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TO: RENE c/o SEN GREEN DATE: 2/18/98

FROM: GINA SPARTZ

PER YOUR REQUEST, VARIOUS ARTICLES ON THE ANGOON BOMBARDMENT. THE NEW YORKER ARTICLE IS QUITE LENGTHY BUT VERY GOOD. I HAVE MARKED THE SECTION WHERE THE WRITER TALKS SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE SKIRMASH. THE OTHER TWO ARTICLES ARE FROM THE JUNEAU EMPIRE'S WEBSITE.

Archives

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Sunday, January 25, 1998

'A crime that was not committed'

Last modified at 11:23 a.m. on Sunday, January 25, 1998

By JAMES MacPHERSON
THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

Witness: Languc-'u, "Billy Jones," pictured in the foreground, was 13 on the day of the attack. He witnessed the entire event and later wrote about it.
PHOTO COURTESY ALASKA HISTORICAL LIBRARY, VINCENT SOBOLEFF COLLECTION

On Oct. 26, 1882, the U.S. Navy bombarded and burned the village of Angoon over a dispute between Tlingits and the Killisnoo whaling station after the accidental death of Tith Klane, a tribal shaman.

Klane was a crewman on a whaling boat when a harpoon gun exploded prematurely during an attempt to take a whale. After the death, Tlingits ceased work to mourn and prepare for a burial ceremony.

Tlingit custom required compensation for his death, and because of his high status as a medicine man, 200 blankets were demanded.

The whaling Company superintendent, J.M. Vanderbilt, refused payment and ordered the Natives back to work. When the Natives continued to mourn, painting their faces with coal tar and tallow as a sign of sorrow, Vanderbilt traveled to Sitka and told Navy Cmdr. E.C. Merriman that the Indians were uprising and threatening whites' livesand property.

Although Native accounts dispute it, Vanderbilt said Tlingits had taken two men hostage and said they would be killed if compensation was not paid.

Merriman, the top American official in Alaska at the time, returned three days later with men from the Navy, Marine Corps and the Revenue Cutter Service, the forerunner of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Adams, Merriman's ship, had too deep of a draft to navigate Kootznahoo Inlet off Angoon. So Merriman pressed into service the civilian tug Favorite and the Revenue Cutter Corwin, which had been at port in Sitka.

Merriman took several prisoners and made a counter offer to the Natives - who spoke little or no English, demanding 400 blankets from them.

When only 81 blankets were delivered, Merriman's men - with noresistance from the Tlingits - burned canoes, storehouses and totem poles; stole artifacts; and shelled tribal houses from the vessel Favorite, equipped with a Gatling gun and howitzer cannon.

Six Tlingit children died from smoke and fire.

With winter coming and all homes and food caches destroyed, the Tlingits believed they were left to die.

"It's the day we suffered from a crime that was not committed," saidBilly Jones who was 13 at the time of the attack. "The people of Angoon nearly starved to death. How much we suffered."

Jones, whose Tlingit name was Languc-'u, recorded his account ofthe attack in 1949, before his death.

His people showed no anger, only sorrow for the bombardment, Jones said.

Information in this article come from Angoon oral history and government accounts of the bombing. The article first appeared in the Jan. 19 edition of the Southeast Empire.

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Sunday, January 25, 1998

The Unforgotten

Last modified at 11:21 a.m. on Sunday, January 25, 1998

By JAMES MacPHERSON
THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

In memory: totem poles, raised in 1982, stand in Angoon as a memorial for the children who died in the attack one century earlier.
PHOTO BY KRISTAN HUTCHISON

It happened more than 115 years ago, but the U.S. Navy attack on Angoon is as vivid in the minds of local Tlingits as if it happened yesterday.

The deaths and destruction caused by an attack of a Navy gunboat in 1882 has not been forgotten by the Admiralty Island residents and tribal leaders want money from the federal government to replace stolen artifacts and rebuild the 27 tribal houses that were destroyed.

More than money, they want an

apology.

Native leaders in this village 55 miles southwest of Juneau tried in 1982 to extract an apology from the Navy for the attack. They had also asked that a Navy ship be named after the village as a sign of respect.

But the Navy denied the request for a formal apology and said it would consider naming a ship. Native leaders were sent home from Washington, D.C., with a Navy hat, a memento of the trip.

"It was a midshipman's hat," said Royal DeAsis, who was one ofhree Tlingit delegates who met with the Navy at the Pentagon in 1982. "The hat wasn't even a full-fledged Navy officer's hat - amidshipman isn't even on the so-called totem pole yet."

Now 16 years later, the hat is packed away in the village somewhere and no ship in the fleet bears Angoon's name.

This time the village will go to the highest level of the Navy and to the President for the apology - and money.

"We don't want just an apology," said Leonard John, associatdirector of Kootznoowoo Cultural and Education Foundation. "We want restitution for what they took, too. It's made a large impact on this generation."

The account isn't in history books, and even some Tlingits outside Angoon don't know of the incident.

But in this village of about 600, the oral history has been handed down for several generations.

"We have not forgotten," said Matthew Fred Sr., 73. His voice isangry with emotion when he speaks of the bombing. "I'm stillhurting. All they left us with was a smoldering village."

In 1973, Angoon did receive an out-of-court settlement for $90,000 as compensation for the bombing. Only one tribal house was restored before the money ran out.

John said he doesn't know how much money it will take to rebuild thevillage, but it will be expensive.

"There's really no way to put a price on the lost culture," John said. "There's no way to put a price on the lost lives."

If funded, the rebuilt village would open to tourists creating much-needed jobs in the village that has few employment opportunities and high unemployment.

"It will bring economic diversification to the community," said John,who works for a subsidiary of Kootznoowoo Inc., Angoon's villagecorporation. "Most importantly, it will restore heritage and bring back identity to individuals and the community."

The first step, however, is for the Navy to say it's sorry.

"An apology is the most important thing to us," John said.

"It would give us some sense of justice," said DeAsis.

"It seems as though it's like a wound that hasn't completely healedand we keep scratching at it."

Top Navy officials in Washington have yet to receive another formal request for an apology - or money.

"We can't act on it until we see a request," said Cmdr. Frank Thorp, aNavy spokesman at the Pentagon.

For its part, Coast Guard personnel from the Sitka-based cutter Woodrush last year conducted safe-boating courses in Angoon, and constructed a new playground and jungle gym.

"We were trying to rebuild bridges of faith and trust to the community," said Lt. Cmdr. Ray Massey, a Coast Guard spokesman in Juneau.

Massey said he doesn't see his service apologizing on behalf of theRevenue Cutter Service, the Coast Guard's predecessor, which tookpart in the attack.

"I don't think we have anything to apologize for," said Massey. "Idon't think they (Angoon) recognize us as the egregious party here."

John said the Coast Guard's recent actions were admirable, but fallshort.

"We were happy to receive the gesture," John said. "There was somuch wrong done that playground equipment doesn't changeanything."

Fred says the story will probably continue to be passed down by Angoon villagers - unless an apology is made.

"If an apology is made, nobody will talk about it again," Fred said.

This article first appeared in the Jan. 19 edition of the Southeast Empire.

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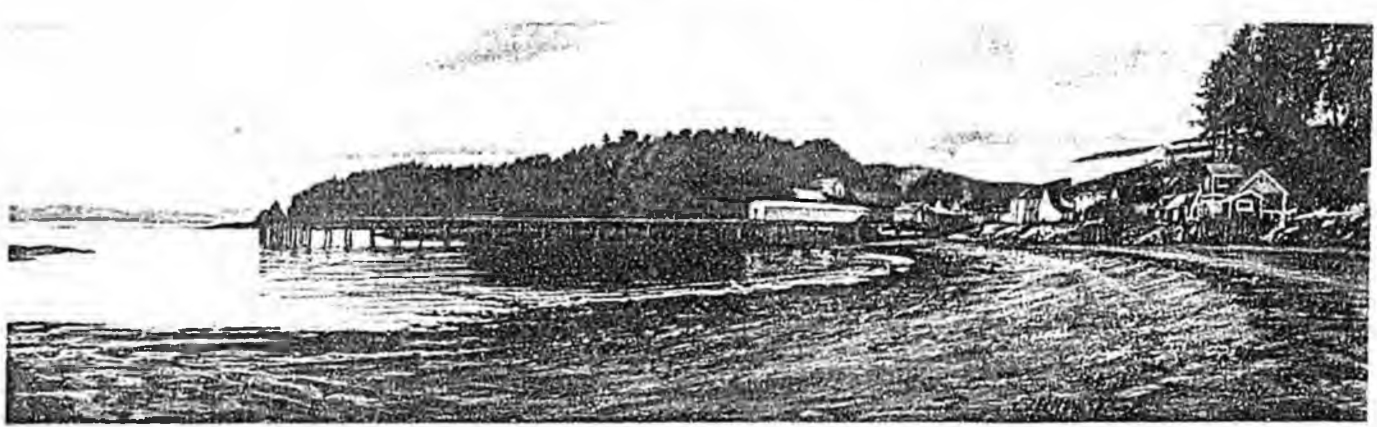
A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE UNCOMMITTED CRIME



ANGOON is a shacky, tenacious, remote, and defiant little frontier speck of an Indian town on Admiralty Island, in southeast Alaska. It is surrounded by wilderness. Convocations of eagles turn and circle above it like figures in a mobile. When they land on the long, springy branches of a spruce or a hemlock or a cedar or a pine, the branches shake, and all the other birds leave. You can walk up close then and stare at the eagles, and they will stare back at you. The look in their eyes is kind of mad and impatient and half-witted. Their feet and beaks are the color of the yellow on the shaft of a pencil. From a distance, their bodies blend with the body of the tree, so that all you see of them is their white heads, like light bulbs. In the spring, when the herring are running, there are more bald eagles on Admiralty Island than in all forty-nine other states. Some of the eagles stay around all year. When the fishermen catch bullheads or black bass or rockfish, or some other fish they don't care to keep, they leave the fish floating for the eagles. Sometimes an eagle launches itself and soars into the air until it is just a tiny, wheeling stick-figure cross against the sky, and then returns and strikes a cat on the beach in front of the town.

Admiralty Island is ninety-six miles long and thirty miles wide at its widest part, it has seven hundred and twenty miles of coastline, and Angoon is the only town on it. Approximately six hundred and thirty people live there; according to the phone book, sixty-seven have phones. Most of the people are Tlingit—which is properly pronounced "Thleen-git" but more commonly "Klink-kit"—and are stubborn enough in their resolve to preserve their ancestral ways that Angoon is often referred to as the last outpost of Tlingit culture. The town is built on a small spit of land. At its narrowest point there is room for four or five houses, built end to end and almost as close as the cars on a train. On one side of the spit, the west, are the long perspectives of water that are Chatham Strait, with the mountains of Baranof and Chichagof Islands beyond. On the east is an inlet splitting into channels leading inland. The Tlingit knew their way around the channels, and knew the oddities of the tides, and had no fear of an attack from the water. Looking at the placement of Angoon on a map, one sometimes feels that it is as if the Indians who settled it had sought out the most isolated, backs-to-the-wall, they-can-come-at-us-from-only-one-end place to put up their town. North of Angoon is a small woods, perhaps half a mile of it, and then water. The Tlingit, while brave to the point of fearlessness, were also obsessed spirit thinkers, and the idea that the woods were full of crafty, witching, and sinister forces made a lot of sense to them. Also, they didn't care much for bears. Sometimes one hears that Angoon is where it is because bears could get at it from only one side.

The older section of town describes roughly the shape of an arc. It includes about thirty-five houses. Seen from the strait, they rise in rows up the side of a hill like the rows on the keyboard of a typewriter. Until the middle of the nineteen-seventies, when money from the federal government made it possible to clear land and build houses higher on the hill, above the old town, everyone in Angoon lived in one of the old houses. Most are of simple plank-and-frame construction and are weathered to soft colors or scuffed back to plain wood. Some are built gable end to the water, Tlingit style, and some are sidewise to it. Most have peaked roofs finished with tin, two windows downstairs in the front, with a door between them, and a window upstairs above the door. In the windows of many are children.

The majority of old houses have tribal affiliations. They were built late in the nineteenth century or early in this one and are smaller versions of the houses the Tlingit built in back times. The houses are known by names the Indians gave them to commemorate some aspect of their past or a characteristic of someone who lived in them. Some of the names are Iron Bark House, Springwater House, Killer Whale House, Killer Whale Chasing Seal House, Killer Whale Tooth House, Log Jam House, Mountain Valley House, On Top of the Fort House, End of the Trail House, Middle of the Village House, Bear House, Raven House, and Raven Bones House.

On the front of the Killer Whale House, in the triangle made by the top of the door and under the notch of the roof, are painted two killer whales, in the Tlingit style. Each is about ten feet long. Their heads face away from each other and their tails almost touch above the door. The fins on their backs rise to the top of the upstairs window. They are black and turquoise and red, and match figures that were painted on the housefront in the nineteenth century and later covered over; the present-day

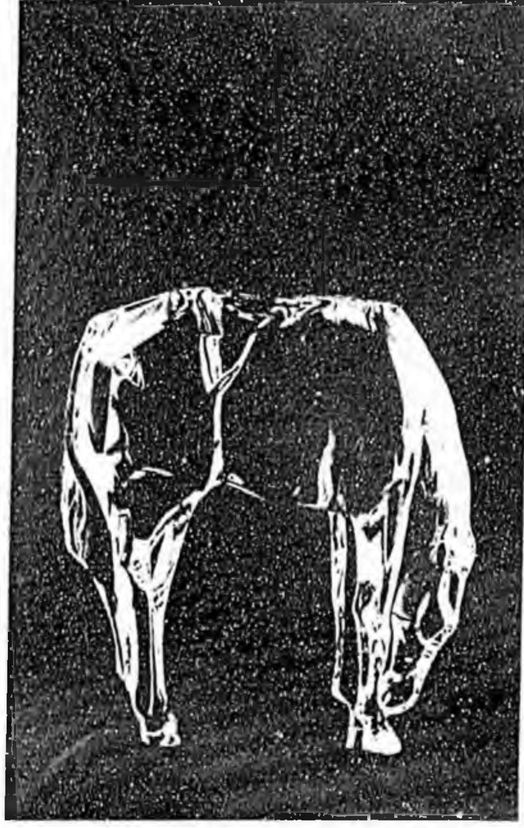


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image was drawn from the outline of the original, which showed faintly through the paint. At one time there were several painted houses in town. All were painted over or had their images removed and taken indoors around 1929 to make Angoon presentable for a meeting of the Alaska Native Brotherhood, an organization created to oppose bad treatment of Indians by white people. Its members believed that the way into the new world was not through the past but by learning to speak English and live and behave like white men.

The houses in Angoon rarely come up for sale. Some are tribal property, others have titles that are in dispute. All require a cash sale. Because they have problems with titles, and no foundations, it is not possible to mortgage them. Also, it is costly to insure them, because they catch fire so easily.

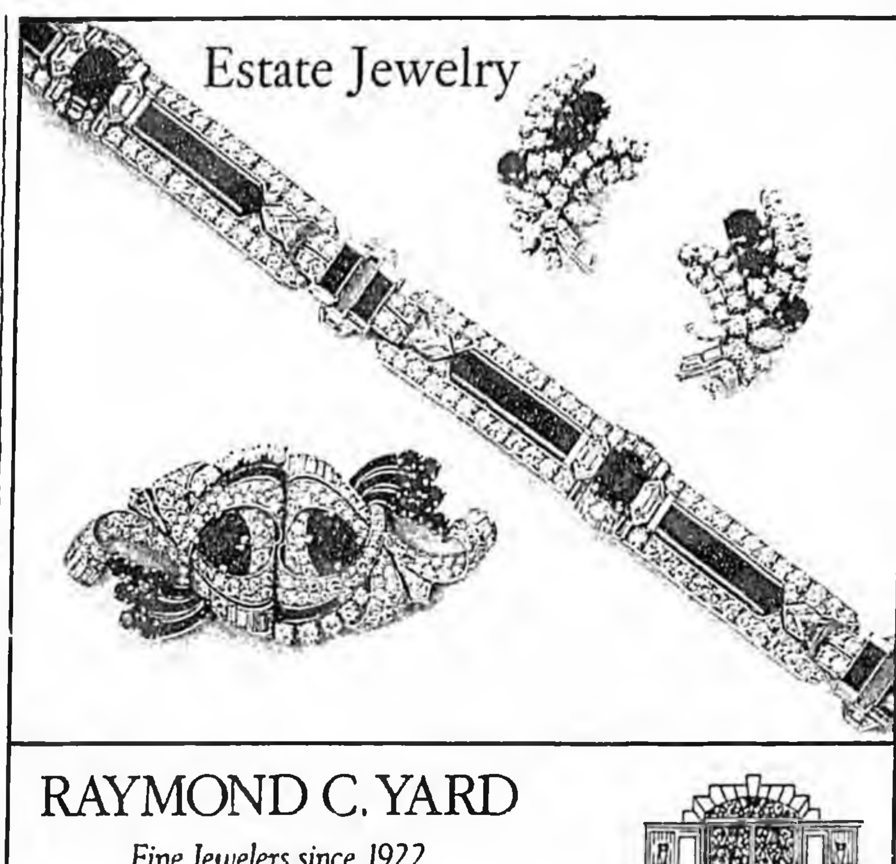
THE climate of Admiralty is that of a subarctic rain forest. The woods are so thickly overgrown that it is not possible to walk in them except where trails have been cleared; most people in Angoon have never been to the other side of the island. Around Angoon are a trail about three miles long leading south from the town, through bear territory, to a burial ground and a ferry terminal, and one running northwest about half a mile, not through bear territory, also to a burial ground, and, beyond it, to an outcropping of land called Danger Point. The woods are so damp that it is difficult to start a fire in them. In the nineteenth century, Aleksandr Baranov, the Russian explorer and governor of all Russian activities in North America, tried to burn down the trees around Sitka, about forty-five miles west of Angoon, because they gave protection to the Indians, but had to give up and cut the trees down instead, because he could not make them catch.

The wilderness is mainly hemlock and spruce, among which are concentrations of lodgepole pine and two kinds of cedar—red and yellow. Here and there are a few lowland clearings, called muskegs, filled with grasses and sedges, and below them tidal low grounds called salt chucks. Along the sides and tops of some of the mountains are meadows. Crossing them and winding through the woods are bear trails, which do not look like the paths that

deer scuff into the forest floor but are simply one paw print following another in line, the marks of generations of bears walking carefully through the forest in the footprints of their ancestors.

Hundreds of bears inhabit the wilderness. Admiralty has the highest density of bears in America, and it is possible that there may be a thousand or more of them in the forest. The bears are a type of grizzly. They can charge at forty miles an hour. You can often hear them for a long time before they come into view. I saw bears only once in Angoon, in a field beside the road, and my recollection is that they were the size of small mobile homes. The dogs in the town mostly keep them away, but if a bear has any real reason to come to town it will. Sometimes people wake in the morning and see them on the beach.

I went to Angoon for the first time in January, and I went back in April. I rented a room in a lodge that serves hunters and fishermen over the summer. When I spoke to someone there on the phone from New York City and asked how I would find the place, he said it was right next to the airport. I flew from New York to Seattle and on to Juneau, and then boarded a plane on which I was the only passenger. It loaded the mail and some packages and landed about half an hour later on the water of the inlet and coasted up to a dock. I stood a few minutes beside the wilderness with my suitcase, and then a man showed up to collect a package that had come over on the plane. I asked if he knew where the lodge was, and he pointed to a path. The lodge is about a mile from town, along the road that leads to the ferry terminal, at Killisnoo, once an Indian fort, and then, in the nineteenth century, a white man's town that had a whale works and a herring-reduction plant that mainly went out of business around 1915. Killisnoo lingered through several fires, then burned almost completely and, in the nineteen-twenties, was abandoned. The road is about three miles long and is the only road in Angoon. It is bordered on both sides by trees, except for a small stretch by the town highway barn, where one can look into the inlet. The tide there, rising and falling and rushing through the rips, makes a sound like traffic. From the road you can see some rocks on which cormorants stand. As the tide



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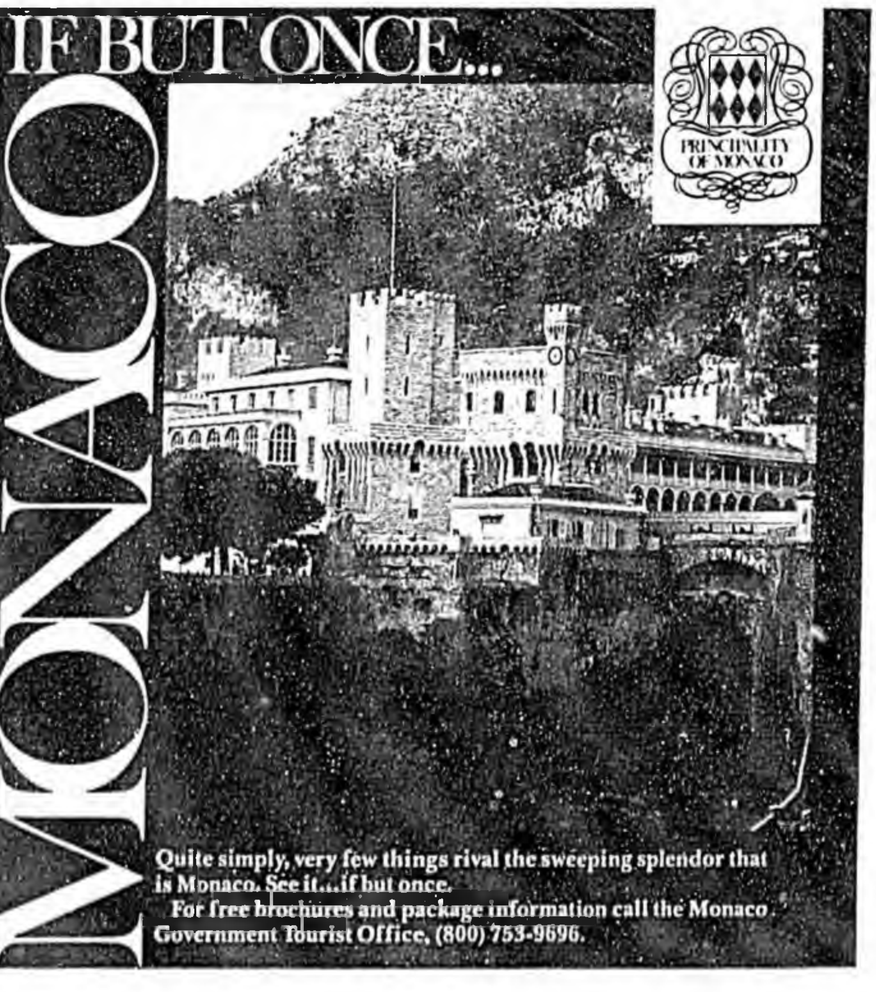

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rises, the cormorants edge closer and closer until all of them are bunched together like a bouquet. The road is made from gravel and dirt. During dry periods, each car is followed by a tail of dust. People drive back and forth along the road for no particular reason except to get out of the house and move around, or to be alone for a while, or to court, or to look at the water, or from nerves and restlessness, or just to feel that they are going somewhere.

In the winter, smoke from the chimneys stays close to the ground and drifts like fog past the windows. The ceiling of the sky is never very far overhead. The tops of the mountains appear and disappear in the clouds. When the tops are covered, the mountains look like plateaus, or as if some kind of abrasion from the sky had sanded them flat. The sun is rarely visible. The sky is almost always white. When the road is full of snow and the crows are crossing the sky, it is like watching black-and-white television. Children ride their bicycles on the frozen road. Crows land on the tin roofs and do a clicky, skidding little dance to get a purchase. They make a hard, ratcheting sound in the backs of their throats, like castanets. Ravens twice the size of the crows strut down the street, stepping aside for cars. The dogs sometimes run up to them and bark in their faces, and the ravens, as big as the dogs, don't even move. Beside the ravens, the crows look like discarded versions of the final design. People sometimes shoot the dogs, for no apparent reason. Not long ago, a family let their dog out and someone shot it, and they bought another and someone shot that one as it sat on their porch.

There is no bank, and no restaurant or bar or café; Angoon is dry. People buy liquor in Sitka or Juneau and bring it over in the trunks of their cars on the ferry. The street through the old part of town is one-way, but no ones knows which way, because a vote has never been taken to decide. On the side of a hill in the center of town are five totem poles.

The beach is a fine, powdery sand that is the color of old copper. Dogs and ravens and gulls and crows leave their prints along the line of the tide. People leave bicycles and old tires and car parts and deer hides and rubber gloves and shoes, one at a time, and bent-up rusted pieces of metal that you can almost but not quite divine the purpose of. The Tlingit at Angoon

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used to throw their trash on the beach and let the tide take it out—a habit that has not made them popular with archeologists. Every now and then, the tide uncovers one of the old blue glass beads that the Russians used in trade with the Tlingit.

The people I passed on the unpaved streets or in the aisles of the town's only store were neither friendly nor unfriendly. Some were curious at seeing an outsider, some acted as if I were invisible, some responded when I nodded, or waved as they passed in their cars. More than one person, I noticed, wore a T-shirt that had on it the name of the town and a phonetic inscription in a language I did not recognize. Beneath the inscription was the date October 26, 1882. The first person I asked would not tell me what it said, and the second wouldn't, either. The third studied me, then looked away, then looked back and said that what it meant was "The day we suffered for the crime we did not commit."

THE name Tlingit denotes a language, not a tribe. Historically, fourteen tribes throughout southeast Alaska spoke Tlingit. The one that settled Angoon was called the Hootsnoowoos, which means "great den of bears" and was spelled a number of ways, including "Hoochinoos" and "Kootznahoos" and "Hootznahoos." The Tlingit occupied the coastline and the riverbanks and, to some extent, the forest along a five-hundred-mile strip of land running from Yakutat Bay, in the north, to just below the Canadian border. There was no alliance among the tribes and no occasion on which all fourteen ever acted together. All considered their society to be divided between two lineages, designated raven and eagle. The lineages—what anthropologists call moieties— are divided into clans. In any Tlingit village are members of a number of clans, but no clan is represented in all. In Angoon today, on the raven side are beaver, sockeye, dog salmon, raven, and also, by marriage, tern, frog, humpback, and coho. On the eagle side are killer whale, eagle, shark, brown bear, wolf, and, by marriage, thunderbird. It is common to place the name of the lineage ahead of the clan, as in raven beaver, or to precede the name of the clan with the name of the town that it comes from, as in Angoon raven, or Kake killer whale.

In past times, clans controlled grounds for hunting and fishing and owned houses. In addition, they possessed artifacts such as hats and masks and robes and dishes and totems and carvings, and also the rights to various legends, dances, and ceremonies pertaining to their background. The Tlingit practice was to fish and hunt only on the grounds belonging to one's lineage. To enter the territory of the other lineage required permission. When the white men arrived, they fished and hunted anywhere they wanted to. The canneries sent their fleets wherever they thought there were fish. The Tlingit had trouble understanding how a civilization supposedly superior to their own could be less honorable.

A village had no formal organization. No clan held rights above any other, except what their wealth and power allowed them to claim, and there were no tribal chiefs—only heads of clan houses. The opposite lineage was responsible to the other for burying its dead. In return, the indebted clan threw a feast, called a potlatch, which long ago involved dances and rituals and speeches and gifts, and became something more edgy and intense after liquor and white men's trading goods became part of it. A Tlingit was allowed to marry a person only from the opposite lineage. Clans today are debased from their former authority, but nearly all Tlingit observe this prohibition. In Angoon, kids sometimes complain that all the attractive prospects belong to their lineage.

Among the clans, the significant line of descent was not the father's but the mother's. A child became a member of his or her mother's clan. The most important man in the life of a boy was his mother's brother, to whom he was apprenticed, and whose legacy he inherited. A boy called his ancestral home "the land of my uncles."

NOT much is known about Angoon before the twentieth century, because not many white people had been there. Also, most of the time when they were, the town was drunk. One man who stopped there in the nineteenth century wrote that he witnessed "a drunken revel of indescribable abandon, during which naked and half-naked men and women dragged themselves about the place." A travelling missionary wrote, "Tuesday we reached Angoon, the chief town of the

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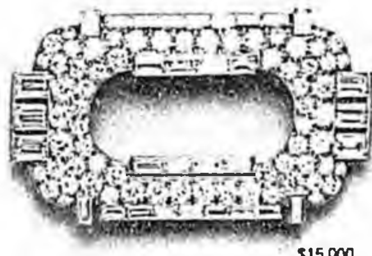

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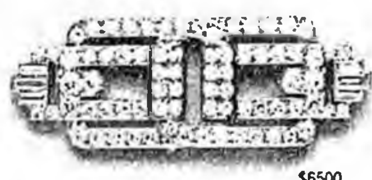

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Hootznahoos. It is beautifully situated and has a population of four hundred and ten. But we did not remain long as the whole town was drunk." John Muir, the naturalist, visited Angoon. He wrote that from half a mile away he could hear men and women screaming and yelling and bellowing and grunting and groaning. He described the houses of the town as a "chain of alcoholic volcanoes," and said that it was the first time in his life he had understood the term "howling drunk." People describing the effects of alcohol on the Indians of Alaska often used the term "whiskey howl." A whole town drunk was a "whiskey storm."

The word "hooch" as a term for liquor is derived from the spelling "Hoochinoo." The Hootsnoowoos were taught to make rum by an American soldier named Brown, who married a woman from Angoon and moved there around 1879. Liquor had been introduced to the Tlingit by Russian convicts around 1796; fur traders liked to use it as trade bait, because they noticed they could come to better terms with a drunken Indian. Once the Hootsnoowoos had learned to make it, they spurned liquor in trade; what the white man offered was not strong enough. The ingredients of hoochinoo were sugar, molasses, flour, and anything else fermentable—mainly rice, potatoes, and raisins. The people of Angoon would carry gallons of it in their canoes to Sitka and sell it under the name Hootznoo. The regulations preventing white men from selling liquor to the Indians were put in place before the Indians learned how to make it. Nothing prevented an Indian from walking into a store and buying the ingredients and making it himself.

Hooch was colorless and smelled bad, and, from impatience, the Indians often drank it hot from the still. Trading posts had houses for the Indians to stay in while they did their business. The Hootsnoowoos often got in trouble for bringing liquor to trade, or for moving into the houses and setting up stills and kicking off a drunk. The white people were afraid of drunken Indians, but continued to sell them molasses. They also continued to ban giving or selling them liquor and to profit from offering alternatives. One was a patent medicine called Painkiller, which was a hundred and two proof and about two per cent opium. Painkiller was especially popular in Killisnoo. Empty bottles of it could be found all over its streets, and a gaunt old man there who was addicted to it spent nearly all his time in a stupor and was known as Painkiller. Whenever he was without it, he was said to be dying. Indians desperate to be drunk would also drink bay rum and sometimes perfume. Before the white man, Indians drank only water.

WHEN a Tlingit was about to die, he would sometimes say, "This house is beginning to fill with spirits. They are waiting for me." The Tlingit believed that touching a corpse was dangerous, so when they felt that a sick person was drawing near death they would bathe and dress the person in his or her best clothes. A corpse was removed from a house by means of a door cut usually into the side of the house and sometimes into the back, or through a hole made in the side by removing a plank. A body could never be taken through the front door, because it was felt that the dread mystery of death would then be on the threshold. After the body, a dead dog was thrown through the opening, and then some sand and some ashes. The door was sealed or the plank put back in place to keep the spirit of death from finding its way in. The purpose of the sand was to make a path for the soul on his way to the land of the dead. The purpose of the ashes I wish I knew. The dog had several purposes, each apparently local. In some places, it was thought that the dog confused the ghost believed to be waiting outside to carry the soul to the land of the dead and kept the ghost from harming anyone living; in others, that the spirit of death would inhabit the dog and not be able to return to the house, and that if no dog was taken someone else would be. In others, the dog was meant to protect the dead man as he made his way along the trail to the afterlife. In others, it was thought that the spirit of death had come to inhabit the dog and it must therefore be thrown out of the house, and in others that it would take with it all traces of the disease.

The bodies of the dead were covered with blankets and burned on pyres of

cedar or spruce. Sometimes, when a murderer had been slain by the family of the victim the two bodies would be burned under the same blanket. Cremation was essential to the Tlingit. One of the ways that they imagined the afterlife was as a place warmed by a fire. Those who had been cremated were able to stand close to the fire, and those who had not—who had drowned, for example, and whose bodies had not been recovered—had to stand behind the others and were always cold. This belief made it difficult for the Tlingit to accept the idea of Christian burial. Satisfaction was what early missionaries to Alaska saw on the faces of the people they lectured on the subject of the fires of Hell. Not until they began to describe Hell as cold and forbidding did they get the response they hoped for.

Eventually, the Tlingit began to assume some ideas of the Christian afterlife. The Tlingit term for their version of Hell was "do heaven." It was between the earth and the place in the sky where the northern lights appear. It was where the dog spirits went, as well as suicides and murderers and witches.

For the funeral, the Tlingit would engage professional mourners, women who would paint their faces black and sit beside the body and cry. A mourner's first tear would run straight down her cheek, making a track. Then she would turn her head at an angle, so that the next tear also made a track. Mourners were paid by the number of tracks they could show.

It was Tlingit custom to burn on his pyre some of a man's possessions that he might find useful in the afterlife. For a while after the Tlingit first accepted Christianity, they continued to do this, except that instead of burning the goods they left them sitting on top of the grave. One man put a mattress on a man's grave, another a sewing machine, and another a record-player, and all of the possessions stayed there until they had absorbed all the weather they could, and then fell apart.

THE Tlingit believed that epidemics were caused by spirits who arrived in sailing ships or steamboats or sailboats or canoes. The boats were called the boats of sickness, and only shamans could see them. As people died, they got into the boats, and when the epidemic had run its course the

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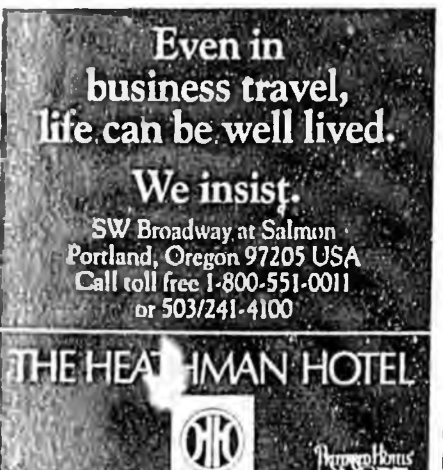

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hold burning objects in their hands and not be harmed, and to put them in their mouths and take them out and all that would happen was that their tongues would smoke. Some could bring the dead back to life. All were believed to have the ability to predict their own deaths, to discover witches and undo their spells, and to call up demons to attack anyone who opposed them, which made other Indians scared of them.

In appearance, the main differences between a shaman and any other Tlingit was that the shaman never washed and never cut his hair. To keep the hair out of his face, he used spruce sap, which made the hair hard and stiff and caused it to make a sound when he moved like wooden balls hitting each other.

"If something is bothering you about our relationship, Lorraine, why don't you just spell it out."

• •

boats left. Like the Indians of the plains, the Tlingit were subject to diseases that were brought to them by Europeans and for which they had no natural defenses. Tuberculosis was sometimes called the white man's disease or the Great White Plague. Scarlet fever, smallpox, measles, and syphilis came from the Russians. Spaniards travelling north from Mexico in 1775 also brought smallpox, and American fur traders and workers for the American Telegraphic Expedition, in 1866, also brought syphilis. In addition, there were epidemics of typhoid in 1819, 1848, and 1855. An epidemic of smallpox in 1836 killed half the Tlingit. Many of its survivors lost faith in their shamans, who could do nothing against the disease, and turned to the doctors at Sitka instead, and that changed something forever. Yakutat, the Tlingit village farthest to the north, escaped that epidemic, and for that the local shaman took credit.

Shamans were not cremated, because it was believed that their bodies would not burn. The first night of a shaman's death, he was left lying in the corner of the house closest to where he was when he died. Each of the next three nights, he was moved to another corner, and on the fifth day he was taken to his grave. Usually, a shaman was buried sitting and facing the water, on a headland, or in a cave, or on a cliff. Indians passing would throw some tobacco or fish oil or some dried salmon into the water, saying as they did so something like "Let me have luck" or "Don't let me die" or "Don't let the wind blow too strongly on my boat." Anyone who came close enough to the shore would leave his offering there. The Tlingit believed that a person could pick up a sickness by getting too close to a shaman's grave or by handling anything that belonged to a dead shaman. American tourists often raided shamans' graves and took with them whatever they wanted, and the Indians couldn't believe that they didn't fall down and die.

Not all shamans had the same powers, but most were believed to be able to invoke spirits who could help them make predictions, or protect warriors, or influence the fortunes of a hunt or a fishing trip, or change the weather. One was famous for having survived a drowning. A war party usually took a shaman with it. The shaman would lie under a robe in the bottom of the canoe and go into a trance in order to report where the enemy was and how many there were. Some shamans were able to

Most of the time, when a Tlingit fell sick he believed that the sickness was the result of a spell cast by a witch. The Tlingit believed that witches, for convenience, could become animals—especially cranes, porpoises, sea lions, and owls. A dog barking toward a graveyard was believed to be warning that a witch was about. The Tlingit also believed that witches could fly. Their favorite place to fly to, after the arrival of the missionaries, was the cemetery, where they would dig up graves and use certain remains for witchcraft. The most common way to bewitch a person was by taking some of his fingernails or hair or a piece of his clothing or some saliva and placing it inside the corpse of a person or a dog; as the corpse rotted, so would the victim. By means of spells cast over a person's hair, a witch could also cause him to go blind; by hexing his fingernails, the witch could cause the person's hand to become paralyzed; and by witching his saliva the witch could cause him to spit himself to death.

When a person wanted to employ a shaman, he would make a pile of robes and furs and food on his floor and send for the shaman. If the reason for the

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hand the wires attached to its poles. The force of the shock would cause the shaman to scream and his body to convulse, and after that shaving his head and extracting the promise to retire were pretty much formalities, but Glass did them anyway.

The last full-blooded Tlingit shaman was a woman, who practiced at least until 1934, in Angoon.

THE person I spent the most time with in Angoon was Matthew Kookesh. Most Tlingit have simple, English-sounding surnames, such as Fred, Jack, Jim, Nelson, and Frank. Some were given to their ancestors by missionaries and some by timekeepers at the canneries who were unable to spell the more complicated Tlingit names, and some are the result of the shortening of a nickname given by a white person, such as White Water Jack. Matthew's is one of the few unreconstructed Tlingit surnames in town. The reason for this, he believes, is that Tlingit names beginning with "K"—"Kanosh," "Kitka," and "Klushkan" are others—were easy enough for white people to pronounce and so were left alone. Matthew is only half Tlingit. His mother is Mexican. His father met her when he was sent to an Indian hospital in New Mexico to recover from tuberculosis. He had signed on to join an expedition to the South Pole and was getting his physical when the tuberculosis was diagnosed. He and his wife lived in Mexico for a while, then came to live in Angoon in the thirties, then left Angoon twice and came back both times. His mother was adopted by the bear clan. His father is dead, but his mother still lives in town. She tells Matthew that he spoke Spanish as a child, but he doesn't remember it. Matthew is small and slightly bowlegged, Tlingit style, and is solidly built. His hair is black but not as straight as a pure-blood Tlingit's hair, and it is beginning to recede. He has a high forehead, , nose and dark eyes, and a heavy beard, which he shaves infrequently, and which gives him a piratical look. He lives with his wife, Jackie, who is Tlingit and grew up in Juneau, and their children, Nadja and Matthew, who are teen-agers, and Nikolai, who is eighteen months.

Matthew is a bear and Jackie is a coho. Matthew's Tlingit name is Yaanustuk. He was told by an uncle that his Indian name has to do with thunder and lightning and comes from the Thunderbird house, but that is all he was told and he wishes he knew more. Kookesh describes an action made by the finning tails of salmon over their nests.

Matthew has four brothers and four sisters. One sister is in Sitka, and one is in Seattle; the rest of his brothers and sisters live in Angoon. He has no uncles in town, and that is difficult for him, because Tlingit society is still nearly enough intact so that a man without an uncle is detached from his culture. Matt is keenly interested in knowing the myths and legends and ceremonies of the past, and feels his separation from them as a deprivation. Tlingit is not a written language, so Tlingit culture is a memory culture. Once cultures of this kind intersect with white cultures, children raised in memory cultures learn about their past from their grandparents, who mind them while the parents are working. Once grown, the children go out into the white world to make a living, and often are disappointed and return to the elders wanting to know more about how they lived. In Angoon, the younger people in this position feel that the elders are sometimes possessive about what they know, because the air of secrecy gives them power. Also, there is the difficulty that no one under forty in Angoon speaks Tlingit, though some can understand it. For conversations of any significance, the elders use their own language. Sometimes, in referring to the past they use the phrase "the canoe days."

Matthew and Jackie live in the old part of the town, in a house that they bought for fifteen thousand dollars and have all but rebuilt. The walls downstairs are wainscoting taken from the superintendent's house at an old salmon cannery out at Hood Bay, ten miles from Angoon. For years, people had tried to remove it, with no luck, and then Jackie figured out that, because of the tongue-and-groove construction, it had to be taken off the wall

a board at a time from the top, not the bottom. Two picture windows at the front of the house frame the inlet. Ducks spin down the tide rips like bath toys. The sun rises in front of the house and sets behind it. Ten thousand dollars for the down payment came from selling a trailer they were living in over in Sitka while they attended Sheldon Jackson Junior College, and the rest of the money Matt made on the pipeline and from fishing. The house is not a clan house, but now that it is in such fine shape people have tried to claim that it is, in the hope of getting it out of Matt and Jackie's hands, or getting some money for it.

From October to May, Matthew works for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, in the subsistence division. In Alaska, "subsistence" is the word used to describe the practice of hunting and fishing for one's food. He has an office in a building shaped like a cross and standing on top of the hill in the center of town. A small plaque over his door says "SUBSISTENCE." His name, among others, is on four technical papers the department has published—one about crabs, one about salmon fishing in the Chilkat and Chilkoot River drainages on the mainland, one about salmon fishing in a salt lake in the interior of the island, and one about logging and how it has affected wildlife in southeast Alaska. The rest of the year, Matt fishes commercially for halibut and king salmon, and hunts. He also guides sport fishermen. In the winter, he walks the beaches on a minus tide, turning over rocks and peering into crevices for octopus—what the Tlingit called devilfish—to use as bait for halibut when the season arrives.

Matt was born in Juneau, in 1950. In those days, Angoon had no high school, so children were required to attend the one in Wrangell; they would board there for the year, and come home only in the summer. After high school, he went into the Navy and was stationed in Hawaii. Around 1968, his father began the oil station in town—the business that supplied heating oil and gasoline to Angoon. When his father died, a few years later, Matt got an honorable discharge and came back to run it. He did that for two years and then sold the business. "It was hard," he says. "People didn't have jobs, and the only time they could pay was when an unemployment check arrived, and I didn't like being a bill collector."

Matthew and Jackie were married while he was running the oil station, and then he left and went to work on the pipeline for two years. After that, they went south, to the state of Washington, to go to college at Western Washington University, and then they came back to Angoon.

Matt knows the daughter of the last shaman in Angoon. Several years ago, when he had his first fishing boat, someone told her that he had fallen off it. She came to him to tell him that there were certain things he must do to protect himself against this, and even though it turned out that he hadn't fallen off, he gathered devil's club and a few other ingredients and boiled them together and used the potion to wash down the hull.

I SPENT enough time in Angoon that I became familiar to most people there—mainly because I walked everywhere I went, and they saw me from their windows or passed me in their cars, or I talked to them or saw

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them at a basketball game or a food sale or at the store or the school or the harbor or the church. People who would probably recognize my name or know me by sight:

—Joe Evans, a logger. He and his wife live a few doors from Matt, and I met him one morning when I had been to see Matt and he wasn't home, and I saw Joe standing by the side of the road looking out at an eagle on a rock in the inlet. I had noticed him on occasion when he was walking to the boat harbor, and had wondered who he was, because there weren't many white people around. He invited me into his house, and I met his wife, who is Tlingit, and we drank coffee. Joe sat on the floor with his shoes off, and his wife sat on a couch against a picture window framing the house across the street and the inlet behind it. The television was on, and it was dark enough in the room so that the part of the couch in front of the TV was a different color from the rest. Jo said that about twenty-five years ago he had served as chief of police in Kake, a Tlingit town, not because he had any interest in being a policeman but because he was logging then, too, and was in terrific shape and could beat up everyone in town. At the time, there was no such thing as a search warrant, he said, and it was important to be tough. He said that he really couldn't stand it down south—meaning in the state of Washington—because after he had been there for a while all the roads and houses and traffic and people began to feel as if they were closing in on him. What he likes in Alaska is that if he decides to settle an argument with his fists he won't end up in jail. He said that his current plans were for him and his wife to sail their boat to places they had never been, and live off clams and fish, and then come back to Angoon and build a Victorian house out at Killisnoo. He had grown so tired of living in the small Indian houses and in logging camps and on sailboats that all he wanted was to live in a house with enough room so that he could have a corner with nothing in it but a table with a flower in a vase.

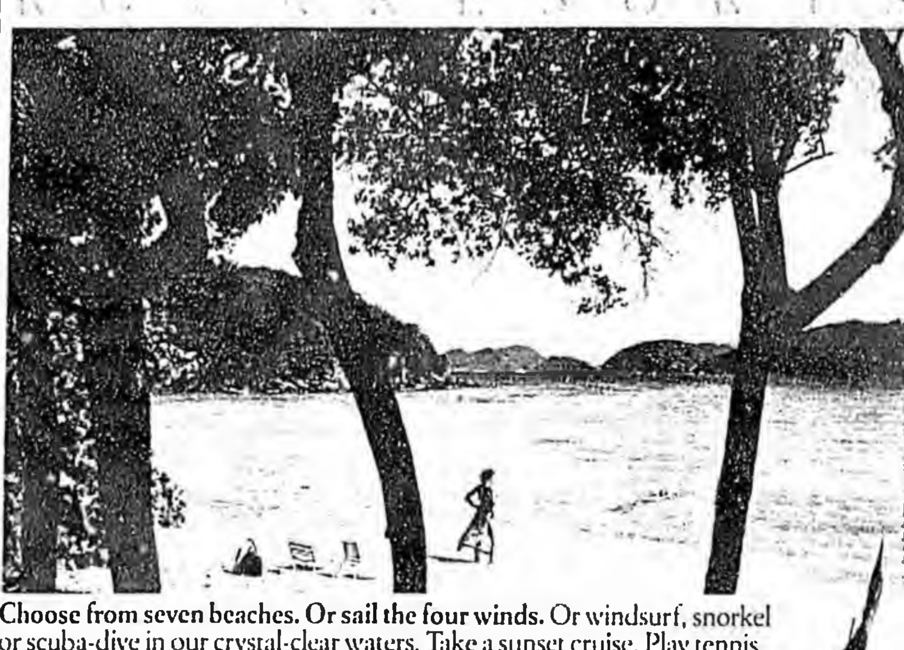
—George Paul, who was knocking down the remains of a burned-up house on the rocks along the inlet just below Matt's house and throwing the wood onto a fire on the beach. The house, which he had grown up in, had burned earlier in the winter, and each day he was coming down to the water and building a fire and banging down what was left of the walls and the foundation and the beams and the floor, and burning them up to clear out the site. You could hear his hammer at work from a long way off; there were times when it was the only sound in town. The smoke from the fire drifted over the rooftops and joined the smoke from the chimneys of the houses still standing. At night, the fire was glowing embers in the darkness on the rocks. When the work was done, Paul would join his wife in Barrow, on the northern coast of Alaska, where she had got a job writing grants for the city. Someone had offered him a lot of money for the land, but he had turned it down. His intention was to stay two years in Barrow and make enough money to return to Angoon and rebuild. He already had his plans drawn up. The new house would be more substantial. The old one had been floated over from Killisnoo, and that accounted for its placement beside the water. The climate in Barrow is forbidding, and he wasn't looking forward to going there, but the money his wife was being paid and the possibilities for him made it difficult to turn the opportunity down. In Angoon, he had a town job driving heavy equipment and grading the road, but it was seasonal work, and in the winter he drew unemployment. What he hoped to do when he got back was buy a boat and get into the gill-net fishery up in Haines. He pointed his hammer across the inlet to a small rocky piece of the shore where he had seen a bear walking in the fall. In the calm water on the other side of Village Rock, he said, his father would catch salmon on the change of the tide. Killer whales, seals, and sea lions chased herring up the inlet on the tide. Otters slid down the far bank. He said, "See those birds? They're here all year round." I asked what they were, and he said, "I don't know. Some kind of duck. I don't know what they are—we're so used to them we don't know their names." We spoke on the day of his last fire. A few

days later, I was walking around town and I saw him come out the door of a house and lock it and walk to his car, in the driveway, and throw a tarp over it, then get into a truck being driven by a friend, who was taking him to the ferry terminal to catch the boat out.

—Matsu Samato, who took me to see the remains of the cannery at Hood Bay. His ancestors were Japanese and Tlingit, and he and Matt grew up together. Matt's best friend was Matsu's brother Billy, who was killed in a fight in a bar in a Southern port town while serving in the Navy. Matsu and his three brothers and five sisters and their mother and father had lived at the cannery during the summer after it burned, while the company was shipping out what remained of the machinery and fish traps.

It was January and cold, and Matsu had just put up a cover, like a little pilot house, on the deck of his Boston whaler. He had to do that, he said, or no one would go out with him anymore, because of lack of protection from the cold and the wind. What gets cold first in a boat is your feet; Matsu touched only the outside of the sole of one of his boots to the deck and put the other on top of it, and I copied him. We left the inlet, turned around the point, and came back past the cemetery and along the outside of town. What I thought was a reef in the distance came closer and turned out to be a school of porpoises, which torpedoed their long, dark, blurred shapes under us and then alongside us for a while. Matsu said they were naturally curious and always checked on boats heading into the bay. On the shore were a horizontal line of brown, the sand on the beach; a line of white above it, the snow; and a wall of green, the forest. There was snow and ice on the bow of the boat.

In Hood Bay were the remains of eighteen cabins along the water and, where the cannery had stood, a rotting barge and some pilings with clams and mussels and seaweed clinging to them. Four ducks pinwheeled across the cove. Walking warmed our feet. Some of the cabins were slanting toward the water or falling over. People from Angoon had scavenged the roofs. In nearly all of them, you could see the sky through the rafters. In the woods above were more cabins, almost completely fallen down and covered by the forest. Matsu pointed up the hillside and said, "I lived in the next-to-last house up there. You



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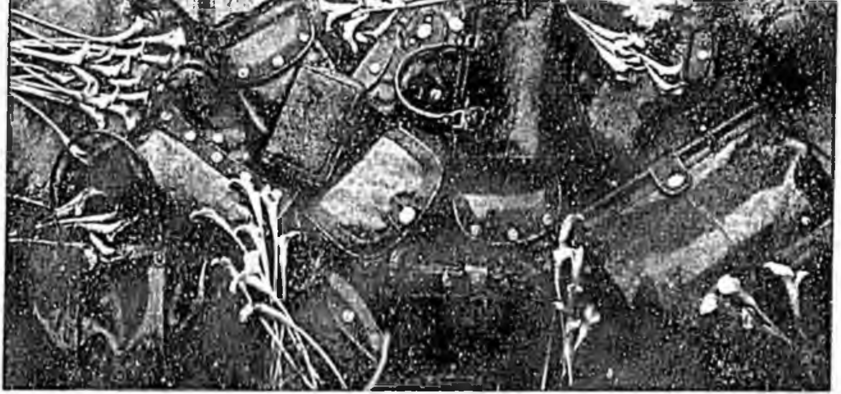

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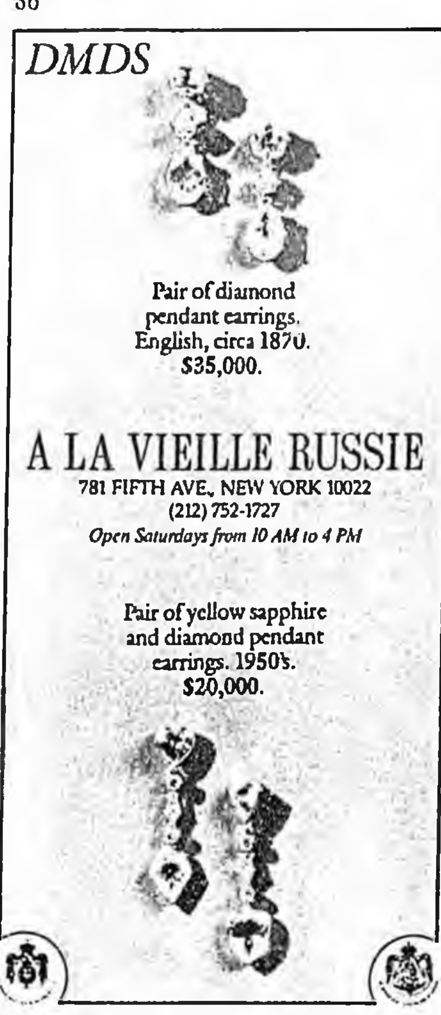
can't see it now for the trees." We looked into the superintendent's house, which had the best workmanship, and I could see the walls stripped of wainscoting in about exactly the proportions that I remembered seeing in place in Matt's house. Inside the superintendent's house, Matsu found a bench, made from planks, and decided to take it back to town.

The seaweed along the tide line was frozen, and there were little rusty pieces of metal in it. Matsu said a boardwalk had run along the shore, connecting the houses. No trace of it was left.

On the way back, the hills and the shoreline slid past like scenery passing the window of a train. Avalanche scars in the shape of arrows and sawteeth patterned the sides of some of the hills.

From Hood Bay we went back around the town and into the inlet and then up inside it. Some way back into it we saw a rock on which were two crosses, and Matsu said that they were there to mark the death of two of Matthew's relatives—one of his aunts and her daughter. They had been on a seine boat and the child was lost overboard, and the mother went in to save her. Matsu intended to take me up into the salt lake where salmon spawn and a lot of people from Angoon do their fishing, but the tide was too low for us to make it over the rapids at the mouth of the lake. We anchored nearby and walked along the shore and followed some deer tracks in the snow for a while, then passed the rapids and walked along the shore of the lake. We found a seine rolled up and left for the next year's fishing, and a campsite, and then we turned around and got back in the boat. Hills ran down alongside us like stair rails. We crossed the inlet with the sky going dark all around and the deer coming out on the beaches to feed.

I ARRIVED in Angoon with an introduction to Matthew Fred, who calls himself Chief of All Chiefs. Not usually in front of any other Tlingits—at least, not ones from Angoon—but they have all read the statement in the paper at one time or another, or heard it from someone who has, and got angry over it and stored it away as a grievance. It is perhaps the first resentment a person encounters in Angoon. Matthew Fred is shrewd and engaging and generous and talkative,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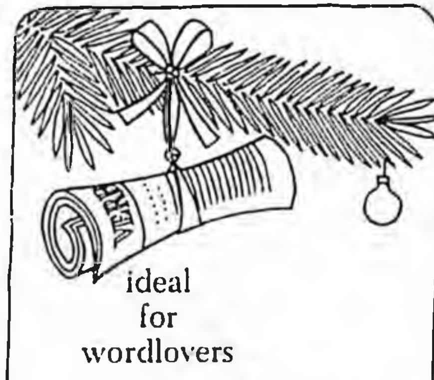
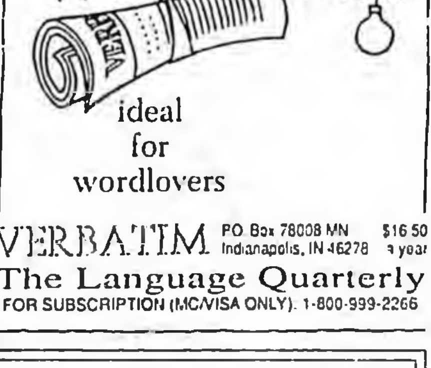
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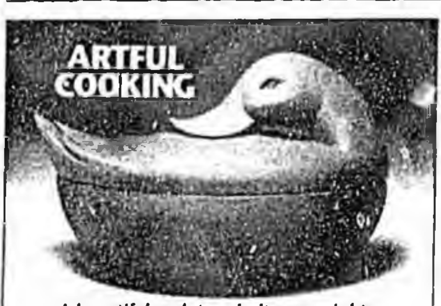
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not to mention interested in everyone else's affairs, and it was natural that he would come to a position of authority in the town. On a wall in his office Matthew Fred has a picture of himself on a stage in the East Room of the White House with President Carter and others, and it is signed "With Best Wishes to Chief Matthew Fred & the Tlingits of Admiralty Island, Jimmy Carter." Admiralty Island was made a national monument in 1978, and on that occasion several people from Angoon went to Washington to meet Jimmy Carter, and it was apparently during this trip that Matthew began to suggest that the appropriate form of address for his person was Chief of All Chiefs. Matthew claims his title as a consequence of his status as an elder in the raven beaver clan, the town's largest, and he qualifies it by saying that the designation applies only to Admiralty Island. Nevertheless, few in Angoon outside his family support it. People in Angoon have met a lot of anthropologists and archeologists and journalists of all kinds and have no real reason to talk to any of them, especially because it usually means time lost on other projects, and so I heard from a lot of people that they were too busy to see me, or didn't want to talk. Or they said come back some other time, mentioning a time when they knew they wouldn't be home, and all this was frustrating until I discovered, by accident, a way to get their attention. I would call someone and ask for an interview and be turned down, and then I would pause, perhaps sigh, and say, "Well, that's too bad, because I've been talking to Matthew Fred and—"

"*You've been talking to Matthew Fred*? Well, then you better get over here and hear the truth."

When I told Matthew that someone had challenged something he'd told me, he would just get angry that I had questioned anything he'd said, and even angrier that I had talked about anything that concerned him to someone he considered a social inferior. About one person he said, "He lies with a completely straight face." About another, "There are nothing but lies in his house."

Matthew Fred is slight and wiry and about five feet ten inches tall. His face is square and deeply lined. He has a straight, wide mouth, and small, black, watery, and wide-set eyes. The most prominent feature of his face is a scar

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on his upper lip, which he received one night in a bar. He is a musician, and for a while during the nineteen-fifties and sixties he made part of his living playing jazz in bars around Juneau. He played the trumpet and taught himself to improvise from a correspondence course. "How I got be a musician," he says, "I was hostile to white men, and I felt I could be just as good as them and do what they could do, and music was the way I felt I could do it." Some of the time, he double-jobbed, doing carpentry or plumbing or painting apartments or laying tile. For a while, he worked at a sawmill. While he did, he played music only on weekends, usually for Indian dances, because it was too dangerous to show up tired at the mill. Otherwise, he would play until one in the morning, come home and sleep until seven, get up and go to his day job, then come home and nap before leaving to play again. He played mainly at roadhouses and clubs. He played at the Occidental; he played at a place called Dream Land; he played in the Bubble Room of the Baranof Hotel; and he played at the L&L, which is where his lip got split. He was playing with his eyes closed, and a logger who didn't like Indians stepped up and slammed the bell of the trumpet back toward his face. The cut took six stitches. After that, Matthew switched to saxophone and played in a band called the Rhythm Chiefs, which also worked the Occidental.

Matthew grew tired of his life and of the kinds of people he met in bars. "That life lost all its glory for me," he says. "I felt I didn't belong where I was at. It felt artificial. The kids weren't happy, and all that the people in the barrooms could offer was the friendship of the bottle. Some people from Angoon came to see me and said they wanted me back home, and I began to think that if I kept up with it, where I would end up is dead someplace, overdosed, like most jazz musicians.

"I fished when I came home. Worked as a cook on a boat, then became a deck boss for a boat purse-seining, cracked the whip. In between that, I would do subsistence. Then was a head maintenance man at a fish company then a social worker, then water-and-sewer man for the town, then went into hospital for a stomach operation." Now he is the Forest Service boss on Admiralty, which is a seasonal job. He

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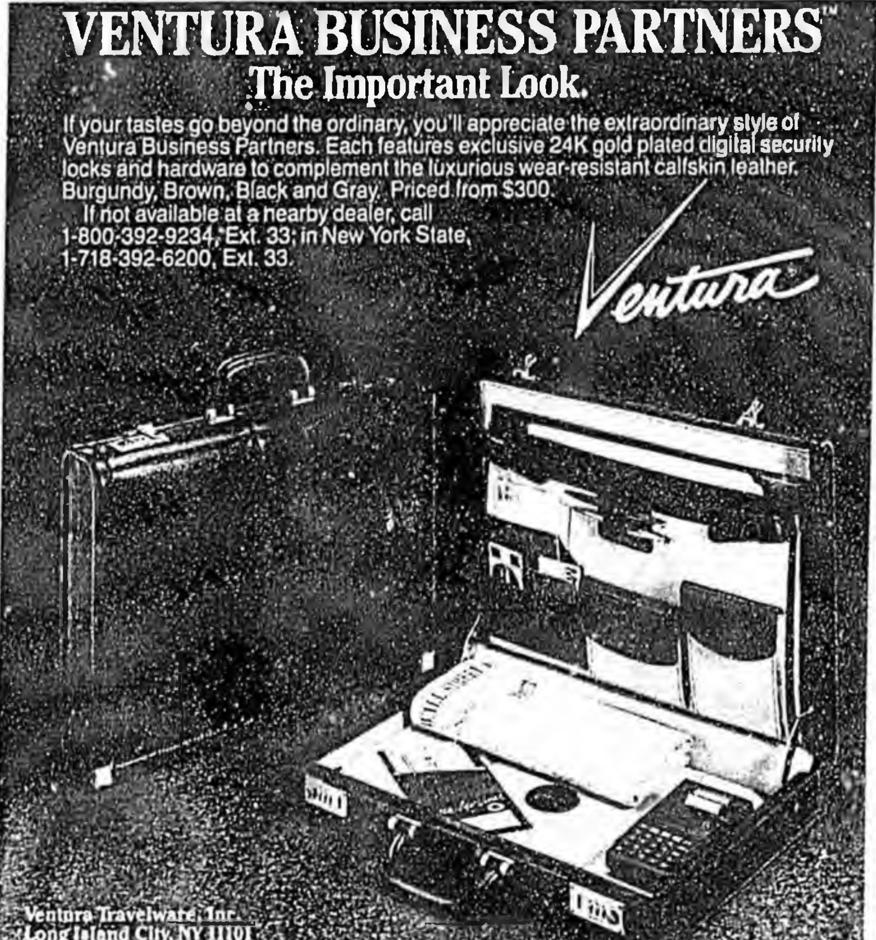
continues to play music, mostly guitar now, and mostly at church. He attends every church in Angoon.

I never felt more like a white guy than when I talked to Matthew Fred. The Tlingit appreciation of passing time is local and historical. There are the legends of their ancestors, which occur in a past that is not locatable, and there are the events in the history of where they live and in their clans, which took place a long time ago, and which no one really remembers exactly the same way from clan to clan and almost never from place to place, and then there are events of modern history, which also float in time, depending on who is recalling them. All of these forms of history have influenced Matthew Fred's sense of time. Much of Tlingit culture was destroyed by missionaries, but when I listen to Matthew Fred talk I sometimes think that one thing they never got their hands on was the Tlingit sense of time. An answer from Matthew to a question I asked never really seemed related to it in a way I could figure out. A question seemed as if it were an occasion for him to talk about whatever was on his mind. He would answer a simple question at some length, or by laboring over details, or with the recitation of a legend, the meaning of which was completely opaque to me, and I would always get impatient and end up wishing I had never asked him in the first place, and trying to think of someone I might go to to get the information. The answer, I think, was no one, because Matthew, of all the elders, has spent the most time with white people and is the most interested in conversation. The other elders I talked to were even more elusive or private or deep in the self-absorption of old age.

THE reason an American can go to a Tlingit village and understand what the people are saying, and may, if he has done a little reading, know more about Tlingit tribal life in the past than do the Indians who live there, probably has a lot to do with the Presbyterians. The first missionaries in Alaska represented the Russian Orthodox Church. The Indians liked ritual and display, the showy interiors of the Orthodox churches, the fancy, imperial-looking gilded robes and jewels on the priests, the burning of incense, and the mysteries of a long, chant-filled service carried on in an impenetrable tongue. At-



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tending church also offered the Indians a chance to dress up.

Presbyterian missionaries arrived in 1877. The Russian missionaries did not care for card-playing or wine-drinking or slander or argument or shamans or the Indian memorial parties called potlatches or any kind of spirit worship except their own, but otherwise they endorsed the way the Tlingit lived their lives, and did not try to civilize them according to ideas brought from home. The Presbyterians considered the culture of the Tlingits to be backward, brutal, and repellent. Here is a Russian Orthodox missionary describing the Tlingit language: "Their speech is flowery and rich in imagery, and they are generally good orators. . . . The language itself is rich with words but even richer in grammatical forms. Nouns and adjectives have articles, as in Greek; persons, tenses and moods of nouns and adjectives are modified by means of prefixes. . . . Listening carefully to the speech of a Tlingit, you might hear the croaking of a frog, the bubbling of water, the cackling of a hen, the crackle of breaking dry wood, or some guttural and rather pleasant, melodious sounds." And here is a Presbyterian: "The sooner . . . the natives drop their stunted and dwarfed language for the liberal English, the better. No encouragement to hold on to their language should be given by missionaries and teachers learning it with the view of addressing them in it. The best way of elevating them is to make them climb up to us."

The Presbyterians opened schools, in which they forbade the children to speak their own language. The entire Indian population of Killisnoo once requested baptism in the Orthodox Church in order to rid themselves of Presbyterian missionaries. Nevertheless, the Orthodox Church was in decline, and the Presbyterian advanced, particularly in Sitka. Some of the converts were drawn by the novelty and the hope of acquiring power by learning to pray and sing in the Protestant fashion.

At the head of the Presbyterian Church in Alaska was a missionary named Sheldon Jackson. Unlike the Orthodox missionaries, who felt that the Tlingit ought to be encouraged toward God without giving up their way of living from the sea and the forest, Jackson had an idea that the Indians should be taught to herd reindeer and to become farmers, with the intention of providing cheap food and transportation and labor for the European and American immigrants. Jackson believed that a teacher should be a married man and that a well-run household was a lesson to the Indians. His goal was to instill in the Indians as "their highest ambition . . . to build American homes, possess American furniture, dress in American clothes, adopt the American style of living, and be American citizens."

Many Tlingit parents wanted their children to learn to read and write, so as to be able to compete with white people, but they resented the school's forced attendance, the ban on speaking Tlingit, and the attacks on potlatches, shamanism, and other traditional beliefs of theirs. Also, they began to realize that being Presbyterian did not protect them from discrimination or necessarily give them a respectable position. White men, often other Presbyterians, still took their lands.

The Presbyterian church in Angoon was built in 1923, the Russian Orthodox Church in 1929, after the one in Killisnoo burned down. There are three other churches in Angoon: one belonging to the Salvation Army, one to the Assembly of God, and one that has no denomination. All except the Orthodox Church have their own ministers. An Orthodox priest comes on a circuit from the mainland.

I went one night to the Assembly of God church, because Matthew Fred asked me to. The minister was a red-haired guy from Kansas standing up and singing and leading everyone along as if it were a tent meeting in the South, and shouting "Praise Jesus!" at unpredictable moments, with a beatific smile on his face. Then people began to stand up and talk about their experiences with the work of the Lord in their lives—what is called testifying. Invariably, some of the experiences were trivial—a woman, for example, who felt that the Lord had seen to it that her son broke his ankle in a bas-

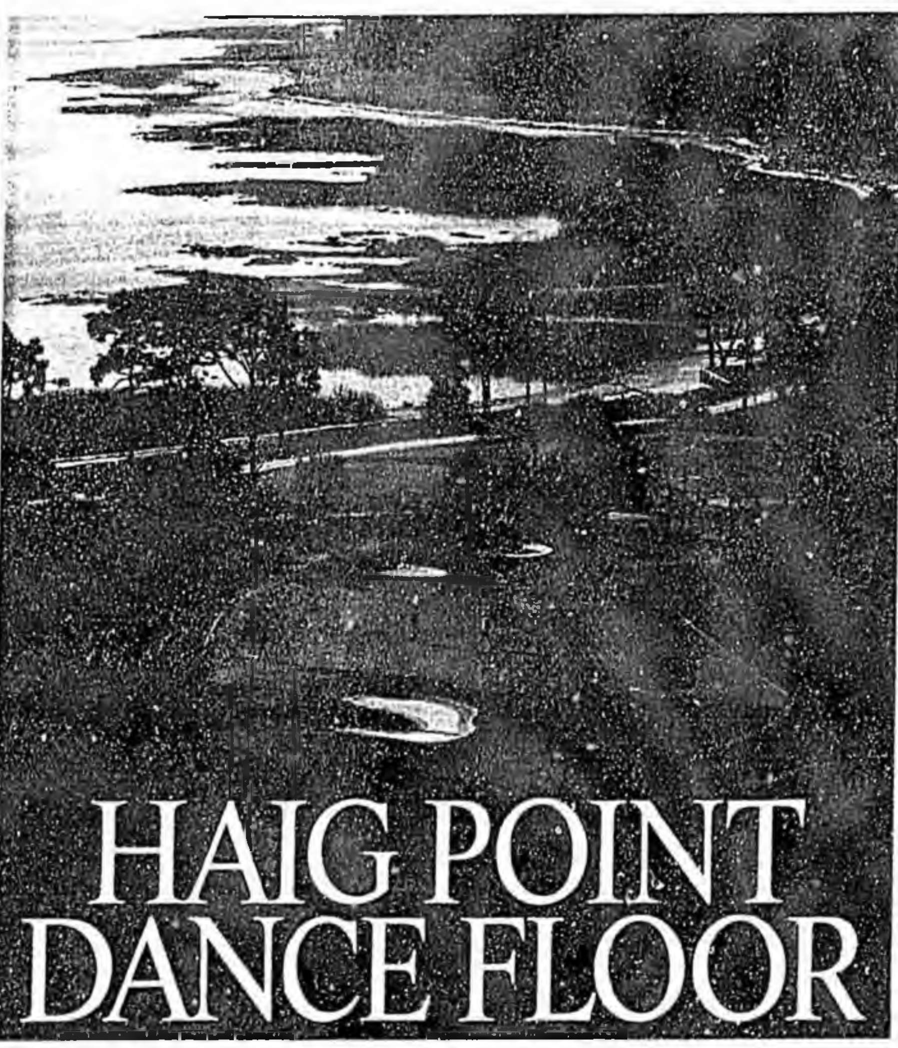
ketball game as a lesson—but then I heard George Paul talk about leaving town and going to Barrow, and a woman talk about a horrible and serious operation she faced, which would be painful and frightening and leave her with little hope of long life, and someone else talk about a sickness, and another talk about drinking, and the troubles just came pouring out. I sat there and sang the songs when they came up, and thought that, whatever else I or anyone else thinks about the Tlingit and the myths they know and the culture they brought into being and its artifacts, they are also now regular Americans, and the triumph of Sheldon Jackson is complete.

IN the canoe days, the Tlingit called God a high-up rich man. They would sometimes invite their enemies to a feast, then in the middle of it murder them. To lure Europeans ashore for an ambush, a Tlingit might dress in a bearskin and walk up and down the beach. Americans the Tlingit called Boston men, and the British King George men. Indians in Canada they called King George Indians. The Tlingit thought white people smelled bad, especially Russians. White people other than Russians the Tlingit called People from the Place Where the Clouds Reach Down to the Earth—that is, the horizon.

The Tlingit began to wear beards and mustaches after meeting white men; before that, they had usually plucked the hair from their faces. They also began to put doors on their houses and, around 1900, to use chairs, but tables were less common. Before white men, the Tlingit would leave their villages for months at a time without making provisions for protecting their property.

Some Tlingit thought that twins were an omen of evil, others that they were lucky, and others that they occurred from having had sex on consecutive nights. A sick Tlingit finding a bug on himself believed he would die from his illness. Widows were not to eat boiled fish, or else their heads would come loose and flop from side to side. A mother would capture her child's first cries in a bag and then carry it to a place where people were passing, so that it would be walked on, in order to keep the child from crying too much.

The Tlingit boiled water not over a



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fire but by tossing heated rocks into it. Sometimes Tlingit would put earwax on their kindling to start their fires. Tlingit had no regular mealtimes; instead, they ate whenever they felt like it. Eating beach food—cockles, clams, mussels, sea urchins, crabs, and seaweed—at night was thought to cause nightmares and bad weather.

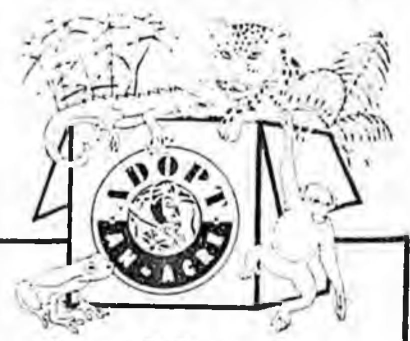
Each Tlingit believed he had a guardian spirit that stayed close to him, usually above his head, and left him only at death or when he committed a serious crime.

The Tlingit thought that all rocks, animals, trees, plants, stars, planets, and the sun were alive and had the same thoughts and feelings and passions and needs that they did, only were generally more cunning and powerful. They believed that owls could speak Tlingit and predict the weather; before a storm, owls were thought to be saying, "Get under trees." Owls were also believed to be able to identify murderers, so sometimes they were shot. Animals of all kinds were thought to be able to understand human speech; therefore, the Tlingit were especially careful never to say anything insulting about bears. A bear's main attributes were thought to be generosity, pride, honesty, and vengefulness. Also, a bear is able to feel shame. It was believed that a male bear would run away from a naked woman, so sometimes when Tlingit women met a bear in the forest they would take off their clothes.

The Tlingit were fond of tattooing young women. The color of the design would be pricked in with a needle, or else a thread soaked in dye would be drawn through the skin. Their favorite colors were red and blue, then black. A common woman could have a vertical line in the center of her chin and one parallel to it on either side. A higher-class woman was allowed two long vertical lines, from the corners of her mouth.

Tlingit society had four levels: those of the highest caste, then people of no distinction, then low-class nobodies, then slaves. A Tlingit man coming to a town where he knew no one was not supposed to speak until someone spoke to him. Beyond that, it was felt that only a nobody would talk a lot, as a means of drawing attention, so a high-caste person visiting a town where he wasn't known would be careful not to say much.

When the Tlingit became Chris-



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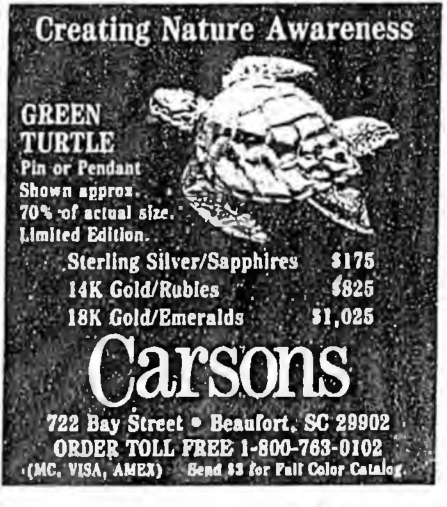

tians and married, the wedding announcement would occasionally refer to the bride as a maid of the forest. Sometimes a Tlingit would meet a white man and ask him to tell everything he knew about God. They would sometimes commit suicide by taking to sea in a canoe with no paddle.

When a Tlingit left on a long journey, his friends watched him out of sight, for fear he might never return.

BY the time people got around to taking pictures of the Tlingit, they wore European clothes. Groups of men would sit in a photographer's studio and hold a pose with expressions that can be read as sullen or grave or backward or resentful or churlish or sombre or something else entirely: how could anyone know? Or a shaman would be persuaded to dress in the skins he wore for his ceremonies and to hold some of his rattles in his hands and stand beside a few of his charms; the look on his face suggests he is familiar with some aspects of magic and is not even close to comfortable with the idea of what kind the man under the sheet behind the lens might be using. Or a group of women would come into the studio and put on some robes and sit in front of things they had made to sell to the tourists who came off the boat at Juneau or Sitka. In any picture of more than four or five people, there is more than one type of face, but nearly all have high cheekbones and dark eyes and black hair, prominent, looming foreheads and brows, and mouths that turn down at the corners. The men tended not to be tall and were often bowlegged—as a result, the Europeans said, of spending so much time kneeling in canoes. The women as they aged grew stout; some are described as weighing three hundred and fifty pounds.

To show anger at an insult, the Tlingit painted their faces black, using charcoal. To protect themselves against burns from the sun and the wind, and against mosquitoes, cold, and snow blindness, the glare off the water, and the heat of the open fire as well, they covered their faces with a concoction made from a variety of ingredients such as spruce gum, soot, graphite, deer fat, goat fat, and seal grease. The mixture dried hard and was waterproof and lasted for weeks. High-caste women also covered their faces with powders and pastes to bleach their complexions. The Tlingit had an abhorrence of any damage to the face. A wound on the face was shameful and had to be paid for by the person who caused it. In fighting, Tlingit almost always struck only the body.

Some doctors believed that the Tlingit's constitution was much stronger than the white man's and that the Tlingit required twice the amount of medicine the white man did to produce the same effect. The Tlingit were said not to notice wind or rain or cold. A Tlingit who was going to ford a river would take off his clothes and sit down in the water for a while. At night, they would sleep so close to the fires that they came close to burning, while on the other side of their bodies would be frost.

As for their bearing, this was written by someone who visited Alaska in the nineteenth century: "The raggedest old man in the village, when talking with a white man, will draw his blanket around him with the air of a monarch. As one of them once said, 'The earth is a round ball, and the white man is on top now and the Indians underneath; but some day the ball will roll over, and it will be the Indian's turn to be on top.' "

ONE of the first Europeans to trade with the Tlingit, toward the end of the eighteenth century, was Jean-François de Galoup La Pérouse, a French navigator. He wrote that they stole anything they could get their hands on. They tore the iron fittings loose from his ship. They tried to sneak aboard at night. He would invite the headmen onto the ship and give them gifts, and they would steal a nail or an old sock. Whenever he noticed them smiling, he was sure that they had stolen something. He gave orders that presents were to be given to the children, in the hope of winning the parents' good will, but whenever his crew were busy with the children he would notice one or another of the fathers stealing something. When they were caught, they were not ashamed but only embarrassed at not carrying it off.

Traders at Sitka in the early nineteenth century would close off the forward part of a ship with sails to the height of a man. Behind the sails would stand an armed crew alongside cannon loaded with grapeshot. Around the deck the traders would string a net that had only one entrance, wide enough for

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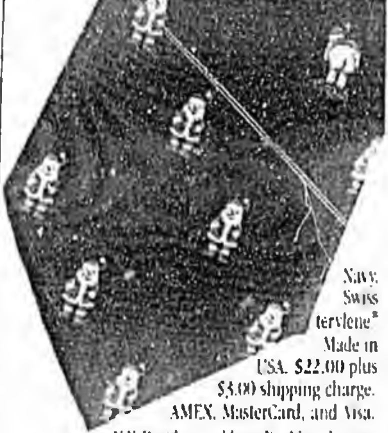
Bah Humbug



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one person. Before trading began, they would bring the chiefs on board and tell them that only a certain number of Indians would be allowed on the ship at one time. None would be allowed more than ten feet from the rail, and if anyone was killed for violating these rules it should not be considered an event worthy of breaking a peace.

Although traders describe the Tlingit as dishonest, the Indians' relations among themselves were always marked by truthfulness and respect for property. The Tlingit considered a person who stole to be under a spell.

EVENTUALLY, from someone in Juneau, I learned that the inscription on the T-shirt referred to the shelling of Angoon by the American Navy, which felt that the Hootsnoowoos had become dangerous and were threatening the white settlement at Killisnoo and needed to be put down, but the person who told me about it said that it would not be a good idea to raise the subject with the people in Angoon, who were still upset about it.

ALL five kinds of Pacific salmon—humpback, dog, sockeye, coho, and king—reside in the waters around Angoon. All except the king spawn in streams on the island.

In past times, the Tlingit believed that salmon lived in houses under the sea, in a place far away, and that in appearance they were more or less like people, and that they observed much the same customs and manners as the Tlingit. Each year, they assumed the shape of salmon and travelled across the ocean to the streams and rivers that belonged to the Tlingit. As long as their bones were returned to the water, the salmon would come back. Because salmon were so abundant in their streams and rivers, the Tlingit never developed a first-salmon ceremony, as did other Northwest Coast Indians. In first-salmon ceremonies, the Indians would greet the first salmon to arrive as if it were a chief paying a visit, and address speeches to it and throw a party for it.

The Tlingit would stand on rocks in the streams and spear salmon with spears made from cedar, or shoot them with bows and arrows, or, during the winter, build weirs and traps, or sharpen stakes and set them in the mud of the flats so that salmon leaping rapids would fall back on the stakes.

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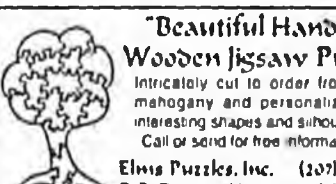

Some of the salmon they ate fresh, most of it they smoked. They were fond of something called stinkheads—salmon heads wrapped in skunk cabbage and buried several days in a barrel below the tide line. They liked salmen best just before the fish spawned, when they had used up most of their body fat, so they would dry better.

What is called the seasonal round—the activities of the harvest that begin in the summer and continue through the cycle of the year—starts in Angoon in early summer, with the arrival of the salmon. The first to show up in the waters around Angoon is the sockeye, which arrives in mid-June or early July and lasts into August. Next to arrive is the pink—also called the humpback or the humpy, because of the grotesque changes the male undergoes during spawning. When humpbacks arrive at the fresh water, the males look like normal salmon; then the bones in their foreheads spread apart until they are wider by a third, and their snouts get longer by two-thirds. The humps that they grow on their backs increase their height by almost a quarter. The dog salmon, also called the chum, follows the pink, and arrives in two runs—summer dogs in late June and fall dogs in September. The coho shows up in Angoon in late September.

The return of the salmon coincides with that of creatures that rely on the salmon for food. Crab, halibut, seals, and trout return to the bays to prey on the salmon that have finished spawning and are dying, and also on their eggs.

During the summer and up until the first frost, deer live in the open meadows above the timberline. You can see them from a distance, dark against the background of green. Hunters reach them by bear trails. Late summer and into the fall is the time for the harvest of thimbleberries, huckleberries, salmonberries, and blueberries. In October, the Tlingit begin taking seals. Mostly, they get them in the bays—on the rocks and reefs where they rest—and at the mouths of salmon streams. Many are taken by chance in the course of a deer trip. By October, deer have moved to the muskegs and the low woods. Hunters hope for snow by the first of December to force them down to the beaches. Clams, cockles, gum boots, chitins, and sea cucumbers make up the winter harvest. In the last of February, Dolly Varden trout arrive at the mouths of the salmon streams to

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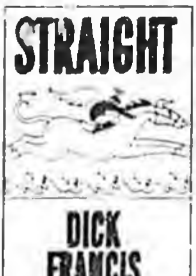

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feed on the fry of the chum and humpback salmon leaving, mostly at night, for open water. In March, the herring return to spawn. The Tlingit cut hemlock branches and leave them in the water for the eggs of the herring to collect on, and then eat them. In April, the Tlingit collect two kinds of seaweed—black and red ribbon—and dry it to use later in stews and, in the case of the black, to cook with salmon eggs. In May, when the seals are having their pups, the Tlingit stop hunting them, and they don't start again until the fall.

Beach logging is carried on throughout the year. Logs are lost in Chatham Strait from barges on their way to a pulp company, or they float away from log rafts, and either they drift in to shore and are found, or someone in a boat out looking for them throws a rope around one and tows it to shore. Logs found above the high-water mark with the company brand are company property for ninety days. Firewood from logs that have been left on the beach is seasoned and contains less pitch than fresh-cut logs, and that is an advantage; a lot of house fires start in pitchy chimneys.

THE Tlingit in Angoon do not rely only on cash and they do not barter. They have what is called a mixed economy: it relies on cash to buy guns and fishing gear and whatever else they need to keep them in the business of finding food. In order for it to work, there has to be a lot of wilderness around them to support the animals they rely on. Lately, the main threats to the welfare of the town's economy have been logging and the promise of quick cash. A lot of the woods around other Tlingit communities have been logged. The Indians sold the rights and got the money and bought pickup trucks, and, for a while, seemed better off. One reason Angoon has been called the last outpost of Tlingit culture is that the people who live there have held on to their preference for fresh Indian food: that means they need the forest, and furthermore that they oppose logging. The Tlingit have traditionally believed that food can be acquired much faster than money, and that gathering food provides capital for trade.

The people of Angoon could have made a lot of money from logging, and they could have had an airport and more roads, but they don't sell their land to outsiders. White people who have got hold of land around Angoon have usually managed to do it through a connection to the Forest Service or some other part of the government. It happens that there is a fairly high turnover of teachers in Angoon, and people in town say that one reason is that the town makes it difficult for teachers to buy land and build houses they can sell later at whatever price a vacation house in Alaska would bring. In this way, the people who live in Angoon have kept the price of their land from rising beyond their means. They have been able to do so because of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, put through in 1971, which gave holdings of land to local corporations to manage. Angoon has control over a little more than thirty-five hundred acres surrounding it. The Forest Service controls the rest, and it was in

this portion that white people were sometimes able to buy.

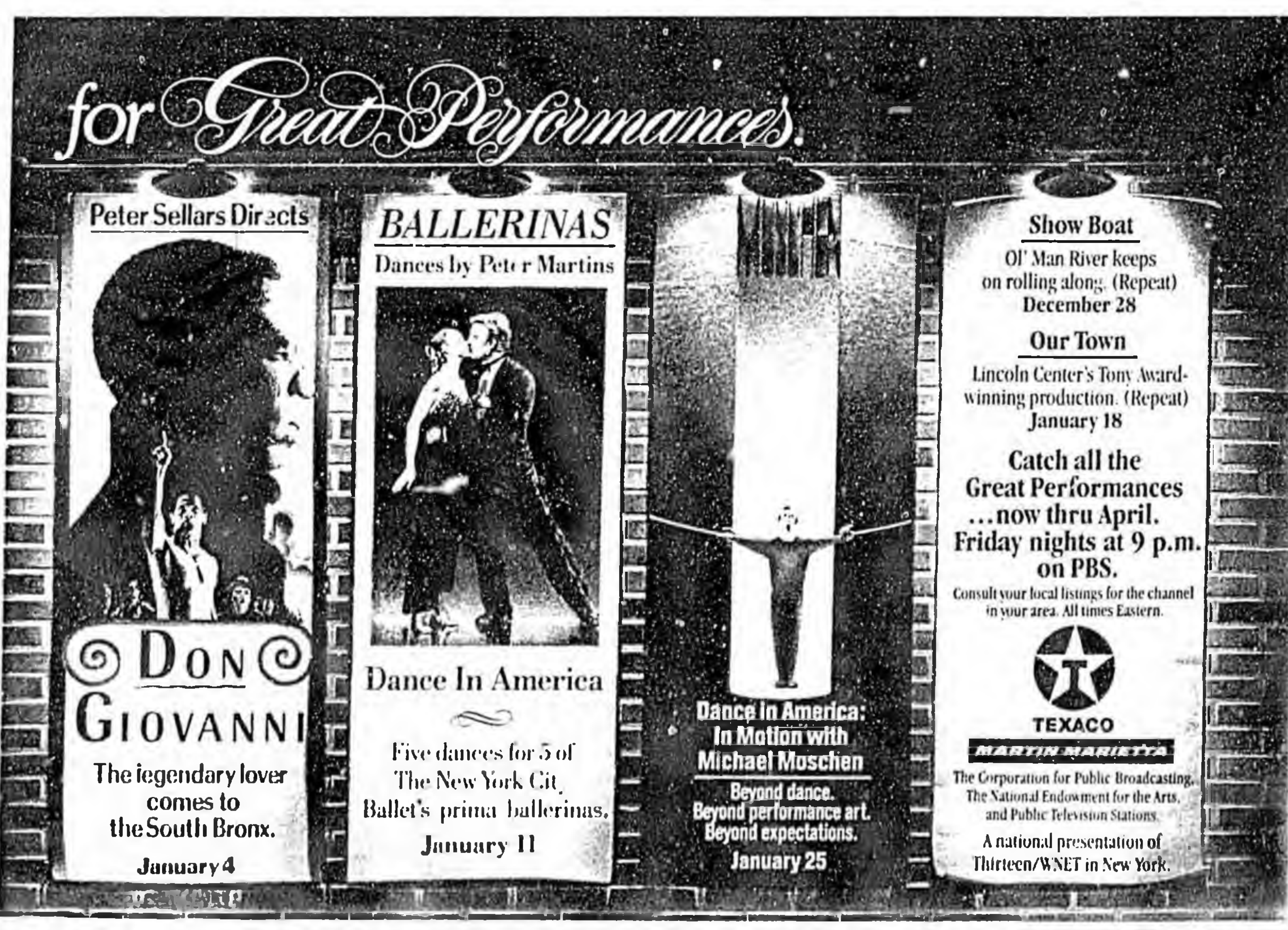
It is difficult for the Tlingit in Angoon to think of the land as an asset for profit, when they have traditionally considered themselves caretakers. They do not like the idea of profit or business in connection with the idea of land. "Standing on the beach" is a Tlingit phrase, and when they use it in discussions about land and about logging what they mean is that they can look down the road at a future based on logging and not only do they see themselves losing their hunting grounds but also they see themselves dispossessed of work, standing on the beach, watching white men at work in their forests.

The Tlingit feel that they have lived properly and with success from the land for thousands of years. They have never hunted themselves out of anything. The white man shows up and it takes only a hundred years to have trouble with the forests and the game and the fish.

The Tlingit in Angoon know that they are poor from stopping the logging. If they can't see it by comparing what they own and the comforts they have with the lives of the Tlingit who have permitted logging and are now driving pickups, then those people tell them. The Tlingit in Sitka like to tell the ones in Angoon that they are stupid and don't know how to make money. The Tlingit in Angoon know that if they cut the timber the game would leave. They have seen it happen in the places on the island where logging went on in past times. The forest grew back too thick: nothing can move in it; game shuns the area; the hunting is worthless. They see it in the communities where logging goes on and the wind blows over the bald, scarred-up, empty land. And anyway they wonder what would happen to the children born after the forest was gone.

Most of the money that is made in Angoon is made by fishermen fishing from small boats with hand trolls. In 1982, there were five hundred and sixteen people living in town. The school system gave jobs to thirty of them—almost all of them white people from outside Angoon. Whatever business there was in the town—the store, for example, and the offices of the government—gave jobs to thirty more. The store is expensive and the meat is frozen. The majority of the households use between one and fifteen deer in the course of a year; some use none, and some use as many as thirty. Nearly all the families eat shellfish that they dig for themselves or buy from another person in town or trade for or accept as a gift. The same goes for fish from the ocean—particularly salmon and halibut. In 1986, nearly half the people in Angoon made less than five thousand dollars for the year. Some made no money at all.

The demise of the fishing fleet began with the closing of the cannery at Hood Bay. The cannery was built in the nineteen-twenties, and was bought by the town of Angoon in 1947, and in 1961 it burned up. No one knows exactly how the fire started; the explanation one sometimes hears is that the insurance wires got hot. The cannery bought fish and stored boats and lent money for repairs and new nets and food for trips, and also money for



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fishermen's funerals and doctors' bills. When it went out of business, the fishermen could still sell their fish at other canneries, but there were none close at hand, and none that gave them the same favorable treatment. By 1975, the Angoon fishing fleet included fourteen boats, which were described in a Bureau of Indian Affairs report as "deteriorating," mainly because their owners were unable to raise money to take care of them. In 1974, Alaska had begun to control the number of fishing boats in its waters by means of permits issued to owners. A certain number were given out, and then the fishery was closed. Many boat owners in Angoon who qualified for permits received theirs and then sold them for a few thousand dollars. Some used the money to buy smaller boats. Some sold the permits because they needed the money, and some because they had grown tired of fishing and all its new restrictions. They had begun to feel that all their knowledge of places to find fish and what they knew about the landscape of the grounds and about the seasons and the migrations came to matter next to nothing, because the new way of fishing, which was to open a fishery for a limited amount of time, didn't take any of those things into account. Under this new practice, fishing seasons were called openings. The season could be as short as twenty-four hours, as is the case with halibut. Usually, there are two, maybe three halibut openings a year, which gives a fisherman forty-eight or seventy-two hours to make his year's money on halibut. Another difficulty with openings is that it is no longer possible to make a living from pursuing one kind of fish; you now have to participate in several kinds of fishing, not only for salmon but for black cod, too, and for halibut and whatever else you can find that is legal and that will make you some money in between. The permits these days are worth many times what the people in Angoon got for them. At present, there are only three purse seiners in Angoon, one of which belongs to a white man who has married into the town.

On the far end of the beach, by the boat harbor, are three derelict boats—the Junior, the Pan Alaska, and the Midnight Sun. Sickness or debt took them out of the fishery. Most of the glass in the windows of their pilothouses is broken. Snow drifts on their decks. The tide walks in and out un-

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derneath them. They tower above a person on the beach. Ravens stare down from their masts. Their owners sit home and watch television.

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> I always compare you to a drifting log with iron nails in it. Let my brother float in, in that way. Let him float ashore on a good sandy beach.
> I always compare you, my mother, to the sun passing behind the clouds. That is what makes the world dark.

A song sung by wolf families on their way to a feast:

> A rich man is coming. Your feelings you keep silent.
> When it is ended, thus they always say,
> "It is all gone."

Song sung to a child in his cradle:

> Let me shoot a small bird for my younger brother.
> Let me spear a small trout for my sister.

Sung on the way to jail:

> They sound like howling wolves from here, everybody just beginning to get drunk, and I have to go away.

I WENT halibut fishing with Matt Kookesh. The opening was scheduled to begin at noon of the first day of May and last twenty-four hours. I took the same room at the lodge, but ate all my meals with Matt and Jackie. My first night, I followed Matt into the yard and held the door of the smokehouse open while he cut steaks from a deer, and we had them with beans and carrots and, afterward, blueberry pie with ice cream. We drank some beer, and then, because it was April, and not January, I walked home practicing in my mind lying down and looking dead to a bear, and then I got in bed and lay in the darkness listening to two Indian women upstairs on the balcony scream at each other about a man that both of them were seeing. One was more reasonable than the other, who was close to hysterical, and who said, "I'll kill you if you don't stay away," and I waited for the gunshot, and then the two of them started crying and the more reasonable one left.

The next morning, Matt went to see if he could find any more octopus in the rocks on the beach along the strait, and Jackie and Nikolai and I went with him. Matt had an octopus hook made

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of a steel rod taken from a box spring. It was about as tall as he was, and had a sharp filed hook turned up half a foot at one end. We walked past the Assembly of God church and down the embankment to the beach and stopped to watch some ducks arrowing toward the strait. Beside us in the woods were birds that made sounds like police whistles. In Juneau, where I had stopped on my way to Angoon, I had walked in the woods, and the people there, blowing whistles to alert the bears, made it sound as if basketball games were being played all over the forest. We walked along the beach toward the small white crosses in the graveyard at the end of the point, Jackie and I carrying empty buckets that joint compound had come in, and Jackie also carrying Nikolai on her back. Matt walked along the edge of the water and sometimes into it, beyond the tide, working his hook into holes between the rocks.

Chatham Strait was flat as a mirror. Someone had worked the beach a few tides earlier; Matt found a couple of tentacles left behind on the rocks, so he wondered if he wasn't wasting his time. I didn't have the right shoes for the water, so I stayed on the beach and gathered red ribbon seaweed off the rocks with Jackie, and watched Matt in the distance, out at the edge of the tide line, stick his hook into a hole and jerk it back and flip an octopus up and into the air over his shoulder while Jackie said, "He got one." I asked him how he killed them, and he said, "Old-timers would turn their heads inside out. New-timers like me figure they got a head, so club it."

On the way back down the beach, we saw Floyd, one of Matt's brothers, plowing toward the horizon in a skiff. Matt said he was on his way to White Rock, an octopus ground against the shore of Chichagof Island.

I went to the store then for something to go with our lunch. Matthew Fred and Bessie, his wife, were in there, along with the Orthodox priest, who had come over for the weekend and was carrying on a blessing of the place. The three of them and a couple of women I knew by sight, plus a woman who worked the cash register, formed a procession that went up and down the aisles, singing. The people shopping stepped aside for them. Bessie carried holy water in a peanut-butter jar. The priest was dressed in a black robe with embroidered white cuffs, and

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three tubs of herring in the bow of Matsu's whaler and the seine piled in the stern. On the way in, by Danger Point, at the entrance to the inlet, they had passed killer whales. Floyd opened a beer and stood beside the boat, looking tired. Herring is the other popular halibut bait. It is fresher than octopus usually is, but not as tough, so a person using it has to bait his lines more than once. Matsu said that people started using octopus when herring got scarce. "The bay used to bubble with herring," he said. "The bait-fishing industry depleted it. No one thought about octopus until herring turned hard to get."

Matt spent the afternoon dyeing his leaders. As it happened, he had nylon leaders and cotton dye, so they turned pink, but that didn't bother him. He had had a line stolen the year before and couldn't do anything about it—since his were white and so were those of the boat he believed had taken them. Whenever he left, I had to take up a position on the deck to keep off the ravens and the crows that would light in the rigging, and calculate the triangle involving them and me and the octopus in the bait tubs. Matsu salted his herring to preserve it, then baited hooks, using the whole herring and cutting the extra off and tossing it in a pile to use when he ran out of whole fish. He gave some herring to Matt. While they worked, Dall porpoises, which are about five feet long and are black and white, like killer whales, fed in the harbor. Chasing schools of herring, they would break the water in regular rhythms, looking, with their fins rising and falling in half circles, like slowly turning saw blades.

he was carrying an Orthodox cross. They came to a stop by the cake mixes and sang "God Grant You Many Years," which has a call-and-response part to it between high voices and low voices, but since Bessie was the only soprano she sang the high part as a solo. The procession went upstairs and then down into the basement, ducking their heads to fit through the low doorway, and stepping aside for the conveyor belt that brought boxes up from storage. After they finished, the woman went back to the cash register and rang up my groceries while the others sang a hymn by the door, and then Matthew and Bessie and the priest climbed into Matthew's pickup and drove away.

The next morning, we had sourdough pancakes, and then we loaded bags of octopus from the freezer into a bait tub, and stopped at the store for some dye Matt had ordered, and went to the boat. Matt keeps his boat, the Sea Dance, at a dock off the lodge; both the dock and the lodge belong to his older brother Albert. Mechanic Mike, a white man who fishes with Albert, and a man from town named Garfield George were sitting on bait tubs on the dock, talking about places in the strait to put a set. It was about nine-thirty. Matt heated water for the dye, then filled a bait tub and dumped into it forty hooks and leaders, which were attached to the clips that join them to the ground line. This arrangement of hook, line, and clip the fishermen call a gangion, which is pronounced "gan-yen;" the line, with hooks attached, they call a skate. Matt was hoping the leaders would turn red. Other fishermen had begun dyeing their leaders in the belief it concealed them in the darkness at the bottom of the sea, but Matt had never dyed anything before and wasn't sure how it would go. Meanwhile, he decided that the turn of the points on the hooks he was using from the year before was not severe enough, so he took about five hundred of them up the pier to Albert's workshop, and, one hook at a time, put them in the vise and bent the points back toward the shanks and hung them on the edge of the workbench. When he got back, around eleven, Matsu and Floyd were tying up at the end of the pier, having come from Hood Bay with herring. They had gone out at six and made three sets with a beach seine, and they had

After a while, Matsu got tired of baiting. "Fishing is starting to turn to work, and it hasn't even started yet," he said. To fish in his whaler, Matsu goes out the night before the opening to Chaik Bay, where a lot of small boats fish, and takes three cases of beer, and parties with the other fishermen, then sleeps on the beach and wakes up early. If it rains, he sleeps under a tree.

Matt's crew, Larry Knudson and Bob Schroeder, arrived late in the

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afternoon from Juneau, bringing Matt, Jr., who was returning from a school trip to Washington, D.C. Larry is a carpenter in Juneau and lives with a Tlingit woman whom Jackie grew up with, and Bob works for Fish and Game in the Juneau office. They had crossed Chatham Strait on Bob's boat and were late, and Matt hadn't been able to raise them on the radio all afternoon. Larry and Bob are in their forties and more or less opposite in every way. Bob is tall and Larry isn't. Bob has a beard and Larry doesn't. Bob talks slowly and soberly, and likes to make sure everyone has heard every word he has said, and has an academic's sense of precision in his speech, and Larry talks fast and easily, and laughs as much as he talks except when he is tired, and then he turns grave. Bob works in streaks and favors systems and the shortest way from one point to another, and Larry is relentless and dogged and inclined to pursue his curiosity as much as any system. Bob is a natural tutor and Larry a natural student. Both of them are funny and willing to work very hard, and the opposite aspects of their natures make them together form a strong crew. Larry is guileless and courteous and principled. It troubles him that by working for Matt he is taking a job from someone in Angoon, but Matt has already tried several people in town and not yet found anyone satisfactory, and his intention in fishing is to make money, not to be a benefactor to the town except by spending there the money he makes. Even with an invitation, Larry will not hunt on islands where he knows that Tlingit resentment of white people hunting in their territory is high.

That night, Jackie made lasagna for all of us, using sausage made from deer. Matt, Jr., said that the question he got asked most often in Washington was whether he lived in an igloo. After dinner, all of Matt and Jackie's nieces and nephews came over to celebrate Nik's birthday, and the house was filled with kids. Larry and Bob slept on Bob's boat. When I went to bed, there were still people down at the dock, standing around by their boats with beer and cigarettes and talking to one another in the darkness.

WE left at three the next afternoon, heading up the inlet, then around Danger Point and into the

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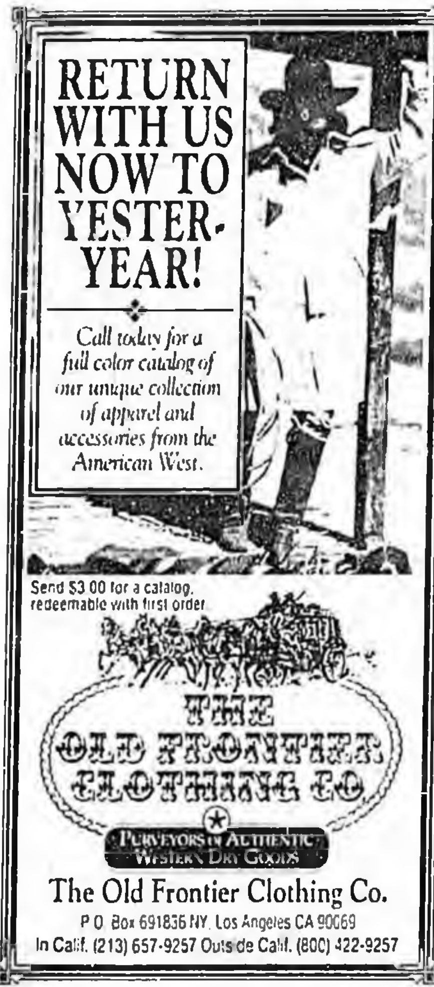
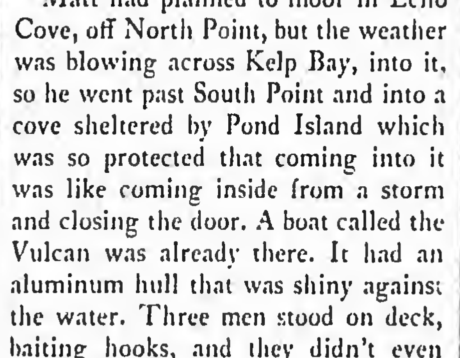


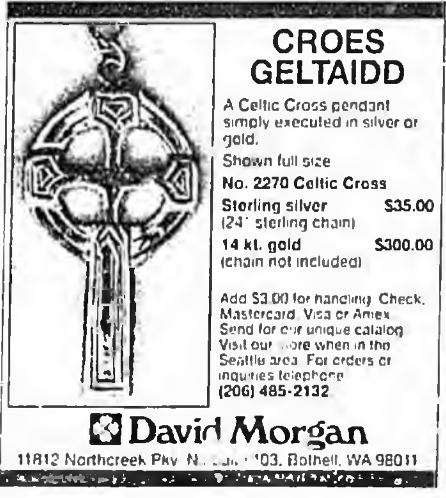
strait, with Matt steering a hundred and eighty degrees and the boat drifting south with the tide. Matt had decided to spend the night in Kelp Bay, off Baranof Island.

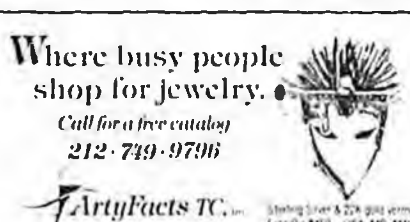
Larry worked at the cleaning table in the middle of the deck, passing a file over the point of each hook, then baiting them and using his knife to cut off the ends of the longest tentacles. Facing the stern and rolling with the swells, he looked like a man taking punches. The swells came in pairs, with intervals of calm, as if pausing to build themselves up; every fourth or fifth one was about four feet, the spray washing across the deck and the back of Larry's yellow slicker. On the deck, all you could hear besides the engine was the hiss of the wake and the scrape of the file. Matt, Jr., slept in the cabin. Bob cleaned Matt's pistol on the galley table, then put it back on the shelf above the cabinets for the dishes. Matt said that some boat owners shot the halibut as they came to the surface—especially the owners of smaller boats—because they were afraid of the trouble the big fish could cause. Sometimes, out on the grounds, you hear the pop across the water in the darkness.

After we had been under way about forty-five minutes, the swells rose higher and turned to whitecaps, and it started to rain. A captain on the radio said a storm was coming in from the southeast, but Matt figured we would arrive in Kelp Bay before the worst of it. The only way I know not to get seasick is to stand on deck in the air, so I watched Larry work in the rain for a while, and then the lower half of the mountains on Baranof started to come into view ahead through the fog, and the color of the shore began to change from blue-gray to green, and then I could pick out the single trunks of trees among the mass of the forest, and then I could see the white head of an eagle in the top of a spruce.



Matt had planned to moor in Echo Cove, off North Point, but the weather was blowing across Kelp Bay, into it, so he went past South Point and into a cove sheltered by Pond Island which was so protected that coming into it was like coming inside from a storm and closing the door. A boat called the Vulcan was already there. It had an aluminum hull that was shiny against the water. Three men stood on deck, baiting hooks, and they didn't even look at us. Matt moored about two





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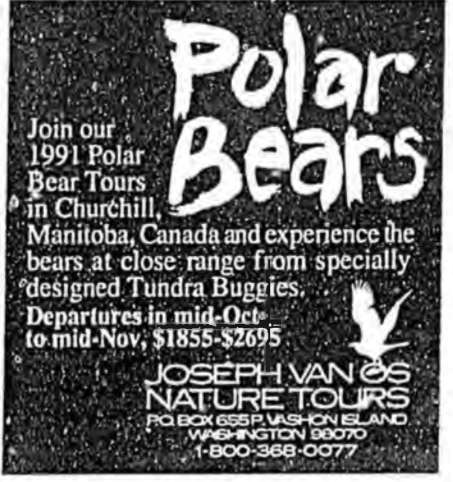

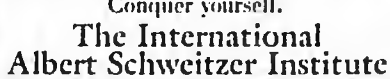

hundred feet from them, up against a wilderness you couldn't see through the fog and rain.

Matt, Jr., woke up with his hair sticking out in several directions. Larry finished sharpening and baiting hooks and coiling them carefully in the bait tubs, so they could be lifted out quickly and one at a time without tangling. He came in and slept for a while at the galley table beside Bob, who, wearing an Alaska Department of Fish and Game hat, was reading an article about bear attacks in *Sports Afield*. Matt sat at the galley table with charts spread before him, studying places in the strait for sets. Bob said it might be a good idea to put someone on deck to watch the birds, but Matt said there were no birds in that cove, and I was so surprised that he would know something so specific about a territory that I went outside to check, and he was right. When I got back in, he was saying that last year he had seen a bear come down to the water on Pond Island and jump in and swim the channel to Baranof. We swung at anchor, with the rain on the surface of the cove making small popping circles, which expanded into rings the size of dinner plates and disappeared. Oystercatchers crossed the cove between the two boats, along with several small ducks of a kind called butterball.

That night, we ate deer stew and cranberry muffins that Jackie had made. The stew was so hot it steamed up the windows. The galley table converts into a bed, which I shared with Larry. The bed was a piece of good fortune for me, since I had expected to sleep on the floor. When we got into it, I could see the lights on the deck of the Vulcan and the men still baiting, but now also drinking beer. I heard the water lapping against the hull and felt the rocking of the boat and heard the gas hissing in the pilot light in the stove and the clicking of the rain on the roof, and then I was asleep. Then someone on the radio was calling the Sea Dance, and that woke everyone up, and it turned out to be the ship-to-shore operator on behalf of Bob's wife. He talked to her, for privacy, in some foreign language; later, I asked him if it was Spanish, and he said it was Nepali. I slept again for a while, and then Garfield George called and said he was out in the strait and wanted to know where Matt was anchored. Garfield had no radar and needed to know how to find the cove. Matt talked him in, and he moored beside us. Then I tried to sleep some more, but Larry had a way of snoring that was more like a seizure than a snore, and I think I had just about fallen asleep when Matt came through the galley at five-thirty, saying, "You guys don't have to get up." Bob came in and said that he had dreamed about bear attacks. Matt made eggs and bacon and toast and coffee and there were more muffins, and Garfield came over and had breakfast with us. He had earned everyone's regard for crossing the strait at night, with no radar, and in some weather. Then Larry and Matt, Jr., and Bob went to work baiting the rest of the hooks with herring, and somewhere around nine-thirty the crew of the Vulcan, who had finished baiting the night before, appeared on deck, yawning and taking leaks over the gunwales.

Matt planned to lay down first the sets for which there would be the most competition, and to save his others,

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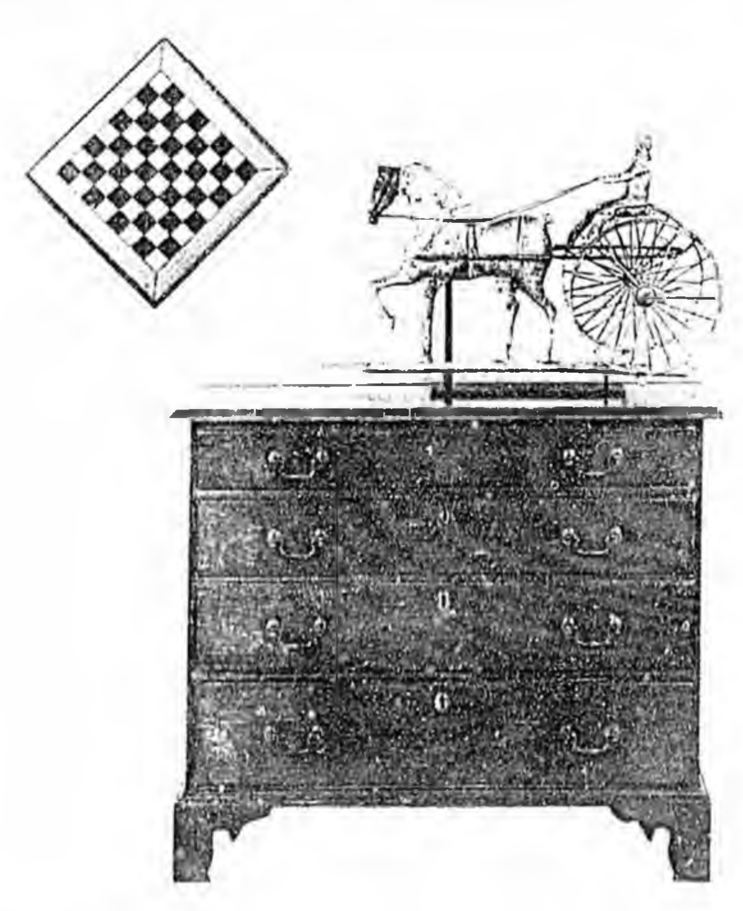

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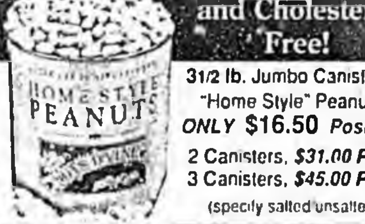

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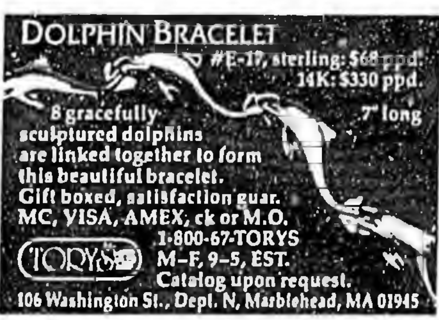

which were secret and speculative. Mainly, they were ones he had once watched a captain from Juneau prosper with. That captain was especially aggressive and the other fishermen tended to be afraid of him, so everyone gave him plenty of room to work in. He had lately been in a car accident, and Matt knew he wouldn't be out for the opening.

By the time we left the cove, around ten, other boats were showing up on the horizon. Through his binoculars Matt could see that one of them was Albert, and that he was sitting right in the middle of the set Matt hoped to make first. He picked another and began to trace its route slowly, to let the other boats know his intentions.

Sandhill cranes flew over us and across the strait, getting smaller and smaller, until they looked like perforations on a line saying "Tear Here."

At ten-thirty, the Sailor, from Sitka, showed up, towing a raft. She circled us while the captain, who was white, called out to ask if we had seen the St. Peter, the boat belonging to the captain who had been in the car accident; he was wondering whether it was safe to set in the area. Then he said that he planned to set outside the island, in the strait, which was also where Matt had thought of going. The horizon began to be highlighted by boats, like pins on a map. We spent the rest of the morning pointed at a ridge on Pond Island, with the Sailor off our starboard bow, pointed in the same direction.

Ducks grazed the surface of the bay. The clouds lifted off the tops of the mountains. The wind stood at fifteen knots. Matt went in behind the Sailor, hoping to push him to declare his intentions. Garfield came on the radio and said, "Looks a little crowded out there." By now, there were boats at even intervals all the way across the horizon. Garfield was holding a place in against the island. The Sailor moved off toward Kelp Bay, leaving room for Matt in the strait. He stood on the flying bridge, watching the other boats through the glasses and hoping to preserve his first two sets.

The buoy for the first skate went over the stern precisely at twelve. Bob and Larry stood on either side of the skate as it played out. They worked as fast as they could, clipping a gangion to the skate every twenty or thirty feet, then reaching into the bait tub for a

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new one. Each skate is about six hundred feet long, and where Matt was fishing skates go down about eight or nine hundred feet. Off the stern, an elephant seal surfaced and watched the line going out. A set takes about twenty-five minutes to complete. Matt put out four, then went back to retrieve the first. In former times, when a Tlingit dropped a halibut hook over the side of his canoe he would say, "Go right to the fireplace—hit the rich man's daughter."

Collecting the set, Matt worked the winch, bringing the skate to the surface. He bent over the stern from his waist, peering into the water for the stringy little gangion and the hook with or without bait, or with the fish. A fish coming up grows bigger and changes color and takes shape and comes into focus; it looks like a photograph assuming its form in a developing tray. When a hook came up without a fish, Matt, Jr., standing beside his father, would remove the gangion and hang it from a cable running at shoulder height above the gunwales. When he had a fish, he would grab the cable and yell "Fish!" and steer the fish around to the side and club it between the eyes, and the fish would shudder and then you could see it go blank, and then Larry or Bob would gaff it and wrestle it onto the deck. The largest of the fish were about five feet long and weighed about a hundred and fifty pounds, and did not always come over the side on the first try. Larry and Bob hoisted them onto the table in the middle of the deck, cleaned them, and threw them into the hold, which had ice in it. Sometimes, when the fish were really coming in, the two of them got as many as eight fish behind, and sometimes there were lulls with no cleaning to do. Then they would take out the hose and wash the slime and the blood off the table and the deck and off their slickers. They worked with sharp knives, as the boat rocked in the swells, and with the flat, slippery bodies of the fish like carpets under their feet, but no one got cut. Once Matt had started to fish, there were no breaks. Anyone with a few moments free could wander into the galley and get something to eat or some coffee, but the fishing went on throughout the night and the next morning. In addition to halibut, black and gray cod took the bait, and so did rays, and yelloweye, whose eyes bulge out from the trip to the surface, and sometimes turbot, and a rockfish called an idiot, which was the fluorescent-red color of a nail polish and was worth a dollar a pound. Sometimes sand fleas would have got to the fish first, and all that came up was a portion of the head attached to the hook, and the spine with the bones sticking out, and sand fleas dropping off it that were the color and shape of grains of rice.

The sets alternated good and bad throughout the night. For a time, it would look as if Matt had struck it rich, and then there would be a drought. One set came up with only one or two fish. Everyone worked steadily; to stop would be to acknowledge the cold and the quantities of water that had soaked through the cuffs of their gloves and down the necks of their slickers. The sun rose, but no one really noticed. Matt quit around eleven. He considered doing one more set, but thought he probably wouldn't be able to get it out of the water in time, and didn't want to risk trouble with Fish and Game, so gave it

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THE BOMBARDMENT OF ANGOON

October 26, is a day of remembrance for the Tlingit Indians of Angoon, Alaska. It is the day that U.S. military forces totally destroyed the village in 1882.

Events which led to the destruction of their tribal houses, winter food supply, canoes, and the deaths of six children have been attributed to a grave misunderstanding between cultures, complicated by a language barrier.

Billy Jones, who was 13 on that fateful day, would remember it decades later as "the day we suffered from a crime that was not committed."

It began on October 22, 1882, with the accidental death of Tith Klane, an Angoon shaman employed as helmsman by the Northwest Trading Company whaling operation. A harpoon gun fired at the whale accidentally exploded, killing Tith Klane. In accordance with their tribal laws, Tlingits ceased work to mourn and prepare for the burial ceremony.

Tlingit custom also required payment from the party responsible for the death of an Indian. Because of the shaman's high stature, they requested 200 blankets in compensation. The superintendent of the whaling company refused to pay and ordered villagers back to work.

When they instead continued their mourning and preparation for burial, he took the company's tug to Sitka and reported to the Naval commander that the Indians were uprising and threatening the lives and property of whites.

Navy Commander E.C. Merriman responded by gathering a military force from the Navy, Marine Corps and Revenue Marine Service (a forerunner of the U.S. Coast Guard), borrowing a revenue cutter and arming a civilian tug, and setting sail for Kootznahoo Inlet behind Angoon.

When the fleet arrived three days after the death of Tith Klane, the people were peacefully gathering winter food. Merriman immediately took nine Indians captive. Determined to end the Tlingit custom of demanding compensation for a tribesman, he made a counter demand for 400 blankets by noon the next day. It is questionable whether his demand was understood, as Merriman did not bring an interpreter and villagers understood little English.

When only 81 blankets were delivered to him the next day, Merriman ordered his military forces to burn all storehouses containing the villagers' winter food supply; gather, chop and burn the villagers' canoes; and shell tribal houses. At no time did his attack force meet with resistance.

After the shelling stopped, Merriman landed marines and soldiers to burn the tribal houses. The landing force first looted the houses of ceremonial dishes and hats, handwoven blankets and other valuables, then burned the rubble.

Six children suffocated in the smoke. It is not known how many people died in the long winter that followed because they were deprived of shelter and food supply.

The story is a grim reminder that misunderstandings and disrespect between cultures harbor the potential for human tragedy. While there has been some small acknowledgment by the U.S. government that a grave injustice had occurred, a formal apology has never been offered to the people of Angoon. This absence prolongs feelings of indignity and dishonor. An apology will bring closure to the tragedy and a final sense of reconciliation.