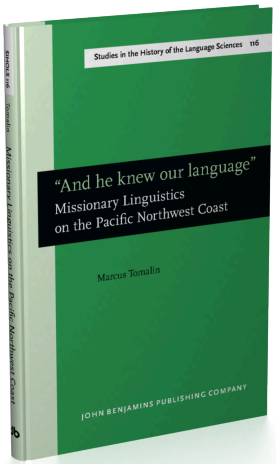
Studies in the History of the Language Sciences
116

2. Culture and contact

https://doi.org/10.1075/sihols.116.04ch2



Pages 31–53 of
"And he knew our language": Missionary Linguistics on the Pacific Northwest Coast
Marcus Tomalin
[Studies in the History of the Language Sciences, 116]
2011. xi, 203 pp.

CHAPTER 2

Culture and contact

2.1 Haida Gwaii

Haida Gwaii is an archipelago that is situated off the Northwest Coast of British Columbia, about 240km north of Vancouver Island. The two largest islands in the chain are Graham Island, to the north, and Moresby Island, to the south, and these are surrounded by about 150 smaller islands, including Langara, Louise, Lyell, Burnaby, and Kunghit. The total land-mass of the chain is estimated to be around 10,000 km^2, making it twice the size of Prince Edward Island, Canada's smallest province. The archipelago is separated from the mainland by the notorious Hecate Strait, a dangerous inshore channel that has been responsible for countless maritime disasters. The route by sea from the north of the islands leads across Dixon Entrance towards Alaska. Indeed, the proximity of Alaska enabled several Haida groups (including some from the village of Dadens on Langara Island) to invade southern Alaska during the early 18th century. They managed to drive the Tlingit natives from parts of the land, and they established Haida villages on the Prince of Wales and Dall Islands, on the southern tip of Alaska.[1]

Haida Gwaii's climate is oceanic; the mean annual, summer, and winter temperatures are about 7.5 °C, 11.5 °C, and 3.5 °C respectively, and the annual precipitation ranges from 800 mm (in eastern areas) and 4,000 mm (in western areas) per annum. Largely as a result of their location, the islands constitute a distinctive ecoregion that is characterised by considerable biological diversity. The vegetation is dominated by open-growing western red cedar, yellow cypress, shore pine, western hemlock, and Sitka spruce, and these form some of the most remarkable examples of Pacific temperate rainforests. Not surprisingly, this diversity of habitat sustains a wide range of wildlife, and the geographical isolation of the islands has had an appreciable impact on the development of the species that live there.

---

1. The migration of the Haida to Alaska had certainly occurred before the 1790s, since numerous references in the journals and logbooks kept by various mariners refer to a Haida community based in this region. For instance, writing in July 1792, Joseph Ingraham, the Captain of the *Hope*, noted that the Haida chief known to the Europeans as 'Cow' or 'Kowe', 'had withdrawn his tribe from Cunneyah's and lived on the main at a place they called Kywannee' (Kaplanoff 1971: 196).

For instance, there are several endemic sub-species of birds on the islands – including the northern saw-whet owl, the hairy woodpecker, and Steller's jay – and certain land mammals are similarly distinctive: the Haida Gwaii black bear is the largest of its kind in North America, and the ermine and sea-otter are also sub-species that are unique to the islands.[2] It has been estimated that, in the 18th century, there were only about eleven species of land mammal and amphibians on the islands, but this number has increased considerably since the first period of extended contact with European culture in the 1770s. In recognition of the uniqueness and importance of Haida Gwaii as a natural environment, an agreement was reached in 1988 between the federal and B.C. provincial governments permitting the creation of a park area on the islands. As a result, the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site was established in 1993, and it is run jointly by the Canadian Government and the Council of the Haida Nation.[3]

While geographical and ecological facts of this kind can be collated and summarised fairly easily, it is much harder adequately to convey the historical and cultural complexity of Haida Gwaii and the indigenous communities that dwell there. Even the name of the archipelago has caused difficulties and disagreements throughout the centuries, and these problems have often been due to the socio-political implications of the assigned labels. The modern phrase 'Haida Gwaii', which is standardly translated as 'Islands of the People', may have originated in the 19th century, but it has only been in common usage in official documents since the 1980s. Significantly, though, it is the name that has been adopted by the Council of the Haida Nation and therefore it seems destined to become the standard name for the foreseeable future. The earliest known Haida name for the islands, though, is 'xàaydlaa gwaayaay', which can be roughly translated as 'Home Islands' (Enrico 2005: 885; Enrico 2005: 1597–1598), but for most of the 19th and 20th centuries the archipelago was referred to as 'The Queen Charlotte Islands'. The history and significance of this particular name will be discussed later in this chapter, but it is only one of the non-native names that have been proposed since the late 18th

2. A brief summary of the wildlife found on Haida Gwaii can be found in Horwood & Parkin (2006: 23–45). More detailed accounts can be found in Douglas (1991), Shackleton (1999), and Scudder & Gessler (1989).

3. The Council of the Haida Nation was formed in 1974, and information concerning its activities can be obtained from http://www.haidanation.ca. Similarly, information about the Gwaii Haanas project can be obtained from the official website: http://pc.gc.ca/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas/index_e.asp. The name 'Gwaii Haanas' is an unfortunate one, when viewed from a purely linguistic perspective. It is supposed to mean "Islands of Beauty", but, in Haida, the verb *haana* ("to be handsome") cannot be applied to islands or to places in general, therefore the name of the park is grammatically incorrect. For a detailed discussion of this, see Enrico (2005: 1736).

century.[4] At certain times, Haida Gwaii has been called 'Santa Margarita', 'Great Island', and 'The Washington Islands', and no doubt there have been many other names which were never recorded and which therefore have subsequently been forgotten. The historian Kathleen Dalzell has emphasised the fact that the renaming of certain geographical areas has been a characteristic aspect of Haida Gwaii culture since the late 18th century at least, noting that '[a]lthough early visitors named so many places, they did not publicise the fact and consequently there was much renaming' (Dalzell 1968: 19). In a similar manner, in the preface to his collaborative rendering of certain Haida myths, Robert Bringhurst commented that

> [o]n the white man's maps, where every islet and scrap of land, inhabited or otherwise, sits now in the shadow of somebody's national flag, and is named for preference after a monarch or a politician, Haida Gwaii are shown as the westernmost extremity of Canada, and they are named not for the Haida, who have always lived there, nor for the Raven, who somewhat inadvertently put them there, but for a woman who never saw them. Her name was Sophie Charlotte von Mecklenburg-Strelitz, but the British called her simply Queen Charlotte, for she was the wife of the Mad King of England, George III.
>
> So the Raven, who often likes to call a rose a skunk cabbage, just to see what trouble he can cause, has tricked us again, Haidas and outsiders alike, with this one. He has us trained now to point to Haida Gwaii and say "Queen Charlotte Islands." (Reid & Bringhurst 1996: 15)

In fact, the situation is rather more complex than Bringhurst acknowledges since, while 'Queen Charlotte' did indeed denote a specific individual – namely, Sophie Charlotte von Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1744–1818) – it was also the name of a particular ship, and both entities motivated the use of this phrase. These intricacies are typical since, whenever new names have been proposed – either for Haida Gwaii in its totality or else for particular islands, bays, and coves that form part of the archipelago – they have usually come with potent socio-political connotations.

In the whimsical passage quoted above, Bringhurst refers to 'the Haida who have always lived' on Haida Gwaii. In truth, it is not known when the early ancestors of the modern Haidas first arrived on the islands, though recent estimates suggest that they have lived there for around 12,000 years (Fisher 1996: 117). Despite extensive anthropological studies, though, little is known for certain about Haida culture and society much before the late 18th century, but some

---

4. From time to time throughout this book, the term 'non-native' will be used to refer, rather heterogeneously, to Europeans, Americans, and Canadians – that is, to denote either residents or visitors to Haida Gwaii who were not of Haida descent.

characteristic features of the pre-contact period can be hypothetically reconstructed (Carlson 1983: 22–23). Like other communities along the Pacific coast, the Haidas may have originally migrated from the interior, and swiftly adapting to the maritime environment in which they found themselves, they adopted a seasonal lifestyle which enabled them to make the most effective use of the available material resources. No doubt partly as a result of this, they developed a distinctive and complex social organisation that involved elaborate rituals, such as the potlatch (a ceremonial distribution of gifts), which often marked rites-of-passage and significant events in the history of their communities. Predictably, these are the aspects of Haida culture that have stimulated the interest of anthropologists and historians most frequently, and authoritative publications such as George Murdock's *Rank and Potlatch Among the Haida* (1970), Jacob van der Brink's *The Haida Indians: Cultural Change Mainly Between 1876–1970* (1974), and Marianne Boelscher's *The Curtain Within: Haida Social and Mythical Discourse* (1989) have presented a range of approaches and perspectives.

The Haida villages were divided into two exogamous clans, associated with the Eagle and Raven respectively, and these were both characterised by matrilineal kinship structures. In addition, the Haidas were skilled craftsmen and magnificent seafarers who could design, build, and manoeuvre canoes around the intricate waters of the Haida Gwaii archipelago, as well as to further destinations such as the mainland or Vancouver Island. The mythological narratives that were either transcribed or paraphrased in the 19th and 20th centuries drew upon oral story-telling traditions that stretched far back into the prehistorical centuries of Haida cultural development. However, since they were not written down at the time, the earlier versions of the stories can only be partially reconstructed. Indeed, it was certainly during the period before European contact that a distinctive Haida culture developed, presumably constantly evolving and changing as the communities developed and adapted.[5]

The various topics mentioned in the above paragraphs are all of the greatest interest and importance. However, since the main chapters of this book are primarily concerned with early attempts on the part of Europeans to analyse the Haida language, the origins and social structure of the Haida communities cannot be a central concern here. Indeed, I have nothing especially new to say about these subjects. Rather, it is necessary now to provide an overview of the earliest European-Haida encounters in order to ensure that the particular interactions discussed in later chapters can be viewed in the context of these initial exchanges.

---

5. For a range of perspectives concerning Haida culture, see Murdock (1938, 1970), Van Den Brink (1974), Drew (1982), Steltzer (1984), and Boelscher (1989).

2.2 Discovery and exploration

Although it has become conventional to claim that the first contact between Haidas and Europeans occurred when Juan José Pérez Hernández (a.k.a. Juan Pérez, c.1725–1775) anchored off the coast of Haida Gwaii in July 1774, it is highly likely that this encounter had been preceded by others. For instance, a 1566 map produced by the cartographer Bolognino Zaltieri (fl. 1550–1580) shows three islands in the location where the Haida Gwaii archipelago is situated, suggesting that its existence was known about in 16th-century Europe. Also, in 1708, a letter was published in *The Monthly Miscellany or Memoirs for the Curious* which purported to describe a voyage by a Spanish admiral called 'Bartholomew de Fonte' that had been undertaken in 1640. Although it is now generally accepted that this voyage never occurred and that the letter is in fact a droll spoof, some of the physical descriptions and names are eerily reminiscent of specific locations on Haida Gwaii, and certainly several noted 18th-century explorers, and their patrons, believed that the letter proved the existence of a passage to the Pacific (White 2006; Mathes 1999). Nonetheless, even if these curiosities do indeed suggest that Europeans had encountered Haida Gwaii (in one way or another) before the late 18th century, Juan Pérez's journey along the Pacific Northwest Coast in 1774 certainly marked the beginning of a sustained period of contact. Consequently, even if it lacked primacy, Pérez's voyage marked a pivotal moment in the history of the Haida peoples, and therefore merits careful consideration.

The purpose of the voyage was clear. Pérez was required by the Viceroy of New Spain to sail the *Santiago* north along the Pacific coast from San Blas, in order to claim additional land for Spain. From the outset, the journey was arduous, and the many difficulties were dutifully recorded by two Catholic priests who were on-board, Father Juan Crespi (1721–1782) and Father Tomás de la Peña (1742–?). Mist and bad weather impeded progress from the very beginning, and forced Pérez to remain a good distance away from the mainland, but, on July 18th 1774, land was sighted (unexpectedly) to the northeast. And so Pérez and his crew first saw Haida Gwaii. Initially, there was no sign of life on the islands, which Pérez assumed to be part of the mainland, so he sailed in as close as he could to obtain a better view. On July 20th, Haida canoes were observed sailing towards the ship, and Father Tomás de la Peña described the encounter that followed:

> […] presently there came to us a canoe with nine men in it. This canoe drew near to the vessel, the pagans in it singing; but they would not come near enough for us to communicate by means of signs. Having followed us for some time, they returned to the land. About five o'clock this canoe, and another in which there were six pagans, caught up with us, both drawing up to our stern. The Captain made

> them a present of some strings of beads and they gave us some dried fish. But they would not come on board the ship. These persons are well-built, white, with long hair; and they were clothed in pelts and skins, some of them were bearded. They had some iron implements in their canoes, but we were unable to inquire where they obtained them, for presently they went back to land, inviting us thither, and offering to give us water on the following day. (Cutter 1969: 159)

This passage emphasises the extent to which both the Europeans and the Haidas relied upon improvised sign-language in order to communicate during these early encounters. More significantly, though, the presence of 'iron implements' in the canoes suggests that there had been prior contact (of some kind) between Haidas and non-natives, possibly involving the Russians who sporadically moved down the Pacific Northwest Coast from the Bering Strait during the 18th century. It is significant that white men were already being referred to as *yaats' xa7idaraay* in 18th-century Haida: this can be translated literally as 'Iron People', suggesting that the first encounters with non-natives had involved the exchanging of goods for iron implements (Enrico 2005: 1596).

The day after this initial meeting, twenty-one canoes came alongside the *Santiago*, and eventually the Spanish sailors were able to persuade two of their visitors to come on-board. Father Crespi offers the most detailed account:

> Although we invited these Indians to come aboard ship they did not venture to do so, except two of them, who were shown everything and who were astonished at all they saw in the vessel. They entered the cabin and we showed them the image of Our Lady. After looking at it with astonishment, they touched it with the hand and we understood that they were examining it in order to learn whether it were alive. (Cutter 1969: 237–238)

In many respects, this brief tableau constitutes a prototype of many subsequent encounters that occurred between the Haidas and later generations of missionaries who would arrive on Haida Gwaii in order to offer the indigenous peoples both physical and spiritual succour. In July 1774, though, the exchanges were fleeting: after trading with his Haida visitors, Pérez was forced by the bad weather to move further away from the land, and therefore he and his men never actually went ashore. It was Pérez, though, who decided that the islands should be known as 'Santa Margarita', since the first sighting of the canoes had taken place on the 20th July, the Saint's Day of 'that glorious lady', Margaret of Antioch (Cutter 1969: 157).

If Pérez's voyage had effectively put the Haida Gwaii islands (back?) on contemporaneous European maps, it was Captain James Cook's (1728–1779) fleeting visit to the area in 1778 that initiated a flurry of trading activity which lasted well into the 19th century, and which indirectly caused tremendous hardships

for the indigenous Haida communities. During his third and final voyage of discovery (1776–1779), Cook explored the Pacific Coast; he sailed north, mapping the area from California to the Bering Strait, and, significantly, he passed most of April 1778 at Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island, repairing and re-rigging his two ships, *Resolution* and *Discovery*. While based in this location, Cook and his crewmen traded with the indigenous peoples, exchanging metal objects of various kinds (buttons, handles, kettles) mainly for sea-otter pelts which were subsequently sold for a vast amount of money in China.[6] Although Cook did not actually land on Haida Gwaii itself during his voyage, when an account of his journey was published in 1784, the detailed information given about the abundance and value of the sea-otter skins that had been acquired at Nootka Sound brought a large number of trading vessels to the area – and Haida Gwaii rapidly became a popular destination (Cook & King 1784). In effect, then, it was Cook's journey which gave impetus to the nascent maritime fur trade, and, despite the fact that the Pacific Northwest Coast was still relatively untouched by colonial expansion in the 1780s, the new trading possibilities were fully exploited both by enterprising individuals and by existing organisations such as the South Sea Company and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC).[7] Although the former had been established in 1711 and had been granted exclusive rights to trade with Spanish South America, by the late 18th century it was in decline, and the fur trade boom only temporarily delayed its demise. By contrast, the HBC benefited greatly from the new opportunities. Having received its royal charter from Charles II in 1670, it had established itself in North America during the 18th century, and, in 1821, it merged with the North West Company of Montreal, which meant that it now had access to territory which reached to the Arctic Ocean in the north and to the Pacific Ocean in the west.[8] Consequently, the fur trade proved to be a profitable business, and it certainly brought a wide-range of visitors to the Pacific Northwest Coast, both by sea and by land.

It would be wrong to claim, though, that all non-natives who came to the region during the late 18th and early 19th centuries were exclusively obsessed

---

6. It is well known that Cook never completed his third voyage. He was killed by natives at Kealakekua Bay on the Big Island of the Hawaiian chain. More information about this can be found in Hough (1994).

7. Carswell (1960) provides an overview of the South Sea Company, and Fisher (1996: 125–135) examines various aspects of the fur trade. The maritime and land-based fur trades differed in significant ways. For more information, see Fisher (1992) and Howay (1941).

8. For further information about the origins and development of the HBC, see Mackay (1966), Galbraith (1976), and Newman (2002). Useful original documents and images are available from http://www.canadiana.org/hbc.

with the task of making as much money as possible as quickly as possible. Indeed, Mary Malloy has recently shown that a surprisingly large number of the traders were generally intrigued by the indigenous cultures that they encountered, to the extent that they acquired numerous artefacts such as labrets, masks, jewellery, and other objects produced by native craftsmen. Although the majority of these were initially obtained merely as ethnic *curios*, souvenirs that would enable friends and family to glimpse the unfamiliar cultures of the 'Indians', many of them ended up in anthropological collections as the 19th century progressed. Malloy cogently summarises the situation as follows:

> Sailors had been collecting souvenirs on their voyages for well over a thousand years when the American vessels first travelled to the Northwest Coast, but the artifacts that returned to New England on Yankee ships in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries met a different sort of reception than had existed previously. For the first time, public-spirited institutions waited to receive them. There had been both private collectors and royal collections in Europe for several centuries, but the simultaneous expansion of international commerce and the creation of learned societies in Boston after the American Revolution made it a unique and important center for the collecting of "curiosities". Native American artifacts were particularly welcome, as many of these institutions were self-consciously attempting to define a uniquely American history and culture and came to regard the New World's native people as a potential counterpart to the ancients of the Old World. (Malloy 2000: 31)

Consequently, as a result of this coincidental conflux of circumstances, many of the artifacts obtained by the maritime traders during the period 1780 to 1840 provided a starting point for the larger anthropological collections that began to emerge later in the century.

As more ships began to arrive in the waters around Haida Gwaii from the 1780s onwards, lured by the possibility of substantial profits, it was inevitable that the islands should be mapped more accurately; and more detailed charts necessitated a proliferation of names. It was during this period that 'The Queen Charlotte Islands' was used for the first time. Captain George Dixon (1745–1795), the commander of the *Queen Charlotte*, was the person who chose it. Having sailed to the Pacific Northwest Coast mainly for purposes of trade, Dixon anchored his vessel at Cloak Bay, between Langara Island and Graham Island, at the north end of the archipelago, on July 1st 1787. Two days later, he moved on, passing by Hippah Island, and collecting many sea-otter pelts as he went. Having reached Cape St James on July 25th, he rounded the point, and began to sail northwards up the east coast. In the published account of the voyage, which consists mainly of descriptive letters written by William Beresford (fl. 1789), the naming of the islands is mentioned as follows:

> There is every reason to suppose, not only from the number of inlets we met in coasting along the shore, but from our meeting the same inhabitants on the opposite sides of the coast, that this is not one continual land, but rather forms a group of islands; and as such, we distinguished them by the name of Queen Charlotte's Islands […] The land, in some places, is considerably elevated, but not mountainous, and is totally covered with pines, which in many places offered a pleasing contrast to the snow that perpetually covers the higher ground.
>
> (Dixon & Beresford 1789: 223–224)

Like the great French navigator Jean François de Galaup, comte de La Pérouse (1741–1788?), who had sailed alongside Haida Gwaii in 1786, Dixon and his crew recognised that they were encountering 'a group of islands' rather than a single land-mass, and the fact that Beresford was able to recognise specific Haida individuals who had obviously travelled along passage-ways between the islands, certainly indicates the closeness of the contact that was sustained between the Europeans and the natives. Most importantly, though, despite the fact that the main parts of Beresford's descriptions of Haida culture focus on details such as particular items of clothing and the use of labrets, he does note that he had found it extremely difficult to master even the basics of the language:

> I often endeavoured to gain some knowledge of their language, but I never could so much as learn the numerals: every attempt I made of this kind either caused a sarcastic laugh amongst the Indians; or was treated by them with silent contempt; indeed many of the tribes who visited us, were busied in trading the moment they came along side, and hurried away as soon as their traffic was over: others, again, who staid with us for any length of time, were never of a communicative disposition, but certainly skulked about the vessel for some evil purpose […] If these circumstances are duly considered, I trust thou wilt not accuse me of inattention, though it is not in my power to give thee any specimen of the language spoken by these people; however, from what observations I was able to make, it seems something similar to that of the inhabitants of Norfolk Sound.
>
> (Dixon & Beresford 1789: 228)

As crude as they are, these comments at least provide an insight into the practical difficulties that confronted sailors on the voyages of discovery who were intrigued by the languages that they encountered. While it is obviously unfair to attribute a lack of co-operation on the part of the Haidas to such things as 'sarcasm' and 'contempt', Beresford's account at least indicates that the periods of contact were often short, and mainly taken up with the business of trade. Indeed, trade was the main purpose of Dixon's voyage, and no doubt the crew of the *Queen Charlotte* were generally far more interested in the acquisition of sea-otter pelts than the acquisition of indigenous languages – hence the superficial,

speculative suggestion that Haida is similar to the language spoken by 'the inhabitants of Norfolk Sound'. Since 'Norfolk Sound' was Cook's name for the part of Alaska which is now referred to as Sitka Sound, this means that Beresford believed that Haida bore similarities to Tlingit (one of the Na-Dene languages). However, given his primary preoccupation with trade, it is appropriate that he should conclude his account of Haida Gwaii by noting that 1,821 sea-otter skins had been 'purchased': '[t]hus in one fortunate month, has our success been much greater than that probably of both vessels during the rest of the voyage, – So uncertain is the fur trade on this inhospitable coast' (Dixon & Beresford 1789: 229). Passages such as these were largely responsible for alerting others to the fact that the maritime fur trade could develop into a lucrative business, and that Haida Gwaii was a particularly profitable location.

Partly as a result of the Dixon-Beresford panegyrics concerning the furs to be found at Cloak Bay, a larger number of ships began to pass by Haida Gwaii with greater frequency during the early years of the 19th century, and, occasionally, some of the Europeans who found themselves coming into contact with the Haidas became interested particularly in their language. One such person was John Box Hoskins (1768–1824?), who sailed aboard the *Columbia* during its second voyage to the Pacific Northwest Coast in 1790–1793. In his 'Narrative' of the journey, Hoskins is clear that financial gain provided the motivation for the visit. As he puts it,

> [t]he principal tribes for skins reside at the three following villages Tooschcondolth, Masheet or Hancock's River, and Cloak Bay. This latter is the most famous it affording more skins than any other tribe we have yet known or heard of […].
> (Howay 1969: 233)

The three places that Hoskins has in mind here seem to be Cumshewa Inlet, Masset Sound, and (obviously) Cloak Bay. However, having reached Haida Gwaii in August 1791, he developed a sincere interest in Haida culture, and he certainly seems to have wanted to learn more about the language and customs of the people who lived on the islands:

> The manners, customs, dress, canoes, etc. etc. of these people are all similar their language differs only in a few words in the termination of some words They have or make a long quivering which gives them a most savage disagreeable sound but to convey a better idea I here subjoin a list of words I was able to procure which are spelt as near to their pronunciation as my ear would direct which I am conscious is far from being right. (Howay 1969: 235–236)

Conveniently, Hoskins lists over 100 Haida words, written in a rough phonetic script with corresponding English translations, and, although wordlists of this

Table 2.1 Selected vocabulary from Hoskins' list

Haida	English
Hongi	eyes
Tsing	teeth
King	to see
Quden	I understand
Nah	village or house
Kite	shall I go?
Enah	a woman
Kong	moon
Khah	dog, cat, etc.
Nukky	a Sea Otter skin
Huun	large
Tschnoo	fire
Peeshuck or Peesuck	bad

kind were collected throughout the 19th century, Hoskins' is a particularly early example. Such documents are often extremely revealing, providing insights both into contemporaneous Haida society and, of course, into the cultural contexts and presuppositions that characterised the list compilers themselves. In this case, in addition to the names of the months and a few numerals, Hoskins includes words such as those given in Table 2.1.

Despite the inevitably inexact orthography, many of these words are recognisable (e.g., 'Hongi' is *xang7a*, 'Tsing' is *ts'ing*, 'Nah' is *na*, and so on). It is of interest that Hoskins included 'Peesuck or Peeshuck'. In 1916, Boas suggested that this word came from the Nuu-Chah-Nulth word *p'icaq* (where <c> denotes the affricate /ts/), and (if this is correct) the fact that Hoskins encountered it on Haida Gwaii indicates that it had passed into the Haida lexicon during the 18th century, as a result of trade and contact with native communities on the mainland (Enrico 2005: 1788). Typically, although he included this linguistic information in his 'Narrative', Hoskins ended his discussion of the language with the words '[b]ut to return from this digression if so it may be called' (Howay 1969: 237). He knew that most of his readers were more concerned with sea-otter pelts than with participles. Nonetheless, his brief notes are useful, mainly because, as Enrico has rather ruefully observed, '[l]anguage use by the Haidas in contact situations in the 19th century has not been a focus of investigation' (Enrico 2003: 4). Therefore, a careful reading of the existing journals and log-books produced by the explorers and traders who came into contact with the Haidas during the period 1770 to 1870, provides many fragmentary insights into various communication strategies.

Hoskins certainly provided rather more information about the Haida language than many of his contemporaries. For instance, in stark contrast, John Boit (1774–1829), who sailed as fifth mate on the *Columbia's* second voyage, merely noted laconically in his log that '[t]he Nations on the Main speak a language different from those on the Islands' (Howay 1969: 374). Parsimonious asides like these are more typical than Hoskins' carefully prepared tables. However, as the 19th century progressed, visitors to Haida Gwaii became increasingly intrigued by the language they found there, and, to appreciate why this shift occurred, it is necessary to say something about two other groups that gradually came into more constant and sustained contact with the Haidas during this period – namely, the missionaries and the anthropologists.

2.3 The arrival of the missionaries

A sustained period of contact may have begun in the 18th century as a result of European exploration, and it may have continued in the 19th century mainly due to trade, but it was not long before missionaries of various denominations became interested in the communities on Haida Gwaii. While it is extremely difficult to determine who was the first missionary to spend time on the islands, it is clear that Jonathan Green (1796–1878) was one of the earliest to travel there motivated by spiritual, rather than financial, considerations. Although Green's work will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 3, a few details will be given here. Born in Lebanon, Connecticut, Green had been ordained into the American Congregational Church in 1827, and, in the same year, he sailed from Boston to Hawaii to begin working for the non-denominational 'American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions'. After only a few months in Hawaii he travelled to the Pacific Northwest Coast, and he spent several weeks living with the Haida communities both on Haida Gwaii and in Alaska. Fortunately, he recorded his experiences in a detailed journal, and therefore it is possible partially to reconstruct both his route round the islands and his reactions to the various people he encountered there. He quickly became interested in 'the Queen Charlotte's Island language', and, like Hoskins and others before him, he compiled a wordlist, and wrote down a number of phrases and sentences in a broadly phonetic notation of his own devising (Green 1915). Green was probably the first churchman of any kind to spend time with the Haidas and to attempt to master the rudiments of their language. However, he only remained on Haida Gwaii for a short time, after which he returned to Hawaii. Although he suggested to the Board that the Pacific Northwest Coast would provide an excellent location for important missionary work, his employers chose not to act upon his recommendations. Consequently, despite his initial

approaches towards some kind of linguistic analysis, his time on the islands did not establish a lasting legacy of missionary contact.

When Green left Haida Gwaii in August 1829, there followed a period of about fifty years during which there was minimal missionary contact. However, the missionary infrastructure at various locations along the Pacific Coast became more stable and elaborate as the 19th century progressed, a development that would eventually have profound consequences for the Haida communities – and the CMS was one of the dominant organisations that established an influential Anglican presence in the region. Having been founded in 1799 by a small group of people that included Henry Thornton (1760–1815) and William Wilberforce (1759–1833), the 'Society for Missions to Africa and the East', which later became the 'Church Missionary Society', expanded rapidly. By the 1850s,it had been able to send missionaries to West Africa, South Africa, India, Malta, Australia, China, and Palestine, to name just a few of the overseas locations in which it had stations. The first CMS missionaries to Canada were sent in 1822, and, by the middle of the 19th century, there was a wide-spread conviction within the Society that missionaries were urgently needed on the Pacific Northwest Coast. This led to the establishment of the North Pacific Mission, and William Duncan (1832–1918) played a crucial role in its development. Born in Yorkshire, the illegitimate child of a servant, Duncan had been raised by his mother's parents, and he was strongly influenced by the evangelicals, such as Anthony Thomas Carr (1796–1854), whom he had encountered while singing as a treble at Beverley Minster and, later, while working as a Sunday School teacher. Accordingly, he joined the CMS in 1854, at the age of twenty-two, and was admitted as a trainee missionary at Highbury College. In 1856, Duncan was sent to the Pacific Northwest Coast. Staying initially on Vancouver Island (as the guest of the HBC chaplain), he eventually arrived at Fort Simpson (Lax Kw'alaams) on October 1st 1857.

Despite the arduous nature of his work, Duncan was tireless, and he set about the task of learning Tsimshian with the help of Arthur Wellington Clah (1831–1916), a Tsimshian who had converted to Christianity.[9] From the very beginning, Duncan advocated a distinctive variety of low-church Anglicanism, and he consistently refused ordination, preferring to work as a lay minister. Partly motivated by a desire not to become dependent upon the HBC for support, he founded a Christian settlement at Metlakatla in 1861, near to the present-day town of Prince Rupert. Initially, sixty Tsimshians travelled there with him, but, after only a few months, the community had increased to several hundred. In

9. The techniques that Duncan used in order to learn Tsimshian will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. Clah's remarkable life and work are discussed in Neylan (2003: 161–174), and Neylan (2005: 88–108).

the early years of the settlement, the CMS were inclined to view Metlakatla as a Christian utopia, a compelling example of what missionary work could accomplish. As the community continued to expand, more missionaries were required, and, in 1873, Duncan was joined by William Collison, a man who was to have a pivotal role in establishing a CMS mission station on Haida Gwaii.

The history of the CMS's involvement in Haida Gwaii was helpfully summarised by Eugene Stock in his *Metlakahtla and the North Pacific Mission* (1880). By the 1870s, the two main population centres on the islands were both on Graham Island – Masset (a.k.a. Ghadaghaaxhiwaas; usually referred to now as 'Old Masset'), to the north, and Skidegate (a.k.a. Hlghagilda) to the south-east (see Figure 1.1). In 1869, the HBC had established a trading post at Masset. Partly for this reason, it was chosen as the location for the CMS station on Haida Gwaii, and the task of establishing the station fell to William Collison, who arrived in Masset in November 1876. Obtaining his information from documents that were preserved in the CMS archive, Stock refers to Masset as 'the principal trading post'; he describes the station there as one of the 'outlying missions', and his description of the Haidas is typical of its period in emphasising both their physical prowess, their (perceived) cruelty, and the profound social problems that had been caused by alcohol and disease:

> On the group of islands named after George the Third's Queen, dwell the finest and the fiercest of the coast tribes. The Hydahs are a manly, tall, handsome people, and comparatively fair in their complexion; but they are a cruel and vindictive race, and were long the terror of the North Pacific coast. They even ventured to attack English ships, and in 1854 they plundered an American vessel, detaining the captain and crew in captivity until they were ransomed by the Hudson's Bay Company. No tribe, moreover, has been more fearfully demoralised by the proximity of the white man's "civilization." Drunkenness and the grossest vices have spread disease and death among them. (Stock 1880: 76)

The disastrous consequences which resulted from contact between European 'civilization' and indigenous culture along the Pacific Northwest Coast have been well documented: traditional customs were marginalised, alcohol caused extensive suffering, disease was rampant, and the subsequent establishment of Church-run and government-funded residential schools unwittingly provided an environment in which physical, psychological, and sexual abuse could flourish. Stock's reference to attacks upon 'English ships' no doubt alludes to incidents such as the capture of the *Eleanora* in 1794, while the plundering of the 'American vessel' most likely refers to the taking of the *Susan Sturgis* in 1852, a notorious event that resulted in an official enquiry. Although precise details are hard to establish, a group of Haidas (possibly led by Chief Wiah of Masset) took the crew of the

Susan Sturgis hostage and looted the ship. The captives were eventually rescued by Albert Edward Edenshaw (one of the most prominent Haida chiefs of the 19th century), though his innocence in the matter has been repeatedly questioned.[10] Incidents such as these profoundly influenced perceptions of the Haida peoples, causing them to be regularly portrayed in European accounts as cruel, vindictive, and fierce. However, Stock was keen to emphasise that, by the early 1870s, the Haidas had started to respond to the influence of Christianity, as it had been communicated to them by the missionaries:

> […] the Hydahs have not failed to recognise the advantages that Christianity has conferred upon their neighbours on the mainland. Trading expeditions up the coast took them occasionally to Metlakahtla, and the peace and prosperity they saw there deeply impressed their minds. A striking instance of the moral influence of the Christian settlement occurred in 1873. Many years before, a young Tsimshean woman had been captured by a party of Hydahs, and carried as a slave to Queen Charlotte Islands, where, after a while, a son was born to her. Five and twenty years passed away, and then she was restored by her owner, for a consideration, to her relatives at Fort Simpson. The Hydahs seem to have thought this a good opportunity to make friends with their old enemies, and they sent a deputation to Metlakahtla with her son, now a grown man, to give him up as a voluntary peace-offering. (Stock 1880: 76)

It is not clear why Stock felt that this story concerning the restoration ('for a consideration') of the 'young Tsimshean woman' and her son demonstrated the new morality that Christianity had brought to the Haidas. Indeed, when he was writing (in the late 1870s) the Masset mission station was still comparatively new, and, in many respects, it was too soon to determine the impact it would have. However, quoting extensively from Collison's letters, Stock summarises Collison's time as a missionary:

> Patiently and prayerfully for the next two years and a half, with one or two intervals for visits to Metlakahtla, did Mr. Collison labour among the Hydahs, on the same lines as Mr. Duncan had done originally among the Tsimsheans; first, diligently trying to pick up their language, and making himself known as their friend; then opening a school; then seeking to win them from some of their most degrading customs. Very quickly he gained a remarkable influence over them, and though the medicine-men were, of course, bitterly hostile, greater was He who was with the Missionary than those that were with his opponents; and the

10. Various attacks upon trading vessels are discussed in Acheson & Delgado (2004). For a reassessment specifically of the *Susan Sturgis* affair, see Gough (1982).

> tokens of the working of the Holy Ghost were manifested sooner than even an ardent faith might have anticipated. (Stock 1880: 78)

Stock explicitly mentions Collison's attempts to 'pick up their language', and this was certainly one aspect of the latter's ministry that merits close attention.[11] Indeed, he seems to have been the first European to have attained conversational fluency in Haida, and therefore the linguistic notes that he produced (some of which have been preserved in the CMS archive) are of considerable interest and importance. In effect, they provide the first detailed information about Haida lexis, phonology, morphology, and syntax. Compared to the simple wordlists and collections of phrases and sentences that had been gathered by explorers and traders who had come into contact with the Haidas for only a few days or weeks, Collison's analyses of the language, which he produced during a period of two years, were inevitably far more comprehensive. Also, since he was partly concerned with the task of translating liturgical and scriptural texts, he was the first person seriously to attempt to find a way of conveying Christian notions in Haida, and, consequently, he was one of the creators of what could be referred to as a Haida missionary sociolect.

Gradually, Collison's successors extended the linguistic work that he had begun, though there were certainly periods of inactivity. When Collison left Haida Gwaii in 1878, he was followed by George Sneath (1857–?), who proved to be a poor choice. Despite starting with great enthusiasm, he became dissatisfied with the kind of churchmanship practised by the CMS missionaries. In particular, like Duncan, he was opposed to ordination, and expressed his dissatisfaction openly in a rather pompous letter to the CMS:

> Ordination I cannot accept. Ritual and robes to me are nothing more than man-made nonsense and especially when introduced among the heathen. Both Jesus and his noble servant Paul did without them and I will.
>
> (CMS Archive G1C2/01882/35)

Given the contemporaneous difficulties at Metlakatla that began to manifest themselves in the 1870s (discussed below), the CMS was never going to tolerate this kind of stubbornness, and, not surprisingly, Sneath resigned soon afterwards. He was followed first by Charles Harrison, and then by John Henry Keen, both of whom produced important linguistic work that will be assessed at length in the following chapters. When Keen left Masset in 1898, Collison's son, Henry A. Collison (1877–?), took charge of the mission station, which was appropriate since

---

11. The task of exploring the way in which Collison acquired this knowledge will provide the main focus for Chapter 3.

he had been born in Masset. However, the station entered a period of gradual decline. William Hogan (1852–1914), Rev. Creary (dates unknown), and Alfred Price (1863–1931) were all based there, but the latter was the last of the Haida Gwaii missionaries. When Price left in 1920, he was not replaced.

Although the establishment of the mission station on Haida Gwaii suggested that the CMS North Pacific Mission was flourishing in the 1870s, the next few years were traumatic since there were acrimonious divisions and disputes between William Duncan and the CMS authorities. One of the main problems was that Duncan refused to allow the members of his Metlakatla community to receive Communion since he feared that this would have an adverse affect upon indigenous groups who he was convinced had an historical tendency towards anthropophagism (at least as part of some of their secret society rites).[12] Not unreasonably, the CMS authorities were troubled by this, and a lengthy process of attempted negotiation ended when Duncan was expelled from the Church of England in 1881. Undaunted, he simply continued his missionary activities as a non-denominational endeavour, and, in 1887, he and around eight hundred Tsimshians travelled to Annette Island in Alaska to establish a settlement known as 'New Metlakahtla'. Duncan remained on the island for the rest of his life, and his controversial legacy is still fiercely disputed.[13]

The above summary has focused upon the activities of the CMS missionaries, mainly because the linguistic work produced by the members of this group will be explored in the core chapters of this book. However, it is certainly not the case that the Anglicans were the only denomination to establish a mission station on Haida Gwaii. Indeed, as the 19th century progressed, many different kinds of missionaries began to arrive on the Pacific Coast, and another prominent and influential group were the Methodists. Thomas Crosby (1840–1914) provided robust leadership, working tirelessly amongst various indigenous peoples, and he was responsible for determining when the time was right for the Methodists to establish themselves on Haida Gwaii. Like Duncan, Crosby was a Yorkshireman. He had been born to Methodist parents, and the family had emigrated to Ontario in 1856. In 1861, he had answered an advertisement in a Methodist newspaper that was seeking missionaries for work on the Pacific Northwest Coast, and, keen to participate, he travelled to British Columbia, eventually arriving there in 1863. Initially he taught in a native school in Nanaimo, but in the late 1860s he became an itinerant preacher, moving around Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, as

12. For a probing reanalysis of various accounts of cannibalism, see Mcdowell (1997).

13. Contrasting overviews of Duncan's life and work can be found in Arctander (1909), Usher (1974), and Murray (1985).

well as on the mainland.[14] He was ordained in 1871, and soon after this he came into direct contact with members of the Masset Haida community. At least according to the version of events that appeared in Crosby's memoir *Up and Down the North Pacific Coast By Canoe and Mission Ship* (1914), the Masset Haidas had initially sought a Methodist rather than a CMS missionary:

> In 1876 a large party came over from Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, most of them painted and in their blankets. They wanted to take me back with them to see their people, most of whom, they said, wished to have a Missionary. It was impossible for me to leave my work at that time, and we thought that the Church Missionary Society, who had Missionaries along the Coast, should take that part of the Island, so we urged them to make application to that Society. The Church Missionary Society afterwards took up successful work at Masset.
>
> (Crosby 1914: 263)

It is impossible to determine whether this account is accurate or not, but, if it can be trusted, then it suggests that there was a certain amount of interaction (and even co-operation) between the various missionary groups: if one organisation felt that another was better able to minister to a particular community, then the work was allocated accordingly, sometimes via consultation. However, despite the fact that Crosby did not send a missionary to the Masset Haida in 1876, the connections between the Methodists and certain Haida communities were soon strengthened. Specifically, after the establishment of the CMS mission station in Masset, several members of the Haida community in Skidegate began to petition for a similar station. In response to these requests, Collison visited Skidegate in 1877, but, although he was personally sympathetic to the wishes of the nascent Christian community there, he was unable to help since the CMS could not fund another mission station on the islands. Undaunted, the Skidegate Haidas petitioned the Methodist mission at Fort Simpson, Crosby recalled the occasion clearly:

> […] an urgent call came from the Skidegate and other peoples in the south. These Indians made regular visits in the summer to Fort Simpson for business purposes, both with furs for the Company and to trade off their large canoes among the Indians for fish-grease and other food. On these occasions they generally spent one Sabbath or more with us; and we would have weekly evening services especially for them and also special services in Chinook in the Church on the Lord's Day. When they saw how the Tsimpshean people were improving and how many of their children were beginning to read and write, they began to urge for a

14. A good biographical study of Crosby can be found in Bolt (1992). The often neglected work of Crosby's wife, Emma, has recently been examined in some detail in Hare & Barman (2006).

> teacher at Skidegate, Queen Charlotte Islands. The leader in this movement was Gedanst (Amos Russ) […]. (Crosby 1914: 262–263)[15]

The native convert mentioned here, Gedanst (c.1850–1934, a.k.a. Amos Russ), often claimed to be the first Haida to have been baptised, and he seems to have been one of the leaders of the movement to acquire a mission station for Skidegate. As a direct result of this plea, a station was established in Skidegate by George Robinson (fl. 1883–1885), a lay Methodist minister, in 1883.[16] During the next few years, a (largely tacit) understanding was reached between the CMS and Methodist mission stations: the former would oversee activities in the north of Haida Gwaii, while the latter would concentrate on the southern areas. However, despite this co-ordinated division of labour, the Anglicans and the Methodists approached their work in different ways, and they laboured largely independently. Like the CMS missionaries, though, the Methodists devoted a considerable amount of time to the learning of Haida, despite the fact that they did not publish grammatical studies and translations of liturgical and scriptural texts. There is no doubt, however, that Crosby encouraged his fellow Methodists to master the indigenous languages that they encountered. Concerning his experiences of learning Tsimshian at Fort Simpson,[17] he later recalled that

> [m]ost of our services had to be carried on through an interpreter. We felt that every effort must be made to get hold of this new tongue. In this Mr. Dudoward, our interpreter, was a great help. We had many a struggle before we were able to preach and teach the people in their own tongue, but every missionary should master the language the very first thing. (Crosby 1914: 41)

Although their linguistic intentions were good, one problem that plagued the Skidegate mission was the quick succession of missionaries who were based there, the rapid changes of personnel preventing sustained linguistic research. Crosby's summary of the early years is telling:

> Mr. Robinson remained at Skidegate for nearly two years. In the summer of 1885, he was succeeded by Rev. G. F. Hopkins. Three years later this Missionary was compelled, by the decline of his wife's health, to seek a change from this isolated

---

15. 'Chinook' here means "Chinook Jargon".

16. For an overview of the establishment of this mission station, see Crosby (1914: 264–265).

17. There are various complexities concerning the names that are used to refer to the languages spoken on the Pacific Rim. The practice here will be to use the contemporary names in the main body of the text, but to retain the names (and spellings) used by the authors of the documents that are quoted as source material. Although this convention introduces a few seeming inconsistencies, the context of the discussion should usually prevent any confusion.

> appointment. In 1888 he was succeeded by Rev. A. N. Miller, who in four years likewise found a change necessary. An interim of a year followed, during part of which a lay teacher, Mr. S. Lazier, supplied the work. (Crosby 1914: 265)

Although mainly a list of names and dates, this short extract effectively conveys the difficulty of sustaining any kind of continuity: if each missionary only remained in post at Skidegate for a few years or so, then it was hard to accomplish any long-term projects. No doubt this partly explains why the CMS and Methodists alike were keen to make use of native converts in order to spread the 'good news' of the Gospel. While the case of Gedanst has already been mentioned, Crosby provides another example:

> Another of our "Home family" was a young woman who came from the streets of Victoria. She was converted and became a very happy Christian. She was a good singer, and quite a help to us when we opened up the Mission at Queen Charlotte Islands, as she was a Hyda by birth. She would often go on evangelistic trips with the Missionary and his party. (Crosby 1914: 90–91)

So, fairly soon after the missionaries first arrived on Haida Gwaii, a tradition of native evangelism was initiated, and, as a direct consequence of this, a diverse mixture of Christianities emerged, many of which drew upon indigenous rituals, beliefs, and customs as well as more conventional Christian traditions. The various kinds of theological syncretism that occurred along the Pacific Northwest Coast when the Christian message was taken up by native evangelists are forbiddingly complex and they have only just started to be explored in any detail. For example, with a particular focus on Tsimshian Christianity, Susan Neylan distinguishes carefully between 'syncretism, convergence, and dualism', and she puts it

> [s]yncretism is a concept that refers to the blending of Native and Christian beliefs, symbols, rituals, and cultural expressions. Christianity, according to this idea, is not accepted as a comprehensive package. Rather, it is incorporated selectively into, even altering, pre-existing spiritual practices. The borders between the two religious systems become so blurred that they effectively combine, although rarely equally, into new beliefs, practices, or systems. (Neylan 2003: 15)

Understanding these interactions is an important part of trying to elucidate the broader cultural impact that the missionaries had upon the indigenous communities of the Pacific Northwest Coast.

2.4 Disease and demography

If the missionaries brought Christianity (of various sorts) to Haida Gwaii, then they also brought modern medicines and (often) a sincere humanitarian concern for the well-being of the indigenous peoples. As the 19th century advanced, these resources became increasingly beneficial, since the Haida communities suffered terribly as a result of certain diseases and damaging social customs that had been introduced by the non-natives who passed through the region. From the late 18th century onwards, smallpox and alcoholism (in particular) began to undermine the traditional Haida way of life, and a rapid decline in population effectively destroyed many well-established Haida communities. Although it is of course extremely difficult to estimate the number of Haidas who were living on Haida Gwaii at various points during the 19th century, there is general agreement that the population, which had been around 15,000 in the late 18th century, had fallen to around 1,700 by the 1860s, and may have reached a low of around 600 in 1915.[18] Aware of these shocking reductions, the missionaries tried to relieve the physical sufferings that afflicted the members of the local communities. For instance, it is known that Collison vaccinated the Masset Haidas against smallpox during the 1870s, and, as a result, the disease, which had been carried to the islands from the mainland, did not claim an inordinate number of victims there:

> Having at length succeeded in procuring a supply of vaccine lymph from the Indian Department of the Canadian Government, I invited a number of the Haidas to meet me in the Mission-room. I informed them of the danger in which they stood should the Kali-koustla (smallpox) again attack them, and the advantage to be gained by vaccination. I informed them of how the Iron people had suffered from its ravages in the past, until this remedy had been discovered. I endeavoured by every means in my power to induce some of them to submit to the operation, but in vain. They shrunk from it, evidently fearing that there was some thing mysterious in it. At length I resolved on trying the force and influence of example. Casting off my coat, I bared my arm, and vaccinated myself before them all. (Collison 1915: 203)

Although Collison had received extensive training in preparation for his work as a missionary, his medical knowledge was limited. He realised, therefore, that he was taking a significant risk in attempting to vaccinate the Masset Haidas himself, and, as his account of these events continues, it becomes clear that the process did not go as smoothly as he had initially hoped:

---

18. Population estimates can be found in Duff (1997: 52–71), and Boyd (1990: 135–148).

> I completed the operation, took up my vaccine and lance, and turning to them said: "Now since none of you would consent to be vaccinated, I have placed the medicine on myself. Should the Kali-koustla come now, probably numbers of you will die, as when it came formerly, but I shall escape." I was just leaving the room when a stalwart Haida who was a sub-chief sprang to his feet and exclaimed: "Etlagida lagging di ishin, tung kiwunsit alzeil kum di quothal ashang" ("Chief, it is good that you should place the mark on me also that I may not die"). I accordingly at once vaccinated him. His example was promptly followed by the others who were present. The rumour soon sped throughout the camps of the wonderful remedy; the scianawa of the Iron man which could effect what all their medicine men had failed to do, even to save them from the evil spirit of the Kali-koustla, and men, women, and children came crowding in upon me, so that for several days I could scarce find time to eat, so great was the rush for vaccination. But alas for the results. Though I had taken the precaution of warning them that it would probably become painful and swollen in a few days, yet I was not prepared for the storm of indignation which arose. Some of them became very unwell; not only the arm but in several cases the shoulder and neck became inflamed and swollen, and as the effect followed the cause so quickly they feared the worst, and threatened to shoot me, should the symptoms increase. I was now as fully engaged in endeavouring to soothe and allay the symptoms which had arisen, as I had been before in vaccinating. (Collison 1915: 203–204)

Collison's frank description certainly captures something of the fear and horror that the smallpox epidemics caused in the 1870s, and it is typical of his writing that he should try to include certain words, phrases, and sentences in Haida in order to make his summary as linguistically accurate as possible. Consequently, it is clear that 'Kali-koustla' was the word that the Haidas used to refer to the smallpox, and it was a compound formed from *q'al* (*skin*) and *q'awsdla* (*to make stick out*) (Enrico 2005: 1495, 1512). Also, the word 'scianawa' could be a truncated form of the Masset phrase *skayaanaa cyaal* which specifically indicated 'a certain medicine for discovering a witch who is causing sickness' (Enrico 2005: 1201). In this way, Collison provides an insight into the contemporaneous Haida understanding of disease and medicine, and this reveals the way in which the Haida had begun to find ways of referring to comparatively recent phenomena such as new illnesses and cures. However, these sorts of details aside, there is no doubt that the lives of many of the Masset Haidas were saved as a direct result of the basic medical treatment that he was able to offer.

One unavoidable consequence of the smallpox epidemics was that many Haidas left Haida Gwaii and travelled to other places on the Pacific Northwest Coast that were perceived to be safer, and these migrants often ended up in larger centres such as Victoria and Vancouver. Displacements of this kind only contributed to the general problem of de-population, though, and, as a result, the Haidas who

remained on Haida Gwaii relocated from outlying villages to larger settlements such as Masset and Skidegate, leaving their ancestral territories deserted. A similar development occurred during this period amongst the Haida communities on the Prince of Wales Island and Dall Island in Alaska: the Alaskan Haidas had initially dwelt in a number of villages including Howkan, Koinglas, Klinquan, and Sukkwan. However, when the smallpox epidemics began to strike, the surviving communities relocated to larger centres such as Hydaburg and Kasaan.[19]

In addition, it is crucial to emphasise the fact that the first extensive period of missionary activity on Haida Gwaii, which began with the arrival of Collison, happened to coincide with a number of profound political changes which ultimately had a dramatic impact upon native culture all along the Pacific Northwest Coast. In particular, in 1876, the Canadian Government enacted legislation which attempted to define and determine 'Indian' status and band membership. Essentially, various laws were modified and consolidated to form a body of legislative measures which became known as the 'Indian Act'. In effect, this Act allowed the Government almost complete control over the First Nations. For instance, it stated criteria for determining membership of the category 'Indian', and specified the rights and protections that could be expected by individuals so classified. Most notoriously, though, the Act forbade traditional ceremonies such as the potlatch and the sun dance (Bartlett 1980). Other significant developments included the establishment of residential schools and the encroachment of Euro-Canadians upon land which had been reserved for the First Nations (Scholtz 2006, esp. Chapter 3). Needless to say, these highly contentious developments had a deep and lasting impact on many aspects of native culture within Canada. However, it was not until 1910 that the Queen Charlotte Agency was established at Masset, with the result that the Government took control over the remnants of the Haida community who still resided in the old missionary outpost.

19. For a clear discussion of the impact of missionary activity upon the traditional Haida way of life, see Henderson (1974: 303–316).