

Tsigazi

Ats'e Tsigazi was the first to bring his family over this area. Their clans travel a lot. They don't stay in one place too long. They have to follow where the animals go. As they traveled, they camped wherever they killed moose or something. They traveled over rivers, creeks, mountains, hills, woods, and meadows.

One summer when Tsigazi was just a very young boy, his clan traveled a great distance. But they did not come upon any animals. Oh, they snared rabbits and squirrels and groundhogs now and then, but they started to go without food for days at a time. So, they got nothing but water.

Tsigazi had two older sisters and one brother just older than he was, but he was the youngest. He was so young he was just beginning to walk and talk. He was the favorite of his older sister.

Then one morning, the older sisters said to the people, "My sister and I are still strong, so we must go ahead of you all and hunt. All the men are exhausted and can't go hunting anymore. They are too weak."

So the sisters went early in the morning. They went ahead to hunt. They traveled over two mountain ridges before they killed some caribous. Then the oldest sister started back to meet the clan. She met them just over the ridges. She came and found her families, but her two young brothers were missing.

The oldest sister asked her parents, "Where are my brothers?" And they told her they had to leave them behind because they could not pack them any more. The little boys were so weak from hunger that



This is the story of Tsigazi as told by Mary Charlie. Mary was born north of Fort Ware in Fox Lake. She was raised since the age of two by her grandparents, Mack and Sophie McCook. Mary is the Tsek'ene Language Specialist in Aatse Davie School. She is currently enrolled in Thompson Rivers University and is gathering traditional stories as part of a project within her studies.

Mary's father Francis Charlie told her this story many times. Tsigazi means "Little White Hair" in Tsek'ene. The name was given because Tsigazi had a streak of white hair all his life.



She traveled over the ridge, and she saw something like a child on a rock halfway down the ridge. She approached him cautiously and called him by name. He got up and answered, so she knew it was her youngest brother. She ran down to him and picked him up, asking him how he got there so fast. He answered in his babyish way, so she couldn't understand what he was saying. She guessed someone or something brought him there. So, she did not ask him again.

She gave him water and food. Then they set out for the other brother. But when they got to where they had camped, the boy was dead. They buried him and left to follow the others.

Kwadacha History Project, Phase 2

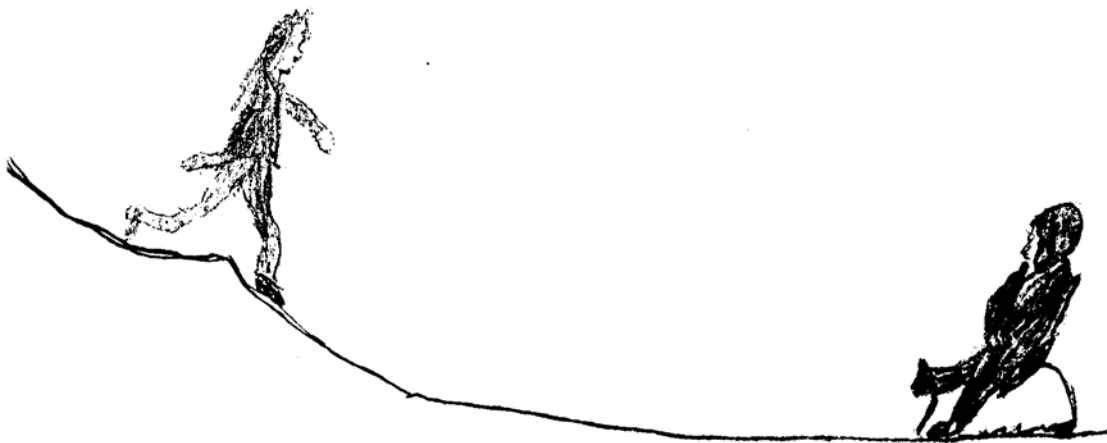
This project began in August 2005. The first phase lasted one year, during which time Susan Hatfield McCook gathered stories and personal histories and researched historic records and data.

In Phase 2, we have formed an advisory group to review the information gathered, decide which areas of Kwadacha history should be included, and determine how historic information, records, and artifacts should be preserved.

Staff at Aatse Davie School will use this library of information and artifacts to teach our children the traditions, values, and ways of Kwadacha.

Susan McCook will continue to work with Band members as our community carries out the challenge of preserving Kwadacha heritage. She is in the community frequently to work with the advisory committee, to carry out the directions of the committee, and to continue researching.

If you are interested in being part of this exciting project or if you have information or pictures from Fort Ware's past, we invite you to contact the school at (250) 471 – 2002 or email Susan at hatfield@cnc.bc.ca.



That young boy grew to be a strong and skillful hunter. His name was Tsigazi. He grew up and became the great, great, great, great grandfather of our Tsek'ene people of both Fort Grahame and Fort Ware. He was a very good hunter and provider for our people. They did not starve during his lifetime.

His resting place is at 21 Mile on top of a mountain. People say something is there that watches over his grave. Those who travel there say they hear it but do not see it.

