

# LOCK, STOCK AND BARREL

## Nisga'a Ownership Statement

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**Nisga'a Lisims Government**

*Soyt-K'ilim-Çoot / one heart, one path, one nation*

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July 29, 2014

Members of Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a

Re: Lock, Stock and Barrel: Nisga'a Ownership Statement

In the early 1980s, the Nisga'a Nation, through wahlin Sim'oogit Hleek, the late James Gosnell, participated in the Constitutional talks hosted by the federal government. In a probing dialogue between James and then Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Mr. Trudeau asked James, "What does Aboriginal Title mean?" It was then that James so powerfully asserted that the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada own the land "Lock, Stock and Barrel".

In accordance with the wisdom and recommendation of the members of the Council of Elders, the NLG Executive unanimously agreed that we reprint the publication from our archives entitled, "*Lock, Stock and Barrel: Nisga'a Ownership Statement*" to members of Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a (WSN) for your edification.

To comprehend where we are today as the Nisga'a Nation and our long-standing aspirations in respect of sustainable prosperity, it is important to know where we came from. *Lock, Stock and Barrel* will provide you with a comprehensive insight into the position of our forefathers dating back to first contact and through the generations from the 1913 Land Committee to its re-birth through the Nisga'a Tribal Council in the 1950s, and in our position in the Calder Case. Remarkably, our position has remained consistent through the generations.

As told in these pages, we had always sought a just and equitable resolution to the land question through negotiation of a treaty which would recognize our ownership and interests in our lands, and our right of self-government over our lands and ourselves.

On May 11, 2000, we accomplished what our ancestors fought for when the Nisga'a Final Agreement took effect. We own 2,000 sq km of Nisga'a Lands, and have constitutionally protected interests in 26,000 sq km of land in the Nass Area. Under our treaty we have clearly defined rights of law-making

authority over our citizenship, our fisheries, our hunting, our forests, our language, our culture, our education, just to name a few areas of authority. This right of self-government is constitutionally protected under our Treaty as was upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2013.

For the future, we as decision-makers will be challenged with tough, complex choices that we must make on behalf of the Nisga'a Nation. As the late Justice Josiah Wood once reminded this House, "As trustees of the powers vested in the WSN, you must keep in the forefront of your mind at all times the interests of the Nation, and ensure that your actions and decisions are made solely in furtherance of what you reasonably believe to be the Nation's best interests."

We should always be mindful of where we came from and the dream of our forbearers to have our Aboriginal Title recognized so we can determine our own destiny. We are living their dream now.

I strongly hope you enjoy reading the pages of *Lock, Stock and Barrel* and that it ignites a further interest in our rich history.

Si'aamhl wilsim'

Respectfully,

NISGA'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "H. Mitchell Stevens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "H." and last name "Stevens" being more distinct than the middle name "Mitchell".

Sim'oogit K'aween

H. Mitchell Stevens, President

# LOCK STOCK AND BARREL

Nisga'a Ownership Statement



SIM'OOGIT HLEEK  
CHIEF JAMES GOSNELL

*President 1973-1988*

*Born: March 18, 1924*

*Died: July 30, 1988*

## CONTENTS

LOCK, STOCK AND BARREL 5

APPENDIX ONE 31

APPENDIX TWO 43

APPENDIX THREE 85

APPENDIX FOUR 91

APPENDIX FIVE 97

APPENDIX SIX 103

APPENDIX SEVEN 109

*About the title: In a meeting between Rod Robinson and the late James Gosnell, James recalled a conversation he had with an acquaintance of his, Hugh Conn, who described to him: "At one time, you people owned this land and everything on it — lock, stock and barrel." James told Rod that he would borrow those words because the Nisga'a people do in fact own the land, the resources and even the air — lock, stock and barrel!*

Note: All Nisga'a names, common spelling at the time.



Chief Timothy Derrick of Aiyansh, Nass River

SOME OF US  
ARE AWAKE AND UP AND DOING;  
OTHERS SEEM TO BE ASLEEP,  
LYING DOWN AND DOING NOTHING.  
BY AND BY WHEN THE HAPPY DAY COMES,  
AND WE WHO HAVE LABORED ARE REJOICING  
IN THE FRUITS OF VICTORY,  
THOSE SLEEPERS WILL WAKE UP AND CLAIM  
TO HAVE A SHARE IN THE HARVEST.  
IF THOSE PEOPLE WANT TO SHARE  
IN THE GOOD THINGS COMING,  
LET THEM JOIN WITH US IN THE WORK.

*Timothy Derrick*  
*Sim'oogit K'eexkw*  
*August 1919*

LOCK, STOCK AND BARREL



*Nass Lake, headwaters of the Nass River*



## LOCK STOCK AND BARREL

We are Nisga'a – the people who live in the Nass River valley of northwestern British Columbia. We have owned this land since time immemorial. We own it today. In these pages, we reaffirm our title to it.

Since time immemorial, we have lived in the Nass as members of an elaborate and complex society with our own cultural traditions, language, territorial boundaries and systems of government and law. Despite the arrival of Europeans and the introduction of their traditions, we remain a distinct people with inherent rights of self-determination.

These rights arise from ancestry, from the land and from the Creator. Land and resource management was traditionally conducted through a system of family-owned territories in which the use of, and access to, natural resources was regulated by the head of each family, or house. Some 60 houses held territories and access by each Nisga'a was guaranteed through complex kinship relations or reciprocity arrangements as determined by the unwritten body of laws and social customs that governs Nisga'a behavior – Ayuukhl Nisga'a. Together, these family territories form a contiguous block of land that comprises our territory. Although, by tradition, control over each house was unilaterally exercised by the owning family, in the early years of this century our hereditary chiefs agreed that all land was to be held in common ownership for all the Nisga'a. Thus, the land itself is held as a 'common bowl' for everyone.

The Nass River and its watershed – from glacial headwaters to Pacific estuary – provided the food, fur, tools, plants, medicine, timber and fuel that enabled us to develop one of the most sophisticated cultures in North America. Since the last great Ice Age, we traveled, fished and settled along all 380 kilometres of the river and its tributaries.

In Ayuukhl Nisga'a – our ancient oral code – there are many stories describing the river and its special places. Our homeland – all 24,862 square kilometres of it – straddles a spectacular route to Yukon and Alaska from Canada and northward to the glacier-fed lakes of Meziadin and Bowser. From the Skeena Mountains in the northeast to the intersection of the Alaska Panhandle and the B.C. coast, this is Nisga'a land.

The Nass supports all five species of Pacific salmon, the most important currency we have ever known. Rich salmon runs were harvested in a manner that

allowed us to build our villages and develop a far-flung trading empire that reached deep into the Interior and ranged up and down the coast. Besides salmon and steelhead, the Nass is home to the oolichan, a finger-sized member of the smelt family which is a mainstay of our culture and an historic staple of Nisga'a trade. In earlier times we shared our oolichan grounds with other tribes – Gitksan and Tsimshian – hungry after long winters.

For more than 10,000 years, we have thrived in this land, organizing ourselves into four clans – Gisk'aast (Killer Whale), Laxgibuu (Wolf), Ganada (Raven) and Laxsgiik (Eagle). We still hunt, fish and trap. But today we are also lawyers, administrators, politicians, priests, teachers, linguists, loggers, commercial fishermen, carvers, dancers, nurses, architects, technicians and business people. Our population now numbers about 6,000. Approximately 2,500 people live in the Nisga'a villages of Gingolx (Kincolith), Lakalzap (Greenville), Gitwinksihlkw (Canyon City) and Gitlakdamiks (New Aiyansh). Another 3,500 live elsewhere in Canada and around the world. At present, we are the only First Nation in B.C. formally negotiating land question with the federal and provincial governments.

The Nisga'a Land Question will be settled, of that we are certain. We are prepared to do whatever is necessary to bring this about. Our elders are teaching us to look inside to find the strength and purity we need. Our young people are coming back from the cities to consult with our elders and to learn from them. They are bringing back home the skills and education we will need to build a new economy in the Nass. We are ready and poised for a new era for the Nisga'a Nation.

By 1993 we had been in formal land claims negotiations with the federal government for almost 20 years, since a split decision by the Supreme Court of Canada opened up the question of aboriginal title. The B.C. provincial government agreed to join negotiations in 1991, reversing its historical stand that aboriginal title was a dead issue. An agreement-in-principle, an important step towards a final agreement in which major issues of jurisdiction and land title would be settled, was to have been signed by March 1993 but that deadline – like so many others – came and went. Still we press on. We are now fine-tuning a blueprint for Nisga'a Government.

Ayuukhl Nisga'a, our ancient code of laws and customs, is primarily the record of our people – our mythology and our image of the world. It is Nisga'a history as told by the people themselves: the creation of the world, the flood, the volcano, the legends behind local topography, the founding of the great families and their crests, the mystical feats of warriors, shamans and spirit beings.





*Ancient petroglyphs on a rock outcrop in the middle of the Nass River*

## P R E - C O N T A C T

Our story goes back beyond recorded history – to a flood, when the glaciers of the Ice Age were melting. Nisga'a legends tell how our ancestors survived on rafts lashed to the mountain tops. To a time when Txeemsim – trickster, miracle worker and pivotal figure of Nisga'a cosmology – came down from his sky home to do the bidding of K'amligihahlhaahl or Chief of Heavens.

Txeemsim was a supernatural being who assumed human and animal forms when the world was still in twilight. Like the Greek god Prometheus, he stole the fire of heaven and brought it back to earth; back to a people huddled in a forbidding, frozen landscape. Txeemsim plays the role of 'transformer' similar to the coyote trickster of the Navaho and the raven of Haida myth. Indeed, Txeemsim is sometimes called 'raven'. To us, Txeemsim displays the best of what humankind should strive for. He's an approachable demi-god, full of human failings, even as he demonstrates how these failings can be conquered. Over time, our ancestors learned that it was in their own best interests to accept moral responsibility. Txeemsim proved that every single action or decision human beings make is actually a moral one — that it will affect others, for good or bad. Over and over, Txeemsim's life proves that selfish behaviour is ultimately destructive for both self and society.

Besides being a storehouse of mythic stories, Ayuukhl Nisga'a is also a sophisticated set of laws that establishes and defines Nisga'a institutions and code of conduct. Under the code, as outlined in Museum Bulletin No. 19, every Nisga'a belongs to a wilp or house which owns its songs, crests, dances, stories and territory. There are now about 60 wilps which own and manage 40 angoskws (family territories) comprising Nisga'a land. All these rights are handed down through matrilineal succession in a ceremony known as the Settlement Feast. Like a deed in a land registry office, the Settlement Feast is a formal registration of title and ownership.





*Pauline Robinson, Eagle clan,  
Sigidimnak' Nits'iits' Gai*

## C O N T A C T

We first met European traders in the latter part of the eighteenth century, scorning British explorer Captain George Vancouver because he had nothing of value to trade for seal fur. The traders were followed by the missionaries, who, with Christian zeal, persuaded the Nisga'a to chop down the totem poles church leaders feared as symbols of idolatry. Working with the government, the church began the 'civilizing' process that wrenched children from their homes and sent them off to learn the white man's culture in residential schools. It was generations before the Church began to understand that it was destroying a vital, dynamic culture different from their own. Today the Christian churches support the Nisga'a and many Nisga'a leaders consider the church one of their strongest allies and supporters.

Later, settlers began making their way up Portland Inlet to the mouth of the Nass, claiming Nisga'a land. The British Columbia colonial government had refused to recognize aboriginal rights before and after it joined in the Confederation of Canada in 1871, and a desultory dialogue began between Victoria and Ottawa. The federal government first insisted the province abide by the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which decreed that treaties must be made with native peoples to take over their land. But Victoria, under pressure from settlers and developers, refused to recognize title, much less to negotiate. In 1884 the federal government outlawed the potlatch – the gift-giving feast that anchored tribal society. The feast was, in essence, the seat of government for the Nisga'a and other West Coast tribes. From 1884 to 1951, attendance at a potlatch was punishable by jail terms of two to six months. By 1920, the Indian Act was amended to require the compulsory attendance of Indian children in schools. The express purpose of the schools was to teach children that their parents' ways of life were 'savage' and that 'civilization' – meaning white society – was their only hope.

In 1920, the Indian Department's deputy superintendent, Duncan Campbell Scott, made it all too clear: "Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question and no Indian department." Until 1948, Indians were expressly denied municipal voting rights. In 1949 they were finally awarded provincial voting rights. It was not until 1961 that they gained a vote – and a voice – in federal elections. All the while we continued to fight. To settle the Land Question, Chief Mountain led the first land claims delegation to Victoria in 1881. It was turned





*Nelson Leeson, Axhlaawaals  
Frog clan, Lakalzap*



*Harry Nyce, Gilseñ  
Eagle clan, Gitwinksihlkw*



aside rudely. A later delegation to Ottawa returned to the Nass with some vague assurances, and Nisga'a Chief Israel Sgat'iin banished the surveyors the provincial government had sent to stake out reserves to pen the Nisga'a in isolated fragments of their ancestral land. The surveyors told him they were going to give us land, and Chief David McKay, Sim'oogit Axhlaawaals, asked how they could give us land that was already ours. "These are our mountains and our river," Chief McKay said. Then he pointed his blunderbuss in the head surveyor's belly, took away the surveying instruments and sent them back downstream.

Of course, the white surveyors came back. Eventually our reserves were laid out as 60 tiny plots making up less than one per cent of our traditional territory. Encountering one rebuff after another, in 1913 we appealed to the highest court in the land by sending an eloquently worded petition to the Privy Council of England. The document, which spelled out our claim to our land, became a rallying cry for other tribes.

In 1916, after sporadic attempts at dialogue with the government, the Nisga'a joined with The Allied Tribes of British Columbia to force government recognition. Then the government cracked down, prohibiting Indian fundraising that effectively quashed all land claims discussion. It was 1951 before the government backed down and repealed this repressive legislation.

Formed in 1955, the Nisga'a Tribal Council united the four Nisga'a clans and their four communities to work towards resolving their land claim. It was, and still is, the tribal group that formed the basis of this identity. Nisga'a Chief Frank Calder, the first Indian to be elected to a legislature in the British Commonwealth when he became a Member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia in 1949, spearheaded this historic initiative.

Elected as first president of the Tribal Council, Calder led the Nisga'a into the next stage of their political evolution. Through its efforts, the council was instrumental in affecting a fundamental shift in federal government policy towards aboriginal peoples.

## THE CALDER CASE

In November 1971, chiefs of the four villages in the Nass valley, together with village elders wearing their traditional sashes, traveled to Ottawa for the hearing of their case in the Supreme Court of Canada. For five days, seven judges heard the argument of the appeal. Then they reserved their decision for 14 months.

Mr. Justice Wilfred Judson, speaking for three judges, found that the Nisga'a, before the coming of the white man, had aboriginal title, a title recognized under English law. But, he went on to say, this title had been extinguished by pre-Confederation enactments of the old colony of British Columbia. Mr. Justice Emmett Hall, speaking for three judges, found that the Nisga'a, before the coming of the white man, had aboriginal title, that it had never been lawfully extinguished, and that this title could be asserted even today.

On this reckoning, the court was tied. The seventh judge dismissed the case on a technicality but did not address the question of aboriginal title. What was significant for aboriginal rights was that all of the six judges who had addressed the main question supported the view that English law, in force in British Columbia when colonization began, had recognized Indian title to the land.

Mr. Justice Judson, in describing the nature of Indian title, concluded: "The fact is that when the settlers came the Indians were there, organized in societies and occupying the land as their forefathers had done for centuries. This is what Indian title means. What they are asserting in this action is that they had a right to continue to live on their lands as their forefathers had lived and that this right has never been lawfully extinguished."

He went on to hold that the old pre-Confederation colony of British Columbia had effectively extinguished the aboriginal title of the Nisga'a.

Mr. Justice Hall, who with two of his colleagues was prepared to uphold the Nisga'a claim, urged that the court should adopt a contemporary view and not be bound by past and mistaken notions about Indians and Indian culture. He said: "What emerges from the... evidence is that the Nisga'a in fact are and were from time immemorial a distinctive cultural entity with concepts of ownership indigenous to their culture and capable of articulation under the common law, having developed their cultures to higher peaks in many respects than in any other part of the continent north of Mexico."

He held that the Nisga'a title could be asserted today. No matter that the province would be faced with innumerable legal tangles. What was right was right.

The Supreme Court's judgment, although it was not handed down until February 1973, came at a timely moment. The election of 1972 had returned the Liberals to power, but as a minority government. To remain in office, the Liberals depended on the goodwill of the opposition parties. So the question of aboriginal title was catapulted into the political arena.

In Parliament, both the Conservatives and the New Democrats insisted that the federal government must recognize its obligation to settle native claims. The all-party Standing Committee on Indian and Northern Affairs passed a motion that approved the principle that a settlement of native claims should be made in regions where treaties had not already extinguished aboriginal title.

On August 8, 1973, Jean Chrétien, then Minister of Indian Affairs, announced that the federal government intended to settle the claims, beginning a process that continues to this day.

#### IRREFUTABLE PROOF

Over the years, the Nisga'a Nation has carefully documented its claim to the territory of the Nass River valley. This documentation, spanning centuries — from oral agreements with neighboring tribes through archival history, all the way to sophisticated, computer-generated mapping — offers irrefutable proof that we have title to our homeland today. Landmarks include the following:

#### THE SKEENA RIVER INDIAN LAND QUESTION COMMITTEE

The Skeena River Indian Land Question Committee had full knowledge of the contents of the Nisga'a Land Petition at the time of its drafting, and it supported the claims and boundaries set forth in the Petition, just as the Nisga'a tribes supported the Gitksan claims to lands embodied by tributaries which flow into the Gitksan territories of the Skeena River. Of note is the fact that up to 1926 the village of Kitwancool was a member and supporter of the B.C. Allied Tribes in its quest for the settlement of the B.C. Indian Land Question. During one of the campaigns for the Nisga'a and Gitksan Land Question Funds, Michael Inspring Bright collected from the Kitwancool people the sum of \$140. In 1926, when the village of





*Bowser Lake*

Kitwancool decided to withdraw its support to the Land Question, it requested that the \$140, which it had contributed to the Fund, be returned to Kitwancool.

The above request was fulfilled by Anthony Adams, who was the Aiyansh Secretary of the local Land Question Committee. The Skeena River Indian Land Question Committee had full knowledge of the contents of the Nisga'a Land Petition at the time of its drafting, and it supported the Land Question and boundaries set forth in the Petition.

#### REAFFIRMATION OF TAHLTAN-NISGA'A BOUNDARY

While Treaty Creek land is now being claimed by the Kitwancool, there is irrefutable evidence that the land belongs to the Nisga'a. This boundary was agreed to between the Nisga'a and Tahltan in 1898 and reaffirmed on two later occasions. In the fall of 1898 the Tahltan Nation and the Nisga'a Nation mutually agreed to the boundary at Treaty Rock at Treaty Creek, to avoid bloodshed. The above-mentioned treaty was reaffirmed in an official meeting between the same two nations in Terrace, B.C., on February 12, 1977, by a motion: Moved by Edward Asp – seconded by Rod Robinson – That a resolution be drafted reaffirming the traditional Tahltan/Nisga'a boundary and agreement at Treaty Rock in 1898. The motion was carried unanimously and maps were then signed. The said resolution as follows was drafted officially at a meeting held in Terrace, B.C., on February 2, 1993:

"We reaffirm the traditional Tahltan-Nisga'a boundary at Treaty Creek, as determined by our forefathers in 1898 and drawn on the map hereto attached, and signed in duplicate by our respective tribal councillors on February 10, 1977, as confirmation thereof." The 1993 resolution was signed by Alvin McKay and Joseph Gosnell Sr. of the Nisga'a Tribal Council and Pat Edzertza and Yvonne Moon of the Tahltan Tribal Council.

#### GREASE TRAIL

To the Nisga'a Nation the oolichan fishery meant four things: survival, wealth, power and sovereignty. That wealth, status and power are all closely related among the Nisga'a is a truism. Hence, those who for one reason or another allowed their families, or tribes, to starve were placed in an extremely difficult and diminished position. Reverend Robert Tomlinson wrote about this matter from Gingolx with

characteristic outrage in 1871. An excerpt reads: "There is a very bad practice among these tribes to take greatest possible advantage of those in distress, while at the same time they endeavor to mislead them by the most audacious statement, viz. that they have a great regard for them, and that if they themselves were not so much better than other people, those in distress would die of starvation. They accompany these statements with gifts of food and clothing. Were you merely to hear and see all this you would suppose that was the case of a noble minded philanthropist assisting some poor unfortunate outcast; but when you come to know that all these gifts have to be repaid by more than twice their value, and that the food sold was sold at more than ten times what it was worth, you would naturally feel shocked. Yet such is the case."

This is the observation of one person looking in, one who does not understand the culture of the Nisga'a. Here are the qualities of the Nisga'a: Since time immemorial, we have welcomed visitors with whom we have shared our resources.

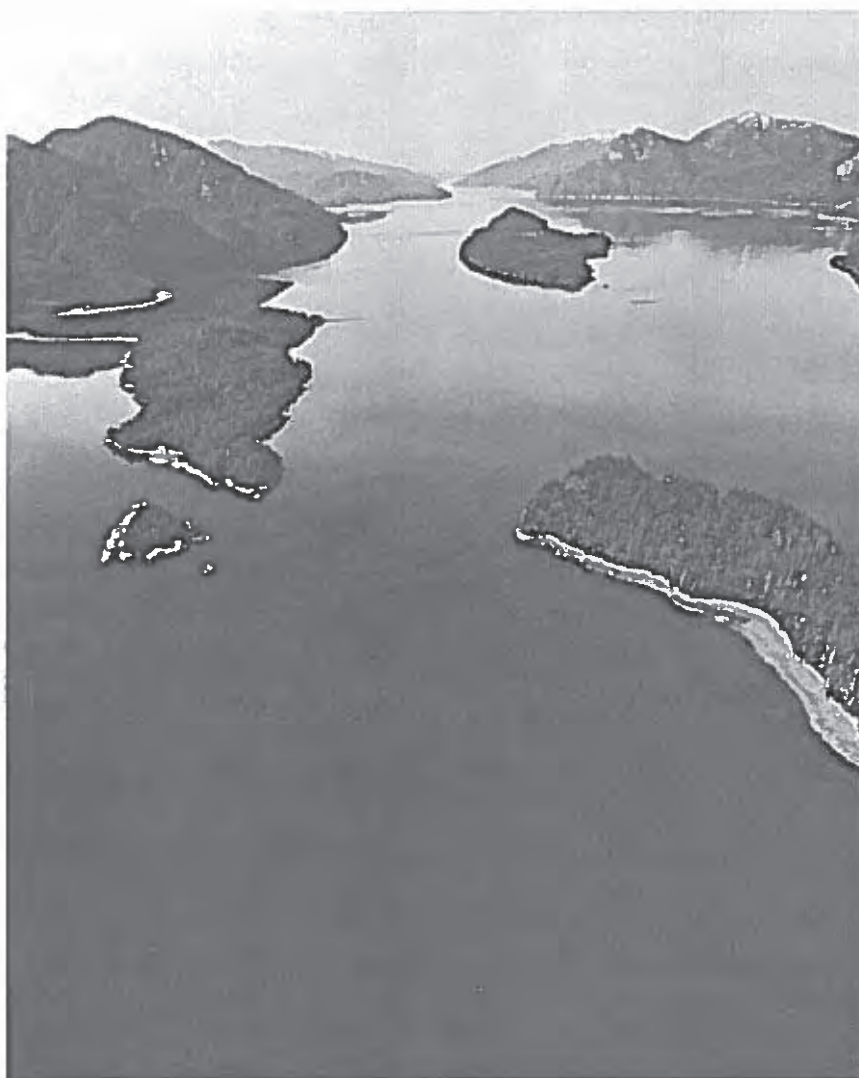
## COMMON BOWL

Throughout Nisga'a history, from the beginning of time, one of the most important principles in Nisga'a society has been that of sharing and coexistence. Both concepts are embodied in Nisga'a tribal laws and traditions such as *amnigwootkw*, the *yukw*, *hagwinyuuwo'oskw* and a Nisga'a edict which declares the sharing of a 'common bowl' – *saytk'ilhl wo'osihl Nisga'a*.

Following the formation of the Nisga'a Land Committee in the 1890s, it was decided that the Nisga'a would stand united and speak with one voice.

A confirmation was made at that time, through consultation and the consensus of the Nisga'a, that their tribal ownership included the territory of the Nass River watershed. The boundaries of this land were described in the 1913 Nisga'a Petition as follows: "Commencing at a stone situated on the south shore of *Kinnamox* or *Quinamass Bay* and marking the boundary line between the territory of the said Nisga'a Nation and that of the *Ts'imsan Nation* or *Tribe of Indians*, running thence easterly along said boundary line to the height of land lying between the Nass River and the Skeena River, thence in a line following the height of land surrounding the valley of the Nass River and its tributaries to and including the height of land surrounding the northwest end of *Mitseah* or *Meziadin Lake*, thence in a straight line to the northerly end of *Portland Canal*, thence southerly along the





*Galsgiyst, in Observatory Inlet, looking south*

International boundary line to the centre line of the passage between Pearse Island and Wales Island, thence southeasterly along said centre line of Portland Inlet, thence northeasterly along said centre line to the point at which the same is intersected by the centre line of Kinnamox or Quinamass Bay, thence in a straight line to the point of commencement."

Nisga'a lands west of the international boundary, located in Portland Canal, have not been included in negotiations with Canada.

## SHARING AND COEXISTENCE

It happened that those placed in such difficult straits sometimes paid with goods. This was noted as early as 1864 by Reverend Doolan, then establishing the first Anglican mission on the Nass at Abanseek, a village which was in the area of the present Laxgalts'ap: "During the winter months, the Nisga'a became aware of the annual plight of neighboring tribes living in the surrounding areas that were driven down into our valley from want of food."

The ethnological record of Rev. Doolan also shows evidence that individuals sometimes gave up personal wealth in return for sustenance. Some neighboring tribes were frequently distressed by famine, hence the development and use of Genim Sgeenix/Grease Trail. This was explained in the following way in 1977 by the late Chief Eli Gosnell – Sim'oogit Wii Gadim Xsgaak: "The bentwood oolichan boxes that were used to hold and transport oolichan grease had to have their seams caulked or they would not hold grease in its liquid state. The material used was a mixture of punky cottonwood which is very much like a fibre, and oolichan meal. It happened one year that some of our people met some starving people on Genim Sgeenix/Grease Trail between Gitlaxt'aamiks and Gitwinhlguul and those Gitwinhlguul were found eating the putty out of the seams of those old broken boxes that used to lay around up there."





*Oolichan*



## SLAUGHTER OF THREE GITLAXT'AAMIKS CHIEFS BY JITS'AAWITS

The Jits'aawit returned Meziaden and the headwaters of the Nass after being defeated by the Nisga'a on Bear Pass Glacier. After the slaughter of the three Nisga'a chiefs which occurred around 1830 – Galga, K'aldudaaw and Luuksaxgeehl – by Jits'aawits, the Nisga'a warriors gathered to discuss their plans for retaliation. The slaughter, in which Gook was the only survivor, took place at Ksi Maaksgwit, approximately 4.5 miles below the southwest corner of Meziaden Lake. Gook ran from Ksi Maaksgwit downriver on the west bank of Lisims (Nass River) until he reached Wilsghalguul, where he vaulted across to the east bank and into Genim Sgeenix and followed the trail down to Gitlaxt'aamiks to tell his story.

## RETALIATION

Gilwo'os is the name of the feast that takes place prior to retaliation. All the people of Gitwinksihlkw, Gitlakdamiks and Lakalzap gathered at that feast where plans were made for retaliation. Niiwadamxkw means that the Nisga'a met the Jits'aawits one year after the slaughter; that's when the Nisga'a struck back.

## RETRIBUTION

The following Nisga'a chiefs were involved in this retribution or ksiiskw: Gilwo'os, Sgat'iin, Ksim Xsaan, Axdi Wil Luugooda, Wii Litskw, Sgañisim Sim'oogit, Hlidax and Niýslisýaan, K'amksiiwaa, Minee'eskwa, Gitwilaak'il – K'ceekw, Gwingyoo, Duuk' and Nimts', Ksdiyaawaḱ and Tḱaatḱ' anlaxhatkw.



*Chief Israel Sgat'iin*

PEACE CEREMONY  
BETWEEN THE NISGA'A  
AND THE GISGAGA'AS



THE NASS RIVER INDIANS and the Gisgaga'as made friends. But Meluleq (the Laxgibuu head-chief of Gisgaga'as) killed another Nisga'a named Gurhma'wen. A Nisga'a murdered Kwisem'arh. The Nass Indians had murdered others in the early days, and they were (mutually) retaliating. For a time, the Gisgaga'as did not go to the Nass. After the informant (Brown) was eight or nine years of age, he saw the (following affair) happen. The Nisga'a sent word to the Gisgaga'as (our tribe), declaring that they wanted to make friends, and that they were to have a celebrated name, Hawaagyan. Then the Nisga'a came up to Gisgaga'as. They brought up with them a name for that feast which was Qawagyan, Peace Feast. When they arrived, there was a very large party of them, a big crowd. The Gisgaga'as were gathered together to meet them. They had invited the Kispiox and the Git'anmaks to the feast. The feast party camped just above the Gisgaga'as village. Meluleq was getting ready for the ceremonies, and just stripped himself naked, to meet his guests. Weerairh did likewise. Tsenshoot followed their example, as well as Gurhma'wen. All this for meeting one another. The flies were very bad at that time of the year, but they did not mind them. One of the Nisga'a, coming ahead of his party, said, "This is the last day for your village." Weerairh answered, "You have entered the Wolves' mouths. You won't be alive tomorrow." Tsnetsut spoke to Meluleq, "You won't see the sun tomorrow. This is the last time you look at the sun." Meluleq answered, "The crows and the wild beasts will eat your flesh. You make me angry now." Then the Gisgaga'as gathered together and erected a barricade with trees in front of their village and built another one in front of the Nisga'a (opposite). They put the barricade across, to (show) that the Nass Indians were not to pass on the other side of the mark. If one of the Nisga'a went beyond this barricade, those on the opposite side would kill him.

The same thing with the Gisgaga'as. If they went beyond their barricade, they would be destroyed. Then the Gisgaga'as went back to their houses and the Nisga'a



to the camp they had fixed up, in the morning. Then they fired off false cartridges of only powder, without bullets in their guns. The Nisga'a did likewise. Then the Gisgaga'as sang songs, sang a peace song. The Nisga'a also sang peace songs. Then (the Gisgaga'as blew) white down on their heads – down of the swan. Both the Gisgaga'as and the Nisga'a did the same thing. This was a peace performance. They composed a song about the peace, the words of which were that they were making peace. In the evening, the invited guests arrived in the village of Gisgaga'as, and the Gisgaga'as allowed them to come forward. The Nisga'a gathered to one side of the village. Two men were (delegated) whom they were to use in their peace performance. Gurhma'wen did not come in person, but sent his daughter and she stood up in his stead. All the people came out of their houses and (converged) on the Nisga'a. No one of them had dangerous weapons, only sticks, and the Nisga'a hit some Gisgaga'as with sticks, others with their hands. Tsenshoot was the only one who had a larhwan.

Gurhma'wen's daughter too had a larhwan. And they kept waving them, and no one could take them away from them. As long as the people were not able to take away from these supposed fighters, the fight was to continue, until these two were captured. Then they took a caribou skin and covered Tsenshoot, held him down, and made him a prisoner. And the same with Gurhma'wen's daughter. As soon as they were captives, the (sham) fighting ceased. They sang the song which they had composed during the night, with the words about how they were to make peace. Then they all entered the houses, and they led Tsenshoot to the rear of Meluleq's house. As for Gurhma'wen's daughter, they sat her at the back of Weerairh's house. They got two men of noble birth, chief's sons, and stood them on both sides of her, to guard and watch her. When he was to stand, they told his guards to make him stand up. In honour of him, they spread caribou skins all the way up along the house (for him to walk upon) until he reached the back of the house. Then he sat down. A very big caribou skin they spread for him to sit upon. It was a great seat for him. They piled (trade) blankets about four feet high; they then piled pillows and sat him on top of them. When he wanted to drink water, they brought some to him. They did the same for Gurhma'wen's daughter and for Weerairh. The whole village gave a grand feast. They all clubbed together and everybody helped along. The Gisgaga'as gave to every one of the Nisga'a beaver, marten, caribou, and fisher pelts. So that the Nisga'a went away (to their camp) with bundles of various skins given them by different Gisgaga'as. In the morning (the Nisga'a) gave their dance. To those who

were performing in the peace ceremony they did not give any food. That was the rule. Nobody in the song and dance of peace was allowed to eat for one day. After they had fasted for one day, the very best food that had been prepared was passed around and they were fed. The bodyguards of the two also had to fast for a day and the next they were fed like the others. And the bodyguards were not led to the food until the next day, and then they ate to their full satisfaction. The dance lasted four days, in one of the largest houses in the village. Then four men led the prisoner to that house. They sat him at the rear of the house, for the last big dance. The Nisga'a danced and placed them on seats of honour. Meluleq took the white tail of an eagle and dipped it in the blood so that one half turned red. Then he gave it to Tsenshoot, placing it in his hand. Weerairh did the same thing to the young woman. They got the very best handkerchief that came from the white men's store and wrapped her hand with it and planted on her head two white swan's feathers which he had brought from the Nass. Then they went on back with them to the Nisga'a.

Tsenshoot picked one of these out and returned it to Meluleq before he went back to his own people. This was a sign of deep friendship, interpreted with the words, "I have given you peace and friendship for years to come." Gurhma'wen's daughter did the same thing to Weerairh. The villagers got ready before the Nass visitors would leave them. They gave them a farewell dance, dancing behind them until they were out of sight. The Nisga'a also danced as they were on their way homewards. They sang a song in the Sekani (a Dene tribe of the northeastern interior) language, advising them that they would enjoy peace with them forever. The Gisgaga'as gave the Nisga'a song and the Nisga'a gave the Gisgaga'as another. And the peace ceremony was over. This happened when the informant, John Brown, was a child, nine or 10 years of age (and he was about 70, in 1920). He was frightened of some of the ceremonies. The reason why they were pretending warfare before the peace ceremony was merely to show their strength and power to one another. But it meant that it would never be used. Yet it was a critical moment, as, at the least provocation, real war might have broken out if the Gisgaga'as had deviated from their purpose, that after this there should be no more fighting.

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Gowagaani is a Nisga'a peace song which was composed in five different languages: Gitksan, T'ahlt'aan (Jits'aawit), Gidagans (Tlinget), Haydax (Haida) and Ts'imsan (Tsimshian). All of the above-named tribes were defeated by the Nisga'a in defense of Nisga'a territory.

## T X E E M S I M

Earliest origin stories place the Nisga'a on the Nass before the flood, while early reporting on Skeena stories show their origin stories as post-flood. Numerous origin stories connect the Nass with Txeemsim, legendary hero of the Nisga'a Nation. It was reportedly peopled by refugees from Laxwiiyip, which has been associated with the upper Nass. It is clear that at the time the whites arrived, Nisga'a presence and influence was well established on the upper Skeena as well as the upper Nass. The scholarly world takes origin stories very seriously.

Anthropologists and others have studied their function in transmitting attitudes, culture and history. The importance of these stories cannot be overlooked. The Nisga'a punished insolence of the largely Jits'aawit at Galduu, Gisgaga'as and Git'angask on the upper Skeena, and went so far as to build a da'oots'ip [fortress] at Kitwanga. Having established that these neighbors came to barter for grease as a matter of course, we can go on to explore the sad, yet important matter of starvation. When food stocks ran low over the winter, Interior tribes had no recourse but to come to the Nass for their very survival. As witnessed in 1870, many did not survive the arduous trek across the Grease Trail: "This highway is broad, clear and very old. One is almost never out of sight of an Indian grave, marking the spot where some weary mortal had indeed put off his burden. Many were old and moldering, but here and there were fresher ones. All vestiges [trace, remains] of a grave is gone in fifty years."

These inland people obviously suffered greatly because of their poverty and the Nisga'a demonstrated their compassion for these impoverished groups by inviting them to live in the Nass when they first learned of Christianity.

## M A R M O T , R A B B I T , M I N K A N D B E A R S K I N S

Furs, traded for oolichan in late winter, were principally marmot and rabbit skins, generally sewn together to form rugs for bedcovers or robes. Marten, mink and bear skins were also tendered and accepted. But not infrequently when pressed by famine, which was not unusual among the inland tribes, they handed over their young children in barter for food. These were in turn passed on to the Haida as part payment for their canoes, which were so necessary for their hunting and fishing. A number of those were sold in exchange for food when young to the Haida. It happened that those placed in such difficult straits sometimes paid with goods.





*Lax Sýoon (Bear Pass Glacier) near Stewart, site of an ancient territorial battle*

Shotridge and other archeologists found great numbers of Nisga'a artifacts in the Skeena. A cursory examination of Barbeau's totem pole monographs will indicate how Nass carvers supplied the Gitksan with both poles and expertise. Nass halayt powers were feared and, in the pre-contact world, these powers provided yet another avenue by which the Nisga'a were acknowledged as masters. Mr. Reginald Dangeli, descendant of the original Portland Canal Jits'aawits, provides a unique and highly credible source of history in support of the ancient use and ownership of Meziaden Lake and Bowser Lake country. He was able to hear the history of the area from his childhood and, obviously, he brought keen interest and considerable ability to the task of writing his family stories via a research grant from the Alaska Historic Commission. Many years later the aggressive Laxwiiyip Jits'aawit came to Meziaden Lake and attempted to dislodge the Nisga'a. In 1895 the Nisga'a repelled the Laxwiiyip Jits'aawits all the way up the lake and drove them out of Meziaden.

Later, these Laxwiiyip returned and killed two Gitksans. At the same time Nisga'as were killed and Sgañisim Sim'oogit fought and killed many.

Due to these ongoing battles the Nisga'a are the true owners of Meziaden Lake and Bear Valley. The Nisga'a have used it since time immemorial. The Gitwinhlguul have long been seen as Gitksans. Fairly recently, during the past 150 years, the Gitwinhlguul (originally Jits'aawit who were absorbed by the Gitksan) wandered into the Nass and were permitted to remain as Lek'axgigat helpers (nobles). After contact, when Indian ownership laws were undermined by missionaries and government officials, two kinds of events occurred: almost 75 per cent of the Gitwinhlguul moved to Old Aiyansh for school and to become Christianized and joined the Nisga'a tribe, and Gitwinhlguuls who remained behind and some who emigrated to other Skeena villages appear to have begun to encroach upon traditional Nisga'a territories. These people appear also to have claimed huge territories which may have been based on their limited understanding of Nisga'a laws governing occasional use of certain Nisga'a properties. The Nisga'a have not deviated from the course set down by our forefathers – which is based on their firm belief of sharing and co-existence.

The Gitwinhlguul appear to have been encouraged in certain excesses by the peculiar involvement of the late anthropologist Wilson Duff.

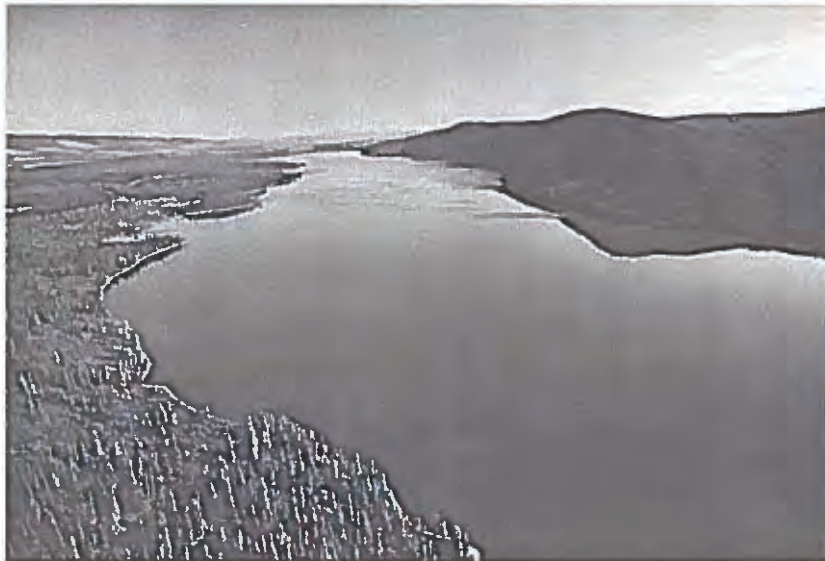
Duff pronounced ownership of Meziaden Lake without acknowledging longstanding Nisga'a interests there, without approaching the Nisga'a for

information and without indicating that Gitwinhlguul Wolves and Ravens emphatically denied each other's alleged claims as recently as 1954.

The Nisga'a consider this aspect of Duff's works as misguided. So does Hugh Taylor, who in a recent Tahltan study, appears to accept the notion that there is confusion in this matter. Any such confusion appears to have originated among the Gitwinhlguul in recent years. The Gitwinhlguul were Lek'axgigat allowed to use this territory, in exchange for which they were allowed to trade furs and skins to the Nisga'a for grease and rent; their presence was as Nisga'a tenants, helpers and consumers of Nisga'a goods.

The Gitwinhlguul were frequently wiped out, hence "place where made small" – the interpretation of their name. They had no access to salt water and they were almost prisoners of the Nisga'a. The Gitwinhlguul could not own Nass River property because they were originally Jits'aawit, who were brought in as lek'axgigat in exactly the same way as the Portland Canal Jits'aawit were. They survived under the protection of the Nisga'a and could not claim ownership under such circumstances.

Note: Lek'axgigat – nobles



*Meziaden Lake*



# A P P E N D I X

## 1

REPORT MADE BY HON. JOSEPH W. TRUTCH,  
JUNE 22, 1869,  
AND EXCERPTS FROM HIS DIARY

# REPORT MADE BY HON. JOSEPH W. TRUTCH

## RE: TREATY BETWEEN NASS AND TSIMPSHEAN TRIBES

Lands and Works Office  
Victoria June 22nd 1869

Sir,

In obedience to your request conveyed to me by letter of the 17th Inst from the private secretary, I have the honor to lay before you the enclosed Report of the proceedings during the recent visit of His Excellency the late Governor to the North West Coast on H.M.S. "Sparrowhawk" and I take this opportunity of submitting the following remarks on that subject.

It is a matter of congratulation that the settlement of the murders carried on during the past twelve months between the Naas and Chimpsean Tribes, which was the main object of our lamented Governor's visit to this part of the Colony, has been so fully and satisfactorily accomplished. From information obtained from Mr. Duncan, Mr. Tomlinson and Mr. Cunningham of Fort Simpson, as well as from Indians of the contending tribes, I am satisfied that the killing of the Naas Indian in which this bloody dispute originated was purely accidental.

A Naas Indian formerly resident at Metlakatlah, gave a feast (on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter) to Members of both the Naas and Chimpsean tribes, who up to that time, had been living on the most friendly terms. For this feast a supply of Rum was purchased from the Schooner "Nanaimo Packet" and during the drunken orgies which ensued, a Chimpsean Chief by the accidental discharge of his pistol, killed one of the Naas people. We were fortunate to detect this Schooner, after a twelve month immunity, in the act of dispensing liquor again to the same Indians, amongst whom the quarrel between these tribes originated, and almost at the very place where it arose. Her seizure and condemnation, (after due enquiry) had a very salutary effect in showing to the tribes of that neighbourhood that Government are able and determined to punish offenders against the Law – whether white people or Indians. In the fight which followed the accidental killing of the Naas Indian, two Chimpsean Chiefs were killed and in accordance with the savage requirement of Indian law, the loss of these chiefs had to be compensated by the slaughter of an equivalent in number and rank of the opposite tribe.

Thus, murder followed murder in continual succession with no prospect of complete satisfaction on either side. There was no real ground for the hostility of these tribes towards each other. They were, on the contrary, anxious to be at peace so as to avail themselves of the Spring fishery in the Naas River, which affords the main source of subsistence to all the Indians of this neighbourhood.

Without the interposition of some powerful peace maker, however, reconciliation was impracticable and this quarrel might have lasted for years, with ever increasing waste of blood, but for the intervention which ensured its complete cessation.

The murder of the three "Kincolith" Indians did not originate in or indicate ill feeling towards that mission. Mr. Tomlinson and his work are held in respect by both contending parties, as well as by the Indians generally along that part of the coast and there is no reason to suppose that his life was at any time in danger. But the minds of Indians cannot readily admit that Members of a tribe with which they are at war can be denationalized, and placed out of reach of their savage laws of revenge, by the mere act of residing at the time at a Mission Station especially. Station situated at Kincolith is in a most remote part of the Colony and in the midst of a notoriously ferocious race of Indians.

And here it may be observed that however admirable the spirit and intention of such stations, and however valuable their humanizing influences in many cases on the surrounding savage tribes, tending directly to the discontinuance of barbarous customs such as have given rise to the outrages and disturbances now under reference, it is questionable how far the establishment of such posts should be encouraged in situations so remote from the control of Government as Kincolith, while a field for missionary labour extending for four hundred miles southward along the Coast from Metlakatlah remains entirely unoccupied.

It would appear more judicious & advisable that missionary enterprise should radiate gradually from the centre of civilization instead of isolating itself at once in points like Kincolith on the utmost verge of the Colony. So long however as the station is continued it must, most assuredly, be held under the protection of Government, but it is evident that the very remoteness alone of such posts renders efficient protection a matter of much practical difficulty and in many cases entails on the Colonial Government considerable embarrassment and pecuniary outlay.

The mode by which the warring tribes were brought to relinquish their feud and bound over to live in future according to English law appears in happy contrast to the manner in which by bombardment and burning of Indian Villages, canoes &



the authority of Government, has on some occasions, been enforced with perhaps unnecessary infliction of loss of life, and impoverishment, and even, in some cases, destruction of entire tribes.

It may confidently be expected that a more salutary and lasting effect will result from the persuasive, but firm course adopted towards the Naas and Chimpseans which was so satisfactorily consummated on board H.M.S. "Sparrowhawk" on the 2nd of June, than could have been produced by a more forcible mode of proceeding, and it is a very gratifying reflection in all who have served under Governor Seymour... that this his last official act was in every way so creditable to his Administrative ability and so entirely in consonance with that kindliness of heart which was his peculiar characteristic and which will long cause his memory to be cherished among us.

It must be borne steadily in mind, however, that as these tribes were specially placed by the direct act of the Head of the Executive under the operation of English Law, that law must in future be enforced among them at whatever cost.

Whilst at Metlakatlah and Fort Simpson enquiry was made into merits of the conviction and fine of Mr. Cunningham, the Hudson's Bay Co's Trader at Fort Simpson, by Mr. Duncan acting as a Justice of the Peace, on a charge of selling liquor to Indians at the Company's post at Fort Simpson which conviction had been sustained on appeal before Chief Justice Begbie, and subsequently submitted by Dr. Tolmie, acting for the Hudson's Bay Co. for the Governor's consideration. Upon investigation of the case on the spot it did not appear that there were any grounds for the Governor's interference with the Magistrates decision and award.

The mission station at Metlakatlah has been so fully described by others and the benefits conferred directly on the Indians of the neighbouring tribes, and indirectly on the Colony, by Mr. Duncan's labours on the North West Coast are now so generally acknowledged that I need only add an expression of my appreciation of the great importance of the results that have been accomplished by that Gentleman's Christian zeal, courage and singular persistence of purpose combined with remarkable ability and adaptability for this particular work.

The only fear is that should the mission be deprived of his services, very much of the good work effected by him among the Indians will be undone for lack of his sustaining presence in their midst.

The investigation held at Bella Coola into the complaints of the white settlers at that place as to the behaviour towards them of the Indians amongst whom they

reside, lead to the consideration of how far Government is responsible for the protection of settlements isolated as this is at so great a distance from the settled portions of the Colony and lying so far off any travelled line of communication.

It is impossible to exercise any supervision or control over either Indians or white people at such remote posts – quarrels arise, the real origin of which it is often impossible to ascertain, and Government are called on to punish the Indians without its being proved that they are actually more blameable than those who accuse them.

As a general deduction from the beneficial results of the late cruise of the "Sparrowhawk" it is apparent how desirable it is that a ship of war should periodically visit the various settlement missionary stations, and Indian villages along the coast. By this means only can any measure of protection be given to the scattered settlers and missionaries, and the wild tribes amongst whom they are located be kept in any control, and by such blows as that infliction in the confiscation of the Nanaimo Packet the Sale of Liquor. In the cause of nearly all Indian outrages towards white people, as well as among themselves, will be rendered so hazardous a business that trade must soon be extinguished in that part of the Colony. Some duly authorized official agent of the Colonial Government should be sent in all cases on board of ships engaged in such missions to share, if not to bear wholly, the responsibility of any extraordinary proceedings that events may necessitate. For officers in command of Her majesty's ships, although holding commissions as Justices of the Peace, may reasonably be supposed to be disinclined to take decisive action in police matters which can hardly be considered within their proper jurisdiction, and which may involve questions of material importance and great pecuniary interest to the Colony.

I have the honor to be Sir your Obedient Servant

*(Signed) Joseph W. Trutch*

His Honor

The Officer Adminstrating the Government.



*Talking stick*



## EXCERPTS FROM JOURNAL OF HON. JOSEPH W. TRUTCH

RELATIVE TO TREATY SIGNED AT FORT SIMPSON BY NAAS AND  
CHIMPSEAN CHIEFS, JUNE 2, 1869

**Note:** The "Mr. Lowndes" mentioned in the following entries was Arthur E. Lowndes, secretary to Governor Frederick Seymour, and the "Mr. Duncan" was Rev. William Duncan, missionary in charge at Metlakatlah.

MAY 30 (1869)

... Leaving Fort Simpson anchorage early in the morning, we reached the Naas River about 10 am, and came to anchor off Kincolith Mission Station. We found the schooner "Nanaimo Packet" at anchor about two miles up stream, and a boat was at once sent to search her, but no liquor was found on board in excess of the quantity which her permit allowed her to carry. Still a watch was kept to prevent her getting away, until we could communicate with the Indians at the village above, from whom we expected to get decisive information of their having obtained liquor on board the schooner... on our return on board it was decided that I should go up to the Naas villages with a message from the Governor to the Chiefs; but it was considered too late to start that afternoon. It being Tuesday, Mr. Tomlinson did not come off to call on the Governor till next day.

MAY 31

... Left the ship at 10 am in the Captain's gig, with Mr. Lowndes, and accompanied by Mr. Duncan as interpreter... On landing at the lower village, I informed the Indians, through Mr. Duncan, that I had a message for them from the Governor, and was accordingly conducted to the Chief's house, where the tribe presently assembled, and I told them that the Governor was much grieved at the evil work that had been going on for some time between them and the Chimpseans, and had come to make friends; that he wanted the Chiefs of the Naas to come down at once to him on board the Sparrowhawk, and to go in her to Fort Simpson to have a talk there with the Chimpseans, and arrange all their difficulties before him. For some time they hesitated to go on the ground that the Chimpseans who commenced the fighting ought to have been brought up to Kincolith, instead of the Naas, who were the aggrieved party, being carried to Fort Simpson. They at last, however, agreed to go down with us, and I then went on about three quarters of a

mile up the river to the second village, where a meeting was also called in the Chief's house, and the same message delivered. This tribe having also, after some hesitation, accepted the Governor's invitation. We started, on our return, at 6 pm and after proceeding about five miles were overtaken by four canoes, in which were the chiefs and principal men of these villages. They accompanied us down to the ship, which we reached at 10:30 pm...

#### JUNE 1

... At noon we started from Kincolith... and anchored off Fort Simpson at 6:30 pm. There I went on shore to the Indian villages, accompanied by Mr. Lowndes, and Mr. Duncan as interpreter, and summoned their chief people to come on board the ship the next day at 10 o'clock, to meet the Naas Chiefs and arrange a peace, as the Governor was fully determined to put an end to the fighting and disorder that had been going on so long. After a short consultation among themselves they cheerfully consented to come on board next day.

#### JUNE 2

... The Chiefs of the Chimpsean tribes having arrived on board at 10 o'clock, were set opposite to the Naas Chiefs on the quarter-deck, in presence of the Governor. A parley ensued, which lasted a couple of hours. All the events of their hostility during the past year were discussed, and the amount of compensation to be paid by each tribe for injuries done to the other having been finally settled among them, peace was concluded, and symbolized by the former enemies blowing swans down over each other's heads. A document setting forth that peace had that day been concluded between the Chimpsean and Naas Indians in the presence of the Governor was then drawn up and to this the Chiefs' names were all signed by their marks being set there to as certified by the Governor's signature and seal. Each Chief was also furnished with a paper setting forth that he had signed this treaty. These papers were signed by Mr. Lowndes and certified by Mr. Duncan as interpreter. The Governor then, through Mr. Duncan, addressed the Chiefs, telling them that he had allowed them on the occasion, for the last time, to make compensation to each other, according to the custom hitherto in force among them for friends and relatives killed and injuries inflicted; but now they must understand that this barbarous system was abolished; that they must henceforth live according to English law; and that if they offended against that law by taking each other's lives, every means in the Governor's power should be employed to apprehend and

punish them. All the Indians on board, to the number of one hundred and upwards, were then feasted, and presents of pipes, tobacco and c., made to each. The previously hostile tribes now mixed together with the greatest cordiality. After the feast the Chimpseans departed in high spirits, seemingly much satisfied at the result of the day's conference. The ship then left for Metlakatlah with the schooner in tow, the Naas Indians remaining on board, as some of them were required as witnesses in the case against the schooner. We had a pleasant run to Metlakatlah where we arrived at 6 pm, and anchored in the inner harbor.

Note: The details of the seizure of the schooner have been omitted for the foregoing, but may be summarized: At Metlakatlah Captain Mist, of the Sparrowhawk, and Mr Trutch, as justices of the peace, held court on June 3 and 4, when the Naas Indians told of the manner in which liquor had been supplied to them prior to the start of the Indian war. The judgment of the court was, "the schooner to be forfeited, and the master, William Stephens, fined \$500, and each of the two men employed on board as crew, \$10."



*Surveyor's transam on Lisims, the Nass River*



F. H. S. Sparrowhawk.

Fort Simpson

2<sup>nd</sup> June 1865.

We the undersigned chiefs of the  
Naas River and Fort Simpson, in  
the presence of His Excellency Governor  
Seymour have agreed to terms of  
peace which we faithfully promise  
to abide by.

Naas Chiefs.

James <sup>his</sup>  
X <sup>mark</sup> Lequenech

Kensahdah <sup>his</sup>  
X <sup>mark</sup>

Thrat coo kahke <sup>his</sup>  
X <sup>mark</sup>

Cleetah <sup>his</sup>  
X <sup>mark</sup>

Shahowah <sup>his</sup>  
X <sup>mark</sup>

Chinypsean Chiefs

Weshaikes <sup>his</sup>  
X <sup>mark</sup>

Neeahohi <sup>his</sup>  
X <sup>mark</sup>

Neeashwaiks <sup>his</sup>  
X <sup>mark</sup>

Neeahwaik <sup>his</sup>  
X <sup>mark</sup>

Alhamlachah <sup>his</sup>  
X <sup>mark</sup>

## Kaaschips

Highnow <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Cupahkah <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Wetahtrw <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Akshattahn <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Neeuan <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Neashhishyahn <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Highyal <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Shahantahn <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

## Thunysreianships

Thwanah <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Maashkhumfand <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Neashyighyuanah <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Neashyachahmah <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Nakdeean <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Mahdeeks <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Hamighyand <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Lipseezeost <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Leeanlachah <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Quashwahl <sup>his</sup>  
X  
Mark

Frederick J. Rogers

A P P E N D I X

2

A SKETCH OF THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF  
THE NASS RIVER INDIANS,  
OCTOBER 1915



# A SKETCH OF THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE NASS RIVER INDIANS

*By Edward Sapir*

October 15, 1915  
Canada Geological Survey  
Museum Bulletin No. 19.

## INTRODUCTION

In February, 1915, a deputation of four Nass River Indians visited Ottawa on business connected with the Department of Indian Affairs. Through the kindness of Mr. D.C. Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, their attention was drawn to the anthropological work of the Geological Survey and to the ethnological exhibits in its museum. Opportunity was thus gained, on February 18 and 19, for the writer to secure a sketch of some of the outlines of the social organization of the Nass River division of the Tsimshian stock, a sketch which is confessedly imperfect in many respects, but which may, for the present, contribute its share towards the comparative study of the problems of West Coast sociology.



*Max Haines, Aykii Min Aajax  
Wolf clan, Gingolx*



*Alvin Azak, Ha'is  
Killer Whale clan, Gitwinksihlkw*



His father was head chief of the kispo'udwi'de phratry of the kitwankci'lku tribe. He is also known as li'cimc, a nickname going back to his child name. Despite his age, Chief Derrick has quite a good command of English, and this, combined with his great intelligence and evident knowledge of aboriginal social conditions among his people, made it possible to obtain a larger amount of material in a short time than is perhaps ordinarily feasible. He is responsible for practically all the data contained in this paper. He was assisted by the interpreter, Mr. Woods, only part of the time.

The Indians constituting the deputation were:

- (1) Chief T.L. Derrick (see frontispiece), living at the village of Aiyansh ('a'ya'nc). He formerly lived at the village of kitlaxta'amikc, whence he moved to Aiyansh along with most of his tribesmen. He is 59 years of age and is the third chief by rank of the kit'anwi'likc tribe. His present Indian name is k'e'xk'u, one of the noble names of the kitwil'na'k'i'l clan, to which Chief Derrick belongs and of which he is head chief.
- (2) Chief W.J. Lincoln, living at the village of Kincolith (kinyo'lix). He is about 40 years of age and is the youngest chief of the kitxat'en tribe. His Indian name is qadaxe'ex, one of the noble names of the laxlo'kct' clan, to which Chief Lincoln belongs.
- (3) Chief A.N. Calder, living at the village of Greenville (laxqalt'sa'p). He is about 46 years of age and is the head chief of the kitgige'nix tribe. His Indian name is 'nagwa'o'n 'long hand,' one of the noble names of the laxkibo' or Wolf phratry, to which Chief Calder belongs.
- (4) Mr. R.S. Woods, living at Kincolith. He is about 22 years of age and belongs to the noble class of the kitxat'e'n tribe. His Indian name is nixdjo'nt', one of the noble names of the laxsgi'k' or Eagle phratry, to which Mr. Woods belongs. Mr. Woods is only part Indian, his mother having been half-breed and his father white. He speaks perfect English and proved useful as interpreter.

I may say that the data here presented were obtained without any reference whatever to the material on Nass River social organization that Boas gives in his account of the tribe (Report of the 65th meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1895, pp. 569-583). Correspondences between his and my own data have, therefore, all the force of mutually corroborative evidence.



*Gitlakdamiks, with the lava beds and the Nass River in the background*



*Gitwinksihlkw on the west bank of the Nass River*



*Lakalzap, Nass River*



*Gingolx, at the mouth of the Nass River*



## SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE NASS RIVER INDIANS TRIBES AND VILLAGES

The Tsimshian tribes of Nass river are known collectively as Nisqa'a. Though held together by identity of language and common interest, they can hardly be said to form a political entity, each tribe being an independent unit and occupying its own village or villages. There are four of these tribes, occupying villages along the Nass in the following order, beginning with the mouth of the river:

- (1) kitxat'e'n 'people of (fish) traps,' located at the mouth of the river. They occupy the two villages of kinyo'lix 'place of scalps,' or Kincolith, and laxqalt'sa'p 'old village site' (literally 'on the town'), or Greenville. The former village is said to be so named because the scalps of enemies used to be dried there.
- (2) kitgige'nix 'people further up stream' (from the point of view of the preceding tribe). Their village is named lax'anla'c 'mountain slide.' They are considered the main tribe of the Nass River Indians.
- (3) kitwankci'lku 'people of home-of-lizards' (from kcilku 'lizard'). They used to inhabit the old village of kitwankci'lku, from which the tribe receives its name. At present they are located at laxul 'ya'ns 'under leaf,' or 'Underleaf,' a recently established village situated across the river from the old one.
- (4) kit'anwi'likc 'people moving regularly from and back to their home village.' The name refers to their periodic descent to the mouth of the river to get olachen (sa'k'), but no other fish. They occupy the two villages of kitlaxt'a'amikc 'village on ponds,' or Gitlakdamix, and 'a'ya'ns 'leaves coming out,' or Aiyansh. The latter is a new village (only about forty years old), to which most of the inhabitants of the tribe have moved over, few being left at the older village of kitlaxt'a'amikc.

## PHRATRIES, CLANS, AND CRESTS

The Nass River Indians, like their southern neighbours, the Tsimshian proper, are divided into four exogamous phratries (p'te'eq'l) with maternal descent, i.e., the crests and other privileges descend from a man to his sister's son; one's predecessor in the holding of any title or right is thus not his father, but his maternal uncle. The phratries are the laxkibo'u 'on the wolf,' generally referred to simply as Eagles (cf. xcga'k' 'eagle'; xsgi'k' is the Tsimshian proper dialectic form); the



*Hubert McMillan, Wolf clan  
Sim'oogit Ksdiyaawak*

kispo'udwi'de, a name of unknown meaning; and the qana'da, also of unknown meaning. The name qana'da was said by Chief Derrick to be derived from qana'u 'frog,' one of the crests of this phratry; it is more than likely, however, that this is merely a folk etymology to explain an otherwise meaningless term. The main crest of the Wolves is the wolf, of the Eagles the eagle, of the kispo'udwi'de (at least in part) the killer-whale ('ne'ql), of the qana'da the raven (qa'q').

As far as present distribution is concerned, these phratries are found well scattered among the four Nass River tribes, though not all of them are represented in each tribe.<sup>1</sup> The Wolves are found in all four tribes, but they do not occupy the same rank in each; they are the head phratry among the kit'anwi'l'kc, kitgige'nix, and kitxat'e'n, but the third and last among the kitwancki'lku. The Eagles are found represented in three of the tribes, being absent among the kitgige'nix. The kispo'udwi'de phratry again is absent among the kitgige'nix, but represented in the other three tribes. The qana'da phratry, finally, is found to be lacking among the kitwankci'lku only. The relative importance of a phratry seems to depend on the number of members it counts.

The phratries are subdivided into smaller groups that may be termed clans or, perhaps preferably, families. The Indian term for these subdivisions is wil'nata'l, though the more inclusive term p'te'q't seems also to be used to apply to them; wil'nata'l may be translated as 'being together with one another' (cf. Tsimshian reduplicated na-t'elt'a'l 'company'), i.e. 'group of kinsmen dwelling together.' The clans have their definite order of rank within the phratry of a particular tribe and are characterized by the ownership of special crests, legends, songs, individual names, houses, hunting and fishing territories, and numerous other inheritable privileges. On the whole, a clan seems to be confined to a single tribe, though there are cases of a single clan name being represented in two distinct tribes. Thus, the kispo'udwi'de clan of both the kitwankci'lku and kit'anwi'l'kc bears the name of kisp'a'st', though the crests, as far as they were obtained, do not correspond at all; the main crest of this clan among the kitwankci'lku is the killer-whale, among the kit'anwi'l'kc the moon. In other words, rank and privileges can not be safely

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<sup>1</sup> It is quite likely, as Mr. Barbeau points out, that the facts of distribution as given in this paper apply only to the nobles.



predicated of either phratry or clan (insofar as covered by a name of more than unilocal distribution), but must always be studied with reference to a particular tribe or, what amounts to the same thing, village.

While each of the four phratries, as we have seen, has its characteristic or head crest, it does not at all follow that this crest figures as the main crest of each of its clans. Thus, among six Nass River clans belonging to the Wolf phratry, only two possess the wolf as their main crest (in one of these, moreover, this crest has the special name of 'wolves moving about'); in two others the wolf occurs as one of the crests, but not as the main crest, this position being occupied by the 'son of black bear' and 'white grizzly' respectively; in the two other families, finally, the wolf is apparently not owned as crest at all, the main crest in each of these being the 'black-bear prince.' Similar conditions prevail with reference to the other phratries. The ascription of a single definite main crest to each of the phratries must, therefore, not be understood inclusively. However, there seems to be no doubt that some connexion is recognized between the member of a phratry and his phratric crest or crests, even in cases where it is not looked upon as one of the specific crests of his clan. Thus, while the kitwil'na'k'i'l clan of the kit'anwi'likc tribe, the second clan in rank of the Wolf phratry as represented in the tribe, does not possess the right to use the wolf as a real crest, it nevertheless can show it in a potlatch for fun, as it is their phratric emblem; the point is that they may not use the wolf crest to increase their prestige, as by the giving away of property in connexion with it. Chief Derrick went on to say that any member of the Wolf phratry could use both wolf and black-bear as ordinary crest, but as specific 'high' crests only insofar as his clan had the definite privilege of using one or both of them. The right to use a crest can be transmitted only within the limits of matrilinear inheritance. However, it is sometimes customary among the Nass River Indians for a chief to lend his main crest to be shown at his son's potlatch, without his son thereby securing the right to the regular use of the crest. There is also a tendency to reserve the use of the most important crest or crests to the head chief and his titular successor, the other members of the clan being permitted to use only the minor crests. Thus, among the kitwil'na'k'i'l, the second family of the Wolf phratry of the kit'anwi'likc, the two main crests, the 'prince black-bear' and the lo'ayo'q' crest, were reserved, as far as representation at potlatches was concerned, for the chief (Chief Derrick himself) and his chief sororal nephew, while the minor crests of the family, such as the 'underground people,' 'doorkeepers,' and 'stone platform,' could



*Rod Robinson, Eagle clan  
Sim'oogit Minee'eskw*



*Richard Gonu, Killer Whale clan  
Sim'oogit K'amksiiwaa*

be used either by himself or his inferiors of the same family. It goes without saying that a special crest of a family can not be used by a member of another family of the same or another phratry, even if the latter is superior in rank. According to Mr. Woods, one cannot even pay a neighbour a visit and wear a garment decorated with a minor crest without justifying the use of such regalia by the expenditure of property at the house visited. In view of these circumstances I think it may be more proper to speak of an individual having the right to use a crest than owning a crest. The latter terminology implies, or may be taken to imply, a mystico-religious relation between the individual and the crest-being, an implication which it seems safest to avoid. Connected with the attitude of jealous respect towards the crest is the custom of not showing more than one crest at a single potlatch.

There seems to be a marked tendency for each clan to show its crests in some more or less definitely circumscribed concrete form, different from that in which the same crests are exhibited by other families. In quite a number of cases this tendency is reflected in the formal name of the crest, the name of the crest animal being modified by some descriptive epithet. Thus, as we have already seen, the wolf crest occurs also in the special form of 'wolves moving about,' the black-bear crest also as 'black-bear prince' (the epithet 'prince' is found also with other crests, e.g., 'killer-whale prince' and 'mountain-goat prince,' and seems to indicate that the crest as used by the particular family stands higher in rank than the simple unqualified crest of other families) and 'son of black-bear.' In many cases the modified crest name indicates clearly the type of ceremonial object shown as a representation of the crest. Thus, we not only have the eagle crest, but also 'stone eagle,' 'wooden eagle,' 'abelone-covered eagle' and 'eagle garment.' Similarly, the raven crest appears also in the special forms of 'abelone-covered raven' and 'two ravens,' the mountain-goat crest also as 'mountain-goat hat.' It is significant to note that while the mountain-goat is primarily a kispo'udwi'de crest, the special 'mountain-goat hat' was given as one of the crests of a qana'da clan. The tendency towards a concrete interpretation of the crest idea comes out still more strongly in the case of crests which refer not to animals or celestial bodies but to peculiar ceremonial objects connected with legends. Thus, one of the crests of an Eagle clan is a ceremonial ladle bearing the name of 'small coffin,' and a Wolf clan has as one of its crests the 'foolish grease-dish.' There can be little doubt that crests of this type are of lesser age than the typical animal and celestial crests, as they seem in every case to be peculiar to special clans and thus to have arisen, on the whole,





*Oscar Mercer, Raven clan  
Sim'oogit Ksim Xsaan*

subsequently to the splitting up of larger groups into the present clans. It is not probable that historically they are strictly comparable to the more general crests; it seems quite likely that they are to be explained as a result of the ever-increasing tendency to identify the crest with a specific representation of it. Psychologically it is important that the same term, *ayu'kus*, is applied to both types of crests as well as to the privilege of using a distinctive house name.

We shall now give the ranking of phratries and families in each of the four tribes, beginning with the *kit'anwi'likc* and proceeding down stream, also the crests used by each family, so far as they have been ascertained. I can naturally not claim completeness in this outline of clans and crests and so would like to emphasize the caution that too much must not, in most cases, be made of negative evidence. Chief Derrick did not in any case enumerate all the crests of a clan. This was due partly to forgetfulness, partly to the impossibility of doing more than skimming the surface in the short time at our disposal. The crests are given in the order in which Chief Derrick dictated them. This should not be taken to imply that the order indicated rigidly reflects their ranking, even assuming that a definite ranking of crests is obtainable. Nevertheless, I believe the order at least approximates to such a ranking, the less widely distributed crests generally coming last. At any rate, there was no doubt in Chief Derrick's mind as to which was the highest crest for any given clan.

## ( 1 ) CLANS AND CRESTS OF THE KIT'ANWI'LIK

The phratries, all four of which are here represented, with their clans, rank as follows:

### I. LAXKIBO'U 'ON WOLF'

This is the head phratry of the tribe and is divided into three clans, ranking in the following order:

1. *kisq'ansna't* 'people from *sq'ansna't*, home-of-berry-bushes'; *sq'ansna't* is the name of their former village. The head chief is *skat'e'n*.
2. *kitwil'na'k'i'l* 'all in one (though living in different houses).' The head chief is Chief Derrick.
3. *kitwillu'ya'xu* 'people of hiding place.'

## II. LAXSGI'K' 'ON EAGLE'

This also is subdivided into three clans, ranking in the following order:

1. semlaxsgi'k' 'real laxsgi'k,' i.e. 'foremost Eagles.'
2. laxt'seme'lix 'on beaver.'
3. kitqane'eqs 'people of ladders.'

## III. KISPO'UDWI'DE

Consisting of only one clan:

1. kisk'a'st' 'people living among ha'ct', certain green bushes.'

## IV. QANA'DA

Not further subdivided.

Chief Derrick gave the last two phratries in this order, but stated that they were alike in rank. The crests of these clans are as follows:

### I. WOLF PHRATRY

#### 1. kisk'ansna't clan

- a. kibo'u 'wolf.' Main crest of this clan specifically, as well as general crest of the Wolf phratry.
- b. cmax 'black bear.' This is the ordinary bear, not the 'prince bear' of the second family of this phratry. The word cmax is probably identical with Tsimshian sa'mi, which, according to Boas, means 'meat,' but is also used as plural for ol 'black-bear.' The proper term for black-bear in Nass River is 'ol.
- c. haikelaxa' 'something to poke (or stab) the sky with' (properly ha-kel-lax ha', cf. Tsimshian gal 'to spear'). This is a long ceremonial staff that is shown in potlaches; there are songs that go with it.

#### 2. kitwil'na'k'i'l clan

- a. lko'wi'likcilkum cmax 'prince black-bear.' Main crest of the family. When shown as a crest, the eyes and ears of the bear are inlaid with abalone.
- b. la'ayo'q' 'controlling the law (of seating at potlatches),' literally perhaps 'wherein is law, custom' (cf. Tsimshian aya'wux 'law, custom'). This term refers to the skull-like mask, representing the head chief of the ghosts, worn by a man at the door whose business it is to usher guests to their proper seats at the potlatch given by the host to show this crest. The masked usher represents the mythical head chief of the ghosts who, according to the family legend accounting for the origin of the crest, gave power to the family ancestor. Chief Derrick explained that his own right to use the lo'ayo'q' crest

is due to the fact that his legendary ancestor took the skull-mask away from the one who first had it, i.e. the ghost. This crest is evidently identical with Boas' lo'ayo'qs "the commanders," given, however, as a Nass River kispo'udwi'de crest.<sup>1</sup>

c. kademc'a'xu 'underground people.' This crest is shown in the form of a wooden carving of a man (kadem ya'n 'wooden man').

d. kitlu'ce'l 'doorkeepers.' This crest has no song or story connected with it.

When a potlatch is given, the man showing it erects two posts outside of the house (they do not constitute regular totem poles or p't'sa'n).

e. ta'q'amlc'ep 'platform of stone.'

### 3. kitwillu'ya'xu clan

a. lcycmkibo'u 'great number of wolves moving about,' literally perhaps 'wolves moving into the house through the smoke-hole.' When this crest is shown in a potlatch, the members of the host's family come out wearing wolf skins.

b. 'a'xqw'dem hat'se'egwa'a 'foolish grease-dish.' This refers to a ceremonial dish which, at a potlatch, would be shown to the invited chief to eat out of.

c. 'anywcke't 'roasting a man.' In exhibiting this crest at a potlatch they used to put a stick through a slave and roast him. This practice refers to a legend according to which a Tsimshian chief was once taken captive to the kit'anwi'l'kc and so treated because he was in the habit of ill-treating his wife, a princess of the Wolf phratry of the kit'anwi'likc.

## II. EAGLE PHRATRY

### 1. semlaxsgi'k' clan

a. xcga'gim lc'ep 'stone eagle,' the main crest of the clan. The crest name refers to a small stone eagle found ages ago, according to the legend, in the mountains.

b. ki'biluxu, a supernatural being living under the water.

c. dolt's sem'w'git 'vagina chief.' This refers to a ceremonial dish shown at potlatches, that was carved into the shape of a vagina.

### 2. laxt'seme'lix clan

a. lpin 'humpbacked whale,' the main crest.

b. t'seme'lix 'beaver'.

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<sup>1</sup> Tsimshian forms are taken from F. Boas, *Tsimshian Texts (New Series)*, Publications of American Ethnological Society, vol. III, 1912, vocabulary (pp. 254-284).



### 3. kitqane'eqs clan

- a. ma'c hat' 'white marten,' the main crest.
- b. t'sinli'k' 'grey squirrel.'
- c. lgwc'ancgi'ict 'small coffin.' This refers to a large feast ladle in the shape of a coffin.

### III. KISPO'UDWI'DE PHRATRY

#### 1. kisk'a'st clan

- a. lwqs 'moon,' the main crest. Note that though the killer-whale is the main crest of this phratry as a whole, it cannot be used by the kispo'udwi'de of the kit'anwi'likc.
- b. pct'a'i 'grouse.'
- c. haq' 'wild goose.'

### IV. QANA'DA PHRATRY

- a. qa'q' 'raven,' the main crest.
- b. qana'u 'frog.'
- c. cw'q' 'robin redbreast.'

## ( 2 ) CLANS AND CRESTS OF THE KITWANKCI'LKU

The phratries, only three of which are here represented, with their clans, rank as follows:

### I. KISPO'UDWI'DE, THE HEAD PHRATRY

The kitwankci'lku are considered the main Nass River tribe for representatives of this phratry. According to Chief Derrick, it consists of only one clan:

1. kisk'a'st'.

### II. LAXSGI'K' 'ON EAGLE'

Consisting of two clans:

1. laxlo'ukct' 'bundle of things.'
2. kit'se'eq' 'in the bow.'

### III. LAXKIBU'U 'ON WOLF'

Consisting of a single clan:

1. laxt'i'yw'ql. This is said to be the name of a village in the 'Flathead' country to the south, somewhere on the mainland about halfway between Nass River and the present city of Vancouver.

The qana'da phratry is not represented among the kitwankci'lku. The crests of these clans are:

#### I. KISPO'UDWI'DE PHRATRY

##### 1. kisk'a'st' clan

- a. lguwi'likcilgum 'ne'ql 'prince killer-whale.' The main crest.
- b. k'utk'onu'kc 'owl.'
- c. mede'gem t'sa'aya'ks 'water grizzly.'
- d. 'ni'q'ancgi' 'bending over,' referring to a ceremonial representation of the rainbow. maxma'ai', the ordinary term for 'rainbow,' is a more common name of the crest.
- e. lgowi'likcilgum ma't'x 'prince mountain-goat.'

#### II EAGLE PHRATRY

##### 1. laxlo'ukct' clan

- a. tagat'qada't'jut' 'man of the woods,' a supernatural being who lives off by himself and flies in the air. This is the main crest of the family.
- b. q'a't' 'shark.'
- c. 'anlo'lgum wi'lp' 'bird's-nest house.' This is the name of one of the houses of the village (see section on House Names), but it is at the same time considered a crest.
- d. xcga'gem ya'n 'wooden eagle.' The crest is represented as a pole surmounted by an eagle's head.
- e. ctaxtxo'x

##### 2. kit'se'eq' clan

- a. t'seme'lix 'beaver,' the main crest.
- b. xcga'k' 'eagle.'

#### III. WOLF PHRATRY

##### 1. laxt'i'yw'ql clan

- a. ci'ha'wa'lku, translated as 'son of a black-bear,' main crest. The term evidently means 'new taboo, recently forbidden' (cf. Tsimshian ha'wa'lk 'taboo'), and seems to be a periphrasis for another term which, for reasons of taboo, was not mentioned.
- b. kibu'u 'wolf.' This crest was stated to be less important here than the ci'ha'wa'lku, though it gives the phratry its name.



*Button blankets*



### (3) CLANS AND CRESTS OF THE KITGIGE'NIX.

There are only two phratries represented in this tribe. These are, in the order of their rank:

#### I. LAXKIBU'U 'ON WOLF'

Which consists of only one clan:

1. kitgige'n'x.

#### II. QANA'DA

Which also is said not to be subdivided but to consist of one clan:

1. qana'da.

The Eagle and kispo'udwi'de phratries would seem to be lacking. The crests of these clans are:

#### I. WOLF PHRATRY

1. kitgige'nix family

- a. lgo'wi'likcilgum cma'x 'prince black-bear,' the main crest.
- b. yw'px, a mythical water animal resembling an inflated balloon (yw'px 'to inhale'). When this crest is to be shown, a house is built with a door in the form of the opening and closing beak of the mythical animal.
- c. ncxc k'a'lho'dumql 'mother of Not-quite-completed.' This refers to a ceremonial feasting spoon, named after ncxc k'a'lho'dumql, a large mythological woman.

#### II. QANA'DA PHRATRY

- a. qa'q' 'raven,' the main crest. The full name of this crest here is txabila'demya'q' 'raven all covered with abalone' (cf> bila' 'abalone').
- b. t'e'bin 'sea-lion.'
- c. qana'u 'frog.'
- d. galxma't'x 'mountain-goat hat,' referring to a ceremonial hat worn during a potlatch.

#### (4) CLANS AND CRESTS OF THE KITXAT'E'N.

All four phratries are represented in this tribe. They rank as follows:

##### I. LAXKIBU'U 'ON WOLF'

Which was stated not to be subdivided but to consist of only one clan.

1. laxkibu'u.

##### II. LAXCGI'K' 'ON EAGLE'

Which is subdivided into four clans, ranking as follows:

1. kisk'abena'xt 'people dwelling among thorns.'
2. laxlo'ukct'.
3. kitlaxwusa'x 'people living on a sand-bar.'
4. kicq'a'a'kc 'people living on water.'

##### III. KISPO'UDWI'DE

Not subdivided into clans.

##### IV. QANA'DA

Not subdivided into clans.

The crests of these clans are as follows:

##### I. WOLF PHRATRY

- a. makcgum lik'i'incku 'white grizzly,' the main crest.
- b. mac'c'l 'white bear.'
- c. kibu'u 'wolf.'

##### II. EAGLE PHRATRY

###### 1. kisk'abena'xt clan

- a. ne'eq'am q'a't' 'shark with big dorsal fin,' the main crest.
- b. xcga'k' 'eagle.'
- c. t'seme'lix 'beaver.'
- d. lcycgi'bilix 'rotten gi'bilix' (the gi'bilix is a supernatural being living under the water).

###### 2. LAXLO'UKCT' CLAN

- a. txa'biladem xcga'k' 'eagle all covered with abalone,' the main crest.
- b. 'nax'ncycm txo'x 'supernatural halibut halibut shaman.'
- c. t'seme'lix 'beaver.' Its proper name here is he'tgwutl t'seme'lix 'standing beaver.'

- d. lgo'wi'likcilgum haut's 'prince shag.'
  - e. txabiladem t'sa'l 'face all covered with abelone.'
3. kitlaxwusa'x clan
- a. xcga'k' 'eagle' (i.e. plain eagle, not qualified in any way).
4. kicq'a'a'kc clan
- a. kwe'cxga'k' 'eagle garment,' referring to a ceremonial garment made of eagle skins.
  - b. xga'netl t'seme'lix 'beaver eating wood.'
- III. KISPO'UDWI'DE PHRATRY
- a. lcqc 'moon,' the main crest.
  - b. pili'ct' 'stars.'
  - c. k'wut'k'wunu'kc 'owl.'
  - d. sayaita't' 'two men with the same intestines.'
  - e. mac wa'n 'white deer.'
  - f. maxma'ai' 'rainbow.'
  - g. ti'ait'ku 'thunder.'
- IV. QANA'DA PHRATRY
- a. gama'ts 'star-fish,'<sup>1</sup> the main crest.
  - b. t'apxa'dem ya'q' 'two ravens.'
  - c. qana'u 'frog.'
  - d. cilca'lic 'bird-skin hat.'
  - e. haq'clga'k' 'lance, spear.'
  - f. lo't'se't'el'amge'ik' 'saw-bill duck spitting into.'

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<sup>1</sup> This was translated as 'barnacle,' but Mr. Barbeau informs me that it is obviously mistranslated for 'star-fish,' a qana'da crest.



*Pts'aan*



## ( 5 ) D I S T R I B U T I O N   O F   C R E S T S

The following tables conveniently summarize the preceding data. Each column is headed by a combination of numbers referring to one of the clans; the first (arabic) numeral refers to the numbered list of tribes the second (roman) to the phratry as ranked in the tribe, the third (arabic) to the clan within the phratry. Thus, the column headed 3. II. 2 contains the crests, so far as recorded, of the second clan of the second phratry of the third tribe, i.e. the crests of the kit'se'eq' clan of the Eagle phratry of the kitwankci'lku. The occurrence of any one of the crests enumerated in the first column in a particular clan is indicated by a letter in its column corresponding to the order in which the crest occurs in the preceding outline. The main crest of a clan may be readily ascertained by reference to "a" in its column.

### S U M M A R Y   O F   W O L F   C R E S T S

Crest	4.I.1	4.I.2	4.I.3	3.III	2.I	1.I	Total
Wolf	a			b		c	3
Wolves moving about			a				1
Black-bear	b						1
Prince of black-bear		a			a		2
"Son of black-bear"				a			1
White grizzly						a	1
White bear						b	1
Underground people		c					1
yw'px					b		1
Sky-stabber	c						1
"Wherein-is-law" (ghost)		b					1
Doorkeepers		d					1
Stone platform		e					1
Foolish grease-dish			b				1
Roasting a man			c				1
"Mother of Not-completed" (grease dish)					c		1

# SUMMARY OF WOLF CRESTS

Crest	4.П.1	4.П.2	4.П.3	3.П.1 <sup>1</sup>	3.П.2	1.П.1	1.П.2 <sup>1</sup>	1.П.3	1.П.4	Total
Eagle					b	b		a		3
Stone eagle	a									1
Wooden eagle				d						1
Abelone eagle							a			1
Eagle garment									a	1
Beaver		b			a	c	c			3
Standing beaver										1
Beaver eating wood									b	1
Humpbacked whale		a								1
White marten			a							1
Grey squirrel			b							1
Shark				b						1
Shark with big fin		a				a				1
(Halibut)										1
Half-halibut				e						1
Halibut-shaman							b			1
Prince shag							d			1
gc'btlx <sup>u</sup>	b									1
Rotten gc'btlx <sup>u</sup>						d				1
"Man of the woods"				a						1
Vagina chief (dish)	c									1
Small coffin (ladle)			c	c						1
Bird's nest house										1
Abelone-face						e				1

<sup>1</sup> These two clans are known by the same name, *laxlo'ukct*

# SUMMARY OF KISPOUDWIDA CRESTS

Crest	4.III <sup>1</sup>	3.I <sup>1</sup>	1.III	Total
Moon _____	a		a	2
Stars _____			b	1
Rainbow _____			f	1
"Bending over" _____		d		1
Thunder _____			g	1
Grouse _____	b			1
Goose _____	c			1
Prince killer-whale _____		a		1
Owl _____		b	c	2
Prince mountain-goat _____		e		1
Water grizzly _____		c		1
White deer _____			e	1
Two men with same intestines _____			d	1

<sup>1</sup> These two clans are known by the same name, *kisqa'st*

# SUMMARY OF QANA'DA CRESTS

Crest	4.IV	3.II	1.IV	Total
Raven _____	a			1
Abelone-raven _____		a		1
Two ravens _____		a		1
Frog _____	b	c	c	3
Robin redbreast _____	c			1
Sea-lion _____		b		1
Star-fish _____			a	1
Saw-bill duck spitting into _____			f	1
Mountain-goat hat _____		d		1
Bird-skin hat _____			d	1
Lance _____			e	1

These tables show the presence of a minimum of forty-eight distinct crests among the Nass River Indians; if we count special forms of the same crest as distinct crests, we obtain a total of sixty-three. Most of these occur in only one clan of a tribe; the only crests that are more widely distributed, so far as can be gathered from this material, being the wolf, black-bear, eagle, beaver, shark, halibut, ki'bilxu, moon, rainbow, owl, raven, frog, and mountain-goat. As a matter of fact, however, the total number of crests represented among the Nass River tribes is undoubtedly several times as great as here indicated. Moreover, the failure of such well-known crests as the grizzly bear, water grizzly, and killer-whale to appear more than once is clearly due to the fragmentary character of our data. Each of the crests, with the one exception already noted (the mountain-goat occurs both as a kispo'udwi'de and qana'da crest) is restricted to a single phratry; the grizzly bear of the Wolf phratry is, of course, not the same being as the water grizzly of the kispo'udwi'de.

There is no doubt that at least one reason for the appearance of the same crest in more than one clan is the fact that clans often originated by the splitting of earlier more inclusive units, so that they share the same tradition up to a certain point. Moreover, the fact that any particular clan possesses only one form of a given crest points to the secondary origin of the more special forms of the typical crests; thus, the beaver, 'standing beaver,' and 'beaver eating wood' of various Eagle clans doubtless represent special developments of a common beaver-crest tradition.

On the other hand, if any weight is to be attached to the non-occurrence of characteristic phratric crests in certain clans, there would seem to be very good reason to believe that at least some of these originally stood outside the phratry and were only later, perhaps owing to the stress of some systematizing tendency, included in one of the four main phratries now recognized. In this way would be explained, for instance, why two of the three Nass River kispo'udwi'de clans recorded have the moon as their main crest (without at the same time owning the killer-whale), while the other has the killer-whale as its main crest (without at the same time owning the moon). Here two originally distinct clans, or groups of clans, one characterized by the killer-whale crest, the other by the moon crest, seem to have become consolidated into a kispo'udwi'de phratry. Equally instructive examples occur among the Wolf and Eagle families. That, e.g., two of the nine Eagle clans recorded, the laxt'seme'lix or Beaver clan of the kit'anwi'likc and the kitqane'eqs clan of the same tribe, do not own the eagle, their phratric crest, is best explained by assuming that they originally had nothing to do with the true Eagle clan or phratry,



but were only secondarily amalgamated with it. The former of these two exceptional families is, significantly enough, characterized by a name that directly refers to one of its crests, the beaver; the very form of the name, *laxt'seme'lix*, is strictly analogous to that of the phratric names *laxkibo'u* (Wolf) and *laxsgi'k'* (Eagle), thus directly suggesting that in the remote past the group characterized by the beaver crest was a distinct social unit quite independent of and parallel to the groups characterized by the wolf and eagle crests. The evidence derived from the family legends would naturally be of the greatest assistance in establishing these and other such reconstructions. One thing seems very clear at present – that the present fourfold (not to speak of a simpler tripartite) arrangement into phratries cannot be forthwith assumed as the historical nucleus from which the present complex clan system, with its irregularities of crest distribution, has arisen.

#### HOUSE NAMES AMONG THE NASS RIVER INDIANS

One of the privileges owned by certain families was the use of a distinctive house name, a privilege to which the same term *'ayu'kus* is applied as to the crest. According to Chief Derrick, by no means every chief house of a clan has such a name. At any rate, he knew of only eight such house names among the Nass River tribes, three of which belong to the *kit'anwi'likc*, two to the *kitwankci'lku*, and three to the *kitxat'e'n*; the *kitgige'nix*, according to Chief Derrick, have no ceremonial house names.

Beginning with the *kit'anwi'likc*, we find that their old village of *kit'axt'a'amikc* possessed the following three house names (the new village of *'a'ya'nc* has naturally no new house names of its own, but simply uses the older names from *kitlaxt'a'amikc*):

1. Of *kisq'ansna'at'* clan (Wolf phratry): *wucinkilp'elem'ala'* 'fire going through two smoke-holes' (c.f. *'ala'* 'smoke hole'). This house is inhabited by chief *ni'ic'ycq'* 'father of (i.e. owner of) (slave named) *'ycq'*.'
2. Of *kitwil'na'ki'l* clan (Wolf phratry): *willo'a'ml qc'ct* '(house) entrance of which is attended by joy' (literally, 'being-good-therein heart'). This is Chief Derrick's (*k'exk'u*) house, recently built at *'a'ya'nc*.
3. Of *laxt'seme'lix* clan (Eagle phratry): *lpinem wi'lp* 'whale house.' *lpiln* 'humpbacked whale,' it will be remembered, is the main crest of this clan. This

house is inhabited by chief le'eq' 'used up' (this word is used, e.g., of hair falling out of fur or using up of floor planks).

The two house names found among the kitwankci'lku are:

1. Of laxlo'ukct' clan (Eagle phratry): 'anlo'lkem wi'lp 'Eagle's nest.' This house was owned by Chief Derrick's maternal grandfather. It is inhabited by chief kwi'xma'a'u 'salmon spearer' (cf. ma'a'u 'two-pronged salmon spear').
2. Of laxt'iy'ql clan (Wolf phratry): willoxc 'a'nolku 'drumming all over in the house' (cf. 'a'noi 'drum'). This house is inhabited by chief paxk'apl xsga'k' 'ten eagles on a tree.'

The three house names found among the kitxat'e'n are:

1. Of laxlo'ukct' clan (Eagle phratry): 'anwucindjc'q' '(house) that one gets ashamed in after entering (because it is so long)' (cf. djc'q' 'to be ashamed'). It is inhabited by chief kitxc'n.
2. Of laxkibo'u (Wolf) phratry: 'ange'lcma'x 'where black-bear lies down to sleep.' It is inhabited by chief ni'iclic 'ya'n 'father of (slave named) 'ya'n, Excrement.'
3. Of kispou'udwi'de phratry: wi'lpl laxa' 'sky house.' It is inhabited by chief ni'ic 'yo'ct' 'father of (slave named) 'yo'ct'.'

## PERSONAL NAMES OF THE KIT'ANWI'LIK

Anything like a complete survey of the men's and women's names characteristic of the different clans of the Nass River Indians was, of course, entirely out of the question under the circumstances. It was necessary to content ourselves with a selection of typical names belonging to the different clans of one of the tribes, the kit'anwi'lik. The names of highest rank are kept apart from the more common names. It is believed that at least some idea is given of the spirit of the very interesting system of naming that obtains among the tribes of Tsimshian stock.

### I. WOLF PHRATRY NAMES

1. kisiq'ansna't' clan, noblest names:

wc'eci lc'ep 'stone dish,' the noble male of highest rank in the family.

minlko'ckum giba'yukul xga'k' 'eagle flaps his wings slowly,' a prince's name.

ni'ic 'ycq' 'father of (slave named) 'ycq', a male name. k'ipla'xu 'little trout' (cf. la'xu "trout"), the noble female name of highest rank in the family. 'axti'bo'xu 'whale spouts,' a princess' name.

MORE COMMON NAMES ARE:

his 'no'ot'ks 'lying stunned,' a man's name. wi'banl mac q'aya' it' 'big belly of mac q'aya'it', a small salt-water fish' (cf. Tsimshian q'aye'it 'bull-head'), a woman's name. A slave name owned by this clan is: no'ni', a man's name.

2. kitwil'na'k'i'l clan, noblest names:

'axgipa'yuku '(eagle) remains on a tree, unable to fly,' the noble male name of highest rank. t'sasq'a'x 'white wind,' a prince's name. k'e'exku, a male name. ni'k'weli'ltku '(eagle's) head drooping as he rests on a tree,' the noble female name of highest rank. It was borne by Chief Derrick's mother. t'q'akctcxu waq; t'semi'lx 'beaver's tail lying on the ground,' a princess' name.

MORE COMMON NAMES ARE:

xpaye'xku 'people sitting down in a row,' a man's name. q'wadzaxga'kl 'mouse passes right through (anus) when swallowed' (cf. ga'kl 'mouse'), a man's name. ncxc'e'l 'mother of (slave named) 'e'l,' a woman's name. pait'a': 'sit in the middle,' a woman's name.

3. kitwillu'ya'xu clan, noblest names:

t'cingiba'yuku '(eagle) flies away (without salmon which he had been eating when sitting down),' the male name of highest rank. ci'da'u '(lake frozen over with) new ice,' a man's name. co'da'l 'new lady,' the female name of highest rank. kcimk'iyc'q', a woman's name.

MORE COMMON NAMES ARE:

tik' 'get ashamed (when entering the house and seeing many people),' a man's name. lel lc'elaq' 'some rotten ones in a box' (cf. lcq' 'rotten'), a man's name.

II. EAGLE PHRATRY NAMES

1. semlaxsgi'k' clan, noblest names:

qade'lebern haya'tsku 'anchor for a copper' (cf. haya'tsku 'ceremonial copper'), the male name of highest rank. ni'ic ki't'ikc 'father of (slave named) ki't'ikc,' a man's name. nit'se'ts qa'l 'grandmother of (slave named) qa'l,' the female name of highest rank.

MORE COMMON NAMES ARE:

xt'siye'e 'come passing through a strait,' a man's name. ncxc ha'at'ku 'mother of (slave named) Woodpecker,' a woman's name.

2. laxt'semi'lix clan, noblest names:

qaldixma'qt lo'laq'tl kibo' 'he throws behind corpse of wolf' (cf. lo'laq't 'corpse'), the male name of highest rank. q'am'na'het'ku '(wolf) stands looking on bank and starts back,' a man's name. le'q' 'used up,' a man's name. 'okcqaice'i 'grizzly bear's foot,' the female name of highest rank. 'na'mit'mw't'ku '(wolves) stand whining on bank of river,' a woman's name.

MORE COMMON NAMES ARE:

q'wadzaxkco'o'n 'fresh fish (eaten by bear or wolf) passes through quickly,' a man's name. lo'iskum t'simt'o'k'u 'stinking in the navel' (cf. t'ok'u 'navel'), a man's name. cayaitqa'a'q' 'wolf pack comes together and howls,' a woman's name.

III. KISPO'UDWI'DE PHRATRY NAMES

1. kisq'a'st' clan, noblest names: wucinxpe'eltku 'dividing copper into ten pieces,' the male name of highest rank. wi't'cikcna'aqc 'wide bracelet,' the female name of highest rank.

MORE COMMON NAMES ARE:

ni'ic hai wa'xa 'father of (slave named) wa'xs.' caitkcilc'e 'school of small fish all run out under water when touched by a man,' a woman's name.

IV. QANA'DA PHRATRY NOBLEST NAMES

1. t'si't'a'ul', the male name of highest rank. Its meaning is not known. qalkcit'apxa'at' 'two (wolves) go together,' a man's name. 'axdi'wello'yc'ede 'much property left behind in a box,' a man's name. k'uli'gc'u '(wolf) swims from river across bay,' the female name of highest rank.

MORE COMMON NAMES ARE:

tali'ick' 'socks,' a man's name. qe'lxk'u 'shouting,' a man's name. ya'ak'u, a woman's name. ligahalye'e '(wolf) walks along the beach,' a woman's name.

Two types of name illustrated in this material are of particular interest. The first is comprised by names like ni'ic ki't'ikc 'father of kit'ikc,' ncxc ha'at'ku 'mother of Woodpecker,' nit'se'ts qa'l 'grandmother of qa'l.' The second element in such



names is generally the name of a slave, while the first element (father, mother, (grandfather), or grandmother) indicates not the relation of kin but that of ownership. The names are purely traditional and do not, of course, necessarily imply that the bearer has or had a slave of the indicated name. That an ancestor may have had a slave of that name, thus accounting for the origin of the full name, is naturally another matter.

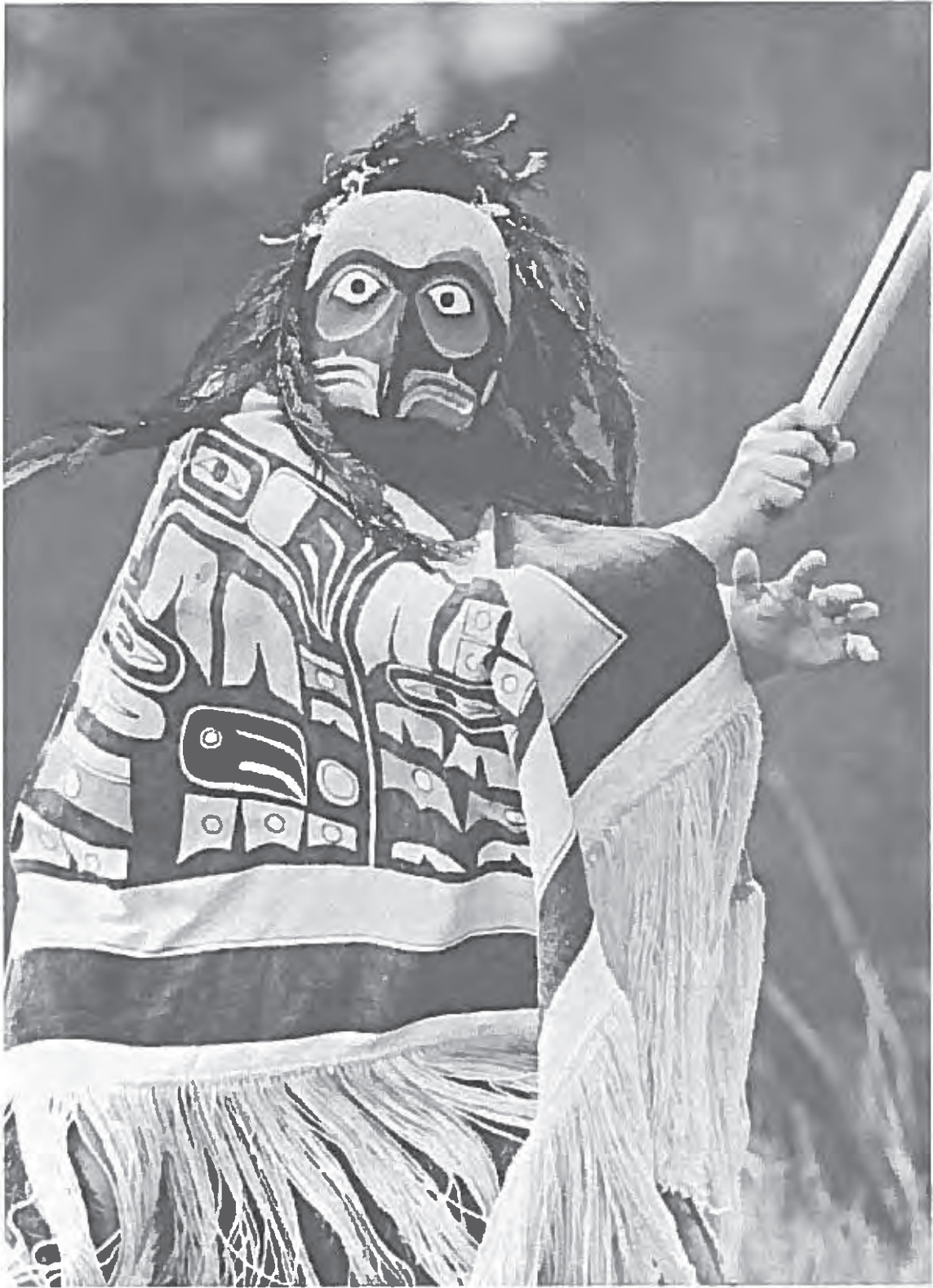
Of still greater interest are the names that refer to crests. The chief point to note with regard to these is that such names refer not to a crest of the clan or phratry to which they belong, but to a crest of one of the other three phratries. Thus, several Wolf phratry names refer to the eagle, the main crest of the Eagle phratry (e.g. 'Eagle-flaps-his-wings-slowly,' 'Eagle-remains-on-a-tree-unable-to-fly,' 'Eagle's-head-droops-as-he-rests-on-a-tree,' 'Eagle-flies-away-without-salmon'); to the hump-backed whale, also an Eagle crest (e.g. 'Whale-spouts'); to the beaver, an Eagle crest (e.g. 'Beaver's-tail-lying-on-the-ground'); and to the bullhead<sup>1</sup>, a qana'da crest (e.g. 'Big-belly-of-white<sup>2</sup> – bullhead'). Conversely, several Eagle phratry names refer to the wolf, the main crest of the Wolf phratry (e.g. 'He-throws-behind-corpse-of-wolf,' 'Wolf-stands-looking-on-bank-and-starts-back,' 'Wolves-stand-whining on-bank-of-river,' 'Wolf-pack-comes-together-and-howls'); or to the grizzly-bear, a Wolf (or possibly kispo'udwi'de) crest (e.g. 'Grizzly-bear's foot'). Some of the qana'da names also refer to the wolf (e.g. 'Two-wolves-go-together,' 'Wolf-walks-along-the-beach'). It is important to note that the strict linguistic analysis of the name does not in every case make the reference to the crest animal seem at all necessary. In other words, there is no doubt that the custom of what may be termed cross-phratric naming, once established, led to the habit of reading extra-phratric crest interpretations into names that may have originated quite differently. This type of reinterpretation of names is analogous to other methods of reinterpreting names current among other American tribes, e.g. reading references to clan animals into names belonging to corresponding clans or reading

<sup>1</sup> The bullhead does not occur in my list of Nass River crests. I learn from Mr. C.M. Barbeau, who has recently made an exhaustive study of the social organization of the Tsimshian proper, that the bullhead is a qanha'da crest.

<sup>2</sup> I do not know whether mac of this name is to be translated 'white' or 'red.' It means properly 'red,' but it seems to be regularly translated 'white' in crest names, e.g. mac wa'n 'white deer,' ma'c hat 'white bear.' Mr. Barbeau's testimony is corroborative of this curious fact, for he finds mes-'c'l translated as 'white bear,' in spite of Boas rendering of this term as 'red bear.'

mythological allusions into them. From a linguistic standpoint it is interesting to note that many Nass River names are really sentences consisting of several words, e.g. qaldix-ma'q-t lo'laq'tl kibo' 'he-throws-behind-corpse-of-wolf,' (qaldix- local particle 'behind the houses'; maq- verb stem 'to put down, throw'; third person subjective; lo'laq't- 'corpse,' object of preceding verb; -l connective syntactic element, here showing that following noun is genitively related to preceding; kibo' 'wolf'). Such sentence names are full ceremonial forms that undoubtedly appear much abbreviated in ordinary usage. It seems highly probable to me that many, if not all, such names arose from a desire to give a full legendary or crest-referring context to older simpler names (e.g. qaldixma'qt 'he throws behind') that only implied or were secondarily made to imply such a reference.

When Chief Derrick's attention was called to the crossphratric character of several of the names, he explained that such names were due to the fact that they were bestowed by the father, who, in a matrilineal society with phratric exogamy, necessarily belonged to a different phratry from his son or daughter. Thus, in a name like 'axgi'pa'yuku 'Eagle-remains-on-a-tree-unable to fly,' borne by a Wolf man of the noble class, he stated specifically that the reference was to the crest of his Eagle father. Chief Derrick further connected the giving of a cross-phratric name with the fact that a child is born in a house belonging not to his own phratry, but to that of his father; when still young, however, he was sent away to be brought up at the house of his maternal uncle, where he would live with his family kinsmen. This custom of change of residence early in life finds its exact counterpart among the Haida.



*Dancer Dennis Nyce representing Naxnok, or spirit beings*





*Dancer Raymond Azak*



## CEREMONIAL DANCES

One or two incidental facts were obtained in regard to the ceremonial dances of the secret societies, and are here given for what they are worth. Among the ceremonial dances whose performance was regarded as an inheritable privilege are:

1. 'o'lala', in which the performers practised cannibalism.
2. lo'lim, in which the performers ate dogs.
3. ho'na'na'l, in which the performers broke objects with a long club, later paying for the property destroyed with objects of greater value.

Chief Derrick claimed that the 'o'lala' and lo'lim were the two head dances and that the ho'na'na'l was used only by princes. He claimed to have the right to the performance of the lo'lim and ho'na'na'l but not to that of the 'o'lala'.<sup>1</sup>



*Ceremonial drummers*

<sup>1</sup> A relatively full account of the secret societies of the Nass River Indians is given by F. Boas in his report on *The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians* (Report of U.S. National Museum for 1895), pp. 651-659.

## CLASSES OF SOCIETY

A few scanty notes were obtained on the classes of society formerly recognized among the Nass River Indians. Chief Derrick recognized three main classes:

1. cemgiga't 'nobles, chiefs.'
2. wa'a'in 'common people.'
3. lili'ngit 'slaves.'

The term lili'ngit is evidently the reduplicated plural of li'ngit (cf. Tlingit li'ngi't), the Tlingit word for 'people.' It implies that the main source of the slave class among the Nass River people was constituted by captives taken in war with the Tlingit Indians to the north.

The common people, as well as the nobles, were represented in all four of the phratries or p'te'eq't. They were allowed to show the less important crests in potlatches, but not the main crests.

## PHONETIC KEY

### Vowels:

- a*, like *a* of German *hat*. It often, in fact normally, is slightly palatalized, corresponding to *a* of French *la*.
- ā*, like *a* of English *hat*.
- u*, like *u* of English *but*.
- e*, like *e* of French *été*.
- ɛ*, like *e* of English *men*.
- i*, like *i* of French *fini*.
- ɪ*, like *i* of English *it*.
- o*, like *o* of English *note*.
- ɔ*, like *o* of German *voll*.
- aw*, approximately like *aw* of English *law*. It stands acoustically midway between *a* and *ɔ*.
- u*, like *ou* of French *bouche*.
- ʊ*, like *u* of English *full*.
- ə*, *ɪ*, *ɛ*, *ɪ*, *ɔ*, *o*, and *ʊ* respectively. They generally occur as rearticulations of preceding fuller vowels.

### Consonants:

- b*, as in English *be*; softened form of *p*.
- p*, intermediate in articulation, i.e. acoustically midway between English *b* and *p*.
- p'*, surd *p* followed by aspiration; developed from *p*.
- ɸ*, glottalized *p*, i.e. *p* pronounced with simultaneous glottal closure, release of oral closure being earlier than that of glottal closure; between vowels *ɸ* is pronounced with less stress, so as to suggest *b'*.
- m*, as in English.
- m'*, *m* pronounced with glottal closure immediately preceding.
- w*, as in English *we*.
- w'*, *w* pronounced with glottal closure immediately preceding.
- d*, as in English *do*; softened form of *t*.
- t*, intermediate in articulation, i.e. acoustically midway between English *d* and *t*.
- t'*, surd *t* followed by aspiration; developed from *t*.
- ɸ*, glottalized *t* (defined similarly to *ɸ*); between vowels it suggests *d'*.
- n*, as in English.
- n'*, *n* pronounced with glottal closure immediately preceding.
- ɟ*, anterior palatal *g*, approximately as in English *argue* (including *y*-element of *u*); softened form of *k*.
- k*, intermediate in articulation, approximately like *c* of English *excuse* (including *y*-element of *u*).
- k'*, surd *k* followed by aspiration; developed from *k*.
- ɸ*, glottalized *k* (defined similarly to *ɸ*); between vowels it suggests *g'*.
- y*, as in English *yes*.
- y'*, *y* pronounced with glottal closure immediately preceding.
- ɕ*, voiceless anterior palatal spirant, like *ch* of German *ich*.
- g*, as in English *gun*; softened form of *k*.
- k*, intermediate in articulation, i.e. acoustically midway between English *g* and *k*.
- k'*, surd *k* followed by aspiration; developed from *k*.
- ɸ*, glottalized *k* (defined similarly to *ɸ*); between vowels it suggests *g'*.
- gw*, *kw*, *k'ʷ*, *kʷ*, (*k'ʷ*), labialized forms of *g*, *k*, *k'*, and *k* respectively.
- x*, *xʷ*, voiceless spirants corresponding in position to *k'* and *k'ʷ*.
- g*, velar *g*; softened form of *q*.
- q*, intermediate in articulation, i.e. acoustically midway between *g* and surd *q*.
- q'*, surd *q* followed by aspiration; developed from *q*.

$\text{q}$ , glottalized  $q$  (defined similarly to  $\text{p}$ ); between vowels it suggests  $\text{q}'$ .  
 $\gamma$ , voiced velar spirant corresponding in position to  $\text{g}$ , from which it is developed.  
 $\text{x}$ , voiceless velar spirant, approximately like  $\text{ch}$  of German *ach*.  
 $\text{q}^w, q^w, q'^w, q^w \gamma^w, \text{x}^w$ , labialized forms of  $\text{q}, q, q', \text{q}, \gamma$ , and  $\text{x}$  respectively.  
 $\text{s}$ , as in English *so*.  
 $\text{c}$ , acoustically midway between  $\text{s}$  and  $\text{sh}$  of English *ship*.  $\text{s}$  and  $\text{c}$  are variants of one sound.  
 $\text{dj}$ , approximately  $\text{j}$  of English *just*, but verging towards  $\text{dz}$ .  
 $\text{ts}, \text{tc}$ , approximately like  $\text{ts}$  and  $\text{ch}$  of English *hats* and *child* respectively; variants of one sound.  
 $\text{ts}, \text{tc}$ , glottalized forms of  $\text{ts}$  and  $\text{tc}$  respectively (defined similarly to  $\text{p}$ ); variants of one sound.  
 $\text{l}$ , as in English.  
 $\text{'l}, \text{l}$  pronounced with glottal closure immediately preceding.  
 $\text{l}$ , voiceless spirantal  $\text{l}$ .  
 $\text{n}, \text{l}, \text{'l}, \text{k}$ , weakly articulated forms of  $\text{n}, \text{l}, \text{l}$ , and  $\text{k}$ , occurring in final position.  
 $\text{'}$ , glottal closure.  
 $\text{'}$ , breath release.

***Diacritical Marks:***

- $\text{'}$ , denotes that preceding vowel is long.
- $\text{'}$ , indicates that preceding vowel is stressed.



# A P P E N D I X

## 3

### FURTHER HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## INDIANS HOLD BIG CONFERENCE HERE

Newspaper clippings  
Daily News, Prince Rupert, B.C.  
Friday, November 21, 1919

### ALL TRIBES UNITE IN SUPPORT OF CLAIM IN CONNECTION WITH LANDS OF PROVINCE

There was held in Prince Rupert on November 17 and 18 a conference between representatives of the Indian tribes of British Columbia allied in support of the petition of the Nishga tribe now before the Privy Council in England, and the united tribes of B.C. consisting chiefly of Tsimpsean and Kitikshean tribes.

To the Indian tribes of British Columbia and particularly to those of the northern coast, this conference was of outstanding importance as it resulted, not only in the settlement of differences which had existed for a number of years between the Nishga and neighbouring tribes, but also in the alliance of the two organizations through a resolution passed, by which the United tribes pledged themselves to support the allied tribes in carrying forward the Indian case, until either they have obtained a judgment of the Judicial committee of the Privy Council or the governments have arrived at a basis of settlement with them.

George Matheson of Sardis, B.C. (was the) chairman of the conference and some of the northern places represented by the delegates present at the conference were Kincolith, Greenville, Port Simpson, Meanskinisht, Kispiox, Hartley Bay, Kitimaat, Kitkatla, Kitlobe, China Hat, Kitselas, Kitsum-galum, Kitwangool.

### THE PETITION

The Nishga petition is a direct petition presented by the Nishga tribe to the Privy Council in the year 1913 for securing independently of the governments a decision of the land questions. Ever since 1915 the interior Indians have been allied with the Nishgas and have actively helped them. At the conference held in June, 1916, between the allied tribes and the Indian Rights Association the Nishga petition was accepted as a test case for all the Indian tribes of British Columbia. In carrying on their agitation the allied tribes have been helped by the Friends of Indians of B.C., the Social Services Council of Canada and the Aborigines Protection Society of London, England.

# P E T I T I O N

IN THE MATTER OF THE TERRITORY OF THE NISHGA NATION  
OR TRIBE OF INDIANS

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY IN COUNCIL  
\*THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE NISHGA NATION OR TRIBE OF INDIANS\*

SHEWETH AS FOLLOWS:

From time immemorial the said Nation or Tribe of Indians exclusively possessed, occupied and used and exercised sovereignty over that portion of the territory now forming the Province of British Columbia which is included within the following limits, that is to say: — Commencing at a stone situate on the south shore of Kinnamox or Quinamass Bay and marking the boundary line between the territory of the said Nishga Nation or Tribe and that of the Tsimpshean Nation or Tribe of Indians, running thence easterly along said boundary line to the height of land lying between the Naas River and the Skeena River, thence in a line following the height of land surrounding the valley of the Naas River and its tributaries to and including the height of land surrounding the north-west end of Mitseah or Meziadan Lake, thence in a straight line to the northerly end of Portland Canal, thence southerly along the international boundary to the centre line of the passage between Pearse Island and Wales Island, thence south-easterly along said centre line to the centre line of Portland Inlet, thence north-easterly along said centre line to the point at which the same is intersected by the centre line of Kinnamox or Quinamass Bay, thence in a straight line to the point of commencement.



In view of all that has been hereinbefore stated Your Petitioners, claiming to hold a tribal title to the whole of the said territory both by aboriginal right and under the said Proclamation, and having no other recourse for securing justice, humbly place this Petition before Your Majesty as the source and fountain of all justice, having supreme authority over all persons and matters within Your Majesty's dominions, and possessing and exercising upon and with the advice of Your Majesty's Privy Council original judicial jurisdiction.



Your Petitioners most humbly pray that Your Majesty in Council may be pleased to take into Your Most Gracious Consideration the matters hereinbefore set forth, and in exercise of the original jurisdiction to which reference has above been made and all other jurisdiction relating to such matters possessed by Your Majesty in Council and upon report made to Your Majesty in Council by a Committee of the whole of Your Majesty Privy Council, or upon report so made by the Judicial Committee or other Committee of the Council to which Your Majesty in Council may see fit to refer the same, may adjudge such matters and determine all question arising therefrom for decision.



This Petition is presented by the Nishga Nation or Tribe of Indians through their Agents, Messrs. Fox and Preece, of 15, Dean's Yard, Westminster, Solicitors, in pursuance of a resolution passed at a meeting of the said Nishga Nation or Tribe, held at the Village of Kincolith situated on the Nass River in the Province of British Columbia, on Wednesday, the 22nd day of January, 1913.

*\*All Nisga'a names, common spelling at the time Note: Excerpted from Petition to His Majesty's Privy Council, lodged on 21st May, 1913*



Nisga'a Land Committee, 1913

*(From left to right)*

*4th Row:*

Charlie Elliot, Mark Smith, Brian Peal, Charlie Brown, William Stevens

*3rd Row:*

Matthew Russ, Jeremiah Clayton, Charlie Davis, Leonard Douglas,  
Benjamin Benson, George Pollard

*2nd Row:*

Benjamin Monroe, Peter Calder, William Lincoln, George Woodfield, Lazarus Moody,  
Andrew Mercer, William Angus, Alfred McKay, George Eli, Johnny Moore

*1st Row:*

Paul Mercer, John Wesley, Steven Allan, Arthur Calder, Charlie Barton,  
William Foster, Sam Pollard, William McNeil





*Nisga'a Tribal Council copper shield*

A P P E N D I X

4

AN EXCERPT FROM AYUUKHL NISGA'A:  
THE FLOOD

## THE FLOOD

EXCERPT FROM ORIGINS, AYUUKHL NISGA'A - VOLUME 1

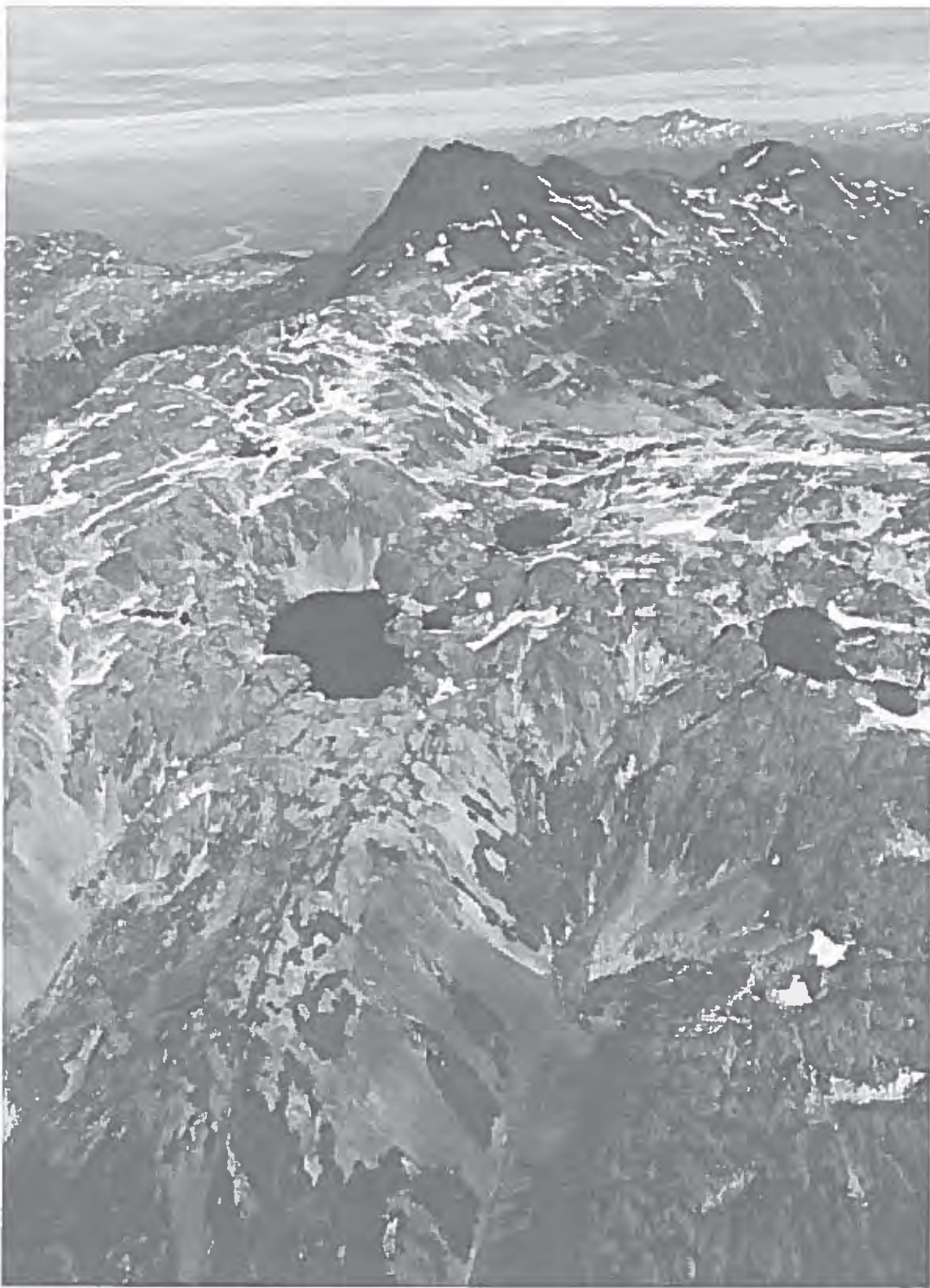
For the benefit of some who may not be familiar with the length and depth of our Txeemsim legend and related mythical history, we would like to point out that what we have presented here is but a small fraction of the entire cycle of narratives.

To relate just the Txeemsim legends alone would take an elder many long winter days and nights. After all, that legend embodies an accumulated history spanning thousands of years. In contrast, the history of British Columbia as known by Europeans encompasses a span of less than 200 years.

One major historic event which is not included at present in this brief volume of Nishga legends is that of the Great Flood. While the Flood adaawaks will be compiled in the future, we do want to cite them here as a further example of the depth of our history and its narration. For instance, Greenville Sim'oogit Niyslisyaaan (the late Leonard Douglas) spent two entire evenings recounting the many events, feats and details surrounding our Nishga ancestors' encounter with the Great Flood. His story would fill several volumes in itself.



*Sgañisim Xk'aat'aapgwit (Mt. Kwinamass) Savior Mountain south of Gingolx*



*Sgañisim ǰhlaawit (Vetter Peak) Savior Mountain in central Nass valley*



If we had had time and space to include this important part of our history in this volume of *adaawaḵs*, many of our historians' words would have described in detail how our ancestors survived the Great Flood and how that contributed to the reformation of the Nishga tribes as they exist today.

We will simply mention here that when the Great Flood occurred, our forefathers saved themselves by riding out the fierce onslaught of the turbulent, foaming waters in their large canoes. To prevent being carried away by the winds and currents, they tied their canoes to the four highest mountain peaks within the territory, rode out the flood storms and were in this way able to return to our Naas River homeland after the waters subsided. Those mountains were: Sganisim *Xhlaawit* near *Gitwinksihlkkw*; Sganisim *Xk'aat'aatgwit* near *X'anmas* (Kwinamaas) river; Sganisim *Ansimakiskw* (Kswan) in Hastings Arm; and *Wii Sganisim Sim'oogit*, at *Lax Xk'alaan* near *Hyder*, Alaska. As a consequence, each of these four mountains are major historic landmarks for us to this day.



*Sganisim Guxw Mak'iskw (Mt. Fowler) Savior Mountain at top of Hasting Arm*



*Sgañisim Laxsáa (Mt. Hinkley) Savior Mountain near tip of Portland Canal*

A P P E N D I X

5

TRIBAL OWNERSHIP

## TRIBAL OWNERSHIP

Throughout Nisga'a history, from the beginning of time, one of the most important principles in Nisga'a society has been that of sharing and coexistence. Both concepts are embodied in Nisga'a tribal laws/traditions such as 1) amnigwootkw, 2) hagwin-yuuwo'oskw, 3) the yukw, and 4) a Nisga'a edict which declares the 'sharing of a common bowl' – saytk'ilhl wo'osihl Nisga'a. Following the formation of the Nisga'a Land Committee in the 1890s, it was decided that the Nisga'a would stand united and speak with one voice. A confirmation was made at that time, through consultation and the consensus of the Nisga'a, that their tribal ownership included the territory of the Naas River watershed and the boundaries of this land were described in the 1913 Nisga'a Petition as follows:

Commencing at a stone situated on the south shore of Kinnamox or Quinamass Bay and marking the boundary line between the territory of the said Nisga'a Nation or and that of the Ts'imsan Nation or Tribe of Indians, running thence easterly along said boundary line to the height of land lying between the Naas River and the Skeena River, thence in a line following the height of land surrounding the valley of the Naas River and its tributaries to and including the height of land surrounding the northwest end of Mitseah or Meziadin Lake, thence in a straight line to the northerly end of Portland Canal, thence southerly along the International boundary line to the centre line of the passage between Pearse Island and Wales Island, thence southeasterly along said centre line of Portland Inlet, thence northeasterly along said centre line to the point at which the same is intersected by the centre line of Kinnamox or Quinamass Bay, thence in a straight line to the point of commencement.

An historic Treaty between the Tahltan and Nisga'a, which was earlier agreed on at Treaty Rock, was reaffirmed by the Tahltan and Nisga'a nations in Terrace, B.C., on February 12, 1977. Nisga'a lands west of the International boundary, located in Portland Canal, have not been included in negotiations with Canada.

The Nisga'a Statement and Nisga'a Petition of 1913 reinforces this philosophy of tribal ownership. Since the creation of the Nisga'a Tribal Council in 1955, in continuation and furtherance of the work of the earlier Nisga'a Land Committee, and specifically since the Nisga'a Tribal Council case against the government of B.C., heard in the Provincial Supreme Court in 1968, and the ensuing hearing of



the case in the Supreme Court in 1972, the Nisga'a continue to advance a united position on this basis of their tribal ownership of Nisga'a lands and resources.

The Nisga'a have not deviated from the course set down by their forefathers – which is based on their firm belief of sharing and coexistence.



*Gitlakdamiks community hall*

## DEFINITIONS

### 1. AMNIGWOOTKW:

A privilege granted to a son, children and wife by his father, regarding temporary use of father's land, etc.; a privilege which ceases automatically upon death of father. (We are a matrilineal society.) Privilege ends when father dies.

### 2. HAGWIN-YUUWO'OSKW:

A plot of land granted to the bride on her wedding day by her maternal uncle/grandfather, the underlying message being that her husband may have access to their land for the benefit of their children. Husband's privilege ends when wife dies.

### 3. TRIBAL OWNERSHIP:

The Nisga'a tribe/nation...

### 4. YUKW:

The feasting system which settles the estate of a Chieftain – and which entails the passing on of the Chieftainship, authority to land, and entitlement to land. The key people involved in putting up such a feast are:

- a. the immediate maternal family of the deceased, though others contribute in various ways, namely the extended family/clan,
- b. spouses and children of the immediate family, and
- c. in-laws.

### 5. GWILXYEN'SKW:

The law which requires all those with knowledge of our laws and our values to pass this information on to the next generation, thereby perpetuating the information.

6. KSIISKW:

- a. The law which requires a wrongdoing to be repaid with something of equal value. (If a person was accidentally killed, the family of the deceased was given a plot of land by the family who caused the death.) This law was used frequently in the olden days.
- b. Another example of ksiiskw is that if a Chieftain to be, or someone who is his descendant, cannot settle the affairs of his uncle, then another person is required to do that settlement. If the person that does the settlement is of no relation to the Chieftain, he is given a token of appreciation, usually a piece of property. This is to acknowledge the agreement with the idea that when this Chieftain gets back on his feet (so to speak), he will redeem the land he had given up.
- c. The law which requires a wrongdoing to be repaid with something of equal value, i.e. an eye for an eye. (Years back, for example, if a person was accidentally killed, the family of the deceased had the right to take the life of a member of the person's family who caused the death.)



*Ann Robinson, Eagle clan, serving at pole-raising feast*

A P P E N D I X

6

THE WOMAN WHO ATE ALL THE FOOD  
AN EXAMPLE OF THE NISGA'A ORAL TRADITION



## THE WOMAN WHO ATE ALL THE FOOD



THIS POWERFUL NISGA'A LEGEND IS TOLD BY MRS. BRIAN PEEL

There were four brothers who always hunted in the vicinity of Meziadin Lake at the head of the Nass River. Their wives were responsible for carrying the dried salmon. There had been a great famine and the only dried salmon left was held by the wife of the eldest brother.

The older brother was the first to reach an encampment. The others would follow and the eldest brother's wife was always the last to arrive, after the others had finished eating. Just as the others were ready to sleep, the woman would appear with the pack she carried and eat whatever food was left.

When they arrived at the last encampment, before the hunting grounds, they waited for the woman. Finally she appeared with her heavy pack. Her husband took the pack and opened it, finding only bark! The woman had eaten all the dried salmon and replaced it with bark, to deceive the others.

The woman's husband had a very serious altercation with his wife. He told the others: "This woman must be left behind to gather for herself; she is too gluttonous for her to stay with us."

The party left the woman behind. But the wife of a younger brother had pity for her and hid some live fire in a ball of pulverized wood.

Alone and weak, the woman took the ball of live fire, and headed off in another direction.

Later, the older brother turned to his brothers, "Go back and see what has happened to the one who ate all the food; she must have perished. Perhaps the wild animals devoured her flesh. Burn her remains."

They could find no trace of her and returned to say: "We have searched everywhere but couldn't find what happened to your wife. There is no sign of her." So, giving her up for dead, they returned to their village.

The woman's grown daughter cried when she heard the news. Her father was afraid his daughter would hear about the serious altercation between himself and his wife which he believed was the cause of his wife's death.

The deserted woman had by this time moved to the head of the lake, where there were a great many salmon. She had made a large smoke house and became a good hunter. Her bow and arrow killed much game.

She knew she had discovered a rich hunting ground and that she was going to claim it as her own, yet she was afraid to return to her own village. She feared meeting her own people because she would have to explain what her husband had done. As well, her brothers would make reprisals.

She also knew that others, thinking her dead, would treat her as a ghost woman and would be afraid. At the same time, she wanted to return to give her new hunting territory to her brother, as it was very rich in furs and fish.

Meanwhile, another lone hunter had left Gitlaxt'aamiks. Sad, after the death of his wife, he set out in the hope he would perish. Not knowing where he was going, he came to the lake where the woman lived.

His approach was seen by the woman, who took out her bow and arrows to kill him. But the man called out: "Don't shoot me; I will do you no harm."

The woman recognized him from her own village, and put down her bow and arrow. The man approached: "What has happened to you? Your husband says that you were dead."

"He only thought that I was dead. I travelled a long way until I got here; I have taken this to be the property of my uncle, Ksomsaan, who will add this to his other territories. But I'm afraid to go back as it may anger my brothers, who may kill my husband for the way he has treated me, and then again my own people have believed me dead and may not believe me when I appear before them."

The man said: "Your husband, who claims you died on the trail, no longer has any claim on you. I will marry you. One day we will return to the village of your uncle and you can tell him what you have for him."

The two lived there for a long time. And, unknown to them, the woman's daughter cried continually.

The couple gathered a great quantity of furs and food; their two houses were full. They began to make plans for a return to Gitlaxt'aamiks.

But the woman was afraid, so the man devised a plan to have the woman wear a disguise: "As all the people believe you to be dead, you should make a

leather outfit like the Tsetsoet women. No one will recognize you when you are dressed differently."

So, when the woman made her leather outfit, she put it on and they took as much of their property as they could pack and, carefully hiding the rest, set off for their village. After many days of travelling they went directly to the husband's house where the woman was introduced as a Tsetsoet.

No one recognized her and her husband told his uncle: "We will invite the people to whom we will show my wife. She will show and sing Tsetsoet songs and dance." Then the woman came forward and began singing in a foreign tongue and dancing in a strange manner, with her face partially covered by her long hair.

While dancing, the woman came close to her daughter who cried out: "Naa'a!" which means mother. Mother and daughter then wept with joy.

The woman went to her uncle, Ksomxsaan. She took him to her houses which were filled with food and were carried back to the village. Then Ksomxsaan gave a great feast during which he announced: "My niece brought me robes and a bountiful hunting ground, which will never be empty, *axdiwilluugooda*.

"My niece shall assume it and the name of the territory will be known by the same name."

So that is how it came to be that the Ksomxsaan, house of the Canada group, have the rights to the vicinity of Meziadin Lake, which is still considered the richest hunting grounds in the interior. This is the area disputed by the Wolf clan and the Raven people, both of the Nass River and the Gitwink'ul people.



*Smokehouse*

A P P E N D I X

7

FRANK CALDER ON THE B.C. LAND QUESTION



## FRANK CALDER

In the Executive Board Meeting of the Nisga'a Tribal Council, held at New Aiyansh on June 29 and 30, 1993, President Joseph Gosnell advised me to totally research my personal files with respect to the traditional Nisga'a hunting grounds as outlined in the Nisga'a Petition that was submitted on May 21, 1913, to His Majesty's Privy Council, London, England, in the matter of the territory of the Nisga'a Nation.

In response to this request, attached is a copy of a letter and trapline chart dated January 3, 1969, which I received from Mr. G.A. Smythe, the Conservation Officer of the Department of Recreation and Conservation of the Government of British Columbia, which clearly indicated the position and policy of the provincial government regarding certain traplines located in the Nass River Valley and registered in the names of several trappers resident in Kitwancool. The letter is concise, straightforward and self-explanatory. However, please note the fourth last paragraph. It states, "...since that time a trapline has given an individual or a group the sole right to trap the land. Nothing more. They have no claim to the land – just the fur."

In plain summary I would suggest that the last three words "just the fur" implies the registered trappers are not authorized to profit from other resources of fish, forest, water, land, mineral, big game, farm and construction (outside trapline requirements), etc., etc. I would advise that this letter be studied thoroughly, keeping in mind that the named trappers are licensed to trap for fur only. The letter is marked and it is the first item from my files.

There are several pertinent prefaces to Mr. Smythe's letter. They are as follows:

1. On March 28, 1960, the Nisga'a Tribal Council wrote to Mr. E.W. Innes, clerk of the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs, and requested a hearing before its members. The Petition was granted and on May 26, 1960, the attached Nisga'a brief was submitted to the committee for consideration. It officially appeared in the Parliamentary minutes of proceedings and evidence No. 7. This Nisga'a brief was instrumental in reopening negotiations for the final settlement of the British Columbia Land Question. (Note: It may be recalled that on March 30, 1927, the special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons had rejected the Land Question of the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia that resulted in the Federal restriction of any further consideration of the land question.)

2. Then on March 9, 1961, the Nisga'a Tribal Council delegation, comprised of James Gosnell, Hubert Doolan, Chester Moore, Frank Calder, Rod Robinson, William McKay and Roy Azak met with the Government of British Columbia in Victoria and informed its members that the Government of Canada had agreed to reopen deliberations regarding the settlement of the B.C. Land Question and that judiciously the B.C. Government should recognize and support this federal move.
3. It was the occasion of the Nisga'a mission to Victoria that Mr. Wilson Duff of the Royal British Columbia Museum informed that Nisga'a delegation of his recent publication entitled "Histories, Territories and Laws of the Kitwancool." – (Memoir #4, 1959).
  - a. This publication included a map which outlined the traplines in the Nass Valley that were registered in the names of several Kitwancool trappers – a map which, according to Mr. Duff, originated with Chief Michael Inspring Bright of Aiyansh.
  - b. On page 5 of the publication, the persons who submitted to Mr. Duff in 1959 the Kitwancool territorial land claim in the Nass River Valley were: Peter Williams, Fred Good, Solomon Good, Maggie Good, Walter Douse, Walter Derrick and Ernest Smith. Mrs. Constance Cox did the translations and Mrs. B.W. McKilvington did the writing of the stories.
  - c. To the knowledge of the Nisga'a Nation this was the first time, since time immemorial, that its tribal members had ever heard of a neighbor tribe claiming part of the traditional Nisga'a hunting ground.
  - d. The Nisga'a delegation confronted Mr. Wilson Duff in Victoria and in no uncertain terms condemned the Wilson publication as a farcical incomplete document due to his lack of foresight to interview the Nisga'a Nation for verification of Kitwancool stories.
4. Following the return of its delegates to Victoria, the Nisga'a Tribal Council wasted no time in its executive priorities. It immediately notified all the chiefs, councillors and members of the Nisga'a Nation in all the Nisga'a communities and branches that a special convention will be held in Aiyansh on November 6 and 7, 1961, for the sole purpose of interviewing Chief Michael Inspring Bright concerning his leading role in creating discrepancies in the Nisga'a land question. As Chief Bright was blind and hard of hearing, he was seated in the front row of chairs with Chief Stephen Eli as communicator, between the chairman and the questioners.

In reply to questions posed by leading Nisga'a chiefs from a packed assembly, Chief Michael Inspring Bright admitted that:

- a. He drafted the trapline map which eventually reached the office of Mr. Wilson Duff in Victoria.
- b. He had allocated and registered the names of a number of his friends and relatives from Kitwancool to certain traplines from the Kinskuch River northward to the Bell Irving River in the Nass River Valley.
- c. He had registered these traplines contrary to the advice of the B.C. Indian leaders in 1927 that tribal trappers throughout British Columbia should not register their traplines until solutions of them have been reached by the land question.
- d. He did not inform the Nisga'a people of his activities on behalf of the Kitwancool community.

The highlight of the special convention at Aiyansh was Chief Michael Inspring Bright's admission of misleading the Nisga'a land question that accrued to misunderstanding and disagreement between the people of Kitwancool and the Nisga'a Nation (all of whom were good friendly neighbors for centuries), and he concluded his remarks with an assurance that, as one who had originally come from Kitwancool, he would have no difficulty in counselling the people there to abandon their claim of land in the Nass River Valley. To this day, his decisive words, "Way dim sityeexwdi'y," meaning, "Well, I am going to change it," still rings in the ears of those who attended that special convention at Aiyansh. As unfortunate as it was, Chief Michael Inspring Bright, who was on in years went from able to disable in health, bedridden and finally passed on in February 22, 1965, without the opportunity to meet his associates in Kitwancool and to provide a solution to the ill-fated event in the Nass River Valley.

The second item from my files is an eight-minute tape transcription of my interview with John E. Carlick and George Edzerza in Telegraph Creek on July 29, 1968, regarding the Tahltan-Nisga'a Peace Treaty boundary at Treaty Creek. In this tape, Chief Carlick related the stories which were passed on to him during his youth by his great-grandparents concerning the Tahltan invasions into the "Noothsga" (Nisga'a) territory. He said that the Nisga'as never did invade and attack the Tahltans; rather it was the other way round. It was always a Tahltan invasion and attack upon

the "Noothsga" Nation. This appeared to verify the historical evidence that two northern interior tribes had attempted to reach the coast:

- the Tahltan tribes by way of the Stikine River Valley and by way of K'alii Lisims (Nass River Valley), and
- the Tsetsaut tribes by way of K'alii Lisims (Nass River Valley) and by way of Gits'oohl (Portland Canal).

Both attempts failed due to the military resistance of the Tlingit and Nisga'a Nations respectively.

The core of the Carlick-Edzerza tape-message declared the "Noothsga" (Nisga'a) as the sole tribe ever encountered south of Treaty Creek, and that the Nisga'a Land Committee should have consulted the Tahltan Nation during the drafting of the Nisga'a Petition in 1910 with respect to the location of the Tahltan-Nisga'a Peace Treaty boundary.

In addition to the tape, George Edzerza described how he and his father, George Edzerza Sr., along with Jack Pete and Pete Tashoots, all from Telegraph Creek, had ventured south of Bowser Lake on a sightseeing trek the fall of 1923. They had camped for a noon meal and were preparing to return northward when they spied a hunter approaching from the south. It was then that they realized they had trespassed upon another person's trapline. This was a deadly error in traditional Indian hunting laws. It meant death to encroachers. But to their surprise the hunter greeted them politely and introduced himself as Simon Gunanoot. After an exchange of friendly dialogue, George Edzerza Sr. invited the famous trapper to victuals and mountain tea with his group. During this repast George Edzerza Sr. congratulated Simon Gunanoot on his victory in court. (After running from the law for 13 years Simon Gunanoot turned himself in in 1919 and in 1920 he was acquitted in court for a crime he did not commit.) Before they parted George Edzerza Sr. asked Simon Gunanoot why he did not unsling his rifle when he saw strangers on his trapline. Simon Gunanoot replied that he cannot exercise traditional laws upon the land he did not own. He said, "This is Nisga'a country."

The third item from my files is a 60-minute tape transcription of the Frank Calder and Thomas Berger interview with Chief Richard Woods in Prince Rupert on August 9, 1968, regarding the Nisga'a Petition, boundary of the Nisga'a hunting ground, Nisga'a Land Committee, O'meara, Friends of the Indians, unanimous support of the Nisga'a Petition, B.C. Allied Indian Tribes, Spences Bridge, Duncan C. Scott, 1927 Joint Senate and House of Commons hearings, McKenna-McBride



Agreement, Surveyors, Delegations, Provincial Unity and jealousies of certain neighboring tribes encountered.

At the time of this taping Chief Richard Woods was the only remaining personage from the 1910 period that gave birth to the Nisga'a Land Committee and its hiring of Richard Woods as interpreter and of Rev. Arthur E. O'meara as lawyer of the Nisga'a Nation and to the drafting of the Nisga'a Petition.

I and Tom Berger interviewed Mr. Woods prior to the submission of the Nisga'a Case to the Supreme Court of British Columbia in 1969. The interview covered the impact of the Nisga'a Petition as previously listed, but the most engaging aspect of it was the unanimous support the Petition received from all the tribes in British Columbia, especially the Interior tribes. Mr. Richard Woods stated that in all of his lifetime involvement in the Land Question, at no time did he ever hear of an opposition to the Nisga'a Petition or to its specified boundary. The only criticism came from the neighboring tribes and it only had to do with their suggestion that other tribes should have been part of the Petition. According to Mr. Woods, jealous talk began from this latter point.

Respecting other tribal support, Mr. Woods referred to the Nisga'a delegation to Ottawa in 1915 to commence consideration of the Nisga'a Petition. On that occasion Mr. Duncan C. Scott, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, indicated that, as the Nisga'a Petition appeared to assume the grievances of all the tribes of British Columbia, the Nisga'as should solicit their unanimous support. The Nisga'a Land Committee agreed and accepted his advice, whereupon it initiated two conferences; one at Port Essington and the other at Spences Bridge.

At Port Essington the northern tribes, including the Gitksan and the Tsimshian, gave wholehearted support to the petition, and at Spences Bridge the Petition was instrumental in the formation of the Indian Allied Tribes of British Columbia and in its provincial support. Both conferences were held in 1915.

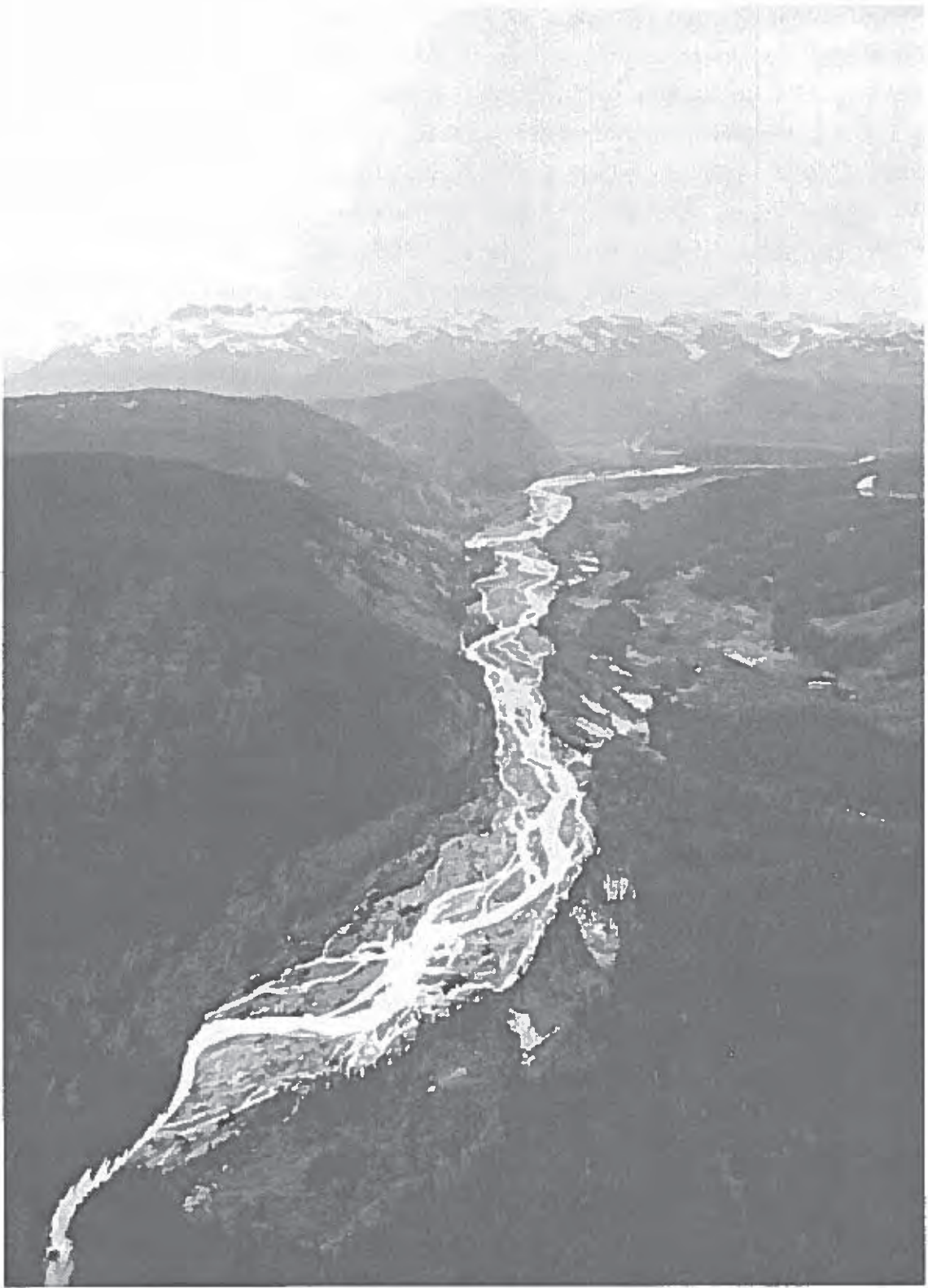
In June 1916, the *Prince Rupert Daily News* reported a conference at which the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia and the Indian Rights Association accepted the Nisga'a Petition as a test case for all the Indian Tribes of British Columbia, and on November 21, 1919, the *Prince Rupert Daily News* reported another conference at which the United Tribes of B.C., comprised chiefly of Tsimshian and Gitksan tribes, supported the Nisga'a Petition. Mr. Woods tape transcription is most resourceful and informative on many Land Question issues such as on historical rights. In this connection he said that from many decades of

usage the Tsimshians and the Gitksans (Kitwancool) may have established certain historical rights at Red Bluff (oolican fishing) and on the traplines above Kinskuch River respectively, but cannot lay claim to these lands as their own because they both know that these lands are within the bounds of the Nisga'a Petition which they both supported.

Chief Richard Woods died in Prince Rupert on March 15, 1977, nine years after the interview by Calder and Berger, and four years after the judicial decision on the Calder Case. Indeed, he was one of the patriarchs of the British Columbia Land Question.

The fourth item from my files are two old maps upon which are marked some of the hereditary Nisga'a coastal camps and shelters spelled in Nisga'a. These hereditary coastal locations are mapped throughout Portland Inlet, Quinamass, Nasoga Gulf, northern tip of Somerville Island, Observatory Inlet, Portland Passage, Portland Canal, Pearse Canal, Pearse Island, Wales Canal and Tongas (west of Wales Island). Tongas was a community of mixed tribes, predominantly mixed Tlingets and Nisga'as. During the late 1800s there was an outbreak of an epidemic disease, other than the ravaging smallpox, that forced the people to vacate Tongas. A good many of them migrated to the area of what is now Ketchikan. Those of Nisga'a descent moved to K'alii Lisims (Nass River). Among them was a young boy from a Moses family whom Chief Job Calder and his wife Chieftess Nagwa'un of Laxgalts'ap adopted to be a half-brother to their own son, Arthur Calder. They named the adopted boy Peter Calder. These two boys, in their later years, became part of the Nisga'a leadership in the Nisga'a Land Question. Chief Peter Calder was the resource person on matters pertaining to memorable accounts of tribal visitations, sharing, strifes, ceremonial assemblies and economic trades between the Nisga'as and the Tongas, Haidas, Tlingets and the Tsimshians that created this sea-lane of coastal camps and shelters. As the Nisga'as holistic world measured sharing as traditional, cultural and good public relations, they welcomed the neighboring tribes to use these coastal camps as resting places and to shelter their canoes from stormy weather. In other words, just as there was a Grease Trail, so there was a Grease Lane.

The fifth item from my files is an old written manuscript. The manuscript was found by two old bottle seekers and excavators in the remains of an old Nass River jail house that was located between Double Island and Port Nelson, both on the opposite river side of the village of Kincolith. The 44-page manuscript is entitled "Report



*Treaty Creek, traditional boundary line between Nisga'a and Tahltan*

written in 1887 by commissioners of the Dominion and British Columbia Governments who were sent to interview the Indians of the Nass River and Port Simpson in B.C. in an effort towards better understanding of their wants and grievances." It detailed many historical events including the presence of W. O'Reilly, Survey Commissioner, the influence of William Duncan, the introduction of the Indian Act and the reservation system, aboriginal title and rights, rejections of the Metlakatla Alaska Tsimshian claims in Portland Inlet and K'alii Lisims (Nass River), land selections, coastal camp and fishing site selections, trapping and hunting ground site selections, community site selections, smokehouse site selections, tribal encroachments, oolican site controversies, the British North America Act, B.C. terms of union, responsibilities of Indian agents and Indian village councils, the influence of Rev. Thomas Crosby, the influence of rum-runners and the Land Question.

Nevertheless, the resume of this document, as it referred to the Nisga'a Petition and boundary, is quite obvious in the following aspects:

- a. The Tsimshian Nation disregarded its signatures to the Nisga'a-Tsimshian Peace Treaty of June 2, 1869, in the presence of Governor Frederick Seymour on board the H.M.S. Sparrowhawk, by continuing to create dispute with the Nisga'as and to claim coastal lands and waters that were previously under share basis by the grace of the Nisga'as. March 12, 1981, letter to Bert McKay and Peace Treaty with accompanying statements.
- b. In a meeting held in Fort Simpson at which the Tsimshian people demanded the Hudson Bay Company leave the Fort, the Commissioner said to James Hayward, a Tsimshian, "...I have however been given to understand that when the Hudson Bay Company settled themselves here fifty years ago, there were no Tsimshians living on the spot, but that subsequently Indians flocked round the place. If that is so, it is not difficult to understand that the company should claim the land immediately about their buildings, and that it is you who have encroached upon and squatted on the company property..." This quotation appeared on the bottom of page 37 and the top of page 38 of the manuscript. It has raised the question – Where did the Tsimshians come from that were laying claim to sites in the Nass River area? Obviously from the vicinity of Metlakatla and around the inner harbour where Prince Rupert is presently located. A few years later these claimants were identified as William Duncan's Metlakatla Tsimshians.



- c. By the manuscript and other recordings it would appear that the William Duncan Tsimshians continued the claims for several years following their citizenry on Annette Island, Alaska, August 7, 1887. According to the manuscript they would come in 30 to 40 canoes through Portland Inlet and into the Nass River area as if they owned the territory during the fishing and oolican seasons.
- d. During the period of surveys for Indian reserves, both the Government Commissioners and surveyors completely ignored the traditional tribal and clan hunting and fishing grounds. They even advised the Indians to designate any coastal sites they were using, and this judgment created a sort of a 'Gold Rush' for coastal and river lands particularly in the Nass River area where the oolican was the centre attraction.
- e. The neighboring tribes' economic land claims in the lower Nass River and its attempt to 'reserve' them under the Indian Act was the basis of disagreement between friendly adjoining tribes, and the Government Land Commissioners' refusal to recognize aboriginal title and rights was the foundation of the Nisga'a Land Committee, Nisga'a Petition and boundary.

From the advent of the European to the birth of the Land Question, the Nisga'a Nation was cognizant of the term 'Nass River Tsimshians.' It was and is a misnomer. It was like Columbus identifying 'Indians' when he thought he had reached India. The term had been applied now and then in the writings of missionaries, missionary doctors, anthropologists, economic explorers, government surveyors and government administrators, etc. Thus it was not uncommon to read about the Nass River Tsimshian land claims; whereas it should have been more commonly termed the 'Nass River Nisga'a land claims.'

I would like to conclude the research of my personal files by recalling a most memorable stay at the residence of Chief and Mrs. Ambrose Reid in Port Simpson during the month of October 1938. Following my discharge I had to remain near the Port Simpson Hospital as an outpatient recovering from the typhoid fever. The Reids, who were good friends of my foster parents, Chief and Mrs. Nagwa'un Calder, were only too pleased to accommodate me, since we all shared the sad loss of my foster father who had passed on a year earlier, and for the opportunity to talk to me about the Native Brotherhood organization and the Land Question. During my sojourn at Port Simpson, therefore, I had ample time to converse with Chiefs Ambrose Reid, Thomas Gosnell, Henry Bailey and other great leaders of the



*Oolichan storage bin at Fishery Bay*

village, all of whom were included as founding fathers of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia. Without a trace of a doubt they all agreed that one day the organization could include in its agenda the reopening of considerations to settle the British Columbia Land Question and that on this certainty, they would support any of the organization's affiliate that may wish one day to submit its land case to the courts. True to this word, the Native Brotherhood of B.C. supported the submission of the Nisga'a Tribal Council (legal content and boundary) in 1969, and Messrs. Guy Williams, Johnny Clifton and Arnold Recalma were its representatives for the Calder Decision, 1973, Ottawa.



FRANK CALDER  
NISGA'A TRIBAL COUNCIL  
*President 1957-1973*

TRADITIONAL NISGA'A TERRITORY







**NISGA'A TRIBAL COUNCIL**  
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