

Rainbow Creek Dancers

Robert Davidson – Clip 6

The first potlatch for a town chief in my lifetime was in 1978 and I remember Reg was so excited - the first time he danced was at that potlatch - and he would say "hey Robert sing another one" so he could dance and I only knew three songs, I said "I sang them all". It didn't happen [until] about two years later ...the idea of forming a group was never formalized; we just gradually grew to that point. A friend of mine, Art Thompson, was having a potlatch and we were invited to sing and dance at his potlatch. We worked really hard in 1980, just a few of us came together, and that was the birth of the Rainbow Creek. At that time we called ourselves the Urban Haidas after the Urban Cowboy movie.

We started off with two, three songs, three dances that we learned from my grandmother. It seemed like the more we sang, the more we danced. Some were natural dancers, so they would spontaneously dance like an old person; there was no coaching, we didn't see those elders dance. My grandmother would look at them; "wow" she'd be surprised. It's almost like we had this connection to a cosmic knowledge. We were intuitive. We were in tune with that ancient knowledge. In 1989 I hosted

another feast in Massett, a two day feast called *Every Year the Salmon Come Back* and for years I'd been thinking about how to give thanks to the river, how to give thanks to the salmon and so I created this huge salmon mask, and created a song for it. At the feast we danced that dance. We were very proud of it. One elder said, "wow I haven't seen that dance danced for a long time."