



Oral Histories, Truth, Reconciliation, and Indian Residential School Histories

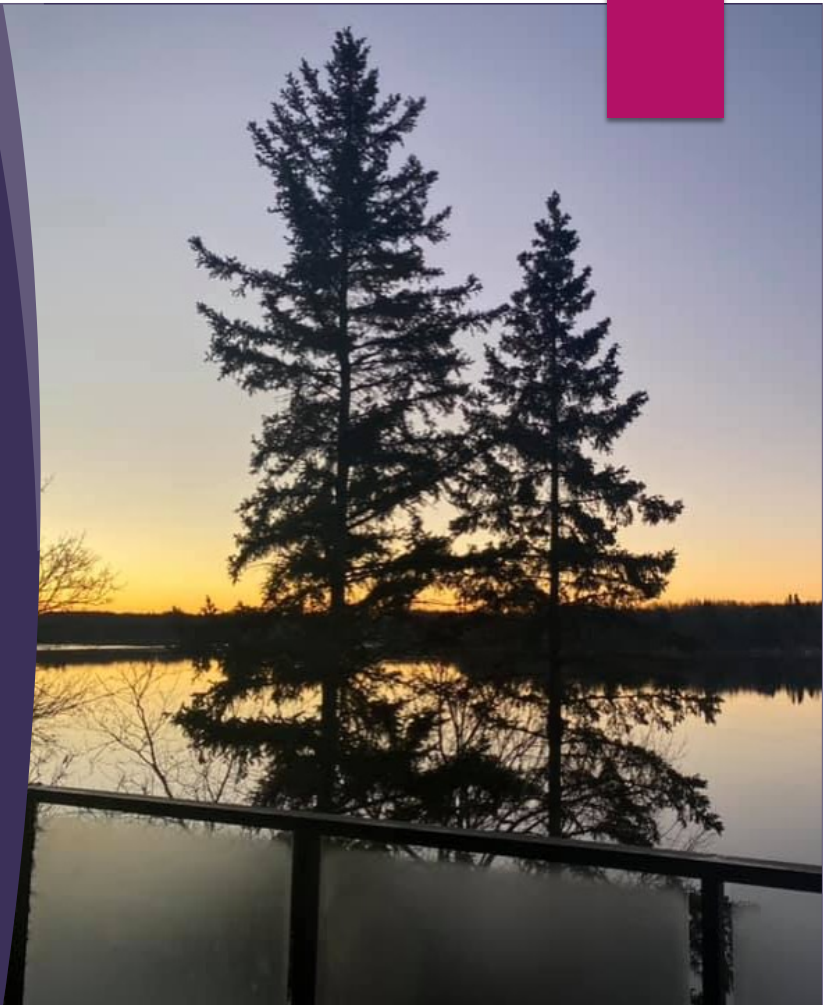
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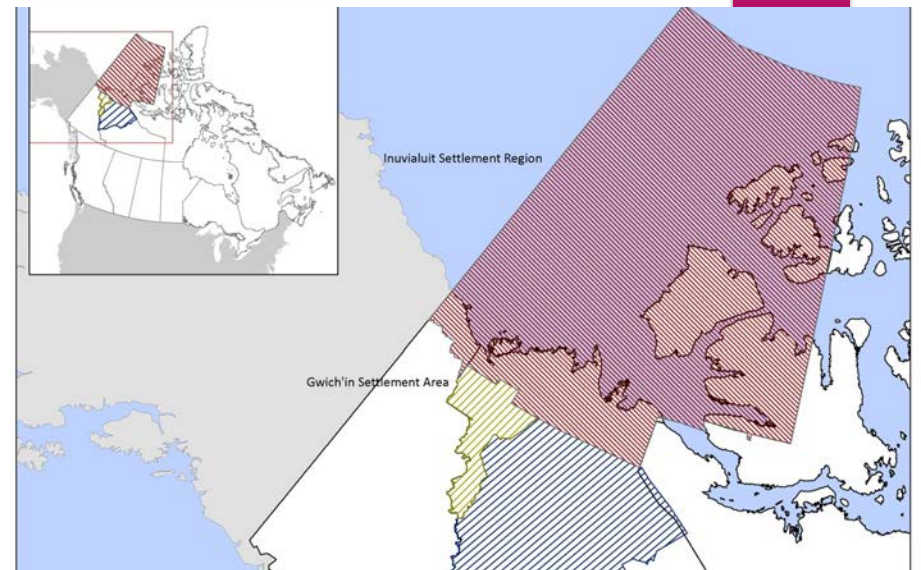
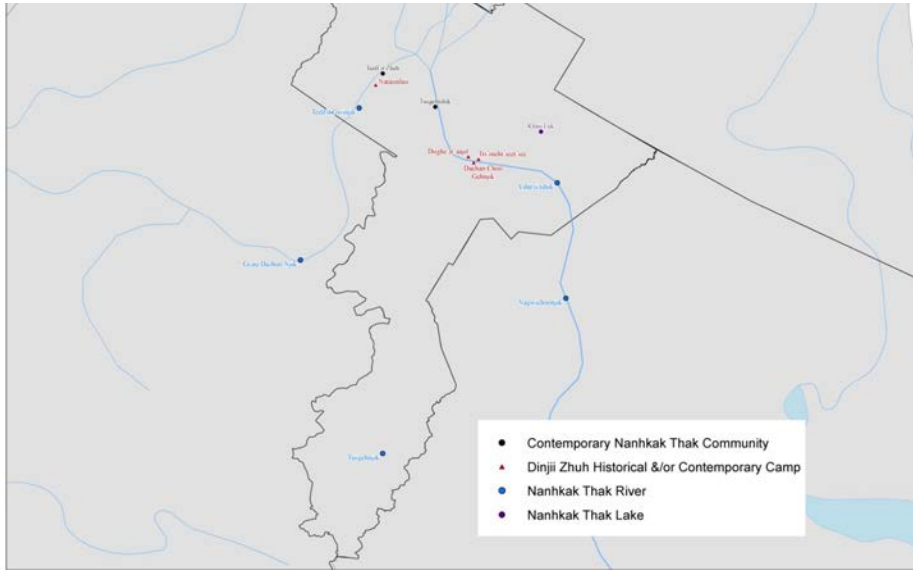
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@CrystalGailFraser

Looking After Ourselves

- National Indian Residential School Crisis line: 1-866-925-4419
- Text Line: text 686868 for free, 24/7
- Canadian Mental Health Assoc.: 1-833-456-4566 toll free (In QC: 1-866-277-3553), 24/7 or visit www.crisisservicescanada.ca
- Check for mental health resources in your area.
- Look after yourself: take a walk, call or text a friend, nourish your body with a snack, show your emotions.





Region – Nanhkak Thak



Oral Histories & Archival Research

2 VERY DIFFERENT PROCESS

Oral History Considerations

- ▶ Knowing what kind of oral histories you are trying to access.
- ▶ Highly nuanced work.
- ▶ Directions of interviews.
- ▶ How data is stored and shared.
- ▶ Lengthy process.
- ▶ Self-care for all involved.



Yi'eenoodàì'
yeendoo
gwizhit
gwitèe'ah:
“long ago will
be in the
future.”

- ▶ What does the community want? Many possible scenarios.
- ▶ How does this affect oral history and interview content?
- ▶ In the context of student death & unmarked graves:
 - ▶ Remembrance – ceremony, grave markings, monuments.
 - ▶ Historical data – names, circumstances, what happened.
 - ▶ Could be about a particular person or an institution in general.
 - ▶ Imaging – Indigenous Knowledge about mapping Land and water.
 - ▶ Recovery – location of graves, Indigenous death rituals, how to do this work in a good way.
 - ▶ Accountability & Justice – criminal charges, what this means working within settler colonial justice frameworks.
 - ▶ Theory – Indigenous theories of death, Indian Residential Schools, strength & resilience.



Community-Engaged Research

- ▶ Giving communities the space to develop their own research proposals.
- ▶ Understanding the complexities of research on the histories of Indian Residential Schools.

Theory: Dinjii Zhuh Concepts of Strength + Eve Tuck

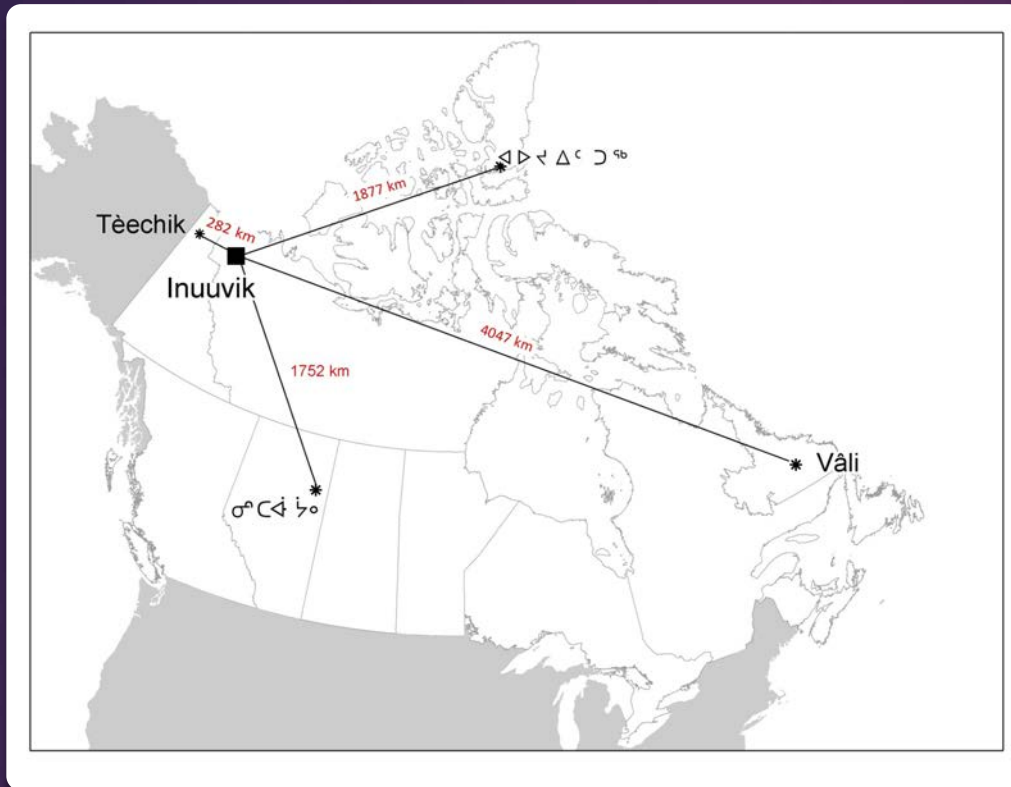
Indigenous Education scholar Eve Tuck's moratorium on damage-centered research for Indigenous communities.

The strength of Dinjii Zhuh philosophies:

T'aih → ancestral strength

Vit'aih → personal strength

Guut'àii → collective/communal strength



Ongoing
Aggressive
Policies of
Assimilation and
Colonialism into
the 1960s and
1970s



NWT Archives/ © Emily Stillwell fonds / NWT Archives

The Carcerality of Institutionalized Life

© Crystal Gail Fraser



The Carcerality of Institutionalized Life

The Involvement and Refusal of Parents from the Outset

- ▶ Indigenous parents and families seeking to engage with the churches and the state about education for their children.
- ▶ Provided to be forceful critics of the system and facilitated lasting change.



Indigenous Cultural Customs – How Parents Looked After Children

The persistence of regional customs.

Mentorship and demonstration.

Language resurgence in day schools.



Indigenous Cultural Customs – How Parents Looked After Children





Conclusion:
*By Strength,
We Are Still
Here*

Thanksgiving

Photo: Fort Providence, NWT. Courtesy Dr. Jessica Dunkin

