

BOOK REVIEW

By WALLY OLSON

Indian Fishing: Early Methods on the Northwest Coast by Hilary Stewart; University of Washington Press, 1977

Hilary Stewart has done it again! A few years back, she put out an excellent study of Northwest Coast archaeology entitled *Artifacts of the Northwest Coast Indians*. Her latest book is a classic, but in the same style as the earlier one. She begins by describing the importance of ifhsing on the Coast, and then goes into each one of the techniques used — hook and line, nets, harpoons, traps. Another chapter describes the different means of preparing and preserving the catch. What makes this book so useful is the fact that it was well researched.

Each sketch — and there are hundreds of them — is based on an actual item in a museum collection or on old photographs and Indian descriptions. Under each sketch is a small code number which enables the reader to tell exactly where the item came from and its size. The drawings are so exact, so clear, yet so simple, that nearly anyone could learn how to make some of these things just from the illustrations.

Besides the excellent art work, the text is beautiful. Whenever there was a question of something was made or done, she went out and made the item or watched the Indians doing the same thing today. She has a feel for the importance of fishing as a way of life. The final chapter is on the spiritual aspects of fishing and food from the sea.

I would highly recommend this book to any library — adult, high school or primary school — as an example of what can be done in capturing something of our heritage in Alaska. There is no doubt in my mind that anyone who takes the time to go through this book carefully will come away with a great respect for the skill and knowledge it took to be successful fishermen. Most of all, the reader will come away with a respect for the Indians as people who lived from the sea. My own personal comment? Its's fantastic!!

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