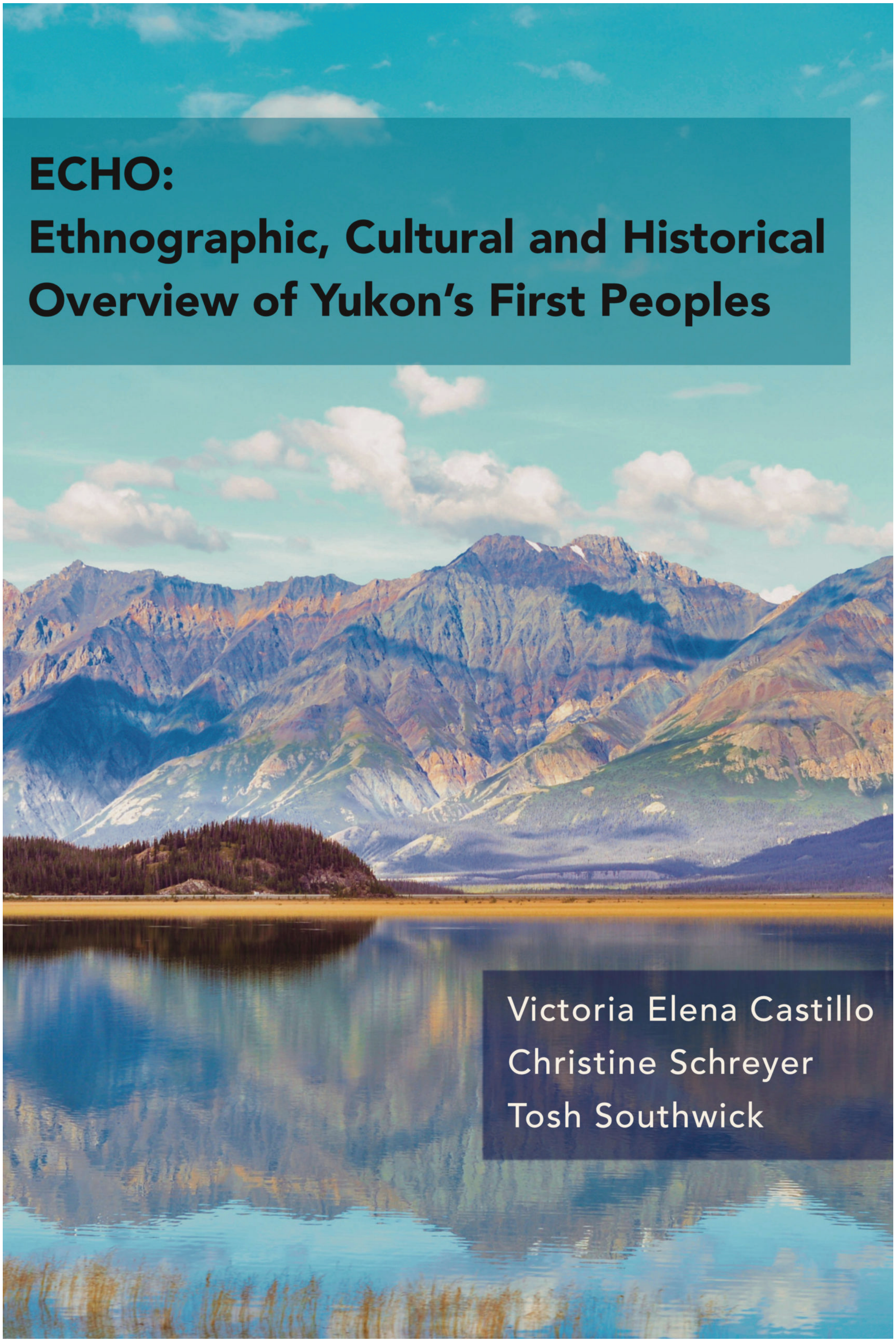

ECHO:
Ethnographic, Cultural and Historical Overview of Yukon's First Peoples

Victoria Elena Castillo
Christine Schreyer
Tosh Southwick

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VICTORIA ELENA CASTILLO, CHRISTINE SCHREYER, AND TOSH SOUTHWICK

INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGED RESEARCH PRESS
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to our students, past, present and future.

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Preface

This open-source handbook is meant to support our students by providing access to free online content that reduces the financial hardship many of our students face while also providing succinct easy to access materials focusing on Yukon First Nation cultures to Yukon's communities. We see this book as a living document, one that will allow us to make changes to the book as our disciplines evolve and as needed to reflect the changing cultural and governance landscape of the territory.

We encourage ongoing feedback from readers and editors. This can be done in two ways. Editorial comments can be shared directly at the bottom of each web page. The other option is to email the authors directly at echobookyukon@gmail.com.

Acknowledgements

We have been working on this handbook for seven years, which means there are a lot of people to thank. First and foremost, we would like to thank our current and former students who, over the years, have asked us some insightful, complex and sometimes difficult questions about Yukon's Indigenous peoples, their histories and cultures. One source of inspiration for this book was Robert Muckle's volume *The First Nations of British Columbia: An Anthropological Overview* (2014). We hope this book will complement Muckle's as a source of contemporary information about the Indigenous peoples of Canada.

This book would not have been possible without funding provided by Yukon University and the University of British Columbia. Many colleagues have helped us through this writing journey including our fantastic book editors Jennifer Stewart, Amanda Graham, and Norman Easton. Early guidance and editorial support of this volume were provided by Darcy Cullen, Nadine Peterson and anonymous peer reviewers at UBC Press. Thank you to Lianne Charlie and Rhiannon Klein for your useful conversations on governance in Yukon. Others who provided invaluable support include Yukon University librarians Derek Yap and Aline Goncalves, the Yukon University Research Fund, Yukon Government Heritage Resources Unit and the Cultural Services Branch, Christian Thomas, Ty Heffner, Cathy Ritchie, Val Monahan, Yukon News, the Hougen family, Kevin Benson, Whitehorse Star, Megan Williams and Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Committee, Teri-Lee Isaac and the Selkirk First Nation Heritage and Culture Department, Deanna McLeod and UBC copyright librarian, Lori Walter. The Yukon Archives are always an incredible resource; we were able to find some amazing photos of Yukoners, which we included in the handbook.

This book would not have been possible without the interviews we were able to do with Marilyn Jensen, Norman Easton, Chief David Johnny, Raymond Le Blanc, Brandon Kyikavichik, Julie Cruikshank, and the oral stories of Mrs. Angela Sidney, Mrs. Annie Ned, and Mrs. Kitty Smith. We appreciate the time that Barb Dawson, Barbra Meek, Patrick Moore, and Brittany Tuffs provided us with as well as Gillian Staveley, Jessica Alfred, Ken Coates, and Paul Nadasdy. Being able to tap into Catherine McClellan's work helped us tremendously.

We are also grateful to the Yukon First Nation Heritage Group for spearheading the creation of the Heritage and Culture program at Yukon University. Many of the themes and readings in this handbook come from their curriculum recommendations. The President's Advisory Committee on First Nations Initiatives at Yukon University was also an early supporter of this book.

A special thank you goes to Chief Elijah Smith and the delegates who flew to Ottawa to present *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* and to all those that came before and after who worked tirelessly to bring about new forms of governance to improve the lives of First Nation peoples in the territory.

Finally, we thank our families for their never-ending patience and support during the writing process.

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INTRODUCTION - WHY THIS BOOK IS NECESSARY

> *Growing up I was taught that our people had always been here. That Yukon First Nations were the first peoples here and that we will always be the original people. I think as I continued to grow and learn it became apparent and is now solidified in my mind and heart, that Yukon First Nations are resilient, masters of adaption, and have the strength and perseverance to overcome over 100 years of colonization and start down the path of reclaiming their self-determination. The changes in this amazing part of the world over the last 100 years are mind-boggling. We have Elders who were born on the land, speaking their First Nation language, who are now on Facebook. We have gone through a period of such oppression that it literally wiped out parts of our culture and now we are witnessing the reclamation of ceremony, arts, language, and the revitalization of Yukon First Nation cultures.*
>
> *Today we have pride in our culture, in our ways of knowing and doing. Today we celebrate Yukon First Nation people in many ways, and we hold our culture up for our younger generations to embrace and for others to learn about. Festivals like the Adäka Cultural Festival, which happens every summer, are great examples of the progress being made. Today we see Yukon First Nations passing their own laws, creating language revitalization programs and plans, succeeding at economic development and paving the way for our future generations. Today we see our many levels of government trying to work together for all of our children tomorrow.*
>
> *This book is meant to share a part of the journey that brought us to this point. It is meant to be an example of how we can integrate multiple ways of knowing and doing and work together to present a shared history and collaborative future.*
> – Tosh Southwick

Recently, Yukon, Canada, has experienced exciting growth in First Nations cultural revival as well as an influx of newcomers brought on by the growth of the industrial, tourism, and education sectors. These newcomers are interested in learning about Yukon First Nations' diverse and complex cultures. Students of Yukon culture and history have traditionally been regaled with stories of the fur trade, the gold rush, the creation of the Alaska Highway, and the territory's natural history. Yet many students studying Yukon's First Peoples' history— and visitors and tourists wanting to learn more about the cultural landscape of the territory—have been hard-pressed to find a contemporary overview of information related to Indigenous ethnography, culture, and history. Often students are presented with materials that contain outdated terminology and do not discuss some of the contemporary changes to Indigenous self-determination and artistic forms of expression.

This book is intended to be a starting point from which readers can begin their studies of the diverse Indigenous cultural groups that make up Yukon. For some readers, this book may be their first introduction to Yukon's diverse Indigenous peoples. For others, particularly those who are Indigenous or who have lived in Yukon for a long time, some of the information in this book may already be familiar. While this book is primarily an anthropological and historical overview, we hope that by presenting a range of material from local First Nations, anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians that every reader will come away having learned something new about Yukon's founding cultures, traditions, languages, history, and governance. We (an archaeologist, a linguistic anthropologist, and a First Nation educator and leader) bring varied anthropological, historical, and Indigenous perspectives to this volume. We have attempted to use accessible language and an anthropological lens to provide a picture of cultural persistence and change by highlighting the cultural traditions, histories, and modern-day practices of Yukon's Indigenous peoples.

A key component of the book is the inclusion of interviews with Indigenous and non-Indigenous anthropologists and historians who have conducted collaborative work with Indigenous peoples. We have asked them to describe, in their own words their career highlights, the importance of collaboration in their work, and what makes Yukon special to them. Many of these researchers have paved the way for us and for young scholars wishing to pursue research with, and for, First Nation and Indigenous communities. They have introduced us to communities and community members, provided us with ethical guidelines, supported our research, and mentored us as we moved forward and now carry on with our own work. These interviews are intended to illustrate the long-standing tradition of collaborative anthropology in Yukon. We hope that future researchers in Yukon and elsewhere might look to Yukon as a model for respectful practices in collaborative anthropology and history.

As well, the inclusion of a current land claims section, explaining in plain language how the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) works in the real world, is a useful resource for those who are new to the UFA. Yukon is unique in its varied governance systems and, understandably, other Indigenous groups throughout the world look to Yukon to learn about land claims and how the UFA is being implemented to improve the lives of Indigenous peoples. Because of the UFA, governance in Yukon looks very different than in the rest of Canada. Many of the issues that other Indigenous nations are facing are still present in Yukon, but the tools to deal with them are different—and many people would argue more effective—because the UFA puts control of Indigenous lives and governance in Indigenous hands.

Many visitors to Yukon normally visit some of the key tourist stops along the Alaska Highway, while others will venture to more remote locations, hoping to learn more about the territory, its people and its past. We hope that ECHO will give these latest newcomers a better sense of Yukon's history, including who its Indigenous peoples are, as well as more information on their cultural practices. For students, this book is meant to help them learn about people and parts of Yukon that they are not familiar with. The territory is large, with many cultural groups, and we've attempted to present information about each group.

The chapters are arranged chronologically. In chapter (Chapter 1), we discuss terminology and provide definitions for some of the more frequently used phrases. We identify and discuss the 14 Yukon First Nations and other Indigenous groups in the territory. In Chapter 2 we provide a First Nation creation story and then, using archaeological examples, briefly outline the movement of peoples across the Bering Land Bridge and into Yukon during the last ice age. We also describe some of the more significant Yukon archaeological sites and introduce the archaeology researchers who have worked in the territory.

In Chapter 3, we present anthropological research conducted in Yukon over the twentieth century, discuss the value of oral traditions and introduce the various language and cultural groups within the territory, and highlight prominent researchers who have contributed to our understanding of Yukon's Indigenous cultures.

Chapter 4 presents Yukon's Indigenous people's historical relationship with newcomers. We focus on colonial relationships that began in the mid-nineteenth century with the fur trade and the whaling industry, then address how Indigenous peoples negotiated the influx of newcomers during the gold rushes at the turn of the century. This is followed by a discussion of the arrival of missionaries and the introduction of western religion and, later, the development of the Alaska Highway. Next, we turn to a discussion of federal influence on Indigenous peoples in the territory, particularly as it pertains to resettlement. Finally, we touch on the emergence of Yukon land claim movement.

In Chapters 5 and 6 we discuss Yukon's Indigenous peoples in recent and contemporary times. Chapter 5 addresses the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement, using examples that focus on how the agreement is put into practice in communities. We describe the differences between the Umbrella Final Agreement, a First Nation Final Agreement, and a Self-Government Agreement. Today, revitalization is manifested in an outpouring of artistic and cultural projects. Chapter 6 explores modern-day Indigenous art forms such as dance, music, poetry, storytelling, carving, and instrument-making.

We hope that you find this book informative and engaging and that it encourages students to continue to develop their interest in Indigenous studies of Yukon. For those who wish to learn more, we have added numerous footnotes and have suggested further readings at the end of each chapter.

CHAPTER 1 - WHO ARE YUKON'S FIRST PEOPLES?

Learning Objective

- Describe what culture, anthropology, and ethnography are.
- Identify all fourteen First Nation governments in Yukon.
- Identify the most culturally inclusive language when talking with and about Indigenous peoples in Yukon.

Some Definitions

There are many ways to learn about cultures. For anthropologists, the basic definition of **culture** is the learned patterns of behaviour, beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideals that are characteristic of a society. Anthropologists study these learned patterns to better understand and describe different cultural groups. They may study a group's **lifeways,** such as how people obtain food and what they eat, how clothing is made, how people house themselves and how it's constructed, and how a person is treated through their lifespan, to better understand cultural norms. One of the best ways to study lifeways is to conduct **ethnographic** research, using a method called **participant observation**. Anthropologists often do this by living with groups for extended periods of time, documenting and describing the group's customary behaviours and ideas, and trying to record what they observe through the point of view of the people being studied.

When we talk about Yukon's **First Peoples,** we are talking about a variety of independent cultural groups whose traditional territories are partially or wholly found within Yukon. They can trace their ancestry to the time before European and Euro-American settlers, whom we call **newcomers**, arrived in Yukon.[1] Other terms that are routinely used to describe Yukon's First Peoples include **Indigenous**,[2] **First Nation(s)**, **Aboriginal**, **Native**, and **Indian**. Yukon also has **Inuit**[3] and **Métis**[4] people living within its territory. A few of these terms have gone out of favour: for example, Indian is now considered a derogatory term in some circles, and Native is becoming antiquated. The term **Indigenous** is gaining recognition and use worldwide, including in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP 2007).

Unlike most Indigenous communities in the rest of Canada, most of Yukon's First Peoples are no longer organized in **bands** (see Chapter 5), which are defined by the Federal Government as "a body of Indians declared by the Governor-in-Council to be a band for the purposes of the Indian Act," the Act being a federal government construct (International Journal of Indigenous Health 2017:3). Yukon First Nation peoples have

---

1. Recently, the term **settler** has been used by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars to describe non-Indigenous peoples in Canada who have settled permanently and brought their colonial agenda with them. An agenda that "persists in the ongoing elimination of Indigenous populations… and control over their lands (Barker and Lowman, n.d.). Some Indigenous peoples in Yukon do not accept or support the term because it carries connotations of people settling in an uninhabited place, which was not the case in most parts of the Americas (author's note, Southwick).
2. The term Indigenous, according to Harold Cardinal, an important Cree lawyer and leader, means "born of that environment, from the land in which it sits" (1999:180). The term is more inclusive than the term Aboriginal, which is used in Canada to label all three groups of Indigenous peoples with legal status: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. Indigenous includes people who do not have legal status under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982. Other terms that have previously been used to describe Indigenous people in Canada include Indian (this is still the term used in the title of the legal document, the *Indian Act*), Native (a term to describe non-Inuit or non-Métis Indigenous people, which has lost popularity in Canada), and First Nations (a Canadian term for non-Inuit and non-Métis people that came into common use in the 1980s and is still widely used).
3. "Inuit are circumpolar people, inhabiting regions in Russia, Alaska, Canada and Greenland, united by a common culture and language. There are approximately 55,000 Inuit living in Canada" (International Journal of Indigenous Health 2017:6). Some Inuit people live and hunt part of the year on the northern tip of Yukon.
4. Today, the term Métis is used to "broadly describe people with mixed First Nations and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis… Historically, the term applied to children of French fur traders and Cree women in the Prairies, of English and Scottish traders and Déne women in the North, and Inuit and British in Newfoundland and Labrador" (International Journal of Indigenous Health 2017:7). In 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Métis and non-status Indigenous peoples are considered "Indians" under Section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act,* 1867 (Fontaine 2016).

reclaimed the right to define their own organizational structures. This means, for instance, that the former Selkirk Band is now the Selkirk First Nation. Some communities also use the term government or council. Still, the terms band, Indian, and Aboriginal are widely used by the federal and provincial governments. Yukon government uses First Nation to describe those groups that have signed land claim agreements.

Fourteen First Nations

There are approximately 7,700 self-identified Indigenous people in Yukon, which is about 23% of the territory's population (Government of Yukon 2014). This number can vary as people move in and out of the Territory. There are 14 First Nations in Yukon:

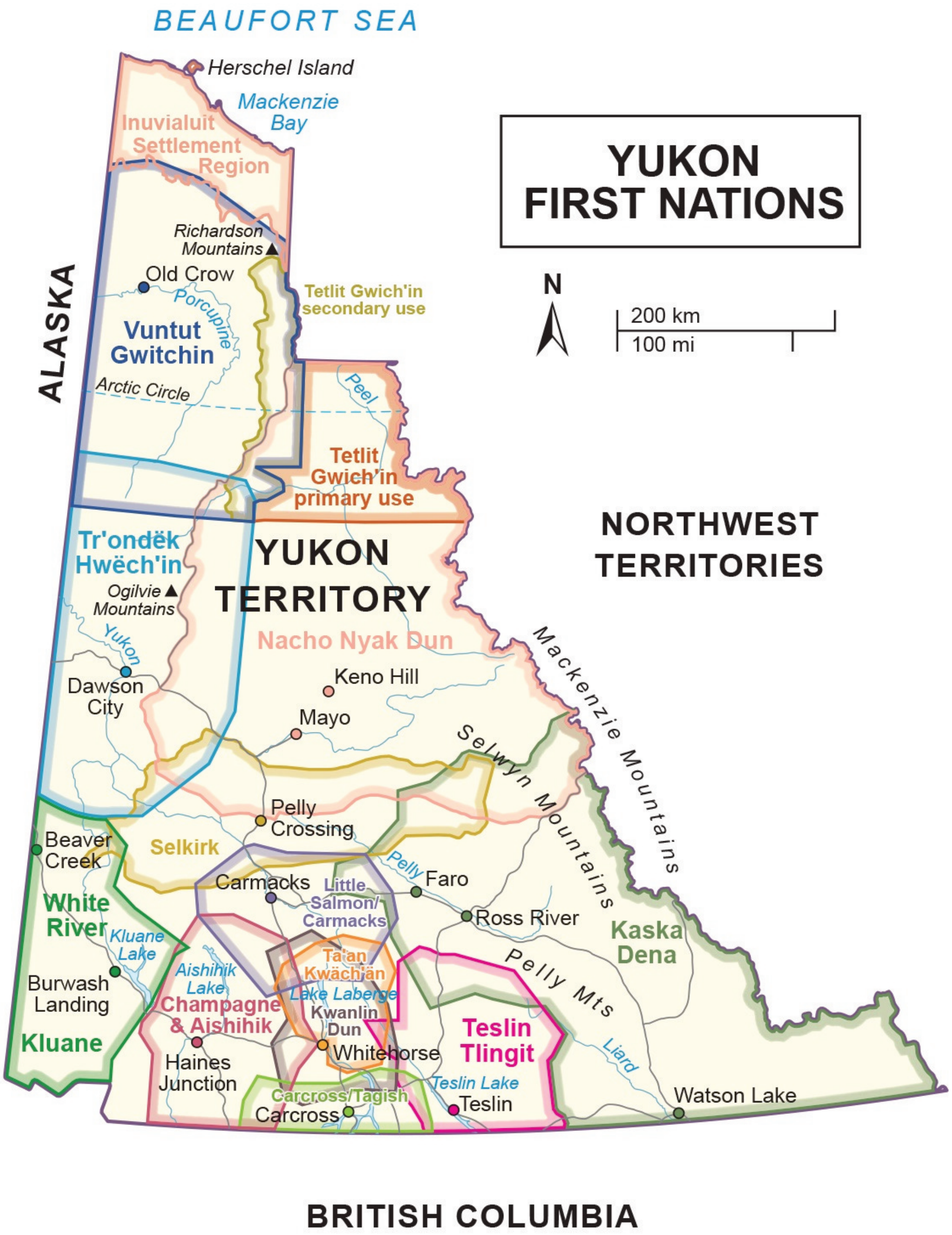
- Carcross/Tagish First Nation,
- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations,
- Kluane First Nation,
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation,
- Liard First Nation,
- Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation,
- First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun,
- Ross River Dena Council,
- Selkirk First Nation,
- Ta'an Kwäch'än Council,
- Teslin Tlingit Council,
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in,
- Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and
- White River First Nation.

Additionally, the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in in the Northwest Territories have land claims that extend into Yukon and overlap Yukon First Nations claims, which have been settled with trans-boundary agreements (Government of Yukon 2017a) (See Figure 1.1). There are also strong relations with many tribes in Alaska and First Nations in British Columbia. It is important to remember that the contemporary boundaries were placed on Yukon First Nations and created many separations that were not there previously.[1]

As you will see, Yukon's First Peoples have had, and continue to have, many connections, including to their own communities, their own territories, and to other Indigenous communities federally and internationally. These affiliations have been fluid over time as people's connections and relationships have shifted depending on their societal needs. In Chapter 2 we discuss the earliest connections people had to each other and to the land.

---

[1] The land claim negotiations with the White River First Nation (WRFN) did not result in a Final Agreement and were terminated in 2012. Consequently, the WRFN has reasserted its original traditional territory shown on Figure 1.1 (see also Chapter 5) (personal communication, Easton).


BEAUFORT SEA
Herschel Island
Mackenzie Bay
Inuvialuit Settlement Region
YUKON FIRST NATIONS
Richardson Mountains
Old Crow
Porcupine
Tetlit Gwich'in secondary use
N
200 km
100 mi
ALASKA
Vuntut Gwitchin
Arctic Circle
Peel
Tetlit Gwich'in primary use
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
YUKON TERRITORY
Ogilvie Mountains
Nacho Nyak Dun
Yukon
Mackenzie Mountains
Keno Hill
Dawson City
Mayo
Selwyn Mountains
Pelly Crossing
Beaver Creek
Selkirk
Pelly
Faro
Carmacks
Little Salmon/Carmacks
Ross River
Kaska Dena
White River
Kluane Lake
Ta'an Kwäch'än
Pelly Mts
Burwash Landing
Aishihik Lake
Lake Laberge
Champagne & Aishihik
Kwanlin Dun
Teslin Tlingit
Liard
Kluane
Haines Junction
Whitehorse
Teslin Lake
Watson Lake
Carcross/Tagish
Carcross
Teslin
BRITISH COLUMBIA

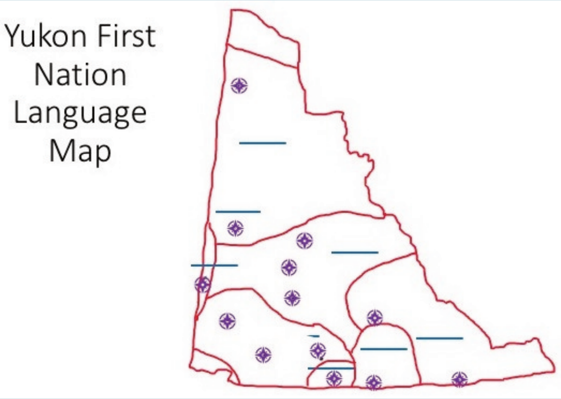
Modified from:
http://www.env.gov.yk.ca//maps/media/uploads/pdf-maps/
Traditional_Territories_ENV.020.01.pdf
© Government of Yukon 2017

Figure 1.1 Map of Yukon First Nation traditional territories (modified by Lovell Johns from Yukon Government Map 2012).

Chapter 1 Activity

Chapter 1 Activity

Print this map. Match each Yukon First Nation language to a blue line. Match each Yukon First Nation to a purple icon.



Language:

Han
Northern Tutchone
Southern Tutchone
Kaska
Gwich'in
Tagish
Upper Tanana
Tlingit

Yukon First Nation:

1. Carcross and Tagish First Nation; 2. White River First Nation; 3. First Nation of Na-cho Nyak Dun; 4. Champagne and Aishihik First Nation; 5. Liard First Nation; 6. Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation; 7. Ross River Dena Council; 8. Selkirk First Nation; 9. Ta'an Kwach'an Council; 10. Teslin Tlingit Council; 11. Tr'ondek Gwitchin First Nation; 12. Vuntut Gwitchin Government; 13. Kluane First Nation; 14. Kwanlin Dun First Nation

Suggested Readings

For more information about the history of Indigenous Peoples across Canada see *Natives & Settlers – Now & Then: Historical Issues and Current Perspectives on Treaties and Land Claims in Canada*, edited by Paul DePasquale (2007). The four-volume set, *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada* (2018), is an atlas that brings Indigenous perspectives and histories to the forefront. The book has more than 50 Indigenous contributors and focuses on language, demography, economy, culture and residential schools as well as other topics. First published in 1932, T*he Indians of Canada* by Diamond Jenness (1977) is an example of early anthropological research focused on Canada's Indigenous people. For information on terminology see the *Indigenous Foundations* website hosted by the University of British Columbia (First Nations and Indigenous Studies, University of British Columbia 2009). Information on contemporary newcomer relationships with Indigenous people can be found in *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Harris 2002) and *On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada* (Asch 2014). For a discussion of what the term settler means within a Canadian colonial context see Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker's book *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (2015).

As well, the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* "publishes anthropological, historical, sociological, political, legal, educational and cultural issues affecting First Nations people".[1] Although the majority of articles focus on Indigenous peoples in Canada, it also publishes articles focusing on Indigenous peoples world-wide. A list of other scholarly journals that focus on Indigenous topics nationally and internationally can be found on the University of Toronto's *Centre for Indigenous Studies* website.[2]

---

1. https://www.brandonu.ca/native-studies/cjns/
2. https://indigenousstudies.utoronto.ca/resources/scholarly-journals/

CHAPTER 2 - ARCHAEOLOGY AND YUKON'S FIRST PEOPLES

Learning Objectives

- Describe what Yukon’s environment was like during the ice age and after.
- Explain what creation stories are and their significance to Indigenous cultures of Yukon.
- Explain the peopling of the Americas from a scientific perspective.
- Identify early anthropological researchers in Yukon and the significance of their work.
- Describe major archaeological sites in Yukon and their location.
- Explain the significance of White River Ash.
- Identify early archaeological researchers in Yukon and the significance of their work.
- Identify some current archaeological researchers and their collaborators.

Yukon's Landscape and Geology

Located in the northwest corner of Canada, Yukon is 482,443 km^2, of which approximately 474,000 km^2 is land and 8,000 km^2 is water. The territory is bordered by Alaska, the Northwest Territories, and British Columbia and is part of the Canadian Cordillera, which consists of large mountains and plateaus connected to the Rocky and Coast mountain ranges. Various minerals can be found in Yukon, including silver, gold, copper, lead, asbestos, and ochre.

There are four major river systems in Yukon. The largest is the Yukon River, which begins in Atlin, Teslin, Tagish, and Bennett lakes in British Columbia and the southern Yukon and runs more than 3,000 km through Yukon and Alaska, draining into the Bering Sea. This river has many tributaries, including the Porcupine, White, Klondike, Stewart, Pelly, and Teslin rivers in Yukon. The other major river systems are the Peel River in the northeastern Yukon, the Liard River in the southeast, and the Alsek River in the southwest. Some of the larger lakes in Yukon include Kluane, Aishihik, Dezadeash, Kusawa, Laberge, Bennett, Tagish, Marsh, Teslin, Little Salmon, Tatlmain, Big Kalsas, Ethel, Mayo, Frances, and Finlayson lakes.

The climate of Yukon is both arctic and subarctic and is characterized by long cold winters, with an average temperature of –29.5°C, and brief warm summers when the average temperature is 21°C. The Coastal Mountains block moisture from moving inland from the Pacific Ocean, which creates a drier climate than that on the Alaska side of the mountain range.

The ecology of Yukon is part of the boreal forest ecoregion.[1] Most mountain peaks and higher elevations are characterized by alpine tundra,[2] while the coastal plain is Arctic coastal tundra.[3] The boreal forest developed after the last ice age when the ice sheets retreated, leaving behind new lakes, rivers, and valleys. As the environment began to warm up, new species of fish and animals began to appear (Ember et al. 2012:159).

---

[1] This ecoregion is characterized by mountain ranges, which contain numerous high peaks and plateaus separated by wide valleys and lowlands. These have been modified as a result of glaciation, erosion, the gradual movement of wet soil or other materials downslope, and rock fragments and particles ejected and deposited by volcanic eruptions (Smith et al. 2004:158).

[2] Alpine tundra is an ecozone that does not contain trees because it is at high altitude.

[3] Arctic coastal tundra is an ecozone that is low, flat, and boggy. The below-ground soil is damp and thick and contains permafrost (permanently frozen ground), often to great depths, and only the surface active layer thaws in the summer (Smith et al. 2004:32).

Origins: Indigenous and Archaeological Views

Creation stories[1] (sometimes called myths[2]) are “symbolic stories describing how the universe and its inhabitants came to be. Creation stories develop through oral traditions and therefore typically have multiple versions” (Womack 2005:81). These stories act as a way of knowing and a means of understanding the universe and how people came to be in a place; they help people “work out a relationship with the environment” (Cruikshank 1978:10). They describe how the plants, animals, and people appeared in a certain territory. Yukon First Peoples have a variety of stories describing how the Earth and Yukon’s landscape were formed, some of which overlap in content and reach into deep time. The following example from Kaska storyteller Tuu:’ts begins with a world covered by water and explains how the Earth came to be:

> Once there was no earth. Water was where the earth is now. The earth was very deep under the water. Beaver and muskrat, and all the animals and birds, dived but none of them reached the bottom. None of them stayed under the water longer than half a day. At last Diver (a bird) went down; after six days he came up quite exhausted and speechless. His friends examined his toenails and found mud or earth under them. From this, they formed on top of the water a new earth, which grew until it formed the present earth. At first, it was merely mud and very soft; later it became firm, and trees and vegetation began to grow on it. Now the earth is old and dry. Perhaps it is drying up [Teit 1917:441–442].

Crow[3] is a popular figure in creation stories and is usually portrayed as a bird with the ability to take human form. Crow is responsible for creating the human realm; Crow is creator, transformer, and trickster. The stories of Crow provide people with lessons about relationships, customs, and resource use (Ned in Cruikshank 1990:282–297). Here is an excerpt from an interview with the late Tagish Tlingit Elder Angela Sidney, who describes Crow as creator of the Earth:

> After Crow made the world, he saw that sea lion owned the only island in the world.
> The rest was water—he’s the only one with land.
> The whole place was ocean!
> Crow rests on a piece of log—he’s tired.
> He sees sea lion with that little island just for himself.
> He wants some land too, so he stole that sea lion’s kid.
>
> “Give me back the kid!” said sea lion.
> “Give me beach, some sand,” says Crow.
>
> So, sea lion gave him sand.
>
> Crow threw that sand around the world. “Be world,” he told it. And it became the world [Sidney in Cruikshank 1990:43–44].

---

1. We define story as an account of incidents or events.
2. The term myth has multiple meanings; anthropologists typically do not define myths as imaginary or fictitious stories. For instance, Cruikshank defines myth as “a traditional story which takes place in supernatural time, when men, animals, superhuman beings and often gods could communicate directly” (1978:50). For many Indigenous peoples the term myth implies that the story is not true, therefore the term is frowned upon.
3. Crow is connected to Raven from the Alaska coast and may be the same being (McClellan 1987:252).

The story of Crow, like other creation stories, can be lengthy and will often be told orally over many days. The story can be humorous, serious, or both (Legros 1999). Numerous other origin stories and myths also exist among the different Yukon First Nations, including the story of Smart Beaver[4] who took a trip down a large river (possibly the Yukon River) to stop giant creatures from terrorizing people. Smart Beaver killed giant cannibalistic men and reduced giant animals to their present size, teaching "them to eat non-human food and mak[ing] it safe for people to live again" (Sidney et al. 1977:22; McClellan 1987:252–258).

For some Yukon Indigenous peoples, creation stories are factual accounts of how their ancestors came to be in a particular territory and are considered accurate oral histories. These ancestral accounts of events sometimes offer differing perspectives from research that archaeologists[5] have conducted to describe how people came to populate Yukon. However, rather than being seen as separate fields of inquiry, when viewed in tandem, archaeology and oral stories, such as creation stories, can provide a more holistic understanding of past Yukon Indigenous cultures (Cruikshank 2005:51–52). One example of this can be found with research conducted on Kwäday Dän Ts'ìnchi man (see section Yukon Archaeological Sites).

---

4. The culture hero, Smart Beaver, is an example of the culture hero phenomenon found in many Indigenous cultures around the world.
5. Archaeology is the branch of anthropology that reconstructs the daily life, customs, and cultures of past peoples by studying their written records (when available) and material culture (Miller 2013).

Archaeological Research in Yukon

Professional archaeological research in Yukon began in the mid-twentieth century. Yukon is large, yet the number of archaeologists who have worked in the territory is small compared to neighbouring provinces and states. The following archaeologists have contributed to our understanding of Yukon's culture and history.

The first professional archaeologists to work in Yukon were Frederick Johnson and Hugh Raup, who conducted archaeological and botanical investigations in the southwest Yukon in the 1940s (1964; see also Harp Jr. 2005). This was the first scientific expedition along the recently constructed Alaska Highway. This research was followed by Richard S. (Scottie) MacNeish's work in locations on the Arctic coast and in the southwestern Yukon in the 1950s and 1960s (1956, 1964); Bryan Gordon's work on the Arctic Yukon coast (1970); and William Irving and Jacques Cinq-Mars's archaeological excavations in the Old Crow Flats on the Old Crow River in the northern Yukon (1974). Significant research was also done by William Workman, who carried out excavations in the Aishihik-Kluane area in the southwest Yukon (1978). In the 1980s, Richard Morlan and Jacques Cinq-Mars focused their attention on early human occupations in Beringia (1982),[1] Donald Clark began pre-contact[2] research throughout Yukon (1983), Raymond Le Blanc researched pre-contact sites in the Old Crow Flats (1984), and Sheila Greer conducted archaeological research in Yukon (1981, 1982, 1983). Clark would later undertake historical archaeology excavations at Fort Reliance (1995). In the 1990s and 2000s, archaeologists active in the territory included, Ruth Gotthardt (1990), Nancy Saxberg (1993), Greg Hare (1995), Thomas J. Hammer (1999), Julie Anne Esdale (2001), Ty Heffner (2002), Michael Brand (2002), Christian Thomas (2003), Glen MacKay (2008), Vandy Bowyer (2011), and Victoria Castillo (2012).

While much of this research has been based at academic institutions, the 1970s and 1980s also saw the emergence of cultural resource management (also known as CRM), as archaeologists and Indigenous groups pushed governments to create legislation meant to protect cultural resources,[3] by documenting and/or protecting sites. Both academic and CRM research in Yukon is governed by federal and territorial legislation[4] (Government of Yukon 2002). The *Yukon Historic Resources Act* makes it illegal to disturb any archaeological site, excluding those on First Nations settlement land,[5] without first holding a permit. First Nation government rules are paramount on settlement lands. Penalties for violating the Act can include a $50,000 fine and/or six months imprisonment for an individual, or a $1,000,000 fine for a corporation (Government of Yukon 2002:56). To obtain a permit an individual must meet certain criteria. They must have a Master's degree in archaeology and have two archaeology field seasons of experience, and they must be attached to a major institution or university or be a practising archaeological consultant (Government of Yukon 2008a:15). They are expected to submit a valid research proposal and methodology and have complied with the terms and conditions of

---

1. "The growth of glaciers and ice-sheets worldwide during the ice age locked up vast amounts of the world's water, causing sea levels to drop by as much as 120 metres. In the Bering Strait this drop in sea level exposed the Bering Land Bridge, which formed a connection between Asia and North America" (Zazula and Froese 2011:14). This unglaciated land bridge region is often known as Beringia.
2. The term pre-contact relates to the period before Indigenous people came into contact with non-Indigenous settlers. In Yukon this varies from region to region but 1848 is generally recognized as the beginning of the historic period of written records.
3. Cultural resource management is the study of archaeological sites that are threatened by natural phenomena or human development. In Yukon, these sites are identified, assessed, excavated, and/or protected.
4. The permit process was derived from the Yukon Archaeological Sites Regulations (Government of Yukon 2003) pursuant to the *Historic Resources Act* (Government of Yukon 2002).
5. In Yukon, settlement land is categorized as either surface and/or subsurface. It is owned by a First Nation (see Chapter 5).

previous permits. The researcher must have consulted with and obtained approval of affected communities. They are strongly encouraged to involve and communicate with local community members in their work. They are required to identify potential conservation requirements for artifacts recovered during their research program and indicate how these requirements will be met (Government of Yukon 2008:15).

Yukon First Nation settlement land does not fall under this requirement as they have their own government rules on how settlement lands are managed. Consent is required from the First Nation to access settlement lands. First Nations also hire archaeologists and other cultural resource managers to work with them on cultural projects. The Umbrella Final Agreement (Canada 1993) was signed in 1993 by the Council for Yukon Indians (now the Council of Yukon First Nations), the Canadian government, and Yukon government (see Chapter 5). The document reads, “Key provisions of the Agreement describe First Nation rights to manage and administer Settlement Lands, which are selected from land within the First Nation’s Traditional Territory.”[6] Settlement lands comprise about 8.6% percent of land in Yukon (Government of Yukon 2008:22).

The territorial government maintains an inventory of all of the archaeological sites in Yukon. Currently, the list contains over 3,800 sites (Gregory Hare, personal communication 2012), including, but not limited to, cabins, tent frames, brush camps, caches, traps and snares, fish camps, game drives, trails, house pits, and graves (Gotthardt and Thomas 2005). Many sites still remain to be discovered and recorded.

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[6] Traditional territory means “subject to a Yukon First Nation Final Agreement, with respect to each Yukon First Nation and each Yukon First Nations person enrolled in that Yukon First Nation’s Final Agreement, the geographic area within the Yukon identified as that Yukon First Nation’s Traditional Territory” (Canada 1998a:9).

An Archaeological Perspective on Early Migration into Yukon

Forty thousand years ago, during the Pleistocene,[1] two enormous ice sheets, the Cordilleran over the western Rocky to Coast mountains and the Laurentide over the lands to the east, covered much of Canada (Goebel et al. 2008:1498; see Figure 2.1). They retreated and expanded numerous times over the course of thousands of years. During the Last Glacial Maximum[2] (LGM) these ice sheets and others around the world grew in extent and depth that caused global sea levels to fall approximately 120 metres (Meltzer 2009:3). This happened because rain and snow froze into glacial ice instead of going into the oceans. This drop in ocean levels exposed the Bering Land Bridge, a landmass that was approximately 1,600 km wide (north to south) at its greatest extent and connected what is today Alaska and eastern Siberia at various times during the Pleistocene[3] ice ages. The Beringian environment was characterized by open grassland and tundra, ideal for foraging ice age animals.

Throughout the time of these ice sheet advances and retreats there were areas that were never glaciated, for instance in northern Yukon and Alaska. To understand when and how modern humans moved into the Americas and into Yukon and beyond, archaeologists and other researchers have attempted to study the routes they took. At least 20,000 years ago, and possibly earlier, ancestors of Indigenous Americans walked across the Bering Land Bridge and, at some point, paused in Beringia for a few thousand years. They then quickly migrated southward. This is called the Beringian Standstill model (Tamm et al. 2007). Whether the pause happened in western Beringia (Siberia) or eastern Beringia (Alaska) is still up for discussion; perhaps these ancient Beringians were a small, thinly spread population across Beringia. The discovery of three 11,500-year-old burials at Upward Sun River in Alaska, including that of infant Xach'itee'aanenh T'eede Gaay (Sunrise Girl-Child in Middle Tanana), and subsequent DNA testing indicate that the ancient Beringians, like Xach'itee'aanenh T'eede Gaay, had split from other Asian groups and become genetically distinct during the standstill period. About 4,000 years later the northern and southern branches of the Indigenous American family tree split again, creating two more genetically distinct groups, an Indigenous South American group and an Indigenous North American group (Moreno-Mayar et al. 2018).

Two possible routes of new world human colonization have been brought forward, popularly known as the Coastal Migration Route (CMR), and the Ice Free Corridor (IFC) route (Figure 2.1). The CMR posits that people followed a southward route along the west coast of Alaska and British Columbia, leaving evidence of their movements along the coastline (Easton 1992; Goebel et al. 2008:1499, 1501; Mackie et al. 2018). Previously, it was assumed that most of the coastline where sites might be found was now underwater and therefore unreachable for further study. There is now evidence that "the earliest known people to enter the Americas...

---

1. The Pleistocene is a geochronological division of geological time. Huge expanses of the northern hemisphere were covered with glacial ice sheets that successively advanced and retreated. The Lower Pleistocene began approximately 1.8 million years ago, the Middle Pleistocene 730,000 years ago, and the Upper Pleistocene 127,000 years ago; it ended about 10,000 years ago.
2. Last Glacial Maximum (LGM) refers to a period in the Earth's climate history when ice sheets were at their maximum extension, between 26,500 and 20,000 years ago (Tarbuck et al. 2017).
3. The Pleistocene is a geochronological division of geological time. Huge expanses of the northern hemisphere were covered with glacial ice sheets that successively advanced and retreated. The Lower Pleistocene began approximately 1.8 million years ago, the Middle Pleistocene 730,000 years ago, and the Upper Pleistocene 127,000 years ago; it ended about 10,000 years ago.

likely arrived by traversing the Pacific coast using watercraft. This corridor would have been open for migration by 16,000 years ago as the Cordilleran Ice Sheet retreated and exposed tracks of land along the coast" (Waters et al. 2018:10). Recently, clear evidence of initial human coastal occupation was discovered in the form of human footprints "impressed into a 13,000-year-old paleosol beneath beach sands" at Calvert Island, British Columbia (McLaren et al. 2018). On Triquet Island, British Columbia, a 13,900-year-old hearth feature with associated artifacts has been found (Gauvreau and McLaren 2017). The Calvert and Triquest sites, and other coastal sites along the Pacific Coast, are demonstrating the very early use of a Pacific coastal human migration route at > 14,000 years ago (Mackie et al. 2018).

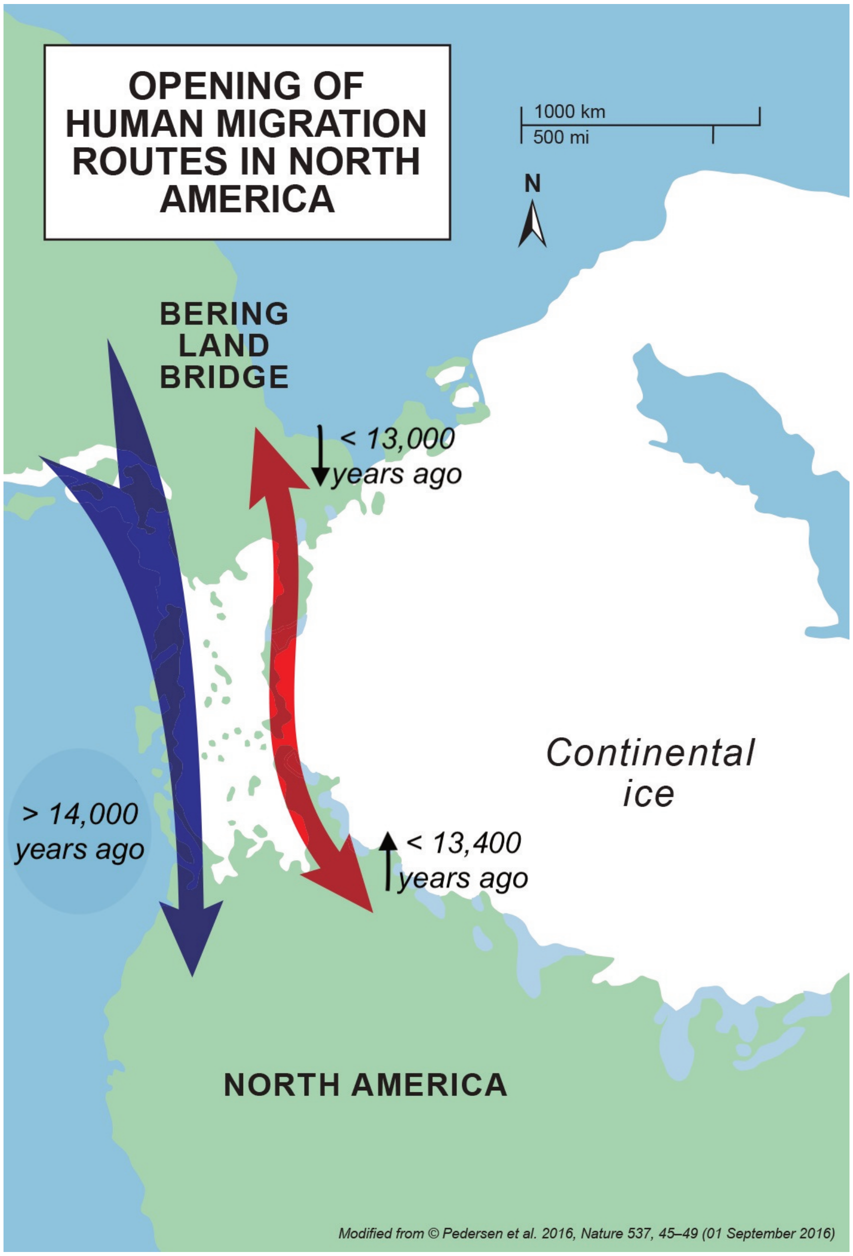
OPENING OF HUMAN MIGRATION ROUTES IN NORTH AMERICA
1000 km
500 mi
N
BERING LAND BRIDGE
< 13,000 years ago
Continental ice
> 14,000 years ago
< 13,400 years ago
NORTH AMERICA
Modified from © Pedersen et al. 2016, Nature 537, 45–49 (01 September 2016)

Figure 2.1 Map of Beringia and possible travel routes into the new world (modified by Lovell Johns from Pedersen et al. 2016).

The Ice Free Corridor (IFC) route suggests that people may have moved from Asia into the Americas prior to the LGM, earlier than 20,000 years ago, by walking across the Bering Land Bridge and settling in unglaciated areas of eastern Beringia as early as 15,000 years ago (Morlan 2003). At the end of the LGM, the Laurentide and Cordilleran ice sheets retreated, opening an interior ice-free corridor on the southern side of the IFC at approximately 13,400 years ago. The northern (Beringia) side of the IFC opened up at approximately 13,000 years ago (Heintzman et al. 2016). This allowed large mammals, such as bison[4] and, it is argued, human populations that hunted them, to migrate northward from the ice sheets and then later southward through parts of Yukon, northeastern interior British Columbia, the Plains east of the Canadian Rockies, and into the rest of the Americas (Morlan 2003; Heintzman et al. 2016). Because the archaeological and phylogeographic[5] record indicates that the northern part of the IFC was only open after 13,000 years ago, it "precludes the postglacial corridor as a southward route for initial human dispersal into the Americas, the corollary being that the first Indigenous peoples leaving Beringia probably took a coastal route…" (Heintzman et al. 2016:8061). The first peoples moving southward could not have occupied the rest of the Americas through the post-glacial IFC because it was not open in time. By the time the corridor was open people were already south of the ice sheets (Waters et al., 2018:1). Thus, people probably arrived south of the ice sheets following a coastal route, moving inland from the coast as they traveled to the southern hemisphere, reaching the "southern portion of South America by 14,200 years ago" (Waters et al. 2018:10).

---

[4] Some of these animals also included mammoths, mastodons, muskoxen, camels, horses, short-faced bears, steppe bison, lions, wolves, and ground squirrels. The larger animals are also known as megafauna (Zazula and Froese 2011).

[5] Phylogeography is the study of the historical processes that may be responsible for the contemporary geographic distributions of individuals. This is accomplished by considering the geographic distribution of individuals in light of genetics, particularly population genetics.

Yukon After the Ice Age

As the environment warmed up, approximately 14,000–10,000 years ago, glaciers melted and left behind new lakes and rivers, sea levels rose, grasslands turned to forest, and plants and animals appeared in the new environments. Many ice age mammals disappeared, but some remained, including caribou, bison, and muskox. The vegetation of Yukon was characterized by shrub tundra, which transitioned to spruce forests by 7,000 years ago. People began to populate the rest of Yukon from northern and southern areas. The people who populated Yukon between 10,000 and 4,500 years ago were hunter-gatherers (foragers or food collectors) who lived in very small groups known as bands.[1] These people moved throughout the landscape following the seasonal cycle and probably erected temporary shelters or structures. They would usually return to the same location every year to harvest local resources. People would have hunted large game, but in order to be successful, hunters would have needed specialized tools.

After 4,500 years ago, the climate became cool and humid. People continued to hunt large game but also started hunting smaller game (Ember et al. 2012:155–157). Stone net sinkers also began to appear in the archaeological record, indicating fish harvesting was occurring in rivers and lakes. Salmon runs became established on the Yukon River and its tributaries. Fishing areas became summertime gathering places for people, and some have remained in use to the present day: Fort Selkirk is one example (see next section).

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1. The term band here refers to a small, nomadic (within a particular region), local group that is politically autonomous.

Archaeological Sites of Significance

Before moving forward with a brief overview of some key archaeological sites that have been recorded in Yukon, it is worthwhile noting that there is still a great deal of disagreement within the archaeological community regarding terminology, dates, and archaeological traditions.[1] Figure 2.2 shows the archaeological sites discussed in this book. The following cultural historical sequence[2] (Figure 2.3) is by no means definitive; rather, it is a cursory sequence intended to help readers identify some of the more significant Yukon archaeological sites.

Earliest Sites

Bluefish Caves

Possibly the earliest site in Yukon is located in the northwestern portion of the territory. Bluefish Caves, 54 km southwest of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation village of Old Crow, overlooks the Bluefish River, a tributary of the Porcupine River (Cinq-Mars 1979; Morlan and Cinq-Mars 1982). These caves, located on the traditional territory of the Vuntut Gwitchin, contain evidence of three distinct periods. The earliest period is represented by small cobbles and pebbles as well as split long bones that may show traces of whittling and high polish, possibly man-made. One bone, a split caribou tibia,[3] dates to 24,800 years ago and may have been used as a fleshing tool used to process animal hides (Cinq-Mars and Morlan n.d. in Ackerman 1996:512–513; Bourgeon et al. 2017). A 23,500-year-old mammoth bone core and reattached flake may also indicate that people were making bone tools (Cinq-Mars in Morlan 1987:286). There are no associated stone (or lithic) artifacts found within the deepest layers, thus these remains may have been created by natural processes; this is still up for debate (Dixon 1999). Younger artifacts, which may be from a later period, have also been found at this site and include microblades[4], burins,[5] and debris—known as debitage in archaeology—left from the production of stone tools.

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1. The term tradition “refers to styles of artifacts, assemblages of tools or other items of material culture, architectural styles, economic practices, or artistic styles that last” over a long period of time (Darvill 2008:465–466). “The idea of a tradition implies a degree of cultural continuity even if there are local or regional patterns in the archaeological material” (Darvill 2008:466).
2. A cultural historical sequence is done by placing historical societies into distinct ethnic and cultural groupings according to their material culture or the objects they left behind. “The development of a robust culture history remains the object of some archaeological work, especially the geographical and chronological mapping of cultures and cultural influences” (Darvill 2008:118).
3. The tibia, or shinbone, is the larger and stronger of the two bones in the leg below the knee in vertebrates. It connects the knee with the talus, or ankle bone.
4. A microblade is a small, narrow stone blade, ranging from less than 5-11 mm wide and about 15-45 mm long. They were often made from a conical or wedge-shaped microcore, often punch-struck or pressure-flaked.
5. A burin is a “flake tool with a chisel edge that was produced by the removal of two flakes or spalls at right angles to one another to create a very fine sharp and durable edge” (Andrefsky 2005:254). It is “used for working bone, antler, and ivory and perhaps for engraving” (Darvill 2008:64).

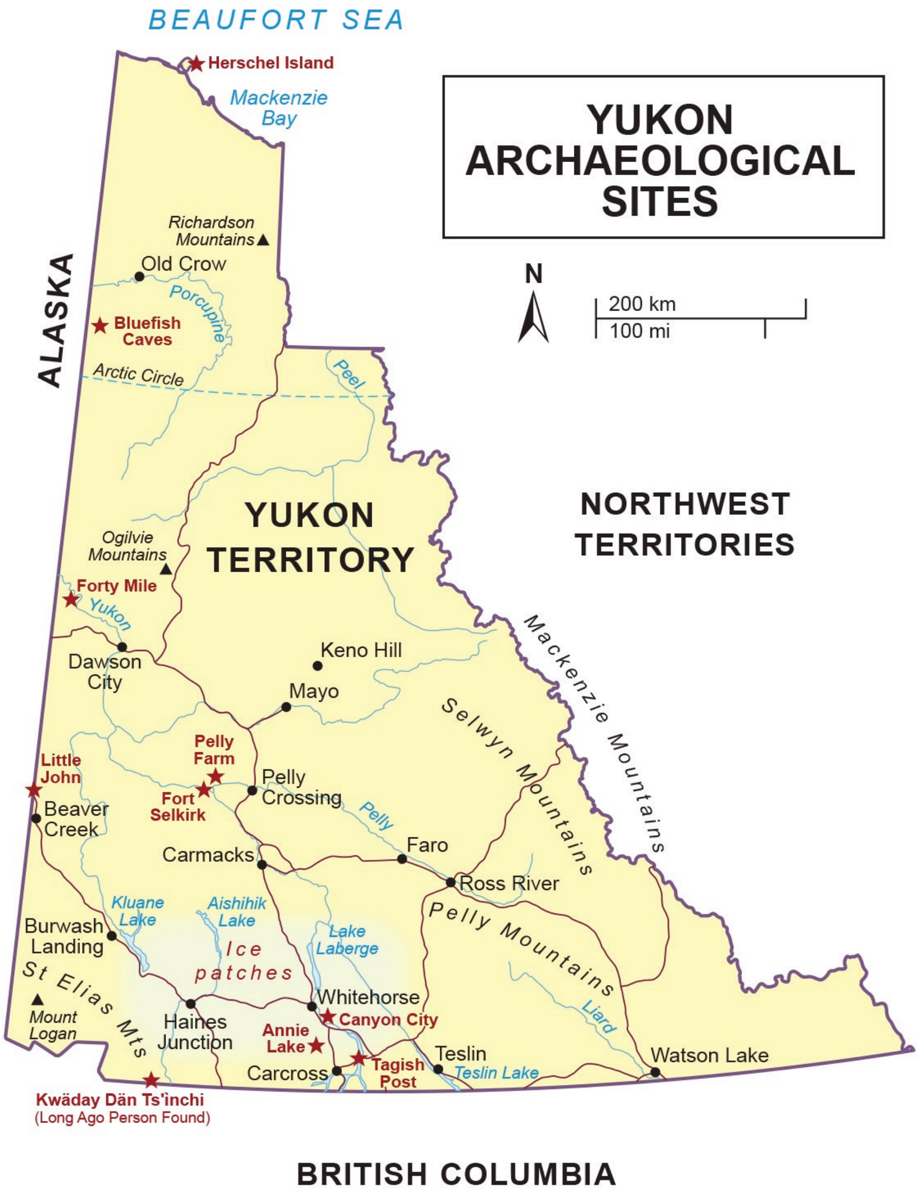
BEAUFORT SEA
Herschel Island
Mackenzie Bay
YUKON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES
Richardson Mountains
Old Crow
Porcupine
Bluefish Caves
ALASKA
N
200 km
100 mi
Arctic Circle
Peel
YUKON TERRITORY
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
Ogilvie Mountains
Forty Mile
Yukon
Dawson City
Keno Hill
Mayo
Mackenzie Mountains
Selwyn Mountains
Little John
Pelly Farm
Fort Selkirk
Pelly Crossing
Pelly
Beaver Creek
Carmacks
Faro
Ross River
Kluane Lake
Aishihik Lake
Lake Laberge
Pelly Mountains
Burwash Landing
Ice patches
St Elias Mts
Mount Logan
Whitehorse
Canyon City
Haines Junction
Annie Lake
Liard
Tagish Post
Teslin
Teslin Lake
Watson Lake
Carcross
Kwäday Dän Ts'ìnchi
(Long Ago Person Found)
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Figure 2.2 Yukon archaeological sites discussed in the book (modified by Lovell Johns from Yukon Government Map 2017).

Little John

Another early site is the Little John site, which was excavated from 2002 to 2017 by Norman Easton (Figure 2.4). This site is located just off the Alaska Highway, 12 km north of the village of Beaver Creek, Yukon, and about 2 km from the international border with Alaska. This site, is within the traditional territory of the White River First Nation and unglaciated Beringia, and contains evidence of human occupation from the most recent past back to the end of the Pleistocene (10,000 years ago). The deepest identified site layer represents what may be the earliest precisely dated tool collection found in Canada. The tools found in that layer include bifaces, scrapers, large blades, and tear-drop–shaped Chindadn projectile points, two of which are dated to 13,200 years ago, while many of the rest are characteristic of this early time period. Subsequent layers also have evidence of human occupation ranging in time from after the Pleistocene to the present. In addition, excavations in 2008 uncovered bison and wapiti bones that had been modified by people. These modified bones were found in association with stone flakes and cores dating to 14,000 years ago (Easton et al. 2011:289). The Little John site represents a sequence of shifting lifeways over time, the movement of people and/or artifacts, and expressions of cultural identity through artifact remains (Easton and MacKay 2008).

Annie Lake

Located in the south-central Yukon, the Annie Lake site is in the Southern Lakes District and lies in the traditional territory of the Carcross/Tagish and Kwanlin Dün First Nations. This site contains evidence of occupation spanning from 7,200 years ago to the present day and is one of the older documented archaeological sites in Yukon. The site was originally discovered and excavated by Sheila Greer in the 1980s; Greg Hare continued excavations at the site in the 1990s (Greer 1981, 1982, 1983; Hare 1995; Hare and Greer 1994). The earliest layers showing human occupation of the site occur during a time when shrubs and forest were just becoming established again, as the glaciers began retreating and caribou and bison started to become plentiful. The site contains well-made projectile points constructed with high-quality materials. This site also contains a distinctive tool form called a lanceolate spear point, which is similar to points found in the Plains and Plateau regions and may represent cultural interaction between different groups. A large scallop shell is evidence of transport with coastal peoples during the past 1,000 years.

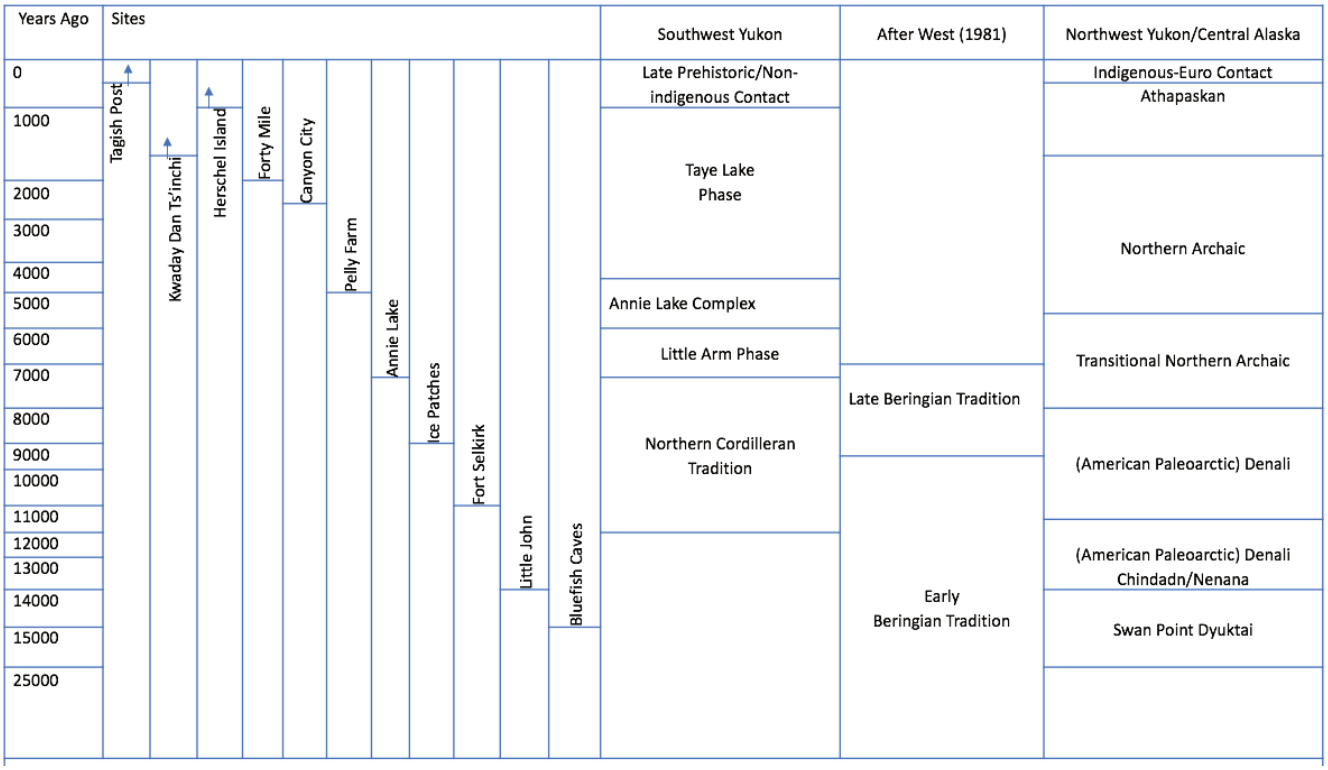
Years Ago
Sites
Southwest Yukon
After West (1981)
Northwest Yukon/Central Alaska
0
1000
2000
3000
4000
5000
6000
7000
8000
9000
10000
11000
12000
13000
14000
15000
25000
Tagish Post
Kwaday Dan Ts'inchi
Herschel Island
Forty Mile
Canyon City
Pelly Farm
Annie Lake
Ice Patches
Fort Selkirk
Little John
Bluefish Caves
Late Prehistoric/Non-indigenous Contact
Taye Lake Phase
Annie Lake Complex
Little Arm Phase
Northern Cordilleran Tradition
Late Beringian Tradition
Early Beringian Tradition
Indigenous-Euro Contact
Athapaskan
Northern Archaic
Transitional Northern Archaic
(American Paleoarctic) Denali
(American Paleoarctic) Denali Chindadn/Nenana
Swan Point Dyuktai

Figure 2.3. Archaeological sites and dates described in this volume: southwest Yukon and northwest Yukon/central Alaska (after Hare 1995:130; Holmes 2011:181; West 1981, 1996:549).

Ice Patches

In 1997, two sheep hunters walking on the ice-covered peaks around Kusawa Lake in the southern Yukon discovered a wooden stick with string attached to it resting on an enormous pile of caribou dung. Yukon government archaeologists identified the string as sinew and also discovered some feathers attached to the stick. The dung and stick (which ended up being an *atlatl*[6] dart shaft) were dated to 2,400 and 4,300 years old (Hare 2011:6). The discovery prompted more research in what became known as the Ice Patch Project. There are currently sixteen Ice Patch sites identified on various mountaintops. These sites are located on the traditional territories of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Kluane First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and the Teslin Tlingit Council. Some of the more significant archaeological finds include an ancient moccasin found in the Ruby Range that is approximately 1,400 years old, the oldest known moccasin in Canada (Figure 2.6) (Hare 2011:18). As well, there are approximately 200 artifacts made of bone, antler, wood, and stone, all of which are extraordinarily well preserved. The oldest artifact, a dart found west of Aishihik Lake, is 9,000 years old (Greer and Strand 2012:146-147; Hare 2011:22).

Anthropologists in Yukon and Their Collaborators: Norman Easton and Chief David Johnny

Figure 2.4 Anthropologist Norman Easton at the Little John site (photograph courtesy of Grant Zazula).

Norman Alexander Easton is a Canadian anthropologist. He has been an anthropology lecturer at Yukon University (formerly Yukon College) in Whitehorse since 1986. His research focuses on the social history of Northern Athapaskan (Déne) Indigenous people and prehistoric underwater archaeology. His current research activities in Yukon include projects in archaeology, social history, linguistics, and contemporary social issues. A large component of his research concentrates on the Little John site (discussed in this chapter). Norman was born in Vancouver and moved to Yukon by happenstance in 1986 when his wife found work there. He had just finished his master's degree in underwater archaeology at the University of Victoria. While attending a Yukon Underwater Diving Association (YUDA) general meeting, he offered to take part in a project conducting an archaeological survey of the Yukon River system. This survey, conducted from 1986 to 1989 as part of YUDA's Underwater Heritage program, was the first of three major research highlights of Norman's northern archaeology career.

The second highlight was working on the Fort Selkirk Culture History Project from 1987 to 1991 in collaboration with the Selkirk First Nation and archaeologist Dr. Ruth Gotthardt. This was the beginning of Norman's collaborative work with First Nations. The third highlight of his career has been working on the Yukon-Alaska borderlands since 1990 and discovering the different sites that are located there, including the site of Little John.

Norman graduated from university in the 1980s, a time when young anthropologists were starting to try different types of research, particularly through community involvement. He began conducting ethnographic and linguistic research with the White River First Nation of Beaver Creek, and Native Alaskans in Northway, Tanacross, and Tetlin, but did not conduct archaeological projects until his fifth year of research. That allowed him to establish rapport and trust with people in White River. This long-

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6. Atlatl is an Aztec word for an early type of dart or spear thrower. An atlatl provided a means of increasing the thrust exerted on a spear or other projectile by artificially extending the length of the thrower's arm and thus the leverage available (Darvill 2008:29).

term community research has resulted in people throughout the Upper Tanana Valley region on both sides of the border feeling comfortable enough with Norman to share their time with his field school students, and to teach them about subsistence pursuits, such as hunting and fishing. He believes there is great value in having his students, many of whom are urban dwellers, leave the field school with a real appreciation of the value and importance of a village subsistence lifestyle. To Norman, collaboration means being patient and willing to put in the time to come back year after year, establishing personal relationships, not just professional ones. He feels that this is what counts with villagers: you need to be committed for the long term. What comes out of that is something really great that goes in all different directions. People will have a sense of real trust and they will know that the researcher cares about the people and their culture. It should not be about working with people for two weeks never to return. He feels you also have to be willing to be a part of the community.

What Norman loves most about Yukon are the people he has met in the course of his work that have taught him about the Déne way—the values that the Déne people hold. He has tried to integrate these values into his life and feels that he would not be the person that he is today without the guidance and support of Déne people.

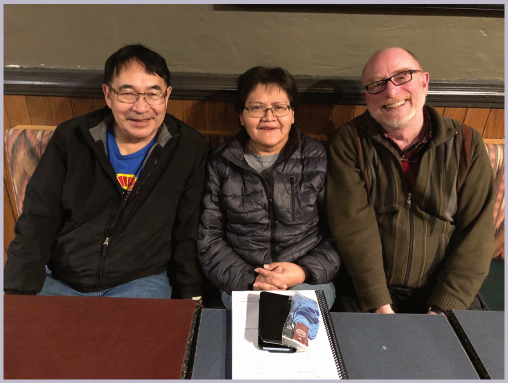

Figure 2.5 Deputy Chief David Johnny, language expert Ruth Johnny and Norman Easton (photograph courtesy of Victoria Castillo).

David Johnny Senior is a former Chief of White River First Nation of Beaver Creek, Yukon. He has collaborated with Norm (Norman) Easton on archaeology and culture history projects for over 20 years. It took some time before their collaboration started. When Norm first arrived in Beaver Creek to begin his research on the borderlands at the invitation of Bessie John, David's older sister and village matriarch, many in the community, including David, were not convinced that collaboration could happen. "You know," says David, "you have government people coming up. They dig this site or that site but they never tell the First Nation nothing. When I became chief way back when, and Norm came and said he wanted dig, everybody was waiting for him to make a move. It took a few years but he came back and stayed with us." In 1996, Bessie John adopted Norm with a traditional potlatch. This means Norm is now David's nephew. "He stayed with my brother and he learned our ways. He learned our language, he learned by walking in our country. It took a few years to do that."

Eventually, when Norm asked for permission to conduct archaeological excavations at Little John in 2002, the community told him he could but that he would have to get approval in the traditional way from Elders in Beaver Creek and Northway, Alaska. With their approval, Norm began bringing students from southern Canada, the United States, and Europe to excavate the site and learn about the cultural traditions of White River peoples. Graduate students would conduct their research and others would participate in the field school he put on every summer until 2016. Part of the student's curriculum included Upper Tanana language lessons and listening to White River traditional stories as told by community members. David encouraged students to participate in moose cutting, packing, and cooking (including eating moose guts, moose head soup, and tongue, all delicacies).

Community members participating in the field school created some long-lasting friendships. David notes, “Still today, a lot of them call us, talk to us. A couple of them had kids and when we see them the kids say, ‘hi grandma, hi grandpa’. It came to the point where we interacted with them so much that a lot of them came into our family.” The community also supported student’s research by providing feedback on research publications.

For David, one of the highlights of working with Norm is his willingness to “put his side away, he took our side. He dressed like us, he talked like us, and he started thinking like us. We have a different way of thinking when it comes to digging up your ancestors [material culture]. It took a few years for us to get easy with that. For thousands of years we’ve had that tradition. We showed him our way and he accepted it and in turn taught us about archaeology.” Having Norm teach White River youth about their deep-time culture in a different way is also valuable. “Before it was Injii [forbidden], you can’t touch that stuff, but now just a simple rock draws their attention if it has a different shape.” David adds that, “before, nobody took the time to say, ‘here is my grandmother or great-great-grandfather, from 15,000 years ago.” He believes that learning through archaeology allows people to understand themselves better.

When asked what his favourite part of being from and living in Yukon is he says, “I would say the Little John site because we always had a hunting camp there. My dad said that people use to camp there a long time ago. It never really dawned on us. We thought about it and [back in the Pleistocene] there’s no trees, a big valley there and the animals travel up and down the valley. That’s when we looked at it from another way.”

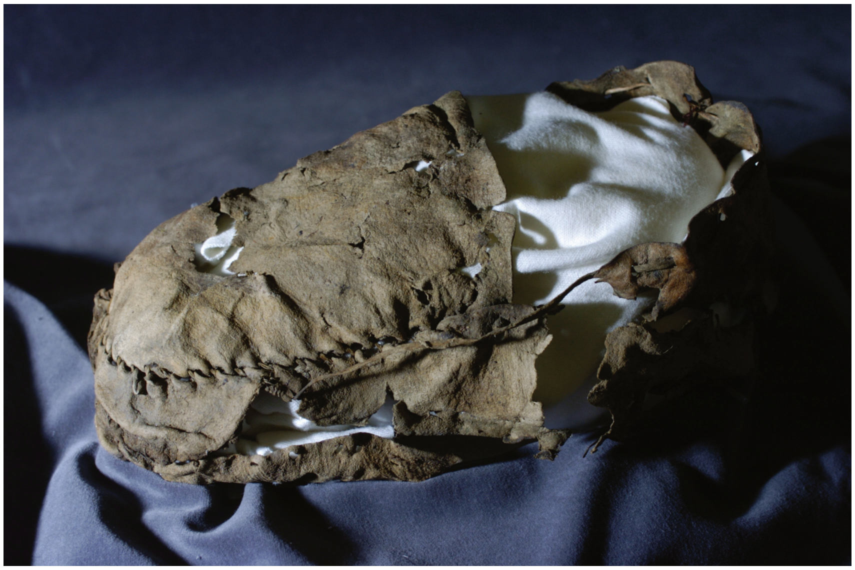

Figure 2.6 Moccasin, estimated to be 1,400 years old, found in a Yukon Ice Patch (photograph courtesy of Mike Thomas, Yukon News).

Pelly Farm

The Pelly Farm site is located in the traditional territory of the Selkirk First Nation, on the north bank of the Pelly River approximately 5 km from its confluence with the Yukon River. The site, discovered in 1957 by Scott MacNeish, sits on an 18-metre-high terrace overlooking Pelly Farm (MacNeish 1964:220). Excavations uncovered a collection of stone tools and animal bones related to multiple occupations ranging from 5,000 years ago to until approximately 1,200 years ago. The deepest layers, showing the oldest human occupations, contained evidence of a small group of hunters who were processing bison and elk during the winter and muskoxen, bison, elk, caribou, bear, beavers, and birds during the summer. Over time, different people arrived and deposited their animal processing remains at the site. The final occupancy of the site indicates that people had new tools and were processing animals such as moose, caribou, goat, sheep, and rabbits. The numerous stone tools recovered include spear points, scrapers, choppers, burins, and hammerstones, indicating that people occupied this location multiple times over many years (MacNeish 1964:229–230).

A Change in Environment: White River Ash

Approximately 1,900 years ago and then again 1,250 years ago, massive volcanic eruptions occurred at Mt. Churchill, located in eastern Alaska close to the Yukon border. The second eruption was incredibly large and filled the air with plumes of volcanic ash, which spread eastward through Yukon to the Northwest Territories and beyond. Ingesting the ash would have seriously injured the eyes and lungs of animals and people—inhaling it would have been like inhaling particles of glass. Once the clouds settled, most of the central Yukon was covered with a substantial amount of volcanic ash. (This layer of ash is called White River Ash because its thickest deposits and first description are from along the White River.) Water sources would have become contaminated and vegetation would have been destroyed. Digesting the ash would have been akin to eating small shards of glass. No one is sure when plants and animals returned. What is visible archaeologically is the change in tool types that took place after the eruption (Clague et al. 1995:1177; Lerbekmo et al. 1975:203–209).

The fifteen hundred years after the eruption brought about notable innovations in technology and tool manufacture. Items made of copper appeared for the first time. Nuggets of native copper were heated and hammered into tools, including awls and arrow points, and adornments such as tinkling cones began appearing. As well, there was a greater prevalence of bone and antler tools. Some of these items often contained line and dot decorative motifs. Interestingly, this is a time when small stemmed and notched arrow points appeared in the tool kit, indicating a transition from the use of the atlatl to bow and arrow, a completely new technology. In interviews with Upper Tanana Elders, Mr. Andy Frank and Mrs. Bessie John (interviewed in Northway Alaska, August 2004), and Mr. Joseph Tommy Johnny (interviewed in Tsoogot Mann, July 2001), Norm Easton was told that the traditional village of Leek'ath Niik (Muddy Water Creek), which is located on the eastern side of the middle of Scottie Creek valley, "was the location to which their ancestors retreated at the time of the eruption and subsequent ash fall – a time referred to in their oral history as the year of two winters" (Easton 2009:17).

Later Sites

Fort Selkirk

The late pre-contact and early contact period in Yukon is represented by a number of prominent archaeological sites. Fort Selkirk and the surrounding locality are situated on the confluence of the Pelly and Yukon rivers in the central Yukon and are part of Selkirk First Nation settlement land. The oldest evidence of occupation of this locality is an 11,300-year-old tool made from caribou antler. Local inhabitants have used the area as a seasonal fishing village and trading site for thousands of years. In 1848, Robert Campbell opened the first Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) fur-trade post in Yukon across the river from the fishing village. His intent was to conduct trade with the Northern Tutchone people who had access to a significant quantity and variety of furs, such as beaver and marten. Campbell and his crew were the first non-Indigenous people that the Northern Tutchone had ever met. In 1852, the Coastal Chilkat Tlingit raided the fort, permanently ejecting the HBC fur traders from the post, because they wanted to maintain their fur-trade monopoly with the Selkirk people. The first archaeological testing of the site occurred in the late 1980s. At that time exposed chimney remains and a log-lined cellar were discovered. Additional excavations in the 2000s exposed the original fur-trade post, including wooden foundation beams, a large wood-lined cellar, and typical fur-trade post artifacts such as blue-on-white transfer print ceramics, trade beads, glass medicine bottles, cut copper sheets, metal buttons, and square cut nails. Interestingly, the site also contained a small number of Indigenous-use artifacts such as a bird blunt,[7] beamers,[8] barbed bone points,[9] and lithic and copper tools (Figure 2.7). Many of these artifacts were found within living quarters and may indicate developing social interactions between the Northern Tutchone and the HBC (Easton and Gotthardt 1987; Castillo 2012a).

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[7] A bird blunt is a bone or antler object used to stun birds (Emmons 1991: 138). One end of the shaft has a semi-rounded tip (Castillo 2012b:120).

[8] A beamer is a split long bone, typically a caribou toe bone (metatarsal), which provides scraping edges. Beamers were used for hide tanning. People would remove the hair by scraping the skins or hides (Morlan 1973:300).

[9] A barbed bone point is typically attached to a shaft and is thrown or shot at animals. The barbs keep the point in the animal.

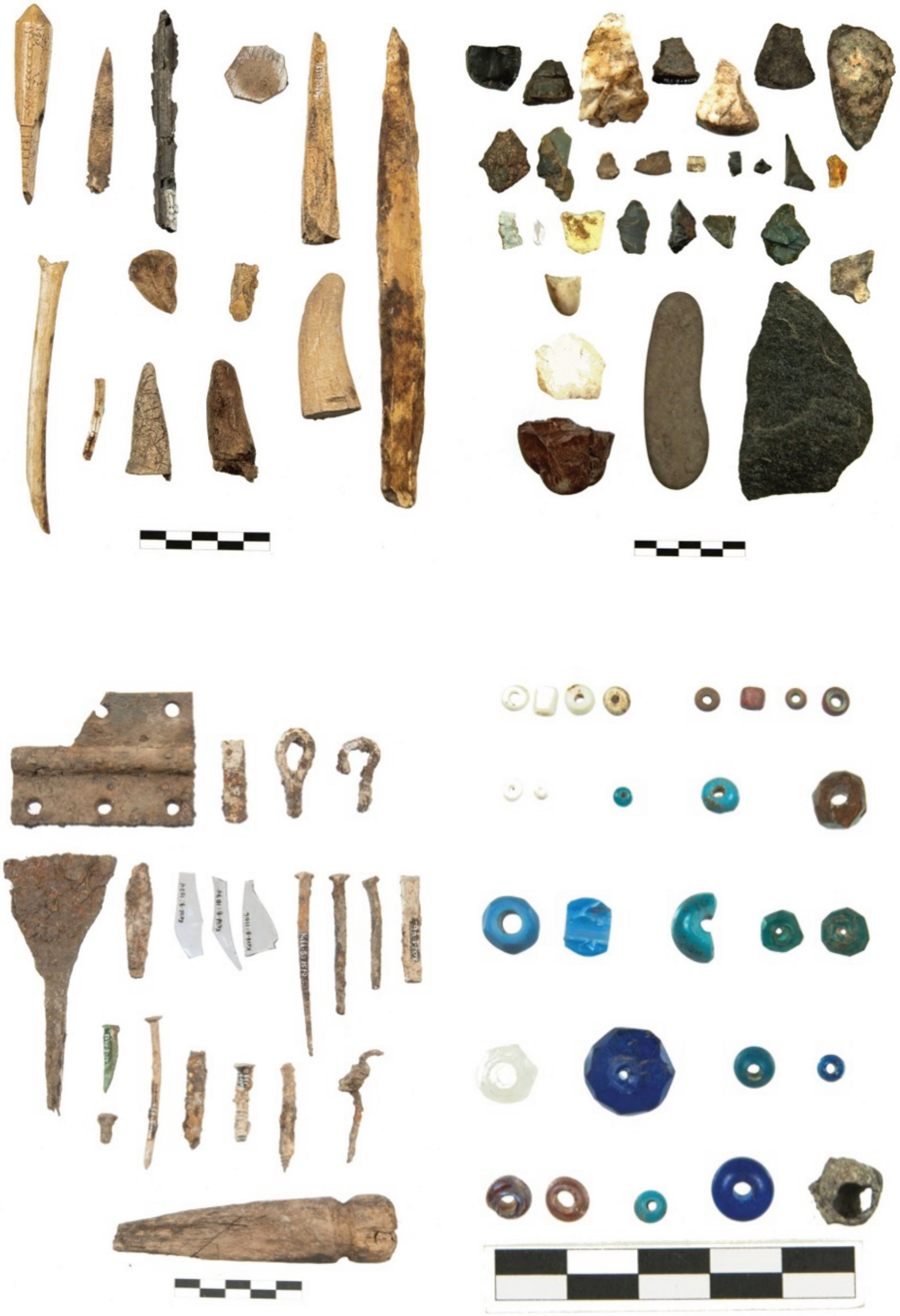

Figure 2.7 Fort Selkirk contact-period artifacts (Castillo 2012:119, 123, 142, 147).

Forty Mile

Beginning in 1988, the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in First Nation and Yukon government conducted multi-year excavations at the Forty Mile site, which is located on Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in settlement lands at the confluence of the Yukon and Fortymile rivers in the northwestern Yukon. The site was tested in the 1990s to identify the location of archaeological evidence, and subsequent excavations between 2000 and 2005 resulted in evidence of periodic site use over thousands of years. These excavations uncovered artifacts and broken-down building structures of an early gold rush town (c. 1886), including Fort Cudahy, Fort Constantine (Northwest Mounted Police detachment), Forty Mile town, and Forty Mile Island. Artifacts and features included hearths with burnt bones still present, “triangular-shaped end scrapers, a bone point, a flaked-stone axe or wedge, birch bark and wood remains, and a small amount of stone debris from tool making” (Hammer and Thomas 2006:20). There is also evidence of bone and antler tools, the use of “copper working using small native copper nuggets, and the adoption of the bow and arrow” (Hammer and Thomas 2006:21). The site also demonstrates the importance of fishing and caribou hunting by the Hän people (Hammer and Thomas 2006).

Kwädąy Dän Ts’ìnchį

Kwädąy Dän Ts’ìnchį (Long Ago Person Found in Southern Tutchone) was an Indigenous man whose remains were found in 1999 in Tatshenshini-Alsek Park, British Columbia.[10] Using radiocarbon dating he is estimated to have lived during the “late pre-contact or Early European contact period ca. 1720 – 1850 cal AD” (Richards et al. 2017:118). His remains were well preserved, as were the tools and clothing he was travelling with. Through scientific analysis it was discovered that he was “a young man, essentially healthy, but also a carrier of a latent form of tuberculosis. He had eaten seafood much of his life and likely grew up close to salt water. He started his final journey in the late summer on or near the coast in the Haines-Klukwan area of Alaska and died only a few days later on the glacier” (Greer et al. 2017:571-572). Using “first-hand 19th century accounts, contemporary research and oral history from peoples of the area” (Champagne and Aishihik et al. 2017:201) researchers were able to begin to understand Kwädąy Dän Ts’ìnchį’s travel and lifeways as he followed a “variant of the western routing of the Chilkat Trail” possibly choosing this specific route because “the Dän, Tagish and Tlingit narratives of glacier travel indicate that glaciers were known as effective travel routes…” (Mathews et al. 2017: 481). His final destination may have been “one of the settlements on the Tatshenshini River or its tributaries (Champagne and Aishihik First Nation et al. 2017: 185). Through a community DNA study that included citizens from fifteen groups who had connections to the Tatshenshini-Alsek area, it was determined that 17 of 246 participants were related to him.[11] The project members who participated in this study considered it successful because of their reliance on different ways of knowing, which “included scientific studies involving scholars at many institutions, insights from old documentary sources and learning at the feet of knowledgeable First Nation elders” (Greer et al. 2017:572).

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[10] This park is part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which also incorporates Kluane National Park in Yukon, and the Wrangell-St. Elias and Glacier Bay national parks in Alaska.

[11] Participant groups included: Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, Chilkat Indian Tribe, Chilkoot Indian Association, Sealaska Heritage Inc., Kluane First Nation, White River First Nation, Carcross-Tagish First Nation, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Ta’an Kwäch’än Council, Teslin Tlingit Council, Taku River Tlingit, Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation, Selkirk First Nation, First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (Greer et. al. 2017: 496).

Archaeologists in Yukon and Their Collaborators: Dr. Raymond Le Blanc and Brandon Kyikavichik

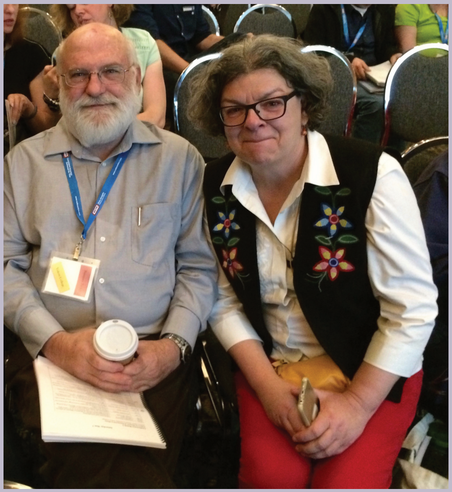

Figure 2.8 Archaeologist Dr. Raymond Le Blanc and applied anthropologist Sheila Greer (for more on Greer's work see the section on Kwäday Dän Ts'inchi) (photograph courtesy of Victoria Castillo).

Raymond (Ray) Le Blanc grew up just northwest of Toronto, in Rexdale (which is now a part of Etobicoke). Ray's interest in archaeology was piqued at the age of 14 during a grade 11 history class at North Albion Collegiate Institute. The class partly focused on classical archaeology, which sparked in him a desire to learn more about archaeology, and he eventually discovered that there was more to the discipline than just the classics. He realized that there was a rich archaeological heritage in North America and, once he was accepted into the University of Toronto (U of T) as an undergrad, he dedicated himself to becoming an archaeologist.

After receiving his bachelor's degree in archaeology from the U of T, Ray moved on to pursue a master's degree at Memorial University. His thesis, titled "The Wigwam Brook Site and the Historic Beothuk Indians," was completed in 1973. He returned to the U of T for his doctorate and cites Bill Irving, his dissertation supervisor, as one of his most influential mentors. In 1975, when Ray's plan to work on Hudson's Bay materials fell through, Bill invited him to join the Northern Yukon Research Program (NYRP) and go to Old Crow, Yukon, for the summer. As Ray says, "Once I got off the plane I realized I wasn't going back to eastern North America." He continued doing doctoral research in Old Crow for four years as part of the NYRP. It was during this time that he met Jacques Cinq-Mars, who was co-director of the NYRP with Bill Irving. It was Jacques who encouraged Ray to take on research at the Rat Indian Creek site, which is located 60 km upstream from Old Crow. The stratified site dates back to 2,500 years ago. Here he conducted major research on the development of the culture history in the Middle Porcupine area. And, during his years working with the NYRP, Ray also became familiar with many of the now well-known Yukon sites: Bluefish Caves, Dog Creek, K-Ridge, and the caribou fence sites of the northern Yukon. Ray has always made collaboration a key part of his work. To him, it isn't collaboration so much as being a student, particularly when working with Indigenous Elders. For his doctorate, he was part of a multi-disciplinary research project that included people from Old Crow, both young people and Elders. He worked with community members Peter Tizya, Richard Charlie, Danny Kassi, Hugh Charlie, and Timothy Charlie. He also mentored younger archaeologists such as Sheila Greer and Ruth Gotthardt; Ruth was his field assistant in 1976 and 1977.

In 1979, Ray began working for the Archaeological Survey of Alberta. As Northern Archaeologist, he completed many major projects, including surveys of the Peace Country and Lesser Slave Lake, and excavated the Bezya microblade site in the oil-sands region. This work strongly resonates with northern Alberta researchers to this day. The lure of the North proved to be too strong, however, and after five years, Ray joined NOGAP—the Northern Oil and Gas Action Plan at the Archaeological Survey of Canada. As part of NOGAP, Ray again worked with Jacques Cinq-Mars on a number of important sites in the northern Yukon and in the Mackenzie Delta.

In 1983/1984, Ray completed his dissertation, *The Rat Indian Creek Site and the Late Prehistoric Period in the Interior Northern Yukon* (Le Blanc 1984). This work is one of the most solid discussions of the late prehistoric in Yukon and one of the first, and still most referenced, works on prehistoric antler and bone technology. In William Workman's review of the dissertation monograph, he says that Ray "sets a new standard of rigour and detail... Le Blanc has made a valuable contribution to our understanding of a poorly known area... Certain of the analytical techniques break new ground and set new standards" (1987:189-191).

When NOGAP came to an end in 1991, Ray took up research and teaching duties at the University of Alberta (U of A), where he remained until his retirement in 2013. In 1994 he published the much-cited monograph *The Crane Site and the Palaeoeskimo Period in the Western Canadian Arctic*. In his review of this publication, Charles Arnold states, "Raymond Le Blanc's research on the Crane site... significantly advances our understanding of the Palaeoeskimo period in the history of the western Canadian Actic... It is also an excellent example of how to carry out archaeological fieldwork, analyze and present data: it could be used in archaeological instruction as a model of a good report" (2010:104-105).

Ray supervised almost two dozen graduate students during his tenure at the U of A and taught courses in North American Prehistory, Cultural Resource Management, Lithic Technology, and Archaeological Methods, to name a few. He was also chair of the Department of Anthropology. In this period, he continued working in the northern Yukon independently and with his students, and at all times collaborating closely with the Vuntut Gwitchin community in Old Crow. The various sites he worked on included Rampart House, Schaeffer Creek, and Dechyoo Njik in Old Crow Flats, the moss houses at Berry Creek, and Rat Indian Creek, once again, where he researched the semi-subterranean house occupations. Beginning about 2005, Ray worked closely with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government Heritage Office as they began a long program of documenting their culture and history and places of importance in their traditional territory. Over a number of years, Ray worked with elders, community members and youth documenting caribou fences and archaeological localities and sharing his knowledge of the archaeology of the region acquired over many years. Other community members he has worked with include Lazarus Charlie, Charlie Thomas, Peter Tizya, Hugh Charlie, Danny Kassi, Joseph Bruce, Lance Nagwan, Chelsea Charlie and Brandon Kyikavichik. This work with the Vuntut Gwitchin continues to the present day. When asked what his favourite part of Yukon is he replies, "It's being there. I enjoy the people and the environment, more the northern Yukon than anything else. I just love when I fly over there, I feel kind of enveloped in an area I know very well. I've actually had a fantastic opportunity to see so much of the country. I've had the privilege of being able to go into some pretty remote locations."

Brandon Tyler Kyikavichik is a Vuntut Gwitchin culture and heritage specialist, and former Vuntut Gwitchin Chief and Council member. He was born in Whitehorse and raised in Old Crow, Yukon. Brandon became fascinated with his culture as a child. When he was twelve years old, he spent a few spring months in the bush with his grandfather who taught him about their history, language, and place names. That's when he first became interested in heritage and culture.

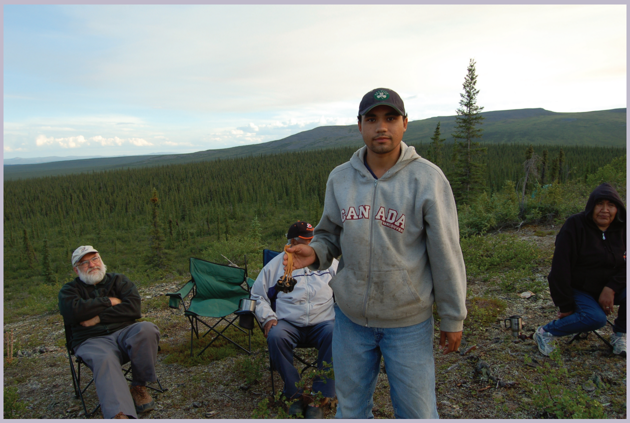

Figure 2.9 Culture and heritage specialist Brandon Kyikavichik in the forefront, Dr. Ray Le Blanc to his right (photograph courtesy of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation).

Brandon first began working with Ray Le Blanc when he was in high school. He had gotten a job with the Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Department when he was 15 years old. Every school year he would go and live in Whitehorse for high school and then in the summers he would return to work in heritage. He was asked to participate in a cultural technology camp which was meant to teach youth about the different "types of technology that Gwitchin people used to survive in an Arctic wilderness in ancient times before the advent of Europeans, when we were making everything from the land." As an archaeologists with a focus on northwestern archaeology of the area, Ray Le Blanc was a facilitator during that project.

As Brandon explains it, "In the 1970s, Ray went around with an Elder named Lazarus Charlie, in Gwitchin his last name is Tetlichi. He went around to ancient sites with Lazarus, and they studied the archaeology of those sites, the human use of those sites together. Lazarus showed him where a lot of the old moss houses were and where the old underground cellars for storing meat, and fish, and berries were. We had all heard stories about the area from our Elders. It was called *Dinizhoo*. It's a place where Gwitchin people used to gather and they would play games, and they would have events, and they would hunt and fish, and cook and work together. It's right near a couple of caribou fences. It was an area that fell into disuse. For over a hundred years it hadn't been used. But the Elders had heard many stories from their grandparents about the area. That's where we did our cultural technology camp. Ray had been told about it by Elders, and he went there and found all kinds of amazing things. When he and I walked through the forest there we found dozens of huge underground cellars for storing meat and food and other things. He showed us old moss houses. I had heard all of those stories all of my life about how incredible our ancestors were and just being there the feeling was… inspiring doesn't begin to explain the feeling when you're there." They also looked at caribou fences used to hunt caribou. "Decades later, after Ray had done a lot of studies around the Vuntut territory and had written a couple of books, he probably knew the most out of a lot of researchers so they brought him along [to the cultural technology camp]." Ray and some Vuntut Elders showed the youth the location of underground cellars, caribou and adze-cut trees (an axe-like tool used for cutting wood), stone tool replicas such as obsidian knives, bow and arrows and atlatls. Brandon says, "You know, it was pretty cool. And that was my first experience with Ray… Going to the caribou fences. It was my first time ever experiencing, seeing, actually being around the caribou fences, with Ray. That was a pretty amazing experience."

One of the things Brandon is most proud of is his community's ability to connect youth, adults and Elders during the culture camps. "We have youth there, we have young adults who help do a lot of the work, and they do a lot of the hunting and teaching as well. Then, you also have the Elders there for their stories and teachings. We add in the archaeologists and the technical help, the scientists, everyone working together. Everyone knows their role. There's another level of inspiration that comes when you actually get out there and you see the proof of the evidence. The stories we hear growing up, the next thing you know you're out there and you're seeing the archaeologists and the people they're working with finding evidence of these stories."

Brandon also spent time with Ray visiting Gwiinzii Cave. In the Gwitchin language, this means good. He comments that Ray isn't someone who likes to sit around. When they visited Gwiinzii Cave, Ray trekked up and down the mountain, a very steep mountain every day. "We were living on top of a mountain, in the summit, and we had to build a camp, chop and pack wood. Ray had some physical issues at the time but he was putting in 12 to 13 hours a day of strenuous labour." Brandon enjoyed working with Ray because he was able to learn new skills, techniques, and methods.

Recently, Brandon has been working with his uncle Joe, writing the Gwitchin language, in the modern orthography. His uncle is one of the most fluent speakers of the Vuntut dialect. They listen to recordings of Elders that were made in the 1970s and 80s. Many of those Elders were born in the late 1800s. They transcribe the Elders words in Gwitchin and then translate that into English. Brandon and his uncle transcribed Elder Myra Kay Kyikavichiks story, and in that story she talked about the moss houses that Brandon had visited with Ray. She described how they were built and that they were meant for people who decided to settle down. "When you start to get to a certain age, you can't really live that life anymore. The moss houses were close to a caribou fence and they were also close to a fishing area as well. Myra tells a story about two old women that got left behind. They were done with the chase, they were done with the migrating, and the moving and the nomadic lifestyle. And so the community built them two moss houses, one each. Then they built them a fish trap. They let them live by that fish trap in those moss houses and that's where they stayed most likely. Those are pretty inspiring stories."

When asked what his favourite part of living in Yukon is, Brandon responds, "Obviously, it's going to be the wilderness. It's beautiful. One of the things I'm lucky with up here is that I'm scholastically inclined. I can be academic and scientific at times. But, I grew up right here in Old Crow in the bush. I can do whatever I need to do on the land as well. There's just nowhere else in the world where you can become such a well-rounded person." Brandon's favourite place is Old Crow. "I lived in Old Crow my whole life, it's a difficult place to live, it's such a harsh climate. But, there really is something inherently beautiful about this place and about the people that grew up here as well. I would have to say Old Crow."

Tagish Post

The Northwest Mounted Police established Tagish Post in 1897 to deal with the influx of thousands of prospectors heading to the Klondike[12] gold rush (Dobrowolsky 1995). The post was located upstream of a major Tagish Indigenous village near the head of Marsh Lake in the southwestern part of Yukon. For the duration of the Klondike gold rush (see Chapter 4) Tagish Post was the only Canadian customs port for those entering the country via the White Pass, Chilkat, and Taku River trails. Many local Indigenous people worked as guides and packers assisting the southern gold seekers. The site was tested in the 1980s and 1990s (Greer 1981; Hare and Gotthardt, personal communication 2007), and archaeological excavations of the site were conducted in 2007 and 2008 (Castillo 2008, 2009). Twenty-nine building features, 22 garbage middens, and over 120 artifacts were identified and/or recovered at the site. Building features include the inspector's quarters, the sergeant's quarters, the hospital, and the detachment. Recovered artifacts include semi-synthetic leather, the butt of a gun, a horseshoe, a metal latch, complete medicine bottles, a key, and a round wooden container with a preserved salve still inside. Interestingly, although some Indigenous people earned part of their living here, there were no Indigenous artifacts recovered at Tagish Post.

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[12] The Klondike gold rush (1996-1899) was a time when there was a "massive influx of southerners into the Klondike area, Yukon, following news of the discovery of gold" (Dickason and Newbigging 2010:346).

Canyon City

Canyon City is an archaeological site located in the city of Whitehorse at Miles Canyon in the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. The site was first excavated in 1994 and contained evidence of people living at Canyon City from 2,500 years ago until the year 1900. Originally the site was a summer gathering place for Indigenous people, and archaeological remains from this time include skin scrapers, flakes, and points, which indicate that hunting and fishing were conducted there. A foot trail following the Yukon River, traditionally used by people on their way from Marsh Lake to Lake Laberge and back, cuts through the site. The trail has not been dated but it was likely in use even during the early days of Indigenous occupation of the site. In 1897, a saloon was built at the site for the prospectors moving through on their way to the Klondike goldfields. A tramline was built a year later to move people's goods through Miles Canyon. By the summer of 1898 a hotel, a restaurant, a store, stables, a machine shop, a Northwest Mounted Police post, and cabins and tents had been erected. Material remains from this time period include metal-working tools, household goods, beer and liquor bottle fragments, and thousands of food cans (Hammer and Hare 1999). With the establishment of the White Pass Railway Company in 1900, which moved people and goods from Skagway to Whitehorse, and the sale of the tramline to the aforementioned company, Canyon City was almost completely abandoned.

Herschel Island

Herschel Island (Qikiqtaryuk) is located off the northernmost part of Yukon on the Beaufort Sea, in the traditional territory of the Inuvialuit people. The island has a long history of occupation by Indigenous hunters, European whalers, the Northwest Mounted Police, and missionaries. This small island, measuring approximately 12 km in length, contains archaeological remains of the Thule culture dating back over 800 years ago and was occupied until the twentieth century. Archaeological excavations at Herschel were first conducted in the 1970s and 1980s near Pauline's Cove, at a site called Washout. In the early 1990s, Max Friesen led an archaeological project as part of the Qikiqtaryuk Archaeology Project. Archaeological remains from these excavations included the discovery of three rectangular Thule houses. Hunting and fishing tools, sewing materials, evidence of skin preparation, and cooking implements, including pottery, were found within one of the houses. Animal bones, especially from ringed seals, and a large quantity of baleen from bowhead whales were also discovered, indicating their importance as a source of food and materials (Friesen 2012:146). Other early Herschel Island sites, such as Avadlek Spit, a long spit on the southwest side of the island, are also interesting for the lack of mammal bones and the abundance of fish and bird remains, which Friesen indicates is a rarity among Thule sites (Friesen 2012:149).

Chapter 2 Activity

Yukon Archaeological Sites of Significance

Using the Yukon Government Heritage Publications link identify a Yukon archaeological site of significance that hasn't been mentioned in the book (name it, indicate where it's located, whose traditional territory it is on, the sites date, and the important artifacts and features found there).

Suggested Readings

Suggested Readings

To read other creation stories by Elders Mrs. Angela Sidney, Mrs. Kitty Smith and Mrs. Rachel Dawson see *My Stories are My Wealth* edited by Julie Cruikshank (Council for Yukon Indians, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory 1979). Although there is no specific archaeology journal in the territory, research in Yukon is often published in the journal *Arctic*, the *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* and *Arctic Anthropology*. For a general overview of Beringia and the peopling of the new world, see Ted Goebel and Ian Buvit (eds.) “Introducing the Archaeological Record of Beringia” in *From the Yenisei to the Yukon* (Texas A&M University Press, College Station 2011).

Significant Yukon archaeological research was conducted in the mid- to late-twentieth century. These works include: *Investigations in Southwest Yukon, Volumes 1 and 2* by Frederick Johnson, Hugh M. Raup, and Richard MacNeish (Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts 1964); William Workman’s *Prehistory of the Aishihik-Kluane Area, Southwest Yukon Territory* (National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Ottawa 1978); Ray Le Blanc’s *The Rat Indian Creek Site and the Late Prehistoric Contact Period in the Interior Northern Yukon* (National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Ottawa 1984); Greg Hare’s *Holocene Occupations in the Southern Yukon: New Perspectives from the Annie Lake Site* (Government of Yukon, Whitehorse 1995); *and* Donald Clark’s *Fort Reliance: An Archaeological Assessment* (Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec 1995).

Other publications of interest include Donald Clark’s chapter “Prehistory of the Western Subarctic” in *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 6, Subarctic*, edited by June Helm (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 1981); Clark’s *Western Subarctic Prehistory* (Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec 1991); and Max Friesen’s chapter “Inuvialuit Archaeology” in *Herschel Island Qikiqtaryuk: A Natural and Cultural History of Yukon’s Arctic Island*, edited by Christopher Burn (University of Calgary Press, Calgary 2012).

For further study of projectile point sequences in the northwestern part of North America, see *Projectile Point Sequences in Northwestern North America*, edited by Roy L. Carlson and Martin P. R. Magne, particularly Chapter 18 by Gregory Hare, Thomas Hammer, and Ruth Gotthardt, titled “The Yukon Projectile Point Database,” and Chapter 19 by Norman Easton and Glen MacKay, titled “Early Bifaces from the Little John Site KdVo-6 and KdVo-7” (Archaeology Press, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby 2008).

The article “Cultural Landscapes, Past and Present, and the South Yukon Ice Patches” by Sheila Greer and Diane Strand describes an example in which Indigenous governments are working together to manage and interpret their cultural heritage (Arctic, 2012). Yukon government’s website for the Archaeology Program provides guidelines for archaeological work in the territory and links to legislation and policies. Also available on the website are links to Yukon government heritage publications. Many of these are co-authored with First Nation communities. The website includes full texts of community archaeology booklets (e.g. Hare and Gotthardt 1996) and theses pertaining to Yukon archaeological research (Yukon Government Heritage Publications).

An excellent and thorough book on Kwädąy Dän Ts’ìnchį is *Kwädąy Dän Ts’ìnchį: Teachings from Long Ago Person Found.* This volume is a terrific example of collaborative work between different governments, First Nation communities and scientists (Hebda et al. 2017).

CHAPTER 3 - ETHNOGRAPHY AND TRADITIONAL LIFEWAYS

Learning Objectives

- Identify early anthropological researchers in Yukon and the significance of their work.
- Explain what collaborative research is.
- Explain why oral stories and traditions are important.
- Identify Yukon's Indigenous languages and where they are spoken.
- Identify the differences between Athapaskan and Tlingit languages.
- Describe some commonalities and differences within the seasonal round of families living in Yukon before newcomers arrived (some of which still continue today).
- Describe some of the ceremonies that occurred in Yukon before newcomers arrived (some of which still continue today).
- Explain Indigenous trade relationships that existed before newcomers arrived in Yukon.
- Identify some current anthropological researchers and their collaborators.

Early Anthropological Research

Similar to archaeological research, professional anthropological research in Yukon began in the early twentieth century. However, prior to anthropologists documenting the cultures of Yukon's Indigenous peoples, other newcomers to Yukon, such as early explorers, missionaries, and fur traders, wrote records about the people they were meeting recording information about their daily lives and cultural practices. Simultaneously, Indigenous people created stories about the newcomers that were transmitted orally (see Chapter 4 for more details). The newcomers' records were often detailed and included information about the lifeways of the various Indigenous cultures, including observations about their clothing, diet, technology, and spiritual beliefs. (It should be noted that most of these early documents display evidence of the colonial biases of the authors, but they are important sources of history nonetheless.) These topics will be expanded on later in this chapter, but first we will introduce some of the early anthropologists who worked with Indigenous peoples in Yukon.

Early Anthropological Research

Franz Boas is widely regarded as the father of North American anthropology due to his extensive fieldwork with Indigenous peoples in Canada and his attempts to promote general awareness of their culture in western society. In 1883, he conducted his first ethnographic fieldwork in Canada with the Inuit people of Baffin Island, and he later conducted extensive research in the Canadian Pacific northwest. While Boas never ventured into Yukon, he did learn about the Tlingit culture when he collected Tlingit stories for his book *Indian Myths and Legends from the North Pacific Coast of America* (2002 [1895]), and he worked with an Alaskan Chilkat Tlingit named Louis Shotridge in order to publish *Grammatical Notes on the Language of the Tlingit Indians* (1917). Boas also was a teacher and mentor to Frederica de Laguna, who conducted both archaeological and ethnological research in Alaska and Yukon; de Laguna is best known for her work with the Yakutat Tlingit (1972).

Although de Laguna focused her research more on the Alaska side of the border, she encouraged her students to conduct research throughout both Alaska and Yukon. One of her students, Catharine McClellan, conducted ethnographic research with the Indigenous people of the southern Yukon in the late 1940s, which continued for many decades. During the course of McClellan's extensive career, she published numerous volumes about Yukon's First Peoples; her main academic ethnographic work is the two-volumes entitled *My Old People Say: An Ethnographic Survey of Southern Yukon Territory*. In the first volume she referred to the lack of data about Indigenous groups in Yukon: "My main purpose in this account is to give a preliminary sketch of each [of the groups in the southern Yukon]. However, the reader will soon discover that the data are exceedingly uneven, both in quality and quantity" (McClellan 1975:2). McClellan stressed the need for more ethnographic research in Yukon and said, "Although this is the first report about these people, even less is known about some of their neighbours. Until we have a firm ethnographic base, we will not be able to deal adequately with the more theoretical issues" (McClellan 1975:xx). Other early Yukon anthropologists were former students of de Laguna as well, such as Marie-Françoise Guédon, who conducted an ethnographic study of the Upper Tanana peoples in the village of Tetlin, Alaska, but also in villages and camps on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border (1974).

A Collaborative Approach

A Collaborative Approach

In the past, anthropologists rarely respected the intellectual property rights of the Indigenous people about whom they were conducting research, although this has changed as the discipline of anthropology has grown and evolved. Policies on intellectual property rights and traditional knowledge have recently been developed to help researchers who wish to better understand the protocols and best practices for working with Indigenous peoples in Yukon.

Anthropologists in Yukon and Their Collaborators: Dr. Catharine McCellan (1921-2009)

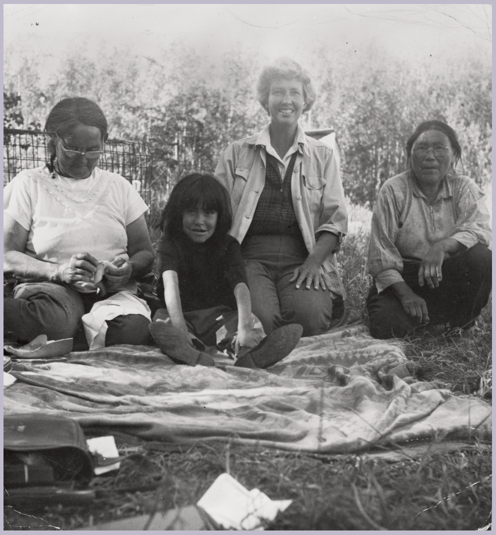

Figure 3.1 Mary Billy Smith, Mary Edna [Smith], Dr. Catharine [Kitty] McClellan, and Sophie Isaac (photo courtesy of Yukon Archives, Elsie Smith collection, 77/48B, #7).

Catharine (Kitty) McClellan first came to Yukon as a young graduate student in the summer of 1948, with funding from the National Museums of Canada to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in the southern Yukon for her doctoral research. In an obituary she wrote about Catharine, Julie Cruikshank, another anthropologist who worked in Yukon after Catharine (and who will be discussed later in this chapter), commented that Catharine "was taken aback when the museum informed her that a woman researcher could not possibly go to the Yukon 'alone' and advised her to attach herself to a male scientific party. Unfazed, she and a fellow student, Dorothy Rainier Libby, persuaded the museum to give them a small stipend to proceed together" (2010:348). Catharine soon became a model for other ethnographers generally, and, specifically, for other academic women. She continued to work in Yukon until the mid-1980s and returned every summer, as well as the occasional winter, to conduct her research.

Today, some of Catharine's best-known publications include her aforementioned ethnographic volumes *My Old People Say: An Ethnographic Survey of Southern Yukon Territory* (1975) and *Part of the Land, Part of the Water: A History of the Yukon Indians* (1987). While these volumes provide information on lifeways, subsistence patterns, social organization, technologies, and history, she was also highly interested in the stories and oral traditions of Yukon's Indigenous people. Through the course of her fieldwork in Yukon, she recorded numerous stories, myths, and oral histories. One of her monographs, *The Girl Who Married the Bear* (1970), "compared 11 different versions of a single story and discussed the enormous power it seemed to have for both narrators and listeners and both men and women" (Cruikshank 2010:349). Julie Cruikshank edited one of Catharine's last publications prior to her death: the volumes *My Old People's Stories: A Legacy for Yukon First Nations* were published in 2007 by the Yukon Heritage Branch and are meant to be companions to her earlier ethnographic work.

Catharine's fieldwork began before collaborative or applied research had developed in the field of anthropology (collaborative anthropology means working together with the community, while applied anthropology refers to the application of anthropological data, perspectives, theory, and methods to identify, assess, and solve social problems). As Julie Cruikshank writes, "McClellan never defined her work as applied anthropology, and she could scarcely have imagined the policy implications it would have years later" (2010:349). Examples of those policy implications include the fact that Catharine was called as an expert witness during the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry in 1976, and her detailed ethnographic work was used as background material during the land claims processes (Cruikshank 2010). And, although collaborative research was not yet the standard practice, Catharine did engage in collaboration with First Nations in Yukon throughout her long research career. The level of detail she obtained in her works, as well as her annual returns to the North, show that she was an anthropologist who did more than "collect" information and then return south never to be seen again.

Catharine was a role model for current anthropologists who want to have mutually reciprocal relationships with the communities where they work. She was also supportive of Yukon Indigenous people becoming anthropologists. In the Author's Note in her 2001 edition of *My Old People Say* she wrote, "It is with the deepest pleasure that I now see younger First Nations individuals becoming anthropologists themselves, or in other ways preserving their old peoples' unforgettable legacy" (McClellan 2001:xxiii).

Although we cannot know what Catharine's favourite thing was about Yukon, we do know that she was very grateful for the warm hospitality that many individuals, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, offered her throughout her research in Yukon. In the acknowledgments to *My Old People Say* (1975) she wrote, "To all my native friends in southern Yukon Territory I give my deepest thanks for the warmth with which they received me and the thoughtful ways in which they answered my countless questions" (McClellan 1975:xxv).

We, on behalf of the other anthropologists who have worked in Yukon, also offer our deepest thanks to Catharine McClellan for being the wonderful role model that she was and for sharing her knowledge through her many publications.

For instance, many Indigenous communities now insist that researchers follow *Ownership, Control, Access and Possession* (OCAP), a set of standards created by the National Aboriginal Health Organization which shut down in 2012. It was then taken over by the First Nations Information Governance Centre. The organization "asserts that First Nations have control over data collection processes in their communities and that they own and control how this information can be used" (First Nations Information Governance Centre 2017). As well, the document entitled "Protocols and Principles for Conducting Research with Yukon First Nations," created by Yukon University, states that, "This protocol has been developed to help ensure that, in all research conducted with Yukon First Nations peoples, appropriate respect is given to their cultures, languages, knowledge, and values, and to the standards used by them to legitimate knowledge" (Yukon Research Centre 2013:3). The First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun's Traditional Knowledge Policy also emphasizes that researchers should contact the Indigenous community as their "primary point of contact" (First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun 2008:8). In Yukon, collaboration has been key for many years and for new researchers it is the standard.

The Importance of Oral Traditions

Well, [this story] is from old people, early days people. They tell that story to us. They carry the story out here and there and then like newspaper, just like newspapers. They carry this story from one generation to the other. That's how they know [Moses Tizya, August 20, 1979, VG2000-8-22:112-114, Gwich'in and English in Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Shirleen Smith 2009: XI].

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Yukon's Indigenous peoples have creation stories about how the land was shaped and changed over time. These stories developed through oral traditions of the many different Indigenous groups in Yukon. Some of these stories document a time when other-than-human persons walked the Earth, such as supernatural creatures or ancient animals, but others are of more recent times. These more recent stories are known by anthropologists as "oral histories" – oral accounts of events that are passed down between generations. In societies that traditionally did not have a way to write their histories, oral histories were used to make sure that people behaved according to cultural customs and learned to respect the land and the animals.

Anthropologists have long been interested in the study of myths, legends, stories, and oral histories, since these oral traditions can act as windows into a culture's worldview and tell anthropologists about who the people are, where they come from, and how they see the world. As oral traditions were a foundation for knowledge about the land and society for Yukon's Indigenous people, early anthropologists often documented oral narratives during their ethnographic research (Boas 2002 [1895]; de Laguna 1972; Emmons 1991; McClellan 2007; Teit 1919, 1921). Two anthropologists who are well known for documenting oral traditions in the southern Yukon are Catharine McClellan (Figure 3.1) and Julie Cruikshank (Figure 3.2). As Julie Cruikshank writes, "mythology differs from science, but both are organized systems of knowledge based on close study of the environment. Both systems take many years to learn, and both are perpetually open and incomplete" (Cruikshank 1991:13). Cruikshank's research documented oral histories from individuals across Yukon, and she published numerous books and articles on the importance of stories for Yukon's Indigenous peoples (Cruikshank 1990, 1991, 1998, 2005). In particular, her book *Life Lived Like a Story*, which is a compilation of the life stories of three Yukon Elders (Mrs. Angela Sidney, Mrs. Kitty Smith, and Mrs. Annie Ned), is well known both in Yukon and around the world (1990).[1] For more detail on Julie Cruikshank's research, see the inset box below.

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[1] This book won the 1992 John A. Macdonald Prize in Canadian History, an annual prize given to the best scholarly work in Canadian history published each year.

Anthropologists in Yukon and Their Collaborators: Dr. Julie Cruikshank and Barb Dawson

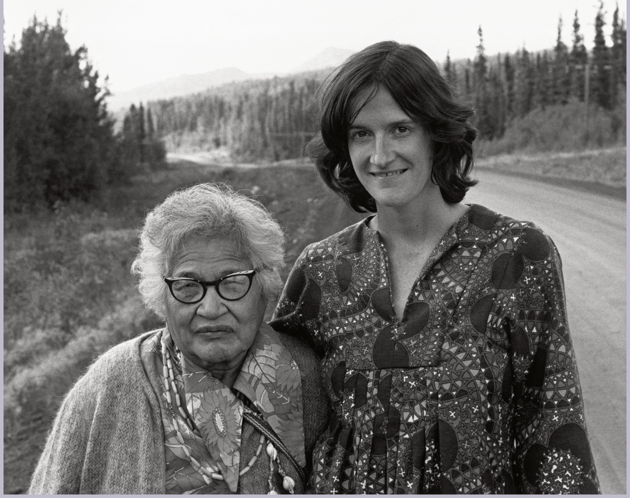

Figure 3.2 Tagish Elder Mrs. Angela Sidney and anthropologist Dr. Julie Cruikshank in 1976 (photograph courtesy of Jim Robb).

Julie Cruikshank received a bachelor's degree in anthropology in 1967 from the University of Toronto. She had never heard of anthropology before she went to university but since it sounded interesting, she thought, "I'll sign up for that!" She had a fabulous first-year teacher and ended up majoring in the discipline. It was after her BA, through a variety of circumstances, that she first came to Yukon, helped along the way by a geographer named Jim Lotz. Julie says, "He was fantastic! I knocked on the door and he was running a small institute in Ottawa called the Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology and he welcomed me in and set me up with a desk in their library so I could learn some things about the North."

At that point in her life, Julie did not want to have a regular job and she wanted to do something related to what she had studied at university. Dr. Lotz had a contract to do a study for the Royal Commission on the Status of Women and had discovered the Commission was not conducting any research into issues concerning Indigenous women in the North. He had Julie spend a year reading everything she could, and then he sent her off to Yukon for three months in 1968. As she says, "It was a life-changing experience!" Julie remembers that people were extremely generous and were quite interested in talking about issues related to the status of women—Indigenous women particularly—because they had not previously been consulted by the Commission. Julie met a lot of people in Yukon, including many Indigenous women her own age, who became good friends. At the end of three months, she went back to Ottawa and helped to write the report. However, she really wanted to return to live in Yukon, which, she notes, is not an uncommon experience for those who come to Yukon.

She finally did move back to Yukon in the 1970s. At which point, her friends, many of whom were Indigenous women, were all in their early to mid-twenties. These women were very involved in trying to prepare the political groundwork for the land claims process. Part of the reason she got involved in oral history was because they considered it essential for someone to record life stories to support the land claims process. As oral history research was just becoming important within history and anthropology, Julie was very excited to be involved in this research project with a variety of Yukon families. She spent the next few years recording stories and preparing small booklets, which, at that point, were only meant for the families. Eventually, however, the Department of Education showed interest in developing booklets for schools, and Julie worked with several women to further develop the family booklets into school materials. For instance, Elders Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Sidney both developed books of stories that were used in literature courses and in social studies. Then the Yukon Native Language Centre, started under the auspices of the Council for Yukon First Nations, became interested in having oral history work done too, as part of their documentation for land claims. Julie spent a number of years working with the linguist John Ritter, Elder Gertie Tom, and many other Elders and younger people. Julie comments, “I was very excited that there were these kinds of projects that I could contribute to and it just seemed to me a wonderful way to be living in a community. I had no intention of ever leaving the Yukon at that point. It’s a remarkable place.”

When asked what some of her career highlights from working in Yukon were, Julie replied that she never thought of her work in Yukon as a career, but rather as a way of being and living in a community and being able to make a contribution. Julie went back to graduate school in the mid-1980s. By this time, there were a number of young Indigenous women and men who were interested in doing oral history documentation, which gave her the opportunity to focus on varied research questions and think about how these questions tied to anthropology and history in new ways.

For Julie, the most interesting part of her work in Yukon was working with the women Elders, who were very clear about what they wanted to do, what they thought was crucial to record, how to do work that made sense to them, and what they thought was valuable that could speak to broader audiences. They were happy when there was local interest in their work, and they also wanted to focus on what Mrs. Ned called “speaking to the outside.”

Julie’s work in Yukon has involved learning how to think about anthropology as part of a community process or to think about how ideas about oral history could come together in ways that worked for people locally. In her work, collaboration was the norm. Julie worked together with her research partners on the recordings they made and on any editing of the texts, and it was always a case of going back and finding out exactly what they thought was appropriate. As a result, Julie has never thought of any other way of conducting research, and she adds that increasingly the way anthropology work is done is through collaboration.

Finally, Julie says that the best thing about Yukon is the relationships between people. She has been back to Yukon every summer since she left, as it’s very important for her to keep in touch. Coming to Yukon these days, then, is a chance to visit, connect, and see old friends. While she is not actively doing research anymore, she says that every day she thinks of something that Mrs. Ned, Mrs. Sidney, Mrs. Smith, or some of the other Elders said to her, and so Yukon remains a constant in her thoughts.

Barb Dawson completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Arts at UBC's Okanagan campus in 2020. Barb met Julie Cruikshank, an anthropologist, in 1972, when Julie first came around to her grandfather's house to introduce herself to her grandmother. Barb was just 7 years old but has a vague recollection of that first meeting and has many other memories of Julie since that time. Barb, who is part Tlingit on her mother's side and is from the Yanyeidí clan, is from Whitehorse and was raised by her grandmother Rachel Dawson, from Selkirk First Nation. Her grandpa and grandma moved to Whitehorse when her grandma was around eighteen years of age from Fort Selkirk because her grandpa was working on the boats.

Julie came to visit her grandmother often to record Rachel's stories. Barb says that she was happy every time she got to see Julie and she'd jump on her lap, "I'd sit on her lap and she'd talk to grandma as I sat on her lap." Together, Julie and Barb's grandmother talked about her grandmother's stories from Fort Selkirk, including what Barb calls "the moral of the story – kind of stories." Julie and Rachel eventually published these into a chapter in one of Julie's books.

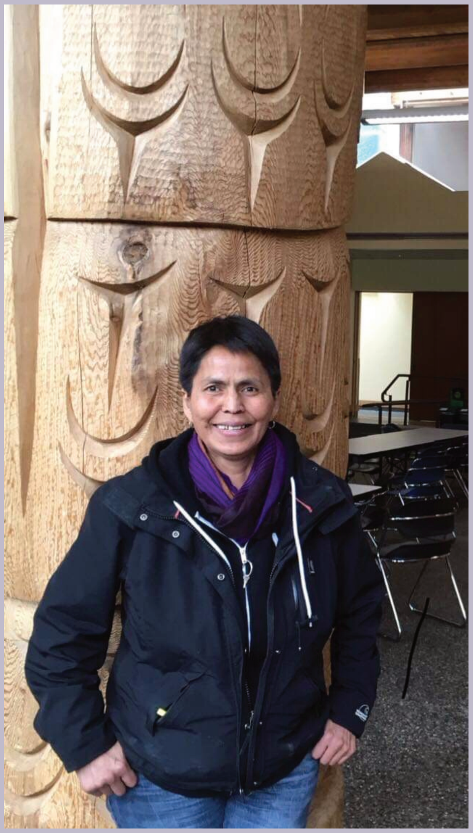

Figure 3.3 Visual Artist Barb Dawson (photograph courtesy of Jackson Trapline).

Barb remembers that when she was small her grandmother enjoyed the visits with Julie because they were nice visits all the time. Barb recollects that "Julie was very interested in hearing my grandmother's stories and my grandmother was very interested in telling her the stories." Once the stories were published, her grandmother kept the book in her house. Barb isn't sure how Julie met her grandmother, but likely it was through other Elders in Whitehorse that Julie was working with, Annie Ned or Kitty Smith. Barb's grandfather was also one of the hereditary chiefs from Selkirk First Nation, so he was one of the Elders that Julie wanted to talk to for her research so Julie talked to both her grandmother and her grandfather.

Some of the highlights of Barb's time with Julie include going on spring picnics out to Lake Laberge, Fox Lake, and Kusawa, and going boating there as well with family. These days Barb and Julie keep in touch whenever either visits Vancouver or Whitehorse and they make a point of being in touch. In thinking about the collaborations between Julie and her grandmother Barb remembers, "Well, I think Julie was one of the first people that came to interview a lot of the Elders and before that nobody was really interviewing Elders. What I experienced personally, having grown up with my grandmother, we would go to either Marsh Lake or Lake Laberge or wherever my grandmother's old friends would be and they would share stories amongst each other, in Tlingit, and I didn't understand it, but I would go with her and play and do whatever, but I knew why she was there. She was there to relate with the other women, catch up, and share with each other. And when Julie came along, she started talking about the [oral history] projects and my grandma was all for it because she knew that if she didn't tell her story to Julie then, you know, there wouldn't be anyone to record it. Because I guess she had the good foresight that no one was going to pay attention to her, I don't know, so it was a good thing that she did talk to Julie because now we know the stories that my grandmother was told from her grandmother or her mother."

Barb's favourite part of Yukon is being on the land. She likes to go for a hike or pick berries, moss berries. She usually spends a lot of time in Atlin, BC, and when she's there she tries to get out hiking or on the land, and this last time she was up there she went on the canoe trip from Atlin to Juneau for Celebration so that was huge. Barb doesn't have a favourite place in Yukon, for her, it's the whole place that's special, being on the land.

When asked if she has any last comments about Julie, Barb replied, "we've been friends for, I don't want to say it because it's so crazy, 46 years! Because I was 7 when she met me and I'm 35 now, so it's just crazy. It's my whole life."

Yukon Indigenous Languages

Yukon is home to eight main Indigenous languages, each with multiple dialects: Nee'aaneegn' (Upper Tanana), Gwich'in, Hän, Dän K'è (Southern Tutchone), Dän K'í (Northern Tutchone), Tàgish, Lingít (Tlingit), and Dene K'éh (Kaska). Other Indigenous languages spoken in Yukon prior to contact with non-Indigenous peoples included Inuvialuktun, Ahtna, and Tahltan (Figure 3.4).

Language shift from Indigenous languages to English has been occurring in Yukon for many years and is a cause of concern for many people since children often learn English instead of their Indigenous language as their first language. In 1988, and again in 1991, the Yukon government conducted surveys to determine the strength of the Indigenous languages of Yukon. A summary of a recent (2004) fluency assessment by the Aboriginal Language Services reports that in Yukon there are eight Indigenous languages with many dialects[1] and all eight are in danger of vanishing; one language, Tàgish, is near extinction,[2] and another, Hän, has only a handful of speakers remaining. Most fluent speakers are elderly; few, if any, children learn their ancestral language as their mother tongue and few, if any, children enter school as fluent speakers of their ancestral language; and English is the main language of business and government and the main language used in schools and homes (2004:12).

There is hope for these languages, though, since many Yukon First Nations have developed language revitalization programs, including school classes and immersion camps, and more and more individuals are currently learning their ancestral Indigenous language as a second language (Norris 2007). Further information about Yukon First Nation language revitalization programs appears below, but first we will look at how Yukon Indigenous languages were discussed in the past and examine their linguistic families.

The Indigenous languages of Yukon have had many different names depending on who was describing them (Figure 3.5). The Indigenous peoples of Yukon have their own names for their languages in their language, just as the name for the Spanish language in that language is *Español*. When newcomers, such as explorers, fur traders, and missionaries, first interacted with Indigenous groups they often misheard language or cultural group names or wrote them down according to how they might spell them in their own language, which caused inaccurate labels in historical records. Another issue was that when newcomers asked one group of Indigenous people what the people up river were called or what their language was called they may have replied with an informal and inaccurate descriptor, which today might be considered offensive. The chart below shows some of the previous Yukon Indigenous language descriptors, as well as the name their speakers would call the language.

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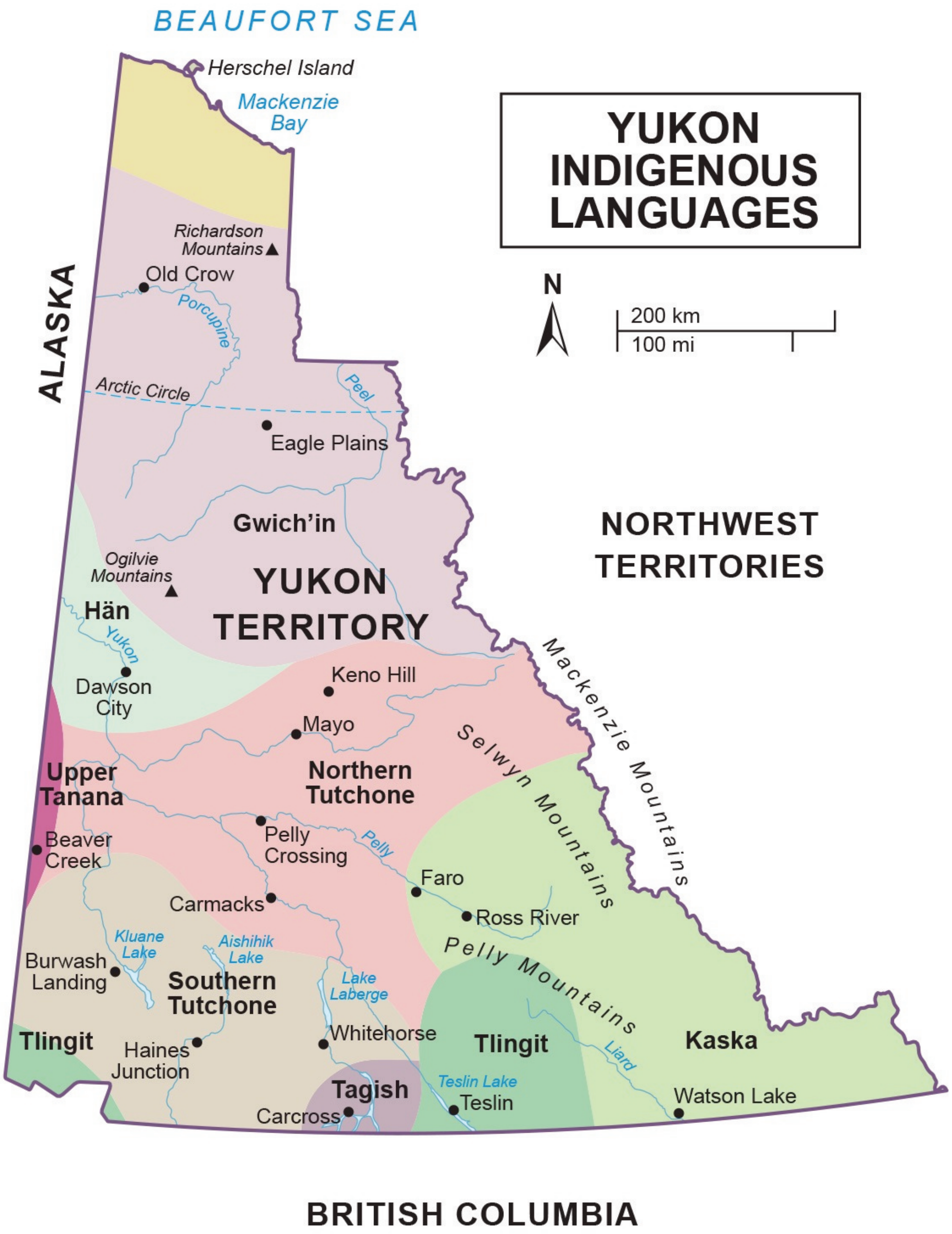
1. In linguistics, the term dialect refers to a variety of a standard language. Dialects are usually mutually intelligible, which means that speakers of one dialect can understand speakers of another. For instance, British English and Canadian English are two dialects of English.
2. While the terms language death and language extinction were commonly used for many years, more people are now embracing terms such as "sleeping languages" for languages that are no longer being spoken, with the idea that it is possible to awaken them once again (See Hinton 2001).



BEAUFORT SEA
Herschel Island
Mackenzie Bay
YUKON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES
Richardson Mountains
Old Crow
Porcupine
ALASKA
N
200 km
100 mi
Arctic Circle
Peel
Eagle Plains
Gwich'in
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
Ogilvie Mountains
YUKON TERRITORY
Hän
Yukon
Dawson City
Keno Hill
Mackenzie Mountains
Mayo
Selwyn Mountains
Upper Tanana
Northern Tutchone
Beaver Creek
Pelly Crossing
Pelly
Faro
Carmacks
Ross River
Kluane Lake
Aishihik Lake
Pelly Mountains
Burwash Landing
Southern Tutchone
Lake Laberge
Tlingit
Haines Junction
Whitehorse
Tlingit
Liard
Kaska
Tagish
Teslin Lake
Teslin
Watson Lake
Carcross
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Modified from:http://www.gov.yk.ca/pdf/languages_map.pdf
© Government of Yukon 2017

Figure 3.4 Yukon Indigenous languages (modified by Lovell Johns from Yukon Government Map 2017).

Indigenous Language Name	Popular Language Name	Other Language Descriptors
Nee’aaneegn’	Tanana	Lower Tanana, Tanacross, Upper Tanana, Tannin-Kootchin, Nabesna, Ahtna
Gwich’in	Gwich’in	Gwitchin, Gwichin, Kutchin, Kootchin, Eastern Kutchin, Western Kutchin, Loucheux
Hän	Han	Hankutchin, Han-Kootchin, Hun-koo-chin, Hong-Kutchin, An Kutchins, Takon, Gens de(s) Foux,
Dän K’è	Southern Tutchone	
Dän K’í	Northern Tutchone	Tutchonekutchin, Wood Indians, Gens de(s) Bois[3]
Tàgish	Tagish	Tahk-keesh, Tahkeesh, Tahgish, Tagisch, Si-him-E-na
Lingít	Tlingit	Inland Tlingit, Taku, Takutine, Chilkat, Chilkaht, Kolosh, Kalushiani
Dene K’éh	Kaska	Frances Lake Kaska, Upper Liard Kaska, Dease River Kaska, Nelson Kaska (Tselona), KasHa, Kaša, Kɔswa, Casca, Gens de(s) Couteaux

Figure 3.5 Indigenous Languages of Yukon (The Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6, 1981).

All of Yukon’s Indigenous languages except Tlingit belong to the Athapaskan language family.[4] Tlingit belongs to the Tlingit language family. These two families together with a third language family, Eyak (spoken in Alaska),[5] make up the Na-Dene superfamily. As McClellan explains, “The name Na-Dene comes from the Tlingit *na* and Athapaskan *dené,* both meaning people” (1987:107). Some of the Indigenous languages found in Yukon are also spoken in nearby communities in Alaska, the Northwest Territories, and British Columbia. Furthermore, languages from the Athapaskan family are also spoken in Siberia (Ket) and the southwestern United States, (including Navajo and Apache) (Vajda 2010). In relation to the idea of language families, Catharine McClellan wrote the following:

> The various Athapaskan languages spoken today are so different that a [Gwich’in] speaker from Old Crow, for instance, cannot understand a Kaska speaker from Watson Lake, but the grammars and sound patterns of Gwich’in and Kaska are basically alike. Because of this, linguists are sure that both languages have come from a common source [McClellan 1987:107].

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3. It is only recently that Northern and Southern Tutchone have been seen as distinct language groups, so the terms used to describe Northern Tutchone would also apply to Southern Tutchone.
4. Many speakers of Athapaskan languages refer to their language family as the Déne language family, since this is the word for “people” in their language (see: http://www.horizonzero.ca/elderspeak/dene.html).
5. In January of 2008, the last fluent speaker of Eyak, Ms. Marie Smith, passed away. However, there have been recent efforts to revitalize the language. A young French man, Guillaume Leduey, taught himself the Eyak language through online documentation and materials produced by the Alaska Native Language Center. Leduey has since visited Alaska and is currently working with linguists and community members to help teach the language. For one article on Guillaume Leduey’s contribution to the Eyak language, see:http://www.thecordovatimes.com/article/1125preserving_alaska_native_culture

The Athapaskan languages also differ significantly from the Tlingit language, which makes it harder for an Athapaskan speaker to understand a Tlingit speaker than it is for two Athapaskan speakers to understand each other. However, as all of the languages share linguistic patterns, they are still more similar to each other than they are to languages from other language families (McClellan 1987). Since the development of the Yukon Native Language Centre in 1977, much work has been done to document, preserve, maintain, and revitalize Yukon's Indigenous languages.

Anthropologists in Yukon: Dr. Barbra Meek

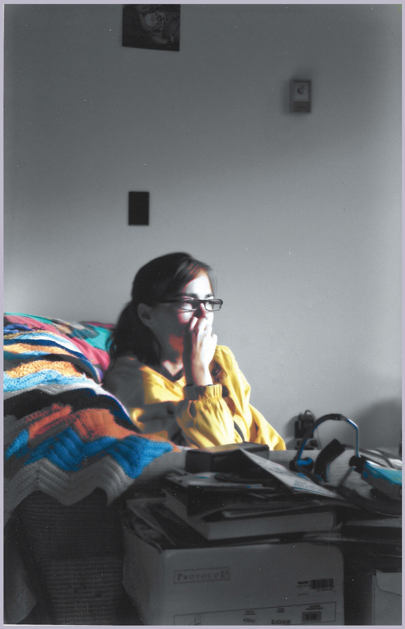

Figure 3.6 Anthropologist Dr. Barbra Meek (photograph courtesy of Barbra Meek).

Barbra Meek, a linguistic anthropologist, first encountered Yukon on December 21, 1997–the shortest day of the year. Aboard an Air Canada flight from Vancouver, her first glimpse of Yukon was of a snow-covered landscape, mountainous in parts and icy, and her first impression was of the airport (the pre-9/11, pre-2000-expansion version); it reminded her of the airport in Reykjavík when she was on her way, solo, to live in Sweden for a year as a teenager—small yet comforting and surrounded by a seemingly barren Arctic landscape. This impression created an immediate fondness for the place. It also helped that her husband, anthropologist Jerry Carr, was already there, had found them an apartment to rent in Whitehorse as a base, and was eagerly awaiting her arrival. He had been there since September and had already begun working with a First Nation on a narratives project.

Barbra's first steps towards working with First Nations in Yukon involved accompanying employees of the then Aboriginal Language Services (ALS), a branch of the Yukon territorial government in charge of distributing funding to the First Nations (from a cooperative agreement), and coordinating Indigenous-language projects. First Nations people were employed as staff and as ALS personnel. Everyone at ALS was enthusiastic about developing Indigenous-language programming and implementing revitalization projects. The First Nations were also open to collaborating with anyone invested in Indigenous languages. If you were interested in Indigenous languages and committed to their revitalization, it was an incredible time to be in Yukon.

Barbra has worked with individuals, First Nations, and tribal councils on a broad range of language revitalization efforts. For example, she has been involved with Kaska House of Language workshops, week-long immersion-style camps, Aboriginal Headstart programming (a play version of "Sas, sas naganhtan-a?"—a Déne translation of Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?), text production, such as the Kaska Alphabet Book (2002), curriculum development (language exercises, verb paradigms), teaching/practising writing, and documenting Elders' knowledge. One of the significant events for Barbra during her career in Yukon was presenting a paper on Kaska language revitalization at the 2011 Athabaskan Languages Conference, which was hosted by the Council of Yukon First Nations and held in Whitehorse. Many of the people who participated in, guided, and informed her research were in the audience. Barbra wrote and presented the Athabaskan Languages Conference research paper with Leda Jules. Most recently Barbra has begun collaborating with several consultants, institutional partners, and Kaska First Nations on a “talking dictionary” project supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) partnership grant awarded to Pat Moore at UBC.

Barbra sees the mutual investment she and her partners have all made in the projects they’ve undertaken together as one of the benefits of collaboration. The Kaska First Nations and the individuals involved in the documentation and revitalization of the Déne language were doing this work well before she arrived, working with anyone who would support and invest in their language endeavours. The fact that they were and are invested in collaborating is also an incredible benefit and reward.

Discovering new verb forms, long-ago words, novel pronunciations, or dialects: all of this is exciting. But much of the nitty-gritty grammatical work also elicits memories, narratives, reflection, and commentary—knowledge that people want to preserve and share with future generations. These individual collaborations are certainly rewarding, but a further benefit is the constant reminder of the social significance of even the smallest linguistic detail.

Another personal benefit of collaboration is how much Barbra has learned and how much remains to be learned and discovered. The task of documenting just the grammar at times seems incredibly daunting, if not impossible, but everyone involved just keeps chipping away at it. As part of this project, her team has been working to create sound files of words (nouns, verb forms) to post online so that educators and learners can access these linguistic forms and build their own linguistic repertoires.

Recently, academics in anthropology and linguistics have engaged in a growing discussion of what it means for research to have “broader impacts” or implications beyond the theoretical and methodological within our respective disciplines. While some academics are dismissive of such concerns, relegating them to “applied” status, the reality of contemporary research is that researchers don’t do it alone. All aspects of the work, from inception to publication, are the results of collaborations with people, the most significant collaborations being the ones that result in the data and evidence that motivate analyses and speak to theoretical concerns. To privilege researchers’ goals over those of their field collaborators would be unethical, if not immoral, and to merely acknowledge their contributions in an “Acknowledgements” section is to vastly undervalue, if not entirely trivialize, their significance. It is the incorporation of all participants’ goals into the overall research agenda that should now be labeled “broader impacts.” As Barbra states, “For many of us conducting linguistic fieldwork in the late 1990s and early 2000s in the Yukon, this approach was taken for granted; you couldn’t do research any other way.” Thus, one final benefit of collaborating with First Nations is the exemplary research approach these collaborations established and model.

When asked what the best part of Yukon is, Barbra replied, “Frozen tires, dried moose meat, and stick gambling… Just kidding!” She continued, “Identifying a ‘best part’ is difficult because it’s the combination of ‘parts’ that makes working in the Yukon worthwhile. That is, the people I’ve gotten to know and collaborate with, the goals and activities we’ve shared, and the beautiful landscape that has encompassed our endeavours—that’s the best part. I also just love the smell of Mida Donnessey’s tanned moosehides, the best part of which is the memory of these experiences that the smell evokes.”

Anthropologists in Yukon and Their Collaborators: Dr. Patrick Moore and Brittany Tuffs (BA, Anthropology)

Figure 3.7 Anthropologist Patrick Moore (photograph courtesy of University of British Columbia).

Patrick Moore began working in Yukon in 1985. Much of his work has been focused on language revitalization and language teaching. He has, for instance, organized and facilitated a Kaska narratives workshop for the Kaska Tribal Council; worked with fluent speakers to produce a Kaska, Mountain Slavey, and Sekani noun dictionary entitled Guzägi K'ūgé = Our Language Book: Nouns: Kaska, Mountain Slavey, and Sekani, Vol. 1 (1997); and co-instructed UBC Kaska Language summer courses in Kaska territory in Yukon.

Patrick's work on these projects involved collaboration with local First Nation communities, including the Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nation, and the Kaska Tribal Council. He has also been involved with the "talking dictionary" project mentioned above by Barbra, and he has worked with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation on Tagish language projects. For Patrick, collaboration is crucial since First Nations are the main stakeholders in any language work; because they represent the local communities, they are essential for success. Patrick has learned a great deal from working with many of the administrators and Chiefs of the Kaska First Nations, as well as with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

Patrick's career highlights include starting the Ross River Drummers, as well as organizing a cultural exchange between the Ross River School and Tulita, NWT. Patrick also worked with Tahltan artist Dempsey Bob during a two-week workshop in Ross River. He has participated in annual training sessions for Native Language Instructors at the Yukon Native Language Centre. When asked what the best part of Yukon is, Patrick replied, "The people, the bush, the animals, the berries."

Figure 3.8 Indigenous Studies Researcher Brittany Tuffs (photograph courtesy of Aidan Sullivan).

Brittany Jean Shelby Tuffs is an Indigenous Studies Masters student at the University of Saskatchewan. Raised in Ross River, Yukon, she is a member of the Ross River Dena Council. Her Kaska names, given to her by her grandparents, are Dāniāní’ and Ehtsų̄ Mēsdzį̄hmā. Brittany first became interested in working with linguist Patrick Moore before she moved to Vancouver to complete her Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Looking at the required course work, she realized that she needed a second language in order to graduate and she did not want to take French or Spanish. She started asking folks in her community if there was anyone who could teach her Kaska and some people directed her to Patrick Moore. He had worked in her community extensively and had conducted long term language research with the Kaska. “I emailed him and asked about it. He created a Kaska language course for me… it was great. I learned how to read, write, and speak Kaska more fluently.” In the course she would listen to interviews he had done with Elders in Kaska and English and she would translate and transcribe them. Brittany did the language course work and transcription for three years. The materials she transcribed were loaded onto the Kaska Language Website (https://kaska.arts.ubc.ca/), a site that allows Kaska language learners access to language materials.

One of the highlights of Brittany’s work with Patrick was working on a Kaska language summer session in Watson Lake. The project was supported by the University of British Columbia and the Yukon Native Language Centre. She was able to work with Elders and community leaders from both Ross River and Watson Lake. She also met some of her relatives for the first time. Brittany found it interesting that even though the communities are close in proximity, relatively speaking, “the Watson Lake dialect is quite different from Ross River.” She also learned “the importance Pat places on collaboration with the community, he does a lot to work with the community, especially the Elders.”

Another highlight of working on the Kaska language at UBC was taking part in language revitalization work. “It was five hours a week. I heard interviews from Elders in my community. And so, even though I was so far away at school, I was still maintaining that connection with my culture and language and people. I wasn’t really talking to them but I was listening to their stories.” Working with Pat also allowed Brittany to work on the online Kaska dictionary which helped her learn new skills with computers, using transcription software.

For her Master’s, Brittany plans to research Kaska people’s understanding of law and land. She states that Kaska legal principles and processes can be found in Kaska concepts such as *ā́’ī* and Dene *k’éh gū́s’ān*. *Ā́’ī* translated into English means respect or taboo. *Dene k’éh gū́s’ān* translated means Kaska laws. She says, “I’m looking at concepts like this and how they have guided us, the Kaska people, in our decision-making processes historically and today.” Her research questions include how has settler law undermined Kaska law? How do Kaska peoples understand the land? How is the Kaska law a valid source of authority?

When asked what her favourite part of, and place in, Yukon is she replied, “My favourite thing is just going home to my community. Especially in the winter, I love Yukon winters. I miss it so much, just being with my community and family." Her favourite geographic location is Ross River Hill, "It's a place where we all get together… there's sledding and family time. If you get up high enough you can see all of Kaska land. It's beautiful. It reaffirms all of our Elder's decisions not to sign land claims. Why would you ever sell this?"

Much of this chapter so far has focused on the importance of oral histories and language – two items that remain key issues to Yukon Indigenous peoples today. In the next sections, as noted above, we discuss the descriptions of the lifeways of the various Yukon Indigenous cultures, including social organization, subsistence, technology, and spiritual beliefs. While much of the information provided below is based on early records, we also acknowledge that many of the lifeways are still thriving today, although often in a modified form.

Social Organization

Societies around the world arrange themselves in different ways; one way that many Yukon Indigenous peoples use to organize themselves is a clan system (called moieties by anthropologists) where one is recognized as a Crow or a Wolf (Honigmann 1981:447). McClellan has written, “As soon as…people meet you, they ask, Are you a Crow or a Wolf?” (1987:175). However, before we begin discussing the clan system it is important to understand some key concepts.

Anthropologists use a few terms to describe the way that groups organize themselves socially, such as band, tribe, chiefdom, and state. The term that an anthropologist will choose to use to refer to a specific group is largely based on the subsistence of the group, as well as settlement and political patterns. The anthropological term that is often used to describe Yukon’s Indigenous peoples is band, which refers to people who were traditionally highly mobile due to foraging for subsistence.[1] Bands were usually not larger than fifty people who spoke the same language and were egalitarian, meaning that people had equal rights. In Yukon, bands were often located in a particular watershed and were separated by mountains (Honigmann 1981:446; McClellan 1987:175). Bands in Yukon were very adaptable and, depending on the resources in an area and the season, they might come together into larger groups or separate into smaller families.

Within a band there were often several household groups. A household was made up of adults and children in an extended family who shared a shelter, cooking and eating their food together (Honigmann 1981:447). The people in the extended family could be related in a variety of ways, including in-laws and grandparents; extended families are still an important part of Yukon culture today. Normally, when a household had more than one grown man, those individuals would work as hunting and trapping partners, while the grown women would gather items such as plants, berries, and wood, and trap small animals in nearby areas.

Kinship groups were formed differently in different parts of Yukon. The most complex social and kinship structures can be found among the Indigenous peoples of the southern Yukon (McClellan 1987:178). Tlingit, Tagish, and some of the Southern Tutchone followed matrilineal patterns, in which descent flows through mothers. A woman and her children are part of the same matrilineage, which is the same as the woman’s mother. The woman’s daughter’s children will also be of the same matrilineage, but her son’s children will be a part of their own mother’s matrilineage. This resulted from strict exogamous marriage patterns, which means that men and women are only allowed to marry if they are from different matrilineages. Within any one family, then, there would traditionally be two lineages: the mother and the children would be from one and the father would be from another. Each matrilineal house had a name, as well as special stories, songs, personal names, and crests that illustrated the history of that particular matrilineage.

A group of matrilineages that come from a larger matrilineal descent group are known as a clan (Emmons 1991:23–27; McClellan 1987). As McClellan writes, “clan structure was based on the assumption that all these matrilineages were descended from a single female ancestor, even if the exact links between the matrilineages often could no longer be traced” (1987:181). Clan groups came together for social events and they were also stewards over the lands associated with their matrilineage houses. Clan groups were “never political or geographical units like modern states” (McClellan 1987:183).

The last layer of formal kinship grouping in the southern Yukon was the **moiety.** There are two moieties—Crow and Wolf. What is sometimes confusing is that in contemporary Yukon society many people refer to their moiety as their clan. Coastal Tlingit in Alaska also have a moiety system, but in Alaska the two groups are often referred to as Raven (instead of Crow) and Eagle (instead of Wolf). Each side of the moiety, Crow and Wolf, would have clans grouped within them. Some moieties might only have one clan within them. Although matrilineage houses and clans have specific crests and symbols, all members of the Crow moiety have the right to wear a crow symbol and all members of the Wolf moiety have the right to wear a wolf symbol. In sum, moieties were larger social groups of individuals that did not necessarily have blood relationships but were still considered to be kin through this wider social network.

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[1] Band, as it is used here, does not refer to political structures (as discussed in Chapter 5).

In other areas of Yukon, moieties and clans are arranged differently. Much variety exists in social organization among Yukon's First Peoples, but similarities are present as well. The Southern Tutchone and Northern Tutchone, who resided in the central Yukon, follow matrilineal descent patterns but do not have houses associated with matrilineages or the clan system. They do, however, use a Crow and Wolf moiety system, as do the Kaska peoples. There is some evidence that the Kaska also had a clan system, but there is limited information on this (McClellan 1987:188–189). In the areas north of Fort Selkirk, ethnographic evidence documents three social units that are often called "clans" among the Hän (Osgood 1971:40) and Gwich'in communities (Slobodin 1981:517–524). As Mishler and Simeone describe, "The Han clans of Crow and Wolf found in Dawson… correspond more closely with those of the inland Tlingit and northern Tutchone. Among the Gwich'in, the Han's other neighbors, there are three clans—Ch'ichyàa [Wolf Clan], Neetsaih [Crow Clan] and Teenjiraatsyaa [middle clan]—but none of these clans is directly associated with birds or animals" (2004:91).

Alfred Charlie recounts how the Gwich'in Wolf and Crow clans came to be:

> So Crow told Ch'ataiiyuukaih to paddle him up to where the people had been and when they got there, he told Ch'ataiiyuukaih. "I see a big chèhlùk [fish: loche/burbot] going toward the shore. Take me to the shore."…
>
> So he did that. He saw the big loche coming to shore, upside down. Crow told him step on his belly. So he did. Then all the people came out; most people came out of the mouth. All those people came back.
>
> So that's how the Ch'ichyàa [Wolf Clan] and Neetsaih [Crow Clan] came to be. I don't know how Teenjiraatsyaa [the middle clan] started. That's how they started, the way I understand it. It's a true story [Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Smith 2009:14].

Where and How People Lived

Dwellings

Before newcomers came to Yukon, the majority of Yukon's Indigenous peoples travelled through their territory, stopping at various locales that were significant such as fishing, hunting, and gathering camps. Very few permanent dwellings were made at this time, but there were some exceptions. The pit houses found in the northern part of Yukon are an example of dwellings that were somewhat permanent (Thomas 2004). In these cases, the semi-subterranean houses were made of "split-wooden poles and insulated with moss" (Crow and Obley 1981:507), and families would return to them during hunting season in consecutive years. Another type of permanent dwelling are the Inland Tlingit matrilineage houses that were modeled after the homes of their Coastal Tlingit relatives.

Common non-permanent dwellings used in the southern and central parts of Yukon were large lean-tos that could fit two to six families (McClellan 1975:233–234, 236–237, 240–251). Each side was a framework of poles that connected to a ridgepole that was "about three to four metres long and about 2.5 metres high" (McClellan 1987:140). A variety of materials, such as hide, birchbark, or moss, were used to cover the framework of poles, and spruce boughs were laid on the dwelling floor for warmth. A fireplace was placed in the centre between the two halves of the lean-to (McClellan 1987:141).

In the central and northern Yukon, houses were often made of a framework of saplings, which were then covered with moose or caribou skins; these were also known as brush camps (Legros 2007:253; McClellan 1987). Similar to the lean-to houses of the southern Yukon, these caribou-hide houses would fit two families, who would take both the skins and the poles with them when they travelled (McClellan 1987). Gwich'in and Hän people also made houses out of moss during periods of reduced travel in the late fall and early winter (Crow and Obley 1981:506; Mishler and Simeone 2004:46). These houses were constructed on top of square pits in the earth using a series of poles and beams to support the framework (Mishler and Simeone 2004:46). A fireplace was placed in the centre and openings were left in the roof for the smoke to escape. Some dwellings were sturdier and lasted for a season, while others were designed to be put up and taken down as people travelled through their territories during their seasonal round. Today, individuals often set up camps, sometimes with non-permanent dwellings in areas where they continue to hunt, fish, and gather.

The Seasonal Round

The seasonal round, which included hunting, fishing, and gathering, was the most common subsistence pattern for Yukon's Indigenous peoples. McClellan noted that, "in spite of local variations and specializations, all Yukon natives followed pretty much the same sequence of activities in getting food throughout the year" (McClellan 1987:152). Depending on the season, they would travel to specific places, such as good fishing lakes, hunting locations, or berry patches, to collect the locally abundant resources, such as foods, and materials for tools and shelters. They would sometimes trade these resources with other Indigenous groups in order to meet their needs. Information about the seasonal rounds of different Indigenous groups in Yukon has been documented by many anthropologists (for example see Gotthardt 1987; Legros 1981; McClellan 1987; Clark 1971; Mishler and Simeone 2004; Thomas 2003).

Subsistence Tools and Technologies

Knowing where resources were located and at what time of year they would be plentiful was one aspect of subsistence but knowing, too, what technologies could be used to collect those resources was also essential. In the field of anthropology, technology is defined as the knowledge people hold about collecting materials or resources, making tools, practising their skills, or making art. Prior to contact with newcomers, Yukon Indigenous peoples developed the technology and the tools using materials from their environments to develop the technology and the tools that enabled them to hunt, fish, and gather in their lands. Today, people continue to hunt, fish, and gather, but use modern tools and technology, which they have adapted to suit their needs.

Hunting

Throughout Yukon, Indigenous people used bows and arrows and spears to hunt big game. As noted in Chapter 2, stone, bone, and copper were used for points for the arrows and the spears. The style of these tools varied depending on the particular people and their location. For instance, in some areas of Yukon near local copper sources, copper was used to make knives and projectile points (Cooper 2011:262; McClellan 1987).

Many people hunted caribou in the late fall in Yukon and one of the most common ways to do so was to build caribou fences, which were used to corral the caribou into an area where they could be easily killed. Caribou fences were often found in heavily treed areas and could stretch from two to four kilometres in length (Gotthardt and Thomas 2007; Le Blanc 2007; McClellan 1987). The trees that would make the fence were felled and shaped with stone adzes in earlier years and then later with steel axes (Gotthardt and Thomas 2007). Moses Tizya remembers two kinds of fences, one for winter and one for summer (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Smith 2009:90). The remains of caribou fences can be seen in many areas throughout Yukon.

Once a hunter had enough meat to support his family over the winter, it would be stored in a food cache. A cache, in this context, is a place where a large collection of winter food would be stored so that a family could access it during times when it was more difficult to hunt, fish, and gather. (In other contexts, a cache is a hidden or inaccessible place used to protect foodstuffs from other people or animals.) In Yukon, two types of caches were commonly built: above-ground and below-ground, the latter being used for storing berries (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Smith 2009:281). While people no longer use caches, many people continue stock their freezers in the fall with meat that will feed themselves and their families throughout the winter.

Trapping

Trapping provided food for Indigenous peoples in Yukon, as well as furs and other materials used to make clothing and tools. Different animals were trapped, including beaver, muskrats, marten, wolves, marmots, ground squirrels, and rabbits. Two ways that fur-bearing animals were trapped were through snares and deadfalls (McClellan 1987). To make a snare, people would use babiche[1] (a cord made of rawhide or sinew) to braid a rope, which they would then tie in a way that allowed the rope to remain open until an animal passed through (Legros 2007; McKennan 1965:39). A deadfall was made by creating a pile of logs that would collapse and break an animal's back when the animal touched the bait that was placed inside (Legros 2007). Both methods were used for many years even after fur traders introduced steel traps in Yukon (Gotthardt and Thomas 2007) and trapping continues to be a popular activity in Yukon.

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[1] The making of babiche was described by McKennan in *The Chandalar Kutchin*, Arctic Institute of North America Technical Paper No. 17: “The women make babiche by cutting wet rawhide into thin strips the width of which varies with the intended use; namely fine babiche for snowshoe netting, coarse for toboggan lashings…” (McKennan 1965:39).

Fishing

Fish was a staple of Yukon Indigenous people's diets, and many groups had seasonal fish camps where families would stop during their seasonal round. In the larger fish camps, families would set up fish traps or set nets in order to catch fish. Fish traps were usually placed in shallow rivers or streams and funnelled fish in one direction then prevented them from swimming back out again with sharp poles placed at the entrance (Gotthardt and Thomas 2007; McClellan 1987). Once fish were caught in the traps they were either speared or caught in a dip net (Legros 2007:208–212; McClellan 1987; Osgood 1971:66–67). In other places nets made of babiche were set across rivers or under ice to catch many fish at once (Legros 2007:209; McClellan 1987). People used stone net sinkers to make the nets sink to the depths required to catch fish (Gotthardt and Thomas 2007). Fishing hooks and gaffs (a fish hook with a handle used for catching large fish) were also used to catch fish (Hebda et al. 2012). Fish hooks were made out of a variety of materials including bone, antler, native copper, and modified birchwood (Legros 2007). Fishing continues to be a popular activity today and numerous community and individual fish camps remain around Yukon in favourite fishing spots.

Travelling

Travel was an essential part of Yukon Indigenous people's way of life, so technologies that helped people move from one location to another more easily were important and diverse. In the summer, birchbark canoes (Osgood 1971:79–81) and dug-out canoes, rafts, and moose-skin boats were used to move up and down the river highways (Legros 2007:219, 236; McClellan 1987). In times of high water, such as during spring break-up, travel was difficult and temporary rafts might be constructed to help people cross rivers or creeks.

In the winter, people used snowshoes, as well as dog sleds and toboggans, to get from one place to another. Legros writes the following about snowshoes and their use in Yukon: "Short ones were used on Indigenous roads on which the snow had been packed by frequent travel while long ones were used to open trails that had been abandoned for several months, or else to leave the beaten path in order to pursue or flush out game" (Legros 2007:196; Osgood 1971:81–82). Men and women both participated in the making of snowshoes: men "formed the wooden frame and laced the centre with heavy babiche or rawhide netting [and] women usually cut the babiche and did the finer netting of the toe and heel sections" (McClellan 1987:149). Toboggans made of both skin and wood were used to help carry large loads across long distances (Legros 2007).

Gathering

As Yukon's Indigenous peoples travelled often, the containers—baskets and bags—they used to gather and store their foodstuffs needed to be light and portable. Nevertheless, people often took time to decorate them. McClellan tells us that, "rigid or semi-rigid containers were of wood, bark, horn, antler, and basketry; bags were of hide, guts, fish skin, and other animal parts" (1975:279). Mishler and Simeone provide information on how birchbark baskets were made: "Raw birchbark is harvested by Han women and men in spring or early summer from select traditional areas along the banks of the Yukon River at a time when the bark is full of sap" (Mishler and Simeone 2004:193). Different groups made baskets in different styles; even within a group, different shapes and sizes were used for cooking, food storage, and gathering (McClellan 1975:280). In the past, bags made of animal skins were used for both food storage and cooking, as described in the next section. Other types of bags were used to carry animals that had been snared, for example, such as netted game bags (McClellan 1975).

Cooking

Types of Cooking

In the past, both men and women participated in cooking, although sometimes the type of item to be cooked affected who did the processing and cooking. McClellan describes the different types of cooking and food processing:

> Throughout the area, fish and meat were cut and, if not eaten fresh, dried, fermented, or frozen; berries were preserved in grease, or dried, but sometimes frozen; roots were stored where they would keep cool or frozen. Cooking was done by grilling, roasting, stone boiling, paunch [animal belly] boiling, and—in more modern times—stove boiling [McClellan 1975:207].

To practise stone boiling, which was necessary when containers could not be placed directly over a fire, people would place water and food in a container, such as a spruce-root or birchbark basket, and then add hot stones, which caused the water to boil and the food to cook (Crow and Obley 1981:506; McClellan 1975:209). McClellan writes, "Boiling was the preferred method of cooking in the old days, because people drank the soup, which was especially desirable before the days of tea. Many people still like boiled meat the best" (McClellan 1975:210).

Drying was a popular preservation technique, as was mixing grease into the food to seal it from the air so that it could be stored in the food caches throughout the winter (McClellan 1987). The late Mrs. Myra Kaye, a Gwich'in Elder, remembers how grease was used to preserve food: "After bringing the roots home, they were peeled, cut into small pieces, and pounded. This was put into fish oil and they made something like pemmican with it" (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Smith 2009:102). In the summer and fall, meat and fish were dried on pole frameworks (McClellan 1975); the practice of drying meat and fish still occurs throughout Yukon. It was essential to store as much food as possible so that families could make it through the long winter months.

Cooking Utensils

While baskets and bags were used to gather and cook food, individuals throughout Yukon also made wooden plates prior to the arrival of newcomers. McClellan describes how people in the southern Yukon "used hollowed-out wooden bowls as common food dishes; from these they transferred their individual portions to piles of clean brush—'grandma's dishes'—which could be thrown away. As a Tagish woman pointed out, if each person had a separate wooden dish it would be 'too much to carry'" (McClellan 1975:279). Myra Kaye remembers that her Gwich'in relatives "got [birch]bark to make plates or bowls" (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Smith 2009:102). Cooking spoons and ladles were also often made of wood, though both Tlingit and Tagish families used sheep-horn soup ladles, some of which were used for special occasions and were highly decorated (McClellan 1975:281).

Health and Healing

Traditional Indigenous healers in Yukon were known by a variety of names, including shaman, medicine man (or woman), and Indian doctor (McClellan 1987:227).[1] Traditional healers tended to be men, but midwives who helped deliver babies were always women. Every group of Indigenous people usually had at least one healer, to whom many requests were made: to cure illness, to help with spiritual matters, to influence power and spirits, and to tell fortunes (McClellan 1975, 1987).

While there were differences among the Indigenous healers of Yukon, their practices were often very similar, which is confirmed by anthropologists who documented life among the people in Yukon (Crow and Obley 1981; McClellan 1975; Slobodin 1981). Healers found their path in life in a variety of ways: they may have acquired a spirit helper (voluntarily through dreams or by accident), they may have inherited the role from a relative in their maternal line, they may have been born into the role, or they may have inadvertently become one if they disturbed the grave of a previous healer (McClellan 1975:531). Healers did not wear special clothes, but often had long and uncombed hair. They acquired items such as drums, rattles, and amulets to help with their work; when the healers died, these items were buried with them unless an item was specifically willed to a relative. Healers were some of the few individuals who were buried without being cremated (McClellan 1975).

Traditional Indigenous healers and midwives held specialized knowledge about medicines, plants, and animals that could be found out on the land (Legros 2007; McClellan 1987). Nevertheless, all people learned from a young age what types of medicines could be used to cure certain common illnesses such as colds, headaches, toothaches, and earaches. They knew how and where to find the necessary plants and animals, as well as how to process them.[2]

Even though people had knowledge of medicines, there is “a widespread belief among the Yukon [Indigenous peoples] that before the arrival of the whites, people were remarkably healthy” (McClellan 1975:223; for a discussion of pre-contact sickness in Yukon and Alaska, see Fortuine 1989). Information about disease and epidemics prior to contact with newcomers is lacking in detail and difficult to obtain (Helm et al. 1971). Some events are recorded in oral histories, but details on how many people died and from what specific disease are sometimes missing. One reason is that disease names have often fluctuated over time; for example, tuberculosis, a complaint that McClellan noted in her ethnographic work, was previously known as consumption. Newcomers did bring new diseases with them, including smallpox, measles, and pneumonia, which are discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.

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1. Shaman is a term that originally comes from Indigenous healers in Siberia; anthropologists have borrowed it to refer to many different types of healers (see Kehoe 2000).
2. For a detailed list of the plants used to heal various illnesses and diseases, see McClellan 1975:223-232 [2001]; Legros 2007: 245-249.

Ceremonies

Potlatch

A potlatch is a feast or celebration where the hosts give out gifts to the opposite matrilineal clan as a payment and thanks. The word potlatch originates from the Chinook trading jargon, which was spoken along the northwest coast in the nineteenth century. McClellan notes that “white prospectors brought this language into the Yukon” and that “potlatch means to give” in the Chinook language (McClellan 1987:215; see also Hibben 1877). While a potlatch can be held for many different occasions, in the southern Yukon the Coastal Tlingit, in particular, have come to associate the term most often with memorial feasts. Marilyn Jensen (Figure 5.7) wrote the following about the potlatch ceremony:

> A potlatch celebrated life, death and other momentous occasions. It was at the centre of the community and brought people from other villages closer together. The potlatch was a time to honour a loved one’s life. It provided, and continues to provide to this day, an opportunity to visually see the clan system in motion. It was a chance to see who was who and to arrange marriages, alliances and plans for the future [Jensen 2005:5].

During a memorial (headstone) potlatch, held approximately one year after cremation, the clan of the deceased would host, after collecting gifts and food throughout the preceding year. The opposite clan members would perform specific duties, such as digging the grave and carrying the coffin to the burial site, as well as other necessary tasks. After the burial, a feast would be held and the hosts would distribute the collected wealth. The giving of gifts was a way to solidify social bonds and was part of social reciprocity and moral obligations that were taught early on to children. McClellan provides more details on the events of the potlatch:

> Both hosts and guests sang honoured clan songs, danced, displayed their [clan] crests and engaged in notable oratory. Those who had performed specific duties for the deceased were specially paid, but all guests received gifts commensurate with their ranks and relationship to the dead person… [McClellan 1981:478].

Mrs. Kitty Smith describes the first headstone potlatch:

> They don’t throw away, coast Indians, their own style. But this people they forgot it. Should be they got him yet. Me what I claim, I know it. See that snake?
>
> One girl bring home that one. Coast Indian. He make her raise it. Gee, not scared, that girl. He start to grow about that big. She give him her milk, what do you think of that!
>
> She call him her son. “For awhile I’ll raise you. They kill us all time war. I raise you,” she tell him (for revenge).
>
> He’s getting big now. That girl keeps him way down there in ground. All time he stays there. Can’t come out.
>
> That girl’s mother tells her sons, “I don’t know what for she’s raising that snake, your sister.” Should be she tell her mamma, you know. (Should say) “I been raising that thing, Mama. It’s going to be war, for us”. Should be she tell her.

> Marten skin blanket, they give her, that young girl. They want to kill him, you know, that snake. She's got seven brothers that girl. They're ready now.
>
> "You think you work for me, sew that marten skin blanket. I'm going to pay you," one lady say. Anything jobs they giver her she's done quick. That time she stay there. They kill him.
>
> She hear him scream. She get up, "Ah, my son." They got him. She go to town, tell her Mamma, "What for you kill him? That's my son."
>
> "Why don't you tell us," says her Mamma.
>
> She make song, for that his son they kill him: (sings) "My son, when he get hurt that time I hear him, my son, my little son."
>
> Outside coast Indian they make picture, headstone, for that snake. At Klukwan, they've got headstone [Smith in Cruikshank 1979:95-96].

According to McClellan, "potlatching on a large scale probably only began in the nineteenth century" (1987:221) and she and other scholars believe that potlatching was likely not found throughout Yukon until later time periods after the practice was introduced by the Coastal Tlingit, although this is debated by others. Despite this, it is likely that all of Yukon's Indigenous peoples had significant ceremonial practices prior to the nineteenth century, possibly involving gift giving. These ceremonies became more like Tlingit potlatch practices as the groups interacted more and more as time progressed. The Canadian government outlawed the practice of potlatching in the 1880s, on the basis that the process was un-Christian and would cause the hosts to become wards of the state (without any possessions). According to s. 140 of the 1927 *Indian Act*, the penalty for participating in a potlatch was imprisonment for two to six months. Despite this, people continued to potlatch (often in secret) and it wasn't until 1951 that the legislation was changed and people could openly participate in the potlatch again. Since that time there has been a resurgence and evolution of this practice and potlatches continue to be held throughout Yukon today.

Puberty Rituals

Many of Yukon's Indigenous peoples had puberty ceremonies for both boys and girls, which was a time for them to learn about their new roles in society as mature adults. Information about these can be found at cultural centres around Yukon. Isolation was a key feature of the puberty ceremonies. In her book *Life Lived Like a Story*, Julie Cruikshank recorded Tagish and Tlingit Elders Mrs. Angela Sidney's and Mrs. Kitty Smith's stories about "Becoming a Woman." In Mrs. Sidney's story, she remembers "they put me outside, away from camp. You have to wear a bonnet—mine was a fancy flannel blanket" (Cruikshank 1990:98). Mrs. Sidney goes on to describe how long she stayed in her tent away from camp and what the women who visited her taught her, such as sewing and how not be hungry. She describes how she was to sit and behave and the consequences of not acting properly. For instance, she had to sit on her knees and "if you stretch your legs, you shorten your life" (Cruikshank 1990:99). Mrs. Sidney also says that the typical length of seclusion was one year, but that hers ended abruptly after only two months when her mother became sick. In her story, Mrs. Sidney also mentions that "boys have to be trained too" (Cruikshank 1990:100) and gives some indication of how this occurs but without great detail.

Other researchers have provided more detail on what male puberty rites entailed for different cultures across Yukon. McClellan explains that Tlingit boys lived together in camps and were trained by their maternal uncles and males in their clan (McClellan 1981). In describing Tagish male puberty rites, she explains that boys were taught "technical and ritual aspects of subsistence activities, their moral obligations, other and the traditions and prerogatives of their matrilineages" (McClellan 1981:488).

For the Hän people to the north, puberty rituals were also important, but less emphasis was placed on male puberty ceremonies while “girls were subject to elaborate ritual behaviour” (Crow and Obley 1981:508). Slobodin provides detail on Gwich’in puberty rituals and states that before a young man was married, he lived with a group of other young men and “improved his knowledge and skill in the subsistence activities, the making of snowshoe frames and other woodwork, the techniques of war, bushcraft, and tracking” (Slobodin 1981:524). Slobodin also expressly indicates that girls were subjected to many taboos, such as “wearing a deerskin cowl hanging down so that she could see only her feet” (Slobodin 1981:525), to prevent her from gazing at others. She was also made to drink with a swan bone straw (see also Legros 2007:363–364). Honigmann describes similar rituals for the Kaska people in the southern Yukon (1981:447).

Finally, evidence of puberty rituals can also be seen in the landscape of the southern Yukon, as McClellan documents “wEtedi (menstruant) rocks”, which are “young girls who had just reached puberty to be turned magically into stone” (McClellan 1975:86). Leaving a gift when you pass by these rocks is said to bring good fortune, while inclement weather is said to result from touching them.[1]

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1. A number of cultural centres in Yukon have examples of female and male puberty rituals including Kluane Museum of Natural History and Tagé Cho Hudän Interpretive Centre

Connections Between Indigenous Groups

Trade

For thousands of years, trade between neighbouring Yukon Indigenous groups occurred throughout the territory. For instance, the Hän people traded with Tutchone people to the south and with the other Déne people like the Gwich'in to the north (Mishler and Simeone 2004). The Gwich'in in turn traded with each other and with the Inuit living on the Arctic coastal plain near the mouth of the Mackenzie River (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Smith 2009)

During the early to mid-nineteenth century, the Coastal Chilkat Tlingit of southern Alaska maintained a network of trade routes that only they could use. These routes were guarded very carefully, and people were not permitted to pass inland or to the coast unless they had permission from the Tlingit. The passes were only accessible between June and September, when it was warmer and the snow and ice had melted, making water travel on either side of the passes possible.

A great deal of trade was carried out between the Coastal Tlingit and the Northern Tutchone. The Northern Tutchone provided large quantities of furs to the Tlingit who used them for their own purposes (including clothing) and also for trade with other Tlingit and coastal trade partners. The trade relationship between the two groups was highly organized: each Tlingit lineage would trade with a specific Tutchone group and with no one else.

The Tlingit traded two types of goods. Before contact with Russian and European trade vessels on the coast, they traded maritime harvests and other coastal goods to the inland Northern Tutchone. Once European contact occurred, they also brought European goods inland for trade.[1] The Tutchone obtained these coastal items and then traded them in turn to other groups such as the Hän, the Tanana, and the Kaska. Thus, the Tlingit market affected many Indigenous peoples in Yukon, often indirectly.

The trade protocols practised by the Tlingit Chilkat and Northern Tutchone were very complex. Trade expeditions were often organized and financed by a high-ranking Tlingit man. A leader would set off with his nephews and family members, including wives, and slaves who acted as porters. There could be up to 100 people at the beginning of the trip; then the group would split up into several caravans of 20 to 30 people who went to trade with smaller groups at various Tutchone locations like Kluane Lake, Aishihik Lake, Hutshi Lake, Big Salmon River, Little Salmon River, Tatchun Lake, McGregor River, Minto, Fort Selkirk, Laberge Lake, and Alsek Lake. The Tlingit and Tutchone example of an extended trade network is just one example of how different groups in Yukon traded with each other. Today trade often occurs at arts and culture festivals or between groups that continue to have connections through marriage or kinship across Yukon.

Inter-Group Marriage

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[1] The Tlingit traded food delicacies and other specialty items such as seaweed and seaweed cakes, dentalia shells, mother of pearl, abalone, dried clams, seaweed, fish oil, blueberries in skin pouches, medicinal herbs, roots, Tlingit blankets, and "Indian tobacco." The Tutchone traded furs, including lynx, fox, marten, wolverine, ermine, and marmot, and dressed fur capes, made of moose, bear, wolf, and ground squirrel, as well as moccasins (slippers), copper nuggets, moose sinew (used as thread), and Dall sheep skins (Krause 1956:127; Legros 1984:17–18, 1985:47; McClellan 1975:502 [2001]; Olson 1936: 211).

Trading alliances often led to marriage between members of different Indigenous groups. In regard to marriage alliances among the Tlingit, McClellan writes, “Marriage alliances cemented for trading purposes were highly vulnerable to dispute” (1981:478). Marriage between groups might also occur if a woman from one group was stolen away by another group. Slobodin writes about the Gwich’in that “a high-ranking family preferred that their sons marry girls from lower-ranking but reputable families” because “exceptionally desirable and high-ranking females might become prime objects for kidnapping by neighbouring peoples, including [Inuit peoples]; there was a special term for such women, translatable as ‘she who is stolen back and forth’”(Slobodin 1981:525). However, Slobodin notes that very few women received this title.

Anthropologists in Yukon: Gillian Staveley

Figure 3.9 Anthropologist Gillian Staveley (photograph courtesy of Jeremy Staveley).

Gillian Staveley is a Canadian anthropologist and resource management consultant. She was born and raised in Yukon, is Kaska Dena, and part of the Liard First Nation. She began working in anthropology in 2008, when she was an undergraduate student at the University of Northern British Columbia. She was hired by the Yukon government under the Student Training and Employment Program (STEP). This job allowed her to work with Yukon government archaeologists over an entire summer. She was able to travel through many parts of Yukon and participated in significant archaeological projects such as the Ice Patch project (see Chapter 2).

Gillian completed her master’s thesis, titled “The Kaska Dene: A Study of Colonialism, Trauma and Healing in Dene Kēyeh” at the University of British Columbia. Her research centered on taking an interdisciplinary perspective to explore cultural dynamics between people and the environment. She specifically focused on *Dene Kēyeh*, which means “the People’s Country” in the Kaska language. Her study area included Yukon, Northern British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories. She studied the intergenerational gap between how Kaska Dena Elders and Kaska youth like her viewed the land. Questions she posed included, How is this knowledge transmitted to future generations? What are the disjunctures between traditional ways of being on the land and future understandings of our environment? What is being lost through this process?

Gillian’s greatest highlight to date is working within her own Kaska community, because she has been able to focus on grass-roots programs focusing on language acquisition and the importance of environmental stewardship in the community. She also conducted an archaeological site inventory at McIntyre Creek (in Whitehorse), which allowed her to engage with Kwanlin Dün First Nations youth. She feels this was an incredibly rewarding experience. More recently, Gillian is employed as the manager of lands and resource for the Kaska Dena communities in British Columbia where she oversees all referrals in the Kaska traditional territory in BC.

To Gillian, the benefits of collaborating with Indigenous communities include being able to create lifelong commitments and friendships with the people she is working with and for. She believes that she is able to engage with the community's issues, concerns, and goals. She says, "When you can engage people in this way, you are doing real collaboration and can create a successful project." For her, the work becomes more meaningful because she has made a connection with the people she is working with.

What Gillian loves most about Yukon is her own traditional territory, specifically the Liard River Valley, which she considers the most beautiful place in the world.

Slavery

Women were also stolen away to be slaves as well as brides. Slaves were individuals who were not members of the group they were living with, but who helped run the home and were part of daily family life, although they were not able to leave. McClellan writes that:

Most slaves were well treated although they were never free once they became slaves. Some even married into their owner's family. A slave woman might become the second or third wife of the man who captured her. In that case, she would be adopted into an appropriate clan or moiety, and her children would become free members of the group. Captive children were sometimes adopted by a childless couple and raised as if they were the couple's own sons or daughters [1987:232].

Wealthy individuals sometimes bought slaves, but slaves could also be the product of warfare between groups (Slobodin 1981). For example, if two groups engaged in battle and one group suffered more deaths than the other, slaves could be exchanged to compensate for lost lives. These individuals could be released when their home community was able to provide a large payment, or when they were rescued or ran away from their captors (McClellan 1987:232. For an example of a story where a slave escaped her captors, see Williams 2013, "Kidnapped Woman Escapes").

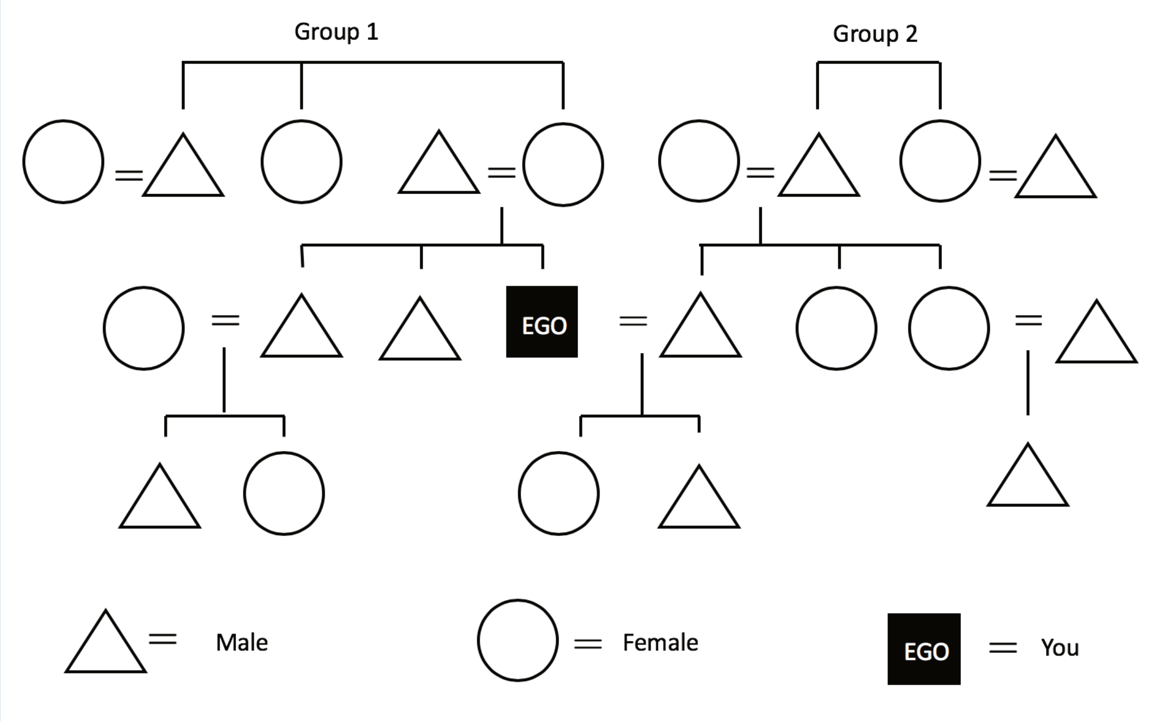
It's clear that there was a wide range of interactions between the various Indigenous groups in Yukon. In the next chapter, we explore the interactions between newcomers to Yukon and the Indigenous groups that greeted them when they arrived.

Chapter 3 Activity

Kinship Activity

In the following activity, you need to identify what matrilineage the ego (you) belong to.

1. Print this chart.
2. Which matrilineage does ego belong to (Group 1 or Group 2)? Colour in the ego's matrilineage.
3. Mark all the members of the Group 2 matrilineage with crosshatching.


Group 1
Group 2
EGO
Male
Female
EGO
You

Suggested Readings

This chapter has provided an introduction to a wide range of topics. More detailed ethnographic and historical accounts of Yukon's First Peoples include *The Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 6, Subarctic*, edited by June Helm (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 1981), particularly the chapters by John R. Crow and Philip R. Obley (Hän), Richard Slobodin (Kutchin), and John J. Honigmann (Kaska); Cornelius Osgood's book *The Han Indians: A Compilation of Ethnographic and Historical Data on the Alaska-Yukon Boundary Area* (Yale University Publications in Anthropology, New Haven 1971); Richard Slobodin's book chapter on Kaska warfare "Without Fire: A Kutchin Tale of Warfare, Survival, and Vengeance" (Proceedings: Northern Athapaskan Conference, National Museum of Man Mercury Series, 1971); Catharine McClellan's academic works *My Old People Say: An Ethnographic Survey of Southern Yukon Territory* (National Museums of Canada, Ottawa 2001 [1975]), *My Old People's Stories: A Legacy for Yukon First Nations* (Yukon Heritage Resources Unit, Government of Yukon, Whitehorse 2007), as well as her works for broader audiences, such as *Part of the Land, Part of the Water: A History of Yukon Indians* (Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver 1987); and more recent publications such as *Han: People of the River* by Craig Mishler and William E. Simeone (University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks 2004), *Oral History as History: Tutchone Athapaskan in the Period 1840–1920* by Dominique Legros (Yukon Heritage Resources Unit, Government of Yukon, Whitehorse 2007), and *People of the Lakes: Stories of our Van Tat Gwich'in Elders/Googwandak Nakhwach'ànjòo Van Tat Gwich'in* by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Shirleen Smith (University of Alberta Press, Edmonton 2009).

For more collections of stories about how people lived in Yukon as told by Yukon First Nation Elders Mrs. Angela Sidney, Mrs. Kitty Smith and Mrs. Annie Ned see Julie Cruikshank's work *Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders* (University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver 1990) and *Kwädą̄ y Kwändü̱r (Traditional Southern Tutchone Stories)*, compiled and translated by Margaret Workman (Yukon Native Language Centre, Whitehore 2000).

More information on the Indigenous languages of Yukon can be found in *Sharing the Gift of Language: Profile of Yukon First Languages* (Government of Yukon Executive Council Office: Aboriginal Language Services, Whitehorse 2004), Barbra Meek's *We Are Our Language: An Ethnography of Language Revitalization in a Northern Athabaskan Community* (University of Arizona Press, Tucson 2010), and the numerous publications and books at the Yukon Native Language Centre[1] which were written with language experts, including: Jane Montgomery, Josephine Acklack, Doris Bob, Barbara Moss, Lizze Hall, Lorraine Allen, Martha Smith, Elizabeth Smith, Margaret Bob, Lucy Wren, Kathy Birckel, Hazel Bunbury, Lena Johnson, Bertha Moose, Bessie John, Edward Roberts, Ann Mercier, Dennis Porter, Catherine Germaine, Eva Billy, Martha Smith, Vivian Smith, and Lorraine Allen.

For more information on the Kaska Dene, the effects of colonialism and forms of healing see Gillian Farnell's The Kaska Dene: A Study of Colonialism, Trauma and Healing in Dene Kēyeh (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver 2014).

Dr. Norma Shorty's dissertation research on her clan origin stories and the process of gathering clan stories provides a Tlingit perspective on documenting one's own culture, family history, and ways of knowing. Her thesis titled *Inland Tlingit of Teslin, Yukon: G̲aanax̲.Ádi and Kook̲hittaan Clan Origin Stories for the Immediate and Clan Family of Emma Joanne Shorty (nee Sidney)* is important and necessary work (2015).

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[1] http://www.ynlc.ca

For oral history accounts of the Inuvialuit living on Yukon's North Slope see Murielle Ida Nagy's *Yukon North Slope Inuvialuit Oral History* (1994).

For more contemporary ethnographies of Yukon and Northern British Columbia's Indigenous Peoples see *We Are Our Language: An Ethnography of Language Revitalization in a Northern Athabascan Community* (Meek 2010) *and 'We Are Still Didene': Stories of Hunting and History from Northern British Columbia* (McIlwraith 2012**).**

CHAPTER 4 - YUKON FIRST NATIONS' RELATIONSHIP WITH NEWCOMERS

Learning Objectives

- Describe the significance of the Royal Proclamation on Indigenous peoples' land rights in Canada.
- Explain the significance of the 1969 White Paper: *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*.
- Identify Indigenous population figures for Yukon, prior to, and after colonization.
- Critically evaluate the emergence of the early Yukon fur and whaling trade.
- Describe the role of Indigenous peoples during the 19th-century gold rushes.
- Identify and explain the consequences of having missionaries, and the residential and day school systems, in Yukon.
- Explain the difference between big-game provisioning hunting and sport hunting in the early 20th century and how this affected Indigenous peoples.
- Identify and explain the consequences of Federal Government imposed policies on the traditional lifeways of Yukon's Indigenous communities.
- Explain the consequences of the building of the Alaska Highway on Indigenous communities.
- Describe the emergence of the land claim movement in Yukon.
- Identify some current historians and historical archaeologists and their collaborators.

Indigenous Peoples and Colonial Forces

Significant colonial[1] interactions between Yukon Indigenous peoples and newcomers have occurred in Yukon over the last 175 years. The arrival of the fur and whale trades, disease, missionaries, gold rushes, and the introduction of wage labour, wildlife conservation, government interventions, infrastructure development, and the land claim movement were all pivotal events that influenced and affected the lifeways of Indigenous peoples during that time. The following sections introduce some of the more prominent post-contact events that have occurred and discuss how Indigenous peoples have negotiated these events.

Indigenous Peoples and Colonial Forces

Numerous federal government laws, and commissions have affected Yukon First Nations peoples over the last two centuries. One of the most influential is the Royal Proclamation between Britain and Indigenous peoples in North America that was put forth by King George III in 1763 (Appendix A), which was initially meant to claim British territory in North America. The Royal Proclamation states that Aboriginal title[2] has existed and continues to exist, and that all land is considered Aboriginal land until ceded by treaty.[3] In other words, it is "recognized that Indigenous peoples were living in societies at the time of contact with Europeans, and that as a consequence we were required to gain their assent to settle on their lands" (Asch 2014:73). The Royal Proclamation prohibits newcomers from claiming land directly from the Indigenous inhabitants, unless it is first purchased by the Crown and then sold to the newcomers. It further states that only the Crown can buy land from Indigenous peoples. Other federal government policies and reports that stand out as important in the histories of Canada's Indigenous peoples include the *Indian Act* of 1876 (Canada 1985), the *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy* (Canada 1969), the *British North American Act / Constitution Act* (Canada 1982 [1867]), the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples of Canada* (Canada 1996), and *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (2015).[4]

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1. Stephen Silliman, a historical archaeologist, believes that in many cases, the studies themselves of contact between Indigenous peoples and newcomers are actually colonial in nature, and by colonial he means "(1) attempted domination by colonial settlers; and (2) resistance, acquiescence and living through these by Indigenous peoples" (Silliman 2005:59).
2. Aboriginal title "refers to the inherent Aboriginal right to land or a territory. The Canadian legal system recognizes Aboriginal title as… unique collective right to the use of and jurisdiction over a group's ancestral territories. This right is not granted from an external source but is a result of Aboriginal peoples' own occupation of and relationship with their home territories as well as their ongoing social structures and political and legal systems" (First Nations and Indigenous Studies, University of British Columbia 2009).
3. In this context a treaty is "an agreement between government and an Indigenous group in Canada that defines the rights of Aboriginal Peoples with respect to lands and resources over a specified area and may also define the self-government authority of" that group (University of Victoria n.d.).
4. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's mandate was "to learn the truth about what happened in the residential schools and to inform all Canadians about what happened in the schools. The Commission documented the truth of what happened by relying on records held by those who operated and funded the schools, testimony from officials of the institutions that operated the schools, and experiences reported by survivors, their families, communities and anyone personally affected by the residential school experience and its subsequent impacts." For more information see: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=890.

The *Indian Act* was introduced by the Canadian government in 1876, and was meant to govern relations between the federal government and Indigenous peoples (Canada 1985). For many people, the *Indian Act* was, and continues to be, seen as a means of assimilating[5] Indigenous peoples through the numerous versions of the Act. The Act made all status peoples wards of the state. Although some Indigenous peoples see the Act as being beneficial, since it provides them with special status and some protection of Aboriginal rights such as reserve land, medical care, and education, others see the act as paternalistic, since it enables the federal government to regulate and administer the activities of registered Indians and reserves. This includes political control, such as imposing governing structures on Indigenous communities in the form of band councils, as well as control over the rights of Indigenous peoples to practice their traditions and cultures, exemplified by the banning of complex feasts such as potlatches (Dickason and Newbigging 2010:199). The *Indian Act* also enables the government to define who is considered Indian through the granting of Indian status[6] and to control Indigenous people's finances (creating economic dependence) and education (Frideres and Gadacz 2012:5–6). In essence, the Indian Act, which is still in effect today, remains a very controversial piece of legislation.

Another key event in Indigenous history occurred under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's government. In 1969, a White Paper[7] entitled "Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy" was presented by then Indian Affairs Minister Jean Chrétien (Canada 1969). It proposed "ending the special legal relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state" and dismantling of the *Indian Act*, Indian Status, and the Department of Indian Affairs (Schouls 2002:20–21). Eliminating the Act was meant to provide equality to all Canadians by abolishing distinct legal status for Indigenous peoples, which in turn meant providing them with the same rights and responsibilities as other Canadians (Schouls 2002:20–21). The White Paper proposed converting reserve land to private property that could be sold by the Indigenous band or its individual members, moving responsibility for Indigenous matters from the federal government to the provinces, and integrating specific Indigenous services into the same types of services as other Canadian citizens (Canada 1969:6; Indian Chiefs of Alberta 1970:188-281). The White Paper also suggested providing funding for economic development, appointing a commissioner to address outstanding land claims, and gradually terminating the existence of treaties (Belanger and Newhouse 2008:4–5). Indigenous leaders saw the White Paper as a "thinly disguised programme of extermination through assimilation" (Cardinal 1999:1). The policy was eventually not put in place because of negative reaction from Indigenous groups and other organizations across the country (Indian Chiefs of Alberta 2011).

Later, due to protests and movements by Indigenous groups in Canada in the 1980s, Section 35, which sets out the "Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada," was included in the *Constitution Act*, 1982:

- (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.
- (2) In this Act, "aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.
- (3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) "treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims

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[5] Assimilation is defined as "the absorption of a minority group into a majority population, during which the group takes on the values and norms of the dominant culture" (Darvill 2008:27).

[6] A person with status is defined here as "an individual recognized by the federal government as being registered under the *Indian Act*. They are referred to as a Registered Indian (commonly referred to as a Status Indian). Status Indians are entitled to a wide range of programs and services offered by federal agencies and provincial governments" (Canada 2012). A non-status Indian person "is someone who is not registered as an Indian under the Indian Act" but who may self-identify as Indigenous (Frideres and Gadacz 2012:55).

[7] The term White Paper "is commonly applied to official documents presented by Ministers of the Crown which state and explain the Canadian government's policy on a certain issue" (Parliament of Canada 2017).

agreement or may be so acquired.

- (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons [Canada 1982, section 35].

The recognition of Indigenous rights in the Constitution has given Indigenous peoples in Canada the ability to pursue treaty claims in the courts, which had not been an option when their rights had not been entrenched. Another significant change to the Constitution was the enactment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of gender. This led to Bill C-31, *An Act to Amend the Indian Act* (passed in 1985), which was meant to eliminate sexual discrimination in the Act (Canada 1985). Before this change, any Indigenous woman who married a non-Indigenous man lost both her own and her children's Indian status. Bill C-31 offered two sections under which Indigenous people could register. Section 6(1) applied to people who had already been registered under the *Indian Act* prior to April 17, 1985. It stated that a person who was registered prior to that date was "considered to have two registered Indian parents and could pass your Indian status to your children." If you were registered under section 6(2) it meant that you were considered to only have "one registered Indian parent and you needed to marry another registered Indian to pass your status to your children" (National Centre for First Nation Governance 2019). This meant that until recently, anyone registered under section 6(2) could not pass their status on to their children. This mostly affected women as they were the ones that lost their Indian status if they married non-Indigenous men, prior to 1985. Recently, a Court of Appeals case, *McIvor v. Canada*, determined that "Canada is obligated to remove the discrimination and to ensure that all First Nations women and their descendants are granted Indian status on the same footing as First Nations men and their descendants" (Deer 2019).

Yukon Indigenous Populations

Population estimates for Indigenous peoples in Yukon prior to direct contact with newcomers range from 4,700 (Kroeber 1939:141–142) to 9,100 (Krech 1978) or more (McClellan and Denniston 1981:372). Indirect contact with newcomers first occurred during the eighteenth century when Russian (c. 1771), Spanish (c. 1774), and English (c. 1778) traders arrived on the coast of Alaska (Gibson 1992:12, 18, 22), to the west of Yukon. One of the first contact events between newcomers and Indigenous peoples living close to the eastern Yukon border occurred in 1789, when fur trader Alexander Mackenzie[1] began trading with the eastern Gwich'in people of what is today the Mackenzie River drainage basin (Slobodin 1981:528) (Figure 4.1).

Although these non-Indigenous traders had no direct contact with people within the borders of Yukon, their trade activities on the coast and east of Yukon eventually brought disease to coastal Pacific and Mackenzie River people, who in turn spread diseases into Yukon during their Indigenous trade expeditions (Slobodin 1981:529). Once direct newcomer and Indigenous contact took place, diseases such as scarlet fever, smallpox, mumps, measles, dysentery, jaundice, whooping cough, pneumonia, diphtheria, meningitis, and influenza devastated Indigenous populations (Coates 1991:13; Helm et al. 1971:329-337; Legros 2007:115–123; Marchand 1943; Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon 1988b). By 1890, when traders, missionaries, and miners had made their mark within the territory, it is estimated that there was significant Indigenous population loss because of European diseases (Legros 2007:123). Indigenous peoples had little or no immunity to these new diseases, which could wipe out an entire community in a number of weeks (Anderson to Council, HBCA B/200/b/28: 55 [Nov. 30, 1852]; Campbell 1958:109 [May 30, 1851]; Campbell and Stewart 2000:102 [May 20, 1851]; Dawson 1987 [1887]:138B; Fortuine 1989:116). Disease destroyed families, often causing the death of knowledge-bearing Elders and the loss of family leaders, such as mothers and fathers. No one was left unaffected (Radford et al. 2005). Some people had to move to live with other family members or other Indigenous groups to survive; others were forced to stop living on the land, and instead became more sedentary.[2] This caused many people and communities to lose their traditional systems of kinship and cultural knowledge, as well as languages, as they amalgamated with other families and groups.

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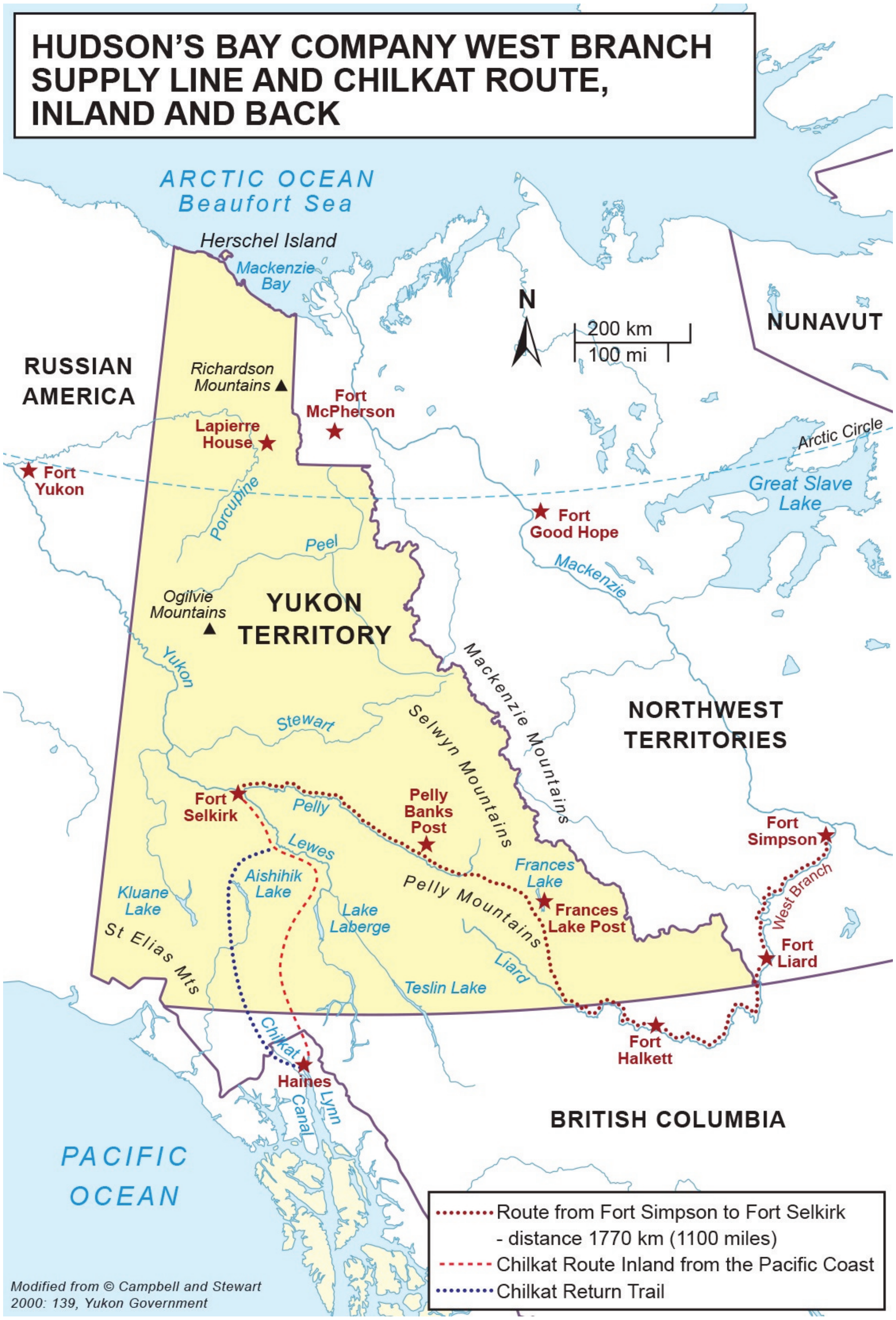
1. Alexander Mackenzie worked for the Northwest Fur Company (NWC). The NWC and the Hudson's Bay Company were the primary fur traders in Rupert's Land (which later became Canada) until their merger in 1821.
2. The term sedentary is defined as the transition from a nomadic lifestyle, in which people move from camp to camp at regular intervals, to a society in which one remains in one place permanently, in a single settlement.


HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY WEST BRANCH SUPPLY LINE AND CHILKAT ROUTE, INLAND AND BACK

ARCTIC OCEAN
Beaufort Sea
Herschel Island
Mackenzie Bay
N
200 km
100 mi
NUNAVUT
RUSSIAN AMERICA
Richardson Mountains
Fort McPherson
Lapierre House
Fort Yukon
Arctic Circle
Great Slave Lake
Fort Good Hope
Porcupine
Peel
Mackenzie
Ogilvie Mountains
YUKON TERRITORY
Yukon
Mackenzie Mountains
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
Stewart
Selwyn Mountains
Fort Selkirk
Pelly
Pelly Banks Post
Fort Simpson
Lewes
West Branch
Aishihik Lake
Frances Lake
Kluane Lake
Pelly Mountains
Frances Lake Post
Lake Laberge
Fort Liard
St Elias Mts
Liard
Teslin Lake
Fort Halkett
Chilkat
Haines
Lynn Canal
BRITISH COLUMBIA
PACIFIC OCEAN
Route from Fort Simpson to Fort Selkirk - distance 1770 km (1100 miles)
Chilkat Route Inland from the Pacific Coast
Chilkat Return Trail

Modified from © Campbell and Stewart 2000: 139, Yukon Government

Figure 4.1 Map of fur-trade posts in Yukon, eastern Alaska, western Northwest Territories, and northern British Columbia (modified by Lovell Johns from Campbell and Stewart 2000).

Population numbers began to rise once again during the early twentieth century, with a total Yukon population of 27,000 people in 1900, 3,300 estimated of whom were Indigenous. Due to the post–gold rush exodus, by 1911 Yukon's population declined to 6,000, including 1,500 Indigenous people. By the 1920s, the population of Yukon had dropped to 4,000, including 1,500 Indigenous people (Canada 2009a:951). This number held steady until the early 1940s, when Yukon's population climbed once again, to 38,000 people, although the Indigenous population remained at 1,500 (Canada 2009b:155). By the 1960s, Yukon's Indigenous population was estimated to be approximately 3,000 people (Jonason et al. 1960:2). In 1996, the total population of self-identified Indigenous people within Yukon totalled 6,170 (Government of Yukon 1998), and by 2011 it was 7,710, or 23.1 percent of Yukon's population (Government of Yukon 2014). The 2011 National Household Survey census indicates that the number of people self-identifying as Indigenous is 7,710 (Government of Yukon 2014:1-12).

Emergence of the Fur and Whaling Trade

In the early 1840s, Yukon was one of the last places in Canada that non-Indigenous people had not directly visited. Even so, Indigenous peoples in Yukon, such as the Tutchone, were already making contact with newcomers through indirect trade networks with the Coastal Tlingit people of Alaska, who traded European and Asian goods[1] supplied by the Russian American Company (as early as 1799) for inland Yukon furs. At around the same time, the Gwich'in people in the northern Yukon were trading both directly and indirectly with the Russians in Alaska as well as with the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort McPherson in the Northwest Territories (Karamanski 1983:169; Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Smith 2009:121–123). Indigenous people were already savvy traders by the time they began direct trade with newcomers, since inter-Indigenous trade networks had been in existence for millennia (see Chapter 3).

These new trade relationships introduced European goods into Indigenous people's lifeways. Indigenous people began to incorporate fur-trade hunting into their yearly round, but it did not upset their traditional pursuits (Castillo 2012a). It was once assumed that Indigenous people who were mediators in trade or whose traditional territory was located near a trading post became dependent on the fort for survival (Harmon 1957:65–66; McGillivray 1989:64), but in fact most Indigenous peoples in Yukon did not become solely dependent on the posts.

When non-Indigenous traders began to arrive in Yukon in the 1840s, their intention was to make a profit through the trade of furs. The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), for example, sent Robert Campbell to explore and build trade networks with Indigenous people along Francis River, Francis Lake, and the Pelly River (Figure 4.1).

Campbell's movement westward made him the first non-Indigenous person to cross over the Yukon watershed. Campbell was adept at establishing forts; he set up Yukon fur-trade posts at Frances Lake, Pelly Banks, and finally Fort Selkirk. He "moved slowly along Francis Lake and the Pelly River all the while attempting to establish trade relationships" (Castillo 2012b:37). It was during his travels that Campbell first recognized the strong trade ties between the Tlingit Chilkat and the Indigenous groups, such as the Kaska, living in the interior (Campbell 1958:38–45 [July 23, 1838]). As Castillo, one of the authors here, notes, "These Indigenous trade networks would have significant repercussions for Fort Selkirk and its inhabitants" (Castillo 2012b:37; Figure 4.2).

The building of Fort Selkirk unintentionally caused friction in trade relations between the Northern Tutchone and their long-time trading partners the Tlingit, since the Tutchone now had two trading partners and could play one against the other to obtain the best price for Tutchone furs. After numerous minor attempts at removing the HBC from the fort, on August 22, 1852, "twenty-seven Coastal Tlingit Chilkat attacked Fort Selkirk" (Castillo 2012b:71). On that date, Robert Campbell wrote in his journal:

> Since last date we had a narrow escape of being cut to pieces, the alternative has been the loss of our all. About noon Saturday the boat with some of the hunters (HBC) arrived unsuspectedly from above, though expected only in Fall…the Indians (Chilkats) rushed with hellish yells into the water & dragged it ashore

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[1] As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Tlingit provided both utilitarian goods and delicacies, including European trade goods such as tobacco, beads, and flintlock guns, and wool Tlingit blankets (McClellan 1975: 502 [2001]).

> here; & in less than a minute they had everything out & the guns from Gauche & Kitsah…I was seized by the arms & three sprung (yelling like furies) presenting their guns to my breast…The whole scene passed in about 3 minutes from the unfortunate arrival of the boats till they were masters of all… [Campbell and Stewart 2000:141 (Aug. 22, 1852)].

The Chilkat's final attempt to stop the HBC from trading with the Northern Tutchone was successful. Interestingly, the Northern Tutchone had stayed away from the fort in the days leading up to the Chilkat attack (Castillo 2012:71). Right after the raid, the fort's inhabitants floated away on a raft; Campbell's superiors did not permit him to retaliate, although he desperately wanted to. The buildings at Fort Selkirk were left abandoned for decades.

In essence, those Indigenous groups that were positioned close to forts and also had access to outlying Indigenous groups often dominated trade relationships between themselves and others and became powerful intermediaries in trade. When trading relationships became unsettled, violence could sometimes ensue. The fur traders brought more than goods for trade: they inadvertently, and in one case purposefully,[2] brought disease, which devastated Indigenous communities who had no natural immunity to these foreign viruses (as mentioned above).

In 1889, a few decades after fur traders arrived in Yukon, American whalers arrived on Qikiqtaruk, also known as Herschel Island (see Figure 2.2), which is located in the Beaufort Sea, five kilometres off Yukon's northern coast (Bockstoce 2012:158; Nuligak 1966:24). For millennia, the Inuvialuit had been seasonal visitors to Herschel Island, harvesting caribou, whales, and polar bears (Friesen 2012:146–147). The whalers had determined that the Beaufort Sea was one of the last areas in which the bowhead whale still thrived. Bowheads, whose numbers had dropped dramatically due to overhunting, were in high demand because of their sought-after baleen, blubber, and oil. To make the short Arctic whaling season profitable, it was necessary for ship crews to overwinter near Herschel Island, which had a good *Qikiqtaryuk* for the large ships. In 1890, the community of Pauline Cove was established by Euro-Americans. "The Herschel Island settlement approached one thousand people at its height in 1894-96" (Bockstoce 2012:162), and it was the largest Yukon community during that time. "Its members lived amid 'a mixture of wooden and canvas buildings, native huts, spare casks, boats, wood and all spare stuff'" (Library and Archives Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police fonds, PA211736 in Bockstoce 2012:162).

The effects of the whalers on the Inuvialuit were overwhelming. Many Inuvialuit were hired as meat hunters, deckhands, and seamstresses. The whalers were often rough and objectionable men who lived hard lives and had little regard for the Inuvialuit people with whom they worked (Nuligak 1966:45, 110). They provided large quantities of alcohol to the Inuvialuit, which had not been available before the whalers' arrival (Nuligak 1966:31). This caused serious social disruptions within families. Incidences of physical and sexual abuse of Inuvialuit women and children were also recorded (Radford et al. 2005: 00:35:50). There was an increase in caribou hunting, a staple food of the Inuvialuit, as the demand for meat by the whalers grew. Although there is evidence showing that caribou were so plentiful that their numbers stayed high during this time (Bockstoce 2012:162; Nuligak 1966:32), whale numbers plummeted as whalers overhunted (Bockstoce 2012:165), often cutting off and keeping the head of the mammal and dropping the rest of the carcass back into the sea (Radford et al. 2005: 00:28:50). For a people who took care to hunt only when necessary for subsistence, this would have been a confusing waste of resources.

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2. Representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company allowed a boat carrying supplies from Fort Simpson to Fort Yukon to move forward even though they knew that the men on board were suffering from scarlet fever. Upon their arrival, the illness spread to the local Gwich'in people who then carried it to their trading partners further away (Coates 1993).

Archaeologists in Yukon and Their Collaborators: Dr. Victoria Castillo and Jessica Alfred

Figure 4.2 Archaeologist Dr. Victoria Castillo (photograph courtesy of Victoria Castillo).

Victoria Elena Castillo is a Canadian archaeologist. She has been an instructor of history and anthropology at Yukon University since 2010. The first time Victoria came to work in Yukon was in 2004. She was hired as an archaeological assistant at a local cultural resource management firm based out of Whitehorse. Victoria spent the summer conducting community archaeology projects throughout the territory. Her specialization is in historical archaeology but working in Yukon has allowed her to excavate pre-contact sites that go back thousands of years as well as contact-period and post-colonial sites.

Through her resource management consulting experience, Victoria has been able to work with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun, Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Little Salmon First Nation, and Selkirk First Nation. She has also participated in archaeological assessments for industry. Some of the more interesting projects for Victoria have been excavations at Tagish Post and working in culture camp–style projects, where she takes young students from First Nation communities out on the land to conduct excavations. These trips can span a day, a month, or more. Culture camps are meant to teach students the practicalities of excavation, but more importantly, they allow students to learn about their people’s history through the archaeological record. “To actually see some of the material that comes from where their own people are from, from 50 years ago to 1,000 years ago, it’s really interesting and it’s nice to see students learning in that experiential way.”

Victoria’s doctoral work began in 2005 at Fort Selkirk, and the project itself focused on looking at social and economic interactions between the Northern Tutchone people, the Tlingit people, and the Hudson’s Bay Company during the early fur trade in Yukon in the 1840s. During the three years of excavations at Fort Selkirk, she brought students and workers out with her to excavate at the confluence of the Pelly and Yukon rivers. The project wrapped up in 2012 when she defended her dissertation.

Victoria thinks that the best part of Yukon is the ability to go into the forest at the drop of a hat and just get away from everything. “I can step out of my house and walk a block and I’m basically in the wilderness.” Another terrific part of Yukon is having so many Indigenous cultural groups living in the territory. “There is not just one Indigenous group living here, but 14 different First Nations, and there’s so much cultural diversity.” Victoria stresses that Yukon is a really fascinating place to be for an archaeologist because there is such a huge opportunity to learn about different cultures, which is what archaeology and (more broadly) anthropology are all about.

Jessica Rachel Alfred is a Northern and Southern Tutchone, Selkirk First Nation citizen. Jessica has always been interested in her people's history and is particularly drawn to Northern Tutchone oral histories. Jessica first began working with Victoria in 2004 when a position opened up for a student archaeology assistant in her First Nation. The job entailed working with Yukon Government and a heritage consulting firm in Yukon, conducting archaeological excavations at the historic site of Twata Lake, located on Selkirk First Nation settlement land. The following year, Jessica and Victoria worked together again, this time at the historic site of Fort Selkirk (see Emergence of the Fur and Whaling Trade section).

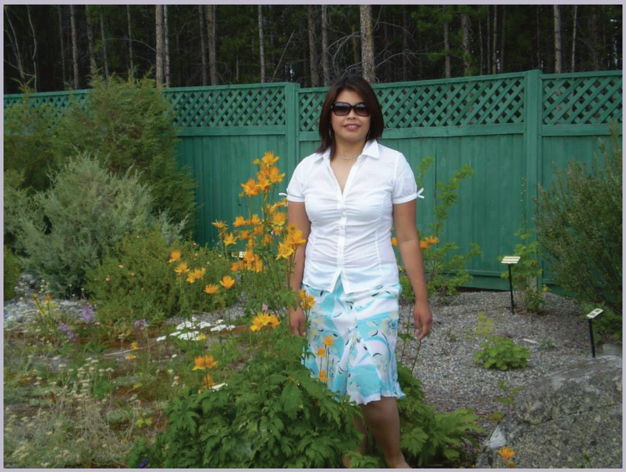

Figure 4.3 Selkirk First Nation Project Manager Jessica Alfred (photograph courtesy of Jessica Alfred).

Jessica has been drawn to archaeology and other cultural work because of her interest in ancestral migrations and early lifeways. She's particularly interested in people's winter survival skills and child-rearing practices. She chose to work with Victoria because it allowed her to go to remote places on the land, stepping back in time. She was also excited to participate in archaeological excavations, as it allowed her the opportunity to find tangible examples of her people's past.

Some of the highlights of her work with Victoria include "working with someone such as Victoria that is very determined and has the ability to make smart decisions based on her knowledge and skills, which she has acquired in the heritage sector." Her early years, working on projects with Victoria, set the foundation for what she wanted to do later, managing on the land projects, managing camps and doing heritage and lands administration.

She also enjoys the collaborative aspects of heritage and lands work, particularly the benefits to the community. It's important to her that collaboration addresses shared concerns of those running the heritage project and the community. She likes being able to bring together like-minded people who can build projects that benefit all those involved, "to create balance and mutually beneficial relationships between Selkirk First Nation and other collaborators." For Jessica these positive collaborations include having collaborators come to the community, work with the First Nation, and put in the effort needed to build and maintain relationships, by showing respect in all aspects of the project. She wants to see equal efforts by all parties involved. In the past, projects happened that were not beneficial to Selkirk First Nation, but this is no longer acceptable. Community-based projects are the way forward as the First Nation have an interest in the work, whether it be for archaeology, geology, or another discipline.

Finally, for Jessica, her favourite part of living in Yukon includes living on her traditional territory, amongst her language speakers and the rich culture and history of Selkirk First Nation. She enjoys gaining knowledge on the land, for instance hunting and fishing, and sharing that knowledge with her children. Her favourite place in Yukon is Ta'tla Mun Lake (Tatlmain Lake) where her grandmother was born and raised. It is a spiritual place for her where she can soak in the beautiful scenery and where her family has deep time history.

The fur and whaling trades had profound effects in some areas of Yukon, and none in others. Indigenous people participated as “traders, fishermen, provision hunters and part-time labourers” at the forts (Coates 1991:36). For the Northern Tutchone, the building and subsequent demise of Fort Selkirk did not influence their ability to obtain different types of non-Indigenous material culture such as glass, metal, and ceramic objects. They were able to continue their productive trade with the Tlingit for many decades after Fort Selkirk ceased to exist. Comparatively, Inuvialuit lifeways changed dramatically during contact with the whalers and in subsequent decades. The whales were all but decimated, and families were greatly affected by the years of abuse inflicted on them by the whalers (Burn 2012:8). Still, the Inuvialuit were able to continue their hunting lifestyle after the whalers left (Radford et al. 2005).

Gold Rushes

The gold rush of 1898 has been described in countless books, newspapers, and magazines inside and outside of Yukon (Figure 4.4). But, for the most part, Indigenous peoples were ignored in early accounts of the Klondike gold rush, even though their participation was integral to the survival of thousands of gold seekers. Big-city news reports and miners' journals typically focused on the newcomers and their adventures in the North. This is ironic since a Tagish family was central to the discovery of Klondike gold.

Prior to the 1898 rush, gold had been found within Yukon by Indigenous people, explorers, fur traders, and missionaries. For instance, Robert Campbell describes seeing gold near Fort Selkirk in his journals (Wilson 1970). Missionary Robert McDonald indicates that gold was present in Birch Creek (near the Yukon-Alaska border) in the 1870s (Cruikshank 1991:122). As well, geologist George Dawson identified gold deposits in the 1880s (Cruikshank 1991:122). Campbell and McDonald were not eager to report their findings because they feared newcomers would come to Yukon and tamper with fur-bearing animals or influence Indigenous peoples in a negative way.[1] It was not until the late 1880s that gold seekers began to report finding gold in large quantities in Yukon; this was associated with rushes that had already occurred in California and British Columbia (Brands 2003; Forsyth and Dickson 2007).

The first large gold strike was on the Stewart River in 1885. This was followed by a small gold rush on the Fortymile River in 1886. On the Alaska side of the border, another mini gold rush occurred on the Yukon River in 1893 in what became known as Circle City. But it was not until 1896, when Tagish community members Keish (Skookum Jim), Káa Goox (Tagish Charlie), Shaaw Tláa (Kate Carmack), and Kate's non-Indigenous husband George Carmack discovered gold on Bonanza Creek, that a major Yukon gold rush began (Coates 1991:36; Cruikshank 1979:45–47; Cruikshank 1990:186; Cruikshank 1991:122–124; Porsild 1998:3; Spude 2011:14).

The story of how Keish and his group discovered gold varies with the teller. The often-exaggerated non-Indigenous version romanticizes Skookum Jim and describes him as an Indigenous man who "longed to be a white man—in other words, a prospector" (Berton 1958:44). In this telling, Keish and his family and friends purposely headed to the Klondike to search for gold, and they discovered it after George Carmack was informed of a good location to search by another non-Indigenous gold seeker.

In Tagish oral history accounts, the purpose of Keish's trip downriver was not to look for gold but rather centred on a family obligation: he was looking for his two sisters, Aage and Kate, who had left home with their non-Indigenous gold-prospecting husbands. Keish and his family came across gold by chance; it was not the focus of their trip (Cruikshank 1990:124–133).

After striking it rich, the group headed to Seattle with their newfound wealth and spent their earnings with abandon. Eventually they lost all their money and parted ways. Keish's discovery and carefree spending in Seattle led to a mass influx of gold seekers to the Klondike gold fields (Berton 1958:106; Spude 2011:15). News of

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1. In 1896–1897 Hän Chief Andrew Isaac moved his people to Moosehide to protect them from the influence of the non-Indigenous gold seekers who arrived in Dawson during the gold rush (Tr'öndek Hwëch'in 2003). As his daughter (whose name is not given) states, "But my dad didn't want my people to get mixed up with them. Because he thought it would ruin their lives and spoil them, and they'd get drinking and things like that. And so he figured he'll move them down to Moosehide about three miles away from Dawson" (Cruikshank 1979:47–48; Mishler and Simeone 2004:22).

the gold strike was printed in countless newspapers throughout North America, and the world, and many people decided to attempt the long journey to the Klondike gold fields in hopes of making a fortune (Berton 1958:112). While 100,000 people attempted the dangerous trip inland from the Alaska coast, approximately 30,000 people, mostly Americans, actually made it to the gold fields.

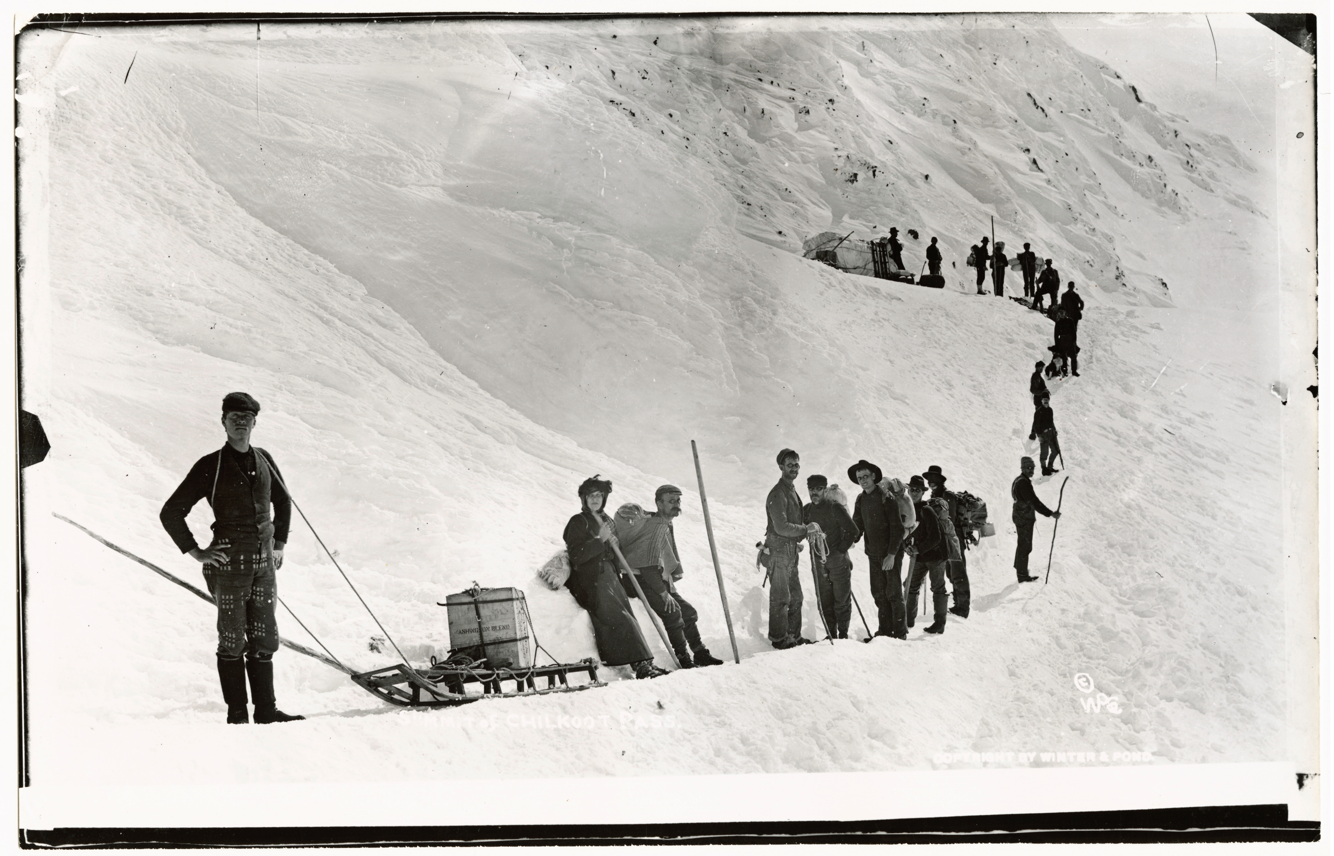

Figure 4.4 Gold seekers along the Chilkoot Trail (photograph courtesy of Yukon Archives, Winter & Pond fonds, 82/285, #2294).

Indigenous people participated in the various gold rushes that occurred in Yukon. They typically worked as packers, helping carry goods along the Chilkoot or White Pass trails from the coast inland. Mrs. Angela Sidney describes the work of packing:

> They go back, pack stuff [for prospectors].
> They're freighting over the summit toward Bennett.
> They get paid for packing stuff: flour, soap, everything like that…
> [Sidney in Cruikshank 1990:58].

Indigenous people also worked as woodcutters and loaders on steamboats, and as hunters providing meat and fish to miners and their pack dogs (see Dick Nukon, Porcupine-Peel, January 20, 1995, 1995:93-95, English and Gwich'in in Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Smith 2009:256-257; Coates 1991:45). As Bishop Bompas noted when describing Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people's mixed economy during the Klondike Gold Rush, "…The Indians now place such high prices on meat or fuel, or other things which they supply to the whites…" (Bompas in Cody 1908:271).

Early on, Indigenous people also worked as labourers at the mines, but as time went on and more newcomers arrived, those non-Indigenous miners who could not stake a claim ended up working for other miners and took away the labour jobs that once belonged to local people. An Indigenous person might continue to trade furs seasonally at various Yukon fur-trade posts and also incorporate some mining work into their economic pursuits. As well, some Indigenous people chose to stay away from mining altogether. Those that did participate were able to work in a mixed economy, which now included trading and money exchange. This allowed them to purchase goods that might have been unavailable to them before the gold rush (Coates 1991:34–35).

Missionaries and Religion

Before the arrival of newcomers and the implementation of organized school curricula and institutions, Indigenous people in Canada, and more specifically Yukon, taught their children through what has been termed the three Ls: looking, listening, and learning (Miller 1996:15). Keeping in mind that every Indigenous culture differs in the means by which children are taught, in general this might consist of:

> …shaping of behaviour by positive example in the home, the provision of subtle guidance towards desired forms of behaviour through the use of games, a heavy reliance on the use of stories for didactic purposes, and as the child neared early adulthood, the utilization of more formal and ritualized ceremonies to impart rite-of-passage lessons with due solemnity [while] there was a powerful imperative to avoid imposing one's will on another individual [Miller 1996:17–19].

This was in stark contrast to the form of education that Euro-Canadians introduced to Indigenous peoples in Yukon and across Canada.

The first Anglican missionaries arrived in Yukon in the 1860s, and the Anglican Church was the first to run a day-school[1] program (located at Forty Mile, Moosehide, Old Crow, and Fort Selkirk) and the first to open residential schools in Yukon. By the 1940s, Anglicans, Catholics, Baptists, and Presbyterians were all firmly entrenched in Yukon, attempting to convert Indigenous peoples to their religions and bring them to their churches (Coates 1993:115). To do so, the various churches needed to understand and eliminate Indigenous people's spirituality. As Coates (Figure 4.6) writes:

> Significantly, unlike many early evangelists in New France and colonial America, the northern missionaries acknowledged the presence and feared the vitality of Indian spirituality. Accordingly, much of their work was a deliberate attempt to supplant Native beliefs [Coates 1993:116].

Conversion to Christianity did happen; by the early twentieth century, many Indigenous peoples had welcomed the Church into their lives (Helm et al. 1971:323; Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Smith 2009: 230). It's difficult to determine how many Indigenous people chose to convert to Christianity, but it is estimated that by the 1950s, approximately 1,500 Yukon Indigenous people had converted to organized religion (Clark 1950).

There are many factors that resulted in the conversion of so many Indigenous people during the early twentieth century. Rapid changes brought on by the arrival of newcomers—particularly diseases, gold rushes, and industrial development, including the construction of highways—all led to dramatic changes to people's lifeways, and this may have become the impetus for following missionary teachings. Later, residential and day schools were also places where young children were forced to convert to Christianity (see section on residential schools). The missionaries were also very good at finding common ground on which to meet Indigenous people. The Anglicans hired and trained Indigenous catechists to preach to people. As well, scriptures were translated into Indigenous Yukon languages (McClellan 1987:77). As one individual notes:

> When the missionary come to the country, the people [were] good enough to believe them right away. These people told me that. [The] minister [who] came into the country first, that's…Neil McDonald, his

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1. Day schools were operated on or near First Nations communities to educate registered Indian, Métis, and Inuit children. Students did not have to live at the schools.

> father Archdeacon McDonald. He did lots of work for the people. You see the Holy Bible translated into our language, the prayer book, hymn book? That man did a lot of work. I didn't see him; [he was] before my time [Joe Netro, August 10, 1977, VG2001-4-2:73-80, English in Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Smith 2009:141].

Yet, many Indigenous people chose to not convert to organized religion, and those that did often did so by syncretizing[2] their Indigenous spiritual beliefs with the Church's teachings (Coates 1993:129, note 88).

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[2] Syncretism is defined as the blending of traits from two different cultures to form a new trait. This can be applied to the blending of religious and spiritual beliefs.

Residential Schools

Residential schools appeared in Canada in the early-nineteenth-century, however, the opening of day and residential schools in Yukon coincided with the federal government's new interest in the North and the development of infrastructure and resources there. Residential schools were funded by the federal government (because Yukon Indigenous peoples were considered wards of the state, and were governed by the Indian Affairs Branch) and administered and managed by various Christian churches. The government and churches believed that by taking children from their families at an early age and instilling the ways of the dominant society during the children's eight or nine years of residential schooling far from home, they could create a space "not merely of the training of the mind, but of a weaning from the habits and feelings of their ancestors, and the acquirements of the language, arts and customs of civilized life" (Ryerson 1898:74). Attendance at such schools soon became compulsory.

In total, "there were four residential schools established in the territory and one school in northern British Columbia for Yukon Indigenous students" (Government of Yukon 2011c:1). Over time, some day schools became residential schools and changed their names as well. Later school hostels were introduced. Anglican Bishops William Bompas and Isaac Stringer established the first residential school in the territory in 1911 at Carcross. Those children living far from Carcross who attended the school were taken away from their families and traditional way of life. The only children who could see their families were those whose communities were located close to the school. Initially called the Chooutla Residential School, and later named the Carcross Indian Residential School, it closed in 1969. Aklavik Anglican Indian Residential School was opened in 1927 at Shingle Point, 80 kilometres east of Herschel Island (Qikiqtaruk). Due to overcrowding, the school was moved to Aklavik in 1934. St. Paul's Indian Residential School was opened in 1920 in Dawson. In 1943 the school was closed; later it became St. Paul's School Hostel. Other school hostels included St. Agnes and Coudert Hall, both located in Whitehorse. The Whitehorse Baptist School was established in the 1940s. Many Yukon students attended the Catholic Church–run Lower Post Residential School, which was located across the BC–Yukon border. It was closed down in 1975 (Government of Yukon 2011c:1; see King 1967). Yukon Hall Indian Day School (Anglican) was opened in 1956 and closed in 1965. As well, non-status Indians were sent to Grouard Indian Residential School which was located in Alberta. It was open from 1939 to 1962.

There were many negative impacts to Yukon Indigenous children and whole communities, who attended residential schools. As Ray writes, "In recent years the dark side of the residential-school life has come to light as traumatized former students, and the children of those students, have recounted their experiences and passed on the stories of their parents" (2011c:238). Indigenous languages and customs were often violently suppressed (Helin 2006:97). Vital kinship bonds, such as those between children and their parents, were purposely broken, and "children were often subjected to unspeakable humiliation, and physical and sexual abuse. Children were beaten for speaking their [Indigenous] languages and practicing their traditions" (Helin 2006:97). Children were forced to give up their spiritual practices and to follow the religious teachings of the Christian orders that ran the schools. Children also contracted and sometimes died from Euro-Canadian diseases. Over time, parents became angry that their children were being sent away, only to come home a few years later not knowing their culture or how to survive on the land and help their families. Sometimes children did not return at all (Mission School Syndrome 1988).

Attempts to assimilate Indigenous children through the day and residential school systems were not successful and created social dysfunction within communities. Many Indigenous people never fully let go of their own cultural and spiritual beliefs. Many residential school survivors have come together in recent decades to relearn their cultural histories, languages, and traditions, resulting in a spiritual and cultural resurgence in Yukon Indigenous communities (Mission School Syndrome 1988). In the documentary, Mission School Syndrome, a few participants said that despite their negative experiences, they did feel that there was some benefit to the schools, which allowed them to learn about settler Canadian society (Northern Native Broadcasting 1988a).

To help atone for the trauma inflicted on Indigenous peoples, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was created and funded in 2007 by the federal government (Canada 2010). The Commission was meant to provide "a safe, respectful and culturally appropriate setting where former students could share their personal experiences" (Ray 2011:243; see also Stanton 2011 and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized on behalf of the government of Canada for the 120 years of abuse towards Canada's Indigenous peoples (Canada 2008a; see Appendix B for Statement of Apology). Although not everyone was happy with the apology, many felt that it was a first step towards reconciliation and understanding. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission held hearings in Yukon communities during the spring of 2011 and winter of 2013. The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future," was released in June 2015.[1] The TRC's final report summary calls what happened to Indigenous children in Canada cultural genocide and defines it as follows:

> Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015: 1].

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1. For more details on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, see: http://www.trc.ca.

Big-Game Provisioning and Sport Hunting

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, big-game hunting[1] was the main method by which Indigenous people and newcomers alike acquired meat and animal by-products, necessary for survival in the subarctic. There was an abundance of big game, such as moose and caribou; in fact, “meat was a substitute for bread, in both Indian and non-Indian homes” (McCandless 1985:44). Many Indigenous people hunted meat both for their own subsistence and to sell to the newcomers who arrived with the fur trade, the whaling industry, and the gold rushes. This was lucrative for them, and many people felt that the resources would never disappear: they believed that there was an unending supply of moose and caribou.

From the 1910s to the 1940s, many big-game and trophy hunters arrived in Yukon. Their goal was to bring home trophies from their hunting expeditions and take part in an “authentic” Yukon experience. To do this, they were required by law to hire guides who would take them on expeditions into the forests of Yukon. These guides were most often, although not always, Indigenous men, who knew the landscape intimately. The guides could also hire a group of assistant guides, wranglers, camp helpers, and cooks to support the expeditions. For a long time, this set-up was ideal for everyone, as it meant that the meat was never wasted. As McCandless writes, “Often it was dried and cached on the spot for winter traplines used by those same men. Thus, the hunting party could serve several purposes: trophies for the hunter, license revenues for the government, wages for the guides and meat for winter trapping” (1985:45). As time went on, non-Indigenous guides began complaining that Indigenous guides were taking their business and were overhunting animals. In response, the Territorial Council changed the hunting laws in 1923 to stop Indigenous people from becoming chief hunting guides. Under the new laws, in order for an Indigenous hunter to become a chief hunting guide, he would have to give up his Indian status (enfranchise), which meant that he would lose medical care and education benefits and his children would also lose their Indian status (McCandless 1985:59). A few men, such as Johnny Johns, who was a Tlingit-Tagish man from Carcross, decided to go ahead and give up their status.[2] Johnny Johns eventually became one of Yukon’s most famous chief guides (Cruikshank 1991:64).

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1. Big-game hunting is defined as the hunting of large wild animals. Trophy hunting is defined as the hunting of wild animals for sport, with parts of the animal used as a trophy and other parts used for food.
2. Frank Slim, a Southern Tutchone, Tagish, and Tlingit man, also enfranchised so that he could work as a riverboat captain in the 1930s (Dillman 2010:16).

Highways and Social Change

One of the most important events that occurred in the lives of Yukon Indigenous peoples was the construction of the Alaska Highway [1]. Over the course of its construction and for decades afterwards, permanent changes occurred in the lives of Indigenous peoples living near the highway. These changes included shifts in the relationship between Indigenous peoples and their land, and dramatic changes in people's familial or kinship ties, which were an absolutely essential part of society (Cruikshank 1985:185). Before the highway's construction, there were few roads in Yukon, and people travelled by boat, on horseback, by foot, on snowshoes, and by sled.

Although discussions regarding the construction of the Alaska Highway began in the 1930s, the World War II bombing of the United States naval base at Pearl Harbour by the Japanese military on December 7, 1941, prompted the expedited construction of the road as a means of protecting the northwest coast from attack. There was no consultation with Indigenous peoples when the decision to build the Alaska Highway was made. In March 1942, Canada and the United States signed a letter of agreement to build the highway (Brebner 1985:9). The agreement stated that the United States Army would survey and construct a pioneer, or temporary, road using Engineer troops. Then the highway would be completed by the U.S. Public Roads Administration. The U.S. would maintain the highway throughout the war, and Canada would obtain control of the road once the war ended. Notably, the United States would also be allowed to use timber, gravel, and rock along the route of the highway in order to facilitate construction (Brebner 1985:11–12).

Construction of the pioneer road brought 18,000 U.S. Army Engineer Corps men and Public Roads Administration workers to Yukon (Cruikshank 1985:175). The population of Whitehorse immediately jumped from approximately 750 people to almost 20,000, most of them American soldiers. Once the pioneer road was completed in 1942, the permanent road was begun, and with it a total of 34,500 men arrived. To house all these men, "line camps" consisting of approximately 100 to 200 men were set up every 10 to 15 miles along the road. The permanent road was completed in 1943.

The impact on local Indigenous peoples was profound, particularly in terms of resource overharvesting, since more people were hunting for the same provisions. For instance, in 1942 the U.S. government asked the Yukon government to allow the United States Army and Canadian civilian highway workers the right to hold resident hunting licenses (Government of Yukon 1920). Some Indigenous people who lived through that time have stated that animals were overhunted for sport and often carcasses were left to rot (Northern Native Broadcasting 1988b). Because of the overhunting that was happening, particularly along the Alaska Highway and Haines Road, in 1942 the Canadian government placed approximately 10,000 km2 in reserve. This area was traditionally part of the hunting lands of Southern Tutchone people, including today's Champagne and Aishihik First Nation and Kluane First Nation. The Yukon Commissioner then declared that there would be a no-shooting zone along the Alaska Highway and created the Kluane Game Sanctuary (Northern Native Broadcasting 1988b; Yukon Territory Ordinance 1942 in Cruikshank 1985:177). This decision prohibited newcomers and Indigenous people from hunting and trapping within the game sanctuary, even though the fur supervisors at Indian Affairs Branch knew that overhunting was the result of big-game hunting by

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1. Another important project that was started at this time was the Canadian American Norman Oil Line or CANOL. It was meant to carry fuel from Norman Wells, Northwest Territories to Alaska during World War II. Although it functioned for less than a year "the pipeline was destructive to the environment in that it disturbed permafrost, causing flooding and erosion. There were oil spills…" and it destroyed habitats that Indigenous people relied on for their seasonal pursuits (see the Alaska Highway Archives, http://www.alaskahighwayarchives.ca./en/chap5/index.php)

newcomers and U.S. Army construction crews (Canada 1950). Indigenous people were therefore forcibly removed from their traditional land and subsistence locales. The establishment of a game sanctuary was just one of many government interventions that took place during highway construction and the years immediately following the end of World War II.

The rise in population also meant that diseases spread very quickly with so many men living in close proximity to each other and to local people already living near the path of the highway. Another impact of the highway's construction was the "tragedies of girls who froze to death after drinking parties or who died in other violent ways because of their association with the [non-Indigenous] men" (Cruikshank 1985:181). However, some Indigenous women married non-Indigenous crewmen and raised families together in Yukon.

Other changes included the move away from river travel as the primary means of transport. Indigenous people had been working on steamboats as deckhands and woodcutters for decades, but with road development, steamboats disappeared from Yukon rivers and many Indigenous people lost part of their livelihood (Coates 1985:154; Cruikshank 1985:179). The building of the Alaska Highway and other roads also allowed the establishment of fur-trade posts near these roads. Normally, Indigenous trappers would bring their furs in every year to trade for goods. During the later war years, fur prices dropped because of low demand in other parts of the world. People began settling permanently near highway trade posts even as they ceased trapping furs, since it was no longer profitable. Instead of participating in their traditional yearly round, they chose to search for employment as highway crewmembers (Cruikshank 1985:176; Northern Native Broadcasting 1988b: 00:52:00).

The decline in fur prices caused financial hardship for many families. A family allowance was put in place, which provided each family with five dollars per month. There were strict rules around the allowance: for example, children had to attend school. Wives and children began staying in towns close to day schools to collect the allowance, while husbands continued to trap far away. This separation caused issues within families and a shift in familial relations (Canada 1946). As well, the Revised Act to Provide Old Age Assistance, which provided money to seniors, was introduced in 1952. There were incidents of other family members taking the money, causing more familial discord (Cruikshank 1985:180). The forced registration of traplines also caused family and community disruptions because the government ignored matrilineal social organization, which clearly indicated hereditary rights. Many have argued that these interventions represented paternalism and coercion on the part of the government.

Construction of the highway also brought about other means of acculturation,[2] such as an increase in the use of alcohol, which caused social disruption. In the 1940s it was illegal for Indigenous people to purchase alcohol. Once the highway came, alcohol was readily available and "older natives overwhelmingly maintain that the highway brought alcohol abuse and an alarming amount of violence, grief and further social disruption" (Cruikshank 1985:183). Indigenous people were not legally allowed to purchase alcohol until 1967, but by then many families had been detrimentally affected.

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[2] Acculturation is defined as culture change resulting from contact between cultures. This is a process of external culture change.

Resettlement

Like other areas of Canada, Yukon had reserve lands, but they were created and used in different ways than in the rest of Canada, where Indigenous peoples were forcibly moved to reserves starting in the nineteenth century. Compared to government interference outside the Territory, during the early 20th century, policies that focused on Yukon Indigenous peoples were few, and people were primarily left alone. It wasn't until the 1930s and 1940s that the federal and territorial governments began creating policies to control indigenous peoples. This was primarily due to the cost of creating and implementing policies.

Early on, one Indigenous community asked the government to grant them tracts of reserve land within their homelands to protect their people from the often-negative social influences of newcomers (Kwanlin Dün First Nation 2013:23). In 1902, Chief Jim Boss (Kishxóot) of the Ta'an Kwäch'än wrote a letter to the Department of Indian Affairs stating that land privatization and overhunting by newcomers was causing hardship to his people. He requested "protection of a portion of his people's traditional land" (Kwanlin Dün First Nation 2013:23). He demanded that the government control overhunting and compensate his people for the lands that had been appropriated by newcomers. The federal government's Indian Agent granted them a reserve; it was relocated four times, without the First Nation's permission, between 1915 and 1921 (Kwanlin Dün First Nation 2013:38).[1]

An Indian Agent was brought to Yukon by the Department of Indian Affairs in 1914, but his role was to provide welfare payments and health services (Coates 1996:197). By the 1940s things began to change, mostly, as mentioned earlier, because of new federal universal social welfare changes. As Coates describes:

> Having been all but ignored over the previous half-century, the Natives now faced the impact of national policies, countrywide initiatives for Indian people, and specific measures aimed at northern Natives. The transition from neglect to regular involvement was abrupt and disruptive [1996:199].

As fewer people were able to make a living from trapping and systemic racism limited employment opportunities, Indigenous peoples began to rely more heavily on welfare payments. Since payments were attached to the registration of children in day and residential schools, many families took part in village life for the first time.

Although reserves were created in the early twentieth century, for the most part Indigenous peoples did not use them initially. In the 1950s this changed, as the Department of Indian Affairs decided that Indigenous peoples should be housed away from areas that had increasing mining development. Some of the first reserves were created near existing communities, but they were completed in a piecemeal manner and only partially planned, and reserve land was usually in poor locations where it was difficult to meet subsistence needs (see Appendix C). Some of the new reserves and relocations that were completed included:

- Aishihik residents moving to Haines Junction,
- White River residents moving closer to the Alaska Highway,
- Moosehide residents moving to Dawson City,
- Ross River residents moving to Upper Liard Bridge,
- Pelly River residents moving to Pelly Crossing, and

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1. Community Elders have indicated that the resettlement of the Kwanlin Dün community occurred at least seven times over the past century.

- Fort Selkirk residents moving to Mayo, Minto, Carmacks, and Dawson City.

During this time of Indigenous movement to reserves, people were encouraged to stop hunting and trapping and to live sedentary lives. Community government structures were chosen for them by the Department of Indian Affairs, such as the band and council system. Some of the major issues with the reserve system were as follows:

- They were poorly constructed and expensive;
- There was overcrowding;
- Legal title was uncertain;
- Alcohol was readily available;
- Socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse groups were expected to live on the same reserve;[2]
- Populations grew as more people were brought to the reserve and housing shortages arose; and
- Economic development created tensions as people competed from the few untrained labourer jobs that were available [Coates 1996].

Some have argued that there were upsides to reserve living, such as the convenience of having medical care close by, the ability to find wage labour, limited food scarcity, and the ability to remain separate from the bad influences that many newcomers brought to the territory (Coates 1996). Yet, for the most part, the reserve system created a backlash from Indigenous communities as people began to protest unfair living conditions, land title issues, and lack of adequate consultation between their villages and the Department of Indian Affairs. Even so, reserves became places of empowerment as they became hubs of political engagement. During the late 1960s, Indigenous leaders came together to protest the injustices perpetrated on Yukon's Indigenous peoples.

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[2] As examples, Champagne and Aishihik were two different communities that were joined in the 1970s, while Kluane represented communities from Snag, Burwash Landing, and Kloo Lake that were joined in 1961.

Creating a Strong United Voice

Throughout the late 1950s and the following two decades, resource extraction developments were proposed by governments and businesses, bringing the issue of economic development and land rights to the forefront (Berger 1977; Lysyk 1977). One example of development that occurred without Indigenous consultation was the territorial government's granting of oil drilling exploration rights in the Old Crow Flats in 1970.[1] The Old Crow Indian Band (Vuntut Gwitchin Government) asked for an injunction on exploration in the area, as it was, and continues to be, an important place for the Vuntut Gwitchin peoples (Government of Yukon and Vuntut Gwitchin Government 2006). This was one of the earliest instances of Indigenous opposition to development. Community leaders petitioned the House of Commons, claiming the land as their own since they were the original occupants (Coates 1993:237). The federal government disagreed, saying that they had no rights to the land because they had not signed any treaties. In many respects, this signified the emergence of the land claims movement.

It was during this period that Indigenous organizations, such as the Klondike Indian Association (KIA), Yukon Indian Advancement Association (YIAA), Yukon Native Brotherhood (YNB), Yukon Association of Non-Status Indians (YANSI) (see section *A Dynamic Future*, Figure 5.4), and the Council for Yukon Indians (CYI), were established. These organizations had specific goals in mind, including the settlement of Yukon land claims, the election of an Indigenous Yukon citizen to the Yukon Territorial Council, and discussions pertaining to economic and social issues. In 1968, leaders such as Chief Elijah Smith (Figure 4.5) of the Whitehorse Indian Band[2] and a delegation of Yukon Chiefs (Figure 4.6) met with Jean Chrétien, then Minister of Northern Development and Indian Affairs. They met to discuss their concerns regarding the way Indigenous affairs had been managed, to have their outstanding grievances heard, and to focus on the land claims question. Their statement of concerns included the following:

> We, the Indians of Yukon, object to being treated like squatters in our own country...We feel the (non-Aboriginal) people of the North owe us a great deal and we would like the Government of Canada to see that we get a fair settlement for the use of the land. There was no treaty signed in this country, and they tell me the land still belongs to the Indians (Chief Elijah Smith in Kwanlin Dün First Nation 2013:67).

Five years later, in 1973, the Yukon Native Brotherhood produced the document *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow: A Statement of Grievances and an Approach to Settlement by the Yukon Indian People*.

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1. Prime Minister Diefenbaker supported the idea of northern Canada as a resource rich area in the mid-1950s. The extraction of commodities such as oil, lumber, minerals, gas, and hydroelectric power began in earnest during the mid-twentieth century.
2. Some of the recommended education changes included the fostering of two-way communication channels between parents, teachers, and students, and between Yukon Native organizations and the federal and territorial governments; the revival and re-establishment of Indigenous languages; the inclusion of accurate Indigenous history and culture in the school curriculum, as well as information about Indigenous people's contributions to Yukon life; and assistance in the development of Indigenous teachers (Yukon Native Brotherhood 1972).

This document was in response to the growing question of land ownership at a time when economic development was encroaching on the traditional territories of Yukon Indigenous peoples. Yukon Chiefs, including Chief Elijah Smith, presented the document to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in Ottawa.[3] It described initiatives necessary to address the changing social and cultural situation in Yukon, such as:

Remembering Chief Elijah Smith

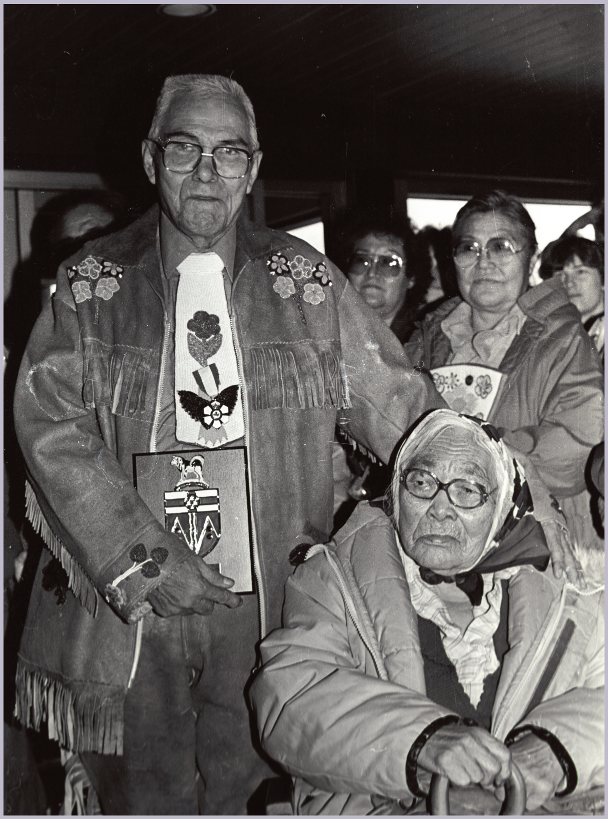

Figure 4.5 Chief Elijah Smith and Mrs. Annie Ned (photograph courtesy of Whitehorse Star).

In his own words, former CBC and CKRW broadcaster Les McLaughlin remembers Chief Elijah Smith:It was a historic day for native [Indigenous] people in Yukon. In February 1973, representatives for the Yukon Native Brotherhood were in Ottawa to present their Yukon land claim. Led by Chief Elijah Smith, they delivered a document called “Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow” to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. The meeting is often heralded as the turning point for settlements of aboriginal rights in Canada. I was there that day, and well recall that they impressed the Prime Minister with the presentation, and with the ad-libbed words of wisdom from Elijah Smith. Later that year, the Yukon Native Brotherhood and the Yukon Association of Non-Status Indians joined forces to form the Council for Yukon Indians to further the land claim process that had just begun.

Edward Elijah Smith, the son of Annie Ned, had a lot to do with that. He was born on July 12, 1912, in Champagne, and lived in Yukon all his life except the six years he spent with the Canadian Army overseas during WW II. However, it was in Yukon that Elijah Smith became a fighter. By the mid-1960s, Yukon First Nations, fearful of losing their cultural identity, began to organize. During hearings on the federal white paper in Whitehorse in 1968, Smith spoke of being treated like squatters in their own country. He said that Yukon Indians wanted the government of Canada to see that we get a fair settlement for the use of the land. Elijah Smith was the founding president of the Yukon Native Brotherhood and was also a founding Chairperson of the Council for Yukon Indians, since renamed the Council for Yukon First Nations. He encouraged Yukon native people to stay in school. Many of these students would eventually play instrumental roles in land claims and self-government negotiations.

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3. Prime Minister Diefenbaker supported the idea of northern Canada as a resource-rich area in the mid-1950s. The extraction of commodities such as oil, lumber, minerals, gas, and hydroelectric power began in earnest during the mid-twentieth century.

He served as Chief of the Kwanlin Band, founding President of the Yukon Native Brotherhood, founding Chairman of the Council for Yukon Indians, and Yukon representative to the National Indian Brotherhood. He spoke persuasively of the need for unity among First Nations people long before his vision was widely accepted. Twenty years after Elijah Smith led a group of Yukon native people to Ottawa, they signed the umbrella final land claim agreement, setting the stage for the completion of modern-day treaties for each of Yukon's 14 First Nations.

Chief Smith held an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of British Columbia and was named to the Order of Canada. He remained a prominent figure throughout the land claims process until his death in a tragic accident in October 1991. To honour his memory, the federal building in Whitehorse is named for him, as well as the Elijah Smith Elementary school in Whitehorse, opened on September 8, 1992.

A CKRW Yukon Nugget by Les McLaughlin, Courtesy Marg & Rolf Hougen (2016).

- facilitating Indigenous input into social programs that affected them,
- creating culturally sensitive programming for seniors,
- supporting the promotion of cultural identity,
- providing people with the ability to plan their own community-development strategies and programs,
- appointing an education consultant who would act as a liaison between the Department of Education and the Indigenous community,[4] and
- allowing Yukon Indigenous peoples to create their own economic base and involving them in economic decisions that affect them. For instance, consulting them when oil leases are going to be granted, when hydro dams are going to be built, when national parks are going to be established, when mines are hiring employees, when waters are going to be polluted, and when pipelines are going to be built [Council for Yukon Indians 1977].

The presentation of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* started what became a 20-year negotiation between Yukon Indigenous groups and the federal and territorial governments. There were various starts and stops along the way, some of which occurred because of Indigenous disagreements on specific issues, while others happened because of decision reversals by the federal government (The Long Journey Home Part 2, Northern Native Broadcasting 1997: 00:36:00). After 16 years of negotiations, an agreement in principle was reached in 1989. The Yukon Indian Land Claim Framework Agreement was approved by the Chiefs and signed by Yukon and federal governments. On May 29, 1993, all the negotiators signed the Umbrella Final Agreement (Canada 1993). Individual First Nations then began negotiating and ratifying their individual final agreements. A discussion of contemporary land claims, the Umbrella Final Agreement, and present-day independent First Nation governments can be found in chapter 5.

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4. Some of the recommended education changes included the fostering of two-way communication channels between parents, teachers, and students, and between Yukon Native organizations and the federal and territorial governments; the revival and re-establishment of Indigenous languages; the inclusion of accurate Indigenous history and culture in the school curriculum, as well as information about Indigenous people's contributions to Yukon life; and assistance in the development of Indigenous teachers (Yukon Native Brotherhood 1972).

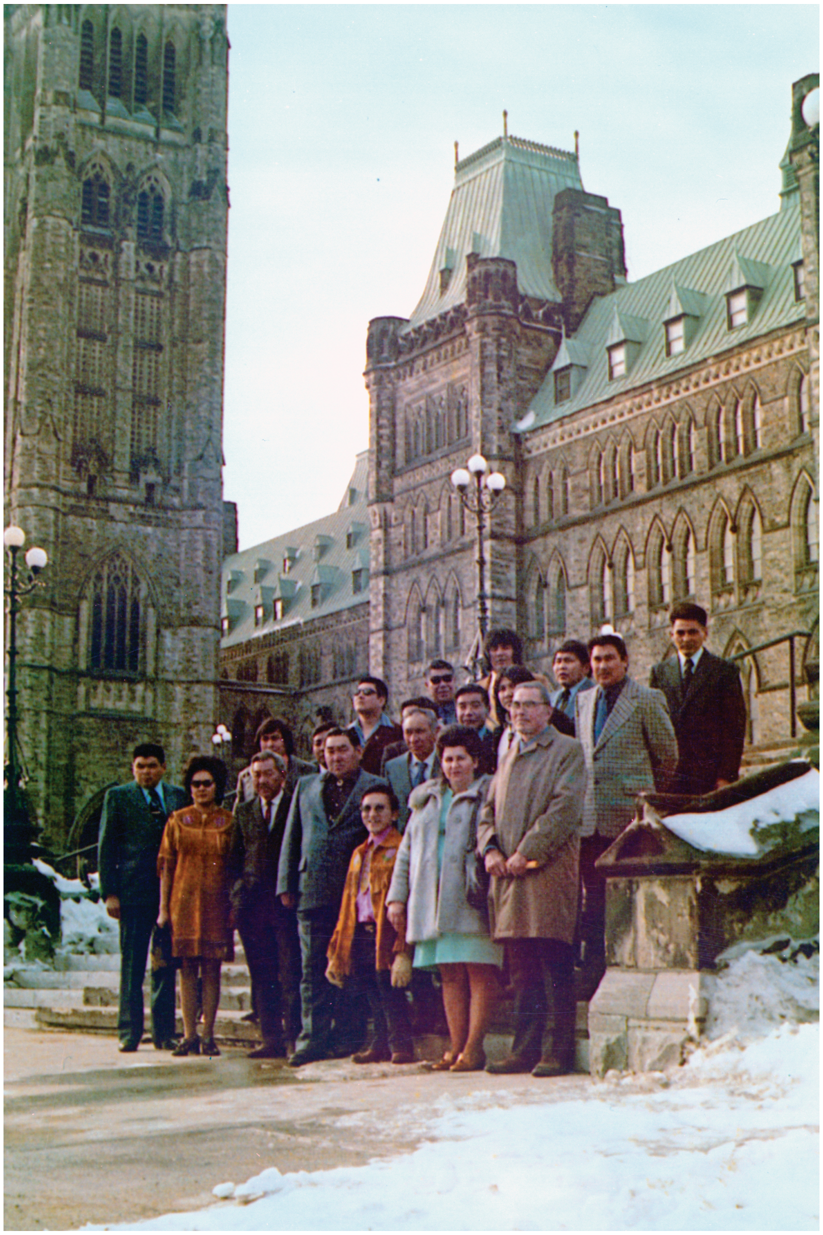

Figure 4.6 The Yukon First Nations delegation in front of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, Ontario, in 1973. The delegation that travelled to Ottawa in 1973 included (see Figure 4.5 back left to right) Reggie Vance, Chief Clifford Mcleod (Ross River Déne), Chief Danny Joe (Selkirk First Nation), Chief Charlie Abel (Vuntut Gwitchin Government), Willie Joe, Chief Dixon Lutz (Liard First Nation), Roy Sam, Jimmy Enoch (White River First Nation), Chief Sam Johnston (Teslin Tlingit Council), Chief Dave Joe (Champagne and Aishihik First Nation), Chief Percy Henry (Tr'öndek Hwëch'in First Nation), Chief George Billy (Little Salmon Carcross First Nation), Chief Peter Lucas (First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun), Yukon Commissioner Judy Gingell (Kwanlin Dün First Nation), Chief Dan Johnson (Carcross/Tagish First Nation), Chief Johnny Smith (Kwanlin Dün First Nation), Chief Ray Jackson (Champagne and Aishihik), Mrs. Irene Smith, and Chief Elijah Smith (Kwanlin Dün First Nation) (photograph courtesy of Yukon Archives, Judy Gingell collection, 98/74, 1).

Historians in Yukon: Dr. Ken Coates

Figure 4.7 Historian Dr. Ken Coates (photograph courtesy of Dave Stobbe).

Ken Coates is a Canadian historian who is currently a professor and Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation in the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of Saskatchewan. He was born in Banff, Alberta, raised in Revelstoke, British Columbia, and moved to Whitehorse at the age of six. He remained in Yukon until he went to university. He attended F.H. Collins Secondary School. He decided to go to university because a high school teacher told him "Yukon kids were not well prepared for university studies and should expect not to do well." Ken set out to prove his teacher wrong, and he did. He received his bachelor's degree in history from the University of British Columbia, his master's in history from the University of Manitoba, and his doctorate in history from the University of British Columbia.

Ken has been conducting research in the North since the early 1980s. Ken's early work concentrated on late nineteenth-century and twentieth-century Yukon, with a specific focus on the Hudson's Bay Company; later, he focused on residential schools and Yukon land claims negotiations. His current research is concerned with Indigenous rights, treaties, and economic conditions, as well as regional innovation in Northern Canada. He co-directs "a multi-year project designed to generate public policy discussion and development on Aboriginal participation" in the natural resource sector.

Ken feels his career is full of highlights. One significant highlight was working with Northern Native Broadcasting (NNBY) to create The Mission School Syndrome, a documentary based on "Betwixt and Between," a paper Ken wrote about the history of the Carcross Residential School. Some other highlights for Ken include his involvement in the negotiation of revisions to the Yukon Act (Canada 2002), and an exciting time in the 1980s when he was invited to give a talk to Whitehorse City Council and the mayor on the history of Yukon's Indigenous peoples. Ken also participated in a United Nations workshop held in Whitehorse on negotiated land claims from around the world. He says, "Because of the work I have done in the Yukon, people have invited me to numerous places all over the world to give talks on the stories and the experiences of the Yukon. I have had marvelous opportunities to talk about Yukon history and Yukon public affairs."

Ken has collaborated with First Nations and Indigenous peoples across the country and has been able to apply what he's learned from Yukon in many different places. He speaks of countless benefits of this collaboration, including learning about the limitations of his own worldview and realizing that he had been seeing the world with a particular lense. Through his work with First Nations, he has learned the value of patience and has come to understand that change takes place over seven generations rather than in seven days. For Ken, "It has been a staggering privilege to work with First Nations in many different areas." Through his work, he has also learned about the limitations and strengths of documentary records, the suspicion Indigenous peoples have of academics generally, and how Indigenous peoples like to tease academics.

Asked to name what he likes best about Yukon, Ken says, “The best place on the planet is Tagish Lake. I’m a kid of Tagish Lake; my father and I built a cabin on that lake. That place is home to me; it is where I go to fill my spirit up.” He goes on to say, “I think the Yukon is in the process of setting a global standard for how Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can work together. I’m old enough to remember the Yukon in the sixties and the conversations about Aboriginal issues in elementary and high school. I remember that world; I remember when very few First Nations people lived in Riverdale. Yukon has changed in some really remarkable ways. It’s not perfect—there are a lot of tensions and issues—but it’s a place of optimism and creativity, and for me that is an indication that the world can change in a constructive and positive way. At the end of the day we may be able to find real partnership. That’s the best part of the Yukon.”

Chapter 4 Activity

Yukon First Nations Manifesto on Pipeline Development

Northern First Nations have sometimes been criticized for being inconsistent or self-contradictory in their approach to large-scale development projects. During the 1970s, it was often argued that oil and gas development would have a negative impact on Yukon First Nations. What, if any, were the benefits of such development in this period?

Activity:

It is the present day. You are a Yukon First Nation citizen. A large private oil and gas company would like to build a pipeline through your community. What costs and/or benefits do you see for your people? What demands do you have for the oil and gas company if you allow them to build the pipeline? What concerns do you have? Do you allow them to build?

Suggested Readings

For an in-depth discussion of the history of Yukon Land Claims see the four-part Nedaa video series *The Long Journey Home* (produced by Northern Native Broadcasting for Council of Yukon First Nations, 1997). *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow: A Statement of Grievances and an Approach to Settlement by the Yukon Indian People* (Charters Publishing, 1977) is a foundational document in the Yukon land claim. A collection of Indigenous people's perspectives on illness and going to Indian Hospitals can be found in Laurie Meijer Drees *Healing Histories* (The University of Alberta Press, 2012). To read Indigenous oral accounts of the Klondike gold rush see Julie Cruikshank, Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith and Annie Ned's *Life Lived Like a Story* (The University of British Columbia, 1990). For a discussion of early interactions between Selkirk First Nation people and newcomers see *Fort Selkirk: Early Contact Period Interaction Between the Northern Tutchone and the Hudson's Bay Company in Yukon* (Castillo, Government of the Yukon, 2012). The film, *I, Nuligak, An Inuvialuit History of First Contact*, provides a biographical account of an Indigenous man's life during the whaling trade at the turn of the 20th century (White Pine Pictures, 2006). A historical account of Yukon can be found in Ken Coates and William Morrison's *Land of the Midnight Sun: A History of the Yukon* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005). Ken Coates provides a detailed historical account of interactions between Indigenous peoples and newcomers to Yukon during the 20th century in *Best left as Indians* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993). To better understand the Indian Act see the book *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality* (2018). Written by Indigenous scholar Bob Joseph, this book is a guide to understanding the legal document. For an oral history account of the Vuntut Gwitchin people in their own words see *People of the Lakes: Stories of Our Van Tat Gwich'in Elders / Googwandak Nakhwach'anjòo Van Tat Gwich'in* (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Shirleen Smith, The University of Alberta Press, 2009). For an ethnographic and ethnohistorical overview of the Han peoples of the upper Yukon River basin see Craig Mishler and William Simeone's *Han, People of the River/Han Hwech'in: An Ethnography and Ethnohistory* (University of Alaska Press, 2004). *I Was Born Under a Spruce Tree* by Champagne and Aishihik First Nation elder JJ Van Bibber describes the author's life along the Yukon and Pelly Rivers, prospecting, fishing and lumbering (Talus Publishing Group, 2012).

The social effects of big game hunting in Yukon are found in *Yukon Wildlife: A Social History* (The University of Alberta Press, 1985). An important group of conference papers describing the effects of the Alaska Highway on communities in the north during the mid-20th century, including Yukon First Nations communities, see *The Alaska Highway: Papers of the 40th Anniversary Symposium* (University of British Columbia Press, 1985).

For a national perspective on residential schools and the sixties scoop and how they have been viewed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission see *The Sleeping Giant Awakens: Genocide, Indian Residential Schools, and the Challenge of Conciliation* (MacDonald 2019). The films, *Mission School Syndrome* and *Healing the Mission School Syndrome* provide stories of residential school survivors and their experiences during and after their time living in Yukon residential schools (Northern Native Broadcasting, 1992 and 1995 respectively). Tlingit filmmaker, Duane Gastant Aucoin's film, *My Own Private Lower Post* describes one man's journey to understanding his mother's time at the Lower Post Indian Residential School (Filmwest Associates, 2008). In their own words, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens who survived residential school share their stories in, *Tr'ëhuhch'in Näwtr'udäh'ą: Finding Our Way Home* (Clarke et al. and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Publication, 2009). For a Canada wide discussion on the history of residential schools see *A Knock on the Door: The Essential History of Residential Schools* from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2016).

CHAPTER 5 - YUKON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND GOVERNANCE

Learning Objectives

- Describe the significance of the document: *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow.*
- Explain what the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement is and why it is significant.
- Explain what First Nation Final agreements are and their purpose.
- Explain what Self-Government Agreements are and their purpose.
- Identify which First Nations have not settled their land claims under the Umbrella Final Agreement and why they have chosen this path.
- Identify some of the key people involved in the Yukon land claim movement and current discussions on self-determination.

Modern Day Self-Determination

Self-government is not new to Yukon's Indigenous peoples, they have been self-governing since time immemorial. With the introduction of the Indian Act in 1876, traditional forms of self-governance that had been practiced for thousands of years were replaced with a colonial western model that was meant to support assimilation efforts by the federal government (Canada 1876). As the authors of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* write:

> First, remember, there were never any wars between Indian and White in the Yukon. Second, remember, there were no treaties signed in the Yukon. Third, remember, the first Indian Act was designed to protect the Indian from the Whiteman. This concept was never applied in the Yukon. These three things are important, because they combine to make the YUKON claim different from other Settlements [Council for Yukon Indians 1977:17–18].

The Yukon claim referred to in the proceeding quote was made by Yukon's Indigenous peoples as represented by the Council for Yukon Indians (CYI) in 1973. As mentioned in chapter 4, Chief Elijah Smith, as well as 12 other Yukon Chiefs, formed the Yukon Native Brotherhood in 1968 with the goal of creating a strong, united voice for Yukon Indigenous peoples who wanted to regain the right to govern themselves. One outcome of this initiative was the creation of the Yukon Indigenous authored document *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, quoted above, which propelled land claim negotiations forward between Yukon First Nation peoples and the Government of Canada under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau (see section *A Dynamic Future*, Figure 5.1). *Together to Today for Our Children Tomorrow* described the heart of the major issues as Yukon First Nations saw them but also suggested a road map towards a future where all Yukon peoples could flourish. Key to this future was an ability to co-govern and work together. During the mid-20th century there was growing unrest within Indigenous communities which occurred alongside the growing civil rights movements in other parts of the Americas. There was also serious backlash following the release of the Government of Canada's White Paper in 1969, entitled *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy* (Canada 1969). The White Paper proposed to:

> Eliminate Indian status, dissolve the Department of Indian Affairs within five years, abolish the Indian Act, convert reserve land to private property that could be sold by the band or its members, transfer responsibility for Indian affairs from the federal government to the province and integrate services with other Canadian citizen services, provide funding for economic development, and appoint a commissioner to address outstanding land claims and eventually terminate existing treaties [First Nations and Indigenous Studies, University of British Columbia 2009].

Yukon First Nation peoples, who were a part of the civil rights movement, were, like many First Nations across the country, also angered by the White Paper which many agreed was a "a thinly disguised programme of extermination through assimilation" (Cardinal 1969:1). Because of this unrest, and also growing development interests in the north, the Government of Canada was forced to consider Yukon First Nation land claims. Negotiations for the next two decades centered around the Umbrella Final agreement (UFA). It was through the Yukon Native Brotherhood organization that Yukon Chiefs came together and formed the Council for Yukon Indians (CYI) who became the negotiating body representing Yukon First Nations peoples in land claims. By the end of the 1970s, "…the Council for Yukon Indians, the Yukon Association of Non-Status Indians and the Yukon Native Brotherhood amalgamated to form the Council for Yukon Indians"[1] (Council of Yukon First Nations 2019a). The CYI continued its role of representing Yukon First Nations throughout the land claim negotiations process.

Over the last few decades, many of the Indigenous community leaders and Chiefs who participated in the land claim negotiations have been interviewed and their histories recorded. The end result was the development of various forms of media introducing people to Yukon's early land claim movement and current and future approaches to governance. One important resource is the *Mapping the Way* website created in partnership with Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN), Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN), Vuntut Gwitchin Government (VGG), Kluane First Nation (KFN), Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation (TH), Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TTC), First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun (NND), Champagne and Aishihik First Nation (CAFN), Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC), Selkirk First Nation (SFN), Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation (LSCFN), Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN), Yukon Government (YG) and the Government of Canada (GOC) (Mapping the Way 2019). The *Mapping the Way* website includes podcast interviews with leaders who were at the forefront of the Yukon land claim movement and negotiations, many of whom are currently involved in implementation of the agreements. These include: John Burdek, former Chairperson of Kwanlin Dün First Nation and signatory to the KDFN Self-Government and Final Agreements; Angie Joseph-Rear, former Chief of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in; Joe Linklater, Chief of Vuntut Gwitchin Government; Sam Johnston, Teslin Tlingit Council Elder, former Chief and former Member of the Yukon Legislative Assembly; Robert Hager, former Chief of First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, Dave Joe (Dä Ké), Champagne and Aishihik First Nation (CAFN) citizen, lawyer and land claim negotiator; Doris McLean (Guna), former Chief of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, and Adeline Webber (Kh'ahàdê), Teslin Tlingit Council citizen and Indigenous women's rights activist (Mapping the Way 2019). As well, there are quotes from important leaders such as Roddy Blackjack, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation Elder and former Chief, and excerpts from key First Nation government documents such as the Selkirk First Nation Constitution introduction which reads:

> We, the Selkirk people, exercise our inherent right of self-government, and having aboriginal rights, title and interests since time immemorial in a vast area of land, do herein provide for ourselves a basis for our First Nation, for our law and for our government, in order to assure for ourselves today, and for countless generations in the future, protection of our lands and resources, protection of our language and culture, and a life that fulfills our uniqueness as human beings and sustains our well-being [Selkirk First Nation Constitution 2013:1].

The following sections will describe the results of the land claim negotiations, including the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA), the First Nation Final Agreements and the Self-Government Agreements.

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[1] Today this organization is called the Council of Yukon First Nations. The council's current mandate is "to serve as a political advocacy organization for Yukon First Nations holding traditional territories, to protect their rights, titles and interests" (Council of Yukon First Nations 2019b).

Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement

For over twenty years, dedicated Yukon First Nations leaders from all of Yukon's First Nation communities, the Federal Government and, later in the journey, the Territorial Government, negotiated to complete the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA), which was signed in 1993. Early on there were two agreements in principle that were voted down because they did not meet the requirements of Indigenous communities before the final agreement was finally signed. Prior to the UFA, there were no signed and implemented treaties in Yukon. This agreement was different than in other parts of Canada, as the Canadian and territorial governments were not bound to historic agreements written and signed hundreds of years earlier. Unlike other Indigenous peoples in Canada who, according to the Canadian government, had signed away specific rights to the land and governance, Yukon Indigenous peoples had not.

The UFA is a framework document that all 14 Yukon First Nations negotiated and agreed to use as the structure for finalizing their individual First Nation Final Agreements (see section *A Dynamic Future*, Figure 5.2). The Umbrella Final Agreement "itself is not a legally binding document" (Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Government 1997, p. 4). It is a political agreement made between Yukon First Nations, the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon (Council of Yukon First Nations 2019). The UFA lays out overarching provisions which are found in all Yukon First Nation Final Agreements. These provisions include: criteria on eligibility and enrolment, lands set aside, tenure and management of settlement lands, access, expropriation, surface rights board, settlement land amount, special management areas, land use planning, development assessment, heritage, water management, boundaries and measurements, fish and wildlife, forest resources, non-renewable resources, financial compensation, taxation, taxation of settlement land, economic development measures, resources royalty sharing, Yukon Indian self-government, transboundary agreements, dispute resolution, and implementation (Canada 1993). Each individual First Nation Final Agreement must include the above provisions, but each Nation is also able to modify the required provisions to suit their particular needs. These modifications are found in individual Final Agreements (see the next section). The parties negotiated land claims and self-governance at the same time. Importantly, when an "Indian Act band ceases to exist and is succeeded by the self-governing Yukon First Nation" they become "a legal entity having the capacity and powers of a natural person, including the ability to enter contracts and hold property" (Government of Canada 2003:9).

A vital aspect of the UFA is the involvement of Yukon First Nations in public government institutions. *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* specified the need for Indigenous representation on all Yukon boards and agencies, "to make sure that land policies will be planned with the interests of the Indian people" (1977:33). Within the individual First Nation Final Agreements there were are a number of public government boards and committees created. Today, these have extensive authority, such as the Renewable Resources Councils (RRCs), which manage fish, wildlife, and lands. Other boards and councils require Yukon First Nations representation, and these representatives often make up to 50 percent of the seats at the table. These include: the Yukon Heritage Resources Board, the Yukon Water Board, the Yukon Surface Rights Board, and the Yukon Land Use Planning Council. These boards and councils can provide recommendations to the Minister, the affected Yukon First Nation, and boards and sub-committees on issues that relate to the public's interest.

First Nation Final Agreements

The heart of each of the First Nation Final Agreements is a co-management model where Yukon's First Nation peoples and the territorial government work together to manage Yukon Territory. Each First Nation took the UFA framework back to their community to consider how to best implement it in their territory. From this work, came the First Nations' modern treaty which includes three main elements: the Umbrella Final Agreement, the individual First Nation Final Agreements and the individual First Nation Self-Government Agreements. Implementation plans were developed to put these final agreements in place. The individual Yukon First Nation Final Agreements came into effect after the UFA was finalized and "include all the provisions of the UFA along with specific provisions that apply specifically to that individual Yukon First Nation" (Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Government 1997). One example of a specific provision can be found in the Teslin Tlingit Council Final Agreement. Chapter 13: Heritage has a specific provision that reads, "A Person who accidentally discovers a Heritage Resource on Teslin Tlingit Council Settlement Land shall take such steps as are reasonable in all circumstances to safeguard the Heritage Resource and shall report as soon as practicable that discovery to the Teslin Tlingit Council"(Teslin Tlingit Council and Canada 1993: clvii). Another example is found in the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in agreement. One of the specific provisions found within their Chapter 13: Heritage section states that, "In developing a land use plan which includes all or part of the Traditional Territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, a Regional Land Use Planning Commission shall take into account the cultural and heritage significance of the heritage routes and sites identified in Schedule C – Heritage Routes and Sites, attached to this chapter" (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Canada 1998:163). These are specific provisions that may not appear in other First Nation Final Agreements.

A Yukon First Nation Final Agreement is legally binding once it has formal ratification[1] and is "brought into effect" (Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Government 1997). Each First Nation Final Agreement is recognized in section 35 of the federal Constitution Act, 1982. Currently, eleven of fourteen Yukon First Nations have signed their individual First Nation Final Agreements and their Self Government Agreements (SGA). The latter are described in more detail in the next section.

The "first four" communities that signed were, Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, Teslin Tlingit Council, First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun, and Vuntut Gwitchin Government, who all signed in 1995. The last seven who signed in subsequent years were:

- Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation (1997),
- Selkirk First Nation (1997),
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (1998),
- Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (2002),
- Kluane First Nation (2004),
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation (2005), and
- Carcross/Tagish First Nation (2006).

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[1] Ratification is defined as the action of signing or giving formal consent to a treaty, contract, or agreement, making it officially valid.

Self-Government Agreements

A Self-Government Agreement (SGA) is what makes the First Nation government a legal entity and does away with the Indian Act as it applies to specific bands. It is separate from the Umbrella Final Agreement and is distinct, but connected, to the First Nation Final Agreement for each Nation. The SGA allows the First Nation to create a constitution that outlines how it will govern itself and provides the means for the First Nations to possess law-making powers.

For instance, Teslin Tlingit First Nation has “incorporate[d] traditional Clan culture into contemporary organizational and management principles” (Teslin Tlingit Council 2017). Teslin Tlingit Council has five clans: Kùkhhittàn, Ishkìtàn, Yanyèdí, Dèshitàn, and Dakhl’awèdí, and an appointed member of each Clan sits on the Executive Council (Teslin Tlingit Council 2017b). The Executive Council also includes the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief, Youth Councillor, and one Elder appointed by the Elders Council (Teslin Tlingit Council 2017c). In another example, the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun has a differently structured government, made up of an elected Chief, Deputy Chief, four Councillors-at-large, a Youth Councillor, and an Elder Councillor (2017c). Thus, these two First Nations have modified their governance structures to address their own Nation’s needs.

The SGA “lays out the powers, authorities, and responsibilities of the individual First Nation government” but is not protected under the Constitution of Canada like the Final Agreements are (Council for Yukon First Nations 2019). This “means that the Parliament of Canada may at any time make changes to the Yukon Self-Government Agreement Act without the agreement or involvement of Yukon First Nations” (Legend Seekers 2002: 87). Even though this is “a remote possibility” it is still possible (Legend Seekers 2002: 87).

The Self-Government Agreement essentially provides the tools for Yukon First Nations governments to decide their own affairs and chart their own course moving forward. It is the Self-Government agreements that allows Yukon First Nations who have signed and ratified their Final Agreements to decide who is a citizen of their Yukon First Nation, pass their own laws, and to design and provide services and programs for their citizens (Government of Canada 2003: 9). The agreement has five sections. Important elements within each section are as follows:

Part 1 focuses on definitions, principles, general provisions, ratification, self-government legislation, amendment and review, remedies, and interpretation and application of law. An example of a general provision found in the Carcross/Tagish Self-Government Agreement is as follows, “This agreement shall not affect the ability of the aboriginal people of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation to exercise, or benefit from, any existing or future constitutional rights for aboriginal people that may be applicable to them” (Canada 2005: 4). In terms of the interpretation of law, the SGA states that “where there is any inconsistency or conflict between the provisions of federal Self-Government Legislation and any other federal Legislation, the federal Self-Government Legislation shall prevail to the extent of the inconsistency or conflict (Canada 1998c:4). Thus, it lays out how the agreement applies to the First Nations citizens and how the First Nation legislation works in relation to federal government legislation.

Part 2 focuses on the legal status and constitution of the First Nations Government as well as transitional provisions and delegation. The constitution does the following: recognizes and protect the rights and freedoms of the First Nations citizens; provides the mechanism to challenge to validity of the First Nations laws; outlines a system of reporting to ensure financial accountability to its citizens; establishes the First Nation governments governing bodies; and provides a citizenship code (Canada 2003:9).

A citizenship code is a key aspect of the SGA as it gives authority to the First Nation Government to decide who is a citizen of the First Nation. One can be a citizen of a Yukon First Nation without having Indian status; one can be a citizen of a Yukon First Nation and also have Indian status; and, one can be a member of a Yukon First Nation and affiliated with a Native American nation in the United States (Canada 1993; Canada 2010). Individuals have to apply to a self-governing First Nation to be a citizen. A person can only be a citizen of one Yukon First Nation and enrolled under one Canadian agreement. If someone chooses to transfer to another First Nation, they may not be accepted back to their initial First Nation or accepted into the new First Nation.

Part 3 focuses on legislative powers. Under the SGA this includes both provincial and federal level laws and provides lawmaking powers and how they relate to the laws of general application. Under the SGA, First Nations have exclusive law-making powers with regard to internal affairs and management of their rights. These include law-making powers that apply to citizens, and law-making powers that affect all people, regardless of citizenship while on settlement land. The law-making powers that relate to the citizen often include provincial like jurisdiction over matters that include things like child welfare, adoption, and education. For example, a self-governing First Nation may pass its own child welfare act; that act would apply to the citizens of that Yukon First Nation no matter where they were in Yukon. The laws that a First Nation creates about its settlement lands are applicable to all people on the settlement lands and do not revolve around citizenship. Some examples of these laws are the administration of justice, rules regarding dangerous substances, and land zoning (Dacks 2004). Self-governing First Nations in Yukon for the most part sit at the same jurisdictional level as the territorial government but there are significant areas where a Yukon First Nation can exercise law-making abilities of a federal nature. For example, a Self-Governing First Nation could pass their own law on intellectual property rights. In terms of law-making authority, the laws of general application apply in the absence of a Yukon First Nation law. This means that Yukon and Canadian laws apply throughout Yukon unless a First Nation has created their own law on that topic, in which case the First Nation's law takes precedence over Yukon and Federal Governments. If a First Nation law and a Yukon government law conflict, the Yukon First Nation's supersedes the territorial law on settlement land (Dacks 2004).

Part 4 focuses on finances, includes programs and services, financial transfer agreements, revenue and financial accountability. The SGA provides funding "which support the delivery of programs and services at the First Nation level" (Council for Yukon First Nations 2019). This means that the First Nation can "negotiate the assumption of responsibility" for managing, administering and delivering programs or services within its own jurisdiction if and when the Nation determines to do so (Canada 1993:33). This is often called "drawing down" a program or service, such as Kwanlin Dün First Nation operating a wellness program at a health centre.
Lastly, part 5 describes the ratification process for each First Nation including how campaigning and communication is done with First Nation members. It also describes how the ratification voting process is to occur and how many yes votes are needed (50%) to adopt the Final Agreement.

A Different Path Towards Self-Determination

Not every First Nation citizen or community agreed with the shift away from the Indian Act to the Self-Government Agreements: self-government is by its very nature controversial and political. Each First Nation held a ratification vote in which each member had to decide whether to become a self-governing First Nation or to remain an Indian Act band. There were people who voted no to Land Claims and Self-Government but, in the cases of Yukon First Nations who have signed their agreements, the majority of citizens in each First Nation voted yes to moving towards self-government under the UFA (Canada 1993).

There are three Yukon First Nations who have not currently settled land claims under the UFA and remain Indian bands under the federal Indian Act: Liard First Nation, Ross River Dena Council, and White River First Nation. They themselves, and other Yukon First Nations, still consider them to be self-determining, although they are following a different path (see section *A Dynamic Future*, Figure 5.3). Each of these First Nations have very specific reasons for not signing an individual Final Agreement under the UFA. For instance, according to interviews with Kaska Elders and leaders (Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council), Alcantara states that the Kaska-Dena did not agree with specific provisions within the UFA including the “permanent sharing or surrendering of any of their traditional lands” (2013: 98). They also did not support the requirement to repay comprehensive land claim negotiation loans, nor did they agree with the amount of land quantum they were to get through the UFA (Alcantara 2013: 100). White River First Nation as well, had its own reasons for not moving forward under the UFA.[1] As former Chief Charles Eikland Jr. stated, “If we thought it (UFA) was good for us, we would have signed… The problem with those claims is that when you’re negotiating, they claim it’s flexible and can be worked with but when you get down to dealing with issues, they remain rigid and don’t flex” (Eikland Jr. in Stasyszyn 2012). Thus, in these instances, Crown-Indigenous Relations (CIRNAC) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC),[2] the former which implements the Indian Act, still follow a mandate of intervening in a wide variety of issues related to First Nations and other Indigenous groups in Canada, including the ability to make sweeping policy decisions such as determining who is considered an *Indian*, and managing *Indian* lands, resources, and finances.

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1. For a discussion of the complexities of Indigenous politics and governance in Yukon see Lianne Charlie’s article: Modern Treaty Politics in the Yukon (2017).
2. INAC used to refer to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. In 2011, the name became AANDC, which stood for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. In 2016, it reverted to INAC, but with new meaning—Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. Today INAC has been dissolved and two departments have been created instead, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC).

A Dynamic Future

It is significant that of the over twenty self-government agreements signed across Canada, 11 of them are in Yukon. This is a large number considering that Yukon has some of the smallest First Nation populations in Canada. Many across the country believe that Yukon First Nations are leaders in self-government. They have broken trails that other Indigenous peoples from across the country and the world can, and do, use as examples of better relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

It will be an exciting and challenging journey to see the Final Agreements fully implemented across Yukon. As stated in the Mapping the Way Project, “We can see the huge change that only 20 years of self-governance created. Imagine what First Nations will be doing in the next generation” (Yukon First Nation Self-Government 2016). There are certainly still challenges, particularly when dealing with the varied interpretations of the agreements. And many Indigenous peoples and communities still struggle with the legacy—and ongoing presence—of colonialism in Canada.

However, Yukon First Nations continue to prioritize the cultural legacy they have inherited from their ancestors. As noted in the Yukon First Nation Self-Government Mapping the Way online project, “From the protection and management of Settlement Land, special areas and heritage resources, to the cultivation of intergovernmental relationships within this new governance landscape, implementation of the agreements is ‘dynamic and evolving and continues to shape the Yukon’s present and future’” (Yukon First Nation Self-Government 2012b).

A Unique Approach to Self Government Video Panel Discussions

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Figure 5.1 Respected Elders Judy Gingell and Sam Johnston discuss Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow. (Yukon University and Yukon Government 2018).

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Figure 5.2 Negotiators Albert Peter, Victor Mitander and Barry Stuart discuss the Umbrella Final Agreement (Yukon University and Yukon Government 2018).

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/echoyukonsfirstpeople/?p=292

Figure 5.3 Former Chiefs Hammond Dick of the Ross River Dena Council and David Johnny Sr. of the White River First Nation talk about forging a separate path from the UFA (Yukon University and Yukon Government 2018).

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/echoyukonsfirstpeople/?p=292

Figure 5.4 Margaret Commodore, Bill Webber, and Charlie Eikland discuss the creation and work of the Yukon Association of Non-Status Indians (YANSI) (Yukon University and Yukon Government 2019).

Anthropologists in Yukon: Dr. Paul Nadasdy

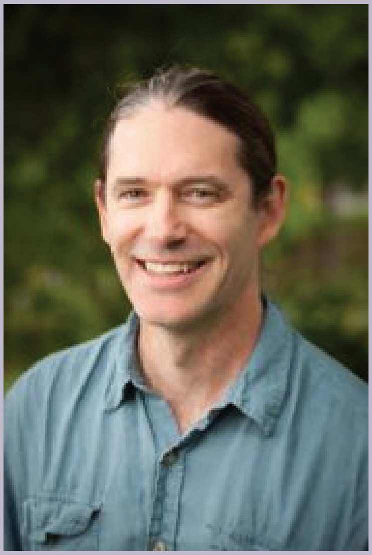

Figure 5.5 Anthropologist Dr. Paul Nadasdy (photograph courtesy of Paul Nadasdy).

Nadasdy began doing research in Yukon as a doctoral student in 1995. Having previously spent some time in Alaska, he knew he wanted to conduct research in the North. Given his interests in First Nations politics and environmental issues, and because Canada was reputed to be a leader in co-management, it seemed like Yukon would be an ideal place to do the research he wanted to do.

One of Paul's most notable career-related experiences in Yukon was his participant observation with the Ruby Range Sheep Steering Committee (RRSSC). Created in 1995 (shortly after Paul's arrival in Yukon) in response to Kluane First Nation's concerns about the sheep population in the Ruby and Nisling ranges, the RRSSC met for the next few years in an effort to develop a set of sheep-management recommendations. Paul was interested in traditional ecological knowledge, its integration with science, and the politics of such efforts, so he attended all the committee's meetings and interviewed many of its participants. The RRSSC formed the central case study of his book *Hunters and Bureaucrats*, and his critique of the RRSSC process—and of the project of knowledge-integration more broadly—has been influential in academic, management, and policy circles. Of course, Paul adds, he would not have been able to come up with that critique of the RRSSC if he hadn't spent a great deal of time with Kluane people out in the bush, talking over coffee, and the like. And the latter activities are much more enjoyable than sitting in meetings…!

For Paul, the benefits of collaboration have been huge: his research simply would not have been possible without it. He sees the kind of ethnographic research he does as being inherently collaborative, in that it depends on people talking with him, taking him out on the land, and letting him sit in on meetings. During his initial period of research (1995-1998), he arrived in Burwash Landing with research questions he had generated on his own, but he changed them as his research progressed, in response not only to the situation on the ground but also to reflect local people's interests, knowledge, and perspectives. Paul considers this an essential aspect of doing ethnographic research. Paul's more recent project is collaborative in a more standard sense. It grew in part out of his experience working as a negotiator for Kluane First Nation (KFN) back in 1997–1998 and in part out of conversations he had with Robin Bradasch and others in KFN's Land Claims Department in the late 1990s and early 2000s. These conversations about the different cultural assumptions that various parties brought to KFN's land claim and self-government negotiations and the resulting misunderstandings framed the project. Together, they agreed that it would be useful if someone (Paul) wrote about this dimension of the negotiations, especially since not even all of the negotiators seemed to be aware of it.

In preparation for the research, Paul worked with Robin and others to bring some order to KFN's land claim–related archive. In the process, they uncovered (in plastic bags in the back of a filing cabinet) the nearly 100 tapes KFN had used to record all their final and self-government agreement negotiations from 1995–2002 (and a few from earlier periods of negotiation as well). During his research, Paul received funding from the National Science Foundation (in the US) and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research to (1) have all of KFN's tapes transcribed (copies of the tapes have been deposited in the KFN collection of the Yukon Archives) and (2) return to Yukon for a year (August 2003 to August 2004) to carry out more research on KFN's land claim process. One valuable part of Paul's work for KFN that year was to act as their official representative on the Implementation Review Group (IRG). In this capacity, he attended monthly IRG meetings (usually four days/month) from October through July. At the same time, he also attended/observed (again as KFN's official representative) monthly meetings (two days/month) of the Senior Financial Arrangements Committee, a tripartite body set up under the Yukon Self Government Financial Transfer Agreements.

Paul also conducted extensive research with the files in KFN's Land Claims Department, examining documents on land claim negotiations, including many types of materials, such as drafts of agreement chapters and maps tabled by all three governments during the course of negotiations. He worked in the Yukon Archives, which contain Yukon government records of the negotiation process. Analysis of these documents has enabled him to better understand the impact that specific historical events, both internal and external to the negotiating process, had upon the negotiations.

During his year working on this project, Paul also conducted 16 semi-structured interviews with negotiators and implementation officials. By that time, his participant observation and archival research had progressed far enough to give him a good idea of exactly what issues he needed to discuss with each interviewee. In these interviews, he elicited interviewees' perceptions of what took place at the negotiation table, inquired into the nature of their government's mandating process (and "internal negotiations" that took place within each government), and asked about social relations among the negotiators. He gained an understanding of the social context (social relations, values, and practices) in which government officials work(ed). This enabled him to get a more balanced understanding of the land claim negotiation and implementation processes, as well as a sense of the plurality of approaches to land claims among the government officials most involved in the process.

When asked what the best part of Yukon is, Paul replied, "The land and people. I fell in love with Kluane country, and I have been incredibly fortunate to have spent a good deal of time out in the bush hunting, fishing, trapping, and travelling with experienced and knowledgeable people like Joe Johnson, Douglas Dickson, Dennis Dickson, Dickie Dickson, Agnes Johnson, Peter Johnson, Grace Chambers, Gerald Dickson, Bob Dickson, and Joe Bruneau, all of whom generously shared their time and put up with my less than expert bush skills." Over the years, Paul has travelled many of the trails and visited many of the cabins and other significant sites throughout the region. Back in Burwash Landing, it still amazes him how incredibly welcoming and friendly people have always been; they took him in as a stranger and have been unfailingly warm and generous. Paul concluded by saying, "Because of the connection I feel to both the land and the people of Kluane country, I can honestly say it feels like I am coming home whenever I crest Boutellier Summit and catch my first glimpse of Kluane Lake below."

Chapter 5 Activity

Self-Government Activity

Using the historic *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* document, the *Mapping the Way* website, the *Long Journey Home* four-part video series and the *Perspectives Series* panel discussion, identify and describe the accomplishments of one Yukon First Nation Self-Government trailblazer.

Suggested Readings

The Umbrella Final Agreement Between the Government of Canada, the Council for Yukon Indians and the Government of the Yukon is the primary Yukon land claim document (1993). The Council of Yukon First Nations website is an excellent resource for all things Yukon Self-Government. To view digital copies of the Umbrella Final Agreement, First Nations' Final Agreements, Self-Government Agreements, and Self-Government Implementation Plans see https://cyfn.ca/agreements/.To assist in understanding the Yukon land claim see, *Understanding the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement: A Land Claim Settlement Information Package* (Council of Yukon First Nations and Yukon Government, 1997).

For an ethnographic case study of the relationship between the Canadian government and First Nation governments, see *Hunters and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon* by Paul Nadasdy (University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver 2003). Paul Nadasdy's, *Sovereignty's Entailments: First Nation State Formation in the Yukon,* is an ethnographic study of Kluane First Nation people, their state formation practices and sovereignty politics (2017). Lianne Charlie critiques the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement and discusses the politics of recognition, self-determination, identity, and citizenship through the use of collage theory and practice in her book chapter *Piecing Together Modern Treaty Politics in the Yukon* (2020). The Yukon Archives has put out a digital *Yukon Land Claims Bibliography*, which includes publications up to 2011 (Yukon Government, 2011d). For an analysis of comprehensive land claim agreement negotiations in Canada see Christopher Alcantara's, *Negotiating the Deal: Comprehensive Land Claims Agreements in Canada* (2013). For a discussion of issues pertaining to joint management and the Umbrella Final Agreement see Norm Eastons*," It's Hard Enough to Control Yourself; It's Ridiculous to Think You Can Control Animals*"*: Competing Views on "The Bush" in Contemporary Yukon* (The Northern Review, 2008). For an alternative and thought-provoking discussion on land claims and reconciliation in Canada see Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson's book *The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the Land Rebuilding the Economy* (2017).

The most comprehensive international document on the rights of Indigenous peoples around the world is the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007. Canada is now a signatory of the declaration. Originally, Canada voted against the declaration. The document "establishes a framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of indigenous peoples" (2007).

CHAPTER 6 - ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Learning Objectives

- Describe some of the more prominent Indigenous artists in Yukon.
- Explain the significance and importance of storytelling, theatre, poetry, creative writing, toys, music, games, dance, visual arts, fashion design and carving to Yukon's Indigenous peoples.
- Identify Yukon's cultural centres and the First Nation communities they serve.

Verbal Arts

Storytelling

Yukon's Indigenous peoples have always had verbal forms of artistic expression: people who could tell stories and people who could compose songs. In describing past music and dance of the Gwich'in people, Slobodin wrote, "Verbal skills may be regarded as entertainment since the [Gwich'in] keenly appreciated style and wit in oratory and in repartee" (1981:528). As history and lessons about how to behave in the land and with your social relations are embedded within oral histories, learning how to tell stories of all types was, and is, an important skill for Yukon's Indigenous peoples. In the cold winters, families would gather for storytelling sessions around the fires in their homes (McClellan 1987). The Elders were the ones to start the storytelling sessions and then, if time allowed, others would get to take their turns. Storytellers learned how to tell the stories by listening to their ancestors. Well-regarded orators would be called upon to make speeches at ceremonies, such as the potlatch (see below for more details on this ceremony). Storytelling and speechmaking were meant to be informative, but also humorous. In fact, it was the role of certain relatives to have "joking relationships" with their in-laws and paternal second cousins (McClellan 1975, 1987:249). Verbal artistry continues to be a valuable contemporary performance art. Below are modern day storytellers, renowned for their creativity and oratory skills.

Mrs. Angela Sidney (Storyteller)

The late Tagish Elder Mrs. Angela Sidney (Figure 3.2) received the Order of Canada in recognition of her contribution to knowledge about Yukon, which primarily occurred through her storytelling. She is famous for saying, "I have no money to leave to my grandchildren. My stories are my wealth" (Cruikshank 1990:36), and she worked with anthropologist Julie Cruikshank for an extended period of time to document her story knowledge. These stories are included in the academic books *Life Lived Like a Story* (Cruikshank 1990) and *The Social Life of Stories* (Cruikshank 1998) and in community-focused publications, such as *My Stories Are My Wealth* (1977) (co-written with Kitty Smith and Rachel Dawson), *Place Names of the Tagish Region, Southern Yukon* (1980), *Tagish Tlaagú: Tagish Stories* (1982), and *Haa Shagóon: Our Family History* (1983). The recognition of Mrs. Angela Sidney's storytelling was instrumental in the development of the Yukon International Storytelling Festival, which began in Whitehorse, Yukon, in 1988 and ran until the summer of 2012. Storytellers from all over Yukon participated, as well as performers from across the circumpolar globe.

Louise Profeit-LeBlanc (Storyteller)

Louise Profeit-LeBlanc is Angela Sidney's niece, and she learned the art of storytelling from a very young age. Louise is a member of the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun and grew up speaking Southern Tutchone; she "is now the keeper of many of [her relatives'] stories of the ancient and not so distant past." Louise is the co-founder of the Yukon International Storytelling Festival (described above), and she has performed in many different locations around the world.[1]

Gramma Susie and Cache Creek Charlie (Comedy Duo)

As in the past, comedy is often an essential element to contemporary storytelling and two performers who embrace this are the comedy duo Gramma Susie and Cache Creek Charlie, played by Sharon Shorty and

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[1] http://www.torontostorytellingfestival.ca/2015/tellers/louise-profeit-leblanc/

Duane Ghastant' Aucoin, both from the Teslin Tlingit First Nation. They have made it their goal "to teach First Nation language and culture through humour and laughter."[2] Both second-generation survivors of residential school, they used their humour to help "heal through laughter"[3] at the Truth and Reconciliation meetings held in Canada in 2011. They are frequent performers at festivals across Yukon; those individuals lucky enough to see them perform have an unforgettable experience.

Theatre, Poetry and Writing

Gwaandak Theatre

Today, other forms of artistic expression come from the production of theatre shows, poetry and the written word. The Gwaandak Theatre provides an avenue for "Indigenous-centred theatre" (Gwaandak Theatre, 2019).[4] It was started in 1999 by Leonard Linklater and Patti Flather with the intention of "illuminating Indigenous and Northern stories around the world" (Gwaandak Theatre, 2013). Over the years the theatre has produced works such as "Ndoo Tr'eedyaa Gogwaandak, Forward Together, Vuntut Gwitchin Stories" which was meant to honour "millennia-old storytelling traditions and Indigenous language revitalization" (Gwaandak Theatre, 2019). The company also runs an Indigenous Summer Play Reading that features Indigenous writers from throughout Canada which are often directed and performed by local talent. *Justice*, written by Leonard Linklater, was inspired by the story of the Nantuck brothers. These Indigenous men were the first to be hanged in Yukon in 1899. The play reflects on the "clash of culture systems" that took place (Gwaandak Theatre, 2019).

Allan Benjamin (Cartoonist and Poet)

Comedy based on grandparents is found in the comics and poems written by Allan Benjamin, from Old Crow. His comic, titled Didee and Didoo (which mean Grandma and Grandpa in the Gwich'in language), depicts Elders from Old Crow and what life was like in the past. It currently appears in the newspaper What's Up Yukon. In an interview with that publication, Benjamin stated, "Being humorous is one of the ways that we survive; my grandmother was always funny, and I picked up a lot with comical people… Mostly I like to draw cartoons because they're funny and I think it's important that people get a good laugh" (Westover 2014). His poems also capture what life used to be like at Old Crow and are valuable for learning about the history of the Indigenous peoples in Yukon:

ALL THE LADIES WORE HANKERCHIEFS.

EVERYONE HAD HIGH CACHES.

ALL THE ELDERS SMOKED PIPES.

EVERYONE USED DOGTEAMS.

WE MADE OUR OWN TOYS.

EVERYONE HAD BIBLE NAMES.

WE ALL USED GASLAMPS AN' CANDLES.

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[2] See http://www.sharonshorty.com/historysc.htm
[3] See http://aptnnews.ca/2011/07/05/healing-through-laughter/
[4] https://www.gwaandaktheatre.ca/

PLANES LANDED ON GRAVEL BARS.

WE PACKED WATER FROM THE RIVER.

WE CAN BUY CANDY WITH A PENNY.

INDIAN AGENT WAS A BIG SHOT.

WE ONLY USED BOWSAW AN' AXE.

EVERYONE VOTED FOR NEILSON.

ONLY RICH PEOPLE HAD RADIOS.

WE USED TO PLAY BUTTONS.

LADIES WORE BLOOMERS (I THINK).

WE USED OIL DRUMS FOR STOVES.

THEY PLAYED RECORDS.

MOTHERS MADE SWINGS FOR BABIES.

THEY ONLY HAD 10 H.P. KICKERS.

WE USED TO MAKE SUGAR CANDY.

EVERYONE USED CELLARS.

NOBODY WORKED ON SUNDAY [Benjamin 2015].

Entertainment

Games

Yukon Indigenous people, like many people around the world, have developed forms of entertainment specific to their territories, such as games. Catharine McClellan documented some of the games people used to play and she states that many of these were competitive (McClellan 1987:243). Different cultural groups were involved in different types of games and play. For example, the Gwich'in held foot races, tug-of-wars, wrestling, and a bouncing game that involved making a trampoline type item out of "strong, untanned moosehide" (McClellan 1987:244). Northern and Southern Tutchone communities played a game similar to volleyball, where the ball was "made of tanned skin stuffed with animal hair, and a marten tail or some bird down was attached to it so that it streamed out behind like the tail of a kite" (McClellan 1987:244). People would throw the ball and try to keep it moving and up in the air.

Gambling was also a popular pursuit and almost any game could be a source of gambling entertainment. However, the best-known gambling game was the stick game, which was played by many different cultural groups in Yukon (McClellan 1987:244). Catharine McClellan gave a description of what stick gambling entailed in her book *Part of the Land, Part of the Water*:

> In playing the stick game, one team of players tried to prevent the other side from guessing who was holding the stick. The team members lined up and passed the stick between themselves, always trying to fool the other side. Each team had a skilled drummer at the end of the line, and everybody sang lively gambling songs. This added to the pace and excitement of the game. The leader of the team that was watching tried to guess who on the opposite team had the stick. If he guessed correctly, the team that was hiding the stick gave him a counting stick. If he guessed wrong, the leader of the guessing team had to give up one of his own sticks. The teams played until one side had won all of the other side's sticks. The counting sticks were often of carved bone with engraved designs. Stick games could be very exciting and last a long time. Players tried to find out who had the stick by staring into the eyes of their opponents or clapping their hands quickly to surprise the opposite side into showing where the stick was [McClellan 1987:244–245].

Gambling, and the stick game in particular, occurred spontaneously, and also occurred at many different social events, such as celebrations. Tournaments dedicated to the game were often held, and both men and women gambled and played the game. Today what was once called stick gambling is now called hand games. These tournaments have had a resurgence in Yukon in recent years. Every year, the 14 Nations Hand Games Society organizes hand games, including all women and youth competitions (McLean 2015). These events are very popular and well attended.

Music, Dance, Drumming

Music and dance are also popular forms of performance art. In the past, the types of music played throughout Yukon varied. In the north, Slobodin describes the instruments played by the Gwich'in (as recorded in Murray 1910) as "tambourine [shaped hand] drums, wooden gongs, and willow whistles" (Slobodin 1981:528). As well, "singing was highly regarded; supernatural power was manifested in song, which was judged for tone, voice production, and style, as well as text" (Slobodin 1981:528). In many Indigenous cultures in Yukon, songs were the property of the composer and others could sing them only if the composer granted permission. Crow and

Obley write that there were four types of songs that were composed by and for the Hän peoples: “love, war, potlatch, and shamanistic,” and, like the Gwich’in, the Hän used a tambourine-shaped hand drum as their main musical instrument (Crow and Obley 1981:509). Similarly, McClellan writes that the topics of Tutchone songs included “romantic love, loneliness, the beauty of their country, the pleasures of drinking with their affinal relatives, and poignant mourning songs for those who had died” (McClellan 1981:502).

As noted above, drums were a popular instrument. Two types were often found in Yukon: skin drums (used by many groups of people) and plank drums (used by the Tlingit and Gwich’in) (McClellan 1987:246). Different groups made their skin drums differently, but there were some general similarities:

> Skin drums were made of untanned caribou or moose hide. A piece of wet hide was stretched over a circular wooden frame and laced onto it with strings of babiche that crossed the back to form a kind of handle so the drummer could easily hold the drum [McClellan 1987:246–247].

Plank drums were made from flattened planks and often painted with red ochre (McClellan 1987:246). However, McClellan notes that the Tlingit people she spoke to stated that “on the Taku they also used the coastal type of box drum” (McClellan 1975:295). Today, the process of drum making is very similar to drum making in historic times. Clan symbols and other images continue to be painted onto drums. Special workshops are put together for people to learn the art of drum making (Champagne and Aishihik 2017) and there are special music festivals that promote this art such as the Dákų̀ Nän Ts'èddhyèt Festival of Drumming, Song and Dance (Champagne and Aishihik 2019). Moose hoof rattles were also used throughout the southern Yukon, particularly by traditional Indigenous healers (McClellan 1975:295). Skilled dancers would drum or rattle while they danced, and this practice continues today.

Dances, songs, and stories changed with the influence of newcomers to Yukon; in particular, the fur traders brought with them “square dances, jigs, and later on, polkas, waltzes and two-steps” (McClellan 1987:248). As well, new instruments such as the fiddle, harmonica, and accordion became popular (McClellan 1987:248); and the Gwich’in are still known for their fiddle playing skills. The recent development of cultural festivals, such as the Adäka Cultural Festival at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre in Whitehorse, the Moosehide Gathering in Dawson, and the Ha Kus Teyea Celebration in Teslin, gives people the opportunity to see the diversity in dance and music styles across Yukon for themselves. Below are just a few of the amazing modern-day Indigenous performers who play music and perform in Yukon, nationally, and internationally.

Boyd Benjamin (Fiddler)

From Old Crow, Boyd Benjamin comes from a long line of fiddlers. He has released two CDs, *Home Sweet Home*, 2011, and *The Flying Gwitch’in Fiddler*, 2013, and played at many festivals and shows. He has played alongside Buffy Sainte-Marie, Ashley MacIsaac, Fred Penner, and Tom Jackson, and performed at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics. In 2008, he was awarded a Special Youth Award at the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards (Benjamin n.d.; Figure 6.1).

Tr’ondëk First Nation Singers

The Tr’ondëk First Nation Singers are a performance group from the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in First Nation, located in Dawson City, Yukon. Following the Voices of the Talking Circle: Yukon Aboriginal Languages Conference, in 1991, Hän community members developed the goal of reviving Hän songs and dances as part of the community’s cultural life, including the use of the gänhäk, which is the special stick held by the leader of the dance group to let the dancers and singers know when to start and finish a song. By 1996, the singers had learned enough to perform at the Moosehide Gathering for the first time; they have continued to grow and develop as performers since that time (Adäka Cultural Festival 2019).

Jerry Alfred (Musician)

Jerry Alfred is of Northern Tutchone descent and a member of the Selkirk First Nation. A biography of Alfred from the Virtual Museum of Canada describes him in the following way: “The son of a shaman, Alfred was designated a ‘Keeper of the Songs’ at birth.” (Harris 2002). During his childhood, Alfred sang in a choir that performed throughout Yukon, which taught him about Western musical influences as well. In 1995, he and his band the Medicine Beat won a Juno Award for Aboriginal Recording of the Year for their song “Etsi Shon” (Grandfather Song) (Van Matre 1996).

Diyet (Musician)

A singer with Southern Tutchone, Japanese, Tlingit, and Scottish roots, Diyet grew up in Burwash Landing and is a member of the Kluane First Nation. Her music is described on her personal website as “alternative folk, roots, country, and traditional Aboriginal with catchy melodies and stories deeply rooted in her Indigenous worldview and northern life” (Diyet and the Love Soldiers 2019). She has been nominated for many different Aboriginal Music Awards, including Best New Artist, Best Songwriter, and Album of the Year.

Vision Quest (Hip-Hop Duo)

Yudii Mercredi and Nick Johnson, who are the hip-hop duo Vision Quest, reside in Whitehorse, Yukon, but the two performers have roots in Gwich’in (Mercredi) and Southern Tutchone (Johnson) communities. One 2013 article on their music described them in the following way: “The duo want their songs to be relevant and to describe what it’s like to grow up now in the Yukon,” and “their First Nation culture is something they want to explore in upcoming songs” (Gillmore 2013). Their debut performance at the Frostbite music festival battle of the bands in 2013 earned them first place, and they have since received other awards and honours (Vision Quest 2019).

Anthropologists in Yukon: MarilynYadułtin Jensen

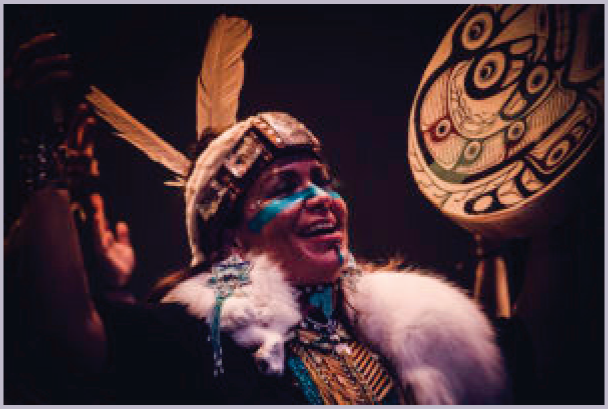

Figure 6.1 Educator, consultant, and dancer Marilyn Yadułtin Jensen wearing Inland Tlingit regalia (photograph courtesy Simon Ager).

Marilyn Yadułtin Jensen is senior consultant with Social Innovation where she focuses on Indigenous issues across Yukon. Prior to that, she was an instructor in Yukon University’s First Nations Governance and Public Administration certificate, which is a program meant to support the development of strong leaders within Yukon First Nations and Indigenous governments through university-level programming.Marilyn comes from the Carcross/Tagish First Nation and was born in Whitehorse, Yukon. Her traditional territory encompasses Carcross, Dyea, Tagish, and Marsh Lake. She began her academic career at the University of Alaska, where she was required to take a course titled “Native People of Alaska,” which she really enjoyed and which introduced her to the field of anthropology. After completing that course, she continued her studies in anthropology because she liked the balanced and holistic way the discipline approached the study of peoples. She completed her undergraduate degree in anthropology at the University of Alaska in 1992.

One of Marilyn’s primary research highlights came right after she completed her bachelor’s degree. She was hired by the Council of Yukon First Nations to work on the Elders Documentation project. This project lasted three years and allowed her to travel throughout Yukon interviewing Elders from many Nations, recording the material and then transcribing it. This experience was significant to her because she was able to work with Elders that are no longer with us and she was also able to learn more about the different First Nations communities in Yukon.

Another highlight came when Marilyn and her colleague Ingrid Johnson (also an anthropologist) were asked to create a land claims training workshop for Yukon government employees. The focus was on Yukon First Nations people today and the self-government work that different Nations were taking part in. They also taught people about Yukon First Nations culture and contemporary issues.

A few years later, Marilyn decided that she was ready to go back to her studies and enrolled in the Indigenous Governance master’s program at the University of Victoria, under Dr. Taiaiake Alfred. Marilyn was inspired and challenged during her time in the program, and she found her student colleagues “academically brilliant.”

Dance is another important aspect of Marilyn’s life. She began dancing when she was two, in the 1970s. As a teenager she stopped dancing, but when she began her master’s program she saw other students dancing and being strong culturally. Upon her return to Whitehorse, Marilyn decided to start an Inland Tlingit dance group, the Dakhká Khwáan Dancers (discussed in this chapter). In 2016, Marilyn received the Polar Medal of Canada, which “celebrates Canada’s northern heritage and recognizes persons who render extraordinary services in the polar regions and in Canada’s North” (Governor General of Canada 2014).

For Marilyn, the best part of Yukon is in her traditional territory of Carcross: being on Bennett Lake, looking towards the mountains, and knowing that her ancestors have been there for thousands of years gives her strength and helps her feel rejuvenated.

Dakhká Khwáan Dancers

One of the best-known performance groups in Yukon is the Dakhká Khwáan Dancers. The group formed in 2007, under the direction of Marilyn Jensen (Figure 6.1), and quickly grew from 6 members to 25. The goals of the group are “to bring opportunity of cultural revitalization and social transformation within our communities by reclaiming our languages, traditional values through the traditional art form of song, drumming, dance, storytelling” (Dakhká Khwáan Dancers 2019). The group now has a children’s dance group as well, which was created with the intention of passing on the cultural knowledge of dance and song to the younger generation. They have danced all over the world, including at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, in New Zealand, and at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. Most recently, they were nominated for an Indigenous Music Award, for their first album, Deconstruct/Reconstruct.

Visual Arts

Much of the early visual art made by Yukon Indigenous peoples has been practical as well as aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Designs are often carved into wood, antler, and bone, or sewn, beaded, or painted on cloth. Images of some of this early visual art can be seen in Julie Cruikshank's book *Reading Voices, Dän Dhá Ts'edenintth'é: Oral and Written Interpretations of the Yukon's Past* (1991), which contains detailed photos of local Indigenous material culture, as well as photos of people's personal collections of carvings and beadwork. In the past, clothing and body ornamentation were two types of visual art that were often commented on by early anthropologists and other newcomers. The following sections will demonstrate more contemporary visual arts.

Clothing, Fashion, and Regalia

Most of the early clothing worn by Yukon Indigenous peoples was made of tanned moose and caribou hides; excellent examples can be seen in the drawings of fur trader Alexander Murray (1910). As McClellan notes, “women tanned skins in slightly different ways from place to place, but the same basic steps were necessary everywhere to make beautiful soft leather” (1987:142; see Tom 1981). Prior to the arrival of newcomers to Yukon, women would use bone, antler, and copper needles and awls to sew the leather into pieces of clothing such as pants, tunic shirts, moccasins, and mittens. Today, many these same traditions and materials continue to be used in modern artwork and body ornamentation. For instance, Nancy Hager creates artwork which includes moose hair tufting, porcupine quilling, and fish scale art (Hager n.d.). She began crafting in the 1970s, after her grandmother taught her to sew and tan moose hide. She also does beadwork, and makes slippers, mukluks, vests, mitts and baby belts (Hager n.d.).

Decorations for clothing have often included many items from the land, such as fur trim, shell beads and buttons, native copper beads, bird feathers, porcupine quills, and buttons made of berry seeds (Hebda et al. 2012; McClellan 1987). For instance, Honigmann notes that Kaska clothing was often decorated with porcupine quills, pieces of moose tripe (intestine), and skin fringes. Fur was used to line items that were worn in winter and items were also woven with goat hair (such as the well-known ceremonial Tlingit Chilkat blankets that were traded inland by Coastal Tlingit peoples) (McClellan 1975:321).

Notable discoveries about clothing worn by Yukon Indigenous peoples before contact with fur traders and missionaries also came from the study of Kwädąy Dän Ts’ìnchį (Long Ago Person Found (see Chapter 2). The clothing items that were found with Kwädąy Dän Ts’ìnchį included a woven spruce-root hat and a robe made of 95 ground squirrel pelts that were sewn together with sinew from moose, mountain goat, and whale (Hebda et al. 2012). Kwädąy Dän Ts’ìnchį’s clothing illustrates the wide area of land he travelled during the course of his life and/or the trade relationships he had.

In contemporary times, as in the past, visual art and performance art have often blended together for Indigenous people of Yukon. For instance, the production of regalia[1] for dance performances is a long and detailed process; people invest their time, energy, and love into the pieces they create. In many cases, designs of clan symbols are created for regalia and then sewn onto clothing, such as the button blankets worn by Tlingit dancers. In the past, as well as the present, people adorn their bodies with tattoos, nose rings, ear plugs, and labrets, and would also paint their faces during ceremonies such as the potlatch (Honigmann 1981).

Tattoos were another popular form of artistic expression in the past and today. For example, in Gwich’in culture “tattooing was applied to the chins of women as a mark of beauty, and to the upper arms and occasionally the cheeks of men as a war honour” (Slobodin 1981:517). Alexander Murray’s fur trade *Journal of the Yukon, 1847-48* contains excellent drawings of 19th century Gwich’in men and women with face tattoos and face ornamentation, wearing regalia and daily clothing (1910). Today, tattooing in the form of skin stitching is being revitalized by northern peoples. For instance, Gwich’in artist Jeneen Frei Njootli has begun practicing this art form and describes it as “a lot like sewing, in that it involves a needle and thread, but it’s actually a form of tattooing – using the needle to thread trails of ink under the skin and form decorative and permanent designs” (Tukker 2016).

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[1] Traditional and often sacred clothing, accessories and artifacts worn or carried during ceremonies.

Jewellery was made out of quills, beads of dried berries and seeds, and, later, after contact with newcomers, glass and coins. If people were wealthy their jewellery was made of copper and dentalium shells, which were traded inland from the coast (Honigmann 1981; Legros 2007). Sewing and jewellery-making doesn't end with regalia, however. Today there are many fashion designers who are incorporating traditional styles and motifs with modern high fashion styles.

Sho Sho Esquiro

Sho Sho Esquiro is a fashion designer from Ross River, Yukon with Kaska and Tlingit ancestry (Zotigh 2017). She designs clothing that utilizes materials found in the north including carp leather, seal skin, lynx fur and floral beadwork. Her designs are known for meticulous attention to detail and the mixing of fabric, furs, skins, shells and beadwork. In 2013 Sho Sho's collection was featured during Haute Couture Fashion Week in New York City. In 2014 she represented Canada at Jessica Mihn Anh's Fashion Phenomenon on the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France. Some of the awards she has received for her work include 1st Place (Textiles) from The Autry in Los Angeles; 1st Place (Beadwork) at The Eiteljorg in Minneapolis; 1st Place at the Heard Market (Textiles) and the Conrad House Award in Phoenix; and the 2016 Best of Division (Textiles) juried competition and Best in Show (Couture Fashion Competition) at the SWAIA Indian Market in Santa Fe (Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto, n.d.).

Tanika Knutson

Jewellery designer, Tanika Knutson is a Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in artist, whose "current body of work is influenced by traditional First Nations craft" (Klondike Institute of Art & Culture, 2018). She comments on her work this way, "Through resourcefulness, First Nations transform ordinary things into useful materials, functional objects, and beautiful ornaments. I identify with this evolution of materials as a jeweller, as we also take rough materials and transform them into something precious" (Klondike Institute of Art & Culture, 2018). Her work is highly sought after within the Territory and nationally. She is one of many young talented designers from the Yukon.

Heather Dickson

Fashion designer, Heather Dickson, is of Tlingit (from Carcross Tagish First Nation) and Nuxalk (from Bella Coola) descent. Born and raised in Yukon, Heather received her diploma in Fashion Design in 2010 from the International Arts Institute of Vancouver. Since graduating Dickson has developed her business, Dickson Design, which specializes in the beautifully beaded and highly sought-after "Granny Hanky Headband". Her website describes Dickson Designs as, "a harmony between Traditional & Modern Northern First Nations Fashion" (Dickson Designs 2019). In 2015, she won the Best Up and Coming Visual Artist award at the Adäka Cultural Festival.

Carvings and Pictographs

Cruikshank includes photos in her book of Tlingit territorial markers that have been carved into the landscape, including faces carved into a rock on the shore of Atlin Lake and a tree near Klukshu Flats (Cruikshank 1991:96–97). Other examples of art in the landscape include pictographs, or rock paintings, such as the red ochre pictograph on rock at Atlin Lake in Taku River Tlingit territory (McClellan 1975:466; for a history of Yukon First Nation art see also van Kampen 2012).

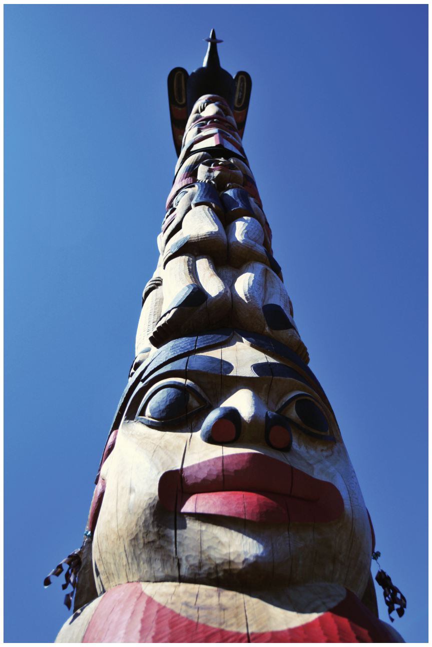

Figure 6.2 The Healing Totem Pole on Whitehorse's waterfront (photograph courtesy of Jon Corbett).

Carved clan crests, totems and boats are also forms of artwork, which are known to represent the land from the areas where clan houses, community members, and family lineages originate. Woodworking and carving continue to be popular forms of artistic expression. For example, master wood carver and artist Dempsey Bob, who is of Tlingit and Tahltan descent, has mentored and trained many other carvers from Yukon and surrounding areas, including Keith Wolfe Smarch (Smarch n.d.), Dale Campbell (Campbell n.d.), Wayne Carlick (Lattimer Gallery 2019), and Eugene Alfred (Alfred n.d.). As well, a new generation of carvers is moving into the forefront. Blake Shaá'koon Lepine, who is of Tlingit, Han, Cree and Scottish descent has built an extensive body of artwork that includes wood carvings with abalone, mother of pearl detailing, canvas paintings, and hide, shell, copper and wood jewelry (Lepine n.d.).

As well, the Sundog Carving Program, founded in 2004, began as an opportunity for at-risk youth to participate in art therapy programs based around learning to carve. The program, now known as the Northern Cultural Expressions Society (n.d.), has been further developed to include school programs, carving programs, and cultural resilience programs. Carvers from the Northern Cultural Expressions Society have also been involved in local Whitehorse art projects, such as the carving of the Healing Totem Pole, which honours residential school survivors (Figure 6.2).

Art Shows, Cultural Centres, and Museums

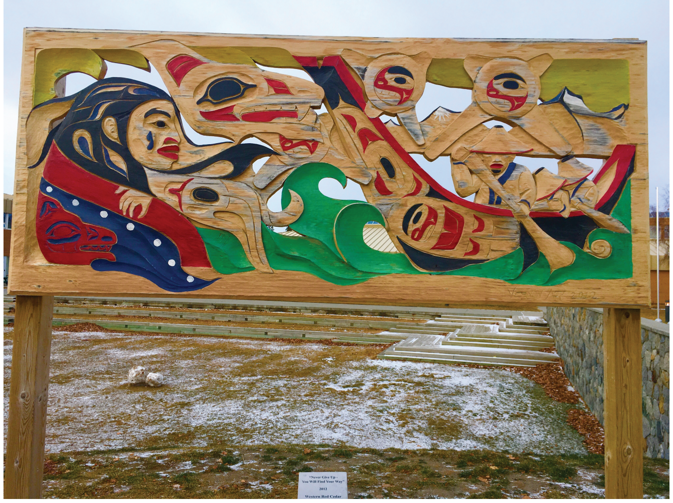

Figure 6.3 Never Give Up – You Will Find Your Way, by Vernon J. M. Asp (photograph courtesy of Victoria Castillo).

Visual art continues to be an important part of life in Yukon. Styles and types of art vary depending on the community and the artists, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Art shows highlighting the diversity of Indigenous art have been occurring for many years across the territory and works of Indigenous art are on display in public areas (see Figure 6.3), as well as in local art galleries, such as the Yukon Arts Centre Public Gallery. There is so much creativity in Yukon that it's difficult to name all of the talented Indigenous artists from the Territory. Art collectors and tourists, as well as many others, support Indigenous art in Yukon through the purchase of items made by local artists, including jewellery, clothing, slippers, carvings, and paintings (such as the work of Jeneen Frei Njootli (National Gallery of Canada 2019) and Joseph Tisiga (Diaz Contemporary n.d.). Contemporary Indigenous artists embrace the style and techniques of their ancestors, but also utilize new materials and modes of production. For instance, Doug Smarch Jr.'s window piece in the Haines Junction Visitors Information Centre inside the Da Kų Cultural Centre, "Ice and Fire" uses acrylic, a new material, to showcase his design (Figure 6.4).

A great deal of artistic work is exhibited at First Nation cultural centres. Two examples of cultural centres that host art exhibits are the Déslin Hà Kus Teyea Dàkhakhwân Hit–Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre[1], located in Teslin, and the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre[2], located in Whitehorse. Both buildings are multi-functional and are used for hosting cultural events as well. The Teslin Heritage Centre, which opened in 2001, has a Great Hall, an Elders' room, a gallery, and a gift shop. In terms of art, "the Gallery provides a showcase for modern and traditional Tlingit arts and culture" (Teslin Tlingit Council 2017a) and, according to the Heritage Centre's webpage, "Expressions of Teslin Tlingit culture are found in the colourful masks, carvings, paintings, beadwork, button blankets, bags and other crafts made from traditional materials and modern media that are on display at the Heritage Centre" (Teslin Tlingit Council 2017a).

The Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre opened in 2012 and has since hosted many cultural events, as it is centrally located in Whitehorse. According to its website, the goal of the centre is to "celebrate the heritage and contemporary way of life of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation" (Kwanlin Dün First Nation 2017). The Cultural Centre hosts both permanent and travelling exhibits and is becoming a popular destination for tourists.

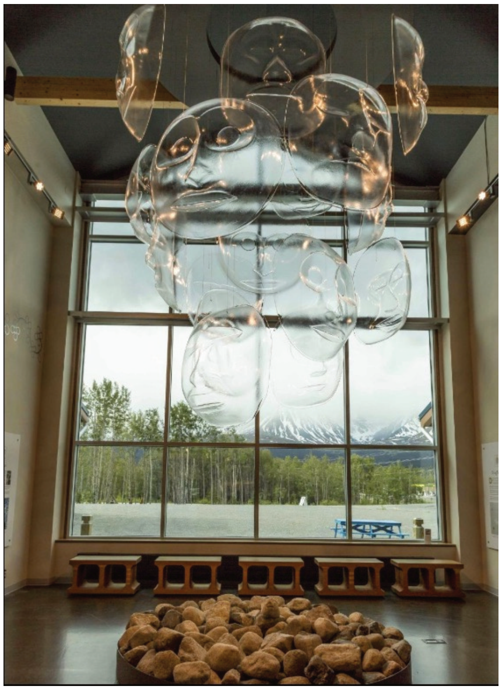

Figure 6.4 Doug Smarch's artwork "Ice and Fire" (photograph courtesy of Victoria Castillo).

Recently, one very popular travelling exhibit that showcased art, sewing, and examples of both historic and contemporary clothing was entitled "Sewing Our Traditions: Dolls of Canada's North" (Yukon Arts Centre Public Gallery 2009). In the past, children used toys for learning and for play. These toys were smaller versions of items that children needed to learn how to use, such as bows and arrows, tools, and weapons. They also played with balls and dolls made of moosehide (McClellan 1987). The doll exhibit was curated by the Yukon Arts Centre Public Gallery for the 2010 Winter Olympics, held in Vancouver, Canada. This exhibit included dolls from across the circumpolar world but focused on the work of Indigenous peoples in Canada. From Yukon, there were dolls from eight Indigenous groups; two of the doll-makers, Annie Smith and Dianne Smith, are pictured below (see Figure 6.5).

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1. http://www.ttc-teslin.com/heritage-centre.html
2. http://kwanlindunculturalcentre.com/

Other cultural centres in Yukon include: Kluane Museum of Natural History[3] (Kluane First Nation); Carcross/Tagish First Nation Learning Centre[4] (Carcross/Tagish First Nation); Tagé Cho Hudän Interpretive Centre[5] (Little Salmon Carcross First Nation); Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation); Da Kų Cultural Centre[6] (Champagne and Aishihik First Nation); Binet House Interpretive Centre[7] (First nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun); John Tizya Centre[8] (Vuntut Gwitch'in Government); Big Jonathan House[9] (Selkirk First Nation); and the George Johnston Museum[10] (Tlingit).

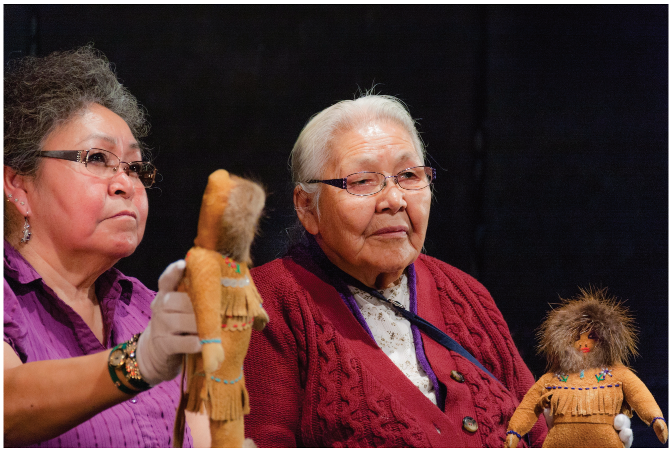

Figure 6.5 Doll-makers Mrs. Annie Smith and Ms. Dianne Smith sharing knowledge about traditional sewing. Dolls by Mrs. Annie Smith (photograph courtesy of Amanda Graham).

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[3] http://kluanemuseum.ca/
[4] https://destinationcarcross.ca/project/learning-centre/
[5] http://www.yukonmuseums.ca/cultural/tagecho/tagecho.html
[6] https://cafn.ca/da-ku-cultural-centre/
[7] https://www.heritageyukon.ca/our-heritage/museums-and-cultural-centres/binet-house
[8] https://www.heritageyukon.ca/our-heritage/museums-and-cultural-centres/john-tizya-centre
[9] http://www.selkirkfn.com/index.php/government/departments/lands-resources/big-jonathan-center/
[10] http://www.gjmuseum.yk.net/

Chapter 6 Activity

Cultural Centre Visit

Visit an Indigenous cultural centre or museum and look at the exhibits through a lense of reconciliation. By reconciliation, we mean “a process of healing of relationships that require public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2016:160). How can museums be agents of colonialism? While visiting a cultural centre or museum, think about the following questions:

1. Was your experience of this museum/cultural centre/interpretive centre positive or negative? Explain…
2. Were you looking forward to this visit?
3. What were you expecting to learn from your experience?
4. What do you remember best from your experience?
5. Was there anything about your visit that made you remember it better?
6. Who do you think the museum/cultural centre audience is?
7. True or false, I felt I learned some new information.
8. True or false, I have developed an increased interest in something I knew little about before coming here.
9. True or false, I have gained knowledge that I can use in my work as a result of my visit.
10. True or false, I understand better the community this museum/cultural centre is focused on.
11. True or false, I could make sense of most of the things I saw and did at the museum/cultural centre.
12. Were you looking for anything in particular? Explain.
13. True or false, I’m able to talk about something I have learned here with others.
14. True or false, I learned something that made me change my mind about something. If so explain…
15. My favourite exhibit was…
16. My least favourite exhibit was…
17. If the museum/cultural centre focused on Indigenous peoples, did it provide evidence of working towards reconciliation?

CONCLUSION

We hope that you have found this volume to be a useful and engaging entry point to the study of Indigenous histories and cultures in Yukon. We have skimmed the surface of many fascinating and complicated topics and have provided references for you to delve deeper into the subjects that most interest you.

As we have attempted to illustrate, the histories of Indigenous cultures in Yukon are ones of persistence and change, and these themes continue in contemporary Yukon Indigenous society. For instance, one outstanding issue from the topics we have discussed is the fact that not all of the Indigenous communities in Yukon have at time of publication signed a Final Agreement. Time will tell how these will play out as compared to those First Nations who have been signatories since the beginning of the process.

Research in Yukon is ongoing; researchers who have been welcomed in the territory continue to come back to work in collaboration with communities and a new generation of researchers are following in their footsteps to continue this tradition of community-based research. This includes Indigenous community members who are also researchers within the disciplines of anthropology and history. We hope that future researchers in Yukon and elsewhere will look to Yukon as a model for best practices in collaborative anthropology and history. We look forward to the future and all of the new research to come.

Excerpt from the Royal Proclamation of 1763

And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our Interest, and the Security of our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds — We do therefore, with the Advice of our Privy Council, declare it to be our Royal Will and Pleasure, that no Governor or Commander in Chief in any of our Colonies of Quebec, East Florida. or West Florida, do presume, upon any Pretence whatever, to grant Warrants of Survey, or pass any Patents for Lands beyond the Bounds of their respective Governments. as described in their Commissions: as also that no Governor or Commander in Chief in any of our other Colonies or Plantations in America do presume for the present, and until our further Pleasure be known, to grant Warrants of Survey, or pass Patents for any Lands beyond the Heads or Sources of any of the Rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean from the West and North West, or upon any Lands whatever, which, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us as aforesaid, are reserved to the said Indians, or any of them.

And We do further declare it to be Our Royal Will and Pleasure, for the present as aforesaid, to reserve under our Sovereignty, Protection, and Dominion, for the use of the said Indians, all the Lands and Territories not included within the Limits of Our said Three new Governments, or within the Limits of the Territory granted to the Hudson's Bay Company, as also all the Lands and Territories lying to the Westward of the Sources of the Rivers which fall into the Sea from the West and North West as aforesaid.

And We do hereby strictly forbid, on Pain of our Displeasure, all our loving Subjects from making any Purchases or Settlements whatever, or taking Possession of any of the Lands above reserved, without our especial leave and Licence for that Purpose first obtained.

And We do further strictly enjoin and require all Persons whatever who have either wilfully or inadvertently seated themselves upon any Lands within the Countries above described. or upon any other Lands which, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are still reserved to the said Indians as aforesaid, forthwith to remove themselves from such Settlements.

And whereas great Frauds and Abuses have been committed in purchasing Lands of the Indians, to the great Prejudice of our Interests. and to the great Dissatisfaction of the said Indians: In order, therefore, to prevent such Irregularities for the future, and to the end that the Indians may be convinced of our Justice and determined Resolution to remove all reasonable Cause of Discontent, We do, with the Advice of our Privy Council strictly enjoin and require, that no private Person do presume to make any purchase from the said Indians of any Lands reserved to the said Indians, within those parts of our Colonies where We have thought proper to allow Settlement: but that, if at any Time any of the Said Indians should be inclined to dispose of the said Lands, the same shall be Purchased only for Us, in our Name, at some public Meeting or Assembly of the said Indians, to be held for that Purpose by the Governor or Commander in Chief of our Colony respectively within which they shall lie: and in case they shall lie within the limits of any Proprietary Government, they shall be purchased only for the Use and in the name of such Proprietaries, conformable to such Directions and Instructions as We or they shall think proper to give for that Purpose: And we do, by the Advice of our Privy Council, declare and enjoin, that the Trade with the said Indians shall be free and open to all our Subjects whatever, provided that every Person who may incline to Trade with the said Indians do take out a Licence for carrying on such Trade from the Governor or Commander in Chief of any of our Colonies respectively where such Person shall reside, and also give Security to observe such Regulations as We shall at any Time think fit, by ourselves or by our Commissaries to be appointed for this Purpose, to direct and appoint for the Benefit of the said Trade:

And we do hereby authorize, enjoin, and require the Governors and Commanders in Chief of all our Colonies respectively, as well those under Our immediate Government as those under the Government and Direction of Proprietaries, to grant such Licences without Fee or Reward, taking especial Care to insert therein a Condition, that such Licence shall be void, and the Security forfeited in case the Person to whom the same is granted shall refuse or neglect to observe such Regulations as We shall think proper to prescribe as aforesaid.

And we do further expressly conjoin and require all Officers whatever, as well Military as those Employed in the Management and Direction of Indian Affairs, within the Territories reserved as aforesaid for the use of the said Indians, to seize and apprehend all Persons whatever, who standing charged with Treason, Misprisions of Treason, Murders, or other Felonies or Misdemeanors, shall fly from Justice and take Refuge in the said Territory, and to send them under a proper guard to the Colony where the Crime was committed, of which they stand accused, in order to take their Trial for the same.

Given at our Court at St. James's the 7th Day of October 1763, in the Third Year of our Reign.

GOD SAVE THE KING

Appendix B - Federal Apology for Residential School System

Prime Minister Harper offers full apology on behalf of Canadians for the Indian Residential Schools system

11 June 2008, Ottawa, Ontario

The treatment of children in Indian Residential Schools is a sad chapter in our history.

For more than a century, Indian Residential Schools separated over 150,000 Aboriginal children from their families and communities. In the 1870's, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligation to educate Aboriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools. Two primary objectives of the Residential Schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child". Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.

One hundred and thirty-two federally-supported schools were located in every province and territory, except Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Most schools were operated as "joint ventures" with Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian or United Churches. The Government of Canada built an educational system in which very young children were often forcibly removed from their homes, often taken far from their communities. Many were inadequately fed, clothed and housed. All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities. First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools. Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools and others never returned home.

The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian Residential Schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage and language. While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children, and their separation from powerless families and communities.

The legacy of Indian Residential Schools has contributed to social problems that continue to exist in many communities today.

It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors that have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered. It is a testament to their resilience as individuals and to the strength of their cultures. Regrettably, many former students are not with us today and died never having received a full apology from the Government of Canada.

The government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation. Therefore, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this Chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to Aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian Residential Schools system.

To the approximately 80,000 living former students, and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you. Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry.

The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long. The burden is properly ours as a Government, and as a country. There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential Schools system to ever prevail again. You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey. The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.

Nous le regrettons
We are sorry
Nimitataynan
Niminchinowesamin
Mamiattugut

In moving towards healing, reconciliation and resolution of the sad legacy of Indian Residential Schools, implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement began on September 19, 2007. Years of work by survivors, communities, and Aboriginal organizations culminated in an agreement that gives us a new beginning and an opportunity to move forward together in partnership.

A cornerstone of the Settlement Agreement is the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This Commission presents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian Residential Schools system. It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us.

On behalf of the Government of Canada
The Right Honourable Stephen Harper,

Prime Minister of Canada

Appendix C - Yukon First Nation Community Information: Pre-Land Claim Reserve Lands

Yukon First Nation	Ethnicity/ National Group	Yukon Communities	Yukon Pre-Land Claim Indian Reserve
Carcross/Tagish First Nation	Tlingit, Tagish	Carcross, Tagish	Carcross 4
Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Champagne First Nation	Southern Tutchone	Aishihik, Champagne, Haines Junction	Champagne Landing 10 Haines Junction Kloo Lake Settlement Klukshu River Settlement
Ta'an Kwach'an Council	Southern Tutchone	Lake Laberge, Whitehorse	Lake Laberge 1
First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun	Northern Tutchone	Mayo	Mayo 6 McQuesten 3
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation	Hän	Dawson City	Moosehide Creek 2 Moosehide Creek 2B
Teslin Tlingit Council	Tlingit	Teslin	Nisutlin 14 Nisutlin Bay 15 Teslin Post 13
Selkirk First Nation	Northern Tutchone	Fort Selkirk, Pelly Crossing	Selkirk 7
Kwanlin Dün First Nation	Tagish	Whitehorse	Whitehorse 8

Figure 7.1 Appendix C selection of Yukon First Nation pre-Land Claim land reserves (Canada 2017).

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Tosh Southwick belongs to the wolf moiety and is a citizen of Kluane First Nation. She is associate vice president Indigenous Engagement and Reconciliation at Yukon University, which leads the reconciliation and Indigenization work at the institution and works to strengthen relationships with Yukon First Nation governments and Indigenous partners outside Yukon. Formerly, she was Director of First Nations Initiatives at the university. Tosh holds a Master of Education degree from the University of British Columbia and a Bachelor of Arts with honors in Psychology from the University of Victoria. Before joining Yukon University (formerly Yukon College), she worked in Governance, Education, Human Resources, and Health for various First Nation Governments and organizations. Southwick has served as youth councilor and Deputy Chief for her First Nation and is an active member of Kluane First Nation Development Corporation. She is currently chair of the Yukon First Nations Education Commission.

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