

Ulkatcho First Nation

The Ulkatcho are a subgroup of the Carrier (Dakelh) people. They share traditional territory with the Nuxalk, the Kluskus, the Chilcotin and the Kimsquit people. In the 1950s, the Nation moved to Anahim Lake.

Right:
On the only wagon road in the Bella Coola Valley, circa 1922. *Canadian Museum of History, Harlan Smith Collection, 56922.*

A Blend of Cultures



Ulkatcho means 'people of the fat of the land'. Traditionally, they relied on the animals of the plateau for food, clothing, and shelter, using woodland caribou in much the same way as the plains peoples used bison. They moved with the seasons to the best trapping, hunting, and fishing spots. They would fish in the lakes and rivers on the Chilcotin Plateau in the summer, and in the rivers near the coast in the fall.

The beginning of the fur trade meant families spent more time trapping on the plateau instead of wintering in the Bella Coola Valley.

The seasonal round brought the Ulkatcho into regular contact with both coastal and plains peoples, and there have been many intermarriages with both the Nuxalk and the Chilcotin.

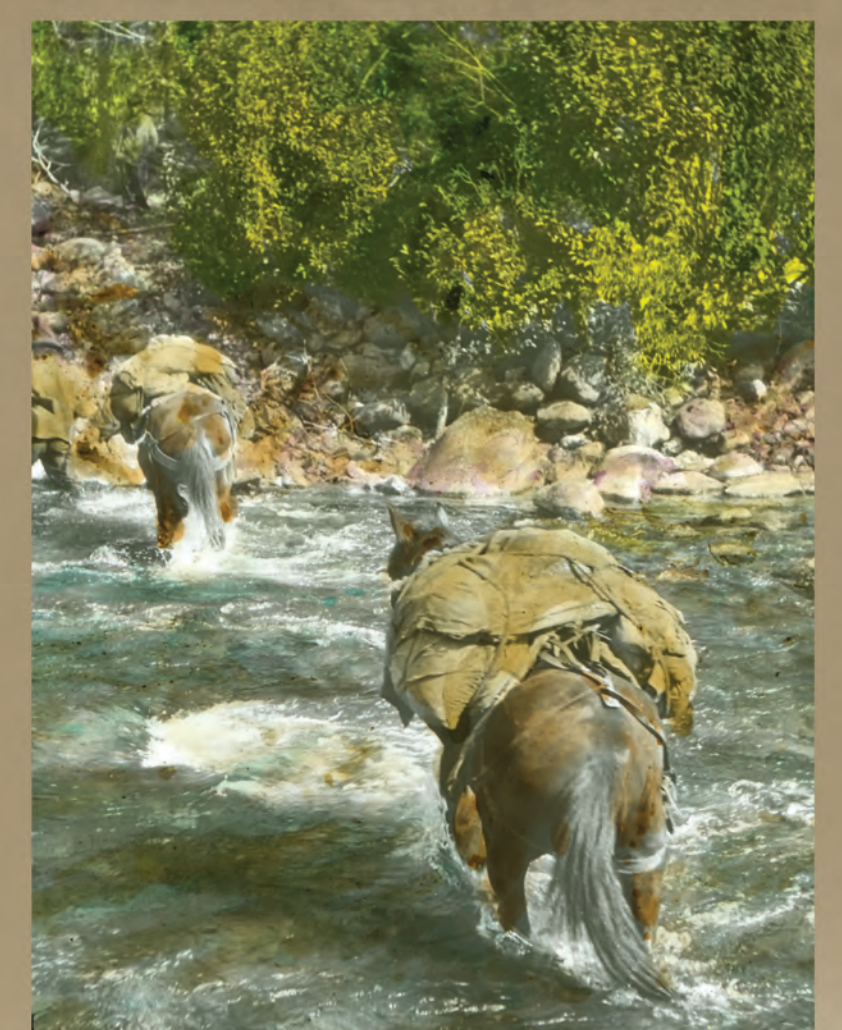
Above:
An Ulkatcho-Carrier family with a wagon load of freight on the wharf at Bella Coola, 1924. They would drive the wagons to the end of the road, then pack the freight over trails to the plateau. *Canadian Museum of History, Harlan Smith Collection, 61814*

Below:
A group of Ulkatcho-Carrier people at their temporary camp near Bella Coola, 1924. Charlie West on horseback, Chief Quinas with hat near left, standing, Alexie with cap to the right. *Canadian Museum of History, Harlan Smith Collection, 61852.*

The Ulkatcho Grease Trade



The Ulkatcho and other Carrier people used a complex network of trading trails, known as 'grease trails'. Eulachon are small ocean-going fish that migrate into coastal rivers. Their grease was a valuable commodity for food and for tanning hides. The Ulkatcho carried caribou, moose, and mountain goat meat and hides down into the Valley, and returned with grease, which they traded to interior Nations.



Images clockwise from top left:
Jennie West, a Chilcotin woman from Ulkatcho, weaving a cradle, 1920. The Ulkatcho and other Carrier people are known for their weaving. *Canadian Museum of History, Harlan Smith Collection, 48964.*

Fording the river near Burnt Bridge with supplies, 1922. *Canadian Museum of History, Harlan Smith Collection, 55756 LS.*

Jennie West, wife of Charlie West, with camping gear for a two-day berry-picking trip with her little girl. *Canadian Museum of History, Harlan Smith Collection, 55769.*

Ulkatcho man backpacking eulachon oil, July 1922. *Canadian Museum of History, Harlan Smith Collection, 55694*



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