Nootkan Band Names

John Thomas, Haawayaqu's
University of Victoria

Vancouver Island's west coast and the adjacent tip of Washington's Olympic Peninsula is the homeland of the Nootkan speaking people. Many different bands occupy parts of the coast line and inlets from Cape Cook to Cape Flattery. Each band is named for a characteristic trait of the people or a distinctive feature of their location.

The most complete list of these names occurs in the 'Second general report on the Native people of British Columbia,' by Franz Boas (1891). In compiling this list Boas drew on older sources, such as Sproat (1868). Twenty-three names are listed, written in a linguistic orthography. One of these is an unidentified name listed in parentheses. Geographic locations are given and a few names are translated.

Band Names From Boas

1. Til'nak'atkh-male people........ Cape Flattery.
2. Potinaka'th................. San Juan Harbour.
4. N'wih'th
5. Hstuy't'h'a'th
6. Ht'barw'ath-whasen on hill people
7. Haxa'kh
8. Th'lo'kh
9. Th'lo'k'kh
10. O'pe'enha'kh
11. Yul'h'ax
12. Th'at'kh
13. K'thnnank'nakhawhick her people
14. A'thnnaxk
15. Ill'k'axkh-see houses on spit people.
16. He'k'kh
17. Mi't'xaxk
18. M'x't'xak
19. A't'axk
20. Pak'a'x
21. Kayk'kh
22. Tw'kh'whale-well in bay people.
23. N'k'k's'nah-lake in bay North of Nitinaht Sound.

Since the time of Boas the west coast band names have occurred in print many times (in various spellings), but the words have never been fully broken down into their constituent morphemes, or even accurately translated. It is my purpose here to attempt further analysis of these names.

The order of my presentation follows that of the Boas list. A typical English rendering (if available) and a translation of each word is given first. The Band names are then given in both Nitinaht (my first language) and Nootka (my second language). Where possible I have undertaken a morphological analysis of the words. For readers unfamiliar with the geographic area of the Nootkan people, a map from Philip Drucker's The Northern and Central Nootkan Tribes (1951) has been included. This map locates seventeen of the bands mentioned in Boas. All are written...
in their English spelling, although in the text of this anthropologist's work a phonetic transcription is also attempted. There are a few additional band names mentioned in his introductory chapter (see Pp 3-6).

I would like especially to thank Dr. George Clutesi and Mrs. Agnes Dick of Port Alberni, British Columbia for their kind help with the analysis of these words.
Names

1. **people of the coast.**
   - **Nootka** \( \ddot{a}\cdot?as?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. \)
   - **coastline location.**
   - **people of.**
   - **Nitinaht** \( \ddot{a}\cdot?a\cdot?ya?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. \)
   - **coastline location.**
   - **people of.**

These people are also known as the Makah (see Drucker map). \( \ddot{a}\cdot?as?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h} \) is a Nootka word meaning people of outside coastal locations.

It is possible that this term refers to Tatoosh Island. The village there was used by whale and seal hunters from different places as a camp or shelter during stormy weather. Permanent residents were called \( \ddot{a}\cdot?as?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. \)

2. **people of the foam.**
   - **Nootka** \( \ddot{a}\cdot?ci\cdot?na?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. \)
   - **Nitinaht** \( \ddot{a}\cdot?ci\cdot?d\cdot?\ddot{a}?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. \)
   - **sea foam, suds.**
   - **on the rocks.**
   - **people of.**

Drucker subsumes this term under the name Nitinat.

3. **people of di\textsuperscript{‘}ti\textsuperscript{‘}d\textsuperscript{‘}a.**
   - **Nootka** \( ni\cdot?ti\cdot?na?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. \)
   - **Nitinaht** \( di\textsuperscript{‘}ti\textsuperscript{‘}d\textsuperscript{‘}a?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. \)
   - **di\textsuperscript{‘}ti\textsuperscript{‘}d\textsuperscript{‘}a is known today as Jordan River, located S.E. of San Juan Harbor (also: Port San Juan, Port Renfrew).**

4. **people who always came back.**
   - **Nootka** \( hu\cdot?e\cdot?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. \)
   - **came back.**
   - **always.**
   - **people of.**
   - **Nitinaht** \( hu\cdot?ya?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. \)

5. **people who live way in there on the beach (head of the bay or harbor).**
   - **Nootka** \( \ddot{h}u\cdot?cuq\ddot{h}is?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. \)
   - **\ddot{h}u. way over there (far).**
   - **\ddot{c}u. being at.**
   - **\ddot{q}A. inside.**
   - **\ddot{is}. beach.**
   - **\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. people of.**
   - **Nitinaht** \( \ddot{xu}\cdot?cuq\ddot{h}i\ddot{s}a?\ddot{a}t\ddot{h}. \)
6. people of the place where bushes hang down.

Nootka  hiku·ʔat̓ə.

hiku·ʔ. bushes hanging from face of rock. hair hanging over brow.

ʔat̓ə. people of.

Nitinaht  hiku·ʔat̓ə.

This term does not appear in Drucker.

7. Knowledge of this band is now lost. No identification is possible. The term does not appear in Drucker.

8. Tsishaat people who are proud of their community.

Nootka  čiša·ʔat̓ə.

Nitinaht  čiša·ʔə.

čiša. proud.

ʔə. people who are ___.

This term describes a people who are proud of their prosperous, clean community.

9. Toquat. people of the narrow, rocky beach.

Nootka  tuk·ʔat̓ə.

tuk. narrow.

Nitinaht  tuk·ʔə.


Nootka  hu·picisʔat̓ə.

hu·píkim. round object.

-icis. on edge of bank of river.

ʔat̓ə. people of.

Nitinaht  hu·picisʔə.

11. Ucluelet. people of the sheltered bay.

Nootka  yu·ʔu·ʔat̓ə.

yu·ʔ. sheltered bay.

ʔu·ʔ. place of.

ʔat̓ə. people of.

Nitinaht  yu·ʔu·ʔə.

yu·ʔ. a way to shore through rough sea.

ʔu·ʔ. place of.

ʔə. people of.

12. Clayoquat.

Nootka  ʔaʔu·ʔkʷə·ʔat̓ə.

ʔaʔu· another, again.

ʔaʔu·ʔkʷiə. changed to different form repeatedly.


15. Nootka ma'nu'satddb. people of houses in a row.


17. Moachat. people of the deer.

18. Nuchalat. people of ma'as.
maʔas. tribe.
-ʔatḥ. people of.

Nitinahlt maʔas?t̓x.

baʔas. house.
-ʔatx. people of.

maʔas or baʔas is also a name given to a group of people knowledgeable in the culture and history of the potlatch (songs, dances, and masks).

Nootka nučaʔat̓h
nučiʔ. mountain.
-ʔat̓h. people of.

Nitinahlt dučaʔat̓x.

dučiʔ. mountain.
-ʔat̓h. people of.

20. Ehetisat people of the big beach area.
Nootka ?iʔat̓sisʔat̓h.
?iʔ. big.
-ʔat̓is. beach area, along beach.
-ʔat̓h. people of.

Nitinahlt ?iʔisʔat̓sisʔat̓x.

?iʔx. big.

Nootka qaʔyuʔat̓x.
qačak. needle.
-ʔyu. bush area.
-ʔat̓x. people of.

Nitinahlt qaʔyuʔatx.

22. Chickliset. people of the cut in the beach.
Nootka čiʔaʔat̓s?
čiʔ. cut.
-ʔaʔ. into, inside.
-ʔis. beach.
-ʔat̓h. people of.

Nitinahlt čiʔaʔat̓sʔat̓x.

23. (Tlahosath)

Possible Translation

Nootka ʔaʔiʔuʔsʔat̓h
ʔaʔis. post or tree on the beach.
-ʔuʔ. in front of beach area.
This term was unanalysed on the Boas list. It does not appear in Drucker.

References

