was being developed, the Department of the Interior rescinded the Navy's permit for practice bombing of Sea Lion Rock just south of Olympic National Park, restoring peace to nearby nesting and haul-out sites.

By extending much-needed protection to offshore and nearshore marine areas, the Olympic National Marine Sanctuary is an important addition to the Washington Islands National Wildlife Refuges and the magnificent coastal wilderness of Olympic National Park. These agencies, which represent some of our government's best aspirations toward the natural world, join Native Americans of the Makah, Quileute, Hoh, and Quinault tribes in a long tradition of stewardship for this splendid joining of land and sea.

9
Footprints on the Land

Afternoon clouds were just settling over the mountains and foothills above the Dungeness River, but the valley fields were still bright with spring sunlight. The high shoulders of Blue Mountain and Deer Ridge were edged in winter snow, and the blue silhouette of Mount Angeles rose abruptly over the green slopes of Lost Mountain to the west. I crossed a field of wet spring grass where the foothills met the valley floor and stopped by a small marsh. Dry cattails rustled in the cool north wind, and a pair of mallards dabbled in the shallow waters of a winter pond.

It wasn't hard to imagine this low, rolling landscape in late Pleistocene time. The same ice-rounded foothills and hummocky piedmont plain stretched north to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Just as now, the snowpack would be melting back from the mountains. The small marsh and pond was larger then, and bordered then as now by a thick growth of cattails. Instead of the grassy fields of the valley and second-growth Douglas-firs and cedars covering the foothills, there were shrubby patches of willow and alder interspersed with sedges, grasses, trailing blackberry, and wild rose. And in place of the houses lately sprung up in the old farmlands of

the Dungeness Valley were slowly melting blocks of ice, stranded remnants of the recent advance of the Cordilleran ice sheet that pressed against the northern Olympics like a wedge.

This was the landscape the earliest known inhabitants of the Olympic Peninsula encountered more than 12,000 years ago. We know this because it was here in the late 1970s that a valley resident turned up one of the most significant archaeological finds in the Pacific Northwest. Emanuel Manis was deepening a pond for wintering waterfowl when he uncovered what he recognized as the tusks of a prehistoric mammal. Archaeologists from Washington State University examined the site and confirmed the animal was a mastodon, a large elephantlike mammal that inhabited Pleistocene landscapes. Within hours of beginning work, one of the archaeologists made a remarkable discovery. Embedded in one of the mammal's ribs was a broken piece of antler or bone resembling a spear point. The fragment was lodged more than three quarters of an inch deep, suggesting a blow delivered with great force. Further examination under a microscope revealed that the outer covering of the fragment was worn away, typically the result of human workmanship. The rib had partly grown over the spear point; this was not a fatal wound.

Other evidence indicated human involvement as well. A number of bones exhibited telltale signs of butchering, and the skull, which had been turned 180 degrees out of its natural position, was smashed into thousands of pieces. Several bones from the upper side of the skeleton were moved a short distance away, presumably out of the pond in which the carcass lay; these also showed signs of butchering. The skeleton was buried in stream-deposited sand and gravel, which lay directly atop the rocky rubble of glacial drift. Seeds and bits of wood recovered from the strata that contained the bones were radiocarbon dated at more than 12,000 years. The discovery was not only the earliest evidence of human presence in Washington, but the earliest association of Paleolithic hunters with mastodons anywhere in North America.

Not far from the pond is a small grassy rise alongside the road. It was the only high ground close to the watering hole, and researchers thought it might be the hunters' campsite. A cross-section of the rise revealed the charred remains of six to seven fire pits, all in different-aged strata, as well as the bones of several bison, caribou, muskrats, and ducks, and a tooth from a very large black bear. There was evidence of eight or nine layers of occupation by hunting people at this site between 6,000 and 12,000 years ago.

Early prehistoric hunters and gatherers probably followed the large Pleistocene herbivores to the northern peninsula from the south after the ice had retreated and vegetation began to reclaim the scraped and rocky landscape. As the climate warmed and became drier, human populations in the Great Basin and Columbia Plateau gravitated to rivers and lakes. Population pressures might have prompted some groups to explore the recently deglaciated landscapes to the north. Their dwellings must have been temporary, sewn hides or woven mats over stick frames; none have survived the passage of time. The people carried a few simple tools of bone and stone (a flaked cobblestone and a flensing tool were found at the Manis site), but little else is known of them. Who were these earliest of wayfarers on the peninsula, these small nomadic bands who hunted the raw glacial landscapes for mastodon, caribou, bison? What brought them to this remote and rugged corner of land, and what was their relation to the people who followed them thousands of years later?

Archaeological investigations in Olympic National Park have been fairly limited in the past. The park's rugged topography and thick forests proved daunting, and the mistaken belief that Native Americans were loath to venture into the interior mountains dissuaded early investigators. But archaeologists have taken a closer look at the mountains and river valleys of the park in recent years, and the picture of early human presence here is becoming much more complete. Early hunters left traces in the Olympics that lead from this small marsh at the edge of the northern foothills, up through the mountains, and deep into the interior ranges. The cultural artifacts that reappear on the coast thousands of years later offer a stunningly clear window into the sophisticated ways of sea mammal hunters whose descendants still inhabit the area. Though much of the archaeological record is missing — only fragments and a few simple stone tools remain from great sweeps of millennia — the story of how the earliest inhabitants of the Peninsula learned to adapt and thrive within this dynamic ecosystem unfolds like a blossom in a newly greening landscape.

The Mountain Hunters

From the Manis site, Blue Mountain dominates the southwestern horizon. A gentle, broad-shouldered peak, with fingers of forest reaching nearly to its summit, its south side opens into the subalpine meadows of Deer Park, named for the creatures drawn to its warm, south-facing slopes in spring. Deer Ridge swings east from Deer Park in a long green undulating line before plunging south into the valley of the Gray Wolf River. The ridge drops abruptly at a place called Slab Camp where a tongue of Cordilleran ice pushed through into the steep canyon of the Gray Wolf. From the flat, glacier-carved gap that remains, it's half a day's walk to the meadows of Deer Park, an even shorter walk down to the Gray Wolf. Sheltered from prevailing storms and watered by a perennial stream, Slab Camp was the site of an old Forest Service ranger station for years; today it hosts a primitive campground popular with hunters in deer season.

Archaeological work done at Slab Camp in the 1980s uncovered extensive evidence of early human use of the area. The site yielded no hearths or animal remains, but more than 64 stone tools were discovered — points, flakes, hammer stones, and cobble tools — as well as thousands of worked chips. The artifacts were located below a layer of volcanic ash from Mount Mazama, a volcano that erupted in the southern Cascades about 6,800 years ago (the clear waters of Oregon's Crater Lake now rest in its caldera). Mazama's ash spread north and east as far as British Columbia and Montana, and the ash and pumice deposit it left behind provides a handy benchmark for archaeologists. This date, and the nature of the artifacts recovered, show the Slab Camp occupants practiced a way of life archaeologists describe as the "coastal Olcott pattern," named for the family farm in the Stillaguamish River east of Puget Sound, where the pattern was first identified.

Olcott people were "generalists"; they hunted land animals, gathered plants and berries, probably fished. Little is known of these early inhabitants, other than the scant evidence gleaned from the stone tools they left behind. They chipped basalt into simple, expedient tools; many of these tools appear to be quickly made, possibly on site. They also fashioned more elaborate blades and spear points of varying sizes. These were worked into the distinctive shape of a willow leaf, an indicator of the coastal Olcott pattern.

Creators of the Olcott pattern practiced a widespread subsistence lifestyle on the Northwest coast that remained stable for several thousand years, roughly from about 9,000 to 6,000 years ago. Their way of life is well represented on the peninsula. Olcott sites near Quilcene, Port Angeles, and at Lake Cushman in the southeastern Olympics yielded distinctive "willow leaf" spear points, and an Olcott point was found just above Mazama ash at the Manis site. A number of other Olcott-pattern tools turned up in these sites as well. Choppers and scrapers indicate that people were working animal hides; abrading stones suggest the manufacture of bone awls or needles, probably used for making clothing or basketry, and gravers point to working with wood or bone. This hunting and gathering way of life raises intriguing questions: Does this land-based pattern indicate that people had not yet learned to use nearby marine resources? Or were these hunting camps merely the inland component of a seasonal round that included coastal sites now lost to erosion and changing sea levels?

At this point no one can say. During much of Olcott-pattern life on the peninsula, sea levels were considerably lower than today. The rebounding of the land surface after the weight of the ice sheet was lifted and resulting fluctuations in sea levels would have placed most coastal sites of those days below current sea level. This, combined with the dense junglelike growth along the coast and the erosive power of the waves, may have conspired to hide or eliminate an important component of Olcott-pattern life here. But evidence of early human use of Olympic National Park's high country abounds.

From Slab Camp, the subalpine meadows of Deer Park are easily reached by following open south slopes along Deer Ridge. A large archaeological site at Deer Park yielded artifacts similar to those found at Slab Camp: points, flakes, a cobble tool, unfinished points and blades, an abrading slab. There was no organic material by which to date the site, but the tools match the Olcott pattern. Interestingly, the basalt from which they were fashioned seemed different from native Crescent basalt. In fact, the rock is dacite, a glassy, fine-grained, extrusive rock similar to andesite. Dacite weathers slate gray and fractures into smooth, shiny black faces; it feels lighter in the hand than Crescent basalt, and it flakes to a finely honed edge. Cobbles and boulders of dacite are believed to have been rafted to the Olympic Peninsula by the Cordilleran ice

sheet from parent rock in the Howe Sound area of British Columbia. The rocks are still commonly found in streams and along shorelines that lay in the path of the continental ice sheet, largely below 3,500 feet. The presence of dacite in the interior mountains or above the height of the last ice sheet means that humans brought it there.

If you trace the interconnecting ridges on a topographic map from Deer Park and Blue Mountain west to Obstruction Point, then farther on to Hurricane Ridge or south around the Gray Wolf headwaters, you'll notice vast stretches of open subalpine country joined by ridges and watered by lakes and snowmelt streams. The high country here is mantled with lush meadows, pocketed with marmot burrows, and criss-crossed with the trails of deer and elk. Nearly everywhere they have looked, archaeologists have found ample evidence of human use of these areas in the form of dacite flakes, points, and worked cobbles. Recent investigations by park archaeologists have shown that early hunters and gatherers left traces even farther into the interior, along the open ridges of High Divide and the remote Bailey Range. The places where they camped, perched on a scenic overlook, or stopped to rest in the shade of a rock outcrop are often the same places backcountry hikers stop and rest today.

I find a deep satisfaction in thinking of the old ones — "the People," as early Native Americans everywhere referred to themselves — ranging over these mountains with a few simple, elegantly honed tools. I think they must have shared something of the delight we feel in the rugged splendor of this mountain landscape. Their stone whittlings scattered across upland ridges and basins are words spoken across a changing landscape of ten thousand years. They add a familiar element to the haunting beauty of these coastal mountains. And they cast our wilderness wanderings today in a different light.

Only one high-country site, by a tarn in Seven Lakes Basin in the north-central Olympics, has yielded a positive date for early human use of the high country. Charred ash from a fire pit buried beneath a foot of organic litter was dated at about 5,000 years before the present. Chipped dacite and charred bones suggest the site was used as a hunting camp. By that time the period of postglacial warming had ended and the climate had cooled in the Olympics. Sea level was beginning to stabilize, and vegetation had come to resemble that of today. The elk and deer who

summer in this moist, north-facing basin today may be descendants of the animals that drew small hunting bands from nearby lowlands in summer and fall. Perhaps those distant travelers were gathering meat to dry for winter use, or simply enjoying the largess of a fall high-country hunt. Either way, the Seven Lakes site suggests a seasonal use of high-country resources at a time when seasonal adaptations to marine resources were also beginning to appear on the Northwest coast.

Early Coastal Cultures

To trace the path of early maritime culture in the Pacific Northwest — from hunting of land mammals to use of nearshore resources — it's necessary to venture slightly north, to the Fraser River Gorge in mainland British Columbia. There, a site discovered on the grounds of an old cannery shows evidence of stable, long-term human occupation from 8,000 to 2,000 years ago. Stone hunting artifacts of the Olcott pattern dominate the lower archaeological strata, but about 4,000 years ago, increasing numbers of bone and antler tools began to appear. Chopping cobbles became rare around that time and abrading stones for wood and bone work much more common. Chipped stone points became smaller, and ground slate points appeared. New tools also made their first appearance: carving tools made with rodent teeth for detailed woodworking, mussel shell adze blades, and antler wedges.

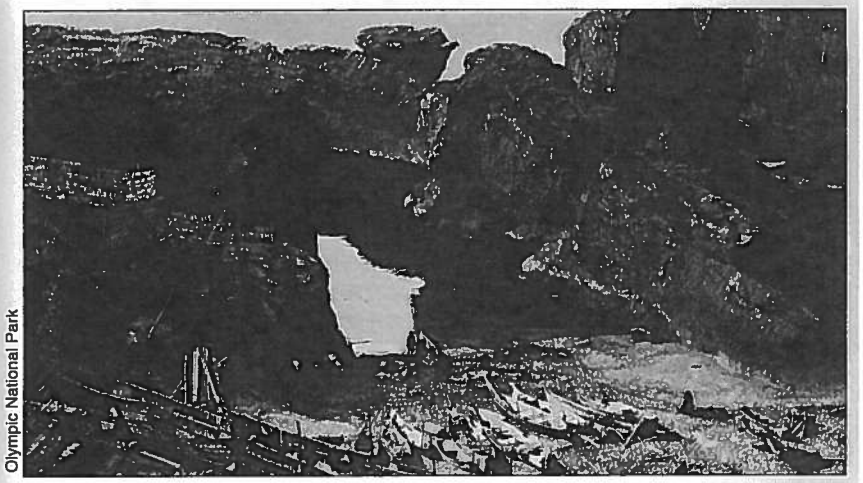
But the most significant difference from earlier times was a marked increase in the use of marine resources. Remains of salmon, sturgeon, and other fish as well as mussels and seabirds were added to the earlier remains of land and sea mammals. Antler wedges suggest large-scale woodworking, and it is very likely that seagoing canoes had been developed by this time. Shellfish became a winter staple, marking the beginnings of a seasonal adaptation that would soon unfold into the later maritime and Northwest Coast culture.

A similar evolution of hunting and gathering strategies was doubtless unfolding on the Olympic Peninsula as well — particularly as the climate cooled and forests began to close. The first evidence of this early maritime way of life on the peninsula was discovered at the mouth of the Hoko River, 15 miles east of Cape Flattery on the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

The Hoko River drains wet coastal lowlands in the northwest corner of the peninsula. Running brown and muddy during winter storms, the river deposits tons of silt along its lower floodplain and on its delta on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Here, a rich assemblage of wooden artifacts preserved in the wet mud of the river mouth shows that the site has served as an important seasonal fishing camp for nearly 3,000 years. Radiocarbon dates from Hoko indicate regular occupation of the site from 2,200 to 2,900 years ago. The mouth of the Hoko remains a favorite fishing spot for Makah people in whose traditional territory it lies.

Sealed from oxygen and organic decay in the wet mud of the river mouth, well-preserved wood and fiber artifacts and abundant animal remains paint a vivid picture of an early coastal and riverine fishing culture. By carefully excavating artifacts with spray from hoses pumped from the river, archaeologists uncovered bent-wood halibut hooks used in offshore fishing, bone or antler harpoon heads for hunting sea mammals, a fragment of a weighted split-spruce fishing net, and a possible fish weir. Also washed from the mud were wooden wedges, carved points, and a piece of adze-hewn cedar board.

One fascinating find at Hoko included six intact knives made by lashing flakes broken from quartzite beach pebbles into split-cedar handles. Replicas of these knives proved excellent for cleaning and filleting fish. The number of knives and blades recovered from the site, along with fragments of burden baskets, suggest that the people who camped here processed large numbers of fish, most likely for storage and later use. The hooks and net fragments indicate they fished the offshore bank, and remains of fish from offshore waters were twice as plentiful as salmon, which were most likely speared in the river. Canoes were probably used to take so many offshore fish, though no canoe fragments were found at the site. Nor was evidence of plank houses, though tools for splitting large cedar boards found elsewhere make archaeologists suspect that such dwellings were part of early maritime culture. Remains of seals, porpoises, and dolphins show that these sea mammals were hunted regularly, probably using the barbed spear points found at the site. Though the bones of a gray whale were found, no whaling tools accompanied them, suggesting the whale was scavenged from the beach.



Olympic National Park

A Makah fishing camp on Tatoosh Island, showing cedar canoes and halibut drying racks. The photograph was taken by Samuel Morse, an agent at Neah Bay from 1890 to 1903.

A presage of the flowering of the Northwest Coast culture to come was also washed from the mud of the Hoko River. A redcedar tool identified as a mat creaser, used to soften cattail or rush fibers to be woven into mats, was carved into the likeness of a pair of kingfishers joined at the beak tips. This stylized design, simple and elegant, is the oldest artwork found anywhere on the Northwest coast.

At least three other early maritime sites have been discovered on the peninsula, two on the outer coast and one on the strait. All are shell middens containing bone artifacts and antler woodworking tools, along with plentiful remains of sea mammals and shellfish. Their location on uplands and terraces above today's coastline points to a higher sea level at that time. Like the lower strata at the cannery site in British Columbia, test excavation of one of these sites shows widespread use of worked stone tools at lower levels. But this earliest of technologies, by which humans lived here for the last 12,000 years, all but disappears from northern coastal sites on the peninsula about 1,000 years ago. Instead, Native Americans developed highly refined skills for detailed working of wood, shell, and bone. This mastery of the resources of forest and sea led to the development of the elaborate cultures that followed.

Ozette: Life in an Early Whaling Village

Contact with European seafarers in the later part of the 18th century forever changed the lives of the indigenous people of the Northwest coast. New technologies and a different kind of material wealth introduced by fur traders disrupted long-standing social traditions, alliances, and mores. The introduction of exotic diseases wiped out entire villages and devastated Native American society. Treaty policies of the 1850s and the government schools that followed often outlawed Indian cultural practices and beliefs, and generations of Native people became exiled from their past.

Early observers writing in the wake of these social upheavals often reflect a skewed and somewhat limited view of indigenous life on the coast. Many details of the ways in which Native Americans interacted with each other and with the ecosystem were lost. Archaeological knowledge of early Northwest lifeways was also limited by the perishable nature of the wood, bone, and fiber materials that supported coastal culture over the past 1,000 years. To see how native cultures here evolved with the natural systems of the Olympic Peninsula, it's necessary to look to the time before the first contact with Europeans. Fortunately, on the northern end of the Olympic coast, one of the most important archaeological sites in North America reaches back to that time and offers a detailed look at daily life in a prosperous village of sea mammal hunters.

Ozette Village is situated in the lee of Cape Alava, just south of the Makah Indian Reservation. A photograph taken of the village in the late 1800s shows a cluster of a dozen or so houses. Most are built of split cedar planks, and a few are in the old shed roof longhouse style. One of five permanent Makah villages located around Cape Flattery on the northwest tip of the peninsula, Ozette remained occupied well into the 20th century. Families leaving the village to be with children attending mandatory boarding school in Neah Bay eventually led to Ozette's demise. Some returned to hunt and fish in summer, but by the 1930s, most of the houses had tumbled down and the hillside was overgrown with trees and brush.

Ozette contained the most extensive undisturbed shell midden ever found on the Olympic coast, however, and it was known to have been a principal whaling village for the Makah. In fact, its location was ideal for sea mammal hunting. Situated on the westernmost point of land in the contiguous United States, the village lay close to the migratory routes of whales, fur seals, and other sea mammals. Large offshore reefs and islands offered protection from pounding Pacific swells and provided easy passage for canoes.

A fairly detailed picture of Makah whaling culture has been pieced together from ethnographic reports and accounts from tribal elders. According to tribal traditions, whale hunting defined Makah society. The endeavor was undertaken only by whaling chiefs, an inherited privilege, and with a great deal of prescribed ritual and religious observance. Pursuing gray or humpback whales at sea — eight men to a 35-foot cedar whaling canoe, armed with harpoons tipped with mussel shells and sealskin floats — was a difficult and dangerous undertaking. Whalers fasted, purified themselves, and prayed to their spirit guides well in advance of the spring hunts, and they and their family members adhered to strict taboos. A whale could sustain a whole village for weeks with plenty of oil and blubber left for trade.

Whalers were afforded tremendous prestige, and whaling families formed an aristocracy. Like most indigenous societies on the Northwest coast, Makah society was stratified. The noble class consisted mostly of whaling chiefs

Clallam County Historical Society

Ozette Village at the end of the 19th century. The remains of the ship Austria, *shipwrecked in 1887, litter the beach in the foreground.*

and their families; successful hunters enjoyed a high degree of wealth and status. The broad class of commoners possessed a variety of learned skills, from basketry and canoe carving to seal hunting. The underclass of slaves (probably about five percent of the population at time of European contact) were captured in battle, traded from other villages, or born into slavery. By and large, they led lives of servitude.

Nobles enjoyed privileged access to prime hunting, fishing, and gathering sites throughout the Northwest coast; these rights were inherited or acquired through marriage. Members of noble families were expected to marry within their class, among different villages or tribal groups. Despite this strict social order, all classes enjoyed a good deal of social mobility. Commoners could better their standing and increase their wealth through marriage, by acquiring a specialized skill, or through warfare. They could also shift allegiances among chiefs. All classes — nobles, commoners, and slaves — lived together in the longhouses at Ozette.

In the 1960s a team led by Washington State University archaeologist Richard Daugherty excavated a trench in the large shell midden at Ozette. Working from the beach up through successive layers of coastal terrace, their shovels turned up more than 2,000 objects. Some — buttons, coins, rifle parts — were obviously from the historic period. But layers beneath them predated European contact. Bone fish hooks, stone sinkers, bone and shell blades, and carved combs dated back an estimated 2,000 years. The abundance of fish and sea mammal bones throughout the midden showed that a stable and highly organized hunting and fishing society had inhabited the site almost continually during that time. Nearly all of the bones found were from sea mammals, predominantly fur seals, but the discovery of whale bones confirmed what had long been known by Makahs; Ozette was indeed a whaling village, possibly one of the largest south of Alaska.

In the second year of initial excavation at Ozette, archaeologists sunk a test pit in a wet area back from the beach. Deep in the mud, they unearthed a coiled rope made of cedar boughs. Further excavation revealed fragments of woven cedar bark mats and baskets, along with a section of hewn cedar house plank — all perfectly preserved in the wet clay. Makah oral traditions told of landslides that buried Ozette Village in the distant past; here was evidence. Like the alluvial deposits that preserved highly perishable artifacts at Hoko, clay had apparently preserved similarly perishable artifacts at Ozette. If the oral traditions were accurate, here, beneath the shrubs and young trees, might lie a virtually intact whaling village — complete with wood, fiber, and bone artifacts — sealed since the day it was buried. A find of this magnitude required major excavation, and Daugherty and the Makah Tribal Council began planning one. As it turned out, the Pacific Ocean had plans of its own.

A severe storm early in 1970 battered the upper beach with waves and began to erode the sea bank in which the collapsed longhouses were buried. The midden slumped, and house planks and artifacts were exposed: an inlaid box, a canoe paddle, a woven rain hat. Daugherty and the Makah Tribal Council secured emergency funding so that excavation could begin that spring. Forgoing shovels and trowels for seawater pumps and hoses, spray nozzles and fine-bristled brushes, teams of archaeologists and students from around the country began the work of unearthing the first houses. Artifacts sealed in clay for 450 years were coaxed once more into coastal sunlight: delicately wrought combs, whale bone clubs used for seal hunting, dozens of finely woven baskets, and elaborately carved wooden bowls. Not only finished pieces but artifacts in various stages of manufacture and repair were also recovered, offering a rare cross section of a functioning coastal culture. Piece by carefully excavated piece, the story of early everyday life on this coast — and something of the people who lived it — was revealed.

A burden basket was washed free of the clay, filled with rolls of cedar bark newly stripped from a tree and not yet processed into fibers for mats, baskets, or clothing. Spindles and pieces of looms emerged, along with an intricately woven plaid blanket in a pattern previously unknown on the coast. Other items emerged from the clay: carved bent-corner cedar boxes used for cooking with heated stones, larger decorated storage chests, rain hats, halibut hooks, wedges, and woodworking tools. Some chisels were fitted with steel blades, possibly salvaged from shipwrecked Japanese junks. Woodworking technologies evident in earlier archaeological finds had obviously been carried to a high level on the coast by this time. The level of detail and distinctive style of the decorative artwork suggested a highly developed esthetic.

The lay of the houses and artifacts recovered also gave clues to the structure of Makah society. Whaling equipment was often found at the rear of the houses, places occupied by whaling chiefs and their families.

Sleeping platforms covered with cedar mats lined the walls, and each household maintained its own hearth, sometimes separated from the others by screens.

The mudslide that buried — and so preserved — Ozette village came so suddenly that there was no time to retrieve valuables. Inside a cedar bark sheath lay a finely honed harpoon head of mussel shell with carved elk bone barbs and fitted with woven fiber rope (similar points were found broken off in whale bones). A long cedar plank was carved with the likeness of a whale that matched the petroglyphs at "Wedding Rocks" a short distance down the coast. Wood and bone handles of everyday tools were carved in the stylized likenesses of people, owls, wolves.

Janis Burger

"Wedding Rocks." It is impossible to date these petroglyphs south of Cape Alava on the coast, but their style closely matches designs carved into artifacts dated at close to 500 years old found at Ozette Village.

Some objects seem to have been made for ceremonial or purely artistic purposes. A bone carving of a small human figure crouched within a mussel shell echoes a Makah creation story; and a beautifully carved cedar whale fin was inlaid with 700 sea otter teeth in the motif of the mythical Thunderbird. The striking beauty of these designs reflect not only the Ozette people's reverence for the natural world that sustained them, but their close ties to a spirit realm that permeated that world and insured their well-being and prosperity.

The archaeological dig at Ozette lasted 11 years. Three of five known longhouses were fully excavated and over 50,000 artifacts recovered. All remained with the tribe. Many of the finest pieces from this collection can be seen at the Makah Cultural and Resource Center in Neah Bay. For the Makah people of today, Ozette is a gift from the past offering a deeper perspective on their own rich heritage, a fuller sense of who they are. For all of us, Ozette is a window on a stage of the human journey on this coast, from nomadic hunters following game across the spare, post-glacial landscape to sophisticated village dwellers living amid plenty and sharing such "contemporary" pursuits as trade, status, and the cultivation of artistic expression.

Northwest Coast Adaptations

The Makahs' way of life reflected their unique position at the peninsula's northwest tip. Access to migratory fur seals at Umatilla Reef and halibut banks off Cape Flattery as well as Ozette's proximity to the migratory routes of whales influenced many of their cultural practices. The location of other Native American villages at the mouths of peninsula salmon streams similarly influenced their cultures. The Makah shared many of their cultural practices with other Wakashan-speaking whaling people of Vancouver Island (the Nitinat and Nootka), but they also shared important cultural traits with their peninsula neighbors. All tribal groups on the peninsula shared a broad cultural pattern practiced from Yakutat Bay in Alaska to Cape Mendocino in California. This "Northwest Coast culture" is one of the most elaborate and sophisticated indigenous cultural patterns north of Mexico.

Generally speaking, Northwest Coast people are distinguished by an

orientation toward marine resources, communal winter villages, extensive use of canoes for water transport, and a strong reliance on salmon. Northwest Coast cultures are also known for their specialized adaptations to particular environments and the skilled use of a number of widely scattered seasonal resources. Both traits are well illustrated among the tribal groups of the peninsula. Though peninsula peoples shared a number of traits, the wide cultural diversity found among these groups — their languages, beliefs, ceremonies, artistic expressions, and subsistence strategies — reflect the natural diversity of the Olympic ecosystem itself.

In winter, when heavy rains and long hours of darkness descended, the people of the peninsula gathered in communal winter villages. A village consisted of up to 20 longhouses, though most had only a few. The houses were usually about 30 feet wide and 60 feet long, constructed of split or adze-hewn redcedar planks lashed to post and beam frames with cedar withes; they were usually set along a river or shoreline. Two to six related families shared each house, each family maintaining its separate household. Wide cedar planks lined the walls, serving as beds and seating, and cedar baskets or bent-corner cedar boxes held family possessions.

Villages were occupied throughout the winter months, some year-round. In spring, summer, and fall, smaller family groups usually traveled to hunting, fishing, and gathering sites: shellfish beaches, salmon streams, inland lakes, prairies. Surpluses were gathered, processed, and stored at these seasonal settlements, supporting winter village life and affording the leisure time to develop the traditions of elaborate winter ceremonials that were a central part of Northwest Coast life.

"Tribes," as we've come to think of them today, were actually loose associations of villages at the time of European contact, sharing languages, kinship ties, and common food gathering locations. The formal tribal structure was imposed by the United States government with implementation of the treaties of the 1850s. Villages as well as "tribes" traded and intermarried, establishing important alliances and renewing intertribal relations. Central to this social order was the potlatch. Every momentous event in village life, every claim to hereditary privilege, whether a name or song or a prized fishing site passed on to a new generation, required a potlatch. Preparations for these elaborate gift-giving ceremonies sometimes took years. Guests traveled from distant villages, and the feasting, dancing, and singing that preceded gift-giving often

went on for days. A village headman or host family gained great prestige by giving away amassed wealth. The songs and dances affirmed the heritage and position of the host family, and the value and order of gifts distributed acknowledged the status of the guests. By accepting the gifts, guests acknowledged the hereditary claims, prosperity, and social status of their hosts, thus reaffirming a family's place in the strict social order.

Potlatches also served another important function in Northwest society. Though the region is blessed with unusual abundance, it is also subject to unpredictable seasonal shortages. Individual salmon runs can fail because of flooding or drought; changes in weather patterns can cause shifts in sea mammal migrations; occasional "red tides" may contaminate shellfish; a berry or camas crop may fail. Along with its other functions, the institution of the potlatch served to redistribute resources and "share the wealth." Since well-to-do families were expected to reciprocate in kind, a mutual sharing was assured. In spite of this kind of cooperation, warfare among tribal groups and even among villages was not uncommon. Some crimes and social improprieties were deemed so egregious they could be resolved in no other way. Raiding was also an accepted way to obtain slaves or increase one's status.

Whether raiding or visiting, hunting or fishing, all transportation along the peninsula's coastlines, rivers, and lowland lakes was by carved western redcedar canoe. The technology of canoe manufacture, from felling the giant redcedars to carving or painting the bow designs, was attended by a great deal of ceremony. Cedars were felled using a combination of chopping and controlled burning, then were split and hollowed out with adzes and burning coals.

Most tribal groups are known to have employed at least six sizes of these versatile craft. Small "shovelnose" canoes were popular on inland rivers and along parts of Hood Canal; larger sealing and whaling canoes of the open coast were extremely seaworthy under a variety of conditions, and huge 60-foot seagoing canoes were used for long-distance transport. Canoes were also an important trade item among tribal groups, with most of the larger seagoing canoes originating on the northern coast.

One tree, the western redcedar, formed the foundation of Native American culture on the Northwest coast. Lightweight, decay-resistant, and easily split into boards and huge house planks, redcedar was both

versatile and lasting. Houses, canoes, clothing; baskets, boxes, and cooking containers; masks, headdresses, and rattles; ropes, mats, and spear and arrow shafts; cradles, dolls, and even diapers — all were fashioned from its dark aromatic wood or reddish brown bark. Western redcedar and the salmon that spawned in its shade along the peninsula's rivers and streams were the heart and soul of Northwest culture. Human life here without them — whether in the distant past or the near future — is difficult to imagine.

Indigenous people on the peninsula were masters of woodworking and knew the distinctive qualities and appropriate uses of a wide variety of woods. Hard, resilient yew was best for bows and harpoon shafts; light, straight-grained cedar for boxes and boards. The hardwoods, maple and alder (which wouldn't flavor foods), were used for bowls; tough, flexible spruce root for burden baskets and rope; young Douglas-fir for dip net handles and spears.

Inhabitants of the Olympic Peninsula were incredibly imaginative and resourceful in making good use of the abundant resources that surrounded them. Foods were plentiful nearly everywhere on the peninsula in season, and tools made of wood, shell, and fibers allowed people to harvest and preserve it in quantities. Saltwater fish were taken with hooks and lines, gill nets, and seines; anadromous and freshwater fish with weirs, dip nets, and spears. Shellfish of many varieties were gathered in large numbers from intertidal areas all around the peninsula; surpluses were smoked, dried, and stored. During times of seasonal shortage of other foods, shellfish beds could prove sound village bank accounts. More than 50 species were identified in a single midden in La Push, and records show that large quantities of dried shellfish were sold to white settlers on the peninsula.

All tribal groups on the peninsula hunted land mammals as well as sea mammals. Elk and deer supplied meat, hides, antlers, and bone (land mammal bones are a much harder and denser medium for tools and weapons). For tribal groups that maintained upriver villages, like the Quinault, Quileute, Elwha S'Klallam, and Skokomish, land mammals may have formed an important part of their diet.

Berries were gathered throughout the summer and fall, from early ripening salmonberries along streams to late-blooming blueberries in the mountain meadows. Eaten fresh or dried (often mixed with seal fat),

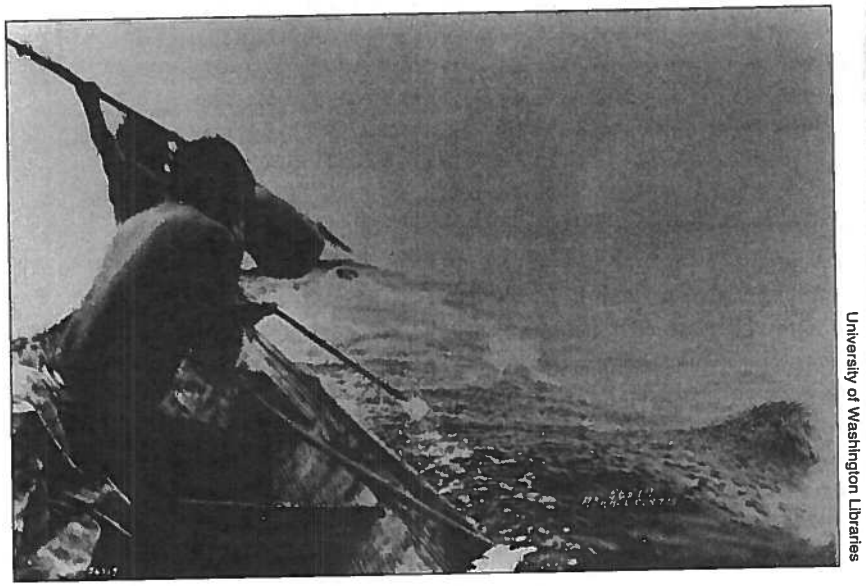
berries, along with bracken fern roots and camas bulbs gathered from open prairies, were among the principal plants used for food. Over 150 plants are known to have been used by Native Americans in western Washington, for foods, medicines, and materials.

Other Peninsula Cultures: The Quileute and the Hoh

South of the Makah villages on the Olympic coast lies the territory of the Quileute and Hoh people. Their traditional territory included the Quillayute River and its tributaries, the Dickey, Sol Duc, Calawah, Sitkum, and Bogachiel, as well as the Hoh River. The Quileute and Hoh are Chemakuan speakers, a language group unique to the Olympic Peninsula. At time of European contact they occupied three principal winter villages at the mouths of the Quillayute River (the site of the present Quileute Reservation at La Push), the Hoh River (site of the present Hoh Reservation), and Goodman Creek, as well as smaller settlements upriver and at other locations. They also maintained some 40 seasonal settlements scattered along the coast and inland river valleys.

For countless generations, Quileute people enjoyed what may have been the most varied way of life on the Peninsula. Though tremendous runs of salmon and steelhead filled the Quillayute and Hoh rivers, Quileutes also excelled at hunting sea mammals, taking seals and whales on occasion. They fished offshore and gathered shellfish, mounted elk hunts up the inland valleys, and gathered bracken fern roots and camas bulbs from Quileute and other prairies. Camas was an important trade item with the Quinault to the south, who traded sockeye salmon in return. Like many tribal groups on the peninsula, the Quileute kept their prairies productive and held back the encroaching forest by burning (today's town of Forks was settled on the Forks Prairie).

Like the Makah to the north and Quinault to the south, the Quileute fashioned highly decorative artwork. Quileute women were known for their watertight cooking baskets and for blankets woven from the hair of "wool dogs" kept for the purpose and from mountain goat wool imported from the mainland. Quileute art also reflected strong ties to the spirit world: to *Kwati*, the Changer, who created the first people from wolves, and to *Hayak*, the Raven who stole back the sun from the pow-



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A native whaler prepares to harpoon a surfacing gray whale. Sealskin floats attached to the harpoon head will drag as the whale tries to dive, eventually exhausting it. (Photo: A. Curtis)

ers of darkness. The spirit world was also celebrated by five secret societies, which initiated participants into the ritual lore of the tribe. Initiates into the "wolf society" gained warrior spirit power; another society harbored fishermen. One small secret society was the exclusive domain of whale hunters; members of the "weathermen society" were said to exercise power over weather and the migrations of whales; and elk hunters followed the dictates of the hunters' society. Only the latter is believed to be entirely Quileute in origin; the other societies had counterparts among the Quinault and Makah. Unfortunately, little remains of the pre-contact religious life of the Quileute. A fire set by a white claimant to tribal land in 1882 destroyed all 26 houses at La Push, along with every tool, mask, basket, and hunting or ceremonial artifact.

Contact came early for the Quileute, and they apparently wanted no part of it. In 1775, the Spanish schooner *Sonora* lost a landing party and its longboat to Quileute warriors, as did the British ship *Imperial Eagle* a dozen years later. Shipwrecked crew members of the Russian-American Company ship *Sviatoi Nikolai* were captured as slaves in 1808, though

most were later ransomed. Quileute warriors had a reputation for fierceness, and they conducted raiding and retribution parties along the coast from Vancouver Island to the mouth of the Columbia. James Island just off La Push, a burial place for Quileute chiefs, also served as a nearly impenetrable fortress while the village was under attack.

Besides the Quileute and the Hoh, the only other members of the Chemakuan language group were the Chemakum people of the Port Townsend area at the northeast corner of the peninsula. Quileute legend tells of a great flood that separated them from the Chemakum. The Chemakum people were a small, isolated band, fending off hostile neighbors on all sides until they were finally destroyed by Chief Seattle's Suquamish in the 1860s. Western civilization gained a firm foothold in Quileute country in 1882 with the establishment of a government school. Treaties were signed with the Quileutes in 1885 and 1886. Today a rebirth of cultural awareness among all the tribes on the peninsula has led to the teaching of native languages and tribal traditions to young tribal members, keeping ancient legacies alive as the last native speakers approach the end of their days.

The Quinault and the Queets

South of the Quileute are the Quinault and Queets people. Like the S'Klallam along the strait, and the Twana of Hood Canal, the Quinault are Salish-speaking people. Salish speakers probably spread south from the Fraser River delta and now inhabit much of Puget Sound and British Columbia's Georgia Strait, as well as the south Olympic Coast. The Quinault lived in five large winter villages near the mouth of the Quinault River; the closely related but less numerous Queets people lived in one or two villages on the nearby Queets River. Both occupied nearly 50 smaller settlements scattered along the two river systems—some a good ways inland of Quinault Lake.

Their territory was particularly productive; the Queets and Quinault rivers supported all five species of Pacific salmon, including large runs of sockeye in Quinault Lake, as well as anadromous steelhead trout. Sockeye were particularly important to the Quinault. They are rich in oil and flavor, and since they do not spawn in large quantities elsewhere

on the peninsula, they were a cherished trade commodity. The numbers of sockeye and other salmon running in the Quinault River system may account for the large number of villages (and the large population) recorded there around the time of contact.

Like Coast Salish people elsewhere in the Northwest, the Quinault maintained numerous fish weirs and traps on their rivers. Each village had at least one weir, a "V" of sticks planted in the riverbed and woven with a mesh of other sticks or a net to trap or concentrate salmon or steelhead on their upstream migration. The fish could then be taken with dip nets or spears. A large run of sockeye that spawn in Quinault Lake in late winter and early spring provided a surplus that was dried for later use as well as traded. Early runs of smelt on the coast were taken for trade; the oil they yielded was highly valued on the peninsula. Halibut, cod, herring, and other ocean fish filled out the Quinault's seasonal fishery.

Like most Northwest Coast people, the Quinault practiced a First Salmon ceremony. Its intent was to honor and give thanks to the salmon, supernatural humans who lived in longhouses beneath the sea. If the salmon people were shown the proper respect and gratitude when they visited a village in salmon form, they would return in great numbers, bequeathing the gift of their flesh to the villagers, thus insuring the people's survival. For a First Salmon ceremony, the first salmon caught by the village headman in late winter or early spring was laid carefully on the river bank, its head pointing upstream. The fish was cut in a prescribed manner, using a mussel shell knife. The salmon's heart was carefully removed and ceremonially burned in a fire; its head, bones, and entrails were kept intact. After it was cooked, pieces of the first salmon were shared with each member of the village, and its bones were carefully returned to the river.

Salmon were central to all Quinault villages, though inland settlements probably also relied on elk, deer, and bear. Upriver Quinault are reported to have dressed in hides, furs, and moccasins and hunted with bows. Log "deadfall" traps were set for bears, and snares were used for smaller animals. Seasonal hunting forays took many coastal people into the high country. Traditions tell of inland skirmishes between Quinault and S'Klallam people who entered the mountains from the north. The notion that prehistoric Native American people avoided the mountains was laid to rest by the Olcott findings of the 1980s and 1990s. Accounts

from tribal elders from around the peninsula indicate that this was just as untrue in recent times. Tribal traditions were once more proven accurate in the summer of 1994 when a low winter snowpack melted back on a high northern ridge to reveal a woven burden basket flattened against the newly exposed ground. Its style matches that of later Northwest Coast culture and it could easily date from the time of contact, indicating that high-country gathering remained a vital part of the seasonal round on the peninsula well into historic times.

The S'Klallam

The historical territory of the S'Klallam people comprised those northern ridges where the basket was found, the forested streams and rivers that drain them, and the 80-mile stretch of bays, points, and shoreline that form the peninsula's northern coast. At the time of European contact, about 1,500 S'Klallam occupied 13 winter villages along the strait from the Hoko River east to Discovery Bay. Small clusters of gable-roofed longhouses lined the shores of protected coves and river mouths. Large settlements were located at the mouths of the Clallam, Elwha, and Dungeness rivers, and at least one permanent village was located up the Elwha, a site now flooded behind Elwha Dam. With salmon spawning in the northern streams and all the Puget Sound runs passing through the strait, the S'Klallam enjoyed a readily available and nearly year-round source of protein. From late winter through spring they trolled and netted Chinook and coho in the strait. Halibut were plentiful in late spring, and sockeye and pink salmon arrived in summer. The S'Klallam shared the use of salmon camps of woven mat huts with their eastern neighbors, the Twana, along Hood Canal as well as with other Salish-speaking groups across the strait. Later in the season, as fall chum and winter steelhead runs headed up their rivers, the S'Klallam rounded out the year fishing their own streams with weirs and spears. Typically, village headmen controlled the first weir on each stream. Great quantities of salmon — as many as several thousand a day at the height of the runs — were dried on racks or smoked and stored.

S'Klallam people netted seabirds and ducks with large nets stretched over sand spits, or hunted waterfowl at night from canoes using long-

handled dip nets. Each village had a deer and elk hunter and a sea mammal hunter. Furs, bones, and antlers were always in demand, and hunters and their families sometimes spent whole seasons in the mountains hunting and then dressing hides. Seals were hunted for meat and oil; whales were taken only occasionally, when one was sighted in the strait. Camas, bracken fern root, and other plant foods were gathered at Sequim, Port Townsend, and other prairies.

Like their coastal neighbors to the west, the S'Klallam were fierce warriors. They warred with the Makah as well as with tribal groups inhabiting Puget Sound. They in turn were raided by northern tribes, and many of their villages were well stockaded. Nonetheless, they frequently intermarried with Makah and Twana people and enjoyed extended social relations with other tribal groups, trading, gambling, and potlatching well up the coast. By the mid-19th century the S'Klallam had expanded their territory to the east, occupying the land formerly held by the Chemakum.

The Twana

Hood Canal, which bounds the eastern shore of the peninsula, was misnamed by cartographers. The "canal" is actually a glacial fjord carved into the base of the mountains. Fed by the rivers pouring off the steep eastern front of the mountains, and regulated by a glacial sill at its mouth, Hood Canal provides a rich marine environment hosting salmon, sea mammals, and exceptionally productive shellfish beds. Before the coming of Europeans, its shorelines, bays, and upland valleys were home for the Twana people.

Some 13 Twana villages have been identified along the shores and river valleys abutting Hood Canal. Villages were located at the mouths of the Dosewallips, Duckabush, and Skokomish rivers, as well as on the shores of Dabob and Quilcene bays and many smaller creek mouths. Most populous among the Twana were the Skokomish people, who lived in five or six villages along the lower Skokomish River and maintained a permanent village on the inland tributary, Vance Creek. The Twana villages along the canal shared a salmon-oriented culture similar to that of their S'Klallam neighbors, with perhaps a greater reliance on

shellfish. Littleneck, butter, and horse clams, cockles, geoducks, mussels, and native oysters were gathered in quantities (Quilcene Bay remains one of the most important oyster-producing areas in the country).

Like the S'Klallam, most Twana villages had land mammal and sea mammal hunters, as well as those specializing in waterfowl. But the Skokomish villagers evolved some unique cultural patterns. The inland villages of the Skokomish were apparently more cohesive and closely allied than those of the coastal Twana. And while they relied heavily on salmon, land mammals were a key part of their local economy. In fall the villages would band together for organized elk hunts in the upper valley of the South Fork Skokomish. The headman of the most highly ranked village led the hunt, assisted by specialists whose spirit power gave them influence over the movements or behavior of elk.

As with other activities that involved the taking of animals, elk hunting was carried out with elaborate ritual and preparation. The Skokomish practiced a First Elk ceremony as well as a First Salmon ceremony. Families of hunters dressed the hides and processed and cured the meat over low fires. The meat was temporarily stored in raised cedar caches and later moved to winter villages. Vital food-procuring and tool-making skills among the Skokomish — as among other tribal groups on the peninsula — were often believed to have come from a spirit power. From an early age, young people were encouraged to make a spirit quest into the forest, to fast and bathe in hope of being visited by a spirit power who would assist and guide them later in life.

Coast people believed in a mythic time when creatures shared both human and animal characteristics. To prepare the world for humans, the Changer transformed many of these creatures into the animals we know today. Some frightful beings were changed into rocks or landforms; others were banished to the mountains or the depths of the ocean. People were given their human shape then, and instructed in the fundamentals of culture. During a spirit quest, a youth or adolescent might be approached by an animal or spirit being and given a song. The seeker might then fall into a trance, enter myth time, and be taken to his or her spirit animal's human village, where the youth would be given special powers. Among the Twana, it wasn't until years later in an individual's life, usually during an illness, that a shaman would recognize the return of a spirit power and assist in a ritual where the spirit song would be

sung, danced, and acknowledged among the village, perhaps to be melded into the cycle of winter ceremonies.

These strong ritualized ties with the world of spirit permeated every aspect of native life. Every skill, every success in hunting, fishing, or gathering was accomplished only with help of guardian spirits. By aligning themselves with the spirit powers that governed the abundance and availability of plants, fish, birds, and other animals, and by following the mores prescribed for taking them for their use, indigenous peoples lived as equals within their larger natural communities. The means of sustaining a human population through times of scarcity and abundance, disturbance and environmental change were woven into the fabric of native cultures over millennia and reinforced through a strict set of beliefs and ritual practices. The fit between these primary cultures and the changing dynamics of the Olympic ecosystem was seamless.

Treaties and Treaty Rights

By the mid-19th century, when Isaac Stevens was appointed governor of the newly created Washington Territory, the fabric of Native American culture had been deeply torn, and remaining populations were ravaged by disease and alcohol. The Donation Land Act of 1850 had allowed settlers to stake claim to Indian lands well in advance of negotiated treaties. The years 1851 and 1852 saw the first registered homestead claims in the Port Townsend and Sequim areas. Gold was discovered in eastern Washington Territory a few years later, and the floodgates opened. Liquidating native land claims to make way for settlers was high on Governor Stevens's agenda, and he accomplished this through a series of hastily drawn treaties. Stevens signed treaties in 1855 and 1856, negotiating with designated "tribes" and appointed "chiefs" in Chinook jargon, a trading medium of limited vocabulary wholly inadequate for complex treaty issues. Nonetheless, Stevens persuaded Native Americans to cede ownership of their lands (a concept foreign to native cultures) in exchange for reservations, certain specified goods and services, and the guarantee that native people would retain the right to hunt and gather on open and unclaimed land and to fish "in all their usual and accustomed grounds and stations" in common with whites. This last part of the agreement proved critical over the next century and a half as tribes challenged a relentless array of state-imposed assaults on their fishing rights.

In 1905 and again in 1908, Northwest tribes won important Supreme Court contests affirming their right to fish in accustomed areas. Nonetheless, by the 1960s, Washington state agents were arresting native fishermen on the grounds that traditional net fishing was "incompatible" with modern fisheries management. Although the tribal portion of the statewide catch amounted to only about 6 percent at the time, natives were blamed for the overfishing that was depleting the runs.

Following a 1964 attempt by Washington state to nullify tribal fishing rights on the Nisqually River, the federal government again stepped in. In a landmark 1974 decision, U.S. District Court Judge George Boldt upheld treaty fishing rights and changed over a century of fisheries management in Washington. Judge Boldt interpreted the 1855 treaties to mean that Indians were entitled to half of the harvestable salmon and steelhead in Washington state. A later decision granted tribes the right to protect the habitats of salmon and steelhead. That decision led to the 1987 Timber, Fish, and Wildlife Agreement, which gives tribes, state agencies, timber companies, and environmental groups an opportunity to work together to find solutions to threats to salmon habitat. The TFW agreement places Native Americans' traditions and ethics once more in the forefront of habitat protection on the peninsula, a role tribal peoples have assumed for hundreds if not thousands of years.

A Cultural Reawakening

Native Americans have been remarkably resilient in maintaining cultural traditions in the midst of profound economic, social, and religious change. Largely through oral traditions, elders have managed to keep tribal identities and values intact despite intensive government effort to "assimilate" native peoples into American culture. This resilience, combined with federal acknowledgement of long-suppressed treaty rights, and the rediscovery of a rich and prideful heritage, has led to a cultural reawakening among Native Americans on the peninsula and throughout the Northwest coast. Programs to preserve native languages and teach them to tribal members, begun as early as the 1960s and 1970s among

the Quileute and Makah, are now well underway among other peninsula tribes. And potlatches and tribal gatherings remain vibrant with traditional songs and dances.

Perhaps the most visible expression of this rebirth of Native American culture on the peninsula has been the resurgence of the redcedar canoe. To commemorate the centennial of Washington's statehood in 1989, 16 Washington tribes took part in a celebratory "Paddle to Seattle." Several tribes carved traditional canoes from redcedar logs for the occasion. At a welcome celebration hosted by the Suquamish Tribe, the paddlers were invited to participate in a much more ambitious international effort, a Paddle to Bella Bella on British Columbia's northern coast.

Four years of planning, carving, and training led up to the event, and in the summer of 1993, six Washington tribes and an international group pointed their cedar canoes north for the 650-mile journey and began singing their paddling songs. The Quinault, Quileute, Makah, and all three S'Klallam tribes mounted traditional canoes, crews, and support boats. The enthusiasm and dedication of the paddlers and the spirit of intertribal cooperation proved infectious. Whole families of supporters, from elders to small children, went along in cars, trucks, and vans. At each stop along the way, paddlers and guests were ceremonially welcomed and hosted by local tribes. Singing, dancing, and feasting filled traditional longhouses along the northern coast as nations celebrated their diversity as well as their common cultural bonds.

Many Native Americans on the peninsula see the Paddle to Bella Bella as a turning point in cultural awareness for tribal members of all ages. Elwha S'Klallam carver and head paddler Al Charles Jr. was 21 at the time of the paddle. "To be able to see our culture and beliefs put into practice on a daily basis really brought the culture alive for young people," he said later. "The farther we paddled toward Bella Bella, the more people came out of their shells, joining in the singing and drumming. By the north end of Vancouver Island, we were singing our tribal songs for crowds of 300 to 400 people as we pulled into the beaches."

For Al Charles Jr. and for tribal members across the peninsula and Puget Sound, the change was lasting. "I hear young people on the reservation just break into a song now, something they'd be afraid to do before the paddle," he told me. "And the experience has put a twinkle back into the eyes of our elders."

10
Protection for Olympic's Wildlands

In 1890, the same year the U.S. census pronounced the American frontier closed, a "rush" of exploration hit the Olympic Mountains. Two of the Olympics' most noteworthy explorers met in July of that year at a forest camp in the Skokomish Valley. Judge James Wickersham was an inveterate explorer and mountaineer who had traveled widely in the Northwest. A year earlier he and a companion explored the upper reaches of the Skokomish Valley; he returned this year with a larger party to pioneer a route north across the mountains to Port Angeles.

Sharing a campfire with Wickersham was Lieutenant Joseph P. O'Neil. Also a seasoned wilderness traveler, O'Neil had led an exploratory expedition into the northern Olympic high country five years earlier, eventually reaching the Dosewallips headwaters and the northern flanks of Mount Anderson. "The travel was difficult," he confessed in his report, "but the adventures, the beauty of the scenery, and the magnificent hunting and fishing amply repaid all hardships." Now he returned with a large party of enlisted men and members of the Oregon Alpine Club, a pack train, and mountains of supplies. They were building trail as they advanced up the Skokomish River, and progress was slow.

Janis Burger

Mount Carrie and the Cat Basin. Though the interior mountains had been traversed by Native Americans for millennia, they were terra incognita *for Euroamericans until the latter part of the 19th century.*

Though members of O'Neil's party would explore sections of the Duckabush and Dosewallips rivers to Hood Canal and descend the East Fork Quinault River to the Pacific that summer, O'Neil's men were not the first to cross the range. A small party led by Melbourne Watkinson is reported to have crossed by a route similar to O'Neil's in 1878, but the glory of "first Olympic crossing" went to a well-publicized expedition sponsored by the *Seattle Press*. Its ragtag members emerged from the rain forests of the Quinault, battered, footsore, and hungry, only weeks before Wickersham and O'Neil's meeting. The Press party had started across the Olympics from the north the previous December, largely in an effort to scoop Wickersham and O'Neil (few were then aware of the Watkinson expedition) and ran headlong into one of the worst Olympic winters on record. The travels and travails of the Press party's ill-timed adventure are delightfully told in Robert L. Wood's *Across the Olympic Mountains*.

No record remains of the conversation that Wickersham and O'Neil shared around the fire that July afternoon. They undoubtedly discussed their previous routes and the nature of the country they had crossed. It's also quite likely that there, as afternoon breezes wafted their smoke through the valley forest, the seed for the creation of Olympic National Park was planted.

By the late 1800s, the wholesale destruction of the virgin pine forests of the Great Lakes states by large timber companies sparked a nationwide movement to protect American forest lands. In 1864, a federal grant allowed the State of California to designate Yosemite as a park. In 1872, President Grant signed the act creating Yellowstone National Park, and by 1885, nearly three quarters of a million acres were set aside as a forest preserve in the Adirondacks in New York. The popular writings of John Muir extolled the majesty of western mountains and forests and demanded government protection for them. In 1891, Congress responded to growing popular sentiment and gave the president power to create forest preserves by proclamation, withdrawing land from the public domain and closing it to homesteading and private speculation. Judge Wickersham knew that Major John Wesley Powell, head of the U.S. Geological Survey, was preparing a list of forest reserve recommendations for the president's signature. Wickersham sent Powell his unpublished report and urged that Olympic be recommended as a national park:

> In all the great commonwealths of Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and Alaska, there is not a national park. The forests are being felled, and destroyed, the game slaughtered, and the very mountains washed away, and the beauties of nature destroyed or fenced for private gain. . . . The heaviest growth in North America lies within the limits of [the Olympic] region, untouched by fire or axe, and far enough from tidewater that its reservation by the government could not possibly cripple private enterprise in the new state, and by all means it should be reserved for future use. The reservation of this area as a national park will thus serve the twofold purpose of a great pleasure ground for the Nation, and a means of securing and protecting the finest forests in America.