IN REMEMBRANCE OF

HOMALCO PEOPLE AND

THEIR NEIGHBORS

IN THE EARLY YEARS

The stories recorded here were written by Bill and Susan Blaney so that future generations would have an understanding of their culture, their ancestors, and the strength of their commitment to their community.

The courage, bravery and hardship that is revealed in these stories reflects both the harsh realities of how life was then, and the generosity, commitment, and loyalty that the grew within the Coast Salish People.

Draft Outline for a book about the History of Homalco people

Topic Index

Overview
Memories of Our History
Written by Homalco People

Ancient stories have been passed down for several generations by Homalco elders, which include stories being passed down from the Elders who are still alive. People of the Homalco community in Campbell River have written down the stories they remember and the stories that were told to them which include some of the following:

Stories that were not recorded in writing that were:

- passed down by word of mouth
- passed down in the stories told by elders
- passed down through the rituals
- passed down through the singing and dancing

These are the ways of the Homalco people. Our history is passed down the family tree, so the younger generation would remember who they were and what their life was about. They would then pass on stories to the next generation.

This was the way the Homalco people remember their history. Even today many of our people will remember things about our culture when they talk about or think about Church House.

We still compare how we lived then with how we live now. The youth who have been raised on our land in Campbell River do not have memories of Church House because they have not lived there.

All of the parents and the Elders alive today can pass this knowledge on to the children.

We are reminded of the importance of remembering, writing down and talking about the stories of our past. It makes us aware of how our lives have changed, but more importantly, it reminds us of who we are as a Nation.

When we learn about how our ancestors lived and how hard they worked, we can be grateful for the values they gave us and have more appreciation for the opportunities we now have to choose where and how to live.

It is important to know about our past and to honor our cultural history because that is what gives our lives meaning. When we can access the power of our past and begin to draw on the spiritual strength of our ancestors we can resolve any problem we might have now.

Our commitment in writing this book is to ensure that all of our people will have the opportunity to own the power of their cultural inheritance.

LANDS
Traditional areas traveled by Homalco people.

Homalco people lived quietly, staying out of everyone's way. Keeping distance between themselves and other Nations and Tribes.

Homalco people were very civil and were busy minding their own affairs. They went about their daily lives with daily routines, traveling up and down the coast in their canoes.

They lived together in family groups. Hunting and fishing was the main routine in the lives of Homalco people. Their culture and life style was created by the fishing hunting and food gathering seasons.

Following is a list of the areas traveled by the Homalco people in search of food to preserve.

To the Northwest from the entrance to Johnson Strait, to Desolation Sound and to the Northern tip of Georgia Strait and to the many Discovery Islands that separate Vancouver Island from the mainland coast.

Lands –
Traditional Lands traveled by Homalco People
Orford Bay – Orford River
Our First Main Settlement

This was the first main village, the main gathering place of the Homalco people. This place is called a Reserve today.
Orford Bay was the main village, the main gathering place. Orford River always had a good return of salmon. Our people then had a place to settle. It was an ideal spot to harvest salmon.

In order to stock enough provisions, enough dried salmon to last all winter; Homalco people were very busy during the fall when the salmon returned to Orford River. Everyone worked. All family members were involved so they could harvest salmon and preserve enough to get them through the long hard winter and spring.

Page 5. ***Traditional Lands***

For many years the people of Homalco did the same things over and over. It was a way of life. To preserve enough food so they could live worry free and pray for an easy winter.

There were homes at Orford Bay. These houses were made of cedar shakes, from split cedar logs that were split into boards. Small cedar poles were also used as studs and rafters to form a permanent home for the family.

The smoke house was also made of cedar.

TRADITIONAL HOME LANDS
Historical sites of Homalco – Bute Inlet people
In remembrance of the first permanent
Home for Homalco people

Homalco people are part of the Coast Salish Nation. Homalco is the most Northern group of Coast Salish People.

The main villages were the gathering site. The permanent homes of Homalco were Homathco River at the head of Bute Inlet and Orford Bay, which is the located at the east side of Bute Inlet.

Bute Inlet is a historic site – a gathering place of our ancestors where stories were passed on from generation to generation. This piece of the history of Homalco people is very important because it was their first home.

The stories told there were passed on in the Homalco language. We spoke the same language as our neighboring Coast Salish people. Sliammon, Klahoose and Comox

TRADITIONAL LANDS
Historical Sites.

In the history first written about Homalco, Aaron Rapids was said to be a settlement. However, there is no evidence of that name. Perhaps it was not a 'real' settlement.

The historical site at Arron Rapids was believed to be a look out point used by Northern Tribes who raided other Coast Salish Tribes.

From that vantage spot, information could be passed to other spots like Orford Bay and Homathco River area. It was an alert site for a smaller Tribe of people to protect themselves from a larger nation who would want to raid their lands.

Larger nations would also take our people as slaves, especially the women. So our first concern was to protect our people from raids by other tribes.

Homalco people used the steep slopes of Bute Inlet as a defense against the raiding parties. Rolling large boulders down on to the beach would stop the canoes. This made it more difficult for raiding parties to get close enough to attack our people.

Fighting uphill was a lot harder, especially if you were being bombarded with large rocks.

Sudden surprise attacks happened though and both sides suffered. many loses

Homalco people were alert and ready. In one incident, two war canoes from another tribe tried to catch a small canoe from Arron Rapids Look Out Point. Look Out Point notified Orford Bay and that one man in a small canoe was never caught. The raid was unsuccessful. Homalco people were saved by this one man.

In belief, Arron Rapids was never a real settlement, but an alternate "Look-out Point".

Some History – The North Wind
By Bill Blaney

We remember the cold brisk winters, spent in the Eupe at Church House in the old village at the east side mouth of Bute Inlet Mainland off B.C. coastline.

Many cold winters were remembered by our by our people. The North Wind, (also referred to as the Bute Wind) blew for many days. Sometimes during the cold spells of January and February, the North Wind blew down the Inlet and seemed to get colder as it entered the Inlet. Sometimes it would blow for two or three weeks at a time during a very cold winter.

I remember many of our people would stock up on wood in order to stay warm. You could see them cutting firewood down at the waterfront. Many logs were towed in by boat. You could hear chain saws going and see many people making big stacks of firewood. Homalco people faced very hard times during the winter months at Bute Inlet.

Not many vessels would dare travel the rough waters. One time, the Bute Wind blew for three weeks straight.

A lot of families were running out of food to eat. The wind was so strong during that cold spell in January and February that many suffered severe hardship. Sometimes there was a shortage of food, so people would go down to the beaches and dig clams to eat, even on the coldest days.

No matter what, our people would always helped one another. The homes we had at that time were very poorly built and were very drafty. Few were insulated so a lot of wood was burned up to stay warm. Often people would gather together to keep warm.

During the hardship of winter, we learned a lot of lessons about survival. Many times, we went without food because not enough had been stored. Our people have many stories about the North Wind at Bute Inlet.

Some of these stories are about how strong the wind really was. and how our people would seek shelter in caves to get away from the cold wind at Bute Inlet.

Often the Islands of Discovery between Vancouver Island and the mainland were chosen as a good place to spend the winter.

Our Lands
Old Church House

When European settlers started to move into Homalco territories, Homalco people moved their settlement closer to the mouth of Bute Inlet on the East side of Sonora Island. They built homes in an area where most of the foods were easier to harvest.

The first General Store was built in the area at Stuart Island and Homalco people now had a place to purchase food. There were houses being built in Old Church House where they settled for a number of years around 1850. No one remembers the time of the year.

A Catholic church was under construction at old Church House when a severe wind blew down the building. The elders at that time, believed that was not the right place for their settlement. Something was telling them to move away from there, to seek a more sheltered place where the North Wind would not blow as hard.

Old Church house became a summer home for Homalco people. A good spot to camp, pick berries, and most important of all, it became a fishing village. There were plenty of salmon to catch and sell to a fishing company on Stuart Island.

Old Church House was a beautiful spot in which to spend the summer. Fruit trees were planted. Homalco people now had apples, plums, cherries and crab apples. This was an ideal spot to can and preserve fruit and berries. Ling cod, rock cod and red cod were also available in abundance near the waters of Yuculta Rapids, which means Fast Flowing Waters.

Gillnet Fishing – The Early Years
By Bill Blaney

When Gillnet commercial fishing started to grow in British Columbia in earlier years, many fishing industries required more commercial fishermen. Since the native culture was based on the skills of fishermen, there were many skilled people in the marine environment.

First Nation people were given first chance at employment in the fishing Many of our Homalco people got their first chance at gillnetting in the early years of. Commercial salmon fishing. In those years, there were many fish around River Inlet. Especially during the summer during the sockeye salmon season.

Since the salmon industry was growing very quickly at that time, the Fraser River's rich harvests required more and more fishing camps.

The fishing companies built living quarters up River Inlet and employed many of the women in the cannery. The men started fishing and picked up the trade very quickly. They had lived on the coast all of their lives, so they were familiar with the trade.

The company supplied them with a Skiff. They Gillnetted salmon for the entire duration of the Salmon season. In order to get to the fishing grounds further many Natives traveled by Union Steam Boats that operated at that time in this area. Many of our people traveled to River Inlet in the passenger/freight boat in order to reach the Northern fishing grounds.

There were many stops along the way because the Steam Boats delivered supplies to many places that were north of Vancouver. The trip usually took about two days.

Page 11. ***Gillnet Fishing continued***

Rivers Inlet Cannery and Wadhams Cannery employed many women and the men purchased or rented a SKIFF to use for Gillnet fishing.

Back then, these SKIFFS had no motors, but they had a pair of oars. They either rowed to their favorite fishing ground or were towed by a fish packer, which was another way of sailing.

The fishermen had the old linen nets and the wooden corks and their leaded lead lines. There was no nylon net yet at that time. They rowed into the fishing grounds and pulled their nets up by hand, at that time, mostly 'human power'.

Our people were eager to own their own fishing boats so they fish hard to earn enough money to purchase their own fishing vessels. It was not very long until many owned their own boat. At one time, there were many privately owned fishing boat. At one time there were as many as twenty or thirty fishing boats around our home.

I can still recall the day of the Vivian and Easthope Engines slowly puttering along toward the fishing grounds. It was usually one or two cylinder motors at that time, which were owned by the Homalco people.

There are many stories to tell about gillnetting around our fishing grounds. Bute Inlet, Toba Inlet, Ramsay Arm, Philips Arm, Open Bay, Village Bay near Harriot Bay. Georgia Strait near Powell River was near by.

After Rivers Inlet coming down fishing around Smith Inlet. Knights Inlet and Johnston Strait also provided memories of many fall fishing days.

The increasing demands and growth of the fishing industry resulted in a small cannery being built at Redonda Bay on Redonda Island. Once again many Homalco people were employed. The Fish company built living quarters for the employees that working in the cannery. The fish company's name was Francis Millard, which operated for many years. There were other small fish companies

There were other small fish companies. Another names that might be familiar are Iverson, Tellock and Western.

There were other fish packers who bought salmon for cash. There were many fish scows anchored around Orford Bay, Stuart Island, Big Bay, and Surge Narrows Store. Many men delivered their catches to these places which were ideal because they always bought the salmon.

Quite often you could see four or five Gillnet Boats tied up or travelling together. Sometimes, you could see them just drifting around talking about their fisherman blues. Talking about their night's fishing, or worrying how poorly they made out, or worrying if somebody else did good and you missed the boat.

Other did not let us know how well they did. But they would laugh at us if you did not do well.

The life of a Gillnet fisherman had a lot of little problems. A rip in the net was always a bother. Drum or rollers were sometimes not working right or we would be catching too many Dogfish.

Sometimes the net would ball up, or the tide was too strong. The tides were always a problem. We were always waiting for the tide. We would wait for the tide to go out fishing and wait for the tide to come home from fishing.

The Bute Inlet People and their Neighbors
as remembered by Bill Blaney

The Homalco people lived quietly among themselves in this isolated area. On the mainland side, at the Northern tip of Georgia Strait, along the rocky shores of Bute Inlet.

They are called the Bute Inlet people, a proud but shy people who live peaceful lives among themselves. They stayed close to their own kind and their own territories.

Going about their daily routines, not knowing what the future holds or what will become of them.

Life was not always so easy for the people who lived at Bute Inlet, but there were many things they often did to share together as a one family.

Before the first white people came to their part of the world, the only way to travel was by water, and the only way our people traveled was in their dug out cedar canoes. In the summer months they traveled up and down the rugged coast of Bute Inlet where other Indian people lived..

There were many feasts. They would hunt, fish and dig clams and share any food they gathered with the people they met. The Homalco people celebrated many new friendships.

They traded with everyone they met. Food, blankets, dug out canoes and whatever else they had. Mostly though, it was an exchange of gifts.

They also played native games. A game called LA-Hul which sometimes lasted many hours, and sometimes all night long.

They did their Indian dances and other games.

There were many varieties of foods for the Feast. There was smoked and barbecued salmon, deer, mountain goat, seal, ducks, geese, cod and steamed buttered clams. During the summer there were many varieties of berries and fruit.

Through the potlaches and feasts, a bond of friendship was formed and these communities kept in contact with one another throughout the years.

Our Ancestors were always good in ready for guests. Our people were always kind and were always happy to see receive people from other reserves. We were taught to always have respect for people from other places, especially the Elders. In return, other groups would always welcome our members in the same way when we went to visit their villages.

Our closest neighbors were the Klahoose Band. They were called the Toba Inlet people. They spoke the same Indian dialect. Toba Inlet people are Coast Salish people. Their main reserve is now on Cortes Island in the village of Squirrel Cove.

Many of the Klahoose people were at one time Homalco people. In the past many of their members were bonded through marriage. Some Homalco people transferred to their reserve and became

members of the Klahoose Band. So today, we have friends and relatives who are living there.

Sliammon

Sliammon people are another Band who are neighbors. They are in Powell River B.C. They also speak the same dialect as Klahoose and Homalco. Many of our people also bonded in marriage in the past. This is why many Homalco people also have transferred to the Sliammon Reserve.

NEW LOCATIONS

In the last thirty years, many Bands have moved their people to new land because of isolation. It has given children an opportunity to attend school without leaving home, and it gives the members access to medical services, shopping and all of the services that a larger community offers.

At one time Sliammon, Squirrel and Church House were joined together in their business affairs and Band management; The three reserves had headquarters at one Band Office which was once at Sliammon.

Since Homalco people moved away from their homeland they are now taking care of their own business affairs and management at Campbell River. Their relationship with the Klahoose and Sliammon is still close. From time to time they meet for celebrations and some holidays.

Sometimes it is a wedding, sometimes a funeral and sometimes a special holiday.

Logging Days –
As remembered by Bill Blaney

Wen logging became one of the main industries along the coast in British Columbia and fishing was dying out for our people many of the Homalco youth from Church House became interested in the logging business.

There were many small logging camps starting up around the Bute Inlet area. So many of the young men learned the trade and fast became good loggers.

The small logging companies were not far from home, so many of our youth got started logging by getting hired for work in the small logging camps.

Starting out as a chokerman, or the whistle punk (also known as the signal man) who is relating whistle signals to the donkey (also known as the machine that hauls the logs from the woods to the landing). There the logs are either loaded on trucks to be hauled away, or pushed into the ocean by a bulldozer. They are then boomed up and towed away to the lumber mills by a tugboat.

The small 'Zippo" logging companies were where our youth got started and got their breaks into their logging careers.

Everyone soon heard about their good works and knew that Homalco youth were hard workers, and fast at their jobs as rigging slingers, chokermen, hooktenders, and chasers (known today as the landing man).

A few became high riggers in the good old days of the wooden spar tree and the wooden sleigh runner machine. They took real pride in being the 'bull of the woods'.

When these young men were home in Church House on weekends or their time off, they would gather around and talk about their experiences in the logging camps. They would often brag to one another about their work. They were always in competition with one another and talked about who was the better logger.

They loved to tell each other stories about what they accomplished, how they did the impossible and succeeded. They would argue about who had the better way of going about fighting a tuff (log) hang-up, or who was faster in the rigging, setting chokers around the logs.

Many stories were also told about how steep the side hills were, how tough the logging was, how they had overcome impossible odds to get the job done. They had great pride in their accomplishments. They would argue about who did the hardest work.

After the youth became good loggers, they became familiar with the machinery around them. They learned to run and operate the machine (the one they called the donkey).

At that time, most of the crew employed on the rigging were Indian youth. They worked very well together and took real pride in what they were doing. There were also guys that worked on the booming grounds and were also good at their jobs.

In the earlier times there were also the hand loggers from our reserve. At that time, they had a lot of claims to choose from. Many became self-employed as independent loggers. Using only hand logging tools, axes, bucking saws, and sledgehammers, spring boards and log jacks, they got a lot done.

There were no power saws yet, so everything was man powered. It was very hard work and took a lot of skill to get these logs into the salt chuck.

Many of the logging claims were on steep hills, so when they fell a tree, it would then have to slide into the water. If the tree got hung up along the way down thee steep slopes, it was very dangerous to roll the log off its hang up, and to control its slide into the water.

In those days anyone who was a hand logger had to have the courage to put their life at risk to get that tree into the water.

Hunting Experiences For Young Men
As remembered by Bill Blaney

The art of hunting was a skill learned only through experience. This skill was passed on from one generation to another. When a young boy, became a man, and had a new voice, he would complete his transformation by bathing in the rivers or steams each morning.

He would rub cedar and hemlock branches on his arms, legs and chest each morning before sunrise, at least three times and bathe in the cold river to wash off the needles.

Then these branches were taken care of, stacked in a neat pile. The branches were placed where they would face the sunrise. This shows that the young man was bathing each morning, and you could see how much he was training to become a very strong man and a great hunter.

Hunting was then a pride for a young man. To get his first big buck deer was a great accomplishment. Swimming each morning meant that the deer would not smell the new hunter, and that he would be strong and fit for the hunting experience.

Hunting mountain goats was a much harder task for the young man. First they had to learn the trails into the steep slopes up Bute Inlet. Those slopes were steep and hard to climb.

Another test was getting used to the height. There was this mountain up Bute Inlet that had many mountain goats on it.

However, it had very few trails you could take that would allow you to reach the top of this mountain. Not very many young men reached the very high points. But through training some made the grade.

I remember some of the stories our Grandfather told us about their hunting trips. My brother and myself would listen for hours. All this listening was learning for the young men to become skilled hunters.

All of this training was hard. The reward was the pride to be able to show your people you were a real man.

Fishing and Hunting Skills
As remembered by Bill Blaney

Fishing was another skill to be that took time and commitment to learn to do well. Catching fish in the rivers or streams was not to be learned over night. Skill and patience had to be mastered.

Hooking salmon in the full harvest, the young man had to learn the skill of hooking one salmon without scaring off the whole bunch of other fish. The real learning came only with experience.

Hunting seals, geese and ducks also required a great deal of patience to do well.

The flats, and the sand bars around the head of Bute Inlet was where many seals, geese and ducks gathered.

Many of our Homalco people used their dugout canoes to hunt geese, duck and seals. They would lie low in the canoe cover themselves and the canoe with branches, and go up the Homathco River. Then they would drift back down the river hiding under the branches so they could get close to the seals, ducks and geese which were usually swimming in the water near the mouth of the river.

Sometimes the geese and ducks would come within a few feet of the hunters. The hunters were well hidden so they would not be noticed by the game.

Youthful hunters had to learn to be very still and patient. This was the only way a hunter could get close enough. The hunter would

then study the main stops where the game came to rest. Then the hunter moves to that spot. Sometimes, it takes hours, but it is

Patience and silence and the ability to be very quiet and very still, hardly breathing, so the ducks and geese are attracted to the smell of the trees that allows you to catch the game.

They also had a way to trick the seals. Seals are very curious. They will come real close when they are being nosey which makes it easier for the hunter.

As seals go up the Homathco River after salmon, they would usually follow the canoes around wherever the hunter traveled. Their curiosity made them rather easy prey. They had no hesitation in coming close to the canoe, especially if they could smell fish..

Canada geese would flock around the flats in the tall grass of the sand bars near the mouth of the river.

The hunter would then study the main stops where they rest when they move. The hunter would move into that spot and rest. Again, it took patience and skill to stay hidden in the tall green grasses being quiet, staying still like a log, and waiting for the game. The reward for the patience and long wait is the kill when the geese return to their spot.

After the hunt, it was not uncommon for eight or ten men to gather around and talk about their experiences. They would joke and laugh about their hunting trip. They learned from each other, and shared information. They often tried new ways to attract and capture more game.

These were only a few of the ways Homalco youth were trained to be great hunters. They always listened to the stories of the great hunters, and learned respect for themselves as hunters by following the rituals and developing patience.

Harvesting Food by Bill Blaney

The Homalco people lived along the rocky shores of Bute Inlet. The harvest of food was easier there at that time. The spawning rivers and streams were the main harvest. It was a must to store as much food as we could catch to supply food for the community for the long winters.

Before the white man came, the Homalco people had many ways to store their food harvest.

Smoked salmon was a main harvest in the autumn months for it had to supply the entire community for the long winter months ahead.

Another skill everyone needed to learn was hunting for deer and mountain goat. This meat was also smoked and dried or barbecued over an open fire, and dried later for storage.

The Homalco families usually had more than one home along Bute Inlet, which they lived in whenever the harvest seasons were most suited for them. Temporary homes that were built along the salmon spawning rivers and streams were made of cedar shakes and logs.

Our people traveled to different places along the Inlet in their canoes to preserve food. They lived in the seasonal homes while

they harvested the fish, ducks, geese and seals during the spring and summer months.

The fall months were always busy preserving, curing and storing the food for winter.

In the fall months, we were busy hunting and trapping. We were always experimenting, looking for more efficient ways to hunt, fish, and preserve our food.

Our fathers and grandfathers often talked about their hardships and the long hard winters that passed by. They told about the cold winter's north wind that blows fierce through the whole of Bute Inlet. When the north wind is blowing, the waters of the inlet are covered with raging white caps and the temperature drops far below zero.

The men of our Reserve had to be strong and tough to survive because most of our travel was on water.

Harvesting and preserving food for the winter was the most important part of our daily lives. As we traveled to different places along this land, we were always seeking new fertile territory for food.

Harvesting Shell Fish – By Bill Blaney

Shellfish was harvested during the spring and summer as our people traveled to the many small islands near the northern tip of the Strait of Georgia.

There were many clam beds there that provided an abundant harvest. We would dig up the clams and cockles and build a big fire on the beach. We would prepare a great feast.

Rocks were placed in a circle, then we would build a big fire on the rocks. The rocks had to be very hot. Then we would remove the fire, place the clams over the hot rocks and cover them with a blanket or canvas. The clams then cooked and steamed.

The clamshells would open up. We would remove the clams from the shells and put them on sticks. Then we would barbecue them over an open fire. The clams were then dried and put in storage for winter.

When it was time to eat the clams, they were boiled until they were soft again. We usually served the clams with a dip this was one of our favorite winter feasts.

Harvesting Herring and Herring Eggs - By Bill Blaney

Herring spawning grounds were near the head of Bute Inlet in an area called Bear Bay. Harvesting herrings was a very important part of our food supply. The spawning season was in early spring.

Herring was one of our most loved main foods. We would harvest as many as possible each year.

Herrings were either sun dried or smoked in the smoke house, then dried and stored away. Herring eggs preserve well and can last a long time.

Cedar branches were put into the water on the spawning grounds. The spawning herrings eggs stick to the branches of the cedar. Later the herring eggs were dried and stored. Herring eggs lasted a long time in storage.

When it was time to eat the herring eggs they were soaked in fresh water and eaten either raw or cooked. The dried herring eggs were often cooked over an open fire. Our Elders are all very fond of herring eggs.

Herring eggs are still harvested along the coast in exactly the same way.

Salmon Harvest By Bill Blaney

Salmon was very plentiful around the spawning rivers at Bute Inlet. Orford River, Southgate River, Homathco River. There was always a very abundant harvest of salmon in these areas.

The Homalco people were always ready for the Chum salmon runs .up these rivers. This was the busiest part of the fall months for the harvest of salmon.

They would wait until late October to start smoking their salmon when the weather was cooler. Cooler weather is much more effective for smoking salmon. Our Elders say in warmer weather, the salmon tend to fall off in the smoke house. The salmon was smoked or barbecued until they were very dry because that makes them last longer in storage. Also salmon is dried in the cooler weather they seem to last longer in storage.

Cod Fish Harvest by Bill Blaney

Ling cod usually spawns in January and February. The people of Homalco used to spear ling cod during the months when they spawned in the shallow waters near the shores and beaches of our homeland.

Cod eggs were also eaten by our people. They were good either cooked or raw. Lingcod was also smoked and dried by our people. Lingcod was favored because it lasted a long time in storage.

Introduction of Religion by Bill Blaney

In the early days of our ancestors, more and more white settlers were coming to live in this land. The first missionary set out to spread the news of God and the Bible along the mainland coast of Georgia Strait on the west coast of British Columbia

The Oblate Roman Catholic priests were first to visit the Indian Reserves along the route from the Fraser River.

The first Catholic mission was built at Mission City on the Fraser River. Their intention was to convert the Indian people into joining the Catholic Church.

There were other missionaries from other churches going around about the same time, trying to convert Indian people into their religion.

As time went by our people grew more and more interested in the Catholic Religion.

Page 27. ***Introduction of Religion continued***

Each time the Oblate priests came and visited the Indian reserves, many people converted to their teaching about God. They began to learn more and more about their new found faith and new beliefs.

The Indian people adopted the Catholic Religion and those practices became a part of their daily lives. This in turn changed their life style and changed their traditional ways of living. They began to set aside some of their practices.

The more we learned from the priests, the more we became involved in the Catholic religion.

This new teaching changed many ways of our life style and beliefs. The ways of our ancestors were set aside for the new kind of worship.

In those days, many Indian wars were stopped. Indians had been fighting against each other. Tribes from other places were fighting. This all stopped when we began to learn about God through the Catholic Church.

In the beginning the Catholic Priests would invite us to attend a religious teaching each year around Christmas at the Friseur River Mission. The priests invited individuals from other reserves all along the coast to their place. There were a few people from every Reserve.

We would all travel to Fraser River by canoe to learn more about our new found religion.

Their devotions were designed to help us bring back what we had learned from the Oblate priests and to teach our own people about God and the Bible.

According to the ancestors of our people, they were glad to make this journey. They were curious about the white people's ways and they were learning to speak the English language.

Back then there were still no schools on our Reserves. Also at that time, more and more white settlers were coming to this land and it became important for us to learn more of the English language.

At about the same time fur trade began in our area. The white people were interested in dealing with our people for furs.

The first Bible written in the Indian language was Chinook which most of our ancestors and other Indians along the coast understood.

Our Fathers and Mothers were very religious at this point in time. Their parents taught them to be.

From then on it was passed on to other generations. Religion was important to our ancestors. They were truly dedicated to their belief in God. It was important to them to see our younger people keep up with their religion and faith.

It was important to them that the younger generation follows in their footsteps and respect and practice the same religion.

Page 29. ***Introduction of Religion continued***

The ancestors wanted them to have respect for the Church in our village when we were growing up. They also had great respect for the Oblate priests whenever they visited our village.
I remember times when the Oblate priest held services or mass. Back then all masses were in Latin. Our Elders, both men and women sang hymns in our own Indian language. Most of the prayers were said in our language as well.

Through the teaching some band members attended the parish at Fraser River in Mission B.C. They learned to translate from Latin to our own Indian language. Whenever the Oblate priest came to visit our village, our parents made sure we attended the church and masses and other services.

Mass in the morning and benediction in the evening. The Bishop from Vancouver visited our reserve once every two years. It was a ver special occasion for our people. During the Holy week of Easter time.

Many of our children made their fist Holy Communion and confirmation at that time. It was an important part of our lives to receive these sacraments when we became of age. A high mass celebration was held with a choir of our own elders.

They harmonized with each other and sang our Indian Hymns. They sang beautifully and each one seemed to know their own parts very well. Our church bell was ringing and the joy of it all could be felt by everyone there. Everyone was very happy.

After the service was over pictures were taken and we were all introduced to the Bishop. All of the Band members were allowed to kiss the Bishop's ring.

It was then a tradition of the Church to greet the man of God in this way. The Bishop then went to have a meal at some Band member's home.

Then the Bishop was given a tour around our village and he said he had enjoyed his trip to our Reservation.

After everything was over, most of the Band members were there to see him, off. He boarded the Union Steam Boat to go back to Vancouver.

The Catholic priests continued to visit our Reserve for quite some time. Bringing words of God to our people. The priest was usually there on Christmas and during Easter. Whenever a Band member died they would attend the funeral service. Most of the time they could not make the journey from Sechelt where they were stationed. When that happened, a parish priest from Campbell River would attend the funeral service. In later years, a priest would fly into Church House from Campbell River.

When They Took Us To Residential School
By Bill Blaney

The children from Church House attended a one-room day school and one teacher to about thirty students. Back in the late 1940's and into the early 50's they received very little education. It was a lot of work for one teacher to teach the Indian students.

Isolation was the factor, teachers were afraid of living amongst the native people. Poor living quarters and isolation were reasons why the teachers were nervous and found it hard to teach.

The students were too old for their grade levels because most of them had dropped out of school at that time.

Later in the early 50's the school burned to the ground and all school-aged children were forced to leave home and attend a boarding school at Sechelt.

They lived there and learned all through the whole year's school term. It was hard for the younger children to go to school there. They missed their home and family very much. Most of them had never been away from home. They were allowed to go home on Christmas holidays for two weeks and during the summer holiday when school was out.

The education they received there was a benefit to them. Some of the benefits were that they got to learn something about life out in the world. The only life they had known was the life they lived on the Reservation.

The Residential school was operated by Brothers, Nuns and Oblate Priests.

The Indian children were not allowed to speak their own language. The rules there were hard to abide by, for there were many other Indian students from other places attending the same school.

There were more than two hundred Native students boarding there. The children from Church House were forced to attend the

Boarding School until the two rooms school was built again at Church House in 1962.

By 1979 there were only eight students left, so the school was closed by Indian Affairs. At that time many of our people moved with their children to Campbell River and to other towns and cities in British Columbia.

The school was renovated again five years ago and is now used for living quarters for the people who are working on the salmon enhancement and aquaculture program.

Residential School Stories
My Residential School Years
By Bill Blaney

As I remember, my residential school years were not the best part of growing up. Leaving home at the age of seven was very frightening for me. Going to a strange place with lots of strange faces was scary.

It was very hard for me, and my odder brother Johnny. For we had never been away from home, we had never been separated from our parents and family. It was very difficult, but we had to face it, like it or not. Neither us nor our parents had a choice. We started school two weeks late.

We were put on a Union passenger boat at Stuart Island. There was a general store there, which was near our home in Church House. Church House was a very isolated Reserve North West of Stuart Island.

We were on the boat overnight and arrived at the dock in Sechelt early in the morning. A priest was there to meet us. I was so afraid, I was counting on my older brother to help me know what to do.

When we arrived at the school, it looked so big. I was told that we were going to live there until Christmas. I was afraid and started to cry. My bother was o.k. and I knew he would protect and comfort me. He said "everything will be o.k."

When I saw others relatives and friends from home I began to feel better. I had never seen so many people in one place. It sure felt strange to me. It took time to really get used to being around so many people.

My cousin showed us around, where to go to sleep and where to go to eat. We were shown which classroom we would be attending.

Then school started and I had to repeat Grade One again. I had already done Grade one at home in Church House. It was hard for me for I knew very little English then. I was placed in with children a lot younger than me.

I tried very hard so I could catch up to the children my own age. Four years later, I passed to a grade higher. Then it was even harder for me to keep up with the rest of the pupils.

I was very poor in reading and spelling. It was a real struggle for me to keep up. It was even harder because I missed my home so much. I used to daydream so much in class, I began to fall behind.

As I got older I could not wait to reach sixteen so I could quit school. Also as I got older life was tougher. I was forever getting into trouble.

There were times that I was very unhappy. The boys were always picking on me and I was getting into fights. At times I was blamed for things I didn't do and I got punished for it. My hands were not even healed from one strapping when I would be getting another strapping for trying to get even with the kids that were teasing me..

I guess I was a real troublemaker. As I remember, I was not a favorite of the Brothers who looked after us.

I was tired of living in this school life. I vowed I would never see a residential school again. I can't wait to be sixteen so I can leave. I QUIT!

I was hurt in my life at school. I blamed the school system for everything that is wrong with me. When I turned sixteen I quit during the Christmas holiday and I never went back there.

I was not the place I didn't like, it was the way I was treated. We were punished when we spoke our own language. It was hard because it was natural to do that. I would get a slap on the mouth, and sometimes worse. I decided it was unfair to get punished for accidentally speaking my own language. It was hard to stop and think about what I was going to say all the time.

I got tired of getting punished and I was finally learning not to do the wrong things and keep out of the way. I learned to do most of the work by myself or with a few friends.

I was quite handy with tools and I did a lot of woodwork after school in the workshop they had there. I even carved a totem pole. I also learned to play guitar and to sing. I spent hours in the music room.

I remember the times when we went to bed hungry. We often didn't get enough to eat. We used to steal from the garden. I guess that is one reason I hated residential school. I never felt full, I never got enough food.

Sometimes on Sundays, we would take long walks down to the beach, or up the hills into the woods. I remember that we got lost in the woods, we didn't get back until suppertime.

I remember the dances on Friday night. When I did something wrong, I could not go to the dances, so I learned to stay out of trouble. I remember missing a few dances because we got caught smoking. BIG PUNISHMENT!

As we grew older and a little wiser, we had system down pat. We learned to get around most of the system at the School. We would figure things out carefully. We learned how not to get caught.

We were all such little devils. We could keep a straight face and pretend that we did not know anything at all if we were ever questioned about 'who did it'. We got away with many things.

Even though there were many tough times and we all suffered the hardship of being away from home at these times, we also had many memorable moments, especially when we were all together.

We got to meet people from different reserves and learned about their ways and became good friends.

We learned about God and prayed before and after meals. We prayed before we sat down at school and again before we left the classrooms. No wonder most pupils who went to boarding school never practiced religion after they left school. We were all 'prayed out' by the time we finished school. Most students said " I've had enough religion for awhile".

It was the same with me. After I left school I became an alcoholic for a while. It has been quite a few years now I have learned to keep away from "it".

I found God again and learned to forgive, and learned to love myself and others around me.

It is said in the Bible – Jesus said, "You must learn to forgive before you can learn to love".

So whatever the Boarding School systems did that was not right, we better learn to heal.

TO HEAL..

TO FORGIVE...

TO LOVE AGAIN

Reunion at Sechelt Residential School - by Susan Blaney

I had the opportunity to visit the place where the Homalco children attended Boarding School during the earlier years until 1960. The school is no longer there; it burned down some years ago. However, many memories of how life was there lingered on. Memories of the times we were far away from our home.

The school was operated by Oblate Priests, Brothers and Nuns. They had very strict rules that the students had to abide by. They found it very hard to so since the only life they had knows was living on a Reserve. The hardest rule was not being able to talk in our own language. It was forbidden and if you got caught you either got a strapping, or some other severe punishment.

The school is now replaced by a Museum, Theatre and some offices buildings.

As we drove around the Reserve we found many changes. The Church had also burned down. The Town site seemed to be the same. Our stay at the Motel, down at what we used to call ' the Bay' was very nice. Quite a few people from Sliammon stayed at the same place.

The main purpose for the reunion was to try to heal the past after the Catholic Church asking the Native people for their forgiveness for any mistreatment and abuse our people had endured when we attended school there. The records show that many of our Native people still suffer from attending boarding school. Sechelt was not

The only boarding school. It was one of many around British Columbia.

Many people shared the experiences they had during their school years. Some showed emotional feelings, remembering the hunger and bad times. Most students shared how much they missed their parents and families. They missed growing up at home with their families. They felt they were robbed of their childhood. It also made learning very difficult because they missed family and home. It interfered with their studies.

Most of the talk was based on why the government did this thing to our Native people. Why couldn't they have built better schools and brought in proper teachers to our reserves. Instead they took children away from their homes and families.

The meals were served right there at the Culture Center. The food was great. We also got to meet a few friends as well. There will be another gathering about Boarding school and the Catholic Church. One at North Vancouver sometime in November

Pilgrimage at Kakawis
By Susan Blaney

We had a pilgrimage at Kakawis on the West Coast, better known as Meares Island. Kakawis is also a family treatment Center. We were very fortunate to be able to have our pilgrimage there. It is such a beautiful place and the people from there were very nice.

This pilgrimage was a three-day weekend based on the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Sacraments of the Catholic Church. The reason we have a pilgrimage is to help people deal with their alcohol and drug problems. It give the people the encouragement to overcome their addictions. It also helps a person top deal with any other hurts or problems that they have.

For some, it is a very emotional three days. We had a lot of jokes and there was a lot of laughter. We even had an evening of short plays (skits). It was nice to see people take part in all of the activities. There was also a lot of singing and music.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our Band Office and Terry for their support, the use of the photo copier and supplies to make our song books. A special thanks to Terry for her help in typing out some songs and for being patient when the paper got jammed in the copy machine.

It was good to see quite a few of our Band members there. We had fourteen adults and five children. We had four vehicles for our trip. We were lucky that three of them were Vans.

On Thursday, about 44 people joined us; there were people from as far north as Terrace and Fraser Lake.

We had no one to cook for meals for the weekend when we got there. So Father Salmon was going to do the cooking. However, by strange coincidence, one of the guys was a certified chef and he took over the kitchen. We were very thankful for the young man, Brian Burwash who was from Idaho.

We hope to have another pilgrimage here in Campbell River sometime in early spring. We all hope to see them all again.

Traditional Ways and Beliefs
By Bill Blaney

Whenever a family member dies, it is traditional to have the body lay in state at the home of the deceased for three days of mourning. Usually prayers and the rosary are said during the item that the deceased lay in state.

Our Elders say that the coffin is only open during the daytime until about three o'clock in the afternoon.

The body is not to be left alone during the time it lay in state. Family members and friends stay and meditate or pray as long as the body is in the home.

When a mourner cries for the loved one when the coffin is open, our Elders tell us to make sure the tears do not drop into the coffin.

The belongings of the deceased are to be burned. Clothing and trinkets which the deceased may have treasured during their lifetime are to be burned. Food is usually burned separate from clothes and other things.

These ceremonies are observed, as the traditional farewell to the lost loved one.

When a parent dies, either mother or father, it is also believed that the children should wear a string or thread around all of the joints, neck, arms, ankles, wrists and knees.

Then the parent's body is in the grave, the body of the child aches in the joints. All of the children should war the string for a whole year.

Another tradition is to do offerings for one full year after the death. of a parent. Start getting up early each morning at day break. Face the sun as it rises over the horizon. Name your bad habits one by one. Open your hands and blow away your bad habits one at a time.

We have been taught that as you name your bad habit and blow it away from your hands you will get rid of that bad habit.

It is believed that all of the children of the deceased can get rid of any bad habit they believe they have in this manner.

Story Telling by Bill Blaney

It is in our culture to tell stories. The grandfathers and grandmothers would educate the children in the traditions and ways of their Tribe through their stories.

I have listened to many stories from my grandfather my mother-in-law and her Brother Ambrose. The fairy tales and jokes that were told to the children were both amusing and educational.

Story telling was also the only entertainment we had before radio and television. Our community was isolated, so these evenings were always interesting and fun.

There were fairy tales, stories about our culture, and about the special powers of certain animals and birds. One of the best things about these stories is that they were told in our own dialect. As I recall, it seems that it was more exciting and interesting when we heard those stories in our native language. I also believe that we learned at a deeper level when we heard about our traditions in our own language. There are some things that just don't translate from our native language into English either in speak or in writing.

A lot of the fairy tales and stories were told just like a mother tells stories to her children today. However, in those days, the parent did not read the story from a book. So the version my parents told, might be have a few different details, however, the story is the same.

Most of the stories taught us the parallel between humans animals. It showed us the characteristics of our own 'animal' nature. As children we were fascinated by the stories. The stories told were very old and had been passed down through many generations.

The Changing Life Style of Homaldo People
By Bill Blaney

The life style of Homalco people has been a story of constant change. Right from early times when the first white people came to this land, the Homalco people were scattered throughout Bute Inlet.

We were called the Bute Inlet people by our Indian neighbors. Our ancestors had more than one home. They lived in areas where they could harvest food, which meant they moved with the seasons and could be found at different times of the year at different places along the rugged coast of Bute Inlet.

As time went by, they moved away from Bute Inlet, to a cove which was called Church House where a more permanent settlement was made.

The houses were poorly made and very small. Most homes were 16 x 24 feet. There were only two bed rooms. Even if you had eight children, there were only two bed rooms. There was no living room space and no living room furniture. We had camp size cots for sleeping. Each house had a hearth and a wood stove in the kitchen.

Back then we did not realize how life could be, we just took what we got and lived with it. At that time it was not that we could not afford to buy furniture, we were too far from a furniture store and we knew of no way to get the furniture to our homes.

When a window got broken it was not replaced. There was no place nearby to buy glass.

There was no hot water or indoor plumbing. There were no bathrooms, only an outhouse. There were only a few homes that had indoor plumbing.

Later, when things improved, the school was built and our children were able to come home from Residential School.

A health clinic was also built and we had some health services.

We asked Indian Affairs to build better homes for the bigger families and add more rooms to the older houses. Renovations were made and homes were painted inside and out.

It was at this time that the three Reserves joined forces. Church House, Squirrel Cove and Sliammon got together to seek more help from Indian Affairs.

For some reason, Church House was always denied the request of better homes for our people.. We were told there was not enough money or maybe next year, or some other excuse.

Because of the isolation, shipping and handling costs were very high, so the cost was always a factor.

We had a poor water system and no fire fighting equipment, so many homes were lost there.

The community needed a septic system, but we were always denied. We were told that the rocky ground on which the community was built was not suitable for septic tanks.

We had no phones with which to communicate with Indian Affairs. We used the mail, but the mail was delivered to the local general store which was three or four miles away by boat.

The life of isolation there was getting harder. Our only way out of the community was by boat so getting supplies and taking care of health issues was difficult. Many people did not have a boat and had to depend on others for transportation. Grocery shopping became difficult.

Travel by boat has hazardous, especially during the fall and winter months.

Sometimes, we would travel by plane to Campbell River to do our shopping, but plane fares were getting so high that most of us could not afford the fares.

There came a time when everyone realized that we must make some changes. Conditions had changed so much in the past 20 years that life in Church House was no longer a viable option.

Times had changed, and it was recognized that the community must make some changes for some of the following reasons:

1. There came a time when most of the nearby general stores were closing down and shopping in these stores was also very expensive.

2. Many of our children were reaching higher grades in school and the Boarding school they had been attending closed down.

3. Many parents did not want to be separated from their children, who were forced to leave home if they wanted to complete their education.

4. The elder members of our Band needed medical attention, so they needed to be close to a hospital and doctors. It was difficult and expensive to take care of people who had medical problems. Boarding the seaplanes was difficult for the Elders and they had to have at least one person

In 1979 and 1980 the last of the members moved away from Church House. So today, we have members scattered throughout

the province. Some living in Campbell River, some in Vancouver and others have transferred to Silicon and live in Squirrel Cove on Courts Island.

The life of isolation was getting harder at Church House and many moved away in search for an easier way of life.

One big difference between now and then is that our traditional stories are not in a book. There were no books written that pass on the stories that we heard from our parents and grandparents.

Current Educational Problems

Ever since the early days, our people have had misfortune in education. The education we received in earlier times seemed unimportant to us. There was great wealth around our environment and there were plenty of jobs.

Logging and fishing were the main employment of our people and many of our young people quit school to find jobs close to home. No one realized the importance of having an academic education at that time.

Our culture was such that we did not realize the value of education. We could not see what the future would hold, and no one realized that the world would change so fast.

The culture of our ancestors still affects the youth of today. If the youth of today are to succeed in life they must be encouraged and supported to continue in school.

In order to progress our youth need a lot of encouragement from parents and teachers to stay in school and study so they can reach higher grade levels.

Most jobs today require a minimum High School Graduation. We must do everything we can to support our children. They are creating the future for the next generation.

We need to be able to work beside, cooperate with and learn from our white neighbors and be able to keep the best of our native history and culture in our lives.

It is important that the youth of today be able to span to gap between their culture, their family history, their spiritual traditions and the new computer driven cyber space world.

Only the students who have a solid support system in place in their home as well as at school will be able to stay in school and get the grades that will give them the tools they need to bridge that gap.

We need to set a good example for our children, to help them fulfill their dreams of a better tomorrow for our people, for our grandchildren.

Holidays at Home by Bill Blaney

Many holidays at home on our reserve were very memorable, especially Christmas. This was the time of year when everyone enjoyed themselves.

The big event was to attend Mass on Christmas Many celebrated by attending parties right through the holidays.

The children coming home from the Residential schools created a more joyful holiday spirit.

The loggers were also home from their jobs and the spirit of Christmas filled the air. Meeting our children at the Passenger Freight boat was always very exciting.

Preparation for this holiday began three weeks before Christmas. .Many of our people had taken out the catalogue and started ordering clothes, shoes and presents. Most of the people were not able to shop at the nearest town of Campbell River, so the only selection available to us was through the Simpson Sears and the Eaton catalogues. At that time, those catalogues were in every home.

The general store nearest us was on Stuart Island (which is now a salmon fishing Resort). The store had a Post Office and the local Postmaster knew all of our people.

Near the Christmas holiday there were many parcels for our people.

Many times we never got what we ordered, or they sent replacements when they did not have what we wanted.

We had problems, sometimes sizes and colors were wrong. It was difficult to get everything we wanted the way we wanted it.

Then came the preparation for the great day. It was time to decorate the Church and the Community Hall.

A note from our Band Council was sent out to every house saying that all men should take part in the decorating.

Not all were willing, but the efforts of a few got the job done. Presents were getting wrapped for the children, family and friends. We usually had a Christmas tree all decorated in our community Hall and all the presents were there waiting for Santa to show up.

The name tags were on these presents so Santa knew who to give it to. It was a big job for Santa, and each child picked up their present when Santa called their name. The parents watched their children receive their presents.

This event usually took place a few days before Christmas.

After Santa finished giving out all the presents, parents and kids took their presents home and a dance was held for the rest of the evening.

Our own people provided the music. We had several accordion players and a few guitar players who also sang.

On Christmas Eve we usually had a priest to celebrate Christmas Mass. Our people gathered at our Church to celebrate the birthday of Jesus. Everyone got dressed up in their best clothes.

The church always looked beautiful. decorated with lights and ornaments. The ceiling was usually covered with decorations and lots of small Christmas trees on the walls and posts.

The front of the Church was the main decorated area with flashing Christmas lights and the crib of Baby Jesus laying in a small stable beside the alter. We also had a statue of Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the three kings, and the animals from the stable.

Then before the Mass, all of the people would go up to the front in a line and place their gift of money in a large bowl. They would kiss the baby Jesus feet and return to their place.

This was a traditional way of our people and it happened every Christmas Eve.

After Mass, our people greet one another with a Merry Christmas on this joyous evening. Then it is off to home where there was a feast of turkey and ham and a variety of other goodies.

The celebration usually continued on until the early morning of Christmas Day.

Some of our people would wait until Christmas day to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

These dances usually took place from just before Christmas to New Years.

New Years Eve was another great celebration. Everyone danced on New Years Eve, even the Elders were seen on the dance floor. This celebration usually continued until dawn New Years Day.

Stories From Our Culture

The Owl

Our people had a strong belief that seeing an owl was a bad omen, especially a White Owl. The story that has been passed down is that the white owl has special powers and can hypnotize you so you will get lost. The Owl can control your brain, and would cause you to walk around in circles and get very lost. It was believed that the White Owl could control your mind. The owl would keep you lost in the woods and no matter which way you went to get out, you would end up back at the same place again.

It was believed that the owl would keep you in that circle until it was tired of the game. You would not be free until the owl decided to go wherever owls go when they are tired!.

So in the early days of our people, if the owl was sighted or heard while they were out in the woods, on a hunting trip they would go home immediately.

The Killer Whale

Our Ancestors believed that the sighting of a pod of Killer Whales traveling together was a bad omen. Sighting a pod of Killer Whales meant a death in your immediate family or someone from your community.

Killer whales traveling in a group meant a funeral service. If one of the whales in the pod of whales waved its tail in the air it was waving goodbye to someone close and dear to the family.

This was one of the beliefs of our ancestors.

They also believed that the Killer Whale was someone that had died and was reborn as a Whale to warn people about what is going to happen. The Killer Whale was always treated with great respect..

It has been said by our Elders that the Whale is a boat for the spirits of our people that died before us.

The Raven

Raven was known as a gossip. It was believed that the Raven spread stories from their perch up in the tree.

Raven would listen to other people talk, and quickly fly to other Reserves and settlements to report what he had heard.

Raven is known to be sneaky, sly and a big mouth trouble maker.

Raven is known to be tall. So when Raven is around, be careful. Raven will listen to everything you say and spread the gossip fast.

Cedar Wood

With cedar wood with which I built my canoe to catch a salmon
With cedar wood I make by paddle so I can use my canoe
With cedar wood, I split into shakes and made my home.
With cedar wood, I built my smoke house with to dry the salmon I caught.
With cedar wood, I carved for my bowl which I will eat from.
With cedar wood I carved a spoon, so I can use the bowl, and eat my food.
With cedar wood, I use for kindling to start my fired and barbecue my salmon.
With cedar wood I use to hang my salmon together, hold together as it smokes in the smoke house.
With cedar wood, I use to hold my barbecue salmon together in my open fire.
With cedar wood, I carved a totem pole to tell the news my ancestor once told.
With cedar wood I carved by ceremonial mask
With cedar wood, I made a bailer from cedar bark and bail water out of my canoe
With Cedar wood

My Homalco Prayer
by Bill Blaney

God bless our Homalco people.
Fill their hearts with love for each other and for thee.
I pray today Lord for peace and happiness,
Guide our people to the right paths to do only good
for others and to serve thee more faithfully..

When trouble and sorrow appear within our midst,
When only darkness seems to surrounds us,
Give us light

When we are lost and alone in our fears
Give us hope oh Lord
Give us vision to see only the good in one another
Help us turn away from all evil
As we journey through this life.

AMEN

If you found these stories interesting or inspiring, and if you have similar stories, please write them down so your memories can be on record for the benefit of all First Nation children, and especially those who live in your own community.

The material in this
book was transcribed by
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