

Reginald and Louise Dangel

While Reginald was at the Wrangell Institute he met Athabaskans, Aleuts and Eskimos. The different cultures and tribes exchanged some cultural and other ways of life and got to know each others life styles. Reginald was at the Institute for four years.

During World War II the Aleut lifestyle was upset when the Japanese invaded the chain. The Aleuts were evacuated and moved to old abandoned canneries, some that were not even fit to live in. This is how some of the people wound up at the Wrangell Institute.

When the Native first went to school in Ketchikan, they had to go to the BIA schools because the kids did not like the way they were treated at the public schools. Netti Joans took the issue of the discrimination to one of the highest courts in the area and after that the public school could not kick you out of school on a minor incident.

Reginald did not take discrimination too seriously because of the lifestyle (this included most natives).

In Prince Rupert and Southeast Alaska the Natives had to sit on the left side of the theatre and that was the only place that they could sit. If you tried to sit elsewhere the usher would try to move you, and if you didn't move you would have to leave.

While in the military you could not talk to your mother and sister in the streets while you were in uniform. You could only talk to them at home.

In Juneau they had white trade only and some signs that said "No Indians or dogs allowed."

The Natives didn't think anything about it, if someone didn't want to take their money, then they would go somewhere where someone would take their money.

The true born Alaska white people were not a problem during this time.

When Reginald was a child he was taught how to survive in the environment early. If he wanted to eat, he had to go get his food and if he didn't then he went hungry.

Louise stated that while she was growing up the people would move to areas in the summer time where they would make money. In the Fall they would go to fishing areas

to put up salmon for winter. Lousie stated that nowadays it is rare to see that.

Tsimshians wre seagoing people. The canoes that they used were 50-60 feet long. There are many adawaks on the expeditions that were made through the Chilkat country. The canoes and paddles were made from red cedar trees and the Tsimshian obtained most of their canoes from the Haidas on the Queen Charlotte Islands. The Tsimshians knew how to make the canoes, but the Haidas were the experts. The Canoes were different for certain purposes: hunting, fishing and trading. They were used from the Columbia River all the way to Kodiak. All of the canoes had designs on the front for certain things and had crests on them so they could be identified. The canoe was the main thing for the Tsimshian, Tlingit and Haida.

Reginald belongs to the Wolf clan. The Wolf clan originated from the Stkine area and later settle on the Nass River. The Wolf clan used to be Tlingit but adpoted the ways of the Tsimshians from the Nass River.

Louise belongs to the Beaver clan. There are four clans in the Nisgha nation: Laxgibuu Wolf, Laxsgiik Eagle, Gisga Killer Whale, and ganada Raven.

The nature of the Tribal House is recognized by an association of two crests. Each house may have several lesser crests in their possessions. A crest without a myth or legends (adawaks) to explain it's origins and connections with it's owners is an impossibility. The crests were a sign of right like a deed used in property ownership.

Traditionally large matrilineals often occupied more than one house. These blood relatives maintained their own crests, dances, ceremonial privileges, legends, songs, house names, personal names, spirit names, fishing, hunting and gathering territories.

Matrilineas is named after it's highest ranking Chief who has control over possessions. Children inherit the crests songs, dances, names, territories, ceremonial paraphernalia. All members of this house were regarded as brothers and sisters. A child did not inherit everything of it's tribe or clan.

the Chief was responsible for his clan character's and distribution of products of paint. Their positions are hereditary and owners of wealth. They must be will born, many personality traits were necessary: able leader, eloquent speaker, generous, congenial to his people, a good example in conduct and good taste, command wealth and distribute it to benefit his people. He relies on his people

for cooperation and good will. He had to be a Nisgha in the full sense of the culture.

Women's status - The Women received hereditary dancing powers belonging of their clan. Women of the chief's class took the Chief's names until a male heir is qualified. They are and were very well respected. They have the final work in their clan house.

The totem pole is a crest symbol for a clan house. It is their oral history. Prior to this they used to have house fronts. The crests were painted on to these walls. The totem pole will tell who is there, why they are there, and if you are that same crest then you are welcome to that house.

The Nisgha Tsimshians always had traditions that go way back. Each clan has a special place where they go. With the Land Settlement the Tsimshian Nisgha people think the other people settled too quick on the land because money talks.

Senator Nick Begich came and met with the Tsimshian people and they explained the documents they have in Washington about Chief Mountain having a land treaty with the United States in Portland Canal. When they laid the first boundary in Alaska between Alaska and Canada, the treaty said that the Tsimshian occupied the western shore of the Portland Canal. Begich had all the material to present to the land committee, but when he left his plane crashed and it was never found. That halted the land claims of the people in the Portland Canal area.

Reginald ended the class by relating the story that his grandfather, Robert Stuart, told about how the Wolf clan migrated down the Stikine River.