

Kw' ahtidee Jimmy Bruneau

Knowing Two Ways

A time of great change for the Tłıchǫ



Northwest
Territories Education, Culture and Employment



Acknowledgements

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Chief Jimmy Bruneau

Jimmy Bruneau lived from 1881 to 1975. He was an important and respected leader during a time of great change for the Tłıchǫ.



Hand games Fort Rae 1962—Jimmy Bruneau centre front.

Photo credit: *NWT Archives/June Helm fonds/N-2004-020: 0356 (edited)*

Front cover photo credit: *NWT Archives/Richard Finnie
fonds/N-1979-063: 0047 (edited)*

Back cover photo credit: *Sketch from biography "Kw'ahtideè Jimmy
Bruneau" at <http://tlichohistory.com/en/learn/our-elders/biographies>*



Tłıchq lodge 1913.

Photo credit: *National Museums of Canada/Library and Archives Canada/e002013749 (edited)*



Chief Jimmy Bruneau with a group of Tłıchq and Dehcho Dene men, women, and children at the Grey Nuns centennial, Fort Providence, 1967.

Photo credit: *NWT Archives/June Helm fonds/N-2004-020: 0598 (edited)*

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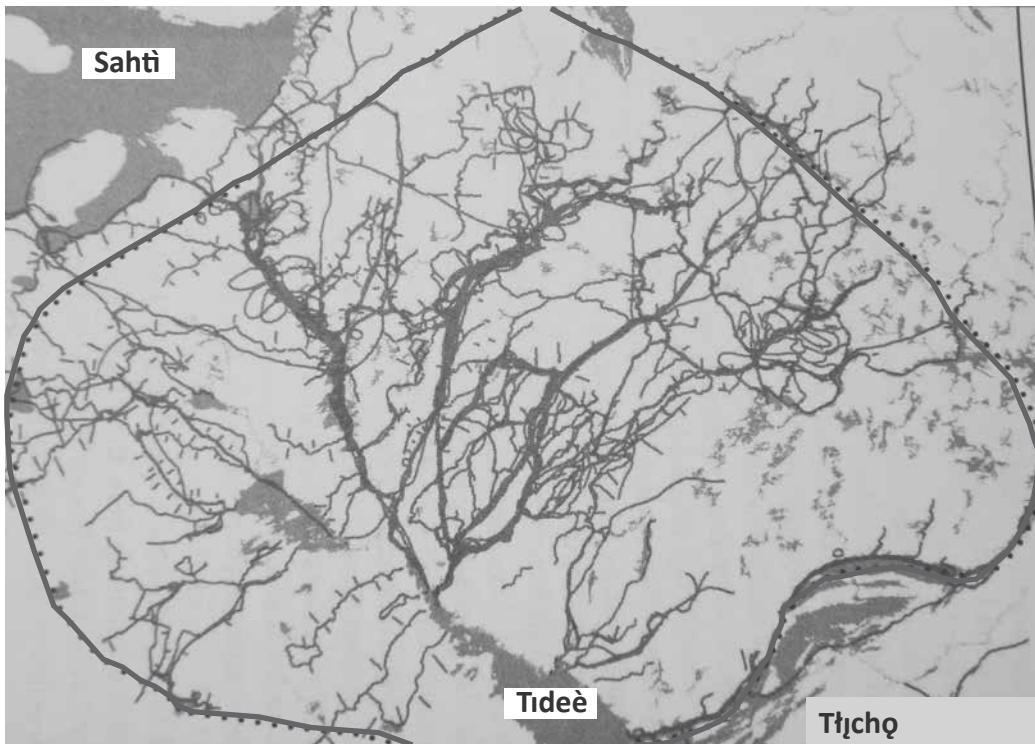
**Chief Jimmy Bruneau with Louis Beaulieu
of Whatì 1950s.**

*Photo credit: NWT Archives/Henry Busse
fonds/N-1979-052: 1568*

Tłıchǫ Words

This book uses some Tłıchǫ place names and other words. Tłıchǫ spellings and English meanings are from Tłıchǫ Yatı̨ Multimedia Dictionary.

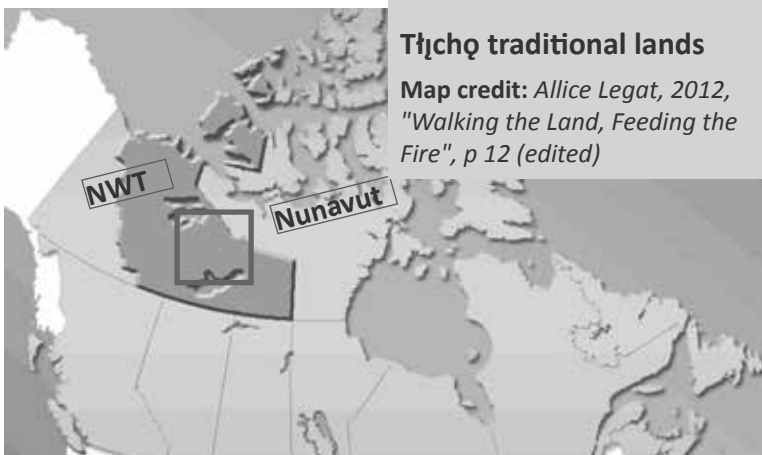
Tłıchǫ (pronunciation)	English
Tłıchǫ (tlee-chon)	Dogrib
Behchokǫ̀ (bay-cho-ko)	Fort Rae, Rae-Edzo
Gamètì (gam-ma-tea)	Rae Lakes
Wekweètì (wek-way-tea)	Snare Lake
Whatì (what-tea)	Lac La Martre
Tı̀deè (tea-day)	Great Slave Lake
Sahtì (sah-tea)	Great Bear Lake
Mq̄whì (mon-fwee)	Monfwi, Murphy, Morphy
Kw'ahtı̀deè (kwa-tea-day)	Chief or Grand Chief
kweèt'ı̀j (kwe-tea)	white people
k'àowo (ka-woo)	traditional leader
k'aàwı (ka-we)	trading boss or middle person between Tłıchǫ and traders



Mqwhì Gogha Dè Njłtèè

Tłıchǫ traditional lands

Map credit: *Alice Legat, 2012, "Walking the Land, Feeding the Fire", p 12 (edited)*



Tłıchǫ researchers documented ancestor trails during the Dene-Metis mapping project in 1970s.

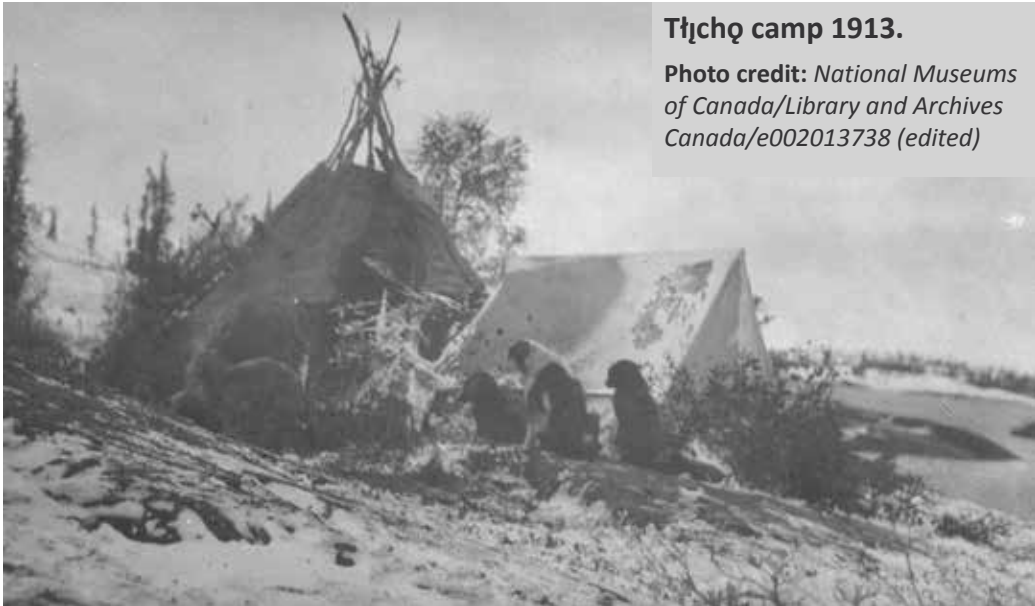
The Story Begins

Jimmy Bruneau was born on December 12, 1881. His parents were Tł̨ch̨ Dene. Tł̨ch̨ traditional lands—M̨wh̨ Gogha D̨ N̨l̨—cover a large area between Saht̨ (Great Bear Lake) and T̨d̨ (Great Slave Lake).

Tł̨ch̨ ancestor trails link thousands of places and stories that carry Tł̨ch̨ knowledge. Tł̨ch̨ language and culture is tied directly to this land.

When Bruneau was young, the Tł̨ch̨ followed an annual round of hunting, fishing, and trapping. They mainly lived in the bush and made regular visits to trading posts for gatherings and supplies.

Women did most of the work to raise children and maintain the household. Men hunted and women processed the harvest.



Tłıchǫ camp 1913.

Photo credit: *National Museums of Canada/Library and Archives Canada/e002013738 (edited)*



Tłıchǫ and Yellowknives at the portage, Pethei Peninsula, Tideè—on their way to the caribou hunt, 1922.

Photo credit: *NWT Archives/John Russell fonds/N-1979-073: 0642 (edited)*

Every day people gathered firewood, fetched water, checked nets and snares, and fed dogs. Other activities changed with the seasons.

For example, during break-up (May-June) people hunted small game and birds, collected birch bark to make canoes, cut and peeled logs, and visited.

When the water and sun got warm (June-August) people tanned hides, hunted birds, gathered plants and berries, and travelled and traded.

When it got darker (August-September) people made dryfish, stick fish, and dry meat; hunted barrenground caribou; and prepared to move to winter camp.

When the winds got cold (September-October) people moved to winter camp, made winter gear and clothing, hunted ducks, and gathered berries.

During freeze-up (October-November) people trapped small and large game for furs and food, and made more winter gear and clothing.



Tł̓chq camped on island 1913; with birchbark canoe and york boat.

Photo credit: *Tł̓chqhistory.com: Life on the Land; Mason, CMC 26010 (edited)*



In a birchbark canoe, the whole family comes to Fort Rae for treaty, visiting, and trading July 1923.

Photo credit: *NWT Archives/John Russell fonds/N-1979-073: 0551*

When the days got short (November-February) people hunted caribou and ptarmigan, travelled by dog team and showshoe, went to spiritual gatherings, and trapped for furs and food.

When the days got longer (March-April) people hunted caribou and ptarmigan, trapped muskrats, and fished with hooks through the ice.

Tłıchǫ groups shared land and people. Within their traditional lands people moved from one group to another, following ties of blood or marriage.

Each group was loosely connected through hunting, fishing, trading, and family. People came together in larger or smaller groups, depending on their need for food and furs.



Three dog teams leaving Fort Rae, 1917-18.

Photo credit: NWT Archives/Alma Guest fonds/N-1979-067: 0060



Tłıchǫ lodge 1913.

Photo credit: *National Museums of Canada/Library and Archives Canada/e002013741 (edited)*



Fish stage of frozen stick fish, Whatì 1959.

Photo credit: *NWT Archives/June Helm fonds/N-2004-020: 0232*

Jimmy Bruneau's father—Dzimi—was a k'àowo (traditional leader) among the Dechílaagot'ì (Edge of the Woods People)—one of six regional groups.

A k'àowo had authority because people respected his skills and knowledge—of hunting, trails, the land, bush life—and chose to follow him.

For many years before he died Dzimi was also the k'aàwì (trading boss or middle person between the people and traders). As k'aàwì he had knowledge of kweèt'ì (white people) and skills to negotiate a good deal for trading furs.

Dzimi died when Jimmy Bruneau was 16 years old. Mqwhì—Jimmy's uncle—then became k'àowo.

How the Tł̓chq

A young woman who did not have a husband lived with her two brothers. One day a handsome stranger came to their house. The brothers said to the sister, "This handsome man has come for you so you must marry him." So the couple wed.

On their wedding night the young woman woke to the sound of a dog gnawing on a bone. The woman's husband was no longer at her side. She jumped up, lit the fire, and searched the tent. But there was no dog in the tent. The woman went back to bed and fell asleep.

Once again she woke to the sound of a dog gnawing on a bone. The woman called out to one of her brothers. He threw a hatchet in the direction of the noise. There was a loud cry and then silence.

The woman and her brothers quickly lit the fire and found a large black dog lying dead. The woman's husband did not return.

Eventually the woman gave birth to six puppies. She loved the puppies and hid them in a sack.

Came To Be

One day upon returning to the camp, the woman noticed the footprints of children around the camp. The next day instead of checking her snares as she usually did, she hid behind a bush close to the tent.

After she left, the six puppies crawled out of the sack and turned into three girls and three boys. The woman ran towards them. Before she could reach them, two of the girls and one of the boys jumped back into the sack.

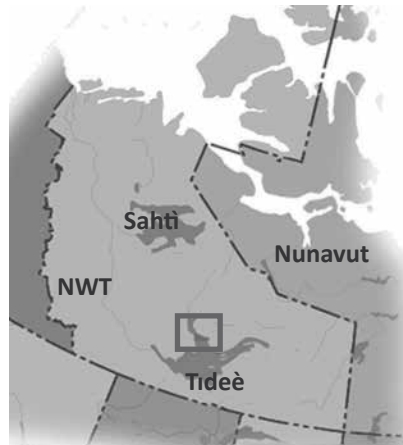
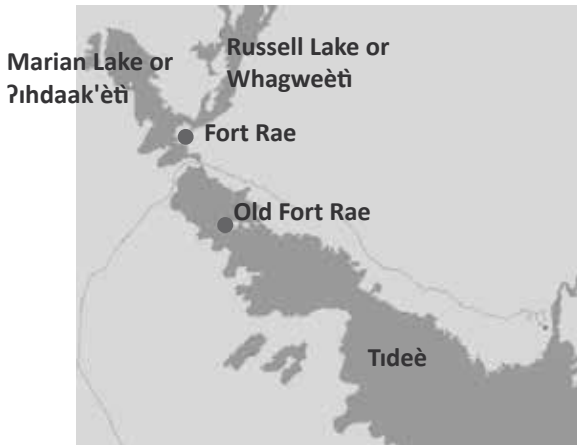
The other three children grew up strong and healthy and produced many children. We are descended from them and that is why we call ourselves the Tḥchq.





Old Fort Rae—looking south down the North Arm.

Photo credit: *Library and Archives Canada/PA-051416 (edited)*



Old Fort Rae 1924.

Photo credit: *NWT Archives/John Russell fonds/N-1979-073: 0735 (edited)*

Life on the Land is Changing

Tłıchǫ traditional life on the land changed a lot during Bruneau's time. Starting with the fur trade, the Tłıchǫ were more and more in contact with kweèt'ı̀ (white people) and their values, goods, and institutions.

Before they had face-to-face contact, the Tłıchǫ were aware of kweèt'ı̀ and their trade goods.

In 1852—29 years before Jimmy Bruneau was born—the Hudson's Bay Company set up Old Fort Rae in the North Arm of Great Slave Lake. It was a central Tłıchǫ trading post until 1906, when Jimmy Bruneau was 25 years old.

At different times, Tłıchǫ groups also traded at other forts in the NWT such as Simpson, Franklin, Norman, and Resolution.

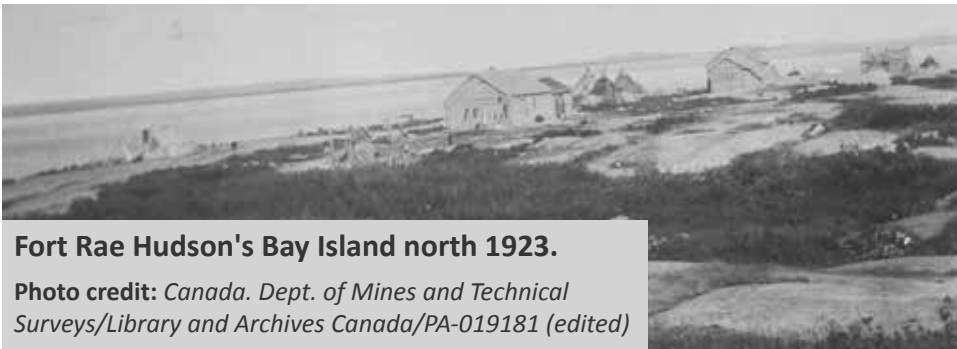
Trading stopped at Old Fort Rae when the Catholic mission and Hudson's Bay Company moved to Fort Rae.



Fort Rae

Fort Rae is located on Marian Lake, on two islands and the mainland. It is a good area for fish. Tłıchǫ no longer needed to travel on the big lake to reach their main trading post.

During Bruneau's time, more Tłıchǫ moved from the bush into town. Fort Rae became the main community.



Fort Rae Hudson's Bay Island north 1923.

Photo credit: *Canada. Dept. of Mines and Technical Surveys/Library and Archives Canada/PA-019181 (edited)*



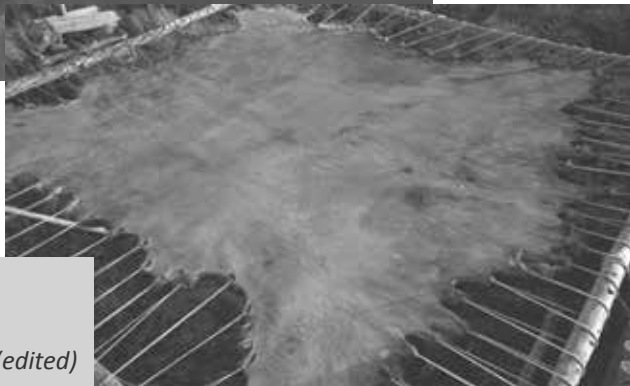
Fort Rae Hudson's Bay Island south 1923.

Photo credit: *Canada. Dept. of Mines and Technical Surveys/Library and Archives Canada/PA-019182 (edited)*



**Anne Bruneau, 83
years old, June 1973.**

Photo credit: *Native Press,*
June 20, 1973 (edited)



Moose hide.

Photo credit: *NWT Archives/Rene*
Fumoleau fonds/N-1998-051: 1349 (edited)

Marriage and Family

Jimmy and Anne Bruneau married. Over the years they had 12 children. Their son Susie is the only child who lived to be an adult.

Jimmy and Anne spent most of their days in the bush.

In 1973 when Anne was 83 years old, she talked about the times before Jimmy Bruneau became chief.

"... we spent most of our days in the bush. We didn't have a hard time in the bush like the young people have nowadays."

"We bought everything in cases like tea, sugar, and etc. So we had no worries about food. Jimmy was a very good hunter."

"Those days I sure had to tan a lot of moose hides."

Treaty 11

Jimmy Bruneau was 40 years old when the Tłıchǫ signed Treaty 11 in 1921. Mǫwhì was k'àowo. People followed him because of his knowledge of two ways: Tłıchǫ and kweèt'ì.

At first Mǫwhì walked away from negotiations. He did not agree with the government's terms. When he returned, he described the Tłıchǫ terms. He signed when he believed that the government accepted the Tłıchǫ terms.

Treaty 11 promised annual payments and services such as medical care and education. That the Tłıchǫ would always have the right to hunt, fish, and trap.

In exchange, the federal government assumed the right to manage activities on Tłıchǫ traditional land. For example, mineral and gas exploration.

The Tłıchǫ understood the treaty as a common understanding of peace and friendship—not as a promise to give up title to their traditional lands.



**Jimmy Bruneau in the
chief's jacket and hat,
with treaty medal 1940s.**

Photo credit: NWT
Archives/Buffum family
fonds/N-1986-006: 0245

Bruneau Becomes Chief

When Mqwhì died in 1936, Jimmy Bruneau became chief. He was 55 years old. As with his father and Mqwhì before him, people chose to follow Jimmy because they respected his skills and knowledge.

Anne Bruneau remembers.

"Jimmy always talked about everything like school for the children and wanted to help his people."

"When he first became chief, I sure had to do a lot of work. We would plan the feasts and organized activities, help the people as much as we can. But I enjoyed every minute of it."



Fort Rae 1937.

Photo credit: *Charles A. Keefer/Library and Archives Canada/PA-073989 (edited)*



Family by wall tent, caribou parts in a pile of spruce boughs, Fort Rae 1949.

Photo credit: *NWT Archives/Henry Busse fonds/N-1979-052: 1716 (edited)*



Checking nets in winter, Whatì 1959.

Photo credit: *NWT Archives/June Helm fonds/N-2004-020: 0204 (edited)*

More Change for the Tłıchǫ

Besides Treaty 11, other government laws and policies changed the Tłıchǫ way of life during Bruneau's time.

The *Northwest Game Act* (1917) imposed a closed season for caribou. From October to November and April to July the Tłıchǫ could hunt only to prevent starvation.

The *Migratory Birds Convention Act* (1917) said it was against the law to hunt game birds during the spring and fall. Tłıchǫ depended on these for food.

There was widespread mineral exploration on Tłıchǫ lands. From 1931 to 1947 twenty mines started up.

Until the 1960s, children went to residential schools. Government medical and education services, social assistance, and housing aimed to bring the Tłıchǫ to communities and away from the bush.

In 1961 the Mackenzie highway reached Yellowknife. This increased Tłıchǫ connections with people, places, things, and ideas from the south and the north.



Treaty feast and gathering 1939.

Photo credit: NWT Archives/Richard Finnie fonds/N-1979-063: 0048 (edited)

Treaty dance Fort Rae 1937.

Photo credit: Charles A. Keefer/Library and Archives Canada/PA-073761 (edited)



Treaty Time

Since the Tłıchǫ signed Treaty 11 they have treaty time once a year at Fort Rae. This is a time for visiting, feasting, dancing, and hand games.

Each person receives their treaty payment. As 'head chief' Jimmy Bruneau got \$25. Each 'lesser chief' got \$15. Every other man, woman, and child each got \$5.

The Indian Agent represented the government and handed out the money. If the agent was also a medical person, they did checkups and immunization shots.



**Jimmy Bruneau welcomes
Dr. Riopel, Indian Agent
and medical officer, 1939.**

Photo credit: NWT
Archives/Richard Finnie
fonds/N-1979-063: 0052 (edited)



Tea dance Fort Rae 1937.

Photo credit: Charles A. Keefer/
Library and Archives Canada/
PA-073742 (edited)



Tłıchǫ get ready to leave Fort Rae after treaty days, in scow and canoes, to return to hunting grounds around Martin Lake, 1937.

Photo credit: Charles A. Keefer/Library and Archives Canada/PA-074005 (edited)

Protest at Treaty Time

In 1967—when he is 86 years old—Chief Jimmy Bruneau led the Tłıchǫ in a protest against the government.

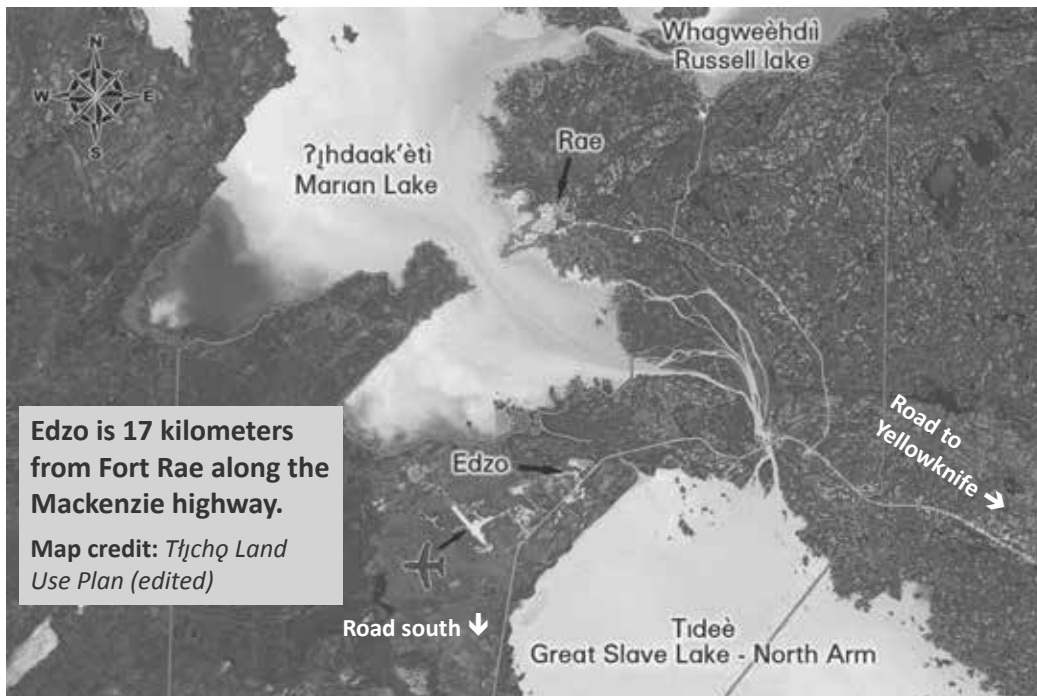
Everyone refused to accept their treaty money. The protest was against government efforts to slowly and steadily take away their treaty rights.

Chief Bruneau said that the treaty money did not buy the land or the rights of the people who lived there.



Dealing out treaty stores and provisions 1925.

Photo credit: NWT Archives/John Russell fonds/N-1979-073: 0153 (edited)



Edzo is 17 kilometers from Fort Rae along the Mackenzie highway.

Map credit: *Tłıchʼo Land Use Plan (edited)*



Aerial view Fort Rae 1959.

Photo credit: *NWT Archives/June Helm fonds/N-2003-037: 0310 (edited)*

Edzo

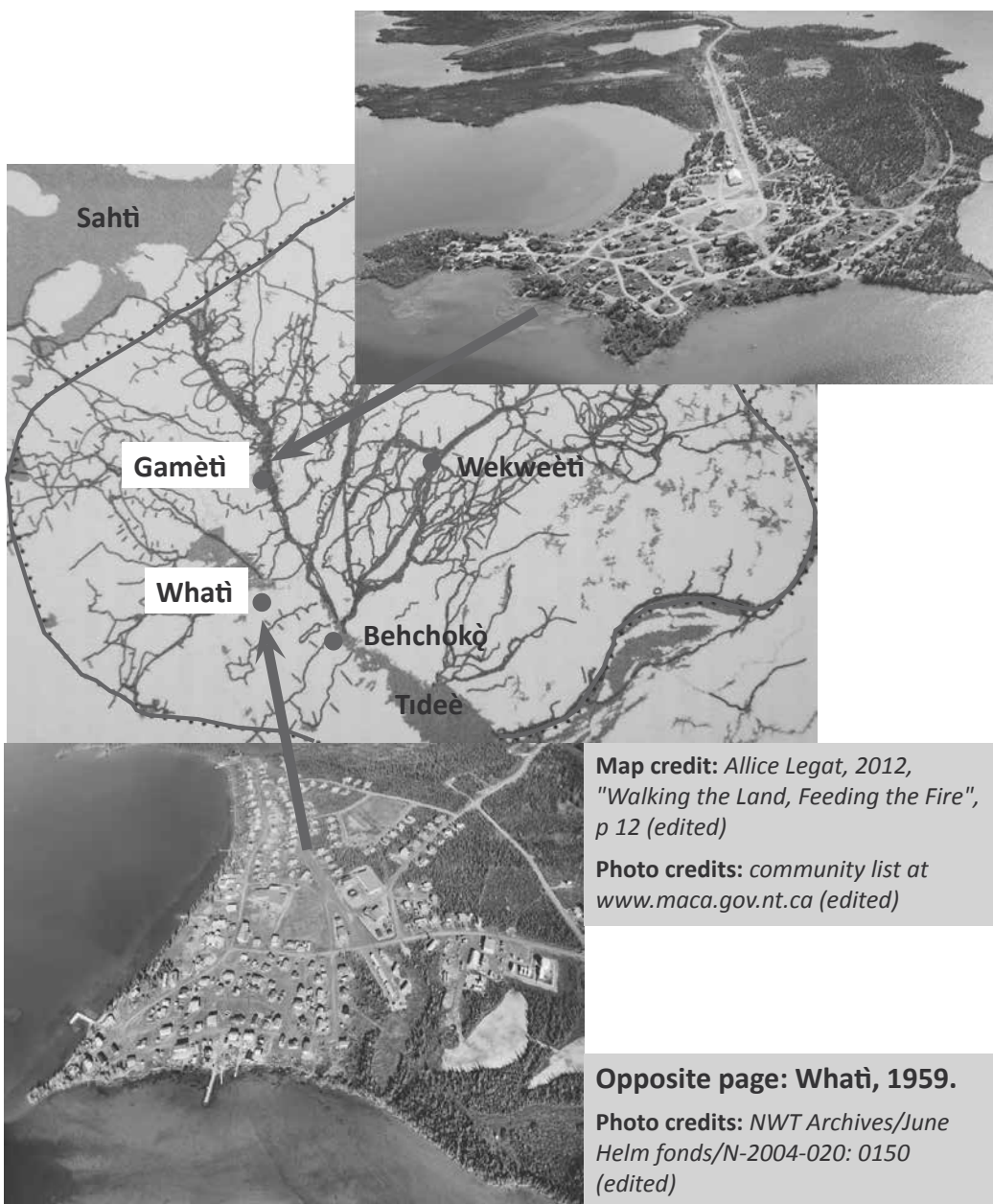
In the 1960s, the government decided to build a new place for the Tłıchq—Edzo. They wanted to move the Tłıchq away from Fort Rae. People needed housing. Fort Rae had drainage problems and poor sanitation.

During community meetings, Chief Bruneau and the Tłıchq said they did not want to move. They needed to stay close to their fish nets. Fort Rae is an important place for their culture.

Government people stressed the benefits of moving: closer to the highway, better drainage, a park for the children, row housing.

Chief Bruneau told the government people to build Edzo if they must. And that the Tłıchq would probably choose to stay in Fort Rae. And that is exactly what happened.

At first mainly kweèt'ı̀ lived in Edzo. Today some Tłıchq also live there. Many government services moved back to Fort Rae. People called the double community Rae-Edzo; today called Behchokò.



Map credit: *Alice Legat, 2012, "Walking the Land, Feeding the Fire", p 12 (edited)*

Photo credits: *community list at www.maca.gov.nt.ca (edited)*

Opposite page: Whatì, 1959.

Photo credits: *NWT Archives/June Helm fonds/N-2004-020: 0150 (edited)*

Tłıchq Communities

Over time the Tłıchq built more permanent communities away from Behchokq. They wanted to get away from kweèt'ı̄ influence and have a more traditional Tłıchq lifestyle. They settled at sites that they had long used as temporary camps.

Then and now, people get to these communities by air, winter road, or along traditional land and water trails.

Gamètı̄ is located along a chain of waterways that connect Tı̄deè and Sahtı̄. It is an important place for caribou; a good place for trapping and fishing.

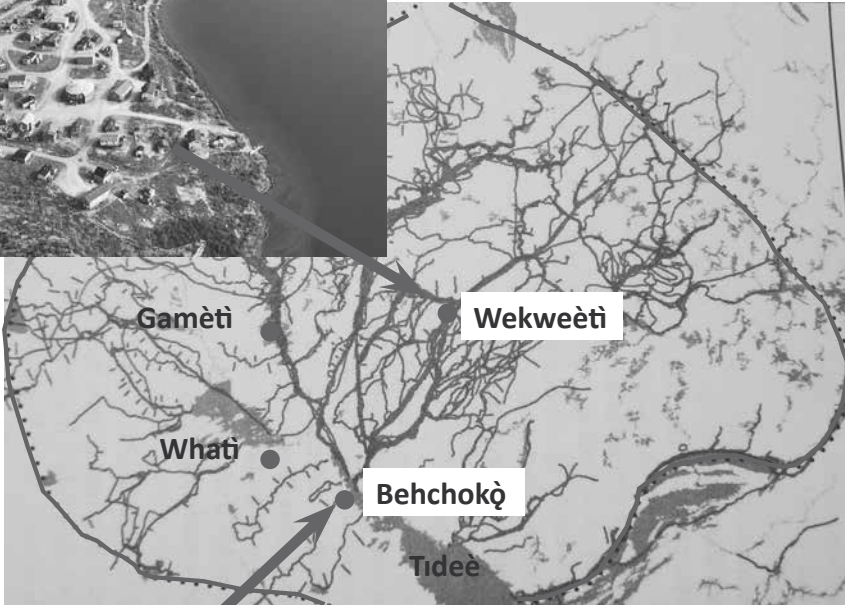
Whatı̄ is located on Lac la Martre. It is a place where conflict occurred long ago between the Tłıchq and the Chipewyan. It is a good area for trapping.





Photo credits: community list at www.maca.gov.nt.ca (edited)

Map credit: Alice Legat, 2012, "Walking the Land, Feeding the Fire", p 12 (edited)



Wekweètì is located along a common boat and sled route that the Tłıchǫ travelled every fall to the tundra to hunt migrating caribou. People saw Wekweètì as a perfect place for Tłıchǫ who wanted a life more connected to the land and the caribou.

Behchokò is Fort Rae and Edzo together. Behchokò is the largest Tłıchǫ community and the only one on an all-weather road.



Caribou hides on drying rack, Wekweètì 1986.

Photo credit: NWT Archives/Rene Fumoleau fonds/N-1998-051: 3186 (edited)



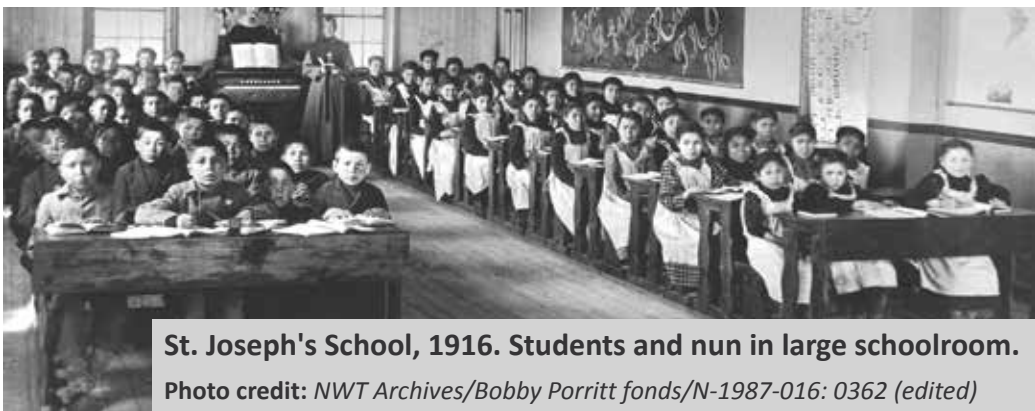
Study time, residential school, Fort Resolution.

Photo credit top: Library and Archives Canada/PA-042133 (edited)



Cutting wood, residential school, Fort Resolution.

Photo credit: Canada. Dept. of Interior/Library and Archives Canada/PA-048021 (edited)



St. Joseph's School, 1916. Students and nun in large schoolroom.

Photo credit: NWT Archives/Bobby Porritt fonds/N-1987-016: 0362 (edited)

A Tłıchǫ School

Jimmy Bruneau had many experiences throughout his life that inspired him to work for a Tłıchǫ school. He never spoke English and did not read or write.

He saw Tłıchǫ children sent to residential school across the lake to Fort Resolution, away from home. Three of his own children may have died there.



Oxen and dog teams haul firewood, water, and hay for the residential school at Fort Resolution.



Photo credits: *Canada. Dept. of Interior/Library and Archives Canada/PA-043177 (bottom); / PA-043179 (middle); /PA-043178 (top) (edited).*



Children on their way to residential school from Fort Rae 1937.

Photo credit: *Charles A. Keefer/Library and Archives Canada/PA-073735 (edited)*



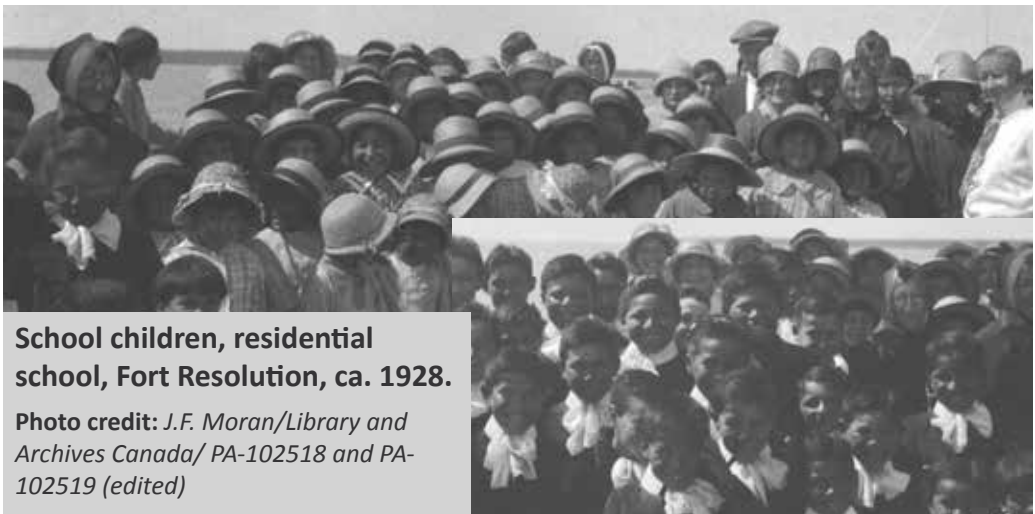
Sewing at residential school.

Photo credits: *Canada. Dept. of Mines and Technical Surveys/Library and Archives Canada/PA-023095 (edited)*

When Bruneau was 12, a kweèt'ì from the U.S.—Frank Russell—stayed at his father's winter camp. Jimmy saw him write in his journal and heard him speak English.

When Bruneau was about 30 he took another kweèt'ì from the U.S.—David Wheeler—to the edge of Wekweètì by dog team. He spent many days listening to English and watching him write. Over the years Bruneau made many other similar trips.

When he was 40 he watched his uncle sign Treaty 11. He saw people losing their language and way of life. He wanted Tłchq children to keep their own ways, as they learned new ways.



School children, residential school, Fort Resolution, ca. 1928.

Photo credit: J.F. Moran/Library and Archives Canada/ PA-102518 and PA-102519 (edited)

In 1991, Elder Elizabeth Mackenzie said, "The old Chief, he looked far ahead of us, so that we can be strong like two people."



Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, Edzo, 2010.

Photo credit: *wikipedia.org (edited)*



Chief Jimmy Bruneau school drummers made a CD of their music during their first visit to the southwestern U.S.

Photo credit: *JB HI-FI NOW Music* <https://now.jbhifi.com.au/Album/729337626027> (edited)

Chief Jimmy Bruneau School

Chief Jimmy Bruneau School opened in 1972. At the opening ceremony he said,

"I have listened to my elders; elders such as Mqwhì. I have listened to the way they talked. I have listened to their ways and now I am speaking according to their ways."

"I have asked for this school to be built on my land; and that school will be run by my people; and my people will work at that school; and our children will learn both ways—our ways and the white men's ways."

And today the Old Chief's dream keeps growing. The other Tł̓chq communities each have their own school. And they keep working to find ways for the students to maintain their Tł̓chq ways in the modern world.



Pre-Easter caribou feast at the home of the old chief Jimmy Bruneau 1970.

Photo credit: *NWT Archives/Beryl Gillespie fonds/N-1999-052: 0080 (edited)*

A New Chief

Jimmy Bruneau was chief until 1969. He was 88 years old. After much discussion, the Tłıchǫ agreed that Jimmy's son Susie become the next chief.

Two years later Susie Bruneau was replaced as head chief in the first formal election. The old ways of choosing a leader were changing.

During the 1970s, the Tłıchǫ elected three different men as head chief, one after the other.



Chief Susie Bruneau, with hat, talking to elders July 1969.

Photo credit: NWT Archives/Northwest Territories. Department of Education, Culture and Employment fonds/G-1999-088: 0007 (edited)



Wake for Jimmy Bruneau, with Bishop Paul Piché and Father Jean Pochat.

Photo credit top: *NWT Archives/Rene Fumoleau fonds/N-1995-002: 4758 (edited)*

Photo credit bottom: *NWT Archives/Rene Fumoleau fonds/N-1995-002: 4757 (edited)*



Final Days

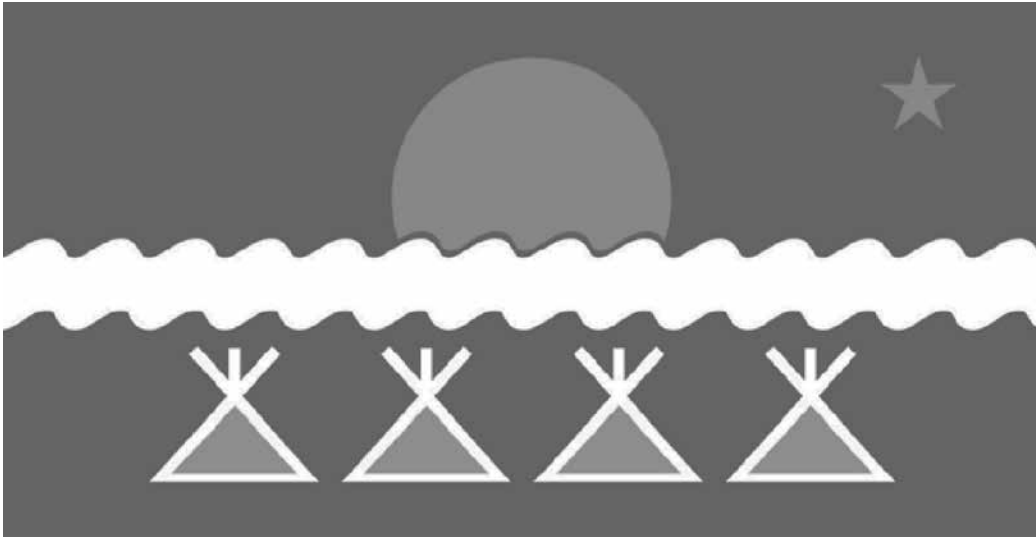
Jimmy Bruneau died at the hospital in Behchokò at 3:20 am on Thursday, January 16, 1975. He was 94 years old.

Hundreds of Tłıchǫ attended his wake and funeral to pay respect. Today he is well-remembered for his knowledge, wisdom, and skills.



Jimmy Bruneau funeral fire January 1975.

Photo credit: Native Communications Society (edited)



The flag represents the unity and strength of the Tłıchq. Imagine the colours: royal blue background, red tents, yellow sun and north star, white flowing river.

- Four red tents stand for the four communities: Behchokò, Whatì, Gamètì, and Wekweètì.
- Royal blue background stands for the broad northern Tłıchq territory.
- Sunrise and flowing river stand for Mqwhì's words, and capture Tłıchq strength and endurance.
- North Star stands for a new era for the Tłıchq, moving united into the future and committed to protecting the Tłıchq language, culture, and way of life for future generations.

Photo credit: www.tlichohistory.com/images

Glossary

ancestor: A person from a long time ago who is related to you.

influence: To have an effect (good or bad) on someone or something.

negotiation: Discussions where people try to reach an agreement about something.

permanent: Lasting a long time; long-term; forever.

temporary: Lasting for a limited time; short-term.

terms (as in a treaty or land claims agreement): The details of an agreement and how they are carried out.

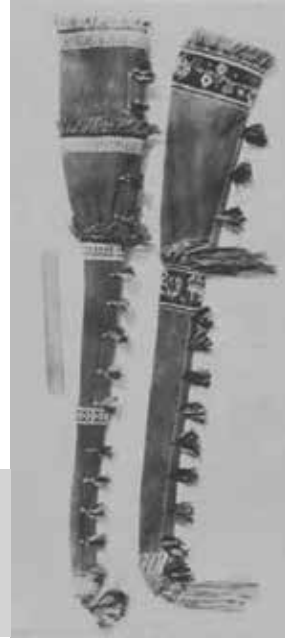
title: right, claim, ownership, entitlement.

traditional: long established; time honoured.



Gun covers and dog covers: examples of silk work done by students at residential school, Fort Resolution.

Photo credit: Canada. Dept. of the Interior collection/Library and Archives Canada/e011082776 (edited)



Refuelling at Fort Rae 1931.

Photo credit: Canada. Dept. of Mines and Technical Surveys/Library and Archives Canada/PA-014399 (edited)

Discussion Questions

1. Chief Jimmy Bruneau wanted the Tłıchǫ to know two ways. What does that mean to you?
2. The story mentions four forts that the Tłıchǫ used during the fur trade, besides Old Fort Rae. Can you name them and find them on a map?
3. The Tłıchǫ are part of Treaty 11. Is your community part of a treaty? If yes, which one? If no, what is the closest treaty to your community?
4. During Jimmy Bruneau's life, many things changed for the Tłıchǫ—some good; some not so good. Name one good thing and discuss why. Name one not so good thing and discuss why. What kinds of changes have you experienced?
5. During Bruneau's time, the Tłıchǫ held a protest. What did they want to achieve? Have you ever been in a protest? If yes, why? If no, why not?
6. Since Bruneau's time, the Tłıchǫ have negotiated and signed a land claims and self-government agreement. Go to <http://tlichohistory.com/> to learn more about the Tłıchǫ Agreement.



Father Amoreaux and Chief Jimmy Bruneau at the microphone on the porch of the Roman Catholic Mission in Fort Rae, 1959.

Photo credit: NWT Archives/Henry Busse fonds/N-1979-052: 2988 (edited)

Information Sources

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Chief Jimmy Bruneau (second from right) during 100th Anniversary celebration of St. Michael's Roman Catholic mission church at Fort Rae 1959.

Photo credit: NWT Archives/Henry Busse fonds/N-1979-052: 3024

- Tłıchq Land Use Plan, 2013
- *The People of Denendeh—Ethnohistory of the Indians of Canada's Northwest Territories*, June Helm, 2000, University of Iowa Press
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Hand games 1962.

Photo credit: NWT Archives/June Helm fonds/N-2004-020: 0364 (edited)



**Hand games Fort Rae,
1962.**

*Photo credit: NWT Archives/
June Helm fonds/N-2004-020:
0389 (edited)*



**Aerial of caribou, near
Wekweètì, 1986.**

*Photo credit: NWT Archives/Rene
Fumoleau fonds/N-1998-051: 3200
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