

DR. ERNA GUNTHER

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If this were Japan, an individual of her significance would have the status of a National Treasure. To many of us, this is exactly our feeling for the pioneering anthropologist who was a friend of many museums.

Dr. Erna Gunther, who died recently, achieved an enviable reputation internationally as an anthropologist and author, but she continued her concern for the problems of small museums, talking with volunteers and staff, and presenting her popular lectures, which have given countless people insight into the artistic values of Native American carvings, basketry, weaving, music, dance and legend. To those of us who were Erna's students, museum interns, lecture or television audiences, or readers of her informative books, we have lost a person who influenced our lives profoundly.

Erna Gunther (1896–1982) graduated in 1919 as a student of Franz Boas, and received her MA in anthropology from Columbia University in 1920, studying under famed anthropologist Franz Boas. After graduating she moved with her husband, Leslie Spier, to the University of Washington in 1921. After leaving for a short period of time with her husband she returned in 1929.[3] When her husband left in 1930 she stayed at the University; at that time the marriage dissolved.

She formed part of the core of the newly formed anthropology program at the University of Washington in the 1920s, along with Spier and Melville Jacobs. In 1930 the Washington State Museum named her Director. As head of the University's anthropology department. she built the faculty from two residents in 1930 to ten in 1955. In 1966 she moved to the University of Alaska Fairbanks, becoming chair in 1967.

An American Indian specialist, her research focused on the Salish and Makah peoples of western Washington State, with publications on ethnobotany, ethnohistory, and general ethnology.

Her students included anthropologists Wayne Suttles, Dale Croes and Wilson Duff.

In 1949 she helped finance the archaeological investigation run by Charles E. Borden at Walen's farm (DfRs-3) on Boundary Bay.

Gunther: It's very hard to decide what to tell a group of people in a very brief time, but I thought you might be interested in knowing something about the whole Northwest coast and I didn't know what single thing to talk about so I decided to talk about the whole Northwest coast, and give you some ideas of the relationship between the Indian tribes as they live along the coast.

Now the area that we call the Northwest coast is from the mouth of the Columbia River to southeastern Alaska. There are some people who include the coast of Oregon and the northwestern part of California, but my feeling is that while those people do resemble the ones on the northwest coast, they resemble the people to the south a good deal more and it's so simple to say the mouth of the Columbia River than to pick any other kind of a spot on the Pacific Coast map.

In this region, we have three sub-territories: We have the area from the Columbia River up to the neighborhood of Deltan on Vancouver Island which is south of Nenimo and north of Victoria. These are the people that have a relatively simple form of northwest coast life. Then, from the central part part of Vancouver Island going north as far as the _____, again is one large area where we have a great deal of similarity. In the north we have three very famous people, the Toochian, who live on the Skeena River in British Columbia, the Highda who live on the Queen _____'s Islands, and then the Clinket, who live in southeast Alaska.

Those are the three divisions where we find some very, very interesting likenesses and some great differences. One of the likenesses that you have is a very interesting one, that you have the same kind of an eye following you everywhere, the shape of the eye in northwest coast is a very interesting feature. It has been studied by many people and a great deal has been written of it, but it has a feature which is very telling and which is very exact.

Now, in these three areas, we have three different types of representation. Each of these people have some outstanding feature and the simpler ones in the southern part of the region have a great deal of fear and respect for the medicine man. The medicine man is an extremely important individual and he controls the village even though he doesn't have any position in the village, but he does control the village very much and he has such importance because he has a commune with the great spirit that are the spirits of their religious beliefs.

These spirits are very interesting, they are quite human, they travel, they go around the world all the time. The world according to them, is flat and it's round, it's like a saucer and they travel around the edge and in the winter, from about the first of December, to about the middle of February, these spirits are with people and the rest of the year, they're gone.

These spirits, we sometimes refer to as their guardian spirits, because everybody has a guardian spirit. Young children, little boys, when they are about five or six years old, go into their first training to see their spirit and grandfather always does this.

One of the very interesting features that you get in many forms of American Indian life is the tremendous importance, in the family, of the Grandfather. The Grandfather is the man who undertakes the responsibility of teaching the boys. The father has very little to do with it. He fishes and has a lot to do, getting enough food for them, and so the grandfather is the one who takes over the young boys and trains them to go into their guardian spirit quest.

Now, he does it this way: he will talk to the children about the spirits, what they are like and so forth, and then he sends them out to go and find some thing that he has put in a place that he tells them approximately where it might be and bring back. Now, while they are going and searching for this thing, they may not eat, they may not drink and they may not sleep. They bring it back and this becomes an annual affair. They do it year after year and whatever they have to find is always further away than it was the year before. Now, this is the kind of training that they will go through until they are about 14 to 16 years old.

Then they go on the spirit quest itself. They must clean themselves perfectly, inside and out, before they dare approach the spirit. The spirits usually live below a lake, below a part of the river and the boy has to dive down to reach the spirit. A great many times, if he feels the spirit is going to be very far down, he will take a rock in his hands and he dives down so that the rock will carry him further down than his own weight would. Then the rock drops on the roof of the house of the spirit, the spirit's slave comes out and asks who's there and he looks the boy over to see whether he is thoroughly clean and if he isn't, he's sent away. If he is, he's brought in and presented to the spirit and the spirit will talk to him and tell him what kind of a pure life he should lead, how he should behave himself.

Then he will show him the kind of dance that he should do in the winter ceremonies and the kind of a costume he should wear and all the time the boy hears singing and he hears the song that he is going to use himself when he comes back after this experience.

Now, after this experience the family will find him somewhere, maybe near the lake or in the woods and he's in a trance. They carry him home and then they lay him down by the fire and he gradually recovers from this experience and nobody ever asks him whether he saw a spirit or not, this is his own business. He may go again the next year if he didn't see one and he may keep on going until he sees one but usually they have success very soon. Then every winter when the spirits come to this part of the world, they have their dances. The dances are usually from about the first of December until the middle of February.

They honor these spirits very much and yet on the other hand, they also feel that they can tell them something and along in the beginning of February, they always have dances in which they tell the spirits now you've been with us long enough, you better start going home.

In English they have a very interesting name for this period. It's called "Clean Up." The first time a Skagit Indian said to me, he said, "Are you going to come to "Clean Up", and I said, "What do you mean?" And he told me what it was. I said, "Yes, I'm coming to Clean Up," and I did. Everybody dances, you see during the time that they have this spirit dances, one man might dance all night. He has so much to give from his spirit, maybe there will only be two or three, but when Clean Up begins, everybody dances and they actually sing them home, we're through with you for this year and they always say, too, we're glad you came.

They have to keep the relationship there, it's a very close thing, very intimate and it is a very powerful thing and I think you'd be very much surprised to know that a great many of the Indians who are today taking part in our modern society, still do this. You can go to almost any Indian village in the southern part of Vancouver Island or the northern part of Washington during this period in December and January and at least on the weekends, you would hear the drums going, and you know that they are having one of their spirit dances.

Now, this idea of a relationship with a guardian spirit is very strong in this region. When you go a little bit further north, you still have the relationship but it goes for a different way. For instance, the Nootka, the people that live on the west coast of Vancouver Island, and they are the great whale fishermen on the coast here. They are very important people and very interesting people. They don't have a group of spirits, as they do here, but they have their Wolf Festival, and the Wolf is their special spirit and they train for this and their dances are directed toward the Wolf and the Wolf ritual is something that lasts about six weeks, just very similar to the spirit dances, and it is done with masks which are not used in the south and this is the beginning of the ceremonial character, rather than the individual character that you have in the southern part of the area and the masks which are made for the Wolf ritual are very ancient.

For instance, in the British Museum in London, they have a wolf mask from Nootka that was collected by Captain Hook in 1778 and it looks exactly like the masks that are used still at the present time. It's a beautiful piece of carving. We have been aware that the Nootka did very fine carving. They don't any more today, but I was not surprised when I found this mask in the British Museum and the character of the carving. We have this now, absolutely nailed down by the amount of archaeological work work that is being done at Ozek. I don't know whether any of you are aware of the

tremendous archaeological dig that Washington State University has going at the place where the old village was at Ozek.

Now we call that our American Pompeii. The village was destroyed by a landslide and they had two landslides and so many of the things were not damaged and the carving that these people did was so much more beautiful than anything that many of the Nootka people have done since then, and their carving was once very much finer than it is today. However, we find the same kind of eye in that wolf. We find the same kind of feature there that you see in modern times. The fact that northwest coast art has such a great history and is over such a tremendous area of cultural sequences, it is important to factor in our study of the people in this region.

Now, when you go beyond the Nootka, we have another extremely important group in the central part of the Northwest coast and those are the Quamkule. If you know this word, you may not recognize its pronunciation. It's spelled Kwakiutl. There is a tremendous amount written about these people. Professor (Frank) Boas, from Columbia University, started going out to the Kwakiutl in the 1890's and from that time on until he died in 1942 he worked on the language. He worked on the culture, he did a tremendous amount of recording.

I have recently had experience in doing some translation of a book that was written on 1881 to 1883. The continuity that we get not only among the people who have worked constantly with our northwest coast area in one way or another and the people who have given the information. They all link together and I tell you, one of the most interesting things you can go to is a meeting of a group like that because we really have tremendous conferences and we've having one at Burnaby at Simon _____ University in May of this year.

I have the terrible job of being the leader of one of the discussion groups because we don't quite get the hair pulling, but almost. Insisting that you let somebody speak as long as he wants to and not interrupt him is hard but we do have terrific arguments on, in the first place there is one great thing that we have not decided on yet, and that is where did the people on the northwest coast come from. Not where they started from but how did they get here and why did they stop here and what did they bring with them when they came. These are the things that we don't know.

I'm just working on a paper on the Klinket of southeastern Alaska and I have just read again all the information that I can find about where did the Klinket come from. We are all in agreement. There is nobody who disagrees with the fact that the Indians of America came from Asia. There isn't any doubt about that. They couldn't have come from any place else, but when

did they come and how did they spread in America. Those are very, very important questions.

We find, for instance, languages that are spoken, various dialects of the language spoken from the Yukon down to the Mexican border. We have very little of it in this particular area right here. This is a very interesting feature. We feel that none of these people wander down the coast. They all went into the interior and then they came out again because nobody can really go down this coast.

The kind of water craft that people had, maybe 30,000 or 40,000 years ago would not permit them to come down this coast. It would be impossible and they moved into the interior because it seems from the kind of culture that they brought, that they were interior people and they became coastal people after they settled in various places on the northwest coast. Many of the people that went diagonally across the continent, they stayed there.

We have three great languages that are spoken by American Indians. The one that I just mentioned, that is spoken sporadically all the way from Alaska to Mexico is Athabaskan. The people on the Yukon speak that language, the Navajo speak that language, the Apache speak that language. There are people in California, the _____, we are just talking about them, they speak a Athabaskan language. It's sporadic but it continues all the way and the people who probably came first wandered very far inland and wandered diagonally and they are the people who speak Algonkian.

Another group of people that wandered in and didn't go as far east in their diagonal progress was Sharpa, those are the Buskogians, the people who live in the middle part of this country.

Finally the Athabaskans, who came in probably last. What they brought with them from Asia, we don't know. There is one thing, when they came into America and they had no idea that they were doing any more than just wandering along in the same kind of country in which they had been. There was no difference between the Asiatic coast and the coast of America. In many instances, they may have come in when this was absolutely dry land. You see we once had a great area between Asia and America that we refer to as the platform. The water was very low, still today. The water in the Bering Strait is very shallow and you still can't come into Nome with a boat of any size, you've got to _____ everything in and the boat stays out in the harbor.

I think, we always talk about the great Pacific, well, there are places where the Pacific is extremely deep, but in this particular place, Bering Sea, which is an arm of the Pacific, you have very shallow water and we have from

Couteotolgy we know that there are shelves of animal forms that one lived only in the Pacific and then they moved into the Atlantic and they had to get there in water. They must have gone along the Arctic coast when the Arctic coast was a nice warm area. The excitement of the study of this sort of material is such that the people that do it are very firm in their ideas and imagine, the arguments we can possible have on this because all of it has to be just straight argument, you have nothing to prove. It's a wonderful thing, I think it's as much fun as probably some of the great tournaments that the knights used to have. Our spears are verbal.

This shows you the basis of this likeness that we get in this great area and then in the north. Something else comes in which we haven't had before and now that is a type of social organization, the organization of the village and of the family and the type of inheritance of the family. You have the clan and when people marry, they may not marry within the clan. They have to marry outside of the clan and then the inheritance is through the mother and not the father. The person who raised the young men in the family are the mother's brothers and not a father. The father raised the children of another family, you see, and this is a very, very complicated trait.

Social organization is something that most anthropologists jest about because it's a Chinese puzzle and it is really a very governing thing. One thing on the whole northwest coast, though with everybody was wealth. They all wanted wealth. We have a book written by Paul Raden on American Indians which is not very good as a whole, but it has one chapter heading which is superb and that is the one from the northwest coast and he calls them the capitalists of America and they really were. You've all heard about the potlatch, well, the potlatch is part of that. When you see a man, you see the early missionaries and teachers and so on that came out to the coast here. All they saw in this potlatch was a man giving away everything he had. He wasn't giving it away, he was lending it out and you had to take it whether you wanted it or not. He would give to somebody, say 100 blankets. A blanket was a unit. They were cotton blankets. they were never used. They were stacked up if you had this kind of a bank, you might take your money and stack up bills.

Well, the blankets were stacked up in the same way. They were cotton blankets and they were worth \$1.00, after the Europeans came here. They were given away but they were given away at interest that no bank in the United States would dare to ask such interest on a loan. These were like loans and when a man gave somebody 100 blankets, the interest on these blankets was never less than 50%.

Among the _____ where this was really carried to an extreme, the interest would be 100%. In other words if you got 100 blankets then you get 200 blankets back. You can see a great many of the people with the Hudson Bay Company was Scottish and when they saw a man standing there and giving the very last thing away that he had, it hurt them, it really hurt them and they would go away and shake their heads and say, these Indians are crazy. As a matter of fact, that was a great big piece of business, and this you find, this giving away things is something which is not peculiar to the northwest coast. You get it in the Plains, also.

In the Plains, however, it was usually associated with the death of an individual. When a man dies, his wife gives away everything he has. I was on the Colville Reservation when one of the very important people there died and his wife gave everything away that she had, her kitchen stove and everything in the house, she gave away. Somebody said, well, what is she going to do?

_____ River in Washington and he was a medicine man and there were the representations of his two spirits that he depended upon. Now, if you'll have the next picture, there is the other side of the same boards. When he went to the land of the dead to rescue a soul, which some medicine men would do, they would go, maybe four of them, would go together and they would set these in the floor in the shape of a canoe. Then each man would stand by his spirit board and they would paddle and go to the land of the dead, just as they had the river Styx. When they got to the river, if the spirit had not yet eaten with the dead, he could be rescued. If they rescued him they would bring him back and the soul is a replica of a person that's about this tall, three inches high, and he rescues it, he puts it in cupped hands like this and he brings it back.

When he gets back to the patient, they can come back much faster than they go out. It sometimes takes them three or four nights to get out to the land of the dead, but they can come back very quickly, and they come back and put this on his head and then they rub the soul into him again and he recovers. In order to keep their reputation, they've got to watch this whole situation very carefully to see if somebody is in a trance and he was coming out of it. If he's eaten with the dead, he's gone, they can't rescue him, but they use these boards for this journey to the land of the dead.

Next please. In the Southern area here and all the way up the coast to about the middle of Vancouver Island, you have the use of mountain goat wool for the weaving of blankets and the women weave the blankets and they weave them on a loom which goes through these square, oblong holes there. It's a roller loom and they move it as they weave on it and then when they are through, they pull the broom string and it comes out into a flat

piece. This is a pair of loom holders that a man will make for his wife. These are very beautiful ones and they were made near Duncan on Vancouver Island. They are in the museum up in Victoria. I borrowed these, a great many of the slides I'm showing you are slides of pieces I have in the northwest coast show that I had with the Seattle World's Fair. I fortunately got a good many pictures from these pieces before I returned them again to their owners.

Next one please. In the North among the Klinket _____ you have totem poles and they mean something. They tell the story of a spirit experience or they tell something of the ancestry of the family. Now, here in the southern part, you have posts in the house also, and they decorate, the posts are inside the house to support the roof, you see, and the decoration is very frequently the spirit, the guardian spirit that a man saw in his experience. And here is a pair of land otters that are climbing up, the whole board doesn't show, but there is a sequence of about four of them, four doubles in the home board and this is from the Quamichum Village, which is right near Duncan on Vancouver Island. They are very, very cute little land otters. Land otters are very famous figures for these people to use.

Next one please. This is a very interesting figure which I put in the southern part of the Northwest coast because I think it is, it's a point of one which we have no definite origin and it is a figure representing a shaman. There is a very interesting feature. Smart creatures like this are the things that make us realize that there is relationships. You see, there is a figure of a face there on the kneecap. Well, kneecaps are very frequently decorated in northwest coast art and nobody else does it, and so when you find a figure with a decorated kneecap, you've got one clue that it might be from the northwest coast. This is supposed to be a medicine man. It's a very fragile old figure and this here is just a board that they've nailed on it and I didn't dare take it off. I was afraid it would fall apart so I just used it with the board in it.

The next one please. You can see there are very good features in it. Now, here is an interesting figure for it's, there is a feeling of simplicity about this and strength. Now, this is a grave figure and it is a very, very fine piece of northwest coast carving. I don't know whether you are aware of the fact that the most difficult thing in a piece of carving of this sort, is the position of the arms and the hands and that is extremely well done. This is again, from the south end of Vancouver Island, and is a very startling and it's a figure that stands about this tall from the floor and I had that at the fair also. I had it surrounded with greens.

This is the southern most mask that is made on the northwest coast by the Cowitches. The Cowitch are the people who live in the neighborhood of

Duncan on Vancouver Island and this is a very interesting mask. In the first place it is not worn on the face, but it has a handle down below where the neck would be and the dancer holds this in front of his face so that the inside of the mask, you see, is not carved out to use on the face. One of the interesting things about it is the eyes that stand out, very projected eyes, and then it always has these two birds on the top and this mask is called the _____ and it is the southern-most of the use of masks that we have on the coast and is a very complex and very interesting piece. It's usually in dark red and black and white and the dancer carries it. Then he either has it in his right or left hand and then uses the other hand to gesture and he has a very beautiful costume, usually of the woven blanket that is made on the loom that you saw.

This is the mask which is worn by the wild man in the wolf ritual from the Nootka and he has a very wild expression that is cedar bark which is on his head and the wild men are very interesting. You have this in a great many Indian ceremonies that people may come in and destroy anything that they want to. Well, you get that in a lot of the old English Christmas celebrations, too, and especially the New Year's celebrations. These men go in and tear things apart and you get the same thing with the fool dancer among the Kwakiutl and he has a very nice way of doing it. He usually asks his father how much property damage he'd be willing to pay, how much he can do for his wild dance that day. A wild character of this sort is a very frequent thing in the southwest. The Hopi and Zuni, when they have their winter dances, they have a character that they call mudslinger, and that's just exactly what he does. He's very much like the fool dancer up here and the wild man of the Nootka.

Another one please. Here we have one of the fine masks that belongs to the Kwakiutl. The Kwakiutl have a super performance of their winter dances and this is a raven. He has a few features that are very interesting. He has a beautiful eye. The carving of the eye and the painting of that eye is a very fine feature. He has these marks here, the slits, and then he has this scallop which goes down here. Now, these are all features that you look for when you see a mask and want to try and place it. This thing, by the way, is about this long. It's a tremendous mask and you can get even bigger than this. They have masks that are so big that nobody can stand up and wear them, they crouch on the floor and they hop. When they get enough energy they hop from spot to spot and there is one crane who has a tremendously long beak and he hops around and these beaks all open and close and he will go around and nip people. These things sound amusing but they're very important and very sacred.

Next one please. Here is an example of a very decorated inside post. I showed you the inside post with the little otters running up, well, now here

is an inside post of a Kwakiutl household and this is a figure that appears in the history of the family and, of course, it's represented in their particular way. The feature that you get in a great many of these figures is that you have the lips here but then these are all the wrinkles around the edge of the mouth, and they're very beautifully carved and very significant to the character.

Now, I wanted to show you that these people, in spite of all this beautiful wood that they decorate, have not forgotten stone. We speak of a stone age, well, you know the stone age never closed. We have a stone age today. Look at all the cement that we use and all the stone that we develop and use in one way or another, so, we've never left that.

Here is a tobacco holder. One of the interesting features about the northwest coast is that they used a great deal of tobacco and tobacco, you know, it the Indian's revenge. I mean it's an American Indian trait which has been universally adopted. These little mortars are used to grind up the tobacco because they have leaves and it has no treatment when they buy it. You'll be interested to know that up in Alaska this still happens today. The Eskimo much prefer tobacco they can get in Siberia today than the tobacco that they can buy here and many of them go all the way up to Cape Prince of Wales where they meet the Chuckchee coming from the other side and the big thing that they trade for is the Siberian tobacco. This has been going on for several hundred years. It is evidently, according to them, worth the trip. They do it in the winter because it's easier to travel in winter. It may feel more difficult but it is easier when everything is frozen to skim over in your sled than to go through in the summer.

Now, this is a very fine little bauble. This bauble is about 10 inches large and it's very well carved and is a very good example of the use of stone which goes to; can I have the next one.

This, I always say right away, is not made by Henry Moore but I think he would be very proud of it if he had made it. This is a hammer and this is a hammer which is held by the upright piece there and this here is the striping face and this is made by the Clinket. How old it is, I don't know. It may be extremely old, but it is perfectly preserved and is one of the finest pieces of stone sculpture that we have from the north. I brought with me a book which is called "Images in Stone" and it is the catalog of an exhibition that they had in the Vancouver Art Gallery.

You know a strange thing has happened with Northwest coast Indian art. In a period between 1939 and today, Northwest coast art has become from an ethnic native art that nobody paid very much attention to, to one of the great arts of the world. Today, there is practically no first class museum in

the United States or Canada that would set up a two year schedule of exhibitions without something Indian and if it's Indian then it was most usually from the Northwest coast. I'm very proud of the fact that I have a great deal to do with this great change because I began when San Francisco had its World's Fair, and we had a very fine arrangement for display from the federal government and we had an excellent show. We even had totem poles taken down there and an excellent show of Northwest coast art.

Then, they also had a small exhibition and they invited four groups to represent themselves in this exhibit and they had a Japanese, it was the rim of the Pacific, and they had Japanese, they had Polynesian, they had Peruvian, and they had Northwest coast. This was the first time that Northwest coast was ever shown in an artistic setting and with accepted styles of art and today we have one big show after another, stacks of catalogs of Northwest coast shows. For instance, I don't know if any of you happened to see the far north show that ran around three or two years ago, well, almost three years ago now, in 1973. We had that in the National Gallery in Washington, in the Amos Carter Museum in Ft. Worth, in the Ft. Worth Art Museum and in the Boston Art Museum, oh, and in Anchorage, Alaska and that was a terrific show. 302 pieces of Eskimo and Indian, Indian only being the Northwest coast. We really, those of us who have Northwest coast art, it's very dear to our hearts, are very, very proud of the fact that the magnificence of this art is actually being understood today. When you see pieces like this, you could send this to any big show and it would stop anybody, to look at it.

Next one please. This is another one that looks even more Moorish to me than the other Henry Moore. This is a _____ hammer and that is rasped here the hand here and here is the hammer platform. Now, these are Clinkit and when they were made, we don't know. We don't know anything about them. We only know that they're beautiful and they show up in every show that they have.

Another one please. This is an old friend of mine. He is in the exhibition as I have it at the Seattle World's Fair. This is a canoe prow and the representation is a land otter. A land otter is tricky. The land otter is swift and the canoe belonged to a man, according to to his friends, had these characteristics, so they made a canoe prow for him to put on his canoe. You see the face there is in the form of a mask really, and the eyes are inlaid abalone and that abalone, by the way, is California abalone, which has been traded to the Northwest long before any Europeans came here. They always wanted this because in the North they have abalone but it doesn't have the color. The abalone shell is worth a great deal. This is human hair on it and this is a figure about this size. It's a beautiful figure. It came from the Philadelphia Museum, University of Penn.

You might be interested in the rounds of cedar that I have there. I found these in the mill pond at the cedar works in Seattle right by the Fremont Bridge. They were floating in the water there and so I went in and asked, "Are you throwing them away?", and he said, "Well, we don't know quite what to do with them." I told him, "I'm putting up a show in the fair and I'd love to have them." "Well," he said, "just send a truck and get them." They are the most useful things I've ever had to put things on. This was an area that I called sculpture island and I had a great many pieces on it.

Next one please. Now, here is a very interesting piece. It comes from the museum at the University of California at Berkeley, and it is a man who is turning into a land otter. He has rows of fur bracelets on and his hands are in the position of a land otter's paws and he is growing some hair, some fur on his thighs and he has on a mask representing the land otter. Now this is, again, the way that a man is expressing his relationship with a spirit, guardian spirit. This figure stands about four inches high, four feet high I mean, and is a very strong, and a very gorgeous figure. I have that in a show that I did for the Centennial last year, while I was in Alaska.

Next one please. Now, to show you these people not only made figures of this sort but here is the kind of household goods that they use. Here is a beautiful bowl. It's about this size, about 15" across. It is carved in one piece and it has a hawk at one end. The white spots in there are sea snaggle and they are very decorative. This is the kind of a bowl that would be used in a big feast. This would not be everyday wear, this is the best china they had and it is a very fine piece of carving. I wanted to show you these people lived with this material as well as have it for their ceremonial occasions.

This is a bowl which is made for fish oil and it is made of one very large mountain sheep horn, which is steamed and put on the mold to dry, and this is what comes out. And there is a small piece which represents the animal and they said there was one piece on the other side, too, but I like it better with just one piece instead of that one on the other side.

This is from Princeton University, where a great deal of the collection that was made by Sheldon Jackson, whose collection is in the museum by that name now and he graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary, so he gave them some of his collection, also.

This, I love. In don't know when an artist has gotten a more beautiful feeling for a Kingfisher. This is a kingfisher, it's a rattle. Here again, these people have things that are as imaginative as that canoe prow and realistic as you have it here in this carving.

Question: “What is this made from, is this carved of wood, also?”

Gunther: “Yes, this is of wood. It’s two pieces. Here you can see is the joint and they are glued together. All the rattles are made in two pieces.”

Question: “Did they use fish oil for glue?”

Gunther. “Well, they would use spruce gum, usually.”

Here is, I think, a very beautiful mask, a human face and a man who has great doubts. I mean, I love the forehead on that. That forehead is the expressive thing in this particular mask. This comes from the Tsimshian, the people on the Skeena River in northern British Columbia and he is probably singing, probably a spirit song. But I think this is a very, very beautiful piece and the coloring is rather nice. It used to have much more red in between the skowl there, the forehead.

This hat would make many a head crumble. It’s very heavy. It belonged to Domawach. Domawach was one of the famous chiefs of the Clinkit in the 1850’s, about that period and this is a helmet. It is also used as a hat but it’s a helmet that he wore in war. You see here, this was covered with skin and it’s been torn away and the carving of that has a tremendous strength in it. It’s realistic, perfectly realistic and yet you have a feeling of its physical character as well. This is part of heavy wood and these helmets were worn by the Clinkits. We have quite a nice collection of them in Sitka and there is a terrific collection of helmets in Leningrad.

The collection of Northwest coast material in Leningrad is worth the trip. It’s even worth eating the food you have to eat while looking at it! It’s tremendous and the first collection, well, they’re odd pieces and they don’t know when they were collected but the first real collection was in 1842, and the interesting thing is, after they sold Alaska, they sent another expedition over in 1890 and they made a big collection and they got a lot of stuff. They have these defensive collars that belong to these helmets, they had just lined up in the case. I have never lived in such luxury in all my life as I spent in the weeks that I spent at the Leningrad Museum day after day.

About this size, a wonderful piece and they they have an ermine cape on the back of it and so you have something they have worn. The ownership of these things is sometimes very dubious and it is very destructive to one’s arguments sometimes.

Question: You mentioned back in B.C., did you know Simon Charlie, the famous woodcarver of the Kalkian Indians there?

Gunther: Who?

Answer: Simon Charlie.

Gunther: I think I have heard that name.

Answer: He was building a log house himself, just this side of the reservation on 13 acres of land he owned, and my brother, Sid Johnson from Bingen here, had one of his totems, about this high. We bought when we were up there. You mentioned the 30,000 years period. May I ask why or how the 30,000 year period was arrived at?

Gunther: Uh, all of them are arrived at guesswork, and every year they get pushed back further. We used to say 10,000 years and we'd think it couldn't have been done in 10,000 years, so we'd feel that maybe they were here longer and 30,000 to 40,000 is very common now, as mentioned. And there are a number of people in the group that are working on this, say 70,000, so it all goes with an analysis that becomes more and more exact on the melting of glaciers, the presence of the glaciers and the entire weather condition of the coastal area.

Some say that they walked across when walking was still possible, and others say, well, now they must have had some kind of water craft and come across the water. This is all imagination, though, we just don't know. One of the great difficulties we have is that so many good sites have been destroyed. You see, archaeology is not just going and digging around. Archaeology can only be done by a trained group of people because the important thing is where the piece is found, and at what depth it is found, in what relationship it is do anything else.

You see the first thing they do, when they do a good archaeological dig, is they measure every inch. The test that have for students when they do archaeology, we always have a place they can do it, we seed it, we put things in it. They have to make sketches of it and they have to do one thing as they put it back, and if they put it back in the right places, which the sketches show, then we know it comes out right. It's where the dig is found, at what position it's found, what is around it, how deep it is, the kind of soil it's in. The first thing they always do is to make an analysis of the soil. If any of you ever have the opportunity to go out to Ozed and see the dig there, you can go out in the summer. It's four miles to walk through the forest and there is no transportation out there. You can get little folders, they tell the hours of the day and there is always somebody there.

You can get little folders, they tell the hours that they have tours and they

are very happy to see people, see how they live and what they do. Then also, in Neah Bay, there is a hut which used to belong to the Coast Guard. It's a metal building where the tuff is being stored at the present time and you can go see that, too. That's open various hours of the day and there is always somebody there.

One interesting feature, I'm on the committee for the new Museum that they are rebuilding there and we have a big problem. You remember that bowl that I said was made of sheep horn? They have dozens of those bowls but they're mostly wood and, in fact, they're all wood, and those bowls have to be kept in liquid polyethylene or they check. They are very thin and they check very easily. When I say check, I mean that they get very breakable in the structure of the bowl. They wanted to see after they had them in polyethylene a couple of years why they began to take them out to see how they'd react. One week and the checking would begin. Now what are we going to do — have an aquarium of polyethylene? It's a terrific problem. We don't know what to do with them. They have to stay in the stuff forever. People always want to shelac everything, and that is the worst thing you can do to anything that you want to save. Once you've shelaced it, it's lost, you cannot get at the texture of it again.

But here we have this stuff floating around in great big tanks, as I say. We took half a dozen of them out and within one week they began to check. That bowl that I showed you with the big hawk beak in it, that is a very dangerous piece, too. They check because after awhile the wood doesn't hold anymore and always in exactly the same spot where the pressure is. I have one bowl like that. It's just an oblong bowl and that checked and they put a piece of brass around it and put great big nails in it and I took it for just that purpose because it was a very good thing to show. This is where it's going to check and we keep watching, if we can, pieces of that in some of our collections to see whether there is any sign of a check because if you get it soon enough, you can put a brace in there.

You have no idea, people think you give it to a museum and you put it on a shelf and that's the end of it. Well, that's the beginning. When you have these pieces by the hundreds, which do you in many museums, you just don't have the time to go around. We haven't got enough help, and these things have to be done by a person that knows what he's doing. So, often people come and say we'd like to help you. Well, there are a good many things you can do and we're glad to have them, but there are some things that they have to learn over a period of time, and these are becoming so important now, you can't give them to anybody to practice on.

Question: The items from Leningrad, did they loan you anything or . . . ?

Gunther: Oh, yes. It took us seven years to get it, but we got it. I went there first in 1968 and our show went on in 1973. That only happened through the two embassies of the countries and it went back and forth, back and forth. I did something for my own piece of mind. I went to the eastern museum and I borrowed pieces that were as nearly like the Leningrad pieces that I wanted because it would be just like the Russians to say, three weeks before the show. “No, we’re not going to lend it,” and I had these pieces all alerted and everything. The things came but they came awfully late. They could have just as well sent them a month earlier. I would call Washington or they would call me every single day to see whether the Russian material had come. You can’t pack over night either, it would be a tremendous job.

Question: Was there one particular type of stone used for carving, like for these bowls or other things?

Gunther: Yes, usually the salt.

Question: How were they able to carve so delicately in that beautiful bowl of stone and its amazing that they had tools?

Gunther: Well, that wouldn’t be carving. That would be rubbing. They would probably rub that down. That is one of the great difficulties with their carving today, they are doing it all with electric tools cause they’re doing it fast because they want to sell it, and it’s just ruined. Really, the carving that is being done today is just perfectly horrible, most of it, and a very few good pieces.

I brought two books here. This is a catalog of the stonework in Vancouver. It’s very beautiful material. I realized when I looked at it this afternoon that I had forgotten to bring my slides on the stone mask. Here it is, this is the _____, and here is the mask. This mask is entirely made of stone. The eyes are not in this one and there is another one which is, they got the two together. One is in the museum in Ottawa and the other one is in Paris. I tried to get it from Paris a good many years ago for a show in Seattle, but they wouldn’t lend it to me then. Here is the one that is in Ottawa. And the one that has no eyes is in Paris. They were carved by the same man, there is no question about that whatsoever. They were worn and how they were kept on, is a real problem and I think I have solved it. They both have a spot back of the forehead. I think they hung it from the ceiling and the dancer stood behind the mask.

This is the way the Eskimos dance in many instances. You see, the Eskimos don’t do wild dancing over a big circle because they don’t have that much room. They dance in place and they dance with a mask hanging down from the ceiling and they stand behind it and they gesture with their hands and

they move their feet, but just in place and that's the way that was handled, because you can see on this mask that they have been worn and you can tell by a very funny thing and that is the fact that the inside of the mask, where the place was carved out for the nose, is greasy. I've handled them both because after handling the mask, the one that is in this country or in Canada. I wrote to Paris the next time I was going over and I said I would very much like to handle that mask and I was coming in such a such a date. I had the case opened and I played with the mask for awhile and put it away and it was the greatest satisfaction in the world.

But, they wouldn't lend it, but evidently they had better messengers this time and they got it for this particular show. I was up in Vancouver and I think I spent the better part of an hour standing and looking at those two masks facing each other. Oh, they were perfectly gorgeous, just marvelous. The carving is wonderful and the mask from Ottawa show much more of a very, very thin coating of blue on the face and the mask from Paris has a much redder mouth. I mean, they both evidently had much more color, they lost it. This stone work is really miraculous.

Question: I notice the lips are all so thick. Is that because they're working in stone, or, those Indians didn't have those kind of features, did they?

Gunther: No, but you find heavy-lipped very, very popular on representations. They don't always make them the way they actually are.

Question: Dr. Gunther, have you made a study of the Eskimos, the Aleuts?

Gunther: Yes, a little bit. Not as well as I know the Northwest Coast.

Question: They are so much similar all the down the coast from the Aleut s to the Athabaskans, and the Athabaskans all the way across the McKenzie County in Utah.

Gunther: Yes, but there are tremendous differences. The whole basis of life is different.