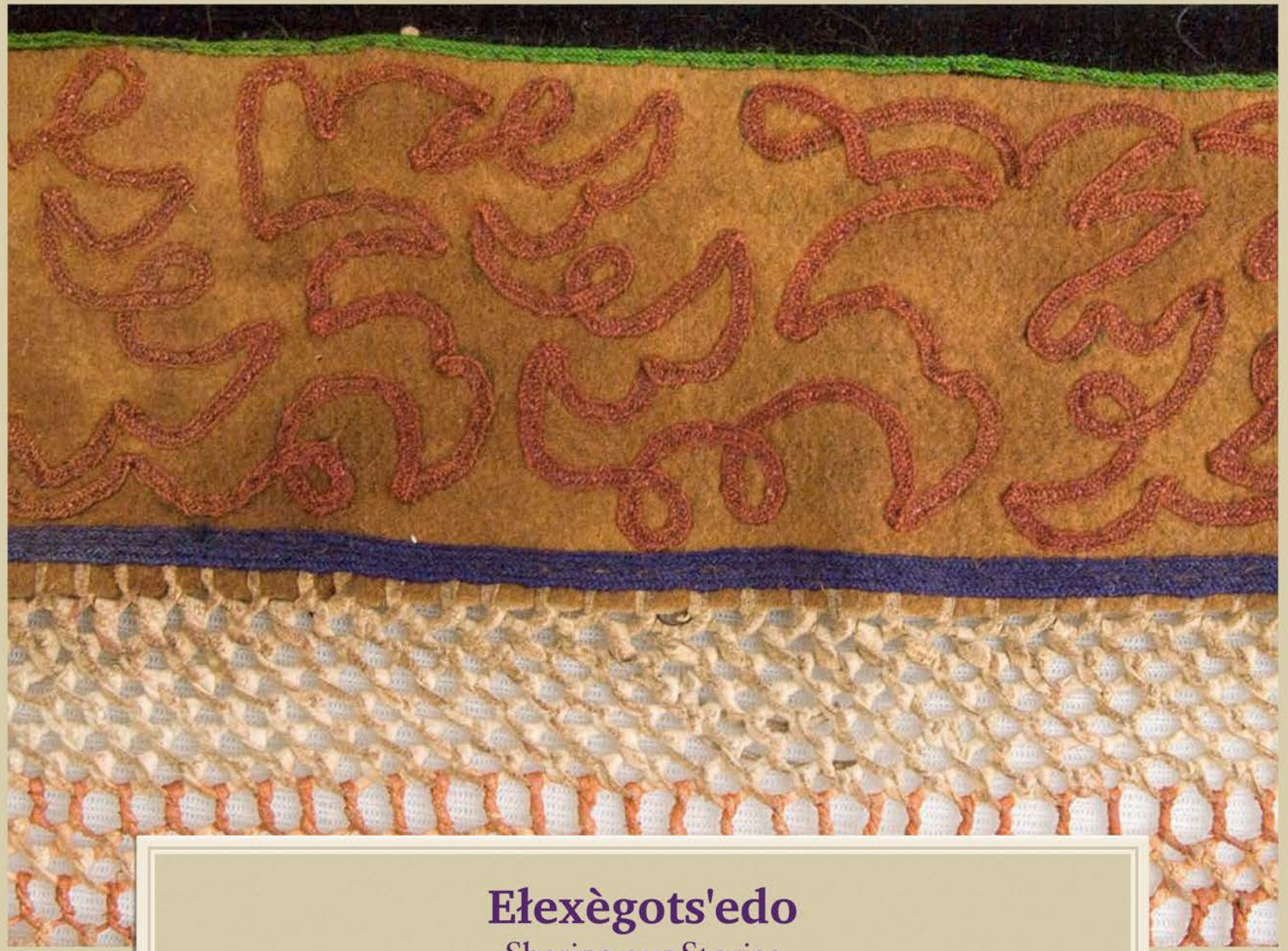


Ełexègots'edo

Sharing our Stories

Ełexègots'edo

Sharing Our Stories

A collection of stories and photographs of objects from the Tłı̨chǫ region.

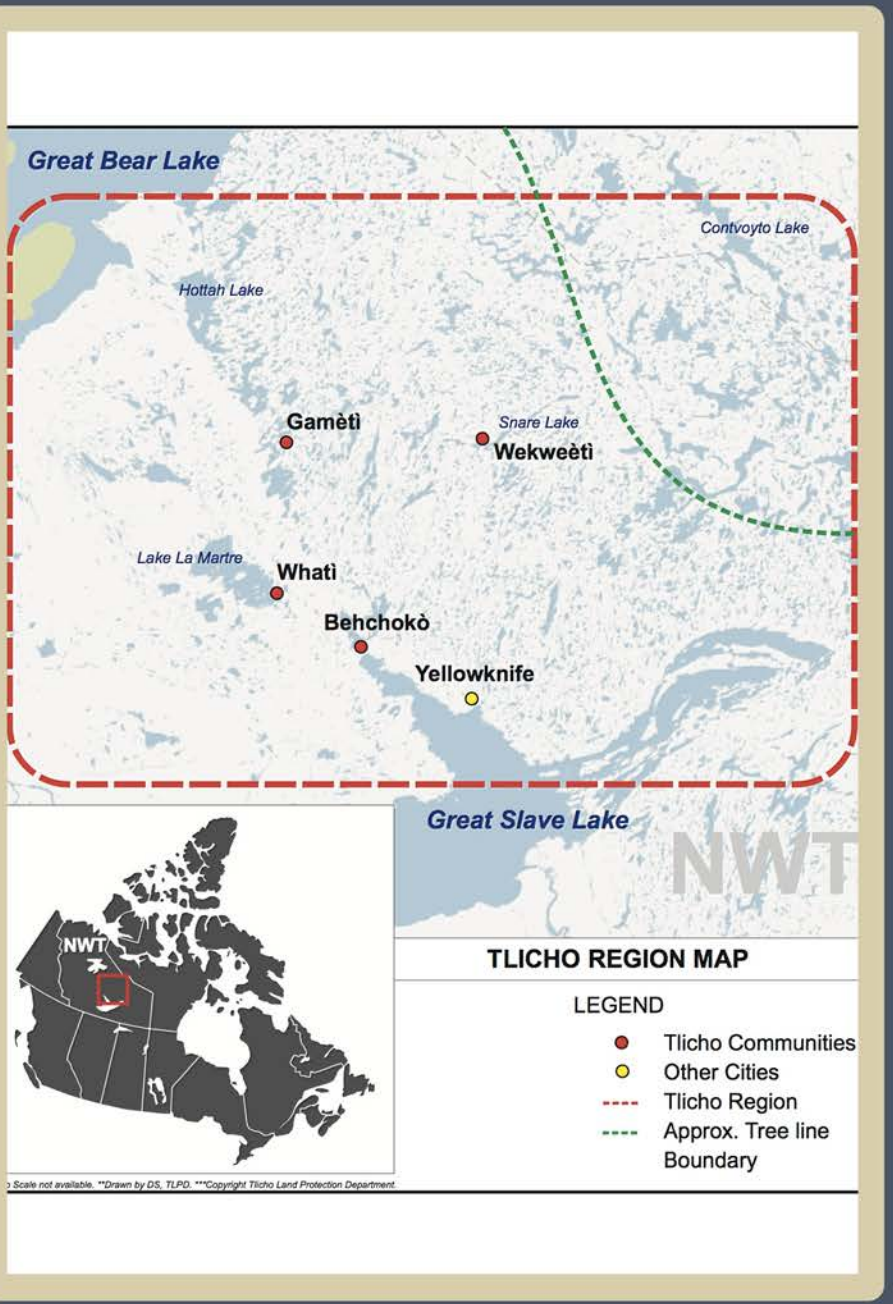

Great Bear Lake
Contvoyto Lake
Hottah Lake
Gamètì
Snare Lake
Wekweètì
Lake La Martre
Whatì
Behchokò
Yellowknife
Great Slave Lake
NWT
NWT
TLICHO REGION MAP
LEGEND
Tlicho Communities
Other Cities
Tlicho Region
Approx. Tree line
Boundary
Scale not available. **Drawn by DS, TLPD. ***Copyright Tlicho Land Protection Department

Table of Contents

Introduction

In February 2013, a group of students, teachers and elders from the Tłı̨chǫ region travelled to Yellowknife to participate in a workshop at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC). Communities represented were Gamètì, Whatì and Behchoko.

The participants (listed below) spent two days looking at objects from the collections of the museum. These objects were carefully selected from the Tłı̨chǫ region 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 Tłı̨chǫ 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 Francis Williah (F.W.), Bernadette Williah (B.W.) as well some by Rosa Mantla (R.M.) and Tammy Steinwand (T.S.). 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: Bernadette and Francis Williah
Committee Members: Tammy Steinwand (TCSA), Wendy Stephenson
Interpreter/TCSA Staff Member: Rosa Mantla
Students: Isaac Mantla, Arianna Steinwand, Alan Moosenose, Brenda Wedawin
Chaperones: Jasper Eyakfwo, Jessica Football-Wetrade

Comment

For many reasons, "Sharing Our Stories" is an important project. Bringing together aboriginal youth and elders from the Tłı̨chǫ region to examine museum objects is a treasured opportunity for us to record and preserve information about the past. The exchange of memories from the elders about traditional lifestyles, experiences and stories creates vital, cultural learning for the youth and museum staff. 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. This project helps inspire pride in culture for elders, teachers and, most importantly, the students.

Barb Cameron
Director
Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre
February, 2013.







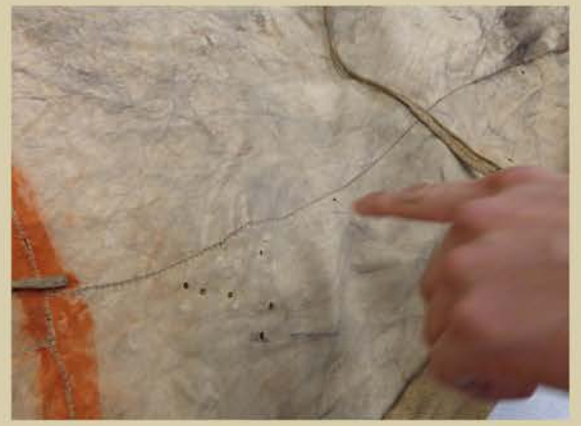














Reflections of the Workshop

Students:

“I learned things I didn't learn about back at home in my community. I liked the stories. I'm familiar with the stories now and now I want to experience it. I want to go to Sliding Hill where the Yamozha story is!”

“I learned that if we don't start learning the stories now, our culture is going to be dying off.”

“I, as a young Tłı̨chǫ, don't always understand but I want to learn. I want to get people talking about our culture. We need to keep doing things from our culture. “

“It was cool that we saw stuff that was really old and that we don't see on display.”

“It was pretty cool that we are learning about our native ways and what people were doing in the old days and how tough it was for them to work, doing all that hard work. Now it's just all easy.”

“From hearing the elders and other elders that I have met, I do understand their stories and their struggles. The young generation is us and I thank them and I appreciate everything they have done. So we are learning and continuing on to understand our language, culture and traditions and to preserve it for the younger generations. Then they can understand where we were and where we can go.”

Reflections of the Workshop

Chaperones:

"Before I came here I didn't know much about our culture, about how people used to do things in the past, what equipment people made and used, how they made clothing, and I didn't know that much until now. It feels good to hear how they did that and I guess it's up to us to pass that knowledge on. I know there's new technologies but the younger generation has to stop using this and keep on doing what they did in the past. I can imagine that in the past they had no electricity they had to carry on with their lives - it must have been hard. Just travelling by dog team and by boat! I'm thankful that the elders are here. If it wasn't for them we couldn't be where we are right now. Masi."

"I hope you students will carry on the traditions of our lives. I really appreciate it that the elders came and that we came to the museum. One thing that really touched me was the tipi. I could hear the drumbeat inside and that really touched me. I just held back my tears until now. I'm so grateful for it."

Reflections of the Workshop

TCSA Staff:

"We don't practice a lot of our traditions any more, but when we come to a place like this we can see the objects and hear stories about them. When we think about it this is our stuff. We need to learn about this history and learn from our elders. Many of our parents don't know this stuff so it's important to do this here. When you students go home, 'spread the word'! What can you do now to practice your culture and learn your language? We can use technology to keep our culture alive; spread the word, record it etc."

"It's very important that the young people see these artifacts. Even the smallest things, we need to know the history of them. If we don't know the history of our own people it's really sad. That's why we're tied to the land and our people. "

Elders:

"Whatever you learned from us, we hope you will take it in and use it well."

ketsɻ̀hkǫǫ whìlea

embroidered moccasin

B.W. "These slippers are made with caribou hide. The embroidery is sewn with a chain stitch. A long time ago, this is the type of flower they always drew on clothing."

PWNHC 987.94.3a,b
Maker unknown, Behchoko, dates from the 1930s or 1940s.

ewòbàake

white tanned caribou hide slippers

B.W. "This is like a slip-on moccasin. Years ago, people used to use this type of moccasin but it would be just plain. In the old days they didn't have sewing machines. The easiest way to make a moccasin design was like this, with no upper on it. People would use smoked caribou hide because white hide, like this, gets dirty easily."

PWNHC 987.94.4a,b
Maker unknown, Behchoko, 1930s-40s.

ewòhjıh

beaded moose hide mittens

F.W. "People always put yellow in the middle of the beaded flower in the past. When people beaded, they used the same colour of beads as the flowers that they had seen before. Now a lot of people that sew use their own colourful ways of beading."
F.W. "Some of these beads are from a long time ago; 'old timer beads'. Before round beads arrived, beads were kind of big, long, cut beads. On this mitt there are some round beads so this could have been made a little later."

PWNHC 987.94.6a,b
Maker unknown, Behchoko, date from the 1930s or 1940s.

ts'èko gha ewòhjıh

beaded moose hide mittens

F.W. "In the past when the women sewed, they sewed just like a sewing machine! The stitches that they made on clothing are just the same as stitches from a sewing machine. The stitching was really perfect."

PWNHC 987.94.5a,b
Maker unknown, Behchoko, date from the 1930's or 1940's.

ewòhjıhtłòa

child's caribou hide mittens

B.W. "The mitts that people wore in the old days were like skidoo mitts today. They just went around the fingers and the thumb and there was fur or hide around the wrist. They were short mitts. People didn't use wool for the mitt strings, they used pieces of hide for holding their mitts together. That's how it was a long time ago. Just plain. Later on, other people introduced the fancier ways and decorating techniques."

F.W. "Sometimes the men or kids could go through about five pairs of mitts a year because they really used them to work. They were shorter mitts, like working mitts. No trim, just straight hide for trim.People always had strings for their mitts, even for the small children. When you're travelling you could drop your mitts. The older people always had strings for their mitts."

R.M."My mom still makes that kind for my nephews."

PWNHC 979.10.30a,b
Maker unknown, Behchoko, about 1978.

ewòlajɪh

embroidered caribou hide gloves with wolverine fur trim

B.W. " Under the fringes you can see hide that is orange. People used to dye the hide for decoration. To dye the hide we took bark from a small tree [like a willow]. The bark was boiled and the liquid was used to colour the hide. Sometimes if we wanted to colour it really fast, we would chew on the bark and would spread the juice from our mouth on the hide. That would colour it really fast."

*F.W. "In the past, when people had to make designs without beading or embroidery thread, ochre (**tsɪh**)was used. It was used on hide (like on a tipi) to make a line where the fringes are placed. When women used to make moose hide toboggan bags, they would also use ochre to make a design on it. People really tried to test what types of natural things from the earth could make designs for them. That's how people were. It was like their artwork."*

PWNHC 987.94.7a,b
Maker unknown, Behchoko, 1930s-40s.

a story about tsıh...

F.W. "Tsıh came from the human body. A long time ago, people used to fight different tribes on top of the mountain near Behchoko. That's where they would fight each other (for example, Tłı̨chǫ and Chipewyans or Tłı̨chǫ and Cree). When they killed people they did that just to get their hide clothing or their weapons like bows and arrows or spears. Anything that was useful. Right on top of that rock (we can see it today), there is kind of a line that goes down on either side. When people were killed on top of the mountain their blood ran down on each side. It went all the way to where the river is. Today that is where tsıh is found and that is the story of where tsıh came from. "

whààkeè

winter wrap-around moccasins with caribou skin liners

B.W. " People wore moccasins all the time; in bad weather, muddy weather, they always wore moccasins, as long as it was something that covered their feet. When the hair was left on the hide, people would tan the hide on the inside only. This way linings could be made for their shoes, for their mitts and also for making caribou hair parkas too. In the old days that was done so that every family member had something to wear in the cold weather months. When liners were sewn using caribou fur hide, they were worn with the stitches on the hide side so that the stitches wouldn't bother their feet when walking."

PWNHC 978.27.3a-d
Maker unknown, Behchoko about 1978.

ewòhke, k'ı̨ę̀h wetì t'à ewò dıìdıı

embroidered caribou hide moccasins dyed with alder or willow bark

B.W. "These were dyed with alder bark. Sometimes the elders call it bark from a willow. If you leave the bark soaking longer in the water, the colour of the dyeing liquid will get stronger."

F.W. "Some people can still do it. They still can dye their hides like that. It doesn't fade."

PWNHC 2003.10.5a,b
Maker unknown, Hay River area, mid-1920s to mid-1930s.

tsàewò, dzǫwò ke

moose hide and beaver fur boot

B.W. "These are both made with beaver fur. One part is the fur from the top of the beaver, and the other part is from the belly."

How many furs would it take to make those?

B.W. "One beaver pelt would be enough for one pair. Some people just use fur on one part of the mukluk; the tops or the bottoms. "

PWNHC 2000.11.6
Made by Rosalie Drybones, Behchoko, 1967.

ekwǫ̀wò tł'àɂeh

beaded caribou hide leggings

F.W. "No one would be wearing this type of clothing, it was just made for a celebration. In the old days when people used to trade at old Fort Rae, they used to wear this type of legging.

Before the traders came, people only wore plain caribou hide clothing; jackets and pants. Even the women used to wear caribou hide clothing. When the traders first came they didn't bring clothing. They only brought things like flint, ammunition for the old time fire arms. If people wanted to trade they would trade for tobacco or things for hunting. People didn't know anything about beading then so their clothes were plain."

PWNHC 979.25.2
Made by Frances (Erasmus) Richardson, Behchoko, 1975.

godzǫ tèwhehtsìı

caribou hide loincloth flaps

F.W. "This little flap that the men wore would give them breeze when they were dancing. In those days, if they had the cameras it would have been funny to see!" [laughter]

F.W. "People wore leggings and a shirt a long time ago. They needed caribou hide lacing for the front and the waistline otherwise the pants could fall off. There was no elastic or zippers or anything in those days."

PWNHC 979.25.2
Made by Frances (Erasmus) Richardson, Behchoko, 1975.

ʔeh

beaded ‘chief’s coat’ of caribou hide and velvet

B.W. "The trim on the coat is white fox from the barrenlands. It's a small fox. The other materials used are velvet and beads with caribou hide."

PWNHC 979.25.2
Made by Frances (Erasmus) Richardson, Behchoko, 1975.

Reproduced after the style of the 1880s.
Outfit was worn by Tłı̨chǫ Chief Alexis Arrowmaker at 1975 Treaty Days celebrations at Behchoko.

ewò degoo tł'àʔeh

man's caribou hide summer shirt and pants

B.W. " The women used to wear skirts made of hide. All the clothing was hide. The women didn't wear pants."

PWNHC 979.10.25a,b
Maker unknown, Behchoko, 1978.

ewòʔea

child's caribou hide dress

F.W. "For little girls, the dresses were usually longer. They would go all the way to the ankles so that their legs wouldn't show. Even women wore long dresses all the way down. They didn't have stockings so sometimes the women used white hide to make something like a stocking. As for the feet, they wore moccasins or liners of caribou hide with fur on it for their feet."

PWNHC 979.10.28
Maker unknown, Behchoko, 1978.

PWNHC 998.36.1 Made by Marie Quitte, Gamètì, 1966.

Deghǫʔeh

caribou hair coat

B.W. "I made Francis a caribou hair coat twice. The last one I made was probably in the 70's when we were still using dog teams. At that time we went to Deline to visit the old prophet Naedzo with other families. We had two children then and we went all the way there with a dog team. Francis wore his coat like this and when he was there he gave it to the old prophet as a gift."

How many hides did it take to make this?
B.W. "For a coat this size it would take five caribou hides with the hair on [young caribou]. We really look at the colour of the hair when we make a jacket. The beginning of August is a good time to collect caribou hides for clothing because at that time the hair is not too thick, thin or long. In August, the young caribou calves are so beautiful in colours. The colours can be really dark brown or some can be brownish. There are three types of colours. That's what we look for. We can make designs on jackets just from the different colours of hair. When we collect hides the hair on the stomach part is not that long so that part of the hide can be used for trimming. We can make all kinds of designs along the cuffs."

How long did it take to make a coat like this?
F.W. "To make a coat like this it takes a long time because you have to tan one side of the hide."

…continued from page 29

B.W. "When I'm working on the inside of the hide, I moisten it first. After that I use whitefish liver and spread it on the inside of the hide. Then I put the two sides of hide together and put it away in a cool place. Every day I put it over a bit of fire, enough to heat up the liver, and then I scrape the liver off with a scraping tool. I can tell it's ready when it makes a certain noise when I scrape it! Then it turns out well and is ready to use!"

F.W."If it doesn't get soft, you have to re-do the process again. Even one hide takes a long time to tan. Women used to take babiche, maybe two or three strands and twist it together to make a strong rope. After that, they tied one end of the babiche over here and one end over there. They took the hide and put it over the babiche. They tried to soften it by going back and forth over the babiche. Sometimes it took quite a while to soften the hides.

To tan the hides is very hard work and takes a lot of time. I remember, close to Christmas one year, you could hear it in all the other tents. The noise of the hides going back and forth over the babiche [makes the noise]. Sometimes the women would do it but even the families would help because it takes a lot of muscle work.

When you wear this type of coat and pants in cold weather of minus 40 or colder, you can even sit on the sled as it goes over a lake and you won't feel the cold. That's the reason the women made coats and pants for the whole family. "

lıhsà

cotton shawl

B.W. "When we were younger, women used to wear these for tea dances."

F.W. "A lot of women wore these when they went to church or for gatherings or for just around town. When we were young , all the elderly women wore those. Even in the 60's we saw women wearing those. The shawls were only black in colour. "

F.W. "My mother wore that kind and so did Bernadette's mother."

PWNHC 989.13.1
Owned by Alice Beaulieu who wore it for her wedding in 1922 in Behchoko (at the age of 16). The shawl was given to her by her groom. Alice was born 1906 and lived in Whatì.

ts'ohwheh

porcupine quillwork belt

B.W. "The person that did this must have been really skillful to do this type of work".

Who would have worn that belt?

B.W. "It must be for someone with a small waist or stomach!"

PWNHC 987.94.1
Maker unknown, Behchoko, dates from the 1930s or 1940s.

gahwòhts'ah

hood made of looped strips of hare [rabbit] skin

B.W. "When we lived in the bush we would cover our head with rabbit fur to keep warm. Rabbit fur is really warm."

PWNHC 983.14.2
Maker unknown, Fort Providence, 1983.

gahwòhts'ò èhtł'ɻ̨

blanket made of looped strips of hare [rabbit] skin

B.W. "I haven't made anything with rabbit fur yet but this blanket was made by my late sister. A blanket takes a lot of rabbit furs. This blanket could take about twenty rabbits to make it. With one rabbit pelt you have to cut it around and around to make a long strip and then kind of twist it. Then it has to be attached to the next strip. When it gets really long then you have to start weaving it. The blanket can be bigger but it depends on how many rabbits you get. The skins can't be dried too much before you work with it or else it will break. Today I don't know anyone who can make a rabbit blanket. People don't do that anymore."

F.W. "Most of our elders up the river near Fort Norman told us stories about when it was very cold. Some days the kids were so cold that their parents would make a parka out of rabbit skins. If they made it really well, without any gaps it would protect them from the cold. At the same they would make them pants and if they were careful of their clothing so that it didn't rip and tear, it would keep them warm, even in the cold weather."

B.W. "I don't like to make rabbit skin blankets . Too many lice!"

F.W. "If there was lice on the rabbit skin blanket we wouldn't sleep all night. So if we gave that blanket to the newlyweds they won't sleep either!!" [laughter]

PWNHC 988.58.1a
Made by Elizabeth Chocolate, Behchoko, 1988.

A story about a couple inside *Weyìıts'atłaa*

F.W. and B.W.

"This story is about the mountain called **Weyìıts'atłaa** . There is a legend about how the man and the woman got into the mountain. It started way back in Great Bear Lake. Now the community there is called Deline. (In **Tłı̨chǫ** we say '**Dèlı̨ı̨**').

It used to be called "Edalè" way back when the fur traders came. (Edalè means 'exchanging'). In those days there was a hunter who had two wives and they were really beautiful. (In those days a man would have more than one wife.) They were very skillful and they did all the work for their husband. Because he was a great hunter and a powerful man they were able to survive. They helped each other. When the man went hunting he had to travel far and he carried all his weapons with him. The weapons all came from animals and the land.

Even when he made canoes he made sure the canoes were really well made and the way the women sewed the birch bark on the canoes was very well done. It was hard work. He made sure that water never seeped through the birch bark.

From there (Edalè) he went down the river, past Great Bear lake and the big lake next to that and all the way to Hottah Lake. Then he went past Gamètì, Faber Lake, Sarah Lake, Mazenod Lake, Hislop Lake and all the way down the river. He got to the area called 'Tata ah' (its along the river); there are a lot of islands there that we don't always see if we go down the other side of the river.

…continued from page 36

He came across a tipi. The tipi was made of moose hide and there was a woman there. She was a nice, beautiful woman sitting in the tipi. He stopped there and asked this woman, "Come with me." She said, "No I can't" because the man she lived with was a great hunter and a very, very powerful medicine man. He could do evil things so she was afraid of her husband. But the other man kept insisting and he took the woman with him along the river, 'Sahk'ede'; the first big river that goes south.

As soon as he got onto the portage he saw a canoe coming after him. He told the woman to get in the canoe and they went to the next portage down the river called 'Behk'odè'.

Just as they got to the mouth of the river he knew that the other canoe was right behind him so he was afraid of what the other man would do to him. For sure the man would do something to kill him. It was on the river and he couldn't go on to the big Marion Lake .

He had no choice but to go to Weyìts'atłaa, the mountain. As soon as he got to the shore he pulled the canoe onto the shore. Then he lifted up a big rock and he told the woman to go under it. So they both went under the rock into the mountain.

As soon as the other man came, he was so angry. He started using lahwhı. It was a big bone spear. The hunter was so angry that he started to stab that spear into the rocks on top of the mountain. "Dı dı dı" was the sound that it made.

…continued from page 37

Every time he stabbed his spear into the rock it would go in. Then he would go and try every part of the top of the mountain. He could hear the man and woman so everywhere he heard voices he tried cutting through with the spear. Finally he couldn't get through to them. He yelled out to them in the mountain, “you’ll remain stuck in there for as long as this land lasts.”

Today, when you pass the mountain, you can see that way on top of the mountain the rock is cut off, kind of like a chair. You can see it. When the man was so angry, he had stabbed on and on and crunched it with his spear until a big piece of the rock came off. That's why it looks like a chair where that piece of rock is gone.

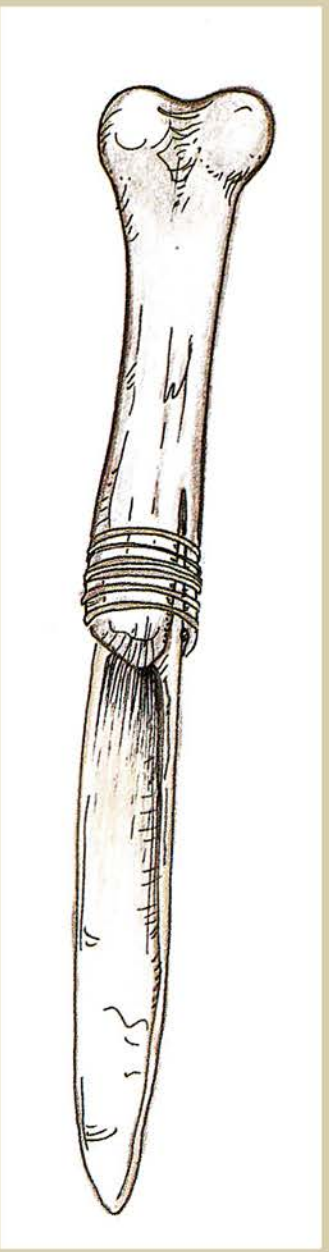
He said "From now on, you will never ever get out of the mountain. You will always be there forever."

Today when people dream about the mountain it is full of people inside the mountain. In their dreams they visit inside the mountain and they see the faces and the front parts of people who are there. All their belongings are there too; their dog teams, whatever they travel with. The one thing people who are dreaming don't see is the back of those people. They only see the front.

…continued from page 38

So when people go to the top of the mountain to the part that is like a chair, they put an offering. Our elders say you can put an offering there for health or women can put an offering there when they can't have babies. If women put an offering there, the mountain will give them their child. There are a lot of other stories related to that area."

Photo credit:
GNWT/ECE



edzagwòʔǫhtsı̨

bag made of caribou leg skins

F.W. "People made different types of bags from caribou hide. They made bags like this for packing dry meat and meat that they harvested. In those days there was no canvas. They used this kind of bag for packing gear and food supplies. When they made bags like this for hunting they usually made them bigger than this."

PWNHC 989.11.1
Made and used by Elize Murphy, 1940s, Snare Lake area. [Eliza (1909-1988) was the daughter of Chief **Mǫwhì** *who signed the treaty in Rae in 1921].*

dedìɪtsɪawò etsı̨wò

moose skin bag sewn with sinew

F.W. " This bag is made out of baby moose hide. Vital's mother kept things for a long time and when she gave something to Vital he kept it for a long time too. One time she gave him a dollar and he kept it for a long time. That's why he said "I never run out of money!" Vital was probably one of the first ones to go to residential school . A lot of them were taken away to school and taught how to speak English. He was one of the first."

PWNHC 2000.11.5
Belonged to Vital Thomas. Made by his mother in the Behchoko area, about 1916 or 1917.

xàadzàa etsı̨wò

caribou skin bag with cotton fabric collar

F.W. "This is a scraped white caribou hide. It's good to keep dried meat in a bag like this. Snare Lake people carried bags like this. There are ways of preserving meat when you're travelling or hunting by boat. Especially if you're travelling all the way from the barrenlands. When men were collecting hides, they took the hair off the hides and dried them. When it was time to leave, and all the meat was dried, the hide was placed on the ground. All the dry meat was placed side by side in two layers that were covered with thin caribou hides like the one from this bag. Fat was put in there too. After that they covered it with another hide and made a bundle, a really good bundle. They tightened it with string from each angle so it was really tight and then they made sure that nothing could get in between the hides. When they left the barren lands, they put it in the boat. Going over portages nothing got through the bundle, not even dust. The caribou hides really preserved the meat. The meat tasted fresh. The way the bundles were made, a person could have two packsacks and put the bundle on top of it. That's how they went over the portage. A lot of the times it's the men who have the knowledge of how to make a good pack to go over a portage. Those men really know how to pack their gear and how to place it in a canoe. Even though they have several bundles, it all fits in the canoe. If they go with people who don't have the knowledge, the canoe looks all lumpy."

PWNHC 2007.5.1 Made by Noella Kodzin, Wekweti, 2007.

edzagwò etsı̨wò

bag made of caribou leg skins sewn with sinew

F.W. "This bag is called **etsı̨wò**. *People used to put their pemmican in here but you can put your dry meat or your bannock in it too. In the old days there was no such thing as ziploc bags or plastic, so this was the only kind of bag that people put their food in. Dried food used to be in here because this type of bag keeps it fresh and it keeps the taste of food that is in there. Women would pick berries and put their berries in there too. So a lot of times bags were very important to have."*

Is it waterproof?
B.W. "When it rains hard, things will get wet because it's sewn together. The water will go in the seams. When it rains, things were covered with a dried hide."

PWNHC 987.94.8
Maker unknown, Behchoko, dates from the 1930s or 1940s.

dedìıbàaghòò

bag made of looped caribou hide

F.W. "People would put hunting gear in those kinds of bags but no meat. Just some things that they had to carry and pack."

PWNHC 987.94.2
Maker unknown, Behchoko, dates from the 1930s or 1940s.

Yamozha and the Giant Wolverine

Yamozha woke one morning and cut down a birch tree to make a bow. After working on his bow for some time, he began to walk south. Eventually he reached **Hodǫ̀ǫ̨dzoo**, a place where people slid for good luck.

Here he found that **Nǫ̀gha** (wolverine) had placed sharpened stakes at the bottom of the slide to trap people. **Yamozha** decided that he would make **Hodǫ̀ǫ̨dzoo** safe for people again, so he quietly approached the stakes and carefully slid his caribou skin shirt over one of them. Twisting his nose until it bled, he covered the top of the stake with blood, and then pretended to be dead. Soon **Nǫ̀gha** came by and took **Yamozha** back to his camp in a large bag made of babiche and bark. **Yamozha**, through use of his power, freed himself and killed **Nǫ̀gha** though letting the wolverine's family escape unharmed. In this way **Yamozha** made **Hodǫ̀ǫ̨dzoo** safe for people to slide at again.

Story courtesy of PWNHC
Bottom photo credit: National Museums Scotland

whaèhdǫǫ̀ ts'ǫ́ k'ılıbò

birch bark basket sewn with spruce root

F.W. "When people used bark to make containers they could drink out of, they would be clean. People used roots to sew the baskets or cups. They would be waterproof if you made them the right way. When you take a root out of the ground you pull it out and then you split it. You split it straight and even, to the size that you want so you can use it.
If you put the inner bark of the tree on the inside of the container it will be smooth inside. Some containers were as big as a basket and when people were doing some work and they needed water, they would have a birch bark basket of water beside them. Sometimes they made a lid for it so that dirt wouldn't get inside."

PWNHC 983.69.1
From Slavey Point near Hay River. Maker and date unknown.

dedìıbàaghòò

moose stomach bag

F.W. "This is part of the moose stomach. The reason it is big is because it was stretched when it was wet and stuffed with something and it dried like this. You can eat this too by cooking it on the fire or boiling it. It's like roasting marshmallows when it's fresh. You just put it on the fire a bit and then you eat it. We usually use the stomach from caribou more often. We put bone grease in there and bone marrow too. Once it's full it can be tied up or sewn and it preserves the fat for a long time, even through the summer!"

B.W. "Our women never would attach a piece of hide like this to the stomach because it already has an opening. They would just use the stomach and tie it together. I've never seen one like this. Once you harvest the stomach from the moose or caribou you have to take everything out of it and clean it out really well. Right now you're looking at the inside of the stomach. It has been turned inside out. We also used this stomach to collect blood for making blood soup."

student - "It's interesting because it's basically a food as well as a storage container! It's both!"

PWNHC 2012.13.2
Made by Ricky Andrew, Tulita, 2012.

k'ɪtǫ

birch bark container

F.W. "Birch bark containers were used for collecting water and for dishes because we didn't have utensils or eating ware. Because we have those things now, we're not using birch bark like our ancestors did. Our people used to use baskets like this and some were bigger than this. A lot of our women made these baskets for berry picking or whatever they needed to use it for."

B.W. "When I was young my family used to make big open birch bark plates. They used to put fish in them."

F.W. "We peeled the bark in the spring time when the sap is running. We peeled the bark by putting a long stick and rolling the bark off the tree onto the stick. If you just use your fingers, you might rip the bark."

From left to right on previous page:

Birch bark container made of folded birch bark and spruce root
PWNHC 981.21.2
Found on Simpson Island, East Arm of Great Slave Lake. Maker and date unknown.

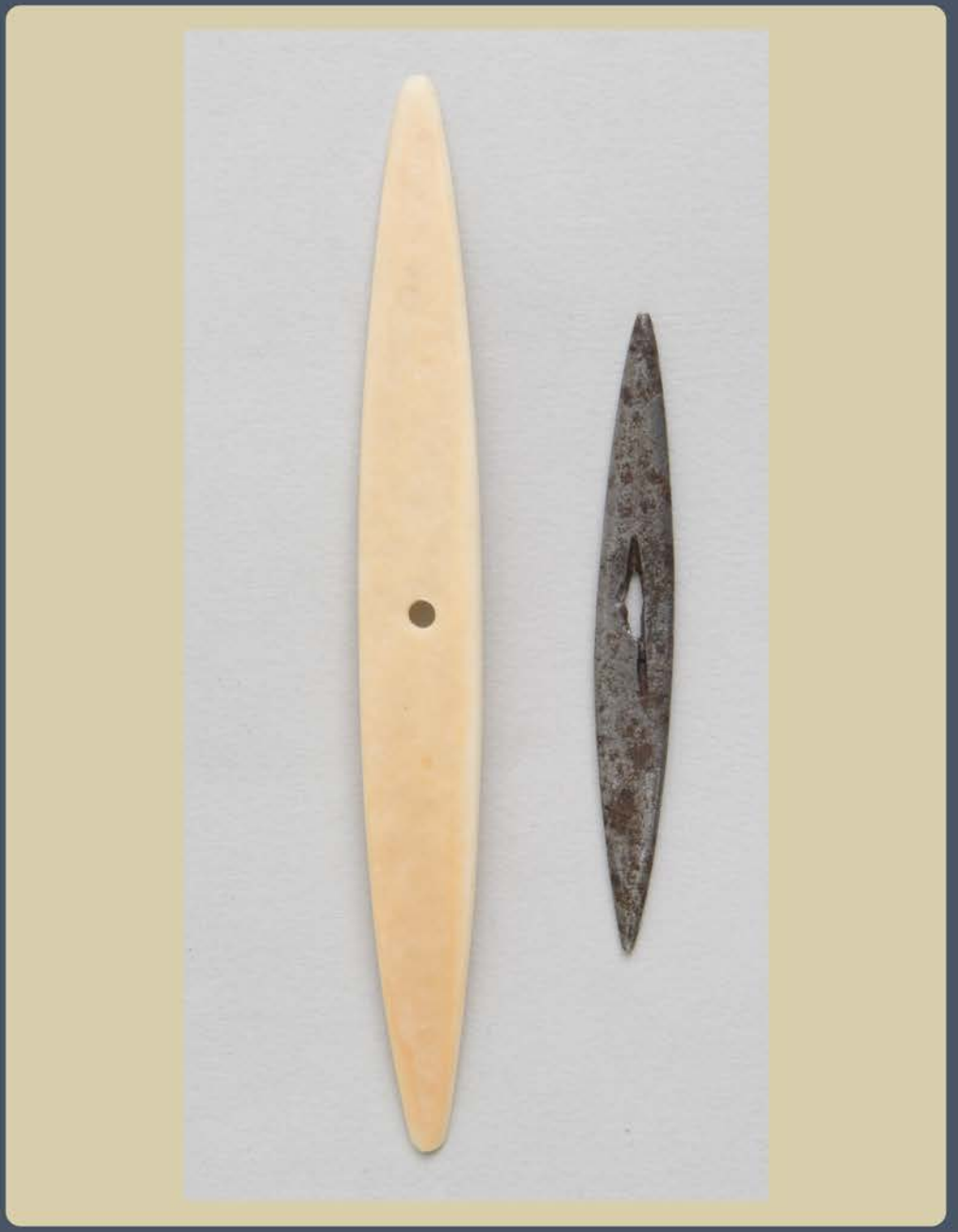
Birch bark drinking cup
PWNHC 991.119.1
From **Dı Naı Tso Wodo**, *Faber Lake. Belonged to Wetade.*

ʔaagah

bone snowshoe lacer

F.W. "These tools are used like a needle for weaving the babiche on snowshoes."

PWNHC 979.10.16
Maker unknown, Behchoko, about 1978.



k'eedzeh

two handed scraper

F.W. "You can make this scraper by splitting a caribou leg bone in half. One side of the bone is used to form the scraper. Some people can use a big knife to make the scraper or some people can use an axe to make it. They sharpen it with a rock or knife. Sometimes they wrap each end so that the person holding the tool doesn't get sore hands. They scrape the outside and inside of the caribou hide with this tool. Some women use a knife to take the hair off a hide. Today some women even use hair clippers to take the hair off of hides!"

PWNHC 998.11.3
Made by Frank Black, Behchoko, 1998.

PWNHC 2010.10.3
Belonged to Madeline Judas Sr., Wekweti, 1990-2000.

ìghoò

scrapers

F.W. "This tool is a different type of scraper. After you take the flesh off the moose hide, you put it on a frame and run the string around the hide to tie it onto the frame. The hide dries up. You scrape the hair off the moose hide with this tool. You can use it with one or two hands."

B.W. "When you scrape the hide you can see the sunlight through from the other side and you can tell how thick the hide is. That way you won't overdo it and rip the hide. We use ashes to mark the sections that need to be worked on. These tools are made from big files. They have to form the scraper by heating it with fire. They make it sharp on both sides with another file. If the men know the wife or grandmother needs a tool, some men will have ideas on what to use to make tools. The men knew how to make their own tools from the materials that were on hand."

From left to right on previous page:

Double-ended scraper
PWNHC 2003.7.2 Use by Elise Liske, Yellowknife area, 1940-1990.

Hide scraper with metal blade. Long handle is wrapped with caribou hide
PWNHC 998.11.2 Made by Frank Black, Behchoko, 1998.

Hide scraper with metal blade and wooden handle wrapped with fabric
PWNHC X965.11.1 Origin and maker unknown. Early 1960's.

From left to right on previous page:

enǫ̀kwah - **flesher**

B.W. "When we want to flesh the inside of the moose hide, we put it on a stump or a tipi frame so that it doesn't fall on the ground. We use this tool to take the flesh and meat off the hide. We can finish that work in one day. It depends how big the hide is. This tool works really quickly. Once you start doing it, it just kind of peels off with this tool.

F.W. "In the old days they didn't have steel tools to take the flesh off the hides. They used bone tools. It's made from the lower leg bone of the moose. When the edge of this tool is really sharp you can take the flesh off right away. To make it sharp they could file it or rub it with a certain type of rock. You can use this type of tool to flesh beaver skins too. Ice chisels were made in the same way with the same type of bone tool on the end of the chisel. You would add a long pole to it so you could chisel the ice."

From top to bottom on previous page:

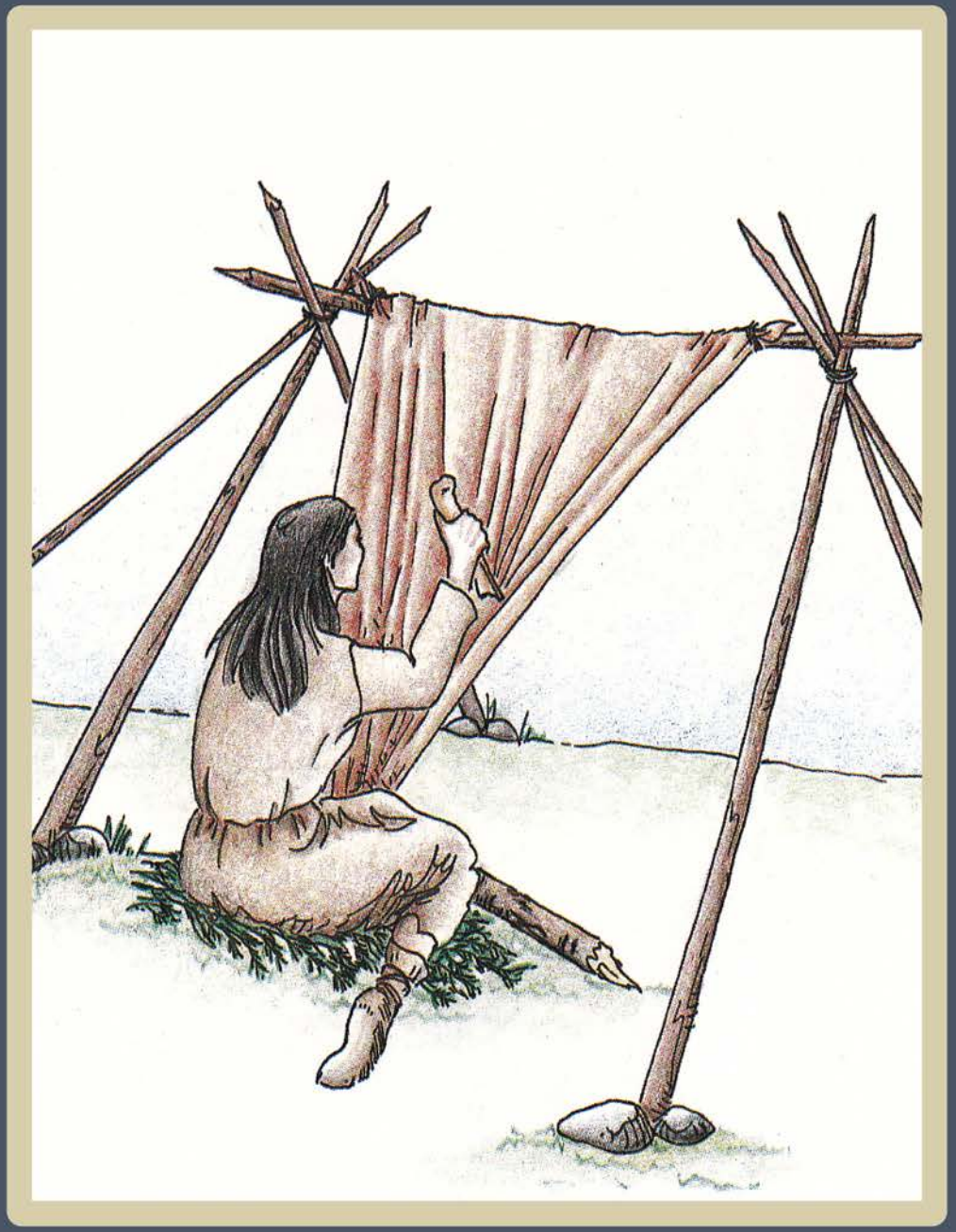
Flesher made of moose leg bone, with hide strap
PWNHC 979.10.36 Maker unknown, Behchoko, about 1978.

Flesher
PWNHC 979.10.35 Maker unknown, Behchoko, about 1978.

enǫ̀kwah netsà-lea - **beaver skin scraper**

(made with caribou bone)

PWNHC 998.11.1 Made by Frank Black, Behchoko, 1998.



Moose hide scraping story

B.W. "There was once a young woman who was really fond of a young man. Finally the young man took her in. One day, the young man killed two moose. The women wanted to show off her skills so that the man would think she was smart and had all the skills that a woman needed. When the young man came back with the two moose, they put up two tipi frames and put the two hides on it. She started to flesh the moose hides with the enökwah and she started to go from one moose hide to the other; back and forth, back and forth. Finally towards the end of the day she was exhausted. If she didn't complete the work, the man wouldn't take her in again so she really wanted to finish the hides. All day she kept on going from one hide to the other. Finally she was so tired that she fell asleep in the daylight. She fell asleep against the moose hide in the sun and the hide started to dry up. The man saw her and thought , "She won't do any better in the future so I might as well leave her". So he just left her sleeping with her head leaning on the moose hide!"

photo credit: GNWT/ECE

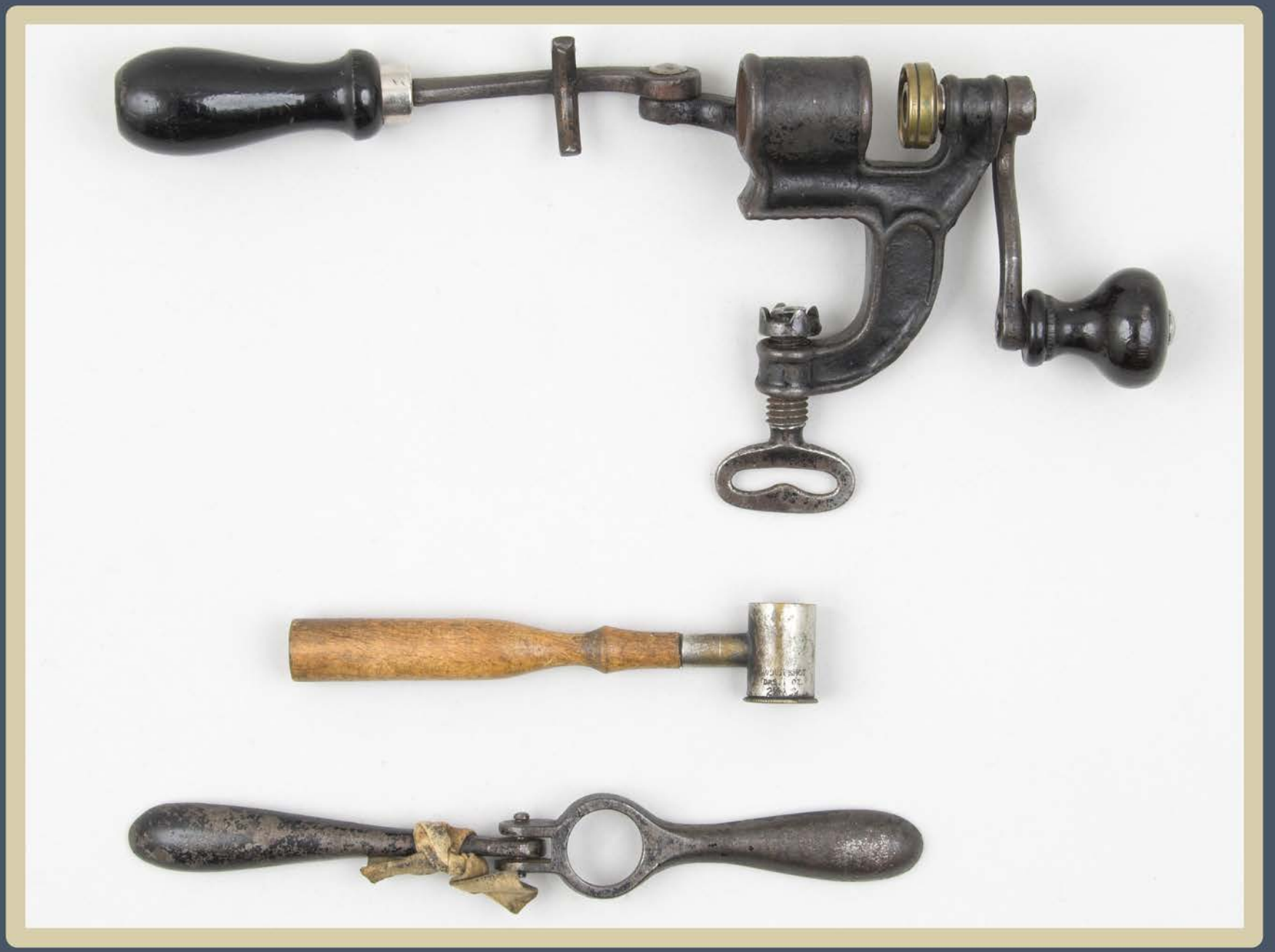
kwe kwetè

hide scraper with stone blade

F.W. "The rock on this scraper is from the barrens. There is a lot of this type of flat rock in the barrens. People would look for this kind of dark smooth rock for scrapers like this."

B.W. "This scraper is used when the hide is kind of dry and stiff. They use this to scrape any parts that are kind of stiff. You hold the tool and go down the hide, then you go up the hide and then you go sideways; back and forth until you see that the hide is getting softer. The rock scraper works better than the metal scraper. It's also used when you're scraping beaver hides on the inside or even wolverine pelts."

PWNHC 2007.1.1 Belonged to Margaret Lafferty. It was her first scraper, made by her mother Madelaine Dryneck. Behchoko, mid-1930's.



wet'à kwìikǫ̀ǫ̀ gehtsı̨

shotgun making tools (shell crimper, powder measure, cap remover)

F.W. "People used this to make some sort of bullet , like a shotgun shell. The tip was steel and the rest was like a wrapper. I've seen my dad use tools like this. Before they made those, people used round bullets [musket balls]. Next came shotgun shells, then after that they put the powder in there. Somehow they had to get the bullets to shoot out of the gun so they put the flint powder in there. Then they had to shove a cloth in there and light it. When it hit the flint, and with the heat, only then the gun would fire. It takes time to shoot a gun. But what they liked about those first guns was that they didn't have to use bows and arrows!"

R.M. "It's important for us to know how those guns and ammunition worked long ago. The words that go with these things are not heard very often anymore."

PWNHC 985.2.1, 985.2.2, 985.2.3
Belonged to Johnny Migwi from the Marian Lake area.

From left to right on previous page:

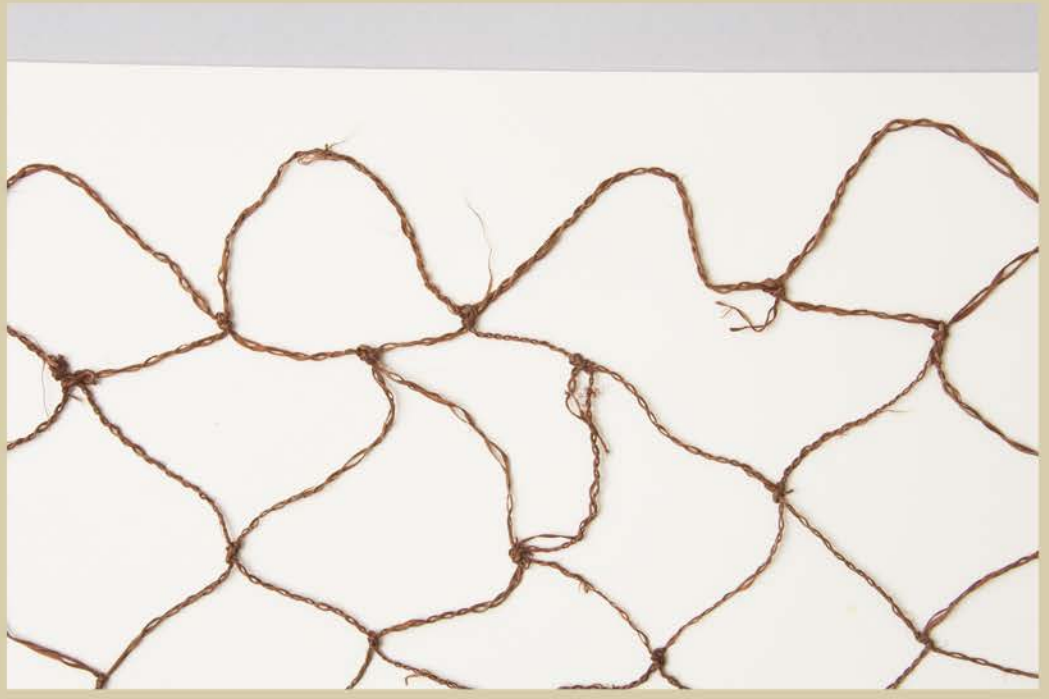
ejɪedè kwɪìkǫ̀ǫ̀ weyìɪ whetɬ'ɪɪ

powder horns

F.W. "This horn is for the gun powder. They put the powder in there with another type of funnel. It is made from the horn of a bison or muskox. "

PWNHC 983.55.1
Used in the Enodah (Trout Rock) area, early 1900s. Made of cow horn.

PWNHC 2000.11.7a,b
Made of cow horn. From the early 1900s, used in the Detah area.



From left to right on previous page

k'àlaàghaa - fish net needle (“shuttle”)

B.W. "The larger tool is used for mending or making fish nets. The smaller one is used to string the blue string onto the net before they set it."

F.W. "We have another tool that looks like a square. That's what we use to make the size of the mesh in the net. In Tłı̨chǫ it's called 'The eye of the fish'. That was a really important tool for making fish nets."

PWNHC 977.32.39
Maker unknown, Yellowknife, 1970s.

k'àlatǫǫ̀mı̀ı̀ - part of a fish net made of willow

B.W. "The nets that our people used to make a long time ago were made from the inside bark of the willow. They mended that into fishnets. Because it's willow they had to keep it moist all the time; in the summer and the winter. If they didn't it would dry up and break."

PWNHC 2000.11.2
Made by Phillip Huskey's mother-in-law Behchoko, around 1962.

detsɻxàà

knives

F.W. "My grandfather died when he was 99 years old . He told me that this tool was so important for men as a knife and as a shaver.

When they made sleds, the men had to shave off the wood on the inside and outside of the log. They used this tool for all the woodworking that they did. In the old days bone was used as a shaver like this tool. It might not be too sharp but they had to make do with what they could find. "

From top to bottom on previous page

'Crooked' knife
PWNHC 997.10.2 Belonged to Pierre Liske Sr. of the Yellowknife area.

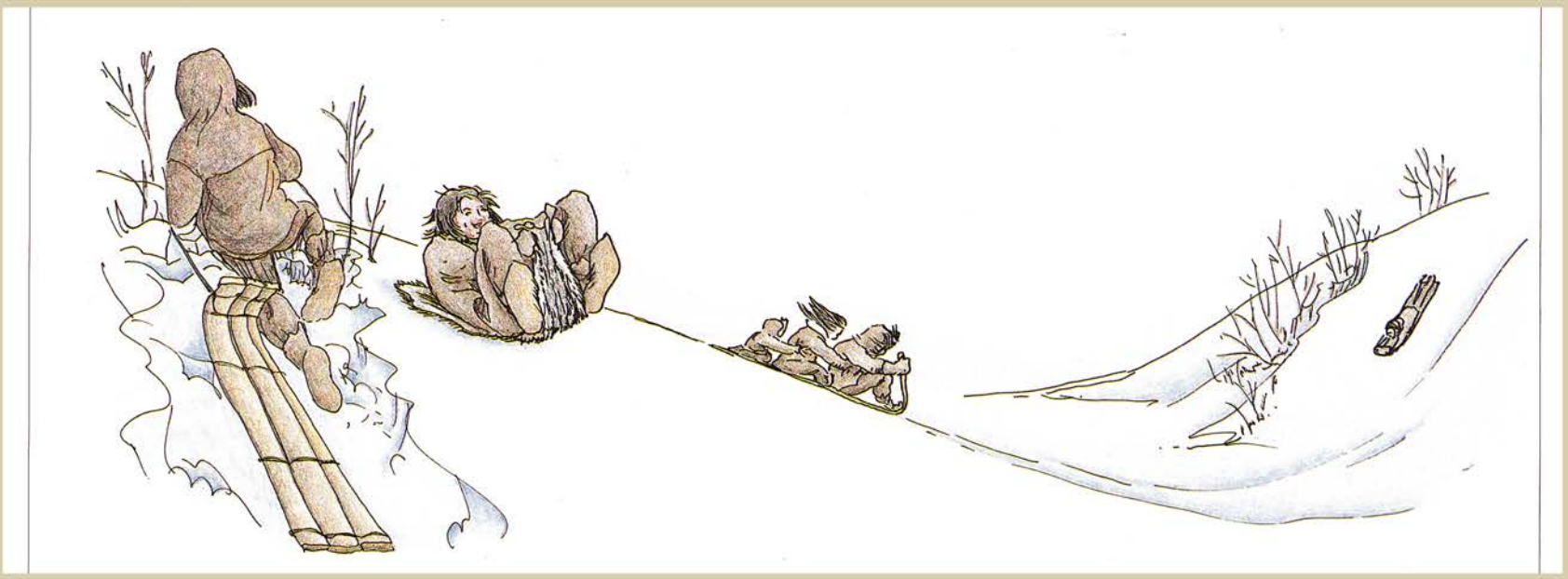
'Crooked' knife with birch handle
PWNHC 996.45.1 Made by Joe Suze Mackenzie, Behchoko, 1996.

whaèhdǫǫ̀ ts'ǫ
nı̨htł'èejı̨ı̨kw'à wet'à dedıı

Victor orthophonic victrola

F.W. "Some people had something like this. There used to be a man who lived in Behchoko and he worked for the HBC. After working there he must have earned items like this."

PWNHC 2010.8.1a-h
Record player enjoyed in the Henry Lafferty household in Behchoko from the 1930s to the 1960's.



ekwǫ̀wògohzìì

caribou hide ball stuffed with moss

F.W. "In the early summer when people all came together after the muskrat season, they came to one area and played all sorts of games. The main game they played was the moss ball game. They made a small caribou hide moss ball and tied it really tight so that the ball fit in your palm. The men started by throwing it back and forth to each other. As soon as they could, the women started to try to get the ball away from the men. The men tried to get it out of the women's hand. They kind of competed to see who was the strongest. Because that game was so fun, even the elderly women and men would join in. Sometimes they played it all night long because it doesn't get dark in the early summer. In the winter time they made sleds for themselves out of part of a tree. They would cut it and trim it and kneel on it with one knee. Some parents would make nice sleds for their kids by putting two pieces of wood together."

R.M. "It was kind of like a snowboard in the old days!"

PWNHC 2010.12.60 Colville Lake, 1962.
Photo credit: GNWT/ECE

…continued from page 69

F.W "Another activity was similar to a horseshoe game. Each individual would have three throwing sticks and they would throw it as far as they could. Whoever threw it the furthest, the next person had to throw their stick as close as they could to that stick. It went on and on until the last stick was thrown. Whoever threw their stick closest to the first person's stick won the game. Checkers were another recreational activity. The checkers were hand made out of wood. There were also drumming and tea dances for fun. Those were the main social activities that they created among themselves."

zahkak'ekòa, tsekaa gıt'à nàgozee

handmade wooden toy snowmobile

T.S. "I remember seeing kids make toy skidoos. They would take a spool and use it for the back part of the skidoo. It would roll like the track. Slingshots were made too with hide and old bicycle tires."

PWNHC 982.70.17
From a Mackenzie River camp, early 1980s.
Maker unknown.

detsı̨elà tłeht'oò wexè, tsekaa gıt'à nàgozee

handmade wooden toy boat with motor made from a tin container

R.M. "The older children would make their own toys. I remember living in the bush, we used to watch my brothers and others making boats like this. They really spent a lot of time on the propeller as they were really curious as to what kind of sound it would make in the water. After they made the boats they would pull them by running all along the shore. The propeller would make a noise! They also used tin cans to make nice boats. At the back, they would put a little block of wood for the motor and then nail some metal on it for the propeller. They worked with tin cans and scissors but they never cut themselves. They were really skilled!"

F.W. "Some people do really good work even making a little boat. In the old days, because there were no toys for kids, people were busy making this kind of toy. They would take the boat to the shore, tie a string to the boat and then tie the string to a long stick. Sometimes when it would get into the grassy part the kids would get into the water to drag the boats through the water. Even though they would get their pants and shoes wet, they didn't mind. This is how they had fun and kept busy."

PWNHC 973.10.189a,b
Made by youth in Whatı̨, 1953.

dedìıwò behtsı̨̀wò

moose hide toboggan wrapper

B.W. "I've made two sled bags like this. The way that this one is put together is a bit different than the way I make it. She probably used one moose hide to make this bag. I even made the harnesses and the dog blankets for my husband's dog team."

PWNHC 997.10.1
Made by Elise Liske, Yellowknife. Used in the Enodah and North Arm area, 1930s-1940s.

ʔah

snowshoe with moose hide harness

F.W. "This smaller snowshoe is for the early winter when the snow is soft and not that deep. The wood on the frame is from white spruce. If you use birch, you have to take the bark off and do a lot of carving on the wood. The spruce is easier to work with."

PWNHC 2000.11.14a,b
From Whati, 1959. Wood frames made by Bruno Moosenose. Babiche webbing and harness made by Catherine Moosenose.

ʔahcho

snowshoes with moose hide harness

F.W. "The big snowshoes are made for this time of the year [February/March] when the snow blows down and the wind gets strong. The snow gets hard so with this kind of snowshoe you can just walk on the snow without sinking in the snow. When you're hunting caribou you don't have to run after the caribou, you just glide over the snow. You can go after the caribou for a long time and you won't tire yourself out. It's the caribou that get tired because they sink into the deep snow. They get tired and you can catch up to them. These snowshoes are for hunting long distance. I went hunting wearing this type of snowshoe."

F.W. "When the women weave the snowshoe together, every weaving has to be perfect. If one single mistake is made, all the year that the hunter uses the snowshoes, the hunter won't kill anything. It's like bad luck for a whole year. Sometimes if the hunter recognizes a mistake in the weaving, he'll cut off the part where there is a mistake.These snowshoes don't seem to be from our people. The middle part is not the same as our people make them. The Tłı̨chǫ people make the middle part really strong where the foot goes. We can identify different cultures by looking at the front part of the snowshoe and the way it's woven together."

PWNHC 2010.12.4a,b
Made by Bern Will Brown. Caribou babiche webbing done by Todzi. Tulita, 1949.

The Grouse and the Snowshoes

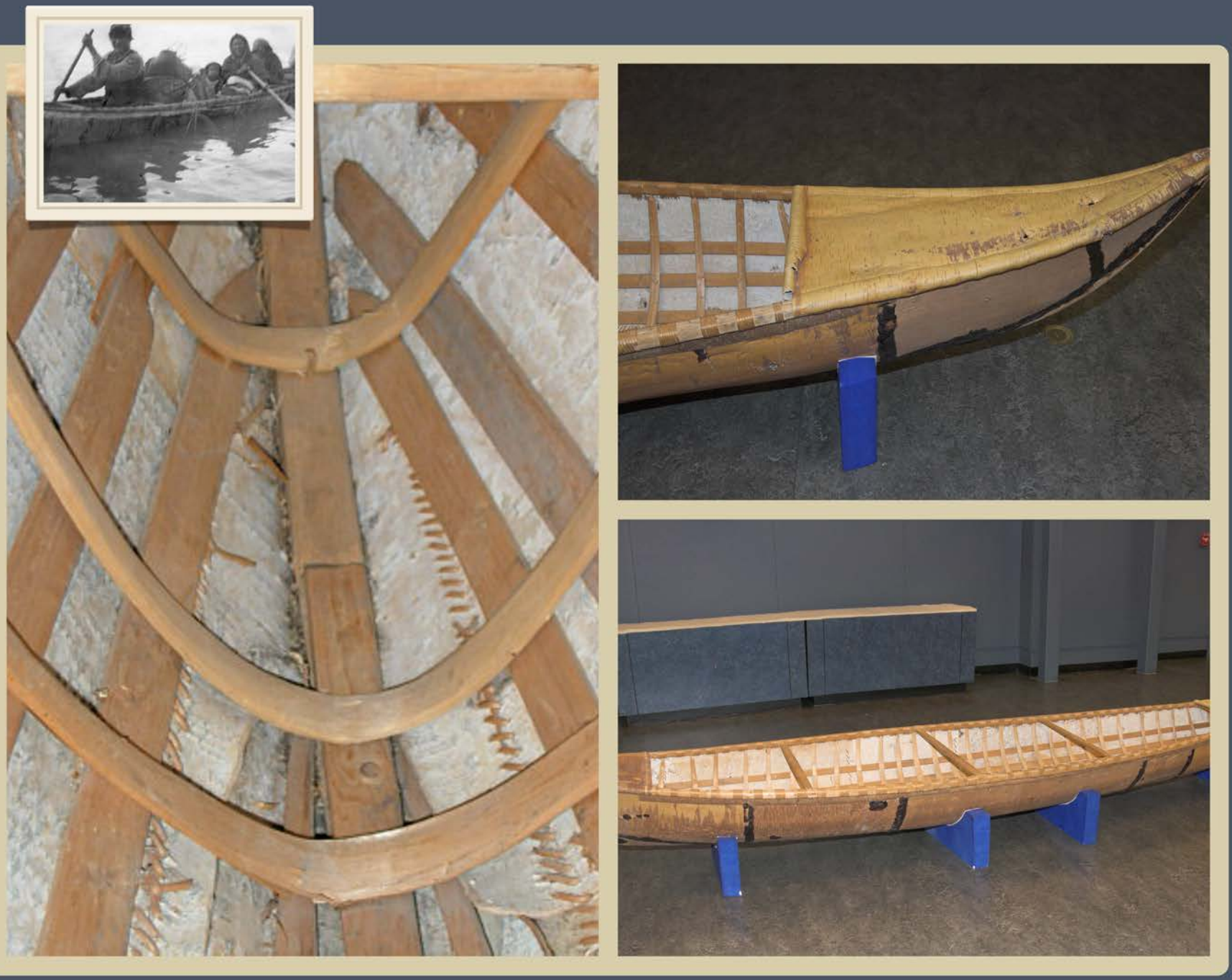
F.W. "A long time ago a man was living in the bush. Every day he wanted to go out in the snow. He tried to make snowshoes but he didn't know how to put the babiche together on the frame. Every day he would try to walk with it, but the snowshoes didn't work. Finally he left the empty frames in the snow. Then he went off to do his work away from his camp. Later on when he came back to his camp, somebody had woven the babiche a little bit on his frames. The next day it was woven a little bit more. And the following day even more was done. At the end of the fourth day the whole snowshoe was woven. The following day the other snowshoe started to get woven. He kept asking himself, "Who's doing that? Who's weaving my snowshoes?" By the time his two snowshoes were ready to be used he looked up and from the tree the grouse [dɪh] flew out. There are two types of chickens [grouse]. 'Dɪh' was the one who had woven his snowshoes. Long ago, people used to learn from the natural beings out on the land. They helped us!Through them we learned a lot of teachings. From them we learned the skills and knowledge of how to do things."

t'oò

paddle

Why is the paddle so narrow?
F.W. "This is how our people made paddles for our canoes. They have a little knob at the end so you don't lose the grip. This is the paddle of the Dene, the kind that we use. This paddle was made recently because it's so smooth. People have sand paper now to make it smooth. It wasn't made with a crooked knife, or you would see the marks and it wouldn't be this smooth."

PWNHC 973.27.1b
Made by Chief Jimmy Bruneau, Behchoko, 1973.



PWNHC 973.27.1a Made by Jimmy Bruneau, Behchoko, 1973.
Black and white photo credit: NWT Archives N-1979-073-055.

k'ıelà

birch bark canoe

Why is the spruce gum black?
F.W. "They have to heat the gum to use it and that's why it gets dark like that. There were no things like nails or glue so everything came from the land like the roots and gum."

How many people does it take to make the canoe?
F.W. "It takes about four people. In the past people just used to help each other. People didn't have much in those days to give to each other, like tea, so they had to gather Labrador tea leaves to make tea to share. It was just good to work together in those days."

Did you have to be really careful on the river?
F.W. "When we were going up or down the river we had to be really careful. We always portaged so that we didn't go on the rocks with the bark canoes. Nowadays we have a lot of smooth canoes but this one, because of all the gum, it's not so smooth and it holds on to the water. It was a lot of work for the people who were using this type of canoe!"

How many people fit in the canoe?
F.W. "Two people and their gear in the middle. Or one person and the rest of the canoe would be filled with gear. In the old days when families used a canoe like this they wouldn't have much gear. Maybe one set of clothes and a sleeping blanket. Hardly any food. They had to catch their food on the way. Not like today where people take all their food with them! When a family of five people used birch bark canoes, the husband and wife would have their own canoes to carry their family and all their gear. Older youth might also have their own canoes."

edzagwò behtsı̨̀

hand-pulled toboggan made of caribou leg skins

F.W. "This was a bag that people used for a toboggan. It's made of caribou leg skins. People used them when they went travelling and if they had no place to sleep they would just use that for sleeping with their blankets. These sleds could be longer. All their camping gear and clothing could go in the sled bag. (Not too much clothing because when they travel they just take one extra set of clothing). I think this small one is just an example."

Why did they use the leg skins of the caribou?
F.W. "The leg skin is faster and more slippery. The hair goes one way and is shorter. You have to sew the skins the way the hair lies so that when you pull it, it slides easily. If you go downhill you can sit on it and go as far as you can!!"

PWNHC 978.27.12 Maker unknown, Behchoko, about 1978. Sketch credit: GNWT/ECE

edzats'ìì, ekè whegǫǫ

dried caribou hooves and tendons

F.W. "These are the caribou hooves and all this is part of the tendons on the caribou legs. When these are taken out of the bone and dried over smoke they are preserved and won't get spoiled. In the old days when there was no fridge or freezers, people dried all parts of the animal. They dried these hooves and saved them all year long. Then when they ran out of food for their children, they would boil them over and over until the hooves fall off and it all gets really soft. It gets really tasty. People eat the inside of them and the broth from the hooves and the tendons makes nice drinking broth. Sometimes they mix rice in the broth and it makes really nutritious food."

Belongs to Karen Wright-Fraser.

dechɻet'àa

two-person crosscut saw

F.W. "When these saws came with the traders, the Métis people were some of the first people to own a saw like this".

How does it work?
F.W. "You need two people, one on each end. If you have just one person using the saw it doesn't work very well."

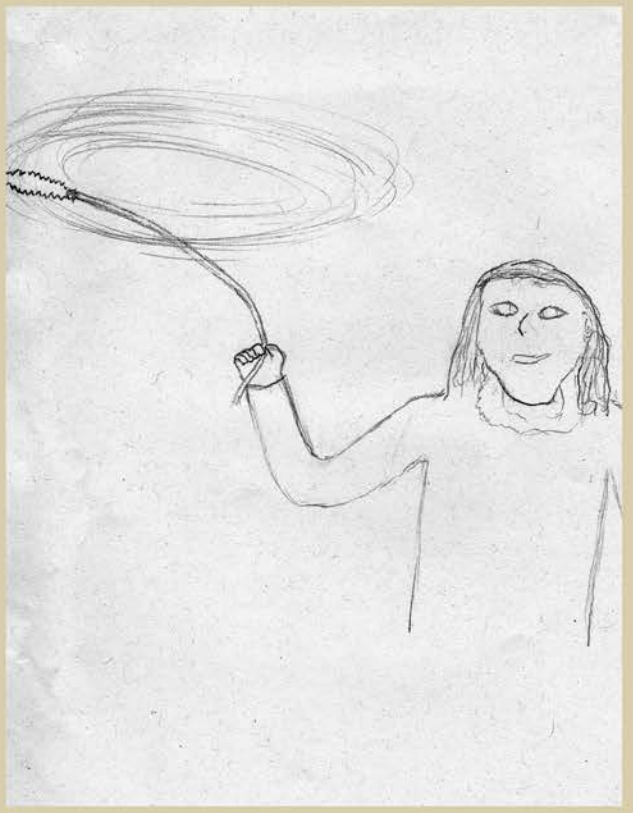
PWNHC 998.15.1
Used by Alex Mackenzie's family from the late 1890s to the 1940s for cutting up logs, N'Dilo area.

satsǫ̀nàʔedlıı

‘Singer’ foot treadle sewing machine

F.W. "Pete Baker used to run a store in Behchoko. It was at the place we now call "Arny's Point". He was a store manager so he probably had those kinds of machines. This kind of machine works with our feet!"

PWNHC 2005.17.3
Belonged to Elise Liske of Yellowknife. She acquired this machine in 1924 when she got married.



Sketch by Alan Moosenose

detsı̨ ts'eehtł'ǫ̀ǫ̨

wind charmer

F.W. "This was used to call the wind to help people. Sometimes people would use a wind charmer to call the north wind to freeze the lake. But when I was travelling with Eddie Weyallon, there was four of us. The wind charmer was wider and we stained it with black charcoal from the fire. Then we tied a string to it and made it go round and round and make that noise. When we used it on the land, the dogs started to howl! It was really noisy so we stopped using it. For us it didn't make a difference in the weather. For some it works and for others it doesn't. This one kind of looks like a toy. When adults make a wind charmer it is usually wider and longer. In my travels I have seen a lot of people using wind charmers to call the wind."

T.S. "We were there when they found this. We brought it back and the story came back with us."

R.M. "On the same trip, Nick Black made an offering to the lake. He made a raft and we had to put our offerings on it. He made a fire on it and he pushed it out into the lake.It was made to get rid of the rain and wind. The next day we had to cross the lake. Different family groups have their own traditions."

F.W. "There is so much traditional knowledge and different groups are aware of different things. For example, if we catch ptarmigan we can cook it in different ways. When we boil ptarmigan, we were told never ever to spill the broth of the ptarmigan on the snow. If you spill the broth on the snow, that night it will blow. It will be really stormy with a north wind and be very, very cold. Never spill the broth on the snow. You can put it by the fire but never in the snow. One day you never know; you might be travelling with your grandchildren. You should keep these things in your mind."

PWNHC T39.

wet'à tsàwò dageèhdaa

fur press

F.W. "Our word for this means fur press means 'what they weigh fur with'. In the old days, guns were long. When a trapper went to trade furs for a gun he had to keep piling the furs along the height of the gun standing up.

But sometimes the furs didn't reach the top of the gun even when all the furs were given to the trader. The next year the trapper had to hand in more furs, until they reached the top of the gun. Only then could he get the gun. The trappers didn't know the price for one fur. It was just the height of the furs when they were piled on top of each other that mattered."

PWNHC 971.9.1
From the Hudson's Bay Company, Yellowknife. Used from the 1930s to around 1970.


0
5cm

kwets'ìikwe

pipe bowls and pieces

F.W. "When pipes came a long time ago, people didn't have tobacco to put in the pipe to smoke. So people used to gather dry leaves from different flowers and plants and use that as tobacco. Later on when they moved to Old Fort Rae, the elderly women used to go way out in the bush with packsacks. They would collect all sorts of berries and flowers with the
leaves and stems and they would pile them in their bags. After that, the women would carry them all the way back to their camp with the leaves hanging out of their packsacks. Some they would dry them, but some they would pound until they were a powdery mixture. They had a tobacco pouch and they would fill that and use it as tobacco."

From left to right on previous page:

Stone pipe bowl with decorative cross-hatching
PWNHC 982.10.1 Found at Winter Lake.

Stone used to make stone pipe bowls
PWNHC 994.36 From Mattberry Lake.

Partially made stone pipe bowl
PWNHC 994.37 From Mattberry Lake.

Stone pipe bowl pieces
PWNHC 994.33 From Mattberry Lake.


0
5cm

kwe satsǫ̀dek'oo

copper and copper tools

F.W. "People used to search for copper in the ground. There's an area past Mesa Lake where people can find it. It is a lot of work to find the copper but in the past they worked hard to find it so they could use it. They used it for arrow heads, knives and spears too. ***Kwe satsǫ̀dek'oo*** *means 'red silver metal' in our language. They used to heat it up to make things with it. Our people knew how to use this before Europeans came. To survive they found things from nature that they could use."*

R.M. "Before the Europeans, our people were professors!"

From left to right on previous page:

Slab of naturally occurring ('native') copper from the NWT.
PWNHC 973.10.191.

Unfinished copper blade, copper 'bar' (copper found on the land was cold hammered into bar shapes before becoming blades.)
PWNHC 993.76.3,.23&.27 Wekweeti, early 1800's.

whaèhdǫǫ̀ kwɪk'ì1 nedèe

muzzle loading musket

*F.W. "When guns first arrived, the Dene people had no word for guns. They called it "**detsɥwexǫ̀ęlę**" meaning 'something that comes out of wood'. They had never seen one before so that's the word they had for it".*

PWNHC 971.14.1
Found loaded, underwater in Meridian Lake. Likely dates from 1800 to 1820.


0
5cm


0
5cm

k'ìì

arrow and arrowheads

F.W. "I never saw my father use bows and arrows but I know that they used to hunt with bows and arrows. Especially for small game like rabbits and ducks, anything that they needed for food. As a little boy they used to make bows and arrows for us to play with for target practice. We didn't have many toys. Bows were very strong in the past. And the hunters were strong too. When they shot an animal with the arrow, it went into the animal and it killed them. That's how strong they were."

From left to right on previous page:

Quartz arrowhead
PWNHC 992.119 KlPp-3-80
Found at Faber Lake, 200-2000 years old.

Arrow
PWNHC 2000.11.1
Made by Harry Bearlake, Behchoko, 1970.

Rhyolite arrowhead
PWNHC 992.119 KlPp-3-84
Found at Faber Lake, 200-2000 years old.

Photo on left: Wheeler DE. 1914. The Dog-rib Indian and his Home. Bulletin of the Geographical Society of Philadelphia 12(2):47-69.
Photo on right:T. Andrews/GNWT

ekwǫ̀wònı̨hbàa
caribou skin lodge

F.W. "The top of the tipi is darker brown from the stain of the smoke. If it just sits still without being used or being rained on, it's going to last."

B.W. " Many of our elders have lived in caribou hide tents like this."

Student: "This was made in the 1800's! It must have been tiring to sew all this. People must have been very patient. They had to scrape all those hides."

F.W. "All our ancestors, your grandparents today, lived in tipis like this. To survive they moved from one area to another following the caribou. Because they were able to survive, we are all here as people. If it wasn't for them, we wouldn't be here. We have something to think about when we see this. We don't realize all the work and all the struggles that our people went through to survive. In one tipi there could have been eight families living and surviving altogether. Imagine how crowded it might have been! In the tipi they didn't have lights or candles so the fire in the middle gave them light. They did everything together. They gathered wood or hunted together, they helped each other. They always had to cook right on the fire as they didn't have pots and pans like today."

How many hides were used for this tipi?
B.W. "There must have been around thirty five hides. "

PWNHC 997.6.1
This skin lodge was purchased from Bear Lake Chief (K'aawidda) in 1893 by Frank Russell, for the University of Iowa. K'aawidda was a trading chief for the Dogrib groups, and traded at Old Fort Rae and Fort Norman. He died in 1913. Many Tåîchô people today can trace their ancestry to Bear Lake Chief. The lodge is decorated with a line of red ochre.

Thank You

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