

Only 2,000 Now Speak Tlingit— Hoonah Indian Lady Instructing Tlingit Culture, Language at AMU

About 400 years ago a glacier moved down a valley in South-eastern Alaska forcing the resident Tlingit clan to find a new home.

The clan made a song about the migration following the coming of the ice. As is the custom of the Tlingits, the song belonged to the clan and only members of the clan were permitted to sing it. As is also their custom, the song was passed from one generation to the next.

Today only one person knows the song and is permitted to sing it.

Such are the tenuous threads linking the present with the cultural treasures of the Tlingit past.

Perhaps the most important link with the past is the Tlingit language. Without the language all the songs, stories and rituals would be dead.

Nora Florendo remembers that when she was a girl, and in fact, until about 25 years ago, nearly all Tlingits spoke Tlingit. Today they nearly all speak English and fewer than 2,000 of them speak Tlingit.

Mrs. Florendo, who originally came from Hoonah about 50 miles southwest of Juneau, is one of several Tlingits campaigning to renew interest in their language and culture. She is currently teaching a ten-week course in Tlingit conversation and grammar at Alaska Methodist University.

She is leading her 12 students, six of whom are Tlingits, toward three goals: a limited skill at conversation, an awareness of the grammar and a familiarity with the culture.

Since there is no written grammar for Tlingit, except articles written on a technical level for linguists, the grammatical part of the course is particularly difficult.

Linguist Richard Dauenhauer, AMU assistant professor of English and comparative literature, is taking the course and also helping overcome this problem.

They hope the notes they compile throughout the course will provide the basis for a popular written grammar and Mrs. Florendo is receiving credit in a directed study course for her work in developing a grammar.

Grammar is not the only major difficulty facing the student of Tlingit, however.

"Because of the unique sounds used in Tlingit, some of its words

are among the most difficult in the world to learn to pronounce," Dauenhauer said recently while discussing progress made in the first few class meetings.

A third major difficulty is spelling. Seven systems for writing Tlingit have been used at various times, including one which utilized the Russian alphabet, and even within the system used today there are many dialect differences.

Both Dauenhauer and Mrs. Florendo work with a sense of urgency to overcome these and all other difficulties. "Other Indian languages of Alaska are nearly extinct.

There is no hope for most of them. But there are still enough Tlingit speakers that with intensive support from schools it is possible to save the language," Dauenhauer said.

Eyak, one of the Indian languages related to Tlingit, is spoken by only three people, he explained, and another, Haida, by only about 200 people in Alaska and, except for a few villages, the Athapaskan languages of Alaska will become extinct during the current generation.

Mrs. Florendo feels her people have a psychological need for



NORA FLORENDO

their language and culture. It is her dream to train other teachers who will help spread a renewed interest in the Tlingit heritage throughout the 14,000 member Tlingit nation.

She is especially interested in training women to teach Tlingit in their community schools and in developing a uniform system of writing to assist them.

JOHN B. COGHILL

UNION OIL DISTRIBUTOR

for Tanana and Yukon River Villages
also in the Nenana, Clear, Healy areas

P.O. BOX 268, NENANA, ALASKA



SAVOY BAR

423 2nd

OWNER: CURLY LEVI

MANAGER: TOMMY FULLER

Delightfully Unique !



- Clean
- Economical
- an Alaskan Industry

DID YOU KNOW

You can burn coal for
half the cost of any other fuel?

**USIBELLI
COAL MINE, INC.**

Office
270 Illinois St.

Dial 456-5005

Alaska
Railroad Area

Kellogg to Promote Authentic Indian Customs and Traditions

Authentic Indian tradition and information will be part of a new promotional program by the Kellogg Company on their package panels and inserts.

According to the company, Kellogg believed Indian food use and customs are representative of the type of their product Sugar Smacks. So, in coming months, Kellogg's Sugar Smacks will carry portraits and bi-

ographical information of famous chiefs on their package backs.

Later, 3-D cards with color scenes and descriptive stories will be included as package inserts.

Other Kellogg Indian ads will include T.V. commercials employing actual Indians reenacting Indian lore.

Alaska Business Directory

PERKINS MUSIC

Guitar, Violin, Banjo
Sales & Repairs
Bows re-haired. Cases,
Strings and Accessories
in stock.

Special Orders Invited.
Mail Orders Processed in 24
hours.

P.O. Box 339 3535 Shanley St.
College, Ak. 99701 479-6351

House of Fabrics

Fabrics for all your
sewing needs

406 Barnette, Fairbanks, Alaska

Sachs MEN'S SHOP

108 Cushman...456-4017

AURORA BARBER SHOP

Alberta Grant - Manager
Jim Holden - Assistant
524 2nd Ave. 456-7071

1000 GOLD STRIPE LABELS \$1
FREE GIFT BOX!
1000 Deluxe Gold Stripe
2-color, gummed, padded
Labels printed with ANY
Name, Address & Zip
Code.
A. V. CO.
Box 525 Fairbanks,

CO-OP Drug & Photo

"ALASKA'S LARGEST"
Prompt Mail Order
SERVICE & PHOTOFINISHING
• Prescriptions
• Photo Supplies
• Cosmetics
• Sundry Items
P. O. Box 1390 Fairbanks

DONALSON COMPANY PO Box 845 Anchorage, Alaska

Phone 279-3025

Fairbanks Lumber Supply
"Where One Call
Supplies It All"
Box 629 - 272 Illinois St.
Garden Isle, Fairbanks
452-2183



High Style . . .
at Low Cost . . .

Completely correlated furnishings
for all your office needs

Fairbanks Office Supply

P.O. Box 2552, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

SUPPLIES

We have the largest inventory and variety
of office supplies in Alaska

PROMPT MAIL ORDER SERVICE
TO INTERIOR ALASKA

Write for Free Catalog

All Cash and COD Mail
Orders Sent
Freight or Postage FREE!

All mail orders will be sent COD unless
an account has been established.

DEAN'S BEAUTY LOUNGE

Room 107
Co-op Balcony
452-2060



**Tundra Times
Brings YOU
THE News**

Achman ELECTRIC

1700 Willow Street
Fairbanks, Alaska
452-3629

A-1 RECORD SHOP
Foodland Shopping Mall

MAIL ORDERS OUR SPECIALTY

P.O. Box 1313
Telephone 452-3335

Alaska National Bank
of Fairbanks
Complete Banking Service
Branches at University
Nenana - Airport Road
Eielson - Delta - Tok
Main Office - Northward Bldg.

Jean's Fabric Shop

1st & Cushman
Fairbanks, Alaska

Yukon Office Supply, Inc.

Sales - Service - Rentals
511 Gaffney Rd., Fairbanks
Phone - 452-1148

Bill Soon . . .

(Continued from page 1)

of land rights of natives on state selected lands since early in the present legislative session. The question has been how these things relate to possible native claims settlements in Congress.

It may very well be, said the Attorney General, that enabling legislation will be necessary to solve this problem and assure these villages their property and land claims rights.

Meanwhile, in Washington D.C. at least one prominent NCIO executive who has been actively involved in the land claims fight and the advocacy of Alaskan Natives reports he is very pleased with the forthcoming administration position.

Sources believe that a meeting two weeks ago between Alaskan Native leaders, Vice President, Agnew, Secretary of the Interior, Rogers Morton and other high administration officials contributed greatly to the present administration position.