

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Herem, Barry, Photographer

Barry Herem Photograph Collection, 1994

Whale House, Klukwan, Alaska

PCA 363

5 photographs, color
11 x 14 in.

Processed: June 1995
By: Ellen FitzGerald,
India Spartz

ACQUISITION: The photographs were purchased from Barry Herem, photographer, of Seattle, Washington. Herem took the photographs while the Whale House screen was in Seattle in the summer of 1994. The Whale House screen was returned to Klukwan, Alaska in late 1994 (Acc. No. 1995-034).

ACCESS: The collection is unrestricted. (See note (Jan. 27, 2005) from Barry Herem in master file.)

COPYRIGHT: Request for permission to publish or reproduce material from the collection should be discussed with the Librarian.

PROCESSING: The photos have been numbered and placed in Mylar inserts with the oversize collections.

Biographical Note

Barry Herem is an artist, teacher, writer, photographer and award-winning poet whose work has been commissioned by many companies and organizations. He lectures on the art, landscape, and historic culture of the Northwest Coast throughout the United States, Canada, and Germany.

Herem has spent 30-years studying Northwest tribal art in British Columbia and Southeastern Alaska and has documented “a treasured store of haunting and controversial works, monumental in scale and long sequestered in a prominent tribal building known as the Whale House in the tiny but historic village of Klukwan, Alaska.”

The most famous of all Tlingit clan houses, the Whale House, located 125 miles north of Juneau, contains four immense totemic house posts and an 18-foot wide carved and painted cedar screen (circa 1830), recognized as the “greatest works of art ever created on the Northwest Coast.” The Whale House is closed to all except during short periods of significant ceremony. *[From the Humanities Washington web site <http://www.humanities.org/> Accessed 25 Jan 2005]*

Scope and Content Note

Herem photographed the Whale House screen and house posts in the late summer of 1994 during the time it was housed in Seattle, and made the images available to museums and libraries. The five images show close up detail of sections of the house posts and one full image of the screen. Information about Klukwan and the Whale House may be found in books in the Historical Collections. The story of the sale and repatriation of the Whalehouse artifacts is told in the article: <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/Tlingit/WhaleHouse/part1.html>

Inventory

- 1 Weeping woman [close up of totem carving, possibly from the Konakadet house post, Klukwan Whale House]
- 2 [close up of totem carving showing faces, possibly from the Konakadet house post, Klukwan Whale House]
- 3 [full image of Whale House screen]
- 4 [close up of face from the house post, Klukwan Whale House, possibly Raven and Bullhead]
- 5 [close up image of face from house post, Klukwan Whale House]