



UNIT 10

The Persistence of Native Culture

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Relationship with the Environment



Celebration 2010. SEALASKA HERITAGE INSTITUTE, PHOTO BY BRIAN WALLACE.

The Persistence of Native Culture

Although facing many pressures over the years, Native culture has persisted in Alaska. This was due to many dedicated people and groups who kept Native heritage alive.

The Alaska Native Brotherhood originally promoted efforts to suppress Native language and traditions. However, the organization led the revival of aboriginal culture by adopting traditional rules, procedures, and protocol for their meetings.

The *ku.éex'* (also known as a potlatch) continued and flourished in the late 1960s. In 1969, the Chookaneidí clan of Hoonah hosted a large *ku.éex'* after clan leader, Jimmy Marks, died and was replaced by Willie Marks. In 1971, the Lukaax.ádi clan held a *ku.éex'* to commemorate the construction of a new tribal house in Klukwan.¹

Tlingit dance was brought from the *ku.éex'* to the general public in 1968. At that time, the Marks Trail Tlingit Dancers performed at the Juneau Celebration for the settlement of the Tlingit land-claims case. Jenny Marks, a member of the Lukaax.ádi clan, led the group. Since then, many communities have organized dance groups.

In the early 1980s, clan leader Austin Hammond (Daanáawaak) of the

¹ Rosita F. Worl, "History of Southeast Alaska Since 1867," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 7. Northwest Coast*. William C. Sturtevant, ed. (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 158.

Lukaax̄ádi clan started a cultural survival camp that taught Tlingit culture and clan history to children.² Around the same time, the Sealaska Corporation started the Sealaska Heritage Institute to promote the knowledge of Southeast Alaska Native customs, history, arts, and educational achievements. The institute sponsored cultural activities, including two celebrations at which Elders gathered to record their traditional knowledge and dances. During the first celebration, Elders knowledgeable about Tlingit property law met with Tlingit lawyers and scholars to clarify principles behind Tlingit law.³

Matrilineal descent was also recognized by the Tlingit through the 1980s. Traditional marriage rules were still honored, although relaxed somewhat. Marriages between two Raven clan members or two Eagle (Wolf) clan members were allowed, but the marriages were frowned upon. Still today, the issue of matrilineal descent and cross-moiety marriage is a sensitive cultural issue. Nevertheless, it is an issue worth exploring so that individuals can come to their own conclusions as to which tradition works for them.

By the late 1980s, the Tlingit language was spoken only by people over the age of 50.⁴ Nora Dauenhauer and several respected traditional scholars offered Tlingit language classes and developed curriculum materials. Although children are no longer speaking Tlingit as their first language, they continue to sing Tlingit songs in dance groups, learn cultural traditions at culture camps, and experience firsthand the vibrancy of their Native culture in action at *ku.éex'*, totem pole raisings, and other celebrations.

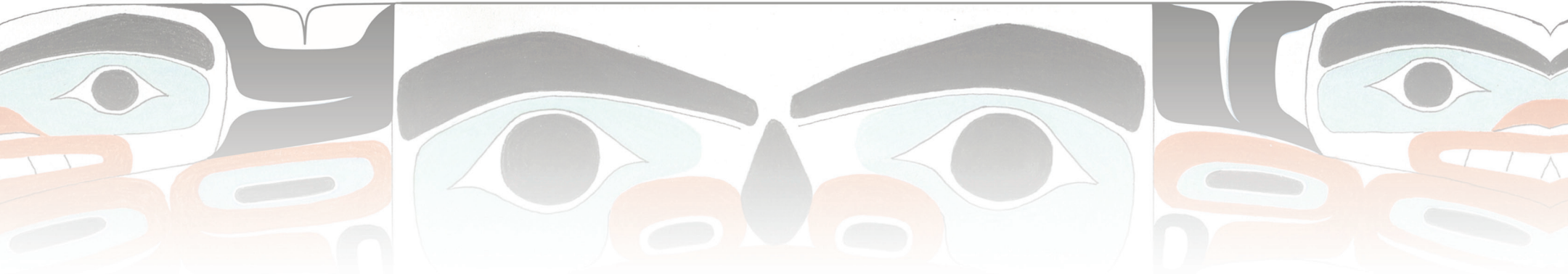


Celebration 2010. SEALASKA HERITAGE INSTITUTE, PHOTO BY BRIAN WALLACE.

2 Ibid., 159.

3 Rosita Worl, “Tlingit At.oow: Tangible and Intangible Property,” PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 1998.

4 Ibid.



The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Background and Place-Based Activities

Principles of Tlingit Property Law by Rosita Worl. (“Tlingit At.óow: Tangible and Intangible Property,” PhD Dissertation, Harvard University).

Property includes two essential aspects:

- the object itself (tangible and intangible),
- the web of social relations that define the relationship between individuals and the object or the use and disposition of the object (Hoebel 1972:58).

Property held by the Tlingit formerly included land, physical structures including houses and facilities where food processing occurred, warriors’ armor and weaponry, ceremonial items including shamanic objects, utilitarian objects and equipment, and clothing, as well as intangible property including songs, stories, names and crests all of which were subject to Tlingit property law.

The 1867 Treaty of Cession abolished aborigi-

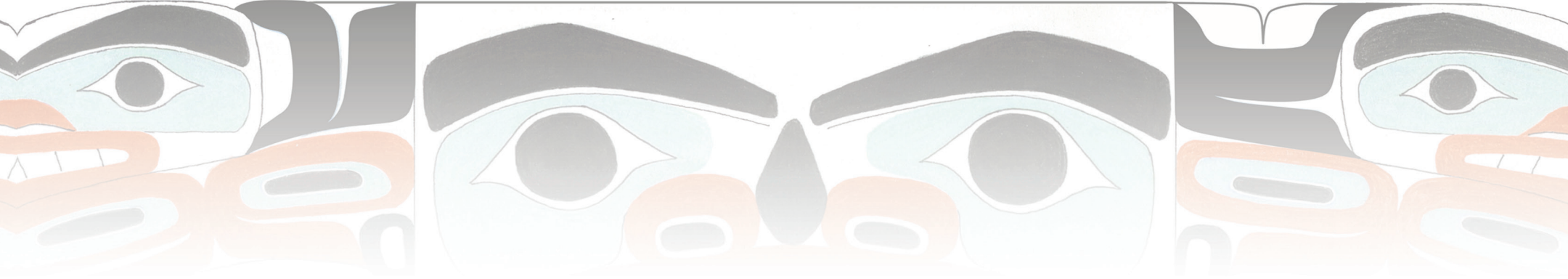
nal title of Alaska Native lands and removed land in Southeast Alaska from Native ownership and the jurisdiction of Tlingit law.

The Tlingit also held slaves, who played an important role in both the economic and ceremonial spheres, as property until 1900 (de Laguna 1972:470).

Another form of property included clans’ *at.óowu*. Objects were transformed into clan *at.óowu* through a process that began with the acquisition of a crest, its incorporation onto a physical object, its ceremonial transformation into property and its legal validation of ownership by a clan. Once an object transformed into clan *at.óowu*, strict cultural protocols governed the use of the clan *at.óowu*.



Violation of that behavior or social norm was the basis of conflict and resulted in legal action and occasionally supernatural repercussions as well.



The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Background and Place-Based Activities

Tlingit Property Law

The legal principles governing clans' *at.óowu* are multiple and complex. A clan object can possess two, and sometimes three, distinct proprietary interests including ownership, use, and indemnification rights.

Under Tlingit law, two clans may have an ownership interest in their *at.óowu*. The *Wooshkeetaan* screen, which was located in Juneau and which was the subject of a legal dispute, provides an illustration of this principle.

-The *Wooshkeetaan* maintained an ownership interest in the screen and a usufruct right of the Thunderbird crest.

-The *Shangukeidi* hold ownership of the Thunderbird crest on the screen and the name of Thunderbird that was used to

identify the screen and the house. This ownership right persisted in the duplicate that was made of the original screen.

Anthropologists uniformly concur that the Tlingit have a complex form of property ownership.

Goldschmidt and Haas (1946:17), who studied the possessory land rights of the Tlingit, likened their organization and law to Western corporate institutions and law:

...the Tlingit had well defined conceptions of property and legal rights to territory. The clan or house group is an economic unit in Tlingit society, which, like a corporation in western society, controls the use of certain land and other valued properties....

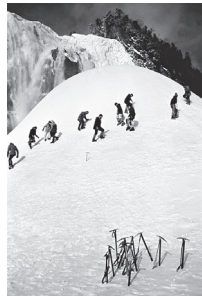
While these laws were not codified, the rules governing Tlingit relations with each other and the legal expectations towards property were nevertheless known and well established throughout the society and acknowledged by neighboring tribes.

Source:

Council of Traditional Scholars. Tlingit Clan Trust Property Law and Dispute Resolution. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Resources. Sealaska Heritage Institute. Web. 9 Dec. 2011. <http://www.sealaskaheritage.org/programs/NAGPRA%20documents/NAGPRA%20Resources/SHI/Resolution%20and%20Procedures/dispute_resolution_code.pdf>.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Background and Place-Based Activities

PERSIST



Show students the picture for “Persist.” Explain to students that persistence means the continued existence of something in spite of difficulty or opposition. In this context, this term refers to the fact that Alaskan Native culture has survived the onslaught of outside influences. In spite of the hardships of forced assimilation and throughout the tremendous struggle for rights, recognition, and respect, our culture persists!

SUPPRESS



Show students the picture for “Suppress.” Explain to students that to suppress is to prevent the development, action, or expression of (a feeling, impulse, idea, movement, etc.). Ask students to offer examples that illustrate this term.

PROTOCOL



Show students the picture for “Protocol.” Explain to students that a protocol is an official procedure that governs certain diplomatic occasions; a code of behavior in a group or situation. Ask students to describe some of their daily routines in the classroom that could be considered protocol.

MATRILINEAL



Show students the picture for “Matrilineal.” Ask students which parent passes along their moiety. Relate this to the traditional Native matrilineal practice of tracing ancestral descent through the mother’s line. Ask students how it is done today. Ask students if they had a choice, which way they would prefer.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Background and Place-Based Activities

CELEBRATION



Show students the picture for “Celebration.” Ask students if any of them have been to Celebration and to describe their experiences. Continue to explain that Celebration is a festival of Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian tribal members organized every two years by Sealaska Heritage Institute. Since the event began in 1982, it has become an effective vehicle for encouraging individuals, families, clans, and communities to participate in traditional song and dance, arts and crafts, and the revitalization of Native languages. It is also one of the largest gatherings of Southeast Alaska Native peoples.

COMMEMORATE



Show students the picture for “Commemorate.” Explain to students that to commemorate is to show respect for someone or something in ceremony. In this context, the Lukaax̄.ádi clan paid their respects after the construction of a new tribal house. Asks students what or whom they would commemorate if they had the opportunity.

TRIBAL HOUSE



Show students the picture for “Tribal House.” Ask students to describe a Tribal House. What is unique about Tribal Houses? Explain that traditionally, Tribal Houses were made out of cedar planks with bark roofs. They could be up to 100 feet long and house several families from the same clan.

KU.ÉEX'



Show students the picture for “Ku.éex’.” Ask students about what happens at a ku.éex’. Continue to explain that a ku.éex’ is a traditional Tlingit ceremony associated with funeral rites that is commonly referred to as a “potlatch”. Ask students about their personal experiences at ku.éex’.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Background and Place-Based Activities

SEALASKA HERITAGE INSTITUTE



Show students the picture for “Sealaska Heritage Institute.” Explain to students that SHI is a regional Native nonprofit organization founded for the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian people of Southeast Alaska. The goal of the institute is to perpetuate and enhance Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures.

TLINGIT PROPERTY LAW

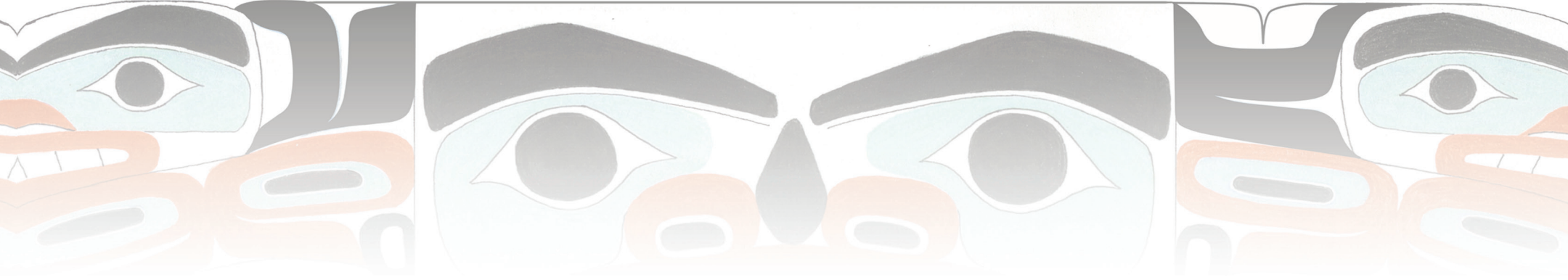


Show students the picture for “Traditional Law.” Help students to the understanding that the term “traditional law” refers to the very specific ways in which the Tlingit people viewed land and property (See Tlingit Property Law excerpts in Unit 10, see also “Man Never Too Old To Learn” Unit 2). The 1867 Treaty of Cession abolished aboriginal title of Alaska Native lands and removed land in Southeastern Alaska from Native ownership and the jurisdiction of Tlingit law.

KNOWLEDGEABLE



Show students the picture for “knowledgeable.” Ask students what it means to be knowledgeable. Continue to explain that to be knowledgeable is to be intelligent and well informed. However, to be knowledgeable does not necessarily mean that one has wisdom. Express to students that knowledge, together with honesty, is the path to wisdom.



Language and Skills Development

LISTENING

Join Those Halves

Make an extra set of vocabulary pictures. Cut each of the vocabulary illustrations in half. Spread the illustration halves on the floor in a scattered form. Group the students into two teams. Give the first two players in each team a long length of string or yarn. Say a vocabulary word. When you say "Go," the first two players in each team must rush to the illustration halves. The object of the activity is for the players to use the string/yarn to join together the two halves which make up the illustration for the word you said. The first pair of players to do this successfully wins the round. Repeat until all players have participated.

Illustration Hold Up

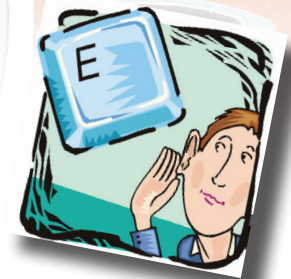
Before the activity begins, prepare a page which contains small versions of the vocabulary illustrations. Provide each student with a copy of the page. The students should cut out the illustrations. Say a vocabulary word. Each student should then hold up the illustration for the vocabulary word that you said. Repeat this process until all of the illustrations/vocabulary words have been used in this way.

Clan House Toss

Prepare an outline of a clan house on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. Give a student a beanbag. The student should toss the beanbag towards the house. If the beanbag misses, say a vocabulary word and have the student find its coordinating picture. If it lands in the house, the student may pass. Repeat.

Knock Knees

Mount the vocabulary pictures on the board. Group the students into two teams. Give a small, hard ball to the first player in each team. The first player in each team must place the ball between his/her knees. Say a vocabulary word. When you say "Go," the two players must then walk to the pictures without losing the balls. The first player to reach the vocabulary pictures and identify the picture for the word you said wins the round. If a player loses his/her ball, he/she must return to his/her team and begin again. Repeat until all players have played.



Language and Skills Development

SPEAKING

Calendar Bingo

Locate an old calendar. Provide each student with a calendar page (make copies if necessary). Also, provide each student with ten small markers. Each student should place the markers on different dates on his/her calendar page. Mount the vocabulary pictures on the board. Call a student's name and say a date in the month. If a marker is not on the date you named, he/she should say a complete sentence using a vocabulary word from this unit. However, if a marker is on the date you called, he/she may pass to the next player. Repeat.

Trapped

Have two students stand facing one another with hands clasped. The two students should raise their hands above their heads to resemble the arch of a bridge. Have the remaining students line up in a straight line. The students should walk under the bridge in single file. When you clap your hands, the two students should lower their hands, trapping one of the students between their arms. Show the trapped student a vocabulary illustration. The student should then say a complete sentence using the vocabulary word for the illustration. The bridge should then be raised for the next round of the activity. Repeat.



Picture Outline

Mount the vocabulary pictures on the board. Draw a chalk outline around the sides of each picture. Review the pictures with the students. When an outline has been created for each picture, remove the pictures from the board (being certain to recall their original locations on the board). Number each of the outlines and call upon a student to recall the vocabulary word for the picture that goes with that outline. Repeat this process until all of the vocabulary words have been said by the students in this way.

Picture Jigsaw

Cut each of the vocabulary pictures into four pieces. Mix the cut out pieces together and distribute them to the students (a student may have more than one picture section). When you say "Go," the students should attempt to match the jigsaw sections they have to reproduce the original vocabulary pictures. When the students put the necessary pieces of a picture together, they should identify the picture by its vocabulary word. Continue until all vocabulary pictures have been put together and named in this way.

Language and Skills Development



READING

Sensory Letters

Stand behind a student. Use the index finger of your writing hand to “write” a letter/syllable from a sight word on the student’s back. The student should feel the letter/syllable. Then, the student must name a sight word that contains that letter/syllable. This activity may also be done in team form. In this case, group the students into two teams. “Write” a letter/syllable on the backs of the last players in each team. When you say, “Go,” the last player in each team must repeat this process with the player in front of him/her. The players should continue in this way until the first player in the team feels the letter/syllable. That player must then identify a sight word that contains that letter/syllable. The first player to do this successfully wins the round. Repeat until all players have played.

Funnel Words

Group the students into two teams. Give the first player in each team a funnel. Mount the sight words on the walls, board, and windows, around the classroom. Say one of the sight words. The students with the funnels must then look through them to locate the sight word you named. The first student to do this correctly wins the round. Repeat with other pairs of students until all players in each team have played.

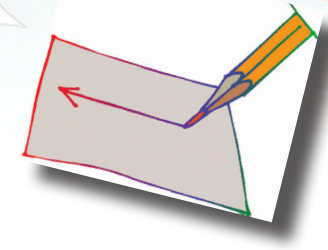
Half Time

Before the activity begins, cut each of the sight words in half. Keep one half of each sight word and give the remaining halves to the students. Hold up one of your halves and the student who has the other half of that word must show his/her half and say the sight word. Repeat in this way until all students have responded. An alternative to this approach is to give all of the word halves to the students. Say one of the sight words and the two students who have the halves that make up the sight word must show their halves. Depending upon the number of students in your class, you may wish to prepare extra sight word cards for this activity.

Sentence Completion

Provide each student with a copy of the sentence completion version of the story. The students should read the text and say the missing words. When finished, review the students’ work.

Language and Skills Development



WRITING

Dash

Group the students into two teams. Make two sets of dashes on the board — each set should be the same and should represent the number of letters in a sight word. When you say “Go,” the first player in each team must rush to his/her set of dashes on the board. Each player must then write a sight word that fits the number of dashes. Accept any sight word that fits the dashes. The first player to do this correctly wins the round. Repeat with other sets of dashes until all students have had an opportunity to participate.

Research

Have the students do online research into the issue of Native Land Rights. Encourage them to look at the issue from many points of view. When the students have completed their research, each student should share his/her findings with another student and then with the class.

Sentence Relay

Group the students into two teams facing the board. Place chalk in the board ledge. Write the same sight word on the board for each team (there should be two versions of the same word on the board). When you say “Go,” the first player from each team must rush to his/her team’s word. Each student should then add ONE word — either before or after the sight word. The player should then rush to the back of the team and the next player must race to the board to add another word — before or after the words already on the board. The students should continue in this way until a complete sentence has been written. You may wish to evaluate the sentence based on the number of words used to create them. Repeat, using a different sight word for each round of the activity.

Sentence Completion

Give each student a copy of the sentence completion version of the text. The students should write in the missing words. Afterward, review the students’ work.

Place-Based Activities: Culture and Language Revitalization

Sources:

Elders

Parents

*Community
Resource
Persons*

Teachers



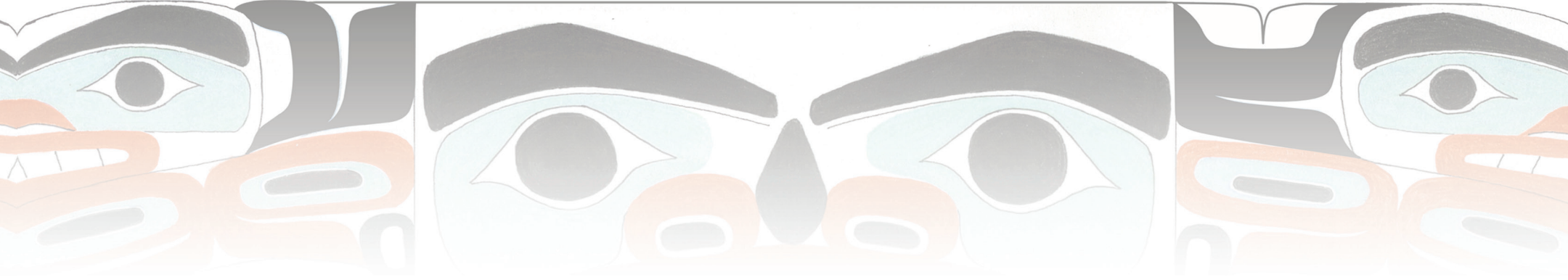
Get students to examine the cultural and language programs/meetings occurring within their community

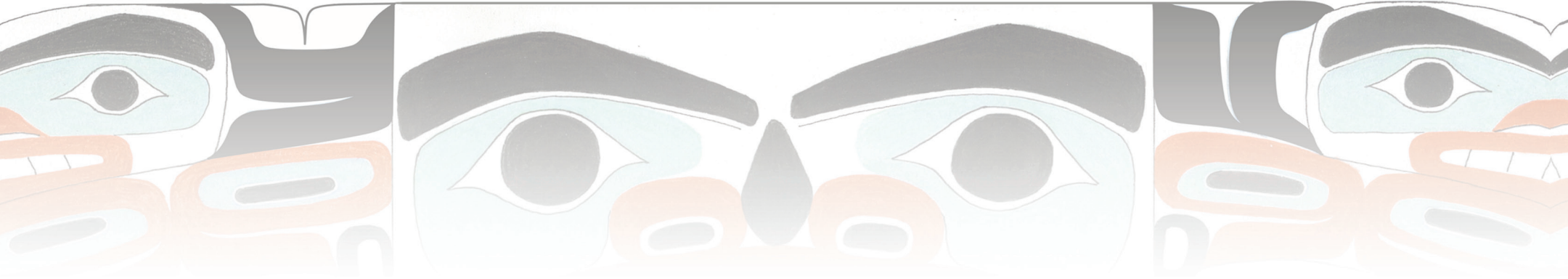
Get students to determine the cultural authorities in the community

- Have students make a knowledge bearer resource chart to hang in the classroom

Have students develop a graph of Native language speakers versus English speakers

- Allow students to develop plans on how to reverse the decline of aboriginal language speakers in our Native communities





Reading and Writing: Sentence Completion



Celebration 2010. SEALASKA HERITAGE INSTITUTE, PHOTO BY BRIAN WALLACE.

The Persistence of Native Culture

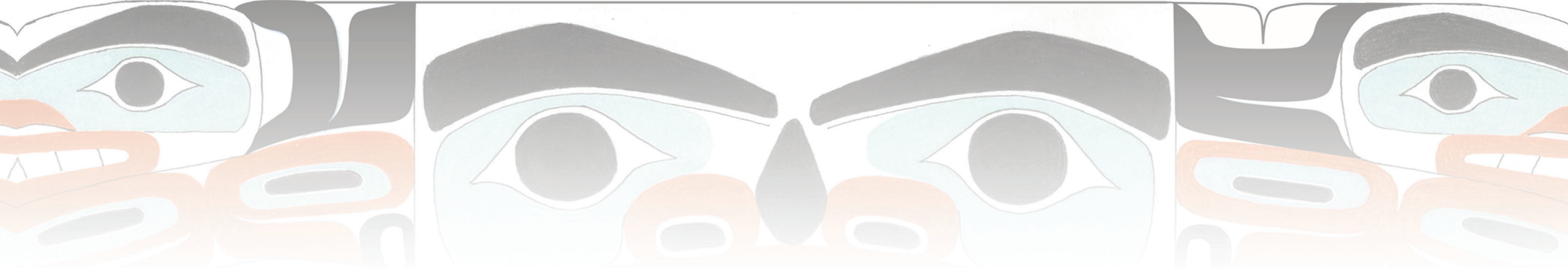
Although facing many pressures over the years, Native culture has _____ed in Alaska. This was due to many dedicated people and groups who kept Native heritage alive.

The Alaska Native Brotherhood originally promoted efforts to _____ Native language and traditions. However, the organization led the revival of aboriginal culture by adopting traditional rules, procedures, and _____ for their meetings.

The _____ (also known as a potlatch) continued and flourished in the late 1960s. In 1969, the Chookaneidí clan of Hoonah hosted a large _____ after clan leader, Jimmy Marks, died and was replaced by Willie Marks. In 1971, the Lukaax̄.ádi clan held a _____ to _____ the construction of a new _____ in Klukwan.¹

Tlingit dance was brought from the *ku.éex'* to the general public in 1968. At that time, the Marks Trail Tlingit Dancers performed at the Juneau _____ for the settlement of the Tlingit land-claims case. Jenny Marks, a member of the Lukaax̄.ádi clan, led the group. Since then, many communities have organized dance

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groups.

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_____ descent was also recognized by the Tlingit through the 1980s. Traditional marriage rules were still honored, although relaxed somewhat. Marriages between two Raven clan members or two Eagle (Wolf) clan members were allowed, but the marriages were frowned upon. Still today, the issue of _____ descent and cross-moiety marriage is a sensitive cultural issue. Nevertheless, it is an issue worth exploring so that individuals can come to their own conclusions as to which tradition works for them.

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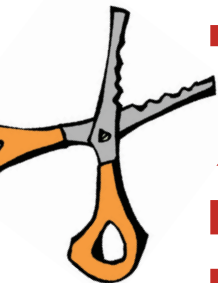
4 Ibid.



persistence

suppress

protocol



A decorative border at the top of the page features stylized, colorful faces with large eyes and open mouths, rendered in a folk-art style. The faces are arranged in a row, with some showing teeth and others showing closed mouths.

matrilineal

Celebration

commemorate



tribal house

ku.éex'



Sealaska Heritage Institute



Tlingit property law

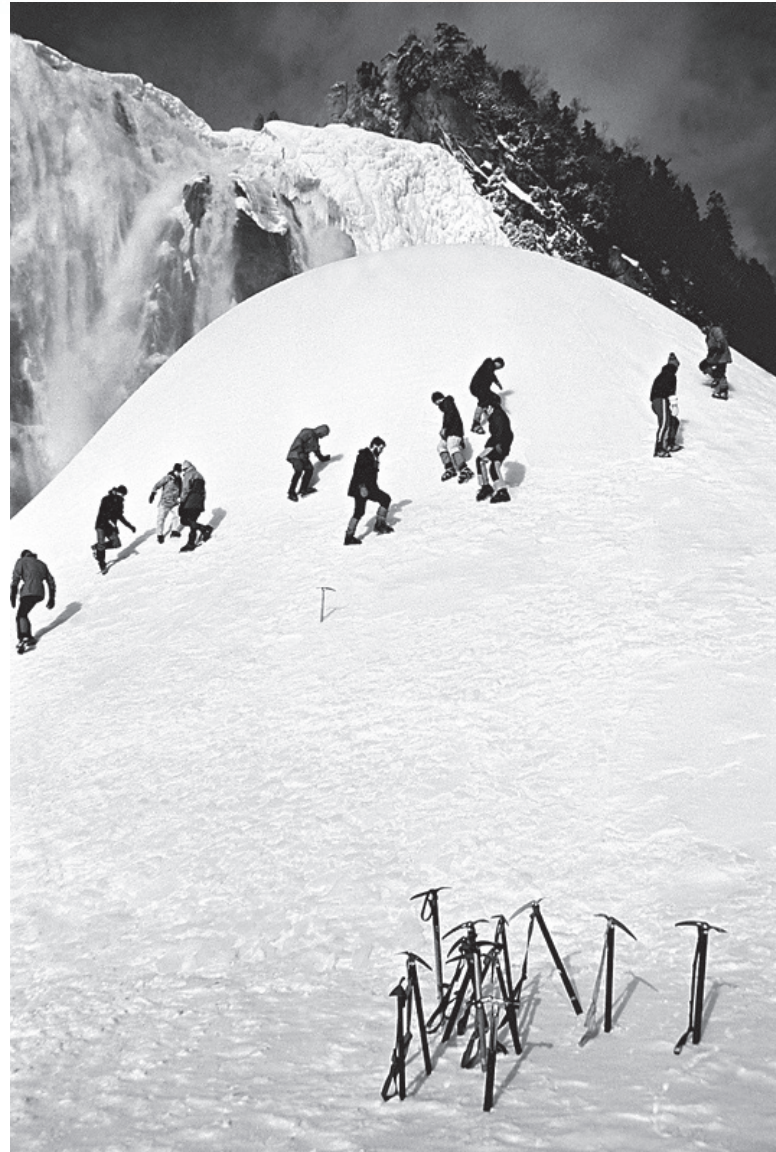
knowledgeable

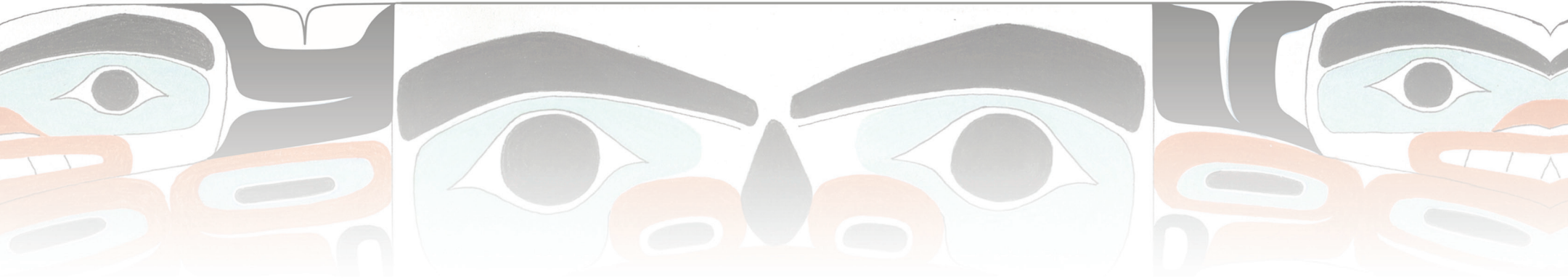




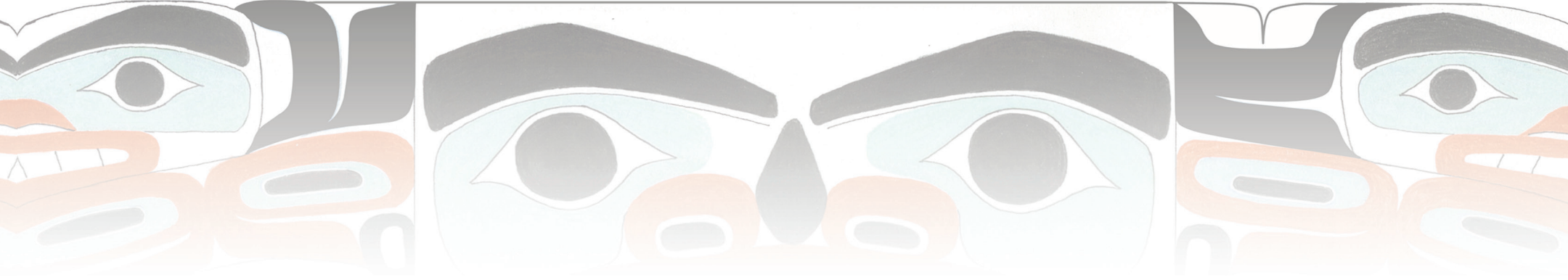
VOCABULARY PICTURES



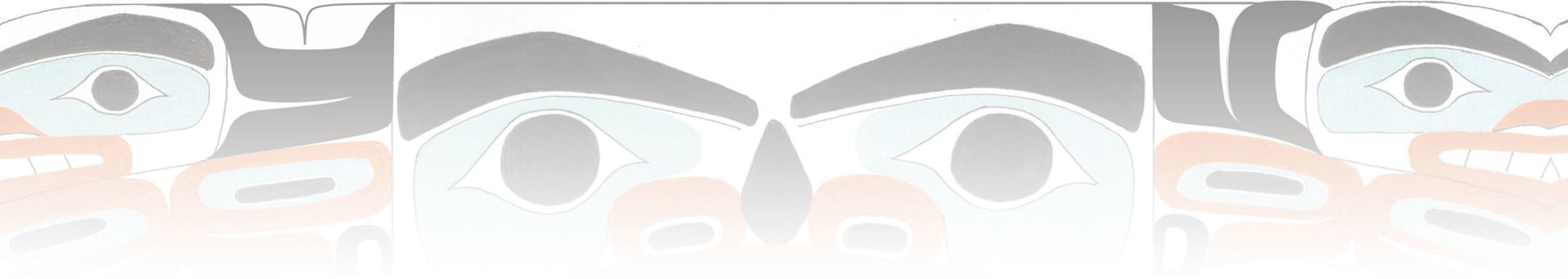




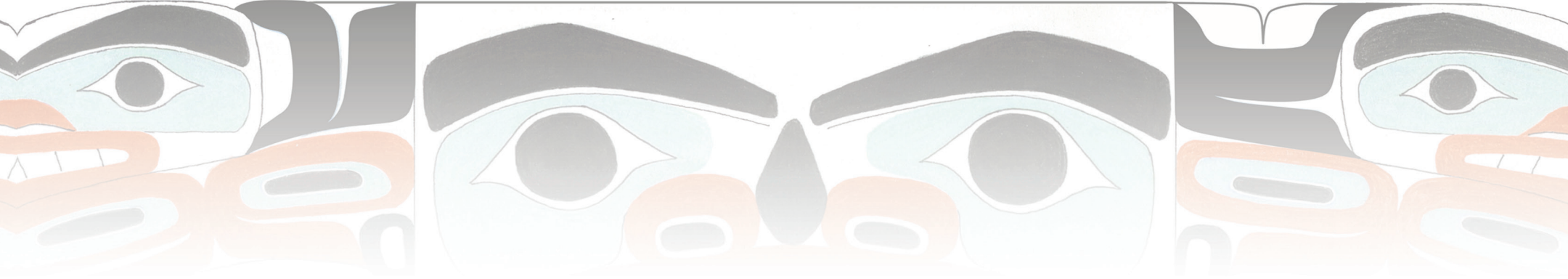
PERSISTENCE

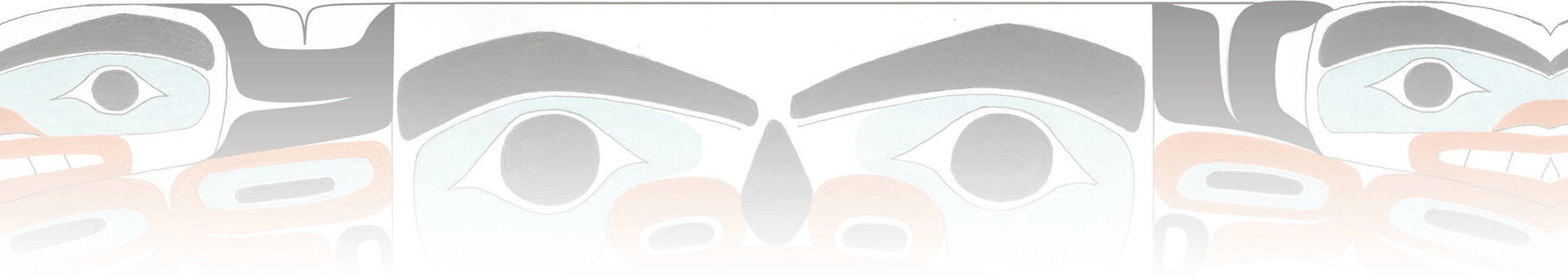


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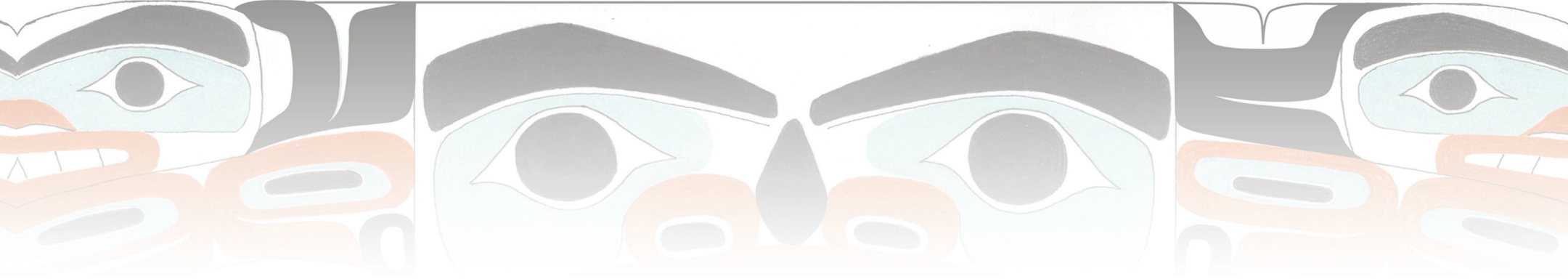


SUPPRESS





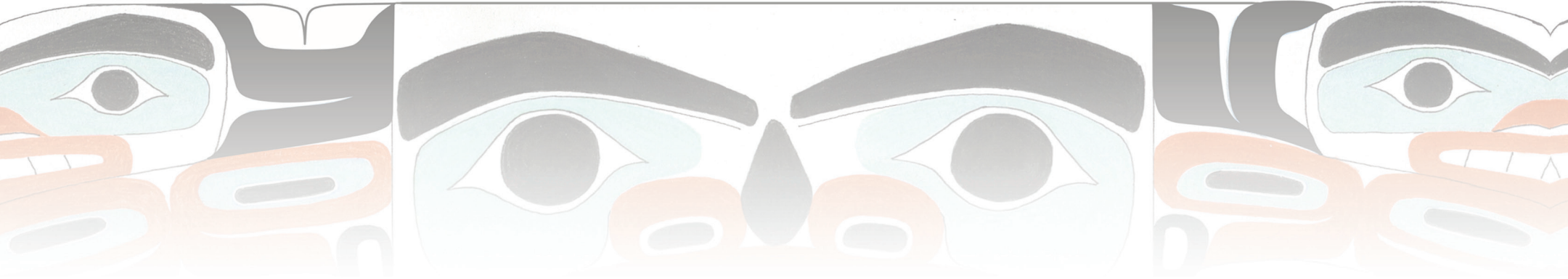
PROTOCOL



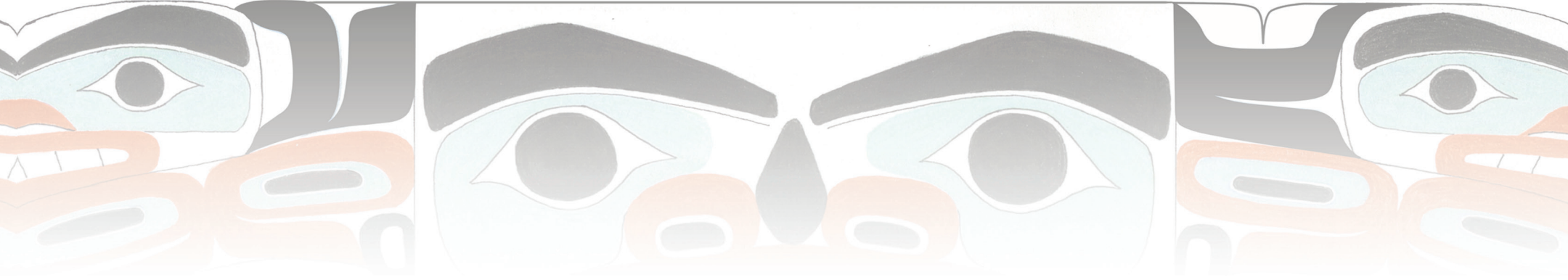
11750. Native Basket Weavers.

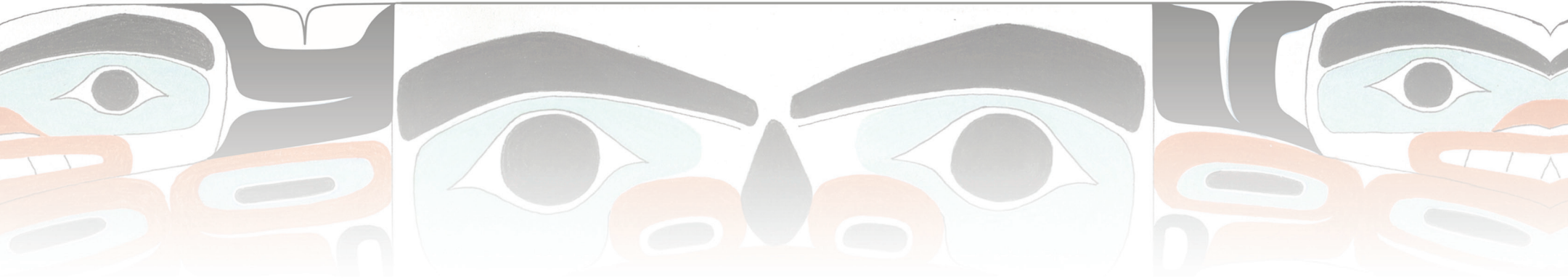
Published by W. H. Case, Juneau, Alaska.

Copyright, 1906, by Case & Draper.

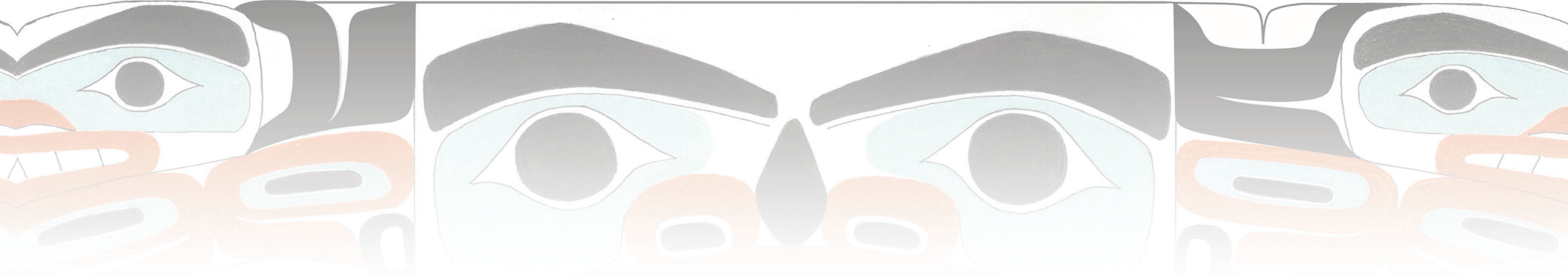


MATRILINEAL

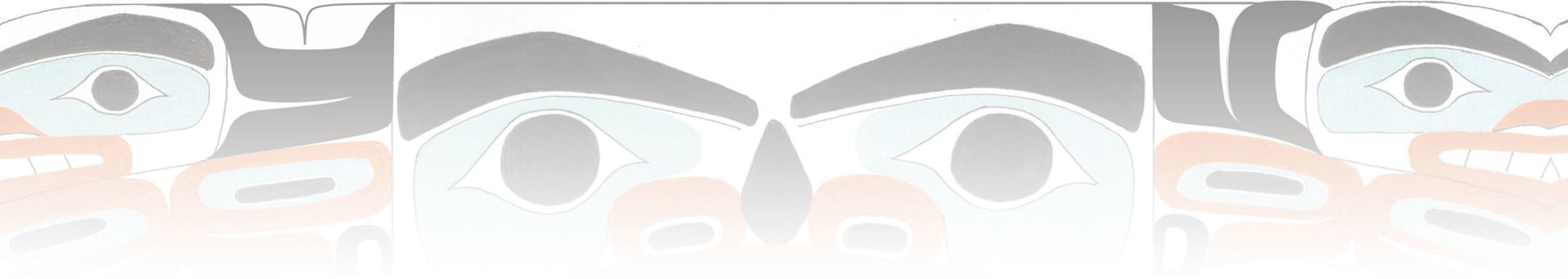




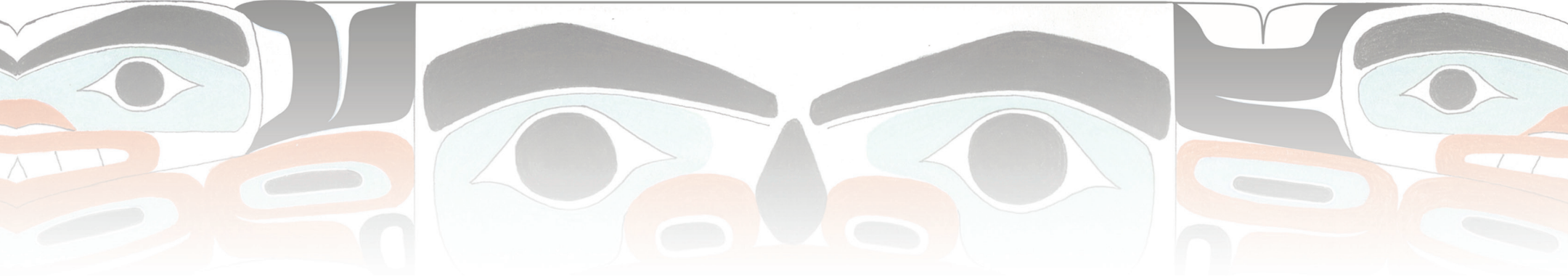
CELEBRATION



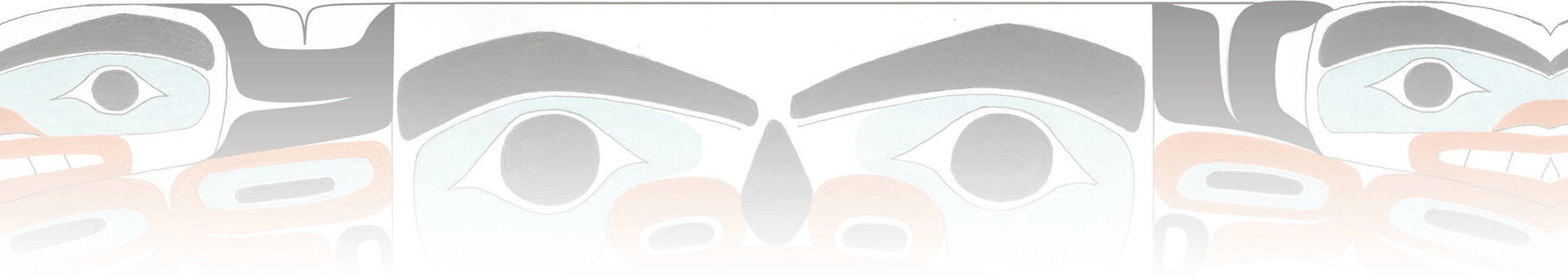
Alaska State Library - Historical Collections



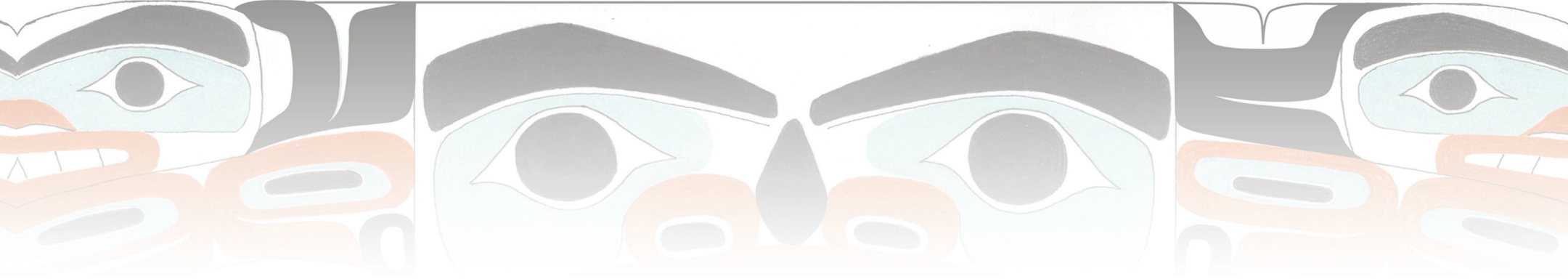
COMMEMORATE



Anchorage Museum of History & Art. Library & Archives.



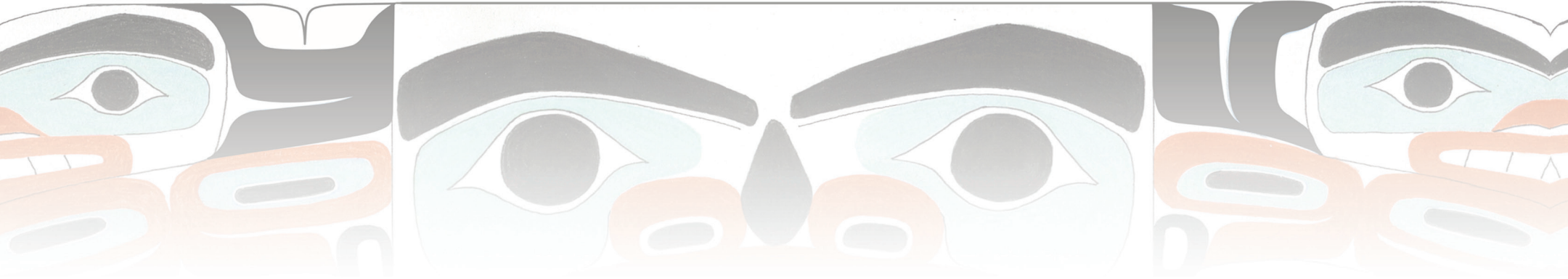
TRIBAL HOUSE



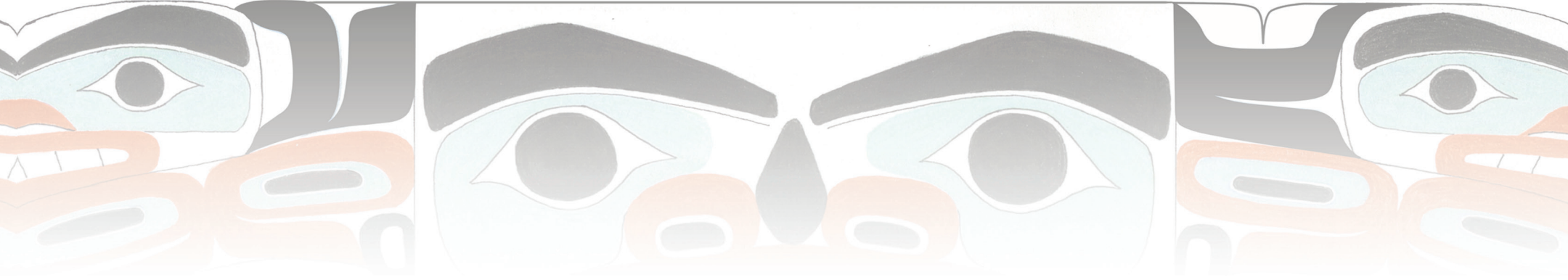
CHILKATS IN DANCING COSTUMES AT SITKA POTLATCH

COPYRIGHT DEC. 23, 1904.
By CASE DRAPER.

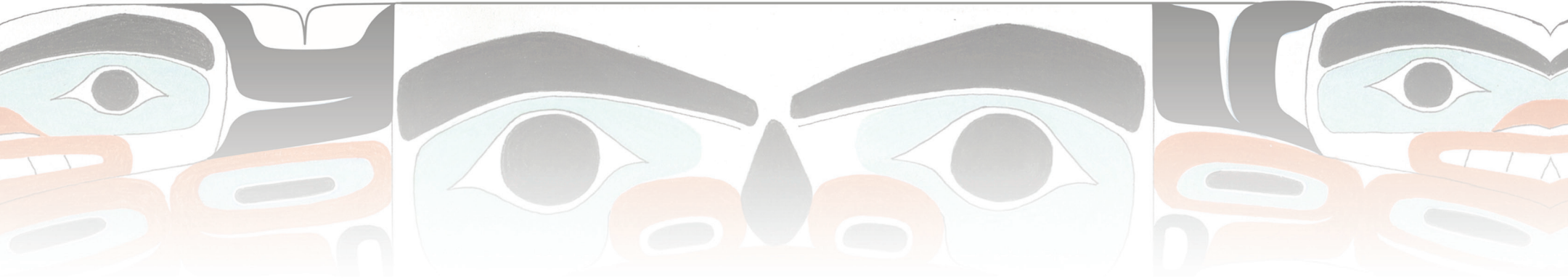
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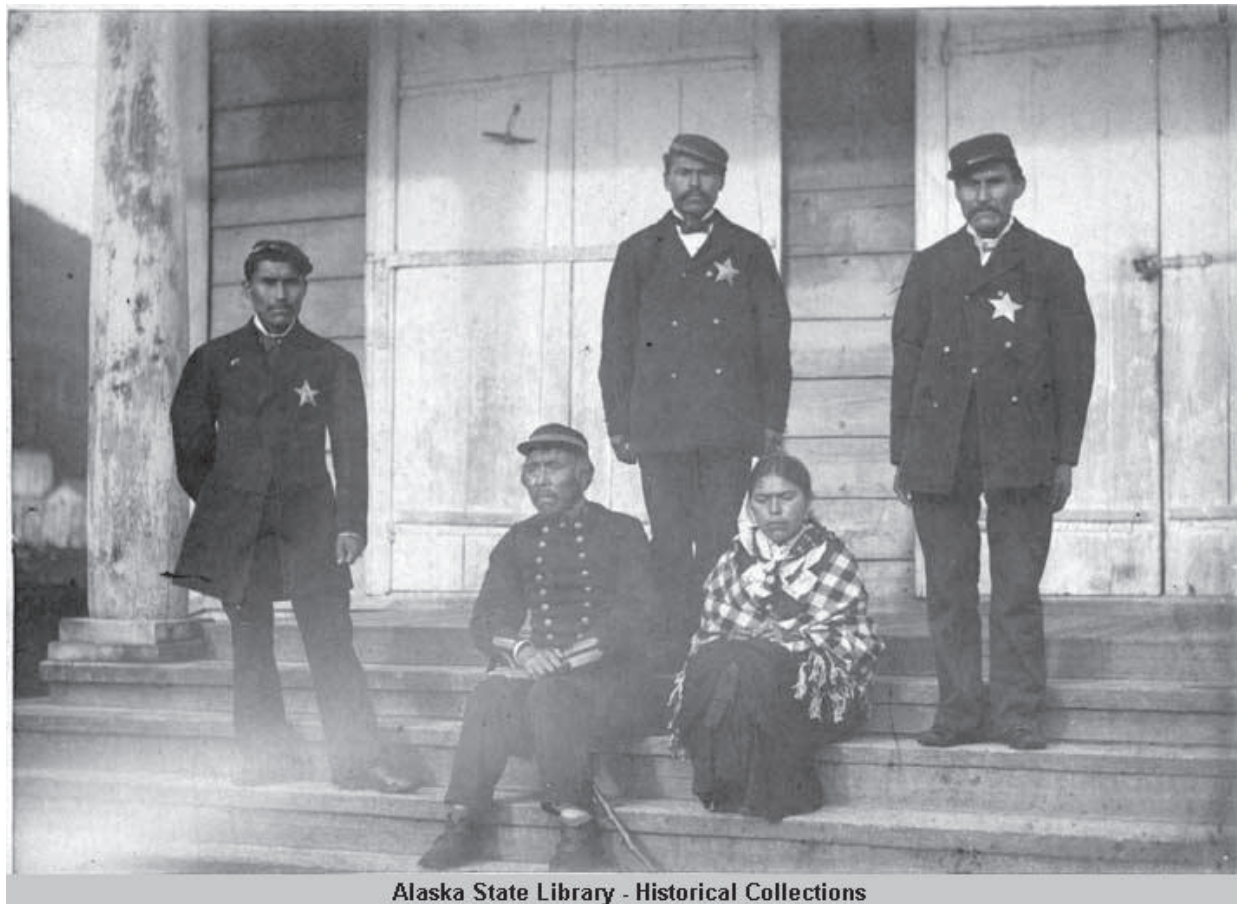
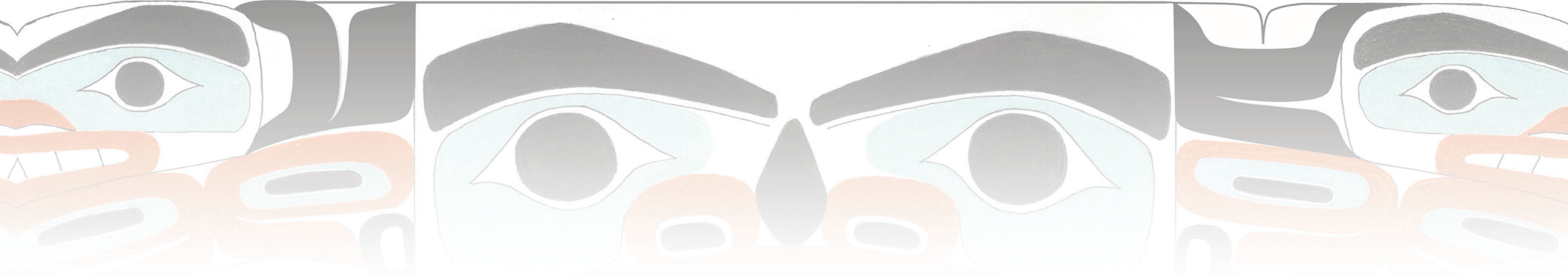
KU.ÉEX'



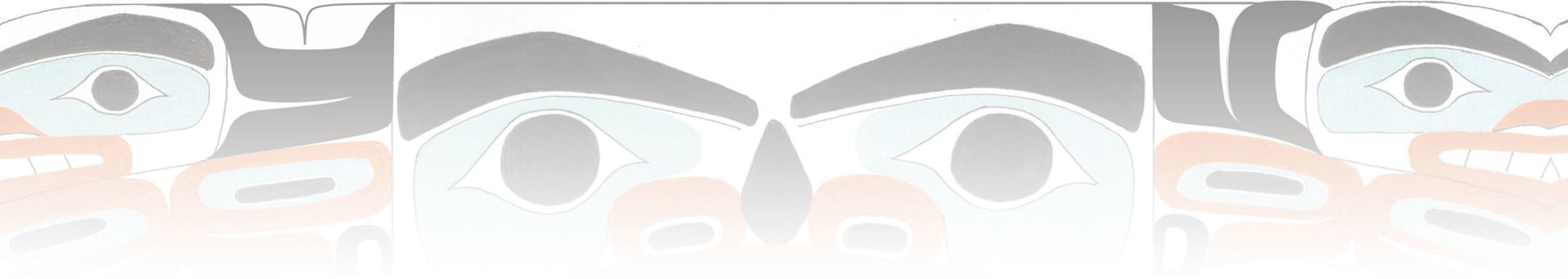
Sealaska Heritage Institute



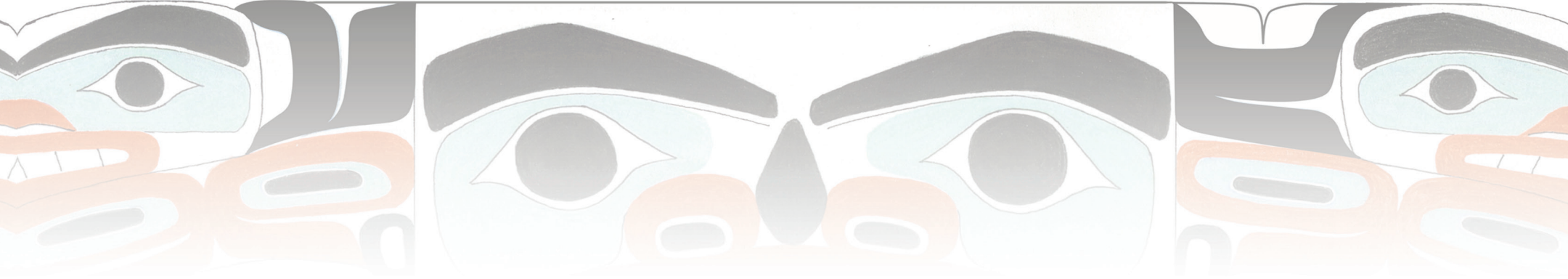
SEALASKA HERITAGE INSTITUTE

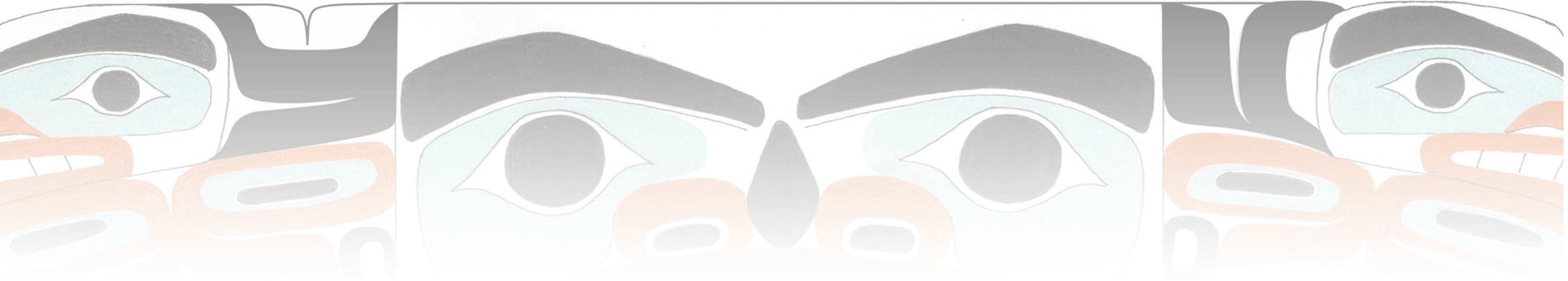


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