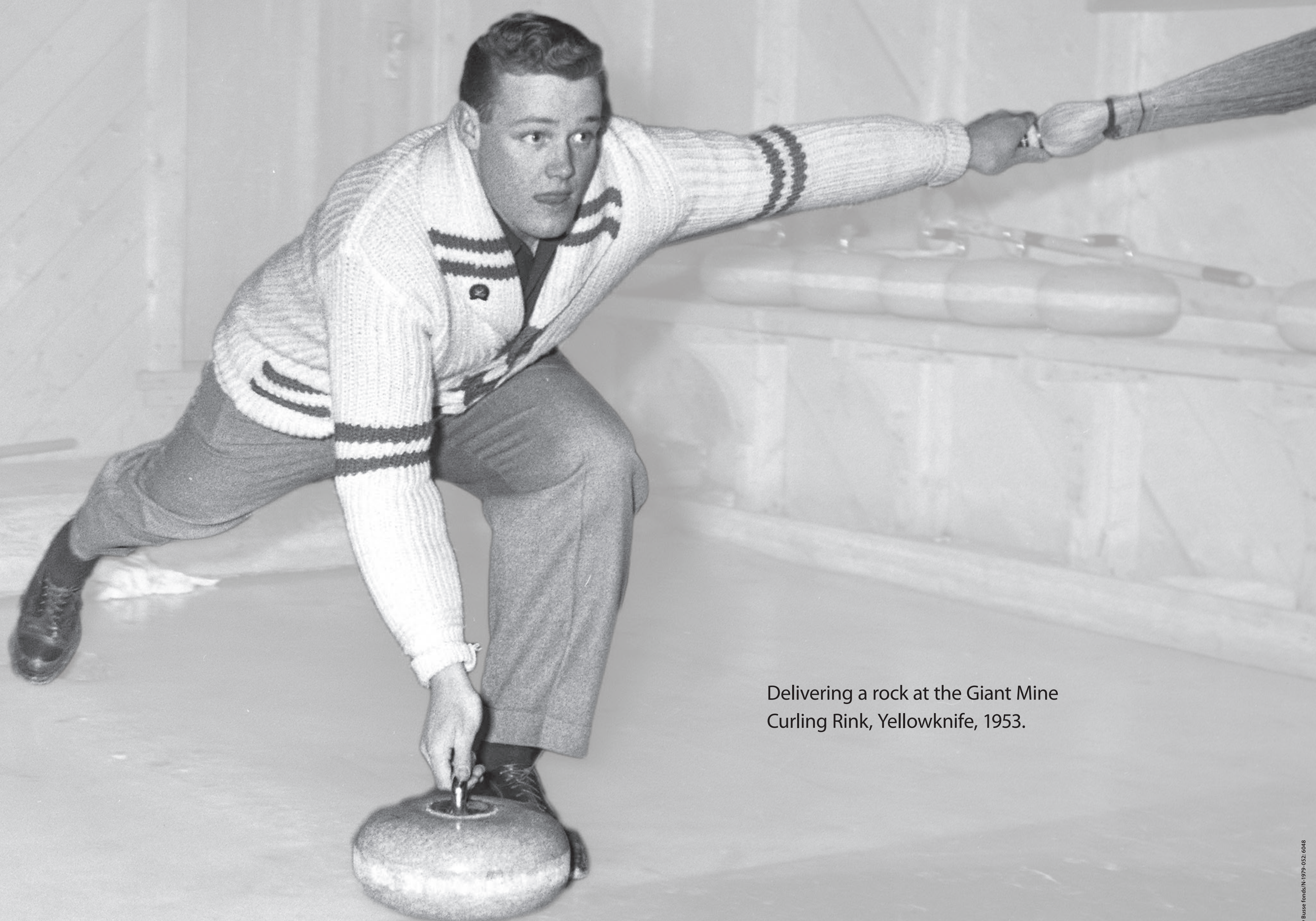
Aklavik, ca. 1960



Baker Lake, ca. 1971



“Top of the World Curling Rink”
Alert Army Camp, 1966



Delivering a rock at the Giant Mine Curling Rink, Yellowknife, 1953.