

# Frank and Emma Williams featured in 'Tongass Texts' bilingual book

Frank and Emma Williams of Ketchikan are perhaps half of all the living speakers of the Tongass dialect of Tlingit. They've recorded for posterity their language and their knowledge of old Tlingit ways, in a book just published by the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska.

Tongass, a southern Tlingit dialect, still uses the ancient ways of pronouncing words and so it sheds light on the history of the Tlingit language, and the

Tlingit people.

"Tongass Texts" contains two traditional stories—one about a war with the Tsimshians and one a moral tale about the misfortunes of a lazy woman—and three long accounts of Tlingit beliefs, folk medicine, and traditional food. The war story was told by 88 year old Frank Williams, and the others by Emma, who is 82.

The book is bilingual, with Tlingit on one page and the

English translation facing it

For most of their 63 married years, Frank and Emma have lived in the same house in Ketchikan, where they raised two daughters who gave them nine grandchildren. Frank grew up in Metlakatla, and is a speaker of Tsimshian as well as Tlingit. He has owned three fishing boats during his long career as a fisherman, and occasional guide.

If you'd like to order a copy of the book, "Tongass Texts," send \$4.50 to the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska, Fairbanks Alaska 99701