

Grabhorn, Laura

From: Wolf Head [wolfhead@wolfheadstudios.com]
Sent: Monday, June 03, 2002 1:34 PM
To: Long House
Cc: Mario Caro
Subject: Final Copy-Eagle Dancer & Raven Paddle

Hello once again-

I wasn't blessed to be a natural born writer...something I really have to work at...I was in a hurry to finish the writting late Saturady so that i could move onto wood carving on Monday. Well I looked over the text on Sunday eve. and noticed that a few sentences needed to be re-worked in order for them to fit into the flow.I promise this will be the last changes I make for now. So if you will... could you please delete all the other emails I sent and use only the info. on this email.

Thanks.

Sincerely,

Frank L. Fulmer

Wolf Head Studios

Raven Guiding the Tlingit Nation

"*Raven Guiding the Tlingit Nation*" was design to honor who we are, "**HAA SHAGOON**" past and future generations and the Creator. The bottom part of the Raven's beak is formed like a canoe with a man representing the Tlingit Nation riding inside the canoe, spiritually being guided by Raven the Creator. The handle for the paddle is also formed to the shape of a canoe.

This concept was in the making over a two-year period. My objective was to achieve a flow to the design using the old style heavy form line used by the earlier Tlingit artists. While at the same time, I was moved by visions I had for a new design and color for the Raven's head and body. The abalone shells used for the Creator's eyes and body represent His spirit that scintillates with flashes of His glory. I hope that I am pushing the envelope into new exciting directions by contributing these new concepts.

The Eagle Dancer

The Tlingit Chookaneidie Clan has called **Sit' Geey** (Glacier Bay) Alaska their home for many **HAA SHUKA** (generations). The Chookaneidie people prospered here because of the abundance of wild life and plants provided by the Creator. The Chookaneidie people were commonly referred to **Sit' Geey** as the **sakwnéin éewu- kákw** (bread basket) because of their respect for life, the Tlingit people gave thanks through prayer for the animals and plants whose lives were given so that the people might live.

The day of great sorrow and sadness came when the chief was forced to lead the **aantkeení** (village people) from their homelands because of advancing **t'éex's** (glaciers) to a place on the outskirts of **Sit' Geey** they called **Hun-yaa-naa** (old village, Hoonah meaning, protected from the west wind). They began to prosper there because of their chief's wisdom.

As winter gave way to early spring the chief and his people packed their canoes and returned back home to "**Sit' Geey**" to setup a temporary spring camp. They worked from early morning to late at night harvesting **tléikw** (berries) and **x'oon dleey** (seal grease) and putting up **x'oon daneit** (seal grease) and **kat'ákw** (berries put up with seal grease) for their winter storage. By the end of spring season they made their way back to **naa** in time for the summer and fall salmon run.

One year a **yeis k'eljáa** (fall wind storm) caused a fire to sweep through the village destroying all the homes in its path along with their food storage. With the **táak** (winter) months approaching and little food left to feed the whole village, the chief began to wonder how the **aantkeení** were going to survive.

As the chief thought and pondered over the dilemma he had a vision where he was walking along the **a-eegayáak** (shoreline near the village). Where he came upon a **ulitoogu kaa ch'aak'** (super natural eagle) perched on a lower branch of a tree looking over the shoreline of the bay. As the chief approached this **L-ulitoogu kaa ch'aak'** spoke to it saying: "*If only I were an **ch'aak'** (bald-headed eagle) ... I would be able to go far and wide to every part of our country to gather enough food to feed my people.*" The chief did not realize that this was an **L ulitoogu kaa ch'aak'** sent by the creator to help feed the village.

The chief was astonished when the **L-ulitoogu kaa ch'aak'** eyes began to scintillate with white flashes of light as it spoke to him saying: "*Don't worry chief, Because of your heart and concerns for your **aantkeení**, I will catch enough food to feed the whole village.*" When the chief awoke from the vision he immediately called the **aantkeení** together to tell them of the good news. As the chief revealed his vision, some of the people wondered if this vision was real... or just wishful dreaming?

The following morning to every ones surprise, they found an abundance of seafo at the *aan x'ayee* (village center). The *L-ulitoogu kaa ch'aak'* brought them *x'o* (seal meat), *xáat* (salmon), *aashát* (steel head) and *x'wáat'* (dolly varden trout). The chief and his people rejoiced as they continued to find food every morning until there was enough food to feed them through the *táakw* (winter) months.

At their first potlatch they gave thanks to the creator and the *L-ulitoogu kaa ch'aak'* saving their lives. The chief introduced a new dance to honor the *L-ulitoogu kaa ch'aak'* calling it "**The Eagle Dancer**". While the chief was performing the dance before *aantkeení* he was transformed into a *ch'aak'* and flew away. To this day he can be seen soaring high in the sky or perched high upon a branch of a tree watching over *aantkeení*.

The photo you see called "*The Eagle Dancer*" shows the chief dressed in his regalia with five abalone shells. While performing he is undergoing a transformation, turning into an eagle. The eagle's tail also serves as an apron that is part of the male performer's regalia.

The story of "*The Eagle Dancer*" is contemporary and takes into account two major tragic events that took place in the history of the Tlingit Chookaneidie Clan. The advancing ice age that forced our people to move from Glacier Bay over two hundred fifty years ago and the fire that destroyed the village of *Hun-yaa-naa* (protected from the west wind) in the 1940's. I felt it important enough to preserve these events by weaving them into the story and the carving of "*The Eagle Dancer*" for the remembrance of who we are..." **HAA SHAGOON** "the generations who have paved the way before me and the generations to follow.

As a child my mother and her parents were one of a few families left to setup a traditional spring camp in Glacier Bay, Alaska before the U.S. Government closed the gates to our homelands by declaring it a National Park and cutting off our hunting to the area. To this day the Tlingit Chookaneidie people carry on the fight against the U.S. Government to gain back our identity "**HAA SHAGOON**" which is one with *Geey* (Glacier Bay) our homeland that rightfully has belonged to us for 9,000 years.

Frank L. Fulmer

G'ooch-Sahyee (Wolf Head)

Wolfheadstudios.com