

Abstr. Bynon: record of a feast (1916-18) <sup>about</sup> held when the ruins of the house of ni-sna-we', g. ludzaus chief, fell to the ground.

Date  
1918?

The house, on HBC property, while not the largest, had the largest timbers. The feast was held as if in sorrow, to all the men of the nation. The chief addressed them:

"Today I am crying, and I want to show my sorrow to all the people of the Tsimshian nation. I want them to see why I and all my tribe are sorry. You all know that house, the house that sheltered the chiefs before me, and cost much wealth to erect. It has fallen down, and is now a thing of the past."

After the feast, the leading lakage't, ni-spi'ns, gave the history of the house:-

"When the chief of the g. ludzaus wanted to build a house ~~to~~ to shelter all the royal chiefs of the tribe, they planned a house that was different from those of other chiefs. The beams were to be the largest of any house; all were in favour of this. Then all of the tribe were called together. The g. anha'ds, the largest group in the g. ludzaus, were given the task of getting one of the timbers, and the rest of the tribe, g. spawudwa'ds, laxski'k, and laxki'bu went after the other. There was much rivalry as to who would be the first to bring out their timber.

The g. anha'ds ~~went~~ went to Finlayson Island, just opposite the village. The rest of the tribe went to Work Channel. The g. anha'ds found the tree they wanted and started to cut it down, the young men doing the cutting, and the older men composing songs which they would use if they got their timber to the village first. The young men burnt the tree down, then cleaned and shaved it. Then "they all stood together

Speech

Speech

The building of the house

and then they packed this tree to the beach, where they left it. The next day they started off for the village with their big timber, and saw that they would land first, so they prepared for a feast. The others took two days to get their stick to the water and another day to get it to the village, and as they approached they were met by the g.arha'do people and songs were sung, and all were invited to the g.arha'do feast.

The g.iludza'uo then counselled and decided they would need help in raising the beams into position. They asked the men of all of the other tribes to raise one, and they (the g.iludza'uo) would raise the other. There would be a competition to see who could get their beam up first. The g.iludza'uo won, taking only one day to get their timber up; the others took two days.

(The method: first one end was raised, propped up. Crossed sticks, like the letter X, were placed under the raised end, and the people lifted with these sticks until they had one end in place. The other end was raised in the same way).

When the house was completed, the greatest feast of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> kind ever given in the village was held. The people named the house wəlm'i'sət kays'tsk "where spawns coppers", and on its front were painted many small coppers, one for each copper owned by the chief of the house. Inside the house at the back was a partition, screening the private quarters of the royal chiefs. Here the nephews <sup>and neices</sup> of the royal chiefs were kept until they assumed their higher positions. Here too the kala'it kept and blew the naxnoxx whistles (which were never blown in public, and lost their supernatural powers if

The house

blown by any but the kalait.). This back portion was never open to the public but was always kept guarded. On the 8 posts in the house were carvings of the mɔdi:k (head only), and at the rear of the house there was a painting the same as the one at the front.

Feast  
organization

All the members of the tribe contributed to the feast, both in food and in wealth (all the best furs). Canoes were sent to the qitxata and all of the other Tsimshian tribes to invite the guests. The chiefs of the tribes who had the gao'a myth and who came from Imlaham contributed to the feast and helped in the preparations and sewing.

As the canoes of the guests arrived, the men of the qitludzán met them, carried the canoe into the house and burned it on the fire. All the visiting chiefs were treated in this way. Oolichan grease was also burned. The invited chiefs then attempted to "put the fire out" but were unsuccessful. [?]. Then all the people were given food, and then all the guests received gifts. Each chief whose canoe had been burned received a new one, and with it, valuable furs.

At this time the house assumed the name.

Though gone and in ruins, the house is still kept alive. At the [present] feast ~~the~~ it was announced that the present house of the qitludzan chief would bear the name, but gifts were not distributed. (Beynon believes that this was left for another day when a great feast will be given, probably during the winter months).