



Library podcast

'Breaking Ground: The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and the Unearthing of Tse-whit-zen Village' at the Central Library

[0:00:00] **Podcast Announcer:** The following podcast of Lynda Mapes was recorded live at the Seattle Public Library on May 17th 2009. In 2003 a backhoe operator hired by the state of Washington to work on the Port Angeles Waterfront Dry Dock discovered one of the oldest Native American villages ever found in the region. Eventually over 10,000 artifacts and 300 barrels were recovered from this ancient homeland village of the Klallam. Author Lynda Mapes spent years researching the controversy between the state of Washington who had cited the dry dock over the ancient village. The Klallam people who were descendants of the original inhabitants of Tse-whit-zen, and the citizens of Port Angeles who were employed on the project as they came to terms with their history, their economic realities, and their humanity. The University of Washington Press generously agreed to co-host this program with the Hugh and Jane Ferguson Seattle Room. The Capell Family Endowed Book Fund support provided for the illustrations in the book.

[0:01:09] Please join with me in welcoming Lynda to the podium.

[0:01:19] **Lynda Mapes:** Hi everybody. Thanks for coming. It's a special treat to read at the Seattle Public Library. Libraries are special places. I first learned to love books by going to the library with my mom when we wanted to escape my brothers. I had a card from a very young age and I'd go downstairs to the children's section and load up, and she'd go upstairs and get her escape reading, and then we were set for another round. I want to thank the staff of the Seattle Public Library from putting on this event today. This is a very special Library were so lucky that it is at the heart of our community. Today, I'm going to show you some pictures first, and then I'm going to read to you from the book. It's important for you to know that the reason this book is illustrated with more than a hundred photographs and maps all of them in color is because of a special gift from the Capell family right here in Seattle that endowed a series of books on topics such as this. So I'm grateful to them for making that possible. I'm also

[0:02:17] grateful to the Seattle Times and publisher Frank Levin who initially supported this work in the Seattle Times. You might have read this story first there. We're lucky to have locally owned independent journalism here, in Seattle, and also lucky to have a locally owned independent bookstore Elliott Bay Books, to whom I also extend my thanks for being here today. So just very briefly to tell you the story, in case you don't already know it. Back in 2003, the Department of Transportation was beginning work to do the repairs that are actually now underway on the Hood

Canal Bridge. If you tried to get to the peninsula lately, you know, you can't, you've got to drive all the way around. That's because they're replacing one half of the bridge because it frankly was falling apart. And so they needed a place a dry dock, very deep hole, in which to float out components all the way to the Hood Canal Bridge site for repair. So they went looking in the Puget Sound region for a site for a dry dock

[0:03:17] to build these components. And, they went to Port Angeles where they began to build this facility on the waterfront. What they found wasn't what anyone expected. They found not just what they thought was a great construction site, nice and big, flat, right on the water in use industrially for more than a hundred years. No one thought of this as an Indian place. They thought of it as a perfect industrial site, but what they found within 10 days of beginning construction was midden and then human remains. They stopped the job. Everyone was shocked. Debate went on with the tribe for the next eight months about what to do next. Ultimately, in consultation with the tribe, they decided to continue and as they continued they also continued to discover human remains, and ultimately the largest, oldest Indian village ever unearthed in our area. With more than 10,000 artifacts, ultimately more than 300 burials, before the project, at the request of the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe, was stopped. Some of the artifacts are

[0:04:29] on public display today now for several months at the Burke Museum and I urge you to go and see them. They're absolutely beautiful. They are a good representation of some of the 10,000 objects that were taken from that site. You'll find tools use for hunting, tools used for fishing, beautiful decorative objects, including a bone comb perfectly intact - just one tooth broken. Parts of this site were in use continuously by the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe and our ancestors for 2700 years. It's a very old site. So I urge you, if you're interested in seeing some of these artifacts for yourself, go to the Burke, they're in the Central Hall when you first walk in. That beaver is going to be on the front page of the Seattle Times tomorrow in a story I did about some beaver habitat, and its contribution to salmon recovery. At the moment, it's my screen saver because I really love the picture. Okay, speaking of pictures, I'm going to quickly go through this slide show. It tells the story of the

[0:05:30] book in 10 chapters. Beginning with this, I think remarkable photograph, which shows the establishment of the city of Port Angeles. This is in about 1920, and the city is growing up around the waterfront. And, you see the tribe that's been dispossessed from its waterfront home, nonetheless continues to encamp on the waterfront, to travel there in canoes. What I love about this photograph is the sense of a connection to what was there before, it's not yet invisible. This is just to orient you. The Lower Elwha Klallam tribe that we all know of today, is one of three bands of the Klallam people. The Klallam people had an empire back in the day stretching all the way from the Hoko River on the peninsula, to the Hamma Hamma, across the straits of Juan de Fuca, and into Canada- 33 known villages in all probably more. Look how we thought about this very same place. This slide shows the town of Port Angeles as it was growing, and we plotted it, of course into private property and individual lots. Just to orient you,

[0:06:37] this is the Ediz Hook. When you drive into town, you see that plume of steam from the paper plant that is still there today this rectangle. At the base of the Hook is the Alexander Sampson land

claim. It was the first white settlement in the area, and it was taken right over the site of the Klallam Village. This is the Department of Transportation site seen from the air. The point of this photograph is to show you how the place was thought of in modern times, which was as industrial land. But look, what was right beneath it. This is the comb I told you about you can see it for yourself, it's at the Burke, what an incredible object. It's carved on both sides. It would fill the palm of your hand. Those two birds, we like to think our cormorants. We've talked about this at the tribe as to just what images might be. This is Mark Charles and he is digging for the bones and belongings of his ancestors. You'll notice the heavy equipment in the background. That's because once the tribe and the state

[0:07:43] decided to continue with the project, the tribe, more than a hundred tribal members worked alongside the state construction workers, as well as archaeologists. And, their job was to try to find their ancestors' bones and belongings, and move them out of the path of construction.

[0:08:03] Obviously this became very controversial. This is Frances Charles, still the chairman at the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe, talking to Gary Locke and the Secretary of Transportation at the Centennial Accord meeting back in 2004. That's the annual meeting of the tribes of the state of Washington with the cabinet secretaries. Usually what they talk about is healthcare, one thing and another. What they talked about that day was why this project had to stop. That was not a popular idea in the town of Port Angeles. This is the reaction at the Chamber of Commerce photographed by Steve Ringman at the Seattle Times, as it happened. Here's the reason why. These are tents over the burial sites that were uncovered. As the construction project progressed, each one of these tents is over an intact grave of an ancestor of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. You see those stones in the front of the fort of the photograph with a red tape around them though, those are headstones. They were set aside to go back with

[0:09:05] the bones to the same spot they were taken out of when months reburial finally took place. As the work progressed the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe members carried the remains of their ancestors from the site in handmade cedar boxes, to put them in storage on the reservation until they could be reburied. You'll notice there's a cross carved in the surface of that box. The reason for that is the Indian Shaker Church, which is an amalgam of Christian and Indian belief uses the cross, and so it was carved into the lid of every single one of the boxes. You'll also notice the candle that is being held by Mary Ann Thomas, there in the right at the front of the fort of the photograph. That was to carry blessings with the remains as they're taken from the site. Sometimes Johnson Charles, there with the red paint on his cheeks for spiritual protection, and the Indian flute would try to give comfort to the tribal workers as they worked at the site. He would play some of the songs that they knew from their own

[0:10:13] ceremonies, to try to calm the emotions which were of course, very intense as this work went on. The pile of bags at the back of the site, those are full of matrix, that is to say gravel, soil other material dug from the site to be taken to the lab where the archaeologist worked to be sorted for a tiny little bones of fish, and birds, and animals, and other pieces of material from the site, to try to learn as much as we could about the Klallam people. It's important to understand that, it really shouldn't be any surprise that the Klallam people lived here for more than 2700 years continuously at

the base of Ediz Hook. This is the Elwha River. It's the earliest known photograph of the Elwha taken in about 1880. What a lush beautiful abundant ecosystem. And of course, the fish in the Elwha River fed, not only the tribe, but the entire watershed. There was an abundant source of wildlife. There was fresh water. There was the saltwater sea life to take for sustenance. There was all of

[0:11:24] the shellfish additionally. This was an Eden. Probably one of the finest places to live in the Aboriginal world. Of course, the tribe continued to take fish from the Lower Elwha, from the Elwha River, even into I would say, the 1940s. The fish runs were still abundant. This is a photograph from an elder at the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe who allowed me to literally take it from a photo album her family keeps, scan it, and use it in the book. This is one of her elders when he was younger fishing for salmon with a gaff hook in the Elwha River. Look how big those fish were. The Elwha Tsee salmon and Chinook salmon are among the earlier fish runs that we're still trying to rebuild. Chinook salmon are now threatened species in Puget Sound. We hope someday that we can bring back fish like this to the Elwha River when the dams, finally come down. This is an otter skeleton found at the site. I put this photo in the book because I think it shows the abundant ecosystem that fed the tribe. Look at that. That is a vertebra

[0:12:35] from the otter with a spear point right through it. What kind of skill would it take to spear a swimming otter from a canoe? This is a bone point used for catching fish. It has two parts. There is the stone shank and the bone point which would be bound to it with a little bit of Cedar. Look how intact and perfect that artifact is, the point is still sharp. Talk about points, this would have been used for taking deer or small game. It is a beautiful quartz point. It is also on display at the Burke Museum. You can see it's incredible color for yourself. It's chipped from stone. Imagine what it would take to make that, the edge is as sharp as a razor. I've felt it. This is a harpoon point, notice the hand. It was interesting to me to look at the photographs that came from different sources. As this work was photographed by archaeologists, by the Department of Transportation, by tribal members themselves. This photograph comes from the tribe. Invariably their photographs reflected their unique world

[0:13:42] view, which is intensely personal. Every artifact that was photographed by them as always being held, or it's being shown as how it would be used. You never see it displayed abstractly, for instance against a ruler or just with a number, it is always like this, held in hand - a beloved object. This harpoon point is carved from bone. They found many many styles and sizes of harpoon points of the site. That is an adze. It's carved from nephrite rock, which is very dense very heavy. It would be hafted to handle and used to perhaps split planks for a longhouse, perhaps to chip out a large feast bowl. I felt that object. It's very heavy, very smooth, and the edges still absolutely razor sharp. This photograph is the father of the man you saw playing the flute. Notice his black face paint. He never showed this photograph until the discovery of the site at Port Angeles. There was a lot of debate even within the tribe about whether they practiced some of the traditional Coast Salish practices,

[0:14:55] religion in which black face paint is sometimes worn. And, as the ground spoke and revealed the traditions of the Klallam people, indisputably, finally not just a story, here it was, 10,000 artifacts. Johnson brought out this photograph. He hung it on his wall for the first time in the

apartment he kept at the reservation. To me this symbolizes the reconnection, restoration, reclaiming of culture that the site helped bring to the tribe.

[0:15:31] Let me take a step back. Now that you've heard a little overview of the story. The book places what happened in Port Angeles in 2004-2005 into its largest historical context which unfortunately begins not only an Aboriginal times, but with us, our arrival. The newcomers exploration came quite late to the straits of Juan de Fuca. It came first on the west coast during the fur trade. It's only later that to begin to venture into the straits of Juan de Fuca. About 1790 explorers came to the area of the Tse-whit-zen Village site. Ancestors can't speak to us directly but they do speak to us through their elders. This is the late B. Charles in the foreground. She would have turned 90 a week ago, I'm sorry to say we just lost her. Her aunt, Adeline Smith seated next to her, is 91 years old and she can tell sharp clear memories of the burials at the Tse-whit-zen Village site and she can also speak today of how she knows that many of those burials were because of the last time that we showed

[0:16:42] up in that area wanting something. Smallpox, devastated the coastal tribes of the Northwest. I don't know if any of you have been told that smallpox was deliberately brought with germ filled blankets. I have spoken to experts about it and that's not believed that is the case in the Northwest. This was a terrible accident. These were germs that the Native people had no resistance to, and through ordinary contact, that is to say trade and so forth, these germs were spread. You can see from this map that the relentless march of smallpox throughout the Northwest took a terrible toll on the Northwest tribes. You can tell the time of the epidemics, in part by some of what we find at the site. This is a trade bead, and it in part dates some of this site to the time of the epidemics. Additionally, stones like this one etched are a real mystery and one of the most interesting finds at the site - archaeologists uncovered more than 700 of these no two alike. This is believed to be a shaman stone and there is

[0:17:54] a real interest in whether the finding of so many of these stones in one place, dumped as if in a refuse pit, indicate a cultural response to the epidemics - a sense of alarm, perhaps even anger. As the traditional ways of curing and healing cannot deal with this terrible death force that no one understands. It is it is thought that perhaps these stones tell the story of a backlash against the traditional healers at the tribe as the relentless march of smallpox continues to kill people in the village. This is a Chinese coin and it is a good reminder that this was one of the first global trading economies. This coin dates to an early dynasty and again tells us something about how old this village is. This picture to me is a very moving one. It shows a woman on the Ediz Hook and it's important to remember that the tribe, despite all they went through, did not just disappear. They didn't just die off and they didn't go away. They continue to cling to the Ediz Hook in shacks, in shanties trying to

[0:19:08] find a way to remain in their homeland. The reservation that was initially established for them was in a place they had never lived they, they had no relations and they had no tradition of hunting or fishing. This was at Skokomish. When the reservation was created most of the Klallam people from the Lower Elwha refused to go, instead they remained in the area. And they found a new

way to survive. They adapted to the new money- economy. This is a relative of B. and Adeline whom you saw earlier in the elder's photograph you saw. What are they doing here? This is a ferry, believe it or not, drawn across the Elwha River with a rope and one of Adeline's relatives used to charge 25 cents a ride to take people across the river. They also farmed homesteads inland from the river since they had been displaced from the waterfront, and farming was done very cooperatively here. These are families who gather together for haying. But, nonetheless, a terrible demographic disaster had taken its toll on this tribe. These boxes, more than

[0:20:20] 300, at the bunker where they were stored during the time of construction. Tell some of the story of the human loss taken by the epidemics. The next chapter of the book takes yet another step forward in the history of this site. It's only 26 Acres, but you can tell the whole story of the Northwest in this one construction site. Not only do you see the Aboriginal village and evidence of the time of the coming of the explorers and the epidemics, but you see the industrialization of this area beginning, of course with the damming of the Elwha River. This is the project as it's underway. In this picture you can still see a little bit of the free-flowing Elwha River, but you can also see what is to come. We can't comfort ourselves by telling ourselves that oh, they didn't know that they were going to hurt the salmon. Sometimes history speaks more loudly in some places than in others. If you go to the state archives in Olympia and you search in the right place with the help, of course from

[0:21:26] a great librarian, you will find this document. Note the date - 1911. You can hold it in your hands. What does it say? It is the report of a game commissioner who has visited the tributaries above the dam, and found not a single salmon in it. The game warden says if we don't do something about this dam, provide some kind of fish passage, these fish will be lost again -the data is from 1911. Who paid the biggest price? We all did of course. For the tribe who depended on this river and its fish to sustain themselves, the loss was particularly large. This is Frances Charles's mother holding one of the fish she was just cleaning for dinner, taken from the Elwha River - look at the size of that salmon. There was also a whole way of life built around the river. Look closely at this picture. You'll see a little baby at the front wearing a cedar hat. Here, she is, this is Adeline Smith today 91. She's a toddler in this photograph. She's seated with her family by the banks of the Elwha River on a summer evening.

[0:22:33] She speaks in the book at length about gathering down there. The elders would read the newspaper translated for them from the Klallam by one of their elders who spoke both English and Klallam. The kids would play in the river. You couldn't keep us out of that river is how she describes it.

[0:22:53] What came next, well industrialization, of course powered by the electricity created from the damming of the Elwha River. That big mill that you see chuffing away down there at the base of the Ediz Hook was right next door to the one that was built over the Tse-whit-zen Village site. These are the gentlemen who built it. They're standing right on the side of the village. Note the piling, it's driven right through a burial, at the burial grounds at Tse-whit-zen Village. Those stones mark the site. Note the attitude. This is a company newsletter and its sites an earlier newspaper article from back during the time that that mill was built. Here's the headline, "Squatters and Bones of Indians Bother Builders" the important thing to take away from this is the attitude. At the time there weren't any of the kinds of

laws in place then, nor were there any of the sensibilities that have grown and are still growing in our region, that you don't just toss bones aside and keep building. Look how big it was in its

[0:24:04] day, this was the largest sawmill of its type. Note the masted schooner on the beach, would be loaded with lumber and taken all over the world, fed by the forests of the Olympic Peninsula. This mill was a cash cow for the city of Port Angeles, in the place that had always been a place of wealth first for the tribe, now for the newcomers who counted their wealth in different ways, not in abundant foods and songs, but in money.

[0:24:38] This is the Ediz Hook back when there were people still living on it. I think it's a fascinating picture because we just don't think about the Ediz Hook like this today, as you know, it's now completely industrialized, here you see this isn't. About the 1930s tribal members still clinging to little shacks out there on the Hook, note the canoes on the beach. This is the first Tribal Council of the Klallam people as they began to have to deal with us. They also adopted some of our ways of governance and this Tribal Council includes one of the first people who brought the news of the treaty to the Klallam people, literally running back to talk of the signing of the paper. Again, this is some documentary evidence of some of the money-economy ways that the tribe undertook to try to support themselves. These gentlemen are cutting firewood for sale in town. This is out at Pysht. Pysht is still there today, but it's now a company town just a tiny little place really where the timber company Merrill & Ring

[0:25:46] has its headquarters or some of their headquarters. And before the timber company came, the Indian people had a village at Pysht. And they continue to homestead there until they were pushed out. This is one of those homesteads. I love the grinding wheel in the front of this photograph. It was used to sharpen knives for butchering salmon. So we ask ourselves, how could anyone have gone there to build a dry dock, to dig a hole big enough to moor several battleships side-by-side? Well, let's be fair take a look at this picture. This is the site as it appeared when the Department of Transportation first showed up in 2003 to take a look at the invitation, by the way of the city of Port Angeles, and the port of Port Angeles certainly doesn't look like an Indian anything does it? Anything it looks like a third world airport. No one's thinking about this. They're not thinking about this site before it was developed. They're not thinking about this. This is an 1863 survey map that really rather

[0:26:56] clearly shows Indian villages on the shore. Do you see them there in the closely hand written script Indian village? Indian village, Indian village here and here, and here. This map is not a secret. They're replicas of it all over in Port Angeles. When you go into the McDonald's on the main road right into town it hangs on the wall. When you walk into the wall, into the office of one of the County Commissioners, it hangs behind his desk. So you ask yourself. What were they thinking? And, they say to us in some of the interviews in this book. Well, you've got Mount Rainier right there, don't you? And, you've got people living right below it don't you? It's not just an instant, hello. People sometimes have a hard time connecting the dots. No one is thinking about this. These are the Indian people and camped on the beach as the town begins to rise around them. These are very beautiful historic photographs in the archives at the Port Angeles Public Library. They're not a secret anyone doing research for

[0:28:04] this project could have seen them. This is Dennis Sullivan. Today, he's Vice chairman of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. He was chairman at the time that the decision was made to allow the state of Washington to proceed with this project. To be fair to Sully, he says, you know, there were a lot of projects going on. This is, at that time, land owned by the port of Port Angeles. The tribe hasn't had a presence there in generations. To them, this was just one more developer with a project that they were asking the tribe in very perfunctory way to review. And, furthermore, he today will say that he didn't go and talk to some of the elders like B. and Adeline who would have told him about the presence of the cemetery. And so the tribe wrote a letter to the state saying, okay, go ahead, but be careful. I think that Dennis Sullivan was very brave and telling that story publicly. He apologizes today for the fact that he didn't first talk to the elders, elders like Walt Bennett. I'm sorry to say

[0:29:13] Walt has also since passed on since I wrote this book. What he's doing in this picture is looking at a harpoon point with one of the other tribal members marveling at the beauty of it. Elders were brought to the site after it was initially discovered to enjoy seeing the belongings of their ancestors. This is a very important photograph. We've seen this image over and over, haven't we? This is of course the groundbreaking ceremony and everyone is looking very happy and thrilled at the jobs that are about to be created in Port Angeles. The thing that's really important to notice is there's not a single Indian person in this picture. The tribe was not invited to the ceremony. Not only that, notice the shovel with the foot on it. The site was discovered not 20 feet from that shovel. You want to talk about irony? It lives in this photograph. This is the initial discovery. Note the bands of shell experts in archaeology will tell you this is midden. It's usually the first thing found at any site indicating

[0:30:23] the presence of human habitation. You know, there's a lot of contention about this photograph because the archaeological firm that missed the site didn't recognize what they were seeing in this hole, which was recognized, they purport to recognize, a second archaeological firm that contends it was very obvious from the very beginning that what had been discovered. It was a very large important Indian village. I think the important thing to say about this photograph as well, is that as soon as the first sign of habitation was found, the job was stopped. It isn't like the photograph you saw earlier of the newspaper heading saying, you know, "Bones and Indian Remains Bother Builders" not anymore. More you don't run into bones at a construction site in the state of Washington in the year 2003 and just keep digging. So the job was stopped. Even at that early stage incredible artifacts were found. And of course these human remains. Just enough to fill a cigar box, fragments, but not enough nonetheless.

[0:31:38] They were deeply deeply hurtful to the Lower Elwha Klallam people who held this graveside service and many many many others in the months to come. What was most hurtful for the tribe was recognizing that these bones had just been reburied in the backfill of the construction trenches. This is Colleen Jollie, to the right in the photo. She was the tribal liaison at the department at the time. You note her Department of Transportation hat, and she's talking with tribal members about what in the world do we do now? They started out with a survey. Okay, let's take a look. We missed it the first time, let's take another look and see if we can figure out what's really here. By this time the tribe was fully engaged, having not given it a close enough look the first time around, they weren't messing

around at this point. They brought a full court, press not only themselves. That's Frances Charles the chairman of the tribe, but also their spiritual advisor Mary Ann Thomas from Vancouver Island. They

[0:32:38] were at the site every single day that work went on, This is the tribal council meeting with Congressman Norm Dicks and his staff, and they are talking about what in the world do we do. We have stopped this job. We really need to fix the Hood Canal Bridge. We've got nowhere else to go to build this dry dock. We have many many jobs in the region that depend on going forward, and the tribe in return has their concern about their culture and preservation of the site. However, they're also very concerned with the political fallout if they stop the job. They went through the bolt decision, they know what kind of backlash they could have faced more importantly, backlash their kids could have faced in schools, if they said no. Debate went on for about eight months. Eventually, they reached an agreement signed that allowed work to go forward and here's what it looked like. Construction workers in heavy equipment, all kinds of heavy equipment working at the site even as tribal members worked alongside

[0:33:42] archaeologists to try to clear the site section by section of human remains and artifacts before the equipment could proceed. You see the construction worker there waiting for the tribal construction monitors to finish their review, so he can start up and keep going. It's very important to tell you that during this construction job, friendships were formed between the construction workers and the tribal members. This wasn't just rednecks versus Indians. It was a much more complex, rich human story than that. This is Mary Ann Thomas addressing the DOT workers and managers before work gets underway for the day. I love the body language in this photograph. You see Mary Ann with her hand to her heart, saying this isn't just any construction job, this is a sacred place. This is the homeland of our ancestors and you see some of the construction managers in their hard hats in their orange vests. Some of them are listening intently, some of them are standing there with their aw come on, look on their

[0:34:51] face. I think this photograph speaks the proverbial thousand words. As they work they uncover some 10,000 artifacts. They work in a, in a house, believe it or not. They were in such a hurry because of the progress of this job. They didn't get some kind of formal lab facility to work in, they just took over a house rented it in Port Angeles and turned it into a field laboratory. Where the bags, and bags, and bags of material and artifacts were brought. As you can see from this photograph each and everyone was carefully logged and catalogued for later analysis. Here's what that home looked like. I love the people just seated at these folding chairs. And what would have been a living room. What they're doing here is picking through trays of matrix, looking for a little tiny fish bones, fish ear bones, little pieces of bone fragment from animals, whatever they can find that might help tell the story of the early Klallam people. Look at that. This is a blanket pin hand carved from bone. For

[0:36:04] the tribe it was discovery too. Many of them had never had any contact with their culture and as they worked at the site each day, it was a rediscovery of who they were, and where they came from. Friendships as I mentioned formed at the site because in part of the excitement of what was being discovered there. This is Mary Ann Thomas, the spiritual leader from across the way at

Vancouver Island, talking to the Secretary of Transportation's mother as she explains an artifact to her. This is a hammer stone. Look how beautifully made it is, for the work of pounding that particular wedge into a plank to split it. I love this photograph here. You see one of the Lower Elwha Klallam tribal members, very young. He's probably 18 or 19 years old. What he's holding in his hand are replicas of artifacts that he's taught himself to make. This is how deeply he took the experience of finding his ancestors' belongings into himself. He found he had to try to make these artifacts, the same things himself, and he quickly

[0:37:15] found out how difficult it is. This is a spindle whorl dug from the site. It's evidence of course, of the weaving that was done, by the very skilled workers at the site using the wool of mountain goats given to them in trade. And, also of dogs- specially bred and raised hair dogs. They also would mix in a little cattail fluff, and feathers of birds to spin and to weave beautiful blankets. This spindle whorl is carved from a whale vertebra. It's at the Burke too by the way, you can see it here. You see the tribal members working, sifting through these very very very abundant abundant supplies of matrix that's being rattled across this conveyor belt and they're going through it with trowels to search for human remains, especially or artifacts before it's disposed of on the site. Look how many tribal workers - more than a hundred in all, and for many it was the best paying work. They had fifteen dollars an hour or ten dollars an hour. A lot of them had never had any job at all or they were look working

[0:38:28] at the convenience store. And here they were suddenly in their homeland looking through their ancestors; bones and belongings. It was a very emotional job for many of them. Certainly not just any construction job. Look at that. I love this. This is a stone mallet used to pound other implements to split planks or do other heavy work. Remember what I said about the point of view? Notice how every one of these artifacts is held in hand, when it's held by a tribal member, and held in the position in which it would have been held for use. That's Michael Q. Langland and he's showing his fingers 10 inches apart and he's displaying to you the size of the harpoon point that he had just found at the site. Look at the expression of joy on his face. Joy quickly gives way to a sense of despair as more and more burials are found. These are the burial tents. I told you about how they dotted the site. Look at the size of the heavy equipment in the background, imagine the difficulty of trying to work with

[0:39:40] equipment like that, in a place as delicate as what turned out to be a cemetery. Carrying the bones and belongings of their ancestors from the site was very emotional, difficult work for the tribal members. They would wash their faces with a tincture of salmonberry each day to try to wash off any bad spirits, any bad feelings from the site so that they would not take it home to their families. I want to correct myself, it's not tincture of salmonberry, they're washing with but, snowberry.

[0:40:19] Word got out. What you see in this photograph are canoes coming from all over all of the Coast Salish Nations. During the canoe journey came to the Tse-whit-zen Village site to offer song, prayer and blessing. Here, you see the construction workers stopping their workday for the tribe, the tribal construction workers to hear the blessings and prayers of other tribal members brought for their ancestors. As the word spreads, so does anger. These are members from the Skokomish Nation who came to visit this site and see for themselves what was going on. As you can see by their jackets, winter has now changed, summer has now changed to winter. Work is still going on. By now they've

found not 50, not 100, not 200, but 300 burials. And, they've come to visit because some of their own people are buried here. This was such a large regional cemetery, and as you as you can see from the expression on their faces, they're very angry. The department, by now, is desperate to try to save the job. They try everything.

[0:41:30] This is a ground-penetrating radar which they dragged across the site to try to locate the burials. That doesn't work. Ultimately, at the centennial accord meeting of tribes from across the state, with cabinet secretaries from the entire Washington state government. Tribal members, tribal leaders instead of talking about health care or emergency management or police services, they stand one at a time and in the style of the Longhouse tell the gathered governor and cabinet secretaries - this job has to stop. They came from Colville. They came from Spokane. They came from Quileute. They came from Hoh. They came from Squaxin Island. They came from across Washington with the same message. This is a very important picture. In it, the Secretary of Transportation is being given a message by Frances Charles, her back to the camera. We're shooting this picture, as it's happening at the casino where the centennial accord meeting is still underway. In this picture, Frances is telling the secretary - ee're sending

[0:42:43] you a letter, you're going to get it in two days. In it, we're going to ask you to shut the job down. This is terrible news. The work has gone on for 18 months. There are a lot of people whose livelihood depends on it. It goes down very badly in Port Angeles, where despite the large number of burials discovered, workers and the political system, that is to say the City Council, Chamber of Commerce and others, they still want this job to continue. This is a meeting at the union hall where the Secretary of Transportation tries to explain why this job has to stop. It doesn't go over real well. Look at the expressions. Nothing before had ever been stopped in this town because of anything Indian. This is the sentiment in town - support the graving yard. Note the marquee - this was a very unpopular decision locally. This marquee is outside the union hall and usually it says things like, you know, spaghetti feed tonight, bring your family. Well after they shut down the job, here is what it said: Hey Doug! (That was the name of the secretary at the time.) Screw it all up, then walk away. Thanks for the memories.

[0:43:59] Here's the one they put up for Frances Charles, the chairman of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. Hey Frances. Your way or no way. No project shut down. Work with others. What a bad joke. That was the clean version. A lot of what the tribe heard was much more harsh. But here again is the reason why the job was stopped. Take a look at this map. What you see here is the ancient Beech line buried under the substrate. On it, you see many many many many pink triangles. Each one is a burial. Many many burials. This box, this photograph shows the cedar boxes filled with the bones of the ancestors before they were reburied.

[0:44:49] So what came of it all we have to ask ourselves? What was learned from this? This is a healing ceremony held in Port Angeles on a cold wet bitter day in January, and an icy sleet was raining down on all of us. People came from all over for this ceremony from Indian Country construction workers who worked at the site, townspeople. And, before it was all over, before the last prayer was said, the last song, they decided to circle the site, one more time. Take a look at this

picture. I think it's very rich and full. It looks apocalyptic. It shows the sheet piles still in the ground rising in the air. It shows the dug up and disturbed construction site, and it shows little pits where the archaeological remains were found. It's a jumble. It's history. It's the past, and it's also the future, and more than anything, it's uncertain. Where is this ground headed? Who's going to own it? What's going to happen to the burials? What will happen to the archeology? Frances Charles addressed the crowd and asked for healing. She asked

[0:46:07] not for forgiveness, but mutuality. A sense that we're all here together, and that if anyone had understood that, that indeed this never would have happened. That it's not just about one community, it's about all communities. And, that if we're going to avoid having more discoveries like this, we're going to have to understand that we all live here together now. This of course, is the cover of the book. I chose it for the cover because of this picture, and what you see in it is not only the tribal members - group gathered in prayer, but townspeople. Behind them, construction workers. This was a day where everyone realized what was going to be needed to heal this wound, was a sense of reconciliation. Ultimately, at root, what this story is based on is this unreconciled history that still plays out.

[0:47:03] It takes more than a press conference to fix things. This picture is a poignant one. It was, this is a press conference that was held when in a settlement of the lawsuit by the tribe, against the state was announced. What was so sad to me, I was there for this press conference, was the Indian people sat on one side of the room, and the white guys sat on the other. The governor came with her proclamation. That's her, in the yellow suit. By this time the controversy had been going on so long we changed governors. The mayor of Port Angeles was there in her purple jacket. Frances was there, but it wasn't enough. It takes time to build reconciliation and the room actually felt quite divided that day. But, there was something very special that happened, and I think it's a direct result of the discovery of this village. Take a look at the flags. You see the usuals, but for the first time what you also saw was the flag of the Lower Elwha Klallam people. It was the first time it was ever displayed at a public event in Port Angeles.

[0:48:08] In this picture B. Charles and Adeline Smith are meeting with Frances Charles in Adeline's trailer, not far from Tribal Center. If Frances or others had come to them, to this trailer earlier, perhaps they would have heard from the elders about the burial ground they knew it was there. And, this picture, the elders are lecturing Frances and saying why didn't anyone ask us? And, she is apologizing that no one did. And, in the end this conversation was a gracious one, even a loving one. What the elders said to Frances and what Frances would now tell the larger world is - you have to know your history in order to build your future. Thank you very much.

[0:49:02] I'm happy to read or happy to take questions. Do you want to hear some of the book? Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

[0:49:15] It's impossible to capture the whole book in a quick reading. So I thought what I might do instead is just share some of the hearts that were shared with me, as I worked on this book. I often ask myself. What am I doing writing this thing? I'm not a historian. I'm not an archaeologist. I'm not an

expert. But, what I am by trade, is a listener. And, what was shared with me during the course of the reporting on this story, first for the paper, then for the book were very very personal stories. And, some of it's really hard to hear because it's painful. But, from all sides of the circle of this story, whether you're working at the DOT, or you were one of the city councilman, or you were one of the tribal members - you had a very strong feeling in your heart as this project was going on. And so the interviews that are in this book are I think uniquely powerful. So to share some of that.

[0:50:15] For some tribal members working at the site was their first encounter with their own culture. "When I first started I was really excited. I didn't know anything about it," said Teresa Sanders. "I didn't know anything about my culture at all. My mom was white and my dad's Indian. So when we were kids, my mom wouldn't let us live on the reservation. She kept us more or less separated from anything tribal." Sanders, with bright blond hair and blue eyes, took a lot of guff. "I looked like a little white baby. People would say I was the milk man's baby. I hated it," Sanders said. "And, when I'd go to the tribal functions, I wouldn't expect people to accept me.

[0:51:06] When I started working at the graving yard, I was so honored they would trust me with that." She found herself getting angry as she began to learn about her tribe and the history of her homeland. "I learned more and more about my people, what they did to them. They took their land, their language, and all the things that were not given to me and a lot of children because their parents didn't talk about their culture either because it was painful. It changed who I am. My whole life is in a different direction. Now it started out as a job. But all these artifacts, that's all I think about anymore. We're looking back on the past to find out the answers they already had. From that first week, I was down there. I knew my whole life was going to change. This is our link. This is how we found out who we were before. I want it to keep going, we can take back what was taken for us?" Sanders worked over on the western end of the site, where archaeologists encountered the grave with more than 100 burials in an

[0:52:22] area the size of a single-car garage. It was the way people were buried, in sand, on top of, and right next to one another, that made tribal members think it was a smallpox grave. That the living had to work quickly to burry so many dead to protect themselves and their families. "So many of those burials, you looked at them and saw so much sorrow. It came off of them. That was what affected me the most, all the sadness," Sanders said. "It takes so long, you're on your side brushing on the bones, and you're thinking about that person. When I saw all those people, especially the infant, you're taking in so much hurt. It was so sad because the cedar boxes, for them, were so small." The growing number of burials unearthed at the construction job continued shocked everyone. First 10, then 20, then 100, then 200, 300 more. Tribal members felt their feelings shift. "At first, we were saving them from being disturbed, getting them out the path of that bulldozer," said Wendy Sampson, a language instructor for the tribe,

[0:53:50] who dug burials at the site. "I was really excited to work down there. It was a brand new experience. It was a big wave and I wanted to get into it. It was proof. There it is. Look at this. It's not just a story anymore. There are 10,000 artifacts and more than 300 burials that show we were there. We've been talking about this, and telling people for a long time, and no one listened. There has not

been a lot of recognition. We were overlooked. Now the entire world has proof. Listen next time." But, as she kept digging graves, she grew uneasy. "It wasn't until I was talking with my elders, and I realized how they felt about it. How disgusted they were. And there I am. I'm digging graves too" Samson said. "We're down there, voluntarily, getting paid. I'm sitting there, picking the flesh off somebody's bones, and with the elders being so mad about it. Then it was - that's what we're doing, one more disturbance. It makes me cry to think I'm the one down there. They're picking the flesh off these bones, breaking bones

[0:55:17] one at a time, putting them in a box. Why do we have to be doing that? And there I am, with my little wooden pick. I'm down there getting paid digging graves. I don't know who said it, but it was really true - it was a funeral every day. I cried digging up people. And, our elders would say we would rather you be down there doing it, because you're going to do it with care and tenderness, better than with the machine going 15 feet before it stops. A lot of tribal members felt that way. A lot of people felt they needed to be there. A lot of it was the ancestors helping us along so that we were the ones there to do it." Wendy Sampson kept a journal of her work at the site, writing the Klallam words for what she was finding. Rock, shell, hearth, wedge, bone, skull, rib, ancestor. "But they didn't have a word for digging up people," Samson said, "That just didn't happen." Thank you. [Applause.]

[0:56:51] I'm happy to take questions. Yes, right. The question was what's happened to the site, and what happened to the remains? Since the book was finished, two things have happened. Number one, if you were to drive out to that site today, there would be absolutely no identification of it, because there is still archaeology there, and a lot of it only a portion of the site was dug - about three percent. The rest of it is still there. It's very important to know that the archaeology dug from the site has yet to be analyzed for what it can tell us. Federal funding is needed for that. The funding to do the analysis of the site, stopped along with the job. That's the way the law works. And, there are those who believe that the federal government has an obligation to continue with the work of analyzing those artifacts, so that the rest of us, the public, has the benefit of understanding what those artifacts can teach us. That's the intended trade-off if you destroy an archaeological site, you get at least knowledge of a portion

[0:57:55] of the site in return. That's uncompleted work. It's not yet been funded. It would take somebody like Norm Dicks or another advocate in Congress to fund the analysis of the archaeology. The artifacts today are in the basement, pardon me, not the basement, they are in cabinets at the Burke Museum. They're being lovingly and carefully cared for, they are safe, they're protected. They're being kept for the tribe until they can have a museum of their own. They're raising money now to try to build that museum. Ultimately they'd like to have a museum and a curation facility to tell their story themselves with those objects. As for the remains, they were reburied at the site in a very solemn ceremony at daybreak last fall. I was there. It was a very simple ceremony. Spirit workers came from Canada to do the work, so that the Lower Elwha Klallam people would not take the sadness into their own homes, and they were reburied at the site in those same cedar boxes, as close as possible to the place they initially

[0:59:05] came from. The tribe, as part of the legal settlement, was, I can't really say given, I would say returned 10 acres of their original land there on the waterfront, to keep in perpetuity. And that's where they like to build the curation facility. It's also where the remains were reburied. Yes. How old they are. The question was, has anyone dated the remains to determine how old they are? The tribe was adamant that the remains themselves, the bones not be dated, or any of the material touching them. However material in the same strata, the same layer as the bones has been dated and from it. There are, I'm sorry, I don't quite recall. I think seven different radiocarbon dates in from the site, and from them, we know that portions of the site were in continuous use going back as far as 2700 years. That's before the creation of English. That's before the time of Jesus. It's a very, very old site and what is so interesting about it, is you have not only time depth, you have a continuity across time. Unlike

[1:00:12] some other sites in the Northwest where you see only a picture, here, you have a panoramic window to the past. Yes, the question was couldn't people have seen, when the job stopped, a glass half full rather than half empty? That after all, work had gone on there for 18 months, and it was work they wouldn't have otherwise had, and the work was going to travel somewhere else? Isn't it funny how people are? They have a way of sometimes looking at what they lost, or don't have, as opposed to what they do. And, you make a very good point that money wasn't, you know gambled away. It was invested in payroll in the Port Angeles community. And so it's not like the money was quote-unquote "wasted." Indeed the job did continue. They ultimately built that dry dock right here in the state of Washington in Tacoma. As a matter of fact, they didn't build the dry dock there,, let me correct myself - they built the components at an existing dry dock. And, that job is being completed today as we speak. So I think it's important

[1:01:11] to think about money, and the role that it played in this story. I mean one of the reasons that there was such a push to keep the job going was because of the jobs. And then, one of the reasons that there was so much resistance to shutting the job down was well, we've already spent so much money. This is one of the first times in the country that so much money, 90 million dollars by then, had been spent, that there was a walk away. And, it was an important statement of values that there are things that are worth more than money, and when you find an archaeological site of this value, and mostly when you find this many human remains, it's the right thing to do. Yes. I think this is a very unsettled piece of policy right now. The question was what should you do when archaeologists want to study remains and tribe objects? As we all know from the story of Kennewick man, the discovery of the ancient remains in the central part of the state of Washington that went to court was a very very bitter battle

[1:02:13] over exactly your question. Where should science draw the line? Where should the gift to humanity of the knowledge from the place trump the interests of an individual people? You know, I don't myself personally have an answer to that question. And, I think we're going to have to keep answering it as a community, and I think it's going to be case by case. And I think, what I do know for sure, is that tribes have to be at the table when that's discussed and I'm heartened by the fact that these are no longer one-sided conversations. They are still too much after the fact conversations. What would have helped all of this not happen in the first place is if the tribe had been at the table, in


a very full rich, present way from the very beginning. And, that is starting to change. I mean the Department of Transportation when they undertook their next big construction project, it's the Columbia River Crossing a new bridge planned over the Columbia River. They did it very differently after this experience.

[1:03:15] They engaged for a whole day in a history symposium, to which they invited tribes from around the region, historians, all kinds of experts to talk about this place, so that there would be a rich full understanding before any work at all took place. So it's been a big learning, and a painful one, but nonetheless, it's been a learning. Yes. The question was, how big is the tribe and where are they, and how big is their reservation, and what might this do - how might it affect them in the future? It's a small tribe. And until about let's see, last month they had no casino. So this was not one of the large I-5 casino tribes with a big cultural resource department, a cultural facility repatriation department. That was not the Lower Elwha Klallam. It's about 760 people. They've always had a very high unemployment rate, never had a lot of money. They're hoping that with the casino they'll start to have some money. Their land based is small, they didn't get a reservation of their own until quite

[1:04:20] late. I do believe it was the 1970s. Remember Indian people incredibly did not even have citizenship in this country until 1920. They didn't have electricity at the reservation, and they didn't have the basics, until quite recently within our lifetimes here in this room. I think the site discovery has been a kind of rebirth for the tribe in terms of finding their own culture, and kind of boosting their own sense of who they are, and it's brought tremendous pride to the community. The doing of the work side-by-side down there at the site help bring to a halt the kind of temporary silly feuds that we all get involved in, the inter-family rivalries and so forth. For a time, they really came together as a people and having had that experience and having drawn on the strength that they took from their ancestors as they met them, so to speak, face-to-face. They've gone forward as a stronger people, a more unified people, a very very proud people and their intention is to keep building on the experience.

[1:05:30] They want to have a museum and Cultural Center and I think they'll do it. Yes, the question was do they still practice their traditional language? I love that question. They've worked incredibly hard at that. They've been working with a linguist from a Texas University for years now to build and write the first Klallam dictionary. Remember these were not written languages. They were oral languages. And so, how do you write a dictionary when it was never written? Not so easy. How you do it is you have elders like B. Charles and Adeline Smith sit and listen by the hour to tapes of oral history and stories told by their ancestors, their elders, and transcribe them. Painstakingly, hour by hour, into an universal alphabet. So that those words can be passed onto the next generation in languages kept alive. Incredibly the Lower Elwha Klallam, small as they are, were among the first tribe to bring their Native language. And to the public schools, Jaime Valdez is their language instructor and she teaches Klallam

[1:06:41] at the Port Angeles High School, just as they teach Spanish or French. It is an elective for the kids to get their language requirement and you go to that classroom and it's got Indian kids in it, but it's also got a lot of non-Indian kids just curious to learn more about their neighbors. And, they think it's cool to learn Klallam and I think for the tribe, there's an enormous sense of pride in keeping



their language. They, of course, went to see it be brought back in much more common usage on the reservation. There are only a few fluent speakers today of Klallam and that's true not only of the world but an Indian country across America. Yes. The question is whether there will be readings elsewhere. Absolutely. I intend to go to Port Angeles. That's an important place to take this story and who knows where else. It's a story I love to tell, so if there's interest I'll show up. Thank you very much.

[1:07:43] **Podcast Announcner:** Thank you for listening to this Seattle Public Library podcast.

