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BOOK INTERVIEW

NAME: _____



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Frontier Spirit: The Brave Women of the Klondike is a book written by Jennifer Duncan. It offers brief biographies of eight women who played significant roles in Dawson, Yukon Territory, during the Klondike Gold Rush. This excerpt is from the book. The interviewee, Lisa Hutton, is a woman of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in heritage.

Chief Isaac was a well-known chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (Hän) during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896, when thousands of people migrated to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in homeland. This made the Hän people a small minority compared to the tens of thousands of newcomers.

LISA TELLS HOW THE TR'ONDËK HWËCH'IN SAVED THEIR HERITAGE:

“The First Nations people are really resilient to have held on to their culture. Chief Isaac, chief during the Gold Rush, had the foresight to protect the language and dances and songs. He asked our neighbours and relatives in Eagle, Alaska to take them and keep them until the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in were ready to receive them back. The influx of non-Native peoples, the diseases, being removed from their fishing grounds—it didn't kill them. The First Nations people have been an integral part of this city since they moved into town from Moosehide in the 1950s. They played active roles in the community. We make up part of the city. And what Chief Isaac did really saved the First Nations culture here. Almost a hundred years later, the First Nations decided it was time. Following traditional ways, they contacted the people in Alaska and asked what the protocol was to get the songs and dances back. There were certain ceremonies the people in Dawson had to learn, certain rules they had to follow, and once they were ready, they began earning the return of that traditional knowledge. And that's been going on for about ten years now.”

Source: Duncan, J. (2003). *Frontier Spirit: The Brave Women of the Klondike*. Doubleday Canada.

