The Man Who Became a Caribou

Dinjii Vadzaih Dhidlit: The Man Who Became a Caribou is a new bilingual volume based on a series of oral interviews with Gwich’in elders living in rural northeast Alaska and the Yukon Territory. Richly illustrated, the book covers a wide range of topics based on traditional harvesting and use of caribou from ancient to contemporary times. It also reveals traditional beliefs and taboos about caribou and includes a detailed naming system for caribou anatomy, conversations about potlatches and sharing, as well as personal experience stories and traditional stories. The book was made possible by research grant from the National Science Foundation and a publication grant by the Alaska Humanities Forum.

Craig Mishler is a cultural anthropologist and folklorist who has worked continuously in Alaska since the late 1960s and is the author, co-author, and editor of eight books, including Neerihiinjìk: We Traveled from Place to Place: The Gwich’in Stories of Johnny and Sarah Frank (2001) and The Blind Man and the Loon: The Story of a Tale (2013).

Kenneth Frank is an elder, indigenous scholar, and a fluent speaker of the Gwich’in language. He was raised in Venetie, Alaska, lived for many years in Arctic Village, and now resides in Fairbanks. Kenneth is in frequent demand for drum making and singing workshops and is the leader of the Di’haii Gwich’in dancers.

Other project team members and collaborators include Allan Hayton, Crystal Frank, and Caroline Tritt-Frank.