REPATRIATION, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, AND CULTURE
IN A NORTHERN ATHAPASKAN COMMUNITY

by

Kate Hennessy

B.A., University of British Columbia, 1996
M.A., University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2002

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

The Faculty of Graduate Studies

(Anthropology)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

July 2010

© Kate Hennessy, 2010
ABSTRACT

Many Canadian First Nations and Aboriginal organizations are using digital media to revitalize their languages and assert control over the representation of their cultures. At the same time, museums and academic institutions are digitizing their ethnographic collections to make them accessible to originating communities. As the use of digital media becomes standard practice both in the production of ethnographic objects and the “virtual repatriation” of cultural heritage, new questions are being raised regarding copyright, intellectual property, ownership, and control of documentation in digital form. In this dissertation, based on collaborative ethnographic multimedia production work with the Doig River First Nation (Dane-zaa) in northeastern British Columbia, I follow the transformation of intangible cultural expression into digital cultural heritage, and its return in the form of a digital archive to Dane-zaa communities. I explore how new access to digitized ethnographic documentation has facilitated local media production, and argue that these productions are acts of remediation of digital cultural heritage that resignify the products of ethnographic research in Dane-zaa communities. Through the lens of the collaborative production of the Virtual Museum of Canada exhibit Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land, I show how local control over efforts to safeguard intangible heritage resulted in the implementation of a documentary methodology that modeled the appropriate transmission of culture in Dane-zaa social practice. The participatory production process of the virtual exhibit also facilitated expressions of Dane-zaa intellectual property rights to cultural heritage. Using the example of the digitization of photographs of early twentieth-century Dane-zaa nááché (dreamers’) drums, and the community’s subsequent decision to remove them from the virtual museum exhibit, I explore how new articulations of Dane-zaa rights to control the circulation and representation of their digital cultural heritage are guided by knowledge of Dane-zaa nááché, traditional protocols for the handling and care of material culture, and by contemporary political concerns and subjectivities.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. ii
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................. iii
List of Figures ........................................................................................................................ vii
Acknowledgements .............................................................................................................. viii
Dedication .............................................................................................................................. x

## Chapter 1: Repatriation and Digital Cultural Heritage ......................................................... 1
Introduction .............................................................................................................................. 1
About the Dissertation ............................................................................................................ 5
  Structure ................................................................................................................................. 6
  Orthography .......................................................................................................................... 6
  Recordings ............................................................................................................................. 7
Virtual Repatriation? .............................................................................................................. 8
Safeguarding Heritage .......................................................................................................... 15
Negotiating the Public and the Private .................................................................................. 21
Cultural Production at the Doig River First Nation ................................................................. 26
  The Doig River Band Hall and Cultural Complex ................................................................. 26
  The Doig River Museum ...................................................................................................... 29
Outline of Chapters ............................................................................................................... 33

## Chapter 2: Dane-zaa Nááchę and the Power of Public and Private Knowledge ....................... 38
Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 38
Dane-zaa Nááchę and Dreaming in the Ethnographic Record .................................................. 40
  Medicine Power and the Vision Quest ................................................................................ 41
  *Makémúünatane*, the First Nááchę .................................................................................. 45
The Tea Dance ......................................................................................................................... 52
The Tea Dance Today ............................................................................................................. 58
Between “Personal Medicine and Public Shamanism” .......................................................... 61
  *Mayiné? and Ahatá?yiné? (Náácheyiné?)* ........................................................................ 62
Dreamers’ Drawings .............................................................................................................. 64
Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 71
Chapter 3: Repatriation, Digital Cultural Heritage, and the
Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive ........................................... 73
Introduction .................................................................................... 73
The Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive ......................................... 76
Collecting Dane-zaa Intangible Cultural Heritage ............................. 76
“Even the Land Misses the Songs”: Accessing Dane-zaa Intangible Cultural Heritage ................................................................. 84
The Creation of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive ................... 92
From Intangible Expression to Cultural Property ............................... 95
Repatriation and Digital Technology ............................................... 100
  1. Fragmentation .......................................................................... 105
  2. Indigenous Ideologies of Repatriation ....................................... 108
  3. Remediation ............................................................................ 110
Conclusion: A Middle Ground of Cultural Reclamation? .................... 113

Chapter 4: Suunéch’ii Kéch’iige (“The Place Where Happiness Dwells”):
Digital Cultural Heritage and Media Production at the Doig River First Nation ................................................................. 117
Introduction .................................................................................... 117
Global Indigenous Media Production ............................................... 120
Land, Politics, and Media Production at the Doig River First Nation .... 126
  “The Place Where Happiness Dwells” ............................................. 132
  Contact the People: Dane-zaa Continuity and Change (2000; video, 24 min.)... 139
  The Otter Man’s Prophecy (2002; video, 24 min) ................................ 143
  Hadaa ka Naadzet: The Dane-zaa Moose Hunt (2004; virtual exhibit, currently off-line) ............................................................ 147
  They Dream About Everything (2005; video, 50 min) ...................... 151
  The Dreamers Drumming Collection (2005): Tea Dances; Trail Dreamers’ Songs; Symbols Lodge Prayer Songs; and, “They Dream”
  The Soundtrack Remixed (enhanced audio CD-ROMs, 2005) .............. 156
Conclusion ....................................................................................... 160
Chapter 5: Participatory Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage: 
*Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* | 164

Introduction ................................................................................................................. 164
The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Community Collaboration ................................................................. 166
Jean Rouch and “Shared Anthropology” .................................................................. 171
*Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* ..................... 178
Goals and Priorities ........................................................................................................ 180
A Dreamer’s Drum .......................................................................................................... 183
   Sam Acko’s Narrative on Renewing Drum Making Traditions at Doig River.... 187
   Tommy Attachie: The Story of the Drum.............................................................. 191
Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 199

Chapter 6: Dreamers and the Land .......................................................................... 201
Introduction ................................................................................................................... 201
Narratives of Place as Resistance .............................................................................. 205
*Aláá? Šatɔ* (Petersen’s Crossing) .............................................................................. 214
   Billy Attachie at *Aláá? Šatɔ* (Petersen’s Crossing) ............................................. 217
*Madáts’atl’oje* (Snare Hill).................................................................................... 222
   Sam Acko at *Madáts’atl’oje*: “The Man Who Turned into a Moose” ............... 226
   Tommy Attachie at *Madáts’atl’oje* ................................................................. 241
Sweeney Creek ............................................................................................................... 244
   Tommy Attachie at Sweeney Creek: *Gaaye’a*’s “Prairie Chicken Song”........... 247
   Tommy Attachie at Sweeney Creek: The Dreamer *Makéts’awéswąq* ............... 257
*Alédzé Tsáa* (Alédzé Creek) and *Tsazuułh Saahgáe* (‘Big Camp’)............... 267
   Tommy Attachie at *Alédzé Tsáa* ...................................................................... 269
   Tommy Attachie at *Tsazuułh Saahgáe* ......................................................... 274
*Nétl’uk* (Osborne River) ......................................................................................... 281
   Billy Attachie at *Nétl’uk* .................................................................................. 283
   Sam Acko at *Nétl’uk* ...................................................................................... 292
*Gat Tah Kwâ* (Montney) ......................................................................................... 298
   Tommy Attachie at *Gat Tah Kwâ* (Montney) .................................................. 300
   Gerry Attachie Talks about *Gat Tah Kwâ* (Montney) (I.R. 172) ................. 307
Conclusion: Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage Through Practice ........... 313
Chapter 7: Digital Matters ........................................................................................................... 316
Conclusions ................................................................................................................................. 316
“Indigenous Curation” and the Post-Production of *Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* .............................................................................................................. 318
Digital Matters ............................................................................................................................ 322
  Community Post-Production Consultations, July 2005 to January 2007 .................. 323
  Digital Matter #1: Cultural Protocols and Intellectual Property Rights .......... 331
  Digital Matter #2: Control ....................................................................................................... 343
Traveling the Alaska Highway ................................................................................................. 348

References .................................................................................................................................. 354

Appendix I: Virtual Exhibit Catalogue: *Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* ........................................................................................................................................ 376

Appendix II: Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval ......................................... 604
LIST OF FIGURES

1. Map of Northeastern British Columbia (Brody 1988:33) .................................................. 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My doctoral research was made possible through the generous funding of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), The Canadian Polar Commission, Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies, and the University of British Columbia. I am grateful for the trust that these institutions placed in me to take on my doctoral project and to communicate what I learned in the process.

I am grateful to the Faculty and Staff of the University of British Columbia’s Department of Anthropology. In particular I offer my gratitude to my supervisor Patrick Moore, who mentored me through coursework, fieldwork, and publishing, and always kept me on the right track. Thank you to my committee members Bruce Miller and Jennifer Kramer for their constant support and insight. Thank you also to Julie Cruikshank, John Barker, Sue Rowley, Ulrike Radermacher, Larry Grant, David Schaepe, Leona Sparrow, Andrea Sanborn, Lawrence Isaac, David Houghton, and the Reciprocal Research Network Implementation Team for allowing me to learn so much from their inspiring work. I am also thankful for the work, scholarship, and collegiality of Kimberly Christen, Christina Kreps, Alexandra Denes, and Aaron Glass.

Thank you to my Trudeau Foundation mentor and friend, Sylvia Hamilton, and to Peter Biella for many years of support and friendship. Thank you to Bettina Cenerelli, Josée St-Martin, and Pierre-Gerlier Forest of the Trudeau Foundation for their guidance and encouragement. My sincere thanks also to other colleagues who have supported me in my dissertation writing efforts: David Geary, Kisha Supernant, Karen Rideout, Robin O’Day, Julia Colleen Miller, Erin Baines, and Julie Wagemakers at the Liu Institute for Global Issues. I am particularly grateful to Patrick Moore, Billy Atachie, Marlene Benson, Eddie Apsassin, and Julia Colleen Miller, who transcribed and translated the Dane-zaa Záágéʔ (Beaver language) narratives and texts that are included in this dissertation.

I am indebted to the many research collaborators with whom I have worked and who have made my project possible. My sincere thanks to Amber Ridington for introducing me to the Doig River First Nation community, for initially involving me in Dane-zaa media projects, for her collaboration, hard work, and consultation throughout our often complicated fieldwork and exhibit production. I owe a host of gratitude to Robin Ridington and Jillian Ridington, who first taught me about Dane-zaa people as an
undergraduate in anthropology, and have continued to teach me ever since. Without
them, and their dedication to Dane-zaa communities, none of the work represented by
this dissertation would have ever been possible. I offer thanks also to Craig Campbell
and to Mike Annany, who inspired me to think in new ways about media and
communication.

At the Doig River First Nation, I have many people to thank. First, thank you to
Margaret Attachie, my “Grandma,” and to Mikayla Attachie, Adrian Attachie, Shirley
Reiter, and Melissa Knight, who always made a home for me at Doig River and in Fort
St. John. My sincere gratitude to the members of the Doig River community, all those
who participated in the multiple aspects of the production of *Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa
Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*, and who took the time to be interviewed in
the summer of 2007. Although many of these interviews did not appear in the
dissertation, they helped me significantly to better understand my work at Doig River.
My gratitude to: Amy Acko, Annie Acko, Brian Acko, Leo Acko, Sam Acko, Alveena
Acko, Robin Acko, Starr Acko, Eddie Apsassin, Glen Apsassin, Mark Apsassin, May
Apsassin, Jack Askoty, Fred Askoty, Billy Attachie, Gerry Attachie, Bernice Attachie,
Margaret Attachie, Tommy Attachie, Wally Attachie, Gary Ben, Charmayne
Brinkworth, Brittany Brinkworth, Jane Calvert, Kelvin Davis, Margaret Davis, Maxine
Davis, Marcel Davis, Tyler Davis, Lucy Davis, Madeleine Davis, Norman Davis, Renee
Davis, Shawna Davis-Green, Vern Davis, Rene (RC) Dominic, Robert Dominic, Rosie
Field, Gabe Harvey, Margie Miller, Marlene Benson, Garry Oker, Shirley Reiter, and
Holly Reiter. My enormous thanks to Marshall and Jean Holdstock, and to Warren
Reade, Teree Rathje, Ronda Peck-Svisdahl, Verena Hofmann, Keary Walde, Pat Jansen,
Dave Rattray, and Brenda Paul. I would also like to thank the *Dane Wajich* exhibit
interactive media producers Wayne Clark, Katherine Lee, Kyle McIntosh, and Malcolm
Levy.

Many family members and friends offered their encouragement and support in
the course of my studies. In particular I would like to thank my brother James
Hennessy, my grandmother Helen Ann Lingenfelter, and Natasha Lyons, Tamara
My love and gratitude to my husband Oliver Neumann, who showed endless patience
throughout this process and always made time to listen to or read my work. Last but
certainly not least, thank you to my parents, Ann Hennessy and Tom Hennessy, who
have supported my education and explorations from the very beginning.
DEDICATION

For my Parents, Ann and Tom Hennessy,
& my “Grandma” Margaret Attachie
Chapter 1: Repatriation and Digital Cultural Heritage

Introduction

This dissertation follows the transformation of Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage into digital cultural heritage, and its return as the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive (R. Ridington, et al. 2004-2010) to the Doig River First Nation, an Athapaskan speaking Aboriginal community in northeastern British Columbia. In the ethnographic record, the people of the Doig River First Nation have been referred to as Beaver (R. Ridington 1981), and today identify themselves as Dane-zaa, meaning ‘regular/ordinary people’ in Dane-zaa Záágéʔ (the Beaver language). In 2003, anthropologists Robin and Jillian Ridington digitized their archive of approximately 600 hours of audio recordings, 5000 photographs, and 60 hours of digital video tape that they had recorded in Dane-zaa communities in the last forty years. They returned it in the form of a hard drive and password-protected online catalogue to the Doig River First Nation to curate for all Dane-zaa people. Since then, members of the Doig River First Nation have worked with the Riddingtons and other outside collaborators to actively integrate digital photographs, video, and audio, from the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive into their cultural centre’s exhibits, and to produce a range of media for public circulation, such as audio CDs, video documentaries, and virtual exhibits. I argue that these community productions are acts of remediation of digital cultural heritage that have resignified the products of ethnographic research in Dane-zaa communities. Further, digital access to Dane-zaa cultural heritage documentation, and engagement with this media through community media production, have facilitated culturally specific articulations of restrictions on the circulation of private forms of knowledge that aim to keep media
Figure 1. Northeastern British Columbia. (Brody 1988:33)
circulating in culturally appropriate ways. While these productions constitute subtle forms of resistance—intervening in colonial, national, and industrial narratives—they also raise a series of “digital matters” that question the role of digital technologies in safeguarding digital cultural heritage. I frame my discussion of the remediation of Dane-zaa digital cultural heritage in relation to the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which emphasizes that communities should be full partners in efforts to safeguard their heritage. I argue that community participation in documentation and safeguarding is essential in developing digital strategies that are focused on keeping intangible heritage alive in social practice.

I began my work with the Doig River First Nation in 2004 as a web design and digital video production educator. As a doctoral student conducting fieldwork there between 2005 and 2009, using models of collaborative production and research most strongly associated with ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch (1974), I co-curated and produced a virtual exhibit of Dane-zaa oral traditions and histories of nááchę (known in English as prophets, or dreamers) called Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land (2007).¹ This participatory web-based project was in large part inspired by the 2004 return of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive. Dane Wajich is available to the world, hosted by the Virtual Museum of Canada. Between 2004 and the project’s launch in May 2007, co-curator and producer Amber Ridington and I worked

¹ Throughout this dissertation, I provide links to the exhibit Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land. These links are intended to function as virtual footnotes providing contextual information produced in collaboration with the Doig River First Nation. [http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/]. The project can also be viewed in print form as an exhibit catalogue in Appendix I, p. 376.
with the community and a team of linguists, ethnographers, and educators to facilitate
the production of the exhibit and negotiate its representation of Dane-zaa stories and
songs.\(^2\) Dane Wajich integrates interactive maps of traditional hunting territories with
Dane-zaa Záágéʔ video narratives, archival and contemporary photographs and song
recordings, and documentation of the project’s participatory process, to teach viewers
about the history of Dane-zaa nááchę (dreamers) and their significance for the present
generation. In July and August of 2007, I conducted twenty interviews with Dane
Wajich project participants and other Doig River community members, which greatly
enriched my understanding of aspects of Dane-zaa cultural production that I take up in
this dissertation.

Nááchę, who can be genealogically located in the Dane-zaa kinship universe, are
said to have traveled to heaven in their dreams and brought back songs and prophesies
that provide moral and spiritual guidance. Dane-zaa oral tradition also asserts that
nááchę dreamed ahead to find the trails of game animals, and predicted the coming of
white settlers to the Peace River region as well as the industrialization of the oil-rich
landscape (Brody 1988; R. Ridington 1988). The last known Dane-zaa dreamer was
Charlie Yahey, who passed away in 1976. The songs of many dreamers are remembered
today by “song keepers” who have revived drumming and singing at Doig River, teach

\(^2\) To see the full list and biographies of Dane Wajich project participants, please go to:
http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/project/projectteam.php, or Appendix I,
p. 401-412.
To see the virtual exhibit project credits, please go to Appendix I, p. 379, or:
http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/credits.html
younger generations to drum and sing, and lead the group known in the Fort St. John area and beyond as the Doig River Drummers.

The transformation of Dane-zaa cultural heritage from analog into digital form has provided opportunities for community participation in cultural production and creative engagement with new media. Digital media projects at the Doig River First Nation have also facilitated a reconnection to intangible heritage documentation that had not always been accessible, despite the circulation of many analog copies, and promoted greater awareness of what had been recorded by anthropologists over the years. Through collaboration with a range of ethnographers, linguists, and folklorists, the mobilization of digital cultural heritage has forged new possibilities for participatory research, elicited community research priorities, and strengthened relationships between researchers and the community.

At the same time, these cultural productions have highlighted tensions within and between Dane-zaa communities over the appropriate use of archival media, and over rights to determine how digital cultural heritage will be used. The “digital matters” that I explore in this dissertation’s concluding chapter reinforce that if the desire for repatriation is related to the desire for control over representation (Kramer 2004)—including local control over the circulation of public and private forms of knowledge—then the use of digital technologies for what has been called “virtual repatriation” may in fact have the opposite effect.

**About the Dissertation**

The findings presented here represent my experience with the collaborative production and review of the virtual exhibit *Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs:*
Dreamers and the Land, and ethnographic fieldwork with Dane-zaa communities over several years. My understandings of the work represented in this dissertation were greatly enriched by my research collaboration with exhibit co-producer Amber Ridington, and my many conversations with former Chief of the Doig River First Nation, Garry Oker. The dissertation reflects these experiences and understandings generated in the process to the best of my knowledge, and is a selective account of the forms of knowledge, places, people, and histories that I describe.

Structure
While the dissertation frequently references the Dane Wajich exhibit, there are no images from the project in the text of the dissertation itself. I have made this decision in order to encourage readers to visit the online exhibit and experience the images, videos, audio recordings, and texts in their full context. The Dane Wajich project represents a two-year process of collaborative production and consultation with members of the Doig River First Nation, and is the most appropriate illustration of the project I describe in the following chapters. The dissertation is therefore best understood in relation to the multimedia work; throughout the dissertation, there are hyperlinks to media in the virtual exhibit that can be activated (in the electronic PDF version) by clicking on the link. For readers with a paper version, the print-based Catalogue of the Dane Wajich exhibit is attached as Appendix I (page 376) of the dissertation, and is cross-referenced with the hyperlinks in footnotes.

Orthography
The orthography of Dane-zaa Záágéʔ used in this dissertation is based on the system developed by linguists Marshall and Jean Holdstock in their work in Dane-zaa
communities since 1962. The orthographic transcriptions and translations used in this dissertation were made by Dr. Pat Moore in collaboration with Julia Miller, Billy Attachie, Marlene Benson, and Eddie Apsassin. The ethnopoetic transcription of narratives and interviews in this dissertation follows a style in which speech lines are broken to reflect pauses and intonation (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987; Hymes 1981; Tedlock 1972). In cases where I am quoting narratives from other sources, I have replicated the ethnopoetic style of the original author. The narratives from the *Dane Wajich* project that are presented in Chapters Five and Six have been edited for orthographic accuracy by Pat Moore, and so differ from the original presentation of the narratives in the exhibit, as seen in Appendix I.

**Recordings**

All media recorded in the course of the production of *Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* is the property of the Doig River First Nation. Media from the *Dane Wajich* project is used in this dissertation with the permission of the band. DVD hard copies of unedited video recordings were archived at the Doig River Band Hall, and all media related to the project have been catalogued and digitally archived for return to the Doig River First Nation. The audio-recorded interviews that I conducted with individual members of the Doig River First

---

3 More information about *Dane-zaa Záágéʔ* and the Beaver Literacy Program can be found in Appendix I, page 462, or in the context of the virtual exhibit *Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* or at:


A *Dane-zaa Záágéʔ* pronunciation guide developed for *Dane Wajich* can be found in Appendix I, page 464, or online at:

Nation in the summer of 2007 were duplicated and returned to interviewees in the format of their choice, but were not archived with the band.

**Virtual Repatriation?**

The return of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* to the Doig River First Nation is part of a broader movement to digitize heritage collections and facilitate greater accessibility. In recent years, museums have embraced digital technologies for their ability to make collections visible over the Internet. Anthropologists are digitizing their ethnographic archives to share them with research communities, and using digital recording technologies in their fieldwork. Material culture in museum collections is being digitally photographed for online collection databases and virtual exhibits, while documentation of intangible cultural expressions is being transformed from analog photographs, film, video, and tape recordings into digital files. Significantly, these technologies are allowing members of originating communities to access images of objects, audio and video recordings, and texts documenting their relatives and their material, cultural, and linguistic history, often for the first time. In what is amounting to a paradigm shift in the ways that institutions and individual anthropologists can display and create access to their collections, digital technologies—paired with innovative programming and design that is responsive to the needs of community stakeholders—are providing significant possibilities for sharing curatorial and ethnographic authority with originating communities.

Access by originating communities to their cultural heritage in on-line museum and ethnographic collections has become known as *virtual or digital repatriation* (Peers and Brown 2003a). Justification for the use of the term repatriation, when no actual
transfer of property ownership occurs, has been centered on the possibilities for visual access to collections to parallel some of the positive effects of the repatriation of tangible cultural heritage and human remains to originating communities. From the printing of copies of digitized photographs and recordings for personal use, to the creation of museum exhibits, language curricula, video documentaries, and websites (J. Bell 2003; Christen 2006b; Fienup-Riordan 2003; Moore and Hennessy 2006; Pigliasco and Colatanavanua 2005; A. Ridington and Hennessy 2008; R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006d), digital cultural heritage is being recontextualized and reconnected to social practice.

However, these engagements with digital cultural heritage are also sites of intersecting histories of research and cultural expression, the aural and “visual legacy and historical deposits of sets of encounters and relationships” (Edwards 2003:83). While the use of digital technologies to create access to collections for originating communities has been described by museum scholars and ethnographers with great hope for cultural, social, and political empowerment through reconnection to tangible and intangible cultural heritage, my dissertation explores how engagement with digital cultural heritage through participatory community media production has also revealed tensions, contradictions, and conflicts as material and intangible cultural heritage are reconnected to dynamic social practices.

In the chapters that follow, I explore three related processes at play in the return of digital cultural heritage to Doig River. The first is grounded in the history of collecting intangible cultural expression in Dane-zaa communities, and the impact that changing documentary technologies have had on this process of documentation. The
second has to do with the ways that members of the Doig River First Nation are using new media to resignify and recontextualize their digital cultural heritage, and to communicate their history and identity in new forms. The third relates to a shift away from local control over the public and private forms of cultural knowledge toward circulation and remix that has been facilitated by digital technologies.

First, collecting in Dane-zaa communities has been primarily focused on spoken words and intangible cultural heritage, rather than material cultural heritage. In contrast to the expressive visual artistic traditions of the northwest coast First Nations, sub-arctic hunter-gatherers traditionally kept material possessions to a minimum, carrying technologies and expressive traditions in their heads, rather than on their backs (Cruikshank 1992). As such, spoken words have been treated as objects to be collected as much as their material counterparts (Cruikshank 1992:5). They have been archived and duplicated, transformed from intangible expressions to tangible ethnographic object (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991). As a central focus of academic writing and publishing on Dane-zaa culture and history, these oral histories, songs, personal narratives, and related photographs and film recordings have been recontextualized and remediated through interpretation and circulation.

Second, the digitization of ethnographic documentation from Dane-zaa communities, complemented by Dane-zaa access to copies of digital cultural heritage, has facilitated media production by the Doig River First Nation. Digital access has aided in the re-use of media from the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive. Members of the Doig River First Nation have made a series of efforts to resignify the products of ethnographic research—media that were once considered visible or audible evidence of
an indigenous world expected to disappear, but which instead persists (Ginsburg 2002). These productions, which are performances thematically grounded in the history and contemporary significance of Dane-zaa nááchë, document local and everyday resistances that reflect “the existence of a range of strategies and structures of power” (Abu-Lughod 1990).

Third, more broadly considered, is the notion that digital technologies are facilitating an unprecedented shift away from locally controlled and mediated forms of knowledge, to unfettered public access, remediation, and remix. This process is at odds with the notion of Doig River First Nation’s indigenous media productions as forms of resistance, as unrestricted circulation of media can undermine the efforts of indigenous producers to define how cultural knowledge is transmitted, circulated, or restricted. As I will describe, while media projects at Doig River facilitated the articulation of intellectual property rights to, and restrictions on digital cultural heritage, digital technologies also complicated efforts to enforce these rights and restrictions. Digital code, that at its most primary function is programmed to make copies, has displaced the ‘natural’ duplication constraints of analog media (Lessig 2008). Unlike the tools associated with the dissemination of analog media– discrete networks of master copies, duplication technologies, and distribution media– computers are simultaneously tools for the production and distribution of digital cultural heritage (Cameron 2007). The creation of digital cultural heritage and related cultural productions are therefore significant “arenas in which social actors struggle over social meanings and… visible evidence of social processes and social relations” (Mahon 2000:467).
As I explore in subsequent chapters, these dynamics were made visible during the production and review of *Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*. On the one hand, I show how elders selectively performed and contextualized traditional narratives and life histories that they recorded with Dane-zaa youth for inclusion in the exhibit. I describe how archival media were selected to be remediated and contextualized by newly recorded narratives. I analyze a range of these video narratives that can be viewed throughout the “Places” section of the *Dane Wajich* site. On the other, I describe how Dane-zaa at Doig River and in related communities drew on their personal knowledge of protocols for handling and care of sacred material culture to make decisions about the control of their representation in digital form. I describe how the Doig River community initially chose a painted drum made by the dreamer Gaaye\xa in the early twentieth century to be the aesthetic and thematic anchor of the exhibit. However, almost two years later, as the final version of the project was being reviewed by the community, concerns about photographs of the drum being placed on the Internet began to be voiced. People used cultural protocols associated with the traditional care and handing of dreamers’ drums to think through the ways in which photographs of the drum should be restricted or circulated in new media contexts.

With greater awareness of the ability of the Internet to widely distribute information, community members also began to articulate particular intellectual property rights to the material, raising important questions about control of cultural heritage in digital form. Members of an adjacent Dane-zaa community, the Blueberry

\[\text{\footnotesize \[4\text{\footnotesize The ‘Places’ page of the }\textit{Dane Wajich} \text{ exhibit can be found at Appendix 1, p. 415, or:}\ \textit{http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/index.php}}\text{\footnotesize ]}\]
River First Nation, began to object to Doig River’s use of images that depicted members of their families. The Doig River Chief and Council eventually decided that in addition to gaining copyright permissions from the copyright holder, anthropologist Robin Ridington, use of the archival images would also require intellectual property rights clearance from the families of those depicted in the photographs. When stakeholder families at Blueberry River declined to give permission for Doig River to use particular images in the *Dane Wajich* project, all media documenting the *nááché* Charlie Yahey were subsequently removed from the exhibit. In response to the concerns at Doig River about showing dreamers drums publicly, all images of dreamers’ drums and drawings were also removed (Hennessy 2009; A. Ridington and Hennessy 2008).

The articulation of these restrictions occurred only after community members were actively involved in a participatory new media production process over a period of more than two years. As elders’ exposure to the technology increased, so did their understanding of the consequences of using it. As cultural authorities in the community, their advice to the exhibit production team about what media could be made public, and what should be kept private, was crucially important to the production of a representation of Doig River’s history and culture that did not circulate sensitive cultural knowledge, and which could be approved for world-wide distribution.

The ethical paradox made clear in this research, however, is that visual data used in new media contexts, like the *Dane Wajich* project, can generate articulations of rights, but at the same time they amplify the difficulty of enforcing those rights. Even though the Doig River Chief and Council, the Elders Council, and members of the community came to a consensus over the way that sacred material culture and its digital
representations should be restricted, an Internet search still reveals multiple manifestations of the contested images on several publicly accessible websites that breach both community intellectual property rights and the anthropologist’s copyright.

The example I have described here emphasizes that if digitization of ethnographic documentation precedes a community’s opportunity to assess the collections and possibly apply restrictions, then cultural information that is usually privately restricted might be distributed without their consent. It also complicates the ability of anthropologists to control how their ethnographic documentation will be used. While many museum curators have taken the requests of originating communities to treat material culture with traditional modes of care and handling very seriously, even restricting visual access to sacred objects in exhibits and visible storage (Rosoff 2003), the digital medium makes it difficult to control the circulation of ethnographic representation in virtual contexts. In her ethnography of Nuxalk art production and repatriation of cultural property in Bella Coola, British Columbia, Jennifer Kramer suggests that Nuxalk desire for repatriation of cultural property is entangled with the desire for restitution for other forms of social, cultural, and political theft under colonialism. For Kramer, the desire for repatriation is “the desire for self-representation, both as an individual and as a First Nation” (2004:163). Similarly, members of the Doig River First Nation view the return of cultural and linguistic documentary heritage as an important milestone in a wider struggle for self-governance, economic independence, and self-representation. Digital cultural heritage plays a significant role in the articulation and re-mediation of Dane-zaa cultural and political identities, but also challenges the ability of local communities to restrict the circulation of private forms of
knowledge. I argue that while engagement with digital technologies may impede aspects of Dane-zaa control over their own representation, Dane-zaa cultural productions are also significant locations “for the revisioning of social relations with the encompassing society, and exploration that more traditional indigenous forms cannot so easily accommodate” (Ginsburg 1994:372). The production and review of this exhibit, and the negotiations of control over representation of culture, language, identity, and ownership of digital cultural heritage that it initiated constitutes the case study of Dane-zaa cultural production at the centre of this dissertation.

**Safeguarding Heritage**

In this section I contextualize my use of several terms that appear frequently throughout the dissertation: cultural heritage, natural heritage, intangible cultural heritage, and safeguarding. Their definitions are drawn from UNESCO heritage policy, and have constituted a productive framework for thinking through the politics and practices associated with the documentation, digitization, and remediation of Dane-zaa heritage.

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, was founded in 1945 with the mandate “…to create the conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based upon respect for commonly shared values” (UNESCO 2009:2). To date, UNESCO has 193 Member States, including Canada. The instruments of UNESCO are: International Conventions, which are subject to ratification, acceptance, or accession by Member States, and which define the rules with which States agree to comply; second, Recommendations, or “norms” which are not subject to ratification, but which Member States are encouraged to apply in their
national contexts; and third, Declarations, another means of defining ‘norms’ of significant and lasting importance, and which set forth universal principles for support from the community of Member States (UNESCO 1995-2007). Since its inception, UNESCO has supported a range of world heritage initiatives, beginning with tangible heritage (movable and immovable), expanding to natural heritage, and more recently to intangible heritage, and in the process supporting a growing awareness of “the arbitrariness of the categories and their interrelatedness” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004:52)

The global dialogue around the determination of what constitutes heritage has been supported and facilitated by the UNESCO’s Culture Sector (Kearney 2009). For example, the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural, Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) defined “cultural heritage” in the following way:

- monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value form the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view. (UNESCO 2005:10)

For the purposes of the Convention, “natural heritage” was also defined as the following:
- natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;
- geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;
- natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty. (UNESCO 2005:10)

The World Heritage Convention’s definitions of “cultural” and “natural heritage” represent a particular heritage discourse that emphasizes the ‘universal value’ of heritage. The Convention has had a continued and defining impact on the development of national and international cultural heritage policies and practices, and has generated wide ranging criticism for its Eurocentric focus on monumental and aesthetic sites and places (L. Smith and Akagawa 2009). In contrast, more contemporary discourse on heritage protection calls for fuller recognition that:

… heritage protection does not depend alone on top-down interventions by governments or the expert actions of heritage industry professionals, but must involve local communities and communities of interest. It is imperative that the values and practices of communities, together with traditional management systems, are fully understood, respected, encouraged and accommodated in management plans and policy documents if heritage resources are to be sustained in the future. Communities need to have a sense of ‘ownership’ of their heritage; this reaffirms their worth as a community, their ways of going about things, their ‘culture’ (Logan and L. Smith 2009:xiii).

The 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage has been described as a counterpoint to the World Heritage Convention in its
acknowledgement of non-Western heritage manifestations and practices, and as a “significant intervention into international debate about the nature and value of cultural heritage” (L. Smith and Akagawa 2009). The 2003 Convention defines intangible cultural heritage as:

the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development. (UNESCO 2003:2)

Intangible cultural heritage, as defined above, is agreed to be manifested in oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of intangible heritage, as well as the performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO 2003:2-3). Yet these expressions and practices are considered to be threatened by the forces of globalization; the Convention is written in recognition that “the processes of globalization and social transformation, alongside the conditions they create for renewed dialogue among communities, also give rise, as does the phenomenon of intolerance, to grave threats of deterioration, disappearance and destruction of the intangible cultural heritage” (UNESCO 2003). From this perspective, the world’s intangible cultural
heritage is in need of safeguarding, and resources need to be allocated to do this essential work.

*Safeguarding* intangible cultural heritage is premised on identification, inventorying, documentation, protection, and transmission. The term is defined in the 2003 Convention as,

… measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage. (UNESCO 2003:3)

As I will describe in more detail in Chapter Five, in a departure from earlier world heritage policies that granted agency to state parties, Article 15 of the Convention emphasizes that efforts to safeguard heritage should involve the full and meaningful participation of communities whose heritage is being safeguarded (Kurin 2007; Logan and L. Smith 2009). However, the 2003 Convention, like other UNESCO heritage policies, is still formulated and administered by state powers, and state parties that have ratified it are responsible for taking measures to safeguard intangible cultural heritage (Kearney 2009). Using examples from Australia, Amanda Kearney has described the ways in which Aboriginal communities have used new technologies and initiated projects aimed at safeguarding Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural heritage. She points out, though, that because Australia has not ratified the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, communities cannot draw on the Convention for support of their particular approaches to safeguarding. Kearney proposes that “non-ratification of the Convention reflects an ongoing homogenizing of
Indigenous identity in Australia, and this contributes to an undermining of Indigenous self-governance, autonomy, and cultural distinctiveness in individual Indigenous communities” (2009:218). Canada, similarly, has not ratified the 2003 Convention; however, as in Australia, the references provided by UNESCO policies are productive frameworks for considering Indigenous approaches to safeguarding heritage.

In this dissertation, I show how members of the Doig River First Nation worked with outside collaborators—anthropologist, linguists, folklorists, and media producers—to document and safeguard their heritage. In demonstrating the interconnection and inalienability of what UNESCO has identified as tangible, natural, and intangible heritage, Dane-zaa participants demonstrated the arbitrariness of drawing distinctions between forms of heritage. Through our participatory production of the virtual exhibit *Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*, I describe the ways in which Dane-zaa project participants enacted a strategy of safeguarding their cultural heritage that modeled their preferred modes of transmitting cultural knowledge through practice. Specific cultural protocols were eventually evoked to support decision-making about the circulation of sensitive cultural heritage, and its representations in digital form, to facilitate cultural transmission in appropriate social practice. I argue that while documentation is central in efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, such documentation must be carried out in culturally appropriate forms. Local control over the negotiation of public and private forms of knowledge is central to safeguarding heritage in all of its forms.
Negotiating the Public and the Private

Indigenous media and archiving projects in Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific, and North America (Christen 2006a; GRASAC 2008; Iverson, et al. 2008; Pigliasco 2007; R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003; Rowley, et al. 2010; Tapsell 2001) provide insight into the ways that local communities negotiate the circulation of public and private forms of knowledge. Control over the circulation of knowledge, the ways that knowledge is mediated, and the forms that are used to represent knowledge locally and globally, are integrally related to the ability of local communities to safeguard knowledge within appropriate social practice. These media are “dynamic sites of struggle over representation, and complex spaces in which subjectivities are constructed and identities are contested” (Spitulnik 1993:296).

Kim Christen, for example, has asked anthropologists to question the ‘openness’ of their visual archives and the ethical parameters used to justify sharing materials in the digital age (2009). Based on digital archive design work with the Warumungu community in Australia’s Northern Territory, she suggests that “Indigenous knowledge systems make clear other ways to conceptualize how information can and should be shared, how access is constructed, and how expanding our understanding of openness has been limited by our own default notions about the boundaries of information freedom” (Christen 2009:5). Christen’s work on the development of culturally appropriate forms of access to Indigenous digital cultural heritage responds to prior modes of colonial collection practices, which assumed authority over the appropriation, interpretation, and public display of Indigenous material culture. In the Canadian context, according to Ruth Phillips and Elizabeth Johnson,
Under the paradigm of scientific knowledge, museum curators assumed the virtually unfettered right to collect, look at, investigate, and interpret First Nations materials and human remains. They displayed objects in museum collections to serve institutional mandates to inform the wider public about the cultures from which they came. The visible display of museum collections, especially when they involve objects that are normally private or seen only during ceremonies, has reinforced many First Nations people’s feelings of powerlessness, inadequacy, and humiliation. (Phillips and Johnson 2003:133)

Yet even physical repatriation of cultural property can do damage to traditional modes of negotiating public and private knowledge. Phillips and Johnson indicate that in the case of potlatch regalia repatriated to Kwakwaka’wakw communities on the northwest coast, “the conditional return of their illegally confiscated regalia further damaged traditional observances by replacing their hereditary forms of clan and lineage ownership and ceremonial display with the conventions of Western public museums” (Phillips and Johnson 2003:155).

Michael Brown has discussed how these concerns have been extended to the circulation of digital information. He notes that Indigenous groups, particularly those of North America, Oceania, and Australia,

…frequently complain that public display of objects held to be sacred—a term notable for its elasticity—violates their cultural rules and vitiates the object’s power. Information, which is far more reproducible than individual works of art, generates even greater anxiety because it can be circulated instantly through technologies such as the Internet. (Brown 2009:152)

Brown further asserts that while the term ‘cultural property’ was once narrowly applied to architectural monuments and objects of national patrimony, the term is
“increasingly held to encompass intangible as well as material expressions of a distinct community, including its language, art styles, music, folklore, technical knowledge, and religious practices” (Brown 2009:151). He links concerns about the eroding relationships between tangible and intangible forms of heritage to Walter Benjamin’s famous observation that an art object’s ‘aura’ is undermined by the technologies of mass production. Indeed, in Benjamin’s essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” the “aura” of an original work of art is diminished as the “technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition” (Benjamin 1968:221). Even the most perfect reproduction, what Baudrillard later called the simulacra (1994), is lacking the element of “its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be” (Benjamin 1968:220). The aura derives its enchantment from its social meaning, its ability to carry messages, to transmit the story of its origin, its traces of ownership, and inherent cultural value (Cameron 2007). For Benjamin, the authenticity of an object is dependant on this aura, as

… the authenticity of a thing is all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object. (Benjamin 1968:221)

By this reasoning, therefore, if an object is separated from its systems of meaning, “then its aura is diminished” (Cameron 2007:57). Yet the opposite has also been argued, that in fact it is the act of documentation and circulation that creates the
aura in the first place. According to Peter Walsh, Benjamin framed his critique of mechanical reproduction incorrectly; rather, “It is the mechanical reproduction– the photograph– that created the aura of the original, much as it was the machine that created the “handmade,” the negative that created the “positive,” and the digital that gave retroactive birth to its latent opposite, the “analog” (Walsh 2007:29).

My intention in evoking the work of Walter Benjamin is to suggest that concerns over reproduction of media persist, and that they are exacerbated by digital technologies. Concerns among many Indigenous peoples have to do with their threatened ability to control the circulation of public and private forms of knowledge at a time when digitization is being heralded as a methodological strategy for addressing the asymmetrical power relations of the colonial era of museum and ethnographic collection.

I therefore argue that participation of communities in efforts to safeguard their heritage is essential. My argument is supported by the language of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage. I assert that the need for community participation is amplified in relation to the widespread mobilization of digital technologies in safeguarding initiatives. As Kim Christen emphasizes, “Part of the inclusion of new technologies in these ventures is about maintaining control, both technological and social, over how knowledge is catalogued, circulated, and cultivated” (Christen 2005:327). She has shown these processes at play in her work with Aboriginal communities and digital archives in Australia, where, for example, Warumungu women determined limits on the documentation, reproduction, and reception of dreamers’ songs, negotiating what forms of knowledge should be open, and how access to the rest
of the material should be restricted, as a starting point for digital safeguarding (Christen 2005).

Precedents can be found in relation to ‘old’ archiving technologies as well, with one of the best examples coming from the Makah Cultural and Research Center in Neah Bay, Washington State. Here, the recovery of the Ozette archaeological collection, and its accession into the centre’s museum, reminded staff and community members that the traditional system of property ownership, both tangible and intangible, was still practiced in Neah Bay communities (Bowechop and Erikson 2005). Artifacts were accordingly stored by type, by household from which they were recovered, and in relation to Makah linguistic categories. The management system for this collection “… is not only an organizing device for accessing information and artifacts, but a tool for reflecting, understanding, and preserving the cognitive system within which the artifacts were produced and used” (Bowechop and Mauger 1995:5). The Makah and Warumungu examples, drawing on old and new media strategies for safeguarding public and private forms of intangible heritage, reinforce the notion that “the ways in which collections are stored, managed, and accessed can have profound significance to their host community in whether they support or erode traditional values” (Bowechop and Mauger 1995:6). Christina Kreps has identified these strategies as principles of Indigenous curation, which emphasize that museological behaviour is frequently embedded in broader cultural forms and systems. Of significance to this dissertation, she argues that:

Indigenous models of museums and curatorial practices are tangible expressions of the intangible, or rather, ideas about what constitutes heritage, how it should be perceived, treated, passed on, and by whom. They exemplify holistic approaches to heritage preservation that are integrated into larger social structures and ongoing social practices. (Kreps 2009:197)
In subsequent chapters, I will show how community-based documentation of heritage at Doig River led to the articulation of principles of Indigenous curation—culturally specific models of care and transmission of cultural knowledge—but I will also question the role of digital technologies in safeguarding these elements of heritage.

**Cultural Production at the Doig River First Nation**

My interest in Dane-zaa cultural productions builds on the work of other scholars of Indigenous media and political anthropology exploring “the ways in which media enable or challenge the workings of power and the potential of activism; the enforcement of inequality and the sources of imagination; and the impact of technologies on the production of individual and collective identities” (Ginsburg, et al. 2002:3). Before outlining the structure of the dissertation, I will describe some forms of Dane-zaa cultural production that have been created as visible expressions of Doig River identity by members of the Doig River community both independently and in collaboration with outsiders. These productions include the architecture of the Doig River First Nation’s new Band Hall, the collections in their museum, and a range of multimedia works. These cultural productions evoke the history of Dane-zaa nááchę, the politics of land and resources, and the histories of research.

**The Doig River Band Hall and Cultural Complex**

The Doig River First Nation’s newly constructed Band Hall stands out dramatically against the reserve landscape. The angular wings of the building, its round
central space, and yellow cedar paneling contrast with the uniform lines and colors of
government-issued housing visible on the ridges beyond. On the flat plain below the
hall are the Doig River rodeo grounds, where covered stands and a dirt arena become a
bustle of barrel racing, bull riding, and celebration each July. Closer to the Doig River,
which winds its way through the reserve, a circle of teepees and bleachers are marked
by a sign informing visitors that these are “cultural grounds.” Here a group of Doig
River men perform the songs of Dane-zaa dreamers for seasonal tea dances, funerals,
and public events throughout the year.

Long before settling on the reserve at Doig River, Dane-zaa families used to
come together in the summer at Suunéch’ii Kéch’iige, or “The Place Where Happiness
Dwells,” now known as Montney near Fort St. John. As I explore in more detail in
Chapter Four, each year family groups would gather to dance to the songs of nááchę,
court, settle political disputes, hunt moose, prepare dry meat, and process moose hides.
In 1914, in keeping with the land allotments provided for by Treaty 8, which Dane-zaa
leaders signed in 1900, this area was surveyed to be the Fort St. John Band’s reserve
(I.R. 172). While the band continued to live a seasonal, nomadic lifestyle, this fertile
game-rich hunting ground remained an important summer gathering place. However, in
1944 under pressure from government agents to turn this area into agricultural land,
members of the Fort St. John Band (later to split into the Doig River and Blueberry
River Bands) surrendered Indian Reserve 172 to the Veteran’s Land Department for

5 Images from the Doig Reserve and Band Hall can be found in Appendix I, from page
416, or seen online in the Dane Wajich exhibit at:
distribution to returning war veterans (Roe 2003). Sub-surface mineral rights that should have been held in trust for the Doig and Blueberry Bands were inadvertently also transferred to the veterans, who in addition to becoming farmers, became wealthy oilmen. It was only after 1977, when a Department of Indian Affairs officer discovered that the Doig and Blueberry bands had unceded sub-surface mineral rights and alerted the band, that Doig and Blueberry commenced legal action claiming damages for improper surrender of the lands and transfer of mineral rights. After a court battle of more than two decades, the Bands were eventually awarded 147 million dollars for the federal government’s breach of trust. The Doig River First Nation used their share to create trust funds for band members, to support cultural and linguistic revitalization programs, and to start Band-managed businesses. They also used some of these funds to finance the construction of their new Band Hall.

The significance of Dane-ţaa nááchę in contemporary life is visible in the Band Hall’s central entrance space, which is circular, designed to reference the moose hide drums that are used by singers to perform the songs that Dane-ţaa once dreamed from heaven, and the circular paths of dancers around the Tea Dance fire at which these songs are played. A framed poster provided by the architect, Ib Hansen, includes hand drawings by former Chief Garry Oker that suggest the hallways that branch off from the circular foyer are meant to represent trails—those traveled by Dane-ţaa people in life as they move though their territory hunting and making a living, and in death as they trace the paths taken while alive and find their way along the trail to heaven. In the building, hallways lead from the central foyer to a gymnasium, an elders' lounge and a community kitchen; a business meeting room; a wing of administrative offices,
including those used by the Chief and Council, the Band Manager, and the lands management and GIS office; and a medical wing with a nurse’s station and counselor’s office. This new building stands in sharp contrast to the former band office, a two-room structure that was cold in winter, provided little space for the Chief and councilors to work in, and made on-reserve meetings with government and industry representatives difficult. The new Band Hall was officially opened in July of 2003, and at the ribbon-cutting celebration, the Doig River drummers sang dreamers' songs for the community, visiting dignitaries, industry executives, and local media. Shortly after, the band produced and began to distribute a compact disc of dreamers' songs called Suu Na chii K’chi ge [Suunéch’ii Kéch’iiige], named in honor of the place “where happiness dwells” (G. Oker et. al, 2004b) making the Band Hall both a space for performance of Dane-zaa tradition and distribution of living heritage in digital form.

The Doig River Museum

Just inside the entrance of the Band Hall is a space designated for a small museum. Glass exhibit windows face the hallway and reception desk, allowing visitors to see objects from the main foyer. Most of the objects in the museum have been donated or created by band members, and they are displayed generally according to type. The collection of objects in the museum represents what I would describe as community curation—when an object is identified by a member of the community or outside collaborator (anthropologists, archaeologists, and linguists, for example) as being worthy of display and brought to the museum, Band Hall administrators find a place for it. However, the result of this casual approach is far from haphazard; rather,
the collections represent diverse aspects of Dane-zaa material culture: artifacts of a seasonal hunting, trapping, and gathering livelihood, reserve and rodeo life, negotiation with colonial authority, and the material evidence of Dane-zaa people and outside researchers as cultural producers and media makers (Mahon 2000).

For example, tanned lynx and marten furs hang in glass cases, and beaver pelts lean against the walls in their stretching frames. A well-used moose hide scraper, made from the leg bone of a moose to remove hair and tissue from the fresh hide, points to the ongoing importance of the production of moose hides, moccasins, and other garments in generating cash for supplies and trading for other resources. A fringed moose hide jacket, and moose hide moccasins, both delicately beaded with colorful flowers and leaves demonstrate the skill of Doig River women who continue to scrape, treat, stretch, smoke, and sew moose hides given to them by hunters. An old steel trap and rusty artifacts of hunting, trapping, and camping—a small wood-handled frying pan, empty rusty cans that once contained peanut butter or lard, a hunting knife—evoke the band’s lands-based history and economy. In another case, a blue felt military jacket is exhibited along with a crumbling leather belt with a brass snake-shaped buckle, once worn by Chief Montney, the great grandfather of Chief Kelvin Davis and of Chief Norman Davis, and the man after whom the Montney reserve lands were named.

Many of the museum’s objects directly reference the long relationships Doig River community members have had with anthropologists, linguists, and archaeologists. A large, box-like archaeological exhibit occupies the centre of the museum space. The exhibit was created by Fort St. John archaeologist Keary Walde, who has trained many Dane-zaa to work with him over several decades, and who uses the exhibit to teach in
Doig River’s educational programs. In a glass case that is visible from inside the museum and the reception area, one can see evidence of the community’s long working relationship with linguists and missionaries Marshall and Jean Holdstock. Colourful self-published Beaver literacy primers and workbooks embellished with hand-drawings, a Beaver dictionary, and other language teaching tools are sometimes used within homes and in school programs. They are a primary resource for local Beaver language revitalization workers who continue to develop the dictionary and initiate other projects. One of these is an interactive CD-ROM based on the Holdstocks’ work, displayed alongside language learning texts first produced in the 1960s.

Next to the Holdstocks' Beaver literacy materials is the most recent book about Dane-zaa culture, history, and ethnography by anthropologists Robin Ridington and Jillian Ridington. *When You Sing it Now, Just Like New* (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006d) is a collection of essays that reflect on over forty years of documentation of Dane-zaa communities. The glossy cover of this volume features Doig River Drummers Garry Oker, Tommy Attachie, and Jack Askoty sitting in a grassy field drumming and singing into the anthropologist’s microphone. Photographic evidence of this long relationship lines the walls of the inside of the museum space; black and white images, professionally mounted for the official opening of the Band Hall, were selected by the Ridingtons from their ethnographic archive to represent Doig River’s main families: Attachie, Davis, Askoty, Acko, and Oker (R. Ridington, personal communication). The images came from the recently created *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, which was also physically returned to the Doig River First Nation on a

An adjacent shelf of the museum display case contains some of the tangible outcomes of Doig River’s media productions that are directly related to the recent digitization initiatives and new access to archival materials. The audio CD Suu Na chii K’chi ge [Suuméch’ii Kéch’iige] features the songs of Dane-zaa dreamers recorded by former Chief Garry Oker and Dr. Robin Ridington in the course of his ethnographic career with Dane-zaa communities. On another audio CD the current group of Doig River Drummers sing dreamers' songs that have been passed down from song keeper to song keeper over the last two centuries. Two CDs present live recordings of Tea Dances at Doig River, and another includes “remixes” of a soundtrack produced for a documentary video called They Dream About Everything that used newly returned digital cultural heritage (G. Oker et. al, 2005).

On yet another shelf is a display related to the Virtual Museum of Canada web-based exhibit called Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land (2007). A poster publicizing the exhibit depicts elders, youth, linguists, and ethnographers—including myself—recording oral histories on video against backdrops of industrially impacted landscapes and old Dane-zaa seasonal camps. Next to the poster is a colourful exhibit catalogue with the web address in the cover, which includes all of the photographs, exhibit texts, and transcripts that are displayed on-line. This virtual exhibit includes archival photographs and dreamers' songs that were recorded in the 1960s from the Ridington-Dane-zaa Digital Archive, as well as newly recorded audio,
video, and photographs. Edited by Amber Ridington and me, the catalogue is included in this dissertation as Appendix I.

In its architectural details, in the contents of its museum, and in the practices of everyday life that it facilitates, the Doig River First Nation’s Band Hall and its ceremonial grounds evoke histories of colonialism, resilience, and the ongoing significance of Dane-zaa dreamers to contemporary life and outward expression of Dane-zaa identity. Dane-zaa cultural productions—museum exhibits, artwork, audio CDs, video documentaries, virtual exhibits, and architecture—are Indigenous re-mediations of histories of survival, struggle, revival, and ethnographic and linguistic research in their communities. These productions are also visible negotiations of research relationships and rapidly changing documentary and communication technologies that now have the potential to record, reproduce, and remix cultural and linguistic practices in an unprecedented way.

**Outline of Chapters**

In this introductory chapter, I have introduced a theoretical framework for my argument that community participation in the documentation and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is essential for developing safeguarding strategies that are focused on keeping intangible heritage alive in social practice. I have begun to describe the contexts of cultural production on which my research has been based, including emerging tensions over the right to circulate Dane-zaa digital cultural heritage, and broader discussions of the role of technologies in supporting the circulation of public and private forms heritage in appropriate and diverse social practice.
In Chapter Two, I review the ethnographic literature on Dane-zaa nááchę (also referred to as dreamers, or prophets) and their practices. My emphasis in the chapter is on the way that Dane-zaa people historically managed public and private forms of knowledge, particularly in relation to the private vision quest, medicine power, dreaming, and the public Tea Dance and performance of dreamers’ songs. I explore descriptions of the ways that Dane-zaa people negotiated the visibility and use of related material culture, such as medicine bundles and the nááchę’s drawings of heaven on moose hide and drums. As religious and moral authorities, nááchę played central roles in controlling the public circulation of sacred forms of knowledge and material culture. I show how more recently, Dane-zaa leaders have drawn on this religious and moral authority by using nááchę drawings and songs to protest the oil and gas industrialization of their territory.

In Chapter Three, I discuss how ethnographers and linguists have used documentary technologies to collect culture and language in Dane-zaa communities in northeastern British Columbia. I describe the digitization and the return of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive to the Doig River First Nation, and situate this case study in relation to international digitization movements aimed at connecting originating communities to their cultural heritage in dispersed collections. While I argue that the term “repatriation”, virtual or otherwise, does not accurately describe digital access to heritage, I also explore several First Nations’ perspectives on repatriation of cultural property that suggest potential for these broader digital initiatives to: 1) address the fragmentation of heritage by bringing dispersed collections of tangible and intangible cultural heritage back together; 2) facilitate expressions of the meaning of reclamation.
that are grounded in Indigenous ideologies; and, 3) facilitate remediation of digital
cultural heritage through Indigenous media production.

In Chapter Four, I contextualize Indigenous media production at Doig River with
a history of the Doig and Blueberry Bands’ loss of Indian Reserve 172 at Montney, and
their thirty-year legal struggle for just compensation. I review a range of the Doig River
First Nation’s recent media productions that have utilized digital cultural resources from
the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*. I discuss how these media evoke the history,
spirit, and ongoing significance of Dane-zaa dreamers—particularly their legacy of
songs, moral codes, and paintings on moose hide—to articulate resistance to outside
domination and ongoing colonial relationships.

In Chapter Five, I describe *Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* (2007), which remediated digital heritage from the
*Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, and facilitated the documentation of oral histories
in significant locations throughout Dane-zaa territory. My focus in the chapter is on the
participatory methodology developed in the course of the production of the virtual
exhibit, and the extent to which the documentation and safeguarding of intangible
cultural heritage can be enhanced through community collaboration. I connect the
mandate of the 2003 UNESCO *Charter on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural
Heritage* for community-involvement in safeguarding initiatives to the methodological
legacy of visual anthropologist Jean Rouch. I show how community leaders used a
painted drum made by the dreamer *Gaayęa* to demonstrate the inalienable connections
between tangible, intangible, and natural forms of heritage. I emphasize that these
participatory strategies facilitated community-definition of the *Dane Wajich* virtual exhibit production process.

In Chapter Six, I describe how the community-defined production process for the *Dane Wajich* exhibit was put into practice. I detail our group excursions to significant places in Dane-zaa territory, and the documentation of elders’ narratives at each location by a team of Dane-zaa youth. I argue that these video-recorded narrative performances communicate an alternative Dane-zaa knowledge system that counters the materialistic engagement of the oil and gas industry with the same area. They are sophisticated oral remediations and recontextualizations of narratives and discourses performed in the past at these places. I discuss how, in the context of the *Dane Wajich* exhibit, these narratives are presented alongside contemporary and archival photographs of Dane-zaa life, photographs of the exhibit production process, videos, and contemporary and archival performances of prophet songs. These media evoke regional history and contemporary engagement with the legacies of Dane-zaa *nááčhe* to navigate ongoing defense of aboriginal and treaty rights, and relationships with government and industry.

In Chapter Seven, I look closely at key questions about digital cultural heritage, intellectual property rights, and copyright that were raised in the course of the production and community review of *Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*. I explore the role of cultural protocols for the handling and care of material culture in local decision-making about public access to photographs of material culture, drawing on Christina Kreps' definition of Indigenous curation (Kreps 2003; Kreps 2009). I use the example of *Gaayę́a’s* drum, images of which were
removed from the virtual exhibit, to explore the extent to which the transformation of ethnographic objects into digital cultural heritage facilitates a loss of control over representation even when the original object remains in the possession of source communities. I conclude by arguing that even when source communities⁶ come to a consensus that certain elements of their digital cultural heritage should not be made publicly available over the Internet, they are faced with the fact that these very images may have been circulated in the course of the digitization and remediation.

⁶ Source communities, which are also referred to in this dissertation as originating communities, are said by Laura Peers and Alison Brown to refer “both to these groups in the past when artefacts were collected, as well as to their descendants today. These terms have most often been used to refer to indigenous peoples in the Americas and the Pacific, but apply to every cultural group from whom museums have collected: local people, diaspora and immigrant communities, religious groups, settlers, indigenous peoples, whether those are First Nations, Aboriginal, Maori, or Scottish. Most importantly, the concept recognizes that artifacts play an important role in the identities of source community members, that source communities have legitimate moral and cultural stakes or forms of ownership in museum collections, and that they may have special claims, needs, or rights of access to material heritage held by museums” (Peers and Brown 2003:2).
Chapter 2: Dane-zaa Nááchę and the Power of Public and Private Knowledge

In the introductory chapter I argued that the digitization of Aboriginal tangible and intangible cultural heritage is creating new opportunities for originating communities to access and engage with their heritage. At the same time, these digitization initiatives mark a shift away from locally controlled and mediated forms of knowledge to extensive public access, remediation, and remix. I introduced some of the ways that, in the course of my fieldwork, members of the Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations began to contend with the positive and negative consequences of digitization and the attendant circulation of ethnographic documentation from their communities. I also situated their experience in relation to innovative digital archiving projects by Indigenous communities that have taken local protocols for managing access to and circulation of dynamic forms of cultural knowledge as the organizing principles for access to the archive, information architecture, and search parameters. These projects demonstrate Indigenous engagements with new media and communications technologies that emphasize the “deeply social and ethical relations people have to and with “information” (Christen 2009:4). They place a high priority on the ability to control the way their digital heritage is accessed and viewed. Dane-zaa people with whom I worked on final drafts of the Dane Wajich virtual exhibit drew on ongoing knowledge of their prophet tradition, dreamers’ songs, and care and handling of related material culture to make decisions about the management of their ethnographic media. The Dane-zaa media projects, and those from many other Aboriginal communities that I will describe in the course of this dissertation, call into question the “openness” of
ethnographic archives and justifications for unrestricted “sharing” of cultural heritage in the digital age (Christen 2009).

In this chapter, based on ethnographic descriptions and my own observations, I discuss the way Dane-zaa have historically managed public and private forms of knowledge and cultural expression. While in subsequent chapters I will relate these traditional cultural protocols to contemporary decision making around the use of digital cultural heritage in community-based media projects, I begin here by bringing together descriptions of nááchę, their individual and public dreaming and song traditions, and the public performance of nááchę songs in the Dane-zaa Tea Dance (also known as prophet or dreamer’s dance). I situate these Dane-zaa examples in relation to wider literature on “prophet cults” in native North America (Spier 1935).

I then look to these descriptions for more specific information about the way that individuals and groups carefully restricted access to private forms of knowledge associated with the vision quest, medicine power, and dreaming. Inextricably tied to these restrictions were the ways in which Dane-zaa negotiated visibility and use of related material culture, such as personal medicine bundles, and the nááchę’s drawings of heaven on moose hide and drums. While medicine bundles were kept privately—I have never personally seen one, nor has anyone even spoken of one to me—dreamers’ drawings were used, and continue to be used, under particular conditions to demonstrate Indigenous religious and political authority. These ethnographic examples emphasize that private medicine bundles and medicine songs (shin), and semi-public dreamers’ drawings and nááchę Tea Dance songs—tangible and intangible expressions of the
individual power and the dreamer’s vision of heaven—continue to be selectively restricted or revealed.

As Julie Cruikshank (1998) has asked in relation to Athapaskan women’s prophet narratives in the Yukon territory, what are the contexts in which prophet narratives continue to have meaning? How are prophet narratives, songs, drawings, and negotiation of protocols of access, significant in contemporary Dane-zaa social and political life? I begin to answer these questions in this chapter by conveying the persistence of prophet narratives in Dane-zaa oral tradition, the changing nature of the Tea Dance at Doig River, and the continued importance of the Tea Dance as a public expression of culture and identity. I conclude the chapter by connecting the ways that Dane-zaa nááchë historically used prophet drawings on moose hide in resistance to colonial and Christian authorities to more recent uses of one such drawing and a nááchë song to protest oil and gas industrialization in Dane-zaa territory.

**Dane-zaa Nááchë and Dreaming in the Ethnographic Record**

Nááchë and rituals they performed have figured prominently in ethnographic descriptions of the Dane-zaa. Early visitors Monsignor Faraud (1866) and linguistic anthropologist Pliny Goddard (1916; 1917) recounted their observations of Dane-zaa Tea Dances and their prophet leaders, and Robin Ridington, Antonia Mills (formerly Ridington) and Jillian Ridington later published widely on their in-depth fieldwork with Dane-zaa, including their work with the last nááchë in the Peace River region, Charlie Yahey (Mills 1982; R. Ridington 1978; R. Ridington 1981; R. Ridington 1988; R. Ridington 1990a; R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006d; R. Ridington and T. Ridington 1970). Based on long-term fieldwork in related Dene Tha (Slavey) communities in
northern Alberta, Pat Moore and Angela Wheelock (1990) and Jean-Guy Goulet (1998) describe the persistence of dreamers and belief in medicine power. More overtly political interpretations have also been presented; Michael Asch’s work on the Slavey “drum dance” views it as a mechanism for cultural reproduction, bringing groups that have been socially isolated by the reserve system together again (Asch 1988), while Hugh Brody’s *Maps and Dreams* (1988) positions Dane-zaa dreaming traditions and the maps of heaven that they created as strategies of resistance against evangelical, agricultural, and industrial “frontiers” and ongoing systemic racism.

An introduction to Dane-zaa nááchë and their negotiation of public and private knowledge first requires some description of underlying traditions of medicine power, dreaming, and the vision quest, all private forms of knowledge. These are then distinguished from more public expressions of Dane-zaa nááchë such as Tea Dance songs and drawings of heaven.

**Medicine Power and the Vision Quest**

Pliny Goddard, a linguist and Boas-trained ethnologist collecting in the early twentieth century on behalf of the American Museum of Natural History, indicated that “those at least who had ambitions as hunters or warriors, and they probably included all the young men, sought supernatural helpers” (Goddard 1916:226). Medicine power, in his accounts, was integral to survival. He quotes a Dane-zaa Chief at Vermillion, named Ambroise Tete Noir, directly:

“That was the way they used to live. The animals used to be as wild as they are now. With nothing but a bow and arrow they could not live. But in each band there were one or two men like this with medicine who could kill them. The people came to them when they got hungry.”
When asked what a man had to do to get it, he said: “They do not do anything. If there was anything they could do, they would all have it. It comes suddenly on a man. Suppose some animal takes pity on him or likes him and gives him power. I do not know what used to give men that, whether it was God or the animals themselves.” (“Chief at Vermillion” [Ambroise Tete Noir] in Goddard 1916: 227)

In ethnographic documentation of Dane-zaa, medicine power is indicated to be a private form of knowledge. It could include the gift of a song (shin ‘song’, mayinē? ‘his/her song’) from an “animal helper,” and was sometimes acquired in the course of a childhood vision quest. Robin Ridington describes the Dane-zaa vision quest as follows:

Each species of animal had its song that it gave to the person who sought it out. The word for spiritual power or medicine is mayine, ‘his song’. The same term was used to refer to a person’s medicine bundle. Every child was sent into the bush to make contact with an animal. He or she spent several days away from people. When the child returned, the camp seemed strange and unfamiliar to him. He reacted to it as an animal would react. Usually an old person had been dreaming about him and when the child was seen at the edge of the camp it was he who brought the child back into the circle of the people. The old person placed the skin of his own medicine animal around the body of the child who slept, perhaps for several days. When the child returned from sleep he was a person once more but the memory of his vision remained with him.
(R. Ridington 1981:353)

In his ethnography *Trail to Heaven: Knowledge and Narrative in a Northern Native Community* (1988), Ridington also reconstructed a story as it had been told to him by Japasa, a Dane-zaa elder. The essence of his vision quest was interpreted as follows:
My dad said that when he was a boy, about nine years old, he went into the bush alone. He was lost from his people. In the night it rained. He was cold and wet from the rain, but in the morning he found himself warm and dry. A pair of silver foxes had come and protected him. After that, the foxes kept him and looked after him. He stayed with them and they protected him.

These foxes had three pups. The male and female foxes brought food for the pups. They brought food for my dad too. They looked after him as if they were all the same. Those foxes wore clothes like people. My dad said he could understand their language. He said they taught him a song. (R. Ridington 1988:57)

Further, according to anthropologist Antonia Mills,

A child may learn his medicine song, called mayine, on his very first quest. Alternatively, the song may “come to him” later on in life. Some people never appear to have acquired songs as part of the vision quest experience. Some people, those who are medicine men or women in their adulthood, have a large number of songs, one from each of their medicines. (Mills 1982:35)

Dreaming, according to Robin Ridington, was central to the life of all Dane-zaa, including children. However it was not until a person was older, and “dreamed back to the time of his vision quest and had been given instructions for making a medicine bundle” that dreaming took on a particular purpose, such as providing food for his family (1981:335). Ridington observed that the medicine bundle was hung behind where a person slept, with the head always pointed east in the direction of the rising sun, and
that it was both an instrument of his dreaming and sign of his maturity (R. Ridington 1981).

Pliny Goddard also described some of the material manifestations of prophet religion, such as the image of a moose worn by a hunter, and the use of fetishes made from moose and other animal skins. He observed the use of medicine poles in the form of crosses, or upright poles with offerings among the Fort St. John Dane-zaa, and learned about their use from an informant at Vermillion. Goddard’s documentation of the “Beaver Indians” includes photographs of medicine poles that he took close to Fort St. John (Goddard 1916). The brief narrative, entitled *Fournier’s Grandfather’s Supernatural Power*, describes the use of an individual’s great medicine power to feed starving people:

> The informant’s father was a great medicineman. A party of Beaver were traveling in midwinter beyond Hay River toward the Rocky Mountains. A band had been separated from the main party and through bad luck in hunting the men had all starved. The surviving women and children came to the grandfather’s camp. The old man, displeased because some of his relatives in this band had died, said he would make medicine so that none of his relatives would have trouble in killing all the game they wanted to eat.

He made a medicine pole, painted it, and set it up. He had a man stand beside the pole and made it as high as the man. He then began to sing, and although it was the middle of winter it thundered and began to snow. The snow fell until it was as high as the top of the pole. They could kill all the game they needed. Just the heads of the moose were sticking out of the snow and they could be killed with spears. When the snow melted the water was so high that the beaver gnawed the tops of the tallest cotton trees along Hay River. (Goddard 1916:260)
The personal medicine song—*mayiné?*—imbues the individual with medicine power to both heal and to cause harm throughout their life. The medicine poles that Goddard describes appear to be physical manifestations of individual medicine power. Dane-zaa curing ceremonies also used *mayiné?*—both the singing of a personal medicine song, and use of the medicine bundle, the outward expression of the individual’s *shín* ‘song’—to diagnose and treat illness. Mills understood these illnesses to be caused by a medicine attack from another person, an attack from a ‘lost soul’ trying to grab onto and follow that soul to heaven, or retribution from spirit forces for the person’s intentional or unintentional abuse (Mills 1982). In contrast with the curing function of *mayiné?*, the “medicine fight” can be a physical confrontation between two people, or can be initiated from any distance. In both cases the adversaries sing their medicine songs silently or aloud. When someone thinks that they are being attacked, they will sing their *shín* publicly or privately as the situation demands (Mills 1982).

*Makénúúnatane, the First Nááchê*

*Nááchê* are said to have first emerged in the North Peace region at a time of great social, economic, and spatial upheaval. Before 1760, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the first European to enter Dane-zaa territory, reported that Cree with guns had displaced Beaver Indians from the Athabasca River region (R. Ridington 1981). Mills writes that Dogrib Indians pushed west, ahead of white fur traders in the east, with the result of increased battling between Indigenous nations. Traditional patterns of subsistence had been forever changed, as providing meat and furs to sustain white traders in exchange for guns, shot, knives and axes provided the means to hunt but did not ensure survival. This period of medicine war, as people used their medicine powers
offensively and defensively are chronicled in Dane-zaa oral history (Mills 1982:44).

These histories (see Goddard 1917; R. Ridington 1978, 1981, 1988; and Mills 1982) describe the emergence of the first Dane-zaa nááchę, who put an end to medicine wars between Beaver and Cree, preached proper social behavior, and used their dreaming power to ensure successful hunts and survival for band members. Makénuúñatane, who is believed to have been the first nááchę, is said to have gone to sleep for many days, and then woken with knowledge of heaven and specific instructions for hunting moose.

As the dreamer Charlie Yahey described to Robin Ridington:

Makenunatane went to sleep, for a long time. The people looked after him always. Around noon of the next day in his dream he went to heaven. It was a long ways back so he couldn’t make it back soon. They know he was still living but he was some place, a long ways in his dreams. They just looked after him and knew he was in heaven, because they could see that his throat was moving. They just kept watching him. His throat was moving always so they just watched him and finally about noon he was himself again. Then sat up and started singing… He told people about heaven. He sang that song and told about it. He told people about heaven, everything what is wrong and bad. (R. Ridington 1978 in Mills 1982:57)

In the centuries after Makénuúñatane traveled to heaven in his dreams, many other Dane-zaa men and women became nááchę: Nááchę Wódagé, Alédzé, Azádé, Makét's’awéswáŋ, Adísht'lishe, Tsíiyuwe Nááchę, Dakwatlah, Anaalaatááʔ, Gáayéča, Náách’íi, Askekulea, Náách’íi (also known as Lilly), Matś’ii? Dak’ale, Mataghalé? Nachíí, Ak’íže, Maʔaahé? Ets’éléh, Oker, and Charlie Yahey. 7 These men and women are said to

---

7 This list of Dane-zaa nááchę was assembled and transcribed in the course of the production of Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land. An interactive description of these dreamers can be seen in Appendix I, p. 445, or online at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/dreamers/dreamers.php
have traveled to heaven and brought down songs to sing for the people, prophecies relating to the great changes imposed on Dane-zaa under colonialism, and instructions on how to live a good and moral life. Dane-zaa prophets, like Dene prophets in surrounding regions, blended aspects of Christianity with their own beliefs. The Christian concept of heaven merged with an aboriginal understanding of a place “where spirits dwelt,” but with the addition that dreamers could visit heaven while still alive (Abel 1993:130).

Further, in the way that individual Dane-zaa made medicine bundles as expressions of their medicine power, nááchę drew maps of their visions of heaven on moose hide, on drums, and on paper. According to Robin Ridington, they “are to prophet dreaming what medicine bundles are to medicine dreaming” (R. Ridington 1978:16); however, as I will show in this chapter, these drawings had a public component that medicine bundles and mayinéʔ did not. Ridington has interpreted these drawings as adaptations of the “Catholic ladder,” a pictorial catechism used by Oblate missionaries to depict biblical history with a visual metaphor of a linear, progressive history. He believes that the nááchę rejected this lineal history and used the form to represent their shamanic flight to heaven (R. Ridington 1990a). Some of these “dreamers' drums,” and perhaps hides and drawings, are still in the possession of descendants of nááchę. Some of them were photographed by Robin Ridington and Antonia Mills in their work with Charlie Yahey and other Dane-zaa at Doig River and Prophet River in the mid-1960s. Ridington describes how his informant Jumbie kept a moosehide on which the dreamer Dakwatla had painted his vision of the trail to heaven. Jumbie would only show the painting on special occasions. Ridington also talks about a
double-sided drum that Charlie Yahey would play when singing dreamers’ songs. The

drum was made by the prophet Gaayę̣ who passed the drum on to Yahey. The drum is

painted on both sides, and “both designs center on the image of an even-armed cross

and show pathways leading to a circular horizon. The Dreamer explained them as
drawings of Yagutunne, the trail to heaven” (R. Ridington 1990a:79).

In the autumn of 2005, I had the opportunity to hear first hand the narrative of

Makénúunatane, the first Dane-zaa dreamer.\(^8\) The story provides some insight into the

ongoing significance of nááchę in contemporary Dane-zaa life, as it was told in the

context of a meeting about Dane-zaa media production and the development of language

and curriculum for the local school district. I was sitting with former Chiefs Gerry

Attachie and Garry Oker in a meeting room on the Doig reserve discussing the

production of the Virtual Museum of Canada exhibit that we had been working on the

summer before, and reviewing videos that had been recorded for the exhibit. We had

traveled with co-producer Amber Ridington, project collaborators, and a group of youth

and elders to seven locations in Dane-zaa territory, and at each of these places we had

recorded oral histories and personal narratives relating to Dane-zaa dreamers and the

band’s history of survival on the land. That day, as we contemplated our next steps for

\(^8\) Robin Ridington asserts that Makénúunatane was the first Dane-zaa Dreamer. Mills
disagrees, asserting that Dakwane, who is said to have subdued the cannibal monster
Tsekute, was the first real prophet. She asserts that he was followed by his brother,
Alédze. After him came Makénúunatane and Makéstawéswa, who are “the most
famous” and to whom many of the songs sung today are attributed (Mills 1982:54).

Because of Ridington’s assertion that Makénúunatane was the first prophet, and the
extent to which this particular genealogy was repeated by many Dane-zaa in the course
of my fieldwork, I have chosen to use this history of the nááchę, while acknowledging
that there is some disagreement.
the project, conversation turned again to the history of nááchê. Chief Oker’s administrative assistant, who had grown up on a farm on the former Montney reserve, asked, “So, are there any more prophets today?” Chief Oker was quick to respond, telling her, “Not in a traditional sense, but what we are doing is implementing those values…”

Observing this interaction, Chief Attachie leaned back in his chair, scratched his head, and then looked up at the ceiling. In English, he told us:

*Makénųúnatane* was the first prophet, for this area here.

*Makénųúnatane.*

Before *Makénųúnatane* there was war, people killing each other, war. *Makénųúnatane* was, he started, his spirit must have left him about some time in the mid-summer, they said. He was hunting all the time, and all of a sudden he don’t hunt anymore. He spent more and more time with children, playing with kids, all the way fall and the winter time, people were starving, nobody kill nothing. They were just ready to starve, When his wife tell him *hunt*, But he wouldn’t, he just spend more time with kids. Finally he tells his wife, if I sleep one of this morning, don’t wake me up. So one morning he was sleeping, so they just let him sleep, And they had dogs, so they moved the dogs away… Then he slept one day, two days, three days, nine days, nine days he slept. Nine days, he start moving little bit, so they give him massage I guess, he starts moving right here [indicates at his throat]. So they give him water. He told them about heaven, beautiful place, and there’s two roads, heaven and then there’s’ [Dane-zaa term] More people going that way [motioning to the left path]
So how come they don’t go this way [straight ahead]?
Not many out there.
So he followed this road, and there was heaven.
And he talked with God, I guess, he told him about sin. Sin.
And he didn’t know. And he came back and spread this message.
And people were weeping, they said, people were crying.
But he told ‘em, you can repent, it’s not too late.
So, from that day, people believe in God.
So the Prophets started that.
Then Makénunitàtane told them, go ahead. Hunt.
Everybody went hunting.
“One of you going to kill a moose with an axe”, he told them.
Then they all went out… “No, not yet. Move to another camp,” he told them.
So while they were moving, a moose coming across.
They all shoot at him, and miss, bow and arrow,
and this guy walking among them,
and he remember what Makénunitàtane told them,
and he just throw the axe toward the moose, and hit him right here,
with axe, and it died.
The first time people eat in months, they say…
Then they was gonna’ feed him but he didn’t wanna’ eat.
“Go ahead,” he told them, “Feed the kids.”
And before that, it was cold, cold, cold.
When he came back, he bring hot weather back with him,
and it was warm, they said…
Next day they all went out hunting.
Every one of them got a moose. A fat moose.
Then, they usually have a circle, teepee.
After they bring all the meat back,
[Makénunitàtane] visit the first teepee and they had a feast there…
And then all the way around.
Last one was a guy, he is a, somebody not level headed, crooked guy.
He told his wife, “Boy, he eat lots.
There is only bones in there, so give him bones.”
Makénunitàtane pick up that bone, and he told him,
“You shouldn’t have said that, that you got less than that, you might get punished.”

He put that bone back.
The other ones, they survive, and then they start to believe in God.
Then he have dreams, every once in a while, songs too,
and that winter, coming winter, that guy who didn’t want to feed anyone,
he was doing good, but he don’t need the rest, so he go out in the bush.
Alone, and then about mid-winter, he starve to death,
al his family.

*Makénúúnatane*, a true story…

*Makénúúnatane* til Charlie Yahey was the last one, 1977.

(G. Attachie 2005)

Chief Attachie’s narrative recounts a very specific series of events and themes that Charlie Yahey, Old Man Aku, and others described to anthropologists and linguists.⁹ *Makénúúnatane* is said to have predicted the coming of white men to Dane-zaa territory, but as the story describes, he first gained prominence among the members of his band as a leader of communal hunts who had the ability to “dream ahead for everybody” (R. Ridington 1988:77). In Chief Attachie’s narrative, *Makénúúnatane*—as he himself predicted—sleeps for nine days and dreams of trails to heaven. He returns with messages for the people about “sin” and behaving respectfully. He brings relief from cold weather and starvation, and predicts the location of game and the way it will be killed. The death of a greedy family who disrespected *Makénúúnatane* by withholding food conveys the gravity of inappropriate social behavior. The story told by Chief Attachie rearticulates a Dane-zaa philosophy that animals will only offer

---

⁹ In particular, see Ridington (1988:150-151) for his interpretation of the story of *Makénúúnatane* as told by Old Man Aku to Johnny Chipesia, translated by Margaret Attachie. Antonia Mills (1982:57) also provides Charlie Yahey’s account of *Makénúúnatane*’s transition from hunt chief to *nááchę*.
themselves to people when people are generous with one another; the story “reiterates that there must be social accord before people can be in accord with the animals that give them life” (R. Ridington 1988:78).

**The Tea Dance**

Ridington (1978) asserts that the Dane-zaa Prophet complex was grounded in a shamanic model of the individual’s relationship to his or her social and natural environment, and that the more recent Prophet cult was a reaction to the many rapid changes in that relationship. The observable and documented beliefs and practices surrounding Dane-zaa nááchę are contiguous with established modes of thinking about life, death, morality and spirituality among Indigenous peoples of northwestern North America described by Leslie Spier (1935) (R. Ridington 1978). Spier suggests that when this complex reached the plains tribes through the prophet Wovoka, it became the Ghost Dance, “an attempt to turn back the recent experiences of military conquest and ecological collapse through ritual activity, dreaming, and prophecy” (R. Ridington 1978:1). Spier gathers ethnographic and ethnohistorical information to hypothesize that the origin of the Ghost Dance lay in the shamanic complex of the northwest, from the Athapaskans of British Columbia to the Paviotso of the Southwest:

…the ultimate origin of the two Ghost Dance movements was not with the Paviotso but in the Northwest among the tribes of the interior Plateau area. It can be shown that among these peoples there was an old belief in the impending destruction and renewal of the world, when the dead would return, in conjunction with which there was a dance based on supposed imitation of the dances of the dead, and a conviction that intense preoccupation with the dance would hasten the happy day. From time to time men “died” and returned to life with renewed assurances of the truth of the doctrine; at intervals cataclysms of
nature occurred which were taken as portents of the end. Each of these events led to the performance of the dance with renewed fervor, only to have it fall into abeyance again when their expectations remained unfulfilled. This northwestern cult agrees precisely with the core of the Ghost Dance religion among the Paviotso, and the circumstances of its appearance among the latter parallel those of earlier date in the Northwest. (Spier 1935:5)

However, James Mooney (1991 [1896]) asserted that the Ghost Dance of 1890 was a new development “engendered by the need for a messiah at the moment, and totally without historically connected antecedents” (Spier 1935:5). He does not attribute the emergence of a prophet complex among the Paviotso to a particular source. Ruth Benedict, in her dissertation “The Concept of the Guardian Spirit in North America” (1974 [1923]) critiques anthropological generalizations of observed religious phenomena that seek to designate “origins”. Benedict raises issues of ethnographic omission, error, and subjective interpretation in monographs as limiting the anthropologist’s ability to draw conclusive comparative connections between North American native religious practices. Benedict asserted that her work “explains the impossibility of assigning complete distribution to most phenomena, and the necessity of avoiding conclusions which would be invalidated by the discovery of an exception” (1974 [1923]:8-9). Similarly, the Dane-zaa prophet complex is “too complicated to admit of dogmatic assertions” (ibid:67), and with many probable sources, did not likely spread from one region to the next as a coherent ideology.

Among Dane-zaa people in the northeastern part of British Columbia, the complex of ritual, dreaming, and moral guidance that was described by Spier as a dream dance, ghost dance, religious dance, praying dance, and prophet dance (Spier 1935), is known as the Tea Dance, named for the large pot of tea prepared with a feast for the
dance. In the past, nááchę performed their own songs, and those of prophets that came before them, around the time of the winter and summer solstices, or upon the death of a band member. The Tea Dance is a world renewal ceremony in which people dance clockwise around a central fire to the songs dreamed by nááchę. As people move in the direction of the sun across the sky, so they believe that they are ensuring the changing of seasons, cycles of life, and in the case of memorial Tea Dances, helping a person’s spirit along the “trail to heaven” (R. Ridington 1988).

Descriptions of Tea Dances were included in the earliest ethnographies of Dane-zaa people. They point to the role of the Tea Dance as an event performed to pray for successful hunting and the well-being of people. The first Christian missionary to make contact with the “Beaver Indians” was the Oblate Father Faraud, who visited Dunvegan, in what is now known as Alberta, in 1859 (Mills 1982). Faraud described the dance that he attended in this way:

The festival was located at the edge of the river in the middle of a beautiful prairie. As soon as the sun rose, men, women, and children arrived from all surrounding areas. They were all equipped with tree branches. In less than an instant, a green circle, 200 meters in circumference, was constructed.

In the centre of this large green arbor, a huge fire is lit. It was there that libations took place.

At the sound of a signal, the men advanced, wearing their best clothes. Each one carried a plate filled with grease and a little bag filled with drymeat.

Two elders, standing in the centre of the circle, ceremonially receive the offerings of each man. Beside them are the drummers, grimacing with frenzy as they beat their bellowing drums.
When all the offerings have been accepted, the elders throw the melted grease into the fire. An enormous flame rises, followed by an absolute silence. It is the solemn moment. The great chief begins his invocation to God.

He says, “Receive, Oh God, the offering that our children give, and in return bring them good hunting of nice fat animals. Watch over their lives so that when they are reunited in another autumn, they are able to make again the offering of very fine grease.”

As he says this, men, women and children all repeat the same invocation. The grease is abundantly spread on the dying charcoal and a lively flame rises. The flames devour the offerings to God and all the spectators fall to the ground. It is the moment to begin the feast. The feast lasts three or four hours. Afterwards, the dance begins. A dozen musicians, all beating drums pass in front. Men, women, and children follow them and accompany them with their voices, all the time jumping and making faces as they turn around the circle. Now the dance in its circle becomes faster, as the voices take on a strange passion and the drumming becomes more frenzied. The crowd whirls, the chants become howls, and the music becomes a frightening tam-tam. This ridiculous dance holds something so beautiful and so moving for the Beavers that they continue for entire days and nights. (Faraud 1866; R. Ridington et. al, translation)

Mills believes that Faraud’s description may be evidence that prophet dances had already begun at this time (Mills 1982:69), reinforcing Spier’s hypothesis that the 1890 Ghost Dance diffused from the northwest. Over fifty years later in the summer of 1913, Pliny Goddard documented a prophet dance among Dane-zaa of the Peace River. Goddard reports:

The one community ceremony of striking interest is the semi-annual gathering when offerings of food are placed in the fire. These ceremonies seem sometimes at least to be under the control of the prophet. A large dance ground is fenced and a central fire prepared. The officiating individual puts in the fire the pieces
of the flesh of the game animals and prays that the tribe may be fed with similar food in the future. They also asked for snow and rain since animals are more easily taken when they can be tracked. This religious observance is followed by dancing throughout the night by the men and women who circle the fire clockwise. (Goddard 1916:229)

Goddard quoted an informant, James Herber, who spoke about the role of the prophet as a hunt chief:

“The Beaver do not have the sun dance.” He did not know what it was. “They have a Tea Dance. They have had it eight or ten years. A man here dreamed about it, a prophet. He saw people in his vision who sang for him and he taught songs to his people.

“People say if he says ‘A male or female moose is given you, you better go and kill it,’ then they go and kill it. He does not know if it is true or not. The Cree do not have it. They begin seriously with prayer and give thanks; at the end it is play. The women and men dance around the fire to the beating of a drum. They eat first.” (Goddard 1916:230)

Robin Ridington and Antonia Mills also described the Tea Dance’s connection to successful hunting and survival on the land, and the role of dreaming, and of nááchë in everyday and ritual life (Mills 1982; R. Ridington 1978). Mills describes some of the early dances that she and Ridington attended as being precipitated either by the coming together of two or more closely related Dane-zaa bands, or by the death of a member of one of the bands. The coming together of bands typically occurred in the late summer and in mid-winter, with the fall gathering as a time of feasting, courtship, and gambling after a summer of intensive hunting and food preservation, and the winter gathering as a time to “ask the supernatural powers for help and sustenance through the remaining
cold, dark months, a time to strengthen the spirit” (Mills 1982:74). Mills describes how people would often go to the dreamer Charlie Yahey to hold these dances, or try to bring the dreamer to the dance (the ethnographers and their car were often mobilized to this effect). Dances held after the death of a band member were most likely to take place in the summer, when relatives were more able to hunt for the meat needed to host a dance for their band and those in the surrounding area for “a renewal of their earthly ties, and a celebration of their new ties to someone who has made the journey to heaven” (Mills 1982:74). Before setting out in advance of the dance, hunters would pray and dream for a successful hunt to be able to feed everyone at the dance. Mills indicates that “when the purpose of the meat is to feed everyone at a Prophet Dance whose purpose is to renew everyone in remembering how to act properly and in accord with *Yagetsati* and the spirit chiefs, the expectation of success in hunting is high” (Mills 1982:77).

Mills and Ridington observed Tea Dances at Doig River held in a large tipi, or inside one of the government-built reserve houses. A fire was built in the center, or in the house stove, and after everyone was assembled, drummers would begin to sing the songs of the prophets. People danced clockwise around the fire to the rhythm of the drums and the voices of the drummers. Aside from a break for a feast after midnight, the dance could continue for as long as four nights. Robin Ridington wrote this vivid description of the Tea Dance in 1971:

The Beavers dance, usually in a large teepee, clockwise or, as they say, “following the sun” around a fire. The fire is the center of the circle and its column of smoke joins heaven and earth, the axis of subjective experience. Extending horizontally out from the fire is a circle of people. The singers and the drummers are mainly young adults, the hunters. They sit in the direction of
the sunrise, just as they sleep in their own camps toward the sunrise. Older men sit toward the north, and the very old, as well as the Dreamer, if he is present, sit toward the sunset. Women and their children sit along the southern circumference of the circle, and the door is generally the dividing line between men and women.

The singing and the dancing go on for three or four nights, and during the day the Dreamer may dream for the people or talk to them about his dreaming. The dance lodge is a ceremonial extension of the domestic camp, whose metaphor is extended to include all the people who have come together to dance. The singers sit to the east and sing, but instead of medicine bundles that bring medicine songs to their minds, they have drums that carry heaven songs out to the people. The dance is a hopping shuffle around the fire. They say it is walking to heaven. The rhythm is a steady, powerful beat, evocative of walking, and the melodic line with its intricate turns is the path that the animals, the Dreamer, and ultimately you, yourself, will follow.” (R. Ridington 1990a [1971]:62-63)

**The Tea Dance Today**

In her history of northern Dene people and their interaction with colonial authorities, Kerry Abel (1993) suggested that Dene prophet movements neither attracted significant numbers of followers nor persisted in influence. Yet the songs of Dane-zaa nááchę performed at Tea Dances throughout the year remain one of the most visible forms of public ceremonial life at the Doig River First Nation. Pat Moore and Angela Wheelock (1990) similarly observed that in neighboring Slavey communities, prophet movements developed continuously over the last century rather than fading away. Jean-Guy Goulet’s ethnography of the Dene Tha (1998) further conveys the persistence of private belief in and practice of vision quests and the receiving of gifts of medicine power from animals, and ways of knowing and praying as expressed through the highly
visible prophet dance. While the Dane-zaa Tea Dance looks different than it did in the past, and has new meaning in its contemporary social and political context, it demonstrates a high level of continuity with prior practices.

Since the death of Charlie Yahey, the last known Dane-zaa nááchę, in 1976, Dane-zaa drummers have revived these song traditions and maintained knowledge of their provenance and history. At Tea Dances, Charlie Yahey used to sing his own songs from heaven and those of nááchę that came before him, while playing the drum made by Gaaye. Today, the Doig River drummers sing the songs of Charlie Yahey and many of the nááchę that came before him. They use unpainted moose hide drums to publicly perform these songs, as there are no more living dreamers in the community to transform their visions of heaven into tangible, visual form. They perform the songs of nááchę throughout the year, at cultural events, political meetings, and particularly before the Doig River Rodeo or as a part of the Doig River First Nation’s ‘Doig Days’ Educational day in mid-May, when all grade four students in the North Peace school district spend the day at the reserve to learn about Dane-zaa culture, history, and language. The Doig River Drummers periodically travel to other communities to drum and sing for someone who has passed away, and at cultural events in Fort St. John and beyond. As Chief Garry Oker told the people gathered at a dance in the spring of 2000,

The drum is very important in Dane-zaa culture. It’s been around for a long, long time. The… lead singer here Tommy Attachie knows all the traditional songs that goes back four or five hundred years. And we’re glad to… say to you that we still maintain it and it's pretty strong within the drummers and the traditional people here. (G. Oker 2007 [2000])
My first experience with the public ceremonial life of Dane-zaa drumming and the performance of dreamers’ songs was in July of 2004, the night of a Dane-zaa cultural celebration in conjunction with the annual Doig River Rodeo. I was visiting Doig River with linguistic anthropologist Pat Moore and folklorist Amber Ridington to talk with former Chief Garry Oker, his council, and Dane-zaa linguists Billy Attachie and Marlene Benson about the Virtual Museum of Canada web exhibit project that we hoped to collaboratively produce in the community the following summer. On a circular stage in the “cultural grounds” below the new cultural centre and Band Hall, audio technicians from Fort St. John set up microphones and a PA system. Community members arrived around suppertime, walking in small groups, some pushing strollers, some accompanied by their dogs, or driving over the grassy field to the dance area in their trucks and cars. Some of the drummers, and a couple of other men who were visiting from another community started a fire in the middle of the dance circle. The groups of community members, Dane-zaa from other reserves and from Fort St. John, and non-native visitors like me, started to take their seats in the covered bleachers. Teenagers and kids continued to talk and play around the margins. The Doig River Drummers, led by song keeper Tommy Attachie, tuned their smooth, unpainted moose hide drums over the fire, and then sat on a bench on the covered stage. After an introduction and welcome by Chief Oker, the group began to drum and sing into the microphones set up on the stage. Slowly, groups of people began to dance. Tommy spoke in *Dane-zaa Záágéʔ* before many of the songs, indicating which dreamer had dreamed the particular song the group was preparing to sing, or its connection to
particular animal, such as “Gaaye’a’s Chicken Song.”10 As night fell, the numbers of people dancing increased. In keeping with an ethnographic and, increasingly, a community tradition of documenting this public expression of dreamers’ knowledge, I had set up a video camera at the edge of the dancing ground, and recorded the fire glowing red and orange as silhouettes circle clockwise around it. Sometimes I was visible dancing too, when I was nudged from behind the camera and into the movement of Dane-zaa people and visitors of all ages.

**Between “Personal Medicine and Public Shamanism”**

In the ethnographic literature I have been referencing, nááchë are particularly visible communicators of a world view that includes what Robin Ridington has called “personal medicine and public shamanism” (R. Ridington 1990a:63). Nááchë balanced the protection of individual medicine power with their public communication of their knowledge as a dreamer. In the following section, I further explore the role of mayine—individual medicine power and medicine bundles—as private knowledge. I then compare the private nature of mayine? with the public songs—ahatá?yiné? 'Our Father/[God's] songs’—of nááchë, and their drawings of visions of heaven. I conclude with a discussion of the negotiated public use of nááchë’s drawings in the past and in contemporary social and political life, suggesting the continuity of these practices in new forms and contexts.

10 The dreamer Gaaye’a’s ‘Chicken Song’, which was recorded by Amber Ridington that night in 2004, can be heard online in the Dane Wajich exhibit at: [http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/songs/drummers_chickensong.php](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/songs/drummers_chickensong.php)
Mayiné? and Ahatáʔyíné? (Nááchyíné?)

Based on observations beginning in the early 1960s, Robin Ridington (R. Ridington 1978; 1988) and Antonia Mills (1982) have both described the inseparability of the private world of the Dane-zaa vision quest and individual medicine powers from public expressions of prophet religion such as the Tea Dance. In their collaborative and individual publications they have explored in particular detail the concept of *mayiné?*, the “vision quest animal power” given to a man (or woman), sung only in times of personal crisis. Mills indicates that *mayiné?* was sung privately under the breath, or silently whenever the individual felt a need to call upon his medicine power: “Publicly they are used only in some curing ceremonies and in some medicine fights” (Mills 1982:35). Mills and Ridington specify that both the medicine song and the medicine bundle were the private property of an individual, who throughout their life learned to manage their own power, respect the power of others, and protect them from public access (Mills 1982; R. Ridington 1978; 1988). Inappropriate use of one’s given power could result in the power being withdrawn by the spirit that had granted it.

*Shin* had intense social, as well as personal significance. Robin Ridington describes how every person with *shin* also learned about taboos associated with their particular medicine power (1988). The individual had to avoid certain kinds of food, and certain kinds of activity that related to their animal helper. The larger social group tried to respect individual powers, becoming aware of taboos, as “knowing the taboos of an individual is tantamount to knowing the medicine power of the individual” (Mills 1982:42). Violating these taboos is said to have had dire consequences. A violation could make a person “too strong,” and they could potentially become a giant man-eating monster, called *wechuge* (R. Ridington 1981). In going *wechuge*, an individual’s
power turns inward and becomes self-destructive, as the individual’s insides ‘turn to ice’ and he begins to eat his own lips. Then, “… if unchecked his medicine power becomes socially destructive as the person turns against his fellow man and systematically begins killing them and eating them as if they were game” (Mills 1982:41). Descriptions of the Dane-zaa wechuge parallel those of the Cree windigo (Norman 1982).

These examples of individual control of medicine power, and group awareness of proper behaviour in relation to these complex powers only begin to convey the importance that maintaining protocols for managing private and public knowledge had for social cohesion and individual well being. As Mills writes, “While it is incorrect for the Beavers to boast about their own or other people’s power, or even to talk about it under ordinary circumstances, it is not only considered correct, but necessary for the safety of society that everyone respect the medicine power its members possess” (Mills 1982:42). In these examples, personal negotiation of the use of shin—as a song, or in material manifestation as medicine bundle—and group respect for the shin of others, is a central theme.

But what of more public expression of individual dreaming power? As I have described, Dane-zaa nááchë were people who were said to have received their power to “dream ahead for everyone” after a near-death experience in which they “traveled to heaven.” While they maintained and protected their own personal medicine power, they also returned from their dreams with songs, prophecies, and visions of heaven meant for a public audience, and which were sometimes drawn on hides and drums. Ridington asserts that while both the hunter’s personal medicine and the dreamer’s public
medicine are songs that have been given in dreams, “the Dreamer, through his own
death, has been given the gift of guiding men through the experience of their anticipated
death and creation” (R. Ridington 1990a:63). Ahatáʔyinéʔ, the songs given to nááchę,
are considered to be public property, and sung and remembered after the prophet’s
death (R. Ridington and T. Ridington 1970). While the individual’s shin “is covert and
potentially destructive in the hands of bad men,” the prophet’s ahatáʔyinéʔ “is public
and only capable of human benefit” (R. Ridington and T. Ridington 1970:60). The
communicating of the dreamer’s knowledge through the Tea Dance is described as the
basis of Dane-zaa ceremonial life (ibid.).

Dreamers’ Drawings

Dreamers’ ahatáʔyinéʔ were intended for all Dane-zaa people, and to be
publicly performed. However, ethnographic accounts indicate that the drawings of
visions of heaven that nááchę created were treated with great reverence, carefully
protected, and shown publicly only under particular circumstances. The following
accounts describe a series of situations in which nááchę used their drawings as
assertions of their religious authority, and resisted attempts by Christian bishops and
Indian Agents to purchase the drawings. In contemporary contexts, Dane-zaa people
have mobilized nááchę drawings on hides and drums in their possession as a form of
public resistance to the industrialization of their territory (which I will describe in
Chapters Four, Five and Six). They have also made them the thematic focus of a
number of local Indigenous media projects, including the web exhibit Dane Wajich—
Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land. I argue that while in the past,
nááchę exercised religious and cultural authority by using the drawings to pray for
subsistence and survival, and protecting them from appropriation, contemporary Dane-
zaa have exercised religious, cultural, and increasingly political authority by keeping
these drums and drawings in their possession, and controlling when, where, and how
they are seen.

The first example is a story recounted by Antonia Mills, which she was told
about the Prophet Lilly (Nááchį́) from the Halfway River Band. She describes the way
that Lilly showed his moose hide to the Bishop Grouard (who visited the Dane-zaa
between 1883 and 1885), and refused to allow the Bishop to purchase and take the
drawing away:

Lilly was a prophet from the Fish Lake band of Dunneza to the northeast of the
Halfway band. It is apparently after him that the Prophet River is named. The
Dunneza say that his reputation as a prophet spread until the Catholic Bishop
(mentioned above as visiting 1883, 1884, 1885) sought to see him, seeking to
disabuse the Indians that they had a real prophet they should follow. As the
Dunneza tell the story the Bishop and his entourage arrived and found the
Prophet Lilly, and talked to him for several days. Lilly showed the Bishop the
drawings of heaven that he had made after his return from Heaven. These were
large maps, made on a whole moosehide, painted in fine lines that symbolically
represent the travels of the soul after death to heaven, and the multifaceted
nature of heaven. Covered with swan’s down which flutters in the slightest
breeze, these drawings have less the aura of maps or sign posts to heaven than of
potent and sacred religious talismans. Lilly sang the prophet songs for the
Bishop. As the Bishop watched, say the Dunneza, some miracles occurred.
Having come to denounce the prophet, the Dunneza say he left impressed by the
true stature of their religious leader. The Bishop asked to take, or buy one of the
downy maps from Lilly, but he said that it would be wrong for him to let them
go from the Dunneza. Even before the coming of the Bishop, Lilly told his
people that there would be many changes occurring in their country. He foretold
the coming of increasing numbers of white men and the creation of the Alaska
highway: a huge trail of the white men blazed through their territory. (Mills 1982:63)

Robin Ridington published a similar story, this one told to him by Augustine Jumbie about the dreamer Dakwatlah (transcribed by Ridington below as Decutla). In this story, Jumbie details Dakwatlah’s role as a preacher of morality, and as a person “dreaming ahead” to guide people in successful hunting. He is also described negotiating the conditions under which a visiting Indian Agent and the Catholic Bishop could view his drawing on moose hide, which they had requested to see. When they returned the next year and asked to purchase it, Dakwatlah forcefully denied their request:

One time some Chichodi [a band for whom Tuchodi Lake is named] people came to see Decutla. “Decutla, we’re hungry.” “All right,” Decutla said. “You go to church. I will find game. Come on now. I’ll see. Today I will have church. Next time, don’t lie, don’t steal, don’t kill. People killing is no good. All right, I’ll see now.” Those Chichodi men were just skinny. All their dogs had died. Decutla sang a little bit and had church all night. Then he said, “Three men should try to go hunt. Maybe one man will get two cow moose, one will get goat, one will get a moose, a fat one, too.” “Sure?” they said. “Sure,” Decutla said.

They went out and one man got two cow moose, one man got a goat, and one man got a big bull moose with lots of fat. It was wintertime and it had lots of fat. Nighttime came and the men went home. The man who got the bull moose came to see Decutla and shook hands with him. “Decutla, that’s good,” he said. “Bull moose I catch. All fat. Lots of fat on the legs.” “Next time,” Decutla said, “don’t fight anymore. Don’t make any more trouble.” Decutla gave them something to put in their pockets.
One time the Indian Agent and the Bishop came to Fort Nelson. They had heard about Decutla and wanted to see him. Archie Gardener lived in Elson and he could talk Slavey, Sekani, Cree, and English. He and my brother Joe Bigfoot and I took the Bishop and the Indian Agent to visit Decutla. We went by boat to where he was staying. When we got there he was smoking. The Bishop said, “Decutla, I would like to see something.” “Aha, good. Too many roads now. Too many people in boats. Maybe tomorrow. Just quiet then.” “All right, tomorrow. What time?” “Eight o’clock. I give you something to eat. Slavey come, too.”

At eight o’clock the next morning they came again. They just talked and talked until one. All day, Decutla had church. He didn’t eat. All day he sang. Finally it was time for the whitemen to leave. “Ah, good,” they said. They shook hands with Decutla. The Indian Agent said to him, “You’re just like my daddy. I’d like to see your letter.” He wanted to see the moosehide Decutla had drawn with a picture of heaven on it. That is the same moosehide I have now. Decutla told him, “All right. Everybody should be quiet. At dinnertime you can see it.” He was just like a Father in church. Lots of people came to see it. Everybody knelt down and made the sign of the cross. Decutla talked. Then he showed the moosehide. “This is not the place, this earth,” he said. “This is God’s Place. Wherever you stay, God’s Place is right here. It is just like the window in a house. Just like in sleep it came to me.”

The next year the Bishop came. “That moosehide, I buy-em,” he said. Decutla told him, “That is Indian’s Church. I can’t sell em. If I sell this, there will be no moose in this country, no chicken, no bear, no caribou, no sheep, no beaver. Everything will be gone. I can’t sell it. How are we going to eat?” “All right,” the Bishop said and shook hands with Decutla. (R. Ridington 1978a:103-104 in R. Ridington 1990a:80-82)

Both Lilly (Nááchįį) and Dakwatlah showed their moose hide map of heaven to visiting Bishops who, as Mills points out (1982), likely had the intention of discrediting the prophets. Lilly then sang prophet songs for the Bishop, demonstrating the
connection between songs from heaven and their expression in material form, and apparently convincing him of the prophet’s authority. *Dakwatlah* was very particular about the conditions under which the moose hide could be viewed, and once satisfied that sufficient respect was being paid to the occasion, preached the moose hide drawing’s significance, explained how it had come to him in a dream, and sang a song. Both Lilly (*Nááché*) and *Dakwatlah* resisted attempts by bishops to purchase the moose hides and appropriate the material expression of the prophet’s power. *Dakwatlah’s* assertion of the role of the moose hide in ensuring the continued presence of animals and Dane-zaa subsistence is a significant articulation of the connection between the *nááchę* drawings and survival, the perceived consequences of giving up ownership, and the continued, essential ability to treat the drawing with respect.

While Lilly and *Dakwatlah* successfully guarded their moose hides from being collected, Kerry Abel gives the example of a Fort Simpson prophet’s deer hide painting, which had been created for his people after he predicted his own death, that was taken by a bishop after the prophet died:

> At Fort Simpson, William Spendlove reported on one man who had emerged from a four-day trance to tell his people the secrets of the unseen world he had visited. He prepared an elaborate painting on a deer skin to represent the future world, hoping that the Indians would use this deer to teach each other after his death. “In the spring he died as he had said,” Spendlove marveled, “to the sorrow of all his friends who almost worshipped him. The parchment was brought here this spring for the Bishop and it is really wonderful.” (Abel 1993:130).

The opportunistic acquisition of sacred Aboriginal material culture described here parallels the practices of many “collectors” across Canada at the close of the
nineteenth century. Ruth Phillips and Betsy Johnson have indicated that the most extensive museum collecting took place during a period, after the 1884 amendments of the Indian Act, of extreme impoverishment and demoralization, and in which Aboriginal populations were at their lowest ebb. These collection initiatives were informed by the same cultural evolutionist policies that justified official colonial policies of assimilation (Phillips and Johnson 2003). Nááchę drawings on animal hides were actively used to resist these very policies of assimilation, appropriating elements of Christianity and integrating them with long-established individual dreaming and shamanic traditions.

Hugh Brody documented this strategy of resistance in Maps and Dreams (1988), his ethnography of Dane-zaa communities in northeastern British Columbia. Brody describes the events of an official hearing on the Halfway River reserve related to the proposed development of the Alaska Highway Pipeline, at which elders used a large moose hide dreamer’s map to communicate their concerns to visiting officials. Members of the Blueberry River First Nation had narrowly missed heavy casualties when a cloud of poison gas was excreted from a well site and contaminated their village (R. Ridington 1990b). Further, the pipeline was perceived by local First Nations to be a threat to the wild game that they depended on, to their economic security, and their cultural practices. While band members had been invited to voice their opinions on this next phase of industrialization of their territory, the meeting had been dominated by the review of lengthy, technical documents and the concerns of contractors and government representatives, leaving little room for meaningful contribution from reserve residents. Brody describes how the presentation of the dreamer’s map at the hearing shifted the balance of power in the room:
… Jimmy Wolf’s brother Aggan and Aggan’s wife Annie brought a moosehide bundle into the hall. Neither Aggan nor Annie had spoken earlier in the day, but they went directly to the table at which the elders had sat. There they untied the bundle’s thongs and began very carefully to pull back the cover. At first sight the contents seemed to be a thick layer of hide, pressed tightly together. With great care, Aggan took this hide from its cover and began to open the layers. It was a magnificent dream map.

The dream map was as large as the table top, and had been folded tightly for many years. It was covered with thousands of short, firm, and variously colored markings. The people urged the chairman [of the hearing] and other white visitors to gather round the table. Abe Fellow and Aggan Wolf explained. Up here is heaven; this is the trail that must be followed; here is a wrong direction; this is where it would be worst of all to go; and over there are all the animals. They explained that all of this had been discovered in dreams.

Aggan also said that it was wrong to unpack a dream map except for very special reasons. But the Indians’ needs had to be recognized; the hearing was important. Everyone must look at the map now. Those who wanted might even take photographs. They should realize, however, that intricate routes and meanings of a dream map are not easy to follow. There was not time to explain them all. The visitors crowded around the table, amazed and confused. The center of gravity had suddenly shifted away from procedural concerns, pipelines and terms and conditions, to the Indians’ world. (Brody 1988:266-267)

Brody goes on to describe how the map prompted elders to speak about how their way of life had changed, and how their lands had been impacted by the industrialization and colonial development. The elders expressed their concern about the weakness of contemporary dreamers, and whether or not young people would be able to take up their essential skills. The elders used the map as a visual foundation for the communication of concerns that asserted their long history on the land, their knowledge
of its resources, and their survival and persistence in the face of colonialism. They asked that logging and pipeline development be limited so that moose were not driven away, and the animals on their traplines—resources on which their lives depended—were not harmed. Brody explains that the elders used the map to find a way to communicate their perspective in a context in which relations of power and barriers of language, culture, and interest all but obscured meaningful exchange. The elders at the hearing articulated some of the protocols for caring for the dreamer’s map, making it clear that it was only to be revealed under special circumstances, and that viewing the map necessitated singing of a dreamer’s song, which they did, to the confusion of the oil and gas industry representatives. Brody’s example highlights the ways in which nááchę drawings, songs, and oral narrative are powerful tools for the communication of Dane-zaa authority. Mobilized in diverse contexts, and as I will describe in the following chapters, mediated in new forms, they represent a defense of autonomy, rejection of the terms of the colonizer, and assertion of Indigenous paradigms (Cruikshank 1998).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced ethnographic descriptions of Dane-zaa dreaming, medicine power, the vision quest, and related material culture. I provided some context for understanding the emergence of the first nááchę, and connected the Dane-zaa prophet “cult” to broader prophetic movements throughout Native North America (Spier 1935). The full transcription of Chief Gerry Atatchie’s narrative of Makénúúnatane, the first nááchę, conveyed the persistence of prophet narratives in contemporary Dane-zaa oral tradition, while descriptions of the Tea Dance at Doig
River shows continuity with prior traditions of performance and communication of prophet songs and associated knowledge, and continued importance as public expression of culture and identity. I explored the ways in which Dane-zaa have historically managed public and private forms of knowledge, and the differences between private individual medicine power and medicine songs, and the semi-public songs and drawings of nááchę. I connected the ways that nááchę historically used prophet drawings on moose hide in resistance to colonial and Christian authorities to a more recent example of the use of a drawing and nááchę song to protest the petroleum-based industrialization of Dane-zaa territory. In the next chapter, I will explore how the digitization of Robin Ridington and Jillian Ridington’s ethnographic documentation of nááchę songs, photographs of nááchę drawings on moose hide and drums, and recordings of the last Dane-zaa nááchę, Charlie Yahey, made these resources available to Dane-zaa communities.
Chapter 3: Repatriation, Digital Cultural Heritage, and the *Ridington-Dane-zaa Digital Archive*

Introduction

In this chapter I describe how over forty years of ethnographic documentation of Dane-zaa communities in northeastern British Columbia—shelves and boxes of reel-to-reel audiotape, photographic negatives, video and audio cassettes, and audio mini-disks—were transformed into digital media and returned to the Doig River First Nation to curate for Dane-zaa (Beaver) communities—the Blueberry River First Nation, the Halfway River First Nation, and the Prophet River First Nation in northeastern British Columbia. I situate the digitization and return of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* (R. Ridington, et al. 2004-2010) within an international movement in which museums, academic institutions, and individuals are using digital technologies to make collections more widely visible and to respond to Indigenous claims for access to their tangible and intangible cultural property. I also provide examples of ways in which Aboriginal peoples around the world are using digital media to revitalize their languages, make claims to land and resources, and assert control over the representation of their cultures. While I suggest that access to digital cultural heritage has the potential to support these claims (Dyson, et al. 2007; Eisenlohr 2004; Landzelius 2006; Mahon 2000; Wilson and Stewart 2008a), I assert that the term repatriation does not accurately describe the practices, processes, and dynamics of the digital cultural heritage access movement.

In the first part of this chapter, I explore the process of translating documentation of Dane-zaa intangible heritage—narrative, song, performance, language, and ‘traditional’ knowledge—into digital cultural heritage. I do this first by describing
how Robin Ridington and his colleagues Antonia Mills, Jillian Ridington, and Howard Broomfield collected extensive documentation of Dane-zaa intangible heritage in their work between 1964 and 2004. In particular, building on Chapter Two and its detailed discussions of Dane-zaa public and private forms of material culture and knowledge, I further describe how Robin Ridington’s early fieldwork and close relationships with members of Dane-zaa communities resulted in the documentation and/or interpretation of Dane-zaa shin (songs), and náácheyinéʔ (dreamers' songs), photographs and recordings of the last Dane-zaa nááchč he Charlie Yahey, and photographs of nááché drawings on drums and moosehides. Second, I review the ways in which changes in recording and duplication technologies have contributed to the increased accessibility of Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage documentation for its originating communities. I emphasize the significance of the Ridington collection for contemporary Dane-zaa, who have made copies of ethnographic images and recordings a dynamic part of their social and political lives. Third, I describe the digitization of the Ridington archive of analog documentation, and the development of the online database and photograph gallery for Dane-zaa community access. I conclude with a discussion of the Ridingtons’ approach to sharing intellectual property rights to the contents of the archive.

In the second part of this chapter, I explore the way digital access by originating communities to cultural heritage collections, such as the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive, has come to be referred to as virtual or digital repatriation (Hennessy 2009b; Resta, et al. 2002). While digitization has shifted the ways that institutions can display and create access to their collections, and the ways in which Indigenous peoples can access and integrate collections into their media practices, I emphasize that digitally
mediated access to Indigenous cultural heritage is raising important questions about the ownership and control of heritage in digital form. Unlike the repatriation of material culture or human remains, ownership of digital cultural heritage is rarely transferred from copyright holders—museums, ethnographers, and collectors—when digitally returned to the communities of origin. If, as Jennifer Kramer asserts, “the desire for repatriation is the desire to control representation as individuals and as First Nations” (2004:161), then how does digital repatriation by institutions and individuals support or thwart efforts of First Nations to represent themselves? At the same time, how are new media technologies appropriated by Indigenous communities to articulate their own social, cultural and political visions (Srinivasan 2006), and what potential do such movements bring for shifting relations of power between heritage institutions and communities of origin? I begin to address these questions by referencing three British Columbia Aboriginal perspectives on the significance of repatriation. I relate these perspectives to possibilities for digital access to collections to (1) address fragmentation of heritage by bringing together dispersed collections of Aboriginal material and intangible heritage; (2) facilitate expressions of the meaning of repatriation that are

11 A notable exception is the Hopi Music Repatriation Project, a collaboration between the Columbia University Program in Arts Administration and the Center for Ethnomusicology. Led by Trevor Reed, this project aims to establish a culturally-appropriate methodology for transferring rights of ownership of Hopi cultural property in Columbia University collections to communities of origin (Reed 2009). Columbia University Center for Ethnomusicology Director Aaron Fox and Chie Sakakibara have also described their initiative to repatriate musical heritage recorded by Laura Bolton, now owned by Columbia University, to Iñupiat communities in Barrow, Alaska (Fox and Chie 2007).
grounded in Indigenous ideologies; and, (3) facilitate remediation of digital cultural heritage through Indigenous media production.

**The Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive**

In 2003, ethnographers Robin and Jillian Ridington, along with folklorist Amber Ridington, returned 40 years of ethnographic documentation in the form of photographs, audio, and video recordings on a 500-gigabyte hard drive to the Dane-zaa community at Doig River in northeastern British Columbia. The archive catalogue was also made available over the Internet as a password-protected database. In the following sections of this chapter, I provide a brief history of the Ridingtons’ documentation and collection of Dane-zaa intangible heritage, the collection’s eventual transformation into digital form, and the subsequent return of the digital archive to the Doig River First Nation to curate for all Dane-zaa bands. I begin a discussion, which will carry through the remaining chapters of the dissertation, of the ways in which the digitization and return of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* created both opportunities and tensions for Dane-zaa communities as they gain access to digital cultural heritage, and knowledge of the copyright and intellectual property rights that define its ownership.

**Collecting Dane-zaa Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Why have ethnographic accounts of sub-arctic Aboriginal peoples focused on intangible, rather than material, expressions of culture? Anthropologists working with northern Canadian Athapaskan peoples have written about moments in which they realized that their conventional academic approach to research had little relevance for
the individuals and communities with whom they work. Julie Cruikshank describes how her early attempts to document secular history in the Yukon Territory were thwarted by Southern Tuchone elders who insisted on telling stories instead. Robin Ridington, who began documenting music and oratory among the Dane-zaa in 1964, similarly recalls how his novice endeavors to fill out surveys were met with blank stares, buffered by offers to provide “Indian stories.” He later wrote that while still honouring scientific inquiry and scholarly method, “I have used these methods and traditions to inform a different anthropological language from the one I was taught in graduate school” (R. Ridington 1988:73). Julie Cruikshank too came to understand that these stories enlarged, rather than limited her project; that the extensive knowledge of these elders was “not amenable to direct questions” and required demonstration so that others could see how it is used in practice (Cruikshank 1998:70). Only knowledge relating to direct lived experience could be expressed in a meaningful way.

Both Julie Cruikshank and Robin Ridington have maintained long-term research relationships with sub-arctic Aboriginal communities. Along the way, following the lead of storytellers with whom they worked, both amassed extensive documentation of Athapaskan oral traditions. Their work as ethnographers has contributed to an idea of culture expressed not as material objects, which have been the focus of ethnographic museums across North American, Europe, and the Pacific, but as intangible heritage—narratives, songs, technical knowledge, language, performance, spiritual and ritual knowledge—that were offered to them by the many individuals who felt compelled to speak into a tape recorder, or look into the lens of a camera. While the Aboriginal cultures of the northwest coast have been represented in museums around the world by
their monumental sculpture and expressive carving traditions, subarctic Athapaskan peoples have become known for their equally complex, yet much less visible, intellectual culture and intangible forms of cultural expression. Because survival in the subarctic required mobility, possessions were kept to a minimum, and knowledge of how to procure what was needed, when it was needed, was prioritized over the accumulation of material objects (Cruikshank 1992). According to Julie Cruikshank, “Oral tradition is a complex and intricate art form in the Yukon, critical for passing on essential information. It weighs nothing and can accompany a traveler anywhere, but it rarely appears in museums” (1992:8). Robin Ridington, working with the Dane-zaa, noted that culture was something carried in the head, rather than on one’s back (R. Ridington 1982 in Cruikshank 1992). Collecting in Dane-zaa communities has therefore focused on intangible forms of cultural expression, rather than material culture.

This fact is emphasized with a search for material objects of Dane-zaa origin in the collections of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Very little can be found: a rabbit snare; a bark basket; a stretched beaver pelt; a hide scraper made from a moose’s foreleg bone; a beadwork necklace; and a tiny replica of a bark canoe. These artifacts are delicate and degradable. As Cruikshank points out, archaeologists have depended on oral traditions to learn about the past of subarctic peoples, because so much of their material culture perished (Cruikshank 1992).

This small Dane-zaa collection of material culture stands in contrast with the large archive of intangible expression collected between 1964 and 2004 by Robin Ridington and his colleagues Antonia Mills, Jillian Ridington, and Howard Broomfield. Robin Ridington began his fieldwork as a Harvard University graduate student with
Dane-zaa communities at Prophet River, Halfway River, and members of the Fort St. John Band, (who were divided by the Department of Indian Affairs into the Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations in 1976). Along with Antonia Mills, then also a Harvard graduate student, Ridington took photographs of people and places, and documented his experiences in written fieldnotes. At this time, he was particularly interested in Dane-zaa kinship, and the ways in which people referred to each other as relatives (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003).

When Robin Ridington began documenting music and narrative in the early 1960s and 1970s, he used a Uher reel-to-reel tape recorder. There were limitations attached to that particular documentary tool; because he had a limited supply of tape and batteries, he turned the recorder off when he thought that “nothing was happening” (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003; R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006b). The constraints of the medium influenced Robin’s ideas about what was important to record; the narratives of Dane-zaa elders, and the oratory of the nááchę Charlie Yahey were clearly extraordinarily important, and inevitably took precedence over the documentation of everyday conversations and soundscapes (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006b).

It was in this early period of fieldwork that Robin Ridington and Antonia Mills recorded a significant number of elders’ narratives and the singing of náácheyinéʔ at Tea Dances and individual performances. Ridington has written that by 1968, he had recorded many hours of audio tapes of Charlie Yahey’s oratory and dreamers’ songs during Tea Dances. Many of these dances took place because of the ethnographer’s ability to drive Yahey and his wife Anachuan from the Blueberry Reserve to visit Dane-
zaa communities at Doig River or Halfway River (R. Ridington 1988). In 1968, wanting to learn more about Charlie Yahey’s personal experience of being a dreamer, he requested an “audience” with Yahey, which was recorded on the Uher reel-to-reel. Ridington conveys his sense of Yahey’s intentions in committing his words to tape, and, through the assistance of Tommy Attachie, translates some of what Yahey told him on that day:

The old Dreamer knew we would not immediately understand much of what he was saying as we listened among a crowd of people at Jack and Eskama’s. He also knew that after he was gone we and the Dunne-za [sic] children, for whom the name of Charlie Yahey was as legendary as that of Makenunatane in his own time, will come to study and learn from what he was saying to us. He knew there would soon be children who would never meet a Dreamer. He knew that our job was to carry his words from one world to another. Charlie Yahey chose this day to speak to us, and through us, to the children he would only know in dreams. He chose to speak through the white man’s medium of a Uher 4000 Report L five-inch reel-to-reel tape recorder wired into a red and white Nine Lives Hot Shot six-volt fence battery. He chose to record his words so that both we and children might return to them as we grow in our understanding of his world. He appreciated the Uher as a medium and also as a metaphor. Tommy Attachie put his words into English for us:

Just like this kind of tape recording
you can hear the song.
That is how they grab it.
They wake up with that song.
When they wake up with it in the morning they won’t lose it.
They just sing the song that way– how it turns
And other people who come in there will sing with it.
From there that is how come there are lots of songs all over.
Some other guys will come and straighten up that song.
They will come in and sing it after the Dreamer
And from there make a dance. (R. Ridington 1988:98)
As Robin Ridington documented Charlie Yahey’s oratory, and Tea Dances, public expression of the nááchę’s sacred knowledge of heaven, he also photographed some of the drawings made by nááchę that were shown to him by elders like Augustine Jumbie and Charlie Yahey. In the years following his initial fieldwork, some of these images were published in books. For example, in his ethnographic overview of the “Beaver Indians” in the Handbook of North American Indians, Ridington includes an image that he took in 1966 of Augustine Jumbie kneeling in a teepee on the Halfway River Reserve, displaying a drawing by the nááchę Dakwatlah. The image’s caption indicates that the drawing had been created around 1900, and kept as a ceremonial object (R. Ridington 1981:356). Trail to Heaven (R. Ridington 1988) includes photographs of Charlie Yahey, in two of which he is displaying a double-sided painted moose hide drum to the camera (p. 112, 114). This drum was made by the nááchę Gaayę̨ga who died and was buried on the Montney reserve in 1923. The painting on one side of the drum, interpreted by Ridington as a representation of the Beaver cosmos, and the dreamer’s flight to heaven, was rendered by Ridington as a line-drawing, published in several works (R. Ridington 1978; R. Ridington 1981; R. Ridington and T. Ridington 1970), and reprinted elsewhere (Burley, et al. 1996:16).

Robin Ridington also documented some of the more private aspects of Dane-zaa sacred knowledge. In his early fieldwork, having built close relationships with many elders and individuals of his own age, he encountered and recognized practices related to shin, Dane-zaa songs. He describes one event in particular in Trail to Heaven (1988) in a chapter entitled “The Boy Who Knew Foxes.” Old man Chipsia (“Japasa”) had been gravely unwell, suffering “attacks” in the hospital in Fort Nelson. At his request,
his family finally brought him out to camp at Buckinghorse, Mile 176 on the Alaska Highway. The schoolteacher arrived in camp the next morning, apparently critical of the way Japasa’s family would “hold him down” as he suffered more of his attacks. Ridington described hearing a woman from Prophet River explain to her that they did so to prevent him from getting “too strong” (R. Ridington 1988:52). He later came to the understanding that the woman was referring to the potential for Japasa’s mayinéʔ to become uncontrollable, for him to become wechuge, the cannibal monster. That same evening Japasa told the family members and friends that had gathered there the story of his own vision quest, in which he was protected and fed by a pair of silver foxes. He also sang a song, which Ridington interpreted as Japasa’s medicine song, given away in order to prevent himself from getting “too strong” as he prepared for his own death, which came the next day (R. Ridington 1988:57-58). Ridington’s experience of Japasa’s communication of sacred knowledge associated with mayinéʔ was a significant moment in the history of Dane-zaa ethnography, for he documented what are almost always privately managed forms of Dane-zaa knowledge and power, except in circumstances of great personal danger, or imminent death. It was also significant for the direction of his future work; as he told me in an interview, “…that really changed my life. That’s when I decided that what I was going to do was listen to stories” (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2007).

In later years, Robin Ridington was joined by Jillian Ridington, who also took on the work of documenting stories and songs, particularly those of Dane-zaa women (J. Ridington 2006). Howard Broomfield, an audio documentarian who had worked with Canadian composer R. Murray Schaefer’s World Soundscape Project, joined the
documentary team in 1978. With a supply of tape from the Canadian Ethnology Museum [now the Canadian Museum of Civilization] the group was able to record more extensively than they had in prior fieldwork. The work of the ethnographers was further transformed when, in 1981, they switched from the Uher reel-to-reel tape recorder to a tape cassette recorder. Howard Broomfield carried a tape recorder with him wherever he went, recording a wide range of soundscapes, settings, events and interactions between Dane-zaa people, and between Dane-zaa and the visiting ethnographers. Howard was nicknamed “Soundman,” and the Dane-zaa “came to accept that wherever he went he would ‘take sound’ unless specifically asked to turn off the machine” (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006c). Jillian Ridington and Howard Broomfield’s audio documentations, along with Robin’s earlier recordings of Dane-zaa elders and Charlie Yahey’s oratory, became significant elements of the Ridington ethnographic archive.

In 1999, Robin and Jillian Ridington made a further transition in their documentary technique. Digital technologies, in the form of audio mini-disk, gave them the ability to record virtually endlessly. Mini-disks were inexpensive and long-playing. Battery life had also drastically improved, making remote recordings lightweight and easy. In 2001, they also changed their approach to visual documentation, transitioning from still photography to digital video, and experimenting with non-linear digital video editing (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006b). Reflecting on their many decades of intangible heritage documentation, and the changes in recording technologies that they took advantage of, Robin and Jillian Ridington write that:

Dane-zaa hunters follow the trails of game animals they know from dreams. As ethnographers, we have followed the trail of stories. We have encountered stories and transformed them into recorded actualities. Our instruments have
been tape recorders, minidisks, and mini-DVs rather than rifles. Our willing
game is Dane-zaa oral tradition. Actualities are audio or visual documents of
particular moments, times, places, people, events. Robin was privileged to work
with elders of the Dane-zaa First Nations in the 1960s. He knew then that the
events of those times were extraordinary and deserved to be documented. He
knew that both our cultures were changing rapidly. The media available at the
time were photography, audio recording, and written field notes. He used all of
these to his best ability. Now we are both working with digital audio, digital
imaging, and computer editing of both texts and actualities. (R. Ridington and J.
Ridington 2006b)

“Even the Land Misses the Songs”: Accessing Dane-zaa Intangible
Cultural Heritage

As available documentation and duplication technologies changed, so did the
ethnographers’ ability to make their recordings and photographs accessible to the
communities from which they originated. Robin Ridington has described how in his
early years of fieldwork, without the means to duplicate his recordings, he had made no
copies of his Uher reel-to-reel tapes at all; rather, each summer that he returned to work
in Dane-zaa communities, he brought a box full of master-recordings with him to play
back for people he visited (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2007).

Demand for access to the recordings increased. When Ridington began to
transfer the original master-recordings onto cassette tape, people began asking for their
own personal copies. More and more people had cars with cassette players, and wanted
to be able to listen to the songs and narrative of elders and of Charlie Yahey while they
drove. Until his retirement in 1995 from his postion as Professor of Anthropology at the
University of British Columbia, Ridington had access to funding agencies, and to a tape
reproduction lab where he could efficiently make duplications of desired recordings. He
purchased blank tapes and made a hundred copies of his entire archive to that point on cassette tape—12 to 15, 90-minute tapes. He mailed or delivered boxes of tapes to Dane-zaa community members who asked for them. He would often send more than one set of copies to the same person, as many of the tapes were lost, damaged, or recorded over for other uses (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2007).

With newly available digital technologies and storage formats, original masters of Dane-zaa song and oratory were dubbed onto DAT tapes, and digitized and archived on CD and DVD. Upon request, these were duplicated and distributed among members of Dane-zaa communities to listen to and copy at their discretion (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006b). These tapes, CDs, and photographs have become common in households at Doig River and on other Dane-zaa reserves. Many times I have entered someone’s home to hear the songs of Charlie Yahey and other elders playing in the background, or seen portraits taken of community members displayed on the wall. Charlie Yahey’s voice “has become as familiar to people who never knew him as it was to those who attended his Dreamers’ Dances” (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006b:20). These documents of intangible heritage, moments in time, records of people and places, have been re-integrated into many aspects of Dane-zaa social life.

Drummers and singers at Doig River, some of whom learned directly from Charlie Yahey and singers like Charlie Dominic and Albert Askoty, have enriched their repertoire by listening to recordings of their elders. They continue to sing and perform them at Tea Dances for the community and the general public. Reproductions of Robin Ridington’s photographs of relatives and friends hang in the Doig River museum and in peoples’ homes, reminders of the way lives have changed, and the extent to which
traditions persist in new forms. As Robin and Jillian Ridington write,

The fact that we have been able to preserve images and to document oral performances as oral actualities does not necessarily remove them from the mode of oral and cultural transmission. Singers and songkeepers listen and learn from them, just as Charlie Yahey expected when he agreed to make the recordings, forty years ago. The recordings complement their knowledge of songs passed down through oral tradition. (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006b:22)

Former Doig River Chief Garry Oker shared his perspective on the role of the Archive in his community:

I think a lot of these traditional stories and archival things are the foundation for, For our generation and the next generation to use.
That’s what it’s for.
I mean, if we don’t, we don’t use it,
Then why are we gonna bring it back and make it come alive?
It’s our job to make sure that information is collected properly, and housing it in a place where we can access it.
And we can do that with the web, and digitalization,
And then use it for whatever purpose we need to make a quality of life.
And still remember our ancestors
and use some of their wisdoms to move forward.
(G. Oker 2007)

Former Chief Kelvin Davis also talked about the potential for archival documentation to help subsequent generations to learn about Dane-zaa history. He indicated that these archival histories may also help Dane-zaa people convey this knowledge to non-Native peoples who are ignorant of local First Nations history. Chief Davis told me,

Those [are] important for educating the young generation that’s in school.
In a way, they may be—that may be one way to teach 
Some of the younger generation in the history. 
Because today a lot of the kids, 
Even young kids are into the computer. 
I think this book here [referring to the Dane Wajich print-based exhibit 
catalogue], it will advance the Native people, 
Not only the Native people, 
But—people that don’t know about Natives. 
To understand at least that bit of history about Native people. 
(K. Davis 2007)

For Gary Ben, who was adopted out of Doig River as a young child, archival 
documentation of life in his home community has helped him to reconnect to the place 
where he was born:

Yeah, it's very important for me because, 
it's helping me to learn the ways to pass on to my son. 
My son is four years old today, 
and teaching him the songs and the dances and the drumming, 
and learning about who he is. 
And I wanted—learning from my family here is important to me too because, 
when I was younger I was taken away from the community, 
and I returned. 
I met a lot of people in the southern part of B.C., and I was raised there. 
Their nationality was Carrier-Sekani people. 
And I was learning the ways, their culture, and I was 17. 
In 1987 I found my family over here. 
(Ben 2007)

For Doig River language expert and band councilor Marlene Benson, the 
recordings from the Ridington Dane-zaa Digital Archive have been an important 
resource for language revitalization and documentation initiatives. She also thinks about
them as potential resources for the band’s ongoing struggle to protect Aboriginal and treaty rights. In her words,

Well, I downloaded it [an audio file] from that archive of Robin’s, And then I transcribed it and I had a full page of Beaver words that I’ve never heard before. And I got my mum to help me translate each one. Which was really interesting. Like a lot of words, like wow, I didn’t know you could actually say that! You know, so that is my goal, is to listen to them And then just get the words And then our dictionary would be bigger. It will have more meaning.

Because if we don’t do that, In the future, if it ever went to court and they had a recording, And if they didn’t know the meaning of a word, How are they going to translate it? And that could be their key word they’re looking for, We don’t know.
(Benson 2007)

In keeping with the way that Marlene Benson alluded to the power of Dane-zaa Záágéʔ in the Doig River First Nation’s cultural political life, recordings of náácheyínéʔ (dreamers’ songs) are also considered by some contemporary Dane-zaa to be powerful tools in digital form. As former Chief Kelvin Davis told me in the summer of 2007, when the ability of the band to resist incursions of government-sanctioned industrial development on their land was exhausted, the Ridingtons’ recordings of náácheyine had power to disrupt the ravenous extraction of oil and gas. When used with proper respect, the power of nááchē as a form of resistance remains embedded in the magnetic tape and
I was in, in English, they call it Ladyfern. There were—the industries were back in there trying to—there was a big [natural gas] pool there. They say it was two percent globally, which is huge in volume and, so it—it really bothered me because we’re trying to protect it and we didn’t have any mechanism to deal with the province, or we didn’t have no agreements with anybody.

So it was tough for us to really do anything as council back then. But one day I went out there and I remember what my mother told me. She said, the prophet, a long time ago, the great prophets used to say, even the land misses the songs. I remember that.

So I had these dreamers, these songs, so I put all my four windows down and I played it and I drove around this hill and I prayed. I ask God, I said, “Lord, this is where our people survived, it’s because you willed it. Look at the damage they’re doing. Look at the destruction. We’re—we’re—this place won’t be the same. Where are the animals going to go?”

And I left it at that. Within two years, that Ladyfern, Snare Hill [Madáts'atl'ọje], dried up, all they were sucking up was water. And that, to me, is a testimony in itself. Very, very powerful, once you believe it in your heart. So that’s—for me, that’s what I experienced…

The recordings of the songs, of the prophet’s songs, are very powerful and if…
you use it the right way, it will be effective.
But if you use it the wrong way,
then the meaning of the song and the power of the songs,
I believe will be, my mother told me years ago, prophets used to say,
“Don’t play with these songs.”
If the song giver wants to,
he can take the—the spirit of the songs back and all it is,
is going to be, is just songs,
that’s it, nothing more.
(K. Davis 2007)

Chief Davis described one of the ways that he used recordings from the
Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive in practice. He drew on knowledge passed to him
by his mother to emphasize the importance of proper use of dreamers’ songs, lest their
power be taken back. While the use of archival documentation of dreamers’ songs is
central in his story, Chief Davis emphasizes that his use of the recordings was in
keeping with proper treatment of the songs. He demonstrates his knowledge of their use
in practice.

When I asked elder Robert Dominic about the significance of archival
documentation in his daily life, he emphasized to me that while documentation indeed
has value—particularly for the ethnographers and linguists who have been documenting
Dane-zaa peoples—the value for him is in his everyday practice of Dane-zaa culture. He
told me,

So what, I’ll try to answer your question is,
like, this recording,
things like that,
is important for you, Kate,
and Robin, or Amber, Marshall and Jean Holdstock and, you know,
all these people that—who recording our Dane-zaa way of people, 
way of dreamers and stuff like that. 
It’s ah, it’s important to you 
‘cause you’ll—you’ll keep the records from [of] us.

The way, if I’m passed on and long time gone, 
then you’ll—you’ll dig it out and you’ll say, 
this is what Robert used to say in that day, 
in that hour, in that minute, you know. 
It’s, you know, so it—it’s been important for you. 
Because, you know, you’ll see what I told you, 
what interviews that other people do—said.

But me, my story is come from me and what I learned, 
what the stories that elders—dad used to tell us and mom used to tell us. 
Mom learned all these stories from my grandpa… 
and he learned—he listened to the dreamer, 
Charlie Yahey’s stories.

And those stories that Charlie Yahey tell the people, 
people that listened to them, 
to him, that day, 
will never, ever forget that story what he said ‘cause it’s true, honest truth. 
He—he’s come from up above. 
So people really pay attention, that’s for their own use, for their own good. 
For their own behaving. 
Before—for their own doing. 
Like, if it’s right, wrong, you know… 
‘cause us, we’re a really spiritual people, 
Dane-zaa, Beaver Indians. 
(R. Dominic 2007)
The Creation of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*

In 2003, in collaboration with Robin, Jillian, and folklorist Amber Ridington, the Doig River First Nation received a grant from the British Columbia Museums Association for digitizing the Ridingtons’ photographic, audio, and video collection of Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage. The entire archive was to be made available as digital copies on a hard drive, which would be accessible in the Doig River First Nation’s Band Hall. The archive was named the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*. A selection of images from the archive, and a full catalog of images, text, and audio and video recordings would be accessible through a password-protected on-line database called the *Dane-zaa Archive Catalogue.*

For the Ridington family, this represented a leap in their ability to “share ethnographic authority with Dane-zaa First Nations” (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003). In this section of the chapter, I will review the creation of the online database, and, in relation to the desire to share ethnographic authority, the approach taken to defining intellectual property rights to the collection of digital cultural heritage.

By 2003, the Ridingtons’ ethnographic archive consisted of approximately 600 hours of audio recordings, 5000 photographs, and 60 hours of digital video tape (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003). Audio recordings were transferred from DAT dubs or original reel-to-reel tapes into computer files, and then stored on archival-quality digital video discs (DVD). Mini-DV video tapes were also transferred to DVD, as were photographs and slides after being scanned at high-resolution (R. Ridington and J.

12 The password-protected *Dane-zaa Archive Catalogue* of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* can be viewed online at: [http://fishability.biz/Doig](http://fishability.biz/Doig)
Ridington 2006b). Copies of all of these files were loaded onto a 500-gigabyte hard drive, which in 2004 was delivered by Amber Ridington and myself to the Doig River First Nation’s Band Hall.\(^{13}\)

Prior to the arrival of the physical hard drive at Doig River, Robin and Jillian Ridington and members of the Doig River First Nation, working under the direction of Amber Ridington, had developed a web-based catalogue of the entire archival collection. The web-based catalogue is built with an open-source software called Plone, which is a popular object-oriented database and content management tool. A company called FishAbility in Victoria, British Columbia, developed the database, and continues to host it on their server.

The home page of the *Dane-zaa Archive Catalogue* tells visitors that “Dane-zaa people have had generations of prophets, dreamkeepers, and songkeepers. Their knowledge, history, and culture can be seen in the songs, stories, and images contained in this archive.” A link inviting viewers to “listen to an introduction” opens a short, untitled QuickTime audio clip of unidentified Dane-zaa drumming and singing. The clip concludes with a voice that I recognize as Billy Attachie, an elder and *Dane-zaa Záágéʔ* authority, saying “Those stories I remember, that’s what I live by now.”

\(^{13}\) As I will describe in more detail in Chapter Four, in 2003-2004, Amber Ridington and I mentored Dane-zaa youth in a digital media skills training program, funded by Industry Canada/Canada’s Digital Collections. The goal for the program was the creation of a virtual exhibit that used material from the newly digitized *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, and taught community members how to access the archival material. The completed exhibit was called *Hadaa ka Naadzet: The Dane-zaa Moose Hunt*. Because the completion of the archive coincided with the commencement of this project, we carried the archive with us to Doig River and helped to install it in the Band Hall, and then used it throughout the youth training program.
In order to access the on-line catalogues and images, the user must log into the archive. To obtain a user-name and password, the user must send an email to copyright holders Robin and Jillian Ridington to request access. A user with access to the archive will observe that the archive itself is divided into four main sections: Images, Audio Files, Text, and Video.

Photographs from the Ridingtons’ fieldwork have been classified as “Old Series” and “New Series”. The “Old Series” images are digitized slides and negatives from Doig River, Blueberry River, Halfway River, and Prophet River, taken between 1964 and 1971. The images are organized by location, person, and activity, with each category introduced by a paragraph describing the setting and events portrayed. These images are visible online in a variety of resolutions, and can be easily downloaded with a mouse-click. The “New Series” images were taken between 1979 and 1982, primarily at Doig River, but also at Blueberry River, Prophet River, Halfway River, and in Fort St. John. These images are categorized by household, location, date, or event. These images are catalogued, but unlike the “Old Series” images, they are not visible on-line.

Similarly, there is no on-line access to audio and video files, although the catalog can be searched, and particular recordings can be identified. Audio and video files can only be accessed directly from the hard drive at Doig River, at the discretion of local curators and cultural workers. Robin and Jillian Ridington indicated that before the contents of the archive were made available over the Internet, they would be reviewed by stakeholder communities (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003); limited availability of media in the on-line archive is presumably the result of these negotiations. Of great significance to Dane-zaa communities, the Dane-zaa Archive Catalogue stands as an
internet-accessible inventory of intangible cultural heritage recorded by Robin Ridington and his colleagues.

**From Intangible Expression to Cultural Property**

Robin Ridington and Jillian Ridington refer to their ethnographic recordings as “actualities.” They draw on the language of radio and television to frame their recordings of sights and sounds as documentations of changes in sound and viewscape over time, evidence of cultural change (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003). Despite acknowledging the effect of technological limitations on their documentary practice, their use of the term “actuality” implies that they have collected objective, unmediated records of the past. This framework stands in contrast with anthropological and museological discourse that positions the collection of tangible and intangible heritage as a subjective act. According to Susan Pearce, the act of selection—what the collector chooses to document, classify, or take away—adds to the nature of the object (Pearce 1992:38). What Robin and Jillian Ridington have called “actualities” might better be understood as “ethnographic objects,” which, according to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett,

…are objects of ethnography. They are artifacts created by ethnographers. Objects become ethnographic by virtue of being defined, segmented, detached, and carried away by ethnographers. Such objects are ethnographic not because they were found in a Hungarian peasant household, Kwakiutl village, or Rajasthani market rather than in Buckingham Palace or Michelangelo’s studio, but by virtue of the manner in which they have been detached, for disciplines make their objects and in the process make themselves. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991:387)
“Ethnographic objects” from this perspective are created through the subjective act of identification, selection, and detachment. The documentation of Dane-zaa ephemera—photographs of people and objects in moments in time, audio recordings of oratory and song—function similarly as acts of detachment. Through documentation they become ethnographic objects. Comparing historical approaches to the documentation of oral narrative with histories of collection of material culture, Julie Cruikshank has pointed to the “ambiguous boundary” … “distinguishing utterance from object” (Cruikshank 1992:5). She describes the role of documentary processes and their technologies in the transformation of ephemera into material objects, and their relationship to contemporary debates over cultural property and representation:

Spoken words, embodied in ordinary speech, may be ephemeral physical processes. But they become things when they appear on paper, on artifacts or when they are recorded in magnetic or digital codes on tapes or disks, or in film or videotape. Material objects, especially the portable kind found in museums, can have meanings read into them quite different from those their makers intended, but those meanings tend to be framed, interpreted, understood in words. Yet this blurred distinction underscores the parallel ways in which verbal utterances and material objects are used both to symbolize the past and to stake out positions in discussions about cultural representation, copyright of oral narratives and ownership of cultural property. (Cruikshank 1992:5-6)

As Dane-zaa ephemera have become ethnographic objects, they have become physical objects (tapes, film, photographic prints); as these ethnographic documents of intangible cultural heritage have been digitized, they have become digital cultural heritage (digital files and storage devices) that can be owned, traded, copied, and circulated. These objects have been interpreted and circulated by anthropologists. They
have also been re-integrated into Dane-zaa social and political life, as resources for learning and teaching. In the example of Chief Kelvin Davis's use of tapes of dreamers songs at the Ladyfern gas facility, these media are perceived as a powerful tools for the negotiation of relations of power with industry and government.

As Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage has been collected, digitized, and made accessible to Dane-zaa communities in the form of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive, it has also been claimed as property. The contents of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive are “copyrighted by the collectors for their use” (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003:67). This is so because, under the Canadian Copyright Act, the act of the creation of a document—for example, pressing “Play” on a tape recorder—is an assertion of ownership and a legal right to control the use of the document (Canada 1985- March 10, 2010). This technicality has underscored the practice of academic anthropology, where the copyright of the ethnographic object, and by proxy the legal right to publish, distribute, or even sell these ‘creative works’ has long rested with the researcher, rather than with the subject of ethnographic study him or herself (Marcus and Clifford 1985).

In the Doig River First Nation’s original application for funding from the British Columbia Museums Association (BCMA) to digitize the Ridington’s ethnographic collection, several statements were made about the ownership of Dane-zaa cultural

14 Section 18 of the Canadian Copyright Act, “Copyright in Sound Recordings” states that: the maker of a sound recording has a copyright in the sound recording, consisting of the sole right to do the following in relation to the sound recording or any substantial part thereof: (a) to publish it for the first time, (b) to reproduce it in any material form, and (c) to rent it out, and to authorize any such acts.
heritage (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003). These statements, and the digitization initiative that followed, represent the intentions of the ethnographers to share ethnographic authority with Dane-zaa peoples. The statements illuminate some significant tensions between the copyright of Indigenous intangible heritage by collectors, and community understanding of intangible cultural heritage—language, oral traditions, song, dance, artistic expression—as collectively owned.

The first statement asserts that:

Dane-zaa cultural heritage is collectively owned, and a great number of generations contribute to our cultural heritage. The documentation of our peoples’ heritage in the Ridington Dane-zaa Archive represents indigenous intellectual property and although it is collectively owned, it will be curated by the Doig River First Nation at their museum, and will be made accessible to all Dane-zaa peoples. (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003:67)

According to the second statement,

Before the digitized material is made available on the internet, or shared in any other capacity, the four Dane-zaa band councils (Doig River First Nation, Blueberry River First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, and the Prophet River Band) will meet to review the material and determine what is appropriate for public viewing and procedures for the potential sharing of this information with the public. Material of a sensitive nature may be assigned restricted access, and permission for its use will come through consultation with stakeholders (a particular family or individual). (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003:67)

And, returning to the question of copyright, the final statement asserts that the archive’s documentary material is copyrighted “by the collectors for their use,” but that this copyright is shared “by the Dane-zaa peoples represented by the four Dane-zaa bands” (ibid). More significantly, “Permission to copy any of this material must be
obtained from the copyright holders” (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2003:67).

These statements assert control over Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage
documentation by the collectors, and by Dane-zaa peoples at Doig River, Blueberry
River, Halfway River, and Prophet River. These statements are meant to protect the
rights of the collectors to use the material for academic research and publication, and
the rights of Dane-zaa to determine how and by whom their cultural heritage is used
and reproduced. However, the first statement in particular illustrates a basic
contradiction at the heart of debates over the ownership of cultural property—that
collectively owned intangible cultural expressions become the property of an individual
collector through the act of documentation. This contradiction was illuminated by the
act of digitization and return to Dane-zaa communities, when Indigenous intellectual
property rights and shared copyright with Dane-zaa peoples were collectively granted,
but exclusive copyright—ownership—was not. Interestingly, as I describe in Chapters
Four, Five and Six, the media in the archive were later used with the permission of the
Ridington family in a series of Doig River media productions and local educational and
political projects. In this process the digitized media were remediated and re-
copyrighted by the band, a subtle act of reclamation.

The second statement demonstrates the assumption that the Ridington/Dane-zaa
Digital Archive contains documentation of culturally sensitive material. On the Digital
Archive Catalogue page titled “Rights and Reproductions,” under the sub-heading
“Intellectual Property Rights,” the authors write that the four Dane-zaa Band Councils
“reviewed the material to determine what is appropriate for public viewing and
procedures for potential sharing with the public” (R. Ridington, et al. 2004-2010). As I
have indicated, no audio or video recordings are available over the Internet in the
*Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, and only a limited series of photographs from
Robin Ridington’s early fieldwork can be viewed and downloaded from the online
Archive Catalogue. However, even though an initial consultation is said to have taken
place with the four Dane-zaa bands, and as one might expect, not all issues related to
the culturally sensitive contents of the archive were resolved before their public
circulation. The Doig River media productions that I describe in Chapters Four, Five,
and Six led to the placement of further restrictions on the use of available digital
heritage from the archive (a process that I will describe in Chapter Seven). These
community re-articulations of intellectual property rights and restrictions reinforced the
need for use permissions from intellectual property rights holders in families, rather
than Dane-zaa band councils, as originally indicated in the British Columbia Museums
Association grant and on the online archive itself.

The digitization and return of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* is a nexus
of tensions between histories of anthropological research, articulations of Indigenous
ideologies and cultural rights to heritage, and Indigenous remediation of ethnographic
objects. In the following section of this chapter, I relate the case study of the return of
the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* to Dane-zaa communities to the emerging
discourse on digital technologies and repatriation.

**Repatriation and Digital Technology**

According to Ross Parry, “At each turn digital technology appears to have
challenged a tenet, a defining characteristic of what a museum is” (Parry 2007:139). In
Canada the use of digital technology to create visual access to collections of Aboriginal cultural heritage has been part of a wider institutional movement aimed at decolonizing curatorial practices by building relationships with First Nations. The early collection of Aboriginal material culture occurred in concert with the colonization of native lands, the disruption of economic systems, devastating disease epidemics, and the imposition of assimilationist government policies. Much of this collecting was done with the belief that Aboriginal culture would disappear. Ruth Phillips and Elizabeth Johnson (2003) describe how this belief was hardened into policies of assimilation aimed at hastening the elimination of Native communities by suppressing fundamental cultural practices. The oppressive Indian Act of 1876 confined Aboriginal peoples to their reserves and constructed them as legal wards of the state. Children were forcibly removed from their communities, placed in residential schools, and forbidden to speak their native languages. Fundamental practices like the northwest coast potlatch were banned. It was “thus, in a period of impoverishment and extreme demoralization when the Aboriginal population was in its lowest ebb, that the most extensive artifact collecting projects were carried out. These projects were informed by the same cultural evolutionist theories that justified the formulation of official policies of direct assimilation” (Phillips and Johnson 2003:152). The removal of material culture from Aboriginal communities in British Columbia is therefore inseparable from its broader context of dispossession of lands and economics systems, and systemic cultural and linguistic oppression. Phillips and Johnson state that contemporary negotiations over ownership of Aboriginal cultural property, including the repatriation of artifacts, should be seen as a way to build new
relationships that open up new ways “to exorcise the ghosts of history” (ibid. 2003:151).

Repatriation has also been used to describe visual access by originating communities to tangible and intangible collections in museums and archives, even when no return of property occurs. For example, Ann Fienup-Riordan (2003) calls the work of Yup’ik elders visiting Berlin’s Etnologisches Museum “visual repatriation”. She describes how the act of viewing artifacts in the museum that were collected in their region evokes names, dramatic displays, songs, and multitudes of stories that have significance beyond direct reference to the object. More than remembrances of the past, the stories are intended as advice for the future, grounded in an awareness of particular histories and their relationships to the present. The primary concern is not to reclaim objects and return them to their home communities, but “to re-own the knowledge and experiences that the objects embodied” (Fienup-Riordan 2003:39). For Yup’ik elder Paul John, more important than specific information related to the collections is their capability to teach self-reliance and pride to the younger generation. It is his hope that “young people will use this long-hidden knowledge as ammunition in their battle to take control of their land and their lives” (Fienup-Riordan 2003:39).

The term visual repatriation has also been used to refer to the return of photographs and other media to their source communities. Joshua Bell (2003), as well as Judith Binney and Gillian Chaplin (2003) use the term “visual repatriation” to make sense of diverse, emotional processes of remembrance, storytelling, and performance following the return of photographs to communities in Papua New Guinea and Australia, respectively. As in the museum context, the photographs are used to re-
engage Indigenous communities with their visual—rather than physical or material—histories. According to Elizabeth Edwards, “Visual repatriation is, in many ways, about finding a present for historical photographs, realizing their ‘potential to seed a number of narratives’ (Poignant 1994/95:55) through which to make sense of that past in the present and make it fulfill the needs of the present” (Edwards 2003:84). These examples show that access to visual documentation, without transfer of ownership, “can generate counter-narratives to the once monolithic, colonial and disciplinary histories that the photographs themselves often helped to create and sustain” (Bell 2003:111).

While these examples reinforce that mere access to collections can have rewarding outcomes for source communities, many argue that this is not a practice that should be called ‘repatriation.’ In a public on-line discussion, Deputy Director of the University of Cambridge’s Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Robin Boast argued that “Of course, "virtual repatriation" is a nonsense. You cannot virtually repatriate an object. It assumes, obviously wrongly, that a representation is as good as the thing itself” (Boast 2009). David Houghton, a Kwâkwâk’wakw resident of Alert Bay who has been working as a community liaison researcher for the Reciprocal Research Network (see Rowley, et al. 2010), recently shared his thoughts about the idea of ‘virtual repatriation’ with me:

So we ask ourselves what is virtual repatriation? The institution holds the object, holds the digital media and controls the release of the information...Virtual repatriation seems nothing more than lip service to an idealized concept. The reality is it is just a capacity building exercise on the museum side. Repatriating cultural artifacts will stay firmly ensconced with the status quo of the institutions. Capturing and preserving indigenous knowledge is important work. Community based involvement with an increasing recognition of the value and
relevance of originating communities is now spurning a whole new branch for museums involving information technologies. (Houghton 2010:2)

Further, the desire of Indigenous peoples to exercise control over their own representation is not limited to tangible artifacts associated with museum collections; increasingly, the multiple products of anthropological research, including documentation of intangible cultural heritage are also being claimed as cultural property. In many cases, repatriation and control of wide ranging forms of intangible cultural property are the only acceptable outcome. According to Michael Brown,

The proprietary drift of ethnic assertiveness has led to demands that information held by repositories, including museums, be repatriated to the source communities said to be its rightful owners. Sharing copies of field notes, images, and audio tapes is judged insufficient; indigenous peoples want complete control over the material regardless of the competing claims of its author, be it folklorist, ethnographer, photographer, or missionary. This sensibility is captured in policy documents circulated among professional curators, archivists, and cultural-resource managers, who increasingly accept that claims of ownership by indigenous communities should be given greater weight than other factors when determining the uses to which documents can be put by the general public. (Brown 2009:153)

Following these assertions, the international movement to create digital access to heritage collections of all forms—for example, by creating digital photographs of tangible objects, or digital copies of intangible heritage documentation—is an unsatisfactory gesture, and could not be called repatriation, virtual or otherwise. When ownership and copyright of cultural property is not transferred to original owners, control over representation, over mediation, remains with the owner of copyright.
So, to return to the questions I raised in the introduction to this chapter: if the desire for repatriation is the desire for control over representation (Kramer 2004), then how does digital access to institutional and private heritage collections support or thwart efforts of Aboriginal peoples to represent themselves? Does digital access have the potential to shift relations of power between heritage institutions (including anthropologists) and originating communities? Further, how are new media technologies being appropriated by Indigenous communities to articulate their own social, cultural, and political visions (Srinivasan 2006)? While the use of digital technologies to create access to heritage collections does not constitute repatriation of cultural property, I argue in the following section that digital technologies are facilitating related processes of reclamation that have the potential to both support Indigenous self-representation and shift relations of power between institutions and originating communities. I point to the ways in which digital access to cultural heritage has the potential to: 1) address the legacies of colonial fragmentation of Aboriginal cultural property; (2) articulate Indigenous ideologies of repatriation that connect the return of cultural heritage to broader forms of restitution and reclamation of lands, language, and cultural identities; and, (3) remediate and resignify repatriated digital cultural heritage to meet contemporary goals for cultural transmission and political recognition.

1. Fragmentation

I hope that someday before I leave this world that I see a lot of—all of our stuff come back. ‘Cause I hear we got things all over the world. And why did we
loose it? What really happened? (Emma Tamlin in C. Bell, et al. 2008:33)  

Emma Tamlin’s statement expresses the dismay that many Aboriginal people in Canada feel about the fragmentation of their cultural heritage into disparate institutional and private collections, and the desire to understand why and how it occurred. Digital access may provide originating communities with tools to locate and identify tangible and intangible cultural heritage in widely dispersed collections. Access to images and object records may help originating peoples to make sense of the ways in which colonial authorities, museum curators, anthropologists, and other researchers have classified, named, and archived Indigenous material culture and intangible heritage documentation. Web 2.0 technologies may also facilitate the correction of inaccurate or erroneous information attached to Aboriginal cultural heritage in collections, and the reconnection of material culture with intangible forms of knowledge also fragmented through collection and colonial assimilationist practices.

Two Canadian projects currently in development exemplify these possibilities. First, the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN) is a web-based museum collections portal developed collaboratively by the Musqueam Indian Band, the Stó:lō Nation, the Stó:lō Tribal Council, the U’Mista Cultural Society, and the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Through a single portal, the RRN allows visual access to widely dispersed collections of Northwest Coast First Nations’ material culture that are held by the co-developers, and by partnering museum

---

15 This quotation is drawn from an interview conducted with Emma Tamlin (Kwakwaka’wakw) by Barb Cranmer on January 9, 2003, in Alert Bay, British Columbia, at the U’Mista Cultural Centre, cited in C. Bell et al. (2008:33).
institutions in North America and Europe. In online research spaces, users can create their own projects, invite discussion and collaboration from other researchers, and contribute intangible knowledge of artifacts to object records (Iverson, et al. 2008; Rowley, et al. 2010).

Another example is the Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures (GRASAC), founded by Ruth Phillips, Heidi Bohaker, and Darlene Johnston, with Alan Corbiere and John Borrows. According to their website, GRASAC was created to determine if it would be “possible to use information technology to digitally reunite Great Lakes heritage that is currently scattered across museums and archives in North America and Europe with Aboriginal community knowledge, memory and perspectives” (GRASAC 2008). GRASAC also aims to ‘digitally repatriate’ heritage materials when physical repatriation is not a viable option.

Both GRASAC and the RRN have been built and implemented on the premise that digital technologies offer new possibilities for researchers and originating communities to both locate and visually access Aboriginal material culture that has been geographically fragmented. The ability of these technologies to facilitate online research collaborations and to accommodate the contribution of Indigenous knowledge to object records has the potential to reconnect locally held intangible knowledge to material culture held in museum collections. These technologies also provide an opportunity for Aboriginal communities to trace the history of collecting (or theft) in their communities, and to even initiate processes of physical repatriation. In this sense, the digital repatriation of geographically fragmented collections to originating communities
contributes to the ongoing project of building relationships between institutions and Aboriginal peoples that Phillips and Johnson (2003) describe.

2. Indigenous Ideologies of Repatriation

We do not have a word for repatriation in the Kwak’wala language. The closest we come to it is the word u’mista, which describes the return of people taken captive in raids. It also means the return of something important. We are working towards the u’mista of much that was almost lost to us. The renewed interest among younger people in learning about their cultural history is a kind of u’mista. The creation of new ceremonial gear to replace that held by museums is yet another u’mista. We are taking back, from many sources, information about our culture and history, to help us rebuild our world which was almost shattered during the bad times. Our aim is the complete u’mista or repatriation of everything we lost when our world was turned upside down, as our old people say. The u’mista of our lands is part of our goal… (Cranmer Webster 1992:37)

Gloria Cranmer Webster describes the meaning of the Kwak’wala term u’mista. She expresses a Kwakwələ̱kwakw ideology of repatriation based on the principles of reclamation, revitalization, and the renewal of cultural, social, and political life. The negotiation of rights to unceded land and resources is central here. U’mista is also the name given to the Alert Bay cultural society and museum built to house repatriated Kwakwələ̱kwakw potlatch regalia, which, after a large potlatch in 1921, had been forcibly acquired by the Canadian Government (Clifford 1991). Repatriation of the regalia from the Canadian Museum of Civilization (formerly the Museum of Man) and the Royal Ontario Museum to two Kwakwələ̱kwakw communities was contingent on the creation of fireproof museums to receive them. James Clifford (1991) describes how
the U’Mista Cultural Society in Alert Bay and the Kwagiulth Museum & Cultural Centre on Quadra Island used this reclamation to consider what the act of repatriation meant for their communities, and to articulate this through the curation and exhibition of their repatriated collections. The U’Mista Cultural Centre created an exhibit of potlatch regalia that focused on the history of the collection, the role of Chief Cranmer, who in 1922 had negotiated with the Indian Agent the release from prison of community members in exchange for the collection, and the place of this collection in broader ongoing struggles for land, resources, and Aboriginal rights. Clifford compares this approach with that of the Kwagiulth Museum, whose founders focused their exhibits on the “expression of family pride and rights—in objects, stories, dances, political authority. This is the prime significance of the exhibition design organized by family ownership” (Clifford 1991:141). Both re-contextualizations of the repatriated collection, as articulated through the creation of local band museums, communicate particular Indigenous ideologies of the inalienability of material culture from broader cultural and political lives.

The cultural processes that Clifford describes in relation to the repatriation of the potlatch regalia are also evident in digital documentation efforts focused on intangible, rather than tangible heritage. For example, Pat Moore and I have described similar processes in relation to the digitization of endangered languages. We show how the Carcross-Tagish First Nation’s use of the online Indigenous language archiving tool FirstVoices.com (2000-2009) created an environment in which elders and youth workers could articulate an Indigenous language ideology in resistance to the values and practices of residential schools and control by outside organizations. Local control of
language revitalization efforts as facilitated by FirstVoices.com allowed the conceptualization and practice of a language ideology that prioritized the holistic nature of language and culture, showed preference for traditional modes of social interaction, and demonstrated the centrality of elders’ knowledge (Moore and Hennessy 2006). Language in this case was represented as inalienable from other expressions of culture, traditions, identity, and the land. The locally controlled use of FirstVoices.com connected the revitalization of language to the broader reclamation of political authority, land, and cultural identity— a digitally mediated return of control over representation. Like Cranmer Webster’s definition of u’mista, the Carcross-Tagish First Nation’s articulation of language ideology is inseparable from its broader cultural, historical, and political context.

3. Remediation

These are all artifacts that we can re-use in a way to express our ideas. Repatriation can help us to express our own cultural identity in many forms. Like in actual political, spiritual, or just a sense of knowing who we are—as people. (G. Oker 2007)

Garry Oker, former Chief of the Doig River First Nation in northeastern British Columbia, states that the repatriation of cultural heritage—both tangible and intangible—is a tool in his community for self-representation and expression of Indigenous identity. His statement reflects the desire of many Canadian First Nations to have cultural heritage repatriated in order to gain greater control over the representation of their cultures, languages, and histories (C. Bell and Napoleon 2008; Kramer 2006).
Chief Oker’s interest in the “re-use” of repatriated artifacts points to some of the ways in which digital access to collections offers the possibility to resignify the tangible products of colonial collecting and research practices. Communications technologies, now more widely accessible to members of the Doig River First Nation, are powerful tools for the expression of Indigenous identities and political subjectivities (Hendry 2005).

Writing about the ways in which Australian and Inuit media producers are re-mediating colonial film and photography documenting their communities, Faye Ginsburg describes how Indigenous people have been recontextualizing their representations as inscribed in media to “‘talk back’ to structures of power and state that have denied their rights, subjectivity, and citizenship for over two hundred years” (Ginsburg 2002:51). Digital technologies can aid in locating these media representations and creating access to them. Further, access to copies of digital cultural heritage provides convenient and powerful content for contemporary Indigenous media productions created to communicate cultural identities, political authority, and to intervene in national histories that have obscured Indigenous experiences of colonialism. These technologies are providing opportunities for the remediation and resignification of cultural representations.

Another example comes from the Sawau Tribe of Beqa, Fiji, who have been collaborating with anthropologist Guido Pigliasco to archive and remediate filmic and photographic representations of the vilavilairevo, or Sawau firewalking, which they now claim as Indigenous cultural property (Pigliasco 2007). Their DVD initiative, called The Sawau Project, is a multimedia montage of repatriated colonial and tourist
documentation of the vilavilairevo, contemporary firewalking practices, and documentation of community reconnection with the landscapes associated with the origin of the vilavilairevo (Pigliasco and Colatanavanua 2005). The “re-use” of copies of digital cultural heritage is central in this Sawau process of remediation and self-expression, and challenges the unfettered circulation of representations of fire-walking by the Fijian state that do not acknowledge Sawau ownership of their intangible cultural heritage (Hennessy 2009a).

In the Australian context, Kim Christen has described how the Pitjantjatjara Council initiated the Ara Irititja digital archive project to make formerly inaccessible documentation of Aboriginal histories, practices, and material culture accessible to community members. This desire to access Anangu cultural heritage led to a vast effort to locate cultural materials possessed by museums, archives, and families throughout Australia. Outcomes of this initiative were the production of an innovative archiving system for digital heritage, traveling exhibits, and a website (Christen 2006a). Like Christen’s later collaborations with the Warumungu community in Australia’s Northern Territory to produce the Murkutu Archive and related websites (Christen 2009), and the Plateau Peoples’ Web Portal (Plateau Center for American Indian Studies 2010), these local media productions use specific cultural protocols for access to knowledge and heritage as guiding principles for the development of archiving and outwardly communicative media. These examples point to the way in which digital access can inspire Aboriginal media production that emphasizes principles of “Indigenous curation,” the notion that Indigenous protocols for care and handling of material culture are both curatorial strategies and forms of intangible heritage that, through their
practice, also safeguard intangible heritage (Kreps 2009). These locally produced media projects further demonstrate “the ways in which technology and cultural practices can be made to work together to fulfill community goals” (Christen 2006a:59), including bringing together fragmented documentation, and translating cultural protocols into multimedia expressions of Indigenous histories and identities. These projects emphasize that local control over the archiving and circulation of intangible cultural heritage, including the restriction of sensitive documentation, can support the transmission and safeguarding of digital cultural heritage within social practice.

**Conclusion: A Middle Ground of Cultural Reclamation?**

Museums and anthropologists have been engaged in the digitization of heritage collections with great optimism for the potential of these technologies to make collections available to communities of origin. I have indicated that the practice of digitization and the facilitation of digital access, which has been referred to as “virtual repatriation,” has the potential to address the fragmentation of Indigenous cultural property, to support Indigenous media production, and to facilitate the expression of Indigenous ideologies that contest colonial and national hegemonies over land, language, culture, and representation. The media projects that I discussed in the section above suggest that access to digital cultural heritage can have outcomes that parallel some of the outcomes of physical repatriation of objects. However, the “virtual repatriation” of digital copies of Indigenous cultural heritage generally creates community access without transferring ownership of original documentation. As Michael Brown has indicated, many Native American groups seek complete control of information in repositories that relates to their communities, and do not accept the idea
of digital copies as a form of repatriation at all. Ownership and control over Indigenous cultural property remains a crucial issue (C. Bell and Napoleon 2008; Brown 2003). This point is emphasized by the complex declarations of ownership associated with Dane-zaa cultural heritage in the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive, where copyright is claimed to be shared between the creators and Dane-zaa communities, collectively, making the genuine seeking of permissions to use the digitized material on these terms ‘virtually’ impossible.

Paul Resta, et. al. have called digital repatriation “a middle ground of cultural reclamation for indigenous peoples” (Resta, et al. 2002). Even if the term “digital repatriation” is not appropriate to describe the possibilities associated with digital access to heritage collections, “the middle ground of cultural reclamation” is a useful starting point for considering both opportunities and tensions related to these practices. While the projects I have described in this chapter, including the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive, have not involved the transfer of ownership of cultural property to communities of origin, they aim to reconnect tangible and intangible heritage to social and political practice. This is a middle ground—yet not a satisfactory end point—of cultural reclamation.

James Clifford (1997) uses Pratt’s concept of the “contact zone” (1992) to rethink the museum’s relationship to aboriginal peoples. Clifford’s contact zone is a space that restructures museum collections as an “ongoing historical, political, and moral relationship” (Clifford 1997:192). In keeping with the examples provided by J. Bell (2003), Binney and Chaplin (1993), and Fienup-Riordan (2003), he describes the reaction of Tlingit elders to being re-introduced to objects in the basement of the
Portland Art Museum, who responded to the objects with songs and stories, instead of the more direct, detailed information expected by curators. One elder’s “traditional” story about a giant octopus recasts the octopus to represent state and federal agencies currently restricting the rights of Tlingit to take salmon according to tradition. The story is not a story of repatriation, but of reconnection to heritage and associated forms of knowledge. It demonstrates the potential for access to objects that remain in museum collections to initiate articulations of current political and social struggle, the seeds of changing relationships with museums and anthropologists. This perspective complements Ruth Phillips and Elizabeth Johnson’s view of contemporary negotiations over ownership of Aboriginal cultural property as ways to build relationships between First Nations and museums (2003), and emphasizes that Aboriginal language reclamation, ownership of land, and repatriation of cultural property are not isolated projects.

The *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* and its password-protected on-line *Dane-zaa Archive Catalogue* were created to provide Dane-zaa communities with digital access to documentation of their tangible, intangible, and natural cultural heritage. While this was not technically a repatriation—statements of shared ownership were made, but copyright of cultural documentation was not transferred to the four Dane-zaa bands—the archive can be considered a ‘contact zone’ where the “historical, political, and moral relationship” between the collectors and community members can be negotiated and possibly even refigured (Clifford 1997). In the following chapters, I detail the ways in which digital cultural heritage from the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* was used by members of the Doig River First Nation in a series of local media
productions. These productions are heavily focused on the histories and contemporary significance of Dane-zaa nááchę, the continued performance of nááchę yinéʔ (dreamers’ songs), and the Tea Dance. They represent the resignification of the tangible products of research in Dane-zaa communities that speak to unequal relations of power in contemporary social and political contexts.
Chapter 4: *Suumnéch’ii Kéch’iige* ("The Place Where Happiness Dwells"): Digital Cultural Heritage and Media Production at the Doig River First Nation

**Introduction**

The creation and digitization of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* represented a series of compelling transformations of Dane-zaa tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The first, as detailed in the previous chapter, was the process that began with Robin Ridington’s first reel-to-reel audio recording of Dane-zaa peoples more than forty years ago. The archive contains the material products of the anthropologists’ subjective transformation of intangible forms of expressions, ephemera, and material culture into tangible media objects—audio tape, photographic negatives, film, and video tape. The second transformation, inextricably tied to the availability of new, affordable digital technologies, funding initiatives from provincial and national governments, and the desire of Dane-zaa communities to both have access to and authority over their heritage, was enacted through the digitization and duplication of these tangible media objects. This was a transformation of Dane-zaa intangible heritage documentation from analog media object into digital cultural heritage. The third transformation occurred through the return of this digital cultural heritage to the Doig

---

16 Funding for the digitization of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* and related media projects came from a range of Canadian sources: The British Columbia Museums Association (BCMA), the Canada Council, the British Columbia Arts Council, Industry Canada (Canada’s Digital Collections, now defunct), and the Virtual Museum of Canada. The Doig River First Nation’s media productions were made possible by successful bids for funding, making a significant connection between national and provincial initiatives and community capacity to engage with digital technologies and outside expertise.
River First Nation and the creation of the online *Dane-zaa Archive Catalogue*, which greatly increased the potential of Dane-zaa communities to access copies of their digital heritage documentation. Along with the availability of digital tools—computers, software, and technical skills—to make copies of digital heritage, these transformations created new opportunities for Dane-zaa to integrate digital cultural heritage into their ongoing cultural, educational, and political productions.

In this chapter I review a series of multi-media works created by former Chief Garry Oker and members of the Doig River First Nation, in collaboration with Robin and Jillian Ridington and others between 2000 and 2005, the time of the digitization of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*. These projects both remediate archival documentation of Dane-zaa cultural heritage, and experiment with new media forms to express local histories and identity in new ways. The first is an audio CD of dreamers songs called *Dane-zaa Dreamers’ Songs 1966-2000 Volume 1– Suu Na chii K’chi ge “The Place Where Happiness Dwells”* (G. Oker et al. 2004b); the second is a video documentary called *Contact the People: Dane-zaa Continuity and Change* (G. Oker et al. 2000); the third a video called *The Otter Man’s Prophecy* (G. Oker et al. 2004a); fourth, a virtual exhibit called *Hadaa Ka Naadzet: The Dane-zaa Moose Hunt* (Doig River First Nation 2004); fifth, a video documentary called *They Dream About Everything* (G. Oker and Elders 2005); and sixth, a series of audio CDs of the Doig River Drummers performing dreamers’ songs: *Symbols Lodge Prayer Songs* (G. Oker 2005a); *Tea Dances* (G. Oker 2005b); *Trail Dreamers’ Songs* (G. Oker 2005c); and a remixed soundtrack of the documentary *They Dream About Everything* called “*They Dream*: The Soundtrack Remixed” (G. Oker 2005d).
These productions reflect the interest of many members of the Doig River First Nation in using digital technologies to represent their language, culture, history, and identity with a range of media for community-based education initiatives and to address non-Aboriginal audiences in the local area and around the world. As I review the content of these productions, my particular interest is in thinking through the role of these media in social practice, or “the ways in which people use these forms and technologies to construct, articulate, and disseminate ideologies about identity, community, difference, nation, and politics, and their impact on social relations, social formation, and social meanings” (Mahon 2000:469). For, while the Doig River First Nation’s media productions are aligned with ongoing Dane-zaa claims for land and political recognition, and the desire for self-representation, the projects I describe are grounded in long-term relationships with outside anthropologists, and the active interests of ethnographers and researchers in exploring the potential of digital access to facilitate Indigenous self-expression and the sharing of ethnographic authority. This intersection of interests and motivations evokes the potential opportunities associated with digitization and access to Indigenous cultural heritage that I raised in the previous chapter: as a method of bringing collections back together; for facilitating the articulation of Indigenous ideologies of reclamation; and, for supporting Indigenous remediations of the media products of ethnographic research. As I will explore in subsequent chapters, these relationships and productions constituted the beginnings of inter and intra-community negotiations over public and private aspects of Dane-zaa culture in its digitally mediated form, and eventually raised important questions about Indigenous intellectual property rights to Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage.
Global Indigenous Media Production

My discussion of the Doig River First Nation’s media productions draws from literature on global Indigenous media, what Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart “loosely define as forms of media conceptualized, produced, and/or created by indigenous peoples across the globe” (2008b:2). The examples that I present in this section emphasize resistance to colonial, national, environmental, industrial, and cultural forces. While there is perhaps a tendency for scholars (including myself) to romanticize these acts of resistance as evidence of the failure of structures of power, Lila Abu-Lughod points out that scholarship is better served by viewing these acts of resistance as illuminating these broader relations of power and generating better understanding of them (1990). In keeping with this perspective, I contextualize my discussion of global Indigenous media and the Doig River First Nation’s media productions with a brief history of the Montney Reserve (IR 172), known by many Dane-zaa as Suunéch’ii Kéch’iiige (“The Place Where Happiness Dwells”), which emerges as a theme running through Doig River’s video productions, web exhibits, and audio CD releases. The Montney Reserve and its complicated history illustrates the negotiation of relations of power between Dane-zaa people, settlers, farmers, local media, the federal government, and the Canadian justice system.

The study of Indigenous media is thought of as emerging from a critical revision of the discipline of anthropology, catalyzed as people traditionally in front of the lens gain greater access to media technologies (Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod, and Larkin 2002). These studies pay sustained attention to the fact that mass media are at once cultural products and social processes, as well as potent areas of political struggle (Spitulnik 1993; Hall 1980; Ginsburg 1994). This work has, according to Spitulnik, “begun to
engage wider anthropological issues regarding race, ethnicity, symbolic processes, and
the politics of the nation-state, and has been, for the most part, rooted in a strong
interest in the possibilities of media advocacy and a politicized anthropology” (Spitulnik
1993:303). Indigenous media producers are engaging new technologies to challenge
Eurocentric and colonial meta-narratives of Aboriginal and national histories. Museums,
film, and photography, which became the visible evidence of an Indigenous world
expected to disappear, are now mobilized as assertions of Aboriginal resilience and
creativity in the face of continued linguistic, geographic, social, and political
marginalization (Ginsburg 2002; Geller 2004).

Indigenous control over the production and representation of culture, language,
and history has been central to these global efforts. I discuss several examples here to
emphasize the place of many Indigenous media practices in ongoing struggles for
political recognition and rights within local communities and vis-à-vis the nation-state.
Patrick Daley and Beverly James (2004) have shown the ways in which in the Alaskan
context “the connection between indigenous peoples’ territorial groundedness, their
subsistence and cultural practices, and their needs and desires to communicate their
identity in wide-ranging ways” (2004:17) has been articulated through the media of
mass communication. They show that Aboriginal peoples in Alaska have resisted in
innovative ways capitalist and racist discourses that justify and perpetuate white
intrusion, and make use of the tools of the colonizer to argue the case for Indigenous
understandings of their rights. The authors cite the 1971 establishment of Yup’ik
community-run television station, KYUK-TV, Bethel, the development of mini-TV sites
and associations, the Applied Technology Satellite-6 project, and the eventual
establishment of RATNET the Rural Alaskan Television Network in 1981, as central moments in the development of community television and the communicative capacity of Alaska Native peoples. For the authors, “what has long been at stake is not only the right to occupy and use their homelands but also their right to control their means of communication. In this sense, freedom for indigenous peoples is premised on control over their political economy and control over capacity to tell their own stories” (Daley and James 2004:5)

Lorna Roth has similarly described how Indigenous broadcasting in the Canadian north has contradicted tropes of cultural “death by media” by using television as an emancipatory tool, aimed at political development and community empowerment, resulting in new configurations of democratic power, and becoming central to processes of constructing Indigenous nationality (Roth 2005). Examples ranging from a National Film Board of Canada animation workshop in Cape Dorset in the 1970s, to a traveling radio transmitter in northern Ontario, to a communications policy paper prepared by the Inuit of Nunavik, are seen as setting a context for the creation of community and regional broadcast organizations. Roth asserts that when minorities gain the rights to produce, control, and transmit their own messages in their own and others’ languages, media can play a central role in dismantling antiquated and inherited power relations, and in clearing discursive space for engagement between constituency groups and government (Roth 2005).

In the Australian context, Faye Ginsburg has argued that the challenge for Indigenous media producers is to create visions of culture and history that simultaneously address the realities of Aboriginal communities and intervene in
representations of national histories (1994). She gives the example of South Australian Pitjantjatjara videomakers, whose work, under the direction of elders, focuses on ceremonies, stories, dances, and sand designs, and shows the production process to authorize the reconfiguring of traditional practices for video as “‘true’ and properly done.” They reinforce social relations that are fundamental to ritual production, and reinforce the place of Pitjantjatjara among Aboriginal groups in the area and within the dominant culture. These media “provide sites for the re-visioning of social relations with the encompassing society, and exploration that more traditional indigenous forms cannot so easily accommodate” (Ginsburg 1994:372).

Terence Turner has described how the Kayapo in Brazil have used the act of video-making to “enact themselves” through self-representation to Brazilians and Westerners in order to resist hydroelectric dam construction in their territory (Turner 2002). The Kayapo Video Project, started by Turner in 1990, provided video production equipment, and limited technical training in camera work and editing. Rather than “polluting” Kayapo media production sensibilities with Western production techniques (a Eurocentric critique of his project that he rejects), Turner claims that Indigenous societies around the world,

… that have learned to use video and other electronic media of representation have not collapsed or suffered the eclipse of their own categories of space-time, agency, or power. On the contrary, many have been able to employ video representations, and specifically the process of producing them, to strengthen their sense of identity and the continuity of cultural traditions [original emphasis]. (Turner 2002:80)
The revitalization and reclamation of Indigenous languages has been another focus of global Indigenous media productions. In Canada, the sorrowful legacy of Canada’s colonial assimilationist policies, most clearly articulated in the histories and lasting effects of its residential schools, is being addressed in a range of new media forms aimed at returning local control over language documentation and learning (Moore and Hennessy 2006). In the Yukon context, Ken Coates argues that explanations for contemporary challenges facing Yukon Aboriginal peoples can only be understood by addressing the past, “in the experience of children in residential schools, the years of systematic discrimination, the establishment of separate residential reserves, the attitudes of the white majority, and the policies of the federal and territorial governments” (Coates 1991:249). Patrick Eisenlohr (2004) points out that because assertion and communication of linguistic difference can support claims of Indigenous “alerity and authenticity,” which are common in expressions of cultural activism in Indigenous media, “language revitalization can be a key element of such electronically mediated struggles of recognition vis-á-vis the nation state and its institutions” (Eisenlohr 2004:34), as has been the case with the use of Indigenous and minority languages in electronic media networks in Canada, Greenland, Australia, New Zealand, and Morocco (ibid.).

Chapin, Lamb, and Threkheld (2005) further emphasize that Indigenous mobilization of digital technologies such as GIS (Geographic Information Systems) around the world has been done for political goals. These media have primarily addressed the defense and reclamation of ancestral lands, the strengthening of Indigenous political organization, economic planning and natural resource management,
and the documentation of history, culture, and language to reinforce cultural identity (Chapin, Lamb, and Threkheld 2005). Terry Tobias’s methodology for “biography mapping” and traditional land use documentation work with First Nations across Canada further emphasizes the political significance of connecting oral history to place. More than creating maps, he says, these projects increase participants’ awareness of their connection to territory: “They often have a new found sense that their activities as individuals are part of a larger picture involving the whole community. Mapping always gives rise to a heightened awareness of aboriginal rights that have been denied, and an increased willingness to be involved in strategies to right long-standing injustices” (Tobias 2000:2).

In his book Maps and Dreams (1988), Hugh Brody eloquently articulated the discursive and ideological disjunctures between Dane-zaa and settler epistemologies of traditional lands and resource mapping. His descriptions of Dane-zaa elders, their dreaming and hunting traditions, and the use of dreamers’ maps in carefully negotiated public contexts demonstrates continued resistance to multiple forms of oppression—evangelical, agricultural, industrial—and suggests the potential for Dane-zaa control over representation of land, resources, and culture to shift some of these long-established unequal relations of power.

The thematic focus of the Doig River First Nation’s media productions on the relationship of prophet traditions and contemporary Dane-zaa identity to the continued use of the land and its animal resources also parallels the use of broadcast media by Athapaskan elders and land claims activists in the Yukon Territory. Pat Moore and Daniel Tlen (2007) show how Elijah Smith, who initiated the 1972 Yukon Native Land
Claim, seized the opportunity to broadcast native-language narratives over CHON-FM, a native radio station in Whitehorse. Created in 1985, CHON-FM was the product of significant shifts in Canadian licensing and funding policies, providing new possibilities for Aboriginal self-representation. The narratives Smith recorded and broadcasted,

... focus on cultural knowledge of place, history, and rights, making a solid claim to the land, and Smith’s use of broadcast media reinforced the contemporary relevance of oral histories. The stories Smith recorded served to counter the rhetoric of land claims negotiations, which were steeped in Western concepts of property (Nadasdy 2002, 2003) and which posited power (including rights to land and resources) with the Federal and Territorial governments. (Moore and Tlen 2007:269)

Dane-zaa media producers and their collaborators similarly used newly available communications media (digital video, audio, and web-based technologies) to make explicit connections between contemporary practices of dreamers’ traditions and ongoing land and treaty negotiations. Like Smith’s CHON-FM broadcasts, which contested Western regimes of ownership of land and resources, the Doig River First Nation’s media productions can also be seen as a location of negotiation over rights of ownership of cultural property.

Land, Politics, and Media Production at the Doig River First Nation

The Doig River First Nation’s digital media projects, which have included the collaborative creation of a digital archive, video documentaries, websites, traditional drumming and singing CDs, Dane-zaa Záágéʔ language education curriculum, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping projects, are cultural productions and
locations of tensions over the right to mediate Dane-zaa culture, language, and history. Their multimedia representations of their traditional lands, culture, and language have in particular been aimed at challenging the legacy of a Euro-Canadian colonial discourse that has been based on racist assumptions about Aboriginal inferiority, and which has been specifically used to justify the appropriation of Dane-zaa territory. Roe et al (2003) describe how governmental correspondence and newspaper journalism in the Fort St. John area between 1933 and 1946 engaged tropes of colonial discourse—Aboriginal destitution, inevitable extinction, weak constitution; European conceptions of progress, the innate value of material progress, and agriculture as an indicator of land use—and used them to legitimize the transfer of Indian Reserve 172, referred to as the Montney reserve, to returning war veterans in 1946 (Roe et al 2003).

Some historical context is necessary for this discussion of Doig River’s media productions, many of which directly or indirectly reference the history of the acquisition and eventual surrender of the Montney Reserve. Steve Roe et al (2003) and Hugh Brody (1988) describe how eighteenth and nineteenth century expansion of the fur trade economy into the west began to deplete food resources. The expanding intrusion of non-Aboriginal trappers and prospectors further destabilized native subsistence practices, with game numbers fluctuating more severely as their numbers diminished, leading up to extreme scarcity and starvation (Dickason 1999-2000). The late-nineteenth century Klondike Gold Rush inflicted further pressure on the Aboriginal people of the region, causing them to resist the passage of prospectors through their territory. The Dane-zaa people in particular are known to have established a blockade that kept prospectors from traveling north (Foster 1998 in Roe 2003).
The Proclamation of 1763 had reserved the right for the British Crown to acquire Amerindian lands, and “land transfers, which had previously been individually negotiated, now required treaties” (Dickason 1999-2000:6). Treaty 8 was signed on June 21, 1899, partially in response to the growing tensions between Aboriginal peoples and settlers over land and resources. At the time, it encompassed the largest area of any treaty, stretching over 841, 491 square kilometers of northern Alberta, parts of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories (Dickason 1999-2000) [see Figure 2]. On April 11, 1916, in keeping with the rights accorded by Treaty 8, members
of the Fort St. John Band selected 18,168 acres of prairie, approximately seven miles north of the town of Fort St. John to be their reserve (Roe et al. 2003). This land was chosen by the Fort St. John Band because of its long-standing significance as a summer gathering place and dance ground. It was known in Dane-zaa Zaągéʔ as Suunéch'ii Kéch'iiige, “The Place Where Happiness Dwells.” Some Dane-zaa elders at the Doig River First Nation have childhood memories of these summer gatherings and the Tea Dances that were held there, presided over by the dreamer Charlie Yahey, and before him, the dreamer Gaayę́a. They also remember the confusion and hardship that accompanied the loss of their reserve to returning war veterans, and their time at Petersen’s Crossing while they waited for the granting of new reserves at Doig River and Blueberry River.

Steve Roe et al (2003) have chronicled the history of I.R. 172, which from its creation was “fraught with political and legal turmoil” (2003:116). He describes the intense pressure placed on the Department of Indian Affairs after Word War I by non-Native residents of the Fort St. John and Rose Prairie area to open up the Montney for settlement. Settler ideologies of progress as represented by the use of land for agriculture were incompatible with a Dane-zaa seasonal use of places in their territory. The fact that there were no structures, permanent residents, or visible agricultural activities on the Montney reserve were taken as evidence by settlers and Indian Affairs agents that the reserve was not being used. The cultural and spiritual significance of the

---

17 Treaty 8 entitlements were 128 acres of land per person up to a maximum of 640 acres of land per family of five. Treaty 8 also included a land in severalty clause, which states that “for such families or individual Indians as may prefer to live apart from band reserves, Her Majesty [sic] undertakes to provide land in severalty to the extent of 160 acres to each Indian” (UBCIC 2005:225).
reserve for Dane-zaa people was largely ignored by the settler population. In the late 1930’s, oil and gas exploration began in the Peace River region, bringing more pressure on the DIA to acquire the reserve and open it to non-Aboriginal settlers. According to Steve Roe et al:

… by the spring of 1940, at roughly the same time that exploratory drilling began at Commotion Creek in the Peace Region foothills, Anderson Exploration applied for a permit to prospect for oil and gas deposits on I.R. 172. FM Steel, the petroleum engineer for the Department of Mines and Resources, noted that a “surrender of [mineral rights] by the Indians will be required before a permit can be granted and… it might take some little time to obtain this release.” Nevertheless, Steel suggested that “steps be taken to bring about the necessary surrender at an early convenient date.” Three months later Brown executed the proposed surrender of the mineral rights to the Government of Canada, “in trust to lease,” purportedly for the welfare of the band. (Roe et al. 2003:125)

On September 22, 1945, the Fort St. John Band purportedly surrendered I.R. 172 at Petersen’s Crossing. A document signed by DIA agents Grew and Gallibois, and also marked with an ‘X’ by Chief Succona and four head men (names written in Gallibois’ hand), states that the:

“Chief and principal men,” acting on behalf of “the whole people” of the band, “do hereby release, remise, surrender, quit, claim and yield up” I.R. 172 to the Crown, “in trust to sell or lease… upon such terms as the Government of Canada may deem most conducive to [the] welfare [of the Band].” (Roe et al 2003:131)

In 1948, the reserve was sold to the Department of Veteran’s Affairs, and land was allotted to returning World War II veterans. In 1949, significant oil deposits were discovered on the Montney reserve, and the profits from their exploitation went to the
new settlers. Roe et al. go on to explain how in the early 1950s, the Fort St. John Band, who had been precariously based at Petersen’s Crossing, consented to the purchase of two smaller reserves at Doig River, which became I.R. 206, and Blueberry River, I.R. 205. Thirty years later, after a tip-off from a sympathetic DIA agent alerting the band that their mineral rights had not been held in trust by the Canadian Government, as per the terms of the surrender of I.R. 172, the chiefs of the Doig and Blueberry River bands initiated legal action claiming damages for the improper transfer of the reserve and its mineral rights. According to Roe et al:

The plaintiffs’ case was dismissed at the Federal Court Trial Division in 1987, and the dismissal was later upheld by a split decision at the Federal Court of Appeal in 1992. The band appealed again, and in 1995 the Supreme Court of Canada found that the Crown had breached its fiduciary obligation by selling the band’s mineral rights and making no effort to correct its error. By 1997 the plaintiffs had negotiated an out-of-court settlement for $147 million for restitution for oil and gas royalties. (Roe et al. 2003:118)

The financial settlement from I.R. 172 supported, in part, the design and construction of the Doig River First Nation’s new Band Hall, which in turn provided technical and administrative infrastructure for the fundraising and production of local media projects. As described in Chapter Three, one of the first of these initiatives was the digitization of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*. Garry Oker, who was the Chief of the Doig River First Nation throughout the the design and construction of the new Doig River Band Hall, and the digitization and media projects that followed, described his motivation for the construction of the Band Hall as in part to create a safe and welcoming home for the archive of Dane-zaa heritage (G. Oker 2007).
The videos, audio CDs, and multimedia productions discussed below should therefore be viewed in the context of the Doig River and Blueberry Bands’ successful legal battle for restitution over the loss of I.R. 172 and its associated mineral rights and ongoing Treaty Land Entitlement negotiations (UBCIC 2005)\(^{18}\) with the Canadian federal government. The experience of these situations has raised consciousness in the community about the significance of documenting oral history to assert authority and to articulate local rights discourse. Such awareness was fundamental in inspiring members of the community to envision and direct the media productions that I review below.


The liner notes of the compact disc (CD) *Dane-zaa Dreamers’ Songs: 1966-2000 Volume 1 – Suu Na chii K’chi ge “The Place Where Happiness Dwells”* describe how in

\(^{18}\) The term Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) refers to “a specific claim made by those Indigenous communities that have not received the full amount of reserve land they were entitled to under their treaty” (Union of BC Indian Chiefs 2005:225). In British Columbia, TLE is considered to apply to the signatories of Treaty 8 (ibid). Between 1899 and 1961 seven Aboriginal communities signed Treaty 8. They are: Doig River, Fort Nelson, Halfway River, Prophet River, Salteau, Tsekani and West Moberly; according to the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, “In April 2000 the McLeod Lake First Nation signed into Treaty 8 under the Treaty 8 Adhesion Settlement Agreement. The Canadian government accepted TLE claims from West Moberly Lake and Halfway River First Nations with the BC government joining negotiations in February 2003” (ibid. 2005:226). At stake is the amount of land that an Aboriginal community was entitled to receive. As described in the previous note, Treaty 8 entitlements were 128 acres of land per person up to a maximum of 640 acres of land per family of five.
the 1930s, the Dreamer Gaayę́ę̄ brought a song from heaven to the Dane-zaa about Suunéčh’ii Kéčhéı̄ge. Translated as “The Place Where Happiness Dwells,” this place is located on the former reserve at Montney. Robin Ridington recorded Charlie Yahey, the last known Dane-zaa dreamer in the region, singing Suunéčh’ii Kéčhéı̄ge in 1966. Since then, Ridington and his colleagues have documented the continued performance of this song and others at Tea Dances at the Doig River First Nation and in other communities and locations in northern British Columbia.

To celebrate the Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations’ settlement of the court case Blueberry River Indian Band v. Canada (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development), [1995] 4 S.C.R. 344, and the continuing strength of the Tea Dance and song traditions, the Doig River First Nation sponsored the production of a CD that brought together songs “by every singer that [Ridington] had recorded over the last thirty-five years, as well as songs Garry Oker recorded for his step-grandfather, Albert Askoty” (G. Oker et. al 2004b). The CD was produced by Garry Oker, Robin

19 In my discussion of I.R. 172 I frequently refer to the Dane-zaa term Suunéčh’ii Kéčhéı̄ge, or “The Place Where Happiness Dwells.” I am using a 2007 transcription created by Pat Moore with Billy Attachie and Madeline Oker. This transcription differs from the one created by Robin Ridington, and which is used in the title of Dane-zaa Dreamers’ Songs: 1966-2000 Volume 1– Suu Na chii K’chi ge “The Place Where Happiness Dwells.” I have maintained the former spelling in the title of the CD to reflect varying orthographic interpretations of Dane-zaa Záágéʔ.

20 The full text of the Blueberry River Indian Band v. Canada (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development), [1995] 4 S.C.R. 344 decision can be found online at http://www.indigenousbar.ca/cases/apsassin.htm (accessed May 22, 2010).
Ridington, and Stacy Shaak, a multimedia producer from Galiano Island, British Columbia, who assisted with the digitization of the Ridingtons’ ethnographic archive and subsequent media productions. Robin Ridington’s songs were made available in digital formats for this CD project through the digitization and return of the

*Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive.*

The CD begins with the *Dane-zaa Zaágéʔ* oratory of Charlie Yahey. A translation reads as follows:

There are no dreamers, they think.
Some of them got to make it through, quite a ways.
Sure are lots up in heaven.
Some people put themselves back.
Theirs bills are lots.
They think there are no prophets.
They think there are no prophets.
Some of them got to make it through far, quite a ways.
Up in heaven.
Some people put themselves back.

(G. Oker, et al. 2004b)

The notes state that Charlie Yahey is “speaking about how people who do not believe in the dreamers will have trouble finding their way along yaak’adze’atanae [the “trail to heaven”, now spelled *yaak’ádzéʔ atane*]” (G. Oker et al. 2004b). This oratory is followed by the beating of a moose hide drum, the sound of a child crying in the background, and then Yahey’s voice transitioning into song.

All song tracks on the CD are titled only with the name of the performer. Dane-zaa songs are usually referred to in relation to the dreamer who first dreamed them—for
example ‘Oker’s song,’ or occasionally more specifically named in relation to the context in which a song was dreamed, such as ‘Gaaye’a’s Prairie Chicken song’ (I explore a narrative related to this song in Chapter Six). This information is not included with the recordings, although based on my reading of Dane-zaa ethnography, my fieldwork with songkeeper Tommy Attachie, and my experience co-producing the Dane Wajich virtual exhibit, it is not considered to be private knowledge. Rather, these songs and their provenance are meant to be shared with people.

The first four tracks, all performed by Charlie Yahey, are followed by four tracks by Ray Acko (also known as Aku), three tracks by Sam St. Pierre, three tracks by Johnny Chipesia, two tracks by Augustine Jumbie, two tracks by Billy Makadahay, two tracks by Charlie Dominic, four tracks by Albert Askoty, four tracks by Tommy Attachie, three tracks by Sammy Acko, and, a final track by Charlie Yahey, beginning with Dane-zaa Žáágéʔ oratory and then followed by the singing of the title song, Suunéch’ii Kéch’íige. The CD liner notes once again provide translation and interpretation of Yahey’s oratory. They write:

“He begins by saying that he dreams for people because he feels sorry for them:
   People are in a hurry. Maybe you, hurry.
   I feel sorry for you.
   That’s why I just make one step towards you.
   The next time happen to me, sickness.
   You can hear about me if I die.
   You can hear the news about me.
   (G. Oker, et al. 2004b:5)

While the individual song tracks are named only by performer, giving little context for the songs themselves, short biographies of the performers are provided as
CD liner notes. These biographies emphasize the significance of these performers for present Dane-zaa communities, and the persistence of their song traditions through ethnographic documentation, digitization, and archiving.

For example, Aku (Ray Acko) is described as “an important elder of the Doig River First Nation. He is mentioned as a good hunter and family head in HBC [Hudson’s Bay Company] journals prior to WW1… His son, Sammy Acko, continues in his father’s tradition. Aku’s songs and stories have been transferred to a digital archive” (G. Oker, et al. 2004b:6). Sam St. Pierre’s singing “was known for its remarkable high pitch and strong delivery… He also passed on teachings from the great dreamers of the Dane-Zaa [sic] past. A CD of his songs is available” (ibid.). Augustine Jumbie, who was described in detail in Ridington’s Trail to Heaven (1988), “lived most of his life in the Prophet River area. Jumbie was a skilled hunter… [he] delivered his songs quickly and with a distinctive high vibrato. The complete recordings of his songs and oratory have been transferred to a digital archive” (G. Oker, et al. 2004b:7). Johnny Chipesia “was a well known storyteller” with “a fine command of oral history. Prior to the flu epidemic of 1918, he was raised by his grandfather, Chief Montney (Mutain) of the Fort St. John Band… He was much in demand for both his narrative and singing. He was also a skilled hunter and expert marksman” (G. Oker, et al. 2004b:8). Billy Makadahay “had such a strong singing voice it seemed to reach directly to heaven… The songs on this CD were recorded during a memorial Tea Dance for Ano Davis at the Doig River First Nation in the summer of 1968… A complete CD of the music from that tea dance is available” (G. Oker, et al. 2004b:9). Charlie Dominic “was known for his love of horses and loved to be seen riding a particularly fine white horse… The songs on the
CD were recorded at Charlie’s home by Howard Broomfield in 1979. They are part of a much larger collection documenting Charlie’s repertoire. Charlie was an important influence on contemporary singers like Tommy Attachie” (G. Oker et al. 2004b:9).

Albert Askoty, the authors of the liner notes write:

“…became a song-keeper following the death of Charlie Yahey… Shortly before he died, Albert passed on his role of song-keeper to Tommy Attachie. The words he speaks on track 21 are as follows. They echo what Charlie Yahey said on track 1.

“One, one of the dreamers will know us. One will quickly know.” He say it. He said it before. “Two, two sings sing it all, all two songs sing it.” Dreamers are many. “One will know us,” he said. He is a dreamer. It’s the way.

(G. Oker, et al. 2004b:10)

Tommy Attachie and Sammy Acko are active leaders of Dane-zaa song and oral traditions at Doig River. About Tommy Attachie, the CD notes say that, “His Christian faith, combined with his knowledge of traditional Dane-zaa teachings make him an inspiration and role model for younger people. Tommy knows the songs and the stories that go with them. He knows Dane-Zaa territory. He knows the language. These skills make him an ideal teacher for the coming generations” (G. Oker, et al. 2004b:11). And finally, of Sammy Acko, the son of Aku, the authors write, “Like his father, Sammy can tell a story from memory without hesitation… Sammy has accepted the role of lead singer and is an inspiration to younger people of his community. Many of his stories in Beaver and English have been recorded digitally” (G. Oker, et al. 2004b:11).
Robin Ridington and Garry Oker’s recordings of these men performing Dane-zaa dreamers' songs have had several complementary effects. First, as I have described, these songs were created by individual dreamers who may have lived up to two centuries ago. The songs, contextualized by the CD’s biographical liner notes emphasize a strong genealogical and cultural connection, facilitated by oral tradition and traditional practices between contemporary performers and individual dreamers. They demonstrate the continuity of these song and oral traditions at Doig River, and suggest that these practices will be transmitted to future generations through culture-bearers Tommy Attachie and Sammy Acko.

Second, the act of bringing Robin Ridington’s archival recordings together with Garry Oker’s new recordings on this CD connects past and present performances. It emphasizes a transition from outside anthropologist as documentarian, to Indigenous media producer as documentarian. While this shift is not without its own tensions (to be explored in subsequent chapters), it is a collaboration that marks a transition in control over representation, and reflects the Ridingtons’ desire to “share ethnographic authority with Dane-zaa First Nations” (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006b) through the digitization and return of the archive.

Third, the choice of the audio CD as a medium for the distribution of dreamers’ songs suggests the intention of the producers to communicate Dane-zaa history, identity, and continuity of tradition to related Dane-zaa communities and to a broader audience. The CD was duplicated, the liner notes were professionally designed, and the whole package made available for sale at the Doig River Band Hall, which is where I purchased my own copy. The emphasis in the CD’s liner notes on the availability of
these songs in digital format suggests that the process of transforming Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage into digital cultural heritage is central to Doig River’s process of revitalizing and transmitting Dane-zaa cultural knowledge to future generations. Indeed, digitization, remediation, and circulation of digital cultural heritage are presented in this CD as a strong element of Doig River’s strategy for stewardship and curation of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive. Clearly articulating the connection between the Dane-zaa prophet tradition and the former Montney reserve, and the persistence of tradition in the face of extreme hardship and displacement under colonial administration, the CD—like I.R. 172 at Montney once was—is presented as an important location for the continuity of Dane-zaa tradition. As the liner notes read, “We hope that this CD itself will become a place where happiness dwells for the Dane-zaa, young and old” (G. Oker, et al. 2004b:1).

**Contact the People: Dane-zaa Continuity and Change (2000; video, 24 min.)**

*Contact the People: Dane-zaa Change and Continuity* was produced by the Doig River First Nation, directed by former Doig River First Nation Chief Garry Oker, and “realized” by Garry Oker, Stacy Shaak, Jillian Ridington and Robin Ridington (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006a). Robin and Jillian Ridington collected the photographs and field recordings for the film, while Stacy Shaak oversaw video imaging and animation, and video editing. This video was created in parallel with the digitization of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive, and was screened in Canada, and Japan in 2000 and 2001.
The film focuses on the history of the Dane-zaa dreaming, singing, and oral traditions, and their continued importance for contemporary communities struggling to defend Aboriginal and treaty rights, to maintain the Dane-zaa language, and to negotiate the opportunities and environmental dangers associated with oil and gas industrialization in Dane-zaa territory. According to Robin and Jillian Ridington, the video “is an audio and video collage in which sounds and images recall the stories within stories that make up Dane-zaa oral history” (2006a:113). In contrast to *Dane-zaa Dreamers’ Songs: 1966-2000 Volume 1–Suu Na chii K’chi ge “The Place Where Happiness Dwells,”* which contextualizes song recordings with textual introductions to Dane-zaa dreamers’ songs and the biographies of the performers, *Contact the People* provides little assistance to the non-Dane-zaa viewer. In a textual guide written to facilitate understanding of the video, Robin and Jillian Ridington emphasize that:

Like Dane-zaa storytelling, the film uses a highly contextualized form of discourse. People within the culture will understand more in the film than will outsiders, in that they recognize the images and voices of their relatives who are telling the stories. Many passages are in the Beaver language. Members of the community translated their words into English; these translations are presented as written subtitles. The Dane-zaa tell about themselves in their own voices but also welcome outsiders to share in their experience. (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006a:113-114)

In spite of the “highly contextualized discourse” of the video, the opening visual montage of the film includes former Chief Kelvin Davis’s *Dane-zaa Záágéʔ* voice, indicating his hope that the film will teach outsiders about Dane-zaa culture. The translation reads, “Today, it’s been five years that we’ve been coming together. Many white people, they don’t know our ways. If they look at the way we live, maybe they
will know us. It’s good that many of us are gathered here today” (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006a:116). The visual montage that follows includes striking images of Dane-zaa dreamers’ drawings, and other images of people and places from the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*.

Throughout its 24 minutes, *Contact the People* makes extensive use of the Ridingtons’ archival photographs, and juxtaposes these images with newly recorded footage of Dane-zaa people in a range of contexts. For example, Blueberry River First Nation elder May Apsassin talks about her grandfather, the dreamer Charlie Yahey. As she speaks about his role as a dreamer, and her hope for maintaining the Beaver language, a montage of photographs and dreamers' songs from the archive depicts Yahey, a drum with dreamers’ drawing on it, and a range of places and people. In another scene, Sammy Acko discusses the impact of oil and gas development in Dane-zaa territory. Over a visual montage of environmental degradation, logging trucks, and sour gas well flares, Sam Acko says,

> We are going to leave this place. ‘Cause we are disturbed like the animals been disturbed. They disturb us… When we were camping in here, 1966, we were kids, and I remember, there were lots of horses, and lots of people. All the elders are with us in here. And then, there’s a big moose lick up there… (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006a:120)

Sam Acko emphasizes his knowledge of the land, animals, and the impact that oil and gas industrialization has had on Dane-zaa ability to hunt and move throughout their territory. As with the *Dane-zaa Dreamers’ Songs: 1966-2000 Volume 1– Suu Na chii K’chi ge “The Place Where Happiness Dwells”*, the video makes explicit reference to the history of the Montney reserve (I.R. 172) and its surrender.
Yet more than in any other Doig River media projects, this video identifies the annual Doig River Rodeo as an important marker of Dane-zaa identity. Archival images of the rodeo, horses, and elders like Billy and Tommy Attachie as young men at the rodeo are juxtaposed with new footage and images of the rodeo. In one segment of the video, former Chief and long-time Band Councilor Gerry Attachie explains, “we’ve been doing this for thirty years, forty years… it’s part of our tradition, eh, horses, and the rodeo. Our people, they like it, so I hope they’ll continue in the future.” The Doig River First Nation’s ownership of this event, and their control over their participation in a spectacle that has historically perpetuated the colonial fantasy of Indians dominated by cowboys, is a significant challenge to colonial stereotypes (Furniss 1999).

The Doig River Cultural Grounds, which include a circular Tea Dance area with covered bleachers, and a series of large teepees, sit just beyond the rodeo grounds. In *Contact the People*, images of the rodeo are juxtaposed with a segment on the Tea Dance, reflecting the hybridity of these annual practices, which are usually held on the same weekend. The video layers archival images of the Tea Dance with images and footage of contemporary Tea Dance drumming, singing, and dance practices to convey the continuity of dreamers’ traditions. Former Chief Oker, in a voice-over, states that “The lead singer here, Tommy Attachie, knows all the traditional songs that go back four or five hundred years. And we’re glad to say to you all, that we still maintain it and it’s pretty strong, within the drummers and the traditional people here.”

In another voice-over-image montage, Billy Attachie discusses Dane-zaa medicine power and its acquisition through the vision quest. “They’s, long time ago,” he says, “they all got power from each animal.” These powers, he goes on to say, were used to
heal people who were sick. While the video makes very clear reference to Dane-zaa medicine power, it does so only superficially. These private experiences remain private. However, by both alluding to their existence and keeping them out of more detailed circulation, they “substantiate the power of the group to keep its identity intact” (Weiner 1985:214). By juxtaposing explanations of the prophet dance and the Doig River Rodeo, the producers of Contact the People assert an understanding of their culture that embraces hybridity, and maintains their dreamers’ traditions as the ritual and performative core of Dane-zaa identity. According to Elizabeth Furniss, whose work has explored how British Columbia First Nations have used participation in rodeos to carve out a space in which they can represent their culture and identities,

To First Nations people, their increasing struggle to control the terms in which Aboriginal cultural identity is publicly defined is part of a broader process in which they are challenging the multiple dimensions of more concrete forms of political and economic domination by the Indian Affairs bureaucracy, the Canadian justice system, the provincial agencies managing Crown lands, or the forestry and mining companies exploiting natural resources. The control of public definition of Aboriginal identity has long been an important part of these processes of domination. (Furniss 1999:178)

The Otter Man’s Prophecy (2002; video, 24 min)

Like Contact the People: Dane-zaa Continuity and Change, The Otter Man’s Prophecy was produced by Garry Oker, Stacy Shaak, Robin Ridington, and Jillian Ridington in 2002. This video features the narratives of former Chief Garry Oker, and elder May Apsassin, the granddaughter of the dreamer Charlie Yahey. In the first half of the video, Oker is filmed at Charlie Lake Cave, a significant archaeological site in
British Columbia for researchers and Dane-zaa people, with faunal and cultural evidence of Indigenous occupation dating back 10,500 years (Fladmark, et al. 1988).

Oker is shown sitting inside the cave, singing along with a recording of one of the dreamers’ songs performed by the Doig River drummers that is being played. He then rises from his sitting position, and says, “Better go and find the song, so you can help me remember all these things.” He moves to the mouth of the cave, and looks out at the view beyond. He says to the camera, “I just can imagine what our ancestors are thinking about. This cave here over ten thousand, five hundred years ago, somebody was living here.”

Chief Oker unwraps the cloth bundle that he has been holding, revealing a painted moose hide drum skin. Made by the Dane-zaa dreamer Gaaye̱a̱, the drum skin is missing its frame, and is torn on one side and along a line where it has been folded up. Chief Oker contemplates the meaning of drum skin, which he inherited from his step-Grandfather, Albert Askoty. He says, in conversation with Robin Ridington, who remains off camera:

This is our last dreamer. The last dreamer. It is very sad that it is broken. Got to find the pieces. I wonder what all this means. There’s the good side, the bad side, it seems. The directions. These are the trails that one comes to, two different ways. And then there’s a couple of lines through here, so these must represent the journey of people. You come to the centre and then there’s just one trail left. So this must be the area where they have to come to terms with themselves. I want to try to repair this… My grandpa was a music keeper – Albert Askoty. He was given this when it was broken, but before it was destroyed. People just didn’t look after it very well. (G. Oker, et al. 2004a)
Chief Oker then references the process of documentation of Dane-zaa dreamers’ songs that he has been engaged in, and articulates the significance, for him, as Chief of the Doig River First Nation, of media production activities in the community:

We are recording all these songs now. I think it is crucial that we do that for people that really know the songs and remember them [and] are still with us. So we are basically picking up all the broken culture of Dane-zaa people right now and this is what it represents. There is a lot of alcoholism, fighting, and people are never happy with each other. They even take on, fight their own leadership. So people are not well. And obviously this is a good example, of the drum. So what we are attempting to do is trying to put it back in the right order, so that people can walk in the right path, with truth and honesty and respect for one another in life. I think that’s what I am after. I know that many a times I just want to walk away and leave these things alone. But I keep coming back to this, because my job is not ready. It’s not done yet, so I gotta’ get at it. (G. Oker, et al. 2004a)

For Garry Oker, Gaayëa’s torn drum is a metaphor for both the condition of the Doig River community and a source of moral and cultural inspiration. As a community leader, he looks for guidance from Dane-zaa oral traditions, particularly dreamers' songs, drums, and associated knowledge. As this scene concludes, the camera zooms in on trucks passing along the Alaska Highway, visible from Charlie Lake Cave. A recording of the Doig River Drummers singing a dreamer's song swells in the soundtrack.
The second half of *The Otter Man’s Prophecy* features May Apsassin’s story of an Otter Man who married a Dane-zaa girl and took her to live at Charlie Lake (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006b). Robin and Jillian Ridington have written about the documentation of this narrative, explaining that May told the story to Jillian in English, in response to her question about whether dreamers communicated with one another in their dreams. They indicate that May learned the story from her father, Charlie Dominic, in which the brother of the Dane-zaa girl talks to Otter Man in his dreams, and Otter Man invites the brother to visit the family, including two half-otter children, at Charlie Lake. Otter Man warns the brother about the arrival of white people in Dane-zaa territory. In the video, May Apsassin tells Robin and Jillian Ridington that Otter Man told his brother-in-law:

I want you to come in my dream.  
I see all this happen.  
This going to be big Fort St. John. Going to be full of people,  
and pretty soon you got no place to step, even…

And pretty soon, how you going to live?  
What you going to eat?  
You live on the moose, everything, rabbit,  
whatever you live on out there be gone.  
They going to be no trees.  
And that’s what I was looking at.  
You know, these logging, oil companies, roads all over,  
and they started doing all these things.  
And my dad was telling us a story about that…  
(R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006b:24) [see reference for full transcript of May Apsassin’s Otter Man story]
The producers of *The Otter Man’s Prophecy* juxtapose two narratives. One is an expression of Dane-zaa oral tradition, emphasizing the continuity of knowledge and the prophetic authority of Dane-zaa dreamers. The other, recorded at the Charlie Lake Cave, once Otter Man’s home, represents the ruminations of a contemporary Dane-zaa political leader looking to the dreamers of the past for inspiration and strength. The video reflects the use of prophet narratives among other sub-arctic Athapskan peoples to demonstrate that the past is frequently used to make sense of the present, and that prophecy narratives are not evidence of failure in the face of colonialism, but rather “of successful engagement with change and detailed foreknowledge of events” (Cruikshank 1994:119). *The Otter Man’s Prophecy* exemplifies the translation of these practices and themes into new media forms with inherent potential for electronic circulation to diverse audiences.

*Hadaa ka Naadzet: The Dane-zaa Moose Hunt (2004; virtual exhibit, currently off-line)*

*Hadaa ka Naadzet: The Dane-zaa Moose Hunt* is a virtual exhibit produced by a team of Doig River First Nation youth in collaboration with Dane-zaa elders, project manager and folklorist Amber Ridington, web designer Dan Arbeau, and myself. As a videographer, web designer, and recent MA in the Anthropology of Media from the University of London, I was hired to facilitate the youth training component of the project. Our first trip north in the fall of 2003 was my first introduction to the people of the Doig River First Nation. The project was funded by Canada’s Digital Collections, a now obsolete granting agency of Industry Canada, and by the Northeast Native
Advancing Society, a Fort St. John organization that regularly funds local First Nations education initiatives. The project was directed by folklorist Amber Ridington, with the goal of facilitating community access to the newly digitized *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, and providing multimedia skills training to Dane-zaa youth. The project funds included three new computers, monitors, and software for use by youth for the exhibit development.

The Dane-zaa moose hunt was chosen as the theme of this virtual exhibit to reflect the autumn hunting activities of the Doig River community, activities that the families of youth participants were engaged in at the time of the youth media training project and exhibit production. Youth participants—Amy Acko, Renee Davis, Holly Reiter, and Alveena Acko—spent three afternoons a week for two months in the new Doig River Band Hall working with Dan Arbeau, and intermittently with Amber Ridington and me on content curation and digital media skills training leading up to the launch of the exhibit in Spring 2004. Instruction focused on teaching the youth participants how to search the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, to download images and sound files, keep track of metadata and captions, and integrate these media into web pages. The youth participants were also encouraged to work with elders, interviewing them about moose hunting practices, documenting their responses to images and media from the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, and transcribing their knowledge into the web exhibit’s pages. The team was encouraged to express this knowledge in their own voice, retaining the use of the first person in writing. Each youth participant wrote their own biography page, and wrote a profile and biography of a Dane-zaa elder by whom they had been inspired.
The content of *Hadaa ka Naadzet: The Dane-zaa Moose Hunt* is organized to provide an overview of practices and forms of knowledge associated with moose hunting. The content on the site reflects the research practices of Dane-zaa youth, consulting with elders and hunters. The pages contain textual information, audio recordings, and archival and contemporary photographs of the moose hunt, Dane-zaa people, and places along the following cultural and practice-based themes: Hunting, meat processing, hide preparation, dreamers, and Dane-zaa elders.

Pages relating to hunting and meat processing include instructions from hunters on preparing hunting tools and showing respect for animals. They include recent videos of elder Jack Askoty shooting and butchering moose, and loading meat and hides into his truck to bring back to Doig River. They also include the story of Jack Askoty’s first moose hunting experience, drawn from the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*. The page related to hide preparation details the many steps required to cure moose hide, and includes a video that I filmed and edited showing elders Rosie Field and Margaret Attachie smoking moose hide over a spruce root fire.

The section of the exhibit on Dane-zaa dreamers draws extensively from the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, and from consultation with elders to teach about dreamers such as Charlie Yahey, and the continuity of the Tea Dance in contemporary life at Doig River. It was important to the web team that the Tea Dance feature prominently on the site, with dreaming traditions acknowledged as a source of the knowledge and power used by hunters in dreaming the trails of their animals and ensuring the success of the hunt. Like the CD *Dane-zaa Dreamers’ Songs: 1966-2000 Volume 1– Suu Na chii K’chi ge “The Place Where Happiness Dwells”*, the web
exhibit text refers to Charlie Yahey singing the “Place Where Happiness Dwells” song about the former reserve at Montney: “Those who spent time there say that meeting their relatives there was like the Dreamer’s experience of meeting his relatives in heaven. Sadly, we lost the reserve in 1945, but still remember the happiness we shared there through our Dreamer’s song.” An audio recording from the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive of Yahey singing the song is available to click on and listen to.

In a review of the moose hunt exhibit, which praises the initiative as an example of the ways in which First Nations people are using new media for self-representation and cultural revitalization, linguistic anthropologist Pat Moore also points out elements of the exhibit that would benefit from improvement. First, reflecting infrequent use of *Dane-zaa Zaágéʔ* by Dane-zaa youth, and limited native-language literacy in the community, many of the exhibit’s *Dane-zaa Zaágéʔ* words are misspelled, creating a missed opportunity for reference and ongoing Beaver literacy initiatives (Moore 2007). Further, and of greatest consequence, are some of the electronic infrastructure problems that have now made the site unavailable online. At launch, rather than give the exhibit to funder Canada's Digital Collections to host, the Doig River First Nation made the decision to host the site themselves. This at first seemed to have been a good decision, because the Canada's Digital Collections program was eventually cut by the federal government, taking with it many digital projects that were unable to arrange their own web hosting. However, when the Doig River First Nation's former webmaster, who also hosted the Doig River website and the Moose Hunt exhibit terminated his contract with the community, he took his servers with him, taking both sites off line. Although back-up copies of the exhibit exist, one has yet to be re-posted on the Doig River First
Nation's new website. While Hadaa ka Naadzet: The Dane-zaa Moose Hunt created opportunities for youth engagement with new media and the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive, and facilitated the public communication of Dane-zaa history, culture, and identity, the project also illustrated some of the challenges faced by First Nations in ensuring the persistence of their representations in electronic form.

They Dream About Everything (2005; video, 50 min)

Like Contact the People (G. Oker et al. 2000), the video They Dream About Everything (G. Oker and Elders 2005) was a creative collaboration between Garry Oker, Stacy Shaak, Robin Ridington, and Jillian Ridington. In this film, however, direction credits are shared between former Chief Garry Oker and “Elders of the Dane-zaa First Nations,” suggesting a higher degree of involvement from the elders of other Dane-zaa communities than previous productions. The video draws heavily from photographs and audio recordings from Dane-zaa communities that became a part of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive. In addition to the use of these media, They Dream About Everything makes use of computer animation and visual effects to represent the producers’ vision of Dane-zaa dreamers’ prophecies and visions. Robin and Jillian Ridington explain that the title of the film came from Tommy Attachie’s narrative about Dane-zaa dreamers. In a statement about the aesthetic intentions behind the project, they write,

The film uses digital video to communicate the cinematic language of Dane-zaa Dreamers’ prophecies. It is a story that tells itself through actualities. The film brings Dreamers’ songs and stories to life by combining narratives by
contemporary elders with images and songs and oratory from the forty-year Ridington/Dane-zaa archive… The Dane-zaa language is cinematic and rich in metaphor and images. When the Dreamers spoke and sang, their oratory created vivid images in the minds of traditional Dane-zaa people. It is difficult to translate Dane-zaa oral narrative into written English, as a great deal of its subtlety and imagery is lost in literal translation. The digital video medium allows us to combine archival actualities (songs, texts, and images including portraits of the last Dreamer, Charlie Yahey) with video narratives and songs by living elders”. (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006b)

Like *Otter Man’s Prophecy*, which juxtaposed Dane-zaa oral tradition with contemporary interpretations of dreamers’ knowledge, *They Dream About Everything* experiments with the aesthetic possibilities afforded by digital multimedia to realize contemporary visual interpretations of Dane-zaa prophetic visions and expressions of Dane-zaa identity that are connected to the traditions of the past.

These aesthetic explorations are first evident on the cover of the *They Dream* DVD. A moose hide painted with red and black lines, perhaps a Dane-zaa dreamer’s drawing that was photographed, and then digitized, for the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, forms the basis of a visual montage that includes portraits of Dane-zaa elders, including Charlie Yahey, drummers and dancers at a Tea Dance inside a teepee, and contemporary Doig River drummers singing into microphones.

The visual themes on the DVD cover are continued in the DVD’s interactive menu. Circular designs that are defining elements of the dreamers’ drawing on the cover of the DVD have been isolated, copied, and used in the visual navigation of the menu, which gives the viewer the option to watch the film, select DVD chapters, view photographs, or visit the Doig River First Nation website. Selecting the option for photographs presents a slideshow of images from the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital*
Archive—unidentified images of elders, children, places, and activities—including many portraits of Charlie Yahey holding a dreamer’s drum. Another option is a series of photographs from “Doig Days 2005”, the Doig River First Nation’s annual culture festival, which is open to the public and attended each year by all fourth grade students in the North Peace School District. While the photographer is not identified, these images of contemporary Dane-zaa community members, children, and cultural activities complement the archival slideshow series in a way that is in keeping with the project’s overall intention to represent the continuity of Dane-zaa traditions and practices.

Launching the DVD menu option to watch the video initiates a scrolling text describing the context in which Robin Ridington recorded the stories and songs of Charlie Yahey. It reads, in part, “The story begins with Charlie Yahey telling Robin how Dreamers get their songs. It continues with stories about the Dreamers told by elders today. The Dane-zaa people invite you to share and respect what elder Billy Attachie calls “wise stories” (G. Oker and Elders 2005). Recordings of the Doig River Drummers singing dreamers’ songs are modulated with audio effects and added musical improvisations. Images of the drum held by Charlie Yahey in one of the photographs taken by Robin Ridington in 1966 are juxtaposed with images of stars. Planets swirl, and an animated swan flies through the cosmos and down to earth, a metaphor for the dreamer’s journey to heaven. Garry Oker, digitally transported into this dream world, acts out the moment at which the dreamer awakes, having received a song from heaven.

In a later scene, filmed the day of the grand opening of the Doig River First Nation’s new Band Hall, former Chief Garry Oker addresses the crowd gathered in the new gymnasium. He thanks Robin and Jillian Ridington for their life-long commitment
to documenting Dane-zaa cultural heritage, and for the return of their digital archive “for our people, and for any Dane-zaa person who wants to look at the stories and see the pictures”. His voice tinged with emotion, Oker tells the crowd, “We finally got it all back.” Robin and Jillian Ridington then ascend the stage, and Robin talks to the crowd about their experiences over the last forty years working with Dane-zaa elders. He relays his impression that elders understood that Robin and anthropologists had come with the purpose of sending messages from one generation to the next. *They Dream About Everything*, like *Contact the People* and other Doig River media productions, makes use of digital technologies to transmit these messages in new forms.

The film’s montage of image and sound is then given over to the voices and images of Dane-zaa elders, none of whom are identified, but some of who are familiar to me, and would certainly be recognized by Dane-zaa viewers. Tommy Attachie describes learning to drum and sing, and his role as a song keeper. He talks about the prophecies of dreamers, who foresaw the incursions of white settlers, the building of highways, and the oil and gas industrialization of Dane-zaa lands. Madeline Davis recites a genealogy of dreamers while the car she is riding in appears to take off into the sky. An elder who appears to be the daughter of Charlie Yahey remembers how her father lamented the loss of practices of respect for dreamers, resulting in their inevitable exit from this world. A younger relative of Charlie Yahey recalls listening to one of Robin Ridington’s tapes, and hearing Yahey predict the bands’ settlement of the Montney case. Sam Acko talks about his knowledge of the bush, of hunting and survival, and his intention to pass these skills on to the younger generation. The elders’ narratives presented here emphasize the continuity of dreamers’ knowledge, the
significance of dreamers’ prophecies, and messages of respect for ongoing cultural revitalization and the work of everyday life.

While Contact the People complemented the presentation of archival images, songs, and narratives with the Doig River Rodeo as a representation of contemporary Dane-zaa life, They Dream About Everything depicts the activities and relationships associated with Doig River’s annual “Doig Days”. This is a day-long community festival aimed at bringing the non-Aboriginal community out to the Doig River reserve, particularly designed to teach students and teachers from the local school district about Dane-zaa culture, history, and lifeways. The video depicts some of the educational stations that are constructed by community members in the “cultural grounds” of the reserve, just below the new Band Hall, and adjacent to the Doig River. Shirley Reiter demonstrates how to scrape a moose hide, which is stretched on a frame, and surrounded by curious children and their teachers. Maxine Davis and Lucy Davis demonstrate how to wring out and stretch a scraped and soaked moose hide. Norman Davis builds a fire in a deep hole with dry roots to create smoke for curing the processed moose hide. Billy Attachie presides over his recreation of a Dane-zaa trapping camp. Former Chief Garry Oker is shown talking to a journalist. “You need to know your history to have an identity,” he tells her. Pointing to a demonstration of an archaeological dig, he describes the significance of doing archaeological survey work in defending traditional lands from oil and gas development. “This is what we are teaching,” he tells her.
The Dreamers Drumming Collection (2005): Tea Dances; Trail Dreamers’ Songs; Symbols Lodge Prayer Songs; and, “They Dream” The Soundtrack Remixed (enhanced audio CD-ROMs, 2005).

The Dreamers’ Drumming Collection is a four-CD series of Dane-zaa dreamers songs performed by the Doig River Drummers. My discussion of this collection is focused on the aesthetic and textual presentation of these dreamers’ songs and their representation of Dane-zaa oral traditions, language, and culture. The CD collection was produced by former Chief Garry Oker, and includes songs recorded by Robin Ridington, Garry Oker, and Stacy Shaak. Designed by a Fort St. John media production company called Eagle Vision, the CDs are enhanced with a Flash interface, so that when they are viewed on a computer, they present textual context for the recordings and an image slideshow of people, places, drummers, and dancers from the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive. The covers of the CDs depict Peace River region landscapes, each of which appears to represent one of a summer, autumn, winter, or spring season. This image is layered with an archival photograph of a Dane-zaa drummer, and collaged into his drum is a contemporary photograph from Dane-zaa communities. The face of each CD is a digital copy of a circular motif from a Dane-zaa dreamer’s moose hide drawing, the same one used in the DVD navigation menu of They Dream About Everything. In this way, each of the CDs remEDIATE the Ridingtons’ archival photographs; each presents newly performed versions of dreamers' songs; and, each suggests that visions of Dane-zaa dreamers, as represented by the use of the dreamer’s drawing on the CD, continue to have meaning in new media contexts.

Tea Dances contains seventeen audio tracks of a Doig River Drummers performance. The cover, with its rust-tinged foliage, seems to represent autumn. The
liner notes of this CD describe the Dane-zaa Tea Dance and its roots with the prophet tradition, indicating that it is also known as the Dreamer’s Dance because of the provenance of each song from a particular dreamer. The notes emphasize the living oral and song traditions of prophets, and their presence in times of great change and upheaval for Dane-zaa people:

Some of the Dreamers whose songs are sung today lived in the early 19th century. Others were alive at the time the Dane-zaa signed Treaty 8 in 1900. One of these was Atisklise [Adishtlíshe], whose name means “birchbark” or “paper,” because he brought back messages from the people in Heaven. The last Dreamer was Charlie Yahey, who died in 1976. Another was Oker, Chief Garry Oker’s grandfather. The songkeeper, Tommy Attachie, knows which dreamer brought back each song. (G. Oker 2005b)

The enhanced version of the CD presents an animated navigation interface in which audio tracks can be selected and controlled, and a slideshow of images of children, families, elders, the dreamer Charlie Yahey, drummers, and a Tea Dance inside a teepee runs in a looped cycle. A scrolling window of text presents the liner-note text about the Tea Dance, quoted above, and also describes the context in which these songs were recorded by Robin Ridington, presumably the annual Tea Dance before the Doig River Rodeo:

Friday night, July 21, 2001: Jack Askoty had built and painted a circle of benches around the fireplace and stage with roof beams to be covered with a tarp. Flying above the stage was the Doig River First Nation’s flag, designed by Chief Garry Oker, using red, white, blue, and black, the Doig River First Nation colors. The singers were Tommy Attachie, Sammy Acko, Edward Achla, Leo Acko, Garry Oker, Jack Askoty, and Clarence Apsassin. Quite wonderful was the number of kids involved. Some of the girls had beautiful moose hide dresses
inspired by Annie Oker, who was there dancing, taking the role of the one old woman who dances slowly, and with each turn of the circle, leaves the rest of the dancers in the smoke of the fire. (G. Oker 2005b)

Like *Tea Dances*, the second CD titled *Trail Dreamers Songs* (2005c) documents a Tea Dance at Doig River. A photograph of song keeper Tommy Atchachie is featured on the cover, collaged into the drum of a Dane-zaa drummer photographed by Robin Ridington in the 1960s. The liner notes and enhanced CD text replicate the text included on the *Tea Dances* CD, indicating that this performance was recorded at Doig River on July 21, 2001. The nineteen tracks of dreamers' songs are unnamed, and include some of the ambient sounds of a Tea Dance—children’s voices, applause from dancers, and *Dane-zaa Záágéʔ* conversations between the performers about songs and their origins with particular dreamers. Like *Tea Dances, Trail Dreamers Songs*, with its liner notes, enhanced digital information, and archival slide shows depicting generations of Dane-zaa people, emphasizes the continuity of knowledge associated with dreamers' songs, and the ongoing performance and practice of the Tea Dance at Doig River.

While *Tea Dances* and *Trail Dreamers Songs* present songs from a Tea Dance recorded by Robin Ridington, the third CD titled *Symbols Lodge Prayer Songs* present songs recorded in Garry Oker’s home with the assistance of media producer Stacy Shaak. The cover of this CD depicts a winter landscape, with what appears to be a portrait of Blueberry River elder May Apsassin, who attended the recording session. Lead singers Tommy Atchachie and Sam Acko, along with Freddy Askoty, Brian Acko gathered at Oker’s home in Fort St. John on March 28, 2001. The mood of this session, according to the liner notes,
… was prayerful and more stately than the lively energy songs of a Tea Dance, in which people dance in a circle around a fire. Prior to recording the songs Elders Billy Attachie, May Apsassin, Tommy Attachie, and Sammy Acko spoke about the meaning of the Dane-zaa Dreamers’ tradition. (G. Oker 2005a)

The intimate setting of these recordings creates ample space for conversations between performers. Tommy Attachie and Sam Acko, in particular, speak at length in *Dane-zaa Záágéʔ* about the songs and the dreamers who created them. They also laugh, and talk about getting into town to run errands before the stores close.

The enhanced CD-ROM menu again features images from the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*—teepees, portraits of children and families, drummers and Tea Dances—connecting contemporary practices with the traditions and lifeways of the past. Yet these contemporary practices do not always seek to replicate these prior practices; the first audio track of the CD is particularly notable in that it is described as an “adaptation of a song by Chief Garry Oker’s grandfather, Albert Askoty” (G. Oker 2005a). Without ethnomusicological analysis, the ways in which it is adapted are not readily apparent, but the assertion of this adaptation suggest an intention to develop the dreamers’ song tradition in new ways.

This intention is made clearer with the final CD in the collection, “*They Dream*: The Soundtrack Remixed. In keeping with the visual remix of archival photographs and digitally animated visions of the dreamers’ journey to heaven in *They Dream About Everything*, this CD presents audio remixes of the performances the Doig River Drummers created for the video soundtrack. The liner notes of this volume replicate those of *Symbols Lodge Prayer Songs*, suggesting that these particular songs were later remixed with digital effects such as reverb and digital modulations, and the
layering of tracks of electric guitar, bass, and keyboard to accompany the singers’ voices. The first song of this CD appears to be an adaptation of the first song on the *Symbols Lodge Prayer Songs* CD, suggesting yet another version of Albert Askoty’s song.

The tracks included on “*They Dream*”: *The Soundtrack Remixed* represent a shift in representation of Dane-zaa dreamers’ songs. While the CD *Dane-zaa Dreamers’ Songs: 1966-2000 Volume 1–Suu Na chii K’chi ge “The Place Where Happiness Dwells”* primarily reproduced performances of an earlier generation of Dane-zaa, including the dreamer Charlie Yahey, the three volumes *Tea Dances, Trail Dreamers’ Songs*, and *Symbols Lodge Prayer Songs* present contemporary performances by the Doig River Drummers, and re-interpretation of traditional songs. “*They Dream*”: *The Soundtrack Remixed*, along with the video that inspired it, demonstrate the use of digital technologies to create new culture-based media out of traditional forms.

**Conclusion**

Julie Cruikshank has described how, in the course of documenting oral traditions in the Yukon Territory, Athapaskan women repeatedly selected prophet narratives to record to tape because they believed that they were of value to pass on to younger generations. The recurring theme of these narratives was the prediction of transformations that would accompany the arrival of white settlers, emphasizing foreknowledge of events that came to pass (Cruikshank 1998). Prophecy narratives, according to Cruikshank, “provide a striking example of how southern Yukon women,
at least, draw on traditional narrative as an authoritative explanation of contemporary events, an explanation that competes with Western discourse” (Cruikshank 1987:120).

Media producers at the Doig River First Nation have also selected prophet narratives and song traditions as the focus of their documentary initiatives. They have selected archival media—recordings of dreamers' songs and oratory, photographs of the dreamer Charlie Yahey, and photographs of dreamers’ drums and drawings—to remediate as publicly available audio CDs, documentary videos, and websites. These media emphasize the ability of prophets to predict the disruption caused by colonial and industrial exploitations of Dane-zaa territory. They draw strong connections between the prophetic authority of generations of Dane-zaa prophets and contemporary practices of prophet traditions, characterized by the Tea Dance, and ongoing performance of dreamers’ songs by the Doig River Drummers. These media also demonstrate the continued use of Dane-zaa Žáágé? and, as “highly contextualized form of discourse” (R. Ridington and J. Ridington 2006a), have the dual function of conveying Dane-zaa identity to general audiences while conveying representations of culture, history, and language that would only be understood more fully by Dane-zaa people.

The consistent evocation of the history of I.R. 172, the former reserve at Montney, further connects the continuity of prophet narratives, Tea Dance, and song traditions to ongoing struggles for political recognition and the defense of Aboriginal and treaty rights. Paralleling the challenges faced by Australian Aboriginal media producers to represent contemporary struggles while intervening in national narratives (Ginsburg 1994), the Doig River First Nation’s use of new media to tell the story of the surrender of the Montney reserve and their successful claim for compensation for oil
and gas revenues, intervenes in Euro-centric local, provincial, and national narratives that once used tropes of colonial discourse grounded in racist assumptions about Aboriginal inferiority to appropriate the Montney reserve for non-Aboriginal settlement.

Access to—and remediation of—media in the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* also raised important questions about ownership and control of the products of ethnographic research. As I will describe in the concluding chapter of this dissertation, engagement with digital cultural heritage, and discussions within and between Dane-zaa communities about the circulation of cultural documentation in digital form, led to serious discussion about control of Dane-zaa cultural heritage. These negotiations were not only between members of the Doig River First Nation, the holders of copyright of the digital files in the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, and with *Dane Wajich* exhibit co-producer Amber Ridington and me. They were also fundamentally negotiations between Dane-zaa communities (the Doig River First Nation and the Blueberry River First Nation) who are collectively confronted with digital access to an archive of their intangible cultural heritage and the Western systems of ownership that define how these media objects are used.

These negotiations are complicated by unequal access in Dane-zaa communities to the means of production of digital representations of Dane-zaa history, culture, and language. My review of the Doig River First Nation’s media productions should make clear that these audio CD collections and documentary videos have been driven by a small group of people—former Chief Garry Oker, Robin and Jillian Ridington, the Doig River Drummers, and other consultants, including me—raising the question, to what degree do these productions represent the identity and intentions of Dane-zaa
communities? Or are these the visions of only a few Dane-zaa people and collaborating anthropologists? Further, what are the effects of these practices on the definition of rules of ownership of Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage? For example, all of the CDs in *The Dreamers Drumming Collection* are copyrighted by the Doig River First Nation. While this could indicate recognition of the cultural rights of the Doig River band to own the collective copyright of songs performed by members of their community, or be meant to reflect the Doig River First Nation’s financing of these productions, this act also raises the issue of the Doig River First Nation’s right to copyright songs that could be considered the property of all Dane-zaa people. As Faye Ginsburg has pointed out,

… indigenous digital media have raised important questions about the politics and circulation of knowledge at a number of levels; within communities this may be about who has had access to and understanding of media technologies, and who has the rights to know, tell, and circulate certain stories and images. (Ginsburg 2008:303)
Chapter 5: Participatory Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage: 
*Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*

**Introduction**

In the last several years, inspired by access to their repatriated digital cultural heritage, members of the Doig River First Nation have initiated video, audio, and web-based media projects aimed at revitalizing and documenting language and culture, and communicating Dane-zaa identity and history to a regional, national, and international audience. The community has invested in digital media production technologies—video cameras, computers, and software—and in providing digital media skills training for Doig River First Nation youth, with the intention of continuing the documentation of Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage and adding to the community's archive of digital heritage.

In this chapter, I introduce the Doig River First Nation’s most recent project, an Internet-based virtual exhibit called *Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*. Funded by the Virtual Museum of Canada, the exhibit integrated photographs, songs from the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* with newly recorded audio and video recordings depicting Dane-zaa dreaming and singing traditions. The production of this exhibit was grounded in community participation and the mentoring of youth in video production. Under direction from Doig River elders, the community group and collaborators traveled to significant places in Dane-zaa territory where youth recorded elders telling stories in *Dane-zaa ĺáágéʔ* and English about drumming, singing, and the history of Dane-zaa *nááchę*. The collaborative production and post-production of this exhibit constituted the core of my doctoral fieldwork. As
exhibit co-curator, co-producer, and co-community coordinator (with Amber Ridington),
I facilitated the production of the exhibit while researching the effects of access to the
Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive on local cultural production, documentation of
intangible cultural heritage, and issues relating to Dane-zaa cultural rights.

My particular focus in this chapter is on the participatory methodology
developed in the course of the production of Dane Wajich. I describe this methodology
to comment on the extent to which the documentation and safeguarding of intangible
cultural heritage can be enriched through community-involved, collaborative practices
(Kurin 2003). I relate our approach to the production of Dane Wajich to the UNESCO
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), which
specifies that communities are to be full partners in efforts to safeguard their heritage
(Kurin 2007). I connect the Charter’s emphasis on community collaboration in
intangible heritage documentation to the ethnographic films, methods, and writings of
visual anthropologist Jean Rouch, the originator of cinema vérité and direct cinema
(Feld 2003a), whose notion of a “shared anthropology” has informed collaborative
visual anthropological practices, and provided a methodological reference for the Dane
Wajich production and ethnographic methodology.

I then draw on case examples from the early production planning process of the
Dane Wajich exhibit, which articulate the inalienable relationship between Dane-zaa
material culture—in this case a painted drum made by the nááchė Gaayę́ga—and
intangible forms of knowledge. I present two narratives that were recorded in the course
of the Dane Wajich planning process, and which were made a part of the completed
exhibit. The first, told in English by Sam Acko, recounts the way in which he revived
local knowledge of drum making, which was nearly lost, and in doing so revived
drumming and singing traditions at Doig River. The second narrative, told in Dane-zaa
 Żáágéʔ by Tommy Attachie, connects Gaayę́’s painted drum to Dane-zaa knowledge of
hunting, trapping, seasonal movement throughout their territory, the ongoing practice of
traditions associated with nåáchę́, and the role that should be played by elders in
communicating this knowledge to younger generations.

These narratives, elicited through the Dane Wajich project’s collaborative
process, emphasize the interconnection of tangible, intangible, and natural forms of
heritage. These articulations of Dane-zaa ideologies of heritage and practice-based
transmission of culture highlight the contributions of participatory methods to
documenting and safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage as it is grounded in the
totality of social, cultural, and political life.

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural
Heritage and Community Collaboration

The 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural
Heritage, more than any previous international cultural or heritage treaty, emphasizes
the responsibility of the communities whose cultural traditions are being safeguarded, to
participate in the process (Kurin 2007). In Article 11(b), the convention calls on State
Parties to “identify and define the various elements of the intangible cultural heritage
present in its territory, with the participation of communities, groups, and relevant non-
governmental organizations” (UNESCO 2003 in Kurin 2007:15). In Article 15,
Participation of communities, groups, and individuals, the convention reads that:
Within the framework of its safeguarding activities of the intangible cultural heritage, each State Party shall endeavor to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain, and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management. (UNESCO 2003 in Kurin 2007:15)

Article 15 of the Convention implies that efforts to safeguard intangible heritage should be done with the full partnership of communities. This represents a shift in perspective on the role of culture bearers in determining best practices for safeguarding. According to Richard Kurin,

Governments, or university departments or museums, cannot just assume they have permission to define intangible cultural heritage and undertake its documentation, presentation, protection, or preservation. Community participation is meant to be significant and meaningful— involving the consent of community leaders, consultation with lead cultural practitioners, shared decision-making on strategies and tactics of safeguarding and so on. Article 15 strongly empowers the community in the operation and realization of the Convention. (Kurin 2007:15)

The 2003 Convention builds on a series of heritage policies that have struggled with the definition of intangible cultural heritage and strategies for its implementation. The 1989 UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore was criticized for its focus on the role of professional folklorists and folklore institutions to document and preserve endangered traditions (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). The 2001 Report on the Preliminary Study on the Advisability of Regulating Internationally, through a new Standard-setting Instrument, the Protection of Traditional Culture and Folklore shifted the emphasis on heritage conservation from artifacts, represented by oral traditions, performances, and rituals, to people—the performers
themselves, the artisans, the healers, and so on (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). The 2001 report conveyed the significance of broadening the scope of intangible heritage and methods for safeguarding it; according to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “The continuity of intangible heritage would require attention not just to artifacts, but above all to persons, as well as to their entire habitus and habitat, understood as their life space and social world” (2004:54). Building on previous heritage policy initiatives and the intensive discussions that drove such shifts in definitions and methodological approaches, the 2003 Convention is founded on the following principles:

(a) consideration of this heritage as process and practices rather than end products, (b) recognition of this heritage as a source of identity, creativity, diversity and social cohesion, (c) respect for its specificities, i.e. its constantly evolving and creative feature and its interaction with nature, (d) enhancement of respect for this heritage and its practitioners, (e) guaranteeing the primary role of the artists/practitioners/communities, (f) placing priority on intergenerational transmission, education and training, (g) recognition of the interdependence between the intangible cultural heritage and the tangible cultural and natural heritage, and, finally, (h) observance of universally recognized human rights. (Aikawa 2004:146)

These principles emphasize a growing consensus that heritage categories—tangible, intangible, and natural—are both arbitrary and interconnected (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). Examples across cultures emphasize that tangible objects are activated and reproduced with intangible knowledge. For instance, the Guinean Sosso Bala is type of xylophone connected to a set of musical and oral traditions in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is central in the performance of the Sunjata epic, performed by professional bards in West Africa, and is protected and transmitted by the Kouyate family (Nas 2002). The
Sosso Bala—the tangible instrument—is animated by intangible oral traditions and knowledge of instrument construction. As another example, elaborately carved Lithuanian crosses, originating in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century as a focus of identity, beliefs, and ceremonies (Nas 2002), require the transmission of intangible knowledge by artisans for their ongoing production and life in social practice. In yet another example, the Japanese \textit{Ise Jingu} shrine is recreated by highly skilled local craftsman every twenty years. Master carpenters are charged with remembering how to create and assemble complex joinery using ancient tools, and to pass this knowledge on to apprentices (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). These examples emphasize the relationships between tangible culture and intangible forms of knowledge that produce and re-produce them.

Tangible heritage “… without intangible heritage, is a mere husk or inert matter. As for intangible heritage, it is not only embodied, but also inseparable from the material and social worlds of persons” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004:60). From this perspective, the totality of cultural expression and every day practice is not reducible to discrete categories, nor can it be separated from ongoing negotiations for power, political recognition, land, resources, and cultural rights.

The Smithsonian Institution’s Centre for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, led by Richard Kurin, is credited with pushing heritage policies aimed at participation into practice. Their annual Folklife Festival in Washington D.C. has brought ‘more than 23,000 musicians, artists, performers, craftspeople, workers, cooks, storytellers, and others to the National Mall to demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and aesthetics that embody the creative vitality of community based traditions” (Smithsonian 2010). By bringing heritage practitioners to live audiences, the Folklife Festival has:
… foregrounded the agency of those who perform the traditions that are to be safeguarded. Unlike other living entities, whether animals or plants, people are not only objects of cultural preservation but also subjects. They are not only cultural carriers and transmitters (the terms are unfortunate, as is ‘masterpiece’), but also agents in the heritage enterprise itself. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004:58).

The Festival’s facilitation of live performance and self-representation brings into focus the agency of individual cultural practitioners in safeguarding and transmitting these intertwined expressions of culture. The Centre for Folklife and Cultural Heritage’s approach to foregrounding the agency of cultural practitioners, and their emphasis on the safeguarding and transmission of intangible cultural heritage as a collaborative process, has strong parallels with approaches to participatory production methodologies in visual anthropology. Methods associated with heritage conservation of the tangible and the intangible cultural heritage—collaboration with cultural communities, and documentation of practices—easily cross over into the discipline of visual anthropology.

In the following section of this chapter, I explore the work of visual anthropologist Jean Rouch, which set a precedent in visual anthropology for collaborative media production and reflexive media practices. Because community participation in documentation of intangible heritage is one mandate of the 2003 Convention, I suggest that Rouch’s approach to collaborative ethnographic media production makes a productive contribution to discussions of collaborative tangible and intangible heritage safeguarding, while drawing attention to new challenges related to the use of digital technologies. Rouch’s notion of the ‘participatory camera,’ which is based on feedback and critique from ethnographic subjects, and of ‘shared anthropology,’ in which ethnographic subjects are active participants in the creation of
their own representations, have been highly influential (Feld 2003a; Ginsburg 2005; MacDougall 1998; Stoller 2005). The production of the multimedia virtual exhibit *Dane Wajich*—*Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*, which I explore later in this chapter and in subsequent chapters, was methodologically grounded in the participatory video documentation of Dane-zaa oral narrative. It features the products of participatory video making prominently in the final exhibit. The project represents the Doig River First Nation’s innovation of a collaborative methodological approach that supports UNESCO policy that emphasizes community participation in intangible cultural heritage safeguarding initiatives, while raising questions about the continued relevance of Rouch’s approach.

**Jean Rouch and “Shared Anthropology”**

Jean Rouch’s methodological and theoretical approach stands out in the history of visual anthropology for its multi-faceted engagement with colonial, post-colonial, and racial politics. Rouch’s work demonstrates an insistence on exploring and nurturing the relationship between the anthropologist, their subject of study, and the production of ethnographic representation. Born in Paris in 1917, Rouch first traveled to West Africa in 1941, where he worked as a wartime bridge and causeway engineer. Increasingly disillusioned by the colonial power relations and his position within them, he was drawn to African people and began to learn about their cultural practices. When he returned to France, he began doctoral studies, and in 1946, on a research trip to Niger, he brought a wartime 16 mm camera with him (Feld 2003a). Rouch’s first film was made on a journey by canoe down the Niger river, and depicts hippopotamus hunting by harpoon.
(Rouch 2003). Subsequent films, such as *La punition* (1962), *Rose et Landry* (1963), *Les maîtres fous* (1955), *Moi, Un Noir* (1958), made at the height of the African independence movement and amidst post-colonial debates in France, explore issues around the impact of European racism on Africans, and African responses to European colonialism (Feld 2003a). Jones (2005) points out that Rouch’s friends and relationship to Africa led him to view post-colonialism as not only a total rupture between the colonizer and colonized, but as a movement that would forever change the discipline of anthropology, which itself was “forged in the context of colonialism’s asymmetrical power relations” (Jones 2005:119). Like Frantz Fanon, who wrote *A Dying Colonialism* (1965) in the same year that Rouch made *La pyramide humaine*, Rouch saw the transfer of control over representation as a core requirement for the end of European colonialism in Africa; both of these critics of colonialism recognized the power of media and communications technologies to transform society (Jones 2005:119).

Rouch’s concept of *Ciné-Ethnography* was developed in this context of post-colonial, social, and disciplinary uncertainty. *Ciné-Ethnography* is a synthesis and elaboration of the documentary legacies of Robert Flaherty and Dziga Vertov; the refinement of the concepts of *cinema-verité* and direct cinema; the development of the ethnographic fiction genre, exemplified by *Chronicle d’un été* (Rouch 1960) and *La pyramide humaine* (Rouch 1959); and, the exploration of filmic conventions of reflexivity, authorship, autocritique, and ‘shared anthropology’ (Feld 2003b:12). Each of these methodological and theoretical elements reflects Rouch’s primary concern with using documentary technology to initiate, provoke, develop, and ultimately represent the
complex relationship between the filmmaker/anthropologist and the filmic/ethnographic subject.

Dziga Vertov and Robert Flaherty were both cinematographers concerned with expressing reality; yet they were, as Jean Rouch puts it, doing sociology and ethnography without knowing it (Rouch 1974). In 1920, Robert Flaherty set about filming the life of the Eskimo in the Canadian Arctic. The product of this work, *Nanook of the North* (Flaherty 1922), stands out as an ethnographic film classic and as the first example of what David MacDougall has called “participatory cinema” (MacDougall 1998:134). Rouch asserts that it was Flaherty’s “basic honesty” that required that he show the results of his work to his subjects, developing film each evening, projecting it for local spectators and planning subsequent shooting based on their responses and suggestions. Flaherty’s use of film in the field anticipates both “participant observation” and what anthropologists refer to as “feedback” (Rouch 1974:38). Rouch points to the ways that the camera mediated an important relationship between Flaherty and his film subjects, and the film’s audience. Rouch points out that:

If Flaherty and Nanook were able to tell the difficult story of the struggle of a man against a thriftless but beneficial nature, it was because there was a third party with them. The small, temperamental, but faithful machine, with an infallible visual memory, let Nanook see his own images in proportion to their birth. It is this camera that Luc de Heusch called the ‘participatory camera’. (Rouch 2003 [1973]:38)

The ‘participatory camera’ both facilitates the relationship between filmmaker and filmic subject, and a shift in power over representation of culture from the exclusive
domain of anthropologist/filmmaker into a shared space of mutual interaction and critique.

Rouch’s interest in Vertov, considered the pioneer of cinema-vérité, was his use of the camera to record small pieces of time and space. As Nanook and Flaherty deliberately re-created Inuit lifeways for the camera, so were Vertov’s fragments understood to be mediated by the camera, and distinguishable from lived reality. Vertov’s model of the ‘ciné-eye’ was not “for seeing the truth but as a new kind of seeing that created its own peculiar truth” (Feld 2003b:13). For Vertov these camera-mediated representations are distinct from those that the human eye could register alone. He writes,

I am the ‘cine-eye,’ I am the mechanical eye; I am the machine that will show you the world as only the machine can see it. Henceforth, I shall be liberated away from human immobility. I am in perpetual motion. I can approach things, back away from them, slide under them, enter inside them; I can move up to the very nose of a race horse, pass through crowds at great speed, lead soldiers into battle, take off with airplanes, turn over on my back, fall down and stand up at the same time as bodies which fall and stand up again.  (Vertov 1963 [1923]:34 in Rouch 1974:38)

Flaherty similarly rejected the belief that he could record events as they happened, like a “fly on the wall,’ nor did he want to (Feld 2003a). Rather, he facilitated the recreation and interpretation by Nanook and his family of their own lifeways for the ‘participatory camera,’ rejecting positivist assumptions about the cameras and film as objective ethnographic media. For Rouch, the work of Flaherty and Vertov challenged non-interventionist principles of the early American cinema-vérité movement:
In these films, Rouch saw a denial of what all ethnographers are forced to learn: that realities are co-constructed and that meanings always change as contexts of interpretation change, continually revealed and modified in numerous ways. Provoking, catalyzing, questioning, and filming are simply strategies for unleashing that process. (Feld 2003b:16)

This process generates not only the production of ethnographic film, but also ethnographic writing and scholarship. For Rouch, the principles of feedback and critique at the center of ‘shared anthropology’ also create conditions for the collaborative production of ethnographic information. His film *Horendi* (Rouch 1972), made in Niger about the initiation processes of dancers, generated demands for participants and viewers for subsequent films to be made, but even more, through studying the films in detail on a small moviescope viewer with informants, Rouch was able to gather more information in a couple of weeks than he felt he could have in months of direct interviewing and observation. Rouch writes,

This type of posteriori working is just the beginning of what is already a new type of relationship between the anthropologist and the group he studies, the first step in what some of us have labeled ‘shared anthropology’. Finally then, the observer has left the ivory tower; his camera, tape recorder, and projector have driven him, by a strange road of initiation, to the heart of knowledge itself. And for the very first time, the work is judged not by a thesis committee but by the very people the anthropologist went out to observe. (Rouch 2003 [1973]:44)

Rouch also applied participatory methodologies to the production of what came to be known as the genre of *ethno-fiction*. *Chronicle d’un été* (1960), perhaps the best example, documents a group of Parisians over one summer, and makes use of avant-garde techniques “deliberately employed to create a distance from any naïve empiricist
idea that a camera records ‘the’ truth as it unfolds in front of its eye” (Loizos 1993:56).

Changes in camera and sound-recording technology allowed the recording of image and speech by one or two people, and light equipment made hand-held shooting possible. New theory and practice translated into what Peter Loizos calls Rouch’s ‘radical epistemology’ for documentary filmmaking, as Rouch made use of new visual technology to transform his ethnographic practice. In the production of participatory ethnographic documentary and ethno-fiction, the camera is an active agent of investigation, not confined to the role of a ‘passive recording instrument’. Rouch’s own term for this method is the French word provocation, a kind of “probing-through-interaction” that identifies the filmmaker as primary image-maker rather than objective documentarian (Loizos 1993:46).

Against the backdrop of French decolonization, the American civil rights movement, and the Vietnam War, Rouch struggled with the interpretation of ethnography as exploitative, and the role of the camera in exacerbating the problem. Feedback from collaborators in ethnographic work, and personal reflection on the relations of power between him and those he represented on film inevitably pointed to anthropology’s colonial foundations and the complicity of visual recording technologies. Rouch’s suggestion for addressing this problem went beyond Flaherty’s participatory mode, and Rouch’s own technique of privileging the voice of the ethnographic subject over that of the filmmaker, by recommending that training the subjects of ethnographic study to be filmmakers themselves might be one way to shift an unequal relationship of power entrenched in the discipline and with documentary technologies. He wrote: “I don’t think it is a complete answer, but it has merits in that it leaves the people with
something rather than just taking from them (Rouch, et al. 2003 [1977]:221).

Subsequent anthropologists, filmmakers, and multimedia producers have struggled between a belief in the ability of visual technologies to intervene in entrenched power relationships, to document reality, and doubt in the idea that an ethnographic reality exists to be documented at all. Documentation of the encounter between filmmaker and film-subject is a methodological strategy, where witnessing the “event” of the film is a central part of what filmmaker MacDougall calls *participatory cinema* (MacDougall 1998:134).

While Rouch embraced new sound and image recording technologies in his own work, he looked forward to a future when the costs of cameras and equipment and the skills required to operate them were not prohibitive. He wrote:

> And tomorrow?... Tomorrow will be the time of completely portable color video, video editing, and instant replay (“instant feedback”). Which is to say, the time of the joint dream of Vertov and Flaherty, of a mechanical ciné-eye-ear and of a camera that can so totally participate that it will automatically pass into the hands of those who, until now, have always been in front of the lens. At that point, the anthropologist will no longer control the monopoly on observation; their culture and they themselves will be observed and recorded. And it is in that way that ethnographic film will help us to “share” anthropology. (Rouch 2003 [1973]:46)

While Rouch’s technological predictions have come to pass—indeed, all of the tools that I now have at hand allow me to do what he had once only dreamed of—their alleviation of unequal relations of power in the ethnographic endeavor have not. While the Rouchian approach suggested a methodological strategy for the production of the *Dane Wajich* virtual exhibit, and in particular, raised my awareness of the importance of documenting and including participatory process in the completed virtual exhibit, I
show in the remainder of my dissertation that digital technologies did not radically advance the project of “shared anthropology” as Rouch might have hoped. While the return of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* to the Doig River First Nation facilitated local media productions (such as those described in Chapter Four), and therefore shifted ethnographic authority to members of the Doig River community, the transition from analog to digital cultural heritage, and the circulation of representations of Dane-zaa culture, history and identity over the Internet, exacerbated tensions over control of representation.

*Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*

The Doig River First Nation's virtual exhibit project *Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* was inspired by engagement with the newly created *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*. It was made possible by access to new, inexpensive digital documentary technologies that realized Rouch’s dream of community-based collaboration in the production of ethnographic representations, yet also revealed that the digital revolution has brought a new set of challenges related to control over representation along with it. Engaging Rouch’s key principles of feedback and critique, the project and its three-year post-production process created a significant expression of Dane-zaa identity for Dane-zaa communities and virtual visitors to the exhibit, and facilitated the articulation of Dane-zaa intellectual property rights and cultural protocols for the circulation of digital cultural heritage.

In keeping with many of the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR), I was interested in the idea of this project as “a social process of collective learning by
groups of people who join together in changing the practices through which they interact in a shared social world” (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005:563). Emphasizing investigation of circumstances of place and realignment of power (S. Smith 1997), PAR methodologies have been presented as one way of “decolonizing” the research relationship (L. Smith 1999). Many Aboriginal scholars, while critical of western paradigms, have appropriated aspects of participatory action-oriented methodologies to their own ends. Linda Tuhiwai Smith points to the widespread use of participatory action research that is developed on the basis of Indigenous value systems (L. Smith 1999:167). Wylie similarly asserts that research in formerly marginalized communities “will only be effective if those whose lives are affected are directly involved in the research enterprise from the outset, as partners, not merely as subjects, as sources of insight, and as progenitors of new lines of evidence” (Wylie 1995:267 in Lyons 2007). However, as many community-based researchers have discovered, the ideals associated with participatory action research methodologies seldom match the specificities, tangents, and realities of any given project (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Rather than imposing a pre-conceived methodology, as I will describe below, Amber Ridington and I worked in collaboration with Doig River First Nation participants to implement a methodological approach for production of the Dane Wajich exhibit focused on supporting community goals for language and culture education, and documenting and safeguarding intangible heritage.
Goals and Priorities

After the successful launch of the Doig River First Nation’s website project *Hadaa ka Naadzet: The Dane-zaa Moose Hunt,* which Amber Ridington and I worked on with a group of Dane-zaa youth and local web designer Dan Arbeau, Doig River Chief Garry Oker was eager to keep the media production momentum going. The band hired Amber Ridington to write a grant to the Virtual Museum of Canada for another Doig River First Nation community-based project. My role in the Virtual Museum of Canada grant-writing process was to create a draft content map of the exhibit that demonstrated a potential organization of content. From the beginning of the initiative, the focus of the exhibit was on Dane-zaa oral and song traditions. However, the content and architecture of the exhibit was left open to a community-based process of decision-making. The grant proposal’s content map, which was required by the Virtual Museum of Canada, was set aside in favor of a decision-making process led by Doig River elders.

As co-producers, co-curators, and co-coordinators of the exhibit, Amber Ridington and I first worked with Doig River Chief and Council and community members to identify local goals for the project, and to establish a starting point for facilitating the community-based process of exhibit planning, production, and post-production. We worked to address these community goals in guiding the framework for the collaborative project, and in the external partnerships that we formed to meet these goals.

As I have described elsewhere (Hennessy 2006; Hennessy 2009b; A. Ridington and Hennessy 2008), a central priority for the band was to facilitate skills training for community exploration of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive’s* collection of Dane-
zaa narrative and song traditions, and to work with a range of community members to record new oral histories and songs with the goal of adding them to the archive. Throughout the production and post-production process, Robin Ridington and Jillian Ridington assisted Amber Ridington and me by sharing their extensive knowledge and experience in Dane-zaa communities, contributing to the exhibit’s interpretive text, and suggesting particular images, texts, and recordings from the Digital Archive for use in the project. Their contribution facilitated the use of the archive for the project and raised the production team’s awareness and interest in the contents of the archive. The completed exhibit integrates many of the Ridingtons’ archival photographs and audio recordings with new recordings and photographs created by the Dane-zaa production team and collaborators.

The second Doig River First Nation goal for the project was to provide for the enhancement of multimedia and documentary skills training for as many Dane-zaa youth as possible, and to involve them integrally in the process of production and website development. However, while the Virtual Museum of Canada partnership investment grant paid for the majority of the exhibit development costs, media production training for youth was not an eligible expense. We therefore applied for funding from the Northeast Native Advancing Society (NENAS) in Fort St. John to pay a stipend to the youth participants. Further, my colleague and mentor Professor Peter Biella, Director of the Program in Visual Anthropology at San Francisco State University, traveled from California to Fort St. John to assist Amber Ridington and me in conducting photography, video, and sound recordings workshops for the six youth
participants: Robin Acko, Starr Acko, Amy Acko, Charmayne Brinkworth, Brittany Brinkworth, and Mark Apsassin.

The third goal for the project was to generate and archive *Dane-zaa Zaâgéʔ* linguistic and educational resources for local language revitalization initiatives, and for the local school district’s curriculum, which was in need of local First Nations content to use in elementary and high school level First Nations studies programs. To meet these objectives, we created several key partnerships. The first was with linguistic anthropologists Pat Moore (University of British Columbia) and Dagmar Jung (University of Cologne), who had recently been awarded funding from the German Volkswagen Foundation for a project to document the Beaver language (*Dane-zaa Zaâgéʔ*). Working in collaboration with language experts such as Billy Attachie, Madeline Oker, Eddie Apsassin, and Jack Askoty, and graduate student Julia Miller, they were able to translate and orthographically transcribe significant selections of narrative recorded for the project.

The North Peace School District #60 supported the project from its application phase by signing on as an official partner. Through its First Nations Education Center staff—Brenda Paul, Pat Jansen, David Rattray—they continued to provide crucial support and curriculum development expertise throughout the development of the project, refraining from commenting on the content or structure of the virtual exhibit, but helping with the creation of curriculum based on Doig River’s completed and approved project and provincial curriculum guidelines for First Nations education.²¹

²¹ The Teachers’ Guide and *Dane Wajich* curriculum can be seen in Appendix I, p. 467-497, and online at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/resources/teachers.php/
Based on the goals articulated by Chief Garry Oker, Dane-zaa elders, youth, and other community members, Amber Ridington and I scheduled and planned a series of community meetings for late June of 2005 at which we hoped to elicit suggestions for the documentation of Dane-zaa narrative and songs traditions. These meetings, which were left open to Doig River First Nation Chief, council, and elders’ council to direct, resulted in significant articulations of the inalienable relationships between tangible, intangible, and natural heritage.

**A Dreamer’s Drum**

The first exhibit production-planning meeting took place in the boardroom of the Doig River First Nation’s Band Hall on June 25, 2005. The youth media production team had already been assembled, and every resident of the Doig River reserve had been invited to attend. The goal for the meeting was to discuss what content the virtual exhibit should include, and to suggest themes and topics for documentation of oral traditions and songs. In keeping with the theme of reclamation, highlighted by the return of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, Chief Garry Oker had also invited linguists Marshall and Jean Holdstock to travel from their home in Fort St. John to attend the meeting, and to bring their albums of photographs from their decades of work with the Doig River First Nation to show the community. Chief Oker had also invited a journalist from the local newspaper, the *Alaska Highway News*, to write a story about the launch of the Virtual Museum project, the return of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, and the significance of seeing the Holdstock’s photographs.
Elders and community members gathered to drink tea and talk, while I set up a video camera, and checked that the group was almost ready to start the meeting. Marshall and Jean Holdstock arrived, and Chief Oker directed me to go outside and film the Holdstocks as they entered the Band Hall with their photo albums. I also video taped Mr. and Mrs. Holdstock as they sat at the large table in the middle of the meeting room, showed their photographs to the people who had gathered to talk about the virtual museum project, and talked about their long history of documenting *Dane-zaa Záágéʔ* at Doig River.

As Mr. and Mrs. Holdstock concluded the presentation of their photographs and history of local linguistic research, Chief Garry Oker did something that had great significance for the *Dane Wajich* virtual exhibit production process. As I continued to video tape the meeting, he placed a large cloth bundle on the meeting room table. I recognized this bundle from the Oker and Ridington-produced video *The Otter Man’s Prophecy* (G. Oker, et al. 2004a). Chief Oker explained that the bundle contained the skin of a Dane-zaa dreamer’s drum that had belonged to his grandfather, Albert Askoty, and that it had been passed on to him when Mr. Askoty passed away. As he had done in the video outside of the Charlie Lake Cave in *The Otter Man’s Prophecy*, Chief Oker unwrapped the cloth bundle to reveal the painted skin of a Dane-zaa *nááchéʔ’s* drum.

The drum skin was made of moose hide, separated from the wooden frame that had once stretched it tight, and torn from one edge toward the center. It was painted with red and black pigment, depicting two crosshatched “trails” leading to a central circle. One side of the circle was painted solid red, the other black. From the central circle, a single trail led to the top of the drum. An area close to the center of the drum
was faded from its many decades of use. Chief Oker explained to the group that for him, the dreamer’s drum represented the kind of knowledge that the community needed to heal itself from social problems, and that would guide him in his actions as a leader. He related the drum to the virtual museum exhibit, saying that the project would allow the community to translate traditional knowledge into a new medium, one that had the power to teach the world about Dane-zaa history, language, culture, and ongoing defense of Aboriginal and treaty rights. Like the photographs that Marshall and Jean Holdstock had brought back to Doig River that day, and the digital cultural heritage that had been returned in the form of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive, the presentation of the drum at the meeting evoked the articulation of associated memories, traditions, cultural practices, and discussion of contemporary political and social issues.

Seeing the drum for the first time in many years inspired elders in the room to speak. They identified the drum as having been made by the nááchê Gaayę’a in the early 20th century. Gaayę’a died in the summer of 1923 at Suunëch’ii Kéché’ege on the former Montney reserve. He lives in the memory of many of the elders who attended that first meeting, and based on their knowledge of the history of nááchê like Gaayę’a, the model of collaboration and production that defined the virtual museum project began to emerge.

The following day, elders, youth, and community members again gathered in the Doig River gymnasium to continue to discuss the project. Amber Ridington and I had hoped to create a list of narratives or songs that the band wanted to document and archive, and integrate into the virtual museum project. I stood expectantly in front of a large paper flip chart, with several colored markers in my hand. Amber sat with the
group of elders, Doig River councilors, and youth at long tables that had been set up along one side of the gymnasium. Community members, including female elders who seemed reticent about joining the male elders at the tables, sat in the bleachers and listened to the speakers. Filmmaker Peter Biella and linguistic anthropologist Julia Miller prepared the video camera and sound equipment to record the meeting, and linguistic anthropologist Pat Moore recorded sound and photographed the meeting.

Still holding my pens, I asked the group about what they would like to record, and how they would like to go about it. Rather than answering my too-direct questions, the elders sitting at the table took turns speaking. Billy Attachie talked about the importance of maintaining the Beaver language. Red Cloud (Rene) Dominic told a long story about a time when he had fractured his neck while hunting in the bush, but against all odds had been able to walk for two days back to camp and seek medical attention. Sam Acko described how close Doig River had been to losing knowledge of drum making, and the songs traditions that went with them. I remember feeling frustrated, worrying that these orations would not help the group to make concrete decisions about the direction of the project in the month that we had funds available for field research. I felt even more lost when the narratives turned from English to Dane-zaa Žáágéʔ. Tommy Attachie, a song keeper at Doig River who remembers, performs, and teaches the songs of Dane-zaa nááché, spoke at length to the group of community members at the meeting, aware that collaborators in the room, and youth who were not fluent in Dane-zaa Žáágéʔ could not understand. Only days later, after Pat Moore and Julia Miller had worked with Jack Askoty for a first translation of Tommy Attachie’s narrative did I begin to understand how Tommy Attachie had used his knowledge of
Gaaye’s drum to eloquently define a methodology for the production of the virtual museum exhibit. I also began to better understand Sam Acko’s narrative of the revitalization of drum making and singing at Doig River. In the following section, I present both of these narratives, and discuss them as expressions of the inalienable relationship between tangible, intangible, and natural cultural heritage. I suggest that the community-led process of exhibit pre-production resulted in a process of intangible cultural heritage documentation that does not make arbitrary or disciplinary distinctions between forms of heritage.

Sam Acko’s narrative on Renewing Drum Making Traditions at Doig River

Sam Acko:

Making that drum, too, we just about lost it.
And then, we lost it for a while,
we didn’t know
how to make drums.

And then, my brother, and Albert Askoty,
they are professional drum makers.
And then, they know what kind of wood,
they know how to cut it.

And then they, they usually tell us how to do it.
And then, after, and then I started making drums,

but every, every, every wood I cut,
he told me how to cut it this way, this way,
but I want to cut it my own way,
and then I kept breaking it, breaking it.
Pretty soon I give up and sit.
Who cares? I’ll just give up.
I don’t want to make drum no more.

And then after he passed away,
about ten years later,
I remember exactly what he told me.
The way to cut it, what kind of wood.
And then, after he, he died, ten years later.
And then I cut that, the wood,
and then I cut it exactly the way he told me to, to do it.

And then I made a frame.
And then I made a drum.
And then, that’s ten years later.

*Tommy Attachie:*
And you teach me.

*Sam Acko:*
Yeah, yeah.

That’s how it is, too, we just about lost that, that one,
how to make a Dane-zaa drum.

And then even songs, too, we just about lost it.
But we picked it up again.
Now there’s a lot of young people are singing, and drumming.

And we start teaching the little ones, too.
We run a kids’ Beaver Camp every spring.
And then that’s where, 
we teach those little kids how to drum and sing. 
Which is really good.

And this Elder’s Camp is very important to us. 
Because, uh, all the young people like to go there, 
camping and then learning. 
We try to pick everything up again. 
Like, how we used to live. 
Before.

That’s all. 
(S. Acko 2007 [2005]-a)

Sam Acko gives a personal account of the revitalization of drum making traditions at Doig River. He describes a moment in which he realized, a decade after the death of Albert Askoty and Sam’s brother—band members who had carried and transmitted this knowledge to younger generations—that the knowledge would be lost if it was not practiced. He remembered exactly what he had been taught, overcoming his frustration at the difficulty of the drum making process, and translated that knowledge into the creation of a drum. Sam Acko then passed this knowledge on to Tommy and on to others; the practices of the Doig River Drummers, all using hand made moose hide drums, are evidence of Mr. Acko’s revitalization of this practice.

Sam Acko also connects his knowledge of drum making to the practice of Danezaa songs traditions at Doig River. “And even songs, too, we just about lost it,” he tells the group, “But we picked it up again.” Mr. Acko clearly articulates the relationship between the knowledge of drum making traditions and the continued transmission and performance of nááchî songs. The revitalization of drum making is integrally connected
to the revitalization of song traditions, both of which Mr. Acko describes as having come perilously close to being lost.

Mr. Acko also alludes to one strategy the Doig River First Nation has been implementing to actively create conditions for the transmission of these interconnected forms of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Mr. Acko references the kids’ Beaver Camp, which brings youth and their families out each spring to camp with Elders on Dane-zaa territory and to learn about trapping beaver, stretching pelts, to listen to stories, and to practice speaking Dane-zaa Záágéʔ. The Elders’ Camp similarly supports Doig River’s elders setting up camp in late summer, hunting moose and making dry meat, and spending time with their extended families out on the land. These camps reinforce the relationship of the transmission of cultural knowledge with the active practice of traditions in Dane-zaa territory. Sam Acko evokes the Doig River First Nation’s model for actively promoting the safeguarding and transmission of Dane-zaa cultural knowledge in the context of a virtual exhibit planning meeting to suggest a course of action for the exhibit production process and content. Mr. Acko’s personal narrative was complemented by Tommy Attachie’s Dane-zaa Záágéʔ reflection on the meaning of Gaayēa’s drum, the intangible cultural knowledge that it represents, and how this knowledge should direct the virtual museum production process.
Tommy Attachie: The Story of the Drum

‘Gonna speak our language.

Ii Gaaye’a taghalé? giiguunaadéhjiich ach’uu,
Someone re-wrapped Gaaye’a’s drum, putting on a different drum skin,

če ii yaaghéhéch’ilhéh.
the one that was later ripped apart.

Ii laa hááhgáádôh mak’ááhts’anêtii.
We looked at that one yesterday.

Ii adishtl’ish mé sô Gaaye’a taghalé? ayii yedúñéhjiijé.
That drum that has a drawing on it, someone put a hide on Gaaye’a’s drum.

Yiittséh tóhch’e dé jii jiïge wólë de dah sô,
A long time ago on this land,

me sô ii hadaa zêhhe? gúlé ajuu adaawasjíih.
somebody killed that moose, I don’t know who.

Me sô hadaa zêhhe? me sô haayeghetl.
Somebody killed the moose and scraped its hide.

Gaaye’a yaaduunéhjiijé.
Gaaye’a wrapped it [put the drum hide on].

---

23 The video of Tommy Attachie’s Story of the Drum can be watched as a part of the Dane Wajich exhibit at
A full transcript with time code can be downloaded at
or seen on Appendix I, p. 499.
Yaa k'adze kóh nááchę guuh shin nááleheh.
He dreamed about Heaven and he brought the songs back.

Ii Yaak’eh yaa adíshtl’íshe őkech’ii atanii.
He drew two trails to Heaven on the drum.

Ii lhígé ach’uu ts’éʔ? wats’éʔ? jii lhígé Nahhatáʔ? ts’éʔ?.
One trail leads to another place, one trail leads to God.

 Háá lhélǫh walǫh ts’éʔ? wats’eh lhígé zóh atanii.
At the end there is only one trail.

Guu giigeh giidestlısh hááhgáádóh mak’aahsınétah.
Those things he drew on the top, we saw them yesterday.

E ēhdaatše: lháhtsegúúh degash kéch’e, lháhtsegúúh guudadal.
Both sides: one side is dark, and the other side is red.

E jii, hááhgáádóh ii k’ánnestii tl’oh,
And this, yesterday I looked at it, then after that,

Bible k’ih wasjiih.
I read the Bible.

Juuh’dzenéh Ahhatáʔ? kuuts’adéjiih haę.
Today, we believe in God.

Nahhadzéʔ? ajuu déhgash;
Our hearts are not black;

nahhadzéʔ? dadal.
our hearts are red.

Ii k’áástahah juu jegúúh déhgash,
I think the black side, the one I looked at,
ii sô ajuu úújuu.
*that must be the side that’s not so good.*

E ii k’áásenéhtah iidekêh,
*I am going to tell you about what we saw in the past,*

gukeh wowajiich jii hahk’ih nahhanaajuunuu,
*we will talk to them about how our ancestors lived,*

hóhch’ii ?ëh,
*how it was back then,*

ii tl’ó gwe nåêchesne jéts’ë?
*and after that, where the Dreamers were.*

Kénaasjiih dah nåághaghaechë? de shin hááda?ah dé.
*We remember where they lived, where they dreamed the songs that they brought back.*

Dane guu ts’ë? dayah.
*People went toward them [people went to see them].*

Gwe k’ëh juu?úú,
*That way, too,*

je háákë? nåášehjiìhdëh háákaa juuhdzenëh,
*[we’ll talk about] how we live still today,*

ii hehsahdôh nahhaazeduu.
*and how people lived long before us.*

Ii taghalë?, giidúúnaahjiije náächë yaadéshtl’íshe,
*That drum, they rewrapped the one that the Dreamer Gaayë’á drew on,*
Gaayę́, ii hááhgáá dó́h mak’ááhts’anéhtah.
*Gaayę́,* the one we looked at yesterday.

Aja hájé loph só ii k’ááts’anéhtah k’aach’uù.
*It was not by accident that we looked at it.*

Nááwadúútsii gūlé.
*It will come back, maybe.*

Ii ghōh ô, e dane ghaa náéché? gwe.
*For that reason,* he dreamed for people.

*Sweeny Creek* ahte dane náájeh.
*People lived at Sweeny Creek.*

Wats’ehdóh ts’eh dane etl’o,
*A long time ago,* people, one after another,

e júúhje ajuu kaa guu k’eliit, gwets’ë? juu,
*before this place over here burned, back then,*

ahte gwe dane nááje;
*all the people who lived there;*

*Oker* gweyaa nááchɛ, *Oker* ajuu k’aa,
*Oker wasn’t their Dreamer yet,*

nááchɛ Adishtl’íshe gweyaa nááchɛ.
*the Dreamer Adishtl’íshe dreamed for them.*

Ts’ibe Dane ghaa nááchɛ ale.
*He was the Dreamer for the Muskeg People.*

Háá watl’ô wats’ë? *Oker.*
*After that,* *Oker* was their Dreamer.
You should tell them about the things you can remember.

I remember Oker when he was sick.

Grandmother and I visited him.

Generation after generation, growing and raising kids,

our grandmother told us,

how to live,

long ago and today.

And these younger people,

what they see,

what their grandma,

and what they taught you about making dry meat and how to do other things,

And us, when we were kids,
ts'idaa gets'elgeh,
when we were kids,

tlégae dan jeh dahts'edéhdeh gúúhaake gehaaghish.
we sat behind people in the saddle, that was how we travelled.

Háa 1956 guu seismic aadlaa? dawats'eh, wagon éh.
In 1956, before the seismic lines were made, [we moved around] with wagons.

Háágaa pack horse éh dane aghaajel.
People were still bringing back meat with pack horses.

Háa hôch'ii zoh gwe ahte wats'eh,
That was the way things were,

guu éh gweyéh wawajije.
we will talk to them about those things.

Eh nåhè daakhene elder ahlhe jë kënaahjiih,
And you elders, you remember things from back then,

ii juu gwekéh.
[tell them about] those things.

in the bush sadejiitl gwats'ë? juu,
And as we go all over into the bush,

jö de je hëwóhch'ii de guudaadawajii.
you tell them the important stories.
(T. Attachie 2007 [2005]-a)

Mr. Attachie’s narrative connects the creation and history of a tangible object—
Gaaye'a’s drum—to intangible knowledge and natural heritage. The drum, first, is
related to “some land,” Dane-zaa territory—natural heritage—that once sustained a
living made from hunting, trapping, and gathering food. The drum is also related to knowledge of animals on the land, in this case how to hunt a moose, how to butcher its meat, and how to process its hide. The drum represents intangible knowledge of drum-making, as Sam Acko described. In Mr. Attachie’s narrative, the nááchë Gaayeł stretched the hide to make the drum. And his painting on the drum, much more than just an image, represents his private dreaming practice and semi-public expression of his knowledge as a Dane-zaa nááchë. To create the painting on the drum, to use the drum in performance for Dane-zaa people, “He dreamed about heaven and he brought the songs back.”

Tommy Attachie interprets Gaayeł’s painting on the drum as representing paths of morality. One is “a trail to God,” and the other a trail “to another place.” He interprets the painting on the drum in relation to his Christian faith, which he demonstrates as syncretic with his Dane-zaa spirituality. Starting with his description of the drum, Tommy Attachie goes on to evoke Dane-zaa oral histories, genealogies of Dane-zaa nááchë, and Dane-zaa dreaming and hunting traditions. He tells the group assembled for the planning meeting, “I am going to tell you about what we saw, how our ancestors lived and how it was back then. After that, where the dreamer was. We remember where they lived, where they dreamed the songs that they brought back.”

Tommy Attachie gives the example of Sweeney Creek, located across the provincial border in Alberta. As I will discuss in Chapter Six, Sweeney Creek was an important summer place for Dane-zaa families to gather, socialize, dance, hunt, and share the labour of processing moose hides, among other things. It is situated along the old wagon road between the Fort St. John area and the former Regal River reserve in
northern Alberta. The nááchê Gaayę a was from a Beaver reserve in Alberta that no longer exists. Sweeny Creek is known as the place where Gaayę a dreamed his “Prairie Chicken” song, one that is still regularly performed by the Doig River Drummers. Sweeney Creek is also included in the Doig River First Nation’s negotiation of their Treaty Land Entitlement, adding a specific political significance to the documentation of oral histories that prove early cultural use of the site.

Tommy Attachie’s narrative of Gaayę a’s drum and the knowledge associated with it is also used to reflect on changes made to Dane-zaa life ways by the industrialization of Dane-zaa territory. Mr Attachie encourages the elders to tell the young project participants about what life was like for them growing up, traveling with wagons, and “behind people in the saddle,” and how life has changed. He remembers his grandmother, how she taught him, and how she took him to visit with the prophet Oker. Mr. Attachie demonstrates the vitality of Dane-zaa Záágéʔ, and exercises Dane-zaa authority over the meeting by speaking in a language that only adult community members can understand.

Tommy Attachie’s narrative, reinforced by Sam Acko’s reminder of the importance of keeping traditions alive through ongoing practice, defined the Dane Wajich production process. Although Mr. Attachie was speaking in the first person, he was encouraging the elders listening to him at the meeting to do the same in the course of the virtual exhibit production. He laid out a model of documentation of Dane-zaa oral tradition and histories of place that demonstrated the relationship between a dreamer’s drum, generations of Dane-zaa people and nááchê, intangible cultural heritage, and significant natural locations in the region. Tommy Attachie and Sam Acko emphasized
that while documentation of Dane-zaa cultural heritage had been central to protecting the transmission of knowledge, documentation and transmission of cultural knowledge should be carried out through Dane-zaa social practice.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have related the participatory methodological approach taken to the production of the virtual exhibit *Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* to international intangible heritage policy and the legacy of collaborative visual anthropologist Jean Rouch. The 2003 UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* recommends the full participation of stakeholder communities in activities related to the safeguarding of their intangible cultural heritage. Jean Rouch’s vision of “shared anthropology,” based on collaborative filmmaking, similarly advocates the participatory production of ethnographic representation. The Doig River community’s desire to build documentary skills capacity for young people, and their access to new documentary technologies, were central in facilitating the *Dane Wajich* project’s participatory process. I described how Sam Acko and Tommy Attachie’s narratives set the direction of the project. At initial project planning meetings at Doig River they articulated their personal perspectives on the inalienable relationships between tangible, intangible, and natural heritage. Their narratives support the growing consensus that these heritage categories are arbitrary and interconnected (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004), and reinforce the necessity of community leadership in defining locally significant methodologies for the safeguarding of cultural heritage and ongoing practices. In the following chapter, I present and discuss a
selection of the collaboratively produced video narratives recorded in important locations throughout Dane-zaa territory by the *Dane Wajich* production team, which became central elements of *Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land.*
Chapter 6: Dreamers and the Land

Introduction

“… all these stories just hold this earth. That’s how native people use it. Live by it.”
Tommy Attachie at *Gat Tah Kwâ* (Montney) (T. Attachie 2007 [2005]-c)

On June 26, 2005, at a community exhibit planning meeting in the gymnasium of the Doig River First Nation’s new Band Hall, elders Sam Acko and Tommy Attachie told personal stories that articulated inalienable relationships between Dane-zaa tangible, intangible, and natural heritage. They were inspired to speak by a drum made by the *nâáchë Gaaye* that had been brought into the virtual exhibit planning process by Chief Garry Oker. As Chief Oker had done in the video *The Otter Man’s Prophecy* (G. Oker, et al. 2004a), he presented the drum as a tangible representation of oral and song traditions of Dane-zaa *nâáchë*, knowledge of the land, and survival under colonialism. He used the drum and the intangible knowledge associated with it to think through the challenges he faced as a Chief, a Doig River First Nation community member, and a Dane-zaa individual.

Tommy Attachie and Sam Acko also used the drum as an anchor for articulating personal knowledge gained through their experience of significant changes in Dane-zaa culture, language, economies, rights, and politics. In the course of the production that I describe in this chapter, I came to realize that their narratives had suggested a model of collaborative documentation of Dane-zaa stories and songs for the Virtual Museum of Canada exhibit *Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*. This model of documentation was grounded in Dane-zaa cultural practice.

Our June 26th planning meeting came to a close when elder and language expert
Billy Attachie, declared that the meeting was over. “This is a waste of time. Let’s get started!” he said. Because I had not understood Tommy Attachie’s *Dane-zaa Záágéʔ* narrative, I was concerned that the full morning of community discussion had not resulted in any concrete plans being made for the production of the exhibit. I worried that Billy Attachie’s impatience with the group discussion indicated impatience with the whole project. But my concerns were unfounded. Within an hour of the conclusion of the meeting, the Doig River Band’s van pulled up outside the Band Hall, chauffeured by Eddie Apsassin. A group of elders—Margaret Attachie, Billy Attachie, Tommy Attachie, Rene Dominic, Sam Acko, and Jack Askoty—along with the youth video documentation team of Starr Acko, Robin Acko, Brittany Brinkworth, Charmayne Brinkworth, and Mark Apsassin—and collaborators—Amber Ridington and myself, Peter Biella, Pat Moore, and Julia Miller—piled into the van and a small fleet of pickup trucks with our recording equipment, cameras, snacks, and water. We were informed that our destination that day would be Petersen’s Crossing.

In the weeks ahead, the group traveled to six other locations in Dane-zaa territory. Just as Tommy Attachie had asked them to do, the elders participating in the project made decisions about places of significance on the Dane-zaa landscape, and led the convoy of project participants there. We drove north to *Madáts’atl’oje* (“Snares Set Around It”), known in English by people of Doig River as Snare Hill, and by the oil and gas industry as Ladyfern. We then drove east across the provincial border into Alberta to a place known as Sweeney Creek. Another day we visited *Alédzé Tsáá*

24 A map of all the places visited in the course of the *Dane Wajich* project can be viewed in Appendix I, p. 415, and as a part of the virtual exhibit at this link: [http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/index.php](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/index.php)
(Alédzé Creek), named after the nááche Alédzé, and then Tsazuulh Saahgáe, translated as ‘Big Timber Creek’, but known in English as ‘Big Camp’. We took a short trip from Doig River to Nétl’uk, ‘The End of the Flat’ near the Osborne River. And finally, the group went back to Gat Tah Kwâ (“Spruce Among House”) on the old Montney Reserve, the location of the dance grounds at Suunéch’ii Kéch’iige (“Where Happiness Dwells”). At each place, the youth video team set up their recording equipment, and a rotating group of elders looked into the camera and told “the important stories.”

In this chapter, I discuss a selection of the narratives recorded on these trips out onto the land. All of these narratives can be viewed as subtitled videos in the context of the Dane Wajich exhibit by following links in footnotes. These narrative texts and videos demonstrate how a community-based process of intangible heritage documentation, inspired by Gaayê’a’s painted drum, evoked expressions of identity and history. I suggest that the narratives elicited through the community-led collaborative production process illustrate the potential of participatory documentation of intangible cultural heritage to initiate local safeguarding strategies that are grounded in Indigenous cultural and linguistic ideologies. I show that these strategies supported Dane-zaa preferences for sharing personal experience and knowledge, teaching younger generations through practice, and performing narratives related to Dane-zaa nááchê and the land as acts of resistance that illuminate structures of power, most visibly represented by the oil and gas industry.

I also discuss the multimedia context in which each of these narratives is presented. Each “Places” page in the Dane Wajich exhibit provides interpretive text,

---

25 All “stories” in the Dane Wajich exhibit can be viewed at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/stories.php
shows a map of the featured location, a mouse-activated *Dane-zaa Žáágéʔ* audio place name, photographs of the collaborative exhibit and video production process, subtitled video recorded at that place, and related archival and contemporary recordings of *nááchê* songs. The co-presence of these media demonstrates the Indigenous remediation of ethnographic documentation associated with access to digital cultural heritage that I first discussed in Chapter Three. Media from the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* are presented alongside newly collaboratively documented media. All are part of a larger Doig River project of conveying a contemporary representation of their community, history, and identity. Following Peter Biella’s assertion that hypermedia technology will end the marginalization of ethnographic film in the discipline of anthropology (Biella 1993), I suggest that these multimedia expressions of history, identity, and knowledge of place in the *Dane Wajich* exhibit are continuous with Dane-zaa modes of recontextualization in oral narrative.

Through my own narrative of active participation in this production process, I convey my understanding of the personal contexts in which these stories are being told. These narratives are deeply informed by the experiences of the speakers with colonial oppression, alienation from land and resources, continued involvement in the band’s struggle to defend Aboriginal and treaty rights, and experience working with anthropologists and linguists. These narratives, which allude to Dane-zaa medicine power, appropriate behaviour and morality, and which connect generations of *nááchê* to particular families and places in Dane-zaa territory, are powerful records of a long history of use of the land. They are also documents of the impact of colonial, industrial, and agricultural development. Building on the experience of Doig River leadership and
community members with the prior creation of local media (such as those described in Chapter Four), the narratives are expressions of Dane-zaa authority, resistance, and resilience. The narratives emphasize the inalienable relationship between tangible, intangible, and natural forms of heritage, and the transmission of culture through practice.

**Narratives of Place as Resistance**

In recent years, anthropological interest in the relationships between Aboriginal place names, cognition, and experience has produced a series of detailed explorations of the ways in which narrative practice and naming are said to anchor individuals and groups to place. Keith Basso’s (1996) study of place names with the Western Apache is one of the best known studies in this field. His book chronicles a mapping project carried out in collaboration with the Apache nation at Cibecue, Arizona, in which he took on elder Nick Thompson’s instruction to “learn the names” (1996:42). Basso traveled with Apache horsemen to hundreds of places in the Cibecue area, documented narratives about the origins of place names, and listened to the ways in which Apache men and women used these place names in everyday conversation. According to Basso, “Apache constructions of place reach deeply into other cultural spheres, including conceptions of wisdom, notions of morality, politeness and tact in forms of spoken discourse, and certain conventional ways of imagining and interpreting the Apache tribal past” (Basso 1996:xv). As place-making is a way of constructing the past, it is also a way of constructing social traditions and identities. The past is constituted in relation to individuals and their contemporary experiences. Western Apache constructions of history are contrasted with Apache histories crafted by Anglo-
Americans, which are seen to “[proceed] on different assumptions, [produce] a different discourse, and [involve] a different aesthetic” (34). Basso gives the example of “speaking with names” to show the way in which Apache place names are used to anchor traditional narratives. On occasion it is used to accomplish the communicative work of an entire saga or historical tale, or when ancestral knowledge seems applicable to personal difficulties. Basso’s ethnographic understandings of these concepts extend to linguistic forms relating to the Apache concept of wisdom—smoothness of mind, resilience of mind, and steadiness of mind—which must be cultivated through observation of place, and the learning of names and stories that make and re-make sense of place.

Similarly, Andie Palmer’s ethnography of the Secwepemc, the Shuswap of Alkali Lake in British Columbia, examines the ways in which “kinds of talk, situated in particular places on the landscape, and in travel between them, allow that knowledge to be carried forward, reconstituted, reflected upon, enriched, and ultimately relocated, by and for new interlocutors, in new experiences, and sometimes new places” (Palmer 2005:3). She argues that contemporary engagement in practices of hunting and gathering creates shared experiences between people while “recreating a known social context in which existing knowledge of the land may be effectively shared and acted upon” (2005:4). She draws parallels with the narrative practices of Athapaskans (including the Dane-zaa), who obtain and claim knowledge that stems from the authority of individual experience. Stories—those related to place, to hunting and gathering practices, to addiction and sobriety, to death and grieving, to moral instruction—are used by Secwepemc people to make sense of their lives and the many changes in
lifeways that they have endured. Palmer grounds discussion of these narratives in the historical context of the establishment of the Alkali Lake reserve and relations between Secwepemc, priests, and white settlers and ranchers. She draws examples from her own fieldwork and from courtroom discourse in local hunting rights cases, in which individuals “express their understandings of their relationship to the land and its resources across conflicting systems of discourse” (Palmer 2005:25).

In another recent work on First Nations’ conceptualizations and uses of place, Thomas Thornton studying the Tlingit of southeast Alaska argues that, for Tlingits, “place is not only a cultural system but the cultural system on which all key cultural structures are built” (Thornton 2008:4). Thornton explores the ways in which Tlingit names, stories, songs, and art are used in a process of “binding and rebinding” individuals and culture to specific places and landscapes (2008:7). He identifies four key cultural structures that mediate relationships to place as his frame of analysis. They are:

1. social organization, which groups and distributes people on the landscape and helps to coordinate their spatial world and interactions with place; 2. language and cognitive structures, which shape how places are perceived and conceptualized; 3. material production, which informs how places are used, not used, or misused to sustain human life; and 4. ritual processes, which serve to symbolize, sanctify, condense, connect, transform, and transcend various dimensions of time, space, and place in ways that profoundly shape human place consciousness, identity, and experience. (Thornton 2008:8)

The ethnographies of place and place naming by Basso, Palmer, and Thornton have been instructive in my attempts to make sense of my fieldwork with the Doig River First Nation. I was struck by their articulations of the culturally specific and
diverse ways that individuals and groups in these ethnographies use knowledge of place in dynamic cultural and social reproduction. However, my intention in this chapter is not to explore the particular ways in which the structures of Dane-zaa culture are produced in relation to place, or the way culture is anchored to place through story, or how the history and details of place names are used in social practice. While building on this body of literature, this chapter’s presentation of narratives recorded for the virtual exhibit *Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*, is informed more closely by Julie Cruikshank’s ethnographic collaborations with Tlingit, Tagish, and Southern Tuchone women (1987). Cruikshank divides her presentation of the stories of elders Kitty Smith, Angela Sidney, and Annie Ned into alternating accounts of personal experience and traditional narratives to attempt to show how each woman uses stories to explain events in her life, and how each brings unique skills to the performance of her story. Cruikshank considers these narratives to be statements of cultural identity,

… where memory continuously adapts received traditions to present circumstances. Looking at how individuals take these shared traditions… and how they use them to interpret events from their own experience and then pass them on to succeeding generations may add a different perspective to debates about cultural persistence and cultural change. (Cruikshank 1987:12)

Based on the narratives from the *Dane Wajich* exhibit that follow, I argue that Doig River First Nation elders similarly draw on shared traditions, particularly related to Dane-zaa *nááchǝ̕*, to make sense of present circumstances. In doing so, elders Tommy Attachie, Sam Acko, Billy Attachie, Gerry Attachie, May Apsassin, Madeleine Davis, Margaret Attachie use narrative performance to demonstrate alternative ways of knowing about place that contrast with the consumptive activities of the oil and gas
industry in Dane-zaa territory. These ways of knowing constitute a sophisticated articulation of an alternative representation of knowledge and power.

Lila Abu-Lughod’s work on power and resistance among Alwad ‘Ali Bedouin women has been particularly useful for thinking through Dane-zaa media productions and narratives of place as acts of resistance. She argues that anthropologists should “learn to read in various local and everyday resistances the existence of a range of strategies and structures of power” (Abu-Lughod 1990:53). Rather than romanticizing these acts of resistance as evidence of the failure of systems of oppression, we should “respect everyday resistance not just by arguing for the dignity of heroism of the resisters but by letting their practices teach us about the complex interworkings of historically changing structures of power” (1990:53). I argue that the media productions and narrative practices of Dane-zaa elders reflect active negotiation of structures of power that have shaped the experience of Dane-zaa people. These are the successive oppressive frontiers—evangelical, agricultural, industrial—that Hugh Brody explores in Maps and Dreams (1988). They are the shift from a seasonal hunting and gathering lifeway to settlement on reserves; from egalitarian band-level society to contemporary political organization; from a subsistence economy to negotiation with the oil and gas industry; from Dane-zaa Žáágéʔ to English; from orality to literacy; and, as I have explored at length in the dissertation so far, the shift from intangible cultural expression to digital cultural heritage (and surely this list is woefully incomplete). As Abu-Lughod asserts, these narrative practices not only constitute acts of everyday resistance, but illuminate the broader structures of power that continue to permeate Dane-zaa experience.
In the body of this chapter, I describe the contexts in which the narratives were recorded, such as the places our production group visited, the audiences present for the narrative performances, and my observations of the mood and tone of the excursions out into Dane-zaa territory. I do not attempt a textual analysis of the narratives; rather, in the remainder of this section, I draw on the work of Richard Baumann and Charles Briggs (1990) to provide a framework for considering the role of narrative performance in Dane-zaa social and political life.

Baumann and Briggs advocate an agent-centered view of performance that acknowledges the multiple ways in which individuals actively contextualize their narrative performances to enable their verbal art to transform, not simply reflect, social life (1990). Contextualization, they write, “involves an active process of negotiation in which participants reflexively examine the discourse as it is emerging, embedding assessments of its structure and significance in the speech itself” (Bauman and Briggs 1990:69). These assessments include how performances will be received, understood, and communicated by audiences.

For example, Bauman and Briggs discuss the strategy of meta-narration, whereby performers embed reflexive commentary into their narrative. Meta-narrative devices, they argue, “index not only features of the ongoing social interaction but also the structure and significance of the narrative and the way it is linked to other events” (1990:69). This strategy is apparent in the Dane-zaa narratives that follow, for example in the way that Tommy Attachie comments on the accuracy of his narrative at *Gat Tah Kwâ*—“…even two hundred, three hundred years ago, the story still today we talk about it, still the same”—or in the way that he addresses the listening audience directly.
in his narrative of Gaayę́ ga’s painted drum in the Doig River gymnasium (which I presented in Chapter Five). A second strategy is that of reported speech, which Bauman and Briggs identify as a central device for connecting narrated events with contemporary contexts of narration. Reported speech allows performers to “increase stylistic and ideological heterogeneity by drawing on multiple speech events, voices, and points of view” (1990:70). As the Dane Wajich production team traveled to significant places in Dane-zaa territory, narratives related to those places were contextualized and re-contextualized. Stories that had once been told at those places among Dane-zaa and for anthropologists were told anew for the youth camera team and the assembled audience of elders, community members, linguists, and anthropologists. For example, Tommy Attachie’s narrative of the death of the nááchë Adishtl’ishe at Tsazuulh Saahgáe is an eloquent re-telling of the late Charlie Dominic’s last night with the dreamer at that place.

Meta-narration and reported speech are both acts of “decentering” the narrative event and the narrator’s voice, which “opens up possibilities for renegotiating meanings and social relations beyond the parameters of the performance itself” (1990:70). In the Dane Wajich narratives that I present in this chapter, the act of decentering is also evident in a process called entextualization. Entextualization is:

… the process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit—a text—that can be lifted out of its interactional setting. A text then, from this vantage point, is discourse rendered decontextualizable. Entextualization may well incorporate aspects of context, such as that the resultant text carries elements of its history of use within in it. (Bauman and Briggs 1990:73)
Briggs and Bauman point out that while verbal arts are widely considered to be highly susceptible to treatment as self-contained, bounded objects, easily separated from their contexts of production and reception, entextualization is not only enacted through documentation, the creation of the linguistic or ethnographic object. Rather, entextualization by narrative performers is an act of agency, where “participants themselves may be directly and strongly concerned with the social management of entextualization, decontextualization, and recontextualization” (1990:74). Dane-zaa processes of entextualization of narrative are evident in the ways in which elders and community members took control of the contexts in which videos for the Dane Wajich exhibit were recorded, and then used these contexts to articulate alternative models of knowledge and power. For example, I describe how participants altered some of the places where we were filming, so that features of place-based narratives could be reflected in the landscape and recorded in the camera’s frame; or, as evident in many of the narrative texts presented here, are the ways in which narrative performances were preceded by contextual statements such as the narrator’s name, the place name, the date, and even the weather at the moment of documentation, so as to embed context in an actively entextualized narrative.

These acts of entextualization are fundamentally acts of control over cultural production. In these acts, Bauman and Briggs recognize “differential access to texts, differential legitimacy in claims to and use of texts, differential competence in the use of texts, and differential values attaching to different types of text” (1990:76). They argue that the study of these three interrelated processes—entextualization, decontextualization (decentering), and recontextualization (recentering):
… opens a way toward constructing histories of performance; toward illuminating the larger systemic structures in which performance plays a constitutive role; and toward linking performances with other modes of language use as performances are decentered and recentered both within and across speech events—referred to, cited, evaluated, reported, looked back upon, replayed, and otherwise transformed in the production and reproduction of social life. (Bauman and Briggs 1990:80)

In narratives that I present in this chapter, Dane-zaa elders actively negotiate their performances in relation to their perceived audience, context, and personal authority. These active processes of entextualization, decentering, and recentering of oral narrative have parallels in the ways that Dane-zaa media producers are now using their digital cultural heritage in local productions. I argue, therefore, that the Doig River First Nation’s remediation of intangible cultural heritage documentation, such as that contained in the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive, has continuity with prior and ongoing modes of narrative performance. Oral narratives of Dane-zaa nááché, which have long been mobilized to demonstrate successful negotiation of the rapid changes associated with colonialism (Cruikshank 1997), are communicated in multimedia contexts as they have been in personal contexts for centuries. These everyday, local communicative practices of resistance to outside domination represent an alternative model of what knowledge of place, and power, can be.
**Alááʔ Ṣatọ (Petersen’s Crossing)**

On June 26, 2005, just hours after our planning meeting at Doig River, we arrived at Petersen’s Crossing in pickup trucks and the Doig River van. I learned that day that this place was known in *Dane-zaa Záágéʔ as Alááʔ Ṣatọ*, meaning 'boat sitting there.' It was called Petersen's Crossing after the store and trading post established in the 1930s by Ernie Petersen along the banks of the Beatton River. A day school had also been established there, and Dane-zaa children had been given the choice to attend school there or be sent away to residential school. To keep their children with them, Dane-zaa families made *Alááʔ Ṣatọ* their temporary home in the time between the loss of the Montney reserve and the establishment of the reserve at Doig River. Some families had continued to live there, and that day we would be visiting the homesteads of Emma Pouce-Coupe and Ferlin Makadahay.

We unloaded our camera and sound recording equipment and set it up on the freshly mowed meadow adjacent to Ferlin Makadahay’s house. The day was overcast, and warm. Billy Attachie, one of the many people to be recorded that day, sat down in a plastic chair, his crutches lying next to him in the grass. After a week of video production training, a morning of meetings, and moving a lot of equipment, the novice video makers seemed tired. More chairs were found, the weariest were seated, and we decided who would be responsible for each production role. Brittany would be the

---

director and camera operator; Mark would assist her; Robin operated the boom mic, and
Starr worked with Pat Moore to record back-up sound.

In one photograph from that first day of filming, I see that Jack Askoty settled
down on the grass to listen, while Margaret Attachie listened from a distance. Others,
like Eddie Apsassin, Sam Acko, and Red Cloud Dominic listened from outside the
camera’s frame. I stood behind the video producers, answering questions and guiding
the set up of the shoot. One of Peter Biella’s (clean) socks was hanging out of my
pocket, donated to the production kit in case of the need for extra wind protection for
our boom microphone. This afternoon was still and muggy, so the sock stayed in my
pocket.

I look at myself in the photograph and I see a person who was a little confused;
like the students, I was tired from the heat of the day and the long meeting that
morning. Not having understood Tommy Attachie’s Dane-zaa Zaągeʔ narrative in the
Doig River gymnasium, I was still uncertain about the nature of the production process
that was unfolding. But I was also excited, because despite anything I had yet been able
to recognize as an agreed-on plan for the exhibit production, a significant number of
Doig River elders, youth, and community members had come to Aláʔ? Sąto. One of
them was about to start speaking.

Billy Attachie is known as the Doig River First Nation’s Dane-zaa Zaągeʔ
language authority. In addition to his spoken fluency, he has been dedicated to honing
his Dane-zaa Zaągeʔ literacy. For decades he has worked with linguists Marshall and
Jean Holdstock on the development of Beaver literacy resources—workbooks, primers, a
dictionary, bible translations, and so on. His ability to read and write in Dane-zaa
Záágéʔ has placed him at the center of Doig River’s language documentation and revitalization projects. Billy Attachie worked with Marlene Benson, Eddie Apsassin, Pat Moore, and Julia Miller to translate and transcribe the majority of the Dane-zaa Záágéʔ narratives in the Dane Wajich exhibit. He has traveled to Aboriginal language conferences across Canada, and in 2009, was honored as a “Language Champion” at the First Nations Language Conference “Bringing Languages to Life” in Vancouver, for his extraordinary commitment to Dane-zaa Záágéʔ. Billy Attachie was stricken with polio when he was a child, leaving him unable to walk without crutches. Yet he is always on the move, running errands between Doig River and Fort St. John, visiting with his grandchildren, and cooking food for guests in his house. He is always teasing, joking, and saying what is on his mind.

On this day in June 2005, our first day of recording video narratives for the Dane Wajich exhibit, Billy Attachie heeded his brother Tommy Attachie’s suggestion earlier that day to tell stories of Dane-zaa nááché, and what he remembered about the way things were in the past. In the narrative that follows, Billy Attachie describes how people used to gather at Alááʔ Ŝaṭo for Tea Dances. He remembers the women who used to cook at the gatherings, and the people who would travel from far away to join other Dane-zaa families at Alááʔ Ŝaṭo. This was also the home of the nááché Oker, right next to Billy’s grandmother’s home. Billy’s grandmother cared for Oker when he was old and sick. When his legs were so weak that he could no longer walk, she would pull him on a sled to visit with people. Billy talks about Oker’s foreknowledge of his own death. When he passed away, the nááché Oker was buried at Alááʔ Ŝaṭo.
Billy Attachie at Alááʔ Šato (Petersen’s Crossing) 27

Tóch’édóh Dane-zaa jọ laa náájich.
A long time ago, the Dane-zaa gathered here.

Jọ guu adáást’uk lhójigé šalaa,
These flats are positioned one right after another,

gwe adáást’uk taachii lhójigé šalaa.
there are three flats, one right after the other.

Jọ dane ёнёёjich.
People came together right here.

Dane, dane daahwéhsats.
People, people danced.

Dane daahwéhsats kénáasjiih éh.
I remember people dancing.

Millie úú Marguerite Olla danegháá ghehts’és.
Millie [Alice Askoty] and Marguerite Olla cooked for people.

Danegháá ghehts’és éh;
They cooked for people;

hé dane nátłọ,
there were many people,

---

27 The subtitled video of Billy Attachie’s narrative can be viewed in the context of the Dane Wajich exhibit at:
and the original transcript in Appendix I, p. 510.
Horse Lake wats’ēh úú Moberly Lake wats’ēh. 
from Horse Lake and Moberly Lake.

Nááchene lhenájich jō dē. 
The Dreamers used to gather together right here.

Iī nááchē jō hestlah jō yīídáādeh çʔaah. 
The last Dreamer [Oker] lived across there.

Asō ē kwā wagháádé guukwā. 
Their house was beside my grandmother’s house.

Jō hēwāa guukwā. 
Their house was nearby here.

Asō gō yaakōnaayaa yagáah șadaa. 
Grandma kept visiting to sit with him.

Hōhch’ii zōh háá lhēlōh ajuu ghadah. 
And finally he died.

Ajuu ghadii tō giits’ādé? wplaa. 
After he died, they made his grave.

Adaawajiih. 
He knew [before it happened].

E Millie jō at’ōlīikehde yaamaa aach’e. 
Millie stayed beside him all summer.

Ach’uμ gwats’ē? náayaadluuș éh guu dachin wasdluuűse. 
She pulled him to different places with a wooden sled.

Hōhch’ii jō dane gō náajeh dē wats’ēʔ. 
She pulled him like that to where the people lived.
Úú jó yéhdaa ghezat dór nááché alé.
*She had a hard time with him, even though he was a Dreamer.*

Eh, ii hóhch’ii zoh mats’ané? dajii ajuu naa?iiyaa aajáâ?.
*And, because his legs were weak, he couldn’t get up anymore.*

Eh juu gwadóh yúú?kwâ ts’ë? giidéchejé?,
*Back then, if they would have taken him to the hospital,*

agiyyuuleh sô.
*they would have done something for him.*

Wohcheh kulêa alé.
*But he was too old.*

Háá guulaa.
*That’s enough.*

(W. Attachie 2007 [2005]-a)

Billy Attachie speaks from his own experience of growing up at Aláá? Šatö.

Based on some of what he remembers of his childhood there, he articulates the close connections of his family to the nááché Oker. He describes the care with which the ailing dreamer was treated by Billy’s grandmother and Alice Askoty, emphasizing the proper moral obligations with which elders should be treated. This narrative also reflects Billy Attachie’s personal connection to the nááché Oker because of their shared struggles to walk. In a process of contextualization of this narrative (Bauman and Briggs 1990), Billy contrasts the resources that he has had to deal with the disabling effects of polio—for example, access to medical care, crutches, a truck to drive—with Oker’s lack of resources. Finally, Billy Attachie emphasizes that when Oker finally passed away, he
was buried at Alááʔ Șațo, cementing the connection between Dane-zaa nááchę traditions, and ongoing relationships to Alááʔ Șațo.

On the Alááʔ Șațo page of the completed version of *Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*, Billy Attachie’s narrative is contextualized by photographs of the video production process. The many project participants that day are shown sitting adjacent to a smoky fire outside of Emma Pouce Coupe’s house. That day, Tommy Attachie, Margaret Attachie, Eddie Apsassin, Sam Acko, Margaret Attachie, Jack Askoty, and Red Cloud Dominic all took turns sitting in front of the youth video team’s cameras and talking about what they remember about living at Alááʔ Șațo. Many discussed the day school that had been set up at Petersen’s Crossing. As we filmed these stories close to the Beatton River, Tommy Attachie directed the youth documentarians to make sure the old stone chimney of the burned down schoolhouse was visible behind him in the camera’s frame.

Billy Attachie’s narrative and the production photographs are also presented along with two recordings of nááchę songs. The first is a recording of Albert Askoty, Jack Askoty’s father, singing a song that was dreamed by the nááchę Oker (Askoty 2007 [1994]). The song was recorded by Garry Oker at a memorial tea dance for Alice Moccasin, Albert Askoty’s wife, at Doig River in 1994. This song was included in the Doig River First Nation’s audio CD *Dane-zaa Dreamers’ Songs 1966-2000 Volume 1—Suu Na chii K’chi ge “The Place Where Happiness Dwells”* (2000; track 24). The text describing the song in the *Dane Wajich* exhibit reads:

Alice Moccasin settled at Petersen's Crossing in the 1940's with her first husband, the Dreamer Naáchíjíi/Oker. After Oker died in 1951 Alice remarried Albert Askoty and they continued to live at Petersen's Crossing until the late 1980s. This performance is a powerful tribute to the woman who connected the lives of the Dreamer Oker and Albert Askoty so intimately.
(See Askoty 2007 [1994])

Another close family connection is represented by the second song on the Alááʔ Sato exhibit page. The late Billy Makadahay,29 grandfather of Ferlin Makadahay, sings a song by the dreamer Adíshtlišhe.30 Robin Ridington recorded this song in 1969 at a memorial Tea Dance for Anno Davis31 at Doig River. The song acknowledges the ongoing presence of the Makadahay family at Alááʔ Sato and at Doig River. The use of the song in the Dane Wajich exhibit also demonstrates the remediation of archival documentation of Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage. In this case, at Alááʔ Sato, Billy Makadahay’s song, recorded, archived, and digitized by the anthropologist Robin Ridington, is re-contextualized with Billy Attachie’s contemporary recollection of life at Alááʔ Sato, Garry Oker’s recording of Albert Askoty singing Oker’s song, and the visual record of the community-based process initiated to elicit new intangible cultural heritage documentation and public expression of contemporary Dane-zaa identity. The

[..]

29 A short biography of Billy Makadahay can be found in the “In Memory” section of the Dane Wajich exhibit in Appendix I, p. 390, and at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/project/inmemory.php?action=inmemory/billy_makadahay
30 Billy Makadahay’s performance of the dreamer Adíshtlišhe’ can be heard at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/songs/makadahay_adishtlishe.php
31 An image and biography of Anno Davis can be viewed in the “In Memory” section of the Dane Wajich exhibit in Appendix I, p. 386, and at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/project/inmemory.php?action=inmemory/anno_davis
co-preservation of these media on the Alááʔ Şatô page communicates the transmission and continuity of Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage through practice.

**Madáts’atl’oje (Snare Hill)**

On the morning of July 1st, 2005, we set out for Madáts’atl’oje, literally translated as ‘Snares Set Around’, and known in English as Snare Hill. Located about two hours north of the Doig River reserve, the area is criss-crossed with seismic exploration cut lines, and is the location of a massive natural gas extraction facility and pipeline network owned by Canadian Natural, one of the largest crude oil and natural gas producers in the world. The gas facility is called Ladyfern, so the area is also sometimes referred to by Doig River band members by this name.

A large group of people turned up that morning at the Doig River Band Hall to join the excursion north. In addition to the youth video crew of sisters Starr and Robin Acko, and sisters Brittany and Charmayne Brinkworth, we were joined by elders Margie Miller, Rosie Field, Margaret Attachie. Marlene Benson, a Dane-zaa Záágéʔ language authority and mother of two young boys came with us to assist with translation from Dane-zaa Záágéʔ to English. Sam Acko, Tommy Attachie, and Billy Attachie, who were clearly taking on roles as leaders in this process of travel and documentation, rode with us in the Doig River van, which was again driven by Eddie Apsassin. Our day trip to

---

*Madáts'atl’oje* took us to several locations in the area that the elders like Sam Acko and Tommy Attachie wanted the group to see.

The Doig River van was full of conversation and chatter. Some of the girls in the back laughed and teased each other, while others caught up on sleep. Peter Biella and I talked about next steps for youth video training. The project log book, religiously kept by Amber Ridington and project participants, indicates that along the way, Tommy Attachie and Sam Acko, who rode with us in the van, discussed the *nááčhe Alédzé*, and the revival of drum making at Doig River (project log book, July 1, 2005).

At around 12:30, after almost two hours of driving along dirt roads through muskeg and prairie, we arrived at a clearing in the trees. This location, on the south side of the Ladyfern industrial site, was marked by a large red and blue pipeline structure. We got out of the vehicles and stretched our legs, walking around and taking photographs. We examined the pipelines and condensor facility as well as piles of industrial material stacked in the clearing. We photographed the Canadian Natural sign that was fixed to the pipe structure, which referenced the place in terms used by the oil and gas industry: “Lady Fern C-62-G/94-H-1”. In the hours ahead this dynamic was reversed, as Sam Acko and Tommy Attachie took turns claiming the significance of *Madáts’atl’oje* for generations of Dane-gaa people.

Sam Acko suggested that we should eat lunch on a knoll a little way to the north. We made our way there, parked our vehicles on the main dirt road, and walked into the bush up an old seismic cut line. At the top of a small rise in the cut, the group began to settle in for the mid-day meal. Sam pulled out a machete and began to cut down green spruce boughs. These were laid along one side of the opening. Billy
Attachie came along on his crutches and sat down on the fragrant cushion that the boughs made. Rosie Field, Margaret Attachie, and Margie Miller also settled down on the clean green branches. Sam Acko and Pat Moore pulled dry fallen wood, twigs, and moss out of the bush and laid them down in the clear centre of the cut. Within seconds the branches were smoking, and burst into a small hot fire. Sam cut a long green branch and instructed me to press it into the ground to one side of the fire, so that it would extend at an angle over the fire. When I did that, he hung a tea kettle of water over the fire to boil. Sam worked quickly and efficiently. He cut green twigs for us to use to roast hot dogs over the fire. I worked on preparing lunch, while the elders waited in the shade.

Sam scanned the cut line, and pointed out the gentle rise of Madáts’atl’oje in the distance beyond. He contemplated the landscape, and then walked down from the rise where we were eating and started to clear some of the small trees that were blocking our view of the hill. Brittany, Charmayne, Robin, and Starr worked with Peter Biella, Amber Ridington, Pat Moore and me to prepare the video and sound equipment. When Sam was satisfied that a proper background for the video shoot had been created, he opened up a folding camp chair, placing it so that Madáts’atl’oje was visible over his shoulder. Sam made himself comfortable, and the camera was set up accordingly. With Billy Attachie, Margaret Attachie, Tommy Attachie, Margie Miller, Rosie Field, and Eddie Apsassin listening, the youth crew and collaborators filming, and Madeline Oker writing down rough translation, Sam told an extraordinary story in Dane-zaa Záágéʔ about Madáts’atl’oje.
In a narrative that we have called “The Man Who Turned into a Moose,” Sam Acko articulates the centrality of Madáts’atl’oje, the place where we sat and listened, in the continued survival of Dane-zaa people. Madáts’atl’oje was known as a place where moose could be hunted in times of hardship, particularly in the deep, hungry cold of winter. He tells the story of how, at this very place, a group of hunters once set out to drive moose into snares. Unbeknownst to the hunters, one of the men was endowed with the medicine power of moose. He was known as “pure” or “clean” because of the way he guarded his private medicine power, following cultural protocols such as abstaining from relations with women. His medicine power was visible on his body as a moose mane growing from his chest, but he always kept it hidden under his jacket so that no one could see it.

One day, one of the hunters erroneously accused the “pure” man of sleeping with his wife, and vindictively pulled open his jacket with a stick to reveal the hidden moose’s mane. The pure man was unhappy at being violated in this way. When the group moved out to surround the moose on Madáts’atl’oje and drive them into their snares, he slipped away from the group, eluding the man assigned to watch him, and transformed himself into a moose, leaving only a pile of his clothing behind. When the men checked their snares, they had not caught a single moose. The pure man, in moose form, pushed all the snares out of the way and led the moose on the hill through an opening in the surround. This is why, Sam told the group, there are still moose on Madáts’atl’oje, and throughout Dane-zaa territory today.
Sam Acko at Madáts’atl’oje: “The Man Who Turned into a Moose”

Aadzehdóh tóhch’ii’dóh jii,
A long time ago,

Madáts’atl’oje dane yéhjii.
they called this Madáts’atl’oje [Snare Hill].

Dane yadáádzé? háá ghêdaa.
People depended on this place to live.

Dane yadáádzé dáánejiiłh.
People depended on this place to survive.

Ẹ̇ ii laá hákkaa jjuchtzenèh,
And that is why even today,

sadanéné hákkaa jjuchtzenèh ghats’adaa,
my people are still living here,

juune dane kóțiíne.
and these young people, as well.

Gwadádó? ajá hëwöch’ii dé.
A long time ago that’s the way it was.

Wôle dé ajá hanaajú’une daánejjítl dé,
Our ancestors survived even though

---

33 The original transcript of Sam Acko’s video narrative at Madáts’atl’oje can be seen in Appendix I, p. 514, and in the Dane Wajich exhibit at:
do we dane ghwêghô?
*people died from starvation.*

Gwadâdôh kénejit dé.
*It was tough back then.*

Wak’was énejit ats’édô.
*It was fiercely cold long ago.*

Ii tl’ôh yâş natlô.
*There was lots of snow.*

Héwôhêh’ê ēdaadlah dêh.
*It was like that; those were hard times.*

Jii Madâts’atlôje giyêhji ii tsêh nââghadéhdêshê.
*They called that place Madâts’atlôje [Snare Hill] and they returned to that place to survive.*

Gii ghadah dane atl’ôjé;
*They put snares around it;*

ii wats’êh hadaa giits’ê’ daayuut êhhaade.
*then they chased the moose there, walking side-by-side.*

Êhhaade ghaadele hadaa giits’ê’ daayuut dé.
*They walked side-by-side to chase the moose off the hill.*

Hadaa daagheluut dé ii wadâádzêih ii ghehdah.
*Every one of them snared moose, and because of that, they were able to eat.*

Atsedôh gúûháâke laa jii dane yaak’êh ghadah
*This is how, a long time ago, people lived on that.*
Gáh elah,
*That was the time,*

Tas éh dane ghadaa dóh gwadóh wólé.
*people survived by using bow and arrows, long ago.*

Ẹ, lhígé,
*And, one time,*

jii sô dane yaagae náájeh.
*some of the people must have been living nearby.*

Dane yaagae náájeh,
*Some people camped nearby,*

hőhch’e háá yask’ih.
*in the winter.*

Yask’ih wólé.
*It was wintertime.*

Èdaadlah è aja kēhjuu hadaa ghazehhelh.
*Times were hard; they could not kill any more moose.*

Hwedah wólìiʔé
*It was around that time*

jii Madáts’atl’ojii giidzhchë déhjiitl.
*that they went to Madáts’atl’ojii [Snare Hill].*

Giidzhchë déhjiitl dé dane lhígé,
*When they went towards it there was one person,*

dane āske alè, āske alè,
*a young person,*
úújo aadah.
who took care of himself well.

Ajuulii dejuu sô ts'eguu ehchuut dah sô mak'eh wôle.
He didn't even bother with women.

Hájii ii mawajeh këjeh, hôhch'e dane.
How pure he was, that person!

Dane k'ôdii dane tááje.
He was young and he lived among them.

Ě juu sô dane éh k'êaadish éh hôhjô,
That man must have travelled with them,

dëlhîgé dane mejii? ajuu úújo.
but there was one person whose mind was not good.

Dane sô ē juu dane k'ôdii aîhe haje lôh sô.
That crazy man accused that young man of touching his wife.

dats'égé? ts'ê núúyuulh,
He had no reason for doing that,

jii dejii? éh.
it was all in his head.

E ē dane,
That person,

aadaa?ajeh hôhch'ii aske aîhe hôhch'e, ehse.
he kept himself clean like that, that young man I mentioned.

Jii dat'sehts'ané? náanne'eh.
He was hiding his chest.
Datsehts'ané? nááñé?eh zóh hopch’ii,
*He kept on hiding his chest like that all the time,*

hopch’ii éh.
*like that.*

Ajuu dane yatsehts’ané? a?eh.
*Still no one saw his chest.*

Jwe matsehts’ané? k’ehłó haada dzisgii!
*On his chest he had the mane of a moose!*

Haadagháá? nááʔo; dane ajuu adaayejííh.
*The moose hair was hanging from his chest; people did not know.*

Guu haada mawajii ii só adaajííh,
*He must have known those clean (spiritual) moose,*

dé dane k’óddi,
*this young man,*

hopch’ii laa wūújó adaadah ajuu juu ts’égguu gae dayaa hopch’ii alè.
*and he took care of himself, and didn’t go near women.*

Ę jii Madáts’atł’ojii,
*And here at Madáts’atł’ojii [Snare Hill],*

só giighadah dašadlu’gh shaltó ahte gwene náádzat.
*they must have set lots of snares around here, all those hunters.*

Giighada dašedlu’gh hopch’e.
*They set snares around it like that.*
Háá go k’óghadék’ún ts’eh sô ahte øhlóghaajiitl ii sô ii.
*Right away they made fire, and it must have been at that time, that they all met together here.*

Naaghetsatl wawe naaghadahgwan ii kúngááh.
*They were wet and they were drying themselves beside a fire.*

Ahte ølhehnaaghèsjiitl háá hadaa ii ghaaduuijiitl dahwólé.
*They all came together again preparing to go toward the moose.*

E’ deh yii
*Right there*

e’ dane hajeloh dats’égé? ts’ë? ajuulii kaa núuyúúlé,
*that man must have wrongfully accused him of fooling around with his wife,*

e’ sô ii.
*it must have been.*

Jii dats’ehtsâné? sô,
*His chest,*

dats’ehtsâné? úújô ii gúh ii.
*that young man must have hidden his chest well.*

Ii naane?eh hóhch’e ii.
*He hid it that way.*

Ajuu daguusje ajuu lhéjojé háále,
*He did not pull his jacket apart,*

ajuu dane yúú?é kaa.
*so people wouldn’t see it.*
Hoȟch’ii eh, gwedzech só,
*It must have been like that,*

jūŋgetśégúh, iıyatsęhtšanii
*with an upward motion, the one who accused him*

yak’wisjé? lhejoje tš’eh hóláa?.
*exposed his chest by ripping open his jacket.*

Dę, “Dóch’e hajelo datšehtš’ané nááne’ê só,” yéhjii e juu.
"*Why is this guy hiding his chest?* he said.

Jwe matšehtšané? k’ih tš’eh hadaa dzisgii náé?aa?.
*Right there, his chest was covered with moose-hump hair, hanging down.*

Hadaa dzisgii laa jii,
*This moose mane,*

hadaa e nawóne kéhtš’ê?.
*was just like the hair on a moose’s hump.*

Ii magháa? nadzéeze náá?ae.
*His hair was long and hanging down.*

Ii laa hadaa dzisgii úúžhe.
*That’s called ‘hadaa dzisgii’, moose mane.*

Hadaa e nawóne kéhtš’ê?.
*It’s just like the hair on a moose’s hump.*

E wats’eh só ajuu maawúújo kéch’eh e.
*After that, he was not very happy.*

Háá hadaa eghaduujelh dé wólę.
*They were going to surround the moose.*
Ii gwadádóh wawọyo dę guune dane,
*Back then those people were wise,*

juuhđzenéh wadeh dane woyone ghaelēh,
*wiser than people today,*

Gwadadane,
*Those people back then,*

yįįįįdóh Dane-zaa,
*our Dane-zaa ancestors,*

hóchh’ii laa juuhđzenéh háákaa ghaşedah.
*were resourceful, that’s why we are still here today.*

E ah sō eht’sezóh giiyéhlhígé dajjii.
*And at that time he said something to his younger brother [to the pure young man].*

Dane hadaa edéhhjii, “Dóchh’ii ajuu mawúújó kéje?”
*When they were chasing the moose, [his brother was thinking] “Why does he look so unhappy?”*

“Ajuu kélii, Dọtsiit méh zóh hááwóhch’e,
“Whatever you do, Stay right with him,

ajuu dọtsiit,” sō yéhjii.
*don't let him go off by himself,” someone told him.*

Hóchh’ii ĺ.
*It must have been like that.*

Ii háá ewats’ēh hadaa eghadéhhjiiitl, yeʔedé hóchh’e̱h yeʔech’e̱h hóchh’e̱h.
*At that point, when they started chasing the moose, his brother stayed close to him.*
Yeʔech’eh hóhch’ii ajuu yadaʔsiit hóhch’e.
*He was right with him; he never let him go.*

Háá jo ehtsezoh guu naade sô.
*All of a sudden, right in front of them,*

hadaa taawadéhsat jii.
*the moose all ran off;*

Jii lhígé ehchaage guts’egúh hadaa taawadéhsat úh.
*One moose and then another separated from the rest of the herd and started to run away.*

“Jii naade ustlé. Juude jii naade nêtleh,”
*“I’m going to go around this way really fast. You go around that way and turn the moose around,”*

yéhjii juude sô yaanewóʔoh,
*he said [the younger brother to his older brother]. Everything happened so quickly,*

ê wanehuude juude yanáčaak.
*the young man was able to fool his brother who was trying to stay close to him.*

Juude yanáčaak hóhch’ii.
*He fooled him.*

Jii lhígé déhsô ade lhígé déhsô dê.
*While the young brother ran after one moose, his older brother ran after the other one.*

Ii wats’eh zôh najwé.
*Then he was gone.*
Everyone was chasing the moose.

Then when they went toward them, there weren’t any moose.

"What happened?" they asked.

No one had snared any moose.

Then they all got together, all of them except for the younger brother.

He was gone.

From there, they went back to that place.

That's where he took off from his older brother.

They were looking over there, where he had chased that moose,
They followed his tracks to where his clothes were lying on the ground,

and then all of a sudden, a moose took off.

When he turned into a moose, he quickly went among the other moose.

He went around to the edge of where all the other moose were, and they went with him,

somewhere there was an opening.

There he ran into the snares, pushing them out of the way and all the moose followed.

That's what happened, in this story.

Right behind me in the picture [video]

is Madáts'atl'ọje [Snare Hill].

This is the main story about this area.

Today, people tell stories about this area when they get together.
Háá jii zóh wajich só méhjii jò sò dane ajii.
This story must be about this place.

Jò laa dane k’e laa hadaa aajáá;
Right here, a man turned into a moose that day;

júhdzenéh kuuts’ajiih háá gwii laa wólę enúúdle.
today we believe that’s how it was.

Æ jii, jii
And this, this,

mawajijé? jii hadaa aaje.
this is his story, the story about that man who became a moose.

Nadègeže lọ.
It’s long.

Méh nahewajiché dah hóch’e lholaade hóch’ii.
I’m going to talk to you guys about these stories, like this, one after another.

Taahdajuu damòdage náyech’ese hóch’ii lholaade.
Once in a while, his brother would see him like that, now and again.

Méh wajich naadžës lòh hóchh’ii lhédóh.
His story is really long.

Walōh ts’ê? ajuu wŏdah ts’ê? nááyaachëh,
In the end, he didn’t see his brother anymore,

towards the end of story of the moose.

Hójijii elaa juh’dzenéh,
That is why today,
dane yataah néhyah eh  
*there are still moose,*

jii hadaa nahhaagáah néhyaa.  
*because he went amongst them.  
*[If they had all been killed there wouldn’t be any today]*

jii hadaa nahhaagáah néhyaa aja dane yaaghadaaghò.  
*There are moose standing beside us, yet no man will kill them all.  
*[Because of that man who joined the moose and showed them man's ways, today people are not able to kill all the moose]*

Ii t’ôh, dane yékáédaa hónch’ii de juuhdzenéh hadaa  
*After that, today people hunt moose.*

Êhts’ii, k’ehts’è? dane wehtsan aak’e k’ëaagoch hónche.  
*If you are following a moose out in the bush, don’t approach from upwind because it circles back on its trail and will smell you.*  
(S. Acko 2007 [2005]-b)

Sam Acko’s narrative emphasizes the centrality of *Madáts’atl’ọje* to the survival of Dane-zaa people. Without the resourcefulness and knowledge of their ancestors, as evidenced by those who came to *Madáts’atl’ọje* in hard times to snare moose, contemporary communities would not have survived. With the slope of *Madáts’atl’ọje* visible behind Sam in the video recording of this narrative, he makes the explicit connection between survival and this particular place.

Sam Acko’s narrative is also one of an individual’s negotiation of their medicine power. He alludes to some of the protocols of privacy and respect that the protection and management of medicine power required, such as abstinence and keeping evidence
of moose power—the shaggy moose’s mane on the man’s chest—always hidden from view. The violation of this man’s privacy—the exposure of the moose mane on his chest by a jealous hunter—results in the pure man’s abandonment of his human form. He transforms himself into a moose and he guides the rest of the moose through the suround of snares, forever enabling moose to elude Dane-zaa hunters and maintain their populations. He also ensures that moose, endowed with the knowledge of escaping from hunters, will forever be available for Dane-zaa hunters in hard times.

In the *Dane Wajich* exhibit, Sam Acko’s video narrative is contextualized by other media. Photographs of the video production process document the listening audience, seated in camp chairs and on spruce boughs along a seismic cut line at *Madáts’atl’oje*. The tea kettle boils over a fire in the center of the cut. The video crew is shown in the process of filming Sam Acko, and later, at an industrial site a little distance away, Tommy Attachie, who talks about the impact of industrialization on Dane-zaa lands. Margaret Attachie is shown standing with Robin and Charmayne in front of a massive gas processing plant.

As at *Alááʔ Sát̓op* (Petersen’s Crossing), the video narratives are co-present with archival recordings of *nááché* songs. One is a recording made by Robin Ridington at the memorial Tea Dance for Anno Davis at Doig River in 1969. In it the late Billy Makadahay sings a song that was dreamed by the *nááché Adishtl’íshe*.34 In the course of the *Dane Wajich* exhibit production, Tommy Attachie told Amber Ridington and me that this song was often used in difficult times of cold weather to bring warm weather.

back. As *Madáts’atl’óje* was central to the survival of Dane-zaa people in difficult times, so *Adísht’íshe*’s song was also used to pray for better weather conditions and the procurement of food that was essential for survival.

Another song co-present with Sam Acko’s narrative was also recorded by Robin Ridington, this time in 1979. In it the late Charlie Dominic\(^{35}\) performs the same “hard times” song by the *nááchê* *Adísht’íshe*. This song, and Billy Makadahay’s 1969 performance of the song, were both included in the Doig River First Nation’s CD *Dane-zaa Dreamers’ Songs 1966-2000 Volume I– Suu Na chii K’chi ge “The Place Where Happiness Dwells”* (Oker et al. 2004b; tracks 18 and 19). These songs were chosen for the *Dane Wajich* exhibit to reflect both the significance of *nááchê* and their songs in times of hardship. These archival recordings were remediated in the *Dane Wajich* exhibit to reflect the ongoing importance of oral tradition and place for contemporary Dane-zaa communities. In the context of *Madáts’atl’óje*, these songs, oral traditions, and their continued performance, emphasize the significance of specific places for the survival of Dane-zaa communities in hard times.

Finally, Tommy Attachie’s video narrative, which was recorded at the site of an oil and gas development close to *Madáts’atl’óje*, describes the difficulties—‘hard times’ of another kind—brought about by the industrialization of Dane-zaa land. As Tommy said he would do in the first community planning meetings, he talked about what he remembered life being like as a child, and how things have changed. He discussed the relentless extraction of oil, gas, and forests from the area around *Madáts’atl’óje*, and his

\(^{35}\) An image and short biography of Charlie Dominic can found in Appendix I, p. 389, and in online in the *Dane Wajich* exhibit at:  
concern about what will be left for future generations. The juxtaposition of this video with the *nááchę Adishtl’íshe’s* “hard times” song, and Sam Acko’s beautiful telling of “The Man Who Turned into a Moose” at *Mádáts’atl’ọje*, suggest that oral and song traditions will be a source of strength and resilience into the future, and that political maneuvering, strong leadership, and negotiation with industry and government are important tools in the struggle to alleviate these “hard times”. “These younger people will live,” he says, “It is for them that I talk” (T. Attachie 2007 [2005]-d).

**Tommy Attachie at *Mádáts’atl’ọje*³⁶**

I was, ah, forty-seven years ago, I was in here.
Today I sitting here, July one, year 2005.
Forty-seven years ago, I see different things up there.
Everything quiet.
Maybe once in a while you see a plane go through.
And there’s nothing here.
Nice and peace.

And I was in here, you know.
Today is July one.
This land at Snaring Hill, highways all around it;
west, northwest, and south, northeast.
And I’m straight west from Lady[fern], that Snaring Hill [area], now.

And today, forty-seven years ago,
seems, seems not too long.
Talk just what we see here.

³⁶ Tommy Attachie’s video narrative at *Mádáts’atl’ọje* can be viewed at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/video.php?action=fla/tasnarehill. The original transcript can be seen in Appendix I, p. 531.
They turned everything upside-down.
All these thing we see.
Nothing left.

And [once] they finish on top of this earth,
they start under it.
They’re gonna’ fly from Alaska,
they’re gonna’ take a big pipeline,
right to Chicago somewhere.

All this, even this beside me here,
oil well,
is gonna’ go to Chicago.
‘Cause uh, all these little ones [oil wells] join together,
they’re gonna’ empty under [the land], you know.
That’s where the money is.

They take it under from our back,
and they take ‘em to Chicago.
After they finish everything,
what about these girls?
They’re growing.
Now look, they help us in here [as video crew].
It’s for them I talk.

After they get everything,
empty this under [under the ground].
Some of them already got enough money,
too much money.
They just go to Hawaii or elsewhere.
They just live nice life.

And us, in little reserves, still struggling.
What about these younger ones,
and my age, maybe thirties?
Be nothing left.
Everything, come highways through.
No gas. If then we buy, these younger ones growing up, buy gas;
maybe be five dollars a gallon, a liter!
They take it now, you know.
Forty-seven years ago, I was here;
look what, what happened now.

They open our eyes.
Then, that’s a real thing, you know.
Then, I think for the future.
It’s starting heading that way,
that’s why we gotta’ put the brakes.
Stay there, hold ‘em back.

We gotta’ negotiate it, everything.
Tell them what we want and then, you know,
then everything will come in place.
Where the big space there [at Doig’s Cultural and Administrative Centre],
you know, some good ones [leaders],
falling in place like that, all become one.
That’s what, that’s what I want.

Before, us Native people are forgiving people.
What people do to us,
we, we don’t care.
We pray for them,
we just keep going.
‘Till now, they open our eyes.
These younger people will, will live.
It is for them I talk.
I am only Grade Three, but I can talk.
For end of story.
(T. Attachie 2007 [2005]-d)
Sweeney Creek

On July 2nd, we met at noon at the Doig River Band Hall to organize our video equipment and prepare for our field trip. That day our group was made up of elders Tommy Attachie, Rosie Field, Sam Acko, and Billy Attachie, as well as Eddie Apsassin and Howard Attachie, youth video producers Charmayne Brinkworth and Brittany Brinkworth, and Pat Moore, Amber Ridington, and myself. Two pick-up trucks arrived loaded with quads—the four-wheel all-terrain vehicles that are so often used for transportation around the reserve, and for hunting explorations into the bush. These would be used by participants who would be unable to walk the distance into the day’s film location, a place called Sweeney Creek, across the border in Alberta.

An hour later, our convoy of trucks began the trip out of Doig and into the back country. We drove eastward past large grassy pastures and pipelines. All the while, there was discussion of place. We drove through back roads and past familiar landmarks—a white painted boulder, and a place called Broomfield Creek, which had been named after the sound documentarian Howard Broomfield, who used to like to bathe there when he was camping with Dane-zaa people nearby. As we drove through a denser forested area, Sam Acko pointed out a hill called K’íhtsaaʔdze, meaning “really old”. This hill, covered in unusually large fir trees, is described as a spiritual place. More recently, I asked Sam directly about K’íhtsaaʔdze’s spiritual nature. I was quickly admonished, in Sam’s gentle way: “Some people are pretty nosy!” I did learn, though, that K’íhtsaaʔdze somehow escaped being burned in a massive forest fire in the early

37 Learn more about Sweeney Creek in Appendix I, p. 425, and at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/sweeney_creek.php
1950s that tragically killed many Dane-zaa people. Lately, oil and gas companies have been drilling into it to tap the mineral resources.

Somewhere along the way, we crossed the provincial border into Alberta. This border is not marked, and the Dane-zaa leaders of the excursion took no notice. After two hours of driving, we pulled off onto the road’s grassy shoulder. Tommy Attachie walked over to the car I was riding in, and Pat Moore, seated in the front, rolled down the window. Tommy showed us a book of printed maps of the area, pointing out Sweeney Creek at the confluence of MacLean’s and Wolfe creeks. The rest of the group unloaded themselves and the equipment from the cars. There was the rumbling of an engine in the distance, and then Trevor Makadahay’s massive grey monster truck rolled into view. Trevor was accompanied by his girlfriend Jennifer, his cousin Kevin Attachie, and his uncle Howard Attachie. They were out for a drive, maybe looking for moose. They stopped to chat, and eventually rumbled back down the road. This chance meeting, hours away from Doig River, reminded me of how familiar this area was for many people from Doig.

Walking sticks were procured from the bush nearby, the quads were unloaded from the back of the trucks, and we set off walking and motoring along a seismic cut line towards the old wagon road. This road, Tommy Attachie later explained, was once the main route between the Fort St. John area and Beaver and Slavey reserves in northern Alberta. This had been the route taken by prophets like Gaaye ga as they hunted, dreamed, and spent time with people. Robin Ridington featured this road in a beautiful piece of writing about the young Tommy Attachie (R. Ridington 1985).
The road soon opened up into a large grassy plateau, warm with the afternoon sun. In the valley just below us, streams flowed together, grasses waved in the breeze, and it seemed that at any moment a moose could wander through this verdant, quiet setting. We began to unpack our camera equipment, and Tommy Attachie sat down in a folding camp chair, facing the old wagon trail, his back to the valley. Peter, Amber, and I worked with the video crew as they set up their shot, checking sound levels, and making sure that the valley and creeks were visible in the frame behind Tommy. Sam, Eddie, and Billy watched from their seats on the quads, and Rosie sat in a chair, waving bugs away with a small green branch. When everyone seemed ready, Tommy Attachie told two important stories in Dane-zaa Záágéʔ to the group that articulated the relationship of Sweeney Creek to Dane-zaa nááchë, proper moral behaviour, and the ongoing practice of nááchë drumming and singing traditions at the Doig River First Nation today.

In the first narrative recorded that day, Tommy Attachie describes how Dane-zaa people used to travel from all directions along the old wagon road to camp at Sweeney Creek. He talks about how the landscape has changed, how the growth of trees has altered what can be seen from this place, and how plentiful the game used to be here. He talks about how dreamers used to gather at Sweeney Creek, and how people would visit with them for moral guidance, to be told “how to live.” Tommy Attachie, recalling what the late Charlie Dominic had told him, tells the story of how the nááchë Gaayëʔ dreamed a song at Sweeney Creek known today at Doig River as the “Prairie Chicken Song”. Tommy also tells how one winter Gaayëʔ dreamed the song Suunéch’ii Kéch’iige
(‘The Place Where Happiness Dwells’), and based on this, other dreamers predicted that 
Gaaye’ would eventually die at that place at the summer dance grounds at Montney.

In the second narrative that I present here, Tommy Attachie describes how the 
náách’e Makéts’awéswa’, whose name is translated as ‘If He Leaves Things, That’s the 
Way They Would Be,’ became a dreamer at Sweeney Creek. He tells how
Makéts’awéswa’ and his wife were out snaring rabbits, when a single bullet was fired at
them. The bullet miraculously passed through Makéts’awéswa’, but it killed his wife.
Later, in a dream, Makéts’awéswa’ learns that the bullet was meant to kill him so that
his wife could re-join the shooter, who had been her former husband. It was after that
event, Tommy explains, that Makéts’awéswa’ became a dreamer. His physical transition
to náách’e, and the protocols of care and respect shown by the Dane-zaa people around
him to support this transition, echoes stories of the first dreamer, Makénúúnatane (see
the transcription of Gerry Attachie’s narrative in Chapter Two).

Tommy Attachie at Sweeney Creek: Gaaye’a’s “Prairie Chicken Song”

Dane-zaa Zááge’i.
*I’ll speak in the Dane-zaa language.*

Sę, dane jeh dáąąasdaa dök kwadó dökch’e, kénašjiих dökch’e.
*Ever since I could remember, I sat up behind people [in the saddle on
horseback].*

---

38 Tommy Attachie’s video narrative of Gaaye’a’s “Prairie Chicken Song” at Sweeney
Creek can viewed in the context of the Dane Wajich Exhibit at:
The original transcript can be seen in Appendix I, p. 534.
Júúhje Chuu Dehgas dę wadzeh gwe dane tsédzeh náejich jọ Sweeney Creek dane náájiich.

*From Black Water, people used to move down to Sweeney Creek.*

Dane náejiihé júúhje;

*People were moving back this way;*

jọ yaadné ghadaajiihe gwadzé?

*they were moving back this way*

Ch’ǫné? Zaahgé? ghajii dah,

towards Ch’ǫné? Zaahgé? [Wolf River],

ę dane néjii.

*that’s where people camped.*

Ę wats’eh dane chejii e yii Ole Lake koh,

*From there, people moved again, through Ole Lake,*

ę Moose Creek wats’eh Cecil Lake koh.

*and from Moose Creek, through to Cecil Lake.*

Gwe dane wats’eh dôhchê ọso ge náájiich. Kénasjiih.

*I remember people always used to travel around that way.*

Tôhchêdôhjii, jii highway háá tôhchêdô aadlaa?.

*This highway was made a long time ago.*

Ii aadzeh jii wagon trail alê áádażé.

*Before that, it was a wagon trail.*

Háá lhêlô highway aadlaa?. Kénasjiih.

*And then finally, the highway was built. I remember that.*
Jii laa *Hines Creek Road* giiyéhjii júúhjii tane.

*They call this the Hines Creek Road.*

Háákaa wadzéh dóh juu lhígé aatlaa?.

*Another one [road] was built before that.*

1947, 1947, 1947, *in* 1947,

*guuuh núúdlii laa gwatsii McCarty Line* ghiiyéhjii aatlaa?.

*it must have been at that time that the bush road they call the McCarty Line was made.*

Lhét’óh *Hines Creek jó wats’èh*.

*It went from here to Hines Creek.*

É kénsji’ih juuh hwéhwá zóh kedaache gwats’èh dóh.

*I remember, you used to be able to see a long ways, now you can only see a short distance [because of the trees].*

Juuneh ts’édáah ghanayeh héh háákaa wats’èhdo.

*The children were growing up here even before that.*

Jó dane néjiih héh.

*People moved here [to Sweeney Creek] at that time.*

Wagons, *everything*,

háá wagons wólę juu.

*there were already wagons.*

Jó dane néjiih héh.

*People moved here at that time.*
Gọ yíjéh natọkwè wólę ts'ęh wats'ęh aahı̨ tága tó wá.
*Back there, you could see all the way to that cabin.*

Júúhje šiskatsę zó̯̱h gat nachii alę, 
*The only place where you would see big spruce was on that big hill,*

júúhje juu.
*and over here, too.*

E jëdząq hadaa naaghaagole dah giyaaʔéda dah háá,
*Whenever they would see a moose walking across over there,*

gii—giits'ę? dadle hé, hadaa ghažéhelh.
*they went toward it, and killed it.*

Jii tł'uk nachii alę menasjihi, tó̯̱hchedóh.
*I remember this used to be a big prairie, long ago.*

E gwadż professor gwadódzéh ę dane náádaalhde júúhji kwá nááđááwísʔah dëh, kedaadaajéh, 
*When a person walked down from the hill, they could see all of the tipis standing upright there,*

Charlie Dominic ę séhjii.
*the late Charlie Dominic told me.*

“Guulaa hááwaawoč'ęʔ, e jūu nááwanéhzhó,” éhjii.
“That's the way it used to be here, now everything has grown up again,” he [Charlie Dominic] said.

1970 ii hestlah ii hehnaawajęh.
*1970 was the last time he went to see that place with us.*
Hats'ané? yédéh gédzadich, truck éh nahélaa.
Someone brought us up there by truck, and then we walked around on foot.

“Ach’uu wólę,” éhjii.
“It’s different now,” he said.

Got’óh háátł’uk t’uk zóh alčę, t’uk hádaaséhk’áse,
Long ago it was only an open meadow, the grass was this tall,
guu dachin dahdaašaʔó.
and there were trees scattered here and there.

Jéyó naaghaagol dé háá dzezhelh.
When a bull moose was crossing that big opening, we would kill it then.

Háágaa wóhdaadzhí jii atanii alčę.
Even back then there was a trail here.

Gaayę́guu nááchesne ḋlhonaaaghadesh dé got’óts’ę́.
When Gaayę́ was a Dreamer, he came together with all the other Dreamers here, long ago.

Jii nan lhéťóh wúújó nághaneʔó.
They put everything on this land [people’s values] in good order.

Háá júúhje hestlah tóhche, dane wúújó nuuke kaa.
Even people coming from far away they would enlighten [about how to be good].

Háá dane úújó nááje ḋ.
Even people who were already living well.

Háágaa dane duujii kaa.
He still wanted to tell them about how to live.
Jwe dajii úh hôheh’e Gaayę́ą́ daghats’égé? we,
He moved around like that. Gaayę́ą́ and his wife must have camped together here,

háá chuudah sō gúlé yétsédzhə́e gúlé juude nédah.
down by the creek; maybe he camped here.

Nadahe dahwesadze gah wache? neghenedah.
Right where the prairie chickens were dancing, that’s where he set up camp.

Háá guushin Nahhatááʔō t’sēh,
Those songs came from God,

háá sō juuhjii t’sēʔ edaawajih kaa.
they must have been for us to learn from today.

Nedahe dah wesats wageʔ neghanedah,
They camped right where the prairie chickens usually danced,

ę́ háléth’ōh, háléth’ōh, aajen.
And in the morning, in the morning, he sang.

Ii nedahe yinhéʔáá dahwesadze wats’ęyaah.
He brought out that prairie chicken song.

“E dats’égéʔ t’sēʔ ii dahwesadze wats’ęyaah,” éhjii.
“Go to where the prairie chickens are dancing,” he told his wife.

Háá e wats’ęʔ yaadeh,
When she got there,

ę́ neyaadeh, hájé yegáah naadéh yegáah naadéh.
when she got there, the prairie chickens just flocked to her.
While her husband was singing that prairie chicken song, she started dancing.

The prairie chickens were dancing even under her dress, swirling around and around.

That's what people say.

Even the animals had their own song.

The Dreamers were the ones who set this land straight, people said.

Even though people were living far away, he would travel great distances to reach them.

Then one time in winter,

during the time of stories,

he brought out a song that had come to him.

This place where you go to [each summer],

you will go to its end; maybe you will die there,” they said.
“‘E júúhje guutaah aja wawódáá sè, e júúhje dane nááchę ehłene taahdzé? ajuu awódáá sè,’

“You will die over there amongst the people and the Dreamers,’

dane séhjii,

_people told me,

éhjii laa,” giyéhjii.

_That’s what people told me,” he said._

Ii éh, háá ii dę́ sô Dane-zaa nané? k’eh gúlé je sô ēhdę́ núúdlìi.

_There, that place must be on Dane-zaa land, maybe at that place [Montney Prairie]._

Adegéh dane čeʔadlı́i úúh.

_People really prayed._

Guune nááchesne ēhlh̓ náághadesh

_Those Dreamers came together_

adégeh cheghaʔadlı́i éh.

_and really prayed._

“Ēhdę́ núúdlìi Sunéch’ii Kéch’iige,”

_“It must be at Sunéch’ii Kéch’iige [Dance Grounds at Montney Prairie] [where you will die],”_

wēhjii dane yéhjii.

_that’s what they told him._

Ii shin, juuhdženéh háágaa méhts’ajin.

_We still sing that song today._
Edę dane ḋénéh daayaahéh,
*People met there,*

dane ahže ghadaa ʔúújǫ.
*and they were all happy.*

Ii sô dane ahdaaghajíh ô ʔii shin kęʔaadlaa?.
*Those people must have known about that song.*

Haje hááje every year hóhch’hii, háá walǫh ts’ę¿.
*Each summer he did that [went there], towards the end.*

Nááchesne ghet’ǫ dóh,
*When there were still many Dreamers, [he said],*

“Ajuulii,
“*There will be nothing,*” [no Dreamers]

nááchesne,” natlǫ dép.
*[he told them that] when the Dreamers were still numerous.*

“Ǫkechíne nahhagááh haawúʔáážé,
“*Only two Dreamers will be with us,*

nááchesne wajwé éhsé,” ghajii.
*when the other Dreamers are gone,” they said.*

Ii ghajii éh.
*They predicted that.*

“ Háá čhdę sô,” Oker sô ts’ę¿ ę́hjii
“*It must be there,*” he said to Oker.
“Satl’qh wawqdaa sê,” éhjii
“After me, you will look after the people,” he said.

“Éhdę sô sachęh ô edaawajiíh ô,”
“I must have known about it even while I was sleeping,” he said.

Aje kéhwolę kuujii, ii adaajii.
He told him that he had doubted whether his dream was real.

Ii Charlie Yahey, Oker fifties aja ghadah.
Charlie Yahey and Oker were both Dreamers; Oker died in the 1950s.

Charlie Yahey seventies ii 1970 watl’q,
Charlie Yahey died after 1970.

Seventy-four godah enúúdlìi.
around 1974.

Aja ghadah, ii juu.
He died, too.

Ii ghadah! Nááchesne natl’q nejwé jáá?.
Look at that! Lots of those Dreamers died.

Háá ǫkech’ine háághes?aadzé.
Then, two of them were left.

Lhígé zq’h héstlah.
There was only one at the end.

Háá ii laa nááchesne gweghaajii dah juu?.
Long ago the Dreamers talked about this time when there would be no Dreamers.
“Héé háákaa waze t’ôh Makenúunatane nene
“Still further back, Makenúunatane and

Makéts’awéswqá,” yéhjii.
Makéts’awéswqá were Dreamers,” he said.

Náághaches dôh, gwat’ôh juu.
There were Dreamers, even way back then.
(T. Attachie 2007 [2005]-e)

Tommy Attachie at Sweeney Creek: The Dreamer *Makéts’awéswqá* 39

Júúhje lhígé náêchê,
*There was a Dreamer over this way,*

Makéts’awéswqá laa úúye.
*who was called Makéts’awéswqá.*

Dane sô,
*That man, must have been,*

dane mats’égéwé gaah wôh daaghêt’ôh sô,
*that man must have been setting snares for rabbits with his wife,*

dane sô yúúnet’úúk eh.
*when someone shot him.*

39 Tommy Attachie’s video narrative of *Makéts’awéswqá* at Sweeney Creek can be viewed in the *Dane Wajich* exhibit at:
The original transcript is in Appendix I, p. 546.
Ehťuuh yaʔotsʼé? déhtl'aa,  
*The bullet went right through him,*

Mak'wisje ghaawōoko.  
*making a hole in his jacket.*

Ehťúúh yaʔotsʼé? déhtl'aa.  
*The bullet went right through him.*

Waʔonétsʼé? mats'égé  
*His wife, who was sitting on the other side of him*

daah woh danaaghat'ũu ēhlhēh.  
*resetting rabbit snares, was killed instead of him.*

Ii zēhheʔ.  
*Someone killed her.*

E wadžeh sõ iī dane ká̱naataah hó̱chh'e.  
*From then on he [Makéts'awéswa] was looking for that man.*

E hóchh'ií zõh walõh tšéʔ?.  
*He kept on like that until the end.*

Neschę kō ná̱sachę:  
*He went to sleep and dreamed*

mats'égéʔ aadzhé yélénéʔ.  
*that his wife had been that other guy’s wife.*

“Nahhaazéhhiiʔ tl'q  
“They were going to kill you and afterwards,*
that woman was to return to him. That's what they had planned to do,” he was told.

Dane yēhjii.
Someone told him that [in his dream].

“Ě mats'égé? kaa mēwanaatl'āá?.
“What she had planned for you happened to her instead.

Aadzēh mats'égé? yelhē laa.
She had been his wife before.

Naelaah nahghaʔo laa,
That bullet was meant for you,

ajuu laa nagháá laa sô,”
but they didn't hurt you,”

dane yēhjii.
somebody told him [in his dream].

Ě wadze sô náádadéšche.
From there, he started dreaming.

Lhégé sô nēšchēh; lhédō zōh.
One time he fell into a really deep sleep.

Hájé jō dazōh wawadah
His chest was only moving slightly

ajuu ajije wūújo.
and he was not breathing very well.
They cleaned a place in the bush and looked after him there;

they were wise long ago.

“Let’s see what happens, make sure the dogs don’t make any noise,” they said.

They muzzled the many dogs that they had.

They kept him alone, attending to him diligently.

One after another, they watched over him.

They spent two nights with him.

Five days, they spent five days with him,

and that’s what happened.

He layed there for a long time, and carefully they would roll him into a different position.

They watched over him like that.
Háá īi deh āo zhōh wawadaah ahte hōhch'ii.
*He was barely alive all that time.*

Háá lhētōh *eight days* awejah.
*Finally it had been eight days.*

Wūújo kemaahs'ę? guune
*They put him in a good clean place*

dane woyōne dane chis alēne sō.
*and there was an old wise man there.*

Lhets'edaa giigáah dehts'ii giyaadah.
*Once in a while, they would sit beside him and look after him.*

Háá hōhch'ii zhōh *nine days* awejáā dē.
*Nine days had passed like that.*

Giigáah déhțse eh
*They were sitting there with him*

ehțs'ęzo,
*when suddenly,*

wōhch'e ajich aadaachilh.
*he started to breathe more strongly.*

E sō giigaahtaah ē juu,
*As they watched him,*

ajich aanaajaaʔ.
*he started breathing strongly again.*

Háá ēhđe wat's'ęh sō ii giigáah déhțsii zhōh,
*They continued to sit beside him,*
háa guugááh sô jiijígenáánesdaah.

*and then he sat up.*

Ii dê sô,

*And right there,*

guutaah wák’adanetaah úújône sô k’ahtaah.

*as he was looking at them, he saw who the good people were.*

Ii wats’êh sô chuú giiyékôh;

*They gave him water to drink;*

juugii dzìiwe ehdaachaat ehghatsaʔish hóhch’ii.

*and they were massaging his ears [to wake him].*

Háa naaayadéheh’ê hóhch’ii.

*He opened his eyes.*

“Guugááh ts’ejígenaanesdaa déh sô.

“I must have sat up again with them then.*

Gô wôlé laa,” sô guuyéhjii.

*It must have been over there,” he told them.*

“‘Jôde tsaaghaahdaa k’alakéti dzeneh,’ daahjiih.

“‘You were barely alive for nine days,’ you said.*

Jô wats’êh dës?at dehgo.

*From here I floated over there.*

Hájé gô nîiyaa.

*I must have just gotten there,*

Haje lhígé nááchesne laa ghasdlé.

*when I saw one Dreamer*
‘Hee tōhchets’eh wodezat,’
‘A long time has gone by,’

dane séhjiı.
someone told me.

Hájé ii delaah k’aajuu t’aahnadêzhaa.
And right then, I started back.

‘Nine days,’ sadaahjii.”
‘Nine days,’ you told me,” [Makéts’awéswa’aa said].

Ii Makéts’awéswa’aa, ii juu,
That Makéts’awéswa’aa, him too,

ii juu nááchįı.
he was a Dreamer as well.

Nine days ajuu ghadah,
He died for nine days,

ê laa juu mayiné? natluu juuhdzenéh ii ts’ajin.
and we still sing many of his songs today.
(T. Attachie 2007 [2005]-f)

Tommy Attachie’s narratives are rich with detail about the historical, practical, and moral connections between Sweeney Creek and generations of Dane-zaa nááchįı and people. He describes Sweeney Creek as a gathering place for nááchįı and Dane-zaa families, where nááchįı would set the world in good order. It is a place that not only figured in the transmission of ideas of proper moral behaviour from nááchįı to people, but in the continuity of practices of the nááchįı themselves, as exemplified by the story of Makéts’awéswa’aa becoming a dreamer at Sweeney Creek, and by Gaayę́a receiving
both the ‘Prairie Chicken’ song and *Suunéch’ii Kéch’ii* song there. Tommy Attachie describes the importance of proper protocols of respect that were afforded to *Makéts’awésw’a* as he slept, barely alive, for nine days. Dogs were muzzled, people sat with him, and helped him to come back to “life” when he was ready. Tommy seems to suggest that the proper actions of the people helped *Makéts’awésw’a* to make his transition from hunter to nááché.

Sweeney Creek, and the families and animals that gathered there, created conditions suitable for dreaming. *Gaayeqa* dreamed the ‘Prairie Chicken’ song after he made camp where prairie chickens were dancing. Further, Tommy Attachie describes the role of *Gaayeqa*’s wife, who danced with prairie chickens at Sweeney Creek as *Gaayeqa* sang the song he dreamed the night before. She danced to the song with the prairie chickens as *Gaayeqa* fixed the song he had dreamed in his memory for future generations. Tommy Attachie eloquently and methodically articulates the role of this place in safeguarding these elements of Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage.

In the *Dane Wajich* virtual exhibit, Tommy Attachie’s video narratives are co-present with other media related to Sweeney Creek and the nááché who were connected to that place. One is a video that I recorded with Amy Acko, an occasional member of the youth documentary team, of elder Margaret Attachie in her home at Doig River. In the video, Margaret talks about what it was like to camp in the summer at Sweeney Creek. As she speaks, she sews a pair of moose hide moccasins that she has

---

40 The video of Margaret Attachie talking about Sweeney Creek can be seen in the *Dane Wajich* exhibit at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/video.php?action=fla/margaretsweeney

The original transcript is in Appendix I, p. 555.
made entirely by hand. She has stretched, fleshed, scraped, and smoked the moose hide by herself. She has hand-beaded the moccasin tongues with delicate, colorful prairie flowers. She recalls how groups of women would work together at Sweeney Creek to make dry meat. They would also work in groups to process moose hides and turn them into moccasins and clothing that they would trade with settlers for food staples (M. Attachie 2007 [2005]). As it was when she was a young woman camping at Sweeney Creek, Margaret continues to supplement her income by processing moose hides and making beautiful moose hide moccasins, mukluks, and clothing. Margaret’s narrative describes the essential work that women carried out when camped with their families at places like Sweeney Creek—drying meat, making moose hides and clothing, and generating cash for food and other necessities. These are likely the activities that Gaaye’a’s wife would have engaged in at Sweeney Creek, in addition to helping her husband remember the ‘Prairie Chicken’ song the morning after he brought it back in his dreams.

Tommy Attachie and Margaret Attachie’s video narratives on the Sweeney Creek page of the Dane Wajich exhibit are also contextualized by three song recordings. The first is of Albert Askoty singing Gaaye’a’s ‘Prairie Chicken’ song, recorded by Garry Oker in 2004. Albert’s voice is strong and clear as he sings this song that, as Tommy described, was first dreamed at Sweeney Creek. Amber Ridington recorded the second song at a rodeo weekend Tea Dance in July 2004, at which Tommy Attachie and the Doig River Drummers also performed Gaaye’a’s ‘Prairie Chicken’

41 Albert Askoty’s 1994 performance of Gaaye’a’s “Prairie Chicken” song can be heard in the Dane Wajich exhibit at:
song. Their performance demonstrates continuity of the knowledge of the song and its use in Dane-zaa cultural practice; indeed, Albert Askoty passed the role of song keeper to Tommy Attachie, who is now responsible for teaching nááchê songs, and narratives of their provenance, to younger drummers and singers. This third song on the Sweeney Creek exhibit page was recorded at the same Tea Dance in July of 2004. Lead singer Tommy Attachie and the Doig River Drummers perform a song that was dreamed by the nááchê Makéts’awéswəa, who became a dreamer at Sweeney Creek.43

The Sweeney Creek area has been one focus of the Doig River First Nation’s Treaty Land Entitlement Negotiations with the federal government. The Doig River First Nations’ remediation of these multimedia expressions of Dane-zaa culture and history once again emphasize the inalienability of tangible, intangible, and natural forms of heritage, and their continued significance for the people of the Doig River First Nation.


**Alédzé Tsáá (Alédzé Creek)** and **Ṯsazuulh Saahgáe (‘Big Camp’)**

In the early afternoon of July 3rd, our group drove north out of the Doig River reserve in the direction of an area and natural gas facility known as PeeJay. From there we would drive to Alédzé Tsáá, the area around a creek named after the prophet Alédzé, and then to Ṯsazuulh Saahgáe, known as “Big Camp” in English. Elders Tommy Attachie, Billy Attachie, Sam Acko and Rosie Field rode in the Doig River van, with Eddie Apsassin at the wheel. Howard Attachie came along, as he had on our trip to Sweeney Creek the day before. The youth video crew that day was made up of Starr Acko, Brittany Brinkworth, and Charmayne Brinkworth. Peter Biella, Pat Moore, Julia Miller, Amber Ridington and I continued to document the production process, log the video production, and support the youth media producers.

We parked our vehicles at the bottom of a long sloping road that led us into the basin of Alédzé Tsáá. The valley that this creek flows through was bursting with green foliage and gently flowing water. After some discussion of where the video equipment should be set up, Sam Acko pulled out his machete and started cutting a trail up a steep hill towards a small flat ridge that overlooked the creek. We picked up our packs and camera bags, and formed a line behind him. I walked just behind Billy

---


45 More information on Ṯsazuulh Saahgáe can be found in Appendix I, p. 431, and on its page in the *Dane Wajich* exhibit at: [http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/big_camp.php](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/big_camp.php)
Attachie, who nimbly navigated the clinging weeds and uneven rocky ground with his crutches. As I tried not to step on the small sharp stumps of saplings left behind by Sam’s machete, I noticed that Billy was even steadier on his feet than I was. He barely paused to rest until he had reached the top of the hill.

Sam continued to clear away the small trees that interfered with our view of the creek and the stretch of valley beyond. As Starr, Brittany, and Charmayne unpacked the recording equipment, one of them remarked at how tiring it was to hold the boom microphone still for such long periods of time. Moments later, Sam Acko, who must have heard this comment as he cut back branches, presented the girls with a small green branch that he pressed into the ground at Tommy Attachie’s feet. It had been cut so that the microphone boom could rest in the crotch of two smaller branches, easing the job of the microphone operator.

The following text represents part of what was recorded at Alédzé Tsáá that day. The project log notes and rough translations indicate that in addition to the English narrative below, Tommy Attachie spoke in Dane-zaa Záágéʔ about a range of historical and moral themes. He recalls being told about a great sickness that once afflicted Dane-zaa people. He talked about the severity of winters in the past, when it had been so cold that prairie chickens actually froze where they were sitting in trees and fell to the ground. He indicated that winters are now less severe because of the prayers of Dane-zaa nááché. He told the group that prophets knew about God before the arrival of missionaries, and they predicted the coming of settlers to the area around Charlie Lake, now the city of Fort St. John. Tommy remembers how his grandmother told him to be a good person, and how when his father passed away, his grandmother told him not to
cry, but to remember what his father had taught him. The time and funds allotted for translation for the Dane Wajich project unfortunately meant that the Dane-zaa Zzágé narratives recorded at Alédzé Tsáá were not translated and transcribed, but they remain in the project archive and will hopefully be accessed, translated, and remediated in the future.

In English, Tommy Attachie first talked about Alédzé Tsáá as the place where the dreamer Alédzé was buried. He then described the centrality of Alédzé Tsáá in the history of Dane-zaa engagement with the fur trade. In the past, he says, people would bring the pelts collected during the Spring beaver hunt in the north to Alédzé Tsáá, build a raft, and ride the river with the products of months of labour all the way back to Doig River. This narrative is told in English, perhaps in response to some comments made by the young video producers about not understanding the narratives of past days. Tommy, Billy, and Sammy often expressed their concern that the young people learn from their experience with the Dane Wajich project, and it is possible that this shift to English reflected their desire to encourage the novice camera crew to keep listening.

Tommy Attachie at Alédzé Tsáá

My name’s Tom Attachie.
I’m a elder from Doig River. And today is …
Scattered cloud, and a little windy.

The original transcript can be seen in Appendix I, p. 559.
This is the place they call it *Álédzé*. Some Prophet named *Álédzé* is buried up this creek somewhere. Up north, this creek run from north. They got a cabin in there, that’s what they call Sam’s Cabin. And today just a little ways up here, you see them trees, that’s where is Doig River.

They call this place *Álédzé*. I’m gonna start from Doig. Doig called *Taahche*. And all this, this Doig, they call it Raft River. *Hanás Saahgéʔ*. *Hanás* means raft.

A long time ago, my grandma was healthy, all the people. There was no beaver around here. Just around March, some of them leave March. And they went straight north towards that Ring Border. That’s only that area has a lot of muskrat and a lot of muskrat and beaver. It’s only around this area there is no beaver.

So they went up there. They start with dog team. Soon as started snow melts they use pack dogs. They went over that, that area. Fontas area, and Ring Border, all that area.

Then they trap beaver there until around, around May. And they kill enough beaver and they pack north, and they pack dogs too, and they hit this river, up this river someplace. From up there, from Ring Border they walk all, all day.
And as soon as they hit this river they make a raft.
And all them trappers, they make a raft in order to go down.
Then they hit the Doig.
That’s how these people trap.
Every year they do that.

And today we still trap around here, this area.
People live here hundreds of years.
(T. Attachie 2007 [2005]-b)

The photographs of our production process at Alédzé Tsáá in the Dane Wajich exhibit depict a small group of people, young and old, occupying a place that figures significantly in the history of the Doig River First Nation and in oral traditions of Dane-zaa nááchê. Sam Acko’s deliberate clearing the space here and at Madáts’atl’éje (Snare Hill) a couple of days before, demonstrated a forceful awareness of the power of sound, image, and place to make a case for these histories. For Sam, it was essential that as Tommy Attachie spoke of the historical and contemporary importance of this place, that Alédzé Tsáá be visible in the camera’s frame. I was beginning to understand some of the importance of traveling each day to these places. At each location we visited, we were bearing witness to changes on the land, and asserting continued Dane-zaa presence in these areas. We were finding old trails, and making new trails through the bush. We were documenting it all in order to communicate the deep connections between Dane-zaa tangible, intangible, and natural heritage, back to the people of Doig River, to industry and government, and out into the world beyond. These narratives were being

47 Photographs documenting the production process at Alédzé Tsáá can be viewed in Apendix I, p. 429-430, and in the Dane Wajich exhibit at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/gallery_aledze_creek.php
recorded in their context, and the elders were teaching with the narratives through practice.

We packed up our equipment, and rested for a few minutes in the sunshine alongside the creek. As we drove up the road out of the valley of from Alédzé Tsáá we were told that there would be another stop on the way home to Doig. Our convoy of van and trucks headed southwest from Alédzé Tsáá to Ṭsazuulh Saahgáé (translated as 'Big Timber Creek'), a place commonly referred to in English as 'Big Camp'.

Ṭsazuulh Saahgáé, we learned, has been a camping, gathering, and dancing location for many generations of Dane-zaa people. Like Madáts'atl'ōje and other places in Dane-zaa territory, the area around Ṭsazuulh Saahgáé is heavily impacted by oil and gas industrialization. It has been a focus of Doig River’s efforts to assert Aboriginal and treaty rights to this land, with particular emphasis on protecting the graves of ancestors, including the nááchẽ Adishtl'ishe, that are close to Ṭsazuulh Saahgáé.

Once again, we parked our vehicles along the side of the dirt road, and followed elders along a trail that they cleared into the bush. We came out into a wide open clearing in the trees, lush and green with knee-high grasses and flowers. In the center of the open meadow was an old wooden corral for horses. Along the edges of the meadow, and back into the trees, were sets of weathered tipi poles, clear evidence of the use of this place by Dane-zaa families in the recent past.

Tommy Attachie set his camp chair down in the grass, with tipi poles visible over his shoulder. When the camera crew was ready, Tommy told a beautiful, detailed

---

48 To view the Ṭsazuulh Saahgáé page of the Dane Wajich exhibit, go to Appendix I, p. 431, or: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/big_camp.php
story in *Dane-zaa Záágé?* about the death of the dreamer *Adishtl'íshe* at *Tšazuulh Saahgáe*. In this narrative, Tommy first talks about the dreamers *Adishtl'íshe*, Oker, and Charley Yahey, and their connections to families at Doig River and Blueberry River. He recalls what the ‘old man’ Charlie Dominic told him about this place, along the main pack trail, where, in spite of freezing weather, men had been able to kill moose and help each other to survive. He tells the story of Charlie Dominic’s experience helping *Adishtl'íshe* as he was sick and preparing to die. First, Charlie Dominic was sent to pick up *Adishtl'íshe*’s snares, which were left out on the trail. Then, he was sent back along the trail by the dying *nááche* to kill and bring back a moose cow and calf that *Adishtl'íshe* saw in his dreams. The meat from these moose was to be his last meal. Charlie Dominic brought back the meat, sat with *Adishtl'íshe* as he cooked and ate it, and then talked with him late into the night. At some point before morning, the old dreamer passed away.

This story, which many of the listeners at *Tšazuulh Saahgáe* that day only understood after it had been translated, emphasizes the central role of dreamers in ensuring the survival of people by helping them to locate and kill game animals in hard times. On his last night, *Adishtl'íshe* used his dreaming power to visualize moose out on a trail; Charlie Dominic’s successful hunt and the procurement of meat for the dreamer’s last meal is further evidence of *Adishtl'íshe*’s prophetic abilities. I find the story deeply moving in its conveyance of the strong familial relationship that Charlie Dominic had with *Adishtl'íshe*, his uncle. The narrative is a powerful expression of respect for the dreamer, of proper moral behaviour in caring for him in his illness, and of love.
Tommy Attachie at Tsaguulh Saahgàe 49

E yîijêh,
Long ago,

aahte gwadzê? šís nachii,
over there, around the big hill,

ii waʔêh wayii Lake Post gwe,
on this side, around the place they called Lake Post,

gwe sô wawach’êh aahte yaš kéhdeh gö kaaghaajêh.
they looked around, and in the winter they went trapping there.

E guuyaa náechê laa Adishtl’îshe úúzhe.
Their Dreamer was called Adishtl’îshe.

Mazhiné? natluu ets’ajin.
We still sing many of his songs.

E juu daa wóledah ajuu ghadah;
He died somewhere around here;

ë juu wóledâh mats’adé? wólê.
his gravesite is somewhere around here.

Adishtl’îshe úuîye.
His name was Adishtl’îshe.

---

The original transcript is in Appendix I, p. 559.
“That was my uncle, my mother’s brother,” grandma said.

E háá ?e ajuu ghaadii tl?oh watl?oh háá,
After he died, then,

dahgene háanesjiilhne,
others were still living,

háanesjiilhne,
others survived,

Oker guyaa nááchë a?e.
and Oker was their Dreamer.

Ii laa aah?e
That’s all

Oker, Jack Acko juu yaiyé? yaa?ejin,
Jack Acko sang some of Oker’s songs,

ii ts’?eh laa guu mayiné? adaadáats’aijih.
that is how we know some of his songs.

E wats’?eh Blueberry ts’?eh juu,
And at Blueberry,

Charlie Yahey guuyaa nááchë.
Charlie Yahey was their Dreamer.

Back then, all the people were together.
Juune nááchesne dane ts'è? wadaajich.
*Those Dreamers talked to the people.*

Jwe wadanè? ghaghetlo.
*There were many people around here.*

Jwe laa atane guuatane chish ałè jii.
*Their main pack trail went right through here.*

È è kuleja ajuu ghade jwekèh sèhwajich.
*That old man who died not too long ago told me stories about this area.*

“Ghètlò,” ehjii.
*“There were lots of people then,” he said.*

Jò náaghajeh dóh adagèh wodèhk'aats dè ajuuulii ghazèhkhèl dah.
*When they lived here, and the winter was really cold, they couldn’t kill anything.*

Sò gwadżè? júúje Moig Flats wajigè juu ghokèdètæn de;
*Over there towards Moig Flats, the trail goes down;*

it must have been

waa?èh dah gheschecè aghadè.
*somewhere there, just before they got to the river, where they slept.*

Eh édzè taah hadaa aajii sò ghaaghòh.
*They must have killed the moose that stayed on the hillsides.*

Even though it was cold,
háá hóch’ii ghaa guu náághaleh éh,
they brought back moose meat from the kill,

lhọ laadeh dah ghaghadah.
helping each other to survive that way, on and on.

Gúúlaa kulę́a sé séhjii.
That’s what that old man told me.

“Ě jii, jọ de sọ,
“It must have been here,

jọ gwélé júúhje woliideh I think jọ núùdlìì.”
I think right here, or maybe over there.”

 Şeze Bilháá? yéhjii ě.
He [Charlie Dominic] was telling Billtáá? [Bill’s dad] about this.

“Juude dajiih lhédóh aajaa?, dajiih.
“He [the Dreamer Adishtlíshe] was sick, nearing his end.

Pine tséʔ sọ guu ats’aché hē.
We stayed home at Petersen’s Crossing.

He tsídaagae ts’ele,” gúúla éhjii.
We were children then,” he [Charlie Dominic] said.

Háá March k’eh sọ Adishtlíshe,
It must have been in March that Adishtlíshe died,

March k’eh watane k’eh wólę de sọ.
in March, at the time when the snow crusts.

“Dajiih,” giyéhjii éh
“He is sick,” they told him [they told Charlie Dominic].
“Júúhje mekaa dêst'aa?,” yêhjii.
“I went over here to him,” he [Charlie Dominic] said.

“Ii megááh neyeh, šeže alê,” yêhjii Biltáá ê.
“I came beside him, he was my mom's brother,” he [Charlie Dominic] told Billtáá [Bill’s dad].

“‘Samélhé daahge? ajuu naadáslheh.’
‘I did not pick up my snares,’ [Adishtl'íshe told him].

‘Gweje naaduslheh gweje nástla sé,’ éhsii.
‘I will pick them up quickly and come back right away,’ I said. [Charlie Dominic said].

Jó náánastlah de wats'êh êdaats'êh guu mëlh aahte naadií?ií t'l'ôh.
I came back here, going along one side [of the creek] and then along the other to pick up those snares.

Háá gwats'êh ts'adésjiilh,” éhjii.
We were coming over this way,” he [Charlie Dominic] said.

“Haje megááh nets'anejiitl dé,
“When we got to him,

ii gwe chele šadaa. Dajiíh,” yêhjii.
he was lying on his side sick,” he [Charlie Dominic] said.

“‘Gwadzêh yîíjeh neyaa de gôdah náét'êh êhde.’
‘You go over there, back the way you came,’ [Adishtl'íshe said].

‘Ókech'ii hadaa yaadžé
‘Two of them a cow and calf’
gehde aach'eh,
they are there,

gwadzeh neyaah atane wagaaah.
beside the trail you came on.

Gwadah aach'eh, sëhjii'.
They are staying around there,’ he told me [Adisht'ishe told Charlie Dominic].

’Ii go naetleh uh ii ghêghô ch’e sô,
’Go back over there, and after you kill them,

atsân wastse‘de,’ sëhjii.
I’ll eat its meat,’ he said to me [Adisht'ishe told Charlie Dominic].

Gô taah naadëstlh ah ii hadaa ôkech’ii ghiighô,” éhjii.
I went back there and killed those two moose,” he [Charlie Dominic] said.

“E guu atsân magaaah náaniilaa.
“And then I brought the meat back to him.

Adé hahde? adedziis,” éhjii, “stove k’ih.”
He cooked for himself on the stove,” he said.

“Háá wúújo adéch’ii tl’oh wochaa atsaajii.
“He cooked really well for himself and he ate a lot.

’Háá jii laa méh duusháá sê’ éhjii eh.’
‘This may be my last meal,’ he [Adisht'ishe] said.

Hájé wúújo heh wajich ê háá.
He talked with us for a really long time.

Ii haatl'ege nuidaajii ajuu ghedah.”
And sometime during that night he died. ” [Charlie Dominic said].
In the *Dane Wajich* exhibit, production photographs from *Tsazuulh Saahgáe* show Tommy Attachie, Sam Acko, youth video producers, and others watching and listening to the video playback of Tommy’s narrative.\(^{50}\) In the photographs, I think that they look pleased with what has been recorded. The story articulates the Doig River community’s long time connection to *Tsazuulh Saahgáe*, the living memory of dreamers, and their resting places. Further, a recording made by Robin Ridington in 1979 of Charlie Dominic singing a song that he learned from *Adishtl'íshe*, is co-present with Tommy Attachie’s narrative on the *Tsazuulh Saahgáe* page of the *Dane Wajich* exhibit (C. Dominic 2007 [1979]).\(^{51}\) This remediated song recording is contextualized by the new documentation of Tommy Attachie’s narrative. Together, these media are a powerful body of evidence in the ongoing struggle to defend *Tsazuulh Saahgáe* from agricultural and industrial disruption. As with other places visited in the course of the *Dane Wajich* production process, they demonstrate that the transmission and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage cannot be arbitrarily separated from the safeguarding of tangible and natural forms of heritage.

\(^{50}\) A photo gallery of images taken at *Tsazuulh Saahgáe* can be viewed in Appendix I, p. 431-432, and in the *Dane Wajich* exhibit at: [http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/gallery_big_camp.php](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/gallery_big_camp.php)

**Nétl’uk (Osborne River)**

On the morning of July sixth, our group assembled at the Doig River Band Hall for a drive out to Nétl’uk, a place in the flats close to the Osborne River. This was the location of a series of trapping cabins that marked this as an established winter camp for people from Doig River. Robin and Jillian Ridington, who had just arrived for their summer visit, joined the crew that day. Everyone they encountered that morning at the Band Hall seemed excited to see them. The group was comprised of Gerry Attachie, former Chief of the Doig and Blueberry River First Nations, Billy Attachie, Tommy Attachie, Mark Apsassin, Sam Acko, Robin Acko, Starr Acko, Brittany Brinkworth, Charmayne Brinkworth, Pat Moore, Amber Ridington, and myself.

Nétl’uk is a short eastward drive from Doig. The Osborne River, which flows through the area of Nétl’uk, eventually meets the Doig River and rushes through the center of the Doig River Reserve. We drove our van and trucks, this time with the addition of the Ridingtons’ car, through the increasingly familiar back roads around Doig. One of our last turns took us down a road into an open grassy field, which was marked at one end with a gently moving stream, a tributary of the Osborne River.

As we climbed out of our vehicles, and began to unpack cameras and microphones, Sam Acko once again started chopping with his machete. He laid large pieces of wood in the dry creek bed along the edge of the stream, and started a fire. The smoke was a welcome mosquito repellent (as well as a good way to heat up our lunch). Sam then cut a series of short branches and assembled an improved version of the

---

microphone support he created the day before at Alédzé Tsáá. We took a lot of photographs of that microphone stand, because everyone, especially the young sound documentarians, were so pleased with it.53

All of the elders who traveled with us to Nétl’uk that day spoke for the camera. Because the project’s time and funding resources for translation were limited, we eventually had to prioritize some of the narratives for translation and transcription to be included in the Dane Wajich exhibit. For this reason, I present only the texts of narratives by Billy Attachie and Sam Acko below. But Tommy Attachie told the group in Dane-zaa Záágéʔ about the significance of Nétl’uk as a stop on the trapping trail between Doig and Lake Post in the north. He talked about how the Department of Indian Affairs used to grant them two weeks of “holiday” in the spring to hunt beaver, and they would come to Nétl’uk. He recalls trapping with George Succona, a good man who would rise early to make bannock even before Tommy was up to make tea in the morning. Gerry Attachie, Tommy’s brother, also recalled how forty years before, he had also come with George Succona to Nétl’uk to trap. He told at length stories of this place, his family, and the importance of trapping for the subsistence and survival of people at Doig River.

In the narrative text below, Billy Attachie talks in detail about the trapping cabins that used to exist at several locations around Nétl’uk. He emphasizes that they were only used in winter, and that there was a gravesite nearby. He recalls how people had moved back and forth from Nétl’uk to Petersen’s Store at Alááʔ Sató. This was a

53 Images of the documentation process at Nétl’uk, including Sam Acko’s “Dane-zaa microphone stand” can be viewed in Appendix I, p. 433-435, and at:
time, Billy says, when people were good to each other, when they helped each other. He remembers men consulting with each other before going out to hunt; women worked together to collect berries. And above all, people prayed; he recalls that dreamers from Halfway, Blueberry, Petersen’s Crossing, and elsewhere would gather at Nétl’uk to dance and pray. He remembers the nááchë Oker, how people used to confess their sins to him; he remembers how other dreamers were known for their sense of morality, or for the songs they brought down for the people. He concludes his narrative with a lament for the way that people now live their lives, and his hope that people will find a way to come back together again.

**Billy Attachie at Nétl’uk**

**Juuhđzenéh, July sixth, 2005.**
*Today is July sixth, 2005.*

**Jo ats’ach’ë Nétl’uk de;**
*We are here at Nétl’uk, [the end of the flat];*

**jọ laa Nétl’uk wúúzhe.**
*This place is called Nétl’uk.*

**Tóhchedóh, jọ dane náájeh, jọ de.**
*Long ago, people used to live here, right here.*

**Ii kwâ wólë gwe kwâ wòtlọ.**
*There were many houses.*

---

54 The video of Billy Attachie’s narrative at Nétl’uk can be viewed in the Dane Wajich exhibit at:
The original transcript is in Appendix I, p. 567.
Haatseh júuhje
*The first ones over here*

*north ts'égúuh* dane nááje eh,
*lived north of here,*

e ii watl'óh yeh ts'elégæ wadzís ēhst̓é?.
*and later on they lived by the creek.*

Kwâ aanaawedlaa?
*They rebuilt houses over that way*

lhóde wadézhah,
*lined up, one right after another,*

kwâ wazeʔ.
*real houses.*

E júuhje yaawawanélaadeh.
*And over here, they tore them apart.*

Ii dalaah haje dane háaghadaa,
*People stayed right there during the winter [in a permanent winter camp],*

ii ḍeh.
*right there.*

Júuhje zóh dane háaghadaaʔ,
*People only lived over here [at this permanent winter camp],*

dane e káach'ge wółe.
*when they were trapping.*
Hájé kenasjiih jọ,
I remember, here,

jii mëgae wólę dę,
where this lake is,

ii wagááh juu dane ts‘ádé? wólę.
beside this there was also a grave.

Dane ts‘ádé? wólę tl‘wah.
Since then it is a burial site.

Tóhchedóh, Oker júhje dane táájeh,
Long ago, Oker stayed with people over here,

Chief Sagonii juu.
Chief Sagonii too.

Ii wats‘eh Charlie Dominic aabaane.
Charlie Dominic and my parents were from here as well.

Háá ghetlıŋ.
There were quite a few of them.

Daahgéne Moose Creek ts‘é? aach‘eh.
Some of them lived at Moose Creek.

Moose Creek ts‘é? natlı́ne.
There were many people at Moose Creek.

Gwadzene juu gọ lhéhnaághajeh.
Some of them were living there.

Gọdótstǻeh adáátisédzé aghadajelh,
From there they went to the store [at Petersen’s Crossing],
ē ḋékéh ghaadaadelh.
*following each other along the same trail.*

Juu waatl'ō ajuu tôhch'ē déh Doig ts'ēʔ;
*Not too long ago they made houses at Doig River;*

dedokwā awīdlaaʔ,
*they made cabins,*

go dane nāājeh, ii wats'ēh laa.
*and people started to live there, from then on.*

Yeh Moose Creek jījuu,
*From Moose Creek,*

*Petersen's Store ts'ēʔ zōh dane nōnaadich.*
*people went back and forth to Petersen's store.*

Iiyeh Ts’ibe Dane? juu,
*Over there, the Muskeg People,*

jūūhje aaghach’ēh Chinchaga Lake ts’ēʔ,
*stayed at Chinchaga Lake,*

Lake Post laa wūūye.
*which was called Lake Post.*

Hōhjō ajuu yelhéh udazii giidayēʔo.
*But they renamed it.*

E dane wūūjọ nāājeh gwadōh.
*People lived well back then.*

Dane ọhte ęhts'enāājeh.
*All the people helped each other.*
Dezuu lhénaaghadijé lhéwawajich,  
_all the men got together and talked to each other_,

hátlédóh enejii.  
_very morning._

Lhaç? ghaaduuyaadah,  
_Whenever they were going to go somewhere_,

Jedzáá aghaduujél dé keh lhéhwawajich.  
_they talked about where they were planning to go._

Ii ts’éguu juu,  
_The women too_,

lhénaaghadiije lhéwawajije.  
_gathered together and talked to each other_.

Guu jìje we kaaghajelh gaah we woh dadaghêtló.  
_They went berry picking together and set rabbit snares one after another._

Dane ehsíi Nahatáá’ kuujii.  
_Everyone believed in God._

Gwadzéh wadzéh kénasjiih dòts’èh,  
_As long as I can remember_,

dane che’aadliih.  
_people prayed._

Nááchii naawólè;  
_There were Dreamers_;

nááchiine natló gwadóh.  
_there were many Dreamers long ago._
E aťólėh tāajúdze dane,
People, in the middle of summer,

dǝ ge nǝwoje yǝsk'edôh.
would get ready for winter.

Ii Petersen’s Crossing,
At Petersen’s Crossing,

ǝhte ǝhneghadaajiiłh.
they all came together.

Lhénáághadíjé.
They gathered together.

Háá iidah Horse Lake gwadâ? úúh, Moberly Lake,
People from Horse Lake, Moberly Lake,

Halfway, Blueberry,
Halfway, Blueberry,

lhédô lhéghaajiiłh daawéhsâts cheghadliiñh.
all came together to dance and pray.

Náách’ene ǝhnëh náághadaadîñh.
All the Dreamers came together.

E natłone nááchê? gwene
And there were many Dreamers

adaage wúújo cheʔadlii hóheh’iine.
who prayed really hard.

Qhtè chégheñeiñh.
All of them travelled around.
Dane ajuu Ahhaatáą? kuujii dane,
*People that don’t believe in God*,

ajuu ajuu che?aadlii ne wódgeze ghadah.
*people who don’t pray, live a long time.*

Sõ wadeh kéts’uule k’ewa?aach.
*Maybe it is so they can continue to do bad things.*

E dane úújone wódgeze ajuu ghadah.
*And the good people, they live a very short time.*

Wólê kéts’eleh awúúldii ze gúlé,
*Maybe before they do something bad,*

neguudiiche gúlé.
*God takes them.*

Dane ehsíi Nahatáą? kuujii.
*Everyone believes in God.*

Jii dane che?adlii nááchiine guts’ë? wadaajich.
*These people who prayed, the Dreamers, he [God] spoke to them.*

Dahhiine nááchene dane dzah k’êh waa?aasne adáághajíiḥ.
*Some of the Dreamers knew if people had done something bad.*

Daahgíne, ñ jwe jii shin háághadaalh.
*Some of them, they don’t do that; they just bring out songs.*

E *Oker* ñ dane
*And Oker was the person*

dane yaats’ë? adóhwajeh ałé.
*that people went to to confess [their sins].*
Hóhch’ę nááchę ałę.
*That was the kind of Dreamer he was.*

Hé wúújo wadóh.
*Things were really good long ago.*

Ejuu ach’uu wóle.
*But today it is different.*

Dane–dane ajuu lhójeh,
*People–people are not very good,*

dane ęhch’aa dadésk’ęh.
*people go their separate ways.*

Jéháák’e? dane lhénaajiilaa?
*How will people gather again?*

Lhédóh dane lhénaajiilaa dé,
*If people really come together again,*

dane lhéhwajich úúh,
*and if people talked together,*

dane wúújo lhé?aa, ii tl’wah,
*and if they treat each other well, after that,*

haa ii lóh ts’ę?,
*after all that,*

wats’ę’ laa dane lhénáákese.
*people would come back together again.*

E juu, juu ach’uu wóle,
*But now, now it’s really different,*
“Se z̓oh,” dane kuuji.
*people only think about themselves.*

A hēkets’eleh, e juu hágwēlāa.
*And it’s getting really bad, that’s the way people are.*

Ii dē wats’êʔ naah Hewawasjich.
*That’s all I have to tell you.*

(W. Attachie 2007 [2005]-b)

When it was Sam Acko’s turn to talk, he sat down on the grass along the edge of the creek. The smoke from the fire he had made drifted around him, keeping the mosquitos at bay. The gently flowing water of the creek was visible in the camera frame behind him. When he had settled comfortably, and the microphone was resting properly in the stand he had made, Sam told a traditional narrative that was inspired by *Neł’uk* and the creek that ran through it.

In the narrative text below, Sam Acko introduces himself as having grown up with elders, learning stories and songs since he was a little child. Speaking in English, he restates that *Neł’uk* was once the location of Dane-zaa trapping cabins, including one belonging to old Chief Succona. He then goes on to tell a story about *Tsááyaa*, the Dane-zaa culture hero, and *Ṯiihchuk*, the human-eating giant mosquito man. In the story, *Tsááyaa* humorously outsmarts the gullible mosquito man, and once again escapes being eaten.
Sam Acko at Ne'tl'uk

Hello my name is Sam, I’m from Doig. I’m one of the guys who used to sit with the elders and drumming with the elders ever since I was knee high, ever since I remember.

And this is July 6, year 2005. Today we’re here in Ne'tl'uk.

This is where they call Ne'tl'uk. Chief Succona used to call this place Ne'tl'uk. Chief Succona, he have cabins here. Just on the east side about one kilometer. There used to be about four or five cabins in there which is a well location today.

I’m gonna tell you a story about Tsááya and Tšiihchuk.

Tsááya he was here first, first time. I guess the Ahhaataá [Creator] put him here on earth to work with all kinds of living animals, jii nan on this earth.

So one time there was Tšiihchuk. He always go after Tšiihchuk. Tšiihchuk, they call human hadaa which is moose. They call us moose because, because we are moose to him. He live on people, Tšiihchuk Family.

The video recording of Sam Acko’s narrative of Tsááya and Tšiihchuk at Ne'tl'uk can be viewed in the Dane Wajich exhibit at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/video.php?action=fla/sammymosquito. The original transcript is in Appendix I, p. 578.
Long time ago when this world got made,
first time,
even animals communicate with
people here on earth.
That’s why there was Ts’iihchuk family.
There was Nówe family,
Nódaa family.
Nówe family is kind of short and white.
And Nódaa is about in the middle.
Between Nódaa family, between Ts’iihchuk and tall and skinny and Nówe.
They are about medium, medium tall,
medium size that is the way Nódaa’s family is.

And one time Tsááya was walking along this kind of creek,
like Osborne here.
And then way up,
he spot Ts’iihchuk canoeing down.
Those years I guess people would make canoe,
canoe out of a, a hide,
any kind of hide they could sew it together,
make it big.
Then they can make a frame.
And then it will become canoe if they,
they know what to do.

When Tsááya was walking along the creek like this,
he spot Ts’iihchuk canoeing down.
So, there was
There was one big spruce leaning over,
over a creek like this.
He climbed that,
big, big spruce where Ts’iihchuk can’t see him.
There was so many branches up on top.
And then,
while he was canoeing down he was just looking good at the water. 
And then he just slowly is canoeing down, 
taking his time and, 
when he, when he went under that big spruce, 
*Tsáyaa* show himself like this [looks down], 
so that reflection on the water, 
the water is kind of still, 
someplace still like that there [points].

The human reflection right underneath him where, 
where his canoe is. 
So there’s a moose, 
he saw a moose. 
“There’s *hadaa,*” he said. 
He call us moose, *hadaa.* 
And then from there, that, 
that reflection, 
he keep shooting it with his bow and arrow. 
Each arrow keep floating down. 
Keep shooting it, 
and then, 
keep floating down. 
Pretty soon all, 
all his arrow float down. 
And then, 
from above, 
he pee on him. 
He pee on *Ts’iihchuk* so *Ts’iihchuk* is very, 
he’s not smart. 
He can make a living but he is not smart. 
He is just—Anything you tell him he will do it. 
That’s the way *Ts’iihchuk* is.

So, so he pee on him and then he look at the sky. 
“*Oh, there is no clouds but it is raining on me,*” he said.
So, pretty soon he can’t hold back any more, that *Tsááyaa*. He start laughing and then he look. There he is. “You wait right there. I’m gonna go get my arrows.” When he canoed down that *Tsááyaa* got off and he took off, he escaped.

That’s the way, long time ago, traditional stories go.

And this is just perfect spot for, for actors in the future. We’re gonna go pick this spot if we gonna have a future, actors from Dane-zaa people from Doig.

So, [untranslated] that’s the end of the traditional stories. It’s long. It go on forever these stories. But sometimes I will tell you some more story about these, these *Tš’iihchuk* story and then *Nówe* story which is wolverine, and then *Nódaa*. And then moose. Those kind of stories are long.

(S. Acko 2007 [2005]-c)

After the conclusion of Sam’s story, we packed up our gear and drove to the former location of the winter trapping cabins at *Netl’uk*. We pulled into a large circular clearing in the trees that was rough with the dried mud ruts left in the ground by heavy machinery. The remnants of an oil well and gas tanks occupied one side of the clearing, and rusting pipes and metal structures were scattered around the rest of the area. We climbed out of the vehicles, and Tommy, Gerry, and Sam led us over to the edge of the
clearing. They pointed to the wooden remnants of the cabins that had once been the trapping cabins they had just discussed at length on video at Netl’uk. Decaying pipeline segments lay like fallen trees over the cabin site. We were encouraged to photograph the cabins and the detritus of oil and gas extraction, while Robin Ridington videotaped Tommy and Sam as they talked about the impact of industry in the area.

Billy Attachie’s narrative at Netl’uk affirmed the long history of Dane-zaa seasonal occupancy of the area. He connected histories of nááchë, like the prophet Oker, to this place, and he emphasized the role of nááchë, and by proxy the role of places where dreamers and people gathered, and the economies that these places once supported, in teaching proper behaviour and morality to generations of Dane-zaa people. I believe that Billy was suggesting that the loss of the cabins at Netl’uk, and in a related way, the loss of lifeway that promoted the moral behaviour (that was evoked so many times in these prophet narratives), was fundamentally connected to the loss of control over Dane-zaa lands and resources. His narrative reinforced the notion that the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage cannot be separated from the safeguarding of forms of natural heritage that create conditions in which intangible cultural expression can occur. Sam Acko’s narrative at Netl’uk reinforced this notion by demonstrating the role of place in evoking the telling of a traditional story. The still, reflective waters of the Osborne River inspired this particular story of Tsááyaa and the Mosquito Man. Sam Acko suggested that this place would be suitable for the reenactment of traditional stories for Doig River’s ongoing media projects. Perhaps, in light of changes in the way Dane-zaa knowledge is now being communicated, Sam was thinking about new forms of transmission of Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage.
Certainly, the 2001 recording of Tommy Attachie and the Doig River Drummers performing a song by the Prophet Oker (Attachie 2007 [2001]-b), which is presented on the Nètl’uk page of the Dane Wajich exhibit, coveys the role of participatory documentation and new media in remediating digital cultural heritage to represent contemporary Dane-zaa knowledge and social, political, and cultural life.56

56 A 2001 recording made by Robin Ridington of Tommy Attachie and the Doig River Drummers performing a song dreamed by the nááchë Oker can be heard in the Dane Wajich exhibit at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/songs/drummers_oker.php
Late on the morning of July 8th, Amber Ridington, Jillian Ridington, Robin Ridington and I met with Gerry Attachie in the meeting room of the Doig River Band Hall. It had been decided that the group would be traveling that day to the location of the old reserve, I.R. 172, at Montney. Its name in Dane-zaa Záágéʔ is Gat Tah Kwâ, translated literally as ‘Spruce Among Dwellings,’ for all of the teepees that used to be erected there before its 1945 surrender. This was also the location of Suunéch’ii Kéch’iiige, ‘The Place Where Happiness Dwells’, where the dreamer Gaayeʔ held dances and sang the nááchę’s songs. On the table in the meeting room, Gerry Attachie spread a large map of the Montney area that had been produced by the Band’s GIS technician. He pointed out a small icon in the Montney prairie that indicated a gravesite. This gravesite, he told us, was that of the nááchę Gaayeʔ. We also leafed through his photocopy of a Hudson’s Bay Journal from Fort St. John that documented interactions with Dane-zaa people. Sections that were particularly related to Dane-zaa families had been highlighted in fluorescent green ink. One of these highlighted passages recorded the death of the Gaayeʔ at Gat Tah Kwâ in 1923. For Gerry, the objective of our trip to Montney that day, the last such excursion for the production group that summer, would be to physically locate Gaayeʔ’s grave, and document narratives there.

After a phone call had been made to the current owner of the parcel of Montney that we wished to explore, asking for permission to drive onto the land and walk

---

57 Media and information about Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney) can be found in the Dane Wajich exhibit in Appendix I, p. 437, and at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/montney.php
through the fields to Gaayə́’s grave, we set out in trucks and the Doig River van for our last day of filming. On this day, elder May Apsassin from the Blueberry River reserve, granddaughter of nááchə́ Charlie Yahey, joined us, as did Robin and Jillian Ridington. Former Chief Gerry Attachie led us, along with his brother Tommy Attachie. Eddie Apsassin drove the Doig River van, and Charmayne Brinkworth, Brittany Brinkworth, Robin Acko, and Starr Acko were the video crew. Amber Ridington and I supported the youth team.

Before noon, our convoy of vehicles pulled off of the Rose Prairie Road onto Montney Road. We opened cattle gates, and drove through a field to get as close as possible to the railroad track that now cut through the old reserve. We parked, unpacked our equipment, and after consulting Gerry’s map, started to walk along the railroad track in the direction of the area where Gaayə́’s grave was remembered to be. Eventually, we left the tracks, and in a single line, walked through the vibrant yellow canola flowers and tall grass to the edge of the field. There was some discussion about the route we should take; features of the landscape had changed, and the area where the grave was presumed to be now looked unfamiliar. Gerry Attachie, Robin Ridington, and Amber Ridington decided to continue to look for the grave, while May Apsassin, Tommy Attachie, Jillian Ridington, the video team and I decided to sit and rest in the sun. May Apsassin sat in a folding camp chair, and the rest of us nestled into the tall grass.

After a little while, May indicated to me that she had something to say to the camera. The video team was resting a little distance away, so I picked up my own video camera and began to film her as she spoke. Sitting in the grass at Suunéch’ii Kéch’iige
had made May think about how many people used to gather there, and how few elders remain in Dane-zaa communities. She talked about the ongoing practice and transmission of Dane-zaa oral narrative—the way that people teach each other, and care for one another. She discussed her concern about the loss of language and the practice of other skills. She talked about the importance of education for young people, and her strong desire to see the survival of Dane-zaa Žáágéʔ (Apsassin 2007 [2005]).

When May finished speaking, Tommy, who had been listening in the grass nearby, called me over to him. Speaking in English, so that I would understand, he told me a story about the death of Gaayę́ at Gat Tah Kwâ.

Tommy Attachie at Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney)

And, all the other things,
you know, then what they say,
today we see.
That’s way before us.
Back in the 30s.
I don’t know when they make this reserve here,
but anyway the people live here.

58 May Apsassin’s video narrative at Gat Tah Kwâ can be viewed in the Dane Wajich exhibit at:
The original transcript is in Appendix I, p. 584.

59 Tommy Attachie’s video narrative at Gat Tah Kwâ can be viewed in the Dane Wajich exhibit at:
The original transcript is in Appendix I, p. 582.
Every people live all over places,
do trapping and do their living.

And summertime they come all,
come in here.
And Charlie Lake too.
And after Gaayega, the Prophet,
come from Regal River, Alberta.
Every year he come through Sweeney Creek,
Cecil Lake,
and come up here.
Across that River,
where that Fish Creek, Charlie Lake Creek,
join that Beatton [River].

Little bit up there’s an old, main, trail go across that Beatton.
That’s where they went across.
People are from Doig, they wait for him in Cecil Lake.
June 19th, 1922, he was buried here.
See he started some time springtime.
Started move this way.
That’s why he make that Sweeney Creek somewhere.
He got that song, Chicken Song,
that’s the springtime, around May, I think.
Springtime Chicken Dance.

And he come through,
maybe around May he get up here.
And he must be.

I hear grandma said he’s over North Pine somewhere,
drumming for people.
From Montney people,
go up there too.
And the mans [men],
and whoever come in there, 
all together maybe three, four days they sang. 
And he start to move over Montney, 
went across here somewhere. 

And then he keep doing that all them years, 
every year he come. 
And finally, 
he know about it, 
what’s going to happen to him. 
He come up here, 
he went to Montney, 
and pray for people coming back. 

He went— that’s, that’s where he died. 
Then they buried him here. 
July 8th today, twenty after one [o’clock], 
I tell you that story, 
about Gaayega, 
way before, 
way before I was born. 
That’s why all these our story, 
that’s way before I was born, 
1943, the war time. 
But 1922 and more, 
way more, 
even two hundred, three hundred years ago, 
the story still today we talk about it, 
still the same. 
It isn’t written or nothing. 
But just a year, 
what happened in a place, 
who died, you know. 
All these stories just hold this earth. 
That’s how native people use it.
Live by it.

And while we growing, you know, they tell us about the God. The Creator. And we know.
But soon these, back in the ’60s, start people drinking. All way till ’70, we are on the street. I am number one. I stay in the street. And that’s when they know, ‘gonna be like that. But after that we know that that’s not for us. And we come back to our culture again and live by it. We are a lot happier. Native people live like that. Hear stories, traditions, all the other things. (T. Attachie 2007 [2005]-c)

In this narrative, Tommy Attachie reiterates many of the themes that he had been articulating in locations around Dane-zaa territory throughout the week. He describes how Dane-zaa people used to travel in a seasonal round to make their living, and gather in summer at Gat Tah Kwâ. He talks about the prophetic power of nááché—“…what they say, today we see”—and about how nááché, including Gaayëga, used to come together at Gat Tah Kwâ for Tea Dances that lasted for days. Referencing the story he told at Sweeney Creek, Tommy tells of Gaayëga dreaming his ‘Prairie Chicken’ song there, and then bringing it to the dance at Gat Tah Kwâ. As Gaayëga had also dreamed the Suunéch’ii Kéch’iige song at Sweeney Creek, he knew that this was the place where he would die. As Gaayëga had predicted, Tommy told me, he died there and in 1923 was
buried.

As we sat in the tall grass in the farmer’s field that used to be his reserve and dance ground, Tommy emphasized that this event, the story of Gaay̍a’s death that he had just told me, happened long before he was born. Yet this story, and those based on events even hundreds of years into the past, are still remembered and passed on. “All these stories,” he told me, “just hold this earth.” He makes the point that the transmission of Dane-zaa oral tradition—intangible cultural heritage—is not safeguarded through documentation and transcription alone, but through lived practice. As Tommy had been demonstrating throughout our week of travel to the locations of stories in Dane-zaa territory, a central element in the practice of transmission was direct experience of place, or ‘natural heritage’. After many difficult decades at Doig River, where stories and songs and knowledge of drum making and many other cultural expressions threatened to slip away, Tommy says, “we come back to our culture again and live by it.” The narratives presented in the Dane Wajich exhibit demonstrate that returning to the practice of traditions does not mean living as people had done before, but using the traditions of nááchə, oral narrative, Dane-zaa Zááğaʔ, and the teachings of resourceful ancestors to make sense of colonial history and contemporary challenges and opportunities, and to communicate them in new forms.

On the Gat Tah Kwâ page of the Dane Wajich exhibit, Tommy Attachie and May Apsassin’s narratives are co-present with other media. Photographs of our production process that day show our group consulting maps and the Hudson’s Bay journal, and carrying our camera equipment along the railroad tracks to the area around Gaay̍a’s grave. A video recorded later at Doig River by Amy Acko and Amber
Ridington features elder Madeline Davis recounting childhood memories of attending summer Tea Dances at *Gat Tah Kwâ*. She recalls that Montney was so populated that it was hard to find a place for another teepee. She remembers all of the people, “a lot of the people way far,” sitting in an audience with a dreamer, while he showed them a white moose hide with a drawing of heaven on it. She says, “I think from God, God gave him a sound like that. And everybody listen to him, what he say” (M. Davis 2007 [2005]).

Two song recordings further contextualize these media. First, there is a recording made by Amber Ridington at a Tea Dance at Doig River in 2004. Tommy Attachie and the Doig River Drummers perform *Gaaye’a*’s song *Suunéch’ii Kéch’iige*, the song he dreamed at Sweeney Creek (T. Attachie and Doig River Drummers 2007 [2004]). This song marked the prophecy of *Gaaye’a*’s own death, a story that was confirmed by Tommy Attachie in the narrative recorded on our visit to *Gat Tah Kwâ*. The second song was recorded by Robin Ridington in 2001. Tommy Attachie sings a song by the dreamer *Nááchè*, also known as *Dakwatlah*, who spent time with people at *Gat Tah Kwâ* (T. Attachie and Doig River Drummers 2007 [2001]-a).

The final video on the *Gat Tah Kwâ* page of the *Dane Wajich* exhibit was

---

60 The video recording of Madeline Davis at Doig River talking about *Gat Tah Kwâ* can be viewed in the *Dane Wajich* exhibit at:
The original transcript can be seen in Appendix I, p. 590.

61 Robin Ridington’s 2001 recording of Tommy Attachie singing a song by the dreamer *Nááchè* can be heard in the *Dane Wajich* exhibit at:
recorded by Amber Ridington and me toward the end of our work at Doig River that summer. In the late afternoon of July 22nd, we set up our camera equipment behind the Doig River Band Hall. Former Chief Gerry Attachie had agreed to sit down with us to document his experience of the band’s thirty-year struggle for restitution over the surrender of the Montney reserve. Chief Attachie’s narrative that afternoon surveyed a history of relationships between Dane-zaa people, settlers, colonial authorities, the federal government, and with outsiders like Amber and me. He begins by talking about Dane-zaa resistance to the influx of resource-hungry gold miners at the end of the 19th century, leading up to the signing of Treaty 8. He describes the band’s acquisition of the Montney reserve, and of Suunéch’ii Kéch’aige as a gathering place up until the loss of the reserve. Gerry’s description of the 1945 surrender of I.R. 172 at Petersen’s Crossing corroborates the archival research presented in the article *If The Story Could Be Heard': Colonial Discourse and the Surrender of Indian Reserve 172* by Steve Roe et al (2003) which I drew on to describe the context of the surrender in Chapter Four of this dissertation. Under great pressure from the Indian Agent and local farmers, Chief Succona and a small number of others signed the surrender; many others were still out in the bush, and had no opportunity to vote. Years later, when Gerry Attachie became a band councilor, and then Chief, he initiated the challenging case against the federal government for breach of trust. In spite of serious obstacles—negotiating the local history of colonialism, deciphering legal jargon, finding a lawyer, funding the case, and persisting in the face of unsympathetic opposition—Gerry Attachie describes how the band finally won in the Supreme Court in 1995. The new Band Hall, evidence of the financial resources that came with their settlement, is visible behind Gerry as he tells this
story. He expresses his hope that the band’s efforts, including the creation of the museum and multimedia projects such as the one we are creating, will aid in the struggle to keep Dane-zaa Záágéʔ alive in practice.

Gerry Attachie Talks about *Gat Tah Kwɛ* (Montney) (I.R.172)\(^2\)

I am Gerry Attachie.
I was born in Siphon Creek, Tsiísooʔa adeh,
1948, October 29,
and grew up down at Petersen’s Crossing.

We there until about ten years, between 1950 to about 60.

And about round 1899 Treaty was signed down at the old Fort.
One of my great grandfathers signed the Treaty,
put his ‘X’ on it.
And what they call “Peace Treaty”
they sign the Treaty so the early settlers,
the gold miners,
wanna go up north to Alaska, Yukon, to look for gold.
But they can’t get by here,
our people won’t let them go through.

They don’t want anybody around here to go through.
So they stopped them and then they took them,
I don’t know how long,
finally they negotiate and then they signed the Peace Treaty.

---

The original transcript can be seen in Appendix I, p. 586.
And about, around 1916, 
we, they gave us Montney Reserve. 
It is about seven miles north of Fort St. John. 
18,000 acres.

So we call that “Where’s Happiness Dwells,” gathering, gathering place. 
So we were there till, between 1916 up to 1945.

And 1940, 
the oil company they ask for permission to drill around, in IR-172 [Montney]. 
So our people give them permission to go ahead. 
And they did. 
They did, 
did some drilling.

About that time, 
in the early 1940s, 
the government and the people in Fort St. John, 
they, they want that Montney land, 
farmers. 
They thought it’s good for farming, 
and then our people, 
First Nation, 
don’t use it. 
That’s what they say.

And, but some people that work for the Department of Indian Affairs, 
they said, 
“The Indians will be farming one of these days, 
and in the future they will farm.” 
But about 1943, ’44, 
they put a lot of pressure on our Chief Succone, 
our Chief. 
They want that land, 
and then finally 1945 they set a date and then September 20, 1945,
the surrender took place down at Petersen’s Crossing,  
which is ten miles west of here.

They bring some of the people back from the bush  
but some were way back,  
they couldn’t find them.  
And they brought some people back there at Petersen’s Crossing  
but not very many.  
Some were gone.  
They brought some people in from Prophet River.  
And I don’t remember what happened.  
Some of the, according to some of our people they didn’t vote.

Anyway, the land was sold.  
18,000 acres for returned soldiers.  
And today forty-two farmers own the mineral rights in British Columbia.  
It’s the farmers at Montney.  
I.R.172.

But while we, I grew up down at Petersen’s Crossing,  
people were talking about what happened to Montney,  
they thought,  
reserve.

According to some people,  
when it was sold 1945, 1946  
some of the people came back to reserve.  
But it was fenced off some places,  
and they said,  
“You can’t come back here. It was sold.”  
And that’s when they know,  
some of the people know,  
it was sold,  
1945, yes.
About, around 1970, ‘74,
I became Councilor.
In 1976 I was elected for Chief, for Blueberry and Doig together.
That’s when I take it out somehow.
I read some books, a book called “Peacemaker” book.
And I was looking at that,
and then I read a little,
a story about Pine View.
Pine View reserve, it says,
IR-172.
They even had a map, parcel,
each quarter, and...

It says there,
the former reserve, Montney,
was sold 1945
and then the mineral rights which add to that IR-172 were forgotten,
they said.
So I thought, so, the people were talking about that.
They only had ten dollars for two years,
twenty dollars, each person.
They call it nan soniiyɛ, ‘land money’.

Land money, nan soniiyɛ.
What happened to nan soniiyɛ, they said.
So that’s when I start to look into that more,
and then try to communicate with Indian Affairs.
And this led to that,
and finally,
the Indian Agent, Tommy Watson and I we sat down,
and then we set a date,
got all the documents out.
And then got a lawyer in Fort St. John, Callison.
And we run into problems right off the bat.
Lawyers are not cheap,
and they don’t do,
they got to have money up front,
and everything was new to me.
I don’t know about, much about law,
and lawyers too, you got to have, they have to have retainer, and everything!
And we start looking for money.

We finally got the money from a small band just across the border.
And sometimes people could say, you know,
“Indians should help one another.”
But sometimes, when it comes down to something like this,
it’s not like this.
It’s different.
We struggle,
we travel lots.
Finally we got some money to start.
1987 we went to court.

We lost.
They said we were six months late over limitation.
Thirty year Limitation Act which came into BC in 1974,
and we run into that,
and we run into a rough, pretty redneck judge,
George Addy, his name.

We appeal it, before three judges, in 1992.
One was a black judge named Isaac.
These two other whites,
white judge,
these white judge went against us,
but the colored guy, Isaac,
he said the Indians have a good case here.
And so we appeal it to Supreme Court in Canada in 1995,
and won it there.
We just settle it out of court.

And with that money we built this hall here, this complex, the rodeo ground, and some of the buildings.

And the sad part is, when we start this court case, some of the elders said they were happy, they said. Finally they want justice done, because they’ve been suffering in the past too long. They pass on.

But now we’re just looking forward in the future to set up something for our next generation. One thing lacking right now is, start slowly dying off, is our language. But we are fighting that. We try to bring it back. That’s why we brought you people in. The museum here too.

I hope we don’t lose our language, and I just want to end there. And thank you again, for putting me on this video. Haa guulaa [that’s finished].

(G. Attachie 2007 [2005])
**Conclusion: Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage Through Practice**

In this chapter, I presented a selection of narratives that were recorded in the course of a collaborative community-based process for the production of the virtual exhibit *Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*. The production of these videos was inspired by a painted moose hide drum that was made by the dreamer Gaayeq̓ in the early twentieth century, and which was brought to an exhibit planning meeting by Chief Garry Oker. These place-based narratives, and their accompanying photographic documentation of the production process, demonstrate how a community-defined process of intangible cultural heritage documentation evoked expressions of identity, history, and culture that articulate the inalienable relationships between tangible, intangible, and natural forms of heritage. The narratives and their descriptive contexts illustrate the potential of participatory documentation of intangible cultural heritage to initiate strategies for safeguarding heritage that are grounded in social practice. They also represent the negotiation of narrative performance by Dane-zaa elders, who use strategies identified by Bauman and Briggs (1990) as contextualization, decontextualization, and entextualization, to demonstrate alternative ways of knowing about place, and alternative models of power in relation to broader structures of inequality.

Further, I have described the co-presence of these narratives with archival media—primarily those nááchə songs recorded by Robin Ridington in the 1960s, and more recent recordings by Amber Ridington and Garry Oker—as powerful demonstrations of the dynamic transmission of Dane-zaa cultural heritage in new forms.
These archival recordings are remediated in a process of community media production. Rather than becoming static artifacts of anthropological relationships, they are brought back into a community-defined course of action that re-integrates them into Dane-zaa dynamic social practice. I argue that contemporary Dane-zaa remediation of digital cultural heritage has continuity with prior and ongoing modes of narrative performance.

A range of important themes were raised in the narratives recorded at each place in Dane-zaa territory, each of which reinforce the ongoing significance of Dane-zaa nááchë, use of the land and its resources, and the growing consensus that distinctions between tangible, intangible, and natural heritage are arbitrary and unnecessary. Tommy emphasized that cultural heritage—the oral traditions, codes of morality and proper behaviour, language, knowledge of place, material objects that were presented in the course of our collaborative fieldwork—are not safeguarded through documentation, collection, or archiving alone. Their transmission depends on their ongoing use in practice. Former Chief Gerry Attachie positioned the band’s more recent efforts to keep tangible, intangible, and natural forms of heritage alive—through the Doig River museum, language initiatives, and new media projects—as an extension of his long, persistent struggle for restitution and to defend Dane-zaa Aboriginal and treaty rights.

These narratives, in thematically diverse and inherently complex ways, demonstrate the potential for community-led intangible cultural heritage documentation to support the creation of safeguarding strategies that will keep cultural documentation—both archival and newly created, oral and digitally mediated—in dynamic social practice. Building on the experience of Doig River leadership and community members with anthropologists, lawyers, and with the creation of local media (such as those
described in Chapter Four), the narratives are expressions of Dane-zaa identity, authority, survival and resistance. They articulate an alternative model of power in relation to place. Through the Dane Wajich virtual exhibit, these expressions came to be communicated more broadly, to a wider audience, and with more local control over production than previously possible. In the following and final chapter I explore the “digital matters” that emerged as a result.
Chapter 7: Digital Matters

Conclusions

In this dissertation I have discussed a range of examples of the ways in which museums and anthropologists are using digital technologies to make heritage collections accessible to communities of origin. I have suggested that these new media forms of access are providing significant possibilities for museums and anthropologists to share curatorial and ethnographic authority, complementing broader movements in international heritage institutions toward co-curation and collaboration (Kreps 2003; Peers and Brown 2003b; Phillips 2003). In my ethnography of these practices among the Dane-zaa, I have detailed the creation, digitization, and return of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive to the Doig River First Nation, and followed some of the ways that this digital cultural heritage has been remediated through community cultural production. I have been particularly focused on the role of collaborative methodologies in relation to the documentation of what has come to be known as intangible cultural heritage, the “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage” (UNESCO 2003:2). Responding to the emphasis in the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage on the responsibility of communities whose cultural traditions are being safeguarded to participate in the process (Kurin 2007), I have described my work as a co-coordinator (with Amber Ridington) of the participatory production of the virtual exhibit Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land. I have argued that the
documentation of intangible cultural heritage is enriched through community-led, participatory processes that model the transmission of culture in appropriate social practice, and in this case, is informed by legacies of collaborative filmmaking in the discipline of visual anthropology.

However, I have also shown that rather than reifying distinctions between forms of heritage—a central critique of UNESCO heritage policies (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006)—the Doig River community-based production process, and the extensive oral narratives that it elicited, reinforced that the totality of cultural expression and everyday practice is not reducible to discrete heritage categories (for example, tangible, intangible, and natural). These processes are also inseparable from ongoing negotiations for power, political recognition, land, resources, and cultural rights. The participatory production of the Dane Wajich exhibit, and the content that was created by participants, highlighted elders and community members as “not only cultural carriers and transmitters… but also agents in the heritage enterprise itself” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004:58). I described the narratives recorded for the Dane Wajich exhibit as acts of entextualization—assessments of how their individual and collective performances would be received, understood, and communicated—and in which Dane-zaa elders contextualized their verbal art with the intention to transform, not merely reflect, social life (Bauman and Briggs 1990).

In this chapter, I further describe how the participatory production of the Dane Wajich exhibit created conditions in which cultural protocols for the negotiation of public and private forms of Dane-zaa knowledge could be mobilized in local decision-making about the circulation of elements of digital cultural heritage. The final version
of the *Dane Wajich* exhibit, which was officially launched in May 2007, was the product of a series of intensive community consultations that I facilitated with Amber Ridington. These formal and informal reviews and ongoing exhibit revisions took place between the fall of 2005, after the completion of the participatory production process that I describe in Chapters Five and Six, and the spring of 2007. In the course of these reviews, decisions were made by members of the Doig River community, the Blueberry River community, and Amber Ridington and me about the content of the exhibit and the appropriateness of showing or restricting elements of Dane-zaa tangible and intangible culture. In this chapter I describe these reviews, and explore the “digital matters,” that emerged in the process. I ground my discussion of these matters in Christina Kreps’ theory of Indigenous curation, which posits that Indigenous principles of tangible and intangible culture management are simultaneously forms of intangible cultural heritage and a means of safeguarding it (Kreps 2009). The collaborative *Dane Wajich* post-production process led to the articulation of principles of Dane-zaa curation of dreamers’ drums and drawings, ultimately resulting in the removal of related digital content from the virtual exhibit. However, the new media context of the project raised questions about the role of digital documentary practices, including digital archiving and “virtual repatriation” in safeguarding Indigenous curation in practice.

**“Indigenous Curation” and the Post-Production of Dane Wajich-Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land**

Christina Kreps has called practices of local knowledge management and heritage conservation “Indigenous curation” (Kreps 2003; Kreps 2009). She argues that
collaboration and co-curation between museums and members of originating communities has revealed a rich diversity of Indigenous traditions for the care, handling, perception, and valuing of their cultural heritage, which enrich possibilities for tangible and intangible heritage preservation. Kreps writes that,

The word curator is derived from the Latin word curare, which means ‘to take care of’. If we think if curators as caretakers and guardians of culture, we can see how certain individuals in many societies, such as priests, ritual specialists, shamans, and elders, are curators. Indigenous curators may possess specialized knowledge on the care and treatment of certain types of objects, and are entrusted with keeping these objects safe on behalf of a community, family, or clan. This responsibility is often socially sanctioned and grounded in customs, traditions, and systems of social organization. (Kreps 2009:195)

Kreps explains further that Indigenous curatorial methods can be centered on the protection of spiritual, as well as physical integrity of objects, reflecting “a particular community’s religious and cultural protocols pertaining to the use, handling, and treatment of certain classes of objects (Kreps 2009:196). Of central importance to this dissertation is Kreps’ assertion that aspects of Indigenous curation are both a form of intangible cultural heritage and also a means of safeguarding it. She argues that “Indigenous curatorial traditions, such as Native American approaches to the care and handling of sensitive materials discussed above, fit the definition of intangible cultural heritage because they consist of practices, knowledge systems, skills, and instruments that function to transmit culture and are part of peoples’ cultural heritage” (Kreps 2009:199). In my explorations of the “digital matters” that emerged in the course of Dane Wajich exhibit post-production, I argue that prior and contemporary practices of restricting access to these dreamers' drums and drawings are principles of Indigenous
curation, and that they are significant elements of safeguarding practices associated with these forms of Dane-zaa tangible and intangible heritage.

However, while Kreps draws attention to the fact that a primary focus of the 2003 UNESCO *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* is on helping to sustain living cultural traditions, practices, and processes, rather than just collecting and preserving cultural production, she also indicates that the primary practices of listing and documentation associated with the Convention have the potential to undermine principles of Indigenous curation. She writes,

This process may inadvertently undermine the integrity of Indigenous curation by isolating or detaching practices from their cultural whole and making them fit criteria outlined in the Convention. Herein lies one of the more contradictory aspects of the Convention as a mechanism for supporting Indigenous curation. One of the ultimate goals of the Convention is to protect world cultural diversity as a universal value, yet the methods used in the archiving and documenting process themselves can lead to the standardization and homogenization of practices that are inherently varied, and governed by specific cultural protocol. The universality principle inscribed in the Convention is especially problematic because it implies that people’s cultural heritage is the heritage of humanity and is thus part of a public cultural commons. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points out, ‘when culture becomes the heritage of humanity, the presumption is open access’ (2006:185). (Kreps 2009:204)

Building on this argument, and on the themes presented in this dissertation so far, I argue that these very contradictions played out in relation to the documentation and archiving of Dane-zaa heritage. While Canada has not ratified the 2003 Convention, and the Doig River virtual museum project was not a UNESCO sponsored initiative, the case example that I have presented in the dissertation still illuminates some of the tensions that Kreps identifies. For example, in my review of Dane-zaa ethnography
(Chapter Two), I described how the documentation of practices associated with Dane-
zaa nááchê created records of vital importance for the revitalization and continuity of
traditions at Doig River, such as (but not limited to) the making of Dane-zaa drums,
knowledge of nááchê songs and their histories, and the continued public practice of the
Tea Dance. In Chapter Three, I showed how members of the Doig River First Nation
have used the contents of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive in contemporary
practices related to language and cultural education, expression of identity, and political
resistance, and how they have been remediated in new forms, such as video
documentaries, audio CDs, and websites. However, the same processes of
documentation and remediation by the collectors and community members could also be
said to be complicit in the blurring of distinctions between public and private forms of
knowledge through circulation and interpretation that marginalizes principles of
Indigenous curation. The digitization of museum collections and ethnographic
documentation in particular has added a new dimension to concerns related to the
circulation of cultural knowledge that was traditionally privately managed. If, as I argue
here, Dane-zaa protocols for the management of public and private forms of knowledge
are principles of Indigenous curation, and that these aspects of Dane-zaa Indigenous
curation are themselves forms of intangible cultural heritage and also means of
safeguarding intangible heritage, then I conclude this dissertation by asking, how has
documentation supported the safeguarding of Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage?
How might transformations of ethnographic archives into digital cultural heritage
further undermine principles of Indigenous curation, and thereby the safeguarding of
Dane-zaa intangible cultural heritage?
Digital Matters

*Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* represented both an engagement with Dane-zaa digital cultural heritage from the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive*, and a collaborative community media production focused on the local control of mediation of Dane-zaa history, language, and culture. However, in the two years of community reviews and post-production following the field documentation described in Chapters Five and Six, key issues related to control over the circulation of Dane-zaa digital heritage emerged. In the following section I outline the process of the exhibit post-production and community consultation that emerged in the period immediately following the documentation of narratives that I described in the previous two chapters, up to the official launch of the exhibit in May of 2007. I argue that the *Dane Wajich* participatory process created conditions in which principles of Dane-zaa Indigenous curation could be articulated, but it also illuminated some of the challenges of safeguarding aspects intangible cultural heritage in the digital age. The first “digital matter” that I discuss is grounded in the role of Dane-zaa cultural protocols and Indigenous intellectual property rights in managing public and private knowledge, and defining how documentation of such knowledge should be accessible in digital form. The second “digital matter” relates to the question of control of the circulation of digital cultural heritage and the implications of these matters in practices related to Indigenous curation, digitization, and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
Community Post-Production Consultations, July 2005 to January 2007

In July and early August of 2005, during the production and initial post-production of the virtual museum project, I camped with Pat Moore, Amber Ridington, Julia Miller, and Peter Biella, just beyond the Doig River First Nation’s Tea Dance grounds along the bank of the Doig River. Early in the morning I would listen to the rustle and stomp of a roaming herd of horses that would wander by to eat grass in the meadow, the rumble of a car passing on the road high on the bank across the river. Each morning, as we rose to make a fire and prepare breakfast, the first of a steady stream of visitors began to arrive and sit with us to talk, drink coffee, and see how we were faring. For example, Darren Dominic arrived one morning with a thoughtful supply of tea and toilet paper, in case we were running short. Billy Attachie and Eddie Apsassin frequently drove up to the campsite on their quads to say hello, share a joke, or make a suggestion about the project and the direction it was taking. Chief Garry Oker also visited us there frequently, making our campsite an important place for talking about the progress of the project.

That summer, when the *Dane Wajich* project team was not out recording video narratives, and needed access to electricity, computers, and the Internet, we worked in a space in the Doig River Museum. The Doig River Museum is a very public space on the reserve. It is located directly across the hall from the Band Hall’s main reception desk, and has a wall of glass exhibit cabinets that allow passers-by in the hallway to look into the museum’s main space. It is a commonly trafficked part of the Band Hall; the door to the un-staffed museum is unlocked by the custodian each morning, and throughout the day, band members use a telephone or the computer just inside the entrance. Community members and visitors alike wander in and out of the museum, looking at
familiar objects and family photographs. It was a productive location for co-producers Amber Ridington and me for continuing to make the project as visible as possible to members of the Doig River community, and for maintaining involvement the initial post-production process.

The youth video production team, who were paid a stipend for their participation in the project, were asked to meet with Amber Ridington and me each working morning to prepare for the day’s excursion out onto the land. On the days that the group did not travel to film on location, we worked together, and in consultation with as many elders and community members as possible, to create a storyboard and assemble content for the virtual exhibit. We reviewed and catalogued the photographs that we took each day in the field, and selected the best ones for possible inclusion in the web exhibit. We digitized, catalogued, and backed up our video recordings, and worked with Pat Moore, Julia Miller, Billy Attachie, and Madeline Oker to start prioritizing video and audio recordings for the long process of translation and orthographic transcription ahead.

The Band loaned us two large bulletin boards, which we propped on a table and leaned against the wall at one end of the museum. We pinned our explorations of ideas for the structure of the website to the bulletin boards, along with quotes from video recordings, photographs from the production process, and references to related media that had been located in the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive to the board. As the organization of the virtual exhibit began to take shape as collaged images, text, and

63 Photographs of the Doig River Museum, and in particular, some of the storyboards and exhibits of Dane Wajich content can be seen online in the Dane Wajich exhibit at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/places/gallery_doig.php
diagrams on our bulletin boards, the need for further documentation emerged. For example, youth team members wrote short statements about themselves and their involvement in the project, and then documented and transcribed the biographies of a number of project participants for the “Project Team” section of the exhibit.\textsuperscript{64}

Our storyboarding was publicly displayed as an exhibit in the Doig River Museum on July 11, 2005, the occasion of a community-wide celebration of ongoing negotiations of the band’s Treaty Land Entitlement. On this day, a meeting was held with the Doig River Chief, Council, elders, their attorney, and visiting federal representatives. Afterwards, the Doig River Drummers performed nááché songs for visitors and community members. I videotaped the performance, and it was eventually included in the \textit{Dane Wajich} exhibit.\textsuperscript{65} After the drummers had concluded, a dinner was served to the visitors and the entire community in the picnic area just outside the Band Hall.

In the days preceding the Treaty Land Entitlement celebration, Amber Ridington and I worked together with members of the youth team to develop a series of exhibit panels that presented photographs of the production process, photographs of Doig River elders, and quotations drawn from video narratives. One panel indicated the probable timeline of the post-production and community review schedule. Jack Askoty helped us mount the panels by cutting lodge-pole pine poles in the woods near the Band Hall, and

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{64} Visit the “Project Team” page of the \textit{Dane Wajich} exhibit in Appendix I, p. 401, and at: \url{http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/project/projectteam.php}
\textsuperscript{65} The Doig River Drummers’ performance at the Treaty Land Entitlement celebration can be viewed in the \textit{Dane Wajich} exhibit at: \url{http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/stories/video.php?action=fla/tledaydrumming}. The orginal transcript of the performance is in Appendix I, p. 598.
using them to construct stands to hang the panels from. We selected segments of video from the recordings of our excursions out onto the land, and played them in rotation on a television adjacent to the jack pine pole exhibits. Throughout the day of meetings and celebration, government representatives and community members took in the videos, the exhibit panels, and the large storyboard collages that we had presented. In the weeks that followed, in consultation with our Dane-zaa team members and community visitors to the museum, Amber Ridington and I continued to refine this storyboard and exhibit information architecture in preparation for our return to Vancouver and the next phase of exhibit design.

While Doig River community members directed the *Dane Wajich* exhibit production process, which I described in Chapters Five and Six, Amber Ridington and I directed the post-production process in consultation with the Doig River community members. For me, this was a process of listening to Doig River community members, interpreting the messages that I was receiving, discussing and debating these messages with Amber and project participants. Amber and I would then work with a group of interactive producers, called Unlimited Digital, who executed the exhibit’s web and graphic design, and accommodated extensive revisions as we elicited feedback from the Doig River community to translate these messages into multimedia contexts.66 Amber

---

66 Unlimited Digital is a small interactive media production company located in Vancouver, B.C. Based on their work with other museum and virtual exhibit sites, Amber Ridington and I selected them to produce the interactive component of the *Dane Wajich* virtual exhibit. Their team was comprised of Wayne Clark, Katherine Lee, Kyle McIntosh, Darren Card, and Malcom Levy, who translated the digital content Amber Ridington and I provided them with into versions of the exhibit, which we then reviewed with the Doig River community. While most of our work together occurred in
and I would then present the multimedia results of these communications, interpretations, and remediations back to Doig River community members at official community meetings and with informal visits to peoples’ homes on the Doig River reserve and in Fort St. John. We continued to work with the Unlimited Digital team to re-integrate this feedback into subsequent versions of the exhibit. This was a time intensive process, which I do not present in detail here. Instead, I outline our post-production review schedule and comment on the general outcomes of each official exhibit review.

Between our departure from Doig River at the end of July 2005, and the official launch of the virtual exhibit in May 2007, our review and post-production process involved four official community consultations with the Doig River community, and ongoing liaison with changing Doig River Chief and Councils, financial administrator Ronda Peck-Svisdahl, Band Manager Warren Reade, elders, and many community members. We also partnered with linguist Pat Moore, who directed a team of linguists that included University of Washington graduate student Julia Miller, and Doig River language specialists Billy Attachie, Madeline Oker, and Eddie Apsassin. In these two years the language team meticulously translated and transcribed the video narratives and texts that are seen in the exhibit, and that I have included in this dissertation. Amber Ridington and I worked in consultation with Robin Ridington and Jillian Ridington to develop interpretive texts for elements of the exhibit, which were then confirmed and

Vancouver, two members of their team, Katherine Lee and Darren Card, attended a planning meeting at Doig River in late June to meet project participants and the Chief and Council.
edited when Amber and I traveled to Doig River to meet with groups of community members.

Our first official review took place in October of 2005. Because Amber had returned to continue her doctoral course work at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I conducted this review alone (the rest were conducted together). I brought with me two different design schemes for the exhibit prepared by Unlimited Digital designers. These designs reflected the content structure and look and feel of the exhibit that had been developed in the course of storyboarding throughout July at Doig River. I also brought DVDs of videos that had been recorded—the narratives that I present in Chapter Six—to be reviewed for inclusion in the exhibit. More than a dozen community members, including Chief Oker and councilors Gerry Attachie and Norman Davis, attended the first community meeting. Based on the consensus of this group, we selected one of the design schemes, and reviewed plans for exhibit content. The videos were screened, and suggestions were made for the subtitling and treatment of translations. The videos and design schemes sparked wide-ranging conversations, which continued throughout the week that I was in Doig River to review this first iteration of the exhibit. In addition to the official community meeting, I met with people in the project space in the Doig River Museum, and visited with community members who had not been able to attend the meeting to elicit their feedback.

In May of 2006, Amber and I traveled together to Doig River to present the second iteration of the exhibit, which integrated feedback from the first review, and showed a more populated version of the exhibit. Several key suggestions were made during the official community meeting. First, some objections were raised about the
choice to use the image of Gaaye’a’s torn drum skin on the home page of the exhibit, which I will describe in detail in relation to the first “digital matter.” It was also suggested that a series of web pages be added to the exhibit memorializing Doig River community members who had passed away, and which provided a reference for names that were frequently evoked in the exhibit’s oral histories and narratives. A list was created of people for Amber and me to research, to consult with Robin and Jillian Ridington about, and to integrate into the exhibit.

It was also emphasized at the meeting how nice it would be for people to hear the publicly performed dreamers’ songs in the exhibit, such as those that had been distributed on the CD Dane-zaa Dreamers Songs: 1966-2000 Volume 1–Suu Na chii K’chi ge “The Place Where Happiness Dwells” (G. Oker, et al. 2004b). While there were many recordings in the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive, and in the audio CDs that had been released by the band that we could use in the virtual exhibit, the majority of them had little readily associated contextual information. It became apparent to us that we would need to work with song keeper Tommy Attachie to identify which dreamers were associated with the recordings of dreamers' songs from the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive so that the songs could be linked in the exhibit to related places and to descriptions of the dreamers themselves. On this trip to Doig River, Amber and I spent two days listening to recordings of songs with Tommy Attachie as he scraped and stretched beaver hides in the basement of his house. Tommy identified which dreamer had dreamed each song, and occasionally where the songs had

67 The “In Memory” section of the Dane Wajich exhibit can be seen in Appendix I, p. 381-392, and online at: http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/project/inmemory.php
been dreamed, and other related narratives. Amber and I returned to Vancouver with a long list of jobs to do, and a series of changes and additions to pass on to the Unlimited Digital designers.

Amber and I spent the spring and summer completing the work set out for us in community reviews, and that which we felt was required to complement the narratives and themes that were produced in the exhibit’s participatory production process. We worked with Unlimited Digital’s media designers, with Pat Moore and his team of translators, with a contracted French translator, and with our representative from the Virtual Museum of Canada to create a version of the exhibit that we felt satisfied the many stakeholders in the exhibit. We returned to the Doig River First Nation in December of 2006 to present the community with what we thought would be a nearly final version of the exhibit. However, it was only as we sought feedback on the exhibit during this review that we began to hear more serious critiques of the use of Dane-zaa digital cultural heritage. It was only after nearly two years of participatory production and ongoing consultation, and as elders in the community became more familiar with the Internet and what it meant for visibility of their cultural heritage, that serious “digital matters” began to be articulated. A fourth review was conducted in January of 2007, when Amber Ridington and I again traveled to Doig River to seek resolutions to the tensions over the circulation of digital cultural heritage that had emerged in the post-production of *Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land*. The

---

68 Because Canada has two official languages, French and English, it was a requirement in our funding agreement with the Virtual Museum of Canada that the virtual exhibit *Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land* be available in both languages. The exhibit’s introductory page offers links to a French or English site:

http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/
first “digital matter” that I describe relates to the role of cultural protocols in
articulations of intellectual property rights in defining the public and private nature of
aspects of digital cultural heritage. The second “digital matter” points to the
complexities of controlling the circulation of heritage documentation in the digital age.

**Digital Matter #1: Cultural Protocols and Intellectual Property Rights**

As I described in Chapters Five and Six, the painted moose hide drum made by
the dreamer *Gaaye̱a* inspired Tommy Attachie to define how the documentation of
narratives for the *Dane Wajich* exhibit should unfold. In addition to articulating the
inalienable connections between Dane-zaa tangible, intangible, and natural heritage,
Tommy Attachie suggested that elders travel with young people out onto the land to tell
them “the important stories.” Based on Tommy Attachie’s narrative in the Doig River
Band Hall on June 26, 2005, the elder-led production team then traveled to seven
places in Dane-zaa territory where they recorded personal histories, traditional
narratives, and oral histories of Dane-zaa *nááchè* that were to be included in the virtual
exhibit.

*Gaaye̱a*’s painted drum skin had been featured prominently in the exhibit’s
content storyboards, which had been displayed in the Doig River museum throughout
the review process, and presented in draft versions of the exhibit in a central place on
the homepage in our October 2005 review. However, in our May 2006 review, it was
suggested that because the drum skin was torn, it was not the best image to represent

---

69 Tommy Attachie, “The Story of the Drum” in the *Dane Wajich* exhibit:
The original transcript is in Appendix I, p. 499.
the project. Rather, it was suggested than another photograph of a drum made by
Gaayę́a should be used instead on the exhibit home page. In 1967, Robin Ridington had
photographed the nááché Charlie Yahey holding a rare two-sided painted drum that had
been made by Gaayę́a. This photograph was chosen by the participants at this review
from the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive to replace the image of Gaayę́a’s torn
drum skin. It was felt that this image both honored the memory of Charlie Yahey, to
whom many people at Doig River had close personal and kin ties, and demonstrated his
ongoing importance to the Doig River community. The photograph of the pristine
painted drum was also thought to better represent the project as a whole.

It was also suggested that Gaayę́a’s torn drum skin should be preserved and
perhaps even restored. Former Chief Garry Oker and Amber Ridington and I later
discussed the possibility of raising funds to restore the drum and to exhibit the drum in
the Doig River Museum. However, as Amber Ridington and I have described elsewhere
(A. Ridington and Hennessy 2008), around the time of our December 2006 consultation,
when we began to discuss this possibility with community members more widely, we
were surprised to hear that some people did not think that public display of nááché
drawings was appropriate. While Gaayę́a’s drum skin had been shown in community
meetings and had featured in drafts of the exhibit to this point, it was only when the
project was nearing completion, and more specific discussions relating to the public
display of Gaayę́a’s drum, that these objections began to surface.

Following the December 2006 revelation that showing images of dreamers’
drums in the exhibit was a problem for some people, we scheduled a follow-up review.
When we arrived in Fort St. John in January of 2007, Amber Ridington and I were
encouraged by Chief Kelvin Davis to visit with as many people as we could to ask about the appropriateness of showing the drum in the virtual museum exhibit.

Billy Attachie had been the first to explain to us that the drum could only be exhibited in the museum if it was covered up in cloth, the way that dreamers like Charlie Yahey used to care for these drums. When we visited with him that January, he once again emphasized that people who had cared for these drums had always kept them wrapped up and out of sight. He reminded us that there was much that Doig River people were not telling us about this issue. I understood this to mean that there was knowledge associated with the drum that Amber and I were not meant to have access to. This, perhaps, was the reason that people had not felt comfortable discussing this sensitive issue up to this point.

Billy Attachie’s subtle reminder of the limits of sharing forms of knowledge evokes a basic contradiction that has emerged around the repatriation of Native American material culture, in which under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in the United States, claims for the repatriation of sacred material culture require that private information be made public. Michael Brown and Margaret Bruchac describe this dynamic in relation to the following example:

In a 1997 conference on NAGPRA held in Santa Fe, a Laguna Pueblo official named Paul Pino identified the problem this way. ‘One of the things that really concerns me,’ he said, ‘is again, how much does the government have to know, and how much do the officials have to know with regards to the use and purpose, what these objects are for? Again, we’re stuck in that position where disclosure means, you know, losing what safeguards we have with regard to those items. (Brown and Bruchac 2006)
Paul Pino’s statement draws attention to the contradictions inherent in processes of reclamation of tangible and intangible indigenous cultural property. Claims to private knowledge, or objects based on Indigenous principles of curation, or methods of safeguarding, may result in the undermining of those very safeguarding principles. As Amber Ridington and I organized formal community consultations, drove from house to house on the Doig River reserve, and chatted informally with people about these issues over coffee in the Band Hall, we were continually asking questions about private cultural protocols and forms of knowledge in order to encourage community leaders to make decisions about the public circulation of tangible, intangible, and digital cultural heritage. Looking back at my field notes now, I am grateful for the generosity of the Doig River and Blueberry River community members from whom we sought advice. While they provided us with a range of opinions and information with which to make decisions about the content of the Dane Wajich exhibit, I suspect that our probing into cultural protocols related to dreamers and their drawings was pushing the boundaries of appropriateness.

At the end of our visit in January with Billy Attachie, he directed us to visit with his brother Tommy. As Tommy Attachie had done in the course of documenting video narratives for the Dane Wajich exhibit, he talked to us about the role of Dane-zaa prophets in making peace between people, providing moral guidance, and bringing songs from heaven. In response to our questions about the appropriateness of showing images of nááchê drums and drawings, he talked about how prophets used to care for their drums by hanging them up and keeping them away from people.
In a follow-up interview in the summer of 2007, Elder Robert Dominic explained these protocols for care of the drums to me in more detail:

They made a drum and he—they—they got in through, I don’t know how, how that happened, but there’s nothing impossible for him [God] upstairs [in heaven], from upstairs.

He told him, “Draw this way, special ink.”
These inks you don’t just get in stores, drugstores. I know he got them from bush and... he just put a little ink in there and automatically it’s [flowing] by itself, by Him, upstairs…

And the next morning, this nice colourful drum.
He told him, and then he told the people why he drew that. He told everybody why he made that drawing on that drum. ‘Cause people upstairs tell him to do this. That’s a special meaning and something about ah, crime, something about … helping out and disease. All kinds of—it’s special drum.

You just don’t drum it…
just grab it down and start playing it and—no, it’s not. It’s so special, got to be a certain way, certain place. It’s got to be where the sun sets. It’s got to be hanging that way, towards the sun. Wherever you camp, you’ve got to hang where the sunset’s going to be. It’s where it’s going to hang.

So you can’t just hang it over the north side, or southeast, whatever, it’s got to be always at sunset, that drum.
(R. Dominic 2007)
Drummer and singer Brian Acko also told me about the way his uncle Jack Acko used to care for his drum:

I know my Uncle Jack kept one of those drums like that.
I remember it, he had it.
He had two of them, two drums, and one little one like that one–
It was one of those dreamers… he kept it.
But I remember, my Uncle Jack showed us to that,
Me and my brother Ronnie, youngest brother.
One day he showed us that.

[Kate]: Do you remember how he used to take care of those drums?

[Brian]: Yeah… he’d hang it up pretty high and make sure that there’s,
It’s not where… ladies walk, or where they call, ah, dirty ground.
He kept it real good.
He wouldn’t let nobody go in his room and so…
He cherished it with his heart.
Cause I guess his drum was… pretty important to him…
He wouldn’t just show it to anybody.
I remember there was drawing on it, ‘cause I seen it.
There was a drawing on it.
A road to heaven and then there’s a cross like that on it.
(B. Acko 2007)

In the course of our January 2007 consultation, Amber Ridington and I spoke informally with many members of the Doig River community. I must emphasize that at first there did not appear to be any agreement around showing the drum publicly. As Amber Ridington and I have described elsewhere (A. Ridington and Hennessy 2008), some people felt that the sacred nature of the drum, and traditional protocols for restricting access to drums, meant that they should not be publicly viewed. Others felt
that photographs of the torn drum *could* be seen by the public because the damaged drum no longer held any power. Taboos around menstruating women were again evoked; for example, we were told that menstruating women were not allowed to dance, or to step over men when they were sleeping, or to view the dreamers’ drums. These taboos were used to suggest that menstruating women should still not see the drums or their images. One person was concerned that other First Nations would see the drum and use it in dangerous ways. Still another person felt that because the drum was damaged, it had been spiritually deactivated, and would therefore be okay to be viewed in more public contexts. Another person felt that the drum was like the bible, meant to be seen and possessing the power to help people.

Former Chief Garry Oker, who believed that there was great benefit in the drum being seen, later spoke with me about the advantages of using this knowledge rather than limiting access to it:

… old dreamers' drawings and maps… a huge big thing.  
I’ve seen them, but the people…  
It’s passed on to the family and the family is just basically hanging onto it, okay, maybe that is a sense of empowerment.  
But they don’t know how to translate it.  
So, what good is that if we can’t use it?  
Knowledge is only as good as what can be done with it, and how can it improve our lives, you know, and our families  
… our community.  
Without that, there’s no sense of bringing back something we can’t use.

(G. Oker 2007a)
Former Chief Oker’s perspective on the role of dreamers’ drums in contemporary social practice and cultural production was made particularly clear in his use of Gaayega’s drum as a metaphor for community healing in the film *The Otter Man’s Prophecy* (G. Oker, et al. 2004a), which I described in Chapter Four. His interest in mobilizing the drum in new contexts was also apparent in the way that he used Gaayega’s drum to initiate community leadership of the Dane Wajich exhibit production process, and to elicit the transmission of knowledge through practice, which I described in Chapters Five and Six. However, in the course of my work between 2003 and 2007 with the Doig River First Nation, it had become increasingly clear that as a young and active community leader, former Chief Oker’s perspective is in tension with members of an older generation at Doig River who hold more conservative views about the role of traditional cultural protocols.

In spite of these contrasting perspectives, as Amber Ridington and I persisted in our consultations with the Doig River First Nation Chief and Council, and continued to engage community members in conversation about the use of these images, a general consensus emerged which suggested that the sensitive issue could only be resolved, and that the serious concerns of those who were opposed to the drum being shown addressed at that time, by removing all images of dreamers’ drums and drawings from the Dane Wajich exhibit. While removing these photographs required a substantial aesthetic revision of the exhibit, I was very interested to note that such changes did not impact the exhibit’s thematic content. While Gaayega’s painted drum skin had inspired the process of traveling out onto the land to record narratives related to Dane-zaa heritage and aspects of contemporary identity, public visual access to the drum was not
required to convey the significance of dreamers in Dane-zaa social practice and cultural production.

When Amber Ridington and I visited Tommy Attachie once again to discuss this issue, he agreed that an image of an unpainted drum, such as those used by the Doig River Drummers today, should take the place of the photograph of Charlie Yahey holding Gaayęga’s drum. Tommy presented his own drum to be photographed, and eventually, it became the central image on the Dane Wajich exhibit’s home page.\(^70\) We also revised the Dane Wajich page called ‘A Dreamer’s Drum,’ which explains the role of Gaayęga’s drum in the exhibit’s participatory process. It now states that:

… over the course of the development of this website, our Doig River elders and community members also came to a consensus that it is not appropriate to show Dane-zaa Dreamers’ drawings to a world wide audience on the Internet. Even though the drum is central to this website, in order to ensure that the Dreamers' drawings are treated properly and with respect, no images of Dreamers' drawings or the drum that we describe here are shown.\(^71\)

In addition to creating a representation of Dane-zaa culture and history that did not circulate images of these sacred drums and drawings, thereby respecting the wishes of those at Doig River who felt strongly that this would be culturally inappropriate, the replacement of Gaayęga’s drum with the unpainted drum had the positive effect of shifting the focus of the Dane Wajich exhibit away from archival images to a more


contemporary representation of the way that nááchë songs are currently used in public social practice.

However, while there was some resolution of issues at Doig River related to the public display of nááchë drums, tensions over the content of the Dane Wajich exhibit had not yet been resolved. Amber Ridington and I were informed that descendants of Charlie Yahey at the Blueberry River reserve were upset that photographs of the late nááchë were being used in Doig River projects without their participation or consent. When we asked Chief Kelvin Davis what to do, he encouraged us to visit with the family at Blueberry River, to explain the Dane Wajich project, and to seek their permission to use the photographs.

The first person that we met from the Blueberry reserve to discuss these issues was generally supportive of Doig River’s virtual museum project, yet he indicated that the Blueberry community would like to save this material to eventually use in their own exhibits. He directed us to meet with another member of his family, who had been particularly concerned with the use of images of Charlie Yahey and the drum on the Internet. With Doig River elder Jack Askoty along with us, we drove to Blueberry and met with Charlie Yahey’s descendent. He told us of his concern that these images were

---

72 While in the course of my fieldwork I was given official permission by the Blueberry River First Nation to conduct research with Blueberry River community members, my relationships never developed to the extent that I recorded official interviews. The following general descriptions of consultations at Blueberry River are based on field notes, and not official interviews, so I anonymously refer to the people I spoke with. I have included these general, anonymous descriptions of Blueberry River perspectives because of the significant impact they had on the production of the Dane Wajich exhibit, and expressions of intellectual property rights to digital cultural heritage that they had at Doig River.
being used by others for financial gain, while members of his community received nothing. Further, he was worried that people would be able to copy images of Charlie Yahey from the Internet, and that it would be impossible to control how the images were used. He emphasized that the drum held by Charlie Yahey in the 1967 photograph from the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive had been cared for appropriately by the nááchê, and that he himself had now taken the responsibility of caring for the drum. The extraordinary drum remained in his possession, and needed to be cared for according to tradition. He described how the drum was always kept out of view; how it used to be wrapped in a tarp and hung in a tree, or hidden away where it could not be found or disturbed. Even in the deep cold of winter, he said, when it was played, it rang as true as if it had just been warmed over a fire. Charlie Yahey’s relative made it clear to us that images of the nááchê, and of the drum, should not be used in the Doig River virtual exhibit until his family had had the opportunity to discuss the issue in more detail.

Ultimately, over the next several months, and many phone calls and voice messages, the descendants of Charlie Yahey at the Blueberry River First Nation decided that they did not want any photographs or media related to Charlie Yahey to be used in the Dane Wajich project. Accordingly, we worked with our website designers to remove all images and sound recordings of Charlie Yahey from the exhibit. Based on continued conversations around the issue, Amber Ridington and I also decided that all photographs of individuals from communities other than Doig River that had been selected for the project should also be removed, as there had been no opportunity to seek permissions from families.
What emerged in this process of consultation and discussion with Doig River Chief and Council, community members, and the Blueberry River relatives of Charlie Yahey, was an initial articulation of the Doig River First Nation’s intellectual property rights discourse in relation to Dane-zaa cultural heritage documentation. In a meeting with Amber Ridington and me at Doig River during this January consultation, it was decided by Chief Kelvin Davis and Councilors Gerry Attachie and Norman Davis that individual stakeholders or their descendants should be consulted for their permission to display their cultural heritage, and that this decision should not be made by their elected Chief and Council without their specific permission (A. Ridington and Hennessy 2008).

These articulations reflected the desire of Dane-zaa people at Doig River and Blueberry River to control the way the dreamers’ drawings and images of the dreamer Charlie Yahey are used in social practice. While the desire for control is clearly grounded for many Dane-zaa people in knowledge of cultural protocols, or principles of Indigenous curation, they are also reflections of unbalanced relations of power between Dane-zaa communities, who have had unequal access to the resources and relationships needed to access and remediate their digital cultural heritage. Unequal access to heritage resources and to the means of production of representations of Dane-zaa culture—access to funding, administrative infrastructure, production technology, and outside expertise—in this case raised important questions about the politics of the circulation of knowledge. As reflected in the outcomes of Indigenous media production in communities elsewhere, these questions “may be about who has access to and understanding of media technologies, who has the rights to know, tell, and circulate certain stories and images” (Ginsburg 2008:303). In my fieldwork with the Doig River
First Nation, and in my informal discussions with members of the Blueberry River First Nation, it became apparent to me that these articulations of rights to control the way that digital cultural heritage—in this case ethnographic representation of Dane-zaa heritage—is circulated and accessed, are in tension with these broader relations of power. However, rather than romanticizing such acts of resistance as evidence of the potential failure of these structures of power (Abu-Lughod 1990), I understand them to illuminate the structural and technological forces that continue to complicate efforts to keep cultural knowledge and heritage circulating in culturally appropriate ways. I take these up in relation to the second “digital matter”: control.

Digital Matter #2: Control

The ethical and methodological paradox made clear by the digitization and remediation of cultural heritage from the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive is that while documentation used in new media contexts, such as Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land, can generate articulations of rights, they simultaneously amplify the difficulty of enforcing those rights (Hennessy 2009b). The Doig River First Nation Chief and Council came to a consensus over the ways in which stakeholders and their descendants should have the right to determine how their cultural heritage is used. They decided that intellectual property rights to ethnographic documentation should reside with descendant families, rather than with band Chiefs and Councils. In response to concerns raised over the circulation of images of nááče drawings and drums in the course of the review of the Dane Wajich exhibit, images related to drums and drawings were removed. Further, in keeping with these articulations of Indigenous intellectual property rights to documentation of culture,
when permission to use media documenting the dreamer Charlie Yahey was declined by his descendants at Blueberry River, these media were removed from the Dane Wajich exhibit. However, these contested media still circulate (albeit in limited contexts) in the Doig River media projects that I described in Chapter Four; furthermore, an Internet search reveals multiple manifestations of the contested images on publicly accessible websites.

In a first example of the circulation of this image over the Internet, the photograph of Charlie Yahey holding Gaayega’s drum that was removed from the Dane Wajich exhibit can be found in the Royal British Columbia Museum's Virtual Exhibit called Journeys and Transformations: British Columbia Landscapes (Royal British Columbia Museum 2004), hosted by the Virtual Museum of Canada. The exhibit credits indicate that this image was provided by the Doig River First Nation and the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive; however, like earlier publications of this image in analog contexts (R. Ridington 1978; R. Ridington 1981; R. Ridington 1988) and in Doig River First Nation media productions (G. Oker 2005d; G. Oker, et al. 2000), the use of this image had not yet openly emerged as a contested issue.

A second example of the digital circulation of this photograph can be found on the website of the Treaty 8 Tribal Association (2005-2010). In the Flash-animated introduction to the website, and in the animated banner of the main site, Charlie Yahey has been digitally removed from the context of the original photograph to float with his drum against a blue sky, while an eagle flies in circles below him over the landscape. While this and other images in the animated visual montage evoke the strong identity and histories of contemporary member communities of the Treaty 8 Tribal Association,
the use of the photograph contradicts the statements of Indigenous intellectual property rights and principles of Indigenous curation that emerged in the course of the *Dane Wajich* exhibit post-production and community consultations. While the use of this photograph, in publications, the Royal British Columbia Museum virtual exhibit, and the Doig River media projects such as *Contact the People* (G. Oker et al. 2000), *The Otter Man’s Prophecy* (G. Oker et al. 2004a), and *They Dream About Everything* (G. Oker and Elders 2005) occurred before the articulation of these rights, they all continue to contradict these rights.

The continued circulation of the photograph of Charlie Yahey holding *Gaayę́a’s* painted drum points to yet another contradiction underscoring intangible heritage safeguarding efforts related to the transformation of ethnographic documentation into digital cultural heritage. As I have described in this chapter, descendants of Charlie Yahey at Blueberry River inherited *Gaayę́a’s* drum. According to one member of the family, the drum has been cared for according to the cultural protocols passed down by Charlie Yahey and dreamers who cared for drums and drawings before him. In the course of my fieldwork, and in my review of Dane-zaa ethnography, protocols for care of dreamers’ drums were described to me by several people as intertwined with the caretaker’s ability to negotiate the visibility and use of the drum in order to maintain its power. These descriptions are continuous with ethnographic descriptions of the use of *nááchę* drawings that I described in Chapter Two. Safeguarding the power of *nááchę* drawings was integrally connected to the safeguarding of knowledge of their care; or, in Christina Kreps’ terms, Indigenous curation as both a form of intangible cultural heritage and a method of safeguarding it through practice (Kreps 2009).
In this dissertation I have also discussed some of the ways in which the digitization of heritage collections have been connected to discourses on repatriation. Access by originating communities to their cultural heritage in on-line museum and ethnographic collections has come to be referred to as “virtual repatriation.” Even though these practices rarely involve the transfer of ownership to communities of origin, engagement with repatriation discourse has been centered on the possibilities for digitization practices to parallel some of the positive effects of physical repatriation. In Chapter Three, I explored a series of examples of the ways in which digitization practices are considered to have the potential to: (1) address the legacies of colonial fragmentation of Aboriginal cultural property; (2) to articulate indigenous ideologies of repatriation that connect the return of cultural property to broader forms of restitution and reclamation of lands, language, and cultural identities; and (3) to remediate and resignify repatriated digital cultural heritage to meet contemporary goals for cultural transmission and political recognition. The return of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive to the Doig River First Nation, and the subsequent production of the virtual exhibit Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land further emphasized that there are significant opportunities associated with access to, and remediation of, digital cultural heritage. I described how the digitization of the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive made the collection digitally accessible, bringing together the invaluable work of Robin Ridington and his colleagues over many years into the hands of the Doig River First Nation and other Dane-zaa communities. Further, through the lens of the collaborative production of the Dane Wajich exhibit at Doig River, I explored how access to digital cultural heritage and tools for mediation of
representation of language, culture, and history facilitated the articulation of Dane-zaa ideologies of heritage that did not make distinctions between tangible, intangible, and natural forms. Access to digital cultural heritage also supported the remediation of these products of ethnographic research, and their presentation in new forms.

However, in the ethnographic case study I have presented in this dissertation, the entangled acts of documentation, digitization, and remediation can be seen to have compromised the ability of the caretakers of Gaaye’a’s drum to control visual access to the drum. Even though descendants of Charlie Yahey have kept the drum pictured in the photograph according to protocols of restricted access, images of the drum still circulate. Following the argument I have presented, the digital circulation of the photograph of the nááché Charlie Yahey holding Gaaye’a’s drum undermines principles of Dane-zaa Indigenous curation that were articulated in the course of the Dane Wajich project. If Dane-zaa principles for the care, handling, and respect for the power of a dreamer’s drum depend on controlling the conditions of access to the drum, then the circulation of visual representations of the drum can be said to undermine the curatorial activities of the drum’s owner. Therefore, if the desire for repatriation is the desire for control over representation (Kramer 2004), then this case suggests that documentation, digitization, and remediation practices that do not from their inception consider local protocols and articulations of intellectual property rights may undermine the goals that such practices were intended to achieve.

My discussion of ‘virtual repatriation’ was grounded in the exploration of three transformations related to the return of digital cultural heritage to the Doig River First Nation. The first is based in the history of collecting intangible expressions in Dane-zaa
communities. I followed some of the ways that Dane-zaa oral narratives, songs, personal histories, and related photographs and film recordings have been transformed into objects of ethnography. The second transformation is the conversion of Dane-zaa cultural documentation into digital cultural heritage. I focused on the creation of the *Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive* and its return to the Doig River First Nation. I detailed the ways in which the access to digital cultural heritage has supported local media production, and resulted in the Indigenous resignification of the products of ethnographic research, and expressions of contemporary identity. The third transformation, which I have explored in relation to the post-production of the *Dane Wajich* exhibit, highlights the role of digital technologies in facilitating a significant shift away from locally controlled and mediated forms of knowledge—what Christina Kreps calls Indigenous curation (2009)—to public access, remediation, and remix. Doig River First Nation media projects, which did not involve broad community consultation, have exacerbated this shift, drawing attention to contrasting Dane-zaa perspectives on the public circulation of aspects of culture and tradition. This trend towards public access and remix is in tension with the efforts of some members of Dane-zaa communities to define how their cultural knowledge and digital heritage is circulated or restricted in digital contexts.

**Traveling the Alaska Highway**

On May 24, 2007, the front page of the Fort St. John Newspaper *Alaska Highway News* announced that “Past and Future Collide: Doig River on Web in New Virtual Museum” (Olsen 2007). The paper reported the official launch of *Dane Wajich*—
–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land, which had taken place the day before as a part of the Doig River First Nation’s annual Doig Days celebration. In the article, former Chief Garry Oker talked about the Internet as a tool for the Doig River First Nation to communicate their involvement with the oil and gas industry and their efforts to document local history. He was quoted saying that “This (the virtual museum) is an example of how communities can use the World Wide Web to tell their stories to the rest of the world.” Former Chief Kelvin Davis described the virtual museum project as being part of an electronic world that his community needs to be engaged with. He told the reporter that, “This is a positive step that we are taking, and we want people in the outside world to appreciate what we have comprised, what we’re trying to achieve, and what we’re trying to work towards.”

The photograph on the front page of the Alaska Highway News showed Tommy Attachie supervising Dane Wajich team member Mark Apsassin as he operated a video camera the day we filmed at Nétl’uk (Osborne Creek). The theme of elders and youth working together to safeguard cultural traditions—which the photograph evoked—is also reflected in the annual activities of Doig Days, in which Doig River community members demonstrate Dane-zaa cultural practices to school children and teachers from the North Peace School District. At the 2007 event, before the Doig River Drummers performed nááché songs for a Tea Dance, Chief Kelvin Davis announced the launch of the Dane Wajich virtual museum project and thanked all of the participants and community members who had been a part of post-production reviews. Each person who had been a part of the project production was called up to the Tea Dance stage, and Amber Ridington and I presented him or her with a copy of the Dane Wajich exhibit.
catalogue that we had produced. The catalogue, which replicated the content of the exhibit, had been duplicated with Doig River funds so that a copy could be distributed to every household on the reserve. Members of the community who did not have regular access to the Internet particularly welcomed the print catalogue. There was a real sense of celebration as the virtual and print versions of the exhibit were presented to the community and visiting public. Each participant was applauded as he or she ascended the stage. Afterwards, the Doig River Drummers sang dreamers’ songs and the children and members of the community from Doig River danced with the visiting students and teachers. Observing the pride with which the community celebrated the launch of the virtual exhibit, I felt grateful for the financial resources and time that Amber Ridington and I had been able to direct towards ensuring that the contents of the exhibit were in keeping with the protocols that had emerged in the course of our consultations. The front-page article in the *Alaska Highway News* that reported the events of that day reflected the optimism that many Dane-zaa people expressed about the role of digital technologies and the Internet in cultural, social, and political life.

On this same day in May 2007, however, one could also have gone into the Fort St. John Visitor Information Centre and acquired a representation of Dane-zaa culture in another form. The “Hello North” Travel Guide is a publication of the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association (2007), and is freely available in visitor centres along the Alaska Highway. The cover of the travel guide featured a montage of images from the north: Mile Zero of the Alaska Highway, flying the Canadian and Provincial flags, a long highway stretching toward a snowy mountain vista on the horizon, a family and their dog fishing off a dock, a moose grazing on the edge of a shallow lake, an RV
crossing a bridge, and in the very centre, a photograph of the late Dane-zaa elder Charlie Dominic, playing his unpainted drum. This same visual montage was also being sold on a plastic travel mug. This photograph of Charlie Dominic was taken by Robin Ridington in the 1960s, and was digitized for inclusion in the Ridington/Dane-zaa Digital Archive. I have not been able to determine how the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association acquired this image. While the copyright holder, Robin Ridington, did not grant permission (personal communication), it is possible that permission was given by one of Charlie Dominic’s descendants, although I have not been able to confirm this. While the article on the front page of the Alaska Highway News about the launch of Doig River’s virtual exhibit reflects community control over the production of their own representation, the use of the photograph of Charlie Dominic illuminates the use of Dane-zaa digital cultural heritage to serve other ideological purposes—namely the enhancement of the Fort St. John economy and the marketing of the North as place to visit and perhaps even settle. The appropriation of the image of Charlie Dominic points to some of the more subtle, yet ongoing colonizing effects of the Alaska Highway, which was fundamental in the settlement, agricultural transformation, and industrial development of Dane-zaa territory.

It could be argued that the inclusion of a representation of Dane-zaa people in a visual montage of the north acknowledges the history and continued presence of these communities today. This is a valid line of reasoning, and would be strengthened if indeed descendants of Charlie Dominic gave their permission for the image to be used, and had approved the treatment of the image. However, the 2008 edition of the “Hello North” Travel Guide demonstrates the aesthetic power of digital remix to undermine
such reasoning. In 2007, the late Charlie Dominic was featured prominently in the centre of a colorful visual montage of Alaska Highway scenery, suggesting a strong Aboriginal presence in the north. The 2008 version, conversely, features a majestic RV traveling the highway, and instead of being centrally located, Charlie Dominic has been rendered in black and white, and collaged into a historical narrative alongside nostalgic gold rush era buildings and a grizzly bear (2008). No longer central to the story of the Alaska Highway, the photograph of Charlie Dominic was used to aestheticize the very colonial narrative of progress and exploration that the Dane Wajich exhibit sought to disrupt.

On the day that the virtual exhibit Dane Wajich–Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land was launched at Doig River, images of the Doig River First Nation, and videos of elders speaking in their language about the history of their use of the land, about their dreamers, and the ongoing importance of dreamers in their contemporary life were circulated around the world over the Internet. It is likely that on this day, and in the years that followed, many copies of the “Hello North” Travel Guide also traveled along the Alaska Highway and beyond, circulating representations of Dane-zaa culture in a different form. These contrasting representations reinforce the notion that these mediations and remediations of Dane-zaa people, culture, and language will continue to travel and be reshaped in multiple, unpredictable ways. They will be consumed and interpreted in trucks moving along the Alaska Highway, and on the computer screens of Internet users on the other side of the planet. What this will mean, remains to be seen.
Digital technologies are broadening inequities in power over representation, as the tools of the digital ethnographer or archivist—the computer, the camera, the audio recorder—are simultaneously the means of production of representation and the means of distribution of representation (Cameron 2007). Local-level articulations of copyright and intellectual property rights—such as the right to use and to determine community, academic, and public levels of access to digital cultural heritage—reflect the complex and dynamic values that communities are attaching to their cultural and linguistic heritage in digital form. In the course of my fieldwork with the Doig River First Nation, these articulations were facilitated through collaborative digitization projects and participatory production of ethnographic representation. It is the articulation of these rights that, in the future, might facilitate the negotiation of new relationships between originating communities and researchers. According to Kim Christen, “Part of the inclusion of new technologies in these ventures is about maintaining control, both technological and social, over how knowledge is catalogued, circulated, and cultivated” (Christen 2005:327). Such responsible engagement with new media and management of digital cultural heritage could be one strategy by which members of the Doig River, Blueberry River, Halfway River, and Prophet River First Nations may work towards having control over representation of themselves as individuals, and as First Nations, repatriated.
References

Abel, Kerry


Abu-Lughod, Lila


Acko, Brian


Acko, Sam


Aikawa, Noriko


Apsassin, May

Doig River First Nation: Virtual Museum of Canada.

Asch, Michael

Askoty, Albert

Attachie, Gerry


Attachie, Margaret

Attachie, Tommy


355


2007 [2005]-e Tommy Attachie at Sweeney Creek: *Gaaye*’s “Prairie Chicken Song”. In *Dane Wajich*—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land. Online Multimedia, 6 min. 58 sec. Doig River First Nation: Virtual Museum of Canada.


Attachie, Tommy and the Doig River Drummers


Attachie, William


Basso, Keith

Baudrillard, Jean

Bauman, Richard, and Charles L. Briggs

Bell, Catherine, and Val Napoleon, eds.

Bell, Catherine, Heather Raven, Heather McCuaig, Andrea Sanborn, U'mista Cultural Society, and 'Namgis Nation
Bell, Joshua

Ben, Gary

Benedict, Ruth Fulton

Benjamin, Walter

Benson, Marlene

Biella, Peter

Binney, Judith, and Gillian Chaplin

Boast, Robin

Bowechop, Janine, and Patricia Pierce Erikson
Bowechop, Janine, and Jeffrey E. Mauger
1995 Tribal Collections Management at the Makah Cultural and Research Centre. Smithsonian Center for Museum Studies.

Brody, Hugh

Brown, Michael F.

—

Brown, Michael F., and Margaret M. Bruchac


Cameron, Fiona

Canada

Chapin, Mac, Zachary Lamb, and Bill Threlkeld

Christen, Kimberly


Clifford, James


Coates, Ken

Cranmer Webster, Gloria

Cruikshank, Julie


Dominic, Charlie


Dominic, Robert


Dyson, Laurel Evelyn, Max Hendriks, and Stephen Grant, eds.


Edwards, Elizabeth


Eisenlohr, Patrick


Fanon, Frantz


Faraud, Mgr. Henry


Feld, Stephen, ed.


—


Fienup-Riordan, Ann


First Peoples' Cultural Foundation

Fladmark, Knut R., Jonathan C. Driver, and Diana Alexander

Flaherty, Robert dir.
1922 Nanook of the North.

Fox, Aaron, and Chie Sakakibara

Furniss, Elizabeth

Geller, Peter

Ginsburg, Faye

—


—


—


Ginsburg, Faye, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin
Goddard, Pliny

—

Goulet, Jean-Guy

GRASAC

Hall, Stuart

Hendry, Joy

Hennessy, Kate

—

—

Houghton, David

Hymes, Dell
Iverson, Lee, and Sue Rowley, Leona Sparrow, Dave Schaepe, Andrea Sanborn, Ryan Wallace, Nicholas Jakobsen, Ulrike Radermacher


Jones, Graham


Kearney, Amanda


Kemmis, Stephen, and Robin McTaggart


Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara


Kramer, Jennifer


Kreps, Christina F.


—


Kurin, Richard


—


Landzelius, Kyra, ed.


Lessig, Lawrence


Logan, William S., and Laurajane Smith


Loizos, Peter


Lyons, Natasha

2007 Qualiaq ohongniaq tuunga (Making Histories): Towards a Critical Inuvialuit Archaeology in the Canadian Western Arctic. PhD Dissertation, Archaeology, University of Calgary.

MacDougall, David

Mahon, Maureen

Marcus, George E., and James Clifford

Mills, Antonia Curtze
1982 The Beaver Indian Prophet Dance and Related Movements Among North American Indians, Anthropology, Harvard University.

Mooney, James

Moore, Patrick

Moore, Patrick, and Kate Hennessy

Moore, Patrick, and Daniel Tlen

Moore, Patrick, and Angela Wheelock, eds.

Nas, Peter J. M.

Norman, Howard A.
1982 Where the Chill Came From: Cree Windigo Tales and Journeys. New York: North Point Press.

Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association

Oker, Garry


Oker, Garry and Elders of the Dane-zaa First Nations dirs.


Oker, Garry, Robin Ridington, Jillian Ridington, and Stacy Shaak dirs.

2004a  The Otter Man's Prophecy. 24 min. min. Canada.

Oker, Garry, Robin Ridington, and Stacy Shaak

Oker, Garry, Robin Ridington, Jillian Ridington, and Stacy Shaak. dirs.
2000 Contact the People: Dane-zaa Continuity and Change. 24 min. min. Doig River First Nation. Canada.

Olsen, Mac

Palmer, Andie

Parry, Ross

Pearce, Susan M.

Peers, Laura, and Alison Brown
—, eds.

Phillips, Ruth

Phillips, Ruth, and Elizabeth Johnson

Pigliasco, Guido Carlo

Pigliasco, Guido Carlo, and Felix Colatanavanua dirs.
Plateau Center for American Indian Studies, Washington State University
2010 Plateau Peoples' Web Portal.

Poignant, Roslyn

Pratt, Mary Louise

Reed, Trevor

Resta, Paul, et al.

Ridington, Amber, and Kate Hennessy

Ridington, Jillian

Ridington, Robin

—

—

1988 Trail to Heaven: Knowledge and Narrative in a Northern Native Community. Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre.


Ridington, Robin, and Jillian Ridington


Rouch, Jean, Dan Georgakas, Gupta Udayan, Judy Janda

Rowley, Sue, and Dave Schaepe, Leona Sparrow, Andrea Sanborn, Ulrike Radermacher, Ryan Wallace, Nicholas Jakobsen, Hannah Turner, Sivia Sadofsky, Tristan Goffman

Royal British Columbia Museum, Virtual Museum of Canada
2004 Journeys and Transformations: British Columbia Landscapes.
http://www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/exhibits/journeys/english/index.html

Smith, Laurajane, and Natsuko Akagawa

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai

Smith, Susan

Smithsonian

Spier, Leslie
Spulner, Deborah  

Srinivasan, Ramesh  

Stoller, Paul  

Tapsell, Paul  

Tedlock, Dennis  
1972 Finding the Center: Narrative Poetry of the Zuni Indians Translated by Dennis Tedlock from Performances in the Zuni by Andrew Peyentsa and Walter Sanchez. New York: The Dial Press.

Thornton, Thomas F.  

Tobias, Terry N.  

Treaty 8 Tribal Association  

Turner, Terence  

UBCIC, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs  
UNESCO


—


—


—


Walsh, Peter


Weiner, Annette B.


Wilson, Pamela, and Michelle Stewart, eds.


—

Virtual Exhibit Catalogue
Dane Wajich—Dane-zaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land

www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich

Edited by Amber Ridington and Kate Hennessy
© 2007 Doig River First Nation
Table of Contents

Credits .................................................................................................................................................. 3
Copyright Notice .................................................................................................................................. 4
Dedication – In Memory .......................................................................................................................... 5

THE PROJECT ....................................................................................................................................... 17
   About the Project ................................................................................................................................. 17
   About Doig River First Nation ........................................................................................................... 21
   Project Team ...................................................................................................................................... 25

A DREAMER’S DRUM ............................................................................................................................ 37

PLACES ............................................................................................................................................... 39
   Hanág Saahgéʔ (Doig River) ............................................................................................................... 40
   Alááʔ Šatö (Peterson’s Crossing) ..................................................................................................... 43
   Madátsatl’oje (Snare Hill) .................................................................................................................. 45
   Sweeney Creek .................................................................................................................................... 49
   Alédzé Tsáá (Aledze Creek) .............................................................................................................. 53
   T̓sazuulh Saahgáé (Big Camp) ......................................................................................................... 55
   Nêtl’uk (Osborne River) ..................................................................................................................... 57
   Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney) ...................................................................................................................... 61

DREAMERS AND THE LAND ............................................................................................................... 65
   Creation Story .................................................................................................................................... 66
   Land .................................................................................................................................................... 67
   Dreamers .......................................................................................................................................... 69
   Dreamers’ Dance ............................................................................................................................... 75
   Doig River Drummers ......................................................................................................................... 77

DANE-ZAA STORIES AND SONGS ......................................................................................................... 79
   About Dane-zaa Stories ...................................................................................................................... 81
   About Dane-zaa Songs ...................................................................................................................... 82

RESOURCES ......................................................................................................................................... 83
   Dane-zaa Culture and History .......................................................................................................... 84
   Dane-zaa/Beaver Language .............................................................................................................. 86
   Teachers’ Resources .......................................................................................................................... 91

APPENDIX I: Teachers’ Resources: Elementary and Secondary Lesson Plans

APPENDIX II: Video Transcripts - Beaver and English
## APPENDIX II

### Table of Contents for Video Transcripts

The Project

**Doig River Rodeo: Johnny Oker and Garry Attachie, 2000** ................................................................. 1

A Dreamer’s Drum

**Gaøyeq's Drum: Tommy Attachie, 2005** ........................................................................................................ 2
**Gaøyeq's Drum: Mark Apsassin, 2005** .......................................................................................................... 10

Places

**Alááʔ Ṣatò (Peterson's Crossing): Billy Attachie, 2005** .............................................................................. 13
**Madát'satl'ıje (Snare Hill): Sam Acko, 2005** ............................................................................................ 17
**Madát'satl'ıje (Snare Hill): Tommy Attachie, 2005** ................................................................................ 34
**Sweeney Creek: Tommy Attachie, 2005** ............................................................................................... 37
**Sweeney Creek: Tommy Attachie, (about Dreamer Mak'éts'aweswąq), 2005** ....................................... 49
**Sweeney Creek: Margaret Attachie, 2005** ............................................................................................. 58
**Alédzé Tsáá (Aledze Creek): Tommy Attachie, 2005** ............................................................................ 60
**T'sazuulh Saahgáe (Big Camp): Tommy Attachie, 2005** ...................................................................... 62
**Nêt'l'uk (Osborne River): Billy Attachie, 2005** ..................................................................................... 70
**Nêt'l'uk (Osborne River): Sam Acko (Tsááyaa and Mosquito Man), 2005** ............................................ 81
**Nêt'l'uk (Osborne River): Sam Acko (Dane-zaa place name Nêt'l'uk), 2005** ...................................... 84
**Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney): Tommy Attachie, 2005** ............................................................................... 85
**Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney): May Apsassin, 2005** .................................................................................... 87
**Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney): Chief Gerry Attachie, 2005** ........................................................................ 89
**Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney): Madeline Davis, 2005** .................................................................................. 93

Dreamers and the Land

**Learning to Drum and Sing: Tommy Attachie, 2005** ............................................................................. 95
**Dreamers and the Dreamers’ Dance: Tommy Attachie, 2005** ................................................................. 97
**Drumming and the Dreamers’ Dance: Chief Gary Oker, 2001** ............................................................. 99
**Doig River Drummers, perform for Treaty Land Entitlement celebration, 2005** ................................. 101
**Revitalizing Drum-Making and Singing: Sam Acko, 2005** .................................................................... 103
**The Dreamer Azáde: Tommy Attachie, 2005** ......................................................................................... 105
I am going to tell you about how our ancestors lived...and where the Dreamer was. We remember where they lived, where they dreamed the songs that they brought back from heaven. That is how we live today... We keep on teaching each other.

Tommy Attatchie, 2005

Dane-zaa Stories & Songs | PROJECT CREDITS

Doig River First Nation gratefully acknowledges the financial investment by the Department of Canadian Heritage in the creation of this on-line presentation for the Virtual Museum of Canada.

Funding:
The Virtual Museum of Canada
The Volkswagen Foundation for Endangered Languages
The Doig River First Nation
The Northeast Native Advancing Society
North Peace School District #60

Project Directed by:
The Doig River First Nation (see Project Participants)

Producers, Project Coordinators, Exhibit Curation, Community Consultation:
Amber Ridington and Kate Hennessy

Interactive Producers
Wayne Clark and Katherine Lee

Website Production Development:
Unlimited Digital Communications, Inc.
Usability Testing: Wayne Clark
Design: Kyle McIntosh and Darren Card
Graphics, Programming and Integration: Kyle McIntosh
Video Editing: Malcolm Levy with Kate Hennessy

Ethnographic Documentation:
Amy Acko, Robin Acko, Starr Acko, Eddie Apsassin, Mark Apsassin, Peter Biella, Charmayne Brinkworth, Brittany Brinkworth, Kate Hennessy, Julia Colleen Miller, Dr. Patrick Moore, Madeleine Oker, Garry Oker, Amber Ridington, Jillian Ridington, Dr. Robin Ridington, Stacy Shaa.

Interpretive Text Writing and Editing:
Amber Ridington and Kate Hennessy
Dr. Robin Ridington
Jillian Ridington
Dane-zaa (Beaver Language) Translation and Transcription:

**Director:** Dr. Patrick Moore

**Translation:** Billy Attachie, Madeline Oker, Eddle Apsassin, and Margie Miller

**Transcription:** Dr. Patrick Moore, Julia Miller, Gabrielle Müeller, Billy Attachie, Madeline Oker.

**French Translations by:**
Françoise Wolfsohn
Solen Roth

**Teachers Resources:**
Angele Wheelock in consultation with:
Doig River First Nation
School District #60, First Nations Education Center, Fort St. John.
Kate Hennessy and Amber Ridington

**Text Editing:**
Dr. Jennifer Kramer
Frances Rafis
Sarah Mitchell

---

**Dane-zaa Stories & Songs | COPYRIGHT NOTICE**

Unless otherwise noted, all materials that are part of this Web site, including images, illustrations, designs, icons, photographs, video clips, and written and other materials are copyrights, trademarks, trade dress and/or other intellectual properties owned, controlled or licensed by the Doig River First Nation. Please note that the archival images and recordings collected by Robin Ridington are copyrighted by him, and are used in this exhibit with his permission.

We invite you to use the material on this Web site for educational and personal purposes. Copyright and other property notices should be kept intact with the material.

Transmission or reproduction of items beyond education and research, especially commercial, requires the written permission from the Doig River First Nation or other indicated copyright and/or intellectual property rights owners. For more information please contact:

Doig River First Nation
Box 56 Rose Prairie, BC, Canada. V0C 2H0
Tel: 250 827-3776
Fax: 250 827-3778

**Disclaimer**

The stories and opinions expressed in this Web exhibit represent the experiences and memories of the project team. They do not necessarily represent the experiences or opinions of all Dane-zaa people.
About The Project

Doig River First Nation’s Dedication:
This exhibit is dedicated to the memory of important Doig River elders and community members no longer living. We honour their lives by remembering and practicing what they taught us.

Ray Aku (Oct 1, 1879 – Dec 12, 1973)

Aku lived for almost a century and fathered many children. His last wife was Akulli Davis, who outlived him by twenty-five years. Many of our elders remember him as Abu, father of Aku. He was a wonderful singer of Dreamers’ Songs. Before WWI, Frank Beaton wrote in his Hudson's Bay Company journal that Aku was an important hunter, trapper and family head. Aku passed on knowledge of songs, stories and hunting to many people at Doig. We especially remember him for his love stories and songs.
Akully Davis Acko  
(Aug 7, 1929 - Feb 19th 1998)

Akully Davis Aku and Ray Aku. Dog River, circa late 1960s. Photo by Robin Ridington.
Catalog # OSP2123.

Akully was Ray Aku's last wife and is the daughter of Jebis and Anna Davis. She had a warm smile and a loving nature. Sammy, Annie, and Shirley Acko are children of Ray and Akully who continue to carry on Dane-gaa tradition.

Alvina (Abu) Acko  
(June 1935 - Jan 24, 1965)


Abu, daughter of Clair Oker and Ray Aku, was the older sister of Molly Acko Agassnin. Like Molly, Abu was the mother of many children. She gave birth to many of our people at Dog who are now approaching older status. Abu died at a tragically young age.

Jack Acko  


Jack was Aku's son by Aza Davis. He and his wife Eskama had no children of their own, but brought up many children and taught them about Dane-gaa traditional ways. Jack was a great hunter and drum maker. He had a warm shy smile and a dry sense of humor. Sammy Acko learned many stories from his older brother Jack, and like Jack, Sammy loves to laugh, and to share stories and traditional skills.
Molly was the daughter of Rav Aku and Claire Oker. She is the mother of many of our Dog River First Nations people, and brought up many more. When Molly died in 1994, anthropologist Robin Ridlington described her as “one spruce tree standing – the solid center of the world.” Molly was just that, the center around which her large family revolved.

Eskama was very generous. She always had visitors and always fed people when they came to see her. She always helped other women in the community when there was a hide to tan. She was very close to her half sister, Mary Pouce Coupe (Nauchil). Her brothers were Alex and George Checkyss. She and her husband Jack were a wonderful loving couple. They raised many of Abu’s children after their mother passed away.
Charlotte was the oldest of Ray Acko's children with Akulli Davis, his last wife. She married Robert Paquette, and they had several children. She moved to his territory near Chetwynd, and tried to maintain close ties to her relatives here at Doig. She struggled unsuccessfully to keep her children with her, against the wishes of unsympathetic people in the BC Ministry of Human Resources.

Mary Pouce Coupe (Naachin) (May 23, 1890 - Mar 11, 1977)

Naachin lived a very traditional Dene-gaa life, and was very knowledgeable about our traditional Dene-gaa stories and techniques. When she was quite young, she married old Appan, whose ancestry we can trace back to the first written record describing Dene-gaa people in 1799. Through Appan, Naachin learned many traditional stories. Her first daughter, Helen Appew, was born from that union, and Helen later married Chief Succona.

After Appan's death, Naachin married John Pouce Coupe and had several more children, including Lena. When she was again widowed, she became the wife of Charlie Yahey's brother, Ben. Alice Ben Attachie and Louis Ben were the children of that marriage.

Naachin was a great influence on her many grandchildren; they include song-keeper Tommy Attachie, Dene-gaa language keeper Billy Attachie, former Chief Gerry Attachie, Margaret Attachie, an expert maker of traditional moose-hide clothing, the late McKenzie Ben, and Madeline Succona Davis, one of our most knowledgeable elders and the mother of Chief Kelvin Davis.

The children that Naachin raised sometimes called her Samskanka, which means "policeman," because her voice was the voice of authority. But she was also a kind and gentle teacher. She would tell stories until the sun began to go to sleep, and then would repeat the stories the next night until they had learned them.

Lena Pouce Coupe (April 20, 1856 - April 13, 1931)

Lena was the daughter of John Pouce Coupe and Naachin, and is the grandmother of many members of the Doig River First Nation.
A son of Chief Attachie, Murray was brought up in our traditional Dane-gaa way, and was a very skilled hunter. His many sons learned these skills from him. Murray, and his wife Alice, lived through the loss of our traditional nomadic lifestyle and the loss of our reserve lands at Cat Teh Kwä (Montney), and adapted to life in our new Doig River reserve. They had eleven children, many of whom are among our most important elders.

When Indian Agent Joe Callibais tried to force people to abandon their trap lines and send their kids to school, Murray spoke out about our Dane-gaa need to make a living from the land. His son, former Chief Gerry Attachie, initiated the legal action about the loss of the Montney Reserve that ultimately resulted in a settlement for the Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations.

Dick's children have grown to be strong and vibrant members of our community.

Mackenzie was the son of Louis Ben and John Davis's daughter, Dee Klape Davis. He and his sister Marah were among the many children raised by Naachin (Mary Pouce-Coupee). Mackenzie and Tommy Attachie were like brothers growing up. Although they and Billy sometimes played tricks on their grandma, they also knew she was the boss. She taught the children she raised to know and respect the wise stories of the land.
Anno Davis (Daedama) (Feb 27, 1909 – Spring 1968)

Anno was the daughter of Noskiwan Attukiiwa and Gasete Montney. She married old Jebis and became the mother of Akully, Tar, and Deeda. After Jebis died, she married Ak (Francis Leg), the son of the Dreamer Gaa’eg. She loved to dance at Dreamers’ Dances, and passed her traditional skills to her daughters, whose own children now carry them on.

Francis Leg (Aki) (Born in Alberta, Died in British Columbia around 1960)

Francis was the son of the Dreamer Gaa’eg (a.k.a. Kayton). He was born in Alberta but settled in Doig River country and married Dedama. He became a respected member of our Doig River community.

Ronald Attachie (June 8th 1951 – 1990)

Ronald was one of the first of our people to get his air brake ticket and to drive transport trucks. He married Pauline Wolf from the Prophet River First Nation. After Ronald passed away, his children were raised on the Prophet River Reserve with their mother’s family.

John Davis (Sept 21, 1904 – Oct 1988)

John Davis (”Grandpa Jones”, or ”Biscuit”) was the son of old Jebis and Malii Atschew. He was the father of eleven children, and his many descendants are central to our Doig River First Nation community. He taught his sons great hunting and trapping skills, and the women in his family are experts in traditional Dane-gaa women’s skills.

“Grandpa Jones” loved his life in the bush and seldom went to town. He even preferred to live at a distance from “downtown Doig.” When he testified at the Montney court case, he told the judge, “What I can remember, I will say. What I do not remember, I will not say.” John Davis was an honest man.
**Tommy Davis Sr.** (April 5, 1936 – 2004)

Tommy Davis Sr. Doig River, late 1990s. Photo courtesy of Margarita Atchew.
Catalog # DNCAHCOF. 12-56 – 47

Tommy Davis was the son of John Davis and Mary (Mall) Atchew. Like all of John Davis’s sons, he was a skilled hunter.

**David Davis** (May 21, 1926 – 1997)

David Davis and Johnny Chippsia, drumming and singing. Doig River, circa late 1960s. Photo by Robin Ridington. Catalog # DP1136.

David Davis, one of John Davis’s many sons, was a true man of the bush. He almost never went to town. He lived with his father and brothers away from the rest of the Doig River community. He had a special relationship to the animals of the bush. He was shy and quiet around strangers but was a source of humor, wisdom and inspiration to people who knew him and spoke his language.

**Pat Davis** (June 15, 1933 – Nov 21, 1968)

Brothers David and Pat Davis. Doig River, circa late 1960s. Photo by Robin Ridington.
Catalog # DP1137.

Pat, one of John Davis’s sons, was married to Madeline (Mama) Succena and is the father of Chief Kelvin Davis. Pat was a large man with a large spirit. He is remembered as a happy guy who made people laugh.
Tar Davis (a.k.a. Tommy Davis Jr.) (June 10, 1956 – 1971)

Tar Davis was the brother of Akulli and Deda, and the son of Jebis and Anno Davis. He never married, but he was a loyal son and a strong hunter. After the passing of his mother, Anno, Tar organized one of the great Dreamers Dances that continues to be remembered by all who attended it.

Mary Davis Dominic (Daeda) (May 5, 1939 – Jan 1984)

Daeda was the younger daughter of Jebis (old Davis) and Anno (Destaama). She married Charlie Dominic, and is the mother and grandmother of many of us now living at the Dog River reserve. She was skilled in our traditional Dane-gaa ways, and remembered going on the traditional seasonal round with her family. She had a husky voice and a great sense of humor. Daeda could make ordinary talk, like asking for a cup of tea, sound like something wonderful.

To read what Daeda’s granddaughter, Renet Davis, wrote about her, visit: http://moosehunt.dogriverfn.com/page.php?sectionid=28&pageid=27.
Charlie Dominic (1904 – Dec 1994)

Charlie Dominic’s father died when he was very young, and his mother then married the Dreamer Charlie Yalwey. Young Charlie was greatly influenced by his step-father, who taught him songs, stories, hunting and trapping. Charlie Dominic had many children who are now active and important members of our Dane-gaa community.

Charlie became a strong singer and a good teacher. Songkeeper Tommy Attache counts Charlie as one of his important mentors. Charlie took pride in his horses and always liked to ride a handsome white horse. From his teenage years to his years as elder, Charlie was a smart dresser. He liked to look good and he was good at it.

Tommy Dominic (October 27, 1941 – 1982)

Tommy was the son of Charlie Dominic and Jean Succora. He was active in Doig River’s first farming projects. His daughter is Sherry Lynn Dominic of the Blueberry River First Nation. Tommy had an easy grace and his passing was a great loss to his family and the community.

Darren Dominic (Chucky) (December 15, 1969 – October 8, 2005)

Darren was the youngest child of Charlie Dominic and Deda Davis. They taught him many traditional ways, including how to hunt and trap while out in the bush as he was growing up. He spoke our Dane-gaa language fluently. He is remembered as a kind and loving soul.
Chief Succona (1879 – June 24, 1952)

Chief Succona was the half brother of the Dreamer Oker. He was the father of George Succona and Madeline Succona Davis, and the grandfather of Margaret Dominic Davis and Chief Kelvin Davis. Succona became Chief after the death of Chief Montney in the 1918 flu.

Sally Makadahay (Dec 12, 1933 – Sept 17, 2001)

Sally Makadahay married the singer Billy Makadahay. Their two daughters, Rita and Margaret, are the mothers and grandmothers of many Doig River First Nations people. She knew and practiced traditional Dane-gaa ways, and passed her skills on to her children and grandchildren.

"Big Sally" was proud of her ability to sing Dane-gaa songs. She was also a source of information about how members of her community were related to one another. Sally had her own distinctive way of speaking that anyone who knew her will never forget.

Billy Makadahay (Feb 27, 1904 – 1970)

Billy's father, Felix Makadahay, died when he was very young, and he was brought up by the Dreamer Oker, the brother of his mother, Hazel. He learned the traditional songs and stories from Oker.

Although Billy died more than a quarter-century ago, his beautiful voice still sings for the Dane-gaa people on cassettes and CDs. Billy's voice was so strong that when he took the lead, you could hear him singing far into the bush. Billy was the powerful voice of many a Dane-gaa tea dance.
Oker (1878 or 1881 (conflicting records) – Jan 26, 1951)

Oker was a Dreamer and singer who had many children, he passed his songs and stories on to his wives, children and community members. His knowledge is maintained today by his daughter, Annie, and his grandchildren, including former Chief Carry Oker, and Madeline Oker, an expert in our traditional Dane-gaa language.

Alice Moccasin-Askoty (June 6, 1922 – Jan 1994)

Alice was the daughter of Meka Moccasin and Jane Yeklezi (Mun-Chueh-Sal), “the beautiful one.” As a young woman, Alice was married to the dreamer Oker, who passed much of his traditional knowledge on to her before his death. She later married Albert Askoty (Mague), and shared a traditional life with him for many years. Her many children and grandchildren have been fortunate to learn from her. She trained many girls about how to become proper Dane-gaa women. People who knew her will always remember her tending the fire in her log home at Peterson’s Crossing.

Albert Askoty (Mague) (Sept 30, 1920 – Feb 4, 1994)

Albert Askoty was a songkeeper who passed his knowledge on to Tommy Attachie, to his sons Jack and Fred Askoty, and to his grandson, Chief Carry Oker.
Charlie Yahey (1881 or 1882 – Nov 1976)

Charlie Yahey was our most recent Dane-gaa Dreamer. His songs and prophecies are still listened to and performed by his descendents and many of us whose lives he has influenced.

Charlie’s father was Attachok, “Big Eagle,” who died when he was young. He was raised by his father’s brother, Usulets (Big Charlie), for whom Charlie Lake is named. His first wife, Atahin, was a daughter of our Doig River elder, Yeklezi. After her death, he married Bella Attachie (Anachuan), who lived to be well over 100.

Charlie Yahey spoke our Dane-gaa language with elegance and authority. He is one of the greatest men the Peace River country has known.

Anachuan (Bella Yahey) (circa 1874 – July 16, 1976)

Anachuan’s exact birth date cannot be ascertained, as it was before official records were kept. CBC radio heralded her as “The Oldest Woman in Canada” and announced that she was 116 years old when she died.

Anachuan was the last wife of the Dreamer Charlie Yahey, and although they did not have any children of their own, they brought up several, including Charlie Dominic, whose mother Atahin Yeklezi was married to Charlie Yahey before his marriage to Anachuan. Anachuan was a very traditional woman, and when she was forced to live on a reserve, she deeply missed the trials of her younger days.

Mary Harvey (Maeli) (Jan 6, 1921 – 1999)

Mary was the daughter of Khatakose Harvey. She married Charles (Atsukwa) Bigsack and they had one daughter, Margie Miller, before Charles died in 1944. Mary later re-married Dan Wolf. Mary’s daughter, Margie Miller, is an important elder of our Doig River First Nation. Margie continues to pass on the traditional skills she learned from her mother, Mary Harvey, and her step-father, Dan Wolf.
About The Project

Our Doig River First Nation elders, youth, and leaders worked collaboratively with ethnographers, linguists, and web-designers to create this exhibit.

Over a one month period in the summer of 2005 our elders brought the documentary team to eight places in our territory. At these places we shared oral histories about the stories, songs, people and experiences that connect us to the land.

The stories and songs presented here introduce you to a long line of Dane-ga’a Dreamers who have provided spiritual and practical guidance for our people for hundreds of years. You will also learn about some key places within our territory and how we have been reclaiming them from the effects of colonialism and development.

The theme for this exhibit, Dreamers and the Land, was inspired by the return of a Dreamer’s drum to the community. The drum is now part of our collection in our museum.

Our youth team was trained in video documentation to record the stories that you see here. Through this documentary work, our young people have made a major contribution towards strengthening our Dane-ga’a language and traditions.

The primary source of funding for the project was a Virtual Museum of Canada Partnership grant. Contributing Partners include:

- The Doig River First Nation;
- The North East Native Advancing Society (funding youth training);
- The North Peace School District #60, First Nations Education Program (preparation of accompanying teachers' resources);
- The Volkswagen Foundation’s Endangered Languages Program (Dane-ga’a / Beaver language translation and transcription funding).

To learn more about the project team and their roles and expertise in building this site please visit Project Team.
Project Photos: 3/12

Project Photos: 4/12
Robin Acko, elder Margaret Attachie, and Charmayne Brinkworth standing in front of a natural gas development in the Mdéít’l’f’ja (Snare Hill) area. The Mdéít’l’f’ja (Snare Hill) area is a place where Dane-gaa people have hunted for moose during hard times for many generations. July, 2005. Catalog # DZVMCNHP-7-01-05-0017.

Project Photos: 5/12

Project Photos: 6/12
After participating in a community meeting about the website project, Charmayne Brinkworth and Mark Assassin are setting up the video camera for the first time to record oral histories at A’áldáá (Peterson’s Crossing), June, 2005. Catalog # DZVMCNHP-6-29-05-066.
**Project Photos: 5/12**
Chief Cary Oker discussing the website project at the ethnographers’ campsite by the Dolg River. (From left) Amber Ridginton, Cary Oker, Eddie Appassin, Kate Hennessy and Peter Bells. Dolg River Cultural Grounds, July, 2005. Catalog # DZYMCNPD-7-04-05-E027.

**Project Photos: 5/12**
Robin Ridginton recording Sam Acko and Tommy Attachie explaining where the Succon’s trapping cabins used to be located at N昊uk (Osborne River). The cabins were destroyed by oil and gas developments. July, 2005. Catalog # DZYMCNPD-7-06-05-E018.

**Project Photos: 8/12**
Project team members Robyn Acko, Brittany Brinkworth, Charmayne Brinkworth, Starr Acko May Appassin and Jillian Ridginton carrying their equipment to the shoot location at Cat Tah Kwaj (Montney). Cat Tah Kwaj (Montney) is a traditional summer gathering spot for our people, and the Dreamer Gsaweg was buried here in 1923. July, 2005. Catalog # DZYMCNPD-7-08-05-E009.

**Project Photos: 11/12**
Dolg River First Nation community members (Rosie Field, Shirley Acko, Annie Acko, Madeline Oker and Gary Bath, amongst others) review the first draft of the website and provide direction for changes. Dolg River Cultural Centre. May, 2006. Catalog # DZYMCNPD-5-17-06-E082.
We are the Doig River First Nation, one of four Dane-gaa (sometimes referred to as Beaver Indian) communities of the Peace River area of northeastern British Columbia, Canada.

Our traditional hunting and trapping grounds include vast areas that extend in all directions from our current reserve at Hanāṣ Saahgē (Doig River). Our reserve was established in 1952, and is located 70 km northeast of Fort St. John, B.C., on approximately 2500 acres. The surrounding area is rich in natural resources, including major oil and gas deposits. Our band is made up of 220 people, half of whom live on our reserve.

Our Community:

Today, our people are living in a hybrid world that integrates non-aboriginal culture and economy with our Dane-gaa traditional knowledge and hunting culture. We are engaged in a range of business ventures and cultural activities that are focused on strengthening our economic base, improving the health of our community, and maintaining Dane-gaa traditions and language.

In July of 2003 we opened our new Cultural and Administrative Centre on our Doig River Reserve. This was made possible in part by our 1998 financial settlement with the Federal Government in a breach of trust case (see Cat Ṭah Kwâ (Montney)). Our beautiful facility includes a museum, a gym, our administrative and healthcare offices, community gathering spaces and outdoor rodeo grounds. Our Cultural Centre is a place where we gather to socialize and to dance to our Dreamers’ songs. It is also the place where we meet with politicians and developers to assert our rights to our lands.

Our History:

Until the mid-1950s, we lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle. We traveled seasonally within our Peace River country from the Rocky Mountains to the plains of Alberta to hunt, gather, and socialize with other Dane-gaa kinship groups.

In 1794, Rocky Mountain Fort was established in our traditional territories, and we began to participate in the fur trade. As a result of the fur trade, European culture slowly started to impact our traditional way of living.

In 1900 we signed Treaty 8 in an effort to preserve our lands and natural resources from outside interests. By 1914, we were allotted reserve land at Cat Ṭah Kwâ (Montney), one of our traditional gathering places, but for several decades we continued to travel freely throughout our traditional land.

During World War II, the US Army Corps of Engineers constructed the Alaska Highway across our traditional territory. After the war, the highway allowed an influx of settlers and developers to come into our land, and our lifestyle changed dramatically. We were forced to settle on reserves and to send our children to government schools. The Department of Indian Affairs agreed to sell our first reserve at Cat Ṭah Kwâ (Montney), to the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, and we were forced to move further north, to the land on Hanāṣ Saahgē (the Doig River), where our community is centered today.
For more information about our culture and history, please visit Hanas Zaangli (Doig River) and Resources.

**Stories**


[Click to Watch]

**Doig River First Nation Photos: 7/17**

Visiting Grade Four schoolchildren from the North Peace School District and Doig River community members dancing at our annual "Doig Days" celebration. Doig River, May, 2005. Catalog # IMG_0185.

**Doig River First Nation Photos: 5/17**


**Doig River First Nation Photos: 3/17**


**Doig River First Nation Photos: 6/17**

Doig River First Nation Photos: 7/17

Doig River First Nation Photos: 11/17

Doig River First Nation Photos: 8/17

Doig River First Nation Photos: 9/17
Doig River First Nation Photos: 14/17

Doig River First Nation Photos: 17/17

Doig River First Nation Photos: 13/17
About The Project  |  PROJECT TEAM

Below is a collection of community members and participants that made this project possible. Click on each photo thumbnail to learn more about each person.

Tommy Attachie
Elder, Song-keeper, Oral Historian, Project Advisor

My name’s Tom Attachie, I’m fifty-eight year old.
When I was young, I want to drum.
I want to drum, I like to drumming with people.
And finally I grow up and I started drumming and now,
I start, I’m a song leader.

Tommy Attachie has been singing Dreamers’ songs since he was a young man. He learned from the masters: Charlie Yahey, Billy Makadahay, Charlie Dominick, Albert Askoty. From Albert, Tommy inherited the role of song-keeper. His Christian faith, combined with his knowledge of traditional Dane-zaa teachings, make him an inspiration and role model for younger people. Tommy knows the songs and the stories that go with them. He knows Dane-zaa territory. He knows the language. These skills make him an ideal teacher for the coming generations. (Robin Ridington)
Another dream I’m trying to pursue is filmmaking. I love to be behind the camera and calling all the shots

(Amy Acko, 2004)

Amy has played a central role in many of Dvig River’s media projects. She studied video production at Galiao Island’s Gulf Islands Film and Television School, and helped to create Hadas Kaa náanqat - The Dane-gaa Moosehunt website in 2004. Amy’s sensitive and creative videography, and her patience and attention to detail made her invaluable to this project. She graduated from high school in June 2006.

When I was a little kid, these old timers, with them, I sing náachéé xiyé with them. From there, I learn about these songs and these drama, when they’re making it. From them, I learned how to hunt, and how they’re going to live in the bush.

All those ways...

These young people, I’m teaching them that in the bush. And these Náachéé xiyé, Dreamers songs, if they wish...I’m going to teach them the way of the old timers that are gone. I remember those things since I was a kid.

(Sam Acko - courtesy Robin Ridington)

Sam Acko is the youngest son of Ray Aku, a master storyteller and singer, and the grandson of the Dreamer Ágáh. Like his father, Sam can tell a story from memory without hesitation. Like his father, his stories are both humorous and profound. Sammy is committed to passing on the Dane-gaa oral literature. During Tea Dance ceremonies he sets aside time to pass on traditional stories to the younger people. He also tells stories with grace and ease in less formal settings. Sammy has accepted the role of lead singer and is an inspiration to the younger people of his community.
Robin Acko
Youth Documentarian

Robin lives at Dog River with her family—Mom Annie, Dad Gary, brother Ray, and her sisters Starr and Amy. She is a high school student in Fort St. John. She made a strong contribution to the project’s documentation team, especially as a sound person—she showed great patience and strong arms, holding the microphone boom for long periods of time.

Starr Acko
Youth Documentarian

Starr lives at Dog River with her family—Mom Annie, Dad Gary, brother Ray, and her sisters Robin and Amy. She is a high school student in Fort St. John. Starr is a great baseball player, and like her sister Robin, is a talented sound-person.

She was an important part of the youth video documentation team.

Eddie Apsassin
Beaver Translation Team, Project Advisor, Project Bus Driver

I’m doing this [website project] to have a little history on myself to tell my grandkids, when I have grandkids.

I was born on August 23, 1953 in the Moose Creek area or the Taanche area. I’m not sure where. I lived at Peterson’s Crossing until I was eight years old. My father died in 1961. In a vehicle accident, after this happened and me and my mother moved to Blueberry for a year, to probably deal with the grief.

While at Peterson’s I went to school for about a year or two, I really don’t remember. The teachers used to pull on my cheeks, that’s probably why they’re big now! And they used to pull on my hair. In Blueberry I attended the school they had there in 1962 until 1966. I think I was in grade five. I moved back to Dog the same year and started school there in the fall. Our teacher’s name was Mrs. Ebener. I think, in January she got fired because I think she drank too much. She was RC’s girlfriend.

When I was a kid I remember moving to Sweeny Creek on wagons. We would have to go through bogs and have to put down logs so the horses could get through. I remember them making lots and lots of dry meat. This was fun time to me especially to come home it seemed like everyone was pumped up to go home. The adults practiced the old traditional ways. I don’t remember going hungry in those days living in the Dog area, but when we lived in Blueberry we were pretty poor and hungry. I think the only source of income then was family allowance.

In 1967 I went to the school in town for about a year. Then in 1968 I started working. I lied about my age, I was 15 at the time and said I was 18 to get my social insurance number.

I’m doing this [website project] to have a little history on myself to tell my grandkids, when I have grandkids.

(interviewed by Amy Acko and Brittany Brinkworth, 7-19-05; Transcribed by Amy Acko)
Mark Apsassin
Youth Documentarian

Johnny Askoty
Elder, Oral Historian, Beaver Translation Team

May Apsassin
Elder, Oral Historian

The more stories we have heard the more knowledge we have gained during this project.

I often sit out in the bush and I think, what were they thinking about back in the day? What were their priorities, and what drove them from day to day? Was it hunger or pride? Was it just basic survival instinct? I often wondered what it took to survive day to day for them, was it strength or was it will? But anyway this is what we're trying to figure out with this project now, through recording stories and interviews with elders. The more stories we have heard the more knowledge we have gained during this project. Now I have a great interest in website designing and I hope to make a career out of it. We looked at a drum and heard some of the stories about it from the elders. We found out the drum was made by a Native Dreamer. It is supposed to be about fifty years old and represents two paths of life coming to a transformation stage. After the transformation stage the paths join into one path representing the right path on the way to heaven. One of my goals is to learn my native language (Beaver) and also to learn more about our Native history and our ancestry.

May Apsassin is one of Charlie Dominic's daughters and is the granddaughter of the Dreamer Charlie Yahey. Although she is a member of the Blueberry River First Nation, she maintains strong ties to the Doig River First Nation. May shared her knowledge and experiences of Git Tai Kwii (Montney) with the Project Team on our field trip there. She is a respected elder who continues to encourage the use of Dane-gaa traditions and language.


May Apsassin is one of Charlie Dominic’s daughters and is the granddaughter of the Dreamer Charlie Yahey. Although she is a member of the Blueberry River First Nation, she maintains strong ties to the Doig River First Nation. May shared her knowledge and experiences of Git Tai Kwii (Montney) with the Project Team on our field trip there. She is a respected elder who continues to encourage the use of Dane-gaa traditions and language.

Billy Attachie grew up at Peterson’s Crossing and at Dogi with his parents, Alice and Murray Attachie and his numerous siblings and extended family. He learned how to hunt and trap at a young age and continues to hunt, despite being affected by polio when he was a young man. Billy’s first language was Dane-zaa and he only began to learn English when he attended the day school at Peterson’s Crossing in the 1950s.

Billy has been a pioneer in working to preserve and document the Dane-zaa language. He began working with linguists and missionaries Marshall and Jean Holdstock to translate the bible into Dane-zaa in the 1960s and later took native language workshops in Vanderhoof and Prince George to learn how to write his language phonetically. Since this time Billy and the Holdstock have started the Beaver (Dane-zaa) Literacy Project which has produced a number of conversational beaver language books with common Dane-zaa words and phrases.

In recent years, Billy has gone digital and made Dane-zaa language materials available in both written and oral formats with sound files accompanying the text so that students can hear how the words should sound as well as read it.

Billy is a proud father and grandfather and continues to pass along a great deal of traditional knowledge to the younger generations within his community.

Chief Gerry Attachie (elected Chief from 1976–1993)

Elder, Oral Historian, Project Consultant

Gerry was re-elected to council on November 21, 2003 after a six year sabbatical from band administration.

Gerry was first elected to council in 1974. Two years later, he was re-elected as Chief becoming the youngest Chief in British Columbia at that time at the age of 25. He had grown up on the reserve and often heard the elders discuss their concerns with government and the treaty. He took the responsibility to make a change while he was in office. The former Fort St. John Indian Band (which is now split into Blueberry and Dogi) was moved from the land they were occupying near Fort St. John when the veterans came home from the war. The government needed prime land to give the veterans, so they relocated the First Nation people. This was prime land that was rich with mineral rights. In the late 1960s, Gerry helped file a land claims case regarding this issue in BC Supreme Court. This case is known as the Montana Land Claim or Assinibo vs. The Queen. Gerry joined the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and through his involvement with them, doors of opportunity started to open.

I was born on September 10, 1944 in a tepee in Dogi somewhere. I was raised in Pine, we had a cabin there. In the winter time and summer we would have a tepee outside, and I start cooking about seven years old. I start doing things with my mom and I cook bannock... And from there we go to school at Pine. From there we move up here (Dogi River). We snare rabbits, hunting, me and my grandma. We got a house about a mile from here, they built us a house and we stay there, three houses they built. My grandma raised me. I stay with her all the time. I work for her and she teach me lots of stuff and that’s why I do it today. I thank my grandma to teach me stuff that, why I do it today.

(Interview with Margaret Attachie by Amy Acko and Brittany Brinkworth, 7-19-05; Transcribed by Brittany Brinkworth)
Peter Biella

Visual Anthropologist, Youth Video Production Mentor

Peter Biella is Director of the Program in Visual Anthropology at San Francisco State University, a position he inherited from his mentor there, John Collier Jr. Peter’s work spans the gamut of photographic media, from 16mm film and “chemical” still photography to digital video and interactive communication. His experience with the latter, in Yanomamo Interactive, Maasai Interactive, and an AIDS-education CD, strengthened his commitment to applied media ethnography. Having first seen himself as an anthropological filmmaker, in recent years Peter found the ethnographic component of his work richly enhanced by a “collaborative-activist” focus. This was the case in his contribution to Dane-gaa Stories and Songs. Working in Doig River, it was a joy to pass on techniques of video production and interactive design to teens who want to carry their culture’s auto-documentation forward. As with Dane-gaa, Peter has been fortunate to work with people who know and love their communities so well.

Brittany Brinkworth

Youth Documentary

I hope...that in the future people will look back and think I made a difference through recording our language and Native history.

I was born in Fort St John on February 6, 1991. I am fourteen years old and I am in grade nine at Dr. Kearney School. I live in Doig River. My household consists of my mother Barb, my step-dad Mark, and my older brother and sister Cash and Charmayne who are fraternal twins. Some of my goals in life are to continue to play volleyball and reach a higher level and to learn how to speak Beaver. Other goals in life are to finish high school and to graduate. I want to have a good career and one day I hope to get married and have kids. One of my goals this summer is to learn about my history through stories and songs from the elders, which we are doing in this project. I also hope to gain knowledge of the dreams and stories that the Dreamers have dreamt about. Through the interviews we’ve been getting from the elders I have learned how to work with the video camera, microphones, and lighting. I also learned about the proper way to get the best sound from a person when we are doing an interview — it is called the inverse square law. I hope during this project I will make my mark in Doig River history and that in the future people will look back and think I made a difference through recording our language and Native history.
Hi, my name is Charmayne Brinkworth; I was born in Fort St John on January 18th 1990. My parent’s names are Barb Davis and Edward Brinkworth. I have a twin brother his name is Cash we are 15 and I have a sister her name is Britany she is 14. I live in Doig with my mother, Britany and Cash. My father lives in Fort St John. I enjoy playing volleyball, watching hockey, watching movies, hanging out with my friends, quadding, snowboarding, listening to music and helping others. My favorite sport is volleyball. My goals in life are to go to University and play volleyball and do something that I enjoy like take something to do with the environment and be a environmentalist. I think it would be really interesting to learn how to speak and understand beaver the language my whole family on my mothers side speaks. This project we are doing now about the webpage is a really good experience for all of us to learn. We learn about how the Dana-zaa people used to live and all about our culture. As we are the next generation it is up to us to keep our culture and language alive that is why I am involved in the web design project. It is fun to go out to the bush and film the elders and listen to them tell stories. I have learned a lot like how to video camera, do sound and light reflector.


Chief Kelvin Davis is working hard to protect the rights and economic future of his people. He follows in the footsteps of his grandfather, Chief Succom.

'It’s a challenge. We want Industry to understand our rights. We’re going to be here for the next 100 years.'

Chief Kelvin Davis, September, 2005

In order to ensure that Dana-zaa Aboriginal and Treaty rights are respected, Chief Davis and his Lands’ Monitoring Department, review proposed oil and gas operations in their territory to protect sensitive cultural areas.

As Chief in 1998, when his First Nation won their breach of trust case for lost oil and gas revenues from their old reserve at Can-Tah-Kiwi (Montney), Kelvin was instrumental in setting up the Doig River First Nation’s Trust fund, to ensure financial security for future generations. He also initiated the plan to build Doig’s multi-million dollar Cultural and Administrative Centre.

As an active hunter and horseman, Kelvin keeps in touch with the land, and is able to bring his concerns about the effects of industrial development to the forefront.
With our old people, old time, what they'd saying we, we do. They teach us those, a lot of things - Make dry meat, make hide, and scum and stuff like that.

(Madeline Davis, 2005)

Madeline Davis is the daughter of Chief (Tagea) Succom and his second wife, Helen Appaw. Madeline was born at Dogig and was raised there as well as out on the land with her family as they traveled seasonally to hunt and trap. Her mother died when she was two years old and her father, along with her grandmother, Nancy Assassin and Mrs. Jack Arza, raised her and taught her the traditional Dane-zaa way of living.

Madeline married Pat Davis and they had six children before he died in 1968. Madeline continues to be a strong mother and teacher to her family and others within the Dogig River community. Her son, Kelvin, has followed in his grandfather’s footsteps and is the current Chief of the Dogig River First Nation.

Rosie Field, Swearley Creek, 2005. Catalog #: DZMCHDF-7-02-65-0330

Rosie Field
Elder, Oral Historian

Rosie was raised in a Dane-zaa community at Halfway River by her parents Sammy Fox and Zolle Field. When she was quite young she married a strong hunter and leader, Thomas Hunter, who at that time was much older than her. She and Thomas lived a traditional lifestyle hunting, trapping and traveling around their territory and they had six children.

Rosie learned a great deal from her parents and her husband and his family and continues to share this knowledge with her family and community. After the death of her husband Thomas in 1982, Rosie found a new life partner at Dogig River, Tommy Assachie.

Tommy and Rosie can often be found listening to Dreamers' songs and sharing information about Dane-zaa people and history in their home at Dogig River.

Rosie still prefers to speak in Beaver, although her laugh and appreciation of people transcends all language barriers. At Dogig she is affectionately called, "Grandma Rosie" by the youngsters.
I grew up on Callano Island, B.C., and have been working for the last several years as a visual anthropologist and media consultant. I have experience teaching documentary video and multimedia design, as well as funding and managing oral history and multimedia education projects in my home community and with northern First Nations like Dolg River. I received an MA in the Anthropology of Media from the University of London, SOAS, and I am currently working towards a PhD in Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. My projects with First Nations communities in northern British Columbia, Alberta, and the Yukon use methods of participatory ethnohistory while facilitating collaborative community media projects as video production instructor and multimedia producer.

I was first introduced to Dane-zaa culture and history in 1992 as a student of ethnographer Robin Ridlington at UBC. In 2001, Amber Ridlington and I partnered with Dolg River Youth and Elders to create Hadaa Kee naadzaat: The Dane-zaa Moose Hunt. The success of that project, and the community dialogue and storytelling that it initiated, were a major source of inspiration for this collaborative website, Dane Wajich – Dane-zaa Stories and Song: Dreamers and the Land.

I offer my sincerest thanks to the Dolg River community for their support and dedication to this project. Gerry Oker, with elders like Tommy Attachie, Billy Attachie, and Sam Acko, weighed the possibilities for developing this website and expressed the most beautiful and articulate way what they saw as the best direction for the production process and the content of the site. The youth video team showed patience, skill, and creativity in dealing with challenging filming environments, and long days of travel and recording. Billy Attachie, Madeline Oker, and Eddie Apassion worked countless hours with Pat Moore and Julia Miller to translate and transcribe the extensive Beaver language resources that you will find on this site. My warmest thanks to my ‘Grandma’ Margaret Attachie for always making a home for me at Dolg.

You can find out more about me at www.katethennessy.com
I am a PhD student in the Linguistics Department at the University of Washington. My research focuses on the area of phonetics, a branch of linguistics that explores the characteristics of human speech sounds. Specifically, I investigate the acoustic attributes of linguistic tone in the Dene-Gaa language. My secondary area of interest is sociolinguistics, which explores the relationship between language and society; in particular, I explore how neighboring languages may influence one another through language contact.

I have been fortunate to be a part of various collaborative efforts, many involving community-driven multi-media projects addressing the problems of language endangerment in indigenous communities. Also, I am grateful to have been awarded a fellowship from the US Department of Education to study the Dene-Gaa language not just as a linguist, but as a language learner.

I was born in Michigan, in the middle of the mitten that is the Lower Peninsula in 1954. In 1976, I came to the North, to the community of Assumption (Chateh), where I first learned to speak Dene Dihah (Slavey). Since then I have worked with native language programs and projects in Alberta, the Yukon and British Columbia with Slavey, Kaska, Tagish, Beaver, and other languages.

I have especially enjoyed working with this project because the stories remind me of many of the elders I knew in Assumption thirty years ago, and the teachings they shared with us then. It has been an honor to work with the Dug River elders who are among the best teachers I have known, and I have especially enjoyed working with Billy, Eddie and Madeline on the stories and on the Beaver language. Billy likes to joke around and he gave me my Beaver name, Edze – “Strawberries” – because I picked so many wild strawberries and I usually show up just when they are about ready to eat. My Kaska name is Dahvalid “travelling Man” but I can’t use that in Beaver because Billy travels around even more than I do. I enjoy just being with people when I am in Dug River and I miss them when I am back in Vancouver. Some of the best times I have had in the last two years have been spent camping by the river in Dug River. It feels like home to me there. I hope we will continue working on the language in the future because there is so much more we can do while our elders are with us.
Our job is to understand the gifts of our ancestors. The gifts they have left us and the stories and the songs. And we have to listen carefully. Dane-gaa people come from a long line of Dreamers. We are using this gift to build a foundation of our future.


Chief Oker was first elected Chief of the Dolg River First Nation on Nov 21, 2001, and was re-elected on November 21, 2003 for another 2-year term.

During his two terms as Chief, Garry worked hard to put in place sound financial management, an elders care program, good working relationships with the oil and gas companies, the completion of the community complex, a long term trust for future generations and the development of cultural education materials. He has committed to continue fighting for the Treaty rights of the Dolg River First Nation people, and to always put the people first.

Chief Oker comes from a long line of Dreamers who use prophecies and wisdom from Elders to guide and direct leadership in decision-making. He continues to use songs and stories to build visions that strengthen the community.

He has traveled throughout North America and Europe to study and work as a film director/visual artist. His world acclaimed short film, Contact the People, has had international attention, and he is currently completing a short film story about the ancient Dane-gaa Dreaming tradition. They Dream About Everything. Chief Oker continues to use the symbolic messages of the past as a way to connect with the present and future, and he does this through leadership and the visual arts.

Oker finished his Masters of Arts In Leadership and Training at Royal Roads University in 2005. Since his first election as Chief in 2001, Chief Oker has led the community through structural administrative changes and the development of new governance policies. His vision is to ensure quality of life for all membership through economic independence and management of our own information and territorial lands. He has developed partnership agreements with multi-national oil and gas companies and has driven policy development and changes within sectors of government to ensure Aboriginal and Treaty rights are protected and addressed in all levels of government.

I started working with Billy Atchachie on Beaver language revitalization in 1997, after Chief Garry Oker got funding for a project to turn our Beaver dictionary into computer form. We worked on this project for two years, from 1997-1998. After that, Billy and I started doing interviews with Elders and translations of stories. I had learned previously how to write the Beaver language, but I honed my skills by working with Billy. Since then, I have been doing translations like the ones on this site, writing about local history, and getting people’s heads up on what is happening on the land, who our people are, and where they come from.

I think that this website has been good for the younger generation. They will be able to learn about our history and the lives of the elders. Hopefully they will be inspired even more to go to the elders and ask them questions about their lives and what they know.

We have a very rich history, and we have lots of be proud of. Our people have come a long way to where they are today. Their knowledge of the land is really strong, into this 21st century.
I am a folklorist with experience producing and facilitating exhibits, websites, and documentaries that showcase oral histories. The projects I do tend to draw together aspects of the physical and cultural landscape to provide a wide ranging and contextualized view of peoples’ sense of place and identity. My approach is grounded in an awareness of the politics of cultural representation and I strive to facilitate community self-representation.

I have an M.A. in Folk Studies from Western Kentucky University, a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of British Columbia and I am currently working on my Ph.D. in Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland. My dissertation will explore how Dane-gaa people articulate their cultural experiences through their narrative traditions.

I was born in Fort St. John on the third day of a Dreamers’ Dance which my parents attended at Dog River. Most summers throughout my childhood, I returned to Dog River with my parents and spent time hanging out with my friends here and exploring the bush around the Dog River reserve. Because of my life-long relationship with the Dog River community, it has felt natural for me to bring some of my skills back to this community where I have maintained close friendships over the years. In many ways this place and these people feel like home to me.

Having conducted oral history work in Kentucky, West Virginia, Alaska, and British Columbia since 1995, I began working with the Dog River First Nation in 2002. Since then, I have collaborated with the Dog River First Nation to create the Dane-gaa Digital Archive, establish the Museum at the Dog River First Nation Cultural Centre, and to prepare numerous grant applications for cultural heritage funding, including this virtual museum project Dane Wajich – Dane-gaa Stories and Songs: Dreamers and the Land.

This project has been a true collaborative effort between its directors within the Dog River First Nation, whom you hear from throughout the exhibit, and a team of documentarians with diverse specializations including linguists, anthropologists, videographers and educators.
A Dreamer's Drum

On June 28th, 2005, a group of Dane-zaa elders, young people, linguists, and anthropologists met at our Dogrib First Nation's Cultural Centre to plan this website. Chief Garry Oker came to the meeting carrying a drum skin that had been in safe storage in his home for many years. Chief Oker had inherited the drum from his late grandfather, the song-keeper Albert Askoty who had been given the drum to care for by the Dreamer Charlie Yakey, since Albert's death, the drum had rarely been seen by our Dane-zaa community.

Some of the elders at the meeting recognized the drum as one made by the Dreamer Gaayeq, a teacher for Charlie Yakey. They remembered stories about Gaayeq’s life, and the story of his death in 1925 at Cai Tsi Kw’ (Montney).

Dane-zaa Dreamers like Gaayeq received songs from Heaven in their dreams; they often drew maps of their visions from Heaven on tanned moose hides and on the skins of their drums. Gaayeq’s drum is now fragile with age and torn from its frame, but the elders at the meeting identified the paintings on the drum as symbolic images central to the Dane-zaa Creation Story. They also recognized the drum’s value for teaching about Dane-zaa history and traditions.

The drum inspired Tommy Attachie, who is now the song-keeper for our people, to talk about the ways in which the drum is tied to Dane-zaa history, memory, land use, spirituality, and survival. Speaking in Dane-zaa Zëegewé (our Beaver language), Tommy told everyone present — elders, youth, ethnographers and linguists — that they should travel to those places in Dane-zaa territory where the Dreamers used to camp, and tell “the important stories” (view this clip).

In this way, those who attended that planning meeting decided that Gaayeq’s drum would be a central symbol and guiding metaphor for this project. Dane Wajich – Dane-zaa Stories & Songs: Dreamers and the Land. However, over the course of the development of this website, our Dogrib elders and...
community members also came to a consensus that it is not appropriate to show Dane-zaa Dreamers' drawings to a world wide audience on the Internet. Even though the drum is central to this website, in order to ensure that the Dreamers drawings are treated properly and with respect, no images of Dreamers' drawings or the drum that we describe here are shown.

Songs

Tommy Attachie singing a prayer song by the Dreamer Nałché (John Norseta), circa 2001.

< Click to Listen

A Dreamer's Drum Photos: 2/2
Community members talking about the website project in the Doig River Museum. Doig River Administrative and Cultural Centre, July, 2005. Catalog # DZYMCKH_CB_8B0P-7-11-05-E026.
Places | DANE-ZAA PLACES

Our Dreamers dreamed in many places throughout our Dane-zaa territory. Their dreams came to them as they moved with their families in a seasonal round. Like all our people, they traveled through our territory, hunting moose and other game, trapping fur-bearing animals, and harvesting plants and berries.

The songs and teachings of our Dreamers, like the stories of our people, are therefore tied to specific places, and to an expert knowledge of the land and its animal and spiritual resources.

Take a virtual tour of some of the places that are important to us and learn about our connection to the land. You will also hear about the way that our Dreamers have prepared us to survive on the land through changing times.

In front of us they done everything on this land... They destroy the land... We pray and everything started coming back... Like get our land back, what they gave us.

Tommy Attachie, 2005 (DZVMCD-7-105-101).
Plains | Hanåg Saaghé (Doig River)

Location: Hanåg Saaghé (Doig River)

Songs


Click to Listen

Doig Photos: 1/10

Traditional Use:

Hanåg Saaghé means "Raft River" in our language. For as long as we remember, this area of the Doig River has been a major camping spot for our people. We used it on our seasonal rounds as we traveled to hunt, trap, and gather throughout our territories. We would often transport our furs down river from Alédé Tsáá by raft following the spring breakup. This is why we call it Hanåg Saaghé (Raft River).

Colonialism and Settlement:

In the early 1950s, we were forced to settle here and send our children to school after our reserve at Cat Tah Kwá (Montney) was taken away from us. The Doig River Indian Reserve has been our home base since then. The last fifty years have been decades of great change, struggle, and cultural resilience for us.

Settling down meant that we no longer made our living entirely off the land. The large influx of settlers and developers who arrived after the Alaska Highway was built during WWII also threatened our control over our land base. This alienation from our land and its resources, coupled with the decline of the fur trade meant the loss of our livelihood through trapping.
Stripped of many of our rights through Colonial rule, and living in sub-standard houses provided by the Department of Indian Affairs for many years, many of our people turned to alcoholism and despair as they struggled to fit in with the growing non-Aboriginal community around us.

Renewal:

In 1986 we were compensated for the loss of our mineral rights at our old reserve at Cat Tail Kwâ (Montney) after persevering over a twenty year period to research and build our case. Receiving both the recognition of wrongdoing, and compensation for our lost mineral rights, has been very important for the renewal of our community. Following this success, we were able to build our own Administrative and Cultural Centre, which we opened in 2003.

Our Administrative and Cultural Centre is an inspiring place for our community to gather for meetings, social events, work, and recreation. The centre has also been the home base of this website project.

With our project office set up in the Doig River Museum, we created exhibits about our trips out into the bush to document oral histories, and shared them with the rest of the community and visitors to the museum. We also made DVDs of these field recordings and showed them to community members, project participants, and visitors.

Project team members – elders, youth, ethnographers, and linguists – met with the wider community members in both our boardroom and gymnasium to talk about the website, how the information should be gathered, how the information should be organized, and what it should look like.

Although we are now settled on the Doig River reserve, we continue to travel and hunt throughout the territory that we once moved through every season. We maintain a connection to the important places around us, and work hard to protect our Aboriginal and Treaty Rights to the land and its animal and spiritual resources.

For more about our community at Hanâg Sâshgâ? (Doig River), please visit About Doig River First Nation.
Members of the Dōl̓ig River community and visitors, including the band’s attorney and Crown negotiators watch video filmed for the.website project. This video screening was part of a community. celebration of their ongoing Treaty Land Entitlement negotiations with the Canadian government. Dōl̓ig River First Nation Museum, July, 2005.
Catalog #: DZVMCHP-CR-BRDP-7-11-05-0220.

Tommy Attachie, stretching beaver hides and telling Amber Ridington and Kate Hennessy about the history of Dacegaa Dreamers’ songs. Tommy Attachie’s House, Hanís Saangé? (Dōl̓ig River), May, 2006.
Catalog #: DZVMCHHP-F-14-06-0011.

Catalog #: DZVMCDPKH-7-17-05-0011.

Howard Attachie, hunting close to Hanís Saangé? (Dōl̓ig River).
Places | Alää? Šaño / Peterson’s Crossing

Location: Alää? Šaño (Peterson’s Crossing)

Stories

Billy Attachie, talking about the Dreamer Néáchji’ Oker, 2005. 

Click to Watch

Songs

Albert Askoty singing a song by the Dreamer Néáchji’ Oker, 1994.

Click to Listen

Billy Makadanay singing a song by the Dreamer Adíchif’ Iche, 1969.

Click to Listen

Our name for Peterson’s Crossing is Alää? Šaño, which means ‘Boat Sitting There.’ Alää? Šaño is a major point in our trail system because the stepped terraces provide a natural place to cross the Beaton River. Today the road follows our trail, and we drive across the bridge at Alää? Šaño on our way between Doig River and Fort St. John.

Alää? Šaño came to be known as Peterson’s Crossing when Ernie Peterson established a store there in the 1930s. Peterson’s store was strategically located across the river from where we traditionally camped, so that he could easily buy furs from us.

After World War II, when we lost our reserve at Cat Tah Kwä (Montney), the Indian Agent, Calibois, set up a Day School at Peterson’s Crossing and told our people that if we didn’t send our kids to school, our children would be taken away from us and sent to a residential school. In order to keep our children with us, many of our people settled at Alää? Šaño for the winter and built log cabins there to live in.

When our reserve at Hanäg Saahgé? (Doig River) was established in 1952, many people moved to Doig, but a handful of people, including many members of the Askoty, Makadanay, Oker, and Pouce Coupe families, continued to live at Alää? Šaño.
Our Dreamer Oker, had a camp, and later a cabin, at Alaa' Satp. Oker passed away in 1951, but "Oker Flats," the area around his camp where we would gather for our Dreamers' Dances, is named in memory of him. Oker died there, and his grave is still located in our cemetery at Alaa' Satp.

Billy Atachic remembers the death of Oker and his life at Alaa' Satp. He also recalls other Dreamers such as Charlie Yanev and Coeyca who came to visit Oker at Alaa' Satp, and to share songs and stories, and dance with our people there.
Places | Madáats’atl’oje (Snare Hill)

**Location:** Madáats’atl’oje (Snare Hill)

**View:** 1 2 view full map

**Stories**

Sam Acko, telling a Dene-zaa story of The Man Who Turned Into a Moose, 2005.

[Click to Watch]

Tommy Attachie, talking about the impact of industrialization on Dene-zaa lands. July, 2005

[Click to Watch]

**Songs**

Snare Hill Photos: 1/12

Video and language documentation team, listening to Sam Acko tell the story of ‘The Man Who Turned Into a Moose’. Madáats’atl’oje (Snare Hill), July, 2005. Catalog #: OZAMCKNDP-7-01-05-8092.

This place is called Madáats’atl’oje, which means “Snare Set Around It.” We have been hunting and trapping here for as long as we can remember. We used to rely on Madáats’atl’oje during the long cold winter when food was scarce, because our hunters could always find moose here to sustain us. We would set up large snares around the hill at the center of Madáats’atl’oje, and then drive the moose off the hill and into our snares.

You can watch Sam Acko talk about hunting, survival, and respect for animals in the story of “The Man Who Turned in a Moose” at Madáats’atl’oje. Then, listen to the late Billy Macadahay singing the “Hard Times” song, which was often sung during times of extreme cold and hardship, to bring warmer weather.

Over the last fifty years, the area around Madáats’atl’oje has been greatly impacted by oil and gas development. Now, pipelines radiate out from the Ladyfern Compressor Plant in all directions. The pipelines connect well sites and convey the oil and gas pumped out of this land to far away markets.
We are concerned that the moose that eat the willows and drink the waters near the well sites will become sick from the chemicals used in oil and gas production. That is why we monitor the developments in this area and exercise our Aboriginal and Treaty rights to protect our natural resources.

Tommy Attachie talks about what Snare Hill was like before industrialization, how industrialization has affected Dane-gaa people, and what he hopes for the future.
Snare Hill Photos: 9/12
Tommy Attachie, speaking about the impact of oil and gas industrialization in Dane-gaa territory. Madââs’al’îje (Snare Hill), July, 2005. Catalog #: DZVMCNHP-7-01-05-E046.

Snare Hill Photos: 8/12
The project team, recording Tommy Attachie at an oil and gas development near Madââs’al’îje (Snare Hill), July, 2005. Catalog #: DZVMCNHP-7-01-05-E045.

Snare Hill Photos: 11/12
Robin Acko, Margaret Attachie, and Charmayne Brinkworth stand in front of an oil and gas facility close to Madââs’al’îje (Snare Hill), July, 2005. Catalog #: DZVMCNHP-7-01-05-E037.

Snare Hill Photos: 12/12
Margaret Attachie, Robin Acko and Charmayne Brinkworth stand in front of an oil and gas facility close to Madââs’al’îje (Snare Hill), July, 2005. Catalog #: DZVMCNHP-7-01-05-E037.
The Sweeney Creek area, located just east of the British Columbia-Alberta border, is one of the places we would gather seasonally to hunt, camp and learn from our Dreamers as they traveled across our lands.

Elder Margaret Aatchie remembers camping at Sweeney Creek in her youth in the 1940s and ’50s. Her family would set up a seasonal base camp there. She recalls spending time tanning hides and doing the beadwork that she would often trade for groceries and supplies.

As he traveled between his people in Alberta and British Columbia to share his prophecies and dreams, the Dreamer Gazeq used a trail that later became the first wagon trail through this area. The old wagon trail is now expanded into a road, but we still use parts of the old trail, unaffected by the road, to access our traditional hunting and camping grounds.

Elder Tommy Aatchie tells the story of Gazeq to bring back his Prairie Chicken Song from Heaven while camping at Sweeney Creek in 1922. We continue to sing this song today at our Dreamers’ Dances. Listen to two different recordings of this song, one sung by Charlie Yaney in 1966 and the other sung by Albert Askoty in the 1990s.
Tommy Attachie also recalls the story of Makéts’awéswág, becoming a Dreamer after dying and coming back to life while passing through the Sweeney Creek area. We still sing many of Makéts’awéswág’s songs today.

The Sweeney Creek area, like many others, is sacred to us because of the Dreamers who spent time there with our people.

**Songs**

Albert Askoty singing the Dreamer Gaayeq’s “Prairie Chicken Song,” 1990s.


---

**Sweeney Creek Photos:** 5/12
The documentation team, walking to their shoot location. Sweeney Creek, July, 2005. Catalog #: DZVMCKHDP-7-02-05-0018.

**Sweeney Creek Photos:** 11/12
Brittany and Charmayne Brinkworth, videotaping the landscape at Sweeney Creek. July, 2005. Catalog #: DZVMCKHDP-7-02-05-0004.

**Sweeney Creek Photos:** 6/12
Tommy Attachie and Rosie Field, arriving at the traditional Dane-gaa gathering place at Sweeney Creek. July, 2005. Catalog #: DZVMCKHDP-7-02-05-0021.
Sweeney Creek Photos: 8/12
Peter Biello, Howard Attachie, Eddie Assassin, Billy Attachie and Sam Acko listen as Tommy Attachie shares oral histories about the Dane-gaa Dreamers who passed through this area. Sweeney Creek, July, 2005. Catalog # DZVMCKHDP-7-02-05-E033.

Sweeney Creek Photos: 10/12
Sisters Brittany and Charmayne Brinkworth, videotaping the landscape at Sweeney Creek, July, 2005. Catalog # DZVMCKHDP-7-02-05-E064.

Sweeney Creek Photos: 9/12
The project team records Tommy Attachie at Sweeney Creek, July, 2005. Catalog # DZVMCKHDP-7-02-05-E002.

Sweeney Creek Photos: 7/12
The documentation team prepares to record Tommy Attachie sharing oral histories about the Sweeney Creek area, July, 2005. Catalog # DZVMCKHDP-7-02-05-E031.
Places | Alédzé Tsáá (Aledze Creek)

location: Alédzé Tsáá (Aledze Creek)

Stories

Tommy Attachie talking about the Dreamer Alédzé, 2005.

Click to Watch

Alédzé Creek Photos: 3/7

Brothers Tommy Attachie and Billy Attachie wait in the shade while the video production team sets up their equipment. Alédzé Tsáá (Aledze Creek), July, 2005. Catalog #: DZVMCPM-KH-7-03-05-ED11.
When the flu epidemic came to the Fort St. John area in 1918, many of our people spread out and kept moving to avoid it. Alédzé Tsáa is one of the places where we took refuge and where we were able to continue to make our living from hunting and trapping.

We continue to hunt and camp in this area today.
Places | Tsazuulh Saahgée / Big Camp

location: Tsazuulh Saahgée (Big Camp)
view: 1 2  view full map

Stories

Tommy Attachie, telling about the death of the Dreamer Adishíł’she at Tsazuulh Saahgée (Big Camp) in 1919, 2005.
Click to Watch

Songs

Charlie Dominic singing a song by the Dreamer Adishíł’she, 1979.
Click to Listen

Tsazuulh Saahgée means “Big Timber Creek.” It is located on one of our main pack trails, which follows the Beatton River. We have maintained a major camping and gathering spot here for many generations.

In 1952, a forest fire swept through this area, many of our people were caught up in it and died. Despite the sadness we feel for the loss of our loved ones at Tsazuulh Saahgée, we have recently resumed our traditional gatherings in this spot.

The Dreamer Adishíł’she used to sing and pray with our people who were gathered here during Dreamers’ Dances. Tommy Attachie tells the story of Adishíł’she’s death here at Tsazuulh Saahgée in 1919. Tommy learned this story from the late Charlie Dominic, who witnessed Adishíł’she’s death. You can also listen to Charlie Dominic singing one of Adishíł’she’s songs.

Oil and gas pipelines have impacted this area in recent years. Through our Lands’ Monitoring Program, we are taking steps to assert our rights to this land, and to preserve the graves of Adishíł’she and our other ancestors who died in this area.
Big Camp Photos: 2/9
Tommy Attachie, speaking about the Prophet Okar and other Dane-gaa people who camped seasonally at Tsazuluh Sashgã (Big Camp). Teepee poles and meat drying racks are visible behind him. July, 2005. Catalog # DZVMCPM-KH-7-03-05-E036.

Big Camp Photos: 3/9
(from left) Videographer Brittany Brinkworth, operating the camera as Howard Attachie, Sam Acko, Amber Ridington, and Tommy Attachie watch the footage just recorded at Tsazuluh Sashgã (Big Camp). July, 2005. Catalog # DZVMCPM-KH-7-03-05-E047.

Big Camp Photos: 4/9
Rosie Field, listening to Tommy Attachie’s recollections and stories at Tsazuluh Sashgã (Big Camp). July, 2005. Catalog # DZVMCPM-KH-7-03-05-E037.

Big Camp Photos: 6/9
Howard Attachie (left) and Sam Acko (right), watching video of Tommy Attachie’s oral histories at Tsazuluh Sashgã (Big Camp). July, 2005. Catalog # DZVMCPM-KH-7-03-05-E044.
Places | Net'uk (Osborne River)

Location: Net'uk (Osborne River)
View: 1 2 view full map

Stories

Click to Watch

Sam Acko, telling a story about Tsáakyaa and Mosquito Man. Net'uk (Osborne River), 2005.
Click to Watch

Sam Acko, sharing a story about the origin of the Dené-zaa place name Net'uk. Net'uk (Osborne River), 2005.
Click to Watch

Songs

Doig River Drummers singing a song by the Dreamer Nâschij/Oker, 2001
Click to Listen

Osborne Photos: 1/12

We call the prairie around the Osborne River, before it joins the Doig, Net'uk, which means "End of the Flats" or "End of the Prairie." Watch Sam Acko tell about Net'uk.

This is a spot where many of our people camped before we were forced to settle on reserves. Billy Attachie tells about the Dreamer Oker, who often travelled through the area on his seasonal rounds.

Listen to one of Oker's Dreamer's songs.

Chief Succona built a trapping cabin here and he used it until his death in 1952. His son George Succona, who is now our oldest band member, continued to trap here in the spring and fall time until the area was disturbed by the construction of an oil well and associated pipeline in the 1980s.

Inspired by the river setting, Sam Acko told a traditional Dené-zaa story about Mosquito Man at Net'uk in 2005. By continuing to use our land and by telling the stories that we associate with particular places, such as Net'uk, we keep our traditions alive.
Osborne Photos: 2/12

Osborne Photos: 3/12
Chief Gerry Attachie, sharing his experiences and oral histories at Neếtłuk (Osborne River), July, 2005. Catalog # DZVCMCKHP-7.06-OS-E058.

Osborne Photos: 8/12

Osborne Photos: 7/12
Osborne Photos: 5/12
Tommy Attachie, speaking to Dane-gaa youth and documentarians about Dane-gaa people and Dreamers who passed through NetTuk (Osborne River), July, 2005. Catalog # DZ/VMKXDP-7-06-05-E048

Osborne Photos: 10/12
Oil and gas development by NetTuk (Osborne River). July, 2005. Catalog # DZ/VMCP/DP-7-06-05-E011

Osborne Photos: 11/12
Tommy Attachie points out the remains of Dane-gaa cabins disturbed by oil and gas developments around NetTuk (Osborne River). July, 2005. Catalog # DZ/VMCP/DP-7-06-05-E008

Osborne Photos: 9/12
Sam Acko, adjusting the microphone stand for sound recorder: Charmayne Brinkworth and speaker Billy Attachie. NetTuk (Osborne River), July, 2005. Catalog # DZ/VMKXDP-7-06-05-E041

Osborne Photos: 12/12
Discarded oil and gas pipeline materials adjacent to the remnants of Dane-gaa cabin. NetTuk (Osborne River) area, July, 2005. Catalog # DZ/VMCP/DP-7-06-05-E007
Places | Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney)

location: Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney)
view: 1 2 view full map

Stories


▶ Click to Watch

May Assassin, talking about Dane-gaa oral tradition and Beaver language revitalization. Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney), 2005.

▶ Click to Watch

Chief Garry Attachie, describing how he and the band won compensation for the loss of IR-172, the former Montney Reserve. Hanâs Saahgê? (Doig River), 2005.

▶ Click to Watch

Traditional Use:

Gat Tah Kwâ lies just north of the city of Fort St. John. The name means "Spruce Among House," which refers to the large number of teepees our people had here both before and after Europeans came to our land.

Montney Creek runs through Gat Tah Kwâ. This creek, and the agricultural community now located here, were named after our Chief Montney. He died here in 1918, at the age of seventy-two, during the Spanish flu epidemic that ravaged our people.

Our dancing grounds at Gat Tah Kwâ are called Suunéch’ii Kéetch’ige, which means "The Place Where Happiness Dwells." Elders such as May Assassin, Tommy Attachie and Madeline Davis, remember how our people would gather there every summer to court, celebrate births, settle political issues, visit with relatives, and to drum, sing, and dance.

The Dreamer Gaayeq named one of his songs "Suunéch’ii Kéetch’ige." When our songkeepers sing that song now, it reminds us of the importance of the Dreamers’ Dances we held there. Gaayeq died at Gat Tah Kwâ in 1923 after falling off a horse, and we continue to care for his grave here and follow his teachings.
Treaty No. 8:

In 1900 some of our leaders signed Treaty No. 8 at Fort St. John, close to Cat Tah Kwâ. We had been concerned by the influx of Klondikers coming through our lands during the gold rush as their use of our lands put pressure on our animal resources. Our leaders who signed Treaty No. 8 thought that it was a treaty of peace, and that it acknowledged their rights to hunt and trap on the land.

The treaty promised that reserve lands would be set aside for our exclusive use. In 1914, members of the Fort St. John Beaver Band, the ancestors of our Doig River and Blueberry River people, chose Cat Tah Kwâ to be our Reserve, because of its importance as a summer gathering spot for us.

Colonialism and Loss of Lands:

We continued to gather at Cat Tah Kwâ every summer until 1945, when the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), acting under pressure from the Veterans Lands Director to free up farmland for returning WWII veterans, convinced a few of us to surrender our reserve. The Indian Agent assured us this was in our best interest, and promised that in return we would receive land closer to our trails.

By 1948, the land at Cat Tah Kwâ was being divided up and given to veterans. We were forced to stay at Alaaâ Sâeá (Peterson’s Crossing), without a reserve, and send our children to school. In 1952 our reserves at Hanâq Sâaehâ (Doig River) and Blueberry River were established and many of our people settled there.

The effects of these colonial policies meant that we slowly lost control of most of our lands. As Aboriginal people of that time, we could not legally use reserve assets to conduct business, raise funds for a lawyer, or vote. As we moved from an entirely resource based economy to one more dependent on cash, our lifestyle changed also. We did not enter the cash economy on equal footing, both through the paternalistic hand of the DIA, and because of prejudice and racism aimed at our people and culture.

Compensation and Renewal:

It was not until 1977 that a DIA officer discovered and reported to us that our subsurface mineral rights to the Montney Reserve had been mishandled by the DIA prior to the surrender of the lands to the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. He told us that we could go to court to be compensated. Within a year, our Doig and Blueberry Bands began legal proceedings. It took twenty years of persistent legal action for us to reach our final settlement with the government. In 1998, we settled out of court for breach of trust and lost oil revenues. We received $147 million dollars in compensation.

Cerry Attachie was our Chief from the beginning to the end of this momentous twenty one year fight for justice. Listen to him talk about the process.

We are using the financial award from the Montney Case to assure a better future for our people. We have invested much of the money and set it aside for our community’s use. We used some of this money to build our new cultural and administrative centre on the Doig River First Nation reserve. From this facility we monitor development on our lands and assert our Aboriginal and Treaty rights.
## Timeline: Treaty No. 8 and our Reserve Land Rights

*Courtesy, Doig River First Nation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Dane-gaa: Beaver Indians in Fort St. John oppose Klondikers heading north until the government agrees to a Treaty of Peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>The Crown and Chiefs representing many First Nations sign Treaty No. 8 at Lesser Slave Lake; Treaty Commissioners arrive in Fort St. John after the Dane-gaa have dispersed to summer hunting grounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>The Treaty Commissioner returns to Fort St. John and some leaders of the Fort St. John Beaver Band, ancestors to our Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations, sign Treaty No. 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Following the provisions of Treaty No. 8, the Fort St. John Beaver Band was to be allotted 128 acres for each man, woman and child who was a member of the Band. However, many people were missed, and were not included on Band lists. The Montney Reserve (Indian Reserve No. 172) is surveyed at Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney) for the Beaver Band’s exclusive use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Leaders of the Fort St. John Beaver Band, ancestors to our Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations, surrender mineral rights associated with Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney) to the Crown in trust “to lease” for its benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Without the knowledge of many Band members, some of the leaders of the Fort St. John Beaver Band, ancestors to our Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations, put their marks on a document that surrendered the Montney Reserve to the Crown to sell or lease for the Band’s benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) transfers the Montney Reserve, including “inadvertently” the mineral rights, to the Department of Veteran’s Affairs (DVA) for $70,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-1956</td>
<td>Former Montney Reserve lands are sold and transferred to individual returning war veterans. Although the DVA did not have valid title to the mineral rights for the lands, those rights were included in the sale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>DIA is made aware that there is valuable oil and gas in the area, but does nothing to inform DVA that they do not hold subsurface rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Three small reserves are surveyed for the Band close to their trapping areas at Hanâq Saahge’ (Doig River), Blueberry River and the Beatton River. These reserves total 0194 acres — one third of the original Montney Reserve’s size.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>For the first time, Canada’s First Nations people are allowed to vote without losing their Treaty rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Oil and gas production began on the former Montney Reserve. In that same year, the Fort St. John Beaver Band splits into the Blueberry River and Doig River Bands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>A DIA officer discovers that the Doig River and Blueberry River Bands still retain their subsurface rights to the Montney Reserve; these rights have been held in trust for the Bands by the Crown. The DIA officer reports this to the Bands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>The Band commences legal action claiming damages for the improvident surrender and improper transfer of mineral rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Trial Court says that the thirty-year statute of limitations prevents the Band’s appeal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Federal Court of Appeals issues a split decision, particularly regarding the loss of the subsurface rights, The Doig River and Blueberry River Bands appeal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Supreme Court of Canada finds the Crown breached its fiduciary obligation by selling the Band’s mineral rights, and making no effort to correct its error in 1945, when it should have done so. The Court awards damages for royalties from 6.75 sections (of the original 28 sections at Montney) that had not already been transferred to veterans by 1949.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>After intensive negotiations, the Bands and government reach an out-of-court settlement for $147 million as restitution for royalties that should have gone to the Doig River and Blueberry River Bands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>The Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations’ Chiefs and Councils begin pursuing Treaty Land Entitlement negotiations with the federal government in order to rectify the difference between the number of people who were allotted land in 1914 and the actual number of people who should have received land at that time, but were left off the Band List. Once negotiations are completed, the Doig and Blueberry Bands will be entitled to select additional lands.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Montney Photos: 7/12
Tommy Attachie, looking out over the fields at Cat Tah Kwāj (Montney), July, 2005. Catalog #: DZYMCHDF-7-08-05-E007.

Montney Photos: 3/12
Chief Gerry Attachie and May Apsassin, looking at a Hudson’s Bay journal that recorded the death of the Dreamer Gaayēj in 1923 on our reserve lands at Cat Tah Kwāj (Montney). Cat Tah Kwāj (Montney), July, 2005. Catalog #: DZYMCHDF-7-08-05-E027.

Montney Photos: 5/12
Chief Gerry Attachie, leading the project team to find the Dreamer Gaayēj’s grave, Cat Tah Kwāj (Montney), July, 2005. Catalog #: DZYMCHDF-7-08-05-E003.

Montney Photos: 8/12
Dane-ga youth documentation team, following Jillian Ridington and May Apsassin through the fields at Cat Tah Kwāj (Montney). July, 2005. Catalog #: DZYMCHDF-7-08-05-E009.
Our stories and traditions prepare us to face the many challenges brought on by the coming of the white people, and, more recently, by the rapid industrialization of our land. We remember the songs of our Dreamers and sing them today as we defend our Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

As our elder Tommy Atatchie recently said in 2005:

All these stories just hold this earth. That’s how Native people use it, live by it.

Click on the links in the circle to learn more about our Dane-gaa Dreamers, our Land, and our Creation Story.
Just like the creation story in the Bible, we Dane-zaa people have our own story about how the world was created. This story has been passed along through our oral tradition, it is sacred to us, and provides a base for all our other stories about the land, people, and animals.

Our children today still enjoy listening to these stories. As they hear our "wise stories," and personal experiences from their parents and grandparents, our children come to understand the history and culture of our people. In this way, we keep our oral traditions alive.

Charlie Yahey told us about Tsâyiya, our culture hero, who overcame giant animals that used to hunt people by placing them beneath the earth. Yahey also explained that oil and gas extraction releases the grease of the giant animals from below our land; and through this industrial oil and gas extraction, our people and our way of life are under threat.

This is a translation of what Charlie Yahey said in 1968:

That guy - Tsâyiya - started to work on the world so everything would be straight for today. Some of the giant animals he didn't kill. He just chased them under that place. That's why the ground goes high. He also sent giant fish underneath and that is why, even today whitemen drill a hole to them to get their fat. The oil that they get is the fat of the giant animals.

Tsâyiya made everything straight for the world of ours. He knew it before. That is why they get gas from down under the ground. They look all over for it and then find it underneath. God made that for the white people. That is what the person and I know. I tell the story - true story

(excerpt from R. Ridington, Trail to Heaven 1988:121:122)
Dreamers & The Land

Until recently, we spent the seasons traveling through our territory in the Peace River region, now part of northern British Columbia and Alberta. We would hunt and trap, gather berries and other foods, and dry meat for the long winters. Each summer, we would meet with other bands to dance and visit with our relatives. Knowing our land and the cycles of the seasons, plants, and game always has been an essential part of our existence.

When Europeans came to our territory, they introduced firearms and tools such as steel traps, knives, and snare wire. We entered into the fur trade economy and adapted our older ways of hunting to include the new technology.

Today, we use trucks, all-terrain vehicles, and skidoos to hunt. We combine these modern machines with our traditional way of hunting on horseback and on foot. While our mode of transportation may change, we still hunt in the same types of places, like muskegs (boggy areas with moss and dwarfed spruce), creeks and mineral licks. Our knowledge of the land and game, and of the seasons' cycles, is as important as ever.

Through our lands' monitoring programs, we actively protect our hunting grounds and the game from the harm of industrialization, so that we can continue to hunt in our territories and follow our traditions. We continue to press for our Aboriginal and Treaty rights so that future generations will be able to hunt and live by our traditions.

Charlie Yahey, our most recent Dane-gaa Dreamer, who passed away in 1976, interpreted the industrial development of our Dane-gaa territory in relation to our Creation Story.
The Land Photos: 7/7
Peterson’s Crossing In winter, 2006. Catalog # DZVMCARDP-12-05 – 10.

The Land Photos: 8/7
Chinchaga Lake. Image courtesy Margaret Attachie. Catalog # DZVMCARDP-12-06 – 43.

The Land Photos: 5/7
Choke Cherries. Image Courtesy Doig River First Nation. Catalog # DSCN0716-VH.

The Land Photos: 4/7
Oil well in Doig River territory. Image courtesy Doig River First Nation. Catalog # DSC00107-VH.

The Land Photos: 6/7
Nâaching (Dreamers) are Dane-gaa people who travel to Heaven in their dreams and bring back songs. The songs provide teachings, visions, and prophecies from the Creator. The Dreamers share these songs with our people to guide us through our life on earth. Most of our Dreamers gained their abilities only after dying and coming back to life; like the swans, Dreamers can fly to heaven and return to earth.

Our Dreamers are sometimes referred to in English as Prophets, because of their ability to see into the future and predict events yet to come. In their dreams, our Prophets see the ways in which our people should behave to one another and towards the game animals that we depend on.

Our Dreamers often draw maps of their dream-journeys on moose hide and on their drum skins. Through these drawings, and their songs, they share these messages with our people. Dreamers’ songs are an essential part of our Dreamers’ Dance, a ceremonial gathering where we dance in order to renew the cycles of the world.

Our first Dreamer was Makiénúmatane, whose dreams predicted the coming of Europeans. We still sing his songs today. Many other Dreamers followed Makiénúmatane. The most recent was Charlie Yaney, who died in 1976.

Stories


Click to Watch

Download the list of Dane-gaa Dreamers [PDF]

We have songs and teachings from nineteen Dane-gaa Dreamers. We still sing their songs and tell their stories today. Rollover the sections of the Dreamers Circle above to learn more about our Dreamers and listen to their songs.
Makénúúnatane

Born mid or late 1700s.

The first Dreamer we remember was named Makénúúnatane, which Madeline Oker translates as; "On the Trail," "The Doorway," and "He Opens the Door." Makénúúnatane predicted the coming of the white men and was the first of our Dreamers to guide us through interactions with Europeans.

As Europeans moved into our lands in the late 1700s, and our hunting and gathering lifestyle incorporated guns, manufactured goods, and new cultural influences, Makénúúnatane’s teachings and prophecies helped our people make sense of the new realities we were facing. His Dreamer’s songs continue to guide us today.

We think that the mention of a Chief called "The Cynic," (French for "The Swan") in the North West Company Journal of 1799 refers to Makénúúnatane. Our genealogy corroborates this, and our oral tradition consistently associates Dreamers with swans; both can fly far away places and return.

We have many stories about Makénúúnatane. One of them tells of how he first became a Dreamer. Makénúúnatane died when his son-in-law saw him wearing a white Hudson’s Bay blanket and mistook him for a caribou. His last message was that people should think of Heaven, and should not retaliate against the relative who shot him by accident. That message of mercy and compassion has been passed down to the Dreamers who followed him.

Based upon his oral history work with our people, Robin Richington has written the following about Makénúúnatane:

In his life he was associated with swan and Saya [Saya, or Tsaluyam, is a hero character featured in many of our stories]. In his death he was associated with Jesus, the new culture hero of the white men. He introduced the concept of a new, straight trail to heaven in symbolic recognition of the progressive quality of historical experience. ... The stories of his life depict him in both contexts, first as a swan chief, and then as a prophet who, like Jesus, predicts his own death (Swan People 1978:48).

We continue to sing his songs to this day at our Dreamers’ Dances and gatherings.

Alédzé

Born early 1800s.

Alédzé, whose name means “Gun Powder” in English, got his Dreamer’s name because of his ability to travel from one place to another in his dreams, much like the power that gunpowder gives to a bullet.

Alédzé Tsáa (Alédzé Creek) is a place where this Dreamer often camped, and is where he died. We continue to hunt and camp in this area today and tell stories about his teachings. Each telling of these stories keeps them alive.

We also continue to sing Alédzé’s songs at our Dreamers’ Dances and gatherings.

Stories

Tommy Attachie talking about the Dreamer Alédzé, 2005.

Click to Watch

Azáde

Born in 1815.

Azáde, means “Liver.” Following our tradition to nickname someone after one of their children, he was also known as Askurtáat, which means “Aku’s dad,” after the birth of his son, Ray Aku, in 1879.

Azáde had seven children and has many descendants living at Doig River and other Dane-gaa communities today. Stories about him are still being circulated through our oral tradition.

Stories


Click to Watch

Songs


Click to Listen
Dakwatlah / Nááché

Born early or mid 1800s. Died early 1900s

Dakwatlah was also known as Nááché, which means “Dreamer.” He is probably the person listed as “Deekta Nuzate” in archival records, whose father was born around 1800. He was a member of the Sikanni band that traded into Fort Nelson.

Dakwatlah made a large moose hide drawing of his dream of Heaven. This was cared for by Augustine Jumbie until the mid-1980s. Anthropologists Robin and Jillian Ridington took photographs of the moose hide drawing when Jumbie showed it to them in the early 1980s. Jumbie told a story about the Catholic Bishop asking Dakwatlah to give him the moose hide drawing. Dakwatlah replied that he would only part with it if the Bishop gave him his robe. The Bishop declined the offer and Dakwatlah kept his drawing.

Adíshtlíshe

Born circa 1870. Died in the 1919 Spanish Flu epidemic.

The name Adíshtlíshe is interpreted by our elders to mean “Birch bark,” “Paper” and “Newspaper.” Our Dane-gaa word for paper is birch bark and Adíshtlíshe was called this because he delivered messages from our people in Heaven to our people on earth through the songs he dreamed.

According to Johnny Chipsia, Adíshtlíshe also delivered mail to the Hudson’s Bay Post at Fort St. John. His name and its English translation, “Newspaper,” are recorded in the 1899 Northwest Mounted Police census.

Adíshtlíshe signed Treaty No. 8 in 1900 at Fort St. John. He was often mentioned in the Hudson’s Bay Company records. Many of our people can trace their ancestry back to Adíshtlíshe.

Tommy Attachie tells the story of Adíshtlíshe’s death at Tsazuułu Saahgā (Big Camp) in 1919. His grave is still located there. Through our Lends’ Monitoring Program, we are protecting it from disturbance by the oil and gas industry.

Adíshtlíshe’s songs are a source of strength for us today. We sing them often at our Dreamers’ Dances and gatherings. Adíshtlíshe’s song to bring on good weather is a very important and powerful song; we use it during hard times to make things better.

Stories

Tommy Attachie, telling about the death of the Dreamer Adíshtlíshe at Tsazuułu Saahgā (Big Camp) in 1919, 2005.

Click to Watch

Songs


Click to Listen

Billy Makadahay singing a song by the Dreamer Adíshtlíshe at the memorial for Anno Davis. Dolg River, 1988.

Click to Listen


Click to Listen


Click to Listen

Makés’tawéswá

Born circa 1870. Died in 1916.

Makés’tawéswá literally means, “If he Leaves Things, That’s the Way They Would Be.” It has also been interpreted more loosely as, “His Way Only,” “The Way It Is,” and “He Shows The Way.” His personal name was Asukwe and archival records show that he may also have been called Metakeuche. Many of our Dane-gaa families today are related to Makés’tawéswá. He lived in the Halfway River area for much of his lifetime.

Makés’tawéswá and Makénúunatane are two of our most important early Dreamers. Like Makénúunatane, Makés’tawéswá told our people to think of Heaven and not to kill people who had harmed them. We have stories of Makés’tawéswá being attacked once; he “thought of Heaven” and refused to retaliate. His message was that Yaakt’ch’atane, “The Trail to Heaven,” is the right path that everyone must follow.

Makés’tawéswá’s songs showed people the way to reconcile their differences by singing and dancing together. We still sing his songs today at our Dreamers’ Dances and gatherings.

Stories

Tommy Attachie, talking about the Dreamer Makés’tawéswá at Sweeney Creek, 2005.

Click to Watch

Songs


Click to Listen
Anałaataá?  
Born mid 1800s. Died circa 1920

We remember this Dreamer as Anałaataá?. He is also referred to as “Waskonie” and “Wuskulli” in archival documents. He was called Anałaataá? following our tradition to nickname someone by the name of one of their children, in this case Anaala.

Anałaataá? was closely related to the Dreamer Charlie Yahay. He was the first husband of Anaachuan, who married Charlie Yahay in 1930, following Anałaataá?’s death.

Nááchče Wdage
Born mid or late 1800s.

Nááchče Wdage means “Oldest Brother Dreamer.” Nááchče Wdage was the older brother of the Dreamer Nááchče (John Notseta) and is listed as “Maatzun Dekutla” in archival documents. These brothers came from the Prophet River area. Following in the footsteps of their father, the Dreamer Dkwaatlaah, they were also sometimes simply referred to as Nááchče, or “Dreamer.”

Ts’iyuuwew Nááchče
Born late 1800s.

Ts’iyuuwew Nááchče means, “Old Woman Dreamer.” She came from near Peace River, Alberta.

Our songkeeper Tommy Attachie remembers her name but is not familiar with her songs.

Gaayq̱a
Born late 1800s. Died in 1923

Gaayq̱a was from the Hines Creek/Eureka River area in Alberta. He visited our people each summer and taught many songs to our drummers and singers, as well as to our Dreamers such as Oker and Charlie Yahay. Gaayq̱a made and painted the double-sided drum that Charlie Yahay inherited from him. Robin Ridington took many photographs of Charlie Yahay with Gaayq̱a’s drum in the 1960s.

Gaayq̱a’s wife, Mali (Molly), was much loved and respected by our people. They enjoyed her company as they camped and worked together at places such as Sweeney Creek and Cat Tah Kw̱a. Gaayq̱a’s son, Aki (Francis Leg), married Ann Davis, and settled down in the Dog River area with her.

Gaayq̱a brought back his Prairie Chicken song from Heaven while camping in a place where prairie chickens gathered to dance at Sweeney Creek. We continue to sing this song, and many other songs dreamed by Gaayq̱a, at our Dreamers’ Dances.

He dreamed his song “Suunéčh’h Kéchl’íge,” which means “The Place Where Happiness Dwells,” at our Dreamers’ Dance grounds at Cat Tah Kw̱a. Hearing this song today reminds us of the good times our people had at Cat Tah Kw̱a in the summers when they would gather there to court, celebrate births, settle political issues, drum, and sing and dance to the Dreamers’ songs, renewing our world for another cycle.

Gaayq̱a died in 1923 while riding his horse on our old Reserve at Montney, which we call Cat Tah Kw̱a. Before he died, he told people that the place where he is buried will always have a lot of game animals. In 2005, former Chief Gerry Attachie took our Project Team to find the grave at Cat Tah Kw̱a and discovered that even though the area is surrounded by farmland, there is still an abundance of game there.

Songs

- Albert Asiotsy singing the Dreamer Gaayq̱a’s “Prairie Chicken Song,” 1990s.
  - Click to Listen

  - Click to Listen

- Tommy Attachie, telling about Dane-zaa people and Dreamers gathering at Sweeney Creek, 2005.
  - Click to Watch

- Tommy Attachie, talking about the Dreamer Gaayq̱a. Cat Tah Kw̱a (Montney), 2005.
  - Click to Watch

  - Click to Listen
Askekuleq

Born late 1800s.
Askekuleq means "Boy, Old Man." This Dreamer's name implies that he had the wisdom of an old person combined with the innocence and energy of a youth. He was also known as " Wanaitaas" which means, "The father of Wanaa." He is the grandfather of elders currently living at the Blueberry River and Halfway River First Nations.
Askekuleq's brother was the Dreamer Ma'aahe't Ets'eleh, who was also known as Old Chief Butler. Our most recent Dreamer, Charlie Yakey, sang many of Askekuleq's songs. Our Doig River Drummers continue to sing Askekuleq's songs today.

Mataghalé? Nachíi

Born late 1800s.
Mataghalé? Nachíi means "His Drum Big" or "Big Drum."
Mataghalé? Nachíi is said to have come from Alberta. He settled at Moerber lake and became a member of the Sauteau First Nation and is known to be related to the Desjarlais family.
From his position with the Sauteau First Nation at Moerber Lake, he contributed to our Dene-gaa tradition of Dreamers.

Ma'aahe't Ets'eleh / Old Metachii

Born late 1800s. Died March, 1942.
Ma'aahe't Ets'eleh means, "His Snowshoes." He is also known as "Old Metachii" and "Old Chief Butler."
Ma'aahe't Ets'eleh was a Chief but also had the gift of dreaming. He is the brother of the DREAMER Askekuleq.

Nááchê / John Notseta

Born late 1800s. Died Spring 1944.
The name Nááchê means "Dreamer." Born in the Prophet River area, Nááchê followed after his father, the DREAMER Dakwatiay, who was also sometimes referred to as Nááchê.
Like so many other Dreamers, Nááchê traveled around sharing his prophecies and teachings with Dene-gaa people throughout our territory.
Madeleine Davis remembers Nááchê showing his dreamers' drawings at Gat Táa Kwa when he was there teaching and singing at a Dreamers' Dance.
Nááchê is the father of many Notsetas living today, including the Chief of the Prophet River Band, Liza Wolf.
We still use Nááchê's teachings and songs today.

Uușáa? K'jaaqich / Nááchê

Born 1899. Died 1929.
Uușáa? K'jaaqich was a DREAMER from Halfway River. His name means, "He Carries a Rail Around." He was also called Nááchêj which means "Dreamer." His English name was Joe Lilly. Although he died when he was just thirty years old, he had three wives and fathered four children and many people at the Halfway River First Nation are descendants of his.
Uușáa? K'jaaqich is reported to have once used his power to prevent a government plane from taking off on a lake in the Halfway River area.

Matsi? Dak'ale / Aتسیغواقا

Born late 1800s.
Matsi? Dak'ale means, "His Head (Hair) White." He was also known as Jack Atsukwa and was the son of the DREAMER Makets'aweswaq. Both Matsi? Dak'ale and Makets'aweswaq lived in the Halfway River area, but also travelled seasonally throughout Dene-gaa territory.
Matsi? Dak'ale had personal medicine powers that told him never to sleep inside a building. Even in the coldest weather, he slept outside or in a tent. As a DREAMER he learned a great deal from his father, Makets'aweswaq, and helped pass along both his father's and his own DREAMERS' songs to the next generation.
Nááchjjí / Oker

Born 1881 or 1878. Died in 1951.

Nááchjjí means “Main Dreamer.” The name Oker comes from our Dane-gaa pronunciation of his nickname, Sugar. Oker was the brother of Chief Succna. Oker had three wives over his lifetime and fathered eighteen children. He also raised billy Macadanay, who became a remarkable singer. Two of his daughters married Aku, son of the Dreamer Azádí. His daughter, Annie, is the mother of Chief Cary Oker.

Oker’s last wife, Alice Mocassin, married the drummer and songkeeper Albert Askoty after Oker passed away of old age in 1951 at Aláá? Šato. His grave is in our cemetery there. Oker had settled at Aláá? Šato, and “Oker Flats” is the area around his camp where we would gather for our Dreamers’ Dances. Other Dreamers such as Charlie Yahey and Gaayeq would come to Oker flats to visit, share songs and stories, and dance with our people.

Billy Attachie recalls the death of Oker at Aláá? Šato in 1951.

As one of the last of our Dreamers, Oker was instrumental in passing along our songs and traditions to our younger generations. Our Dog River Drummers continue to sing his songs at our Dreamers’ Dances and community gatherings.

Stories

Billy Attachie, talking about the Dreamer Nááchjjí/Oker, 2005.
- Click to Watch

- Click to Watch

Songs

- Click to Listen

Dog River Drummers singing a song by the Dreamer Nááchjjí/Oker, 2001
- Click to Listen

Ak’íze / Aama


Ak’íze came from the Halfway River area. She was also called Aama which is the way that our people pronounced her English name, Emma. Her full English name was Emma Skookum.

Ak’íze became a Dreamer when her sight returned after being blind. She and Charlie Yahey were the only Dreamers alive after the death of Oker in 1952.

She was photographed by J.C. Biezaun Grant in 1929 as he traveled through our Dane-gaa lands studying our people. Anthropologist Robin Ridington photographed her and recorded her singing and oratory in 1956.

Charlie Yahey


Our most recent Dreamer was Charlie Yahey who died in 1976 at an old age. Charlie was raised by his father’s brother, Usuleet (Big Charlie), for whom Charlie Lake is named and who died in the 1918 flu.

Charlie Yahey learned many songs from the Dreamer Gaayeq who was one of his main mentors. He also traveled to Heaven, and brought songs back for our people to use.

Spending most of his life traveling seasonally throughout our territory, he was forced to settle at Blueberry River in the 1950s. He still continued to move around seasonally and often spent time at Aláá? Šato during the summer months. It was here that the late songkeepers Albert Askoty, and Billy Macadanay, as well as many of our current Dog River Drummers and songkeepers, learned many of the songs that they continue to perform today.

Charlie Yahey’s legacy of songs and oratory, some of which has been preserved through audio recordings made by anthropologist Robin Ridington during the 1950s, continues to nourish our Dane-gaa First Nations. It was with the strength of Charlie Yahey’s songs and oratory that our people were able to continue with our Dreamers’ Dance during the hard years that followed the building of the Alaska Highway.

Charlie Yahey has many descendants living within the Blueberry River and Dog River First Nations. He was married to four different women over his lifetime and fathered eleven children. His last wife, Anuchuan (Bella Attachie) had been married to the Dreamer Anaalaatáa? until he died around 1920. When she remarried Charlie Yahey in 1930, who was also a Dreamer, she was able to share some of Anaalaatáa’s knowledge with him.

Listening to the recordings of Charlie Yahey’s oratory and songs continues to give our people an insight into the symbolic language that Charlie Yahey shared with the earlier Dreamers. Dancing to our Dreamers’ songs at our Dreamers’ Dances and community gatherings keeps our tradition alive and strong.
Dreamers & The Land | DREAMERS' DANCE

Our Dreamers' Dance is a world renewal ceremony. We dance to songs brought down from Heaven by our Nāáchj, or Dreamers. These songs are remembered and performed by our Doig River Drummers.

Dahkawəὲs is our Beaver word for Dreamers' Dance and it simply means, "they dance." We also call it a "Tea Dance," because we always drink tea when we gather together like this.

Traditionally, our people came together to dance and to hear the Dreamer's words and songs near the winter and summer solstices.

Today, our people from the different Dane-ga Bands come together to dance at various points throughout the year. At Doig River, we always hold a Tea Dance around the summer solstice to kick off our Doig River Rodeo weekend.

We also continue to hold Memorial Tea Dances when there has been a death in the community. At these ceremonies, we dance to help the person's spirit begin its journey along yaał'he atane, the trail to heaven. Like the Dane-ga people who came before us, we dance in a circle following the sun's direction from east to west.

Our most recent Dreamer, Charlie Yahsy, said that if our people did not come together to sing and dance around the time of winter solstice, the sun would continue to move to the south and winter would continue. By dancing together, we help the sun turn toward the north and bring on the long days of summer, renewing the earth's cycle for another year.

Dreamers' Dance Photos: 1/5
Catalog #: Teadance02DV03-5-2.

Stories
Chief Gary Oker teaching about Dane-ga drumming and the Dreamers Dance. Excerpt from the video, Contact the People, ©2001 Doig River First Nation.

Songs
Dreamers’ Dance Photos: 2/6
Drummers drum their drums over the Tea Dance fire. Hanág Saahgél (Dog River), July 2004. Catalog # T48362XV03-3-4.

Dreamers’ Dance Photos: 5/6

Dreamers’ Dance Photos: 3/6
Dancing inside at a winter Tea Dance. Hanág Saahgél (Dog River), late 1960s. Catalog # 05F0915.

Dreamers’ Dance Photos: 6/6
Tea Dance celebrating the opening of the Dog River First Nation’s Administrative & Cultural Centre, 2003. Photo by Jillian Ridington, used with permission. Catalog # 3001402-R1-050-23A.

Dreamers’ Dance Photos: 4/6
Dog River youth display their dancing skills for visiting school groups at Dog’s annual Dog Days, May 2005. Catalog # IMC_0127.jpg
Our Doig River Drummers are very important to our community and to the other Dene-gaa bands. They perform at memorial Dreamers' Dances, and at community events such as our 2005 Treaty Land Entitlement celebration.

All members of our community may sing our Dreamers' songs whenever they like; but it is our tradition that only men accompany the songs by playing hand drums at Dreamers' Dances and other events.

Our Doig River Drummers have a number of lead singers such as Tommy Attachie and Sam Acko. These men follow in a long line of songkeepers who remember the songs and the people who dreamed them. During performances they pass on their knowledge of the Dreamers' songs, which extends back over 200 years, by referring to each Dreamer as they sing their songs.

Any member of our drumming group can become a songkeeper with time. The newer members of the group learn the songs by listening and practicing with the group; and if they become skilled, they will take on the roles of lead singer, teacher, and keeper of our Dreamers' song tradition.

In the following excerpt, Tommy describes the way in which Dreamers find their songs. He also explains the central role of drummers and singers in helping our Dreamers maintain their songs here on earth:

All these Prophets when they sleep they get the song.
They said just like a small ball from Heaven....
As soon as they wake up, they sing that song over and over...
And all these song leaders, like us (the Doig River Drummers)...
As soon as he sing different song they all go in there, they sit in there, play drum...
And ever and over, pretty soon just the one he hear exactly the way it is.
And he told them that's good right there. Keep going.
And they sing it.
All the people gather some food. They dance.
That's how these songs, they pick it up...
That's how we come in here we sing it today.
Tommy Attachie, 2005 (Catalog #DZV/MCM/D-3-054062).

Our song tradition was almost lost during the hard years for us following the construction of the Alaska Highway in the 1940s.
With the settlement of our lands, and our forced settlement on reserves, we lost access to many of our hunting and trapping areas and their plant and animal resources – and this hurt our culture. Despite struggles with alcoholism and other effects of colonization, we maintain the songs of our Dreamers and they continue to be a source of strength.

Listen to songkeepers Tommy Attachie and Sam Acko telling about reviving our Dreamers' song tradition, and drum making tradition, and about how they are sharing these traditional skills with our younger generations.

To listen to more of our Dreamers' songs, visit Songs.

---

**Songs**


Click to Listen

---

**Doig River Drummers Photos: 3/4**

Doig River drummers and singers David Davis, Johnny Chipseal, Jack Acko and Dick Davis perform inside a house at a winter Tea Dance, Hanāg Saahge7 (Doig River), late 1960s. Catalog # OSPF335.

---

**Doig River Drummers Photos: 2/4**


---

**Doig River Drummers Photos: 4/4**

Based on oral tradition, we have maintained our stories and our songs and passed them along from generation to generation.

Please watch, listen, and learn from our stories and songs.

Even two hundred, three hundred years ago, the story, still today we talk about it, still the same.
It isn’t written or nothing….
That’s how Native people use it, live by it.
Tommy Attachie, 2009 (DZVMCDV-7-08-05-1)

How many years ago.
Old prophet.
When you sing it now, just like new.
(Tommy Attachie, 1998. Catalog #TA4-A)

Stories & Songs Photos: 1/3
Welcome Dance for visiting school groups at Doig’s annual Doig Days.
Stories & Songs | ABOUT DANE-ZAA STORIES

Stories are at the heart of our Dane-zaa life.

Our creation story explains how the world was created and provides the foundation for our cultural beliefs. We have “wise stories” to teach our young people what they need to know about the land and its living beings. The story of The Man Who Turned into a Moose is an example of this.

Stories about people, places and important events are a big part of our tradition also, and they record our history and experiences. Many of these stories are presented here on this website.

We also have funny stories like Tsááyaa and Mosquito Man. Tsááyaa is our culture hero, and the stories about him entertain us and make us laugh. They also teach us lessons about how to behave.

We have always had expert storytellers, such as Sam Acko. We also use stories less formally in everyday life to pass along our personal knowledge and to reinforce our cultural traditions.

Our young people are also contributing to our storytelling tradition by telling about their experience of the world as they know it. Please watch the videos where some of our young people tell stories from their perspective.

View the collection of all the stories about our Dreamers and our land presented in this web exhibit >


Click to Watch
We have two types of traditional songs:

**Mayine** are personal medicine songs that we are given on vision quests by our spirit helper. We only use these when we are in great need of help. Mayine are almost never sung in public (none are on this website).

**Nächtig yine** are songs that are brought back from Heaven by Dreamers. Our Dreamers are people who have died, and then come back to life. They have the special ability to travel to Heaven in their dreams. These songs represent prophecies and messages from God and our ancestors in Heaven to be shared with our people. We have had generations of Dreamers whose songs continue to guide us through life.

Our Dreamers’ songs are meant for public performance. Songkeepers like the Dog River Drummers keep our songs alive by performing them at our Dreamers’ Dances and at community gatherings.

**Dane-zaa Song Language:**

Our traditional songs have their own language. Each song has a specific sequence of sounds (called vocabularies by musicologists) that Dreamers understand, but that have no meaning in our Dane-zaa / Beaver language. We rely on our Dreamers to explain the significance of each song, and we rely on our songkeepers to remember the significance of the songs over time.

**Dane-zaa Drumming:**

Only men drum and perform at our Dreamers’ Dances. Women sing Dreamers’ songs unaccompanied and for smaller audiences.

Our drummers use two rhythmic patterns on the hand drum:

- The most common is a slow steady beat that evokes the feel of feet along a trail. **DUM, DUM, DUM** ...
  
  *Listen to Audio*

- The other is a repeated pattern of unstressed and stressed notes, which is also a Cree style of drumming. **daDUM, daDUM, daDUM** ...
  
  *Listen to Audio*
Go to school, hang on to your language, hang on to your tradition way of living, and you be a hundred percent good person.

Mees Apassini, 2005

Resources | DANE-ZAA RESOURCES

Please explore the many resources in this section to learn more about our people and our history.

- Learn about our culture and history
- Learn Dane-zaa Zâgê? (the Beaver Language)
- Find lesson plans and teachers resources
- Glossary of Terms

DANE-ZAA BEAVER LANGUAGE
An Introduction to Conversational Beaver

Resources Photos: 1/3
An Introduction to Conversational Beaver - Interactive Multimedia Learning Tool:
© 2005:

- Eagle Vision Video Productions Ltd,
- NENAS – North East Native Advancing Society,
- Northern Lights College,
- Doig River First Nation.
Resources | DANE-ZAA CULTURE AND HISTORY

DANE-ZAA CULTURE

To learn more about our community at Doig River visit our website: www.doigriverfn.com

To learn about our moose hunting traditions, visit our youth-produced website:
Hadza ka Naadza: The Dane-zaa Moose Hunt Website
www.moosehunt.doigriverfn.com

Selected bibliography about Dane-zaa culture:
For a list of Dr. Robin Ridington’s extensive publications on Dane-zaa Culture since 1988 see: http://www.retreatisland.com/rrpubs.htm


HISTORY SINCE WHITE CONTACT

For a summary of historical events in our region since our first contact with white people see:

A Gallop through our Peace Region History
fsj.net/peacehistory.html

TREATY No. 8

Thinking it would secure their lands from outsiders, eight of our Dane-zaa chiefs signed Treaty No. 8 in 1900 at Fort St. John. For more information about Treaty No. 8 please see the following:

Treaty No. 8 Documents
www.aic-nce.gc.ca/pr/rt8/trt8_e.html

Treaty 8: 1899–1999 (Library and Archives Canada)
www.collectionscanada.ca/treaty8/index-e.html
Timeline: Treaty No. 8 and our Reserve Land Rights

MONTNEY COURT CASE:

In 1998, our First Nation, along with the Blueberry River First Nation, were compensated for the loss of our traditional lands at G̱at Tah Kaʔ (Montney). Read more about this momentous and precedent setting court case:

Blueberry River Indian Band v. Canada
www.indigenousbar.ca/cases/apsassin.htm

ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological studies at Charlie Lake Cave, located just west of G̱at Tah Kaʔ (Montney), show that Aboriginal people inhabited our lands in northeastern British Columbia more than 10,000 years ago. The history of our people reaches back into this archaeological era.

Charlie Lake Cave Excavations
www.sfu.ca/archaeology/museum/bc/clc/src/CL000001.HTM

The Gutah Archaeological Research Project

Culture & History Photos: 6/7
Photograph of Dog River Elder Madeline Davis in the Dog River First Nation Museum, 2005. Madeline’s knowledge is one of our prized resources. Catalog #: DXVMCDPKH-7-11-05-2013

Culture & History Photos: 4/7
Charlie Lake Cave. An important spot for Dane-gaa people as well as an important archaeological site occupied more than 10,000 years ago. July, 2005. Catalog #: DXVMCDPKH-7-17-05-229

Culture & History Photos: 1/7
The Dog River Cultural Complex, 2008. Photo by Darak Lappar, used with permission courtesy of Ken G. Hansen Architect.

Culture & History Photos: 5/7
Charlie Lake Cave. An important spot for Dane-gaa people as well as an important archaeological site occupied more than 10,000 years ago. July, 2005. Catalog #: DXVMCDPKH-7-17-05-40.
Resources | DANE-ZAA ZÁÁGÉ? (BEAVER LANGUAGE)

Our Language

We call our language Dane-zaa Záágë?, which translates as “people-regular language” in English. It is also known as the Beaver Language, because of the name the Europeans gave our people during the fur trade.

Dane-zaa Záágë? is a member of the Athabaskan language family, which is one of the largest in North America. It includes the Navajo language of the American Southwest, Hupa, spoken along the Pacific Coast of California and Oregon, and many languages of Alaska and Canada. Dane-zaa Záágë? is closely related to the languages spoken by our neighboring Athabaskan groups, such as Dene Dhän (Alberta Slavey), Sekani, Tsuut'ina (Sarcee), Dene Súfnë (Chipewyan), and Dene Záágë? (Kaska).

Dane-zaa Záágë? is spoken at Hanág Saahgé? (Doig River), Blueberry, Halfway River, and Prophet River in British Columbia as well as at the Boyer River (Rocky Lane) and Child Lake (Tleske) Reserves in Alberta.

Language Loss

English is now the first language of most Dane-zaa children, and of many adults in our communities. Dane-zaa Záágë? was our primary language until our grandparents and parents started to send our children to school in the 1950s. English only became dominant in the 1980s. Because our language is orally based, Dane-zaa Záágë? becomes increasingly endangered as our fluent speakers pass away.

Revitalizing Dane-zaa Záágë?

One thing lacking right now is, start slowly dying off, is our language. But we are fighting that. We try to bring it back. Gerry Attachie, 2005 (DZVMCDV-7-22-05-01)

Documenting our Elders telling stories in Dane-zaa Záágë? for this website project is just one of the ways that we are working to preserve our language. Learning how to write it down is another way that we are preserving it.

Alphabetic and syllabic writing systems were developed for Dane-zaa Záágë? by early Anglican and Catholic missionaries in the 1800s, but the most systematic orthographic work has been conducted by Marshall and Jean Holdstock. Since 1992, they have worked with Billy Attachie, Sam Acko, and other speakers at Hanág Saahgé? (Doig River) to analyze the sound system of our language and develop a writing system for it. With assistance from Wyndham Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, the Holdstocks conducted a Beaver Literacy Project between 1976 and 1994. They worked with our community and
produced a Dictionary as well as a number of introductory books.

In 1999 we revived the Beaver Literacy Project to make language materials available for use on computers. With support from NENAS (North East Native Advancing Society), we worked with the Holdstocks to produce An Introduction to Conversational Beaver. This multimedia resource allows students to hear and read our language at the same time.

Our language experts Billy Attachie and Madeline Oker continue to work with our community and linguists such as Dr. Patrick Moore and Julia Miller to document our language and keep it alive. Check out our Dane-gaa Záágé? pronunciation guide to learn the sounds used in our alphabet.

**Language Photos:** 3/12


**Language Photos:** 9/12

Linguist Julia Miller, uploading video to her computer. Atláš Šát̓q (Paterson’s Crossing), June, 2005. Catalog # DZVMC00P-6-29-05-E016.

**Language Photos:** 4/12


**Language Photos:** 5/12

Documenting Tommy Attachie at Madaksa'ił'ya (Share Hill). (From L) Madeline Oker translates Tommy’s narratives as he speaks; visual anthropologist Peter Biella shoots the video camera, and Charmayne Eniskeworth and Robin Askio monitor the sound recording. July, 2005. Catalog # DZVMC00P-7-01-05-E031.
This guide is based on the *Dog River Dictionary* by Marshall and Jean Holdstock. It is intended as an introduction to pronouncing and writing the sounds used in Dane-gaa Zaagé? (the Beaver language).

To write our language, we use the sounds represented by the Latin alphabet (used also for the English and French languages) in combination with additional symbols for the sounds we use that are not part of the Latin alphabet. Please refer to the Symbols chart for the list of phonetic and tonal characters which we use in addition to Latin letters.

To begin learning our language, listen carefully to Billy Atachie pronouncing the sounds found in our alphabet, and then practice them yourself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUDIO</th>
<th>BEAVER LETTER</th>
<th>BEAVER WORD</th>
<th>ENGLISH MEANING</th>
<th>ENGLISH EQUIVALENT (OR NEAR EQUIVALENT) OF THE SOUND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>gat</td>
<td>‘tree’</td>
<td>Sounds like the vowel in the English word <em>cut</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aa</td>
<td>saa</td>
<td>‘sun’</td>
<td>Sounds like the sound at the beginning of the English word <em>ah</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ag</td>
<td>ahág</td>
<td>‘yes’</td>
<td>Sounds like Beaver <em>aa</em>, but pronounced through the nose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ac</td>
<td>cgac</td>
<td>‘spoon’</td>
<td>Sounds like the two vowels <em>a</em> and <em>e</em> pronounced as a single vowel, with the <em>e</em> brief and the <em>a</em> longer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ai</td>
<td>hak'ai</td>
<td>‘cow’</td>
<td>Sounds like the two vowels <em>a</em> and <em>i</em> pronounced as a single vowel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>bes</td>
<td>‘knife’</td>
<td>Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <em>ball</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch</td>
<td>aché?</td>
<td>‘tail’</td>
<td>Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <em>chain</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch'</td>
<td>čhr'gné?</td>
<td>‘coyote’</td>
<td>Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <em>chain</em>, except the sound is glottalized so there is a “popping” sound.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>dane</td>
<td>‘person’</td>
<td>Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of <em>dog</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dl</td>
<td>dleçhe</td>
<td>‘grizzly’</td>
<td>Sounds like a sequence of <em>d</em> followed by <em>l</em> as in <em>toddler</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dz</td>
<td>arzé?</td>
<td>‘heart’</td>
<td>Sounds like a sequence of <em>d</em> followed by <em>z</em> as in the English word <em>lutz</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dz'</td>
<td>dzenfi</td>
<td>‘calendar’</td>
<td>Sounds like a sequence of <em>d</em> followed by <em>z</em> as at the English word <em>lutz</em>, except with the tongue just behind or between the teeth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>se</td>
<td>‘belt’</td>
<td>Sounds like the vowel in <em>face</em> but without the glide to <em>i</em> at the end of the vowel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>qbaa</td>
<td>‘weasel’</td>
<td>Sounds like the Beaver vowel <em>e</em> said through the nose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ea</td>
<td>dabea</td>
<td>‘sheep’</td>
<td>Sounds like the vowel in the English word <em>hat</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ęż</td>
<td>kuleq</td>
<td>'old man' Sounds like the Beaver vowel a as said through the nose.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ą</td>
<td>gaah</td>
<td>'rabbit' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of the English word goa.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ąh</td>
<td>ghaje</td>
<td>'goose' This sound is different than any English sound, although in rapid speech many English speakers change the /g/ sound of ga. to a sound that is close to the /h/ sound of Beaver.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ń</td>
<td>ańńęq</td>
<td>'yes' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of hen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hadaa</td>
<td>'moose' In many words /h/ has a stronger sound at the beginning of syllables.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šin</td>
<td>'song' Sounds like the vowel in stick.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiǐh</td>
<td>'grouse' Sounds like the vowel in seat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jępy</td>
<td>'bull moose' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of jup.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ke</td>
<td>'shoes' Sounds like the sound at the beginning of kite.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k'at</td>
<td>'willow' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of kite, except the sound is glottalized so there is a 'popping' sound.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aląąq</td>
<td>'boat' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of leaf.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lhuuge</td>
<td>'fish' This sound is different than any English sound. It has the sibilant quality of s, but the air comes around the sides of the tongue.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>męț́h</td>
<td>'snare' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nódaa</td>
<td>'lynx' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of net.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gogosh</td>
<td>'pig' Sounds like the vowel at the beginning of open.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at'qę́</td>
<td>'leaf' Sounds like the vowel at the beginning of only.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sas</td>
<td>'bear' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of son.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>śan</td>
<td>'star' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of son, except with the tongue just behind or between the teeth.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shin</td>
<td>'song' Sounds like the sound at the beginning of she.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tás</td>
<td>'crutch' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of tea.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at'qę́</td>
<td>'leaf' Sounds like the consonant at the beginning of taa, except the sound is glottalized so there is a 'popping' sound.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiłęzaa</td>
<td>'dog' Sounds like a sequence of t followed by Beaver /h/. There is no similar sound in English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tčuulh</td>
<td>'rope' Sounds like a sequence of t followed by Beaver /h/, except the sound is glottalized so there is a 'popping' sound. There is no similar sound in English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsáą́</td>
<td>'beaver' Sounds like a sequence of t followed by s as at the end of lets.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PHONETIC AND TONAL SYMBOLS USED IN DANÉ-ZAA ŽÁGÉ? (THE BEAVER LANGUAGE)

Dané-záa Žágé? (the Beaver language) uses the Latin alphabet (also used by the English and French languages) in combination with the following symbols which indicate sounds that are not found in the Latin alphabet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUDIO</th>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
<th>EXAMPLE IN BEAVER WORD</th>
<th>ENGLISH MEANING</th>
<th>EXPLANATION OF SYMBOL &amp; SOUND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>̀z</td>
<td>ma’ané’</td>
<td>'his/her snowshoes'</td>
<td></td>
<td>This indicates a glottal stop; a break in sound between vowels. It sounds like the consonant sound that comes between the two parts of Oh-Oh! This sound is made when the vocal cords are pressed together to stop the flow of air and then released.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘</td>
<td>k’at</td>
<td>‘willow’</td>
<td></td>
<td>The apostrophe associated with a consonant means that the sound is “glottalized,” with glottalization, the consonant has a popping sound. The popping sound is made by combining a glottal stop (made when the vocal cords are pressed together to stop the flow of air and then released) simultaneously with another consonant. This example, k’at, sounds like the consonant at the beginning of kine, with an extra &quot;popping&quot; sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>tładézhaa</td>
<td>‘he is going up’</td>
<td></td>
<td>The acute accent (high tone) indicates that the vowel has a relatively higher pitch than the unmarked vowels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>şän</td>
<td>‘star’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The underlined letters indicate dental sounds. Dental sounds are made by saying the sound of a letter with the tongue just behind or between the teeth (not on the ridge behind the teeth). This example, şän, sounds like the consonant at the beginning of son, except with the tongue just behind or between the teeth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>at’qé̂</td>
<td>‘leaf’</td>
<td></td>
<td>The hook under a vowel means that it is nasalized, and pronounced through the nose. This example sounds like the vowel at the beginning of only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“</td>
<td>ma’dé̄</td>
<td>‘his/her eye’</td>
<td></td>
<td>The hachek over a vowel indicates a rising pitch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“</td>
<td>ch’înê</td>
<td>‘coyote’</td>
<td></td>
<td>The circumflex over a vowel indicates a falling pitch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The North Peace School District is one of our partners for this project. Their First Nations Education Program staff has worked with our community and the content of this web-exhibit to create the lesson plans and curriculum materials you see here.

**Teachers’ Guide**

*Dane Wajich Dane-zaa Stories & Songs: Dreamers and the Land* is designed to teach students—through a virtual exhibit—about our Dane-zaa (Doig River) First Nation. We invite you to learn about Dane-zaa history and culture through an exciting mix of video and sound files, photographs, and text.

This Teachers’ Guide first provides a brief orientation to our website. Below we summarize the six main sections of this web exhibit which are accessed from the tabs at the top of every web page: The Project, A Dreamer’s Drum, Places, Dreamers, Stories & Songs, and Resources. Note that you can also see an overview of the six main sections, as well as all the subsections, of the exhibit by clicking on Site Map at the bottom of every page.

Following the introduction are Lesson suggestions for elementary (younger) and high school (older) students that have been paired with each section of the website. Each lesson includes background information, core concepts, student worksheets, discussion questions, and suggestions for enrichment activities. These lesson plans have been developed in conjunction with the BC Ministry of Education Shared Learnings curriculum objectives. Lessons can either be accessed from the Teachers’ Resources online or downloaded as PDF files from the appropriate sections of the website.

**View Teachers’ Guide Introduction ›**

- Lesson 1: The Project
- Lesson 2: A Dreamer’s Drum
- Lesson 3: Places
- Lesson 4: Dreamers and the Land
- Lesson 5: Stories and Songs

**Download the Teachers’ Guide [PDF]**

**Relevant Educational Links**

**BC Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Educational Enhancements Branch**
https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/  

**Edukits:**
Aboriginal Youth Identity Series: www.edukits.ca/aboriginal.htm

**Map of Aboriginal Languages in BC**
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/aboriginal/aboriginal.htm

**Atlas of Canada: Aboriginal Languages**
http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/peopleandsociety/lang/aboriginallanguages/1
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction to Learning Resources</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. The Project</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Lesson 1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Lesson 1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. The Dreamer's Drum</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Lesson 2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Lesson 2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Places</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Lesson 3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Lesson 3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Dreamers and the Land</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Lesson 4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Lesson 4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Stories and Songs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Lesson 5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Lesson 5</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction to Learning Resources

Dane Wajich Dane-ẕaa Stories & Songs: Dreamers and the Land is designed to teach—through a virtual exhibit—about our Dane-ẕaa (Doig River) First Nation. We invite you to learn about Dane-ẕaa history and culture through an exciting mix of video and sound files, photographs, and text.

This Learning Guide first provides a brief orientation to our website. Below we summarize the six main sections of this web exhibit which are accessed from the tabs at the top of every web page: The Project, A Dreamer’s Drum, Places, Dreamers, Stories & Songs, and Resources. Note that you can also see an overview of the six main sections, as well as all the subsections, of the exhibit by clicking on Site Map at the bottom of every webpage.

Following the introduction are Lesson suggestions for elementary (younger) and high school (older) students that have been paired with each section of the website. Each lesson includes background information, core concepts, student worksheets, discussion questions, and suggestions for enrichment activities. These lesson plans have been developed in conjunction with the BC Ministry of Education Shared Learnings curriculum objectives. All lessons are included in this Learning Guide, or can be downloaded individually (see the Learning Resources page of Dane Wajich Dane-ẕaa Stories & Songs: Dreamers and the Land).

The Doig River First Nation is one of five Dane-ẕaa communities located in far northern British Columbia and Alberta, Canada.

Dane-ẕaa speak an Athabascan language and we are related to other Athabascan groups in Canada and the United States, including the Navajo of the American Southwest and dozens of First Nations who live in northern Canada and neighboring Alaska. Dane-ẕaa have lived in our traditional homeland for thousands of years and, until 1952 when the reserve at Doig River was established, we lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle, traveling seasonally through the Peace River country of northern British Columbia and neighboring Alberta.

Today, there are approximately 220 members of the Doig River First Nation, about half of who live on our reserve at Doig River. To find out more about Doig River visit About the Doig River First Nation You can also watch a video clip of a recent Dreamer’s Dance held at Doig River.
Dane Wajich Dane-ẕaa Stories & Songs: Dreamers and the Land was developed by a project team that included community elders, youth, and leaders, who collaborated with anthropologists, linguists, folklorists, filmmakers, and web designers. The main components of our exhibit are described below. More detailed information, including sub-sections, is available under each section of our website which can be reached by following the links at the top of each page.

This part of the exhibit provides more information about the website project team, and our community goal of documenting and revitalizing our culture and language through the pairing of elders and youth and traditional knowledge with multi-media technology.

In 2005, former Chief Garry Oker brought a special drum to one of the first project meetings. The drum, which had been kept in his family for many years, and was made by the Dreamer Gaayęą, inspired elders to talk about the importance of Dreamers to our Dane-ẕaa culture and, as a result, the Dreamer’s drum became the touchstone for our project. However, because of the sacred nature of the Dreamer’s drawings on this drum, our Doig River community has decided that it should not be portrayed on the Internet.

“Places” tells about our Doig River First Nation’s traditional homeland and the places where we lived in the past, as well as our connection to our land today. You can also learn more here about our traditional Dane-ẕaa seasonal rounds. “Places” also tells the story of how Dane-ẕaa traditional culture was disrupted by the building of the Alaska Highway, oil and gas industrialization, and other activities in our traditional homeland. This part of our website also explains how our Dreamers prepared our Dane-ẕaa people to survive on our land and maintain our culture in spite of these rapid changes.

“Dreamers and the Land,” explains the role of Dreamers—the spiritual leaders who passed down stories, songs, and wisdom to our community.

By clicking on the Dreamers ring, you will be redirected to a Dreamers Circle that contains information (including songs and stories), about nineteen of our Dane-ẕaa Dreamers. Students and teachers can also download and print this list as a PDF so they can study it offline. Look for the link at the bottom of the page.

By clicking on the Land ring, you can learn how the connection between our spiritual traditions and our land continues to be central to our Dane-ẕaa culture.

“Dreamers and the Land” also tells about our Creation Story, our Dreamers’ Dance and about our Doig River Drummers, who remember and “keep” the songs of our Dreamers and perform them at our Dreamers’ Dances and community gatherings throughout the year.
Stories and Songs

- For hundreds of years, our Dane-zaa culture has been handed down through oral traditions - both stories and songs.
- “Stories and Songs” provides an introduction to our story and song traditions in the sections: About Dane-zaa Stories, and About Dane-zaa Songs.
- Collections of all the video clips (stories) and songs displayed in this exhibit are presented in the sections: Collection of Stories and Collection of Songs.
- Many of the stories are in Beaver, our Dane-zaa language. These stories have been translated into English and French, and the transcripts can be downloaded from the Collection of Stories page so that both teachers and students can read and study the stories offline.

Resources

- This part of our website is divided into sections on Dane-zaa Culture and History, Language, Teachers’ Resources, and a Glossary of Terms that are used on our site. Students can learn about local archaeology, take a Dane-zaa language lesson, and learn even more about our Dane-zaa history and culture.
- The Language Page introduces you to our Dane-zaa language and links to interactive Beaver Language Lessons where students can both hear and read our Dane-zaa language.
- The “Introduction to Conversational Beaver” has a number of excellent features that may initially be hard to find – so we are directing you to these features here: After clicking on the link at the bottom of the Language page you can either:
  a) Start the lesson by clicking the box at the bottom of the page (this will bring you to a Table of Contents with sections for vocabulary and phrases according to topics such as: greetings, conversations about the weather, classroom commands, action words etc.),
  or
  b) Listen and read about the sounds used in our language by clicking on the menu tab at the top left section of the page – and then clicking on “Pronunciation Guide.”
- On the Teachers’ Resources page, you will find five elementary level, and five high school level lesson plans that correspond to the main sections of the website, as well as this Teachers’ Guide.
Elementary Lesson 1: The Project

Background: Dane-ẕaa elders, youth, and community members collaborated with a team of specialists to document and contribute to the revitalization of our culture and language. During the summer of 2005, our elders brought the documentary team to eight places in our territory where we shared oral histories about the stories, songs, people, and experiences that connect us to the land. The stories and songs presented here also introduce you to a long line of Dane-ẕaa Dreamers who have provided spiritual and practical guidance for our people for hundreds of years.

To learn more about the importance of cultural revitalization to our Dane-ẕaa website visit the Stories page. Among many stories of place and history, you can watch a Dreamers’ Dance and hear former Chief Garry Oker talk about the importance of our website project to our Dane-ẕaa people. You can also listen to Dane-ẕaa elder, May Apsassin, talk about the importance of preserving traditional Dane-ẕaa culture for future generations.

Core Concepts
- Aboriginal cultures, including Dane-ẕaa, pass knowledge from generation to generation and practical skills are learned by young people from older family and/or community members
- The extended family is important in Dane-ẕaa culture and in many other cultures around the world
- Elders have an important role in the Dane-ẕaa community
- Remembering community members who are now gone is essential to the Dane-ẕaa concept of respect, and is also important to families and cultures around the world.

Procedures
1. Go to the In Memory page of our website and click on the pictures until you find a person who interests you. Once you have selected someone, read about them, look closely at their picture, and fill out the following worksheet.
Worksheet

1. Who is the Dane-zaa person you have chosen? Write down both their English and Dane-zaa name (if they have one).

2. What special qualities or traditional skills was this person known for?

3. How did this person share their knowledge with others?

4. What did you learn from this person about our Dane-zaa culture?

Discussion Questions

1. Do you know anyone in your family or community who has knowledge they could share with younger people? This might be someone who knows how to prepare a special food, who tells stories, or has other knowledge they can share with students.

2. What are some ways that you preserve memories of people who have died in your family or community?

3. How does our Dane-zaa website help preserve Dane-zaa culture for future generations and maintain memories of our elders and other community members who are no longer alive?

Enrichment Activities

1. Invite an elder (senior) or other community member to visit your classroom to talk about a skill they have or knowledge of local culture or history. Write down what they say or draw a picture of what you hear or see.

2. When members of our family die, we can still hold onto memories of them. Remembering family members is an important way to preserve family stories and pass on cultural values. You can create an “In Memory” tribute of your own to a family or community member who is important to you. (Suggestion: Students can also share memories about living people who are important to them.) Write a story about this person and draw a picture or bring a photograph from home to illustrate it. Your class may choose to create a display of these stories.
Dane-ẕaa elders, youth, and community members collaborated with a team of specialists to document and contribute to the revitalization of our culture and language. During the summer of 2005, our elders brought the documentary team to eight places in our territory where we shared oral histories about the stories, songs, people, and experiences that connect us to the land. The stories and songs presented here also introduce you to a long line of Dane-ẕaa Dreamers who have provided spiritual and practical guidance for our people for hundreds of years.

To learn more about the importance of cultural revitalization to our Dane-ẕaa website visit the Stories page. Among many stories of place and history, you can watch a Dreamers’ Dance and hear former Chief Garry Oker talk about the importance of our website project to our Dane-ẕaa people. You can also listen to Dane-ẕaa elder, May Apsassin, talk about the importance of preserving traditional Dane-ẕaa culture for future generations.

Elders and younger community members can work together, using new technology, to document and preserve Aboriginal oral traditions. New technologies, including websites, can be utilized by Aboriginal peoples to tell their own stories, in their own way. Cultural appropriation, copyright, and intellectual property rights, as they relate to information technology, are emerging issues for Aboriginal peoples.

Cultural and language documentation and revitalization is taking place in many Canadian First Nations communities today. Many communities have recorded elders, filmed dances and other special occasions, written and published dictionaries and story collections, and created websites such as our Dane-ẕaa website. Our Dane-ẕaa community members are excited about the possibilities of the Internet and other electronic technologies, which provide a wonderful way to document our traditional culture and can even spark cultural and language revitalization. However, we also have concerns about how this technology is used and how we can best share our stories with people outside our community. This concern is one that is shared by other First Nations.

To find out more about cultural revitalization, go to the Story Collection page and listen to Dane-ẕaa elder Sammy Acko, as he talks about how the art of Dane-ẕaa drum making was almost lost, then was “revived.”

1. Go to the Stories page of our website and watch the video of Dane-ẕaa youth, Mark Apsassin, talking about what Dane-ẕaa culture means to him and why documenting and revitalizing culture is important to Dane-ẕaa youth today.

2. Click on Project Team where you will find pictures of our Dane-ẕaa website team members. First read the Project Team home page, then choose a team member and, based on their profile, fill out the worksheet below.
Worksheet

1. Who is the team member that you have chosen?

2. What was their “job” on our website team?

3. What knowledge or skills did they share?

4. Why is cultural documentation and cultural revitalization important to our Dane-zaa people and the project team member you chose?

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think that websites are a good way to document and revitalize traditional culture? Why or why not?

2. How is Dane-zaa culture different from your own? How is it the same?

3. The Dane-zaa community decided that the Dreamer Gaayęą's drum was too sacred to portray on our website. Can you think of other types of cultural or spiritual artifacts that would not be suitable for showing on the Internet?

Enrichment Activities

Design a website, either alone or as part of a team, that documents some aspect of your community or family’s culture. What will your website include? Who is its intended audience—your family, your friends, your community, the world?
Elementary Lesson 2: The Dreamer’s Drum

Background

In July, 2005, a group of Dane-zaa elders, young people, linguists, anthropologists and folklorists met at our Doig River First Nation’s Cultural Centre to plan this website. Former Chief Garry Oker brought a drum to the meeting that had been in his family for many years. Elders present at the meeting recognized this drum as one that was made by the Dreamer Gaayęą.

Dreamers, such as Gaayęą, were wise people, or prophets, who received songs and messages from Heaven in their dreams, and often drew maps and pictures of these visions on their drums. Gaayęą’s drum is sacred to our Dane-zaa people because it has a drawing on it of one of the visions he received during his lifetime. Seeing Gaayęą’s drum again inspired our Dane-zaa elders who were at the meeting to talk about the importance of Dreamers, and their messages from Heaven, to Dane-zaa culture. For this reason, we choose the Dreamer’s Drum as the central symbol and guiding metaphor for our website. To find out more, watch the video clip of Dane-zaa elder Tommy Attachie talking about Gaayęą.

Due to the sacred nature of the drawings on Gaayęą’s drum, our Dane-zaa community decided not to portray the drum on our website.

Core Concepts:

- Aboriginal cultures create art for ceremonial and functional purposes
- In our Dane-zaa community, drums were used by Dreamers, such as Gaayęą, in the past and are used today by our Doig River Drummers who perform at Dreamers’ Dances and community events throughout the year.
- Dane-zaa Dreamers were given songs in dreams and visions. The Dreamers’ songs deal with the right way to live on our traditional land, with bringing on good weather, with ensuring good hunting, and with how to live in order to follow the road to Heaven.
- Only Dreamers can draw or paint their visions on drums.
- Our last Dane-zaa Dreamer, Charlie Yahey, died in 1976.
- Our Dane-zaa Songkeeper, Tommy Attachie, and our Doig River Drummers continue to perform songs that were handed down by our Dreamers and these songs give us strength to face the challenges of today.

Procedure

1. Go to The Dreamer’s Drum.
   Read the information on the Dreamer’s Drum then click on the links to hear our Dane-zaa elder (and Songkeeper), Tommy Attachie, talk about the importance of Gaayęą’s drum and to hear Dane-zaa youth, Mark Apsassin, talk about what the drum means to him. You can also listen to Tommy Attachie singing a Dreamer’s song.

2. Go to Gaayęą.
   Click on Gaayęą and one of our Dane-zaa elders will pronounce his name. Read about his life and listen to Tommy Attachie and the Doig River Drummers singing Suunech’ii Kech’iige (The Place Where Happiness Dwells)—one of Gaayęą’s songs.

3. Once you’ve finished, fill out the worksheet below.
Worksheet

1. What is special about Gaayęą’s drum?

2. Why can only Dreamers draw or paint their visions on drums?

3. Why is the Dreamer’s Drum so important to our Dane-zaa culture and to our website?

4. Who was Gaayęą?

5. Describe how he received one of his special songs.

Enrichment Activity

Visit a cultural centre, museum, or art gallery where Aboriginal or indigenous art is on display. Choose a piece of art or a ceremonial object and answer the questions below:

1. What is the item?
2. Where does it come from?
3. What was it used for?
4. How old is it?
5. Do you think that this item should be on display? Why or why not?

Back in the classroom you can share what you’ve learned.
High School Lesson 2: The Dreamer’s Drum

Background

In July, 2005, a group of Dane-zaa elders, young people, linguists, anthropologists and folklorists met at our Doig River First Nation’s Cultural Centre to plan this website. Former Chief Garry Oker brought a drum to the meeting that had been in his family for many years. Elders present at the meeting recognized this drum as one that was made by Dreamer Gaayęą.

Dreamers, such as Gaayęą, were wise people, or prophets, who received songs and messages from Heaven in their dreams, and often drew maps and pictures of these visions on their drums. Gaayęą’s drum is sacred to our Dane-zaa people because it has a drawing on it of one of the visions he received during his lifetime. Seeing Gaayęą’s drum again inspired our Dane-zaa elders who were at the meeting to talk about the importance of Dreamers, and their messages from Heaven, to Dane-zaa culture. For this reason, we choose the Dreamer’s Drum as the central symbol and guiding metaphor for our website. To find out more, watch the video clip of Dane-zaa elder Tommy Attachie talking about Gaayęą.

Due to the sacred nature of the drawings on Gaayęą’s drum, our Dane-zaa community decided not to portray the drum on our website.

Core Concepts

- Aboriginal cultures create art for ceremonial and functional purposes.
- Cultural appropriation, intellectual property rights, and repatriation are important issues facing Aboriginal people and communities today.
- In the past, our Dane-zaa Dreamers were given songs in dreams and visions. The Dreamers’ songs connect Dane-zaa people today to our cultural beliefs and traditional homeland.
- Only Dreamers can draw or paint on drums.
- Our last Dane-zaa Dreamer, Charlie Yahey, died in 1976.
- Our Dane-zaa Songkeeper, Tommy Attachie, and our Doig River Drummers continue to perform songs that have been handed down by our Dreamers and song keepers and these songs give us strength to face the challenges of today.
- Cultural appropriation is the adoption of aspects or symbols of one culture by a different cultural group.
- Cultural repatriation refers to the return of cultural, ceremonial, or artistic objects to their place of origin.

Procedure

1. Go to The Dreamer’s Drum.
   Read the information on the Dreamer’s Drum then click on the links to hear our Dane-zaa elder (and Songkeeper), Tommy Attachie, talk about the importance of Gaayęą’s drum and to hear Dane-zaa youth, Mark Apsassin, talk about what the drum means to him. You can also listen to Tommy Attachie singing a Dreamer’s song.

2. Go Gaayęą.
   Click on Gaayęą and one of our Dane-zaa elders will pronounce his name. Read about his life and listen to Tommy Attachie and the Doig River Drummers singing Suunech’ii Kech’iige (The Place Where Happiness Dwells)—one of Gaayęą’s songs.
Worksheet

Today, Aboriginal communities and families are working to have ceremonial objects returned to their communities. This return is referred to as repatriation.

1. Write an essay or research paper on the topic of cultural appropriation and repatriation. You can also do research on the Internet. Here are some questions to get you started:

- Should Aboriginal art used for religious or ceremonial purposes be on public display in museums and art galleries?
- What about cultural centres that are based in Aboriginal communities?
Elementary Lesson 3: Places

Background

Many places in our traditional homeland are intimately connected to particular Dane-zaa Dreamers, their lives, and their songs. At many of these places our Dane-zaa people gathered in the past to socialize and to attend Dreamers’ Dances. Our Dane-zaa people also traveled throughout our traditional homeland, hunting, trapping, and harvesting berries and plants in tune with the passing seasons.

Go to Alédzé Tsáá and listen to Dane-zaa elder Tommy Attachie tell about how our Dane-zaa people moved through our traditional homeland. The chart below tells you about what Dane-zaa did during each season of the year. Click on the links to find out more about these seasonal activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Spring Elder’s Camp</td>
<td>Sam Acko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring beaver hunt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Dreamers’ dances</td>
<td>Madeline Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>picking berries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tanning hides</td>
<td>Margaret Attachie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gathering medicinal plants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Moose hunting, drying</td>
<td>Hadaa kaa Naadzet: The Dane-zaa Moose Hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moose meat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duck and goose hunting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small game hunting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing for winter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Trapping</td>
<td>Madáts’atl’oje (Snare Hill)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snaring moose (in the past)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the winter, particularly if the weather became extremely cold, hunters might have difficulty hunting and, at times, our Dane-zaa people faced starvation. Go to Madáts’atl’oje (Snare Hill) and click on “Hard Times,” to hear Dane-zaa singer, Charlie Dominic, sing a Dreamer’s song that was sung in the winter to give people the strength to survive.

These places also have great historical and political significance for us. Leaders of the Fort St. John Beaver Band, ancestors to our Doig River and Blueberry Bands, signed Treaty No. 8 at Fort St. John, close to Gat Tah Kwą̂ (Montney), in 1900. To learn more about this history go to Gat Tah Kwą̂ (Montney), read the text there and see our Timeline of Treaty No. 8 and our Reserve Land Rights. You can also visit Treaty 8 Tribal Organization to find out more about the history of Treaty No. 8.
After World War II, Dane-zaa lost some of our traditional lands and we were forced to move from Gat Tah Kwą̂ (Montney), our original reserve, to our present reserve at Hanaş Zaahgii (Doig River). Meanwhile, oil and gas activities brought disturbing changes to our homeland. Tommy Attachie talks about these changes in an interview at Madáts’atl’oje (Snare Hill).

Recently, after many years of struggle by our community leaders, we finally received compensation for these losses. To find out more, go to Gat Tah Kwă̂ (Montney) and listen to Chief Gerry Attachie talk about how we succeeded at receiving compensation for our lost traditional lands.

Finally, go to Lands and find out more about how we continue to use our traditional homeland today.

Core Concepts

- Traditional Aboriginal activities and lifestyles changed with the seasons.
- Dane-zaa follow a traditional lifestyle, utilizing resources found in our traditional homeland at different seasons.
- Our Dane-zaa Dreamers, their songs, and their lives are intimately connected to our Dane-zaa traditional homeland, and specific places are associated with specific Dreamers and stories.

Procedure

Go to Places and click on the links on the map that direct you to places within our Dane-zaa homeland.

For each place, you can:

- Listen to someone pronounce the name of the place by clicking on the megaphone symbol beside the place’s name.
- Follow links to hear stories and songs.

Then, fill in the worksheet below.
Worksheet

1. What traditional Dane-zaa place did you choose? Write its name in both English and Dane-zaa (if there is a Dane-zaa name). What does this name mean?

2. What time of year did our Dane-zaa people live at or visit this place?

3. What were the main things that Dane-zaa people did at this place?

4. Which of our Dane-zaa Dreamers were associated with this place?

5. What did you learn about this place through listening to stories and songs?

6. What did you learn about how our Dane-zaa people think about the land?

Enrichment Activity

Everyone has particular activities that they do during each season of the year. For example, you may garden and go to the beach in the summer and ski or go sledding in the winter. Review the seasonal chart above, that shows what Dane-zaa do at certain times of the year. You and your class will be creating a similar chart that shows the types of activities you (and your classmates) enjoy during each season. Do you things similar to our Dane-zaa people, or different things?
High School Lesson 3: Places

Background

Many places in our traditional homeland are intimately connected to particular Dane-ẕaa Dreamers, their lives, and their songs. At many of these places our Dane-ẕaa people gathered in the past to socialize and to attend Dreamers’ Dances. Our Dane-ẕaa people also traveled throughout our traditional homeland, hunting, trapping, and harvesting berries and plants in tune with the passing seasons.

Go to Alédzé Tsá and listen to Dane-ẕaa elder Tommy Attachie tell about how our Dane-ẕaa people moved through our traditional homeland. The chart below tells you about what Dane-ẕaa did during each season of the year. Click on the links to find out more about these seasonal activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Spring Elder’s Camp &lt;br&gt;Spring beaver hunt</td>
<td>Sam Acko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Dreamers’ dances &lt;br&gt;picking berries</td>
<td>Madeline Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tanning hides &lt;br&gt;Gathering medicinal plants</td>
<td>Margaret Attachie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Moose hunting, drying &lt;br&gt;moose meat &lt;br&gt;Duck and goose hunting &lt;br&gt;Small game hunting &lt;br&gt;Preparing for winter &lt;br&gt;Trapping</td>
<td>Hadaa kaa Naadzet: The Dane-ẕaa Moose Hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Trapping &lt;br&gt;Hunting &lt;br&gt;Snaring moose (in the past)</td>
<td>Madáts’atl’oje (Snare Hill)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the winter, particularly if the weather became extremely cold, hunters might have difficulty hunting and, at times, our Dane-ẕaa people faced starvation. Go to Madáts’atl’oje (Snare Hill) and click on “Hard Times,” to hear Dane-ẕaa singer, Charlie Dominic, sing a Dreamer’s song that was sung in the winter to give people the strength to survive.

These places also have great historical and political significance for us. Leaders of the Fort St. John Beaver Band, ancestors to our Doig River and Blueberry Bands, signed Treaty No. 8 at Fort St. John, close to Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney), in 1900. To learn more about this history go to Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney), read the text there and see our Timeline of Treaty No. 8 and our Reserve Land Rights. You can also visit Treaty 8 Tribal Organization to find out more about the history of Treaty No. 8.

After World War II, Dane-ẕaa lost some of our traditional lands and we were forced to move from Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney), our original reserve, to our present reserve at Hanás Zaahgii (Doig River). Meanwhile, oil and gas activities brought disturbing changes to our homeland. Tommy Attachie talks about these changes in an interview at Madáts’atl’oje (Snare Hill).
Recently, after many years of struggle by our community leaders, we finally received compensation for these losses. To find out more, go to Gat Tah Kwą̂ (Montney) and listen to Chief Gerry Attachie talk about how we succeeded at receiving compensation for our lost traditional lands.

Finally, go to Lands and find out more about how we continue to use our traditional homeland today.

Core Concepts

- Existing treaties within British Columbia and the current treaty process in British Columbia are part of complex Aboriginal land issues.
- Our Dane-zaa Dreamers, their songs, and their lives are intimately connected to our Dane-zaa traditional homeland.

After World War II, Dane-zaa lost some of our original traditional lands through the encroachment of agriculture and through oil and gas industrialization. Despite this fact, our Dane-zaa people continue to be strongly attached to, and use, much of our traditional homeland. Where access was blocked because of agricultural and oil and gas activities, such as at Gat Tah Kwą̂ (Montney), our Dane-zaa leaders and elders worked to receive compensation.

Today, Dane-zaa continue to use and value our traditional lands. We have a deep spiritual attachment to the land, to the places where we have lived and gathered for Dreamers’ Dances and to where our Dreamers lived in the past, and to the places where we live and make our living today.

1. Visit Places and click on the link to Gat Tah Kwą̂ (Montney) to find out more about the importance of this place to our Dane-zaa people and our fight to gain compensation for the loss of our traditional lands at Gat Tah Kwą̂. Listen to the stories and songs related to Gat Tah Kwą̂, click on the link to the Montney Court Case, and read the timeline related to treaties and land claims on our Dane-zaa traditional homeland.

2. Visit the Treaty 8 Tribal Association website and read over “Our Mission.”

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think our Dane-zaa elder Tommy Attachie meant when he said, “These stories hold the land?”
2. How do Dane-zaa people think about the land?
3. Should Dane-zaa and other Aboriginal groups, be compensated for the loss of traditional lands?
4. What are some of the ways in which Dane-zaa are attached to our traditional reserve at Gat Tah Kwą̂ (Montney)?
5. How does the Treaty 8 Tribal Association Mission Statement reflect an Aboriginal perspective that is different than that of Euro-Canadian society?
6. Do you think that First Nations people in British Columbia have been treated fairly by the Federal and Provincial governments through historical treaties and the BC land claims process? Why or why not?
7. How can the land be shared in a respectful way?
Worksheet A

Land Claims Issues

1. When did Dane-ţaa sign the first treaty with the Canadian government? Why?

2. Where was our first Dane-ţaa reserve located and why did our Dane-ţaa people choose that place to settle?

3. Why did our Dane-ţaa people have to move from their traditional reserve and gathering place at Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney)?

4. When did our Dane-ţaa leaders surrender the reserve land at Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney)?

5. What happened to our traditional lands at Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney)?

6. Where did Dane-ţaa live after we lost our lands at Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney)?

7. How did Dane-ţaa life change with the effects of Colonialism and our forced settlement on reserves?

8. Describe the process that Chief Gerry Attachie, and other Dane-ţaa leaders, followed to successfully receive compensation for the loss of our traditional lands at Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney)?

9. How did we use the financial settlement we received?

10. Do you think money can compensate for the loss of traditional Aboriginal lands? Why or why not?
Worksheet B

1. Go to Places and choose one of our Dane-zaa places by either clicking on the map or the names at the top of the page? Write the name of place you have chosen in both English and Dane-zaa (if there is a Dane-zaa name).

2. What time of year did/do Dane-zaa people live at or visit this place?

3. What were the main things that Dane-zaa people did/do at this place?

4. Which of our Dane-zaa Dreamers were associated with this place? What did they do here?

5. View the slide show for the place you have chosen and listen to stories and songs from this place. How has this place changed since the arrival of agriculture and oil and gas industrialization in our Dane-zaa homeland? How have these changes affected Dane-zaa access to this particular place?

Enrichment Activities

1. Work in teams to complete more research into land claims in British Columbia. Some suggested sites are listed below, but there are many others. Once your team has done enough research, create a PowerPoint presentation on what you’ve learned.
   - The Canadian Encyclopedia
   - Aboriginal Land Claims (Student Resources)
   - Treaty 8 Tribal Organization

2. Is there a place that has special significance to your family or community. How has it changed over the years? Interview family or community members to find out more. Do different people remember different things about these places? You could also visit a place with an elder (senior) to find out more about how it has changed over the years. Document what you discover.
## Elementary Lesson 4: Dreamers and the Land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our Dane-zaa Dreamers were wise people, or prophets, who received songs from Heaven in their dreams, and often drew maps and pictures on their drums of these visions. In their dreams, our Dreamers saw the ways in which our people should behave towards one another and towards the game animals that we depend on. To find out more visit <a href="#">Dreamer</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Dreamers’ Dance

The Dreamers’ Dance is an Earth renewal dance, traditionally held near the winter or summer solstice. During Dreamers’ Dances, our Doig River Drummers sing Dreamers’ songs handed down for generations and people dance clockwise around a circle, similar to the way in which the sun moves around the Earth. Today, we continue to remember the songs of our Dreamers and sing them as we defend our Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Aboriginal people have diverse cultural traditions and spiritual beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aboriginal dance is performed in many communities and has specific roles and purposes in traditional and contemporary Aboriginal Culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Music also has specific roles and purposes in Aboriginal culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dreamers are Dane-zaa spiritual leaders who received songs from Heaven in their dreams, helped our people to live in the past, and helped to prepare us for the changes of the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dane-zaa hold Dreamers’ Dances throughout the year and songs handed down from our Dreamers are performed by our Doig River Drummers and our Songkeepet Tommy Attachie.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit Dreamers and click on The Dreamers Circle to find out more about our Dane-zaa Dreamers. Choose a Dreamer and follow the links to listen to songs they received in dreams and learn about their life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then go to [Dreamers’ Dance](#) and [Doig River Drummers](#), to find out more about our Dane-zaa traditional music and dance. Once you have had a chance to learn more about this important part of our Dane-zaa culture, fill out the worksheet below.
Worksheet

1. Which of our Dane-zaa Dreamers did you choose to find out more about? What is their name? When and where did they live? What is one special thing you learned about them?

2. Why are Dreamers’ Dances held?

3. Describe a Dreamers’ Dance.

4. How do our Doig River Drummers carry on the Dreamers’ Dance today?

5. Have you ever been to a Dreamers’ Dance, powwow, or other Aboriginal dance? If so, what do you remember about it? You could draw a picture or write a story about what you remember.

6. If you haven’t attended an Aboriginal dance, perhaps, you have attended a dance from another culture or a group within your community. If so, what do you remember about this dance? What was its meaning for the culture or group that held it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrichment Activity</th>
<th>Attend a Dreamers’ Dance, powwow, or other traditional dance performance (this could be a Chinese-Canadian, Indo-Canadian or other cultural performance). Pay careful attention.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                     | • What did you see, hear, do?  
|                     | • If invited to do so, join in with the dancers.  
|                     | • Once you return to your class, write a story or draw a picture of what you saw.  
|                     | • If you take cameras with you, make sure that it is okay to take pictures of the performance.  
|                     | • Remember, not everyone is comfortable with people taking pictures at traditional dances or ceremonies.  |
High School Lesson 4: Dreamers and the Land

Background
Our Dane-zaa Dreamers were wise people, or prophets, who received songs from Heaven in their dreams, and often drew maps and pictures on their drums of these visions. In their dreams, our Dreamers saw the ways in which our people should behave towards one another and towards the game animals that we depend on. To find out more visit Dreamer.

The Dreamers’ Dance is an Earth renewal dance, traditionally held near the winter or summer solstice. During Dreamers’ Dances, our Doig River Drummers sing Dreamers’ songs handed down for generations and people dance clockwise around a circle, similar to the way in which the sun moves around the Earth. Today, we continue to remember the songs of our Dreamers and sing them as we defend our Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

Core Concepts
• Music, songs, and other oral teachings have specific roles and purposes in traditional Aboriginal societies.
• The lives and experiences of Aboriginal musicians and traditional spiritual leaders are positive examples for others.
• Dance has specific roles and purposes in traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture.
• Dreamers are Dane-zaa spiritual leaders who receive songs from Heaven in their dreams, have helped our people to live in the past, and have helped to prepare us for the changes of the future.
• Dane-zaa hold Dreamers’ Dances throughout the year, and songs handed down from earlier Dreamers are performed by our Doig River Drummers and our Songkeeper Tommy Attachie. The Dreamers’ Dance brings our Dane-zaa community together and provides strength to our community as we continue to defend our Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

Procedure
• Go to Dreamers and follow the links on the page to find out more about our nineteen Dane-zaa Dreamers.
• Next, go to Stories of Dreamers and the Land and listen to Dane-zaa elder Tommy Attachie talk about Dreamers’ Dances that were held in the past and the role of Dreamers in Dane-zaa society.
• Then listen to Dane-zaa elder Madeline Davis talking about Dreamers’ Dances held at the dance grounds at Montney called Suunéch’ii Kéch’ii (Where Happiness Dwells) when she was young.
• Finally, listen to former Chief Garry Oker talking about the importance of the drum and Dreamers’ Dances to contemporary Dane-zaa culture.
• Once you have had a chance to listen to our Dane-zaa elders and community leaders, you can discuss what you’ve learned and fill out the worksheet below.

Discussion Questions
1. What roles have Dreamers played in our traditional Dane-zaa culture?
2. Dreamers’ Dances so important to Dane-zaa? Why were they important in the past and why do they continue to be important today?
3. Are there any special ceremonial events or dances held in your community that help to bring the community together, the way Dreamers’ Dances bring our Dane-zaa community together?
Worksheet

1. Describe the role of Dreamers in our traditional Dane-zaa culture.

2. How have Dreamers lead our Dane-zaa people in the past and helped to prepare us for the challenges of the future?

3. Describe our Dane-zaa Dreamers’ Dance. What happens during a typical Dreamers’ Dance and why are they held?

4. Do you think that preserving and encouraging cultural traditions is important, not only for Aboriginal communities, but for other communities? Why or why not?

5. Do you think documenting such traditions is important? Why or why not?

Enrichment Activities

1. Find out whether any traditional cultural events, such as our Dane-zaa Dreamers’ Dances, are held in—or near—your community. These could include dances, powwows, celebrations of traditional holidays, or other events. If so, your class can arrange to visit such an event and observe what happens. If you have permission, your class could film or photograph the event. Remember, however, that not everyone is comfortable with people from outside of their community filming or photographing traditional events. If you are able to document the event through digital media, that’s great. If not, you can remember what you observed and share your observations when you return to class.

2. Invite an Aboriginal (or other) musician or cultural leader involved with a traditional cultural event to your class to talk about the importance of that event to their community and culture. Listen respectfully, and afterwards discuss what you learned.
Elementary Lesson 5: Stories and Songs

Background
Dane-zaa have preserved our traditional stories and songs for many generations. Dane-zaa elders are expert storytellers and enjoy telling stories to people of all ages. Dane-zaa traditional stories are intended both to entertain and to teach about our traditional values and how to survive in the bush. They also provide Dane-zaa with ways to think about the impact of oil and gas industrialization on our traditional lands. Go to About Dane-zaa Stories to find out more about our traditional Dane-zaa storytelling traditions.

Dane-zaa traditional songs have also been preserved for hundreds of years and are a vital part of our contemporary Dane-zaa oral traditions. There are two types of Dane-zaa songs.

- Mayiné are personal medicine songs that we are given on vision quests by our spirit helpers. These songs are private and rarely sung in public. None of these personal songs can be found on our website.
- Nááché yiné are songs that are brought back from Heaven by our Dane-zaa Dreamers. These songs may tell the future or contain messages from God and our ancestors in Heaven to be shared with our people. These songs are meant to be performed in public. Songkeepers, like our Doig River Drummers, keep these songs alive by performing them at our Dreamers’ Dances and at community gatherings. Go to About Dane-zaa Songs to find out more about our Dane-zaa traditional singing.

Core Concepts
- Aboriginal cultures pass knowledge from generation to generation through oral traditions.
- Storytelling is an important activity in Aboriginal cultures.
- Participation in Aboriginal storytelling and other group activities requires effective and responsible listening skills.
- There are many forms of traditional Aboriginal music.
- Stories and songs are an important part of Dane-zaa oral traditions and we Dane-zaa have maintained our stories and songs for many generations.

Procedure
1. Activity One: Storytelling

Oral traditions are traditions that are handed down through listening, speaking, and singing. Elders, such as our Dane-zaa elders, tell stories or sing songs, and young people must listen carefully until they can remember the story or song. That’s because, in the past, many Aboriginal people, including Dane-zaa, didn’t have a written language. Master storytellers might know enough stories to be able to tell stories all night long without repeating themselves. It takes highly developed listening skills and a strong intellect to remember so many stories and songs. Do you think you could do that? The next activity will give you a chance to test your listening skills.

The Telephone Game

- Your class should sit in a circle on the floor.
- Each student should sit about an arm’s length away from the next student.
- The teacher, or a chosen student, can begin the exercise by whispering a short message or a part of a story or poem, into the ear of the first student. Make sure that only the student you are speaking to can hear what you are saying. Then the next student whispers what he or she thought they heard into the ear of the next student. The last student to receive the message should stand up and tell it to the rest of the group. Then compare what the last student heard to what the first student, or teacher, said at the beginning. This exercise will only work if each person does their best to pass on the message they hear. If they make up their own message or add things on purpose to confuse the message, then it won’t be a true test of your class’s listening skills.
How did you do? Learning stories takes patience and keen listening skills.

Now, go to About Dane-ază Stories and listen to Dane-ază elder Sam Acko tell a story about our culture hero, Tsááyaa, and Mosquito Man.

You can also download the transcript of the story so that you can read it at your own pace. Then fill out Worksheet A below.

Worksheet A
1. What happens in the story? Retell the story, briefly, in your own words and draw a picture to illustrate the story.

2. How do you think Sam Acko learned this story? He gives you some clues at the beginning of the story.

3. Tsááyaa is not only a culture hero, he is also what is known as a Trickster. Tricksters, such as Raven and Coyote, are common figures in traditional Aboriginal stories who are both powerful, yet prone to playing “tricks” on other characters in stories, and so are called “tricksters.” How does Tsááyaa
Activity 2: Dane-zaa Songs

Go to About Dane-zaa Songs. Read through the page, following the links. Listen to the two different drum beats used in our Dane-zaa Dreamers’ songs. You can gently sound out the beat on a table, chair, or even your legs. Then follow the link to Dane-zaa Songs and choose a song to listen to. As you listen, fill out Worksheet B below.

Worksheet B
1. What song did you choose? If it has a name, write it here.

2. Which of our Dane-zaa Dreamers received this song? If the text indicates when and where the song was dreamed, write this here.

3. When was this song performed? By whom?

4. What type of rhythmic pattern (beat) does the song have?

5. Are there any other special things about this song?

6. How do you think that Dane-zaa Dreamers’ songs are different from those you have heard before? How are they the same?

Enrichment Activities
1. Attend a local storytelling event or invite a local storyteller to your classroom. Afterwards, discuss your favourite stories.

2. Listen to more Aboriginal music. There are many Aboriginal and Indigenous artists who have recorded CDs, both in Canada and around the world.

   • Listen to one or more CDs in your class or set up a listening centre, so that you can listen to music between other activities. A few suggestions are listed below.

      * Jerry Alfred. *Etsi Shon*. (A Yukon First Nations musician, Alfred won the Juno Award for this CD and most of the songs on it are in Northern Tutchone, a language related to our Dane-zaa language.)
      * Putamayo presents: A Native American Odyssey (Inuit to Inca)
      * Heartbeat: Voices of First Nations Women

   • After you have listened to some of this—or other—music, discuss how it is similar to our Dane-zaa traditional music. How is it different?
### High School Lesson 5: Stories and Songs

#### Background
Dane-zaa have preserved our traditional stories and songs for many generations. Dane-zaa elders are expert storytellers and enjoy telling stories to people of all ages. Dane-zaa traditional stories are intended both to entertain and to teach about our traditional values and how to survive in the bush. They also provide Dane-zaa with ways to think about the impact of oil and gas industrialization on our traditional lands. Go to About Dane-zaa Stories to find out more about our traditional Dane-zaa storytelling traditions.

Dane-zaa traditional songs have also been preserved for hundreds of years and are a vital part of our contemporary Dane-zaa oral traditions. There are two types of Dane-zaa songs.

- **Mayiné** are personal medicine songs that we are given on vision quests by our spirit helpers. These songs are private and rarely sung in public. None of these personal songs can be found on our website.

- **Nááchę yiné** are songs that are brought back from Heaven by our Dane-zaa Dreamers. These songs may tell the future or contain messages from God and our ancestors in Heaven to be shared with our people. These songs are meant to be performed in public. Songkeepers, like our Doig River Drummers, keep these songs alive by performing them at our Dreamers’ Dances and at community gatherings.

Go to About Dane-zaa Songs to find out more about our Dane-zaa traditional singing.

#### Core Concepts
- Aboriginal storytelling has social and cultural functions.
- Aboriginal storytelling has a strong influence on contemporary Aboriginal (Indigenous) literature, art, and film.
- Traditional Aboriginal music has a distinct influence on contemporary Aboriginal music.
- Stories and songs are an important part of our Dane-zaa oral traditions.
- Dane-zaa have maintained our stories and songs for many generations and our Dane-zaa elders share stories with youth today, and youth also carry on Dane-zaa oral traditions as members of groups like the Doig River Drummers. Our stories and songs provide guidance for our people as we face the challenges of the present, and the future, and help us maintain a strong sense of our Dane-zaa culture.

#### Procedure
Storytelling is an important part of our Dane-zaa culture. Go to Collection of Stories and listen to Dane-zaa elder, Sam Acko, tell the story of “The Man Who Turned Into a Moose.” Then fill out the worksheet below.
Story Worksheet

1. In which season does this story take place?

2. Where does the story take place and why was this place so important to our Dane-zaa ancestors in the past?

3. What happens when our Dane-zaa ancestors try to snare the moose at Snare Hill?

4. How do the hunters know that the young man has turned into a moose?

5. How does the Man Who Turned Into a Moose help the moose to escape from the snares?

6. What did you learn from this story about our traditional Dane-zaa way of life and about our beliefs about animals and their interactions with humans?
Dane-zaa Songs

Songs are also a very important part of our Dane-zaa culture.

- Go to About Dane-zaa Songs and learn more about our Dane-zaa traditional music.
- Next, go to Song Collection and listen to as many songs as you have time for.
- Choose one and fill out the worksheet below.

Song Worksheet

1. Who performs the song?

2. Which of our Dane-zaa Dreamers first received (dreamed) this song?

3. Where does the performance take place? When?

4. If the song was sung at a particular Dreamers’ Dance, why was that dance held?

5. What role does traditional music play in our Dane-zaa culture? How is music important in your own life, family, or community?
Enrichment Activities

1. Host an Aboriginal Film Festival

Storytelling has influenced contemporary Aboriginal artists, writers, and filmmakers. Recent films, such as *Atarnajuat: The Fast Runner*, *Smoke Signals*, and *Rabbit Proof Fence*, have all been influenced by traditional storytelling traditions. “Screen” one, or more, of these films in your classroom. You might want to invite people from other classes or hold the “festival” in your school’s gym or auditorium. Afterwards: read an interview with the director of *Atarnajuat* at http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/kunuk_z_interview.htm#open, read an interview with Sherman Alexie, screenwriter of *Smoke Signals* at http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/alexie.html, or read an interview with Phillip Noyce, http://www.iofilm.co.uk/feats/interviews/r/rabbit_proof_fence_2002.shtml director of *Rabbit Proof Fence* to find out more about the making of these movies.

a) How were these films influenced by storytelling?

b) Can you see similarities between these films and stories told by our Dane-ẕaa elders? (You might want to return to Collection of Dane-ẕaa Stories and listen to more of our Dane-ẕaa elders telling stories, before you conclude your discussion.)

2. Create a PowerPoint Presentation about an Aboriginal Musician

Contemporary Aboriginal and Indigenous musicians are often influenced by traditional Aboriginal Music, such as our Dane-ẕaa singing.

Working in a team, find out more about a contemporary Aboriginal (or Indigenous) musician or group and create a PowerPoint presentation to share what you learned. You can also do an oral report. Bring a portable CD or MP3 player so you can share the music you’ve discovered with your class. Below are a few websites to get you started.

- Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards
- Earthsongs
- Aboriginal Australia Art & Culture Centre
- Indigenous
**THE DOIG RIVER RODEO**  
*(CONTACT THE PEOPLE, 2001)*  
© Doig River First Nation, 2005.

**DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS:** Johnny Oker and Gerry Attachie talk about the Doig River Rodeo, followed by images of Doig River Rodeo Grounds, some archival images, and contemporary images of the rodeo and community members.

**ORIGINAL RECORDING:** Excerpt from the video: *Contact the People* ©2001 by the Doig River First Nation. This collaborative production was Directed by Doig River First Nation member Gary Oker, and produced by videographer Stacy Shaak and ethnographers Robin and Jillian Ridington.

**PLACE OF RECORDING:** Doig River First Nation Rodeo Grounds

**RECORDED BY:** Stacy Shaak

**ENGLISH TRANSCRIPT:** Kate Hennessy, 2006

**KEY:** 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [     ] Indicates translator’s note.

---

00:00  
[Johnny Oker]  
Hello! Yeah, my name is Johnny Oker, President of this rodeo. We’re just building gates for a race track. We’ve just got a couple more days, so we have to hurry up!

00:20  
[Gerry Attachie]  
Welcome to Doig Rodeo. Good Rodeo ground here, and uh, I think the young people will have a good time this weekend.

00:30  
Cultural Days and the Rodeo– we’ve been doing this for about maybe thirty years, forty years. Uh, it’s part of our tradition, eh, horses and the, and the Rodeo. The young people, they like it, so I hope they’ll continue in the future.
DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: Tommy Attachie speaks in Beaver at a project planning meeting. He connects the Dreamer Gaayę'ą’s drum to Dane-zaa dreaming, hunting, and oral traditions and uses these principles to direct the project team to document the material you see throughout this website. Doig River First Nation Cultural Centre, 2005.

CATALOG NO.: DZVCDVCAM-6-29-05 -1 of 4.

RECORDED BY: Peter Biella and Julia Miller, June 29, 2005.

TRANSLATED BY: Billy Attachie, Madeline Oker, and Eddie Apsassin, July 2006.

DANE-ZAA TRANSCRIPT*: BY: Dr. Patrick Moore; Julia Colleen Miller, Billy Attachie, and Madeline Oker, July 2006.

* Funding for Dane-zaa transcriptions and translations provided by a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation entitled: “Beaver Knowledge Systems: Documentation of a Canadian First Nation Language from a Place Name Perspective.”

KEY: 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [ ] Indicates translator’s note.

00:00
‘Gonna speak our language.

00:09
Ii Gaayę’ą taghalę’ giiguunaadéhjiich ach’uu,
Someone re-wrapped Gaayę’ą’s drum, putting on a different drum skin,

00:14
cę ii yaaghéhch’ilheh.
the one that was later ripped apart.
00:16
Ii laa háhgaádóh mak’aahts’anétii.
*We looked at that one yesterday.*

00:19
Ii adíshtl’ish mè sô Gaayęą taghalé? ayii yedúúnéhjiijé.
*That drum that has a drawing on it, someone put a hide on Gaayęą’s drum.*

00:27
Yííṯsééh tóhch’e dé jìíge wólę de dah sô,
*A long time ago on this land,*

00:31
me sô ii hadaa zéhhe? gülé ajuu adaawasjííh.
*sombody killed that moose, I don’t know who.*

00:36
Me sô hadaa zéhhe? me so haayéghetl.
*somebody killed the moose and scraped its hide.*

00:40
Gaayęą yaaduunéhjiijé.
*Gaayęą wrapped it [put the drum hide on].*

00:43
Yaa k’adze kòh nááchę guuh shin nááleheh.
*He dreamed about Heaven and he brought the songs back.*

00:47
Ii Yaak’eh yaa adíshtl’íshe ḥkech’ii atanii.
*He drew two trails to Heaven on the drum.*

00:52
Ii lhígé ach’uu ts’ê? wats’ê? jii lhígé Nahhatáá? ts’ê?.
*One trail leads to another place, one trail leads to God.*
At the end there is only one trail.

Those things he drew on the top, we saw them yesterday.

Both sides: one side is dark, and the other side is red.

And this, yesterday I looked at it, then after that,

I read the Bible.

Today, we believe in God.

Our hearts are not black;

our hearts are red.

I think the black side, the one I looked at,
that must be the side that’s not so good.

I am going to tell you about what we saw in the past,

we will talk to them about how our ancestors lived,

how it was back then,

and after that, where the Dreamers were.

We remember where they lived, where they dreamed the songs that they brought back.

People went toward them [people went to see them].

[we’ll talk about] how we live still today,
ii hehsahdôt nahhaazeduu.
_and how people lived long before us._

Ii taghaléʔ, giidúúnaanéhjiijie nááchę yaadéshtl’ishe,
_That drum, they rewrapped the one that the Dreamer Gaayęą drew on,_

Gaayęą, ii hááhgáádôt mak’aahits’anéhtah.
_Gaayęą’s, the one we looked at yesterday._

Aja hájé lòh sò ii k’aats’anehtah k’aach’uu.
_It was not by accident that we looked at it._

Nááwadúútsii gúlé.
_It will come back, maybe._

Ii ghóh ô, e dane ghaa náčhéʔ gwe.
_For that reason, he dreamed for people._

Sweeny Creek ahte dane náajeh.
_People lived at Sweeny Creek._

Wats’ehdóh ts’eh dane ɛtl’o,
_A long time ago, people, one after another,_

e júúhje ajuu kaa guu k’eliit, gwets’êʔ juu,
_before this place over here burned, back then,_
02:40
ah-te gwe dane nááje;
_all the people who lived there;

02:43
Oker gweyaa nááchę, Oker ajuu k’aa,
_Oker wasn’t their Dreamer yet,

02:47
nááche Adíshtl’íshe gweyaa nááchę.
_the Dreamer Adíshtl’íshe dreamed for them.

02:51
Ts’ibe Dane ghaa nááchę ale.
_He was the Dreamer for the Muskeg People.

02:54
Háá watl’q wats’ę́ʔ? Oker.
_After that, Oker was their Dreamer.

02:58
Guu hóhch'ii ?éh kenaahjííh dé wawajich éh.
_You should tell them about the things you can remember.

03:02
Sę Oker menaasjííh dajiih éh.
_I remember Oker when he was sick.

03:06
Asųų magááh nááts'adás.
_Grandmother and I visited him.

03:09
E gwene lholaadeh wats’ę́ʔ náághazhelé,
_Generation after generation, growing and raising kids,
nahhagrandma anahhéhjii dôh,
our grandmother told us,

jeh haak’e ghaşeda,
how to live,

gwadaʔuu juuhdzeněh.
long ago and today.

E juu the younger people,
And these younger people,

what they see,

what their grandma,

guu k’éhwawaache guu dry meat aaghaaleh,
and what they taught you about making dry meat and how to do other things,

kenaaghajííh dah guu juu.
what they remember, too.

E hê when we were kids,
And us, when we were kids,

ts’idaa gets’êlêh,
when we were kids,
tlęgæ dane jeh dahts'edéhdeh gúúhaake gehaaghanish.

*we sat behind people in the saddle, that was how we travelled.*

 Háâ 1956 guu *seismic* aadlaʔ? dawats'ęh, wagon éh.

*In 1956, before the seismic lines were made, [we moved around] with wagons.*

Háángaa pack horse éh dane aghaajel.

*People were still bringing back meat with pack horses.*

Háá hóhch'ii zəh gwe ahte wats'ęh,

*That was the way things were,*

guu éh gweyéh wawajije.

*we will talk to them about those things.*

Eh naał daahkene elder ahlhe jé kénaahjííh,

*And you elders, you remember things from back then,*

ii juu gwekéh.

*[tell them about] those things.*

in the bush sadejiitl gwats'ęʔ? juu,

*And as we go all over into the bush,*

jʊ̑ de je hɛwôhch'ií de guudaadawajii.

*you tell them the important stories.*
I was born in Fort St. John, August 26th, 1984. I’m a member of the Doig River community. Um, right now I’m documenting a story about my life, and how I came to be where I am today.

When I was young I was in foster care, I was moved around a lot, into group homes. I’ve lived in Vancouver. I was on the streets for a few years, uh, I became involved with drug dealers. I had a bad habit. I had a drug habit. Um, I got arrested for a charge. I went to jail. I overcame my habit. I don’t do the drugs I was doing.

Um, right now in Doig as of now I just got released May 25th. I am currently working with a few of the other people on the reserve doing website development and uh doing footage and stuff. I don’t know.
For right now I do have a plan for my future. I hope to become a website designer. I will be going to the college this fall and uh, doing, trying to get my degree for this.

Hopefully all this summer, if I am not somewhere else, where I hope not to be, I hope to finish what we are doing this summer, hope it will be a good outcome, and I also hope I can have a career doing what we are doing. As of today, I guess I am in a bit of trouble [laughs]. There is, uh. I don’t know, there is some accusations of me doing something. But, its, I do have, I have some proof that I was not there, and I have, well there was someone else.

[Mark Apsassin]
What about this project?

This project makes me feel really good. I am really interested in this. I hope to make a career out of this, and you know, just be a good example for all the younger kids on the reserve. Be a good example for my younger brother and sister. Right now the people in the community are getting ready for our Treaty 8 Days. Its annual days, a big Rodeo, we have it once a year.

Uh, we are working with the Elders, and documenting stories, stuff about our past and our history. I don’t know, I just really hope this comes, comes out to be a good experience for us and all the other kids for the reserve. And uh, I don’t know, I just also hope I can make my life, make it a little bit better for me, and for my family.

I know I have had pretty bad problems before, family problems and that, and uh, that’s about all I need to say.

[Kate Hennessy]
What does that drum mean to you?
3:10
The drum, that we did have on exhibit, means, it means a lot. I guess some of the Dreamers back in the day, they would dream, and they would write their dreams on the drum. And the drum that we did see, it’s about a path, there is two paths in life. And to every path, there is a point, there comes to an end. And there is a point where, I don’t know, I guess we just find out who we really are and what we want out of life.

3:40
And it is a transformation point, sorry. And uh, yeah, And then you know, life, or death, is a part of life, transformation. There is only one road to heaven, and I hope I am on that road. A lot of the other stuff, there’s a lot of stories on the reserve, from our Elders and stuff. And some of them I can’t understand because they are spoken in Beaver, our native tongue. I do hope to learn my language one day, and uh, yeah that’s about it. I hope a lot of the other kids learn our language, so uh, you know, we can talk to our elders, understand them, know, know our history, know all about all about our, our past. It would be good knowledge for all our younger generations on the reserve.

That’s about it. Cut.
BILLY ATTACHIE AT ALÁÁʔ SATQ
(PETERSEN’S CROSSING)
© Doig River First Nation, 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: Billy Attachie talks about the Dreamer Nááchįį/Oker, who lived and died at Alááʔ Satq (Petersen’s Crossing).

CATALOG NO.: DZVMCDVCAM-6-29-05-2 & 3 of 4

RECORDED BY: Youth Documentation Team: Brittany Brinkworth, Charmayne Brinkworth, Mark Apsassin, Robin Acko, Starr Acko. VMC Mentors: Kate Hennessy, Peter Biella, Pat Moore, Amber Ridington, Julia Miller

TRANSLATED BY: Billy Attachie, Madeline Oker, and Eddie Apsassin, July 2006
DANE-ZAA TRANSCRIPT* BY: Dr. Patrick Moore; Julia Colleen Miller, Billy Attachie, and Madeline Oker, July 2006.

* Funding for Dane-zaa transcriptions and translations provided by a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation entitled: “Beaver Knowledge Systems: Documentation of a Canadian First Nation Language from a Place Name Perspective.”

KEY: 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [     ] Indicates translator’s note.

00:00
Tóch’édóh Dane-zaa jò laa náájich.
A long time ago, the Dane-zaa gathered here.

00:06
Jò guu adáástl’uk lhójigé šalaa,
These flats are positioned one right after another;

00:10
gwe adáástl’uk taachii lhójigé šalaa.
there are three flats, one right after the other.
00:15
Jó dane enénájich.
*People came together right here.*

00:18
Dane, dane daahwéhsats.
*People, people danced.*

00:21
Dane daahwéhsats kénasjiih ëh.
*I remember people dancing.*

00:24
Mille úú Marguerite Olla danegháá ghehts’és.
*Mille [Alice Askoty] and Marguerite Olla cooked for people.*

00:30
Danegháá ghehts’és ëh;
*They cooked for people;*

00:33
hé dane natlô,
*there were many people,*

00:35
Horse Lake wats’ëh úú Moberly Lake wats’ëh.
*from Horse Lake and Moberly Lake.*

00:38
Nááchene lhenáájich jò dë.
*The Dreamers used to gather together right here.*

00:43
Ii nááchë jò hestlah jò yiidáádeh ç’aah.
*The last Dreamer [Oker] lived across there.*
Their house was beside my grandmother’s house.

Their house was nearby here.

Grandma kept visiting to sit with him.

And finally he died.

After he died, they made his grave.

He knew [before it happened].

Millie stayed beside him all summer.

She pulled him to different places with a wooden sled.

She pulled him like that to where the people lived.
01:30
Úújọ yéhdaa ghezat dôh nááče aľę.
_She had a hard time with him, even though he was a Dreamer._

01:37
Eh, ii hóhch’ii zóh maţ’s’ané? dajii ajuu naa?fíyaa aajáá?
_And, because his legs were weak, he couldn’t get up anymore._

01:53
Eh juu gwádóh yúú?kwâ ts’ę? giidéchejé?,
_Back then, if they would have taken him to the hospital,_

01:57
agiiyuuleh sô.
_they would have done something for him._

01:58
Wohcheh kuleałę.
_But he was too old._

02:07
 Háá guulaa.
_That’s enough._
* Aadżehdóh tóhch’iidóh jii,  
  A long time ago,

* Madáts’atl’oje dane yéhjii.  
  they called this Madáts’atl’oje [Snare Hill].

* Dane yadááhdzé? háá ghédaa.  
  People depended on this place to live.
Dane yadáádzé dáánejiilh.
*People depended on this place to survive.*

And that is why even today,

sadanéné háákaa juuhdzenéh ghats'adaa,
*my people are still living here,*

juune dane ko'iiine.
*and these young people, as well.*

Gwadádó? aja héw'hch'ii dé.
*A long time ago that’s the way it was.*

Wólë dé aja hanaajúúne daanenjiitl dé,
*Our ancestors survived even though*

do we dane ghwęghq?.
*people died from starvation.*

Gwadádóh kénejit dé.
*It was tough back then.*

Wak'was énejit ats'édó.
*It was fiercely cold long ago.*
There was lots of snow.

It was like that; those were hard times.

They called that place Madáts'átloje [Snare Hill] and they returned to that place to survive.

They put snares around it;

then they chased the moose there, walking side-by-side.

They walked side-by-side to chase the moose off the hill.

Every one of them snared moose, and because of that, they were able to eat.

This is how, a long time ago, people lived on that.
Tas éh dane ghadaa dóh gwadadóh wólę.
*people survived by using bow and arrows, long ago.*

And, one time,

Some people camped nearby,

In the winter.

It was wintertime.

Times were hard; they could not kill any more moose.

It was around that time

*that they went to Madátsatl'ojii [Snare Hill].*
Giidżehcę děhjiitl dé dane lhígé,
*When they went towards it there was one person,*

dane ąske alę, ąske alę,
*a young person,*

úújǫ aadah.
*who took care of himself well.*

Ajuulii dejuuh ső ts'éguu ēhchuut dah ső mak'eh wölę.
*He didn't even bother with women.*

Hájii ii mawaję́h kéjeh, hóhch'e dane.
*How pure he was, that person!*

Dane k'odii dane tááję.
*He was young and he lived among them.*

Ęjuu ső dane éh k'čaadish éh hóhjǫ,
*That man must have travelled with them,*

dēlhígé dane mejii? ajuu úújǫ.
*but there was one person whose mind was not good.*

Dane ső ę juu dane k'odii alę haje löh ső.
*That crazy man accused that young man of touching his wife.*
He had no reason for doing that,

it was all in his head.

That person,

he kept himself clean like that, that young man I mentioned.

He was hiding his chest.

He kept on hiding his chest like that all the time,

like that.

Still no one saw his chest.

On his chest he had the mane of a moose!
02:30
Haadagháá? nááʔq; dane ajuu adaayejiíh.
*The moose hair was hanging from his chest; people did not know.*

02:33
Guu haada mawajii ii sô adaajííh,
*He must have known those clean (spiritual) moose,*

02:34
dę dane k'qidii,
*this young man,*

02:38
hóhch'ii laa wúúj adaadah ajuu juu ts'éggu gae dayaa hóhch'ii ałę.
*and he took care of himself, and didn't go near women.*

02:44
E' jii Madáts'atl'oijii,
*And here at Madáts'atl'oijii [Snare Hill]*,

02:49
sô giighadah dașadlu̍qh ghetlq ahte gwene náádzat.
*they must have set lots of snares around here, all those hunters.*

02:54
Giighada daședlu̍qh hóhch'e.
*They set snares around it like that.*

02:57
Háá go k'óghadék'un ts'eh sô ahte etsłqhaajiitl ii sô ii.
*Right away they made fire, and it must have been at that time, that they all met together here.*

03:04
Naaghetsatl wawe naaghadahgwan ii kúgááh.
*They were wet and they were drying themselves beside a fire.*
They all came together again preparing to go toward the moose.

Right there

that man must have wrongfully accused him of fooling around with his wife,

it must have been.

that young man must have hidden his chest well.

He hid it that way.

He did not pull his jacket apart,

so people wouldn't see it.
03:38
Hóch'ii eh, gwedzeh sô,
*It must have been like that,*

03:43
ji'gets'égúúh, ii yat'eh'tsanii
*with an upward motion, the one who accused him*

03:47
yak'wisjé? lhejoje ts'èh hólaa?.
xposed his chest by ripping open his jacket.

03:49
"Why is this guy hiding his chest? " he said.

03:54
Jwe mat'sèhtsané? k'îh ts'èh hadaa dzisgii náè?aa?.
*Right there, his chest was covered with moose-hump hair, hanging down.*

03:58
Hadaa dzisgii laa jii,
*This moose mane,*

04:01
hadaa è nawóne kéh'tsè?.
xwas just like the hair on a moose’s hump.

04:03
Li magháá? nadzëeze náá?ae.
*His hair was long and hanging down.*

04:06
Li laa hadaa dzisgii úúzhe.
*That’s called ‘hadaa dzisgii’, moose mane.*
04:08
Hadaa ę nawoncé kéhts’ę?
*It’s just like the hair on a moose’s hump.*

04:10
E wats’ęh s襭 ajuu maawújǫ kék’ęh ę.
*After that, he was not very happy.*

04:14
Háá hadaa eghujuujelh dé wólę.
*They were going to surround the moose.*

04:16
Ii gwadádǫh wawọyǫ dę guune dane,
*Back then those people were wise,*

04:19
juuhdzenéh wadeh dane woyne ghaeleh,
*wiser than people today.*

04:23
Gwadadane,
*Those people back then,*

04:24
yíjíidǫh Dane-zaa,
*our Dane-zaa ancestors,*

04:27
họhch’ii laa juuhdzenéh háákaa ghaşedah.
*were resourceful, that’s why we are still here today.*

04:30
Ę ah s襬 ehts’ęzơh giyéhlhigé dajii.
*And at that time he said something to his younger brother [to the pure young man].*
When they were chasing the moose, [his brother was thinking] “Why does he look so unhappy?”

“Whatever you do, Stay right with him,” someone told him.

At that point, when they started chasing the moose, his brother stayed close to him.

He was right with him; he never let him go.

All of a sudden, right in front of them,

the moose all ran off.

One moose and then another separated from the rest of the herd and started to run away.
“Jii naade ustlé. Juude jii naade nêtleh,”
“I'm going to go around this way really fast. You go around that way and turn the moose around,”

yêhjii juude sô yaanewóʔoh,
he said [the younger brother to his older brother]. Everything happened so quickly,

è wanehjuude juude yanáeʔaak.
the young man was able to fool his brother who was trying to stay close to him.

Juude yanáeʔaak hôhchii.
He fooled him.

Jii lhígé déhs ôdë lhígé déhs ôdë.
While the young brother ran after one moose, his older brother ran after the other one.

Ii wats'eh zôh najwé.
Then he was gone.

Ii wats'eh ahte hadaa eghaahdel úh hôhchii.
Everyone was chasing the moose.

Ahte giiyedéhjiitl úh è juu ajuulii.
Then when they went toward them, there weren’t any moose.

“Dááwôhchëa?” ghajiì.
"What happened?" they asked.
Ajuulii hadaa ajuulene hadaa šaluut.
No one had snared any moose.

Then they all got together, all of them except for the younger brother.

He was gone.

From there, from there,

from there, they went back to that place.

That's where he took off from his older brother.

They were looking over there, where he had chased that moose,

over there.

They followed his tracks to where his clothes were lying on the ground,
06:30
hadaa zḥ wōjīt sō naatl'aaah.
*and then all of a sudden, a moose took off.*

06:32
Hee ii hadaa aajii eh ahte juude.
*When he turned into a moose, he quickly went among the other moose.*

06:36
Hadaa lợh ts'ë? déhtl'aa ahth hadaa yeh wadéhsade gọ,
*He went around to the edge of where all the other moose were, and they went with him,*

06:41
lhááhts'ë? juukaats'ëh.
*somewhere there was an opening.*

06:45
Ii mēlh eyaanédlade ahth hadaa hááwoṣat.
*There he ran into the snares, pushing them out of the way and all the moose followed.*

06:50
Guulaa hááwejaa jii, jii wajich.
*That's what happened, in this story.*

06:56
Jii sadáádzii Madáts'atl'oje
*Right behind me in the picture [video]*

07:00
dak'ēsāʔuu.
*is Madáts'atl'oje [Snare Hill].*

07:02
Ii wajich háá ii zḥ mēyēhch'ëh.
*This is the main story about this area.*
Juuh dzeʔahte eh lhēhwats'ajich hōhch'i: dah.
*Today, people tell stories about this area when they get together.*

Háá jii zōh wajich sô méhjii jō sô dane ajii.
*This story must be about this place.*

Jō laa dane k’e laa hadaa aajáá;
*Right here, a man turned into a moose that day;*

júh’dzenéh kuuts’ajiih háá gwii laa wólę enúúdle.
*today we believe that’s how it was.*

And this, this,

*this is his story, the story about that man who became a moose.*

It’s long.

Méh nahewasjiché dah hōhch’e lhølaade hōhch’ii.
*I’m going to talk to you guys about these stories, like this, one after another.*

Once in a while, his brother would see him like that, now and again.
Méh wajich naadžeš löh hôhch'ii lhédôh.
*His story is really long.*

Walôh ts'ël ajuu wôdah ts'ël? nááyaachêh,
*In the end, he didn't see his brother anymore,*

gwats'ël lhédôh gwats'ël? wats'ël? méh wajich wôlê hadaa.
*towards the end of story of the moose.*

Hôhjii elaa juuhđzenêh,
*That is why today,*

dane yataah néhyah eh
*there are still moose,*

jii hadaa nahhaagááh néhyaa.
*because he went amongst them.*
*[If they had all been killed there wouldn't be any today]*

jii hadaa nahhaagááh néhyaa aja dane yaaghadaaghô.
*There are moose standing beside us, yet no man will kill them all.*
*[Because of that man who joined the moose and showed them man's ways, today people are not able to kill all the moose]*

Ii tl'ôh, dane yêkáédâa hôhch'ii de juuhđzenêh hadaa
*After that, today people hunt moose.*
08:09

If you are following a moose out in the bush, don’t approach from upwind because it circles back on its trail and will smell you.
DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: Tommy Attachie, sitting in front of an oil well in the Madáts’atl’oje (Snare Hill) area, talks about how the landscape has changed since he spent time here as a boy in 1958. He describes the impact that the forestry and oil and gas industries have had on the Dane-zaa landscape and Dane-zaa culture. The footage of oil wells and industrial damage to Dane-zaa lands was filmed by Stacy Shaak, Robin Ridington, and Kate Hennessy between 2001 and 2006. The piece was edited by Kate Hennessy and Malcolm Levy, 2006.

CATALOG NO.: DZVMCFL7-01-05-2of3.

RECORDED BY: Youth Documentation Team: Brittany and Charmayne Brinkworth, Robin and Starr Acko. VMC Mentors: Kate Hennessy, Peter Biella, Pat Moore, Amber Ridington, Robin Ridington, Stacy Shaak.

TRANSCRIPTION: Kate Hennessy and Amber Ridington, 2006.

KEY: 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [     ] Indicates transcriber’s note.

00:00
I was, ah, forty-seven years ago, I was in here. Today I sitting here, July one, year 2005.

00:12
Forty-seven years ago, I see different things up there. Everything quiet. Maybe once in a while you see a plane go through. And there’s nothing here. Nice and peace.

00:30
And I was in here, you know. Today is July one. This land at Snaring Hill, highways all around it; west, northwest, and south, northeast. And I’m straight west from Lady[fern], that Snaring Hill [area], now.
And today, forty-seven years ago, seems, seems not too long. Talk just what we see here. They turned everything upside-down. All these thing we see. Nothing left.

And [once] they finish on top of this earth, they start under it. They’re gonna’ fly from Alaska, they’re gonna’ take a big pipeline, right to Chicago somewhere.

All this, even this beside me here, oil well, is gonna’ go to Chicago. ‘Cause uh, all these little ones [oil wells] join together, they’re gonna’ empty under [the land], you know. That’s where the money is.

They take it under from our back, and they take ‘em to Chicago. After they finish everything, what about these girls? They’re growing. Now look, they help us in here [as video crew]. It’s for them I talk.

After they get everything, empty this under [under the ground]. Some of them already got enough money, too much money; they just go to Hawaii or elsewhere. They just live nice life.

And us, in little reserves, still struggling. What about these younger ones, and my age, maybe thirties? Be nothing left. Everything, come highways through.

No gas. If then we buy, these younger ones growing up, buy gas; maybe be five dollars a gallon, a liter! They take it now, you know. Forty-seven years ago, I was here; look what, what happened now.

They open our eyes. Then uh, that’s a real thing, you know. Then uh, I think for the future. It’s starting heading that way, that’s why we gotta’ put the brakes. Stay there, hold ‘em back.
3:27
We gotta’ negotiate it, everything. Tell them what we want and then, you know, then everything will come in place. Where the big space there [at Doig’s Cultural and Administrative Centre], you know, some good ones [leaders], falling in place like that, all become one. That’s what, that’s what I want.

3:48
Before, uh. Us Native people are forgiving people. What people do to us, we, we don’t care. We pray for them, we just keep going. ‘Till now, they open our eyes. These younger people will, will live. It is for them I talk. I am only Grade Three, but I can talk.

4:19
For end of story.
TOMMY ATTACHIE AT SWEENEY CREEK,
GAAYE’A’S “PRAIRIE CHICKEN SONG”
© Doig River First Nation, 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: Tommy Attachie remembers Dane-zaa people and Dreamers gathering at Sweeney Creek. He tells the story of the Dreamer Gaaye’aa, dreaming the “Prairie Chicken Song” at Sweeney Creek.

CATALOG NO.: DZVMDVCM-7-08-05-1of1

RECORDED BY: Youth Documentation Team: Brittany Brinkworth, Charmayne Brinkworth, Starr Acko. VMC Mentors: Kate Hennessy, Peter Biella, Pat Moore, Amber Ridington, Julia Miller

TRANSLATED BY: Billy Attachie, Madeline Oker, Margaret Attachie, Eddie Apsassin, Margie Miller, July 2006

DANE-ZAA TRANSCRIPT* BY: Dr. Patrick Moore, Julia Miller, Gabriele Müller, Billy Attachie, and Madeline Oker, July 2006.

* Funding for Dane-zaa transcriptions and translations provided by a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation entitled: “Beaver Knowledge Systems: Documentation of a Canadian First Nation Language from a Place Name Perspective.”

KEY: 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [ ] Indicates translator’s note.

00:01
Dane-zaa Záágé’.
*I’ll speak in the Dane-zaa language.*

00:04
Sę, dane jeh dáágasdaz doh kwadó dóhfch’e, kénasjiich dóhfch’e.
*Ever since I could remember, I sat up behind people [in the saddle on horseback].*

00:12
Júuhje Chuu Dehgas dę wadžeh gwe dane tsédzeh náejich jö Sweeney Creek dane náájiich.
*From Black Water, people used to move down to Sweeney Creek.*
00:19
Dane náejíihé júúhje;
*People were moving back this way;*

00:21
jó yaadóné ghadaajíihé gwadzé?
*they were moving back this way*

00:25
Ch’óné? Zaahgé? ghají dah,
towards Ch’óné? Zaahgé? [Wolf River],

00:27
ę dane néjii.
*that’s where people camped.*

00:29
Ė wats’eh dane chéjii e yii Ole Lake kóh,
*From there, people moved again, through Ole Lake,*

00:34
ę Moose Creek wats’eh Cecil Lake kóh.
*and from Moose Creek, through to Cecil Lake.*

00:37
Gwe dane wats’eh dóhché ṣoŋge náájiich. Kénasjiíh.
*I remember people always used to travelled around that way.*

00:42
Tódóhchédóhjíí, jii *highway* háá tódóhchédó aadlaa’?
*This highway was made a long time ago.*

00:47
Ii aadzéh jii *wagon trail* alé áádadzé.
*Before that, it was a wagon trail.*
And then finally, the highway was built. I remember that.

They call this the Hines Creek Road.

Another one [road] was built before that.

It must have been at that time that the bush road they call the McCarty Line was made.

It went from here to Hines Creek.

I remember, you used to be able to see a long ways, now you can only see a short distance [because of the trees].

The children were growing up here even before that.

People moved here [to Sweeney Creek] at that time.
01:36
Wagons, everything,

01:38
háá wagons wólę juu.
there were already wagons.

01:41
Jò dane néjih héh.
People moved here at that time.

01:43
Gò yíjéh natǒkwě wólę ts'ěh wats'eh aahte kedaache.
Back there, you could see all the way to that cabin.

01:48
Júúhje šiskatsé zôh gat nachii alę,
The only place where you would see big spruce was on that big hill,

01:52
júúhje juu.
and over here, too.

01:54
E jędząq hadaa naaghaagole dah giyaaʔéda háá,
Whenever they would see a moose walking across over there,

01:57
gii - giits'ě? dadle hé, hadaa ghazéhhelh.
they went toward it, and killed it.

02:00
Jii tl'uk nachii alę menasjiih, tőhchedóh.
I remember this used to be a big prairie, long ago.
02:07
When a person walked down from the hill, they could see all of the tipis standing upright there,

02:14
Charlie Dominic ê séhji.

*the late Charlie Dominic told me.*

02:18
“Guulaa hááwaawoch’eʔ, e juu nááwanéhzhǫ́,” éhjii.

“That's the way it used to be here, now everything has grown up again,” he [Charlie Dominic] said.

02:20
*1970 ii hestlah ii hehnaawaajeh.*

*1970 was the last time he went to see that place with us.*

02:27
Hats'anéʔ yédéh gédzadich, truck éh nahélaa.

*Someone brought us up there by truck, and then we walked around on foot.*

02:31
“Ach’uu wóle,” éhjii.

“It's different now,” he said.

02:33
Got'oh háátl'uk t'uk zóh alé, t'ük hádaaséhk'áse,

*Long ago it was only an open meadow, the grass was this tall,*

02:36
guu dachin dahdaašaʔo.

*and there were trees scattered here and there.*

02:38
Jéyǫ naaghaagol dé háá dzezehhelh.

*When a bull moose was crossing that big opening, we would kill it then.*
Even back then there was a trail here.

When Gaayęq was a Dreamer, he came together with all the other Dreamers here, long ago.

They put everything on this land [people's values] in good order.

Even people coming from far away they would enlighten [about how to be good].

Even people who were already living well.

He still wanted to tell them about how to live.

He moved around like that. Gaayęq and his wife must have camped together here,

down by the creek; maybe he camped here.

Right where the prairie chickens were dancing, that's where he set up camp.
03:24
Háá guushin Nahhatáá? tš’ęh,
*Those songs came from God,*

03:29
háá só juuhji ts’ęʔ edaawajííh kaa.
*they must have been for us to learn from today.*

03:33
Nedahe dah wesats wageʔ neghanedah,
*They camped right where the chickens usually danced,*

03:37
ε hátléť’oh, hátléť’oh, aajen.
*And in the morning, in the morning, he sang.*

03:41
Ii nedahe yínę? háádęʔq.
*He brought out that prairie chicken song.*

03:45
“E dats’égęʔ tš’ęʔ ii dahwesadze wats’ęyaah,” éhjii.
*“Go to where the chickens are dancing,” he told his wife.*

03:50
Háá ε wats’ęʔ yaadeh,
*When she got there,*

03:52
ε neyaađeh, hájé yegáah naadelh yegáah naadelh.
*when she got there, the prairie chickens just flocked to her.*

03:56
Ii madezęʔ ii nedahe yínęʔ ejine dahdéht’aadę,
*While her husband was singing that prairie chicken song, she started dancing.*
04:01
Jii makuusjii yiwe laa, haje nadahe nááwadanaaselh.
*The prairie chickens were dancing even under her dress, swirling around and around.*

04:07
Gulaa dane éhjii.
*That’s what people say.*

04:09
Haa guu ghade uu mayiné? daawólę.
*Even the animals had their own song.*

04:12
E nááchesne laa jii nan úujo néghene?q? dane éhjii.
*The Dreamers were the ones who set this land straight, people said.*

04:18
Hé sadzę dane kéyah, gwats’ę? dane hóhch’e zóh háách’ęh.
*Even though people were living far away, he would travel great distances to reach them.*

04:24
Háá lhígé yask’ih,
*Then one time in winter,*

04:25
wachis t’óh
during the time of stories,

04:27
lhígé shin háádę?q.
*he brought out a song that had come to him.*

04:31
“Jii nan k’eh doyáá ts’ę?,
“This place where you go to [each summer],
gots’ę? laa nan k’eh doyáa ts’ę waloh ts’ę gwats’ę? laa; ajuu wawọdáa sę,” éhjii.

you will go to its end; maybe you will die there,” they said.

“E júuhje guutaah aja wawọdáa sę, e júuhje dane nááchę ehlhene taahdzę? ajuu awọdáa sę,”

“You will die over there amongst the people and the Dreamers.’

people told me,

dane séhjii,

that’s what people told me,” he said.

II éh, háá ii de sò Dane-ža nanę? k’eh gúlé je sò ehđę núúdlįi.

There, that place must be on Dane-ža land, maybe at that place [Montney Prairie].

People really prayed.

Those Dreamers came together

and really prayed.

“It must be at Sunéch’ii Kéch’iige [Dance Grounds at Montney Prairie] [where you will die],”
05:17
wéhjii dane yéhjii.
that's what they told him.

05:19
Ii shin, juuhdzenéh háágaan mèhts'ajin.
We still sing that song today.

05:23
Edę dane čéné daayaahéh,
People met there,

05:27
dane ahte ghadaa ?úúj.
and they were all happy.

05:30
Ii só dane ahdaaghajíih ṣii shin ké?aadlaa?.
Those people must have known about that song.

05:34
Haje hááje every year hóhch'ii, háá waloh ts'ę?
Each summer he did that [went there], towards the end.

05:41
Nááchesne ghëtł́q dóh,
When there were still many Dreamers, [he said],

05:44
“Ajuulii,
“There will be nothing,” [no Dreamers]

05:47
nááchesne,“ natłq dé.
[he told them that] when the Dreamers were still numerous.
05:50
“Ǫkechine nahhagáh haawúúʔázé,
“Only two Dreamers will be with us,

05:53
nááchesne wajwe éhsé,” ghajii.
_When the other Dreamers are gone,” they said._

05:57
Ii ghajii éh.
_They predicted that._

06:00
“Howá ęhdę́ sô,” Oker sô tśéʔ éjhii
“It must be there,” he said to Oker.

06:07
“Satl’oh wawqdaa sè,” éjhii
“After me, you will look after the people,” he said.

06:10
“Ęhdę́ sô sachę́h o edaawajíh ḥ,”
“I must have known about it even while I was sleeping,” he said.

06:13
Aje kéhwolę kuujii, ii adaajii.
_He told him that he had doubted whether his dream was real._

06:17
Ii Charlie Yahey, Oker _fifties_ aja ghadah.
_Charlie Yahey and Oker were both Dreamers; Oker died in the 1950s._

06:22
Charlie Yahey _seventies_ iñ 1970 watl’o,
_Charlie Yahey died after 1970,_
Seventy-four godah enüúdlìi.
around 1974.

Aja ghadah, ii juu.
He died, too.

Ii ghadah! Nááchesne natľ’q nejvé jááʔ.
Look at that! Lots of those Dreamers died.

Then, two of them were left.

There was only one at the end.

Long ago the Dreamers talked about this time when there would be no Dreamers.

“Still further back, Makenúúnatane and
Makéts'awéswąą were Dreamers,” he said.

There were Dreamers, even way back then.
DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: Tommy Attachie talks about the Dreamer Makéts’awéswąą, who is said to have become a Dreamer at Sweeney Creek after dying for nine days and then coming back to life.

CATALOG NO.: DZVMCDVCAM-7-08-05-1of1

RECORDED BY: Brittany Brinkworth, Charmayne Brinkworth, Robin Acko, Starr Acko, Kate Hennessy, Peter Biella, Pat Moore, Amber Ridington

TRANSLATED BY: Billy Attachie, Madeline Oker, Margaret Attachie, Eddie Apsassin, Margie Miller, July 2006

DANE-ZAA TRANSCRIPT* BY: Dr. Patrick Moore, Julia Miller, Gabriele Müller, Billy Attachie, and Madeline Oker, July 2006.

* Funding for Dane-zaa transcriptions and translations provided by a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation entitled: “Beaver Knowledge Systems: Documentation of a Canadian First Nation Language from a Place Name Perspective.”

KEY: 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [ ] Indicates translator’s note.

00:00
Júúhje lhígé náçehę, 
*There was a Dreamer over this way,*

00:03
Makéts’awéswąą laa úúye. 
*who was called Makéts’awéswąą.*

00:08
Dane sô, 
*That man, must have been,*
dane mats'égéwé gaah wóh daaghét'óh sò,
that man must have been setting snares for rabbits with his wife,

when someone shot him.

Eh'úuh ya?óts'ë? déh't'ah,
The bullet went right through him,

Mak'wisje ghaawókó.
making a hole in his jacket.

Eh'úúh ya?óts'ë? déh't'ah.
The bullet went right through him.

Wa?óntë'së? mats'égé
His wife, who was sitting on the other side of him

resetting rabbit snares, was killed instead of him.

Someone killed her.

From then on he [Makéts'awéswäq] was looking for that man.

He kept on like that until the end.
00:40
Neschê kô nááșachê:
He went to sleep and dreamed

00:44
mats'égé? aadzeh yélené?.
that his wife had been that other guy's wife.

00:46
“Nahhaazéhhii? tl’q
“They were going to kill you and afterwards,

00:48
yéhnuujéle dage nawghenho laa,” sô yéhjii.
that woman was to return to him. That's what they had planned to do,” he was told.

00:53
Dane yéhjii.
Someone told him that [in his dream].

00:55
“E mats’égé? kaa mewanaat’áá?.
“What she had planned for you happened to her instead.

Aadzeh mats’égé? yelhê laa.
She had been his wife before.

00:59
Naëlâah nahghaç?q laa,
That bullet was meant for you,

01:02
ajuu laa nagháá laa sô,”
but they didn't hurt you,”
01:04
dane yéhjii.
*somebody told him [in his dream].*

01:06
Ej wadžę sō náádadéšche.
*From there, he started dreaming.*

01:09
Lhígé sō néşchēh; lhédō zōh.
*One time he fell into a really deep sleep.*

01:15
Hájé jō dazōh wawadah
*His chest was only moving slightly*

01:18
ajuu ajije wūújō.
*and he was not breathing very well.*

01:21
Kemaahse sō giyéhdaahge yeʔēhjiighadah;
*They cleaned a place in the bush and looked after him there;*

01:24
gwadōh wawoỳo de.
*they were wise long ago.*

01:26
“Háá áájii kaa juuh tlęžaa ajuu wūújii ēh.”
*“Let’s see what happens, make sure the dogs don’t make any noise,” they said.*

01:30
Tlęžaa we juu sō natlo naaduughadéstl’ọ.
*They muzzled the many dogs that they had.*
01:34
*They kept him alone, attending to him diligently.*

01:36
Èh-gae giiyéjiigihdaa zō̓h.
*One after another, they watched over him.*

01:40
Háá méh ókeghë̇h gheehtl háá lhélōh.
*They spent two nights with him.*

01:43
*Five days méh awajáá?,*
*They spent five days with him,*

01:46
hóchhe zō̓h.
*and that's what happened.*

01:48
È wadjëže sadiiyeh chegeh ach'uu háák'e naagiiyehchiish.
*He lay there for a long time, and carefully they would roll him into a different position.*

01:53
Hóchhe zō̓h só giyéjiighdaa.
*They watched over him like that.*

01:57
Háá ii deh jo zō̓h wawadaah ahte hóchh'ii.
*He was barely alive all that time.*

02:02
Háá lhétōh *eight days awejah.*
*Finally it had been eight days.*
They put him in a good clean place

and there was an old wise man there.

Once in a while, they would sit beside him and look after him.

Nine days had passed like that.

They were sitting there with him

when suddenly,

he started to breathe more strongly.

As they watched him,

he started breathing strongly again.
02:38
Háá ehdę́ wats’eh sṓ iì giiɡááh dėhtsii zōh,
They continued to sit beside him.

02:42
háá guugááh sō jiijigénáánesdaah.
and then he sat up.

02:45
Ii dę́ sō,
And right there,

02:48
guutaah wak’adanetaah úújone sō k’ahtaah.
as he was looking at them, he saw who the good people were.

02:53
Ii wats’eh sō chuu giiyę́koh;
They gave him water to drink;

02:55
juugii dziiwe ehdaachaat ehghatsaaʔish hṓhch’ii.
and they were massaging his ears [to wake him].

03:00
Háá naayadéhch’ę́ hṓhch’ii.
He opened his eyes.

03:02
“Guugááh ts’ejigénaanesdaa dę́h sō.
“I must have sat up again with them then.

03:06
Gṓ wólę́ laa,” sō guuyę́hjii.
It must have been over there,” he told them.
“‘You were barely alive for nine days,’ you said.

From here I floated over there.

I must have just gotten there.

when I saw one Dreamer.

‘A long time has gone by,’

someone told me.

And right then, I started back.

‘Nine days,’ you told me,” [Makéts’awéswäq said].

That Makéts’awéswäq, him too,

he was a Dreamer as well.
03:40
Nine days ajuu ghadah,
He died for nine days,

03:42
ɛ laa juu mayiné? natluu juuhdzenéh ii ts'ajin.
and we still sing many of his songs today.
Did you used to go to Sweeney Creek?

Yeah, Sweeney Creek, there. Every year we go. Um, we stay there long time ’till they make a lot of dry meat. And moose hide. Everybody make moose hide them days.

They help each other. Uh, one hide, four people.— uh, four womens make that one hide. It’s really easy. And it’s fast, too.

And Sweeney Creek they camp there long, long time. And they trade, uh, moccasins to potatoes and stuff like that, from Worsely, those people. And some of them buy it. Yeah, we
camp all over that area. It’s fun.

01:15

[Kate]
So the moccasins are important for making money.

[Margaret]
Yeah, it’s very important to make money, and [adjusting stitches on the moccasin] [Beaver word] … make it little bit, for stretch, so yeah they make lots of moose, uh, they make jackets, and, jackets, and dress. People order them and they make moccasins too.
00:00
My name’s Tom Attachie. I’m a elder from Doig River. And today is, uh. scattered cloud, and a little windy.

00:25
This is the place they call it Alédzé. Some Prophet named Alédzé is buried up this creek somewhere. Up north, this creek run from north. They got a cabin in there, that’s what they call Sam’s Cabin. And today just a little ways up here, you see them trees, that’s where is Doig River.

01:00
They call this place Alédzé. I’m gonna start from Doig. Doig called Taahche.

01:05
And all this, this Doig, they call it Raft River. Hanás Saahgéʔ. Hanás means raft.
A long time ago, my grandma was healthy, all the people. There was no beaver around here. Just around March, some of them leave March. And they went straight north towards that Ring Border. That’s only that area has a lot of muskrat and uh, and uh, a lot of muskrat and beaver. It’s only around this area there is no beaver.

So they went up there. They start with dog team. Soon as started snow melts they use pack dogs. They went over that, that area. Fontas area, and Ring Border, all that area.

Then they trap beaver there until around, around May. And they kill enough beaver and they pack north, and they pack dogs too, and they hit this river, up this river someplace. From up there, from Ring Border they walk all, all day.

And as soon as they hit this river they make a raft. And all them trappers, they make a raft in order to go down. Then they hit the Doig. That’s how these people trap. Every year they do that.

And today we still trap around here, this area. People live here hundreds of years.
E yífíjéh,  
*Long ago,*

00:02

aahte gwadzéʔ šíς nachí,  
*over there, around the big hill,*

00:05

ii waʔéh wayii Lake Post gwe,  
*on this side, around the place they called Lake Post,*
00:08
gwe sō wawach’ęh aahte yās kēhdeh gō kaaghaajęh.
*they looked around, and in the winter they went trapping there.*

00:12
Ę Łuuyaa nāčęł laa Adíshtl’íshe úúzhe.
*Their Dreamer was called Adíshtl’íshe.*

00:17
Mazhiné? natluu ets’ajin.
*We still sing many of his songs.*

00:20
Ę juu daa wōlédah ajuu ghadah;
*He died somewhere around here;*

ę juu wōlédah mats’adé? wōlę.
*his gravesite is somewhere around here.*

00:25
Adíshtl’íshe úúye.
*His name was Adíshtl’íshe.*

00:27
“Asųų ᓂ’eh ᕭeze alę,” yéhjii.
*“That was my uncle, my mother’s brother,” grandma said.*

00:31
E háá ę ajuu ghaadii tľ’oh watl’oh háá,
*After he died, then,*

00:37
dahgene háánesjiilhne,
*others were still living,*
háanesjiilhne,
others survived,

Oker guyaa nááchę alę.
and Oker was their Dreamer.

Ii laa ahał
That’s all.

Oker, Jack Acko juuh yayinę? yaaʔejin,
Jack Acko sang some of Oker’s songs,

ii tsę́h laa guu mayinę? adaadáats’ajiih.
that is how we know some of his songs.

E’ wats’ę́h Blueberry tsę́h juu,
And at Blueberry,

Charlie Yahey guuyaa nááchę.
Charlie Yahey was their Dreamer.

E’ wats’ę́h ahałt’ōh dane ę́htaah hö́he’hę́h.
Back then, all the people were together.

Juune nááchesne dane tséʔ? wadaajich.
Those Dreamers talked to the people.
Jwe wadané? ghaghétłq.  
_There were many people around here._

Jwe laa atane guuatane chish alę jii.  
_Their main pack trail went right through here._

Ęę kulčą ajuu ghade jwekéh séhwajich.  
_That old man who died not too long ago told me stories about this area._

“Ghértłq,” éhjii.  
_“There were lots of people then,” he said._

Jq náághajeh döh adagéh wodehk’aats dę ajuulii ghazehhél dah.  
_When they lived here, and the winter was really cold, they couldn’t kill anything._

Sō gwadžę? júúje Moig Flats wajigé juu ghọ kedetan de;  
_Over there towards Moig Flats, the trail goes down;_  

_Eh édżé taah hadaa aajii sō ghaaghoh._  
_They must have killed the moose that stayed on the hillsides._
01:54
Wadéhk’ats ô,
*Even though it was cold,*

01:56
háá hóchh’ii ghaa guu náághaleh éh,
*they brought back moose meat from the kill,*

02:00
lhó laadeh dah ghaghadah.
*helping each other to survive that way, on and on.*

02:03
Gúúlaa kulça çéhjii.
*That’s what that old man told me.*

02:07
“E jii, jô de sô,
“It must have been here,

02:12
jô gwélé júúje wóliideh *I think jô núúdlîi.*”
*I think right here, or maybe over there.*”

02:17
Şeže Billtâá? yêhjii ç.
*He [Charlie Dominic] was telling Billtâá? [Bill’s dad] about this.*

02:21
“Juüde dajiih lhédôh aajâa?, dajiih.
“He [the Dreamer Adíshtl’íshe] was sick, nearing his end.

02:25
Pine ts’é? sô guu ats’achë hê.
*We stayed home at Petersen’s Crossing.*
We were children then,” he [Charlie Dominic] said.

It must have been in March that Adíshtl'íshe died,

in March, at the time when the snow crusts.

“He is sick,” they told him [they told Charlie Dominic].

“I went over here to him,” he [Charlie Dominic] said.

“I came beside him, he was my mom's brother,” he [Charlie Dominic] told Billtáá [Bill’s dad].

“I did not pick up my snares,” [Adíshtl'íshe told him].

‘I will pick them up quickly and come back right away,’ I said. [Charlie Dominic said].

I came back here, going along one side [of the creek] and then along the other to pick up those snares.
03:05
Háá gwats'ęh ts'adésjiilh,” ēhjii.

_We were coming over this way;” he [Charlie Dominic] said._

03:09
“Haje megááh nets'anejiitl dé,

“When we got to him,"

03:13
ii gwe chele şadaa. Dajiih,” yēhjii.

_he was lying on his side sick,” he [Charlie Dominic] said._

03:24
“‘Gwadzęh yįįįhh nėyaa de gödah nąčt'ěh ēhde.’

“‘You go over there, back the way you came,’ [Adíshtl'ishe said].

03:28
‘Ókech'ii hadaa yaadžę

_‘Two of them a cow and calf’_

03:31
ehde aach'ęh,

_they are there,

03:32
gwadzęh nėyaa atane wągááh.

_beside the trail you came on._

03:35
Gwadah aach'ęh,’ sēhjii’

_They are staying around there,’ he told me [Adíshtl'ishe told Charlie Dominic]._

03:37
‘Ii gö nąčt'ěh úh ii gheghqō ch’e sô,

_‘Go back over there, and after you kill them,’_
03:41
atsán wastṣedze,’ séhjii.
*I'll eat its meat, ’ he said to me [Adíshtl'íshe told Charlie Dominic].

03:45
Gọ taah naadêstl'ah ii hadaa ókech'ií ghiighó,” éhjii.
*I went back there and killed those two moose,” he [Charlie Dominic] said.

03:50
“E guu atsán magááh náániilaa.
“And then I brought the meat back to him.

03:53
Adę hahdeʔ adedziis,” éhjii, “stove k’ih.”
*He cooked for himself on the stove,” he said.

03:58
“Háá wúújǫ adéheh’ii tl’oh wochaa atṣajii.
“He cooked really well for himself and he ate a lot.

04:02
‘Háá jii laa mēh duusháá së’ éhjii eh.’
‘This may be my last meal,’ he [Adíshtl'íshe] said.

04:07
Hájé wúújǫ heh wajich ę háá.
*He talked with us for a really long time.

04:10
Ii haatl'ège núúdlii ajuu ghedah.”
*And sometime during that night he died.” [Charlie Dominic said].
DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: Billy Attachie talks about the Dreamer Nááchįį (Oker) and other Dreamers from Alberta who travelled through this area. Nətl’uk (Osborne River).

CATALOG NO.: DZVMCDVCAM-7-06-05  1 & 2 of 2

RECORDED BY: Youth Documentation Team: Charmayne Brinkworth, Brittany Brinkworth, Starr Acko, Mark Apsassin. VMC Mentors: Amber Ridington, Kate Hennessy, Jillian Ridington, Robin Ridington, Pat Moore.

TRANSLATED BY: Billy Attachie, Madeline Oker, and Eddie Apsassin, July 2006
DANE-ZAA TRANSCRIPT* BY: Dr. Patrick Moore; Julia Colleen Miller, Gabriele Müeller, Billy Attachie, and Madeline Oker, July 2006.
* Funding for Dane-gaa transcriptions and translations provided by a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation entitled: “Beaver Knowledge Systems: Documentation of a Canadian First Nation Language from a Place Name Perspective.”

KEY: 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [     ] Indicates translator’s note.

00:00
Juuhdzenéh, July sixth, 2005.
Today is July sixth, 2005.

00:09
Jǫats’ach’e Nətl’uk ḥe;
We are here at Nətl’uk, [the end of the flat];

00:12
jǫ laa Nətl’uk wúuzhe.
this place is called Nətl’uk.
Long ago, people used to live here, right here.

There were many houses.

The first ones over here lived north of here,

and later on they lived by the creek.

They rebuilt houses over that way lined up, one right after another,

real houses.

And over here, they tore them apart.
People stayed right there during the winter [in a permanent winter camp],

People only lived over here [at this permanent winter camp],

when they were trapping.

I remember,

there was a gravesite,

next to this lake.

Since then it is a burial site.

Long ago, Oker stayed with people over here,
Chief Sagonii juu.

Chief Saccona too.

Ii wats’ęh Charlie Dominic aabaane.

Charlie Dominic and my parents were from here as well.

Háá ghétkì.

There were quite a few of them.

Daahgéne Moose Creek ts’ę? aach’eh.

Some of them lived at Moose Creek.

Moose Creek ts’ę? natlone.

There were many people at Moose Creek.

Gwadzene juu gọ lhéhnáághajeh.

Some of them were living there.

Gọdóts’ęh adááts’ędzé aghadajelh,

From there they went to the store [at Peterson’s Crossing].

ţ ěhk’ęh ghaadaadelh.

following each other along the same trail.

Juu waatl’ọ ajuu tóheh’ę déh Doig ts’ę?;

Not too long ago they made houses at Doig River;
nedōkwâ awîjldaa?,
*they made cabins,*

01:49
go dane nâájeh, ii wats'êh laa.
*and people started to live there, from then on.*

01:54
Yeh Moose Creek jíjuu,
*From Moose Creek,*

01:56
Peterson’s Store ts’ê? zôh dane nônaadich.
*people went back and forth to Peterson's store.*

02:00
Iiyeh Ts’ibe Dané? juu,
*Over there, the Muskeg People,*

02:02
jûûhje aaghach’êh Chinchaga Lake ts’ê?,
*stayed at Chinchaga Lake,*

02:07
Lake Post laa wûûye.
*which was called Lake Post.*

02:09
Hôhjó ajuu yelhêh udazii giiyadê?q.
*But they renamed it.*

02:17
E dane wûûjô nâájeh gwadôh.
People lived well back then.
Dane ohte eht'senáájeh.
*All the people helped each other.*

Dezùu lhénaaghadijé lhéwawajich,
*All the men got together and talked to each other,*

hátłédóh enejii.
*every morning.*

Lhaqé? ghaaduuyaadah,
*Whenever they were going to go somewhere,*

Jedzáá aghadujél dé keh lhéhwawajich.
*they talked about where they were planning to go.*

Ii ts’éguu juu,
The women too,

lhénaaghadiije lhéwawajije.
*gathered together and talked to each other.*

Guu jíje we kaaghajelh gaah we wóñ dadaghéltó.
*They went berry picking together and set rabbit snares one after another.*

Dane ehsii Nahatáá? kuujii.
*Everyone believed in God.*
As long as I can remember,
people prayed.

There were Dreamers;
there were many Dreamers long ago.

People, in the middle of summer,
would get ready for winter.

At Peterson's Crossing,
they all came together.

They gathered together.
Háá iidah Horse Lake gwadané? úúh, Moberly Lake, *People from Horse Lake, Moberly Lake,*

Halfway, Blueberry, *Halfway, Blueberry,*

lhédó lhéghaajilh daawéhşats cheghadliih. *all came together to dance and pray.*

Náách’ene ēhneh náághadaadich. *All the Dreamers came together.*

E natlone nááchë? gwene *And there were many Dreamers*

adaage wúújö cheʔadlii hóqhbiine. *who prayed really hard.*

Qhte chéghenejiilh. *All of them travelled around.*

Dane ajuu Ahhaatááʔ kuujii dane, *People that don’t believe in God,*

ajuu ajuu cheʔaadlii ne wódzeze ghadah. *people who don’t pray, live a long time.*
03: 52
Sō wadeh kēts'ule k'ewa?aach.
*Maybe it is so they can continue to do bad things.*

03:58
E dane úújon' wodzeze ajuu ghadah.
And the good people, they live a very short time.

04:03
Wólê kets'eleh awúudlii ze gülé,
*Maybe before they do something bad,*

04:07
neguudiiche gülé.
*God takes them.*

04:11
Dane ehsíi Nahatáá? kuujii.
*Everyone believes in God.*

04:15
Jii dane che?adlii nááchiine guts'ê? wadaajich.
*These people who prayed, the Dreamers, he [God] spoke to them.*

04:19
Dahhiine nááchene dane dzah k'eh waa?asne adáághajííh.
*Some of the Dreamers knew if people had done something bad.*

04:25
Daahgine, ë jwe jii shin háághadaalh.
*Some of them, they don’t do that; they just bring out songs.*

04:30
E Oker ë dane
*And Oker was the person*
04:36
dane yaats'ë? adóhwajeh ałę.
_that people went to to confess [their sins]._

04:40
Hóhch'ë nááchë ałę.
That was the kind of Dreamer he was.

04:46
Hé wúújọ wadóh.
_Things were really good long ago._

04:48
Ejuu ach’uu wóle.
_But today it is different._

04:51
Dane–dane ajuu lhójeh,
_People–people are not very good,_

04:54
dane ehch'aa dadésk'ëh.
_people go their separate ways._

04:57
Jéháák’ë? dane lhénaajiilaa?
_How will people gather again?_

05:01
Lhédôh dane lhénaajiilaa dé,
_If people really come together again,_

05:05
dane lhéhwajich úúh,
_and if people talked together,
05:08
dane wúújo lhé?aa, ii tl’wah,
*and if they treat each other well, after that,*

05:14
haa ii lôh ts’ë?,
*after all that,*

05:17
wats’ë laa dane lhénéákese.
*people would come back together again.*

05:20
E juu, juu ach’uu wólê,
*But now, now it’s really different,*

05:22
“Së zóh,” dane kuujii.
*people only think about themselves.*

05:26
A hékets’eleh, e juu hágwélaa.
*And it’s getting really bad, that’s the way people are.*

05:29
Ii dë wats’ë? naahhewawasjich.
*That’s all I have to tell you.*
Hello my name is Sam, I’m from Doig. I’m one of the guy who used to, uh, sit with the elders and drumming with the elders ever since I was knee high, ever since I remember.

And this is July 6, year 2005. Today we’re here in Nętl'uk. This is where they call Nętl'uk. Chief Succona used to call this place Nętl'uk. Chief Succona, uh, he have cabins here. Just on the east side about one kilometer. There used to be about four or five cabins in there which is a well location today.

I’m gonna tell you a story about Tsááyaa and Tshiichuk?.
Tsááyaa he was here first, first time. I guess the Ahhaatáá [Creator] put him here on earth to uh, to work with all kinds of living animals, yii nan on this earth.

So one time there was Tsíihchuk. He always, uh, go after Tsíihchuk. Tsíihchuk, they call human hadaa which is moose. They call us moose because, because we are moose to him. He live on people, Tsíihchuk Family.

Long time ago when this, uh, world got made, first time, even animals communicate with, uh, people here on earth. That’s why there was Tsíihchuk family. There was, uh, Nówe family, Nódaa family. Nówe family is kind of short and white. And Nódaa is about in the middle. Between uh, Nódaa family between Tsíihchuk and tall and skinny and Nówe. They are about medium, medium tall, medium size that is the way Nódaa’s family is.

And one time Tsááyaa was walking along this kind of creek, like Osborne here. And then, uh, way up, uh, he spot, uh, Tsíihchuk, uh, canoeing down. Those years I guess people would make canoe, canoe out of a, a hide, any kind of hide they could sew it together, make it big. Then they can make a frame. And then it will become canoe if they, they know what to do.

When Tsááyaa was walking along the creek like this, he spot Tsíihchuk canoeing down. So, there was, uh; There was one big spruce leaning over, over a creek like this. He climbed that, uh, big, big spruce where Tsíihchuk can’t see him. There was so many branches up on top. And then, uh, while he was canoeing down he was just looking good at the water. And then he just slowly is canoeing down, taking his time and, when he uh, when he went under that big spruce, Tsááyaa show himself like this [looks down], so uh, that reflection on the water, the water is kind of still, someplace still like that there [points].

The human reflection right underneath him where, uh, where his canoe is. So there’s a moose, he saw a moose. “There’s hadaa,” he said. He call us moose, hadaa. And then from there, that uh, that reflection, he keep shooting it with his bow and arrow. Each arrow keep floating down. Keep shooting it, and then uh, keep floating down. Pretty soon all, all his arrow float down. And then, uh, from above, uh, he pee on him. He pee on Tsíihchuk so
Tš’iihchuk is very, uh, he’s not smart. He can make a living but he is not smart. He is just uh – Anything you tell him he will do it. That’s the way Tš’iihchuk is.

04:43
So, so he pee on him and then he look at the sky. “Oh, there is no clouds but it is raining on me,” he said. So uh. Pretty soon he can’t hold back any more, that uh, Tsááyaa. He start laughing and then he look. There he is. “You wait right there. I’m gonna go get my arrows.” When he canoed down that Tsááyaa got off and he took off, he escaped.

05:13
That’s the way uh, long time ago, traditional stories go.

05:18
And this is just perfect spot for, uh, for actors in the future. We’re gonna go pick this spot if we gonna have a future, actors from, uh, Dane-zaa people from Doig.

05:32
So, [Beaver words...] that’s the end of the traditional stories. It’s long. It go on forever these stories. But, uh, sometimes I will tell you some more story about these, these, Tš’iihchuk story and then Nówe story which is, uh, wolverine, and then Nódaa. And then, uh, moose. Those kind of stories are long.
So this is where, uh, old Chief Succona used to, used to winter and then, uh, trapping. He used to spend a lot of time up here. He called this place Nêtl’uk. Which means, uh; End Flat. The flat goes all the way up here and then it end not too far from here. The flat ends. That’s why, that’s what he call it, “Flat End,” Nêtl’uk.

So uh, just little ways down from here, about one kilometer, there is one little creek we just crossed up here, uh. They call it, Lhuuge Natlwą́ą [fish many] which means, uh, “Fish Creek.” They call it Fish Creek because years ago a lot of fish in that creek. That’s why they call it Fish Creek.
TOMMY ATTACHIE AT GAT TAH KWÂ
(MONTNEY)
© Doig River First Nation, 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: Tommy Attachie talks about the Dreamer Gaa'yâ at Gat Tah Kwâ, the former Montney Reserve, and about Dane-zaa gatherings at “The Place Where Happiness Dwells” located there.

CATALOG NO.: DZVMCDV-7-08-05-1.

RECORDED BY: Kate Hennessy, 2005.

TRANSCRIPTION: Kate Hennessy and Amber Ridington, 2006.

KEY: 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [     ] Indicates translator’s note.

00:00
And, uh, all the other things, you know, then what they say, today we see. That’s way before us. Back in the 30s. I don’t know when they make this reserve here, but anyway the people live here. Every people live all over places, do trapping and do their living.

And summer time they come all, come in here. And Charlie Lake too. And after Gaa'yâ, the Prophet, come from Regal River, Alberta. Every year he come through Sweeney Creek, Cecil Lake, and come up here. Across that River, where that Fish Creek, Charlie Lake Creek, join that Beatton [River].

00:45
Little bit up there’s an old, main, trail go across that Beatton. That’s where they went across. People are from Doig, they wait for him in Cecil Lake. June 19th, 1922, he was buried here. See he started some time springtime. Started move this way. That’s why he make that Sweeney Creek somewhere. He got that song, Chicken Song, that’s the springtime, around May, I think. Springtime Chicken Dance.

01:31
And, uh, he come through, maybe around May he get up here. And he must be.
I hear grandma said he’s over North Pine somewhere, drumming for people. From Montney people, go up there too. And uh, the mans [men], and whoever come in there, all together maybe three, four days they sang. And he start to move over Montney, went across here somewhere.

And uh, then he keep doing that all them years, every year he come. And finally, uh, he know about it, what’s going to happen to him. He come up here, he went to Montney, and pray for people coming back.

He went– that’s, that’s where he died. Then they buried him here. July 8th today, twenty after one [o’clock], I tell you that story, about Gaayæ, way before, way before I was born. That’s why all these our story, that’s way before I was born, 1943, the war time. But 1922 and more, way more, even two hundred, three hundred years ago, the story still today we talk about it, still the same. It isn’t written or nothing. But just a year, what happened in a place, who died, you know, all these stories just hold this earth. That’s how native people, uh, use it. Live by it.

And uh, while we growing, you know, they tell us about the God. The Creator. And we know. But soon these, back in the ‘60s, start people drinking. All way till ‘70, we are on the street. I am number one. I stay in the street. And that’s when they know, ‘gonna be like that. But after that we know that that’s not for us. And we come back to our culture again and live by it. We are a lot happier. Native people live like that.

Hear stories, traditions, all the other things.
And our before us grandfather, grandmother. And next our dad and mom, and next us. And after generation our granddaughter, our grandson, our oldest daughter, our oldest son. They carry on like that.

But today getting down, a lot of things lost. Even they lost their language, and I just hope, I want to come back to life again. To use our Beaver language, and the Cree use their Cree language. Around in Blueberry [Reserve], there’s, there’s, it is just only straight English.

And whatever we hear these stories, from, he hear from my dad, and I hear from my Dad, or my Aunt Mary Pouce Coupe, and we all hear it good, and today we still remember. We say it to you and who, who want to pick it up. And that’s what I was saying to my family. I say,
“Go to school, hang on to your language, hang on to your tradition way of living, and you be a hundred percent good person.”

01:50
I said, I told her, “If I am gone, you can carry on.” Cheyenne, Ronnie’s daughter– I was in Doig. She tell story about that guy got his eyes in his stomach? She said, “My grandma tell me, tell story like that.” They all sit outside, I guess they make fire. And she tell story, and all them little kids just quiet, Sandra was saying. And I said, “That’s good, that they learn something from what I tell you.” See, we are just carry, from this, that, and all these things. Even today, moose hide making, moccasin sewing, there hardly anybody getting beads.

03:00
And I just think, I hope all the things come back to life, but, it don’t look like the one. The world is getting close. And all this, this reserve, Dane-zaa nanéʔ, it is right here, yíídóne [across river] And that time our, our family our cousins,

03:40
our uncles, aunties, there are lots, and today, look, just me and Tommy. Our Dad and Mom, they’re gone.

03:50
And, and now just me and him, we, and Billy, and Madeleine, and Annie, Margie. So I hope all these writing in the paper, 1920, 1930, forty, fifty. Somebody pick it up, and they can see what was there, and how people were live. It was good, I say, long time people, they are friendly, they are kind, and they always help. They are there for anybody. Anybody’s children. Anybody got no home they say “Come, eat with me. And you are welcome.” That’s how our ancestors used to say.

05:13
It was so good. And I just wish all these young people still hang on to their language, and that way they’ll get somewhere, they believe, and their school. One thing I know, school is very important, and that’s for our kids’ future.
I am Gerry Attachie. I was born in Siphon Creek, Tšii Sooʔaʔa Waʔdeh [rocks located there], 1948, October 29, and grew up down at Petersen’s Crossing.

We there until about ten years, between 1950 to about 60.

And about round 1899 Treaty was signed down at the old Fort. One of my great grandfathers signed the Treaty, put his ‘X’ on it. And what they call “Peace Treaty” they sign the Treaty so the early settlers, the gold miners, wanna go up north to Alaska, Yukon, to look for gold. But they can’t get by here, our people won’t let them go through.

They don’t want anybody around here to go through. So they stopped them and then they took them, I don’t know how long, finally they negotiate and then they signed the Peace Treaty.
And about, around 1916, we, they gave us Montney Reserve. It is about seven miles north of Fort St. John. 18,000 acres.

So we call that “Where’s Happiness Dwells,” gathering, gathering place. So we were there till, between 1916 up to 1945.

And 1940, the oil company they ask for permission to drill around, in IR-172 [Montney]. So our people give them permission to go ahead. And they did. They did, did some drilling.

About that time, in the early 1940s, the government and the people in Fort St. John, they, they want that Montney land, farmers. They thought it’s good for farming, and then our people, First Nation, don’t use it. That’s what they say.

And, but some people that work for the Department of Indian Affairs, they said, “The Indians will be farming one of these days, and in the future they will farm.” But about 1943, ’44, they put a lot of pressure on our Chief Succone, our Chief. They want that land, and then finally 1945 they set a date and then September 20, 1945, the surrender took place down at Petersen’s Crossing, which is ten miles west of here.

Uh, they bring some of the people back from the bush but some were way back, they couldn’t find them. And they brought some people back there at Petersen’s Crossing but not very many. Some were gone. They brought some people in from Prophet River. And I don’t remember what happened. Some of the, according to some of our people they didn’t vote.

Anyway, the land was sold. 18,000 acres for returned soldiers. And today forty-two farmers own the mineral rights in British Columbia. It’s the farmers at Montney. IR-172.
But while we, I grew up down at Petersen’s Crossing, people were talking about what happened to Montney, they thought, reserve.

According to some people, when it was sold 1945, 1946 some of the people came back to reserve. But it was fenced off some places, and they said, “You can’t come back here. It was sold.” And that’s when they know, some of the people know, it was sold, 1945, yes.

About, around 1970, ‘74, I became Councilor. In 1976 I was elected for Chief, for Blueberry and Doig together. That’s when I take it out somehow. I read some books, a book called “Peacemaker” book. And I was looking at that, and then I read a little, a story about Pine View. Pine View reserve, it says, IR-172. They even had a map, parcel, each quarter, and uh.

It says there, the former reserve, Montney, was sold 1945 and then the mineral rights which add to that IR-172 were forgotten, they said. So I thought, so, the people were talking about that. They only had ten dollars for two years, twenty dollars, each person. They call it nan soniiye, money.

Land money, nan soniiye. What happened to nan soniiye, they said. So that’s when I start to look into that more, and then try to communicate with Indian Affairs. And this led to that, and finally, the Indian Agent, Tommy Watson, and I we sat down, and then we set a date, got all the documents out. And then got a lawyer in Fort St. John, Callison. And we run into problems right off the bat.

Lawyers are not cheap, and they don’t do, they got to have money up front, and everything was new to me. I don’t know about, much about law, and lawyers too, you got to have, they have to have retainer, and everything! And we start looking for money.

We finally got the money from a small Band just across the border. And sometimes people could say, you know, “Indians should help one another.” But sometimes, when it comes down to something like this, it’s not like this. It’s different. We struggle, we travel lots.
Finally we got some money to start. 1987 we went to Court.

08:58

We lost. They said we were six months late over limitation. Thirty year Limitation Act which came into BC in 1974, and we run into that, and we run into a rough, pretty redneck Judge, George Addy, his name.

09:23

Uh, we appeal it, before three Judges, in 1992. One was a black Judge named Isaac. These two other whites, white Judge, these white Judge went against us, but the colored guy, Isaac, he said the Indians have a good case here. And so we appeal it to Supreme Court in Canada in 1995, and won it there. We just settle it out of court.

10:14

And with that money we built this hall here, this complex, the rodeo ground, and some of the buildings. And the sad part is, when we start this court case, some of the Elders said they were happy, they said. Finally they want justice done, because they’ve been suffering in the past too long. They pass on.

10:50

But now we’re just looking forward in the future to set up something for our next generation. One thing lacking right now is, start slowly dying off, is our language. But we are fighting that. We try to bring it back. That’s why we brought you people in. The museum here too.

11:19

I hope we don’t lose our language, and I just want to end there. And thank you again, for putting me on this video. Haa guulaa [that’s finished].
DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: Madeline Davis tells about attending a Dreamers’ Dance at Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney) when she was a little girl. She recalls watching the Dreamer Nááchê (John Notseta) showing maps of Heaven to the people who had gathered there to dance, sing, socialize and tell stories. Doig River, 2005.


RECORDED BY: Amy Acko and Amber Ridington

TRANSCRIBED BY: Amber Ridington

KEY: 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [ ] Indicates translator’s note.

00:00
…old reserve, in Montney Reserve a lot of people there too. Plus I can remember, a lot of teepee in there.

00:15
Just those teepee you know like that, you see that across [points to the Doig cultural grounds where teepees are set up]. That kind of, just, just all, just side the creek and across side the creek, I remember that. A lot of people there.

00:33
Other side too, that’s uh. Do you know where’s the Rose, Rose, that Rose’s house at Montney, this side? That - drive straight and a pack trail in there.

00:53
I remember I ride with, uh, my dad. I’m small I remember that. Uh, We ride, we go at that
other people from Blueberry just that side. They got a lot of, a lot of teepee and just all over the place too.

01:15
We went over there, that Tea Dance right in there. I remember and uh. Plus I can remember there, I don’t know when I went back to Montney, that old reserve I don’t know. I remember that once I can, I staying with my grandma and they dance, they hold hand each other. I think come from those people Alberta. Some where they’s coming and there’s Cree, I think a Cree people they singing they own song. They hold each other hand and they dance inside and outside and outside. Three lane outside the dance. I remember that.

02:23
I just remember there, I don’t know, maybe someplace, I don’t know. Just like I am sleeping, I dream, like that, when I was small. I, I remember, after that, uh, that guy from 232, what they call him? Uh. One of them dream about heaven. I can’t remember his name. He’s come to, uh, the Montney. Uh, the - Too many people you can’t put teepee on, you can’t stay in there. Too many people.

03:23
I look at it, I look, uh, uh, I, I remember I look, just people heads all over the place, just around. That guy, he sit in the middle. He do something to a moose hide or something, white one, he write it to heaven for those guys. Nobody up, just everybody sit down and listen to him. You know that’s uh, maybe I think it and. A lot of people way far, he speaking, that people listen all what he say. He, I think from God, God gave him a sound like that. And everybody listen to him, what he say.

04:26
That’s what, uh, my dad said.
TOMMY ATTACHE AT THE DOIG RIVER MUSEUM
“LEARNING TO DRUM AND SING”
© Doig River First Nation, 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: Tommy Attachie talks about growing up in the Hanás Saahgéʔ (Doig River) area and about learning how to drum and sing the Dreamers’ songs. Doig River First Nation Museum, 2005.

CATALOG NO.: DZVMCDV-7-17-05-1of2

RECORDED BY: Kate Hennessy and Amber Ridington, 2005.


KEY: 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [     ] Indicates translator’s note.

00:00
[Kate Hennessy - off camera]
Yeah like, you’re the song keeper. And uh, what does it, how is it important to you? What does it mean for you? What are you doing when you teach those guys how to sing the song?

00:11
[Tommy Attachie]
Just sing it. You know I was raised like that. So, uh, when I was a kid, when they uh, they teach us these things through story. They teach us these things through story. All the rest, the people here, when they’re young they were drumming with these drummers. And one of them there. From there I wanted, I want the, I want that drum. I want to learn.

00:45
I learned from, uh, my dad you know. Then, but that time I didn’t sing I just drum with Tommy Davis Sr. That was uh, when they make Tea Dance. Not tea dance but just play drum, me and Sam we pick it up and we sing along with them.
And after he died you know then uh, Sammy was song leader from there, we catch on. Before these Tea Dance we help them, we sing with them. That was really important for me. Because with that story these Prophets come from, uh, heaven. All these things, that’s why we, we uh, really like that.

Because it never get lost. Nearly get lost. That’s why a lot of guys, you know, then I never song leading until I was singing with people good. And Albert Askoty told me, “You know all the songs. You can sing. You can’t follow people all the time. You know all the songs, go ahead,” he told me. He just drummed with us.

And I start one song I good, another one, another one. That’s when I catch on. And Sammy too song leader. And the rest of them just about. Leo Acko, Robert, Eddy, Brian and Ronnie, Sam and uh, Johnny Askoty. All the rest of them, they know how to sing. Once they start song leader, they can make it. And uh, that’s how it is.
00:00
And uh, through dream they see everything up there. And a pers, good person died, lots of these songs you know the songs give to that person and they dream it, in the morning they sing it. And uh, when they. When the guy died, you know, he give him that song and while they sleeping they hear it. That person started to sing.

00:38
And go. Then, uh, All these things, these people are, is white people, Christian people they preach all over the world. They started work with people. That time all these Prophet too work with the people more ‘til they tell everybody there’s Heaven. Just like these Christian people go all over places. They pray for everything. That’s what Native people is.

01:23
And, uh. That Gaahyæç was from over Alberta get up here come over all, all the way ‘til 1922 I think June, he died. Seems like these, these Christians go all over. And all the Christians go all over the world. Then tell about the lord. And uh. Native people that’s why right across Canada.
02:01
This Tea Dance is ours from uh, from these Prophets around here, in Assumption too. Then the rest of them, uh, other places, other tribes, [United] States or down east or down south, what they believe with their drum. We can’t say they’re wrong. Only Jesus would say, “You’re wrong.” Wrong way. Maybe the way they, they got the gift from God. Got a gift from God. And the way they believe it’s the same god.
**DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS:** In this excerpt from the video *Contact the People* (2001), Chief Gary Oker talks about Dane-zaa drumming traditions and Dreamers' Dances. Doig River First Nation Rodeo and Cultural Grounds.

**ORIGINAL RECORDING:** Excerpt from the video: *Contact the People* ©2001 Doig River First Nation. This collaborative production was Directed by Doig River First Nation member Gary Oker, and produced by videographer Stacy Shaak and ethnographers Robin and Jillian Ridington.

**PLACE OF RECORDING:** Doig River First Nation Cultural Grounds

**ENGLISH TRANSCRIPT:** Kate Hennessy, 2006

**KEY:** 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [ ] Indicates translator’s note.

00:00
The drum is very important in Dane-zaa culture. It’s been around for a long, long time. The, uh, lead singer here Tommy Attachie knows all the traditional songs that goes back four or five hundred years. And we’re glad to, uh, say to you all that we still maintain it and it’s pretty strong within the drummers and the traditional people here.

00:24
[child’s voice]
Did you guys, did you see us spin around?

00:30
[Doig River First Nation Drummers drumming and singing]
[Sam Acko]
If we take all you kids out camping again, you will hear a lot of traditional stories like this…

[01:40]
[singing, footage of Dreamers’ Dance]
00:00
[Chief Gary Oker] It’s a special day… We’ve been working on Treaty Land Entitlement for a long time now, and we’re going to start presenting all the information that we got to the Federal Government and the Provincial Government and they’re here to, uh, to be our guests, so let’s give them a round of applause over here.

00:26
[Drumming and singing a prayer song]

02:26
[Tommy Attachie]

O juu lhiigé Oker hine? wasjin
Then also one, Oker song I will sing, Oker, last prophet, eh.
02:36
[resume drumming and singing]

04:37
[Gary Oker]
\textit{Jii naachij yiné}, when they talk about these Dreamer’s songs that come from the land, that there is two roads, one is the evil road, and one is the good road. And then when we come to a place, where there is only one road, and that road it takes you to heaven. That’s what these songs are all about, is to get ourselves off these two roads, into one road.

\textit{Yíjeh dé, guula},
In the future then, finally;

05:09
That’s why we practice these songs, that’s why we maintain it, and we are being recorded now because we are going to put it on the world wide web for a cultural museum. These things are important for us, as Dane-zaa people. All the young people, you go to have some road to follow. That’s what we’re going to do here. And want to thank you for coming, and being in our community, and get to know the people, talk with them, and uh, hopefully we can be successful in our negotiation to get back our land. Thank you!

05:48
[Tommy Attachie]
\textit{Jii yiné? gweh i'one}
This song fast, that one.

05:50
[Gary Oker]
Okay, one fast one for everybody’s spirit to lift up, then we’re going to eat here.
Making that drum, too, we just about lost it. And then, uh, we lost it for a while, we didn’t know, uh, how to make drums.

And then, uh, my uh, my brother, and uh, Albert Askoty, they are professional drum makers. And then, uh, they know what kind of wood, they know how to cut it.

And then they, they usually tell us how to do it. And then, uh, after, and then I started making, uh, drums, but uh, every, every, uh, every wood I cut, he told me how to cut it this way, this way, but I want to cut it my own way, and then I kept breaking it, breaking it. Pretty soon I give up and sit. Who cares? I’ll just give up. I don’t want to make drum no more.

And then after he passed away, about ten years later, uh, I remember exactly what he told
me. The way to cut it, what kind of wood. And then, after he, he died, ten years later. And then I cut that, the wood, and then I cut it exactly the way he told me to, uh, to do it.

01:14
And then I made a frame. And then I made a drum. And then, that’s ten years later.

[Tommy Attachie]
And you teach me.

[Sammy Acko]
Yeah, yeah.

01:26
That’s how it is, too, we just about lost that, that one, how to make a Dane-zaa drum.

01:32
And then even songs, too, we just about lost it. But we picked it up again. Now there’s a lot of young people are singing, and drumming.

And we start teaching the little ones, too. We run a kids’ Beaver Camp every spring. And then that’s where, uh, we teach those little kids how to drum and sing. Which is really good.

01:58
And this Elder’s Camp is very important to us. Because, uh, all the young people like to go there, camping and then learning. We try to pick everything up again. Like, how we used to live. Before.

That’s all.
And all these Dreamers, uh, that uh. Sam Acko’s dad he sing about eleven songs. And after that he just stop. No more. Then uh, he tell me the story about that you know. Then his father, maybe you call him Azáde. That’s the one I think. Sam’s grandpa. He dream. He’s a strong Prophet. He dream, uh, when he was a young, young, man. Young man, when he was young man just go out in the bush look around, go around in the bush. Then one place in the bush you know he was walking and he hear somebody over there, just a lot of people laughing like that you know.

He run to there but nobody. Just keep, just keep going on. When they got there you know, a little ways over here pretty soon people talk to eachother. Everybody talk, you know laugh. He ran in there. It’s nothing. Finally he was, many times that happen. Finally he was thinking, “I want to see what happen.” And not too far, another place again, people talk to each other. He ran over there. He’s got trees about seven feet tall, or, spruce that. He ran in there you know then he look around allover, nobody. And that one, one spruce there’s a, there’s a paper in there.
Didn’t writing on it or nothing, just piece of paper folded, it was there. He look at that. He don’t know where that paper come from but he put it his pocket. And he went home and he keep it in his pack. Every time people move, where he going to sleep he hang up his pack sack there.

And uh, that keep going on, he keep it, that paper you know. He don’t know where, where, it come from. Finally, uh, one place they are camping, you know, he went to hunt, you know, he put his pack in there, where he sleep, where his home. And one of his brothers he take from there, take it off from there. Take in there you know he see a paper.

Nobody know where he get it from. So he spent, he put it in his pocket. He went to hunt a little ways and two big cow moose, he kill.

Then uh, he, uh, he skin it you know then everything. Real fat moose. And he come back. He put it back in there before he coming back. Exactly where he put it back. Hang them up again. And uh, when he come back, you know, in the morning he was thinking, “Who done this?” That thing is gone, disappeared. And his brother went up there he told him: Yesterday I take it, I went over there, I got two moose. He told him that. And he said he fly back.

Because uh, I don’t tell nobody. I gonna keep it for a while for use, for something important. But that’s you guys fault you flew back he said. It happened though, that story. Aku told me in that tape. And uh, it’s the same guy, Sam’s grandpa [Azáde].
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - FULL BOARD

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Patrick Moore
INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT: UBC/Arts/Anthropology
UBC BREB NUMBER: H07-00574

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other locations where the research will be conducted:
Doig River First Nation Administrative and Cultural Center Blueberry River First Nation Band Hall Private homes, Doig River First Nation Private homes, Blueberry River First Nation

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):
Kate Hennessy

SPONSORING AGENCIES:
N/A

PROJECT TITLE:
Digital Media, Repatriation, and Cultural Revitalization in Northern Athapaskan Communities

REB MEETING DATE: April 26, 2007
CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: April 26, 2008

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Name</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hennessy- research Proposal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>April 1, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent Forms:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennessy- Consent Form</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>April 1, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisements:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennessy- Recruitment poster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>April 1, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennessy-Sample Interview Questions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>April 1, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter of Initial Contact:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennessy- Blueberry River Letter of Support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>May 10, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennessy- Doig River Research Proposal Letter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 1, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Documents:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennessy- Doig River Letter of Support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 14, 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following:

Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Arminee Kazanjian, Associate Chair
Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Associate Chair
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair