



Nahe Gõndié Goghánídle

Sharing Our Stories

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A collection of stories and photographs of objects from the Dehcho



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Introduction

In November 2012, a group of students, a teacher, elders and an interpreter from the Dehcho travelled to Yellowknife to participate in a workshop at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC). Communities represented were Nahanni Butte, Fort Liard, Fort Simpson and Fort Providence.

The participants (listed below) spent two days looking at objects from the collections of the museum. These objects were carefully selected from areas in the Dehcho and are being preserved and cared for at the museum. During the workshop, students photographed the objects and recorded stories told by the elders. Stories were told mainly in the South Slavey language.

This book represents the collection of information gathered during the workshop. The photographs were taken by the students as well as by PWNHC Curatorial Assistant, Susan Irving. Stories recorded here are mainly those told by Mary Ann Bertrand (M.B.) as well as others by Andy Norwegian (A.N.) and Joachim Bonnetrouge (J.B.). These stories appear in the manner in which they were recorded at the workshop. Very little re-wording has taken place.

It is the hope of the Committee for the “Sharing Our Stories” project, that people will share this book, the photos and the stories with others and that many more stories will come alive as a result.

Elders: Mary Ann Bertrand, Joachim Bonnetrouge

Committee Members: Andy Norwegian (interpreter/translator), Wendy Stephenson

Students: Lory-Anne Bertrand, Brandon Constant, Lisa Constant and Chris Cli-Hopf

Teacher: Therisa Sayer

Comment

For many reasons, “Sharing Our Stories” is an important project. Bringing together aboriginal youth and elders from the Dehcho region to examine museum objects is a treasured opportunity to record and preserve information about the past.

The exchange of memories and stories about traditional lifestyles, experiences and aboriginal skills creates vital, first-hand cultural learning for the youth. Collecting and documenting information, aboriginal language terminology and elders’ stories is of immeasurable benefit to the Northern Heritage Centre. Once recorded, these stories about the rich cultural heritage of the Dene can be shared with others through museum exhibits, websites, books, and videos. Projects such as this will help to instill pride in culture, especially for the youth and future generations.

Barb Cameron

Director

Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre

December, 2012



Xa tth'á

Spruce root bowl

To make this kind of basket, people collect a lot of roots and soak them so they are pliable.

M.B. "If you look at this bowl made of spruce roots it looks like it won't hold water but once it's been soaked it will hold water. We even collected moose blood in these types of baskets and would sometimes add meat to it and make soup. That's what we would eat the soup in."

The colours on the rim of this basket are made from more recent dyes but in the past the colours were made from the roots of plants.

To make purple – people used the unripe cones that grow on top of spruce trees. When you take those and boil them, that's what gives you the purple colour. For yellow, there is a [certain] plant and the roots are really yellow in colour. When it's boiled you get the yellow dye.

To get a red colour, in the summer people would find a [certain] plant that is not too high. It doesn't have berries on it, mostly leaves. When you boil that, you get the red colour. Roots are dyed this way as well as porcupine quills.

PWNHC 996.8.82 Basket rimmed with goose quills, dates from around 1912

Xa Tehnı

Spruce root basket with lid

M.B. "I've seen my grandmother keep her sewing items in here like needles, sinew and awl."

Back in the times when there were no scissors, people would make a cutting tool with a piece of sharp flat rock. The rock was put into a groove made in a piece of wood. The sharp rock was used to cut out moccasins and things like that. People would also keep that sharp rock in a basket like this.

M.B. "When my grandmother made these baskets she would take bear grease or any kind of grease and rub the outside and the inside with it. After awhile it gets dark like this – kind of like shellac!"

PWNHC 996.8.83a-c This basket is almost 100 years old and dates from around 1912. The handle is made of moose hide wrapped with root.



Etth'ęné Echí

Bone awl

This awl is made from a bone in the back foot of a moose. It is a basketry awl, used to make spruce root baskets.

People would sometimes put a slit or narrow hole in the awls and use them to weave the babiche on snowshoes.

PWNHC 2012.7.1

Made by Laura Nande, Fort Liard, 2012





K'ı Tehnı

Birch bark container

Birch bark baskets are used for lots of things. For example, when people were going through the moose hide tanning process, they would make longer baskets so they could soak their moose hide in it. Some baskets were used for berry picking. People also stored berries in them and they kept very well.

People would keep dry meat in there and also pemmican. They would crush the dry meat and mix fat in it. They would freeze it in blocks, certain sized blocks, and they would also keep those in there. People also made smaller baskets, about half this size.

If the basket was going to be used for holding water, several things could be done. The stitching on the inside would be covered with spruce gum. When moose hide was scraped, the whitish flesh that was scraped off was boiled. People would cover the stitches with that so the basket could hold water. To make it even more water tight, they would take clay from the river bed and rub the stitched areas. For cooking purposes they would do the same thing. The entire exterior would be covered with clay.

The basket wouldn't be put directly on the fire. It was put beside the fire. People put water and hot rocks in it to make the water hot. Then they could cook their meat.

From left to right:

PWNHC 978.66.8 Made by Sarah Edda, Fort Liard, 1978

PWNHC 983.69.1 Found near Slavey Point, near Hay River

PWNHC 982.100.55 Stitched with spruce root. From Trout Lake, dates prior to 1972



K'ı Tth'á

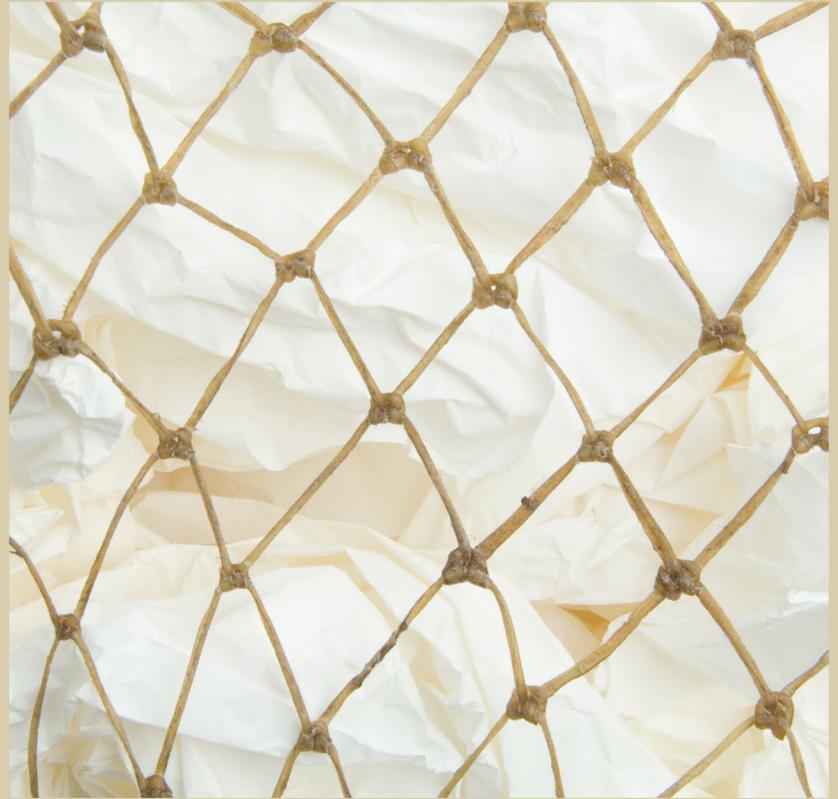
Birch bark bowl (stitched with spruce root)

Bowls this size were often used when cooking meat by an open fire. The meat was cooked and then placed in the bowl.

If the bowls were going to be used for eating from, they would usually be more shallow.

PWNHC 999.99.1

From Johnny Klondike's camp in the Fisherman Lake area, early 1980s



Tł'uh Tehmíé (string bags)

Knotted babiche bag

M.B. "I saw my grandmother make these. When the babiche is made into a bag, and while it is still damp, she would place spruce boughs or other things inside it so that the bag would take the right shape when it dries. My mother packed moose hides in this type of bag, but much bigger. When she was going to pack moose meat in the bag, she made a bark container to go inside the bag."

These are made just like the loops for a fish net are made. Even children were involved in packing moose meat and smaller [knotted] bags were used by children. They would also put a basket insert into it and that's how they would pack the moose meat.

Some of these were really durable and made quite big. They could carry quite a heavy load. People would make a 'tumpline' and tie it with loops to the bag so that it was easier to carry across their forehead.

PWNHC 982.100.49 Made by Dora Lefoine, Fort Providence in the mid 1960s

Tł'uh Tehmǵé (string bags)

Looped babiche bag

M.B. "I saw my mother make a bag like this for her uncle. He had it for many years and kept his clothes in it."

These bags can also be used for hunting. People put rabbits and chickens in them.

How long did it take to make a bag?

M.B. "If you have the babiche, it would take about a day to make it."

PWNHC 982.100.38 Possibly made by Angelique Lesage, Fort Providence in the mid 1960's





ʔəʔəle Tthí-dhéh t'áh Tehmja Hólı

Bird skin bag

This is made from a duck with a white patch on the back of its head ...a type of black duck. It's very hard to pluck! There is a special type of quillwork on the handle of this bag – it's done on a loom.

People also used to skin mallards and take the green feathers to make designs.

M.B. "My grandmother had one of these with mallard feathers on it and she used it as a sewing kit. Even the feet on swans or snow geese – they would skin them out and use the webbing on the feet for bags or tobacco pouches. Sometimes we were told as kids not to touch this kind of bag because it could be some kind of medicine bag."

PWNHC 977.14.1

Bird skin bag with embroidered caribou hide and woven porcupine quillwork handle. Made in Fort Providence during the mid-1920s to mid-1930s



Gahmbaachoké t'áhTehmıé Hólı

Bag made from swan's foot

M.B. "A swan's foot was used to make this bag. I've made them before for my grandmother. There's no indication that this has been sewn together so this has probably been made with one whole foot.

The bag would have been used for tobacco or a medicine bag—whatever a person wanted it for.

You can also make bags this size with a beaver tail. You skin the beaver tail and trim the bottom of the tail with a strip of moose hide. Then you turn it inside out and cut the hide so the beaver tail will have fringes at the bottom. The rim would also have moose hide and a drawstring."

*PWNHC 996.8.73
Made around 1912*



Kó Dhéh

Small caribou hide bag

In the very older times these bags were called ‘fire bags’. They were used to carry things for making fire. There would have been flint in here and birch bark and things for starting a fire. A person’s life depended on being able to start a fire so this kind of bag was really important. When it’s used to carry stuff for making fire it’s made with hide that is very thick. It’s tied quite tight on top to prevent it from getting wet.

After contact, they used this type of bag for carrying loose tea. When they did that they would line the bag with canvas and put the loose tea in it.

Today people also use bags like this for carrying shells for rifles. In the old days they would have had flint and musket balls in those bags. Bags that were used for hunting were just plain.

Youth today should always have a survival bag with them too.

M.B. “My dad taught my brothers that. When I was young, we would use a baking powder tin and keep matches and birch bark in it.”

PWNHC 988.151

Made by Sarah Hardisty, Jean Marie River, 1988. It was patterned after her grandmother’s. Floral quillwork on one side and strawberries on the other



Kech'oi

Pointed toe slipper

These were the way moccasins were made traditionally within the Dehcho region. They were worn by both males and females.

M.B. "My grandmother made a pair of these for one of her grandchildren who was quite young. But none of the other children had that kind so when he came home he cut the toes off with a pair of scissors!! When you don't see any design on a pair of slippers, they were probably used for hunting purposes. If you wear a pair of decorated shoes when you're hunting, the binding on the snowshoes would take the decoration off quite quickly! So we have 'hunting shoes' and 'Sunday shoes or dancing shoes!'"

In the old days a hunter needed about 5 pairs of shoes because they were always being changed [after getting wet and torn]. In the old days even the men needed to know how to make moccasins. In the summer time there is a certain grass that doesn't grow upwards but kind of spreads out along the ground.

M.B. "My father used to collect that kind of grass and rub it until it was soft and pliable. Then he would put the grass inside a piece of burlap. He would lace it shut and put that inside his moccasins. When those kinds of inserts are in your slippers, feet dry out a lot quicker."

PWNHC 982.100.37

Made by Anna Lindberg, Liard River, 1965



Ch'oh Ke

Moosehide moccasins with quillwork

The style of moccasins changed after contact – other styles were brought in. Even Inuit styles!

People took the footwear apart and used the patterns. That is probably where this style came from.

PWNHC 984.81.1 Made by Anastasia Bonnetrouge, Fort Providence, 1984

Ke k'eh Eghá t'áh Nánéhdlu

Moose hide slippers with moose hair tufting and ermine fur trim



These are decorated with moose hair and they don't last as long. After about 2 years the hairs start to pull out.

A lot of the slippers have beaver on them as trim. Sometimes weasel [or ermine] is used as trim but not for children's slippers. It's the same with women. They didn't wear slippers trimmed with weasel.

M.B. "According to our stories, weasel is the younger brother to the wolf and therefore we don't use weasel on slippers for children. You don't see wolverine hair on slippers. It's a respected animal and not usually worn close to the feet."

PWNHC 977.14.4a, b Fort Providence, mid-1920s to mid-1930s

Keah Ndahındee

Moose hide crow boot moccasins

This style of moccasin could have been borrowed from the Yukon.

A.N. "My cousin is from Rabbitskin – and this is the style they wear. So we call this style of moccasin 'Rabbitskin slippers'."

Slippers that are made with beads last longer than the ones made with quills or embroidery thread.

*PWNHC 995.14.1
Made by Margaret Begue, Fort Simpson, 1995*



Medzih-dhéh Ke k'eh Lasúé t'ah Náénéhdu

Silk embroidered caribou hide moccasins



These moccasins that are kind of white are made with tanned/bleached caribou hide. The embroidery is silk thread. When the caribou hide is tanned it will look white like that.

The smoke that's put on a hide makes it look brown.

M.B. "But if you don't put smoke on the hide and you walk around with white [unsmoked] slippers they will get dirty quite quickly."

How old were you when you made your first slippers?

M.B. "I was 7 or 8. I was able to make slippers by the time I was 9."

PWNHC 977.14.2a, b Made in Fort Providence, mid-1920s to mid-1930s

Ke K'eh t'áh Dííłı

Caribou hide moccasins

These moccasins were tanned but not smoked. They were dyed with the bark of alders. The bark is carved off of alders and then dried on a piece of tarp. Then the bark is boiled and the hide is placed in the same water. When the hide comes out of the water it would be this colour.

PWNHC 2003.10.5 mid-1920s to mid-1930s





Clockwise from top left:

Ehts'oo t'áh Ke k'eh Náenéhdlu

Wrap-around moccasins

PWNHC 2003.10.46a,b

Moose hide wrap-around moccasins with glass beadwork and horsehair 'piping', collected between 1925 and 1933, Hay River area.

Ch'oh Ehtth'aa

Quill loom

PWNHC 983.37.3

Woven porcupine quillwork on wooden bow loom. Diamond design on sinew with bark spacers. Made by D. Edda, Fort Liard, 1983



Tth11k'íhdhéh

Gun cases

This shorter gun case was probably made for a later date model gun because the older guns were a lot longer than this. These cases are for the shorter barreled guns – more recent types like a 22 or a 30-30.

In the old days men that had very well decorated gun cases, dog harnesses and shell bags were thought to be people that were very capable out in the bush.

M.B. “My mother made a gun case like this for my dad but without the tassels. When you’re going out through the willows you don’t want these [tassels] on there as they could catch or make noise. This gun case was probably made for an older type model of gun.”

Gun cases could be decorated with beads or silk or porcupine quills. When people use gun cases in the winter time they usually have a flap that folds over and is attached.

Left to right:

PWNHC 986.39.1, 2 Commercial deer hide gun case with twisted quillwork decoration made by Ruby Bonnetrouge and Mary Agnes Matto, Fort Providence, 1986

PWNHC 981.10.1 Moose hide gun case made by Margaret Sarcelle, Fort Simpson, 1936



Gah-dhéh ?e

Hare skin jacket

Rabbit skin jackets can be made at different times of the year.

M.B. "I have seen my grandmother collect rabbit hides for blankets and jackets in the summer time when the fur is brown. When you collect it in the summer time the hair doesn't fall out as easily as it does in the winter."

Once the rabbit is caught, people would take the raw hide, scrape it, let it dry and then make the blanket or clothing. It would take about 30 or more rabbit hides to make this kind of jacket. The strips are looped on to each other. Looping the hide strips is very durable. Rabbit skin jackets can be made to look fancy by taking the rabbit skins from the summer and putting them on the cuffs or along the bottom of the white fur jacket. The front of the jacket can be laced shut with moose hide.

M.B. "I remember my mom told me one winter they went to visit some people who were living in a tipi made of logs. There was a lady living there who was coming in and out of the tipi just wearing a long sleeved dress. She wondered why that lady wasn't cold. My grandmother laughed at her because the lady was wearing a full outfit of rabbit skin clothing under her dress!"

A.N. "Once I was out in the bush as a kid and my hands got cold. My mom caught a rabbit, skinned it, turned it inside out and stuck it in my mitts and it kept my hands warm. Another time, my hands were cold and my dad caught a chicken. He had me hold my mitts out and he plucked the chicken feathers right into my mitts and then my hands were warm!"

Gahdhéh Ts'ée

Hare skin blanket



M.B. "When we were in the bush and our kids got cold, I used to make them rabbit skin blankets. We would weave the blanket and then put it between two sheets. Then we would stitch the outer edge, and also in the middle every so often, so that the blanket inside doesn't move. It's better to put the rabbit skin blanket between sheets because the hair can fall off."

To make a blanket they would start cutting the rabbit close to the hind legs. They would cut all the way around the rabbit until they got to the head. When they got to the head area (the hole that is left where the eye was)....they would end the long strip on the other side of the eye hole. When two rabbit strips needed to be attached together, they would use that eye hole to attach the next rabbit strip. When a number of strips of rabbit fur were cut, they would wind them onto a stick. When they were needed to make something, the fur was taken off the stick. Things were kind of woven with the rabbit strips.

PWNHC 986.105.1

Egóchíé

Moose shoulder blade

This fall, two ladies used this type of shoulder blade to attract a bull moose. They spotted a moose so they stopped and rubbed this on a tree. The moose came out of the bush towards them and they shot it. Around Liard women are also moose hunters!

A.N. "The first time I used one of these I was rubbing it really hard and an elder saw me doing that. We had just seen some moose tracks and he said, 'You know, when you notice that tracks are not so big, they couldn't be made by big bull moose so when you rub that so hard you're frightening a young bull away from yourself! Take it and just go up the willows up one way, every so often – not just go crashing through with it!'"

PWNHC 2012.8.3 Made by Gord Beaulieu, Fort Resolution, around 2008





Méhedhéh Ghalaedaa

Tools for working moose hide

From left to right:

Iḡhoh - Curved metal tool

This tool is usually made with an old file. It must be heated in the fire and then banged with an axe to make it shaped like that. It is used when the hide is taken out of the water solution to take the solution off the wet hide.

M.B. "Nowadays people are even using paint scrapers to scrape their hides!"

PWNHC X963.12.2

Enótthah - Fleshing tool

This is the first tool used when working a moose hide. This tool is used to take the flesh off the inside of the hide.

PWNHC X963.12.1



Méhedhéh Ghalaedaa

Tools for working moose hide

K'ejee - Long bone scraper

This long bone tool is used to take the hair off caribou or calf hides or to take off the hair roots that are left on the hide. It would be used against a log.

PWNHC 2002.13.1

Met'áh Edhéh Ts'enéht'ah - Long wooden handle with a stone end

This was found south of Fort Liard and is used in the tanning process. It is held with both hands and pushed against the hide to soften it.

PWNHC 984.23.1



Méhedhéh Ghalaedaa

Tools for working moose hide

Met'áh Enéhgee - Hide wringing stick

When you take the moose hide out of the tanning solution, the stick is placed through the holes on the edge of the hide and twisted so that all the solution is wrung from the hide.

PWNHC 998.II.5

Ttheté - Small metal tool with a wooden handle

This tool is used to scrape and soften a dry hide.

PWNHC KHS 73.186.4

Mary Ann makes most of her own tools. When marrow is left inside the bone flesher and wrapped in a cloth it will be stronger and a darker colour. She leaves her tools wrapped for at least 2 days.

She would also put her fleshing tool in bear fat and leave it for about 4 days so it would be stronger.



Echí

Awls and files

A.N. "At the sawmill in Jean Marie River, guys would take a chainsaw file and a piece of wood like this. Then they would pound that piece of chainsaw file into the wood and make a tool to sharpen their chainsaw."

A nail can be pounded into a piece of wood and the end filed off and sharpened. This tool can be used on the frame of a drum to make the holes.

Some of the handles for these types of tools are made with moose antler. Whatever metal people could find, they would use for the tips....nails, the tail end of a file etc. Before metal, people used bone as the sharp end.

Clockwise from top left:

PWNHC 978.35.2

Made by Esiah, Fort Simpson in 1932

PWNHC 996.45.2

made by Joe Suze Mackenzie of Behchoko in 1996

PWNHC 979.10.55

PWNHC 989.75.4



From left to right:

Tthets'éhk'é Délı̨ gots'ẹh xọh Mbehdalá íle edé Thụh Lọh theʔo Egúʔo

Small knife or spear point

M.B. "When my brother was younger he used to boil moose hooves for a long time. When they get really soft you can take the bone out and carve it. My brother used to carve that bone into an arrow head. When it dries and hardens, it is very hard and durable. He would use that to hunt chickens and small game like that."

PWNHC Sloc1 Found on Sanguex Lake, at least a thousand years old

Méh Edhéh Ets'eneht'a Loh Theʔo

Stone scraper

A scraper like this would have been tied on the end of a long stick and used as a tool for working with hides.

PWNHC KHS 73.96.1 From the Rabbitskin River area



Some of these older things are made from materials in other parts of the country, like the Tulita area. People would have traded for things like this in the past.

K'í l̥h Theʔə

Stone spear point

PWNHC TL/Mʃ

Th̥h L̥h Theʔə

Stone knife blade

PWNHC 989.90.1

Found on the Blackstone River

Gahmbaacho T'ahth'ęę Łuh

Ladle or spoon



This would be more of a ladle than a spoon and it's made from the breastbone of a young swan. Smaller spoons can be made with the breastbones of chickens [grouse], tablespoon sized!

The end part [of the bone] can be a bit brittle so people would take a piece of wood, split it and put the end of the bone ladle into the wood and lace it. That would give the ladle a handle and make it a lot more stable.

Ladles or spoons can also be made with the hipbone socket of the bear and also from a bone on the beaver.

PWNHC 980.35.1 Made by Frank Tetcho, Trout Lake, 1980

Gok'ah t'áh Thụh Lọh Theꞑo Hólı

Iron file or spear point

A.N. "There is a story about a year when there was a shortage of files given out at Treaty time. Because there weren't many files, the Treaty man broke the files in half so everyone got half a file for sharpening their axes and knives!"

*PWNHC 989.82.148
From Old Fort Providence, a North West Company trading post on the north shore of Great Slave Lake, 1789 to 1823*



Decḥüt'áh Cḥé

Saw handle



A.N. "This is like a manual saw mill – you go up and down with these!! One man would be up on top and one man would be down below. They would saw boards with these kinds of saws."

The saw blades were very valuable. When the saw was no longer usable the blade was used for a lot of things such as knives and scrapers etc.

PWNHC KHS 73.187.1

Tthedzeh t'áh Marbles zháhólı

Clay marbles

A.N. "When I was a kid we went swimming around Jean Marie River. There's an area where we used to get blue clay from the bottom of the creek. We made lots of things with the clay like marbles and figures. We'd let them dry and put them on rocks and then shoot at them with our slingshots!"

PWNHC 978.80.26





Náidíi K'eets'edendih (rub on medicine)

Hudson's Bay Company store items

*J.B. "The king of pain, for men and beasts- that's what it says on the label [Minard's Liniment]!
We always had a bottle of this in our family when I was young. When you had a headache you
could open the bottle and inhale the smell from it. Your eyes just watered!"*

From left to right:

PWNHC KHS 73.186.2 tin box for cigarettes

PWNHC 2010.12.77 liniment

PWNHC 978.80.8 liniment box

PWNHC 978.80.17 sunlight soap



Łé gots'ęh Súra Dhéh

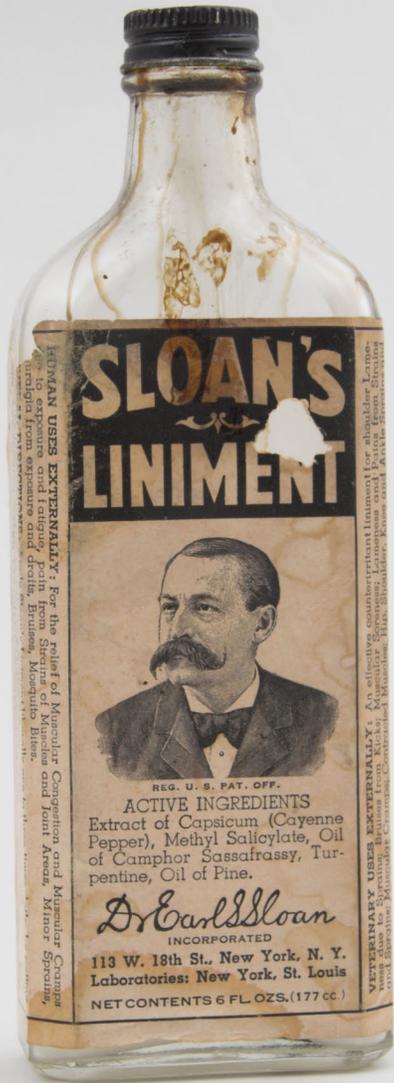
Flour and sugar bags

M.B. "My grandmother made hunting packsacks with those bags. She also washed them and used them for drying dishes. The bags were reused for a lot of purposes. They were also used for wicks for homemade candles and could be made into pillows. They would be filled it up with chicken feathers, sewed up and then put in another cover so that the feathers wouldn't come through. The big 50 lb bag could be used for clothing as well. Some of the ones with flowers on them were made into dresses for young girls."

From left to right:

PWNHC 989.1.1 Hudson's Bay Company 25 pound flour bag. Bag was purchased full at Fort Norman (now Tulita) in 1973 for \$3.69.

PWNHC 2010.12.80 Alberta Sugar 20 pound sugar bag



From left to right:

Náidíí Thekq̄

Sloan's liniment bottle

Many people really liked this medicine when it first came out.

M.B. "Some of the very older people are asking why this medicine doesn't exist anymore because they like it. People used it for aches and it was a valued medicine because it worked well."

PWNHC 2010.12.77 - 1920s to 1960s

Edáıdzeah gogha Ek'ák'óq̄

Christmas candles

M.B. "My dad used to buy a box of those for Christmas. We would be living in the bush and when it came to be Christmas time my parents would light one for each family member. We would all sit by the table and our parents would pray with us."

PWNHC 978.80.22



Trade items from
Fort Alexander on
the north shore of
Willowlake River,
1817 to 1821

Ehts'oo Zhqa - Glass trade beads

PWNHC 976.7.123

Met'áh ?ah Ts'eghah - Bone snowshoe lacer

PWNHC 976.7.90

Et'álaa - Button

PWNHC 976.7.85

Lamó Zhqa Łéetq̄ - Trade ring

PWNHC 976.7.96

J.B. "In the past the Hudson's Bay store had a lot of these types of rings. Each ring cost one muskrat so if you wanted to get married you needed to have 2 muskrats – one for your ring and one for your partner's ring."

M.B. "The idea of exchanging rings was practised before contact. Our people made rings out of antlers and when couples got together they shared these rings. Wedding ceremonies were headed by elders and the bride would place a ring on the groom and vice versa. If you belonged to one tribe you married someone from a tribe far away. The elders made those decisions. That is why you have relations all over."



Tehnı Detsılı

Copper pots

These were popular as water pails. People would have bought them at the Hudson's Bay Store. These pots were more convenient for cooking in and carrying things in than birch bark containers.

When those copper pots first came into existence, people didn't like the taste of water or tea made in them so for drinking water purposes they still drank out of birch bark containers for a long time.

M.B. "I remember seeing these. My grandmother had some old ones like that. She had one copper pot that she didn't want to get burned on the outside by placing it on the fire. So she would use a different pot on the fire to boil her water and then make her tea in the shiny copper pot."

Were old pots recycled for other uses?

M.B. "I have seen it where people would take a smaller pot that is still shiny but not being used any more. They would make a cut like this but leave a bit of a lip on it. They would collect bear, beaver or some kind of fat and melt it in here. Then they would take a strip of material [wick] and leave it in the fat on the bottom of the pot. When it got dark outside, they would light the wick, put a hole in the back of the pot, put it on a stick and the metal on the pot would reflect the light of the burning wick."

PWNHC KHS 73.79.2



From left to right:

Tł'uh K'etih - Violin

J.B. "I saw John Tetso a few times when he came to visit his children at the residential school. He was dressed as a trapper would be."

M.B. "Around Fort Liard, my grandpa used to make fiddles. In those days, people could make things just by looking at them. They used the moose hide scrapings when they made the fiddle. It worked just like glue. Even by boiling hooves they could make glue to fix wooden things. We made our own chairs and things in the past and used babiche too."

PWNHC 984.52.1 Violin made out of local wood except for the bow. Made by John Tetso, Fort Simpson, 1954

Edhéh Ezhóondih - Hide balls

M.B. "My grandmother used to make these and fill them up with moose hair and a bit of moss. I used to make these for my children too."

In the old days even adults played with the moose skin ball. They would toss the ball back and forth and they would have two teams. They would try to take the ball away from each other. They made masks out of birch bark and played games involving masks too. When people lived in villages and if there wasn't any shortage of meat or other supplies, people would be involved in games and activities long into the night. Everyone was involved.

PWNHC 2010.12.60 Caribou hide ball filled with moss, Colville Lake, 1962

PWNHC 988.15.2 Moose hide ball, filled with moose hair. Made by Sarah Hardisty, Jean Marie River, 1988



Dechı́ t'áh T'ahsía Zháhólı́

Homemade wooden toys

The older children had the better toys. Sometimes they would make wooden toys for the younger children.

J.B. "I can remember making sure we had a kicker made out of Klik cans. We even made a little propeller so that when you pulled it along the river it made a sound."

What toys did the girls play with? What were the girls doing?

M.B. "They were sewing! The girls made little boats and sleds too."

J.B. "In some ways it was part of cultural training making these little toys. Starting children very young – it seemed like they were playing but they were already learning. Things were often made in the evening when all the chores were done."

Clockwise from top left:

PWNHC 982.70.18 toboggan

PWNHC 982.70.90 toy gun

PWNHC 982.70.94 toy boat

PWNHC 982.70.17 toy snowmobile

PWNHC 973.10.189 a,b toy boat with motor

PWNHC 999.99.6 toy skidoo



Clockwise from top left:

K'1 Elá

Birch bark canoe

M.B. "My husband and I have built a birch bark canoe. I hope we can make another one!"

PWNHC 972.2.1 Made by Edward Jumbo, Trout Lake, 1971

Ts'u Elá

Spruce bark canoe

M.B. "This is my dad's canoe. He made it. I am thankful that it is being taken care of here."

A.N. "I can remember when my dad came back from hunting in his spruce bark canoe. The kids would run down to the shore and take pieces of spruce gum off the canoe and eat them!"

PWNHC 983.39.1 Made by Johnny Klondike, Fort Liard, 1983

Láhk'ee t'áh Ts'ereh gha T'oha

Small paddle

M.B. "People used this with one hand when paddling a small canoe. My dad used to make these too."

PWNHC 986.65.6 Very small paddle for paddling a lightweight canoe with one hand. Drum Lake, Mackenzie Mountains



Tleelá

Outboard motor

M.B. "My husband still has one of these old kickers and uses it once in awhile."

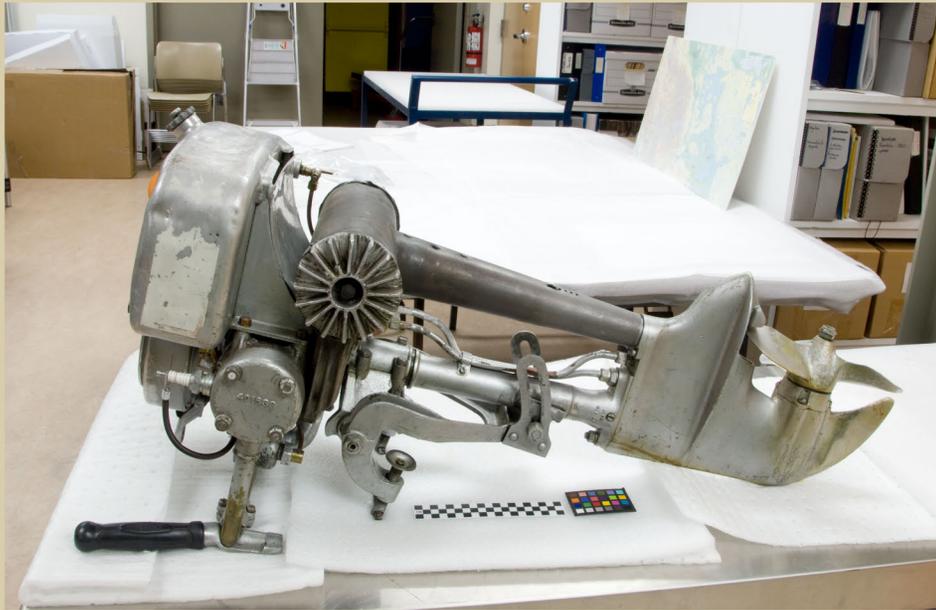
J.B. "The first time I drove one or saw one, I was 6 years old. It was a 4 HP. You would have to start it with a little rope. It would take us 5 days to get to Hay R. from Providence. Now it takes about an hour and a half! A friend told us that in Ft. Res they all grew up beside the lake and they had this type of kicker. Everybody had a 2 HP. One spring a fellow did really well with trapping and he bought himself a brand new kicker. The kicker came in to town and it was a 3 HP! Everybody went down to the shore to watch him try it out. The elders were saying, "Gee he better watch himself, he might go too fast and hurt himself!"

PWNHC 2010.12.15 Neptune 1.5 HP outboard motor; manufactured in 1946



Tleelá

Outboard motor



M.B. “People would put this kicker on the back of a small freighter canoe or on the back of a scow – it was for working. We put this on the back of a square ended canoe. It was better than paddling! People used these for many years – you could fix them yourself. We have a 22 ft freighter canoe with a wide stern. We still have a 5 HP.”

J.B. “After the old champion 4 HP, my uncle bought a 5 HP. That was a big change. You could hardly hear the boat!”

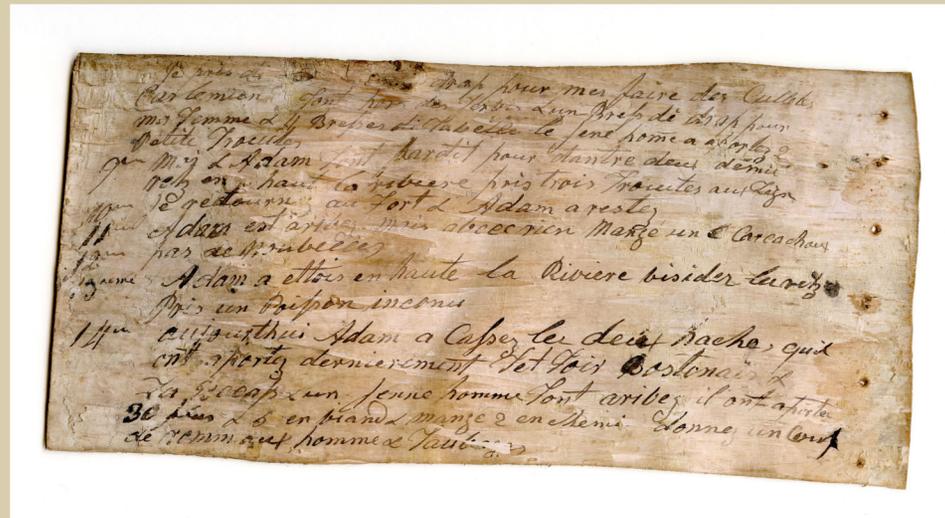
PWNHC 2010.12.16 Johnson 8 HP outboard motor, manufactured in 1927

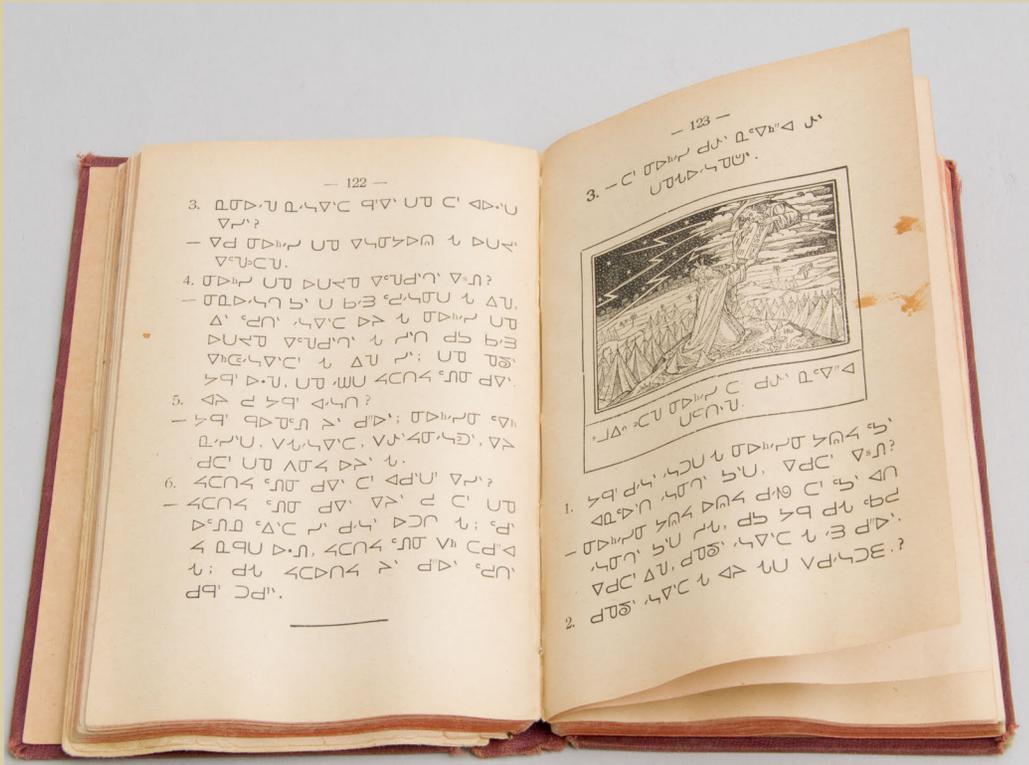
Tsá Dhéh Náehndıı K'ı k'eh Edııt'éh

Birch bark journal page

M.B. “My dad told me when he used to go to the trading post [HBC], the trader would write on birch bark because there was no paper. They would keep the birch bark under a piece of wood to keep it flat. They wrote on it with a [feather pen] dipped in ink.”

PWNHC 2000.6.1 From a North West Company trading post, Fort des Couteaux Jaunes (Yellow Knife Fort) located on the south shore of the Mackenzie River near Beaver Lake, 1802-1803





From left to right:

Mek'ehts'edaa tł'uhgə t'áh Hólı

Homemade chair with babiche seat

M.B. "I saw my uncle make a chair like this with wood and babiche. Then he sold it to the church."

PWNHC 978.17.1 From St. Peter's Anglican Mission, Hay River, early 1900s

Nóhtsı Edıhtł'ehé Dene K'éé Daatł'éh

Prayer book in Slavey syllabics

M.B. "My husband can still read syllabics. There are some young people in Fort Liard learning to read syllabics because it is the Dene language."

J.B. "I remember people writing to each other. My wife's grandma would receive letters long ago from people in Trout Lake where they were using syllabics."

PWNHC 995.17.1 Roman Catholic prayer book written in Slavey syllabics from St. Margarine's (St. Margeurite's) Hospital in Fort Simpson. Published in 1911.



From left to right:

K'e Zhọa

Shoe

“Boy - there must have been a lot of square dances with that shoe!!” (lots of laughter)

PWNHC 2003.53 JIRi-7-1128 – LR From HBC site at Fort Simpson, around the 1900s

Dechı Líbarı Tóné

Old barrel staves

J.B. “When we were young and in residential school, sometimes we found these under the snow. We made skis with the boards just to play with.”

A.N. “We had a sliding hill at Jean Marie River. We went and found those boards and we nailed some old rubber boots to them with short roofing nails. We slipped our moccasins into those old boots and slid down the hill!”

PWNHC 979.19.3

PWNHC 976.7.217 Barrel fragments from Fort Alexander 1817 to 1821

Ts'úutthe

Pipe



M.B. "Pipes were made with different things. Marten berries [grow among cranberries] are kind of an orange colour. The branches of this plant go off one central root. You can take that root, hollow it out along with the branch, and that's what my grandfather used to make pipes. Moose hooves and antlers were also used to make pipes. They could take a young buffalo horn to use as a pipe."

There is a certain grass that grows up in the mountains – it was usually smoked by men only. They would also dry and smoke the leaves of the plant called Bluebell.

PWNHC 2003.53 JIRi-7:1266&1469 Clay pipe from the HBC site at Fort Simpson, early 1800's

Dzɛndɪ

Rat root

J.B. *“I have rat root with me all the time when I travel. I have it in my pocket. You can take a little piece off and chew it. It’s a little bit bitter. You can shave it off, boil it and drink it if you have a cold.”*

M.B. *“Once you take it from the land, you have to leave an offering. Any kind of irritation in the mouth or sore throat or chest congestion, you can chew the root and swallow the juices. If you have a headache, you can light it, extinguish it and inhale the smoke.”*

A.N. *“I’ve seen elders shave it, put hot water in the basin, put a towel over it and inhale the moisture from the rat root and hot water.”*





Gotsíecho Télq̄h Dehtheʔo gogha Tł'uh Ehtł'ųų Hólı

“A String Web to Hang at the End of Grandfather’s Sleeping Mat”

Baby net

In the days of the giants, there was one giant that was pretty old, walking with a cane. His cane kept going through the earth so he made this type of net and put it on the end of his cane so that it wouldn’t go through the earth. He passed down certain powers to his relatives with that object.

These nets carry certain powers. They stop certain diseases and illnesses from going to people. They were made in different sizes.

Ones this size would be attached to a baby so that illness or colds would not go to the baby. That’s the story from the people in this area. People tie this to the baby swing where the baby is sleeping.

M.B. “I use these with my own children. We make them with wood from a small young tree.”

PWNHC 978.28.15 Sinew netted on a willow hoop. Made by A. Berreault, Fort Liard, 1978

Thank You

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