

Ida-Rose L. Hall  
 Alaska the Great Land BYU Tour  
 Dr. Richard Gunn  
 Art 415R

Books read or scanned:

The Seattle Totem Pole, by Viola E. Garfield, University of Washington Extension Series No. 11, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1940.

Aleut and Eskimo Art, Tradition and Innovation in South Alaska, by Dorothy Jean Ray, University of Washington Press, Seattle, Jan 1979.

Pipes that won't Smoke, Coal that won't Burn. Haida Sculpture in Argilite, by Carol Sheehan, Photographs by Ron Marsh. Glenbow Museum, Printed and bound by Hignell Printing, Ltd., Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Tsimshian Images of the Past: Views for the Present, Edited by Margaret Siguen, University of Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1984.

The Haida Indians--Cultural Changes between 1876-1970, by J. H. DenBrink, Printed in the Netherlands, 1974.

Ninstints, Haida World Heritage Site, by George F. MacDonald, foreword by Michael Ames, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver.

A Haida Potlatch, by Ulli Steltzer, forwarded by Marjorie Halpin, University of Washington Press, Seassattle, & London, 1984.

The Wolf and the Raven, Totem Poles of SouthEastern Alaska, by Viola E. Garfield and Linn a. Forrest, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 12th printing, 1986.

Main Book: Far North, by Henry B. Collins, Frederica deLoeguna, Edmund Carpenter, Peter Stone, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, London. Nat'l Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

Note on Main Book: The reason I chose this book is that it covered both the Alaskan, Aleut, and Indian Art of Alaska. Aleut and Eskimo Art was also a very fine book but not as comprehensive as The Far North.

I took notes on all of these book, but not in as great detail as my main book. I also zeroxed examples of the arts of the various tribes of Indians for future reference when (if?) we return to Alaska. I have submitted the notebook in which I took notes from my reading, for you to leaf through if you so desire.



SIGNIFICANT IDEAS LEARNED:

I chose to take the tour for credit to try to expand my knowledge of art in general, and Alaskan art in particular. I have had no training in art whatsoever, except a Freshman course at Weber college in basic design in 1940. If there is anyone who fits the "I don't know anything about Art, but I know what I like" syndrome it would be myself.

I'M  
GLAD  
YOU  
WANTED  
TO  
TRY.

1. I learned much about the History of native Indian and Eskimo art.

The history of Alaskan Art, especially of the Eskimo cultures, goes back at least 2,000 years. The Art of the Eskimos in the North goes back further than the Aleuts or the Alaskan Indian tribes further South, because they lived in colder climates than the Indians and their artifacts were preserved for this reason and also for the reason that they made many of the articles found in diggings in Eskimo villages of bone and walrus ivory, which survived the elements longer.

Archeologists have designated several periods of art from the diggings in Eskimo areas of Alaska: They are: Okvik, (300 BC), with several sub styles which evolved gradually into each other. (Sub-styles A, B, and C.) Old Bering Sea Culture, Styles I and II and III (300 A.D.), Punuk, (900 A.D.) and Birnick and Thule (500-1000 A.D.), and Ipiutak (350 A.D.) Some of the early art, especially masks, seem to have an oriental appearance.

Perhaps the main point I gleaned from studying these periods is that these ancient peoples did very beautiful things. The decorations on their harpoon heads, and upon fish hooks and sinkers, their culinary articles, and oil lamps may have had a supernatural meaning to the peoples who carved them, but the result was beautiful to behold. You mentioned in one of your lectures that these early artists instinctively incorporated some of the basic techniques and fundamentals of art into their objects.

KEY  
100%

The Alaskan Eskimos were unequaled in making ear-rings, hair ornaments, belt fasteners, combs, needle cases, thimbles, bobbins, bodkins, work bag fasteners, harpoon sockets, drag handles, harpoon rests and other items they used in their daily lives.

The Bering Sea and Pacific Eskimos were noted for their wooden bowls and containers, food bowls, ladles and spoons, boxes of various shapes and sizes with neatly fitted lids. Some of the other wooden items were: helmets, visors, snow goggles, and painted boat paddles.

Skin garments, made by either the Eskimos or Indians, were tailored with utmost skill and often tastefully inset with bands, trims and tassels. This is especially true after contact with Europeans and whites who traded beads and trims for furs, etc.

One difference between northern Eskimo and Aleut relics is that the Aleuts rarely decorated bone and ivory artifacts. Aleut artistic skills were applied primarily to wood carving and painting, weaving, and basketry, hats and masks, which were largely perishable (Far North, Collins). Therefore the history of their art does not go back much further than two hundred years because most of their art was done in the medium of wood, which was plentiful in their regions. The moist climate and the rain forest it produced soon claimed its own.





190 THREE-PIECE COSTUME\*

Tunic: Suede buckskin, white and dyed porcupine quills, seeds, and fiber

132 (52) HIGH

Trousers with attached moccasins:

Suede buckskin, porcupine quills, polychrome fibers

123 (48 1/2) LONG

Hood: Suede buckskin, white and dyed porcupine quills, beads, and fiber

51 (20) LONG

Collected (presumably from the Kutchin Indians) on the Mackenzie River, by Bernard R. Ross

Gift of the collector, 13 June 1925

Smithsonian Institution: 328 766

(tunic), 328 767 (trousers with

moccasins), 328 768 (hood)

Although it is not certain this costume was produced by the Kutchin Indians based in Alaska, it appropriately represents the high quality of such work produced by the large Kutchin population in Alaska, as well as in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. A parallel costume, similar in design and execution to the Smithsonian example, is in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History (Caspar Whitney collection, gift of Mrs. Morgan Wing Jr., 1949 (fig. f).

C. D. L.





## 221 FOOD DISH

Wood, with red, black, and green pigment

48.9 (19 1/4) LONG

Collected apparently by Capt. Ivan A. Kupreanov, Governor of the Russian American Colonies from 1836-1840

Museum collection, October 1870  
Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte, Oldenburg, 221

This dish is carved in the form of a skate.

## 220 FOOD DISH

Wood, with red, black, green and white pigment

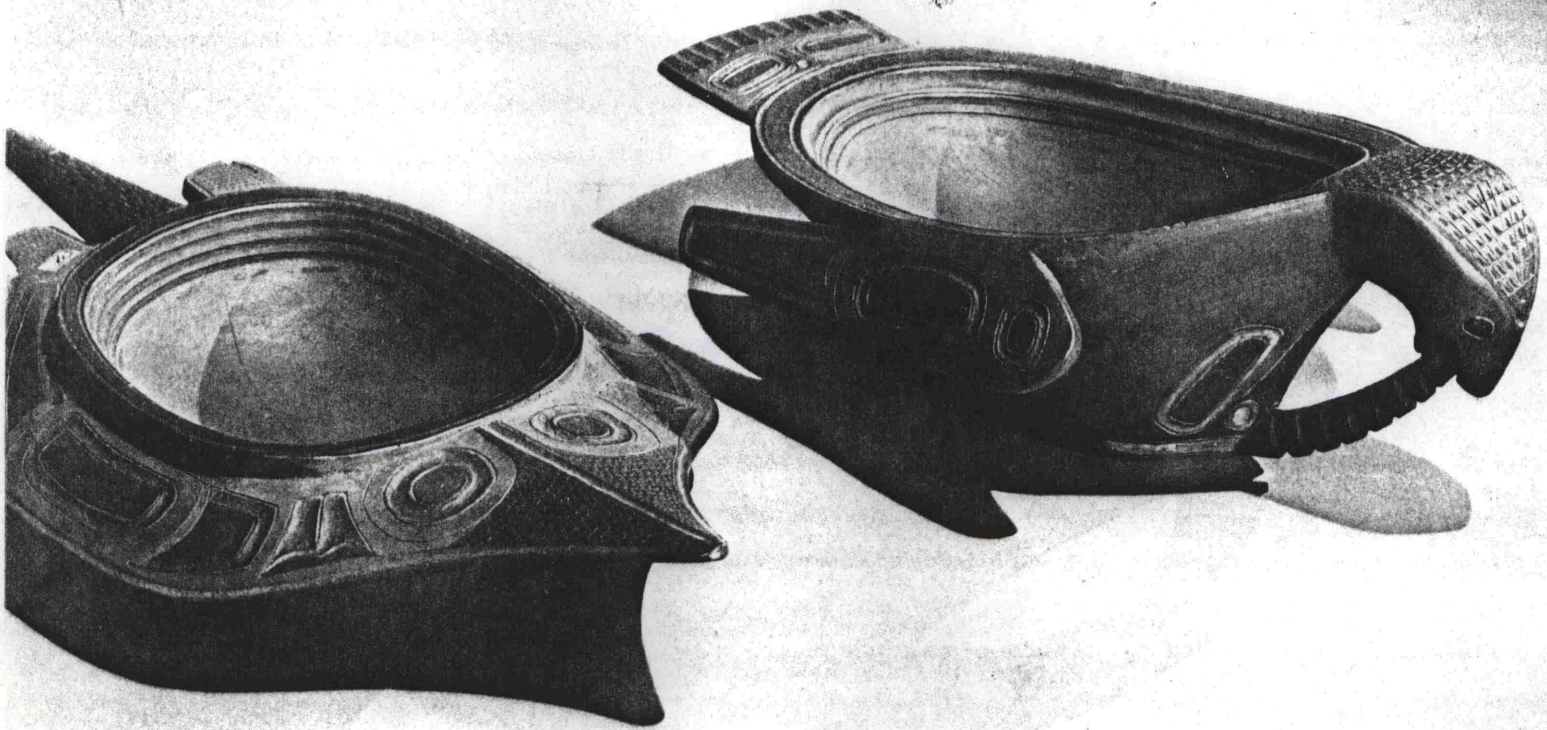
40 (15 3/4) LONG

Collected apparently by Capt. Ivan A. Kupreanov, Governor of the Russian American Colonies from 1836 to 1840

Museum collection, October 1870  
Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte, Oldenburg, 220

This dish represents the form of a bird, and, like No. 221, may be compared with similar examples in the Moscow Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, collected by Lisianski at Kodiak, probably after the Russians had introduced a substantial Aleut population. The dishes may represent a kind of hybrid style, with influences from both west Alaskan cultures superimposed upon essentially Tlingit types. Dr. Erna Gunther has best described their style as "Tlingit-influenced Aleut," perhaps for Russian patrons.

C. D. L.





The finely woven baskets were very beautiful and exquisite examples were found in the museums we visited. When contemporary woven baskets can be obtained in today's market, they are very expensive. Early explorers, traders, and missionaries came into possession of some of these perishable items, and these found their way into museums around the world.

One of the art books said that many different varieties of driftwood reached far north areas and that even Phillipine Mahogany has been found on Alaskan beaches. Larger pieces of driftwood than we saw on the beaches while we were on tour must have been found, because the eskimos early homes were dug-outs and the half of these structures which protruded from the ground were made out of driftwood. It may be that we didn't see large pieces of driftwood because the natives are still collecting the wood for fuel during the winter. (There are no forests in the far north.)

Alaskan Eskimo and Indian Art evolved around the religious ceremonies, customs and every day articles needed to sustain life. The early art seems to be more beautiful than the art which the natives developed to satisfy the "curio" trade after contact with the European cultures.

SPIRIT  
INTEGRA-  
TION.

2. The Alaskan native population, especially the southernmore populations have become more integrated with the white Russian and English fur traders, the settlers, and the goldminers who came into Alaska, than the U.S. continental Indian was. Maybe that was because the Alaskan native has not had as much room to "escape" in.

The Euro-American contact with the Alaskan natives has, for the most part had a negative effect in the lives of these peoples. And a decided effect upon the native art forms.

Almost as soon as the natives came in contact with the traders and explorers, they wanted the knives, cooking utensils, dishes, clothing and other European items such as beads, trimmings, etc., which they soon learned they could obtain by trading furs and by hunting and fishing for the Europeans. The obtaining of these items, however, led to the abandonment of some of their most beautiful native artifacts. European contact also brought disease which wiped out more than one third of the native population several different times. It also led to prostitution of their women to get white men's "goods", and the Eskimo, Aleut and Indian were as susceptible to the evils of alcohol as their American native counterpart.

But contact with the white man was not all negative. The early protestant missionaries brought christianity, education, and even new ways to earn their livings to the native populations. However, the missionaries mistakenly considered the totem pole and other native art forms as forms of pagan worship and encouraged and even insisted upon the destruction of many of these irreplaceable totems. The conversion to Christianity also brought an end to the power of the Shamans, which power was often cruel and arbitrary.

By the time the United States government found itself in the position of being a "ward" for the Alaskan natives, it had a little more experience with handling native populations. The Indian lands are now protected, and each Indian family can have 160 acres. Much of the Indian lands are "preserves" for the Indians, and some of them get royalties for oil. These royalties have not proven an advantage for the Indian for the most part, as it has eliminated the need for him to live off the land, thus lessening his native "ingenuity" and "industry". It has also led to extensive problems with alcoholism.



At our visit to the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, we saw students of Eskimo, Indian, Asian and European ancestry. And some who were obviously of "mixed" descent. That the natives who have in the past one hundred years found employment in the lumbering, mining, and fishing industry in Alaska will further extend their presence into all phases of Alaskan professional life is the promise of this inter-racial student body

3. One of the most interesting cultures I learned about was the Haidas and Tlingits who are found south of Yakutat Bay and who are famous as the totem pole and potlatch peoples. Perhaps more has been written about these people than any other Alaskan natives. Their art is considered second only to that of the ancient Aztec and Inca Indians.

What I said, above, about integration with the general population is perhaps more true of the Tlingits and Haidas than any other Alaskan native population. Many of them live away from their native habitats now, but there is a very strong drive among some of the younger people to keep the native arts, crafts, and customs alive.

Some interesting facts about the Haidas and Tlingits:

1. History: Because most of their art was expressed in perishable mediums (wood, grasses, etc), not much is known anciently about these peoples, their origins, etc. (Of course the Book of Mormon might add some light here.) The biggest problem in the study of Haida and Tlingit Art is the struggle of nature to reclaim its own. However, A Haida Potlatch by Uli Steltzer, claims that the Haida art dates back 3,000 years.

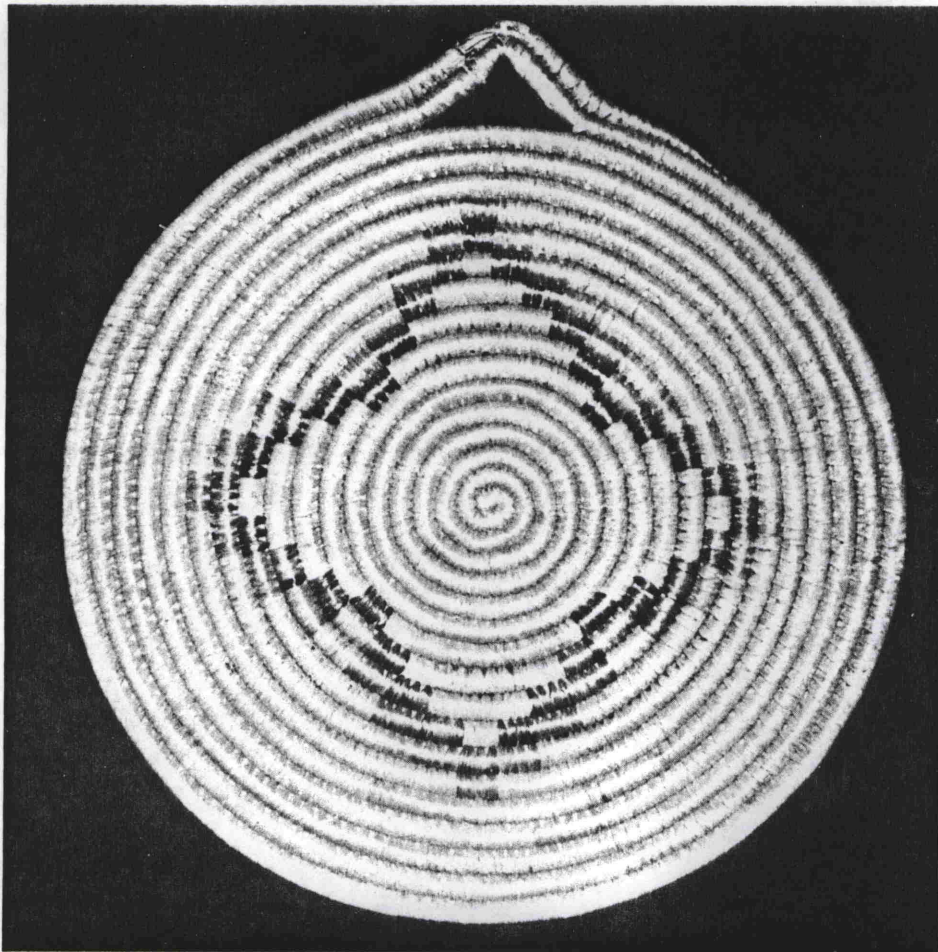
The Haidas were taller and had lighter skin than mainland Indians. They were known as great fighters and the temperate climate with its profusion of food sources (fish, berries, animals) made living quite easy for these Indians. For this reason they had time to develop their art forms.

The early white traders and trappers found the native population amenable to trading and peaceable to approach. Later disagreements between White and Indian made the Indians more hostile, but the desire to obtain western household and hunting weapons prevailed over hostility. In fact when the government first started to concern itself with the Indians, they were faced with trying to stamp out the practice the Indians had established of prostituting their wives and daughters to obtain western "objects" of trade. Alcoholism became common among them. Smallpox and other western diseases reduced the native populations drastically. It did not take too long for the natives to become dependant upon white goods and jobs in fishing and hunting and mining industries.

Carol Kaufmann classifies three distinct periods of Haida art, all dated from contact with whites, and which involved producing art for sale. (Haida Carvings 1820-1918.) This however, only applies to the carving of Argillite, which carving originated when westerners desired "souvenir" art.

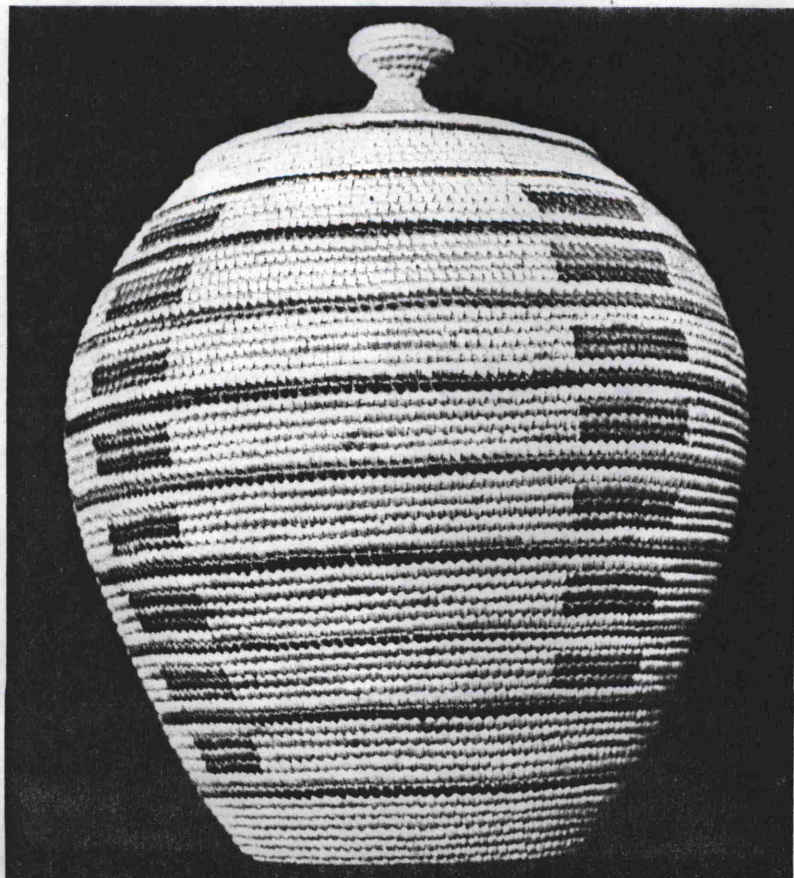
1. 1820-35. The sculpture featured traditional themes.
2. 1830-1865. Western period. Reproduction of Euro-American themes.
3. 1870-1910: Return to Haida themes not only of traditional Haida forms but the introduction of sculptured figures of mythological scenarios based on Haida folklore. (Carved miniture totems, etc.)





84. Mat of coiled grass, Stebbins, 1945. Diameter:  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches (21.3 cm.). Collection of D. J. Ray. The colors of the center design are red and black.

85. This fine basket was made in Hooper Bay in 1960. Height:  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches (18.8 cm.). Collection of D. J. Ray. The colors are browns and tans. The lid fits very snugly.





278 MANTLE WITH STYLIZED  
FACES

Woven cedar bark, with black, green  
and red pigment

90 (35 1/2) WIDE

Prince of Wales or Queen Charlotte  
Islands; Victor Justice Evans  
Collection

Bequest of the collector,  
26 March 1931

Smithsonian Institution, 361 033

279 CEREMONIAL COAT

Mountain goat wool, dyed black, blue  
and yellow, land otter fur, com-  
mercial yarn and thread

155 (61) WIDE

Collected from "Situk Jim" at  
Yakutat by Axel Rasmussen, ap-  
parently before 1912

Portland Art Museum, 48.3.548

Two gussets of land otter fur have  
been let into the sides of the coat  
because it was too small for the  
wearer. This use of land otter fur in  
a garment is most unusual, since the  
animal is feared for its evil super-  
natural powers, and to wear even a  
small piece of its hide or sinew is to  
risk being captured by a Land Otter  
Man.

The design as a whole represents  
the Brown Bear, the most important  
crest of the Tekwedi clan. The three  
central faces are those of the Bear, of  
the Tlingit woman who married the  
Bear, and, below, their cub child. On  
the back of the coat is an inverted  
face which signifies that the wearer  
will soon invite his hosts to a potlatch.  
Thus, this garment would be one  
worn by the Tekwedi chief when he  
was a guest at a potlatch given by a  
Raven clan.

Davis, *Native Arts of the Pacific Northwest*,  
no. 25.

de Laguna, *Yakutat Tlingit*, pl. 145.

F. de L.





Many of these early Argillite carvings found their way into museums. Although the Haidas still carve Argillite (and there were some beautiful examples at the 1986 Expo) the medium is controlled by the Indians and a modern Argillite carving is quite expensive.

The Tlingets and Haidas were very clever in adapting European methods to their architecture. Presumably taught to the native men by ships' carpenters, the houses of the Indians use modern carpentry techniques. These houses might be said to be a form of pre-fabs. The Indians could quickly take it apart to take to their summer fishing areas, leaving just the basic structure, around which reassembly was equally rapid when they returned to their winter homes in the fall. Totem crests, carved on the main beams inside and outside their houses, indicated the clan to which the inhabitants of the villages belonged.

Perhaps the most prevailing form of Tlinget and Haida art, however is in the Totem Pole. Our first exposure to totem pole art was at the Vancouver Expo. (See trip journal pictures near the end of the notebook)

Some of the themes which are repeated over and over in Haida and Tlinget art are the crest symbols which have descended traditionally in the culture. Crests identified a clan's genealogy. To use a certain crest, such as the Raven, one had to be descended through the Raven Clan. Descent was determined by the tribal lineage of the mother. Marriage had to be to a member of a different clan.

Some of the more common crest symbols were: Raven, wolf, bear, frog, killer whale, etc. Often the crests had an animal-human form which reflected their belief that their animal diets could assume human form or could turn humans into animal forms. These crests, proving descent, were carved on totem poles and placed near or was an integral part of one's dwellingplace.

When a chief died, the new chief-apparent had to prove his lineage to the rest of the clan by throwing a huge feast called a potlatch, at which he proved his wealth and his heritage. (although the potlatch could seriously deplete his resources). At this Potlatch he gave gifts to all invited to the feast. If a person did not give a return potlatch to his host, he might end up upside-down on a totem pole as a public insult until he did.

The Haidas and the Tlinget's had a strict caste system, and it was next to impossible to rise from one's caste. However, during the years of the smallpox epidemics when so many were dying, elevation to a higher caste was possible, and was demonstrated with potlatches and totem raisings.

Conversion to Christianity almost stopped the raising of Totem poles, but the potlatch had to be eliminated by government edict because so many Indians were becoming impoverished by these feasts.

A modern artist might envy the position and high esteem held by Haida artists within the tribal caste structure. An artist had to spend an apprenticeship under a trained totem-pole carver. If he was good at his art, he had plenty of business. It was then his responsibility to train others in his art. Trained artists survived the contact with the white man, and modern Haida art work, done by artists trained at the University level, still reflect, in beautiful form, many of the ancient traditional Indian art forms.

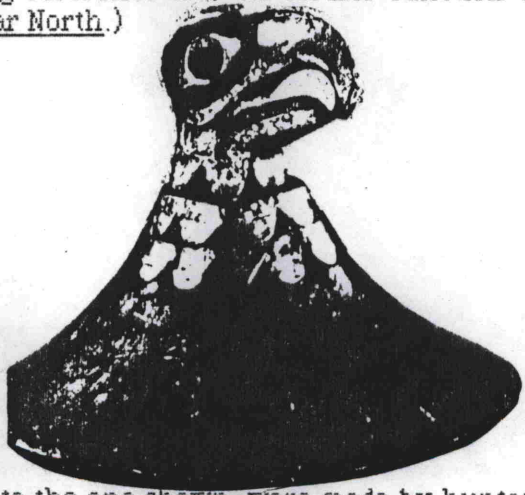


It is to be lamented that our present society and the modern Indian culture does not reflect the "saving" and total use to which the Indian, for instance used the animals taken in the hunt. As we learned on the visit to the Indian village the last evening of our tour, even the hoofs, hides, sinews, intestines, etc. of the animal was used. A lesson the present-day "throw away" generation could well emulate.

4. Another object which on which the Indian lavished his artistic talents was in his decoration and carvings of masks. These were used especially during religious ceremonies and usually worn by the local medicine man or Shaman at a potlatch, or at a totem raise, or at a burial, birth, or marriage. These were sacred items and used principally by the Shamans. They were kept in secret caches or storage boxes, and could not be touched by anyone else. If the masks and other "sacred" objects used by the Shamans were "polluted", new ones would have to be made and the old ones destroyed. Masks take many forms--animal, human, a combination of both. There were fearful ones designed to terrify, and comical ones meant to entertain. As sacred as these were supposed to be, it is surprising how many have made their way into museums. (Were the Shaman's corruptible?)

SPIRIT  
ARMOR

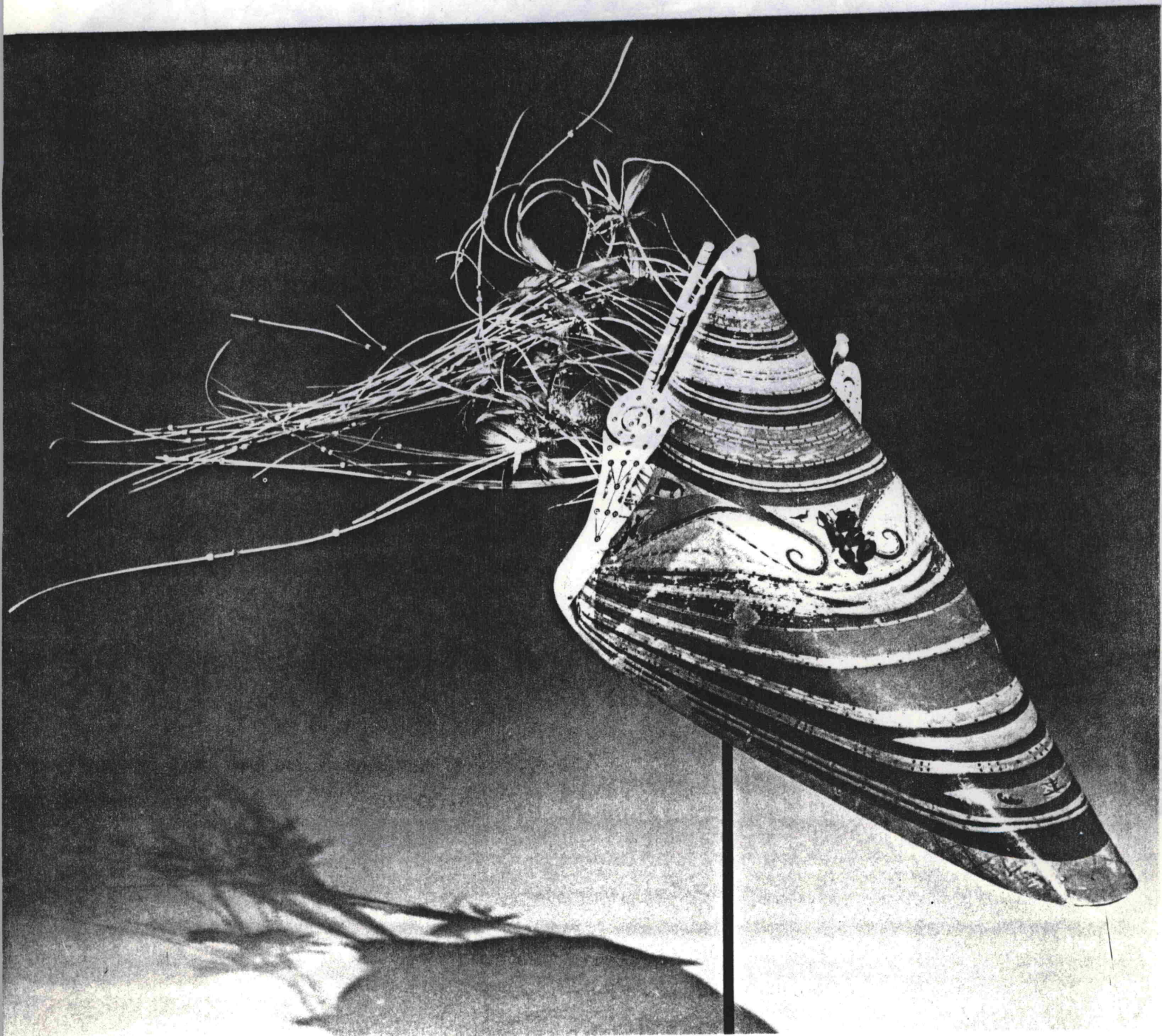
5. An unusual and beautiful art form appears in the ceremonial and hunting wooden hats of Alaskan Eskimos and Indians. Many of these have an oriental appearance. (See ceremonial hat, below) The hats were made of wood, and painted with black, green and white pigment, copper, iron nails, rawhide strap, modern glue and tape. The mask below represents the eagle crest of the Tongass Tlingits, with whose descendants it still remains. It may represent a surviving reference to their former function as heavy "armored" war helmets. (Pg. 204, The Far North.)



Hunting hats, similar in shape to the one shown, were made by hunters as far north as Kotzebue Sound. These hats projected in front of the hunter's face to protect eyes from glare while hunting at sea. The hats were made from driftwood or stiff skins. The driftwood ones (made by the Eskimos and Aleuts) were usually of California Oak. Bending the wood was in itself an art, and a man would frequently take a whole week to render a plank pliable enough by using hot water or steam to make a hat. The hats were formed of a single piece of wood, planed as thin as possible and bent until the edges come together to be sewn with sinews, soaked, bent and sewed together at back. They were often beautifully decorated with feathers or ivory, and had beautiful painted designs on them.

Aleut wooden hunting hats were one item which increased in beauty after the advent of the white contact. The Russians identified the chiefs by the elaborateness of these hats, and by coercion or bribery used the chiefs to furnish "slave labor" for





63 HUNTING HAT

Wood, pigment, ivory ornaments, sea  
lion whiskers, feathers, and trade  
beads

43.5 (7 1/8) LONG

Aleutian Islands or Kodiak, collected  
by Andrei Khlebnikov, c. 1810  
Museum of Anthropology and  
Ethnography, Leningrad, 563.1

Collected by Andrei G. Khlebnikov  
Museum of Anthropology and  
Ethnography, Leningrad, 563.1



hunting and fishing expeditions. It was toward the end of the 18th century that the "closed" hat (at the peak) rather than the customary open top appeared. These hats were very expensive. If a man owned one it was his most prized possession. It was a dangerous possession, too, because if the wind caught under the visor, both hunter and kayak could be overturned.

6. Another art form which is a natural one, and which made an immense impression on me while we were in Alaska is the Alaskan Glaciers. These were formed by the greatest artist of all, our Heavenly Father. Nowhere is the process of "creation" more evident than in the Alaskan snowfields and glaciers. They seem benign as they lie there in their blue and white beauty, but they represent powerful forces as they gouge out valleys as they move slowly down the mountains. The glacial melt forms rivers and waterfalls, which, as these flow into the valleys below, deposit silt and gravels in the valleys below. The glacier represents earth being created before our very eyes. (Paraphrasing Gunn.)

BEAUTIFUL  
ABSTRACT  
ART

The current interest in preservation of our natural resources for future generations has helped to preserve the fragile ecology of Alaska. Mining has defaced some of the landscape, and several species of whale, seal, and otter have been seriously depleted, but interested citizen and governmental agencies are bringing the population of these species back, and helping to keep intact this beautiful and fragile land.

One example of how man and nature can work together is personified in the Alaskan pipeline. The engineers created a beautiful engineering masterpiece which takes into consideration perma-frost, migration paths of animals, and the contraction and expansion connected with the extreme climatic conditions in Alaska.

We're glad we were on the "Alaska the Great Land. BYU Tour!"

ME TOO, YOU  
WERE EXCITING  
LEARNERS