

# MOOSE AND MINERALS: FIRST NATION OF NACHO NYÄK DUN ELDERS' PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGE



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LACE - LABOUR MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE EXTRACTIVE  
INDUSTRIES (PI GERTRUDE SAXINGER)

AAA/CASCA VANCOUVER 2019



# METHOD(OLOGY)

**LACE - Labour mobility and community participation in the extractive industries: case studies in the Canadian north Research Project 2014 – 2019; JOJO Fieldwork**

**Oral History Project – Elders' Opinions on the Impact of the Extractive Industry**

**aim: add to the understanding of the “complex pattern of mutual involvement and unequal impacts” (Winton and Hogan 2015:93)**

**13 Oral History Interviews; 30 - 90 minutes; mix between semi-structured and narrative/life-history interviews: 10 more narrative/life-history based, 2 more semi-structured, (depending on age and knowledge about the mining industry), 1 “ice-fishing” interview/discussion between 2015 and 2017**

**oral accounts and subjective memories accounts are treated as centre-piece to academic inquiry (Cruikshank 1990)**

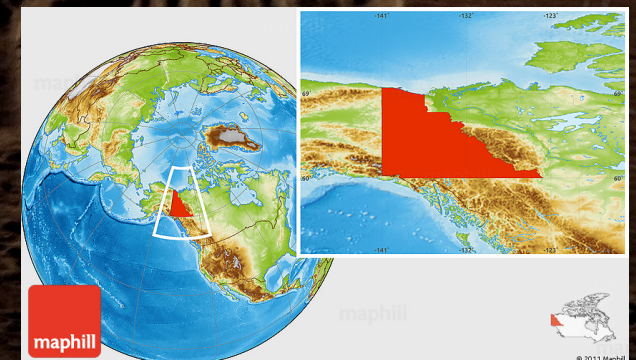
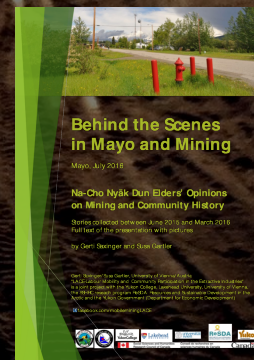
**Presentation of preliminary findings (booklet) to Elders in 2016**

**Verification of Transcripts in 2017 and 2018**

**Poster: Memories of Mining > Timeline of Major Events**

**Book: Dän Hùnày – Our People's Story 2019**

**Online @ [Dän Hùnày](#)**





# Memories of Mining: First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun Elders' perspectives



Picture credits: © Susanna Gartler  
Map: www.yukoninfo.com  
Steamboat: www.hougengroup.com  
Mine Site: www.vitgoldcorp.com

Poster by Susanna Gartler, student investigator of ReSDA Project JACE - Labour Mobility and Community Participation in the Extractive Industry (2014-2019), and Gertrude Saxinger (Co-PI), in collaboration with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun.

Sources and further Readings  
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Canada

Yukon

Lakehead University

ReSDA

Yukon College





# DÄN HÙNÀY OUR PEOPLE'S STORY

FIRST NATION OF NACHO NYÄK DUN ELDERS' MEMORIES  
AND OPINIONS ON MINING

FIRST NATION OF NACHO NYÄK DUN ELDERS  
WITH SUSANNA GARTLER, JOELLA HOGAN AND GERTRUDE SAXINGER

FIRST NATION OF NACHO NYÄK DUN ♦ REŠDA – RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARCTIC ♦ YUKON COLLEGE





Bella Peter



Simon Mervyn



Jimmy Johnny



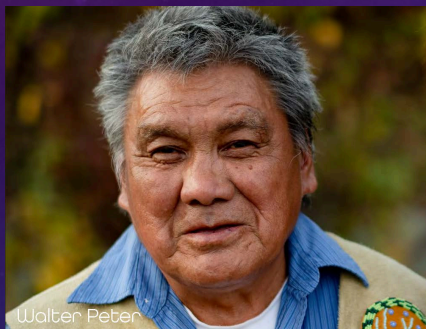
Nancy Hagen



Betty Lucas



Helen Buyck



Walter Peter



Lena Malcolm



Donnie Germaine



Simon Mervyn



Frank Patterson



Catherine Germaine



Rose Lemieux



FIRST NATION OF  
NACHO NYÄK DUN  
ELDERS who  
participated in the  
project





## CHAPTER ONE: LIFE IN DÄN KU

Lena Malcolm: “We don’t go on a boat. We don’t go town. They kept us down there. (laughs) We played around with the ball. Later on we picked some berry, cranberry – yeah was a good life.”



## CHAPTER TWO: RELOCATION

The late Helen Buyck tells that there might have been systemic reasons:

“They never told us what we could do about the water, we were given no alternatives. A well could have been drilled; something could have been done because there is plenty of good water there. Maybe at that time government people did not want Indians to get too wise.” (Helen Buyck 1983 in Mayo Historical Society 1990: 252f.)



## CHAPTER THREE: RESISTANCE AND RESILIENCE

Betty Lucas: While we were living in a cabin and I got eight children with my husband. We got three little bedroom, one little kitchen and sitting room out there, for eight, nine, ten of us. We filled up in that little house and we never complained. We got something better than a tent. Anyway, when some of my kids grew up and they take them to residential school. My kid. Then we've been having problems, my husband and I, we used to drink liquor then. We both quit.

Now we are thinking about our family, he told me let's move to a trapline.

Let's move to a trapline, save our children, my kids.





## CHAPTER FOUR: LIFE IN MAYO AND ELSA

Women did not work in the mining sector. They started working in early age as babysitters, in the restaurant or in the hospital. Catherine Germaine explains: My first job was when I was twelve as a dishwasher in a café, I was proud of my pay cheque, I got seventy-five dollars. Lots of young girls started like that, peeling vegetables, waiting on tables. Later on, I worked in the hospital and kitchen. When I was thirty-eight, I went to work in the school as a language teacher. I learned at the Yukon College.



## CHAPTER FIVE: MINING TODAY

Sitting on the banks of Tagé Cho gé (Yukon River) during a Yukon First Nations General Assembly Simon Mervyn explains:

... the opportunities, you take it with a grain of salt, that's what First Nations do.

This mine over here (pointing toward Minto Mine), it's a big hole in the ground, all the resources are going south.







## CHAPTER SIX: RESPECT FOR NATURE

Walter Peter: You always have great respect for the river. You do not make fun or talk about it.

‘You know why’, he told me? People say, ‘river is not alive’. But that’s a lie. River can hear you. If you talk about it can hear you, everything. So, you have to abide by the rules, to have respect for it. You don’t talk any nonsense. The river, it’s alive, it can hear what you’re saying about it.



# FILM: MINING ON FIRST NATION LAND





# CONCLUSION

- Nacho Nyäk Dun Elders' perspectives shed very different light on recent history of the Yukon and contact than common narratives of 'discovery', 'empty lands' and previous accounts of past events that are purely oriented towards mining proponents and processes
- more nuanced understanding of how mining colonialism was/is experienced
- ONLINE VERSION OF Dän Hùrày is available on [fnnd.com/heritage](http://fnnd.com/heritage)
- Second print run already planned
- Continuing research relationship with First Nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun and other First Nations across the Yukon
- Continuing collaboration with individuals
- Next step: Write-up Dissertation, Presentation of Results to Community in Fall 2020.