

# The Strong People - nəx<sup>w</sup>słáyəm

*Told by Beatrice Charles, łi?łi?xçə?, as told by Sam Ulmer sway?á?ł  
Watch on YouTube in Klallam and English at: [www.youtube.com/KlallamLanguage](http://www.youtube.com/KlallamLanguage)*

One day there was a big gathering at Elwha, ?é?łx<sup>w</sup>ə?. They were celebrating building a new longhouse. Many Tribes were invited and traveled many miles to join the festivities. They feasted on salmon, clams, wild berries and other good things from nature. At this gathering they were singing, dancing, playing games and having contests. They wanted to see who was the strongest. They decided to see who could lift a q<sup>w</sup>łáy', log, to the top of a long house that they were building. "Who can lift this big log?" the Klallams asked. All of the guest tribes tried first; each tribe chose their strongest men, but none could lift the big log.

Then it was time for the Klallams. As the Klallams were figuring out how to get the log up so high, they remembered that logs float. So the Klallams began to roll the big log away from their longhouse. All the way down the beach into the water. Then, their strongest young men walked out into the water on both sides of the log. The water was so cold, but the Klallams still walked until in the water until it was up to their shoulders. They let the log float onto their shoulders and walked out of the water still carrying the big log on their shoulders. They carried that big log back up the beach, when they reached the Longhouse, everyone shouted at the same time "ša?šúm', ša?šúm', ša?šúm'!" (Klallam version of ready set go) On the third time they all lifted the log up to the top.

All of the other tribes thought the mighty Klallam must be very strong to put the log up so high and so smart to use the water to first get the log onto their shoulders. They all shouted, "Nəx<sup>w</sup>słáyəm, Nəx<sup>w</sup>słáyəm, Nəx<sup>w</sup>słáyəm!" This means "Strong People."

That was how our people received their name.

