

# ***Chenega Diaries: Stories and Voices of Our Past***

## Classroom Resources

### **Secondary Lesson**

Governance

### **Program Segments**

1. Life in Chenega
9. Looking Back at Life in Chenega

<b>Book Segments</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Elder Recollections: Steambath Brotherhood, Chenega Chiefs, Electing Leaders	283-285
Nickey Kompkoff diary entry, November 7, 1944	27
Markey Selanoff diary entry, November 7, 1944	27

**Themes:** government, civics, elections, voting, participation

**Content area:** History, Government

### **Learning Standards:**

A.1, A.7, C.2

### **Objectives**

Students will:

- Explain why a governing body is important to a community.
- Identify and write to local leaders.
- Recognize their role in the community as future voters.
- Compare local government structure to a tribal council.
- Determine which responsibilities are handled by the local, state, and national government.

### **Anticipatory set/Background**

Is it possible to live without governance? Though the Chenega community was small and accustomed to working together to survive, they established a council to provide leadership and make decisions for the community.

Students are subject to a variety of “governments”—the rules set by their parents, the policies set by the school, and the laws established locally and nationally. Students may not recognize the daily activities that directly affect their lives and how they can influence the actions of people in power. By introducing the function and structure of the local government, students can understand the importance of their participation in its processes.

## Teaching Ideas

1. Ask students if it is possible for a community to live without governance. Discuss why a council was necessary even in a community as small and cooperative as Chenega. Discuss the different governing bodies in Chenega such as the church, the council, the chiefs, and the PTA.
2. Create a flow chart to help students understand the local governance in their town. Explain the role of the mayor and assembly in appointing and approving people for important roles such as fire chief, police chief, school board, health and human services director, and so on. Guide students to understand that voters have an impact by voting, thereby choosing who they feel are best qualified to be a mayor or assembly member. They can also tell the mayor and assembly who they feel are best qualified for certain jobs by calling or writing letters. Emphasize that voters do have an influence.
3. Write letters to local representatives and have students describe local issues that are personally important to them.
4. Read a list of responsibilities and have students determine whether they belong to the local, state, or national government or if they are shared. For example, the local government is responsible for elections, roads, utilities, public safety, education, and parks and recreation. However, in emergency situations, the federal government may step in to assist with public safety. Local and state governments work together to provide public schooling.
5. Have students choose a Native American tribe and research the structure of its tribal council. Compare and contrast its structure to that of the local government.

# ***Chenega Diaries: Stories and Voices of Our Past***

## Classroom Resources

### **Secondary Lesson**

Learning from Elders

### **Program Segments**

1. Opening
2. Life in Chenega
3. Hunting and Fishing
9. Looking Back at Life in Chenega

<b>Book Segments</b>	<b>Pages</b>
John Poling diary entry, October 6, 1945	146
Letter from John Poling to Lankershim Elementary School	161
"Bidarkas" by Wally Brizgaloff	225
Photographs	144-145
Elder Recollections: Daily Life: Modern Conveniences, Advice to Future Generations, Community and Working Together, Memories: The Earthquake	253-255, 263-264, 279-281, 255-258

**Themes:** tradition, oral history, lifestyle, technology, change

**Content area:** Social Studies, Language Arts, Science

### **Learning Standards:**

A.2, A.3, A.6, B.2, B.4, C.1, D.1, D.2, D.3, D.4, E.1, E.2, E.5, E.8

### **Objectives**

Students will:

- Interview elders in their communities.
- Debate the role of technology as a creator or divider of communities.
- Simulate life without modern technology.
- Explain the importance of the Bidarkas to the Chenega way of life.
- Create an oral history.

### **Anticipatory set/Background**

"Things aren't the way they used to be." "Those were the good old days." "Kids are different today." People of older generations speak with nostalgia of a youth that was simpler, slower, and friendlier. Today, modern technology allows people to connect instantly, yet some say society is more detached than ever.

Elders play an important role in a community. By mentoring youth, sharing what they have learned, and teaching about contributions they have made, Elders promote pride in one's heritage and preserve history. In the village of Chenega, parents taught children to hunt, fish, cook, and care for families. "Back then we did have to help each other to survive," recalls Chenega Elder Mary Ann Kompkoff.

### **Teaching Ideas**

1. Have students ask a grandparent, or an adult the age of a grandparent, if they could speak to future generations, what would they like them to know? Compare the responses to those of the Chenega elders.
2. Have a debate regarding the role of technology as a creator or divider of communities.
3. Challenge students to "unplug" from modern for a week by not using cell phones or the internet or watching television. Ask them how they handled their interactions with their families and friends.
4. Have students find out how bidarkas (or baidarkas) are constructed and build models. Research the significance of the bidarka to the Chenega way of life.
5. Create an oral history. Have students write questions, then interview and record each other. Students should focus on their own experiences, not folklore, rumors, gossip, or hearsay.

# ***Chenega Diaries: Stories and Voices of Our Past***

## Classroom Resources

### **Secondary Lesson**

A Subsistence Way of Life

### **Program Segments**

1. Opening
2. Life in Chenega
3. Hunting & Fishing

<b>Book Segments</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Letters from John Poling to the General Superintendent, US Department of the Interior	44, 149
Letter from John Poling to the Seattle Fur Exchange	84
Letter from John Poling to Lankershim Elementary School	161
Letters from John Poling to his family	179, 196-200
“Bidarkas” by Wally Brizgalloff	225
“Geography” by Mikey Eleshansky	226
Elder Recollections: Daily Life: Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping, Homekeeping: Preserving Food, Daily Chores: Preparing for Winter, Advice to Future Generations	240-249, 251-252, 298-299, 263-264
Photos	130-132, 144-145
Maps	127-129

**Themes:** survival, economy, wildlife, subsistence, resources, geography

**Content area:** Science, Social Studies, Geography, Economics

### **Learning Standards:**

C.1, D.2, E.1, E.2

### **Objectives**

Students will:

- Identify plant and animal wildlife in and around the village of Chenega.
- Evaluate the benefits and hardships of a subsistence economy.
- Describe cultures that led a subsistence way of life.
- Describe geographical features and manmade structures in the village of Chenega.

### **Anticipatory set/Background**

For more information on the Chenega Diaries project, visit us at [www.ChenegaDiaries.com](http://www.ChenegaDiaries.com)

The dictionary definition of “subsistence” emphasizes poverty and economic need. The Native view is that subsistence is a way of life that enriches the close relationship between the people and the resources of the land and sea. The people of Chenega were part of a subsistence economy in which their survival depended on what they hunted, fished, or grew. The Chenega elders don’t recall themselves as poor. “Back then everybody was rich. They didn’t need money to be rich,” recalls Elder Paul Selanoff.

### **Teaching Ideas**

1. Make a list of the benefits and hardships of a subsistence economy.
2. Consider different views of a subsistence economy. Ask students “In your opinion, did the people of Chenega live in poverty and economic need? Why or why not? Which definition applies to Chenega and the survival of its people?”
3. Have students make a short photo documentary about other cultures that led a subsistence way of life.
4. Create a Chenega Field Guide detailing local plant and animal wildlife.
5. Study the maps and photos of the village. Create a salt map that includes the contours of the land and coast. Use materials or board game pieces to represent structures in the community and use toothpicks to make labels for the church, school, steam baths, smokehouses, and residents’ homes. Trace the path of the villagers fishing expeditions around Crab Bay and Nellie Juan.