



Title: Chilkoot Cultural Camp

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Brown bear death reminds people to clean up their act

By Dan Henry

Bears and people do not mix. Although stories abound regarding the awesome power of the Alaskan coastal brown bear, the truth is that in most habitual encounters with humans the bear loses. Such was the case of a young brown bear that was destroyed last Friday at Chilkoot State Park.

The scenario is familiar to those who have lived in bear country. Bear wanders into a peopled area. It finds out that people mean food availability. The animal follows its instincts to find more food. A few careless people encourage it. Bear becomes over-eager. Bear becomes dangerous. The danger of conflict becomes acute. Bear is killed.

Fish and Wildlife protection officer Al Hassen would prefer that this common affair were not so predictable. Because of the public safety issue, he was called in by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) to "deal with the problem." His investigation into the issue also involved the assistance of several other state park employees, state biologists, and citizens.

The problem of the Chilkoot cub began last year when a Lutak resident killed a brown bear sow in defense of life and property. The action left two motherless cubs, at least one of which probably returned to the area this season in search of food. Chief ranger for Haines area state parks Terry Rader first noticed the scrawny 1 1/4 year-old bear as it wandered through the Chilkoot campground in early July.

"After awhile it started coming through several times a day," the ranger explained. "Then we began warning campers and the bear continued to come through."

It wasn't long before Al Hassen was contacted by Rader to provide support on the potential problem. Hassen said that "when state parks came to me I suggested that we post signs and pass out literature—try and educate the public."

The educational venture involved a great deal of the state employees' time and effort, but the bear kept coming back. "We chased the bear around and made foot patrols daily," Rader recalled. "We posted signs, we warned campers about proper food storage; we pretty well saturated the camp with PR."

The 80-pound cub continued to haunt the Chilkoot campground. Some bystanders claimed to have seen a woman trying to feed the bear a tuna fish sandwich. Vacationers could hear the bear rattling garbage can lids in the night. Anglers witnessed the bear grabbing their fish off the banks of the river. Rangers were staying at the park until midnight to divert the moonlight marauder. A cute cub was turning into an acute headache for a lot of people.

Under Hassen's guidance, the next phase in the bear scare program involved "people yelling at the bear, then throwing rocks." The bear paid no attention.

The protection officer decided to fire "cracker shells" from a shotgun at the bear. The shells are designed to snap loudly near the animal, but do not actually touch or penetrate the skin. The cub hardly took notice of the explosions.

"We then determined it was not afraid of people," Hassen said.

The small bear became a greater nuisance as it began to feel more at ease with people's

campsites and belongings. One distraught fisherman reported that the bear had broken into his cooler and had eaten a 100-pound halibut. Later, the bear rolled against a tent and bent the frame. The visitors quickly left the campground with one more Alaskan bear tale to tell. Unfortunately, the story did not end there.

As soon as it became apparent that the bear was becoming habituated to the finer points of human lifestyles, Hassen suggested to ADFG that the animal be relocated. "I recommended from the very beginning to move the animal," he stated.

The question of relocation triggered an interagency discussion that touched upon all of the possible ways to deal with the bear. Although Hassen had initially pushed to take the animal elsewhere, Juneau ADFG officials notified him that it was against their policy to move the bear.

Donald McKnight, regulations supervisor for the game division of ADFG, was direct in stating the agency's official position. "The policy that deals with habituated bears is to destroy the bears."

As inhumane as this action might sound, ADFG backs up their reasoning with ample evidence. A recent study published in the May-June issue of 'Alaska Fish and Game' found a remarkable return rate in bears that have been relocated to other areas. In 1979, 47 bears were flown out of a 1,300 square mile study area at the headwaters of the Susitna river. Some were transplanted up to 150 miles from their pickup point. Sixty percent of the creatures returned, averaging 58 days to make the trip back home.

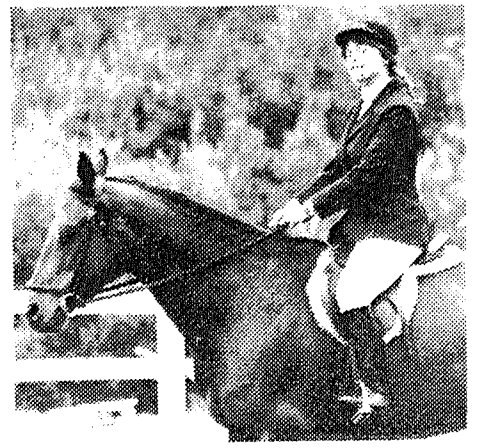
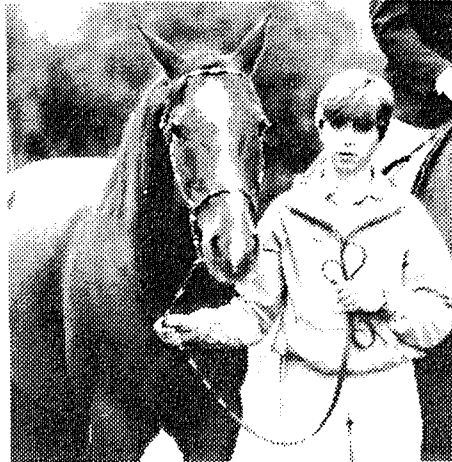
Bear relocation has also been attempted in the Haines area. Several years ago one mischief-maker near town was flown to the Katzehin drainage on the east side of Lynn Canal. It took only 20 days for the bear to make its way back to town via icefields, mountain ranges and Skagway.

McKnight cited another pressing concern that contributes to ADFG's seemingly stringent policy: the budget.

"The bottom line was funds," he declared. "If we removed every bear that has been reported in a human zone in Southeast this summer, my budget would be gone one month into the fiscal year. If we transported the (Chilkoot) bear, budget-wise, I'd have to give up a goat survey in the area. The biological information is just too important; we can't let go of it like that."

At the same time, McKnight acknowledged Hassen's efforts to protect the bear. "In Al's opinion it was worth the long shot for bear transport. Al's first thought was for the welfare of the bear. He took a lot of heat through the game division."

Another reason that objections were raised regarding relocation was the danger of drugging the bear. ADFG game biologist Kris Hundertmark explained: "The option that I objected to most strenuously was tranquilizing the bear in the park. If darted, there's about 10 minutes to a half hour before the bear loses consciousness. We could lose it as it ran through the brush. Then a day or two later it might wake up as



Melissa Matthews (left) and Karen Stokely (right) show off their prize horses in preparation for the Southeast Alaska State Fair Horse Show. Melissa and her horse Rebel recently garnered top honors at the 3rd annual Yukon Horseman's Association show held in Whitehorse. Karen and her horse Missey also made a strong showing in the competition.

S.E. State Fair promises fun for all

When Harriett Jurgeleit talks about the Southeast Alaska State Fair she can hardly hide her enthusiasm. "It's going to be much more exciting this year," she bubbled, "with new food booths, logging events, entertainment and workshops."

As executive director of the state fair, Harriett has had her hands full in keeping the people and events coordinated. Still, it seems to be coming together better than she could have expected.

"We just haven't had the last minute push that happened in past years," she explained. "The fair isn't just one person. It couldn't be put together without everyone's

A special feature of the fair will be the numerous workshops that will be held on a broad variety of topics. "These are new this year," Harriett said. "We think they should be really popular."

The workshops will focus on such diverse issues as mitten-making, vegetable gardening in S.E. Alaska, survival on S.E. beaches, sewing shortcuts, economics of small farming, animals and poultry, and shark fishing.

Erwin Hertz has been instrumental in organizing a logging show at this year's fair. The show, which features more prize money than ever before, includes children's,

Horse Show Opening Days

Wednesday, Aug. 15

9 a.m. - Halter classes; open to everyone

Lunch break

Afternoon - 4-H; Age levels: Fitting & showing; jumping; hunt seat equitation; saddle seat equitation; stock seat equitation; bare back equitation; Western or English riding horse.

Thursday, Aug. 16

8 a.m. - Dressage

Lunch break

Afternoon - Equitation over fences; hunter over fences; English classes.

help." The director emphasized an August 9 meeting to take place at 7:00 p.m. at the fairgrounds for all department workers.

Harriett's enthusiasm, while encouraged through a cooperative staff, centers also around the wide variety of interesting booths and events that will take place at the fair. One aspect that she feels particularly inspired by are the "artists in action." She noted that the craftpersons will include a porcelain painter, dollmaker, weaver-spinner, carver, potter and a glass blower. Many of the artists are locals who have been working for months to prepare their displays.

Food is always an important part of the fair. "Some folks come just to try a little taste of everything," Harriett noted. This year will feature 16 booths including such foods as potato salad, tacos, burritos, fresh shrimp, fish and chips, seafood salad, corn on the cob, pocket sandwiches, egg rolls, pies, cupcakes, ice cream and breakfast specialities.

women's, and men's events in axe throwing and choker setting. Power sawing will be a men's and women's event. Other men's events will include hand bucking, obstacle bucking, and log rolling. A grand prize of \$2,000 will be awarded to the individual who accumulates the highest overall points.

Another highlight in the fair events will be the wide range of entertainment. Coordinator Fred Shields described the acts as all being "top-notch." He noted that this year's fair will include stage lighting, which "will help tremendously."

The showbill involves a variety of entertainers from around the country and locally as well. The Red Clay Ramblers are "the biggie," Shields said. "They're a country-folk-bluegrass band with a sense of humor—a great band to watch. They must be seen to be believed."

Shields is also thrilled over the appearance

See BEAR p. 8

See FAIR p. 5

Chilkoot Cultural Camp: A Tlingit heritage is passed



Teens learn traditional Tlingit fish-cleaning techniques from Helen King. They are careful to throw the fins, in which the fish spirit resides, into the river.

By Dan Henry

"All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth."

When Chief Sealth (Seattle) of the Duwamish tribe wrote these words over a hundred years ago, he meant to explain to President Franklin Pierce the close-knit bond between Native people and the earth. He was also trying to point out that all people must live with the ways of nature if we are to live at all. Despite the fast-paced, highly technological world we live in today, there are still a few who hold on to this premise as the key to our future.

Here in the Haines area we are fortunate enough to be called home for people who are still concerned with the welfare of the children of future generations, of the earth from which we draw our livelihood. This three-part series will explore the people and ideas that have been drawn together at the Chilkoot Indian Cultural Camp to assure our children's children that a long-established heritage will not be forgotten.

Five weeks ago, the camp site on the Chilkoot River consisted only of a smokehouse in a clearing in the berry bushes. A few young people had been brought to help clear the land further and start erecting tents in anticipation of the upcoming session. Chilkoot Indian Association president Roy Clayton stood among the busy youngsters to supervise their activities. He seemed eager to tell about the forthcoming cultural event.

"We want to teach young people the old style of Tlingit living," Clayton emphasized. "We want to revive the cultural heritage."

Clayton pointed out the ways that the program had shown growth. The number of teachers, volunteers, and participants was expected to rise from last year's trial camp. "People want to come out here and work for nothing," he said. "They just want the kids to learn."

The enthusiasm generated from the pilot program last year had been enough to raise funds for a bigger program this summer. Clayton elaborated: "The kids really loved it. They went right to the legislature for more money."

The response was positive. This year's camp will operate on funds from the summer youth training program, the State Council for the Arts, Older Alaskans Commission, Johnson-O'Malley grants, and private contributions. The money is used to create facilities and pay the way for a number of Tlingit elders to pass their knowledge along to the youngsters.

One of the local elders, Chilkoot chief Austin Hammond, is the source of inspiration for the popular summer program. Through his vision for the future, Native and non-Native people have organized into a strong, enthusiastic force. Hammond described the meager beginnings: "Three years ago I put up a smokehouse for the fish. Then someone asked me, why don't you have a children's camp so they can learn how to put some dried fish up? I said that I don't know how I'm going to get the money. Just that smokehouse, it cost me over \$3,000. It was my own money."

Hammond's concern for the cultural heritage did not end with the question of funds. Assistance from other concerned citizens, such as Julie Folta, helped make enough money available to start the camp.

The vision has continued to see the program grow and touch many people in the community and the state. Hammond emphasized his concern for personal growth among the students and the physical expansion of the camp facilities. "My father's side, they talked with me and they say, 'This place we're going to call Sockeye

Point. So they give it to us and we own the whole place up to the Glory Hole. But now the state holds the ground. Sealaska holds the ground. That's why I can't get a regular house here. You see the tent—they told me if you build a house, you've got to take it down. But I would like to have this ground back for the grandchildren that you see. I want to get the whole place not for myself, but for the other ones; they're going to grow. My children, they'll have children—that's why I'm working on it."

Some of the unique aspects of the cultural camp are the diversity of educational offerings and the variety of students who have come to learn the culture. Each of the elders specialize in an area that they know best to pass along to the children. The curriculum includes storytelling, beading, survival, cooking, carving, and musical skills such as singing, drumming, and dancing.

The diversity of participants is what keeps the program running. Austin Hammond stressed the positive differences in the camp. "All of these different trees around us, they're all together. That's the way I feel about the white children, colored children, whatever they are, they all have to learn the culture. Our white brothers, we are learning what they learn. They teach us, why not teach them? We can get together all as one. What we need, they can help us."

Even the Tlingit teachers have come from diverse backgrounds to assure the students of a broad cultural knowledge. Hammond tells the stories of the Raven clan while Ed and Cecelia Kunz have been invited to explain the ways of the Eagle clan. "I can't talk about the Eagle's side," Hammond explained. "Just the Raven side is what I can talk about. The Tlingit don't want to tell the other's stories. All the other villages can come here. The land they've got to know, so I told them when they get back home, when you see your grandfather tell him to tell you about the land so it wouldn't be lost."

Camp director Matilda Jackson has been instrumental in organizing the teachers for the various skill classes. Her staff includes beadlers Lillian Hammond, Anne Keener, Louise Light, counselors Tom Jimmy, Jr. and Diane Light, master carver Nathan Jackson and his assistant George Lewis, survival instructor Archie Klaney, storytellers Austin Hammond, Ed and Cecelia Kunz, Helen King for fish preparation, Rachel Johnson for singing and drumming, and Elsie Hughes for general food preparation.

Two sessions of the cultural camp have already taken place in July. The last 10-day camp, involving 10-17-year-olds, began on Monday, August 6. "Anyone is welcome to come out," Roy Clayton stressed. "They are invited to volunteer or just watch."

This article is first in a series dealing with the Chilkoot Indian Cultural Camp. The second segment will deal with the teachings of the elders and the third will focus on the response from students and their parents.



Master carver Nathan Jackson teaches Nicki F traditional carved designs.



Camp director Matilda Lewis leads the young ones a-berrying as a part of a class teaching survival skills. Counselor Diane Light also helps the group.



Chilkoot Indian Cultural Camp: Let the Elders Speak

Part two in a three part series.

By Dan Henry

There is a story behind every time-worn face. The story involves not only the history of a single person, but includes the legends, attitudes, and lifestyle of an entire race of people. The elders who have gathered at the Chilkoot Indian Cultural Camp have dedicated their time and energy to "protecting a heritage."

Their hope lies in the children. Native cultures such as the Tlingit have relied for countless generations on the oral tradition to preserve the ways of life. For the last century, however, the presence of non-Natives in this part of Southeast Alaska disturbed ways that cultural knowledge was passed along. Euro-American lifestyle, religion, and language stifled the Tlingit ways of life. The culture became a shadow of what it had once been.

Three years ago Chilkoot chief Austin Hammond envisioned a camp setting where traditional Tlingit lifestyle would be taught to youngsters. Last summer, a pilot program was attempted. The success of the camp can be measured in the enthusiasm felt by the young and old people involved. Many of the children lobbied the state legislature for further support. These and other efforts by a growing circle of friends resulted in a full-scale program this year to preserve time-tempered traditions.

The Chilkoot Indian Cultural Camp, which just concluded after a month of activities, featured customary Tlingit skills like beadwork, singing, dancing, drum-making, survival techniques, carving, food preparation, and storytelling. Elders from all over Southeast gathered to pass along their understandings to Native and non-Native young people.

Rachel (Dixie) Johnson is a local crafts person who has dedicated much of her summer to teaching musical skills at the camp. She found that while the students at first appeared shy or stand-offish about singing and dancing, they warmed up to the ideas when they discovered their own personal involvement in the Tlingit heritage.

"What a difference in the children's attitude toward their culture from when they first came to today," Dixie marveled. "Before, there was no interest whatsoever in what their clan was, but after they learn the clan song, you know, they wanted to know which one they could come out to dance to because they didn't know what they were. We're digging in and trying to find what they are so they'll know and have a little pride in themselves."

Tlingit custom maintains that members of the tribe belong to different clans based on bloodline. Early in each camp session the elders at Chilkoot helped to identify what clans the children belong to by tracing family lineage.

"They're different stories altogether, depending on different clans," explained the song master. Like we have Eagles, then under the Eagles we have Wolf, Bear, and they all have a story behind how they got their clan. Most of them know what clan they belong to, but it's hard today because of all the intermarriages where they're not supposed to, like a Raven and a Raven, or an Eagle and an Eagle. We feel that if a Raven married a Raven then they are marrying their own bloodline. I tell them their histories through song."

Music is a vital part of the learning experience, claimed Dixie. It pulls the group together, creates a bond among young and old, Native and non-Native. Dixie described a few



Dixie Johnson prepares teens for a drumming session.

occasions behind the songs that are commonly performed.

"We have the warm-up song that is done before you ever come out in front of people. These weren't performances, like the ones you give in front of tourists, these were given when you're consoling the opposite clan. There might have been a death in the family, or maybe you're helping them rejoice at a new birth in the clan. Or maybe there was a wedding."

As is common with all the elders' teachings, there is a story behind each one of the songs or dances. Virtually all of the skills are intricately woven into a long-standing history that provides depth and reason behind the activities.

"We have what we call an entrance song," Dixie began. "We call these trade songs because they arrived by trade. They used to take trips into the interior. Austin Hammond's great-uncle had taken a trek into the interior and on the way back hurt his foot so he couldn't walk and rather than endanger his nephews' lives he told them to go on ahead and leave him. He taught the nephews the songs he had traded and those are the songs we use."

"Some of our songs have Tsimshian. We didn't know this until we sang in Ketchikan and they asked us where we got it, but we didn't know what people they were traded from. And then they told us it was Tsimshian."

A feeling of interconnectedness pervades all of the activities described by the elders. The recent arrival of Tlingit oral tradition has caused the Native people to scrutinize their historic past to find out their own identities. Often they find strong similarities between the past and their present chosen path.

"I love this," Dixie exclaimed. "I didn't know that my dad had been a songleader too. Then somebody from Sitka came up and told me. He said I didn't just get this haphazardly, but my dad was one too. Now I have two songleaders—my sons."

One distinction of the Chilkoot camp is the feeling of family between the elders and the children. Indeed, many of the youngsters are the grandchildren or great-grandchildren of their instructors. However, the elders are cautious not to play favorites, and stress the notion of togetherness as the thread that binds them as a much larger family unit. Elder Lillian Hammond is enthusiastic about the opportunity to unify young people by teaching a common history.

"I think it's wonderful to have this chance to pass our knowledge down to our grandchildren," the beading instructor said. One thing I wanted to say, we're trying to teach our kids in school—some of them whites, half-breeds, whatever—but we're all together now. A long time ago white people did not like our Native people, now we marry white people. We're all mixed."

Hammond joins many of the other elders in her belief that language helps to bind the children together. Although a 10-day camp is hardly enough time to fully learn the Tlingit tongue, applicable words are incorporated into the daily lessons.

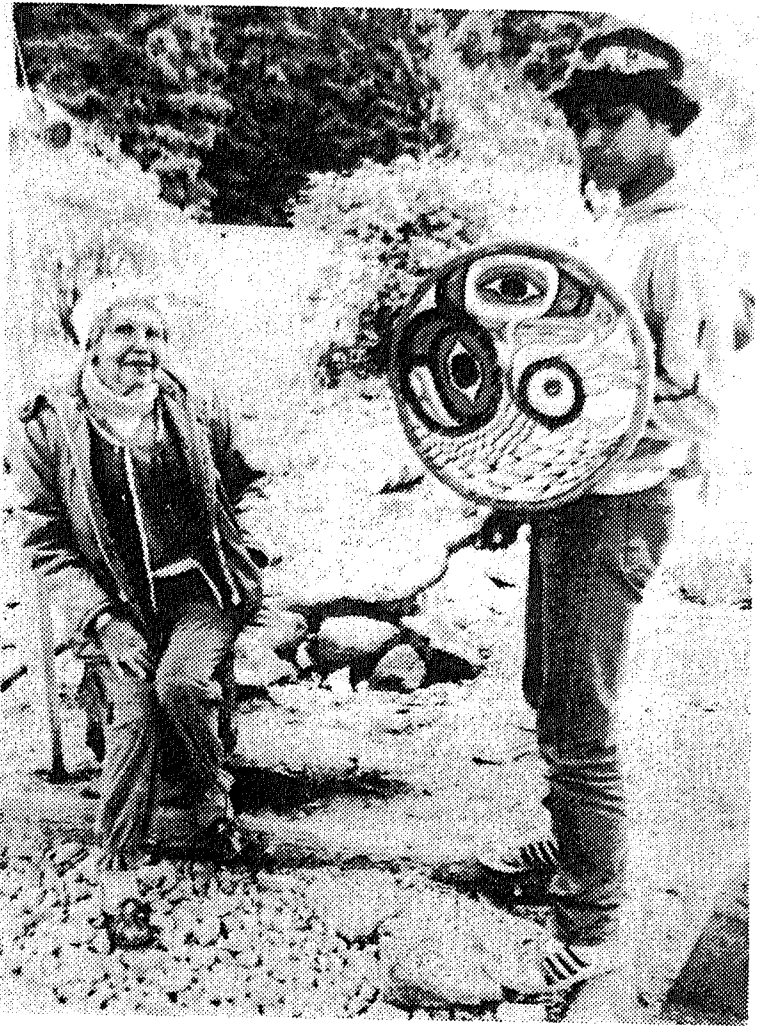
"It's funny," Lillian noted, "our Native kids grew up learning how to speak the white language and they don't start the Native language, so now it's harder to teach them. In my beadwork class I teach them how to say thread, needle, bead, things like

that. I tell them to say it so they can tell others what they are learning in our language. It's funny how the kids will sing the Tlingit songs. They know how to say it, how to sing it, but they don't even know what it means."

Lillian expressed a common concern among many of the elders: support within the community for teaching traditional Indian ways. She noted that while many visitors had come out to observe the camp, the many needs of the group—including that of future expansion—were up in the air because of uncertain funding.

"This is a community affair," Lillian said. "We're all mixed in. The town should help us with food for this camp. People should think about donating something. The other day Julie (Folta) brought some ice cream—she paid for it—and one of the kids said, 'Hey, we're going to have white man food.'"

See CAMP p. 5



Ann Keener watches Bobby Brakes practice on a traditional Tlingit drum.

CAMP

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In addition to food for thought, the camp must also meet the children's needs for physical nourishment. The Chilkoot camp focused on providing many traditional foods as a major part of the diet. The meals often included salmon and salmon roe, halibut, and wild berries.

Helen King spent much of her time showing students how to prepare salmon in a number of ways. Frank and Elsie Hughes also invested a large part of their time as the cooks for the camp. Frank Hughes, who worked full time as a volunteer, described the effort invested into providing meals for the camp.

"We put in 12-14 hours a day, seven days a week for these kids," Hughes noted. "Things that everybody else takes for granted are things that we don't have here and it's necessary that we don't have it. This way we can get a taste of what primitive living was. We're not actually primitive cooks, but we're trying to give them the food of the land."

Although the campers have met with limited success catching the fish, people have been generous in their donations. Klukwan resident and survival instructor Archie Klaney caught most of the fish himself for use at the camp. Even passing visitors have contributed to procuring food and supplying various services.

Hughes recalled a man who stopped by for two weeks to build a fish wheel for the camp. "He had to move on, but said, 'When I come back if you haven't done anything with it I'll help you put it up.'"

Hughes was quick to point out that the camp experience was a two-way street; the elders often learned as much as did the students.

"The staff is learning moods and attitudes of children, which is important. You can't always get out of a kid what you want. We have to stand back and say 'Hey, slow down a little bit and try a different angle; maybe we can get in through the back door if we can't get in through the front door.'"

The teaching staff at the camp agreed that there are many ways to approach the students. After several weeks of living with the young people, the elders began to

recognize differences in learning styles and attitudes.

Wood carver George Lewis believes that much of the teaching was a matter of getting past "interferences."

"It's pretty hard sometimes to get past that child's fantasy," he said. "They have a certain imagination that you have to play with. But you can get past that. The whole thing is similarities in language and also interferences. Once you get past that interference with, say, a Japanese child, or a Tlingit or a Haida, some don't seem to respond like our white brother. But actually they're listening to you. We found out they learn fastest through their eyes."

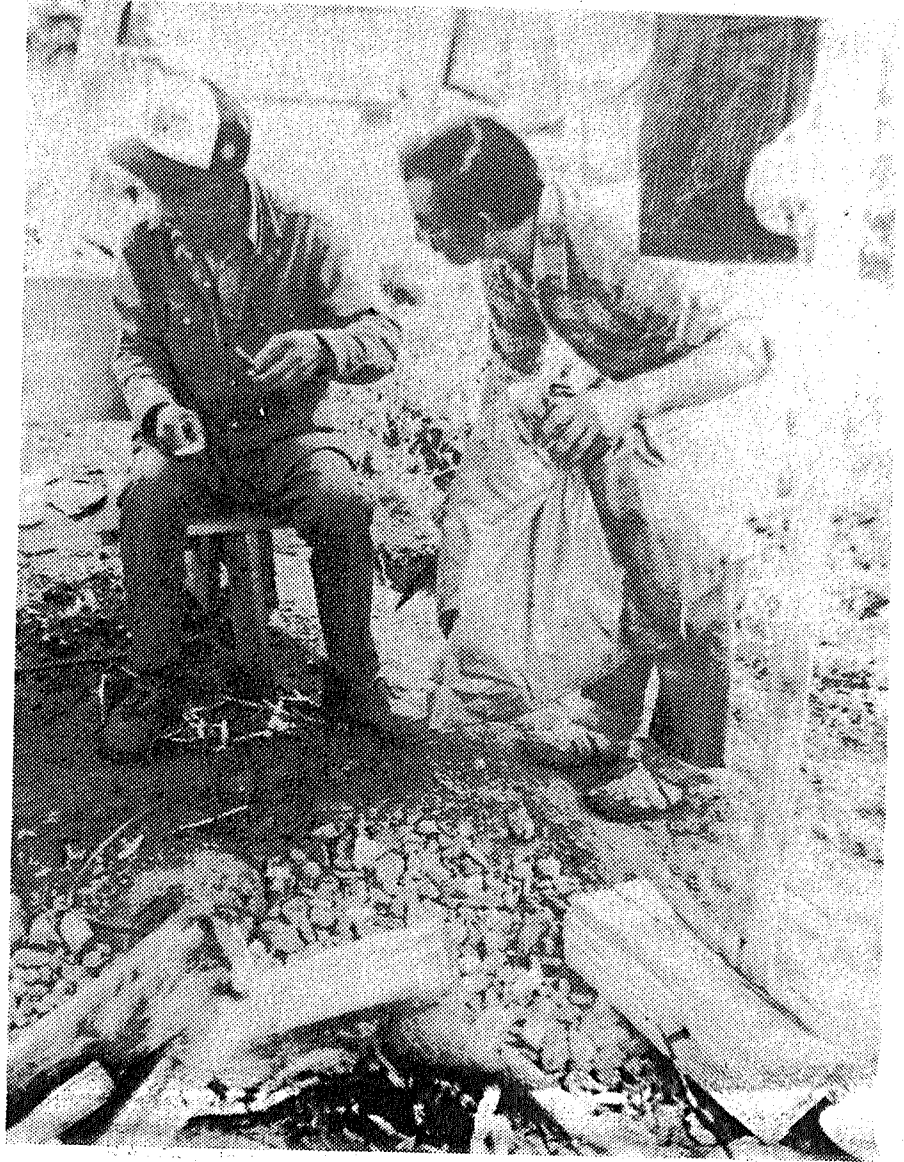
Woodcarving skills particularly apply to Lewis' theory on learning. He found that straight lecture did not work as well as did "hands on" experience.

"The kids are growing with respect," Lewis said. "They're growing with their patience. Some of them wanted to handle the sharp knives right away. As a consequence, two or three people got cut the first week. Those who got cut have learned a lot more than those who haven't."

Wayne Price, a former Haines resident now living in Angoon, also senses the growth and enthusiasm of his students. Since many of the young people are from urban centers such as Juneau, Sitka and Fairbanks, Price feels that it is important to "get them in tune" with traditional methods.

"All this young energy going to traditional use is pretty nice," he admits. "It's enjoyable just witnessing what these kids are accomplishing. I had one group here that was carving away while a bunch of kids were beating the drums and singing Indian songs at the same time. It feels real good."

Though relatively young, Price was asked to teach carving because of his broad background in the field. He learned much of the trade from teachers like Leo Jacobs and John Hagen at Alaska Indian Arts, Inc. in Haines. The carver is now working on an extensive project in Wrangell to restore the historic Chief Shakes house. The work includes creating six



Archie Klaney, left, and Frank Hughes, right, share a moment together at the campfire.

new totem poles for the house. Price said that the Chilkoot camp was a good break.

"The kids are great," he noted, "I told them I'd be back next year. They really catch on—look at the work. It's fabulous. The whole idea of the camp is a real good thing. Kids really don't get exposed to this anywhere else."

Another vital aspect of traditional training involves basic outdoor survival. Archie Klaney worked extensively to give the students a broad background in Native woodsmanship, including firestarting, edible plants, primitive shelters, and orienteering.

Klaney related an example of how to find your way out of the woods. "I took the kids out in the woods. It was cloudy. We went in big circles, then I said, 'Which way to camp?' The children were all quiet, then one speaks up. 'Say, I know the way back to camp.' Then Julie says, 'You do, eh? Which way?' The little girl pointed right towards camp. Then Julie says, 'How do you know?' 'Oh,' she says, 'I listen to Mr. Archie and I hear that waterfall so we'll go that way.' That made my day. I told them if you can't see the mountain in the clouds, listen for the waterfall."

The concept of effective listening plays a necessary role at the camp. The elders are concerned about the accuracy of the children's memory once the camp has ended. After all, the legends of their people have already been altered through the course of time. Chilkoot chief and storyteller Austin Hammond explained the importance of listening carefully to cultural history.

"The children, they've got to listen," Hammond said. "Some of the younger ones don't listen, but you've got to tell them what's going to happen. My grandfather used to tell me stories. One night he told me a story. I was nine years old. The next night he said, 'Tell me the story I told you.' I got to shaking, sweating. Then my grandfather turned me around and said, 'Grandson, if you don't tell me that story, you're not going to learn. You have to tell me. From where it ends I can start talking again.'"

Hammond feels that it is necessary to tie the various skills together with stories of the ancestors. No single class is more important than the other; they all tell the story of a cultural experience that is much wider than that of a single person. The camp setting provides a context in which the old ways may be continued, just as the knowledge was passed down for centuries.

Frank Hughes summarized the feelings expressed by many of the elders as they reflected on their experience. Looking back on the camp, he noted that the outstanding lesson is "trying to show love to my fellow man and to the kids, to the staff. I'm not doing this for money, it's got to be for love."

(This article is the second section of a three-part feature which is intended to describe the structure of the Chilkoot Cultural Camp, the teachings of the elders, and reflections on the experience by teachers, students, and parents.)



Carving instructor Wayne Price oversees woodcarving class.

Chilkoot Heritage:

Camp prepares for future

By Dan Henry

As we measure human history, it was not long ago that the headwater site along the Chilkoot River was home for an active, healthy tribe of Tlingit Indians. These were the Chilkoot people, a subculture that had lived for centuries in harmony with the salmon, bear and eagles at the place where clear water flows out of Chilkoot Lake.

According to Austin Hammond, contemporary leader of the Chilkoot people, one year a sickness came through the settlement. Many members of the tribe were killed by the mysterious illness. A few survivors went to see the Wife, who might know of the medicine with which to combat the scourge. She said, "I don't want them to catch any more of my sickness. I will call all the skeletons to go up there on the mountain."

The dead were then all taken to the high ridge on the east side of the river, where their bones supposedly remain today. Hammond added that "there's no grass on the graves. Since that time you will hear no owls here."

If one stands on the road near the old village site and looks across the river toward the steep cliffs, it is not hard to make out the form of a large eye silhouetted in the rock. "That's where the eye of the woman is since we've had our people killed," Hammond concluded.

VISIONS OF HERITAGE

The eye on the cliff reminds the Chilkoot descendants of their place of cultural birth, of their heritage. For the past two summers, the ancient site has been used again for the purpose of breathing life into the near-forgotten traditions of the Tlingit people. The Chilkoot Indian Cultural Camp comes from a vision belonging to Hammond, and subsequently many others, that the "old ways" not be lost by the crush of modern society.

The camp, which attracted Native and non-Native youngsters from all over the state, ran for five weeks in July and August this year. Last year's pilot program offered a 10-day

session. Next season, the camp staff hopes to see the program touch even a broader cross-section of young people for a longer period of time.

Camp director Matilda Lewis noted that "some of (this summer's) kids were wanting us to reserve them some space for next year. They kept saying, 'we want to come back.'"

DIVERSE GROUPS

The summer camp brought together many Native elders, craftpersons, and a diverse group of volunteers to teach the traditional ways to children. The lessons included a broad spectrum of Native skills from woodcarving to storytelling. Campers were placed into a live-in situation so that they might be able to absorb as much of the culture as possible with a minimum of outside distraction. For many of the children it was necessary to start teaching from the most basic level.

One of the primary organizers, Julie Folta, explained that "there were some kids for whom this was just an introduction. We had to teach them what clan they belonged to. There were a few who didn't even know who their grandparents were."



Neil Erickson shows a method for preparing salmon

of the camp also felt strongly that the learning process had been two-way, affecting the teachers at least as much as the students.

Matilda Lewis was frank with her side of the learning: "To me this was on-the-job training. We all learned. Those working next year will know better what to do after this." She added that even more help will be required as the program expands. "Next year we will need a lot of local help," she said. "Next year we will also need food and lumber donations."

Julie Folta considered a major

expressed by the workers was that more citizens of Haines and Klukwan needed to get involved. The number of visitors to the camp averaged "about a dozen," daily, with passing tourists accounting for the majority. Many donations are needed to keep the program on its feet next year, but the life of the camp depends most of all on basic community support and appreciation.

Matilda Lewis remarked that she thought that the "tourists often seemed more interested than the locals." Julie Folta summarized the general feeling by noting that "most

"Some of the kids who went back on the ferry didn't want to go. They kept singing the songs we had taught them, singing them over and over."

The program was geared for young people from varied backgrounds. The staff felt that the traditions were important for anyone to learn, no matter what their ethnic heritage. "We don't just take Tlingit kids," Folta emphasized. "We take everybody; they will grow together."

TWO-WAY LEARNING

As the staff reflected on the summer's work, a number of successes became apparent. Most of the teachers expressed great satisfaction with the enthusiasm and interest shown by their students. Organizers

success to be the "teaching of the traditional Tlingit way of thinking. The Tlingit way of problem-solving is important. With the bear, for example (see August 9, 1984 issue). All the things that happened helped us realize the interrelationships that always exist. The problems we dealt with revived an interest in the old wisdom."

Austin Hammond felt that the outcome of the Chilkoot camp could be measured by the level of interest he perceived in the students. He noted that many had worked hard carving totems, sewing beadwork for headbands, or simply understanding how to effectively use a knife. Overall, Hammond observed that "the camp was a lot better this year than last. Some of the kids who went back on the ferry didn't want to go. They kept singing the songs we had taught them, singing them over and over."

Hammond stressed the importance of spirituality as a permeating theme throughout the teachings of the elders. This aspect of traditional understandings became apparent in his particular class: storytelling.

"The story of our people from here is connected with the Bible," Hammond explained. "We have to believe in God--the only thing we've learned from Raven is what we already knew. My grandfather used to say 'don't get on top of people, stay under them.' The Bible is under the Tlingit story."

COMMUNITY EFFORT

The camp staff came to understand through their experience the necessity of working together as a community. A primary concern

of all, people just need to come out to see what's happening."

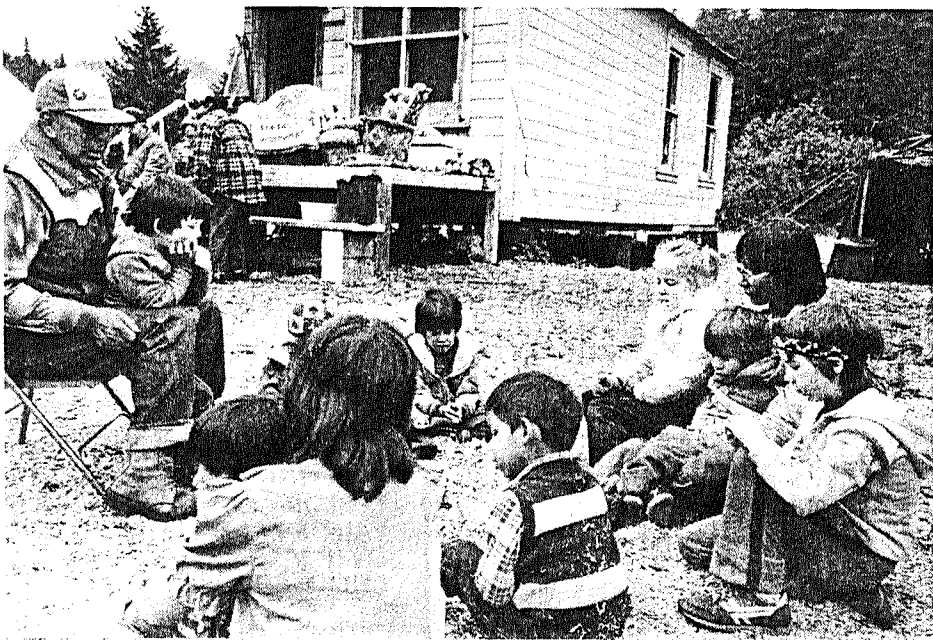
PARENTAL CONCERN

The Chilkoot staff's message that comes through again and again is the unique opportunity to learn about an original culture from those who have lived it. Sonny Cropley, a Native man who took his two young boys from Sitka to experience the camp, maintained that this was one of his last opportunities to pass along a heritage that even he had never quite understood. Like many of the staff members, he too sensed the urgency of Hammond's vision.

"I am second removed from the culture, my boys are third removed, and we are feeling now that it is important to understand the heritage," Cropley said. "My sons are caught in a crossfire. All the continuing culture after us will not be a lived culture, but a learned culture."

The Chilkoot camp, he felt, was an appropriate means to reverse the trend away from "living the culture."

The aboriginal settlement that once flanked the shores of the Chilkoot River will never be duplicated. That part of the culture has been tucked away in the memories of a few surviving descendants. Because of a vision, however, those recollections will be shared with a younger generation so the pride of understanding one's heritage might continue to live. So these children will teach woodcarving to another generation. So the children will know the songs of the ancients. So they will be able to tell the story of the Wife's eye in the cliffs above the Chilkoot River.



Austin Hammond (left) weaves a Tlingit tale while children and counselor Tom Jimmie (far right) listen