

CANOES JOURNEY THE WATERWAYS

The canoe holds a central place in traditional Northwest Native communities. It connects peoples across the waters—for fishing, trading and visiting. The canoe displayed above carried Kwakwaka'wakw workers from Vancouver Island to Puget Sound to pick hops. The canoe was purchased from Chief Jonathan Whonnock by Caroline McGilvra Burke.

In 2002, a new canoe was built by the Whonnock family to replicate this canoe:

“When the white man came and wanted our people to have Christian names, Jonathan Whonnock refused to purchase a name. One of his names was Wa'nukw, which means ‘owner of a river,’ and so that became his surname. So, out of respect for him and the fact that it was a family name, we call our canoe Wa'nukw.”

DON SVANVIK, 'NAMGIS (Kwakwaka'wakw)

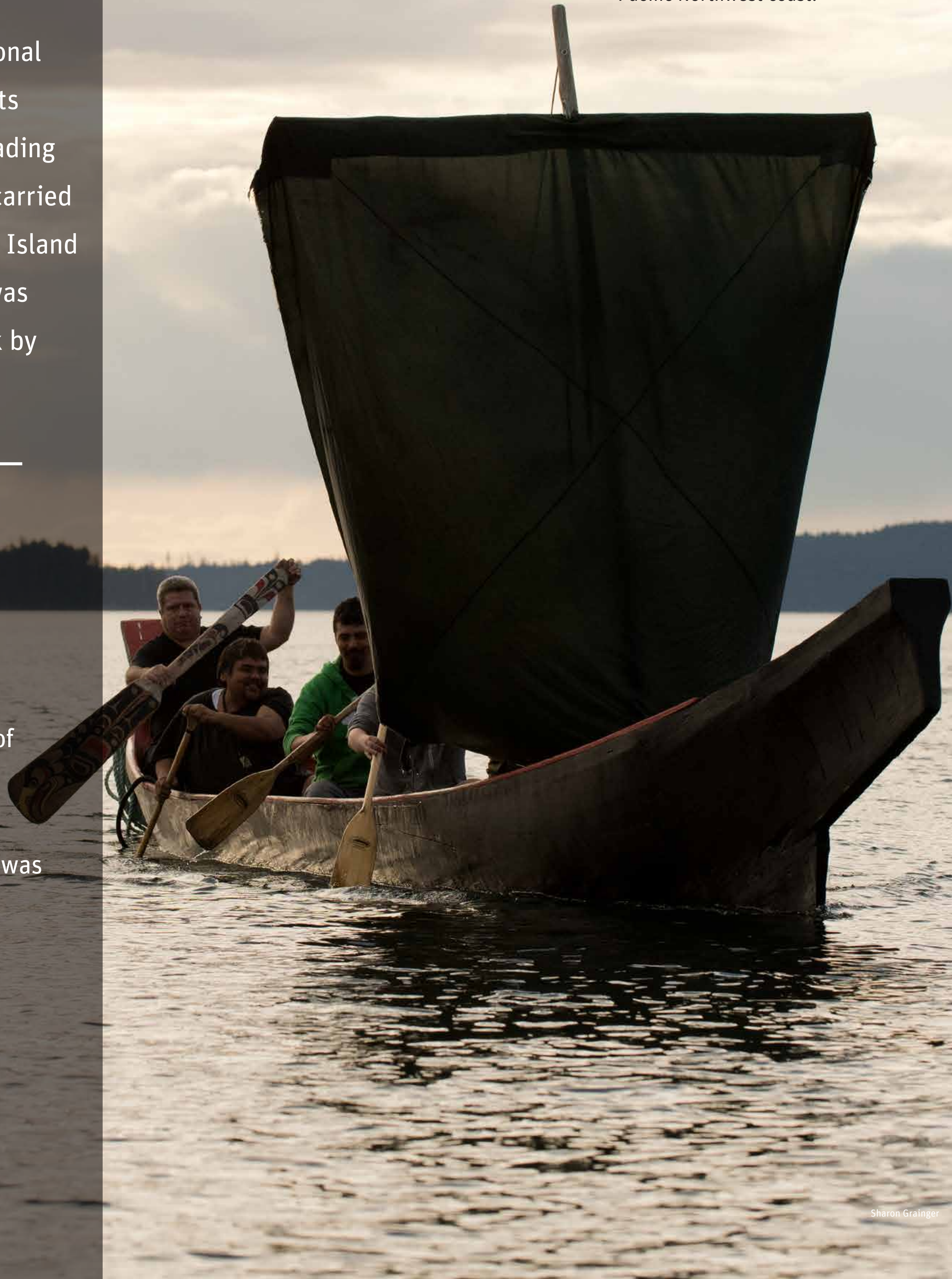
Canoe

Whonnock family, Kwakwaka'wakw
Late 19th century
Wood, paint

On the bow of this boat, an eagle figure holds a salmon tightly in each claw.

1-1963
Caroline McGilvra Burke Collection

The Wa'nukw canoe carries one of the 'Namgis canoe families each summer as part of Canoe Journeys—an annual canoe gathering of Indigenous nations and communities along the Pacific Northwest coast.



Sharon Grainger

