

HAIDA LAAS

April 29, 1994

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Journal of the Haida Nation

The Haida Dictionary

by John Enrico

In the 1970's, the Alaska Native Language Centre produced a series of Haida dictionaries, the last in 1977. Recognizing that these were incomplete, ANLC applied for and obtained money to produce a more comprehensive dictionary and hired me to do the work.

My collection of data had begun in 1975 as part of my work for the Massett Band and actual assembly into a dictionary began in Massett in 1981 under the National Science Foundation grant obtained by the ANLC. The first draft Massett Dictionary was finished in 1984. Then in 1987 I obtained another NSF grant for two years work adding the Skidegate dialect. This work actually continued for a year or so longer, funded by the Vancouver Museum. In 1991 I made a brief trip to Hydaburg in order to get at least the basic Alaskan information.

The dictionary now contains around 14,000 words, with the Skidegate form listed
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Old Massett Site of Haida Language Conference

**Haida Language Conference -
Old Massett, May 9 & 10,
1994.**

The 1994 Haida Nation House of Assembly had a panel discussion on the state of the Haida language. The discussion resulted in a call for a Language Conference to address the many concerns, and to plan and organize activities aimed at restoration of the Haida language to full time everyday use.

The conference will be co-hosted by the Council of the Haida Nation, Old Massett Village Council and the Skidegate

Band Council. This is the first language conference scheduled on Haida Gwaii.

Agenda items brought forward to date include: Reports from existing language programs (Masset, Queen Charlotte and Hydaburg Schools and others?); Report from John Enrico, New Haida Language Dictionary (all three dialects are included); Inventory of linguists and orthographies; Inventory of all fluent speakers, those who understand, learners, and any one literate in any of the orthographies in
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COMMUNICATIONS

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existence; Establishment of Haida Language Authority, Institute or Board (central resource for direct access); Rounding up all existing audio and video tapes, documents, and everything relevant to Haida culture and language; De-politicizing programs and maintaining an open concept in the program environment; Evaluation of successful language programs elsewhere; Planning on-going community programs and activities; Planning of future conferences and immersion programs; Finance options and resource; Cultural night, singing and dancing and speech making; and; **your input** to the conference.

Fund raising update:

There is no funding available for the conference, so everyone attending must make their own arrangements to attend. Old Massett Village Council has donated \$500.00 and will assist with other costs; Skidegate Band Council will donate as yet an undetermined amount of money; CHN is committing staff and resource time; Thunderbird Air has donated, for Raffle, return tickets for two from Massett to Vancouver including hotel and car rental. Draw date is May 8 at the Massett Airport. Tickets are \$2 each or 3 for \$5. Half of the proceeds will go to the Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly in Skidegate on May 12 & 13, 1994. A \$5000.00 Bingo is planned for April 28 in Massett. Once again, half of the proceeds will go towards the

Youth Assembly. Anyone wishing to donate items for fund raising can contact Ernie Collison in the Massett CHN office, or for money donations, please make cheque or money order payable to: Haida Tribal Society, Box 589, Massett, Haida Gwaii, V0T 1M0.

Conference Fees: There is no fee. The only investment required is energy and commitment for the restoration of the language. Please bring your own note paper and writing utensils.

Food donations: Fresh and preserved food can be donated ahead of time or can be prepared and brought to the Old Massett Hall on the days of the conference. Lots of food will be needed. Lunch and supper will be available for all in attendance.

Volunteers needed: As this is an unfunded conference, volunteers will be needed to cook, set-up, clean-up, drive el
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HAIDA LAAS: JOURNAL OF THE HAIDA NATION

Editorial Policy:

- * To educate and inform Haida People on what is taking place within the Haida Nation; and everything that affects the Haida Nation.
- * To form a communication link between all Haida's living off Island and on.
- * To educate the non-Haida people on the aims of the Haida Nation.
- * Haida Laas has the right to edit all submissions that will be printed in the paper.
- * Approval must be obtained from the Communications Committee prior to printing of articles.
- * The Comm. Committee has final responsibility for what is published.

" THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF THE HAIDA LAAS NEWSLETTER IS THE DISSEMINATION OF QUALITY INFORMATION THAT IS ACCURATE,ISSUE ORIENTED AND REFLECTS HAIDA LIFE AND CHANGES."

Haida Dictionary (cont.)

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first, Massett second, and Alaskan third. The Skidegate dialect preserves some consonants lost in the northern dialects, and is placed first because it throws some light on the northern forms of the many words in which this has happened.

Most of the lost consonants have left behind what linguists call a skeletal slot (a kind of ghostly consonant) in the Massett dialect and to a lesser extent in the Alaskan dialect; this is represented with ". " (the period), for example in **k'in.aan** "moss" or **ts'aa.u** "low tide" (compare Skidegate **k'inxaan**, **tsixu**; other consonants lost in the north in certain words include ʔ or glottal stop, r, which is pharyngealized glottal stop in the north, and c, a velar fricative). Similarly, the Massett dialect preserves certain consonants or skeletal slots that have been lost in the Alaskan dialect.

The original (1972) ANLC alphabet has been simplified by eliminating underlining of certain letters and made closer to the actual sound system of the language while adhering to the goal of an alphabet that can be typed on an ordinary keyboard. Besides the loss of some consonants, the major difference in the appearance of northern and southern words is due to the change of the Canadian tone system to a pitch accent system in

Alaska.

In Alaska, each word has at most one high-pitch syllable, the accented syllable (many words have no accent at all) has to be marked. In Canada, any syllable can be high or low tone, though tone is highly dependant on syllable structure and so for the most part does not need to be marked. The exceptions are mostly low-tone long vowels, as in **ts'aa.u** above. If we left off the tone mark in this word, aa would be the predictable high tone rather than the unpredictable low tone, and we would get a different word (in this case one that the language doesn't use, a possible but non-existent word).

Skidegate speakers will have noted that **tsixu** is spelled with a short vowel i even though that vowel is pronounced like long ii as in **k'iina** "hot". The important fact here is that the two pronunciations are not really identical--the long vowel of **tsixu** is low-tone, while that in **k'iina** is high -tone. Everyone will agree that we need to differentiate a low-tone i-sound from a high-tone one. One way that we could do this would be to use a tone mark on one of the two, leaving the other plain. But actually the language itself differentiates them for us, because it can be shown that word initial low-tone long vowels in Skidegate are basically short (which is why they are low-tone) and are automatically lengthened when pronounced. Note that this makes spellings in northern and southern dialects

much more similar than one would have thought from transcriptions by some of the linguists who worked on Skidegate in the 1970's-- instead of Levine's **tsii** "fisheggs" (Levine ignored tone, so we don't know if this is high or low) we have **tsi**, with a vowel the same tone as that in northern **tsa**.

Let's look at some of the information that is included in noun entries. Besides the form for each dialect, its word class (noun) and definition(s), an entry contains the (often unpredictable) classifier associated with the noun (for example, **gu** for chitons or coins, **ra** for plates or towns), various unpredictable inflected forms (for example, the definite, the inalienably possessed, the plural-kinterms only, and so on), and adjectives based on the noun (these are very common, for example, **tangaa** "be salty" based on **tanga** (s), **tangng** (m), **tang** (a) "seawater, salt"). In some cases there are also verbs based on a noun which must be included, for example **tawda** (m,s), **tuuda** (m), **t'awda** (a), "grease, lubricate" from **Taw**, **tuu**, **t'aw** "oil, grease").

Verbs are very much more complicated. To start, one has to list the kinds of phrases that the verb requires in order to make a sentence. Some verbs require only a subject, others a subject and a object, others still other information. For example, **gyaa dah** "sell" occurs with a subject and a phrase **NP7ad** (s),

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xaa.ad kil dii sk'adadii : Teach Haida To Me

by Robert Davidson

In 1960 you were able to recite from memory the names of all the carvers there were in each community of Massett and Skidegate because there were so few. Today there are so many you cannot begin to name all the carvers who are practising the art of our ancestors. In the late 1950's and early 1960's, people predicted the art to become extinct in a very short time. The authorities who predicted this were proven wrong.

Today our language, which is the very foundation of our culture, is on the threshold of extinction. It is said by experts that when the last living person of my parents generation dies, our language will be officially extinct. That means within a very short 10 to 20 years, the language that expresses and defines who we the Haida are, will be gone forever.

I have a vision that this trend can be reversed just like the extinction of the art was reversed. But this can only be done by us, the Haida people, by committing ourselves to this movement.

It has been said many times that the language of a culture holds insights and knowledge to our universe. Language defines us as Haida.

What will it take to motivate us into learning our language again and make this a living language?

What will it take for us to realize the seriousness of this situation?

What will it take for us to start reclaiming the language?

What are we willing to do about it?

In talking to people who speak the language, one thing is becoming very clear. Many people do not speak the language for fear of making a mistake in front of their peers. We as students of the language need to hear Haida in speech or in everyday life more often.

The only people who now speak the language are the people who were taken away to the residential schools. But these people have a lot of pain in relation with the language. I was talking to a friend the other day who is in my Dad's generation. He was laminating his experience at residential school. He left home speaking the language, but he does not remember the first two years of school there. To this day he cannot speak the language.

In short, in order for us to move on with learning the language, some kind of healing has to take place in our parents generation in order for them to speak the language among themselves. Some kind of healing has to take place in order to remove the shame that surrounds our language. Some kind of commitment has to be made for them to speak the language in public. We need to encourage them to speak to us in our own tongue. Somehow they have to be encouraged to speak and realize that it is okay to make those mistakes with each other.

We as a people have been living in criticism with each other long enough. As I continue on the road to healing my soul, I am beginning to understand the strong need for encouragement to lighten each others load. When we start to encourage each other, when we can make allowances for mistakes to be made, we will be on that road to healing. When a child is learning to walk, every effort is made to encourage that child to continue it's efforts into succeed. Many of us hold back for fear of what the other person will think of us. We as students of the language must have patience in getting the information from our Haida speakers.

I found it painful as a child to be continually put down for not speaking the language. Now as I am learning the language, I see it as a very healing medium. I see language as part of the process of reclaiming our identity. I see it as taking charge of our lives again. I see it as coming full circle in our recovery.

When we say the need is strong to save the language, we need to look at the bigger picture. When you see a drowning man in the water, you do not say save just his arm, or save just his feet. You have to save his whole being. In reconnecting with our culture, we need to realize that the language is only one facet of our being Haida. To date we have reclaimed the Art, the Songs, and the Dances, we are now in the process of reclaiming our land. I also have a strong sense that we

Haida Language

need to reconnect with our spirituality as well as our language.

As I learn more of the language, I find it very exciting to finally break down the barrier that has always separated me from my parents and grandparents. In the past the language acted as some kind of barrier. It had some kind of power over me. Whenever I heard the language, I used to blank it out. Now that I am learning the language, I have become very thirsty for knowledge. The student who is just starting to learn, or who wants to learn the language, has to start just like the child who is learning how to walk. The first step is to learn one word. Learn that word, and learn where and when to use it. There already is a large vocabulary of Haida words that are in everyday use. Those words that we now use we have to start pronouncing them correctly, such as for "Haida" to xaa.adaa" or "xaaidaaga", depending on your dialect.

In reclaiming our language we can start to reconnect with our spirituality. In reclaiming our language we can reconnect with our self esteem and self worth again, the very emotions that were beaten out of our parents generation, the very emotions that have affected us all indirectly.

Sometimes I feel like a broken record in talking about our healing. What is it that we need to heal? For years I have been talking about putting the puzzle together. Today I ask my-

self, "what is the puzzle?" The puzzle I'm putting together is self esteem and self worth. Self esteem is how I feel about myself. Self worth is the value that I put on myself. Like many other people, I was ashamed to be Haida. Where did this feeling come from? Am I worthy of the gifts of life? In healing the wounded parts of self, I am able to have a better self image, and in having a better self image I am able to choose life, choose love and choose happiness.

We are on the threshold to recovery. We all hold that key. We as Haida people have to make that move. No one is going to do it for us. We need to take that first step.

Guusuu talang gedwang
(what are we waiting for)?

Volunteers Needed

The Council of the Haida Nation is looking for volunteers to assist with preparing for the Haida Language Conference.

For more information or if you wish to volunteer, please call: Ernie Collison, Co-ordinator, at the number listed below.
Howa!

Council of the Haida Nation
Masset Office: 626-5252
♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

(cont. fr. pg. 2)

ders and visitors and to assist in any way.

Billets: People from Skidegate, Hydaburg, Ketchikan, Prince Rupert, Vancouver, Victoria and Seattle have indicated that they are planning to attend. Visitors are asked to find accommodations with family and friends on Haida Gwaii. However, there is always the need for billeting, and if any visitors need billeting, please contact the CHN Massett office, noted above. Haida Gwaii residents are requested to take in billets, please call the CHN Massett office if you can take in billets. Please remember that there is only a small budget, and assistance may not be available for those taking in billets.

Travel Information: BC Ferries 1-800-222-4537; Thunderbird Air 1-800-898-0177 or 626-5500; Canadian Air 1-800-665-1177; Harbour Air 626-3225 Massett or 627-1341 Rupert; Waglisla Air 1-800-663-2875; Massett Travel 626-3604; and; Rikka Travel 559-4400.

HAAW7AA for your interest and commitment to the preservation of the Haida language.

Ernie Collison
Coordinator,
Haida Language Conference
Council of the Haida Nation
Ph: 626-5252 or Fax: 626-3403

Haida Language

(cont. fr. pg. 3)

NPrahl (m), **Npreehl** (A), literally "with NP" (where NP means 'noun phrase') specifying the item sold. These phrases subject, object, and so on, are called the verbs "arguments". Then **gyaa dah** can also occur with an optional **NPgi**, **NPga** phrase "to NP", but this is less closely related to the verb and is called a "non-functional argument". This difference between "functional" and "non-functional" arguments is mostly of concern to linguists; what is of concern to other users of the dictionary is the simple fact that all these phrases are associated with **gyaa dah**. "Sell", however, will not be a basic entry - the word comes from **dah** "buy" (originally "trade for") by addition of pronoun **gyaa**, and appears as a subentry under **dah**. Already we see that the information contained in this dictionary is more complete than that in standard dictionaries of European languages. Such dictionaries will tell you whether a verb occurs with a subject only, or a subject and an object, but contain very little information about other arguments. But this is just the beginning. There are many other categories of information contained in the verb entries of this dictionary that have no counterpart in standard dictionaries, some only of interest to linguists, others crucial information for anyone who wants to use the word (but

information that standard dictionaries take for granted). I covered some of this information in the talk I gave at the QCI Museum last spring.

The other word classes of the language are pronouns, postpositions (rather than prepositions), quantifiers (like "all, some"), adverbs, verb-complex elements (basically, adverbs that are added after the verb rather than amongst the arguments), particles (like "too, only, even"), classifiers, instrumentals (like "with a knife, with a rock"), determiners (like "this, which"), suffixes (parts of words rather than distinct words but necessary nevertheless), expletives (or exclamations), address forms (like "Dad, dear") and replies (like "yes, no, OK").

Work remaining to be done (and currently funded by Parks Canada) consists in finishing the addition of the Alaska information, refining definitions, and checking entries for consistency. Writing a good dictionary is a long-term project. There are individuals who have spent half their lives editing (let alone writing) single editions of dictionaries. Eventual publication will be by the Alaska Native Language Centre, a branch of the educational system of the State of Alaska.

Ha'ada Gwaii

by Fred White

The isles of mist, rain, sunshine, wind, snow, rocks, sand, soil, trees, and Ha'aday are indeed lovely.

I am drawn to this land, the land of my people.

Ha'ada Gwaii, the homeland of the Ha'aday, where the bond is strong, though I have only been there once. The people, mountains, sea, ocean, deer, eagles and ravens all cohabitate.

These shores, beaches, cedar, spruce, pine provide the landscape with life, color, presence.

My ancestors have been here more than nine thousand years, look around and see why.

Salmon: sockeye, coho, spring, and dog, provides health, wealth, and lineage.

Halibut, herring, oolichans, crabs, and seaweed are also staples of the diet.

Salmon berries, blueberries, huckleberries, season the isles with flavour and color; sweet, tart, orange, blue, and red.

History, mystery, and mythology pervade in Ha'da Gwaii.

Nani, Chini, keepers of knowledge, teach me more.

Speak to me in the tongue of our people, speak to me tenderly, speak passionately, speak slowly, speak, and I will listen, speak, so I may speak as well.

My voice needs strength, my mind needs sobriety, my life needs faith, my life needs you, nani and chini. Teach me about Ha'ada Gwaii.

Aboriginal Language Principles

Prepared by the Assembly of First Nations Aboriginal Language Conference. January 1988.

"Language is culture & culture is language."

"If we are the tree, what kind of fruit do we produce? Are they recognizable to us? Through common language, we can recognize our fruit."

"Look at an acorn, it grows into a great huge tree. What we have left is the acorn. We must plant that seed so it can flourish."

"We cannot build a house without a foundation."

Language is a gift from the Creator. Language expresses our unique relationship with our Creator, our attitudes, our beliefs and our values.

the future and survival of aboriginal people depends on the survival of our spirituality, our land, our knowledge and skills, our traditions and culture which are expressed through our aboriginal language.

The maintenance of language is an aboriginal responsibility. Language belongs to the people and its preservation, revival and maintenance must necessarily involve, depend on, and evolve from the people!

Although English and French are useful in allowing our people to speak nation to nation, aboriginal languages are in danger of extinction throughout Canada. Protective measures and revitalization efforts are urgently required at every level of society

and government.

Education is the passing down of the collective knowledge of the older generation to the succeeding generation. Elders are thus the natural link to this collective knowledge and therefore are critically important to the survival of our nations. Elders, as keepers of knowledge, shall be involved in all aspects of language revitalization and maintenance activities.

On-going language retention activities are demonstrating positive impacts among aboriginal people which must be maintained and encouraged. In addition, current language efforts have shown even greater impact in developing self-pride, improving self-confidence, and healing spiritual, social and family disintegration caused by the loss of the languages.

Despite limited resources, Aboriginal people are making efforts to utilize technology to record and to increase use of language in their community as well as to adapt their language, history and culture to new ways of learning and teaching. Critical to these efforts is the expansion of existing programs and innovations in language preservation and maintenance.

All languages as all nations are equal and therefore should not be judged by their number of speakers nor protected on the basis of numbers.

Aboriginal literacy traditions have embraced many different kinds and forms, i.e. pic-

tographs, wampum, birchbark etching, syllabic and hieroglyphics, as well as conventional alphabets; therefore, aboriginal people must decide how their language is preserved and through what forms.

Aboriginal people have historically been denied access to higher education and moreover our traditional approach to education has been largely ignored. Therefore, aboriginal people must be provided the necessary support to develop their own educational institutions, manage their own schools, and exercise their right to use and teach their own language.

Furthermore, educational institutions must respect different modes of teaching, recognize and certify varying levels of experience and expertise, and help provide training and accreditation to aboriginal people.



SKIDEGATE BAND COUNCIL
BOX 1301, SKIDEGATE, BRITISH COLUMBIA V0T 1S1
FAX (604) 559-8247 TELEPHONE 559-4496

Douglas P. Berger BA CA

Chartered Accountants

Suite 200, 206 Seymour Street
Kamloops, British Columbia
V2C 6P5
Telephone (604) 372-5551
Telecopier (604) 372-1422

Price Waterhouse



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CHN Budget Approval,
Committee Appointments &
Quarterly meeting Scheduling
May 2, 1994 10:00 am
Old Massett: Elders Building

Haida Language Conference
May 9 & 10, 1994
Old Massett

Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly
May 12 & 13, 1994
Skidegate

Northwest Tribal Treaty
May 25 & 26, 1994
Skidegate

CHN/BC/CDN Treaty Negotiations
Tuesday, June 14, 1994
Old Massett Hall



Haida Laas : Subscriptions

Haida Laas is published bi-weekly by the Council of the Haida Nation and is distributed through CHN offices, Regional Councils, the Skidegate Band office, the Old Massett Village Council office and through subscriptions. If you would like to subscribe to Haida Laas, please send cheque or money order for \$35 (cdn) to:

**Haida Tribal Society
P.O. Box 589
Massett, Haida Gwaii
V0T 1M0**

Be sure to include your name, address and phone number.

NOTICE TO ALL YOUTH

There will be an important meeting concerning the upcoming

***Haida Gwaii
Youth Assembly
May 12 & 13, 1994.***

This meeting will be held at the Skidegate CHN office on May 4, 1994 at 4:30 pm. For further information, please call Ernie Collison at the number below or Willis Parnell at 559-4496. Howa!

**Council of the Haida Nation
Massett Skidegate
626-5252 * 559-4468**



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