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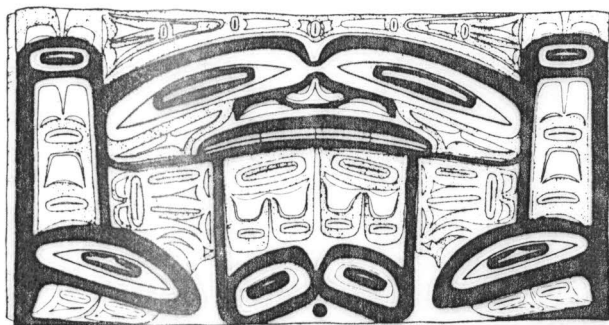
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✓ HAIDA BURIAL PRACTICES: THREE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXAMPLES

The Gust Island Burial Shelter
The Skungo Cave, North Island
Mass Burials from TanuGEORGE F. MACDONALD

THE GUST ISLAND BURIAL SHELTER: PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

JEROME S. CYBULSKI

National Museum of Man
National Museums of Canada
Ottawa, March, 1973Musée national de l'Homme
Musées nationaux du Canada
Ottawa, Mars, 1973

preserved at both ends of the tomb.

The covering planks were removed and recording began with the western sub-chamber. The boxes in this area differed considerably from those from Gust Island or Kiusta. With few exceptions they all showed evidence of European influence in their construction and hardware. At least seven individuals were resting in the sub-chamber in boxes with nailed corners and hinged lids. The dimensions of the box floor averaged 21" wide by 36" long, almost a foot longer than the longest ones from the burial caves. The longer boxes allowed the bodies to be less tightly flexed but some flexing was still necessary.

The large eastern chamber, twenty six feet by ten feet, contained approximately ninety individuals, not including skulls which had been thrown out of the ground. Slightly more than one hundred individuals had originally been interred in the tomb. Between twelve and fifteen feet from the eastern end two decorated boxes were encountered. One was a typical late nineteenth century painted and carved chest. The other was decorated on the front with the head of a beaver gnawing a stick carved in high relief (Pl. 25).

Between the carved chests and the eastern end of the pit, the burials were for the most part flexed within leather covered steamer trunks that had been purchased in Victoria or at Port Simpson. Even the few wooden boxes appeared to be factory-made and were painted blue-green or red. Most of the boxes were locked and were not opened. The contents of those that had come apart or had loose lids were examined but none had grave goods associated with them.

Throughout the entire burial pit, however, hundreds of loose faceted blue glass beads were found. They appeared to have been scattered in the pit since none were tightly clustered as they would have been if strings of beads had been placed in the tomb.

A second tomb of much smaller dimensions was found just to the east of the large one. Again it had been opened and some of the contents scattered. It was about seven feet square and three feet