



# Returning the Past: Repatriation of First Nations Cultural Property

Four Case Studies of First Nations Repatriation



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# Returning the Past: Repatriation of First Nations Cultural Property

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## ■ Overview of Resource & Prescribed Learning Outcomes

This resource provides a unit of study on **First Nations** repatriations for secondary school students. The case studies are designed to be used whole or in part. Written in collaboration with First Nations knowledge holders, the case studies are meant to provide teachers and students with a record of the experiences of repatriation from four different First Nations communities, three in British Columbia and one in Alaska.

Each case study is presented with a map, images and a timeline. Initial inquiry activities, lesson ideas, research activities, and glossary are also provided. All bolded words are defined in the glossary.

**Please note:** In this resource, the terms First Nations and Indigenous are used. First Nations is used to designate the first peoples of Canada and the Tsimshian of Alaska. Indigenous is used when referring globally to the original inhabitants of a place.

This Unit of Study meets the following Prescribed Learning Outcomes:

### Social Studies 10

#### Skills and Processes

Apply critical thinking skills such as questioning, comparing, summarizing, drawing conclusions, and defending a position

Demonstrate effective research skills such as accessing information, assessing information, collecting data, evaluating data, organizing information, presenting information, and citing sources

Demonstrate effective written, oral, and graphic communication skills individually and collaboratively

#### Identity, Society, and Culture from 1814 to 1914

Evaluate the impact of interactions between Aboriginal peoples and European explorers, and settlers in Canada from 1815 to 1914.

### Social Studies 11

#### Skills and Processes

Apply critical thinking skills

Demonstrate effective research skills

Demonstrate skills and attitudes of active citizenship, ethical behaviour, open-mindedness, respect for diversity, and collaboration

#### Politics and Government

Describe major provisions of the Canadian Constitution (section 25 and 35 outline Aboriginal rights)

#### Society and Identity

Demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by Aboriginal peoples in Canada during the 20th century and their responses

### British Columbia

### First Nations Studies 12

#### Skills and Processes

Apply critical thinking skills including questioning, comparing, summarizing, drawing conclusions, hypothesizing, and defending a position

To make reasoned judgements about a range of issues, situations, and topics

Demonstrate effective research skills

Demonstrate attitudes of active citizenship, ethical behaviour, open-mindedness, respect for diversity, and collaboration

#### Contact, Colonialism and Resistance

Assess the economic, social, political, and cultural impacts of contact with Europeans upon BC First Nations from the period of the land-based fur trade to Confederation

#### Cultural Expressions

Evaluate the importance for Aboriginal peoples to determine use of their artistic traditions and historical artifacts



## ■ Introduction



**Repatriation** is the return of **cultural property** to the originating country, community, family, or individual. Some cultural property may have been taken from its original owners through illegal or unethical ways. Repatriation of cultural property is an important part of acknowledging and reconciling the unjust ways that many First Nations people were treated in the past.

The repatriation of cultural property is an emotional topic for First Nations people in Canada and for Indigenous peoples around the world. Repatriation also has political and legal importance and must be understood as part of Indigenous peoples' historical and current encounters with **colonization** and its consequences.

In the past, many museums were involved in the collecting and categorizing of Indigenous cultural property and knowledge often without the active involvement of Indigenous people. Museums have displayed these objects for many years, sometimes misinterpreting or misrepresenting their use and meaning. Recently, some museums have started working with First Nations on exhibits, education programmes, and on repatriating cultural property. Now many Indigenous families and communities are actively engaged in repatriating objects from museums around the world. The case studies in this resource help us better understand the Stó:lō, Haisla, Haida, and Tsimshian communities and their individual and collective quests to regain important cultural property from museums.

Exploring this complex issue means understanding that cultural property may have been either taken, **appropriated**, stolen, or sold. The return of wrongfully taken cultural property to their original communities is important work. Acknowledging the historical events that resulted in First Nations losing their cultural property and addressing these issues is an important part of repatriation and reconciliation. It is one way to recognize Indigenous peoples' history and future.

## ■ Initial Inquiry Activities:

The following are some topics for classroom discussion that can be raised prior to reading the different case studies.

Think of a time when something important to you was taken without your permission.

- How did you feel?
- What was your first response?
- What did you do to try to get it back?
- In retrospect, how might you approach the problem of retrieving your property?

In small groups, ask the students to discuss their experiences of having something important to them taken away without their consent.

- Was the object returned?
- What research is necessary to learn about the loss, the circumstances at the time, and the impact that the loss had on people involved? Consider the different sources you would need to consult.
- If the object was not returned, how was the final outcome resolved?
- How could your experiences aid those who may have similar experiences in the future?

Consider the removal, sale or theft of cultural **heritage** from societies for collection and display in museums or private collections.

- How is this situation different from an individual's loss of property?
- What information do you need to know in order to recommend action?

In small groups, develop guidelines for how these items should be returned.

- What will you need to know?
- Who should be consulted? Who should be involved?
- Have each group present their guidelines to the larger group.

## ■ Case Study Lessons and Research Activities:

### **Assign one case study to small groups of students:**

- Have each group member read the case study.
- Have each group analyze the steps taken by the First Nations community to repatriate their cultural property.
- Assess the effectiveness of the First Nations strategy in each case study.
- Have students consult additional resources such as the maps, photographs, newspaper and magazine articles, and websites provided.
- Present their case study analysis to the rest of the class.
- Invite students use the “Questions to Consider” in each case study to structure their presentation.
- Ask students to revisit the initial guidelines (from the Initial Inquiry Exercise) and list any changes they would make based upon reading the case studies.

### **Discuss the following questions with the class:**

- What was the point of controversy or contention, if there was one, in each of the cases?
- How are the cases similar? How are they different?
- What do you think the roles and responsibilities of museums, governments, and citizens should be with regards to repatriating cultural property?
- What do you think the role of oral histories might play in the repatriation process?
- What might some of the costs be to repatriate an object?
- What are some communities doing to raise funds for repatriation projects?
- What are your impressions of the repatriation process?

### **Creative responses:**

Cultural items carry different meanings for different people. Choose a cultural item from one of the case studies and describe its significance to the various people who had it in their possession. Create a poem or art piece based on these diverse perspectives.

Using one of the case studies, generate a list of people or groups who had possession of the cultural item in question. Determine the rightful owner of the item. Include the guidelines that you used to come to your conclusion. Write an opinion piece for a local paper that outlines your judgment.

## Case Study Lessons and Research Activities continued

### Research a cultural object:

Search on the internet for museums which have on-line collections. Individually, in pairs, or in small groups, choose a First Nations object from a museum collection.

- Was the material unjustly or illegally acquired?
- How can this be determined?
- What are the challenges for First Nations communities in undertaking research in Museums? What challenges did you face undertaking this research?
- What are the challenges for museums in determining rightful owners of objects in their collections?

Respond to the issues you have uncovered in your research by writing recommendations for museums and First Nations communities.

### Newspaper articles analysis

Pick a newspaper article from one of the case study's "Research Resources" and respond to the following questions:

- Are there issues with repatriation that are not directly stated in the article?
- What are the assumptions or bias of the writer?
- Does the news article include Aboriginal perspectives?
- Why do you think the repatriation of the cultural property is reported in the "Arts and Entertainment" section as opposed to "Local Canadian News", or "World News" sections of the newspaper? Do you agree or disagree with this way of viewing repatriation? Support your answer with what you have learned from the case studies.
- How does the media shape the way that we view repatriation cases?

### MOA Repatriation Guidelines

In small groups, review the Museum of Anthropology's Repatriation Guidelines

[http://www.moa.ubc.ca/pdf/Repatriation\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.moa.ubc.ca/pdf/Repatriation_guidelines.pdf)

- Analyze, discuss and summarize the information provided in the guidelines. Consider what is included and what is not included. Assess whether the guidelines are helpful in assisting with repatriation?
- What are some of the barriers First Nations might face in requesting the repatriation of cultural property?
- What are some challenges that museums might face in repatriating items?

## Glossary:

**Ancestral remains:** The human remains of an ancestor.

**Appropriate:** To take without permission or consent; to seize, to use without having proper knowledge or understanding of a particular object, property, culture, or right.

**Band:** A Band is an organizational structure defined under the Canadian Indian Act which represents a particular group of First Nations people. The term “Nation” is now more commonly used.

**Bentwood box:** A storage box made of cedar. The term bentwood comes from the fact that the sides of the box are made from one piece of wood that is scored in three places and then bent using steam. Boxes were used to store a variety of items such as food and clothing, and could be used for cooking. They were also used as grave boxes.

**Clan:** A clan is a group of people that are connected by a common ancestor from either the paternal (father’s) or the maternal (mother’s) line.

**Colonization:** The term colonization refers to Western European countries’ extension of political, economic, social, and often religious control over lands with established indigenous societies. Colonizing powers often impose their ways of life on indigenous societies.

**Cultural property:** Cultural property is material of importance to the cultural heritage of a group of people. It includes artistic, historical, religious, and cultural objects, as well as songs, stories and dances.

**Descendant:** An individual who identifies him/herself as belonging to a particular family or cultural group because s/he shares ancestry.

**Ethnography:** A form of anthropology where a variety of field research methods are used to understand a specific group of people or culture through the study of their daily lives.

**First Nations:** A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian” in Canada. Although the term First Nations is widely used, no legal definition of it exists.

**Glass plate negatives:** A form of negatives used in early 20th century photography.

**Halq’eméylem (Hal-ko-melem):** An Indigenous language and dialect spoken by some First Nations people of the lower mainland and southern Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

**Heritage:** Practices, places, collective memories, traditions, and objects that people individually or collectively wish to preserve and pass on to the next generation to perpetuate national or cultural identity.

**Indian Agent:** A representative of the Canadian federal government who was responsible for one or more First Nations groups. Indian Agents were instrumental in enforcing the Potlatch Ban and sending First Nations children to residential schools.

## Glossary continued

**Indigenous:** Peoples who have the earliest historical record of living in a particular geographic region.

**Missionary:** A person sent by a particular religious group or church to convert people to their own faith.

**Mortuary boxes:** These were often bentwood boxes that would contain the remains of the deceased after their bodies had been ceremonially prepared.

**Mortuary house:** Houses built solely for the keeping of the dead.

**Mortuary pole:** A pole created to commemorate a community member that has died. Mortuary poles often have a carved-out niche where a mortuary box would be placed. The figures on the poles represent the poles' owners.

**NAGPRA:** The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act is an American Federal law passed in 1990. NAGPRA provides a process for museums to return certain Native American cultural items under four categories: human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony.

**Nation:** A culturally and politically organized body of First Nations people under a single government. Bands or tribes can exist as sub-sects within a Nation.

**Native American:** A term relating to a tribe, people, or culture that is indigenous to the United States.

**Potlatch:** A ceremonial occasion and feast where ancestors are honoured, family wealth in the form of hereditary names, privileges, songs and dances are passed on, marriages witnessed, debts repaid, family status enhanced. Potlatches are carried out according to the cultural protocols of the host family. Invited guests have a responsibility to witness and recall what takes place in the potlatch. Guests are given gifts by the host as payment for taking on this responsibility.

**Pre-contact:** The time before contact with European traders and colonialists.

**Regalia:** The ceremonial clothing used by First Nations people.

**Repatriation:** The transfer of physical custody and ownership back to the originating community, such as tribes, bands, or nations.

**Shaman:** A man or woman who has the ability to work between the natural and supernatural worlds, cure illness, generate miracles, ward off attacks, and maintain cultural and medicinal knowledge.

**S'malgyak:** The name of the language shared by the Tsimshian, Gitksan, and Nisga'a Nations of British Columbia and Alaska.

**Sxwóxwiyám (shwo-kwee-am):** A Halq'eméylem (Hal-ko-melem) word meaning 'history of the distant past'.

**Time immemorial:** A term meaning the beginning of time.

**Totem pole:** Large wooden pole with images carved into them to represent the owner's clan and family history. These images and the history behind them are the cultural property of a particular individual, family or clan and may not be told or used by anyone else without permission.

**Transformer:** Supernatural figures common in many First Nations' origin stories. Transformers often have a deep concern for human well being and moral conduct.

**Tribe:** A tribe is a group of First Nations sharing a common language and culture. The term is used frequently in the United States, but only in a few areas of Canada.

**Tribal Council:** It is the primary First Nations organization to govern over the rights and decision-making of their particular Nation. Also referred to as Band Council.



## CASE STUDY OF STÓ:LŌ REPATRIATION



### ■ Case Study: Stone T'xwelátse: The Road Home

This case study is about the return of a stone ancestor to his family, after having been separated from them for over a hundred years. Through international cooperation between the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture (Seattle), the Nooksack Tribe (U.S.A.), and the Stó:lō Nation (Canada) this repatriation was possible. Words in Halq'eméylem (Hal-ko-melem), the language of the Stó:lō people, are used in this case study with pronunciation help provided in parentheses.

*“I was T'xwelátse, and that it was my responsibility to find out all that I could about this name and the man who carried the name before me.”*

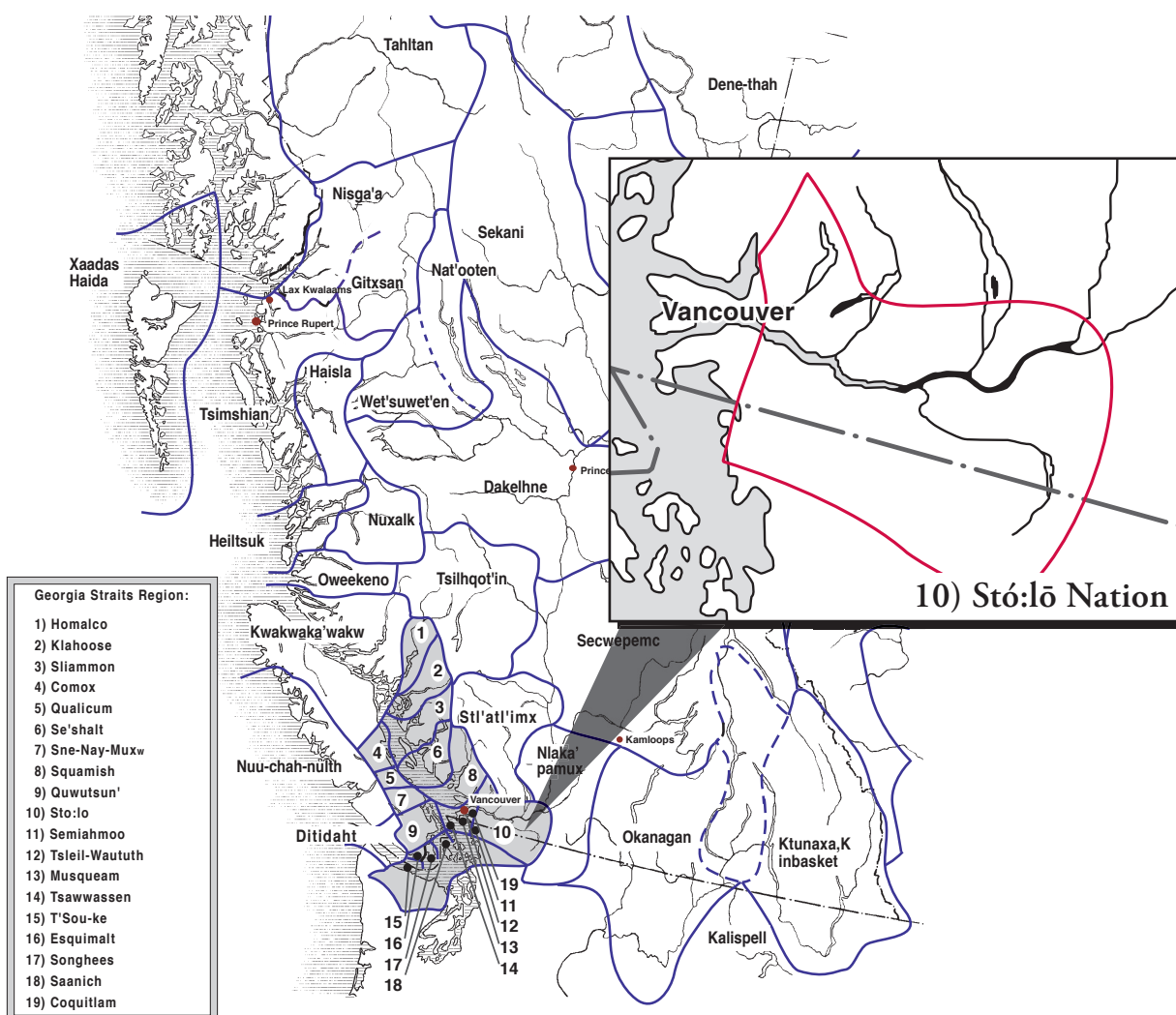
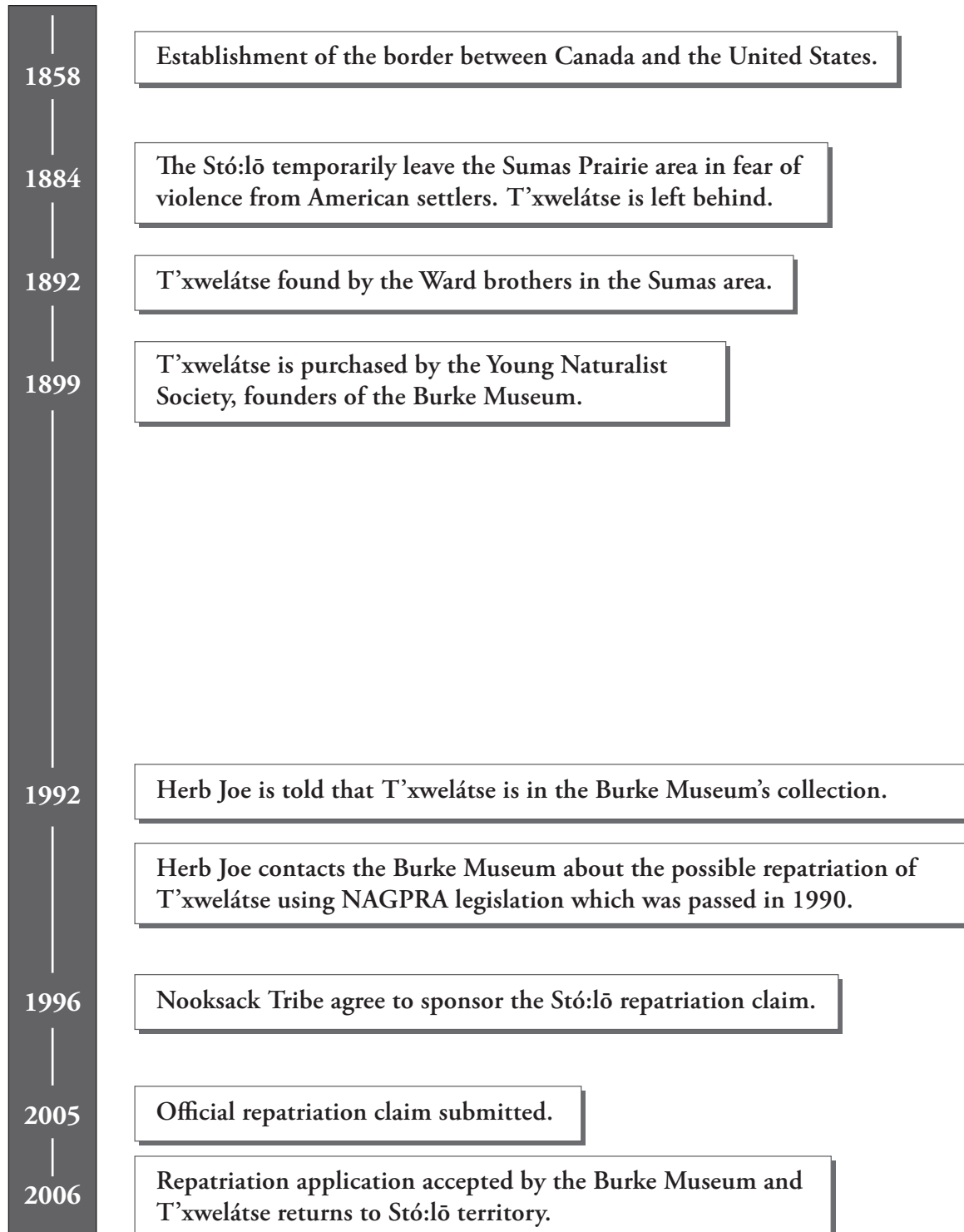


Photo: Georgia Joe, age 3, visiting the Stone T'xwelátse at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture. Seattle WA, 2006. © David Campion

## T'xwelátse Stone Ancestor Repatriation Time Line

Time Immemorial - Transformation of T'xwelátse by Xá:ls



### How Stone T'xwelátse came to be:

In Stó:lō oral history, in the distant past, what today is called **time immemorial**, the world was 'not quite right'. Animals could speak with people; people could be transformed into animals. According to a *sxwóxwiyám* (shwo-kwee-am), a man called T'xwelátse (Tix-WIL-aht-sah) was born into this chaotic world in a village along the lower Chilliwack River. This man became the ancestor of the Ts'elxwéyeqw (Ch-ihl-kway-uhk) **Tribe**. Following Stó:lō tradition, the name T'xwelátse was passed down through the family over many generations. The following *sxwóxwiyám* is about one of these men named T'xwelátse:

*T'xwelátse and his wife were on the river bank arguing when Xá:ls (H-alls) happened upon them. Xá:ls, the great **Transformer** being given the responsibility by Chichelh Siy:ám (Cheech-el See-am) for making things right as he traveled through our lands, asked this man and woman if they would consider not arguing and that there were better ways of resolving conflict and resolving problems. As a result of his interventions Xá:ls and T'xwelátse, who was a **shaman**, decided to have a contest. They tried to transform each other into various things – a salmon, a mink, a twig. Finally, Xá:ls was successful in transforming T'xwelátse into stone. Xá:ls then gave the responsibility of caring for Stone T'xwelátse to T'xwelátse's wife. Stone T'xwelátse was to be brought home and placed in front of their house as a reminder to all of the family that we have to learn to live together in a good way. And the family's responsibility from that point in time was caring for Stone T'xwelátse – given to one of the women of our family. They were to be the caretaker of Stone T'xwelátse throughout their lifetime and would pass it on to one of their daughters or grand daughters who would then be responsible for caring for Stone T'xwelátse for that generation. As told by T'xwelátse -Herb Joe (Schaepe, p. 10, 2007).*

### The History of Stone T'xwelátse:

After his transformation, Stone T'xwelátse became a 4 foot tall, 600 pound granite sculpture. He was moved up and down the Chilliwack River Valley by his caretakers, who were elder women of the T'xwelátse family. However, the way of life for the Stó:lō people changed greatly after the arrival of Europeans. In 1858, the creation of the border between Canada and the United States divided the Stó:lō's traditional territory between two countries. Around this same time, one of the female caretakers married into the Semá:th (Sumas) Nation, which is located close to the Washington State border. As a caretaker she took Stone T'xwelátse with her when she moved to her new home.

In 1884, a large group of white settlers from Washington rode into the village, accused a young Stó:lō boy of crimes he did not commit, and hung him. Not long after, another hanging was attempted. Fearing more violence, the Stó:lō villagers fled their homes. Because the move was supposed to be temporary, and because he was so heavy, Stone T'xwelátse was left behind.

## CASE STUDY OF STÓ:LŌ REPATRIATION

[illegible]

*The Chilliwack Progress*, September 15, 1892. Courtesy Chilliwack Museum and Archives.

According to Stó:lō culture, an object belongs to its owner as long as it remains in their territory. Colonizing cultures often viewed an object as being abandoned when it was not physically with its keeper. In 1892, the Ward brothers found Stone T'xwelátse in a field and assumed he had been abandoned. The discovery of Stone T'xwelátse was reported in *The Chilliwack Progress*, as a “curiously carved Indian image.” Soon after, Stone T'xwelátse was sold to a small ‘dime store museum’ in Sumas, Washington. In 1899, a group of scientists were in the area and came across Stone T'xwelátse. They later donated him to the Washington State Museum (now named the Burke Museum of Natural History and Cultural) in Seattle, Washington. T'xwelátse stayed at the Museum until 2006.



## CASE STUDY OF STÓ:LŌ REPATRIATION



Georgia Joe, age 3, visiting the Stone T'xwelátse at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture. Georgia's grandfather Herb Joe carries the name T'xwelátse. Seattle WA, 2006. © David Campion

Stone T'xwelátse's importance to his people did not disappear when he did. His name and *sxwóxwiyám* continued to be passed down and caretakers continued to be appointed over subsequent generations. In the early 1970s, Herb Joe was given the name of T'xwelátse when he became a Chief. At his naming ceremony, Herb Joe remembers that "from this night on...I was T'xwelátse, and that it was my responsibility to find out all that I could about this name and the man who carried the name before me..." (Gough, p. 91, 2004). In 1992, a Stó:lō Nation archaeologist re-discovered Stone T'xwelátse at the Burke Museum and told Herb Joe.

Finding Stone T'xwelátse was just the beginning of his journey home. The Burke Museum was a state museum and all of the objects in its collection belonged to the people of Washington State. Because of this, the Burke Museum could not simply return Stone T'xwelátse, they needed legal consent. The repatriation of Stone T'xwelátse had to go through the *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* or **NAGPRA**, a U.S. law that allows for certain **cultural property** to be repatriated. The only problem was that under NAGPRA, cultural property could only be returned to tribes living in the United States. Since Herb Joe

and the rest of Stone T'xwelátse's descendants live in Canada, the Burke Museum could not return Stone T'xwelátse directly to them. For the next 14 years, Herb Joe and many others worked to find a way to bring Stone T'xwelátse home.

There has always been a close relationship between First Nations and **Native American** groups living near the border. For example, Herb Joe was part of both the Stó:lō Nation in Canada and the Nooksack

Tribe in the United States. Both of these groups are a part of the larger Stó:lō community. Because the Nooksack Tribe was a recognised U.S. tribe, the Stó:lō Nation asked if they would help in the repatriation request. In 2005, the Nooksack Tribe made a formal request to the Burke Museum under NAGPRA to repatriate Stone T'xwelátse. The Nooksack Tribe would then return it to Herb Joe's family. Proving Stone T'xwelátse's case under NAGPRA was not easy, and took many years of research and collecting historical evidence.



Community members greet T'xwelátse at the Nooksack Reserve, Washington, 2006. © David Campion

## CASE STUDY OF STÓ:LŌ REPATRIATION

In March 2006, the Burke Museum approved the NAGPRA application for repatriation. Stone T'xwelátse was going home! On October 6, 2006, staff at the Burke Museum repatriated Stone T'xwelátse to the Nooksack Tribe, and on October 14, after 114 years of separation, Stone T'xwelátse travelled back across the border to be welcomed by over 500 people.

Stone T'xwelátse has always been an important example of what the Stó:lō see as 'living together in a good way'. Through the repatriation of Stone T'xwelátse important relationships have been made between the Burke Museum, the Stó:lō Nation, and the Nooksack Tribe. As one Stó:lō elder put it,

*To celebrate [Stone T'xwelátse's homecoming], leaders from here, Nooksack and neighbouring tribes and chiefs will all come to celebrate and share. Sxwó:yxwey (Sh-why-kway) mask dances will be used to welcome him home, which is very sacred. People haven't seen this type of ceremony in a long time, even ever, so the welcome home celebration will be part of the revival (Gough, p. 89, 2004).*

Though Stone T'xwelátse was separated from his family for over a century, his homecoming helped restore balance in a chaotic world and brought many different communities together. Stone T'xwelátse's asks us all to live together in a good way.

### Questions to Consider:

- How are objects connected to community history?
- How does oral history play a role in remembering and passing on one's culture?
- In what ways do political borders impact cultural borders?

## Research Resources:

*T'xwelátse me t'ókw' telos qáys (T'xwelátse is finally home)*, Film by Herb Joe & Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre, 2007. Bear Image Productions. 30 minutes. (Contact 604-824-5124 to purchase a copy)

Stó:lō website: <http://www.stolonation.bc.ca>

Nooksack website: <http://www.nooksack-tribe.org/>

"National NAGPRA" (January 24, 2006). Available From: The National Park Services  
[http://www.nps.gov/history/nagpra/fed\\_notices/nagpradir/nir0342.html](http://www.nps.gov/history/nagpra/fed_notices/nagpradir/nir0342.html)

# CASE STUDY OF STÓ:LŌ REPATRIATION

## Newspapers reports

“T’xwelátse comes home: in stone a legend lives again” *The Seattle Times*. January 28, 2007.

The Seattle Times Archives. By Sandra Shields

[http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/pacificnw01282007/2003541043\\_pacificpstone28.html](http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/pacificnw01282007/2003541043_pacificpstone28.html)

## Museums sites

Burke Museum of Natural and Cultural History website:

<http://www.washington.edu/burkemuseum/events/stone/index.php>

The UBC Museum of Anthropology’s Calendar of Events

<http://www.moa.ubc.ca/pdf/calendars/MOACalendarJan08.pdf>

This case study was initially prepared by Kathleen Bertrand, Joanna Hayman, Danielle MacKenzie and Marika Wiggan as part of the course *Studies in Museum Anthropology*, 2008, at the University of British Columbia.

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Gough, M. E. (2004). *Repatriation as a Reflection of Stó:lō Cultural Values: Tset Tháyeltxwem Tè lálém S’olhetawtxw (We are Building a House of Respect)*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Carleton University.

Schaepe, D. (2007). Learning to live together in a good way: Lessons on repatriation from Stone T’xwelátse. *The Midden*, 39(2), 9-17.





## ■ Case Study: Repatriation of Haida Ancestral Remains

This case study focuses on the **repatriation** of the remains of Haida ancestors from North American museums. *Yahgudangang* (Yaa goo dawn guung) means *To Pay Respect* in the Haida language. It is the term the Haida use for repatriation. Working towards the return of all their ancestors and their reburial is important to the Haida and shows respect for those ancestors.

*“Our journey has been long, but also rich in learning and healing.”*

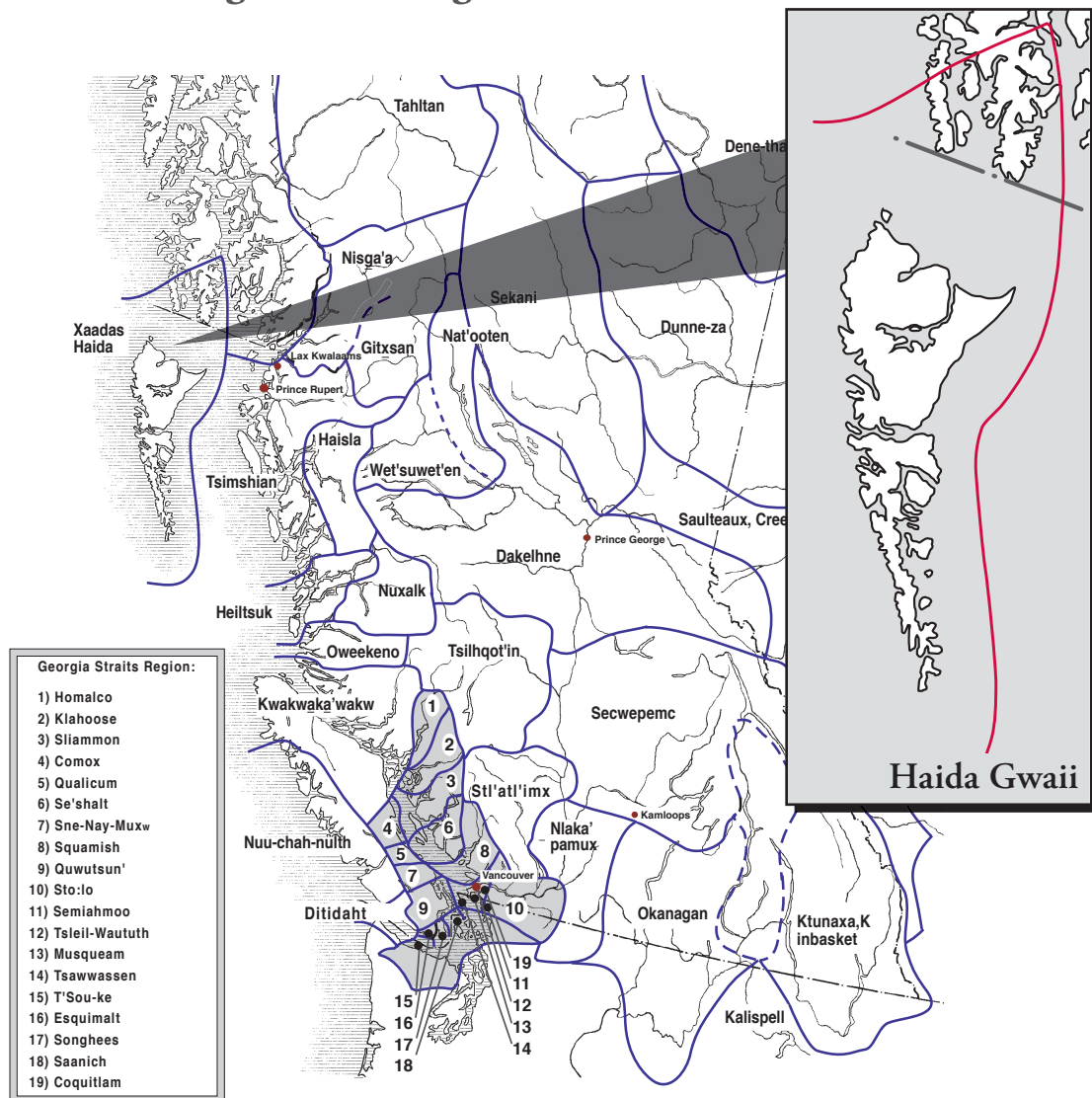
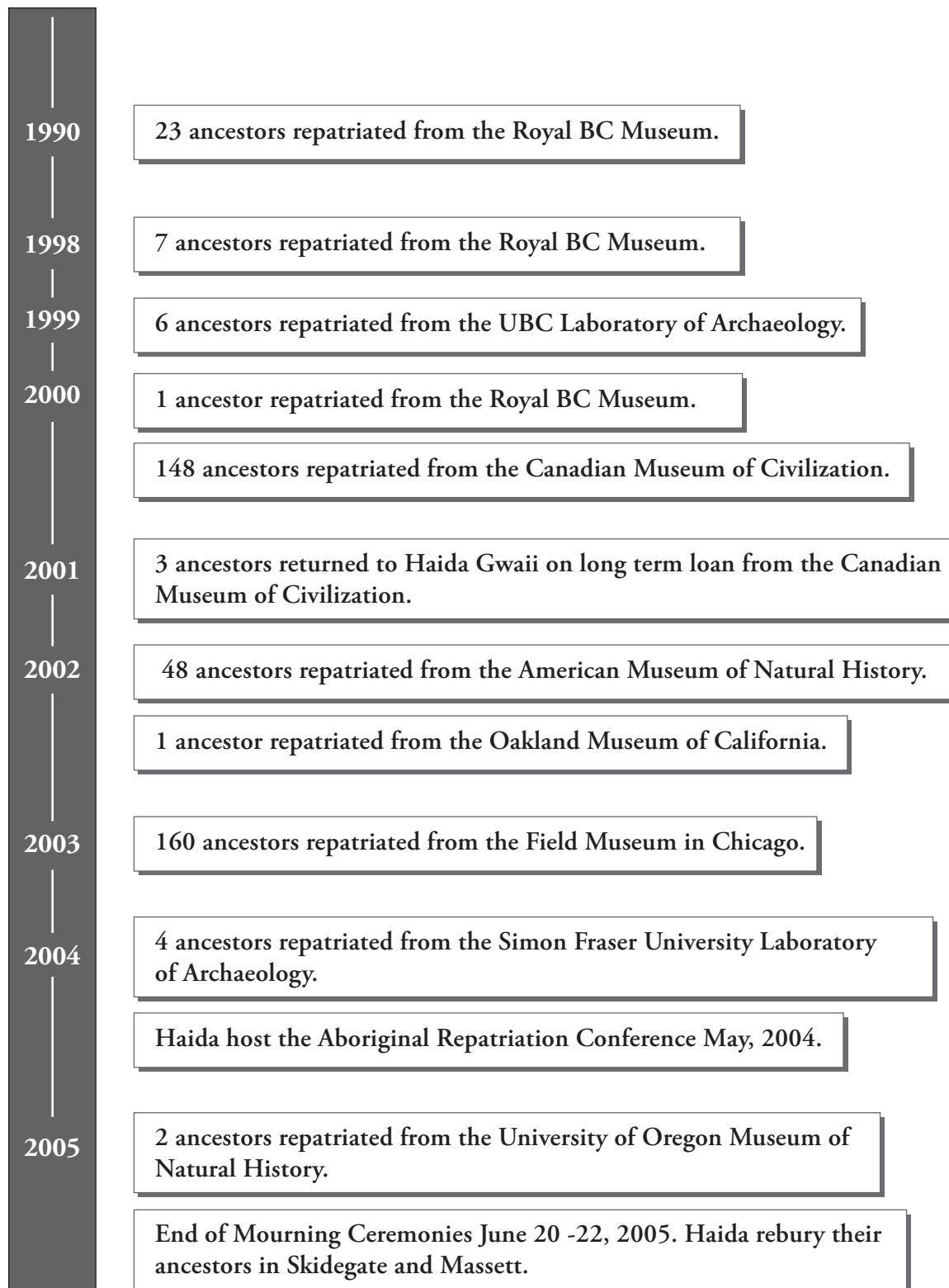


Photo: Eagle Dancer performing at the end of the mourning ceremony, Haida Gwaii, BC, 2005. Courtesy of the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kaay Llnagaay.

## Haida Ancestral Remains Repatriation Time Line

Time Immemorial - the Haida originate on Haida Gwaii





Raven dancer performing at the end of the mourning ceremony, Haida Gwaii, BC, 2005. Courtesy of the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kaay Llnagaay.

*Our journey has been long, but also rich in learning and healing. In the Museum communities of North America many individuals have had their lives changed by what they have experienced through repatriation.... We approach repatriation with mutual respect and understanding and are seeing new understandings based in respect for our past, and a more knowledgeable regard for our present as Haida people today. (Haida repatriation website – [www.repatriation.ca](http://www.repatriation.ca))*

### The Haida Nation:

Haida Gwaii is the homeland of the Haida people. Haida Gwaii (also known as the Queen Charlotte Islands) is a group of islands in northern British Columbia.

*Our culture is born of respect, and intimacy with the land and sea and the air around us. Like the forests, the roots of our people are intertwined such that the greatest troubles cannot overcome us. We owe our existence to Haida Gwaii. The living generation accepts the responsibility to ensure that our heritage is passed on to following generations (Council of Haida Nation website – [www.haidanation.ca](http://www.haidanation.ca)).*

Before European contact, tens of thousands of Haida people lived in villages on Haida Gwaii. When Europeans came to this area they brought smallpox with them, a disease to which the Haida had never been exposed. Smallpox killed many Haida, and only a few hundred people survived. Many of the surviving Haida moved to Skidegate and Old Massett. Today approximately 5,000 Haida, live both on and off the islands.

### Removal and Repatriation of Ancestral Human Remains:

Traditionally, the Haida would put the remains of their deceased in **bentwood boxes** in **mortuary houses**, or in **mortuary boxes** on top of trees or **mortuary poles**. After the arrival of **missionaries**, these practices were forbidden and much of this **cultural property** was destroyed or collected by archaeologists, anthropologists, and other collectors.

The Haida Repatriation Committee is made up of two branches: the Skidegate Repatriation Committee and the Massett Repatriation Committee. The committees were created to help bring home their ancestors, treasures, and grave materials from museums and universities around the world which had been removed from Haida Gwaii over the past one hundred and fifty years.

The importance of **ancestral remains** repatriation for the Haida can be shown in the quote below:

*Our ancestors are our relatives and we have a deep connection to them. We are who we are today because of them. We believe that as long as the remains of our ancestors are stored in museums and other unnatural locations far from home, that the souls of these people are wandering and unhappy. Once they are returned to their homeland of Haida Gwaii and are laid to rest with honour, the souls can rest and our communities may heal a bit more (Skidegate Repatriation & Culture Committee website - [www.repatriation.ca](http://www.repatriation.ca)).*



Elders provide leadership and direction at a community consultation, Haida Gwaii, BC, 1998. Courtesy of the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kaay Llnagaay.

### Successful Repatriation in BC:

The Haida have been successful in repatriating all of their ancestors from museums in British Columbia. In many cases, a Haida delegation made up of Haida elders, chiefs, artists, and researchers would visit the place where the remains were held. These delegations were important because they made sure that the larger Haida community was represented and that Haida cultural and legal rules were followed.

The process of repatriation formed many new relationships between the Haida and the museums repatriating Haida ancestors.

*We include museum staff in our work and ceremonies where appropriate and together we build and foster relationships. By the end of each repatriation, the employees of the museum are always so thrilled to have been a part of the process and you can see they understand and are involved from their hearts (Skidegate Repatriation & Culture Committee website - <http://www.repatriation.ca/Pages/Our%20Learning.html>).*



## Haida Repatriations outside of BC:



Elders and Youth pose at the Field Museum, Chicago, 2003. Photo Credit Nika Collison. Courtesy of the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kaay Llnagaay.

Even though the Haida have been successful in repatriating all known ancestors from all North American museums, they are still working on repatriating their ancestors from European museums and private citizens.

Many museums in the United States and Europe have been involved in helping the Haida repatriate their ancestral remains. A major obstacle in international repatriations is the amount of money it costs to visit these museums and later bring the ancestral remains back home. Often museums need repatriations to go through

a legal process because their collections belong to a city or country. When this happens, the repatriation is expensive and can take a long time. For example, in 2002, the American Museum of Natural History repatriated 34 Haida ancestral remains. The remains had been taken from graves in Haida Gwaii between 1897 and 1901 by anthropologist Charles F. Newcombe. It took the Haida two years to negotiate and fundraise approximately \$50,000 to cover the costs of repatriating their ancestors.

## Repatriations from private citizens:

Many people have contacted the Haida and offered to return the remains of their ancestors in their possession. There have also been a few repatriations from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Ancestors are often transferred to the RCMP when they are found after a natural disaster such as a flood, or during construction work. In the 1990's, it was discovered that an unethical anthropologist had stolen 44 Haida ancestors from their graves in the 1970s and 1980s. When he was unwilling to return them, the RCMP became involved and eventually the ancestors were repatriated to the Haida.



Raven dancer performing at the end of the mourning ceremony, Haida Gwaii, BC, 2005. Courtesy of the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kaay Llnagaay.

Currently, any Haida archaeological excavations or environmental disruptions which uncover skeletal remains on Haida Gwaii require those who find them to leave them undisturbed, make a note of their location, and alert the Council of the Haida Nation or the RCMP.



Chiefs waiting at the beach as part of End of Mourning Ceremony. 2005. Photo credit J. McGuire. Courtesy of the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kaay Llnagaay.

## CASE STUDY OF HAIDA REPATRIATION

### Questions to Consider:

- Why would museums or individuals take possession of ancestral remains?
- Do you think that this practice still occurs?
- How might repatriation of ancestors affect First Nations' communities?
- How might international repatriations be different from local or national repatriations?
- How was the community involved in the repatriation process and the End of Mourning ceremonies? Review Haida repatriation website to find more information.

### Research Resources:

*Stolen Spirits of Haida Gwaii*. Toronto: Primitive Entertainment Company, 2004.  
by Kevin McMahon. 74 minutes.

Skidegate Repatriation and Cultural Committee: [www.repatriation.ca](http://www.repatriation.ca)

Council of the Haida Nation: [www.haidanation.ca](http://www.haidanation.ca)

### News reports

Indian Burial and Sacred Grounds Watch Website: Haida First Nations repatriate human remains from USA  
[www.ibsgwatch.imagedjinn.com/learn/2002sept12haida.htm](http://www.ibsgwatch.imagedjinn.com/learn/2002sept12haida.htm)

National Public Radio – audio documentary Parts one and two  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1599694>

### Museums sites

UBC Museum of Anthropology – repatriation policy:  
<http://moa.ubc.ca/collections/repatriation.php>

Canadian Museum of Civilization repatriation policy:  
<http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/repatriation/repatriation00e.html>

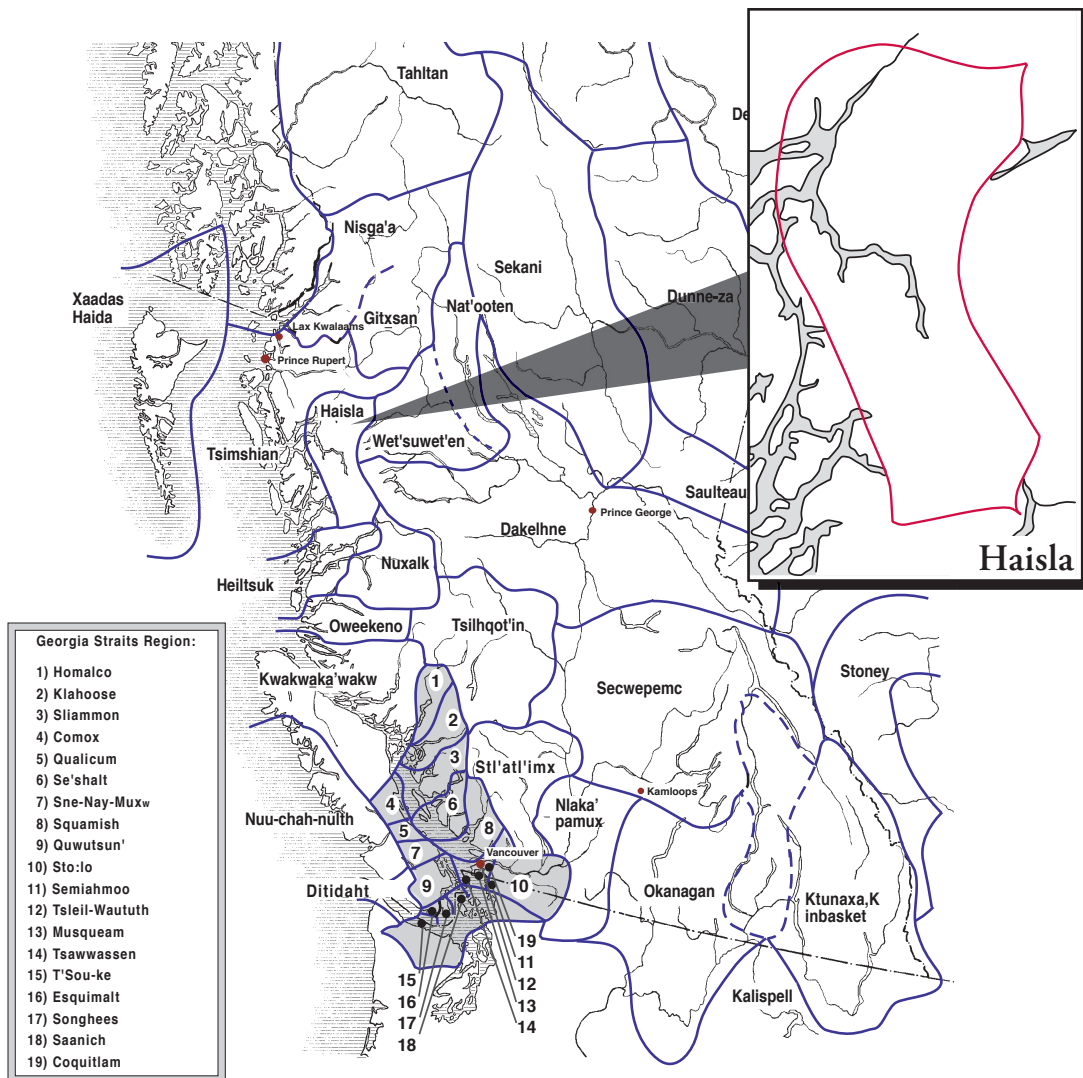
This case study was initially prepared by Jenna Walsh, Jeff Harris, Nick Waber, and Genevieve Adamek as part of the course *Studies in Museum Anthropology*, 2008, at the University of British Columbia



## ■ Case Study:

### G'psgolox returns home to the Haisla

This case study looks at the events that led to the creation of the G'psgolox (gup skol locks) Pole in 1872, how the Museum of Ethnography in Sweden acquired the pole in 1929, and its repatriation to the Haisla people in 2006. The G'psgolox Pole shows the important connection between cultural property and the community history of the Haisla people.





## G'psgolox Pole Repatriation Time Line

Time Immemorial

1872

G'psgolox Pole erected by Xenaksiala people in the Kitlope Valley.

1900

After a smallpox epidemic and avalanche nearly destroys their village, the Xenaksiala are forced to abandon the Kitlope Valley.

1927

Swedish Consul Olof Hanson asks to purchase a totem pole.

Without the consent of the Xenaksiala, permission to sell the pole is given to Indian Agent Ivan Fougner by the Department of Indian Affairs.

1929

The G'psgolox Pole is cut down and shipped to Sweden.

1950

Haisla Nation is formed when the Xenaksiala community joins with the Haisla in Kitamaat.

1981

The G'psgolox Pole is placed on display at the new Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm after being in storage for 46 years.

1991

Members of the Haisla Nation visit Sweden to request return of the G'psgolox Pole.

1994

Swedish government decides to give the Pole back to the Haisla as a gift. The Museum of Ethnography negotiates with the Haisla for return of the G'psgolox Pole.

2000

Two replicas of the G'psgolox Pole are made by Haisla carvers. One stays in Sweden to replace the pole that is repatriated, the other is raised where the original G'psgolox Pole once stood in the Kitlope Valley.

2006

The G'psgolox Pole is repatriated to the Haisla and currently resides in the village of Kitamaat.

## Haisla Xenaksiala Community:

On March 12, 1948 the Xenaksiala people joined the Kitmaat Band, becoming part of the Haisla Nation. The Xenaksiala peoples' traditional homelands are located in the Kitlope Valley on the central coast of British Columbia. In the late 1700's, Europeans came into contact with the Xenaksiala people. With the Europeans came smallpox, a disease that the Haisla had not been exposed to before. The introduction of this disease, followed by a large avalanche in the Kitlope village forced the Xenaksiala to move to Kemano Bay, and later to Kitmaat. These two events are important to the history of the G'psgolox Pole.



Replica of G'psgolox pole raised in the Kitlope Valley, BC, carved 2000. Courtesy of Na Na Kila Institute.

## The Story behind the G'psgolox Pole:

In the early 1870s, Chief G'psgolox of the Eagle clan in the Kitlope Valley lost all of his children and tribe members, except for his wife, to smallpox. Stricken with grief at his loss, he went to the forest where he saw the spirit Tsooda. Tsooda asked G'psgolox why he was sad. G'psgolox told him about the loss of his children and his tribe. Tsooda gave G'psgolox a piece of crystal and told him to go to his dead and bite the crystal in their presence. After following Tsooda's instructions, G'psgolox saw his dead family members and tribe come to life.

## The History of the G'psgolox Pole:

After G'psgolox's experiences with Tsooda, he decided to create a mortuary pole in memory of his children and people. He commissioned members of the Raven clan to carve a pole for him. The figures on the pole represent Tsooda, Asoalget (a mythical Grizzly Bear), and another mythical male Grizzly Bear that lives under water. The pole was 9 meters tall and was raised in the Kitlope Valley in 1872.

After the avalanche, the Xenaksiala people moved to Kemano Bay and later to Kitmaat village, leaving the G'psgolox Pole behind. In 1927, a Swedish government representative expressed interest in acquiring a First Nations totem pole to bring back to Sweden. An Indian Agent named Ivan Fougner knew about the G'psgolox Pole and was given permission by the Canadian government to sell it to Sweden. It was thought that the village was abandoned and no longer important to the Xenaksiala. This was not true, although the people had moved; they were still very connected to the place where the pole stood.

The G'psgolox Pole arrived in Sweden in 1929, and was sent to the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm. From 1929-1975, the pole was housed in temporary quarters because the museum did not have space to display it. After 46 years in storage, the G'psgolox Pole was finally displayed in the Museum's new central hall in 1980.

## CASE STUDY OF HAISLA REPATRIATION

Cecil Paul's grandmother had told him the story of the disappearance of the old pole, and requested that he keep his eyes open as to its whereabouts. Cecil had not forgotten about the G'psgolox Pole. It was, and continues to be, important to his family. In 1991, the Haisla learned of the pole's location at the National Museum of Ethnography in Sweden. Haisla Chief Councilor Gerald Amos and Louisa Smith, a descendent of Chief G'psgolox, planned a trip to Sweden to see the pole. After seeing the G'psgolox Pole they requested its return because it had been wrongfully taken from their land.

It took the Haisla several years to get the Swedish government to agree to return the G'psgolox Pole. As part of the negotiations the Haisla agreed to create a replica of the pole for the Museum of Ethnography. In 2000, two replica poles were carved: one was given as a gift to Sweden from the Haisla; the other was raised in ceremony in the pole's original location. Even though the Swedish government agreed to return the G'psgolox Pole in 1994, more than ten years passed before it was returned to the Haisla.

In April 2006, after a year of planning, the G'psgolox Pole left Sweden and arrived in Vancouver at the UBC Museum of Anthropology. When the pole arrived, it was welcomed by Haisla chiefs, elders, community members and the general public. It was on display for two months before it completed its journey home to Haisla territory.

Finally, on July 1, 2006, a traditional Haisla welcome ceremony was held for the G'psgolox Pole in Kitamaat. Community members, Swedish representatives, and others were present to witness its return to Kitamaat, where it remains today. Its final resting place is still under discussion in the community.



Chief G'psgolox Dan Paul Sr. and Anders Bjorklund of Sweden, signing official documents of ownership on April 26, at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC. Courtesy UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, BC, 2006.

On Behalf of Chief G'psgolox (Dan Paul Sr.) the Haisla Nation, the Totem Pole Committee, Na na kila Institute and Kitamaat Village Council, we would like to **Thank you** for witnessing the Homecoming of the G'psgolox Totem Pole and for helping us to celebrate this historic occasion! Aix gwa las!



### Return & Renewal

Saturday, July 1st, 2006

- 4:00 Procession of Chiefs and Dancers from Bay Area
- 5:00 Welcoming of Chiefs and Honored Guests
- 5:30 Welcome by TPC, Master of Ceremonies
- 6:45 Break
- 7:00 Official Ceremony/Unveiling of Totem
- 7:30 TPC Presentations
- 8-9:30 Guest Speakers
- 9:30 Dance Group Performances

### Questions to Consider:

- How can history be told without words? What role do objects play in telling history?
- In your opinion, what are the most interesting aspects of the G'psgolox Pole repatriation?
- Why might the history of the G'psgolox Pole be important to the Haisla?

### Research Resources:

*Totem: the Return of the G'psgolox Pole*, National Film Board of Canada, 2003. By Gil Cardinal.

70 minutes

<http://www.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/visau/index.php?mode=view&language=english&filmId=51162>

Na Na Kila Institute website [www.nanakila.ca](http://www.nanakila.ca)

Haisla First Nation website [www.haisla.ca](http://www.haisla.ca)

Turtle Island Native Network website

<http://www.turtleisland.org/culture/culture-haisla.htm>

### News Reports:

“BC Totem Comes Home From Sweden.” *The Globe and Mail*, April 27, 2006. By Mark Hume.

<http://www.ecotrust.ca/communities/bc-totem-comes-home-sweden-museum-returns-haisla-artifact-after-band-agreed-craft-replic>

“B.C. Totem-pole saga has Swede ending.” *The Globe and Mail*, March 14, 2006. By Jonathan Woodward.

### Museum sites:

UBC Museum of Anthropology – calendar of events on G'psgolox Pole:

[http://www.moa.ubc.ca/pdf/calendars/MOAMay\\_Aug06.pdf](http://www.moa.ubc.ca/pdf/calendars/MOAMay_Aug06.pdf)

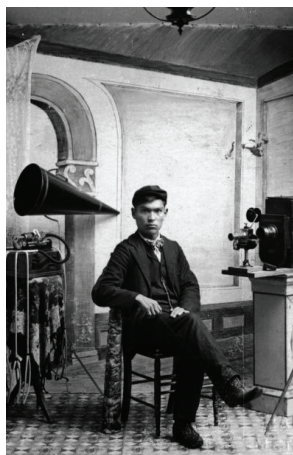
Etnografiska Museet – Sweden National Ethnography Museum

[http://www.etnografiska.se/smvk/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=1675&l=en\\_US](http://www.etnografiska.se/smvk/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=1675&l=en_US)

This case study was initially prepared by Jonathan Pringle, Laura Rock and Christine Selzler as part of the course *Studies in Museum Anthropology*, 2008, at the University of British Columbia.



## CASE STUDY OF TSIMSHIAN REPATRIATION



### ■ Case Study: Bringing our images home to Metlakatla, Alaska

*Bringing Our Images Home* offers students an opportunity to learn about the Tsimshian people of Metlakatla, Alaska and introduces them to the historic photographs of B.A. Haldane (1874-1941). B.A. Haldane was a Tsimshian and a professional photographer who took many photographs of First Nations peoples and communities from 1890 to 1941. Haldane's photographs have recently been brought back to Metlakatla, Alaska as a form of repatriation. We learn this history from Tsimshian scholar Mique'l Askren.

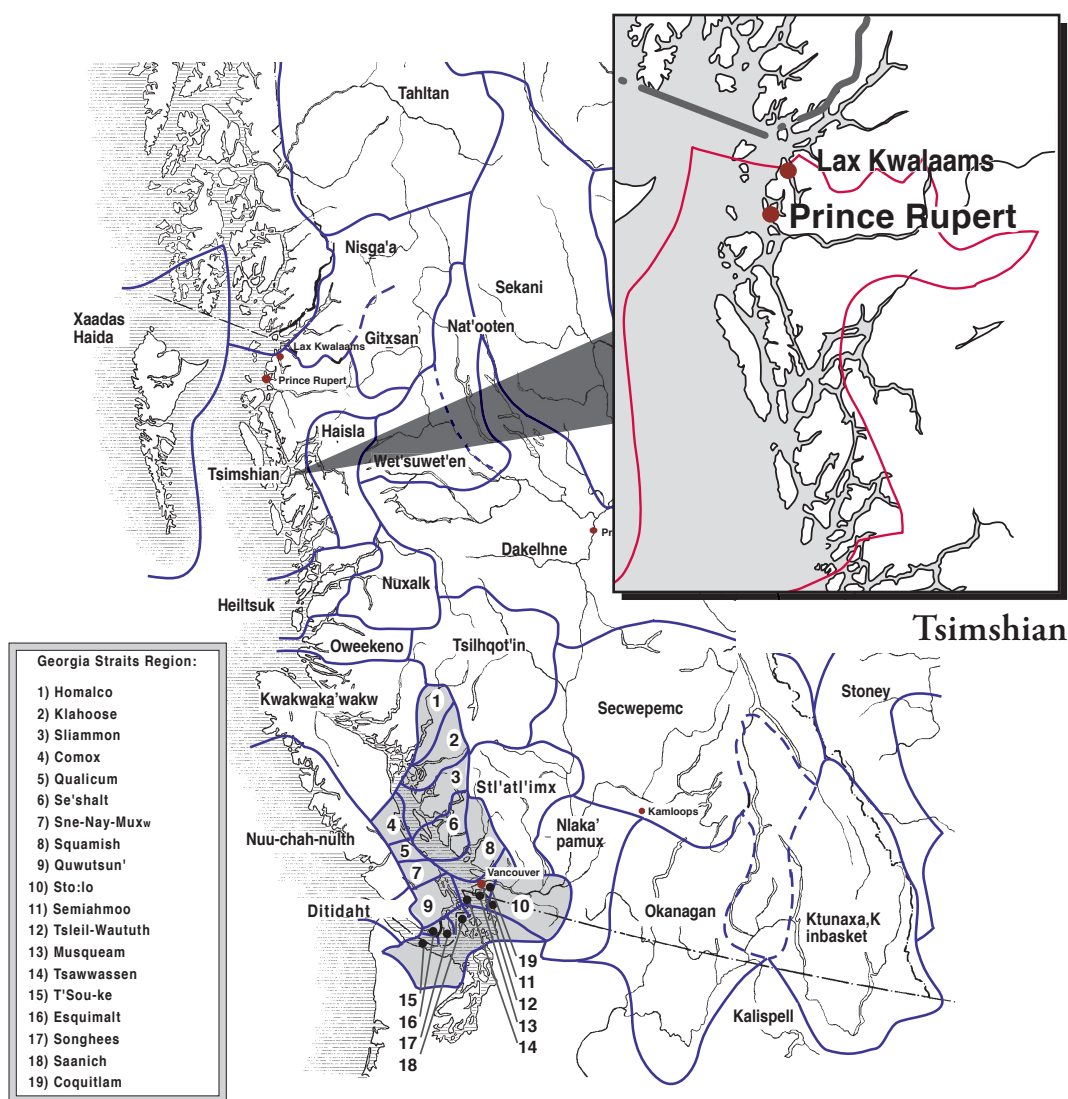


Photo: B.A self-portrait inside his studio, circa 1900, Metlakatla, Alaska. #88.1.71.2, Tongass Historical Museum, Ketchikan Alaska.

## Tsimshian Photograph Repatriation Timeline

### Time Immemorial

1834	Establishment of Fort Simpson by the Hudson's Bay Company in the area of Tsimshian Territory known as Lax Kw'alaams.
1857	Missionary William Duncan sent by the Church Missionary Society of England (CMS) to work with the 2,300 Tsimshian at Fort Simpson.
1862	Duncan moved with a group of fifty of his converts to Metlakatla, an abandoned winter village. Soon after, the population tripled with people seeking refuge from smallpox.
1874	Benjamin Alfred (B.A.) Haldane was born to Matthew and Ada Haldane in Metlakatla, British Columbia.
1887	After Chief Justice Matthew Begbie's verdict denied the Tsimshian Nation's claim to land ownership in Metlakatla, 823 Tsimshians including B.A. Haldane moved to an island in Alaska to build a new Christian community and continue to petition for land rights.
1891	After years of negotiation, Metlakatla, Alaska, was established as the Annette Island Indian Reserve by the United States Congress.
1899	B.A. Haldane opens Haldane Studio in Metlakatla, Alaska. He begins to travel throughout Southeast Alaska and British Columbia to take photographs and teach music in First Nations Communities.
1941	B.A. Haldane passes away.
2003	Dennis Dunne discovery of one hundred and sixty-three of B.A.'s original glass plate negatives in Metlakatla.
2004	Mique'l Askren receives permission from B.A.'s family and Metlakatla's Tribal Council to research B.A.'s photography for her Master's thesis at UBC.
2007	B.A.'s photographs are repatriated to Metlakatla upon their request from the exhibit "Looking to Our Past to Inspire Our Future: A Photographic Exhibit of Metlakatla's History."

### The History of Tsimshian Nation of Metlakatla, Alaska

Since **time immemorial**, the traditional territory of the Tsimshian Nation has been 3.4 million hectares of land around the lower Skeena River and nearby islands on the Northern British Columbia coastline (see map). Metlakatla, Alaska is a new Tsimshian village. It is only 120 years old. Metlakatla's history involves a series of events that began in 1834 when the Hudson's Bay Company established a trading post in Tsimshian territory at *Lax K'walaams* (luck-wil-laams), also known as Port Simpson. For many centuries, *Lax K'walaams* had been an important place for Tsimshian people to meet and trade with others. When the Hudson's Bay Company built the trading post, nine Tsimshian **tribes** from villages on the lower Skeena River moved to *Lax K'walaams* to protect their trade interests.

In 1857, the Church Missionary Society of England sent a **missionary**, named William Duncan, to bring Christianity to *Lax K'walaams* and convince the Tsimshian to abandon their cultural traditions. In 1862, Duncan moved with fifty of his converts to an abandoned winter village further down the coast of British Columbia called Metlakatla. Duncan wanted to keep his new converts away from the influences of their relatives who practiced Tsimshian traditions, and from alcohol introduced by traders. Duncan established rules that outlawed **potlatching** and other ceremonial practices. His goal was to eradicate all Tsimshian traditions and replace them with Christian beliefs. He was unsuccessful, as the Tsimshian continued to practice their culture, but in secret.



Family Portrait taken in B.A.'s studio in Metlakatla, Alaska ca. 1900. ACR# 297620, Wellcome Collection.

In 1880, Duncan was dismissed from his post in Metlakatla after a number of disagreements with the Church Missionary Society. He continued to live with and support the community's effort to resolve land ownership. In 1886, the Tsimshian land ownership claim was denied. In hopes of getting land rights in the United States 823 Tsimshians moved from British Columbia in 1887 to an island in southeast Alaska. This area now known as Metlakatla, Alaska, was declared Annette Island Indian Reserve in 1891. Duncan continued unsuccessfully to stop Tsimshian participation in potlatches and other ceremonies.

### Benjamin Alfred Haldane (Tsimshian), 19th Century Photographer

Benjamin Alfred (B.A.) Haldane was born to Matthew and Ada Haldane at the time of the mass migration that established Metlakatla, Alaska. His family and community referred to him as B.A. When he was fifteen years old, B.A. was expelled from school by Duncan after completing grade three. B.A. was an avid reader with remarkable capacity for learning. There was no reason for B.A.'s expulsion, other than Duncan's argument that "there was nothing more for him to learn." Like other missionaries at this time, Duncan tried to keep his First Nations converts at a low level of education so they would not threaten his authority.



## CASE STUDY OF TSIMSHIAN REPATRIATION

B.A. did not allow his lack of schooling to discourage him from continuing his education on his own. He taught himself both music composition and photography from books that he purchased using wages he earned working at the salmon cannery. A talented musician, B.A. played many instruments, taught music, and directed bands and choirs. He also transcribed Tsimshian songs to sheet music.

Around 1890, B.A. began his career as a photographer by taking individual and family portraits in Metlakatla, Alaska. Nine years later, he opened a portrait studio with props, backdrops, and décor of the period. B.A. was the only professional First Nations photographer on the Northwest Coast, and many people traveled great distances to have their portraits taken by him. It was considered prestigious to have a portrait made in a photography studio.



B.A. self-portrait inside his studio, circa 1900, #88.1.71.2, Tongass Historical Museum, Ketchikan Alaska.

B.A. took photographs until his death in Metlakatla, Alaska in 1941. He documented the development of the community, its events, and the lives of First Nations people along the Northwest Coast. Many of his photographs were collected and later donated to the United States National Archives in Anchorage, Alaska. His photographs are also part of the collections at the University of Washington in Seattle, the Alaska State Library in Juneau, and the Royal BC Museum in Victoria. Very few of his photographs remain in his community of Metlakatla, Alaska.

### Mique'l Askren (Tsimshian), Community Curator for Metlakatla, Alaska:

I am a direct descendant of the Tsimshians who moved to Metlakatla, Alaska with William Duncan in 1887. My great-great grandparents were married by Duncan and my great-grandmother attended Duncan's school. My grandmother handed down many stories about the migration of our family and other Tsimshians from British Columbia and about building our community in Alaska. Her stories made our history come alive and were very important to me. At a young age, I began practicing our peoples' traditions through dancing, singing, regalia making, and wood carving. These experiences have given me a sense of responsibility to keep my culture alive and preserve our history for future generations. Today, I am a PhD student focusing on First Nations Art History at the University of British Columbia. I also work for my community as the Curator of the Healing Art Collection.

My interest in B.A. Haldane's work began after a discovery was made by one of our community members named Dennis Dunne in 2003. While he was at the garbage dump in Metlakatla, Dennis came across boxes filled with **glass plate negatives** that someone had thrown out. There were 163 glass plate negatives in total. Dennis quickly brought the negatives to a nearby museum to make sure they were properly cared for. After learning that the negatives were from B.A.'s studio, I asked our **Tribal Council** and

## CASE STUDY OF TSIMSHIAN REPATRIATION



Sidney Campbell posed with his totem pole in Metlakatla, Alaska, ca. 1905. Image from glass plate negative, William Duncan Memorial Church Archives, Metlakatla, Alaska.



Men in regalia, Metlakatla, Alaska circa 1925. Left to Right: Paul Mather, unknown, George Eaton, Sidney Campbell, unknown, B. Simpson. Image from glass plate negative, William Duncan Memorial Church Archives, Metlakatla, Alaska.

B.A.'s family if I could research and write about his photography for my Master's thesis. They gave me permission and I worked very closely with them so I that could share my discoveries as I researched.

For our community, the most important part of B.A.'s work is that his images document the continuation of Tsimshian traditions in our community after our conversion to Christianity. Perfect examples of this are the photographs that B.A. took of Sidney Campbell. One photograph shows Sidney as a young man carving a totem pole in Metlakatla in 1905 and the other shows him standing with five other men from our community wearing their regalia around 1925. Sidney Campbell (ca. 1849-1934) was one of the men who migrated to Metlakatla, Alaska in 1887. He continued to carve and practice our ceremonies in our community even though they were outlawed by Duncan. Duncan also forced people to give him their regalia when they were baptized, in order to prove their faith in Christianity. However, Sidney Campbell and many others in our community secretly kept their regalia after the move to Alaska. These images are especially important because most history books on First Nations people portray our community as having abandoned our cultural traditions when we converted to Christianity. B.A.'s photographs support our oral history in Metlakatla, Alaska about the ways in which our ancestors continued to practice our traditions.

I presented selections of B.A.'s photographs to his family and our community many times throughout my research. For many, it was the first time they had seen the photographs and pictures of their ancestors from this time period. Among the fifty men, women, and children who attended each presentation, there was a strong reaction of pride and amazement in B.A.'s career as a photographer. In response to one of the presentations, Tsimshian artist Wayne Hewson stated:

*"It made me proud of the fact that my grandfather helped record history, not just ours but all the people he traveled to, and that he continued to attend potlatches... These photographs show that our people were proud and that we didn't give up our culture."*

(Personal communication with author)

### Photograph Repatriation:

Since the majority of B.A.'s photographs are in museums, it is very difficult for people in our community to see or own copies of his work. As a part of my efforts to give our people more opportunities to view his photographs, I created an exhibit called *Looking to Our Past to Inspire Our Future: a Photographic Exhibit of Metlakatla's History*. The exhibit opened in August 2007. Because we do not have a museum in

## CASE STUDY OF TSIMSHIAN REPATRIATION

Metlakatla, the exhibit was presented at our medical facility, the Annette Island Service Unit (AISU), as part of the Healing Art Collection. As part of the exhibit, I organized a photograph repatriation program so community members could simply request copies of the photographs that were meaningful to them. To make the process even less complicated, I provided the electronic images and AISU paid for the printing so the photographs would be free for our people. Over 500 photograph requests were placed by community members ranging from elders to children.



Looking to the Past to Inspire Our Future Exhibit, Annette Island Service Unit, Metlakatla, Alaska, 2007. Courtesy M. Askren.

Elder and cultural leader, Barbara Fawcett felt that the exhibit

*"...opened up sleeping history that touches us all." For Barbara, having copies of these photographs in her home means that, "My great-grand parents are no longer invisible. My family members of years ago were there and some played an integral part of that history. They matter just like the others!"*

(Written communication with author)



Aidan Winter (11 years old) writing down his order for the photograph repatriation, Annette Island Service Unit, Metlakatla, Alaska, 2007. Courtesy M. Askren.

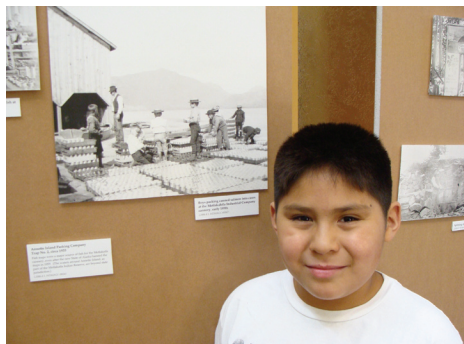
Nine-year-old Collin Williams, a descendant of B.A., was the youngest person in our community to request images from the exhibit. Sharing his feeling about the photographs he states,

*"I realized what happen[ed] in the olden day[s] and what can happen now...I wanted the pictures to remind me of everything they [our ancestors] did because it makes me feel safe."* (Personal communication with author)

Collin Williams requested a 1910 photograph of children working in a salmon cannery.

*"I chose this picture because they all had to work together to stay alive and to have the food people went out for when they went fishing."*

(Personal communication with author)



Collin William (9 years old) with the photograph of children working in our salmon cannery that he requested in our photograph repatriation program, Annette Island Service Unit, Metlakatla, Alaska, 2007. Courtesy M. Askren.

Through the creation of the exhibit, and witnessing the responses to the photographs by my community, I have come to truly realize how important and meaningful repatriating the photographs was to all generations of my community. It is really important to have our past close to us so it can guide us in the future.



## CASE STUDY OF TSIMSHIAN REPATRIATION

### Questions to Consider:

- How would you feel if photographs of your family members were owned by museums?
- What steps would you take to get access to these images?
- Using one of your own photos, or one that you accessed from the internet, describe how a single image can be used to tell two different stories.
- What do photographs convey about 1) the photographer who made the image, 2) the people in the image, 3) the time period in which the photograph was made?
- Could a photograph returned to a community be considered repatriation? If so, why? If not, why not?

### Research Resources:

Mique'l Askren, 2007. "Benjamin Haldane (Tsimshian 1874-1941)", pp. 2-4. In *Our People, Our Land, Our Images: International Indigenous Photographers*. Hulleah J. Tshinahnajinnie & Veronica Passalacqua (Eds.) Heyday Books.

Metlakatla, Alaska: <http://www.metlakatla.com/index.html>

University of Washington Photographic Archive Collection:  
<http://content.lib.washington.edu/cdm4/results.php?CISOOP1=all&CISOBX1=haldane&CISOFIELD1=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOROOT=all>

Alaska Digital Archives:  
<http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm4/results.php?CISOOP1=exact&CISOFIELD1=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOROOT=all&CISOBX1=Metlakatla%20%20Alaska&CISOSTART=1,1>

William Duncan: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Duncan\\_\(missionary\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Duncan_(missionary))

### Museum sites:

Tongass Historical Museum:  
<http://www.city.ketchikan.ak.us/departments/museums/Metlakatla.htm>

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Wayne Hewson, Personal Interview. Metlakatla, Alaska, 28 February 2006  
Barbara Fawcett, Written Correspondence. Metlakatla, Alaska, 28 May 2008  
Collin Williams, Personal Interview. Metlakatla, Alaska, 23 May, 2008