

Stories of Our Origins



Student Activity Book

Name: _____

The Old Man with the Otter Medicine

Told by John Blondin

Spring 1994



The Old Man with the Otter Medicine

There was a small group of people who lived on a small fish lake. They had gathered a lot of fish during the fall to make dryfish for the winter. They continued to use their fishnets to catch fish when the winter came.

In the middle of winter they started catching less and less fish. They started to eat up all the dryfish they had caught during the fall. Slowly, the people started to worry that they would not catch enough fish for the whole winter and would starve. The people got together to decide what to do. Someone said: "There is an old man who lives by himself. He has medicine power. Let's go and see what he can do." So that is what they did.

The people went over to see the old man. They told him they were worried about not catching a lot of fish. The old man listened to them. Afterwards he told them, "As a gift for my power, make me a drum. I have otter medicine and I will use my otter medicine to see why you are not catching many fish anymore."

When the people were finished making the drum they gathered around the old man. The old man started singing his medicine song. While he was singing, his spirit transformed into an otter and this otter went into the lake, swimming around to look for fish. The otter did not find any fish at all. The otter decided to go to the far end of the lake, but he could not find any fish there either. The otter swam back to the shore and entered into the body of the old man and the old man stopped singing.

The people around him started asking him questions; "Well, do you see any fish?" The old man looked at them and said, "No, I saw no fish in the lake." The people were desperate. They asked the old man to try again the next day.

The next day the people gathered around the old man again. The old man started to sing his medicine song. His spirit left his body and again became an otter. This time the otter decided to go deep into the deepest part of the lake. There, to the otter's surprise, was a huge hole. At the entrance to the hole there were two large jackfish guarding the entrance.

The otter saw that inside the hole there were thousands and thousands of fish. The otter killed the two jackfish and chased all the fish out of the hole. The otter was really excited. Quickly the otter returned back into the old man. The old man said, "Check your nets! Check your nets!" Everyone was excited. They all went onto the ice to check their nets. They found them full of fish, so full that the nets were melting a hole in the ice! The people were all so happy. Later that night there was a huge feast in honour of the old man who had the otter medicine.

Understanding the Story

1. What happened to the people living by the fish lake in the winter?

2. What did the old man ask the people to make for him?

3. The old man used his medicine to transform into an animal. Which animal did he turn into?

4. At first the old man/otter thought there were no fish in the lake. Finally he found them. Where were the fish all this time and who was guarding them?

5. How do the people in this story show their appreciation for the Old Man with the Otter Medicine?



Other Activities

- What is Medicine Power? Use George Blondin's stories to investigate "e'chon" (eh-choe).

- What sorts of fish could have been in the hole at the bottom of the lake? Make a list.

- List the characteristics of the otter.

- If you could have any Medicine Power, what type would you have? Why?

- List and talk about the different ways of fishing in summer and winter (past and present)

North Slavey Language Activity

Here are the English and North Slavey words for common fish in the NWT.

grayling - t'áe (*ta-eh*)

jackfish - ?óhda (*oh-dah*)

trout - sahba (*sah-bah*)

whitefish - łú (*kloo*)

loche - nòhkwée (*no-kway*)

Match the North Slavey word with the correct fish.

?óhda



t'áe



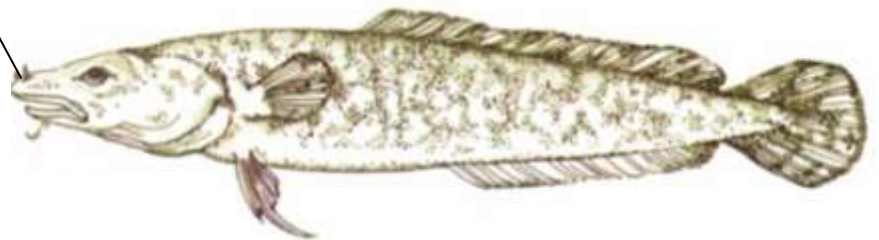
łú



nòhkwée

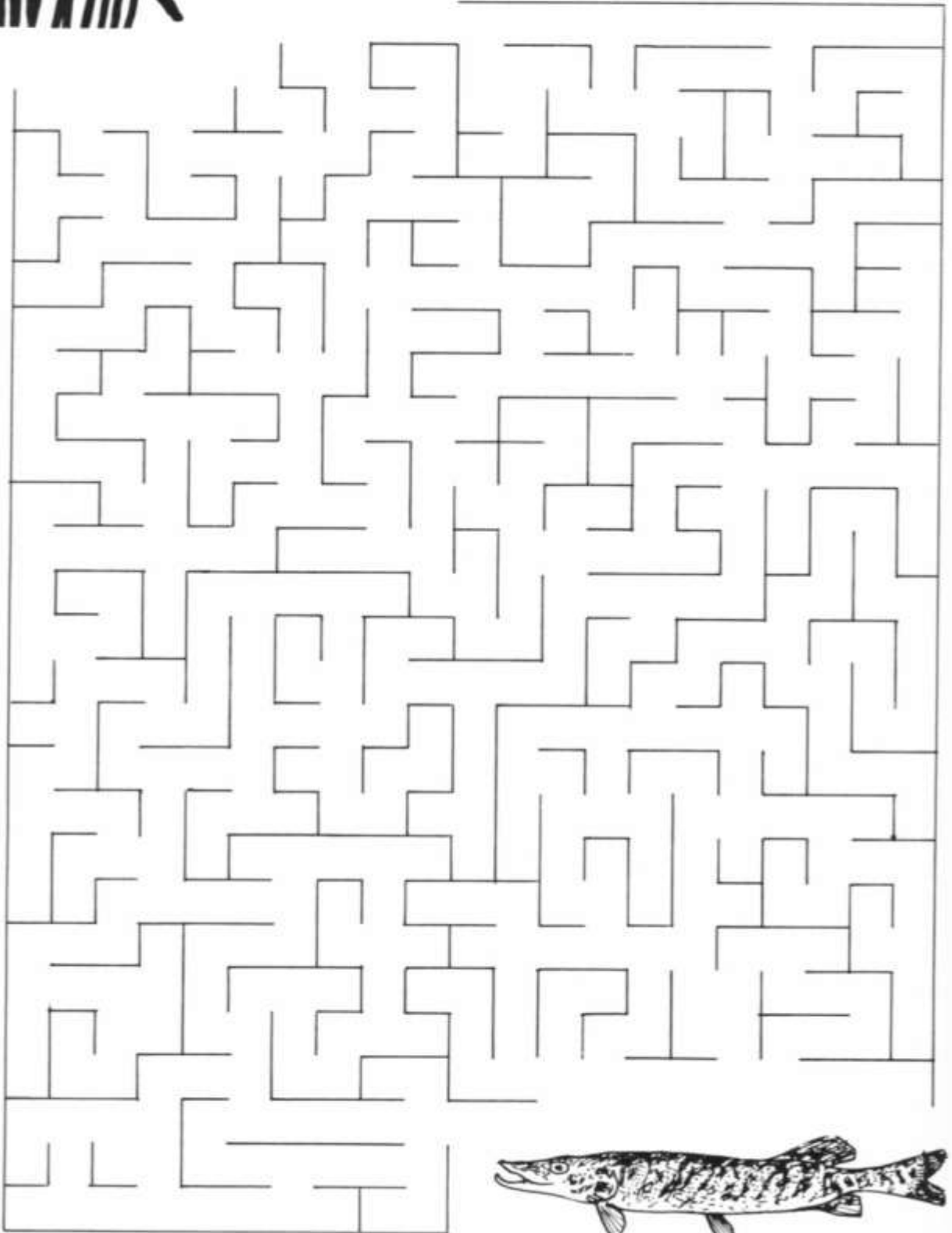


sahba



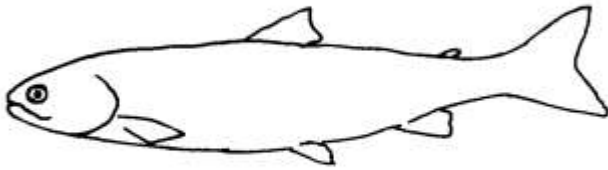


Help the jackfish return to the reeds where it likes to swirl

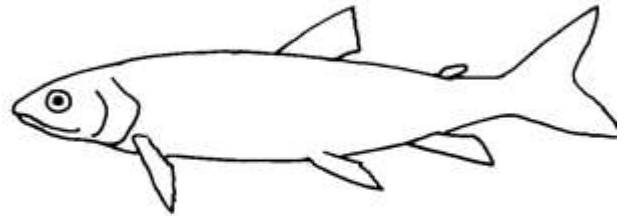


Unscramble the names of the fish.

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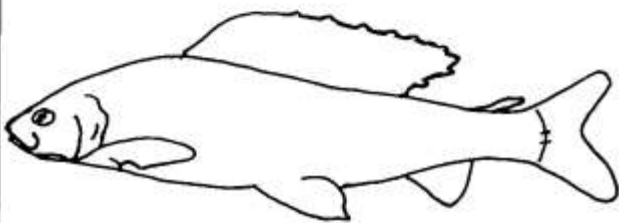
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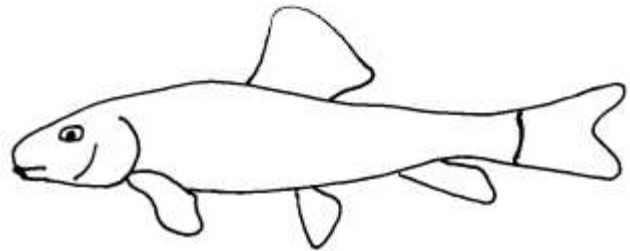
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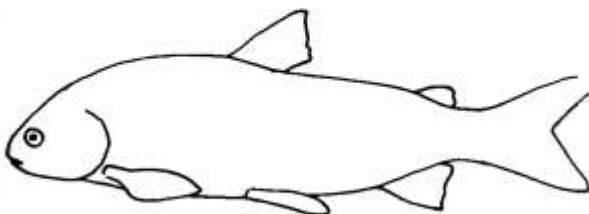
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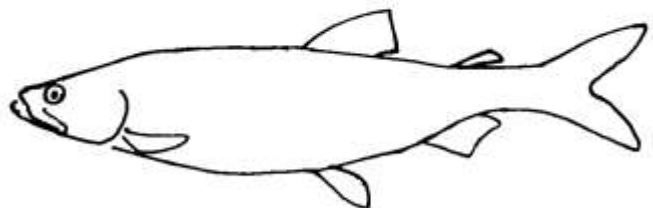
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Pronunciation Guide for “The Old Man with the Otter Medicine” (North Slavey)

ʔəhda – “oh-dah”

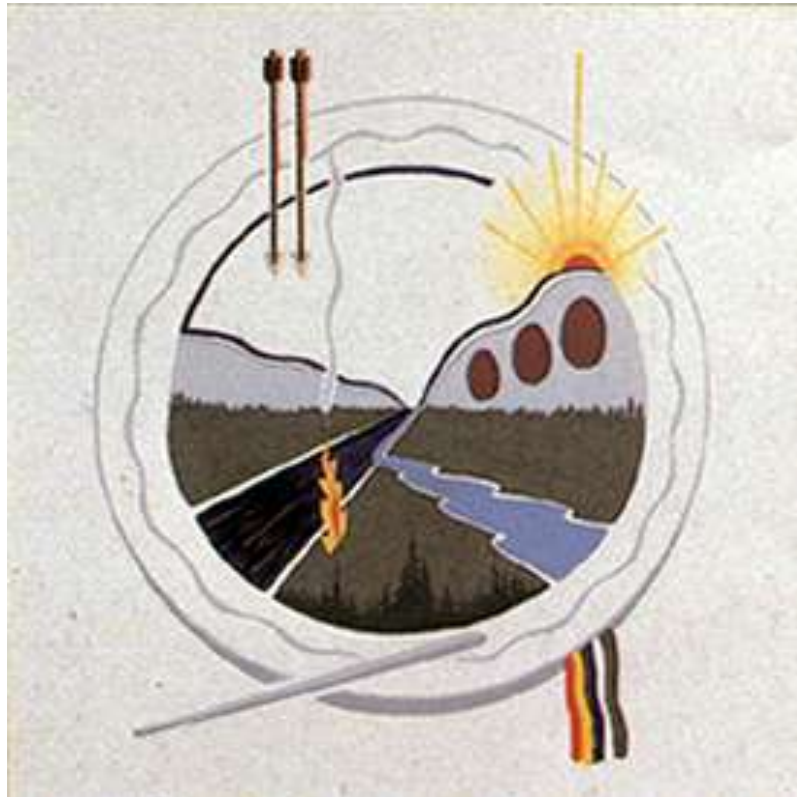
t’áe - “ta-eh”

łú - “kloo”

nəhkwée - “no-kway”

sahba - “sah-bah”

The Dene Logo and the Legend of Yamoria
Told by George Blondin



The Dene Logo and the Legend of Yamoria

“Many years ago, before the whiteman came into this country, the Creator sent a special man, Yamoria, who travelled into our land. He put everything into its rightful place and got rid of whatever was harmful to people. By doing this, he set laws for people and animals to follow. Until this very day, we are still holding onto them.

In the time when Yamoria came, there were large beavers living in **Sahtu (Great Bear Lake)**. People who lived in this area would travel across the lake by canoe to hunt the caribou. The beavers did not like them to travel across the lake so they would get as close as possible to the canoes and splash their tails hoping to tip them over. When Yamoria heard about that, he went to Sahtu and told the people that he would chase the beavers away.

Yamoria started chasing the beavers around the lake. The big beavers immediately went down **Sahtu De (Bear River)** but the younger ones were harder to chase towards the river. During the time that Yamoria was chasing the younger ones around the lake, the bigger beavers had built a dam on the river. That is where the Sahtu De Rapids are to this very day.

Yamoria got the younger ones to head down Sahtu De and then he chased all of them down the river. Near Tulita, at the meeting place of the two rivers, **Sahtu De (Bear River)** and **Dehcho (Mackenzie River)**, Yamoria killed two medium beavers and one small one. The larger ones were still living and continued down our Great River, Dehcho.

After killing the three beavers, he stretched and pegged the three hides on the south face of **Kwetení?aa (Bear Rock Mountain)**. You can see the impression they made on that rock to this very day. Meanwhile, the two large beavers continued to swim down Dehcho, building two more sets of rapids along the way.

From the top of **Kwetení?aa (Bear Rock Mountain)**, Yamoria shot two arrows at the meeting place of the two rivers and said, “as long as this earth shall last, you shall call them Yamoria’s arrows.” Still to this day, you can see two big poles sticking out of the River. Even after each spring, when the ice goes away, there are always two big poles sticking out of the river.

After shooting the two arrows into the river Yamoria brought the beavers that he killed up the Dehcho River about 25 kilometres from the meeting place of the two rivers. There he camped. He cooked the beavers and the grease that had drizzled from the cooking beavers started to burn. Until this day, the fire continues to burn and you can still see it when you pass by this place.

The symbol of the three beaver pelts on **Kwetenı?aa (Bear Rock Mountain)** and the forever-burning fire up-river from that mountain, are signs on the land as a reminder of the teachings of legends. If we remember and live them, if we take the signs set on the land for us as our symbols, we will survive as a nation.”

The five-colour ribbons are for the five tribes of the Dene Nation. The logo was first painted on a traditional Dene drum.

The End

Student Activities

Understanding the Story

1. Where does this story take place? (Name the rivers and lake).

2. Why did the Dene people want Yamoria to come and help them?

3. What landmarks can you see today that are from Yamoria's story with the giant beavers?

4. The ribbon on the Dene logo has five colours, one for each of the 5 Dene tribes. Name the languages spoken for the 5 Dene tribes.

For Discussion

- Why do you think the Dene logo image is on the circle of a drum?
- Discuss why you think this story was chosen to form the basis for the Dene Logo.
- Look at the 9 Dene Laws. Which of the Dene Laws are used in this story?
- Do you think Yamoria was a good person? Why? Why not?

Other Activities

- Use the blank map of the NWT in the back of your booklet. Locate and mark the places talked about in this story. (Great Bear Lake, Bear River, Tulita, Mackenzie/Deh Cho River)
- Colour the Dene logo in your workbook. Label the landmarks on your logo (Bear Rock, Smoking Hills, Dehcho, Sahtu De, 2 arrows).
- Use a circle of brown material to make your own beaver hide stretcher.
- List the characteristics of **Yamoria**, and the **beavers**.

Yamoria

The Beavers

North Slavey Language Activity

Here are 4 of the important places talked about in this story. Read the story again and find the English word for these places.

Kwetenı?aa - _____

Sahtu De - _____

Sahtu - _____

Deh Cho - _____

Scrambled Words

Unscramble these words from the story!

Ehd hco (*hint* – a river) _____

Eabvre (*hint* – an animal) _____

MaYroia (*hint* – hero of the story) _____

Irvre (*hint* – type of water) _____

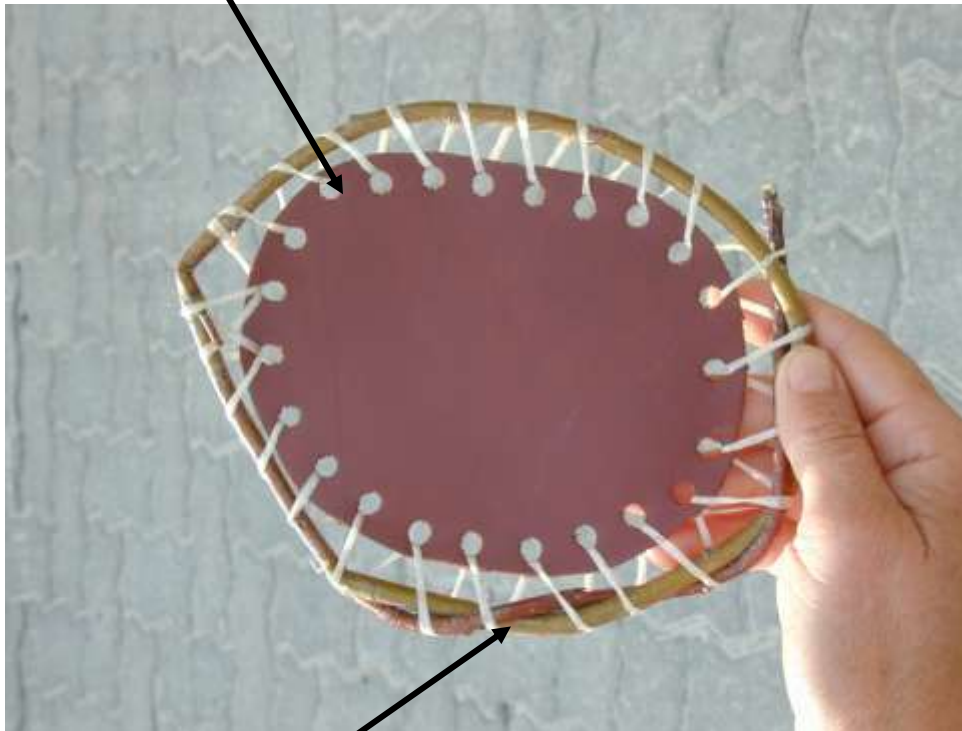
UTilat (*hint* – place) _____

TShau (*hint* – lake) _____

How to make your own Beaver Hide Stretcher!

1. Collect a long, thin piece of green willow (that will bend easily).
2. Wrap the willow around in a circle that is a bit larger than the brown circle of leather.
3. Weave the ends of the willow together so that the willow stays in the shape of a circle.
4. Take some sinew or heavy string and loop the leather to the willow, using the holes in the leather.
5. Now you have your own Beaver Hide Stretcher!

Step 4



Step 3

**Pronunciation Guide for “The Dene Logo
and the Legend of Yamoria” (North Slavey)**

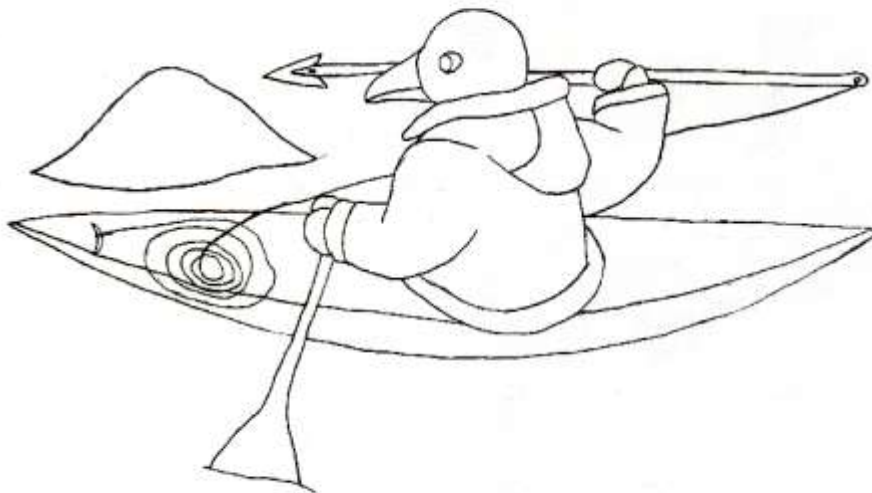
Kwetenıʔaa – “kway-tay-nee-ah”

Sahtu De - “saw-too day”

Sahtu - “saw-too”

Deh Cho – “day-choe”

The Mackenzie Land
(from the book, Elik by Herbert Schwarz)



The Mackenzie Land

(from the book, Elik by Herbert Schwarz)

Once upon a time, near Tuktoyaktuk, there was a large pingo called Ibyuk Pingo. In those days the countryside was not as it is today – with its countless rivers and islands and lakes. The whole place was barren with only a few lakes and rivers in between, and the game was very scarce.

At that time there lived on top of Ibyuk Pingo, an Inuvialuit hunter with his wife, and a young son who was the spirit of the Raven. It happened one day, in the early hours of the morning that the hunter went outside his home to inspect his snares in the bush nearby.

He was greatly surprised to find attached to the tree trunk a large sealskin bag that was filled with water. He was very puzzled by this unexpected appearance of the sealskin bag, as he had never seen it there before. So he went back to his home, woke up his wife, and showed her the sealskin bag attached to the tree trunk.

The next day he went outside again. The sealskin bag was still attached to the trunk, but now it was much bigger and it contained more water. So he talked the matter over with his wife and with this son, who was the spirit of the Raven.

The following morning he went all around to warn the people near him. Surely the unexpected appearance of the sealskin bag filled with water bade them all no good.

But the people only laughed at him and called him a silly old man. “Why should they be afraid of water, living right on top of that great big pingo?” And they ridiculed him and made fun of him.

But the Inuvialuit man was not put off by their ridicule. Each day he went to the bush and hauled up large tree trunks, right to the very top of the pingo where he had his home. And each day as he stepped out of his home, he saw the sealskin bag getting bigger and bigger until it was overflowing with water. So he worked harder than ever, hauling up the big spruce trunks right to the top of the hill. Only his wife and son, who was the spirit of the Raven, helped him with his labour.

He was building a large raft, right on top of the pingo! And the people stood around them, but they would not help them. They watched the man, his wife and his son, hard at their task, and they laughed at their seemingly ridiculous efforts.

In time, the Inuvialuit man had enough tree trunks to build a large raft and tied together the tree trunks with babiche and strips of spruce bark. He fastened his kayak to the raft with rope. Afterwards he made a shelter out of caribou hides in the center of the raft, and he took all his provisions and all his hunting equipment into the shelter.

Each morning the sealskin bag was growing bigger and bigger and it pushed out of its way, all the trees that grew around it. And still, in spite of all his warnings, the people around would not listen to him, and they called him a silly old man. One day, when the raft was finally completed and was perched right on top of the pingo, the Inuvialuit man sent his wife to see an old woman who had an orphan girl in her care. He asked for the orphan girl to come and live in their home. The old woman, who found it hard enough to provide for her own needs, was only too glad to get rid of the orphan girl. So the orphan girl came to live with the Inuvialuit man and his wife and the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven.

And it happened one day that the sealskin bag pushed all the forest out of its way and suddenly it burst. The water that came from it poured forth continuously for days and weeks and months. It just did not stop flowing. Pretty soon, all the land below the pingo was flooded with water, and all the Inuvialuit who used to laugh at the old man perished in the great flood.

Eventually the water reached the very top of Ibyuk pingo, and the Inuvialuit man and his wife and the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, and the orphan girl moved to the shelter in the center of the raft.

They had retreated to the raft just in time, as all the land around them disappeared and they could not see anything else but a vast expanse of water. They stayed on the raft for a long time and there was no sign of the water receding.

But their food was getting low. So one day, the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, asked his father if he could use of the kayak and the hunting equipment. He wanted to get some food and search for some dry land. At first his father was against the idea, but then he let him go.

So the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, set off to explore the great water around him. And he paddled his kayak for many days until one day he saw a small island bobbing up and down in the water. He approached it cautiously but at the very moment that he came to it, the island disappeared under the surface of the water.

So the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, got his harpoon ready and set the lines free. And at the precise moment when the island popped up again from under the water, he let go of his harpoon, and speared the island right in its very top.

Once he had it at the end of his harpoon, he held it firmly with his lead rope so that it would not sink again. And as it happened, the island was the top of a giant pingo!

Once he had the pingo firmly fixed with his lines, the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, effectively stopped the whole island from popping up and down under the water. Eventually some of the water receded and the land reappeared and was now criss-crossed by numerous lakes and rivers. The boy paddled back to Ibyuk Pingo.

There he found his father's raft perched right on top of the pingo. And he also saw many dead whales and fish and dead creatures which were left stranded right on top of the pingo. And the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, married the orphan girl and they had many children.

Their children grew and prospered in that great Mackenzie Land which was now full of rivers and lakes and fish and game of all kind. And the Inuvialuit people hunted the vast herds of caribou in the forests, fished in their great lakes and rivers and hunted seals and whales in the Beaufort Sea.

When the hunting season was over, and the long winter cast its dark shadow over the Arctic, the people delighted in story telling. From one generation to another, these stories and legends were heard all over the Mackenzie Land. As there was no written language among the Inuvialuit, this formed a vital part of their life and maintained the traditions and culture of the people.

The End

Student Activities

Understanding the story

1. Where does this story take place?

2. Name the group of people in this story.

3. List the main characters in this story.

_____, _____, _____, _____

4. What happened to the sealskin bag that was tied to the tree trunk?

5. What types of things reappeared after the boy (Raven spirit) harpooned the island? Make a list of them.

For Discussion

- What other story does this remind you of?
- In the past, people and animals were very close in spirit. In this story, the son in the family is always called, “spirit of the Raven”. If you could/do have the spirit of an animal or bird, which would it be?

Other Activities

- This legend takes place near the present day community of Tuktoyaktuk. Mark this community on the map of the NWT (at the back of your workbook).
- The community name of **Tuktoyaktuk** means “**Looks like a caribou**”. What does the name of your community mean?
- This story takes places on the edge of the Beaufort Sea. Draw a small map of that part of the NWT.
- What is a kayak? Pingo? Babiche? Use each of these vocabulary words in a sentence.

Vocabulary

Match the following words from the story with the correct meanings.

Pingo	A group of Inuit in the Western Arctic
Kayak	String made of animal hide
Raven	A one-man boat used by the Inuit
Inuvialuit	An Inuvialuit community in the Western Arctic
Tuktoyaktuk	A large black bird
Babiche	A hill made of permafrost

Inuvialuit Language Activity

- The Inuvialuktun words for **man, woman, girl, son** and **raven** are:

Angun , arnaq, niviaqsiraq, irniq , tulugaq

Use each Inuvialuktun word in a meaningful sentence.

(angun)

(arnaq)

(niviaqsiraq)

(irniq)

(tulugaq)

- Read the following short paragraph. Now rewrite the paragraph replacing the Inuvialuktun words with English words.

There was a **tulugaq** who lived on the edge of a village. Each day he would watch a tall **angun** go out in his kayak to check his fishnet. Sometimes his **irniq** would also bring his kayak and help check the net. When they got home, they would take the fish to an **arnaq** who would clean the fish with the help of a young **niviaqsiraq**. Each day the **tulugaq** would watch, hoping that he would get a fish too!

Pronunciation Guide for “**The Mackenzie Land**” (Inuvialuktun)

Tuktoyaktuk - “tuk-toy-ak-tuk”

Ibyuk - “ib-ee-yuk”

Inuvialuit – “in-oo-vee-al-oo-eet”

Angun – “ung-un”

Arnaq – “ag-nuk”

Niviaqsiraq – “niv-ee-uk-see-gak”

Irniq – “ig-nik”

Tulugaq – “too-loo-gak”

The Caribou Boy

Told by John Blondin
1993



The Caribou Boy

Told by John Blondin

1993

A little boy was travelling with his parents and grandparents. They were travelling through the bush, carrying all their belongings. At night they set up their camp. During the night, the little boy began to make sounds in his sleep, moaning and groaning. The boy's grandfather, who was a Medicine Man, woke him up and asked him, "What was your dream?" The little boy said that he didn't remember so the grandfather told him to go back to bed.

The next day the family packed up and kept walking, carrying all their supplies. They travelled over the land, walking all day. By nightfall they set up camp at a good spot. After eating, the little boy was put to bed and the same thing happened. The family listened to the boy moaning and groaning. Again, the grandfather woke the boy and asked him "What was your dream?" Again, the boy could not remember and was told to go back to bed.

When the grandfather told the parents that the boy could not remember his dreams, one of them said, "You have medicine, you could do something." So the grandfather took out his drum and started drumming. His spirit left his body and went to the time when the little boy was born and watched the child grow up to the present day. The grandfather was watching the child's life to see if anything might have influenced the little boy to have him make such strange noises. But the grandfather could not find anything. After his spirit had returned to his body, the grandfather told the family members, "I didn't see anything wrong with the little boy from the day he was born." He said he would try again later.

The next day was much the same as the last. After traveling all day, the little boy was sent to bed after dinner. He began moaning and groaning in his sleep. His grandfather put him back to bed after finding that, again, the little boy did not remember his dream. This night, however, the little boy woke up after his family had gone to sleep, put on his winter clothes and walked out into the night.

In the morning, after realizing he was gone, the little boy's family went out after him. The grandfather could tell what time the little boy had left and was able to read nature like a book, so he knew they would have to hurry to catch the boy. The family packed up their camp and set out after the boy, following the tracks in the snow. Before long, two sets of caribou tracks appeared beside the boy's tracks. Eventually, they found his hat, gloves, parka and pants lying in the snow and saw that he was walking barefoot with the caribou. They picked up his clothes as they were walking and were very concerned about what was going on.

The family was worried that the little boy would freeze to death because it was winter and they could no longer find his footprints. All they could see were caribou tracks all over so they decided to climb up a hill and look into the valleys to see if they could see him.

When his family finally found him, the little boy was a long way off with two caribou. The sun was shining in the sky and the little boy's family began waving at him to come back. The little boy turned around and walked to the bottom of the hill. His family could now see that his legs had changed into the form of a caribou.

The little boy began to sing a song and in that song he explained that "a long time ago I was a caribou being, but the spirit is so strong in me I cannot remain a human anymore. So I am going back to being a caribou. I am so grateful to you for being my parents and my grandparents and for that I will give you a gift. If you ever need any caribou, pray to me and I will send you caribou."

As he said that, he turned around and started to walk towards the two caribou and continued to change into an animal. On the horizon a whole herd of caribou was waiting for the Caribou Boy. They were all waiting for their leader who was even now changing back into a caribou – his arms became legs and his head grew huge antlers. Just before heading off over the horizon, the Caribou Boy turned around and gave one last look at his old family, and then he was gone.

Told by John Blondin
Autumn 1993

Understanding the Story

- 1. What made the grandfather think there was something special about the little boy?**

- 2. What was special about the grandfather?**

- 3. The boy left in the middle of the night. Where did he go and how did the family find him?**

- 4. What happened to the little boy at the end of the story?**

For Discussion

- This story shows that people and animals had a very strong relationship in the past. Can you describe it? Has that changed nowadays?
- Why are caribou so important to the Dene?
- The grandfather knew that the little boy had special “medicine”. Can you describe what he means by “medicine”?

Other Activities

- Draw a caribou track in your workbook.








- **Cloth Bag Activity** (see activity sheet). Open the Cloth bag with the photos of items made from caribou. Draw the items, name them in English and North Slavey, and tell what part of the caribou they come from.
- Look at the booklet on Caribou Hunting. Describe 2 ways to hunt caribou without using a gun.

- **Language Activity** (see sheet). Match the North Slavey words with the correct item made from caribou. **Hint:** if you need help, look at the back of the cards in the Cloth Bag.

Cloth Bag Activity

Draw the item	What is it called?		What part of the caribou did it come from? (Hide? Bone? Antler? Muscle?)	
	English word	North Slavey Word		

Language Activity

English Word	Item made from caribou	North Slavey Word
scraper		Ǝchú
mitt		bó
babiche		Ep'jne
rattle		Bebí Ǝshéle hánágoye
awl		tłuhgǝ

Pronunciation Guide for “The Caribou Boy” (North Slavey)

Tłuhgō – “kloo-goh” (babiche)

Bebí Ʒshéle – “beh-bee esh-eh-leh ha-na-go-yeh” (rattle)

Hánágoye

Ep’ıne - “eh-pee-neh” (scraper)

Bó - “boe” (mitt)

Ʒchú - “eh-choo” (awl)

The Hoof Baby

Told by Pierre Judas

Wekweti, 1983



The Hoof Baby

A long time ago, an old woman was living alone among a group of people. In those days, people were always travelling in order to stay close to the caribou. They depended on the caribou for their lives. This particular group of people decided to leave the spot where they were camped and travel on. The old woman was left behind.

All alone and partially blind, the old woman was left in her shelter made from branches with snow piled round it. As she sat quietly by the fire it began to get dark outside. In the quiet of the night she could hear sounds. The sounds were much like that of a baby crying.

Wanting to see what was making these sounds, the old woman crept out of her hut and found many, many caribou tracks. In one of the hoof prints was a very tiny baby boy. The old woman took the baby back to her shelter.

In these days of long ago, people used to kill and eat ravens for food. The woman fed the tiny baby on the powder from the dried liver of a raven. Whenever she went outside she would keep the baby inside her fur coat to keep him warm. She fed and cared for the little boy as well as she could and soon he began to walk.

When the little boy could talk he asked his granny to make him a bow and arrow for hunting. This she did and he kept the bow and arrow by his side.

One night the old woman decided to check on the boy while he was sleeping. He was sleeping in a warm raven feather blanket. When the old woman opened the blanket the boy was not there! Later on that night she checked again and the boy was there, sleeping peacefully.

The next morning the boy told his granny where he had been the night before. "We were playing on the same lake where you found me. Let's go and see what we were playing with." The boy and his granny walked back to the spot he had told her about. When they came to the lake they saw that the little boy had used his new bow and arrow to kill many caribou. They spent the rest of the day cutting up the caribou meat.

The little boy never grew to be very big. He remained very small because he had been born out of a caribou's hoof. The old woman told the boy the story of how she had raised him from the time she found him as a tiny baby lying in the caribou track. She also told the boy stories about his uncle who lived far away from them. As a result of these stories the little boy grew curious and wanted to see where his uncle lived.

Whenever the boy wanted to travel a long way he had the power to change himself into a caribou calf. This he did and off he went to see where his uncle was living. By the time he had travelled that long distance it was dark and all the people were asleep in their huts of branches and snow. As a sign that he had been there, the little boy left a caribou chin stuck on a long stick by the door of the hut. Then he travelled back home.

It was not until the next morning that the uncle noticed the stick by his doorway. When he and his people looked outside they saw caribou tracks leading away from the hut. They were very hungry for caribou meat so they decided to follow the caribou tracks.

When the uncle and his people arrived at the old woman's hut she told them the story of how the little boy had been born out of the hoof of a caribou. She and the boy were living well with a lot of caribou meat to eat. Seeing this, the uncle and his people moved to the spot where the old woman lived.

One day, the little boy told his granny to make him some grease from the fat in between the two sides of the caribou hoof. "If you make a bucket of grease," he said, "don't let my uncle put his finger into it to taste it. My caribou power is very special and must be respected." But before his granny could tell the uncle, he had put his finger right into the grease.

Without even looking at the grease, the boy knew that his uncle had put his finger into it. His caribou power would never be the same. This made the boy very upset and suddenly he grabbed the bark bucket of grease and took off to the moon.

On a clear night, when the moon is full and bright, take a close look at the moon. If you look carefully you can see the little 'hoof baby' with his bucket of grease.

Told by Pierre Judas
Wekweti, 1983

Understanding the story

1. Where did the older woman find the tiny boy?

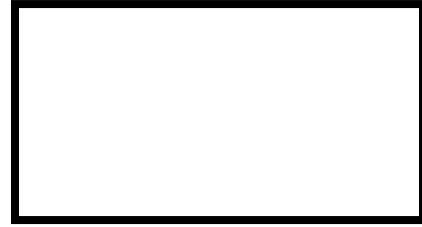
2. What did the woman make as a gift for the boy?

3. What is the other animal mentioned in this story? Name 2 ways it was used.

4. The tiny boy had special powers. Describe his powers.

5. Why did the boy get angry and take the bucket of grease to the moon?

Other Activities



- Draw a caribou track in your book.
- List 4 reasons why caribou have been so important to the Dene people. (4 uses of caribou)
- Look at an image of the moon and try to find another shape (other than the boy and the bucket). Create a story to explain the image you see in the moon.
- How do you make grease? How do you make drymeat? Invite someone from your community to talk about these things.
- This story was told by Pierre Judas from Snare Lake (Wekweti). Locate Wekweti on the map of the NWT at the back of your booklet.

Dogrib Language Activity

Learn these words in **English and Dogrib**:

caribou - ekwò

raven - tatsò

bucket - tò

caribou meat - ekwòkwò

moon - adzezaà

uncle - go?eh

Fill in the blanks with the correct Dogrib word:

The old woman found a tiny boy in the track of the _____.

When the boy was little, the old woman fed him with food from the _____.

The boy wanted a bow and arrow so he could hunt _____.

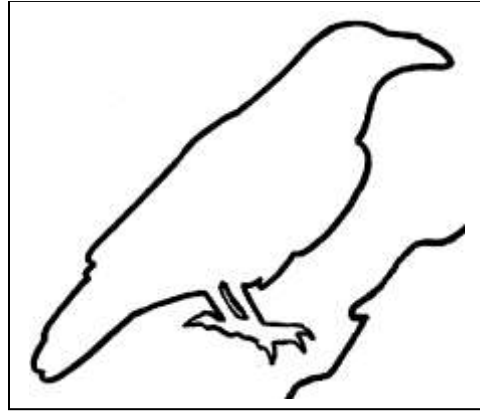
The people were hungry and wanted to eat _____.

The boy's _____ put his finger in the _____ of grease.

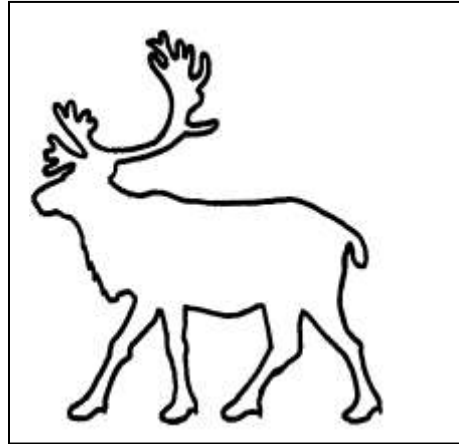
The boy was upset with his uncle and took the bucket of grease to the _____.

Match the Dogrib word on the left, with the correct picture on the right.

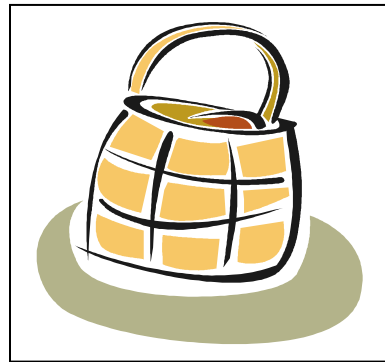
ekwò



adzezaà



tatsò



tò



Pronunciation Guide for “*The Hoof Baby*” (Dogrib)

Wekweti - “weh-kweh-tee”

Ekwò - “eh-kwoe”

Tatsò - “ta-tsoe”

tò - “toe”

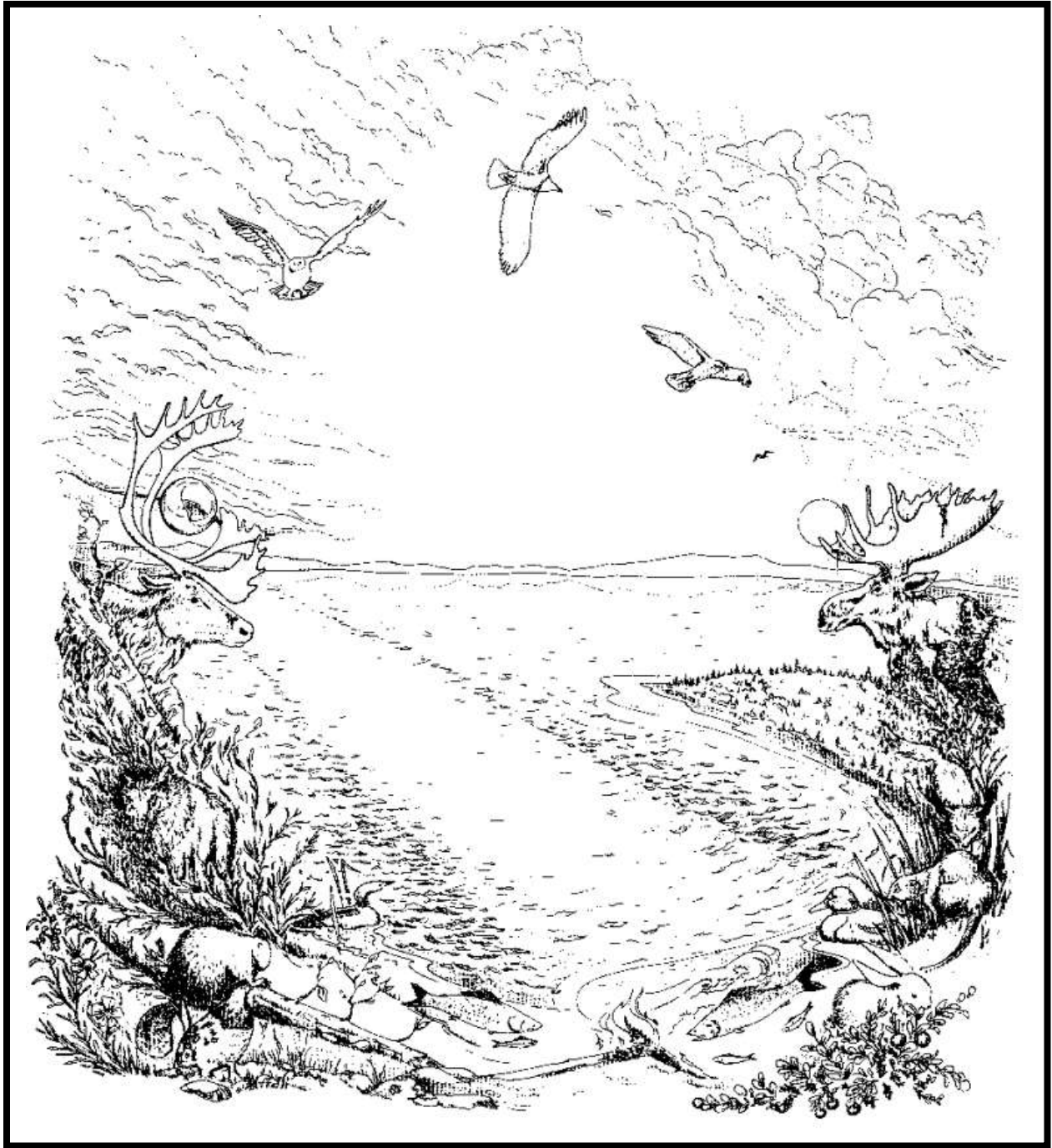
ekwòkwò - “eh-kwoe-woe”

adzəzaà - “ah-dzeh-zah”

goʔeh - “go-eh”

Where Our World Came From

Told by Peter Ross,
Ft. McPherson



Where Our World Came From

Told by Peter Ross

A long time ago, when animals could speak like we do, the earth was all covered with water. There were no hills, no riverbanks, no forests, no fields, only water and sky. All the animals lived on a large raft, including Raven.

It wasn't long before Raven was feeling a little crowded on the raft. He longed to stretch out his legs on dry ground. Now Raven liked to be comfortable and well fed at all times. Raven, you know, was a very wise bird and if he didn't like something, he would think of a way to make things better for himself. "If I had any earth, even a little bit, I would make it grow large enough for all the animals to live on," Raven told everyone.

Of course, all the animals were excited because they missed their old homes in the woods in holes, or riverbanks or in trees. They missed running and playing and stretching their limbs. But who would be brave enough to find some earth for Raven? They all knew deep in the water they could find it – far beneath their safe raft.

Some animals peered over the edge of the raft but no earth could be seen. Finally, Muskrat volunteered to search for a piece of earth. Muskrat remembered his cozy home in the river and thought to himself, "It is true that this is not a river and that I have never seen so much water before but it is water all the same."

Down dove Muskrat, and the water closed over him.

After a long time, Muskrat's good friend Otter said, "I think something has happened. I can dive very well. Let me try." And down dove Otter into the dark water.

But like Muskrat, Otter never returned.

"Let me try," offered Loon. I can stay under water for a long time and travel quickly over a long distance under water. I should be able to find some earth." But like Muskrat and Otter, Loon never returned either.

You would think that the other animals would be afraid to follow Muskrat, Otter and Loon, but they were concerned about what happened to their friends. And so all the good divers and swimmers – the Loon, the Oldsquaw Duck, the Harlequin Duck, the White Wing Scoter, the Goldeneye Duck, the Grebe and the mink went down under the waters and tried to bring back some earth but none of them returned. The other animals feared that their brave friends and drowned. “It’s no use,” they all agreed, hanging their heads.

But Beaver made a last try. Beaver not only was a good swimmer, but he was a hard worker and a clever builder. Now he made sure that he tied a line around his body first so that he could be pulled back up out of the water.

He dove so deep into the water, he almost drowned when he reached the bottom. As he struggled in the water, he clutched some mud from his paws. Beaver knew that when his friends pulled him up, they would find the mud. Sure enough, the mud was still on his paws when his friends pulled poor Beaver out of the water. He had used his last strength to reach the bottom and retrieve the earth and the water had been too much for him. Beaver had given his life to help the other animals. All of them were sad but thankful when they lay their eyes on their good friend.

Now Raven started to work. Carefully, he gathered the mud from Beaver’s paws and formed it into a ball. Then he took his walking stick and ran it through the bit of earth. He planted the stick on the surface of the water. No sooner did the earth touch the water then it began to grow, just as Raven said it would. It grew larger and larger.

When it was big enough to hold everyone, the animals stepped onto it from their raft. How wonderful it was to feel the earth beneath their feet again. They laughed and sang with happiness.

And they never forgot their friends Otter, Muskrat, Beaver and the others who had been so brave for their sakes. They had offered their great skills in swimming to find a home for everyone else.

The small clump of earth that Beaver found soon grew into our beautiful land with its hills and forests and lakes. And even today, Raven’s walking stick still holds up the land. Somewhere, where the Old Crow and Porcupine River meet, you can see it. And if you do, remember this story of how Raven made the earth. And when you play on the land in the summer, remember Beaver and his friends who were so brave and kind.

Understanding the Story

1. List the animals in this story.

2. Who was the first animal to dive into the water?

3. Why were the animals diving into the water one by one?

4. How did Raven get the earth to come back?

5. Peter Ross told this story.

Which community was he from? _____

Which language is spoken there? _____

For Discussion

- Which animal do you think was the bravest and why?
- What is the moral (or message) of this story?
- What was special about the raven in this story?
- What Dene law(s) are used in this story?

Other Activities

1. Ask the students to list all the things they would need to create a world. Can you organize this list into any useful categories?
2. What are the characteristics of the Beaver that are necessary for any difficult task? What qualities do the other animals possess?
3. Use a Field Guide for Birds and find the other types of ducks listed in the story. Make a list of the ducks.
4. Instead of bobbing for apples, ask the students to bob for a baggie of sand at the bottom of the tub. Who can 'dive' down and get the earth?
5. Language Activity – match the Gwich'in word with the English word for each animal in the story.
6. Sequencing – Cut out the 6 sentences at the bottom of the page and glue them in the order they happened in the story, at the top of the page.

Gwich'in and English Animal Names

muskrat - dzan



loon - ts'ałvit



otter – tryuh








raven - deetrin



beaver - tsè'




Match the animal picture with its Gwich'in and English name:

<p>dzan</p>		<p>loon</p>
<p>tryuh</p>	 <p><small>Photo by Hannu Hautala ©1995, 1996, 1997</small></p>	<p>otter</p>
<p>tsè'</p>		<p>beaver</p>
<p>ts'ałvit</p>		<p>muskrat</p>
<p>deetrin</p>		<p>raven</p>

There are many animals and birds in this story. Match the animals and birds on the left with the description on the right!
(the first one is done for you!)

1. Raven e a. A black duck
2. Muskrat _____ b. An animal with a flat tail
3. Beaver _____ c. This bird is an excellent diver
4. Otter _____ d. This animal is small and brown
5. Loon _____ e. This is a large black bird.
6. Scoter (duck) _____ f. This animal has a long tail.

Sequencing Activity – cut out the sentences and glue them in the correct order.

1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.
 The loon dove into the water.	Muskrat dove into the water even though it looked very deep.	Beaver dove down into the water and was able to reach the muddy bottom!
Raven used the mud from the beaver's paws to make the earth. All the animals were happy!	All the animals lived on a huge raft. There was only water and sky around them.	The otter dove into the water to try to find land.

Pronunciation Guide for “Where Our World Came From”(Gwich'in)

Dzan - “dzaan”

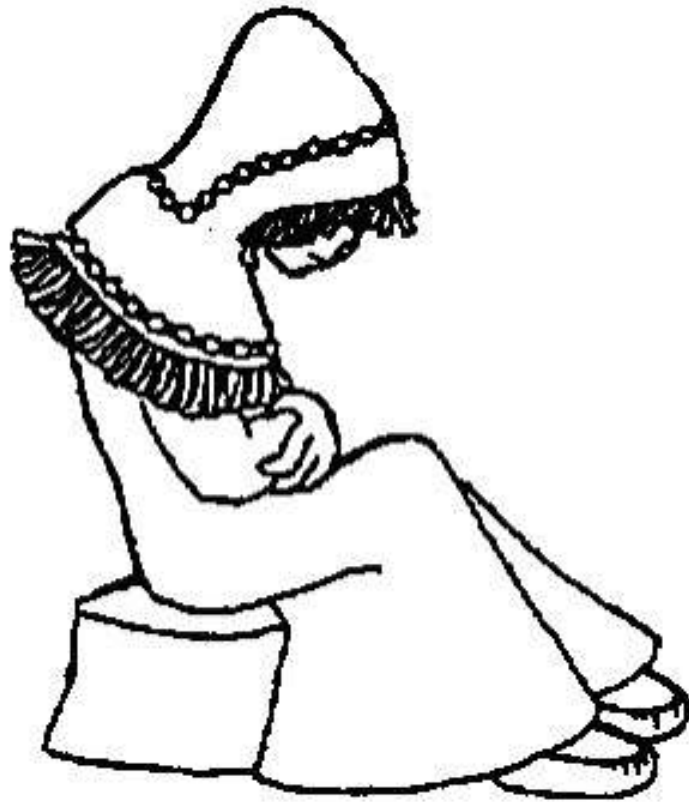
ts'ałvit -“tsil - vit”

tryuh -“truue”

deetrin -“day-trin”

tsè' -“tsay”

Crowbeard Finds Abreeza



Crowbeard Finds Abreeza

At one time, there was a young man called Crowbeard. He lived somewhere along the Upper Liard River, near Fort Nelson, B.C. He was living with his old parents.

One spring day they asked him why he hadn't got together with a young woman. He was then twenty years old, rather late for someone his age. They were concerned for his well-being. The mother said, "We're getting old my son, we cannot take care of you much longer. You should go and look for a wife and have your own family".

Crowbeard said to her that when he was born he saw a woman that was to be his wife. Her name was Abreeza.

They knew that was the work of medicine powers. "Then it is time for you to go looking for her."

They made him a birch bark canoe and off he went in search of his wife. He continued down the Liard River until he reached Echaot'ı̄ Kúé, known today as Fort Liard. He spent the summer there asking around if anyone knew a woman by the name of Abreeza. No one knew of her.

During autumn, he went further down the Liard River until he reached Łíı̄ı̄ Kúé, (Fort Simpson). He found a family there with whom he could stay with for the whole winter long. Crowbeard would help everyone by hunting, trapping, fishing and collecting wood for these people. In the meantime, he would ask around if anyone knew Abreeza in the area. No one had heard of that name.

In the spring of the following year, he paddled down Dehcho, the mighty Mackenzie River, all the way to Tulita. He decided to stay there over the winter and ask around if anyone knew Abreeza. Still, no one knew her.

As Christmas was approaching, people from all over the area would come to Tulita to trade their furs. When each group arrived he would ask them if they heard of a woman called Abreeza.

A group from Sahtu, (Great Bear Lake), had told him that there was a woman by that name who lived in the east arm of Sahtu. He was finally happy to find people who knew that name. When Christmas was over and everyone got their winter supplies, they would leave Tulita to head back home in all directions. Crowbeard decided to go with the people from Sahtu to their main camp at the east arm.

When they arrived, Crowbeard asked a boy to show him the tent of Abreeza. The boy led him in the direction of a tent nearby. When he entered the tent he found the woman just as she was in his dreams.

Upon entering the tent, the woman said, “Where have you been? I have been waiting for you all this time. I was about to give up on you.”

They laughed and hugged each other. Abreeza had the same dream for she was also a medicine woman. She had seen the man who would be her husband, Crowbeard, in her dreams. A lot of young men had asked her to be their wife, but she refused everyone. She knew that one day Crowbeard would appear. And so he did. The following year sometime before November, they had their first son, Karkeye.

The End

By John Blondin (as told by his father George Blondin)

Understanding the Story

1. What kind of story is this?

2. What are the names of the 2 main characters and what is special about each of them?

3. What did Abreeza do in **Łíidlj Kúé** when he stayed there for the winter?

4. Crowbeard finally found Abreeza. Where was she and what group of people was she living with?

5. How did Crowbeard travel during the summer months?

Other Activities

- What are the other names for the following communities or places?

Łíídlıı Kúé _____

Echaot'ıę Kúé _____

Tulita _____

Sahtu _____

Dehcho _____

- Using the NWT map included at the back of your activity book, mark the communities/places in the correct places.
- Using the map and a coloured pencil or pen, trace Crowbeard's journey as he searched for Abreeza.
- Write a postcard from Crowbeard to Abreeza.
- If you could describe Crowbeard in 4 words, what words would you use?

_____, _____, _____,

Communities of the NWT

<u>Traditional Name</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>	<u>English Name</u>	<u>Language</u>
Łíídlıı Kúé	Place where rivers come together	Ft. Simpson	South Slavey
Echaot'ııe Kúé	People from the land of giants place	Ft. Liard	South Slavey
Tulita	Where the waters meet	Ft. Norman	North Slavey

Using the information in the chart, fill in the blanks:

South Slavey is spoken in _____ and _____.

Ft. Liard is the English word for _____.

Tulita means _____ in the North Slavey language.

“People from the land of giants place” is the community of _____.

What language is spoken in the community of Łíídlıı Kúé?

True (T) or False (F)

1. Crowbeard lived near Yellowknife. _____
2. At the beginning of the story, Crowbeard was 20 years old. _____
3. Crowbeard was looking for Abreeza to become his wife. _____
4. Crowbeard travelled to Echaot'ı̄ Kúé in the winter. _____
5. Crowbeard travelled on the Dehcho by birchbark canoe. _____
6. Crowbeard arrived at Tulita just in time for Easter. _____
7. After Crowbeard found Abreeza, they had a son named Karkeye. _____

Pronunciation Guide for “**Crowbeard Finds
Abreeza**” (Slavey)

Echaot’ı̄ę Kúé - “eh-cha-oe-tee koo-eh”

Tulita -“too-lee-tah”

Łíı̄dlı̄ Kúé -“klee-dlee koo-eh”

Sahtu -“saw-too”

Dehcho -“day-choe”