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Two Sides of the Bridge

Growing up in Sitka there was and still is always activities and sports to go and watch. As a kid this is what I wanted to do everyday, I didn't care where or when the games were, but I would do a thousand chores so I could go and watch any one of them. There were two places I could choose to go and watch, Mount Edgecumbe High School and Sitka High School, my eldest brother, who was a junior at the time, played Varsity basketball at Sitka High School so of course I would instantly want to go there first, but if there wasn't a game going on at Sitka I would go to Mt. Edgecumbe and cheer on who ever was playing that day.

My brother's team rivals here in town and in the Southeast in general where the Mt. Edgecumbe Braves. He was always talking down about them, saying how the school was full of Natives, and that the Wolves would take the Braves any day in any sport, even though he had a quarter Haida in him, and we were a 4a school at the time. He was convinced that he would never go there unless he absolutely had to. Listening to not only my brother says these things but also the rest of his basketball team, while I was growing up I began to believe them as well.

Eighth grade year is a hard year for any kid, it's the time when you are almost an adult, going up to the high school. Well for me it was hard for one major reason, my best friend for all three years, going to Blatchley Middle School said that her dad was making her go to Mt. Edgecumbe because he is the volleyball coach and P.E. teacher there. Now her family is the whitest family you could ever meet, she has blonde hair and blue eyes. Her family may be Native American, but there is no way that her family has any Alaska Native in their family. To me this was the worst news I had gotten all of our eighth grade year. That summer after eighth grade year, my friend and I got even closer. Having to say goodbye to my dear friend was horrific.

I convinced her that because we were going to different, rivaling schools we couldn't hangout, because that was what I grew up thinking, and being told. I thought this up until halfway through sophomore year; this was when my father began to work at Mt. Edgecumbe. After he began working there I would go over to Mt. Edgecumbe and use their gym because it was down time for basketball, and I had nothing better to do but get better, and hangout with my dad. I slowly began to warm up to the people at Mt. Edgecumbe as I started to make friends at my rival "native" school. When my friends at Sitka High asked me what I did that weekend, on Monday I would make some weird story up of why they weren't able to get a hold of me, I would say I was camping or fishing or my phone blew up.

Slowly but surely I began to make more friends at Mt. Edgecumbe, and my best friend from middle school is still a great friend of mine today. I started to mix my Mt. Edgecumbe friends with my Sitka High friends and sure enough they started to get along as well. Looking back on my years and my brother's years of high school I can still see that the two rivaling schools are coming together in some ways. I am a senior at Sitka High School this year, I am a starter on the Lady Wolves basketball team and not only I but also my team has made friends with the Lady Braves basketball team at Mt. Edgecumbe. We are still both rivaling schools in the 3A division of Southeast division, and we still will fight to the death against each other off the court, but once the game is

over we can be friends and go to each other's dances and just hangout and be friends, just like how we can be friends with the people at Sitka High School too.

The way that Native and White have looked at each other for so many years, is quite sad; the town of Sitka has been separated Natives and Whites not only in the schools, but also in the community for a very long time, you can see this in the fishing industry were the Natives believe that fishing should be cut down, but also in the hunting. I think that now the town's people can grow together, we aren't as separated as we once were before, and I think in the long run, this will benefit all the people of Sitka, and we can begin working together as a team, instead of two rivaling schools fighting to the death every chance we get to, just to get the last piece of fish left in the ocean.