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and MRS. ANNIE HAYES
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Discusses at length his role in the cultural reawakening of his people, particularly the dance group he organized.
- Discusses preparation of bark clothing.

Imbert: ...about the mission school as other means of suppression of culture.

George: I think one of the big suppressions that came in regarding the potlatches came from the church. And I understand that they meant well but I think they would have done better, Bob, if they had asked the Indian, "What does it all mean?" He might have asked, for instance, "Do you believe in a god?" He might have asked, "Do you, how do you arrive at this philosophy of giving and sharing?" He would have learned that we did pray to a specific God and I'm absolutely certain, Bob, that it's the same God that we were taught later on. Had the church asked us this, Bob, I think we would not have gone down so low as we've done prior to the coming up again. I think the church done a great deal of harm in a lot of ways, although they... I can see that they may have plucked us from the brink of extinction, had the church not stepped in and

wrapped their guardian arms over us to save us from the exploiting forces that came over from Europe. It is not altogether... I think we may have died out. And I think that the church in that respect saved us but in the process of that, they also had a great deal to do with the killing of our very spirit, with wrenching from our very lives the incentive to be our own selves.

We found in a very short while that we depended entirely on the church. We sent our school children to the school and they looked after the children from beginning to end. They clothed them and they fed them, and in the meantime we were more or less cut off entirely from our children. And the result was that when they did grow up and we got to see them again, we had absolutely no control over our children and they had absolutely no -- or very little -- respect for his parent. I say that because that was, that's how I felt in my period in school. I

was more or less, and I'm pretty sure that most people would have the same feeling, that I was somehow made to be ashamed of my own father, my own parent and I should forget everything that concerns my past or the teachings of my own people. Whereas, as I grew older and began to reason things out myself, Bob, I think my father was nearer to God than most people are today. And I think that had the church permitted us to pray in our own fashion, I think we wouldn't have gone down to the depths that we reached before we were able to come up for air again.

Imbert: Would you say then the mission schools forbade the songs, the dances, the drawings, anything?

George: I will not go out on the limb to that extent, Bob, but I would say that the mission schools had a great influence on the government in suppressing this.

Imbert: But at the school, you could not sing and dance...

George: Of course not. In fact, we were not permitted to speak in our own language at all during any time during our stay in that school. I know for a fact there are some of my own age group still living today who paid what we thought in them days as extreme penalty. We were forbidden to speak our own language, and if we were caught the first time, we were reprimanded severely. If we were caught speaking in our own language the second time, we were what they called, in them days, strapped. We were whipped. And if we were caught the third time, Bob, they took our only holidays away from us. And we were forced to stay in the school during the entire summer holidays and work on the farm because we dared to speak in our own language. And I think that done a great deal of harm.

Imbert: Is there anything you'd like to add to that, Annie?

Annie: I think it's quite true what George says, that of course the churches have done wonderful things for us. It has given us help to give us education. And the schools really did

suppress these feelings till the children are made to be ashamed of their heritage. What they had, well, they're ashamed of it. They can't talk their own language today and today when you talk to a youngster -- I have a boy of nineteen and he looks at me in such a funny way when I start talking about the gods of my fathers. Because I've prayed in this, well, in the Indian way. I've seen it prayed in such a way that it brought tears to your eyes. It made you cry because you could feel it in your very heart the way the Indian did it. And this is what we have lost. We're still lost to this religion that we had, the faith we had, because the mission schools have hammered the beliefs into a child from when he is six. And when they release him from a school, you can't reach your own child. No, not today. They don't know how to respect you. They respect where they were brought up, more or less. You are nothing to them then, today. It is done, because in my case it's this way. I can't reach my boy now because he was brought up in a boarding school.

Imbert: So the older people were not able to pass on -- quite apart from the deeper parts of the country -- they were not able to pass on songs and the dances, which is what we're talking about today. Now, would you like to go on from there and say how any efforts with regards to your father's influence, and so on, now in coming back, bringing the culture back.

Annie: Well, yes. I think George has done a wonderful job of it, here now, because after the children come home from these boarding schools, they have nothing to do with our race. They aren't proud of it anymore. What they have learned in school, it's something they have achieved. And what our father or grandfathers told us, well, it's something different. As you grow older, you want it back because you want your heritage and your pride back. This is what George is trying to do today. And I think he has done a wonderful job. These children up here are responding to his calling so he could... Well, let's say the call of the blood, see, we have that now today. These youngsters have the call of the blood. They want their own customs, their own way of living back, and keeping what they have learned. I think that's something. We want to bring our culture back to life now. And so George has achieved so far what you saw yesterday in the hall. I think that's wonderful.

Imbert: This is unique too. This is something very special, I feel this too. Would you like to go back to your father's influence in this respect, George?

George: My father tried very hard to teach me his own cultures right from as early as I can remember. We had a period, Bob, when we used to go home Friday night, stay overnight. And he'd always start what I was, felt to take in them days, as preaching into me the wrong teachings. That is the feeling that I got in them earlier days and I know distinctly, Bob, I will never forget this till my dying day.

That time and time again I told my old father to shut up, that he didn't know anything, that I knew all the answers, that I was a Christian, that I had been saved. Whereas I was a lost soul, Bob. I had drowned myself away from the intimacy of this

God that my own people taught. And it was many, many years before I got that feeling. In fact, it was many years, Bob, before I was able to address my own father as my father, as my dad. I used to look down on him as something heathenish, something that was savage.

It was the aftereffects of the teaching that I got in the boarding school and it took me years and years and years to realize that our teaching had a lot of merit. That we should cling to the best of our teachings. That we should continue to approach our God in the manner we were taught. That we should continue to make these pilgrimages to the mountain tops or to the bathing pools. I used to do it, Bob. I done it for years and years. And this -- I'm sorry if it will make my own church ashamed of me -- but I went to these sacred bathing pools and when I say "I", I mean the rest of us. A great many of us clung to this belief and we went to these mountain top pools and we bathed. We took everything off and we started scouring our body and then we'd talk to our God up there, where there is no man to distract you or to...

We did not believe in standing up before a crowd and saying a long prayer. That is contrary to our teaching. Our teaching was to God, to seek him in our own private bathing places, and there lift up our face to Him because we were made to be proud that we belonged to Him. And that we did not, or we were taught not to prostrate ourselves before our God because we felt that we were a part of Him. We were taught that when, as a small boy, do you come to me as your father, begging me or do you come to me because you love me. That is a teaching, Bob, that we lost. And it will be hard to get it back. I want to approach my God with my face uplifted because I believe I belong to Him. Not because I am his slave, no.

Imbert: Have you anything you'd like to add on your father's influence in this respect...?

Annie: Yes. My father... I'm considerably older than George here so I knew my father better than he did. But what George says about my father's beliefs, I guess it was something that should be a part of every human being in our race. Because what we had long ago before, well, let's say what they had -- I'm referring to my father now -- I think there's something cleaner, something bigger, what we call religion today or what we call the nearness of God. Well, I guess we had it. We had it better than what we have in religions today. And the influence that my father had on my life, well, it's here now. I have captured it back because I belonged to a church for thirty years and I lost all this. Well, I didn't lose it, I just let it go because I was ashamed of it. I called my father

a pagan, a savage, until I, well, until I grew old. I started thinking about the thing, you know, that what we believe today now, the faith we believe in today. What these people come around telling you about, well, it just clicks with the teachings of the Bible itself. Excuse me for putting religion into this but it's a part of our life, see, uh-huh. It's a part of it. Well, what the Bible teaches us today, it just clicks with the teaching of the Indian without an education.

My father, for instance, and my grandfather that died -- he was 104 when he died -- and this he pumped into us, see. And we listened and the influence these people had on the young generation, people younger than themselves, was something very great. Because my husband in there, he says that when you talk to a youth today or to the younger teenagers, they won't listen because nobody has spoken to them the way our fathers did to us. We had respect for all elders in our time because that was

pumped into us. And the faith of the, well, let's call it religion, they had deeper feelings for that and they had awe, and they revered their God, what we call God today now. I think it went deeper than what our religion gives us today. It was something, it gave you cleaner living, it gave you cleaner thoughts and you had more respect for one another, keeping of that faith we had, our forefathers had.

Imbert: And what you realize today is that this religion is part of the... is one aspect of the world. Not just of the sects of religious, a Christian sect coming and telling you, "Oh, this is wrong and I'm the only person that's right." That they're all right in their own way and this is as right for you as the other thing is right for them. It's all basically the same principle.

Annie: Our beliefs are deeper than that, Bob. It was lots deeper because you had understanding for one another. Whether they weren't told, "Your religion says this or your religion says that or we're bigger, better than you are." No, it wasn't. You were made to believe that the next man was equal to you, that you had to have respect. It didn't matter who he was or where he come from, that was where our teaching was superior to the teaching of the churches. I say it because I believe it, see. I believe we have lost something that we used to have long ago.

Imbert: Now I'd like to go on from there. I'm glad we made this point because it has pointed to the secret potlatch. This was one of the stages in bringing things back to...(inaudible).

Inter: Excuse me. George, I wonder if you'd mind not addressing Bob when you're talking because we're doing this, we're going to cut Bob out completely. You are just going to be talking.

Imbert: You see, if you say Bob to me, then we have to cut

that little word out. Sometimes it can be a little difficult so if you just talk to him... That's fine, though. It's just the, now, if we could talk about... I think the next stage is the secret potlatch and its influence on you at that moment, possibly.

George: The last real potlatch that I remember was given in 1925, or around that period. And this potlatch had to be given in the most outermost island on the... in the Barkley Sound area. This potlatch was given by the name of Douglas, we'll call him by his Christian name. And it lasted for two weeks or more, I forget just how long it lasted. And Douglas invited the neighboring tribes and it was a very big affair. I know that the Clayoquot tribes were invited, the Ohiet tribes and the Ucluelet tribes and the Toquaht and the surrounding tribes in that area. The Uchucklesaht and the, of course the Opetchesaht tribe was represented. And this, Bob, was a secret potlatch. It had to be given in secrecy because of the laws that had been passed to suppress this same law, this same practice. And in that potlatch, all the dances and all the procedures were formulated as according to their laws. Me, myself and my own age group participated in these dances, in very many of the dances and the plays and we were, in a word, part of the potlatch. We were schooled to perform certain ceremonial plays and we were made to observe laws and we were coached very, very minutely and very especially for this occasion. And from this potlatch, this feeling of being part

of an ethnic group began to grow inside of me, although I still rejected it as heathenish. Yet I think that spark started at that period when Douglas gave this potlatch at Village Island. And from those dances and plays, I have remembered so well that I have recreated on canvas, I have lived that very life.

Imbert: What was the potlatch given for in that period?

Annie: It was given for one of his nieces reaching womanhood age, the puberty age. They used to do this, they used to give a dance for their daughters or for their nieces. Well, in this case it was for his niece because his brother was dead so he had to give it. And he invited the neighboring tribes so the neighboring tribes would know that they had a girl of marriageable age. That's the way they used to put it.

Man: Now this grows in you. Would you tell the story leading up to the Massey Commission, and I think it must...?

George: In the meantime, my father had been persistently teaching me the better points of his own culture. Of the culture of our own people, I mean -- I don't mean him personally. And he had been hammering it in every occasion and after a while I began to listen and it dawned on me slowly that we had something that was worthwhile keeping and perhaps some later date, bringing back if at all possible. Now around 1949... Now in the meantime this was absolutely taboo for any of the Indians to give the potlatch -- that's why this potlatch in 1925 was given in secrecy. In the meantime there was a

special Royal Commission that came to West here, I forget just when, 1949, around that period. 1947 or 1949, I just forget when it was. And I was called to Victoria to give my own views

on our cultural feelings, aspects of our cultural life. This was merely for an Indian to give his own personal idea. I did not represent any group.

Imbert: Why were you called?

George: Perhaps it was because that I had begun to express my own self. That I had the -- I always want to say courage -- to stand up and tell the better points of my own people. I will not say it was because of that but perhaps it was. I was called over there by the Society for the Furtherance of the B.C. Indians, Welfare Society. And at that time I was working in a mill and I got the call as I came home late that evening. And there was no bus in the morning so I was determined to go because I had a feeling that I could be of some service to my people as a whole. I had a feeling that we should be permitted to sing our own songs again even if it were controlled by the powers that be. So I started out six o'clock in the morning -- this was in the winter months. I started from home six o'clock in the morning... (phone rings) (break in tape)

I started from my home six o'clock in the morning. It was still dark, it was still very dark and there was a little drizzle, I remember definitely. I got my first ride immediately and it took me all the way to Nanaimo. It was eight o'clock when we got to Nanaimo and we had a little bit of breakfast there and the man left me there because that's as far as he was going. I hiked out of Nanaimo and it wasn't very far before I got another ride. And he took me quite a little ways up the road and dropped me off where his home was and I started walking down the road again. It took me six rides to reach Victoria and I was late for my appointment then. I was scheduled to speak at eleven o'clock in the morning and I got there approximately one thirty or two o'clock.

I sat down at the very back end of the hall and the Massey Commission was in session then. And I imagine Mr. Massey noticed an Indian come in because very shortly afterwards, after I sat down, he stopped the procedure there and asked very tactfully if those who were in this particular investigation would mind recessing for a little while. And they were quite happy to recess and he, Mr. Massey, stood up and asked if I were the person who was scheduled to speak that morning. And some of the, some member of society was present and she got up and said that I was the person who was going to speak. So he called me up and I had the floor.

I did not know exactly what I should speak about. Our group had finished its time in the morning and I was more or less finished. I did not come on so I did not know what I should pick on. But I've always had this feeling of the utter, the absolute unfairness of this restriction and this oppression of

even singing our own songs. So right there and then, I decided that I would speak on that. I told the commission as best I could that we were a happy singing people and that we lived a great deal on the immediate circle of our social culture, our social life. We, the Indians, worked all through the summer gathering their food and drying their meats and fish. And in the winter -- they played all winter long, during the wet periods. And it was a practice that suited their environment very well. And it kept them doing something continually. So I spoke on that subject and I tried as best I could to make the Commission realize that it must come back to us in order to survive as an ethnic group, as a nation, if you will. When I got through speaking Mr. Massey stood up and he came over to me and he told me to go back to my people and tell them to sing all they want. And that no harm would be given to us.

I came back home and I told the chief and the proper officials the glad tidings. Nothing was done because we had practically forgotten everything. But the very news reached us that perhaps someday we will be able to sing again. That perhaps someday we will be able to dance again without hiding. Approximately the same time, I got closely in contact with a merchant in town and we, at one time we were discussing the past life of our own people, how great they were and how enormously interesting their dances and their winter festivals must have been.

The result of these discussions -- we'd discuss this perhaps several times -- was that he got his lodge interested in our past life and he... One day he proposed to me that if we could get together, invite our neighboring tribes up here to Alberni and give a big feast, that they would sponsor it. I called the two chiefs together here and their councillors and we met at this man's store, this merchant's store, and we gave the idea. We explained the idea to them as best we could because we thought it was a good idea and we wanted to put it over. Immediately one chief stood up and he thought it was a great big joke. He said, "It can't be done, it's forgotten. No one can sing today." So this merchant was very, very, very disappointed. And after the chiefs had left, I remained in the store and he asked me what I thought. And I said, "Well, we can go down fighting. I'll approach the chief again, the other that remained silent." And as time progressed I kept trying to gain his confidence until the chief said that I could try if I wanted to. So I called a meeting...

Inter: Can we hold it right there? We're out of tape.

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

George: I called a meeting and we met in a little house, back of the chief's own dwelling. The kind lady's name was Nina, Nina Peters. She had the good heart to permit us to meet in

her house, just a small little house. We met there -- perhaps four of us, if I remember right. It was a dismal meeting, very sad in all respects. None of us could sing, none of us remembered what constituted a program, an Indian program. So we just sat there and became acquainted. I think we became acquainted because at that period we were drifting away from each other to the extent where we did not even... or perhaps it became, our visits became more distant until we lost each other's contact personally. So that night we just simply became acquainted. And I called for another meeting the following week at the same night.

The next meeting there was perhaps one or two in addition. Someone brought a drum. She was either too shy or she had forgotten her songs at the moment, which occurs regularly. She had forgotten the song and no songs were sung that second meeting. But she beat that drum and it created a certain intimacy in the small group that we had there. We began to smile and laugh and think about jokes. And we called another meeting and the third meeting someone, some other lady had heard about our effort and she came and that was Mrs. -- she was there last night -- Mrs. Tommy Bill. And she sang a few songs that evening and we weren't able to even accompany her. We had forgotten everything entirely. She sang a few songs that night. The chief was present and I remember distinctly and the feeling of despair that came over me when he stood up and he says, "I wash my hand of the whole thing." He said, "It cannot be done. It's absolutely impossible. I'll have nothing

more to do with it." But he turned to me and he said, "If you think you can do something about it, you have my blessing. Go ahead and do it."

So at this stage I thought that it was too late to stop. I had a conviction, a deep-rooted conviction in me, that we had something, that if properly handled would come back and that we would have something to give to the Canadian culture. So we called another meeting and then we formed a committee. At this period Jimmy Galack made his appearance and he was very helpful and Jimmy is, Jimmy Galack is a born leader. He took things so naturally and he has the tact to organize. So Jimmy became our manager and he done a wonderful job and before we knew it we were growing a little bit at a time, growing little bit at a time until a man from Ohiet heard of our efforts. And he felt like I did -- that this culture could be revived.

This man moved up to this, to us, with the idea of teaching us everything that he knew and he was the big authority on this culture. He was quite an old man but he knew all the songs and he still had that rhythm that we cannot seem to capture yet, to this day, because we are of a different thinking. Now this man we called Gus. His name was Tutimias. And that man taught us a great deal. He taught us everything that we know today and he knew... Very luckily, he was intermarried with our own tribe. His wife was from up there, consequently he knew all our songs. And he used to live up here quite often for long periods at a time. So we were very fortunate in getting Gus as

our teacher. Gus taught us for two years. In fact, Gus died here amongst us, which was very unfortunate and we miss Gus very, very much. Because I think that if it wasn't for Gus, our struggle, our uphill climb, would have been much greater.

We kept on growing and growing until we became quite a good-sized group. Big enough to acquire a name. So we called a meeting and we thought about different names. We took two or

three meetings before we decided on a name. Mrs. Mabel Ucome -- we chose the name she suggested which interpreted Somas Native Echoes. It was to suggest that we are not the proper, we are not the original, that we are but an echo of the past, which I think was very appropriate because we are struggling to recapture what we had lost and in many ways we are but an echo of the great life of the Indians on this coast. Now, we became so that we had... It was my policy to include anyone who were willing to help us from the neighboring tribes. So in a very short time we had representatives from Ohiet, from Ucluelet, and from Clayoquot and surrounding areas. And it worked out so very well, because these people created the interest in their own tribe also.

I might add at this time that I think the big influence in me that gave me the fortitude to keep on is when I heard (Indian) done in Duncan quite a number of years ago. When I heard that (Indian), it stirred me so much that I just broke down and cried. Great big tears rolled down my cheek, not because I was sad but it brought back the teachings of my own father, what he was trying to instill into me, the greatness of the west coast Indian. And I think the (Indian) had a big influence in giving me that fortitude to carry on. We grew very fast after that initial name, acquiring the name of the Somas Native Echoes, and in time we became so good that we gave small performances in the local towns.

Now the coming of the Princess was a big topic around 1951, around that era. And we were called, we were included in the big meeting in Duncan one spring. We were called there as a -- just as a gesture, I felt. And the meeting was centred on the Duncan Indians, naturally, because they already had a big name in their (Indian). And they discussed what they are prepared to do, what the (Indian) people are prepared to do towards entertaining Princess Elizabeth. And there was no... I was very disappointed in that meeting. There was no specific...

They just could not say, "We are willing, we are prepared, we will gladly." It was always an excuse somewhere. "Well, I can't do this. I can't say this." Although they represented the entire cast of the (Indian), although they represented the Duncan tribe, still in all they were too unsure of themselves. Now, our Indian Agent was present there and when the meeting was over for the Duncan people, he stood up and he says, "I've got a group here. Perhaps they might be helpful." And they called on our chief and he said that he's got his people willing and ready to perform. One of the big questions was a

canoe. He said, "We have two canoes that you can have. We have all the paddlers. We have all the paddles. We have the songs if you want it." That was another thing the Duncans were a little leery about. They did not or did not remember their welcoming song. The result of this was that we were chosen to entertain Princess Elizabeth and it was because of that that we were chosen to dance for her in Victoria.

Imbert: Now the next stage after that, I suppose, is the Centennial. And that would continue to...

George: We continued to practise quite regularly after that big shot in the arm, I might say, when we were commissioned to perform before Princess Elizabeth. And the Centennial was approaching and we used to dance in small towns, we made several trips also to Victoria after that dance and participated in the folk festivals, in the main folk festivals.

And it was a very wonderful experience for me because it taught me to be more patient. I don't care how much you do for a group of people, the more you do for them, the more they expect you to do. You can never, never under the sun please everybody. And because of these trips to Victoria and to other

places, Parksville, I began to learn the quality, the necessity of patience and more patience. There was many a time where it just rankled into me to tell them to shut up like I used to tell my father, but I'd repress myself. I'd remember that I'm trying to practise what my father had taught me, to be patient with all men. And I think if it wasn't for these long trips -- they were very trying trips.

We were, for some reason or other, some of our own group had the idea that I make a fortune in these dances. The only money we get was from Victoria. They had to give us a flat sum of \$50 to do a performance in Victoria. Now, it's a big job to move fifty-four members to a distance such as Victoria and that \$50 didn't even begin to pay the expenses of these dancers to Victoria. And it used to cost the people -- the chief and the manager and myself -- a little bit of money out of our own pocket every time. In fact, I used to be broke for months afterwards, trying to catch up what we dished out. And then there was always that, "You didn't give me anything, you didn't give me, why didn't you pay me?" Now, I want our people to get back to that feeling of sharing. We're... Right now, we're on the balance. The first thing we think of, "How much are you going to pay me?" It's not because it's in our heart, it's because what our white brothers ask us. It's all right if there's any money in it. Now, if we could somehow sway them back into giving freely, and sharing what they possess in their heart to their fellow man, I think I will have achieved what I set out to do.

Imbert: The old meaning of the potlatch.

George: The old meaning of the potlatch in another

expression. We cannot give our personal belongings out anymore but we can give what talent we have.

Imbert: That's a wonderful concept, that new concept of the potlatch. There was one side about this that was interesting if you like to go on with this. What sort of costumes, up till now, have you been wearing, up before the Centennial?

George: We had been... Now we just didn't form this group and then die out like so many other groups are apt to do. We kept on struggling along and we'd practise occasionally. We'd practise quite often and Jimmy Galack was a staunch pillar in this adventure. It was an adventure. And without Jimmy Galack's support, I think we would have collapsed. He was a staunch pillar and he knew how to organize and to get the children to obey him. Now the Centennial was rolling around and I was a member of the committee in the Alberni district in town there and someone suggested, "Why not Alberni give a dance? Why not have our own first occupants of this land entertain us with their own way and their own dances?" A wonderful idea and everybody endorsed it at that meeting in Port Alberni. And I said, "Well, I'll have to approach our group and I broached the subject and I tried to sell the idea to them. And after a little bickering we decided to give the dance. And then there was always that, "How much? How much am I getting?" Now, I'm very sad to say this that we -- our group -- participated in the town group to add color to them and they promised to pay us for the little time that we gave them. And they went broke so we didn't get paid and I've always felt quite unhappy about the promise that didn't come through. Of course, it couldn't be helped. The town group went broke as we did but we gave the performance wonderfully.

Now I was commissioned, we were given \$1600 to give this performance in town. That went into costumes and a great many expenses that you do not plan on in the beginning. All our

costumes were, had to be bought and paid for from the stores because of the great difficulty in harvesting your own and manufacturing them properly. Much of our costumes were bought from the stores and made by the different women that belonged to the group. But their costumes were paid for and the idea was to keep these costumes intact and to be used by the Somas Native Echoes whenever the occasion arose. And the womenfolks have kept their costumes very well and I'm very proud of the fact that they have looked after it and that they use it at all occasions. It is perhaps a little out of the way because we had to, we used modern materials and we used, we were... Well, I permitted to have them use sequins, which was quite unethical and it wasn't just right. And we used a lot of beads which we didn't have in the olden days. But on the other hand, we must try to realize that we are progressing too, and that we pick up the things that come our way and do it and execute it in our own style. I don't think we should be too severe in these modern additions which, after all, is secondary. The main thing being the Indian motives and the Indian designs that they

make on their costumes.

Now we gave this... Now this Centennial dance required a lot of preparation. We used to practise consistently, we practised three times a week, three nights a week. And during the last ten days, we practised every night with the exception of the last three days where we made, where we rested. Now that requires a lot of time. And I was working and Jimmy Galack was working and the chief was working and we had to go to these... We had to keep the group intact and happy which was not a small job. And it is more than what appears on the surface. It requires a lot of tact, it requires a lot of patience. It requires a lot of wisdom. Without the teachings that we got from our fathers, I don't think it can be done. We prepared,

we practised very consistently, very... without a break, and we gave three performances. We gave one in Port Alberni and we gave two up in our own... We gave one in our own hall and one in a field. And I think they were good performances. And I think we spent Alberni's \$1600 well. We made a lot of our own costumes that we could at first.

I might mention that MacMillan and Bloedel was very helpful. They said we could have all the bark we wanted, it was there for our taking. All we needed to do was peel it off the logs that were laid in the water. So a man from Port Alberni offered his truck and we went up to Central Lake and we peeled all that morning. We got hundreds of pounds of bark. We brought it down and I distributed to the proper women who still knew the art of manufacturing them into clothes and they made what they could. But they came to me shortly afterwards and they said, "This bark is no good, it's got no life. As soon as you separate the strands, they just disintegrate." So we had to scrap all that and all that time was lost and I decided I'd get the proper bark. And there was none here in this area. All the land here belonged to the logging outfit and we daren't peel the cedar standing here. So I decided to go down the Canal. So old Gus and myself and another young boy, we went down. I had a big packer, and we started out early one Saturday morning. I was still working, and it took us about five hours to get to this place where Gus knew had the proper bark. Quite a distance away. Now that entailed a lot of time. We just didn't get the bark. We had to go, we had to travel five continuous travelling hours before we got there and by the time we got settled to the little locality, the little swamp, it was late in the day. And we had to wait until the next morning to peel the bark. We peeled the bark and it took us the remainder of Sunday to get back home. And we delivered the bark to the same women and they were very, very happy about it.

But this goes to show that it requires a lot of patience. It requires a lot of gumption. It requires a lot of courage. After a while they got the costumes ready and we used it one year or two years and still it all... the thing disintegrated again. I've got some of the costumes left but it disintegrates. And I'm continually researching and continually trying

to find answers. I was in Seattle not too long ago and during my visit with Dr. Gunther there I mentioned this fact, that we cannot seem to get the proper workmanship into our manufacturing of our own clothing. And she said, "Don't you worry about it, it can be done." She says, "You've got to wear it in order that it would keep it's life. Certain amount of your oil from your body must penetrate into the bark to keep it pliable. Otherwise, if you hang it up, it will just simply disintegrate because of the lack of oil."

Imbert: Then there are all the other things, the special shells, the special furs. All these things would have to be collected or...

George: Yeah. We used a little bit of shells, a little bit of fur. But we weren't able to get the proper things and we weren't able -- it was absolutely impossible -- to get the exchange that they used in barter in them days, which was shells harvested from the sea bottoms. But I think now that it can be done with the advent of special apparatus that they have, such as skin diving and all that newer things. And I think that for future performances and for future shows, that we can use the authentic if we are given the wherewithal to acquire it.

Imbert: Would you like to add to this, Mrs. Hayes? Do you want to raise anything at all, do you think? Of course, so

much of this now was George's story and his... Is there anything that occurred to you that you would like to say?

Annie: No, I think this, what George was referring to, the bark, I think it could be, I think it could be preserved in the... Well, you could preserve fur and things today, but I think you could preserve the bark too. Because we have bark at home that belongs to my son that we've had for so many years. It was made when, well, let's say sixty years back. It's still as good, this beaten bark. The reason why most of bark clothing -- well, prepared bark -- doesn't keep today is because they don't do... When they process this they have to do it in a special way. Heat it up and cook it over the fire, let's say. They do that until the thing is just ripe for beating. And if you do it before it's cooked enough or before it's done enough, it pulls apart like George says. It pulls apart, it comes to pieces, because bark isn't rightly cured. You have to cure it over an open fire, in such a way until all the gum is out of it, because it's the gum that sticks together. And when you start beating the bark it, well, it comes out like I'd say flax. They come out wonderful.

John: Could you describe how, from the bark, you make up the costumes...?

Imbert: That's quite a long process, John.

Annie: Yeah, it's quite a while. You could, after we get

the bark off the trees, we dry it in the sun until it's quite dry. And then when we take it in, we store these bark in... They used to store them in cedar boxes before, and they'd keep this. The older they were the better they were for costumes for

clothing. And they used yellow cedar for clothing rather than the red cedar. They used to cook this or dry it. Took a few hours to dry, let's say, twenty feet strip. If it's a twenty feet strip and about a foot wide at the bottom and about six inches at the top. Well, that would take some time to pull it over the fire. You'd have to have red coals or slow fire burning. And we'd pull this thing over, dry it until all the pitch was out of it. Keep on pulling and then on the other end, we'd have somebody there beside the fire with... They used to use a paddle or a sharp-edged board and they'd use some sort of a beater, oh, about six inches long and about four inches wide. And this was sharp and shaped like a wedge and we'd keep beating that bark as it came fresh from the fire, not afterwards. It had to be done just when it was quite crisp. And we kept this up and then we'd cut off so much, you know, the length we needed. So it wouldn't... You had to do it in such a way that you'd keep the pieces intact, you know. After you'd beaten this, it came out silky like. And they were experts in making these. Today I suppose we could, well, we could put in something like it. We did put in something like it. We had about twenty-four skirts made like this. They were still around, I don't know about now though. And when these things were woven, they kept because they were properly cooked or properly cured over the fire.

George: I know we didn't cook ours. I know that.

Bob: We're running out of tape now.

John: Is there anything else you want to cover?

George: I've thought of a last thing to insert somewhere.

Annie: Yeah, because this thing had to be properly cooked or properly cured...

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