



“Off to the Grocery Store” or The family works together! (circa 1863)

Story by William A. White and Andrew Cienski

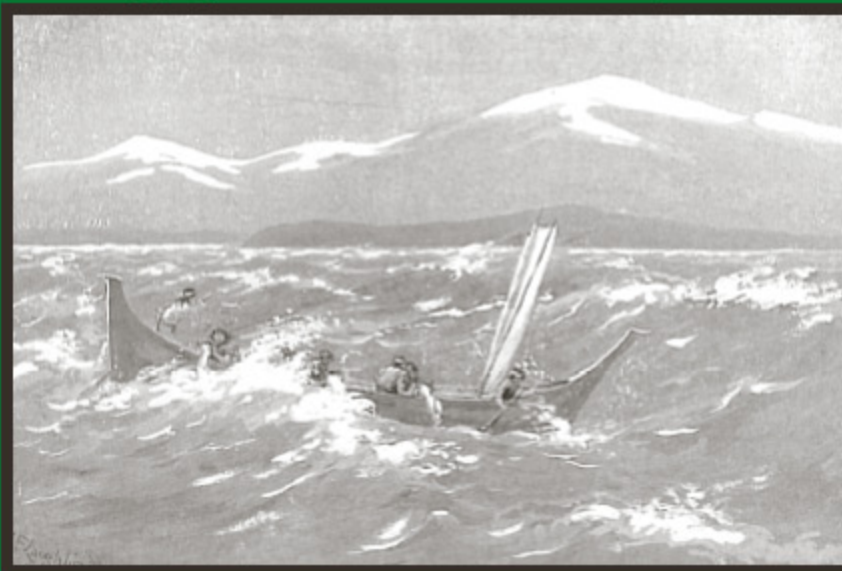


Image from: *Among the An-ko-me-nums of the Pacific Coast.* Thomas Crosby. 1907.

THE wind is blowing: *stsus* a strong and dangerous wind from the Northeast or Southeast. The cold waves spray into their faces as this family strains to make it across the strait. The men pull with all their strength. *Ni' kw'amkw'um t'eluw's*, their arms are strong, and their hands hard after years of canoeing these waters. The rest of the family bail the water that threatens to sink the canoe, *snuxwulh. Suli'si'*, they are afraid, but they don't panic. They have faced all kinds of weather together. And they've made it through by relying on one another.

Siiye'yu, families from Nanoose to Saanich traveled regularly to their camps among the Gulf Islands and along the Fraser River to pick berries, *lhumtst*; fish for salmon, *tseelhtun*; and to visit friends and family, *siiye'yu*. And then *Nem' yuhun'umuts*, they went back home.

Around 1827 about 1500 people from Cowichan and

Chemainus settled on Lulu Island to gather food supplies. They did this every year as part of their seasonal rounds. Trips to gather food, *s'ulhtun*, for the winter or to visit *siiye'yu* could be many days long *kwin skweyul*.

The whole family had to work together, *hikwut*, in order to travel safely. Some had to pull, or paddle the canoe, *'ushulh 'u tthu snuhwulh*. Others to bail the canoe, *lhulut 'u tthu snuhwulh*. They had to be really organized, in great shape and strong,

kw'amkw'um.

Dried fish and clams would have been carried for these trips and of course they had at least three cedar bark bailers, *lhixw lhultun*, to ensure water did not rise up too far. It was hard work, *nan 'uw tl'i' tthu syays*. *Siiye'yu* who traveled to potlatches up and down the island or along the Fraser River visited, *nets'uw'throum*; for maybe two maybe three days, *ni' tsexwi yuse'lu(2), ni' tsexwi lhixw (3) skeyul (days)*. At that time, the world was still very much

ours and many relatives passed from one place to another. For example, in 1828, five hundred Cowichan Canoes passed by Ft. Langley on their way back to the island! Imagine. •

(Note: we hope this short story provides ways in which *Halkomelem* can be incorporated into modern day writing and interest the young about our history. Your community may have a different way of writing the words, that too is an important process. It is also likely a number of the *Halkomelem* words might be different. Who can help you with the correct version? During our parents time *Sulalewx* used to tell many stories like this. This was their gift!)

Sources: *Among the An-ko-me-nums of the Pacific Coast.* Thomas Crosby. 1907. “Notes on the History of the Cowichan Band” *Halkomelem and Straits file 154 Wilson Duff.* PABC.