

TULITA DECEMBER NEWS

Vol. 3 Issue 11: December 4th, 2025



TULITA NEWSLETTER WOULD LIKE YOU TO HAVE A GREAT DAY.

Most of the information in the newsletter is taken from Wikipedia, and/or books mentioned.

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New to Tulita or Just Bored?

We have news for you! This newsletter is out for the people of Tulita and its newcomers who just want to know what is going on in the community or need something to read to pass the time. Have vital information that you want in the next newsletter? Want a correction? Call us at the office at (867) 588 3734 or email tlfc.2018@hotmail.com. Check out our website at www.tulitalandcorp.ca for all the new and past issues.



Events and Announcements.

December 5th, 2025: 65 and Over Christmas Dinner from 1:30PM at the Arena. Please join other elders with a delicious meal and good company and lots of laughs. There will be few surprises for the elders during and after the dinner.

December 6th, 2025: Hamlet of Tulita Christmas Open House. 4PM to 8PM at the Arena. Everyone is welcome! Presents for kids and lots of door prizes.

December 6th, 2025: Tulita Dene Band Bingo. Cards sold from 10:30AM to 12:30PM and Bingo starts at 1pm.

December 7th, 2025: CAWS Christmas Bazaar at the School Gym from 1pm to 4pm. Penny table/food fair/raffle tickets – win a Northwright Air Round Trip! Call 588-4361 for a table or to donate.

December 7th, 2025: Tulita Dene Band Open House. Serving Takeout at 3PM followed by Radio Show @ 4pm. Door prizes, gifts, and food hampers.

December 10-11th, 2025: Tulita Land & Financial Corporation AGM at the Arena from 3-7PM. Snacks provided.

December 18th, 2025: CAWS Christmas Concert.

Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: Elder's Lunch at the Preschool at 2:30pm.



PLEASE CALL ECC FOR BEAR SIGHTING OR FIRE: (867) 588-3441 or 374-0505. Call 811 or (844) 259-1793 for non-emergencies and talk to a registered nurse that are available 24/7 to provide you with confidential advice and support.



COMMUNITY HOURS:

Fire: 588-2222

Health Centre: 588:4251

RCMP: 588-1111

Arena: Mon-Sat. 1pm-9pm.

Aurora College (588-4313): Mon.-Fri. 8:30am-5pm.

Chief Albert Wright School (588-4361): Mon-Fri. 8am-4pm. Closed for summer months.

Cornerstone Oilfield Services Inc. (588-3001): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

ECC (588-3441): Mon.-Fri. 8:30am-5pm.

Fort Norman Metis Land Corp (588-3201): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Gas Station (588-3044): Mon-Fri. 11am-12pm, 2pm-4pm. Sat. 11am-12pm. 1pm-2pm (**For call outs, 867-688-7934 or 867-374-0371**)

Government Service Office (588-3002): Mon-Fri. 1pm-5pm.

Hamlet of Tulita (588-4471): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Harriet Gladue Health Centre (588-4251, or after hours, 374-0004): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Income Support (588-3211): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

IPCA (588-3053): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Mackay Range (588-3051): Mon.-Fri. 9am-5pm.

MYB (588-3048): Mon-Sat. 8am-5pm.

Northern Store (588-4331): Mon-Sat. 10am-6pm.

NWT Power Corp (588-4291): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Parks Canada (588-4884): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Pentecostal Mission (374-0451): Sun. at 11am at the Cultural Centre.

Post Office (588-4331): Mon-Fri. 1:30-5:30pm.

Preschool (588-3401): Mon-Fri. 1pm-3:45pm. Closed for summer months.

Radio Station (588-3233).

RCMP (588-1111): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

RRC (588-4724): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

SRRB (374-4040): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

St. Therese of Avila Church (588-4241): Sunday at 11am.

Two Rivers Hotel (588-3320): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Tulita Airport (588-4555): Mon-Fri. 8:30am-10:30am, 4pm-5:30pm.

Tulita CARS Station (588-3191): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Tulita Dene Band (588-3341): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Tulita District Lands (588-4894): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Tulita Housing (588-4111): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Tulita Land Corp (588-3734): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Wellness Center (588-4271): Mon-Fri. 9am-5pm.

Wright's Convenience (588-4927): 7pm-11pm or check Tulita Buy, Sell, Trade on FB.

RECREATIONAL TIMES (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Fitness Hours: Mon. to Sat. from 1pm to 9pm at the arena.

Crib and card games: Mon. and Wed. at 7pm at the Arena. In the summer, casual card games are at the arbor on clear weather days.

Bingos are usually Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, depending on organization and funds needed. It would be posted at the Northern Store or on-line on Facebook's Tulita Buy, Sell, Trade.

Map of Tulita for newcomers!



There is many places to walk or visit to talk to people. You can walk along the Two Rivers Trail located past the Parks Canada Trailer Building. You can walk through the town, as well as towards Plane Lake Dr to the airport and from Water Intake to the Gas Station. You can walk along the shore, all the way to the bank where the boats load off and where the Barge stops




Birthdays/Anniversary Messages (1st-31st)

(We only add first names for bdays to avoid to much info)



 Happiest birthday to my beautiful granddaughter **Jada** for Dec. 1st.


 Happy Birthday to **Otis** for Dec. 3rd. From the MacCauley's. 


 Happy Birthday to Grandpa **Robert** for Dec. 4th. From Tina's Clan.

 Happy Birthday to my dad **Robert** on Dec. 4th. Love Stacey.

 Happy Birthday to **Robert** for Dec. 4th. From Debbie.






 Happy Birthday to uncle **Richard** for Dec. 6th. From the MacCauley's. 

 Happiest Birthday to our "Triitrii" **Trinity** for Dec. 6th. Mom and dad, and your brother Albert loves you very much, wishing you many more to come, you are a blessing.


 Happy Birthday to **Eric** for Dec. 6th. From Tina and Family.

 Happy Birthday to **Eric** for Dec. 6th. From Stacey.






 Happy Birthday to **Eric** for Dec. 6th. From Debbie.





 Happy Birthday to my sister **Brenda** for Dec. 7th. Thank you for always being there for me. Love ya sis.     From Allan.


 Happy Birthday to **Zoey** for Dec. 7th. From the MacCauley's. 

 To my amazing daughter **Zoey**, happy 6th birthday for Dec. 7th I'm so grateful for every moment with you. Your smile lights up my world, and I can't wait to see all the wonderful



adventures you'll have this year. I love you more than words can say!

 Happy Birthday to my beautiful mom **Jeannie** for Dec. 7th. Wishing you nothing but the best for your special day     and more wondering blessing year's to come... love the kids and Char.


 Happy Birthday to my beautiful sister **Jeannie** for Dec. 7th.    Love Rose Gambler.


 Happy Birthday to son **Mason** for Dec. 8th. Love Janet n family.

 Happy Birthday to **Mason** for Dec. 8th. From the MacCauley's. 


 Happy Birthday to **Reanna** for Dec. 8th. I love you all have the best day  also merry Christmas everyone. From Shannon.


 Happy Birthday to **David** for Dec. 9th. Happy Birthday to a great guy.

 Happy Birthday going out to my brother **Ivan** for Dec. 10th. Thankful for you for being who you are today. Wishing you nothing but the best for you, many more to come, so much love and appreciation for you. Coming from Keesha and kids.

 Happy Birthday going out to our son/brother **Ivan** for Dec. 10th. Wishing u an amazing/blessing day. Lots of love mom, dad n ur sisters.



 Happy Birthday to **Heather** for Dec. 10th. From the MacCauley's. 



 Happy Birthday going out to **Kerri** for Dec. 12th. Love Cheryl n family.



 Happy Birthday to **Kerri** for Dec. 12th. Love Kim, Dean and family.


 Happy Birthday to **Kerri** for Dec. 12th. From Stacey.


 Happy Birthday to **Kerri** for Dec. 12th. From the TLC Staff.




 Happy Birthday to **Crystal** for Dec. 13th. I love you all have the best day  also merry Christmas everyone. From Shannon.


 Happy Birthday to **Xavier** for Dec. 14th. From the MacCauley's. 

 Happy Birthday to **Gavin** for Dec. 14th. From the MacCauley's. 


 Happy Birthday to our babygirl **Hailey** for Dec. 15th. Love Grandma, Grandpa and the family.

 Happiest Happy Birthday to my niece **Miss Hailey** for Dec. 15th. We love ya too much coming from Laim, Alexis and fav auntie Meg.


  Happy Birthday to **HaileyBop** for Dec. 15th. From the MacCauley's. 


 Happy Birthday to **Hailey** for Dec. 15th. From Ethan and Veah.


 Happy Birthday to **Brian** for Dec. 16. From Donna Anderson.

 Birthday Greetings going out to **Darlene** for Dec. 17th. Lots of love from Auntie Caroline and family.

 Happy Birthday to **SherryDean** for Dec. 17th. From the MacCauley's. 


 Happy Birthday to her sister **Sher** for Dec. 17th. Miss you always. Love Zaid.


 Happy Birthday to my daughter **Audrey** for Dec. 17th. Love Suzie.


 Happy Birthday Mommy **Adele** for Dec. 18th. I love you. Love always your favourite, Liana.


 Happy Birthday to **Adele** for Dec. 18th. Love mom, dad, and the family.


 Happy Birthday to **Adele** for Dec. 18th. Love from your favourite Auntie Caroline and family.

 Happy Birthday going out to **Connor** for Dec. 18th. Love Cheryl n family.

 Happy Birthday to my grandson **Connor** for Dec. 18th. Love grandma Cecile and family.



 Happy Birthday to our son **Connor** Dec. 18th. Love mom and dad.

 Happy Birthday to my nephew **Connor** for Dec. 18th. Love Kerri.





 Happy Birthday to my son **Eric** for Dec. 18th. From Wayne Anderz.


 Happy Birthday to **Tianna** for Dec. 19th. Lots of love from Grandma Caroline and family.

 Happy Birthday to **Tianna** for Dec. 19th. We love you both so much   lots of love from Auntie, Aiden, and baby Janet. 


 Happy Birthday to **Willy the 3rd** for Dec. 20th. I love you all have the best day  also merry Christmas everyone. From Shannon.

 Happy Birthday to **Preston** for Dec. 20th. Lots of love from Grandma Caroline and family.


 Happy Birthday to **Preston** for Dec. 20th. We love you both so much   lots of love from Auntie, Aiden, and baby Janet. 

 Happy Birthday to **Joe** for Dec. 20th. Happy Birthday to a great guy.


 Happy Birthday to **Rocky** for Dec. 21st.


 Happy Birthday to **Shania** for Dec. 21st.
From the MacCauley's. ❤️


 Happy Birthday to **Shauna** for Dec. 22nd, lots of love from your favourite Auntie Caroline and family.


 Happy Birthay to **Shauna** for Dec. 22nd. Lots of love and many more to come, from dad, mom and family.


 Happy Birthday auntie Shauna for Dec. 22nd. Lots of love from your niece Liana.


 Happy Birthday to **Uncle Rick** for Dec. 23rd. I love you all have the best day ❤️ also merry Christmas everyone. From Shannon.


 Happy Birthday to **uncle Ricky** for Dec. 23rd. Ash n I love you all. Merry Christmas and happy holidays everyone.

 Happy Birthday to her best friend **Kristianna** for Dec. 24th. Forever blessed to be by your side in this life. LOVE Zaid.


 Happy Birthday to **Kristianna** for Dec. 24th. I love you all have the best day ❤️ also merry Christmas everyone. From Shannon.


 Happy Birthday to **Kristen** for Dec. 25th. I love you all have the best day ❤️ also merry Christmas everyone. From Shannon.


 Happy Birthday to my sister **Kristen** for Dec. 25th. Ash n I love you all. Merry Christmas and happy holidays everyone.


 Happy Birthday to my sis **Kristen** for Dec. 25th. From the Kids and Char.


 Happy Birthday to **David Yallee Jr** for Dec. 25th. From Debbie.


 Happy Birthday to **Capri** for Dec. 25th. I love you all have the best day ❤️ also merry Christmas everyone. From Shannon.

 To our own Christmas **baby Capri** for her first birthday on Dec. 25th, wish you many more to come love you granny n grandpa uncles auntie summer 🍰🥳🥳❤❤❤❤


 DECEMBER 25TH WAS SUCH A BLESSING DAY 🥳 Happiest 1st birthday to **Capri** for Dec. 25th. Out Christmas baby brought so much light into our lives at the right time and my grandma knew she had to be born early to fill our hearts with so much love. ❤️ We love you Lil one 🥳 From: mom & dad. 🥳🍰


 Happy 1st Birthday to auntie pretty pretty **Capriiii** we miss and love you so much, And to everyone that celebrating a birthday in Dec enjoy ur day and many more to come. Mandy, Lee and kiddos 🤍🙏


 Happy 1st birthday to auntie chunky. Auntie and ash loves u too much **Capri** for Dec. 25th.

 Happiest 14teen Birthday to my son **Kingston** for Dec. 27th, we love you forever & always. From: mom & dad. 🥳🍰🥳

 Happy Birthday to **Kingston** for Dec. 27th. Wish you many more bd to come, love granny n grandpa n uncle n auntie ❤❤❤

 Happy Birthday to my **Kingston** for Dec. 27th. Auntie loves you soooo much. Ash n I love you all. Merry Christmas and happy holidays everyone.

 Happy Birthday to **king William** for Dec. 27th. I love you all have the best day ❤️ also merry Christmas everyone. From Shannon.

 Happy 13th Birthday to my daughter **Kixen** for Dec. 27th. ❤️ From Rebecca.

🎂 Happy Birthday to **Kaleko** for Dec. 27th. I love you all have the best day ❤️ also merry Christmas everyone. From Shannon.

🎂 Happy Birthday to my brother **Kyle** for Dec. 27th. Ash n I love you all. Merry Christmas and happy holidays everyone.

🎂 Happy Birthday to **Quinny** for Dec. 27th. I love you all have the best day ❤️ also merry Christmas everyone. From Shannon.

🎂 Happy Birthday to **Quinny** for Dec. 27th. Ash n I love you all. Merry Christmas and happy holidays everyone.

🎂 Happy Birthday to the best auntie in every universe, **Jess** for Dec. 29th. I LOVE you loong time. ❤️ Love Zaid.

🎂 Happy Birthday to **Jessica** for Dec. 29th. From the MacCauley's. ❤️

🎂 A Happy Birthday greeting going out to **Paul** for Dec. 31st. We all miss you, especially AJ,

enjoy your birthday uncle Paul. Love Tum and Family.

🎂 Happy Birthday to my wife **Deanna** and our youngest daughter **Stormi**. I'm blessed to have such an amazing family, and I'm grateful that I get to spend this life with them. ❤️

🎂 Happy Birthday to **Bella**, wish you lots bd to come hope you have fun day love granny n grandpa issac summer ❤️❤️❤️

🎂 Happy Birthday 🎁🎁🎁 everyone. From Donna.

🎂 Happy Birthday to all who's birthdays is in December 🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉 and many more... from Nicole Andrew.



Thu 4 Dec	Fri 5 Dec	Sat 6 Dec	Sun 7 Dec	Mon 8 Dec	Tue 9 Dec	Wed 10 Dec
 -21°C* 30% Chance of flurries	 -28°C A mix of sun and cloud	 -29°C A mix of sun and cloud	 -27°C A mix of sun and cloud	 -28°C A mix of sun and cloud	 -31°C Clear	 -31°C Clear
Tonight	Night	Night	Night	Night	Night	
 -31°C A few clouds	 -32°C Cloudy periods	 -31°C Cloudy periods	 -31°C 30% Chance of flurries	 -35°C Clear	 -35°C Clear	

Funny Stories

The Farmer's Wagon

A farm boy accidentally overturned his wagon, loaded with corn. The farmer who lived nearby heard the noise.

"Hey Clarence!!" the farmer yelled. "Forget your troubles. Come into the house with me and the Mrs., and have a bite to eat. Then I'll help you get the wagon up."

"That's mighty nice of you," Clarence answered, "but I don't think Pa would like me to."

"Aw, come on," the farmer insisted.

"Well okay," the boy finally agreed, and added, "but Pa won't like it."

After a hearty dinner, Willis thanked his host. "I feel a lot better now, but I know Pa is going to be real upset."

"Don't be foolish!" the neighbor said with a smile. "By the way, where is he?"

"Under the wagon."

Air Conditioning Broke

The Catholic Church's air conditioning broke down, so they had to hire a man to crawl around in the ducts and figure out what was wrong. As the man peeked down through one of the vents in the sanctuary, he saw little old Mrs. Murphy kneeling by the altar, apparently saying her rosary.

Since the man was a fundamental Baptist, he thought it'd be funny to try and mess with the lady's mind. In his best authoritative voice, he said, "This is Jesus. Your prayers will be answered."

The little old lady didn't even blink, just kept on saying her prayers. The man decided maybe she didn't hear him, and tried again.

"This is Jesus, the Son of God! Your prayers will be answered!"

Again, she didn't react at all. Mustering up a big breath of air, the man decided to try again. "THIS IS JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD! YOUR PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED!"

The lady looks up and says, "QUIET DOWN! I'M TALKING TO YOUR MOTHER!"

Shark Joke

I once heard about a wealthy Texan who had an impressive ranch in Texas. On his ranch, he had a HUGE floodlit swimming pool and in this swimming pool he kept a SHARK. The rich Texan loved to throw lavish dinner parties and would invite his guests up around the pool afterwards. Then he would say to them, "If any of you will swim a length of this pool then I will give you one of three things: \$10 million, or half of my estate, or the hand of my daughter in marriage."

Well one evening as he was saying this....and he always said before he finished, "but I must warn you before you do so, there is a shark in the pool."

Well one evening as he was saying this, there was a splash, and a man, very nicely dressed, swam the entire length of the pool chased by the shark. He got out of the pool just in time as the shark thudded into the wall.

The Texan said, "Congratulations you are the first person who has ever done that!! Now what would you like? Would you like \$10 million?"

The man gasped, "No thank you."

He said, "Would you like half of my estate?"

The man said, "No thank you."

He said, "Ahh, you want the hand of my daughter in marriage?"

The exasperated man said, "No thank you!"

So the Texan said to him, "Well what do you want?"

He said, "I want the name of the man who pushed me in."

Counting Sheep

Once upon a time, a blonde became so sick of hearing blonde jokes that she had her hair cut and died brown. A few days later, as she was driving around the countryside, she stopped her car to let a flock of sheep pass. Admiring the cute woolly creatures, she said to the shepherd, "If I can guess how many sheep you have, can I take one?"

The shepherd, always the gentleman replied, "Of course."

The blonde thought for a moment and for no discernible reason said, "352."

This being the correct number, the shepherd was, understandable, totally amazed and exclaimed, "You're right! O.K., I'll keep to my end of the deal. Take your pick of my flock."

The blonde carefully considered the entire flock and finally picked one that was by far cuter and more playful than any of the others.

When she was done, the shepherd turned to her and said, "O.K., now I have a proposition for you. If I can guess your true hair color, can I have my dog back?"

Arm Injury

The brilliant lawyer F. E. Smith once defended a bus driver against claims that his negligence had caused injury to a young man's arm.

"Will you please show us how high you can lift your arm now?" Smith asked the plaintiff.

The young man obediently raised his arm to shoulder level; his face contorted with apparent pain.

"Thank you," said Smith. "And now, please, will you show us how high you could lift it before the accident?"

The man's arm shot above his head.

Frazzled Doctor

As soon as I stepped into the urgent-care facility in my hometown, I could see the place was packed with patients. The nurses and doctors all seemed frazzled.

I discovered just how frazzled when a doctor walked into the room, pulled out his examination light, pointed it in my ear, and instructed me, "Say, 'Ah.'"

Colours – Elech'a kareza denidí

English

Naigode

Black

Denjtl'e / Dezene

Blue

Déhtl'ée

Brown

Dehbae

Gray

Dehba / Dehbadze

Green

It'ó

Orange

Dedele-depoi

Pink

Dzé

Purple

Jietú

Red

Dedele

White

Dek'ale

Yellow

Depoi



Mooseskin Boat Trip By: Beryl Gillespie (1981)

This is a brief description of the trip I made this spring to the Mackenzie Mountains of the Northwest Territories (N.W.T.) of Canada. It is no attempt to be a thorough account but only selections in order to convey impressions of the trip.

The purpose of the expedition was to take a Mooseskin boat as the Indians made them from the 1880s into the 1940s. Mooseskin boat means a boat of wooden (spruce) frame covered with raw Mooseskins sewn together, a unique design with a limited distribution. The activities associated with the Indian life in the mountains and the building of the boat were filmed at two different stages for a documentary ½ hour film; sponsorship for this part of the project came mainly from the National Film Board of Canada. The Northern Heritage Museum of Yellowknife, N.W.T. was also a sponsor in order that they would have the boat at the end of the trip for preservation and display at the Museum; only one other of these boats has been preserved. I was contacted by the Museum in hopes that I would be willing to join the group in order to record the daily life in the bush camp and the history and specifics of the building of this most impressive boat. Why me? I am the only person who has recorded Mountain Indian history – through historical documents and by eliciting material from the people themselves 9 and 10 years ago – and I am the author of the Mountain Indian article in the Handbook of North American Indians (Smithsonian Institute, forthcoming). This is a goldfish status in a very small pond.

On May 1, a week after I left home, I was chartered from the native community of Fort Norman on the Mackenzie River to the Indian bush camp 30 miles from the Yukon border on the Keele River. I went by a Porter plane which has a very strong single engine and can land and take off within a very short distance. Besides me there were many pounds of supplies, probably a little over 1,500 pounds, and mainly in weight made up of gasoline barrels that sent off strong fumes throughout the trip; I did not smoke.

It was the most spectacular trip of my life and lasted less than two hours. We did not fly over the snow covered world, we flew through it. The world was still fully frozen

and the snow was white, blue, purple and pink; the mountains looked like endless tasty-freezes without their cones. It also looked very cold and lifeless. We landed on a small lake (only marked on maps of 4 miles per inch) which was 5 miles from the camp. The four men were there to meet the plane with their two snowmobiles with towed moosehide toboggans. There was no introductions which was of no surprise but I recognized the older man, Gabe, and the leader, George, who organized and packed the gear and had me in his toboggan for the trip to camp. Although the world looked frozen from the air, the deep snow was beginning to melt and the men often had to grind through or push the snowmobiles with their heavily laden loads. The way these men know how to drive their snowmobiles is impressive and I quickly gained a respect for these machines and the men using them in this environment.

We reached camp in a little over an hour and immediately I greeted a stunned woman, Vivan (George's wife), an old friend I had known on a couple of trips to the North. No one had told them – Vivian, her aunt Madeline or Gabe – that it was me that was to be with them, only that a white woman was to join the group. They all had been apprehensive for days before, and where the men set up my tent several hundred feet from the main camp demonstrated their concern of having a female stranger amongst them. There was a sense of relief on their part that evening.

I was rather pleased to have my own tent (until the film crew came on May 20th) since I had expected to share a tent of women and children throughout the time; Americans generally like a degree of privacy. The camp consisted of 4 adult men, 3 adult women, a girl teenager, two girls of 8 and 9, a 4 year old boy, and baby "Posh Posh" of 2. Three of the children were George and Vivan's and the other girl was Vivian's sister.

On my arrival that night there were 9 moose hides drying on racks, enough to make the boat. Within an hour, about 7:30 and still very light, George had shot another moose close to camp and everyone went to the kill site, women and children just watching while George did most of the butchering of at least 650 lbs. of animal in less than an hour. As always, he took the head off first and then the rest of the hide, and then worked on the gutting and sectioning; all the time there was steam coming off the moose in the cold air. We "naturally" had fresh, boiled moose ribs for dinner. Ribs are a favored section and

often the first consumed. More on the subject of meat later but I can say it was delicious that first night. But, on returning home, I never wanted to see boiled moose or caribou meat again three times a day or roasted heads, etc. for lunch; they loved it.



It was suggested by George that first night that I should take a 30/30 rifle back to my tent because there were grizzly bears. I dismissed this idea quickly admitting I was no hunter and that the kick of that kind of rifle was beyond my control. I left for my tent around 1:00am that morning (a very normal bedtime for the camp) and there was still a slight lightness in the sky to guide me through sinking snow spots and over willows and stumps. I started a fire in my steel barrel stove and the tent was warm when I got into my bag although sleep did not come easy after a day of such newness and remoteness.

The following day was warm and sunny and it was easy to get acquainted with the basic patterns of activities in camp. I also realized I could be most helpful preparing and cleaning up the meals that were all made in George and Vivian's tent. I cooked and

washed dishes far more during this trip than I ever do at home. That first day was in many ways idyllic; I felt comfortable with those in camp except “Posh Posh” who I considered a deplorable raging beast during the entire trip (his family obviously not in agreement with this viewpoint). I did spend many moments that day viewing in awe the beautiful mountain scenery of which I took far too many photos. That tranquil sensation had its first blow that evening when George insisted I go to bed with a loaded gun; the men had seen grizzly tracks close to camp.

Grizzly bears are the only bears in this region and the Indians fear them in the spring when they first wake up and are hungry. The Indians know they are unpredictable until their stomachs are full, a process that may take two months. George is no fool when it comes to knowing animals and what I should, or could do. He only asked me to shoot up through the tent to sound a warning and not try to shoot at the grizzly since it would have been a perfect shot with a 30/30. Besides George being the most brilliant hunter and perfect shot I can ever imagine knowing, he had a large rifle, a 308, that he had only in case of a grizzly; he never needed it for a moose. Needless to say, my first Saturday night away from Eugene was frightening to say the least. I knew, too, that he would be very capable of handling this situation as well as many others in the coming weeks far better than myself.

It was known later that it was a grizzly mother and her two cubs that continued to approach the camp nightly for a month. The men checked the tracks daily and knew of her presence at night by the dogs barking, but she never got close enough to shoot. Often at night I could hear wolves howling, but this was a pleasing sound of the wilderness. They never conjured up an apprehension as the thought of a grizzly poking its head into the tent.

Meat is about 90% of any Indian bush camp – the sightings, killing, butchering, processing and eating is life. But, there are items of our contemporary world now considered desired to be essential in addition to meat. We had coffee, tea, Tang, sugar and canned milk with every meal. Oatmeal, eggs, commercial bread, jam and flour are also considered basics. In addition, numerous other items are considered important if not always available although chartered planes made this a well supplied camp. There were

canned vegetables, sometimes fresh onion and potatoes for stews, rice, dried mashed potatoes and always too many boxes of “Kraft Dinner” (macaroni and cheese). Candy and potato chips frequently were brought out of well hidden sacks to please the children. Vivian also used Pampers for Posh Posh but with a very practical rationalization; they were much easier in a bush camp than daily heating water to wash regular ones. This entire trip was done based on a contemporary Canadian economy. The hunters were paid an equivalent to the approximate cash value of a spring hunt for furs. The women were paid also for their general labors and essential role in making the boat. The Indians would not have established this remote bush camp or built a Mooseskin boat on romantic or traditional impulse; they were paid to revive an aspect of their own cultural past. But, they wanted to do it, and it was truly an Indian bush camp for two months for which meat was the focus of life until the end.

On May 3, Sunday, the group decided to go on a picnic. To most of us this would seem unnecessary since we were already living outdoors at a beautiful location and did not have to get away from house and kitchen. But, we did go on a picnic. The snow was melting quickly and our two snowmobiles with towed toboggans had frequent difficulties through rugged terrain and opening steams. This is no way dropped the zeal to reach a specific destination discussed by them before departure. I would have easily settled for a location with fewer travelling challenges and real hazards but I obviously was not directing traffic.

The first thing done at the picnic spot (and any camping or resting location) was everyone chopped down and/or collected wood for a fire. In order to heat two kettles of water for tea, a fire of at least 12 feet long and 3 feet high is considered normal; wood is a very abundant commodity. Spruce boughs were cut and layed as a carpet, and everyone began eating. We had moose drymeat, smoked back fat which is a condiment of drymeat, 2 moose noses, 2 heads and a couple of sides of ribs. Besides meat there was bannock (a baking powder biscuit bread) with butter and jam. There was napping, card playing and always someone eating or having tea. During this relaxing family outing on nearby tributary of the Keele River broke open and we were surrounded by water. This really didn't bother anyone greatly and we did not attempt to leave until 11:00pm by which time

there was some refreezing. We went through a couple of open streams with only the men getting soaked while we were dashed through in the water tight moosehide toboggans. Although no one complained, or conveyed any fear outwardly, it was clear all were very relieved to be back in camp and warm again around the stoves.



During the following month in this camp most of the time continued to focus on meat and hides. On May 5th the first caribou herds were sighted and the whole camp went into a frenzied state. That evening everyone was delighting in the success of the kill and taste of something other than moose. In a few days there was 35 carcasses in camp, and after the initial skinning and butchering by the men it all became women's work. Although there was four adult women in camp, Vivian was often busy with child care and I was not expected to be full time meat and hide processor. The two older women, both in their sixties, worked 12 to 16 hours most days for three weeks. Much of the meat is sliced

thinly and dried in the sun over a network of horizontal poles. Bones are cracked and boiled for grease. The hides have to have the hair removed and then laboriously scraped to clean and soften them. My main job was taking the skin off the legs (over 100 of which I saved half to bring home for tanning) so that everyone could enjoy fresh marrow. The hoofs and tendons were dried for a future time to boil for grease. The least tender meat was given to the dogs. Nothing of the animals was wasted.

Nine of the caribou were flown by charter plane back to relatives in Fort Norman. Even though the Indians paid for the plane themselves this was a cheaper and much preferred source of meat at Fort Norman than available at the Hudson's Bay Company store. Once this meat is received by relatives it is then redistributed throughout the community and everyone shares in the hunt.



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It was hard to believe we ran out of fresh meat by June 1st and another moose and her two babies were killed (the young and unborn are prized foods). By this time the film crew of three added to the meaty meal requirements. On our trip down the river in the boat 8 mountain sheep, 1 caribou and 2 moose were killed with much of it kept fresh to give away when we arrived in Fort Norman.

At the end of May and after the moosehides has soaked for a week, building the boat became a major concern. Before this time the spring melt of the mountain snow was rapid and the river was too dangerous for travel. Also, the river was at a flooding state that endangered our camp's survival on the island location. There was about two feet of land between the river and the tents before the water finally started to subside.

Because of the Keele River's temper and Gabe's temperament, the boat was not completed until June 3rd. Gabe and others have proudly told how they used to make these boats in a couple of days, not a week as was true for this construction. Gabe was known by everyone as temperamental, good at sulking, proud, and prepared to be a full fledged prima donna for this trip. For a change in his later years, and maybe for the last time, Gabe was in charge of an important project, and understandably he didn't want it all to end. We have another prima donna in the young film director. He is the oldest son of my closest friend in Fort Norman. These two men added to the tensions of a small isolated group but teasing and silence were effective old ways to contain overt expressions of frustration.

For days before work on the boat began the women made sinew thread from the back tendons of the moose. Describing how sinew is made is most difficult but it is a tedious process with a lot of saliva, involved to soften the strands. We all drank a lot of tea during these many hours to obliterate the favor of rancid fat. The rolled fibers are about 30" long and will make about 3 1/2" of sewn seam. We made tremendous quantity in order to stitch 8 mooseskins together (most in a double overlapping stitch). The hides are then stretched over a spruce frame of over 40' long and 7' wide. The sewing is hard work and takes many, many hours but the worst of it is the pain of sewing through two or three layers of raw moose hide with sinew. The fingers are continuously cut by either the metal leather needle or the sinew, and all of our fingers were badly cut and heavily bandaged.

After a couple of days of sewing none of us could endure putting our hands in soap; the cuts were so tender.

While the women make the thread and sew, the men select trees for the various parts of the boat's frame. The selection is carefully done because each part of the frame requires different curvatures as well as straightness of grain. The complexities of the boat's constructions is technical and lengthy and is a major part of my report to the Museum.

Although one man and woman have to know the basic process of construction, most of the actual work can be done by any Indian trained in traditional skills. One of the older women had never even seen a Mooseskin boat previously, but within less than 10 minutes became the second most accomplished and hard working sewing person. The



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men knew their forest well, and every necessary aspect of each tree's qualities. Their skill with the axe is learned young and they preferred shaping each piece by axe although they had a power saw. They work by trained eye and confidence in their use of the axe to within incredible accuracy, far greater than by using a power saw, they say. The standard of measurement was coined by the cinematographer as the "Imperial Gabe." Gabe accepted the principle that his arm span equaled his height of 6'. By this one measurement all the wood frame sections were cut and fitted together exactly.

The boat's basic design was a Norse fishing vessel of the 10th century along with a long steering oar of Mediterranean origin adapted by the Norsemen. How could such a boat design be an Indian boat near the Arctic Circle in western Canada? The Norse conquered and merged with the Orkney Islanders of the northern British Isles. In the 18th and 19th centuries Orkney men were the predominant employees of the Hudson's Bay



Company which had a monopoly of the Indian fur trade in Canada by 1821. On Company request, or demand, Orkney men were told to build boats to transport the inland trade. With some revisions in order to adapt to new environmental conditions, they built what was familiar to them. These boats, called York boats, were used as the basic transport of the fur trade into the 20th century. The York boats were of all wood construction. The Indians adapted the general design but added their innovation input by using a hide covering. To unravel the origin, development and distribution of these Indian boats is my problem, and one that still provides as many questions as answers.

Our first day traveling in the boat was most memorable and totally miserable as far as I was concerned. There was a raw mist to a full downpour from the time of departure throughout the first night and into the next day. We had to pass through what Gabe considered the worst curve of rapids of the trip and the concern showed on his face before departure. They unloaded for safety and weight the women, children and 12 dogs at the base of a gravel cliff that seemed to be 500' with no slant; it probably was less than 150' high. No one warning me of this "adventure," I carried my "purse" of all writing materials and two cameras in case the boat had trouble. The group also thrust upon me two loaded rifles to carry up this cliff, one without a shoulder strap case. All that can be said is: somehow I made it up the cliff with neither arm free to grasp anything. On reaching the top we all had to have a tea rest. It was raining hard so my rain poncho was taken to cover Posh Posh. Already soaked, we walked across land to meet the men and the boat beyond the dangerous bend – then more tea in the rain. We were all at the night's campsite by 11:00pm, around another one of the typical gargantuan fires having more tea and boiled meat. Gabe, without asking of course, took the rain poncho from Posh Posh and draped it over his tent where there was a leak. I slept in wet clothes with rain draining on my sleeping bag in another tent where ten of us crowded in for the night -ah! The romance of adventure.

The boat was 46' long, 7'2" wide and about 6'6" in height. It was big and majestic; but with 12 people, 12 dogs and several tons of gear and drymeat it provided no tourist class comforts. Gabe sat in the stern with the 31' steering oar, 4 men were at their long rowing oars; and the women, children and dogs crowded in by assigned seating of Gabe's, resting as best as possible on the bottom's frame or on a pile of gear. The boat was extremely sturdy and the frame and with the frame with its hide cover moved easily over shallow areas when it touched rocks. It took a week to make a trip down the Keele River but there was no sense of hurry. Many hours were spent eating, resting, setting up camp each night, as well as hunting and butchering more game. It took at least two hours each late morning to dismantle the campsite as well as have breakfast with many cups of coffee. True for the spring bush camp as well as these overnight camps; they were always left as clean as possible with almost no evidence of our presence.



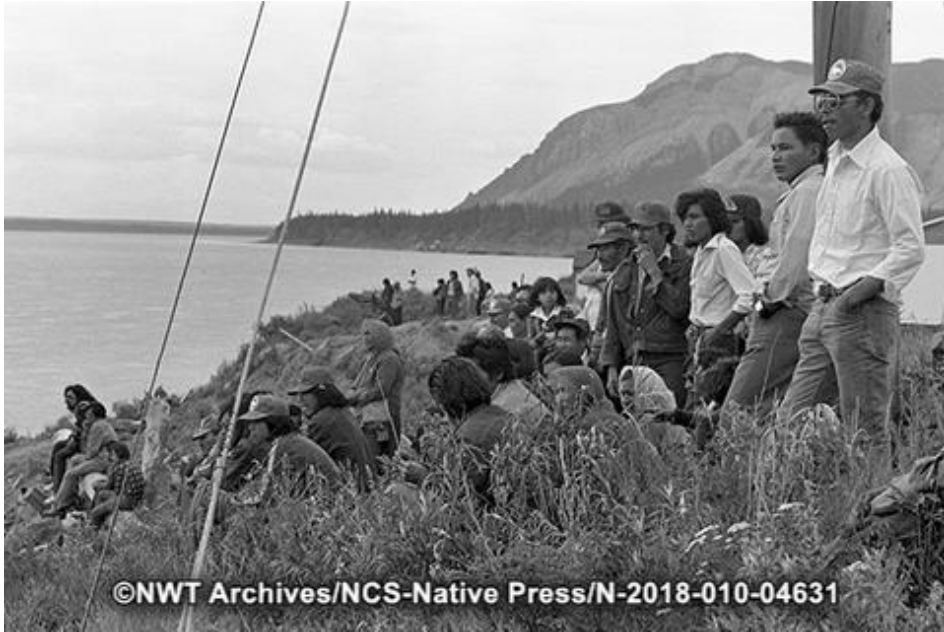
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On the Sunday going down river we didn't travel at all. Various reasons were given – it was Sunday, the boat needed a small leak repaired, men wanted to hunt mountain sheep, and the weather was bad – all true. On this day there is a Posh Posh story that illuminates my previous negative comments as non-native. Posh Posh was still being breast fed at the age of 2, which is unusual but undoubtedly added to his self indulgences. He ate anything he wanted anytime but most preferred walking in others' plates for attention to get personal feeding. He would scream if he couldn't have some of what you were in the process of eating. Like all loved babies in the North, he is given full and favored attention by everyone with the obvious result of a total spoiled child able to have his own way at all times; he was never ignored and almost never disciplined. Like all other children, he is trained early in attitudes towards animals. When near one of the dogs, none of which were mean in temperament, he would display a big smile and say in English "Doggy, Doggy!" The unnerving aspect was, in addition, he would always try to get a stick to hit the dog. (by the age of 6 to 8 all children are proficient at hitting dogs, a talent never forgotten or modified as adults.) On this Sunday a rabbit was shot with a 30/30 rifle and was brought to camp rather "pre-gutted." It was Posh Posh's greatest toy as he played and dragged it about with a happy expressions of "rabbit, rabbit, pretty rabbit." A hunting society has its own approach to socializing their children who will become its future hunters.

The scenery of this week's voyage was magnificent and always dramatic with mountains on all sides until the last two days when we left the foothills and entered the huge Mackenzie River. On the last two nights of camping there was a heavy film of mosquitoes and we slept on the pebble beaches instead of in the woods. But, we were not under the stars. By early June it is light all night in this part of the world. We were greeted by several motor boats of friends and relatives for the last night of the trip and the atmosphere was very jovial. On approaching Fort Norman the entire community (340) was waiting on the shore to greet us. The older people had tears for recalling times now past but everyone found it an emotional moment of joy. The expedition was completed, and for those involved there was sense of relief and exhaustion that went along with the coming days of joyful celebration.

- Beryl C. Gillespie, 1981

Old Photos of Fort Norman

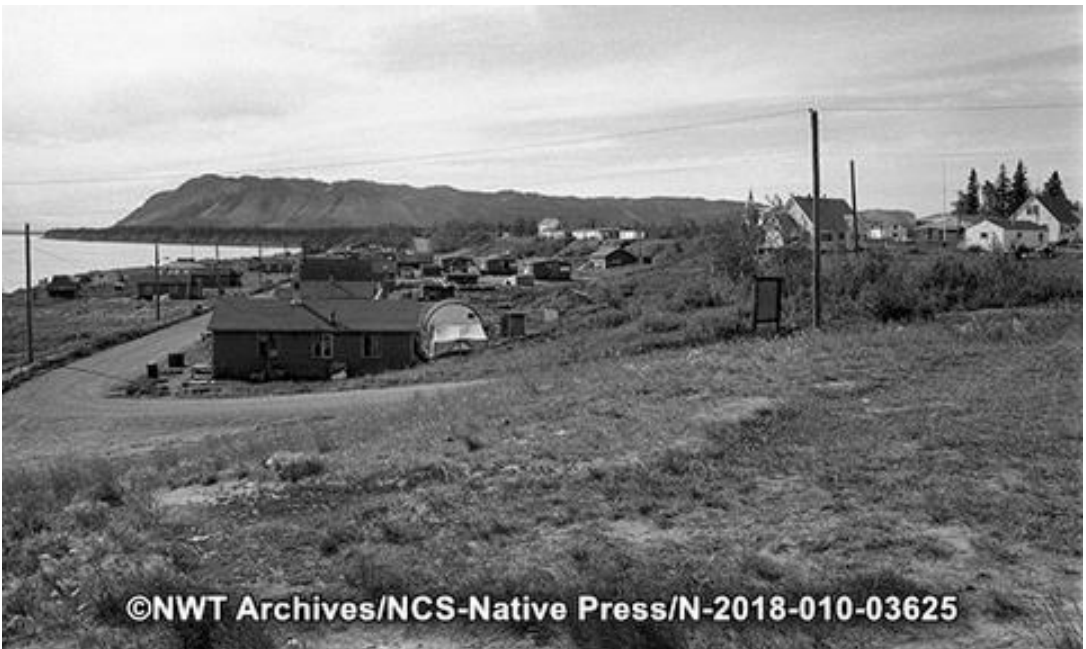


Fort Norman, 1977.
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Words: Aurora Borealis, **Chill**, Christmas, **Cold**, December, **Deep Freeze**, Feast, **Festive**,
 Freeze, **Frigid**, Frost, **Hibernate**, Holiday, **Ice**, Jack Frost, **Lights**, Low Temperature,
Nativity, Noel, **Old Man Winter**, Party, **Season**, Sleet, **Snow**, Snowdrift, **Snowfall**,
 Snowflakes, **Snow Storm**, Solstice, **Stocking**, Winter, **Winter Road**, Yuletide.



Dene Laws



~Share what you have~

~Help each other~

~Love each other as much as possible~

~Be respectful of elders and everything around you~

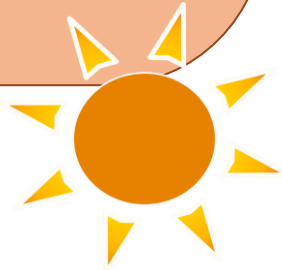
~Pass on the teachings~

~Be happy at all times~

~Sleep at night and work during the day~

~Be polite and don't argue with anyone~

~Young boys and girls should behave respectfully~



**Thank you for reading!
Tulita Land Corporation**