Uncle Jerry’s Canoe

by Nan McNutt

In honor of Jerry Jones, Tulalip canoe carver, and an inspiration to many school children who call him Uncle Jerry.
We paddle far into the middle of the bay, and we laugh together all day long.
So we hook on our life vests and slide the canoe, bow first, into the water.

Tugs of war are a traditional part of July 4th picnics anywhere in the United States. This was true at the Tulalip Indian Reservation too, but here the participants compete in canoes. Such novel adaptations involving games and sports are typical of this transitional period. Tulalip Bay, ca. 1912.
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"I want to be in the canoe, too, Uncle Jerry," I tell Uncle Jerry.
My baby brother loves to climb into Uncle Jerry's canoe. "Being inside the canoe is really fun, isn't it?," says Uncle Jerry, looking out at the water.

"Baby brother, don't climb into the canoe!," I say, as I try pulling him out of the canoe. "Nobody is supposed to climb into the canoe when it isn't in the water."
“Uncle Jerry! Uncle Jerry!” I yell as I run to the house. “Baby brother won’t get out of the canoe.”

Uncle Jerry laughs. “Well, what are we going to do about this problem?”