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Collective Amnesia

THERE WERE BITS OF RUBBLE LYING AROUND, STRETCHES OF PAVING LEADING to nowhere, the shells of outbuildings. Owned by the Port of Port Angeles, this waterfront property was flat, scarified, with weeds poking up between seams of broken concrete paving. Battlements of logs were stacked at the tide line, which had long ago been riprapped and filled beyond recognition. By the time the Washington State Department of Transportation took a look at it in 2002, the site was known primarily by the jobs it had generated. It was the Earles Mill site in 1912. The Charles Nelson Mill in 1914. Olympic Shipbuilders, Inc., during the Second World War. Then the Merrill and Ring Timber Company and, most recently, the Daishowa site, named for the paper plant next door.

At that point, the Department of Transportation was looking at a dry dock in Tacoma, Washington, where it could build replacement pontoons for the Hood Canal Bridge. For this was no ordinary bridge. The Hood Canal span was a floating bridge, with the roadway supported in the water by giant concrete pontoons. The state needed a big, industrial-size dry dock, where it could build a lot of large replacement pontoons

all at once rather than in stages. Then it would tow the pontoons through open water to the bridge to make the repairs.

The department knew at least as far back as 1997 that the Hood Canal Bridge was falling apart and that it would need to replace the bridge's eastern half. By the winter of 2002, chunks of concrete were calving off the bridge as salt water worked its way into the structure. This vital link, carrying an average of 20,000 vehicles daily during the week and 25,000 on weekends, was in urgent need of repair.

Corrosion and deterioration were causing the concrete to split and chip. The draw span would jam in the open position or not open completely. Risk of critical damage from a major storm was reason enough to replace the eastern half of the bridge, a panel of experts declared in 1997. For state transportation planners, the idea of a bridge collapse was no idle possibility. The western half of the Hood Canal Bridge had sunk in a storm with wind gusts of up to 120 miles an hour and sustained winds of 85 miles an hour in February 1979. And another floating bridge, linking Seattle and its eastside suburbs, had sunk into Lake Washington on November 25, 1990. During a $35.6 million renovation, a contractor had mistakenly left open hatches atop the pontoons that floated the bridge. The pontoons filled with water during a winter storm, and the bridge sank with slow-motion drama as TV cameras rolled. No state highway engineer ever wanted to see anything like that again.

Already warned that the eastern half of the Hood Canal Bridge was at risk, the department's engineers didn't want to take any chances. Tidal swings of 16.5 feet battered the aging structure, tethered by cables and anchors in as much as 340 feet of salt water. The bridge could be vulnerable in a severe, sustained storm from the southwest, engineers warned. "When our bridge engineer says, 'This is going; you need to take care of this,' you bet people listen," said Randy Hain, former administrator for the Washington State Department of Transportation's Olympic Region. Replacement was recommended by 2006. Retrofits would be a costlier and less

When transportation department officials showed up looking for a place to build an industrial-scale dry dock, the true history and identity of the Tse-whit-zen site had been buried under nearly one hundred years of industrial use. This is how the site appeared when Port Angeles city officials were marketing it to the department in 2002. "No one said anything about Indians," recalled Randy Hain, a former department administrator in charge of the dry dock project, "and we didn't ask." Courtesy Western Shores Heritage Services.

satisfactory fix. The need to get to work was urgent, as a matter not only of schedule and budget but of life and safety. But to do the repairs, the department needed a place where it could construct fourteen pontoons and twenty anchors for the eastern half of the span.

The pontoons would be immense: more than four times the length of the average blue whale and about forty-two times its weight. The concrete anchors would also be gargantuan, nearly three stories tall and nearly twice the weight of a semi. But finding a spot in which to efficiently construct so many enormous concrete pontoons and anchors, and then float them out to open water for transport, proved difficult.

Urban development had already devoured many dry dock sites in the Puget Sound region—including one filled and paved for an Indian casino. The dry dock the department was assessing in Tacoma was soon deemed too small to get the job done quickly enough without raising the hackles of federal regulators. Department officials worried about mooring the completed pontoons and anchors near shore, awaiting transport. That, regulators warned, might harm salmon, a protected species, by shading their habitat. Still on the hunt for a site, department engineers conducted a tour of the Hood Canal Bridge for local legislators in June 2002, to explain the need for the project. Larry Williams, a city councilman for Port Angeles, went along. He remembers that day well. It was a rainy, blustery afternoon. Williams and other local officials clapped hard hats on their heads and went below the roadway deck to examine the bridge structure.

"We were amazed to see pieces of exposed rebar and pieces of concrete," Williams said. "At that point we were glad we were wearing hard hats. We started looking around at what else was going to pop off as we stood there. I took a large piece of concrete home as a souvenir. The entire surface was encrusted with salt—that is how badly salt had penetrated the bridge. The sense of emergency was there." It was then Williams realized that the port's parcel of waterfront land, long a center of wealth for the area and available for use, might have a new job to do. He walked over to the department's engineers. "After everyone else left, I asked them to give Port Angeles some consideration," Williams said. "I figured we would get a little state funds up here for our timber community. They are looking for a spot, and we have a flat one. They came up and their jaws dropped open. It was, 'We have reached the promised land.'"

Hain remembers the come-on the state transportation department got from the city of Port Angeles. "It's not like DoT went up there looking," Hain said. "It was the city, saying, 'Come up here and build this. We've got a great site for you.'" The city

initially offered the site for lease, but the department quickly decided to buy it instead. It was the size of the site—more than twenty acres, right on the water—that caught the department's eye. For it had not only the Hood Canal Bridge to fix but a far larger repair project looming in the future: the floating bridge carrying State Route 520 across Lake Washington, which connects Seattle with its eastern suburbs.

Here in Port Angeles, there was plenty of flat, industrial land for construction of all the pontoons and anchors. And the site's location, right on a deep, natural harbor, meant that the department, so far unable to find a suitable dry dock, could dig the gigantic hole it needed for its own facility. Then it could use the dry dock, over time, to build the pontoons to fix not only the Hood Canal Bridge but the SR 520 bridge in the future. "We could really collapse all these efficiencies into one site," Hain said. The city was equally interested. The department's project promised to create one hundred jobs over fifteen months of construction, then scheduled to begin in June 2003. Work would go on twenty-four hours a day as the 10.5-acre pit for the dry dock was dug and paved. The department planned a dry dock big enough to moor four battleships side by side, with room to spare. The dry dock would hold 68 million gallons of water, floating the pontoons in a pit so big and so deep that it would take three days to fill with water pumped from the harbor. The upper end of the dock would be 18 feet deep, in order to hold vessels with up to a 16-foot draft. The lower dock would be much deeper, at 43.5 feet, to handle vessels with up to a 21-foot draft. The sea gate, which would hold back the tide, would be massive: 100 feet long and 43.5 feet high. Some 200,000 cubic yards of material would be dug from the site in all, enough to cover a football field 113 feet deep.[1]

Williams called several city officials after the tour and said, "Get on top of this." The city soon showed the department an engineer's dream. Here was a large piece of flat land, already zoned for heavy industrial use, right on a deep, protected harbor. There were no endangered species showstoppers. And Hain remembers this: No one said anything about Indians. Or history. Or burials. Or waterfront villages. No one. Not one person with the port or with the city. "At no time, in any of the discussions, did anyone say anything about 'Did you know?' And we didn't ask him," Hain said. But the tribe's early use of the waterfront was hardly a secret in Port Angeles, city councilman Williams said.

"We had just done a lot of work on sidewalk replacements. The city is built on fill, and in the pre- and post-construction photos, you can see where there were old houses. In turn-of-the-century photos, you can see there were gatherings. I don't know

if anyone realized the extent of the encampment that was down there." A resident of Port Angeles since 1986, Williams said, "I had no idea, no background, no sense of the real history. No front-level consciousness or cognition of the implications of the history on modern-day activity. The closest parallel I can figure to that is, why in the world would we continue to build houses around Mount Rainier [a massive volcano south of Seattle]?" "That's an obvious 'hello' also. But just because we are staring right at it doesn't mean we recognize it."

The Department of Transportation, which had been considering the Port Angeles site since that June field trip in 2002, waited until October 2002 to send its first letter to the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, asking for comment on the project. By then, the tribe was still playing catch-up. Its first contact about the project had come not from the state but through the "moccasin telegraph." The Makah tribe, neighbors to the west, had faxed the Lower Elwha a copy of the inquiry it had received from the department earlier in the year. The department was looking at a spot on the Makah reservation at Neah Bay, an hour and a half down the road, for its project. The department had quickly rejected the idea. Neah Bay, which could be reached only by a spaghetti tangle of two-lane roads, was too remote, and its relentless rain, driving in off the Pacific in sheets, would bugger up the work.

Dennis Sullivan, Lower Elwha Klallam tribal chairman at the time, was unaware that city officials and business leaders had been pushing since June to bring the project to Port Angeles. Tribal members weren't at those meetings, or in on those phone calls, or at those lunches. Tribal members didn't go on the tour of the failing Hood Canal Bridge. Mostly, they didn't attend the meetings of the local chamber of commerce, the economic development council, or the city council. And despite their name, the Strong People, many of the locals in this city had always found it easy to bypass the Lower Elwha Klallam. A small tribe with a high unemployment rate, the Lower Elwha had come a long way since gaining federal recognition. But they had not shared in the renaissance in Indian Country enjoyed by some of the wealthier tribes closer to Seattle who operated large casinos. They had no cultural resource or repatriation program, and nothing like the batteries of lawyers, staff archaeologists, planners, and cultural resource specialists employed by bigger, wealthier tribes.

When the department's letter arrived in October, requesting the tribe's input, it was late in the game, with momentum at the agency and among city officials already smoking in favor of the Port Angeles site. The department approached consultation with the tribe as a bureaucratic formality. One more box to check. And the tribe

responded in kind. Tribal officials were already overwhelmed by other priorities, including the scheduled takedown of the Elwha River dams, the largest dam-removal project anywhere in North America. After a campaign launched by the tribe more than twenty years earlier, preparations for dam removal finally were under way,

Yet another developer's industrial project proposed for property on the Port Angeles waterfront did not make the urgency cut for tribal officials. Especially when the state and the city did so little to engage them. "Consultation isn't where you make a phone call and say, 'We are going to do this, we are sending a fax, we are going to be in this area, do you have anything to say,'" said Frances Charles, who was on the council when the project was first proposed and was later named tribal chairwoman. "You go to that tribe, you find out who the individuals are you need to talk with, you go over the plans in person, you get the history and don't ignore it or take shortcuts and say 'There's nothing there' or 'They don't know.' You have to actually come down and visit, with something in detail, so our elders would have an idea, know by photographs what they are looking at. With photos you can visualize better than with a map. They need to adapt to the ways of the culture, be able to provide the adequate information to the elders. I know that didn't happen. And if something is not adequate, you can't just dismiss it. Don't ignore it. Go into depth. Don't take a chance of taking a loss, like they did. Not once did they come down to Lower Elwha. They took the shortcut on this one."

On the same day in October that its letter went out to the tribe, the department hired one of its on-call archaeological consultants, Glenn Hartmann of Western Shore Heritage Services of Bainbridge Island, to take a look at the site. In its letter to the archaeologist, sent October 21, 2002, the department made it clear it was in a hurry. "The project is being fast tracked and we encourage you to accomplish this task with urgency," the letter said. The agency asked Hartmann to do a routine, $6,285 survey, including $1,660 for fieldwork. It allotted five days for field research, with the stipulation to ask first before taking more time. Hartmann didn't go to the site himself but sent one of his staff archaeologists, Lara Rooke, instead. Even as she worked in the muddy flats of the site, using an auger to drill for signs of archaeology, the business community of Port Angeles packed a public hearing on the project. This is a town where bones were unearthed when the local hospital was built. They found bones when they built the paper mill at the Ediz Hook and when they modernized the plant. They found bones when they built the opera house downtown and when they built the Commercial Hotel. They found bones when they ran the Milwaukee railroad

tracks through the east end of town. They found bones when they built the Big Mill on the west end. And they found bones when they constructed the Rayonier plant, right over another Klallam village. But nobody talked about bones at the meeting. Speaker after speaker, including many elected officials, endorsed the dry dock project.

The archaeologist worked for four days, with hard rain soaking the site half the time. On the first day, she discovered she had the wrong bit for the work and lost half a day when the auger broke. The wet conditions made for sloppy core samples, and she didn't screen the dirt that came out with the auger. By day three, much of the site was under water. The drilling rig—supplied by the department—broke down again and was out of commission another half a day. An entire transect of the site was missed because concrete paving, water, and downed wires made digging impossible. About a third of the site in all was off-limits for sampling because it was covered with paving. The department gave no instruction as to how the work should be done. There was no directive to locate the ancient beach line, buried below the fill dirt, and look there as the most likely place for signs of a village or burial ground. The department did leave a door open for further exploration of the site, at the consultant's discretion, by defining the area potentially affected by the project as "any areas of concern noted by the appropriate tribes." But Hartmann's firm never made contact with the Lower Elwha Klallam. The department had requested "coordination with appropriate tribal representatives" but did not specify what that must, at a minimum, include.

"Were we aggressive about it? No," said Hartmann about contacting the tribe. But he said the tribe also could have taken a more proactive role in making sure its cultural sites were protected. "Anyone who thinks I'm going to develop an interactive relationship with the elders, there is not enough time in the day," Hartmann said. "Tribal people have a certain distrust of archaeologists. They don't want us digging up burials. But we should have instant ability to recognize human remains and know where they are? Guess what, guys, we are not interested in burial grounds, and to expect me to know their inner workings when it is information I'll never use—it's like me asking you to know the inner workings of Wall Street when you are going to stay on the reservation."

The field survey found no evidence of a site. Hartmann said he was a bit surprised. After all, archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and others had written repeatedly of Klallam villages on the waterfront, in the same general area, including Tse-whit-zen. An 1853 survey map located not one but three Indian villages in the area. A competing archaeological firm had already prepared a detailed report in March 1991 on the

paper-mill site next door, directly to the west. That report described Tse-whit-zen village, its approximate location at the base of the Ediz Hook, and its large size and importance. "Around 2,000 years ago, the west end of the Ediz Hook was probably one of the most productive, optimum settings for hunter-gatherer settlement along the entire northern Washington Strait of Juan de Fuca shoreline," the report noted. "The village was not far from the lagoon outlet and the base of the Ediz Hook."[2]

The archaeologists went on for pages about the large cemetery associated with the village. And they noted that its importance lived on in the memories of contemporary elders interviewed at the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe: Beatrice Charles and Adeline Smith. The report detailed burial methods at the cemetery and the grave goods that would likely be encountered if the graves were disturbed:

> The cemetery associated with Tse-whit-zen was located, at least at some point in the history of the village, in the location of the mill complex although the precise location is not known. Alexander Sampson first encountered the Ediz Hook cemetery in 1856, when he claimed homestead acreage that included the village site and cemetery. . . . The cemetery again became a focus when the Washington Pulp and Paper Corporation excavated the footings for the pilings of their mill in 1920. At that time, hundreds of Indian bones were disturbed . . . when ground was broken for the foundations. . . . Contemporary Klallam tribal members who are now part of the Lower Elwha Klallam community think of the Ediz Hook cemetery as the "big cemetery" and that it may have been the cemetery for villages other than Tse-whit-zen.

The report's authors attributed this knowledge to Beatrice Charles and Adeline Smith, interviewed back in 1991.

There was more in the report, about the structures likely to be found at the village and the archaeological evidence, probably still there, of a sophisticated hunter-gatherer society dating back at least 2,000 years. The report noted that the site overlaid the village of Tse-whit-zen and a burial ground, which continued directly to the east—the very spot the department was looking to purchase. And despite all the disturbance of the ground in many years of industrial use, the archaeologists warned there probably still were intact archaeological deposits under the fill. The archaeologists observed that any find here would likely be significant, worthy of placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Dig here *at all*, to any depth, and there had better be an archaeologist present, they cautioned,

because there is such a high likelihood for hunter-gatherer occupations to have occurred.

> Because an historic Klallam cemetery has been identified on the property and the mill property is one of the most likely locations on the south shoreline of the Strait of Juan de Fuca for hunter-gatherer occupations, we conclude that nearly any intact cultural resources which remain here may be significant. . . . We also believe that it is possible that cultural resources may be present in areas that have not been completely disturbed.[3]

The report Hartmann prepared for the department wasn't nearly as long or detailed. It, too, noted the historic presence of the cemetery and the village but not with the same sense of imminent discovery for anyone disturbing the ground in the area—at all. His report sent a mixed message. Hartmann called the site a high-probability area because of the historical record of Indian settlement there. But because the field survey turned up no evidence of it, he deemed a discovery "unlikely." He recommended the standard fallback position of archaeologists everywhere: have a monitor on-site during construction, just in case.

Hartmann said he didn't feel rushed in the survey or that he should have called for a deep-site analysis of the ancient beach line. "It's not standard practice, and how in the world would you have justified the cost?" But he did feel uneasy about the survey results, uneasy enough to look for a colleague to cover for him in August 2003, when he was away on vacation and the department was breaking ground at the site. Arranging a backup like that was something he had never done in his thirty-year career. "I really did have a concern archaeology might be there, because of the limited nature of the survey," Hartmann said. "It struck me, there's the 1853 map—you know something is there. There was the lagoon there, and mostly, to me, it was the idea that you had this village site in close proximity. To not see anything there? But given the industrial use of the place, and all the fill, I didn't find it to be totally unsettling. You are kind of caught. You have historic documentation that says something is there, and ethnography of a more general nature. Those become yellow caution lights—take some care here. I'd said to my client there is supposed to be a village site in the area and a landform where burials were recorded in the 1920s. At the end of the day, it's worth remembering this didn't happen in a vacuum. That report was reviewed by the city, the tribe, and the state historic preservation officer, and no one said anything."

The state historic preservation agency missed the site, just like everyone else.

Based on its review of Hartmann's report, Robert G. Whitlam, archaeologist with the state Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, wrote on January 14, 2003: "We concur with your findings that no historic properties are in the area. . . . Thus, no historic properties are affected." The agency did not visit the site, did no independent evaluation, and made no request for further information. Like Hartmann, the agency cleared the Department of Transportation to proceed with construction, with the safeguard stipulation that an archaeologist monitor the site during construction, just in case. "It comes down to one state archaeologist reviews more than 5,000 projects in a year," said Allyson Brooks, director of the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. "How many would you have to do in a day to visit the sites?"

The transportation department didn't question Hartmann's survey either. Far from it. The department had already announced in a press release issued November 20, 2002, that it, with the endorsement of then-governor Gary Locke, had selected the Port Angeles site. The press release quoted Locke's prepared statement, saying that the project would "result in 100 jobs for Port Angeles and provide a shot in the arm for the area economy." The department issued that release just five days after Hartmann's archaeologist pulled the auger out of the ground. It hadn't even waited to hear the results of the cultural resources survey. In retrospect, Hain said, the department's mistakes are obvious. "Hindsight is twenty-twenty," he said. "Instead of simply sending the tribe a letter, we should have gone out and introduced ourselves and asked, 'What about your elders? We should take them down to the site and see if it jogs their memory.' Did we think about that? Absolutely not. We made that mistake. And I've heard stories about 'Just wait until they get into that,' not only from the tribe, but other people who probably knew about this. Why didn't those people come forward and say, 'Did you know about this?' It sure makes you feel stupid. I didn't hear it often, but I'd think, 'Oh you dope, why didn't you go find that out?' But it is not the kind of thing you think to ask. I am not a geologist or an archaeologist. And the department didn't have much waterside history. We hadn't done enough of this kind of work in the past."

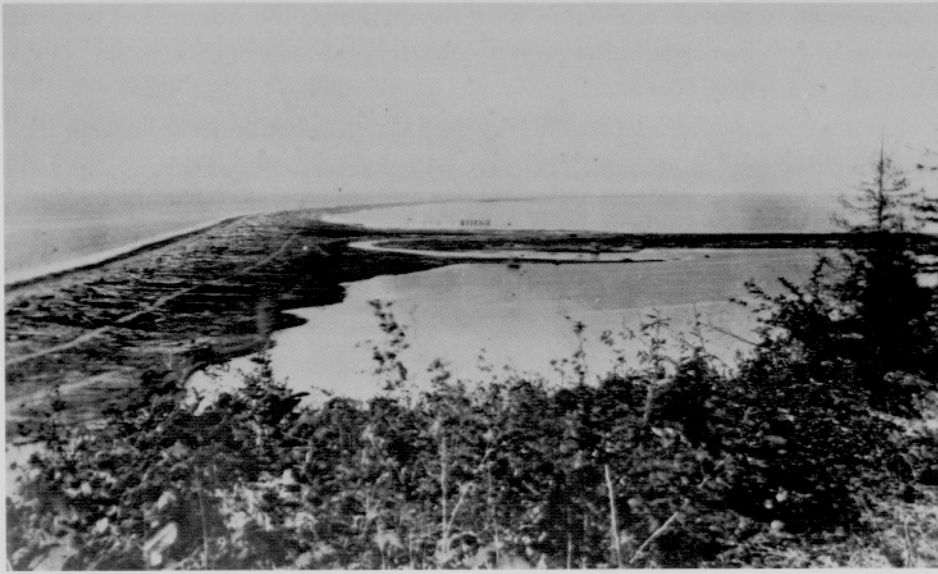
The department's problems started with its schedule. Archaeological review for major projects is preferably done a year or two in advance of construction, so that if significant archaeological or cultural materials are found, the department can make alternative plans. But construction of the dry dock was on a rushed schedule to meet a date the agency had already set for closing the bridge to traffic, towing the anchors and pontoons to the bridge site, and beginning repairs. Those plans, in addition to

arrangements to provide alternative ferry service during the repairs, had put hard edges on every other date in the project, including the start of construction of the dry dock.

Environmental permits for the dry dock were also processed under a pilot expedited review process, since abandoned. The proposal was never reviewed through the more elaborate process of an environmental impact statement. Instead, the Hood Canal Bridge project was a demonstration project under the new process, which was intended to speed up environmental permitting review in part by bringing participants from various agencies together at one table for discussion of the project. But historic preservation and cultural resource specialists weren't part of the team. That exclusion was a reflection, in part, of priorities in Washington State. Salmon, listed for federal protection in Puget Sound under the Endangered Species Act, were the chief concern in major land-use projects and a dreaded potential slowdown in any permitting process.

"No one is thinking about Indians. Everyone is thinking about salmon," said former transportation secretary Douglas B. MacDonald. Nobody at the city or the port brought up Indians either. Seeing requires looking, and nobody was. "'How could you possibly have missed this?' is one of the questions the world is fairly going to ask," MacDonald said. "It's much more than just a question of blaming the archaeologist. The really interesting thing to reflect on is the collective amnesia about what was at that site. I don't think the Port of Port Angeles had a clue, or gave it a moment's thought, and the collective amnesia about that site was a really important part of the question of 'Why did we miss this?' Not only does it tell the history of the contact but also the history of the forgetting, and it is not that many generations ago. The collective amnesia is so profound that no one even asked the question, and that goes to the collective disconnect in the Port Angeles community."

The department filed its request for a permit to build the project with the city of Port Angeles on Christmas Eve, 2002. Port Angeles assistant city planner Scott Johns found Hartmann's report reassuring as he reviewed the permit application. Just four years into his job, he was well aware of the big push in town to get the dry dock project permitted and built in Port Angeles. "We were being as unobstructionist as possible. It was, 'Don't stand in the way of this, so in your permitting don't look too close. We want this to happen,'" Johns said. "But from my perspective it was very thorough. We analyzed it to death, in so many ways. Calculating the cubic feet of soil that would be dug, counting how many trucks. Will they be working at night? What about back-up alarms? That will bother people. Is there enough parking for



Taken in 1884, this earliest known photo of the Port Angeles area shows the base of the Ediz Hook, where a major paper mill would later be built. A wagon road that came down the hill is on the left. At the dock, boats landed to load cordwood and unload supplies. Just outside the picture to the right was a Klallam Indian village and longhouse, the Tse-whit-zen site, where the transportation department would locate its dry dock project. Courtesy North Olympic Library System, Bert Kellogg Collection, Ediz Hook-PTAN VIEW-001.

employees? Bright lights? That will ruin people's views at night."

The state had already done its environmental assessment and declared that the project would have no significant impact. Completed before the Port Angeles site was even selected, the assessment was updated for the city permit application with a checklist of resources deemed unaffected by the project. "Archaeology didn't seem to be an issue," Johns said. City code requires surveying with the tribe any potential development site in town that could disturb cultural materials. But that could be waived if a survey had already been done and a monitor would be present during construction. The department had already seen to that.

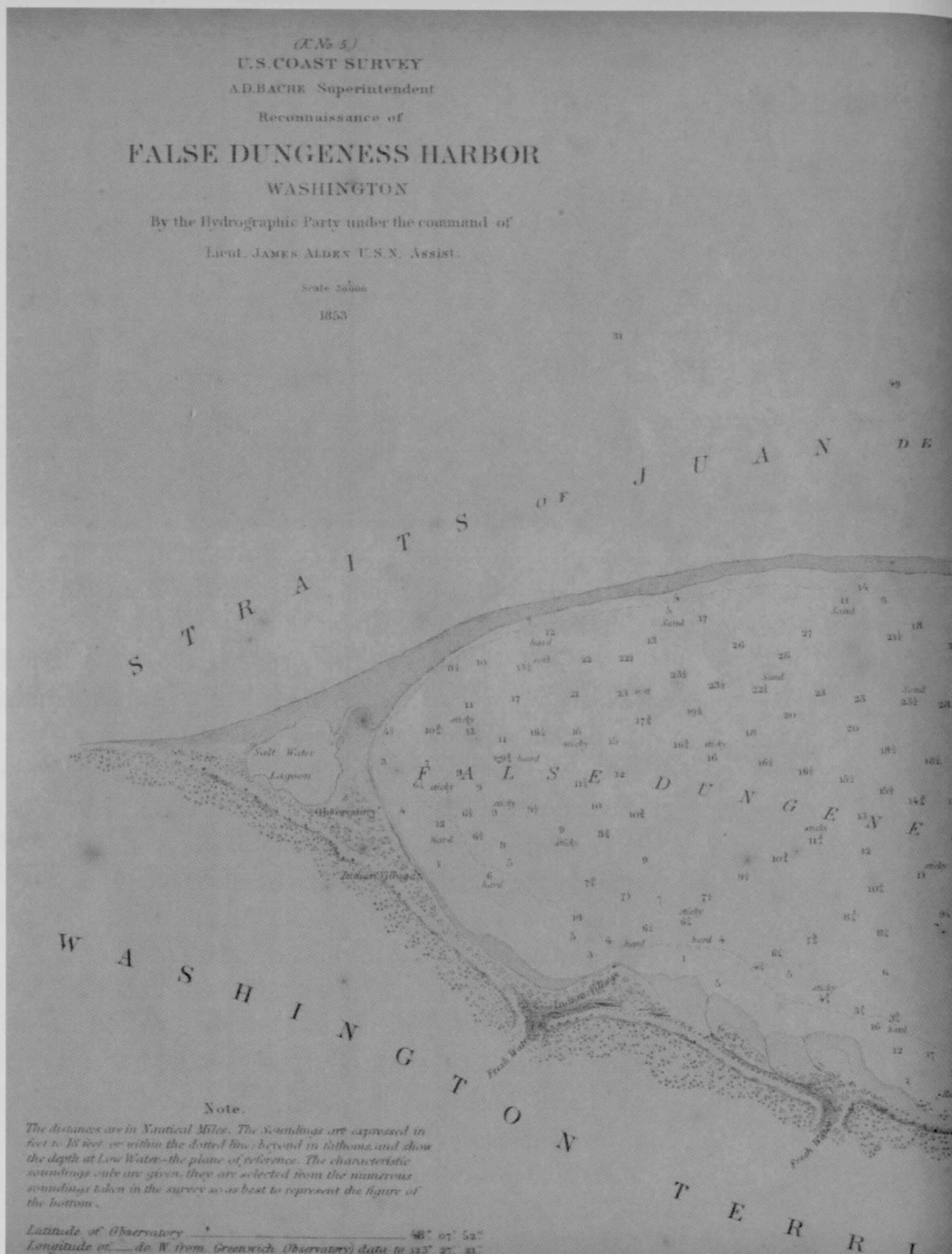
Hartmann had sent his draft report of the cultural resources survey to the state transportation department on December 10, 2002, and his final copy on January 6, 2003. The department forwarded copies to the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, as well as to other neighboring tribes, on January 13, along with a form letter requesting comments. The next day Frances Charles, then a member of the tribal council, wrote to the city in response to its request, separate from the department's, to provide the tribe's views on the project. In her letter, Charles sounded a warning on behalf of the Lower Elwha people: "The tribe is concerned with protection of water quality and marine habitat in the harbor, as well as protection of cultural resources that might be unearthed as a result of this project." Then, in the last of eight items of concern listed,

she wrote: "The Klallam people were present throughout the Harbor and a known village site was located in close proximity to the proposed excavation site. In excavation work, human and cultural remains and artifacts were unearthed. We are extremely concerned about any excavation work and strongly recommend that an archaeologist be present on site throughout this project."

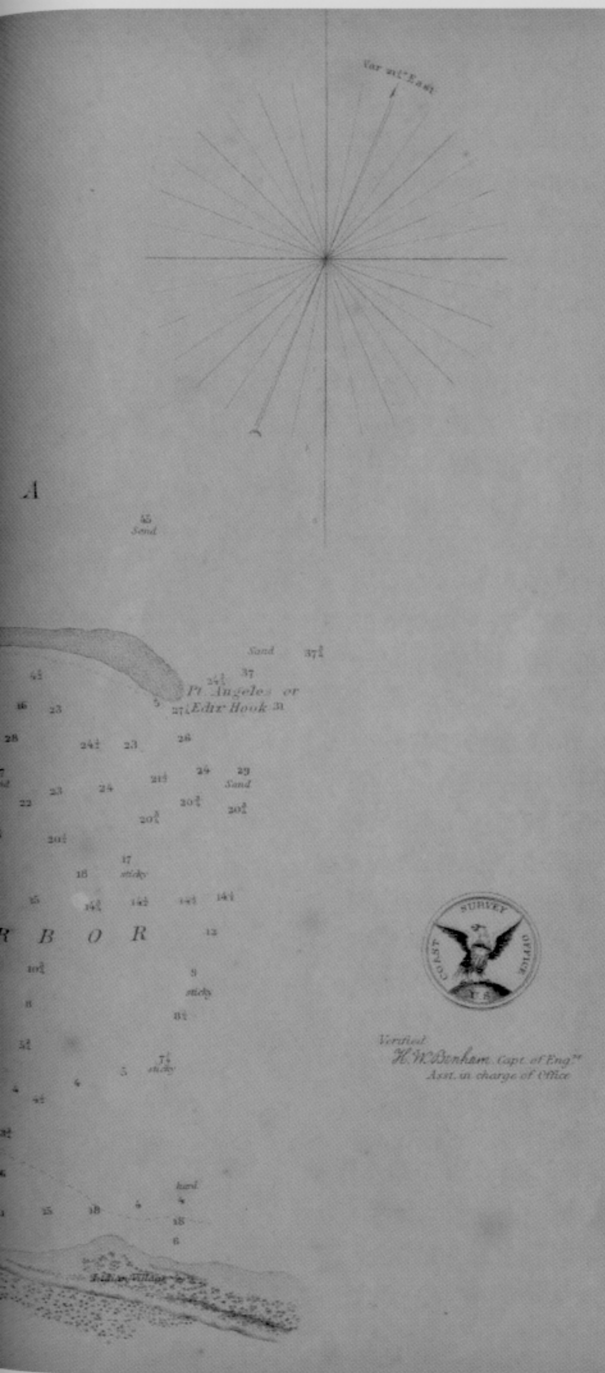
But that warning wasn't clear to Johns, who said his confidence in the site was actually boosted by the tribe's letter. "There were eight comments; they were more concerned about fish, where the soil was going to go. It was eighth of eight. If it was first, if it was definitive—'This is where Tse-whit-zen was, we are confident.' But it was like, 'Oh, there might be something in the neighborhood.' I thought maybe they are back by the bluff; they wouldn't be on the beach." He toured the site with staff from the state Department of Transportation, to see it for himself. "I was trying to get a feel for the site, so I could describe it. I was kind of curious. It struck me as a kind of trashy old waste industrial site. I was thinking, 'How is this going to work, how do you make the sea gate open and shut?'—the engineering and scientific aspects of it—that is my training. It's that all-American stuff: If we have enough money, we can build anything. I had it in my mind that it was all fill. It was inconceivable to me that there could be a burial site."

After all, Johns had seen the picture, an aerial shot taken during World War II of Olympic Shipbuilders, Inc., an industrial shipyard built at the site. And that was *after* the Big Mill—another enormous industrial development—had been built, operated for decades, and demolished on the same ground. Johns was so impressed by the enormity of the shipyard that he attached a copy of the photo to the permit file. "I looked at that picture of the shipyard and thought, 'They would have found a burial ground if they did that.'" The total transformation of the site to industrial use by the newcomers, for whom its history *was* the mill, the shipyard, and piles of logs, heaped and pawed over by front-end loaders, hid the truth.

Yet the same development that convinced Johns and other reviewers that the site was all disturbed and nothing could still be there had actually sealed and protected what remained of Tse-whit-zen largely intact. Most of the early mill buildings were constructed waterward, on pilings. Early construction techniques didn't disturb the ground with heavy equipment. Utility lines were dug by hand. And the thick layers of sawdust for stacking lumber and the fill dirt covering the site protected the village site and burials like a blanket. There were other reasons, too, that Johns and others missed the site: They couldn't see past their own frame of reference. The possibility



Map of False Dungeness Harbor, 1853. Note the three Indian villages mapped on the harbor shoreline, including the westernmost, which may be Tse-whit-zen. U.S. Coast Survey, A. D. Bache, Superintendent Reconnaissance of False Dungeness Harbor, Washington, by the Hydrographic Party under the command of Lieut. James Alden, U.S.N. Assist. Courtesy Clallam County Historical Society.



that Indian graves—many graves—*had* been discovered at the site in earlier construction and simply been shoved aside, didn't register. "It didn't occur to me, 'Yeah, they did find it, and they used it as backfill,'" Johns said. "I could kick myself, it is so obvious. When I think about it, it brings tears to my eyes. It has kind of haunted me. All those past uses there. I used that as justification. I thought, 'Somebody must have discovered this.' But somebody did. They found them and kept their mouths shut." Johns wrote a staff report recommending approval.

Next, on January, 16, 2003, Lower Elwha Klallam tribal employees Matt Bierne, then in the tribe's environmental office, Mike McHenry in the tribe's fisheries department, Rachel Hageman in the tribe's planning department, and Robert Elofson, head of the Elwha River restoration effort for the tribe, sat down with Jerry Moore, from the state transportation department, and two officials from the port to talk about the project.

Bierne used to work in the tribe's environmental office, reviewing developments planned within areas where the tribe has treaty rights to hunt and fish, both on and off the reservation. "We go through this all the time," he said in a weary voice, reciting the machinations of bureaucracy that govern development of the shoreline in Washington. "Anything within 200 feet of the shoreline, they have to have a review team, on which the tribe sits. All the jurisdictions knew our concerns." The tribal staffers brought the 1853 map of the Port Angeles Harbor, drawn when Washington was still a territory. The same map that bothered Hartmann. The map is a popular decorator item in Port Angeles, one of those bits of nostalgia people like to look at briefly and then move on. It's on the wall at the McDonald's on the main drag into town. Another copy hangs on the wall of a county commissioner's office, right behind his desk. "False Dungeness Harbor" was what they

called it when the surveyors mapped the bay sheltered by the Ediz Hook. The character of the bottom—hard, sand, sticky—is written in neat script alongside precise soundings in fathoms throughout the bay. The long, sheltering arm of the hook is carefully drawn, and so is the lagoon that still pools at the head of the bay. There are the stippled banks, representing the trees that used to grace the shoreline. And in tight script, right on the beach, just east of the curve of the hook, is noted "Indian Village." There's a second village marked, where the surveyor also logged a stream of fresh water rattling down the hillside to the east, on the beach. A third village is mapped farther east.

"We brought out the map of the village sites. They didn't seem to take it very seriously," Bierne said. "There were no notes taken, no one asked to make a photocopy. We told them we have knowledge that there was tribal activity all throughout the harbor." Bierne suggested the archaeological firm the tribe would choose to monitor the site during construction. It was the same firm that had written the 1991 report warning of the likelihood of an archaeological find in any ground disturbance at the site. But he was told the department already had its own process for selecting an archaeologist. The meeting ended. And so, for all practical purposes, did the discussion about the project back at the tribe. "We had been cautioned by the tribal council, 'Don't bother the elders; they have been interviewed to death. We have hundreds of tapes,'" Bierne said. "We get these documents all the time, and we have no cultural resources department. There's been assumptions about the fill at that site. And it was on a fast-track process." Less than a week later, the city planning commission held a public hearing on the project. No one objected, and the city council granted its approval the same day, less than a month after the department submitted its permit application. The project was good to go. The city imposed the same default fail-safe condition everyone else had, requiring an archaeologist to be present during any construction, just in case.

Dennis Sullivan, tribal chairman at the time, replied to the department about Hartmann's archaeological survey of the site in a letter written February 5, 2003. He warned the department about the tribe's historic presence in the area. He relayed extreme concern about any disturbance of cultural materials. He, too, asked that a monitor be present during construction. And he essentially agreed with the report. "Our staff has reviewed this document and basically agrees with its findings," Sullivan wrote on behalf of the tribal council. "The proposed site within Port Angeles has clearly been significantly altered, however its proximity to known Klallam Village

sites and traditional use areas argues strongly for caution. We also understand the inherent limitations in characterizing a site of this magnitude with small diameter subsurface borings. . . . We realize that this project is progressing on a fast-track schedule. . . . We look forward to continuing to work with you in the development and implementation of this plan."

But meanwhile, down a dirt road, a stone's throw from the tribal center that would be visited many times later by transportation department managers, Beatrice Charles and Adeline Smith say they could have told anyone who asked them about the cemetery and village at this site. But no one asked them about the proposed project, not even members of their own tribal council. Both women are adamant that they could have stopped the project before it started—if anyone had listened.

"The knowledge, the information was there before they started," Smith said. "We have said that a lot of times, but the younger generation, they didn't want to listen. We always knew there was a cemetery there. There is a lot of differences between the generations. What Bea and I know was handed down. It wasn't written. It was a duty for elders to tell the next generation. We didn't have knowledge like writing it down. You just had to have that memory and pass it on to whoever would stop and listen.

"They should have asked around. Instead they didn't tell anyone. To be truthful I didn't even know what they were doing until they were into it," Smith said of the council. "But people here are a lot younger. We know what we were told by our elders, passed on verbally, from generation to generation. I don't know whether people would have listened to us. We have to deal with our own people, too. We haven't been a reservation very long. And a lot of the history was lost. That's that younger generation, that is the way they are. I hope it will be a lesson to the younger people like the council. They should ask."

Even their own council didn't know about the cemetery, Charles said. "Maybe they have too much work to do, I don't know. But they didn't. They are so busy running the tribe, they forgot to learn the history. You have to learn your history to build your future. They just never bothered; they are just in this present world. They never bothered to find out what happened before. Maybe they don't want to know what happened before. Because it isn't very pleasant. Maybe it is our fault. Maybe we should have stepped forward. But who would listen? They just don't care about us."

Sullivan, chairman at the time the project was proposed, said he regretted not reaching out to the elders the way he should have. "We had to reach out and go talk to the elders. I didn't reach out to as many as I wanted to. This bothers me. Bea and

Adeline, I used to go down and talk with them. They used to summon me. I didn't reach out on this one. . . . Nobody knew exactly where the cemetery was. They probably could have given us some direction about where, I'll have to agree about that. It's been a very expensive learning process for all the parties." Later, as tribal chairwoman, Frances Charles apologized to Beatrice Charles and Adeline Smith for the council not coming to them sooner. The council made some attempts to reach out to tribal elders after the first discoveries at the site, Frances Charles said. "It's not that we didn't make an outreach to them. It was asking the right questions. They were asked but they weren't asked the right questions, and we didn't interpret it the right way."

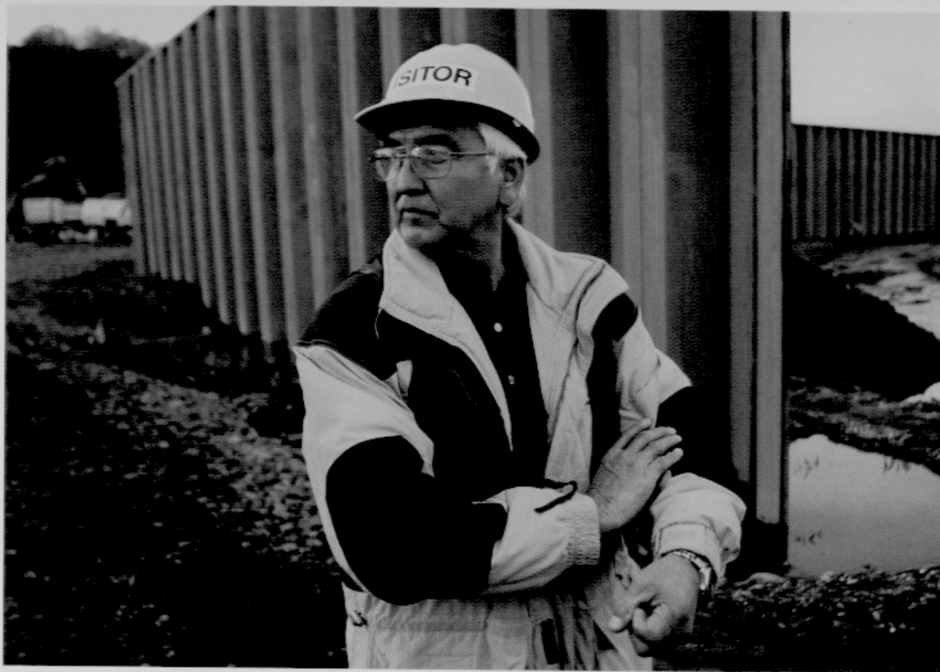
In the early stages of the project, elders were also reluctant to talk, Frances Charles said. "We did try to talk to them, but they were not willing to talk at that time. It was the uncertainty. I think everybody doubted the survival of the cemetery itself. Because of the uncertainty, a lot of the elders didn't open up. But they knew the stories they were told. There was a silence all those months. Not only were the elders ashamed, but they were afraid. It was really hard for them to open up because we were going into painful territory. Generations were told their culture was evil. There still are some that have never opened up, and you have to back up. You are digging into those wounds that are so deep. From losing loved ones, or witnessing something they want to forget, or their guilt at something that happened that they couldn't do anything about, and a lot of the remembered hate and prejudice. You had to be real quiet. In order to stand up for your culture you've been beaten so badly, not physically, but mentally, that you are not to be teaching your culture. And it was not something that we wrote down."

In the past, the tribe had recorded oral histories from its elders about the location of cemeteries and village sites. But the council didn't consult those histories, Frances Charles said. "Why didn't we remember the documentation? Why didn't the staff know?" she asked in frustration. Some elders were irritated at being questioned again about painful history. "It was, 'I've already talked about this. Where are those tapes, those interviews, those manuscripts?' That was the difficulty we were having, that was the lack of ability of knowing the importance of preserving the tapes, those manuscripts, and here we are, putting the burden back on them." Charles remembered the first time she stepped into her council office. "I went up to my office and said, 'My God, we have a gold mine here. Why isn't this in the archives?' When you have changeovers in the council or the staffing, it might not mean anything to them, and

An Indian woman uses a sewing machine on the beach at the city waterfront east of the dry dock site after the Klallam people were displaced from their village at Hollywood Beach, ca. 1902. The tent, on sticks to her left, is made of cedar-bark blankets. The city waterfront was home to at least three Indian villages, of which Tse-whit-zen was the largest. Bert Kellogg Collection, North Olympic Library System, INDN ACTV-012.

it's tossed." But a trove of information also was available, right in town, in public files, about the tribe's historic presence on the waterfront. "It was all right there, we didn't have to go and talk to anyone," Frances Charles said. "All we had to do was research. It is on the map, in the museum, in the library, in the archives, and in our own archives. It's in the stories. I don't think anybody thought about it. Things were rolling so fast, we didn't have time to think about it. We were reactive, not proactive. We didn't have time. I don't blame WashDot. I blame the local governments. They knew it was there. All the signs were there. All the public information was there. But everyone forgot to go out and research."

Later, even when the first human remains were found, Charles said that the tribe still could not provide what the state wanted. "We are hearing there is a grave site. But what the state agencies want us to do is say, 'It's right there.' We can't do that. Don't ask me to put a dime on it. Draw a circle around it. We knew it was down here somewhere, but to say it's right here on this dime, that's what we couldn't do. It's like all of this testing that was done. Twenty holes in one grid and not once did we hit it. It's, 'Look at this map and give us an exact location.' We were being challenged: 'If



Dennis Sullivan, then chairman of the Lower Elwha Klallam tribal council, at the dry dock site, November 2004. He says he regrets not talking to elders to learn the history of the site when the Washington State Department of Transportation was considering it for the dry dock. "It's been a very expensive lesson for us all," Sullivan said. Steve Ringman, courtesy *Seattle Times*.

you don't know and we don't know, then there's nothing there.'"

It wasn't until the project was already well under way that the ground finally started speaking for itself, as artifacts, burials, and remains of the village were gradually revealed. "The ground itself told us," Charles said. "The more things started opening up to us, the ground opened our eyes even wider. The more the ground was disturbed, the more the expression of our spiritual and cultural traditions surfaced. To me, it was the ancestors stepping forward and saying, 'This is your heritage, and it still is.' It was very powerful to have the ground and the ancestors say it themselves. After the evidence of the ground opened up, it finally made it comfortable that the elders could open up. As soon as the ground itself started opening up, they started opening up. It was, 'OK, we can talk about this.' Once the ground opened up, that's when everyone started feeling comfortable with what the knowledge was." But by then, the state was well into its project.

Like Hain of the transportation department, Charles has her regrets. Since the dry dock project, a cultural resource checklist has been negotiated with the state and the city for the next time a developer wants to build on the waterfront. But also like Hain, Charles doubts that it will cover every situation. After all, the city had ordi-

The late Walt Bennett (*left*), a Lower Elwha Klallam elder, is pictured looking at a harpoon point dug from the site, shown to him by tribal member Arlene Wheeler during a tour elders took of the dry dock site in 2003 after the inadvertent discovery of Tse-whit-zen. As children, Bennett, Bea Charles, and Adeline Smith had to walk around, rather than through, the site on the way to school, to respect the sacred ground of a large cemetery located there. Courtesy Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe.

nances on the books long before the dry dock project requiring it to work with the tribe to inventory cultural sites—and avoid them. "Everyone would go back and say, 'What would we do differently?' It's good to have a checklist. But what is the next crisis going to be?" Charles asked.

"We have a city shoreline management plan that hasn't worked yet. It's not about policy. It's about communication and trusting each other. Where do you let down your barriers? I think everyone is trying to take that first step right now. I don't blame the DoT. I don't blame the federal highways. I blame the City of Port Angeles. They knew what was here 150 years ago. They knew the heritage, of what was here. They can't sit there and say they were unaware. They ignored it because of their greed. It's in the archives. In the library. But to them, we don't exist. We are the outsiders that are looking in. We are not of importance to them. We are just another John Doe Citizen with no impact on the City of Port Angeles, and they are the government overseers."

Tribal government has also changed and can fill only so much of the cultural gap. Tribal members used to advise a handful of elders, who executed the community's wishes. But today, the council is younger and acts for a community that doesn't turn

out for monthly meetings unless it has an issue directly at stake. "They know when the community council is scheduled, for the first Monday of every month. They will attend a meeting to address a personal issue," Sullivan said. "The ones that do things are the same ones, over and over. A lot of them come to complain, not to share. The community used to make the decisions for the council. Today, the general community relies on the council to make decisions for them. What bothers me is I feel the community relies too much on the council business committee to make these decisions, which affect future generations."

Their tribal government has, in other words, become in some ways like local governments everywhere. And life on the reservation, like everywhere else, has also become more fragmented and impersonal. "When I was growing up, there was no TV set. Everything was by radio," Sullivan said. "The activity in my day was you would go to the river. Fish were plentiful, the creeks were alive with salmon. People walked everywhere in groups; there was a unity. You don't see that anymore. It was a community effort. The elders were on the council; you didn't have any young council members until later."

The professional government staff at the tribal center can't necessarily provide crucial cultural knowledge. About half the staff is non-Indian. And the cultural gap ripped into this tribe by more than 150 years of violence and forced assimilation has not healed. "I use myself as an example," said Frances Charles, then forty-seven. "There was that whole generational gap, there was that silence. From about age ten or twelve until about thirty, you were not to talk about your religion or your culture. There was a little bit here, a little bit there, and you were not to talk about it. Even within our own council, some of us choose life on the reservation and some didn't want to live on the reservation or be considered an Indian, even today."

Beatrice Charles agreed. "Our culture is just being revived. We were taught not to speak our languages. We forgot our tradition. We forgot our culture for a long time. Maybe that's what's happened. Within our families, we had that. But a lot of families didn't have the older teachings. That breakdown was . . . it was more modern. And you had rivalries between families. It's not communicating with them. It's politics." And many people in this tribe, which was without a recognized tribal government until 1968, are just trying to survive. "We were not recognized for so long. During that era everyone had to be for themselves," Adeline Smith said. "The Indians always took the worst jobs, or the dirty end of the jobs, or no job at all. In Port Angeles, it was rough. Her and I had to go to Seattle to look for work," she said of her niece

Beatrice Charles. "That's where we lost a lot of our culture," Smith said. "People were separated from their culture. The government erased the Klallam off the map. We were diminished from the smallpox. That's why the government put the military reservation here. They said all the Indians are all gone. We was supposed to have died."

The Lower Elwha Klallam people became strangers in their own homeland, plagued by conflict between the tribe and this town for more than 150 years. Even after the reservation was created, many tribal members lived in isolation there, just six miles from downtown Port Angeles. "I wasn't allowed to go into town," Adeline said. "There was an incident where a[n Indian] child was killed. He was clubbed to death with a two-by-four; he lived for three days until he died. You never heard anything about it. Indians didn't dare ask anything. They just got away with it. I never seen Port Angeles, just once or twice a year, when my grandmother took me." Ask at the Lower Elwha Klallam reservation if anyone has ever sought a position on the city council, school board, county commission, or port commission, and the answer will be a bewildered "No." Even the chamber of commerce, the planning commission, and the economic development council were all no-go zones for decades.

Jamie Valadez, a tribal language instructor, raised her kids, one of them a national wrestling champion, in town. "They get watched when they go into a store, or when they drive, they get pulled over more often," Valadez said. "My daughter is a hairdresser, and it's 'No, I don't want you. Can someone else do it?'" She has struggled to feel at home in Port Angeles herself, despite her work teaching the Klallam language at the public high school. "I've lived in town since I was sixteen. I like living in town, but you don't feel like you are a member of that community. You feel like you are a pet, under a microscope. They want to ask you questions, like you are some kind of expert, and you aren't. I fight this a lot; you try to fit in. I see myself distancing myself. Putting this thick wall around. When you fail so many times at trying, you get hurt so many times. I'm staying in that comfort zone, and that's where they all are staying, and we have to get out of that place. Or they are trying to meet their quota: 'We did our outreach to the Native population.' I feel like a quota number."

City officials made an effort to reach out to the tribe in 1990, building a longhouse at a city park with public funds. But the building was kept locked, and tribal members needed city permission to use it. What the tribe regarded as a sacred, traditional place was used for K-Mart employee get-togethers and storage for park department lawnmowers, baseball equipment, and soccer goals. When the city concreted over the traditional

earthen floor, the tribe protested. The city took out the concrete, perplexed at the peculiar people in their midst. Then officials gave the tribe a key to the city, which perplexed the tribe, here long before the settlers first showed up to form a white utopia. "It was like having a key to the house when you are kicked out," Beatrice Charles said. "Then it changes every four years, when they elect someone else who has no history. They never did like us. We have been living through that ever since I was a child. Even today, we tell our kids never to go to town by themselves. It's not safe."

By June 16, 2003, the tribe had taken a closer look at the dry dock site and issued a report comparing its location with the villages on the 1853 map. That report pegged the location of the ancient Klallam village of Tse-whit-zen well south and east of the boundaries of the proposed dry dock.

On August 6, 2003, former transportation secretary MacDonald finally got his first look at the site. He and other department officials had traveled to Port Angeles from the state capital for an event relished by all government officials: a groundbreaking ceremony for a big, coveted project that would bring much-wanted jobs to a local community. He remembered his first impressions of the site vividly. "You didn't see a beach. You didn't see the land. You couldn't even, in fact, from where we stood, see the water. And if anybody had said, 'Do you understand that you are going to spend the next year and a half of your life dealing with the implications and the contents of the site related to Native Americans?' you would say, 'You've come to the wrong party. That must be something else. That is not here. I don't see any Native Americans here. Are there Native Americans in Port Angeles? Isn't that interesting.' There would have been no understanding that there was another overlay in time and in space with which we would soon be very involved. The past was invisible, and the Native American context of the site was invisible. There was a complete disconnect, a complete absence of understanding of where we stood in history and in space as we soon, to our astonishment, learned. The collective consciousness of the Port Angeles community is not contributed to by the tribe. It is part of the invisibility of the tribes. We do not connect between those cultural groups, and that is one of the reasons the Port of Port Angeles and our own engineers would never have given this a second's thought. This happened because the two communities that live in Port Angeles have never worked this out. They don't understand each other's history."

That, the city vividly demonstrated. Town residents and state and local elected officials turned out to celebrate the groundbreaking for the project. There was a band and yellow-and-white striped party tents for locals and dignitaries gathered

Port Angeles city officials and business boosters join transportation secretary Douglas MacDonald (*facing camera, foot on shovel*) at the groundbreaking for the dry dock site, August 2003. Within days, the first human remains would be found not far from where they are digging. Courtesy Washington State Department of Transportation.

to cheer the jobs that would soon be coming to town. Andrew May, 2005 president of the local chamber of commerce, had never seen such a big crowd—not even when the town gathered to watch the demolition of the stack on one of the last big, shuttered mills. "They had a plane flying around, taking photos," May said. "It was the multimillion-dollar thing. We're doing the big sandwich, celebration thing." There were drawings of the project to look at and a video running on a monitor to show how the sea gate of the dry dock would work. "People were singing, dancing, eating, celebrating, walking around, slapping each other on the back. It was who's who, everybody, Peter and Pam Public, everything was wonderful," May said. But as a town resident and a mover and shaker who made it his business to have his finger on lots of pulses, May's sense of Port Angeles was different from the one transportation department officials at the site had that day. Amid all the festivity, to him, something just didn't feel right.

“I’m talking to several people. There were definitely rumors that they didn’t want to listen to what was really out here. Let them get started. I distinctly remember it,” May said. “I was asking around. I’m getting this feel that there is an unheard, small minority saying, ‘Well, wait until they see,’ and later it was, ‘Why didn’t they say so at the time?’ But listen, they were trying to tell folks that,” he said of the tribe. “They did say, ‘You are going to find a village, and we tried to tell you how big it was. But why piss into the wind? If I’m telling you it’s here, and you are going forward with your tests and moving ahead, who am I to say no?’ Nobody needs economic development more than Lower Elwha. And here’s this [archaeological] firm that specializes in this saying it isn’t there. Are you saying you know more than them? There was such momentum at that point. I view it as a Greek tragedy. You heard these things before it happened, you saw it hit the fan, then both sides entrenching.” Thinking back over the moment local dignitaries pushed their shovels into the dirt, breaking ground, he shook his head. “That day was for me a very bizarre day. The word I got was, ‘We are sitting on a powder keg.’”

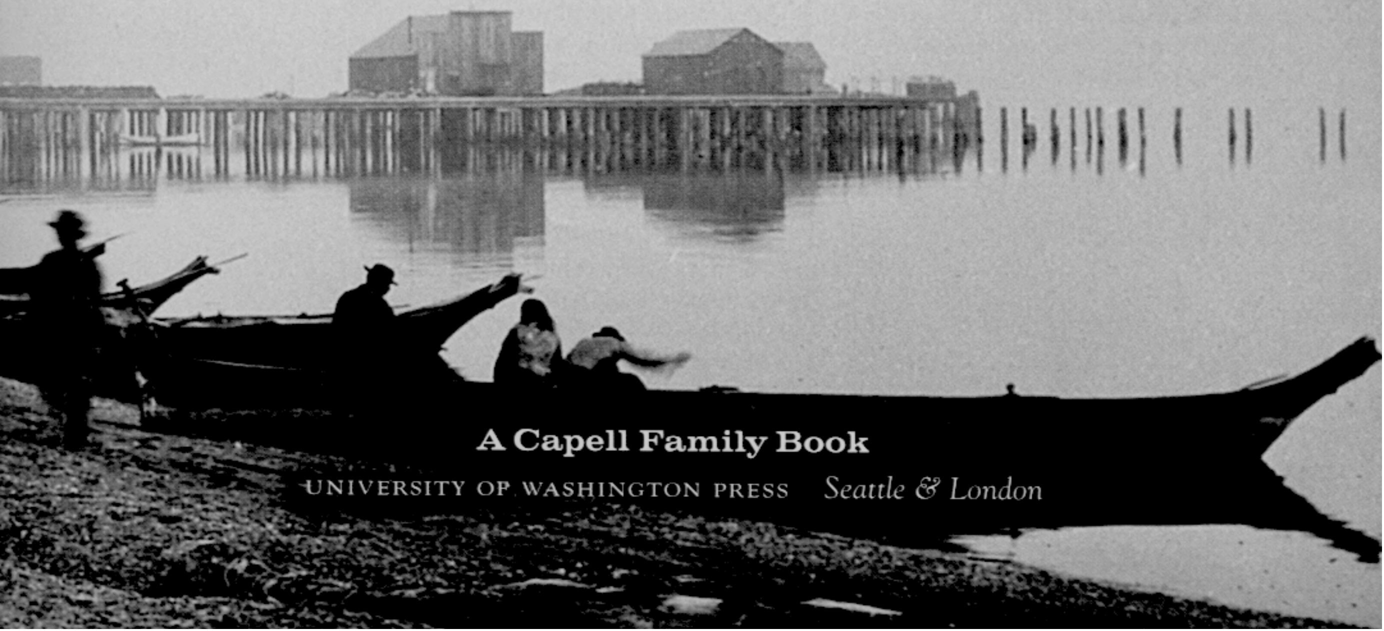
With best wishes
Lynda V. Mapes.

Lynda V. Mapes

Breaking Ground

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and the Unearthing of Tse-whit-zen Village

FOREWORD BY *Frances Charles*



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