

Klukwan's New Community Hall to Allow Tlingit Culture Sharing

The Southeastern village of Klukwan has begun work on construction of a tribal house-community hall building which will allow them to share their Tlingit culture with tourists and visitors to the community.

Operation Mainstream will pay wages for workmen constructing the building, but the community will provide its own materials.

Operation Mainstream, sponsored by RurALCAP, is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Work Training Programs.

Mrs. Mary Gange, director of Operation Mainstream in Alaska, said the Klukwan building is intended to provide a market place for Native arts and crafts, such as totems, silver work and skin

sewing products.

It will be a center for Indian dances, sale of Indian crafts and for community cultural activities such as story-telling and traditional festivities.

Klukwan is located at Mile 22 on the Haines Cutoff Road at northern terminus of the Alaska State Ferry System and thus is open to many tourists. The hall will be a 40 by 26 foot log building.

Workmen have already begun work on clearing, leveling, and spreading gravel for an approximate 100 by 100 square foot lot for the building.

The lot, which allows space for a parking area, was donated to the village by Clarence Hotch. Workmen have also hauled building materials onto the site.

Mrs. Dorothy Fossman, superintendent for the project in Klukwan, said the lot improvement was made possible because of the assistance of the Department of Highways, which provided a caterpillar for work on the lot.

Victor Hotch was named by the village to serve as foreman of the project. The teaching of basic carpentry skills, under the

supervision of experienced village carpenters, will be one of the main objectives, Mrs. Gange said.

She said many of the skills learned by workmen may be carried over in repairing their own homes and may eventually give the men enough basic knowledge and experience to obtain employment when opportunities arise.

In addition to the community hall project, Operation Mainstream will pay wages for workmen to install a chlorinator—supplied by the Public Health Service—for the water supply in Klukwan.

Mrs. Gange said leaky connections in the old system have created a serious contamination problem.