



Family and Traditional Southern Tutchone Stories

Àshèniq
Bessie Allen
(1901 - 2005)

*Recorded and Transcribed by
Lorraine Allen*



Lorraine Allen grew up in the Haines Junction area and is a fluent speaker of Southern Tutchone. Her traditional Wolf Clan name is Chughala.

Lorraine has served for many years as Southern Tutchone Language Instructor at the Porter Creek and F.H. Collins High Schools in Whitehorse. Previously she taught at the elementary and junior-high levels.

She completed the Native Language Instructor Certificate Course at Yukon College in 1992. She subsequently completed the Diploma Course in 1994. In 1996 she completed the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Native Language Education at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In 1998 Lorraine received an Innovations in Teaching Award from the Yukon Department of Education.

Lorraine has authored a number of story books and a set of Language Lessons in her Aishihik dialect of Southern Tutchone, and is a regular participant at YNLC language sessions. She has mentored several Native Language Instructor Trainees.

December 2006



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Bessie Allen at the YNLC, 1995

Photo by Wayne Towriss, courtesy of the YNLC

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Preface.....	iii
Introduction.....	iv
Bessie Allen’s Family History	1
Living A Long Time Ago	7
Making Snares	8
Snaring Bears.....	11
Making Tools	12
Fishnets.....	13
Fish Traps.....	14
Things People Gathered.....	15
Lake Travel	16
Caribou Encounter	17
Making A Living In My Time.....	19
“You’re Smart Like Old People”	21
Traveling from Cultus Creek to Kloo Lake with your Father	23
We Might Not Have Been Born.....	25
Nisling River Childhood Travels	27
Starvation At Nisling River.....	37
Hunting Porcupine	43
Feeding People in Camp	47
A Successful Moose Hunt.....	48
Bear Encounter	50
Second Moose Hunt.....	51
Returning to Kloo Lake	53
Äsüya Straightens Out the World.....	55
The Girl Who Married a Bear.....	65
The Woman Thrown Away	69
Owl Story, Near Chädaya (Tincup Lake Area)	73

Table of Contents (cont)

Photos.....	77
Lists of Personal Names.....	89
Family Tree	97
Bessie Allen Family Tree	98
Jack Allen Family Tree	99
Lists of Place Names	
by Map Number Order.....	101
by English Names in Alphabetical Order	105
Map	108
Appreciation by Dr. Julie Cruikshank, Professor Emeritus, U.B.C.....	109
Tribute to Bessie Allen in Legislative Assembly, May 23, 2006	115
Tribute to Jack Allen in Legislative Assembly, March 26, 1997	119

Preface

I am very pleased to welcome the publication of this book of traditional aboriginal stories by the late Bessie Allen of the Champagne-Aishihik First Nation. She and her husband Jack Allen were a well-known and highly respected couple who lived a subsistence life-style well into their senior years.

Their many descendants will certainly be pleased with all the fine work that Lorraine Allen has devoted to transcribing and translating the tapes she made with her mother.

This book will serve as a fine addition to the repertoire of materials which can be used in classrooms throughout the Yukon. There is still a great need for books which tell our stories and our history from our own perspective.

I thank all those who made this book possible, especially the staff of the Yukon Native Language Centre who have assisted Lorraine in bringing the book to completion.

We hope you, the readers, will enjoy these stories.

Gunat̓ch̓sh,

Andy Carvill

Grand Chief

Council of Yukon First Nations

December 2006



TOGETHER TODAY... FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW

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Introduction

My mother, Bessie Allen, inspired me with the many stories and family history that she often told me. My mother lived a traditional life style well into old age, walking, driving dog teams or riding horses throughout our people's traditional area based along the Nisling River. I hope that others will be inspired by these stories just as I was.

I am the youngest daughter of Bessie and Jack Allen, one of the many great granddaughters of Chief Isaac of Aishihik. Chief Isaac had about 10 children, whose grandchildren make up the Aishihik First Nation. Annie Nicholas once said, "We all came from that one grandpa, which made us a nation." My traditional Wolf Clan name is Chughala.

My mother and I started recording her stories in the 1990s for the Yukon Native Language Centre. I have transcribed and translated a selection of them to share with everyone. There are also some family photos, lists of personal and place names and a map showing many of the places referred to in her stories. My sister Rosalie and cousin Audrey Brown have helped me over the years with my language.

I want to thank Director John Ritter and Mrs. Sheila Maissan at YNLC, and Dr. Julie Cruikshank of UBC, for their help in producing this book.

I realize there are slight variations in the Southern Tutchone names. These are based on the pronunciation in the tapes.

Kwà̀nìschis

Lorraine Allen

Chughala

December 2006

BESSIE ALLEN'S FAMILY HISTORY

My mother's name was **Ámą Kwànjia** (Sadie Roberts Isaac). My mother's mother's name was **Tsäl Kàya Mą**. She had no English name, just her Indian name. My mother's father's name was **Udzi Kì**.

That's the kind of names they named each other long ago, just like now they give them English names. It's not so long ago since white people came, and that's when they started to use English names. Long ago there were no white people. Since white people came, people got their names.

My mother's name was **Ámą Kwànjia** and your cousin Daisy has that name too. My sister Jessie's name was **Dálena** and her daughter Vera has that name too. My brother's name was **Sòthäna** and they gave that name to Daisy's brother, Walter David. Your sister Rosalie's name is **Kùk'way**. That's how we pass those names on.

My mother, **Ámą Kwànjia**, said her dad, **Udzi Kì**, was not very old when he died. They went to Big Tree Creek for fish. They put blankets over their head [to make it easier to see the fish]. That's what kind you have, the [spear head] I gave you. My mother's mother, **Tsäl Kàya Mą**, told him to wait till it warmed up, but he still went. My mother said she heard someone hollering so she went to see. He was waving his hand and threw away his blanket. He was choking when he fell. When she got to him blood was running from his mouth. My mother's mother (**Tsäl Kàya Mą**) said, "I told him to stay! 'Why you want to hunt fish? You don't like fish.'"

My father's name was **Kwàts'änlen**, Robert Isaac. His second name was **Läk'etlen**. He had two names. My father's mother's Indian name was **Mädàka** and she had two names: **Kùkaydadiya Mą** and **Tliyeą Mą**. My mother said they used to call her **Átsu Shāw** - that nickname means "Big Grandma" - because she was so big. She (**Mädàka**) had an older sister whose name was **K'ānchua Utsu**, and their mother was called **Gajel Utsu**. Those grandmas were really old when they died, both of them.

My father's mother, **Mädàka**, came from **Tátl'ashāw Män** (Mayo Lake). My father's father, **Nàshea** (Chief Isaac) brought his wife near Mayo. People said this Chief Isaac had four wives, and that he put them in each corner of his house. One time, my father asked him, "How could you buy stuff for all of them - like people buy stuff for their wives?" My father said his father told him, "My wives will buy stuff with the stuff they sew!"

My father had lots of brothers and sisters. There was Sam Isaac (**Ändatà**), Albert Isaac (**Kàmbäda**) and my father Robert Isaac. Eddy Isaac (**Gats'ada**) and Charlie Isaac were younger. His sisters were Daisy (**Tanādhät / Ts'änlän**) Lucy (**Nàkàda**), and Bessie (**Shajika / Shùndänjik**). **Shajika / Shùndänjik** was Jenny Moose's mother, so they also called her **Däts'e'ala Mą** (meaning "Jenny Moose's mother"). Long ago they gave them any kind of names. Even today it's the same. My father said his younger brothers always used to fight among each other. His father told them not to go away mad, you should solve the problem before something happens.

My parents, Robert Isaac and Sadie had lots of children, but not all of us lived. My oldest brother was named **Sòthāna** (that means "good person"). His

English name was Walter Roberts. After him came another brother, **Kwàtsāw'a Tà**, named after my mother's uncle. My brother Jimmy Roberts came next; his name is **Gemena**. He's named after Jimmy Johnson. My sister's name was **Dálena**. Her name was Jessie in English. Two others died, one was named **Äyānaye**, other one was **Kùk'way**.

Now, this is your dad's side. Your grandfather, Hutchi Allen (**Ts'egegia**) and Copper Joe left Alaska after an argument. They quarreled over cards. That's my husband Jack Allen's father, Old Allen. Copper Joe took him to Hutchi to find a wife. That's when Copper Joe said, "Let's go to Champagne there's lots of women there," he told him, Old Allen, **Ts'egegia**.

That's where they went - to Hutchi where people were living. Copper Joe told the people of Hutchi that **Ts'egegia** came for a wife. That's when he got married, a woman was given to him, that's what they used to do long time ago. Long ago it was the same. People traveled long ways to find a partner.

Then Copper Joe, Copper Jim and Copper Jack went back. Copper Jim and Copper Joe stayed in Burwash area. Copper Jack stayed in Lynx City. There's another person named Copper Joe, and he went to Fort Selkirk.

Your dad's (Jack Allen's) mother was from **Chuyena** (Hutchi, map #47). Her name was **Kāndhāda**. Later they named her 'Lilly' at a church in Champagne. Your grandpa saw her and he didn't want to leave her. She married your grandfather **Ts'egegia**. Your grandma's mother's name was **Shedāzhū Mā**. Her father's name was **Kokhāna**.

Copper Joe and the others went back to Burwash, after they found a wife for him. Your dad's parents lived at Hutchi a long time until all her children were born. When they left **Chuyena**, her parents told your grandpa, "Don't you take her past Burwash. You stay around there with her. We'll come to visit you there so you can hunt for us." So that's where they stayed then - around the mouth of Kluane River.

Kändhāda's mother told not to take her daughter back to Northway, that they are to stay on this side of the border. That's why he didn't take her back to Northway. They lived in a cabin where Kluane River runs into the Donjek River.

Ts'egegia and **Kändhāda** had lots of kids. Johnnie Allen was the oldest - his name was **Kwàts'āwa**. Next was your dad, Jack Allen, his name was **Äjukwänjā**. Next was Nellie Allen (Johnson). Next was Billy Allen, his name was **Nāzhia** (Paul Birckel was named after him). Next were Nellie's younger sisters, **Shānch'ea** and **Tsäl Drū**. Then came Lilly Allen (Birckel), whose name was **Kwāgaya**. The youngest was Jessie Allen (Johnson) named **Jesia**.

Your dad's uncle, who went to Carcross was **Mbäl K'enjita**. His English name is Big Lake Jim. He left long ago and he stayed there. He stayed with Old Man Johnson that time, since their mother died. That's when he went to Carcross. His brother was named **Gats'itā** and his English name is Big Lake Charlie. Big Lake Charlie didn't have any children. But Big Lake Jim had lots of children in Carcross, they told me.

It's not only nowadays people travel long ways to get married. Long ago it was like that too. Even today people from Old Crow have children in Whitehorse as well as here in Haines Junction too.

[YNLC tapes 2335, 2384, 2386]

LIVING A LONG TIME AGO

In my Grandma's time, people used to go for summer trip and hunting down through **Ushè Dät'äla** (Red Tail), past Big Arm (of Kluane Lake, map #29). That's when people killed moose with snares. After they snared them, they would use bow and arrow to kill the moose. They used to braid moose sinew (babiche) to make snares. That's how people survived long ago, by using snares. They also used bow and arrows. When they saw a moose close up, they would use bow and arrows. Sometimes they hit them on the bone, I guess. When they hit them between the ribs they would die.

They used moose ribs for knives long ago, it's a good shape for a knife. They used rocks to sharpen the moose ribs. That's what they used as knives.

At first, my grandfather was the only one who had big game snares. My grandmother would cut lots of wide babiche and braid three together to make snares. They would nail a pole across to another tree on the sheep trail, and then they would set the snare. Sheep used to come down low, that's where they would set sheep snares. He used his snares to kill sheep. He would check them all the time.

My grandfather said they used to skin a sheep out and then sew the meat up inside and pull it. They would haul it in a toboggan to a cache on the way to Aishihik through **Tthe Yì** (Gladstone Creek trail, map #33).

Making Snares

How Bessie Allen's grandfather taught Jack Allen's father to make sheep snares

Long time ago, my old grandpa, my father's father, **Nàshea**, was the only person that had sheep snares. When the sheep come down through the willows, when they come down to the salt lick – **älür nà'ür** – that's where they set snare for them.

My husband Jack Allen's daddy, **Ts'egegia** and his wife **Kändhāda** moved down that way from **Chuyena** (Hutshi, map # 47) to Kluane. My father and his dad came down to visit them and they showed them the sheep snare. They saw my grandpa making those snares. He twisted strips of moose skin, just like twisting sinew.

That's when **Ts'egegia** (Hutchi Allen) measured the snare [how far above the ground the snares had to be set to catch sheep]. Jack's mother watched. Then they started making snares. They set the snares on sheep trails after they saw my grandfather's snares, too. My grandma **Kändhāda** (Hutchi Allen's wife) made snares the same length. She made four snares. **Ts'egegia** walked around through the sheep trails where he set the snares. Sure enough, he said, there's one toggle missing, when he went up to check the snares. He caught two sheep the first time. All of sudden, he came back, packing a big pack pulling his shoulders backwards.

Your grandpa – your grandpa **Ts'egegia** – said that when he caught the sheep, it was tangled up in the willows – **kwàta tsàw**. When he came upon it, it was lying down peeking at him. He sure was proud. He just waved his hands around dancing. He was saying thank you I guess. He sure was happy. He said, "You did a good thing! You showed me how to make snares."

Long ago people used to wave their hands [with palms up, swaying side to side] to say thank you. Your grandma **Kändhäda** said, “Finally, you’re packing! What’s that you’re finally packing?” “Well, I finally snared a sheep.” He even prepared the stomach.

His wife laughed at him packing, when she told the story about him. From there on, they knew! Moose snares, too, they said people had two each.

People made moose snares the same way. They scrape the skin first, then cut it in strips and twist it. The snares are black, so the moose cannot see it. When you set the snares for moose, you set it the same far up [height] as a moose would stand, along the trails to the lakes, where moose go down for water. Sure is a nice place I saw down at McKinley [Creek], when your dad and I went through there. Sure was a nice place to set a snare, there was a nice trail down to the lake along side the river.

At Silver Creek, when we were snaring squirrels, your father and I found a place where someone had a snare. There were trees on the side of the moose trail, like fence. That’s where they set the snare. As the moose walks down to the water, it would get caught.

Jessie Jonathan caught a moose with a snare one time where she found a trail. It was during the winter. The moose had a trail down to the lake to eat grass on the lake shore. She said the moose always used that trail. She used just a plain cotton rope. People used to use thin cotton thread – the kind you use for sewing – to hold the snare in place. The dried snare was tied at the top, same height as a moose would walk. It would probably walk right into it, into that **shin’ay** snare (spring snare). That **shin’ay** snare was really long.

It was used the same way as a rabbit spring snare. That's the way they set the moose snares too. In winter, they used to come far to check the snares, before the moose would freeze in the snare. In the summer too, they check the snares quite often too. People used spears to kill long ago.

They made rabbit snares out of sinew also. I have **tth'emèn** (eagle feather snares), maybe they're old now. If they get dry, they break easy.

They even used sinew from rabbit legs, and made snares from that. Even when the sinews are short, they tied the sinews together and still used it. Then they set a snare stick close by the rabbit trail around the camp. They could hear the rabbits getting caught during the night.

Long time ago, they use to make packsacks out of caribou skin after they knit it. They stripped it and knit it, then it's like a fishnet. Then you put stuff in it after you make the straps, so you can pack it.

So, that's who showed them how to make snares – my grandfather, **Nàshea**. People used to set snares for sheep at **Cultus** [Creek], that's what they say. My grandfather's snare grounds were over there at Sheep Mountain. He used to set his snares for sheep through the willows that grew all the way down to Moose Lake, by the shore [Kluane Lake]. That's where my grandfather's snare places are.

At Silver Creek, one time, we came across a moose snare place. The trail came down through the trees along the hill ridge. The moose snare place was in a place where spruce trees grew close to both sides of the trail. I wanted to take Jimmy there but didn't have time - the rotten poles are probably still there. I forgot where it is now.

Snaring Bears

People made bear snares too. One time, Tom Tomma caught a big bear, fat one. They said he set the snare down low, where he came across the bear trail. It was in the fall. When he went to check his snares along the river on bear trails, he found a sow and two cubs. The bear was getting ready for winter, bringing food to its den. He said it was really fat. When my mother went to visit them, they were drying lots of bear fat. Joe Tom Tom's mother was cutting up bear meat and sharing it with all those who eat bear meat, just like sharing moose meat.

They were busy storing fat (grease) in a bladder bag. It's the same as a moose bladder bag. People used to wash it out, blow it up and dry it to store grease. Whenever people got fat, that's what they used to do - make grease. Same as the skin that comes from around the moose heart, it is like a bladder bag, it can also be used to store crackling for the winter.

Tom Tomma's wife dried and smoked the bear skin. After his wife put it in the water he scraped it and scraped it. Bear skin tans fast because it is so greasy and thin. The bear skin is not thick around the leg or the back part. Whenever we moved camp he would unfold the bearskin and smoke it and scrape it. As soon as we camped he already had black smoke going up. After he smoked it he folded it up and tied it up. Nowadays people don't do things like that.

Tom Tomma used to wear a bearskin jacket, you could see the heat coming from him. People used to sew a thin blanket lining on the inside of bear skin jackets. The bear fur must be really warm. The bear cubs skins were used for hats. The skins were very thin and had short fur. He made a fur cap. When he dressed up, he looked like a bear. That's the first person I saw wear bear skin

clothes. Mrs. Tom Tom sewed the clothes up for him and with the scraps of bear skin she made mitts for her children, Joe Tom Tom and Johnnie Tom Tom. They dried and smoked the bear fat. They cached it at a food cache. They said, “We’ll pick it up on our way back.” The fat is just like moose stomach fat.

Tom Tomma always stayed at Aishihik with people. He’s never quiet. Once he shouted loud at baby rabbits under a dead tree and all the baby rabbits ran away. His wife said, “Gee, what’s wrong with him? What is he shouting for?” Here he was picking up rabbits! He shouted so loud that the rabbits were scared to death.

Making Tools

Copper too, they could get it from a mountain past White River. They call that mountain **Chatsàn Dhäl**. Copper is called **chatsàn**. My mother said there is lots of copper at the mountain they used to travel to by White River. It’s very heavy, she said, and they used to pack it back to Aishihik. People stayed at the base of that mountain. There’s a trail to the mountain – that’s what my mother’s mother said when she told me the stories.

That’s when people first found out how to make copper knives. They flattened it with rocks and made it pointed. They just kept smashing it until it is long and flat. They shaped it like moose ribs to make long knives. They could make anything into a knife if they sharpened it up with rocks. They also made arrow heads, really sharp.

They said when white people came, they gave them files (**k’edà**). With that it was easy to make copper knives. They also made small knives to eat meat. My mother said her father had lots of small knives. He kept them in skin pouch.

Even Champagne people traveled to that Copper Mountain. There's probably copper knives still at their old campsites. If someone was to go back there, they would probably find some.

There's also this rock they called **yatthena** (flint) – it's long in shape. There's lots around Silver Creek, at the end of the hill. I wanted to look for that kind of rock (flint). We brought some back long ago but someone took them. They used a piece of metal to strike it, to get sparks. My father made arrow heads out of flint.

They used rock for axes long ago, too. They would look for a wedge-shaped rock and shape it by hitting it with another rock until it's sharp. Then they filed it with flat rocks. They chopped trees down with that kind of axe. That's how they survived by making tools, my mother said her grandfather told her.

Fishnets

My mother said they made fishnets up there past Burwash. When they killed a moose they twisted sinew. The people who got moose legs made longer fishnets. There's lots of sinew on the leg parts. Moose front shoulder sinew thread makes long fishnets, people say. People gave front shoulder away, that's what they used to make long fishnets, because the leg has lots of sinew threads.

Oh my, my mother made really long sinew thread. She joined the threads together to make a long fishnet. This kind of fishnet is set during the night and pulled out early in the morning. The fishnet is dried during the day so the knots will not come apart, sinew fishnet. They keep doing that, adding more to make it long.

Whoever had a fishnet caught fish, she said, and it was distributed among the people. They kept making the fishnets longer but she said they didn't make them too long because when fishnets get wet, the knots may come out.

They usually set the nets at night. They would get up early in the morning to check them. Then they dried them out that day and set it back again that evening. They gave out fish they caught. That's how people survived those days. Nowadays everything is available, even fishnet.

Fish Traps

Long time ago the fish traps were long, not like a box. The front of the trap was oval shaped, where the fish swim into it. It was five to seven feet long. They peeled young spruce trees to make fish traps, and they tied small willows in between the young spruce. Then they tied the tail end up.

They carried around clubs made from antlers. Two or three people stood at the tail end of fish trap spearing the fish as they came out. The hole at the end of the trap was just big enough for a king salmon to come through. They strung the fish as they clubbed them. It sure was hard times.

Nowadays they have fish traps, like the ones in Klukshu. It was just in Aishihik that they made these cone-shaped fish traps. They tied up the tail end then put it in the creek. The fish would swim into the trap during the day. There were lots of fish there at Nisling River. We made lots of fish there, with **Shänlaya** that time.

Champagne people used to live on salmon only from Klukshu. Jimmy Kane's father (Joe Kane) went hunting with people at Aishihik. That's where they

showed him how to hunt, and from there on Champagne people started hunting moose.

Things People Gathered

People also picked black round knots off the poplar trees called **tth'ithi**, dried knots. They put **tth'ithi** in a pile with aged spruce sap and used flint to start a fire. They also carried around dried grass to help start a fire. They had this knowledge of starting a fire long, long ago.

Once they started a fire, the others in the camp got their fire from that one. When people moved, they got a piece of wood with the center rotten to carry the spark. That's what my mother said, even though she never saw it done herself. When the rotten wood burned out, they would look for another wood with a rotten center. When they camped they would put lots of wood over that one they carried to make a large fire.

When people ran out of tea, they would pick up a plant from the ground. It's flat shaped and grows in swampy area. That too, they dried. Sue (Van Bibber) and them still boil that kind of tea. They mix some in with regular tea - Sue says it is good. That's what people use when they run out of tea during their summer travel. When people run out of tea they drink anything, even spruce bark tea. People travel from spring time - June - and when they travel, they dry lots of fish for dogs. The dogs pack it back. People chop the fish into two pieces and feed it to dogs. Nowadays even dogs have big stomachs, and eat lots. Long ago people used to throw them just rabbit legs. Even so they were still fat.

People fed tree fungus, **ts'u dzay**, to puppies. They cut it up and mixed it with their food. That's what kept dogs fat long ago. Even if they don't eat anything else.

Long ago people used to club ducks when they were molting. There was no 'twenty-two' (rifle) long ago. That's what people around there lived on, they said. People used to go there for molting ducks, **ut'a ädazhal**. They went there with boats, they called that lake **Chukwa Mān** (Wellesley Lake, map # 1). Maybe they got young ducks too. People say when the ducks change feathers, they can't fly. They say those ducks are **k'ànäts'äl**, flopping around. They would club them and fill up the boat. People went there to get ducks.

Lake Travel

Your great-grandfather **Nàshea** used to take people across Kluane Lake by Sheep Mountain with a huge poplar tree boat. There used to be large poplars growing there. He would hollow out a tree to make a canoe. He used that canoe to haul sheep meat - dried sheep meat from Sheep Mountain - when we stayed on the other side of Kluane Lake. Your great-grandfather would be gone for days making a boat over by Cultus Creek. After people dried sheep meat, your great-grandfather hauled it across the lake. The people stayed over there with the meat so nothing would take the meat. Your great grandfather would be busy hauling meat with his canoe. When a wind blows he would come to shore.

My father also made a large raft at Slims River, where the spruce trees are below the old bridge. We used to live there. They made trips with people, meat and their stuff. The raft was very strong. They built the raft three logs high, and that way it was strong. You could put lots of stuff on it but the raft still floated up high out of the water. They even made paddles for it, tied it on a y-shaped wood [as oar-locks]. When they first started off it was slow, but it picked up speed. The last time we did that, some white men told us they were going to make a bridge. After the bridge was built it was easy to bring sheep meat across.

Caribou Encounter

I'll tell you about one caribou my father killed. My father said he shot two caribou and was cutting one up. He said he heard something breathing behind him so he looked back. Of a sudden the caribou lifted him up in its antlers. He was bending over skinning the caribou when it picked him up. He said he grabbed onto the antlers thinking, "that caribou might fall on my legs." He just sat on the antlers while the caribou ran. Finally it was getting tired. The caribou started lowering its head. He thought it's time to stab him. Then he thought, no. He thought, "I'll wait until it is really tired, until it goes down on its knees." As soon as the caribou put its head down he cut the windpipe, **udhèl**. He said he jumped off fast and moved away from it.

[YNLC tapes 2333, 2334, 2384, 2385, 2386]

MAKING A LIVING IN MY TIME

My mother could do just about everything!

People did all kinds of things to make a living.

My mother hunted gopher with us, with **Shänlaya** and me, up at **Kanday Kì** (a hill just north of Aishihik) and through the hills around there. She showed us how to skin gophers too. At first, she would start it for us. She showed us how to prepare them and smoke them. My mother broke the gopher's ribs back so it would lie flat. Then she scraped the ribs so they would dry quick. She set them upright just ready to cut for smoking. Then **Shänlaya** and I sewed the gophers together with young spruce roots.

My mother prepared the roots by splitting them and rolling it up before a gopher hunt. That's when she made us pull spruce roots. That's what we used to sew the gophers together. After we sewed them together we hung them up - just like blankets hanging there. A blanket of gophers sewed that way can be folded up. It can fit into one side of a dog pack, and the rest are folded into the other side. Even if it's very heavy, the dogs would pack them.

As we traveled, we camped. Whenever we camped, we would hang up the gophers again. We used to hang them up on smoke racks. That's how we stored gophers for winter. The meat does not go rotten that way. It's as big as a blanket after it is sewn together. My mother used to sharpen the ends of the spruce roots like a needle, that's how we sewed them together. We made lots of gopher blankets that time.

When we came back to camp, my mother cut out moccasins for us. She taught us how to sew high tops on the moccasins for wintertime. **Shänlaya's** mother

would come to get her, and she would ask my mother, “How did you learn how to do these things?”

My mother said that before her, people used to make small moccasin tongues with round soles. She said she was the one who started making large moccasin tops and different soles - like today’s moccasins. She was the first woman to cut large tops out and made them the way they do now. She cut them out with the small knives her father made. People asked her how she thought of making moccasins like that. She said she thought she wanted to do something different. My mother said her dad made an awl for her – a skin puncher. He made it from the smaller leg bone of a lynx’s hind leg. She used that awl to punch holes and to sew around the moccasin edge.

That’s how people started making moccasins this way. A long time ago, they used to make small moccasin tongues. They sewed skin around under the small tongue. Some people in different areas still make moccasins the old way.

As soon as my grandfather, my mother’s father **Udzi Kì** killed a lynx, he made awls. A lynx bone is same size as a regular awl. They filed it to a point. He said, “My daughter is getting married.” So he gave her two awls. They didn’t have scissors in those days. My mother said she cut the moccasin patterns out on a flat wood with a sharp knife. She said they sold one awl for one tanned moose hide.

People asked her how she sewed around her moccasins. They asked her to see it – the awl. Pardon Kane’s father’s name was Joe Kane, and he told my mother to give an awl to his wife for a price of one skin. She told him, “My father just gave it to me.” But she said she gave it to him for one moose skin. A tanned moose hide. Then Bobby Kane’s mother brought two tanned moose hides for two awls.

When we were ready to go back to Aishihik – my mother and **Shänlaya** and I – we started picking berries. My mother and Daisy’s mother stayed there making birch baskets. They stayed there making baskets with Elsie’s mother. They were also picking berries too. When Bessie Crow (**Shänlaya**) and I picked a basket full of berries, we would give it to my mother to sew the lids on and then we would cache them. They were very heavy and they froze during the fall. During the winter when we took those berries out, they sounded just like dog food bouncing into a dish - that’s when they’re frozen. When blueberries are cached that way, they don’t get squished. Any kind of berries are cached for the winter. Then people go and get them during the winter time. When Annie (Charlie) was a teenager she used to come with us berry picking.

At the same time, we dried moose meat where the moose were killed. We would carry everything back to our cache. We used trees to cover up the food cache, and that way nothing bothered it.

“You’re Smart Like Old People”

Your Dad and I hunted for your grandparents (Jack Allen’s parents) where they lived down at “Salmon Patch.”

We used to follow the Kluane River to Donjek River where the two rivers flow into each other. We traveled with dog teams. Where those rivers meet, down river quite a ways on the Donjek River, there was a bluff that sheep used to climb. We climbed those mountains to kill sheep. There was no bridge yet. That’s where your dad hunted sheep, because your grandma didn’t eat moose meat. He hunted sheep for them. He kept his dog team at the bottom of the bluff and climbed up to the sheep for them.

Your grandmother (Jack's mother) once said to me. "You're sure smart like the old people!"

When your father and I were trapping north of Burwash, your father killed a moose on the trap line and I stored lots of grease in a dried bladder bag. I took the moose heart bag and pulled all the fat around it off and blew that bag up and dried it. Then I made crackling and put it in the moose heart bag. When we came back to your dad's mother's camp I took all this grease and fat (crackling) out for them. She was surprised, she said, "What's that?" I stored sheep fat, too, for them!

One time, we were waiting for the supply man. We were short of tea and sugar. Your dad told them when he was in Burwash that we needed tea, sugar and rice. He also thought that your grandparents were out of tea and sugar too, since they lived a long ways up.

Sure enough, the supply man who worked for Jean Jacquot came in the late evening - his name was Ollie Wickstrom. The dogs started barking, he shouted up at us, "I got your tea and all your order." He was hollering from the river. We lived on top of the bank in a tent. He said, "Come down and help me bring some stuff up."

The supply man stayed with us that night. He told my husband, "I saw lots of sheep cross up by where your father lived. I was looking around for people [to help], but then I thought, 'Who am I looking for? I'm traveling by myself. I can't do anything. The sheep would freeze up if I shot them.' So I went right past them."

We sent back some sheep meat and fat with the supply man to your grandma at Salmon Patch.

That's when your dad kept going up the mountain. I stayed home preparing meat and fat to send to your grandma. Your father said that when he brought the sheep meat and fat into her, she was really pleased. She said, "Oh, my grandchild!" The grease I sent was in a bladder bag.

She said she hurried and cooked the sheep ribs for your grandfather. He was cutting wood up back. He said, "What is that you're cooking?" She said "I told him, 'It's meat that our son sent us.'" She said she brought out the heart sack full of crackling and grease. She said she chipped a piece off it for him. He said, "What are you doing? Eat it yourself - I eat moose meat fat." She said she brought out the grease that was in the bladder bag too. She said, "I took that out for him too." He said, "Goodness! She knows just like the old ways, my grandchild."

Traveling from Cultus Creek to Kloo Lake with your Father

One time at Cultus Creek, a wolf tried to come into our camp, while we were looking for our colt. We were on the Gladstone Trail (see map). We left the colt and her mother with Charlie David, but as soon as they let the mother run, she followed us. We were staying with my father at Kloo Lake, hunting muskrats. Then we went through McKinley Creek. We got to Cultus Creek. Your father was looking for the horses over towards Silver Creek. I stayed with Sophie (Watt) - that's when Jim Watt's dad was still alive, when Jim Watt was already a big boy.

I told my father, Robert Isaac, to make a big fire signal when he comes back from looking for the horses, so that we will know which way he went again.

So we could stay overnight again and wait for him. That's when Billy Roberts was small. Your dad came back, drank some tea and we took down the tent. We packed up the horses, he put your brother Stanley in front of him on the horse. Stanley was still small then. I followed him with the pack dogs.

We made camp on the Gladstone Trail, I chopped branches to set up our tent. Your dad went down to get the horse. Then I heard him talking. So I went down to see who he was talking to. He was throwing sticks or rocks at something behind him. I saw he was throwing things at the wolf behind him. He had the horse with him. Your dad brought the horse into the midst of the dogs that were tied up. We had no guns, the guns were with the stuff away from camp where we unpacked it. The wolf kept trying to come closer. It kept trying to get closer to the pups. We stood close to the fire. Your dad picked up an axe, in case the wolf grabbed one of our dogs. I told him, "Don't throw the axe at him, we need it."

We sat up all night watching it... it kept looking towards the creek. It probably was thirsty. I threw rocks at the wolf but it didn't move. We put the sleeping children between us. We just sat there.

Finally it got up and went down to the creek. I watched it until it went over the hill and looked back. I hurried and packed the dogs. Your dad was putting packs on the horses. My father loaned us a saddle horse. We hurried quickly, we had six dogs, we loaned two dogs to my father. I packed Rosalie in a baby pack, he put Stanley in front of him on the horse. He put the axe in the saddle bags, in case the wolf attacked.

The wolf almost caught us up after we started to my father's camp. It was dark when we got there. My father asked us how come we were traveling in the dark.

He and Big Lake Joe were making tea. We told my father a wolf is following us. My father quickly picked up a gun. They woke up Isaac (Moose).

Isaac and Sam Joe shot at the wolf's legs and it ran away. It probably died somewhere. How would it hunt for itself? They lost sight of the wolf amongst the rocks on the mountains. My father said it wouldn't be following us with two broken legs. We kept looking for it while we were traveling.

From that time, I never go anywhere without my twenty-two or a rifle.

At Aishihik, too, a wolf came around our house, I shone a flashlight towards it and its eyes lit up like fire. Your dad came out with a gun but it moved around too fast.

It snowed that night and we could see it made a pass close to the dog. Your father followed it. He found a place where it lay down close to the house. Not very far away, the wolf was sleeping, facing the house. He got up close to it while it was sleeping and shot it. He hauled it back. That wolf had already killed all the colts in the village.

My father and Charlie David said wolves don't let anything go if they're after it. That's why you always carry lots of shells and a good gun wherever you go.

We Might Not Have Been Born

One time, my father and my grandfather were hunting. My mother (Sadie) told us, "When we went back, something ate the puppies already. As soon as we went past the campsite, the wolves circled us, howling."

We wouldn't have been born if the wolves killed my mother and my grandma that time.

My mother stood under the tree. The wolves kept enclosing. My mother's mother was with her then. She took a box of matches and some dried branches in a handkerchief. She tied it up and threw it amongst them. They started to play with it like a ball. They threw it up and to each other. The wolves played with it because of the noise the matches were making. The wolves wandered away while playing with the matches. You could hear them howling among the trees. They were probably saying, "Let's go."

My mother's mother tied up matches and dried branches again, just in case they came back again. She said she and her mother hurried back.

Meanwhile, my grandfather came back from hunting and he started to look for her. My grandfather asked the people where we were. And the people told him we left right after he went hunting. That's when my father met them halfway - my father walks fast. They told him, "The wolves circled us."

My mother **Ámą Kwànjia** said, "My mother **Tsäl Kàya Mą** told me to stay in a tree. If they kill me," she said, "your dad **Udzi Kì** will come for you." My mother told us, "If the wolves killed us, you wouldn't have been born." My dad probably would have got married again, I guess.

My mother said her mother told her when a wolf blocks your way that means there are lots of them. She said it didn't take them long to circle us. My mother said her mother made a fire with stumps, but the wolves didn't leave.

[YNLC tapes 2333, 2335, 2384, 2387]

NISLING RIVER CHILDHOOD TRAVELS

I am telling you now where we traveled when I was young. We had camps along **Nìlì Chù** (Nisling River, #6). We don't stay one place. It's just the same as how you guys now travel around in cars!

I'll tell you about those places we traveled when I lived with my Mom and Dad (early 1900s). I'll start from my Dad's trapline. This is where we traveled.

My Dad trapped on Nisling River from **Shintay Chù** (Mackintosh Creek, # 25) where it meets **Nìlì Chù** (Nisling River) near **Lür Tlāw Mǎn** (Victoria Lake, # 42). From there, he trapped down to **Ädzāy Dashe** (Schist Creek, # 20). That's where he made built a cache, at **Ädzāy Dashe**. He would pack meat to that cache there to store it.

My mom and I would stay at **Nìlì Chù** (Nisling River), at **Ädzāy Dashe** (Schist Creek) and dry the meat. We worked near the river and my dad would hang the meat up, and then he would go back and pack some more meat to us, to put up in that cache on **Nìlì Chù** (Nisling River).

After that, we would go back to Aishihik. That's the time Marge (Jackson) was small (c. 1920s). They used to come out to Aishihik when we were on the Nisling River.

After we cached that meat we would then head downriver, along Nisling River. Further down, **Sínjī Chù** (Tyrrell Creek, # 16) empties into **Nìlì Chù**

(Nisling River) and that's where we had a fishtrap. To get there, we would pass by **K'ày Nats'āghūr** (Stevens Creek, where it empties to the Nisling, # 18) and then stop at the fish camp they call **Chu Tànàadlì** (# 17). When we got there, we would camp on top of a high bluff. People would hunt there while they were waiting for the salmon run to begin. We dried the meat, and put it up in a high cache.

When the salmon run started running we headed off to fish. There were three creeks upriver from Klaza River where we put in a fish traps – at **Sàni Chù** (Rhyolite Creek, # 13), at **Táchāl Nì Chù** (Dwarf Birch Creek, # 14) and at **Tsāl K'èkìshāt Chù** (Klaza River # 12).

We settled into a fishcamp at **Chu Tànàadlì** (# 17). That's where my mom start to pull spruce roots with us. Bessie Crow and I didn't like to pull [spruce] roots. By then, your uncle and some of the other men were going down to Carmacks to work on the boats. Their wives stayed behind on Nisling River, **Nìlì Chù**, after men started leaving to work on the steamboats in summertime. Gee, I really didn't like the way my mom made us pull out spruce tree roots! She had us use those roots to sew up gophers into bags. We made long bags that you fold to fit in dog packs. We would pull roots and then get a stick and poke them though the skin, and then thread the roots through the same hole, me and Bessie Crow. I wonder if Bessie Crow remembers yet? Whenever we took those bags out of the dog packs, we would hang them up. That's why Bessie and I didn't like my mother to show us anything.

The people who were traveling up to the Nisling with us that time were Charlie Stevens, Daisy's father Charlie David, my dad, my grandpa **Nàshea** – he was

my dad's dad and his (second) wife's name was **Chùtsay Mą**. I forget the names of his other wives. Sometimes when we stayed up there, we used to leave my grandpa at Aishihik.

So that's where we stayed, pulling roots [at **Chu Tààadli** camp]. My mom showed Bessie Crow and me how to split roots. Bessie and I soon got tired and bored doing this. My dad, Charlie Stevens, and Charlie David peeled and shaved small spruce trees. They made the fish trap from small spruce trees, shaped in a cone shape and tied together at the back – about seven feet long, quite big. The fish enter at the round end – like the Klukshu fish traps. They put smooth caribou horns at the end where the fish enter – those horns stick up like fingers. When the fish were gathered in the trap, people speared them. They couldn't club them – how could they? That fish trap was round. When we were ready to take the fish out, they untied the end of the cone so that they could take the fish out a few at a time, and people stood in the water and grabbed them. Charlie Stevens and Charlie David strung the fish on lines.

We used to pick berries too, and put them in birch pans and bury them. We used to put them in a bag and sew it closed. When we would come back to pick them up they were just as fresh as when we picked them in fall time – nothing wrong with them. When the snow started to come, people would go and get their cache, and they would pull it back to where they're staying.

There were trails from Kluane lake to Nisling River **Nìli Chù**, too. One time, Eddie Isaac left Burwash when he saw the fish run starting and he met us at **Tl'àyùà Dashe** (# 7) where Charlie Stevens and Charlie David had a cabin and

a trapline. **Tl'àyùà Dashe** is downriver on the Nisling, between **Sínji Chù** (the mouth of the Klaza River, # 12) and not far upstream from **Leläw Chù** (the mouth of Onion Creek, # 11). A small creek, **Tl'àyùà Chù** (# 8) flows into the Nisling River at **Tl'àyùà Dashe**. There are three or four boulders as big as this house - round and not too high with space around them, just set one after the other running in a straight line. I wonder why?

From **Tl'àyùà Dashe**, a winter trail heads north to **Nà'aya Shān** (Klotassin River, # 3), then on to the Yukon River. Up that way there is a mountain called **Shár Tsì Dhāl** (Mount Pattison, # 5) where people go to hunt sheep.

Daisy's dad, Charlie David, told my dad that Selkirk people were coming down that way. So when we got to **Tl'àyùà Dashe**, people said, "Let's go up that way to **Nà'aya Shān** (Klotassin River). We'll go up as far as **Shár Tsì Dhāl** (Pattison Mountain) and we'll turn around from there if we don't meet them."

That's why we went that way. We crossed the Nisling at **Tl'àyùà Dashe**. It runs a long way north. A creek called **Lùr K'äl Ni Chù** (# 10) runs down to Nisling River near that trail.

That's where they met those people (coming from the Yukon River). My dad and those other men climbed up that **Shár Tsì Dhāl**. They lit a fire. My dad looked through binoculars and said, "They're walking around down there by the creek."

From down there, those people were living there and were walking around down there. They saw smoke on top of the mountain! So they ran into hunters and they all went hunting for sheep together up **Shár Tsì Dhāl** (Mt. Pattison).

Sam Jonathan and Danny Joe (**Galaya**) were some of the people they met there. They had just come back from school at Carcross - they were gone five years. That's where they were coming from, they were coming ahead of people on the trail from Selkirk. That's who came, and they were looking for Aishihik people too!

So someone went back to gather the rest of the people [at Fort Selkirk] and we all met up. I remember Mary Luke's mother had a large pot. She made a big packsack for it. Us, we didn't carry around big pots when we picked berries. We all went to pick berries together – Daisy's Mom (Jessie Roberts), Elsie's Mom, Charlie Steven's wife and us. That's when that old lady filled up the big pot quick. Mary Luke's father's mother and Martha Warville's mother were all there that time. They're related to each other.

My grandma and some older people waited for us at **Tl'àyüa Dashe** because they can't travel around.

From there, we headed up to **Dálür Ätän** (Serpenthead Lake, # 30) and through a pass called **K'àmbadzēa** (# 31). The trail comes down through **Chādaya Mān** (Tincup Lake, # 27). That's where you have your trap line, Lorraine – around **Lelāw Chù** (Onion Creek, # 11), near Nisling River. On the other side of Onion Creek, there's a lake at the end there called **Chādaya**

Mān (Tincup Lake, # 27). We were staying at Tincup Lake, and got grayling at **Ushè T'āla Mān**, “Redtail Lake” (Kiyera Lake, # 28) From there a creek ran out and that’s where they lived. They fished there at the mouth of the creek. They used to make hooks from needles, they bend it into the shape of a hook and put feathers on it. They tied the feathers right below the needle eye. That’s how they fished around this time. At Carmacks they still fish that way in March month when they swim up the creek.

People lived at **Chādaya Mān** for king salmon. Even though Burwash people never go back there. I don’t know why. The king salmon come up Tincup Creek, **Chādaya Chù** (# 26). They also swim into Kluane Lake. That’s where people were living when we came to them. They never used fish traps, they just gaffed them. They were living there for the fish.

I remember that time we came upon grayling. A spring was coming out from under a hill, and that’s the way those grayling came up. That’s when Canyon Johnny said people were calling each other “**Áłaya**” – that means “my friend.” People didn’t say that to each other before, that’s how much they were into catching fish. They said, “Look here, my friend - look at this! There’s lots of fish.”

That’s what my dad and them said when they come back from hunting. Annie’s mom took off her skirt. They tied up the end of the skirt and they empty the fish out of the skirt, laughing hard. My mom, dad and Ken Johnny were watching them.

When we came down around the bottom of Big Arm (Talbot Arm), those visitors from Selkirk were still with us. I remember, too, that's where people died. Sam Isaac died near there at **Tthē Ghūr Ni Chù** (Talbot Creek, # 32) – that's my Dad's older brother.

While we were traveling the meat was getting short because there were lots of people. When it was starting to be springtime they went back towards Fort Selkirk, maybe in March. Sam Jonathan's father and Grace's mother came up with those people. Johnny Alfred **Sha'ala** was a boy that time, and he wanted to stay with my dad to go trapping at Aishihik. The others went back through **Ŋtthe Kļa** (Nanson Creek Trail, # 24). **Sha'ala** made fast toboggans and that's what they used to travel back. From then we never see them anymore and they all died.

From there [from Talbot Creek], we went on to Cultus Creek, hunting for gopher. We stayed at Cultus Creek for the grayling run, that's why we were living there. When the grayling were running, they chased them up the creek and then block the creek off, and then they also blocked it off both upstream and downstream. They blocked the creek with willows/leaves tied in bundles. They used to do that long ago, that's what they said. If the creek was wide they used to join the bundles together to make it long enough to block off the whole creek. Cultus Creek is not very wide, that's where they chased the grayling up the creek. Then they walked around in the water clubbing them, while they were swimming around by the barricade.

When they dried the grayling it just looked like a shoal of fish, row after row (**tādāli**), when they were drying it. They split them in half and dried them for

winter. When they were ready to eat them, they would soak them. The sheep come down there too, that's why they lived there at Cultus.

Then below that we killed a moose. My dad told me to go and help Annie Nicholas's mom, because she is slow. He told me to cut the hair off the skin for her. When I came up to her she was feeling the skin slowly where she had shaved it. I told her, "My dad sent me over to shave the skin for you." She got up quickly and said, "Then I'll start packing the dogs, my niece." Then I shaved all [the hair] off and hung it up for a while.

When we traveled back from Kluane Lake to Aishihik, we usually come through the valley called **Tthe Yì Dashe** (Gladstone Creek, #33) through Cultus Mountains. My great grandfather said they used to skin a sheep out and then sew the meat up inside and pull it. They would haul it in a toboggan to a cache on the way to Aishihik through **Ttheyì** (Gladstone). The people we traveled with then were Mary Luke's mother, Charlie Stevens and his wife, Jenny Moose and her family.

We would go from Aishihik to Little Salmon to sell furs. We lived there in tents on a hill. We lived there a long time waiting for people from Little Salmon to come. They used to play cards. The people from Little Salmon also put hooks down about this time of year. They probably still do today.

I think about the names when I am sleeping, but I forget. So many places we traveled: **Idzi Dāt'āwa Dhāl** (east part of Nisling Range, #21); **K'ày Nats'āghūr Dhāl** (west part of Nisling Range, #19) down Nisling River and

around Aishihik area; **Táchāl Nì Dhāl** (mountain near Dwarf Birch Creek, #15); **Ń-tthe Kìā Dhāl** (Mt. Nansen, #40); **Tākambāl Dhāl** (Shadow Mountain, #43); **Nàtth'à Dhāl** (Mt. McDade, #41) - the river comes along that mountain.

We go to Carmacks for white man food, that's all. That's what people grew up on I guess, they even go with horses. The trail to Carmacks goes over **Ugets'enay Dhāl**. The **Dhāl Yè** trail goes through mountain valley the other side of **Nju Dalāla**. People stayed around a lake near Aishihik called **Tālea Kwàlì**. That's what people call this place - just like white man's names now.

Gee! There were lots of caribou on Aishihik Lake. Annie and I used to go around the lake to shoot some caribou. We get one or two. My father used to get some at **Tthechāl Mān** (Sekulmun Lake, #34). He also got caribou at **Tatay Dhāl** – that same mountain is called **Kàjat Dhāl** (# 23). My father was given that mountain after his uncle died. That's why my father always hunted on that mountain.

[YNLC tape 1890]

STARVATION AT NISLING RIVER

A long time ago people did starve at Aishihik. It happened when Rosalie was about two years old, when Rosalie was just first walking. It happened north of Aishihik, people just about starved. You can't even kill squirrels when this kind of time comes around. Animals are really smart.

Your dad (Jack Allen) and Charlie Steven and Charlie David had been trapping down the Nisling River, **Nìlì Chù**, and came back to Aishihik with furs. Your dad got marten, fox, mink skins and wolf when he was trapping with Daisy's father (Charlie David) on his trap line. We also had some fox traps out by Aishihik where we were camped for ice fishing during the fall. Foxes came around to those fishnet holes. That's where I set some fox traps. I trapped five foxes there. The foxes come around for fish blood, and I threw away some small fish for bait. I caught the mink on shore where I froze fish to the ground. I put the bait near their trails around the lake shore. So we got lots of furs. We took them to Frank Skid's Trading Post, at Kloo Lake.

Your dad said, "Let's go back to your mom and dad. At the same time, we can pick up some food."

After my mom died, my dad stayed with Frank Joe's older sister, Bertha Joe, **Chukala**. They had one son, Billy Roberts, **K'álāla** or **Bibi Shāw**. They were staying at Kloo Lake too. So that's who we visited. That's who your dad hauled wood for.

We left for Kloo Lake with fox skins, mink skins, and lynx skins - all our furs. We bought groceries with our fur money at Frank Skid's store. That flour we got from Frank Skid's store came in 50 pound bags. Rice was in 25 pound bags.

People had already left Aishihik [while we were at Kloo Lake]. They went to Nisling River. If we hadn't gone to Kloo Lake, to Frank Skid's store, people would have starved, even the children.

We stayed five nights with my father. My father said, "People will still be there when you go back to Aishihik." He wanted us to stay. "There's moose around McKinley Creek." He saw moose when he was checking his traps and he asked your father to go with him to help him check those traps again.

They stayed two nights [at McKinley Creek]. They got three moose at McKinley, and your dad helped my father haul them. I stayed back at Kloo Lake with Billy Roberts' mother (her step-mother) when they went to McKinley.

Your dad had some traps set out to the north too. He and Charlie David had set those traps. I said, "What about your traps down the Nisling? They might melt before we pick up those traps." So your dad told his father-in-law, "We are not going to stay very long, soon as we pick up our traps we'll come back." That's why we left, to pick up the traps – at Aishihik, then at Nisling.

We went back [to Aishihik] to pick up our traps so we could set traps for muskrat under the ice. That's why we went to pick up our traps. My father said, "Hurry up and come back."

Later, people didn't want us to leave. We were going to save them. That's why they didn't want us to go back.

Here, people left Aishihik the same time as we left for Kloo Lake. They all would have starved if we didn't go after them!

We headed back to Aishihik. Your dad said we should split that flour and rice in half. “Let’s just take half of it.”

I told him, “We’ll just carry all of it. People might have run out of food.” Even then he never did think that way. So we brought all of it.

A whiteman called Shorty Chambers usually came to Aishihik with food. Shorty Chambers even brought chew on his visits from Champagne. He came across Aishihik Lake when we were gone, and he gave people tea and stuff. He brought little things like tea and sugar. He traveled with dog sleigh. After they bought some things from him, they headed north. People didn’t have much those days. Your grandma and Albert Isaac had hard times.

When we got back to Aishihik [from Kloo Lake], not even one person was left. We just slept one night then we started out after the people. Your dad didn’t want to go after them, but we followed them. When we left Aishihik we could see that people camped two times along the trail. We traveled fast with our dog team. We had lots of dogs, seven dogs - three lead dogs. There was already snow on the tracks.

We hurried up, we hauled the flour, rice. We saw they slept every two nights on the trail as we passed. We had three leaders [lead dogs] - that’s why we caught up to them so fast. The people had killed moose and caribou, but they never thought to keep any. We saw moose hair at the camps. Maybe they chopped some meat up for dogs. They had caribou hair spread all over. That’s probably why the starvation came, they throw pieces of caribou to the dogs. We caught up to them way past Lynx City, when they ran out of meat.

In times of starvation people don’t see anything, not even moose. Animals move away from people. When people see moose on the mountains, they go up after

them and they're gone before people get there. They said it's just like the moose bark when somebody is coming toward them [to signal other moose], even from long ways.

Not very long after that, the people ran out of food. That's when your grandpa (Albert Isaac) came to us and told us the people ran out of food. "We got nothing to eat."

People were hunting – they tried to hunt early morning but got nothing! They come back at night. They didn't have anything to eat. They said all the moose ran away from people before they could get close. When that happens, that's when people are going to starve, they say. There was no rabbits or squirrels. There were rabbit trails, but people couldn't snare them.

That's when we started to share what we brought - meat, sugar, rice, flour. When only half of it was left, we kept it for my sister Lilly and us. Lilly stayed with the people at the camp (while the hunters went out). We always carried around a big tent with us so Sam Williams and his wife Lilly, my sister, stayed there with us our big tent. They just came back from Lynx City, **Tl'ayäda** (map #2).

I guess my sister Lilly cooked a little something for the people. We always carried around a big tent. The children came inside there early in the morning, when they were awakened. I guess the people told their children to go to our tent, and that's why they came. Lilly cooked mush for them in the morning.

Jenny Moose's mother **Däts'e'ala Mä** tried to hunt for squirrels. Annie David (Stevens) (Charlie) and Jenny Moose's mother had snares set. People were trying and trying to hunt, finally they were getting weak.

People came to us asking for tea, we told them, “We didn’t bring any tea back.” I told Albert Isaac, “We were going back [to Kloo Lake] that’s why we didn’t bring tea.” He said, “Everything is all gone.” They ran out of tea.

Annie was near starvation, she was very weak, Frank Isaac too. Annie’s husband Jim Steven, him too. Jenny Moose’s older brother. People were all so weak that they were just laying around the fire and just laid there.

Your dad took back sugar and rice too for the children. He said, “They are just laying alongside the fire now. They are so weak.”

Sam Williams, Eddy Isaac and your dad were hunting together. It sure is hard to feed lots of people. Everything was getting below half now at the end of three days.

When the people started to run out of food, they were scraping skins for dog food. There was no dog food. **Däts’e’ala**’s mother’s two dogs died. They scraped the moose skin and boiled the hide to feed the dogs.

Your dad hauled frozen fish we got that fall. That, too, we were giving out to the people. Lilly was giving out the fish at camp. Daisy’s mother (Jessie) would have starved too. She wanted lots to eat. Lilly told her, “Lots of food will kill you if you eat lots, that’s what my father said. That’s why you don’t eat lots during starvation time.”

The people were bothering us for meat. They were asking us to give them meat. We said, “We didn’t haul any meat.” Your father had moose legs in a cache. Otherwise, they would have all starved. Your dad and Charlie David had a meat cache where they had traps (at **Tl’àyüa Dashe**, map # 7). Your dad had two

moose legs at Charlie David's cabin. Your dad went over to see Charlie David and told him, "Let's go and get the two moose legs. The people are starting to starve."

We don't throw anything away. Your dad even made sacks of blood on his fall time trapping trip. We had two bags of moose blood your dad made up at Charlie David's place. When they arrived back [at **Tl'àyùà Dashe**], it was still there. Daisy's father (Charlie David) had put it on a high cache. When the people heard that your dad and Charlie David had brought back meat, the people started to come to our tent. Your dad and I started to cut the meat up with a saw in small pieces. We can't give them big ones – they would eat it all up at one time. We tried very hard to help them. That's why people were saved that time.

The people who were with us at that time were **Däts'e'ala** (Jenny Moose) and her husband Isaac Moose; **Däts'e'ala Mä** (Jenny Moose's mother); my sister Lilly and her husband Sam Williams; your grandpa's brother Albert Isaac and his wife Elsie Isaac. Gus and Kitty Scurvy were there too. If they had starved, there wouldn't be any Edwin Scurvy – that's his parents. Frank Isaac was there. Annie David (Stevens) (Charlie) and Charlie Stevens and his wife.

People were all so weak that they were just lying around the fire. The ones who could not hunt went with the hunters so they could stay with the dogs and boil something for the dogs.

There were no rabbits at all, even Annie and Charlie Stevens's wife tried to set snare for squirrels. They tried everything even for squirrel, so they could snare squirrels with Jenny Moose's mother, **Däts'e'ala Mä**.

Even the grouse - there was nothing when there was lots before.

Hunting Porcupine

Us, we left early in the morning.

We got up early in the morning, Jenny Moose's mother and I. That's when your brother Stanley was a little bit bigger. Your sister Rosalie was small at that time. I made a fire.

Daisy's father helped me. He helped me put wood on the fire. People were sleeping yet. The two boys were still sleeping, Sam Williams said - Frank Isaac and Jim Steven, **Däts'e'ala** 's father's son. Annie and **Däts'e'ala** (Jenny Moose) were very weak. Kitty too, she was weak. They didn't have much to eat from the time starvation started. That's the time **Däts'e'ala** 's mother, **Däts'e'ala Ma** and I went out looking for porcupine.

I told Lilly to cook soup for the people and not to give them lots. "Don't let them pour it themselves." We always carried around a large soup bowl. I told her to use that to serve them. When they came in, she fed them. We were to save people, that's why.

We went hunting for porcupine - Jenny Moose's mother, **Däts'e'ala Ma**, and me. We tried for porcupine ever since the hunters went hunting. Early in the morning when it is still dark we started to the mountains for porcupine. We went to the rocky places. We went separate ways through ravines where we found porcupine tracks in holes where water washed out of the ground.

I was walking up above and she was walking below, Jenny Moose's mother. I told her, "Don't go back without me if I'm late, because if I come upon a porcupine I'll make a fire. Watch for a fire. I'll put fire in the hole. I might be late if I find porcupine tracks."

I was going along the top, a long ways up on the mountain. And she was going along the bottom, along the ravine where the spruce trees grew all the way down. That's where the tracks were leading to when I came across the tracks.

When there's two porcupines together, they never use the same trail. They use different trails, my mother told me. She said, "If you see two trails, there will be two living in the den. They don't stay together in the den, but stay in separate places in the den, one behind the other."

I came to the place where there were two in a den. I chopped a spruce tree down and use it to poke around in the den. I tied a snare at the end. The entrance went straight in. Then I chopped a hole at the top of the den. I poked around until I touched it. Porcupines don't come out when they hear people.

"Wherever it is in the den, you could hear 'uh, uh'" my mom said. That's how I was listening for it up the hole.

I saw a large old tree root. I chopped it in half and put it in the entrance with lots of dry branches. Where I chopped a hole I listened for it. I lit a fire. When the smoke went into the den, I chopped the stump and put it in the fire.

Then I heard it making a noise up a little ways. Not very far in. I poked through the top of the hole I chopped. I hooked it on one arm - it sure is tough to pull it out. I pulled and pulled. Finally it came loose and I pulled it out.

I ran quickly down the hill - right straight down. It was lying on its back. I looked for the axe I put near me. I thought I hit it on the head, but I only hit it on the shoulder. I hit it on the arm. As soon as I saw the head, I hit it on the head.

I was not like I am now! I used to move around fast long ago. When I pulled it out I hit it hard so it wouldn't go back in.

Then after that, from the hole above I listened. Smoke was still going into the den. I listened from the same hole. I heard a porcupine making noise 'uh, uh', when it got smoked out. I poked around again for it to see how far it was sitting. I poked it up farther. I chopped another hole above it. From there I started feeling around for it. You're supposed to poke the stick along the ceiling of the den with the hook. I kept moving the stick along the den ceiling up high, I pushed the stick past it. (When you feel it) you have to press down hard, then you pull it out. I kept on trying finally I brought it out too. I was trying to hurry! Besides, I was getting up hollering for my partner. She was walking around the bottom. I was going along the top, me.

There was lots of snow that time. That trail was this high (gesturing – 4 feet deep) in the snow to the den. I pulled the next porcupine out. You have to hurry when you hook it. You push the hook past the porcupine. Then you press down hard then pull it out. It finally came loose and I pulled it out. I tried hollering again. I had the axe beside me, I hit it with the back of the axe. There was no club around. I clubbed it, then I pulled it down the hill. It was getting dark, so I hollered again. I went down the hill a little and hollered really loud.

I thought of building a fire again. She **Däts'e'ala Mą** said she went farther (north) looking around but nothing. She said she didn't even see a porcupine track.

Later, she said, "I didn't see the smoke clearly, being at the bottom of the mountain, I thought the smoke was from the hunters," she said. She said "I was thinking of making a fire in a clearing, that's what I was doing," and she gathered wood for a fire.

Then I tied them together one behind the other. I started to pull them. I was packing a 'twenty-two' too. I came back on the trail, I hollered.

Before, I told her, "If you find a porcupine make a signal by hitting a tree with the back end of an axe." I heard her hitting the axe, so I started that way. Then it sounds closer, so I shouted for her. I hollered!

I told her, **Däts'e'ala Ma**, "I killed two porcupines. Pull one for me. Let's go back together," I said. She met me and we started back. She hollered back, "I'm going to make a fire, that's what I'm doing." she hollered.

I thought, how are we going to pack them back without snowshoes? I told her, "Lets take out the guts, because it is too heavy."

So we cooked them by campfire and we singed them. After we took the guts out, they were a bit lighter to pull one after another. After that, we started back at night time.

I told her, "We'll just go back like that," [single file, with Bessie Allen leading]. We started pulling the porcupine back just like that. She was following me. As soon as she fell behind I waited for her. I knew she was getting tired too.

We were just down the trail a bit and I heard dogs mushing. I told her, "I hear dogs mushing. I hear dogs coming up." She was coming behind me pulling a porcupine. Me, I was pulling the large porcupine and she was pulling the mother porcupine. It is hard to pull all of them. They are very heavy.

It was getting dark, I heard dogs coming for sure. Your dad passed us with the dog sled at the bottom of the hill. Us, we were walking up higher on the

mountain. Your dad called out our dog's name. "Barley," he called it. He made him the leader. We had three lead dogs because we always travel far. Your dad called out, "Barley!", as he was mushing the dogs.

I thought, "He's hauling meat for hungry people," that's what I was thinking. I told her, "They must have killed a moose! There's just one toboggan track here."

She was following me. Your dad came back with the dogs to meet us. He tied both porcupines behind the sleigh.

Here, your dad and Sam Williams had killed a moose. That was the first moose that was killed after people started to starve. He told the people he saw it with field glasses, moose walking around. People were waiting for him. He said I told them, "We'll go up there early tomorrow morning."

He went back to camp after he hauled us back home. I killed two porcupines. We brought two porcupines back to camp.

Feeding People in Camp

We always carried around a large pot with us. My sister Lilly would make soup in the large pot. She said, "It is Daisy's mother who is really hungry, just like the children." She wanted to drink lots of soup, she said. I told her, "What about the rest of the children?" She said she cooked blood soup with rice and cut a little meat in for lunch for the children. She said she made bread in a baking pan, too.

Lilly stayed there with them. She used a soup bowl to give them all some, the children. People's children, even Jenny Moose's children. Annie said, "It's

Daisy's mother that's most hungry. She just about starved without food too, that one." They all were weak now. Jim Stevens and Frank Isaac said they were weak, so they stayed in camp. They were supposed to help the others chase the moose towards the people hiding [in ambush], but they couldn't do anything.

I told her, "If they ask to pour it themselves, say no." I told her, "Don't give it all to them, just give them soup."

"Bread too," she said, "when I cook it in the oven. They want to eat two all the time, the children. Even Johnnie too, Frank Isaac's brother, two small brothers. They want two of everything, even soup."

You're not supposed to eat lots. You're supposed to drink soup, they say, during starvation time - clear soup broth. When I brought that moose leg bone in for Lilly [the one Jack Allen retrieved from his cache], I told her to make rice soup with it, a little at a time for them. I told her we might run out of food too.

We just served the people with soup bowls, so they don't eat too much - they're all so hungry. Lilly fried bread all the time. She was always busy cooking. She cut little pieces of moose meat she thawed out by the stove [from that cached moose leg] to make soup for all the people.

A Successful Moose Hunt

Your Dad and Sam Williams went hunting. They took a piece of meat with them. "I just made soup with it," your dad said, "to save myself for morning."

Your dad and Sam Williams killed a moose when they were at the top of the mountain. Sam chased the moose uphill. The others hid to ambush it. They said the moose saw them but it still stayed there, even when they were visible.

It was a sign when that moose met your dad around a hill. That was the end of starvation. That's why they got a moose. He said that until then, the hunters would surround the moose but the moose would just go through between the hunters without being seen and disappear.

He said he signaled over to Sam and they both shot. "We were stalking it," your dad said, "that's where we shot it. Both of us hit the moose," he said, "then the others – the ones waiting to ambush it – heard us. And they came towards us."

"I told them to cut it up while I went to get the dogs," you father said. "Holler for the others, they might pass by you [if they don't know where you are]. Hurry up so I can haul the meat back to the people at home, I told him." That's what your dad said.

He said he made a trail straight down towards the boys, where they were waiting at the bush camp. Frank said, "Uncle, are you telling the truth? Did you kill a moose?" Your dad said, "Yes". Those boys were still sleeping by the fire yet, they were so weak - Charlie Steven's son Jim Steven and Frank Isaac. They just stretched out by the fire.

"When people came back with the moose," your dad said, "We just had meat soup when we came back that night. The boys that were sleeping by the fire woke up and started eating the fat out of the pack sacks."

Your Dad told them, "Help me hitch up the dogs. " Frank said "I can't, uncle. "

"Before I hooked up the dogs," your dad told me, "I told them to cook that meat with a little water. Then I went back with the dog team [to get the rest of the meat]."

He returned quickly. He said he left some of the dogs because the meat was down hill. He said he hitched up four dogs - we had seven, but he only used four dogs to go back to get the meat. Your Dad said, "When I came back with my pack, those kids had eaten all the fat. I cut out the guts, and they ate the fat and passed out after they ate it."

That's why people say just drink soup when starvation happens. That's what long time people say. They ate so much fat that they became ill from over-eating. When people get like that they never get better for a long time. That's why a person should only eat soup when people starve.

He said to the boys, "When hard times come like this, you have to make soup and cut in little bits of meat at a time, that's what they say." I told them. That's what my father always told us. "When there's no food just drink soup only," he said to us.

"Sam Williams cut the meat up fast, cut apart the joints. They had the meat all cut up that way. They were cooking by fire, when I came back. Daisy's dad gave me a piece of meat," he said.

People all had a good feed, he cooked fat too, he gave it to me. I told him to hide the meat, maybe under something, from the children that were left at home, Jim Steven and Frank Isaac, so they would not eat too quickly and get sick again.

Bear Encounter

Gus Scurvy and Isaac Moose were with us then. That's when a black bear climbed up a tree, while they were going across to help your Dad. They sneaked up to the tree. There was a den under the tree. That bear was living in a den where it had brought moss in. It heard Gus and Isaac coming down.

Isaac said, "Hurry up, it's good that it climbed the tree." Gus said "I don't kill that kind." Isaac said "Hurry up, it's good that it climbed the tree, I can't take my shells out."

Why did he keep his shells tied up in his bag anyway? He should have kept some shells in his pocket!

Gus said, "I don't kill bears. If it comes down it might want to leave us alone. It's good that it climbed a tree," he told him. But it was getting ready to come down [to attack them]. Isaac Moose shot the bear. He said, "It was watching us from where it was sitting. If it turns on us, nobody will know [what happened to us]. "

After Isaac Moose took out his shells and loaded the gun, they shot it down. He said he shot it really good in the chest. It was getting ready to come down, to go after them. That's when they killed it.

Your Dad heard the gunshots and they went down. "It sounds like they hit something." Your Dad told them to cut it up. "I'm hoping to go back and get my dogs."

Just Isaac and them ate bear meat. They cooked a little by the fire and ate it. Daisy's father said to them, "If you don't eat anything, you're going to drop. You came with us to help us. It's a blessing you're still walking around yet. " So they ate it to save themselves.

Second Moose Hunt

After that moose was killed, from that time on, people started to hunt. Your father said he saw moose tracks way up high - there's more moose around. He

was looking through field glasses. He said, "We'll go again early in the morning so we could look for the moose."

The hunters thought that the moose that were walking around were going to come down lower. So they climbed above them, Gus Scurvy and Isaac Moose.

That's when they saw five moose all together. That's the tracks they saw. That's a sign that people were going to kill moose again. People had almost all starved. If we didn't catch up to them, probably all the people would have starved. Who could kill anything? All of the people were weak. Only the people that had something to eat who had a little strength left were hunting.

They all surrounded the five moose, they all were shooting. Your dad said, "Sam and I met the moose on their trail. The moose were looking at the hunters, they shot all of them, five moose."

They started cutting up the meat. Daisy's father (Charlie David) told your father to start hauling the meat to the camp. Daisy's father told him he would pile some meat for him. "We want to hurry up and haul the meat to the campfire."

Daisy's father asked Frank Isaac to bring his dog team up, but Frank said he was too weak. When they hauled all the meat back they also hauled Frank back on the dog sled.

Five moose they got. Lilly told them to hurry and cut up the moose legs - the children are hungry. Lilly said she wanted to go to the moose kill site to help them too. "The children have eaten up all the food now. I'll bring back some meat." She hauled back moose legs and ribs.

They hauled all the moose, five moose - seven with the two they got before the starvation started. After they got all the moose the people started out to Selkirk.

We had a large tent. My sister Lilly and her husband Sam Williams were just back from Lynx City, **Tl'ayäda** (map # 2). Your father's Mom was living up there. We froze all the meat to fit in the sleigh. We hurried back to my father [at Kloo Lake], he told us to come back quickly to set muskrat traps with them during February and March months.

Some people went to Fort Selkirk to stay – it's across the river from Pelly [River] along the Yukon River. People used to stay at Selkirk. After, they moved to Pelly [Crossing]. We went with them to Selkirk, we broke trail through the mountains. We kept changing leaders [because we had three strong lead dogs]. When we got to Selkirk they all wanted to dance. They wanted to stay overnight to dance. In the morning your dad picked up lots of groceries. He picked up more sugar, tea, rice and everything. Daisy's mother and Charlie Stevens and them wanted to go back with us too, to hunt muskrats.

Returning to Kloo Lake

When we went back, Sam Williams and Lilly came with us. We all went back to my father. Big Lake Joe said for Lilly and Sam to come back too, so Lilly could walk around with her grandmother to trap muskrats.

I told Daisy's mother (Jessie), "We're going back to Kloo Lake. She said, "What's the hurry?" "My father said to hurry back to Kloo Lake to set muskrat traps," I told her.

Then they made up their mind to stay around Aishihik to set traps for marten with Charlie Stevens family. Even Charlie Stevens asked us for flour. We gave

them lots, even tea. People started to dance, your dad hauled some groceries to half way between Selkirk and Aishihik.

Nobody can do anything when times like this come around. There would have been no story of people that starved, if we didn't catch up to them. With those groceries we brought, that's how we saved the people.

Frank Isaac and Jim Steven hugged your dad and said, "If you hadn't come back [with moose] it probably would have been too late to save us."

Your Dad said he saw moose tracks on the mountain with his glass so they started chasing it to the people.

Tl'àyùà Dashe is where the people almost died of starvation. There would have been no story of people that starved, if we didn't catch up to them.

[YNLC tapes 1890, 2334]

ÄSÜYA STRAIGHTENS OUT THE WORLD

Äsüya went around the world, they say.

He even licked a hole in his **mbay jè ts'äl** (sheep horn spoon), that's how long it took.

When animals used to eat people he told them, "Don't eat people." He killed rabbit or something and threw it to them. After, he left them, I guess.

From there he met a fox. "What are you?" Äsüya said. "I am called a fox," he said. The fox was doing something in a puddle of water. He was poking the stick in the water. That slim stick was bouncing up and down.

"This is what people will do when people die," he said, "They'll come back alive." The fox wanted it to be that way because he wanted the old people to come back again. Äsüya asked, "Why are you doing that?" "Oh, I just want people to come back alive, that's why."

Then a grizzly came out and threw a rock in the water and said, "They will be like this, why should they come back alive?" Äsüya told the bear, "Don't get hungry for people." But still the bear kills people. When he left he said, "You'll eat this kind," and he threw him some fish. While the bear was busy with the fish, Äsüya left.

From there he met a wolverine, laughing away. He asked the wolverine, "Where are you going? What do you eat?" "Oh, I just ate people. That's where I just came from." He told the wolverine, "Don't eat people!" And he threw rabbits and grouse to him and left him.

He just tells them and leaves them, so they wouldn't eat people anymore.

From there he met a mink who was busy tanning a skin. “What are you doing with that?” “Oh, that’s a skin I am working on to make moccasins.” Then he asked the mink, “What are you using?” “I am using people’s brains.” Äsùya told him, “Don’t use people’s brains from now on!” and he threw him some fish.

Things just appear in his hand, I guess, so he can tell them what to eat. “Don’t use people’s brains for tanning anymore,” he said. “You’ll be a mink and live on fish.”

The mink was called **Chäzhüra** long time ago until Äsùya called him Mink, **Chädhäwa**. And that’s what they ate from then on.

A little ways away lived some people he came to. He asked them, “What do you guys do? What do you kill people with?” “We want him to kill gopher for us but look at this. This is a person’s big chest there! That’s what we are eating.”

So he kills gopher and anything and brought it to them. They were eagles I guess. He told the eagles, “You eat this gopher from now on! Don’t eat people’s chest anymore.” So he spilled it in front of them, rabbits and gophers. The eagle said, “Okay.”

He wants the eagle feathers for arrows, that’s what they said. He asked them, “Who’s a tattletale? Who’s a tattletale?” “My older sister, she’s a tattletale.” Then Äsùya killed the sister and threw her off the nest.

Then only the younger brother was in the nest. “What happens when your mom and dad are coming back?” he asked him.

“When my dad comes back it hails. That’s when he’s bringing back a person’s chest.”

Äsùya told him, “Don’t you eat people like your dad.” Then he made a hole at the bottom of the nest and held his hand there, from under the nest. The little eagle’s dad was jumping around asking, “What smells here?” The little eagle said, “What is it you brought back? Maybe that’s what smells.”

The father eagle stepped through the hole and Äsùya grabbed his feet. Äsùya grabbed the stick the eagle uses to kill people with and poked up through the hole into the eagle. Then he threw him over.

Then he told the little eagles, “I’ll give you food, what you’re going to live on.” Then he asked, “When your mom comes back what happens?” He said, “When my mom comes back it rains.”

The two little eagles were in the nest waiting for Äsùya to bring them gopher and rabbit. Their mother came back to the nest. She started walking around and around the nest and said, “What smells here, smells like a person?”

The little eagle said, “What is it that my dad brought back over there? It’s probably *that* which smells.” Äsùya spilled lots of gophers in front of them and said, “You guys eat this kind [gophers] to live from now on. Don’t you eat people anymore.”

They say animals used to eat people before Äsùya straightened out the world.

Äsùya came to two old ladies in the dark during the night. There were some children with the old ladies at camp. The children’s parents were gone.

The old lady picked up wood and it would move forward. Äsùya was moving the wood forward in the dark. The old lady said, “What’s wrong with this wood? Every time I pick it up it moves forward!”

The old lady whispered to the other old lady, “I think it’s a person.” The older old lady said, “What kind of a person would it be?”

Äsùya said to them, “It’s me! I came to straighten you out! Don’t be scared of me. I’ll give you things you will eat to live.”

They were called **Chäzhru**.

They used to kill people with rocks by stuffing them with rocks. He asked them, “Which way do you kill people?” They said, “This is what we kill people with,” and showed him a sharp rock. “When I spear them from below, people just die. That way there’s no blood, that’s how we eat them.”

(He said) “You will be **Chäzhru**” - what that was I don’t know - these people eat people too. They asked him, “What are you going to give us? What are we going to eat then?”

“I’ll give you what you’re going to eat, then I’m leaving you. I’m not going to kill you. Äsùya put some fish in front of them. I was thinking it was what they call fish duck. That’s what they eat.

He watched them eat it, hunt that kind. “Whatever you’re going to eat from now on will just come to you. ” He told them there’s fish in the rivers. He left them after he put food in front of them, this is what they’re going to eat.

From there he came to where **Nts’ilruq** (common snipe) lived.

A snipe made noise from there. The snipe hid away from Äsùya. He dove into the water making a huge wave in the direction he was going. The snipe that they call **Nts’ilruq** drank the water from shore.

Nts'ilr̥u̥a told him [Äsùya] to watch for the **tadùra** (sandpiper) and chase him away. "He might poke a hole in my stomach."

When the water was getting low, the snipe was digging out the bottom of the little lake. Äsùya dug the snipe out and grabbed him by the feet. He asked him, "Why do you hide? I want to give you whatever you're going to eat. That's why I came to you guys. "

Nts'ilr̥u̥a (snipe) jumped back into the water. Äsùya shouted at him, "**Nts'ilr̥u̥a**, **Nts'ilr̥u̥a** , (snipe) come here," and then he came out.

When the water was getting lower, snipe pleaded with sandpiper, "Don't poke my stomach. When I come out I'll tell you when you can poke the hole."

When Äsùya found the snipe he brought him to shore. He told him, "You're going to eat what I give to you. "

Nts'ilr̥u̥a (snipe) told him, "Okay, you could poke a hole now." And the **tadùra** (sandpiper) poked the hole and all the lake filled up again.

From there he came to Wolverines.

They were doing the same thing, eating people. All the game were people before. Then Äsùya changed them into animals like fox. He told the wolverine, "Don't eat people anymore, just steal people's caches." That's why wolverine eat people's caches.

Äsùya came to where the worms stayed in the mountains. He saw worm droppings strung out from under rocks by the lake shore. He thought, "What is

that sticky stuff?” So he picked it up and rubbed it between his hands, thinking it was good for arrow gum.

They said Äsùya was looking for arrow gum so he could give arrow gum to people. They asked him, “Where did you see arrow gum? Where do you all get arrow gum?” “Over there under the rock, it runs out of the rocks. It sticks on people’s hands.”

Äsùya collected up the worm droppings and packed it away into something, whatever appears to him. “Where do you guys get arrow gum?” they said again. They said, “Same place just around the rocks.” Then Äsùya picked them up so he can make arrows with the strips of eagle feathers.

Everywhere he went he asked, “What do you eat?” “We eat people.” Even worms used to eat people until Äsùya straightened them out. Even Lynx used to eat people.

From there he met **Nch’i** (marten). They, too, used to eat people. Äsùya asked them, “What you do to kill people?” “When we kill people we just bring them back home and cut them up.” I guess they used copper knife, whatever they used for knife.

Äsùya dressed as a person and lay down to trick them. They made sharp sticks and poked them into the ground. They said, “You see these sticks, we kill people with it. People are usually [speared] at the end of the sticks.”

That’s when Äsùya came to a line of sticks. He took off his clothes and put dry spruce branches into his clothes [to look like a person lying there]. He put it at the end of a stick [to make it look like the martens killed the person].

When the martens came they asked their children, “Where is the knife?” The martens made a club to kill Äsùya. Äsùya said, “I wish their clubs would break” and the club broke.

He told them, “Stop it now, I’ll give you something you will eat, you’re getting hard time.” They were trying to kill Äsùya. Then he brought grouse and rabbits - anything small. Then he left them.

He met an old man and his wife walking around on the shore. He asked them “What are you guys walking around for?” The old people said, “Gee, that person talks good like people.” Äsùya listened to them talk.

He asked them “Could you give me another spoon, do you have a spoon?” Äsùya had licked a hole in his spoon. They said, “No, we only have an alder spoon, it breaks easily.” Then they gave him an alder spoon.

He came to some people and said to them, “Now, I just about went around the whole earth, but my spoon is no good.” He told them, “This is what you’re going to eat, don’t kill people any more.” They said okay.

“What I give you, that’s what you’re going to eat.” And he left them.

Äsùya was sitting on the trail and cooking for himself, when he saw something like fog floating on the water. It was something they call **Kwänlin** [some kind of water creature / huge creature] that lives under the water – the kind of bones they have in Calgary.

That kind didn’t bother people. They lived in the water under the ground. They peek out of the water. He told them, “Don’t bother people, just look after the water, I don’t have anything to give you.”

They all say “Yes,” when he told them what they’re going to be and eat. Anything - even birds - gray jays were eating people at the beginning. He told the gray jay to eat people’s food - that’s why they eat people’s meat and food.

Äsùya came to the last. He said, “I’m coming close to the end now.” He said, “Whatever I said for you to eat, you’ll eat, that’s why I gave them to you.”

When the raven, **Ts’ürk’i**, makes a sound, he told the **Krúda**, otter, “You run away. You’ll live on fish.” He told them to come out before the crow makes his sound. That’s why the otter hunts fish before the crow makes his sound. Even today, otter does that. Because the otter used to eat people before too.

That’s what he told them.

The wolf said, “When we just go out to hunt it doesn’t take us long to bring a body back.” Äsùya told the wolves, “Now there’s not very many people left, so now you’ll be wolves.” They said yes. “Whatever you kill, like moose, you’ll eat that. Don’t eat people anymore.” Then he leaves them.

Whatever Äsùya gets for anything to eat, it just appears in his hand to give them.

That’s why wolves kill moose today.

My dad said, “We should not eat this.” “That’s why we eat it,” said the **Gaya** (some kind of evening bird) - those things that sit on rocks and said “**Gay, gay**” in the evening.

When people hunt early in the morning and bring people back in evening, he told us to eat this - it looks like a person's meat, they said. After they eat the meat, they hunt again for some more.

He said, "When the wind blows, that's when my dad and mom are bringing back something."

Äsùya said, "Pretty soon I'm coming to my house now."

When he left them, he gave them bow and arrows, so they can give it to other people.

He told the sheep, "People will use your horns for soup spoon. They will make it out of your horns."

He told the caribou to eat caribou moss. Everything used to eat only people first time. Whatever he's going to give them to eat, it just appears to give them to live on. He told them, "You'll eat caribou moss," and spilled it in front of them. That's why caribou now eat that and grass.

He told the people, "You'll eat porcupine." He said, "People are scared of porcupine because of the quills. People are going to eat porcupine," and he showed it to them. He told them to singe the porcupine in the fire and then you'll eat it. That's what you're going to eat, that's why I give it you.

What Äsùya tells them, that's what everything eats. That's why Äsùya went around the world to see all of them. That's how he even licked a hole in his sheep horn spoon. He licked it all that time.

[YNLC tape 1892]

THE GIRL WHO MARRIED A BEAR

Long time ago a girl's mother died.

They were staying there. A bear came to them while they were picking berries. The girl was gone all summer. That's when the bear took her.

This girl said he brings out berries and even gophers for her to eat. She stepped over the bear dung - that's why you have to go around it. That's what she was doing, she was jumping over it.

She met a very good looking man. Dawson people told me this story too. They said people go back looking for her, so they went back.

When they were hollering for her they heard someone whistling. They went into the den. She said, "He is a man when he's with me." They stayed in the bear's den.

Then at night they went to sleep. She said, "He's always sleeping. He only gets up to feed me, then he goes back to sleep."

Then it, winter, was just about over. He woke up and told her, "I had a dream my brother-in-laws killed me."

She had children already in the spring time. They said she had two baby cubs. He told her, "If they kill me, tell them put my head where no one walks around. Put it up high. Don't throw it anywhere."

"My brother-in-laws are going to kill me. You're not very far away from my brother-in-laws' trail," he told her. "Don't help them," he told her.

Soon it was getting warmer and the snow started to melt. She rolled up something and rolled it down the hill. Bears have dens on sides of hills.

Her mother said, "What's this I found?" Her mother remembered what kind of shirt her daughter was wearing when she got lost. She [the daughter] tore her sleeves off. In that, she rolled up rock, and then she threw it down. The brother-in-laws said, "We don't know where it came from." They took it back, and said to the mother, "We found this just like that, and we don't know where it came from. It was by our trail."

The bear told her, "Let's make a fire." She said, "Let's make a fire here." He told her, "It's on the trail. Let's make a fire off the trail." She said, "It's okay - let's make a fire right here where the sun is shining through."

She knew her brothers had a trail up that way. He asked her if she made a sign. She said, "What would I make a sign with?" He didn't say much after that, she said. She said he told her, "I'm doomed to die." Then he went back to sleep.

One brother was waiting above the den with a spear. "One boy had a gun," she said. "As soon as he peeks out I'll try to shoot him," he said.

Her mother said, "This is my daughter's shirt. This is what she was wearing when she got lost."

She said he asked her to take down his teeth. She said, "Why should I? It's your brother-in-laws' hunting trail." Then he threw his teeth away. He takes his teeth out during the winter and hangs them up. Then he told her what to do with his head. He told her not to put his head on the trail.

That's why people don't do that [jump over bear droppings]. They prepare his head good. Even Dawson people say that, and don't step over bear droppings.

The girl asked the bear, "Are there two of you in this den?" The bear said, "No, just you and me, just the two of us." Sometimes bears den up in pairs, one further back in the den. Her brothers were ready for him to come out.

She asked her mother, "Is that you, Mom?" Her mother said, "Yes, it's me. Come out closer, I want to talk to you. Tell me what happened." The girl told her she had been under a spell. She said the bear told her he was not married and that's why I went with him. "He looked like a person when he was sleeping," she said.

Her mother told her, "Come to the village with me." She replied, "Wait, I'll dress up the children." It seemed real to her that she was dressing them up. They had soft fur.

She chose to stay outside the village with her children. Her youngest brother visits her there. Her brothers made bows and arrows. They shot at her children. She told her brothers not to do that, but they kept doing it. She got mad and killed them both. She warned them not to do that, because she becomes a bear when they play like that.

They said her mother had made her a moose skin dress. When she came out of it she was a bear. She killed her younger brothers both.

She left the village with her two sons. The people just watched her go up the mountain.

[YNLC tape 2336]

THE WOMAN THROWN AWAY

Long ago people have a story about people who threw away a woman.

They said it was her mother. Her mother told her to sew some things, and she said, “It’s too many for me to sew!”

She was just becoming a woman. They used to set up a camp away from the main camp for the teenage girl and bring lots of sewing to her. Her mother brought lots of sewing from other people as well.

The girl had a husband, but they still did that to her. Her mother got a husband for her. Her mother still made her live away from the camp.

Her mother put snow on her fire where she was staying away from main camp. The people told her, “Don’t do that.” People felt sorry for her.

Another old woman told the girl’s mother she was going to see the girl for the moccasins she gave her to sew. That old woman put a strip of dried moose back strap and a knife into her sheepskin jacket – a copper-made knife. She wrapped it up in rabbit skin.

She also brought a bit of spark in rotten wood to her. She told her to get the fire as soon as possible before it goes out. The old woman told her to make rabbit snares out of the sinew. She told the girl to listen for rabbit cries and hurry and check it.

Her mother wanted to kill her daughter, but the old woman asked her to just leave her behind by herself. “It will be just the same as killing her.”

The old woman told the girl to get the spark she hid as soon as people left the camp. The girl skinned the rabbit to cook it. She cut up the rest of the rabbit so she'll have it for next meal.

She followed the people, carrying the spark with her. The girl saw snowshoe trails where people were hunting. She made rabbit skin clothing. She wrapped it around her down to her legs.

She was tired so she lit a fire. The old woman had left her a gopher blanket too. She sewed rabbit skin under the gopher blanket to make it heavier. She tied the blanket and stuff up tight and was pulling it.

She heard noises, and it was her brother and another man hunting. They saw her, and her brother went over to her by the campfire. Her brother had killed a moose and gave her some meat. She cut the meat thin so she could cook it by the fire. The rest she froze. She cooked most of it, in case the fire went out.

Her brother told her they will check on her now and then. The next time, her brother came to check if she was still there where they found her. She asked her brother why their mother left her with no fire to die. She told her brother about the old woman who had helped her. Her brother told their mother that his sister is still alive and living outside the camp.

Her mother said, "Are you sure? I'm glad! I was worried about her ever since I left her there." That night the mother of that girl and those boys sat up making moccasins and mitts. Her mother left her without anything for her to survive. Goodness!

She must have been away long time. The old woman also left string, cut from the edges of a moose hide. That's what she used to pull her stuff around.

She was blessed with lots of rabbits around her camp. She caught lots of rabbits. The rabbits were feeding on the spruce trees that made the shelter she lived in where she made camp. Rabbits were everywhere, just white. The old woman had told her to check the rabbit snares as she heard rabbit cries. She hurried to make blankets and clothing with the rabbit skins.

She told the people about how the old woman had saved her, and the advice she gave to her. The girl even made rabbit skin mitts for herself. To make rabbit skin blanket by twisting the skins and sewing it together takes a long time.

My grandmother used to make rabbit skin blanket. That's how I know how to make it. My father's auntie, **Gäjāw Utsu**, my grandmother, twisted rabbit skins while they were wet. She knit it into a large blanket.

People told her husband about the girl that was left to die. So he came to see the family with a gift of beads to get her back. The people were on a summer hunting trip when the girl's husband came to them to ask for her back.

The brother and the old woman told him, "Why you want her back when you left her to die? You didn't go to her to see if she was safe!" He brought some beads to them as a gift. They told him, "We're not giving her back to you." The girl said to her husband, "Go back where you live or I'll club you!" She picked up a burning piece of wood from the fireplace. She told him, "You left me there too. I'm not going back to you either."

The girl's mother asked her son to bring their sister back so she could help sew moccasins for them. She realized that she needed her daughter to help her. The girl's mother tanned lots of moose hides all the time. She wanted to pay the old woman that saved her daughter.

The girl's mother went to see the old woman, with the girl's brother. The girl's mother brought lots of skin and stuff for the old woman that saved her.

The old woman made her all the clothing she needed - she had lots of skin. That old woman also made the girl a jacket - she dressed her up warm.

The girl's mother asked her to come back with them. The girl said, "I'll take my new clothes with me, I must live in my house." The old woman said, "We will stay at our camp all the time. People always travel around without us. Our family lived out there, by ourselves."

The girl's mother tried to pay the old woman with moose hide for saving her daughter. The old woman did not want to give her back. The old woman said, "You threw her away to die."

The girl's mother wanted the old woman to pay her some moose hides for her daughter, the daughter she threw away. The old woman said, "Why should I pay you for your daughter? You threw her out!"

The old woman will not give the girl back to her birth mother. She wanted the young girl for her two sons. The old woman's two sons married her. They were good moose hunters.

[YNLC tape 2384]

OWL STORY, NEAR CHÄDAYA (TINCUP LAKE AREA)

I'll tell you a story about when people stayed further down from Big Arm (on Kluane Lake).

People lived at **Chädaya** (Tincup Lake, map # 27). King salmon came up stream to **Chädaya**, past Big Arm up the Nisling River. In the evening people hung up fish to dry. The fish kept disappearing off the fish racks. When they got up in the morning there was no fish on the racks. Jimmy Johnson and his family and others said that.

They said they didn't see anyone's tracks. They put ashes on the ground under the fish rack so they could see tracks, but there were no tracks. The fish kept disappearing.

Here it was a great big owl - white one - that was taking their fish. When people were sleeping, that's when it came. They didn't hear anything.

My mother said, "Let's go to see the people, how much fish they dried." My grandmother suggested to travel up that way to dry salmon. She said, "This time of year is when [Beaver Creek] people go there to dry salmon."

One person hid and waited to see what was stealing the fish, but he fell asleep. Goodness! This was happening for a long time.

Someone else sat up watching. He saw a great big white owl picking up the fish and fly away, then come back and get another. The owl picked up two fish at a time. He woke up the people and told them about the owl. They said, "He must be lying."

They got two more people to sit up. The owl picked up the dog, by mistake. The dog made so much noise the people got up. They thought it was a bushman.

One man said, "I never sleep at nights. I will sit up." Sure enough, he said that it was a huge white owl picking up the fish.

The owl had babies in the tree. She was feeding them in the nest. At the bottom of the tree was a pile of fish fins and bones.

An old man suggested to burn down the tree. They said it was a big nest. When they started a fire at the bottom of the tree, they saw the babies peeking over the top of the nest. The mother owl flew out through the smoke.

From that day, they dried some salmon. They had a fish trap in the creek. Sam Johnson's mother's grandmother said that too. They said the owl had lots of large baby owls, that's why it took all the fish to feed her babies. They said there were ten babies when they burned and fell down.

My mother's father said when we got there, **Chädaya**, people were packing up salmon. He told them, "You're lucky, you dried fish for the winter."

That man told him about the owl that was bothering them.

The people loaned them the fish trap. They used the trap twice and returned it to the owner. They used to tie the dogs around the bottom of the fish rack. Long ago people used to throw rabbit feet to the dogs and they were still fat, even rabbit guts.

The owl could have killed someone.

My mother said when we started back we went back through **K'ambadzēa** (Ptarmigan Heart, map # 31) through **Tatay Mān** (Polecat Lake, map # 22).

That time while we were gone, **Gājāw Utsu** 's husband died. Those days people were burned instead of buried. They told my grandfather, "We just came back from burning him."

Frank Isaac's grandmother said too, "What is it that's bothering us? Our rabbit snares were set off by a stick."

That time it was people from Selkirk that were sneaking around camp.

People lay on the cache to wait for whatever person was sneaking around.

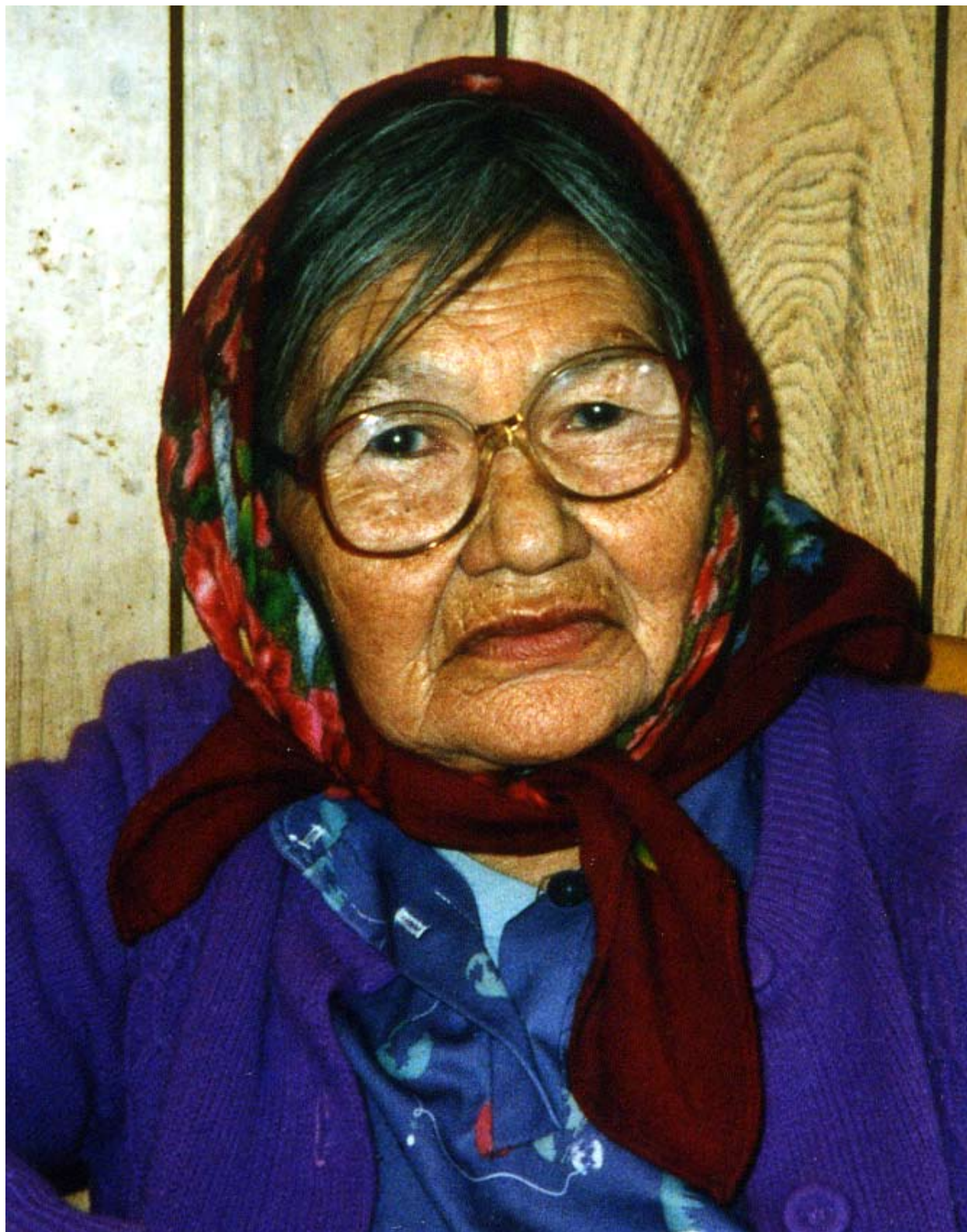
When he went back, he took down some fish from the fish rack. He told the people when he ran away he fell hard on his leg.

Why didn't he ask for the fish? If they had no food they should have said so, people will help them. They never think. He just about got shot in the head, my father said. He told him, "Why don't you come in and tell us you're out of food?"

[YNLC tapes 1891, 2336]

Memories
of
Bessie Allen

1901 - 2005



Bessie Allen in the 1980s, in the old house at Haines Junction.

Photo courtesy of the Allen Family



Bessie Allen at Silver Creek, stretching squirrel skins, 1968.

Photo courtesy of the Allen Family



Jack Allen, Bessie Allen at the experimental farm in Haines Junction, 1950s.

Photo courtesy of the Allen Family



Lorraine Allen at the experimental farm in Haines Junction, 1956 approx.

Photo courtesy of the Allen Family



Luke Williams, Peter Allen, Lorraine Allen at Silver Creek. Peter and Lorraine are brother and sister, Luke's mother is Bessie's sister Lilly. 1958 approx.

Photo courtesy of the Allen Family



Walter David with a caribou in the 1940s. He worked as an outfitter guiding hunters. He was named after Bessie's brother Walter, and was given his uncle's Native name, Sòthäna. He passed away in 1960.

Photo courtesy of the Allen Family



Jan Shepard, Jack Allen, Jim Fall, Solomon Charlie, Annie Charlie, Bessie Allen, June 1977, on the way to Kloo Lake.

Annie Charlie was Annie David, sister to Walter David and Daisy Jackson (not shown).

They were children of Bessie's sister Jessie, who died young. Their father was Charlie David. Bessie brought up those three of Jessie's children (there were others). They always called Bessie "mother" and Lorraine considers them her brother and sisters.

Photos courtesy of the Allen Family



Bessie Allen, late 1970s.



Annie Nicholas (a friend from Aishihik), Bessie Allen, Jack Allen, Little Johnny Smith at a potlatch in Beaver Creek. Date unknown. All of these people have now passed away.

Photo courtesy of the Allen Family



Jack Allen and Bessie Allen at the YNLC, 1995.

Photo by Wayne Towriss, courtesy of the YNLC



Bessie Allen at the YNLC, 1995.

Photo by Wayne Towriss, courtesy of the YNLC



Jack Allen at the YNLC, 1995.

Photo by Wayne Towriss, courtesy of the YNLC



Lorraine Allen, Jack Allen and Bessie Allen at the YNLC, 1995.

Photo by Wayne Towriss, courtesy of the YNLC



Bessie Allen on Christmas 2002, at Copper Ridge Place.

Photo courtesy of the Allen Family



Silver Creek, running into Christmas Bay, Kluane Lake, an area well known to Bessie and her family.

Photo courtesy of the Allen Family

PERSONAL NAMES

Information from Bessie Allen, Äshèñja, November 1991

Edited by Lorraine Allen, January 2006

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Chief Isaac (Robert Isaac's father,
Bessie Allen's Grandfather) | (1) Nàshea
(2) Äzhäntà |
| 2. Määdàka (English name Monica,
Chief Isaac's 1st wife, Robert Isaac's
mother, Bessie Allen's grandmother) | (1) Tlìyeə Mə
(2) Kùkaydadiya Mə
(3) Átsu Shäw |
| 3. Helen Stick (Chief Isaac's 2nd wife) | Chùtsay Mə |
| 4. Määdàka's (Tlìyeəmə's) mother
(Robert Isaac's grandmother) | Gajäw Utsu |
| 5. Määdàka's older sister | K'āñhua Utsu |
| 6. Robert Isaac (Bessie Allen's father)
(also Jamie Roberts) | (1) Kwàts'ānlen
(2) Łāk'etlen |
| 7. Sadie Isaac (Bessie Allen's mother)
(also Daisy Jackson and Jocelyn Kinney) | Ámə Kwàñjia |
| 8. Bessie Allen's mother's father | Udzi Kì |
| 9. Bessie Allen's mother's mother | Tsäl Kàya Mə |
| 10. Bessie Allen's oldest sister
(also Rosalie Washington) | Kùk'way |
| 11. Lilly Roberts (Williams) | Kùk'e |
| 12. Bessie Allen's sister
(also Virginia Allen) | Äyānayeə |
| 13. Ms. Allen's older brother
(also mother's uncle) | Kwàtsäw'ə Tà |

14.	Walter Roberts (Bessie Allen's older brother) (also Walter David)	Sòthäna
15.	Jimmy Roberts (Bessie Allen's brother) (named after Jimmy Johnson) (also James Allen)	Gemena
16.	Bessie Allen	Äshèñja
17.	Billy Roberts	(1) K'áľāla (2) Bibi Shāw
18.	Bessie Allen's cousin (Stolen in Dezadeash War, she was hiding under a skin, taken to Copper Centre, had lots of children over there)	La Shua
19.	Rachel Blackjack (May Roberts' mother)	Tth'įshüa
20.	Stanley Allen (also Percy Allen)	Tàtsaya
21.	Rosalie Washington	(1) Kùk'way (2) K'àythaya
22.	Delmar Washington (Rosalie's son)	K'àythaya
23.	Virginia Allen	Äyānaye a
24.	James Allen	Jemena
25.	Percy Allen (also Stanley Allen)	Tàtsaya
26.	Lorraine Allen	Chughàla
27.	Charlie David (Daisy Jackson's father)	Äch'āla
28.	Jessie David (Isaac) (Daisy Jackson's mother) (also Vera Williams)	Dálena
29.	Walter David (Daisy Jackson's brother)	Sòthäna

30.	Alice Smith (Charlie David's sister) (also Judy Gage)	Zhūra
31.	Long Peter (Charlie David's brother)	Madàt
32.	Jack Allen's mother's father	Kokhäna
33.	Old Allen's mother's mother (from Hutchi)	Shedäzhü Mä
34.	Hutchi Allen (Old Allen) (Jack Allen's father)	Ts'egegia
35.	Lilly Allen (Jack Allen's mother, from Hutchi)	Kändhäda
36.	Jack Allen	Äjukwänjia
37.	Jack Allen's sister (also Maddison Allen)	Shänch'ea
38.	Jack Allen's sister	Tsäl Drü
39.	Billy Allen (Jack Allen's brother) (also Paul Birckel)	Nàzhia
40.	Johnny Allen (Jack Allen's brother)	Kwàts'äwa
41.	Lilly Birckel (Allen) (Jack Allen's sister)	Kwàgaya
42.	Big Lake Jim (Jack Allen's mother's brother)	Mbäl K'enjita
43.	Big Lake Charlie (Jack Allen's mother's brother)	Gats'ità
44.	Joe Tom Tom's sister	Nänshja
45.	Dawson Charlie's brother (Tagish Charlie\$)	Unday Küzä
46.	Isaac Moose (Chief Isaac namesake)	Nàshea
47.	Jenny Moose	Däts'e'ala
48.	Bessie Crow	Shänlaya
49.	Mary Johnson (Lena's mother) (also Maryjane Johnson)	Gùdia

50.	Lena Johnson's grandmother (Charlie David's sister)	Dáyèt
51.	Mbaldúz Tom Tom	Mbäl Jüa
52.	Lilly Bill	Gagalla
53.	Mary (Joe) Jacquot	Nach'ädñch'ea
54.	Jimmy Joe	Uts'ñèkhits'äli
55.	Rachel Alfred (Grace Johnson's mother)	Udzejela
56.	Johnny Mack	Dänji Tà
57.	Johnny Mack's Wife	K'wäda
58.	Drury Crow (Bessie Crow's husband) (also Bruce Green)	Däch'äw Zĩa
59.	Hutchi Jackson	Ts'egüa
60.	Elsie Isaac (Frank Isaac's mother) (also Martha Smith, Bonnie-Jean Joe)	Ákhü Mạ
61.	Helen McGundy's grandfather	Nàtsē Tà
62.	Taylor McGundy	U'änäts'ech'ea
63.	Taylor McGundy's father	Chù Kwàn
64.	Taylor McGundy's mother	Thaya
65.	Gladys Bean (also Jessie Wolf)	Dekātala
66.	Little Drury McGundy	Änàth'aya
67.	Taylor and Drury McGundy's brother	Nàshàwli Tà
68.	Women from Laberge	Kētsia
69.	Popul John's father	Nàshàtsàlia
70.	Kitty Scurvey's mother	Nákhala

71.	Coast Indians	Älür
72.	(also Peter Jackson)	Kàtlay
73.	Albert Isaac	(1) Kàmbäda (2) Khìa
74.	Kitty Isaac (Sam Johnathan's 1st wife)	Nàtsia
75.	Bessie Isaac (Jenny Moose's mother) (also Jamie Allen)	(1) Shajika (2) Shündänjik
76.	Lucy Isaac (married Hutchi Charlie, co-wife of Lilly Isaac)	Nàkāda
77.	Sophie Isaac's father	Gátthì Tà
78.	Daisy Isaac (Annie Nicholas' mother)	(1) Ts'änlän (2) Tanädhät
79.	Billy Sam (Annie Nicholas' father)	(1) Äch'äla (2) Utsì Jedäch'ala
80.	Wesley Kinney (after David Bill, Bessie Allen's relative)	Nägüra (tough one)
81.	Sheyenne Kinney (after Lizzy Isaac)	Ughats'etsàna Mạ (<i>Protective of her</i>)
82.	Marquis Kinney	Ts'egegia
83.	Mya Kinney	Shänch'ea
84.	Devon Kinney (after Thomas Joe)	Gwäda
85.	Jocelyn Kinney	Ámạ Kwànjia
86.	Tiera John	Äshènjạ
87.	Johnny Alfred (Grace Johnson's Burwash brother, Bessie Allen's uncle)	Sha'ala

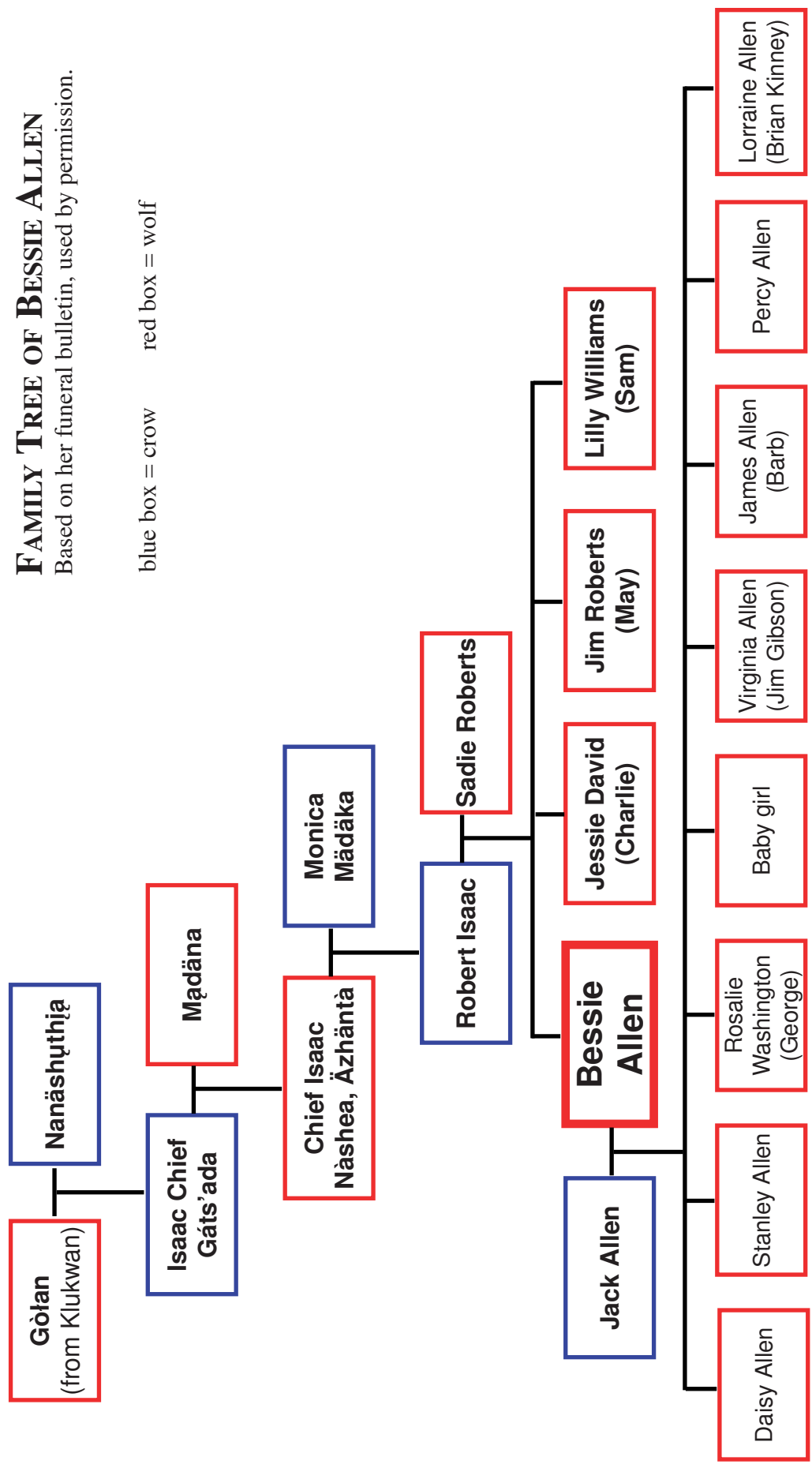
88.	Rachel Alfred (Grace Johnson's mother)	Udzejela
89.	No English name (Bessie Allen's mother's cousin)	Là Shùra
90.	Tagish Charlie (Dawson Charlie's brother)	Undāy Kwäzua
91.	Sam Isaac (also Sam Williams)	Ändatà
92.	Bertha Joe (Robert Isaac's 3rd wife, Billy Robert's mother)	Chukala
93.	No English name (also Chappie Williams, Abraham Williams, and Chris Williams)	Tsayda Tà
94.	Billy Williams (Doc Williams) (Sam Williams' father)	Nàkèdindhät Tà <i>(spirit coming down from above)</i>
95.	David Bill (also Wesley Kinney)	Nàghüra
96.	Old Man Tom Tom (Bessie Allen's grandfather's brother) (also Thomas Joe, Devon Kinney)	Gwäda
97.	Solomon Charlie	Dhälkì'ürtà
98.	Sadie Brown (Charlie)	Ta'chäna
99.	Shorty Charlie	Galān'aya
100.	Johnny Tom Tom (place name of Village Creek) (also Terrance O'Brien)	Thet'à Chua
101.	No English name (Joe Tom Tom's mother)	Sükemā
102.	Joe Tom Tom	Nàdzäda
103.	No English name (Johnny Mac's wife)	K'wäda

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 104. Johnny Mac | Danjità |
| 105. Hutchi Charlie | Ts'egüa |
| 106. No English name | K'ālān'aya |
| 107. Lilly Jackson (Isaac)
(also Agnes McDonald, Heather Jim) | Ts'ùk'ay Mą |

FAMILY TREE OF BESSIE ALLEN

Based on her funeral bulletin, used by permission.

blue box = crow red box = wolf



Pre-Deceased by:

Husband: Jack Allen

Parents: Robert & Sadie Isaac

Sisters: Lilly Isaac, Jessie Isaac & Lilly Williams

Brothers: Walter Isaac, Jimmy Roberts & Billy Roberts

Children: Stanley, Daisy & child

Adopted Children:

Daisy Jackson (Moose)

Annie Charlie (deceased)

Walter David (deceased)

Beaton David (deceased)

Survived by:

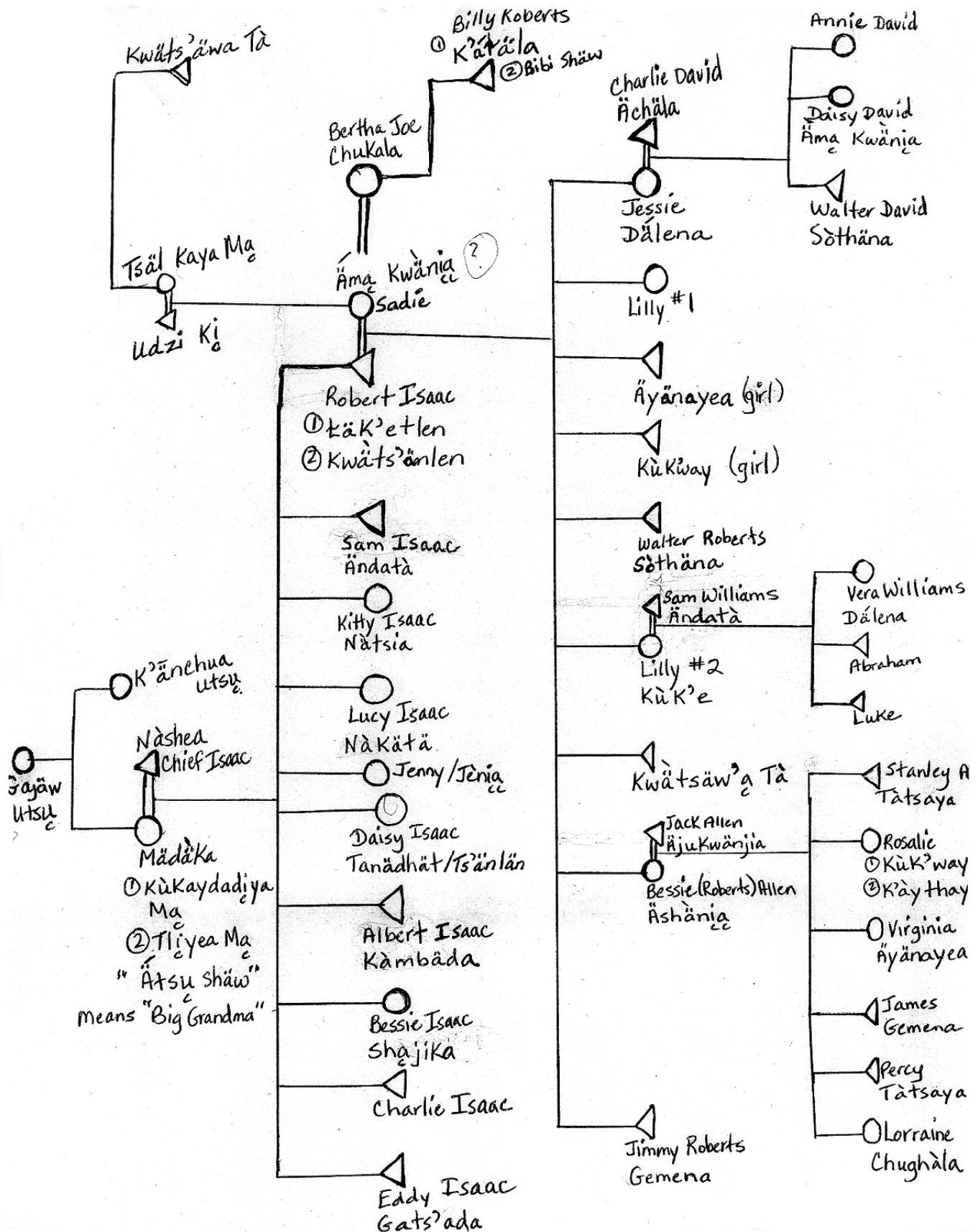
Children: Rosalie Washington (George), Virginia Allen (Jim), James Allen (Barb), Lorraine Allen (Brian), Percy Allen

Sister-in-law: May Roberts

15 Grandchildren

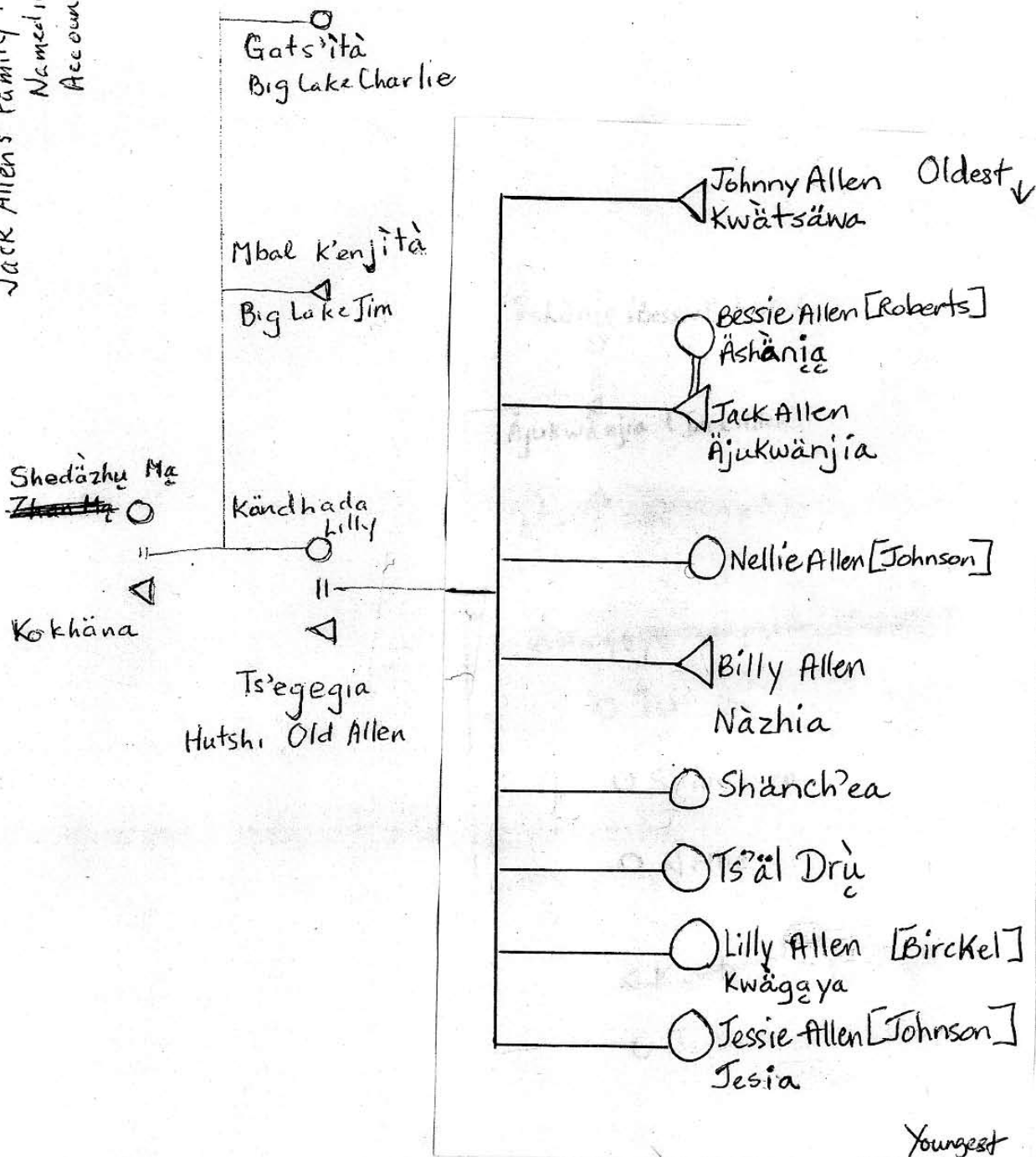
18 Great-grandchildren

BESSIE ALLEN'S FAMILY TREE (drawn by Lorraine Allen)



JACK ALLEN'S FAMILY TREE (drawn by Lorraine Allen)

Jack Allen's Family Tree: Persons
Named in Mrs. Allen's
Account



PLACE NAMES
LOCATION BY MAP ORDER

Map	English	Southern Tutchone
1	Wellesley Lake	Chukwa Mǎn
2	Lynx City	Tl'àyäda
3	Klotassin River	Nà'aya Shǎn
4	Dip Creek trail	Łùrgùlì
5	Pattison, Mount	Shár Tsì Dhǎl
6	Nisling River	Nìlì Chù
7	Nisling (camp)	Tl'àyüa Dashe
8	Nisling (creek mouth)	Tl'àyüa Chù
9	Nisling (campsite)	Tàkwätle Chù
10	Nisling (creek mouth)	Łùr K'äl Ni Chù
11	Onion Creek	Łeläw Chù
12*	Klaza River	Tsäl K'èkìshät Chù
13	Rhyolite Creek	Sàni Chù
14	Dwarf Birch Creek	Táchäl Nì Chù
15	Dwarf Birch Creek Mountain	Táchäl Nì Dhǎl
16*	Tyrell Creek	Sínjì Chù
17	Nisling (fish camp)	Chu Tànàadlì

Map	English	Southern Tutchone
18	Stevens Creek (Nisling)	K'ày Nats'āghùr Chù
19	Nisling Range (West)	K'ày Nats'āghùr Dhāl
20	Schist Creek	Ädzāy Dashe
21	Nisling Range (East)	Idzi Dät'āwa Dhāl
22	Polecat Lake (Stevens Lake)	Tatay Mān
23	Radio Mountain	Tatay Dhāl, Kàjat Dhāl
24	Nansen Creek Trail	Nítthe Kìḃ
25	Mackintosh Creek	Shintay Chù
26	Tincup Creek	Chādaya Chù
27	Tincup Lake	Chādaya Mān
28	Kiyera Lake (Redtail Lake)	Ushè T'āla Mān
29	Pass north of Big Arm, Kluane Lake	Ushè Dät'āla
30	Serpenthead Lake area	Dálür Ätān
31	Ptarmigan Heart	K'àmbadzēa
32	Talbot Creek	Tthē Ghùr Ni Chù
33	Gladstone Creek	Tthe Yì Dashe
34	Sekulman Lake	Tthechāl Mān
35	Bear Lakes	Shár Lūa

Map	English	Southern Tutchone
36	Killermun Lake	Cha Lūa
37	Kloo Lake (fishcamp)	K'ūa Chù
38	Kloo Lake (deadfalls) (Dry Pass Trail)	Dashän Khèla
39	Sulphur Lake	Kwät'äw Māna
40	Nansen, Mount	N'tthe Kìḗ Dhāl
41	McDade, Mount	Nàtth'à Dhāl
42	Victoria Lake	Łùr Tlāw Mān
43	Shadow Mountain	Täkambāl Dhāl
44	Shadow Mountain (near)	Nänshuä
45	Tantalus Butte	Gyḗ Tthì 'āk
46	Little Salmon	Gyḗ Shāw 'āk
47	Hutshi	Chuyena

* *indicates revised*

PLACE NAMES
ALPHABETICAL BY NAME IN ENGLISH

Map	English	Southern Tutchone
35	Bear Lakes	Sháar Lūa
4	Dip Creek trail	Lùrgùlǐ
15	Dwarf Birch Creek Mountain	Táchäl Nǐ Dhāl
14	Dwarf Birch Creek	Táchäl Nǐ Chù
33	Gladstone Creek	Tthe Yì Dashe
47	Hutshi	Chuyena
36	Killermun Lake	Cha Lūa
28	Kiyera Lake (Redtail Lake)	Ushè T'āla Mān
12*	Klaza River	Tsäl K'èkǐshāt Chù
38	Kloo Lake (deadfalls) (Dry Pass Trail)	Dashän Khèla
37	Kloo Lake (fishcamp)	K'ùa Chù
3	Klotassin River	Nà'aya Shān
46	Little Salmon	Gyü Shāw 'āk
2	Lynx City	Tl'àyāda
25	Mackintosh Creek	Shintay Chù

Map	English	Southern Tutchone
41	McDade, Mount	Nàtth'à Dhǎl
24	Nansen Creek Trail	Nítthe Kǎ
40	Nansen, Mount	N'-tthe Kǎ Dhǎl
21	Nisling Range (East)	Idzi Dăt'ăwa Dhǎl
19	Nisling Range (West)	K'ây Nats'ăghûr Dhǎl
6	Nisling River	Nǐlǐ Chù
11	Onion Creek	Łelăw Chù
5	Pattison, Mount	Shár Tsì Dhǎl
22	Polecat Lake (Stevens Lake)	Tatay Mǎn
31	Ptarmigan Heart	K'ămbadzēa
23	Radio Mountain	Tatay Dhǎl, Kàjat Dhǎl
13	Rhyolite Creek	Sǎni Chù
20	Schist Creek	Ădzāy Dashe
34	Sekulman Lake	Tthechǎl Mǎn
30	Serpenthead Lake area	Dǎfür Ătǎn
43	Shadow Mountain	Tăkambǎl Dhǎl
44	Shadow Mountain (near)	Nănshuă

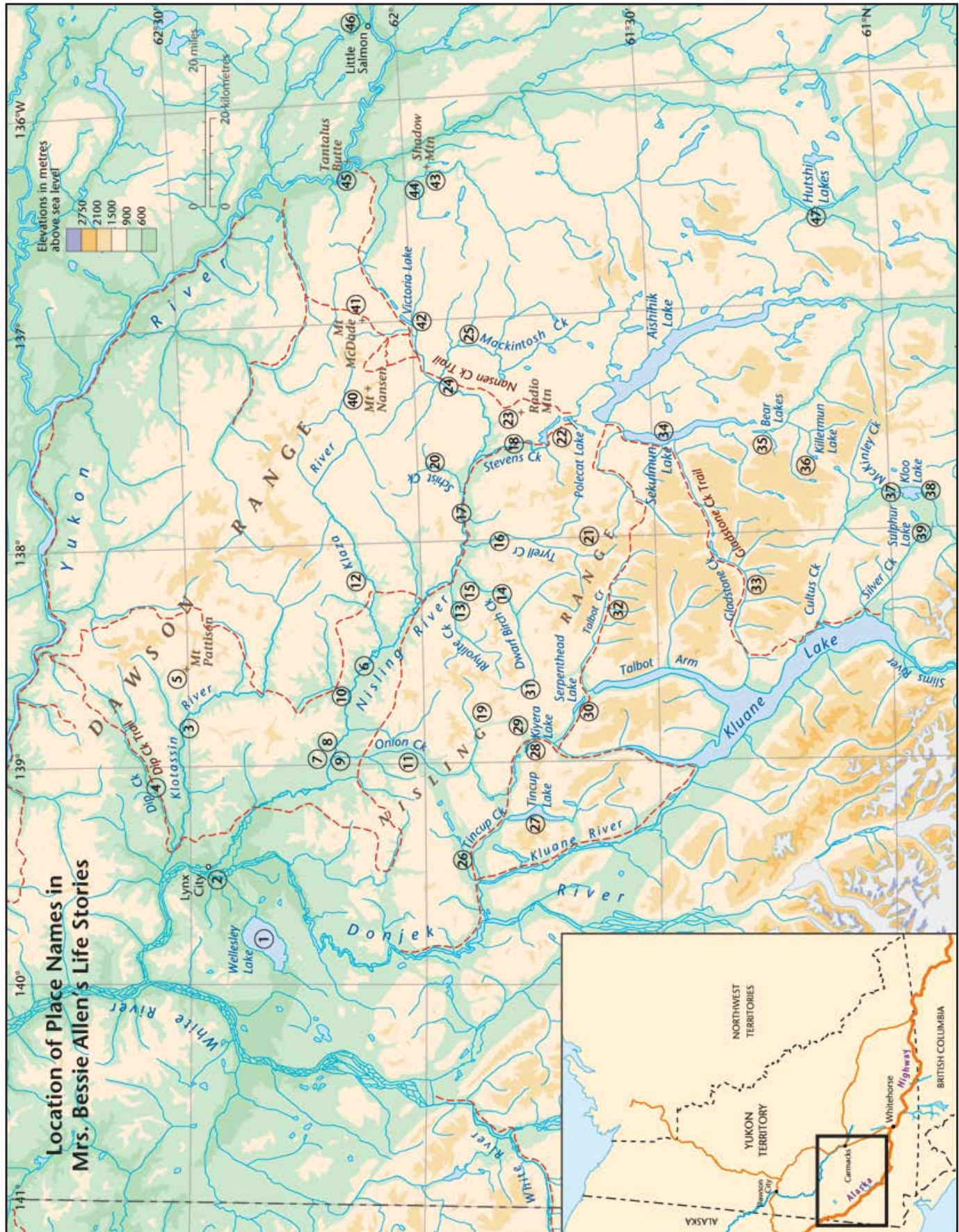
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39	Sulphur Lake	Kwät'āw Māna
32	Talbot Creek	Tthē Ghūr Ni Chù
45	Tantalus Butte	Gyū Tthì 'āk
26	Tincup Creek	Chādaya Chù
27	Tincup Lake	Chādaya Mān
16*	Tyrell Creek	Sínjī Chù
42	Victoria Lake	Łūr Tlāw Mān
1	Wellesley Lake	Chukwa Mān

Places with no clear English name

17	Nisling (fish camp)	Chu Tànàadlį
7	Nisling (camp)	Tl'àyüa Dashe
9	Nisling (campsite)	Tākwätle Chù
8	Nisling (creek mouth)	Tl'àyüa Chù
10	Nisling (creek mouth)	Łūr K'äl Ni Chù
29	Pass north of Big Arm Kluane Lake	Ushè Dāt'āla

** indicates revised*

MAP OF NISLING RIVER AREA



APPRECIATION

by Dr. Julie Cruikshank

This publication originated in a mother's and daughter's determination to record memories of a life that spanned more than a century. The life stories we read here come from a project carried out by Mrs. Bessie Allen and her daughter, Lorraine Allen, with support from the Yukon Native Language Centre.

Bessie Roberts was born near Aishihik Lake in 1901 to parents Robert Isaac and Sadie Roberts Isaac. She came to know the territories extending out from that lake intimately – first traveling with her parents, and then later with her husband Jack Allen. Like her mother, Bessie belonged to the Wolf 'side' as did the children she and Jack Allen raised - Stanley, Rosalie, Virginia, James, Percy and Lorraine. Her life coincided with changes brought by the twentieth century and extended into the twenty-first century, until 2005.

In 1991, when Mrs. Allen was already ninety years old, she and her daughter Lorraine Allen began to tape-record her experiences, as a child and as an adult woman, especially in the Nisling River valley (see map). Bessie Allen told her stories in the Southern Tutchone language and Lorraine then translated her mother's accounts into English. With great care, Lorraine transcribed the Southern Tutchone names of people and of places exactly as Mrs. Allen pronounced them. This is how those names appear on the map and on family trees that accompany this booklet.

Together these two women have documented episodes from a life lived in and around the Nisling River valley – especially between Aishihik and Lynx City - in the early half of twentieth century. These histories come from a time when

rivers, not roads, were the main centres of family and community life in the Yukon, and when families moved on foot between river drainages following well-traveled routes. They provide insight into lives lived before roads drew people away from rivers and before many of the stories and names began to fade as fewer people remembered them.

Two partial family trees and one map are included here to help readers follow Mrs. Allen's account, but they each need a few words of introduction.

Any drawing of a family tree is always incomplete. These two – one showing members of Mrs. Allen's own extended family (# 1), and the other showing family members of her husband, Jack Allen (#2) - include only names of people mentioned in her account. They are intended as a guide to help readers follow her stories, not as a complete genealogy. A more comprehensive family tree would include many more names, but might provide less assistance in following the stories.

The map is a guide to the geography of stories. The base map includes official English names as points of reference. When Mrs. Allen uses a Southern Tutchone name, it is indicated by a number that can be located quickly. Those Southern Tutchone names then appear on two lists that each provide a different orientation. One lists names as they appear on the map, moving roughly from west to east. A second is organized alphabetically by the official name, giving the reader a quick reference to a name that may be better-known in English (for example, 'Nisling River' or 'Cultus Creek').

Mrs. Allen's account appears in six sections. Throughout the first section, "Family History," she is speaking directly to her daughter, Lorraine, explaining who particular ancestors are, how each is related to Lorraine, and how these

names are passed on to younger generations. Mrs. Allen, like other elders, is more likely to use a relational term ('my mother', or 'my father's sister') than direct personal names (like **Tsäl Kàya Mą**), so the family tree may assist readers trying to connect those relationships with named people. When Mrs. Allen says "your grandma" or "your father," she is always speaking to Lorraine. Marriages in those days, Mrs. Allen insists, connected families from distant communities and strengthened connections. "Long ago it was always the same. People traveled a long way to find a partner." For example, **Ts'egegia** or 'Old Allen', her husband Jack Allen's father, came from Northway, Alaska, and married a woman from Hutshi, several hundred miles away.

Her father's father, Chief Isaac (**Nàshea**) had four wives, one from as far away as Mayo. Mrs. Allen speaks with some humour about women's contribution to the family economy. When her own father asked his father how it was possible for one man to support four wives, Chief Isaac joked that his wives were actually quite self-sufficient because of the money they were able to earn from their sewing: "My wives buy stuff with the stuff they sew!" Women's contributions to the domestic economy were always considerable and may actually have increased once trading posts began to sell sugar, flour, salt and other goods. Money earned from selling moccasins and mitts usually went directly to the trading post to buy such staples.

Section 2, "Making a Living Long Ago," describes the day-to-day work of making tools, especially traps, crucial for procuring food and shelter. In this section, Mrs. Allen provides a brilliant discussion of the principles involved in making a snare. Snares are still used by elderly ladies to trap gophers (arctic ground squirrels) or rabbits. Before guns were readily available, they were also used to ensnare large animals, and in this section she describes how sheep,

moose and even bears were snared. Her father's father, Chief Isaac, was skilled in the use of "big game snares," and she gives a delightful and humorous account of how he taught 'Old Allen', her husband Jack Allen's father, to make sheep snares. Jessie Jonathan, she says, once accomplished the same result by setting out a moose snare made of cotton rope. Tom Tomma, she explains, successfully snared a bear.

Section 3, "Making a Living in My Time," follows similar themes with direct references to women's work. She recalls the immense value of a lynx bone awl that her mother's father, **Udzi Kî**, made as a gift for his daughter, Mrs. Allen's mother. When people saw this awl, they readily agreed to trade a fully tanned moose hide in order to acquire a single lynx bone awl.

Her pride in her own mother's skills is enormous: "My mother could do just about everything!" She talks about how, with the help of her valuable awl, her mother invented new moccasin designs – enlarging the tongue of the moccasin – and how this idea caught on with other women. But she also recalls impressions from her own childhood of tasks that initially bored and frustrated her as a youngster trying to learn from her mother. For example, she describes how as a child she and her friend Bessie Crow (**Shänlaya**), resisted digging spruce roots: "Gee, I really didn't like the way my Mom made us pull out spruce tree roots!"

But the rewards of learning her mother's lesson well came later. She modestly enumerates some of her own abilities, learned from her mother, and her pride when her mother-in-law, Jack Allen's mother, praised her abilities: "You're smart, just like the old people!" And then her mother-in-law told others, "Oh my grandchild... She knows just like the old ways, my grandchild." [the term for 'grandchild' was also used for 'daughter-in-law'.]

Section 4, “Nisling River Childhood Travels,” and Section 5, “Starvation at Nisling River,” provide this publication’s core. By the time Mrs. Allen began the work of recording with Lorraine, she was one of the few people still living who could remember the years when the Nisling River was a busy route. Travelers from Aishihik, Fort Selkirk and Carmacks regularly met there to carry out subsistence activities and to trade. As recently as the 1930s and 1940s, Nisling remained a place of great sociability and exchange. By-passed by highways following WW II, it already seemed ‘remote’ when Bessie Allen and Lorraine Allen began documenting these stories in the early 1990s.

Anthropologist Catharine (Kitty) McClellan recalls in her book *My Old People Say* (page 30) that when she visited Kluane Lake in 1948, she met several families from Aishihik in a meat camp on the Big Arm of Kluane Lake. They had come across the height of land from Aishihik via Isaac and Gladstone Creeks, she says. This is one of the same routes Mrs. Allen describes in Section 4 (page 26).

Section 5 continues in the Nisling River valley with Bessie Allen’s gripping account of starvation there sometime in the mid 1930s. She and her husband, Jack Allen, caught up to people hunting on the upper Nisling at a time when food had run out and game was scarce. It was a desperate time, and largely because Bessie Allen had insisted that they carry extra food, they were able to come to the aid of friends seriously weakened by starvation.

In her account of that terrible starvation, Mrs. Allen weaves together several points of view. She and her husband happened to be traveling to Nisling with extra food supplies when they overtook starving people near Lynx City. She describes how they were able to retrieve moose meat from a cache where Jack Allen had stored it the previous summer. She provides a detailed account of her

own successful porcupine hunt with **Däts'e'ala Mą**. She summarizes the story of her husband Jack Allen's successful moose hunt. She also includes stories of those struggling to survive in the camp and the subsequent return of all survivors to Fort Selkirk. She concludes with an account of the return journey she and her husband made back to Kloo Lake, where her father was waiting for them.

Finally, Mrs. Allen concludes with four well-known stories about how the world first began: the story of how *Äsüya Straightens Out the World* at the beginning of time; the well known story of *The Girl Who Married a Bear*; a story of *A Woman Thrown Away*; and finally another story from the Nisling River about an owl.

Bessie Allen and Lorraine Allen have created a wonderful record that enriches our understanding of early twentieth century Yukon life. With this booklet, they make an important contribution to our understanding of First Nations history in the southwest Yukon. This record will make their descendants proud.

Dr. Julie Cruikshank

Professor Emeritus, University of British Columbia

IN REMEMBRANCE OF BESSIE ALLEN

Excerpt from Hansard, Yukon Legislative Assembly, Whitehorse, for Tuesday, May 23, 2006. Speech by Mr. Gary McRobb, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Kluane.

Mr. McRobb: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise to-day in remembrance of Bessie Allen, a well-respected elder in the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. Bessie had been living at Copper Ridge Place in Whitehorse before she passed away on May 2, 2005. Also known by her Southern Tutchone name, Äshènjà , she was a person of indeterminate age although it was known she had lived more than a century.

Sometime around 1901, Bessie was born to Robert Isaac and Sadie Roberts at Aishihik Lake. During her childhood, Bessie and her family lived on the land relying totally on the resources of the area for sustenance through each season. The skills she learned early in life were passed on as she raised her own children in the traditional way.

Bessie met her husband-to-be, Jack Allen, in Burwash, where he worked at the trading post. After they were married, she would often say he had modernized her - even though they still worked a trapline using dog teams.

In true traditional fashion, this couple adapted their harvest of nature's resources with each change in season. In spring, they trapped muskrat and beaver. In early summer, they harvested small game such as gophers, rabbits and game birds and fished for grayling and whitefish.

Later in summer, after the young of the large game animals began to put on fat, Bessie and Jack hunted moose, caribou and sheep. In the fall, they dried fish and meat to store in tree caches until they could return in winter by dog team and sled. Life with such great uncertainty and challenges meant never wasting an opportunity to provide food from the land to their family or community.

An early tradition common to this area's Southern Tutchone people was travel by foot, called a "shakat" trip. Later in life, Bessie kept the tradition alive in the early 1970s by organizing and participating in shakats in the Kloo Lake - Ruby Creek area and another in the Silver Creek area. Up to five families participated in these traditional shakats. Although the hunting and gathering tradition of travel on foot was difficult, shakats remained very important to her.

During an interview, she recalled a summer shakat trip from long ago with her husband Jack and other families. This shakat started by walking from the Aishihik Village to Klukshu for salmon, a distance of some 200 kilometres. In July, they walked to Kloo Lake and then into the Jarvis Creek Pass to hunt sheep and moose before going up the Kaskawulsh River to a camp below Sheep Mountain where they met up with families from Burwash. The group cooperatively snared sheep for drying and hunted moose while moving north until they reached the Donjek River. This summer-long shakat continued on to Burwash before returning to the Aishihik Village.

In her daily life, she went to great lengths to teach her children how to trap well enough to earn a living and to hunt and fish well enough to keep their families

healthy. The Southern Tutchone language was spoken exclusively in their home, and she made a great point of remembering and using traditional place names.

Until the 1940s, Bessie and Jack lived at the Aishihik Village with their children. Bessie served as a midwife to the people living in this small, remote settlement. She often treated flu victims with traditional medicines including the broth from boiled moose bones which gave strength.

To say times were tough would be an understatement, Mr. Speaker. After their first child contracted tuberculosis, the family had no option other than to try to reach the territory's only hospital in Dawson City. They walked and boated from Aishihik to Carmacks and on to Pelly where they rode in a motor boat to Dawson. Unfortunately, Stanley succumbed to this dreadful disease, and his spirit house remains to this day in our former capital city.

After Aishihik, the family moved to Haines Junction where Jack found employment at the experimental farm. Bessie continued to work hard raising her family, tanning hides and sewing traditional garments. She was a great seamstress, making slippers, vests, mittens and blankets. She continued the arduous task of tanning hides well into her 80s.

As the matriarch of her family, Bessie ensured her children understood the traditional ways and spoke their native language. Bessie was known to always put others first. She cared for those in need and raised four children in addition to her own five. She was a caring and devoted person.

Bessie was predeceased by Jack whom I paid tribute to in this Legislature on March 26, 1997. She is survived by her daughters Lorraine, Rosalie and Virginia, sons Percy and James, and many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I will close by inviting all members to join me in welcoming to the gallery her son, Chief James Allen of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and son-in-law Brian Kinney, granddaughter Desiree O'Brien and her spouse, Leslie O'Brien.

Mahsi' cho. Thank you.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF JACK ALLEN

Excerpt from Hansard, Yukon Legislative Assembly, Whitehorse, for Wednesday, March 26, 1997. Speech by Mr. Gary McRobb, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Kluane.

Mr. McRobb: I rise today to pay tribute to the late Jack Allen of Haines Junction, a respected elder of the Champagne-Aishihik First Nation.

Jack Allen was born in 1903 in the Hutshi area. He lived a traditional lifestyle and spent most of his 94 years hunting, trapping and fishing. Jack was an excellent horse trainer and rider, and gained a reputation for riding any wild horse he was dared to ride.

Jack provided for his family in a traditional and contemporary way. He hunted and trapped extensively in the Aishihik area.

During construction of the Aishihik road and airport, he worked for the army barging equipment and supplies up the 60-kilometre long Aishihik Lake.

Jack is survived by his wife, Bessie, sister Jessie Jonathan, daughters Lorraine, Rosalie and Virginia, sons Percy and James, 17 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. Jack Allen will be sadly missed by all those who knew him.



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