

DOCUMENT A

AN EXCERPT FROM ONE OF CHIEF ISAAC'S SPEECHES

NAME: _____



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Chief Isaac was a well-known Chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (Hän) during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896, when thousands of people migrated to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in homeland. Below is a newspaper clipping from that time which preserves one of Chief Isaac's passionate speeches, given in English, his second language.

"Long time ago before the white man came along, Yukon Indian was happy. Indian had plenty game, no trouble and was fat. White man comes and Indian go out and kill meat to feed him. Indian gives white man clothes to wear and warm him by Indian fire. Byemby ... million white man come and cut down Indian's wood, kill Indian's game, take Indian's gold out of the ground, give Indian nothing. Game all gone, wood all gone, Indian cold and hungry, white man no care."

Source: Gray, C. (2021). *Canada's History*, "Reconsidering the Gold Rush."

www.canadashistory.ca/explore/peace-conflict/reconsidering-the-gold-rush



DOCUMENT B

ALL YUKON BELONG TO MY PAPAS BY CHIEF ISAAC

NAME: _____



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Chief Isaac was a well-known Chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (Hän) during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896, when thousands of people migrated to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in homeland. This made the Hän people a small minority compared to the tens of thousands of newcomers.

A clipping from the *Dawson Daily News*, December 15, 1911, preserves his words.

"All Yukon belong to my papas. All Klondike belong my people. Country now all mine. Long time all mine. Hills all mine; moose all mine; rabbits all mine; gold all mine. White man come and take all my gold. Take millions, take hundreds fifty millions, and blow'em in Seattle. Now Moosehide Injun want Christmas. Game is gone. White man kills all moose and caribou near Dawson, which is owned by Moosehide. Injun everywhere have own hunting grounds. Moosehides hunt up Klondike, up Sixtymile, up Twentymile, but game is all gone. White man kill all."

Source: *Dawson Daily News*, December 15, 1911.

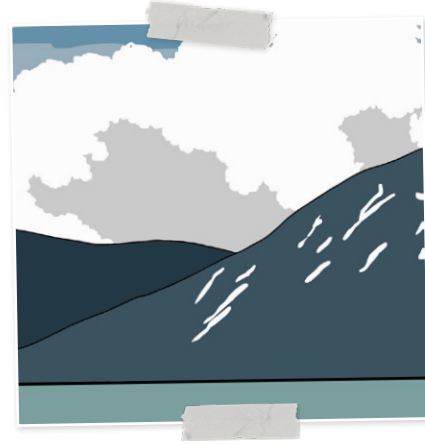
chiefisaac.com/newspaper_articles.html#Dawson_Daily_News_December_15_1911



DOCUMENT C

THE GOLD RUSH MOVE TO MOOSEHIDE

NAME: _____



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Princess Pat Isaac is the daughter of Chief Isaac. Chief Isaac was a well-known Chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (Hän) during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896, when thousands of people migrated to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in homeland. This made the Hän people a small minority compared to the tens of thousands of newcomers.

Chief Isaac resisted the demise of the traditional ways and opposed the destruction of the natural resources, especially the overhunting of caribou herds and the logging of the forests. To get away from the surge of newcomers who were flocking to the area in search of gold, Chief Isaac relocated his people to Moosehide.

WORD BANK

Nugget: a fragment of naturally occurring gold, often found in streams.

AS TOLD BY PRINCESS PAT ISAAC:

"My father was chief at the time of the gold rush. He never see any white people in his life before then. But, he knew they were human beings, and he was friendly with them and welcomed them. And he told his people to be good to them too. So they are, and they good friends.

But my dad didn't want my people to get mixed up with them. Because he thought it would ruin their lives and spoil them, and they'd get drinking and things like that. And so he figured he'll move them down to Moosehide about three miles away from Dawson. He was afraid of alcohol because he saw that they were drinking and things like that, so he thought it wasn't good enough for his people. They live quite simple lives.

Moosehide was a little reserve, I would call it. They moved down there and started to build cabins to live in. The government give them land there so they figured it would be far enough away from Dawson.

White people come to the country and they found **nuggets** all around the place. Very strange, very strange to my father that all those people come for gold. Too much money. The way my dad used to say, they throw the money around, they threw the gold around. There's too much of it."

Source: Isaac, J. (2009). Chief Isaac's People of the River, "Family Stories." chiefisaac.com/family_stories.html



DOCUMENT D

LIFE IN MOOSEHIDE

NAME: _____



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Princess Pat Isaac is the daughter of Chief Isaac. Chief Isaac was a well-known chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (Hän) during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896, when thousands of people migrated to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in homeland. This made the Hän people a small minority compared to the tens of thousands of newcomers. To get away from the surge of people who were flocking to the area in search of gold, Chief Isaac relocated his people to Moosehide, a reserve located just a few kilometers away from Dawson City.

AS TOLD BY PRINCESS PAT ISAAC:

"The Indians, before contact, had their own methods of government or rules of conduct. Records showed Indians continued to do this in Moosehide. Moosehide Indian Council was founded March 1, 1921. The council was elected and records were kept of the meetings. They made law, anyone come to Moosehide with bottle, they put in jail. Also had to tell where he got that booze. No such thing as drunks then. Even when they have dances, everybody laughing, happy. Thats when I was a kid growing up.

Those days white people just gave people any names. All brothers sometimes have different names. My father had only one name, Isaac. It's a wonder the ministers didn't give him more than a first name. His brother named Johnathon Wood, he was a preacher at Moosehide. Another brother is Walter Ben, he was a preacher in Eagle, Alaska."

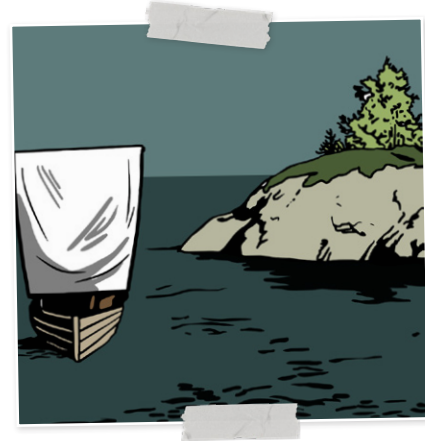
Source: Isaac, J. (2009). Chief Isaac's People of the River, "Family Stories." chiefisaac.com/family_stories.html



DOCUMENT E

CHIEF ISAAC RESISTS

NAME: _____



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

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Chief Isaac resisted the demise of the traditional ways and opposed the destruction of the natural resources, especially the overhunting of caribou herds and the logging of the forests.

WORD BANK

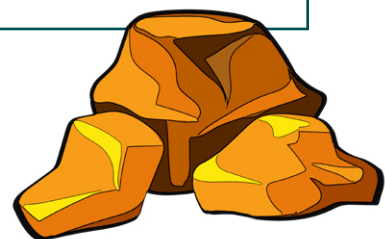
Potlatch: a gift-giving feast or ceremony.

AS TOLD BY PRINCESS PAT ISAAC:

"The Tr'ondek Hewch'in, or Klondike band of Han, came under intense pressure to change during the Klondike gold rush. One change desired by the Canadian Government was abolition of the **potlatch**. In 1884, government amended the Indian Act, making participation in the potlatch a misdemeanor.

Responding to this prohibition, Chief Isaac of Moosehide 'took' many of the Han songs and dances associated with the potlatch and left them with the descendants of relatives and friends who now live in the village of Northway, Tetlin, Tanacross, and Dot Lake. According to stories told by residents of Tanacross, Dot Lake, Tetlin, and Dawson, Chief Isaac gave the songs, dances, and a dance stick called a 'ganhook' or 'ganho' to the people of the upper Tanana region. These songs have been retained in people's memories until today, and some of them are still actively performed."

Source: Isaac, J. (2009). Chief Isaac's People of the River, "Culture and Religion." chiefisaac.com/family_stories.html



DOCUMENT F

BOOK INTERVIEW

NAME: _____



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Frontier Spirit: The Brave Women of the Klondike is a book written by Jennifer Duncan. It offers brief biographies of eight women who played significant roles in Dawson, Yukon Territory, during the Klondike Gold Rush. This excerpt is from the book. The interviewee, Lisa Hutton, is a woman of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in heritage.

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LISA TELLS HOW THE TR'ONDËK HWËCH'IN SAVED THEIR HERITAGE:

“The First Nations people are really resilient to have held on to their culture. Chief Isaac, chief during the Gold Rush, had the foresight to protect the language and dances and songs. He asked our neighbours and relatives in Eagle, Alaska to take them and keep them until the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in were ready to receive them back. The influx of non-Native peoples, the diseases, being removed from their fishing grounds—it didn't kill them. The First Nations people have been an integral part of this city since they moved into town from Moosehide in the 1950s. They played active roles in the community. We make up part of the city. And what Chief Isaac did really saved the First Nations culture here. Almost a hundred years later, the First Nations decided it was time. Following traditional ways, they contacted the people in Alaska and asked what the protocol was to get the songs and dances back. There were certain ceremonies the people in Dawson had to learn, certain rules they had to follow, and once they were ready, they began earning the return of that traditional knowledge. And that's been going on for about ten years now.”

Source: Duncan, J. (2003). *Frontier Spirit: The Brave Women of the Klondike*. Doubleday Canada.

