SKILQUEWAT: ON THE TRAIL OF PROPERTY WOMAN
THE LIFE STORY OF FREDA DIESING

by

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This dissertation presents the life story of Freda Diesing, artist, teacher, and the first Haida woman known to become a professional carver. Diesing holds the Haida name Skilquewat, which translates as the descriptive phrase "On the trail of Property Woman." This phrase makes an appropriate title, as it reflects both the research process and the form of the written result.

Diesing’s life is not presented here as a monolith discovered, singular and clearly bounded, but rather as an organic accretive identity, constantly in the process of construction and negotiation. Diesing defines herself in relation to her mother and her grandmother, and her stories tell how they negotiated their own identities during times of rapid cultural change. For all three women changes in Haida culture under pressure from wider Canadian society tended to emphasize the role of women in the domestic sphere, as wives and mothers, while minimizing their wider political and social impact. Diesing, a woman of mixed ethnic decent, who married late, has no children, lives only on the mainland and grows increasingly independent and active as an elderly widow, resists easy classification. She performs her own identity variably, depending upon her audience.

By developing her identity as a Haida artist and teacher Diesing has been able to negotiate a position of continuing respect and influence appropriate to her chiefly heritage, despite inauspicious circumstances in her own life and in the contemporary history of the Haida people. Yet it is not being recognized as an artist or a master carver that has been Diesing’s primary intention. Rather she has used her art itself as a tool in achieving a goal she defines as most important: helping both Natives and non-Natives understand and take pride in the indigenous
cultural heritage of the Northwest Coast. More than an artist, Freda Diesing is a teacher. Through the stories she tells, and through her own life’s example, she reminds us all of the continuing vitality of Northwest Coast cultures, and especially of the important contributions of women in Coastal society.
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In any dissertation, there are a number of people whose contributions deserve acknowledgement, but none more clearly than in a life story. Not only do I appreciate the fact that Freda Diesing agreed to undertake this project, and shared the stories of her life so willingly, but I am especially grateful for her continuing input at various stages of the production process, and her warm and welcoming disposition throughout.

This undertaking has proven particularly challenging for my supervisory committee as well. I originally came to UBC to work with Professor Marjorie Halpin, although she was not free to chair my committee until my second year. In the interim, Professor John Barker became the chair of my committee, steadfastly guiding and supporting me through the ins and outs of departmental requirements during that awkward time of adjusting to a new university (and a new environment). Professor Halpin then guided me through the intricacies of the proposal/comprehensives process, and supervised the planning, undertaking, and approach to writing of my fieldwork experience. Her relaxed but attentive guidance was pivotal in my undertaking and completing the work. Her passion for excellence in scholarship and teaching (which I experienced most directly while working as her teaching assistant) was inspirational. Her sudden death in the late summer of 2000 was a great loss to myself as well as the university community. It also left me in the final stages of a doctoral programme with no supervisor. During the extensive period of re-adjustment, Professor Ruth Phillips stepped over from committee member to acting chair, despite the demands placed upon her by her position as the Director of UBC’s Museum of Anthropology. It was finally Professor R.G. Matson who took on the duties of supervisor for the critical final stage of drafting and defending the dissertation. His
thoroughness, enthusiasm and tolerance through what has sometimes seemed like no end of troubles have been indispensable. Although never officially a chair of my committee, Professor Margaret Anderson of the University of Northern British Columbia has contributed far more than might be expected of a committee member. Her extraordinary prompt, discerning and knowledgeable comments, combined with ever-cheerful encouragement, have been invaluable. Professor Bruce Miller has provided substantive input and continuity to this document and to my programme, being both one of my first professors at UBC, and one of the first and final members of my committee. A hearty thank you to all!

Information about the art and career of Freda Diesing has been readily provided by individuals in the Department of Foreign Affairs; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (including the Indian Art Centre); the Canadian Museum of Civilization; the Royal British Columbian Museum; the Vancouver Museum, and UBC's Museum of Anthropology. At the latter I am especially grateful for the assistance of Bill McLennan and Karen Duffek.

In addition to the many other professors and friends who have informed and encouraged me over the years, but here go unmentioned, I am particularly grateful for the intellectual stimulation, comradery, and personal support provided by my fellow graduate students Maria Roth, Leslie Robertson, Nancy Wachowich, Karen Richter and Tannie Liu. And for most recently modelling inspired teaching (and showing me how helpful skilful coaching can be), my thanks to Dr. Sharon Fuller.

I am unendingly grateful for the support of my family throughout this process: my parents
William and Jean Slade; my sisters Beth, Gail, and Linda, and their husbands Larry, Gary, and Bob, and all their children. One can never have too many words of encouragement. My son Mark, who equally had his life shifted when I “left home” years ago, has, with his partner Sue, been a steady font of encouragement (as well as late-night cross-country telephone support for those many computer crashes!). But the one who has certainly endured the most, with the best good humour, and supported me in every possible way throughout these seemingly endless years of research, writing, and lugging books around, is my partner Robert Strath, without whom this dissertation truly never would have materialized. Words cannot express my gratitude. But I can warn that now I may actually start cooking again!

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council whose Doctoral Fellowship awards allowed me to begin and continue my doctoral studies.
Until recently there has been no standardized spelling for the Haida language, which contains sounds that do not occur in the English language. Accordingly, in the literature on the Haida, there are almost as many ways to spell words and names as there have been writers (this issue is addressed again further on in the dissertation). In this document, Haida terms are spelled according to Diesing's preferences. Since her knowledge of Haida is limited, and my own is nil, these spellings undoubtedly provide an English bias in their approximation of Haida sounds. However, linguists have been hard at work over the past several decades developing standardized Haida phonetics and orthography. Increasingly, writers are adopting these standards, drawing particularly upon the work of Enrico (1980) for the Masset dialect, Levine (1977) for the Skidegate dialect, and Lawrence (1977) for the Alaskan dialect of Haida.
SECTION I: INTRODUCTIONS

FIGURE 1: Mask of Man And of Woman - by Freda Diesing

In the collection of the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia

Photograph by Bill McLennan 2002 (used with permission)
Chapter 1: Overview

Freda Diesing is not a Titan in this world; the earth does not shake when she walks; armies do not march at her command; crowds do not jostle to see her. She is, as she says, just an old lady "famous" for her eating habits. "Many Haidas are famous for their hospitality and proud of their cooking. I'm not one of them!" An Egg McMuffin® every morning and a senior coffee. The muffin enjoyed as a 2-course meal: first the lower half with the hot egg, cheese, and ham, then the top of the muffin with jam. The free refill on the senior coffee to be taken home for later. Time alone to read the paper is central to this morning ritual. "I like to read the paper. It's free at 'McDonalds' and the lighting is much better there." This is quintessential Freda Diesing.¹

So why write a PhD dissertation about such an ordinary old lady? Two reasons, equally important. First, there is value in the lives of all old ladies. Culture is created and continued daily by the actions and the stories of individuals. Old ladies, then, have not only invested lifetimes in helping to make all of us who we are, but have given us ways to interact within our world and ways to envision our world. Second, this particular "old lady" is famous for something besides her breakfasts. Freda Diesing is an artist and a teacher.

¹ Please see also Crean 2001.
For almost half a century Diesing has been active as an artist, creating both print and textile
designs and, most notably, numerous wooden carvings. She is the first Haida\(^2\) woman known to
make her living as a carver. Diesing is well known in the Northwest Coast (NWC)\(^3\) artistic
community, and revered as a teacher by many. Master carver Dempsey Bob, one of her students,
has dubbed her \"Mother of Carvers\" in acknowledgment of her impact on and contributions to
that community.

Diesing's work has been included in dozens of art exhibitions, and she has travelled and taught
internationally. Yet her presentation to the wider Canadian public remains limited, and her
contributions go largely unacclaimed. This contrasts starkly with the situation for many of her
male contemporaries. Bill Reid and Robert Davidson, for example, have each achieved national
and international fame and fortune as carvers within \"the Haida tradition.\" Bill Reid in particular
has been accorded almost legendary status for his role in the \"Renaissance\" of NWC art,
although he chose to work at a distance from contemporary Native communities. Conversely the
cosmopolitan Robert Davidson, arguably Reid's artistic successor, was certainly one of the
earliest, and perhaps still the most influential artist to bring Haida art back to \textit{Haida Gwaii},\(^4\)

\(^2\) This dissertation presupposes that the reader already has a general knowledge of the history and the art of
the Haida people. For the reader who is unfamiliar with the Haida nation, I recommend Drew, and Volume VII of the
Handbook of North American Indians. Swanton's studies are classic, as are Collison's for a missionary's perspective.
Brink focuses on change throughout the period in question, while good contemporary works include Blackman,
Stearns, Boelscher, and Bringhurst. Books specifically about contemporary Haida art/artists include Duffek, Halpin,
Holm, Shadbolt, and Wright. (Please see bibliography for full reference details).

\(^3\) Although the NWC culture area extends along the Canadian and American coasts from Alaska to northern
California (see Suttles 1990), my use of the term here is generally restricted to the Canadian sector. Equally my use of
the term NWC art style generally refers only to what is commonly known as the \"northern\" coastal groups, who share
not only a similar art style, but a similar matrilineal social structure, and a strongly interrelated history.

\(^4\) \textit{Haida Gwaii}, Land of the Haida, is the term currently preferred by many Haida for what are more generally
known as the Queen Charlotte Islands. As Diesing never used the Haida term, preferring instead to use the full
Western name, or more commonly, just \"the Islands,\" I follow her example throughout this dissertation. For the
same reason I use \"Native\" or \"Indian\" in place of the more politically correct term \"First Nations.\"
stimulating the re-creation of a rich ceremonial life in Haida communities. Diesing has chosen to immerse herself in the mainland urban sector of these communities, as an active agent of cultural transmission, continuity, and change.

How was the trajectory of Diesing’s career affected by her choice of community and location - being in small town northern BC in Gitksan and Tsimshian territory rather than the Haida reserve of Masset or the multi-cultural magnet that is Vancouver? How was it affected by her age, and her gender? And how was it affected by her artistic skill and her creative vision - and by the marketing forces that ultimately drive and shape the world of art-for-sale? These are questions which will be addressed throughout this work, and may be helpful to keep in mind while reading her stories. But the core project of this dissertation is to explore the ways that Diesing has negotiated her identity in relation to her mixed Native-Euro-Canadian heritage, and how she both expresses and reinforces this identity through the doing, and most especially through the teaching of NWC art. For, as will emerge from the stories and discussions to come, Freda Diesing is a teacher. Her career is best understood as the pathway along which she approached teaching, and her art as the means through which she engages the audience she wishes to teach.

This dissertation is first and foremost a life story, situated within and contributing to the field of anthropological autobiography. As such, it helps fill a space in Northwest Coast ethnography, a space where Native women, Native art, and Native historical agency coincide. The analytical theme which I explicitly pursue in this life story is that of identity negotiation. However there are several sub-themes as well, concerning forms of accommodation to change and the persistence
of form and/or meaning, particularly under conditions of depopulation or dispersal. There is also, scattered throughout Diesing’s stories, considerable information about the meaning and the doing of Northwest Coast art, of interest to both art practitioners and art historians.

Students of Haida history will also find it interesting as a three-generation retrospective of a high-status Masset matrilineage, particularly when read in conjunction with Stearns’ (1981) examination of mid-twentieth century Masset, and Boelscher’s (1989) discussion of Haida forms of communication. In Section II, Stories, Diesing discusses chieftainship and inheritance and the history of Masset from a woman’s point of view, emphasizing the role of women in power struggles and negotiations to place chiefs from their own family, and to negotiate marriages that will place their own grandchildren in positions of power.\(^5\) Contrast this with Stearns, who presents the same town history but gives almost exclusively a male-centred view of power and politics. Boelscher discusses inference and allusion as powerful tools of manipulation and coercion, allowing individuals to participate in negotiating the form of Haida society and their own place within it. What Stearns sees as just a group of women chatting quietly after an event, Boelscher sees as the most significant part of an event. Diesing’s focus on individuals rather than events fleshes out Boelscher’s ideas.

Although clearly the life of one individual does not represent the lives of all, starting to understand the life of one individual contributes to the understanding of all. This is particularly true when the individual, like Freda Diesing, is a teacher and an artist - one who not only lives

\(^5\)When considered in light of Haida reincarnation beliefs, one might think that these women are attempting to plan their own political positioning and social environment in their next life.
her own life but reflects the lives of those around her and helps shape the knowledge and experience of others.

Although once again increasing in popularity (Cruikshank 1987), biographical work, particularly life story work, is still not the primary approach to doing anthropological work. Ethnographies that focus on women have become much more prevalent in the last few decades, although still far from proportional to the somewhat more than 50% of the world's population who are female. As for published life stories of Northwest Coast women, I know of only two - Nuytten's (1982) brief biography of Ellen Neel (although Phillips, 2000, has recently completed an extensive biographical study of Neel as an unpublished thesis), and Blackman's (1982) book about Florence Davidson, who, like Diesing, is a Haida woman. Such is the size of the ethnographic space in which this dissertation is situated. Although the empty space in scholarship regarding Northwest Coast art is considerably smaller, there too this dissertation has a valuable place - since much of the existing scholarship is from the perspective of the academic, not the artist.

Bringhurst (1999:66) makes this comment on the advantage of an arts-based approach: “What people think, and what they believe, from moment to moment and day to day, is for each of them to say or not to say, as each of them may choose . . . If we come to the study of culture by way of literature and art, we have an advantage: we can generally be sure that what we are studying is something someone has actually chosen to say.” Over the decades, Diesing has used her art to say a great deal about being Haida.
The existing anthropological literature on NWC art draws upon and extends the classic analysis in the formalist traditions of Franz Boas and Bill Holm, and the structuralist traditions of Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Wilson Duff. Even the more personalized accounts of the artists themselves, aimed at a wider audience, still echo these analytical bases. An understanding of Diesing's life is not well-served by these approaches. Instead, this dissertation represents a radically different undertaking.

My approach to the thinking and the doing of anthropology is eclectic, having been informed by a variety of theories and practices, with the following being most significant. Feminist theorists have taught us that all knowledge is situated knowledge - what you know depends on who you are (biologically and socially) and your particular positioning (politically, spatially and temporally) with regard to any event. Performance theorists have drawn our attention to the importance of choice as well as patterning in how we present ourselves to others. How we act when alone and when in the company of various others is now seen as not just revealing ourselves, but as actually constituting ourselves - we continually remake ourselves through performance. Phenomenology has focussed our attention on the importance of how we focus our attention - that how we perceive and classify "the real world" is very much culturally constructed. Neuroanthropology, delving into the biological bases of perception, cognition, learning, and action, looks at culture from the perspective of the individual organism and it's environment. Stressing the importance of both our uniqueness as individual beings, and our biologically unity as humans, it draws our attention not only to the formative potential of major cultural ritual events, but to the importance of the everyday details that are part of our existence. Embodiment (discussed in detail in Chapter 9) unites these various orientations into an
understanding of cultural practice and social performance which is both deliberate and unconscious, with embodied knowledge being an ongoing process of accumulation and selection. I have fit these theoretical insights into a more general postmodern orientation. Attempting to be sensitive to concerns raised by oral historians, I aimed to follow a post-colonial paradigm of anthropology as collaborative science.

Accordingly, we undertook what Kleinman and Kleinman (1996:190) have termed an "ethnography of inter-personal experience." In order to access and understand Diesing's life story, I lived in her home, intending to "apprentice" to her as a carver, and ultimately taped many hours of her at work designing and carving new creations. During this time she told me stories of her life, presented most often as stories about her family, her teachers and her students. I accompanied her as she interacted with other artists and other anthropologists, in both private and public venues. Through both word and deed, she slowly revealed her personal world. This dissertation is the result of our collaboration to make some of her private knowledge public.

Even a project that appears to be as clearly delimited as the writing of the biography of one individual still needs a sharper theoretical focus. The focus of this work is not specifically on the art Diesing produces, nor on the Northwest Coast art style within which she works; neither is it a feminist critique of the difficulties inherent in being "a woman in a man's world." Nor yet do political economy concerns predominate with debates over "traditional/authentic vs.

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6 I had originally intended for an apprenticeship which would be central to my research, but this did not occur. I will expand on what did occur in Chapter 2.

7 A more detailed discussion of methodological issues and how they were worked out in the research/writing process is presented in Chapter 4.
tourist/market demand” use and production in fourth world communities. While all of these are aspects of Diesing’s reality, and are indeed incorporated into her story, the focus here is not on discrete categories, but on boundaries, meeting places, interactions. What we see is how an individual negotiates and performs her own identity.

Williams (in Bauman 1977:48) claims that performance serves as “the nexus of tradition, practice and emergence in verbal art.” Equally, I would argue that there is an interrelationship between NWC material art forms and orality that emerges in performance. As Halpin (1994) emphasizes, there is a clear relationship between art and orality on the Coast, with crest art being a visual manifestation of the potentialities for being and becoming that are expressed in the oral traditions. The oral is not only given physical form in art and costume, but it is given animation, breath and motion, through individual performance. Following Goffman (1967, 1956) we realize that performance occurs not only in special public events, but in the everyday interactions of one individual with another. The focal point of this research was the search for this nexus of the cultural and the personal in the experience of one individual, as expressed and understood in an anthropological performance shared by two individuals.

Diesing tells and re-tells the stories told to her by her family, and stories about herself and her family, thus creating and re-creating both her Haida heritage and her identity as “a modern woman.” She reinforces her Haida identity through her art, which draws upon the Haida oral traditions for its forms and images, while still remaining proud of her Swedish biological heritage. Diesing has garnered much respect and admiration both within and outside of the Haida community for her art and for her teaching, achieving recognition which might otherwise have
been difficult to attain. Particularly in the earlier years when “cultural hybridity” and “multiple ethnicity” were not concepts used or valued in Canadian society, the situation for a mixed-blood Haida woman whose home was on the mainland was not heartening. More important to Diesing, however, than the personal recognition she has achieved is the cultural recognition and understanding she has helped to perpetuate and spread through her teaching of Northwest Coast art forms and their interrelationship with the culture practices of the people who have created them.

Putting a certain twist upon theorists such as Derrida (1967/1978) and especially Barthes (1972/1980, 1977), who have drawn such attention to the impact of text as symbol (applying not only to description and metaphor, but to the implications of the very shape of the letters used and the placement of words on the page), I have attempted to at least make a limited application of their insights while crafting this text. Accordingly, an attempt at continuing the inter-subjective approach is reflected in the non-standard format of this written dissertation. Rather than presenting separate and clearly defined chapters on discrete categories such as theory; methodology; literature review; research data; analysis, and conclusions, this dissertation seeks to present knowledge in a more humanized manner. As individuals, we all draw upon our existing knowledge not in huge discrete blocks but in bits and pieces, imprecisely, sometimes randomly, occasionally erroneously, always contextually, and apply what we have drawn to help us understand and deal with whatever situation we may be in at the time. So too is existing knowledge presented here - in bits and pieces, here and there, as appropriate. No claim is made.

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8 In addition to national and international exhibitions and teaching engagements, in the first few months of 2002 Diesing was awarded the “Aboriginal Achievement Award,” followed shortly thereafter by the bestowal of an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from the University of Northern British Columbia.
for completeness, either in anthropological text or in personal story, although an attempt has been made to recognize the work of others in the communities of anthropology and art within which this dissertation is situated and from which it has grown.

This structure does not facilitate easy access to information. There is no index, and little in the way of chapter headings, particularly in Section II where Diesing’s stories unfold. This is a deliberate and appropriate choice, for our lives seldom afford easy access for casual observation. If you want to know Freda Diesing, you will have to allow time and space to engage with her stories. There is also no neatly packaged summary, for at no time do our lives offer such summaries, and “closure” is always artificial.

For those who are familiar with Haida culture, it is certainly possible to read Section II (Diesing’s stories) while omitting Sections I and III - the anthropological contextualization and analysis. But to read only the discussions without exploring the stories is to miss the heart of this dissertation. Her stories are her life, and that is what this dissertation is all about - the enduring images of a life lived and spoken.

Nonetheless, a certain amount of structuring is essential to make a written presentation manageable for the reader. Accordingly, an artificial coherence has been imposed on much of this information. Section I, INTRODUCTIONS, does attempt to situate both the anthropology and the art in their respective worlds, as well as introduce Diesing and give insights into the research process of ethnography as inter-personal experience. Section II, STORIES, presents the “research data”: Freda Diesing’s biography. Although the stories of Diesing’s life are presented
mostly in her own words, they have been extracted from months of interwoven conversations, and given a new form and ordering in time and space (my grandmother's world, my mother's world . . .). The same is true for the anthropologist's experiences and comments, which are presented in Section I and Section III (CONCLUSIONS), like the binding, foreword, and epilogue of a book containing Diesing's life story.

Footnotes as used in Sections I and III are as close an approximation as possible in a linear document to the functions of hypertext in electronic media - providing a branching out of one idea or bit of information into something related. I chose that style of footnoting as appropriate to reflect my own preferences for lateral as well as linear thoughtforms. The presentation of such additional commentary in Section II, however, is quite different. That is Diesing's section, which has its own logic and flow; the commentary, being interjected in my voice or that of others, is out of place there, serving only to interrupt or misdirect the flow. Accordingly, in Section II, the footnotes have been transformed into endnotes, where they can provide additional information without intrusion or distraction. Given that Diesing largely provides her own contextualization for what she says (reflective of the fact that she was most often speaking to me - an outsider who might not be able to grasp much in the way of embedded meaning), this spacing should provide no serious impediment to the reader.

In an attempt to distinguish between different "voices" in this written text, and also to avoid the awkwardness of trying to identify to whom "I" refers when two individuals are each telling her own story, technology has been most helpful: one font (this one - Times New Roman) has been used for me, the anthropologist/writer Slade, while a different font (this one - Rubyscript)
has been used for the artist/storyteller Diesing. Italicized forms of both fonts are used when a quotation is being made from any third party. Although this changing of fonts occasionally makes the page look uncomfortably cluttered, I believe it more than compensates by providing, in a sense, another dimension, and a more noticeable alteration in source with the implication of conversation.

With the same intention of providing other dimensions of information, there are many visual images presented as part of the body or appendices of this document. There are several examples of Diesing’s prints interspersed throughout the document, scanned directly from prints she has given to me. There were a number of electronic images that were provided to me by museums from their own photos cataloguing Diesing’s prints and carvings. These were frequently wonderful examples of the photographer’s art, and I am saddened to say that technical difficulties prevented me from using most of them. Finally there is “The Photo Album” (Appendix F) - a partial reconstruction (deliberately appearing constructed) of Diesing’s own photographic collection - images of images of memories. This “Album” also includes a few images that I have “captured” from the videos I recorded with Diesing, to add an essence of the casualness and physicality of art as “lived experience” to this text. As is appropriate to their nature and use, the technical quality of the “image’s image” of “the Photo Album” is often poor - but technical quality can be irrelevant in matters of the heart. And, to draw to mind Barthes’ (1980) comments on photographs: “It is not indifference which erases the weight of the image - the Photomat always turns you into a criminal type, wanted by the police - but love, extreme love.”
There are also several instances wherein the desired free-flow of information has been captured and condensed for quick consumption. The first, the biographical sketch, is included as part of the main body of the dissertation (Section I, Chapter 3). Freda Diesing, although widely known and admired within her community, is not so well known elsewhere. This brief biographical sketch is provided to introduce Diesing to new acquaintances. Like any introduction, it is not intended to replace the richness of personal revelation to come, but only to pique your interest in learning more about this interesting person.

The second, third, and fourth packages of information comprise the Appendices (excluding Appendix E, which is other). To give the reader a more naturalized experience of coming to know Diesing, I had originally resisted all suggestions of providing any “indexing” of her life, believing that each reader should create this structuring uniquely and gradually, from the information Diesing herself provides. However, I have been convinced that such an approach places an unfair burden on the reader, so I’ve assembled some useful materials as contextualizing tools.

The first tool is a brief description of the terminology of the Haida kinship system - Appendix A. In many ways this is the least useful tool, since Diesing more often than not uses kinship terms in the standard Western fashion. Her mother, however, used a more mixed system than did Diesing, and her grandmother used both Western and Haida terms in a primarily Haida fashion. I hope the brief discussion in Appendix A will help the reader better understand the nature of the changes, and the resultant confusion, wrought by Westernization of the indigenous system.
This inherent confusion made it difficult to construct the second tool, the genealogical chart Appendix B\(^9\) - (which actually appears as several charts, since the master is electronic and cannot be fit to paper of acceptable size). This is an anthropological construct to primarily track blood relationships (biased towards a nuclear family), and secondarily to reflect indigenous social classifications (“2\(^{nd}\) wives” as co-wives, for example, are difficult to incorporate). As Freda said of her grandmother’s brothers (and equally of those her grandmother called “aunts” and “uncles”), “She called them her brothers, but it’s hard to tell with some of them whether she meant brothers in the English way or cousins - since she called both her real brothers and her Eagle cousins “brother.” Sometimes I've met old people and they’ll say “I'm your real uncle” or “I'm your real cousin.” We tried to make the chart match our best understanding, but it should be used only as a guide, not a canonical text.\(^{10}\)

Although there is certainly semantic confusion resulting from the mis-matching of two languages and two systems, the situation is perhaps more sophisticated than confused. Boelscher, in her detailed analysis of Haida social interaction, sees part of this confusion as a deliberate ambiguity necessary in a system that is always alive and growing and open to change - but highly directed, contested, and manipulated change. She notes:

> Lineage boundaries are and were redefined along with inter- and intra-lineage relationships; social rank depended upon a complex relationship between self and

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\(^9\) This chart was designed to comprise Diesing plus a 3 generational swing, but is scanty beyond her grandparents. This, it seems, is typically Haida: Boelscher (1988: 37) notes that “genealogies are rarely more than 3 generations deep.”

\(^{10}\) One of several people who have been putting considerable work into reconstruction Haida genealogies is Wright, and her latest (2001) book provides quite a number of charts, including one which includes Diesing.
others and between the ethos of solidarity and that of hierarchy. Kinship terms, as used in a political context to manipulate social statuses, are polysemic and versatile... The symbols of Haida social classification stand in a dialectical relationship to the conscious manipulations of their meaning. Social action aims at a continuous blurring of the boundaries of meanings in order to enable the renegotiation and redefinition of the social relations they replicate. (Boelscher 1988:5)

The third tool, Appendix C, charts a “timeline” of significant historical or personal events and people relevant to Diesing’s life story. The names of individuals who are mentioned in the text are capitalized when they first appear on this chart. I felt very conflicted about incorporating this chart into the document, for two reasons. First, its very nature, the rigid linearization of time, is directly antithetical to the human experience of time and memory, which is immanently flexible, and it is the human experience that is important here. So creating this document feels very much like pinning butterflies to a board, a violation of life (in this case, the life of a story), in the interests of classification. But, just like butterflies lined up on a board, it does add to our understanding when we can see events in both their linear and experiential contexts. This chart highlights the unreliability of memory in accurately placing events on a temporal continuum, particularly in a culture that had an entirely different concept of time, and operated without watches, clocks, calendars, or writing - none of the chronology with which we are now thoroughly imbued. But it also confirms the complementary unreliability of our written record, (whether published or archival) since I often found the same event accorded different dates (or different participants) by different writers - and this is a far more insidious problem, as much more “truth” is generally ascribed to written historical “facts.”

11 It parallels, in that vague sense of perceived un/acknowledged violence, Bringhurst’s observation (1999:385): “Most of the oral poetry that finds its way to written form emerges, necessarily, from cultural collisions or assaults...what oral poets have to say is written down because the world in which they live is being invaded by writers and writing.”
The second reason I hesitated to include this chart is that, despite surface appearances, it is not intended to be an historically accurate, comprehensive document, and should not be used as such. Even discounting the unreliability of dates and sources mentioned above, this chart is a serendipitous listing, based upon scribbled notes and inadequately referenced sources, born from my own inability to remember who was doing what when, and growing, mostly, as an interesting listing of coincidences. So it is offered here as just that, an interesting list of approximate coincidences, a poorly drawn pirate’s map of the temporal landscape of this story - but remember, as always, “the map is not the territory.”

Appendix D lists, as best we can manage for one who desires to keep no such linear records, the schedule of Diesing’s classes and exhibitions.

Appendix E, is, quite literally, “other,” in that it is not directly about Diesing at all, but rather Ellen Neel, the Kwakwaka’wakw artist who was Vancouver’s first “official” producer of totem poles for the tourist trade. It is a copy of Neel’s speech published from the proceedings of a conference held in 1948 at the University of British Columbia (UBC). It reflects Neel’s eloquence and concerns in a way that no paraphrasing could, and gives a unique sense of the attitudes and circumstances of times just before Diesing began exploring the possibilities of Northwest Coast art.

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12 A colloquialism which brings to mind both Hugh Brody’s (1981) “Maps and Dreams,” which explores, amongst many things, Native (Dene-ta) concepts of the relationship between knowledge, landscape, and authority, and the artist Rene Magritte, who’s wry label “ceci n’est pas un pipe” on his painting of a pipe was intended to remind viewers of the difference between a thing and its representation (leading to Michel Foucault’s 1973 article by the same name).
Appendix F, as mentioned above, is the "Photo Album".
Chapter 2: The Artist, the Anthropologist, and the Negotiation of Identities

"As soon as you've finished putting your things away, come upstairs. I have some books and family pictures you can have a look at." Those words, uttered as my partner Rob and I were hefting our boxes and bags into her basement apartment in Terrace in the early fall of 1998, marked the official beginning of my fieldwork with Freda Diesing. Looking back on that evening, I now realize how representative those words were of our relationship over the following months and years.

I originally went to Terrace with a plan: I was going to apprentice to Freda Diesing as a carver, and in the process obtain the information necessary, drawing upon the concepts of "mimesis" (Taussig 1993; Coy 1989) and "embodied knowledge"; (Stoller 1997; Nuttall 1997; Strathern 1996; Jackson 1996; Csordas 1994; Gallop 1988), while using a minimal amount of interviewing, to write the biography of the first Haida woman known to be a professional carver. This biography would form the basis of my PhD dissertation.

As an anthropologist with a strong post-colonial post-modernist feminist bent, I was particularly concerned to ensure that I was not taken to be in a position of power, authority or control in our relationship, with my agenda dominating all that was said or done, and I had given much thought to ways of ensuring that did not happen. I needn't have worried. Diesing is an old hand at dealing with anthropologists. She isn't the slightest bit intimidated or impressed by the scholars,
academics and journalists who so frequently contact her.\textsuperscript{13} In fact, she is so accustomed to being interviewed, and basically being asked the same questions over and over again, that she delivers a virtually scripted performance. Diesing, in her quiet and self-effacing way, definitely controls the interview and says what she wants to say in the way she wants to say it, irrespective of any direction the interviewer may believe he or she has imposed.

Diesing, however, is accustomed to brief performances of herself for others, whether they be journalists, anthropologists, audiences at public exhibitions, or students in her classes. Having a virtual stranger move in with her for months on end, recording what she did and said while refusing to set up any formal, structured interview, was a novel situation which provided ongoing challenges for both of us.

Given my interest in learning to carve and in listening to her stories, we quickly went from looking at her annotated collection of books, articles, family photographs and videos, which focussed attention on her family and on the wider Haida nation, to a more individualistic approach: Freda set up a small carving studio at her home in Terrace, and I made video recordings of her carving and talking.

\textsuperscript{13} For example, during the period I spent with her, she was visited by two fine arts professors from the University of Washington and one anthropology professor from the University of Northern British Columbia, as well as an undergraduate student and a graduate student from the University of British Columbia (two, if you count me). She was in correspondence with another graduate student from the University of Victoria, and a professor of fine arts at the University of British Columbia. She was interviewed by a reporter for the local paper (another clipping to add to her extensive collection), and was interviewed on cable tv. Also, she was twice contacted by an anthropologist at the Northwest Community College to guest lecture in his classes, and hired to teach classes in design and carving for the University of Alaska at Sitka. She participated in the opening of two travelling exhibitions and one gallery exhibition in Vancouver. The nettle net making project in which she was a major participant was featured on an educational site on the Internet, and she gave demonstrations of nettle net making at the museum in Prince Rupert. She also read and discussed about a dozen books on anthropology and feminist studies from my collection. Except for having me in residence, this was typical for her schedule.
My decision to begin recording before I began carving was pivotal in determining my identity in this interaction: I immediately became not an apprentice but an observer, a documentarian. My primary role became to record what she was doing, not to copy it. Although I might help with the setup and the cleanup, handle her tools and be shown the techniques and finer details of the process of carving and design, I was seen as audience not actor. Upon being told by Diesing that she believed one could not be an apprentice with less than five years of continuous work, I realized the impracticality of my original plan. I rather grudgingly accepted my place in the audience, but soon came to realize the importance of interaction with an audience for the act of storytelling and identity performance.¹⁴

In addition to the stories, Diesing also produced carvings during our time together: a pole-style figure of a beaver, a moon mask, a human mask, a bird/transformation mask, and a large bas-relief carving of her lineage Eagle crest. Except for the transformation mask, which she completed while working in Vancouver with her nephew Don Yeomans, she did no carving when I was not there - which is to say all her recent carving has been performance-centred.

Our interaction was so clearly centred on Diesing, who initially expressed not the slightest interest in my life or my ideas, that I found myself in the unexpected position of occasionally having to “butt in” with personal comments of my own, just to assert my presence as an individual. I was never sure whether she welcomed such assertions (following the stereotypical Native practice of not questioning people, but rather allowing them to reveal themselves over time), or merely tolerated them. I do know that Diesing found my avoidance of the structured

¹⁴ This is reinforced and expanded by Boelscher’s (1988) exploration of the central role of audience in both the formal and informal communicative acts that continuously re-structure Haida society.
interview technique, in my attempt to allow her to reveal herself over time in her own way, to be disconcertingly atypical behaviour for an anthropologist. And I think that her laughing comment to a friend, "She's still a student anthropologist - she hasn't yet learned to ask the stupid questions!" was meant as a compliment. I think.\(^\text{15}\)

In the end, I did learn at least the basics of both good Haida design and of woodcarving. Most of this learning was in the "traditional" way, through prolonged observation of a master at work. But I also received direct instruction in design principles and carving techniques, and had some assignments "marked" by Diesing. I might never become a professional carver, or even a real apprentice, but at least I have been a student, and thus have something in common with the hundreds of others, mostly Natives, who have been Freda Diesing's students over the past three decades.

Methodologically, it is important to recognize this apprenticeship approach, since my intention to actually learn to do what she was doing entirely altered the focus of my attention, and the interaction between us. Feminist scholarship has made us acutely aware of the situatedness of knowledge. So not only would a different person have had a different interaction with Diesing than did I, and thus come away with different knowledge, but I too would have come away with different knowledge if my intentions and behaviours had been significantly different than they were. A clear example would be that, if I never had been interested in learning how to carve, not only would my focus have been different during our interaction, altering its dynamics and my

\(^{15}\) I do recognize, however, that not knowing how to ask the stupid questions is not the same thing as knowing how to ask the smart questions!
observations, but it is quite possible that Diesing would not have undertaken any carving at all. Then we would have been in a much more intellectually- rather than physically-oriented performance, and many of the connections between art and lived experience might not have materialized - or at least not in the same manner.

There is one final point that should be raised. The beginning of my fieldwork was not my first meeting with Diesing. That meeting came about through one of those serendipitous occurrences that happen so often in research (and in life). And they get mentioned so seldom in the finished write-up because they show the research process (and life) to be far less planned and controlled than those concerned would like to believe. To throw a little light onto the process of my own research and to acknowledge the value of the unexpected occurrences in our lives, I offer this brief description.

When I first arrived at UBC in January of 1995, my plans for research were vague at best, and changed frequently according to my immediate academic interests at the time and my perception of the ever-shifting political climate for research work. As time drew near to clarify and solidify the direction and form of my research and draft a defensible research proposal (to make up my mind what I was going to do and how I was going to do it), I followed the usual routes of reading a lot of books; talking to people I knew (academics at UBC) who knew people; talking to my

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16 Diesing said in a later conversation that she "had been in a slump" regarding her carving before I arrived, and our work together was the impetus that got her started again.
At one point, I considered abandoning my original plan of working with women to instead work with Bill Reid. Although he was still alive at that time, (he died in 1998) his health was failing. My supervisor at that time, Professor M. Halpin, knew him well, and suggested certain work that she believed should be done with him while it was still possible. I wrote to Bill Reid with this suggestion; my letter was never answered.

Finally I decided what I wanted to do (apprentice with a woman carver to find out about the world of NWC art from her perspective), and who I would like to do it with - Freda Diesing, a woman with an impressive reputation within the Native art community, but whom neither my

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17 There were many people at UBC with whom I also spoke in more general terms about my research, and I thank all of them for their guidance. It was only just now, however, while thinking of the vast network of people who had somehow shaped my original proposal, that I realized the people I didn't discuss it with: people at the First Nations House of Learning; the First Nations artist-in-residence at UBC's Museum of Anthropology (MOA); any of the active artists, agents, gallery owners, or private collectors in Vancouver (or elsewhere). Although I did speak with some of these people at a later stage, my research proposal was formulated almost entirely within the department's academic community. The fact that I had not realized this before spotlights the normalcy of such an approach, even in today's self-consciously politicized research environment. The academic domination of the NWC artworld which I later criticise, and the more general academic control of research and discourse - “us talking with us about them” - while perhaps now more subtle, continues. And I must acknowledge that, despite my best efforts at egalitarianism, I have been complicit in its continuation. What makes this realization even more striking is the fact that during my first year at UBC I participated in the ethnographic field school directed by Professors Bruce Miller and Millie Creighton, working with the Sto:lo Nation at Sardis, BC. The main point of this school was to develop collaborative working relationships with members of the Sto:lo culture (one of the “southern” Nations in the NWC culture group) by undertaking various research/documentation projects selected and directed by Council leaders. Living as guests in Chief Frank Malloway’s “smokehouse” (ceremonial longhouse) further enhanced this intercultural experience for our group, and helped us to understand Sto:lo culture as lived experience for contemporary individuals. Perhaps it was my recognition of the significant differences between the northern and southern groups of Nations that caused me to separate that experience from the planning for this research project.

18 The supervision of my doctoral studies at UBC has been unexpectedly complex, with several professors having occupied the role of “Chair” of my committee. Please see “acknowledgements” for details.
supervisor nor myself had ever met. On the very day that I handed the draft of my "letter of interest" to Freda Diesing over to Professor Halpin, she handed back to me an e-mail from her colleague Professor Margaret Anderson at UNBC. She discussed the interest of the Northwest Maritime Institute in following up a suggestion by Dempsey Bob for an exhibition honouring Diesing's work, and was looking for a curator. When Halpin suggested that I do it under her guidance, I jumped at the chance. So I ripped up my draft letter, and went about contacting Diesing to discuss the prospects of my working with her to do both the show and the apprenticeship.

Diesing was quite happy about the show, and willing to allow the apprenticeship, and we communicated by letter, telephone, and finally in person when she came to Vancouver. We planned what we would like in the show, which was intended to be a travelling exhibition honouring her impact as a teacher, featuring much of her own work and examples of the work of several of her students. I tried to make contact with those of her previous students who had gone on to become professional carvers, to see if they would participate if we could get the funding for the exhibition, and several immediately confirmed that they would (Don Yeomans, Norman Tait, Dempsey Bob, and Dale Campbell). UBC's Museum of Anthropology (MOA) accepted our proposal and confirmed that they would host the exhibition, committing a block of time, space, and resources - contingent, of course on our getting sufficient external funding. Venues other than Prince Rupert and MOA were tentatively lined up. All that remained was the money. Several small granting agencies were approached - some expressed interest, others not. However, the bulk of the funding had to come from the Canada Council. We hopefully
submitted our grant application - waited - and were rejected. Since everything depended on getting the grant we didn’t get, it all fell apart.

Nevertheless, I was now even more enthusiastic about working with this interesting woman, although my focus shifted from her art to her life story. Fortunately, despite her disappointment about the show, she was still interested in working with me. So that is how I ended up in Terrace, chisel in one hand, video camera in the other! And how Diesing, retired, ended up producing so much new art, and taking on yet another student.

If not for our original excitement about the show, I am not certain that Diesing would have agreed to undertake the other, intrusive part: working with me for this dissertation. And even yet, although neither of us discuss it in her life story, that exhibition-that-never-was still calls out to us, now and again, hoping for somebody to give it life.
Chapter 3: Presenting Freda Diesing

Freda Diesing, who holds the Haida names Skilquewat, Weguedaas, and Kant-wuss of the Eagle moiety, was born June 2, 1925 in Prince Rupert, BC, the eldest child of Franz and Flossie Johnson. Franz Johnson was an immigrant from Sweden. Flossie Johnson was a Haida woman from the House of WEAH of Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, and holder of the Haida name Jat-kit-ki-gas, “She whose voice is obeyed.”

When Diesing was only three, her father died of tuberculosis (TB). Diesing’s infant brother Frank was also hospitalized at that time with a congenital heart problem, so Diesing was sent to live with her maternal grandparents, Mary Anne Norman (daughter of the Haida carver Simeon Stilta) and Axel Hanson (a Swedish immigrant). Diesing’s brother later recovered, and they were reunited and lived along with her mother’s new husband Geoff Lambly (a stern and proper Englishman) and second daughter Roberta, first in Prince Rupert and then in Terrace, BC.

Although it was hoped that the drier air would safeguard the children’s health, Diesing’s brother finally succumbed to continuing illness when in his teens. Later that same year (1943) Diesing

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19 Swanton (1905:120) spells this “Skil-ki ‘wat (property-road)” and Barbeau (1950:118:) spells it “Skyilkiiyiat (He-lays-across-the-Fairy-trail),” but Diesing insists that the translation “On (or crossing) the trail of Property Woman” is the proper one.

20 Boelscher (1988:36) discusses the importance of the term “to come from…” for the Haida, who use it to mean not where they were born or lived, but where their ancestors were from and the places they owned. It is important also to understand that in the Haida (matrilineal) way of reckoning descent, both Diesing and her mother Flossie are “Haida”; even though each has a white father, the Haida line continues through the mothers.

21 His name is written JEFFREY Lambly on the wedding certificate, and GEOFFREY Hassel (father’s name) Lambly (step-father’s name) on Diesing’s birth certificate. He was christened in Bristol England as “Walter Geoffrey Gilbert Hassel,” but became estranged from his father and assumed his step-father’s name in his youth.
contracted TB herself, and was admitted to a distant sanitarium in Kamloops BC where she spent the next three years.

Throughout her youth until her hospitalization at age 18, Diesing continued to spend vacation time with her grandparents at the canneries, and was schooled in her Native heritage by her grandmother and aunts. Her grandmother in particular thought it was most important for her young grandchildren to "know who you are," both with regard to their Haida ancestry and, for Diesing and her brother, learning personal stories about their deceased Swedish father. Although neither Diesing nor her brother had been adopted by Lambly, and thus officially held their father’s last name Johnson, they were known by their step-father’s name “so as not to confuse people.” When summers were over, Diesing returned to the family home, first in Prince Rupert, and finally in Terrace. Here life was quite different. Although she was under the care of her mother (and frequently also her older cousin Nancy), this was ultimately the home of her step-father, who tried his best to Westernize his family. Thus Diesing grew up with very strong ideas about who she was, and who she was not.

Diesing attended primary school in Prince Rupert and Terrace, and then secondary school in Terrace, although her secondary school education was terminated by her hospitalization for TB (1943-1946). Always having an interest and skill in art, she attended the Vancouver School of Art in 1955-6. During that time she saw Audrey Hawthorn’s exhibition "People of the Potlatch" (1956), the first major exhibition of Northwest Coast art to be held at the Vancouver Art Gallery, and like so many of her contemporaries was profoundly affected by the quantity and quality of art displayed - art which had largely disappeared from the contemporary Native scene. Diesing
first met the emerging Haida artist Bill Reid at that exhibition. Further discussions with Reid and his mother (who was a Haida woman from Skidegate), and visits to the Vancouver studio of Ellen Neel (a Kwakwaka'wakw carver) fired Diesing's interest in exploring the history of her ancestors. She dedicated herself to researching and revitalizing the cultural heritage of the various Northwest Coast peoples. Diesing supplemented her reading of published and archival materials with interviews of elders, recording clan histories, songs, and personal stories. From that point forward, her art expanded from the landscapes and portraits that she had favoured, to focus on Northwest Coast designs.

On November 9, 1956, Freda Lambly married Arthur (Art) Diesing. His Russian/German ancestors had settled in Manitoba, where the Diesing family had homesteaded. Art Diesing left farming for construction work, came north to help build the Kitimat highway, went to eat in a restaurant in which Freda Lambly was a waitress, and thus met the woman with whom he would spend the rest of his life.

Marriage did not limit the new Mrs. Diesing's artistic efforts: continuing through the 50s and 60s into the 70s, she specialized in design art, producing prints, ceremonial blankets, and dance costumes. She learned and performed traditional songs and dances, and instructed young people in their Native heritage.

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22 Jack Shadbolt (in Halpin 1986:5) says "the most compelling influence for an artist is to come under the immediate spell of a famous artist one admires tremendously and, at the same time, encounters personally in one's own local community, working from the same sources as oneself."
Seeing another art exhibition was again to have a profound impact on Diesing's artistic career.

This was the 1967 exhibition "Arts of the Raven," showcasing what the curators called "masterworks" of Northwest Coast art. This was to prove a pivotal exhibition both for framing the shape and the content of the intellectualization of Northwest Coast art for decades to come, and for inspiring a resurgence of interest and pride in their cultural heritage in many Natives. It had an additional effect on Diesing - it inspired her to become a carver. She began by carving a traditional Haida village in miniature as a Centennial project for her village, and has been a carver ever since.

As part of the cultural revitalization that was beginning at that time, she and several other artists (only one other of whom was a woman - Doreen Jensen) gathered at Hazelton in 1968 to study design and carving in a 6-month course with Robert Davidson, Bill Holm, Tony Hunt and Duane Pasco. Diesing was employed repeatedly by the 'Ksan museum in a variety of capacities. It was during one of these times that Diesing was commissioned by the Prince Rupert Regional Hospital to carve her first large mural - a 9' x 24' low relief mural of four Tsimshian crest figures. Shortly before that, in 1974 Diesing had worked in conjunction with Josiah Tait to carve a replica totem pole for the Museum of Northern British Columbia, which now stands

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23 Held at the Vancouver Art Gallery 15 June - 24 September 1967, with a catalogue written by Wilson Duff, Bill Holm and Bill Reid, the impact of this exhibition far exceeded its brief summer presentation 35 years ago. In ways that those at the time were unlikely to have suspected, it has affected the course of Northwest Coast Art to this day. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

24 Diesing stresses that, despite many reports to the contrary, at no time was she ever employed to be a teacher at the Gittenmax School of Art which is also at 'Ksan. She was employed as a working artist, not as a teacher.

25 In due course Josiah's son Norman Tait became one of Diesing's students.
outside the library and police station in Prince Rupert. At that time, it was considered remarkable for a woman to carve a pole.²⁶

During the winters Diesing worked full-time as a carver, developing her own distinctive style and gaining popular recognition. During the summers, in addition to being a market gardener, she helped develop the Native cultural centre of 'Ksan, working on display design, costume design, and cultural documentation. After 'Ksan officially opened in 1970, Diesing also worked in the shop, gave expert guided tours, and trained and performed with the dance troupe. She also travelled to Ottawa and New York in 1972 to talk and perform at the National Arts Centre as part of the “'Ksan: Breath of Our Grandfathers” production.

In addition to her activities with 'Ksan, Diesing also spent much of her time in the 1970s as a delegate to the Indian Arts and Crafts Association of BC.²⁷ It was also in the 1970s that Diesing began formal teaching, giving classes on design and carving in Prince Rupert. In the 1980s she expanded the range of her teaching by running workshops at Kitsumkalum Village, Terrace in the summer of 1980 and the winter of 1981/82. In 1986 she taught carving to six apprentices at Kitsumkalum, and they jointly made three totem poles which the village ceremonially raised.²⁸ Diesing herself then designed and painted the NWC housefront mural on the Kitsumkalum community centre. Diesing also served for five weeks as a sessional instructor in a Native

²⁶ See Steltzer (1972:159-161) for pictures of Diesing working on this pole and some smaller carvings. See Jensen (1992) for photodocumentation of the process of the production and raising of Norman Tait’s (1973) Port Edward pole.

²⁷ For an interesting overview of federal and provincial (except BC) organizations involved in developing and marketing Native arts and crafts, see McMaster 1993. The primacy of the actions of women in all the facets of these organizations is notable.

²⁸ See McDonald (1990) for a description and analysis of this project.
teacher training programme at Prince Rupert for Simon Fraser University, for NITEP Native Teachers. She has, over the years, given frequent talks at UBC regarding Native art.

Diesing's reputation as an artist continued to grow, and her work was featured in exhibitions across Canada in the 'seventies and 'eighties. She also participated as a carver at the '86 Winter Games in Canmore, Alberta. This provided her with an opportunity to have some fun and turn her hand to carving in a new medium - she participated in an ice-carving display, where she carved a statue of an eagle.

She developed an international reputation as well. Diesing participated in three workshops for invited international artists in Kemi Jarvi, Finland, where her creations are on permanent display. She spent the summer of 1987 in Sweden assisting her nephew Don Yeomans in the carving of a large totem pole (and had an opportunity to explore part of her Swedish ancestry). She was Artist-In-Residence at the Altos de Chavon school of design in the Dominican Republic in 1988. She travelled to Japan with fellow Gitksan artist Doreen Jensen for the "Indian and Eskimo Art" exhibition in Tokyo. She was one of twenty artists featured in the "Robes of Power" exhibition (which was part of Expo '86) and one of only five to go with the exhibition to Australia in 1985, where it was toured nationally.29 At that time she served as Guest Artist at the Adelaide Festival Centre Gallery, as spokesperson and instructor of a month-long class for 15 students, and was able to spend time in the Outback with Aborigine hosts. Beginning in 1980 and continuing for 15 years, Diesing was invited for two weeks every year to be the carving and design instructor at the Totem Heritage Centre in Ketchikan Alaska. Diesing's most recent

29 The other artists who went to Australia were: Doreen Jensen (Gitksan), Dorothy Grant (Haida), Dolly Watts (Gitksan-Nuu-chal-nulth) and Marion Hunt-Doig (Kwakiutl). (Nahanee, 1985:6)
international exhibition venues have been a 1989 exhibition of Native art in Saint Louis, Missouri, and the USA 2000 touring of "Down from the Shimmering Sky." She began the new millennium (twice!) by conducting other international workshops in carving and design, this time for the University of Alaska in Sitka, Alaska.

Diesing is now in her seventies, an age at which most people retire. But Diesing says she probably will not fully retire "as long as I can move." She created two new works for the 1996 "Topographies" exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery, where she both attended all the opening functions and spent an evening discussing her art with gallery visitors. In 1998 the Vancouver Art Gallery initiated the touring exhibition "Down from the Shimmering Sky" curated by Peter Macnair, which included one of Diesing's masks, and again she actively participated in the opening. The raven rattle she hand carved in traditional style for the 1999 exhibition at The Spirit Wrestler gallery in Vancouver was so popular that it generated many requests for more of her work. During the summer of 1999, in addition to several smaller projects, she undertook the carving of a large Eagle panel as a personal project, for the Terrace nursing home in memory of her mother. Retirement is proving elusive!

Diesing remains an involved member of her northern communities. Although her activities were severely restricted for months while she recovered from a badly broken ankle, she is once again travelling back and forth between her homes in Terrace and Prince Rupert (where she is a long-standing member of the "Sweet Adelines" singing group). She cultivates her vegetable gardens, makes jams and preserves, and still carves "enough to pay the property taxes." For years Diesing maintained a connection with the museum and Gitanmaax School of Art at 'Ksan, and
still devotes time every year to teaching art to school children in Terrace and Prince Rupert. During the spring and summer of 2000, she and a friend gave regularly-scheduled demonstrations of traditional nettle net-making at Prince Rupert’s Museum of Northern British Columbia. Diesing also regularly gives guest lectures about Native art at the local campus of Northwest Community College. In honour of her contributions to her community, that College awarded her a formal “Certificate of Recognition” during their 2000 Spring convocation ceremonies.

Diesing’s life continues to hold a wonderful blend of intellectual inquiry, artistic creativity, community involvement, and personal paradox. While identifying herself clearly as a Haida woman, and proudly holding inherited Haida names, she has also spent a lifetime living and working among Tsimshian and Gitksan peoples, and sharing her knowledge with the full variety of First Nations groups who comprise the NWC artistic community. Although her marriage produced no biological children, her training of so many adult artists, and her teachings to so many children, have provided her with generations of descendants. Unlike some artists, who prefer creative isolation, Diesing most enjoys teaching, giving workshops, and engaging in conversations with audiences who come to view carving in public places. By nature a shy and soft-spoken person, she has not hesitated to choose her own path in life, while participating fully through song, dance, costume, and creation in the performance of her heritage and her identity.

Diesing is warmly enthusiastic about sharing her understanding of life, art, and performance through yet another form - this public presentation of her life story.
Chapter 4: Situating the Anthropology

"the moment women open their mouths - women more often than men - they are immediately asked in whose name and from what theoretical standpoint they are speaking, who is their master and where they are coming from: they have, in short, to salute . . . and show their identity papers"

Spivak in Trihn (1989:44)

No work of research, no matter how personal, is done in a vacuum, without history. Research, like all other human activities, has a cultural context - in fact, multiple cultural contexts if one considers, for example, the "university culture" and the particular "discipline's culture" as being sub-cultures within the larger one. Feminists and cultural critics have been effective in drawing our attention to how thoroughly Western scholarship has been shaped by its saturation with White, Christian, patriarchal values and practices. Anthropology, as a part of this tradition of scholarship, has shared in these weaknesses and in fact, by its creation of the "Other," has fed existing hegemonic systems. Contemporary scholarship, including this particular research, operates in recognition of these shortcomings - but recognition of a problem does not mean its easy rectification. All we can do is acknowledge our situation, increase our level of awareness and do our best.

This, briefly, acknowledges my situation. As an individual researcher, I entered the field bringing what are probably the "standard Western scientific" set of beliefs and practices, tempered by an animistic spiritual orientation, a strong tendency towards non-linear thinking, and a middle-aged feminist's desire to give women their due. I also came with many years' training in anthropology, the last several of them at the University of British Columbia (UBC) under the supervision of Professor Marjorie Halpin, an acknowledged expert in Northwest Coast art and other forms of "cultural expression."
It was Halpin’s knowledge of the contemporary NWC carving scene that first led me to consider approaching Freda Diesing for an apprenticeship. It has been my association with both these women that has given me whatever currency I may have within the NWC artistic community. It would be most appropriate then if this dissertation were to be a learned treatise on NWC art, but it is not. Although both of these women, art experts each in her own way, have taught me a great deal, I lay no claim to being a connoisseur of art.

My particular interests lie in the realms of embodied experience and individual perception, particularly the way an individual perceives, envisions, and operates upon her or his place in the universe. I value the individual and the particularistic more than the systemic or global. Biography, then, is the ethnographic realm most suited to my research, and is the primary area of anthropological scholarship upon which I draw here.

My ideas and approach to ethnographic work have also been shaped by scholarship in psychology and feminist theory, particularly as they relate to issues of identity and embodiment. As my analytical interest in this dissertation is on identity negotiation, those two areas are used and discussed as appropriate. The relationship between anthropologists and artists on the Northwest Coast has been fundamental to much of the doing and the thinking about Northwest Coast art for over 100 years. Thus having impact on both my own work and Diesing’s, as well as the wider world into which this dissertation will be situated, that relationship will be briefly explored as well.
In Cruikshank's (1987:11) dissertation she acknowledges a debt to Edward Sapir, both for his interest in and pursuit of biography as an ethnographic method, and for his theorizing which introduced the term “scaffolding” as a model for the way the concept of culture relates to the individual. I must then acknowledge a similar debt to Sapir - scaffolding is a wonderful metaphor. This dissertation itself was created by standing upon and moving within scaffolding created by other anthropologists and theorists. The importance of much of that scaffolding goes unacknowledged, but there are specific platforms that I have pulled together and restructured as a ground from which to work. These will be discussed in this section.

Following the lead of Sapir in valuing a humanist orientation in ethnographic work, my focus is on the importance of the individual in utilizing, continuing, and changing the resources of a culture. I too recognize the importance of culture as a framework or scaffolding for individual action, although my approach puts more emphasis on the unconscious/unrecognized aspects.

Concepts of ethnicity and race are central to the discussion of Diesing’s identity. The term “ethnicity” (to replace race, tribe, etc.) has long been used in the discipline, and became popularized in the increasingly nationalistic, politically volatile latter half of the 20th century. The work of Fredrik Barth (1969) is particularly relevant to this dissertation, in that he shifted the conceptual focus of “ethnicity” from that of clearly bounded entities based on “natural” differences, to that of “self-ascription” (p. 14) whereby people chose specific cultural attributes as markers or signs of cultural exclusivity and distinctiveness. This dissertation follows that orientation, while both questioning the assumed achievement of consensus implied by the term ethnicity (versus race) and emphasizing the continuing two-way process of definition and
inclusion/exclusion - negotiation - involved between an individual and an ethnic group. I particularly focus on the negotiation that goes on between the various aspects of the identity of an individual within her/his “self.” An expanded discussion of the creation and negotiation of a self identity, working with the embodied psychology framework provided by Ludwig, form part of the analysis in Section III.

The work of Roland Barthes is also relevant, insofar as his development of semiotics drew attention to the unacknowledged presence of signs, and their power to affect cognition, particularly the subconscious effects of “connotative” signs and images (see Barthes 1972, 1977). Although this is a “humanist” dissertation rather than a structuralist or semiotic analysis, I have remained conscious of Barthes’ comments while creating the structure, language, and metaphors of this narrative text.
Biography In Anthropology:

Although one tends to think of it as a literary rather than an anthropological form, biography has a long history in anthropology which has often been overlooked in the vaster enterprise.

Franz Boas, one of the earliest and most eminent scholars to study the peoples of the Northwest coast, and acclaimed by many to be the “father” of American cultural anthropology, was not himself a strong believer in the usefulness of personal histories for anthropology (Behar and Gordon 1995). Specifically, he saw their use as being restricted to “illustrating the ‘perversion of truth by the play of memory with the past’” (Boas 1943 in Krupat 1994:9). Having as his ultimate goal “to account for human variability in all its aspects” (Stocking 1992:124), Boas preferred to use commonly-known and shared stories and reports, rather than the personal and individualistic, to create a retroactive representation or memory model of the specific culture under study. As a result, he has left us many explanations, stories, and vignettes from a number of individual NWC “informants,” but no explicitly biographical work.

Swanton, working for Boas in the early 1900s, provides what is still the most comprehensive ethnography of the Haida. Swanton’s explicit desire was to document the Haida corpus of songs and myths, what Bringhurst calls their “literature.” If Bringhurst (1999:203) is correct in his claim that “most of the adventure tales Swanton heard are autobiographical, and if he had probed for more extended autobiographies he might have heard that too,” then Swanton might
be seen as an early biographer. However, since Swanton did not push for more biographical information, I believe that biography was tangential to his main interests, and these personal stories were valued more for what they illustrated about entire groups rather than what they said about any one individual. In this sense, Swanton's work was no more biographical than was Boas’.

Bringhurst (1999:204) also draws attention to “an irreparable gap” in Swanton’s monumental work:

> Out of 150 narratives, he did not record one that was told by a woman. He often dealt with Haida women during his year in the Islands. He transcribed songs that women sang, he bought some artworks from women, and he talked to some of them extensively about family history, house names, place names and other matters of mutual interest. But even at Ghaw, where one of his coworkers and teachers was a woman - Mary Ridley of the Kuna Llaanas - he recorded no women’s stories or narrative poems.

30 “Sghaagya of the Yaakkw Gitinaay was a lively, widely travelled old warrior and trader, born about 1825 in the village of Tisaa’ahl on the outer coast of Haida Gwaii. In December 1900, he dictated ten autobiographical stories to Swanton. In so doing, he became the first and most prolific Haida autobiographer.” (Bringhurst 1999:165). Krupat (1994:5) says “the earliest Native American autobiography I know is an autobiography by an Indian, by the Reverend Samson Occom, a Mohegan, who produced a short narrative of his life in 1768... (it reposed) for many years in the Dartmouth College Library before finally appearing in 1982.” This raises a significant point for consideration - the difference between a personal story told to an anthropologist and an autobiography. While undoubtedly autobiographies comprise personal stories, I believe that a distinction should be drawn between one (or a short series) of personal vignettes and an autobiography. As Darnell (2001:207) says “Life history documents undoubtedly formed part of every anthropologist’s field notes” - and certainly not all anthropologists are biographers. Exactly where those lines should be drawn is unclear. There is an obvious difference between, say, the biographical “information about the artist” in books such as Macnair et al. (1984), the slightly longer sketches in Krupat (1994), the comprehensive accounts in Liberty (1978) and the fully developed biographies in Nuytten (1982). But there seems to be no consensus as to where the “biographical sketch” ends and the “biography” begins. “Radin’s Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian (1920) was the first book-length life history.” (Darnell 2001:207).
This statement is significant for what it says not only about Swanton’s research focus, but also what it says about his preconceptions - perhaps that women were not the "philosophers" of the culture? This would not be surprising, given the comment (to be discussed later) by his mentor Boas that the men were "the thinking ones" in NWC art.

There is even more than just noting the absence of stories about women in general that makes this comment about Swanton’s work directly relevant to Diesing’s story. Diesing’s grandmother Mary Anne Norman was very close to the referenced Mary Ridley, living for some time in the household of her and her husband Paul Ridley (Kinaskilas). Mary Anne would have been about 24 years old when Swanton was there in 1900, already married to Norman Stiltes (in 1891), and the mother of at least three young children: Lena (born 1894), Amos (born 1896) and Emily (born 1898). Mary Anne Norman, Diesing’s grandmother, was one of the women Swanton could have collected stories from, but did not; whose autobiography he could have recorded, but did not. It was only two years later that C.F. Newcombe was in the Charlottes, and Mary Anne worked for him as an interpreter. Whether she also spoke with Swanton we simply do not know - although he does not mention her as one of his "native authorities" or "interpreters" (Swanton 1905:9).

31 Ostensibly "religious ideas, social organization, and language" (with notes on "Industries" and "Arts" which did not get published) (Swanton 1905:9), although his true passion (Bringhurst 1999) was the Haida oral tradition.

32 The term used by Paul Radin (one of Boas’ students, and the writer of Crashing Thunder’s autobiography) to refer to those often selected as informants by anthropologists in the field (quoted in Darnell 2001:15). Darnell discusses the concept of Indigenous informants/philosophers/intellectuals at some length throughout her book.

33 Diesing notes [2002 edit] that Mary Ridley “was related to Norman, a Raven,” and that her grandmother was the niece of Kinaskilas.
It is interesting that Diesing herself is not troubled by these shortcomings, saying of Swanton’s book that she finds it really interesting, and quite reliable, “because a lot of these things I had heard before. He talks about how they made poles and raised them, and the dances and festivities for a new house. And he also mentions men and women, and not just men. He talks a lot about what women did, and I've underlined it in the book.”

Although Boas had no particular academic interest in Native individuals or their life stories, he and his students were meticulous fieldworkers, particularly when it came to documenting material culture collections. They were also, at Boas’ insistence, known for recording their informant’s comments in their Native language, so that extensive texts now exist in the (transcribed) voice of the original speakers (see for example Sapir’s Nootka texts). Boas is also said to have emphasized “the importance of inserting personal concerns into the planning and presentation of research” (Gacs et al. 1988:2). Accordingly, many of his students learned to value the specific and unique, both in subject and in approach, and several of them wrote biographies that have come down to us as classics. It is also particularly interesting to note that a disproportionate percentage of the biographers in this anthropological tradition have been women. One of the most widely known of these early biographies, “Ishi,” was done in the vein of classic salvage anthropology to romantically document the life of ‘the last known survivor of his race’. The California Yaqui man known to Kroeber, Boas, and the general public as Ishi worked for Kroeber for years, serving as a living museum exhibit from 1911 until his death from

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34 This is an important statement, as it (and many others she has made like that) illustrates to whom Diesing attributes primary authority - to those she personally knows, who have passed on the knowledge of the ancestors. She grants the least authority to the written word; a conflict between the book and what she has been taught indicates to her simply an error in the book.
TB in 1916. Yet it was not Alfred Kroeber but his wife, Theodora, who wrote the story of Ishi’s life.\(^{35}\)

Several of Boas’ female students had a particular interest in the presence and voices of women subjects (influenced, perhaps, by the mentorship of Elsie Clews Parsons) (Lamphere 1995; Gacs 1988). Ruth Benedict led two groups of students (later to be well-known anthropologists) in the 1930s Columbia University Laboratory project to document the practices and selected life histories of three tribes of Plains Indians; some of these are being used currently for biographical and ethnohistorical work (Kehoe 1996:381). In other areas, several formal biographies of Native women were published, including Ruth Underhill’s *Papago Woman [Marie Chona]* (1936).

Underhill’s colleague Gladys Reichard was also interested in focusing her ethnographic research on women’s lives. She apprenticed as a weaver with a Navajo family, and subsequently wrote two books relating weaving (and other aspects of Navajo life) from the women’s perspective. Another of Reichard’s books, however, *Dezba: Woman of the Desert* (1939) is an example of a perhaps well-intentioned but totally misleading book. It presents itself as being the story of a particular woman, complete with pictures - yet it is entirely fictional. In her preface to the book, Reichard notes:

> In depicting the characters of the story I have used no incidents or details which are not true. Nevertheless, even though photographs aid in illustrating types, the description of the actors, the relationship they bear to one another, and the episodes in

\(^{35}\) Theodora Kroeber, who held a Master’s degree in psychology and worked as an anthropologist in her own right, was nonetheless described by her associate Julian Steward as the “perfect anthropologist’s wife” (in Gacs et al. 1988:188; emphasis mine).
which they appear are all fictional. I know no Navajo exactly like anyone here portrayed.\(1930\text{vi}\).

Since I originally did not read the preface, I took the work to be genuinely biographical - particularly given Reichard’s first words in the book’s introduction “Dezba is one of the 45,000 or 48,000 Navajo Indians who inhabit a vast territory ...”(xiii), and again beginning chapter 1 “Dezba was the head of a large Navajo household. She was medium in height and stocky in build...” (p. 3). My personal reaction to coming across that paragraph in the preface while checking some details for this dissertation was one of anger and betrayal - and also embarrassment, since I had first read this book years before, while writing a paper on the Navajo, and had relied on it as an informative data source. While it almost certainly is based on detailed ethnographic observation (given the quality of Reichard’s other work on the Navajo), finding myself so deceived means my trust in taking the author at her word has now been severely compromised.

Perhaps I should have been alerted by Reichard’s constantly referring in her introduction to the Navajo culture being portrayed as “his” - but that was such a common perspective and form of speaking in those days. And in retrospect, I should have been immediately suspicious of the writing style Reichard used - that of the literary novel, very romantic in its portrayal of people, land, and situations - but again that was such a common style of writing almost anything about Natives (or any Exotic Other). The clincher should have been Reichard’s technique of writing as if she knew what the characters were thinking, but I was oblivious to that as well - assuming only knowledge based upon extended personal conversations, tempered by a good deal of the literary license necessary to write in the novelistic style. It is, after all, the style used by Greg
Sarris in many sections of his biography of Mabel McKay, a woman he has known for most of his life. And Mabel McKay was a real woman - wasn't she? Sarris wrote two books about her, and there are pictures ...

As previously mentioned, most of the early biographers were women. Gender may be a central rather than a peripheral consideration in this phenomenon. Slatkin (1993-vii), in discussing the writings of women artists, noted that they "focus more consistently than their male colleagues on the personal, rather than the theoretical." Friedman (in Slatkin 1993:xi) argues that women's identity draws upon, but is "not limited to, a group consciousness - an awareness of the meaning of the cultural category WOMAN for the patterns of women's individual destiny...Women then are more aware of a collective identity than a unique, ego-centric, isolated sense of individuality more characteristic of male authors." Thus, women anthropologists may produce biographies more than do their male colleagues because their own sense of self, rooted in community, recognizes and appreciates the value of individual lives.

Unfortunately, the lives they were appreciating have been predominantly male. Darnell (2001:231,235) notes that although an increasing number of anthropologists were doing biographical work as the century progressed, the subjects of those biographies, even into the late 1970s, were still usually men. Possible reasons for this will be discussed in the next section.

36 Krupat (1994:9) notes a parallel situation for both "amateur" writers and anthropologists beginning with Boas' cadre: to obtain the life histories of famous warriors who had fought in historic battles. This dissertation is intended to offer a needed alternative to the "glorious men and their glorious deeds" school.
Unfortunately, there have been only a handful of biographies published by anthropologists about Northwest Coast Natives.\(^{37}\) Short biographical sketches exist for two Native ethnographers: George Hunt (Kwakwaka’wakw) by Cannizzo and Jacknis, and William Beynon (Tsimshian) by Marjorie Halpin (1978). Both of these men were best known in anthropological circles as the Native ‘helpers’ of their more famous anthropologist bosses - Barbeau, Boas, and three of Boas’ students Viola Garfield (1951; 1984), Theresa Durlach (1928), and Amelia Sussman. These biographies were written in part to acknowledge the work of Hunt and Beynon as ethnographers.

Other NWC biographies have dealt almost exclusively with chiefs and artists from the Kwakwaka’wakw and Haida nations. The earliest of these is the 1941 “Smoke from their Fires: The Life of a Kwakiutl Chief” (Charles James Nowell), followed in 1969 by James Spradley’s “Guests Never Leave Hungry: The Autobiography of James Sewid, a Kwakiutl Chief.” A similar theme is continued in 1989 with Joy Inglis’ biography of Harry Assu, subtitled “Recollections of a Coastal Indian Chief.” Bill Holms’ (1983) “Smoky-top” was a memorial retrospective of the career of Willie Seaweed, a chief and a master artist in the Kwakwaka’wakw style. Contemporary Haida artists Bill Reid and Robert Davidson have had perspectives on their lives recorded by several authors: Ian Thom (1993); Karen Duffek (1986); Doris Shadbolt (1986); Marjorie Halpin (1979); Hillary Stewart (1979). Women, however, have only been the subject of two published biographical works: Phil Nuytten lauded Ellen Neel (carver, Kwakwaka’wakw) in his “The Totem Carvers” (1982), and Florence Davidson (a Haida textile artist whose ancestors

\(^{37}\) Although Wilson Duff worked extensively at putting artists’ names, faces, and lives with their works held in museum collections, (Abbott 1981; Anderson 1996; Roth 1999) he did not publish any biographical studies. Contemporary scholars who have worked equally hard in those areas, such as Peter Macnair and Robin Wright, have also not chosen to publish any explicitly biographical works.
and descendants include famous carvers) had her full life story presented by Margaret Blackman (1982).  

Although there have always been anthropologists who have chosen biography as the means to approach, apprehend, and present the cultural Other, the form and characteristics of biography have changed as the theories and paradigms (Kuhn 1962) of anthropology have changed. Darnell examines (2001:207-238) changes in the genre of life histories within the Americanist tradition, (while asserting [p. 209] that the genre had its origins in Boasian culture and personality studies). Darnell selects three anthologies as exemplars for her chronology, and her discussions are presented below.

The first of these, Parsons' (1922) “American Indian Life” was intended as a popular book, to put a “humanist” face on the then-typically staid anthropological “life cycle” portrayal. Most of its contributors responded by producing highly imaginative fictional essays to best illustrate what they perceived to be unique or vital to the peoples so represented.

Casagrande’s (1960) “In the Company of Man,” says Darnell, was intended primarily as a textbook in a time of rapid academic expansion. It reflects the changing contexts of Globalism and Modernism, illustrating that blending of “I was there” authority and mystique of fieldwork (especially fieldwork in “exotic” places -first popularized by Malinowski) with the increased presentation of the anthropologist within the text (what Darnell [p. 233] refers to as the “confessional quality”) that prefigured postmodernist developments. Darnell notes that this

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38 Professor Margaret Anderson notes that Dr. Martine Reid also is currently writing a biography of a Northwest Coast woman (M. Anderson 2002 personal communication).
changed genre still failed to interrogate the power differential between anthropologist and "informant."

The final anthology chosen by Darnell, Liberty's (1978) "American Indian Intellectuals," "consciously updated Radin's notion of the 'primitive philosopher.' The thinker among the formerly primitive had become an intellectual ..." (p. 235). Darnell further notes that it represented "a politicization of life histories," developing a "rhetoric of alignment with Native political positions" emerging in the 1970s (p. 235). Darnell makes an intriguing observation though: oddly coupled with this respectful philosophical alignment with Native concern was the use of an ethnohistoric approach. This enabled the anthropologists concerned to position themselves as politically involved while keeping themselves at a distance since "most of the portraits deal with dead Indian elders rather than with contemporary philosophers engaged in ongoing dialogue with anthropologists..." (p. 208).

In the decades since the 1970s there has been an exponential growth in the use of the life history genre of anthropological writing concomitant with extensive theoretical shifting within the discipline - a paradigm shift both in Kuhnian terms of "communities of practitioners" and in what "Joseph Rouse imagines ...[as] "communities of believers" (Darnell 2001:4). No longer is the detached and omniscient anthropologist the teller of the story while the Native subject attends - using Trinh's (1989:67) imagery: "a conversation of 'us' with 'us' about 'them' [wherein] 'them' always stands on the other side of the hill, naked and speechless." (Then again,

39 Professor Bruce Miller (B. Miller 2002 personal communication) has drawn my attention to the fact that many life stories, of both men and women, are now being written as graduate theses, particularly by First Nations students. One hopes that these theses will one day be published.
see footnote 15). The reflexive, interrogative, and inter-subjective approach used by Sarris (1994) to present the life story of Mabel McKay best exemplifies contemporary anthropological practice.

Anthropologists are now also more aware of the misguidedness of the practice of ‘disappearing’ themselves in their work:

H. David Brumble, writing of the textual complexities underlying Native American “autobiographies,” has shown how early anthropologists who recorded Native life stories often wrote without reflecting on the dynamics of the editorial process, as if their own voices were silent. They would highlight a Native speaker as if his or her words were directly quoted and unmediated. Yet naturally enough, these scientific “absent editors” mended and rearranged what their informants told them, asking telling questions to meet their own research agendas, and sometimes compiled composite materials into one “life history” portrait typifying a group or culture as an object for analysis.” (Brown and Vibert 1996:viii).

One example of the way Native voices have been recorded is given in Bringhurst and is typical of much existing documentation. It concerns the work of Kroeber and the Mojave dream poet Inyokutavere. A translator, Kroeber says, “allowed the old man to proceed - for perhaps five to ten minutes - until he had as much as he could remember, then Englished it to me. With omission of repetitions, condensation of verbiage, and some abbreviating of words, I nearly kept up with him writing in longhand.” (Bringhurst 1999:333, emphasis mine). One can easily see the multiple possibilities for misrepresentation in such a process.

Even the most conscientious contemporary ethnographers face multiple and complex difficulties when a speaker’s worlds must be translated. Even when Native speakers are doing both the
translating and the recording, as in Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1987), they often struggle with whether to provide a literal translation (based only on the speaker's actual words) or a literary, poetic one (translating what they believe to be the images and intentions of the speaker). When the translator is not a member of the same culture as the speaker, and thus may not understand all the allusions and entailments of the words used, translations can be even more limited and contentious.\(^\text{40}\)

Linguistic translation is not an issue in this dissertation, because both Diesing and myself are first-language speakers of English, and all our work together was done in this language. Although both her grandmother and her mother were multi-lingual (being fluent in “high” Haida, English, Tsimshian, and Chinook jargon), Diesing herself claims to have a very limited knowledge of Tsimshian, and even less of Haida, which is used in this dissertation only for specific terms or expressions.

Language aside, though, I have significantly edited Diesing’s presentation here. Despite possible appearances, this dissertation should in no way be taken as giving the story of Diesing’s life exactly as she told it to me. Considerable effort was expended to make it seem like one naturally flowing body of work, when, of course, it has been crafted from a multitude of shorter, much more jumbled conversations.

\(^{40}\)See also Su in Bridgman et al. 1999 (33-53) discussing the complementary problem: a writer’s use of “translations” as a technique to claim legitimacy as a “cultural insider” (the instance cited was of Amy Tan’s supposed (mis-)translation of Chinese expressions in stories where she presents herself as a Chinese-American cultural “bridge”).
Contemporary anthropologists undertaking biographical work often do so in volatile, politically-charged environments, with multiple claims to authority and voice, and numerous, often conflicting, agendas. There continues to be an increasing awareness of the uses and abuses of diverse forms of power, even in these “post-colonial” times (Behar and Gordon 1995; Cole and Phillips 1995; Brown and Vibert 1996; Sider and Smith 1997). Ethnographic biographies have increasingly become collaborative works, and, in form and purpose, may be crafted specifically to meet the desires of the Native subjects (see for instance Cruikshank 1988, 1990). This project too has been a collaborative venture - indeed, I believe the sharing of ethnographic authority to be essential in the production of a life history document. In this case, however, the nature of that sharing of authority turned out not to be quite what I had anticipated. Diesing’s “do it however you think best” directions for the writing of the document granted me far more leeway and authority than I had expected.

For this presentation of our work together, this dissertation, I have grouped her stories thematically, eliminated many repetitions, selected some stories and set many others aside, and of course limited the amount to what could be reasonable contained in an academic document. I have tried to present Diesing’s own words, and remain as true to her intentions as possible while saying what she considers important. However, the dynamics of the fieldwork situation created a frequent need to alter Diesing’s actual words to varying degrees, and certainly to alter the sequencing both of her words and of the topics of our discussions. I am the one who made most of these editorial decisions. Diesing’s major areas of contribution were, of course, in creating and telling these stories, and in checking and revising the various drafts, and providing additional information verbally or through correspondence.
From my perspective (only Diesing can speak of her own perspective), there were two main considerations that shaped the crafting of this document: the intended audience, and the intended use. The first consideration was the intended audience: as a dissertation, it had to meet the expectations of an academic examining committee; it was also intended to provide information of interest to other academics and scholars in various fields. We also anticipated that it would be of interest to a wider, non-academic audience, most particularly to Diesing’s family and friends.

The next consideration was the intended use of the document - beyond its obvious use to fulfill an academic requirement. Unlike earlier works of salvage anthropology (e.g. Nowell, 1941; Kroeber, 1961) this document does not attempt to encapsulate and preserve as much ethnographic information as possible about a dying culture. It is equally unlike contemporary works of cultural documentation created specifically for an Indigenous audience, for example the projects discussed in Cruikshank 1987, and Wachowich 1999. Neither Diesing nor I were trying to document the corpus of Haida culture, or a detailed history of her family, or even a “complete” picture of her own life (how, actually, could one do such a thing?). She was telling me “interesting” things about herself, her life and her family, to be presented in a document she knew was accessible to anyone who might request it, but which probably would have a very limited circulation (we discussed our interests in turning it into a book with public appeal, but that would be a whole other project). Since Diesing has seldom discussed her earlier life, her artistic career or her family history with the younger members of her family, creating this document was one way to share with them information she considers important. It is yet another vehicle for her teaching, available to anyone who is interested.
My own personal and cultural background and analytical interests shaped what I found particularly interesting, and hence what ultimately was included in this document - although Diesing knew she could add, rework or remove anything. My stated interest is clearly on identity negotiation, including the evolving relationship between Diesing's identity and her art. Undoubtedly my selection of stories was biassed by these interests (although Diesing also shares these interests). Although Diesing's guidance on what to include was solicited, direct questioning in this regard was usually unproductive. One way that I determined what Diesing might want included was to attend to how frequently and enthusiastically she told certain stories or repeated certain themes (both to me and to others). One weakness in this approach is obvious: while I tried to be an enthusiastic listener to all stories, I was undoubtedly more responsive to some kinds of stories (e.g. her life as a young girl) than others (e.g. reciting the names and modes of relationship of extended kin); thus playing to her audience, Diesing might thus have shifted some of her selections from her repertoire. Also, there were many things she spoke of that have not been included here, some at my own discretion. For example, she spoke much more about her students and about younger members of her family than appears here. I have excluded many of these stories simply because I am personally uncomfortable presenting at any length information that is not already in the public domain about living individuals when I do not have their permission to do so - no matter how complimentary that information might be.

Much of the information presented here came from transcriptions of audio tapes and video tapes, which were so totally invaluable for creating this document that I don't know how
anthropologists ever got along without them.\textsuperscript{41} I realize that many people have memories that are much better than mine, but even so... The tapes allowed me to go back repeatedly to check my facts - particularly helpful when one person is talking about an extensive network of persons and events with which the other person is not familiar. They also allowed me to recognize areas of confusion or ambiguity in the narrative, which I could then ask Diesing to clarify - although ambiguity should not always be eliminated, in speech or in life.

While transcribing the tapes,\textsuperscript{42} I would sometimes think I heard one thing, but, when I replayed them to double check, (sometimes playing the same section over and over to try to capture the exact words correctly), what Diesing had said was sometimes significantly different from what I had first heard. This was particularly true of speech idioms: to the same degree that we see what we expect to see, we also hear what we expect to hear. I found upon re-reading my transcriptions that I had \textit{unconsciously} altered some words or sentence structures to those which I considered more “grammatically correct” - or at least to those with which I was most accustomed.

I had also, again unconsciously, altered some of her common colloquialisms to my own. I found particular difficulty with her use of the term “after,” especially in the free-form, stream-of-consciousness narratives that formed the bulk of our work together. Diesing uses “after” the way

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item I have kept the original tapes, and made VCR copies for Diesing’s personal collection. However, since the tapes are unedited and thus contain personal and private information, they are not intended to be publically available. I hope in the future to work with Diesing to produce edited tapes that would then be publically available.
\item Not all of these tapes were transcribed - most were just indexed, with selected parts transcribed during the writing process. None of these transcriptions were proofed by Diesing - only the completed drafts of the document - although I did spot-check points problems with her. The process of transcribing video tapes is profoundly frustrating and incredibly time-consuming. For this reason, and to achieve superior audio quality, I strongly recommend that anyone who uses a video recorder for these purposes also run a parallel audio recorder. At least technology exists that facilitates the transcription of audio tapes.
\end{enumerate}
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I use “later,” whereas typically I use “after” as an indicator of sequence. For example, I might say, “After Jane arrived, we went for a walk.” So when Diesing would say, “After we moved to the farm,” my mind was waiting to find out what happened next. Which of course I never did, since that was not at all what she meant. She was also using “after” to indicate a temporal sequence, but her positioning in time was shifted from my own - she was referring to something that had happened previously and I was waiting for something that was about to happen. It is one of those small differences that can produce significant misunderstandings, and ongoing frustration - and it took me a very long time to realize what was going on. In case others have the same difficulties, I have added punctuation, creating a pause, to make the meaning clearer - but that pause was not present in Diesing’s speech.

The fact that making the tapes was always a background activity to something else (carving, driving, sorting apples, net-making ...) is also significant. Because they took place not in studios but in areas that were not well suited for taping (with difficult lighting, insufficient space, and unpredictable levels of ambient noise that often overwhelmed the conversation), some information was irretrievable, and much of it was of poor audio quality - making transcription errors much more likely. It also meant that more editing was required - when thoughts and speech are interrupted, or when topics switch as one memory stimulates another in a pattern that is seldom obvious, or simply as the mind wanders back through time - speech becomes disjointed and concepts can lack coherence.

Dr. Anderson refers to Freda’s usage as “an elliptical form of “after that,” and notes that I might also have made the meaning clear by inserting the missing word, thus: “after [that]” (M. Anderson 2002 personal communication).
Even when a document is written from closely directed and controlled interviews, this process of editing of verbal "markers and fillers" - the "aah," "huh," "um-hum," "well," "yeah, but she, they, y'know" that constitute the act of speaking, is necessary. This is a translation not of language but of modes of communication; and is unavoidable when putting spoken words into written form. When the words are spoken in an undirected form, as they were in this setting, extensive editing is necessary so as not to drive the reader to distraction with these fillers and diluting the impact of the speech or even losing it completely.

Finally, not all of the information contained herein was taped. Many of our conversations were just that, conversations, that happened and were not recorded at all. Later, I sometimes jotted down rough notes - and sometimes the topics of those notes were never addressed again. So for those things, I am relying on my memory and notes to recreate Diesing's words as best I can. Although I have attempted to "show my hand" whenever possible, the significant level of editing I've done here will not be obvious to anyone but Diesing herself. Fortunately, since Diesing is involved in the creation of this document as well as in the preceding fieldwork, I am confident that her editing of my work will have removed any "wrong" information from my analysis and from her life story.

It is probably best if I pause here to talk about the various terms I have been using: biography/autobiography/life history/life story. I use them almost interchangeably, depending on the author or situation I am reviewing, as they share many theoretical and methodological problems. All of them involve capturing, packaging, and sharing the story of a human life - but they are not exactly the same thing.
In the Western tradition of writing, "biography" is the story one person writes about another person's life. A biography may be "authorized" (the person being written about approves of the book, and may actually work closely with the author to produce it), or "unauthorized" (the person being written about disagrees with the form or contents, or does not agree to being written about, or may not even know that she or he is being written about). Biographies draw upon the stories the subjects tell about themselves and others, the stories other people tell about them, and research into documented information about the subject - historical documents, media coverage etc. They usually rely heavily upon structured interviews and other journalistic techniques to obtain this information. Generally, the most "trusted" information is taken to be historical documents (birth certificates, marriage certificates etc.), and often the least respected information is that which the subject provides. Several biases are clearly visible: the (often unquestioned) privileging of written information over oral, that many take as a hallmark of Western civilization; the presumption that lack of personal involvement or distance (over space or time) creates objectivity; the reification of the "facts" of life, and the assumption that they are best presented in the form and words chosen by the author.

"Autobiographies" are narratives that people tell about themselves, and come in two main forms.⁴⁴ Those not intended for public consumption may be called "journals" (most commonly used by men or professionals) or "diaries" (most commonly used by women), and in some cases may even consist of a series of private letters between two people. Those that are intended for others to read are usually presented in the form of published articles or books. Of these, some

⁴⁴ "It was in the second quarter of the nineteenth century that American interest in the first-person life history (only recently, in 1808, named autobiography by the British poet Robert Southey) began to grow." (Krupat 1994:5)
people write their own; many other people who believe they cannot or do not wish to write eloquently about their own lives get someone else to do the writing for them. That writer is usually hired, although if the person involved is quite famous (or especially infamous), a writer might actively solicit the work in return for perceived future gains (publication royalties, marketable reputation, etc.). Sometimes the person will provide the writer with a draft of the entire story, which the writer then “fixes up” for the public. Other subjects provide very little authorial direction, depending on the writer to elicit the information through conversations or interviews and then present the information in a way that most satisfies the subject and appeals to the public. However the information is obtained, an autobiography is expected to present and privilege the viewpoints of its subject, even if these disagree with commonly held beliefs, or are internally inconsistent.45

Autobiographies are therefore more susceptible to certain human weaknesses: the unreliability and constructive flexibility of human memory; the desire to present oneself and one’s loved ones in the most flattering light; and the desire to extract revenge on one’s detractors or enemies.

“Life history” and “life story” are academic derivatives of the above. Life histories, as anthropological forms of biography, are most often externally directed, to satisfy an academic research agenda.46 They may or may not involve an active working relationship with the subject

45 That this will happen is inevitable; it is only a question of degree of variability and consistency.

46 However, Krupat (1994:6) reminds us that “even if the Native subject of an Indian autobiography was pressed to the task by a journalist, historian, or anthropologist, we now understand that only those Native persons who found such a task consistent with their own needs and desires eventually complied”[emphasis mine]. I am concerned, however, that this is a projection of agency where it might not have always existed. Rhoda Katsak (in Wachowich 1999), discussing her scars (which resulted from her being subjected to scientists’ experiments on Inuit children), noted that at the time neither she nor her mother ever considered questioning or challenging the scientists and other government workers who so invaded their lives.
(as stated previously, some have been written about historical personages rather than living people; while others have been written "about" people, but not at all "with" them). Life histories share with the more general form of biography a tendency to privilege written documentation over oral accounts, and a continuing control of voice by the academic author, with the subjects being "allowed" to speak to varying degrees. They also lean heavily on journalistic techniques like closed- or open-ended interviews and eliciting information from second or third parties.

"Life story" is best seen as the current anthropological form of autobiography. They are written by an academic in collaboration with the subject, to meet the goals of both parties. Although the degree of authorial control of the finished document is variable, it still rests primarily with the anthropologist. The process of creation, however, and the ethnographic authority are primarily deemed to be with the subject. The oral is privileged over the written. The format for information gathering is largely through conversations and story-telling rather than interviews, with the subject choosing the topics to be discussed, as well as the nature and extent of information to be revealed. The anthropologist may frequently probe for more information, but it may or may not be given. The central text of the document is expected to be as spoken by the subject. The framing of the text, however, is usually done by the anthropologist, and is frequently extensive (after all, no one can seriously expect an anthropologist to have nothing to say!).

Krupat (1994:3) makes yet another form of distinction, between "autobiographies by Indians" and "Indian autobiographies".  

47 I will take up discussion of Krupat's assertion of the "foreign" nature of autobiography to Native peoples in Section III.
Autobiographies by Indians are individually composed texts, and, like western autobiographies, they are indeed written by those whose lives they chronicle. For the Native American to become author of such a text requires that he - and later also she - must have become "educated" and "civilized" and, in the vast majority of cases, also Christianized. Indian autobiographies, as I have detailed the matter elsewhere, are not actually self-written, but are, rather, texts marked by the principle of original, bicultural composite composition. That is to say, these texts are the end-products of a rather complex process involving a three-part collaboration between a white editor-amanuensis who edits, polishes, revises, or otherwise fixes the "form" of the text in writing, a Native "subject" whose orally presented life story serves as the "content" of the autobiographical narrative, and in almost all cases, a mixed blood interpreter/translator whose exact contribution to the autobiographical project remains one of the least understood aspects of Indian autobiography. Historically, Indian autobiographies have been produced under the sign of history and (social) science, while, with certain exceptions, autobiographies by Indians have been produced under the sign of religion, non-scientific cultural commentary, and art.

Both Indian autobiography and autobiographies by Indians may be seen as the textual equivalent of the "frontier," as the discursive ground on which two extremely different cultures met and interacted.

It is unclear where Krupat would position this dissertation, since neither Diesing's life nor our approach to telling her story fit into his categories. Diesing told her own story, but did not write it - although she did edit it. There was no "mixed blood interpreter" - only Diesing, the quite "civilized," quite "Indian" "mixed blood" subject. This contemporary work has been "produced under the sign of" both social science and art. Finally, perhaps, "frontier" mentality has dissipated.

48 Krupat (1994:4) goes on to refer to the "autobiographies by Indians" type as "self-life-writing."

49 Using these criteria, I am also unclear as to how he would classify Lucy Thompson's life story, which was self-told by her and possibly dictated to her white husband for inscription. The manuscript was typeset and published in 1916, and its lack of editing "so that gross errors in both spelling and grammar found their way into the finished book" (she told her story in English, which was not her first language) is seen by Palmquist as a sign of the "bigotry and/or indifference" of the time, since published works are almost invariably heavily edited, yet "who would stoop to proof an Indian woman's book?" (Palmquist in Thompson 1991:x). Accordingly, Palmquist helped edit and republish the book in 1991.

50 Please see Furniss (1977) for a discussion of how the "frontier myth" shaped the settlement of BC and the subsequent "dominant historical discourse and popular history" comprising "public history" or "hegemonic history." She contrasts this with "alternate histories," which use the same frontier mythic format but basically
It can be seen that, although the above descriptions may make these categories seem discrete, in practice their boundaries are highly flexible and inter-permeable, and discourse slides and slips from one to another. Nonetheless, they do represent explicit choices made by the author and, increasingly, by the subject. I have chosen the category “life story” as the most appropriate for this dissertation as it best suits my personal approach to research (let people speak their own truths) and Diesing’s approach to dealing with researchers (co-operate, but retain control).

Because the form of presentation is an academic dissertation, the amount of framing required is extensive, and the academic authority in those parts is diffuse and textual. The subjective and ethnographic authority, however, rests with Diesing - what is being privileged here is her presentation of her story about her life, her family, her people, and her art.

This dissertation is best compared to texts produced by four contemporary scholars working in the realm of anthropological biography: the work of Julie Cruikshank (1987, 1990) with three Tagish and Tutchone women: Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith and Annie Ned; Greg Sarris (1993, 1994) with the Pomo woman Mabel McKay; Nancy Wachowich (1999) with the Inuit women Apphia Awa, Rhoda Katsak, and Sandra Katsak; and Margaret Blackman (1982/92) with the Haida woman Florence Davidson, and (1989) with the Inupiaq woman Sadie Brower Neakok.

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51 Diesing’s comments upon reading the first draft of Section I of this dissertation were: “Do you have to quote all these different people!?,“ and “Well, there’s not much in here about your subject - that is, there’s not much in here about me.” I will discuss this again in the conclusion, noting only that, not only did I have to quote all those people, my committee told me then I had to provide even more academic contextualization!
These biographical texts were selected for several reasons. The first reason is clear - they all present the life stories of aboriginal women. Additionally, most of these women are narrating their stories in the latter part of their lives (Wachowich being the exception). Since Diesing too is narrating her life from her perspective as an “old lady,” and since our understanding of our lives and the circumstances in which we live them changes over time, as do our memories, I believe age is as relevant as gender or ethnicity in these presentations. Additionally, almost all the writers of these texts are women anthropologists (Sarris being the only exception). A point to note, however is that these anthropologists were all younger than me when beginning their fieldwork, and some also while writing the published texts. If age and gender make a difference in narrating a life story, they probably also make some difference in representing that narration.52

A comprehensive summary and analysis will not be undertaken for these texts. The comparisons will simply be of similarities and differences in areas I consider to be interesting and informative relative to my own work. Readers should also be aware that Cruikshank was one of my first instructors at UBC, and Wachowich was one of my graduate student colleagues, so I have somewhat more than just a text-based approach to their work. I have no personal knowledge of the other two writers.

Unlike this dissertation, which must be written to satisfy specific academic criteria, these published texts were written with much more freedom of expression and exploration, and were intended for a much broader (but still largely academic) audience. While they share with this

52 A very interesting series of articles is presented in Okley and Callaway (1992) which explore the impact of the anthropologist’s gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, and other ‘essentials’ on the ethnographic encounter as well as the subsequent drafting of the document.
dissertation a focus on the stories of the lives of women, and the privileging of their personal and ethnographic authority, their presentations, aligned with their intentions, is quite different.

Sarris, in both books (1993, 1994), makes his role and his presence clear. There is no doubt that he has done the collecting, writing, editing, planning of both books - the first being largely theoretical and expository, the second intended to be much more a personal narrative. It is his voice we hear, his agenda that is being advanced, even as we clearly see and hear the teachings being shared by Mabel McKay. And that was his intention - to continue, contest, and enhance the dialogue surrounding the representation of Native lives. His work is very appealing, both intellectually and for the warm humanity which he brings out in Mabel McKay.

Cruikshank’s work is relevant to my own in several ways - not the least because I have drawn extensively upon her presentation and analysis of the uses of narratives from the oral tradition in my own analysis. Her PhD dissertation (1987) is included in this comparison as well as her published version (1990) because of its usefulness as both a foundational document and as a foil to this dissertation. Cruikshank’s dissertation provides an encyclopaedic review of the history of biography in anthropology, and I strongly recommend it to anyone interested in the study of anthropological biography.

The first volume of Cruikshank’s dissertation is also strongly oriented to theory (the second volume contains the women’s stories and Cruikshank’s commentary). She engages the theoretical debates that were ongoing at the time about the nature and the value of life histories as ethnographic texts; about the appropriate focus for anthropological studies (on the individual,
the culture, or the society); and about the usefulness and limitations of structuralist approaches. Although she expresses the fear that even at that time (roughly 15 years ago) some of those issues were dated, such debates tend to remanifest, so that the theoretical and methodological issues around the doing and the using of life histories have not been fully resolved. Collaboration, for instance, is no longer seen as innovative and certainly is increasingly valued by all involved, although it brings its own set of difficulties both practical and theoretical. Equally, the idea of questioning the “boundedness of categories” has generally been replaced with a view of categorisation as processual, situational, and variable. Cruikshank has done a thorough job of contextualizing and analysing the practice of biography in anthropology, so I have not found it reasonable or useful to reproduce her work here, although I have certainly used it. What I do want to discuss are some of the particulars of her situation in working with these women, and some of the choices she made, in comparison with my own.

Cruikshank’s dissertation (and the resulting book) grew out of her extensive and long term involvement with Yukon communities (at that time over a decade), and particularly with a community-originated and directed project of documenting life histories as part of a larger effort at documenting the oral tradition. Thus Cruikshank shared a “history” with the women whose life stories she presents. In line with her beliefs in the importance of reproducing the sequencing of these women’s stories as told - and following the directives of Annie Ned in particular to “get the words right” (1987:143) Cruikshank has presented and contextualized these stories much as she says they were given to her. Since Cruikshank was frequently working as a form of paid employee by the communities involved (usually through various forms of grants) at the time these stories were collected, and was not tied to any academic institution (and thus free of their
requirements and restrictions), the Native women involved had considerable freedom in
directing the form, content, and usage of their stories, and Cruikshank was primarily a facilitator.
Together they published many small books and articles for use by the community. Cruikshank’s
1990 book is presented as a co-authored effort with the three women involved.

In the drafting of her own dissertation, however, Cruikshank was subject to all the applicable
academic restraints of the day (including the necessity for sole authorship, which still applies).
Yet she tried to make the resulting document as collaborative as possible within those
constraints. Thus, the body of the dissertation presents almost exclusively her analysis in her
voice, and the women’s stories are put into an “appendix” to which she adds comments - but the
“appendix” constitutes another entire volume. Her book, in which she can take more freedoms,
presents a different format, in that she frames the stories with extensive introduction and
conclusion, and adds explanatory and contextualizing comments as appropriate, except this time
the body of the book is devoted to the stories of her three collaborators.

My own situation is quite different. As discussed elsewhere, when starting my fieldwork I had
practically no direct experiential knowledge (as opposed to academic knowledge) of either
Haida persons or Haida society. Even my knowledge of the Northwest Coast environment was
almost exclusively confined to that of the greater Vancouver area. During my fieldwork with
Diesing, I was not working with a community, but rather exclusively with one individual. My
time “in the field” was short; less than a year all-told, beginning in the early fall of 1998 and
ending in the late fall of 1999, and that interrupted in the middle for a term back at UBC and a
trip back home. Although our work together was, in intention and in fact, collaborative, I was the
only one who clearly articulated her primary agenda. There were no supporting grants or forms of paid employment for either of us. Although I had started at UBC with a full Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) doctoral fellowship, it had run out before my fieldwork commenced, and my attempts at securing alternative sources of funding for fieldwork, either from external sources or from UBC, had been unsuccessful (although I did get a teaching assistantship with Dr. Halpin at UBC for the spring term of 1999, and interrupted my fieldwork to undertake it). I paid Diesing only rent and expenses - she was not paid as a consultant (nor did either of us ever raise that possibility). I did not think it essential to present Diesing’s stories in exactly her own works or in anything even approaching the chronology in which they were told (which in fact went back and forth on itself quite often). If I had recorded and reproduced exactly her conversations with me about her life, they would fill a bookcase not just a book!

Seeing part of my responsibility as an anthropologist as ensuring that this presentation of Diesing’s stories is not only “true” (as Diesing said of the draft of this dissertation) and “very real about her life” (as Diesing said about Blackman’s portrayal of Florence Davidson’s life) but also clear, understandable, and inviting, I did not hesitate to cut, slip, and paste as I thought fit, under Diesing's general direction of “Do it however you think best,” followed up by her close editorial scrutinizing.

53 I admit to being consumed with envy when reading the extensive list of helpers (usually students paid as research assistants) that some of these scholars had doing transcription of tapes, construction of genealogical charts, searching out references, typing drafts of documents - as I frequently felt quite overwhelmed doing these things myself.

54 Please see Wachowich’s PhD dissertation (2000) which focusses on the most recent form of commodification of culture in the aim of empowerment - the selling of one’s knowledge and abilities in the form of traditional narrative or life story or specialized environmental experience by Inuit as consultants to the never-ending flow of researchers who come to the north.
The book that Wachowich (1999) produced also derived from a much larger grant-funded cultural documentation project. Wachowich aims to truly give voice to the women with whom she worked. Beyond her introduction which contextualizes the work and explains her contribution to it - and makes explicit her extensive and unavoidable editorial control - the women in "Saqiyuq" speak their own stories in their own words. Women from three generations of the same Inuit family tell stories which speak of endurance and change, coercion, and agency, joy, and sorrow, in ways that need only minimal cultural translation. Wachowich did not attempt to make a unified narrative (which I did attempt), but rather presented these women’s stories as given - discontinuous events in time or in thought, and labelled them, as appropriate, not with titles of her own choosing, but by extracting a significant part of the speaker’s first sentence. Wachowich, in many ways, presents a minimalist approach to the intrusion of the anthropologist into the story of her collaborator.

It is tempting to align this dissertation with Wachowich’s "Saqiyuq" - as it too is structured around the stories of three women from the same family, and those stories too speak of continuity and change. However, there is one very important difference. The women in "Saqiyuq" each told her own story in her own way. The elder Apphia Awa spoke largely in monologues, in her own language, through translators. Although she might have the least control over the finished product, she clearly had the most control over the fieldwork scene. Rhoda Katsak, middle-aged, spoke in English, answering questions, telling stories around the kitchen table, in the midst of active family life, conflating the research process with personal friendship.

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55 While working on this Royal Commission project Wachowich consulted with Dr. Margaret Anderson, who had previously supervised Wachowich’s MA. Coincidentally, Dr. Anderson is now on my doctoral committee.
The teenage Sandra Katsak preferred much more isolation, and much more direct control - she wrote most of her own stories in private, presenting Wachowich with the finished product.

In this dissertation, all the stories are told by Diesing. Although they have been structured to seem to be the stories from three generations of women, they are actually stories about three generations of women as seen, remembered, and presented by only one. Diesing was very close to both her mother and her grandmother, and says that she heard their stories so often that its almost like she can place herself into their lives - “Not that I am them, but that I can imagine how it was for them so well, its almost like I lived it myself.”

However, as cultural critics are quick to assert, imagining a life is not the same as living it. If Mary Anne Norman and Flossie Lambly were really speaking for themselves, their stories might be quite different from those presented here - and almost certainly much more complete. Ludwig (1997:55-56) offers the following counsel:

Leon Edel was one of the first modern biographers to explain how the biographer, as a participant-observer, creatively imposed a narrative structure on his subject’s life. “The biographer may be as imaginative as he pleases - the more imaginative the better - in the way he brings together his materials, says Edel, but he must not imagine the materials.”

As the recipient of decades of instruction from her grandmother and her mother, Diesing is not, I’m sure, guilty of “imagining the materials” (nor, for the record, am I!). What is being offered in this dissertation is one person’s remembrance and understanding of the lives of others, and how that understanding helped shape her own life.
Of these four writers, the one whose work is most directly relevant to this dissertation is Blackman. Two of her texts will be discussed here: “During My Time” about Florence Davidson (1982) and “Sadie Brower Neakok, An Inupiaq Woman” (1989). As with the other texts, both of these grew out of other community-based projects that the author was working on. The book with Davidson was begun after many years of working with the Haida community at Masset, and draws upon an already extensive personalized knowledge of the culture and people involved. The book with Neakok grew from a different field situation, one more closely approximating my own. It is also the most recent of Blackman’s books, following seven years after the publication of “During My Time.”

Although having the advantage of being a professional anthropologist with an established reputation in life history work, compared to my status as a student with no experience of life history work, Blackman too appears to have been relatively new to the Arctic community of Barrows and the people there with whom she worked, including Neakok herself. Blackman originally became involved with Neakok when she agreed to be a subject in a brief high school class on life histories which Blackman was helping to run in Neakok’s community. Blackman’s interest in Neakok was piqued by what she learned while teaching that class, and they undertook the work together that eventually led to the book. Unlike her situation with Davidson, however, with whom she resided as a boarder for a long time, came to know well and developed a close personal relationship with, her relationship with Neakok seems to have been much briefer and more distant both emotionally and physically (in that Blackman stayed in the comparatively
isolated high Arctic community for only a brief time). This unfamiliarity with the community and the environment, and distance between the writer and the person whose life is being written, makes it more difficult for the anthropologist to contextualize the work both academically and personally, and certainly makes the type of communication necessary to collaboratively produce a final document more awkward. It is in this respect that Blackman’s situation parallels my own.

Neakok’s situation is both similar to Diesing’s and radically different. Like Diesing (who is somewhat younger than Neakok), she is the daughter of an aboriginal mother and a white father; unlike Diesing, Neakok knew a great deal about her father, who became inscribed in history (partly by authoring his own book) as a trader baron and therefore a force to be reckoned with in the area. Both women experienced being sent far away from home: Diesing to a sanitarium followed by years of living and attending college in large southern British Columbia cities, and Neakok to schools in California, attending university and becoming trained as a teacher. Both women eventually returned to their home communities to live and develop their careers. Neakok bore and raised 13 children in addition to holding a variety of positions of service to the community, retiring eventually as court judge. Diesing had no children, and her involvement with community was both more gradual in development and of a different nature (avowing, as she does, to be “non-political”). Both women have received honorary doctor of laws degrees in acknowledgement of their contributions to their communities. And both have participated in the presentation of their individual life stories.

56 Blackman (1989:3) notes that Barrows is “the northernmost city in the western hemisphere, the largest Eskimo community in North America, oil boomtown, and seat of the largest “county” government in the United States ... the sort of place that attracts modern-day curiosity seekers.... Barrows is ‘home’ to 1,800 Inupiat.”
Blackman chose an approach to producing Neakok's story that draws upon her skills doing ethnohistorical research - she supplemented the information she got from Neakok with that from other sources (school and government records, judicial training manuals, historical documents, and other publications including the book written by Neakok's father). Thus Blackman is able to present a very full picture of the community life of Barrows in which to situate Neakok's story. I chose to provide a minimum of supplementation to Diesing's personal information, preferring to privilege the oral over the written, and her viewpoint over any others. I also chose not to describe in detail either the Native culture of which she is part or the northern communities in which she lives, since there already exists a wealth of such publications, and because most of the people who I expect will read this dissertation already know more about those areas than I do. Also, as discussed again later, Diesing herself provides the cultural contextualization for her stories, so my comments were seldom required.

Blackman took an interesting approach to framing Neakok's presentation. Blackman provided a preface and introduction that situated her work with Neakok, described the contemporary community and provided historical background. Neakok's stories are then presented as the main body of the text. As I did with Diesing, Neakok's stories are told in her voice, and written in the first person. Blackman occasionally provides additional commentary, in sections that are marked off iconically, by the use of a small symbol and a different font. In a departure from the usual format, if indeed there is such a thing for life histories, Blackman leaves her discussion of the difficulties encountered in doing life history work, and her reasons for making the editorial

57 It might seem that I was inspired to copy these techniques, and I would like to say so, but in fact I had already written the first draft before encountering this book.
choices and other decisions required, to the last chapter of the book. I found that to be very effective in privileging the story of the subject over the story of the anthropologist.

Perhaps the most appropriate life history to discuss in comparison with Diesing's is that of Florence Davidson as presented by Blackman. The most obvious reason for such a comparison, of course, is that Diesing and Davidson are both Haida women, and Blackman's book constitutes the only published life story of a Haida woman. But the reasons for the comparison run much deeper than that: the lives of Diesing and Davidson are interwoven in a complex pattern, reflective of their personal and family histories.

They are related, as so many Haidas are, Eagle to Raven, with Diesing referring to Davidson as "Auntie Florence" (she was the wife of Diesing's Eagle uncle Robert Davidson), called "Nonnie" in person. Davidson grew up on the Islands, becoming one of the matriarchs of Masset; Diesing grew up away from the Islands, and has rarely been in Masset. Yet when in Masset, Diesing and her mother stayed in "Auntie Florence's" house, and when the Davidsons were on the mainland they stayed with Diesing and her mother. As a child in Masset, Diesing's mother Flossie played with "the [Henry] Edenshaw girls" - Davidson's cousins for whom Auntie Florence sewed wonderful Victorian hats that the young Flossie admired.

The fact that Florence Davidson was born an Edenshaw adds an extra dimension to the relationship between the two women. Diesing is of the House of WEAH, which had historic rivalries with the House of EDENSHAW, beginning with the attempts, over 100 years ago, by

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58 Blackman published the first edition of this book in 1982, and then revised it in 1992, and it is the revised version to which I refer here.
Chief EDENSHAW (Albert) to attain the position of Town Chief of Masset held by the Eagle Chief WEAH. Although the Town Chief remained WEAH for several generations, both Albert Edenshaw and Charles Edenshaw (Florence Davidson’s father) were exceptionally popular with ethnographers and other writers of the day, and are thus inscribed historically as having more import in the community than many Haida think was appropriate - particularly those who belong to the House of WEAH. Although the original players in those early events have long since passed away, the rivalry and debates, to a degree, are ongoing, with writers such as Sparrow (1999), granddaughter of the last Chief WEAH, once again attempting to correct old ‘misunderstandings.’

This ongoing debate should not be taken to mean that there is enmity between the two groups however. Ultimately, they are all related to come degree through blood (both groups are of the Eagle clan) or through Eagle-Raven marriage practices. Besides, debate, discussion, and negotiation are all constitutive of Haida society - seen as part of life as it should be lived.

The fact that Davidson’s father was Charles Edenshaw adds yet another twist. Charles Edenshaw, the man who for years was known to anthropologists and collectors as “the best” (which came to be interpreted by some as “the only good”) Haida artist, was a contemporary of Diesing’s great-grandfather Simeon Stilta. Stilta was also an excellent artist (as were many other Haida), and it is only recently that much of his work has been properly attributed to him (largely through the work of Robin Wright) rather than to Charles Edenshaw - much to the delight of Diesing, who takes pride in Stilta’s work.
Again, these historical intersections of Diesing’s and Davidson’s lives should not be seen as creating ongoing problems between them - Diesing always speaks with great respect of “Auntie Florence,” and there is no contemporary Haida artist whose work Diesing more admires than that of Robert Davidson, Florence Davidson’s grandson. These patterns of relationship simply add an additional element of interest to their stories.

Perhaps more significant comparisons can be made between the two women themselves. Davidson was, as Blackman describes her, a “grandmother” figure: mother to many children, grandmother to many more, and “the world’s Nani” (p. xiv); supporter of community events; hostess to all manner of visiting researchers; pictured cooking and serving out food and conversation to the many community members who routinely crowd around her kitchen table; travelling occasionally, but mostly “grounded” within the town of Masset. Diesing is a woman who loves to travel, and does so at every opportunity - even to the extent of travelling almost weekly between two separate homes in two different cities. Diesing has neither children nor grandchildren, yet has been a valued teacher to generations of aspiring artists. At least in these latter years of her life, when she now has the choice to do as she pleases, Diesing completely rejects domesticity - she dislikes cooking, avoids being a community hostess, and has absolutely no interest in maintaining a “model” home. Where Davidson is the “homemaker,” Diesing is the “working professional” - and glad to be so. Yet both women share an interest and concern with the Haida culture, trying to ensure that they live it well, help others to understand it, and pass it along carefully.

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59 Diesing, through her own life and through the stories of her mother and grandmother, presents examples of the “working woman” perspective that Knight (1996) claims is so sorely needed for NWC women of those generations.
"During My Time" was the first of Blackman’s life history publications, and the approach she took to presenting Davidson’s story was somewhat different than my own. Although we both imposed an artificial coherence and chronology upon stories that were told to us in bits and pieces, my restructuring was largely theme-based (creating the categories “Grandmother’s” and “Mother’s” worlds, and extracting stories that seemed appropriate), whereas Blackman reworked Davidson’s stories into a classic chronological “life-cycle” presentation. Blackman also supplemented Davidson’s text (as she did with Neakok’s) with information drawn from extensive archival and external research, an approach which I rejected. Blackman also spoke extensively with other members of the community, and with Davidson’s family members, particularly to elicit their comments on the draft of the text, whereas my approach has been to grant full ethnographic authority to Diesing.

As with her book on Neakok, but in reverse sequence, Blackman frames Davidson’s text with her own, providing discussion of the history and uses of life stories in anthropology, and providing much descriptive information of their personal fieldwork situation - an aspect of the book that I particularly enjoyed and found richly informative for contextualization (and have attempted to do here as well). I particularly valued the retrospective aspect of this book, since the version I read included Blackman’s commentary on how things had changed since the original edition had been published (10 years earlier), the things she would have done differently, and the way the book had been received and used by academics and by the Haida community.
One comment of hers in particular requires addressing by me here. Blackman wrote of community reaction to the publication of Davidson's life story: "Florence's long-time rivals predictably pronounced it a pack of lies the minute it was published" (p. xv). Undoubtedly Diesing's stories will provoke a similar reaction by some people. But Diesing's philosophical approach to such things is reflected in her comments about the stories she and others gathered from the elders for 'Ksan: knowledge belongs to families; different families have different knowledge; the fact that some stories are "different" from others does not make them wrong, it just makes them "interesting." Diesing is unlikely to view any Haida's stories as "a pack of lies," and certainly has worked with me to ensure that her stories are "true."

In addition to these life stories, there is another publication that I think should be discussed here, although strictly speaking it is not a life history but rather the story of various women's lives. Lila Abu-Lughod's (1993) "Writing Women's Worlds" is a beautifully written text exploring the lives of a small group of Bedouin women with whom Abu-Lughod lived, and draws extensively upon their own narratives. I find it particularly relevant to this dissertation because of Abu-Lughod's explicitly feminist theoretical approach, with its emphasis on embodied culture or lived experience and challenge to reified categorization, and also for her refusal to impose closure upon the text or the lives of the women it represents.

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Both Cruikshank (1987) and Underhill (1979) comment on the different versions of events related by elders with whom they worked, and the possibilities for friction that could develop if "meetings" were arranged. Underhill commented on the "constant sparring back and forth" that went on between Marie Chona and the man who had been the family elder until she moved in. This sparring now has a new medium - in print, between people separated by both space and time - but is still a gentle, firm negotiation of position back and forth through the generations.
Abu-Lughod only partially frames the narratives with an introduction telling the reader how to approach and understand the narratives contained therein. But to avoid imposing closure the narratives themselves, various women’s stories grouped by theme, continued on “without end” at the close of the book. The final story was a written synopsis by a young Bedouin woman comparing her understanding of how Bedouin women lived in the recent past (60 years before) with how they were living in her time (particularly with regard to social agency). Both Abu-Lughod’s choices in finishing with this particular story, and her refusal to “contain” the story, encourage the reader to imagine these stories and the lives of Bedouin women themselves as continuing into an endless future, one in which both change and endurance are as inevitable as drifts in windswept sand.

Abu-Lughod also chose to group the narratives of and about the many women with whom she worked into themes expressed by chapter headings such as “matrimony.” Abu-Lughod says she did this, not to encourage and continue what she regards as anthropological minimization through classification, but rather to challenge this practice by showing how the women’s stories are not subsumed by, but rather deconstruct, the chapter titles.

Thematic grouping of narratives is a long established practice in anthropology, whether they be narratives from or about groups of women (e.g., Landes 1938; Richardson; Reichard 1934) or individual women (Underhill 1979; Shostak 1981). More contemporary writers may continue to use a thematic grouping, although a shift can be seen in form and intention. Abu-Lughod is attempting to use such classification as a deliberate deconstructive technique. Wachowich’s use of the women’s own introductory comments to each narrative as a source of titles, usually
providing categories unrelated to Western chronology, has already been discussed. Sarris also presents those stories under chapter themes identified by McKay herself as being important in her own frame of reference, which might not be shared by others and almost certainly not shared by cultural outsiders. Blackman did the grouping of stories chronologically and, like Abu-Lughod named chapters by commonly used categories. Blackman, however, claims that these seemed to accurately reflect a woman’s life cycle events as the Haida saw them (1982:19). In this case the technique gives the stories a more general appeal and makes them approachable by a wide audience. My own dissertation has employed yet a different technique. As mentioned previously, I have re-arranged and grouped Diesing’s stories by theme as well, but the groupings are relative to the individual who is the main subject (grandmother, mother, self). Although I have certainly re-arranged and reworked the narratives that are contained within each group, I have deliberately avoided impressing a chronological or life-cycle ordering, and have in fact provided no further partitioning of these stories into any categories.

Anthropologists aren’t the only ones involved in writing life histories. There are now increasing numbers of Natives (again mostly women) who are choosing to write their own autobiographies or to serve as tribal biographers. For the Northwest Coast, I am familiar only with the book by George Clutesi (1990), written in a style that blends Western forms of short story narration with themes from traditional Native life, much as his art combined the Western medium of

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61 This is not a new occurrence: Emily Pauline Johnson, a famous Mohawk actress and writer, wrote her autobiography “The Moccasin Maker” published by Ryerson Press in 1913. But while such publications used to be rare, they are now becoming numerous as these women are claiming their right to speak for themselves.
watercolour painting with images derived from his youth. This book was published after his death in 1988.\textsuperscript{62}

Janet Finn, discussing the writings of Ella Deloria (one of the Boasians mentioned earlier) and Mourning Dove, reminds us of interesting considerations regarding the selection of the novel rather than the ethnography to express experience:

\textit{Does a novel have less “truth” value? By calling a work fiction, does one remove it from the realm of argumentation? Does that diminish its power to contest the history and practices to which it responds? In what forms can knowledge be packaged to best challenge the histories of misrepresentation by dominant groups?} (Finn 1995:133)

Contemporary writers such as Silko, whose autobiographical \textit{“Yellow Woman”} (1993) forms just part of the corpus of her eloquent and powerful ‘fictional’ writings, have undoubtedly done more to popularize awareness of Native concerns and Native lives than any number of ethnographies - because she and others like her write in a language that is accessible and create story lines which are interesting. On this point I agree with Parsons (1922) and the other contributors to her book - whether it is intended for a populist audience or an academic one, there is really no reason for anthropological texts to be dull. Unlike Parsons’ group, however, I do not think that it is either beneficial to the purposes of anthropology or respectful to the people being discussed if any

\textsuperscript{62}Brinhurst (1999:204) comments: "Several Haida and Northern Wakashan men and women have dictated their autobiographies, mostly in English, since the early 1930s [he does not name them]... But the earliest such document we have - the autobiography of the Nuuchahnnulth elder Saayaacchapis - was dictated in the Nootka language in late 1913 and early 1914 [in Sapir and Swadesh 1939:128-177]." For pictures of both “Chief Tom Sayachapis” and his grandson Alex Thomas, who recorded these stories while working for Sapir, see Kirk 1986:46-47.
purportedly ethnographic document is intentionally a work of fiction. "Real" life is quite interesting enough.

Although Diesing has allowed this dissertation (another piece of anthropological science) to be the vehicle for presenting her life story, we hope that telling her own story in her own words will make it accessible and interesting to people both inside and outside the discipline of anthropology - and particularly to present and future members of her own family.

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63 I say "intentionally" out of recognition of the contributions to the discipline of the postmodernist textualist movement in anthropology which has drawn our attention to how "imaginative" even the most positivist ethnographic work must be, and in acknowledgement of the efforts of psychologists and neuroscientists who have shown us how thoroughly constructed our "reality" is.
Feminist Theory, Embodiment and the Telling of Stories:

...models of truth are always bound up with cultural relations of power.  
- Daniel Clayton (1996:120)

Although there can be many ways to answer the sorts of questions Finn poses (in the previous section) concerning accuracy, authority, agency, and agenda in biographical representation, some of the most interesting, for my purposes, come from feminist theory, particularly with its emphasis on embodied knowledge, and the postmodern approaches in both anthropological and historical research.

Feminist theory has evolved since its emergence as a powerful political/epistemological orientation in the ‘sixties, seen by many as a universalizing dictate based on the beliefs and desires of an impassioned but select group of white, middle-class Western women (see for example Reiter 1975; Moraga and Anzaldua 1983; Sydie 1987). Responding to cultural critics such as hooks (1995) and Trinh (1989, 1991), challenged by deconstructionism and post-colonialism and denounced by minority groups and women of colour, feminist theorists have responded by becoming a diverse and vibrant group (see Behar and Gordon 1995; Cole and Phillips 1995; Camper 1994; de Valle 1993; Gluck and Patai 1991).

Feminist theory as applied to history stresses polyvocality, situatedness, and a constant attending to both blatant and hegemonic forms of power usage in both the creation and interrogation of ‘authorized’ histories. Accordingly, feminist theorists particularly value life histories as individualized, personally authorized windows into other realities - often officially silenced
Slatkin (1993:xi), discussing the autobiographical writings of European and American women involved in the visual arts, bluntly declares that "women stimulated to write their memoirs were anticipating their imminent erasure from history," while supporting Friedman's claim that "alienation from the historically imposed image of the self is what motivates the writing...Writing the self shatters the cultural hall of mirrors and breaks the silence imposed by male speech."

Silencing can take many forms: interrogating the literature to expose this silencing is one of the undertakings of feminist anthropologists. I mentioned previously the comparative over-representation of women anthropologists in areas of biography/life history, and the surprising under-representation of women who were the subjects of these studies. It is quite probable that those women focussed on male subjects at least in part because work that focussed on female subjects was not given serious academic attention - and was, in some cases at least, actively ridiculed. An interesting example of this form of institutionalized silencing is presented by Cole (in Bridgman et al. 1999) discussing the professional life of Ruth Landes, particularly her book "The Ojibwa Woman" (1938).

Landes was one of Boas cadre of doctoral students who was interested in the lives and stories of women. Working under the guidance of Ruth Benedict, Landes wrote Ojibwa Woman as a post-doctoral publication. According to Cole (1999:23-24):

culture was disputed by anthropologists for whom Ojibwa society represented a hunter-gatherer society where social relations are communal and egalitarian. …[further research in Brazil with women involved in a ritual possession cult (1938-39) had much the same result]: Her research was lambasted by critics... who objected to the ethnographic focus on women, to the discussion of male homosexuality, and, not incidentally, to Landes's personal comportment in the field ... an affair with a young Black Brazilian folklorist... As a result of their censuring, she was unable to find an academic publisher [for that work]...

[T]oward the end of her life [at a conference presentation at the University of Calgary, 1980] Landes reflected... 'Male and female scholars preceded me and followed me in both places for decades. Neither set of women, Indian and Brazilian Black, gained me straight professional attention...The Ojibwa Woman has been manhandled in our leading anthropological publications to the effect that I had followed some bias, either in selecting the women or in giving a warped picture. That is, my personality was focussed on, not theirs ... I was the presuming woman.'... [She cautioned]: 'Keep in mind that our women anthropologists are often depreciated as being emotionally prejudiced. It means they are not scientific; or intellectually as powerful as men; or even reliable. I was told this by no less an authority than Linton. Boas was dead.' (emphasis mine).

Such censorship came not only from androcentric male colleagues. None other than Margaret Mead wrote to Benedict (ibid:24) that Landes should "transform... the urban, complex, disorganized society picture with prostitution into the more typical primitive picture of integrated socially accepted transvestism." And she further commented that "If there were some way of teaching her to be either (a) a lady or (b) an ordinary academic female who would behave in routine ways in academic situations, it would be a help" - quite an amazing comment from a woman who prided herself on being anything but an “ordinary academic”!

Unfortunately, although Landes’ story is an extreme example of the silencing of those who choose to focus on an unempowered group, or who present an “atypical” analysis, it is not an unusual one. Since even now the careers of women academics are more vulnerable than their

64 Please see also Gacs et al. (1988:208-214).
male colleagues', and since Native women (and other non-Western women of colour) have certainly been seen as unempowered, and life histories have been seen as an "atypical" ethnological form, it should not be surprising that so many of those women who involved themselves with biographical/life history work chose male subjects - at least in part, it was a strategy for academic survival. Now feminism has helped make these subtle forces of oppression and regulation visible and therefore susceptible to debate, opposition, and alteration. And life history work is beginning to thrive in anthropology. This dissertation, involving two women focussing their discussion primarily on the activities of women, is one more contribution to that corpus of knowledge.

The stories of individual lives, like all other stories (including histories) come in multiple versions, depending on the teller and the audience. Alice Kehoe (1996:385) reminds us of the tendency of some Native "informants" to tell anthropologists what they expect to hear - a comment that Diesing herself echoes. These tellings can range from normative to inventive on the part of the teller. Cruikshank (1990) points out another creative possibility, showing how the three women she worked with presented the stories of their personal lives as interpretations of themes presented in their respective oral traditions.

In a later work discussing disparities between oral and written accounts of the same historical event, Cruikshank notes that "neither oral nor written versions can be treated simply as historical evidence to be sifted for 'facts'" but rather both serve as "windows on the way the past is constructed and discussed in different contexts, from the perspectives of actors enmeshed in

65 Based on the report "Academic Employment of Women in Anthropology" by Burton et al. available on the AAA website at: http://www.aaanet.org/committees/coswa/burton.htm
culturally distinct networks of social relationships.” She recommends that we focus on “identifying how distinct cognitive models generate different kinds of social analysis, leading to different interpretations of events, one of which gets included in official history, the others relegated to collective memory.” (Cruikshank 1996:435-6). There are many areas in Diesing’s stories that add a new perspective to “official history.” And of course, since Diesing insists that much of Haida cultural knowledge is family property, privately owned and not shared by others, even Haida “collective memory” does not hold uncontested versions of these stories - and occasionally may not hold any extant versions of them at all.

Freda Diesing, a storyteller in her own right, is well versed in NWC oral traditions. Has she, like Cruikshank’s friends, drawn upon those to shape the story of her own life? Perhaps. But certainly not in the explicit manner Cruikshank encountered. In the final section of this document, we will explore ways in which traditional stories might have interpenetrated Diesing’s life story. How might my lack of familiarity with those traditional stories have impacted upon my understanding? That, of course, I cannot say.

One aspect of Haida expression, however, surely did come in to play - although to what degree again I cannot say. That aspect is the Haida style, in all communications, to be subtle, indirect, ambiguous, and to rely on allusion to culturally embedded forms and images to say that which cannot be spoken (Boelscher 1988:83, 201). Although Diesing was not raised in Masset, and is not a fluent Haida speaker, we noted before that both her grandmother and her mother spoke ‘high’ Haida - a rich and formalized version of the language.66 They seem to have instilled that

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66 Boelscher (1988:83) discusses the knowledge and use of “high” words as “a form of symbolic capital,” indicating but not overtly claiming one’s high social status.
traditional communicative sensitivity in Diesing, who is well aware of what constitutes “proper talk”. She is always cognizant of the central importance of public opinion and ‘what people will say.’

Since I am not Haida, and do not understand these culturally-embedded meanings, I am sure Diesing has said much that I have missed. However, Diesing is fully aware that this dissertation is a publically available document, so may well use it as a vehicle to make statements that only other Haida will fully understand. Boelscher (1988:43, 49), in her detailed exploration of Haida forms of formal and informal communication, discusses such tactics as:

*a rhetoric of legitimacy* ...[wherein] *within the village context, the content and meaning of oral histories bearing on lineage relations and the tangible and intangible property of lineages are neither static, nor... universally accepted. The meaning of past events is constantly renegotiated because the oral histories of lineage relations implicate the social and political status of their present-day members*. She further argues that “*all public statements carry what Douglas (1966:100) has called a ‘conscious symbolic load’, and are in essence political statements, continuously questioning or granting legitimacy to social positions.*” (emphasis mine).

It must be noted, however, before supposing that Diesing might have chosen to publically present her life story as a self-maximizing tactic: I went looking for her to write about; she did not come to me. Fortunately, this dissertation does provide a way for Diesing to share with us some of her ‘windows on the world.’

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Please see also Blackman (1982).

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67 Please see also Blackman (1982).
Yet, as Mita Emad (1997) reminds us: "Certainly fieldwork is never solely a discursive venture. Where are our bodies when we are doing fieldwork?" One of the areas in which feminists have had significant impact is in reconnecting intellectual knowledge with embodied knowledge—a form of phenomenologists' "Being in the world." The phenomenology of the body as developed by Merleau-Ponty (1962) is particularly popular (see for example Cove 1987; Csordas 1994; Jackson 1996; Nuttall 1997; Stoller 1997). Increasingly anthropologists are situating themselves in their ethnographies not only intellectually but physically as well, paying attention to their own somatic interaction with the cultural, natural, and built environments in which their work takes place. They are also paying more attention to their subjects' physical interactions with and perceptions of the world. Andrew Strathern (1996:203) sees the concept of embodiment as being "the transformer or the transducer" enabling the contemporary shift in conceptualizing anthropology as being "verb" centred (on process), rather than "noun" centred (on categories).

Combining the recent anthropological sensitivity to issues of agency, gender politics and praxis with the phenomenologist's attentive approach to being in the world (French 1994:75) has produced an interesting contemporary anthropology—one that stresses intersubjectivity and has revitalized apprenticeship as an ethnographic method. Accordingly, very interesting studies, such as "Embodying Culture" by Denise Nuttall (1996), are being done by anthropologists who foreground action to word, and who situate themselves (and their bodies) centrally in their research (see especially Jackson 1996; Stoller 1997; Stoller and Olkes 1987; Young and Goulet 1994).
Of particular relevance to this dissertation is the latest work by Jackson (1995). A long established practitioner of the embodiment approach to anthropology, this book explores the problem of “being at home in the world.” This is a topic particularly important in these times of increasing mobility and dislocation of individuals and groups from their home lands and their families.

For this study Jackson worked with Australian Aborigines, who are only now getting back some of their ancestral lands after generations of being dispossessed by colonialist settlement, modern development and globalization agendas. Since Aborigines have a particularly strong and unique attachment to land through “the Dreaming” that constitutes both their metaphorical world and their physical being, living with and learning from these people was particularly informative for Jackson’s work. The understanding at which he ultimately arrived was that “home” was both ontological and existential - being in a place to which you feel connected and physically and spiritually safe. It is both the place where the various events that define social and individual life “happen,” and the feeling that what you do “matters,” where “there is a balanced reciprocity between the world beyond us and the world within which we move” (Jackson 1995:154). Thus it was important for Aborigines not only to physically repossess more of the lands that they had lost, but to also have their concerns regarding the lands that now “belong” to others given serious attention. Aboriginal individuals had to once again feel that they “mattered” in the world to feel at home - wherever they may be physically located at any time.

This approach to home as being both a physical connection with place and an existential experience of agency can be kept in mind while reading Diesing’s stories, and mapped against
her own movements (and those of her grandmother and mother) through physical spaces and social categories, and through various degrees of feeling that she “matters.” It can provide another approach to understanding what it means to be “a woman from Masset.”

This re-cognition of the centrality of the human body to the study of human beings has been stimulated by many sources. Medical anthropologists such as Strathern (1996) and the contributors to the volume edited by Csordas (1994) are bringing their cross-culturally conditioned physiological expertise to bear on the full range of human activities. Women have been particularly involved with re-introducing and problematizing issues of the body, whether it be from a perspective of feminist theory (Behar and Gordon 1995; Bridgman et al. 1999; Cole and Phillips 1995), psychology (Gallop 1988) or cultural criticism (Camper 1994; hooks 1995; Trinh 1989, 1991). The boundaries of what constitutes human physicality have been radically challenged by the introduction of concepts from cybernetics led by Donna Haraway (1990), while Marilyn Strathern (1995) has raised questions about the possibilities for cloning and copyrighting of humans (the ultimate extension of Derrida’s claim that “all is text”?). The very intense use of phenomenology and self-reflexivity in Cove’s (1987) study of Tsimshian mythology, and Wilson Duff’s explorations of the uses of alternate states of consciousness as a path to discovering ‘meaning’ in NWC art (Abbott 1981; Anderson 1996; Roth 1999) might be seen as earlier forms of using embodiment to push the boundaries of empiricism in methods of accessing information.

One of the earlier scholars to direct attention to embodiment was Bourdieu (1977) with his discussion of practice theory. Particularly relevant is his use of the concept of “habitus,” the
forms and practices that have been entrained in the body, manifesting themselves as predispositions and reproducing themselves through action, to interpret social behaviour and social processes. Bourdieu's theory of practice has undergone significant re-fashioning into both performance theory and contemporary approaches to embodiment (see Jackson 1983).

Performance theory itself has been widely used, in folklore as formulated and developed by Bauman (1977, 1989, 1992), and as praxis, in feminist fields of investigation - particularly gender studies. The deconstruction and interrogation of the concept of gender by those who use habitus and performance theory as altered into "performative theory" by scholars such as Morris (1995) is particularly relevant to my discussion of identity negotiation. In the same way that I discuss (Section III) how race continues to be reified as a natural endowment when it is profoundly social in construction, and is another aspect of negotiated identity, performativity as used in culture studies argues that gender, and even sex, are also socially constructed rather than biologically determined, and are entrained and embodied through enactment - that to a large extent, we are what we do (see Morris 1995).

Although both of these theoretical perspectives are useful here, my most significant point of departure from them is in focus: although indeed discussing issues of embodiment, the individual body is a secondary locus of interest in both practice and performance theory. Since ultimately they look at social practices they do not form particularly useful analytical tools here since they do not allow sufficient scope for personal agency to be primary. The focus of this dissertation is on the individual, which is why my first approach to fieldwork was through apprenticeship, which emphasizes personal interaction and intersubjectivity.
An embodied anthropology would seem essential when working with an artist, even if not doing an apprenticeship. Since embodied knowledge applies to the knowledge held by the artist as well as that transmitted, this sharing of lived experience is an irreplaceable method for accessing forms of non-verbal knowledge. Becker, writing from the perspective of an art historian, discusses in great detail the physical nature of art as creation and process:

"conventions of the craft get embodied in the tiniest details of the artist's physical experience and makes clear the inseparable connection between the physical act and the conceptual work that go into making art; in fact, to speak of them as two different things that need connecting misstates the case... [Artists] experience conventional knowledge as a resource at a very primitive level, so deeply ingrained that they can think and act in conventional terms without hesitation or forethought. They experience editorial choices as acts rather than choices... in those moments of simultaneous feeling and thinking what is being thought consists of a continual dialogue with the world relevant to the choices being made. The editorial and creative moment fuse in a dialogue with an art world. (Becker 1982:203-204)

Physicality is particularly important for a carver, who is always mindful of the relationships in space and time (as movement) between the room, the light, the piece of wood, the razor-sharp tools, and her/his body. Large pieces are hefted or wrestled into place, lain under, stretched over, contorted around. Detailed work brings you pore to pore with the wood, sharing the same breath. Small pieces are often cradled in the lap or hand. Of course a bench and vice are recommended, but... sometimes the only satisfactory approach is to hold something, to be aware of it with every inch of nearby skin - as well as constantly directing one’s conscious attention to exactly where that blade is! Hands are always moving over surfaces, judging form, depth, symmetry, and general feel. Carve look touch look carve touch look touch carve ... always motion, rhythm, attention, connection.
It is most particularly in this area that Haraway’s (1990, 1991, 1997) provocative discussions of cybernetics have application in this dissertation. Haraway raised the idea that we are all to some degree “cyborgs” - part human, part machine - because of the increasing level of the integration of technology into our cultures and into our very bodies. She discusses how technology changes not only our activities as individuals and our social processes, but the very nature of what it is to be human - always a fundamental area of concern for anthropologists.

With regard to Diesing, I argue that defining what it is to be human, a woman, an artist and a mixed-blood Haida, in both physical and social terms, has been an ongoing process in her life. In response, one of the decisions she has made is to minimize the use of technology in the creative act. She has done this for both aesthetic and medical reasons. Not only has her visual impairment affected her choice of media for artistic expression and her concern for the health of her lungs caused her to reject the use of almost all power tools, she also prefers the sounds and motions (rhythmic and soothing) of carving with knives and adzes, and the look and feel of a hand-carved piece.

The very act of carving with hand tools - through the repetition of ancient motions, the slowness of the process which allows ample time for thought (and can itself be a form of meditation), the high degree of control over finished form, and the sense of relationship between artist and creation that the process engenders, provides an ontological connectedness with one’s history and humanity that more than compensates for limitations of perfection or quantity of “output.” Diesing is not one to embrace “the cyborg” as desirable.
As previously mentioned, anthropology at the end of the 20th Century has been increasingly turning its focus from what Andrew Strathern has called "an anthropology of nouns" (society, person, individual, self, consciousness) to "an anthropology of verbs" (practising, experiencing, enacting, representing, embodying). "The stress is thus on action and performance, on doing rather than being, or on the being that resides in doing, that issues from and is expressed only in doing. Performativity is made central to social life generally." (Strathern 1996:202).

Developments emerging from scholarship within oral history and folklore have paralleled (and informed) the trend across anthropology, discussed in the previous section, to foreground performance and inter-subjectivity. From Bauman's (1977, 1992) groundbreaking work in performance theory in folklore studies to the emphasis on the performative and interactional aspects of oral tradition (Cruikshank 1992; Silko 1981), to Myer's (1994) exploration of the possibilities for the fulfilment of multiple agendas in the presentation of self and culture through interactive public display, the contingent, multifaceted, and intersubjective aspects of knowledge creation and communication are being recognized as central.

"[H]umans are defined by their desire to tell stories" states Swift (in Brown and Vibert 1996:xix), and storytelling is indeed a quintessentially human form of knowledge creation and communication activity worldwide. As Brighurst (1999:47) describes it: "A story is not a solid object or a solitary entity but a transformative relationship ... And stories, whether mythical or historical, timeless or temporal, never exist in isolation. They are linked to other stories, forming a timeless or temporal web."
Which returns us to Boelscher's (1989) discussion of the "symbolic load" of all public communications for the Masset Haida, wherein all acts of being publically present (or absent) and all acts of speaking (or remaining silent\(^{68}\)) are examined, discussed, and interpreted.

"Public" acts are not necessarily defined by formality or large scale - any communication between individuals (especially from different families) may be considered a public performance. In this respect, Goffman's (1956) model of symbolic interactionism, and especially his (1967:2) concepts of "face" in his "sociology of occasions" studies fit Haida society well.\(^{69}\)

In fact, of course, all humans are performers in this manner, although at some times more consciously and deliberately than at others. Storytelling is a performative event, also at some times more consciously and deliberately than at others, depending on the occasion, the storyteller and the audience. Richard Bauman (1977:11) has defined performance as:

> the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence [which rests on] the knowledge and ability to speak in socially appropriate ways . . . [It] calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness of the act of expression and gives license to the audience to regard the act of expression and the performer with special intensity . . . Performance becomes constitutive of the domain of verbal art as spoken communication.

There are, of course, many more forms of communication than the spoken word, and many more things that are communicated in any speech act than just words. With regard to storytelling, which continues as a vital component in Native cultures, Winona Stevenson (1996:307) says:

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\(^{68}\) The significance of silence, both within conversations and about entire areas of experience, will be discussed in detail further on.

\(^{69}\) Goffman (1967:4,5) defines "face" as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes . . . A person tends to experience an immediate emotional response to the face which a contact with others allows him. . . . One's own face and the face of others are constructs of the same order."

Our grandparents were wonderful storytellers. The way they interacted with their listeners, us children, as well as their body language, tones, and inflections, combined to bring the stories of mosom Charles to life. When grandma Clara Pratt told stories, her eyes danced and glistened. The eyes of Old People, especially grandparents, are windows to the past through which we are honoured by visions of our deceased relatives. Oral history, in both its content and its form conveys the humanity, character and environment of our ancestors in ways the written word simply cannot duplicate.

Leslie Marmon Silko, a renowned author from Laguna Pueblo, writes eloquently about the power and necessity of storytelling in Native American life. In *Ceremony* (Silko 1977:2), she narrates:

"I will tell you something about stories, [he said]  
They aren't just entertainment.  
Don't be fooled.  
They are all we have, you see  
all we have to fight off  
ilness and death.  

You don't have anything  
if you don't have the stories . . .  
There is life here for the people."\(^70\)

Storytelling is relevant to my work with Diesing, not only because she was raised with storytelling, but also because storytelling is what she does, not as a grandmother surrounded by children, but as a teacher surrounded by students, and as an artist, invisibly communicating through the visibility of her work with an unknown, unseen audience.

As a storyteller Diesing is of course a performer; as a dancer, singer, and tour guide, she has even more deliberately assumed the role of performer, accepting the responsibility of

\(^70\) Compare this to Boelscher (1989:43), discussing the continuing centrality of storytelling to contemporary Masset Haida: "What may appear as mere "stories" or anecdotes about the Haida past to outsiders are evaluated by the Haida from a culture-internal perspective as rhetoric of legitimacy... [including rights to lineage tangible and intangible property]... the meaning of past events is constantly renegotiated because the oral histories of lineage relations implicate the social and political status of their present-day members."
competently presenting knowledge to her audience, trying for an "enhancement of experience" (Bauman 1977:44). As an artist she prefers to create dance costumes and masks, and when possible poles, all of which are intimately tied into Haida performances of identity. Additionally, via this dissertation, Diesing provides a virtual performance, a presentation in print in which she shapes some of the stories that have shaped her life.
Haida Art: Artists and Anthropologists

"Among these people all other aspects of decorative art are weak as compared to their artistic expression in woodwork or in art forms derived from woodwork. All this work is done by men and hence it follows that the men are the creative artists while the women seem to be lacking in inventiveness and artistic sense."

- Franz Boas (1927:18)

So it has been written; so it has been done.

Franz Boas’ "Primitive Art" served as a bible to generations of anthropologists and art historians writing about “primitive” art, and even today is central to the discussion and debates about Northwest Coast art. Compare, for instance, Jonaitis’ (1995) "A Wealth of Thought" to Halpin’s (1994) "A Critique of the Boasian Paradigm for Northwest Coast Art.” One is a tribute, the other a criticism, but both deal with Boas’ overwhelming influence. Particularly as developed through the other bible of NWC art, Bill Holm’s "Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form," this formalist approach dominated both the thinking and the doing of NWC art throughout the 20th Century.

Beginning over one hundred years ago, Boas developed an explicitly anti-evolutionist agenda, which expanded during the pre- and inter-war years into an equally explicit anti-racist agenda (perhaps not surprising for one who came to America from a German Jewish background). While his compulsion for the accumulation of ‘authentic’ and ‘accurate’ empirical data may have derived mostly from his training in the physical sciences, his focus on the details of representation in NWC art was almost certainly due in large part to his fervent desire to support
his ‘different but equal’ theories regarding the intellectual abilities and developmental levels of the various human races. He also had a stated goal “to determine the dynamic conditions under which art styles grow up” (Boas 1927:7) - which itself sounds a lot like the contemporary desires to explore the social construction of art.\footnote{Please note also Boas’ implication that art styles are in some way like living organisms, which can both grow and mature, and the implications for the reification of the NWC art style in Diesing’s discussions.}

One of Boas’ theories regarding the forms of art is particularly relevant to my “embodied knowledge” research interests. He puts forward the idea that “the ideal forms are based on standards developed by expert technicians” (1927:12), and that “there is a close connection between the development of skill in an industry and artistic activity” (p. 19). Since “Virtuosity, complete control of technical processes ... means an automatic regularity of movements” (p. 20), ultimately a culture’s art forms are based more on their experience of technology than their experience of nature (prefiguring Haraway?). When describing types of symmetry, he relates them directly to our forms of physical perception and movement, and shows how art can be a form of psycho/somatic performance.\footnote{I am spelling psycho/somatic in this way to highlight its original meaning (from the Greek) of something being simultaneously of the mind (psyche) and of the body (soma). Sadly, the term psychosomatic has been distorted in popular understanding to imply an “imagined” condition rather than a “real” one.}

One of Boas’ many students was Erna Gunther. As a professor with an enduring dedication to the study of Northwest Coast art (e.g., see Gunther 1962,1968), Dr. Gunther shared both the content and the passion of her knowledge with students at the University of Washington at Seattle, students who included Bill Holm, Wilson Duff, Michael Kew, Melville Jacobs and Roy Carlson, all of whom were to have a profound impact on both the development and
intellectualization of Northwest Coast art (Darnell 2001; Roth 1999). Interestingly, although Erna Gunther was publically speaking of Northwest coast material as being “art” rather than “ethnographic object” as early as the 1940s (for example in her speech at the same 1948 conference at UBC at which Neel spoke [in Hawthorn 1948]), and anthropologists such as Barbeau (1957) had already been documenting the work of specific NWC carvers, the credit for this conceptual shift to NWC masterworks of art is commonly attributed to Wilson Duff, Bill Reid and Bill Holm in the 1967 “Arts of the Raven” exhibition.

Bill Holm, writing almost half a century after Boas, criticized some of Boas’ positivist claims regarding representation, and focussed his “Analysis of Form” (1965) not on representations, but on structure, composition, and technique. The production of most Native art had declined considerably in both quantity and quality in the decades preceding Holm’s work, and, in a manner appropriate to the “salvage paradigm” still active in anthropology at that time, Holm studied existing collections in painstaking detail to isolate the design elements. Taking a significant step further than Boas (and most other anthropologists), Holm put theory to practice and taught himself to carve in the NWC style. Holm, who also became a Professor at the University of Washington at Seattle, continued the Boasian tradition. He trained many of the anthropologists and art historians who have been teaching, researching, critiquing, and theorizing Northwest Coast art for the past several decades.

Those Northwest Coast academics whom he did not teach personally are nonetheless familiar with his work, which is canonical. Holm literally defined the vocabulary for discussing Northwest Coast art. Beyond the academic realm, Holm’s “Analysis of Form” has been used as
a guide by carvers ever since its original publication in 1965. The great advantage of Holm’s work is that he made explicit the design principles that lay behind Northwest Coast art, many of which had been forgotten or abandoned in the period of artistic decline in the early 20th Century. The disadvantage is that Holm’s analysis of the art was widely interpreted as a set of defining “rules,” serving as a conservative force in what was quickly reified as the Northwest Coast Art “Style.” Diesing has considerable respect for the work of Bill Holm (with whom she studied at ‘Ksan), and uses his book as reference text in all her workshops. My own first bas-relief assignment from Diesing was to reproduce his design (Holm 1965:29) as a study in good line and form.

As a consequence of Holm’s own experience of the physicality of the process of artistic production, he supported Boas’ assertion of a relationship between repetition leading to virtuosity of movement and the forms of the art created, particularly as related to the “space and time” movements of dance.

*To say that there may be a kinesthetic relationship between this movement [required to carve a formline] and dance movement is not to say that there is any visual or spatial similarity, although there may be, but to a lesser degree. Because of the purely sensory nature of the suggested relationship, it is difficult, if not impossible, for one who has not personally participated in both activities to be aware of it.* (Holm 1968:93)

This is a particularly interesting observation, given Boas’ glib assertion (above) that woodworking was ‘man’s work’. Leaving aside completely his derogatory comments about women’s “inventiveness and artistic sense,” and postponing for a moment his dismissal of the skills required in producing the “women’s arts” of basket making and weaving which had so impressed the early explorers (Norton 1985; Wright 2001), there is
clear evidence both in the oral tradition as Diesing relates and in museums’ ethnographic collection that NWC women did at least some carving in the past (Slade 1989). And, of course, women did dance, at least historically and certainly presently. So if indeed the artistic virtuosity is tied to dance virtuosity rather than one’s skills at chopping a tree, women would have had more than ample opportunities to develop that virtuosity. The non-recognition of women carvers in the “official” record of NWC carvers might be at least partly an artifact of the patriarchal practices of anthropology. Unfortunately, as Brown and Vibert (1996:xviii) remind us, documents and ideas gain authority simply by being referred to and repeated by others, and, on this continent at least, few anthropologists are more referred to than Boas.

It is interesting, though, how insidious can be the effect of one’s understanding of the opinions of experts in shaping one’s own (pre-)conceptions. Although I long protested Boas’ insult to women, I was equally guilty. When considering the relationship of Haida women artists to academics, and the exclusionary gendering they helped impose upon the shaping of the Northwest Coast art scene, my concept of “artist” completely excluded those working in basketry and weaving. That I was not even aware of this until a subtle challenge by Dr. Michael Kew (M. Kew 2002 personal communication) brought it to my

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73 See for example mask VII-C-143 carved before 1903 by a Tsimshian woman called Tsixgax, in the collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and a shaman’s rattle HN 1254 carved by the mother of the Gitksan shaman Peter John of Hazelton, in the collection of the Academy of Medicine in the Royal Ontario Museum. I found these artifacts while doing research on Tsimshian shamanism. I am confident that if one were to review museum documentation for their Haida artifacts, many more carvings by women would be found - although more often than not, no reference at all is made to the creator of these articles.

74 And what of the skills developed using other similarly rhythmic motions, such as paddling canoes, slicing fish or digging up roots - all of which were done by women.
attention is both embarrassing and disturbing. Particularly given that in Diesing’s conversations she so clearly does identity these people as fellow “artists”!

Another anthropologist whose impact on the conceptualization of art (and the doing of anthropology) is pervasive, is Claude Lévi-Strauss. His theorization, which became known as structuralism, shifted emphasis away from surface form to hidden meaning, and aimed to show the unity of human thought through the mind’s structuring of concepts into pairs of binary oppositions. His application of structuralist analysis to NWC produced the classic “The Way of the Masks” (1975), and fostered a new approach to NWC art. Some, however, like Boelscher (1989:5) argue that structuralists, by resolving ambiguities and concretizing the polarity of opposites, missed the most important aspect of these structures - that they resulted from “contradictions emerging from social action, and were hence dynamic.”75 By that time, the discourse regarding NWC art had made the transition from ‘ethnographic object’ to ‘art object’,”76 and the “rebirth” of Native artistic culture became the new “object” of analysis, in the glowing terms of a cultural ‘Renaissance’ (a term which is now being contested by Native groups who say this is a Eurocentric judgment).

75 Please note Halpin’s (1994) discussion as well on the essential nature of ambiguity in NWC art (developing Duff and challenging Boas), and various writers (especially Guedon) in Seguin (1984) of the centrality of ambiguity and transformation in NWC worldviews.

76 This transition was stimulated in no small part by centennial multiculturalism activities and the “Arts of the Raven” exhibition by Holm, Reid, Duff and Shadbolt. A discussion based on Becker’s (1982) model of the creation of “artworlds” will follow.
One of the acclaimed leaders of that Renaissance was Bill Reid, broadcaster and jeweller turned Haida carver, and, like his contemporary Holm, largely self-taught from studying works in the ethnographic collection. As mentioned previously, Bill Reid had been involved with Mungo Martin in the UBC totem pole restoration project. Mungo Martin, uncle of Ellen Neel, had a profound effect himself on the practical teaching and public performance of Northwest Coast art, particularly through the public carving projects he undertook for the Provincial Museum in Victoria (see Nuytten, 1982 and Hawthorn 1993). Martin also had an effect on the theorizing of Northwest Coast art, through his extensive conversations with Wilson Duff, who was at that time a curator with the museum, and later of course became a professor at UBC (Abbott 1981; Roth 1999). Bill Reid also worked with the young Robert Davidson, then characterized as the rising star of Northwest Coast Native artists (Roth 1999). Bill Reid eventually married one of Lévi-Strauss’ students (Martine de Widerspach-Thor), who came from France to research NWC art, and who studied with, among others, Wilson Duff. Robert Davidson married Susan Thomas, another UBC student of Wilson Duff researching Northwest Coast art. Scholarship and practice in NWC art merged into a close little community, particularly at UBC and MOA.

Wilson Duff, who was one of Gunther’s students, played a pivotal role in the situation of Northwest Coast art. His contribution was significant in several areas impacting directly on the artistic community. First, his ongoing research on Northwest Coast Native

77 Mungo Martin’s wife Ababhya played a central role too, regarding MOA’s collection of Kwakwaka’wakw artifacts, her public “performances” of basket making and weaving, and her sociability. This is mentioned briefly in works such as Hawthorn (1993), but she has never received the acknowledgement accorded her husband.
communities, beginning with his undergraduate studies at UBC, and his ideological commitment to helping Native peoples achieve justice in the political arena. Then, his active involvement with the contextualization and “restoration” of Northwest Coast material culture in his capacity as a curator with the Provincial Museum in Victoria. This saw Duff involved with the totem pole restoration project with Mungo Martin and the Hunts, and his participation in the museums’ now-controversial totem pole “salvage” project, which included many other notable BC archaeologists and anthropologists - and the broadcaster Bill Reid. Later, as a UBC professor, Duff made a major contribution to “The Arts of the Raven” exhibition, (marking the beginning of his intense involvement with the art and memory of Charles Edenshaw), and his endless search for “meaning” in Haida art, which he shared with the next generation of UBC students.

Duff began as a conventional scholar and ended (by committing suicide in 1976, in his UBC office) being regarded as highly unconventional both in his methods (such as the use of altered states of consciousness, and particularly hypnopompic imagery (Duff in Roth 1999), in his search for “truth” about Northwest Coast art (Roth 1999; Abbott 1981; Anderson 1996). Ultimately a self-reflexive scholar his work combined the focus on external form from Boas, the emphasis on hidden structure from Lévi-Strauss and the belief in unconscious motivations from Freud, and moved the analysis of Northwest Coast art into realms it had never been before. Duff’s legacy remains strong at UBC today.79

78 “It could be said that the purpose of art is to provide guises for truth.” (Duff in Roth 1999).

79 Please see Roth (1999) for a fascinating exploration of Duff’s teachings and influence as remembered by his colleagues.
The triumvirate of Duff, Holm, and Reid, had a synergistic effect on the seeing and doing of Northwest Coast art for generations. There is no better place to locate the power of that synergistic energy, particularly as funnelled through to the public realm by the direction of Doris Shadbolt, than in “The Arts of the Raven” exhibition of 1967, mentioned repeatedly throughout this dissertation.

This was the first exhibition of Northwest Coast material culture to speak of the objects, those “silent products of anonymous artists” (Duff, catalogue) as works of art rather than ethnographic artifacts and display them as art works, in the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG). The Gallery Director, Doris Shadbolt, stated that intention firmly in her introduction: “this is an exhibition of art, high art, not ethnology ...to explicate and establish its claim to greatness.” The shaping of the discourse around Northwest Coast art that resulted from this exhibition was one infused with a self-serving aura of individual genius and deep intellectualization. It was highly Modernist, as was appropriate to the times, in that it celebrated the unique genius of the individual artist, particularly through the objects in Duff’s “Masterworks” gallery of Charles Edenshaw. It was highly elitist, celebrating the superiority of some art (particularly Haida art) and some artists (particularly the Edenshaws) over others, and praising the insight and discernment of the connoisseurs who recognized, assembled, and appreciated that art. It

80 But see Roth’s (1999) discussion of how the displaying of these works as “isolated, beautiful things to be pleasantly contemplated in a minimalist gallery setting” and the “location of the meanings of the Haida objects ...in a nostalgic, ethnohistoric construction of a pre-contact Haida culture textually steeped in spiritual and social significance” facilitated the academic agenda of appropriating the remains of a “dead” culture and allowed their easy assimilation into Euro-Canadian culture - becoming “the last vehicle for consumption of the Other.”

81 In addition to the intellectual superiority of Haida art, Duff (catalogue) also praised the “dramatic, flamboyant” nature of Kwakwaka’wakw Northern coastal art, while denigrating, by benign neglect, Salish art (not being the right style) - a stigma that southern artists have had to work hard against for over 3 decades.
was a highly intellectualized discourse as well - depicting the thinker and his thinking man’s art full of deep meaning, while at the same time being a projection of sexuality and emotion. It was a discourse of self-serving distancing, with Reid’s comments (catalogue) about “them” ("they were... but now they are no longer... but I am"). It was also a totally gendered discourse: all the “masters” who created and who appreciated this art, and those to whom the continuation of the tradition was lovingly entrusted, that “promising future in the hands of young Robert Davidson,” (Duff, catalogue) were depicted as male (even though the curators readily admitted to really having had no idea who really made most of those “masterpieces” - most attributions were simply educated guesses, often proving to be incorrect 82 - and surely Davidson was not the only Native carver, or even Haida carver, who was “promising”). And it set the tone of scholarship and of artistic production for decades - being the matrix for the formation of the NWC art world.

“But whose aesthetic standards are being used?” they query, rhetorically (Duff, catalogue). “But whose agenda is being advanced?” ask later scholars like Roth (1999) and Crosby (1997).

Roth (1999, incorporating Crosby, 1994) expounds:

_That Charles Edenshaw was selected by these co-curators as the master who signified the apogee of genius and artistry for all of Northwest Coast art was not "natural" but a complex construction at a particular moment in time, grounded upon an already established and lengthy history of_

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82 Roth (1999) observes: “Charles Edenshaw’s works occupy an elevated position within the discourses of Northwest Coast art, and to identify a work as an Edenshaw is to increase its value ten-fold over an equivalent, non-Edenshaw piece.”
anthropological interest in this Haida artist. Charles Edenshaw had been constructed as singular carver some fifty years prior to the 1967 Arts of the Raven exhibit by Franz Boas in his seminal 1927 text Primitive Art, in which Boas describes Edenshaw as "the best carver and painter...among the Haida" (Boas 1955 [1927]:212). In a 1914 letter to anthropologist Edward Sapir, Victoria-based C.F. Newcombe (cited in Cole 1985:195) described Edenshaw as "the best carver in wood and stone now living." Charles Edenshaw's work, represented in abundance in museum collections and highly desired objects, has been, and continues to be the centrepoint by which male Haida art (and, by extension, much Northwest Coast art in general) is judged.

Marcia Crosby has recently argued that many individual interests were also served through the selection of Edenshaw and his construction, within a modernist paradigm, as unrivalled, individual genius. Arts of the Raven created a lineage of purified cultural authenticity, a lineage of genius and mastery was traced between Edenshaw and his descendents, Bill Reid and a young Robert Davidson. For the white curators of this exhibit, who were in charge of acquisitions and building collections within their respective institutional locations, this exhibit both reinforced and expanded their area of expertise in Primitive and / or Indian art (Crosby 1994:30).

There is no doubt that careers were built upon the success of that exhibition (see also Macnair et al. 1984). But were many, or any, of the direct beneficiaries female, one wonders? Diesing says she barely knew Duff, and remembers him only as a professor she "met at a party - and some of the others were giving him a hard time about his ideas. They were quite different."

Meanwhile, both Duff and Holm pursued an interest, originating with Barbeau (with whom Duff spent the year 1958, at the National Museum of Canada [Anderson 1996]), in identifying the individual artists who created the pieces held in museums' ethnographic collections (although they were particularly interested in identifying and analysing the work of the Edenshaws). This interest in historical attribution through analysis of style continues even today in the work of anthropologists such as Peter Macnair, and Robin
Wright, as illustrated by Wright’s (1998) article and subsequent book (2001) in which she argues that many attributions to Charles Edenshaw are actually the work of two other Haida artists, “John Gwaythihl” and “Simeon Stiltha.” Her work is particularly relevant to mine, as Simeon Stiltha (from Yan) was Freda Diesing’s maternal great-grandfather - the father of the grandmother with whom Diesing spent her childhood summers. Unfortunately Stilta (Diesing’s preferred spelling) had died before Diesing was born. However, he and her ancestral “uncles” nevertheless had an influence on Diesing’s work, as she was repeatedly told by other living relatives what good carvers they had been, a heritage she was proud to continue.83 Also her uncle Willie Mathews (then WEAH, Town Chief of Masset) told Diesing, when she asked him what he thought about her carving, that “your uncles would be proud of you” - a very significant statement in Haida society.

Lecturing to a class regarding the difficulties of attribution, a later Duff (quoted in Roth 1999), speaking of himself in the third person, says:

> Now that [Arts of the Raven] was a funny experience: bringing together that great wealth of Northwest Coast art, and seeing emerge from it the personalities and the styles of a few, great, individual artists. And so since that time one of the main streams of research in this field has been to try to learn the styles of those individual artists, to straighten out the art history, to see if we could find out who it was, made them. And Duff has done quite a bit of work with these chests, because he had a real strong hunch, at that time, that these were made by the same man. He thought at that time that the man was Charlie Edenshaw. He didn’t know that it was his uncle, the older Edenshaw. Now how do you go about looking at a great, anonymous mass of tribal art, and trying to find individual styles in it, especially when you can’t read what the art means, when it’s highly

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83 One elderly aunt claimed that many of the poles at Yan and Masset had been carved by Stilta, and that much of the work done by Charles Edenshaw (whom she described as physically unable to do large pieces) had actually been done by Stilta.
abstract and you don't really know what's significant about it. Well, the way he tried it was to see if he could find in the whole series of material innovations, what looked like the innovations of individual artists, to lead him to recognize the styles of individuals (Duff audio recording, MOA Archives, tape 95 MOA "301 - On Edenshaw '73").

Increasingly, anthropologists are turning to the artists themselves for an understanding of Haida art. Peter Macnair (1993) applies a formalist approach to the work of specific historical artists in a search for their own meaning and intentions, and works regularly with living artists to apprehend their emic understanding. Diesing says she knows him well, having worked with him since the beginning of his career as an anthropologist. Macnair recently (1999) curated an exhibition of NWC masks at the VAG, in which one of Diesing’s masks was featured. She participated in the opening of that exhibition, and returned later in June to give guest lectures. Diesing comments how moved she was to see her masks hanging with those of her great-grandfather Stilta for the first time. She notes especially that her "Mom would have been really excited to see that, 'cause she always knew her grandfather was a carver, she had been told, but his work - the smaller things, like his masks and small carvings - she'd never seen them; they hadn't been identified, so she never knew where they were." It is interesting to speculate at this point about Bringhurst's (1999:103) discussion of the Haida myth wherein the blankets talked with each other. If blankets can talk with each other, can masks talk with each other too? Imagine the fascinating conversations those masks might have had - sharing multiple generations of family stories!
New approaches to scholarship in Native art are developing under post-colonial influences. Priya Helweg (1995) has interviewed numerous contemporary female artists, including Diesing, for their perspectives on everything from the daily practicalities of being a productive artist to their relationship to NWC art and the NWC artistic community as women, to their reception as ‘Indian’ artists by the fine arts world. I heard Diesing’s tape of their interview while I was in Terrace, and found it particularly intriguing for what it indicated about Diesing’s promotion of her own agenda (which I understand to be to contextualize Northwest Coast art, and hers in particular, in the lived history of its originators). Although Helweg had a different agenda (focussing on contemporary - and particularly young - female artists) Diesing ensured that her own agenda prevailed - even in this highly structured interview situation.

Marcia Crosby (1997) explores yet another aspect of NWC art. Bringing her own perspective as an urban Haida and an art historian to the understanding of NWC art, she interrogates its ongoing association with land claims negotiations and the affirmation of “seamless” NWC First Nations identities. In a paper discussing how and why we memorialize people which she delivered at the Bill Reid Conference at UBC (1999), Crosby notes the general absence of anthropological investigation of the phenomenon of “silence” in the stories of elder Haida, of the times when it was “not acceptable” to be

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84This is a different kind of silence than that Boelscher describes as being a technique of Haida discourse - yet they are related, as the one inheres within the other. Boelscher observes (1989:208): "One of the few notable essays on the function of silence in North American Indian society is Basso’s article on silence in Western Apache discourse (Basso 1978). Basso explains silence among the western Apache as a function of the definition of a situation. The absence of verbal communication occurs when roles and statuses are ambiguous and the outcome of social relations is unpredictable (Basso: 83). He develops his hypothesis based on the observation that roles are not fixed but are the outcome of ongoing processes. Thus, silence can be interpreted as a negotiating space, as time where status ambiguities are sorted out or evaluated. This does not seem far removed from the function of silence in Haida discourse."
Native, so such things were simply not discussed - noting that heritage was not simply not discussed, it was actively not discussed, and this attitude of silence was passed on to the children. Such was the case in Sophie Reid’s life (Bill Reid’s mother). Such was also the case in most of Flossie Lambly’s life, and Diesing says it was only in the final years of her mother’s life that she became an open advocate of Haida culture. Crosby criticises not the silence of these women, but the silence of anthropologists in not discussing it, or of using it as a trope, part of the construction of a “dark age” from which the “renaissance” could spring. Crosby also discusses the tendency for stories only to be told about the lives of famous people, the celebrity Haida, well connected to the academics, the art world and the media, and makes a plea for the documenting of “a new kind of story,” to “honour the stories that are not heroic, that are ordinary, without judgement.”

To the extent that Diesing’s life has been largely ignored by powerful academics and the media, this dissertation is an attempt to tell just such a story.

A somewhat different approach is taken by Allan Ryan (1995), who focuses on the increasing professionalization of NWC art by presenting at length the varying and frequently challenging comments of the artists involved. His work illustrates how extensive interviewing can be used to unpack the stories embedded in visual art. In this respect Ryan’s dissertation and mine are complementary, in that this might be said to unpack the art embedded in the stories.

Through my work with Diesing, we have developed yet another approach - that of
intersubjectivity as a means to exploring art as process and performance. Being in close personal association for several months, we shared both formal and informal discussions and interactions. Both through these discussions and through witnessing and practicing the techniques of a master, I developed a very personalized understandings of Haida art - both as Diesing expressed it and I came to experience it.

Norman Tait, one of Diesing’s early students, discusses (in Jensen 1992:10) what he believes are the attributes of a master carver:

*Being labelled a master carver used to mean something. But in more recent times, people started using that term loosely, and it lost its meaning. Carvers who could work only in one or two media started calling themselves master carvers or were referred to as master carvers.*

*In my opinion, a master carver ought to be able to design and execute anything - masks, jewellery, flat design, totem poles, canoes, houses. I also think a master carver ought to be able to work in a variety of media - wood, bone, flat design or bark.*

*Furthermore, a master carver ought to be experienced enough and knowledgeable enough to be able to carve in a variety of styles, not just the tradition of the place he comes from. He should understand the differences in style and also how to achieve them.*

To my knowledge Diesing has not yet built a full-size canoe or house, although she has made models of both, and designed and painted the community house front in Kitsumkalum. Beyond those two things, Diesing has worked in every medium, and knows how to execute every regional style. And, although Tait does not mention it here, Diesing recognizes, and her work presents, another characteristic of the “master” - excellence.
Even using Tait’s demanding definition, it is clear that Diesing is indeed a master carver, and I have been honoured to work with her. As for the canoe and the house, well, this is a woman who, when past the age of 70, tied a rope around her waist, looped it around the chimney, and went out alone to rebuild part of her home’s steeply pitched roof! So who knows what she might yet accomplish!
Chapter 5: Situating the Artist and Her Art

In his book, "The Shape of Time," George Kubler argues for the importance of an individual's "entrance," or positioning in a series of ongoing events. One's success depends significantly not only upon one's talents and desires, but also upon one's reception - being the proper person in the proper place at the proper time. He speaks of "the history of things," a term intended to reunite ideas and objects under the rubric of visual forms ... all materials worked by human hands under the guidance of connected ideas developed in temporal sequence. For all these things a shape in time emerges. A visible portrait of the collective identity, whether tribe, class, or nation, comes into being. This self-image reflected in things is a guide and a point of reference to the group for the future, and it eventually becomes the portrait given to posterity. (Kubler 1962:9)

What, then, was the nature of Freda Diesing's "entrance"? What was happening in the worlds of art and politics before, during, and after Freda's decision to become an artist and a carver? Who were her peers in the Native art world? What were they doing, and how did they react to her and the things she produced? And the wider communities in which she lived and worked - were they receptive to her attempts to revitalize aspects of a cultural past that some found outdated or even embarrassing? Who were her audiences, her critics and supporters? Although the answers to these questions are embedded in Diesing's narrative, some of them will be addressed here, while further contextualization of Diesing's artistic career will be provided in Section III.
Converse (1998:63), speaking of BC arts generally, notes that the strength and vitality of today's artistic communities is a recent occurrence, since "(i)solation and marginality were dominant themes in the history of art and literature in the province until recently." In her opinion, "(t)he arts are basically an urban phenomenon, needing the intellectual stimulation found in cities for inventiveness, refinement and dynamism. Culturally, BC existed primarily as a hinterland until the 1960s, depending on imports for artistic nourishment ... art and literature were basically activities of consumption, not of production."

While no one would reasonably argue that art can only be created in cities, many, including myself, would follow Becker in arguing that communities, and not just artistic genius, are essential for the generation and growth of art. Even naive artists, those with no previous exposure to other artistic communities (Becker 1982:258-270) are still members of some community. And as Halpin says:

*People who live together in a community do not need to postulate universal archetypes or a collective human unconscious in order to understand their ability to respond to the work of an artist in their midst - they share with the artist things that are far more tangible, a place and a way of responding to it.* (Halpin 1986:34)

The Native peoples of the Northwest Coast, having lived here for many thousands of years, had a very strong sense of place and family-based community. Accordingly, when first encountered by Europeans, NWC material culture was overflowing with artistic beauty, including massive house frontal poles and interior house posts, followed shortly thereafter by a blossoming of the monumental artworks known around the world as
“totem poles.” However, as traditional communities were destroyed or dispersed in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, both the quantity and quality of “traditional” Native art deteriorated as well. The cumulative effects of diaspora (most pronounced for the Haida 1862-1880), the potlatch ban (1884-1951), the influx of collectors removing most of the existing art (1875-1925), and the booming of the tourist trade and its associated demand for “curiosities” (1890-1920) facilitated by the 1888 completion of the Trans-Canada Railroad, all occurring around the turn of the century, almost entirely changed both the community of artists in which NWC art was produced and the communities of users/buyers for whom it was created.

As new communities formed and old communities re-constituted themselves in the mid-20th Century, NWC art began to thrive again (as, according to Converse, did all art in British Columbia - perhaps as the immigrant population of settlers and transients finally developed for themselves a community identity, and their “art worlds” established and matured).

For the Haida people of Masset a symbolic and a literal statement of this re-constitution was the 1969 raising of Robert Davidson’s totem pole, the first pole to be raised in Masset that century. It was only 5 years later, in 1974, that Freda Diesing and Josiah Tait worked together to carve a reproduction pole to be raised in Prince Rupert.

85 Marchand’s travel notes (1790-1792) state “everywhere on the Queen Charlotte’s Islands appear the traces of an ancient civilization ... a great people, who were fond of the agreeable arts, and knew how to multiply the productions of them ” (in Swan 1874:12).

86 For varying perspectives on this event, please see Blackman (1992), Stearns (1981), and Boelscher (1988).
Freda Diesing was not the first woman to become known for carving totem poles. Decades earlier, beginning in the 1940s, Ellen Neel (Kwakwaka’wakw) developed a thriving family business, Totem Art Studios, based largely on the carving of miniature totem poles for the tourist market. She was also closely involved with Vancouver’s fledgling Tourist Bureau, creating and producing for them the small “Totemland” pole which the Bureau used for marketing purposes, such as gifts to visiting dignitaries.

Neel was trained in the traditional way: she learned from early childhood at the knee of her grandfather, Charlie James (a carver famous both for the quality of his work and his inventiveness) (Nuytten 1982:13). Neel started selling drawings and small carvings to visiting tourists when she was only 12 years old, and her work was popular with tourists all her life - and with individual and corporate collectors, who commissioned much of her work. She was also popular with the Native community - Nuytten describes her house as often bursting with visiting artists, friends, and fans. Diesing was one of those who visited her Vancouver studio. And Mungo Martin, Neel’s uncle (James’ step-son), and an accomplished carver, was also often there, visiting and teaching carving to Neel’s children.

87 Phillips (2000) notes how important it was for the municipal officials with whom Neel worked to produce Vancouver’s official tourist art, to publicly construct her as “100% Indian” when in fact “both her parents were ½ white.” Both Charlie James (who was her maternal grandfather) and his wife were “½ white,” and of her paternal grandparents “her grandfather was white and her grandmother was Kwakiutl.” (To be seen as physically and culturally transgressing established boundaries, and thus being inauthentic, was bad for the tourist trade, where image is all.)

88 Nuytten was a family friend whom Neel taught to carve; he in turn wrote her biography, from which much of this information derives. An excellent exploration of the relationship between Neel and the academic and municipal government establishments who respectively erased and exploited her art is provided by Phillips 2000.
Neel, who returned to full-time commercial carving in 1946 and continued until her death in 1966, can certainly be said to be one who had a “good entrance.” She grew up with training as an artist and carver in the traditions of her people with her Grandfather in Alert Bay. She was talented and bright and friendly, and had a “temperament,” in Kubler’s terms, for inventiveness and flexibility. She married a man who turned out to be quite skilled at marketing her work, and they moved to Vancouver just in time to capitalize on the growing tourist market and its associated political exploitation of images of Indianness in this “Totemland.” Neel did not hesitate to capitalize on this market, recruiting her whole family of spouse and 7 children in this effort to keep the family fed and clothed. They did both carving and marketing of their art at Stanley Park, bringing their heritage out to the wider population (at a time, in the ’40s, when the potlatch was still banned), giving life and reality to Native cultures through this public ‘performance’ of pole carving. She spoke eloquently at a conference at UBC in 1948, asserting both the value of the traditions of the various NWC Native people, and the rights and obligations of artists and patrons to ensure that their art remained alive and fresh and free to change (this speech is reproduced here as Appendix E).

Following that conference, Neel was commissioned by UBC (anthropology) to undertake the totem pole restoration project. She restored four poles that summer, but decided that she could not undertake the rest of the project because it did not pay well enough, and because it kept her from developing her own artistic vision at a time when her creations were in demand.

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89 It was probably Neel’s experience of Charlie James’ work to satisfy the tourist market demand for model poles, with Neel growing up in the 1910s and 1920s “surrounded” by poles in various stages of production (Nuytten 1982) that shaped her own approach to the “business” of NWC art.
were becoming in high demand. Accordingly, she arranged for the UBC committee to meet with Mungo Martin at her house, and he willingly took over the project (now revised, through discussions with Neel, to be a replication project), that was to bring him much renown (Nuytten 1982:52).

The totem pole project, which helped to make Mungo Martin and his successors Bill Reid and Douglas Cranmer famous as carvers, is widely mentioned in books and articles, and of course at MOA. But the significant contributions of Ellen Neel - what mention do they get? The story is now one of a group of male academics interacting with a self-chosen selection of male artists.90

"Between 1960 and 1962, with the aid of Canada Council grants, the University commissioned Bill Reid and Doug Cranmer to create a section of a Haida village" (Duff 1964:85). In 1963, Ellen Neel, successful in both tourist and commissioned art, and popularized for almost two decades as Canada’s only woman Native carver, made her first application for a Canada Council grant. She was rejected. (Nuytten 1982:71). She died, destitute, just two years later, at the age of 50.

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90 There are very interesting discrepancies around the “official” version of the beginning of this project (as given in Hawthorn 1976) - which has Barbeau recommending Martin for the project and Neel refusing MOA’s invitation to help because she could not find the time) and Neel’s version given in Nuytten (where she was first hired for the project and then arranged to have it turned over to her uncle because she found it futile and wanted to develop her own artistry). Phillips (2000) has researched both as thoroughly as possible, given the sparse records available. She did find documentary evidence supporting Neel’s claim. Phillips explores the implications of these contested stories.
Sometimes even a good entrance isn’t good enough.

How much of an impact has Ellen Neel’s career had on Freda Diesing? Directly, her impact was limited to “naturalizing’ carving for Diesing. Having never been told that woman couldn’t carve, Diesing saw Neel only as another Native artist who had found a successful commercial niche - her gender as a carver was unimportant. By the wider community, of course, her gender as a carver was seen as central. Indirectly then, Neel’s role as a successful female “pioneer” in professional carving should have been considerable.

Although Neel was only 9 years older than Diesing, she started carving so early (selling her first tourist piece in 1928 when she was only 12), and Diesing started so late (doing her first professional carving in 1967, when she was 42), that they were effectively a full generation apart. Neel’s artistic training was all traditional, and she took those traditions out to educate a wider society that still banned the cultural practices associated with the potlatch, and saw Indians as, at best, quaint. Diesing’s training was Western - although there had been outstanding carvers in her family, they were before her time. Due largely to early missionary influence, and continuing acculturative pressures, Diesing had not even seen much NWC artwork until she came to Vancouver. By then, the ban on the potlatch had been dropped, Canadian society was actively striving to become
multicultural in response to increasingly strident claims of racism, and the '60s anti-establishment and feminist movements were active.

Pollock (1988:3) speaks of a paradigm shift in the discipline of art history during the early '70s, under pressure from feminist theory and Marxism, such that art criticism was no longer based on ideas of creative genius, masterworks, and the general appreciation of beauty, but rather involved 'studying the totality of social relations which form the conditions of the production and consumption of objects designated in that process as art.' But how far has that shift actually gone? As Pollock later goes on to remind us "But it is only feminists who have nothing to lose with the desecration of Genius. The individualism of which the artist is a prime symbol is gender exclusive" (1988:11).

From such a fluctuating and volatile environment emerged both Native artists who were actively pursuing their traditional art forms, (presenting themselves essentially as NATIVE artists), and those seeking recognition in the realm of worldwide fine arts (presenting themselves essentially as Native ARTISTS) - a polarized orientation which continues to this day. Diesing merged her Grandparents' teachings of Haida worldviews with her newly-acquired Western-trained art background and determined to discover and maintain her Native art traditions. But, like Charlie James and Ellen Neel before her, she wanted to develop her own artistic vision within that tradition.

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91 Please see articles in *In The Shadow of the Sun* 1993, especially Hoffman [166-196] and Gray [137-164].
Unlike James and Neel, Diesing has never carved extensively for the mass market of the tourist trade - most of her work has been commissioned. Furthermore, her main emphasis has not been on totem poles, but on masks - although most of these, indeed, have been designed for sale not wear. Ellen Neel became much more famous in her time than Freda Diesing, but not more financially successful. The contemporary NWC Native art scene has artists that are both rich and famous - almost all of those are male. How significant is the role of gender? In what arenas is gender most significant - acceptance by one's peers? by academia? by art critics and galleries? by the buying public? Should gender be significant?

Diesing steadfastly argues that carving was not a gendered activity for Native peoples "until anthropologists made it so," and that other Native carvers saw her only as another carver - gender irrelevant. However, there is no doubt that the discourse of art was powerfully gendered - and the gender was undisputably male, even before the Arts of the Raven exhibition. From the writings of the early travelers, missionaries, anthropologists, and historians, to contemporary curators and art historians, a "carver" equals a "he", women carvers are still discussed as special cases. This is clearly evident in the realm of NWC art, which is particularly surprising since women played such an important role in bringing Native art into the public forum here in British Columbia.

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92 Not just a male, but a "man" - children, like women, are still presumed not to be carvers, despite the fact that most carvers, traditionally and today, began carving while children, and several (from Ellen Neel and her children to Don Yeomans) were successful commercial carvers while still quite young.
In the 1920s, it was a woman, Emily Carr, who began creating her impressionist paintings of Indigenous British Columbia - paintings which were not popular at the time, but which many now consider treasures. It was a woman, Dr. Alice Ravenhill, who in the 1930s researched NWC art and designs, published her stories and sketches both for the provincial museum and for the non-ethnographic market, creating popular interest in the graphic and story-telling arts of BC Natives. Ravenhill expanded this interest in the 1940s by founding and developing the controversial Society for the Furtherance of BC Indian Arts and Welfare (Converse 1998:112). It was a woman, Ellen Neel, who in the 1940s first brought totem pole carving into a public space, decontextualizing it from the traditional Native context (Davidson 1999; Nuytten 1982; Phillips 2000). It was a woman, Dr. Audrey Hawthorn, who was largely responsible for the establishment and continuation of the original museum at UBC. “People of the Potlatch,” the first major exhibition of NWC material culture in Canada to be presented in an art gallery (the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1956), was under her direction. It was a woman, Dr. Erna Gunther, who shared her expertise and passion for Northwest Coast peoples and their arts with her students at Seattle’s University of Washington. As previously mentioned, these included Bill Holm and Wilson Duff (Roth:1999), who in turn later joined with Bill Reid to curate the exhibition “Arts of the Raven.”93 It was a woman, Doris Shadbolt, as acting Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery, who presented “Arts of the Raven” there in 1967.

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93 They were assisted in this endeavour by several female UBC graduate students who would later become NWC art specialists, including Hillary Stewart and Carole Sheehan. (Abbott 1981)
It was also a woman, Professor Marjorie Halpin (1986:34), who made the observation that "In the course of daily life, artists cultivate the ability to be open to the world, both to absorb it and to let it to flow through their shaping hands and consciousness into form."

A significant part of the world to which Diesing was open was a world of sorrow, and loss, and death. As with so many Native people of her time, tragedy was a family companion.

The man most precious to her as a child - her father - contracted TB when she was an infant, and was nursed at home throughout his illness by Diesing’s young mother. He was buried on Diesing’s third birthday, and his wife was left a widow with two young children when she was barely 20. Diesing’s brother, of whom she says “we were so close it was like we could finish each other’s thoughts,” was weakened throughout his life by a congenital heart defect, to which he finally succumbed at age 16. Later that same year Diesing herself contracted TB. By then, so many of her aunts and uncles and cousins had already died from that terrible disease that when Diesing was sent, at age 18, to a distant sanitarium in Kamloops, no one ever expected to see her again. Since the hospital was too far for her family to travel for visits, Diesing spent the 3 long years of her recovery there alone.
One of the ways Diesing has addressed these losses is through her art, most noticeably through her carving of masks, for which she is best known. Yet her masks are not shocking or agonizing or sorrowful in the characters they portray. Rather her masks, particularly her “portrait” masks, but also even her transformation masks, are extraordinarily life-like and serene. Diesing faced loss and death as the conditions of her birth and childhood. Facing some of the worst that life can offer - capped by her own impending death from a dreadful disease while still a youth - Diesing had to come to terms with her own mortality and fears before she ever had a chance to become an adult, or an artist. So these were not issues that remained for her to work out through her art, but rather those of which she had worked free. It is, I believe, that achievement of control, that quiet celebration of personal power, which endows her carvings with their calm strength.

Diesing’s art involves another deeply powerful emotion, one that I felt but did not recognize before reading Bringhurst’s (1999:143) discussion of Charles Edenshaw’s Dogfish Woman images: “the story and the drawing had become not just heraldic furniture but vehicles of an intensely personal meditation on the permanence of love in a world filled with death and sudden disappearances.” Although love is a word that I have never heard Diesing use to describe her relationship with anyone, it is now easy to see how her carvings of family totems or crests or masks are expressions of love she had for her family, especially her grandmother, mother, and brother. Diesing has even said as
much - in different words. Jensen and Sargent (1986:23) quote her as saying that she created her Button Blanket (for the Robes of Power exhibition) “in honour of my grandmother and her brothers and uncles who, by reason of the times in which they lived, did not have a totem raised in their honour.” To honour her mother’s memory, Diesing has created a photo-video of highlights of her mother’s life, and during our time together she completed a wonderful bas-relief carving of their clan crest, the Eagle, for the nursing home where her mother spent her final years. To me it is clear that Diesing’s carvings are love, not proclaimed, but enacted. And her stories, where she virtually re-created these people for me, are also performances of love.

There is one final emotion to be recognized when discussing the personal aspects of Diesing’s art - a paired set best described as survivor guilt and the power of memory. Myerhoff (1978, 1980), particularly with her work with elderly Euro-American Jews, sheds much light on this area that is relevant here. She describes how aging survivors of mass destruction and diaspora (in her case the fleeing of Jewish individuals from extermination in Nazi concentration camps):

demand to know why they too have not been taken ...devoting themselves to careful examination of their own lives and of history trying to find evidence of something aside from chaos to account for their sufferings...The elders were able to focus their remaining moments, enliven and enrich every detail of daily life, in light of what had been extinguished and lost. “If we lose ourselves now, if we give up our traditions, if we become like everyone else, then we finish ourselves off.” (Myerhoff 1980:76)
This need to honour and preserve past traditions becomes much more powerful as people age, and the role of memory becomes central. Even through memory is contextual, flexible and even creative, the intensity of memory can allow one “not merely to recall the past, but to relive it, in all its original freshness ... providing] the sense of continuity and completeness that may be counted as an essential developmental task of old age.”

Myerhoff goes on to discuss the necessity of memory within the mourning process. She uses for this process Victor Turner’s term re-membering:

the reaggregation of one’s members, the figures who properly belong to one’s life story, one’s own prior selves, the significant others without which the story cannot be completed. Re-membering, then, is a purposive, significant unification... requisite to sense and order. Through it, a life is given shape that extends back in the past and forward into the future.
(Myerhoff 1980:77)

This post-holocaust, diasporic process of examining life and history, and re-membering lost family and past traditions can certainly be applied to Haida society as a whole, as well as Diesing’s family in particular. Due to wave after wave of epidemics of smallpox, measles, influenza, and tuberculosis in the 19th Century, and aided by inadvertent and engineered cultural change, the Haida population was decimated, losing about 9 of every 10 persons (Fisher 1977; Carlson 1997; Kelm 1998; Brighurst 1999). By the turn of the century, survivors from the dozens of villages throughout the islands came together and were only enough to populate two island villages - Masset in the north and Skidegate in the south (Swanton 1905), while some went to Alaska.
This is both holocaust and diaspora, and the processes described by Myerhoff clearly apply to the Haida. They are reflected in contemporary Haida history, and inspired the "renaissance" of Haida art, including the art of Freda Diesing. This recognition of loss and associated re-membering should not, however, be taken to mean that either the art or the artists are morose. As previously stated, Diesing’s art exudes serenity, while some of the most appealing and enduring of Diesing’s personal characteristics are her quick wit, subtle humour, sparkling eyes and cheerful smile.

There is yet another consideration to keep in mind when reading Diesing’s stories. Freda Diesing’s artistic career began in the ‘60s, developed in the ‘70s, and thrived internationally in the ‘80s (see appendix - Exhibitions). But by the time Diesing was in most demand, she was a senior citizen. How significant is the role and process of aging, both as it is perceived by others and as it is experienced within the body? Myerhoff (1978) notes the urgency older people have about communicating their accumulated knowledge to the younger generations, as well as their profound desire to construct the story of their life into one of coherence and meaning (to show that they are now and have always been the same person) and to have that story heard and recorded properly and correctly, to affirm for themselves their existence, while they still have it. When one recognizes that one’s time on stage is limited, how does that affect the performer? the audience? the performance? Since these stories reflect three generations of women’s experience in this process, there is potential for multiple levels of influence. "Contexts,
like rivers, are always in motion, always diverse and differently witnessed, depending on whether their observers are in midstream or on the shore" (Brown and Vibert, 1996:xx).

In the endless interaction of context, existence, and perspective, how does one’s place in time affect the voicing or silencing of what one witnesses?
SECTION II: STORIES

I am a Haida woman from Masset, from the House of WEAH. So was my mother, and her mother before. The Haida are matrilineal people, so it’s who the mothers are that’s really important.

The things I say are based on what I know by what my grandmother, and my Mom, and her cousins and her sister, and my uncles, what all they said. So whatever they said, if they didn’t say it right, then I’m not right either. At least, it might not be right by somebody else, but I figure I heard it from the mouths of those who should know.
Her Haida name was SCANGUIGAN - "Daughter of the Killerwhale."
She was born in 1874, before the first missionary, Collison, came to the Queen Charlotte Islands. She lived in interesting times, I think, and saw a lot of changes for the Haida.

When the missionaries came they tried to make Indian people in the Victorian age image, and they started teaching Indian women to do knitting, crochet, and sewing, and that sort of thing, to live in houses like the Europeans did, and cook and clean and look after the children like white women did. But Haida women hadn't been like that. In the olden days they were active women, independent and strong-willed. They didn't just stay in the house. They used to row canoes and steer canoes and go on the travels. My grandmother travelled in canoes all over. Even my mother went in a canoe, but with a sail on it, and it was a woman who owned the canoe.
When my grandmother was a child she came across from the Charlottes in her grandmother’s canoe. Inverness Cannery was the first village; they visited there. They went up to Port Essington - the guy who started Port Essington was married first to a Haida woman. She was a relative of my grandmother and they went there when Granny was only 11 years old to visit Mrs. Cunningham at Port Essington. And so my grandmother had it in her mind early that you could make money at the canneries, so she came every year.

Granny’s English name was Mary Anne Norman. She was the daughter of an Eagle woman, but I don’t know her name. Robin Wright says in her new book that Mary Anne Norman’s mother’s name was ILSHILAY, and that could be, but I don’t know for sure. In those days children didn’t know their mothers by name. A child had a baby name in Haida and was given an adult Indian name at puberty. After she had children, she was known as “the mother of so-and-so” to other children; that’s why they didn’t remember the adult names of the mother. And all the grandmothers were called “Nonnie,” and all the grandfathers were called “Chinnie.” Only a famous woman’s name was remembered by the average child. The same with the men’s names. And then, because the names were passed on from generation to generation, it’s hard to know sometimes which generation is the one most remembered.

My Mom didn’t know her grandmother’s real name. And neither did Auntie Selina, who was called Granny’s “sister” in Haida, but she could have been her cousin. We are all Eagle clan, SADJUGALTH LANAS GITANS.
Granny's father was the Raven Chief Simeon STILTA. We think he is the Simeon Stilta born in 1799 and died in 1889, but we're not entirely certain of the dates, 'cause there are three of them from that time in the graveyard in Masset, and the dates are all confused on the records, and oftentimes there are no records back then! But even without the dates, I know who he was - a Raven chief and a famous carver.

Stilta carved a lot of the totem poles in Yan, where he was from, and in Masset, and a lot of carvings now in museums. A lot of my Mom's uncles, Granny's brothers, were carvers too. Granny had a lot of brothers: Thomas Simeon, Frank Paul, James Stanley, Joshua Collinson, Robert Stanley, and Daniel Stanley. Well, we think they're brothers, but some might have been cousins, 'cause in Haida they're called the same. And I think there were even more brothers, but they died while she was too young to remember. Thomas Simeon's picture is in Curtis's book, and also in "Fire in the Raven's Nest" - it has lots of pictures of my relatives, and the story of the boy who slept in the ashes is my family's story. My uncle Thomas is wearing a wig in that - his hair wasn't like that. The same with Alfred Adams, he's wearing a wig too. Curtis would sometimes dress people up. Granny's picture is in there too - she never wore a shawl on her head like that, but I guess Curtis thought it made her look more "Indian."

The one Granny was closest to of all was Daniel Stanley, who was supposed to be the next Chief WEAH but he died. My Mom liked him too - when she was little, he took Granny up to Alaska in his boat, which was a sailboat. She had Mom with her then - she was just little,
a baby, and Uncle Daniel bought her a teddy bear in Ketchikan. Mom really cherished that teddy bear for a long time!

Uncle Daniel built that sailboat himself. He used to carve masks and other things to sell - curios - and he would also buy things from other carvers. Then he would take them in his sailboat up to Ketchikan or down to Victoria to sell them. His name is in that "Haida Carvers" art book by Marius Barbeau (a few of my Mom's uncles are in there), and in it he said he learned carving from his grandfather, and from Charles Edenshaw and from Simeon Stilta. I don't imagine that any of these carvings were signed, although I did hear of one mask that had "DAN" written on it - maybe it was his. But he probably didn't know how to write his name to sign things.

Sometimes Granny went with him when he went north to sell things - I don't think she ever went to Victoria. Granny travelled in canoes often. She was even in them once when they went hunting sea otters. She said it was a bit scary, 'cause the canoes were in a circle, and they were shooting! Shooting at the sea otters, but still she was a bit scared. And also they say the sea otter babies just cry like real babies!

Granny worked and lived for awhile with the missionaries, the Keens; that's where she learned to cook and do housekeeping and sewing and other things the white way. And where she learned to speak English was from the missionary's wife there and from her uncle's wife Mary Kinaskilas. But she never did learn to read, and she just learned how to sign her name when she got her old age pension, to sign her cheque.
Granny also worked in a hotel for awhile when she was young, the first hotel in Masset. She spoke Haida and Chinook and English, so once when Dr. Newcombe was there collecting poles she worked as his interpreter. That's about the time that she first met my grandfather too, Axel Hanson. He had his own boat, and he was taking some scientists around, and they stopped in there. So he first met my grandmother then, but they didn't get together for a long time after, 'cause Granny was still married then to her first husband.

Granny bought a sewing machine early and became a really good dressmaker. But her first job at the canneries, because she had a sewing machine, was she used to sew these little flags. Each little boat had its own flag for the cannery, so she had a job sewing flags. And she used to work for these different canneries. And she never let my Mom go to Indian school, because her other kids all got TB and died when they went to Indian school. So my Mom always stayed with her and she used to live in Masset in the winter time, and live at Oceanic Cannery or Port Essington or Inverness Cannery or different canneries where she'd get work in the summer time. 'Cause that was the only way you could make money, so she used to go.

And they also had to live for six months of the year in Masset - that was the law, once it was a reserve, and they made it a reserve when Granny was still a little girl. So it was winters in Masset and summers in the canneries for all those Indian people who worked for the canneries.
Every year when it was time the canneries would pick them all up on the island by ship and take them over. Then they'd have to pay the company for their room, and their food supplies. The fishermen had boats from the company, or a lot had their own boats. When they were going out, all the little boats, with their flags like Granny sewed, would be tied together in a line, and they would pull them all out into the water together. Then they'd each go where they had to. When they had their fish, the big company ship would come around and get them - the companies could tell their own by those flags.

A lot of the fishermen who had boats lost them to the canneries, 'cause they kept telling them they needed improvements, and letting them buy on credit, until they owed so much they couldn't pay and the canneries would take their boats. That happened to Granny's daughter Nellie and her husband Alec Yeomans, Don's grandparents. Alec Yeomans had a nice fishing boat, but with all the things they said he had to add, it ended up he lost it. It was called "The Chief WEAH." He had permission to use that name because he was married to a descendant of the Eagle Chief WEAH.

Granny was still young when she married her first husband, Norman Skiltees. SKILTEES means "Property Woman Lying Down." He was a Raven, and a lot older than her. They used to have arranged marriages, and this man was in line to be a chief, and he was a canoe maker and he made lots of money and that was a thing that made him a good candidate to be her husband. The Haida were known to make the best canoes, so he would make his canoes and sell them all over.
But Skiltees was old and he had TB (but they didn’t know at that time), and he wasn’t very strong. Maybe earlier they may have had slaves help them, but they weren’t allowed to have them. At that time they had sent the slaves back and so they didn’t have that many helpers, and her children were real small, so they weren’t much help. So the men and women just had to work together.²²

So they would go out in the woods to their place and get the log, and then hollow it out and make it lighter, and then when it was able to be pulled into the village then they would take it in. But she used to help him with the canoes, because she was young and she was strong, and he was old and he wasn’t very strong. Granny knew how to use an adze, and how to use a knife - all kinds of tools. She knew how to make bowls, and even boxes.

Donnie’s Dad, Hector Yeomans, he’s the one who told me about the Grand-aunts, like Granny’s “sister” Auntie Kate and also Granny’s daughter Auntie Nellie who was raised by Auntie Kate. - those ones who’d grown up in Masset. When they’d go out and they’d make boxes, they used to soak the cedar boards in the creek to make them soft for a long time. And they could all use tools, they could use knives. When they all went out picking berries or doing stuff, well, they would just make those things they’d need, bend the boxes and just tie them up with ropes, not peg them or anything, ’cause they were in a hurry. So Granny could make all those things, and her sisters.

People forget those things, they don’t talk about them much and you don’t read it in the books.²³ After the missionaries came, they wanted
the women to be like white women, and just do sewing and other "womanly" things. So the Haida women usually didn't say they did anything, because if they did it was like it was kind of a sin or something for women to do men's things. And the missionaries had a lot of power - they even had their own little jails they could lock someone up if they broke the missionaries' "laws"!

But women in those days could do all sorts of things. In the old days, when people couldn't buy things, they had to make them, and they depended on everybody to contribute whatever they could. They needed everybody to help with a potlatch, to accumulate what they needed, and people would do whatever they could.

They did have rules about who could do things, but they were mainly to do with young women when they first had their first periods. They had to be separated from the rest of the tribes, because that was a bad luck sort of thing. And it may also have had to do with separating the young men from the young women because they wanted to keep the young women "pure"! So they separated them from the rest of the people as soon as they had their first period. And they used that separation period to teach the girls the things they needed to know as women. Especially weaving, 'cause women had to do a lot of weaving. And any kind of weaving takes a lot of work if you're using natural materials - a lot of work and a long time! For the fish nets in the old days they probably worked on them for pretty near a year; that nettle net we're making in Rupert, we've been working on it for a long, long time and we haven't even begun to make the net yet, we're still just making the fibres ready and doing the twisting! And that one's
only going to be a little net, not like the big ones they made. And like those blankets and capes they'd make from the pounded bark, and then those Chilkat blankets, they'd work on them for a whole year to make one. So the women had to start learning young - it took a long time to get good at making things.

Making baskets was probably the most important thing to learn, 'cause they used them all the time. And making baskets is hard work - harder than carving, I think! There is all the digging and gathering of all the roots and materials - back then, the women would just go out together to their spots when the time was right to gather roots or strip bark. But now if you want to gather bark or roots on the Charlottes you need to get a permit from the government to do so! My Great-aunt Selina's daughter, Delores Churchill, when she was teaching in Alaska, because she is really a Masset Haida even if she lives in Alaska, got a permit to come with her class and dig spruce roots, which is a lot of work. And then there's preparing them - cleaning and roasting and stripping and making them the right size. And then making the baskets is hard too, hard on the hands and the eyes and the back, and it takes a long time.

Now only a few women make hats and baskets to sell to collectors - because it takes so long, and is such hard work, you have to sell them for a lot of money to make it worthwhile. And with all the cheap baskets and things around, from China and other places, no one will buy them just to use them. So mostly they're just made for collectors now. But before, they were used for all kinds of things, so girls had to learn how to make them, as part of becoming a woman.
Sometimes the separation was for a long time depending on who the parents were and how badly they wanted them to learn it, and also on how good they were at doing it. Some parents were more strict than others. That would have been for the earlier ones, though not my grandmother. 'Cause Granny was raised when the missionaries were there, so there were a lot of changes in those things. But Granny did learn how to sew, and make all kinds of things. And of course she could make hats and baskets.

Granny was really well known for her baskets, and Charlie Edenshaw’s wife, Isabella, Florence Davidson’s mother, was really well known for her hats. She would make her hats out of spruce root, and then Charlie would paint the designs on them, and they would sell them for their income. Charlie Edenshaw also did carvings, especially in argillite and silver, but some in wood too, like masks, models and small poles, and they sold these too for their income.29 He mostly carved silver and argillite, the small stuff, lots of it I guess. But even in the real early days there was a big trade in souvenir kind of things, and he travelled around from one place to another quite a lot. And then those steamships they used to bring a lot of collectors and people would be buying a lot, because I guess Seattle and Vancouver had these curio shops.

Charles Edenshaw was an uncle to my grandmother, so in the Haida way he was closer to her than to his own daughter - he and Granny were both Eagles, but his daughters were Ravens, like their mother. So Auntie Florence should have cared more about her Raven uncles and not made so much of her father. Lots of the carvings that have been
attributed to Charlie Edenshaw weren't done by him, but by others, especially Granny's father, Simeon Stilta. It was my great-aunt Selina who told me that it was my great-grandfather Stilta who carved a lot of the poles in Yan and Kaiusta and Masset. She said that Edenshaw didn't carve poles or anything big, because he was cross-eyed, and he was a cripple. That's why he started carving in the first place, because he couldn't move easily to do heavy work, so he learned to make his living as a painter and a carver. Because he and his father, Albert Edward EDENSHAW, got well known by the whites, and they were good designers and good carvers, well they got credit for all the good carving, even when it wasn't theirs. 'Cause everybody'd heard about the Edenshaws.

I know Granny's first husband, Norman Skiltees also carved spoons, as well as the canoes, and probably other things too but I don't know. I had one spoon that he carved, but my grandmother said it should be my cousin Nancy's. Nancy is Emily's daughter, and Emily was Granny and Norman's daughter older than Mom, so that makes Nancy the oldest living daughter's daughter of Norman Skiltees. So I gave it to her. I really wanted to keep that spoon, but I gave it to Nancy 'cause Gran said. So Granny's husband Norman Skiltees was a carver, and he got famous for his canoes and Granny didn't - but she helped.

There were other women too who helped with carvings that their husbands got known for. Like there was this old man, Captain Brown, who was a carver, and he kept on carving even though he was almost blind! Well, by then his work wasn't so good, 'cause he couldn't see, so
his wife would take it and finish it off so, maybe it wasn't perfect, but it was good enough to sell. Because the two of them, they would go to the ferry when there was lots of people and sell these totem poles. And there is a lot of his work that is in museums, and you can see it getting worse and worse, and he still continued to carve because that was his only money, even though he was blind, or almost blind. And so his wife would try to make them finished-looking. That's how they made their money, so she had to do it. People did whatever they could to get "cask money" like they called it then. In the museums, they say Captain Brown was the carver, but they don't mention his wife's work.  

Mostly, Granny was known for her sewing; she could sew anything, not just flags! Granny couldn’t read but she could do fancy knitting and sewing and things just by looking at the pictures. So she made clothes for her family and for other people, and also sold some through a store. She made picture frames too, out of wood with sea shells attached, and she would sell them to the tourists. I still have one.

But really Granny's main thing was making baskets, she was a basket weaver. And some of her baskets are probably in museums, because this guy from Port Essington, when she lived in Port Essington, she sold baskets to him, those ones with the stripes, and small spruce root baskets. He bought baskets from her, but he probably never put her name down.

So Granny's first husband, Norman Skiltees, he was old, and she was young - that happened a lot. He had been married before, some
woman "Louisa" I don't know, and when she died he married my grandmother. They had their first child in 1894 - a girl, Lena. They had other children too - Amos (1896), Emily (1898), Paul (1901), Edmund (1902), and Frank George (1903) [baptized George Francis]. They were all Gran and Norman's children, and I think there were other babies too - but they all died.

Eventually her first husband, Norman Skiltees, died. He just finished a canoe and then he had a haemorrhage from TB and he died. So he must have been sick for a long time. So then when she was in Masset, Granny would live with her relatives - her uncles and her brothers. And in the summer she still worked in the canneries.

In Masset, her house, the one she had with her first husband, was one of the western-style houses, and it was at the bottom of the hill. There were two modern houses there - it could be it was the Swanson's house, which was beside Granny's. And Mary Stanley had a house nearby too - she also was a witness on lots of the documents for births and marriages, and also Robert Stanley's wife. The one who probably witnessed the most was Granny's aunt Mary Kinaskilas, and they were near too - they had a farm up on the hill. Gran remembered that they animals, and she had a milk cow, and gardens, up on the hill. I was just back in Masset [Spring, 2002] at Reg Davidson's potlatch, really a "forgiveness feast," and I saw those houses again. And I talked with people, and listened to some of the old tapes, and it refreshed my memory. But some of those tapes got thrown out, or taped over somehow.
Lots of those informants went to school, so they were away and learned their history later when they came back. Like Ethel Jones, she's one of the oldest there now, but she doesn't know that many of the old names and such - she also went away to school. And now in Masset they're trying to document the family histories, like that young guy Vernon Williams who said he was one of my relatives and came to talk to me. But the old people there now, there's lots they don't know - they can't remember like Selina, Florence, and Auntie Kate would have remembered. The old people now, in those days, most weren't interested in listening to the old stories - like Nancy wasn't interested in listening to Granny's stories like I was, and Bobbie wasn't even at the canneries - just Nancy and me and sometimes my brother. And at the canneries, the old people would visit Granny and talk to her there. And Auntie Nellie, who was raised by Auntie Kate in Masset, even when she moved to Rupert the old Haida would visit there and they'd talk. And they would dispute what's true and what wasn't. But people now don't hardly remember anyone but their own mothers. Things have changed so much. I wish I had talked more there before all the elders died off.

Emily could remember and told Mom when there was a chimney fire in the house beside them in Masset. Emily wrapped up the younger kids in blankets and put them on the beach in case their own house caught fire. There were the three kids - Mom who was about 4, and her sister Nellie who was 2, and one of her brothers - maybe Paul who was her youngest brother. Mom could remember being there on the beach. But their house didn't catch fire
So Granny was living in Masset, and also living in the canneries after her first husband died. Then it ended up Granny got married to my Grandfather, Axel Hanson. She had met him before, and when she was working at the canneries, she met him again, in 1905 at Port Essington. He was working on the riverboats. He worked for a long time too on a snag scow - a big boat that removed snags from the water. He was also a prospector, so he travelled around a lot. And Granny worked in the canneries, and was back and forth to Masset. So they stayed in a little cabin on Smith Island. Mom was about 8 or 9 then, and remembers he taught her how to read and write and do math.

Then he hurt himself, so he settled down and built a house between North Pacific Cannery and Inverness Cannery, when my Mom was 11. And so my grandmother married him then in 1917. They leased this land for a dollar a year for a hundred years and my Grandfather built a house there, right beside the water - I remember sometimes when the water was high, it would come right up to the porch! He built the whole thing himself, with the help of his brother. I have some pictures - it was a nice little house. They lived there for a long time, right until they died. And then after my cousin Nancy and her family lived there. There wasn't much land there, though, with the mountain behind, then the railway track, and then the house. Someone wrote once about my Mom that she grew up on a farm, but there was no land there to farm! Granny just had room for a small garden, some raspberry bushes, and she'd put in a few vegetables like turnips and potatoes.
Grandpa Hanson was always good at building things. He was the ship's carpenter on one of the tall ships. That's how he first came here, on a tall ship from Japan - from “Yokohamey,” that's how he said it, with his Swedish accent! He'd done a lot of things - he'd been a whaler, and he hunted sea otters, and then the fur seals. So he ended up in Japan, and came over to Canada. The first place he came in Canada was Victoria, and he met the owner of that sailing boat who was still alive when Grandpa Hanson was a young man. And he let him spend the winter on his schooner, until my grandfather had his own sailboat built - the one he had when he first met my grandmother.

When my Grandmother lived in Port Essington, it was the main town in this area. My Grandfather worked on the riverboats and the snag scow. And Port Essington was a really big town, there were several canneries, and a hospital, and hotels. There was a white people's part, and then there was a Finnish town, and an Oriental part, and an Indian part. So it was like several towns joined together. My Grandmother used to work there and live there in little houses. And my Mom was always with her. But after my Mom was married to my Dad Franz Johnson, in 1924, they just lived on a float - like a little cabin built on logs that they pulled around to where they went - they had the fish camp.

In the early days the big Haida canoes used to come up way the river, and the Tsimshian and Gitksan they'd buy big Haida canoes. One time my grandfather was on a big riverboat that sank up by Kitsegukla or Skeena Crossing. Where the railroad bridge crosses the river they call it Skeena Crossing but the village is Kitsegukla.
Grandpa Hanson was working on a riverboat called “The Pheasant.” In 1906 it ran up on the rocks and got wrecked above Skeena Crossing, and the men that were working on the boat they came down in a big canoe. The Skeena Crossing Indians took them down, and then there was a man there named Tom Thornton that cut wood for the riverboats. So Axel Hanson and all the crew they slept in Tom’s root cellar at what they call Thornhill’s Landing. It was called that because a man name of Tom Thornhill lived there, near where the old bridge is, with Eliza from Kitselas village. She was one of “the seven sisters” that the mountains there are called after - the seven sisters of Walter Wright. They were Gitksan from Kitselas, and Walter Wright worked on the riverboats with my Grandfather Axel Hanson. Now it’s part of Terrace, but they still call it the municipality of Thornhill. Terrace wants to make it all one, but Thornhill still wants to keep their own, and run it themselves. I guess they came all the way back down in a canoe, but they stopped at Thornhill.36

And there were other riverboats that got wrecked. “The Princess Royal” (or something like that), it wrecked right up in the Kitselas Canyon, it went up on a rock. It went crossways and came up on the rock. I think some people probably were killed. I knew a lady at Cedarvale, I interviewed her, she was on that boat. And I guess she was in her cabin and she heard a big noise and they came and told her to get off the boat! No lifeboats, except some little boat, but I think that they could get the people off onto the shore, ‘cause it’s so narrow. But part of the ship broke and they fell in, and there was one person I think who survived being under part of the boat.
There used to be a place on the Skeena called Telegraph Point. In the old days the telegraph lines were all along, and then when the railroad came they went along the railroad. And my Mom remembered seeing the first railroad train that they shipped in, a great big huge engine because they built the railroad in sections and they unloaded this big train engine off a barge. And my Mom saw that - she was only about 3-4 years old, but she remembered it because it was so big!

It was the Chinese people who worked on the railroad that did the blasting of the tunnels, and a lot of Chinese people died. They would bury them in one place and then after awhile they would dig their bones up and take them back to China. And after the railroad a lot of the Chinese people worked in the fishing industry, in the canneries.

When the canneries were built they built these little cabins. And the Chinese lived in one part, the Japanese in another part, the Indians in another part. In Port Essington there were Finns, and they had their own section. I guess they wanted to live where they talked their own language. And the Japanese built themselves baths and bath-houses and things like that. The Chinese had wooden tubs that were different - they had different customs as to how they bathed. And some of them had these pipes, like water pipes that they smoked, and they ate different food. But most of them ate the same seafood. Like the Indians, Japanese and Chinese all liked the seafood.

When I was a kid and lived in the canneries, the Chinese imported peanuts, and they used to go around and sell peanuts. We always
liked to buy those peanuts. They made cones out of paper and sold fresh roasted peanuts in these cones. And the Japanese usually had a store, and we used to like the Japanese candy, cause they had some kind of cinnamon in it. They had cinnamon candy, what they called ice candy, rock candy that looked like ice. After I had been away for a long time it was nice to try the Japanese candy, 'cause it was what I remembered as a kid. And they'd sell all kinds of strange things too, like canned bugs! Between having the Chinese with little canned squid, and tiny little ones, and all kinds of interesting, different kinds of food we could get in the Japanese store, and the Chinese sold things they imported like leechee nuts and all kinds of sweet stuff, and bird's nest soup - all kinds of interesting food!

Of course, my grandparents got along with everybody, and the summer when they worked in the cannery, even though they had a place a mile up the track they'd still go and live in the cannery shacks, so they could work in the cannery. 'Cause they'd only have a little while to eat and then they'd blow the whistle and it's time to go back to work. And they'd blow the whistle so you could get up in the morning in time to go to work. So they'd all be close enough so that they could just run to work at the cannery. Grandpa Hanson was the night watchman, so he slept in their big house in the daytime. But we lived at the cannery.

And they had a cannery store; everybody bought their groceries in the cannery store and they could charge it. So if they charged too much they didn't get too much settlement. It was all "the company store," like that song, "I owe my soul to the company store!" And in the fall they'd
get their settlement for their work. Then my grandparents they used to
stock up, and all the Indians too that went back up to their villages,
well, they'd just take their settlement and go to Rupert and buy sacks
of flour, sacks of sugar, a case of tea and coffee and baking powder,
and whatever they'd need. Get their winter clothes, and then head back
to their winter homes in the fall. They called it “grubbing up.”

After my grandmother married my grandfather they lived between the
two canneries. My grandfather was a caretaker at Inverness Cannery.
He would check all through the cannery during the night, and there
were these little locked boxes in different places and he would have to
unlock them at the right time and mark his time, so they knew he
always checked everything when he was supposed to. Grandpa
Hanson was the watchman there for 35 years, and they lived in the
house and then he retired - one of those things that you got a watch
for! He worked for Todd's Cannery. Inverness was the first cannery on
the coast.

Granny didn't marry my grandfather right away. My Mom was
almost 12 when they actually got married. By then Uncle Daniel had
died and all Granny's sons had died, too. After they married then my
grandmother would have not been under the Indian Act after that, so
she didn't go back to live in the village after38. I think she probably
went back about 1936, she went back. She took Daniel Stanley's
headstone for the last time to Masset and then she never went back to
Masset after that.
'Cause I think it was quite poor times, the Depression and people didn't have too much and they couldn't afford to travel anyway. But my grandfather always did work, 'cause he was a caretaker, and they still canned fish, and during the war they still lived there. Inverness burnt down in the 70s I think, and then Port Essington, the fire reversed and it burnt up. But some of the Kitsumkalum Indians still used to live at Port Essington or go there to put up their winter food, or some of them had their fish boats and they still did their fishing and lived in their homes in Port Essington.

When Granny and Mom were living in Masset, Granny spent a lot of time with Mary Kinsaskilas. KINASKILAS was one of Granny's uncles. My Mom said her mother was the niece of KINASKILAS. - then she said she was the niece of WEAH ... but they were all related. He was a powerful man, who originally came from the South. KINASKILAS, WEAH, STILTA - the chiefs were all cousins, all related to each other, so when one died the other one became the stronger one. And with all the chiefs, all the high ranking people, the names were passed along from generation to generation through the mothers. So the names were used over and over again, so it's hard to know what generation was most talked about. The Tsimshians were the same - like Chief LEGALX who was famous but you don't know which generation was most remembered.

The Eagle divisions had names of old villages - "LANAS" is for "those born at so-and-so place." So you know they've come from some other place. 'Cause often the women would move around to marry. So five sisters could marry and have kids at 5 different villages, and so one
could be GITINS, STASTAS, SADJUGALTH LANAS or Alaska villages - like Robert Davidson's mother was from Alaska, and Henry Edenshaw's wife was from Alaska, so they would have a different Eagle name or village (those born at ..), yet all could be related.

Like Robin Wright\textsuperscript{40} says Mom's name JAS-KIT-KI-GAS is a STASTAS name; she was probably named after a relative from another village. Just as Charles Edenshaw was from Skidegate and his uncle was from Alaska and Kiusta. KINASKILAS came from the south, Tanu\textsuperscript{41} or some other place, and married in Masset to a KUN LANAS from Rose Spit. Rufus Moody from Skidegate was Mom's relative, and could have been in line for Chief WEAH too, and also a man from Hydaburg Alaska.

And then when the missionaries came they wanted to change the way of naming, so they called all the ones living in one house the same last name, whether they were Ravens or Eagles. That's why Granny's father Simeon Stilta and his son had the same name. The missionary Collison called them both "STILTA" although Granny's father was a Raven and her brother was an Eagle. But they all lived in the same house then. And the same with her other brothers and cousins too - they have "STILTA" marked on their baptismal records. There were only about 500 people in Masset when the missionary came, and he tried to change all the naming. So people would get baptized, and they would get a new name, and they might get married too, all at the same time. So those might be the first written records or even the only ones - and sometimes the information on them was wrong!
It is very confusing to people in this age of documenting everything in writing. Haida history is very young - 150 years at most. Earlier there were no records, no birth certificates. And then white people didn't hear the sounds the Native people said. Like Indian Affairs wrote Norman SKILTEES as KILTIS in one census - confusing, eh? So most birth dates of old people are guesses, or when they were baptised and given a Christian name.

Albert Edward Edenshaw was the one who was in Masset with Chiefs WEAH and STILTA when the first missionary came. He's the EDENSHAW that some called the head chief of Masset or even the "king" of the Charlottes, but he wasn't. He was considered a "respected elder," but he wasn't a chief of Masset. But he was baptised and given the name Albert Edward and EDENSHAW was used for the family name for all of them. So those called the Edenshaws, they're relatives too, the Eagles. Albert Edward Edenshaw was an Eagle, and also his nephew, Charles Edenshaw, Florence Davidson's father. There's Henry Edenshaw who was Albert Edward Edenshaw's son and a Raven, and his wife Martha. She was an Eagle from Alaska, and looked a lot like Granny.

Mom used to play a lot with Henry Edenshaw's kids. And kids only tended to play with family, 'cause it was believed that others might do you harm. So they were careful who the kids played with. And they were especially careful with food, 'cause people could try to poison you or harm you with witchcraft. So who the kids played with was important - you can usually tell who was related by who the kids played with.
When Granny's uncle KINASKILAS was down south somewhere he had them make a robe for Granny. And he had them copy it from some kind of royal robe - it would be nice to have a picture of that. It was probably like a cape or something. Granny's supposed to have worn that robe at his funeral. And her brother Frank was named Frank Paul by the missionaries after him, and Granny's younger "brother" Frank George was believed to be his reincarnation. I don't know if there is another KINASKILAS now, because my Mom wasn't there for a long time, and so many were dying, and I haven't been around.

In those days they didn't like a woman living alone. So after her husband died, Granny came back to live in KINASKILAS' house. She lived there until he died. They came back when my Mom was young - when she was little, she called Mary Kinaskilas "Nonnie." That's what they call a grandmother on the Islands. We call our grandmother "Granny" cause that's what everyone was saying where we were, but in Masset they use "Nonnie." We called Florence Davidson "Nonnie," although she wasn't our real grandmother, she was a great-aunt. But everyone called her "Nonnie"?

KINASKILAS worked early for the white people. So did his wife - they both spoke English. He was a chief, KINASKILAS. Then he and his wife Mary, they were given the name Ridley as their white name, from the missionary.47 And she liked the name Ridley so much that after KINASKILAS died and she married Robert, she got him to change his name to Ridley 'cause she liked the name!48 So he became like a second husband, but they kept the same name of Ridley; so he was called Paul Ridley, KINASKILAS.
Mary Ridley was Swanton's informant, and also Henry Edenshaw (his wife Martha was Granny's cousin). She shows up in Swanton's book, but not in Bringhurst's. But that's 'cause he only used Swanton's Skidegate stories, with two men informants, and Mary Kinaskilas was from the Masset stories. There are Haida stories, and Tsimshian stories, and even Tlingit stories in Swanton - even though in the book they're all in Haida. That's because, like with the Edenshaws, Albert Edward was half Tlingit, and Charles was part Tsimshian, and the people when they move, they bring their stories with them. I can recognize the different ones, 'cause I know them, even if he says it's Haida.

Mary Kinaskilas, she was also witness to all kinds of births. She taught kindergarten too, in Masset. When she was young Mary Kinaskilas had her lip pierced for a labret, but they quit wearing them after the missionaries came. The older women were embarrassed because it showed their gums. So she just let it grow in, so it was hard to see - but my Mom said she could remember once seeing her put a knitting needle through it! Mom also remembered seeing two men who had crest tattoos, and they stopped doing that then too. Granny spent a lot of time with Mary Kinaskilas, and Granny and Mom were really close to her first husband KINASKILAS. Mom was still young when he died, but she could remember him. I couldn't find out the date Mary Ridley died, but she was still witnessing to baptisms in 1918 to 1920. When I was in Masset, I tried to find her tombstone, but I didn't find it.
Granny's father Simeon Stilta, he died before her mother too, we think in 1889, but we can never be sure. And so Granny's mother, she married others after. Because Mom said, "Well, why don't I have a grandfather?" And she said, "Well you call old man George Grandfather." Mom used to wonder why she had two brothers named Frank, Frank George whose Haida name was KILDUGALTH and Frank Paul. But they told her no, one was her youngest uncle, Frank George. But that was because her grandmother had other husbands after. Because Simeon was old, he died while they were still younger. So most of the people married an old person, and then later in life they married a young person!

Granny's brother, Frank Paul, his Haida name was KUN ("Point") STAITS. He got the last name "Paul" from Paul Kinasiklas, from the missionary then. Because he was living in KINASKILAS' house, his uncle, and the missionaries just took for granted that all the kids would have the same name as the head of the household. After, Frank Paul worked as a "quartermaster," and my Mom, she always admired him and when she was little, said she wanted to be a quartermaster too! But they said she couldn't - but I guess now she could have been!

Frank Paul went down south and they said he married a "Flathead" woman - that's what they called the Salish women then. And they had children, and the children stayed down south and married and had more kids - there's supposed to be a big family now, and the kids know they're part Haida. That was the uncle who bought Mom's wedding dress, which was a suit. Mom's sister Nellie was upset 'cause
she wanted him to buy a dress for her too - “He’s my uncle too!” Then Granny got a bit annoyed with her - “But it’s Flossie’s wedding!”

Mary Ridley Kinaskilas taught English and kindergarten to the kids, but she also taught in Haida. My Mom used to tell me the story and laugh about when Mary Kinaskilas was translating the story of “the fox and the grapes.” A lot of Haida names for things are actually descriptions, like in Haida an animal name may be a description of its scat. “A small hard scat” was the Haida name for a fox. Little kids thought it was so funny. They weren’t laughing at the story, they were laughing at the name of the fox! I guess a lot of missionaries must have been wondering, when they were telling other stories, why people would be laughing - it’s the names, the descriptions.

In lots of ways they were exciting times when the missionary came, because there were new things, so many new things to learn. New songs and music, different singing, wear different clothes, and they liked to learn new things. But of course there were always some who didn’t like the interference, which you could understand. Also, the Tsimshian had a missionary first so the Haida were envious. They wanted to have the same things. They thought the Tsimshian had something they didn’t. But the Eagle chief and his cousins who invited the missionary hoped that they would use the medicines and things. He had TB and he wanted to be cured, but he wasn’t.

But they already had use of many of the White people’s goods. They would take boats to Victoria, Ketchikan and so, they’d go and earn money other ways; before, there was the fur trade sailing to Hawaii
and Japan, and the whaling. They went to work on sailing ships; some went south and worked for farmers. They got around, they weren't just in the villages all the time. After the fur trade, when they found out that they could buy things for gold, then they did whatever they could to get it - like lots of carvings, and baskets and weavings. Then they would get this money and then go and buy goods.

KINASKILAS had bought lots of white people's goods. And then my uncle, my Mom's brother, he was named Paul after him. And Granny's brother Frank, that must have been her younger brother Frank George was born, and people thought he was KINASKILAS' reincarnation. They say than when he was a little kid he used to recognize the things that KINASKILAS had bought, like clocks. KINASKILAS had brought his wife Mary back a piano. And I don't know how he brought a piano back in a canoe! But maybe some boats were already coming there at that time. And I always wondered how come she could play the piano? Maybe she taught herself. But she did play the piano - KINASKILAS' wife. And they used to say when they'd just go there, and he was just a baby just learning to talk, and he used to just call her “Mary,” and he'd say “Mary, that's what I bought for you,” or something like that. So they thought Granny's younger brother Frank George was KINASKILAS' reincarnation. But anyway, my Mom's brother Paul, named for KINASKILAS, died when he was only a young boy, from TB, when he was only 12 years old.

With reincarnation, usually they're just happy to know, when they think they know it's that person come back. They're happy. They're always looking to see if they can recognize something. Like when
Charlie Edenshaw's son got drowned,\textsuperscript{53} they had thought that he came as Mom's youngest brother Paul. Because my grandmother dreamed that he came to her and said “Mary, I'm going to come live with you.” In her dream she heard that. But that might have been wishful thinking, if it was someone that she liked, after he died. And even my mother, when she met Robert Davidson (that would be the nephew), looked and looked at him and said he looks like her brother Paul, his hair looked like his. She was thinking that after her brother died he came to that family. They look for little babies, what they say, or how they act. But when everybody was so closely related, it stands to reason that they'd look alike! But the people would be so sad about losing somebody, but then they'd be watching for the next baby, and hoping that they were going to come back again right away.

It's still the same - even for the real Christians. They may criticise the old “heathen” ways, and follow all the rules of the Christian religion, but they still for sure believe in reincarnation - and that's not a part of the Christian belief that I know! I never heard about me, or my sister or my brother - at that time, with my step-father, they'd just say “Oh, those are just old superstitions.” So I never heard that we were anybody's reincarnation. And I don't think I ever thought about it - I never asked. But some believe that people keep skills of who they were before, and one of Mom's cousins said that “Some of your uncles are guiding you.” But they didn't talk about those things then.

I found out more later - my aunts, my Mom's cousins and uncles, I always asked about the old ways. I got a tape recorder and made tapes of the elders in my family. I made a lot of tapes of the old Chief
WEAH, Uncle Willie Matthews. But in those interviews it was really his wife Emma Matthews who remembered the most - she gave a lot of the answers to him when I did the interviews. I'd ask him a question, and sometimes he'd go to answer and she'd say something, and they'd talk back and forth before he would answer, and she would correct him cause she could remember better. I just wish there were tape recorders when my Grandmother was still living. But then I didn't know so much to ask either!

I only remember what Granny and Mom told me because they always repeated it over and over and I knew what was the thing most important to them. Also I asked other aunts, and Mom's uncles and cousins their version of the stories, and got them to re-sing the songs my Grandmother sang to me so I'd remember. When Mom was old I got her to sing also and tell stories she remembered, and Selina also. Just because I was interested.

But one who would have known the most, she was getting deaf and I was scared to ask her because I didn't know if she could hear me to ask. But Auntie Nellie said, "Oh, she would have been happy," because she knew some things about my ancestors that maybe my Mom didn't know. I think she was married as a second wife to one of my uncles - she was STILTA's second wife. So she knew our history. But I never met her. The missionary made him give her up, so she married someone else. She was married to Amos Russ of Skidegate. That's usually what happened when the missionary made them give up all but their first wife - they tried to find other husbands for them. Her name was Agnes Russ, and her Indian name meant "White Cloud."
She lived a long time - she went on her first plane ride when she was 102! She still was strong up to the end.

But now they look again, they watch for signs. In my family, my Mom when she was old told Bobbie's daughter Judy that she wanted to come back into her family, so she probably will with one of the grandkids. It could be a boy or a girl - it doesn't matter which. And sometimes people even are said to reincarnate into more than one person; it doesn't have to be just one. And really bad people, they believed that they would come back as nasty animals, like a wolverine, and not people at all.

They say that Joan, my cousin Nancy's daughter, she's supposed to be the reincarnation of Mary Anne, my grandmother. And Joan tells the story that after her father died, and her mom Nancy began to date again when Joan was a teenager, Joan would wait up and question her after her dates, just as if she was Nancy's mother, like "Why didn't you tell me where you were? Why didn't you call?" "I was always worried about my mother," Joan says, "and Mom used to tell me when I was young 'You can't be my grandmother, you're too crazy!'"

Granny never wanted to have any surgery, because they thought that if you had something done to your body or removed from your body in one life, then it would show up again in your next life - and she wanted to make sure she had all her parts! That was the logic behind beheading corpses in the raids in old days too, and taking the heads away. So that the person you harmed, and who might want revenge, could not reincarnate and get back at you or your family later. So
They say Alysha, Joan’s granddaughter, is the reincarnation of Auntie Nellie, Granny’s youngest daughter, Donnie’s grandmother. Auntie Nellie told Joan when she was in the hospital that she would come back to her as a baby with blonde hair and blue eyes - she always wanted blonde hair and blue eyes. And Joan, who’s so dark and her kids too, thought how could she ever end up with a baby like that? So then Natasha gives Joan a blonde haired, blue eyed granddaughter! Alysha was born with a tuft of white hair, just like Nellie’s - they tried to pull it out in the hospital because they thought it was fluff! And she fights with Lois all the time, who was Nellie’s daughter. Even though she’s only four, she talks back to her and tries to boss her around. Lois never could get married or anything - she was like a slave to Auntie Nellie. And Alysha is always so sassy to her - yet she always wants to go see her and be with Lois. Even when she was so little she could barely talk, she said in this tiny voice “Wan see Lowlis” - and then she’d fight with her when she got there!

My Grandmother had at least 7, maybe 9, children - it’s hard to say, because several died when my Mom was little. There was the first girl, Lena in 1894, who died; next was Amos born around 1896 (and he died when he was 18, from TB). Then there was Emily, my cousin Nancy’s mom, but she died from TB when she was 22. Mom’s youngest brother Paul was born around 1901, and he died of TB when he was 11 years old. My Mom well remembered both these brothers, ‘cause she
was old enough when they died. They were all Norman Skiltees kids. And there were 2 boys who died when Mom was little. My Mom, Flossie, was born in 1906, and her father was Axel Hanson. And then Auntie Nellie was born in 1908. There was also a son of Axel Hanson, born in Inverness Cannery, I think his name was Edwin, but he died at birth. So with all those children, only Emily, Flossie, and Nellie lived to be adults and have their own children.

And Auntie Nellie, the youngest daughter of my grandmother Mary Anne, was raised by Auntie Kate. Auntie Kate, whose name was SKILTING, was Willie Matthews’ older sister. She had several husbands, so she was Kate Edwards and later Kate Jones but was last known as Kate Harding. Granny had a miscarriage, and so Auntie Kate took Nellie “until she felt better.” But then she said that wanted to keep Nellie ‘cause she had no kids of her own, and Granny had four at home. So she kept Nellie, and took her to raise back on the Charlottes. After, she did the same with Emily’s son, Nancy’s brother Fred. She took him after Emily died, when he was just an infant, and raised him on the Islands. But he died too when he was about 12. Nancy was raised by Granny and by my Mom. Whenever she would mis-behave they would threaten her, saying that they would send her to Auntie Kate too! So Nancy really disliked Auntie Kate!

So Granny’s daughter Nellie was raised on the Charlottes by her Auntie Kate. Auntie Kate never really adopted her; she just took her, but Auntie Nellie used her last name, so she was known as Nellie Harding. Auntie Kate didn’t have any children of her own, but one of
her husbands had kids, so they were raised in the same house and Auntie Nellie called them “sisters.”

And Auntie Nellie always did have an accent, ‘cause she learned to speak English late. She had no schooling past kindergarten, because that’s all they had on the Islands then. She went to the same kindergarten my Mom went to, but then she never got to go further. Because Auntie Nellie was raised by her aunt, and because she spent all her growing-up time on the Charlottes, some of the things she’d say would be from the aunt because she wasn’t raised with the same family. So some things Auntie Nellie would say would be her adopted mother’s story, and they’d be different from what my Mom would say.

But after, Auntie Nellie married when she was 19, and they moved to Port Edward, so she saw a lot of her then, and Granny was able to see the kids. My grandmother always was old fashioned, and wanted family to know each other, and most of the things I know are through her, and the kinds of things she did and talked about. And the most important people in her life, she wanted the names to continue - “Norman” and “Stanley.” I didn’t have kids, but with my cousins’ kids she wanted that - so one is “Barney Norman Dudoward” and the other is “Stanley Dudoward.” So then for anybody who knows that, they know that the name “Norman” was important to her and the name “Stanley” was important to her - for her husband and her brother. And if there had been more, she probably would have named somebody “Simeon,” for her brother Thomas!
After, Mom's eldest sister Emily died too from TB. She was still a young woman of 22, and her son was just a baby. Mom nursed Emily until she died - and Mom was young too, just a teenager, 14 years old. After, Granny and Mom raised Emily's daughter Nancy, and Auntie Kate took her son Fred back to the Charlottes. So of all those kids, my Mom ended up being the only one left with Granny. And all the boys died young, from TB. That's how come Mom ended up with no adult brothers alive, and so I have no "true" uncles.

Granny's children, they must have all been around the TB germs. Because Granny's first husband Norman Skilees kept working hard after he had the TB, right up 'til he died. And then some of the kids, Emily, Amos and Paul, were in those homes, those church schools where all of the kids were together so all of the kids got TB. Except my Mom and Auntie Nellie, who didn't go to those schools. But even with TB all around her, Granny stayed healthy all the same.

The same later with my Mom. And it's a wonder, I don't understand how come. 'Cause Mom helped to nurse Nancy's mother who was her older sister; and her brothers, they all died from it, and her husband my Dad. And they didn't go to hospitals when they died - well my Dad finally went to a hospital, but her sister Emily died right in her house. Because the hospitals didn't really want to take them into the hospitals, especially the Indians, so they just stayed at home until they died.55

They had no electricity or running water at home, so it was really hard work caring for sick ones. And I don't really understand how she
didn't get it! She must have been strong. And then she ended up nursing me too for awhile before I went to the hospital. But Mom never got it, neither did my grandmother. My Mom had scars but she never suffered from it. They must have been strong women! But even so, almost all of Granny's children died from TB. So many people died of TB. And I guess when I found out about my father's relatives, I guess my Dad's brother died before he did, from TB.

When someone dies, the Haida believe that you should babysit the corpse for awhile, because their spirit will stay around - it doesn't leave right away. We also believe that relatives who have already gone will be waiting to help the dying person across to the next life. When Emily was really sick, she saw a woman sitting in a chair, who said she was waiting for her. Emily didn't know who she was, but she saw her there. Then she asked her Mom, my grandmother, ‘Who is that woman who's sitting there?’ When she described her to Granny, she knew her right away, and said ‘That's Auntie Cecelia!’ who had passed away before. Granny couldn't see her, but Emily could see her sitting right there, talking to her. The idea is that a female family relative will be waiting to help you cross.

But they're not only there when you die. The spirits of the relatives are always around. Sometimes people do burnings for them, to help them or for respect. The idea of having family spirits around all the time is not threatening - they won't harm you, but they can help you by putting ideas into your mind. But spirits can't do physical things. So it's not like the white's ideas of being haunted by ghosts, it's more like guardian angels. And about the only effect of the missionaries on that
belief was to change the name that people used to talk about it from "ancestor's spirit" to "angel".

That's why Granny wouldn't send my Mom to school, 'cause her kids who'd gone there had caught TB and died. Emily went to school down in Sardis, at the Coquileetza Residential School.56 When kids went to those schools they were away a long time. Emily never got to come home from school for holidays or anything - she was there from when she went to when she came home to stay. So she was gone from home for 3 or 4 years. Emily was just sent away one day; then one day she just walked in the door!

They didn't teach much at those schools, and the kids did a lot of work on the farms, sewing, cooking and other things. That did help her get a housekeeping job when she was young, and then she worked at "The Beanery." There was a railroad turn-around at The Beanery. So she got some use out of her education. But then she died from TB.

Emily had travelled by steamboat. They all did - the boys too, Amos and Paul, when they went to school. The boys seemed luckier; they were able to go the Boy's Home in Port Simpson. But then they got TB and died too, before Emily did. Mom remembered when Amos died at the Cannery, when he was 18 years old. They all died while they were young kids - only Emily lived long enough to have children, Nancy and Fred, and then Emily died too.

So my Mom, when she was older, was left with no "true" brothers, and Granny had no "true" sisters - but sometimes it's hard to tell, because
cousins were called like brothers and sisters too, before. But we think that's how it is, and that Granny had lots of “true” brothers.

The brother she was closest with was Daniel Stanley; could be he was a cousin, but she always called him her brother. Daniel Stanley’s Haida name was SKIL-KA-JU, “Waiting for Property Woman.” He was supposed to be Chief WEAH’s heir, he was raised to be the chief, but he died young. He went to the hospital in Prince Rupert to have an operation on his leg, which was infected - he had TB of the bone. He had the operation, and then at night he wanted to use the bathroom, and he just went by himself and he fell. And he died - he bled to death in the hospital. He was a young, strong man only 31 or 32, but he died. His wife Emma then married the one who became the next Chief WEAH, Willie Matthews. Granny said that Daniel and Emma had one child, a girl called “Rhoda,” but she died.

Granny never went back to Masset after she took Daniel Stanley’s headstone back. Before that she had gone back every year. But then she kind of gave up. She married my grandfather, and lived on the mainland.

I have some church records for when Granny and Axel Hanson were married, dated 9 October 1917. Auntie Selina, who was Selina Adams then, was the witness, with her husband Alfred Adams. That’s the same Alfred Adams who was the informant for Barbeau, and he ran a store there too. Alfred Adams had been to school in Coquiletza, so he could read and write. He bought from the local carvers, and he was knowledgeable about the carvers and their families, and that’s why he
was widely used as an informant. He's the one too who started the Native Brotherhood, and he was with them for a long time. So you see his name lots of places, and he was Auntie Selina's husband.

On those old records, some people are surprised and say "But the writing is all the same for the names!" But of course it was all the same - none of them could write! You'd think they would have put "X" or something, but they didn't; someone just wrote the names for all of them. Alfred Adams could write, 'cause he'd been away at school, and he's older than my Mom, but not much, so all those older ones couldn't read or write.

My Grandpa Hanson was an interesting man too, but I never got to learn that much about him or his family. He was one of those people who thought that when something was over, it was over. He didn't look back on the past or talk about it much. I tried to talk to him about his ancestry too, 'cause I was interested in his family, just like Granny's. But he just wasn't interested; he didn't want to talk about old times or the people he'd left in Sweden. But he did name my Mom after one of his sisters - they named her Flossie Christianna, and Christianna was the name of his sister.

When my Grandpa Hanson first met Granny, he was working with some scientists and he took them to Masset in his boat, and she was living near Mary Ridley who was working as a translator, so they met that way. He did that kind of work for many years, say 1900-1915, for the scientists and the collectors and such that were around then. I can't remember the name of the people he took, except I think one of
them was called "George," maybe an anthropologist collecting for the museums. He spent 3 years going up and down the Charlottes. They hired Grandpa's boat and he travelled with them when they bought artifacts, and they put them on the boat. There was a photographer too, and he took Grandpa's picture. I'd recognize Grandpa right away if I saw the picture. He was tall, and he always had a moustache - he had a hare-lip and he always covered it with a moustache. Grandpa Hanson's boat would sleep 4, so they lived close together for 3 years. So they'd get to know each other!

Grandpa's boat was called "The Fawn." Or maybe it was called the "Mawich," which is Chinook for "Fawn." I don't know - but he usually spoke Chinook Jargon. It was a made-up language used in the canneries - there were so many different people there with so many languages, but they used Chinook Jargon to communicate with each other. I have a picture of my Grandfather with that boat. It was a 2-masted sloop, built in Chemanus by a man called Ardvick. I know his grand-daughter, who is in the Terraceview home now - she has a model of the boat. There was also some student anthropologist or historian, his name was Bruce Wilson, who knew about this boat; he read about it in some book. It was the first one around here like that, that sailboat, and my Grandfather bought it with 2 years salary.

Owning his own boat like that gave him status with Granny's parents - sort of being like a chief. So that would have helped, like, make him acceptable for her to marry. 'Cause she was a high ranking woman, so she couldn't just marry anyone. She was under some pressure to marry again within the system. After Norman died, they wanted her to
marry a Skidegate man, Joshua Moody. But Granny wanted to marry Axel Hanson.

In the old days, all the marriages were arranged, and people had to marry within their rank. If they couldn't find someone of the right rank amongst their own people, then they would go elsewhere. A lot of my family married with the Tsimshian, and even with the Tlingit. Chief Stilla, Granny's father, was part Tsimshian. Most of Mom's relatives were part Tsimshian. Our crests of the Beaver, and the Butterfly, and the Hummingbird, and the Cloud, and the Moon, they all come from the Tsimshian. Even today, without the benefit of guidance from the elders, a lot of my family have married into the Tsimshian.

Women didn't used to have a lot of choice in who they married, because the elders planned it. There is an old song about a young girl singing from behind the screen to her young love that tomorrow she would be married to an old man. They would choose husbands who were already established, and who had good reputations for themselves and their families.

When I was interviewing our uncle, my Mom's uncle and my grand-uncle Willie Matthews, who was Chief of Masset, I was asking him “Where did our ancestors come from?” and “Why do people in Skidegate say I'm your real relative?” Like Rufus Moodie is one of our relatives and Jack Pollard in Skidegate. And so I'd ask him “How is it that they are our relatives?” And he said, well this chief so many generations ago had seven sisters, and these sisters, some of them
were married to other chiefs in theses other villages, and they had children, and so that’s how come. So some of our relatives are in Alaska and some are in Skidegate and some are in other villages. But because through the mother you still carry your rank and your names, so the names are still the same as our family names, even in Alaska.

Uncle Willie told me on tape the story of the founding of Masset, and how it became an Eagle village, and the story of my grandmother’s relatives. I asked Uncle Willie mostly about names in the families, and where the uncles came from. He also told Auntie Nellie, my Mom’s sister, she got it on tape too. Before it used to be just the anthropologists asking people questions about names, but when my aunt saw me do it, she decided to do it too! When she was talking to him it was in Haida, so I think he gave it to her in Haida. But I think she gave it to them in Alaska when they were doing Haida language studies. But I still have all my tapes. It is enough just to listen to them - whenever I do, it’s just like those people who are gone are back with us again.

My family is from Masset, which was an Eagle village when Granny and my Mom lived there and after when Uncle Willie was the chief, and now it is still an Eagle village, but the chief is related to the Ravens, to Seegay, who had the village before. So I was asking Uncle Willie questions for the tape you know, where were our uncles from. Because Masset was a late village you know, but our names and our families came from other places to Masset. So he told me how Masset got started.
It was our older uncles two or three generations ago who were what they called the Town Chief of Masset. And after the smallpox epidemics when so many people died, they invited the other chiefs to come and have one village, because the other villages, there was hardly anybody living in those other villages. And so they invited the chiefs of all the villages. The Town Chief, he owned the land that Masset is on. So he had his house in the middle, on the beach. And since they were all chiefs who came from other villages, they were all like equals. So they had a race to see where they would live. He told me that they had their canoes, and they all raced, so that whoever got there first could choose the best spot first, and they came in and they chose their spot where they were going to have their houses.

So Masset was set up and they were all like a set of equals, all the chiefs from the other villages, and they built a new village. But because the land belonged to the uncles, the ancestors of our family, so he was considered the Town Chief, although the others were also chiefs, and they were equals. So it's not like a king, like some people thought when they first came, "Oh so-and-so is the king of this village, and the king of the Islands." There were no kings. But there were powerful men, and powerful families.

There were things like, in those days whoever had the biggest totem pole had the highest prestige, and somebody once tried to build a taller totem pole than the Town Chief's, and they heard about it and so they had to build a taller one. Which is different from white people's ways of thinking - it would have been a bit of an insult for someone else to have a taller pole, but it never happened even though they tried
to in a round-about way. And even though some were always trying to outdo the others, and become the most powerful, still somehow the same family managed to keep the Head Chief.

Another thing, because you had to marry within your rank, the next generation the village chief could be from somewhere else. You might marry someone from another village, not always from Masset. The head chief’s sisters might be married in Skidegate, or Alaska, or even the Tsimshian or Tlingit. So the nephews then, to be the new chief, would be from outside Masset. And it is not always the oldest son of the oldest sister who becomes the next chief- it isn’t always that way. It is whoever is willing to be the next chief, whoever is raised - usually a nephew could be taken from Skidegate to Masset, raised in the chief’s house to be the next chief. And they may raise more than one at the same time, because that one could die, or that one could turn out to be an alcoholic, or he might not be suitable, so they never always had just one, they had two or three.

Like with Willie Matthews, he was really Granny’s cousin, from Alaska. But the one of her brothers, Uncle Daniel, who was being raised to be the chief, he died. So then Willie Matthews married his widow and he became the next chief. So these people who write about the Haida - when people try to analyse something too thoroughly, and they try to put these side-by-side rules it has to be this and that - it doesn’t work. In those days people died of TB, they died of smallpox, and everything - so many people died. Before that the men died in wars. So they never just had one person, and they came from cousins, second cousins;
maybe a chief might not have any sisters, but he had cousins, girl cousins, so his heirs could come from his cousins.

The old Chief, Willie Matthews, told me that was the way Masset became an Eagle village, when the chief chose someone unexpected as his heir, although I also learned it from books and stuff too. It was Chief SEEGAY, who was the Town Chief of Masset who was the reason that Masset changed from Raven hands to Eagle hands.

Around the time that they first started making money from the fur trade, and they had lots of money and some of these young men were going on ships and they were getting more experiences and earning money, and then after the big epidemic a lot of people were killed. When they had the race, when all the chiefs came to Masset, Chief SEEGAY's house was in the middle, 'cause he owned the land.

Chief SEEGAY was a Raven, and he wanted his son to be a chief, although he was an Eagle. His mother was Tsimshian. They decided on a new village and Chief SEEGAY ... the old chiefs had more than one wife, you know, they had the first one maybe a Haida, could be an older women than themselves, or a younger woman, and then other wives too. Then after when they started making friends with the Tsimshians, in order to get allies for prestige and for trading relations, then the high chiefs of Port Simpson, Metlakatla, Hartley Bay and that, they started giving one of their daughters. They would be like translators and ambassadors. They were high ranking people but outsiders. So some of the old people didn't like the fact that they would
make the children of the second wives that may be outsiders into high chiefs.

But Chief SEEGAY wanted that son to be his heir, not a nephew or a cousin, even though the son was an Eagle, 'cause he thought he was so smart and capable. So he gave him Masset, and he became the first Chief WEAH. Some of the older ones probably objected that the first Chief WEAH was SEEGAY's son, who had a Tsimshian mother. But Chief SEEGAY was a powerful man, and he had powerful cousins. There was no one above him, no one to stop him. They may have objected privately, but there was nothing they could do about it. He had the rights. And so he started a new chieftanship and a new village.

But all of the people were equals because they all came to Masset to build a new village, all new houses, so there weren't many people in the old villages after than. Some of the Tsimshian rules, but that's not Haida rules, that when there was a change like that, or an adoption of the son by the father - that is, switching crests - that it would only go for one generation and then they would go on. In the Tsimshians that's how the rules apply, but in Haida the rules aren't that way. And so he kept on, "WEAH" continued on for several generations.

Each family has their own version of what the rules are, or if there were any, when they're interviewed. But a hundred years ago, the most powerful men had their own way, regardless of what people say.
My Mom talks about four WEAH chiefs - Steven, George, Harry Weah and Willie Matthews. So there were 4 chiefs that were called “WEAH,” with the last one being Uncle Willie. It was supposed to be Granny’s brother, Daniel Stanley, but when he died they had to find someone else. Granny’s sons all died, so she had no one who could be the heir. It turned into a big dispute between the aunts - Mom’s sister Auntie Nellie, and her cousin, Auntie Selina - they were trying for their sons.

With all the illness and death of people, their dreams were shattered over and over again. It was especially frustrating for the women, for the old women. Right in our own family, between my grandmother who was SADJUGALTH LANAS branch and Auntie Kate who was SCANA LANAS branch, they were hoping and making plans for someone in our family to either be the chief or the mother of a future chief. And none of it worked, nothing that they planned worked.

In the first place, all of my grandmother’s sons died. She had brothers, but her sons died. My Mom’s son died. Then Auntie Nellie’s oldest son died. Then they tried to make my cousin Nancy marry the present chief’s son, so that if they had a son then that son could take over from his grandfather. But she wouldn’t go along with it. Then Don’s dad, they wanted him to marry the chief’s daughter. WEAH’s wife is Raven, so if he couldn’t have a son who would be the next chief, an Eagle chief, he would have to get one of his daughters to marry to someone who could be the next Eagle chief, and that would be Donnie’s dad. But he wouldn’t - he didn’t want to marry Mom’s uncle Willie’s daughter, so that didn’t go right.
The older women, they were always thinking and working to get their children married well, and to raise them up in a potlatch. Some, like Auntie Selina that lived in Ketchikan, she knew that none of Auntie Nellie's kids were going to be, so she started collecting stuff up and like she pushed her son Oliver Adams to be the chief. She and Auntie Nellie had been good friends all their lives, and after than they weren't friends any more.

But I still blame Auntie Nellie for she could have got up and spoken for herself but she didn't. But she was mad because when Auntie Selina was making a speech, she just made her speech in a way that sort of, like she said, "I'M HIS ONLY SISTER ... except Nellie." But she wasn't Willie Matthews' sister, she was his cousin. And neither was Nellie. He was their uncle. But a lot of people are making a big deal about the eldest son and that kind of stuff, the eldest nephew. But Willie was adopted from Alaska when he was a young kid, and Uncle Dan, he was supposed to be the chief; and Uncle Willie was being raised in the same house - but he was just a relative but not close. And the ones they're calling "sisters," they were cousins, so they were relatives, but not that close. And more so in the days when everybody was dying right and left, well they'd reach out for the next closest cousin. They weren't like you read in the books, "the oldest nephew." They sometimes had to go a long ways. And then that person had to have the backing of enough people to put up a potlatch. If the person wasn't liked by the others and hadn't been in the planning, then he wouldn't have the support for a potlatch. Kind of a strange politics, but it worked.
Mom's Auntie Kate, \(^{64}\) it was her mother that was the highest ranking one. And Auntie Kate, when Auntie Selina was getting her son to be the chief, (and she used really talk about that), and she wasn't the right rank - she wasn't high enough in position that her son should be the chief. But anyway, he was the only one that was willing! So eventually Oliver Adams became the Town Chief of Masset.\(^{65}\) But he didn't keep the name “WEAH,” he took the name “GALLA,” an older name. At the feast, Auntie Selina was talking about Willie Matthews, the old Chief WEAH, and she said, “Let his name die.” So Uncle Willie was the last Chief WEAH.

And Mom's Auntie Selina, although she was old, she still had lots of go in her, into organizing. She was a real manipulator-organizer; she kind of made some enemies amongst other people, including Donnie’s grandmother. And all their life they had been really buddy-buddies. But then they didn’t talk for a long time.

But in the first place Auntie Nellie was perfectly capable of talking and sticking up for what should have been her rights, but she didn’t because she was trying to be too churchy and modest. All she wasn’t scared to do was to really pray like mad in Haida. She had a reputation for being good at Haida, a good Haida speaker, and a real prayer. The aunt who raised her, Auntie Kate, her husband Elija Jones was a good preacher - he was blind, but he could preach for a long time. It became the next prestigious thing, you know, after they quit potlatching. The person who could really preach or really pray in Haida had the prestige, and Elija Jones had a reputation for being a really good preacher. He wasn’t a minister, but he was a lay preacher,
just speaking in Haida. Even when he was blind, he still had it all in
memory. Auntie Nellie too, she was really good at praying in Haida.
After she sort of got into the Evangelical rather than the Anglican.
Because in Rupert it was all this Native Revival, and they could really
go at it.

But Auntie Nellie was really mixed up. She had no right to be mad at
Mom’s Auntie Selina, because if she wanted things to go her way, she
was a really good speaker in Haida. She could have a really good
debate with anybody if she wanted to! She used to teach Haida up in
Alaska, and people said she knew old words that they’d all forgotten.
And now her daughter Marion (the oldest of Nellie’s kids, and the same
age as me), she teaches Haida in Rupert to school kids. But Auntie
Nellie could come up with sayings and things like that, because the
old lady that raised her, Mom’s Auntie Kate, all she had in her mind
was preserving Haida, preserving customs.

I don’t know if Auntie Nellie and Auntie Selina ever made up. Auntie
Nellie got a stroke, and she died first, and Auntie Selina died after.
Auntie Selina was 96 when she died, and Auntie Nellie (who was
younger than her anyway) died younger. Auntie Selina was really
health-conscious anyway. She liked beef, and they figured that because
she, she eventually got cancer, but not until she was over 90. And
they’d ask her “What do you like to eat?,” and she’d say “Oh, I like roast
beef. I like to suck the fat.” And that’s one of the worst things you could
do! Regardless, she lived to be pretty doggone old. If she didn’t have
cancer, goodness knows, she’d probably still be alive! She used to bawl
my Mom out, for being too careful when she had arthritis, worried about having a pain. "You should walk!" She was a strong lady.

Auntie Selina had been married to Alfred Adams when they were the witnesses for Granny's marriage, and they had lots of kids: Oliver, Ivan, Livingston, Lorne, and Victor were the boys, and the girls were, Julia, Jane, May and Delores. Delores is the second from youngest, and she's the one who married into Alaska and teaches there with her daughters Holly, April and Evelyn. Most of the girls are weavers of baskets, Chilkat blanket and such. The boys stayed in Masset. After, Selina married a man called Peratrovich, so she was known as Selina Peratrovich, but the boys always stayed known as Adams.

But in my grandmother's time Auntie Selina was just like a younger sister, and a younger sister after a time becomes an elder, and so her ranking would kind of go up. But Mom's Auntie Nellie, she still would remind them of this thing about the rank. I don't know who wrote this, I forget now, this is what Uncle Willie talked about: "A Blanket In Between." That was to mean that the house was divided, with the relatives. The chief was at the end, the farthest away from the door; and the next ranking one was next to the chief, and then there would be another one next to the chief, another family group, and the family groups were separated by a mat or blanket. And that was separating the ranks. They would be like sisters, first cousins, second cousins and so on. So that's what they used to say, that Auntie Selina was "another blanket away." So the ones that were closer had first say.
But she, Auntie Selina, was the one that kept herself and her mind in good shape, and also raised her kids all to have the skills of the good Haida, even though they were educated and everything. One of the girls married an American sailor. The American navy and army had a base in Port Edward, and so this one daughter married an American sailor from down in Chicago somewhere. And she still can speak really good Haida when she comes home for a visit. People said "How do you still remember after being away for so long?" and she said "Oh, I talk Haida to the cat and the dog!" But Auntie Selina couldn't talk hardly any English, she just learned it after she was quite old - after her first husband died, I think. She still had a really strong accent, but it didn't hold her back. But she ended up teaching basketry to people all over Alaska. She was really famous as a basket maker, a real expert. Some of her baskets, with the name as "Selina Peratrovich," were on display on the Alaska ferries my last trip there, and there are lots in museums and collections.

But partly Auntie Selina may have had a little, you know, heard too much of the talk and was annoyed. So she actually, after her son Oliver died, she kind of manipulated things. He was Chief of Masset, Chief GALLA, for only a few years and then he died, and all that started all over again! Because Oliver Adams' father Alfred Adams was a Raven who was related closer to SEEGAY, he was SEEGAY's nephew. So Auntie Selina worked at switching it so that it removed the WEAH set of people and reverted to SEEGAY's people who originally had it. And so Masset is still an Eagle village, but closer to the SEEGAY people, the Ravens. And this time Reno Russ became the new chief. He is an Eagle, 'cause his mother Flora Russ is an Eagle, but her dad was an...
Adams and a SEEGAY relative. The Haida name of Reno Russ is IL-JU-WASS or OT-IL-JU-WASS which means “Big Man Eagle Sitting.” “Eagle Sitting” is one of my family’s crests. Barbeau has a picture of that crest on a pole in Yan, the Eagle with the branches growing on the top. That’s the same figure, and the one I carved in the ice sculpture for Calgary. I met him when I was last in Masset; he is very nice.

But it caused a lot of hard feeling between them, because things changed from about 150-200 years ago. Back before, people were making lots of money and getting lots more experiences - they travelled the world, they travelled up and down the coast, and worked for white people and everything. A lot of them were quite smart. And also a lot of the Tsimshian and Haidas were getting along rather than fighting so much like they used to do. So whoever was smart and had money, and partly because too many of the older people died, well then more people were able to put on potlatches. And of course everybody liked the potlatches so they just sort of did change at that time, and it all had to do with the fur trade. But the missionaries didn’t go there right away, so that was kind of a high point in time for them. They had money, they had access to white peoples’ goods, they frequently went to the cities in Alaska and down south, and they brought back all kinds of things. Like KINASKILAS, he was one of the main travellers.

There were a few scuffles with the Tsimshian. It probably had to do with liquor; some of the ships traded with liquor, and then some of the people would get shot - guns and liquor don’t really mix. So that would start a little war. But they were starting with the Tsimshian, for
potlatching and interchanging of wives and that sort of thing, they started to try to get along. Then they had a big meeting with all the tribes just to try to get rid of these people who were bringing the liquor in, and they actually cooperated with the government I guess and helped them to catch some of these guys who were coming in with their liquor. They brought kegs of rum up from the Caribbean, and they were diluting it with something, probably wood alcohol, because it was making people sick - some died, others went crazy and would shoot somebody that they'd better not have made enemies of.

So things were changing, but the Haidas were the last to have a missionary there. And they actually requested them in. The Haidas were a little bit envious, because lots of them had Tsimshian wives at that time, they were getting along. And one of the Chief WEAH's had a wife who was LEGAI's sister, who was the head chief in Port Simpson. So they were closely related, and had connections with the Tsimshian who already had the missionaries. STILTA's mother was Tsimshian, and SEEGAY's wife who was the mother of the first Chief WEAH, she was Tsimshian. And all the chiefs were related. SEEGAY's son WEAH and STILTA, they were cousins, and they were both our family ancestors.

So they invited Collison to come. STILTA asked to have Collison come because he had TB and he hoped the missionary medicine could cure him. Collison spoke Tsimshian, and STILTA had a Tsimshian wife who could talk to him. They asked him to come, they protected him from harm, and gave him a house to use as a church. My Mom said her relatives were the ones who protected Collison and let him use
their older house. And Collison talks about all of them in his book. So Collison was promised protection and he got it. But STILTA died anyway, from TB. And the missionaries catered to the powerful – they had helped him so he had to help them in return. Like the constables in the village – younger men who had natural authority, the missionaries made them into constables and advisors, so people would go along with them, and they would go along with the missionaries. They had a reputation for being fierce people. But when I talked to the uncles they seemed so mild, I couldn’t imagine them being so fierce – the grand-uncles, the old men.

They were all cousins, STILTA, EDENSHAW and others were all related. Even though trying to become a head chief, one might go over the other one and they might have some disagreements between them, but during the time just before the missionaries came they did cooperate a lot. And they were the young men at that time who actually were quite worldly, and did know some English, and that was between 100 and 150 years ago. They weren’t afraid to travel anywhere, on any ship.

That was the reason why Auntie Selina’s father, Oliver Adam’s grandfather was lost at sea, because they went and joined this ship that was getting sea otter and they took them to northern Japan and they were getting fur seals and sea otter from there. And they would send them off in these little boats, (and he wasn’t the only one, but there were others that went off into northern Japan). And they saw him afterwards and they said that he went ashore and he married an Ainu woman, a northern Japanese woman. And one other man who
did the same thing they caught him and brought him back to Masset. But they never caught Auntie Selina's father, and she always said—once she sang a little song to me, and I didn't tape it but she said her father taught her. But her mother didn't like her to sing it because she was annoyed with her husband because she thought that he deserted her, and she wouldn't let her sing that song because her father taught her!

And some of them got dropped off in Hawaii too. They said when they hired the Haidas, that sometimes these ships before they brought them back to Canada they'd give them liquor and drop them off in Hawaii. But they said they liked it there—it was warm and they could sleep on the shore, and they could get lots of fish easily and fruit. And I guess some of them married into Hawaiians. Then after the 1st World War—some of the Haidas joined the army in the 1st World War. One of Mom's relatives, his name was Jones, and when he never came back they thought "Oh, he must have been killed in the war." But later on in the 50-60s the government was trying to locate him because there was no death record of him, and so they traced him to Hawaii and they found that he went there after the war! 'Cause they'd send them to where ever they wanted to go, and he went to Hawaii and married and they had kids. And they found out that they knew they were Haida—that their father came from the Queen Charlotte Islands. But he never came back. He probably liked it better there than in the cold north!

But Swanton and those people were after the more ancient information, maybe, and some of them thought that maybe that wasn't important, some of the things that happened between 100-150
years ago. They were asking about maybe older things. But to me that's an important time. And it's pretty old now for history in BC.

Those were the times Granny knew, 'cause she was living then, and also her family, her mother and her aunties would have told her. In Granny's family, there weren't so many of the old women, because there was a story that a bunch of the women, the sisters, were travelling together in a canoe, and it capsized and they all drowned. So Granny didn't have so many aunties living. But also her mother told her. Because women passed on the stories to the girls, the ones who would have children, for families to remember.

Granny died in 1948. I hadn't seen her for years, because I'd been in the sanitarium since I was 18, and then working. But I did get to see her about a year before she died. I was 21 or so, and I went up to visit Granny. She and Grandpa Hanson were still living in their house that Grandpa built. I went to see her then, and we even walked all the way from Inverness to Port Edward to visit Auntie Nellie and her family then too. Granny was nearly blind by then, from the cataracts. The same with Auntie Selina too when she was older, she got them too. And now I'm getting them also. Granny still had good long distance vision then, she could see things far away, but she couldn't recognize anyone up close. That was when I last saw her.

Grandpa Hanson, who died just two years later, is buried in Victoria, which is the first place he came in Canada. Granny is buried in Prince Rupert, and my Dad is buried in Prince Rupert too.
Endnotes for Chapter 6:

1. William Henry Collison, Archdeacon of the Church of England arrived in Masset at the end of October 1876 (Collison/Lillard 1981:55; Brink 1974:55). Some sources place his arrival at Masset in 1874. However, according to his own records, he was in Metlakatla from November 1873 (p. 22); in June 1874 he met his first contingent of Haida, and became friends with Chief SEEGAY (p. 54), whom he met again when the Haida visited Metlakatla in 1875 (p. 55). On June 6, 1876 he travelled to Masset to visit the dying Chief SEEGAY (p. 57); he and his family “took up our residence at Masset” 1 November 1876 (p. 59).

2. Knight (1996:218) notes that wives of Native hunting crews in the pelagic seal hunt “sometimes went along on these voyages as steersmen, although this was not typical.” The hunters would usually travel by schooner (and hunt by canoe) following the migrating Pacific fur seals all the way from California to the Bering Sea (with some also going to Japan). The hunt had been revitalized in 1867 after Alaska was purchased by the USA from Russia (who had restricted seal hunting in 1835), and the fleet of about 100 ships was based out of Victoria after 1894 when the Americans, British and Russians banned the hunt. Commercial hunting was conducted 50-100 miles off shore, and “was a dangerous business, even by the standards of the time” (p. 219). Canada also eventually banned the hunt in 1911. Please see Knight (1996:217-230) for details, as well as Kirk (1986:220-223, including a picture of a hunting canoe (p. 221) and a schooner (p. 220).

3. Please see Kirk (1986:116) for a picture of a canoe with a sail attached.

4. Regarding canneries on the Skeena, Lillard (1981:31) notes “The cannery was established by the North Western Commercial Co. in 1876. It was the first on BC’s northwest coast. Site named Inverness by Turner, Beeton & Co. when they took over the cannery in 1880.”

5. Pictures of many of the locations mentioned in Diesing’s stories can be found (as of 2002) on the Tourism Prince Rupert website: http://www.tourismprincerupert.com/photo_gallery.html.


7. Please see Appendix A for a discussion of Haida kinship terms.

8. As with most of these names, a wide variety of spellings exist (see Wright 2001:357.41 for a comprehensive listing). This is the way Diesing spells his name (similar to Swanton’s spelling).

9. Please see Wright (2001:296-303) regarding the efforts to identify Simeon Stilta and the other early STILTA’s. Diesing says that James Stanley, Simeon Stilta’s son, did become the next STILTA at the death of his brother, and that his adopted brother Joshua Collinson took over his house after James Stanley’s death during WW I. Daniel Stanley is said by Wright to be Simeon Stilta’s grandson (James Stanley’s son) but as noted here Mary Anne Norman always referred to Daniel Stanley as her “brother.”

10. This applies even to Mary Anne Norman’s date of birth. The date 1874 came from her baptismal records, as she had no birth certificate, “but Granny always thought she was older.”

11. Please see Wright (1998, 2001) for an analysis of Stilta’s style, and attributions for his work.

12. Barbeau (1957:204) drawing upon Swanton (1905:292) says of “Chief Stihltae ... In Yan village, there was among many others, the 'House-looking-at-its beak,' of which Steeltae - Returned - was the
owner. The curved block of wood, which in the old times took the place of the house-pole on this house, bore the beak of a bird standing out in front."


14. Knight (1996:159) discussing boat builders says "Daniel Stanley of Masset, an accomplished carver, built the two-masted schooner Princess Victoria on contract for a white fisherman sometime before his death in 1911."


16. "By 1908 Masset had three or four stores, two hotels and at least one café owned by local Indian entrepreneurs ... [and] the full range of 'model village' accoutrements - community hall, fire hall, town office, board sidewalks, church, school, and brass band ... all locally funded, built, and maintained." (Knight 1996:164).

17. Dr. C.F. Newcombe was a medical doctor by training and a naturalist by desire who spent years travelling on the NWC as a freelance collector of Native material culture, often on contract for various museums. He first visited the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1895 (with Dr. Kermode) and began collecting there in 1897. He continued collecting on the coast through the first decade of the 1900s. (Cole 1985:165-211).

18. "The North Pacific Cannery Village Museum has a collection of the little flags that used to identify boats for the packers to go round and pick up." (M. Anderson 2001 personal communication).


20. "Virtually all Indian adults were employed in some way. Government subsidy payments were effectively non-existent throughout this entire period [1858-1930]. Native people in BC had to support themselves by working for wages or in subsistence production or, more usually, a combination of both. There was no other choice. That also applied to the non-Indian population during the era of bracing free enterprise. There were no guaranteed medical services, no pensions, no "social safety net" for anyone." Knight (1996:20).

21. Boelscher (1989:55) notes: "A document which reveals who were perceived as "chiefs" at the turn of the century is a letter to the Anglican Church Missionary Society requesting a new missionary, signed by the nineteen "chiefs" of the area ... one is "Norman Skiltees, Skiltis, of the Kun 7laanas." [R14 of Swanton]. This is almost certainly the same Norman Skiltees, Mary Anne's husband.

22. Donald (1997) provides a detailed and informative study of slavery on the Northwest Coast, including a discussion of the wide impact of the termination of slavery.

23. Norton (1985) explores the lack of recognition of Native women's roles in the publications of the colonial (and even contemporary) historic period, and contrasts it with the much fuller descriptions of women's authority and activities given in the writings of early explorers.

24. There appear to have been few tasks that women would not take on. Discussing the historic period, Knight (1997:129) notes that, in addition to foraging, farming, food preparation, household duties, and paid labour "Some Indian women also pursued "men's jobs." A few went out sealing as canoe steerers with their husbands, others acted as boat pullers in the early commercial fisheries, a few worked as
packers. Among the northern trapping groups some women undoubtedly trapped, regardless of whether this was their "proper" sphere or not. Their work in the preparation of pelts for trade was usually critical in the price that such furs would bring. Other native women were an important force in their family's enterprises." Asante (1972:64-65) discusses, for example, Mrs. Eliza Thornhill's renowned skills as a hostess, gardener, hunter and a trapper in the Terrace area (as well as being a wife and mother).

25. As discussed on tape with Helweg, 1993 (F. Diesing 1999 personal communication).

26. Please see Samuel (1987) *The Raven's Tail* for detailed information on making these blankets or ceremonial robes.

27. Please see Steltzer (1976:34,35,42,43) for pictures of Florence Davidson engaged in this process.

28. A picture of Delores Churchill can be seen in Samuel (1987) on page 10, and page 26 shows an earlier (unidentified) Haida woman weaving a basket. Drew (1982) has a picture of various styles of hats and baskets (p. 110) and an unidentified woman in 1902 weaving a mat (p. 111).


30. Please see Jonaitis (1994 :86) for a picture of Yan and Masset (front endpaper) in 1881, and Masset (p. 50) in 1879.

31. Wright (2001:348) provides much the same information about Edenshaw, citing Peter Hill and Mary Nelly Tulip in Barbeau (1916).

32. Please see, for example, the information on Brown in Barbeau 1957:203-208) and the picture "'Captain' Andrew Brown and his wife (1947) " on page 209.

33. Please see Drew (1982:110) for pictures of such baskets.

34. Housing styles changed radically in Masset under missionary influence. "In 1878 [two years after the first missionary Collison's arrival] there were no European-style houses in Masset; by 1888 most of the old houses had been torn down and poles chopped up for firewood" (CMC website at http://www.civilisations.ca/aborig/haida/haaat01e.html). Mary Anne was born in a traditional big house (see WEAH's "Monster House" pictures in Jonaitis 1988:46-47 - "Granny should be one in that group of people, but I don't know which one"). By the time she and her children moved to live with her uncles and brothers, they had Western-style houses.

35. Please see Blackman (1992) for a picture of Florence Davidson and Selina Peratrovich (p. 111), and for a picture of Masset in 1879 (p. 46) and in 1911 (p. 75).

36. Asante (1972) provides information on the Thornhills and the Wrights, as well as a brief history of the entire area, in her book *The History of Terrace*. An introduction to the area is provided (as of 2002) at the Terrace Tourism website: http://www.terracetourism.bc.ca, and the link to First Nations sites (history and extensive photo galleries) are useful. Particularly relevant is the Kitsumkalum site, and their excellent photo gallery at http://www.kitsumkalum.bc.ca/photo.html.

38. Section 12(l)(b) of the Indian Act provided that Native women who married non-Native men lost Indian status for themselves and their children in perpetuity. One of the results of this loss of status was a loss of benefits and right, including the right to live on their reserve land. This was both ethnic and sexual discrimination, as Native men who married non-Native women retained their own Indian status, which they shared not only with their children, but also with their non-Native wife. It was not until 1985 that Bill C-31 amended this provision of the Indian Act. This situation is discussed further in Chapter 7.

39. Collison (in Lillard 1981:150) speaks of “Kinas-Kilas, a name famed in Haida story, where his forefathers were always represented as first in fight and adventure. He, too, had proved himself worthy, and his courage was undoubted.” Collison made him, “Stilta” and “Cowhoe” (George Edenshaw) special constables in Masset. Brighurst (1999:482) says that “Ginaaskilas (active circa 1870) was also a noted carver and one of the best of the early Haida silversmiths.”

40. Please see also Wright (2001). She makes the case that Simeon Stilta’s Haida name was SKIL-KING-ANTS (p. 303).

41. Please see Jonaitis (1994) for a picture of Tanu (p. 49) taken “probably by Newcombe, 1901,” and a picture of Skidegate (p. 41 in 1881 by Dossetter).

42. Still a problem for some of us: although many Haida sounds are not part of the English language, even properly recording the more common sounds can be problematic. For example, I kept hearing STILTES when Diesing kept saying SKILTEES. It was only when Diesing proofread the first copy (in which I had noted an “SK” spelling in Wright, along with other information), that she fixed the error (noting that she was the one who told Wright in the first place). And a further correction suggested: “I didn’t tell you STILTES; I think you got it mixed with STILTA” (which itself is not pronounced as simply as it is written).

43. Diesing notes: “SKILTEES means “The Bed of Property Woman” (KILTEES would be “talking in bed”).”

44. Please see Wright (2001:111) for a picture of EDENSHAW and WEAH taken by Dawson in 1878.

45. Wright has been documenting Haida genealogy, and her latest book (2001) presents the genealogical chart for the Edenshaw family (p.114-115), and for Diesing’s ancestors (p. 300-301). Blackman (1992) presents Florence Davidson’s detailed history of the Edenshaw family, as well as many pictures of several generations of Edensahws.

46. Florence Davidson notes (Blackman:1992:72) that her parents were baptised and married by Rev. Charles Harrison [who was the missionary in Masset 1883-1890], and that “when the missionary called my mother Isabella Edenshaw, she wouldn’t take the ‘Edenshaw’ for a long time. She couldn’t understand it; ‘How can I take Eagle’s name?’ she kept asking.”

47. “William Ridley, 1836-1911. Sent to the coast by the C.M.S.; first Bishop of Caledonia; Metlakatla was his headquarters for nearly twenty years. Soon after his arrival he and Duncan began a long series of disagreements; these finally led Duncan to take his followers to Alaska. Resigned the see in 1922. Author and translator.” (Lillard 1981:28).

48. Paul Ridley must have died before 1910, as Blackman (1992:71) has a picture, “taken ca. 1910,” identifying “Robert Ridley” (Mary Ridley’s next husband), in a group that includes Charles Edenshaw, Henry Edenshaw, James Stanley [“Granny’s brother”], and Rev. W.E. Collison (son of the first missionary).
49. Labrets were wooden, stone, shell, or metal plugs that were ceremoniously inserted into an incision in the lower lip of a Haida girl, increasing in size as she aged. They were indicators of high social status, and older women of high rank sometimes sported very large labrets, the size and weight of which flattened the lower lip down to the chin. They were very ancient ornaments on the coast, perhaps dating back to earlier than 2000 BC, and “the use of labrets... may have occurred earlier on the Charlottes than elsewhere on the northern coast of British Columbia” (Fladmark et al. 1990:237).

50. This was an editorial comment, referring to Diesing’s trip to Masset in 2002.

51. Please see also Barbeau’s discussion of Frank Paul as a carver (1957:211), in which he notes “In 1939 his name appeared in the press in connection with the gold bracelets that he carved for the Queen of England on the occasion of her visit to Vancouver. None of his work has been identified.”

52. Mr. William Duncan of the Church Missionary Society arrived in Port Simpson in 1847 as the first missionary to the Tsimshian. His life and work have been presented in many books, among them Murray’s (1985) “The Devil and Mr. Duncan.” Lillard (1984) provides a good overview of missionary activities on the NWC.

53. This was Robert Edenshaw, who drowned in 1896. Please see Blackman (1992:73-75) for more information.

54. The term “second wife” here refers to the practice of polygamy, having several wives at one time, which some high-ranking Haida practised before the missionaries gained influence. Please see Drew (1982:59) for a painted portrait of Agnes Russ.

55. Despite decades of TB epidemics, BC had no sanitarium before 1908, when Tranquille (Kamloops) opened, for whites only. In 1914 the Indian Act was revised with an order that all Indians with TB were to be (forcibly) removed from their homes and put in sanitariums - but the sanitariums did not exist. Indian Affairs would not pay for acute care hospitalization for ongoing TB; some church-sponsored hospitals then established sanitarium wards for Native patients. The first Indian Affairs sanitarium, Coquileetza Indian Hospital (Sardis) opened in 1941, and included several experimental treatments for TB in the care of its patients - most of whom were children from the Residential Schools. Within 10 years the Miller Bay Hospital (Prince Rupert) and the Nanaimo Indian Hospital (Nanaimo) opened, and all Indian Affairs patients with TB went to one of those 3 hospitals. (Kelm 1998:113-127). Even with that the 1943 “report on Vital Statistics for British Columbia [showed] [T]he Death Rate from Tuberculosis in Indians was 634 per 100,000 population compared to 41 in the remainder of the population.”(in Hawthorn 1948:37).

56. Please see Kelm (1998) for a discussion of the role of these residential schools in the spread of TB and other infectious diseases amongst Native children.

57. Drucker (1958) provides an interesting study of these organizations.

58. What Cole has termed “the scramble for NWC artifacts” was at its height in the 1880s and 1890s, although the influx of collectors, ethnographers, and natural scientists had begun a full decade before, and continued in force until the early 1900s. (Cole 1985).

59. At first we speculated that this might be George Dorsey, who received Harvard’s first doctorate in anthropology in 1894, and collected for Chicago’s Field Columbian Museum beginning in 1897. He was accompanied to the NWC by museum photographer Edward P. Allen. But according to the details provided in Cole (1985:169-177), it would not have been Axel Hanson whom Dorsey hired in 1897, although he may possibly have worked with him at a later date. It was more likely another “George” with whom Hanson worked.
60. Knight (1996:222-225) speaks of a vessel called the Fawn that was one of several schooners which travelled to Japan to hunt fur seals in 1894 and 1895. “[F]or about 25 years [from the mid 1880s] an average of 50 or so Indian sealers from BC put in at Japanese ports and got to know something of those distant shores … In 1901 the Fawn was driven ashore by storms on the northwest coast of Vancouver Island, although her crew were saved by heroic measures … [B]etween 1886 and 1895 some 33 sailing schooners foundered, half of them with no survivors.” Perhaps this is the “Fawn” referred to by Wilson. It may also be the same schooner that first brought Axel Hanson from Japan to Canada, and that he lived aboard for his first winter in Victoria. Possibly he then named his own boat the “Fawn” or “Mawich” after that schooner.

61. Albert Edward Edenshaw, because of his skills at self-promotion with early travellers, missionaries and ethnographers, was widely reported to be the Head Chief, or even the “king” of the Haidas. That this information is still being contested by other Haidas can be seen in works such as Sparrow (1998).

62. There were several epidemics that ravaged the coast, but the worst, referred to here was the 1862 smallpox epidemic that wiped out whole villages in the space of a few weeks (Carlson 1997; Kelm 1998).

63. There are discrepancies in the literature about the number of Chiefs WEAH. Most writers speak of 3, but Boelscher (1989) found documentation of 4 (with the first Chief WEAH dying in 1869 and being replaced by his brother). Stearns (1981:231) quotes Willie Matthews as saying he was “the fourth and last Weah,” but she herself talks about only 3 WEAHs. From Diesing’s information, four WEAHs would appear to be correct.

64. Kate (Edwards Harding) Jones, sister of Willie Matthews (Chief WEAH).

65. There was a gap of two years between when Chief WEAH died (1974) and Chief GALLA was installed as Town Chief (1976).

66. The reference is to Boelscher (1989), whose interpretation is somewhat contradicted here by Diesing. Blackman (1982/92:98, footnote 3) presents yet another understanding of this “blanket in-between” kinship relationship—when “individuals … have fathers who belong to the same lineage.… The relationship is likened to siblingship.”

67. Collison wrote about his exploits, which were published in 1915 as “In the Wake of the War Canoe.” An annotated revision of this book was published in 1981, with Charles Lillard as the editor.

68. Kirk (1986:221) notes that after the “mother-ship” style of commercial sealing began in 1867, “Men from widely scattered villages, speaking wholly different languages, began meeting each other at the Bering Sea hunting grounds and occasionally in Japanese teahouses and Hawaiian cafes.”

69. Knight (1996:225) notes “Matthew Yeoman [sic], later a Masset carver, was one of those who at the turn of the century sailed on a sealer to hunt in Japanese waters.” Matthew Yeomans was the great-grandfather of Diesing’s nephew, the carver Don Yeomans. He is also mentioned in Barbeau (1957).

70. Please see Jensen and Sargent (1986:56-57) where Flossie Lambly discusses time spent with her grandmother, Mary Anne’s mother, listening to songs and stories.
My mother’s Haida name was JAT-KIT-KI-GAS, “Chief Woman With the Loud Voice,” or “She Whose Voice is obeyed.” She got it at a naming gathering in Masset when she was only four. When she grew up, she lived up to her name!
Mom was christened Christiana Flossie Norman, known as Flossie. Her father was Axel Hanson, who came from Gottenberg, Sweden. His family name there had been Johanson. That meant that his father’s name had been “Johan,” so he was known as the son of Johan, or “Johanson.” In the Swedish way, it wasn’t the last name that was passed along, it was the first, and all the kids were known as the son or daughter of (the father’s first name). My Dad’s Swedish name was Johanson too. When my grandfather came to Canada he changed his last name to “Hanson”; when my father came here he changed Johanson to “Johnson.” But my Mom’s last name when she was born was “Norman,” not “Hanson.” It was the woman who wrote about Florence Davidson, Margaret Blackman was the one who sent me Mom’s baptismal records. Mom just used “Hanson” later as her maiden name, as that was Granny’s husband’s name at that time, but she was not adopted.

That’s because Granny didn’t marry Mom’s father right away, not until Mom was almost 12, and she had been married before. Granny’s first husband was a Haida Raven, Norman Skiltees. The missionaries were changing everyone’s name then. Sometimes the missionaries would allow some choice, from the Bible or from someone they knew. Like Uncle Joshua’s was from the Bible, Albert Edward Edenshaw was for a king, Chief Weah was “George” for another king, and Douglas Edenshaw was named for one of the ship’s captains. When the missionary came there he wanted names he could identify with, first and last names, so he gave them all first names. “Skiltees” was Granny’s husband’s Indian name, and “Norman” was the English
name they gave him. Usually what they did in those days for the first ones was to take a person's Indian name and use it as the last name, and give the person an English first name. Then for the next ones, they would take the father's first name and use it as the last name for his wife and the children. Sort of like the Swedish way.

That's why you get all these family names like "Bob" and "Charlie" and "Dick" - the last names sound like someone's first name because they were. The last names of some of Granny's brothers were "Paul," "Simeon," "Stanley," and "Norman? We're not sure if Stanley was just an English name that they picked, or if it was the way some of the English pronounced the Indian names, different ways of spelling "SIMEON" or "STELTA," like for Granny's brother James Stanley. Or maybe there was another Stanley person in there somewhere! But like when the missionaries were changing names, in one of the church records they put "Daniel Stanley" and then they put "STELTA" on the back of it. And Joshua Collison was also raised with them, and on the back of his name too it has "Joshua Collison Stilthda." And then my Grandmother, her youngest brother Thomas Simeon used the last name Simeon. Some of my mom's first cousins they had kids when they weren't married, so the Simeon name still exists. I even had some of the Simeon boys as students in my carving classes. I don't know if there's still any Stanleys. 'Cause I think most of them were girls, and their names would change.

Usually the old Indian names disappeared, but there is one that lasted, and a hard one too - I don't know why such a name lasted.
“YELTATZIE” is an Indian name that means “The Raven’s Earlobe.” It comes from the Tlingit “Yel” for Raven, although some Haida stories use Yel too. Now it is the last name Yeltatzie. It was an Indian man who that was his last name who told me that’s what it meant. My mother’s cousin, also named Flossie, took it as her last name. I never asked her why - if she married a Yeltatzie or what. But lots of people have that name now - that old Indian name.

Granny was given the name “Norman” by the missionaries, to use for the last name for herself and for all of her kids. So Mom was Flossie Norman, not Flossie Hanson. But later she used Hanson anyway, after my grandmother married Grandpa Hanson. And also when Emily Norman married they used the name Hanson. When they got the marriage license they asked what the mother’s name was and used that. It wasn’t like today, you didn’t have to be legally adopted to change your name; they didn’t have those things in the pioneer days.

Mom used Hanson as her maiden name on my birth certificate - it’s signed “Flossie Christiana Hanson” and “Frank Hjalmar Johnson.” My father’s name was really “Franz”- “Frank” was my brother’s name, and we called him “Sonny.” My Mom was born “Christiana Flossie Norman” in 1906. “Christiana” was the name of my grandfather’s youngest sister in Sweden. So Mom was known as “Flossie Norman” when her mother was called “Mary Anne Norman”; then she used “Flossie Hanson” after Granny married Mom’s real father Axel Hanson; then she was “Flossie Johnson” when she was married to my Dad. Later when she married my step-father Geoff Lambly² she became
"Flossie Lambly," the name most people know her by. When we moved to Terrace people assumed I was Geoff's daughter too and called me "Lambly" because my Mom was Lambly.

My step-father first saw my mother at a dance at the fair. It was exhibition time, and Granny put knitting and crocheting and embroidery in contests at the fair, and she won. And Granny took me on the merry-go-round, I remember going round and round. My Mom went to the dance they had at the exhibition, and was said to be the best looking woman at the dance. She wore an orange dress and nice shoes. Mom had been working and bought herself these new clothes, like a suit, and a fur coat, and dress - all these new clothes. And it was in the 1920s so they were those "flapper" styles. And that's when he kind of noticed her.

Mom was really striking looking, actually, and she knew it, even as a teenager. She had dark around her eyes, and long, dark eyelashes, and she had colour, so she looked like she was always wearing makeup, even when she wasn't. One of her girlfriends used to say "I sure wish I had your colouring. I look at you and then I look at myself - and my face looks like a pie!"

I guess her being a widow young gave her a second chance at being a teenager, or being a young person. After my Dad died she went out, to dances.
Mom was only 14 when she met my Dad. My father noticed her when she was just walking down the tracks at the cannery to go to school. He told some people there, "That's the woman I want to marry!" Some guys said "You'd better not touch her, her Dad will kill you." So I guess he got to know her parents.

When I asked her about their courting, Mom said they "just walked along the tracks and held hands" - it wasn't too interesting! At that time they just lived at the cannery. Maybe my grandfather liked him because he was another Swede. But there was a problem: my grandfather was from the south of Sweden, and my father was from the north, right at the border with Finland. It's a small country, but the dialects are really different - they could barely understand each other!

Mom said she thought they wanted her to marry him. And then this old Indian lady who was really close to my grandmother, like her guardian, sort of bawled her out and said "You shouldn't let her marry that man because he's not healthy!" But she married him anyway. Maybe that old lady had a premonition or something, because just a few years later my father died from TB.

She was so young; my Mom was only 17 when she married my Dad, who was 12 years older. We think of them as kids now, but they were adults then. They would go out to dances before my father got sick. Even after I was born they would go dancing - my babysitters were my Mom's girlfriends from when she was a kid.
My father worked at the cannery. He spoke Finnish, so they hired him to boss the Finnish workers. There were lots of men there from Finland - they were popular in the fishing industry. They did a lot of fishing in Finland, and that's what they did here. But most didn't speak English, and my Dad did, so they hired him as the boss.

I didn't really have any influence from him because I didn't even know him. He died before I was 3. He was buried on my 3rd birthday. I remember being on the train - we took the train to Rupert with my father's body, 'cause he was buried in Rupert, and he died in Hazelton. I remember seeing the grave stones - that's maybe the earliest thing I remember. I never did know any of his family 'til I was over 60 - I met his nieces and nephews after I was 60.

He was born in Sweden on January 6, 1894. I have his family tree going back generations, into the 1700s. He and his sisters came over to the USA first, and then he came up to Canada alone. There were some sisters way up north in Alaska, north of the Yukon, Tanaina. Up by a river. Some of the sisters had a store up there. The cousins I met later, they paid their way over, but they made them work it off in the store. So they didn't like that much! There were several sisters. One was married and lived in a place north from San Francisco. I got pictures of the aunts in Sweden, and my cousins showed me pictures. There is a picture of my Dad and Maria Elfreda in San Francisco, so it must have been that he went there first. And I have other pictures of him then, they were taken at the same studio. He was the youngest child, and his sister Maria Elfreda was the second youngest. She's the
one I'm named after. People see it on my birth certificate and think it's "Maria" like most, but it is actually pronounced "Mariah" like her Swedish name was.

My Dad didn't get along with one of his sisters who lived in the States. She died quite awhile ago. When I went to Sweden I saw a picture of them, the two of them. She had two boys, that live in the Seattle area, but I never looked them up. He was kind of upset with them the last time he was there. I've only met her niece, who didn't like her aunt either! They were "the Johnsons of Tacoma"—my cousin, when I met her in Seattle, said that if I were in Tacoma I would know just who they were, but I don't. My father thought they were "social climbers"—he was not happy with her. I think they didn't want him to marry my mother, because she was an Indian.

He was the only one to come to Canada. After, there were 3 girl cousins and my Mom gave me their picture when I was about 12. Then when I went to Sweden I went to there, and they gave me the address of the 2 cousins who were still alive who lived in the States. I looked up my cousins, his nieces, but not the boys. I'd had a dream about a man, who was sort of telling me not to go someplace. In my dream I was going to go some place, but he was warning me not to go. I thought maybe it was him.

It was kind of exciting to meet them, 'cause you always wonder what they were like. I met lots of the cousins and second cousins in Sweden, and the two in the States. But by the time I could get anywhere my
aunts were all dead, so I didn’t get a chance to meet them. But the oldest cousin (named for my father) said I resembled my aunts, and I noticed a family resemblance with my cousins. They said they were glad to meet me, and “had always known about” me and my Mom. But we never saw them.

When I came back from visiting my father’s home in Sweden, Mom had a dream. Dad came to her - just as real as life - and talked to her. They talked about lots of things. Then he saw the picture beside her bed.

“Who is this man here with you?” he asked.

“That was my husband,” she said.

“Why, I didn’t know you’d gotten married!” he said.

So Mom thought that maybe my Dad’s spirit had gone back to his boyhood home when he died. But he missed us and had come along with me when I came back home. She didn’t say that he said he’d seen me - just that it was so real, like he was really there!

In some of the pictures I have of my father and his sisters, I look like them. In some of the pictures I have of Mom I look like her. Some of the pictures I have of us together - you can tell I’m her daughter. But I always figured that was just that I had dark eyes and hair. ’Cause I always figured my mother was better looking. And the same with my sister, I thought Mom was better looking than my sister. But people used to say that. This one guy, a druggist we’d gone to school with, used to say, to tease “Oh, I mean the good-looking one!” - meaning our Mom! I guess I look a bit like Mom and a bit like Dad.
Mom was born in Metlakatla in 1906. Granny was already well along in her pregnancy when she finished work at the cannery. There were no hospitals then on the Charlottes, and Granny had lost her previous baby. So she went to Metlakatla so she could be near the missionary doctor Keen when this baby was born, and so Mom was born in Metlakatla, in a house. Some people have reported that she was born in the Prince Rupert hospital, but it's not so. The first baby born there was a Japanese baby, just after Mom was born.

So Granny had Mom in a house, and there was both a doctor and a nurse there helping. The nurse was an English woman name of "Flossie." She said her parents had called her that 'cause when she was born they said her hair was so soft, "just like floss." Granny never heard that name before, and she really liked it, so she took that "new" name for my Mom. So Mom got the new name "Flossie" like that English nurse and also "Christiana" for Grandpa Hanson's sister.

They worked at the canneries a lot then, so they would travel back and forth between the Charlottes and the mainland. Mom stayed with Granny the whole time when she was a girl - she never went to school except for three years when she was older, at the Sunny Side Cannery School. That was after Granny married Grandpa Hanson and he built their house by the water. But my Grandfather taught her how to read and do math before that, before she went to school, and she learned some from her older brother Amos and her sister Emily to start with, and she did go to kindergarten in Masset. And when she did go to school she said they put her up about three grades in one year, and
she went about 3 years. So she ended up getting as far as grade 7, but she actually only went to school about 3 years. She learned a lot in those 3 years. Granny said her other children had gone away to school, and then got sick and died, so she wouldn't let Mom go - she didn't want her to die too.

Because my Mom spent so much time with Granny, Granny taught her lots about the Haida ways, all the old family stories. She taught her how to speak Haida and Tsimshian and Chinook and the English things she'd learned from the missionaries.

That's why my aunties and uncles had so much respect for what my mother knew, the old ways and the old stories, and said that her stories were likely correct, because she hadn't been sent away like they were. Even her Auntie Selina's husband, Alfred Adams, he had gone away to the residential school, and after, most of them were sent away.

Granny always told me "Remember who you are," and "Remember your family history," although in Mom's generation everyone was trying to be like the whites, and giving up the old ways. People told my Mom when she was young that she would go far if only she would "lose that accent" - the way Indians talk - so she did. But she always remembered how to talk the language. She still remembered a lot of old words that others had forgotten. Sometimes later people would be surprised to find out she spoke Haida, high Haida, and Tsimshian and Chinook too!
It was only after my step-father died that she talked a lot to me about those things again. When she was married to my step-father, she tried to be a good wife to him and please him. She did what he wanted. He wanted to “civilize” her, and “improve” her!

Geoff Lambly married Mom because she was young and so good looking. She married him because he told her he would help her take care of her kids. My brother was still a baby and in the hospital in Prince Rupert when they met. He drove a taxi, and he would take her back and forth to the hospital.

It was hard for her then. I was only three, my brother was sick, and she had nursed my father with TB right up until he was ready to die in the hospital. And before that she had nursed her sister Emily at home until she died from TB. Mom raised Emily’s little girl Nancy, but right then Nancy was with me and Granny at the canneries, after my Dad died. Mom was only 21 years old, a widow with two little children. So she married Geoff Lambly a year after my Dad died. Mom needed someone at that time; she ignored his faults.

When Mom married Geoff Lambly he was driving a taxi, and that meant automatically that he was a bootlegger, ‘cause all the taxi drivers would get liquor for people. Especially in those days, ‘cause it wasn’t legal for Indians to drink alcohol, so that’s how they would buy it. My Mom didn’t like him doing that, ‘cause many became drunks which created lots of problems. And she disapproved. My grandfather when he was younger belonged to a “Temperance” club. Not that he
disapproved of all alcohol - a glass of wine, and brandy for your health, something at Christmas, that was okay - but not to excess. And he passed that on to my Mom, and she passed it on to us too. So she disapproved, so he changed to delivering coal, and so he had to lug these heavy sacks of coal up these long stairs! And he said "Well, I guess I'd rather be driving taxi!"

Mom tried hard to please her husband. She was very careful who she told things to. She would wait to find out how people would react to things, and then she would know how she could talk to them. People can think funny things some times, you know, especially about Indians. Even now. I've done it too sometimes - I'll wait to see what I can tell some people. My step-father wanted this good-looking young wife, but he didn't want an "Indian." So she passed for white. She told people what they wanted to hear, and played up her Scandinavian heritage and her English husband and she downplayed her Native heritage. A lot of people did that then - they hid their Indian-ness. Most people thought she was Italian or something, with an English husband - they had no idea she was Indian.

My Mom lost her Indian status when she married my Dad. That was the law then. When they changed the law, she didn't get it back. She didn't have a birth certificate - she was born in Metlakatla. She only had a baptismal certificate, from the Anglican Church. That happened to a lot of people, because of the way they kept records then. My cousin Nancy had the same problem. She married a Tsimshian man who was enfranchised after he had been in the army, so they both lost their
status. Later their kids got it back, but Nancy never did because she has no birth certificate. She was born in Prince Rupert hospital, but they can't find the records. Her mother, my Mom's sister Emily Norman, was born in Masset, so her birth wasn't registered. The Mission Boat would stop by regularly and baptize people, but they didn't date it. There are Indian Affairs records that show when Granny, Mom and Nancy's mom Emily moved to the Skeena, so maybe Nancy could get her status back if she tried hard enough and had someone help her. Mom never applied to get her status back because she said she was “too old.”

Before my Mom ever met my Dad, the family had plans to marry her to someone else, someone who could be a chief. Oh, those old women were always scheming - planning who was going to marry who, who in the next generation and the generation after that who was going to be the chief, who was going to be the child's mate. They were the ones who did the planning. I know that from the things they did in the family. In this day and age, when I think about them, I kind of feel sorry for those old people, because all their plans all went - nothing ever went the way they planned it. 'Cause the young people they didn't want to listen, they didn't want to do things by the older rules.

In those days, the mothers and the aunts and the grand-aunts, they'd just start pushing the people together. I know that the one that died that they wanted my Mom to marry, I think they started playing together from about the time they were 11 years old. You know, the people would come, they'd bring their son, so that they really got to
know each other, so that when the time came for them to marry, they already would know each other so they wouldn't object too much to it. And they did that with my Mom too, but then he died from TB.

But sometimes putting them together just didn't work. Like with my cousin Nancy. Because Auntie Nellie was already being raised by the chief's relative, and the only way he could have a grandson who would be the next chief was to marry an Eagle woman, because he was married to a Raven woman, and so he couldn't have his own son be his heir, it had to be a grandson. And if they wanted to have a grandson in the right family, then they had to start arranging with the women. Auntie Kate's mom was the high ranking one, and she just said, "Send Nancy over."

And so they brought my cousin Nancy over to Masset. And she said she wondered why this guy was being so nice to her. But they were making him be nice to her, because they were planning on getting her to marry him. But they didn't tell her! They planned a surprise wedding. They were just going to take her to this feast and announce her engagement.

But my cousin Marion, Auntie Nellie's oldest girl, she just kind of said, "Oh they're killing a calf for a feast."

And so Nancy said, "What's the feast for?"
And Marion said, "Oh, to announce your engagement to Christopher Matthews."

And Nancy was just so shocked, she locked herself in her room and wouldn't come out!

She already had a boyfriend, George Dudoward, and she didn't want to marry anybody else. So they had to cancel it. So Nancy went back to Granny's at Inverness, and it ended up she married George Dudoward. And it ended up too that Christopher Matthews drowned. But if my cousin Nancy had married the chief's son then their grandson, the chief's grandson, would have been chief, because he would have been Eagle and also be related to the other chief.

And then Donnie's father, they planned for him to marry Willie Matthew's daughter; his daughter couldn't be another next chief, but he could, so he could be the chief if he wanted to. But Hector didn't really want anything to do with it - he didn't want to go back to Masset and he didn't want to be the chief. So he wouldn't have anything to do with Uncle Willie's daughter, and he married a Cree woman of his choice. That was one of the weddings that my Mom had told the paper that he was heir to be the next chief, and he was quite upset! So that was three times their plan on who the next chief would be was messed up, just in my Mom's generation.

But by then the chief's didn't have any responsibilities, they'd just make speeches to guests. When the politicians come to visit they'd
invite the chief to sit at the head table and make a speech. So, Uncle Willie would say, "Oh, you don't have any respect - all you have to do is make speeches!" Nobody respects you for being a chief any more, unless you have a lot that you can give. But he never had anything. By the time he took over as chief, all the masks and bowls and boxes and spoons - everything - was pretty well all gone. There was no stock of carvings when he took over. When I interviewed him once on the tapes, he said "That Tsimshian woman, she took it all back!" He thought that the wife of Chief WEAH, the second wife who was Tsimshian and sent away by the missionary, took the carved things back with her to Port Simpson. Could be that some were her wedding gifts, and she would take them back. 'Cause if they didn't keep the wife, they couldn't keep the dowry either!

Uncle Willie Matthews was a real nice guy, and he knew a lot. And he was chief for a long time [1932 - 1974]. I have a picture of me with my Mom and Chief WEAH at Robert Davidson's pole raising in Masset, in 1969. He was in his 80s then, and of course he gave a speech, and she stood up beside him all through that. That was the first time my Mom had been back to the Charlottes, and she saw Uncles and cousins that she knew when she was a child, but she hadn't been back in about 50 years. There was a write-up in the paper, and they called her "Princess Flossie" and said that she had the right to choose the next chief, and they called me "Princess" too. But that wasn't right! They tried to make it like the white system, 'cause that's all they knew, but it's just not the same. And then when people see that, they think that you're trying to put on airs.
Old Robert Davidson was still alive when they raised that totem pole in Masset, and it was his grandson, also called Robert Davidson, who carved the pole. Mom and I stayed with Florence and Robert Davidson then in Masset. And sometimes they would stay with us. Old man Davidson was a really nice guy too, and he knew lots of the old songs, and the old stories. I remember him telling the story of the Son of the Sun - that story is in Harris' book. And he could be a funny guy - he had a sense of humour. Once I was saying that I wanted to get some gold bracelets - I really wanted some nice carved bracelets. And he teased me and said, "But you won't go to heaven if you wear gold bracelets!" He was teasing, like, echoing the attitude of the missionaries.

When I was making the button blanket that I wore when we opened 'Ksan, I made the design, but the robe wasn't ready - the sewing wasn't done, and a lot of people helped with the sewing. Robert and Florence Davidson were staying with my Mom then, on our joint farm in Cedarvale, and Auntie Florence helped sew on buttons for that blanket - lots of buttons. They were plastic buttons - not like the one I made for the "Robes of Power" exhibition, which had real abalone buttons. By then, I had designed a lot of blankets, but that was the first one that I sewed.

And one time we wanted some grease and so I went to get it, and I looked for the lightest and clearest, 'cause some was lighter and some was really dark. And I brought the lightest and gave it to them, 'cause I wanted the best. And Auntie Florence said to me, "My dear ... " (she
always spoke like that) “My dear, the darker oil has more flavour.” I
brought the lightest oil as the best, but seems the darkest oil is the best
one that people want, the strong one - I didn’t know! And then I
thought that her husband Robert Davidson would drink first, because
he was the oldest one, but Auntie Florence made him drink last. She
said that the oldest drank last “because old people are germie”!

Auntie Florence’s mother was from Alaska, and they speak the
language differently than those from Masset. So some people in
Masset, when that linguist John Enrico was there, and he was living
at Florence Davidson’s place, and was speaking to her about the
Haida language, some were a bit upset. Some resented him working
with her rather than others. “He shouldn’t be talking to her,” they said,
“she doesn’t speak Masset Haida!” She had a bit of a different accent,
and some of the words are different, ‘cause she learned from her
mother who was from Alaska.

And John Enrico was there a long time, he did a lot of work with the
Haida, on the Haida language, and was a boarder with Auntie
Florence. One time he was there with Auntie Florence, and a bunch of
them were there, the elders. And he read some of the things Swanton
had written in Haida, he read it to them in the Haida, and they said
it was just like listening to those old people speaking again! He was
really good, and that Swanton too - I don’t know how Swanton could
have learned so much Haida when he was there for such a short
time.¹⁰ And now Auntie Florence’s house is a bed-and-breakfast, run by
one of her daughters.
My Mom was living in a "senior's cabin" after my step-father died in 1976. They had lived with me on our farm in Cedarvale, and then with Bobby and her husband on their farm in Woodcock, but then they moved back to Terrace in 1972 to Tuck Avenue, to the retirement place. And Mom just stayed there after Geoff Lambly died. One day Mom turned on the water tap at the sink. Then she couldn't remember how to turn it off. She just couldn't remember how to turn the tap off. So she went out into the hall and asked someone, and they came in and turned it off for her.

She went into the hospital, and found out that she'd had a "mini-stroke." Just like that. She had to stay in the Psychiatric Ward for awhile in the hospital until there was room in the nursing home. There aren't many places there, so for something to become available, really, you have to wait until someone dies!

My Mom lived in Terraceview for a couple of years, and she always acted as though she liked it in the nursing home. She was kind of pampered there. And they had her doing lots of things there - like whenever there was an event or they gave out awards for things, she'd be the one to give a speech or meet the people or cut the ribbon or that. She was in her wheelchair then, 'cause she had about every type of arthritis there was. And she was sort of treated special there, and she seemed to like it. But she kind of gave up near the end. Because of this dispute over a t.v.
The Rotary Club bought them a t.v. to use. Then it was moved to another section. The residents disliked that. Mom became their spokesperson, and got it moved back. So I guess I come from a long line of 'Raging Grannies!' But the staff there felt that she was going against them. I think she had a feeling that the staff turned against her.

She had been involved with the nursing home for a long time before she went there. My step-father too. During the war, the army used the building as a hospital. That's where they sent me when I was sick. The local doctor said I had pneumonia, and it wasn't getting better as it should. So they took me to the army hospital to consult with the army doctor. That's when they found out I had TB.

After the war, the army was going to tear down the building. But the town wanted to keep it, so that's when they got involved. They wanted a place to keep the seniors in Terrace and not have to send them to Kitimat like they did. So eventually they saved the building. It became a mental hospital for awhile. Then it became "Skeenaview," a senior's home. Then in the 1980s, when the building was old and the government wanted to tear it down, the local people got going again. And Mom was one who made some speeches, too, to not close it down but build a new one and keep the old one open awhile. And they did that, and now it's called "Terraceview." So the old people now can stay here, where they grew up. I want to go there too, when I can no longer manage on my own - I even know which room I want, the closest
mom looking over the hill, the one with the best scenery! Oh, I'm just kidding!

The Eagle panel I'm carving now is for the Home, to honour my mother and the other Eagles. The face in the middle is a woman's face, with the labret, and that is to represent my Mom and the other Eagle women in my family. It will go with the first carving I did that's in Terraceview, of the Beaver. The Beaver is one of my family crests, that came from the Tsimshian. That carving was done for the wife of Clarence Michiel, who was the old school principal here; he was my teacher for awhile, and he had stayed there. His wife wanted it in his memory. There is a plaque on it; I may find out where the first plaque was engraved and try to match it for this one. But I may not give it to them - there may not be any of the staff left there who knew about this - that there would someday be another panel, for my Mom. But they did leave room on the wall for it.

Mom was still in the Terraceview Home when she died. That was in January, on New Year's Day in 1990. She was 83 years old. She is buried in Terrace, beside her second husband, Geoff Lambly, who died in 1976. It was only after he died that she really started talking a lot about her Haida heritage. But even before, she sometimes spoke out about things, Haida things, when it was important.

Like when she talked to the papers about the "Death Money." There was this new coin, a Canadian silver dollar, that was brought out to celebrate BC's centennial year, and it had a totem pole on the back of
it. Well, some people were all upset, 'cause they thought this was a mortuary pole, where chiefs were buried, so they started calling it "MEMALOOSE CHICKAMIN," or "death money." And there were write-ups in the paper and on the news, and all these people talking about it. And Wilson Duff got into it - he said it was in the museum there in Victoria, and that it wasn't a mortuary pole at all, but an interior house pole and they had it. So then finally my Mom spoke to the reporters, to settle it all. She said that she could speak about it because it was her grandfather, Stilta, who they believed carved that pole with the Killerwhale on it, and the Killerwhale is for her House, and even her mother's name, which was Stilta's daughter, was "SCANGUIGAN" - "Daughter of the Killerwhale." And my Mom said that it wasn't a mortuary pole, and not "death money," that it was okay - and she should know.

I can't remember if that was one of the poles collected by Newcombe when he was there - he collected a lot of poles. And Granny acted as one of his interpreters there. But maybe it was. Anyway, the Killerwhale is one of Mom's Grandfather's crests, and Gran was named "Daughter of the Killerwhale." When Alfred Adams died in 1946, his son carved a small totem pole for my Mom, like a model pole, with her crests on it: Beaver, and Eagle. And the Butterfly is one of our crests too. I do a lot of things with the Butterfly crest, and people sometimes ask me, 'cause they don't know. But it is one of our crests, one of those from the Tsimshian.
The Butterfly is in a lot of the stories - Butterfly would travel around a lot with Raven. At least in Masset stories. In some others it is Raven and Eagle that are together; I don't know why those stories are different. And the other one you hear of often is Crane - people often call Crane "Master Carpenter" because he did the carving in a lot of the stories. So you hear Crane as Master Carpenter, not as a crest.

After my Mom died, I made this video in her honour, about her life and my grandmother's. I worked with a man here in Terrace who had a machine for making and editing videos, and I took a course from him in video making. So I went through all these old photos, and I put it all together into this video. I never finished it, though. I needed to make a soundtrack for it, but we never did that, and I don't know if he even still has the machine to do it. I couldn't decide what I wanted to say - how I talk and what I say depends on who I'm talking to. I would say things one way if I were talking to a stranger, and a very different way if I were talking to my family. So I've never finished it. I guess I should some day.

Back when Granny was a baby, the missionaries came. The missionaries like Collison made them release all the slaves and send them back where they came from - they banned slavery.

So slavery ended after the missionaries came, but they still went on some raids after. But because even the leaders would say "We can't take any more," they would go on a raid but they weren't allowed to keep anyone. But, like, both my Mom and my Grandmother talked
about how this woman who went on a raid with them, she was one of our relatives, she went on a raid, and they were told not to take anyone. But they were shooting, and then they went on shore and they found this very pretty young woman in the woods. A bullet had grazed her and she was knocked out. And one of our ancestors took her and put her under the stuff in the canoe. Then they took her home and she woke up. She was told, they were told that they couldn't keep anybody but they let her keep this girl. And she was raised like one of the family, as like a babysitter. So she was like Granny's babysitter. They didn't use the word "slave" then; people didn't want to say that, because the missionary came after that, and they didn't want them to have slaves, but the other people still called them that. Even if they would call them family.

And then after, they just took that girl like family, and then she was married to someone after of the same class that wanted to stay. And many stayed, or came back. Used to be no one would marry a slave; people would only marry others of the right status. Well, things changed, sometimes. Then this lady, when she was old, it was either her or her daughter told my Mom that they found out after that she was from the chief's family class. And she told my Mom, and my Mom told me, that even after, she said that the slaves slept in a certain part of the house, but she always slept in with the regular people - that they didn't ever treat her like a slave, and she was always just a babysitter. And this old lady, she was kind of making a diagram in the sand, and she was saying "Well, the slaves slept here, but I always slept here," just to show that she was a different status, because they slept in
a different part of the house. And like my mother always said, it was like she was her mother's "companion."

So this woman was Granny's babysitter, XX-A [name changed for privacy]. After, she had a son and her son was Auntie Nellie's guardian - he watched Auntie Nellie as a child. She liked him because he was supposed to discipline her and to supervise her to make sure she didn't do anything improper, but he pretty much let her do what she wanted. The main thing they were to watch her for was to make sure she never got a boyfriend. After the missionaries came, if a girl had a baby they forced her to marry the father. Auntie Nellie's guardian was called "XY-B" [name changed for privacy], and he married another woman I know.

And then they used to kind of joke around about it, because anyone who was from another place, they would refer to them as slaves, even if they didn't consider them to be. And so they, even when my cousin Nancy was young (and she's just 4 years older than me), they gave her one of this family, it was kind of like pretend, and they said that this girl, whose name was "XX-B" [name changed for privacy], they said she was going to be Nancy's "companion." Like my mom said, "Oh, it's kind of like the Queen's lady-in-waiting." And anyway Nancy and I were talking about it one day and she said, "Yes, I was given one, but she died." - I guess she died of TB, a lot of people died of TB. She said she was a really cute girl. But they were from Vancouver Island before they brought them here.
Chief WEAH did have a slave named "XY-A" [changed for privacy]. Before he died XY-A had his own tombstone carved - it sounds funny, but it was really a good idea, since in those times so many ended up having the wrong information on them, wrong dates, and even the names wrong, due to language problems and the long delays before people got them.

The tombstones weren't made on the Islands, they had to be ordered from Victoria, and then shipped up on the steamships, so there could be long delays. And sometimes they were ordered a while later too. And a lot of the people couldn't read or write, so whoever wrote the names could get it wrong. So they sent down the designs they wanted and the words, but often they were ordered by people who didn't know how to write, although some, like Alfred Adams he went to school so he could read and write. But before they didn't have calendars like now so sometimes they didn't even know the dates, especially the birth dates. So they could be wrong. And he wanted his right - and he had gone to Indian school too, so he ordered it himself. And it said "Chief Weah's Faithful Servant."

XY-A did go back to his own people, but then he returned to be with Chief WEAH again. He used to say that they didn't like it when Chief WEAH rode horses 'cause he couldn't keep up to him to see him and take care of him. Actually, XY-A was one that used to be my Mom's babysitter too, in Masset. And I have a picture, my Mom had a picture because he was one of my Mom's favourite friends. People got really attached to these "babysitters," because, really, they were raised by
them, and they were loved by the kids - like the Black "Mammie's" were in the southern states.

And I know his name, and there's a guy that's been in the newspapers, he's from the Nootka area on Vancouver Island, and this guy whose dancing or something, has the same name, so that must be where he was taken from. Well they used to be called Nootka and now they're called Nuu-chah-nulth or something. 'Cause they just used the wrong name, 'cause they were just trying to tell them something, like "Oh, go around the corner" or something like that, and they made it into a name. They somehow changed the name but they were just trying to give the people directions - they heard them say "Nootka," but they were just telling them what to do. But every time I hear that name I think "Oh-oh, that must be where XY-A came from."

And Mom said that he was really old. And that was when old Robert Davidson's brother Alfred Davidson was making the canoe, it was in Masset. And she'd go and collect the chips like this, and put them in a big tin washtub tub and tie a rope onto it and tow it with a bunch of chips in it. And she'd take them for her old babysitter XY-A too, because he lived in a little house behind theirs, and she said she'd bring him some chips for his fire, to start his fire with. From the last canoe which was made in Masset; Robert Davidson's grandfather's brother Alfred did it.

I don't know what I'd say if I met his family - when my family had him as a slave. And I don't even usually like to talk about it because
my Mom said we don’t say anything to hurt their feelings or anything, ’cause they’re just like our family. Even after, Mom would meet them or their children out walking, and they’d all line up along the side when she’d come by on the sidewalk. I asked her why, and Mom said that it was just automatic respect passed on from their parents, the kids of slaves were taught that. And that’s who my Mom was born in the house of, that old lady XX-A’s daughter’s in Metlakatla.

Because the missionaries would try to marry those ones off in a different village, so some of them went to Kitkatla and some to Metlakatla, and married men from there. And so because my grandmother was raised with them, when she was going to have a baby and she’d been at the cannery all summer, she didn’t go back to Masset because she knew she was having a baby and she had lost one before. And she had worked for that missionary Keen, and Keen was the missionary doctor in Metlakatla. And so she decided to go there and stay with this lady, and have her baby where there was a doctor and a nurse. So she had her baby in Metlakatla, and so Mom, Christiana Flossie Norman, child of Mary Anne Norman, was born in Tsimshian territory, with a doctor and a nurse. That was before Prince Rupert even was.

When my Mom was young she spent a lot of time in Masset - they lived in Masset and travelled to the canneries every year until Granny married my grandfather in 1917 and they lived in the canneries. I have a picture of the houses in Masset, and my grandmother’s house is probably one of these, because the house that she lived in was one of
the modern houses. Mom can remember Auntie Florence there as a young woman, like the pictures in her book, and Auntie Florence can remember Mom in Masset when she was only 4. And there’s a picture in there too of a carved bear, and I think this must be the bear my Mom was always scared of - she used to walk way around it. Then she got brave and she went and pushed its teeth out!

Mom’s uncle was the Eagle chief, and she says that when she was a child she sat in his carved chair: she could ‘cause she was an Eagle. That made her Raven cousins jealous. It seems she was always getting into trouble with her jealous cousins! I imagine she was a little bit of an arrogant kid.

I have to laugh when I think about when they brought the Haidas in France, and Reg says “Oh, these French are really arrogant,” he says, “But they never met anyone as arrogant as Haidas!” Because the Haidas are a group that are really arrogant - “We are the greatest!” And Mom could be like that. And stubborn too - when she was a little girl, and she got her name “JAT-KIT-KIT-GAS,” she was supposed to get her ears pierced - but she wouldn’t let them! She was just a kid, but she refused! But they gave her her name anyway. But she didn’t get her gold earrings then because of it. Her Auntie Selina gave her gold eagle earrings in the 1950s!

Because Granny spoke so many languages, and they travelled around so much, even when she was a little girl Mom could speak several languages. When she was a little girl living at the canneries, Mom
even went with various groups to translate what they wanted to the storekeepers - especially for coal oil, which they needed a lot. For some reason, they just weren't able to say the words “coal oil.”

Once when Mom was travelling on this big boat, the boatman said he would give her 10 cents to watch for when people went to the bathroom and then to flush the toilet after. 'Cause the Indians didn't know how to do that - they weren't familiar with toilets then. So at age about 7 years, she was doing that! And 10 cents was a lot of money for a little kid then.

My Mom told me about when she was a little girl and her mother took her to see an Indian doctor. The last medicine man was supposed to be KUTE, 17 but she didn't say if that was him, she just called him an Indian doctor. And there was another little boy who went there too, at the same time, and the Indian doctor worked on him first. She said this old man, he spit on his hands, and then he rubbed his hands all over the little boy. That was supposed to make him smart, a treatment to make kids smart. Well, then it was my Mom's turn, and she said to Granny "No! I'm not going to let that old man spit all over me!" So she wouldn't do it. And that old Indian doctor just laughed, and said to my Mom. "Oh! That's all right, you don't need it - you're smart already!"

Mom always had a good memory, even for things that happened way back when she was young. She told me of when she was just 5, she was travelling on a boat again and she got sea-sick, she couldn't eat
anything. Finally she got hungry, and she went to the cook house and they made her some macaroni and cheese - and it was the most wonderful thing! That was the first time she had it, and she remembered that. Mom always laughed that she wasn't a good Haida, 'cause they weren't supposed to get sea-sick and she got sea-sick!

I don't remember ever being sea-sick, but I remember as a little kid being in really rough water in a boat, and I thought it was fun. I was rolling back and forth in the bottom of the boat with my ball and my teddy bear! Mom also remembered coming over in a canoe sailed by an old woman, one of the old grannies, and she said it went really fast - faster than the motor boat her brother was driving.

Everyone thought she was such a cute little girl, and she dressed too nice. My grandmother made her clothes. She made these fancy things from pictures for other people's kids, so of course she made them for her daughter too! They came and went from Masset, so she dressed different from her cousins who stayed there.

Auntie Florence, she made these fancy Victorian European style hats for her girls - I have a picture of Mom and the Davidson girls with those hats on. My Mom asked Granny to make her a hat like that too; she really liked those fancy hats. Granny could have done that easily, 'cause she was a good seamstress, but she said to Mom "No, that's Florence's thing to do," so she made Mom a different kind of hat. The Haida are like that - there has always been the idea that some things, some knowledge, is private and limited to just one family. So Auntie
Florence had the right to make these hats her way, and to teach her girls how to make them too. But it would have been wrong for Granny to copy Florence’s work, ’cause she wasn’t a Raven in Florence’s family. She would have to find a different thing to do. Even now, things are done mostly in family groups, and you look after your own family first.

The ones that were jealous, when Mom was little, were strangers, not cousins because they had that built-in respect. But they’d throw mud at her ’cause she looked too good! But Eagles would treat other Eagle kids like their own child, or like their own grandchild. And people are still really happy to see a relative - they even give you a hug and breathe in, like they know you’re a relative by your smell.

A lot of things you know just because you hear relatives talking about it. That’s how I know a lot of what I know, from listening to my relatives talk about who was related to who, and why things were that way, and about who our carver ancestors were. After my step-father died, my Mom and I talked a lot about how things had been. That wasn’t the same for my sister Bobbie - she never talked to her about that, she wasn’t interested. Her father criticised Indian ways, so Mom never tried to teach her.

My Mom’s uncle was James Stanley - Granny’s brother, STILTA. There is a book by a man called Jacobsen, who was a Norwegian working for Germany, touring around the Northwest Coast. He bought a totem pole from her Uncle James, from Kaayan, and in that book it tells
about him, a little about his personality.\textsuperscript{18} He bought it for the Berlin Museum.\textsuperscript{19} There's a lot of controversy about selling those totem poles, and I myself am of mixed opinion. I think they got them pretty darn cheap, but then even in those days the museums were never rich. But we wouldn't have all that stuff to see now if they hadn't been sold. And then when the missionaries came, they wanted people to lose their old culture and they wanted them to destroy them, so I think it's better that they put them in museums than that they burned them or sawed them up to build houses with.

But I have a different reason for thinking that. When Mom was small and Granny was a widow they stayed in his house, they lived there in James Stanley's house in Masset, when she was young. My Mom can remember when James Stanley died and her Uncle Joshua Collison moved into the house. Joshua Collison was either his brother or cousin (now they say he was another brother, but maybe he was a brother by another wife, so it may have been a half-brother, 'cause in the early days they used to have more than one wife, and then people died more). After Uncle James died then Joshua Collison moved into his house, and then my Mom stayed with them, so she was like sisters to the Collison kids. Mom's Uncle Joshua had been adopted from the Alaska side of the family, although he always has "Stilthda" attached to his name. And James Stanley had his Indian boxes and coppers underneath the house, and Uncle Joshua went to school, in the Missionary boy's school, and of course to him they were just old junk. He took these boxes down to the beach and burnt them. And it was during the 1st world War, when they were collecting copper, and he
gave some of Uncle James' Coppers to them when they were collecting copper. But I just wonder if the people here who were collecting copper didn't sell them, or if they really went to scrap copper. My Mom can remember seeing him do that.

And then he must have kept the masks, because she remembers they played with the masks. They would have really caught heck from him, 'cause he was really strict, if they had of known the kids played with the masks when the parents weren't around! 'Cause they were in a box in the house, and Mom could remember she and all her young cousins sneaked into the box and played with those masks. And Auntie Effie, like her cousin Effie, she was one of the younger girls, and she was scared of them, because the boys would scare her with the masks! They got in trouble! Mom said that some of her uncles, she didn't say "mean" exactly, but they 'had strong personalities!" But if they didn't they wouldn't have been the leaders.

I don't know what happened to the masks - maybe some collectors got them. There were a lot of them around. The missionaries didn't want the people to keep any of these things - they called them heathen things. But they would take them and keep some themselves! Or they would sometimes arrange to sell them to collectors. A lot ended up in museums. My Mom and I saw my uncle Chief WEAH's regalia in the museum in Victoria.

Some of the people who worked with the collectors got in trouble with their own people. Like Shotridge,²⁰ some say he was murdered, though
they don’t know for sure. His own people didn’t trust him ’cause he
talked too much and sold things. All over people would be mad if you
told too much to outsiders - “tell them what they want to hear.”

Though they trusted Swanton, and Boas, because they were genuinely
interested. But sometimes, well, human beings are strange things. I
saw something similar at Hazelton in the 1970s. Someone was
talking about the old medicine ways on t.v. Then others criticized that
person, for those same reasons - “don’t tell things that others shouldn’t
know; they won’t understand.” Always they didn’t want to upset the
missionaries and the white people. Does it still go on? Sure it does.

My Mom remembers meeting Barbeau when he was there collecting on
the Skeena. And when I was only a baby, about 1 year old, we lived
in a float house on the far side of the Skeena River. My father worked
with the fishermen, and he bought fish for an American fish company.
Because he went out with the fishermen, and my Mom was only about
18 years old, she used to kind of be in charge of buying fish for my
Dad. She really knew a lot about fish, and she could tell just from
looking at it what kind of fish it was. So she worked with them
counting the fish from the catches. She had counters on her hands, and
they would throw off the fish, and she would call out what type each
one was, and click the counters then someone else would write it
down. She was really fast, and had good eyes! I can just imagine her
standing there, all these fish flying though the air, and her clicking
and calling out their names! She really liked that. That must have
been 1926 or -27, I was just 1 or 2 years.
Back in those days there was lots of activity on the Skeena River, with the passenger boats and the fishing boats and all. Now there is the highway and the railroad track, and hardly anyone on the river, and hardly anyone lives between Terrace and Prince Rupert. But back then, things were busy here.

There is a place by the highway that was known as the town of Skeena. The CN moved the track, but there's a big cement block still. And the cement block was a bank vault. They had surveyed lots and sold some of them, but it never really did develop into a town. Because the railroad went right over to Prince Rupert, and they built the main town on the coast because of the deep harbour. The town of Port Essington was the main town, and my Mom did live there when she was quite young. And there were a lot of canneries even coming up the river. Aberdeen, I think there was a cold storage there. And the fishermen used to fish quite a long ways up the river, as far as the tide water went up to Kwinitsa.

That town of Skeena is right near where the power line comes across the river, near Telegraph Point. I don't remember my Dad 'cause he died when I was only 3, but anyway my Mom said that he worked on the cement pillars putting the power line across. There's two sets of towers now, and I don't know if it was that one or the ones farther down. But now the power line is probably coming from a long ways away, but they used to have their own power plant across there. I'm not sure if there was some fresh water came across too. Because going
into Prince Rupert, their water came from a long ways away, and there is still a wooden line that brings water to Prince Rupert.

Prince Rupert is built on an island, its called Kaien Island, and then the industrial sites are on Ridley Island, that's a coal port, and where they bring wheat in from the prairies; and then Watson Island is a pulp mill. The whole town of Prince Rupert is on an island, and the airport is on another island because its really rocky, it's either rocks or muskeg. And they're still blasting the rocks, and filling up the muskeg to make the town bigger.

Before the railroad there were riverboats. The riverboats used to go all the way up as far as Hazelton! And they were run by wood - steam engines run by wood, and every little while along they used to stop and load up wood. So there were people who made their living cutting wood.

Then they put the railroad in, when Mom was just a little girl, and they were steam engines too - huge big ones. So they would have little stations all along the track, where they could get water. There is a place called Kwinitisa where the Skeena narrows out at the Kwinitisa River - it's half way to Terrace. And that's where the salt water quits, all that way up the Skeena. The old fashioned railroad station that was at Kwinitisa, they moved it to Prince Rupert, and its kind of a tourist attraction, kind of a little railway museum in there. And there's a big siding at Kwinitisa and they still use it if they have to stop for slides, or if there's not enough room to unload it in Prince
Rupert or Ridley Island, they’ll just leave the extra cars on the siding until they’ve got time. Or sometimes if there’s a slide, well the passenger train will have to wait on sidings until they’ve got it cleared.

There are lots of slides even now on the railroad, even with the tunnels. Where it’s closer to the river, they’ll be rocks or rock slides or snow slides that come over the railroad, and quite often stops it. The big slides actually look quite pretty ’cause all the big trees are off it, just lots of little trees and bushes. Sometimes you see goats coming right down to feed on the small growth on the slides. In early, early spring they come down because with the spring growth they can start feeding. And in the summer they go back up the mountain when it’s hot.

Then after the railroad, they built the road. First there were the telegraph lines, and then when the railroad went in they ran them beside the railroad. Then they built this highway in about 1944, because of the war. There was only the railroad, and so they really worked to push the highway through. They did it in sections too. I wasn’t here when they first built the road to Prince Rupert, though, ’cause that’s when I was sick, so I was away for a while then. So it was my Mom who saw it happening.

So the road was put through during the war. At first it was just a gravel road, really bumpy and wash-boardy, and it took about 5 hours to get to Rupert. But now it just takes about an hour and a half
or two hours to get to Prince Rupert. It's all been paved and reworked a few times. And there used to be a lot of slides that used to stop the traffic. The slides would come over the railroad and over the road. But there haven't been too many now. They keep moving their road out onto what is the river, filling it in with rocks and moving it farther away, so it's not stopped by too many slides.

But now there are lots of trucks that use this road. They're hauling logs both ways - they're hauling logs from the coast to the inland and from the inland to the coast. You'd wonder why they can't get along with their own. Then they're hauling chips to the pulp mill. So you have logging trucks and chip trucks passing you in both directions, on this narrow road. And about all you see on the river now are fishermen in little boats, or standing on the banks. And sometimes you see bears too along the road or along the river - they come when the berries are ripe, or when there's fish.

You have to watch out for bears when you're out berry picking, because the bears like the berries too, and they come down and eat them off the bushes. Once when my friend and I were out picking berries, and there were these big bushes, and we were both picking away, and we couldn't see each other. Well, she was talking, and talking away to me, and she could hear me picking on the other side of the bush, and then she wondered why I didn't answer her. So she went around, and here's this big bear on the other side of the bush! Just eating the berries of the bush, and listening to her talk! It wasn't me at all she heard, it was the bear. Was she ever surprised!
We used to see a lot of bears when we lived on the farm near Braun's Island. It was right down there, by the river, and we kids had to walk up to go to school. So we'd see them then, in the bush or around. My Mom always told us not to be afraid of the bears, 'cause if you don't startle them, they won't bother you. And I remember once my brother and I saw a bear, and we tried to give it plumbs, and it ran away. And then we told our Mom, and she was so upset! "Oh no!" she said, "I told you not to be afraid of the bears. I didn't tell you to feed them."

It was quite interesting when we lived on the farm, but there was always a lot of work to do. There were some animals, chickens, and a big vegetable garden. There was always a lot of work. And so one day my cousin Nancy, Auntie Emily's daughter that Mom was raising, she decided to run away. Nancy was just a few years older than me, and her mother died and then my father died and we were with Granny then, and later she came to stay with my Mom who raised her, so she was really like a big sister to me then. She was always working. Mom made her work real hard, and she was tired of it. So she decided to run away - and she did! She just took some of her stuff, and then she left. She went all the way to Granny's, and then she lived with Granny after than until she got married. And she got married when she was only 19, to one of the Dudowards. When she was getting ready to run away, she told me, and I said, "I want to run away too. I want to come with you." And she said, "No, you can't run away. She's your real mother!"
When my cousin Nancy married George Dudoward, she was the first to marry into the Dudowards, who are Tsimshian. The name Dudoward is originally French, probably from a fur trader, and they are related to Chief LEGAIX. They're known to be tall, handsome men.

But there had been lots of our ancestors before who did marry into the Tsimshian - like Chief WEAH was married to one who returned to Port Simpson. And we had Eagle chief relatives in Port Simpson. One was SKAGWAIT, and I took Tsimshian classes from him at night school. So we had lots of ties with the Tsimshian through marriage - and they even tried for my Mom!

Used to be sometimes people would say that someone who was from another place, or the children would refer to them as slaves or something like that, but they weren't, they were from chief's families but from different tribes. And they were mixed, some mixed with Tlingit too. But they were high ranking. Like Albert Edward Edenshaw was part Tlingit. And they would probably have a part-Tsimshian wife. They were really getting mixed-up, you know from the time that the Haidas went to Masset and when the Russians were in Alaska.

A lot of the red-headed Haidas are supposed to be descended from the red-headed Russian fur traders. Actually its supposed to be one of the STILTA's, we don't know if it was Simeon Stilta's father or his grandfather, who was one of the Russians. A woman who was one of the Chief STILTA's mothers, they had been trading and had taken one of their canoes up to Alaska - they used to trade their canoes for stuff
like copper shields, buckskin, tanned skins, and things they could get up there, and Russian goods. And the Haida women were always known as being better looking than the other tribes. So this Russian wanted to marry her; she married this Russian fur trader and then he died in one of these epidemics and then she came back to her own people - came back to Masset again - or Yan, I don't know which one it was. There is a big memorial in Yan, the kind that they put your body in, that has a big carving ... and he had relatives in Yan that were Russian, Tsimshian and Tlingit. Because the ones that were already mixed got their wives and they were mixed, so although they were raised in the Charlottes, they had relatives who were Tlingit, Russian and from Port Simpson. So that they actually were mixed. It probably strengthened their genes.

So whatever the wives were of one generation there was always a connection and they sometimes married back into that same family. Even my Mom, because my grandmother moved to the coast, the people who were sort of cousins who were married into the family that came from Metlakatla and Port Simpson, they wanted to marry my Mom, because people in the same family had been married. But she is considered Haida. But in her ancestry and her uncles, they had Tsimshian wives from Port Simpson and Metlakatla. And one young man from Metlakatla; it used to be the custom that they'd put people they thought they could make a marriage relationship and a new connection between villages, they'd start pushing them together when they're just little kids. And this one man from Metlakatla, and these people, they'd come to visit all the time, and they'd play together. But
anyway he went away to Coquileetza, a boarding school down south, and he got TB and died down there. So that put an end to that.

And then Charlie Dudoward from Port Simpson, who was the last chief (now I think it is Freddy Dudoward), Charlie Dudoward really wanted to marry my Mom too. But Granny didn’t want him to marry her, and she said she was too young - she was only about 14 then. But she didn’t want him to marry my Mom because, let’s say they had a reputation for being wild. But anyway, fate turned itself around and my cousin married a Dudoward anyway! Nancy married George Dudoward, and she just told me within the last year, “Well, Granny should have let her marry Charlie Dudoward!”

Charlie Dudoward was a nice man, I liked him. I knew him when he was old, and used to be friends with his son and his wife. But the reason was I guess he was Killerwhale, Tsimshian Killerwhale, but he had a house that was called Eagle House, and he wanted to get an Eagle wife so that his children, their children would become owners of Eagle house again. But anyway he had sent his mother and sister to ask Granny if she would let him marry my Mom. And he always blamed them, he said “You didn’t try hard enough!” And then after he married a woman from Alaska. I guess she was a nice looking woman but she wasn’t the right rank. It kind of bothered him, and then he had some problems after awhile. He didn’t want his belongings - he owned a Copper and other things - and he didn’t want them to go out of the family, so he adopted his son into his crest. And all the people were mad about it. But since he’s died and his son has
also died, so it's gone to the Dudowards - to a nephew who they
wanted - and it's that nephew who's a cousin to my cousin's son who
they want to adopt into the father's clan to give him a name that
belonged to that clan.

Then my Mom met my Dad, and it ended up she married him. And
then when he died, and I was little and my brother just a baby, then
she got married to Geoff Lambly. When he died, she didn't marry
again. When Mom was young, Alfred Adams used to tease her. Alfred
Adams, who was related to SEEGAY, he was married to Auntie Selina,
who was related to WEAH. And my Mom was also related to WEAH.
And Alfred Adams teased Mom that if Selina died Mom would have to
marry him - because that was the responsibility of a "sister" if the wife
died. And she, she didn't show too much respect, she teased him back,
"I'll never marry you - you're too ugly!"

When Mom was married to Geoff Lambly, and they were just living on
the farm, the 10 acre farm by Braun's Island in Terrace, when there
was only my sister Bobby left with her - my cousin Nancy had gone to
live with my grandmother, my brother had died, and I was away at
the sanitarium,25 my Mom decided that she wanted to do something
she always wanted to do: she wanted to have a business.

She knew that some of her relatives did have businesses before - like
Alfred Adams, he had that store in Masset. And her own mother had
made clothes and sold them, and baskets, and picture frames too.
Granny's first husband, Norman Skiltees, had been a canoe builder
and sold his canoes all over. And, like, Uncle Daniel used to take all those carvings and things - not just his, but other people's too - and sell them down in Victoria and up in Alaska. And there were other people too in Mom's family who used to have their own business. And she always admired them because they ran their own business at a time when it was thought that Indians couldn't do those things. So Mom decided she wanted to go into business too. And she already knew how to cook, and was proud of her cooking, so that's what she did.

So they bought the old jewellery store down on the corner of Lakelse, and turned it into a snack bar. When it opened in September 1945 it was just a little place called "The Corner Snack Bar," with just a counter and six stools. Later on they put on an addition and made it bigger, putting in a few tables and chairs. Bobbie still has a table and some chairs in her kitchen. But it was never really a restaurant, it was always a snack bar - sandwiches and coffee, hot chili, hamburgers, and chips - that sort of thing. And desserts. But it was always really popular.

Mom was a really good cook, and she liked the people, and she had a really good personality, so the place was quite popular. She worked long hours, opening early in the morning, before school. They stayed open very late, after midnight, so that people getting off the train from Prince Rupert could come and get something to eat. And then the RCMP always came in late at night, after hours, and they'd sit around and talk and have coffee. And other late-working people. And even
some of the alcoholics, the ones she knew, and other people who couldn't borrow money, they'd come in and she'd let them run a tab, and sometimes she'd lend them money. But those ones she knew, they almost always paid her back what they owed, and sometimes a bit more. So they pretty well catered to the needs of the local people.

The soldiers were already gone, before the end of the war. And there were a lot of soldiers here in Terrace during the war time, mostly from Quebec. They were having some problems with the soldiers in Quebec, so they sent them all the way out here. But they were gone by the time Mom opened The Corner Snack Bar. But the guys working on the road to Kitimat would eat there - the construction guys ate there a lot. The teenagers really liked the snack bar too.

Because it was wartime when they first opened, a lot of things were rationed. People would save up their ration coupons for things like sugar and give some to my mother. Then she could get enough ingredients to do baking. And she got cream, whipping cream from the local farmers, and so she could make pies, coconut cream pie, and banana cream pie. And people really liked that, 'cause during the war there wasn't much dessert, and Mom made really good pies. So that she wouldn't waste anything, she got the teenagers to tell her what they wanted in the morning, and then she would bake it and they would come back after school to eat it. It was about a year after the war ended that the rationing was over; even though, Mom bought a lot of her supplies from the local farmers. Later they also got the first soft
ice cream machine in Terrace, and of course that was a big hit.
Everyone remembered her by soft ice cream!

People will argue with my sister that my Mom had four daughters, not
two. There were two friends of Bobbie, who looked so much like her,
and so much like my Mom, that people thought they were sisters.
Especially since they spent a lot of time together around the snack
bar, and they called my mother "Mom"! People still think they are
Bobbie's sisters and I'm not. A whole generation of Terrace kids grew
up to Mom and The Corner Snack Bar - sort of like "Happy Days." A lot
of the young girls worked there too. I worked there myself for awhile
when I came back. My sister Bobbie worked there too; but she didn't
work there too long because she got married young and had kids and
then they moved away for awhile when her kids were little.

Mom ran "The Corner Snack Bar" for about 15 years, but then it
became too much for her, so she had to let it go, and they retired. There
is nothing there now - just an empty lot across from the Dairy Queen.
ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 7:

1. Wright (1998) records that “Norman Skiltis” was born 1861.

2. His name is written Geoffrey Lambly on the wedding certificate, and Geoffrey Hassel (father’s name) on the birth certificate. “Lambly is his step-father’s name, which he used. He was a witness in his parent’s divorce and he did not respect his father,” says Diesing. I have used the spelling “Geoff,” but his name appears occasionally elsewhere as “Jeff” Lambly.

3. “Bill C-31, An Act to Amend the Indian Act” was passed June 28, 1985, reversing Section 12(1)(b) which provided that Native women who married non-Native men lost Indian status for themselves and their children. Bill C-31 established the means by which disenfranchised Natives could re-claim their Indian Status, but left decisions about granting band membership up to each band (Converse 1998:172). Canadian enfranchisement, a federal assimilation tactic, was contentious and legally complex, particularly for women and children. For a good discussion in lay terms please see Hawthorn et al. 1958.

4. Until 1985, a woman who married a man who was not a Status Indian lost her own Status under the Indian Act, as did their children. Many Native men and women who joined the Armed Forces during the wars lost their Status and gained Canadian enfranchisement. Despite the special circumstances of Native peoples (including their exemption from compulsory service) “Aboriginal participation in Canada’s war efforts was proportionately higher than that of any other group of people in Canada. One in three able-bodied Aboriginal men enlisted in the First World War ... More than 7,000 status Indians fought in the two world wars. Some estimate that the number would be closer to 12,000 if the non-status Indians were included”(Indian and Northern Affairs Canada website http://www.aicn-inac.gc.ca/ch/abv_e.html 2001-09-20). For more information see also the Veterans Affairs website http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=history/other/native/ (1998-10-9).

5. Please see Beynon’s discussion of continued resistance of the younger generation of Tsimshian to the “older” ways concerning a 1945 potlatch (in Anderson and Halpin 2000:55-56).

6. Both Stearns (1981) and Boelscher (1989) note that Chief WEAH was well respected, but had sometimes been criticized for never having held a potlatch. Traditionally, all claims to chieftainship were validated by potlatch. However, in the face of massive depopulation, culture change, and government regulation - the banning of the potlatch - this practice largely disappeared, even for chiefs. Boelscher (1989:56) notes a shifting between achieved to ascribed status: “In the late 1970s, all but a few of the elders acknowledged as lineage leaders by other village elders had never validated their positions in public. Since the 1980s, however, there has been a renewed trend toward formal validation.” She further notes (p. 162) “rank which was ultimately inherited needed to be accompanied by less distribution of property than rank assumed solely by giving away property, which called for large amounts of property, while making the distributors liable to be accused of “buying chiefship.”

7. Please see Halpin (1981:3) for a picture of that pole raising.

8. Please see Jensen and Sargent (1986) for information and pictures. In Plate XXI, p. 50, Diesing is the dancer on the left in the knee-length red dress and robe.

9. “Grease” is oolachen oil, a NWC delicacy, sometimes sipped, sometimes drizzled over food or used for dunking.
John Swanton, an ethnographer and linguist working as part of the Jesup Expedition, was on the Charlottes in 1900 for less than one year, and accumulated a massive amount of detailed information - recording much of it in the original Haida, which he learned shortly after his arrival. He also drew upon the work of C.F. Newcombe, for whom Mary Anne Norman worked as an interpreter.

Diesing’s nephew Don Yeomans jokingly suggested that she was so outspoken she should join the “Raging Grannies” an activist group of elderly women, but that, as Haidas, their name should be the “Ninja Nonnies”.

Please see Asante (1972) for a detailed discussion of the army presence in Terrace during WW II.

One newspaper clipping from her collection stimulated Diesing’s memory, from the Terrace Herald Jan 15, 1958.

Dr. Charles F. Newcombe was a physician and freelance collector on the NWC for several decades around the turn of the century. He was hired by Boas to assist Swanton in the collection of artifacts for the American Museum from the Haida. Swanton had written to Boas in 1900 “that everything on the Island was for sale; for $10 one could purchase a totem pole model, whereas for an expenditure of from $25 to $60 a totem pole would be delivered to the wharf.” Swanton recommended that they hire Newcombe to collect for the museum since he kept “accurate and complete information” - and he was already “dredging the place’ before his eyes.” (Jonaitis 1988:198). In 1902 Newcombe purchased an interior house pole from Charles Edenshaw for $30 (Wright 2001:246).

Mrs Godman speaking about the BC Indian Arts and Welfare Society’s marketing of Indian art noted that when art was sent in to them “I put a trade mark on it if it is up to standard. It must have a true Indian design and must be truly Indian. If it comes in with a rose or a butterfly, or some bird I’ve never seen, I do not put the trade mark on it.” (In Hawthorn 1948, emphasis mine).

This is Blackman (1980, revised 1992).

Please see Jonaitis (1988) for a picture of Kote’s house in Masset (p. 39) and of Kote (p. 85).

The reference is to J.A. Jacobsen’s Alaskan Voyage, 1881-1883. Some information is also in Cole (1985:61-65).

Please see Wright (2001:223) for a picture and discussion of this pole, which she claims was carved by Albert Edward Edenshaw for the deceased Chief STILTA and raised by James Stanley (his brother and the next Chief STILTA).

Louis Shotridge, a Tlingit man who took full advantage of his father’s high rank to collect otherwise “uncollectable” objects, was the subject of considerable controversy. Whether or not his fall from the roof was accidental, many considered his mode of death to be a form of divine or supernatural retribution (please see Cole 1985:254-67 for more information, and p. 86 for a picture). Although Shotridge worked and published with his wife Florence, (Shotridge and Shotridge 1913) her story seems largely to have vanished from public memory.

Dr. Marius Barbeau made many trips to the Skeena and Nass River areas beginning in 1913, and collaborated for decades with William Beynon in collecting and documenting information on the Tsimshian, Nisga’a and Gitksan. Please see bibliography for references.
22. Asante (1972: 165) notes: “the road to Prince Rupert was referred to in the old days as the Hirohito Highway or the Pearl Harbour Road because it was built by the Army for easy movement of troops to the coast when Japan was thought to be an enemy likely to invade our shores.”

23. A Danish/Russian expedition of two ships made the first recorded trip to the northern coast (1741), and sent two boats with a landing party, but they never returned and their fate remains unknown. The Russians were the first to establish land bases on the NWC: at Yakutat Bay (1795), then a fortified settlement at Sitka (New Archangel, 1799). The Russians maintained a strong presence on the coast, particularly affecting the Tlingit, until 1867. Please see Donald (1997) or Wright (2001) for details.

24. Collison (1981:130) describes the younger Chief STILTA as “a fine looking chief physically before he began to fail. Tall and well built, with a fair skin and a black beard and moustache, he might have passed as a white man, had it not been for his Haida features. He was a true chief, and commanded the respect and obedience due to such. But ... he had, like to many, too great a desire for firewater.” STILTA claimed to be dying from the effects of excessive amounts of home-brew.

25. Both her brother’s death and Diesing’s illness happened within six months of each other, in 1943.

26. Asante (1972:164 -170 “Mutiny on the Skeena”) discusses the military presence in Terrace, and the overwhelming influx of military and civilian personnel. “Within a few months in the year of 1942, about 3,000 soldiers and 3,000 construction workers dropped into the somnolent little town of Terrace with its population around the 400 figure”(p. 164).
CHAPTER 8: MY WORLD

FIGURE 4: FREDA DIESING displaying Aboriginal Achievement Award 2002

Jacket design by Don and Trace Yeomans

Photo by: Slade 2002
sometimes we'd only have bread and jam to eat. I still eat a lot of bread and jam!

But then I went back to Victoria again, 'cause I still had to take those treatments for my lungs, and it was easier living in Victoria. So I went back to Victoria and got more jobs and continued with my treatments. But then there was a bus strike, and I couldn't get to my appointments and so I let the treatments go. And I was scared, scared of getting TB again, but I didn't. I just quit going, and they never called me. And after I went back home to Terrace

That was when I went to see Granny; I was about 21 or 22, and she was old and almost blind, and we walked all the way to see Auntie Nellie. That was the last time that I saw Granny - she died in 1948 and I was back down south.

For all those years, from when I got out of the sanitarium until I got married, my life then was just like a teenage life, although I was older, 'cause I'd spent my teenage years in the hospital. And it was poor times too, so it wasn't very memorable! Times when nothing happened that would interest anyone. Like a "non-time," really, just getting used to living again, and in the city. Sometimes I was home in Terrace, but mostly I was in Victoria and Vancouver.

Then I went back to Terrace, and I worked for awhile in "The Corner Snack Bar," 'cause Mom had that then. And I also got a job at the Overwaitea store. Then I went back to Vancouver.
So then I went to the Vancouver School of Art - that would be in 1955. I had always liked drawing and painting, and some people said maybe I had talent. So I went there and studied art for a year. It was right downtown in Vancouver then, not on Granville Island like now, and I lived nearby so I could just walk over. So I went to school during the day, and in the evenings I worked as a sandwich and salad girl. What they taught was western style art, not Indian art at all - painting and drawing and such. Some people who go to art schools, they use drafting pencils and everything. I use just plain pencils, usually dull ones, to draw on wood. Sometimes people criticise me for my dull pencils, but it's good for drawing on wood, 'cause it doesn't mark it - but the line is very faint.

I just went to the first year of art school where we just did a little bit of everything. We didn't have time to be perfectionists. They didn't have enough time to really go into anything - just so you'd get an idea of what you might like to go in for. I enjoyed it. I did my first Indian design and my first sort of sculpture at art school. And I made my first mask there. It was fun. I don't remember another Indian student there at the time - there were Orientals. Robert went to that same school but that was later. There may have been some in the higher levels, but I don't know of any. Then, I got interested in doing Indian style art, after that.

Some people who collect Indian art want it to be "authentic." They say that things that were made for sale to tourists and such are not "authentic" Indian art - only things made for personal use and
ceremonies. Well, in some way people have always made their art "for sale" - 'cause carvers were always paid in some way, even in the old days. And after the whites, everyone who could make money by carving did so. And lots of people carved things for the anthropologists - like Edenshaw, and even Stilta. He carved a lot of things because the anthropologists asked him - I thing maybe that's one reason he carved so many strange things. So people now seem to be changing their minds!

I think of "authentic" as being in the current style. And there are a lot of these white guys around Seattle who do really authentic looking stuff, but they're no Indian at all. Some of them may be part Cherokee or something, their grandfather was a Cherokee chief or something, the other half came over on the Mayflower.

And now a lot of Indian people are doing art in a style that is not their own, just because it is popular and sells well. Also because a lot of the art schools and that say, "Oh, well you should go into carving, you're talented." But some of the people from the area don't appreciate it, that non-Haidas do carving like Haidas.

There's even discrimination in a way ... like this guy when I went to this meeting and somebody gets up and says "We're getting tired of these Vancouver Indians telling us what to do!" But they're Haidas too! But they didn't like that. Some don't like going back to the Charlottes now 'cause it's really political. Like some of the ones that lived on the Charlottes think that the Vancouver Haidas aren't real Haidas. 'Cause
there was this "us and them" thing with the Haidas who were living away or married to somebody. There’s always discrimination no matter what kind of people. And even a lot of resentment against Robert Davidson because he’s so famous. They think well, some of the fame should go to the village, even though they’re not the ones that stay there. If a person is from a place or his parents are, even if they move it is still the same village forever.

Some people get famous and others don’t. Some people have lots of friends and promoters and other ones are really good! With the promoters, it’s like some people think “Well, so-and-so is promoting Robert, so-and-so is promoting Bill Reid, so-and-so is promoting Norman Tait,” and along comes Dempsey, and somebody comes to promote Dempsey - they sort of have a good feeling about that they’re helping this poor little savage! There are some funny things on all sides.

I knew this lady going into this Tsimshian store owned by one of my friends and anyway Joan was working for them that year. They overheard Rufus Moody\textsuperscript{11} complaining:

"Darn that Freda Diesing and Robert Davidson, teaching all these Gitksans how to do Haida art, cause they never used to do that!"

But they did! And then even some of the Tsimshians said they started it and then the Haidas got it from them!
Actually I'm pretty sure that's how come my grandmother's father got, and even his relatives or something like that, got to do carving because the chiefs they wanted the best, and then they would get the best carvers they could get. And then they would marry and stay there, and then their kids would marry and stay there, and people taught their kids, so that's probably how come. Our family keeps being married into Tsimshian. And he said his crest was the hummingbird and the thunderbird, and his crests came from the Tsimshian. So it must have been a mother or grandmother who got the crests from the Tsimshian. But so does the Beaver, it came from Tsimshian, so they've been mixing for a long time.

Some of the families will say that if they came from anywhere else then they must be slaves. But there's a whole tradition about it, and there's old stories, so it happened a long, long, long time ago. But even some of the old people didn't really know their own real history. And the Haidas were more mixed than anyone else. I think it was because they travelled around different places, and met other people. Because one of the first rulings of the Dudoward family was to name the first chief WEAH - or his mother was the one, mainly, because the chief's name "WEAH" came from there.

Then the carvers went way up to Alaska, all over the coast, as carvers. They were paid - they paid them lots of goods, maybe a couple of canoes. Like Charlie Dudoward was telling me how much that Copper was worth, and that it was worth lots of money, like a totem pole for that, and he had it written down, and I think he told me on tape too,
what was paid for it: so many canoes, so many tubs of grease, so many deer skins and some white skins. So like when there wasn’t money that’s how they figured what something was worth. And slaves, I think there were some slaves involved in it too. So to hire a person to carve a totem pole, who had a good name as a good carver, they would have - the good carvers would get rich. And also the Indian doctors, because they had to pay them a lot for their services. And they would come from lots of places too, because they would go searching for the one with the best reputation, if it was an important person they needed a cure for. So they would get rich. They might even pay them with some of their younger sisters! So they would also be related through the children. So for the future, they’d be related.

That’s how come the Tsimshian and the Haida are related, because they used to give some of their sisters to the other as part payment or gift, and then they would have an interpreter in the other place. And also they would even tell them, “If you don’t treat her good you know what will come to you!” So they had to respect them, especially if that was the daughter of an important Tsimshian chief, or on the other side too. Then they would exchange women like a gift, Haida and Tsimshian, so they would perpetuate their relationship.

Those young women though, they didn’t have too much choice because it was the elders that planned it, and they had to obey. But those real stories, most families have them, like, the girl who will be married to the old man. Like when my grandmother married Norman, because he made canoes and he was considered a good husband material, that
he was already an established person and he was from a good family
...his family and her family got together to decide that she would
marry him. She always thought she was thin, because he used to tell
her, "You'd better eat more, 'cause people will think I don't look after
you good enough, because you're too thin!" They used to always worry
about the people being too thin, but I guess in the old days they had to
have some fat on them to survive the cold. 'Cause my Mom when she
was young she was too thin, and my grandmother gave her this
Indian tonic and she said she got fat and she always stayed that way!
She blamed that tonic for making her overweight! The only Indian
medicine I had was, well I guess I had an operation, a mastoid
operation at the back of the ear, and I kept on scratching and it
wouldn't heal and so my grandmother put pitch on it, and that stops
you from touching it, and that kept it so it healed. Spruce balm.

After my father died I lived with grandparents for awhile. Then when
my brother got out of the hospital and Mom had married my step-
father, we all lived in this big house in Prince Rupert. It's still there. I
remember how big it seemed, but my brother Sonny and I weren't in
most of it. The big area upstairs was turned into a nursery, and
Sonny and I lived up there. We even were given our meals up there! It
wasn't the same with Bobbie when she was a baby though. She was
Geoff Lambly's only child.

I don't remember much from before my father died, because I was
three years old, but I have full memory of the big house in Prince
Rupert, and then living on the farm.
I was a kid about 8 or 9 when we moved onto this farm near Braun’s Island in the Skeena River at Terrace. I remember we had this house and some land, and some chickens and things. And there were vegetable gardens and flower gardens down by the house. We were living there when they had the big flood - “The Flood of the Century” everyone called it. The Skeena floods every year, but this one year, 1936, it went really, really high, higher than people could remember it being before. It destroyed a lot of the homes there, and a lot of the farms the people just never came back. I was still a kid then. I remember the water was getting higher and we had to put sandbags around, to try to keep the water out. Then one time someone woke us up, saying we had to get out, we had to leave, ‘cause the water was too high. And we had to try to get the chickens and put them in cages and get them out, and the other animals - try to save what we could.

And my stepfather had a Model T truck and he was using it to help the neighbours get their animals out. And then it got stuck in the mud and he had to leave it there. Then later he got help from one of the neighbours, Mr. Dawl. He had a horse, and they used it to pull the truck out. Mr. Dawl is still alive - he’s over 100 now, and he’s in Terraceview.

And after, there was so much mud everywhere. And then the next year, all the vegetables in the garden grew so big, I guess from all that new soil, all the stuff in the mud. I have a picture of my Mom with some of those vegetables - they were really huge! And I have a picture of my
step-father using horses to get one of the neighbours' tractors out of the mud, because it was stuck in all that mud.

When I went to school in Prince Rupert and in Terrace, everybody called me Freda Lambly, 'cause my Mom was married to Geoff Lambly then, and they just assumed I was his daughter. But I was never adopted, so my real name was Johnson. But nobody ever checked those things in those days. When kids went to school they just gave them the name that their mother was using; they might have been baptized under one name, and then their mother was living with another man, or remarried, so they'd just use that name when they went to school. Even my brother Frank, he was born and registered as Johnson, but he was buried as Lambly, although he was never adopted. It says "Frank Lambly" on his headstone, but he never was. He wasn't even buried with his own name.

I remember one time in school, they were talking and I said that I was part Swedish, 'cause my father was Swedish. There was this teacher who knew my step-father:

She said "I know your father. He's not Swedish!"

"He's not my father!" I said.

She didn't know. She just figured - like people just didn't know. They just took for granted that whoever was head of the household, that was the father - sort of like the missionaries did.

My grandmother was the one who kept telling me about my real father, and kept saying "remember who you are." Whenever things get
really tough, I just keep saying to myself, like I did when I was young,
with my step-father, "This is temporary, this is temporary." Granny
really helped with that, with my self-image when I was young.

I used to think I was really stupid, so I'd pretty much do what other
people told me. Even when I was a woman, and I was married. That's
because when I was in school, I failed a few times. I was okay in
Grade 1, but then Grade 2, I had to do it three times. I had measles,
and then I had chicken pox, so I failed that year, at age 7. And the next
year, when I was age 8, I was sick again, I was having problems with
my eyes. The teacher told Mom I couldn't see, and that's when they
found out I had the growth in my eye. And that was the year we
moved to Terrace, and I had to go stay with Gran and then come back,
so I missed the end of the school year. So I had to do Grade 2 again,
start again in Grade 2 in September! But that year we were in Terrace,
and I passed, and even came first in my class.

We were living on the farm and walking to school in Terrace. And I
was in Grade 3, and things were going good - and then there was the
flood! And I missed time from school, and wasn't able to finish Grade
3. So I went back into Grade 3 again, and I was able to finish. I
finished Grade 3 when I was 11, and never had a problem with school
after that; I always got good or above average until I got sick again
when I was 18, with TB and had to leave before I finished Grade 10.
But even so, I thought I must be stupid, 'cause I was in Grade 2 for
three years, and then Grade 3 for two years. Even though it was other
things, sickness and moving and other things, not just me. But still I thought that.

And it turned out that some of it was my eye. They found out that I had something in my eye, and I couldn't see right. Like, some kind of growth or scar in my right eye. They think I might have had a bit of TB there as a little kid. My father died of TB so I guess it's no wonder that I got it.

Because I was probably goofing around as a baby you know, and the TB germs were everywhere, so I probably caught the germs from my Dad. Whatever it was, I couldn't see right, although glasses helped later. Then after that I did good in school.

A few years ago I had the scar in that eye operated on. They used this experimental laser technology, and because it was still experimental I didn't have to pay for it, 'cause it's really expensive. The surgery did make it better, but I still have problems. There's like an overlap in part of what I see, so it causes problems with some things - like reading small print. The doctor who did it said I should go back in a few years when it all healed and maybe they could do some more - but I've never gone back. Maybe someday I'll go back again, and maybe they can improve it, since they've gotten so much better now with those lasers.

I even asked about a cornea transplant, but they said my eye isn't bad enough for a cornea transplant. And I know it's not, 'cause I can see
fine with both eyes - it's just one's just a little foggy, and 'cause the scar is right in the middle of my pupil there's an overlap. So to look at black and white print, that's defined, there's a problem; but to look at anything that's not defined, it looks just like ordinary stuff. And I can even read, but I use mostly my left eye if I read without glasses. For this carving, its just general, not really defined, so it's o.k. But with jewellery making, I have trouble, and with small print. Just small stuff that needs to be really precisely defined. Actually now my glasses are good for distance, but for reading I seem to be better off without using my glasses. Something must have changed.

Back when I was a kid in school, Terrace was so small. It changed a lot after the war. But it even changed before I went away, when the war was on and all the service men came here. Terrace started to grow then and kept on growing.

Back then in the school in Terrace - there was just the one - there were only four classrooms for all eight grades. Each room had 2 grades in it but just one teacher for both, and there were 35 kids in all. So that being a lot older than the other kids in my grade wasn't as hard as it might have been elsewhere, 'cause it was such a small group. Even when my sister graduated, after the war, there were only 6 who graduated. I didn't because I got sick when I was in grade 10. So then I took a correspondence course in the sanitarium - I started typing and then took shorthand, but I can't remember any of it now!

It used to bother me, thinking that I wasn't smart or as well educated as some. But I read a lot, and I watch educational programmes on t.v.
- I don’t like to watch the kinds of things on TV. Most people watch, I like the science shows and documentaries and such. And I like to travel and see things in the world. So now I figure I’ve learned a lot, and even know a lot more than a lot of them with more schooling. So I don’t feel intimidated by anyone anymore, and I’m comfortable talking to anyone. But a lot of ones I know are still afraid of talking to professional people, people with a lot of education; they’re nervous of making some mistake, and they’re afraid that those people - because they think of themselves as they’re not good enough, inferior, just for that, so they won’t even talk to those people. Especially if they’re Indians and the others are white.

I can’t say there was really a lot of discrimination when I was in school, because all the mixed-breed kids hung together. There used to be quite a lot of them, and we all hung together, although there were little cliques. The white kids would also stay together, and then the Indian kids too. It didn’t feel like discrimination then - you were always with your own, not feeling like an outsider.

Most of them are mixed breeds, really, although they don’t all know it. And the Haidas are more mixed than anyone else, because they travelled around so much and met so many different people. Some people have such strange ideas, too. I remember when Don and I were in Sweden, there were these German people who kept photographing us, and looking at us, and everything. And after this guy came and told the guy that hired us “Those people aren’t real Indians! I’ve studied Indians and read all the stuff, and he’s got too much hair!” He
was saying that Don couldn’t be a real Indian because he had too much body hair! He must have been reading some of that old Victorian stuff.

There is a lot of physical variation amongst the Haida, because they are so mixed, maybe even with the Ainu from Japan and everything, those lighter races, because some of them have curly hair, some of them have light eyes, some are taller and some are shorter. But they’re all raised like Haida. And they don’t know themselves if there’s really any difference. But as far as any of them know, they’re Haidas. But they do look different - lots of them. And then when the first traders and settlers came around, they mixed in with them. But they’re all raised as Haida, speaking Haida, and having Haida culture. And I don’t think their mothers will tell them they’re not! Their mothers probably didn’t even know if they were. And probably one of the reasons why they were smarter, more alert people was that they weren’t so inbred!

But what those Germans were reading was probably written 500 years ago from the first explorers who came to the east coast, saying that Indians didn’t have much body hair. But they should just come and see. You know there are whole villages where half the people have blue eyes. Like the Hartley Bay Tsimshian. Joan was married and had kids with this Hartley Bay guy who had blue eyes, and yet all of her kids have dark hair and dark eyes. There’s some white on both sides, and yet the kids are dark. Some whole villages are half-breed, but they’re all raised as being full-blooded Indians, so they don’t know the
difference either. Usually if people know that someone had a white father, then they get known as a half-breed, but often they don't know for sure. Sometimes it's based on looks, but not usually. So a person trying to judge somebody's art by what they look like just isn't right!

You'll find that almost all the people in the band councils, and involved in the land claims and other political things are half-breeds or quarter-breeds. None of them are full-blooded Indian. I know, I know them all and who their fathers and mothers are. That's 'cause they have more self-esteem; they can "pass" so they get less discrimination in schools and at work - they can talk and act and think without bad discrimination. Because that makes people avoid mixing in with other people - if they think they're going to get called down and criticised. So those kids are growing up with more self-esteem, and becoming doctors and lawyers and politicians, and getting involved with all that political stuff.¹³

But ones who have low self-esteem, they won't try. A lot of Indians have low self-esteem - if you tell people often enough that they're stupid and lazy, they come to believe it. And, unfortunately, a lot of low self-esteem people think that "sticking up for yourself" means fighting, being crude and acting in other ways that don't go over in politics and law and school. And especially those really macho ones, they pull each other down, with some trying to do things the "higher-ups" approve of. So then they get in fights, and then they feel bad and have to go and get drunk to get over it. And then they really have problems. So really they have to just decide not to drink, and to stay in school.
Like myself, at first I would be intimidated, but now I'm not. Maybe it's just that, as they say, when you get older, you don't care! You just do what you like, what makes you happy!

But they say that you think what you first thought at a certain age, like your personality's set when you're young. And so even though I had a white step-father, I knew all along that he wasn't my father. And he wasn't the kind that really impressed me. So I'd go thorough life thinking "This is temporary, this is temporary." And with my grandmother's influence, and even being taught my name, I just never forgot that, because that's when I first learned to talk.

My grandmother had a lot to do with it too, because she always talked to me; she didn't want me to forget that my step-father wasn't my father. And also to tell me about her family, because in the old days that was what you did - you passed on the knowledge to girls who might have children too.

I have a lot of respect for my Grandmother; and she was really important to me. But Auntie Nellie, Granny's youngest daughter who was raised by Auntie Kate, had a really negative impact on the self-image of her daughter, my cousin Marion. Auntie Nellie had at least 9 kids, but Marion, who is also known as Mary Anne, is the oldest. She thinks she's ugly. She was always compared negatively to me, even as a baby. They used to say to her that I was so cute, and that I was so good and quite, that even when I cried, I was quiet! So she was always told to be like me. But I was quiet probably 'cause my Dad was so sick.
When you husband is home dying from TB you don’t want your kid screaming!

We’re both the same age, and we’re both the eldest daughters. She is very dark, and I am very fair-skinned. So she teases me and calls me a “Boston Lady” - “WASLANGENAS” - which is what they called white women, ‘cause the first ones they saw were from Boston.

“CUMPSEEWAH” was the Chinook for white man, and “CULTIS CUMPSEEWAH” was for the bad white men - the ones who would pinch your bum. So she calls me “WASLANGENAS” - she just does it to tease, but it’s an insult to some.

She has always envied my ability to mix with whites - she doesn’t, ‘cause she feels inferior. But she got along alright in life, and she had lots of kids. In some ways I envy her. She speaks Haida and teaches it in schools, although they’re cutting back on that now. She thinks she looks ugly, too dark and too Indian. And here I’m proud of being an Indian - and I get criticized for that because I don’t look Indian, with fair skin and brown eyes and hair, so some people say I’m a fraud! There can be discrimination from both sides, you know. That’s why many people tend to hang around with people like themselves.

Once the doctors said I had TB, I was sent away to the sanitarium - “Tranquille” - I got admitted because my English step-father Geoff Lambly had friends who got me in there. And there were other mixed breeds when I was there - like Nancy’s half sister. Only Indians who were reserve people had their own hospital.
I went there when I was 18, and was there 18, 19, 20, I got out just before I was 21. The grounds were beautiful there, it was a really beautiful setting. I have a picture of the admission building along the Thompson River, where I stayed when I first went there. Then later I moved to the main building.

There were really nice gardens, and in the last year I could go out to the gardens, and meet people out there. But before that I had to stay inside, they wouldn’t let you out. When I was first there, I had to stay all alone. But I had a radio with me, so I could listen to that and stay in touch with the outside world. That was my only contact. I guess that is why I like to listen to the radio now - I take my little radio with me wherever I go, and I listen to the CBC every day. Its like an old friend. Even the programmes I’ve heard before, and there are a lot of them now on the CBC ‘cause of all the budget cuts, they play old programmes over and over, but I still like to listen to them.

As I started getting better I was able to meet more people there, and made some friends. One of the women I met there, Gladys, we’re still friends. I have a picture of us in a group at the sanitarium. She came up recently to Prince Rupert to visit, and I got a picture of us together - both of us young girls together in the hospital, and now here we are, old ladies, still fine.

I have this photo album that I made at the sanitarium, when they had us do activities. It’s made using the old x-ray film. We had to clean off the x-ray film, then we’d put it over a picture we cut from some
magazine, then put all that on top of leather. We'd sew it up all around by hand, punch holes in the leather and make the album. I have one that I made for Bobbie - it has a picture of a dog on the front of it, because she liked dogs and they had a dog then. I made it for her, and put pictures in it that were taken at the sanitarium; there are some of me, and my friends, and the gardens. And I sent it to her while I was gone, so we could keep in touch.

When I could, I took correspondence courses while I was in there too, to finish my schooling, since I got sick before I graduated. Then after, when I was in Vancouver, I went to the Vancouver School of Art.

Some people are surprised to find out that I'm not Status Indian - like my Mom, I never got my status back either. But I did apply once - I had my original birth certificate. It had no file number on it, but it did identify Mom as Indian. But they said I needed a new certificate, one with a file number on it. So I got one. But the law had changed by then so that nationality of the parents was no longer included. So on the new certificate my mother was no longer shown as being an Indian. So I didn't apply again. I could get it if I wanted, because my mother once was registered. Maybe some day I'll try again, but I don't really care.

Besides, some people say that others get their status back just so that they can be eligible to get things, Indian benefits and other free things. They just care about what they can get out of it - and I don't ever want
anyone to be able to say that about me! I take pride in being able to do for myself.

Besides, the people back at Masset who know who I am recognize me and say I would be welcome back there anytime. But I don't think I will go there to live - I like to just visit. I've lived all my life over here, and I want to stay here. Besides, I like to travel a lot, and it's easier to do from the mainland. It's harder to do things from the Islands. And I don't want to have to live anywhere. I also don't want to be a target in land claims battles, and that's a problem for people who are well known. Like for the Nisga'a now in their land claims battles.

If anyone gets anything, it should be the Nisga'a. They've worked hard at that for a long time. And all these people in BC want to interfere in what should be their own decision. There's only a handful of people who live in that whole area who aren't Nisga'a, yet everybody thinks they should have a say in it - and most of them don't know anything about it at all, and it has nothing to do with them! Besides, ones like the Mennonites and the Hutterites have their own land, and their own religion and schools - why shouldn't the Nisga'a get that too?

In the early days, the government gave land away to settlers - even though it already belonged to the Natives. You could get land just for clearing it. We did that too - my husband got 30 acres for clearing and fencing it. It now belongs to my oldest niece - they bought it when he died. But it wasn't that easy, you know - clearing land is lots of work.
My husband had a lot of experience in clearing land - he did that with his parents in Saskatchewan too. That was before I met him.

When I met my husband Art he was working as a Cat driver for the road construction, when they were putting in the Kitimat highway. I had come back to Terrace, and was working in the restaurant as a waitress. The construction guys would come in to eat there often, and so I met him there. After, we went to dances and things. And we went on a lot of picnics - we liked to go on picnics.

My parents seemed to like him - everybody in my family liked him. He was a really nice guy. But he drank too much - but everybody did in those days, especially those construction guys. My parents didn’t tell me I should get married - I made my own decisions. But I think they figured it was time I got married!

If I had been around at the right time, when I was a young woman, and not in the hospital, I probably would have married younger, and married according to my mother’s advice. They didn’t have arranged marriages any more, really, but the relatives still had a lot of influence. And even if the marriages were still arranged, I probably would have gone along with what they told me to do. In those days I didn’t have much self-confidence, and so I’d pretty much do what I was told - especially by my Mom. I would never talk back to my Mom! And even my step-father, I didn’t talk back to him until I was an adult. Then my sister said, “So now you’re leaving, he’ll take it out on me!”
He wasn't a violent man, but he drank quite a lot, and he'd get mouthy when he was drunk.

Things were really different for my sister Bobbie than they were for me. We had different childhoods, different upbringings so we ended up with completely different characters, and really different knowledge. Bobbie had much more influence from her father than I had from mine, since he died so young. But she wasn't really close to her Dad. And she didn't have so much from Granny or Mom, or even from an older girl like I did from my cousin Nancy.

Bobbie was only 12 when I went away to the sanitarium, so really she grew up when I was not around. My brother Frankie had died just six months before I got TB, and my cousin Nancy had run away not long before that and was living with Granny. I guess when I went she never expected I'd come back, 'cause in the old days everybody died. There was no medicine for it; even in the hospital, they'd just collapse your lung with air to give it a rest - they pumped air into your chest, between your ribs and your lung, and that would make your lung collapse.

So Mom found life a lot different. She had less input into raising Bobbie than Sonny and me - Roberta still says Mom really didn't pay much attention to her. She was very independent, and Mom let her do whatever made her happy. Then when she was about 13 they all moved back to Terrace from the farm, and Mom just kind of let her go - she spent all her time with her girlfriends, and she even had a
boyfriend at 13. She seemed very old for her age - but she still threw
temper tantrums. My brother and I would have never been able to do
that, or even thought about it!

Bobbie married right after she graduated from school, to Robert Perry,
but they've been divorced for a long time now. They had 6 kids
altogether, and a whole bunch of grandkids and even great-
grandkids. After she had her first two kids they all moved to Smithers.
So by the time I came back to Terrace she was already married.

So I guess my parents were happy to see me married too. At first we
lived in Terrace and Bobbie and her family came back and lived in
Terrace too - we lived across the street from each other. Then they
moved out to the farm at Cedarvale, and then we moved out to a farm
at Cedarvale too. And my Mom and step-father lived with us on our
farm in Cedarvale, and then they lived with Bobby and her family on
their farm in Woodcock. So there was still lots of chance for
socializing, and babysitting. I spent lots of time with her kids when
they were young, and also with my cousin Nancy and her kids, and
with Donnie's Mom and Dad too.

Bobbie's ex-husband still keeps cattle on their old farm there, and he
ever used to cut some wood for me for carving. Barb, the youngest girl,
has finally gone back to live on the farm - that had been her dream, to
go back and live there again. Her sister Brenda, who lives in Rupert,
spends the summers there too now and loves it - but she didn't care
for it when she was a kid!
When I broke my ankle, I stayed at Bobbie’s place for a long time, and she looked after me. I couldn’t walk, or even stand up for a long time - if I didn’t keep my foot propped up, it would swell way up right away. It was a really bad break - they had to go back and put pins in it and everything, ‘cause it wouldn’t heal right. And even now it’s not too strong, and it will swell and I’ll have to put it up again. All that just ‘cause I slipped on some ice on the sidewalk! People told me I should sue the city, but I’m not like that. But it’s good that I could stay with Bobbie. Just like my Mom, she takes pride in her cooking and she’s a really good cook. We’ve gone out together, and had vacations together, but that was the longest time we’ve ever spent together.

I never learned to cook like that - when I was a young woman and should have been learning from my mother, I was gone in the hospital. So when I was in Vancouver, I taught myself how to cook - things that you can cook on a hotplate, ‘cause that’s all I had. I don’t like people to watch me cook, ‘cause I do things my own way, but it tastes good when I’m done!

When I was first married, my husband’s mother came to live with us, to teach me how to cook German food, ‘cause that’s what my husband was raised with. They were of Russian and German decent. His grandfather had come from there to the USA and then to Canada. My husband’s father was born in Manitoba, and Art was born in Saskatchewan. They used to talk German at home all the time, until the grandfather died. And they always liked to eat German food. So I learned how to cook German food from my mother-in-law to please
my husband. But I don't cook like that any more! My mother-in-law moved in, and lived with us for a long time before she went home. She had lots of kids - Art was one of seven boys and five girls. But there are no male heirs in the Diesing line, so there are no more “Diesings” left in his family now.

In the sixties, my husband and I used to have a market garden farm out at Cedarvale. We'd grow potatoes, carrots, rhubarb, corn, things like that, and we'd take them down into the canneries and into Rupert, and into Kitimat. We had a truck, and we sold vegetables from the back. This old lady in the canneries, Ada was her name, she used to laugh when I'd come, and say “Oh, SCU-SEETA-NON'S here!” She teased me by calling me “the potato’s grandmother,” SCU-SEETA-NON! It comes from the way they used to call potatoes, “good seed,” and “NONNIE” is Haida for grandmother.

I used to work in that restaurant out by Cedarvale too for awhile - The Cedarvale Cafe. There used to be a missionary village there, in Cedarvale. It was called MEANSKINISHT- “Under the pitch pines” or some say “Under the big mountain,” but now its called Cedarvale.

There was this missionary named Tomlinson that came in there. At that time there was no railway or road or anything and they just came up on river boats. I think Tomlinson first walked in over the grease trails from the Nass. They walked with their small children, and they even made a rooster walk! Across the grease trail! And then they decided to start a mission at Cedarvale. He was really strict and
he just had a few followers there. He was so strict he wouldn't let the riverboat stop there on Sunday. So one time his wife was on the boat and she had to go all the way past, up to Hazelton, and then come back, because he wouldn't let them stop on the Sabbath! He even had a jail, and any little violation the person would have to spend time in the jail. He was really self-sufficient. He built bricks - there's some clay there, on the other side of the river, and he built a brick-making place. And he had a saw-mill run by water pressure, so they built buildings and they had a church, and a school, and it was a fairly self-sufficient place. And it was a relative of his that built the log house that was on the property that we had. His name was Tordis, but he was related to Tomlinsons. So we bought that farm, and we grew vegetables.

Mostly we grew potatoes. My husband did other work still too, 'cause he had worked on construction, but he decided he wanted to be a potato farmer. And that worked o.k. until there were a few rainy summers and the potatoes got blight that ruined the whole crop, and then he didn't want to do that anymore! And I had a truck that we would use to take the vegetables to Rupert and sell them.

And that's when I started to carve then too, and to work at 'Ksan. And I had this truck - it was a Volkswagen camper van, and I really liked it. But then it developed problems with the engine, so I couldn't drive it, and it was parked in the yard. And I wanted to get another engine and put it in, 'cause it was really nice, and would have been worth it to fix. But then he sold the camper van - it was my truck, not his to sell
at all, but still he sold it! To some guy who bought it for his kids to use as a playhouse! So then I had no truck.

Just like my steel guitar. I used to play steel guitar, I liked it, and I still have the guitar somewhere - but no strings. Once Art decided he wanted to use the strings for something else, I can't remember what, so he just took the strings off my guitar! So, no more guitar music. But I did learn to play the accordion too, and that was fun - but I haven't done that in a long time!

And then awhile ago I just decided I wanted another truck, so I bought this little truck, but it was just a truck and not a van, and drove it back and forth to Rupert. But then it was old, and kept breaking down and the tires kept going flat, and I was stuck on the road a few times. But someone always came along to help me! But then I decided I'd better get rid of that truck - although I really liked my little truck - and I went with my nephew and we found another truck, a really nice truck. And big too. And when I first got it, it needed some things, and I just left it with him. And his mother said, "Oh, I can't believe she just left her new truck for you to drive!" It's a really nice truck- but I'm still making payments. And I don't like that - I don't like to have to owe anyone anything, so that when I go, no one will have to pay anything! But around here a person really needs a truck, and anyway I like to pack things around.

In Rupert, there's another port that they ship lumber out of just past the last cannery; it used to be the CO-OP cannery. There's a deep sea
port that mostly sends lumber out to other countries, probably the Orient. My husband was working on that port. Before they built it there had been an old village there, and the archaeologists came and dug it all up before they put the port in. They got a lot of quite well-preserved artifacts there, and they’ve got copies of them in the Prince Rupert Museum I believe. I went there and I saw some things: there’s a big lip labret that the women used to wear, and a paddle and a bow, a hunting bow for shooting arrows, that were wood, they were still preserved. Actually I got a tracing of the bow and the paddle - they let me take a tracing of it. But there was quite a small paddle - it was really interesting.  

And they had basketry, because it was alongside of a creek, and it was preserved wet, and there was basketry and a few wooden items. They think it was about 500 years old, and it was still preserved. It would be Tsimshian. Basketry isn’t usually preserved, but it’s the same as that one in Washington, where there was a mud slide or something that preserved basketry and wooden items.  

Even though it was hard work, I liked it on the farm. We were there, and my Mom. Bobby was out on a farm there too; their land was on the other side of the river. They had their own hydro power plant there, from a dam, ’cause there was no electricity so they made their own, and they’d do everything that they needed power for. But no telephones, even now. Not many people live out that way now, but I still go out to the first old farm house and grow potatoes there. Some day maybe I’ll fix the old house up again, ’cause I like it out there. But
it kind of got the inside stripped out of it for the other place. And there’s a bear that seems to want to live in one of the buildings. I don’t know if it’s one of the white Kermodei bears that live all around there, and there’s one on the main farm, or if it’s just a regular black bear - I just see its signs, not the bear.

Bobbie’s husband kept cattle there, and still has some - they got into my potatoes. We didn’t have cattle, just chickens and things. But I did have sheep at one time, only I found out it wasn’t so easy raising sheep. You didn’t just pasture them. When the lambs came, they could die if they had them in the middle of the night and it was still cold. And the sheep could roll on one and they would smother it. And after they could have mastitis, an infection in the udder, and I had to inject it with penicillin or something. So I sheared the ones I had, and after I sold them. I sold them to go to Vancouver to see an Indian arts show!

That was The Arts of the Raven show. I saw The People of the Potlatch show\textsuperscript{22} when I was going to art school in Vancouver. Then Bill Reid was just starting, and they brought a bunch of Indian art from all over the world, and it was at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Then it was about 10 years later I guess when they had The Arts of the Raven show.\textsuperscript{23} It was sort of the same thing where they brought things in, and it was at the Vancouver Art Gallery, and a lot of Bill Reid’s stuff was shown there too. So I sold my sheep to have enough money to go to Vancouver, just to see an art show.
After I sold my sheep to come to the art show in Vancouver, and I saw the Arts of the Raven show and met Bill Reid, and I bought the book from the show. I copied the drawings, and then I went to the library and took out more books and tried to copy the designs on the totem poles and things - just like Bill Reid had done.

And when I was living in Vancouver too, back in the 50s, I went to visit Ellen Neel. She was a Kwakwutl woman who carved; she was really well known and she lived in Vancouver. So I went to see her there. She was the first woman I met who made her living from carving. Anthropologists always ask about being a woman carver - about resistance from other carvers who were men, or from other Indians. But I never encountered that resistance from Indians. And when we were all at Robert Davidson’s pole raising in Masset [1969] and I was talking to my Mom’s uncle, the old Chief WEAH, about the carvers in my family, and what the elders might have thought about what I was doing, he said “Your uncles would be proud!”

It seemed natural to me for women to carve, 'cause I'm sure that women always did carve. 'Cause in the old days, when you couldn't go to a store, and the men were in the middle of fighting or warring or something, and you needed something, who was going to do it? Who was going to make the containers? It was the women were the thinking people! That's what I told that woman from UBC at the interview, and she said she liked it so much she was going to use it in her thesis!
They had to make sure there was enough food for the family and enough food and things to give away at the next potlatch. And who did it while the men were out hunting, and out raiding and out fishing? Who thought about those things? It was the same as who does it right now!

Even today, the men want to do their fun things, so they go out doing their hunting and, ... and the women are home making sure that the family wasn’t going to starve in the winter. It’s still the same today, even though the women don’t brag about what they do, they are probably the ones that put up all the stuff that’s given away to the people who still have a potlatch. If they don’t have some good women behind them the men don’t have enough stuff. And besides Indian men are the same as white men, they don’t generally buy food, if they have enough money they buy a car, a new car or a new boat or something. So if they didn’t have women behind them to get up enough stuff and to do the right things then they wouldn’t be ready when the occasion came. And the people themselves know that - they didn’t read the books that were written about them!

In one of the old stories, for people who talk about women if they should carve, there’s one of those stories about a young man who showed signs of becoming a medicine man, and his grandmother carved him a rattle and charms - his grandmother! And she made his apron and regalia. It wasn’t a man who did it!
It was only from the anthropologists and the dealers that there was any resistance to women carving! When I started, no one knew anything about what the anthropologists wrote in the Victorian days, and men, women and children were all happy to learn to carve, and all men, women and children were enthusiastic about learning, and no one discriminated against anyone else - until so many people started putting it in their heads!

Because actually whatever the men could do the women could too, maybe not the young women but the older women; the older women were pretty bossy, and the men didn’t try to boss them. That’s what I told Joan’s first husband: nobody told the Haida women what to do!

There was even a woman mask carver from Kuldo village who was famous in her time as a mask carver. I don’t know her name, but Mary MacKenzie knew of her and other people, and I think that some of the masks that are in some of the museums were carved by that woman. She was a mask carver, from the village of Kuldo. It is an extinct village now, because when they started to educate the children they made them move into Kispiox, but the Kispiox people were Kuldo people. The people of Kuldo live in Kispiox and Hazelton now.

The only problems I had with some of the Native people were that some of the Haida carvers criticized me and Robert for teaching carving to outsiders. Some were a little bit envious. One in particular, a prominent carver, Rufus Moodie was a little bit upset, you know. At one time he said that Robert and I were giving away our culture by
teaching others - ones who were not Haida. And some of them had the idea that only Haidas did this and only Haidas did that - they were the only ones who carved, and they were the only ones with totem poles. They were upset because I was teaching amongst the Tsimshian and Gitksan, except some were my Haida relatives who lived in Prince Rupert and Port Edward. But they were all people of Native ancestry.

They said that “They never did carving up in the Gitksan area” - they thought just because the Haida had the biggest totem poles they were the only ones. But I couldn’t be that way, because I knew myself that they had the same culture, because I saw the carvings and I saw the painted boxes, and I’ve been to the Nass and I know the Nass River people. And I also know that there were still famous carvers on the Nass; they were still carving Raven rattles not very long ago. And there are famous carvers among the Gitksan. So I don’t mind - I’m happy to teach those people, and any people who want to learn.

Lots of my students have not been Haida, and some have not been Indian. But I taught them all. And some of the non-Indian ones could produce authentic-type art - if you think of authentic as being done in the right style, to the rules of Northwest Coast art - some even better than the Indians. I think it is easier for the whites, because they have more self-confidence.

And when it comes to one group of Indians doing the art style of another group - well, they are already encouraged to do that by the art
schools, and by the promoters too. Although most Indian artists here want to rediscover the artistic traditions of their own people - up north or the southern groups too. Most people whose ancestors were carvers want to be carvers too - they've heard their grandparents talk about it and think it sounds interesting. And some will stick with it and others will quit 'cause it's too much work. Those that stick with it, some will get well known because their work is really good, and others because they have a lot of friends and promoters.

Then those who get well known face other types of criticism. Like Robert Davidson. He is so famous, and his work is so good, and he has worked really hard at it. Then there are some who say that some credit should go to the village too. Then at a village meeting some said "We're tired of those Vancouver Indians telling us what to do!" But they're Haida too! So there's resentment in all forms.

Even Donnie has been criticised. There are some who say he is not Haida, and shouldn't carve like that. That's because his mother, Francis Sinclair, is a Cree from Slave Lake Alberta. His father, Hector Yeomans, is Auntie Nellie's son, so he is an Eagle Haida. But with the Haida it's who your mother is that counts, not your father. So she was adopted as a Raven, and Florence Davidson adopted Donnie as a Raven and gave him a name. And his wife is a Haida woman too - Trace is a Skidegate Haida. But some people criticise him anyway, so he must be very good at his work to make up for it - and he is.25
There is a lot of controversy over the people that are good - like non-Indians whose work is better than the Indian’s work. There’s a lot of them doing it now. And yet I myself I don’t even know how I feel. Although if it hadn’t been for some of them maybe I wouldn’t have learned. Because I used to admire Bill Holm and the work he did. And he carved some pretty nice things, and he taught a lot of non-Indians to do that carving. But I still respect him for what he did, because circumstances made it almost disappear and he brought it back to some kind of a chance at bringing it back to more perfection.

There might be people who figure Bill Holm had no business doing the things that he did. Because there are all kinds of different opinions. But it was in such a state that to get things back we had to have someone good at analysing. But I know there’s people who don’t think it should ever be taught, but then you don’t know what their motives for thinking that is - they might still think it is heathen and evil to do Indian art!

And then they use all kinds of different excuses for why they should try to change it, and why it shouldn’t be something that isn’t typically Western white art. Because they’re afraid that maybe in this design there is some kind of secret code that’s going to overthrow the world! And if I was really mischievous I’d let them think it! And then let them try to figure out my secret code!

Art is individual and it’s not mysterious by its design. It turned out to be different, but ... I was thinking, when Tommy Adams made his first
pendants, his jewellery, and he did a lot of them alike. So a lot of us Eagles were wearing Tommy’s pendants then, and some of those people asked, "What does that mean? Is that some kind of a society?" Yeah, we’re all Eagle clan, and our second cousin does these designs! He wasn’t considered the best as far as that goes, but I sure like my Eagle pendant that he made!

The Haidas have the nicest totem poles, but it’s because they have the best trees. The huge cedar trees on the Charlottes are the best for carving - tall and straight and smooth. You have to have a big tree to carve a big pole. And smooth, fine grain with no knots - the narrow grain at the exterior of the trunk is best. So those old trees are the best - that the Haida have. So the Haida were able to make the best poles - big, fat poles with lots of intricate surface detailing. And too, being so close to the coast, the Haida got a lot of wrecks from Japan, and they had early contact with traders so they had access to metal and metal tools earlier than the other groups. Even the early ships that came there said they already were using metal, and had metal jewellery. The Tlingit and the Nisga’a poles are much smaller, because their trees are much smaller and not as good for carving, and it’s a different kind of wood. And the Tsimshian and Gitksan - their trees are bigger. The trees get bigger and better as you go south, but the Haida have the best, the old-growth cedars.

Along the coast, along the Skeena, you can see the different trees from Prince Rupert to Terrace. Most of the trees around Rupert are alder trees, then when you get closed to Terrace it will be mostly cottonwood
trees, and red willows, some grey willows, and a few evergreen trees. The white bark trees are alder. And these, their leaves don't go yellow, they stay green. The yellowish ones are willow trees. There's poplar here too - they grow really tall. They're different from birch trees - some of them have white bark, and some birch have red bark. In Terrace there are starting to be birch trees. Between there's alder and red willow and cottonwood. There is lots of alder here for carving - it's like a weed!

Alder wood is a good carving wood. It grows fast, so it has wide grains. With yellow cedar, you want fine grains, 'cause it's easier carving fine grains, for yellow cedar or red cedar. But with alder you want the wide grains because it looks nice. Alder is easy to carve, and it has no objectionable odours or bad flavours - it's a good, sweet-smelling wood. It's hard enough to hold the lines of the carving so you can get nice, sharp edges, but it's soft enough to work easily. You have to keep it damp though, 'cause it gets quite hard when it is dry. And you have to hollow the back out while it is still fresh, because if you don't then it will crack - alder will get big cracks!

For making food goods, like bowls and trays and spoons they either use alder or maple or birch. Cedar or yellow cedar is not good because of the oils. For things that are really hard you use maple, like some rattles are made out of maple 'cause they are used a lot and if you drop them they wouldn't break. And I've made some out of alder too - it makes a nice sound for rattles.
The other good thing about alder is that when you're carving, the knife goes where you expect it to. With red cedar, it does things you don't want it to do, like dive your knife, or splinter, or chunk out. So you have to watch, and listen too, 'cause it makes a different sound when it's not cutting properly. On red cedar you can feel the difference as to which is the right way to go, the way it moves the knife. And so you have to feel the way the knife is going through the wood, and then change your carving technique as required.

And then carving on big panels, laminated boards, is another problem. Like with the Eagle design I'm carving now, the grains are laid at cross directions - they reverse from strip to strip. So one will be easy to carve one way, while the one beside it splinters and needs to be cut in the opposite direction. So it's a lot of work to carve like that - you always have to keep changing and watching for splinters and things. And if a little piece does come off, you have to glue it back right away, and then carve it again, 'cause even one little bit can ruin that whole line of your design. That kind of problem with the wood occurs when the board manufacturer is not aware of the needs of a carver - that all the grain must be going in the same direction. So boards that are made by producers who are experienced at making them for carvers will not have those problems - they align the grain right when they make them. I was given these panels awhile ago by someone in the Okanagan who wasn't experienced like that.

Another wood that some people use to carve is driftwood, and in the river on the banks there's lots of it available. I've never carved
driftwood. The first time I tried carving something, I used cottonwood bark, but it's not very good for carving. But it was sort of interesting to me, before I took any lessons. But I know who did - no it wasn't driftwood, it was just cottonwood. But cottonwood trees, they'll pull up silica out of the sand - 'cause they draw a lot of water, they're those big huge trees. But a lot of the small ones with the really yellow leaves are also cottonwood.

One of our instructors at 'Ksan, Duane Pascoe, he carved a hat out of cottonwood because it was quite big, but it dulls your knives because it's got that silica in it. And it is soft too, quite soft, so it's not that great. But I think they used to use it for making boxes, because they're quite big and it's a soft wood. So they used it for packing boxes, and even for things like the salmon used to be sent out in boxes, and the apples, and that sort of thing. Where they used to use wooden boxes now they probably use cardboard boxes. And of course they used cedar for the old storage boxes, the bentwood boxes. I've made a few of them, and painted designs on too and carved. I still have a few small ones at home, but they're not the best - I sold all my best work, and keep other things mainly to show when I talk to students in the schools or colleges.

In 1967 it was the big centennial year, and there was lots going on for the Indians, and for everybody, all over Canada. That year "Indian revival" times were just starting, and we had the "First Salmon Festival" in Prince Rupert. I made a small village carving for that festival - houses, and canoes and people in old-time costumes. And I
borrowed real masks from an old lady in Cedarvale; other people bought old spoons, bowls, boxes and things from storage - things they'd kept hidden away for years - for the show. And from the Haida, the Tsimshian, the Gitksan - all the groups around got involved, and it was really good, the first really nice Indian festival. Locally we called it 'Indian Days,' with Indian food and a dance group from Alaska. Indian food is, like: dry seaweed (you chew on it); herring eggs on seaweed, that you lightly boil; eulachons - frozen or freshly smoked, and grease. And of course salmon. Everyone usually still loves Indian food, and it's really expensive now.

It was a non-Indian guy, Carl Heinmeuller, who established that Indian dance troupe; he also carved rattles, and head-dresses and other things, and was teaching in Haines. The next year Prince Rupert started their own dance group, Connie Adams and her daughter Margaret Adkins, and had the Salmon Festival every year after that; I always try to make it there, whenever I can. And now there is the Haida dance troop that Claude Davidson has. Robert does some carving for that too, and Reg Davidson - he's a really good carver too, but he gets overshadowed by his brother. Their grandfather, the Eagle chief GANYA, knew lots of songs, even Tsimshian, Tlingit and Chinook songs.

And then, we were still living in Cedarvale when this Native lady named Mrs. Sutton, they hired her to go to Hazelton to teach how to make baskets. So I had my van, so I would drive her to Hazelton to teach basket weaving. At Hazelton they were getting anyone who had
anything to teach to go and give classes, 'cause they were planning a big project.\(^{27}\) Then they told me that they were going to have this Bill Holm come from Seattle to teach design, and they told me how he came up there to teach wood carving and how to make knives. So that's how I found out that anyone of Native heritage could come and take classes, so I started taking those classes. Tony Hunt came, and Bill Holm came - for a few weeks. Robert Davidson came up, and he stayed for a year. And I would go two or three days a week and carve along with Robert Davidson. That's how I actually got started in my carving in Indian art.

I keep telling people I never went to Gitanmaax school, but they keep writing that I was the first student there. There was no Gitanmaax school at 'Ksan when I learned, and the teachers who ended up teaching there, they learned after I did.\(^{28}\) And people keep saying that I taught at 'Ksan at the Gitanmaax school, but I never did. I taught in Rupert and Terrace and Alaska but I never taught at 'Ksan. The guys would be upset at 'Ksan if they heard I said I taught there. 'Cause I worked at everything else but when I worked there! But people keep saying that - even the people who made the tape for the show,\(^{29}\) when they read back to me what they wrote, they said I taught there. They didn't listen to the tape. But people write what they want. And they've been saying that for a long time. Doreen [Jensen] probably wrote that early on 'cause Polly [Sargent] wanted anything that was said to promote Gitanmaax school.
Bill Holm came a few times in the mid-1960s to teach classes, and I always went. He'd come just for two weeks at a time, or one week. He brought lots of carvings with him and slides and he taught design. His work was good - it was really Northern style. But then he studied it a lot, he really specialized in learning that design. As far as design is concerned, if they didn't study Bill Holm then they're missing out on some of the design, or doing something wrong, 'cause he really studied it. Some people they just copy a design and they don't know why they do it that way, they just say they did it but they didn't really learn. Or they just copy - copy each other or copy out of books, but they never learn the principles. I looked, and I copied too at first - everyone copies to learn anything. But I tried to make an exact copy only one time - a mask in the museum in Prince Rupert. I wanted to see if I could make an exact copy. They say it is hard to copy exactly, but it turned out pretty good.

I took other classes in knife making and mask carving from Tony Hunt. In the old days, they used to use beaver teeth for chisels and adzes - that would work well on soft woods like alder. And then they used to make them from files - by filing them down by hand and using grindstones. I made a few like that. But it's slow - if you use a fast electric grindstone, it heats the metal and takes all the original temper out. So you need to know how to take the original temper out in an oven, then grind down the file when it's soft, and then re-temper it again.
Some people just use blowtorches to heat the blades for knives, and then shape them, and dunk them in oil or water, which can work but not as well. I still have one of the first knives I made, and it's pretty good. It was made from a hacksaw blade - a thin metal with a good sharp edge. Some of the guys like to make tools - maybe it's "a guy thing." Even if they don't want to be carvers they like making knives. But just liking to do it doesn't mean you're any good. I bought a few when I was in Ketchikan, but I never found them much good.

But I found out that there are knives, and there are knives! There are some metal mixes that are better than others, and they need to be heated in special ovens to just the right temperature, so they'll take a good sharp edge and stay sharp and not break or chip. Making good knives is an art, really. So now I buy my knives carefully. They're high quality steel and kiln-made so they never need sharpening, and hardly even need polishing. I learned soon enough to take really good care of my knives! 'Cause if one of these [shaped] knife blades gets a chip in it, it's ruined. And I don't sharpen my tools any more either. I take good care of them, and polish them, which is usually enough. But if something happens and one needs to be sharpened again, I take it in to have it done. And the same with my chainsaw, I take it in to be serviced and sharpened. Oh, people will talk now, "Freda Diesing doesn't sharpen her own tools!"

I also got a few good straight knives given to me as gifts at those Scandinavian carving exhibitions. The museum there gave me three, with my name engraved on them, but I haven't tried them. Each time I
was there, they gave me one, and then I bought one too in Finland, which I really like.

I found this guy who makes really good Indian-style knives, and I get them custom made. I even designed one, and then he took the design and made a bunch of them and sold them to others - maybe I should get a commission on those! I use all kinds of hand tools when I'm carving, depending on what I'm doing. But I like the Indian-style knives best, really. You can do the most with them. But it's hard to learn how to use them - you have to slice through the wood, not cut through it like with other knives - just slide it through. That's hard to learn how to do, but once you do, it's the best way for carving most things, I think. You have the most control. I guess that's partly why the Indian carvers designed them in the first place.31

I have a lot of tools now - like most carvers, I got really stuck on buying tools, and would get new tools whenever I could find enough money. And I started buying carving tools early, back in the 60s. I was buying books then too, to see the old art, because there wasn't much left to see. And I would look for them everywhere. This one time, my Grand-Aunt in Alaska, her husband died and so a group of us went up to Ketchikan. And I went looking for these old Indian art books, and I got some too, some Russian ones that you can't get any more. And my cousin said “Every place I went you beat me to it!” Because he was looking too, he was a carver too. And I bought tools in Ketchikan. So now I try to just look when I go in those stores - but it's hard to stop buying when they have such nice ones!
I don't use power tools much. I use my electric chain saw to rough out poles, especially the big poles, and to cut wood into smaller pieces and rough out the smaller poles and masks. Maybe if I got a gas powered chain saw I could go out to the bush and cut some fresh wood. But not with this electric one - not enough cord!

Some people like them, all the power hand tools, and use them a lot because they're fast. But I don't like them, they make too much noise, and dust which is bad for your lungs. I used some power tools in a class I was teaching, like a power rotor, and everybody came down with these bad sinus infections. That cedar dust especially is really bad for you. Especially when you're sanding, 'cause it makes such a fine powder. And people want to blow on it, to blow it away, but that's the worst thing to do. 'Cause then you breath it in, and it's so bad for you. So you have to brush it away, very carefully - and it still gets in the air.

Sometimes I wear a mask, but I don't like to, because they get too hot and then they make my skin break out - I have really sensitive skin. So I just sand as little as possible - besides, I like to leave the marks on, to make things look hand-done. I remember one time, I sanded something real smooth, and this guy, he said, "Is this made of plastic?" So I hardly sand at all.

I made my first wooden mask under Tony Hunt's guidance. My husband Art cut down a tree for me on the farm, and I carved that. And it was hard to carve! The Hunts like to use red cedar to make
their masks, and you don't use green wood with cedars, you have to let it cure. The best way to remember is, the trees with green leaves you can carve best in green wood, but the cedars and those soft woods have to be cured.

I did some Indian designs then too, with Robert Davidson, and some teaching - adzing. Doug Cranmer taught there too. Whenever I was there I took classes or worked with whoever came in there. There were other women too besides me - Doreen Jensen, of course, but other women too. But even those who liked it did not continue as carvers, they got other jobs or did other things. I remember especially Marie Marshall (a Whale), and the daughter of Mary MacKenzie, Fidelia O'Brien.

Then when Robert Davidson came there for that year, I started carving with him. We carved in birch and cedar, and even did ivory carving. It was a tooth, really. Somewhere someone has a gold-clasped pendant I did, of a being with a cap on top - 'cause the tooth had a shape like a cap on it. It wasn't hard to carve in the ivory, but it was slow, with lots of chipping away of tiny bits. I don't do that fine detailed, small work now, 'cause of the scar in my eye. Also, making jewellery, it's very hard on the skin of the hands - Donnie gets these acid burns all the time on his hands. And also the fumes are very hard on the lungs, and I'm really careful to take good care of my lungs - I didn't ever smoke or do pot or any of those things, no matter what other people tried to encourage. Having TB like I did, I really take good care of my health.
So I don't do any jewellery any more, even though you can make a lot more money at it. But some company took a few of my designs and put them on jewellery, so I did get a few cents commission from that! You can carve a bracelet much faster than you can carve a mask - in a weekend, maybe, and it's really easy to sell jewellery, even if only to your own family, because everyone wants to have it - everyone wants to have those silver or gold bracelets. But a lot of people aren't wearing their good jewellery as much as they did - there were several old women, they wore their jewellery at dos and things, and then they were robbed. People saw it, and knew what they had was good, so after they stole it!

Some jewellers do all their carving like jewellery - the slant is in the opposite direction. You see it on totem poles, on ears and things. And there is a difference in edges and finish on flat design between background and body parts. I keep mine flat; Donnie likes to use a punch to stipple the background. Different people do different things, and that's o.k. The only important thing is that their work looks like Northwest Coast design.

I enjoyed learning with Robert Davidson. His work is so good! He had started doing carving in argillite with Robert Davidson Sr., his Haida grandfather, then when he met Bill Reid he started doing designs in gold and some wood carving. Then he came to 'Ksan in 1968 and made two poles there - but I think that he made his first pole when he was there at 'Ksan. He had never carved anything really big before then, so he was still learning too. After that he got more into working
with wood. He did his first big panel for Ksan too - in the sales house. And he carved his first masks at Ksan. He was my teacher, but I had already carved many masks before he carved his first one!

Then Duane Pascoe came there and I carved with him too. But my masks were very different from his - his were more like a carpenter was doing them, you know, exactly the same on both sides. The mask that I found out was my great-grandfather's work, but we thought it was by Charles Edenshaw, once when I was out at a museum with Duane Pascoe we saw it. And we looked at the back, and it was just like I do. And so I said to Duane "see, he did it just like I do it!" Although at that time we thought it was by Charles Edenshaw, 'cause then everything that was good they just put that Edenshaw did it.

After Duane left he started doing copies of old Indian stuff in museums and such, and his work got a lot better. His later poles were much nicer - like the one at the Tacoma airport is better than at Ksan. He studied design just before he came up to Ksan, and maybe did his first poles here. In Seattle, after he got his big contracts, he studied more and got better. But Duane was our instructor when he was just starting. He learned 'cause he just wanted to; he said he used to hang out with the Natives there in Seattle. They used to do little totem poles and carvings - small things, and he started to like carving. And then he started to learn the design. At Hazelton he started doing boxes and teaching design, but his design wasn't really Indian. He always just ... he showed his personality through it. But he probably had the biggest influence on making what people call the 'Ksan style of art. You can
tell stuff that's been made from someone who learned at 'Ksan - it's not any one tradition, but sort of a mix of them all. And people from all over the coast came there to study, so now you can see it everywhere.

I never much copied anybody's style there, I developed my own style right off. Besides, except for poles, which it's easy to tell where they're from, Haida, Tsimshian, and the southern ones, the rest of the carving I think what they call "styles" is really more just things carved by the same carver. Individual styles and preferences, one person doing things in a unique way, not "styles" of a whole group of people. I can still tell lots that were obviously done by the same carver. But the fact that someone had his own style and was carving a lot at some particular time does not mean that, say, all the Haida carvers did it the same way. Just that one artist. But now the anthropologists and the other people who study art, they all talk about a "Haida style" and a "Tsimshian style" of carving like it was always there and always the same, when it's just one person's way of doing it. And the ones who are doing art now are hearing that, and trying to follow that "style."

It's good to learn the basics, and you have to learn the rules of the art, and the easiest way to do that is to copy the work of your teachers. And to copy the things in the museums, the old things, to figure out how they were made. Bill Reid learned that way, copying Edenshaw's work and others, and a lot of carvers still do that, the good ones. I did that too, to learn, but I never apprenticed to anybody, to learn one person's way completely, like they used to do in the olden days. I
learned a bit from everyone. But even the ones who would apprentice, once they learn that one way, then they have to develop a style of their own too. Not just stay a copier.

Like I have my own style - it's not 'Ksan style, or even really Haida style, it's my own style. And Donnie too, he studied with me and with others, but he has his own style. And Dempsey too - he was one of my students, but he has a very distinct style. Everyone can tell his work. He is trying to follow the old Tlingit style - and so are all his students, his nephews. There's certain things about the way they do things; some I saw in Vancouver, they have really good work on them. I don't know whether sometime when they were up in Alaska or someplace somebody gave them some tips on adzing, because their adzing is different from Dempsey's now.

Dempsey often helps finish off the work of his students, so it will look like what he thinks it should look like, so their stuff looks very much like his. But I think that what he takes as the Tlingit "style," like the wide faces, and the heavy-lidded eyes and big black lips, is just the work of one carver in the past, one person's style, not of all the Tlingit to continue on. But he takes it like a tradition to build on, and so now it is a "style," a Tlingit style that a lot of people are trying to copy. And he is very successful. He's always so busy, I hardly get a chance to see him. But I saw him lately, and he'll be giving me some more wood. Whenever he gets wood, like someone cuts down a tree or something and he thinks I'd like it, he gives me some, so it's nice and fresh and good for carving.
When I was there he was showing me the latest thing he is doing - bronzes, and they're really nice. They get cast by someone else, but he likes to finish them off himself, 'cause he says he thinks it's only right that the real artist actually works on each one. A lot of them don't do that - they make the original one, and then all the bronzes are done by helpers. Dempsey was real surprised when I told him I had done a bronze mask once - but I never did finish it off. It's around here someplace, and maybe now they're so popular, I'll get it out and finish it. It is quite an interesting one - but it's so heavy!

When I first started with Ksan I was still living in Cedarvale, where we'd moved in 1966 to have our farm, doing market gardening. And I was driving up to Hazelton. I knew the local people, and about the plans for Ksan - but they were still just plans. Then Polly Sargent asked me to do some work there, that was about 1968. So I took classes when I could, but mostly I worked. It was far to drive from Cedarvale to Hazelton, so once I started working I just stayed there. First I stayed in a room at a little a motel there. Then Polly Sargent said they had a room, a room in their hotel that wasn't used, so I stayed there. I ate in a restaurant in the hotel.

I used to walk down to the buildings, and do carving. The year that Robert Davidson was there, we were able to use the old Hazelton fire hall for carving. And the next spring we were able to use the buildings at Ksan, and they moved his two poles into the end building. In the evenings we would, the carvers, would hang out and carve together, and we'd all learn from each other. They weren't really "classes" then -
I learned some things from them and they learned some things from me. Sometimes it would be dark when I came back. It can get cold in Hazelton in the winter! The little dogs, I'd feel so sorry for them. Their breath would freeze, and they'd look so cold ... and nobody there ever let their dogs in, the dogs had to stay out.

Some people think I taught at 'Ksan, but I never did. I worked there. First, I was hired to help with the setting up of the buildings, with making things to put in the buildings, before 'Ksan started. We started in a little rented building in Old Town. I worked on making rope and hide and bark, and everything they would need to do up the new display houses in 'Ksan. I also bought artifacts if people had things they wanted to sell. And people came in from all over with things for the museum, old things they'd had put away, and I'd see those people. I had the job of interviewing elders to get information to start the dance group, so we would get our stories right, and for learning songs.

Then they had a man that came, and showed us how to make plaster figures. So I learned that from him, and then I took that job over, making plaster figures for display. And that was still in the building downtown. I learned how to cast my own hands and feet, and used them on the statues. And I painted designs on burlap, and made them look like Chilkat blankets. After when we could use the new buildings those mannequins were moved there, to the Pre-Contact building.
Later on we had a sales office there. And we had tours. They'd bring whole busloads of tourists up to Kispiox and some to the Indian villages. That's when I first started being a tour guide and talking, which was really scary at first! I had stage fright, but Mary MacKenzie just pushed the microphone to me and said “You know! You know how, what to say. Just tell 'em!” So that's how I got started. Now I'm not scared to talk, 'cause I had to.

Mary MacKenzie gave me very good training. She was very knowledgeable about “the old ways.” She was a chief in her own right. She had even had trained as a child to be an Indian doctor, but that ended when she had to go away to school. So she had a lot of traditional knowledge, but she was also a modern woman. I learned a lot from Mary MacKenzie.

So I was a tour guide once Ksan started. And then other people came and stayed at Ksan to teach Indian art, and I attended whatever classes were there. So I was doing tour guiding, and working in the store part, and making plaster mannequins to dress up.

One building was to look like “pre-contact,” and another one was “at-contact” with Whites when they had different things. Pre-contact there was no metal, only things made of stone, wood and bone, and bark, roots, and leather - that sort of thing. In the at-contact building there was: button blankets; lots of bent-wood boxes; iron pots; the wash basins that they used to get that were made in China; and they had some other tools that they could buy then.
I worked at Ksan about 5 years, all told, at the beginning, but not full time 'cause I was also doing teaching and my own carving too. I started before Ksan opened, and then towards the last I was hired to do designs for button blankets, and that's when I went on the tour. Then they brought me back for a little while too to re-do the statues to make them look a little better, because they were starting to get a little dusty, and the paint wearing off and stuff. They got grants several times, and they'd bring me back.

We did a lot of studying and interviewing for the "Pre-Contact" and "At-Contact" ones. Then, the people from the coast started trading furs for goods with the Gitksan people, so they had these goods that came from the sailing ships - iron pots, and wash basins, and for potlatches they had sacks of sugar and flour and dishes and different kinds of things. And a lot of blankets. They used to use blankets for money - they called one blanket like a dollar. At first their money used to be groundhog skins, because they used to make blankets from groundhog skins. They called the first dollar bills "GWEK", they named their dollar after groundhog skins.

They had the official opening for Ksan in 1970, and a big celebration. And the poles were raised, and as carvers we danced around the pole. Once Ksan Village opened up they used to have busloads of tourists coming through. They wanted some silkscreens, so I did some screens for the opening of Ksan, around 1970, and in 1971. We started a dance group too, with elders and kids also. Then the dance troupe needed costumes, so I painted designs on burlap and on leather shifts.
for dance troupe, and designed button blankets, although the sewing
was done by others.

The only time I sewed a button blanket was for that “Robes of Power”
show. I designed that blanket, and my Mom’s too, and helped sew on it
all those buttons, real pearl - real abalone, that I’d collect from all the
old shops whenever I found them. ‘Cause it’s hard to find them now,
there’s mostly plastic. And I tried making some, but that abalone dust
is bad for your lungs - toxic even. So I just buy them now. See -
sometimes it’s good that I save all this stuff! But the ones at ’Ksan, the
blankets, I just did the designs on those.

With the dance group, we learned songs and dances; they even hired a
guy from Ketchikan Alaska to come and teach dance, so most of the
dances that were done were from the North, although there was a
Tsimshian dance and there was a Haida song we used too. The songs
came from a lady who was a Wolf crest person. She was brought up in
the North, actually brought up on the trapline, but she must have had
a good memory. She knew so many songs and taught us so many
songs. Her name was Mary Blackwater. I was in charge of the
practices for the dance group. It was fun in those times. Actually now
when there are no elders working with the dance troupe it’s not as
interesting as it used to be when there were elders.

I was part of the show “Ksan: Breath of Our Grandfathers” that
travelled all around. They made a book about it, and I’m in there; I’m
the model for ‘The Weaver,” making the Chilkat blanket, although they
don't name me there. And they took the picture from behind so you can't tell. The National Film Board made a movie of it too, when we were on stage at the National Arts Centre. When the group in the show went to Ottawa [1972] we went by train. It took 4 days to go by train, but we took all kinds of Indian food and everything, because we put on a potlatch in the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

We performed on the stage, and I think it was pretty new then too - the building wasn't very old. I wore a Beaver mask. It was kind of hard to see out of the mask but it was the "Dance of the Animals" or the "Feast of the Animals" and we all wore masks. I had a beaver fur cloak, and there were all kinds of birds and animals. We had to run off the stage into corners, and it was kind of difficult wearing a mask! But we performed for a couple of days there, and then the National Museum paid our way to go to New York.

They let us in the Museum's storage rooms in Ottawa; we looked at all the old carvings in there. They showed us some of the movies that Marius Barbeau did of the old people singing. Then we went to New York, and we went to Washington, D.C. and then they let us look at old things to give us ideas for carvings and things, to see the originals. Then we went to Seattle. There was a whole troupe of us from young kids to really old people up to 80 years old. It was a really fun trip. And the guys - I still have a tape of some of the older men. They were singing Gitksan party songs. Everybody travelling all together, they seemed to really enjoy it.
There were some funny incidents. Like this one guy, Ernie Hysims. We were going to the restaurant, and one time he would order a hamburger, and the next time he would order, like, Swiss steak, and it was hamburger; and the next time he would order something else and it was hamburger. It all had different names, but it was all hamburger. He wanted a steak but all he was getting was hamburger!

With the kids in Ottawa, the kids would be running in the halls at night, making noises like loons, in the hotel. I think we were in, let's see, it was named after some person, right near the Parliament Buildings. The Lord Elgin hotel! We all stayed in that hotel. It was quite an interesting trip.

Then we went to New York, and we stayed in this old hotel, right near the United Nations. The room that we had was steam heated, and there was steam coming out in the bathroom, and it was just like a steambath! It was really old and scary, and this lady, I guess she figured we were really backwards, she lined us up like a bunch of kindergarten kids and told us to make sure our door was locked, and not to open the door to anybody. And we were really scared, you know, 'cause we'd heard how bad New York was. Then she told us "Don't go out by yourselves!" But I had to go out, I just couldn't keep myself in there; I just had to go. Then I met another of our group out there too, by herself, and we wandered around. But it was kind of scary, because there were people looking in the garbage and stuff on the street, and we went down into a subway thing, where there were like shops, but we didn't stay very long because it was scary.
The night we landed in New York was really stormy, like a little hurricane - it was really raining. And it was bumpy on the plane coming down. And then we met that James Houston, who wrote that book - actually he's written more than one, on Eskimos and others - I can't remember the names. He had to do with getting the Eskimo art going. He knew we were coming there, and he took us for tea. It was really interesting. He was living on the Charlottes the last I heard, writing children's books I think.

When I was at 'Ksan was when I first met Polly Sargent from Hazelton. Polly Sargent gathered information over many years. She got a computer early and put a lot on that. Then she worked with her daughter, too, and there was somebody else that she gave information to. She was writing a book, but I don't think she ever published it.

I think she was probably a little nervous about it, because when you get information from people it's not always the same, and you find out that, what one person tells you, somebody else hears it and says "Oh, that's wrong!" And I think that she might have thought that the Native people were all going to say "That's wrong." But she'd get information from one person, and then when that person died she'd get information from some other person and they may be sort of separated, in a way, in what they know.

But once when they were doing recordings of myths and stories and that, she didn't really use all of those that were gotten from the people going out and recording. She sort of went more with ones that were
like those that were already written. But theirs were different. And that
may be the reason why, when people are studying things, they're just
continually re-writing the old stuff. They're afraid of something that's
a little different.

Polly did have access to a lot of original stories, but they may be a
little different from one place to another. But a lot of the stories in
books that you get are pretty close to the ones that had already been
written by other people. But I heard some of the originals, and saw
some of the original transcripts, and they were different - but they
were interesting.

I've heard lots of versions from the real ... from the people themselves.
But, like, even Don, he'd believe what Bill Reid said. But Bill Reid
wasn't always, well, you know, because he kind of made it to his way
of thinking too. But a lot of things I heard right from the people. It
may have changed from a hundred years ago, but even so they were
interesting stories. They tell you lots about the ways of the people.

Like some of the ones that William Beynon wrote down: the stories are
interesting, but it tells you lots about the way the culture was, and the
other beliefs. Just in reading those stories you can tell the reason
why they told those stories. And some of it is about not
discriminating. There's a lot of that. A lot of the stories are about a
person who's been kicked out or something, and made good. After, he
became a chief because he saved the people from hunger, but in the
first place his uncle had kicked him out for some reason or other.
There's quite a few like that. And also a lot of the ones about what women know and what women do, I found in those myths. A lot of people don't believe that, but it's not just written wrong. In a lot of the stories the grandmother is the sort of hero. There's one that I like too, about this young boy that was kind of kicked out of the village because he did something that annoyed the chief. But an old lady, a grandmother, went out with him, kind of to look after him, and the grandmother showed him how to make and to do everything! His grandmother taught him how to build a bear trap and he caught a whole lot of bears. And other things she showed him - making things, carving things, and putting up buildings and making the smokehouses - how to do everything. The boy was taught by the grandmother, because she was the only one there to show him all that. So he became a really self-sufficient, smart hunter and provider. And he ended up becoming in their way rich, because they got so much food, and they built store houses, and had skins and things. And then later on when they found them, he had all of these provisions, and he ended up providing for the whole village. But even though he had been kicked out of the village for doing something wrong, he ended up being a chief afterwards. But it was his grandmother's teachings where he learned to do all those things, because he was too young.

When I write my dissertation, I'm going to gather up all those stories and publish them, so people will know! And now whenever I find anything about women in these old books, I underline it. That's what I like about this book [holding up Swanton's 1905 publication] - he has a lot of good information, and a lot of these things I had heard before
too. Granny, and even Mom, knew a lot of the people he talked to, and
the ones Stearns would have talked to too. Just like Mom knew a lot of
the people Barbeau talked to, and she met Barbeau when he was out
here. And I knew most of the ones that Boelscher mentions - I was out
there interviewing the elders myself then, just before she did, but I
never met her.

So I know the stories and the people, and whether these books got it
right. And Swanton has a lot of information about my family, and
also for those days he mentions men and women, and not just men.
People are always asking me about the women - like as if the women
never did anything important!

In those days everyone was self-sufficient, because if you couldn't
provide for yourself you starved. If you were out by yourself, you'd
snare rabbits, or you'd get bark off willow trees, or maple, or
something to make string and baskets out of - everybody knew how to
do stuff. If they didn't they just died. So kids, they didn't discipline,
they just watched and played. But as soon as they got to about 12, the
girls and the boys got down to serious learning. The girls would learn
basketry and twine making and the things that they needed best to
survive, and the boys would be learning different things - how to hunt
and fish and provide. When people have to do things for survival, they
all have to learn that when they're young.

Through 'Ksan, we used to have fish traps, berry drying racks and
stuff, and we had to talk about it all, because people were going
through. We talked about weaving, and one of the statues was about making a basket, and there was a medicine man performing over a patient, and his helpers around; there was a chief and his wife dressed up in furs; all that stuff. So we used to go out and interview old people, and find out about how things used to be done, and the meaning of the totem poles, and the stories on the poles, from whoever knew anything.

Then part of our show early on was a medicine man's performance: there was a patient, two medicine women and a medicine man, and there were the helpers that were the drummers and singers. But after awhile they didn't do that. I don't know if it had to do with some of them who were worried about people thinking that it made them look too heathen, and they were Christians. I know there was this one old lady, I can't remember if it was at the first one or the second one, she insisted that we sing "Amazing Grace" at the Indian show, to make sure that they knew that we knew that everybody was Christians and weren't really still heathens!

But to my way of thinking it was one type of show, and that was kind of an unexpected thing for the audience. Something like with our concert for "The Sweet Adelines." We had this little act in our concert, and we sang a bunch of Negro spirituals, because they're really good for singing. And then to make it all fit in with the spirituals, we had this actor play this preacher, "Reverend Faker" or something, and it was really almost like making fun of the church! And this one girl who goes to the Baptist church said "I think that some of those people who
were at the show were a little bit insulted!" Because he was acting like an Evangelist, and saying things about the collection, and saying things like he had to buy this new car or something - like making fun of those Evangelists that got themselves in trouble. But anyway, it worked with our songs! In a way it kind of reminds me of them insisting that we sing hymns at our Indian show - especially after having the Medicine man show. It would scare all those people who figured they'd really changed everybody and then - the Medicine man's show!

Some of the really strong church people, I think they were really quite worried when we started having the revival of Indian art and stuff. I remember one time I went to the Girl Guides, tied to this church group, and this Bishop was there, and you could almost tell that because he knew I worked at 'Ksan he thought I was boosting them somehow. I learned at 'Ksan to talk about how the people were so self-sufficient, and they could do this and do that for themselves, and were smart even without anything. Like, they met all their own needs in their society. And then I just had this feeling that the Bishop wasn't too thrilled about what I was saying to these kids. He figured "There's a real heathen amongst us!"

There were a lot of really religious people in this area - Pentacostals, and Born-Againers, and some of the most old-fashioned, although I really like a lot of them, are in the Dutch Reform Church. They are still convinced that graven images are a real sin. But they're not meant to be graven images, but they're still going by the old missionaries' ways
of talking. But what we do is just for art's sake, we're not worshipping them! But some people still have that idea.

Every culture in the world has their own art. Some of it is strictly religious, and others, it's just for art's sake. Especially nowadays, there's not much that isn't just plain art. Except in Russia where they make these pictures - big holy pictures, icons they call it - and now there are people who are just painting icons just to make money, and it's not that they are religious, or that they have a religious meaning, it's just a way to make money because people will buy them. I met a lady whose sister lived in New York and painted icons and was selling them - not because it's something that's old, but there is a market for it so they're doing it. Anything that there's a market for, people are going to do it.

Then there were some religious groups that were trying to make the Indians think that there was something wrong with selling masks and selling carvings in a market way - that they should be sacred. But they never were sacred! Carvings were a prestigious thing, they weren't meant to be sacred. Maybe those Iroquois ones that were carved on a living tree, they might have been. But not Haida or Tsimshian - masks were not considered a sacred carving - they were entertainment things and showpieces.

Except for some people in life, like Indian doctors and that, who were supposed to have power in their life, they were very cautious about handling their possessions, because they figured that their spirit was
hanging around these things and might reappear. So sometimes those things were burned. And then in one way they said that if you took those things and put them in water, like in running streams, for a certain length of time that eventually you could keep it after; that it took that away, and it would kind of cleanse them of that lingering of that power that the previous owner had. When I was up in Hazelton, that lady I worked with, she told me don't be scared of them, but if you just feel respect for them then that's alright. Because if you don't think of them with the respect, you know, you might get scared. It was like an animal senses your feelings - the ghost must too. 'Cause I was always interested in the things, you know, anything that was made by somebody's hands, that they would know my feelings of respect for it, anything that was created by hand. 'Cause this lady that I worked with, she said that she would talk to them, in their language, like, with respect to them. But it was just like the Indians in the old days when they used to take the bark off the trees, they'd talk to the spirit of the tree, explain to it what you're doing and why you need it.

Some other things that they thought were sacred were things like they climbed up in a mountain and in a cave they found crystals - something like that they thought was really a magic thing or a sacred thing. But the carvings were done - they were hired to do it, and they were the best or the most known. Most usually paid for it in goods at first and later paid in money to the carvers. They were hired to go long distance if they were renowned as a carver. They were well paid before modern times.
Even the GITSONTK, they were a carving society, but the people who hired them didn't want everybody to know what was being carved. Otherwise somebody would try to copy what they were doing. So the carving was done in secret, and just brought out at a potlatch as a surprise. The main thing was either shock value or the surprise element, and the whole performance was who could make the biggest surprise and the world's most marvellous things. To make a reputation.

That was how a chief got his reputation. And if they hired someone to carve something, they didn't want everyone to know until the time to let it all out. It was a competition for the best, and it had to be done in secret. So they would almost have spies out to see what the other one was doing, to do the next guy better. It was like politics, or industrial espionage. The potlatches were trying to outdo each other all the time, and they didn't want everybody to know what they're doing, how good what they're doing was. So they would hire somebody to do this thing, to be kept under guard so people wouldn't know what it was going to look like.

And women would do that too, not just the men. They took advantage of all the talent they had. You see that especially among the Haida. If you read the old writings by the ones who saw them in the early days, the first sailors that came, they say you can see how strong willed the Haida women were, and how sometimes they would practically brow-beat the men to get their way on what was bought or what was traded. They had to have their way in what they got for trade, things
they could use. 'Cause the first things they got were blades, and after that they got a few blankets, the first time. But after that they didn't want blades anymore, because the women wanted stuff that they could use to make the blankets for ceremonial stuff, so they wanted the buttons and some fancy things that they could use. So the first sailors were kind of upset, 'cause they brought a bunch more blades, and the women didn't want them! They wanted some blankets instead! They had in their mind all the time with whatever they were buying what they were going to do with this to make it better than the next guy's, and to make some fabulous thing.

And the Haida used to go to distant places and get sea shells to decorate things with. They used to travel long distances to get different kinds of shells, and beads and things like that. The women who were probably doing most of the work with this to make things better and more spectacular and a better show, they would get upset with the men if they only wanted to trade for tools and things like that. They wanted what would be the best thing to make a good potlatch, maybe for their son who would be coming up. They were always planning in advance; right from the time a child was born they would figure who this child was going to marry, who was going to make him a great chief. They always had these things in their minds, right from the old women. They actually were planning the society more than the men were. This fellow, one of my Mom's relatives in Skidegate, he talks about his upbringing, and he said that he was taught by his uncle's wife, his uncle's wife was really strict to make him learn everything he would need to know when he was a chief. He said he was just like a
slave to his uncle's wife! She was going to make a good, strong man out of him!

I did most of my teaching in Prince Rupert. When I moved to Rupert they were building the new hospital and they wanted a panel. It's the first big thing that I did. Its 4.4' x 9' panels or by 10' - it goes from floor to ceiling, and it's a high ceiling in the hospital. So I designed the panel and then had a helper, Harvey Robinson, and we did this panel in red cedar for the entrance to the new hospital in Prince Rupert. I did a model first of the designs - four Tsimshian crests. They are all Tsimshian designs- Raven, Killerwhale, Eagle, and Wolf. Then I did the big one, and I had a helper for that. I was back working at 'Ksan then, so I travelled back and forth to Prince Rupert and 'Ksan while doing that. I'd go down to Rupert and see what needed to be done, do some more work on it, and then leave more instructions with Harvey Robinson on what to do next. Then I'd go back to 'Ksan and work there, then back to Rupert the next week and do more! That was the year before the hospital opened - I remember the Queen came to open the hospital.

Usually panels are not carved on the wall, they are carved and then hung on the wall. When I designed this panel, I had to get right on top of it - climb right on top of it. Then with this one, we drew the final design on the wall, then carved it. That hospital panel wasn't painted, it was carved and stained. Like, the design I did on the Kitsumkalum house front, it was painted from scaffolding - but house fronts aren't carved, just painted.
What I do for panels and such, is draw out the original design freehand on paper, and then attach it to the wooden panel. I do the design freehand first, on paper, and I change it as I go. I don't do it on the wood, 'cause I'm usually inventing it as I go! It's not perfect, 'cause I only need it as a plan. To transfer it, sometimes I just put the pencil drawing face-down on the wood and rub - that transfers the lines from the paper to the wood. And then just draw over them, so they're easier to see. That way, the wood stays clean. Other times, I cut pieces out of the paper design, and draw around it on the wood - use it like a pattern. That way I can improve my ovoids by making both sides even. I don't worry about my original design on the paper, cutting it up, 'cause I'm not going to be using it for anything else later.

Ones that I always use patterns for are boxes, 'cause when you make a design on a box you want all your ovoids to be exact. There still are in existence patterns from a long time ago. Northwest Coast Art, it's not the same as free-form art. With Northwest Coast art, you form the designs by putting together shapes; we use mainly ovoid shapes and U-form shapes. The outside line is called the "formline" - it is supposed to touch everywhere - there is nothing just floating. The only thing that is floating is eyeballs, or other decorations that are meant to be fillers. They sometimes look like eyes, but they're not necessarily - they are just conforming to the ovoid/U-form way of making the eyes. Some people think that they all mean eyes, but they don't all mean that. They're conforming to the style of the design. And this design is the same, usually follows the same rules, except for some areas have little differences. But all NWC design basically follows the same rules, with
ovoids and U-forms, put together to form the design. And the formline is going around the whole design and is part of the design. Whenever the formline is painted in like a deep space, then you use circles or ovoids to relieve the space. Some people who don't know the rules of the art, they tend to focus on these fillers, and the places where the lines join, the shapes they make, and so they draw them and don't pay attention to the real design, the formline. Like Bill Holm called them the "doughnut holes" 'cause people see the "holes" and pay attention to the shape of the "holes," but what they should be paying attention to is the doughnut! So I tell my students about the "doughnut holes," so they remember.

When I start a design, I don't have any great plan, I just kind of have it in my head what I want to do - like an Eagle, it has to be made of ovoids and U-forms and I'm not really thinking, 'cause I don't build it, I build its pieces. I started the Eagle from the stomach and then the tail and the foot, and then even the empty spaces have to look like the rest. Like the secondary spaces have to conform to the looks for the whole thing - so negative spaces conform to the positive spaces. And I do the head separate because the head is just one head, while the body is symmetrical on both sides, so I can just do one half and then double it.

Once I make the original design, I may have to adjust it, to make it fit right into the space, especially if I have to leave room for a frame. I do design that fills up the whole thing. Some beginners, they can trace but they don't know when to adjust. So that's where you have those ones
who haven't learned anything - their tracings keep getting worse and worse and worse. Because they haven't learned to do their own design

That's what happened to the art after awhile, 'cause everyone was just tracing, and the art just kept getting worse. And at the time it was changing; possibly some of the ways where only families passed it on to their families, that might have been part of the reason why some people don't encourage individuality. Because they think it's not fair to the ones whose families couldn't pass it on in their family. So there's all kinds of ideas.

Like there's this one lady from UBC who wanted to talk to me. I'd talked to her on the phone, and so she said she expected to meet a grey-haired old lady. So I told her I am an old lady, but not grey-haired! We were talking about my carving of the Eagle panel and she said, "Oh, you're working on a political thing." I said, "Well, I'm only an artist, I'm not political." And she said, "Oh, artists are political!" But I've always tried to not be political, because being political means always being where you're arguing with somebody. I don't like arguing with people. I want people to just do it yourself. Do it your own wrong way if you like! No one can say the difference, 'cause you're the artist, so who are they to be telling you not to do things like that!

I make up my design as I go along, so it's not like anybody else's. But I know the rules, so it will be authentic according to Northwest Coast - Haida, Tsimshian, Tlingit. Different artists have different ideas: that's
your difference. It's not like, that a way of doing things is wrong, it's just that individuals are different! You can't put it down to "the law" - the law is ovoids and U-forms; aside from that each person makes them slightly different, and puts them together in different ways. The way I do it is not necessarily the way any other artist would do it either. 'Cause a person who is really perfectionist, and wants them to do exactly like their teacher, then you might have a student who would do exactly like you, but I've never had a student do that. I've taught classes, but I've never had an apprentice, really.

Even Don, I would just get him started on something, then he'd watch me, what I was doing, and then he'd do it a little different. And then he had lots of other people who he watched; he worked with the Hunts and John Livingston, and so his style is not like mine. Because he had other people that he saw how they did things too; he just started with me. His style has a little more boldness, more of the Kwagulth, 'cause he did work with them, but then he came back more to Haida. So he is Haida, but he is also so individual. He deliberately tries to be different, but because he never knew any of his other ancestors or anyone, because his name is an ancestor that even his father didn't know, Scottish or something. 'Cause the name "Yeomans" came from a Scottish sailor or prospector or whoever - we don't know, outside of he was a white person of Scottish heritage. Because the first ones who came over, they didn't necessarily care about their children here, and often they had a wife somewhere else!
One of the rules is, when you put the eye in the head, the real eye of the design, the eye has to go closer to the top, not the bottom. Some people put it closer to the bottom, but it's not right. Just some people who are doing the art but they don't know what they're doing. The rules are not complicated, they're quite simple. And they make sense. But nobody has told them, or they don't remember what they're told, and they'll be doing it wrong. When they're students, the white kids remember, but the Native kids don't. I shouldn't say it but too many of them are fetal alcohol syndrome, 'cause their parents thought if the white people can drink, so can we. And then they get hooked. It became a status symbol as soon as the Indians got into bars. "Now we're equal! Yahoo!" Just like kids when they hit the drinking age. It's just like that - they were treated just like children, so then when the law changed, they said, "Yeah, now we can drink!" - and they did. And now, their kids can't learn. I can talk - I never had kids, so I never had to worry about that!

It is still a serious problem. And there is now a generation of Indian kids that can't learn, it's not a fault of their own. Like they wanted me to go and give them some Indian art at the Kermode Friendship Centre in Terrace. But I went there and I could tell, "These kids aren't going to learn anything." They just go there to have free hot chocolate. And if you give them the course, they'll want to let them try the tools. But they just want to play with the tools. The only reason they were going there was to fool around and have the free hot chocolate - that was their reason to go there. So I knew that they're not going to do anything. So I just put designs on potatoes - no, turnips - I just sliced up turnips and they carved on that, to make stamps. We did that in
kindergarten, with potatoes, but turnips are bigger, so I used turnips. These kids were around 15 or so, but you could tell right away that those kids aren't going to have the discipline to do art work! These are the ones who go around and break the trees down that were planted, 'cause they all know to do that. Even if their parents straighten up they give up on the kids, 'cause the kids can't learn.

'Cause after the war, the people who'd been in the army they were allowed to drink. So that made it even worse, 'cause they had their status above the others. So then they all wanted to drink like that. But it's the mother's drinking they say that causes the problem, I don't think it's the father's drinking. But I just wonder about that, if that makes a difference too, 'cause the mothers were getting that, and also cigarette smoking, so the kids were getting that too. So a lot of the kids are hyperactive. Like my cousin's kids are all hyperactive. They were going to get them baptised, and their grandmother says they'll have to get them exorcised first! But I think its just the Catholics who do exorcisms, not the Protestants!

People ask me how I stay spry, and if I tell them, and if they have bad habits, then they think I'm criticising them, when I'm not. I read these psychology books, and they say that if you don't say anything to people then you're "an enabler." So then I thought, well maybe I should say something. But then I found out that if you say something, even a little thing, they just get mad at you!
Now so many Indians are dying of cancer, it has to have something to do with the habits too. They seem to be dying right and left. And the thing is they all smoke, they all abuse themselves, and they’re eating a lot of smoked fish. The old way of doing it was a lot healthier than the new way. They’ve sort of adopted the white way of doing it, where there’s a lot of salt and sugar and even chemicals. And long ago they didn’t use extras. It was just mostly dried fish, just dried and smoked and nothing else. But now they have a taste for sugar, so they’re smoking their stuff more and putting lots of salt and sugar and stuff in it. I went to a social, and they had chowder. I had some, and it had sugar in it! I was so surprised and disappointed - sugar in a chowder! But I guess there are people who are so used to it they just want it in everything, even regular food. The diets - even up with the Inuits, as soon as the stores come, then everyone goes for the sugar and tobacco and alcohol.

Sugar is one thing that I can get into. I've gained weight lately - and I’m usually so careful with my diet, 'cause I was fat for awhile when I was younger, and I didn’t like how I looked at all! And also I like to stay healthy. But I started with Halloween candies, then when Christmas came I ate candies and cookies then, and then there was Easter, and those hollow chocolate Easter bunnies that I really like. So Brenda got me some - and she said, “Oh well, it’s better for people who are older to have a bit of weight on them, or you’ll blow away!” I remember my Mom, she used to be fat and she ended up being really small.
The Spirit Wrestler Gallery [in Vancouver] is asking me for another rattle. Lots of people wanted the one that man bought in the show. But that took a long time - it was four years before I finished that rattle! Galleries really like it when they can get an artist to do “production on demand” like that for their private clients - they already know what they want, and that it will sell. And the artist knows that the piece will sell too, there’s no speculation involved and no risk. So some carvers like to get a reputation for being dependable like that for the galleries. The gallery owners, because a lot of them have taken courses in art, even Bill Holms’ courses and that, they’re inclined to really think of the best as those people who are doing things in what’s considered the proper way. I don’t like to do that kind of “production” work for galleries any more - now I just do what I want to. Most artists are like that - they want to sell only when they’ve already finished, whatever they have, and they want to do only what they want. But I used to be that kind of artist - I would do what they asked me to.

If an artist wants to get known, it’s not good to do work for private clients of galleries. To get a reputation as a carver, you need to get your things out there in the public eye, through shows and catalogues. Otherwise only the people who run the galleries and their best clients will know of you, when you want lots of people from all over to see your work and hear about you. Ksan did that for me - in a way. I did a lot of things for Ksan, so a lot of people got to see my work. But I did a lot of design work for them, for blankets and other things, and I never put my name on it. So they have a lot of my work, but only a
few old-timers there would even know that I was the artist who designed it!

In my early days in Prince Rupert, I was asked to work on a totem pole—it’s still in Prince Rupert. There’s a picture in Ulli Steltzer’s book of me working on that pole. Norman Tait’s dad, Josiah Tait, he and I did one totem pole in Prince Rupert, a reproduction pole for the museum there, in 1974. He worked on the top part, and I did the bottom and we both worked on the central figure. Some places it says I was his student then, but that’s not right—we were just both working together on the same pole, but he did his part his own way, and so did I.

Back then, in the late 60s, early 70s, I taught for a few years in Rupert, just in winters, teaching both adults and children—kids one night, adults the next. I usually like to teach design first, and then carving, ‘cause, like, if it’s Northwest Coast art you really have to learn the rules of the design, that’s the most important. So we’d start with simple forms, simple designs that I made, and from Bill Holms’ book, and I always bring things for them to look at. And then, once they can design some, then you learn how to use the tools. For most of my classes, like in Kitsumkalum and Alaska, they’ve been able to get grants and I’ve bought the knives and brought them in. I don’t usually teach people to make their own tools.

Back then, in Prince Rupert, that’s when a lot of the artists who are carving now came to my classes—like Donny Yeomans started, he
was only 11 years old, and the Adkins boys were only about 10. Rick was older but Alvin was only about 10 years old - they were all in the kids' classes. There were a lot of kids. Sometimes now people will say they studied with me, and I can't remember, and it must be that they were in those kids classes. For the older ones, there was Jerry Marks who came, and Norman Tait, and Dempsey Bob. Victor Reese, he didn't come, after he went to 'Ksan, but his brother came.

There were a lot of girls in those classes too, but the girls never really got known like the guys did. The work of some of the girls was really good too, and some of them did sell things for awhile, and some still do. But it's different for the girls - their circumstances are different. Even with the classes in Kitsumkalum - they were mostly women and some of them were very good, better than the guys. But the thing is, up north, they can work in the canneries or do something else, so they have jobs. And they have families, so there's always work there, and less time. The ones with kids, it's hard for them to raise little kids and carve too.

And at the same time that I was teaching the courses, they were able to get on these education upgrading courses and things. All these things just became available at the same time. So some of the ones who were really good carvers, well, they were also really good at other things, so they continued their education and got really good jobs - regular pay, benefits, all those things. Several are still interested in carving, but because, right now, they're just not able to do it. And most of them didn't sell their carvings either - they liked them so much they just
kept them for themselves! So they didn’t get well known as carvers - but I thought they were good.

One of the best carvers was Dorothy Horner. And her son Vernon Horner took the course at Kitsumkalum with her, so they both carved together, which was really nice. They were two of the ones who worked on the totem poles for Kalum and Terrace. Also there was Annette Bolton, who still carves, but does more beading and basketry. And Rena Bolton, who is Salish herself; she was married to the chief Cliff Bolton and she is really well known now as a basket weaver.60 He was the “elected chief,” but he was also the chief too. Vickey Roberts was another one who took classes and worked on the poles. Sandra Wesley - she is from the Nass River, married to a Kitsumkalum man - was there too. She still carves now, carvings for her uncles that are worn at potlatches. Sandra had little kids, and they would watch her carve - which is good, the way it used to be. I made a mask while I was there, as part of the class. It was a transformation mask: “Daughter of the Killerwhale,” which was my grandmother’s name, and a Raven (which was Granny’s father’s clan).

The classes at Kitsumkalum would go all day long, 5 days a week. And so it wasn’t the same ones who could come every year, ‘cause some had other jobs and couldn’t come back. And they never cared about being great carvers - they mostly wanted things for their village. But those Kitsumkalum people did some really interesting things. One thing that maybe not too many people see now, I don’t know if it’s still
there, it the big panel they carved. It was 10 feet tall, of a Whale and a Thunderbird on top.

They got a grant, so we were able to do the totem poles there - Vicky, Dorothy Horner and her son, Annette, and Mildred Roberts. There had been at the classes before, and then the poles. They were just beginners, really, so we tried to keep the designs like, something simple that they can do. There was one that was like a reproduction pole, with the “bear mother” story. And the other one was just a made-up design; it had the crest animals there for each of the different clans in the village. And a robin on top, ‘cause the Kitsumkalum are the GILA QUOXEX “People of the Robin.”

Those totem poles - there were three of them, the two that stayed in the village, and another one - also with the robin on the top, for the city of Terrace (it’s down there by the police station). And it was important to the village to be able to make their own. There was a big deal there when the poles were raised, ‘cause they said it was the first pole raising there in 150 years. That was in August, 1987, and the poles had been carved that winter. Clifford Bolton was chief then, and there were lots of visitors, some say over 2000 people, and there was a big feast. We raised the poles in the old-style, using ropes, braces and poles. Victor Reece from Hartley Bay was the one who raised the poles. We wanted to do it all the right way. There were articles and pictures in the papers and all. I still have some clippings, and some of my own pictures. There were songs and dances of course; we had on our blankets, those button blankets with the crests. And then when the
poles were up the ones who were the carvers, we did the dance around
the poles. It was quite a do for the village. And they made a video, and
I have that too.

Like, you can’t teach beginners a whole design course in just a few
lessons, and it’s just like that with tourists. When they got to look at
the totem poles at Kitsumkalum this one tourist lady said "Well, how
come it’s so messy?" Well! I didn’t even say, because I don’t want to
say about it, "but it’s not done by Bill Reid and Robert Davidson, it
happened to be done by first time carvers, six of them!" And I still
think it looks similar to the poles up in the villages! But some people
expect that, like, everything’s got to be the very best, and … but I think
she was just somebody who just liked to raise a little disturbance, just
to see what I’d say. I didn’t say anything. Because it would be like, it
wasn’t to sell to a millionaire, it was for the village to have their own
totem pole in their own place and it was done by their own folk. And I
was proud to help them to do it. And they didn’t have to pay a
million dollars to have Bill Reid or Robert Davidson come and do it -
they did it their own selves, with a little help from me. My Mom was
proud of me for helping to teach them. She saw the video and she saw
a Haida name in there for someone who was, like a foreman or a boss
or something like that.

And then, besides teaching the classes at Kitsumkalum, and helping
them do the totem poles, I painted the mural on the outside of the
building. I drew the design out on paper to the right size on the floor;
in the basement at the centre, and then transferred it piece by piece to
the building front. I did the top piece first, and then down, standing on a scaffold. But I was never paid for it. The year before I was getting paid wages, and I designed it in the basement then; but I should have been paid more, because it was dangerous. I had to use scaffolds and everything, and there was no insurance! And then I didn't get paid for it either!

The lady that was in charge there at the time, she wanted to make sure she got as much as possible out of the money. She was trying to save money for the band, so she didn't want to pay more. But they weren't paying the wages either, 'cause it was a grant. It was all grant money. But any political people they want to have lots to say "Well, this was done during my time." That was when the grants were more easily available. Now that they handle their own, they're stingier with what money they give out. And also the guys want more. Because its wasting their time, and they could make a lot more just by carving. And they don't want to take a lot of time teaching their competitors!

After, I taught in Alaska. I have relatives in Ketchikan Alaska, Auntie Selina's daughter Delores and Delores' daughter Holly. My cousin there, Delores Churchill, she is really a Masset woman but she married in Alaska. Her brother is Victor Adams, who still lives in Masset, and is married to Robert's Aunt Primrose, Florence Davidson's daughter. Delores and her daughter were teaching basket weaving. They had just opened this Totem Heritage Centre in Ketchikan. They had heard I was teaching in Rupert so she asked me to come there. So I taught there from the '70s, it must have been 15 years that I went there, from
the 70s through to the 90s. But it was only for 2 weeks a year - I'd teach for 60 hours a year. I'd stay with Auntie Selina, Delores and Holly while I was there. I carved a pole while I was there too, which is outside the Centre now - the Killerwhale pole. It is a small pole, just the one figure, and it wasn't paid for, it was done in the classes.

I was back at Nathan Jackson's totem pole raising in Ketchikan, and got to see a lot of old friends and students and other carvers at the dinner. And I got invited to teach at Sitka this winter. In Alaska, anyone who was interested could take those classes - you didn't have to be of Indian heritage. So there were some white people too. And it will be the same in Sitka, teaching for the University of Alaska. They have a law that you have to let anyone take those classes, you can't have only Indians like they did at Ksan.

In teaching people to carve, the hard thing for them to remember is what comes out and what stays. When I'm teaching I put in little "V" marks where it will be cut. For drawing it's o.k., but for carving, like for the eye, it has to be scooped out around it, so you need to put in a double line, so you will have a line left - a raised line. The grains of the wood catch the pencil or the knife, so you have to be careful when you're carving. And some are harder.

One of the things that Robert Davidson does, at least in some of the pictures I have, is he makes these ovoids so that there's really a narrow space between the eyelid and the iris or eyeball. But for
carving he makes them wider. I've always thought that maybe because I carved things first it seemed easier to have a wider space.

I don't have to paint first 'cause I've done lots of design and painting and carving and I know what it is - and a lot of things I don't paint at all, just stain them or wax them. But you have to know where the paint should go. Even though it's not painted you still need to know where the paint should go so that you don't get things mixed up. So when I was teaching I always painted everything. Otherwise they'll end up carving out something that shouldn't be carved out. Quite often people carve the eyeballs part out you know - so if it's painted then you know you don't carve what's painted. So you have to paint it first.

Like that panel we did down at Kitsumkalum, it was part of the student's project, and so I worked on it with students. And so we painted the design on, and then carved it. They kept it - that panel is still there. And I have some smaller panels that are painted. They're in Rupert right now. Some of those ones I take to the schools when I go; I'm not going to sell them.

Both Granny and my Mom got their Indian names when they were little, but I didn't get my first Indian name, SKILQUEWAT, until I was an adult - it wasn't official until it was announced by the father of the present chief in a naming ceremony at Robert Davidson's potlatch in Masset. SKILQUEWAT means "On the trail of Property Woman." and it was William Russ who gave me that name at the potlatch. Actually,
they gave me that name before, then they took it away and gave it to my aunt. My Mom said they gave this particular name to her when she was just a kid, and then Auntie Nellie forgot, but she had also been given that name, 'cause when Mom had moved away Uncle Willie, Chief WEAH, gave it to her. So then one of my uncles said, oh, they'd give me another name and give that name to my aunt. He gave me another name that has to do with a whale, KANT-WUS "the trail the whale makes as it goes through the water." Both names are about a trail - one on water, one on land. And my Grandmother's name was "Daughter of the Killerwhale." Then after Auntie Nellie died I got it back again. - SKILQUEWAT. Chief WEAH said I should have that name again, and it was announced by Willie Russ.

I have another name too - WEGUEDAAST. It means "Greatest Princess." I received this name when I was adopted into the Eagles at Kitwanga in 1968. It was announced at Kitwanga at a feast; I helped at that feast. They are Gitksan people, but related to us in the way that both have Eagle clans, though the Gitksan have the Wolf clan too that can unite with the Eagles if the groups are too small. I have relatives, nephews, who live in Kitwanga now. And before, I lived in Cedarvale and my sister Bobbie lived just down the road from Kitwanga on the farm. Then, the Eagle group there was very small, and they needed more people, so they asked me to join. That was about when I was starting on my carving and my work for Ksan. I was adopted into their Eagle clan and given the name WEGUEDAAST then. I used to take part in their ceremonies as an Eagle, but I don't any more. I don't take
part in any ceremonies any more. I can't afford to do it right, so I won't do it at all.

Kitwanga is where all those totem poles are that Barbeau wrote about, that the railroad moved. That's also where Emily Carr was for awhile, back in the '20s and '30s. Susan Crean was writing about that, and we talked a bit about Emily Carr. I met Susan Crean when I did those three masks for the show; that's when I made that self-portrait mask. We talked about Emily Carr and the carvers. Emily Carr travelled around here, and on the coast and the Charlottses, doing paintings of old Indian villages and poles, although she was white. But Emily Carr just painted what she saw. She didn't get taught by carvers, or even speak a lot to them. Especially since those Indian carvers back in the '20s probably spoke little English, or even none at all. And a lot of carving then was done in secret, especially with the Gitksan. And even if she had been able to talk with some carvers, even if she did try to learn something about the principles of the art, they didn't intellectualize about their art. And anyway, there's always been the idea that you had to receive something to give away something, like being paid now. Information, songs and stories, these things were free to your own family and crest but not to others, at least outside of a potlatch. Family knowledge was private property, and not just passed along to some stranger who might ask. So I don't think Emily Carr got much real information from the people at Kitwanga.

Most carvings are related to the oral history, the family stories. Even today, those stories have a lot of influence. So there are masks that
look like NWC Indian people, and some like white people, and Africans and Hawaiians - anyone they might have met in the old fur trading days. And a lot that look Asian - even in old carvings. There's a story I found, I think it has something to do with that, where people found a canoe load of Oriental people and some were alive and others were dead. And that's what some carvings look like - they look like people who had got lost at sea and some of them were just alive - probably fishermen who were from Japan or China or somewhere and they got lost at sea.⁵⁸ And I think that probably anything that was unusual people made a story about it, and their carvings were to remember it and how they looked, because they would be describing what they found, what they saw.

I think that happened more than once, 'cause Copper Woman and finding Copper Woman mountains was one of those stories. That one woman who was alive from a wreck, the chief married her and she told them how to find metal and how to make use of metal. So I think she was Asian, from a wreck like that. Any kind of a sea vehicle could get caught on the ocean and end up here.

There are lots of carvings about the Copper Woman stories, and lots about Frog Woman. Frog Woman was Volcano Woman. It was because of her child, he was a frog and the kids threw the frog in the fire, but it was supposed to be the Frog Woman's son. They threw the frog into the fire and it got out and they threw it in again and tortured it. And the next day, after they slept over night, then they heard a woman crying. And they described what the woman looked
like - she had a cane with frogs on it and her clothing had frogs on it. And then she said that the frog that they threw in the fire was her son. Then she was supposed to have destroyed their village - a volcano happened and it destroyed the village. After the village was destroyed there was just one person and she was found by a mainlander. But she was supposed to be a Haida. Then she was discovered by a mainland person, and then their children became the ancestors. And all of their children's children after that tell that story.

Nobody knows where it happened, because it belonged to the people who travelled and so that story comes even up to Terrace and up to Kitselas too when they're all Eagles. And Barbeau has picked it up and made even a kind of fiction story about it - "The Salmon People." And it's kind of all over - in Kitsumkalum they tell that, and there are Kitselas people with that story, and Haidas have that story, and there are Nass River people with that story, and also Tlingit.

And so people think, well Barbeau has it that it came from the Orient, but I think they probably were supposed to be the ones that came under the glacier too. But they came from the north anyway, and they travelled, and maybe - and it makes sense though, because anybody who is a little outsider, they're never really sure about him, and so they kind of get some discrimination, and so they probably moved on, and kept moving on.

And in the stories they're supposed to have gone up the Nass River, and they came down the Kitsumkalum and some of them settled there,
then they went on to the Skeena River, some settled here and Kitselas and as far up as Kitwanga, 'cause there's Eagles at Kitwanga that have the same story. Even at Kispiox too they have the same story. But there aren't so many Eagles the farther up you go. And even the Haida they call them, like my Mom's uncle his name was Git-kwun, and that is really a Tsimshian word and the meaning of Salmon People, and yet they are Haida. But then they say they are part Tsimshian. And also so do the people of Kitselas with that name, but they say "we're mixed with the Haida." But they're not only mixed with the Haida, they're also mixed with the Tlingit. So maybe they did, 'cause that name and those people, but they ended up having the Salmon-Eater name, and also the story of the Volcano. But there's more than one thing that connects our family to the Tsimshian.

Once people were connected to another tribe they continued to intermarry, they wanted to continue - when they had an ancestor who was married into certain families, then one of their children or grandchildren would be married into it. Like one of my cousins, he is from the Tsimshian, but he is Eagle through our side too.

My cousin Nancy's husband was a Dudoward and now her oldest son is living in Port Simpson and his father's people are going to adopt him into his father's Tsimshian side and give him a name - it's an old name from the people that were part Tsimshian and part Haida on the Port Simpson side. So he's going to get an old name, and he's going to be adopted into his Dad's crest, and he's going to give up his Eagle name. It's Joan's brother, Stan Dudoward, he's living in Port
Simpson and he’s going to be adopted into his father’s side, and so his name is going to be ‘Neis-Haida.’ Because through his mother he’s really Haida, but in the past there was somebody, like, a high-named person, whose name was Neis-Haida; it goes back to when there was intermarriage between the Port Simpson and Masset people. And there was also intermarriage between the Hartley Bay people and the Skidegate people.

They were going to have it two years ago, but the fishing was bad, and the fishing keeps on being bad, so there’s not enough to have a feast - ‘cause they have to have quite a big feast to do it. And it’s his cousins by his father’s side that’s going to be adopting him into his father’s crest, and giving him a Tsimshian name. That happens quite often. But they all identify themselves as Tsimshian, because the Dudowards are kind of a fancy clan.

There was a Dudoward wanted to marry my Mom. And it has to do with the past, our family of Haidas were married with the Tsimshian. Like the first Chief WEAH had a wife who was a Dudoward, was a sister of Dudoward, that was also LEGAIC. They were a wild bunch, and still are! That’s why my grandmother didn’t want my Mom to marry into them - so my cousin marries into them! But they’re proud of their wildness! Its even in the books - the missionaries talk about them. Those are the reasons why they moved to Metlakatla from Port Simpson. They couldn’t make them quit potlatching - that was their family.
It's funny - I have to laugh when I think. Back when I was with the Indian Arts and Crafts Association of BC - some say I was the Director, but I was a delegate, and there were several of us who were delegates. But it was fun, and interesting - I got to go to meetings and travel all around, and met some really interesting people - all to help develop Indian art. And Simon Brascoupe was there too, and he's a really nice guy, a funny guy. And he gave me this nickname - "Wild Woman of the Woods!".

I really like learning the old ways of doing things - learning how to make things and do things for myself - no matter what it is. I like that. That's why I learned to do so many things, like making this nettle net, just so I'd know how. Know how people managed when they didn't have stores to go to. The same with making baskets, like I learned with Auntie Selina. Making prints, doing landscapes or portraits. And carving, well, I just seemed to have a natural ability, it came to me real easy.

I've always been interested in the old stories, starting with when I was a kid with my Grandmother - I was always interested in her stories. Now whenever I travel and talk to people, I explain our crests and our stories, so they will understand. Like when I was in Finland, I carved this pole of a big eagle, with this woman standing in front, and a little child. And I used it to explain to them what it is to be Eagle: that it's not a god, that Eagle is our crest, the symbol of our family, and it is passed down from generation to generation, through the women,
from mother to daughter. So they'll understand it's not sacred art, it's not heathen, it's a symbol of who we are.

I started out with 'Ksan and with the revival of Indian art, and that became the thing I wanted to do most, was to continue with the revival of Indian art. And it's the same with any work that I did, was to help keep Indian art. So I never really thought of it as a big money-making thing. And any designs that I did was to sort of help other people understand design. And when we first started doing designs, well it was to help 'Ksan get started. My first designs were just to give away, and to have something in the shop to sell. The first things I sold, like a lady was selling, and then she did more of the promoting type of thing. I just did the design again more to get people familiar with it. Because there was nothing to look at, you know. Most of the boxes and things had been sold or destroyed, and there was nothing for the next generation to use for examples to see.

So a lot of people actually learned from my prints and things - even those supposedly "self-taught" ones. They didn't learn out of the air! But copying and looking at other's work is the only way you can learn - you can't think, well, you didn't have influence from anybody! 'Cause even though some people might look at it and think, "Well, that's simple," but it isn't. Even Bill Reid and Bill Holm learned by copying. And how do people who got to art school learn? They don't create it all themselves, they learn from looking at the art of people who came before them, and studying the Old Masters.
Once you've learned it, once you've learned it then you can be an individual. You have to go that way, you can't continue to keep on copying your teacher or somebody else. It takes a long time to be capable of doing new work that still looks like NWC art. There have to be certain things about it that make it still NWC art. After you've learned, you can go out on your own and individualize your art.

But nature makes it that way anyway - you don't have to try to be an individual, you're gonna be! Life makes it that way.
Endnotes for Chapter 8:


2. Please see Jonaitis (1988) for a picture of a labret and of a woman wearing a labret (p. 27), and Kirk 1986:129,164) for pictures of southern women with shaped heads (also a sign of high status).

3. Please see Appendix E for a partial listing of museums’ holdings of Diesing’s art.

4. This was the “Changers: A Spiritual Renaissance” (1989) exhibition in Toronto and Montreal.


6. Please see Jensen and Sargent (1986:20) for a picture of Dorothy Grant working on a button blanket.

7. Please see also Crean’s discussion with Diesing about TB (2001).

8. Please see Hawthorn (1948, 1958) for a discussion of the sorts of social conditions faced by young women like Diesing at that time, and the adjustments they had to make. Diesing’s hospitalization during those years critical to her socialization as a young woman compounded the difficulties she faced.

9. Many of the articles collected at the turn of the century were produced at the request of the collectors. Swan in particular preferred newly created materials to old (Cole 1985:32), and older materials became harder to find, particularly following the work of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition’s (1897-1902) collection of ethnographic materials. A good example is provided in Jonaitis’ (1991) discussion of the establishment of the American Museum of Natural history. By 1909 Harlan Smith complained “poles are now practically wiped off the Earth in many localities where they were numerous twelve years ago when I had the buying fever” - although he did buy some at the cost of $1 per foot (in Jonaitis 1991:226). In 1923 when the Museum asked George Hunt to purchase 4 Kwakiutl poles, he said the remaining ones were “outrageously priced” (p. 229), but he managed to commission four new ones from the original carver Arthur Shaughnessey (after he was released from jail after the “crime” of actually using NWC art in a potlatch). The poles were completed in 1924 and placed in the Museum’s NWC hall (see pictures p. 235, 251). Please see Cole (1985) for a detailed discussion of collecting on the NWC.

10. For example, Stilta carved the “Sphinx” pictured in Wright (2001:290).

11. Please see Drew (1982:61) for a picture of Rufus Moody, a Haida carver from Skidegate, working on one of his argillite poles.

12. Some of the earliest Europeans to contact the Haida were on the Perez expedition; Perez noted in his journal (21 July 1774) regarding that day’s visitors (adult Haida men and women, some with infants): “All the people are stocky and good-looking, white in colour as well as in their features. Most of them have blue eyes.” (In Wright 2001:18).

13. March (1994:357) claims: “Both despite and because of the contradictions of our ancestry, people of mixed race have become some of the most vigilant and revolutionary leaders working for social change in local and international communities.”

14. Tranquille was a provincial sanitarium built in 1908 in Kamloops, in interior BC By 1924, “there was a two year waiting list for admissions” (Kelm 1998:122). Although it was the only provincial
sanitarium at that time, and acute care hospitals were prohibited from admitting TB patients, "Tranquille would not take Native patients, and those who made the trip to Kamloops were either turned away or boarded with local families at considerable expense to themselves" (Kelm 1998:122).

15. Diesing was admitted to Tranquille in 1943. It was only two years previously, in 1941, that the first Indian Affairs sanitarium, the Coquileetza Indian Hospital at Sardis, opened. "Six months after its official opening on 2 September 1941, all 185 beds were filled. Fully two-thirds were school-aged children transferred from the residential schools by 1944" (Kelm 1998:124).

16. Compare Diesing's treatment for TB: isolation, bed rest, rich food, collapsed lung, and multiple fluoroscope treatments, with the standard treatment recommended by the Mayo Clinic today: treatment with antibiotics ("two to four drugs for 6 to 12 months"), and a relaxed but active lifestyle: "maintain normal daily activities as best you can. Stay connected with friends and family. Continue to pursue hobbies that you enjoy and are able to do." Continued integration with family and normal activities when possible only requires the wearing of a mask in the early stages of contagion - ending the first few weeks after antibiotic treatment begins. (http://www.mayoclinic.com 3 March 2002). Contemporary medical methods are almost a total reversal of what Diesing endured as an adolescent.

17. This too reflects a long-standing tradition for the Haida, who had been cultivating potatoes, tobacco and some beans on the Queen Charlotte Islands for use and for trade since the late 18th or early 19th century (Scouler 1824 in Barbeau 1953:3; Brink 1974:35; Carter 1968:80; Drucker 1963:53). Knight (1996:168) claims that "By the mid 1830s Haida traders were selling canoe loads of potatoes - over 400 bushels in one trip - to the HBC post at Port Simpson, as well as trading them to neighbouring Indian groups" (p. 168). He notes also that "The initial potato gardens in Indian communities were usually tended by women, who later maintained small subsistence farms with the aid of husbands and family ... Women also tended the domestic livestock kept for home use in some locales - the family milk cow, chickens, and other animals. In addition to traditional preservation techniques, Indian women learned the novel methods usually associated with European homesteading" (p. 128).

18. Robert Tomlinson arrived in Metlakatla, 1867; in charge of Kincolith until spring, 1879, then moved to Kispiox; left the C.M.S.[Church Missionary Society] in 1881. Established Meamskinisht, today's Cedarvale, an independent Christian village" (Lillard 1981:14).

19. "Grease Trails" were a network of challenging inland walking trails connecting the Nisga'a territories with the Tsimshian, Gitksan and others, along which people would pack out trade goods and pack home eulachon oil or "grease" obtained from the Nisga'a fisheries at the mouth of the Nass River. For more information and maps of old trails please see Cove and MacDonald (1987).

20. Matson (2001, personal communication) notes that these artifacts are from the Lachane archaeological site, and recommends the following references for details on these NWC excavations: Calvert (1968); Croes (1989) and MacDonald and Inglis (1981). For a contemporary analysis of NWC prehistory, I recommend Matson and Coupland (1995).

21. This site is Ozette, on the Washington coast. For more information please see Daugherty and Friedman (1983).


23. This exhibition ran from June - September 1967. Please see catalogue (Duff, Holm and Reid 1967) for details.
24. This assertion goes well opposed to Boas’ comment that the men’s art was the “thinking” art and the women’s art was the practical stuff.

25. “Donald Yeomans has become one of the most innovative of all the contemporary Haida artists” (Wright 2001:327).

26. For example, the Perez Expedition, 1774.

27. The “big project” referred to was the development of ‘Ksan Historical Village and Museum of the Gitksan in Hazelton. The original small museum established in the 1950s was incorporated into this Village, which was under construction in the 1960s and opened in 1970. There is an interesting and informative website for ‘Ksan at: http://www.ksan.org/index.html.

28. As noted previously, ‘Ksan is the Gitksan’s Historical Village and Museum established in Hazelton, officially opened in 1970. The Gitanmaax School of Art is housed in ‘Ksan, and has now been training Native carvers for about 30 years. Dieging was one of the people who helped to create the Village, and the “classes” she refers to are ones that some of the locals and crew took together in the 1960s, before ‘Ksan opened. Dieging was also employed to work at ‘Ksan after it opened - but as a working artist, and a docent, not as an art instructor. Misunderstandings of terminology have created much misinformation in the written record of Dieging’s career.

29. The reference is to the documentary crew who taped an interview with Dieging to be used in the Aboriginal Achievements Awards broadcast in March 2002.

30. Please see Kirk (1986:112) for a picture of an old carving tool made from a beaver tooth, found at the archaeological site of Ozette, an old Makah village on the Washington coast that was buried by a mudslide. Archaeologists there also found tools made with blades of shell, and tools of stone and of wood. There were also dozens of metal blades found - and this village was buried about 500 years ago, before first recorded contact with Europeans. For more information on the art of Ozette please see Daugherty and Friedman (1983).

31. As early as 1789 Captain Dixon made the following observation: “ ... this art is far from being in its infancy; a fondness for carving and sculpture, was discovered amongst these people by Captain Cook: iron implements were then also in use; and their knives are so very thin, that they bend them in a variety of forms, which answer their every purpose nearly as well as if they had recourse to a carpenter’s tool chest” (Dixon 1989:243 in Macnair et al. 1984:23).


33. Please see Steltzer (1976:136,137) for a picture of ‘Ksan.

34. Please see Jonaitis (1991:220) for a picture of a similar process being undertaken in 1910 at the American Museum of Natural History. She notes (p. 135) that these life-sized models or “life groups ... depicting people wearing costumes and engaged in some activity had been invented in Europe where they had enjoyed a great vogue for several decades [in the latter 1800s] ... Many museums ... saw good reason to have life groups made because of their great appeal to the public.”

35. Matson (2002, personal communication) notes that these are marmot skins, used in high prestige cloaks of marmot.
36. James Houston, born 1921, authored many books of adult and child fiction such as *Eagle Song* (Houston 1983), as well as more academic publications such as *Celebrating Inuit Art 1948-1970* (Houston 1999).

37. Polly Sargent did collaborate with Doreen Jensen to produce the book *Robes of Power* (1986), but Diesing is referring to another project. Most of the material Polly Sargent collected was bequeathed to the Canadian Museum of Civilization upon her death.

38. Beynon, a Tsimshian man, worked for several anthropologists, but most of his published work was for Barbeau (see bibliography). Beynon’s annotated 1945 field notes have just been published (Anderson and Halpin 2000), and a brief biography was written by Haplin (1976).

39. Newton (1973:66) says of the Haida myths: “Nearly all the gods of the Haida began as tiny creatures, or as weak and even despicable members of their families ... ‘The last shall be first’ - Haida and Tsimshian mythology is shot through with the theme of spiritual evolution.”

40. This comment was made, partly in jest, in the spring of 2002, in a conversation that included both discussion of this dissertation and of her receipt of an Honorary Doctorate from The University of Northern British Columbia. If it had been made during the time of our fieldwork together, I certainly would have elicited more discussion from her on these stories. The insertion of this comment into a conversation we did have during our fieldwork days (1998/1999) provides an illustration of how I have interwoven some of her commentary from various conversations into one unit, when it seemed reasonable and useful to flush out one conversation with details provided at another time. I was more concerned with ensuring that her ideas were being fully conveyed than I was with the “purity”of the exactness and sequencing of her words. Comments that she intended as “editorial” regarding the draft of the dissertation and significantly retrospective (as opposed to correction of information such as a date), have been noted in footnotes or by date when included in the text.

41. Please see “*Power in their Hands: The Gitsonk*” (Shane 1984). Anderson comments: “It has been claimed that the Gitsonk were specifically carvers for the secret societies, which was linked to the chiefly system as only people of high rank could participate in some of the societies, but if the link is correct, they were not carving objects for chiefly potlatches - the secret societies were separate, or so we have assumed” (personal communication 2002).

42. Please see Norton (1985) for a detailed analysis of the important economic and political roles of Northwest Coast women during the trading and early colonial periods.

43. Norton (1985) discusses in detail the uses made by Haida women of the local floral and faunal resources, including resource management, harvesting patterns, and trading networks.

44. Diesing believes this was most likely 1975. The Prince Rupert Regional Hospital Annual Report (1976) has a picture of the mural, which it describes as 9' x 24', carved by Freda Diesing and her helper “Harvey Robinson, an Indian craftsman.”


47. Please see Stearns (1981) for a discussion of the impact of alcoholism on the Haida, particularly the mid-century (20th) residents of Masset.
48. Steltzer’s “Indian Artists at Work” (1976) p. 159; also see Diesing’s mask and bowl, p. 160. Norman and Josiah Tait are pictured with a pole they carved for Port Edward, p. 154-155.

49. Please see Steltzer (1976:157) for a picture of Don Yeomans carving as a youth.

50. Rena Bolton is one of the artists (including Diesing) whose work was included in the “Topographies” Exhibition (1996) at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

51. “From the Gitksan perspective ... a pole is a carrier of social, spiritual, territorial, and economic rights and privileges. This is not to say that individuals do not see or respond to aesthetic form, but only that is not what totem poles are about .... [T]otem poles are not raised to be examples of “art,” but to proclaim inherited rights. That they were once, and are now again, carved with great skill and artistry is a by-product of an economic context that permits full-time specialization” (Anderson and Halpin 200:40).

52. The pole raising was in the summer of 1999 (my partner had joined me for that summer, and he and I accompanied Diesing). The classes referred to occurred in January 2000 and again in January 2001 - 3 hours of design in the morning, and 3 hours of carving in the afternoon.

53. “When paint is used to accent details of the crest figures, it is not necessary to carve as deeply, or to take as much time, as when working with an unpainted pole” (Anderson and Halpin 2000:39).

54. Traditionally, all family names and their associated claims to status had to be validated by potlatch [Diesing notes here “with Coast Tsimshians.”] Although Diesing’s Uncle Willie Matthews, Chief WEAH, originally gave Freda her name, he died in 1974. The “naming ceremony” referred to here occurred in November 1981; Diesing’s name was formally announced by William Russ, the father of the current chief Reno Russ, who was installed as Town Chief in 1984 (Blackman 1992:172). Please see Steltzer’s “A Haida Potlatch” (1984) for other information about this ceremony.

55. Barbeau (1929) Totem Poles of the Gitksan, Upper Skeena River, British Columbia. Please see also MacDonald (1984) Totem Poles and Monuments of Gitwangak Village. Anderson and Halpin (2000:38) note that Barbeau and Beynon “In 1921 and 1924 ... made the first complete record of the 109 totem poles remaining in the [Upper Skeena] villages, including the names of the carvers, crest figures, owners, and stories, and enlisted informants' memories to estimate the dates the poles were carved. The totem poles of the Gitksan were the largest and best-preserved group remaining in British Columbia. In 1952, Wilson Duff (1952:21) conducted the next survey of Gitksan totem poles and found that in the intervening twenty-five years twenty-eight poles had undergone restoration and seventeen new poles had been carved and raised.” Cole (1985:272) says “the Montreal Gazette claimed [Kitwanga in the 1920s] as the showplace of northern British Columbia and, next to Niagara Falls, the most photographed spot in Canada.”

56. Crean writes about this meeting in her book “The Laughing One,” which just won the BC Book Award (Hubert Evans Prize) for non-fiction. She was involved with the exhibition “Changers: A Spiritual Renaissance” 1989, Toronto and Montreal (curator Shirley Bear), and wrote an article about it (“Female Gaze,” Canadian Art). (Crean 2002:personal communication).

57. It appears that Carr, who herself complained about the “beastly tourist” (1928, in Cole 1985:278), saw her own travels in quite a different light.

58. “One Japanese junk was wrecked on the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1831. George Quimby (1985:10,13) speculated that given the six documented Japanese wrecks that reached the Northwest Coast between 1782 and 1833, fourteen or fifteen wrecked vessels might have reached there from Japan
every one hundred years” (Wright 2001:338).

59. “Wild Woman of the Woods” refers to a being in NWC mythology about whom many and various stories are told. She is believed to live alone in the woods, avoiding the company of humans (although she has been said to steal wayward children). Because she is large, powerful, and dangerous, humans generally fear encountering her - although she will reward a skilful human, who bests her in an encounter, with great riches. Please see Swanton (1905) and Boas (1970) for examples of these stories, and Levi-Strauss (1982) for a discussion of the masks.
SECTION III: CONCLUSIONS

FIGURE 5: SEAL AND SALMON - DIESING PRINT (1982)
Chapter 9: Voices, Echoes and Shadowplay

This final section of the dissertation is divided into four separate but interdependent discussions. The first discussion is about the creation and negotiation of identity, and draws upon the psychological model proposed by Ludwig. The second discussion is about how Diesing’s art expresses and reflects her identity, and draws upon the embodied space/time anthropological model of Gell. The third discusses how being an artist fits in with Diesing’s conception of how to be a proper modern Haida woman, and draws upon Cruikshank’s related discussions of living “life like a story,” regarding the use of traditional narratives as resources for personal guidance. The fourth discussion is about the ways in which life stories can be used as ethnographic documents to inform anthropological scholarship. These discussions provide a level of response to two questions which underlie the work of this project. How does one apprehend another’s understanding of who they are? How does a woman determine for herself who she is?

In all of these discussions the voice is mine, as I draw upon selected ideas and comments of other scholars. But Diesing’s voice echoes throughout, as I ultimately ground my speculations in her own comments, or in ideas and concepts raised by her comments. Speculative theorizing by one person based upon what they see through the light of another’s descriptions is very much like chasing shadows, never allowing one to feel that they have grasped anything “real” to hang on to at the end. But the chase itself can be challenging and exhilarating - and makes for good storytelling afterwards.
First Discussion: The Creation and Negotiation of Identity

"Remember who you are." A grandmother's words echo across decades, through generations. "Always remember who you are."

So, who are you? How do you, any of us, determine who we are? Since my particular area of interest is the realm of identity negotiation, these are the questions that come to my mind as I read Diesing's stories.

Louise DeSalvo, the biographer of Virginia Woolf, read all of Woolf's work as being an exploration of, almost a meditation on, the constantly fluctuating permutations of "self," and wrote her biography to focus on this exploration (Ludwig 1997:52-53). I also see Diesing's work in the same way, and have chosen to focus this dissertation on "identity."

It is very clear that Diesing appreciates identity, in typical Native fashion more as a "we" concept, embedded in webs of personal relationships, than as the "me" concept of the autonomous individual more commonly seen in Western society (Ludwig 1997:53). Or, to use Krupat's analytical categorization (1994:4):

Native American conceptions of the self tend toward integrative rather than oppositional relations with others. Whereas the modern West has tended to define personal identity as involving the successful mediation of an opposition between the individual and society, Native Americans have instead tended to define themselves as persons by successfully integrating themselves into the relevant social groupings - kin, clan, band, etc - of their respective societies.... These conceptions of the self may be viewed as "synecdochic," i.e., based on part-to-
whole relations, rather than "metonymic," i.e., as in the part-to-part relations that most frequently dominate Euroamerican autobiography.

I believe that creating a comfortable identity for herself, in an environment rife with the struggles of identity politics, has been a significant activity in Diesing's life. She appears to have a strong sense of self now, and operates with confidence in the world - while admitting that such was not indeed always the case, as she used to think poorly of herself and "pretty much did what other people told me." It is important to note, however, that this choice of identity as a focus for analysis was originally my choice, not hers. If she were writing an independent autobiography, she might choose to focus on something completely different.

Her comment "When I write my dissertation, I'm going to gather up all those stories and publish them, so people will know!" regarding traditional Haida stories about women, certainly indicates where Diesing's preferred focus would be. Although when I was reshaping the first draft, cutting away "extraneous" materials to more clearly present one specific subject for analysis, I asked her if she thought my discussion of identity should be scrapped as unnecessary material. She said, "No." In her opinion her identity as a Haida woman was central to the entire undertaking, and the discussion regarding identity was not just helpful but fundamental to understanding her life story as presented in this dissertation. Nevertheless, I understand that "my" dissertation is not identical with "her"

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1 The nature of such a struggle can be seen in the words of March (1994:357) a Jamaican woman of mixed heritage: "We are not white, we are not black. We are more often than not, what others perceive us to be. Positioned in the collectivity of the moment as best suits the communal purpose. ... I cannot represent issues of blackness - white folks will get the wrong idea, black folks get annoyed. I have not been back to Jamaica in twelve years...The last time I was there...[t]he local boys threw rocks at my car and yelled 'white girl'"
dissertation, so I cannot claim, like DeSalvo, that I am only reflecting the subject’s interest -
clearly, the interest is my own.

Which brings us to O’Brien’s warning (in Ludwig 1997:32): “The biographer’s objectivity is a
myth ... Emotional and psychological currents that we do not fully understand draw us to our
subjects; if we are lucky, we do not lose either ourselves or our subjects in the resulting
whirlpool.” Keeping this in mind, I hope to lose none of us in this exploration.

Earlier (Section I p. 5) I mentioned Bringhurst’s comment that the advantage of looking at the
work of artists is that we can be sure we are dealing with something someone wanted to say.

Ludwig (1997:26) however, points out a weakness in this approach:

No doubt, the creative works of people tell us much about their talent and genius
and often the themes that attract them ... Unfortunately, there are certain
conceptual problems in relying on creative works to tell us about creative people.
One problem has to do with the assumption that creative expression necessarily
reveals something fundamental about a subject’s character. No doubt, in many
instances, people strive to communicate their personal visions in their works. But
in other instances, they may choose to mislead the public or hide behind their art
[especially those who] only seem to find an identity on stage or while enacting
certain roles.

Another problem has to do with the distinctive properties of the different media of
expression. Usually, what we can learn about writers from their words is different
from what we can learn about artists, architects, musicians, or actors from theirs.
Nonverbal forms of expression may not be readily translatable into verbal forms.
Creative artists themselves may not be able to explain the basis of their
inspirations, or may interpret their own works differently from most informed
critics. They also may give voice to what they imagine other people to experience
or feel.

Perhaps the most basic problem in judging people from their works is of a logical
nature. Though people may try to express themselves through [art], ... their works
must stand largely on their own. Their personal attributes may have nothing to do
with their works.... It’s fallacious to equate people with their works because we
Certainly in this dissertation I have shown myself to be one of those “biographers” who does not hesitate to expect Diesing’s art to say something about who she is - although I agree with Ludwig that art tells us nothing about whether the artist is a ‘good’ or a ‘bad’ person, kicks puppies or bakes cherry pies. However, following Gell, (1997) I certainly believe that an artist’s oeuvre, and a society’s artistic production, convey a great deal of information indeed about those who produce them.

Whereas Gell’s focus is on art as a social production, informative of the social processes, values and interactions of peoples as communities, my focus, as explained earlier, is on the individual. I believe that Diesing’s art is indeed making statements she wants to say, about art, her heritage, and her identity - that her art is an ongoing performance of her identity. And in line with my belief in the embodiment of being and self, I believe that the choices she has made in creating her art not only allow her to express herself, they also feed back and reinforce her creation of her self.²

² By embodiment and particularly embodied knowledge, I mean that which we know, through every aspect of our intellect and our sensorium. This knowledge, most of which we are not consciously aware, affects our thoughts, actions and responses in a multiplicity of ways. Such a perspective on knowledge clearly presents embodiment as a process - cumulative, selective - rather than an entity. It draws attention to the fact that, like the adage “children learn what they live,” we are all of us constantly shaping and shaped by the cultural and physical environment of which we are a part. Hall (1999:4) speaks in a similar way of literary “resonances” created between the words and images of the text and the subjective knowledge and experience of the reader, ascribing these to Bethell’s “principle of multiconsciousness” which she quotes as “the audience’s ability to respond spontaneously and unconsciously on more than one plane of attention at the same time.”
Ludwig's (1997) work on the creation and presentation of the self is particularly helpful here.

Himself posing the question "How do we know who we are?" he proceeds to use various biographical works to illustrate his answer to this question, based on an embodied psychology. Ludwig’s interlacing of the biological basis of self (based in DNA, cell structure, neurological functioning and environmental fecundity) with the various factors affecting the development of identity through the mechanisms of negotiation and the social construction of self (parenting, schooling, peer pressure, modelling, mirroring, role performance, identification), make a very convincing presentation, in an informative but highly readable format. I find his concept of the use of culturally derived, mythically driven personal “scripts” to be particularly relevant to the objectives of this dissertation, and helpful in understanding Diesing’s presentation.

Echoing Myerhoff (1978) in her discussion of elderly Jewish holocaust survivors, Ludwig (1997:110) speaks of the necessity for people to create a narrative structure for their lives, as you rely on stories to give coherence to your sense of self and make sense out of your existence. Your personal life story offers you an opportunity to integrate in a cohesive and understandable way the seemingly immiscible mixture of your many biological urges, psychological needs, social responses, and spiritual yearnings. Without some organizing framework for these often competing and contradictory experiences, you likely would be emotionally incapacitated.

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3 Given that his use of the theories of a multitude of psychologists and psychiatrists (Maslow, Erickon, Meade, Goffman, Cooley, Pavlov, Freud, Jung) and philosophers (Descartes, Whitehead, Becker, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Kant, James) are openly discussed, it is surprising that, in his focus on mythology and its use in formulating scripts, he given no acknowledgement at all to the seminal work of Joseph Campbell.

4 A modified version of “scripting” has been taken up by the “pop psych” sector of the literary mass media, spawning a whole series of self-help books. But that does not diminish its usefulness as a deconstructive tool here.
Usually these narratives are created without our conscious direction (his ensuing discussion of how people can consciously re-write these scripts, while interesting, is beyond the purview of this discussion). He notes (p. 103-104) how many people internalize perceptions of themselves and expectations put upon them by significant others - usually one or both parents, but it can be from any individual we consider personally important. These may have been explicit perceptions or expectations, but are often imagined - in that it is what you think people thought of you, or expected from you or would have been pleased to see you do. Insofar as you then live your life to fulfill (or oppose) these perceptions and expectations, (p. 103) "[i]nstead of building your life only on past experiences, you actually may be living your life to conform to stories already written for you." Ludwig calls this "lived doubleness," and notes how it can almost create "the illusion of a reversal in time. Because the future comes to be experienced [in the imaginative projection of other's reactions to your actions] before it actually happens, it takes on aspects of the past," and thus "portions of your life ... represents not so much a progression into the future as a realization of the past." Furthermore "the plasticity of your imagination lets you defy the biological linearity of time" (p.106).

Ludwig (p. 106) notes that:

"generally, the biographical format used to portray your life dictates that you order the events chronologically from birth through death. This time-bound, lock-step format causes you to order many personal experiences along a temporal continuum that may not apply. If you grant any reality to your experienced life, then you have to entertain the possibility that this artificial way of depicting yourself may distort who you are."
In the telling of Diesing’s stories, what indication does she provide of the nature of this “lived doubleness” in her life - of scripts that might have been written for her, or that she may have written for herself?

First, of course, Diesing is a woman, and she says much about what she was told and what she inferred about what it meant to be a woman, especially a Haida woman, at various times in the past and during her life. This will be explored in detail in Discussion 4, especially as it relates to her teaching.

Certainly Diesing also says much about artists and carvers throughout her stories. Even though most of the art was missing from her own home and from the coast generally while she was growing up, her grandmother ensured that Diesing knew that she came from a long line of artists - both carvers and weavers. It is interesting to speculate how Diesing, the spirited little girl who carved parts for her brother’s model airplanes, and who says that somehow she always knew that she wouldn’t have children, might have imagined her future, and how that imagination might have affected her life choices. She does say that she went to art school in Vancouver because, as a girl, people said she had artistic talent. And she also says that people who grow up hearing stories about carvers want to try being carvers too - and Diesing was one of those people who grew up hearing those stories (this is the topic of discussion in the upcoming third unit). So it might be that Diesing imagined herself as an artist and a carver even as a child, and then grew up to fulfill that imagined future. But that remains in the realm of speculation, since Diesing never specifically said, and I never asked (one of those “good questions” I missed!).
She does give further hints in her stories, however, of expectations for her performance, based upon her family membership:

"Remember who you are"
"Your Uncles would be proud ..."
"My Mom said she was proud of me for helping them do that..."
"So she helped her husband ... and he got famous as a carver, but no one mentions her!"

At least as an adult, Diesing understood that as a high ranking Haida woman, she had an obligation to behave “properly” and make her family “proud”, whether or not she achieved public acclaim in the process. And so that is what she did.

With words that immediately call to mind the comments of the collaborators in Cruikshank’s (1990) “Life Lived Like a Story,” in which Mrs. Angela Sidney, the speaker, elucidates how she tries to live her life appropriately, in conformance to the models presented in the cultural mythology, Ludwig discusses the tendency for cultural myths to be used as a framework for the structuring of any individual life story. Or, more precisely, it is an individual’s understanding of those cultural myths that serves as the framework (and understanding is processual).

"... and he keeps her hidden in the back room, and no one is to see her eating those seal flippers. They just hear the noise, that strange noise skruunch, schruunch, schruunch. If someone sees her they will die, that’s what he tells his young wife. But eventually, she goes and looks anyway ... I like to think, the old wife, she was carving, just like this. Carving wonderful things. ‘Cause that’s the sound, and he didn’t want anyone to find out ...

"And the story about the boy in the ashes, that’s my family’s story
"One that I like is about the grandmother and the young boy who gets kicked out of the village ..."

There is a difference, however, between the stories one draws upon for guidance, the story "script" by which one lives one's life, and the format of the story one creates when one narrates one's life. When we turn to a story for guidance on the way to proceed (see Cruikshank 1987, and discussion three upcoming) or to convince others or assure ourselves that the action already taken was appropriate, we usually do so deliberately. Although we may become aware of the script(s) by which we live, and may even deliberately re-write them, they usually operate below our level of awareness. The way we tell our personal stories, however, is quite clearly fully within our conscious control. Or is it?

It is possible that the drive to present our life stories in a chronological manner may be largely Western in construction - or it may be largely male in construction. It is interesting to note here that in the life histories by Sarris, Wachowich, Blackman, and Cruikshank, discussed previously, all the elderly women rejected a linear telling of their life story for one embedded in family, place, and events. With one exception, none of those elderly women started their story "I was born ..." - an almost automatic starting point in Western autobiography, and a format that was indeed used by the two younger women Wachowich interviewed. The one exception was Neakok, who Blackman (1989:239) says began her narration with exactly that statement. But her use of this format is not really informative to this discussion since, as Blackman notes (p. 237):

"Sadie's life story was elicited in chronological order. She would likely have narrated her story largely in chronological order regardless of who had elicited it, given her own western education and her familiarity with her father's memoir (which was monotonously chronological in detailing each of his years from age thirteen to sixty-five)."
Wagner-Martin (in Ludwig 1997:106-107) suggests that this is a male form of self-presentation:

*men’s lives are mainly focused outward, and the important facts of their life are external and public. Biographies of males, therefore, mainly have been uncomplicated presentations of the persona, shaped in the pattern of a personal success story [echoes of Krupat’s comments about the earlier prevalence of war hero stories, noted previously]. In contrast, the lives of women, which represent a tightly woven mesh of public and private events ... often don’t lend themselves so easily to this linear formula. Because of this, biographies of women have failed to take into account the nonlinear nature of their existence and the often hidden drama in their interior lives."

Brumble (in Brown and Vibert 1996) has argued that autobiography, in any format, is a style of self-presentation foreign to Native culture, and Krupat (1994) largely supports that assertion, although it is presented there as more unusual than non-existent. It is difficult to tell then whether the multi-layered, polyvocal, contextualized life histories presented by the women discussed above, and equally in this document of Diesing’s stories, are more influenced by the traditions of their Native cultures or by the reality that the tellers are all enmeshed in women’s lives.

I think it is also interesting to note, while discussing the “drama” of women’s inner lives, and the tendency to equate ‘women’ and ‘emotion’, the following observation by Jelinik (in Blackman 1992:19):

*Irrespective of their professions or of their differing emphases in subject matter, neither women nor men are likely to explore or reveal painful and intimate memories in their autobiographies... The admission of intense feelings of hate, love and fear, the disclosure of explicit sexual encounters, or the details of painful psychological experiences are matters on which autobiographers are generally silent.*
Although both Blackman and Krupat note exceptions to this for some males who brag about their sexual exploits, and certainly *Nisa* (in Shostak 1981) devoted much of her self-description to her sexual exploits and emotional outbursts, and Mary Brave Bird (in Brave Bird and Erdoes 1993) is remarkably candid about all forms of difficulties and excesses in her experience, this does seem to be a statement of at least limited applicability in ethnographic autobiographies (although definitely not, for men or women, in the popular “Hollywood tell-all” genre). Whether this is a true reflection of the way the subjects presented their life stories, or an artifact of the editing process, producing the scientific austerity that many ethnographers consider appropriate to such documents, is hard to determine. Certainly in the stories of the two Haida women, both Florence Davidson and Freda Diesing leave the expression of intense emotion almost entirely out of their accounts, although Davidson does make her descriptions somewhat more emotionally “colourful” than does Diesing; for instance, describing her wedding as an unwilling young girl “too awful” to remember in detail (Blackman 1992:99). We cannot really know if this is indeed a trait of autobiographies, or another manifestation of the self-control, in expression and in action, expected of proper Haida women.

It might be expected at this point that I would provide my own analysis of the deep psychological factors motivating Diesing’s life choices, for example highlighting similarities and key points in the lives of her grandmother and mother that may have provided models for her own “script.” After all, as Ludwig says (1997:57) “The task of the biographer is to detect the patterns and modes of a person’s works and productions... Only by grasping the private mythology hidden behind the person’s public mask can you depict the real person.”
The third discussion in this section, concerning the ideal of the proper modern Haida woman being constructed from life experiences and traditional narratives, does drift somewhat into the speculative psychological area - but strives to remain grounded in Diesing's forthright comments. As for anything more arcane - fortunately, I am neither a biographer nor a psychiatrist, and I intend to impose no such totalizing or minimizing structure on Diesing's life (although Taussig (1999) might argue that such an unmasking, a form of defacement, would serve only to heighten the mystery of Diesing, and thus the enchantment of the art that reflects her). Besides, the only kind of "mask" I am qualified or inclined to [re]move is the little wooden one now looking over my shoulder, the one I began carving as a "student project" ("It's not bad, really" she says, kindly, "it's sort of like the little faces you see on totem poles!") the one I did intend to finish, "as soon as I get my knives ready"; the one that has watched over this dissertation like an old friend, constant and uncriticising, and the one that like any friend has come to be accepted and valued just as it is!

Perhaps that is one of the significant areas of difference between psychologists, literary biographers and anthropologists: as Cruikshank (2001, personal communication) expresses it "...they don't understand, we study problems, not people." She does not mean, of course, that anthropologists do not study people. Indeed we do study people, anthropology is all and

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5 This presents a lovely little illustration of Goffman's (1967) interactional face work. This was a gallant attempt to save me from making my actions (my hopeful asking for her appraisal of the little face mask) appear inappropriate (by putting her on the spot), thus damaging both my "face" by doing it, and her own "face" by letting the damage happen in her presence. Since by professional standards the work was quite inadequate, and a negative appraisal could endanger my own self-face (how I see myself) and public face (how others see me) as a competent adult, Diesing opted to strive for something accurate and positive to say: its similarity to totem pole faces. This choice allowed her to keep her own "face" - both as a knowledgeable teacher and critic, and as a social actor who would protect the face of others - while also allowing me to keep my "face" - indeed there was something good about what I did!
completely about the study of people, and frequently, as in this case, about the study of specific, individual people. But behind the most individualistic or most humanistic anthropology is still the orientation produced by the scientific paradigm: the searching for characteristics or patterns that have applicability beyond one individual entity. Unlike psychiatrists or psychologists, who also share the scientific paradigm, anthropologists do not normally attempt to effect “repairs” on the patterns we find in people’s lives, and unlike biographers, we are not usually fascinated into describing only that one individual life. The patterns that manifest in one life are not seen only as adumbrations of a shadow self, but rather are perused and evaluated for their wider cultural applicability. As with artists and their work, there is always some “problem” anthropologists are exploring. My “problem” is “identity.”

Returning to Sapir’s metaphor of the scaffolding provided to an individual by her or his culture, it is important to note that, in Diesing’s case, she had more than one culture’s scaffolding surrounding her as she grew up. Diesing is not just a Haida woman, living in an exclusively Haida world (if indeed there is or has been any such person). Diesing is a woman whose heritage and affiliations are best described as “mixed.” She was born with “mixed blood,” part Haida (itself mixed back over multiple generations with various ethnic groups) and part Scandinavian - and raised in a home with a strongly imposed British socialization, in a town developing as mainstream Canadian, situated within the traditional territories of the Coast Tsimshian and the

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6 Eric Wolf (1964, in Roth 1999) comments: "The job of the humanist scholar is to organize our huge inheritance of culture, to make the past available to the present, to make the whole of civilization available to men who necessarily live in one small corner for one little stretch of time, and finally to judge, as a critic, the actions of the present by the experiences of the past. ¶ The humanist's task is to clear away the obstacles to our understanding of the past, to make our whole cultural heritage [...] accessible to us. He must sift the whole of man's culture again and again, reassessing, reinterpreting, rediscovering, translating into a modern idiom [...] that which a past generation has judged irrelevant but which is now again usable...”
Gitksan. In addition, a significant part of her childhood socialization was from her grandparents, where her grandmother taught her traditional Haida stories and songs in a home ringing with a variety of languages, located within transient communities that refashioned themselves every summer, providing the wonderful ethnic smorgasbord of her childhood cannery days. As a young woman, alone after being released from the hospital, she picked up cultural practices wherever she could find them in Victoria and Vancouver, experiencing times "like teenage days, really, except I was older," in the two largest and most cosmopolitan cities in British Columbia. Upon getting married, new elements were added to the mix: not only was she now a wife, but her mother-in-law’s teachings attempted to reshape her into a proper German housewife! Perhaps these are more cultural scaffoldings than one individual can enjoy!

Diesing has other mixings as well: her residential affiliations are mixed (although she was born, raised, and continues to live on the mainland in the homelands of the Tsimshian and Gitksan, she identifies herself, in the traditional Northwest Coast way based upon ancestral ties, as a woman from Masset, of the House of WEAH). Her “human density” preferences are mixed (she is equally at home in the throngs along Vancouver’s Robson Street, or the wilds along the Skeena, miles and miles from anybody). Her artistic training has been mixed (learning “a bit of everything” in situations as structured as the Vancouver School of Art, and as informal as “hanging out” with fellow artists); even the artistic media in which she creates are diverse, as are the size of her creations: carving everything from small ivory pendants to large wooden totem poles; painting flat designs on everything from house fronts to greeting cards. All of these mixings bring their own benefits and challenges, but undoubtedly the one that has had the widest impact is her mixed ethnic and racial heritage.
As mentioned earlier, the term “race” was largely displaced decades ago by the term “ethnicity,” with its focus on the social construction of similarity and difference, and the appropriateness of its implication of choice and agency and self-ascription in classification in an anthropology that continues to move away from concepts of bounded entities into one of interactive processes. Interestingly, it was with regard to the use of the concept of ethnicity, how and why ethnic groups are created and perpetuated, and ethnic identities assumed by individuals, that led anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz (1983) to re-examine the role of story narration in creating the sense of a shared and continuing personal history as the basis for a shared ethnic identity.

The advantages and disadvantages of phenotypic classification notwithstanding, “race” is very much a live issue in contemporary society, where action often takes precedence over intellectual debate, and where certain types of difference are considered more important than others. For example, the differences between “ethnic” groups in which people take so much pride of membership (for example Haida, Tsimshian, Tlingit or British, French, German) do not seem to be conceptualized or discussed in the same way as “racial” differences - a person who is of mixed Haida/Tlingit parentage or mixed English/French parentage (mixture within a perceived racial group) is not designated as a “mixed breed” in the same manner as is a person of say, Haida/English parentage (crossing the perceived racial barrier between “Indian” and “white”). My use of the term “race” here is in accordance with the way I perceived it applied; it also has

7 Indigenous ethnic groups in Canada have for several decades been reclaiming their rights to self-definition, and accordingly the number of groups has increased exponentially, usually defining themselves by shared language, oral tradition and ancestry, and often have made the politically-informed choice to be designated as “Nations.” Please see Keyes (1981) for discussions on ethnic change in the age of nationalism.
the advantage of emphasizing the point that classification into groups is not always by self-ascription, and that old biases can persist in new political environments. As Zack (1994:25-26) points out:

_The ordinary American understands race as something physical but there are no general racial markers on a chromosomal level and those physical traits that society had designated as racial traits have varied over time. ...Race, like class, is almost entirely part of one’s social identity. There is no uniform biological foundation for it, even though people unthinking think and act as though there is._

The complications of the debates regarding the concepts that both “ethnicity” and “race” signify, expressed as identity politics, are no more strongly felt than by those of mixed heritage, mixed blood, the “mixed breeds” of Diesing’s discourse.

Green (1994:291) maintains that:

_As a person of mixed race, I embody some of the most unresolved contradictions in current human relations. Beyond just the mixing of physical traits, there’s the fact that my blood has ancestry from two different continents. This means that even before the experience of being born and raised in a land which is not my own, I have two or more vastly different histories, heritages, belief systems and ways of life which exist in my soul, in my spirit, in my DNA, in my heart of hearts - whichever you prefer._

The experiences of “women of colour” (itself a category increasingly under attack from within) were brought into academic discourse largely through the feminist movement - and particularly as a reaction by these women to their recognition of the white, middle-class biases inherent in the feminist movement. Groundbreaking work in both theorizing and bringing public recognition to this bias was done by the contributors to _This Bridge Called My Back_ (Moraga and
Anzaluda 1983). The theorizing has been continued by writers such as Trihn (1989, 1991), hooks (1995), Abu-Lughod (1993) and numerous others, while more anthologies have been produced relating the experiences of women of colour, and particularly mixed-blood women, in the face of changing forms of racism (see, for instance Camper 1994, and Palmer 1997).

People of mixed race have a variety of experiences of racism, and a variety of choices for self-identification. Within the discussions of the more than forty female contributors in Camper’s (1994) anthology alone, it seems every possible perspective is presented. Some (e.g., Camper) choose to clearly identify only with one part of their racial heritage, others (e.g., Abu-Jaber, and Adiele) feel equally part of two racial groups. Still others see themselves as part of a group distinct from others (e.g., Dumont: “Metis”; Chai, and Kam: “Callaloo Trini”), while some proudly lay claim to a multi-stranded racial and ethnic heritage (e.g., Achong: Irish, African, Spanish, Chinese and ‘unknown’; Baines: Afro-Canadian, French, Irish, Danish and Native; Carmen: Cherokee-Creek-Algonquin, African and English). Although Kinsley claims she “[u]nintentionally subverted the stereotype of the tragic mixed-race heroine by having one of the happiest childhoods of anyone she knows,” many of the other writers speak with deep resentment of being alienated both from the wider culture in which they live and even from members of their own family - some complaining of being rejected by their own parents because of racial prejudice.

Whether they proclaim like Qadeer (1994:387): “I am... and I know who I am,” or like Saunders (1994:388) they “deal with the quandary of ‘where do I belong’ my whole life,” or
they join Jensen (1994:385) in being “committed to just being me and doing all I can,” all these women draw upon their own experiences to discuss issues of racism and identity.

They speak of public and private embarrassments, belittlings, physical and psychological abuse. They speak of the forms of racism institutionalized within Canadian society. They speak of blatant and unrealized racism expressed by whites, and internalized racism expressed by others too - particularly when they do not look ‘Black enough’ or ‘Indian enough’, or when they are not of an ‘appropriate’ economic status. They speak of the alienation experienced when they look different than other members of their own family - the light one, the dark one, the one with the wrong shaped eyes, or the too curly/too straight hair ... And they speak of (and thereby end) the “suffocation,” the “soul death”( Majaj 1994:80) caused by silencing, either of oneself in an attempt to “pass,” or of one’s personal family history, rooted in shame, hatred, or fear.

For all of these mixed-blood persons, overlaying all these strategies of concealment, strategies of survival, is the endless process, private and public, of identity negotiation. As Arnott (1994:264-268) articulates:

*The process of healing has been a tearing down and tearing up of almost every constituent belief that I held about myself and my world, and a recentering in the truth of body, mind, of spirit, a reawakening of my deep self and a reconstruction of my social self, my being in the world, on this new/old/original foundation.*

... Possibly the most difficult issue for people of mixed heritage is that of belonging, and a part of that is safety: constantly testing the waters to see how I am seen, and what the perceiver's responses to their perceptions might be. The wide world that is laid open for people with multiple heritages is a well of potential, centered in a sometimes perilous terrain. The sliding identity that can be so difficult at first can become a very powerful tool for peacemakers. ... [We must not] divide up the world by race and caste without acknowledging that every single boundary is blurred, and that these blurrings occur not only out of a
conqueror mentality, but also out of love and need, and further that these blurrings have a name: we are called human beings.

A similar recognition of this endless process of construction and negotiation is expressed by Majaj (1994:88-90):

Like my parents, I am grounded in both history and alienation. But if it is true that we are ideologically determined, it is also true that our choices allow us a measure of resistance against the larger patterns which map us; a measure of self-creation. Constructed and reconstructed, always historically situated, identities embody the demarcation of possibilities at particular junctures. I claim the identity “Arab American” not as a heritage passed from generation to generation, but as an ongoing negotiation of difference. My parents articulated their relationship oppositionally, assumptions colliding as they confronted each other’s cultural boundaries. Child of their contradictions, I seek to transform that conflict into a constant motion testing the lines that encircle and embrace me, protect and imprison me ... I live at boundaries which are always overdetermined, constantly shifting.

These sketches trace many of the patterns of accommodation found in Diesing’s life, while these voices echo the words of her stories, stories that are revealing of a powerfully racialized, politicised, essentialized discourse, one in which movement within and between groups, the process of construction and negotiation of Diesing’s identity with herself and others, appears as both internally and externally directed:

“It didn’t feel like discrimination at the time”

“Sonny and I lived up there.
We even were given our meals up there!
It wasn’t the same with Bobbie ...”

“all the mixed-breed kids hung together ...”

“you were always with your own, not feeling like an outsider”
“She would watch, to see what people’s reactions would be”
“He wanted this young, beautiful wife; but he didn’t want an “Indian”
“She calls me Walslangaanas, Boston Lady, an insult to some”
“Some people say he’s not really Haida”

“Some criticised Robert and me for teaching non-Haidas”
“She always wanted blonde hair and blue eyes”
“They said they always knew about us—but we never heard from them.”
“But judging someone’s art by the way they look is just wrong!”
“there are whole villages with curly hair and blue eyes”
“only those of Native heritage could attend”
“And some have red hair”
“I told her that I was not political! But she said ‘all art is political!’”
“But they’re all Haida!”

“They never got to come home”
“they would nurse them at home ... it was hard”
“so many died”

“and I’m the one who’s proud to be an Indian!”
“because I don’t look Indian ... some people say I’m a fraud!”
“There’s discrimination from all sides, you know”

“Remember who you are.”

One mechanism of identity negotiation that was explicitly discussed by one of the writers in the literature that is relevant here was the manipulation of social status - specifically, using your profession to bolster your identity. Not that basing your identity on your job is something new, just that in discussions of racialized identity it seems to be seldom discussed (except perhaps in negative terms, like always being seen as a cleaning lady). Zack, a university professor who has
a “black” father and a “white” mother, raises this (and other significant issues) for consideration (1994:26):

I cannot decide at this time how close that raciality is to my present identity. ... For awhile I thought that I was in a unique position [looks white, ‘legally’ black] because both sides accepted me. But then I began to listen more carefully to what whites were saying about blacks - among ourselves - and what blacks were saying about whites - among ourselves. It became clear to me that generally speaking, among themselves, blacks do not consider whites to be human beings in the same deep sense that they are human beings; and whites, among themselves, do not consider blacks to be human beings in the same deep sense that they are human beings. So, among ourselves, within each race, the other race simply does not exist. We - they - are invisible to each other within the two races.

To have a foot planted on either side of this abyss is an emotional and conceptual impossibility. ... I either rise or sink I have decided to rise. ... I am not so sure that my self-esteem has been repaired in that area so much as that my class status is strong enough to balance out my low racial status, (and possibly vulnerabilities due to female gender as well). ... University scholars, who have books published, are part of those segments of society that used to be called the “upper classes,” regardless of whether they are tenured or how poor they are, or what the ordinarily respectable middle-class person might think of them. So my identity has, in effect, come to rest on the identity of my profession."

While many may challenge her provocative comments on the “invisibility” of races to each other, individuals do routinely exploit status, achieved and ascribed, in the negotiation of their identity - this is nothing new. It must be considered as a mechanism used by Diesing as well, for just like professors, whether rich or poor, famous or unknown, mainstream or ‘out there’, the profession of “artist” is accorded high status in Western society. And, as anthropologists state (e.g., Macnair 1984; Boelscher 1988) and Diesing repeatedly reiterated, artists have always been valued professionals in Haida society as well.8 It would seem that incorporating “artist” into

8 Dockstader (Anton et al. 1979:214, 225) describes Northwest Coast art creations that “became magnificent display ornaments primarily used to emphasize the wealth or social importance of their owners. To assure a supply of these objects, artists were maintained by wealthy patrons; indeed, this is one of the few Amerindian regions where true professional artists existed. They worked for pay, and often “belonged” to locally powerful chiefs, who absorbed their entire output,” and comments that an illustrated Tlingit totem pole “demonstrates the technique of combining ancestry, clan lineage, and historical narrative in one artistic presentation.”
one's identity accords one a certain automatic level of respect - respect threatened by displacement from an environment wherein it was assured by one's proper behaviour in a proper place in a proper lineage. In other words, if you have to create yourself again in a new land where your past credentials hold no value to most of those around you, it could be quite advantageous to establish an identity of "artist."

FIGURE 6: BUTTERFLY - DIESING PRINT (1979)
Second Discussion: The Interrelationship Between Diesing’s Identity and Her Art

What I would like to do in this discussion is look at the relationship between Diesing’s art and the ongoing negotiation of her identity, by extending (or compressing), the analytical work of Gell (1997) on art and social processes into the realm of individual identity formation. Since both Diesing’s identity and her art are strongly influenced by her positioning within art worlds they will be briefly sketched as well.

In order to understand any relationship between Diesing’s identity and her art, our discussion should begin with a few points that apply to Haida artforms generally. I have already mentioned in Section 1 Halpin’s treatise on crests (1973), and her commitment to exploring the nature of Northwest Coast art.9 Continuing the work of preceding scholars such as Duff, Halpin delineated the intricate relationship between stories, crests, art and philosophy, an approach which others continue to refine. Haida stories in the oral tradition equally emphasize endurance and transformation of being, and highlight continuity by focussing on rupture - a pattern which leaves its mark on the personal stories as well.

Haida art represents a way of seeing, simultaneously shaping background and foreground, bringing negative space into balance and harmony with positive space, and it is this ability to see

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9 Halpin (1986:24) was quick to argue that there was indeed nothing “natural” about NWC art, in the sense that some scholars speak of “primitive art” as being an expression of “natural man”: "... the forms of Indian art are sharp, crisp, and in essence related intellectually to the forms of nature. Coastal Indian art is profoundly assertive of artifice, of culture, and not of nature. It is abstract, not organic. Only in the European imagination do Indians exist as natural man. According to their own sense of themselves, they are profoundly civilized. Those who project romantic values - spontaneity, freedom, simplicity - cannot help distorting the complex, conservative, and hierarchical nature of Coastal Indian society." The Surrealists and Abstract Expressionists who “discovered” NWC art in the 1940s also believed in the “natural man”evolutionist approach to NWC art (Jonaitis 1991:238).
balance and harmony as spatial that is essential to being able to do good Northwest Coast art. It (re)presents the malleability of classification (is it a bird? a bear? a human?) in a society where place is everything, and who you are is determined by your birth - yet you can change it all by one outstanding act. Haida art reifies an epistemology: "the world is as sharp as a knife" they say (Abbott 1981); the artist’s struggle is to achieve and constantly maintain "the tension in the line" says Davidson (Steward 1979). That continuous line/lineage pulls a form together from the background that is equally shaped by this line, a form which is always ready, bursting, to change again (Bringhurst 1999).¹⁰

Rigid figures silently standing guard over the families who both express and achieve their identity through them. Raising them up. Tying them to multiple lands.

Dynamic figures, splitting the waves of salt and fresh waters, clearing the way for their creators.

Imposing frontlets, great ceremonial robes of complex design covering bodies decorated with tattoos, wrapping the high ones in multiple layers of connection, covering over their identity while proclaiming it.¹¹

¹⁰ Bringhurst (1999:211) notes: "That is the nature of line in Haida painting; it is also the nature of plot in Haida narrative. Neither the visual art nor the poetry has room for picturesque detail. Their power and complexity demand a sparer form. Yet to anyone who studies the art closely, no two Haida carvers are the same. And no two Haida poets either."

¹¹ Please see also Jonaitis (1991:30) and Gell regarding the social importance of textile and body art. Gell (1998:256), speaking of a South Pacific group with marked similarity in the forms and social uses of art: "Marquesan tattoo and other body arts are consistent with this picture of continually threatened personal and spiritual integrity. But identity was only under threat because it was so labile, so relative and situational. Marquesans could switch social identities at will (by name-exchange, adoption, and other practices) so we have the (apparently) paradoxical situation that a culture whose central preoccupation seems to have been the assertion and protection of social/spiritual identity is also the culture in which identity is exceptionally tenuous. [Where] social status was, theoretically speaking.
The painting of Haida masks, as on Haida faces, showing "eyebrows, eyes, nostrils and lips," the "significant features of the face," often overlain with crest designs: "flat realistic or conventionalized designs are applied with seeming disregard for the structure of the face." (Holm 1965:24).

Group membership marks every person; individual identity is secondary. "I made an Eagle design for my hair, to show that I am an Eagle woman" says Diesing of her self-portrait mask. Yet the group is known by and for the individuals within it, whose names and stories endure for generations, whose spirits watch over the living, and reincarnate in individuals. "Your uncles are guiding you," says Diesing's Auntie. "We are our ancestors!" proclaims Haida speaker Diane Brown (1999). Such is the complex nature of Haida artforms and Haida social identity.

And how does all this relate to Diesing's story? Diesing is an artist - a person who not only uses art, and enjoys the effects of art, but also creates art. As such, she is particularly attuned to the uses of art (especially in Haida society). She creates her art to have a specific social impact - even if she avows that it is cultural, not political - and that process of creation itself both expresses and shapes her own identity.

As mentioned earlier, some people choose to become artists because of its positioning as a "high status" endeavour. Whether Diesing chose to be an artist for that reason is only conjecture on my

wholly a matter of pedigree - and in which it was, simultaneously, accepted that pedigrees could be arbitrary political fictions." Diesing gives numerous examples of this "switching" (especially through adoption) of social identity in Haida society, and the tenuous nature of social position.
part - as, in fact, is my statement that she "chose" that career at all. There is, of course, the central consideration of what Diesing thinks of her career as an artist, and how she positions that in relation to her self image. This will form the core of the next section's discussion.

For the present, there is the consideration, particularly common for those in the arts, of being "born" to do something, of having a "gift." While admitting that some people do have a greater facility for doing a particular thing than do most other people, nevertheless I believe that the average person can do anything reasonably well if they work hard enough at it. This is not based so much on an egalitarian philosophy as on the simple recognition of the wisdom in the old adages "practice makes perfect" and "the learning is in the doing." Prodigies are not only people who are "born to" do something, they are also the people who practice it ... and practice it, and practice it... And of course they are also those who have or attain whatever privileges are required to access the requisite materials, free time, work space etc. Which is also tied in to the second consideration - serendipity - sometimes you also have to be the right person at the right place at the right time. Kubler (1962) called this one's "entrance."

Both Kubler's concept of "entrance" and Becker's (1982) discussion of "art worlds" were presented in Section I, so the bulk of that material will not be repeated here. But we should look again at Diesing's personal situation.

As mentioned earlier, Diesing claims a youthful predilection towards art (e.g., carving pieces for her brother's airplanes), but not, then, a favourable environment. Neither of her parents seem to have been particularly interested in art; her grandmother, although quite creative in her own
youth, was by then a busy working woman helping to raise her two daughters’ children; and both her own household and the northern communities generally had been largely stripped of examples of their artistic heritage.

It was only when Diesing had been separated from her home and family by years of hospitalization and out-patient care for TB, and found herself (literally) starting afresh in Vancouver, that she had the time, inclination, and opportunity to seriously pursue her interest in art - and she did, studying at the Vancouver Art School.

In those early days, “The People of the Potlatch” is said to have heralded a new recognition of Native art; Diesing met established carvers like Ellen Neel, and novice carvers like Bill Reid; and she finally saw, in abundance, the art of her ancestors. But the time was still not quite right. There were other things in her personal life that she needed to do. She went back home. She married. She became a market gardener. She bought a truck.

Perhaps it was the truck. At the very time that her old friend and neighbour, Mrs. Sutton, needed someone to drive her to these new Indian revival activities that were taking place in Hazelton, Diesing happened to have a truck - that VW van. And she took the time, and made the effort to drive her friend, back and forth between Cedarvale and Hazelton - and that is how she got the information and made the connections that began her long relationship with ‘Ksan, that established her reputation as an artist and fed her interest as a researcher. What if she hadn’t had the truck?
Or maybe it was the sheep. It cost a lot of money to travel to Vancouver, and Diesing was never one to have a lot of money, although she has always had enough 'to get by.” But she did have the sheep - and she sold those sheep “to go to an art exhibition in Vancouver.” The Arts of the Raven; The People of the Potlatch; ‘Ksan. Experiences that literally changed her life.

Perhaps her career would have begun and progressed exactly the same way if she had never been forced into distant isolation, if she had never owned a van, or never even seen a sheep. Who knows? All that can be said, in retrospect, is that each seemed to be just what she needed, in the right place at the right time.

And the time was then right indeed for a keen Native artist to carve out a place for herself. Canada was celebrating its centennial, and under Trudeau’s Liberal government was trying to re-fashion itself into an officially self-constituted bilingual multicultural country. Vast amounts of money were made available, in the form of grants and loans, to enhance the prosperity of the country and develop the potentials of its citizens. I was one of the beneficiaries of one such programme: in the fall of 1968, when I had just turned 18, I was able to begin my university education in Ottawa, thanks to the new Canada/Ontario programme of subsidized loans for post-secondary students. As a member of what might best be characterized as Ontario’s “rural poor,” I likely would not otherwise have had the opportunity for a university education - and certainly not as a teenager. (Maybe it was my VW Bug ...)

Diesing was the beneficiary of another arm of the government grants system: most of the training she received while at ‘Ksan, and most of her employment there, was financed by government
grants for Native development, and much of her individual artistic production in the early years was marketed either through ‘Ksan or through the Department of Indian Affairs - particularly through the efforts of her friend and fellow artist Doreen Jensen.

The 1960s are generally considered to mark the beginning of the “Indian Revival” in political terms, or the “Native Renaissance” in art terms - although both just highlight one small section of a long ongoing process. It is interesting how different interest groups symbolically “mark” that time. The general Canadian populace remembers 1967 as Canada’s centennial year, and the year Canadians hosted the world at Expo ‘67 in Montreal. In the smaller world of Northwest Coast art scholars, 1967 is remembered as the year “The Arts of the Raven” exhibition opened a new curatorial discourse about Native art. Literary scholars such as Krupat (1994:339) associate the beginning of the “Native American Renaissance” with 1968, and the publication of N. Scott Momaday’s pivotal “The Way to Rainy Mountain.” Political activists may point towards 1969 and the provocative “White Paper” outlining the government’s official assimilation plan for Native Canadians. Many Haida, especially Masset Haida, look to the totem pole carved by Robert Davidson (Jr.), one of their own, raised in the summer of 1969, the first pole to be raised on the Islands since the late 19th Century. And Diesing, of course, remembers 1967 as the year she became a carver.

Diesing remembers the 1970s as a busy decade during which she alternated between working at ‘Ksan, teaching classes in Rupert, doing private commissions, and producing works for sale - and, of course, fulfilling the duties expected of a wife, a daughter, and an aunt. During that time she was honing her own artistic style and doing ‘production’ art, but she was also actively
researching her Native heritage. Her efforts in that direction were assisted by her mother Flossie, whom Diesing remembers as becoming much more forthcoming about her personal heritage after the death of her husband Geoff Lambly in 1976.

Diesing’s early artistic career was supported by her husband Art, but being married also had its demands. When her husband died in 1980, and Diesing was left as a widow, she was in the fortunate position of seeing an increased demand for her art and her teaching skills, and she was able to travel internationally to exploit opportunities there as well. Which was a good thing, since, back home, the Northwest Coast art world was changing.

As there got to be more and more good Native carvers, and the Northwest Coast art style thrived, competition increased in response to market demands. Eventually the Northwest Coast art world found itself in the position that European art was in the mid 1860s - more good artists producing good works than the system could accommodate, and a rising wave of junior artists inundating the market with works of questionable quality in presenting cultural knowledge, technical execution, or originality (Becker 1982:108).

The earlier European situation fed the growth of the dealer/gallery system for the marketing of art, as opposed to the previous system of patronage (Becker 1982:109). A century later Native art had enjoyed an efflorescence due to both private and public patrons - most especially, as mentioned, the Canadian government. In addition to the system of grants and the marketing efforts of the Department of Indian Affairs, both the museum system and the Canadian Pacific Railroad (another government organization) had always maintained an active, if highly
controversial and self-interested, role as ‘patrons’ of Native arts (e.g., Barbeau and Beynon, various; Cole 1985; Ames 1992). As government agencies were increasingly privatized and federal funding became very restricted as the 1980s ‘recession’ mentality became entrenched, galleries increasingly have served to display and market Native arts - which, conveniently, had only come to be widely defined as “art” in the discourse of the 1960s (Duff et al. 1967; Macnair et al. 1984). The growth of the gallery system is itself a mixed blessing, in that it both promotes Native art by educating the wider public in identifying quality in art, and restricts the artists to producing works that the gallery considers “good” (which usually translates as those which will sell in the contemporary market) (Becker 1982: 94, 115; Schier 1991:151-7).

Diesing not only benefited from the federal grants programmes, the exhibition programme of the Department of External Affairs, and the marketing activities of the Department of Indian Affairs; her work has also been collected by several museums, including the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Royal British Columbia Museum, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the UBC Museum of Anthropology. Diesing says she did not initially have much success marketing her work through galleries, who were “not interested in the kind of carving I did”.

In those days the Modernist paradigm of artistic production was at its peak, which meant, as discussed in Section I, that artworlds celebrated the individual artistic genius of the creative (male). Thus well-spoken, well-connected artists such as Bill Reid could replicate old forms and be heralded for their personal genius and leadership role in the “Renaissance” of Haida art.12

12 It is one of those interesting ironies that this “renaissance” or “re-birth” is seen as such a male-centred activity, when birthing itself, of course, is a female activity. Appropriate, I suppose, to the Modernist environment where NWC art discourse had shifted from the realm of faceless “primitive/natural” to that of the personal “sophisticated/intellectual.”
Those who might not be so well-spoken, or those who were not so well-connected, or those who might be working toward a different agenda, were not easily accommodated by such a system. Diesing, who was also replicating old forms, not primarily to gain personal acclaim, but “so that people would have something to look at” - northern people, that is - clearly did not fit the marketing requirements of the Modernist artworld. Furthermore, Diesing also admits that “I wasn’t very good at selling for myself.” As a result she began to restrict her work to individual commissions.

Now her work is in demand, and established galleries seek her out to encourage, even push her to produce more. It isn’t that Diesing has radically changed her art in response to market demands - as with any artist, the quality of her work improved over time as she more fully developed her skills, and certainly she used to produce both a greater quantity and a greater variety of artworks than she does now. Nevertheless, the corpus of Diesing’s work shows a remarkable similarity over time. Diesing, after initially exploring various options to discover who she was in relation to her art, found a comfortable, rewarding place and stayed there. It was the art worlds who moved around and finally came to her.

This is an important consideration, as it is reflective of Diesing’s approach to all public involvement. She does not market herself; she does not actively seek out commissions, or teaching jobs, or shows - although she will happily undertake them if asked. She does not seek

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13 During our fieldwork, at one point in Diesing’s discussion of the flourishing of the careers of some artists and not others of equal skill, she noted that “It’s just not fair to compare some poor Indian carver working away on a reserve with Bill Reid” who had the advantages of being “famous” as a well-known and well-connected radio broadcaster “before he even started carving!”
out students, journalists, or anthropologists - but she will happily make herself available and share her knowledge, if asked. But only if asked. She has made two comments about this:

_I only do things now when people ask for them, 'cause that way I know they really want them. And, I usually agree to most people's requests, 'cause I often find that, when it comes down to them actually doing it, there's no money, or they've lost interest, or they forgot ...And if it turns out that they really want to do it, and they're really ready, then that's fine. I'm always interested to learn new things, and to do new things, and to go new places. I'll try almost anything once!_

This approach reflects more than just an inherent pragmatism (and a keen sense of adventure!). Some might say it indicates a lack of taking oneself and one’s career seriously. I suggest instead that this is another manifestation of the Haida ideal of proper behaviour: people who “know who they are” perform activities and behave in ways that ultimately attract the attention and respect of others. Thus not only does one not need to market oneself (since your reputation will speak for you), but forcing yourself upon the attention of others, and bragging about your accomplishments, is very bad form (Boelscher 1989).

So, ultimately, Diesing has waited for the art world to come to her - and ultimately, they have.

Although she is a reluctant success - she really longs to retire. _I don't make a lot of money from my art. But I don't need to have a lot of money - not everyone needs to be rich! I can get by with very little. And I don't think_

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14 This implication of modesty in behaviour appears to be in direct contradiction to potlatch behaviour, in which self-aggrandisement through displays of wealth and boasting of the accomplishments of oneself and one's ancestors is the rule of the day. Or is it? Returning to Cruikshank's idea that “distinct cognitive models generate different kinds of social analysis” (p. 85), might the Haida not analyse potlatch behaviour (which is focussed more on the corporate unit than on one person, and is open to immediate public challenge) using entirely different standards than those applied to individual behaviour and self-promotion?
I should have to work hard all my life. I'm an old lady; I have a right to retire."

Indeed she does have a right to retire. But even at the height of her career, Diesing says she was never one to treat her carving as a full time job, as do many of the other carvers. Speaking to a class at the Northwest College in Terrace, she said, using as example her nephew Don Yeomans:

*He does very well, supports his wife and two children, and they have a house in Vancouver, and a truck and a car and all those things people want. But he works at it all the time, just like a regular job. And he just allows himself a couple of weeks vacation a year, and then he's working again. And that's the way you have to do it if you want to make a career as a good carver. I never wanted to do that.*

Throughout her career, Diesing has always preferred to do a bit of everything - carving, teaching, travelling - as it suits her. Being a frugal woman of modest wants and aspirations, this approach has served her well.

But her lack of interest in the outward trappings of success, and her lack of desire to devote every possible moment to developing her art or her reputation, does not mean that she takes the quality of her artistic creations any less seriously than the most renowned of her colleagues. It does mean that she has a different philosophy - both towards what it means to be a successful artist in the Northwest Coast tradition, and what constitutes good Northwest Coast art.

Diesing is, in Becker's (1982) terms, a combination of a traditionalist and a maverick - like a traditionalist, she has been trained in all the important art techniques of the day, and like a maverick she claims to have very quickly developed her own style and gone on to do her own
work in her own way. She is also a traditionalist in the sense that she has very clear ideas about what constitutes "proper" Northwest Coast art, both for herself and for others. Although she appreciates the innovations and alterations of forms that the current generation of skilled artists are producing (as long as they have mastered the basics of formline design first!), that type of art is not for her. Diesing's identity as an artist is closely bound to her role as a teacher, and that derives from her preparation and training, first from her grandmother, then from the elders she interviewed, and finally from her mother, to pass along cultural knowledge to the upcoming generation. And all of that is co-terminus with her identity as a Haida woman, an Eagle woman from Masset, from the House of WEAH. All of her art is infused with that, all of her art explores that identity, and all of her art reinforces that identity.

One might claim that, in many ways, Diesing's art is feminist, although not overtly so. Her biological identity as a mixed-blood Haida woman immediately situates her in a politically charged field, and despite her firm assertions that her art is NOT political, her art can still be situated within a feminist discourse. As described in Broude and Garrard (1994:22):

"As feminist artists explored female experience and identity through their art, they created and addressed a new audience. Lucy Lippard has argued that feminist art replaced the modernist "egotistical monologue" with a dialogue - between art and society, between artist and audience, between women artists of the present and those of the past - and with collaboration as a creative mode. The feminist position is that (in Lippard's words) "Art can be aesthetically and socially effective at the same time," by contrast to the masculinist avant-garde model, in which the creative isolation of the artist, out of touch with society, is highly valued. Feminist art is instead deliberately pitched to a public and social context, and as Lippard says, is "characterized by an element of outreach, a need for connections beyond process or product, an element of inclusiveness." Within the feminist movement, women of color led the way in creating effective forms of social protest art ... a broader connection between art, community, and social policy was forged. ... Also, in the late 1970's and 1980's women artists became
increasingly prominent in the field of public art in the United States - an involvement that may seem paradoxical, given the traditional association of women with the private sphere and men with the public ... Women introduced new attitudes and iconographies to public art projects, in which they sought to express the self not simply as the personal "I", but worked instead to blend the personal with the public, pointing the way toward a reconciliation of the traditional concerns of the artist with those of the community.

Diesing's art seems to create a comfortable space of its own within this feminist discourse. Certainly to the extent that she is a woman doing what has been considered "men's" art, Diesing reproduces the feminist agenda of claiming participative equality in all spheres. The main point of difference is that she claims she is in fact being quite "traditional" in undertaking this "non-traditional" activity.

Although at first blush Diesing's art appears in no way to be "protest art," in a sense all successful Native art is protest art - making the loud and public statement "We are still here! We have endured!" Not only have Northwest Coast people "endured," but Northwest Coast art is now thriving like never before. This is indeed a powerful achievement in the face of decades of personal and institutionalized oppression. And since Native peoples and the rest of Canada have still not settled into mutually satisfactory relationships, every pole, every mural, every print, every mask, every t-shirt, every mouse-pad that is in public spaces, impinging upon the public mind, is a subtle form of art as ongoing protest through subtle reminding, remembering.

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15 "First Nations People have survived as distinct and dynamic cultures with great prospects for the future. Our very survival is cause for celebration" Jenson and Brooks (1991:8).

16 See Crosby (1997) for a parallel discussion of how the Northwest Coast art style has been reified and objectified specifically as a tool in the political arena.
It is also interesting to note Lippard’s statement (above) about women artists coming into and reshaping the realm of public art in the United States, which the speaker found “paradoxical, given the traditional association of women with the private sphere and men with the public.” The cultural specificity of the speaker’s orientation is noteworthy - Haida women have never seemed to hesitate to claim agency in both the private and the public spheres (see, for example the work of Norton 1985). Diesing’s art has always been very much in the public sphere. Her very first carving project - to make a model Haida village - served as a display at the first Indian Days Festival. Diesing’s earliest commissions - to carve panels for the Prince Rupert Regional Hospital, and to make a reproduction pole for the City of Prince Rupert, are both examples of public art that make significant statements about community, as of course was her work with the Kitsumkalum community. Diesing’s years of work with ‘Ksan all focussed on making art for educational purposes - to help bring art back to the Native communities “so that people would have something to look at,” and to help the broader white community better understand history and art from a Native perspective. When she was in Sweden, Finland, and Australia her prime focus was sharing information about Northwest Coast cultures - not just doing art in public places, but explaining the connection between her art and the cultural communities from which it sprang. She most enjoys creating art in public places, specifically because she values and thrives upon public contact and the discussions and opportunities for learning and sharing that such occasions provide.

Diesing’s personal style may be unique, but her work is deliberately traditional in nature, both in the use of her art to make public statements about self and community, and in the form and subject she chooses. Diesing, while situating herself as “a modern woman,” is profoundly
traditional in many ways, and none more so than in her beliefs about the importance of women, especially “old ladies” (as she now calls herself) in the transmission of knowledge. Her main venue for transmitting that knowledge has been through her art - teaching it and doing it.

Gell (1998:255) discusses the nature of “tradition” in art, illustrating his theory of the relationship between time and art and identity. He notes that “The transmission of a ‘tradition’, the recapitulation of a model, is the objectification of memory, and thus inherently retrospective.” Discussing how art is a form of social agency and a tool for shaping identity, he traces the relationship between the community, the artists and the materials they use (see especially his chart of the “art nexus” 1998:29). Tying this together with the dimension of time, and using the Maori meeting house as his ultimate example of the affective powers of art to project and reinforce the power and identity of communities, Gell goes on to argue several points about tradition and innovation which are directly relevant to Diesing’s art (and also informative of the nature of the historic Haida big-houses):

It is not just that Maori meeting houses incorporated ‘innovations’, (i.e. non-traditional elements which, later, being imitated, became ‘traditions’ in themselves), each house was totally an ‘innovation’... in that the house was oriented towards the future, the political triumph which would be the anticipated outcome of the effort invested in its construction. The building of the house was a collective, intentional, action, and ‘action’ is intrinsically future-oriented. ... [A]s ‘traditional’ artefacts, Maori meeting houses are undeniably retrospective, as political gestures they are prospective.... An artefact or event is never either traditional or innovatory in any absolute sense .... A “traditional” artefact (or event) is only ‘traditional’ when viewed from a latter-day perspective, and as a screen, or transparency, through which its precursors are adumbrated. The traditional object is grasped as a retention, a retention of retentions, and so on.

17 Compare to Armstrong’s (1981) exploration of the affective powers of art as object/symbol at the individual level, and Taussig’s discussions of mimesis (1993) and defacement/enchantment (1999).
Conversely, an 'innovatory' object (or event) is innovatory only on condition that we situate ourselves anterior to it in time (i.e., at a moment in time at which it has not yet, or is just about to, come into existence) - so that we can likewise see it as a screen through which still later objects may be protended, as a protention, protention of protentions, etc. ... The logically mandatory nature of such a continuously shifting perspective on tradition and innovation in an historical assemblage of artefacts means that the process of understanding art history is essentially akin to the processes of consciousness itself, which is marked, likewise, by a continuous perspectival flux. ... 

[The meeting house is] a cognitive process writ large, a movement of inner duree as well as a collection of existing objects ... [It] is an object which we are able to trace as a movement of thought, a movement of memory reaching down into the past and a movement of aspiration, probing towards an unrealized, and perhaps unrealizable futurity. (Gell 1998:251-258)

In the same way that a communal house can be a communal cognitive process writ large, drawing upon the past and projecting it into the future, so too can an individual's art be seen as a movement of thought, a movement of memory, and a movement of aspiration. The “tradition” Diesing recalls and projects into the future is one whose reification she herself challenges, one that she, like Gell, knows is only traditional depending on the subject’s intention and position.

When looked at in this manner, I believe the forms of Diesing’s art reflect both her ideological positioning within the traditional Haida community, and her social isolation from it. It is interesting to continue this form of speculation in a brief comparison of her work with another Haida artist, Bill Reid. Reid, arguably the most famous contemporary Haida artist, and also of mixed Haida-EuroCanadian heritage, grew up not knowing about his Haida heritage and then spent the largest part of his adult life trying to come to terms with his Haidaness (Shadbolt 1999; Duffek 1986; Macnair et al. 1984).
Known best as an obsessive proponent of “the well-made object,” Reid combined this Western-trained aesthetic with the art style of his Haida predecessors, (preferring especially to copy the designs of Charles Edenshaw), and produced works of great beauty, particularly in metal. Much of his work draws upon the interwoven/transformative style of Haida art as most abundantly presented on the poles of Tanu, home to his mother’s people (MacDonald 1989), and on argillite panel pipes (Barbeau 1953, 1957; Sheehan 1981; Macnair and Hoover 1984). These pipes were created originally for the early tourist trade (which meant a primary market of males, many of them European or American sailors). This style is most striking in its presentation of a mass of beings of clearly recognizable form and/or those of ambiguous form intertwined, “fluid, caught in the midst of transformation” (Halpin 1981:38), “jostling for position” (Reid in Bringhurst 1991:19), and most often featuring exceptionally long, and often twining, protruding tongues. This iconography is especially evocative of the arts of the South Pacific (for example, see Dark and Rose 1993), and there was certainly contact between Pacific Islanders and Haida islanders during the early trading days, and possibly long before.

Gell (1997:214) commenting on a similar Marquesan depiction of “bodies merging into one another in an indistinguishable tangle,” perceives a “playful ... antithesis of the separation and insulation of body from body which Marquesan ritual rules ... upheld with such stringency,” and he considers this “an ironic commentary on a world suffused with the magical danger of contagion and unboundedness.”

18 I will leave additional speculation about these extraordinarily long, penetrating tongues and interlacing body parts to those of Freudian bent!
When seen as “cognitive process” such a marked stylistic preference might indicate a continuing searching for a new form of self when one’s original understanding of self had been destroyed ("a tearing down and tearing up of almost every constituent belief that I held about myself and my world,” said Arnott (1994:264) previously about her own similar experience of discovering her Native self as an adult), and also a striving to position oneself in a community where one feels out of place. Or, following Gell’s Marquesan example, a playful and ironic comment about the fluid/rigid hierarchy of the insular Haida. This (ironic/playful) style is particularly apt for Reid, an individual who was already famous for his ‘tongue’ - as a radio broadcaster), and whose self-positioning out side of (and above) contemporary Island Haida and ‘sharp tongued’ criticisms raised much controversy amongst Haida peoples everywhere (controversy which many like Brown (1999) believed ultimately contributed to a needed introspection and debate which served to make Haida society stronger).

In many ways, the work of Freda Diesing stands in direct opposition to that of Bill Reid (despite attributing much of her training to Robert Davidson, who himself worked with and learned from Bill Reid).

First there is the question of aesthetics, and the philosophy of art, discussed in part earlier. Reid presented himself (or at the very least was perceived by others) as a “gifted” artist, an “innovator” and “leader” in his field, fully exploiting the Modernist model of the “artistic genius” (Reid, 1999, and Roth 1998). “Ellen Neel and Charlie James were the first to decontextualize Native design and incorporate it into the Modernist art movement,” says Davidson (1999), “Bill Reid’s most important contribution was in improving the technology of
art production." And, as mentioned above, Reid had a distinctive style predicated upon the concept of the well-made object, which has now become a hallmark of contemporary Northwest Coast art (Davidson 1999).

Diesing speaks of carving as a career choice, one of many, both for herself and for others, and does not at all see artists as special people separated from the masses by a "gift". Carving is a skill which can be mastered with sufficiently hard work - although Diesing sees that few people are actually prepared to put in that much work. Diesing also believes that carvings and other art works should both be hand made and look hand made. *I'm an artist, not an industrial designer!* She would be quick to agree with this comment of Dockstader (1979: 216): "With increased technological skill many of these arts are actually better today than formerly, although they are not always as well designed; technology has a way of emphasizing skill to the detriment of talent and taste." Although she admits to a clear preference for using select quality tools, these are generally updates on traditional technology - adzes and straight blade and bent-blade carving knives. Her knife blades may be finely crafted, but she often turns them into rough-and-ready tools - taped on to handles quickly carved to be comfortable and efficient, but hardly elegant. *“When I need to make a new knife I'm usually in a hurry, so I don't attach the blade like I should. I've often thought of carving the knife handles, making really nice ones, but I've never gotten around to it.”* Her approach is low-tech in other ways too - eyes in masks are made by tracing around a penny "just the right size," often using stubby bits

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19 She was contacted a few years ago by someone doing a dissertation on the shamanic aspects of art. Diesing said she was first sent a “survey” to determine whether she saw artists as being somehow special or as working within some form of shamanic ecstasy. She claimed that her unequivocal “no” to such a categorization caused her to be dropped from the roster of artists included in that dissertation.
of very dull pencils; a car-washing brush serves as well as a mis-placed drafting brush for wiping away sawdust and chips. No calipers or routers or drill-presses on her workbench - and certainly no computers with CAD applications.

Reid and Diesing have a particularly intriguing difference around the meaning of the expression "deeply carved." As used by Reid it meant good, well made, as it "dug old meanings more deeply into the surface of material" and was not just "slipping around on the surface" (Shadbolt 1999). For Diesing, however, "deeply carved" is a derogatory evaluation, since good carving should not be deep ("Well, at least it's deeply carved enough that it won't wear off," she said of a ring I was wearing - implying that its durability was particularly unfortunate in light of its poor craftsmanship!). "Deepness" equates to "digging" which indicates a lack of skill. Good carving, for Diesing, should be subtle, clean, and well-controlled - but never "deep"!

With rare exceptions - such as the occasional transformation mask, and her classically rendered raven rattles - Diesing's art images are solitary figures, not intertwined, or sharing the same space - and generally, they keep their tongues to themselves. These figures are seldom even presented in stacked multiples. They stand alone. They are clearly identifiable, not at all ambiguous in their iconography - beaver is obvious beaver in Haida style, eagle is clearly eagle, whether in flat design, or as a headdress or a pole. And a person is clearly a person - her masks can be as realistic as portraits. There are only hints of relationships between the two - an Eagle figure with a female face in an available ovoid in tail or abdomen - "for all the Eagle women in my family," or an Eagle design used on a mask as hair "to show that I
am an Eagle woman.” But these are just marks of relationship - the eagle figure is still an eagle, the mask is still of a fully-human woman.

Although her formlines are “properly drawn,” and flow smoothly around the figures, simultaneously demarcating positive and negative spaces, Diesing’s figures themselves seldom convey a sense of motion, nor do they exude a sense of being trapped or frozen. There is no rigid traditionalism here, where change would shatter being. These are solid forms, well-balanced, firmly planted in Haida tradition, Taoist in their composure. These are figures who “know who they are.” These are figures that are derived from community and connection and tradition - but confidently stand alone, comfortable in their displacement from conventional positioning.

The same, of course, can be said of Diesing herself. She has always known she is Haida. She has always known that she is other than Haida too. Trihn’s “Inappropriate Other,” both “Insider” and “ Outsider.” “She’s talking about me, right here ...” Perhaps, early in Diesing’s career, when she was still searching for her self and her place and her growing self-esteem was still very fragile, she avoided ambiguity in her art because there was so much of it in her life, and she needed to make the symbols of her heritage seem more concrete and enduring, not less - flexible enough to include her within its folds, but sturdy, permanent and secure enough for her to grab hold of as a support for her identity. Art as a negotiation both with others and with conflicting aspects of her self.20 Now her life is full of possibilities rather than limitations and her sense of identity is secure, unambiguous. Her person style is long established, and

20 "If structuralists are correct, we tend to emphasize in symbolic projections precisely those issues which are problematic in our lives rather than things which are clear.” (Cruikshank 1987:12).
comfortable. She is not just one or the other, she is both — and all. While knowing herself to be enmeshed in centuries of history, and while proudly contextualizing her family history and situating herself within it, she also stands alone — and confident.

“Creating,” says Shadbolt (in Halpin 1984:28), “is not an exercise in aesthetics but an act of sensory discovery.” The claim of this dissertation is that artistic creation is also an act of self discovery — and an act of self-fashioning. A large part of Diesing’s identity is embodied in her art; in the making and the remaking, it has made her as much as she has made it.

As embodied identity, apprehending the relationship between Diesing and her art necessitates one more discussion: in a practical, physical sense, as well as a social sense, what understanding might Diesing have developed about Haida ideals of woman-ness and womanly behaviour? What might have been the sources she drew upon to construct that understanding? Again we turn to stories.

FIGURE 7: SALMON
DIESING PRINT (1984)
Third Discussion: How Being an Artist Fits in with Her Conception of How to Be a Proper Haida Woman

"Remember who you are." A grandmother’s words echo ...

"I am a Haida woman from Masset ..."

What does it mean to be a Haida woman from Masset? How does one determine what it means - how do you know?

“To see (or to know) is to be sensuously filled with that which is perceived, yielding to it, mirroring it - and hence imitating it bodily” (Taussig 1993 in Gell 1997:100). The remembering and reproduction of physical forms; the remembering and retelling of family histories and cultural mythologies; the remembering and retracing of the fashioning of a self - these are all ways of knowing Diesing uses in the presentation of her life story, as also in her ongoing creation of the self that tells the story.

“[A]s social persons, we are present, not just in our singular bodies, but in everything in our surroundings which bears witness to our existence, our attributes, and our agency” (Gell 1997:103).21 Although the physical surroundings in which Diesing grew up contained few examples of the physical artistic tradition to which she was heir, the narrative tradition - the telling of family histories, the telling of stories from the cultural mythology - stories selected to

21 This is part of Gell’s discussion of his concept of “the distributed self” which he developed from Strathern’s concept of the “partial self” (please see Gell 1997 and Strathern 1991).
amuse, inform, inspire - continued. Having a father and a grandfather who were both situated outside the Haida cultural traditions meant for Diesing that the women in her family were even more important than usual in helping her learn “Haidaness.” And as we have heard, “Haidaness” has always been important to Diesing. It is perhaps “Haidaness,” more than anything, that is central to her life story as related here. And as a woman, inheriting a tradition from other women, and passing key parts of it along by narrating her life story to yet another woman, it is understandable that women and considerations of “Haida woman-ness” are highlighted in her presentation.

Village noblemen and chiefs, unless they obviously lack the capacity, tend to be spokesmen for their people: they use newspapermen, authors and radio and television people as channels for the messages they wish to get out. Over the years each of them has developed a repertoire of observations, anecdotes, legends and fragments of history. This is truly theirs: their repertoire is as personal as the preferred images of a poet or the thematic obsessions of a composer. (Newton 1973:37)

In this presentation of Diesing’s performance of her “repertoire,” woven together to create her life story, the “observations, anecdotes, legends and fragments of history” which she has chosen to share with us, and for which she has used me and this document as a channel, do indeed constitute messages which she wants to “get out.”

“She brings her history with her.”22 Every interview with Diesing that I have conducted, heard, or read, ultimately finds itself including discussions of her history - her parents, her

22 Adapted from a statement by Danny Glover, speaking of the outspoken activism of his friend Harry Belafonte: “He brings his history with him.” (Mary Willis 2001:87).
grandparents, and her Haida heritage. Freda Diesing lives in a web of history and connection which she is willing - even determined - to share with all who ask. She proudly continues the "spokesman" tradition as characterized by Newton (even if she isn't a "man").

But there is one major difference. Whereas some may choose to speak on behalf of "the Haida people," however they may define them, Diesing is quite clear that she is following an even older Haida tradition. She speaks for no one but herself, and she speaks only about her own her experiences and her own family.

There is a characteristic of Diesing's narrations that should be noted: that of showing respect for others through public acknowledgement of their actions. Diesing does not hesitate to speak of all the teachings she received from her family - especially her grandmother, mother, "Aunties" and Uncle Willie. She is equally quick to acknowledge the training she received from other artists, technicians, and local historians, whether Native or not, locals or foreigners, family or strangers, even though not all of these acknowledgements appear in this document. And Diesing also does not hesitate to call to task those who she believes behaved incorrectly or improperly. She offers subtle comments of rebuke to those whom she has never met and who will never see them (missionaries and collectors gone for generations); to those who have challenged others (to her mind, unfairly), and to those who have challenged or obstructed her in ways she believes unfair or improper.

Often when making a statement Diesing cites her source, saying who told her some piece of information and sometimes under what conditions they told her. Her speech is peppered with
such references, far more than appear here. Occasionally she does this quite deliberately, but more often it seems to be automatic, the result of many decades of living in a culture where how you come to know something is every bit as important as what you know.\(^{23}\) For the Haida, and other Native speakers, citing the source of information is a way of legitimizing knowledge while allowing the listener to position the knowledge along an imagined continuum of believability (where the truest or most dependable knowledge is that which one has experienced for oneself, then what you have been told by someone you know and trust who speaks from personal experience, etc.). Diesing’s overarching comment regarding her family history: *"I heard it from the mouths of those who should know."*

So within that framework of respect, what does Diesing know that she wants to share with us? What are some of her *"preferred images” or “thematic obsessions”* (above) evinced here? Keeping in mind the warnings of Barthes (1970) and Boyarin (1993) that one cannot control how one’s writing is understood when read, there may well be as many different themes found as there are different readers, regardless of Diesing’s intentions. However, since this discussion is about how Diesing might relate her artistic endeavours to her ideas about what constitutes proper behaviour for a modern Haida woman, I have limited my selection to that.

The most important theme is that she does indeed identify herself first and foremost as a Haida woman, from Masset, of the House of WEAH. She demonstrates this through direct assertion ("*I

\(^{23}\) Anthropologists like Boas (1916, 1955) and Swanton (1905) and Barbeau (Barbeau and Beynon fieldnotes: various), who quoted extensively from their “informants,” captured this emphasis on acknowledging how you know what you know in their work, but it was literary critics such as Krupat (1994), and anthropologists like Riddington (1988), Brody (1981 ), Basso (1970,1996), Sarris (1993, 1994), Cruikshank (1990, 1996 ), and the writers in Seguin (1984) and Young and Goulet (1994) who drew serious attention to this practice and have explored its implications.
am...") and through the tracing and telling of generations of family history. Why, one might ask, does a woman who was not born on the Islands, has never lived there, is not fluent in the language, seldom takes direct part in the ceremonial life, and staunches refuses to "be political" still believe herself to be "a Haida woman"?

Partly, of course, because that is the side of her family she knows the most about:

"I didn't really have any influence from him [biological father] because I didn't even know him. He died before I was 3."...

"It was kind of exciting to meet them [Swedish cousins], 'cause you always wonder what they were like. I met lots of the cousins and second cousins in Sweden, and the two in the States. But by the time I could get anywhere my aunts [father's sisters] were all dead, so I didn't get a chance to meet them."...

"I tried to talk to [grandfather Axel Hanson] about his ancestry too, 'cause I was interested in his family, just like Granny's. But he just wasn't interested; he didn't want to talk about old times or the people he'd left in Sweden."

Diesing's Grandmother, however, was very interested in talking about both old times and the people she had left on the Islands. It may well be the case that Mary Anne Norman "gave up" on direct social and political involvement with her family's affairs on the Islands after the death
of her husband, her favourite brother (the intended next Chief WEAH) and so many of her children. Yet she still carried on in the manner of a proper Haida woman - using her skills to take care of herself and her children, and raising her children, and especially her grandchildren to "know" who they were, with all that "knowing" entails.

Mary Anne Norman is depicted as a woman living in "interesting times," times of profound and rapid change in which she participated with enthusiasm. During those times she succeeded in learning not only the traditional skills of a Haida woman ("of course she could make hats and baskets"; "she could use all sorts of tools"; "she travelled all over in canoes"; "she went with them once hunting sea otters"), but also new skills required of the new times ("she learned to speak English"; "she worked as an interpreter for Newcombe"; "she worked in the first hotel in Masset"; "she got a sewing machine early"; "you could make money at the canneries, so she came every year," "she couldn't read, but she could sew anything from a picture"). In this manner Diesing's grandmother, Mary Anne Norman, embodied for Diesing the proper Haida woman of her time. She also provided Diesing with family history and cultural stories about how Haida women should and did behave.

24 In many ways her situation parallels that of Mabel McKay (Sarris 1993, 1994), who also lived in this transitional period when cultural change was rapid and extreme, and who mastered a variety of traditional and new skills to make her way, from, to helping her mother as a laundress, to working as a housekeeper in a big-city brothel, to becoming an expert basket maker, to being a shamanic healer and "Dream Dancer" seer. To the extent that the elderly McKay also lectured widely, and taught the young Sarris how to come to terms with his Native heritage (and provided him with the subject of his dissertation!), her life also resembles Diesing's own.

25 Although Native women were not the only women to work in the canneries, they were by far the largest percentage. The other workers, especially the Chinese who came for the season and then returned home, were predominantly men. Thus these Native women filled a specialized economic niche on the coast. (Knight 1996)
In addition to her grandmother, Diesing had her “Aunties,” her grandmother’s and her mother’s real and classificatory sisters, as models as well. These women, most particularly Auntie Kate, Auntie Selina and Auntie Nellie, provided insights into the active involvement of women in the political sphere, particularly the planning and negotiating and even coercion that went on regarding Haida marriages - particularly those that might have political import. These women are presented as actively engaged in Masset life - strong, determined, well-spoken women., they illustrate one facet of Haida woman-ness that Diesing’s grandmother seems to have largely set aside - political strategist.

To the extent that all of these women had or raised children to whom they tried to pass on the corpus of traditional family knowledge, and for and by whom they tried to engineer future success, they also embodied the Haida female ideal of using your knowledge and skills to the benefit of your family and your community. Most of these women, and later many of their children, were also active outside Masset and even outside the Haida community in political, educational and artistic endeavours.

Diesing’s mother (and women of her mother’s generation) provided her with several models of being a modern Haida woman, not all of which attracted Diesing. She portrays her mother as a young woman increasingly becoming more acculturated. The child Flossie Norman resisted her mother’s attempts to follow procedures that would mark her as a high-status person: she “refused to let them pierce her ears,” and wouldn’t let the shaman involve her in a ritual “a treatment to make kids smart.” Yet the consequences of these small rebellions seem to have been minor - “they gave her her name anyway. But she
didn't get her gold earrings then because of it," and "that old Indian
doctor just laughed, and said to my Mom "Oh! That's all right, you
don't need it - you're smart already!" Two previous techniques of inscribing female
bodies with signs of rank - large body tattoos and the piercing of the lower lip for a labret, had
largely ended when Flossie’s mother Mary Anne was herself a child.

Growing up, "they came and went from Masset"; "she dressed different
from her cousins who stayed there," and she was the subject of teasing by
"strangers ... they'd throw mud at her 'cause she looked too good! While
living at Inverness, in addition to speaking the languages of home, the young Flossie learned
from her siblings and her father to read and write and do arithmetic, and she even went to school
for 3 years. She was told that she had a bright future "if only she would 'lose that
accent," so she did." She married a man outside the Haida community, a Swedish
fisherman, and moved away from the canneries and onto a houseboat, where she worked with
her husband as a fish buyer for the canneries. To this point, she provides a model of a young
Haida woman moving, figuratively and literally, further and further away from life as it was
lived on the Islands.\footnote{This is not to imply that life on the Islands was in any way static. As Stearns (1981) points out, there was considerable change, at an accelerating rate, in Masset life as well.}

Suddenly finding herself a young widow with a little girl and a sick baby boy to care for, Flossie
made choices that both follow and break with Haida tradition. Flossie sent her little daughter
Freda back to her own mother to be to be cared for, and she stayed in Prince Rupert with her
hospitalized son. There she breaks with tradition: rather than returning home when her son
recovered, she marries the Englishman who was pursuing her because "she was so good looking," and proceeds to live her life and raise her family in accordance with his ways. Diesing has presented this as a model of assimilation, a model of concealment, and a model of subjugation to male domination. This was how her mother was living while Diesing was being raised, and she didn’t like it.

Diesing’s grandmother died while Diesing was still a young, single woman trying to find her way in the big city. That was also when Diesing’s mother had herself begun to reassert her own independence. A few years before Diesing was released from the hospital, wanting to “do something she’d always wanted to do,” Flossie drew on the successful examples provided by her Haida relatives and had opened her own business, “The Corner Snack Bar.” But that was in Terrace, and Diesing was not there.

Back in Vancouver, with her grandmother gone and her mother unavailable, and no family close by to guide her, Diesing drifted, delighting in the experience of living, even if they were “poor times”, but becoming increasingly unsatisfied. So where could she turn for guidance? The same place her mother had eventually turned - family examples, family memories, ideas formed in her mind by her grandmother’s stories.

What was the right way for a young woman to behave? How had the Haida women before her behaved? What had people in her family done that she would like to do?
Diesing seldom directly discusses the uses she made of her grandmother’s stories (whether personal or mythical). I cannot say whether that was simply because I never asked, or because she did not see her actions in that context. Therefore much of this discussion about stories is inferential rather than declarative in nature. One source of inspiration, mentioned previously, is quite direct and clear. “Most people whose ancestors were carvers want to be carvers too - they’ve heard their grandparents talk about it and think it sounds interesting.” “I always knew there were carvers in my family, and I was always interested in carving.” “I had always liked drawing and painting, and some people said maybe I had talent.” So in 1955 Diesing went to the Vancouver School of Art. While there, inspired by the People of the Potlatch exhibition, she became interested in the art of her ancestors, and she made her first mask - of European construction, but of Native design. But at the college they did not teach Northwest Coast style art, and none of her colleagues shared her interest or her heritage: “I don’t remember another Indian student there at the time.” Returning to Terrace, where there was still little Northwest Coast art on display, Diesing tended to restrict her artistic output to landscapes and portraits until she became involved with ‘the “Indian revival” of the late 1960s, and her associated involvement with ‘Ksan.

From that point, Diesing fully came into her own both as an artist and as a “modern Haida woman.” Her research in the surrounding Native communities, collecting material culture that had been stored away for years and documenting elders “stories,” greatly enhanced her understanding of Native cultures. Also, Diesing’s mother, in her later years, came to thoroughly incorporate her Haida identity into both her private and public identity, and reconstructed her Haida heritage in long conversations with Diesing, remembering her childhood in Masset and
telling stories about the family’s history. These greatly extended the pool of information in which Diesing could search for models of Haida woman-ness.

Since the stories Diesing has presented here are those as she now knows them, after decades of observing behaviour, reading books, collecting stories and having discussions, it is unclear how much of this information was known to her and therefore available as a guide for her at various times during her life. However, her stories do present images of Haida women which can be interpreted as “models” for behaviour - both the ideal models from the myths, and real-life models of the women in her own family.

The stories that Diesing relates from the oral tradition - both family histories and cultural mythology - present Haida woman as being independent, strong-willed, skilful, cunning, powerful, aggressive and adventurous. They travel extensively and freely - they can paddle canoes, and steer canoes, and own canoes - and even know how to make canoes. They know how to hunt and fish (although they might be more likely to direct others in the doing rather than undertake these activities themselves), and have mastered the techniques of food processing and storing. They are skilled at making all manner of material goods. They know good quality

27 In the ongoing debate (Ingold 1996) as to whether or not one can accurately comprehend the events or experiences of the past when viewed from a contemporary perspective, I support the “not” side, believing, like Diesing, that once you have come to experience and know something in a new way “you never see things the same way again - never like the ones who didn’t do that.” And once you have learned something, it is hard to clearly remember the nature of your understanding before you learned it - especially when looking back over long periods of time.

28 Norton (1985) notes that fishing, for the historical Haida, appeared to be a task usually relegated to slaves.
when they see it, and are always on the lookout for "that special thing." They plan for the future - for themselves, for their children, and for their children’s children. “The women were the thinking ones.”

The Haida women of myth and legend do not hesitate to sacrifice personal desire for the betterment of their family group though strategic marriages - to much older or much younger men, or to men from other, distant, villages or even other, distant, lands (or, in myths, even to other, distant, species or forms of being). They become or accept co-wives where it is beneficial to do so. Single women assume their rightful place as next wife upon the death of a married “sister.” Women learn other languages and customs and serve as “ambassadors” for their people. They are eager to acquire new knowledge, and they ensure that traditional family knowledge is properly recognized, acknowledged and passed along appropriately. Names, status, material property, intellectual property, family identity - all these come and are passed down through the Haida women. There is equality between men and women (perhaps not surprising since women at some previous time could have been incarnated as men, and men, at some previous time, could have experienced life as women - and each may choose to do so again in some future reincarnation). Family members are interdependent - despite the risks and frustrations of being “a stranger,” even of high rank, women do go off into distant marriages, because they know they can always turn or return to their “uncles” and their “brothers” for help.

29 Although these are images of women as presented in the oral tradition, Norton (1985) sees women portrayed in these same ways in the writing of the early explorers. Although Norton suggests that colonization and assimilation practices seriously weakened the position of women in NWC society, Diesing ‘s stories indicate that a considerable amount of respect, agency and authority remained with Haida women.
in times of difficulty. "If you don't treat her good you know what will come to you."

Such was the timeless nobility of the mythical Haida woman.

Historically, the ideal Haida woman was known for her physical beauty, although, in a people priding themselves on their genetic variety, the details of eye colour, hair colour and skin colour are not specified. Little is said about body size either (although early traders described the Haida as generally being noticeably taller than other coastal peoples). There appears to have been a certain premium on plumpness (as an indicator of being well-fed and therefore successful), yet Haida women were also expected to be very physically fit and active, so obesity was likely uncommon.\footnote{Please see drawings and descriptions of historic Haida in Suttles (1990), and Norton (1985) and Blackman (1992) regarding the physically demanding lifestyle of Haida women, and the continuing expectation that high-status people can skillfully perform as well as direct activities.}

As mentioned previously, girls and women of high status had their bodies ritually marked at various stages of their physical and social maturation: the piercing of ears, the piercing of lips, and the inscribing of crest images as tattoos on arms, legs and torso. As with many other peoples, jewellery created from rare and precious materials was also worn by those of high rank - particularly huge earrings and labrets of abalone shell, and bracelets of copper or iron. Again, historical documents leave no doubt that Haida women had independence, strong wills, and authority, which they did not hesitate to use (Norton 1985).\footnote{Especially noteworthy are Norton's discussions of women's ultimate authority in matters of trade, and how that was transformed under forces of colonization.}

The women of myth and legend were remarkably active, engaged and independent - "\textit{nobody told the Haida women what to do!}" yet, ultimately, they put the welfare of their maternal family above all else. If they broke from the group for any reason, seduced by a
stranger, captured by enemies, or staunchly remaining with an abandoned or outcast (grand)child, the result was always that they bided their time (Haida women are portrayed as being infinitely patient while arranging the proper circumstances to be activated at the opportune moment) increasing their knowledge, and using their skill and cunning to turn a disastrous situation into a triumph. Whatever the difficulty, family groups were reunited in the end - although perhaps under radically different conditions - and the family’s prestige was enhanced.

These are the models, mythic, legendary and personal, that Diesing has presented of Haida woman-ness. Quite a bit to live up to! But models provide more than simple projections of the “ideal” Haida woman. The stories that surround the lives of these women, or from which these symbols of perfection were extracted, are deep containers of rich information.

Cruikshank (1987), in her presentation of the life histories of three elderly Tagish and Tutchone women, is intrigued by their incorporation of the stories of others in their personal narratives and especially by the frequent inclusion of traditional narratives in their personal stories. Posing the question “How are the connections between personal accounts and traditional narratives culturally constituted for the narrators?” (p. 166), she notes how many of these stories’ themes are about contradictions and possibilities for conflict in the social world and possibilities for satisfactory resolution of such conflicts. Cruikshank analyses the use of traditional stories as models for living - or more precisely, as models that can be manipulated to explore solutions to problems encountered while living.
Noticing that men and women tend to tell different stories, she draws particular attention to the differences in these stories (p. 166-195). Looking specifically at the corpus of “Stolen woman” stories for women, and “Power bringer” stories for men, both of which have “a root metaphor of travel,” she notes how men’s stories tend to involve the acquisition of supernatural powers and the use of strength to overpower adversaries, and often require the intercession of a shaman to restore them to human society. Women’s stories, she declares, are quite different, in that they emphasize the women’s clever application of mastered traditional knowledge and use of skills to save themselves (and sometimes others as well) from their predicament. The general message of these stories, Cruikshank says, is:

> Men rely on supernatural intervention to acquire knowledge and on the efforts of the community to socialize that knowledge. Women rely on their own efforts which, in turn, depend on shared, collective, transferable knowledge. With both women and men knowledge deals with this issue of power: what knowledge should be shared, what should remain private, and how the special abilities of women should be balanced with those of men. (p. 172)

Cruikshank goes on to provide a detailed and interesting discussion of the various anthropological approaches to the analysis of myth, which I will not reproduce here. Of particular relevance to this discussion is her emphasis on the importance of the sequence of the unfolding of events in myths, and her observation that popular and enduring symbols presented in myths can be recontextualized with regard to their meaning, allowing for new interpretations of these old symbols as cultural circumstances change. Cruikshank concludes that this process of

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With a certain imagination, it is possible to see the storyline of Diesing’s mother’s life not as assimilation and denial, but as following a similar “Stolen Woman” story line, with the beautiful young woman being captured or seduced away from home by some appealing “Other”, becoming like one of them as she learns their ways and raises her children, and in the end, drawing upon shared family knowledge and skills learned long ago, she escapes, returning once more to her own people.
recontextualization of symbols allows individuals to continually interpret and reinterpret these stories in personally meaningful ways, thus allowing for traditional stories to be used as resources during times of cultural change, in strategies of adaptation to change. This, she proposes, will make these stories increasingly relevant and useful to the younger generation as the pace of change accelerates.

Although, as stated previously, Diesing does not narrate traditional stories in the same manner as did Cruikshank’s collaborators, nor does she specifically examine the relationship between traditional stories and the patterning of her own life (as Mrs. Angela Sidney did for Cruikshank), there are still indications that she used her family stories in much the same way.

The stories that she related to me, samplings of the stories she would some day like to “gather up,” followed the sequence of abandonment, separation, or loss of family; travel to an unfamiliar area and/or life in altered circumstances; gathering useful information (particularly through forging unexpected alliances); planning for future possibilities; taking advantage of opportunities as they presented themselves; and ultimately, returning to family having proven onself to be smart, wise and capable. Her favourite mythical stories concerned women acting independently to better their families by acquiring and sharing information, even if that meant breaking rules. It was through their mastering of all the skills required by an adult and then the teaching of those skills, the sharing of their knowledge, that they showed themselves to be ideal Haida women.
A mythical tradition that emphasized the importance of the skilful, independent, intrepid "thinking" woman. A family history replete with women who were active, authoritative, and adventurous - and also determined to pass on traditional Haida knowledge. Combined with the "lived doubleness" of experience as projection and memory (as proposed by Ludwig earlier) it is not surprising that Diesing grew up to be an artist, and a carver, and most especially a teacher.

During the course of her life, Diesing has increasingly brought her lived experience in line with her ideal of a modern Haida woman. And like the women in Cruikshank (1987), Sarris (1994) and Wachowich (2000), Diesing has increasingly come to value the old oral traditions of cultural mythology and family histories as she herself becomes older. As she bemoans the passing of her own elders, reproducing their stories takes on an additional dimension. Her determination to exercise her right to carve in the traditional forms of her ancestors, her "uncles," and to share her knowledge of those forms and of art generally with whomever she chooses reflects her knowledge of herself as a "modern" Haida woman, a woman free in the world, and also "an old lady." The revival and perpetuation of these art forms (and the stories with which they are intimately tied) is presented as a self-imposed obligation - a duty in which she finds many levels of satisfaction, even delight.

As mentioned in the previous discussion, although she identifies herself to others as an "artist," it is in fact her activities as a teacher than Diesing most values. It is actions taken in fulfilment of her perceived obligations, as a knowledgeable Haida woman, to be a teacher that have most

33 Blackman (1992) is not included here, because Florence Davidson's approach to using information from the oral tradition and other of her training was not so much as to speak of it as a body, but to extract from it little sayings and bits of advice used to guide one's life - a litany of do's, don't's and why-not's sprinkled extensively through her narrative.
thoroughly shaped her artistic career. Like the women in Cruikshank's story, Diesing knows the importance of being able to draw upon a shared body of knowledge as a resource during the ongoing construction of a self and a life. Like those women as well - and like her mother, and her mother's mother before - she realizes the importance of contributing to the shaping of that body of knowledge, and ensuring it is handed along to another generation for their edification and development. That she has undertaken a literal approach to this "body" of knowledge, figuratively speaking, and chosen to manifest it through practices of carving and represent it in singular works of art, allows her to more fully embody the ideals of Haida woman-ness as she has come to understand them.

FIGURE 8: RAVEN FINDS MANKIND IN A CLAMSHELL
DIESING PRINT (1980)
FOURTH DISCUSSION: Life Stories: Intriguing Silhouettes or Ethnographic Spotlights?

This dissertation, with its multi-faceted approach which allows for - in fact sees as inevitable - ambiguity, subjectivity, contingency and partiality - is an act of bridging rather than separation. It makes a concerted effort to allow, at least in a small way, some of those women’s stories missing from Swanton to finally be told. Freda Diesing, a woman of Haida heritage, has shared with us some of the stories that have made up her life. Echoed clearly within these stories are other stories, told in the remembered voices of her mother Flossie Lambly, and her grandmother Mary Anne Norman Hanson.

Freda Diesing tells her life story, and within the overlapping realms of family history, art, and personal identity, she repeatedly illustrates how the past, through its stories replete with multifaceted images, presented and represented through her art, can operate to structure the present.

Diesing’s family stories span a time of profound cultural change for the Haida, from “first contact” to the present. They include times that Diesing believes have not been given sufficient attention by anthropologists “They don’t think that those times, 100-150 years ago, were interesting. But I do.” Beginning during what has been considered to be the lowest point of Haida culture, those post-epidemic days of the 1860s when all were predicting the inevitable termination of Haida culture through decimation and assimilation, they span the
period of “decline” in Northwest Coast art (post-1880 to mid 1960s - Macnair 1984), and the ensuing decades of “Native Renaissance,” coming to rest in the fresh possibilities imagined in a new millennium.

Yet one gets a sense from all of Diesing’s stories not so much of lingering decline as ongoing change, sometimes disappointing but frequently challenging and even exciting for the women and men both participating in and creating this change. Despite focussing on those times characterized by massive depopulation and dislocation, losses, and there are many mentioned, are portrayed here as personal, not cultural. One cannot read these stories and leave thinking Haida culture was or is impoverished. Rather one is presented, to use Knight’s (1996:90) expression, with “a chaotically alive history.”

These women’s stories have been presented not only to help fill in a very patchy historical record (although they do), and to present the Haida world from a woman’s perspective (although they do that too). They have been presented because a central thesis of this dissertation, which aims to present the life story of the artist Freda Diesing, is that these stories are not just interesting family trivia and fond remembrances - they are central to the woman, the person, Diesing is. If we want to know Freda Diesing at all, we must hear these stories.

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34 Although there has been an established tendency to speak of a decline and a renaissance, increasing acknowledgement is being paid to the limitations of this model, as the situation might be better described as a series of waves of rise and fall of greater or lesser amplitude and frequency, with strong local specificity - recognizing that different groups faced different conditions. There is also increasing use of the concept of a “double renaissance: to recognize the ca. 1890-1920 peak of interest in NWC arts noted previously. Recent works such as Hawker (1998) explore this issue in more detail (thanks to Profs. R.G. Matson and Bruce Miller (2002 personal communication).
Which raises the question: “Why should we, as anthropologists, want to know about the life of Freda Diesing - or any other individual?” While a documented life story may be desired or even treasured by individuals or even culture groups personally involved, of what value is this life story to the larger ethnographic enterprise?

There are two realms in which I think life histories can be particularly informative: empirical, regarding cultural content and processes, and methodological.

Cruikshank (1987) speaks of the tendency of anthropologists and other readers to “mine” life stories as ethnohistorical documents producing factual data that challenges, replaces or supports academically received knowledge. She rejects this approach of searching for and supporting alternative truths based upon contestation of facts for one which focuses on the way in which events come to be culturally constructed as meaningful, and how these processes of construction might be explained.

Life stories certainly do provide a wealth of information that can be “mined” to help answer empirical questions, and they do provide alternative views of commonly known events - how could they not, when each of us perceives, remembers and reconstructs events from a unique perspective? Diesing’s life story, and the stories she relates that comprise the story of her life, are rich in details that might be of interest to specific others, whether they be family members, other artists, researchers, or the Haida First Nation. She is quick to point out that the cultural information that she conveys is that which she heard “from the mouths of those who should know.” She is equally quick to point out that there is no one “true” version of this
information, since knowledge was passed along in families and certain knowledge was not shared outside of a family. When knowledge was shared outside a family, as for instance in potlatch displays, or even when knowledge was shared with other family members, it was always discussed and often disputed, in what seems to have been a belief, now widely shared, that memory is variable and truth is indeed partial, situational and culturally constructed. If one looks at the information in Diesing’s life story as providing, in Cruikshank’s terms a “window” on understanding cultural processes of constructing meaning, the actual “hows” and “whys” of what people do, rather than just “what” they do, what might one find?

Certainly one could look at the process of the construction and reconstruction of the concept of “art” for the Haida. Dewey (1935), arguing for the recognition of art not as an object but as the “refined and intensified experience” it produces, and thus having its existence only through a process of interaction with “the live creature,” reminds us that art, before being reified and isolated from life, was intimately interwoven with life. Art was useful, and had no existence outside its usefulness - its effect.

As depicted in these stories, such would seem to have been true for Haida art - it was used to establish rights, reinforce statements and create effects that intensified experience. Accordingly, when outsiders wanted to buy Haida “art,” the people obliged by creating whatever was wanted and art took on a new use - it was a good way to make money. Only the attraction of buyers to certain existing goods - like totem poles - is depicted as highly problematic, since their “use” was so historically contextualized. But those problems were avoided through the commissioning of new poles. Freed of their “real” meanings as statements of social rights and privileges, and as
intensifiers of experience - socially useful objects - totem poles, masks, and other goods were created especially for sale. Intriguingly, as Western concepts of “art” and “artist” were taken up from collectors, missionary efforts at religious (and cultural) conversion and government suppression of the potlatch combined to redefine many objects as heathen and primitive. Individuals whose skills had previously been valued by the community are portrayed as being seen as suspect and actively discouraged - a situation which is said to still continue to some degree. The reactivation of the potlatch complex and the curbing of government assimilation policies is seen to have aided in yet another conceptual shift, as becoming a person who achieves recognition through the production of what is now called Northwest Coast style art became a desirable thing. Additionally, in the last several decades of increasing political activity, art has been redefined as political, and artists are said to sometimes be recast or to transform into public spokespersons.

Other subjects might be similarly explored: for instance, changes around the conceptualization and practising of raiding and enslavement; of marrying; of inheriting; of enacting male/female equality; of actualizing family rights and fulfilling obligations. Diesing’s stories provide insights into a variety of social processes and individual actions.

Beyond ethnographic content, life stories also inform the ethnographic project by trying to work out problems of methodology in fieldwork situations of intensely personal encounters and interactive engagement. For example, issues of representation and the potential abuses of power such entail, which may be passionately argued among theorists but can always be set aside in an intellectual exercise, become immediate and demanding of engagement in a fieldwork situation.
This is particularly true when dealing with a life story - there is no possibility of anonymity for the subject, and little (in reality) for the other individuals who are invariably and unknowingly involved in the storymaking process. Ethical considerations become substantive, as the consequences of error can be widespread and difficult to predict - and have real impact on the lives of real people. A collaborative editorial process, as used here, is useful in ensuring that ethical standards, which are themselves culturally constructed, are fairly enacted.

Another consideration with methodological import deals with the recurring question, "How can we access the thoughts, beliefs, experiences of another?" There is, of course, not yet any dependable, repeatable way for us to do this directly - we must depend on our observations and what people tell us. The advantage of life story work is that people tell us a great deal about the experiences, thoughts and motivations that help structure the choices they make. In a positivist sense, the prolonged interaction between the two people involved does allow for "observation of the subject in various environments" and the inference of the accuracy of one's conclusions from the repeatability of the subject's behaviours and responses. But in a determined movement away from positivism, it is the interaction itself that is important - the construction of shared experience and the negotiation of meaning. An environment where the largest part of that construction and negotiation is undertaken by only two people, allows for greater freedom in forms of construction and negotiation, as well as a greater amount of shared understanding, whether through empathetic or explanatory modes. Particularly in examples such as this one, where an emphasis is placed on embodiment as an epistemology and praxis as an approach to learning - and most especially when one is interested in exploring the relationship between life and art.
In discussing the sharing of knowledge that goes on in a fieldwork situation it is important to realize what “sharing knowledge” means to the persons involved. While I can only make assumptions about other field situations, I can comment directly about this situation. Knowledge, Diesing makes known, is not all of a piece. There is, of course, knowledge that can only be gained through direct experience. But even knowledge that can be put into words and passed along is not shared equally. Knowledge is private property. Since, under the right circumstances and particularly with the proper guidance, information is essential to knowledge, information itself is controlled, and can be seen as private.

As mentioned previously, Cruikshank (1987:172) found that both the men’s and the women’s traditional narratives concerned themselves with knowledge and power: “what knowledge should be shared, what should remain private.” Cultures may construct the “rules” regarding the definition and sharing of information, but it is within families that we learn who we are, who others believe us to be, what we can reveal of ourselves to whom, and what we must hide from whom. There, through example, we truly learn of private knowledge and public knowledge. We learn the “public secrets” - that which everyone knows but which cannot be spoken, as we come to “know what not to know,” and the reciprocal of the public secret, that which can only remain secret by being openly mentioned (Taussig 1999:51).

Although Diesing never directly discussed the choices she made in sharing information with me, she did (with that particular skill which Boelscher (1989) found a hallmark of Haida discourse) allude to some of them:
"Just in reading those stories you can tell the reason why they told those stories."

"All over people would be mad if you told too much to outsiders - "tell them what they want to hear"... "don't tell things that others shouldn't know; they won't understand." Always they didn't want to upset the missionaries and the white people. Does it still go on? Sure it does."

"Information, songs and stories, these things were free to your own family and crest but not to others, at least outside of a potlatch. Family knowledge was private property, and not just passed along to some stranger who might ask."

So did Diesing consider me as just "some stranger who might ask"? No, I don't think so; I think (and I hope) that she came to see me as she says previous generations saw Swanton and Boas - a person who was genuinely interested and could be "trusted." But did that make me "family" - someone with whom you had an obligation to freely share knowledge? Of course not.

Despite what I see as the anthropological conceit of considering oneself to really be "family" to those field collaborators who so often establish fictive kinship relations with ethnographers, the emphasis should rest on the "fictive" - an imagined relationship created for convenience. That ethnographers and their collaborators might indeed sometimes form very close emotional relationships does not make them "kin." Diesing, when introducing me in public, called me her "friend" - a term which certainly applies mutually to our continuing relationship. I doubt that she
ever has considered me “the daughter she never had” - or even as some distant cousin. There is no reason for anyone to assume that she shared knowledge with me as she would family - even though one of her reasons for participating in this project was certainly to record certain family information for future generations.

Nor did I have the same interests in the people and places she discussed as would a family member, because I had no connection to them except vicariously through her - her stories and her photos. Except for members of her immediate family and a few friends, I never met any of the people she speaks of, and probably never will. I have no biological connection to any of these ancestors - no drop of their blood runs in my veins, none of their genetic material helps to construct my being. My soul is not connected to the lands upon which they walked, the environment into which they were born. I have never been to “the Islands,” have only been a brief visitor to the north coast, and until less than a decade ago had never set foot anywhere in BC. I have no “real” connection to the lands or the people. And since I am of a different generation than Diesing, I have no “real” connection either to most of the times of which she speaks. And family is all about connection - to people, to land, through time. These are the connections presented in Diesing’s stories of her life.

Crosby (1999) called for the telling of “ordinary stories” to counter the “silences and untold stories of rejection,” and surely these stories could help fill that void. But these are also most certainly stories of celebration, and giving voice (and form) to who one knows oneself to be - ongoing acts of creation and continuation through speaking.
In the mythic world of Raven, he (who can be she), peoples the Haida world by speaking (Reid and Bringhurst 1984). It is Raven’s ability to speak convincingly that causes those early ones to come out of the safety of their womb-like shell, put foot to earth and explore the world - their world. Thus began a tradition of exploration and “adventures on the high seas” that made historic Haida both admired and feared. It continues with contemporary Haida choosing to confidently travel the world. “I just had to go,” says Diesing, exploring the dark and stormy streets of New York, riding the subways of Tokyo, touring the Australian Outback. “I just had to go.” And, as in the way of Raven before, she speaks, and brings forth many people into the world - her world, her people, her self - to whom we are introduced through the medium of this document. Thank you, Freda Diesing, for sharing your world.

FIGURE 9: RAVEN WITH SUN - DIESING PRINT (1980)
ABBREVIATIONS

-420-

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March, Kathy Ann

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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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<tr>
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</table>
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This section provides a brief discussion of the traditional Haida system of kinship classification. A very detailed description can be found in Swanton (1905:62-65), and a more basic one in Boelscher (1988).

The Haida had (and still have in a modified degree) an exogamous 2 moiety (Ravens and Eagles) matrilineal system, in what is referred to by anthropologists as a “Crow” typology. Each moiety comprises a number of lineages, called “clans” (although the expressions “Raven clan” and “Eagle clan” are also commonly used, as they are in this document). What this means for our purposes is that eternal inheritance of moiety, clan, status, names, lands and other tangible and intangible goods comes through one’s mother’s line, while one can use but not bequeath rights given by one’s father’s line, and mother and father are from opposite moieties. In the Haida language some kin are differentiated by whether they are related on the mother’s or the father’s side, some by whether they are younger or older, and some by whether the speaker is as woman or a man, although these differences do not reflect directly in the English translations (again, see Swanton 1905 for all appropriate kin terms). Also, the English terms applied by the Haida do not mean the same to them as they do in the traditional European system from which they derived. The result is a lot of confusion for anyone trying to make an English-language based, European model of Haida kin relations. As a simplified example, in the Haida system, all the members of one’s grandparent’s generation were called what in English are known as “grandmother” or “grandfather” (so your biological grandmother, and her sisters, and your grandfather’s sister and...
all female cousins of that generation would all be called in English “grandmother” One’s biological mother, and all the women of her clan who were of her generation would be called in English “mother.” One’s biological father, and all the men of his clan who were of his generation, would be called in English “father.” The men who were of one’s biological mother’s clan and generation were all called in English “uncle.” The women who were of one’s biological father’s clan and generation were all called in English “aunt.” Persons of one’s own gender and clan were called one term in Haida if they were older, and another term if they were younger, while persons one’s age of the same clan but different gender were all called the same term (and both men and women used the same terms). There is no equivalent translation in English for these terms, since “my older/younger siblings of my same gender” are called “older/younger brothers” by men, but “older/younger sisters” by women, and siblings of both genders can be called “my older brother/sister” or “my younger brother/sister”; there is no third term in English for the siblings who are older and younger than you, but of the opposite gender. Furthermore, English differentiates siblings from cousins, whereas the Haida system would translate by “sister” any female member of one’s generation and one’s clan, and would translate by “cousin” any female member of one’s generation and one’s father’s clan.

So within the Haida system, if you are a woman referring to another woman using the term “mother” you could mean either your biological mother or your mother’s “sisters” (including cousins in the same clan); if you used the term “aunt” you would mean a woman from your father’s clan and of your father’s generation; you would call a man “uncle” if he were from your mother’s clan and generation, and “father” if he were from your father’s clan and generation. If you called a woman “sister,” or a man “brother,” that person could be either a sibling or a cousin.
within your clan; if you called someone "cousin," he or she was related through one's father's clan.

Since there have been decades of pressure to use both English words and the European system of kin terms, the "real" nature of relationships is ambiguous in any description that is done in English rather than Haida, and is increasingly suspect the further back one goes in written records. Freda herself uses the term "Mother" to refer only to her biological mother Flossie, and "Granny" refers to her mother's mother Mary Ann. "Father" means her biological father Franz, while she calls Geoff Lambly her "step-father." By "brother" she means only Frank, and "sister" means only Roberta. "Aunties, uncles, and cousins" are often very ambiguous relationships, and refer to multiple generations.
APPENDIX B

GENEALOGICAL CHART

FIGURE 9: Diesing’s “Hummingbird” design
Ancestors of FREDA (Maria Elfreda Johnson) DIESING

FREDA DIESING
b: June 02, 1925 in Prince Rupert
m: November 09, 1956

Franz Hjalmar Johnson
b: January 06, 1894 in Norrland, Sweden
m: October 24, 1924
Burial: June 02, 1928 Prince Rupert BC

Christiana FLOSSIE Norman
b: 1906 in Metlakatla BC
Burial: January 1990 Terrace BC

Asle Hanson
b: Unknown in Gotemborg, Sweden
m: October 09, 1917
Burial: 1950 Victoria, BC

MARY ANNE Norman
b: 1874 in Masset, BC
Burial: 1948 Prince Rupert, BC

Johann
b: in Sweden

Simeon STILTA
b: Abt. 1799 in Masset, BC
Burial: Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, BC

ILSHILAY (?)
b: Abt. 1851
Burial: Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, BC (?)
PLEASE NOTE: DATES ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY
Descendants of LSHILAY (?)

ILSHILAY (?)
1851 - Unknown
Burial: Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, BC (?)

Simeon STILTA
1799 - 1889
Burial: Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, BC

George

Frank George SKILL-DUGALT

Emma
1894 - 1989

Daniel Stanley SKILL-CA-JU
1881 - 1911
Burial: Masset, BC

Thomas Simeon
1879 -

Axel Hanson
Unknown - 1950
Burial: 1950 Victoria, BC

MARY ANNE
Norman
1874 - 1948
Burial: 1948 Prince Rupert, BC

Norman SKILTEES
Unknown

PLEASE NOTE: DATES ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY
Descendants of MARY ANNE Norman

- Norman SKILTEES
  Unknown - Unknown

- MARY ANNE Norman
  1874 - 1948
  SCANGUIGAN

- Axel Hanson
  Unknown - 1950

- Lena Norman
  1894 - Child

- Amos Norman
  1896 - 1914

- Emily Norman
  1898 - 1922

- Paul Norman
  1901 - 1912

- Edmund Norman
  1902 - Unknown

- George F. Norman
  1903 - Unknown

- Franz Hjalmar Johnson
  1894 - 1928

- Christiana F. Norman
  1906 - 1990
  JAS-KIT-KI-GAS

- Geoffrey Hassel Lambly
  1897 - 1976

- Nellie Norman Harding
  1908 - SKILQUEWAT

- Alec Yeomans
  1905 -

- Edwin (?) Norman
  Unknown - Infant

PLEASE NOTE: DATES ARE APPROXIMATE
Descendants of Christiana FLOSSIE Norman

Franz Hjalmar Johnson
1894 - 1928

Christiana F. Norman
1906 - 1990
JAS-KIT-KI-GAS

Geoffrey Hassel Lambly
1897 - 1976

FREDA DIESING
1925 - Skilquewat

Arthur "Art" Diesing
- 1980

Frank "Sonny" Johnson
1928 - 1943

Judy

Ralph

Alvin

Brenda

Bill

Barbara

Robert "Bobbie" Lambly
1930 -

Robert Perry

Christie

Jeff

Laurie

Richard

Kimberley

Jenny

Robert

Daryl

Greg

Daniel

Ellen

Katie

Gloria

Matthew

Gena

Amy
Descendants of Emily Norman

Emily Norman
1898 - 1922

Nancy Norman
1921 -

George Dudoward

Fred Norman
1921 - 1932

Stanley

Barney

Joan

David

George

Tracey

Nancy

Natalie

Wayne

William

Natasha

Nichole

Leanne

Catherine

Barnie Jr. ("BJ")

David

Leanda

Ryan

Robert

PLEASE NOTE: DATES ARE APPROXIMATE
Descendants of Nellie Norman Harding

Nellie Norman Harding
1908 - SKILQUEWAT

Alec Yeomans
1905 -

"Marion" Mary Anne
1925 -

Arthur

Woodrow

Hector

Francis Sinclair

Lois

Thelma

Pansy

Judy

Jimmy

Ross

Jeannie

Don

Trace

Susan

Robert
## APPENDIX C

### TIMELINE CHARTING RELEVANT EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1579</td>
<td>Sir Francis Drake (British) sails from south to NWC (to Oregon)</td>
<td>no documented contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1602</td>
<td>Sebastian Vizcaino (Spanish) sails from south to NWC (to Oregon)</td>
<td>no documented contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1640</td>
<td>de la Fuente expedition for Northwest Passage contacts Haida?</td>
<td>disputed account - Spanish (Peru)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1741</td>
<td>Vitus Bering (Dane) and Aleksei Chirikov claim Alaska for Russia</td>
<td>2 boat landing party never returned- fate unkown. First contact (with Tlingits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>Royal Proclamation of King George III (British)</td>
<td>acknowledges Native land rights, allows Crown as sole purchaser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774</td>
<td>Juan Perez mapping expedition contacts Haida</td>
<td>Spanish - engage in first trade with Haida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775-76</td>
<td>Smallpox epidemic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775 to 1782</td>
<td>American Revolutionary War - become Independent of Britain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>Cook expedition lands on Islands (Cook Inlet)</td>
<td>British - beginning of the fur trade - esp. sea otters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1782</td>
<td>Smallpox epidemic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>Captains Lowrie and Guise &quot;discover&quot; Haida lands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Captain Dixon claims Islands for English King George III</td>
<td>&quot;Queen Charlotte's Islands&quot; (QCI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>Captain Meares sights Graham Island</td>
<td>fur trading with Tlingit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-92</td>
<td>Marchand's &quot;Voyage Round the World&quot; to NWC</td>
<td>French expedition - exploration &amp; trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Captain Vancouver circumnavigates Vancouver Island</td>
<td>British - visits QCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Alexander MacKenzie reaches Pacific coast by land</td>
<td>British (July 22, 1793 written on rock)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795 to 1805</td>
<td>Russians establish land base At Yakutat Bay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Russians establish settlement at Sitka, Alaska - burned by Tlingit 1802</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799 ?</td>
<td>SIMEON STILTA (R15) born (Yan)</td>
<td>(Great Grandfather) - (1799-1889, age 90?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Russians re-establish settlement &amp; fort at Sitka (1804-1867)</td>
<td>Impact on Tlingit and Kaigani Haida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Lewis &amp; Clark expedition reaches mouth of Columbia River by land</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Fort Nelson established inland BC by North West Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Fort Saint James established inland BC by North West Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808</td>
<td>Simon Fraser reaches coast via Fraser River</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Smallpox and measles epidemic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>Americans build first trading post Astoria at mouth of Columbia River</td>
<td>sold in 1813 to North West Company - becomes Fort George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1812</td>
<td>ALBERT EDWARD EDENSHAW born (Eagle)</td>
<td>Eagle Chief of Kiusta, carver (1812-1894)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820s</td>
<td><strong>maritime fur trade declines, land-based trade expands</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company amalgamate</td>
<td>begins 30 year domination of coast by HBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>Fort Vancouver established on Columbia River</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>Fort Langley established, Fraser River</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Hudson's Bay Co establishes first northern post -Fort Simpson (Nass)</td>
<td>begins profound change in residency patterns - first permanent &quot;intertribal&quot; settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>HBC paddle-wheel steamer &quot;The Beaver&quot; in service</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Russians establish Fort Stikine at mouth of Stikine River</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Rev. Hubert Beaver (HBC) missionary to Fort Vancouver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1839</td>
<td>CHARLES EDENSHAW born (Skidegate) (Eagle)</td>
<td>Albert Edenshaw's sister's son, father of Florence Edenshaw Davidson, carver, 1839-1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>photography invented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>HBC Fort Victoria established, southern Vancouver Island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Canada/USA international border established at 49°N latitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>flu &amp; measles epidemic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Fort Rupert established, northern Vancouver Island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>HBC gets rights to colonize BC, Vancouver Island becomes crown colony</td>
<td>James Douglas is factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850s</td>
<td><em>change from trading period to colonization period</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Kaisun mini-gold rush - mined by HBC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1851</td>
<td>ILSHILAY born (Eagle)</td>
<td>(Great Grandmother) (E12) wife #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>James Douglas appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Queen Charlotte Islands</td>
<td>QCI proclaimed to be a crown colony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>&quot;Susan Sturgis&quot; - Hudson's Bay Company Ship</td>
<td>Weah/Edenshaw: sunk (Sept)/saved (Oct)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1853</td>
<td>JAMES STANLEY born (Eagle)</td>
<td>Granny's brother - (1853-1913)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>WILLIAM DUNCAN arrives as missionary to Tsimshian</td>
<td>Victoria (June); Port Simpson (Oct)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Gold Rush on Fraser River (begins in May)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Haida threaten to attack Victoria</td>
<td>Douglas becomes 1st Governor (1859-1864)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1861</td>
<td>NORMAN STILTES born (Raven)</td>
<td>(or 1840?) (Granny's husband #1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861 to 1865</td>
<td>USA - Civil War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Duncan establishes Metlakatla (May) (South of Port Simpson)</td>
<td>new Tsimshian &quot;model&quot; settlement ruled by Duncan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Smallpox epidemic - catastrophic for Haida &amp; NWC</td>
<td>spread along coast when Natives expelled from Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Missionary Rev. Robert Doolan arrives at Kitcouith</td>
<td>missionary to Nisga'a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>HENRY EDENSHAW born (Raven)</td>
<td>Alfred Edenshaw's son, 1864-1937, carver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Confederation - Dominion of Canada formed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Alaska purchased from Russia by U.S.A.</td>
<td>Haida officially divided by present Canada/USA International border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Missionary REV. ROBERT TOLMINSON at Metlakatla</td>
<td>missionary to Tsimshian &amp; Nisga'a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Hudson's Bay Company post established at Masset</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1870's</td>
<td>Skeena Gold Rush</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>BC joins Confederation</td>
<td>Canadian gov't. replaces British colonial rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1871</td>
<td>MATTHEW YEOMANS born</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>I.W. Powell becomes Superintendent of Indian Affairs</td>
<td>collects for museums 1879, 1881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Missionary THOMAS CROSBY at Port Simpson</td>
<td>Total opposition to shamans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Missionary E. Robson at Victoria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Missionary REV. W.H. COLLISON arrives at Metlakatla</td>
<td>his sons W.E. Collison and H.A. Collison also became missionaries in B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1874</td>
<td>MARY ANNE born in Masset (Eagle)</td>
<td>&quot;GRANNY&quot; - Diesing's Grandmother (died 1948 in Inverness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875 to 1876</td>
<td>SWAN begins collecting on NWC for museums</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Canada passes First Indian Act (under Sir John A. MacDonald)</td>
<td>1st missionary to Haida - invited by Stilthda - stays 1876-79 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Collison visits Masset (June) and establishes mission (Nov)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>first cannery established on northern coast, at Inverness Slough on Skeena</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Eagle Chief STILTA younger dies - 1st Christian burial</td>
<td>Granny's brother; brother James Stanley became next Chief STILTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>George M. Dawson explores QCI - collects on QCI</td>
<td>Geological Survey of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Missionary Rev. A.J. Hall at Fort Rupert and Alert Bay</td>
<td>missionary to Kwakwakawakw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>G. Sneath replaces Collison as Anglican missionary</td>
<td>at Masset: 1879-1883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>BISHOP RIDLEY assists Duncan at Metlakatla</td>
<td>disagreements lead to split</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1879</td>
<td>ALFRED ADAMS born</td>
<td>Granny's brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1879</td>
<td>THOMAS SIMEON born (Eagle)</td>
<td>Tsimshian, Nisga'a, Haida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880's</td>
<td>P. O'Reilly, Indian Reserve Commissioner, lays out reserves</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>&quot;Masset band&quot; created</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1881 to 1882</td>
<td>J. A. JACOBSEN collecting in the Charlottes</td>
<td>Granny's brother, raised to be next Eagle Chief Weah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1881</td>
<td>DANIEL STANLEY born (1881-1911, age 30) (Eagle)</td>
<td>Aiyansh was Tomlinson's (Nisga'a) version of Duncan's (Tsimshian) Metlakatla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Masset reserve established</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>James SWAN collects in the Charlottes (for Smithsonian)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Methodist Missionary work begins at Skidegate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>C. Harrison replaces Sneath as Anglican missionary</td>
<td>George Robinson 1883-1885 - layman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1883</td>
<td>Eagle Chief WEAH dies</td>
<td>at Masset: 1883-1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Missionary Rev. J.B McCullah replaces Tomlinson at Aiyansh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Potlatch banned</td>
<td>1885-1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>G.F Hopkins arrives as Methodist missionary - Skidegate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>fire destroys most of Vancouver (July 13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Trans Canada Railway completed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Duncan establishes New Metlakatla in Alaska</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1887</td>
<td>WILLIAM MATTHEWS (Eagle) born</td>
<td>Skidegate 1888-1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>A.N. Miller replaces Hopkins as Methodist missionary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ca. 1889</td>
<td>Simeon Stilts dies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>The Industrial School for Indians opens</td>
<td>1st NWC residential school, Metlakatla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Coquileetza Residential School opens</td>
<td>2nd NWC residential school, Chiliwack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>J.H. KEEN replaces Harrison as Anglican missionary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Mary Anne marries Norman Stiltes (Raven)</td>
<td>at Masset: 1890-1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1891</td>
<td>&quot;AUNTIE SELINA&quot; born</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>Methodist Missionary: B.C. Freeman (1893-1904)</td>
<td>Skidegate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1894</td>
<td>LENA born to Mary Anne and Norman (Eagle)</td>
<td>Granny's first child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>FRANZ JOHNSON born in Sweden</td>
<td>Father (1894-1928, age 34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1894</td>
<td>EMMA maiden name? born (Raven)</td>
<td>1894-1899, wife of Daniel Stanley and Willie Mathews</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>NEWCOMBE first in Charlottes</td>
<td>freelance collector made several trips to QCI 1895, 1897, 1902, continuing until 1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1896</td>
<td>AMOS born (Eagle)</td>
<td>Mother's brother (1996-1914, age 18 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>FLORENCE DAVIDSON born (Raven)</td>
<td>Granny's cousin, daughter of Charles &amp; Isabella Edenshaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>GEOFF LAMBLY born in England</td>
<td>Step-Father (1897-1976, age 85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>George Dorsey begins collecting on NWC for Field Centennial Museum</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>FRANZ BOAS goes to NWC to start Jessup Expedition (American Museum)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1898</td>
<td>EMILY born (Eagle)</td>
<td>Mother's sister, died ca. 1922, mother of &quot;Nancy&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>SWANTON in the Charlottes</td>
<td>ethnographer of Haida - Jessup Expedition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1901</td>
<td>PAUL born (Eagle)</td>
<td>Mother's brother (1901-1912, age 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>ca. 1905</td>
<td>ALEC YEOMANS born</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ca. 1906</td>
<td>FLOSSIE born in Metlakatla (Eagle)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ca. 1908</td>
<td>NELLIE (HARDING MATTHEWS) born (Eagle)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Tranquille Sanitarium opens in Kamloops - for whites only</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Actor/Writer Pauline Johnson gives last performance, Kamloops B.C.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Government establishes permanent office for Indian Agent in Masset</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Prince Rupert incorporated as a city</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Canada ratifies International Sealing Convention</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>ALICE RAVENHILL organizes BC's first Women's Institute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1911</td>
<td>Daniel Stanley dies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1912</td>
<td>Paul dies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1914</td>
<td>Amos dies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 1914</td>
<td>OLIVER ADAMS born (Eagle)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-1918</td>
<td>WORLD WAR I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>University of British Columbia opens</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Mary Anne marries AXEL HANSON</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Women who are Canadian citizens over 21 allowed to vote</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Chief Dan Cramner (Kwakwaka'wakw) gives potlatch</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1920's &amp; '30's</td>
<td>Emily Carr does her paintings of Indigenous BC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Charles Edenshaw dies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ca.1924</td>
<td>VICTOR ADAMS born</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>FREDA born (Prince Rupert) (Eagle)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Parliament bans all political land-claims activities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>FRANK born (Eagle)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Franz Johnson dies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Flossie marries Geoff Lambly in Prince Rupert</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Women are finally considered legal &quot;persons&quot; in Canada</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Stock market crashes; beginning of &quot;The Great Depression&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>ROBERTA born (Eagle)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Native Brotherhood of BC established</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Smallpox epidemic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Chief WEAH (Harry) dies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>WILLIE MATTHEWS becomes next CHIEF WEAH</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Flossie, Geoff and children move to Terrace</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1939-1945</td>
<td>WORLD WAR II</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Society for the Furtherance of BC Indian Arts and Welfare</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1940's</td>
<td>Coquilleetza Indian Hospital opens (previously res. school)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Freda released from sanitarium, lives in Victoria &amp; Vancouver</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Freda goes to Tranquille Sanitarium with TB (1943-1946)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Abstract Expressionism emerges (from Primitivism) in New York</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Flossie opens &quot;The Corner Snack Bar&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Freda released from sanitarium, lives in Victoria &amp; Vancouver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Auntie Nellie's husband
Mother (1906-1990, age 84)
Mother's sister
1st Provincial Sanitarium
-ends pelagic seal hunt of Pacific fur seals in all north Pacific waters (but not Japan)
based upon Adelaide Hoodless' Ontario institute educating rural women in domestic science
Granny's brother
Mother's brother, Granny's youngest son
Mother's brother, Granny's oldest son
Auntie Selena's son with Alfred Adams
Oct 9, marriage leads to loss of Indian Status; Witnesses: Alfred and Selena Adams.
people arrested, fined, jailed; potlatch goods confiscated and sent to museums & collectors
Privy Council (England) ruling of Oct 18, 1929 on The Persons Case
Sister "Bobbie", Dec 13
succeeded by sister's son William
Eagle - Town Chief of Masset
Geoff employed by BC Public Works
founded by ALICE RAVENHILL, scientist, educator, author
1st Sanitarium for Native people
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>HARRY and AUDREY HAWTHORN come to UBC</td>
<td>establish Anthropology department and museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Mary Anne &quot;GRANNY&quot; dies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>1st Annual Conference on Native Indian Affairs - at UBC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>ELENNEEL establishes her carving at Stanley Park</td>
<td>Kwakwaka'wakw carver, Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>UBC begins pole restoration project (with Neel and Martin)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>BC Natives get provincial vote</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1950-1953</td>
<td>KOREAN WAR</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>potlatching ban deleted from revised Indian Act</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>MUNGOMARTIN gives first &quot;legal&quot; potlatch, Provincial Museum</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>Freda attends Vancouver School of Art</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>&quot;People of the Potlatch&quot; exhibition</td>
<td>inspires Freda's interest in NWC art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Freda returns to Terrace - works in Coffee Shop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Freda marries ARTHUR DIESING</td>
<td>09-Nov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>All Natives granted Federal Franchise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Masset gets electricity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Ellen Neel dies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>University of Victoria and Simon Fraser University open</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Freda &amp; Art move to Cedarvale - joined by parents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>&quot;Arts of the Raven&quot; exhibition</td>
<td>inspires Freda's interest in carving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Canada's Centenary - Freda carves miniature Haida village</td>
<td>displayed at 1st Indian Days Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Freda begins work /study for &quot;KSAN (Hazelton)&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Canada de-criminalizes contraceptive products and information</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>National Indian Brotherhood established</td>
<td>now Assembly of First Nations; first meeting in Vancouver 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Trudeau Government presents WHITE PAPER</td>
<td>galvanizes Indian Rights movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>ROBERT DAVIDSON (Eagle) raises pole at Masset</td>
<td>1st pole raised in Masset in 20th Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Ksan Cultural Centre officially opens</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Freda in &quot;Breath of our Grandfathers&quot; tour (Ottawa and New York)</td>
<td>retire to Terrace Lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Flossie and Geoff Lamby move back to Terrace</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Freda and JOSIAH TATE carves totem pole in Prince Rupert</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Willie Matthews, the last Chief WEAH, dies</td>
<td>Last Eagle chief to be called WEAH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>&quot;People of the Cedar&quot; Exhibition, Thunder Bay</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Freda and Harvey Robinson carve panels at Prince Rupert Hospital</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Oliver Adams becomes CHIEF GALLA of Masset</td>
<td>Change of name of Eagle Town Chief of Masset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Geoff Lamby dies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Native Women's Association of Canada established</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Freda &amp; Doreen Jensen travel to Japan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Oliver Adams dies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Robert Davidson hosts &quot;Tribute to the Living Haida&quot; - Masset (in March)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Art Diesing dies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Heritage House Gallery exhibition - Vancouver</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Totem Heritage Centre, Ketchikan, Alaska</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>First of the Kitumskalum carving classes (12 weeks each year x 3)</td>
<td>Freda becomes a widow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Additional Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Freda formally gets name “SKILQUEWAT,” announced by William Russ</td>
<td>at Robert Davidson’s “naming potlatch” in Masset (November)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>&quot;Arts of the Salmon People&quot;, Museum of Northern BC, Prince Rupert</td>
<td>Freda, Doreen Jensen and Dorothy Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>B.C. Native Women Artists exhibition (Women in Focus)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Reno Russ becomes Town Chief of Masset</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Bill C-31 passes, allowing Native women and children to reclaim status</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>&quot;Robes of Power&quot; Exhibition and trip to Australia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Freda directs Kitsumkalum poles project (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Invited as caver to Kemi Jarvi, Finland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Kitsumkalum Poles raised - 2 on reserve, 1 in front of RCMP in Terrace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>&quot;Hands of Creation&quot; Exhibition, Inuit Gallery of Vancouver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Assistant to nephew Don Yeomans carving in Sweden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Invited as carver to Kemi Jarvi, Finland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Artist-in-Residence at Altos de Chavon School of Design, Dominican Republic</td>
<td>age 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Group Exhibition at Inuit Gallery</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>&quot;Changers: A Spiritual Renaissance&quot; Exhibition, Toronto &amp; Montreal</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>NWC Native American Art: Exhibition&quot;, Saint Louis USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Flossie Lambly - &quot;MOM&quot; - dies (January)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>&quot;Spirit Faces: Contemporary Masks of the NWC&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>&quot;Topographies: Aspects of Recent BC Art&quot; touring exhibition</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>&quot;Down from the Shimmering Sky&quot; touring exhibition</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>&quot;Mythic Beings&quot; Exhibition, Spirit Wrestler Gallery, Vancouver</td>
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**PLEASE NOTE:**

ALL DATES ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY; THIS SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR ANY HISTORICAL REFERENCE

**Note 2:**

NAMES OF PERSONS MENTIONED IN TEXT ARE CAPITALIZED WHEN THEY FIRST APPEAR IN THIS LISTING

**Note 3:**

Sources of this information were various, and are not recorded; please see bibliography for appropriate publications

**Note 4:**

There is some confusion in the records of when Collison actually arrived to work in the Charlottes. According to his own records, he was in Metlakatla Nov 1873 - Nov 1876. Although he visited Chief Segay at Masset (June 1876) he did not establish a mission there until Nov 1876.
APPENDIX D

EXHIBITION, TEACHING and AWARDS DATES

2002 - Honorary Doctor of Laws, University of Northern British Columbia
2002 - “Aboriginal Achievement Award”, Canada
2002 - Teaching, University of Alaska, Sitka
2001 - Teaching, University of Alaska, Sitka
2001 - “The Charles Peacock Collection of Northwest Coast Art” exhibition, Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery
2000 - “Certificate of Appreciation” from Northwest Community College, Terrace
2000 - “Selections from the Permanent Collection” exhibition, Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery
2000 - “Time and Tide: Witnessing changes in Northwest Coast Art” exhibition, Vancouver: Inuit Gallery of Vancouver
2000 - “Northern Contours: A Juried Exhibition of Furniture and Wood Objects from the Boreal Forest, Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery
1999 - “Mythic Beings” exhibition, Vancouver: Spirit Wrestler Gallery
1999 - “Horizons” exhibition, Vancouver: Inuit Gallery
1999 - Prince Rupert: Prince Rupert Gallery
1998 - “Down from the Shimmering Sky” touring exhibition, Peter Macnair curator
1996 - “Permanent collection” exhibition, Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery
1995/1985 - “Contemporary Indian and Inuit Art of Canada” travelling exhibition organized by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs for travel in the United States and Canada
1994 - “Spirit Faces: Contemporary Masks of the Northwest Coast” exhibition, Vancouver: Inuit Art Gallery of Vancouver
1993 - “Art of the Mask: works from the Peacock Collection” exhibition, Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery
1992 - “Adversity/Diversity” exhibition, Whitehorse: Yukon Arts Centre Gallery
1989 - “Northwest Coast: Native American Art” exhibition, Barbara Loeb curator, Saint Louis, (Missouri, USA): Craft Alliance Education Centre and Gallery
1989 - “Changers - A Spiritual Renaissance” exhibition, Shirley Bear curator (with Susan Crean), Toronto and Montreal
1989 - exhibition, Vancouver: The Inuit Gallery of Vancouver
1988 - artist-in-residence at Altos de Chavon school of design, Dominican Republic
1988 - invited again as international carver to Kemi Jarvi, Finland
1987 - works with nephew Don Yeomans carving in a public space - Sweden
1986 - invited as international carver to Kemi Jarvi, Finland
1986 - Ice Carver at ‘86 Winter Games in Canmore, Alberta
1986 - directs carving of 3 poles by Kitsumkalum carving class of 6
1986/1985 - “Robes of Power: Totem Poles on Cloth”, exhibition and tour
(May 10- June 23 at Adelaide Festival Gallery, then 6 state Australian tour)
(Returned to Canada for 1986 - Expo ‘86 in Vancouver)
1984 - “The Legacy” touring exhibition begins, Peter Macnair, Allen Hoover curators, B.C. Provincial Museum
1982 - National Native Art Auction, Toronto: Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
1982 - “Renewal: Masterworks of Contemporary Indian Art from the National Museum of Civilization” exhibition, Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery
1981/82 - 2nd year of classes at Kitsumkalum - carving
1981 - “Arts of the Salmon People” exhibition, Prince Rupert: Museum of Northern British Columbia
1980 - October - artist-in-residence teaching carving Totem Heritage Centre, Ketchikan, Alaska (1 month, classes afternoons and evenings) - continued yearly until 1985
1980 - First Kitsumkalum classes begin (May) - make House of Sim-oi-Ghets Eagle panel classes ran for 12 weeks each, 3 years
1970s/1980s - Department of External Affairs tours 3 exhibitions internationally, each of which contains prints and carvings by Diesing
1978 - Jensen/Diesing trip to Japan
1977 - “Links to Tradition” travelling exhibition, developed by Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for centres in Brazil
1975 - “People of the Cedar” exhibition, Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery
1975 - Diesing designs and carves (helped by Harvey Robinson) panels in Prince Rupert: Prince Rupert Regional Hospital
1974 - “People of the Cedar” exhibition, Dept of External Affairs, Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery
1974 - Diesing and Josiah Tate carve totem pole (restoration) for Prince Rupert Museum
1974 - “Canadian Indian Art ‘74”, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario
1972 - “Breath of our Grandfathers” tour - designs and performs
1972 - “‘Ksan, Breath of our Grandfathers” exhibition, Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization
1970 - official opening of ‘Ksan (continuing employment - design, dance and public relations)
1968/1967 - begins work at Hazelton re ‘Ksan (research, design and display) and participates in carving groups and design classes
1967 - Diesing’s first NWC carving project: a miniature Haida village for display at the 1st Indian Days Festival
Freda Diesing’s art is in the permanent collections of:

- The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada
- External Affairs, Canada
- Canadian Museum of Civilization (previously National Museum of Man)
- Royal British Columbian Museum (previously the BC Provincial Museum)
- Royal Ontario Museum
- Museum of Northern British Columbia
- Museum of Anthropology, UBC
- ‘Ksan Cultural Centre
- Totem Heritage Centre
- City of Prince Rupert
- City of Kemi Jarvi (Finland)

and sold to private collectors by:

- The Department of Indian Affairs (Ottawa)
- The Inuit Gallery; Vancouver
- Spirit Wrestler Gallery; Vancouver
- Vancouver Art Gallery shop

and produced on clothing by:

- Fuzzy Fusion (wholesalers), Vancouver
APPENDIX E

Ellen Neel’s Speech to the 1st Conference on Indian Affairs, 1948

The proceedings of this conference, sponsored by the B.C. Indian Arts and Welfare Society and the Provincial Museum, Victoria, and held at UBC under the chairmanship of Dr. H.B. Hawthorn (UBC’s first Professor of Anthropology), are published as the Report of Conference on Native Indian Affairs at Acadia Camp, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. April 1, 2, and 3, 1948, Dr. H.B. Hawthorn, ed., Vancouver: Department of Extension Services, University of British Columbia.

The conference was attended by 84 people, including “church leaders, officials of the Branch of Indian Affairs, others interested in Indian Welfare, and, most important of all, representatives of the Native Brotherhood of B.C., of the North American Indian Brotherhood, and other native Indians of British Columbia” (p.1). It was acclaimed as the first conference to bring such divergent interest groups together and actively solicit Native input. Neel’s speech, transcribed verbatim on pages 11-15 in the report, is reproduced here in its entirety:

Mrs. Ellen Neel. - Woodcarver, Vancouver.

When people talk of my work - it really isn’t just mine. My husband helps, and the children are all interested, and it is really a family enterprise. During the time I have been selling some of my work and in the course of meeting some of the people who deal in Indian Art work, I have come across some very odd ideas concerning it. When I was asked to speak at this Conference I saw a golden opportunity to present my side of the picture. Although I haven’t sufficient time to quote exact references, I should like to say that each statement has been fully checked against recognized authority, and is historically true. There is no doubt as to their value to my point, even if the inference I draw be unconventional. This point of mine which I shall endeavor to illustrate deals with an idea that the native art is a dead art and that efforts should be confined to preservation of the old work. To me, this idea is one of the great fallacies where the art of my people is concerned. For if our art is dead, then it is fit only to be mummified, packed into mortuary boxes and tucked away into museums. Whereas
to me it is a living symbol of the gaiety, the laughter and the love of color of my people, a day to day reminder to us that even we had something of glory and honor before the white man came. And our art must continue to live, for not only is it part and parcel of us, but it can be a powerful factor in combining the best part of the Indian culture into the fabric of a truly Canadian art form.

When the white man came we had a full and complete art form. Our method of production, however, was a different matter. Slow, tedious, heart-breaking labor went into everything made. Huge cedars were laboriously felled by the chopping of two grooves one above the other with tools made of clam shells and sharpened stones, then splitting off small pieces between the cuts with wooden mallets or clubs. As much as three months was sometimes required to bring down one of these forest giants. After the log was felled and floated to the beach, the carvers began their work. With fire, clam shells and adzes, they wrought their art. For sandpaper they used tanned shark’s hide and the figures took shape gradually under their expert workmanship. As much as ten years was spent on a single pole.

Then the white Man came! He brought with him saws, axes, and hatchets; steel chisels and knives; white, red, green, yellow and black paints. No involved question of propriety was raised as to whether or not the new tools should be used. Rather they were seized upon avidly. And with startling results. With them a tree could be felled in a day. The carving took a quarter of the time; and the paints allowed a wide range of expression not previously possible.

The Golden Age of totem art had arrived. Totems sprouted on every village beach. Chiefs vied each with the other in giving of potlatches. This made work for the artists who flourished now and plied their trade. New forms evolved. In some cases grotesque, caricatures, figures of priests, flowers and famous historical figures, such as Abraham Lincoln, were carved into poles. In short the art was a living art. New techniques were adopted; new material was incorporated; new ideas were welcomed and used. I can find no instance where an idea, a material or a tool was not used simply because it had not been used before.

Unfortunately then began a period in which this growing and living manifestation of my people’s artistry was partly destroyed. Because of economic and religious factors too numerous to examine at this time, an attempt was made to suppress the potlatch. This suppression of the potlatch emasculated the creative ability of the whole race. The production of art was so closely coupled with the giving of the potlatch that without it the art withered and died. Were it not for the interest created by Universities, Museums and the tourists trade we would not have any people capable of producing any of the art. We are gathered at this Conference to attempt to bring about, amongst other things, a resurgence of the creative ability of the Native people. I emphasize at this time my point, and here make it also my plea, if the art of my people is to take its rightful place alongside other Canadian art, it must be a living medium of expression. We, the Indian artists must be allowed to create! We must be allowed to use new and modern techniques; new
and modern tools; new and modern materials. For in every instance creative capacity has followed the discovery and use of better material. I do not mean that we should discard the old, only that we be allowed to use the new. Amongst the Indians there is no phase of life, no useful article to which the art was not adapted; there is no phase of life today to which this art cannot contribute.

I should like at this time to examine briefly some of the problems I have met in attempting to produce my work. In my family carving was a means of livelihood. My grandfather was Charlie James the famous Yakuglas. He carved for over 40 years. To his stepson, Mungo Martin he taught the rudiments of his art, and we his grandchildren were brought up literally amongst his work. Totems were our daily fare, they bought our clothing and furnished our food. There was no problem of sale, since his work was eagerly sought. Now the situation is different. Curio dealers have so cheapened the art in their efforts to satisfy their desire for profit, that I doubt if one could find a single household where the authenticity of the work is important them. I have striven in all my work to retain the authentic, but I find it difficult to obtain even a portion of the price necessary to do a really fine piece of work. This being so, I do not blame my contemporaries for trying to get enough for their work to live on, even though I believe they are mistaken in cheapening their heritage. Certainly a great work could be performed amongst the Native people if a true appreciation of their art could be instilled into the general public. Only when there is an adequate response to our efforts to retain the best of our art will it be possible to train the younger generation to appreciate their own cultural achievements.

As to the application of the art to everyday living, I believe it can be used with stunning effect on tapestry, textiles, sportswear, and in jewelry. Small pieces of furniture lend themselves admirably to the Indian designs. Public buildings, large restaurants and halls have already begun to utilize some of the art.

In short we need only to have some sort or organization to which architects, builders and manufacturers could come to guarantee authentic reproductions. Both my husband and I stand ready to contribute what we can to any group furthering these aims. We have plans we are willing to share. We believe that the Indian people as a whole would also gladly share if only the dignity and the honor of their personal crests and totems could be preserved.

And so we look confidently to the future which must bring a fuller, a better, a more dignified existence to the Native people of Canada, and I personally look forward to being part of the movement which brings these things to pass.
APPENDIX “F”

THE PHOTO ALBUM

PLATE 1: Freda Diesing is formally given the name “Skilquewat” by William Russ
PLATE 2: Signing Registry for Honorary Doctor of Laws - 24 May 2002

PLATE 3: Dr. Freda Diesing and sister Roberta Perry

PLATE 4: Onstage at the Aboriginal Achievement Awards - 2002
"This is some of my art on display at the Terrace Library [2002]. Most aren't finished to show quality, those I take to show students. But the library wanted something to show why I was getting these awards."

PLATE 5: Display in Terrace Library [2002] Front and Back Views
"This is me with my cousin Nancy on a trip to Hawaii. She's my Mom's sister Emily's daughter, but she was raised with us, so she was just like an older sister to me."

PLATE 6: Nancy and Freda in Hawaii

"This is a picture of my Mom and Dad and Nancy when she was a baby. Mom was only about 14 then."

PLATE 7: FRANZ, FLOSSIE AND EMILY'S BABY NANCY
PLATE 8: Beaver Pole

PLATE 9: Freda Carving "Eagle, Mother and Child" Pole

"This is a picture Richard Inglis took of me when he was up there, and this is the mask that George MacDonald bought - but I don't know whether it was for the museum or for himself."

PLATE 10: Freda holding two masks
Plate 14: Freda in Plains-style Embroidered Leather Vest, Celebrating with Northwest Coast Friends - 2000

Plate 15: Doreen Jensen, Dolly Watts and Freda Diesing on tour in Australia with the "Robes of Power" exhibition - 1985
"Back when we were kids and there was the big flood in Terrace, and we had to leave the farm, we stayed with these neighbours. These are the "girls" that I slept in the bed with one, and Bobbie, being just young, slept in with the others."

PLATE 16: Freda and Roberta and the "Girls" from the 1936 Skeena Flood

PLATE 17: Freda as a little girl in Prince Rupert, ca. 1929

PLATE 18: Brother Frank and Freda as children
"This is a picture I took of a picture of my Grandmother."

Plate 19: Mary Anne Norman as a Young Woman
"Auntie Selina, they took her to the Smithsonian, and they asked did she know who these were. and this is supposed to be my Grandmother; and Amos, and Paul and Emily, and the baby could possibly be my Mom or one of the other babies, I'm not sure. The other woman [holding the baby] may be Granny's mother; I'm not sure; I've never seen another picture of her."

PLATE 20: Mary Anne Norman and her eldest children

Plate 21: Grandparents Axel Hanson and Mary Anne, with Nancy, Frank and Freda ca.1929
PLATE 22: Father Franz Johnson, Mother Flossie and baby Freda - ca. 1927
PLATE 23: Amos, Emily and Flossie as young adults
Plate 24: Flossie and Freda (age 14)

Plate 25: Flossie and Freda (age 18)

Plate 26: Flossie and Freda, 1980s
PLATE 27: Chief WEAH (left centre) and family members gather in Masset for the raising of Robert Davidson Jr.'s totem pole - 1969