

# TV program features Rock, Chief Katlian

KOTZEBUE — Alaskans will learn more about two prominent Alaska Native historical figures this year in a documentary recently released to high schools and selected television stations statewide.

"Howard Rock and Chief Katlian lived in different centuries and in different regions of Alaska," said program host Nellie Ward Moore. "But they both were leaders in defending their people's right to the land."

This new television program, "Portraits in Leadership: Chief Katlian and Howard Rock," features two historically significant Alaska Natives.

Chief Katlian, a Tlingit Indian, led the last major battle against the Russians in 1804 in Sitka, where today the battleground is a National Historical Park.

Howard Rock, an Inupiaq Eskimo from Point Hope in Northwest Alaska, founded the *Tundra Times* newspaper in 1962 and was its publisher until his death in 1976. Rock was one of this century's most influential Alaska Native leaders.

As the program opens, however, viewers learn that although history books tell a lot about Alaska's famous pioneers, gold miners and fierce, rugged individuals, they do not reveal much about the contributions of Alaska Natives to the 49th state's history.

"We all are familiar with the Indian wars that were fought in the Lower 48, but few people are aware of the battle between the Tlingits and Russians on Alaska soil," said Susan Andrews, who wrote and produced the half-hour program as director of the Center for Alaska Native Studies, a division of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District in Kotzebue.



photo by Lail Morgan

Part two of the new documentary profiles Howard Rock, the Inupiaq Eskimo who founded and edited the *Tundra Times* from 1962 to 1976.

"Even much of Howard Rock's extraordinary life is not widely known," Andrews said. "We hope this documentary helps Alaskans learn more about these important leaders." In Chief Katlian's time, Natives

defended their land with physical resistance. In this century, Natives battled for their land claims in the court system and the U.S. Congress. *Tundra Times*, Rock's statewide newspaper, helped unify Alaska Native peoples and influenced Congress to resolve Natives' long-standing

Network.

"Portraits of Leadership: Chief Katlian and Howard Rock" was funded through a legislative grant administered by the Alaska Department of Education.



photo by Susan B. Andrews

Production assistant Jace Frankson prepares to create a snowy effect, while videographer Dan Housberg focuses and Leon Kinneveauk records sound.

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—Susan Andrews

claim to their lands in Alaska. The result was the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, which granted Natives title to some 44 million acres of land and nearly \$1 billion for lands lost.

"Howard Rock's story tells itself," Andrews said. "Undoubtedly, he is one of the most fascinating and inspiring people in Alaska history. I believe we can all learn a lot from his example."

Besides distributing the program to high schools and public television stations, the program is also scheduled to run on the Rural Alaska Television



photo courtesy Shur Collection, UAF Rasmuson Library

Chief Katlian mounted an impressive resistance to the Russian invasion in Sitka in 1804, the last major battle against the invaders. But the Russians bombarded the Tlingits with cannon-fire and ultimately won the battle.