

Deninu K'ue Ethno-history Report

Dated December 12, 2012



Indian Encampment (awaiting payment of treaty money) at Fort Resolution, 1924
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Methodology

This report had initially been drafted as two separate reports: "A Genealogy of Bands" and "Traditional and Historic Use of the Barren Lands." However, as we collected and added additional information, it soon became obvious that we should divide the report into chapters—we ended up with eight in all. The chapters are as follows: "The History of Fort Resolution and Its People," "Three Northern Athabaskan Groups," "The Land, Animals, and People," "Historic Use of the Barren Lands," "Akaitcho: the Conflict between the Dogribs and the Yellowknives," "Continued Use of the Barren Lands," "A Genealogy of Bands," and "Conclusions and Findings."

The final report is an attempt at comprehensively documenting both past and present Deninu K'ue occupation and use of the region north of Great Slave Lake in an area known as the Barren Lands. In order to do that, it became obvious that we needed to create a context, one that describes who the people are and their lifestyle, changing technologies, cultural imperatives, and history. Without such a context it would be impossible to grasp and understand the changes in hunting, trapping, and fishing practices over time due to the advent of the market economy in the Northwest Territories (NWT)—first based upon trade, now based upon mining.

In order to prepare the report, numerous sources were accessed and key documents and records were annotated. In Chapter IV of the Deninu K'ue First Nation Ethno-historical Draft Report, excerpts from records have been quoted and described chronologically rather than by location, person, or topic. This was done because tracking people and events chronologically provides a linear history that is more easily comprehended by the reader.

As a final note, in the body of several quotes below we have bolded individual phrases or words. We have made these changes to emphasize a certain point or idea within the quote. These alterations would normally require the phrase "emphasis added" to be placed after the quote to acknowledge our changes. Instead, to avoid repetition, we have added this brief preface. Throughout this report we have bolded text for emphasis, and, in every case, it is our doing.

Summary of Sources

Accounts written by the explorers who traversed the region were used to glean a historical snapshot of Northern Athabaskan society, culture, and territorial range during the early- to mid-years of European contact. These accounts were compared and cross-referenced to determine how, when, and why the various tribes of the Great Slave Lake region used and occupied the Barren Lands, the boreal forests, and the transitional boreal forest—the area in between.

Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) records were used to document both the North West Company's and the Hudson's Bay Company's explorations and trading activity with the ancestors of the Deninu K'ue in the Northwest Territories. HBC forts were opened in locations that were convenient to both the HBC and the tribes in order to foster trade. Documenting these events were the factors and chief traders who kept careful, albeit often illegible, records and journals.

As well, these forts attracted missionaries who kept equally careful records, however with a very different focus—that of converting the Indians to Christianity and "civilization." To a large extent, the fur traders and the missionaries had competing interests. The church records and the priests' accounts and journals were also used to track extended families, task groups, local bands, and regional bands through time and space.

By 1900 the government of Canada had become involved in the affairs of the Dènè. Federal government agents created and maintained administrative records focused on tallying and organizing Indians. RG10 microfilm reels, Department of Indian Affairs' files, and Indian and Northern Affairs Annual Reports were used to track tribal and later Band membership and movements.

Ethnographic sources were used to document the material culture, social organization, and kinship systems of the Athabaskan groups. These sources provided information regarding the Deninu K'ue's use of the landscape and its resources.

Finally, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (Yellowknife), the Glenbow Museum (Calgary), and various other archival sources were used to obtain additional information on the cultures, traditions, and relationships with and among the various tribes under discussion.

Preface

As noted above, the following report was originally divided into two chapters. Now, however, it consists of eight. The first, "The History of Fort Resolution and Its People," contains a brief history of the hamlet now known as Fort Resolution. This history is given in order to provide a context for the reader.

The second chapter, "Three Northern Athabaskan Groups," focuses on the tribes in the area, situating them historically in space. In addition, this chapter describes the use and occupation of the land by these groups. It also attempts to discern the continuum of events, both positive and negative, that impact the relationships among the groups, which, as a matter of course, change over time. A brief ethnographic section explores kinship systems and how they function as an organizing principle for the hunt, including the hunt of the distinct caribou herds found in and around Great Slave Lake.

The third chapter, "The Land, Animals, and People," explores the landscape and the various animals that occupy and use it. This chapter also explores the relationship between these animals and the various Athabaskan groups that we have discussed in Chapter II, and how the Indians hunt and use these animals.

The fourth chapter, "Historic Use of the Barren Lands," discusses the documentation surrounding the use of the Barren Lands by the Athabascans who frequent Fort Resolution for trade purposes. The literature describes their hunt of the caribou, white fox, muskox, and other animals, from the late 18th century until the present day. The Deninu K'ue's continuous use of the Barren Lands, despite legislative restrictions, is clearly set out. Despite the establishment of Fort Resolution and their gradual adaptation to a relatively sedentary life, the Deninu K'ue continue to return to the Barren Lands to hunt, trap, fish, socialize, and pursue other cultural imperatives as their ancestors had done for millennia.

The fifth chapter, "Akaitcho and the Dogrib-Yellowknife Conflict," elaborates on a specific moment in history in the 1820s. A myth developed that the Yellowknives had moved south of Great Slave Lake never to return to their traditional lands on the north side of Great Slave Lake. In Chapter V we examine the roots of this myth and the reasons behind its propagation.

The sixth chapter, "Continued Use of the Barren Lands," is intended as a follow-up to Chapter IV ("Historic Use of the Barren Lands"). We conducted three rounds of interviews among Deninu K'ue First Nation (DKFN) members from every age group, and asked questions regarding their current hunting practices, and the hunting practices of their parents and grandparents. The Band members also discussed their concerns regarding contemporary use of the Barren Lands by both native and non-native groups.

The seventh chapter, "A Genealogy of Bands," explores the ways in which, through time, the peoples of the Great Slave Lake region have physically moved, integrated, and divided. It also details just how they have been moved *on paper* through numerous *administrative* changes in the Department of Indian Affairs. The aim of this chapter is to show that the Deninu K'ue at Fort Resolution are, in fact, Chipewyan and Yellowknife (Copper Indian) people, and that with the advent of the Treaty 8 Adhesion of July 26th 1900 and the subsequent annuity payments, they have only *appeared* to embrace a fully sedentary life. They continue to hunt throughout the Great Slave Lake Region and in particular, on the Barren Lands.

The eighth chapter, "Conclusions and Findings," reviews what we set out to establish and how we established it with reference to the evidence found. The overall goal of this report is to establish, without a doubt, the fact that the ancestors of the DKFN were Chipewyans and Yellowknives, and that they have exerted a continued presence in the Barren Lands north and east of Great Slave Lake in the area surrounding Gahcho Kué since time immemorial.

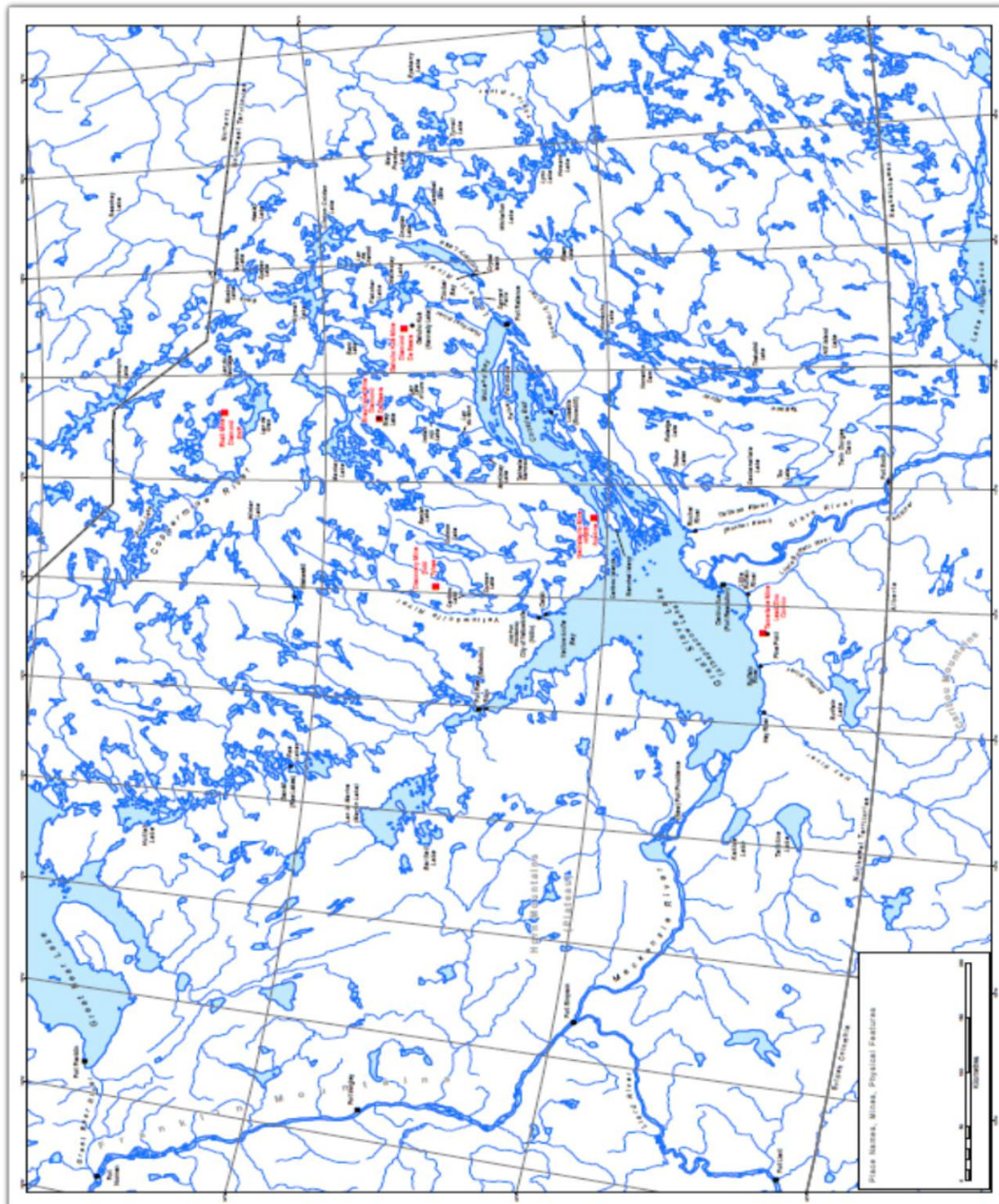
Place Names

For the purposes of this report we have compiled a list, or key, of major landmarks in the Barren Lands in order to more accurately trace the movements of the Chipewyans and Copper Indians/Yellowknives as described in the historic records. The following is a list of these major landmarks and their name changes (if relevant).

1	Aberdeen Lake	17	Dubawnt River	33	McKinley Lake
2	Angikuni Lake	18	Ennodai Lake	34	Muskox Lake
3	Artillery Lake	19	Fletcher Lake	35	Pistol Bay
4	Aylmer Lake	20	Fort Prince of Wales	36	Point Lake
5	Back's Lake	21	Great Fish River (now called Back River)	37	Rankin Inlet
6	Baker Lake	22	Healey Lake	38	Repulse Bay
7	Beechey Lake	23	Hoarfrost River	39	Schultz Lake
8	Bloody Falls	24	Kazan (Hazan) River	40	Sussex Lake
9	Carey Lake	25	Kennedy Lake	41	Taltheilei Narrows
10	Chesterfield Inlet	26	Lac de Charloit	42	Thelon River
11	Clinton-Colden Lake	27	Lac de Gras	43	Timber Bay
12	Contwoyto Lake	28	Lac du Mort	44	Wager Bay
13	Coppermine River	29	Lockhart River	45	Walmsley Lake
14	Crystal Island	30	Marble Inlet	46	Winter Lake
15	Dubawnt Lake	31	McKay Lake	47	Yathkyed-Whoie or Whitesnow Lake
16	Congecathawahchaga	32	Yellowknife River (Beg hoo huley dezzé or Toothless Fish R.)		

The numbers in this list correspond with the map that Robin Tamas of LGL has prepared (map 1), which depicts North West Company and HBC trading posts and forts, mines in the vicinity of Great Slave Lake, and place names used by explorers, side-by-side with their modern equivalents. The map below is for reference purposes only.

Map 1: Map of the Great Slave Lake region with pertinent place names.



Chapter I: Introduction

The History of Fort Resolution and Its People

Hearne, Franklin, Fidler, MacKenzie, and other explorers travelled down the Slave River (then called Athapuscow River) from Lake Athabasca to Great Slave Lake (then called Athapescow Lake). The current site of Fort Resolution is at the mouth of the Slave River on the south side of Great Slave Lake. The North West Company established a fort on Moose Deer Island in 1806 (Peter Usher cited an earlier date of 1786 for the establishment of this fort).¹ Moose Deer Island is one of three islands located in the Slave River delta which bear the same name; in some reports, it is referred to as L'Isle d'Original.² In 1819, in competition with the North West Company, the Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Resolution in its current location—on the shore of Great Slave Lake. The HBC took over the North West Company in 1821, taking full control of the fur trade in Fort Resolution.

Fort Resolution was frequented by members of all of the major Athabaskan groups in the region: Copper/Yellowknife Indians, Slaves, and Chipewyans. The Dogribs, however, did not begin trading at Fort Resolution until the 1880s.³ The Chipewyans, including the Yellowknives/Copper Indians used and occupied lands north, northeast, south, and southeast of Great Slave Lake, with a number of Chipewyan groups occupying the region between Great Slave Lake and Athabasca Lake. The Dogribs lived northwest and west of Great Slave Lake, between it and Great Bear Lake but also along the Mackenzie River. The Slaves lived along Hay River off the southwest shore of Great Slave Lake. And, a specific Chipewyan group, a group that we trace through time in this report, known as the Copper Indians, used and occupied lands north, east, and south of Great Slave Lake and exploited an area from Yellowknife River, east along the shore to Fort Reliance and back toward Rocher River. These peoples, pre-contact, subsisted primarily on caribou meat and fish.

¹ Keith, L. (2001). *North of Athabasca: Slave Lake and Mackenzie River Documents of the North West Company, 1800-1821*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press. p. 166, footnote 4; Usher, P. J. (1971). *Fur Trade Posts of the Northwest Territories*. Ottawa, ON: Northern Science Research Group, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. p. 45.

² Keith, L. (2001). *North of Athabasca: Slave Lake and Mackenzie River Documents of the North West Company, 1800-1821*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press. p. 166, footnote 4.

³ Macfarlane, R., and E. E. (1881). Census of the Population of the District of Athabaska. In General Housekeeping Records and Correspondence Regarding Ile-a-la-Crosse Treaty (Maps and Charts). RG 10, Black Series, Volume 4006, File no. 241209-1, Microfilm reel C-10171, MIKAN no. 2059135. pp. 43 - 44.

The "Northern Indians," or Chipewyans, guided Hearne, Franklin, Fidler, and Mackenzie as they made their way through this region from the south. Both Franklin and Fidler encountered Copper Indians south of Great Slave Lake in the late 1700s and early 1800s.⁴ Franklin, in fact, met his Copper Indian guides on "Moose-Deer" Island.⁵ Much later, in the late 1880s, Warburton Pike met his Copper Indian guides at Fort Resolution.⁶ They took him deep into the Barren Lands toward "Eskimo" territory. Fort Resolution was perfectly suited for the fur trade given its location and function as an area of general congregation.⁷

Priests of the Catholic order "Oblates of Mary the Immaculate" (OMI) and ministers of Protestant denominations established churches in the main settlements around Great Slave Lake in the 1850s. Although the Oblate missionaries had had a presence in Fort Resolution since 1852, they did not have a permanent residence until 1858 when St. Joseph's Mission was constructed (plate 39). In a letter written from St. Joseph's Mission in 1863, Father Emilé-Fortuné Petitot, a well-known priest in Fort Resolution during the 1800s, described the various Indians trading at the Fort and documented the date of Oblate settlement in the region:

The Saint-Joseph's Mission was founded by Mgr Faraud five years ago [1858]. There, I replaced the R.P. Eynard, who left some days after my arrival to visit the Dogrib natives who inhabit the shores of the end of the lake [most likely the north-west corner of the lake]. The Indians who frequent the mission Saint-Joseph are the Montaignais or Chipewyans, whose proper name is Dènè, that is to say, the "real men"; the Yellowknives or Tratsan-ottiné, and the Indians of *lac aux Buffles*: Edjiéré troukénadé [translated from French].⁸

⁴ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). pp. 207-208; Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chipewyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society. p. 540, 546-547, & 549.

⁵ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). pp. 309-310.

⁶ Pike, W. (1967). The Barren Ground of Northern Canada. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 139.

⁷ Pike, W. (1967). The Barren Ground of Northern Canada. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 179.

⁸ Petitot, É. (1863). Letters from Great Slave Lake. September 1863, December 7, 1863, April 3, 1864. In *Missions des Oblats*, 1863, t. 6, pp. 364-382. p. 369.

The history of the Mission, the priests, and the schools is discussed in detail later in this report.

In 1899, Treaty 8 was signed (see Treaty 8 Report Appendix 1). During the Treaty party's travels from Edmonton to Lesser Slave Lake, Fort Chipewyan, Fond du Lac, and finally to Smith Landing/Fort Smith, the Slaves of Upper Hay River convinced treaty commissioners David Laird, James McKenna, and James Ross that they also warranted a Treaty.⁹ In 1900 "[t]he Dogrib, Yellowknife, Slavey and Chipewyan Bands inhabiting the shores of the Great Slave Lake met with the Treaty party at Fort Resolution" to sign the 1900 Treaty 8 Adhesion.¹⁰ In subsequent years, the Great Slave Lake Indians who had signed the Fort Resolution Treaty 8 Adhesion gathered annually in Fort Resolution on "Treaty Days" in order to receive their annuity payments and to get together with friends and relatives.

Throughout the 19th century and the early 20th century, Fort Resolution was the chief trading centre of the Northwest Territories. In 1902, as reported by Hugh Richardson of the 1902 Treaty Party, there were six trading posts in the area.¹¹ By the 1930s, however, the Great Depression took hold, causing many of the free-traders to move on. Ultimately, the HBC and one other post remained in Fort Resolution.¹²

In 1933 gold was discovered in the region surrounding present-day Yellowknife, and in 1937 Yellowknife was established as a gold mining camp.¹³ Fur trading became an occupation of secondary importance to non-Indians, and eventually Fort Resolution lost its status as the economic and administrative centre of the region. Yellowknife became the capital of the Northwest Territories in 1967.

⁹ Fumoleau, R. (2004). *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press. pp. 72, 77, 80, 84, & 93-94.

¹⁰ Fumoleau, R. (2004). *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press. p. 94.

¹¹ Usher, P. J. (1971). *Fur Trade Posts of the Northwest Territories*. Ottawa, ON: Northern Science Research Group, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. p. 41.

¹² Usher, P. J. (1971). *Fur Trade Posts of the Northwest Territories*. Ottawa, ON: Northern Science Research Group, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. p. 41.

¹³ NWT Mining Heritage Society, & Northern Frontier Visitors Centre. (2009). *The Gold Mines Built Yellowknife*. Retrieved August 17, 2012, from <http://www.nwtminingheritage.com/files/frontend-static-mininghistory/The%20Gold%20Mines%20Built%20Yellowknife.pdf>.

As the city of Yellowknife developed, the only two fur trade posts remaining in Fort Resolution were the HBC and Pinsky & Necrasoff (whose business operated between 1920 and 1964).¹⁴ In 1966, the latter was sold to James E. McPherson, who closed it down two years later.¹⁵ The ebb and flow of the market economy of the north necessitated and necessitates the retention by the DKFN members of a subsistence economy based upon traditional pursuits such as hunting and trapping.

As the region's mining activity increased in the Great Slave Lake area, more prospectors entered the north and more sites of potential profit were located. A number of mines have been in operation in the area used and occupied by the Athabascans: Pine Point, Tundra, Salmita, Thompson-Lundmark, Snap Lake, Ruth, Outpost Island, Ptarmigan and Tom, Negus, Giant, Ekati, Discovery, Diavik, Con, Camlaren, Burwash, Beaulieu, Bullmoose, Hidden Lake, and Gahcho Kué are all mines (active and inactive) in the region.

Fort Resolution continued to grow during the 1930s despite the floundering fur trade – likely due to the requirements of the mining sector. Several epidemics had broken out in the region in the late 19th century and early 20th century. By the 1940s, tuberculosis, influenza, and smallpox had reduced the Indian population by two-thirds.¹⁶ In 1938–1939 a tuberculosis hospital was constructed in Fort Resolution to deal with the regional epidemics.¹⁷ Individuals were flown to this hospital from throughout the north.

Several schools were constructed in the area over the years. The Department of Indian Affairs' (DIA) annual report of 1891 described the "Fort Resolution (Boarding)" school as in operation with eight "Pupils on Roll."¹⁸ However, a school of some sort had been in operation since the

¹⁴ Usher, P. J. (1971). *Fur Trade Posts of the Northwest Territories*. Ottawa, ON: Northern Science Research Group, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. p. 46.

¹⁵ Usher, P. J. (1971). *Fur Trade Posts of the Northwest Territories*. Ottawa, ON: Northern Science Research Group, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. p. 46.

¹⁶ Fumoleau, R. (2004). *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press. p. 191.

¹⁷ Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, the. (n.d.). Fort Resolution. Retrieved October 17, 2012, from http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/mapfortresolution.aspx.

¹⁸ Department of Indian Affairs. (1891). Showing the Condition of the various Indian Schools in the Dominion (from which Returns have been received) for the Year ended June, 1891. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1891*. Ottawa, ON: J. O. Patenaude. Part 1, p. 242.

Oblate Missionaries established themselves in town in 1852, with more formal arrangements made in 1858.¹⁹ The school was located in St. Joseph's Mission and went by that name. In 1893 the name of the Fort Resolution residential school was cited, in error, as St. James' Mission.²⁰ St. Joseph's Mission residential school ran until September 1957, when plans to open a Federal Day School (later called Peter Pond School) culminated.²¹ The day students of St. Joseph's Mission were transferred to the Federal Day School, while the boarding school students were moved to Fort Smith's residential school.²²

The DIA employees tasked with overseeing the residential school system took children away from their parents, from homes that were often seasonal in nature, and placed them in residential school. There were only one or two residential schools in the whole of the NWT; consequently, children and their parents were separated by great distances. Families moved to the fort to be near their children, and eventually settled in permanent housing near the fort. This new, somewhat sedentary lifestyle meant that the DKFN members often chose to hunt closer to home. All the same, as we discuss later, the DKFN at Fort Resolution continued to hunt barren-ground caribou and exploit other resources found in the Barren Lands.

The Department of Indian Affairs and, more broadly, the Government of Canada, exerted increased control over the region after the signing of the July 26, 1900 Treaty 8 Adhesion. Hunting regulations and conservation measures were drafted, passed, implemented, and enforced. Initially these measures were justified by the Government as it claimed that there was an "indiscriminat[e] slaughte[r]" of the caribou by the Great Slave Lake Indians.²³ In part, this apparent "indiscriminate slaughter" allowed for a cache system, whereby the Fort

¹⁹ Eynard, G. (1861). *Histoire de la Mission de St. Joseph: Grand Lac des Esclaves*. Archives Deschâtelets, call # LC381.M14R1. p. 1.

²⁰ Department of Indian Affairs. (1893). *Showing the Condition of the Various Indian Schools in the Dominion (from which Returns have been received) for the Year ended June, 1893*. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1893*. Ottawa, ON: S. E. Dawson. Part 1, p. 288.

²¹ Jacobson, J. V. (1957). Memorandum for Mr. Doyle. Re: School accommodation. Fort Resolution. July 30, 1957. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Government Schools - Fort Resolution. 1953-1960, RG85, Vol. 643, File 630/101-1, Part 3.

²² Jacobson, J. V. (1957). Memorandum for Mr. Doyle. Re: School accommodation. Fort Resolution. July 30, 1957. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Government Schools - Fort Resolution. 1953-1960, RG85, Vol. 643, File 630/101-1, Part 3.

²³ Finnie, O. S. (1923). Letter from O. S. Finnie to the Deputy Superintendent General, Department of Indian Affairs, dated September, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Law (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6, Part 1. p. 1.

Resolution Indians would leave food to freeze in the permafrost and return later on their seasonal round.²⁴ In this sense they were able to "bank" the meat that they caught.²⁵ Nevertheless, legislation was enacted that restricted the number of animals per species the Fort Resolution Indians could hunt and trap. These restrictions affected the hunt of several species, though the barren-ground caribou was most often the animal the DIA agents sought to protect.

In order to discourage the Indians from continuing their caribou hunt, the legislators allowed for a more robust beaver hunt.²⁶ The beaver hunt was not undertaken for the meat alone because beaver fur was the standard by which all other pelts were assigned a value.²⁷ These measures effectively forced the Indians of Fort Resolution to attain a livelihood through participation in the wage economy (and, more specifically, the fur trade) while "illegally" hunting and trapping for the meat they required. Additionally, conservation areas were established in the region which barred the Fort Resolution Indians from hunting for food on their way into the Barren Lands. The Thelon Game Sanctuary, located on the eastern shore of Great Slave Lake, was one such conservation area.²⁸

The Athabaskans around Great Slave were grouped into bands along "tribal lines" by the DIA. During the 1940s the Yellowknife 'A' Band was composed of Yellowknives/Chipewyans at Fort Resolution, Rocher River, and Snowdrift. The Yellowknife 'B' was formed from the Dogribs at Fort Resolution and Yellowknife. And, the Chipewyan 'C' Band was formed from the Yellowknives/Chipewyans at Fort Resolution and Rocher River. In 1961 the Yellowknife

²⁴ Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto: The Champlain Society. p. 522.

²⁵ Bury, H. J. (1923). Memo to Mr. McLean: Reported wanton destruction of caribou by natives (Eskimo & Indians) in North West Territories, from H. J. Bury, Supervisor Indian Timber Lands. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Law (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6, Part 1.

²⁶ Lemaire, E. J. (1932). P.C. No. 2631, File 4483, N.W.T.: To the Honourable, The Minister of the Interior. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

²⁷ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). pp. 128-129.

²⁸ Hoare, W. H. B. (1930). *Conserving Canada's Musk-Oxen: Being an account of an investigation of Thelon Game Sanctuary, 1928-29, with a brief history of the area and an outline of known facts regarding the musk-ox*. Ottawa, ON: F.A. Acland: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty. p. 40.

and Chipewyan people of both Rocher River and Fort Resolution were removed from the Yellowknife 'A' and Yellowknife 'B' Band lists. They were then added to the Chipewyan 'C' Band, which now encompassed all status Indians at Fort Resolution. The residents of Snowdrift were then named the Yellowknife 'A' Band, and the Dogribs in Yellowknife became Yellowknife 'B.'

The names of the bands changed again in 1962 when, as we are informed by R. G. McGilp, the Chipewyan Band (formerly Chipewyan 'C' Band) of Fort Resolution “concur that the name ‘CHIPEWYAN’ be deleted from the identification of our band and that henceforth this band will be identified as the Resolution Band.”²⁹

In February 1991 the Yellowknife 'B' Band changed its name to the Yellowknives Dènè Band by Band Council Resolution.³⁰ The same date is given for the Yellowknife 'B' Band members living in the community at Dettah, who changed their name to Yellowknives Dènè Band. Snowdrift (Yellowknife 'A') changed its name to Lutsel K'e in 1992. And, in January 1992, the Resolution Band of Fort Resolution changed its name to Deninu K'ue First Nation. These changes will be discussed in more detail later in the report.

The American anthropologist David M. Smith, in his 1975 dissertation and his 1982 Mercury Series publication, erroneously concluded that the members of the Deninu K'ue First Nation had, for the most part, abandoned their hunting activities and accepted the wage economy in the 1950s as a sole means of providing for themselves and their families. He cited the impacts stemming from residential schools, hunting regulations, the fur trade, DIA administrative band movements, and mining activity.³¹ As we demonstrate in the following pages, Smith's

²⁹ Presloski, W. (1962). Chipewyan (Fitz/Smith) and Chipewyan (Ft. Resolution) Bands - Ft. Smith Agency, March 14, 1962 (Attached Document - February, 1962). In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1870 - 1967: The Administrative Organization of the Fort Smith Agency (MAP), 1958 - 1964, RG10, Volume 8212, File 140/1-1, Pt. 1.

³⁰ Ginnish, S. (1991). May 18 1991, Yellowknife "B" Band Change of Name to Yellowknives Dene Band, with attachment (Attached Document: Band Council Resolution for the Council of the Yellowknife B Band, Chronological No. 90-336, File Reference E-4215-4-763). In Indian Land Registry: Registration No. 133863, Region 8, Instrument type 4, Log # P789. p. 3.

³¹ Smith, D. M. (1982). *Moose-Deer Island House People: A History of the Native People of Fort Resolution*. National Museum of Man Mercury Series: Canadian Ethnology Service, Paper No. 81. p. 1 & 3.

hypothesis was flawed. The DKFN continue, in the tradition of their ancestors, to hunt caribou and other animals in the Barren Lands north and east of Great Slave Lake.

Chapter II: Three Northern Athabascan Groups

At the time of contact with Europeans, the Northern Athabascan groups distinguished among themselves through dialect, custom, and territory. This is similar to the distinctions found among European nations, their languages, and their respective cultures. French, Italian, and Spanish people are all Europeans with similar but distinct, dialects, customs, and territories. This report focuses on three just as distinct Northern Athabascan populations: the Chipewyans/Caribou Eaters, the Yellowknife/Copper Indians, and the Dogribs.

Chipewyan Indians

The Chipewyans, also referred to by some as “the Northern Indians,” belong linguistically and culturally to the Northern Athabascan cultural group.³² Samuel Hearne, the first European explorer in the region, was a Hudson's Bay Company employee who undertook four trips into the Arctic between 1769 and 1772, hiring Chipewyan individuals as guides. He took great pain in recording details regarding people, topography, flora, and fauna along the way. Hearne took note of Chipewyan and Yellowknife use and occupation of the area. The Chipewyan territorial range, at that time, overlapped with that of the Copper Indians.

By the advent of Hearne's first journey in 1769, the Chipewyans were already familiar with, and frequently visited, Fort Churchill (also known as Prince of Wales's Fort) on the western shore of Hudson's Bay. On these visits the Chipewyans brought both copper and information related to the Coppermine River, located to the north of Great Slave Lake, to the HBC and its explorers. We do not know whether the Chipewyans mined the copper themselves or traded for the metal with the Copper Indians. We do know that the Chipewyans somehow managed to obtain this valued metal and that they ranged north and northeast from Great Slave Lake on the Barren Lands.

Peter Fidler, a surveyor for the HBC, penned an account of his 1791 journey with the Chipewyans from Athabasca Lake along the Slave River to Great Slave Lake. During his

³² Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 2.

travels, Fidler's small company was met by two Chipewyans travelling south who informed him about what lay to the north. The Chipewyans told Fidler of a "war" between the "Chepawyans" and the "Esquimeaux" in Eskimo territory.³³

The two Chipewyans that Fidler encountered had evidently met up with a "local band" that was engaged in warfare with the northern Eskimo. This account places some Chipewyans reasonably far north, well into the Barren Lands, in both traditional Yellowknife (Copper Indian) and Eskimo territory. On the other hand, it may simply tell us that the Copper/Yellowknife Indians' dialect was similar enough to that of the Chipewyans that a person unaccustomed to the various dialects of the language (such as Fidler) was unable to distinguish between the two.

Regarding territory, George Simpson, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, wrote in 1821 that the Chipewyans were bordered to the west by the Beaver Indians and to the north by the Hare, Dogrib, and "other Tribes."³⁴ Fort Resolution HBC Factor Robert McVicar wrote in the mid-1820s that the Chipewyan western border was at the "Carrebauf Mountains" near the Peace River.³⁵ In addition, at this time, Chipewyans were known to hunt and travel north of Great Slave Lake into the Barren Lands.

George Simpson recorded large bands of Chipewyans coming to trade at Fort Wedderburn, an HBC fort established in 1815 on Lake Athabasca opposite Fort Chipewyan.³⁶ In his 1821 report, Simpson placed the Chipewyans geographically when he stated that the Fort "is considered the depot of the Athabasca Department . . . on account of its contiguity to the Lands of the Chipewyans," but that "the Chipewyans do not consider this part of the country

³³ Fidler, P. (1934). *Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2*, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society. p. 532.

³⁴ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 32.

³⁵ McVicar, R. (1825-1827). *Report for Great Slave Lake Outfits 1825-1827*, HBCA 1M781, B.181/e/1. fol. 2.

³⁶ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 236-237.

to be their legitimate soil."³⁷ Rather, they occupy "their own barren lands" north and east between Great Slave Lake and Churchill.³⁸

Sir John Franklin's 1820 account of "an old Chipewyan Indian" instantly recognizing a map of the Coppermine River and subsequently drawing an alternative route to the Arctic Ocean indicates Chipewyan familiarity with the Copper Indian territory (note, the Yellowknife/Copper Indian language is simply a dialect of Chipewyan).³⁹ The region north and northeast of Great Slave Lake along the Coppermine River and into the Barren Lands was highly valuable because it supported an abundance of wildlife which enabled the Chipewyans to maintain life with "little exertion."⁴⁰ In addition to their extended territory northward, Franklin described the Chipewyans as moving west on the south shore of Great Slave Lake toward Hay River and into Slave territory.⁴¹

At Fort Resolution on July 25, 1900, four groups signed an adhesion to Treaty 8. For the Chipewyan group, four men signed: Chief Louison Ahthay, Oliver Ajericon, Vital Lamoelle, and Paulette Chandelle, thus bringing the Chipewyans under the jurisdiction of the Department of Indian Affairs. Later, in the 1914 Department of Indian Affairs Annual Report, A. J. Bell noted the extent of the Chipewyan territory:

The Chipewyans are to be found at the eastern end of Lake Athabasca, inhabiting a territory extending southwards to Lac la Haché, north of the Dubant river and the Barren lands, and in their hunting excursions often travelling as far east as Wollaston Lake, where they trade with the Eskimos from Hudson Bay. Some of this nation are also to be found upon the Great Slave Lake, and on the big and Little Buffalo rivers, which flow into Great Slave Lake, west of Resolution.⁴²

³⁷ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 3-3b.

³⁸ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 3b.

³⁹ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 222.

⁴⁰ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 4.

⁴¹ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 222.

⁴² Bell, A. J. (1914). Report of A. J. Bell, Indian Agent for Fort Smith Agency, Treaty No. 8, Northwest Territories. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1914*. Ottawa: J. de L. Tache. Part 2, p. 54.

During the 1960s when the federal government renamed those people at Fort Resolution the "Chipewyan 'C' Band," most individuals at Fort Resolution were Chipewyans and Yellowknives (not to be confused with the Yellowknives Dènè First Nation who inhabit the city of Yellowknife and are identified, for the most part, as Dogrib). The Chipewyans preferred to trade at Fort Smith, Fort Chipewyan, and Snowdrift/Lutsel K'e, with only a handful having seasonal residences at those locations.

Caribou Eaters and the Mountainees

The Caribou Eaters and the Mountainees were regional bands who, unlike the Copper Indians, were not frequently distinguished from the Chipewyans.⁴³ George Simpson did distinguish between these two groups on the basis of their home territories. According to Simpson, the Mountainees resided largely in the boreal forest between Lake Athabasca and Great Slave Lake. Labelled as "home guards," they devoted a large amount of their time to the collection of fur, and traded often with the North West Company and the HBC at Fort Resolution and other forts further south.⁴⁴ In 1821, Simpson estimated their numbers at "about eighty families."⁴⁵

The Lutsel K'e Dènè First Nation members established permanent residences at what is now Lutsel K'e (previously Snowdrift) on the southeast shore of Great Slave Lake sometime during the 1940s and early 1950s. According to some of the Deninu K'ue elders interviewed, a fair number of the ancestors of the people who now live in Lutsel K'e are from Saskatchewan. This would lead one to believe that they are descendants of the Mountainees. Anthropologist Van Stone's fieldwork conducted during 1960–1962 led him to conclude that the Snowdrift population, which was comprised of approximately 150 individuals, including 38 children, were essentially Chipewyan. Twelve residents were at least half-Dogrib.⁴⁶

The Caribou Eater typically remained north of the treeline within their traditional territorial range, the Barren Lands. Instead of hunting fur-bearing animals for the HBC, the Caribou

⁴³ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 14b.

⁴⁴ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 14b.

⁴⁵ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 14b.

⁴⁶ VanStone, J. W. (1965). *The Changing Culture of the Snowdrift Chipewyan*. National Museum of Canada Bulletin 209, Anthropological Series No. 74. pp. 4 & 83.

Eaters, as their name implies, focused their attention on hunting on the Barren Lands where the caribou and other game animals ranged.⁴⁷

The "Barren Lands," which Simpson identifies as the territory of the Caribou Eaters, is an extensive and loosely defined area located north, northeast, and east of Great Slave Lake and the treeline. It is a maze of waterways and lakes with some shrubs but no trees.

According to Franklin's journal in 1824, the territory of the Caribou Eaters also included the region between Great Slave Lake and Athabasca Lake. This region, located between the boreal forest and the Barren Lands, supports transitional forests and woodlands. Emile Petitot's 1883 article (accompanied by a map) also located the "Rein-Deer Eaters" (Caribou Eaters) northeast of Lake of the Hills (Athabasca Lake), straddling the Black Bear Mountains.⁴⁸

The Caribou Eaters occasionally frequented forts. When they did, they generally visited those located on the north side of Great Slave Lake, such as one at Montagne Island, a North West Company fort located in Yellowknife Bay.⁴⁹ A refrain that occurs throughout the fort records is the disappointment of the traders with the Caribou Eaters' lack of consistency in trading at the fort, and their concerns as to when they might arrive. George Simpson wrote that due to the abundant wildlife on the Barren Lands, the Caribou Eaters had no need to trade at the fort and only did so for a few articles of "European Manufacture."⁵⁰ Fortunately for the traders, in winter, when the caribou had left the Barren Lands for the protection of the woodlands, the Caribou Eaters would move south and spend more time at the forts. In November 1819, the trader at Fort Resolution documented the arrival of "seven of the Indians called Carribeau Eaters . . . These Indians did not use to come in till about Christmas, so that we are of opinion they have left their lands with the intention of coming in by open water."⁵¹ The Fond du Lac post journal entry dated March 28, 1859 reported "no arrivals of Carriboo Eaters although in

⁴⁷ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 14b.

⁴⁸ Petitot, É. (1883). On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 5(11), 633-655, & 688. p. 688 (fold-out map).

⁴⁹ Keith, L. (2001). *North of Athabasca: Slave Lake and Mackenzie River Documents of the North West Company, 1800-1821*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press. p. 42.

⁵⁰ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 15.

⁵¹ Brown, W. (1819 - 1820). *Fort Resolution Post Journal 1819-1820*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/2. fol. 29.

daily expectation of seeing them.”⁵² Similarly, on November 15, 1860, the post journal read “no Cariboo Eaters this is about the time they generally make their appearance.”⁵³ Again, on November 19 of the same year: “no signs of Cariboods or Cariboo Eaters.”⁵⁴

By the 20th century, the Caribou Eaters and Mountaineers were referred to less frequently as distinct groups. In 1900 several "cariboo eaters" were counted in the Chipewyan Band located further south at Smith's Landing.⁵⁵ In 1924 Indian Agent McGill recorded one of the last official notes regarding the Caribou Eaters when he included them in a Department of Indian Affairs Annual Report:

. . . the principal tribes found in the Far North are the Slave, Hares, Loucheux, Sicannies, Dogribs, Yellow-knives, Chipewyans and Caribou Eaters. All these tribes are of Athapascan stock.⁵⁶

Copper (Yellowknife) Indians

The Chipewyan/Yellowknives were often referred to as Copper Indians or Red Knives in the various HBC fort journals and explorers' accounts. In the following entry in Franklin's journal, dated August 3rd 1820, Franklin associated the name “Yellow Knife” with the Copper Indians, who were referred to as “Yellow or Red Knives” by the traders:

[T]he Party embarked and were soon brought to the Entrance of a River which has received from the Traders **the appellation of Yellow Knife after the Copper Indians whom they usually term Yellow or Red Knives**. The Indians name it Beg hoo huley dezzé or Toothless Fish River.⁵⁷

⁵² Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fol. 29.

⁵³ Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fol. 42.

⁵⁴ Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fol. 42.

⁵⁵ Macrae, J. A. (1900). Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8. In *Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1900*. Part 1, p. xl.

⁵⁶ Scott, D. C. (1924). Part I: Report of the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1924*. Ottawam ON: F. A. Acland. p. 25.

⁵⁷ Franklin, J. (1995). Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 32.

These Indians occupied a territory largely to the north and northeast of Great Slave Lake. At times they were recorded further west toward both Marten Lake (Lac la Martre) and Great Bear Lake, south between Lake Athabasca and Great Slave Lake in Fort Resolution and other village sites, and east by Lockhart River.⁵⁸ As mentioned above, their English name was linked to the Yellowknife River, located on the North Arm of Great Slave Lake in Yellowknife Bay, where they were thought to have always lived.

It is commonplace to name a group or groups of people after the area that they have resided in for a number of years. Furthermore, new groups who move into the area often acquire that name. The Dogribs at Detah-N'dilo, after residing in the Yellowknife area for a century or so, renamed themselves after their location at Yellowknife on the Yellowknife River. They officially identify themselves as the "Yellowknives Dènè" and have since 1992.

Ethnographic information provided by both Petitot and Fidler establishes a direct connection between the Copper Indians and the Taltson River/Rocher River which feeds into Great Slave Lake about 40 km east of Fort Resolution. Fidler, during his 1791–1792 exploration around Great Slave Lake, stated that the Taltson River or the "Tall chu dezza . . . signifies in the Northern Indian [Chipewyan] tongue *Red Knife*."⁵⁹ Additionally, Petitot's 1891 map has the Taltson River labelled as "Tpaltsan-dessè or "Yellowknives R[iver] or T'al'tson Dèssè R[iver]."⁶⁰ While on his travels, Peter Fidler was told that there were "a great many" of the "Coppermine river Indian[s]" on the "Thay thule dezza," a tributary of the "Tall chu dezza [Taltson]."⁶¹

⁵⁸ Bell, A. J. (1914). Report of A. J. Bell, Indian Agent for Fort Smith Agency, Treaty No. 8, Northwest Territories. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1914*. Ottawa: J. de L. Tache. Part 2, p. 54; MacKenzie, A. (1801). *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans: In the Years 1789 and 1793. With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of That Country. Illustrated with Maps*. London: R. Noble, Old Bailey. p. 108.

⁵⁹ Fidler, P. (1934). A Journal with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave Lake, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2 by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (pp. 493-556). Toronto: The Champlain Society. p. 524.

⁶⁰ Petitot, É. (1891). *Autour de Grand Lac Des Esclaves*. Paris, FR: Nouvelle Librairie Parisienne. p. 373; Petitot, É. (1883). On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory, in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 5(11), 633-655, & 688. p. 688 (fold-out map).

⁶¹ Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society. p. 549.

Hearne, on his 1769–1772 exploration of the region, noted the Yellowknives' presence on the north side of Great Slave Lake in the Barren Lands. Hearne observed the Copper Indians along the Coppermine River on several occasions.⁶² On June 22nd 1771 he spotted them "customarily" hunting "deer" (caribou) along the Conge-ca-tha-wha-chaga River (near the confluence of the Coppermine River and Arctic Ocean), which shows just how far north their territory extended.⁶³ Hearne stated that the Copper Indians have "never seen the sea at the mouth of the Copper River clear of ice."⁶⁴ It is clear that the Copper Indians would travel as far as the river's mouth on the Arctic Ocean. Hearne provided a description of an Eskimo massacre at the hands of the Copper and "Northern" Indians (Hearne's Chipewyan guides) on land where Chipewyan territory had clearly ended. The Copper Indians were obviously very familiar with the northernmost portions of the Barren Lands, especially the area along the Coppermine River.

During the early 1800s the Copper Indians had been known to plunder, maraud, and occasionally massacre Slave, Hare, and Dogrib people while pushing the limits of their territorial range into Dogrib territory.⁶⁵ Prior to the 1820s and the events alluded to above, Mackenzie had encountered three tents of Copper Indians while travelling southwest between Great Bear Lake and Great Slave Lake. In 1812 it was common for the "Red-Knife Indians" to visit Fort Franklin west of Great Bear Lake in pursuit of trade items.⁶⁶ As a consequence of

⁶² Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 118-119.

⁶³ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 118-119.

⁶⁴ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 121.

⁶⁵ Keith, G. (1890). Mr. George Keith. Letters to Mr. Roderic McKenzie 1807 - 1817: McKenzie River Department, Bear Lake, 19th November 1812. In L. R. Masson (Ed.), *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest; Récits de Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inédits Relatifs au Nord-Ouest Canadien* (pp. 60-132). QC: Nabu Press. p. 106.

⁶⁶ MacKenzie, A. (1801). *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans: In the Years 1789 and 1793. With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of That Country. Illustrated with Maps*. London: R. Noble, Old Bailey. p. 108; Keith, G. (1890). Mr. George Keith. Letters to Mr. Roderic McKenzie 1807 - 1817: McKenzie River Department, Bear Lake, 19th November 1812. In L. R. Masson (Ed.), *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du*

these Yellowknife excursions into Dogrib territory and their continued "pillag[ing]" and "plundering," the Dogribs retaliated.⁶⁷ Tyrrell, in a 1911 postscript to Hearne's 1795 journal, described the "war" that broke out between them (though describing a different cause):

. . . a war has ensued between the two tribes, for the sake of the few remnants of iron-work which was left among them; and the Dog-ribbed Indians were so numerous, and so successful, as to destroy almost the whole race of the Copper Indians.⁶⁸

By contrast, in 1823–1824, McVicar, a Fort Resolution HBC fur trader, recorded that “about one-fifth of the Copper Indians were killed by the Dog Ribs of Martin Lake [Lac la Martre: north of Rae-Edzo on the north shore of Great Slave Lake] in winter 1823–24.”⁶⁹ Tyrrell's 1911 statement referring to the destruction of “almost the whole race of the Copper Indians” in or about 1823–1824 was an exaggeration at best, although a massacre of some magnitude had likely occurred.

As further evidence that the Copper Indians had not been massacred, Akaitcho, "Chief" of the Copper Indians, and his band traded at Fort Resolution on a regular basis during the 1820s and early 1830s. Akaitcho was a Copper Indian chief who had guided various explorers throughout the region during the late 1700s and early to mid-1800s. In 1825, after the "war," he fled south for a while. In 1824, Akaitcho met with McVicar at Fort Resolution, where they had “a long parly [*sic*] . . . on the subject of Establishing a Post for his Tribe [the Copper Indians/Yellowknives] at old Mountain Island.” At Fort Resolution, McVicar reported that Akaitcho had stated that he would not return to the north side of Great Slave Lake until he had recovered from his grief:

Nord-Ouest; Récits de Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inédits Relatifs au Nord-Ouest Canadien (pp. 60-132). QC: Nabu Press. p. 106.

⁶⁷ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published in 1824). p. 83; McVicar, R. (1825-1827). *Report for Great Slave Lake Outfits 1825-1827*, HBCA 1M781, B.181/e/1. fol. 13.

⁶⁸ Tyrrell, J. B. (Ed.). (1911). In S. Hearne's, *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort, in Hudson's Bay, to the northern ocean undertaken by the order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the discovery of copper mines, a northwest passage, etc. in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772* (new edition - 1911). Toronto: The Champlain Society. Retrieved October 12th, 2012, from http://www.gutenberg.org/files/38404/38404-h/38404-h.htm#Page_5. p. 178, footnote AT.

⁶⁹ McVicar, R. (1825-1827). *Report for Great Slave Lake Outfits 1825-1827*, HBCA 1M781, B.181/e/1. fol. 13b.

. . . for his part he could not think of returning to the country where so many of his Relatives were so resently [*sic*] murdered . . . and [would] remain with the Chipewyans until time would efface the grief and anguish with which his bosom is inflicted on account of the untimely death of his Relations.⁷⁰

On the heels of the Yellowknives' sojourn south, the Dogribs expanded west, and then south and east to occupy the Yellowknife Bay area, the western edge of former Yellowknife territory. Eventually, and prior to 1900, as anthropologist Beryl Gillespie has noted, "Dogribs were . . . sharing the east arm of Great Slave Lake with Yellowknives."⁷¹ Information gathered by Frank Russell, a University of Iowa graduate student in 1891, corroborates the account of the movement of the Dogribs into "territory occupied by the Yellow Knives."⁷²

The mythology surrounding the skirmish that had taken place during the 1820s refers to a significant moment in time when the Copper Indians/Yellowknives were said to have moved south of the Great Slave Lake "*forever*." However, as seen above and will be witnessed later in this report, this was, and is, not the case. The Yellowknives have used and occupied (prior to 1823/1824 and the so-called Pierrot "war"), and continue to use, regions both north and south of Great Slave Lake.

Peace was eventually achieved on the north side of the lake. In the summer of 1908 Father René Fumoleau reported that "Inspector Ephrem Pelletier, NWMP, met 125 people of the Yellowknife [Copper Indian] and Dogrib bands crossing Great Slave Lake in their York boats" (flat-bottomed vessels about thirty-five feet long).⁷³ The inspector reported that "they were hurrying to Fort Resolution to await the Treaty Commissioner" and their annuity payments.⁷⁴ They were coming from their seasonal settlements on the north shore of the lake, and heading for Fort Resolution for their treaty payments. The overlapping of territorial

⁷⁰ McVicar, R. (1824-1825). *Fort Resolution Post Journal, 1824-1825*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/5. fol. 19.

⁷¹ Gillespie, B. C. (1981). Yellowknife. In J. Helm (Ed.), *Handbook of North American Indians*, Volume 6: Subarctic (pp. 285-290). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution. p. 286.

⁷² Russell, F. (1898). *Explorations in the Far North: Being the report of an expedition under the auspices of the University of Iowa during the years 1892, '93, and '94*. Iowa City: IA: University of Iowa. p. 162.

⁷³ Fumoleau, R. (2004). *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press. pp. 134-135 & 8.

⁷⁴ Fumoleau, R. (2004). *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press. p. 135.

ranges for trapping purposes was fostered by both government and the fur trade boom. During the late 1800s, the fur trade had been slowly but surely expanding making wage labour in the north a viable source of income. Fort Resolution, on the south shore of Great Slave Lake at the mouth of the Slave River, became a hub for the fur enterprises of both the North West Company and the HBC.

In his 1971 study, *Fur Trade Posts of the Northwest Territories*, Peter J. Usher documents the changes at Fort Resolution throughout the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century:

For over twenty years after 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed an effective monopoly in the Great Slave Lake Region. The long established Fort Resolution was the leading post, but the company also collected furs at Old Fort Rae, Fort Smith, and briefly at Hay River . . .

Fort Resolution continued to be a chief trading centre. According to Richardson, who travelled with the Treaty Party in 1902, there were by then six trading posts there . . .

By 1920 there were 14 trading establishments within the region . . . The chief areas which the white trappers and traders made use of were the Slave River, the Taltson River, and the east arm of Great Slave Lake . . . on the Barrens north and east of [Fort] Reliance.⁷⁵

As noted above, four groups signed an adhesion to Treaty 8 at Fort Resolution on July 25, 1900. For the "Yellow Knives" group, three men signed: Chief Snuff, headman Tzin-Tu, and headman Ate-ee-zen, bringing the Yellowknives under the jurisdiction of the Department of Indian Affairs.

In the Department of Indian Affairs report for 1930, F.H. Kitto, in describing where the Chipewyans and the Yellowknives resided, wrote:

⁷⁵ Usher, P. J. (1971). *Fur Trade Posts of the Northwest Territories 1870-1970*. Ottawa: Northern Science Research Group, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. p. 41.

The Chipewyans are found along the Slave River from the south boundary of the Northwest Territories to Great Slave Lake. The Yellowknives are found now in the vicinity of Resolution on the south shore of Great Slave Lake. They formerly lived in the country lying between Great Slave Lake and the Coppermine River but were driven from there by the Dog Ribs.⁷⁶

He has not referred to their hunting range or where they trapped and fished, but it is interesting to note that at this juncture Kitto has accepted the claim that the Dog Ribs pushed the Yellowknives south of the lake, contrary to the evidence provided above. By 1930 a number of the Yellowknives may have had residences (most likely seasonal in nature) south of Great Slave Lake, mainly in Fort Resolution and Rocher River (as we shall see in Chapter VII “A Genealogy of Bands”), but their hunting, trapping, and fishing territorial use extended north into the Barren Lands—a region that they continue to exploit seasonally.

Dogrib Indians

The Aboriginal people who lived and live principally in the vast swath of land between Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake have been called the "Dogribs" by English-speaking Europeans since contact. In recent years, however, this group of people have come to refer to themselves as the "Tlicho."

At the time of European contact the Dogrib Indian territory lay, for the most part, west and northwest of Great Slave Lake. In 1824 Franklin stated that the Dogribs were a people "who reside between the Copper Indian Lands [northeast, east, and southeast of Great Slave Lake] and the Mackenzie's River."⁷⁷ On April 21st 1821, Franklin recorded that the Dogrib tribe:

. . . consists of 380 Men, Women & Children, and inhabits the Countries between Marten and Bear Lakes and westward on each

⁷⁶ Kitto, F. H. (1930). *The North West Territories 1930*. Ottawa, ON: Department of the Interior, North West Territories and Yukon Branch, F.A. Acland, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty. p. 64.

⁷⁷ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 249.

side of the Banks of Mackenzie's River as far as the entrance into Bear Lake.⁷⁸

During this period the Dogribs were often encountered hunting between Great Bear Lake and Great Slave Lake on Lac la Martre to the northwest of the Copper Indian territory. Due to the continued antagonism between Copper and Dogrib Indians, the Dogribs moved further west. During the early 1820s, in order to avoid the Copper Indians, the Dogribs began trading more frequently with the HBC near the mouth of the Mackenzie River instead of at Old Fort Providence. Old Fort Providence, which had been constructed on the North Arm of Great Slave Lake near Rae-Edzo for "the convenience of the Copper Indians, and the Dog Ribs," was forsaken by the Dogribs as both they and the Copper Indians moved west.⁷⁹

Later in that same year, as we have noted earlier, McVicar recorded that "about one-fifth of the Copper Indians were killed by the Dog Ribs of Martin [*sic*] Lake in winter 1823–24."⁸⁰ As noted above, this attack appears to have been a response to the continued aggression carried out by Akaitcho and his band of Copper Indians. After the skirmish in which the Dogribs claimed to have defeated the Copper Indians, the Dogribs ventured eastward. Despite being traditionally associated with Great Bear Lake, some Dogribs began hunting in traditional Copper Indian territory near Fort Enterprise, north of the present-day city of Yellowknife.⁸¹

The Dogribs were one of the four groups that signed an adhesion to Treaty 8 on July 25, 1900, at Fort Resolution. Three men signed for the Dogribs: Chief Dried Geese, headman, Way-mi-ah, and Crap-wa-tee, thereby bringing the Dogrib who had been trading at Fort Resolution under the jurisdiction of the Department of Indian Affairs.

⁷⁸ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 120.

⁷⁹ Franklin, J. (1995). Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc. pp. 30-31; McVicar, R. (1825 - 1827). *Report on Great Slave Lake District 1825 - 1827*. HBCA 1M781, B.181/e/1: fols. 2b - 3.

⁸⁰ McVicar, R. (1825-1827). *Report for Great Slave Lake Outfits 1825-1827*, HBCA 1M781, B.181/e/1. fol. 13b.

⁸¹ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 82.

In 1914, long after the massacre had occurred, A. J. Bell noted in the Department of Indian Affairs Annual Report that the area used by the Dogribs now extended easterly toward Yellowknife River located on the western portion of the Yellowknives' territory:

The Dogribs occupy the northern shores of Great Slave Lake, the country around Fort Rae arm, and between there and Yellowknife River.⁸²

The easterly expansion of the Dogribs did not exclude the Yellowknives (Copper Indians) from the north side of Great Slave Lake where they continued to access resources. In later years the Dogribs more closely associated with the city of Yellowknife. Eventually, and somewhat confusingly, they renamed themselves the Yellowknives Dènè.

Franklin wrote that despite the fact that the Dogribs speak an Athabascan language (as do the Copper Indians, Chipewyans, and Slaves), they claim an origin from the west:

. . . all the Indians who trade at the different posts in the north-west parts of America, imagine that their forefathers came from the east, except the Dog-ribs, who reside between the Copper Indian Lands and the Mackenzie's River, and who deduce their origin from the west, which is the more remarkable, as they speak a dialect of the Chipewyan language.⁸³

In later years the Dogribs, would continue to occupy the North Arm of Great Slave Lake, affiliating themselves with Rae-Edzo (Behchoko), Yellowknife, Dettah, and, to a limited extent, Lutsel K'e. To confuse matters, as has been noted earlier, in 1991 the Dogribs at Yellowknife renamed themselves the Yellowknives Dènè Band. In the 112 years since Treaty 8, only a few Dogribs remain in Fort Resolution, although some DKFN members have Dogrib kin in their ancestry and extended families.

⁸² Bell, A. J. (1914). Report of A. J. Bell, Indian Agent for Fort Smith Agency, Treaty No. 8, Northwest Territories. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1914*. Ottawa: J. de L. Tache. Part 2, p. 54.

⁸³ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 249.

“Weledeh” is a local word for the Yellowknife River. In 1997 the Yellowknives Dèné First Nation Elders Advisory Council commissioned a history of the “Weledeh Yellowknives Dèné” people. That history states that the “Weledeh” people were one group within the T’satsaot’ine (copper people) nation, a nation that was led by Akaitcho/Akeh-Cho. That rendition of history also states that Weledeh family names include Drygeese, Crapeau, Kemelli, Sangris, Martin, Paper, Liske, and Crookedhand.⁸⁴ Drygeese and Crapeau (as Crap-wa-tee) signed the Treaty 8 Adhesion in 1900 “for the Dogribs.” Today the “Weledeh” people speak a dialect of Tlicho/Dogrib, and the Weledeh Catholic School in Yellowknife teaches that dialect to students in Grades 1 through 8.⁸⁵

In October 2010 politicians in Dettah, N’dilo, and Yellowknife began using the term “Drygeese Territory” to refer to a Dogrib territory north of Great Slave Lake.⁸⁶ A local government website suggests that “Chief Drygeese Territory” is the land of the Yellowknives Dèné First Nation.⁸⁷ The term “Drygeese Territory” is a relatively new concept that arose during the modern period. The concept is tied to hunting patterns that took hold after 1900 and have been heavily influenced recently by the construction of the ice roads that lead to the mines, roads which increased the ability of the hunters to take trucks and skidoos into the region.

⁸⁴Yellowknives Dene First Nation Elders Advisory Council. (1997). *Weledeh Yellowknives Dene: A History*. Dettah: Yellowknives Dene First Nation Council. Retrieved October 29th, 2012, from <http://www.akaitcho.info/linked/weledeh%20yellowknife%20dene%20history.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Weledeh Catholic School. (n.d.). About Weledeh Catholic School. Retrieved October 29th, 2012, from <http://www.weledeh.nt.ca/About.php>: “The name ‘Weledeh’ tells us of the ancestry of people who were the original inhabitants of the present community. They lived around the Yellowknife River system and harvested the fish there. The word in its literal sense can be divided into two parts: ‘wele’ which means fish that were harvested and ‘deh’ which means river. When separated, these words have strong symbolic Christian connotations. The fish is the symbol of our Lord and the river is associated symbolically with water as the giver of life.”

⁸⁶Tlicho Government & Department of Environment and Natural Resources. (2011). Revised Joint Proposal on Caribou Management Actions in Wek’eezhii: Implementation Plan. Retrieved October 29, 2012, from http://wrrb.ca/sites/default/files/public_registry/IP_and_coverlet_June_22_2011_FINAL.pdf. p. 10: “Chief Drygeese Territory” is featured on a map at www.enr.gov.nt.ca dated 7 Oct 2010, and is later presented as ‘final’ nine months later.

⁸⁷ Yellowknives Dene First Nation. (n.d.) Dettah and N'dilo. Retrieved October 29, 2012, from <http://dettahandndilo.lgant.ca>.

Slave Indians

The Slave Indians (also spelled Slavey) occupied and continue to occupy a territory on the western end of Great Slave Lake. Their traditional territory extends from the mouth of the Mackenzie River east toward Hay River and down the Hay River.⁸⁸ The Slaves were at times mistaken for other Athapaskan groups. The confusion appears to stem from the similarities between the name of the tribe in question and the Cree term, which either refers to all tribes they have defeated or simply to a "stranger."⁸⁹

The "Slaves of Hay River" were one of the four groups to sign the Treaty 8 Adhesion at Fort Resolution. The Slave Indians have little claim to the region north, northeast, and east of Great Slave Lake, nor do they regularly hunt in the Barren Lands. Therefore, for the purpose of this report, information regarding the Slave Indians will be limited.

The Ethnography of the Area

The groups outlined above all belong to what anthropologists have termed the "Northern Athabaskan" cultural group — a continuum of interlocking groups. James VanStone notes that:

Northern Athapaskan culture has been described as consisting not of a series of neat cultural entities, **but as a cultural continuum** carried on by a series of interlocking groups whose individual lifeways differed only in certain minor details from those of their immediate neighbors.⁹⁰

Early anthropologists and the Department of Indian Affairs both failed to recognize that these Northern Athabaskan groups could and did operate within the construct of a cultural continuum, as described by VanStone. The imposed model of discrete bands whose leadership (a chief and headmen or councillors) makes decisions exclusively at band council meetings, as seen elsewhere in Canada, did not gain acceptance in the Great Slave Lake area. The tradition

⁸⁸ Bell, A. J. (1914). Report of A. J. Bell, Indian Agent for Fort Smith Agency, Treaty No. 8, Northwest Territories. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1914*. Ottawa: J. de L. Tache. Part 2, p. 54.

⁸⁹ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 166 & 169.

⁹⁰ VanStone, J. W. (1974). *Hunters and Fishermen of the Arctic Forests*. Chicago, IL: Aldine. p. 8.

in this region, as stated earlier, was for a small local group to follow a well-respected leader within a larger regional band.

The *Indian Act* “band” structure has been difficult for the Athabaskan people to both accept and to function under. However, by the 1960s some groups/bands had succeeded in working within this structure for administrative purposes. Those able to do so were most often close to industrial transportation routes. Due to their relative isolation, their subsistence requirements, and other socio-economic exigencies, many northern bands were not able to function within this construct.

VanStone succinctly describes how Dogrib society functioned within its larger Athabaskan cultural unit. This description of the Dogribs may also be applied broadly to Athabaskan peoples in general. VanStone defines three socio-territorial groups: the regional band, the local band, and the task group. As VanStone notes: "Membership in these units was not mutually exclusive: a person could, and usually did, have a social identity in all three."⁹¹

Anthropologists Robert Javenpa and Hetty Jo Brumbach, echoing VanStone above, argue that the southern Chipewyans' social organization is similar to that of all Dènè (Athabaskan) peoples. They draw comparisons between the Chipewyan's social organization, that of "concentrated summer band," "winter staging community," and "winter hunting encampment" and the Dogrib "regional band," "local band," and "task group."⁹²

In reference to the regional band, VanStone states that:

. . . [t]he regional band exploited the total range of the band as identified by tradition and use. It utilized all the resources within the range, and this total territory provided sufficient food and other resources to sustain life except during periodic famines. Therefore, the regional band could exist for many generations.⁹³

⁹¹ VanStone, J. W. (1974). *Hunters and Fishermen of the Arctic Forests*. Chicago, IL: Aldine. p. 45.

⁹² Jarvenpa, R., & Brumbach, H. J. (1988). Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan. *American Anthropologist* 90(3), pp. 598-618. p. 611.

⁹³ VanStone, J. W. (1974). *Hunters and Fishermen of the Arctic Forests*. Chicago, IL: Aldine. p. 45.

With regard to the constitution of the local band, he goes on to describe the role of the kinship system in maintaining the integrity of the regional band:

. . . [m]ost of the time, the various families making up the regional band were dispersed in smaller units. Regional band members, however, were related through a network of primary affinal [marriage] and consanguinal [blood] ties.⁹⁴

The “local band” is described as exploiting a smaller range within the regional band's territory and all of the resources therein. It consists of a group of closely related kin, averaging four couples with their offspring and other dependents; the core of a local band might include several siblings, both male and female, with their spouses and dependents.⁹⁵

A task group, on the other hand, would form with the goal of exploiting specific seasonal resources and usually did not last beyond that period. Often comprised of two related families, kinship ties were as significant in forming task groups as were friendships. VanStone states that “the difference between a task group and a local band was one of degree rather than kind.”⁹⁶

The socio-political structure of the people, as outlined above, can be applied to the Deninu K'ue First Nation: in the case of the Chipewyan people, the regional group is represented by either the “Copper Indians,” “Chipewyans,” or others. The local groups are represented by individual modern settlements. Task groups are often composed of a group of family members and/or friends who hunt together on the land. Over time, these regional, local, and task groups have combined and recombined to form the Snowdrift, Rocher River, and Fort Resolution people, now the Lutsel K'e Dènè First Nation and Deninu K'ue First Nation.

Gerald Norn, a 17-year-old DKFN member, hunts on the land with friends and family in ad hoc task groups. When asked, “Who do you go with?” he responded:

⁹⁴ VanStone, J. W. (1974). *Hunters and Fishermen of the Arctic Forests*. Chicago, IL: Aldine. p. 46.

⁹⁵ VanStone, J. W. (1974). *Hunters and Fishermen of the Arctic Forests*. Chicago, IL: Aldine. p. 46.

⁹⁶ VanStone, J. W. (1974). *Hunters and Fishermen of the Arctic Forests*. Chicago, IL: Aldine. p. 46.

Whoever I can. My cousins and friends.

How many people?

Between one person and many. 30 people is the largest group I've ever gone with. I show the kids out on the land, show them what to hunt. What the tracks are.⁹⁷

Rocky Lafferty and his kin also hunt together. He hunts with his family, teaching others (specifically youngsters) in the process (plate 42), and brings meat back to share:

We donate lots to the elders. We get about three or four [caribou] sometimes, we make a few phone calls, and if people want some meat we send it home.

We always go up in big family groups. With my dad and his common law and his two youngest. We always take other kids too to come out, because they enjoy it and they don't get that very often.⁹⁸

In Chapters IV and VI we include additional examples of the caribou hunt which the DKFN continue to participate in.

Fikret Berkes, a professor of environmental studies, stresses that the relationship between smaller units should be viewed within the context of a regional group's use of their territory and by extension, their property:

Common-property systems serve as interface, not only between society and resource, but also between the individual and the society at large. Social roles and obligations are often defined in terms of one's participation in work teams. Common-property systems are an integral part of the local culture. **Hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering are a way of life rather than merely a means of earning a living.**⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Norn, Gerald William Robert. (July 16th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Sophie Henderson's Interview Notes. p. 2.

⁹⁸ Lafferty, Frank "Rocky." (July 16th, 2012). Statutory Declaration. p. 2.

⁹⁹ Berkes, F., and M. T. Farvar. (1989). Introduction and Overview. In F. Berkes (Ed.), *Common Property Resources: Ecology and Community-based sustainable development*. London, UK: Belhaven Press. p. 12.

These common property systems were frequently misunderstood by the explorers, HBC factors, and Indian Agents.

The people who subsisted by hunting, fishing, and trapping in disparate locations on a seasonal basis (termed seasonal rounds) were often referred to in the earlier sources as "nomadic." The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1990) defines a nomad as:

1. a member of a tribe roaming from place to place for pasture; and
2. a wanderer.¹⁰⁰

The Athabascans' seasonal rounds were not random nor did their members "roam from place to place." They did not, and do not, "wander" through the landscape in search of sustenance; their seasonal rounds, described by Jarvenpa and Brumbach, were based upon usufructory rights to a chain of hunting areas:

It is suggested here that a man's (and by extension, his family's) network of **winter** hunting areas and **encampments were not randomly distributed**, but rather comprised a "chain" of loosely contiguous areas within the larger *kesyehot'ine* mosaic of hunting areas. A family gained usufructory access to a particular chain by the socialization experience of its hunters, and it moved around or across the chain of hunting areas primarily by activating ties of *silot'ine* [bilateral kindred].¹⁰¹

In order to survive it was imperative that there be a minimum aggregation of families in a winter hunting encampment:

In the recent history and lore of the southern Chipewyan, the Whitefish-Stonypoint and Lynx family episodes [in which the two families, or Winter hunting encampment/Task groups, failed to make contact with their larger Winter staging community/Local bands and both groups suffered dire consequences] serve as parables or moral lessons about the violation . . . of fundamental socio-spatial arrangements . . .

¹⁰⁰ Allen, R. E. (Ed.). (1990). Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 804.

¹⁰¹ Jarvenpa, R., & Brumbach, H. J. (1988). Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan. *American Anthropologist* 90(3), pp. 598-618. p. 607.

One of our elderly informants observed: “. . . you can't live alone all winter the way his people did. That's no good. You always need a few families together to help each other . . .”

The cultural message, therefore, is that a minimal aggregation of families is needed for viable winter existence. Individuals or families violating this principle were likely to meet with environmental or economic disaster.¹⁰²

The leadership of these smaller units was achieved through merit, not ascribed through inheritance. For example, an individual skilled in the hunt was often looked to for advice in that area, effecting the continued use of specific areas. Because the hunt constituted an entire way of life, over time, such a leader might also come to act as spokesperson for the group in its dealings with other local Bands.

The merit based, and therefore fluctuating political structure of the Northern Athabaskan people did not serve the needs of the government or the forts. The role of an appointed chief was much more expedient to these outsiders, and further, a chief was indispensable as an economic broker. This led to the application of the artificial construct “band” to these extended family units by the Department of Indian Affairs officials who began appointing a chief when required for treaty and administrative purposes. For example, in 1900 at Fort Resolution, “chiefs” were assigned on-the-spot for the signing of the Treaty 8 Adhesion by Slave, Dogrib, Yellowknife, and Chipewyan “local bands.”

The chief's powers were set out in the *Indian Act*, enforced by Indian Agents, and entrenched in First Nations' political structure. Chapter 29, Section 73 reads:

73. (1) Whenever he deems it advisable for the good government of a band, the Governor in Council may declare by order that after a day to be named therein the council of the band, consisting of a chief and councilors, shall be selected by elections to be held in accordance with this Act.

(2) The council of a band in respect of which an order has been made under subsection one shall consist of one chief, and one councilor for every one hundred members of the band, but the number of councilors

¹⁰² Jarvenpa, R., & Brumbach, H. J. (1988). Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan. *American Anthropologist* 90(3), pp. 598-618. p. 611.

shall not be less than two nor more than twelve and no band shall have more than one chief.

Kinship and Marriage Alliances

Although today there is no political structure at the regional level (the Akaitcho Treaty 8 Tribal Corporation is structured solely for land claims negotiation purposes), strong ties exist among local bands due principally to intermarriage. Task groups and local bands are exogamous (people “marry out”), while the much larger regional group is most often endogamous (people “marry in”). A cooperative system is established between local bands through marriage as men trap on family traplines, the traplines of their in-laws, and eventually their own traplines, or come to hunt together on the Barren Lands in task groups.

As mentioned earlier, hunters and trappers from extended kin groups, such as those in the Lafferty family, come together in the fall and winter. Trapping and hunting among the Deninu K'ue has continued to the present as a form of subsistence economy which supplements the expensive (or non-existent) meat available in stores.

During Mary Pierrot's childhood (she is now seventy-eight years old), as she has recounted, there was little choice but to hunt because meat was too expensive to purchase (if available in the HBC store). Hunting was the option of necessity:

What type of meat did you eat?

We don't get meat in the store so we eat only moose. They kill a moose. No work in those days so they have to travel in the winter time to make good money. Spring time the same thing, they make money with beaver and muskrat. In those days things were cheap too. We eat nothing but wild meat.¹⁰³

Stan Beck also noted the DKFN's reliance on the hunt for meat:

[In the] 60s . . . we had to hunt for our meat unless you want to eat canned.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Pierot, Mary Christina. (July 31st, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Beck, Stan. (July 15th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Linda Vanden Berg's Interview Notes. p. 3.

When a hunter kills an animal, the meat does not belong to the hunter alone. As was stated by Rocky Lafferty, the tradition of distributing meat to a hunter's family and elders in the community continues to this day. When describing the contents of his freezer, Donald William Balsillie made reference to the act of giving meat to elders. In collecting different game, he is able to provide for those who taught him to hunt and fish:

I've got connie, I've got pickerel, I've got whitefish, I've got northern pike, I've got ducks, wild geese, buffalo, moose, caribou, beaver meat. Some of it's smoked, some is dried, some just cut out for barbequing. One of the elders dropped by just a few minutes ago because I promised to give him some duck, geese, and some moose meat.¹⁰⁵

The Association between Particular Caribou Herds and Distinct Local Groups

As we will discuss later in greater detail, the three Athabaskan groups under discussion relied upon the caribou. The caribou provided meat, fur, bones, and antlers, thus allowing the Northern Athabascans to eat, clothe, and shelter themselves, and to make tools. The subsistence rounds of a particular band were based upon the anticipated migration of a particular herd of caribou.

The ranges of a number of large caribou herds intersect and overlap in the Great Slave Lake region. Bryan Gordon, a subarctic archaeologist, has noted that the Northern Athabaskan Indians' ability to anticipate the movement of the herd is the result of sustained interaction between a specific group of Great Slave Lake people and specific caribou herds. Gordon has theorized that a specific herd's pattern of movements formed the basis for the seasonal route of a particular band:

The affiliation of human bands with specific herds means a separation from other bands and herds, **segregation reflected in different but contemporaneous tool styles in the four herd ranges** . . . It follows, therefore, that as hunting camps of past bands are confined to the

¹⁰⁵ Balsillie, Donald William. (August 1st, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 7.

modern caribou range, band-herd affiliation would consequently have existed through prehistory, resulting in herd following.¹⁰⁶

Further, he argues the "following" of specific herds reinforced band separation and thus cultural differences. Gordon provided the following example of a cultural imperative pertaining to marriage practices among the regional band who hunt the Kaminuriak herd:

The affiliation of a band with a specific herd was also responsible for the development of distinctive local dialects and a kinship that was unique to the range. An example of the distinctions is evidenced by the Kaminuriak band comprising the Hatchet and Duck Lake and Barren Lands local bands. Each band is sororal, where a woman may marry her sister's widower, leviradical, where a man may marry his brother's widow, and patrilineal, where women are exchanged through cross-cousin marriage.¹⁰⁷

Gordon then provides an example of the differences between local bands when he describes marriage practices for the Caribou Eaters:

But the Caribou-Eaters in the adjacent Beverly range are neither sororal nor leviradical, with rare patrilocality. Rather, they are bilaterally-related, with bride going to groom's band.¹⁰⁸

He concludes with:

Such distinctions support the concept of restricted past contact, a constraint also appearing in tool style and trade foods which are suitable for testing past herd following.¹⁰⁹

Gordon's theory may explain the differences in culture and dialect between the Yellowknives, Dogribs, and the other Chipewyan groups.

¹⁰⁶ Gordon, B. C. (1996). *People of the Sunlight, People of the Starlight: Barrenland Archaeology in the Northwest Territories of Canada*. Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization. p. 11.

¹⁰⁷ Gordon, B. C. (1996). *People of the Sunlight, People of the Starlight: Barrenland Archaeology in the Northwest Territories of Canada*. Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization. p. 14.

¹⁰⁸ Gordon, B. C. (1996). *People of the Sunlight, People of the Starlight: Barrenland Archaeology in the Northwest Territories of Canada*. Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization. p. 14.

¹⁰⁹ Gordon, B. C. (1996). *People of the Sunlight, People of the Starlight: Barrenland Archaeology in the Northwest Territories of Canada*. Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization. p. 14.

Conclusions

The bands who used and occupied the region in the Barren Lands north and east of Great Slave Lake have fluctuated in their territorial range and subsistence patterns throughout time. Gordon surmised that by means of regional group intermarriage patterns (as described by VanStone and others) the three cultural groups moved throughout the landscape in non-random patterns, both interacting with and exchanging people (intermarriage) at the overlaps in the caribou herds' migratory ranges. As we shall see, the bands remained uniquely identifiable entities (within the Athapaskan cultural continuum) through time, and continued to use and occupy the hunting, trapping, and fishing grounds as they always had, albeit in a somewhat different manner.

The 1820s "war" between the Copper Indians and the Dogribs caused a fluctuation in use of particular areas by the Dogribs and the Yellowknives. The fur trade enticed people to spend more time at the trading posts where European goods, including guns, ammunition, and tobacco, were readily available. And, with the advent of the Treaty 8 Adhesion of 1900, these three cultural groups became entangled within Indian Affairs, who subsequently relocated the bands and their members *on paper* and, at times, on the land for *administrative* purposes.

None of the above events have stopped the bands and their members from exploiting the resources of the land, which their ancestors had exploited before them. In the following chapter we explore the relationship of the bands described above with the Barren Lands and its flora and fauna.

Chapter III: The Land, the Animals, and the People

Chapter III examines the evidence relating to the use and occupation of the Great Slave Lake Region, particularly the area known as the Barren Lands or Barren Grounds, by three Athabascan regional bands: the Chipewyans, the Yellowknives, and the Dogribs.

De Beers Canada has compiled a report regarding the occupation and use of the Barren Lands. Their report includes a use and occupation study regarding the people currently known as the Deninu K'ue First Nation. The De Beers report, for the most part, relies on the publications of David M. Smith. His interviews were conducted during visits to Fort Resolution as a young graduate student in the summers of 1968 through 1972. David M. Smith used his dissertation as a basis for at least two of his publications: *Cultural and Ecological Change: The Chipewyan of Fort Resolution* (1976, in the journal *Arctic Anthropology*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 35–42), and *Moose-Deer Island House People: A History of the Native People of Fort Resolution* (1982). Based largely on Smith's works, which were written approximately 40 years ago, De Beers has stated the following:

According to Smith (1982), in the early contact period (1786 to 1890), there was no regional band term that referred to the people who occupied the lands around what is now Fort Resolution. After the fort was established in 1786, the Chipewyan began to refer to any Chipewyans that traded at Fort Resolution as Dene Nu Kwen, which translates as "Moose Deer Island House People" (Smith 1982). In 1856, Moose Deer Island began to be known as Mission Island because a mission house was built there by the Roman Catholic priest Faraud (Smith 1982).

Based on available literature, the Deninu Kué were a nomadic people whose lives focused on harvesting resources by hunting, fishing, and trapping in both forested and barrenland regions. The traditional territory of the Deninu Kué varied over time. A map included in Smith (1981) shows the territory of "Indian" people trading at Fort Resolution in 1825 . . . Based on the map, the territorial range expands into the North Slave Region. According to Smith (1982), the Chipewyans of Fort Resolution would travel at least once a year (typically in the fall) to the barrenlands to harvest

caribou. Caribou would provide them with hides for clothing and tepees.

By the 1940s, the range that the Chipewyans would travel was drastically reduced to include just the southern parts of Great Slave Lake, including parts of the East Arm (Smith 1982). Smith also reported that some Deninu Kué men would sometimes make arrangements with people from Łutselk'e to trap for white fox in the barrenlands (Smith 1982). The range of people trading at Fort Resolution shifted to be just around the fort.¹¹⁰

The following chapter provides evidence that substantiates our conclusion that the DKFN has Aboriginal and treaty rights that may well be infringed upon by the proposed De Beers mines on the northeast side of Great Slave Lake where Gahcho Kué is located. We use Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company archival documents, European explorers' accounts, Department of Indian Affairs archival material, and various other sources in documenting use of the Barren Lands from the contact period until the present.

The Barren Lands

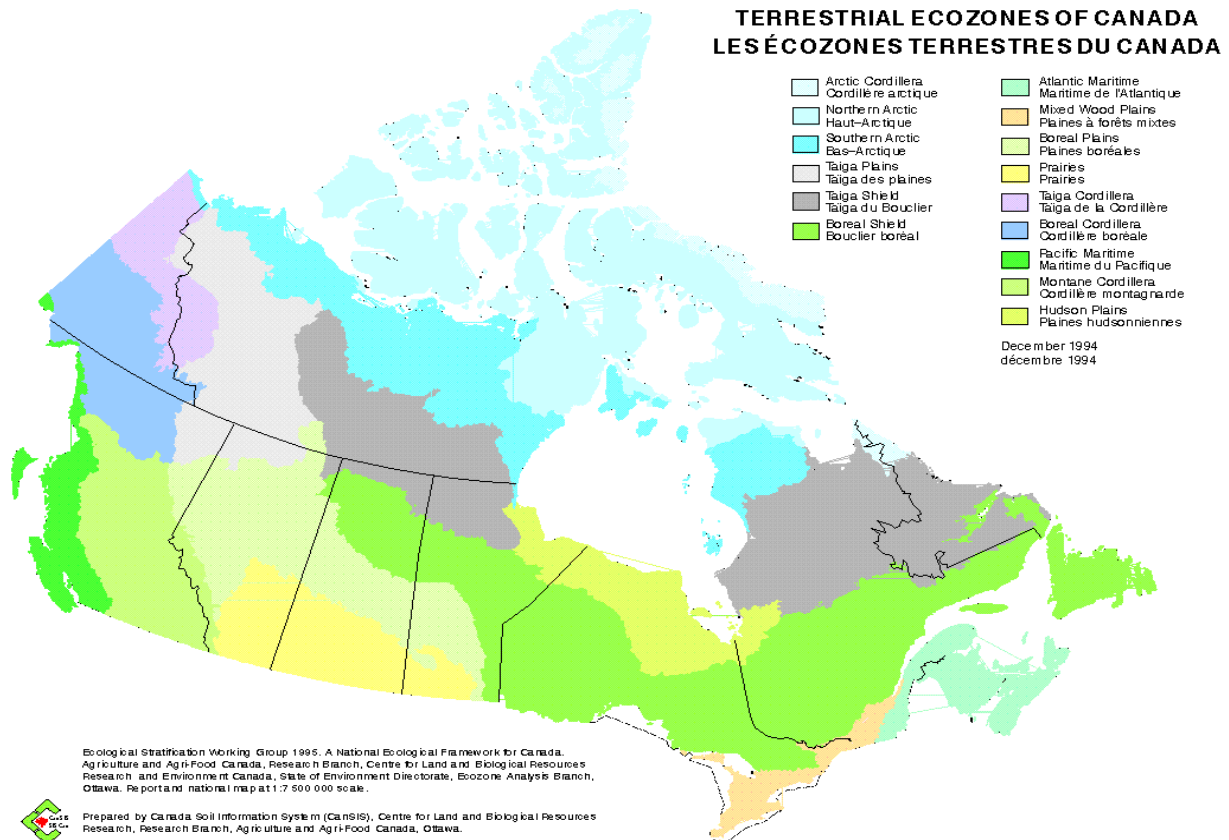
Due to climatic, topographical, geological, and biological (flora and fauna) characteristics, the Barren Lands is a region used extensively for resource extraction—both subsistence-related and commercial. In the past the most important resource exploited was the caribou (by the local bands). During the last 70 years the focus has shifted to the mining of gold and diamonds by the mining conglomerates.

This region, variously referred to by explorers, Indian Agents, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers as the “Barren Lands,” “Barren Ground,” “Barren Country,” “Chipewyan lands,” “reindeer land,” or “caribou land,” is located approximately northeast, east, and southeast of Great Slave Lake. The Barren Lands extend north from the Taiga Shield Ecozone, which is an ecological crossroads or transitional zone where climate, soils, plants, birds, and mammals from the Boreal Shield and Boreal Plains Ecozones and those from the Southern Arctic Ecozone meet. The Barren Lands then extend north into the Southern Arctic

¹¹⁰ De Beers Canada Inc. (2010). Annex M: Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Use Baseline. In *Gahcho Kué Project Environmental Impact Statement*. pp. M4-46 – M4-47.

Ecozone. Within the Taiga Shield Ecozone the boreal forest ends and the Barren Lands begin.

Map 2: The ecozones of Canada. Ecozones of interest: the Southern Arctic, the Taiga Shield, the Taiga Plains, the Boreal Shield, and the Boreal Plains¹¹¹



Although the Barren Lands may appear to be barren due to the absence of trees, they are in fact comprised of a pattern of habitats, including sprawling shrub lands, wet sedge meadows, and cold clear lakes (plate 1). Permafrost is continuous throughout this area, often lying just a few centimetres below the surface.

The permafrost acts as a dam stopping the downward flow of water, thereby keeping the soils either waterlogged or frozen year-round. The permafrost also acts as a barrier to root growth, which inhibits the further maturation of plants:

The permafrost layer is continuous. Thin soils in upland areas

¹¹¹ Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. (2008, November 11). EcoZones, EcoRegions, and EcoDistricts. Retrieved October 15th, 2012 from <http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/nsdb/ecostat/hierarchy.html>.

support dwarf-heath and scattered low-shrub tundra, while low-land and depressional areas near lakes and streams are characterized by sedge tussock and low-tall shrub tundra . . . ¹¹²

Plate 1: Autumn tundra, Barren Lands, central Northwest Territories¹¹³



The Barren Lands are blanketed by an intricate and complex network of lakes and streams, which makes the area difficult to traverse without the benefit of appropriate clothing, shelter, transportation, and, of course, a working knowledge of the area. In an ecological survey of streams in the Barren Lands, Nicholas E. Jones, William M. Tonn, Garry J. Scrumgeour, and Chris Katopodis provide the following description of a portion of the Barren Lands, the Kazan Upland, a description that can be applied to most areas in the Barren Lands. They wrote:

The 4000 km² study area is centred on 6445 N, 11030 W, about 100 km north of the tree line within the Southern Arctic ecozone. The

¹¹² Jones, N. E., W. M. Tonn, G. J. Scrimgeour and C. Katopodis. (2003). Ecological Characteristics of Streams in the Barrenlands near Lac de Gras, N.W.T., Canada. *Arctic*, 56 (3), 249 - 261. p. 250.

¹¹³ ArcticPhoto. (2010). Autumn Tundra, Barren Lands, Central NWT, Arctic Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.arcticphoto.co.uk/supergal/wl/wl06/wl0645-00.htm>.

physiographic region, the Kazan Upland, is underlain by granite, gneiss, and schist that form broad, sloping uplands, plateaus, and lowlands. Eskers, kames, and boulder-strewn till plains cover the land.¹¹⁴

Climatic conditions in the region are also described by the authors:

The mean annual temperature is approximately -12C, with a summer maximum of 27.2C and a winter minimum of -53.9C (Environment Canada, 1991). The climate is semiarid, with 200 – 300 mm of precipitation annually, 50% of which falls as snow . . .¹¹⁵

The various geographical, geological, climatic, and botanical conditions in the region have created an area rich in lakes, rivers, and streams:

The combination of relatively low topographical relief (ca. 50 m) and extensive glacial activity has molded a landscape covered by ca. 21% water, in the form of numerous chains of lakes and connecting streams. Following spring runoff, evaporation from lakes gradually lowers lake level, stream flows diminish, and surface flow is lost from many small streams. At approximately 450 m above sea level, the streams of this area are the headwaters of the Coppermine, Back, and Burnside Rivers, which flow north to the Arctic Ocean.¹¹⁶

Samuel Hearne, an early explorer, described the Barren Lands as follows:

[W]hen the Spring advances, both the deer and the Indians draw out to the Eastward, on the ground **which is entirely barren**, or at least what is so called in those parts, as it neither produces trees or shrubs of any kind, so that moss and some little grass is all the herbage which is found on it.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Jones, N. E., W. M. Tonn, G. J. Scrimgeour and C. Katopodis. (2003). Ecological Characteristics of Streams in the Barrenlands near Lac de Gras, N.W.T., Canada. *Arctic*, 56 (3), 249 - 261. p. 250.

¹¹⁵ Jones, N. E., W. M. Tonn, G. J. Scrimgeour and C. Katopodis. (2003). Ecological Characteristics of Streams in the Barrenlands near Lac de Gras, N.W.T., Canada. *Arctic*, 56 (3). 249 -261. p. 250.

¹¹⁶ Jones, N. E., W. M. Tonn, G. J. Scrimgeour and C. Katopodis. (2003). Ecological Characteristics of Streams in the Barrenlands near Lac de Gras, N.W.T., Canada. *Arctic*, 56 (3), 249 - 261. p. 250.

¹¹⁷ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 80.

Plate 2: Herd of barren-ground caribou grazing in the Barren Lands¹¹⁸



Despite claims to the contrary, including Hearne's account above, the Barren Lands are home to a plethora of animal and plant life.

Eddy Lafferty, a DKFN member, described the Barren Lands in an interview conducted by Linda Vanden Berg on July 17th 2012. In this interview he described his attachment to the area with the following words:

The Barren Lands to me just looks like, lots of fresh water, at one time, like when the ice melts and all that runs down. It's just like lakes, lakes, lakes, lots of fresh water. Really clear. To me that's where all our clean water is coming from. But now all those mines are there. The main places where the trappers trap are on the eskers. Where there's still a little bit of trees, little bit of shelter, little bit of firewood. That's where some of the animals will go that we hunt. In the summer, it's lots of rock country, lots of gravel bottom lakes.

¹¹⁸ NWT Barren-ground Caribou (*Rangifer taradus groenlandicus*): NWT Environmental and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/live/pages/wpPages/caribou_information.aspx.

Very shallow. Some of them have fish. I still have a feeling when I go there, it's like I'm back—it's like I'm home. I don't know if it's a spiritual feeling, but I have a connection with that area, to the mine. **I have it at Snap Lake, I have it at Gahcho Kué. I go to that area just for that feeling to see where the ancestors were. It's like that feeling that you're finally home. I have a really good feeling when I get in that place.**¹¹⁹

The Caribou (or Reindeer)

The Barren Lands provide forage for the world's largest concentration of free-roaming large mammals, specifically, the barren-ground caribou (*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*), which is the predominant game animal on the tundra; it occupies the Barren Lands during the summer months (plates 2 and 3).¹²⁰ These herds are vast in numbers. The herd most exploited by the DKFN, the Bathurst Herd, has numbered as high as 472,000 animals, and as low as 32,000 ["Herd Size During Current Cycle"].¹²¹ In 1997, fifteen years ago, Kevin Giroux, a DKFN member, witnessed tens of thousands of caribou at Snap Lake:

For 7 days straight you couldn't even cross the Barren Lands. It was like a traffic jam. Caribou are standing outside your door. They aren't even scared of you. We would sit there and watch the caribou cross for 7 days the Barren Lands. That was one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen.¹²²

Kevin Giroux stated the following when describing the impacts of the mines on the herds witnessed recently:

That was 1997. With the De Beers mines, we go out there and it's not just the quantity, the quality of the caribou has gone down. Before they look all healthy and bushy tail. You could tell if they're fat by their bushy tail, it would jiggle. Lately they don't get the

¹¹⁹ Lafferty, Edward Roland. (July 16th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Sophie Henderson's Interview Notes. pp. 3 - 4.

¹²⁰ Kendrick, A., P.O.B. Lyver, and Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation. (2005). Denésôliné (Chipewyan) Knowledge of Barren-Ground Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*) Movements. *Arctic*, 58(2), 175 - 191. p. 189.

¹²¹ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (2011). Caribou Forever—Our Heritage, Our Responsibility: A Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy for the Northwest Territories 2011-2015. p. 8.

¹²² Giroux, Kevin Justin. (September 29th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 3.

proper nutrition, the fat's not as good. The tails are droopy. They don't stick up nice and perky. The meat isn't as good. I noticed there's a chemical taste to it, a gasoline, diesel, engine taste to it. Hewey Arden and me would hunt. He would shoot a caribou from the boat, we would give thanks, and then eat the meat right from the caribou. You can't anymore, the caribou is all buggy. The ecology, was all messed up, it's not just the caribou, everything is messed up.¹²³

Plate 3: A caribou herd in the Barren Lands¹²⁴



There are several discrete herds of barren-ground caribou in the Barren Lands that have overlapping ranges. Archaeologist Bryan C. Gordon described the herds and their ranges as follows:

The Barrenlands enclose the Bluenose, Bathurst, Beverly and Kaminuriak caribou ranges, which extend from deep within the forests of the Mackenzie Valley and Prairie provinces north onto the tundra. The two eastern ranges of Beverly and Kaminuriak are

¹²³ Giroux, Kevin Justin. (September 29th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 3.

¹²⁴ NWT Barren-ground Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*): NWT Environmental and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/caribou_information.aspx.

south of the Arctic Circle on a 300–700 m (960–2,250 ft.) high plateau cut by fast rivers flowing to the Mackenzie River, the Arctic Ocean and Hudson Bay. These eastern ranges are in the eastern Mackenzie and Keewatin Districts and the north halves of Saskatchewan and Manitoba.¹²⁵

Wildlife biologists distinguish among the various herds of these barren-ground caribou by using a herd's particular calving ground as a marker. Whereas the calving grounds of the herds are separate and distinct, there is overlap in seasonal migrations and wintering areas, which vary from year to year.

In 1944 J.G. Wright, in an article published in *Canadian Geographical Journal*, wrote that there are five ranges recognized for the barren-ground caribou, which serve to distinguish five specific herds:

- those summering on the Dubawnt and Kazan Rivers and wintering in northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba
- those summering on the lower Kazan River and eastward and wintering in southern Keewatin
- those summering in southern Keewatin and wintering in northern Manitoba
- those summering in the Wager Bay–Back River area and wintering on lakes on the Back River, Aberdeen, and adjacent lakes and north of Baker Lake
- those summering in Boothia and Melville Peninsulas and wintering farther south¹²⁶

In 2006 the NWT Department of Natural Resources implemented a Caribou Management Plan due to an increase in mining activity on the Barren Lands and the ensuing cumulative effects of those mines and their infrastructure on caribou herds. The following rationale was given for the development of the plan:

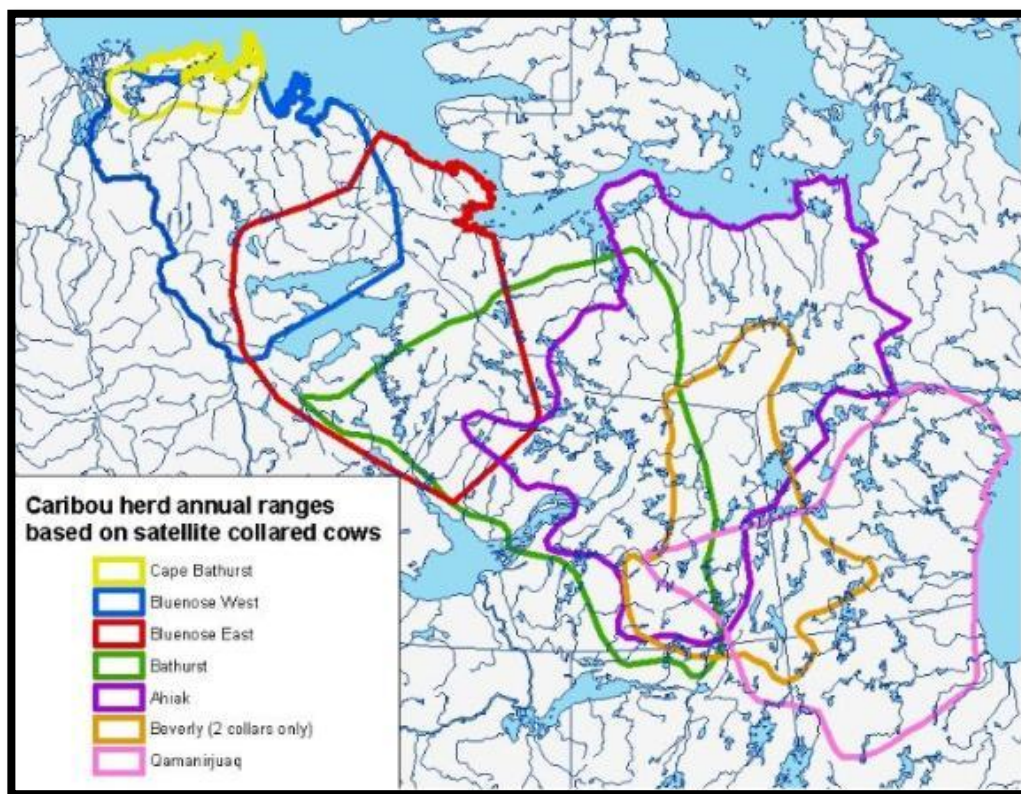
¹²⁵ Gordon, B. C. (1996). *People of the Sunlight, People of the Starlight: Barrenland Archaeology in the Northwest Territories of Canada*. Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization. p. 6.

¹²⁶ Wright, J. G. (1944). Economic Wildlife of Canada's Eastern Arctic—Caribou. *Canadian Geographical Journal* (October 1944), 184 - 195. p. 186.

A management plan for the Bathurst caribou herd has also been developed. Interest in the Bathurst caribou herd grew in the 1990s with a surge in mining activities on the herds annual ranges. Since then, **two diamond mines have been built on spring migration and post calving/summer ranges and a third diamond mine is under construction.** The diamond mining companies monitor caribou abundance and behavior in the vicinity of the diamond mines, however uncertainties remain about the cumulative effects of the mines on the caribou.¹²⁷

The map below, entitled "Caribou herd territorial ranges" (map 3), depicts the seasonal range of individual caribou herds. De Beers proposes to construct the Gahcho Kué mine within the area bounded by the green line, which represents the annual range of the Bathurst herd.

Map 3: Caribou herd territorial ranges¹²⁸



¹²⁷ NWT, Environmental and Natural Resources. (n.d.). NWT Barren-ground Caribou (*Rangifer taradus groenlandicus*). Retrieved November 22, 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/live/pages/wpPages/caribou_information.aspx.

¹²⁸ NWT Barren-ground Caribou (*Rangifer taradus groenlandicus*): NWT Environmental and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Retrieved November 22, 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/live/pages/wpPages/caribou_information.aspx.

Information on the location of calving grounds has been collected since the 1950s. However, indirect evidence suggests that caribou movements have been relatively stable through time although there have been some fluctuations in migration routes. As Fleck and Gunn state:

The frequent association of tent rings, *inuksuit*, stone caches and other artifacts with water-crossing sites and calving grounds attest to the consistency between past and present movement patterns of barren-ground herds.¹²⁹

Gordon, an archaeologist, informs us that:

Signs of human band and caribou herd affiliation have been accumulating since humans and caribou first entered the Barrenlands. Pile slab *inukshuit* made by Thelon and Dubawnt River hunters mark the route of the herd returning to the forest . . .

I have little doubt that modern seasonal movements vary due to overhunting, forest fires and human impingement on caribou range, but calving ground locations have remained stable for centuries, based on aerial survey and the archaeological record.¹³⁰

Recent research by the Government of Northwest Territories based on the use of tracking collars (i.e. VHF, GPS, and/or satellite collars) has provided information on calving grounds, herd delineation, and seasonal movements. VHF collars were employed in 1996; however, since then, only a relatively small number of individuals has been collared (approximately 0.01–0.03% of the herds).¹³¹ With this relatively low sample size, all inferences made regarding caribou movements may be premature; nonetheless, this technology has provided a snapshot of caribou herd home ranges (see map 3). This research, while not contradicting the

¹²⁹ Fleck, E. S., and A. Gunn. (1982). Characteristics of Three Barren-Ground Caribou Calving Grounds in the Northwest Territories. In Northwest Territories, Wildlife Service, Barren Ground Caribou: Calving Grounds in the Northwest Territories, Progress Report Number 7. p. 6.

¹³⁰ Gordon, B. C. (1996). *People of the Sunlight, People of the Starlight: Barrenland Archaeology in the Northwest Territories of Canada*. Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization. pp. 11-12.

¹³¹ Fisher, J. T., L.D. Roy, & M. Hiltz. (2009). Barren-Ground Caribou Management in the Northwest Territories: An Independent Peer Review. Vegreville, AB: Alberta Research Council, Sustainable Ecosystems Unit, Ecological Conservation Management Program. p. 13.

relative stability of caribou migrations, has established that migration routes and foraging ranges will occasionally differ from year to year. As James G.E. Smith noted in 1976:

While the caribou herds typically follow the same patterns year after year, there are those occasions in which they for no apparent reason move in different directions or their foraging ranges may shift from year to year. It has also been suggested that there are long term cyclical fluctuations in the population, as is the case with other faunal species. Long summers or warm winters may delay the early winter migration, and herd movements or dispersal may be affected by the amount of snowfall. Great forest fires periodically occur, affecting the behavior of the caribou and thus of man. The dynamics of the boreal forest and tundra ecology thus include to some degree elements of uncertainty, to which Chipewyan social organization must be adapted.¹³²

The Northern Athabaskan people chose their seasonal hunting routes based upon the caribou's migration patterns. In a December 5, 1916 letter entitled "re: amendments to the North West Territories Game Act," H. J. Bury distinguished between subsistence activities and participation in a wage economy, both of which Bury deemed to be necessary:

The Indians and the Eskimo of the North West Territories rely absolutely on the game of the country to enable them to live. Certain species of game such as the moose and caribou provide them with the means of sustenance, whilst the fur-bearers afford them a means of livelihood.¹³³

Additionally, in 1930, a memo to the Hon. Thomas G. Murphy, which quotes Inspector C. C. Parker extensively, reads:

The Indian hunter goes inland with a small outfit of traps and a limited supply of provisions and ammunition. He has to depend upon hunting and fishing for feed for his family and his dogs. This

¹³² Smith, J. G. E. (1976). Local Band Organization of the Caribou Eater Chipewyan. *Arctic Anthropology*, 13(1), 12 - 24. p. 14.

¹³³ Bury, H. J. (1916). Memo to Mr. Scott, Re: amendments to the North West Territories Game Act, Dec. 5. 1916. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916-1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1. p. 1.

frequently means that he is obliged to follow the food sources which are not always in a section where fur bearers can be trapped. Sustenance must necessarily come first . . . ¹³⁴

The caribou have been, and continue to be, an essential component of the culture of the Chipewyan, Dogrib, and Yellowknife people. This relationship will be explored at length in the following sections.

The Caribou Hunt

As alluded to in Chapter II, the Chipewyans and Copper Indians relied extensively on the caribou. The Chipewyans and Copper Indians would hunt the caribou for the entire summer. As Hearne stated:

Our Northern Indians who trade at the Factory, as well as all the Copper tribe, pass their whole Summer on the barren ground, where they generally find plenty of deer; and in some of the rivers and lakes, a great abundance of fine fish. ¹³⁵

The Chipewyans and Copper Indians of the Great Slave Lake region did not stalk the caribou herds in the manner in which the Europeans were accustomed to hunting game animals. Instead, they moved in *anticipation* of the caribou herds. The Chipewyans and Copper Indians travelled to specific locations year after year based upon their knowledge of a herds' movements within their territory—a territory coincident with the territorial range of a particular caribou herd. As Ernest Burch, a social anthropologist who specializes in the Athabaskan peoples has made clear, hunting the caribou by tracking them would be a near impossibility:

The capacity of *tarandus* [barren-ground caribou] for sustained movement . . . is as great as that of any other species of terrestrial mammal. An awkward looking beast, the *tarandus* is built to move.

¹³⁴ Parker, C. C., as cited in Author Unknown. (1930). Memorandum: Hon. Thomas G. Murphy. October 28, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 2.

¹³⁵ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 320.

A healthy adult can normally outdistance all predators if it has any kind of head start.¹³⁶

Caribou, not unlike humans, are subject to changes in the weather. When migrating, as George Calef noted, they can move as slow as "a mile or two a day" in the cold or as fast as up to "forty miles a day in a dash to reach the traditional calving place."¹³⁷ Ernest Burch informs us that the hunting techniques of peoples like the Chipewyan, who are dependent upon the caribou, are "based on the premise that people cannot 'follow the herds.'"¹³⁸ In referring to the Athabascan hunting techniques, Burch has:

. . . labeled them the 'head-em-off-at-the-pass,' and the 'search and destroy' techniques. They were applied with remarkable homogeneity throughout the entire area occupied by both man and tarandus . . .¹³⁹

In anticipation of the herd, in the summer when the ice had melted, both groups hunted caribou at the same water crossings where they hunted year after year. Throughout his journal, Hearne provided various examples of this technique. For example:

[O]n the thirtieth of June arrived at a small river, called Cathawhachaga, which empties itself into a large lake called Yathkyed-whoie, or White Snow Lake. Here we found several tents of Northern Indians, who had been some time employed spearing deer in their canoes, as they crossed the above mentioned little river.¹⁴⁰

In general, these Indians make use of the single paddle, though a few have double ones, like the Esquimaux: the latter, however, are

¹³⁶ Burch, E. S., Jr. (1972). The Caribou/Wild Reindeer as a Human Resource. *American Antiquity*, 37(3), 339 - 368. p. 344.

¹³⁷ Calef, G. (1995). *Caribou and the Barren-Lands*. Willowdale, Ont: Firefly Books Ltd. pp. 24 & 40.

¹³⁸ Burch, E. S., Jr. (1972). The Caribou/Wild Reindeer as a Human Resource. *American Antiquity*, 37(3), 339 - 368. p. 346.

¹³⁹ Burch, E. S., Jr. (1972). The Caribou/Wild Reindeer as a Human Resource. *American Antiquity*, 37(3), 339 - 368. p. 346.

¹⁴⁰ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 35.

seldom used, but by those who lie in wait to kill deer as they cross rivers and narrow lakes.¹⁴¹

[W]e came to a branch of Conge-ca-tha-wha-chaga River; on the North side of which we found several Copper Indians, who were assembled, according to annual custom, to kill deer as they cross the river in their little canoes.¹⁴²

Caribou were also hunted in the spring as they returned to their summer habitat on the tundra. While snares were sometimes used, caribou impoundments appear to be the predominant technique used. European explorer Samuel Hearne stated that the sheer number of caribou killed in this fashion was:

. . . [s]o successful that many families subsist by it without having occasion to move their tents above once or twice during the course of a whole winter; and when Spring advances, both the deer and Indians draw out to the Eastward, on the ground which is entirely barren.¹⁴³

This quote provides us with a rather interesting piece of information given the supposed "nomadic" nature of the Chipewyans. The Chipewyans had seasonal settlement sites of some size, as well as seasonal migration patterns.

Later in his journal, Hearne provided a detailed description of the caribou impoundment method mentioned above. He began by describing the Chipewyan anticipation of the arrival of a herd:

When the Indians design to impound deer [caribou], they look out for one of the paths in which a number of them have trod, and

¹⁴¹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 98.

¹⁴² Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 118-119.

¹⁴³ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 80.

which is observed to be still frequented by them. When these paths cross a lake, a wide river, or a barren plain, they are found to be much the best for the purposes; and if the path runs through a cluster of woods, capable of affording materials for building a round, it adds considerably to the commodiousness of the situation.¹⁴⁴

He next described the construction of the trap within the transitional boreal forest:

The pound is built by making a strong fence with bushy trees, without observing any degree of regularity, and the work is continued to any extent, according to the pleasure of the builders. I have seen some that were not less than a mile round, and am informed that there are others still more extensive. The door, or entrance of the pound, is not larger than a common gate, and the inside is so crowded with small counter-hedges as very much to resemble a small maze; in every opening of which they set a snare, made with thongs of parchment deer-skins well twisted together, which are amazingly strong. One end of the snare is usually made fast to a growing pole; but if no one of a sufficient size can be found near the place where the snare is set, a loose pole is substituted in its room, which is always of such size and length that a deer cannot drag it far before it gets entangled among the other woods, which are all left standing except what is found necessary for making the fence, hedges, etc.¹⁴⁵

Hearne continued by describing the complexity of the impoundment:

The pound being thus prepared, a row of small brush-wood is stuck up in the snow on each side of the door or entrance; and these hedge-rows are continued along the open part of the lake, river, or plain, where neither stick nor stump besides is to be seen, which makes them more distinctly observed. These poles, or brush-wood, are generally placed at the distance of fifteen or twenty yards from

¹⁴⁴ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 78.

¹⁴⁵ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 78-79.

each other, and ranged in such a manner as to form two sides of a long acute angle, growing gradually wider in proportion to the distance they extend from the entrance of the pound, which sometimes is not less than two or three miles; while the deer's path is exactly along the middle, between the two rows of brush-wood.¹⁴⁶

At this point they wait, having pitched their tents with a view of the caribou trail:

Indians employed on this service always pitch their tent on or near to an eminence that affords a commanding prospect of the path leading to the pound; and when they see any deer going that way, **men, women and children** walk along the lake or river-side under cover of the woods, till they get behind them, then step forth to open view, and proceed towards the pound in the form of a crescent. The poor timorous deer finding themselves pursued, and at the same time taking the two rows of brushy poles to be two ranks of people stationed to prevent their passing on either side, run straight forward in the path up the path till they get into the pound.¹⁴⁷

The group then slaughtered the "deer" (caribou). The hunters would:

. . . close in, and block up the entrance with some brush trees, that have been cut down and lie at hand for that purpose. The deer being thus enclosed, the women and children walk round the pound, to prevent them from breaking or jumping over the fence, while the men are employed spearing such as are entangled in the snares, and shooting with bows and arrows those which remain loose in the pound.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 79.

¹⁴⁷ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 79-80.

¹⁴⁸ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 80.

The primary tool used in the hunt, prior to the advent of firearms, was either a bow and arrow or a spear tipped with bone, copper, or slate.¹⁴⁹ A metal lance head was uncovered in 1977 at Whitefish Lake:

. . . in 1977 . . . Tom Foess found a long Dènè metal lance head at KcNe-1 below Whitefish Lake.¹⁵⁰

Hunting is a skill passed down through the generations:

Some community elders say that when caribou pass a camp on their way south from the summer grounds, people should let them pass for a day before beginning the hunt. They believe that by letting the leaders pass by and hunting from the middle of the herd, the migration of the herd will not be disturbed. If the lead caribou are killed, the herd may change its migration route.¹⁵¹

The DKFN describe how they were told by their ancestors to hunt with care with regard to the future of the caribou. Stan Beck, a DKFN member, argues that the tourists of the north are doing exactly what the elders of the Great Slave Lake Region, as quoted above, had advocated against. He declared (in an interview with Linda Vanden Berg) that the caribou are at risk because the tourists camp on their well-worn trails, which scares them away. Also, those same tourists, in their haste, kill the first caribou that comes their way—the lead caribou. Stan Beck drew an analogy for us, equating the effect that this type of treatment has on the caribou with how a human society might also be affected if treated in the same manner:

[An] Old man [told me that] caribou follow the leaders[.] The tourists' camps are sitting right on their trail . . . and . . . alongside the road . . . [They] shoot the leaders and kill the big bulls because they want trophies and the leaders get confused. **If we killed all our leaders we would be confused too.**¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 322 & 167.

¹⁵⁰ Gordon, B. C. (1996). *People of the Sunlight, People of the Starlight: Barrenland Archaeology in the Northwest Territories of Canada*. Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization. p. 22.

¹⁵¹ NWT Environmental and Natural Resources (n.d.). Our Wildlife: Bathurst Caribou Herd. Retrieved from www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Bathurst_Caribou_Herd.aspx, accessed on July 27th, 2012.

¹⁵² Beck, Stan. (July 15th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Linda Vanden Berg's Interview Notes. p. 2.

Caribou as a Food Source

The various hunts, as described above, allow the Chipewyans and Copper Indians access to a number of goods. First, the caribou was skinned and the hide was used for tents, clothing, and string (*babiche*). Second, the bones and antlers were carved into tools which assisted in both the hunt and everyday life (both material uses of the caribou listed above will be discussed in the next section). Third, and perhaps most importantly, the caribou provided the Chipewyans and Copper Indians with meat. Throughout Chapter IV there are numerous examples of the year-round reliance of the Chipewyans and Copper Indians on barren-ground caribou. The role of the caribou in subsistence activities will be discussed briefly here.

The caribou's hide was not sought after by the HBC (few records are found which involve the trade of this item), but the caribou meat provided by the Chipewyan guides was. Deer, being plentiful was worth noting. Hearne wrote:

The weather for some time proved fine, and deer were very plentiful; but as the above ravagers had materially lightened my load, by taking everything from me, except the quadrant, books, &c., this part of my journey was the easiest and most pleasant of any I had experienced since my leaving the Fort.¹⁵³

The ease which Hearne experienced on this leg of his journey was thanks to a plentiful caribou hunt. Similar accounts are peppered throughout the journals of Fidler, Mackenzie, Franklin, and Pike. Hearne noted the connection between spotting caribou and being free of a "want of provisions":

By the twenty-third, deer were so plentiful that the Indians seemed to think that, unless the season, contrary to expectation and general experience, should prove unfavourable, there would be no fear of our being in want of provisions during the rest of the Winter, as

¹⁵³ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 50.

deer had always been known to be in great plenty in the direction which they intended to walk.¹⁵⁴

Hearne's "Northern Indian" guides would rest and eat what they had killed after the hunt. Once they had eaten all that they could, they would move on in search of the next herd. The Chipewyans would spend the summer months on the Barren Lands subsisting almost entirely upon caribou. Of course Hearne had a goal, that of locating the Copper River, so they moved on:

Deer were so plentiful, and the Indians killed such vast numbers, that notwithstanding we frequently remained three, four, or five days in a place, to eat up the spoils of our hunting, yet at our departure we frequently left great quantities of good meat behind us, which we could neither eat nor carry with us.¹⁵⁵

Hearne described in great detail the method by which the Chipewyans prepared the stomach of the caribou:

The most remarkable dish among them, as well as all the other tribes of Indians in those parts, both Northern and Southern, is blood mixed with the half-digested food which is found in the deer's stomach or paunch, and boiled up with a sufficient quantity of water, to make it of the consistence of pease-pottage. Some fat and scraps of tender flesh are also shred small and boiled with it. To render this dish more palatable, they have a method of mixing the blood with the contents of the stomach in the paunch itself, and hanging it up in the heat and smoke of the fire for several days; which puts the whole mass into a state of fermentation, and gives it such an agreeable acid taste, that were it not for prejudice, it might be eaten by those who have the nicest palates . . . most of the fat which is boiled in it is first chewed by the men and boys, in order to break the globules that contain the fat; by which means it all boils out, and mixes with the broth . . . To do justice, however, to their cleanliness in this particular, I must observe, that they are very

¹⁵⁴ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 74-75.

¹⁵⁵ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 76.

careful that neither old people with bad teeth, nor young children, have any hand in preparing this dish . . . when I was sufficiently convinced of the truth of the above remark, I no longer made any scruple, but always thought it exceedingly good.

The stomach of no other large animal beside the deer is eaten by any of the Indians that border on Hudson's Bay. In Winter, when the deer feed on fine white moss, the contents of the stomach is so much esteemed by them, that I have often seen them sit round a deer where it was killed, and eat it warm out of the paunch. In summer the deer feed more coarsely, and therefore this dish, if it deserves that appellation, is then not so much in favour.¹⁵⁶

Hearne next documented how the Chipewyans would consume the sexual organs:

The parts of generation belonging to any beast they kill, both male and female, are always eaten by the men and boys; and though those parts, particularly in the males, are generally very tough, they are not, on any account, to be cut with an edge-tool, but torn to pieces with the teeth; and when any part of them proves too tough to be masticated, it is thrown into the fire and burnt. For the Indians believe firmly, that if a dog should eat any part of them, it would have the same effect on their success in hunting, that a woman crossing their hunting-track at an improper period would have. The same ill-success is supposed also to attend them if a woman eats any of those parts.¹⁵⁷

And, again:

They are also remarkably fond of the womb of the buffalo, elk, deer, &c. which they eagerly devour without washing, or any other process but barely stroking out the contents.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 316-318.

¹⁵⁷ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 318-319.

¹⁵⁸ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 319.

In 1821, Sir John Franklin, while travelling with Copper Indian guides on his journey toward the Arctic Ocean, described a diet that relied almost solely upon "rein-deer" (caribou). Franklin recorded his party's diet as follows:

Our diet consisted almost entirely of rein-deer meat, varied twice a week by fish, and occasionally by a little flour, but we had no vegetables of any description.¹⁵⁹

Often while travelling, Franklin's company were forced to survive by relying upon dried meat prepared and carried as a contingency measure:

We were extremely distressed to learn from Dr. Richardson, that Akaitcho and his party had expended all the ammunition they had received at Fort Enterprise, without having contributed any supply of provision. The Doctor had, however, through the assistance of two hunters he kept with him, prepared two hundred pounds of dried meat, which was now our sole dependence [*sic*] for the journey.¹⁶⁰

Chrissy Lafferty and Carol Collins, both DKFN members, spoke of practices similar to those described by Hearne and Franklin above. When asked by interviewer Linda Vanden Berg, "What meat do you eat daily?", Chrissy Lafferty replied:

Everything on the caribou, even the guts.¹⁶¹

Carol Collins, in a separate interview, described the process she uses to prepare dried caribou meat. She also discussed the various parts of the caribou that the DKFN members consume:

I'll get a little piece of meat and split it down the middle and carve it thin like a blanket. Try not to make it too thick. I do it thin so I can dry it. I like to smoke it as I dry it. I like it without the smoke too. It

¹⁵⁹ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 33.

¹⁶⁰ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). pp. 130 - 131.

¹⁶¹ Lafferty, Chrissy Gail. (September 26th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 4.

still tastes good. I usually hang it on these little racks that I make. Some people use baby crib slats.

What types of meat do they use? [Question asked by Linda Vanden Berg]

Everything, they eat the guts, the heart, the kidneys, liver, everything, the head. The only thing they don't eat is the hooves. Like rabbits, they eat the brains.¹⁶²

Use of the Caribou in the Material Culture of the Athabascans

Culture is persistent while at the same time adaptive. Traditional pursuits continued long after the establishment and eventual demise of the HBC trading posts. Fur trading was simply incorporated into an existing way of life. Hearne, one of the first explorers in the region, kept a journal of his travels with the Chipewyans, recording their material culture and that of the other Great Slave Lake people in great detail while depending upon them for his day-to-day survival. Hearne was the first to record adaptive changes to the material culture of the Yellowknife/Copper Indians when he noted that they had switched from bows and arrows to the gun for hunting some species.

As noted earlier, it is difficult to overstate the importance of the barren-ground caribou to the Chipewyans and Yellowknives. The movements of the caribou affected the movements of the people. The barren-ground caribou were not simply a source of food for the people, they also supplied most of their material needs—from simple tools to tents for shelter.

The Chipewyan peoples also depended upon the caribou for their clothing. The best caribou skins for clothing were obtained from caribou killed between early August and the middle of October, a period when the hides are thickest and the hair is still firmly attached:

All skins for the above-mentioned purposes are, if possible, procured between the beginning of August and the middle of October; for when the rutting season is over, and the winter sets in, the deer-skins are not only very thin, but in general full of worms and warbles; which render them of little use, unless it be to cut into

¹⁶² Collins, Carol Margaret. (September 26th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 4.

fine thongs, of which they make fishing-nets, and nets for the heels and toes of their snow-shoes.¹⁶³

The explorer John Franklin provides another observation:

The Indians form their robes of the [rein-deer] skins procured in autumn, when the hair is short.¹⁶⁴

In order to to clothe one adult, for the winter approximately eight to ten caribou hides were required (plus an additional five per tent [plate 4]).¹⁶⁵

Plate 4: Caribou hide tent¹⁶⁶



In the winter, the Chipewyans' clothing consisted of:

¹⁶³ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 197.

¹⁶⁴ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 50, 196, & 322 - 323.

¹⁶⁶ Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board. (2009). A caribou skin tent on the tundra. Retrieved from http://www.arctic-caribou.com/news_summer2009.html.

. . . Indian stockings which come up to the thick part of the thigh from the ankle, and are certainly better adapted for the Hunter, who requires to have his limbs perfectly at ease. And above these a piece of loose cloth is worn, hanging before and behind. Some come to the Fort in Winter, clothed in a leathern shirt fitted close to the body, which reaches down to the thighs. Over this a blanket was thrown, and this I suppose is their general hunting dress, with the addition of a Fur Cap or bandeau round the head.¹⁶⁷

The Yellowknife (Copper Indian) winter clothing was described by Franklin as "very becoming".¹⁶⁸ It was composed of:

. . . [a] loose double Reindeer robe thrown over a leathern shirt with stockings and shoes . . . In very severe weather the shirt is usually taken off and the Robe placed next to the skin, which they, in common with other Indians maintain is a warmer manner of dressing, and preferable on such occasions to having an under garment.¹⁶⁹

Caribou hide with the hair left on provided most of the Chipewyan's heavy winter clothing. Caribou hides without the hair were used for the manufacture of other articles of clothing:¹⁷⁰

Beside these [caribou] skins, which must be in the hair, each person requires several others to be dressed into leather, for stockings and shoes, and light Summer clothing.¹⁷¹

Thongs made from caribou hides, were used in the manufacture of snowshoes and sledges:

¹⁶⁷ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p. 3.

¹⁶⁸ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p. 117.

¹⁶⁹ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p. 117.

¹⁷⁰ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p. 3.

¹⁷¹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 196.

. . . several more [caribou hides] are also wanted in a parchment state, to make *clewla* as they call it, or thongs to make netting for their snow-shoes [and] . . . sewing for their sledges.¹⁷²

The caribou hides were also used in the manufacture of tools for “snares for deer [caribou]”.¹⁷³ And “for every other use where strings or lines of any kind are required.”¹⁷⁴

The caribou hides were used for almost anything associated with the daily lives of the Chipewyan people, including the dwellings in which they survived the cold winters:

. . . each person, on an average, expends, in the course of a year, upwards of twenty deer skins in clothing and other domestic uses, exclusive of tent cloths, bags, and many other things which it is impossible to remember, and unnecessary to enumerate.¹⁷⁵

The practice of manufacturing items of clothing from the caribou hide continues to this day. In fact, several DKFN members have discussed how the caribou hides were, and are, used. As James Balsillie recalls, the DKFN “[u]sed to wear caribou skin gloves; everyone used to get gifts: gloves, moccasins, blankets, *etcetera* of caribou skin.”¹⁷⁶ Henry King states that they made “jackets, shoes, [and] clothing.”¹⁷⁷ Martha Beaulieu listed other uses: “[s]hoes, mitts, vests, slippers, hats, [and] jackets. Everything you could use the hides for. Dresses. A lot of people got married in caribou hide dresses.”¹⁷⁸ Mary Pierot also recalled how “nobody threw the hides away. Nobody got shoes in the store.”¹⁷⁹ She stated that the women would make

¹⁷² Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 196.

¹⁷³ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 196.

¹⁷⁴ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 196.

¹⁷⁵ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 196 - 197.

¹⁷⁶ Balsillie, James Robert. (July 15th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Linda Vanden Berg's Interview Notes. p. 2.

¹⁷⁷ King, Henry George. (July 15th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Sophie Henderson's Interview Notes. p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ Beaulieu, Martha Doreen. (July 17th, 2012). Statutory Declarations. p. 2.

¹⁷⁹ Pierot, Mary Christina. (July 31st, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 5.

clothes: "jackets, or, with the fur on, robes."¹⁸⁰ Today, Solomon King says the caribou hide is used as a "mattress, [or a] cover for your seat."¹⁸¹

Despite the usefulness of the caribou to the Copper Indians and Chipewyans, the HBC did not place a commercial value on them – they did not trade for caribou hides. The HBC preferred beaver, mink, wolf, and other skins, which were not necessarily found in the Barren Lands. The Athabaskan Indians were at times faced with choosing between hunting for subsistence purposes and personal material goods or hunting or trapping for furs that they could trade for goods with the HBC factors.

Hearne noted that the Indians would eat their clothing in times of scarcity when the hunt failed:

On those pressing occasions I have frequently seen the Indians examine their wardrobe, which consisted chiefly of skin-clothing, and consider what part could best be spared; sometimes a piece of an old, half-rotten deer skin, and at others a pair of old shoes, were sacrificed to alleviate extreme hunger.¹⁸²

Caribou antlers were used in the manufacture of knives and bayonets:

The men's bayonets and women's knives are also made of copper; the former are in a shape like the ace of spades, **with the handle of deer's horn a foot long.**¹⁸³

Animals as a Food Source

The predominant game animal for the Chipewyans, Yellowknives, and Dogribs has been the barren-ground caribou (also called "rein-deer" by Franklin and Mackenzie, and "deer" by

¹⁸⁰ Pierot, Mary Christina. (July 31st, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 5.

¹⁸¹ King, Solomon. (July 17th, 2012). Statutory Declaration. p. 3.

¹⁸² Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 33-34.

¹⁸³ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 169.

Hearne) since time immemorial. Additional animals hunted are geese (plate 5), ducks, ptarmigans (plate 6), beavers (plate 7), muskrats (plate 10), snowshoe and arctic hares (plates 11 and 12), fish (of many species; plates 13–16), moose (plate 17), and muskoxen (plate 18).¹⁸⁴ Some of these animals range between the Barren Lands and other habitats seasonally, and some fish species are found in the extensive water systems both south and north of the treeline. Subsistence animals found exclusively in the Barren Lands include the arctic hare and muskox.

Geese

Hearne's party often faced the threat of starvation during their travels through the Barren Lands. Hearne and his party relied on geese as a source of meat when the caribou were not in the region. In May 1771, near Snowbird Lake east of Great Slave Lake, several of Hearne's "Northern Indian" guides turned back due to "want of provisions."¹⁸⁵ In May the ground was still frozen and the game was limited:

Game of all kinds indeed were so scarce, that, except a few geese, nothing had been killed by any of our party, from our leaving the women and children on the eleventh instant, nor had we seen one deer the whole way.¹⁸⁶

Hearne stated that "there are no less than ten different species of Geese that frequent the various parts of Hudson's Bay during Summer."¹⁸⁷ He noted that the most common was the snow goose (plate 5).¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 21, 138, 139, 200, 208, 275, & 319.

¹⁸⁵ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 293.

¹⁸⁶ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 293.

¹⁸⁷ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 437.

Geese were a staple in the spring and fall, during which time Hearne's party travelled through the Barren Lands. The group would often come across large migrating flocks:

Geese, ducks, and swans visit here in great plenty during their migrations both in the Spring and Fall, and by much art, joined to an insurmountable patience, are caught in considerable numbers in snares, and, without doubt, make a very pleasing change in the food.¹⁸⁹

Chipewyan groups were just as expert at killing geese as they were at the caribou hunt:

The Indians are far more expert in killing Geese, as well as every other species of game, than any European I ever saw in Hudson's Bay; for some of them frequently kill upward of a hundred Geese in a day, whereas the most expert of the English think it a good day's work to kill thirty. Some years back it was common for an Indian to kill from a thousand to twelve hundred Geese in one season.¹⁹⁰

Kevin Giroux, a DKFN member, recalls participating in the seasonal goose hunt in the Barren Lands as a young man:

Tell me about hunting in your family.

All my uncles, they raised me and we all went out into the bush. I've been out on the land ever since I was a kid. On the boat, checking nets, feeding the sled dogs. I remember going for the seasonal geese, and the fall hunt. I remember going up to the Barren Lands at 12 years old.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 439.

¹⁸⁹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 275-276.

¹⁹⁰ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 439-440.

¹⁹¹ Giroux, Kevin Justin. (September 29th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 2.

Plate 5: Snow goose¹⁹²



Ptarmigan

Hearne often made reference to geese, as did Franklin. However, in February, before the arrival of the geese and other summer birds, Franklin's party relied on resident birds:

The summer birds by this time had entirely deserted us, leaving, for our winter companions, the raven, cinereous crow, ptarmigan, and snow-bird.¹⁹³

The ptarmigan (plate 6) was caught in small quantities and offered a meager amount of meat per bird. Nonetheless, throughout Franklin's travels it remained a necessary and important game bird:

A good many ptarmigan were seen at this time, and the women caught some in snares, but not in sufficient quantity to make any further alteration in the rations of deers' meat that were daily issued. They had

¹⁹² Quebec Outfitters. Hunting: Snow goose. (n.d.). Retrieved September 12, 2012, from <http://www.pourvoiries.com/en/hunting-quebec/species/snow-geese.html#.UFDVhI1mSSp>.

¹⁹³ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 15.

already been reduced from eight, to the short allowance of five pounds.¹⁹⁴

When Donald William Balsillie, a DKFN member hereafter referred to as Don Balsillie, was younger, he hunted small game in preparation for larger game animals (i.e., moose and caribou). As he stated, at first he killed only "small animals: squirrel, chickens [spruce hen, and grouse], ptarmigan, muskrats, beavers . . . [and] rabbits."¹⁹⁵

Plate 6: Ptarmigan¹⁹⁶



Beaver

The beaver (plate 7), a fur-bearing animal trapped throughout the year, was the standard among fur traders by which all other furs were valued: "Three marten, eight musk-rat, or a single lynx, or wolverene [*sic*] skin, are equivalent to one beaver; a silver fox, white fox, or

¹⁹⁴ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 48.

¹⁹⁵ Balsillie, Donald William. (August 1st, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 2.

¹⁹⁶ Life in Inuvik, Northwest Territories. (2012, March 31). Ptarmigan on the Side of the Dempster Highway. Retrieved September 12, 2012, from <http://inuvikphotos.ca/2012/05/31/ptarmigan-on-the-side-of-the-dempster-highway/>.

otter, are reckoned two beavers, and a black fox, or large black bear, are equal to four."¹⁹⁷ The beaver was easy to locate and hunt due to the location of its lodges and dams along rivers and streams (plate 9). The beaver does not occupy the Barren Lands. Several explorers in the region describe the process of "taking the beaver houses":

Early in the morning, my Indians assisted us in taking the beaver houses already mentioned; but the houses being small, and some of the beavers escaping, they only killed six, all of which were cooked the same night, and voraciously devoured under the denomination of a feast.¹⁹⁸

Plate 7: A beaver grooming¹⁹⁹



As we have seen earlier, Donald William Balsillie hunted beaver as a child. Rocky Lafferty and his family trap beaver regularly and teach their children how to follow in their footsteps.

¹⁹⁷ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). pp. 128-129.

¹⁹⁸ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 9.

¹⁹⁹ Elizabeth Irreverent Blog. (2011, June 25). Canada Day Beaver Quiz: A Beaver Preening. Retrieved September 12, 2012, from <http://elizabethirreverent.wordpress.com/2011/06/25/canada-day-beaver-quiz/>.

Below is a picture of Tamara Lafferty, Rocky Lafferty and Tendah Lafferty's daughter (all three are DKFN members), skinning a beaver at their cabin on "Shit Island" in the Slave River (plate 8).

Plate 8: Tamara Lafferty skinning a beaver²⁰⁰



Beaver lodges also provide housing for other animals, including the muskrat and otter:

The musk-rat frequently inhabits the same lodge with the beaver, and the otter also thrusts himself in occasionally; the latter, however, is not always a civil guest, as he sometimes devours his host.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Lafferty, T. (personal communication, September 24, 2012).

²⁰¹ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 143.

Plate 9: Beaver lodge.²⁰²



Muskrat

The muskrat (or "rats" as trappers refer to them), although thought of primarily as a fur bearer, was often eaten (plate 10), as was the beaver. They are found in the transitional forest, Hearne described both their territory and their similarity to beavers:

The MUSK RAT, or MUSQUASH; or, as Naturalists call it, the MUSK BEAVER; is common in those parts; generally frequenting ponds and deep swamps that do not freeze dry in Winter. The manner of life of this species of animals is peculiar, and resembles that of the Beaver, as they are in some respects provident, and build houses to shelter themselves from the inclemency of the cold in Winter; but instead of making those houses on the banks of ponds or swamps, like the Beaver, they generally build them on the ice as soon as it is skinned over, and at a considerable distance from the shore; always taking care to keep a hole open in the ice to admit them to dive for their food, which chiefly consists of the roots of grass.²⁰³

²⁰² Canada Photo Series. (n.d.). Beaver Dam. Retrieved September 12, 2012, from <http://www.canadaphotoseries.com/saskatchewan/green-lake>.

²⁰³ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 379-380.

Hearne described the muskrat as follows:

. . . in general they feed very clean, and when fat are good eating, particularly when nicely singed, scalded, and boiled . . . but their resemblance to a Rat is so great that few are partial to them. Indeed the only difference between them and a common Rat, exclusive of their superior size, is, that their hind-feet are large and webbed, and the tail, instead of being round, is flat and scaly.²⁰⁴

The Chipewyans and Yellowknives themselves, to this day, as seen in the quote below by Mary Pierrot, refer to the muskrat as a "rat":

Do you know where your dad and brother's hunted?

. . . Sometime during the spring time they used to get rats on the north side of the lake. We hardly get rats on this part. But, we get lots of beaver. Not only my dad, but everybody, they used to go down there. Henry used to go for rats there too . . .²⁰⁵

Plate 10: A muskrat foraging. Note its similar appearance to the beaver; some label it the musk beaver.²⁰⁶



²⁰⁴ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 380.

²⁰⁵ Pierot, Mary Christina. (July 31st, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 3.

²⁰⁶ PBase. (2005, May 27). Muskrat. Retrieved Sep 12, 2012, from www.pbase.com/image/44263790 .

Arctic and Snowshoe Hares

The snowshoe hare (or American hare) also provided the Indians of the Great Slave Lake area with sustenance (plate 11):

The American hare [snowshoe hare], and several kinds of grouse and ptarmigan, also contribute towards the support of the natives.²⁰⁷

Plate 11: The snowshoe hare, or, as Hearne has labelled it, the American hare. During the summer, the snowshoe hare's coat turns light brown.²⁰⁸



Although generally thought of as a fur bearer:

. . . The flesh of those [Snowshoe] Hares is generally more esteemed than that of the former [Arctic Hares: plate 12]. They are in season all the Winter; and though they generally feed on the brush of pine and fir during that season, yet many of the Northern Indians eat the contents of the stomach. They are seldom sought after in Summer, as in that season they are not esteemed good eating; but as the Fall advances they are, by feeding on berries, &c. most excellent . . . In thick weather

²⁰⁷ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 143.

²⁰⁸ Ghosh, Anwiksha. (n.d.). Snowshoe Hare. Retrieved Sep 12, 2012, from www.animalspot.net/snowshoe-hare.html .

they are easily shot with the gun; but the most usual method of killing them is by snares.²⁰⁹

The arctic hare is found exclusively on the Barren Lands.

Plate 12: The arctic hare's coat in winter is white except for the black on the tips of its ears. In spring, its coat colour turns to blue-grey²¹⁰



Fish

The Northern Athabaskan Indians' relied extensively upon the caribou for sustenance purposes during the winter months. However, given the abundance of waterways in the Barren Lands,

²⁰⁹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 384-385.

²¹⁰ Lynch, W. (n.d.). Dr. Wayne Lynch, Canada's Wildlife Specialist: Arctic Hare. Retrieved Sep 12, 2012, from http://www.waynelynch.ca/arctic_gallery08.html

fish were eaten year-round. Hearne described the various methods of fishing that his "Northern Indian" (Chipewyan) guides employed. The process described below refers to ice fishing in the winter, but the Chipewyans also fished in the summer using largely the same technique:

Angling for fish under the ice in winter requires no other process, than cutting round holes in the ice from one to two feet diameter, and letting down a baited hook, which is always kept in motion, not only to prevent the water from freezing so soon as it would do if suffered to remain quite still, but because it is found at the same time to be a great means of alluring the fish to the hole; for it is always observed that the fish in those parts will take a bait which is in motion, much sooner than one that is at rest.²¹¹

Another fishing technique is the setting of nets. This method allows for the hunter to set his/her net and leave to seek other game. In this case the ice assisted in keeping the net in place and allowed one to net in a lake or large river without the use of a canoe:

To set a net under the ice, it is first necessary to ascertain its exact length, by stretching it out upon the ice near the part proposed for setting it. This being done, a number of round holes are cut in the ice, at ten or twelve feet distance from each other, and as many in number as will be sufficient to stretch the net at its full length. A line is then passed under the ice, by means of a long light pole, which is first introduced at one of the end holes, and, by means of two forked sticks, this pole is easily conducted, or passed from one hole to another, under the ice, till it arrives at the last. The pole is then taken out, and both ends of the line being properly secured, is always ready for use. The net is made fast to one end of the line by one person, and hauled under the ice by a second; a large stone is tied to each of the lower corners, which serves to keep the net expanded, and prevents it rising from the bottom with every waft of the current . . .

In order to search a net thus set, the two end holes only are opened; the line is veered away by one person, and the net hauled from under the

²¹¹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 15-16.

ice by another; after all the fish are taken out, the net is easily hauled back to its former station, and there secured as before.²¹²

In his interview with Linda Vanden Berg on September 25th 2012, Raymond Giroux described an identical procedure for setting nets. Previous to the question below he was asked "Can you tell me about fishing?" and "What do you catch?":

What about in the winter?

You drill two holes, and string a net between the two holes. We fish all over there from McLeod Bay [on the east arm of Great Slave Lake] to Fort Res.²¹³

Plate 13: A burbot (*Lota maculosa*), caught in Yellowknife Bay. Hearne stated that the Chipewyans called this species "methy."²¹⁴



Hearne listed the various species of fish they had caught. South of Kazan River at Island Lake, Hearne and his party caught in their net:

²¹² Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 16-17.

²¹³ Giroux, Raymond John. (September 25th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 7.

²¹⁴ Vecsei, P. (2010, November 2). Flickr: From the Depth. Retrieved Sep 12, 2012, from www.flickr.com/photos/fishasart/5140720446/

. . . tittameg, pike, and barble; and the only sorts caught with hooks are trout [plate 14], pike [plate 16], burbot [plate 13], and a small fish, erroneously called by the English tench: the Southern Indians call it the toothed tittameg, and the Northern Indians call it *saint eah*.²¹⁵

Plate 14: Lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*)²¹⁶



Hearne provided a short list of the fish found in the region. The only difference here is the inclusion of "perch" (plate 15). He also noted the abundance in which the fish appeared and when the Indians fished:

The many lakes and rivers with which this part of the country abounds, though they do not furnish the natives with water-carriage, are yet of infinite advantage to them; as they afford great numbers of fish, both in Summer and Winter. The only species caught in those parts are trout, tittameg, (or tickomeg,) tench, two sorts of barble, (called by the Southern Indians Na-may-pith,) burbot, pike, and a few perch. The four former are caught in all parts of this country, as well the woody as the barren; but the three latter are only caught to the Westward, in such lakes and rivers as are situated among the woods; and though some of those rivers lead to the barren ground, yet the three last mentioned species of fish are

²¹⁵ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 71.

²¹⁶ ODNR Division of Wildlife. Lake Trout. Retrieved Sep 12, 2012, from www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/6669/Default.aspx

seldom caught beyond the edge of the woods, not even in the Summer season.²¹⁷

Plate 15: Walleye, or as Hearne named it, a "perch" (*Sander vitreum*)²¹⁸



E.B. Preble, the biologist who annotated Hearne's journal along with J.B. Tyrrell, translated Hearne's short list of fish caught into taxonomic language. They are:

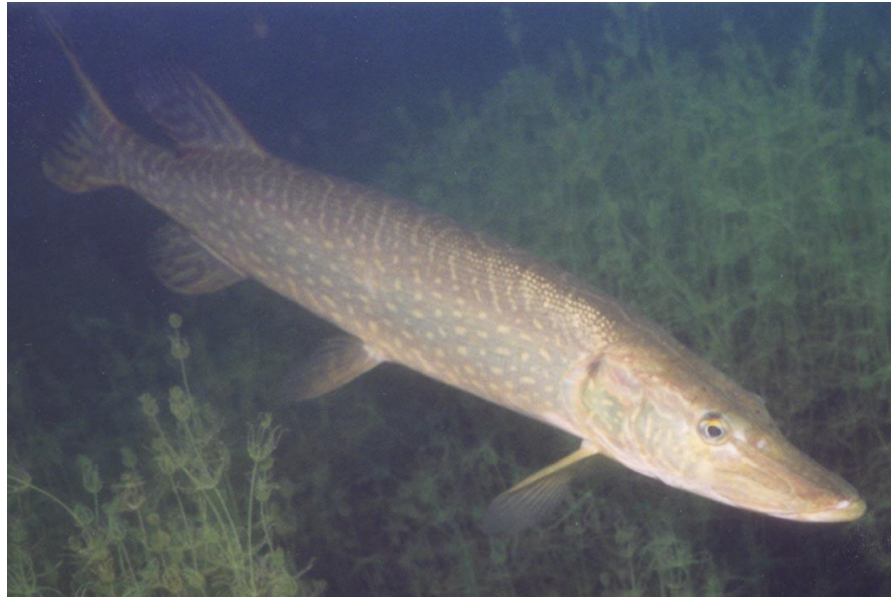
Pike = *Esox Lucius* . . . ; trout = *Cristivomer* [Salvelinus] *namaycush* . . . ; perch = *Stizostedion* [Sander] *vitreum* . . . ; barble = *Catastomus*; tittameg = whitefish (*Coregonus*); methy = *Lota [lota] macu[l]osa*.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 327-328.

²¹⁸ Great Lakes Aquarium. (n.d.). Walleye: *Stizostedion vitreum*. Retrieved September 12, 2012, from <http://www.glaquarium.org/exhibits-species/st-louis-river/walleye/>

²¹⁹ Preble, E. B. (Ed.). (1911). In S. Hearne's, *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort, in Hudson's Bay, to the northern ocean undertaken by the order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the discovery of copper mines, a northwest passage, etc. in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772* (new edition - 1911). Toronto: The Champlain Society. Retrieved October 12th, 2012, from http://www.gutenberg.org/files/38404/38404-h/38404-h.htm#Page_5. p. 249. Footnote: 102.

Plate 16: Northern pike (*Esox lucius*)²²⁰



At Seal River, east of Great Slave Lake, Hearne took note of the Chipewyans' ability to survive on fish until the arrival of the geese in May:

As this place seemed likely to afford us a constant supply of fish, my guide proposed to stay here till the geese began to fly, which in those Northern parts is seldom before the middle of May.²²¹

Fish were also caught year-round as a supplement to the Chipewyans' diet. When caribou were caught, the fish were disregarded:

Several days were now spent in feasting and gluttony; during which the Indians killed five more deer and three fine beavers . . .

The flesh of these deer, though none of the largest, might with frugality have served our small number, (being only six) for some time; but my companions, like other Indians, feasted day and night while it lasted; and were so indolent and unthinking, as not to attend

²²⁰ Pacific Northwest Fishing Reports. (2012, March 25). Northern Pike. Retrieved September 12, 2012, from <http://www.bcfishinreport.com/?p=1922>

²²¹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 17.

properly to the fishing nets; so that many fine fish, which had been entangled in the nets, were entirely spoiled, and in about twelve or fourteen days we were nearly in as great distress for provisions as ever.²²²

Moose

Moose were, and continue to be, a source of food and hides for the Chipewyan and Copper Indians, and their descendants (plate 17). Moose ranged almost exclusively south of the treeline.²²³ During Hearne's travels north of Great Slave Lake at "No Name Lake" (MacKay Lake), he and his party discussed which route to take toward the Arctic Ocean and their respective advantages. Matonabbee, the Chipewyan Chief at the time, chose to abandon Hearne's party, choosing, instead to travel south purportedly because of the availability of beaver and moose:

One of those strangers [either a Copper or Dogrib Indian] had about forty beaver skins, with which he intended to pay Matonabbee an old debt; but one of the other Indians seized the whole, notwithstanding he knew it to be in fact Matonabbee's property. This treatment, together with many other insults, which he had received during my abode with him, made him renew his old resolution of leaving his own country, and going to reside with the Athapuscow Indians.

. . . As to the reason of his determination, I did not think it worthwhile to enquire into it; but, by his discourse with the other Indians, I soon understood that they all intended to make an excursion into the country of the Athapuscow Indians, **in order to kill moose and beaver**. The former of those animals are never found in the Northern Indian territories.²²⁴

²²² Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 24-25

²²³ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Moose in the NWT. Retrieved October 22, 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Moose.aspx.

²²⁴ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 208.

Matonabee's desire to travel south is understandable considering the ease with which Chipewyan and Copper Indians could live in the transitional forest during the winter. After encountering a great number of the animals, Hearne's party stopped on "a small river that empties itself into the Lake Clowey" to feast for several days²²⁵:

The little river lately mentioned, as well as the adjacent lakes and ponds, being well-stocked with beaver, and the land abounding with moose and buffalo, we were induced to make but slow progress in our journey. Many days were spent in hunting, feasting, and drying a large quantity of flesh to take with us, particularly that of the buffalo; for my companions knew by experience, that a few days walk to the Eastward of our present situation would bring us to a part where we should not see any of those animals.²²⁶

The process of running down the moose is outlined below:

. . . the young men took the advantage of the [late March] mornings, when the snow was hard crusted over, and ran down many moose; for in those situations a man with a good pair of snow-shoes will scarcely make any impression on the snow, while the moose, and even the deer, will break through it at every step up to the belly. Notwithstanding this, however, it is very seldom that the Indians attempt to run deer down. The moose are so tender-footed, and so short-winded, that a good runner will generally tire them in less than a day, and very frequently in six or eight hours; though I have known some of the Indians continue the chase [*sic*] for two days, before they could come up with, and kill the game. On those occasions the Indians, in general, only take with them a knife or bayonet, and a little bag containing a set of fire-tackle, and are as lightly clothed as possible; some of them will carry a bow and two or three arrows . . .

²²⁵ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 271.

²²⁶ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 272.

When the poor moose are incapable of making farther speed, they stand and keep their pursuers at bay with their head and fore-feet; in the use of which they are very dexterous, especially the latter; so that the Indians who have neither a bow nor arrows, nor a short gun, with them, are generally obliged to lash their knives or bayonets to the end of a long stick, and stab the moose at a distance. For want of this necessary precaution, some of the boys and fool-hardy young men, who have attempted to rush in upon them, have frequently received such unlucky blows from their fore-feet, as to render their recovery very doubtful.²²⁷

Franklin also described the running down of a moose in his journals. In his account, after a Chipewyan guide had run down a moose for an entire day and killed it, he returned empty-handed. The women then prepared their dog sleds and left camp to dismember and bring it back. Upon their return the moose was split evenly among the group.²²⁸

Moose were recorded as being hunted by the Chipewyans and Copper Indians who hunted in the Barren Lands–transitional zone in the 1900s.²²⁹ The Indian Agent for the Yellowknife Indian Agency based at Fort Resolution, Dr. J. H. Riopel, stated in 1944:

All able-bodied Indians were out to their fishing camps on the main Lake and Rivers or away hunting moose. Several Indians who had been hired at Saw-Mills or at cutting fire-wood **during the summer months left their work and anxiously went away to their hunting grounds in quest of fresh moose and caribou meat.** The duck season was fairly good this **fall.**²³⁰

²²⁷ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 382-384.

²²⁸ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). pp. 265-269.

²²⁹ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Moose in the NWT. Retrieved October 22, 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Moose.aspx.

²³⁰ Riopel, J. H. (1944). Letter to The Secretary, Dept. of Mines and Resources, Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa: September 1944 Monthly Report, October 2nd, 1944. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844 -1970: Yellowknife Agency - Semi Annual Reports 1945 - 1965, RG 10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. p. 1.

Additionally, Donald William Balsillie, a DKFN member, states that when he hunts caribou, he also hunts moose. When asked "What else did you hunt [aside from caribou]?" in his interview with Linda Vanden Berg on August 1st 2012, he responded:

Moose [in purple on map 18]. All the way past Hay River . . . all the way out to Rocher River as far as Lutsel K'e. All the way around the lake on the highway. You know what I forgot: I hunted caribou all around Rae and Bechoko. Hunted caribou there all the way up to Lac la Martre.

Did you follow the ice roads?

Yes. I hunted moose all along the lake shore. Everywhere I hunted caribou I hunted moose as well. Everywhere I hunted moose I hunt caribou as well. They're pretty much the same.²³¹

Plate 17: Bull moose. Note the hump on its back and its flat, wide antlers.²³²



Muskox

Muskoxen are large game animals found exclusively on the Barren Lands (plate 18).

²³¹ Balsillie, Donald William. (August 1st, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 3.

²³² Arkive. (n.d.). Images of Life on Earth: Moose (*Alces americanus*). Retrieved Sep 12, 2012, from <http://www.arkive.org/moose/alces-americanus/image-G54273.html#text=Description>

Although Mackenzie stated that "to the Westward of them [the Chipewyans] the musk-ox may be found, but they have no dependence on it as an article of sustenance," Hearne's account paints an altogether different picture.²³³ Hearne was forced to rely upon the meat, which he described as "disagreeable" on several occasions during his travels:

Early in the morning of the twenty-third [of June, 1770], we set out as usual, but had not walked above seven or eight miles before we saw three musk-oxen grazing by the side of a small lake. The Indians immediately went in pursuit of them; and as some of them were expert hunters, they soon killed the whole of them. This was no doubt very fortunate; but, to our great mortification, before we could get one of them skinned, such a fall of rain came on, as to put it quite out of our power to make a fire; which, even in the finest weather, could only be made of moss, as we were near an hundred miles from any woods. This was poor comfort for people who had not broke their fast for four or five days. Necessity, however, has no law; and having been before initiated into the method of eating raw meat, we were the better prepared for this repast: but this was by no means so well relished, either by me or the Southern Indians, as either raw venison or raw fish had been: for the flesh of the musk-ox is not only coarse and tough, but smells and tastes so strong of musk as to make it very disagreeable when raw, though it is tolerable eating when properly cooked. The weather continued so remarkably bad, accompanied with constant heavy rain, snow, and sleet, and our necessities were so great by the time the weather permitted us to make a fire, that we had nearly eat to the amount of one buffalo [musk-ox] quite raw.²³⁴

And, again:

²³³ MacKenzie, A. (1801). *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans: In the Years 1789 and 1793. With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of That Country. Illustrated with Maps*. London: R. Noble, Old Bailey. p. cxxvii.

²³⁴ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 31-32.

The flesh of the musk-ox noways resembles that of the Western buffalo, but is more like that of the moose or elk; and the fat is of a clear white, slightly tinged with a light azure. The calves and young heifers [of musk-oxen] are good eating; but the flesh of the bulls both smells and tastes so strong of musk, as to render it very disagreeable: even the knife that cuts the flesh of an old bull will smell so strong of musk, that nothing but scouring the blade quite bright can remove it, and the handle will retain the scent for a long time.²³⁵

Plate 18: Muskoxen²³⁶



Despite his distaste for the animal, MacKenzie noted that it's meat was good for a number of purposes:

On the seventeenth [of July, 1770], we saw many musk-oxen, several of which the Indians killed; when we agreed to stay here a

²³⁵ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 138.

²³⁶ The Featured Creature. (2010, September 27). The Stinky yet Loveable Musk. Retrieved September 12, 2012, from <http://www.thefeaturedcreature.com/2010/09/stinky-yet-loveable-musk-ox.html#axzz1zsMz0tzj>

day or two, to dry and pound some of the carcasses [*sic*] to take with us. The flesh of any animal, when it is thus prepared, is not only hearty food, but is always ready for use, and at the same time very portable.²³⁷

Animals as an Economic Resource

The animals of the Barren Lands and transitional forest have played a role in the economy of the Chipewyans and Yellowknives since time immemorial. With the advent of the fur trade in the late 18th century–early 19th century, animals that the HBC would trade pelts for trade goods have been trapped or hunted on a regular basis when the market was good.

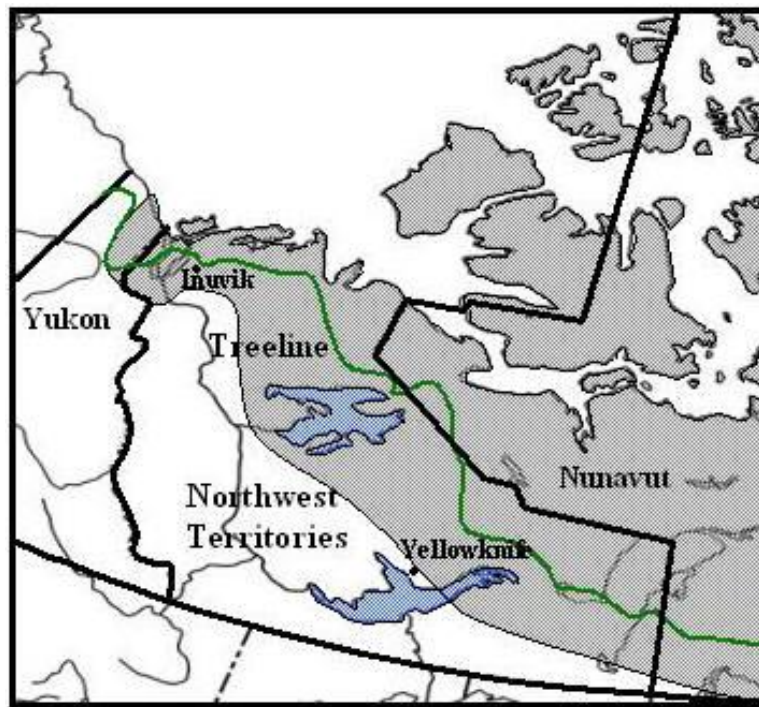
Species of particular importance to the DKFN and their ancestors' trading economy have included the arctic fox (*Alopex lagopus*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), wolf (*Canis lupus*), muskox (*Ovibos moschatus*), beaver (*Castor canadensis*), muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*), marten (*Martes americana*), mink (*Neovison vison*), river otter (*Lontra canadensis*), and lynx (*Lynx canadensis*). Today, the DKFN continue to hunt and trap many of these species and sell the pelts at fur auctions. A number of these species range seasonally between the Barren Lands and the transitional forest. These include the red fox, wolf, barren-ground caribou, and wolverine. Animals found exclusively on the Barren Lands are the muskox and arctic fox.

Animals of the Barren Lands

In the Northwest Territories, the arctic fox ranges throughout the tundra south to the treeline (map 4). Occasionally, when food sources on the tundra are scarce, the animal will range into the boreal forest. Home ranges are typically 3–25 km², but some individuals have been record travelling more than 2000 km.²³⁸

²³⁷ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 38-39.

²³⁸ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Arctic fox. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Arctic_Fox.aspx



Map 4: Arctic fox distribution²³⁹

Arctic Fox

The arctic fox is active throughout the year. Generally, the species breeds in March or April. Pups are born in dens in mid-May to mid-June and are independent by mid-August, at which time they disperse from the denning area.

The coat of the arctic fox changes colour between summer and winter. In July and August the coat is short and brown except for the sides and belly, which are blond (plate 19). This allows the animal to blend in with the natural summer colours of the tundra. In winter the coat has dense underfur and long guard hairs, which provide protection against the harsh winter weather. Two colour phases occur in winter—white and blue—although the blue phase can range from grey to dark blue-black. The white phase is most common (plate 20); the blue phase occurs in only about 1% of the inland population.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Arctic fox. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Arctic_Fox.aspx

²⁴⁰ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Arctic fox. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Arctic_Fox.aspx



Plate 19: Summer coat²⁴¹



Plate 20: Winter coat²⁴²

The white pelt of the arctic fox was a valuable commodity in the fur trade; thus, arctic fox pelts were an important component in the economy of many northern communities.²⁴³ Entries in the HBC Fort Resolution post journals of the 1820s record trappers bringing white fox pelts to the Fort:

8 December 1825: “late in the evening 2 Yellowknife Indians arrived at the Fort with 15 Beaver, 34 Martins, 52 Musquask, 11 Swans, 1 Bear, 1 Silver, 1 Red and **1 White Forx** [sic] . . .”²⁴⁴

24 April 1828: “Old Tsandsané [Chipewyan] and son cast up with 23 Martins . . . about mid day arrived Ettezze and four young lads from the Carx Lands with 11 Beavers, 43 Martins, **5 White Foxes** & 2 Wolverines.”²⁴⁵

30 April 1828: “Sent off Fabeau to Buf River . . . Arrived a party of Yellow Knives. they delivered 292 Martins, 12 Beavers, 6 Swans, 2 [ill], 5 otters, 24 Rats, 37 Foxes, 2 Wolves, 1 Bear, 2 Wolverins [sic] **1 white fox**, about a pack furs in all . . .”²⁴⁶

²⁴¹ McCormick, J. (n.d.). Parks Canada. Retrieved September 2012, from www.wild-facts.com.

²⁴² Retrieved September 2012, from www.arctic-cat-info.blogspot.com

²⁴³ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Arctic fox. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Arctic_Fox.aspx

²⁴⁴ McVicar, R. (1825-1826). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1825-1826*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/6. fol. 22.

²⁴⁵ McGillivray, S. (1827-1828). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1827-1828*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/8. fol. 21.

²⁴⁶ McGillivray, S. (1827-1828). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1827-1828*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/8. fol. 23.

The numbers of arctic foxes trapped likely increased during the early 1900s. During that time, arctic fox pelts increased in value as muskox numbers declined due to overharvesting.²⁴⁷ This led to a reduction in the availability of the muskox pelt and increased the value of the arctic fox pelt.

The trade in arctic fox pelts continues to this day. The trapping season typically extends from November 1 to early April. The number of arctic foxes harvested in the Northwest Territories from the 1991/1992 season to the 2008/2009 season ranged from 37 to 2291, and the average price per pelt ranged from \$15.22 to \$37.84.²⁴⁸ The NWT fur market forecast for 2009–2010 stated that there was a strong demand for arctic fox pelts, and trappers could expect prices to increase over the previous year. Prices that year were expected to average \$20–\$25 per pelt.²⁴⁹ This trend has continued. At auction in January 2012, the average price for arctic fox pelts was \$71.92; top price was \$200.²⁵⁰

Edward Roland Lafferty, in an interview with Linda Vanden Berg on July 17th 2012, recalled that the hunt of white fox occurred exclusively on the Barren Lands and coincided with the caribou hunt:

As a kid they [the elders] used to tell me stories of out there in the Barren Lands. When fur ran out here, they used to go out and get white fox out in the Barren Lands. They went out for white fox and out for caribou too.²⁵¹

James Robert Balsillie also stated that the older generation hunted white fox in the Barren Lands:

²⁴⁷ Lent, P. C. (1999). Exploitation and Preservation. In *Muskoxen and Their Hunters: a History*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma. pp. 127-128.

²⁴⁸ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Arctic fox. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Arctic_Fox.aspx

²⁴⁹ Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs Marketing Program. (2009). NWT 2009–2010 fur market forecast. *GMVF Trappers Newsletter. Fall/Winter 2009*. Retrieved September 2012, from [http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2009/fursfishingagriculture/2009FALLWINTERfinal2\(2\).pdf](http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2009/fursfishingagriculture/2009FALLWINTERfinal2(2).pdf)

²⁵⁰ Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs Marketing Program. (2012). Fur harvesters auction: sales results—January 7, 2012. *GMVF Trappers Newsletter. Winter 2012*. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2012/fursfishingagriculture/2012_winter.pdf

²⁵¹ Lafferty, Edward Roland. (July 16th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Sophie Henderson's Interview Notes. p. 1.

My dad and uncle hunted caribou out there in the Barren Lands and white fox.²⁵²

Gabriel Lafferty and his son Rocky Lafferty continue to trap white fox in the Barren Lands. Note Gabriel Lafferty's mention of the white wolf (discussed later) in the Barren Lands and how travelling out that way provides one with an opportunity to trap them:

Did you ever trap in that area?

Ya, when you go for caribou you take some traps with you. You set some on the way, and on the way back you get your fur. There's good money in the wolves, the white wolves they're the best priced ones . . .

What about the fox?

. . . Trapped silver and white fox in the area, wolverines too they're worth a lot.²⁵³

Further, as Mary Pierrot has stated, everyone from Fort Resolution (referred to below as "Res") hunts white fox. To do so one must hunt on the Barren Lands:

All the people from Res go to the Barren Lands to hunt white fox. Everybody in those days went out hunting white fox and harvesting caribou . . . Every year we used to get caribou.²⁵⁴

Red Fox

In the Northwest Territories, the red fox ranges primarily south of the treeline, but it is also scarcely distributed throughout the Barren Lands (map 5). It occupies a variety of habitats, and ranges over large areas, especially when food resources are scarce. Home ranges are typically 5–35 km².²⁵⁵

²⁵² Balsillie, James Robert. (July 15th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Linda Vanden Berg's Interview Notes. p. 1.

²⁵³ Lafferty, Gabriel. (September 24th, 2012). In Frank "Rocky" Lafferty. Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 5.

²⁵⁴ Pierot, Mary Christina. (July 15th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Linda Vanden Berg's Interview Notes. p. 1.

²⁵⁵ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Red fox. Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/red_fox.aspx



Plate 21: Red phase²⁵⁶



Plate 22: Cross fox phase²⁵⁷

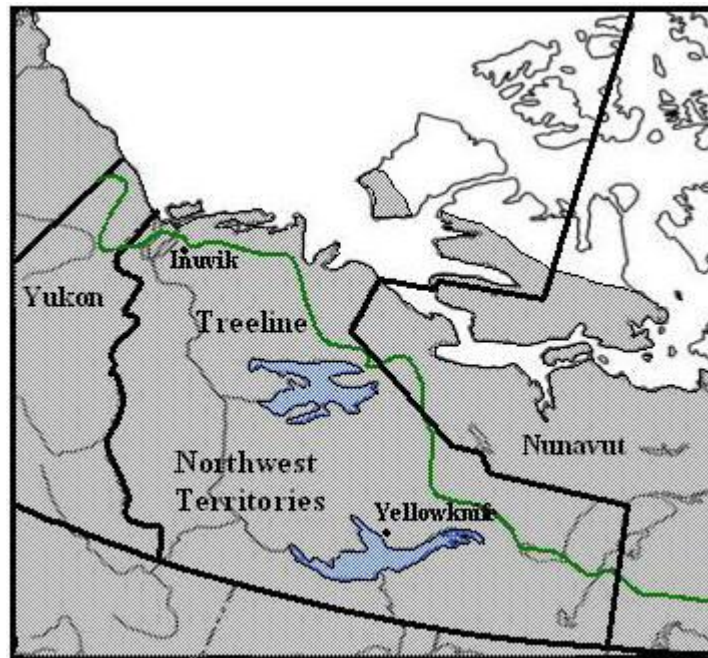


Plate 23: Silver phase²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ Retrieved October 2012, from deskpicture.com

²⁵⁷ Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.waynelynch.ca/boreal_gallery70.html

The red fox is active throughout the year, and is most active at night. Mating occurs in February and March, and pups are born in dens between March and May. The pups generally leave the den in August and travel on their own until they establish their own hunting territories.²⁵⁹



Map 5: Red fox distribution²⁶⁰

The red fox is active throughout the year, and is most active at night. Mating occurs in February and March, and pups are born in dens between March and May. The pups generally leave the den in August and travel on their own until they establish their own hunting territories.²⁶¹

The coat of the red fox can be red, grey-brown, or silver; however, all three colour phases can occur within the same litter of pups. The red phase is most common (plate 21). The overall

²⁵⁸ Images by Horst. (n.d.). (mostly) Silver Fox. Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.imagesbyhorst.com/photo_7117165.html

²⁵⁹ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Red fox. Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/red_fox.aspx

²⁶⁰ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Red fox. Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/red_fox.aspx

²⁶¹ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Red fox. Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/red_fox.aspx

coat is reddish-brown, but the chest, abdomen, and tip of the tail are white, and black hairs occur on the legs and down the back. The grayish-brown phase is known as the cross fox because black hairs across the shoulders form a cross (plate 22). This is the second most common phase. The silver phase is the least common. The overall coat colour is black, but silver frosting occurs on the guard hairs, and the tip of the tail is white (plate 23).²⁶²

Entries in the HBC Fort Resolution post journals of the 1820s record trappers bringing red fox pelts to the Fort:

8 December 1825: "late in the evening 2 Yellowknife Indians arrived at the Fort with 15 Beaver, 34 Martins, 52 Musquask, 11 Swans, 1 Bear, **1 Silver, 1 Red** and 1 White **Forx** [*sic*] . . ."²⁶³

8 April 1826: "In the evening the Grosse Tetter, Ettheechou and Faitin half Breed arrived at the Fort with 6 Beaver, 54 Martins 4 Otters 1 Lynx **1 Red Fox** and 68 lbs fresh meat . . ."²⁶⁴

30 April 1828: "Sent off Fabeau to Buf River . . . Arrived a party of Yellow Knives. they delivered 292 Martins, 12 Beavers, 6 Swans, 2 [ill], 5 otters, 24 Rats, **37 Foxes**, 2 Wolves, 1 Bear, 2 Wolverins [*sic*] 1 white fox, about a pack furs in all . . ."²⁶⁵

Accounts of trappers bringing red fox pelts to the Fort continued to be recorded in the post journals of the 1890s:

14 February 1895: "received a visit from Old Pierre Beaulieu & family trade from them 280 lbs fresh meat, **1 cross fox** & one lynx."²⁶⁶

15 February 1895: "Henry Yellow Knife arrived today with 80 lbs dry meat, 31 toungue 1 Block fat, **1 cross fox**, 9 martens, 1 mink . . ."²⁶⁷

²⁶² Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Red fox. Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/red_fox.aspx

²⁶³ McVicar, R. (1825-1826). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1825-1826*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/6. fol. 22.

²⁶⁴ McVicar, R. (1825-1826). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1825-1826*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/6. fol. 33.

²⁶⁵ McGillivray, S. (1827-1828). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1827-1828*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/8. fol. 23.

²⁶⁶ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B.181/a/19. fol. 43b.

The Fort Resolution post journals further indicated that red foxes continued to be harvested for their pelts in the early 1900s to 1920s:

17 February 1905: “Young Francois in from Buffalo river & gave me 8 mink & **1 R. Fox.**”²⁶⁸

6 November 1915: “Stoney island people came in **had some foxes.**”²⁶⁹

29 March 1922: “Jos. Houle arrived back from his trip to Indians’ camps at Rat River, he brought quite a few pelts. **Foxes, Lynx,** etc.”²⁷⁰

Today, in the Northwest Territories, the trapping season for red foxes typically extends from early November to late February in areas below the treeline, and from early November to mid-April in tundra areas. The number of red foxes harvested in the Northwest Territories from the 1991/1992 season to the 2008/2009 season ranged from 139 to 1171, and the average price per pelt ranged from \$16.38 to \$83.00.²⁷¹ The NWT fur market forecast for 2009–2010 stated that for the red phase, demand was expected to be greatest for better quality darker coloured pelts. The forecast for the cross fox phase stated that “This item has been a strong performer the last few years and we expect good demand again this year for this unique pelt.”²⁷² Prices for the 2009/2010 season were expected to average \$40 per red fox pelt and \$35–\$40 per cross fox pelt.²⁷³

²⁶⁷ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B.181/a/19. fol. 43b.

²⁶⁸ Hudson’s Bay Company (unnamed clerk). (1903 - 1907). *Fort Resolution Post Journal, 1903-1907*. HBCA 1M1020, B.181/a/20. fol. 23.

²⁶⁹ Hudson’s Bay Company (unnamed clerk). (1914 - 1916). *Fort Resolution Post Journal, 1914-1916*. HBCA 1MA59, B.181/a/21. fol. 38b.

²⁷⁰ Hudson’s Bay Company (unnamed clerk). (1919 - 1923). *Fort Resolution Post Journal, 1919-1923*, HBCA 1MA59, B.181/a/23. fol. 129.

²⁷¹ Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs Marketing Program. (2009). NWT 2009–2010 fur market forecast. GMVF Trappers Newsletter. Fall/Winter 2009. Retrieved September 2012, from [http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2009/fursfishingagriculture/2009FALLWINTERfinal2\(2\).pdf](http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2009/fursfishingagriculture/2009FALLWINTERfinal2(2).pdf)

²⁷² Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs Marketing Program. (2009). NWT 2009–2010 fur market forecast. GMVF Trappers Newsletter. Fall/Winter 2009. Retrieved September 2012, from [http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2009/fursfishingagriculture/2009FALLWINTERfinal2\(2\).pdf](http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2009/fursfishingagriculture/2009FALLWINTERfinal2(2).pdf)

²⁷³ Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs Marketing Program. (2009). NWT 2009–2010 fur market forecast. GMVF Trappers Newsletter. Fall/Winter 2009. Retrieved September 2012, from [http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2009/fursfishingagriculture/2009FALLWINTERfinal2\(2\).pdf](http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2009/fursfishingagriculture/2009FALLWINTERfinal2(2).pdf)

The demand for red fox pelts has remained strong. At auction in January 2012, the average price for red fox pelts ranged from \$26.62 to \$53.43; top price was \$110. In that same auction, the average and top prices for silver foxes were \$24.32 and \$29, respectively, whereas cross fox pelts averaged \$62.84 and fetched a top price of \$100 per pelt.²⁷⁴

Because the red fox is not found exclusively in the Barren Lands, Kevin Giroux, a DKFN member, traps "red" foxes, in its many colours, in the Yellowknife River area (north of Great Slave Lake):

The next area I'm familiar with . . . I just basically got it set up. This one takes me up Yellowknife river, by Prosperous and Prelude, there's a couple lines, they call them dew lines, I follow the dew line into the Dettah region. Then there's a good little trail that takes you up by Duck Lake and back to the cabin. This is the area I'm trying to use now. I've gotten 2 lynx, 1 wolverine, 3 foxes, the black tailed one, red fox too, martin was another one, and weasel.²⁷⁵

Wolverine

Historically, the wolverine's range covered most of North America, but habitat loss due to agricultural and industrial development along with human settlement patterns have had an impact on the species' population and traditional range. Additionally, increased pelt prices have fostered more intensive harvesting, which has further impacted the species' population. Today, the animal is found primarily in the tundra and boreal forest regions of British Columbia, Alaska, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories (map 6).²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs Marketing Program. (2012). Fur harvesters auction: sales results—January 7, 2012. GMVF Trappers Newsletter. Winter 2012. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2012/fursfishingagriculture/2012_winter.pdf

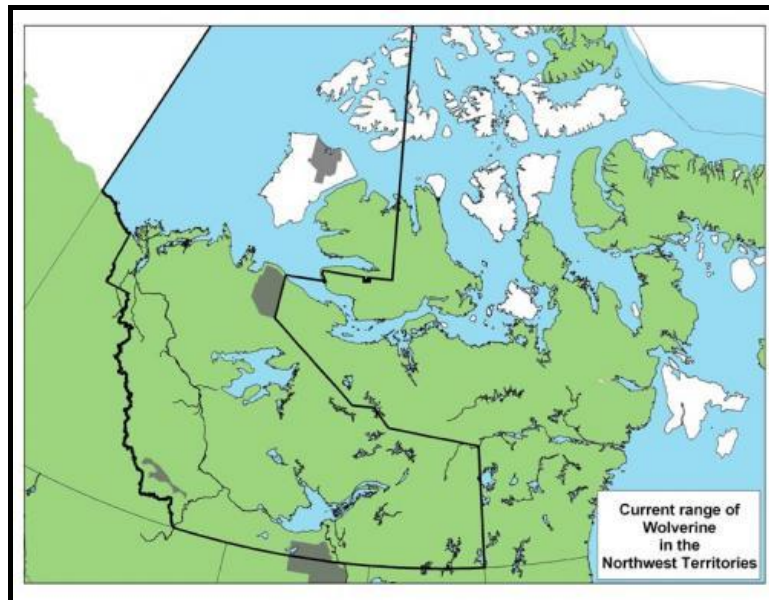
²⁷⁵ Giroux, Kevin Justin. (September 29th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. pp. 2 - 3.

²⁷⁶ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolverine. Retrieved September 2012, from <http://nwtspeciesatrisk.ca/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=Wolverine>; Hatler, D. F. & Beal, A. M. M. (2003). *Furbearer management guidelines: Wolverine Gulo gulo*. Government of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C. Retrieved September 2012, from <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/trapping/docs/wolverine.pdf>.



Plate 24: Wolverine²⁷⁷

The wolverine preys primarily on large game animals (such as caribou), but it also scavenges for carrion and food caches; consequently, the size of its home range is dictated by the availability of game and carrion. On the tundra, the wolverine's home range can extend over several hundred square kilometres.



Map 6: Wolverine distribution in northern North America (green shaded area)²⁷⁸

²⁷⁷ Arkive. (n.d.) Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*). Retrieved September 2012, from <http://www.arkive.org/wolverine/gulo-gulo/>.

²⁷⁸ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolverine. Retrieved September 2012, from <http://nwtspeciesatrisk.ca/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=Wolverine>

Wolverines are active throughout the year, but they will use dens to escape from predators and raise their kits. Mating occurs in May to July, and kits are born in February to March. Yearlings will disperse more than 1000 km² from the area where they were raised.²⁷⁹

The wolverine's coat is glossy dark brown to black with a light stripe extending down each side from the shoulder to the base of the tail (plate 24). The coat is comprised of dense fur and long guard hairs, and thus, has been a valued component of the fur trade. A number of entries in the HBC Fort Resolution post journals of the 1820s and 1880s record trappers bringing wolverine pelts to the Fort:

24 April 1828: "Old Tsandsané [Chipewyan] and son cast up with 23 Martins . . . about mid day arrived Ettezze and four young lads from the Carx Lands with 11 Beavers, 43 Martins, 5 White Foxes & **2 Wolverines**."²⁸⁰

30 April 1828: "Sent off Fabeau to Buf River . . . Arrived a party of Yellow Knives. they delivered 292 Martins, 12 Beavers, 6 Swans, 2 [ill], 5 otters, 24 Rats, 37 Foxes, 2 Wolves, 1 Bear, **2 Wolverins** [sic] 1 white fox, about a pack furs in all . . ."²⁸¹

20 March 1829: "At dusk arrived Louison and Lucas who set off from this on the 8th. they delivered 366 Beavers, 10 Martins, 17 Rats, **1 Wolverine** & 5 Otters. The party consists of 14 men & boys, including some Red Knives."²⁸²

5 December 1887: "2 Indians arrived brought a little meat & **one wolverine**."²⁸³

More recently, harvesting pressure on wolverines has been increasing in northern communities in the Northwest Territories.²⁸⁴ Most wolverines are hunted rather than trapped,

²⁷⁹ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolverine. Retrieved September 2012, from <http://nwt-species-at-risk.ca/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=Wolverine>

²⁸⁰ McGillivray, S. (1827-1828). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1827-1828*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/8. fol. 21.

²⁸¹ McGillivray, S. (1827-1828). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1827-1828*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/8. fol. 23.

²⁸² McGillivray, S. (1828-1829). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1828-1829*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/9. fol. 29b.

²⁸³ Klett, J. (1886 - 1889). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1886 - 1889*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/18. fol. 23.

²⁸⁴ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolverine. Retrieved September 2012, from <http://nwt-species-at-risk.ca/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=Wolverine>

and most are taken opportunistically during other activities, such as caribou hunting in the Barren Lands.²⁸⁵ The coat is highly prized for trimming parkas as it is resistant to frost build-up.²⁸⁶ In fact, a large number of pelts do not make it to the fur market; instead, they are sold for parka accessories.²⁸⁷ Studies from the Central Arctic suggest that harvest estimates based solely on fur market numbers underestimate the actual harvest by at least 50%.²⁸⁸

In 2009, demand for wolverine pelts was very strong due primarily to the taxidermy trade in the U.S. That year, trappers from the Northwest Territories were top performers in the sale of wolverine pelts at auction. The average price per pelt was \$394; top price was \$537.²⁸⁹

DKFN member Solomon King stated that despite the wolverine's range on both sides of the treeline, he has hunted them in the Barren Lands:

I went up to Artillery Lake to trap. I trapped wolves, fox, and wolverine.²⁹⁰

Wolf

Historically, wolves ranged throughout Canada, but they are no longer found in the Maritimes, nor are they found in settled/agricultural areas of Quebec, Ontario, or the western provinces.

²⁸⁵ Lee, J. & Niptanatiak, A. (1993). *Preliminary reconnaissance to evaluate potential wolverine study areas on the Central Arctic barrens, April 1991*. Government of NWT, Department of Renewable Resources, Yellowknife, NWT. http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/documents/content/73.pdf

²⁸⁶ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolverine. Retrieved September 2012, from <http://nwtspeciesatrisk.ca/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=Wolverine>; Hatler, D. F. & Beal, A. M. M. 2003. *Furbearer management guidelines: Wolverine Gulo gulo*. Government of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C. Retrieved September 2012, from <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/trapping/docs/wolverine.pdf>

²⁸⁷ Lee, J. & Niptanatiak, A. (1993). *Preliminary reconnaissance to evaluate potential wolverine study areas on the Central Arctic barrens, April 1991*. Government of NWT, Department of Renewable Resources, Yellowknife, NWT. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/documents/content/73.pdf

²⁸⁸ Gunn, A. (1987). *Kitikmeot furbearer program: preliminary report on carcass examination of harvest wolverine, 1985–86*. Unpublished Report. Government of NWT, Department of Renewable Resources, Yellowknife, NWT. Cited in Lee, J. & Niptanatiak, A. (1993). *Preliminary reconnaissance to evaluate potential wolverine study areas on the Central Arctic barrens, April 1991*. Government of NWT, Department of Renewable Resources, Yellowknife, NWT. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/documents/content/73.pdf

²⁸⁹ Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs Marketing Program. (2009). Fur harvesters auction: sales results—January 7, 2012. *GMVF Trappers Newsletter. Summer 2009*. Retrieved September 2012, from <http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/Publications/2009/fursfishingagriculture/2009SummerFINAL.pdf>

²⁹⁰ King, Solomon. (July 17th, 2012). Statutory Declaration. p. 1.

They continue to range throughout the Northwest Territories and are most abundant where barren-ground caribou winter, although their current population size is unknown.²⁹¹



Plate 25: Wolf: white coat²⁹²



Plate 26: Wolf: dark coat²⁹³

The Government of the Northwest Territories distinguishes between two groups of wolves that occur in the mainland area of the NWT based on differences in their distribution and behaviour. One group ranges above and below the treeline (map 7), preys primarily on barren-ground caribou, and does not maintain regular territories due to the migratory nature of its prey.

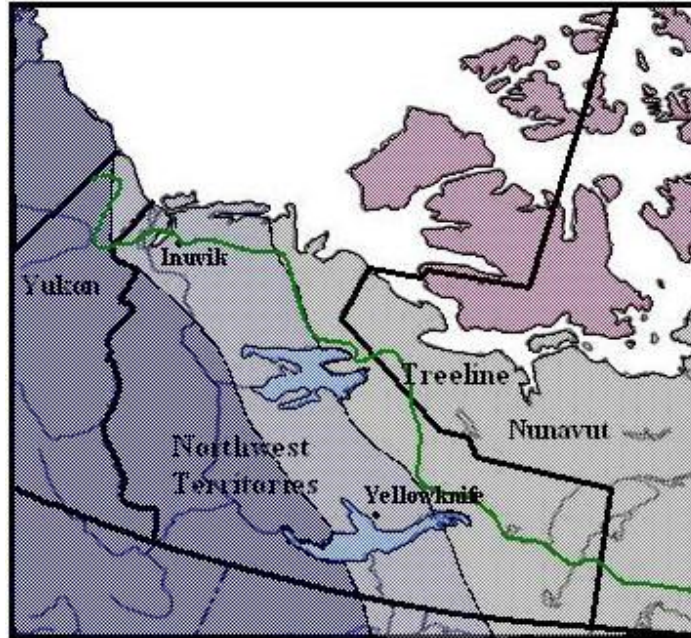
Wolf packs have been tracked up to 160 km between tundra and forested areas as they followed a caribou herd on its seasonal migration.²⁹⁴ During the spring, when the caribou congregate before migrating north, densities of wolves in this group may be as high as one per 10 km². The other wolf group ranges below the treeline or in the mountains (map 7), maintains regular territories, and preys primarily on moose and bison.

²⁹¹ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolves in the NWT. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Wolves.aspx

²⁹² Retrieved October 2012, from <http://allenfoto.photoshelter.com/image/I0000RLm6CeBaWQw>

²⁹³ Retrieved September 2012, from rpguide.soulsrpg.com

²⁹⁴ Kelsall, J.P. as cited in Paradiso, J.L, and Nowak, R.M. (1982). Wolves: *Canis lupus* and allies. In J.A. Chapman, & G.A. Feldhamer (Eds.), *Wild Mammals of North America: Biology, Management, Economics* (pp. 460–474). Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press. pp. 464-465.



Map 7: Wolf distribution in northern North America (grey shaded area: wolves that range above and below the treeline; purple shaded area: wolves that range in the mountains or below the treeline; purple-grey shaded area: range overlap of the two groups)²⁹⁵

Wolves are active throughout the year. In the NWT, they mate in late March. Pups are born in dens in late-May to early-June, and may remain with the family group for many years.²⁹⁶

The wolf's coat consists of long guard hairs and soft, dense underfur. Coat colour is highly variable and can range from pure white to coal black, although light tan or cream mixed with brown, black, and white is most common.²⁹⁷ Coat colour is not strongly associated with geographic area; however, white and lighter colours predominate in the northern Arctic (plate 25), and grey and darker shades are most common in the mainland areas of the NWT (plate 26). The coat is shed in late spring, the new underfur forms in the autumn, and by winter, the coat has resumed its long, silky structure.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolves in the NWT. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Wolves.aspx

²⁹⁶ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolves in the NWT. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Wolves.aspx

²⁹⁷ Paradiso, J.L., and Nowak, R.M. (1982). Wolves: *Canis lupus* and allies. In J.A. Chapman, & G.A. Feldhamer (Eds.), *Wild Mammals of North America: Biology, Management, Economics* (pp. 460–474). Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press. p. 462.

²⁹⁸ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolves in the NWT. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Wolves.aspx

An account in the HBC Fort Resolution post journals of the 1820s describes a group of Yellowknives bringing wolf pelts to the Fort:

30 April 1828: “Sent off Fabeau to Buf River . . . Arrived a party of Yellow Knives. they delivered 292 Martins, 12 Beavers, 6 Swans, 2 [ill], 5 otters, 24 Rats, 37 Foxes, **2 Wolves**, 1 Bear, 2 Wolverins [sic] 1 white fox, about a pack furs in all . . . ²⁹⁹

Wolves are considered to be both game animals and fur bearers in the NWT. From the 1992/1993 season to the 2008/2009 season the number of wolves hunted per year in the NWT ranged from 18 to 110.³⁰⁰ Wolf pelts from the NWT often obtain top prices at fur auctions due to their high quality, which is a reflection of abundant food resources and relatively undisturbed habitat.³⁰¹ From the 1992/1993 season to the 2008/2009 season, pelt prices ranged from \$138 to \$297.³⁰² Demand for wolf pelts has continued to increase, which has resulted in higher pelt prices. At auction in March 2012, the price of wolf pelts from the NWT averaged \$195; top price was \$500.³⁰³

In reference to the hunting of white wolf, Raymond Giroux described how Barren Land animals subsist by hunting and eating one another and each others' leftovers. The white wolves (referring to their colour) eat the caribou, and the wolverines and foxes eat the wolves' leftovers. While hunting caribou in the Barren Lands, Raymond Giroux would also shoot a few white wolves. His son, Cameron Sayine, and his friend, Kyle Enzo, travel into the Barren Lands specifically for the coat of the white wolves:

Did you trap the white wolf?

I shot a few white wolves. When there's a herd of caribou around they will hang around. They all follow the caribou around.

²⁹⁹ Hudson's Bay Company *Fort Resolution Post Journal, 1827-1828*, HBCA B.181/a/8. fol. 23.

³⁰⁰ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolves in the NWT. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Wolves.aspx.

³⁰¹ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolves in the NWT. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Wolves.aspx.

³⁰² Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Wolves in the NWT. Retrieved September 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Wolves.aspx

³⁰³ Northwest Territories News North. (2012, June). Fur prices surge 135 per cent. *Opportunities North*; Section C. Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.nnsi.com/business/pdfs/OPPS/oppsC_fur.pdf

Wolverines and foxes hang around too. They take the food away from the wolves.

My friend Kyle shot 58 Barren Land wolves in the Barren Lands and sold them. Kyle Enzo. They're out hunting him and my son. He shoots a lot of wolves. My son went with him for two weeks. He'll tell you about hunting. He just caught caribou he took a boat out to Artillery Lake.³⁰⁴

When Linda Vanden Berg asked Gabriel Lafferty "Did you ever trap in that area (northeast of Great Slave Lake along the ice roads, and thus into the Barren Lands; see map 21)?" he answered:

Ya, when you go for caribou you take some traps with you. You set some on the way, and on the way back you get your fur. There's good money in the wolves, the white wolves **they're the best priced ones.**³⁰⁵

Muskox



Plate 27: Muskox³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Giroux, Raymond John. (September 25th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. pp. 4 - 5 & 8.

³⁰⁵ Lafferty, Gabriel. (September 24th, 2012). In Frank "Rocky" Lafferty. Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 5.

³⁰⁶ Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.dpchallenge.com/image.php?IMAGE_ID=732281

Muskoxen (plate 27) came to North America from Siberia via the Bering land bridge, and historically occupied northern Canada, including the Arctic Islands, Greenland, and Alaska.³⁰⁷ During the late 1800s and early 1900s, their numbers plummeted and their range was reduced due to unregulated commercial hunting. In an effort to preserve the species, the Government of Canada banned muskox hunting in 1917, and in 1927 established the Thelon Game Sanctuary to protect some of the last remaining muskoxen along the Thelon River.³⁰⁸

Muskox numbers have slowly increased in both the Sanctuary and the central mainland of the Northwest Territories since those measures were enacted. In 1989, hunters began reporting increased sightings of muskoxen west of the Sanctuary, and in 1998, muskoxen were reported in the vicinity of the Lutsel K'e town site. After muskox surveys were conducted in 1998, it was determined that muskox numbers in management unit U/MX/02, which is east of the Lutsel K'e town site, had doubled between 1989 and 1998; consequently, it was recommended that the annual muskox harvest quota in that management unit be increased from 14 to 34.³⁰⁹

Muskoxen live in loosely organized herds of various sizes, but average herd size is 15 animals. They may travel up to 160 km between summer and winter ranges but generally do not undertake long migrations.³¹⁰ Muskoxen mate in summer, and calves are born from early April to mid-May. Calves may stay with their mothers during their first year.³¹¹

The muskox's coat consists of an under layer of short, fine wool and an outer layer of shaggy hair, which can reach lengths up to 62 cm.³¹² The underwool, known as qiviut, is softer than

³⁰⁷ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Muskox in the NWT. Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Muskox.aspx

³⁰⁸ Bradley, M., A. Gunn, & J. Dragon. (2001). *Numbers and abundance of muskoxen, east of Artillery Lake, NWT, July 1998* (Manuscript Report No. 141). Department of Resources, Wildlife & Economic Development, Government of the Northwest Territories, Fort Smith, NWT. p. 1.

³⁰⁹ Bradley, M., A. Gunn, & J. Dragon. (2001). *Numbers and abundance of muskoxen, east of Artillery Lake, NWT, July 1998* (Manuscript Report No. 141). Department of Resources, Wildlife & Economic Development, Government of the Northwest Territories, Fort Smith, NWT. p. 14.

³¹⁰ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Muskox in the NWT. Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Muskox.aspx

³¹¹ Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Muskox in the NWT. Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Muskox.aspx

³¹² Northwest Territories: Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Muskox in the NWT. Retrieved October 2012, from http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/Muskox.aspx

cashmere and eight times warmer than sheep's wool; consequently, it is one of the most sought after fibers in the world.³¹³

During the fur trade, muskox hides were highly sought after for use as carriage and sleigh robes, particularly in Europe. Demand for muskox hides boomed in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In an article entitled *The Role of Independent Traders in the Near-Extinction of Muskoxen on the Mainland Tundra of Canada, 1892–1915*, William Barr states the following:

. . . the massive exploitation of the mainland population [of muskoxen] by the Hudson's Bay Company during the period 1860–1915 was documented in considerable detail; during this period the Company traded a documented total of 17,485 hides.³¹⁴

Barr notes that Indians also traded muskox hides to the independent fur-trading companies in the Great Slave Lake region:

The fact that **an unknown number of musk ox hides was also traded by Indians to independent traders during the period 1892–1915, especially in the Great Slave Lake area**, was recognized, but the author was unable to find any reliable data on the number of hides involved.³¹⁵

Hislop and Nagle, one of the prominent independent fur-trading companies of the late 1800s and early 1900s, conducted business in the Great Slave Lake region. Barr refers to the company doing business with the local Indians:

In total, **during this six-year period [1895–1901], at least 355 muskoxen were killed on the mainland tundra by Indians from the Great Slave Lake area** to supply this particular independent company.³¹⁶

³¹³ Arctic Qiviut. (n.d.). Retrieved October 2012, from <http://www.arcticqiviut.com/>

³¹⁴ Barr, W. (1995). The role of independent traders in the near-extinction of muskoxen on the mainland tundra of Canada, 1892–1915. *Polar Record*, 31, 425-426. p. 425.

³¹⁵ Barr, W. (1995). The role of independent traders in the near-extinction of muskoxen on the mainland tundra of Canada, 1892–1915. *Polar Record*, 31, 425-426. p. 425.

³¹⁶ Barr, W. (1995). The role of independent traders in the near-extinction of muskoxen on the mainland tundra of Canada, 1892–1915. *Polar Record*, 31, 425-426. p. 425.

Barr's accounts are substantiated by entries in the Fort Resolution post journals of the 1890s, which continued to report on Indians bringing muskox hides to the Fort:

1 June 1891: "Dziena arrived today and reports to have made a good hunt. He and his party having received **140 musk ox Robes**, most of the party having crossed to this side of the Lake, and he has come ahead for Tobacco."³¹⁷

1 July 1891: "Towards evening about 10 canoes of Indians arrived. Little Capot Blanc, Gaulets & Dry Geese's Parties. **They are part of the Musk Ox hunters**, and have all made good hunts."³¹⁸

2 February 1893: "Beniah & Band [Dogribs] arrived with some **musk ox robes** today and report deer to be numerous at the edge of the woods. **They hunted for the first time to the N east of the Lake and found the musk ox numerous in that quarter.**"³¹⁹

In addition to these accounts, William Barr, in the journal *Polar Record*, noted that in 1891, Indians brought 256 muskox hides to Fort Resolution to trade with the HBC.³²⁰ As the muskox population declined, so too did the trade in its hide: in 1895, 73 hides were traded by Indians to Hislop and Nagle at Fort Resolution, and in 1897, 51 were traded by the Athabaskan Indians to the HBC.³²¹

By the late 1800s and early 1900s, demand for muskox hides had become so great that it almost led to the extermination of the species. Author Peter C. Lent noted that as muskox populations declined, men from the Yellowknife tribe would travel for up to a month over a distance of 400 km to hunt muskoxen. A dog team with sled could bring back 10 hides at a time. Men often hunted in groups of ten.³²²

³¹⁷ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B.181/a/19. fol. 2.

³¹⁸ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B.181/a/19. fol. 3b.

³¹⁹ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B.181/a/19. fol. 26.

³²⁰ Barr, W. (1995). The role of independent traders in the near-extirmination of muskoxen on the mainland tundra of Canada, 1892–1915. *Polar Record*, 31, 425–426. p. 425.

³²¹ Barr, W. (1995). The role of independent traders in the near-extirmination of muskoxen on the mainland tundra of Canada, 1892–1915. *Polar Record*, 31, 425–426. p. 425.

³²² Lent, P. C. (1999). Exploitation and Preservation. In *Muskoxen and Their Hunters: a History*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma. p. 127.

The Deninu K'ue have stated that they still hunt muskoxen. In a slide presentation to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, they noted that they go to the Thelon River basin to hunt muskoxen.³²³

Animals of the Transitional Forest

Other animals that have been of importance to the subsistence economy of the DKFN, for fur trade purposes include the beaver (plate 28), marten (plate 29), muskrat (plate 30), mink (plate 31), river otter (plate 32), and lynx (plate 33). These species occupy habitats within the transitional forest.



Plate 28: Beavers³²⁴



Plate 29: Marten³²⁵



Plate 30: Muskrat³²⁶

³²³ Deninu K'ue First Nation. (n.d.). Presentation to Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board for: UR Energy's Application to conduct a Uranium Exploration Project at Screech Lake in the Thelon River Basin and the Traditional Territory of the Akaitcho Dene First Nation. Slide presentation, Slide # 16.

³²⁴ Lawrence/Julie & Julia Project, the. (2011). Day 150. Retrieved October 10, 2012, from <http://www.lawrenceandjulieandjulia.com/2011/04/day-150-julie-julia-reimagined-as.html>.

³²⁵ FlickrRiver. (n.d.) Wildlife Photography: American Marten (Pine Marten). Retrieved October 10, 2012, from http://www.flickriver.com/photos/wildlife_photography/popular-interesting/.



Plate 31: Mink³²⁷



Plate 32: River otter³²⁸



Plate 33: Lynx³²⁹

These animals, as stated earlier, have been and remain an important part of the DKFN economy. They continue to be trapped for their pelts. Below is a picture provided by DKFN member Scott Lafferty. It depicts a number of pelts which he caught and skinned in 2009.

³²⁶ Fletcher Wildlife Garden. (2010). Muskrats. Retrieved November 14, 2012, from http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/our_animals/muskrat/muskrat_e.php.

³²⁷ Wildlife Taxidermy Studios. (n.d.). Mink Lifesize Mount #D-999. Retrieved October 10, 2012, from <http://www.wildlifetaxidermy.com/D-999.html>.

³²⁸ Kootenay Nature Photos. (2011). March 3, 2011 River Otter and Bald Eagle Photos from the Creston Valley. Retrieved October 10, 2012, from <http://www.kootenaynaturephotos.com/2011/03/04/march-3-2011-river-otter-and-bald-eagle-photos-from-the-creston-valley/>

³²⁹ Wikipedia. (2010). File: Canadian lynx by Kieth Williams.jpg. Retrieved October 10, 2012, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Canadian_lynx_by_Keith_Williams.jpg

Plate 34: From left to right: three lynx, two foxes (red and silver), and 17 martins, all caught and skinned by young adult DKFN Band member Scott Lafferty.³³⁰



Modes of Transportation

Snowshoes

Prior to contact, the Chipewyans either walked or snowshoed as their primary means of travel. In 1721, the Chief Factor at the HBC trading post at Fort Churchill complained:

I have done all I Can to find any to Come by water in Cannous
through the Countrey & not to Come Creeping by Land.³³¹

Unlike canoeing, walking remained a viable option year round. Once the water was frozen and the ground was covered in snow, a particular type of snowshoe was the footgear of preference for the Chipewyans. Hearne described the Chipewyan's unique snowshoeing style:

[The Chipewyan] snow-shoes differ from all others made use of in those parts; for though they are of the galley kind, that is, sharp-pointed before, yet they are always to be worn on one foot, and cannot be shifted from side to side, like other snow-shoes; for this reason the inner-side of the frames are almost straight, and the

³³⁰ Lafferty, S. (personal communication, September 24, 2012).

³³¹ *Fort Churchill Post Journals, 1718-1721*, HBCA 1M25, B.42/a/1 as quoted in Gillespie, B. C. (1976). Changes in Territory and Technology of the Chipewyan. *Arctic Anthropology* 13(1), 6 - 11. p. 8.

outer-side has a very large sweep. The frames are generally made of birch-wood, and the netting is composed of thongs of deer-skin; but their mode of filling that compartment where the foot rests, is quite different from that used among the Southern Indians.³³²

Canoes

The Chipewyans did use other modes of transportation in order to hunt the caribou in the transitional forest during the late spring and summer when the waters were not frozen (a short season):

The water systems within the Transitional Forest were too discontinuous for long distance travel. Chipewyans used canoes (and rafts) to cross rivers and lakes and to spear caribou at specific water crossings.³³³

Gordon's archaeological evidence provides a more holistic perspective regarding the movements of the Dènè through the Barren Lands:

At first glance it is easy to assume that the 1,002 archaeological sites [found in the region] . . . **represent sites selected because they were accessible along rivers or beside lakes**, i.e., archaeologists could get to them easily. **Such is not the case**, as our surveys were unconfined to lake and river bands, and many were done overland on foot . . . Even during "time off" from major excavations, twenty km hikes to inland areas were common, and resulted in sparse and small sites. Site distribution from these many years of survey and excavation probably are an accurate representation of reality.³³⁴

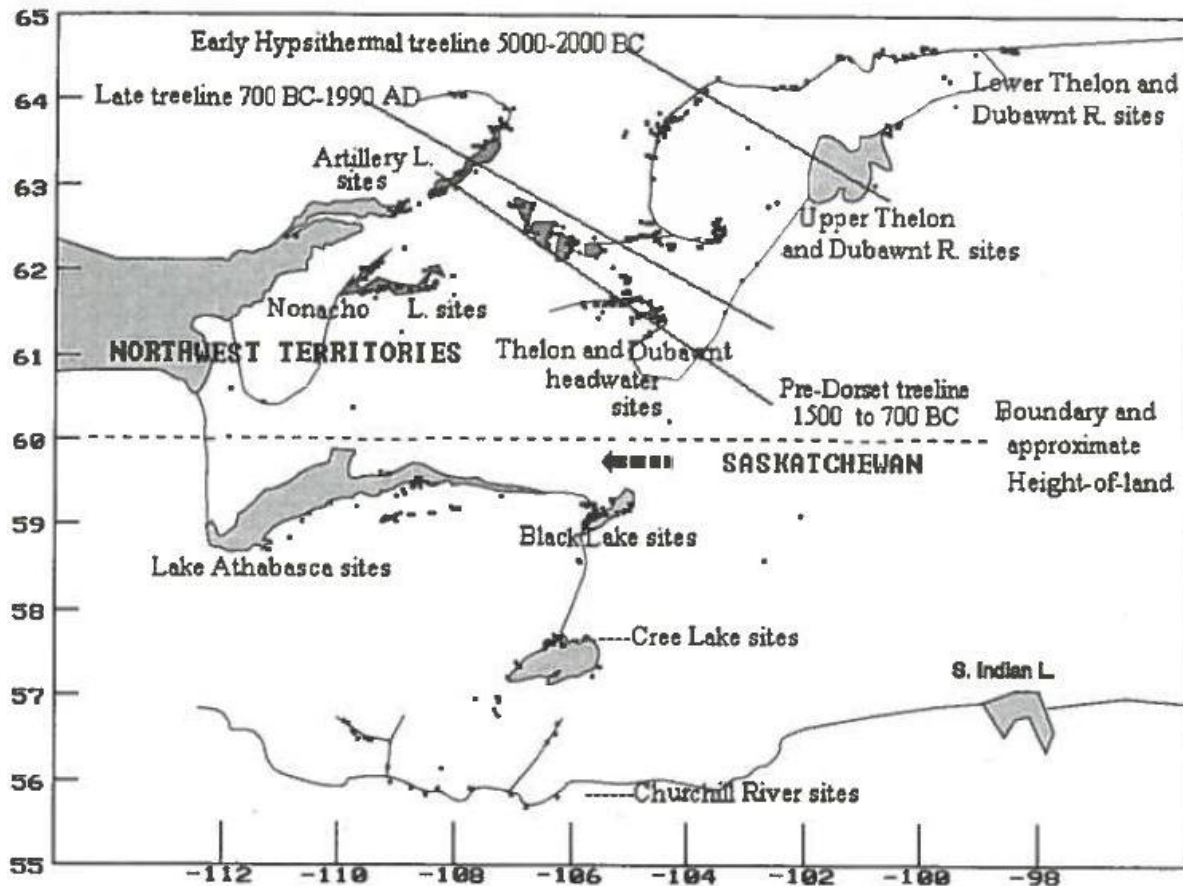
³³² Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 325.

³³³ Gillespie, B. C. (1976). Changes in Territory and Technology of the Chipewyan. *Arctic Anthropology* 13(1), 6 - 11. p. 8.

³³⁴ Gordon, B. C. (1996). *People of the Sunlight, People of the Starlight: Barrenland Archaeology in the Northwest Territories of Canada*. Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization. p. 24.

During the summer, when the ice had melted and the caribou were plentiful in the Barren Lands, travel in this region would require the use of a canoe due to the thousands of lakes and rivers. Gordon's finds (see map 8) substantiate this use of, and need, for canoes.

Map 8: Gordon's map of 1,002 Barren Lands sites spanning the NWT, Saskatchewan, and Alberta



Hearne, in his travels to the Coppermine River, documented the Chipewyan reliance upon the use of canoes in the Barren Lands. He noted that the canoes were light, out of necessity, due to the long distances they were carried:

In our way to the Westward we came to several rivers, which, though small and of no note, were so deep as not to be fordable, particularly Doobaunt River. On those occasions only, we had recourse to our canoe, which, though of the common size, was too small to carry more than two persons; one of whom always lies

down at full length for fear of making the canoe top-heavy and the other sits on his heels and paddles.

The Chipewyans, despite the cumbersome nature of these canoes, were obliged to carry them great distances during the summer months:

This method of ferrying over rivers, though tedious, is the most expeditious way these poor people can contrive; for they are **sometimes obliged to carry their canoes one hundred and fifty, or two hundred miles**, without having occasion to make use of them; yet at times they cannot do without them; and were they not very small and portable, it would be impossible for one man to carry them, which they are often obliged to do, not only the distance above mentioned, but even the whole Summer.³³⁵

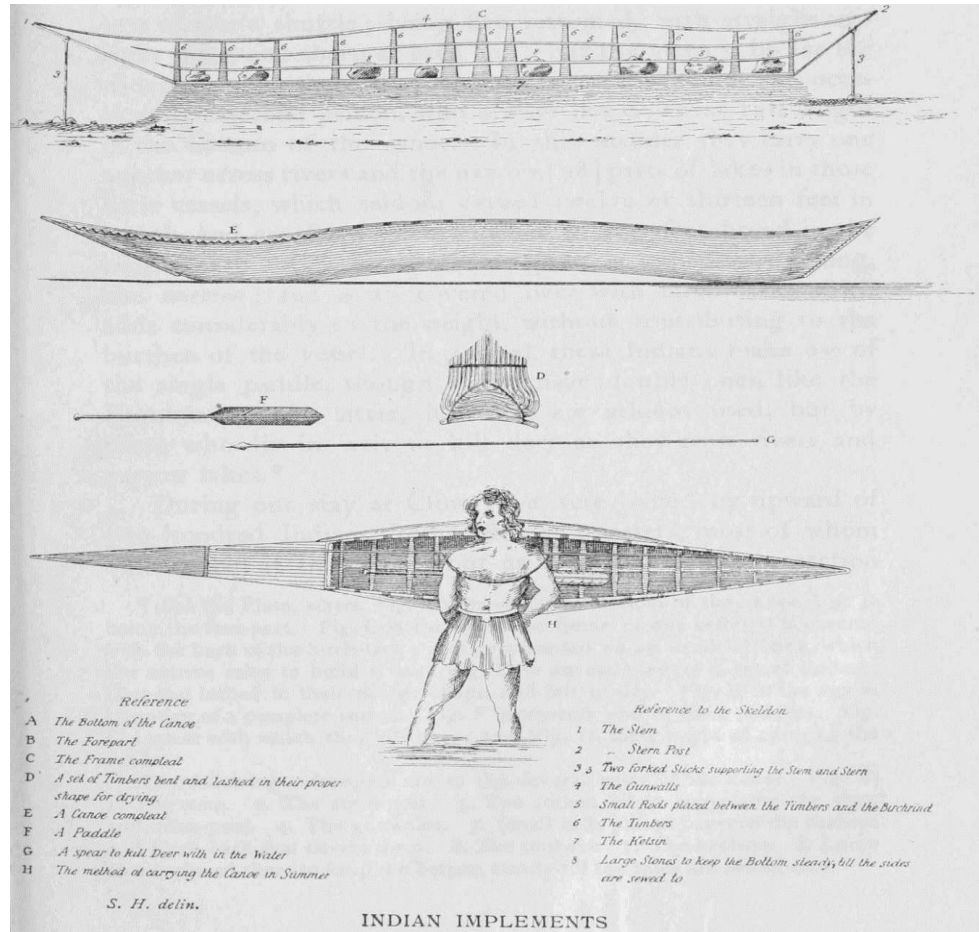
Because portaging a canoe and supplies was a regular occurrence during the thaw, the canoe was designed and constructed to be carried over long distances and to accommodate two people plus baggage on the water. Hearne described, and sketched (plate 35), the canoes as bearing:

. . . some resemblance to a weaver's shuttle; being flat-bottomed, with straight upright sides, and sharp at each end; but the stern is by far the widest part, as there the baggage is generally laid, and occasionally a second person, who always lies down at full length in the bottom of the canoe. In this manner they carry one another across rivers and the narrow parts of lakes in those little vessels, which seldom exceed twelve or thirteen feet in length, and are from twenty inches to two feet broad in the widest part. The head, or fore part, is unnecessarily long, and narrow; and is all covered over with birch-bark, which adds considerably to the weight, without contributing to the burthen of the vessel. In general, these Indians make use of the single paddle, though a few have double ones, like

³³⁵ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 40 - 41.

the Esquimaux: the latter, however, are seldom used, but by those who lie in wait to kill deer as they cross rivers and narrow lakes.³³⁶

Plate 35: A drawing by Hearne named "Indian Implements," showing the parts of a canoe³³⁷



Hearne stated that the Chipewyans hunted moose from canoes as well:

In Summer, when [moose] frequent the margins of rivers and lakes, they are often killed by the Indians in the water, while they are crossing rivers, or swimming from the main to islands, &c. When

³³⁶ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 97 - 98.

³³⁷ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. plate II (p. 98b).

pursued in this manner, they are the most inoffensive of all animals, never making any resistance; and the young ones are so simple, that I remember to have seen an Indian paddle his canoe up to one of them, and take it by the poll without the least opposition: the poor harmless animal seeming at the same time as contented along-side the canoe, as if swimming by the side of its dam, and looking up in our faces with the same fearless innocence that a house-lamb would, making use of its fore-foot almost every instant to clear its eyes of musketos, which at that time were remarkably numerous.³³⁸

Conversely, Hearne described the "common deer" as far more dangerous to approach by canoes, thus necessitating the use of a long stick:

The common deer are far more dangerous to approach in canoes, as they kick up their hind legs with such violence as to endanger any birch-rind canoe that comes within their reach; for which reason all the Indians who kill deer upon the water are provided with a long stick that will reach far beyond the head of the canoe.³³⁹

Hearne's description makes the point that the Chipewyan canoes were in fact quite fragile, and were not useful for much but smaller rivers.³⁴⁰ However, Hearne also wrote that these canoes were "capable of carrying three hundred beaver-skins with great ease, exclusive of the Indians luggage, provisions, &c."³⁴¹ In order to cross larger bodies of water the Indians of the Great Slave Lake joined several canoes together to create a raft:

[A] raft of three or four of those canoes is well secured by poles lashed across them, they will carry a much greater weight in

³³⁸ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 256 - 257

³³⁹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 257.

³⁴⁰ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 35.

³⁴¹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 239.

proportion, and be much safer, as there is scarcely a possibility of their oversetting.³⁴²

They hopped from island to island using this process. Hearne described the the Great Slave Lake (“Athapascow Lake”) with its islands, trees and animals as follows:

[Great Slave Lake] is about one hundred and twenty leagues long from East to West, and twenty wide from North to South. The point where we crossed it is said to be the narrowest. It is full of islands; most of which are clothed with fine tall poplars, birch, and pines, and are well stocked with Indian deer. On some of the large islands we also found several beaver . . .³⁴³

Sleighs and Dog Teams

Sleighs and/or sledges allowed the Indians of the Great Slave Lake region to traverse the Barren Lands (plate 36) with their food and supplies, especially when the waterways had frozen. At the end of the summer and the caribou hunt, the Indians would leave the Barren Lands and head for the transitional forest, taking their season's catch with them. Hearne provided a detailed description of the sleighs and their construction:

In the fall of the year, and as the Winter advances, those people sew the skins of the deer's legs together in the shape of long portmanteaus, which, when hauled on the snow as the hair lies, are as slippery as an otter, and serve them as temporary sledges while on the barren ground; but when they arrive at any woods, they then make proper sledges, with thin boards of the larch-tree . . .

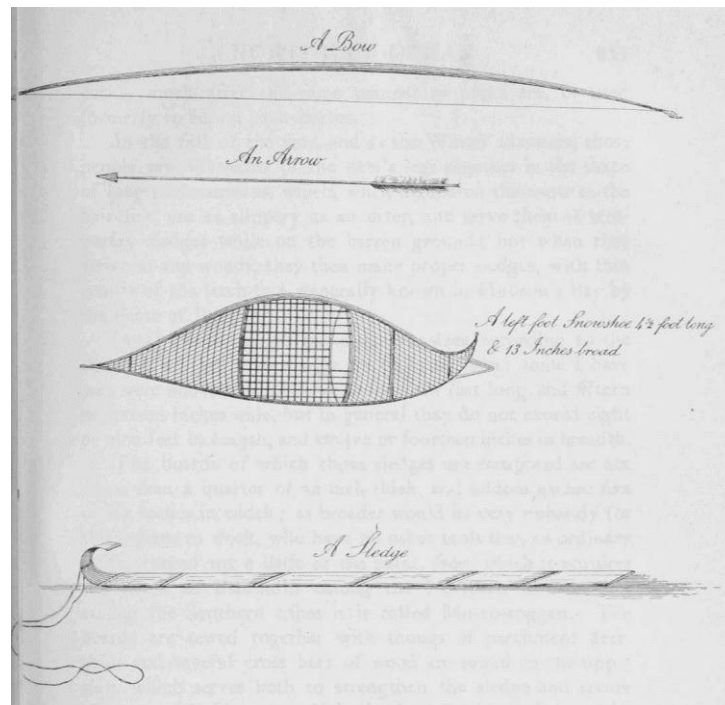
Those sledges are of various sizes, according to the strength of the persons who are to haul them: some I have seen were not less than twelve or fourteen feet long, and fifteen or sixteen inches wide, but in general they do not exceed eight or nine feet in length, and twelve or fourteen inches in breadth. The boards of which those

³⁴² Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 119.

³⁴³ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 248.

sledges are composed are not more than a quarter of an inch thick, and seldom exceed five or six inches in width . . . This contrivance, though so simple, cannot be improved by the most ingenious collar-maker in the world.³⁴⁴

Plate 36: Sketch by Hearne, entitled "Indian Implements," showing a bow and arrow, a snowshoe, and a sledge³⁴⁵



In the past these sleighs were pulled by individuals (as we can see in Hearne's quote above), and the labourer, most often, was a woman. Just exactly when dogs came to be domesticated in the area is unknown. Samuel Hearne, the first European explorer in the region, noted that the Southern Indians (the Cree) had dogs, whereas the Northern Indians did not during the 1760s and 1770s:

The Southern Indians use dogs for this kind of hunting, which makes it easier and more expeditious; but the Northern tribes

³⁴⁴ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 323-325.

³⁴⁵ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. Plate V (p. 458b).

having no dogs trained to that exercise, are under the necessity of doing it themselves.³⁴⁶

Hearne, however, had earlier noted that when the many "Northern Indian" factions collected in one place, there were a number of dogs present. The experience recounted below occurred in late July–early August 1770:

In a few days, many others joined us from different quarters; so that by the thirtieth of July we had in all above seventy tents, which did not contain less than six hundred persons. Indeed our encampment at night **had the appearance of a small town**; and in the morning, when we began to move, the whole ground (at least for a large space all round) seemed to be alive, with men, women, children, and *dogs*.³⁴⁷

In the 1820s Franklin also noted that the Chipewyans and Copper Indians were without dogs, while the surrounding tribes used dogs and dog teams to haul materials. He does, through his use of the word “preserved”, suggest that the Chipewyans and Copper Indians had once used dogs (see Hearne's quote above):

On the 22d we were surprised by a visit from a dog; the poor animal was in low condition, and much fatigued. Our Indians discovered, by marks on his ears, that he belonged to the Dog-ribs. This tribe, unlike the Chipewyans and Copper Indians, had preserved that useful associate of man.³⁴⁸

In the late 1800s Warburton Pike, a big game hunter eager to hunt muskox, hired Yellowknife Indians as guides into the Barren Lands. His report is peppered with references about the trials and tribulations that they faced in relying upon dogs for their survival in the Barren Lands. He sums up his troubles in this anecdote:

³⁴⁶ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 284.

³⁴⁷ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 40.

³⁴⁸ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). pp. 13-14.

A rattling three days' journey took us back to the fort, as old Pierre, who is one of the most rushing travelers I ever met, hustled us along to save using his meat on the way home; he had no intention of feeding his dogs from his load for more than nights when he had fish to give them at home. This trouble about dogs' food is the greatest drawback to winter travelling in the North; a dog, to keep him in good order, requires two whitefish, weighing each perhaps three pounds, every night. This adds so much to the load that a ten days' journey is about the longest one can undertake with full rations all round, unless it be in a part of the country where game is plentiful or fish can be caught *en route*.³⁴⁹

Pike was referring to travel in the winter when conditions are especially harsh, caribou are wintering in the transitional forest, and all the lakes and streams are frozen over with several inches of ice. In the spring and fall, as members of the DKFN have stated, a long trek is much easier using dogs. Gabriel and Rocky Lafferty describe the advantages of dog teams over the snow machine, a more prevalent mode of transportation currently:

What did you feed them?

Gabriel: Fish meat.

Rocky: Kind of depends on what you're doing, because you couldn't carry their food because it's heavy . . .

Could you go further with a dog team than you could with a skidoo?

Gabriel: In the long term, yes.

Rocky: With skidoos you have to carry all sorts of stuff. We used to just travel with meat, lard, and dried tea. Dried meat. Sometimes salt.³⁵⁰

In the spring and fall, when game animals are readily available in the Barren Lands, travelling by dog team was much more efficient. One could hunt the animals required for food along the

³⁴⁹ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 136.

³⁵⁰ Lafferty, Frank "Rocky," and Gabriel Lafferty. (September 24th, 2012). In Frank "Rocky" Lafferty. Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. pp. 2 - 3.

way. Raymond Giroux in describing this also described the composition of the dog team and how it has changed over time:

We use 6 dogs. Before they were different, the dogs used to be bigger. I was born in the 1950s, and they used to just use 3 or 4 dogs. We used to have 60 dogs I remember. We fed them fish or buffalo meat. Always a lot of fish in Taltson. Set a net in winter get a lot of fish: Whitefish, jackfish, pickerels.³⁵¹

Gabriel Lafferty then continued by discussing just how common dog teams were in the past:

Gabriel: One dog team to each family. The whole community had dog teams, each family.³⁵²

Snow Machines

In the 1970s, skidoos, or snow machines, were introduced. As a consequence of their convenience, their comparatively minimal upkeep while not travelling, and their speed, snow machines quickly overtook dog teams as the primary mode of transportation:

Did you use dogs?

Ya, as a kid we'd hook up the dogs to go to the Bay. You'd see other dog teams hooked up to get their groceries. All the way from Res. In the early 70s you get the first skidoo, the Bombardier, they replaced the dog teams.³⁵³

Sleds pulled by dog teams were a better choice for long distance journeys, on the other hand snow machines had the ability to turn treks into the Barren Lands into day trips where one could go out in the morning and return with enough barren-ground caribou for oneself, one's family, and the elders. Raymond Giroux recounted one such trip:

³⁵¹ Giroux, Raymond John. (September 25th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 6.

³⁵² Lafferty, Frank "Rocky," and Gabriel Lafferty. (September 24th, 2012). In Frank "Rocky" Lafferty. Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 2.

³⁵³ Balsillie, Clayton George. (September 28th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 3.

We went to Lutsel K'e with my dad. I went to Artillery Lake about half way up the lake. I caught 7 caribou by skidoo. I was alone. I could go from Snowdrift and back in the same day.³⁵⁴

Plate 37: A snow machine in the NWT ³⁵⁵



Ice Roads and Pickup Trucks

The Tibbit to Contwoyto Winter Road was constructed for the first time in the winter of 1982. DKFN members could now drive their trucks to Yellowknife and continue along into the Barren Lands with relative ease. Raymond Giroux has noted the advantages the ice road gave hunters from freeze up ("around Halloween: November 10th," if not earlier) to late spring and the thaw ³⁵⁶:

³⁵⁴ Giroux, Raymond John. (September 25th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 5.

³⁵⁵ Lafferty, S. (personal communication, September 24, 2012).

³⁵⁶ Giroux, Raymond John. (September 25th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 3.

I'm going to go out to Rae Lakes this winter for a hunt. I could drive right to Rae Lakes to hunt rather than skidoo out to Artillery Lake. Hottah Lake that's where they go to. We got half way there from Rae Lake.³⁵⁷

Moreover, as several DKFN members have stated (see "Chapter VI: Continued Use of the Barren Lands"), the ice roads have been constructed upon the traditional caribou migration routes. As Scott Lafferty has stated, "The caribou are always by the ice road, along the side."³⁵⁸ The impacts of the ice roads on the caribou herds are regarded as negative by members of the DKFN. Don Balsillie has stated that the ice roads allow too much access to the caribou herds by hunters of all backgrounds, and also, that the use of the ice roads by truck convoys bringing materials to the mines disrupts the movements of these herds:

They have had an impact. One reason is access to the area and access to the caribou is more readily available. Secondly, the amount of traffic that goes into the area, the hauling of goods and fuel supplies to the mines, created like a corridor, a curtain, of activity in terms of noise and movement for periods of months at a time when the caribou are in the area. After a number of years the caribou began to move away from the area because of its noise and activity and the pressure by hunters in that particular location.³⁵⁹

Gabriel Lafferty and his father Rocky Lafferty hunt the Bathurst herd along the ice roads. They use pickup trucks and snowmobiles:

Where on the map did you hunt the caribou [his truck route is drawn in purple on map 20]?

We hunted around Gameti, where we hunted caribou . . . I hunted north of the lake.

What did you hunt?

Caribou, that's all I've hunted on that side

From what herd?

³⁵⁷ Giroux, Raymond John. (September 25th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 7.

³⁵⁸ Lafferty, Scott. (July 16th, 2012). In Frank "Rocky" Lafferty. Statutory Declaration. p. 2.

³⁵⁹ Balsillie, Donald William. (August 1st, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. pp. 4 - 5.

The Bathurst herd

How did you get there?

We went with pickups, then when we went off the ice road we used snowmobiles.³⁶⁰

Airplanes

An unlikely mode of transportation that the Indians of Great Slave Lake have used in the 20th century for their regular caribou hunts is the airplane. Below is an example of the Snowdrift community's government-assisted caribou hunt by plane in 1959:

Chief Casaway made an appeal to the Superintendent to secure air transportation to haul caribou meat from the Barrens to Snowdrift. The Chief explained that the fishing had not been too good, and that there was no big game or caribou within many miles of Snowdrift. The Chief said he would like to organize a large hunt in the Barren Lands if caribou could be located. It was felt that the distance would be so great that the Indians would not be able to haul all of the meat back to Snowdrift, and that there would be too much waste. The Superintendent advised that he would write and request an authority to charter an aircraft for such a project, and advise the Chief before they went on a hunt.³⁶¹

The DKFN have also employed this method. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, we have not located documentation for this practice. Below is a quote from Henry King in which he stated that he continues to subsist on caribou as the result of the community's caribou hunt:

Do you still eat caribou?

Yes. If someone hunts it for me. I can't get it myself no more.

Who gets you the caribou?

The community goes hunting by plane and passes meat to the elders.

³⁶⁰ Lafferty, Frank "Rocky," and Tendah Lafferty. (September 24th, 2012). In Frank "Rocky" Lafferty. Unsworn Statement. Justin Fritz's Interview Notes. p. 1.

³⁶¹ Kerr, K. (1959). Minutes of meeting of Yellowknife "A" Band Held in The Hudson's Bay Store: Snowdrift, N.W.T. on December 21, 1959. In Indian Affairs: Minutes of Council - Yellowknife Agency, RG 10, Volume 7129, File 191/3-6, Part 1. p. 2.

Who goes hunting for the community?

The young people. As long as you're strong and able to handle your gun.³⁶²

Below is a photograph of an aircraft working in conjunction with a dog team at Rocher River. In the area airplanes were also used to deliver mail to the forts and the DIA agents.

Plate 38: "Associated Airways Dehaviland Beaver aircraft, registration CF-GDN, on Rocher River beside dog team."³⁶³



This modern technology has also allowed increased access to the Barren Lands to anyone with enough money, just as the ice roads have today. This increased access to hunting and trapping by outsiders was a concern expressed by Indian agents throughout the 20th century. An early example of exploitation of the resources in the NWT without due care is the manner in which

³⁶² King, Henry George. (July 15th, 2012). Unsworn Statement. Sophie Henderson's Interview Notes. p. 2.

³⁶³ Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Center. (n.d.). Associated Airways Dehaviland Beaver aircraft, registration CF-GDN, on Rocher River beside dog team. In NWT Archives Rocher River Photo Gallery. Retrieved October 30, 2012, from <http://www.pwnhc.ca/research/photogallery/Galleries/Communities/Rocher%20River%20Gallery/n-1979-052-3455.jpg>.

the white trappers would go in, strip the land, and leave the north soon after. On October 28, 1930 C.C. Parker commented that:

The general attitude of the white trapper is that the Territories is a fur country in process of depletion and they are out after their share; a trapper who is a stripper. He takes all he can and leaves nothing behind. He is not a settler in the commonly accepted sense of the term. He is only a transient ready to pull stakes and leave as soon as he has made his stake or finds that it does not pay him to stay. He is altogether an undesirable character who could and should earn his livelihood in other pursuits not open to Indians.³⁶⁴

These hunters would often use planes to increase their efficiency. This drove the Indian Affairs agents to consider allowing only the Indians the right to hunt on the land. This arose out of a fear of being compelled to support the Indians should their economic base be depleted:

[R]especting the erection of the whole of the North Region of the Province as a Game Reserve . . . I think you will agree that this action is the most effective, in fact the only effective, method of preventing the abuses that have arisen as a result of the use of aeroplanes by white trappers.³⁶⁵

Conclusion

The ancestors of the DKFN, the Chipewyans and the Copper Indians, hunted in the Barren Lands using various modes of transportation from the most basic snowshoes to modern-day snow machines and pickup trucks. There is an uninterrupted history of DKFN members (past and present) hunting caribou on the Barren Lands to a greater or lesser extent over time. In the following section, that history will be explored through the use of the archival documents of the DIA and HBC, church records, and information taken from statements of individuals who frequented the region.

³⁶⁴ Parker, C. C., as cited in Author Unknown. (1930). Memorandum: Hon. Thomas G. Murphy. October 28, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 3.

³⁶⁵ Scott, D. (1932). Letter to Mr. Rowatt, February 16, 1932. In Indian Affairs Headquarters File: Northwest Territories Game Laws (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 1.

Chapter IV: Historic Use of the Barren Lands

It is difficult to read, synthesize, and ultimately comprehend a rendition of more than two hundred years of historical documents that detail the movements and activities of a people across a landscape—in this case, the Barren Lands (and specifically the region north of Great Slave Lake in which the mines are located or proposed). In order to better present the information from the various archival records and publications pertaining to the Northern Athabascans (including who the people were and how, where, and when they criss-crossed the Barren Lands in pursuit of caribou and other important resources), we have prepared the following chronological summary. To make it more readily understandable, we have broken the entirety of this particular history into slices of time.

In order to to better understand the effects of the Gahcho Kué mine on the Barren Lands, the Lockhart watershed, the local flora and fauna, and the rights of the people who have used the area for millennia, we need to understand the history of the people, their interaction with the land, and their use of its resources. The following begins in the late 1700s with the explorer accounts, which record their interactions with the Yellowknives, Chipewyans, and, to some extent, the Dogribs.

1770–1799

In 1768, Samuel Hearne was commissioned by the Hudson's Bay Company to investigate the possibility of the existence of a Northwest Passage and to report on the Indian mining of copper in the region. The Chipewyans had brought copper from the Copper Indians and the Coppermine River/Yellowknife River to the HBC at Prince of Wales' Fort, which sparked interest among the explorers there. In 1768, Hearne remarked in his journal that:

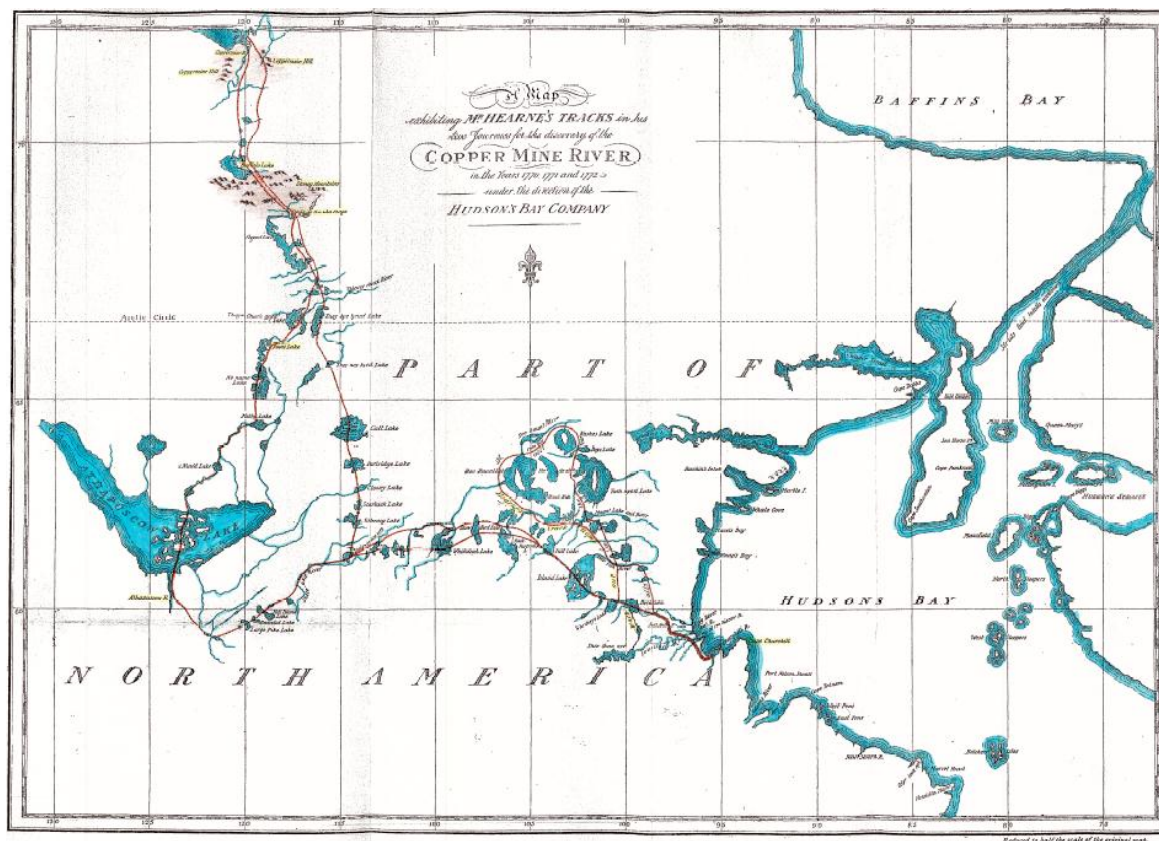
. . . some Northern Indians who came to trade at Prince of Wales's Fort . . . brought farther accounts of the grand river, as it was called, and also several pieces of copper as samples of the produce of the mine near it.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁶ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. xxxiii.

Between 1769 and 1772, Hearne braved three trips, eventually reaching the copper "mines" on the Coppermine River. These voyages were described in his personal journal and were later published as *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort, in Hudson's Bay, to the northern ocean undertaken by the order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the discovery of copper mines, a northwest passage, etc. in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*.

Hearne's guide during his successful third trip was Matonabee, a respected Chipewyan chief. Leaving Churchill, he set out with more than one hundred and fifty people in his party—three times. Eventually he succeeded in locating the Coppermine River and the source of the copper of the Yellowknives and Eskimo. In order to accomplish such a task, he traversed the Barren Lands accompanied by those who knew the region well.

Map 9: J.B. Tyrrell's map of Hearne's routes to the Coppermine River³⁶⁷



³⁶⁷ Tyrrell, J. B. (Ed.). (1911). In S. Hearne's, *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort, in Hudson's Bay, to the northern ocean undertaken by the order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the discovery of copper mines, a northwest passage, etc. in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772* (new edition - 1911). Toronto: The Champlain Society. Retrieved October 12th, 2012, from http://www.gutenberg.org/files/38404/38404-h/38404-h.htm#Page_5. At end.

The map above (map 9) was drawn by J.B. Tyrrell using the coordinates that Hearne had taken while enroute to the Coppermine River. The lake depicted as “Athabascow Lake” on the centre-left of the map is actually Great Slave Lake. After retracing Hearne's steps, Tyrrell portrayed Hearne's routes with greater accuracy. We have coloured the waterways blue, the mountains brown, and the routes orange for greater ease of reference.

After crossing the Barren Lands and heading in a northwesterly direction, Hearne and his companions witnessed a group of Copper Indians on their seasonal caribou ("deer") hunt northwest of the Conge-ca-tha-wha-chaga River (Burnside River):

As soon as the fine weather began, we set out and walked about seven or eight miles to the Northward, when we came to a branch of the Conge-ca-tha-wha-chaga River [see map 9: located directly south of the Stoney Mountains]; on the North side of which we found several copper Indians who were assembled, according to annual custom, to kill deer as they cross the river in their little canoes.³⁶⁸

The Copper Indians then accompanied Hearne and his companions as “guides and warriors” on the next leg of their trip. Hearne wrote:

On the Second, the weather proved very bad, with much snow and sleet; about nine o'clock at night, however, it grew more moderate, and somewhat clearer, so that we set out, and walked about ten miles to the North by West when we lay down to take a little sleep. At our departure from Congecathawahchaga, several Indians who had entered the war-list, rather chose to stay behind with the women; but their loss was amply supplied by Copper Indians, who accompanied us in the double capacity of guides and warriors.³⁶⁹

The acquisition of the Copper Indians as guides proved to be advantageous for the explorers.

³⁶⁸ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 118-119.

³⁶⁹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 131.

Hearne noted in his journal that these individuals were extremely knowledgeable about the land he would be traversing, including the Barren Lands:

On the fourth, we had rather better weather, though constant light snow, which made it very disagreeable under foot. We nevertheless walked twenty-seven miles to the North West, fourteen of which were on what the Indians call the Stony Mountains; and surely no part of the world better deserves that name. On our first approaching the mountains, they appeared to be a confused heap of stones, utterly inaccessible to the foot of man; but having some Copper Indians with us who knew the best road, we made a tolerable shift to get on though not without being obliged frequently to crawl on our hands and knees.³⁷⁰

Their knowledge, as Hearne noted, was derived from generations of Yellowknives (Copper Indians) taking the same routes and paths when travelling to the mines time and time again:

Notwithstanding the intricacy of the road, there is a very visible path the whole way across these mountains, even in the most difficult parts: and also on the smooth rocks, and those parts which are capable of receiving an impression, the path is as plain and well-beaten, as any bye foot-path in England. By the side of this path there are, in different parts, several large, flat, or table stones, which are covered with many thousands of small pebbles. These the Copper Indians say have been gradually increased by passengers going to and from the mines.³⁷¹

It is clear from Hearne's accounts of his three journeys (1769–1772) that the Copper Indians of the Great Slave Lake region were travelling deep into the Barren Lands on their seasonal rounds.

³⁷⁰ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 132.

³⁷¹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.* London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 132.

Prior to contact, during the mid-1700s (and onward), the movement of the Chipewyans was dictated by the migratory patterns of the caribou (and, at times, by their neighbours' aggression). The Chipewyans moved between the Barren Lands and the transitional forest as dictated by the season. In his 1771 journal, Hearne described the seasonal location of the Chipewyans in the transitional forest during the winter months writing that:

. . . many families subsist by it [hunting deer] **without having occasion to move their tents above once or twice during the course of a whole winter**; and when the **Spring** advances, both the deer and Indians draw out to the Eastward, on the ground which is entirely barren.³⁷²

Large groups of Chipewyans were occupying settlements for months at a time during the winter, in the same location year after year. And, in the summer they moved onto the Barren Lands and lived with their "relations and friends."³⁷³ The myth of the nomadic Indian continuously on the move can be put to rest. More information regarding settlement patterns will be provided later in this report.

North West Company explorer Alexander Mackenzie recorded a similar account regarding the Chipewyan summer settlements in 1789. Mackenzie wrote:

The major part of the latter [the Chipewyans] return to the barren grounds, **and live during the summer with their relations and friends** in the enjoyment of that plenty which is derived from numerous herds of deer. But those of that tribe who are most partial to these deserts [*sic*], cannot remain there in winter, and they are obliged, with the deer, to take shelter in the woods during that rigorous season.³⁷⁴

³⁷² Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 80.

³⁷³ MacKenzie, A. (1801). *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans: In the Years 1789 and 1793. With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of That Country. Illustrated with Maps*. London: R. Noble, Old Bailey. p. xci.

³⁷⁴ MacKenzie, A. (1801). *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans: In the Years 1789 and 1793. With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of That Country. Illustrated with Maps*. London: R. Noble, Old Bailey. pp. xc-xci.

Alexander Mackenzie's description corresponds with Franklin's 1820 narrative regarding the caribou migration patterns:

. . . in October on the verge of the barren grounds, [the caribou] shelter themselves in the wood during the **winter**.³⁷⁵

In 1786 the North West Company began trading in the Great Slave Lake region with the establishment of (Old) Fort Providence near Wool Bay outside the present city of Yellowknife.³⁷⁶ This small outpost was reopened in 1789 as a trading post by Alexander Mackenzie. In 1821 it was taken over by the HBC only to be abandoned again in 1823. This earlier Fort Providence is not to be confused with the more recent Fort Providence on the Mackenzie River. The later Fort Providence was constructed in 1896 following the establishment of both a Roman Catholic Church mission school and a new HBC fur-trading post in the area.

Mackenzie's account informs us that the North West Company had begun trading with the Yellowknives on the north side of the Great Slave Lake by 1789:

Mr. [Laurent] Leroux returned on the 22nd March from the other [north] side of Slave Lake where he met with a great number of Red Knives and Slave Indians. They traded with him and promised to meet him this Summer on the west side of the lake.³⁷⁷

True to his word, Leroux returned to the North Arm of Great Slave Lake in June 1789, accompanied by Alexander Mackenzie enroute to explore what would later become known as the Mackenzie River.

³⁷⁵ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). pp. 6-7.

³⁷⁶ Davis, R. C. (Ed.). (1995). *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 25 (footnote).

³⁷⁷ MacKenzie, A. (1970). Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie 1786-1819: To the Agents of the North West Company, Grand Portage. In W. K. Lamb (Ed.), *The Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie* (pp. 437-438). Toronto, ON: MacMillan of Canada. p. 438.

On June 23rd 1789 Alexander Mackenzie recorded that his party had landed on the north side of Great Slave Lake, on the “mainland,” where he encountered a settlement of Indian lodges:

. . . three lodges of **Red-Knife Indians**, so called from their copper knives. They informed us, that there were many more lodges of their friends at no great distance; and one of the Indians set off to fetch them: they also said, that we should see no more of them at present; as the Slave and Beaver Indians, as well as others of the tribe, would not be here till the time that the swans cast their feathers.³⁷⁸

The next day Mackenzie arranged to have a “Copper Indian” accompany his expedition to the mouth of the great river that was the object of his search. Although the Copper Indians had no knowledge of a river located at the western extremity of the lake, Mackenzie hired one of their party as a guide to navigate the many islands and bays along the northern shoreline:

I had several consultations with these Copper Indian People, but could obtain no information that was material to our expedition, nor were they acquainted with any part of the river, which was the object of my research, but the mouth of it. In order to save as much time as possible in circumnavigating the bays, I engaged one of the Indians to conduct us; and I accordingly equipped him with various articles of clothing etc. I also purchased a large new canoe that he might embark with the two young Indians in my service.³⁷⁹

On July 5th 1789, having travelled for six days northward down the "Grand River" (Mackenzie River), Mackenzie encountered:

. . . five families, consisting of twenty-five or thirty persons, and of two different tribes, the Slave and Dog-rib Indians.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ MacKenzie, A. (1801). *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans: In the Years 1789 and 1793. With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of That Country. Illustrated with Maps*. London: R. Noble, Old Bailey. p. 17.

³⁷⁹ MacKenzie, A. (1801). *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans: In the Years 1789 and 1793. With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of That Country. Illustrated with Maps*. London: R. Noble, Old Bailey. p. 17.

³⁸⁰ MacKenzie, A. (1801). *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans: In the Years 1789 and 1793. With a Preliminary Account of the Rise,*

In August 1789 MacKenzie encountered Copper Indians further west toward, and into, Dogrib territory. Mackenzie commented while traveling south from Great Bear Lake to Great Slave Lake:

. . . [we] saw three successive encampments. From the peculiar structure of the huts, we imagined that some of the Red-Knife Indians had been in this part of the country, though it is not usual for them to come this way.³⁸¹

Based upon the above, it is evident that in 1789 the Yellowknives used and occupied the region along the north shore of Great Slave Lake, and as other explorers have noted, the Dogrib and Slave occupied lands further to the west. Yet as early as 1789, MacKenzie observed Copper Indians travelling into Dogrib territory. Additionally, Mackenzie noted in 1789 that the Slave and Dogrib Indians near the confluence of the Great Bear and Mackenzie Rivers had bartered “marten skins and a few beaver” for “small pieces of iron” from “the adjoining tribes, the Red-Knives and Chipewyans.”³⁸²

In between Mackenzie's two journeys, a 22-year-old HBC surveyor named Peter Fidler travelled into the region. On September 4th 1791 Fidler was dispatched from the north shore of Lake Athabasca by Malcolm Ross and Philip Turnor "with 4 Canoes of Jepewyans, in order to remain the whole Winter with them, & acquire their Language."³⁸³ His occupation as surveyor would demand otherwise: Fidler was in charge of surveying the route north along the Slave River for the HBC.³⁸⁴ During his journey he travelled from Lake Athabasca to Great Slave

Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of That Country. Illustrated with Maps. London: R. Noble, Old Bailey. p. 33.

³⁸¹ MacKenzie, A. (1801). *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans: In the Years 1789 and 1793. With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of That Country. Illustrated with Maps.* London: R. Noble, Old Bailey. p. 108.

³⁸² MacKenzie, A. (1801). *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans: In the Years 1789 and 1793. With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of That Country. Illustrated with Maps.* London: R. Noble, Old Bailey. pp. 38-39.

³⁸³ Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor.* pp. 493 - 556. Toronto: The Champlain Society. p. 495.

³⁸⁴ Tyrrell, J. B. (1934). *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor.* Toronto: The Champlain Society. p. 90.

Lake and wintered among the Chipewyans "with no provisions, no tent, scanty clothing and hardly any ammunition."³⁸⁵

Fidler's lack of provisions forced him to rely on the the meat that Chipewyans hunters provided. On September 10th 1791, six days after leaving the others, Fidler noted the variable nature of the Chipewyan hunt:

The meat I got from them was very acceptable as I much stood in need of it having these 2 days past had only the Leg of one Goose—which to an european is but small allowance as to the Indians they all in general from the earliest infancy used to go without for 2 or 3 days frequently & some times nearly double that time; as when they have any thing they can never rest till all is consumed, it is always with them either a feast or a famine.³⁸⁶

On November 4th 1791 Fidler became lost, and after two days he decided to backtrack to an area where he recalled that meat had been cached for later use:

. . . there was . . . one Moose & 1 Black Bear which the Indians had killed in the Fall & could not conveniently take away[.] They had built a small log house over it to keep it from being eaten by the wild animals & intended to return for it so soon as there was good hawling[.] At this place I determined to remain until I found Indians.³⁸⁷

The permafrost in the area had ensured that the meat would keep for the winter. The Chipewyans did not move arbitrarily or wander randomly in pursuit of food. They planned on returning to an area, taking precautions to prepare themselves for the possibility of famine. They moved about the land in seasonal rounds. They used and occupied the same areas year after year. Fidler eventually found his Chipewyan guides and continued on his journey. Fidler

³⁸⁵ Tyrrell, J. B. (Ed.). (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto: The Champlain Society. p. 495, footnote 1.

³⁸⁶ Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto: The Champlain Society. p. 499.

³⁸⁷ Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto: The Champlain Society. p. 522.

travelled with the Chipewyans for less than a year, remaining south of the Great Slave Lake and observing the Chipewyans hunting bear, moose, geese, duck, buffalo, and beaver in this area.

Fidler made note of a large group of "Chepawyans" between Slave River and Taltson River who had just come from the Barren Lands:

. . . there are 40 Tents of Chepawyans a little way to the Northward of us that they are returning from war with the Esquimeaux & had killed 5 tents of those harmless inoffensive people.³⁸⁸

The size of the tent settlements is noteworthy. In the past, anthropologists have assumed that the Chipewyans had travelled in much smaller groups comprised of a few extended families. A careful analysis of the early explorers' accounts brings this assumption into question. Hearne noted, as Fidler had done:

In a few days, many others joined us from different quarters; so that by the thirtieth of July we had in all above **seventy tents**, which did not contain less than **six hundred persons**. Indeed our encampment at night had the appearance of a small town; and in the morning, when we began to move, the whole ground (at least for a large space all round) seemed to be alive, with men, women, children, and dogs. Though the land was entirely barren, and destitute of every kind of herbage, except wish-a-capucca and moss, yet the deer were so numerous that the Indians not only killed as many as were sufficient for our large number, but often several merely for the skins, marrow, &c. and left the carcasses [*sic*] to rot, or to be devoured by the wolves, foxes, and other beasts of prey.³⁸⁹

There was a consistent recorded pattern of Copper Indian use and occupation of the area north of Great Slave Lake, but during this same period, Peter Fidler (on his 1791–1792 trips)

³⁸⁸ Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society. p. 532.

³⁸⁹ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. p. 40.

likewise recorded the presence of Yellowknife (Copper) Indians south of Great Slave Lake. He also noted the friendly interactions between Copper Indians and Chipewyans:

1792

January . . .

27th Friday Thoooh and Cha haw in na (a copper mine Indian) & Family moved SW 4 miles & put up in a small creek that falls into the Buffalo river.³⁹⁰

March . . .

2nd Friday Moved SSE 2 miles & put up[.] Got one Beaver at Night arrived Ki an cho a Canadian **3 Coppermine Indians & one Jepowyan** on their way to the Athapescow Lake House with Letters[.] They remained with us all night[.]³⁹¹

16th Friday In the evening arrived at our Tent a Coppermine river Indian[.] **he says that there a good many of his countrymen a good way down the Thay thule dezza[.] this river empties itself into the Tall chu dezza [Taltson River.]**³⁹²

The connection between the two peoples is further described by Fidler in a March 26th 1792 account of a Copper Indian named *Cha ha in na* travelling south of Great Slave Lake:

Cha ha in na, a Coppermine river Indian accompanied *Thoooh* he is to accompany us to the House . . . This man very well agrees with the Jepewyans but the 2 nations [Chipewyans and Copper Indians] has a secret jealousy for each other notwithstanding they speak the same Language and might be called with great propriety one & the same people. The Coppermine river Indians inhabit to the N & E of the Jepewyans & and are the nigh neighbours to the Esquimaux with whom they are frequently at war with . . .³⁹³

³⁹⁰ Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society. p. 540.

³⁹¹ Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society. pp. 546-547.

³⁹² Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society. p. 549.

³⁹³ Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society. p. 551.

1800–1809

Journals kept by a Mr. Porter at Slave Lake between February 1800 and February 1801 describe the movements of the Chipewyans. On July 9th 1800, Porter recorded that the Chipewyans had discussed moving into the “Carribou [*sic*] Country,” a term synonymous with the Barren Lands:

Most of the Indians went away. Gave 4 mea^s of ammⁿ & 2 feet Tob^o to the Grand Coquin & the same to Trois Pousis & Pieces of Tob^o flint &c to all others Several of them went off for Fort Chipewean . . . they talk of going to the **Carribou Country** Because they are afraid the English [will] Come in the fall & they have Such enourmous Credits of old from ~~from~~ Churchill that [they] are afraid to see them.³⁹⁴

Later, Porter encountered several more individuals planning to hunt caribou on the Barren Lands. These Indians were concerned about the possibility of European competition. Their concerns stemmed in part from their accumulated debt which they owed to the Fort, and the impact that competition would have on their ability to pay it back.

That said, according to Porter, **so long as the caribou herds remained plentiful and appeared each year**, the Chipewyans had little desire or interest to trade with white people. He noted on November 30th 1800, that:

. . . at night three Chipeweans arrived Left the Grand Blanc with a band of 70 odd men eight days ago they have not yet left the Carribou Lands which is a Bad omen for making Packs **The Carriboux is so numerous this year that it will no doubt induce a Great many of them to Stay there all winter.**³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴ Porter, J. (2001). Journal kept by James Porter at Slave Lake, 18 Feb. 1800 to 14 Feb. 1801 (LAC, Masson Collection, MG19 C1, vol. 6). In L. Keith (Ed.), *North of Athabasca: Slave Lake and Mackenzie River Documents of the North West Company, 1800-1821*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. (Original work published in 1801). p. 108.

³⁹⁵ Porter, J. (2001). Journal kept by James Porter at Slave Lake, 18 Feb. 1800 to 14 Feb. 1801 (LAC, Masson Collection, MG19 C1, vol. 6). In L. Keith (Ed.), *North of Athabasca: Slave Lake and Mackenzie River Documents of the North West Company, 1800-1821*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. (Original work published in 1801). pp. 118-119.

The frustration of the fur traders, a frustration caused by the Chipewyan's lack of desire to leave their home in the Barren Lands to trade at the forts, is a recurring theme in the historical record.

1810–1819

In 1800 the North West Company established a fur-trading post on Great Bear Lake. George Keith, in an 1812 report to Roderic McKenzie regarding trade at the post, noted that the natives were named after locations that they frequented:

. . . [t]he Natives of this post consider themselves composed of three distinct tribes and assume the names of Red Knives, Filthy Lake and Grand River Indians, and the 'People of the big or long arrows'. The former [the Red Knives] are few in number, about 15 married men, and claim the term of natives only in consideration of their having frequented this post since its establishment, about the year 1800; their name is derived from the country they originally inhabited or resorted to, the Coppermine River, from whence they procured copper to make knives, &c.³⁹⁶

He then indicated that he believed the "Red Knives" (Yellowknives/Copper Indians) trading at this post were a branch of the Chipewyans:

This tribe, I imagine, is a branch of the Chipewyans; the same manners, customs, and language, with little variation, are common to both.³⁹⁷

Keith also grouped together those inhabiting the west and northwest of Great Slave Lake:

The Filthy Lake [Lac la Martre or Lac la Merde] and Grand [Mackenzie] River Indians . . . altho' they consider themselves as

³⁹⁶ Keith, G. (1890). Mr. George Keith. Letters to Mr. Roderic McKenzie 1807 - 1817: McKenzie River Department, Bear Lake, 19th November 1812. In L. R. Masson (Ed.), *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest; Récits de Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inédits Relatifs au Nord-Ouest Canadien* (pp. 60-132). QC: Nabu Press. p. 106.

³⁹⁷ Keith, G. (1890). Mr. George Keith. Letters to Mr. Roderic McKenzie 1807 - 1817: McKenzie River Department, Bear Lake, 19th November 1812. In L. R. Masson (Ed.), *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest; Récits de Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inédits Relatifs au Nord-Ouest Canadien* (pp. 60-132). QC: Nabu Press. pp. 106-107.

forming two distinct tribes, may be classed together, because the language, customs and manners are common to both.³⁹⁸

He stated that these "Filthy Lake [Lac la Martre] and Grand [Mackenzie] River Indians," undoubtedly Dogribs, inhabited "limited territory" and expressed a "dread" of the Yellowknives, their:

. . . neighbours and frequent visitors . . . [who] very generally make free booty of any little property collected for the purpose of traffic, in order to procure a few necessities of trading with the North West Company.³⁹⁹

The statement that the Yellowknives were exceeding their traditional territorial limits in visiting Great Bear Lake (and also in their continued assault on the Dogribs, as we shall discuss in detail later) is confirmed in an anecdote recorded by the Oblate missionary Émile Petitot. On his 1863 journey with the Dogribs northward from Fort Rae to Great Bear Lake (near present-day Hardisty Lake), Petitot questioned the Dogrib elder Jean-Baptiste Sa-naïn-di (Shining Sun). Petitot asked Jean-Baptiste who had inhabited "this land that you travel through today and where we are at the moment." In 1863 Sa-naïn-di, who Petitot stated was nearly 80-years-old at the time, replied:

The Tpa-tsan Ottinè or Yellowknives, our sworn enemies in the past. These mountains that you see [the Dogrib Mountains, or the Barrier Mountain Range], the mountains of the Dogribs, were the boundary of our respective territories. Today they never hunt here. They, like us, have moved south.⁴⁰⁰

Beginning in 1815, the Hudson's Bay Company had attempted to establish trade in the Great Slave Lake region with Yellowknives, Dogribs, and Chipewyans. However, the rival North

³⁹⁸ Keith, G. (1890). Mr. George Keith. Letters to Mr. Roderic McKenzie 1807 - 1817: McKenzie River Department, Bear Lake, 19th November 1812. In L. R. Masson (Ed.), *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest; Récits de Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inédits Relatifs au Nord-Ouest Canadien* (pp. 60-132). QC: Nabu Press. p. 111.

³⁹⁹ Keith, G. (1890). Mr. George Keith. Letters to Mr. Roderic McKenzie 1807 - 1817: McKenzie River Department, Bear Lake, 19th November 1812. In L. R. Masson (Ed.), *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest; Récits de Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inédits Relatifs au Nord-Ouest Canadien* (pp. 60-132). QC: Nabu Press. pp. 111, & 112.

⁴⁰⁰ Petitot, É. (1891). *Autour de Grand Lac Des Esclaves*. Paris, FR: Nouvelle Librairie Parisienne. p. 253.

West Company continued to capture most of the Indian trade until 1819. During this period the two companies engaged in competition for a monopoly on the fur trade in the Great Slave Lake region. On December 5th 1818, Hudson Bay Company Inspector Aulay MacAulay wrote regarding the Yellowknives (Copper Indians):

We understand the NW Company have a Fort upon the Yellow Knives Indians island and I imagine that is the reason none of them make their appearance this way.⁴⁰¹

On November 19th 1819, his successor William Brown noted:

In the afternoon seven of the Indians called Carribeau Eaters, arrived at the N.W. Fort guarded by two of their men. These Indians did not use to come in till about Christmas, so that we are of opinion they have left their Lands with the intention of coming in by open water, and have been taken by the Ice.⁴⁰²

And, again:

In the forenoon one of the Carribeau eaters, called Clayz ellah gave the N.W. the slip and came running over here.⁴⁰³

On May 14th 1819, MacAulay also noted:

There are but very few Indians about this place at present all the Chipewyans excepting a very few are gone to thiere lands towards the northern part of this Lake. Thiere to hunt Raine deer which is very numerous thiere.⁴⁰⁴

The absence of the Caribou Eaters, and especially the concurrent absence of the Caribou Eaters *and* the caribou, may be explained by Franklin's 1820 account of the caribou's seasonal movements, in which he explains:

⁴⁰¹ MacAulay, A. (1818-1819). *Fort Resolution Post Journals 1818-1819*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/1. fol. 16b.

⁴⁰² Brown, W. (1819-1820). *Fort Resolution Post Journals 1819-1820*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/2. fol. 29.

⁴⁰³ Brown, W. (1819-1820). *Fort Resolution Post Journals 1819-1820*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/2. fol. 29.

⁴⁰⁴ MacAulay, A. (1818-1819). *Fort Resolution Post Journals 1818-1819*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/1. fol. 23.

The rein-deer [caribou] retire from the sea-coast in July and August, rut in October on the verge of the barren grounds, and shelter themselves in the woods during the winter. They are often induced by a few fine days in **winter**, to pay a transitional visit to their favourite pastures in the barren country, but their principal movement to the northward commences generally in the end of April, when the snow first begins to melt on the side of the hills, and early in May, when large patches of the ground are visible . . .

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1820–1829

In 1821 George Simpson, Governor-in-Chief for the Hudson's Bay Company for the HBC's newly established Athabasca Department, categorized the Indians of his district:

The Indians belonging to the district may be divided into three Classes, Mountaineers, Caribou Eaters & Yellow Knives, in all about one hundred and Fifty Families, although properly speaking they are all of the Chipewyan Tribe, their language, manners, and customs being alike.⁴⁰⁶

William Brown, a factor at Fort Resolution, wrote regarding the various Athabaskan groups and their usefulness to Franklin's expedition. On April 29th 1820, he stated that the Copper Indians in Yellowknife Bay would be the most suitable as they had travelled extensively in the region:

We have apprised all the Indians of the arrival and motive of the expedition fitted out by his Majesty's Government under the command of Lieut Franklin, to explore the N.E. termination of the Continent of America . . . I believe the best Indians for receiving information from, and also for accompanying the Expedition are those of Mountain Island [most likely the Yellowknife Indians], their hunting grounds being in that quarter, and it is more than

⁴⁰⁵ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). pp. 6-7.

⁴⁰⁶ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 14b.

probable that many of them have penetrated as far as Copper Mine River.⁴⁰⁷

In 1820 McVicar replaced Brown, and between 1820 and 1825 Robert McVicar operated the post at Fort Resolution. On the 26th of May 1820, McVicar wrote the following letter to Lieutenant Franklin, Commander of the Northern Expedition, corroborating Brown's account:

The principal Indians who can give any information that may be relied upon are the Yellow Knives that being the track of Country they most frequently resort to in their hunting excursions. But from the present state of the Hon'ble Hudson's Bay Company's settlements in this quarter and from our not having a Post amongst these Indians, it has been out of my power to derive any advantage from their knowledge.⁴⁰⁸

Sir John Franklin of the British Royal Navy undertook an expedition from Great Slave Lake to the Arctic Sea between 1819 and 1822. Franklin was aided by the Copper Indian leader, Akaitcho, and his band; they were said to be "the principle Indians who can give any information that may be relied upon."⁴⁰⁹ He also used knowledge of the region acquired by Hearne a number of years earlier and the information provided by both Brown and McVicar. His instructions were:

. . . on my arrival at, or near, the Mouth of the Copper-Mine River, to make every inquiry as to the situation of the spot from whence native copper had been brought down by the Indians to the Hudson's Bay establishment.⁴¹⁰

Franklin's journals, as well as his published narrative, provide information regarding the northern territorial range and organization of the Copper Indians:

⁴⁰⁷ Brown, W. (1819-1820). *Fort Resolution Post Journals 1819-1820*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/2. fol. 130.

⁴⁰⁸ McVicar, R. (1995). Correspondence: Letter From Robert McVicar to John Franklin, 27 May 1820. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 370-371). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 370.

⁴⁰⁹ McVicar, R. (1995). Correspondence: Letter From Robert McVicar to John Franklin, 27 May 1820. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 370-371). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 370.

⁴¹⁰ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. xiii.

A few brief notices respecting the **Copper Indians** will close the journal up to this period. This Tribe though small have the range of a very considerable tract of Country, and they are bounded by the **Chipewyans to the South, Dog Ribs to the West, and the Esquimaux to the North and East**. The tribe consists of 80 Men and Boys. Of these 45 are Hunters, and 110 Women and Children. They are divided under three chiefs, **Akaitcho** our friend is considered the greatest, from having the larger proportion of adherents, about 40 Men & Boys. He certainly is a very respectable and intelligent Indian, and seems well adapted for exercising with judgment, the Authority which he possesses over his Companions.⁴¹¹

At the time of Franklin's journey, the Copper Indians were presumed to number one hundred and ninety. Akaitcho was their "greatest" chief and there were two others who, together, represented half of the "men and boys."⁴¹² Franklin also stated that they called themselves that "Tal tsa oo dinné," or "Taltson Dènè" in today's phonetic pronunciation.⁴¹³ The Taltson River was named after them:

The Copper Indians call themselves Tal tsa oo dinné, a term which my informant could not explain. **They profess to be a branch of the Chipewyan Nation**, but are unacquainted at what time, or for what cause, the separation of their Party took place. They speak a dialect of the Northern Indian language, (which is harsh, guttural and difficult to be acquired) and very much resemble that people in their habits and modes of Life, and where any difference exists, it may be attributed perhaps to their intercourse with the Dog Ribs.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹¹ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 117.

⁴¹² Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 117.

⁴¹³ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 117.

⁴¹⁴ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 117.

Franklin recorded that the Copper Indians by 1820 had switched from bows and arrows to guns for hunting purposes and that they had:

. . . entirely laid aside the use of the Bow & Arrow, and depend principally upon the Traders for supplies of Guns and Ammunition to enable them to subsist.⁴¹⁵

He also noted in regard to their hunting practices:

They do not however depend entirely on this means, for a livelihood, but **catch numbers of Reindeer in Snares** during the Migration of these Animals to and from the North in **Spring** and Autumn and sometimes in the **Summer**.⁴¹⁶

Fifty years after Hearne's explorations, Franklin's 1820 account provided a similar account of the seasonal range of the Yellowknives. Pointing to the seasonal rounds within their territorial range, Franklin noted that the Yellowknives moved with the caribou whose:

. . . principal movement to the northward commences generally in the end of April when the snow first begins to melt . . . and early in May . . . they are on the banks of the Copper-Mine River.⁴¹⁷

This accords with a comment of Akaitcho's, recorded by Franklin on August 26th 1820, which provides some indication of the nature of the Yellowknives' use of the Coppermine River area and their use of the Barren Lands in general:

[Akaitcho] stated likewise that six days would be required for the march to the Copper Mine River, and five more, before any wood would be found. Until the expiration of this time, the Party could not expect to have Fires, because we should find no trees after

⁴¹⁵ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 118.

⁴¹⁶ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 118.

⁴¹⁷ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). pp. 7.

quitting the borders of this lake [Winter Lake]. The Indians, he said, only travelled this road [to Coppermine River] in Summer . . .⁴¹⁸

The Copper Indians were a good choice as guides during the summer as at that time of the year the caribou migrate through the Barren Lands, thus providing the expedition with ample game.

On July 26th 1819 at the Moose Deer Island Fort (the North West Company establishment near Fort Resolution on the Slave River delta), Franklin noted:

The Indians supply them [the men of the fort] with meat occasionally Moose[,] Red Deer & Reindeer, but I understand the Animals are not numerous in their immediate vicinity. The Chipewyans alone now trade here. The Copper Indians were accustomed to do so before the Establishment was made on the North side of the Lake [the North West Company's Fort Providence at Mountain Island near Yellowknife Bay]. They estimate the numbers of Hunters who come hither at about 160 men exclusive of Women and children. But this Season many families have taken alarm at the prevalency of the recent epidemic sickness and retired **to the Chipewyan Lands**, and this has been the cause assigned by the Gentlemen for the present scarcity of Provision, but the effects will probably be more severely felt in their next returns of Furs if they should not be induced to retrace their steps. The Beaver, Martens, Foxes and all the Animals whose skins are valuable may be found in this part of the Country, and also Buffalo.⁴¹⁹

The fur trade forts, while established in areas rich in fur-bearing animals (which were beneficial to the HBC employees), lacked the numbers of caribou required by the Chipewyans in order to subsist and were therefore useful only as fur-trading posts—not as settlements. It appears to have been preferable for the Copper Indians to trade on the north side of the lake.

⁴¹⁸ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 50.

⁴¹⁹ Franklin, J. (1995). The Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc. pp. 22-23.

Franklin again distinguished between the Yellowknife/Copper Indians and the Dogribs when he wrote that Akaitcho, the leader of the “Copper Indians,” sought peace with the Dogribs after years of hostilities:

The Copper Indians and these men, are extremely jealous of each other, and live in a species of hostility . . . The Leader [Akaitcho] has requested also, that we should propose to their Leader to make peace, if the opportunity should offer on our route to the Sea, which of course will be complied with.⁴²⁰

On July 29th 1820 Franklin met with his Yellowknife guides, including Akaitcho, at Fort Providence on Mountain Island, near Yellowknife Bay, to discuss the details of their journey. Franklin's original plan, developed at Fort Chipewyan with the advice of the Métis and Chipewyans, had been to travel northward to Great Bear Lake and from there to Coppermine River. However, the Yellowknives convinced him otherwise:

In consequence of the Water being unusually high, the Indian Guides recommended our pursuing a shorter route to the Copper Mine River than the one they first proposed, by going up the Yellow Knife River and following a Chain of Lakes, leading in a Northern direction beyond its termination, instead of proceeding to Marten Lake and then branching off to the NE . . . They stated as reasons why the preference should be given to their new proposition, that the Reindeer would be sooner found to support the Party, and that there was a large Lake well stocked with Fish and on its borders there was a sufficiency of wood to form an Establishment and answer the Winters consumption.⁴²¹

Reflecting on his original plan to travel via Great Bear Lake, Franklin now thought better of it. One of his reasons was that:

⁴²⁰ Franklin, J. (1995). Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 120.

⁴²¹ Franklin, J. (1995). Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 27.

. . . the Indians whom we have engaged with the exception of one man, **are not well acquainted with that part of the Country**, and we should arrive too late for obtaining Hunters from the Tribes who reside in that vicinity & who would have been removed before that time, towards their **Winter** stations.⁴²²

Franklin's statement indicates that the Great Bear Lake region was outside of the traditional range of the Yellowknives *as a group*. This is consistent with the evidence of the North West Company trader George Keith and with the later evidence of the Oblate missionary Émile Petitot.

In fact, this region was Dogrib territory, a tribe not mentioned in Simpson's 1821 account (quoted earlier) of Indians in the Athabasca District. Franklin, on the other hand, defined the Dogrib territorial range and, in doing so, distinguished the Dogrib from the Yellowknife/Copper Indians (both of whom are branches of the Chipewyan linguistic group and have become confused in more recent times):

I have mentioned that the Dog Ribs are the next people to the westward of these Men [the Copper Indians]. M^r Wentzel [of the North-West Company] informs me, that Tribe consists of 380 Men, Women & Children, and inhabits the Countries between Marten and Bear Lakes and westward on each side of the Banks of Mackenzie's River as far as the entrance into Bear Lake.⁴²³

Additionally, Franklin informed his readers that they also moved east toward Yellowknife:

The chief tribe of the Dog-rib nation, termed Horn Mountain Indians, inhabit the country betwixt Great Bear Lake, and the West end of Great Slave Lake . . . small detachments of the nation frequent Marten Lake, and during the summer hunt in the

⁴²² Franklin, J. (1995). Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 28.

⁴²³ Franklin, J. (1995). Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 120.

neighbourhood of Fort Enterprise [located north of Yellowknife at Winter Lake].⁴²⁴

The territory that Franklin described was located near Old Fort Providence—a fort constructed in a location convenient for both the Yellowknives and the Dogribs. The construction of a fort on what would be the "borderland" between Dogrib and Yellowknife Indians allowed for greater contact between the two, and thus, at times, greater hostilities:

Fort Providence is the last Establishment in this direction and has been constructed for the convenience of the Copper Indians, and the **Dog Ribs who make their hunts between Marten and Bear Lakes.**⁴²⁵

A note written at Winter Lake (Fort Enterprise) by Franklin on August 19th 1820 provides us with an indication of this territorial "borderland" between the Dogribs and Yellowknives, and the possibility of hostility that could come with any meeting:

Distant Fires were perceived to the Eastward of Winter Lake which the Indians suppose had been alighted by the **Dog Ribbed Tribe** who frequently visit this Lake. The **Copper Indians** entertain a great jealousy towards these Men, and consider their visits to this part as an act of encroachment.⁴²⁶

At this time, as mentioned earlier, the Yellowknives were regularly pillaging, plundering, and marauding the Dogribs.⁴²⁷ To avoid conflict, the Dogribs moved further west toward the mouth of the Mackenzie River on Great Slave Lake. Robert McVicar, HBC Chief Factor at

⁴²⁴ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 82.

⁴²⁵ Franklin, J. (1995). Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc. pp. 30-31.

⁴²⁶ Franklin, J. (1995). Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc. p. 46.

⁴²⁷ Franklin, J. (1924). Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22, vol. II, 3rd ed. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 83; Keith, G. (1890). Mr. George Keith. Letters to Mr. Roderic McKenzie 1807 - 1817: McKenzie River Department, Bear Lake, 19th November 1812. In L. R. Masson (Ed.), *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest; Récits de Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inédits Relatifs au Nord-Ouest Canadien* (pp. 60-132). QC: Nabu Press. p. 106.

Fort Resolution, first noted the presence of Dogribs at Marten Lake [Lac la Martre] in 1824, and then described their flight to the Mackenzie River due to the long-standing antagonism between the Dogribs and Copper Indians:

A band of Dog Rib Indians amounting to about 200 souls resorted to the vicinity of Martin Lake until the winter of 1823–24 when in consequence of the unfortunate quarrels between them and the Copper Indians, they fled to the borders of McKenzie River . . . The product of their hunts which formerly formed a part of the returns of this District have since that period been carried to the establishment in McK[enzie] River.⁴²⁸

Later in 1824, the Dogribs retaliated. McVicar recorded that:

. . . about one-fifth of the Copper Indians were killed by the Dog Ribs of Martin [*sic*] Lake in winter 1823–24.⁴²⁹

Tyrrell, in a 1911 reference to this turbulent period, stated that there was an altogether different cause for, and outcome to, the "war." He wrote that the Copper Indians:

. . . having been totally neglected for several years, they have now sunk into their original barbarism and extreme indigence; and a war has ensued between the two tribes, for the sake of the few remnants of iron-work which was left among them; and the Dog-ribbed Indians were so numerous, and so successful, as to destroy almost the whole race of the Copper Indians.⁴³⁰

This claim, that the whole race of Copper Indian had been destroyed has been repeated over the years and has taken on the status of myth. Unfortunately this myth has negatively

⁴²⁸ McVicar, R. (1825-1827). *Report for Great Slave Lake Outfits 1825-1827*, HBCA 1M781, B.181/e/1. fol. 2b.

⁴²⁹ McVicar, R. (1825-1827). *Report for Great Slave Lake Outfits 1825-1827*, HBCA 1M781, B.181/e/1. fol. 13b.

⁴³⁰ Tyrrell, J. B. (Ed.). (1911). In S. Hearne's, *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort, in Hudson's Bay, to the northern ocean undertaken by the order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the discovery of copper mines, a northwest passage, etc. in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772* (new edition - 1911). Toronto: The Champlain Society. Retrieved October 12th, 2012, from http://www.gutenberg.org/files/38404/38404-h/38404-h.htm#Page_5. p. 178, footnote AT.

influenced the recognition of the rights of the DKFN. This claim will be addressed in more detail in Chapter V. However, some explanation here is necessary.

The period after the "war" was thought to have been the first time during which the Copper Indians used and occupied the south side of Great Slave Lake, and it is often claimed that they remained there from then on. It is undeniable that during the 1820s Akaitcho and his band of Copper Indians travelled south of Great Slave Lake to visit McVicar several times in order to avoid the Dogribs, rest, grieve, and recover. Akaitcho and the Copper Indians returned north to hunt and trap on the Barren Lands as they had done before using and occupying a territory on the northwest shore of Great Slave Lake—an area eventually shared by both the Copper Indians and the Dogribs.⁴³¹

Franklin's journal also contains a description of the Chipewyan territory/ which he referred to as the "Chipewyan Lands":

[The Indians] **belong to the Chipewyan or Northern Indians** a Tribe which claims a large portion of the Country, though by no means numerous. They are bounded on the South & SW by the Cree Nation, on the West and the NW by the Beaver Indians, to the North by the Copper Indians, **and have the whole range of the Land to the Eastward between the Latitudes of the Great Slave Lake and Churchill . . . the portion is more particularly distinguished by the appellation of the Chipewyan Lands, a barren country** where the Rein-deer resort at certain seasons, in sufficient numbers to afford an easy subsistence to the Parties who reside there. This portion is common to the whole Tribe, and the Families retire there whenever they feel disposed to indulge in a more easy state, than the life of an active Hunter in these parts will admit of, or when they may require an additional quantity of skins for Clothing and sometimes in seasons of sickness to avoid the spreading contagion.⁴³²

⁴³¹ Russell, F. (1898). *Explorations in the Far North: Being the report of an expedition under the auspices of the University of Iowa during the years 1892, '93, and '94*. Iowa City: IA: University of Iowa. p. 162.

⁴³² Franklin, J. (1995). Journal of Occurrences from Fort Chipewyan in 1820 by Lieut. Franklin, RN & Commander of the Expedition. In R. C. Davis (Ed.), *Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition 1819 - 1822* (pp. 1-276). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 2.

He also provided information regarding the Chipewyans' specialized knowledge of the Barren Lands and the path to the Arctic Ocean. Franklin wrote that an "old Chipewyan Indian" upon seeing his map to the north:

. . . inserted a track along the sea-coast, which he had followed in returning from a war excursion, made by his tribe against the Esquimaux . . . he described two other rivers to the eastward of the Copper-mine River, which also fall into the Northern Ocean. The Anatessy, which issues from the Contway-to or Rum Lake, and the Thloueea-tessy or Fish River, which rises near the eastern boundary of the Great Slave Lake.⁴³³

The Chipewyans continued to be found, for the most part, south of Great Slave Lake. George Simpson noted the range of the Chipewyans in 1821:

Our intercourse here ceases with the Chipewyans as to the Southward or Westward of Athabasca lakes district we fall in with the Beaver Indians and to the North of Gt. Slave lake with the Hare, Dog Rib, and other Tribes.⁴³⁴

Simpson continued with a description of the underlying reason for the Chipewyans' expansion southward:

The Company's Traders at the latter establishment made them acquainted with the use and value of European commodities and being naturally of a vagrant disposition and those articles becoming necessary to their comforts, they shook off their indolent habits became expert Beaver Hunters, and now penetrate in search of that valuable animal into **the Cree and Beaver Indians hunting Grounds**, making a circuit easterly by Carribeau lake, to the South by Isle á la Crosse, and westerly to the Banks of Peace River, and so avaricious are they, that the prospect of gain I have no doubt would lead them much further did not the more warlike Tribes to the Southward and westward intimidate them.⁴³⁵

⁴³³ Franklin, J. (1924). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819-20-21-22*, vol. I, 3rd edition. London: John Murray. (Original work published 1824). p. 222.

⁴³⁴ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 32.

⁴³⁵ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 3b.

In other words, diffusion into the region south of the lake was a recent development for the Chipewyans of Great Slave Lake—a people who had historically lived and hunted in the Barren Lands. With their exploitation of the HBC's lucrative fur trade, the Chipewyans' move was necessary in order to expand their trapping territory. However, Simpson also recognized that just because some of the “chippewyan [*sic*]” people had expanded their range of activity, the regional band had not abandoned their homeland:

The greater proportion of them however **remain on their own barren lands**, where they procure sustenance with little exertion as the country abounds with Rein-deer, and some years nearly the whole of them return thither at time influenced by superstitious feelings, and at others by having laid up what they consider an abundant stock of European articles . . . ⁴³⁶

And further,

the Chipewyans do not consider this part of the Country [Fort Wedderburn, opposite Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca] to be their legitimate soil; they come in large bands from their own barren lands situated to the North of this Lake, extending to the Eastern extremity of Gt. Slave Lake and embracing a large tract of country towards Churchill. ⁴³⁷

Simpson then recorded that given the fact that the Chipewyans were moving back and forth between two homes (north of the lake and south of the lake), it was difficult to ascertain just how many Chipewyans “belonged” to—i.e. traded at—the post at Fort Resolution in 1821:

From these circumstances it is not possible to give an accurate idea of the number that belong to this post, they rarely however exceed Five Hundred families, and are at this season reduced to between Fifty and Sixty. ⁴³⁸

Robert McVicar, HBC Chief Factor at Fort Resolution, also noted the integral relationship

⁴³⁶ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fols. 3b - 4.

⁴³⁷ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 3b.

⁴³⁸ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 4.

between the Chipewyans, the Barren Lands, and the caribou. On July 10th 1820, he recorded that:

Neturr and Lazza azza arrived had nothing and left the Fort without a single shot of ammunition. They are to go straight to **the Chipewyan Lands (where the rain Deer are very numerous)** in order to make out a lively hood until the arrival of our Canoes.⁴³⁹

One week later, he encountered more individuals on their way to the Barren Lands:

Chinnathirra and In kaachka (our Fort Hunters) have gone **to the Cariboo Lands to snare Deer** as they have no ammunition to enable them to make out a subsistence in the vicinity of the Fort.⁴⁴⁰

Later, in his entry for August 4th 1826, he pointed out that the Chipewyans looked to the caribou for both winter clothing and food:

At 11 A.M. the Indians of the 2nd left the Fort they are directed to go to the Rein deer country to procure winter Clothing for themselves and families and be back here with a cargo of dried Provisions by the latter end of September.⁴⁴¹

However, from the traders' point of view, careful management of the Indians included ensuring that they hunted in an area where, come winter, there would not be a strong temptation to remain in the transitional forests on the edge of the Barren Lands:

It is . . . **the traders duty to send them to as great a distance from the rein deer lands as he can and he must direct them into small bands**, and distribute the more experts [illegible] deer hunters amongst the bands so that they may run as little risk as possible of suffering from want of provisions. If this plan is skilfully put in practice, and they are sent off immediately after they come with **their winter hunts**, which is generally about the 24th of april, they have before them a month and a half in which beaver are in season;

⁴³⁹ McVicar, R. (1820-1821). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1820-1821*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/3. fol. 7.

⁴⁴⁰ McVicar, R. (1820-1821). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1820-1821*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/3. fol. 7b.

⁴⁴¹ McVicar, R. (1826-1827). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1826-1827*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/7. fol. 16.

they can employ July and August to advantage in hunting swans and the remainder of the season with the arrival of the outfit killing Musquath [muskox]. They are themselves to **assemble at the Fort in the fall** and having upon the whole or most part of their spring labours the trader can give them a more liberal supply of necessaries for the winter and send them off contented to their hunting grounds by upon water.⁴⁴²

This can be explained by the choice that each Indian hunter had to make regarding the profitability of their endeavours. In the Barren Lands the caribou were abundant game animals and they provided hides but, around the forts, fur-bearing animals most desired by the HBC were abundant and could be sold for a profit. It was in the HBC's best interest to encourage the Indians of Great Slave Lake to stay away from the Barren Lands, where they could acquire meat and fur without having to sell their labour, and instead remain near the forts, hunting and trading furs.

In 1827 Simon McGillivray succeeded McVicar and served as inspector until 1830. The journal entries written by McGillivray are consistent with those written by McVicar; he also noted the attempt by Fort Factors to keep their fur hunters close to the Fort. In this account of Yellowknife trading chief (Akaitcho) making the "Riviere au Liard (MacKenzie River) his **winter residence**" in 1827 in order to acquire furs from the Slaves, McGillivray recorded that he had

. . . used all the arguments possible to dissuade him [Akaitcho] from going there, but he persists, giving as a reason that furs are more abundant there, than this part of the Country. His object is to trade furs from the Slaves, and pillage them if he can.⁴⁴³

McGillivray, like McVicar, also noted that the Chipewyans did not come to trade at Fort Resolution as often as the HBC would have liked. The reason, he explained, was that they were doing well living on the Barren Lands. On December 31st 1828, McGillivray noted that the Chipewyans/Caribou Eaters were not coming to trade:

⁴⁴² McVicar, R. (1825-1827). *Report for Great Slave Lake Outfits 1825-1827*. HBCA 1M781, B.181/e/1. fol. 5.

⁴⁴³ McGillivray, S. (1827-1828). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1827-1828*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/8. fol. 2b.

I am surprised that no Cariboux Eaters visit us. In the course of last summer few came to the House, and those brought no kind of Provisions. I would be pleased to see them arrive with Provisions of any kind, for we are much in want to voyage with.⁴⁴⁴

Similarly, in the spring of 1829, he made several comments about Chipewyans hunting on the Barren Lands rather than trading at the Fort. On April 24th 1829, he wrote:

The Indians of the 22nd left us for **the other side of Lake (N.E.)** There are many Cariboux Eaters, have not come in, but fellows of a ruff stamp. The only persons of note are **Comrade a Mandeville** and 2 Brothers for which I am very anxious about . . . Nainnaw's wife died a few days ago at Buffaloe River.⁴⁴⁵

And, again, on May 2nd 1829, he noted that:

[a]t night arrived Talatsusé & 2 followers . . . Dzendelyé and Chunadsiz or Vieux L'Epauley . . . There are yet two of my **prime fur hunters that have not come in viz. Cat a lou el thill or Comrade a Mandeville and his T'sanathe.**⁴⁴⁶

This absence was explained by Simpson in 1821:

The **Carribeau Eaters are those who confine themselves to their own barren lands** and so called from the circumstances of their devoting the whole of their attention to hunting the Carribeau or Rein-deer which are very numerous . . .⁴⁴⁷

And again:

The **Carribeau Eaters and Yellow Knives** chiefly frequent the North West Establishment at **Montagne Island**, where they

⁴⁴⁴ McGillivray, S. (1828-1829). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1828-1829*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/9. fol. 22.

⁴⁴⁵ McGillivray, S. (1828-1829). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1828-1829*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/9. fol. 35.

⁴⁴⁶ McGillivray, S. (1828-1829). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1828-1829*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/9. fol. 36b.

⁴⁴⁷ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 14b.

exchange provisions and the few Furs they collect, for ammunition, rum, tobacco and other articles of European Manufacture. They rarely and in small bands visit the principal establishment as they get their supplies without the Trouble of going that length with them we have as yet little acquaintance.⁴⁴⁸

The "Yellow Knives" (Copper Indians) and "Carribeau Eaters," as indicated in the above quote, frustrated McGillivray with their unpredictability. This frustration may have stemmed from the Caribou Eaters' and Yellowknives' continued use of the Barren Lands while ignoring trade at the forts. McVicar, three years after the Yellowknife–Dogrib "war," recorded the Yellowknives hunting north of Great Slave Lake at "Martin's Lake" (present-day Lac la Martre) **during the winter**.⁴⁴⁹ Earlier they were also said to hunt in the area near Mountain Island ("Montagne Island") at the site of the North West Company fort, which, on one occasion, is actually called "the Yellow Knives Indians island."⁴⁵⁰ This land was apparently shared by both bands as the Chipewyans (Caribou Eaters) are also reported **hunting muskrats during the summer** near Mountain Island on the north side of the lake.⁴⁵¹

These Chipewyans ("Caribou Eaters") "from the East Side of the Lake" continued to make infrequent appearances which McGillivray went into great detail about on May 8th 1829.⁴⁵² He complained about the "Chipewyans called Cariboux eaters" who continued to hunt caribou instead of trapping for furs for trade at the fort:

In summing up the outstanding Indian debts it stands thus. Of 150 Chipewyans who are entered on our Books . . . of 60 Copper Indians . . . It must be understood, these are all old outstanding debts. **Many of the Chipewyans called Cariboux Eaters**, who reside on their lands, have not paid us a visit this winter. They are

⁴⁴⁸ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 15.

⁴⁴⁹ McVicar, R. (1825-1826). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1825-1826*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/6. fols. 16-17.

⁴⁵⁰ Simpson, G. (1821). *Report on the Athabasca Department, 1821*. HBCA 1M776, B.39/e/1. fol. 15; MacAulay, A. (1818-1819). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1818-1819*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/1. fol. 16b. For other references to the Yellowknives at Mountain Island, see: Brown, W. (1819-1820). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1819-1820*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/2. fol. 106; McVicar, R. (1824-1825). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1824-1825*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/5. fols. 19 & 20; McVicar, R. (1825-1826). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1825-1826*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/6. fols. 22, 38, & 40; McGillivray, S. (1828-1829). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1828-1829*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/9. fols. 9 & 33b.

⁴⁵¹ McVicar, R. (1825-1826). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1825-1826*. HBCA 1M120, B.181/a/6. fol. 40.

⁴⁵² McGillivray, S. (1827-1828). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1827-1828*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/8. fol. 7.

indifferent about us, having the means sufficiently when Caribou are plentiful to keep away from the Fort.⁴⁵³

In years to come, trapping beaver and muskrat for trade with the HBC south of Great Slave Lake would come to occupy a greater proportion of the Great Slave Lake Indians' time. Despite this, the Chipewyans (Caribou Eaters), Dogribs, and Copper Indians continued to hunt caribou on the Barren Lands for food and fur. Much later in the historical documentation we can still witness the consistent frustration of the Indian Agents and other government officials regarding the reliance of the Indians of Great Slave Lake upon caribou, and thus, their independence.

1830–1839

Between 1833 and 1835, Sir George Back undertook an expedition through the eastern end of Great Slave Lake into MacLeod Bay, just south of the Gahcho Kué mine area, en route to the Arctic Ocean by way of what is now called the Back River. In the process he established Fort Reliance (on the eastern arm of Great Slave Lake) as his base of operations. The Copper Indians and Chipewyans aided Back considerably, serving as guides and provisioners. His interactions with them provide us with information regarding territorial use as well as the nature of the relationship between the Copper Indians and the Chipewyans.

Back's writings also serve to reinforce the integral connection between the Chipewyan peoples, the Barren Lands, and the caribou. On August 17th 1833, Back recorded the following:

Still, coasting along the northern shore [of Great Slave Lake in McLeod Bay], and a continuous link of islands to the right, we came to a place distinguished, by the **Chipewyan and Yellow Knife Indians, by the emphatic appellation of "The Mountain."** Here it is their custom to leave their canoes when they go to **hunt the rein-deer on the Barren Lands**; and few have much acquaintance with the country beyond it.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵³ McGillivray, S. (1828-1829). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1828-1829*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/9. fol. 37b.

⁴⁵⁴ Back, G. (1970). *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River, and Along Shores of the Arctic Ocean in the year 1833, 1834, and 1835, By Captain George Back, R.N., Commander of the*

On the morning of August 19th 1833, not quite two days later, Back recorded that his party ascended the Hoarfrost River. While ascending this river on the Barren Lands, possibly at Parry Falls, Back noted a number of stashed canoes:

We now learned from the Indians that the fall[s] . . . was the commencement of a series of appalling cascades and rapids, which, according to their account, were the distinguishing characteristics of Hoar Frost River; and, indeed, some fifteen or twenty small canoes, concealed in the bushes, **belonging as was conjectured, to my old friend Akaitcho and his party, who were hunting on the Barren Lands**, showed pretty clearly the obstacles we might expect to encounter.⁴⁵⁵

He located the **Copper Indians at Walmsley Lake on the Barren Lands** when he wrote:

I directed the course to a distant northerly hill, which, luckily enough, happened to be the western point of another narrows, **well known to the Yellow Knives as a favourite deer-pass**, and which was, in fact the only passage for the water.⁴⁵⁶

Bodies of water in the North West Territories are often used as geographical reference points. Back frequently referred to the Copper and Chipewyans Indians that he came across on the Barren Lands in connection with bodies of water. He provided information on the extent of the territory of the Copper Indians' when he described their fear of encountering the Inuit four miles downstream of Muskox Lake on the Barren Lands:

The Yellow Knives, who travel across the country in the **spring** to spear the deer as they pass the rapid, were not accustomed to

Expedition, Illustrated by a Map and Plates. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc. (Original work published 1936). p. 108.

⁴⁵⁵ Back, G. (1970). *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River, and Along Shores of the Arctic Ocean in the year 1833, 1834, and 1835, By Captain George Back, R.N., Commander of the Expedition, Illustrated by a Map and Plates*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc. (Original work published 1936). p. 114.

⁴⁵⁶ Back, G. (1970). *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River, and Along Shores of the Arctic Ocean in the year 1833, 1834, and 1835, By Captain George Back, R.N., Commander of the Expedition, Illustrated by a Map and Plates*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc. (Original work published 1936). p. 130.

beyond two days' march farther, through fear, as they said, of falling in with Esquimaux.⁴⁵⁷

At the narrows of Clinton-Colden Lake on the Barren Lands, Back met two members of Akaitcho's party:

Two Indians soon arrived from **Akaitcho**, whose party had that afternoon found a seasonable relief to the long privation, which their squalid and emaciated appearance too painfully indicated.⁴⁵⁸

While at Fort Reliance, which was established for the purpose of trading with the Indians on their return trip from the Barren Lands, Back recorded a description of the mouth of the Lockhart River:

[Mr. McLeod] had expected that our route would have been by a small river, about a mile to the eastward, **invariably used by the Chipewyans or Yellow Knives**, whenever they proceed in that direction; and, as it may be supposed, quite unknown to me until that moment. On subsequent inspection, however, it was found to be too shallow for canoes, being merely the outlet to some small lakes, and the waters of a picturesque fall, from four to eight miles distant. **There were many small Indian canoes stowed under the branches of the willows; and as it was the lowest and most favourable route to the Barren Lands, it was preferred, to those by which I had passed.**⁴⁵⁹

In October at Fort Reliance, Back observed “starving Indians” arriving:

⁴⁵⁷ Back, G. (1970). *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River, and Along Shores of the Arctic Ocean in the year 1833, 1834, and 1835, By Captain George Back, R.N., Commander of the Expedition, Illustrated by a Map and Plates*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc. (Original work published 1936). p. 161.

⁴⁵⁸ Back, G. (1970). *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River, and Along Shores of the Arctic Ocean in the year 1833, 1834, and 1835, By Captain George Back, R.N., Commander of the Expedition, Illustrated by a Map and Plates*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc. (Original work published 1936). pp. 163-164.

⁴⁵⁹ Back, G. (1970). *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River, and Along Shores of the Arctic Ocean in the year 1833, 1834, and 1835, By Captain George Back, R.N., Commander of the Expedition, Illustrated by a Map and Plates*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc. (Original work published 1936). p. 182.

. . . from every point of the compass, declaring that the animals had left the Barren Lands, where they had hitherto been accustomed to feed at this season: and that the calamity was not confined to the YellowKnives, but that the Chipewyans also were as forlorn and destitute as themselves.⁴⁶⁰

And later, at the end of May 1834, he noted that:

Akaitcho and thirty of his tribe arrived, empty-handed, and were followed by a couple of young Chipewyans, **who brought a little dry meat from the Yellowknife River**, where one of their party had died from want.⁴⁶¹

Likewise, the HBC trading post journals of Fort Resolution provide innumerable references to the Chipewyans on the Barren Lands. Yet another example is provided by Alexander R. McLeod, the inspector at the time, who wrote on April 12th 1836:

. . . the Arrivals of Sunday received their Wants as far as our Means admitted and they departed and so did Ezenay [Ezzene: Chipewyan], who was Waiting them, they also are bound to the **Barren Ground**.⁴⁶²

1840–1849

Unfortunately, the Fort Resolution records covering the period 1840–1849 cannot be located and may not exist, a fact stated in an email sent by HBC Archives staff to one of our researchers (see Appendix). However, the periods both before and after are consistent in their documentation of the caribou hunt in the Barren Lands. Despite the lack of surviving HBC Fort Resolution records for this period, one can assume historical continuity.

⁴⁶⁰ Back, G. (1970). *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River, and Along Shores of the Arctic Ocean in the year 1833, 1834, and 1835, By Captain George Back, R.N., Commander of the Expedition, Illustrated by a Map and Plates*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc. (Original work published 1936). p. 194.

⁴⁶¹ Back, G. (1970). *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River, and Along Shores of the Arctic Ocean in the year 1833, 1834, and 1835, By Captain George Back, R.N., Commander of the Expedition, Illustrated by a Map and Plates*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc. (Original work published 1936). p. 252.

⁴⁶² McLeod, A. R. (1835-1836). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1835-1836*. HBCA 1M121, B.181/a/11, fol. 39.

1850–1859

Information for the period between 1856 and 1861 comes from journals kept at the HBC post at Fond du Lac. Although Fond du Lac is not in the Barren Lands, these journals contain information about the Chipewyans and Copper Indians who hunted on the Barren Lands and came to trade at the Fond du Lac post. They illustrate a consistent pattern of Copper Indians and Chipewyans/Caribou Eaters hunting on the Barren Lands and then coming to trade at Fond du Lac. On November the 20th 1856, an unidentified Factor reported:

. . . no signs of the Cariboo Eaters . . . It is now past the usual period of their arrival.⁴⁶³

His fears were allayed the following year when, on November 12th 1857, he observed:

. . . the arrival at last of 2 leading men from the Cariboo Country coming for a little tobacco, their party will be here probably tomorrow with their provisions.⁴⁶⁴

And then the next day:

Sleedry's son, Jack, & a large party of Chips come in with provisions begin at once to count their provisions but could not count all.⁴⁶⁵

Again in the spring of 1858, the unnamed Factor reported both Chipewyans and Dogribs arriving in the fort, bringing supplies of meat:

. . . arrived a party of Chips with ribs.⁴⁶⁶

And more than one month later:

⁴⁶³ Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fol. 3.

⁴⁶⁴ Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fol. 10.

⁴⁶⁵ Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fol. 10.

⁴⁶⁶ Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fol. 16b.

An Indian a stranger from Cariboo Lake made his appearance no provisions consequently got nothing.⁴⁶⁷

The pattern of Chipewyans coming in from the Barren Lands in the late **fall** and early **spring** continued over the next three years:

11 November 1858: “begin to look out for the Carriboo Eaters.”

26 November 1858: “arrived a large party of Carriboo Eaters with empty sleds! having left their provisions en route with a determination of not giving an ounce of Grease until they get to [illegible] they ask & expect for it, viz shirts, [illegible] kettles, &c, &c. Of course they ask this from Mr Campbell. I merely told them I shall keep my Goods & ammunition & they might keep their Grease until I hear or know further orders from F^t Chip.”

21 March 1859: “**Indians all gone back to their lands** after getting paid for their miserable ribs & pounded meat brought by them.”

28 March 1859: “No arrivals of Carriboo Eaters although in daily expectation of seeing them.”

4 October 1859: “Two Indians bound for Fort Chipewyan paid us a passing visit: they bring good accounts from the **barren lands**.”⁴⁶⁸

These reports continued into the following decade:

25 October 1860: “. . . got word from Chenay but nothing for the store in way of fresh meat; they are living on Fish at a small inland Lake waiting for the deer to make their appearance.”

15 November 1860: “no Carriboo Eaters this is about the time they generally make their appearance there is sufficient snow.”

19 November 1860: “Louison a young Lad with Chenay cast up late last evening with the agreeable intelligence of there being

⁴⁶⁷ Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fol. 18.

⁴⁶⁸ Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fols. 21b, 22, 28b, 29, & 35.

encamped at an Island Lake a couple of days journey from here living on fish no signs of Carriboos or Carribo Eaters.”

21 November 1860: “the ice is now 3 inches thick so that I expect to see some of the “Carriboos” from the East end of the Lake.”

25 November 1860: “the long looked for Carriboo Eaters have at length arrived.”

3 December 1860: “Whatsagazie and the Squ[ine]le arrived late last night. Whatsagazie leaves in the morning to go in his Brother in Law. The poor fellow is rather down hearted having lost his wife. She died on the **barren Lands**.”

11 March 1861: “arrived the following Indians viz Jacks son and son in law Ponce droite son La cooche two sons Calco Lefoins two sons and Tsinchete Chipewyan Indian. Received their provisions and settled with some of them they brought good loads and tolerable good [ill] report Cariboo numerous three days journey from here.”⁴⁶⁹

It is clear from the Fond du Lac post journals that the Chipewyans (particularly the Caribou Eaters) were consistently returning to the Barren Lands in search of caribou. While in most years the hunt was successful, in some it was not; and the unfortunate result was often starvation. One example is poignantly described in the Fond du Lac post journals. In January 1859, the Factor reports that:

Gros Tete’s wife made her appearance in a miserable starving condition, telling us she left her husband and surviving child (the two eldest boys having frozen to death about 10 days ago) in a dying condition; of course sent off Shawan & Felix with each a chain of Dogs to bring the Old Man & the Child to the House with injunctions not to lose a moment on the journey . . . This is truly sad, and I fear some other poor Chips have met a similar fate, **from scarcity of Deer** and the unusual severe cold weather we have experienced since the beginning of the **winter**.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁹ Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fols. 40b, 41b, 42, 42, 42b, 43, & 46b.

⁴⁷⁰ Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fols. 25b - 26.

Unfortunately, Gros Tête did not survive:

About mid-night died poor old Gros Tête apparently with little or no suffering.⁴⁷¹

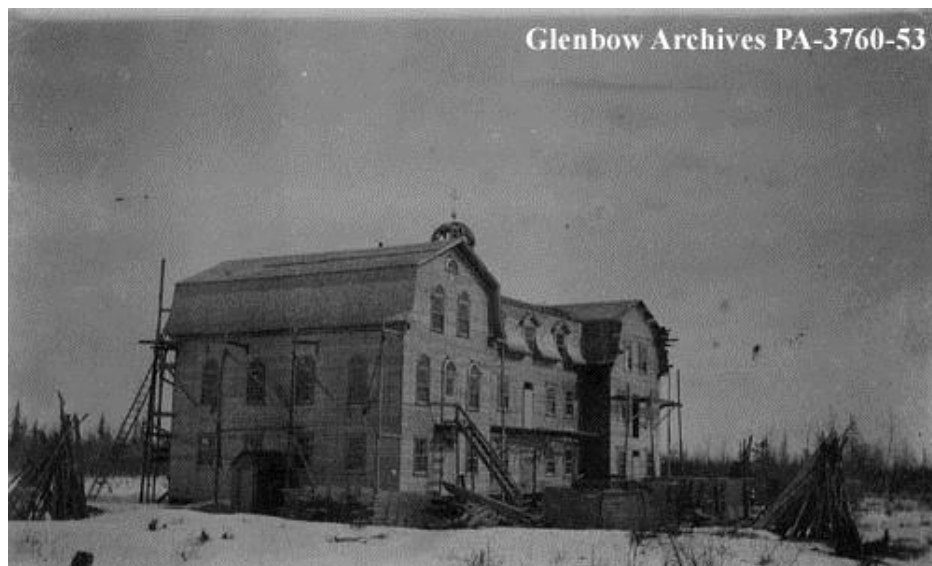
There is no recorded information about the fate of Gros Tête's wife or his surviving child.

1860–1879: Missionary Records of Émile Petitot, OMI

The evidence given by early explorers and fur traders pertaining to traditional land use and socio-territorial organization accords broadly with the observations of the Oblate missionary Émile Petitot, often considered to be the first serious (though amateur) ethnographer in the region. (As an aside, Petitot was one of the first European observers to have paid attention to indigenous self-identification.)

Despite the Oblate missionaries' presence in the Fort Resolution area dating from 1852—performing dozens of baptisms—Oblates did not have a permanent residence until 1858 when St. Joseph's mission was established in Fort Resolution, which enabled their continued work in the region (plate 39).

Plate 39: Roman Catholic mission under construction, Fort Resolution⁴⁷²



⁴⁷¹ Bews, R. G. (1856 - 1863). *Fond du Lac Post Journal 1856-1863*. HBCA 1M54, B.72/a/1. fol. 26b.

⁴⁷² Glenbow Museum Archives: Roman Catholic mission under construction, Fort Resolution (Image No: PA-3760-53). (1900-1906). Retrieved from ww2.glenbow.org/search/archivesPhotosResults.aspx.

Unlike the HBC employees who recorded the day to day activities and trade at the forts, Petitot had little interest in tallying the number of caribou killed or the number of pelts brought in for trade. He had been sent by the Catholic Church to convert the people. In the process, he provided us with an ethnography of the people.

Petitot collected very detailed census information between 1863 & 1864. He wrote that the Copper Indians formed the majority of the Indians trading at Fort Resolution. There were 332 Copper Indians to 245 Chipewyans.⁴⁷³ In 1879, he recorded 537 Chipewyans at Fort Chipewyan and Fort Smith, 31 at Fort McMurray in the Athabasca District, and 318 Caribou Eaters at Fond-du-Lac.⁴⁷⁴ He did not count any Dogribs trading at Fort Resolution. However, at Fort Rae, on Great Bear Lake in Dogrib territory, Petitot counted only Dogribs (788 of them in 1864).⁴⁷⁵

In an 1874 article entitled *Sur les populations indigene de l'Athabaskaw-Mackenzie* [On the indigenous population of the Athabasca-Mackenzie], Petitot provided a classification of the groups around Great Slave Lake and specified their territories:

I call by *Dénè-Dindjié* a large and numerous group of red-skinned Indians who people not only the Athabasca-Mackenzie region, but also a great part of the territory of Alaska and of British Columbia. From time to time the people of this group have been designated by the names “Athabaskans,” “Chippeweyans,” “Montagnais of the north,” and “Tinnèh.” These names are improper and inexact. [Petitot here criticizes previous designations and categories used by fur traders and explorers] . . . In reuniting under the word *Dénè* (men), by which the tribes furthest south are qualified, to the word *Dindjié*, which takes in those to the north, I have captured under one composite name that I believe to be quite appropriate the whole

⁴⁷³ Petitot, E. (1883). On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography, New Monthly Series*, 5(11), 633-655, & 688. p. 653.

⁴⁷⁴ Petitot, E. (1883). On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography, New Monthly Series*, 5(11), 633-655, & 688. p. 653.

⁴⁷⁵ Petitot, E. (1883). On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography, New Monthly Series*, 5(11), 633-655, & 688. p. 653.

nation, yet so little known, of the American natives furthest north after the Eskimo [translated from French].⁴⁷⁶

These “Dénè-Dindjié” divide into several "tribes":

1st The *Montagnais*, *Chippewyans*, and *Athabascans* (*Dénè*). They are of the 4000 [individuals who live] between the Churchill or English River and Slave Lake. They inhabit Ile-à-la-crosse Lake, Froid-du-Cœur Lake, Lac la Biche, Buffalo Lake and Athabasca Lake, the length of the river of the same name and the Slave River;

2nd The *Caribou Eaters* [*les Mangeurs-de-caribou*], *Ethen Eldéli* (*Dénè*). They are 2000 around and hunting in the steppes situated to the east of Caribou, Wolleston and Athabaska Lakes. The Fond-du-lac fort, on the latter lake, is their rendez-vous; . . .

4th The *Yellowknives* [*Couteaux-Jaunes*], *Copper Indians* of [Sir John] Franklin (*Dénè*), 500 souls. **They return to the tribe of the Caribou Eaters** and inhabit the steppes northeast of Great Slave Lake. In Franklin's time [1820s], the Yellowknives were living along the length of the Copper River . . .

5th The *Plats-côtés-de-chien* or *Flancs-de-chien* River. (*Dogribs* of the English) (*Dané*). 1500 souls. They live to the north of the Great Slave Lake, between it and Great Bear Lake and the Copper [translated from French] . . .⁴⁷⁷

It is particularly interesting that he states that the Copper Indians "return to the tribe of the Caribou Eaters and inhabit the steppes northeast of Great Slave Lake."⁴⁷⁸ This again confirms the general observation, witnessed in several sources, that the Copper Indians were a Chipewyan people.

⁴⁷⁶ Petitot, É. (1874). Sur les populations indigènes de l'Athabaskaw-Mackenzie. *Bulletins de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris* II(9), 831-836. p. 832.

⁴⁷⁷ Petitot, É. (1874). Sur les populations indigènes de l'Athabaskaw-Mackenzie. *Bulletins de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris* II(9), 831-836. pp. 832–833.

⁴⁷⁸ Petitot, É. (1874). Sur les populations indigènes de l'Athabaskaw-Mackenzie. *Bulletins de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris* II(9), 831-836. pp. 832–833.

Later, in an 1883 article entitled *On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory*, Petitot described the Indians living in the Athabasca District in current northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. He stated, reiterating his earlier statement, that Chipewyans lived north and northeast of Lake Athabasca “in common under the names of Yellow-knives (**T’altsan Ottiné**), and Caribou-eaters (**Ethen eldéli**).”⁴⁷⁹ Again, we see the word T’altson, the name given to the Taltson River, used in conjunction with the Copper Indians.

As Randolph Freeman, the current Director of Lands Management for the Yellowknives Dènè First Nation, has stated in this report prepared for the Deze Energy Corporation entitled *Historical Overview of the Rocher River/Taltson River/Tazin River Areas of the Northwest Territories and Northern Saskatchewan and the Tazin River Water Diversion*:

The word ‘Tatsanottine’ is the modern day equivalent of Fr. Emile Petitot’s “T’altsan-ottiné” and synonymous with Franklin’s “Copper Indians”, “Red Knives”, “Yellow Knife”, “Yellow Knives” and should not be confused with the Yellowknives Dènè, the primarily Dogrib group, living in Yellowknife, Detah and N’Dilo, **who adopted the name Yellowknives by Band Council Resolution in the early 1990s.**⁴⁸⁰

However, there is a stronger connection between the Copper Indians and the southeast shore of Great Slave Lake. On both the map published with Petitot’s 1891 memoir and the map published with his 1883 article, **the present-day Taltson River** is designated respectively as the **Tpaltsan-dessè** or **“Yellowknives R[iver] or T’al’tson Dèssè R[iver]”**.⁴⁸¹

The map, which accompanied Petitot’s 1883 article, depicts the Copper Indians south of Great Slave Lake and east of Slave River (likely at Rocher/Taltson river); the Chipewyans, south of Lake Athabasca and east of the Athabasca River; and the “Rein-Deer Eaters” north of Lake of

⁴⁷⁹ Petitot, É. (1883). On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 5(11), 633-655, & 688. p. 651.

⁴⁸⁰ Freeman, R. (2008). *Historical Overview of the Rocher River/Taltson River/Tazin River Areas of the Northwest Territories and Northern Saskatchewan and the Tazin River Water Diversion*. Prepared for the Deze Energy Corporation. p. 1, footnote 1.

⁴⁸¹ Petitot, É. (1891). *Autour de Grand Lac Des Esclaves*. Paris, FR: Nouvelle Librairie Parisienne. p. 373; Petitot, É. (1883). On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 5(11), 633-655, & 688. p. 688 (fold-out map).

the Hills, straddling the Black Bear Mountains to the east of the Caribou Mountains and the southeast of Whitefish Lake.⁴⁸²

On a map drawn by Richard King while on the Back expedition in 1836, the Taltson River was given the name “Copper Indian River” (see map 10: left center of map).⁴⁸³ Earlier Peter Fidler, a fur trader who explored the region in 1791 and 1792, wrote that the name of the river was “Tall chu dezza,” or “Red Knife [River]”. He also used the terms “Coppermine Indians” and “Coppermine river Indians” in referring to the Yellowknives.⁴⁸⁴

The above noted records and maps put to rest the belief that the Yellowknives had *expanded* to the Taltson River during the mid 1800's as they were recorded as using and occupying a territory that ran from the Yellowknife River on the north side of the lake to the Taltson River on the south side dating from at least the time of contact.

Petitot refered to the Taltson River as “Tou-bau-dessé” in the text of his 1883 article, which accords with Back’s name of “Thu-wu-desseh” for a river in that area, which is depicted on his 1836 map.⁴⁸⁵

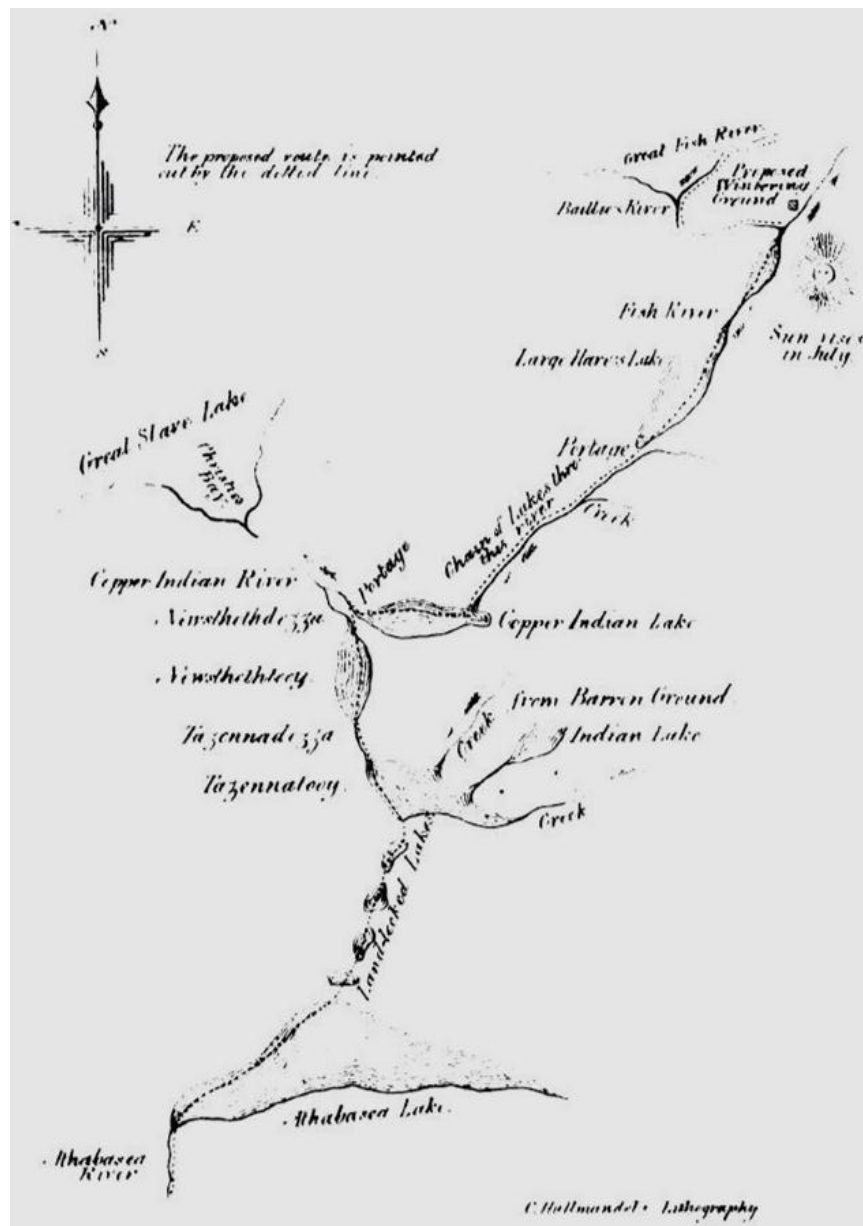
⁴⁸² Petitot, É. (1883). On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 5(11), 633-655, & 688. p. 655

⁴⁸³ King, R. (1836). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Arctic Ocean in 1833, 1834 and 1835, under the command of Capt. Back, R.N., by Richard King, M.R.C.S. &c. Surgeon and Naturalist to the Expedition*. Vol. II. London: R. Bentley. p. 288b.

⁴⁸⁴ Fidler, P. (1934). A Journal with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave Lake, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2 by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor* (pp. 493-556). Toronto: The Champlain Society. p. 520, 521, 524, 546-547, & 551.

⁴⁸⁵ Back, G. (1970). *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River, and Along Shores of the Arctic Ocean in the year 1833, 1834, and 1835, By Captain George Back, R.N., Commander of the Expedition, Illustrated by a Map and Plates*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc. (Original work published 1936). At End (Map).

Map 10: Map drawn by King on which he names the Taltson River the Copper Indian River⁴⁸⁶



Petitot noted in a letter written from St. Joseph Mission in 1863, that:

The Saint-Joseph's Mission was founded by Mgr Faraud five years ago [1858]. There, I replaced the R.P. Eynard, who left some days after my arrival to visit the Dogrib natives who inhabit the shores of

⁴⁸⁶ King, R. (1836). *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Arctic Ocean in 1833, 1834 and 1835, under the command of Capt. Back, R.N., by Richard King, M.R.C.S. &c. Surgeon and Naturalist to the Expedition*. Vol. II. London: R. Bentley. p. 288b.

the end of the lake [most likely the north-west corner of the lake]. The Indians who frequent the mission Saint-Joseph are the Montagnais or Chipewyans, whose proper name is Dènè, that is to say, the “real men”; the Yellowknives or Tratsan-ottiné, and the Indians of *lac aux Buffles*: Edjiéré troukénadé [translated from French].⁴⁸⁷

In his 1891 mémoires, *Autour du Grand Lac des Esclaves*, Petitot wrote:

A word about the Yellowknives whose name I have often mentioned in these pages. I have said that the Dènè population who frequented my mission on Moose Island amounted in 1863 to 660 souls. They belong to two tribes: the Chipewyans or Montagnais, and the Yellowknives or Copper people, for this is what their Indian name, Tpatsan-Ottinè, means [translated from French].⁴⁸⁸

These two statements, considered in the context of his comprehensive 1891 classification, inform us that the two groups who traded at Fort Resolution in the 1860s were (1) the Copper Indians, or *Tpatsan-Ottinè*, considered to be a regional subgroup of the broader category of Dènè; (2) The Chipewyans, or in Petitot's estimation, the Mountainees; and (3) the people from Buffalo Lake, or *Edkiéré troukénadé*. In later years the Buffalo Lake Indians were not noted as a distinct people, and they rarely appear in the historical documentation. Also worth noting at this time is the lack of Dogribs in Fort Resolution. Dogribs were not recorded at Fort Resolution until the 1881 census.

In his 1891 memoir, Petitot recorded only two distinct native encampments in the area: “I left my Dènè flock, the Tchippewayans [Chipewyans] and the Couteaux-Jaunes [Yellow-Knives], the former camped at Fort Resolution, the others around my residence on Moose Island [translated from French].”⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁷ Petitot, É. (1863). Letters from Great Slave Lake. September 1863, December 7, 1863, April 3, 1864. In *Missions des Oblats*, 1863, t. 6, pp. 364-382. p. 369.

⁴⁸⁸ Petitot, É. (1891). *Autour de Grand Lac Des Esclaves*. Paris, FR: Nouvelle Librairie Parisienne. p. 95.

⁴⁸⁹ Petitot, É. (1891). *Autour de Grand Lac Des Esclaves*. Paris, FR: Nouvelle Librairie Parisienne. p. 97.

In April 1864, after only a year at the St. Joseph Mission, Petitot travelled north to the mission at Old Fort Rae (on the north arm of Great Slave Lake) and observed the peaceful co-existence of the Dogribs and the Yellowknives:

A few days after my arrival at Fort Rae, I saw a numerous band of **Dogribs** on the lakeshore. These Indians make up the tribe nearest to the fort. They live almost always with the **Yellowknives** as their neighbours, and they understand Chipewyan perfectly. Many even speak it [translated from French].⁴⁹⁰

This is an interesting statement given that elder Jean-Baptiste Sa-naïn-di had told Petitot that:

The Tpa-tsan Ottinè or Yellowknives, our sworn enemies in the past. **These mountains that you see, the mountains of the Dogribs, were the boundary of our respective territories.** Today they never hunt here. **They, like us, have moved south.**⁴⁹¹

1880–1889

Unfortunately, other than the census noted above, during this period there are few surviving records. The available post journals for Fort Resolution do not cover the years 1880—1885. They do resume again, however, in 1886 and continue until 1889. The only other available written account related to this period is one published by big game hunter Warburton Pike. He visited the area between 1889 and 1890 and eventually published his account in 1892. Pike travelled north from Fond du Lac as far as the Coppermine River on the Barren Lands, and encountered evidence of Copper Indians, Copper Indians themselves, and reports of Dogribs. m What's more, Pike was accompanied onto the "Barren Ground" by the Yellowknives. He wrote that he had "come from far across the big water on purpose to see the country of the Yellow Knives".⁴⁹²

Pike met with "Zinto, the chief of the Yellow Knives" and his band at Camsell Lake between

⁴⁹⁰ Petitot, É. (1891). *Autour de Grand Lac Des Esclaves*. Paris, FR: Nouvelle Librairie Parisienne. p. 189.

⁴⁹¹ Petitot, É. (1891). *Autour de Grand Lac Des Esclaves*. Paris, FR: Nouvelle Librairie Parisienne. p. 253.

⁴⁹² Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 88.

Great Slave Lake and Mackay Lake in 1889.⁴⁹³ At their meeting, Pike asked Zinto to lend him a party to hunt muskoxen in the Barren Lands, and "Zinto," as he is also called, "was very pleased to see a white man on his hunting-ground."⁴⁹⁴ As a result, Zinto promised several of "his young men" that they could accompany Pike on his trek.⁴⁹⁵ However, he warned Pike that the Yellowknives' territory was a much more difficult region in which to hunt muskoxen during the winter than was the Dogribs' territory because the Dogribs' was closer to the woods (and thus the treeline):

. . . musk-ox hunt in snow-time was hard; only the bravest of his young men went, and last year was the first time they had made the attempt. The Dog-Ribs who traded at Fort Rae often went but they had an easier country, as the musk-ox were nearer the woods.⁴⁹⁶

On November 11th 1889, Pike set out with Zinto's brother, Marlo, and several other Yellow Knife Indians, including a man named Salbatha.⁴⁹⁷ On their journey they travelled north of Great Slave Lake along Mackay Lake, passed Lac de Gras, and then travelled further north where Pike's travels took him off his own map into the area on which he has written: "musk ox numerous" (see map 11).⁴⁹⁸

They relied upon caribou meat for sustenance at the beginning of their trip, but as they had left during the beginning of the winter and were travelling north they moved in the opposite direction to the caribou which were moving south and west into the transitional forest.⁴⁹⁹ Eventually they came to rely upon the musk-ox for meat.

⁴⁹³ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 86.

⁴⁹⁴ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 87.

⁴⁹⁵ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 87.

⁴⁹⁶ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 87.

⁴⁹⁷ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). pp. 89 & 106.

⁴⁹⁸ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). Map to face p. 1.

⁴⁹⁹ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). pp. 98, 99, & 100.

Pike and company, on their way back to Fort Resolution (Pike's original starting place), encountered Zinto's camp south of Camsell Lake on Lac du Rocher On December 7th, 1889.⁵⁰⁰ This camp had been referred to a number of times in the Hudson's Bay Company Fort Resolution records for this period. These accounts describe 'Zinto (also recorded as Zinto by Pike and Dzintu and Dzinto by factor James Klett) and the Yellowknives moving from their camp near Camsell Lake down toward Fort Resolution to trade meat and furs:

April 25th 1887: “a Party of 10 Indians arrived brought a few Furs but no meat at 12 OClock tonight 2 Indians arrived from Dzintu Camp brought news of meat in Cache for the Fort.”⁵⁰¹

April 27th 1887: “Jan Sandison & [illegible] Mandeville start early this morning to Dzintu Camp for 2 sleds of half dry meat but it is doubtful if they bring much if this weather continues.”⁵⁰²

May 28th 1887: “Dzintu & 4 others arrived brought a few Furs & a little meat. I and Mr. King Equipped them at once they are anxious to be off as the Ice is getting bad.”⁵⁰³

October 5th 1888: “Dzinto and Lockharts band started off to their wintering quarters apparently well satisfied.”⁵⁰⁴

April 30th 1889: “Michel & I arranging Dzinto Capot Blanc and other Indians who arrived yesterday.”⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁰ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 118

⁵⁰¹ Klett, J. (1886 - 1889). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1886 - 1889*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/18. fol. 12.

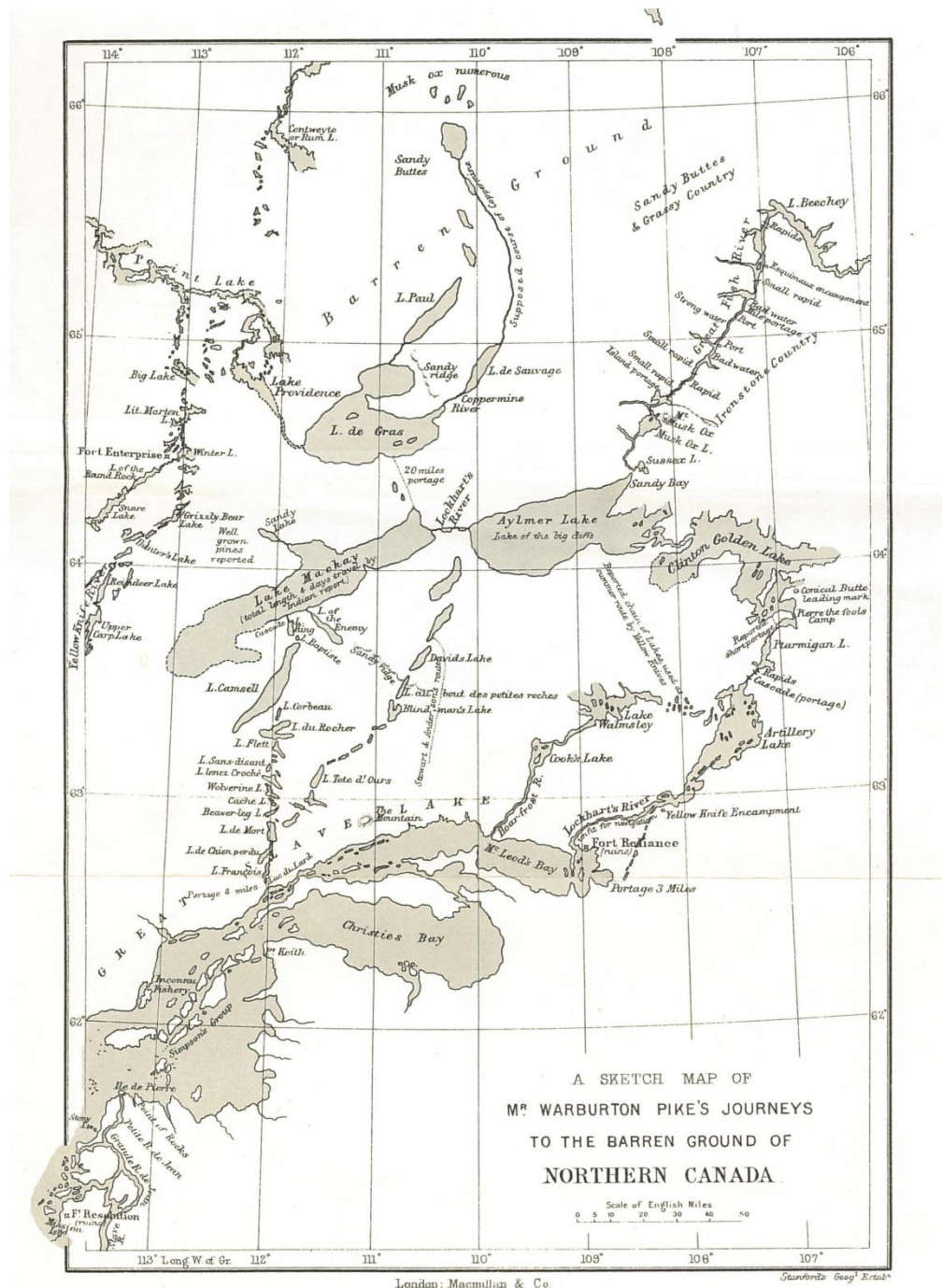
⁵⁰² Klett, J. (1886 - 1889). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1886 - 1889*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/18. fol. 12.

⁵⁰³ Klett, J. (1886 - 1889). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1886 - 1889*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/18. fol. 13b.

⁵⁰⁴ Klett, J. (1886 - 1889). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1886 - 1889*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/18. fol. 38b.

⁵⁰⁵ Klett, J. (1886 - 1889). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1886 - 1889*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/18. fol. 48.

Map 11: Pike's map of his muskox hunt in the Barren Lands from 1892. Note the various annotations he has made to his map: "Musk ox numerous" (very top), "Yellow Knife Encampment" (east of McLeod's Bay), "Great Fish River" and "Esquimaux encampment" (top right corner), and "L. Camsell," Zinto's camp (south of Lake Mackay).⁵⁰⁶



⁵⁰⁶ Pike, W. (1967). The Barren Ground of Northern Canada. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). Map to face p. 1.

Zinto, referred to as "the chief of the Yellow Knives" by Warburton Pike, signed the Treaty 8 Adhesion as Head Man of the Yellowknives in 1900 under the name Tzin-tu.⁵⁰⁷ Another Yellowknife Head Man who signed the Treaty 8 Adhesion in 1900 with the name Ate-ee-zen was documented by name twice in the Fort Resolution post journals.⁵⁰⁸ In the fort records he is called "Et the zin":

July 5th 1888: "Et the zin and a few others arrived brought the meat boat that got frozen in on her way from Fond du Lac last fall."⁵⁰⁹

July 24th 1888: "Et the zin start this morning to Fond du Lac with the Meat Boat King Beaulieu and his sons and all they Indians."⁵¹⁰

On May 16th 1888, James Klett recorded Yellowknives arriving at the Fort. Unfortunately, he failed to mention which direction they were arriving from:

A party of the Yellow Knives arrived brought a little meat and a few furs. I & Michel equipped them at once the all start across in the afternoon to pass the night at the mission.⁵¹¹

On February 25th 1888, Klett observed:

At 7 O clock this morning Moise Mandeville start to Buffalo River with Lousian Dosinare [*sic*: likely Louison Dosnoir] to enable him to get to Buffalo Lake as quick as possible . . . King Beaulieu, Pierre Beaulieu & Son, Francais Beaulieu, Oliver Hoole all start off in the afternoon after a band of Deer that passed about a spell from the Fort this is the first time Deer knowen [*sic*] to pass so close to the Fort.⁵¹²

A point of interest regarding the above quote is the identity of the individual "Lousian

⁵⁰⁷ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 86; Macrae, J. A. (1900). Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8. In *Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1900*. Part 1, p. xlv.

⁵⁰⁸ Macrae, J. A. (1900). Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8. In *Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1900*. Part 1, p. xlv.

⁵⁰⁹ Klett, J. (1886 - 1889). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1886 - 1889*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/18. fol. 33.

⁵¹⁰ Klett, J. (1886 - 1889). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1886 - 1889*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/18. fol. 34.

⁵¹¹ Klett, J. (1886 - 1889). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1886 - 1889*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/18. fol. 30b.

⁵¹² Klett, J. (1886 - 1889). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1886 - 1889*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/18. fol. 26b.

Dosinare." Rene Fumoleau has also called Louison Ahthay, the chief for the Chipewyans during the Treaty 8 Adhesion signing at Fort Resolution, Louison Dosnoir.⁵¹³ Lousian Dosinare, in James Klett's hand, is most likely a corruption of Chief Louison Dosnoir of the Chipewyans signing the Treaty 8 Adhesion at Fort Resolution.

1890–1899

Warburton Pike's hunt continued in the 1890s. Several days after New Years, Pike rested at Fort Resolution after the hunt described above. Zinto travelled south to meet him in order to arrange for Pike's next hunt. As an end to his travels in the Barren Lands, Pike wished to descend the Great Fish River (see map 11 above). Zinto, with his travelling companion Syene, responded to Pike's request:

They [Zinto and Syene] told us that there was no difficulty in reaching the head-waters of the river, as the Indians were in the habit of coming there every summer.⁵¹⁴

Zinto's role in this plan was to provide caches of caribou meat for supplies, and young men who would be willing to travel into this county. Zinto was to meet Pike at Fond du Lac, the party's jumping off point, and give him the supplies he needed for his journey. Unfortunately, because of a limited caribou hunt and a feast he was required to hold for the Dogribs, Zinto did not provide Pike with caribou, although he did provide men for the journey. On Pike's last hunt, the Yellowknives had been satisfactory hunters of muskoxen north of the lake. However, Great Fish River lies northeast of Great Slave Lake in Eskimo territory: the Yellowknives would be the best individuals to lead the way there, but once they entered Eskimo territory, fighting was sure to ensue. The Yellowknives were wary. Nonetheless, they served as Pike's guide during the 1890 exploration. But, as expected, once they left Yellowknife territory on the Great Fish River, the Yellowknife Indians quickly became wary⁵¹⁵:

⁵¹³ Macrae, J. A. (1900). Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8. In *Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1900*. Part 1, p. xlv; Fumoleau, R. (2004). *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press. pp. 99, & 104-105.

⁵¹⁴ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 139.

⁵¹⁵ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 180.

We camped at the foot of a high sand-butte covered with flowers and moss, and found a bunch of willows on the bank of the river. There were indications that someone had camped on the same spot many years ago; small sticks had been chopped with an axe, and bones of caribou were lying in heaps on the ground. The Yellow Knives at once said it was an old Esquimaux camp, and it was evident that they had little inclination to go farther downstream; more probably the chopping was done by a band of Dog-Ribs, whose hunting grounds lie to the west.⁵¹⁶

Eventually the party continued on, returning, again, to Fort Resolution. The HBC Fort Resolution post journals resumed in 1891 but ended again in 1895. These accounts continued to place the Chipewyans and Copper Indians/Yellowknives at both Fort Resolution and hunting far afield. These passages reiterate those cited in the previous sections of this report.

Dzinto, Pike's guide, appears a great deal in the Fort Resolution post journals from the 1890s:

July 8th 1891: "Dzinto and band arrived today."⁵¹⁷

November 25th 1892: "Dzinto and Paul who are working on this side of the Lake arrived but brought little or no furs."⁵¹⁸

December 26th 1892: "Dzinto, Black Head and all the other Indians arrived last Saturday but brought little furs having probably been trading what little the [*sic*] had with Marten, Castore & some of the Indians from the North Side of the Lake also arrived bringing a few furs."⁵¹⁹

April 12th 1893: "two Indians arrived from Beniahs & Dzinto's camp with a little meat and fur supplies for the Muskox hunt."⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁶ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 179.

⁵¹⁷ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B.181/a/19. fol. 3b.

⁵¹⁸ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B.181/a/19. fol. 25.

⁵¹⁹ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B.181/a/19. fol. 25.

⁵²⁰ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B.181/a/19. fol. 27.

July 7th 1893: “Dzinto & party arrived with their, they gave us all their hunts.”⁵²¹

February 27th 1894: “A Band of Indians from Dzinto arrived with some meat so there is no danger to starve I think.”⁵²²

October 7th 1894: “Dzintoo & party arrived this evening late with meat.”⁵²³

April 24th 1895: “Rev. Pere Dupire arrived to-day with a party of Dzintoo Indians . . . brought a little meat & fur.”⁵²⁴

Dzinto (also called Zinto, 'Zinto, Dzintu, Dzintoo, and Tzin-tu) is described as a camp site, a band of Indians, and an individual. The camp site is presumably the same one that Pike encountered near Camsell Lake.⁵²⁵ The band (the "Dzintoo Indians") then would logically be those individuals who came from this site and who were subject to Dzinto, the individual.⁵²⁶ "Dzinto and Band," as recorded throughout the Fort Resolution post journals of the 1890s, were seen transporting meat and furs from north, south, and east of Great Slave Lake just as they had in the previous decade.⁵²⁷

Chief Snuff of the Yellowknives is recorded at Fort Resolution in the fort journals a number of times during this period (1890 – 1899).⁵²⁸ Two references to Snuff with his “party” have been provided below. In the second, written on October 4th 1894, it was recorded that Chief Snuff carried well over 150 pounds of meat into the fort:

June 14th 1894: “Two Indians arrived did not bring their fur but coming for a little Tea & Tobacco for Little Baptiste & Snuff’s party.”⁵²⁹

⁵²¹ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/19. fol. 30.

⁵²² Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/19. fol. 32b.

⁵²³ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/19. fol. 39.

⁵²⁴ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/19. fol. 46.

⁵²⁵ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 118

⁵²⁶ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/19. fol. 46.

⁵²⁷ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/19. fol. 3b.

⁵²⁸ Macrae, J. A. (1900). Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8. In *Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1900*. Part 1, p. xlv.

⁵²⁹ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/19. fol. 36b.

October 4th 1894: “Settled Old Snuff party. they had 150 lbs Meat
32 lbs Grease & 18 lbs Pounded meat & 4 tongues.”⁵³⁰

Klett, on September 24th 1894, again noted Yellowknives coming into Fort Resolution, but this time he had not made reference to them in conjunction with their Head Man or Chief:

A party of Yellow Knives Indians arrived today with Meat &
Grease. Had a rather strong interview with old Pierre Beaulieu.⁵³¹

Klett recorded the names of individuals who came to trade at the fort. However, due to insufficient information, it is impossible to determine *who exactly* these individuals were. It is assumed that there were many more examples of both Chipewyans and Copper/ Yellowknife Indians frequenting Fort Resolution and bearing meat and fur from the Barren Lands and various other locations around Great Slave Lake. Regardless, Klett named several individuals, in his journal, although those that are easily identifiable are largely Chiefs and Head Men.

Below is an example pertaining to Louison Dos Noire, also known as Louison Ahthay (Head Man for the Chipewyans in the 1900 Treaty 8 Adhesion at Fort Resolution) and Lousian Dosinare (as described above), visiting Fort Resolution from Buffalo Lake in the Buffalo River water system (south of Great Slave Lake) on July 2nd 1891⁵³²:

The Buffaloe [*sic*] Lake Indians arrived today. Ajerricon & Louison
Dos Noire Parties bringing good hunts. Two or three Fort Smith
Indians arrived with them from the same place.⁵³³

1900–1909

Treaty 8 was “signed” in 1899 by Indians of the present-day Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. During the Treaty party's travels from Edmonton to Lesser Slave Lake, Fort Chipewyan, Fond du Lac, and finally Smith

⁵³⁰ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/19. fol. 39.

⁵³¹ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/19. fol. 38.

⁵³² Macrae, J. A. (1900). Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8. In *Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1900*. Part 1, p. xlv; Fumoleau, R. (2004). *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press. pp. 99, & 104-105.

⁵³³ Klett, J. (1891 - 1895). *Fort Resolution Post Journals, 1891 - 1895*. HBCA 1M1020, B181/a/19. fol. 3b.

Landing/Fort Smith, the Slaves of Upper Hay River persuaded Laird, Ross, and McKenna that they should also be given Treaty.⁵³⁴ In 1900 "[t]he Dogrib, Yellowknife, Slavey and Chipewyan bands, inhabiting the shores of the Great Slave Lake, met with the Treaty party at Fort Resolution" to sign the 1900 Treaty 8 Adhesion.⁵³⁵

Three individuals "made their mark" for the "Dog Ribs": Dried Geese (as Chief), Way-mi-ah (as Head Man), and Crap-wa-tee (as Head Man).⁵³⁶ For the "Slaves of Hay River," Sunrise and Lamelise "signed", both as Head Men.⁵³⁷ Snuff, Tzin-tu, and Ate-ee-zen "signed" for the "Yellow Knives." Despite Pike's claim that Tzin-tu is "Chief of the Yellow Knives," both he and Ate-ee-zen (both of whom were seen often in Fort Resolution from 1880 to 1899) signed as Head Men, while Snuff signed as Chief.⁵³⁸ For the Chipewyans, Louison Ahthay (or, as we have established, Dosnoir) signed as Chief, while Oliver Ajjericon, Vital Lamoëlle, and Paulette Chandelle all signed as Head Men.⁵³⁹

In 1971 June Helm conducted interviews among Dogrib elders. One such interviewee gave an account of the signing of the Treaty 8 Adhesion at Fort Resolution. In Joseph (Susie) Abel's narration of the events, he indicated that the people at Fort Resolution had been starving and signed the treaty for the food and money involved in the transaction. However, they did so only after repeatedly questioning whether Indian Affairs or the Government of Canada would restrict their hunting rights:

Before Treaty, we used to come [to Resolution] every summer to sell our furs, so that's the place everybody joins together . . . After

⁵³⁴ Fumoleau, R. (2004). *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press. pp. 72, 77, 80, 84, & 93-94.

⁵³⁵ Fumoleau, R. (2004). *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press. p. 94.

⁵³⁶ Macrae, J. A. (1900). Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8. In *Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1900*. Part 1, p. xlv.

⁵³⁷ Macrae, J. A. (1900). Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8. In *Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1900*. Part 1, p. xlv.

⁵³⁸ Pike, W. (1967). *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. New York, NY: Arno Press. (Original work published 1892). p. 86; Macrae, J. A. (1900). Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8. In *Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1900*. Part 1, p. xlv.

⁵³⁹ Macrae, J. A. (1900). Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8. In *Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1900*. Part 1, p. xlv; Fumoleau, R. (2004). *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press. pp. 99, & 104-105.

we got into Resolution, after we sold our fur, there were lots of people. There wasn't much to eat—no fish or game—so some people left to go back where they could find something to eat. We stayed at the fort. We couldn't move back to the bush because my mother was really sick. Finally she died. After she died, we heard that they were going to pass treaty, that the agent would come. Dad says, "We may as well eat." So we started to hunt for ducks, moose, something to eat.

A man came in paddling a birchbark canoe. He had happened to see the agent coming with a boat. [The reference is to the person termed "Commissioner," J.A. Macrae, in the Treaty records.] The man says, "He will be here any time now. Maybe in one or two nights." Then another guy came in. He said that the agent's boat was coming closer, but travelling awful slow. They had no engines, just rowing. Across from Resolution Fort is the Mission Island, and there is a little sny between the island and the mainland. The man says, "They are in the channel right now."

Finally, the agent shows up. They came up the sny, crossing the bay. We had never seen a scow before. It was just like a little rocky island, it was so big. And when he gets closer, we see a red cloth. We know now that it was a flag. They are getting closer, closer. Now we see the big oars, splashing water once in awhile, one oar for one man . . . The sun was just setting. After sundown they landed.

The agent walked up to meet us. He says, "I'm pleased to see all this bunch. It is late in the season. I was afraid everyone had left for the bush. On the Queen's [Queen Victoria] word, I have come with money. I'm going to issue the money to all the Indians. I am pleased that lots of people are still here." And one of the Indian leaders (*denerak'awo*) told the agent: "You are glad to meet us. But everyone is pretty near starving. We were supposed to leave the fort. But we heard you were coming, so we've been waiting without food." The agent said, "I haven't got much food, but I brought some flour and bacon. I can give you some flour and bacon for the kids and old people. It is late now, so we won't talk more. But I will give you 700 pounds of flour and 300 pounds of bacon. You can divide it among yourselves."

So the Indians took the flour. One of the leaders gave it all out to the people. They opened the sack and gave a cup to every person. In those days we didn't have much dishes. So some guys take their shirts out and they took the flour in their shirts. But some, even in their camp, had nothing to put the flour in. Some women, in those days they wore aprons, they picked up their aprons to put the flour in. Someone cut the bacon. They threw it in the apron on top of the flour. When they had given out all of the flour and bacon, everyone was so happy, they were frying bacon and cooking bannock. You could hardly see all night from the smoke of the frying bacon.

The agent said, "Tomorrow I am going to put up a tent. We will have a meeting before I give money. Everyone, old and young, has got to come and hear what is said . . .

The next day they came back to the tent for treaty. When they had all gathered. Drygeese spoke to the agent: "Don't hide anything that I don't hear. Maybe later on you are going to stop us from hunting or trapping or chopping trees or something. So tell me the truth. I want to know before we take treaty." The agent says, " I do what I'm told—to give you fellows money. There will be no trouble for nobody. We won't stop anything.

Drygeese: "If that's the way it is, I want to tell you something. [As you, the agents, have said:] As long as the world don't change, the sun don't change, the river don't change, we will like to have peace—if it is that way, we will take the money and I want you [agent] to sign that that's the way it's going to be."

The Agent says, "OK." So he signs the paper. They gave us the money now . . .

So they gave us treaty.⁵⁴⁰

With the signing of the Treaty 8 Adhesion in July 1900, the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) assumed control of the administration of the Indians trading at Fort Resolution's.

⁵⁴⁰ Abel, J. (1971). The Signing of Treaty No. 8 at Fort Resolution in 1900, From the account in Dogrib by Joseph (Susie) Abel of Dettah, taped on July 5, 1971, Rae; translated by Vital Thomas and entered into field notes of July 6, 1971. In J. Helm (Ed.), *The People of Denendeh*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press. pp. 155-159.

Shortly after this, the Federal government introduced conservation measures through the development and implementation of hunting regulations. This is described in greater detail later on in the present chapter. Despite the new regulations, the DIA records reflect similar patterns of territorial use of the region to those recorded in the HBC journals. Both the DIA and HBC sources reference Chipewyans and Yellowknife/Copper Indians hunting on the Barren Lands and exploiting its resources.

The Dogribs are not mentioned in the above reference because, as noted earlier, prior to 1881 there was no written record of Dogrib Indians trading at Fort Resolution and little reference post-1900 except for government paylists associated with the distribution of treaty annuity payments. The 1881 census conducted by the HBC for the Athabasca District, entitled *Census of the Population of the District of Athabaska 1881* is the first account of Dogribs south of Great Slave Lake.⁵⁴¹ Nevertheless, in July 1899, three Dogrib "Chiefs" signed the Treaty 8 Adhesion.⁵⁴²

J.A. Macrae, the Commissioner for Treaty No. 8, reported that the Caribou Eaters were accepted into Treaty:

Some caribooeaters, belonging to the country **east of Smith's Landing on Great Slave River**, also came into treaty, but they were incorporated with the Chipewyan band of Smith's Landing, being allied thereto.⁵⁴³

In 1909, H.A. Conroy, the Department of Indian Affairs Inspector for Treaty 8, wrote:

. . . two hundred miles north of Fort Smith is Fort Resolution, on the south side of Great Slave lake. Here there are three bands of Indians—Chipewyans, Dogribs and Yellowknives. **The**

⁵⁴¹ Macfarlane, R., and E. E. (1881). *Census of the Population of the District of Athabaska*. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: General Housekeeping Records and Correspondence Regarding Ile-a-la-Crosse Treaty (Maps and Charts), RG 10, Black Series, Volume 4006, File no. 241209-1, Microfilm reel C-10171, MIKAN no. 2059135. pp. 43 - 44.

⁵⁴² Fumoleau, R. (2004). *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press. pp. 122-123.

⁵⁴³ Macrae, J. A. (1900). Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8. In *Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30, 1900*. Part 1, p. xl.

Chipewyans, the smallest band, reside on the south side of Great Slave lake, and are also in the buffalo country, where they hunt. They live chiefly on fish. The Yellowknives come from Yellowknife river, a country that I know very little about, but, from the information that I have received from themselves, the country is very rocky and barren. They are also in the caribou district, and kill a large number of these animals every year. These people are simple in their habits and are good hunters. They have a few poor shacks, and, as they are nomadic, do not reside in one place very long.⁵⁴⁴

Plate 40: 1903: Unidentified trader and trappers in front of the Hislop and Nagle Company store, Fort Resolution⁵⁴⁵



Also of interest is Conroy's classification of the Copper Indians as "nomadic." The patterns of movement of the Copper Indians are more accurately described as "seasonal rounds" within a territorial range. As Javenpra and Brumbach note:

⁵⁴⁴ Conroy, H. A. (1909). Supplementary Report of Inspector for Treaty No. 8, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 19 February 1909. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1909*. Dominion of Canada. Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee. Part 1, p. 201.

⁵⁴⁵ Glenbow Museum Archives (1903). Unidentified trader and trappers in front of Hislop & Nagle Company store, Fort Resolution (Image PA-3760-34). Retrieved October 20, 2012, from ww2.glenbow.org/search/archivesPhotosResults.aspx.

A man's (and by extension, his family's) network of **winter hunting** areas and encampments were not randomly distributed, but rather comprised a "chain" of loosely contiguous areas within the larger *kesyehot'ine* mosaic of hunting areas. A family gained usufructory access to a particular chain by the socialization experience of its hunters, and it moved around or across the chain of hunting areas primarily by activating ties of *silot'ine* [bilateral kindred].⁵⁴⁶

Later that same year, Conroy reported the following regarding the Indians who traded at Fort Smith:

Caribou was plentiful and they had quite a quantity of dried meat left for **summer** and **fall** use. Part of this band roam **on the edge of the Barren land** and seldom come in together except to barter their fur.⁵⁴⁷

1910–1919

In 1912, A.J. Bell, the Fort Smith Indian Agent, who was now in charge of the administration of Fort Resolution, observed the fundamental connection between the caribou hunt and the well-being of the Great Slave Lake Indians:

The caribou hunt is a failure. This is a serious matter for these Indians, as they in a measure depend upon these animals for their winter's food.⁵⁴⁸

However, in 1913, he proclaimed:

Cariboo were fairly plentiful and moose were killed in large numbers in **the early part of the winter**. These conditions serve to

⁵⁴⁶ Jarvenpa, R., & Brumbach, H. J. (1988). Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan. *American Anthropologist* 90(3), pp. 598-618. p. 607.

⁵⁴⁷ Conroy, H. A. (1910). Report of Inspector for Treaty No. 8, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 30 December 1909. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1910*, Dominion of Canada. Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee, 1910. Part 1, p. 187.

⁵⁴⁸ Bell, A. J. (1912). Report of Indian Agent: Northwest Territories, Fort Smith. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1912*. Ottawa, ON: C.H. Parmelee, Part 1, p. 130.

make this a most prosperous year for the Indians at Smith [Landing] and Fort Smith.⁵⁴⁹

In the same year, H. A. Conroy, the Inspector for Treaty No. 8, expressed his frustration with the Chipewyan preference for hunting and trapping over wage labour:

This is a most difficult country to get even the simplest manual labour done in. The Indian, who is a trapper and hunter, does not work at ordinary labour, as he can make more money in a way that he prefers by the latter than the former way.⁵⁵⁰

Conroy noted in 1916:

Caribou had been plentiful during the **winter**, and, in consequence, the Indians did not undergo any scarcity of food . . .

The Chipewyans and Yellowknives had experienced no destitution during the **winter**, but one section of the Dogrib band had lived in some degree of want, until word had been sent in to the police at Resolution and provisions were dispatched.⁵⁵¹

More detailed information regarding the use of both the caribou and the Barren Lands during this period can be found in Charles Camsell's 1916 report entitled *An Exploration of the Tazin and Taltson Rivers North West Territories*. Although Camsell had little understanding of seasonal rounds, or of hunting and fishing as a lifestyle, it is useful to quote relevant observations from his report. Camsell provided a sense of the seasonality of the subsistence activities around Great Slave Lake and the great distances the Chipewyans and Dogribs would travel to procure game:

Both the Chipewyans and Dogribs live a roving life, moving from place to place throughout the year, according to the migration of the game. They have no permanent dwellings and make no attempt to

⁵⁴⁹ Bell, A. J. (1913). Report of Indian Agent: Northwest Territories, Fort Smith. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1913*. Ottawa, ON: C.H. Parmelee, Part 1, p. 126.

⁵⁵⁰ Conroy, H. A. (1913). Report of Inspector Conroy. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1913*. Ottawa, ON: C. H. Parmelee. Part 1, p. 391.

⁵⁵¹ Conroy, H. A. (1916). Report of Henry A. Conroy, Inspector for Treaty No. 8. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1916*. Ottawa, ON: J. de L. Taché. Part 2, p. 80.

cultivate the soil. They obtain a precarious living by hunting and fishing, and supply themselves with clothing, guns, ammunition, and other necessities by the sale of their furs. Both tribes have made treaties with the government and visit the trading posts usually in June or July for the purpose of receiving the government's annual grant of money. After this they return to their hunting grounds and towards the end of the summer most of them congregate on the borders of the barren land to hunt caribou.⁵⁵²

The Yellowknives were often grouped together with the Chipewyans. In the 1914 Department of Indian Affairs Annual Report, A.J. Bell noted that the territory of the Yellowknife Indians included regions north of the lake:

The Yellowknives inhabit the north shore of Great Slave Lake to the east of Yellowknife river, along that river and the Lockhart, also upon the southeast shore of Slave lake.⁵⁵³

And, in 1916, H.J. Bury noted the "Yellow-knife Band" hunting in the region:

[I]n regard to the musk-oxen . . . [t]he Indians of the Yellow-knife Band hunt these animals in the vicinity of the Artillery Lakes.⁵⁵⁴

In 1913, the Roman Catholic Mission school was constructed at Fort Resolution. Forty-one students were enrolled, with an average attendance of thirty-five.⁵⁵⁵

At Resolution, the Roman Catholic Mission erected a new school building, which has only been occupied a year . . . The building itself is on high ground; and the hundred yards between it and the lake have been cleared so that the school is the most prominent

⁵⁵² Camsell, C. (1916). *An Exploration of the Tazin and Taltson Rivers North West Territories*. Canada, Department of Mines: Geological Survey, Memoir 84, No. 69, Geological Series. Ottawa, ON: Government Printing Bureau. p. 23.

⁵⁵³ Bell, A. J. (1914). Report of A. J. Bell, Indian Agent for Fort Smith Agency, Treaty No. 8, Northwest Territories. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1914*. Ottawa: J. de L. Tache. Part 2, p. 54.

⁵⁵⁴ Bury, H. J. (1916). Memo to Mr. Scott, Re: amendments to the North West Territories Game Act, Dec. 5. 1916. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916-1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1. p. 3.

⁵⁵⁵ Department of Indian Affairs. (1913). Statement of Indian Boarding Schools in the Dominion for the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 1913. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1913*. Ottawa, ON: C. H. Parmelee. Part 1, pp. 434 - 435.

landmark at Resolution.⁵⁵⁶

1920–1929

Department of Indian Affairs records contain regular references to the Chipewyans, Copper Indians, and Dogribs hunting on the Barren Lands from 1920 to 1929 for muskox, caribou, moose, and fur-bearing animals such as the arctic fox. These accounts are significant in that they provide information regarding the Chipewyans' continued hunting in the Barren Lands. Although by the early 1900s the numbers of residents at the forts began to increase, and the native peoples of Great Slave Lake continued to be described as dependent upon hunting. Deputy Superintendent General Duncan C. Scott wrote in 1920:

These Indians are solely dependent upon fishing and hunting. In view of their nomadic mode of life it is difficult to induce them to take up agricultural pursuits, and they do no farming or gardening, with the exception of a few living in the vicinity of the forts, who raise some potatoes.⁵⁵⁷

There continued to be regular references to Fort Resolution Indians hunting on the Barren Lands in the Department of Indian Affairs correspondence. In October 1927, Fred Lind at Artillery Lake signed a sworn statement regarding the wanton "slaughter" of caribou by Indians "each fall"⁵⁵⁸:

. . . cariboo [*sic*] are wantonly slaughtered, **each fall, in the district surrounding Artillery Lake** [in the Barren Lands], by Indians who visit Resolution at treaty time.⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁶ Conroy, H. A. (1913). Report of Inspector Conroy. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1913*. Ottawa, ON: C. H. Parmelee. Part 1, pp. 387-388.

⁵⁵⁷ Scott, D. C. (1900). Summary of Indian Affairs in the Various Provinces Based on the Report of the Department's Agents and the Inspectors for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1920. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1920*. Ottawa, ON: Thomas Mulvey. p. 28.

⁵⁵⁸ Lind, F. (1927). Copy LV, Letter to Ottawa, Canada, 11th October, 1927, Sgd. Fred Lind. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1927 - 1930, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 2.

⁵⁵⁹ Lind, F. (1927). Copy LV, Letter to Ottawa, Canada, 11th October, 1927, Sgd. Fred Lind. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1927 - 1930, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 2.

Lind failed to comprehend the sheer number of caribou required to feed, house, and clothe a family in a given year. A.C. McCaskil, a trapper who had made his headquarters at Hinde Lake, wrote in a report to Ottawa in June 1927:

During the **fall of 1926 the caribou migrated** south through Dubawnt lake District as far as Reindeer Lake thence swung north west passing Selwyn and Wholdaia Lakes . . . The Indian tribes numbering approximately 200, slaughtered the caribou in large numbers . . . This tribe of Indians are known as the Chipewyan and take treaty at Fond du Lac, and summer at Black Lake.⁵⁶⁰

In 1930 Constable R.C. Gray, the officer commanding the RCMP of the Great Slave Lake sub-district at Fort Smith, stated:

I have the honour to report that on July 16th, 1930, I went to an Indian Camp . . . in this camp were about ten families of **Chipewyan and Dogrib Indians** . . . The chiefs of the Band were away at the time being still away at Resolution for Treaty. So we finally agreed to wait until they arrived and see what they had to say . . . unfortunately when they arrived I was just leaving on a patrol and when I returned they had **moved up to Artillery Lake**.⁵⁶¹

Constable Gray's report reveals three key facts: first, we know that in 1930 Chipewyans who took treaty at Resolution had encampments around Fort Smith; second, we know that these people did not stay in these encampments, just as they did not permanently live at Fort Resolution, despite taking treaty there; and finally, we know that the Chipewyans who took their treaty at Resolution also continued to hunt around Artillery Lake to the north and east of Great Slave Lake within the watershed that would be impacted by the Gahcho Kué mine.

At the turn of the twentieth century, an increasing number of white trappers pushed into the

⁵⁶⁰ McCaskil, A. C. (1927). Report on the Caribou furnished by A. C. McCaskil, trapper, who has made his headquarters at Hinde Lake for the past ten years, June 1927. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1.

⁵⁶¹ Gray, R. C. (1930). Re: Game Returns, Indians, August 2nd, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

Great Slave Lake area, In the process they negatively impacted the ecosystem. In January 1923, D.N. Murdoff of the Northern Trading Co. in Fort Resolution wrote to O.S. Finnie, Commissioner of the NWT, explaining:

Last year the influx of trappers was so great that, in some sections, there is a very grave danger that the animals will become extinct . . . Between Resolution and Smith we have no less than fifty-five white trappers (a trapper for every three miles) so you can get some idea how devoid of game this district will be after this winter. Heretofore this territory has been supporting ten to fifteen families from year to year, but **this winter they have all been forced to abandon their homes and seek other trapping grounds.**⁵⁶²

This quotation indicates that the movement of the natives living between Fort Resolution and Fort Smith, most likely the Chipewyans, was not only dictated by caribou movements or the animals they trapped, but was, at times, limited by competition with the white trappers. This competition forced some families away from their traditional hunting and trapping grounds. In August of the same year, two groups of Chipewyans and Copper Indians filed a complaint with the Indian Agent at Fort Resolution regarding white trappers' destruction of muskrat lodges and their wanton killing of beavers. The Chipewyans and Copper Indians demanded that a type of game reserve be set aside for their use:

The chief complaint of these two bands [Chipewyan and Copper Indians], was the white trapper, who, they claim, destroy the rat houses in trapping, also killing beavers without leaving some for the maintenance of the fur. The districts which the Indians claim should be protected, are: The mouth of the Slave River, Rocher river (Taltson), Lockart river [flows from Fort Reliance northward toward Artillery Lake in the Barren Lands], and extreme end of the Lake.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶² Murdoff, D. N. (1923). The Northern Trading Co., LTD. Letter to O. S. Finnie, (Sgd) D. N. Murdoff, Asst. Gen. Mngr., Jan. 26th, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1. p. 1.

⁵⁶³ Bourget, C. (1923). Re: Payment of Annuities at Resolution, Rae, Hay River and Providence, To the Assistant Deputy and Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, (Sgd.) C. Bourget, M. D., August the 6th, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1.

Further, in regards to the white wolf's highly sought-after trade:

The Indians claim that the wolfers are working on their main road to the hunting grounds of the barren lands.⁵⁶⁴

In 1927, the presence of white trappers in the Barren Lands was noted by Baptiste Nataway of Smith Landing, which corresponded with the Chipewyan and Copper Indian fears:

[i]n September whilst in the **Barren Lands** hunting I came across a whiteman's tent with no one in it.⁵⁶⁵

Furthermore, a report from the Department of Indian Affairs corroborated this:

I have the honour to report that upon word being received that Indians had found the remains of a white trapper near the Barren lands, you instructed me to patrol to that district and investigate.⁵⁶⁶

The incident of the Indians finding the white trapper indicates that during the 1920s Chipewyans living near, and trading at, Fort Resolution and Fort Smith were regularly visiting the Barren Lands to hunt caribou. Their reliance upon the waterways feeding into the Barren Lands for the trapping of beaver and marten and the hunting of caribou is illustrated by their desire to remove the white trappers from the Barren Lands. In the next section we describe how government agents created and enforced laws, regulations, and policies with the goal of limiting the Great Slave Lake Indians' use of the Barren Lands.

1920–1939: Forcing First Nations off the Land to Make Way for Industry

This report has documented the continuous presence of the Chipewyans and Copper Indians

⁵⁶⁴ Bourget, C. (1923). Re: Payment of Annuities at Resolution, Rae, Hay River and Providence, To the Assistant Deputy and Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, (Sgd.) C. Bourget, M. D., August the 6th, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1.

⁵⁶⁵ Nataway, B., as cited in Peterson, E. (1927). Statements taken in connection with W. Lanners, Trapper, Found dead, Signed Even Peterson, Dec. 2nd, 1927. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1927 - 1930, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 2. p. 1.

⁵⁶⁶ Walters, L. M. L. (1927). Letter to The Officer Commanding Great Slave Lake SubDistrict, Fort Smith, N.W.T., Re: Walter Lanners-Trapper, Found dead., Signed L.M. Lloyd Walters, Corpl., December 21st, 1927. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1927 - 1930, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 2. p. 1.

on the Barren Lands for as long as there has been a recorded history of the region. However, as with all other indigenous groups in Canada, the Chipewyans and Copper Indians were subject to policies, laws, and regulations designed to give the Canadian government far-reaching control over the indigenous peoples' lives, lands, and livelihoods.

In the 1920s the Department of Indian Affairs and the Department of the Interior began to restrict hunting and trapping for both white and native hunters in the Great Slave Lake region. These limitations were often justified as necessary for conservation purposes. One example is the establishment of the Game Sanctuary in the Barren Lands in 1927 for the protection of the muskox population. Indian Affairs, the Department of the Interior, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police all began to enact tougher regulations, which often served to restrict the movement of indigenous peoples. Nonetheless, despite the Canadian Government's attempts to regulate their way of life, Chipewyans continued to make annual trips to the Barren Lands to hunt caribou and other animals.

Ironically, much of the Government's initial hysteria over the supposed dwindling populations of game was fed by the incursion of white trappers into the region, not the misuse of natural resources by indigenous peoples. In fact, in the 1920s, Chipewyan (as discussed earlier) and other native hunters were increasingly concerned about the presence of white trappers on the Barren Lands. They often complained to Indian Agents and the RCMP, and suggested that game preserves be set up for their exclusive use. Some RCMP officers agreed. G.F. Fletcher wrote on November 21st 1922,

It would appear that now is the time to reserve these lands for Indian Trapping before the situation gets too acute. I would say for instance that the country along the north shore of the Great Slave Lake as far North as Great Bear Lake should be reserved entirely for Indians, this country at present supports the largest band of Indians, in the north. The trouble caused by white trappers is not only that they take up trap lines used for ages by Indians, but also from their systematic way of trapping with several cabins and

numerous traps and long traplines they quickly denude the country of fur.⁵⁶⁷

The DIA and its agents, in fact, agreed with the RCMP. They were particularly worried that if the local indigenous populations were unable to feed themselves, the Canadian Government would have to provide welfare for Indians. In 1923, D.N. Murdoff, the Assistant General Manager of The Northern Trading Company in Fort Resolution, noted that:

Between Resolution and Smith we have no less than fifty-five white trappers (a trapper for every three miles) so you can get some idea how devoid of game this district will be after this **winter** . . .⁵⁶⁸

Further, due to this influx of white trappers:

The inevitable outcome of this influx will be that the country will soon be trapped out, the Indian destitute, with no means of supporting himself. The Government will be compelled to feed and cloth [*sic*] the whole population. There will be no alternative that we can see as, unlike other districts, there is no occupation that the Indian can turn to make a living . . .⁵⁶⁹

Murdoff then recommended:

I am sure you will see the advisability of making some restrictions to exclude these trappers before more damage has been done, leaving the Indian a self supporting people . . .⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁷ Fletcher, G. F. (1922). Letter to The Officer Commanding 'G' Division, from G. F. Fletcher, Inspector, Commanding Great Slave Lake subdistrict, 21-11-22. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1.

⁵⁶⁸ Murdoff, D. N. (1923). The Northern Trading Co., LTD. Letter to O. S. Finnie, (Sgd) D. N. Murdoff, Asst. Gen. Mngr., Jan. 26th, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1. p. 1.

⁵⁶⁹ Murdoff, D. N. (1923). The Northern Trading Co., LTD. Letter to O. S. Finnie, (Sgd) D. N. Murdoff, Asst. Gen. Mngr., Jan. 26th, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1. pp. 1-2.

⁵⁷⁰ Murdoff, D. N. (1923). The Northern Trading Co., LTD. Letter to O. S. Finnie, (Sgd) D. N. Murdoff, Asst. Gen. Mngr., Jan. 26th, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1. p. 2.

Two months later, Conroy concurred with Murdoff's recommendation in a Memorandum to Duncan Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs:

In order to maintain them as a self-supporting people, it is necessary to preserve their means of gaining a livelihood, and therefore the fur bearing animals must be rigourously [*sic*] protected. These animals are even now pretty scarce. If aliens are allowed to hunt them it will be just so much worse for the inhabitants of the country, and eventually for the Department, which will be called upon to support them.⁵⁷¹

In the early 1920s, conservation measures were justified by an appeal for the preservation of fur-bearing animal populations across the territory. Despite the many dissident voices that stated that this sort of action would eventually force the Canadian Government to support the north's indigenous population, the regulations were enacted.

Although the Indian Agents and RCMP officers in the region were concerned about the outsiders trapping beaver and muskrat, they were equally concerned that the Great Slave Lake Indians were killing too many caribou. For example, in September 1923, O.S. Finnie, Director of the Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch of the Department of the Interior, wrote to Duncan Campbell Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs, quoting Sergeant S.C. Clay of the RCMP:

From enquiries made it as ascertained that natives from Fort Ray [*sic*], Fort Good Hope, and Norman, **congregate here in the Fall** of most years. Hundreds of caribou are indiscriminately slaughtered annually in this portion of the Territory, very little of the meat is used, the tongues and marrow from bones being mostly all that is used, the balance of the animal allowed to remain on the ground.⁵⁷²

⁵⁷¹ Conroy, H. A. (1923). Memorandum: Mr. Scott, March 1, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1.

⁵⁷² Finnie, O. S. (1923). Letter from O. S. Finnie to the Deputy Superintendent General, Department of Indian Affairs, dated September, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Law (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6, Part 1. p. 1.

However, Finnie's assertion that the caribou were "indiscriminately slaughtered" exhibits his lack of knowledge about the Chipewyan and Copper Indian subsistence rounds. As mentioned earlier, to clothe each adult, approximately eight to ten hides were needed in **winter** (plus an additional five per tent).⁵⁷³ It was necessary to kill a large number of caribou just to feed, clothe, and house (in hide tents) a Chipewyan family. Though meat may have been left behind, the skins were used to construct tents and make clothing. Additionally, as Peter Fidler described much earlier in 1791:

. . . the Indians they all in general from the earliest infancy used to go without for 2 or 3 days frequently & some times nearly double that time; as when they have any thing they can never rest till all is consumed, it is always with them either a feast or a famine.⁵⁷⁴

Regardless, in October 1923, the local Supervisor of Indian Timber Lands, H.F. Bury, wrote that Finnie's report was "somewhat exaggerated":

It is true that owing to the peculiar migratory habits of the barren ground caribou, the Indians and Eskimo occasionally meet with large herds of which they kill as many as they can at the time, but it must be remembered that often for weeks and even months they do not see any caribou and consequently when they meet with a good herd they are inclined to kill as many as possible when they have the opportunity, so as to provide against a future shortage of meat.⁵⁷⁵

Nonetheless, Bury and the Indians were a minority voice—one that was often ignored. Duncan Campbell Scott wrote a memo to all Indian Agents in 1923:

⁵⁷³ Hearne, S. (1795). *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell. pp. 50, 196, & 322 - 323.

⁵⁷⁴ Fidler, P. (1934). Journal of Journey with the Chepawyans or Northern Indians, to the Slave River, & to the East & West of the Slave River, in 1791 & 2, by Peter Fidler. In J. B. Tyrrell (Ed.), *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*. pp. 493 - 556. Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society. p. 499.

⁵⁷⁵ Bury, H. J. (1923). Memo to Mr. McLean: Reported wanton destruction of caribou by natives (Eskimo & Indians) in North West Territories, from H. J. Bury, Supervisor Indian Timber Lands. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Law (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6, Part 1.

At the time of the year when the northern Indian tribes such as the Slaves, Dogribs, Yellowknives, Chipewyan, Hare, Loucheux and Mountain congregate at the posts for treaty and the Delta Eskimo arrive at Arctic Red River, McPherson, Aklavick, and Herschell Island, interpreters should be instructed to point out to these natives the folly of killing more caribou than they need, and to urge them when they meet with herds whilst hunting, to merely kill a sufficient number for their immediate needs and to positively discontinue the practice of leaving dead carcasses to rot on the ground.⁵⁷⁶

In April 1924, O.S. Finnie circulated a letter addressed to all “Indian People” in the north in which he argued that they should kill less indiscriminately or they and their children would suffer:

If the Indian kills many more caribou each year than he needs for clothing and bedskins, after a while there will be only a few left, and the Indians will be cold, and their children will be cold also.⁵⁷⁷

By 1929, both the Department of Indian Affairs and the Department of the Interior were trying to actively regulate all hunting and fishing around the Great Slave Lake. New regulations came into effect on July 1st 1929:

Under Section 7 of the Regulations for the Protection of Game in the North West Territories, every Indian, Eskimo and Half-breed, who hunts and traps in those Territories, is required to make a statement on or after the 30th June in each year giving the number and kinds of game killed by him during the preceding year.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁶ Scott, D. C. (1923). Circular Letter: Slaughter of caribou by natives of N.W.T., Oct. 11th, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1.

⁵⁷⁷ Finnie, O. S. (1924). A letter from the Government to the Indian People, 1st April, 1924. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1.

⁵⁷⁸ Finnie, O. S. (1930). Letter to Dr. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs, Signed O. S. Finnie, 22nd October, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

Hunting and trapping was to be pursued “in season,” and local traditions were overlooked or ignored. A letter from District Agent J.A. McDougall to Regional Director O.S. Finnie, dated March 1930, sums up the thinking of Indian Affairs during this period:

Mr. Peter Baker has been travelling through the district east of Fort Smith over a very extensive area for the past six years. He called at this office yesterday to bring to my attention the fact that in his opinion the Indians and White trappers near the Barrens are killing off a very large number of caribou each year . . .

The Indians do not fish for dog feed but depend on caribou for this purpose as well as for their own needs.

He suggests that Indians be supplied with fish nets by the Government as a means of protecting the caribou, and insisting on the Indians fishing for their dog feed instead of the excessive slaughter of caribou for that purpose. There are a great many lakes throughout the District teeming with fish.⁵⁷⁹

This letter is noteworthy because it illustrates just how the opinion of one white trapper was taken seriously enough to make its way into Indian Affairs' correspondence. Instead of polling local Indians, the Indian Agent argued that the Indians should fish for dog food rather than use caribou as they had done for generations.

Chipewyans and Dogribs around Fort Smith were not pleased with now having to tell the RCMP how many animals they had trapped or shot in the name of “conservation.” R.C. Gray, a constable at the Fort Reliance RCMP detachment, wrote the following to his superior:

In this camp were about ten families of Chipewyan and Dogrib Indians. I managed to get the Chipewyan to give me the amount of fur caught after a great deal of explaining.

⁵⁷⁹ McDougal, J. A. (1930). Letter to O. S. Finnie, March 17th, 1930, (Sgd) J.A. McDougal. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

The Dogrib Indians were very hostile as far as giving any information as to the amount of fur they had caught and refused to give me the desired information.⁵⁸⁰

This information was withheld and later forgotten, as game would be consumed before the Indians returned to the Fort. As the Director of the Department of the Interior, O.S. Finnie, stated in his October 22nd 1930 letter to Dr. Scott:

We desire to compile statistics of the game killed in the several localities where the natives are to be found, but as the natives often travel hundreds of miles to trade their furs it is apparent that the traders' returns do not give us the required information.⁵⁸¹

These regulations impacted the Indians of Fort Resolution as they limited what and when they were able to eat. Instead, the Indian Agent at Fort Resolution, C. Bourget, wrote in January 1929 that the Indians at Fort Resolution should be allowed to kill more beaver—10 per family member—because of the low supply of other game meats:

It will help the situation and give our Indians a chance to make a living and exist while in the woods. Because the supply of meat is not very plentiful this year, moose is scarce, caribou plentiful but in the extreme end of the lake, and in the barren lands, so the beaver may come handy when the Indians have not much to eat besides the money brought by the pelt.⁵⁸²

The following year, J.K. Cornwall, an Indian Agent, sent a similar letter:

I would ask you to get such information as your Department has dealing with the request that the Indians may be permitted to kill beaver during the prime season—a privilege that has been denied

⁵⁸⁰ Gray, R. C. (1930). Re: Game Returns, Indians, August 2nd, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

⁵⁸¹ Finnie, O. S. (1930). Letter to Dr. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs, Signed O. S. Finnie, 22nd October, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

⁵⁸² Bourget, C. (1929). Letter, January 10th, 1929. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1927 - 1930, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 2.

them (notwithstanding treaty obligations) by Order-in-Council, possibly inspired by the theoretical idea of conservation . . .

I am a believer in conservation when human happiness and life are not jeopardized.⁵⁸³

In the interim, the Roman Catholic Mission at Fort Resolution began breeding fur-bearing animals during the 1930s to counteract the recent game regulations. The RC Mission sought to supplement the wages of the individuals affected who resided near the fort:

The R.C. Mission at Resolution have started a mink farm and have done rather well so far, they have also built a building at Snowdrift . . . I am also informed that the R. C. Mission intend to establish a permanent Mission at Hay River next spring.⁵⁸⁴

Despite the efforts of the Roman Catholic Mission, in 1932 the fur trade began to falter:

Comparing our records of the [fur] prices realized in the American and European markets, we find that prices today are fully fifty percent lower than they were this time last year.

You will realize that such a reduction is being felt most keenly among trappers everywhere, but particularly among the Indians and Eskimos, who are wholly dependent upon the proceeds of their hunts for their livelihood.⁵⁸⁵

The beaver problem continued on into 1931, as Parker noted:

The beaver question came up again this year and there is much to be said in favour of some special consideration for the Indian. From information I was able to obtain and personal observation, I am

⁵⁸³ Cornwall, J. K. (1930). Letter to Hon. T. G. Murphy, Minister of Interior and Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, October 17, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 1.

⁵⁸⁴ Trundle, C. (1930). Extracts from the Inspection Report of Inspector C. Trundle, dated at Fort Smith, N.W.T. August 20th 1930, September 24th 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

⁵⁸⁵ Fur Trade Commissioner: Hudson's Bay Company. (1931). Letter to the Deputy Minister of the Game & Fisheries Department, February 5, 1931. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

satisfied that beaver can safely be killed by Indians without endangering their numbers. I am very much in favour of opening the beaver season to Indians in the spring of 1931 on a limitation basis, i.e. say fifteen to each hunter. In so far as killing of beaver by white trappers is concerned, I am compelled to oppose it by every possible means.⁵⁸⁶

These regulatory measures, instituted by the Department of the Interior, had unforeseen consequences. In 1930, W.A.M. Truesdell, Indian Agent of the Fort Simpson Indian Agency, noted that the ecosystem had somehow been disturbed by the hunting measures:

[F]ur has been very scarce for several years, the Indians have been in straitened circumstance for some time . . . [However,] without exception each told the same story of the rapid increase of the beaver, the older men being especially vehement in stating that never to their knowledge have the beaver been so plentiful as at present.⁵⁸⁷

During this period, marten were near extinction, beaver (as mentioned previously) were plentiful, and wolves were overabundant. The issues with the marten and beaver were discussed in an RCMP report filed by Corporal J.L. Halliday:

The general opinion voiced by the Natives throughout the camps on the above patrol were that Marten should be closed as they were practically extinct in their entire trapping areas in the above mentioned localities [Simpson Lake and Ga'cha'ke, Tsai Lake] . . . The Natives idea is that Beaver should be opened and Marten closed now, because if left any longer it will be a long time before the Marten are plentiful enough to trap again.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁶ Parker, C. C., as cited in Author Unknown. (1930). Memorandum: Hon. Thomas G. Murphy. October 28, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 4.

⁵⁸⁷ Truesdell W. A. M. (1930). Memorandum, Doctor Scott, December 22nd, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. pp. 1-2.

⁵⁸⁸ Halliday, J. L. (1931). RCMP Report on Mackenzie Sub-District, RE/- MARTEN. (Depletion) Williw Lake, Ga'cha'ke, Tsai Lake & District, N.W.T., 11th March, 1931. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

In 1931 it was reported that the Hay River area was overpopulated with wolves. Without permission from the Department of the Interior the wolves could not be killed. They were threatening the town of Hay River, its inhabitant's traplines, and the animals in the vicinity (and thus the ability of the inhabitants to hunt them). C. Bourget, the Indian Agent of the Fort Resolution Indian Agency, noted:

I beg to inform the Department that we just received a report from Hay River to the effect that the district is infested with timber wolves this winter and according to rumors there would be bands of wolves numbering as many as thirty five and the whole would comprise nearly two hundred wolves, destroying the trap lines and running the moose away from the country . . . One man at Hay river is willing to try and help destroy them if granted permission from the Department of The Interior, and we would respectfully recommend that some action be taken to remove this drawback to the natives hunting in the district.⁵⁸⁹

In 1932, Truesdell, the Indian Agent at Fort Simpson, reported:

As the wolves are becoming increasingly numerous in this part of the Northwest Territories . . . I have received a large number of complaints from Indians . . . [who] have reported that wolves have consistently robbed their trap lines, their snares and even their fish nets, and are driving the moose and caribou from their usual hunting grounds so that it is becoming a serious menace to their means of livelihood.⁵⁹⁰

Later that same year, the beaver situation was dealt with. E.J. Lemaire informed the Minister of the Interior of a recent Order-in-Council that allowed more beavers to be taken during a longer season (see figure 1):

⁵⁸⁹ Bourget, C. (1931). Letter to The Assistant Deputy and Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, November the 23 ed, 1931. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

⁵⁹⁰ Truesdell, W. A. M. (1932). Letter to Dr. Scott, Feb. 17th, 1932. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 1.

[U]nder the authority of Order in Council (P.C. 1461) dated 24th June, 1931, the said close season was extended to the 31st December, 1933, but provision was made, as a relief measure, for the issue of permits to needy natives authorizing them to take fifteen beaver each year during the period 15th January to 15th May.⁵⁹¹

The wolf problem was dealt with shortly thereafter. In the 1933 Northwest Territories Game Regulations Handbook for the Information of the Public, the section entitled *Wolf Bounties* reads:

1. On and after July 1, 1933 a bounty of \$15 on each wolf killed in the Northwest Territories or in the Wood Buffalo Park will be paid conditioned upon the pelts being surrendered to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police . . .

Note—*The co-operation of every resident in combating the wolf menace is requested. This is particularly desirable in the district to the east of the Mackenzie Delta . . .*⁵⁹²

During the late 1920s and early 1930s the Canadian Government encouraged the controlled trapping of beaver and marten, and at the same time while restricting the caribou hunt. On one hand, the Fort Resolution Indians were told not to kill too many caribou, and on the other, they were allowed to kill a few more beavers to supplement their diet.

However, as seen in figure 1, there continued to be a closed beaver season, which overlapped with the closed caribou season. From the end of May through June, July, and August, both seasons were closed. As indicated by the RCMP records, the regulations were enforced. At Little Buffalo River in 1930, Isidere Ajerican (possibly related to the current family who spell their name Edjericon), a Fort Resolution Treaty Indian, was charged with "killing beaver

⁵⁹¹ Lemaire, E. J. (1932). P.C. No. 2631, File 4483, N.W.T.: To the Honourable, The Minister of the Interior. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

⁵⁹² Dominion Land Administration: Department of the Interior. (1933). Northwest Territories Game Regulations: Handbook For the Information of the Public. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 21.

during close season."⁵⁹³ Additionally, the hunting of the beaver was not necessarily for its meat but instead for its fur, which forced the Indians of Fort Resolution to participate in the wage economy.

Listed below (figure 1) are the 1933 hunting seasons for the various animals of the Northwest Territories.

Figure 1: Northwest Territories - Game Regulations. The white shows the open season (when one is able to hunt that particular animal), and the black shows the closed season (when the ban is in effect). Note that the caribou's closed season includes August, a prime time for procuring hides.⁵⁹⁴

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES - GAME REGULATIONS												
WHITE - OPEN SEASON — BLACK - CLOSE SEASON												
Kind of Fur or Game	JAN	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT.	OCT	NOV	DEC.
Beaver	X											
Fox Arctic - Blue & White South of Timber Line												
Fox Arctic - Blue & White North of Timber Line												
Fox other than Arctic South of Arctic Circle												
Fox other than Arctic North of Arctic Circle												
Otter (South of Arctic Circle)												
Otter (North of Arctic Circle)												
Muskrat (South of Arctic Circle)												
Muskrat (North of Arctic Circle)												
Lynx - Marten - Mink - Fisher												
Partridge - Ptarmigan - Plover Chicken and other Grouse												
Moose - Deer - Mt. Goat												
Caribou - Mountain Sheep												
Wild Geese - Wild Duck												
Wild Swan - White Pelicans												
Buffalo - Musk-Ox Wapiti or Elk												

⁵⁹³ Clifford, J. (1930). Royal Canadian Mounted Police: Report on Conclusion of Case, June 25th, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

⁵⁹⁴ Dominion Land Administration: Department of the Interior. (1933). Northwest Territories Game Regulations: Handbook For the Information of the Public. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 2.

During the 1930s, the statements of O.S. Finnie and others, in which they claimed that the Indians in the region "slaughter caribou in a wanton and altogether senseless manner," were questioned⁵⁹⁵:

Hundreds of caribou are indiscriminately slaughtered annually in this portion of the Territory, very little of the meat is used, the tongues and marrow from bones being mostly all that is used, the balance of the animal allowed to remain on the ground.⁵⁹⁶

Instead, the 1922 report of RCMP Officer G.F. Fletcher, cited above, was taken more seriously. He had stated that the white trappers "take up trap lines used for ages by Indians, . . . [and] with several cabins and numerous traps and long traplines they quickly denude the country of fur."⁵⁹⁷

Chief Joseph Dziedirs of Fond du Lac, in a 1930 letter to the Director of the Department of Indian Affairs, complained of the white trappers' slaughter of the caribou. He maintained that, unlike the Athabaskan Indians, the white trappers cared only for the money they could acquire through the sale of furs. Dziedirs complained about the use of poison, which made the meat inedible:

The White trappers with their poison have destroyed nearly everything.⁵⁹⁸

In the October 28th 1930 Memorandum of Thomas Gerow Murphy (the Minister of the Interior at the time), Murphy cites C.C. Parker in his comparison of white and native trappers:

⁵⁹⁵ Finnie, O. S. (1923). Letter from O. S. Finnie to the Deputy Superintendent General, Department of Indian Affairs, dated September, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Law (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6, Part 1. p. 1.

⁵⁹⁶ Finnie, O. S. (1923). Letter from O. S. Finnie to the Deputy Superintendent General, Department of Indian Affairs, dated September, 1923. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Law (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6, Part 1. p. 1.

⁵⁹⁷ Fletcher, G. F. (1922). Letter to The Officer Commanding 'G' Division, from G. F. Fletcher, Inspector, Commanding Great Slave Lake subdistrict, 21-11-22. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1.

⁵⁹⁸ Dziedirs, J. (1930). Letter to the Director of the Department of Indian Affairs, (Sgd) Joseph Dziedirs, Chief of the Maurie Band, Fond du Lac, Sep. 24, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

The Indian hunter goes inland with a small outfit of trap and a limited supply of provisions and ammunition. He has to depend upon hunting and fishing for feed for his family and his dogs. This frequently means that he is obliged to follow the food sources which are not always in a section where fur bearers can be trapped. Sustenance must necessarily come first with the result that when spring comes, he may not have had an opportunity to trap fur and his debt remains unpaid.

Indians each have their own particular hunting grounds which are never molested by other Indians. Under ordinary conditions, they conserve their fur bearers, always leaving the breeders behind and frequently abandoning one section for one to two years in order to allow animals to propagate.⁵⁹⁹

He describes the white trappers as draining the land with deliberate strategies, and the inability of native trappers to compete:

[L]et me cite the case of only one [White trapper], and he is not exceptional, to show the contrast as between the white trapper and the Indian . . . This particular trapper, with his sin, will have this winter, 209 miles of trap line, using 1500 steel traps besides snares and has cabins on the entire trap line for each night, cabins stocked with provision. To anyone who knows the Indian hunter as I do, having travelled and lived with him, the comparison is ridiculous. And yet there be some who think that, given equal rights, the Indian should be able to compete with the white!

The general attitude of the white trapper is that the Territories is a fur country in process of depletion and they are out after their share; a trapper who is a stripper. He takes all he can and leaves nothing behind. He is not a settler in the commonly accepted sense of the term. He is only a transient ready to pull stakes and leave as soon as he has made his stake or finds that it does not pay him to stay. He is

⁵⁹⁹ Parker, C. C., as cited in Author Unknown. (1930). Memorandum: Hon. Thomas G. Murphy. October 28, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 2.

altogether an undesirable character who could and should earn his livelihood in other pursuits not open to Indians.⁶⁰⁰

Murphy concluded with the statement:

[A]lthough in former years the natives may have been improvident in killing more than they required of these caribou, at present they seem to be much concerned about their preservation and only kill the number for food which they absolutely require.⁶⁰¹

The 1927 *Northwest Game Act* stated:

"[e]xcepting a native-born Indian, Eskimo or half-breed, who is a *bona fide* resident of the Northwest Territories, no person shall engage in hunting, trapping, or trading or trafficking in game without first securing a license to do so."⁶⁰²

In 1932 discussions began regarding the creation of a Game Reserve that would encompass the entire Northwest Territory:

[R]especting the erection of the whole of the North Region of the Province as a Game Reserve . . . I think you will agree that this action is the most effective, in fact the only effective, method of preventing the abuses that have arisen as a result of the use of aeroplanes by white trappers.⁶⁰³

H.E. Hume, Chairman of the Dominion Lands Board, concluded:

⁶⁰⁰ Parker, C. C., as cited in Author Unknown. (1930). Memorandum: Hon. Thomas G. Murphy. October 28, 1930. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 3.

⁶⁰¹ Truesdell, W. A. M. (1934). Letter to the Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs from Fort Simpson, signed W.A.M. Truesdell, Indian Agent and Medical Officer, March 2nd, 1934. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 3.

⁶⁰² Canada. (1927). Revised Statutes, 1927, Chapter 141: An Act Respecting Game in the Northwest Territories of Canada, Section 10. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 2865.

⁶⁰³ Scott, D. (1932). Letter to Mr. Rowatt, February 16, 1932. In Indian Affairs Headquarters File: Northwest Territories Game Laws (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 1.

. . . [f]ollowing the discussion of the suggestion that the **whole** of the North West Territories be created a game preserve by the North West Territories Council on the 14th . . . a resolution was passed recommending that no new hunting and trapping licenses be issued pending a thorough investigation of the situation.⁶⁰⁴

On April 7th 1932, the Acting Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs (most likely A.S. Williams, the Assistant Deputy and Superintendent General before and after April 7th 1932, who took over briefly for Duncan C. Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General before and after April 7th 1932—a stint of one day) directed a letter to Indian Agents across the Northwest Territories asking for their opinions on the “Advisability of making the whole of the Northwest Territories a game preserve, reserving the game for the use and benefit of the native and present resident white population.”⁶⁰⁵ This did not come to pass.

1920–1939: The Thelon Game Sanctuary

The Game Regulations were not the sole hindrance to the seasonal hunt of the indigenous peoples' in the Barren Lands. Game regulations could be, and often were, overlooked. The Thelon Game Sanctuary, on the other hand, provided an actual barrier to accessing the Barren Lands. The "whole" of the Northwest Territories was not, in fact, open to access by the native hunters.

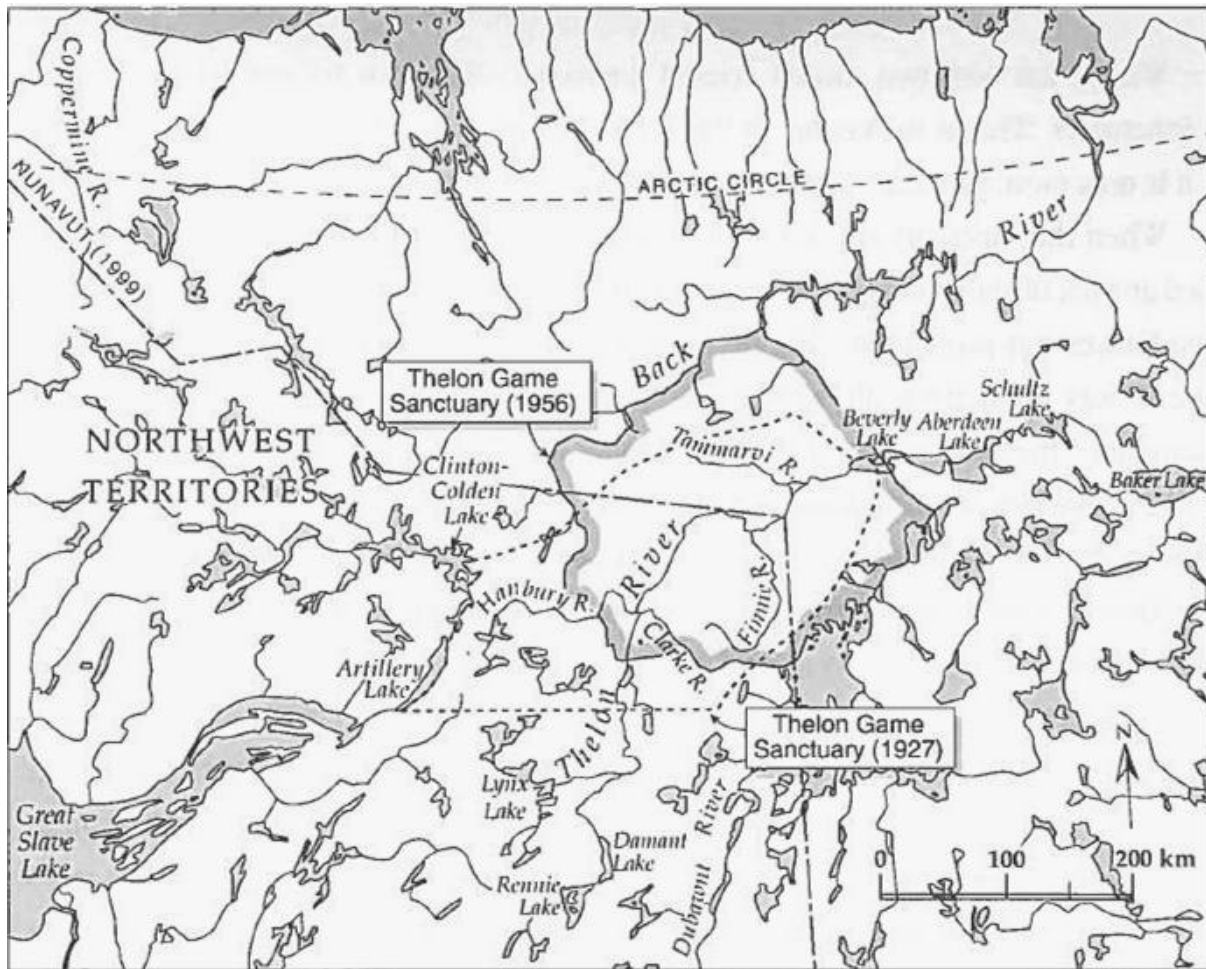
The Thelon Game Sanctuary, established in 1927 by Federal Order-in-Council is located between the Hanbury and Thelon Rivers to the northeast of Artillery Lake (map 12; note Artillery Lake on the eastern Arm of Great Slave Lake near the bottom left corner of the map).⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁴ Hume, H. E. (1932). Letter to J. H. MacBrian, Commissioner, R. C. M. Police, Signed H. E. Hume, Chairman of the Dominion Lands Board, 2nd April 1932. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

⁶⁰⁵ Acting Deputy Superintendent General. (1932). Letter to Dr. Bourget, signed Acting Deputy Superintendent General [of Indian Affairs], April 7th, 1932. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 1.

⁶⁰⁶ Hoare, W. H. B. (1930). *Conserving Canada's Musk-Oxen: Being an account of an investigation of Thelon Game Sanctuary, 1928-29, with a brief history of the area and an outline of known facts regarding the musk-ox.* Ottawa, ON: F.A. Acland: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty. p. 40.

Map 12: Map representing the changing borders of the Thelon Game Sanctuary. The dotted line represents the border in 1927, and the black shaded line represents the 1956 border.⁶⁰⁷



The Canadian Government justified the creation of the sanctuary by stating that "Indians and Eskimos" did not live there; their hope was that the dwindling muskox population could be preserved:

... as the Indians and Eskimo do not inhabit it, it seems to present an excellent opportunity to preserve the remnants of musk-ox on the main land and, in fact, to give all Wild Life a chance to breed and multiply, undisturbed, within this area.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁷ Pelly, D. F. (1996). *Thelon: A River Sanctuary*. Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press. p. 144.

⁶⁰⁸ Finnie, O. S. (1926). Letter to Colonel Cortlandt Starnes, Commissioner, R. C. M. Police, 6th October, 1926. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1. p. 1.

The Fort Resolution bands viewed the Thelon Game Sanctuary as a hindrance to their hunting activities on the Barren Lands. Indians complained about the Thelon Game Sanctuary during the annual treaty meeting at Fort Resolution in the summer of 1929:

At Resolution . . . the second point [discussed at treaty] was the boundary line of the musk ox sanctuary which the Indians were asking to have changed, so that they could pass along Artillery Lake and have as far as Campbell Lake in the east end, their route to Eileen Lake, as their only fishing ground, south side of Artillery Lake.

This point seems very strong in favor of the Indians, I am told that all kinds of signs show that these Indians have been camping along that route and traveling that way to their only fishing grounds at certain periods, and this is in the extreme west end of the sanctuary, where certainly the musk ox is never seen.⁶⁰⁹

Further evidence of the continuous use of the Barren Lands by the Indians of Fort Resolution is provided in the statement given during the annual treaty meeting in the summer of 1931. Indians complained once again to C. Bourget, the Indian Agent at Fort Resolution, that the Thelon Game Sanctuary encroached on the grounds in which they had always fished and hunted caribou:

One of the topics at Resolution, was a request that the Indians be allowed to go to the Musk Ox Sanctuary, **as far as Campbell lake** which would be the east boundary, as they claim, and right they are I believe, they always used this ground previous to the park, either in their fishing expeditions in the **summer** or for caribou and white fox in the **winter**.⁶¹⁰

Eventually, the argument of the hunters was taken to Ottawa, and in a letter to a Mr. Finnie in Ottawa, October 24nd 1929, Sgd. W.H.B. Hoare wrote:

⁶⁰⁹ Bourget, C. (1929). Letter from C. Bourget, Agent, from Resolution, N.W.T., September 9th, 1929. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1927 - 1930, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 2. p. 1.

⁶¹⁰ Bourget, C. (1931). Letter from C. Bourget, Indian Agent, from Resolution, N.W.T., Great Slave Lake Agency, July 31, 1931. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

. . . requesting, through Dr. Bourget, that the boundary of the Thelon game Sanctuary be moved, the Artillery Lake Indians appear to hunt as far east as the east end of Campbell lake . . . The Indian settlement lies to the west of Artillery Lake.⁶¹¹

These attempts to move the sanctuary's boundary lines illustrate the fact that this preserve prevented the Chipewyans, Dogribs, and Copper Indians from Fort Resolution from accessing their traditional hunting grounds:

. . . the Dogrib and Yellowknife [Copper] Indians had complained that the sanctuary as now established cuts them off from desirable hunting and trapping grounds.⁶¹²

C. Bourget, Indian Agent of the Fort Resolution Indian Agency, lists these desirable hunting, trapping, and fishing grounds in his 1932 letter to The Assistant Deputy and Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs:

A point also [of] great importance asked every year by our Indians and transmitted to the Department, is the removal from the Sanctuary of a zone in the South west corner to Sifton lake, Campbell lake, which could be made into the boundary of the sanctuary; this would permit the natives and trappers to go to their old fishing ground south of Artillery lake, the only locality where the timber is not too scarce, where they know the district, and could get the white fox and caribou. This was the old grounds that the sanctuary took away from them.⁶¹³

In a letter addressed to the Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs, H.W. McGill, H.E. Hume, the Chairman of the Dominion Lands Board, updated him

⁶¹¹ Hoare, W. H. B. (1929). Memorandum: Mr. Finnie, (Sgd) W.H.B. Hoare, 24th October 1929. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1927 - 1930, RG 10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 2. p. 1.

⁶¹² Hume, H. E. (1932). Letter to A. S. Williams, Acting Superintendent General, Department of Indian Affairs, Signed H. E. Hume, 26th April, 1932. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 1.

⁶¹³ Bourget, C. (1932). Letter to The Assistant Deputy and Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, May the 16th, 1932. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3. p. 2.

on the situation regarding the Fort Resolution Indians and their conflict with the boundaries of the Thelon Game Sanctuary:

You will recall that at the last session of the North West Territories Council it was decided to authorize the issue of permits to those Indians of Reliance District who have been in the habit of camping on the eastern shore of Artillery Lake within the Thelon Game Sanctuary, where they carried on fishing operation at certain seasons of the year. This is to advise you that the Commissioner of the R. C. M. Police has been requested to issue the necessary permit to the Indians concerned authorizing them to enter the western end of the Thelon Game Sanctuary for the above mentioned purpose. It would be appreciated if you would advise the Indian Agent at Resolution accordingly and request him to notify the Indians that they must not hunt or trap within the boundaries of the Thelon Game Sanctuary or their permits to enter that area will be cancelled.⁶¹⁴

The Indians of Fort Resolution were permitted to fish and camp in the Barren Lands of the Artillery Lake region within the Thelon Game Sanctuary.

At roughly the same time (during the late 1920s), the caribou had altered their migration route: native peoples trading at Fort Resolution and Fort Smith indicated that the caribou had not "come to this band."⁶¹⁵ The Indians of the Great Slave Lake region were forced to rely upon fishing, trapping, and foodstuffs provided by Indian Agents. A report written by J. Clifford in March 1927 described the situation at Snowdrift River in the **winter** of that year:

From my enquiries I learned there were 53 (fifty-three) persons in this camp, 14 (fourteen) men 16 (sixteen) women and 23 (twenty-three) children. The cause of this destitution is owing to the fact that

⁶¹⁴ Hume, H. E. (1932). Letter to Harold. W. McGill, Deputy Superintendent General, Department of Indian Affairs, Signed H. E. Hume, Chairman, Dominion Lands Board, 23rd November, 1932. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws. (Government Publication) 1930 - 1934, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 3.

⁶¹⁵ Clifford, J. (1927). Letter to the Officer Commanding R.C.M.Police, Great Slave Lake SubDistrict, Fort Smith, N.W.T., Re: Destitution amongst Treaty Indians, Yellow Knife Band, Snowdrift River, N.W.T., (SGD) J. Clifford, Sergt., March 19th, 1927. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1. p. 2.

these indians [*sic*] depended entirely on Caribou for food and dog feed, and consequently did no **fall** fishing. This year the Caribou did not come to this band, but these indians [*sic*] apparently did not realize such a thing could happen.⁶¹⁶

Even more troubling is a report from April 1927 describing both the Indians' reliance on the caribou and the lengths to which they would go to survive:

Twenty-three indians have died to the east of Fort Resolution since **winter** set in. The survivors are eating their mocassins [*sic*], old mosehides [*sic*] and strips of babiche used for repairing dog-harness and snowshoes.⁶¹⁷

1930–1939

The sources available for the period between 1930 and 1939 are scant at best. The years of the Great Depression took a toll on all Canadians from all walks of life. Subarctic exploration became relatively less important for a brief period of time. Other than official documentation regarding Game Regulations, not much written material has survived, if it did exist, for this period. There are a few isolated reports. In 1930 F.H. Kitto wrote the following in a report for the Department of Indian Affairs:

The Chipewyans are found along the Slave river from the south boundary of the Northwest Territories to Great Slave lake. The Yellowknives are found now in the vicinity of Resolution on the south shore of Great Slave lake. They formerly lived in the country

⁶¹⁶ Clifford, J. (1927). Letter to the Officer Commanding R.C.M. Police, Great Slave Lake SubDistrict, Fort Smith, N.W.T., Re; Destitution amongst Treaty Indians, Yellow Knife Band, Snowdrift River, N.W.T., (SGD) J. Clifford, Sergt., March 19th, 1927. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1. p. 2.

⁶¹⁷ In a 2003 article in *Manitoba History*, Graham A. Macdonald shows that the shortage in barren-ground caribou was felt throughout much of the north, a year later in 1928-29, including northern Manitoba and what would become Nunavut. MacDonald, G. A. (2003). 'When the Caribou Failed': Ilia Tolstoy in the Barren Lands, 1928-1929. *Manitoba History*, 45, retrieved 16 May, 2012, from www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/45/tolstoy.shtml; Edmonton Journal as cited in Supt, J. R. (1927). Indians Starving in BarrenLands; 23 Have Died During Winter, (sgd) J. R. Supt, April 2nd, 1927. In Indian Affairs Headquarters Files: Northwest Territories Game Laws (MAPS). (Government Publication) 1916 - 1927, RG10, Volume 6742, File 420-6 1. p. 1.

lying between Great Slave lake and the Coppermine river but were driven from there by the Dog Ribs.⁶¹⁸

He had accepted the statement that the Dogribs drove the Yellowknives to the Taltson River, despite reports to the contrary that placed the Yellowknives north and south of the lake before the encounter.

In 1933 the Department of Indian affairs noted that the Indians of the Great Slave Lake region continued to hunt and trap for subsistence purposes:

The principal tribes found in the Far North are the Slave, Hares, Loucheux, Sicannies, Dogribs, Yellow-knives, Chipewyans and Caribou Eaters. All these tribes are of Athapascan stock . . .

These Indians depend entirely upon hunting and trapping for a livelihood.⁶¹⁹

1940–1949

After the relative quiet of the Great Depression, Indian Agents again began to take notice of the actions of the Indians of the Great Slave Lake region. In August 1943, Dr. J.H. Riopel (Indian Agent of the Yellowknife Indian Agency based at Fort Resolution) noted the following in his journal:

We travelled during the night of the 3rd, and arrived at Snowdrift early next morning. 18 Indian Families camped near the R. C. Mission Chapel were waiting for us . . . Annuities were paid after a short talk with the Chief and his Band. No serious complaints from any of these Indians as most of them are well off temporarily after the good catch of **white fox** from last **winter** in the Barren Lands.

Several families from this Band had come to Fort Resolution and Yellowknife for their Treaty Annuities and were on their way to Reliance and East for their **Fall** hunting and **winter** trapping.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁸ Kitto, F. H. (1930). *The North West Territories 1930*. Ottawa, ON: Department of the Interior, North West Territories and Yukon Branch, F.A. Acland, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty. p. 64.

⁶¹⁹ McGill, H. W. (1933). Report of the Deputy Superintendent General. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1933*. Department. Ottawa, ON: J. O. Patenaude. p. 27.

In the September of the following year Dr. J.H. Riopel noted again:

All able-bodied Indians were out to their fishing camps on the main Lake and Rivers or away hunting moose. Several Indians who had been hired at Saw-Mills or at cutting fire-wood **during the summer months left their work and anxiously went away to their hunting grounds in quest of fresh moose and caribou meat.** The duck season was fairly good this **fall.**⁶²¹

Clearly, the Fort Resolution Indians, despite regulatory measures, continued to head into the Barren Lands in search of caribou, and into transitional forests in search of moose.

In a brief reference made in 1947, W.B. Skead, Fur Supervisor for the Fort Resolution Agency, noted the caribou's presence near Rocher River and the hunt that ensued:

The caribou were also found in good numbers at Rocher River and here again the Indian benefitted.⁶²²

In 1949 the Superintendent of Indian Agencies, I. F. Kirkby, noted a correlation between attendance at the Rocher River Day School and the continuation of the hunt:

On September 14th, proceeded to Rocher River with Agency boat. This school had opened for the first time on September the 6th, and was progressing very favourably. The day I attended this school 33 pupils were in attendance and a few more were expected to come in. For the most part this number or possibly a few more will be the limit. Some of these children will move out with their parents for

⁶²⁰ Riopel, J. H. (1943). Letter to The Secretary, Dept. of Mines & Resources, Indian Affairs Branch, Signed J. H. Riopel, Indian Agent, August 16th/43. In Indian Affairs headquarters Files: Annuity Payments for the Fort Resolution Agency. 1943/1947, RG 10, Volume 6881, File 191/28-3 5. p. 4.

⁶²¹ Riopel, J. H. (1944). Letter to The Secretary, Dept. of Mines and Resources, Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa: September 1944 Monthly Report, October 2nd, 1944. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844 -1970: Yellowknife Agency - Semi Annual Reports 1945 - 1965, RG 10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. p. 1.

⁶²² Skead, W. B. (1947). Re: Payment of Annuity in the Fort Resolution Agency for the year 1947, Signed W.B. Skead, July 15th, 1947. In Indian Affairs headquarters Files: Annuity Payments for the Fort Resolution Agency. 1943/1947, RG 10, Volume 6881, File 191/28-3 5. p. 5.

the winter hunt but I believe well over 25 will be in attendance at all times.⁶²³

1950–1959

As discussed in the Introduction, De Beers Canada acknowledges the historical presence of the Chipewyans on the Barren Lands for the purpose of hunting barren-ground caribou. However, they assert that following the end of the Second World War, the DKFN Chipewyans ceased to regularly visit the area to hunt. They argue that this was the result of increased competition and more intensive trapping techniques employed by white hunters, which had slowly shrunk the viability of the Chipewyan territory. They contend that, based upon one source, these factors made it impossible for the Chipewyans to live off the land and the caribou, and caused many to turn to wage work or social services as their primary means of support.

As the remainder of this report will show, De Beers Canada overstates this process. Relying primarily upon David M. Smith, their account states that a decisive change occurred in 1945 at which point the Chipewyans ceased to frequent the Barren Lands and hunt caribou, and instead engaged almost solely in wage labour or began to depend upon the Government's assistance. The participation of the Yellowknives and Chipewyans in the market economy, be it fur trading or mining, has never precluded their return to the Barren Lands to hunt, fish, and/or trap. Many individuals combined both industrial and traditional lifestyles in various ways as circumstance allowed.

Finally, their increased reliance upon wage labour and social services was not a matter of individual choice: the Canadian Government, at multiple levels, had increased its efforts to prevent the Chipewyans from hunting on the Barren Lands. The Department of Indian Affairs' reports, dating from the latter half of the 20th century, demonstrate the continued and regular presence of Chipewyan caribou hunters on the Barren Lands.

⁶²³ Kirkby, I. F. (1949). Extract from the Letter of I. F. Kirkby Dated as Above and Written from Above, September 27th, 1949. In Indian Affairs School Files: Yellowknife Agency - Rocher River Day School - Building Maintenance - Supplies - Accounts. 1948 - 1950, RG 10, Volume 6474, File 910-5, Part 1. p. 1.

The reports of the Department of Indian Affairs' from the 1950s suggest that caribou were often scarce. However, they also report that Fort Resolution Indians continued to hunt on the Barren Lands each year. In response, the Fort Resolution Indian Agency provided freezers to store meat in times of shortage.

The RCMP officers and Indian Affairs agents who had worried in the 1920s that the Indians under their charge would resort to welfare if animal populations were not protected from white hunters were oddly prescient. I.F. Kirkby, the Superintendent for the Resolution Indian Agency in the early 1950s, spent much of his time worrying about how much caribou meat was brought into the Agency's freezers. The freezers at Yellowknife and Rae were usually well stocked, but Fort Resolution Indians often had problems reaching the herds. Despite this it is important to note that the Chipewyans of Fort Resolution were still out on the Barren Lands hunting caribou on an annual basis during the 1950s. These hunts were so successful in fact that in 1951, as the Department of Indian Affairs' Annual report noted:

Three large refrigerators of the "walk-in" type were purchased during the year for installation at Fort Chipewyan, Fort Resolution, and Yellowknife in order that surplus game and fish may be preserved during periods of abundance for the use of Indians during periods of scarcity.⁶²⁴

However, in March 1954, Kirkby wrote that he felt that the Rocher River and Fort Resolution Indians were not taking advantage of the caribou to the same extent as the Yellowknife River and Rae (Dogrib) Indians:

Caribou were somewhat later this year than last but for the bands who had the ambition to get out and hunt there was more than enough to satisfy their own needs and to fill the freezers we supply. At Yellowknife and Rae our freezers are well-stocked while at Rocher River and Resolution very little is stored this year though the latter two points had more opportunity than the first two.⁶²⁵

⁶²⁴ Department of Citizenship and Immigration. (1951). *Report of Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1951*. Ottawa, ON: Edmond Cloutier. p. 19.

⁶²⁵ Kirkby, I. F. (1954). Yellowknife Indian Agency, Quarterly Report for the period January 1st to March 31st, 1954, signed I. F. Kirkby, Superintendent of Yellowknife Indian Agency. In Indian Affairs Central Registry

1950–1959: Organized Caribou Hunts

During the 1950s, caribou hunts were organized by the Chipewyan Band of Fort Resolution and Rocher River, and the transportation costs were funded by Indian Affairs. In line with the Game Regulations of the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Indian Agents attempted to control the hunt. The records of the Indian Agents, however, are limited in that they only take into account official tabulations and, in most cases, what ends up stored in the freezer—the surplus. The agents did, at the time, acknowledge their inability to keep track of all animals, especially those brought in illegally. In order to better control the caribou hunt, Government Agents (usually RCMP) were sent as observers. In March 1955, Kirkby reported the following:

A caribou hunt was organized with a supervisor in charge and some 30 Indians went out and did make a reasonable hunt considering that the weather was very cold all during March when the caribou migrations are usually good. During the hunt some 12,000 pounds of meat was obtained and this was placed in the freezer at Yellowknife for issue to these same Indians next **summer**. The costs of hauling this meat was some 12c per pound and was due to the fact that no large caribou herds were found and it was necessary to travel to the caribou and added to the distance of hauling. Some hunts had to be undertaken in areas where it was only possible to fly the meat out adding considerably to the overall cost. Meat is now stored at Rae, Yellowknife and **Rocher River** for the Indians **summer** use.⁶²⁶

Another organized hunt was carried out in 1956. This time the Indian Agent acknowledged that he could not be certain how many caribou the Indians had killed because not all hunts were supervised:

Organized caribou hunts were carried out for the benefit of the various [*sic*] Indian groups of the Agency. **The Resolution-Rocher**

Files, 1844-1970: Yellowknife Agency – Semi-Annual Reports 1945-1965, RG10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. p. 1.

⁶²⁶ Kirkby, I. F. (1955). Yellowknife Indian Agency, Quarterly Report for the Period January 1st, to March 31st, 1955. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844 -1970: Yellowknife Agency - Semi Annual Reports 1945 - 1965, RG 10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. p. 1.

River hunt was under the supervision of Warden Spreu and a total of 115 animals were taken. The Yellowknife-Rae hunt was under the supervision of Cst. Garvin with 420 animals being taken. The Snowdrift hunt was under the supervision of Supt. Kirkby and 80 animals were taken and stored in the freezer. These figures indicate the total take of caribou by the Indians while on the hunt under supervision, but does not indicate the number of caribou taken before or after by the Indians themselves. Of the caribou taken during the organized hunt some 345 animals were placed in the freezer for summer use. In addition some meat was brought in by the Indians, and approximately 50,000 pounds of meat is stored in the various freezers. The hunt was considered most successful and wastage by the Indians cut to a minimum.⁶²⁷

The reports of the Department of Indian Affairs that spanned the 1950s and 1960s indicate that the Indian populations of Yellowknife, Fort Rae, Fort Resolution, Snowdrift, and Rocher River relied upon fish, barren-ground caribou, and buffalo. Whereas limited trapping and fishing had been emphasized in the 1920s and 1930s, there was now little money in trapping. In late 1957, for example, R. Kendall of the Yellowknife Agency noted that:

With low fur prices, trapping is almost non-existent, however, I do feel that with an adequate addition to our staff that a greater impetus could be given to this vocation, fishing for food is constantly being carried out by the Natives of this Agency . . .

Normally during December there is sufficient caribou in the area of Yellowknife and Snowdrift to meet the needs of the people. This year, however, there was a dearth of these animals, causing them considerable hardship. It was fortunate that they had a good domestic fishery [sic] on which they were able to rely. By the end of December caribou had not come down into the Rae area at all. Rocher River and Resolution, however, were blessed with small numbers of caribou early, as well as a fair population of buffalo and

⁶²⁷ Dalton, A. (2010). *Arctic Naturalist: The Life of J. Dewey Soper*. Toronto: Dundurn Press. p. 226: "Warden Spreu" seems to have been Herb Spreu, a warden at Wood Buffalo National Park (established in 1922). This would suggest that the Ft. Resolution Indians were hunting well south of Great Slave Lake, at least some of the time. The report here also indicates that they were hunting while unsupervised, but it is not known where they were hunting in 1956; Kirkby, I. F. (1956). Yellowknife Indian Agency, Quarterly Report for the Period January 1st, to March 31st, 1956. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844 -1970: Yellowknife Agency - Semi Annual Reports 1945 - 1965, RG 10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. p. 1.

moose. Arrangements have been made to take advantage of the caribou migration in order to fill our cold storage lockers at Snowdrift, Yellowknife, Fort Rae, Rocher River and Resolution.⁶²⁸

However, with the "startling decline in [the] caribou population," the hunt had to be discontinued unless the Department of Indian Affairs made arrangements to help Fort Resolution Indians continue to hunt in the Barren Lands.⁶²⁹ R. Kendall's report for September 1957 stated that the Indians still had the desire to go out but lacked the means to do so:

Efforts were made by various Indian groups, assisted by this office with food and ammunition, to find caribou and moose in the country bordering the barrens. Their efforts met with very meager success. The Indian people continue to complain about the fact that there is less fish now and of smaller variety than ten years ago.

There have been a number of Indian people who have approached us, requesting a grub-stake for trapping this **fall**. This to me, is heartening, as it shows a desire to trap this **fall**. Of this group, no one trapped last year.⁶³⁰

The Agency did assist in the hunt, but it also attempted to regulate it in hopes of ensuring that only a limited number of animals were taken:

A party of sixty (approximately) Indians from Fort Rae and Snowdrift joined in a hunt at the east end of Great Slave Lake during September. They received assistance in the form of rations and gas from the Indian Affairs Branch and took approximately 120 caribou, practically all bulls. The Department of Wildlife were

⁶²⁸ Kendall, R. (1956). Quarterly Report, Yellowknife Agency, October to December, 1956. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844 -1970: Yellowknife Agency - Semi Annual Reports 1945 - 1965, RG 10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. pp. 1-2.

⁶²⁹ Kendall, R. (1957). Quarter Report, Yellowknife Agency, Period Ending 30 June, 1957. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844 -1970: Yellowknife Agency - Semi Annual Reports 1945 - 1965, RG 10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. p. 1.

⁶³⁰ Kendall, R. (1957). Quarterly Report, Yellowknife Indian Agency - Period Ending September 30, 1957. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844 -1970: Yellowknife Agency - Semi Annual Reports 1945 - 1965, RG 10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. p. 3.

advised and sent a representative with the party, who concurred in this report.⁶³¹

In March 1959, J.G. McGilp of the Yellowknife Indian Agency wrote a report in which he expressed his pleasure at the small number of caribou killed. He did, however, express concern at the possibility of the hunters moving further afield to places such as Nonacho Lake (the source of the Taltson River in the Barren Lands), where the caribou were more numerous:

Generally the Indians have set a good record in their low kill of barren ground caribou this **winter**. There has been no large migration through Snowdrift. Although one large hunting party penetrated almost to Artillery Lake [which was previously located within the Thelon Game Sanctuary, but had been made accessible since the 1956 border change (see map 12)] in October, only about 60 to 70 caribou were taken. Since then, the Indians have stayed close to Snowdrift and Fort Reliance waiting for the caribou to come to them. No information was given about the herd at Nonacho Lake, and so no hunters are known to have gone there where the kill might have been large . . .⁶³²

In place of allowing a larger caribou hunt, the Agency brought 200,000 pounds of buffalo meat from Wood Buffalo Park to feed the local population. McGilp noted that he had encouraged the Great Slave Lake Indians to move toward a wage economy and away from “the Indian way of life.”⁶³³ In order to facilitate this transition, jobs were provided on “**winter** road-brushing projects.”⁶³⁴

Nevertheless, these groups continued to push for their annual hunt. In 1959:

⁶³¹ McGilp, J. G. (1958). Yellowknife Indian Agency Quarterly Report Period July 12th - September 30th, 1958. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844 -1970: Yellowknife Agency - Semi Annual Reports 1945 - 1965, RG 10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. p. 1.

⁶³² McGilp, J. G. (1959). Yellowknife Indian Agency, Quarterly Report January 1 to March 31, 1959. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844 -1970: Yellowknife Agency - Semi Annual Reports 1945 - 1965, RG 10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. p. 6.

⁶³³ McGilp, J. G. (1959). Yellowknife Indian Agency, Quarterly Report January 1 to March 31, 1959. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844 -1970: Yellowknife Agency - Semi Annual Reports 1945 - 1965, RG 10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. p. 8.

⁶³⁴ McGilp, J. G. (1959). Yellowknife Indian Agency, Quarterly Report January 1 to March 31, 1959. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844 -1970: Yellowknife Agency - Semi Annual Reports 1945 - 1965, RG 10, Volume 8438, File 139/23-4. p. 8.

Chief Casaway made an appeal to the Superintendent to secure air transportation to haul caribou meat from the Barrens to Snowdrift. The Chief explained that the fishing had not been too good, and that there was no big game or caribou within many miles of Snowdrift. The Chief said he would like to organize a large hunt in the Barren Lands if caribou could be located. It was felt that the distance would be so great that the Indians would not be able to haul all of the meat back to Snowdrift, and that there would be too much waste. The Superintendent advised that he would write and request an authority to charter an aircraft for such a project, and advise the Chief before they went on a hunt.⁶³⁵

In 1959, at the Yellowknife 'A' Band meeting in Snowdrift, the residents discussed the trouble they were having in reconciling their new sedentary way of life (imposed by the requirement for their children's to attend school and more permanent dwellings) with their subsistence activities.

It was pointed out that a day school will be erected in Snowdrift during this **summer**, and people were advised that there would be frequent visits and advise from the Indian Superintendent to ensure that while the children attended day school with effect from September, this need not tie the hunters and trappers to the settlement. **Supt. McGilp emphasized the importance of the men continuing to earn their living in the manner in which they had been accustomed, and that where necessary, children would be placed in foster homes, with foster payments being made by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.**⁶³⁶

Hunting and trapping had continued to be pursued as subsistence activities, including hunting in the Barren Lands, but now required a more expeditious mode of travel in order to accommodate and adapt to this new lifestyle. Later in this report we will discuss just how the advent of the airplane and snow-machine allowed for this adaptation.

⁶³⁵ Kerr, K. (1959). Minutes of meeting of Yellowknife "A" Band Held in The Hudson's Bay Store: Snowdrift, N.W.T. on December 21, 1959. In Indian Affairs: Minutes of Council - Yellowknife Agency, RG 10, Volume 7129, File 191/3-6, Part 1. p. 2.

⁶³⁶ McGilp, J. G. (1959). Minutes of Yellowknife "A" Band Meeting Held at Snowdrift, July 5, 1959. In Indian Affairs: Minutes of Council - Yellowknife Agency, RG 10, Volume 7129, File 191/3-6, Part 1. p. 1.

1960–1969

Well into the mid-20th century, hunting and trapping remained prominent features of Chipewyan, Dogrib, and Slave societies in the north, as both a way of life and a way to make a living. In 1961 it was reported that "the reefer is almost completely filled with moose, bear and wild fowl meats."⁶³⁷ This success is noted again in the 1961 Indian Affairs Branch Annual Report:

There was wide-spread hunting and trapping and fishing in the late fall until Christmas. Fur prices fell sharply just before Christmas and trapping de-creased with low prices received for pelts. Nevertheless, trapping returns remained an important part of the earnings of the Indians of the N. W. T. . . . In the Fort Smith Agency, the figure [for trapping returns] was \$6,246. Around Great Slave Lake in the Yellowknife Agency, it was estimated that between November 1st, 1960 and the middle of March 1961, \$122,500 worth of fur was sold.⁶³⁸

W. Presloski, the Superintendent of the Fort Smith Indian Agency (to which the Chipewyan Band of Fort Resolution and Rocher River now belonged), in his review of the 1961/62 trapping season, stated:

A review was made of trapping activities and returns for 1961/62. There were more trappers out in 1961/62 than the previous season and catch showed an increase of approximately 16% . . .

There are 34 Indian trappers in Resolution and it was established that a per capita return should average at least \$800.00, although, it is possible to increase this to about \$1,050.00.

It was decided to have the Superintendent of the Agency and the Band Council interview every trapper during the week of August 20, 1962, to ascertain that preparations are made for the fall

⁶³⁷ Presloski, W. (1961). Minutes of the Chipewyan (Resolution) Band Council Meeting Held at R.C.M. Police Office, Fort Resolution on September 27, 1961, at 1945 Hours. In LAC, Indian and Northern Affairs: Band Council Meeting Minutes - Ft. Resolution, Jan 61 - June 68, RG 10, Volume 1, File E-191/-3-13-14, Accession E-2000-00328-1, Box 7.

⁶³⁸ Jones, H. M. (1961). The Provincial Picture: Mackenzie Region. In *Report of Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1961*. Ottawa, ON: Roger Duhamel. p. 79

trapping by the trappers to remain on their traplines for at least 4 months. A further check would be made during the last week of September to ascertain that the trappers were prepared and that arrangements were made for children to be admitted to hostels and that departure to the traplines would be in full swing by October 1st.⁶³⁹

Despite the reported low price of fur, the numbers of furs brought in were more than enough to offset the price. Presloski, at this point, felt that there would be enough profit to leave the Band members at Fort Resolution self-sufficient:

Superintendent Presloski advises that the returns from trapping are above average and that if this condition prevailed there would be no need of projects to supplement the economics of the people.⁶⁴⁰

During the winter of 1962 it was reported that a case of anthrax had broken out in the buffalo population around Fort Resolution. A. K. Harris, the Officer in Charge of the District of Mackenzie for Indian Affairs, reported:

[R]egarding the outbreak of anthrax among buffalo . . .

approximately 700 square miles [have] been isolated. This is the area in which dead buffalo have been found. A total of 253 plus dead animals have been located . . .

It has been suggested that it may even be possible to prevent all travel in the area and prohibit all hunting and trapping.

This would have extremely serious repercussions. It would in effect destroy the economy of Fort Resolution as this is the trapping and

⁶³⁹ Presloski, W. (1962). Minutes of the Resolution Band Council Meetings Held in the I. H. H. S. Offices at 16:30 Hrs. June 13, 1962. In LAC, Indian and Northern Affairs: Band Council Meeting Minutes - Ft. Resolution, Jan 61 - June 68, RG 10, Volume 1, File E-191/-3-13-14, Accession E-2000-00328-1, Box 7. p. 1.

⁶⁴⁰ Presloski, W. (1962). Minutes of the Resolution Band Council Meeting Held in Agency Office Fort Resolution, N. W. T. at 20:00 Hrs., November 28, 1962. In LAC, Indian and Northern Affairs: Band Council Meeting Minutes - Ft. Resolution, Jan 61 - June 68, RG 10, Volume 1, File E-191/-3-13-14, Accession E-2000-00328-1, Box 7.

more particularly the hunting area of the people of Fort Resolution.⁶⁴¹

The effects were not recorded for the Resolution Band until the following summer when Modeste Mandeville, the Secretary of the Rocher River Trapper's Council, sent a request to N.K. Ogden, the Regional Supervisor of Indian Agencies:

It was agreed by council members, that trappers whose traplines are inside the restricted area, be allowed to trap in the Wood Buffao [*sic*] park, until such time that the restrictions are in existence. That an extra five thousand dollarsbe [*sic*] appropriated for trappers affected in Fort Resolution restricted area . . . which would enable the trappers concerned to go to distant areas for two or three months such as to Nonacho lake area. Here are the names of those that are ready to meet these conditions.

Francis. Paul King, Alexis Lafferty, Phillip Buggins, Tommy. King[,] Fred Lafferty.

If and when the trappers are taken out to distant areas from Resolution, the trappers could be visited by the Game Officer during his air patrol in December on caribou movement survey, and may be of help to the trappers in shipping their furs to market and they could stay longer on their trapline.⁶⁴²

That same year Chief Alexander King of the Resolution Band at Fort Resolution also asked the government for assistance for the Band's trappers:

Chief Alexander King suggested that trappers should be transported to the bush before freezeup for trapping when they are unable to

⁶⁴¹ Harris, A. K. (1962). Letter to Indian Affairs Branch - Ottawa, from Officer in Charge - District of Mackenzie, Subject Buffalo Hunting, August 31, 1962. In Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844-1970: Fort Smith Agency - General Correspondence Regarding Hunting (MAPS). 1962 - 1964, RG 10, Volume 6980, File 140/20-4 1. p. 1.

⁶⁴² Mandeville, M. (1963). Fort Resolution - Rocher River Trappers' Council Meeting: Fort Resolution, N.W.T. July 27. 1963. Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844-1970: RG10, Volume 6980, File 140/20-4 1. Fort Smith Agency - General Correspondence Regarding Hunting (Maps).

pay for their own transportation. Supplying transportation would encourage more trappers to go out on their traplines.⁶⁴³

In late 1963 the price of fur skyrocketed, and the Fort Resolution Indians were eager to spend their time out hunting, with or without government assistance. The shift was easily noted within the Fort Resolution Band Council Minutes:

The subject of **winter** fishing was discussed and all the men agreed that the Rocher River fishermen did not want to fish through the ice. They would rather spend the time on their trap lines, particularly since the price of fur is so high.⁶⁴⁴

With reference to the previous trapping season, Superintendent Leask, in 1964:

. . . pointed out that Chief King, Councillor Petit-Jean and other members of the Band had been successful in trapping this **fall**.⁶⁴⁵

Alexander King, the then Chief of Fort Resolution, alluded to the continuing caribou hunt in his 1967 letter of resignation:

My reason resigning from the Chief from this day on, August 23, 1967.

I That I am old and tired. And I feel it is time that the younger take on responsibilitys[.]

II My people no longer have respect for me. I try to show them by going out and trapping and hunting for myself.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴³ Johnston, G. L. (1963). Minutes of the Resolution Band Council Meeting Fort Resolution, N.W.T., July 24, 1963. In LAC, Indian and Northern Affairs: Band Council Meeting Minutes - Ft. Resolution, Jan 61 - June 68, RG 10, Volume 1, File E-191/-3-13-14, Accession E-2000-00328-1, Box 7. p. 1.

⁶⁴⁴ Leask, J. D. (1963). Minutes of a Band Meeting held in Rocher River, October 7, 1963. In LAC, Indian and Northern Affairs: Band Council Meeting Minutes - Ft. Resolution, Jan 61 - June 68, RG 10, Volume 1, File E-191/-3-13-14, Accession E-2000-00328-1, Box 7. p. 1.

⁶⁴⁵ Leask, J. D. (1964). Minutes of a Band Meeting held in Fort Resoution, December 7, 1964. In LAC, Indian and Northern Affairs: Band Council Meeting Minutes - Ft. Resolution, Jan 61 - June 68, RG 10, Volume 1, File E-191/-3-13-14, Accession E-2000-00328-1, Box 7. p. 1.

⁶⁴⁶ King, A. (1967). Letter to Mr. Greyeyes, Indian Affairs Branch, from Alexander (Alexandre) King, Aug. 23, 1967. In LAC, Indian and Northern Affairs: Band Council Meeting Minutes - Ft. Resolution, Jan 61 - June 68, RG 10, Volume 1, File E-191/-3-13-14, Accession E-2000-00328-1, Box 7. p. 1.

1960–1969: Rocher River

As has been demonstrated, during the 1960's, the caribou hunt continued to occur and the DKFN of Fort Resolution and Rocher River continued to live off the land. During this period of time a change in the organization of the DKFN took place. Rocher River, pre-1960, was linked to Fort Resolution. Members of both communities, for the most part, belonged to the same band. In 1960, the Rocher River school burned down. As was typical of rural schools in Canada, the Rocher River school had both low enrolment and at times low attendance rates.

In 1955, eleven “non-white” children attended the Rocher River School, and in 1956, seventeen Indian children were listed as pupils.⁶⁴⁷ By 1958, R. Westwater, the Superintendent of Schools for the Northern Administration and Lands Branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, reported being shocked at the condition of the school in Rocher River and was unimpressed with the teacher, Mr. Guthrie. He stated that Mr. Guthrie claimed to have been able to muster only three students, one of whom was his own son, and reported that “most of the children had gone to the bush with their parents.”⁶⁴⁸ The condition of the school was also poor because the government had allowed it to deteriorate. Westwater wrote:

In discussing the matter with Mr. Harrington, Indian Agent, I find that the Department of Indian Affairs would be quite happy to **transfer the dozen families at Rocher River to Fort Resolution . . .**⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁷ Bellavance, N. (1955). Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Northern Administration and Lands Branch, Monthly Report, for the Rocher River School, N.W.T., March 31st, 1955. In Northern Affairs: Government School - Rocher River, NWT, 1955-1964, RG 85, Volume 1438, File 630/102-1, Part 1; Bellavance, N. (1956). Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Northern Administration and Lands Branch, Monthly Report, for the Rocher River School, March 31st, 1956. In Northern Affairs: Government School - Rocher River, NWT, 1955-1964, RG 85, Volume 1438, File 630/102-1, Part 1. pp. 1-2.

⁶⁴⁸ Westwater, R. (1958). Memorandum for Mr. J. V. Jacobson, Chief, Education Division, Re: Rocher River, from R. Westwater, Superintendent of Schools, Northern Administration and Lands Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, April 22nd 1958. In Northern Affairs: Government School - Rocher River, NWT, 1955-1964, RG 85, Volume 1438, File 630/102-1, Part 2.

⁶⁴⁹ Westwater, R. (1958). Memorandum for Mr. J. V. Jacobson, Chief, Education Division, Re: Rocher River, from R. Westwater, Superintendent of Schools, Northern Administration and Lands Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, April 22nd 1958. In Northern Affairs: Government School - Rocher River, NWT, 1955-1964, RG 85, Volume 1438, File 630/102-1, Part 2.

In April 1958, prior to the school burning down, the DIA agents had contemplated moving the community to Fort Resolution. Deliberation involving either rebuilding the school or moving the community would remain a point of discussion until the fire destroyed the school in March 1960. The Chief Superintendent of Schools, W.G. Booth, reported:

On February 18 Mr. Bishop wrote the Fort Smith office requesting that a survey of the school population be carried out at the above two centres **with the object of determining whether they should continue to operate for the school year 1960-61. The burning of the school at Rocher resolved that problem** and it will be necessary, of course, to have **any pupils from Rocher River register in the hostel and attend Fort Smith school. This is in line with previous recommendations.**⁶⁵⁰

On July 7th 1960, P.X. Mandeville, the Game Management Officer, wrote to Mr. A.H. Needham (the Acting Chief Superintendent of Schools at Fort Resolution), noting that the destruction of the school had not in fact solved the problem. Despite the attendance records taken earlier, which had listed only three school-age children in Rocher River, Mandeville recorded seventeen Treaty Indian children.⁶⁵¹ He also stated:

On my last trip to Rocher River during the last week in June, all the trappers were visited, they all want a school at Rocher River this winter, **they are willing to bui[l]d a log house for school at their expense**, provided the Educational Board would furnish a teacher, and some lumber to finish the house for floor, roof, etc. . . . The people of Rocher River do not want to send their children to other schools so they want a school at Rocher.⁶⁵²

Over the next several years a long and unproductive debate took place within Indian Affairs. The Northwest Territories Council discussed whether to replace the Rocher River school or to

⁶⁵⁰ Booth, W. G. (1960). Memorandum for the Administrator of the Mackenzie, Fort Smith, N.W.T., Attn: Mr. G. Needham, A/Chief Superintendent of Schools, from W.G. Booth, 9 March, 1960. In Northern Affairs: Government School - Rocher River, NWT, 1955-1964, RG 85, Volume 1438, File 630/102-1, Part 2.

⁶⁵¹ Mandeville, P. X. (1960). Letter to Mr. A. H. Needham, A/Chief Supt of Schools, from P.X. Mandeville, Game Management Officer, with attachment: List of Children at Rocher River, July 7, 1960. In Northern Affairs: Government School - Rocher River, NWT, 1955-1964, RG 85, Volume 1438, File 630/102-1, Part 2. p. 2.

⁶⁵² Mandeville, P. X. (1960). Letter to Mr. A. H. Needham, A/Chief Supt of Schools, from P.X. Mandeville, Game Management Officer, with attachment: List of Children at Rocher River, July 7, 1960. In Northern Affairs: Government School - Rocher River, NWT, 1955-1964, RG 85, Volume 1438, File 630/102-1, Part 2. p. 1.

leave it as was. The Administrator of the Mackenzie District stated that “the population was still decreasing and now there is only one family left in this settlement.”⁶⁵³ The Director of the Northern Administration Branch forwarded these comments to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories in a recommendation against reconstructing the school. On June 7th 1966, Commissioner B.G. Simpson replied, “I agree. Drop the matter.”⁶⁵⁴

In 1968, the Commissioner for the NWT summarized the events at Rocher River. He stated that after the Department of Indian Affairs had decided not to reconstruct the school, many of the children had the opportunity to move away from Rocher River into foster homes in the neighbouring communities:

In the early 1950's, after determining that the potential school age population at Rocher River would be approximately thirty-five, the Indian Affairs Branch constructed a two-classroom school in the settlement. After 1956, however, the school enrollment began to show a marked decline—only nine pupils registered in September 1957, and the average daily attendance dropped to three in April 1958. As a result of this, serious consideration was given to closing the school and, following its destruction by fire in 1959 [sic], the department decided not to rebuild until there was a sufficient school age population . . . The latest review of the situation took place in September 1968 and at that time there were two school-age children in the settlement. These children and any others in the environs of Rocher River have the opportunity to attend school in Fort Resolution where they would be accommodated in foster homes, or in Fort Smith, where they would be assigned to a pupil residence.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵³ Administrator of the Mackenzie District as cited in Director of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Northern Administration Branch. (1966). Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Replacement of Rocher River School, June 3, 1966. In LAC: Government School - Rocher River, NWT (Indian School). 1964-1968, RG 85, Volume 1465, File 630/102-1, Part 1.

⁶⁵⁴ Simpson, B. G. as cited in Director of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Northern Administration Branch. (1966). Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Replacement of Rocher River School, June 3, 1966. In LAC: Government School - Rocher River, NWT (Indian School). 1964-1968, RG 85, Volume 1465, File 630/102-1, Part 1.

⁶⁵⁵ Commissioner of the N.W.T. (1968). Director of Operations Economic Development Branch: Attention: D.W. Smith, October 21, 1968. In LAC: Government School - Rocher River, NWT (Indian School). 1964-1968, RG 85, Volume 1465, File 630/102-1, Part 1. p. 1.

Many of the families with children did eventually move. The closure of the school, the closure of the Hudson's Bay Company store in 1959, and presence of the Indian Agent in Fort Resolution (along with the promise to provide free housing), drove those remaining at Rocher River to move to Fort Resolution and other communities around Great Slave Lake.

In 1967, the previous year, Dragan Radojicic, the Chief of the Industrial Division of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, had described the above events. He drew a similar connection between the burning of the Rocher River School and the peoples' movement outward. He stated rather simplistically:

Early in 1960, the school burned down. This was the reason for the exodus of almost the whole population, mainly to the neighbouring settlement of Fort Resolution which demonstrates the peoples [*sic*] awareness of the importance of education for their children.⁶⁵⁶

The members of the Rocher River Band did not move solely for the sake of their children's education. When the school burned down and the Hudson's Bay Company store closed, they found that they could not remain. Rocher River was well situated for participation in a hunting, fishing, and trapping economy; however, the Rocher River people were placed in the position of having to relocate to other communities where there was a school, a place to trade their furs, and new homes provided by the government. Most of the Rocher River people moved to Fort Resolution, while the others moved to Snowdrift, Yellowknife, and Hay River. This division pushed some members of the Resolution Band, as the DKFN were called in 1961, toward other communities where familial ties may not have been as strong. The DKFN and the people of Rocher River were, and are, inextricably linked. Many continue to hunt near Rocher River to this day.

1970–1979

In 1973, June Helm described how the members of the Resolution Band (and later the DKFN) had a range that extended east past Fort Reliance and into the Barren Lands:

⁶⁵⁶ Radojicic, D. as cited in Evans, J. W. (1967). Rocher River - Economic Conditions, September 13, 1967. In LAC: Government School - Rocher River, NWT (Indian School). 1964-1968, RG 85, Volume 1465, File 630/102-1, Part 1. p. 2.

The peoples out of Resolution, by that I mean not Resolution but the little semi-permanent camps to the east such as Rocher River, would pass beyond the east arm of Great Slave Lake.

Yes, they [the peoples out of Resolution] would often pick up Snowdrift people, and Reliance is right there, they will go out beyond the bounds of the Caveat and the Treaty, and, in fact, Dogribs will come from this area and sometimes come from Rae and joint [*sic*] the Reliance people and move out to **Artillery Lake and further beyond**, so that right in this southern side which is beyond the Caveat boundary you would have at least two major areas of Chipewyan, those of the eastern sort, the Caribou Eater, and those of the western area, and let's include everybody from Resolution and Reliance, plus occasional Dogribs coming in to join them and occasionally Dogribs coming out of the central Dogrib region, and if they do not encounter in the **fall** caribou before they get to **Point Lake**, they may push beyond Point Lake, and it would be reasonable to do so and then they would be outside the boundary too. So you have got Dogribs in two ways who could go beyond the boundary. And there would be at least a couple of major areas of Chipewyans.⁶⁵⁷

Helm was convinced, from her observations, that intermarriage, tribal identity and common hunting grounds bound the people south of Great Slave Lake together. While they would venture to the north and northeast of the lake together, they separately gathered at various trading posts; consequently, the HBC and the DIA delineated them as different peoples:

Well, they are the same people. Resolution people, Snowdrift people, Rae people, Blanchett Lake people, the people focus at points of trade and who in the course of the **Winter** will be in full force because the animals are there.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁷ Supreme Court Reporters. (1973). Between: Chief Francois Paulette et. al., Applicants, -and- Her Majesty The Queen, Respondent, Volume II. p. 383.

⁶⁵⁸ Supreme Court Reporters. (1973). Between: Chief Francois Paulette et. al., Applicants, -and- Her Majesty The Queen, Respondent, Volume II. p. 384.

When pressed further on this point, Helm notes that Indians living in the Northwest Territories (and as far south as Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) would move from their traditional lands into the Barren Lands each **spring** in pursuit of caribou:

Yes, because in the Spring the caribou are coming from the west and from the south and moving up to their fawning grounds and the Indians are coming out into the barrens to meet them, and when they come first in the **Fall** and the caribou split into these great herds, the Indians in the Territories are into their deep forests after them and the Indians of Northern Alberta . . . and Saskatchewan and Manitoba would be in their areas.⁶⁵⁹

In other words, as Helm indicates in her testimony, the Indians of the Great Slave Lake region returned in the fall, with the caribou, to the wooded lands to the south, and broke into smaller groups at that time. While winter bands were discrete entities, in the summer, on the Barren Lands, all groups followed the caribou, their travels dictated by the herds' movements.

Conclusion

In their report on land use and occupation of the Barren Lands by the Chipewyans and Yellowknives, De Beers Canada has made the following claims based upon the work of David M. Smith:

According to Smith (1982), in the early contact period (1786 to 1890), there was no regional band term that referred to the people who occupied the lands around what is now Fort Resolution. After the fort was established in 1786, the Chipewyan began to refer to any Chipewyans that traded at Fort Resolution as Dene Nu Kwen, which translates as “Moose Deer Island House People” (Smith 1982). In 1856, Moose Deer Island began to be known as Mission Island because a mission house was built there by the Roman Catholic priest Faraud (Smith 1982).

Based on available literature, the Deninu Kué were a nomadic people whose lives focused on harvesting resources by hunting, fishing, and trapping in both forested and barrenland regions. The

⁶⁵⁹ Supreme Court Reporters. (1973). Between: Chief Francois Paulette et. al., Applicants, -and- Her Majesty The Queen, Respondent, Volume II. p. 387.

traditional territory of the Deninu Kué varied over time. A map included in Smith (1981) shows the territory of “Indian” people trading at Fort Resolution in 1825 . . . Based on the map, the territorial range expands into the North Slave Region. According to Smith (1982), the Chipewyans of Fort Resolution would travel at least once a year (typically in the fall) to the barrenlands to harvest caribou. Caribou would provide them with hides for clothing and tepees.

By the 1940s, the range that the Chipewyans would travel was drastically reduced to include just the southern parts of Great Slave Lake, including parts of the East Arm (Smith 1982). Smith also reported that some Deninu Kué men would sometimes make arrangements with people from Łutselk'e to trap for white fox in the barrenlands (Smith 1982). The range of people trading at Fort Resolution shifted to be just around the fort.⁶⁶⁰

As this report demonstrates, these claims do not, in fact, represent the true history of the Chipewyans and Yellowknives on the Barren Lands. A detailed examination of the Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company archival documents, European explorers' accounts, and archival material from the Department of Indian Affairs from contact until the 1970s tells a very different story. During that period, the Chipewyans and Yellowknives consistently and regularly hunted caribou in the Barren Lands. In good years, when caribou were plentiful, the Chipewyans and Yellowknives were able to remain on the Barren Lands without having to travel to the forts to trade. This was a regular occurrence until the end of the 19th century. However, when the caribou herds failed to appear, as they sometimes did, and hunting restrictions were drafted and enforced, the Chipewyans and Yellowknives were forced into both wage labour and travelling much further afield to continue their hunt. Nonetheless, they continued to fill the Fort Resolution freezer with caribou meat year after year.

When the herds failed to appear, or the imposition of game laws and reserves prevented them from hunting on the Barren Lands, the Chipewyans adapted, as necessary (often doing so illegally). This adaptation was never the result of choice but was forced upon them by

⁶⁶⁰ De Beers Canada Inc. (2010). Annex M: Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Use Baseline. In *Gahcho Kué Project Environmental Impact Statement*. pp. M4-46 – M4-47.

circumstances beyond their control. The Gahcho Kué mine then is not simply a benign addition to a "barren," unused land; rather, it is the next event in the long history of the incremental destruction of a way of life.

The following chapter discusses the "war" of the 1820s between the Dogribs and the Copper Indians. Chapter VI describes the DKFN's use of the Barren Lands, and the region surrounding Gahcho Kué, in modern times. These accounts also cover the realm of oral history and thus span almost the entirety of the 19th and 20th century.