

Northern Straits: A Native Perspective

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As a corollary to Wayne Suttles' conclusions in 'Some Questions about Northern Straits', I am presenting a Native perspective on the relevance of family connections and oral tradition to Northern Straits dialects.

1 Family trees and Northern Straits

The family trees of Charley Edwards, Lena Daniels and Tommy Bob were compiled by me from my personal field notes (1968-present). Throughout the years my consultants have been my late mother Eva Guerin, Al Charles, Theresa Gibbs, Lena Daniels, Ivan Morris and Emma Edwards. In addition, I have consulted secondary sources such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) records, tribal enrollment records, school records, census records, archival records and church records.

The three people whose genealogies are considered in this paper belong to the same family.

2 The family tree of Charley Edwards, Lena Daniels and Tommy Bob

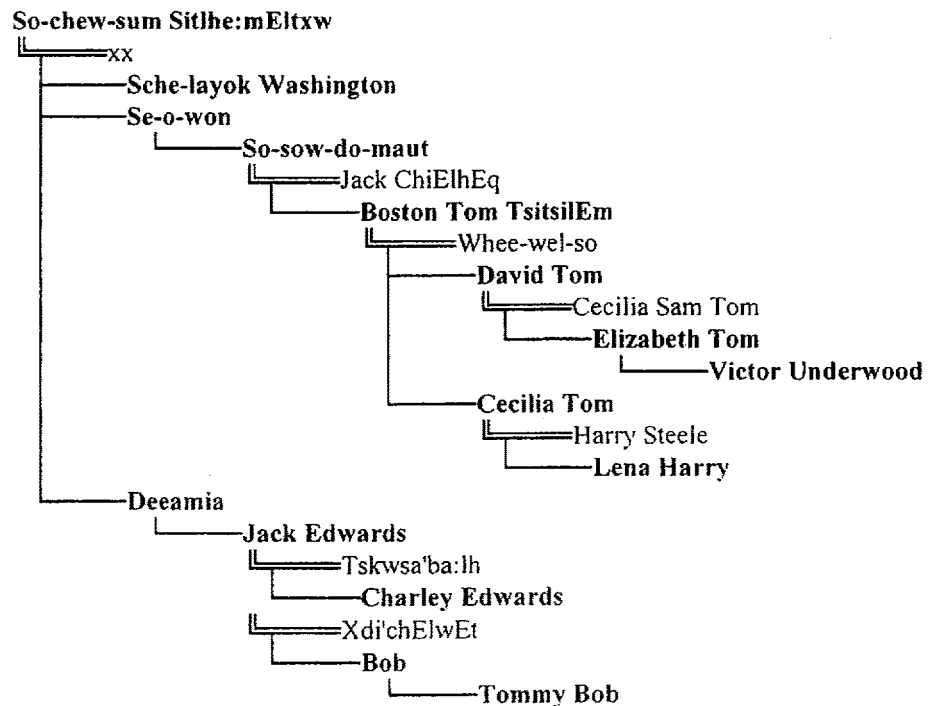


Figure 1: Family Tree

My sources for the above genealogies are documents from the BIA, a notarized deposition by David Tom dated July 7, 1917, genealogies compiled by Wayne Suttles, and my own field work with Emma Edwards. In Figure 1, I tried to regularize the orthography of the names that I took from Wayne Suttles' field notes¹ because the genealogy program I use has no phonetic type. However, I have kept intact the names I took from the BIA records.

3 What language did they speak?

On July 7, 1917, a notary public for the State of Washington residing in La Conner, deposed David Tom who stated that he was born about 1850 at the Lummi Reservation. He said he was Lummi, and so was his father. His mother's father was also Lummi, but his mother's mother "was a La Qualan—a small band near Lummi." (Notarized document July 7, 1917).

Charley Edward identified the language spoken by the Samish, Lummi, Saanich and Songhees as Ləkʷəŋʃnəŋ. Tommy Bob who identified himself as Samish also used this term to refer to his language. (See Suttles this volume.) When Lena Daniels visited Lummi in 1996, I asked her directly what she called herself. Without hesitating, she answered, "Lummi".

4 Conclusion

From my Native point of view, it seems to me that at one time these families all spoke the same language Ləkʷəŋʃnəŋ. I ask myself, do they now speak different languages, or do they still speak one form or another of Ləkʷəŋʃnəŋ.

References

- Suttles, Wayne 2001. 'Some Questions about Nothern Straits' Proceedings of ICSNL 36.
Genealogical field notes (n.d.)
David, Tom 1917. Deposition. Lummi Records and Archives Center.
Daniels, Lena 1996. Oral History Interview.
Edwards, Emma Oral History Interview.
Bureau of Indian Affairs Land Records.

¹ I have used a capital "E" for schwa and "lh" for the voiceless lateral fricative. In addition, I have used "ch" for the post alveolar affricate.