

**ACTIVITIES REPORT FOR JULY–DECEMBER 2016**  
PUBLISHED JANUARY 2017



## Summer 2016

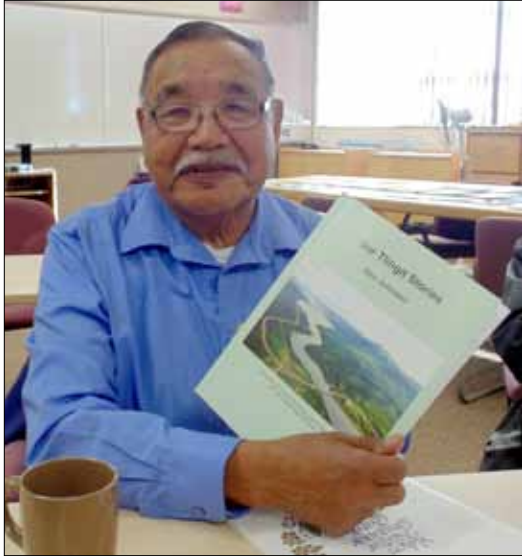
The summer months were busy and productive as staff wound up their material from the previous year's teaching and prepared for the fall sessions and the intake of new students.

In August, YNLC staff enjoyed collaborating with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to offer four-day workshops in Southern Tutchone in both Haines Junction and in Whitehorse, as part of CAFN's ongoing language revitalization program.

YNLC staff also participated in various courses, conferences and meetings in Yukon and Alberta relating to language development, learning and teaching.



*Dawson City showing the Tr'ondëk (Klondike River) entering the Yukon River. The area around the river mouth (Tr'ochek) was a very important salmon fishing place for the Hän people. The prominent slide in the background is known in the Hän language as Èdhà Dàdhèchan, (moose) skin hanging up.*



*Sam Johnston with his book and audio CD Four Tlingit Stories*

## **Four Traditional Tlingit Stories - book and audio CD**

Participants at the Tlingit Literacy Session at YNLC in October 2014 were privileged to hear Teslin Elder Sam Johnston, Ànàtahàsh, tell four traditional stories entirely in the Tlingit language: *Thunderbird; the Blind Man and the Loon; the Lonely Man and the Seagull; the Screech Owl and the Crow*. He also told each story again in English.

Sam Johnston worked extensively with Dr. Jeffry Leer, Professor Emeritus at UAF to transcribe and edit these texts. YNLC's Sheila Maissan word-processed and formatted them into word-for-word study texts and edited the sound files to produce the audio CDs of Sam's narration.

These stories are now available as a book and audio CD set. All participants at the Tlingit Literacy session were given copies as a gift.

## **Literacy and Documentation Sessions**

### **Tlingit Literacy Session**

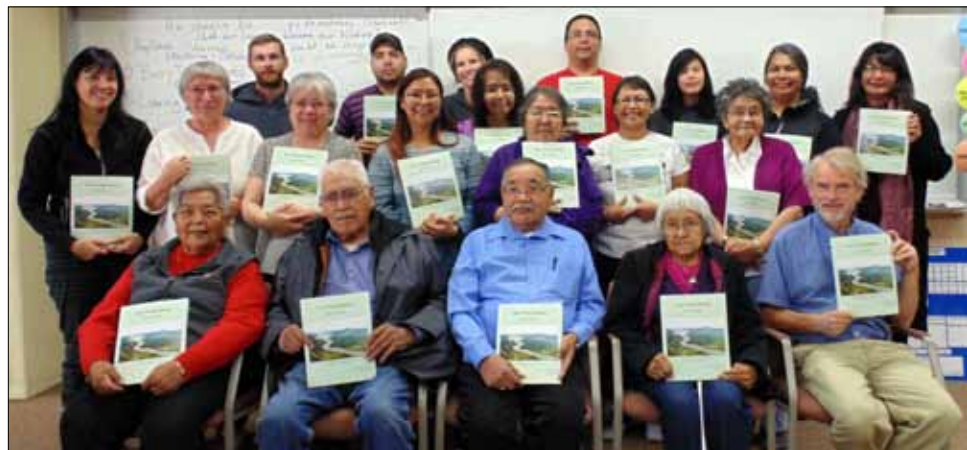
YNLC hosted an intensive Tlingit Literacy Session on October 12-13, 2016. With participants from Teslin, Carcross and Whitehorse, the different Tlingit dialects were contrasted throughout the session, which was led by guest instructor Dr. Jeff Leer.

The session started with the presentation of fluent Teslin Elder Sam Johnston's book and audio CD, *Four Tlingit Stories*. Participants listened to one the stories, K'ákw Kha Yêł (*The Screech Owl and the Crow*) and discussed its possible uses in teaching.

The verbs and question forms of "picking berries" was a focus of this session.

The Elders shared some of the formal vocabulary

*Participants at the Tlingit Literacy Session*



used only at potlatches, and told a traditional story about the origin of the potlatch. Jeff also shared the tribute he had given for the late Elder Emma Sam at a recent memorial potlatch in Teslin.

Gunat̨ch̨ish to Elders Bessie Cooley, Norman James, Sam Johnston, Jane Smarch and Winnie Atlin for their generous linguistic and cultural contributions.



*Participants at the Upper Tanana Literacy Session*

### **Upper Tanana Literacy Session**

On November 17 and 18, YNLC welcomed Upper Tanana speakers and learners from Beaver Creek, together with Elder Jenny Sanford from Mentasta Lake, Alaska.

One focus was on basic conversation in Upper Tanana. Participants also studied the subtle sounds of the L family and practiced making a listening exercise targeting these sounds. They wrote a prayer suitable for language learners and explored its vocabulary.

### **Gwich'in Literacy Session**

Participants for the three day Gwich'in session in November came from Old Crow, Fairbanks and Whitehorse.

The session began with discussions of traditional Gwich'in place names and their origins. YNLC has adapted a map of the traditional Gwich'in territory that can be used as a teaching tool. Participants then worked on the techniques for constructing a listening exercise and adapting it for different levels of fluency.



*Playing a language game at the Gwich'in Literacy Session*

Syntax and vocabulary covered included setting traps, the movement of caribou, and making snowshoes, plus the use of indefinite prefixes. The traditional way of making fire with flint was explored and participants shared Katherine Peter's story of *The Wolverine and Lady Lynx*.

## Hän Literacy Session

Learners and speakers came from Dawson City and Whitehorse for the November Hän session. Participants worked on verb conjugations, discussed naming buildings and shared personal names. They worked on a porcupine story and discussed the Gwich'in and Hän liturgical traditions and prayers.

Founding Director John Ritter shared a photo album of a 1995 Hän Literacy session that YNLC hosted in Dawson City. Percy Henry was already a model speaker for that generation of learners and we honour his continued contributions today.



*Percy Henry and Titus David at the 1995 YNLC Hän session in Dawson City*



*Participants at the 2016 Hän Literacy Session*

## Tagish Language Group

On November 21 the Centre hosted a meeting of people interest in studying and revitalizing the Tagish language. Staff gave the group an overview of the written and recorded Tagish material that was entrusted to YNLC by such speakers as the late Elders Lucy Wren and Angela Sydney.

## Teacher Training

Faculty Advisors Mary Jane Allison and Gina Alaric have worked closely with all the trainees in their individual teaching programs as well as at YNLC. Their visits to schools and First Nation programs are summarized under *Program Consultations*.



participants had the opportunity to make their own paper-based teaching tools.

Linguistic topics covered included stops and affricates; places of articulation; word order and person markers; positional phrases; and listening exercises incorporating all the languages in the room.



*Diploma Training Session participants*

Participants and staff discussed how to choose and carry out the Individual Project required for the Diploma. Each trainee planned and gave a demonstration lesson and was given private feedback.

## **CYFN General Assembly**

YNLC Acting Director Dr. André Bourcier attended the meetings and discussions at the General Assembly held at Airport Lake on June 28-30 hosted by the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. Dr. Doug Hitch and Sheila Maissan set up and staffed a table displaying YNLC's language materials.



*Dr. Doug Hitch with the display of YNLC story books at the CYFN General Assembly*

## **Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Collaboration**

YNLC collaborated with CAFN to offer courses in Southern Tutchone in August. CAFN initiated a summer language revitalization program

consisting of a series of week-long intensive language courses. YNLC partnered with CAFN in offering two of these sessions: August 8-11 in Haines Junction and August 16-19 in Whitehorse. Participants included Chief Steve Smith, Elders, employees of Dá Kù Cultural Centre, members of the summer EOP crew, citizens of CAFN, children involved in a summer day camp and local community members.



*YNLC's Mary Jane Allison  
and Loretta Jensen*

Diploma graduate Amanda Workman teamed with YNLC's Mary Jane Allison and Loretta Jensen to develop and deliver the week-long sessions. Curriculum planning was done in consultation with Khashâ Reid, who led the earlier sessions. The teaching team was supported by language experts Lorraine Allen, Bertha Moose, and Margaret Workman.

The learning environment was fun and relaxed and many participants expressed their enthusiasm for the opportunity to learn their language.

## **Dept. Ed. Summer Academy**

YNLC's Gina Alaric, Mary Jane Allison and Loretta Jensen participated in the Summer Academy offered by the Department of Education on Aug 24-25. The focus of the Academy was the curriculum redesign being implemented throughout Yukon schools, which will impact the native language teachers. YNLC staff, between them, attended the sessions relating to all grade levels and will adapt their own

teaching methods to reflect the new curriculum.

## **Publications**

Our primary publication this fall was *Four Tlingit Stories* by Elder Sam Johnston. Work continues in an updated version of *Tagish Place Names* by the late Elder Angela Sidney. The reports from the fall literacy sessions will be available shortly.

YNLC is working on compiling all our language materials from literacy sessions into useful, searchable pdf format. We have almost completed a prototype of the Southern Tutchone materials from 2003 onwards. The intent is to make this tool available to language teachers and learners, and potentially post it to the redesigned ynlc website.

## **Options for Future Governance of YNLC**

A Review Committee, consisting of high level representatives from CYFN, Yukon College, Dept. Education and YNLC met over the summer to discuss options for the future governance of YNLC. The report was completed in September 2016.

## **Long Service Award**

In November YNLC Acting Director Dr. André Bourcier was recognized by the Yukon Government for his fifteen years of service at YNLC. André joined YNLC as a linguist in 2001 and has worked in all Yukon's languages, leading literacy and training sessions, recording fluent speakers and transcribing and editing their work. He has been Acting Director of YNLC since September 2015.

## Farewell to Dr. Doug Hitch

At the end of August YNLC said farewell to YNLC linguist Dr. Doug Hitch as he moved to Ontario. In his twenty years of service at YNLC Doug has combined his expertise as a linguist with his technical expertise with web-based materials.

Doug has recorded many fluent speakers, transcribed their words and edited the sound files for use in teaching and learning. He accepted the challenges of keeping the written material in Yukon languages accessible through the rapidly changing electronic world.

Loretta Jensen has now been confirmed as YNLC's technical linguist. She has been working at the Centre since spring.

## YNLC and the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board

For many years YNLC has worked with the YGPNB to record and document traditional native language place names, and has collaborated in aerial photo shoots to document these places. The huge task of digitizing the entire collection of landscape photos taken over the years by photographer Wayne Towriss is now complete.

## Planning for Spring 2017

The Yukon Native Language Centre and individual teachers are currently making plans for the spring sessions for teacher training, and for literacy training for Southern Tutchone, Northern Tutchone, and Kaska. Please contact YNLC for updates on scheduling. We look forward to Yukon College graduation on May 19.

## How To Reach Us

If you would like more information on the Centre's programs, or would like to order our publications, please consult our website, [ynlc.ca](http://ynlc.ca), or contact us by:

- local telephone at (867) 668-8820
- toll-free 1-877-414-9652
- fax at (867) 668-8825
- email at [info@ynlc.ca](mailto:info@ynlc.ca)
- mail at:

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*Reorganising at YNLC*





## YNLC Training & Documentation Sessions

A National Vision for Indigenous Language Sustainability (ANVILS) Workshop, Edmonton	YNLC Participation	July 9-10
CAFN-YNLC Southern Tutchone Language Course, Haines Junction	Community Literacy	Aug 8-11
CAFN-YNLC Southern Tutchone Language Course, Whitehorse	Community Literacy	Aug 16-19
Y.G. Dept. Education Summer Academy	YNLC Participation	Aug 24-25
Language Policy and Planning Conference, University of Calgary	YNLC Participation	Sep 1-3
Certificate Training Course	Teacher Training	Sep 19-23
Diploma Training Course	Teacher Training	Oct 3-7
Tlingit Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	Oct 12-13
Upper Tanana Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	Nov 8-9
Tagish Language group	YNLC Participation	Nov 21
Gwich'in Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	Nov 22-24
Hän Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	Nov 29-30



*Grey Mountain from the YNLC library in November. In Southern Tutchone, Grey Mountain is known as The May.*

## Program Consultations

Tantalus School, Carmacks	N. Tutchone	Oct 17-18
Whitehorse Elementary School, Whitehorse	S. Tutchone	Oct 18
Eliza van Bibber School, Pelly Crossing	N. Tutchone	Oct 19
F. H. Collins Secondary School, Whitehorse	Tlingit	Oct 19
Takhini Elementary School, Whitehorse	S. Tutchone	Oct 21
Hidden Valley Elementary School, Whitehorse	S. Tutchone	Oct 24
Whitehorse Elementary School, Whitehorse	S. Tutchone	Oct 25
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in FN Language Program, Dawson City	Hän	Oct 25
Robert Service School, Dawson City	Hän	Oct 25
Jack Hulland Elementary School, Whitehorse	S. Tutchone	Oct 26
Chief Zzeh Gittlit School, Old Crow	Gwich'in	Oct 26-27
Teslin Elementary School, Teslin	Tlingit	Nov 3
Little Salmon Carmacks FN Language Program, Carmacks	N. Tutchone	Nov 4
Eliza van Bibber School, Pelly Crossing	N. Tutchone	Nov 14-18
Nelnah Bessie John School, Beaver Creek	Upper Tanana	Nov 15



*Publications Officer Sheila Maissan busy in her temporary workspace during YNLC renovations*



TOGETHER TODAY... FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW

**COUNCIL OF YUKON FIRST NATIONS**

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