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History of Yukon first nations art

Kampen, U. van

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Author: Kampen, Ukjese van

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Chapter Five-Figurative Art

Introduction

In this chapter I examine various figurative forms that were created by early Yukon and neighbouring First Nations people. Over the years I have heard from various people that are in positions of some cultural authority that Yukon First Nations people did not have a figurative art tradition. A recent example involved an archeology student who I briefly met while examining artifacts that were stored in the Yukon Governments Archeology storage facility in Whitehorse in 2010. The student informed me that Yukon First Nations people did not have a figurative art tradition. The student was only passing on to me what he had learned. An example of what is taught about early Yukon First Nations art can be read in the Handbook of the American Indian, Volume 6 Subarctic:

In spite of their proximity to the great art style of the Northwest Coast peoples, even the Cordillerans closest to the coast could not copy the coastal peoples' monumental cedar carving or painted house screens. They lack the straight-grained coastal timber, and their mobile way of life militated against the creation of large or fixed heirloom objects. Their own artistic expression was in square geometric black or red painted designs or incisions on wooden or antler plates, spoons or gambling sticks and tasteful decorations of clothing. Psychologically, they apparently preferred not to fix in realistic representative form the frequently metamorphosing beings of a universe that they conceptualized as fluid and open. (Helm 1981: 386)

Reading in what some people consider the bible of authority on North Americans Indians, people from the Cordilleran did not create realistic art. Cordilleran is the name of the passage through the glaciers that lead from Alaska into northwestern Alberta. This was formed during the end of the Wisconsin Glacial period about 15,000 years ago. The text is referring to those Native Americans that traditionally lived in that area, amongst them Yukon First Nations people.

Later that afternoon the Yukon Government's archeologist, Mr. Greg Hare asked me if there was indeed a Yukon First Nations figurative tradition, since as far as he knew, there was not one. As you will see in this chapter, I will show that there was a Yukon First Nations figurative arts tradition. While not a main Yukon First Nations artistic expression, there are enough examples of figurative work to support this view.

In the first section I will examine Athapaskan figurative images that are at first not recognized as human renderings. These examples are mostly pendants and the dot within a circle motif. From there I will move on to Athapaskan and Inland Tlingit figurative art that is easier recognizable as human and animal. These figurative images generally fall into one of three styles; stick figures, outlined figures and silhouette images, all three painted on drums or engraved on bone or antler tools. In some cases there was a blending of the styles. See figure # 150 for my drawings of examples of simple stick figure, outlined figure and silhouette figurative images.

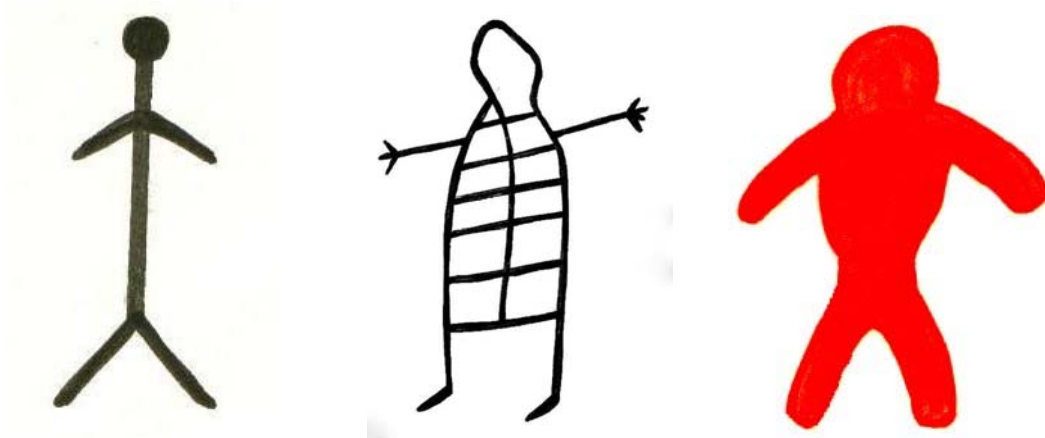


Figure # 150, Examples of figurative images of the Athapaskan style. UvK Drawing.

Almost all Athapaskan figurative images, that is, humans as well as the animals of the land, air and water, were painted or engraved in one of these three basic styles. When we look at the figurative art of the Inland Tlingit you will see a figurative art form that is more complex than the examples illustrated above.

From the stick figures, outlined figures and silhouette images I will move on to carved figures and faces. I will further examine various beaded figurative images. Masks will be analysed later in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death. I will offer what details I have learned about the images and in some cases give suggestions about the meaning. There are times when I will include images from one section, such as beaded figurative images, into another section, like carving. I do this so as not to break up a train of thought and to identify certain points.

Stylized human-figure pendants

There are a wide range of pendants with various degrees of engraving on them. Besides the engraving the pendants themselves are finished in various shapes. Some of the shamans' pendants may be stylized human forms. This is what Judy Thompson says about some of these pendants:

The Athapaskan pendants, while relatively simple in both form and decoration, show considerable diversity in shape and incised motif. The most common shape is lanceolate, although other forms occur, including stylized human figures. (Glenbow Museum 1987: 142)

I will show two Athapaskan pendants as well as two figurines from parts of ancient Europe for comparison. In figure # 151 A & B are two Athapaskan pendants that were collected in the mid-1800s. On the right side, C & D, are two Bulgarian figurines. The Bulgarian figurines are about 10cm and were made between 6000 and 6500 years ago. I found the basic outline of the two different sets to be similar, which could support Thompson's statement that Athapaskans created pendants that are human figures. I want to point out to the reader that the Bulgarian examples are Paleolithic from the hunter-gather societies and that the Geometric Art Period of Yukon First Nations is also Paleolithic art, since Yukon First Nations people were hunter-gatherers into at least the late nineteenth century.

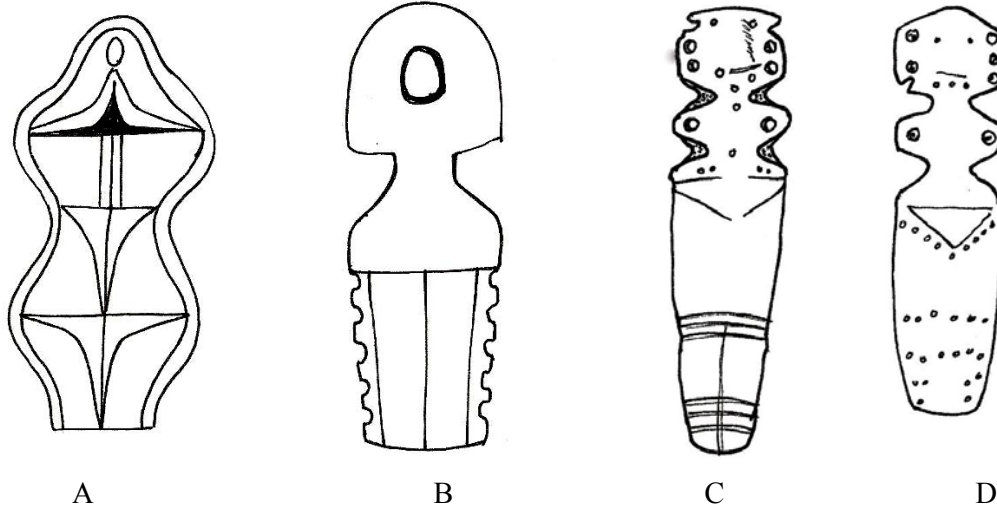


Figure # 151. Comparison of Athapaskan pendants and Bulgarian figurines. A: JaVg-2:97, CMC. B: JaVg-2:101, CMC. UvK drawing; C & D after Linda Mount-Williams.

This is what Marija Gimbutas in *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* says about the Bulgarian figurines:

In the East Balkan civilization, particularly in the Gumelnita complex, schematized bone figurines with a pubic triangle, ear-ring holes, two dots or depressions on the back (*trigonum lumbale*) probably representing eggs, and arm stumps or ‘perforated arm stumps’ which are stylized renderings of folded arms, are found in both settlements and graves. (...) The supernatural triangle and the nudity do not reveal her sexuality. Breasts and belly are not stressed. Through the act of engraving an enormous triangle in the center of the sculpture the artist perhaps visualized the universal womb, the inexhaustible source of life, to which the dead man returns in order to be born again. In this sense the great Goddess is the magician-mother. (Gimbutas 1992: 158)

While some of the details on the Bulgarian figurines are different from the Athapaskan, there are also similarities. In example A is what appear to be a pubic triangle as well as some of the same curves that form the female body such as the wider hips. The dots are lacking in both A and B. Yukon First Nations believe in reincarnation as well as the importance of females in society. Yukon First Nations are matrilineal, the lineage of the children are traced through the mother, since that is where they come from. There were also woman shamans. Women could have two husbands (as well as men having two or more wives) and generally women ran the affairs of camp life. There was a shared gender importance in Yukon First Nations society. If the above pendants A and B are human figures then maybe A represents the female and B represents the male. I suggest B as a male because of the lack of a pubic triangle and a straight line across with a line coming down the middle. Is this suggesting a pair of human legs? A is also more curvy than B giving it a more female rendering. See figures # 24 on the right on page 59 and # 202 on page 211 for additional examples of pendants.

Big Headed Star Man motif

While this motif does not look human and is not strictly considered figurative art, Catharine McClellan has identified the circle within a circle to be the Big Headed Star Man. This circle motif is repeated to make a pattern that is most often found on, but not limited to, sheep horn spoons. See figure # 152 below.

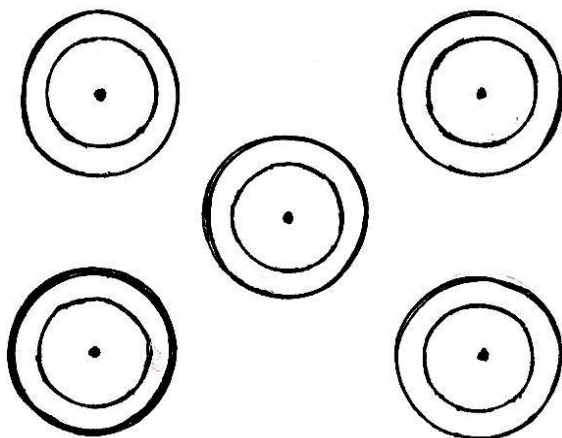


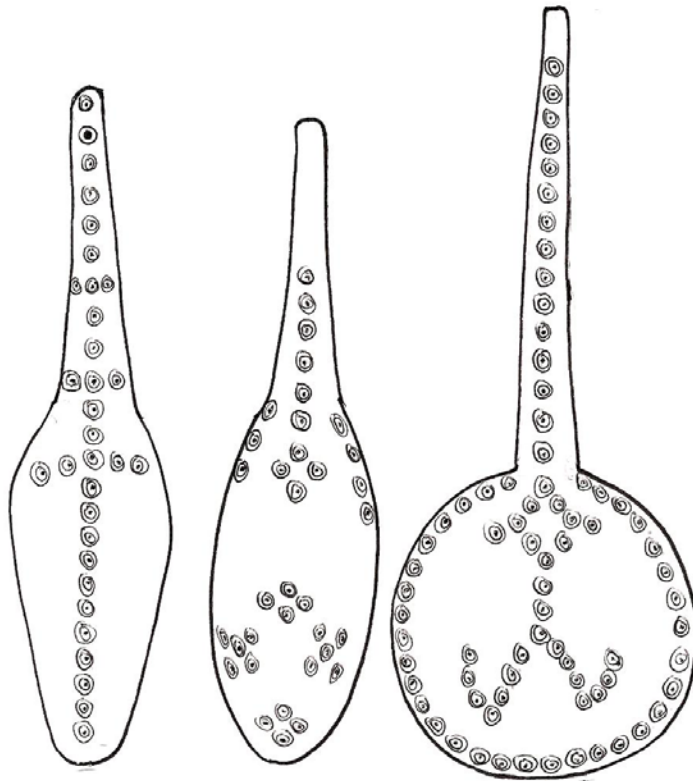
Figure # 152. The Big Headed Star Man motif. UvK Drawing.

The Elders I spoke to stated that the perfect circles of this motif were achieved by using various sized rifle cartridges. The smaller circle was made by using a .22 caliber cartridge and the larger circle by using a 30-30 cartridge. There are other circles that are less than perfect and these appear to have been made by using a hand carving tool. They may have been engraved by hand because of the unavailability of cartridges when they were made. This could be before cartridges arrived into the area by trade. The designs were also burned into the horn. Robert McKennan in *The Upper Tanana Indians* wrote:

Spoons are also carved from the horn of mountain sheep, the horn being boiled first to make it soft. I saw small spoons, comparable to the wooden ones, and large ones suitable for use as dippers and ladles. The handles of the latter are tilted at much more of an angle due to the fact that in making the bowl the horn shell is turned inside out. One specimen was decorated around the rim and along the handle by a dot-and-circle design which was burned in. (McKennan 1959: 45)

The dot within a circle motif is arranged in different patterns and each pattern varied from spoon to spoon. These patterns were used throughout most of the Yukon Territory as well as beyond its borders. The following is a group of spoons that have different dot and circle patterns. These motifs, as well as most other engraved designs on spoons and other objects, have red ochre rubbed into them to highlight the image. These spoons were also discussed in Chapter Two- Geometric & Decorative Arts and shown in figure # 37 on page 67. As stated with figure # 37, figure # 153 A is from the Canadian Museum of Civilization Museum collection and was collected by E.E. Stockton in Dawson City between 1901 and 1906. This Han spoon is made from mountain sheep horn. The spoon in B is on display at the MacBride Museum and there is no information about the spoon. C shows the front side of a spoon from the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) Collection that was originally

collected by the Anglican Church. There is also no information about this spoon. I have included this spoon as a Yukon spoon since this style was made throughout the interior Yukon and northern British Columbia.



A B C
Figure # 153; A: VI-F-5 CMC. B: MacBride Museum. C: CYFN Collection.

McClellan identifies this motif as:

...the dot-and-circle arrangement on the handle of a Southern Tutchone sheep-horn spoon is definitely supposed to represent the Big Headed Star Man. (McClellan 2001: 297)

McClellan tells the story of the Big Headed Star Man in another section of her book:

The Southern Tutchone explain that the Big Dipper (yl'da") is a big-headed man who used to be able to take rabbits from the snares by his magic powers whenever he said "Hu, Hu." Finally an Indian shot him in the back-bone. The Big Headed man then told the Indian to look for him that night in the Northern sky, where he may still be seen today with the fatal arrow showing as a tiny star beside the second big one in the handle. (McClellan 2001: 78)

Below in figure # 154 is my painted image of the Big-headed Star Man story.



Figure # 154. The Big-headed Star Man Story. UvK painting.

In my discussions with the Elders about the Big Headed Star Man motif, they mostly felt that the designs were simply to make the spoon fancy. They did not see anything that looked like the Big Headed Star Man. This may be because too much time has passed and the relationship between the story and the motif has been forgotten. It could also be that the particular unidentified spoon that McClellan examined was indeed representing the Big Headed Star Man, but other spoons do not represent that same story. This motif is wide spread throughout the south-central Yukon, Alaska and into Northern British Columbia. The story is not that well known (although Southern Tutchone Elder Marge Jackson knew of it and my mother, Hazel Smith, pointed out the arrow in the back of the Big Headed Star Man when I was a child) and therefore the dot within a circle may not be exclusively related to the Big Headed Star Man story. Maybe the dot within the circle pattern is used to make up the overall design that represents a story or carries a meaning. Marge Jackson stated that her father, Little Jim, and her uncle made spoons like the ones shown above but she did not remember the designs. When she was looking at the spoons she felt that the pattern in figure # 153 C could be a person. This would then suggest that this spoon may have a story behind the imagery. When she looked at figure # 155 below, she felt that the half circle motif was more like the Big Headed Star Man. In an additional note, non-First Nations see the Ursa Major constellation as a dipper, the Big Dipper, but it may have been seen by First Nations as a big sheep-horn spoon. This was the main spoon used to serve food at potlatches and gatherings. It may be that the Big Headed Star Man motif was associated with spoons because of the Big Dipper constellation. Perhaps the dot within a circle design represents stars.

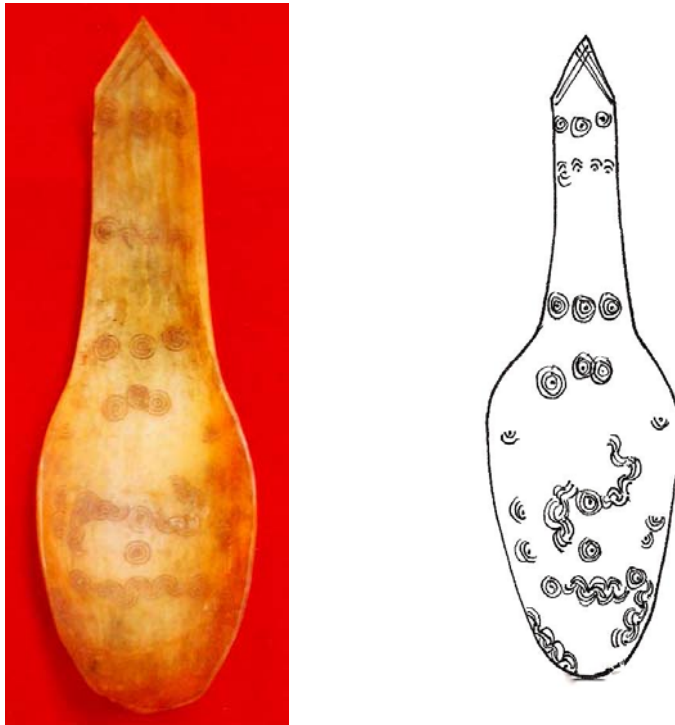
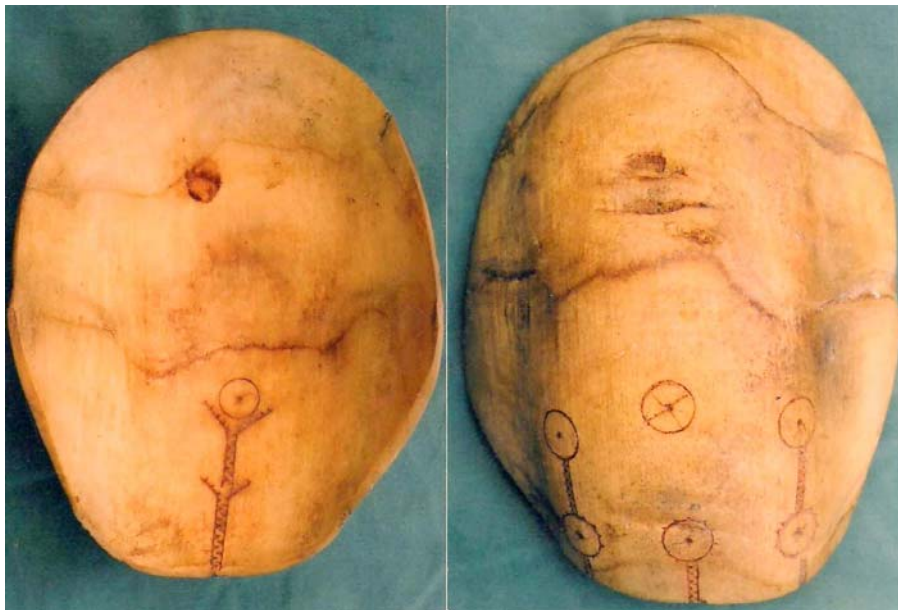


Figure # 155, Sheep horn spoon, VI-J-49 CMC. And UvK drawing of same spoon.

The dot and circle motif, or its variations, have also been used on bowls. In figure # 156 is the dot and circle motif on a sheep horn potlatch bowl that is on display in the Klukshu Museum. The motif on the top side of the bowl may be a stylized stick figure, as may be the patterns on the bottom side of the bowl. An interesting addition is the use of the “repeating cone” motif on both sides to make up the ‘body’ of the image.



Top side

Bottom side

Figure # 156, bowl. Klukshu Museum.

Any of these images, such as the dot within a circle motif, and pendants may represent humans and some may even represent actual people, spirits or deities. Because the creation of the image was so personal and individualistic, most of the time only the creator of the image would have known who or what it represented. Below is an excerpt from the book *World Art Studies*, explaining a non-western approach to the creation of portraiture.

How identity is constructed and presence evoked differs from culture to culture, though, subject to concepts of individualism, a prevailing aesthetic, and a host of social or ritual beliefs particular to a given time or place. Nonetheless, three general categories of image emerge from the survey of portraiture across many cultures and time periods. The most widespread method of portrayal is by tributes of wealth and status but not necessarily bearing physical resemblance to the subject. Many cultures also use symbolic or emblematic images to evoke the individual through various associational characteristics as site, clothing, and literary convention, that is, through visual reference to the subject's name in acronym or proverbial form. Finally, portraiture includes works based on likeness, the result of a confrontation between artist and subject-or some facsimile in the case of posthumous portraits. The three categories of image-generic, emblematic, and representational-are not mutually exclusive. (van Damme & Zijlmans 2008: 304)

While the dot within circle motifs may be abstracted human figures in symbolic or emblematic form, the left image in figure # 153 starts to look like a stick figure. It begs the questions whether we are dealing with the image of a person, spirit or deity. This image leads on to the motifs I will examine next: stick figures.

Stick figures

Throughout the Yukon and beyond its borders are a wide range of engraved or painted 'stick' figures and stylized faces and people. These stick figures were mostly engraved onto wooden staffs, gambling sticks and bone and antler tools as well as painted on drums and arrow quivers. In figure # 157 is a number of examples of various engraved, carved or painted stick people from this region. Example A is a simple stick figure, part of a series, found on a very old Gwich'in bone skinning knife from the Klo-kut site. The artifacts recovered from the Klo-kut site are between 1000 and 1200 years old. See figure # 158 for my drawing of that bone skinning knife to show how the figures are placed on the knife.

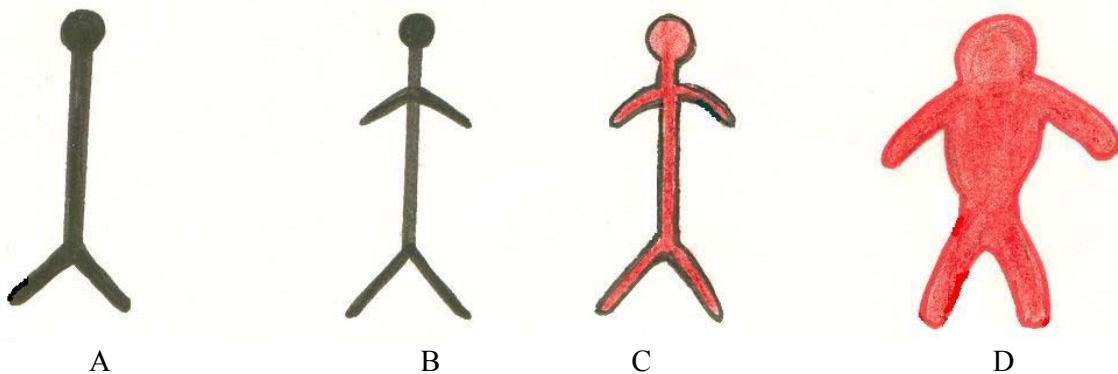


Figure # 157, various stick figures

Note that the Klo-kut stick figures are placed on a line that may represent the ground. Are these people travelling? At the end of the knife are a series of four lines with dots at the end of the line. Do these also represent people? Are the people standing on the line travelling to those other people's location? Are these figures at the other end of the bone skinning knife in the sky? If that is the sky, are they Sky People?

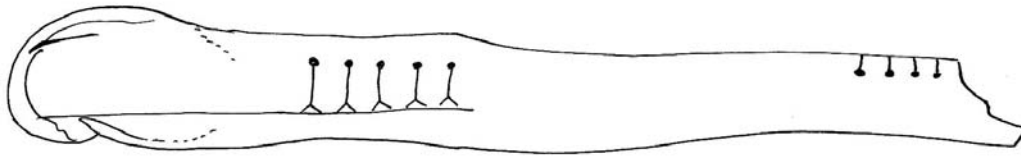


Figure # 158. Klo-kut bone skinning knife. CMC. UvK drawing.

When you examine an artifact like the Klo-kut knife there are many unanswered questions. A next example is about the identification of species that the image represents: see the illustrations below. The animal is thought to be a caribou according to MacBride Museum staff. These images are engraved on what they identify as a Tutchone speaker's staff. See figure # 159 for views of both sides of the medallion. I do question if these are renderings of caribou and if this is even a 'speaker's staff'. I question the caribou identification based on the antler construction. I have learned that often the caribou antlers are longer and sometimes point forward. Moose antlers are bigger and wider while the antlers on the animals on the medallion appear to have small horns that point toward the back. Could they be sheep or mountain goats, with their smaller horns? Or do they represent large ears of a moose.

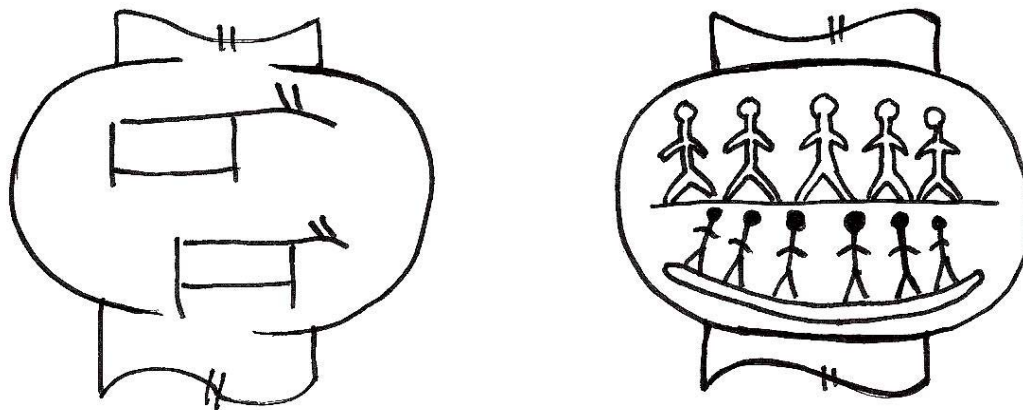


Figure # 159, detail of speaker's staff. 1973.1.158, MacBride Museum. UvK drawing.

Both caribou and moose were a major source of food, clothing and tools in the southern Yukon. There are many caribou and moose in the Tutchone territories so it would make sense that these animal images were placed on objects. But sheep and mountain goats were also hunted and were used in much the same way as caribou and moose, with the added benefit of being able to make sheep horn spoons. One of the common early methods of rendering moose and caribou leaves us no surviving examples since the images were drawn in the snow by Gwich'in hunters to leave a message to the other hunters in their group. The images showed the way to the other hunters after they had split up and one of them had been successful in getting an animal. In figure # 160 is my drawings based on Cornelius Osgood's Kutchin snow drawings in *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin* on page 92. The

designs are simple outlines and the caribou have antlers while the moose do not. Maybe the animals with the antlers are caribou, because in nature both males and female caribou grow antlers every year, males starting in March and females in June. The male's antlers drop off starting in November and the females keep their antlers all winter until just before spring. On the other hand, only the male moose grows antlers and the males start growing and dropping their antlers the same time as the male caribou. Since at least the female caribou have antlers all winter, drawing antlers to represent the caribou makes sense since these drawing were done in the snow during winter.

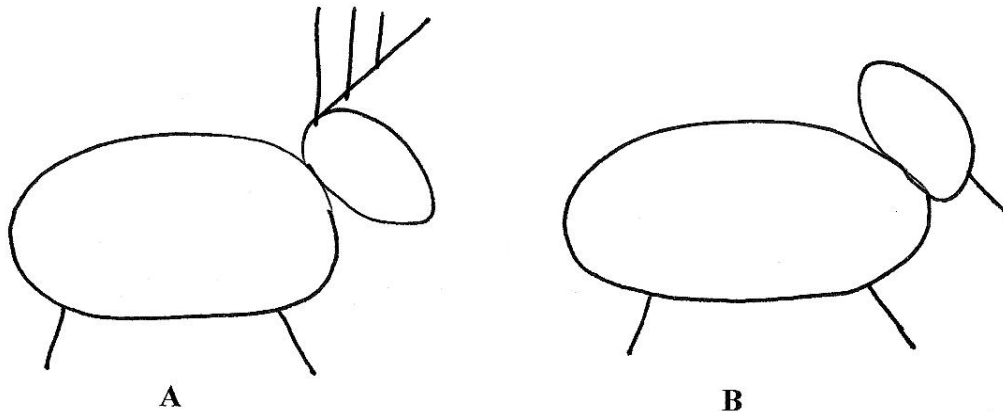


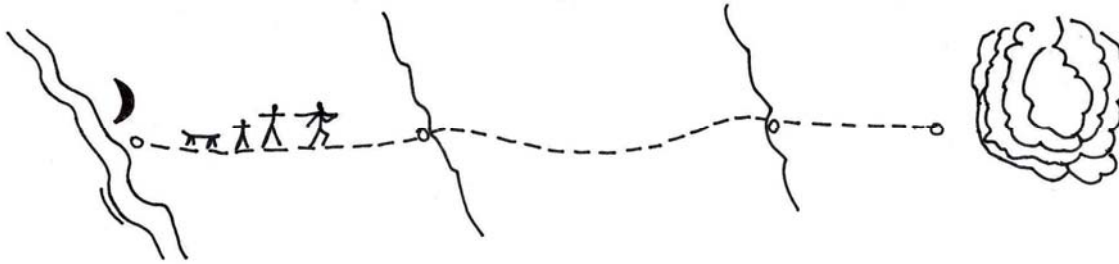
Figure # 160. Caribou and moose hunter identification drawings. A, caribou; B, moose. UvK drawings after Osgood.

Note that the antlers of the caribou are pointed forward and have a series of lines coming off them in a manner reflective of real caribou antlers. The other caribou renderings can be seen in figures # 308 on page, # 309 on page 296 and # 315 on page 300. I get the impression that if the animal rendered is a larger game animal, they are often identified as deer or caribou, but some of these identifications may be incorrect. See figure # 240 on page 235 for an example of a beaded moose and note the large antlers.

The above example is not the only type of image-message left for others to read. In the next figure, # 161 is a series of stick figures left as a message to other people in their group. My rendering of the drawn message is based on the image from page 159 in James Kari's *Tat'ahwi'aenn Nenn': The Headwaters People's Country*. In the book it states:

Around the turn of the century, prospector-explorer Addison Powell wrote this excellent description of Ahtna trail signs (1909:286-88).

When these Indians break camp to go on a hunt, or some trading post, they indicate how many persons have departed and the course that they took by sticking a pole in the ground for each person, and leaning it in the direction he has gone. To each pole is attached a remnant of some masculine or feminine wearing apparel to indicate the sex of the person in represents. Age is indicated by the length of the pole. A cache post, or surface of an old tree nearby, may be found marked with charcoal, or a lead pencil... bearing such diagram as the following:



This would mean that a man with a gun, a squaw, a little girl and a dog had left the bank of the river, when the moon was half full; that their first day travel will terminate on the bank of a creek, where they will camp on the near shore; that their next day's travel will terminate on the bank of another creek where they will camp on the opposite shore; and that at noon of the next day, they will make their final camp at the foot of the mountain. (Kari 1985: 159)

Figure # 161. Travelling family drawings. UvK drawings after Powell.

In this description there is the use of poles which was quite common in the Yukon. The images drawn above are typical stick figures, done in the same manner as we have already seen in figures # 157 & 158.

Going back to the human stick figures in figure # 157 B on page 179 we see an engraved figure with arms. It is part of a series as shown in figure # 159 on the speaker's staff from the MacBride Museum. It appears these people are on a boat. Other than the addition of arms the speaker's staff figures are identical to the Gwich'in figure. I will examine C and D later in this section.

The speaker's staff that the stick figures are on is painted in red and has seagull feathers and trade (?) ribbons attached. Cruikshank says of this staff:

The face of the medallion is divided, as if into the red summer world and the white winter world, and the figures in the winter world seem to be traveling in a boat.”
(Cruikshank 1991: 108)

Cruikshank explains the two images on the medallion in figure # 156 as follows:

In the beginning of time, the horizon came down to the earth to make a barrier. On one side of the barrier was a snow-covered winter world, where everything was white-animals, people, and other living things. The other side was the world of ordinary reality, as we now understand it. In many of the oldest stories, people who are stolen away to the world of myth-time cross the barrier-going under a log or under a point of lane that rises to give them passage-and arrive in this winter world. When the trader Robert Campbell first arrived in the Yukon in 1848, many people thought that he had come from this winter world because of his white skin. (Cruikshank 1991: 41)

There is no clear explanation of the purpose of this staff, or complete meanings of all the images. Similar images were found on a pictograph on a rock face at a place called Moose Creek close to Fairbanks. (This site was destroyed by the United States Air Force in World War II to increase security for their Air Force base.) This location is in the Tanana traditional territory. This explanation is on record at the MacBride Museum and the author of the report is Martin Gutowski. At the time he was a Master's degree student at the University of Fairbanks.

"My research has gathered a connection between a local Athabascan creation story of a giant they call Yaachox and a figure in the Giddings report. The oral tradition refers to the image of the largest one shown in the center of the attached scan of Moose Creek pictographs.

The Yaachox story is about a race of giants like the Greek Titans who existed before the world was like it is now. Yaachox did battle with an evil giant and killed the last one. After that Yaachox separated earth and sky by pushing the sky up to its present height. Yaachox translates as "Big Sky" as the name applies to his final act. Richard McKennan recorded this story as Yatco in his 1939 report on the Upper Tanana Athabascans. This story is prevalent throughout the Athabascan regions of North America.

"There are similar elements in your story from Angela Sidney about "How the Animals Broke Through the Sky". Especially interesting to me is the reference to the separation between summer and winter worlds on the medallion. The two groups of men in boats on the Moose Creek pictographs and the two groups of men on the medallion are very similar. I know form alone is not the only basis for making a connection between rock art images and other renderings on artifacts, but some researchers have asserted that men in boats are sometimes used as a calendar to indicate lunar months. The shape of the boat is a symbol for a crescent moon.

"If the men shown on the medallion are to indicate the number of months immersed in summer and winter respectively, it is off by one or two months. McKennan reported that the Tanana people reckoned seasons by 13 lunar month names, but Kobuk area Athabascans named 12. Either way the number of men figures in both the boats at Moose Creek and your medallion are the same: six and five. However there are four tally marks and eight tally marks above the Moose Creek men in boat groups, yielding the dozen needed for a monthly total. If a person stretches it a bit, the missing months can be the boats themselves carrying the others through the seasons of spring and fall as intermediaries. The story about the two worlds of summer and winter in your book do mention the mediating affect of the weather acting to bring about the seasonal changes. According to McKennan, the Athabascan year seems to begin in the fall when the moose are moving and plump for harvesting."

Martin Gutowski was not the only person analyzing the Moose Creek pictographs. In Frederica de Laguna and Dale DeArmond's *Tales From the Dena* is another analysis of the Moose Creek pictographs. They state:

The most interesting landmark of this kind was the cliff with red paintings on its face, right where Moose Creek enters a slough of the Tanana River about eighteen miles above Fairbanks. These pictures marked the place where Raven is supposed to have made women from men. (...) The pictures are of human or humanoid figures in various attitudes, ranging in size from five-and-a-half to twenty-five inches in height. (...) The largest figure, I suggest, is Raven, standing erect like a person, his skinny wings like outstretched arms. Other pictures are of persons in groups. In one group, the people apparently are all marching in the same direction. In another, three persons are enclosed in a circle, with three others outside; this may represent three people looking down through the smokehole into a house with three occupants. Of particular interest are the two representations of people in boats: five (women?) in one boat, with four tally marks above, and five men in another, with eight tally marks above.

What is surprising about the boats is that they seem to be dugouts with raised prow and stern. (DeArmond & de Laguna 1995: 303)

Below in figure # 162 is three of the six pictographs images from the Moose Creek site that I drew. I wonder if there is a relationship between four women in one boat and the men in the other boat and the location where Raven made the women. Is this possibly a scene from when Crow made the first women? This story of Crow making the first women is also common in the Yukon and both the Tanana and Yukon First Nations versions are essentially the same. There are only men in the world and the men know there is something special about a rough part of the river by a rock cliff or tunnel. It is very dangerous and the men cannot get there; those who try end up drowning. Crow comes along using his power. He can paddle his canoe into the area and once in the special area he catches a bunch of vaginas. When he returns to the men he puts the vaginas between the legs of some of the men and takes off their penises. In this way he creates women. The paintings of Raven and boats are placed on a rock cliff where in the above story Raven supposedly made women. I therefore suspect there is a connection. In the drawing below, on the left, is Raven and in the middle the boat with the possible women and on the right the boat with men. I do not know in what order the images were placed on the rocks and I am just showing three of the six. It appears that Crow is in the canoe with the five people. Is he bringing four women with him?

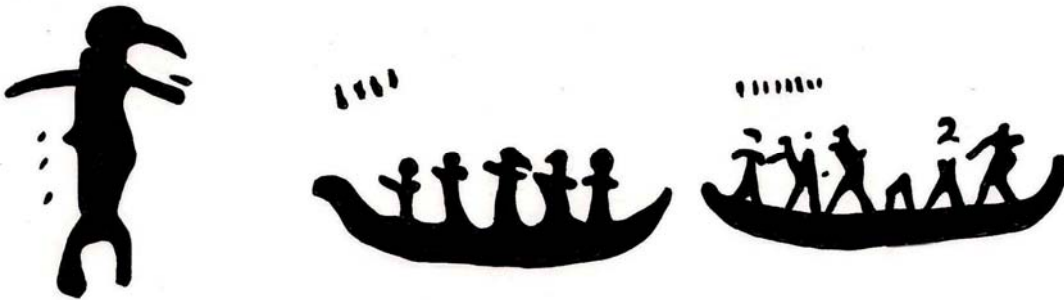


Figure # 162. Three pictographs from the Moose Creek site. UvK drawings after Giddings.

There is another pictograph of men in a boat but this time it is an Inland Tlingit pictograph and is related to another story. See my drawing of the pictograph in figure # 163.



Figure # 163. People in boats. UvK drawing.

There are a couple of versions of this story in *My Old People Say*. I will cite one version here:

While q'a gEx'gE' was still alive, a New yEnyedi man called q'adu tluq' brought the first large cedar dugout canoe up the Taku River from the coast. He is said to have forced a slave from the s'itkedi sib of s'itqo, near Sumdum on the coast, to carry the canoe over the pass to Atlin Lake. According to my koq□hItan informant, the slave was killed in the canoe and then thrown overboard at high noon when the party reached a rocky point called yudeywAn qutuq' on a small island opposite the present town of Atlin. q'adu tluq' commemorated the event by painting a red pictograph on the rocks 15 feet above the water. It shows the sun at its zenith, and the chief and his nephews in the canoe. The name of the slave was yAx□□. (McClellan 2001: 465)

In the other version it is the slave who paints the pictograph but does not state that the slave is then killed. The sun is similar to the pictograph at the confluence of the Alsek and the Tatsheshini River in Southern Tutchone territory in northwestern British Columbia in figure # 35 on page 67. These pictograph boats do look a bit like the image in figure # 159.

When I first started my research I did not think there were any local pictographs. Besides the Alsek and the Tatsheshini River, Atlin Lake and Moose Creek there are pictographs in Southern Tutchone Han territories. They are not easy to locate so there very well may be other ones waiting to be discovered.

I will return to the staff images in figure # 159 which is shown again in figure # 164 below. As we can see there are a number of possible explanations for the imagery and the purpose of the staff. The museum describes the staff as either a song stick or speaker's staff. I have not come across any other references to speaker's staffs in the Yukon other than what artist Stan Peters told me. His information came from well-known Elder George Dawson. And the other reference is what the people of Ross River told me "Speaker's Staffs". Dawson called these types of artifacts 'singing totem poles'. Dawson went on to explain to Peters that the singing totem poles were limited to about four feet in height and often were decorated with either a painted and/or carved Wolf or Raven head. These represented one of the two moieties in the Yukon. Leading a semi-nomadic lifestyle and the smaller size of trees resulted in staff height limitation of about four feet. I wonder if these 'singing totem poles' were a variation of the ceremonial dance paddles known as Ganhooks. Did the person carry the pole and sing or lead the singing at a potlatch? The Ganhooks were carried to lead the dance during a potlatch, hence the possible connection. I will be analyzing various dance paddles in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch& Death.

Personal communications with First Nations Elders from Ross River, both Kaska and Mountain Dene, revealed that the "Speaker's Staff" had images either carved and/or painted on them which told a story. The staff was 'speaking' the story. My informants stated that they did not know of any staff that was passed from person to person during meetings. Using these references the 'speakers' staff shown in figure # 164 may be a 'speaking' staff.

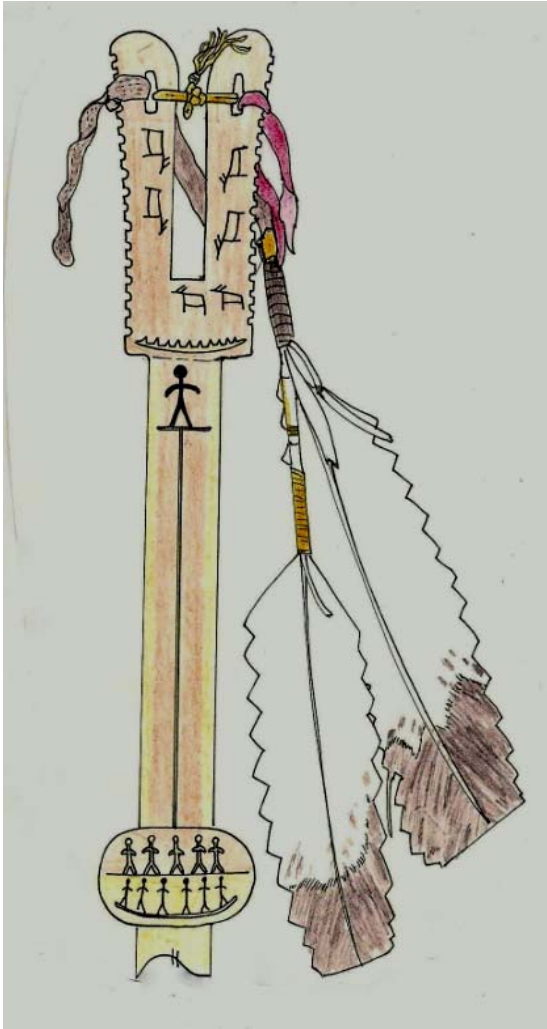


Figure # 164, detail of speaker's staff. 1973.1.158, MacBride Museum. UvK drawing.

I have also read references about, and seen photos of, speaker's staffs that were used by the Northwest Coast Indians but I have not seen any evidence of these having any influence in the interior of the Yukon. I think the staff in figure # 164 may have had other or additional uses and symbolisms. It may have been used in trade rituals or negotiations. Since First Nations people thought that the trader Robert Campbell came from the white winter world, from a part of the world where they could not go, they may have seen a relationship with the coastal Tlingits, who also would not allow the Tutchone into their world. The Tlingits were major trading partners and came from a far away and basically unknown land, as did the trader Robert Campbell. Maybe the figures are on a raft which the Tlingits commonly built to ride down the Takhini and Yukon Rivers to trade with Athapaskan people along the way. Supporting the idea that the image is a raft is that it is the only image where the people's legs are shown as they would be seen when standing on a raft. In the pictographs above you cannot see the legs as you would not when a person is sitting in a canoe.

The next figure shows a medicine stick. It is the only other Yukon staff I have come across that has designs on it. It is of fairly recent manufacture, made in 1961, but the man who made it was in his seventies. This would put his birth date between 1880 and 1890. Well known Yukon artist Jim Robb was friends with Harry Silverfox and in 1961 Robb asked Harry to make him a "medicine stick". He made no conditions or requests, simply wanting a medicine stick. The result is the medicine stick in figure # 165.

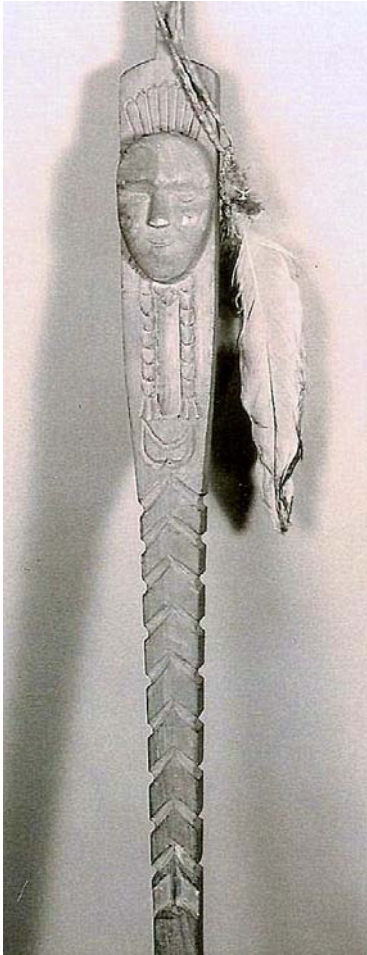


Figure # 165, Northern Tutchone Medicine stick carved by Harry Silverfox. Photograph courtesy of Jim Robb.

Harry Silverfox was Northern Tutchone from Big Salmon. He was known for making traditional Tutchone items. The medicine stick has a cross at the top and Jim Robb felt that this was a Christian reference. There is a fan of feathers behind the man's head and it appears that he has braided pony tails. The face is done in the typical manner of a carved face for a mask. See the mask section in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death. Jim Robb did not inquire about the meanings of all the motifs but preferred to simply accept the medicine stick as it was.

Returning back to the speaker's staff in figure # 164, I would like to make another connection with trade with the Tlingit and how that relates to the seagull feathers on the staff. When I asked my great-grandmother, Mrs. Annie Ned, about the seagull feathers on this staff in the early 1990s, the conversation went something like this (this is from memory, as I was not doing formal research at the time, but was simply trying to learn more about my culture):

Ukjese: Annie, why did they use seagull feathers on the speaker's staff that is at the MacBride Museum and not other types of feathers?

Annie: Them Tlingits, they come to trade, them Tlingits come from the coast...

Ukjese: ah...ok...but what about the seagull feathers?

Annie: Them Tlingits...they come from the coast to trade...they come over here...

Ukjese: ah...oh...ok...? (Ned 1993, personal communication)

After a few more attempts to get a satisfying answer, I could see I was not going to get any other response from her. Not having received a clear answer, I went away confused, believing my over one hundred year old great grandmother was finally becoming senile. As time went by I thought about her answer and later realized that she was talking about the coastal Tlingits who used to come from the Alaskan coast to trade with the Tutchone, right up until the beginning of the 1900s. The Tlingits would start their first trading trips in the spring and conclude their final trading trips in the fall. They came for the wealth that the Tutchone could provide such as hide clothing that was popular on the coast, gopher skin robes, furs, copper, shaman pendants, scratchers and even dolls. In fact, the trade was so important to the coastal Tlingits that they never sent slave raiding expeditions to the Yukon interior. They did not want to upset the trade agreements. Instead they raided other areas or traded for slaves from the Haida and sometimes trading those slaves to the interior Athapaskans.

Seagulls also come only in the spring, for the wealth of the land, and leave in the fall. As trade was an important part of southern Yukon First Nation life, the symbol of trade, which could be the seagull, would have a prominent place among images. It thus may have been used on the important speaker's staff during trade ceremonies. I now understand this to be the answer my great grandmother was trying to give to me. To support this hypothesis I like to refer to the old village of Hutchi. Near this village is an island called Seagull Island. On this island are Tlingit sticks that are decorated with feathers. The Tlingits from the coast had trading partners in the Yukon and in Hutchi. In fact, Hutchi is a Tlingit name; Hùch'i Âyi, meaning "last one". For those Tlingit traders, Hutchi was their last stop. Other Tlingits went to trade in other locations. In the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations publication *Chu'ena Keyi: Hutchi History Research* Seagull Island is mentioned:

Seagull Island, the extremely small island located at the north end of the middle Hutchi Lake is known as *Mürk'ay T'äwa Män* which means seagull island. The lake takes its name from this island. The island is named, is a place associated with the visiting Tlingit traders. It is understood that wooden posts were placed on the island by the visitors; each post represented one of the Tlingits who came to Hutchi to trade. According to Ms. Stella Boss, the Hutchi people were told that when a pole fell, it meant that man it represented died. When the last marker fell, all the traders would be dead. Both the island, and the nearby round-shaped bay on the west shore of the lake, was considered by the Hutchi people to be restricted places where one should not to go. (Champagne and Aishihik First Nations 1998: 48)

Since Seagull Island was a restricted place the wooden posts may still be laying on the island. It was this meeting with Annie Ned that made me more aware about seeking information from Elders: their life experiences are at times so different from my own, that the information presented posed at times as a puzzle. I also later learned that Elders often will tell you what they think you need to know as opposed to what you are trying to learn at that time.

The feathers on the staff at Macbride Museum are cut quite uniquely. They are cut in a zigzag fashion as you can see in figure # 164. This pattern occurs often in Yukon Athapaskan imagery and on some of the older Ice Patch feathers. The Ice Patch collection is a series of artifacts that have been recovered from the melting ice patches on the mountain tops in the southern Yukon. The melting is caused by global warming. The first artifacts were discovered in 1997 and yearly new artifacts are found, from 7300 year old weapon points to 1400 year old moccasins. The Ice Patch feathers are about 5000 years old, so the practice of cutting feathers has been around a long time. In figure # 166 is two photographs showing the Ice Patch feathers and patterns.



Figure # 166. JcUu-2:1, 4580 + 40BP, IPC.

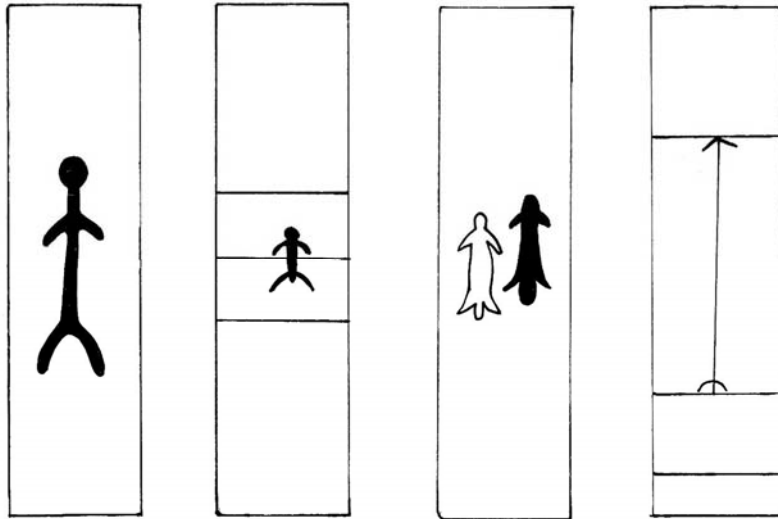
Stick figures as well as silhouette figures were added to stick gambling sticks. Stick gambling in the Yukon is now more commonly known as hand games.

The engraved Tahltan stick figures in figure # 167 are painted in either red or black on gambling sticks and were originally collected by George Emmons, the well known ethnologist. These sticks are also described by Judy Thompson in *No Little Variety of Ornament*. The figures below are from G.T. Emmons *The Tahltan Indians*, 1911, plate xix, University of Pennsylvania Museum publication. Thompson says this about the sticks:

The Tahltan gambling sticks are of beautifully finished wood, painted in red and black. Some designs are functional: encircling lines and bands represent the value and name of each stick. Other motifs include simple, highly stylized representations of an “animal form or natural object intimately associated with the life of the people”...These may have represented the spiritual assistants of the sticks’ owners, painted in an appeal for success in the game.” (Glenbow 1987: 145)

What we can see from these gambling sticks is a whole series of stylized figures and a few, such as the man and beaver, are easily recognized. Other figures on other gambling sticks, such as the canoe and arrows, are also fairly easy to identify. There are some motifs that cannot be identified. They may have represented the spiritual assistants of the sticks’ owners. And again, as stated earlier, knowledge about the meaning behind the representation might always have been restricted to the creator of the object.

Figure # 167A represents a human while figure B is listed as a human but the body extends past the legs, which is unusual. It may be a stylized human but we cannot discount that it may also be some other creature. Figure C is a pair of beavers, one dark and the other light coloured. Is this to represent a male and female beaver? Figure D is an arrow.



A: Man B: Man C: Beaver D: Arrow

Figure # 167, Tahltan stick figures on gambling sticks. UvK drawings.

Two more gambling stick images are shown in figure # 168. The top stick figure is listed as a dog. While the image may be a dog and dogs were sometimes used in hunting, overall, dogs were held in very low regard by Athapaskans. The pose of the animal does look like a typical dog pose. One would not imagine a noble wolf being rendered this way. If it is a dog it may reflect a very low value of the gambling stick. I will discuss more about the dog-wolf status later in this chapter, when examining beaded dogs on a Tahltan jacket: see figure # 243 on page 236. The second image is listed as a canoe and is similar to the boats shown in figures # 159, # 162 & # 163.

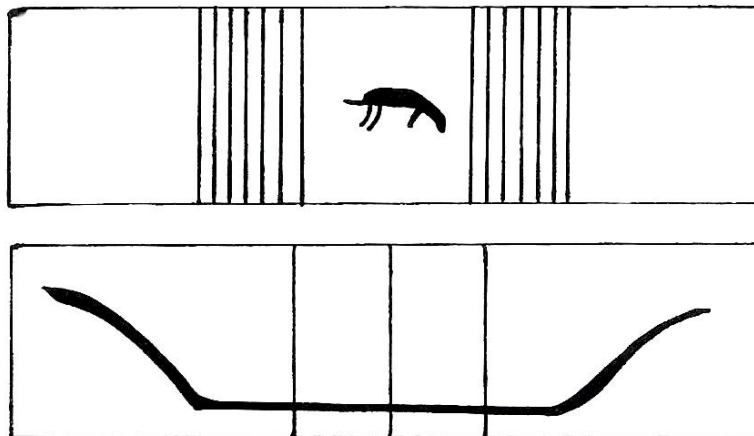


Figure # 168, Tahltan stick figures on gambling sticks. UvK drawings.

The next stick figures are bordering on silhouette figures but I will examine them here. They are the stick figures shown in figure # 157 D. Two humans are painted red on the inside of a drum along with a possible building. The scene appears to be a church in the middle with a ‘stick’ style person on each side. There is no other information about the imagery on this drum. The drum belongs to the Glenbow Museum and was acquired by the museum in 1970 by a collector and is believed to be made decades before the 1970s. What appears at first to be unusual is that the painting is on the inside of the drum. This may have

been done to protect the image and in fact was a fairly common practice, as seen on other drums presented in this thesis. While it did protect the image, it also hid the image from view most of the time. Most creators of the images however preferred to have the image visible on the outside face of the drum and accept the wear on the image. See figure # 169 of a photograph and of my drawing of the drum.



Figure # 169. Tahltan drum. R1108.9, Glenbow Museum.

UvK drawing.

In figure # 170 is a Tutchone image painted on a drum that was collected by Poole Field in Ross River in 1913. I have already shown this drum in the Introduction in figure # 5 on page 30 and now I will examine the image closer. Ross River is a Kaska community with a number of Mountain Dene families. Around a hundred years ago there were a lot of Tutchone people in the area. The original Pelly River people were killed some time before that in a war with the Liard people. The resulting void of people was filled by the Tutchone people from the west and the Francis Lake Kaska from the south east. The Northern Tutchone people left the Ross River area before World War Two for reasons unknown. Perhaps the Tutchone moved because of easier trading available at the villages of Little Salmon and Carmacks.

The drum has a single thong crossing over the top, which would make this a hand-game or stick gambling drum. Presently in the Yukon, only drums with a piece of sinew stretched across the face of the drum are used for hand gaming. The drummer uses a double-beat, creating a rhythm that the players move to when playing. The Ross River Indians are generally considered to be top notch stick gamblers and are talked about by the Elders as loving stick gambling and playing and drumming all night long.

I have drawn the central figure which may be a person or a spiritual figure. While the figure is quite elaborate compared to the simple 'stick' figures we looked at before, you can find the 'root' of the stick figure in the design. See figure # 171.



Figure # 170, Tutchone drum. VI-Q-39, CMC.

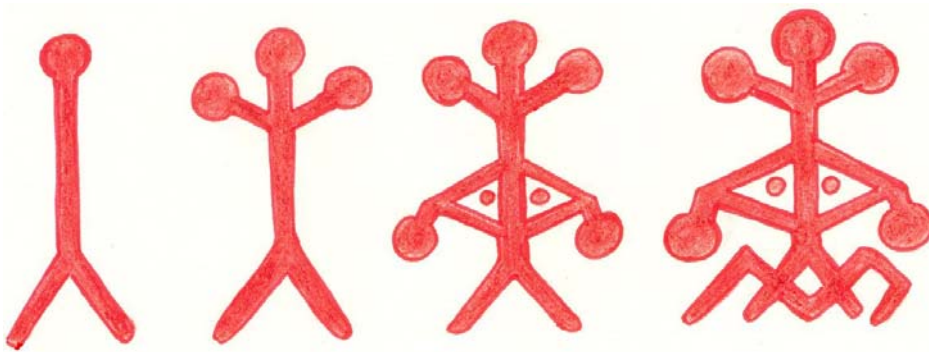


Figure # 171, breakdown of human figure on the Tutchone drum.

This drum is in the Museum of Civilization and nobody knows what it is supposed to represent. There is a letter “P” on the drum and this may have been added by the maker to show his name or it may indicate that this drum belongs to Poole. Adding a person’s initials to an object became quite popular at the turn of the twentieth century. When a person in the community learned to read and write the community members would get that person to initial their possessions.

While I was drawing these images for this book I got the feeling that the figure was a bit spider-like and that the zigzags may be nets. This reminded me of the story that Elder May Long told me about the Spider who saw that people were hungry but could not catch any fish. The spider changed into a man and then showed the people how to make fish nets that were based on his spider web. This saved the people and that is how people learned to make fish nets. While there is no proof that this image is the ‘Spiderman’ I thought the image fitted the story and therefore suggested the idea.

Outlined figures

Next images are outlined human figures. See figure # 172 for an example of a Koyukon human image. While the Koyukon are down the Yukon River in Alaska, they neighbour the Tanana whose eastern territory extends into the Yukon Territory. This image is from a place called Old Fish Camp on the Yukon River and is shown in De Laguna’s *Prehistory of Northern North America* on page 137. Note that this human image is slightly more complex than the earlier stick figures. Another feature is the use of the horizontal lines

across the body. We will see later that this is a common feature among the Inland Tlingit human figures. The image is described as: “Caribou scapula scraper with incised designs representing a man and several birds.” I did not draw most of the scapula as De Laguna did, but focused on the human image itself as well as what is possibly a bird image behind the man.

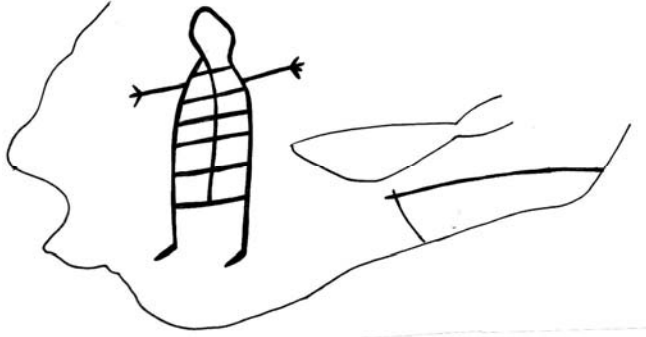


Figure # 172, Man and birds on scapula. UvK drawing after De Laguna drawings.

Another example of outlined Koyukon bird imagery is from the same village but from a different house. In figure # 173, on a scapula, is as De Laguna describes: “Incised design on caribou scapula scraper representing a duck.” I drew the duck image the same as De Laguna drew it herself. Are these birds placed on the scapula to indicate what the owner wishes to get when hunting? But these are scraping scapulas and not the hunting scapulas used as moose calls. Are the different purposes irrelevant? Or is the bird a spiritual guide for that hunter? De Laguna indicates they are ducks, but based on the shape they may be seen as any possible type of birds such as grouse, geese and swans. One thing for certain, in the whole region swans were of spiritual significance. Therefore it could be a reasonable argument, even if the figurative image of swans are scarce, that since swan feathers and down were used in potlatches, by shamans and in other rituals, that the duck images below in figure # 173 may be swans. The drawing itself is rather interesting. Are there one, two or maybe even three birds shown in the engraving? It almost looks like two birds; one standing on the shore while a second bird is in the water and has its head under to feed. Yet the body of the standing bird seems to have two heads and the lines suggest another body behind it. If this is the case then there is a leg for each bird. If not, then the one bird has two legs. This is a typical Athapaskan engraving, showing the animal in a more or less realistic situation in nature which does not appear to be representing a clan or crest.

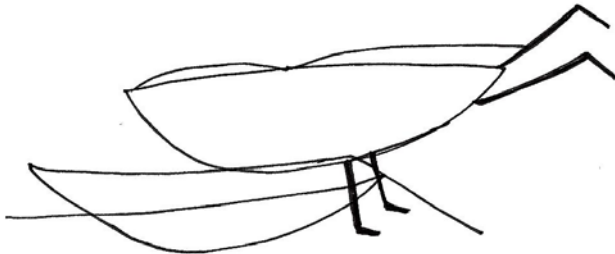


Figure # 173, bird on scapula. UvK drawing after De Laguna drawings.

Another possible outlined bird is an engraving on a spoon collected from Dawson City. This spoon is at the Museum of Civilization and is listed as Han. The spoon was collected by D.D. Stockton between 1901 and 1906 in Dawson City. See figure # 174 below.



Figure # 174, Han spoon. VI-F-3, CMC.

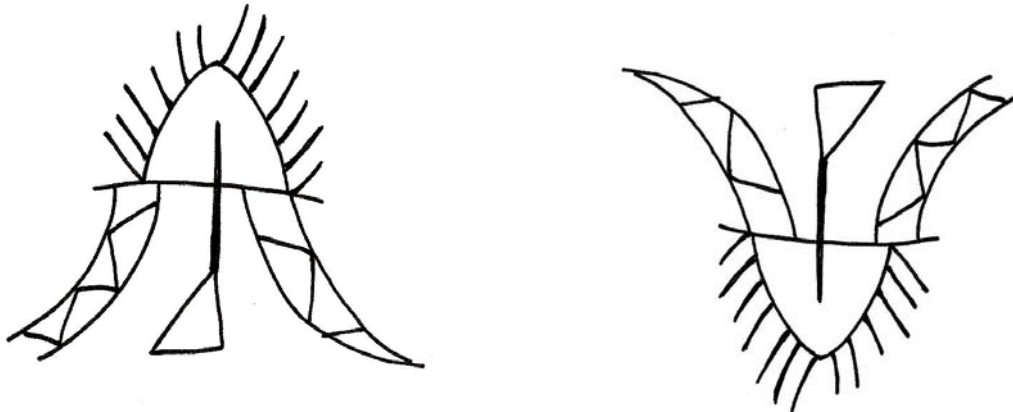


Figure # 175, two views of engraved image. VI-F-3, CMC. UvK drawing.

In figure # 175 I have sketched the design and shown it from two views for clarity. The view on the left as you look at the spoon standing upright, as in the photograph, and the image on the right if you looked at it while holding the spoon up. I believe the image to be some sort of bird. Even thou Athapaskans did not normally depict birds in a crest manner I think that maybe this may be is a clan crest or spiritual guide. After all there was a total freedom in the manner an artist may depict images so nothing would stop an artist from creating a crest image. My best guess is that the image is of Crow.

An example of another outlined figure is the fish which can be seen in the photograph on Patsy Henderson's drum in figure # 177. I have drawn a fish that is painted on a drum in figure # 176. This photograph of Mr. Henderson playing his drum in Carcross was taken in 1947. Mr. Henderson was present at the original discovery of gold that started the Klondike Gold Rush in 1896 and later in life became the chief of the Carcross people in the 1930s. During that time he would trap in the winter months and spent his summers lecturing about the Gold Rush, singing songs and telling Gold Rush and Native stories for the tourists that came through Carcross on the White Pass and Yukon Route train. He carried on with the

summer performances up until the 1950s. Over the years he used other drums that had different designs on them. The outlined fish on the drum is simple in design and has a single line going through its body longitudinally with a series of possibly the fish bones coming down from that line. The eye looks more like a human eye than a typical round eye of a fish. Could this be an indication that this fish is one of the fish people that are mentioned in the Yukon First Nations oral traditions? Also note the design on the dress of the woman standing behind Henderson. These appear to be killer whales which would make me think the woman is a member of the Tagish Daklaweidi clan (Killer Whale) of the Wolf moiety. I will show in more detail the Killer Whales in figures # 219 and # 220 on page 223 later in this chapter in the beaded figures section.

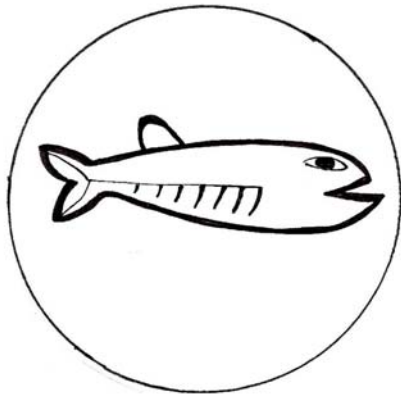


Figure # 176. Fish design on Patsy Henderson drum. UvK drawing.



Figure # 177. Patsy Henderson playing drum and singing. Undated photograph Courtesy of Skookum Jim Oral History Project. YA 88/58R #37.

Another drum (figure # 178) at the Manitoba Museum Collection is listed as Athapaskan-Tlingit and was made by a Teslin man. It came from the Mrs. I.O. Stringer collection. The catalogue card states: "Caribou skin stretched on frame made by Teslin Indian. Used at dances and medicine making. They beat the frame only. South Yukon." While in the process of collecting this drum, the frame may have been beaten as a demonstration but I don't think this was a common practice.

It is a unique design, a type of x-ray image of a stylized animal or person. One of the Elders thought it was a person. There is the "repeating dot" motif down the center of the composition with a series of ribs coming out of the center line. This is a typical Inland Tlingit practice. Very often in the figurative art of the Inland Tlingits they would have a center line in the body as well as a series of 'ribs' going across the body. Often there would be a series of dots along the center line, either where the ribs meet the line or between where the ribs meet the center line. You will see this motif in other Inland Tlingit figurative art later in this thesis.

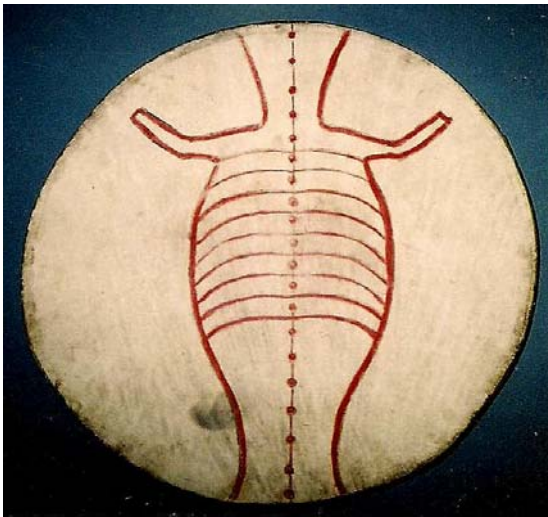


Figure #178. Inland Tlingit drum. H4-33-6, Manitoba Museum.

The drum came from Mrs. I.O. Stringer (Sadie), the wife of the Anglican Bishop of the Yukon, Isaac Stringer. Bishop Stringer had collected many First Nations artifacts during his travels in the northwestern part of Canada from 1892 until his death in 1934.

In the following figure, # 179 is another example of the Inland Tlingit series of ribs across the body. These two humans go beyond the basic outline by having facial details. The figures are from Teslin and are also on the front of a booklet entitled *Craft Manual of Yukon Tlingit* by George M. White. The caption on these figures reads: "Tlingit Ceremonial Cape-the cape shows the Old Tlingit Culture when the Tlingits were Coast People living mainly by fishing." For clarity, I have not included the beaded fish that were attached to the cape. Neither did I include the feet, since the original picture had the feet cut off. The men appear happy and successful fishermen. They are both smiling which is a common facial expression that the Inland Tlingits put on their figures. The figure on the left has a gaff while the figure on the right is swinging a club to hit a fish he is holding. There are two other fish on the cape, beaded fish that have been sewn on to the cape. On the cape one fish is on the forehead of the man with the gaff and the other fish is touching the right man's head. Why those beaded fish are placed at the heads of the two men is unknown. Maybe the image is showing what was on the fishermen's minds or it is indicating a spiritual connection with those fish.

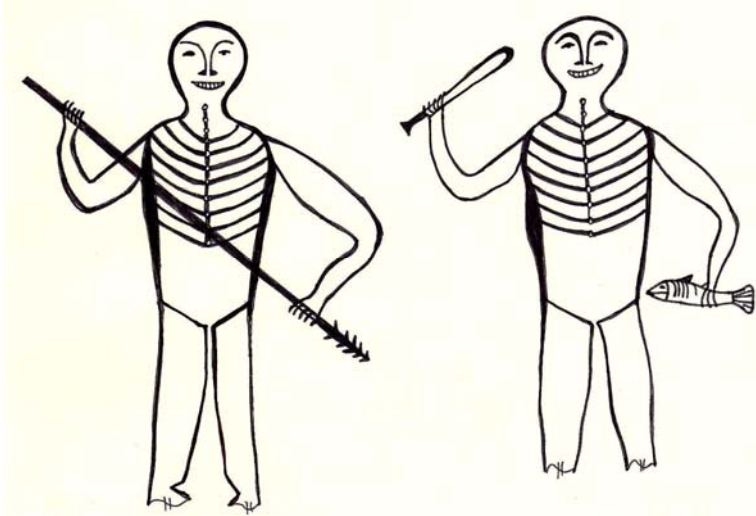


Figure # 179, Outlined Inland Tlingit human figures. UvK drawing.

In the next two outlined figures the image becomes more complex. The photograph in figure # 180 shows the front and back of the dance tunic that the figures are on. This photograph is from the Robert Ward fonds and the story of the two heads is Inland Tlingit from the Taku River area. The image with the two profiled heads is related to the following story that I have copied out of *My Old People Say*. It has its start at a mouth of a river on the coast near Sumdum glacier:

Herring rakes are supposed to be swung sideways, but should never be lifted over the heads of people. On this occasion, one man lifted the rake too high, and started a fight which caused the koq□hltan [Cow sib] to split. Some went to Taku Harbor and then up the Taku River to Nakina, where they settled and made a “totem pole” for the ashes of their dead. On it they carved a Crow with two heads hanging from its mouth. Later, some members of the coastal branch of the sib came up the river and stole the post away. The Nakina koq□hltan then moved to Atlin and Teslin. At Teslin, the chief of the koq□hltan is the keeper of a white cloth dance shirt, on the back of which is a green painting of Crow with two human heads. This representation of Crow is called yA’atneyax (carrying something). The heads are said to be those of slaves. On the front of the same shirt are three joined human heads which encircle a salmon, and are known as ‘Ick’a taxt. Apparently they represent spirits associated with the “Salmon hole” of the ‘Ick’Itan (discussed below), but I did not learn the full story. (McClellan, 2001: 474)

Parts of the ‘Ick’Itan story is as follows:

The ‘Ick’Itan Sib

...They derive their name from ‘Ick’ (deep place), which refers to the place in the stream where the salmon makes a deep hole and “stays in one place.” As already noted, this is probably what is depicted on the Teslin koq□hltan shirt. The present owner of the shirt, however, calls himself koq□hltan and named only individuals from the coast as ‘Ick’Itan... (McClellan, 2001: 477)

There is also a fish besides the bird and a design behind Crow's head. Is this design a reflection of the earlier totem pole that had the heads hanging from Crow's mouth? The profiles seem to be smiling, which as mentioned earlier often occurs in Inland Tlingit human renderings, but I wonder if the mouths are to represent the expression in death. The eyes are placed in the center of the heads and the ear is at the back. It is almost as if we are seeing two perspectives of the head: a side profile of the front of the head and a straight on view of the head from the eyes to the ears. Below the eye is a circle, maybe representing the cheek or a face painted design. In Chapter Eight-Art of the potlatch & Death, on the ganhooks we can clearly see that the artists include face painted designs on their portraits.



Figure # 180, Front and back view of images on Inland Tlingit dance shirt. Uvk drawing.



Figure # 181, image on Tlingit dance shirt. Uvk drawing.

As for the other image with the three joined heads, I show it with the right side up in figure # 182 A and upside down in B. In B we can see what may be a body, the bottom heads

being feet, the hands and a larger head on top. But the figure is presented on the dance shirt with the two heads on top and the one larger head at the bottom. McClellan stated that there are three joined human heads which encircle a salmon. I cannot see a salmon but there is a bird between the 'legs' with an object at the rear of the bird. The type of bird is unknown, but Crows are commonly rendered this way. There may be a link between Crow and the giant fish story reflected in this image. The object behind the bird is also unknown but may represent the salmon McClellan talks about. I have heard of Wealth Women pooping nuggets of gold. Could there be a connection here? As for the figure itself, I would have to guess that this is not a human from this world but from the myth time. During the myth time transformations were common, animals could take human form and sometimes humans took animal form, often at the desires of an animal. The heads are shown straight on and the eyes are correctly placed in the center of the head. The eyebrows, eyes and face layout have a slight coastal Tlingit feel to them, the same hint of coastal influence I have seen on some Southern Tutchone images. Note that these faces are not smiling. Is this because they are not human but animals, since they can't smile but they can show their teeth? Are these spiritual animals assuming human form? I have found that of all the art done in the Northwest Coast Indian art style, there are very few human smiling faces and almost all toothed animals are showing their teeth.

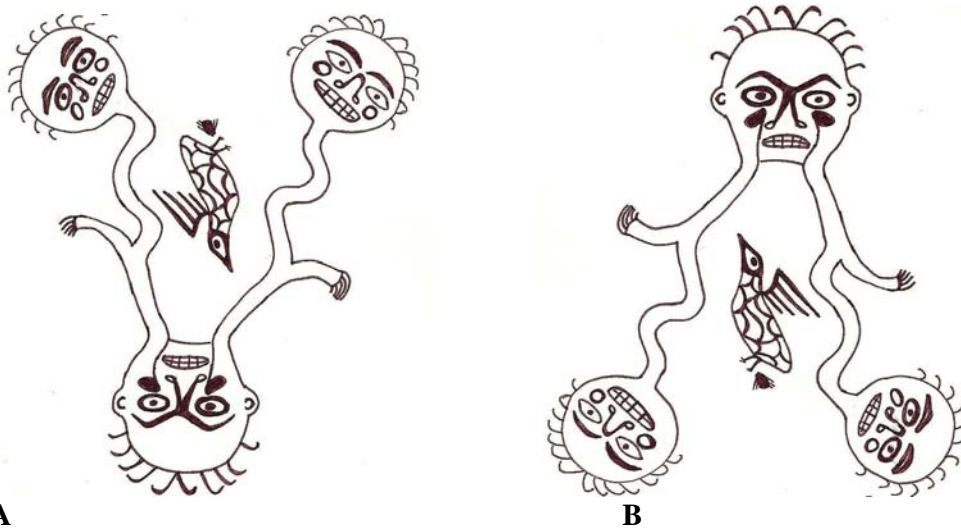


Figure # 182, image on Tlingit dance shirt, A: top, right side up. B: bottom, figure shown upside down. Uvk drawing.

Next I will examine another complex outlined figure. It is on the inside of a drum that was collected in 1911 by D.D. Cairnes and is now in the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa. I earlier discussed this drum in figure # 31 on page 65 but will focus on the bird design here. The bird has a black painted silhouette head but the remaining parts are outlined and have a series of repeating dots throughout the body, wings and tail feathers. This bird design has a similar shape to the beaded birds on Kate Carmacks cape as seen in figure # 224 on page 226 and # 225 on page 227. There is a similarity to the painted birds shown in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch and Death. See figure # 183 for the drum painting of the bird. Catharine McClellan has identified this bird as an eagle but my assessment is that of a Crow, the black colour and the straight beak being the deciding factors. Crow is in the center of a circle and the four arrows point outwards. The circle and four directions are also on the other drums and are sometimes related to the creation of the world in which Crow remakes the world after the great flood.



Figure # 183, Inland Tlingit drum with bird. VI-J-80, CMC.

I have shown a progression from stick figures to quite complex outlined figures. I will next discuss silhouette figures.

Silhouette figures

I will start off with birds and move on to other animal images. In many painted examples the birds are laid out in similar patterns. For the Inland Tlingits the bird is shown in a front view with its wings spread out to the sides and its head in profile, either looking to the left or the right. The details may be different but the bird's basic pattern is often shown in this manner. The Inland Tlingits rarely used a pure silhouette but painted their birds in the outlined style. The Athapaskans mostly created the animal images in silhouette. The Athapaskans' silhouette birds were sometimes painted in a realistic fashion. The Tahltan birds were at times a cross between the Inland Tlingit and Athapaskan image styles.

The following silhouette bird image is painted on a tunic and is in the collection of the Museum Weltkulturen in Mannheim. This is the only tunic that I have seen that has an image painted on it and is therefore very rare. The tunic was purchased from Arthur Speyer, by a German collector, Baron von Wrangel sometime between 1829 and 1830. Baron Ferdinand von Wrangel was born into a noble German family in Russia and was the chief administrator of Russian North America (Alaska) between 1829 and 1835. He was also the president of the Russian-American Company from 1840 until 1849. He would have been in an ideal position to collect artifacts from the region, including those that were collected from the interior by the middlemen, such as the Tanaina and the coastal Tlingits. The tunic passed through a number of hands before finally ending up in this present museum. It is listed on the museum's artifact card as Tanana but often is identified by others as Tanaina. This makes quite a difference since the Tanana live far into the interior of Alaska while the Tanaina live along the Pacific coast in south-central Alaska. I am not sure where the error started but I believe this tunic to be Tanaina. Based on my earlier regional breastband styles I examined in Chapter Three-Hid Clothing to Dance Shirts, this tunic is clearly done in the Tanaina style.

The bird design is painted in red ochre and the type of bird is unknown. The museum artifact card does not comment on it. Judy Thompson in her chapter *No Little Variety of Ornament* in *The Spirit Sings* says this about the bird: “The small bird motif painted with red ochre is an unusual feature and probably represents a clan symbol or spirit helper of the garment’s wearer.” (Glenbow Museum 1987: 152). See figure # 184 of the painted bird and figure # 185 for the breastband pattern. As you can see from the photograph there are three birds painted across the back of the tunic. There is also the common Athapaskan repeating dot motifs above and below the birds. While different in detail these birds do have the same look as the engraved Han bird in figure # 175 on page 193. Both are simple designs with raised outspread wings.



Figure #184, Painted birds on back of Tanaina tunic. Marion Jourdan photograph. Nr. 3219, Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin Abt. Kulturen der Welt.



Figure #185, Breastband pattern on Tanana tunic. Marion Jourdan photograph. Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin Abt. Kulturen der Welt.

The next silhouette bird is painted on a drum and is in the Field Museum collection. See figure # 186. Note also the drum stick, figure #187, with a black head which may represent the raven.



Figure # 186. Raven painted on Yukon Athapaskan drum. Field Museum 2003.4161.337962.



Figure # 187. Raven painted on Yukon Athapaskan drum stick. Field Museum 2003.4161.338197.

This drum is painted with a red background and a typical black silhouette raven flying over the Yukon mountain ranges. Unfortunately there is little information about this drum other than that it was added to the collection in 2003 and is from the Yukon. Its general appearance makes me think that it was collected sometime between the 1940s and the 1970s. It is done in the typical Athapaskan style of painting ravens and there is no doubt that this is a Yukon painted drum in the earlier silhouette image style. As you can see in figures # 190 & 192, Athapaskans sometimes painted their images in scenes, like the scene above of the raven flying over the mountains. Later in Chapter Seven-Art of the Hunt & War I will show more Athapaskan scenes.

The image on a drum is part of the Burke Museum collection and was collected by George Emmons from the Tahltan people on the upper Stikine River in Northern British Columbia in 1909. See figure # 188 for a photograph of the drum and my drawing beside it for clarity. The drum was sealed in plastic and therefore I was not able to take a clear photograph of it. See figure # 189 for a photograph of the stick figure that is inside the drum. The card states: "Ceremonial dance drum of goat skin stretched over circular frame. The front is painted to represent a raven as it belonged in the family having the raven crest. On the inside are drawn some crude animal forms."



Figure # 188. Left: Raven on Tahltan drum 1909. Burke Museum 2818. Right: Uvk drawing of Tahltan Drum.

This drum was well used. The raven is painted in a solid red except for the center of the body which is left open. This image seems to be a cross between the more detailed Inland Tlingit birds and the solid painted Athapaskan birds. The Tahltan were greatly influenced by the coastal Tlingit, so it is understandable that this painted raven style has aspects from both the Tlingit and Athapaskan. A common feature between the two groups is that the wings have individual feathers. One of the differences is that this raven looks like it is in flight and there is a sense of movement which the Tlingit birds often lack. Many of the Tlingit birds are rendered in a manner like the bird crests of countries and states in Europe. Sometimes Athapaskan birds and other animals are rendered like crests but more often the birds and animals are made in a semi-realistic manner and show the bird in natural action: flying, sitting, watching, etc. Another notable difference is that on the Northwest Coast black was the colour of choice with red as a secondary colour. The interior native people preferred to paint images in red and use black as a secondary colour. Because of the plastic bag covering the drum I could not get any clear images of the “rude animal forms” from the inside of the drum. Below is a photograph of what appears to be a stick figure of a human.



Figure # 189. Stick figures inside Tahltan drum 1909. Burke Museum 2818.

The next image is more in the Athapaskan style, a solid coloured silhouette except for the red eyes of the animals and mouth of the raven. This raven is also painted on the inside of

the drum which, as I mentioned before, was not an uncommon practice. See figure # 190. The raven is sitting on a tree branch and watches animals, possibly caribou or moose, walk by. I do not know of a story referring to a like scene. It may have been something the artist observed and decided to paint. If this is the case, it would be one of the few images I have seen that is showing the raven as a realistic bird and not as the symbol of Crow. On the animal on the left is some red paint coming out of the rear end. Is this a mistake or is the artist showing that the animal is bleeding? If so is this a hunting scene? See figure # 191 for a detail of the possibly bleeding caribou or moose.



Figure #190. Raven and animal on Tahltan drum 1909. 2809, Burke Museum.



Figure #191. Detail of bleeding caribou or moose on Tahltan drum 1909. 2809, Burke Museum.

This is a good place to leave birds and look at other silhouetted painted animals. Again these animals are painted on drums. A well known drum that has animal designs painted on it is the potlatch drum used by Johnny Fraser, a Southern Tutchone man from Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. See figure # 192. Johnny Fraser was my first cousin, three times removed, and is now deceased. As I have seen no coloured photographs of this

drum, I cannot tell the medium or colour of the paint. The wolves are painted solid in this case and around the drum are a series of three heart shapes. Hearts shapes, which may be purely decorative, are also common in beaded designs. See figure # 233 on page 232 where the heart is incorporated as the body of an eagle. At the top part of the drum is an unknown shape. The exact location of this drum is unknown. Johnny Fraser sold a lot of his First Nation possessions to tourists, many of which were Americans. It is generally believed by many that this drum is in a private collection in the United States.



Figure # 192, Left: MacBride Museum Photograph with detail of drum 95.345.

There are other photographs of this drum used at potlatches and so the painted wolves would represent the Wolf clan. McClellan also notes this idea about drums in the Southern Yukon in *My Old People Say*:

Often the heads are decorated with crest animals or representations of shamanistic spirits. Ideally the painting should be done by one of the opposite moiety. (McClellan 2001: 295).

This drum will show up later in figure # 326 on page 311 as it has been photographed a number of times.

In the final silhouette figure, # 193, Chief Isaac of Moosehide is holding a painted drum. This painted design appears to be a moose. The photograph was taken in the 1920s and the person to the left of Chief Isaac is Bishop Isaac Stringer. I have added my drawing beside the photograph for clarity.



Figure # 193, Chief Isaac and his drum. 990-77.12, DCM&HS.



The following is what is written about the drum from the website *Chief Isaac's People of the River*:

Chief Isaac's drum was made for him by his brother Walter Ben. Drum design shape like a moose and burnt into the hide came from the Dawson slide. A story about how the slide was formed was told to Trica by Auntie Pat Lindgren. "Many years ago, before the white man came into this country, people of the Han tribe lived at the mouth of the Klondike, where the present city of Dawson is situated. Sometimes a member of the tribe would go missing, and it was said another Indian tribe, from the South, was stealing them. One day members of the Han tribe were at the very top of the hillside at the north end of Dawson, and the other tribe was at the foot of the hill. They were fighting and someone at the top cut down a tree and this started a slide. The rock slide buried and killed all the members of the tribe from the south. Chief Isaac, heredity chief of the Han tribe, proudly displayed a drawing of the slide of Dawson on his drum because the symbol that shapes like a moose are signs of the land set there for his people of the Han tribe to live and to remember." Joy Isaac (http://www.chiefisaac.com/stories.html#Chief_Isaacs_Drum_and_the_Dawson_Slide)

In figure #194 is my drawing of another moose design that is on a drum in the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre of the Dawson Han Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. In this image the moose is based on Chief Isaac's drum but there are differences. In figure # 193 Chief Isaac's painted moose drum is facing to the left in as it is in all the photographs of the moose I have seen. The Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre's drum is facing to the right. Also, the center negative shape in Chief Isaac's drum is empty but the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre drum has a painted shape inside of the negative space. Dänojà Zho's drum has a black outline while Chief Isaac's drum

does not appear to have one. The Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre drum may be a later copy of Chief Isaac's drum, or is an additional drum made by Walter Ben.

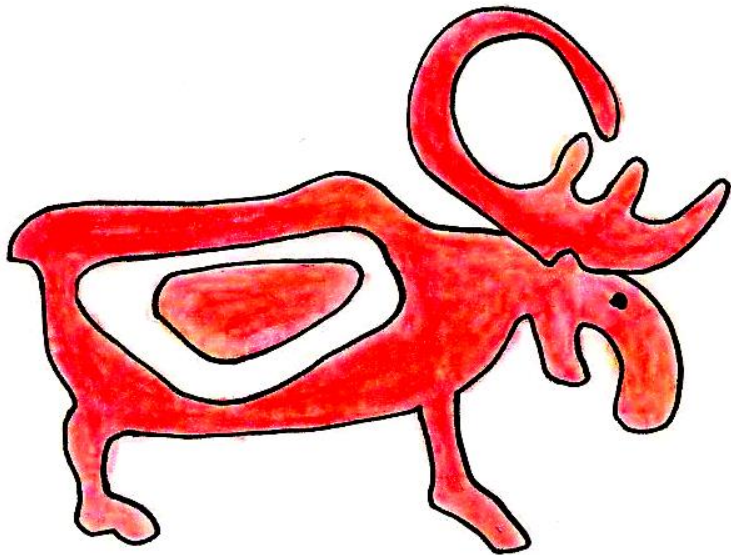


Figure # 194, detail of drum at Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre, Dawson City. UvK Drawing.

The earlier Tahltan bird in figure # 188 on page 202 was also done in red, had a black dot as an eye and had a negative space in the middle of its body. These examples are a cross between the pure silhouette images and the outlined images.

Later I give other examples of stick figures, silhouette figures, outlined figures and figures that combine these styles. I will point them out as they occur.

Carved images

Athapaskans had a carving figurative tradition and I will present a cross section of examples. The first set of carved figures I am showing are either amulets for shaman's or other people's personal rituals. Next I will look at some carved fish figures followed by carved spoons and beaver images. I will finish with larger carved figures that are either trail markers or boundary markers. You will see other carved artifacts in later chapters where the purpose of the figure is known.

The first figure is a simple Ahtna stone human figure that is in the Alaska State Museum collection in Juneau. It was collected from the Copper River in Alaska. See figure # 195 below.



Figure # 195. Ahtna human stone figure. II-C-13. ASM.

The writing on the figure states “Amulet from an old deserted cabin on the Copper River, near Tumsina presented by Dr. Henry Cockerille of Valdez.” This is a simple figure but you can see a body and head. I believe this to be an amulet as well. It’s an object that fits in the hand. The writing on the amulet is on the front as there appears to what may be a mouth and eyes on the head.

The two next figures were collected together from the headwaters of the Chilkat River in the southern part of Southern Tutchone territory. The first example is in figure # 196. This item was collected in 1901 by C.F. Newcombe. On the catalogue card is stated the following about this figure and others that were collected by Newcombe:

“The others are from tribes about headwaters of Chilkat River, probably included in Father Morice’s Tsekehne. I got them from friends who were unable to further specify them, in 1901.”

This artifact is in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection and is listed as a Bone Charm. It is approximately 3.5 inches high (9 cm) and is carved out of bone. Even though the Chilkat River flows into the Pacific Ocean through Chilkat Tlingit territory, this human figure is nothing like the typical Tlingit carving from the coastal areas. It is made in an Athapaskan style, in this case a cruder form of carving.



Figure # 196, small carved bone charm. VI-Q-116, CMC.

C.F. Newcombe collected another bone charm with the same provenance and collection data. See figure # 197 for two views of this animal. This carved animal or creature is similar to the carved animal in figure # 195 that was collected at Fort Selkirk, Yukon, in the 1950s. An interesting point is that the head of this charm looks like the head on the copper knife from Aishihik in figure # 287 on page 283. The Elders I consulted could not be sure of this animal. A frog was put forward as a possibility, but the tail seemed to dispute that choice.



Figure # 197. VI-Q-115, CMC.

In the Canadian Museum of Civilization there is an artifact that was assumed to be found at Fort Selkirk in the 1950s that is also lizard like. The precise location has not been

listed but it was collected during an archaeological survey conducted in the southwestern Yukon in 1957 by Richard S. MacNeish. See Figure # 198 for a photograph of the artifact from the side and top. The function of this artifact is unknown. Ruth Gotthardt, the Yukon Government archaeologist, suggested that it may be part of a speaker's staff. When I held the artifact it fitted in my hand nicely; I was of the impression that it may have been used by a shaman as one of his pendants. He could have held it easily while performing his rituals. Marge Jackson thought it could be used in dance. The item does have the common dot and circle motif with an unusual carved animal at the side. A fox was my first thought but it is wise not to discount the animals from Yukon's past, like the giant beavers. Southern Tutchone Elder Irene Smith suggested that it looked like an otter. When I mentioned to Irene that the otter is generally thought of as being a very bad animal and you have to be careful when dealing with them, she replied: "Not to everybody." If this is an otter, it may be a personal animal spirit guide for either a regular person or shaman. I thought the evil power of the otter did not make this a good choice yet in figure # 199 is a bone carving that is listed to be a land otter from the Jackson Sheldon Museum.



Figure # 198, paddle shaped object recovered from Fort Selkirk. KeKe-1:1, CMC.

Note that both these animals have legs and big eyes. There are many animals carved in bone in this general layout which are similar to the animals in figure # 198 and # 199. For example the coastal Tlingit often carved animals, such as the sea otter, with a similar outline.



Figure # 199. Shaman's otter baton, I.A. 105, Sheldon Jackson Museum.

The otter above is at the Sheldon Jackson Museum and may have been donated by R.A. Clarke along with other articles. In the museum notes it states that it is a "Shaman's baton" and that it is a "shaman's bone to be thrown, medium, Lizard form, bone, 14". The notes also state: "A remarkably fine piece; the land otter is a powerful shaman's spirit." This otter looks very close to the two examples above but in this case you can see the coastal Tlingit art style with the eyes and face at the bottom back of the otter's body. It seems that the two groups of people, interior and coastal, were making similar versions of these animals and reflected them in their own style. The museum notes also mentioned "Lizard form" and this cannot be discounted. I want to add that Dr. Leslie Johnson, an Associate Professor in Anthropology at Athabasca University, noted that this animal looked like the salamanders or newts that are found on the Taku and Skeena Rivers and have been reported as far north as Glacier Bay. These amphibians are mainly active at night and hibernate most of the year. Have these animals been seen at the headwaters of the Chilkat River area, and if so, what is their relationship with First Nations people in that area?

There are a number of similar looking artifacts in the various Tlingit collections of museums, especially with the Yakutat Tlingits, so this style of carving was not uncommon. Note that the Yakutat Tlingits were originally Athapaskans who moved from the interior Copper River areas to the coast and adopted the Tlingit language and culture. The Yakutat Tlingit have many bone carvings in this style, often placed in shaman's necklace rings. See figure # 200. Whatever the case, these are recorded as charms and if used by shamans, maybe the natural habit of the animal made them important. Salamanders often only came out in rain and at night. Both salamanders and otters can live in the water and land and may therefore represent a transformation power. They were able to function at night and the night was considered to be a time the spirits were most active, since night was the spirit's day. Since shamans dealt with transformations from human to animal spirits and back again, maybe those animals represented that ability, since they are moving at ease between the land and water and thus between two different worlds.



Figure # 200. Shaman's neck ring, listed as Tlingit, collected from Copper River. IVA 6528 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

One point to be considered is the commercial value of the otter pelts to the coastal Tlingit people. Whatever the beliefs toward otters, they quickly became commercial once the pelts were in great demand by the traders. There was such a demand that the sea otters were all but wiped out. In this context carved otters might make reference to a very important trade animal.

Another common carved animal figure is the fish. In the Royal Ontario Museum collection one can find a unique and beautiful spoon with a fish design on it. See figure # 201 for the spoon and detail of the fish. This spoon is part of the D.A. Cameron collection and is from the Dawson City area. The spoon has a fish designed on what appears to be a piece of copper at the end of the handle. At first glance this spoon looks like a Northwest Coast Indian art piece, but at closer examination it is more clearly of an interior source. The design uses an outlined style of the fish, rather than the Northwest Coast Indian style with ovoid and “U” shapes. Instead, the artist used lines for the body and a series of dashes to represent the scales. On the handle just in front of the salmon are two circles. They appear to be made of inlaid abalone and would have been traded in from the coast. Abalone shells were highly prized and sought after in past times. The First Nations from the Dawson Area are the Hän, which means river. The Hän are well known for their fishing and it is not surprising to see a spoon with a fish design on it. This looks like a salmon that would be harvested in the late summer from the various fish camps along the river.



Figure # 201. Hän spoon and detail of fish. 953-160-10, ROM

The next fish is a scratcher from the Burke Museum in Seattle, Washington. See figure # 202 for a photograph of the fish in relation to the other scratchers and figure # 203 for a photograph of the fish by itself. These were collected by George Emmons from the Chilkat Tlingits and were accessioned at the Burke Museum in 1909. They were traded in from the interior, most likely from the Southern Tutchone people. The museum notes state:

Bone scratcher, ornamentally shaped and cut. From Chilkat, but procured in trade from the interior people living about the head waters of the Alsek river. Worn suspended around the neck and used to scratch with, the nails never being used.

Scratchers are generally about four inches long close to the coastal areas and five or six inches long in other areas of the Yukon. They were used by both the interior and coastal Tlingit people but it seems that the coastal Tlingit used scratchers more often. For the Kaska the scratcher was used on the head because if you used your fingernails it could result in the loss of hair. The use of the scratcher replaced the fingernails for the coastal Tlingit because to scratch with fingernails was considered harmful to the person. For example, if a woman's husband was away at war and the woman scratched herself with her fingernails, there was a chance that her husband would be wounded at that spot by either an arrow or other weapon.

The scratcher also resembled the shaman's amulets and the owner may have felt that the scratcher offered a certain amount of protection. Since the scratchers are about the same size and designs as shaman pendants they would be hard to tell apart and could be easily misidentified. I wonder why the artist decided to carve a scratcher in the shape of a fish which is very different from the other geometric designed scratchers. Was there more meaning to this scratcher? This size of scratcher is also about the same size as carved bone fish that some archaeologist identify as fishing lure.



Figure #202. Bone carved fish scratcher. # 42, Catalog ID 1020, 1018, 1017, 1019. Burke Museum.



Figure # 203. Bone carved fish scratcher. # 42, 1020. Burke Museum.

This next example is of a carved fish, which does not have a hole for a string in its tail, like the previous fish. The hole is at the center of the fish's back. See figure # 204. This is an artifact that was discovered at the Klo-kut site just north of present day Old Crow and is in the Gwich'in traditional territories. It is about 1200 years old and is presently in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection. While the archaeologists say it was probably used as a lure, it very well may have been used as a scratcher or amulet. I will mention later in Chapter Six-Ritual, Shaman Art & Story Related Art that Athapaskan girls used scratchers during their puberty seclusion. The scratcher was part of the ritual items the young woman had, along with a swan leg bone drinking tube, raven feathers, family stones, puberty hoods and so forth. See figure # 248 on page 243 for additional images of scratchers.



Figure # 204. Cast of bone fish. Government of Yukon photograph.

There are other animal images carved on spoons. The following example is of a spoon from the MacBride Museum collection. In figure # 205 is a carved animal figure in a wooden spoon. There is little information on this spoon, but it appears that the figure is of a large eared animal. Is it a fox? One of the Elders felt it may be a coyote or a sheep. The carving is basic and without the stylization that is found on the coast. Its presentation does not allow us to be sure of the type of animal. I think this is another example of the artist's freedom of expression. We would have to know the artist and the intent in order to understand it. Note the repeating dot motif above the head. These points are very much in the style of the interior Yukon First Nations people.



Figure # 205. Wood face spoon. 1973.1.153, MacBride Museum.

The next spoon (#206) is from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Museum of the North. It was collected from Nenana Minto areas in central Alaska and this is the western most part of Tanana territory. Nenana is located 88 road kilometers west of Fairbanks while Minto is north of Nenana and has no road access. The spoon was a bequest from Katherine

Gust in 1986. She had lived in Alaska for over 30 years. This wooden spoon is rendered in a realistic fashion and there is no doubt that a beaver is carved on the handle.



Figure # 206. Beaver carved on Tanana spoon handle. UA86-13-14, University of Alaska Museum of the North

In the Field Museum there is a double tailed beaver necklace that looks very much like the one in a photograph of Mrs. Angela Sidney. See figure # 207 of the beaver in the Field Museum and figure # 208 of the photograph that was taken by Mr. Jim Robb in 1988. It shows Mrs. Sidney wearing a double-limbed beaver necklace. The split tail beaver represents Mrs. Angela Sidney's Deisheetaan or Decitan Beaver crest which comes under the Crow moiety. But note that in Yakutat, Alaska, the Beaver crest comes under the Wolf Moiety. This illustrates the complexities of the clan system and ownerships.

While the two look very much alike, they are different in detail. There is no information about the Field Museum's doubled limbed beaver but Mr. Robb says that the beaver Mrs. Sydney is wearing was carved by a non-First Nations carver named Steve Anderson, who at the time of this writing is in his fifties. Anderson had carved this beaver sometime before Mr. Robb took the photograph. He had no further information other than that Mr. Anderson is a northern carver. I have so far not been unable to book an interview with Mr. Anderson and therefore do not know where he got the details of the design. I do know that well known Yukon artist Liliias Farley (1907-1980) had copied the dance shirt with the double limbed beaver on it and it was part of a large Yukon art scene on a metal medium that she created. The large piece of artwork was placed on public display in the Federal Building in Whitehorse. When the new Federal Building, the Elijah Smith building was built in 1989 the art work was transferred there. On a side note; the building was named after my great-uncle who was a key figure in starting the Yukon First Nations Land Claims process. This is one of only a couple of examples of First Nations style art on permanent display in Whitehorse that is not in the Northwest Coast Indian art style, but those examples were created by white artists. Therefore there are no examples of traditional Yukon First Nations art on permanent display in Whitehorse.

Did Anderson copy an earlier carved example such as the one in the Field Museum or was it carved based on other double-limbed beaver examples that are on Inland Tlingit dance shirts. Perhaps Anderson got the design from Liliias Farley?

The overall shape of the beaver and what appears to be the inner working of the beaver are evident on both the carvings and in the dance shirt image that I drew in figure # 209. This design can be seen in *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* on page 180. The photograph is of Jake Jackson wearing his Split-Beaver dance shirt at Teslin in 1951. For my drawing of the Split-Beaver I had to guess the colours, based on the tone of grey in the black and white photographs. While I cannot make firm conclusions from the photograph it appears that this beaver is created with mostly fabric. The design is made up of geometric patterns and the upper body appears to have a series of ribs. There are two white lines going from the

upper legs to what appear to be lungs. The white lines from the double hind legs also lead into the bottom. Is this the stomach or are they reproductive organs? The head seems to have two 'U' shaped ears and two small circles for eyes. The nose is recognizable but the white circle in the middle of the head is not. Does this represent the brain?



Figure # 207, Double limbed beaver. 2003.4161.338208. Field Museum.



Figure # 208, Angela Sidney wearing the Double Limbed Beaver. Photograph courtesy of Mr. Jim Robb.



Figure # 209, UvK drawing of Double Limbed Beaver from Jake Jackson's dance shirt.

The story of the double-limbed beaver can be read in *My Old People Say* starting on page 471. In the story the double-limbed beaver is described as having a man's face with a red copper mustache and the eyes and eyebrows were gold coloured. The body had two front and hind legs each and a double tail. This description differs from the images of the double-limbed beavers. The faces do not look human and the front legs are always a single leg. I have no explanation for these differences.

In the story, the man that caught the double-limbed beaver was a Pelly River Athapaskan named Nøts. He was helped by Wolverine who also was Athapaskan speaking. These events took place at a lake called Old Rock which is located on the north side of Three Aces Mountain (Dawson Peaks) in the Teslin area. Basically, Nøts was unsuccessful trapping beaver. He had been out for two weeks and caught nothing. He was also starving. In a dream Wolverine came to him and told him where to set his net. Nøts did that and Wolverine also came to help him. After he set the net Nøts caught a double-limbed beaver and talked to it asking for help. Nøts then let the beaver go and after that he had good luck in catching beavers. Nøts then went on to other adventures with porcupines and mice. The person telling the story said these events happened in his grandfather's time (1800s) and yet in the story it is clearly during the myth time. The animals and people speak the same language and time acted differently than we know it now. In any case the Teslin Inland Tlingits claim that the coastal Beaver Clan holds the double-limbed beaver in high regard.



Figure # 210. D. Leechman photograph, 1948. J2388, CMC

The following is my drawing of another double-limbed beaver from an Inland Tlingit dance shirt. These images are from a photograph taken by D. Leechman and are shown above in figure # 210. In the photograph are four people, from left to right; Marjorie, Jake, Dorothy and Harry Jackson in Teslin, Yukon. Jake Jackson has a double-limbed beaver design on his dance shirt. The design is done like the killer whales on Dorothy's shirt, that is, two beavers placed across from each other on the upper part of the dance shirt. The second beaver is on young Harry Jackson's dance shirt which I will examine later in figure # 217. In plate XIIIc is another photograph of Jake Jackson wearing his double-limbed beaver dance shirt. See my drawing of the double-limbed beaver from plate XIIIc in figure # 211. The creator of this beaver used a lot of geometric patterns and is quite different from the other dance shirt beaver renderings.



Figure # 211, UvK drawing of geometric Double Limbed Beaver from Inland Tlingit dance shirts.

I will now return to carved figures. Other items that have been carved are either trail markers or boundary markers. These could be the Southern Tutchone equivalent of the Tlingit trail and boundary markers. Elders remember seeing these markers in the areas close to the coastal Tlingit territory but I have not heard of these carved posts in other areas of the south-central Yukon. The following figure is on a post from the Klukshu Museum in Klukshu in the southern Yukon. See figure # 212. This is a fairly crude carving of a face.



Figure # 212, marker post. Klukshu Museum.

Below is another carved face in a tree located in Southern Tutchone territory. It is carved in the same manner as the first post. See figure # 213. I have sketched this marker from a photograph provided by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. This marker is still located in its original spot in Southern Tutchone traditional territory.



Figure # 213 Southern Tutchone tree carving. UvK drawing.

The style of these carvings is quite different from the Chilkat Tlingit's trail markers or boundary markers. In figure # 214 is an example of a Tlingit boundary marker. This carved marker belongs to the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation and is on loan to the Kluane National Park Interpretive Centre in Haines Junction.



Figure # 214, Tlingit boundary marker. CAFN Collection.

There are carved examples that were not light and transportable and were not used as trail or boundary markers. These carved works are intended as more permanent sculptures and do not have the amulet function like the smaller Yukon carvings discussed above. In Chapter Six-Art of Rituals, Shamans and Stories I will be looking at story related carvings from just before the mid twentieth century. In the final chapter of the Current Period I will examine carvings from the mid twentieth century and onwards that were carved for the tourist trade.

Beaded & button figurative designs

The biggest and most striking beaded and button figurative images were created by the Inland Tlingits who placed these images on their dance shirts. These were mainly a means of representing their clans. The Inland Tlingits also created smaller figurative images on moccasins, gloves, bags, etc. The Athapaskans also created a number of beaded figurative images on smaller items but rarely on the same scale as the Inland Tlingits. In this section I will be looking at a number of dance shirts as well as the smaller moccasins, gloves, bags, etc. that show figurative images.

The first figurative image is a human figure that is on a dance shirt in a potlatch photograph from the Robert Ward fonds at Yukon Archives. This may mean that the image

was taken in the Carcross-Atlin area. The human figure appears to have been created by the use of various size buttons. The outline is white on a dark background. In my drawing I used a dark outline on a white background, reversing the tones of the image. See figure # 215 for the drawing of the dance shirt and figure # 216 for the photograph of the same shirt.

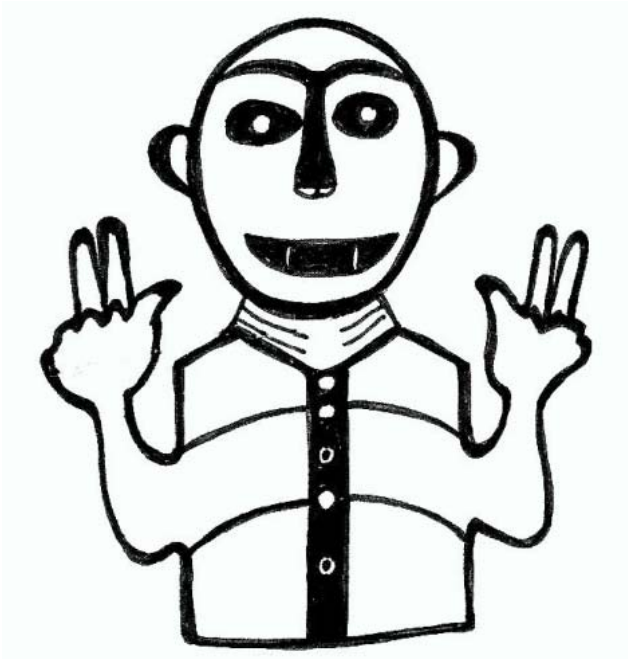


Figure # 215, human figure on Tlingit dance shirt. Uvk Drawing.



Figure # 216, Human figure on dance shirt. YA # 8845.

There are several comments to make about this image. First, human images created by beads or buttons are quite rare. Second, the figure is smiling and has the commonly recurring lines across his chest, but not as many as in other figurative examples. There are only two lines that I can make out that run across the chest. There is a line down the centre of his chest. While lines across and down the chest are common, I wonder if these lines are different, perhaps indicating a tunic or shirt. Another interesting detail is how the figure is holding his hands up and palms out. He appears to hold two fingers up in the same type of gesture that Jesus is shown in many classical paintings. I do not know the reasoning for the hand gestures.

The facial expression shows a happy fellow, as many of the Inland Tlingit humans are rendered. I know of no clans that are represented by human figures. While some deities such as Crow and Beaverman can take human form they are always shown in their animal form. Is this an exception to that practice? Does this image represent a person? I am unfortunately left in the dark as to the reasoning for this image and its place of prominence on the dance shirt.

Water animals

In the photograph, figure # 216, a man standing on the right is wearing a dance shirt that has a beaver image on it. This appears to be the same dance shirt as young Harry Jackson is wearing in figure # 210 on page 217. It is also the same shirt that Mary Jackson wears in a photograph taken in 1951 in *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* on page 183. The photograph is shown in plate XIIIc of *My Old People Say*. It appears that this dance shirt had been passed on to different people in the Jackson family over the decades. While the beaver design looks identical, in the photograph of Harry and Mary's dance shirt the epaulettes and the cuffs appear to be different in the two shirts. Either the photograph has distorted the appearance, since Harry is quite young and the dance shirt is too big for him, or these are two different dance shirts made by the same person. The beaver on the dance shirt is presented in the typical 'crest' style and appears to be created from buttons. See my drawing of the beaver in figure # 217.

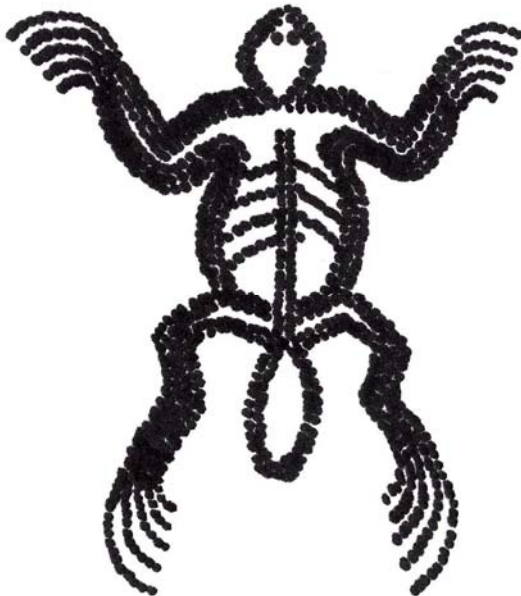


Figure # 217, UvK drawing of beaver from Jackson family dance shirts.

In my drawing I have reversed the black and white of the buttons and background. In this beaver we see the usual line going down the center of the body with a series of 'ribs' coming off that center line. There are four ribs on the left side of the beaver and three on the right side. It looks like the fourth rib on that side was started but never finished. Or was it intended to be unfinished? Maybe the buttons came off at some time and the buttons were never replaced. I wonder if the beaver was removed from one shirt and placed on the other or

if the two identical beavers were made on two shirts. The claws are unusually large compared to the rest of the animal. This might be determined by the material.

In another dance shirt there is a different approach to representing the beaver image and this is on Chief Joe Squan's dance shirt. An example can be seen in *Their Own Yukon* on page 134. The beaver is in profile and seems to show the animal's spine as well as its ribs. See figure # 218 of my drawing

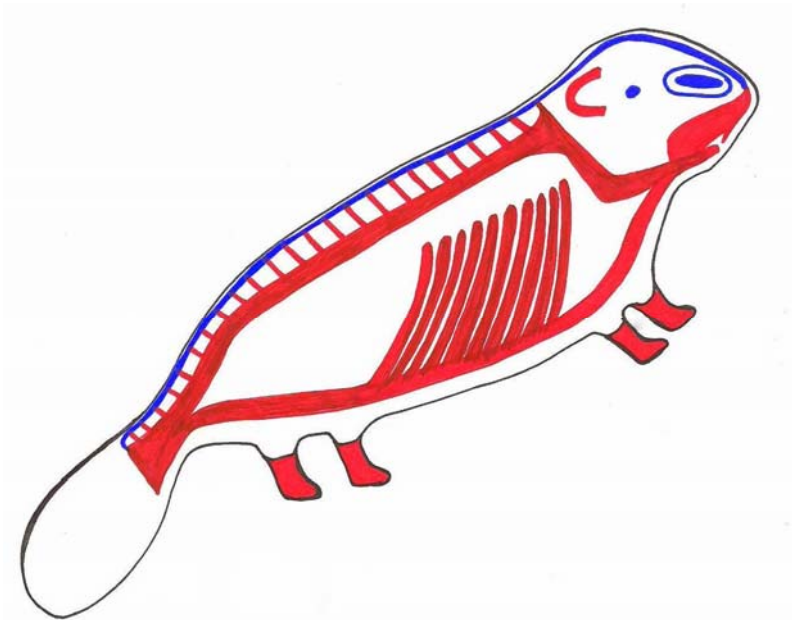


Figure # 218, UvK drawing of button profile beaver from Inland Tlingit dance shirts.

What I find interesting about this beaver is that it does not have the typical line going through the center of the body as in the next two killer whales in figures # 219 & # 220. What appears to be the spine follows the curve of the back but the ribs do not extend from that line but start from the bottom of the body and curve up. The ribs stop before reaching the spine line. Is there a reason for this approach or is it an individual artistic preference.

I will return to an earlier image. In figure # 219 is my drawing of the killer whale that is on the dance shirt of the woman who is standing behind Patsy Henderson in figure # 177 on page 194.

The killer whale on the woman's coat is more complex than the drawn fish on Mr. Henderson's drum. In most cases the beaded animals have more complex designs than the drawn or engraved animals. I believe this has to do with the ability to create a larger image on dance shirts, allowing for more detail. The killer whales are rendered in profile and are facing each other. Putting the killer whales or fish and other animals in profile, and having these two on a dance shirt or coat, was common practice for the Tagish and Inland Tlingit people.



Figure # 219, Killer Whale image on woman's dance coat Carcross, 1947. UvK drawing.

The teeth and the circle in the dorsal fin indicate this image to be a killer whale and it is placed on the shirt to represent the owner as a member of the Tagish Killer Whale clan of the Wolf Moiety. This killer whale has a line going down the center of its body with an alternating series of lines coming from this line to the outside of the body. I drew these images from black and white photographs and I assumed the colours based on tone. This is also the case with the next example. Another killer whale is shown in the same photographs as the beaver in figure # 210; the 1951 photograph in *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* on page 183 and plate XIIIc of *My Old People Say*. See figure # 220.

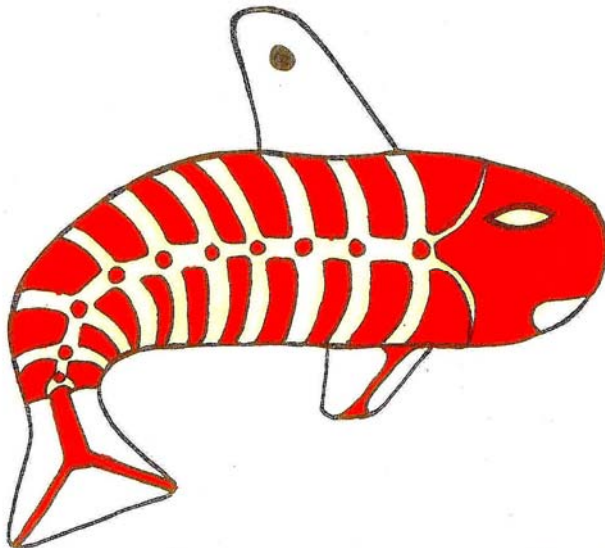


Figure # 220, Killer Whale image on Annie Geddes's dance shirt, Teslin, 1951. UvK drawing.

This killer whale on Annie Geddes's dance shirt looks similar to Dorothy Jackson's dance shirt in figure # 210 on page 217. However, there appear to be some differences which may be due to the quality of the photographs and size differences of the wearers. The killer whales in figure # 219 and # 220 are both part of a pair that is placed on the garment, but in figure # 177 they are facing each other and the killer whales on Annie Geddes dance shirt are facing away from each other.

Furthermore, the ribs in Geddes' killer whale are leading off the center line in the typical Inland Tlingit manner with a series of dots where the ribs meet. In the case of the killer whale in figure # 219 there is a center line with dots but the ribs are not lining up. Next, in figure # 219 the whale has teeth while Geddes's has not. Both have the circle in the dorsal fin. Geddes's killer whale is done in mostly one colour with a dark colour for the circle on the dorsal fin while the killer whale in figure # 219 seems to be completed in more colours and has more details.

I suspect, since the killer whale in figure # 219 is on the jacket of a woman who is with Patsy Henderson in figure # 177, that she is Tagish. The killer whale of Annie Geddes is an Inland Tlingit killer whale. Both people do not live on the coast but in the interior. The use of killer whales as crests for interior people may seem unusual. Based on my understanding of the Inland Tlingit moieties, clans and sibs, the Killer Whale clan of the Inland Tlingit resulted from the Tlingit moving inland. So the Inland Tlingit Killer Whale clan has direct links with the coastal Tlingits. The Killer Whale clan is part of the Wolf moiety.

The Tagish Killer Whale claim comes about differently with the story about the first man to carve the killer whale. In the Tagish as well as Southern Tutchone stories a man marries a coastal Tlingit woman. He is from somewhere in the interior, either Rancheria River (for the Tagish version) or Upper Alsek River area (Southern Tutchone version) and his four or five brother in laws do not like him. They take him to an island and leave him to starve to death. While he is there he gets very depressed but then he hears singing from under the water. Curious, he goes under the water to an underwater village, but it is like our world. It is a city of sea animals that look like people. This is a typical case of people travelling from one world to another. Once there he goes to a big house and there are people and a doctor trying to heal a sick man. The interior man is able to cure the man and as payment is given a large section of gut where he can crawl inside. Once inside the gut he can be transported anywhere he likes. He first goes to his house only to retrieve a tool kit and then returns to the island where he was first left to starve. There he carves out the first two killer whales and once they are put in the water they come to life and grow in size. He orders the killer whales to kill the brother in laws when they come back to the island to check to see if he has died yet. Once the killer whales kill the brother in law the interior man returns to his wife via the magical gut and tells the killer whales not to kill any more people unless they have to. In the Tagish version he tells the killer whales to rid the sea of all the bad snakes and creatures that eat people and thus makes the sea safe for people to travel on.

Since this man is Tagish from the interior, the Tagish claim the Killer Whale crest as their own. Interestingly, according to McClellan in *My Old People Say*, some Tagish say that the Inland Tlingit do not own the Killer Whale clan. Regardless of the ownership of the crest the Tagish at times display the killer whale on their dancing shirts and button blankets and claim it to be their own. The Inland Tlingit do the same but through their clan lineage with the coastal Tlingits.

While the Inland Tlingit and Tagish have the Killer Whale clan the rest of Yukon Athapaskans do not. However, Athapaskans did make beaded fish images. The following image is a beaded salmon from the Klukshu Museum. Since Klukshu is a salmon fishing camp, this only makes sense. The only information I received about this salmon is that it was beaded a 'long' time ago and that it is from Klukshu. It does have the word 'salmon' beaded on it so it may indicate that it was beaded after World War II when the Haines road was built by the United States Army. This made Klukshu more accessible to the outside world and thus the tourism market. You will notice that the fish is done with an outline of beads and a series of dashes in the typical interior Yukon style of rendering fish images. See figure # 221.



Figure # 221. Beaded fish, Klukshu Museum.

I will carry on with the theme of water animals and look at a Tahltan frog design that is on a cartridge belt. This belt is in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collection and was purchased by James Teit in 1915 for \$14.00. This belt is also shown in Judy Thompson's *Recording their Story: James Teit and the Tahltan* on page 157. In the book's caption is written:

Cartridge belt of green cloth, etc. Beaded with leaf designs all over the flap and straps and beaded image of toad (a crest of the Raven phratry). Wooden button. Tahltan. Largely ceremonial, or part of full or fancy dress. (Thompson 207: 156)

It also states that Teit purchased the belt from Jenny Martin on October 1st. See below in figure # 222.



Figure # 222. Beaded toad on Tahltan cartridge belt. Purchased 1915. VI-O-40, CMC.

The belt layout is typical of Athapaskan cartridge belts with a neck strap and cartridge flap to cover and protect the bullets. See the Tutchone cartridge belts in figure # 132 on page 155 and the cartridge belt that is above the octopus bags in figure # 133 on page 156. The beadwork design is a series of stem works with different leafs for the cartridge flap and strap.

Beaded bird designs

Both the Inland Tlingits and Athapaskans created beaded bird designs. There are a number of different designs, the most common Crow or eagles and maybe seagulls. The next example is what I consider a Yukon First Nations beading masterpiece. It was owned and possibly made by the famous Tagish woman Kate Carmack. She was married to a white man, George Carmacks, one of the discoverers of gold that started the Klondike Gold Rush. This cape was done in the Athapaskan style. Even though the Tagish adopted many Tlingit cultural identifiers, the Tagish belonged to the Athapaskan group and bordered the Southern Tutchone. On Kate Carmack's cape are various designs and the first one I will look at is a white bird. See figure # 223 for the cape and figure # 224 for the white bird.



Front



Back

Figure # 223, Kate Carmack's cape. 72.1.80, MacBride Museum.



Figure # 224. 72.1.80, MacBride Museum.

I am not sure if the bird in figure # 224 is a swan or a seagull. It may even be another bird. The Elders I showed the photos to could not clarify it for me either. Since designs are so individual you often have to guess what the beader was intending to make. For Elders, knowledge is very important. When showing them pictures, they would often say: “if you don’t know, you can’t say”. In other words, unless you know the information for sure, it is better not to comment. There is no guess work. Despite my understanding and respect for this, in this thesis I feel I should present my ideas. In this case, I think it may be a swan even if there has yet to be a bird image identified positively as a swan. I can argue this because of the importance swans had in First Nations spiritualism. The use of swan down, feathers and other body parts by southern Yukon First Nations is well documented. Swan down and feathers were used in ceremony, ritual and decoration.

Swan breasts were used for fancy dance hats and the wings were also used in those dances. Swan down was used by women who would blow the down into the air, praying for an easy childbirth, or by hunters leaving down at special places, praying for successful hunts. It is interesting that the use of swans by shamans comes up in stories. One example is John Dickson’s story *The Girl Who Lived with Salmon* that was recorded in *Dene Gudeji* on page 3. In this story the girl is taken by the Salmon people and a shaman uses the powers in the swan feathers to transform the salmon back into the child. Swans are mentioned several times in *My Old People Say* and seem to hold special powers for the benefit of people. My second guess is the seagull, for the possible symbolism to trade. I have mentioned this earlier when I discussed the speaker’s staff at the MacBride Museum.

Another bird, again on Kate Carmack’s cape, is black with white wings. Is it a raven or a magpie? See figure # 225. There are lots of obvious reasons to create a raven, but the bird does look like a magpie. I have not come across any mention of magpies in my research. However, the magpie could be a wearer’s personal spirit guide.



Figure # 225. 72.1.80, MacBride Museum.

There were a number of other beaded motifs that were unidentifiable. On Kate Carmack’s cape there is also an insect type motif. Is it a spiritual being? A bird? A flying insect? Ingrid Johnson felt this was a beaver based on the stylized tail. See figure # 226.



Figure # 226. 72.1.80, MacBride Museum.

The next image is also interesting, another unknown motif. See figure # 227. Ingrid Johnson lists the figures on the cape as:

Geometric designs at both sides of the opening. Center back panel contains bird figures, leaf designs, anthropoid figures, frog designs. Lower edge consists of leaf and floral designs, some serially joined. (Johnson 1994: Appendix B, 4)

I asked Ms. Johnson which design was the frog and why she felt this was indeed a frog. The frog played an important role for Kate's brother, Skookum Jim, in his discovery of the gold. Johnson stated that, based on the shape, it felt like a frog. The frog was at the bottom of the panel.



Figure # 227. 72.1.80, MacBride Museum.

In the Anchorage Museum there is a beautiful sled bag that is done in the typical Upper Yukon River style. The design incorporates what appears to be grouse in the bead patterns. See figure # 228 of the bag and figure # 229 of a detail of the birds.



Figure # 228. Upper Yukon Valley Athapaskan sled bag. 2001.24.1, Anchorage Museum.



Figure # 229. Upper Yukon Valley Athapaskan sled bag. 2001.24.1, Anchorage Museum.

Note the typical Upper Yukon style of adding the outcrops in the stems works. I mentioned earlier in Chapter Four-Beaded and Floral Designs that the Alaska Athapaskans told me that the outcrops represented grouse tracks. This is a perfect illustration of the grouse making those tracks. The didactic panel, part of a series on Athapaskan bead styles, states:

Also heavily decorated was the sled bag, tied between the sled's handle bars in front of the sled driver. The sled bag contained objects needed often on the trail, like matches, food, and extra mittens. The style of beaded decoration indicates that it was made in the Yukon Valley in the border area between Alaska and the Canadian Yukon Territory. (2001.24.1, Anchorage Museum.)

The last comment makes it likely a Han sled bag. The Tanana and Northern Tutchone could be possible contenders.

While the Inland Tlingit had the Eagle as one of their moieties, the Athapaskan groups did not. They did however create eagle images. The Southern Tutchone sometimes included eagle designs on clothing in more modern times, since Eagle is claimed by the Wolf moiety. For other areas I think that the beaded eagle has become popular because of the demand by American people and more recently because of Pan-Indian influences. I would conclude that the tradition of creating beaded eagle images for Yukon Athapaskans started with the Klondike Gold Rush and carried on with the building of the Alaska Highway. The Gold Rush of 1898 saw an influx of Americans, who incidentally thought that Dawson City should be part of the United States. They bought beaded works from local First Nations People. Later on, the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942 brought a second wave of Americans. As Inland Tlingit, Ingrid Johnson wrote in her *Southern Yukon Beadwork Traditions*:

Another elder described changes that were brought about by the war and the subsequent building of the Alaska Highway. She and her contemporaries were busy making articles ordered by soldiers and other workers...This woman also recalled her mother's experience in sewing to meet the demands of packers and goldseekers at Dyea [in Alaska, close to Skagway], a departure point for the Chilkoot Pass, during the Dawson Gold Rush. (Johnson 1994: 16, 17)

Johnson goes on to explain more about the changing bead styles:

Ever-increasing white contact brought with it a shift in economy and commerce. Exchange of commodities gave way to an increased infusion of money as an item of exchange, thereby greatly revaluing the "worth" of hand-made articles and the work that produced them. For example, during the building of the Alaska Highway, women "mass-produced" saleable articles such as fur hats and mitts. (Peters interview, Aug. 18. intricately-designed ceremonial items were then allocated to producing items in demand. Changes in beadwork art over time may profile historical change. (Johnson 1994: 20)

An example of a "demand" item is the pillow cover in Duncan's *Northern Athapaskan Art*. This pillow cover is of Han design and has an American eagle incorporated, obviously ordered by a patriotic American. See figure # 230.



Figure # 230. Han tourist eagle. University of Alaska Museum. UvK drawing.

There are a number of different beaded eagle designs and I am presenting a cross section below. Generally, all the eagles have white heads and darker bodies. While the wings are often spread, this is not a strict rule.

A modern example of a beaded eagle motif was made by Mrs. Albert Isaac (my great grandaunt) from Aishihik in 1966 and is part of the Museum of Civilization's collection. See figure # 231.



Figure # 231, Mrs. Albert Isaac. VI-Q-46, CMC.

The eagle has its identifying white head, the wings are spread straight out and the word Yukon is added in beads below the eagle, indicating to me that this pair of moccasins was made for sale to tourists. For comparison I have included a pair of Inland Tlingit moccasins with an eagle design. See figure # 232. This pair was collected by Clement Lewis in 1912 or earlier from Teslin Lake. Ingrid Johnson identified the eagle design as made by Mrs. Annie Squan (sometimes spelled Sqwan). Annie Squan was one of two wives of Joe Squan, a clan head man of the Crow moiety. There is a photograph of Annie, Joe and Annie's sister, Mary, who is also Joe's wife in the *Handbook of North American Indians*, volume 6, page 474, and in *Their Own Yukon* on page 134. Annie is wearing a shirt with her eagle crest. Joe is wearing a shirt showing his beaver crest and Mary is wearing a button blanket. The dates listed for the photograph is during the summer between 1923 and 1925 for *Handbook of North American Indians* and approximately 1914 for *Their Own Yukon*.

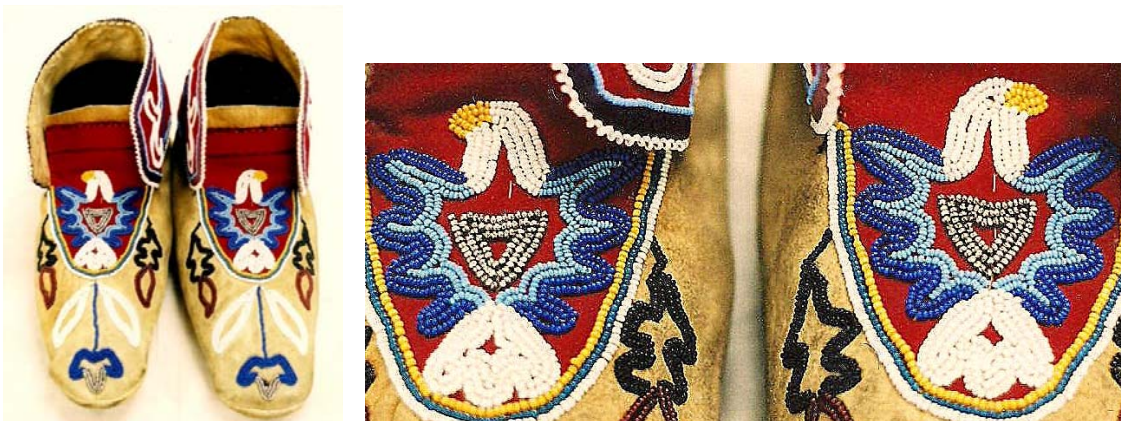


Figure # 232, Mrs. Annie Squan's eagle design. VI-J-4a,b, CMC.

This eagle also had the white head and has its wings spread, but unlike Isaac's, these wings are spread upward. Also, Isaac's wings are green while Squan's wings are blue. Another common eagle design can be seen in figure # 233. This design is quite common among Athapaskan beadworkers. The original designer of this pattern is unknown, as is the age of

the design. I obtained it from my mother's pattern collection, herself in turn having collected patterns from other beaders. The head of this eagle is often done in white but the wings are not spread but folded in, in the form of a heart.

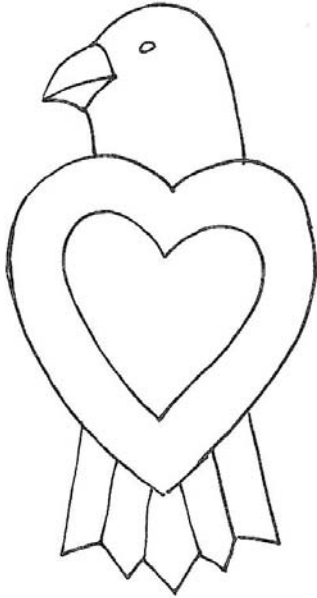


Figure # 233, Yukon Athapaskan eagle bead pattern.

Another Athapaskan eagle can be viewed in figure # 234. This eagle is beaded on a pair of older mitts that I own. The mitts were obtained in Whitehorse and the maker of these mitts is unknown. They are thought to have come from Carmacks which would make them Northern Tutchone. This eagle has a similar layout to the Inland Tlingit eagle styles with its wings spread upward. I have seen this pattern made by both Athapaskan and Inland Tlingits. I estimate that these mitts are about 50 years old.



Figure # 234, eagle mitts. Ukjese van Kampen.



Moose & Caribou

From beaded birds I move on to beaded animals. Below is a series of caribou and moose. The following caribou is on a supposedly Kutchin sled bag. See figure # 235 of the bag that is in the Sheldon Jackson Museum collection and # 236 for a photograph of the caribou. The caribou is placed on top of a large floral design at the center of the bag flap. The initials “JR” as placed to the left of the caribou. This was not an uncommon practice in the Yukon. Just before the beginning of the twentieth century a few Yukon First Nations people learned to read and write. When they returned back to their village the people in the village asked them to write the initials on their possessions. For a period around the turn of the twentieth century it was common to have initials on various items such as drums, knives, bags, etc. You can see other examples of initials on the drum in figure # 5 (“P”) on page 30 and the copper knife from Aishihik in figure # 287 (“JRX”) on page 283. I wonder if the X in JRX is even part of an initial since I have never heard of anybody in the Yukon with a name starting with “X”. Other thoughts about this are that the “X” is the initial of a person who could not read or write and always signed his name with an “X”. Another idea is the “X” stands for Christ. If so, then the initials would be “JR” and “X” meaning the person JR with Christ, so JR being a person of the Christian faith. I wonder if there is a relationship between the two “JRs”. There was a lot of trade between the Aishihik area people and the Chilkat Tlingits and this bag may have come from Aishihik, which would strengthen the “JR” initials coming from the same person. The caribou is rendered in a simple beaded style, almost in silhouette but outlined. Based on the bead style, the use of stem works and ample background, I would say this bag is done in the Yukon or Tanana River area of which Aishihik is part. I do not think this bag is Kutchin, or correctly, Gwich’in.



Figure # 235 Caribou design on Athapaskan sled bag. SJM, SJ-IV-X-42.



Figure # 236 Caribou design on Athapaskan sled bag. SJM, SJ-IV-X-42.

In the Glenbow Museum is a series of caribou beaded on the front and back of a Tahltan shirt. These caribou are in the same style as the moose in figure # 239, illustrating a similarity in animal beaded styles among Athapaskans. See figure # 237 for the front and back of the shirt and # 238 for a detail photograph of the caribou.



Figure # 237, Tahltan caribou shirt. AC 57, Glenbow Museum.

This shirt was purchased by the Glenbow Museum from Mr. William Halmer in 1965. The front has four beaded caribous and the front panel, coming down from the collar, has a simple stem-leaf silk embroidery design extending the whole length. The middle caribou on the back of the shirt is of different colour and design, having a smaller size and set of antlers.

This may be the female caribou. Also note the typically curving, geometric Tahltan beaded motifs in the center of the back of the shirt.



Figure # 238, Detail of caribou on Tahltan caribou shirt. AC 57, Glenbow Museum.

At the MacBride Museum is a hunting bag with a moose motif beaded on the flap. See figure # 239 for the obscured photograph and figure # 240 for my drawing of the detail. This bag was made by Southern Tutchone Mrs. Kitty Henry from the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation. It appears to be beaded in an X-ray fashion, the lines running up the body being ribs. It could also be the intent of the creator to maintain the stem work within the motif, since the pattern is also in the antlers and there are no separate bones inside antlers.



Figure # 239-photograph, moose bag, MacBride Museum.

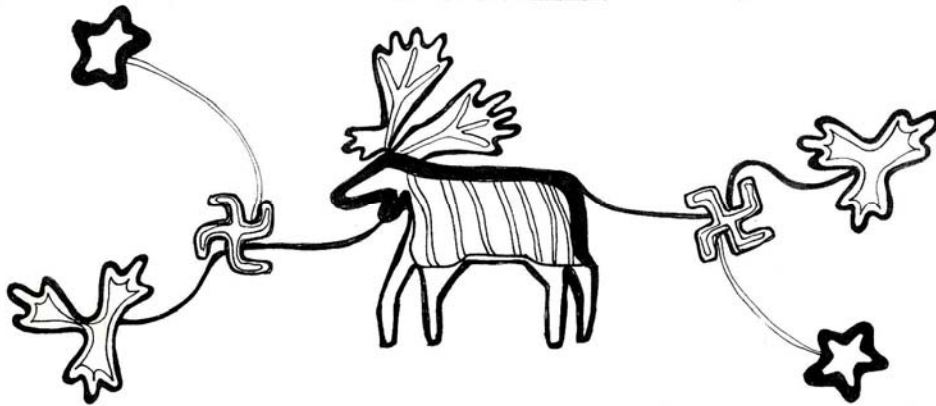


Figure # 240 Kitty Henry bag. MacBride Museum. UvK drawing.

The swastika beaded on the floral design was not that uncommon. There are other examples of swastikas, such as the example in figure # 241. This small pouch was collected by Clement Lewis from Teslin Lake and arrived at the Museum of Man in December 1912.



Figure # 241, swastika design. VI-J-14, CMC.

Wolves

From caribou and moose I will move on to their predator, the wolf. The first beaded wolf images I examine in figure # 242 are from the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta. See figure # 243 for the details of the wolves. This jacket was purchased from Mr. William Halmer in 1965. It is listed as Tahltan. The information of this shirt lists the animals as dogs. I do not think that these are dogs since they are often seen as hostile towards humans. In *My Old People Say* McClellan wrote:

Dogs occupy an anomalous position with respect to both humans and other animals. Certainly the Tagish and Inland Tlingit share the sentiment that dogs are essentially hostile to man and that they are anathema to the spirits of most animals. “Dogs are wicked. They are always out to beat humans!” declared a Teslin informant. This sentiment seems to be felt either explicitly or implicitly throughout the area. (McClellan 2001: 161)

The Athapaskan distrust of dogs is not limited to the Yukon. The following is a quote from *Ways of Knowing: Experience, Knowledge, and Power among the Dene Tha* about the clothing and dogs:

It is general knowledge that all old clothing, pillows, and blankets, especially those of children and the deceased, should be carefully disposed of, either buried in the bush away from dogs or passed on to close relatives who may use them for their own children. The Chipewyan think of the dog as a “scavenger and consumer of feces,” as well “as exemplars of uncontrolled and unregulated sexuality” (Sharp 1995, 70). This belief is held by many other Dene groups. Dogs are clearly a source of worry to the Dene Tha, who says that if a dog happens to urinate on someone’s clothes or picks at them, that person becomes ill. (Goulet 1998: 98)

While dogs were sometimes used in hunting, based on the above information I would have to say that the animals on the jacket are wolves. I will extend this observation also to the other images I present. Most Elders felt that they were wolves with one suggesting that they looked like coyotes. Wolves would furthermore fit in the moiety system.



Figure # 242, Tahltan wolf shirt. AC 56, Glenbow Museum.



Figure # 243, detail of Tahltan wolf shirt. AC 56, Glenbow Museum.

Figurative art: comparing Athapaskan with Inland Tlingit art

You may notice, especially when reading Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death, that there are more Inland Tlingit than Yukon Athapaskan figurative and human images. Why was this? My thoughts on this subject are quite simple. Athapaskans very well may have made fewer figurative images but there are other issues to consider. The southern Yukon was one of the last areas in North America to be explored. Almost all of the artifacts collected before the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 from the southern Yukon was obtained by collectors such as George Emmons. George Emmons was not out collecting artifacts from the southern Yukon but from the coastal Tlingits. The Tlingits put high value on good quality clothing and other items that were obtained through trade from the interior. Some of these items were collected by George Emmons and then later ended up in museums in the United States. Compared to the amount of Tlingit artifacts collected the Athapaskan artifacts make up a very small percentage. In addition, these Athapaskan artifacts had for the most part no figurative art on them. A large percentage of those Athapaskan artifacts with figurative art were collected from the Tahltan, very little came from the Yukon itself. After the Klondike Gold Rush, because of their relationship with the Tlingits, the Inland Tlingits' artifacts were sought after by the early collectors. The Museum of Man (now Canadian Museum of Civilization) hired people to collect Inland Tlingit and Tahltan artifacts, but put little effort into collecting other Yukon First Nations artifacts. The result is a larger proportion of Inland Tlingit and Tahltan objects in the present Canadian Museum of Civilization and therefore more Inland Tlingit human and other figurative images compared to Yukon Athapaskan human images. With the combination of possibly producing fewer examples of figurative art, plus the tradition of cremating or burying the deceased personal items, have simply left fewer Athapaskan artifacts to examine today.

Another question is whether Yukon Athapaskans made more elaborate figurative art than the common stylized stick figures and carved images. If answered in the affirmative, we can only assume that they have been lost in time. As we have seen, figurative images were created in all aspects of early Yukon First Nations art: the various stick figures and figure carvings from the Geometric Period and later the beaded figurative images created during the Beaded Period. If there were any more elaborate figurative images from the Geometric Period, they would have been small. This would have made them transportable to allow for the semi-nomadic lifestyle, but also easier to lose. The only non-transportable carvings were the boundary markers shown in figures # 212 & 213 on page 218.

Closing comments

There are various styles of figurative art in the Yukon. First there are simple stick figures, either human or animal. Second we have the outlined figures with use of the 'x-ray' technique showing the inner structure of animals and using the center line with a series of dot and ribs. They are all made using the artist's own preferences. Third are the simple silhouette images and variations thereof.

The meanings behind a lot of the created images have been lost in time. I therefore have to limit my intentions to offering a basic glimpse of the art style that dominated the early Yukon.

Reasons range from showing a food source such as the various hunted animals, illustration of a story, or representation of crest or clan. They may also represent shaman's guides, such as the otter type animals as shamans' helpers. Figurative art was placed on drums, tools, clothing and other objects and was often more than mere decoration. I will return to other examples of figurative art in some of the later chapters.