

THE BEAVER

TSIMSYAN

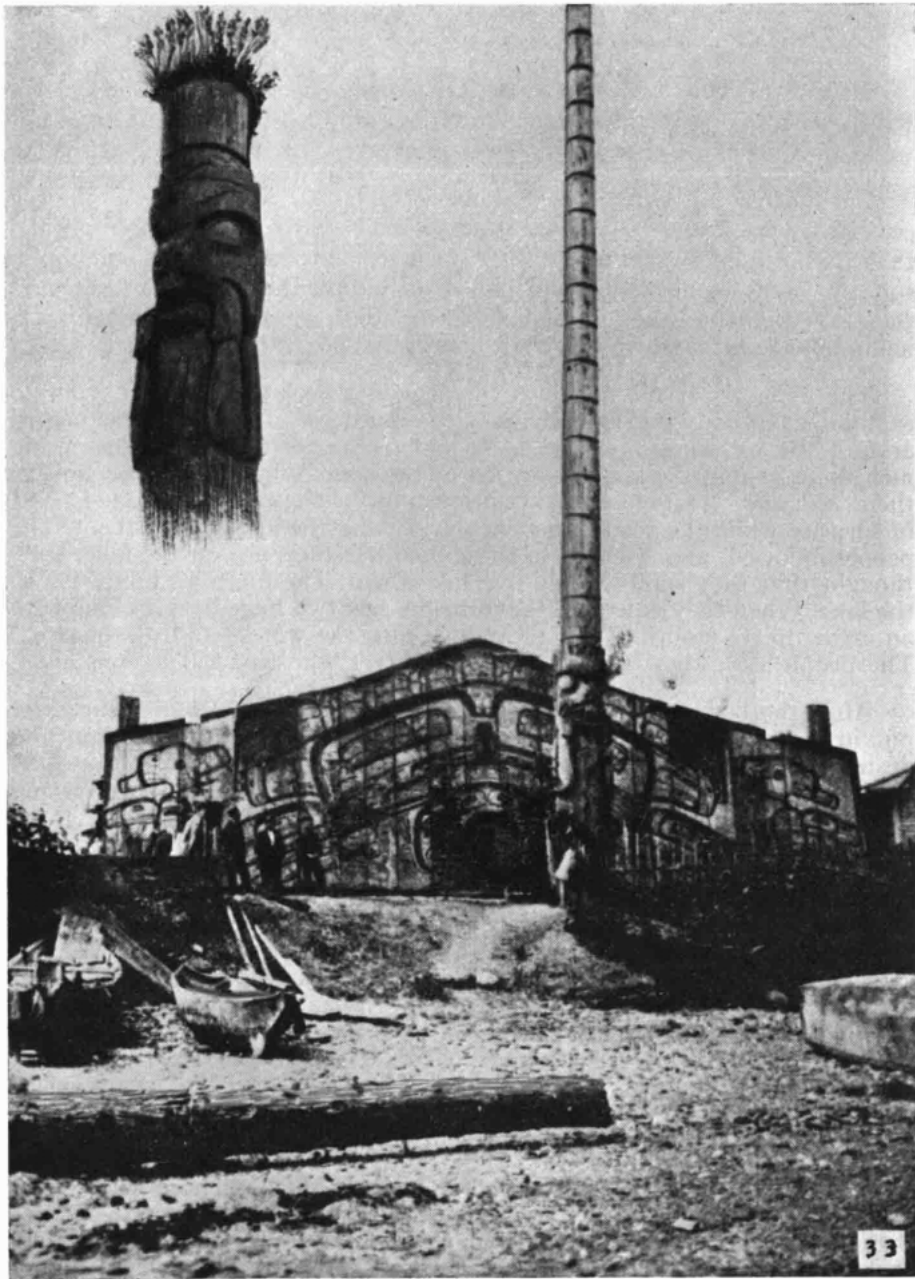
Origin of the Beaver Crest (Gitsalas), at the canyon of Skeena River, according to the informant Walter Wright (Neeshaiwærhs, Gispewudwade of Gitsalas). Recorded by William Beynon, in 1926.

Long after the Gitrhawn (Salmon-Eater) clan in the Eagle phratry established itself and took the lead at Gitsalas, it happened, one morning, that Gwærnk did not get up as usual. As it seemed strange to his household, someone went to his couch and pulled off his blanket. He was dead, and they saw an arrow stuck in his body. They took it out and examined it. It had a bone point, and was carved wonderfully.

The nephews of the murdered man gave a feast that day in order to examine everybody and see who was the murderer. The arrow was passed around and examined, but no one could recognize it. Two strangers, big men, were seen at the feast. They sat at the door. When the arrow came to them, one said, "Oh! Here it is! It belongs to Pelemgwæ." Everyone looked in surprise while the strangers went out, taking the arrow with them. The people followed, giving chase to these men. As they neared the lake, they thought that they surely would overtake them. The fugitives jumped into the lake. When they emerged, the pursuers saw two huge beavers, one with an arrow in its mouth. Then they dove into the waters and disappeared. The people now knew that it was the Beaver who had killed their chief.

After the body of the murdered chief was disposed of and a successor put in his place, the people planned to break the huge beaver dam and destroy the beavers. They prepared hemlock poles with which to dig away the mud, and drove stakes into the large dam. They worked many days and finally, when they had driven in all their stakes and they had almost burst the dam, the men appointed to finish the job fasted and prepared for it. As they went to strike away the pegs, Neeshaiwærhs, Gitrhawn, and Qawm stood to spear the monster Beaver when he came up. Opposite the broken beaver dam on the other shore were Neestarhoq and Sædzan. They were to watch for the Beaver. All prepared, the dam was broken. As the beavers came out, the people slaughtered them. The large Beaver with human heads on its back was first speared by the Kanhade Sædzan; then by the Eagle men of Gitrhawn. After struggling a long time, the Raven harpoon came out, and the Eagles were then acknowledged the owners of the Beaver. They took it to their side of the creek. Another big beaver, the wife of the monster Beayer, escaped and took refuge in a great whirlpool afterwards known as Kwidawren (two miles above the present Hannel station).

The people there were afraid to live in their village. Those who stayed over on the other side of the river, went up farther to the edge of what was then a lake, and they were known as People-on-edge-of-Lake (Gitlarhtsæhlta). This was abbreviated to Gitktsærhl. They were Gwærnk (Eagle), Neestarhoq of the house of Neeshaiwærhs (Gispewudwade), and Sædzan (Raven-Kanhade). The other three, on the opposite shore, built a village on a high hill known as Larh-galwælp (right above first tunnel). These three were Neeshaiwærhs (Gispewudwade), Qawm (Raven), and Gitrhawn (Eagle).



Tsimshyan totem pole of the Standing-Beaver, at Port Simpson

After this the people were unable to get salmon at the canyon, so the two villages moved farther down the river to a place called Andudoon, their village. Here there were many houses and people. When they moved here, the Beaver people followed them and burrowed under the village until there was only a thin crust of earth under them. When the people went out at night they would fall through this crust. The next morning many of the Gitsalaserh people were missing.

Again they moved away. The three who had made the village of Gitksærhl moved on farther up the river to Ktsem'nahusk. Neeshaiwærhs, Gitrhawn, and Qawm came to a place above the canyon which was known as People-of-the-Falling-Leaves (Gitwelmærh). Here they caught the salmon and made their home. Some time after, they decided to move back to the canyon, as it afforded greater protection in event of war. So the people on one side moved to the canyon on what is known as Beaver-Foothill (*tsawlem-tawdzep*). They were known as People-on-Edge-of-Precipice (Gitlarhdzaw),* and the people on the opposite side moved to where they had originally built their village. They became known as Gitlartsehl. Gitrhawn was afterwards the head of all the Gitselasuh houses.

The Beaver Crest (Gillodzar), origin of the Beaver as a crest of the Eagle clan in the Gillodzar tribe of the Tsimshyans. (Recorded by William Beynon from informant John Tait — Sælæben, of an Eagle clan in the Gisparhlawts tribe, in 1948.)

A great famine came upon the people while they were living at the Skeena River. There were no salmon in the streams, and the snow was falling. To escape this, some hunters went to their individual hunting grounds where they managed to gather enough to keep alive. Among these was a Gitsalas man, Hlekyaws, and his wife Winluhlks (Large-Eagle's-Nest). He was an Eagle, and she a Raven. All the Gitsalas had their own hunting grounds except this man. He possessed none to go to, and was now feeling weak from lack of food. He said to his wife, "Come, I know of a valley farther up the river. The people will not hunt there, as they fear it as an abode of a supernatural being called Ksekan'ul (Water-of-the-Bear-Trap). I do not know whether there is any food there, but we have nothing to do but try this place." They set out.

When they reached the mouth of a stream the man became so weak that he could go no farther. His wife made a hut of branches, and they rested by a fire. He was too ill the next day, to move from the hut, so the woman went to the creek and caught a couple of trout. As she knew that trout were plentiful, she gathered roots and made a small wicker trap (*mawhl*) with which she caught larger trout. Next day it snowed heavily, and they were unable to go further. She gathered fire wood and made a stronger shelter.

Gradually the man regained his strength. Soon he was able to assist his wife in trout fishing, and later they went on until they came to the mouth of another river, the Ksemkawt. They stayed here a while. On finding salmon bones on the shore, the woman made a larger wicker trap with which to get spring salmon. They both had fully recovered from the

* The location of the village at the edge of a steep precipice to the foot of which they would throw their victims in time of war; hence they represented the people as being leaves of a tree, and falling into the canyon.

effects of the famine. The snow melted, and the freshets came. The hunter and his wife went farther up the valley.

One day they saw some chopped wood chips floating in the stream. "There must be people living here, as these are not the chips of a gnawing beaver," the man said. They mounted a high hill to view the surrounding country. In the distance was a lake from which smoke was coming. "Let us travel in that direction, and see who these people are," the man said to his wife. A few days later, they came to the lake, and saw a large village on each side of a small creek running from the lake. They camped nearby in order to see who lived here, and approached the village at night to listen. When they heard their own tongue, they knew that these were the Gillodzar people who lived at Klarhkyæls lake. Next day they made themselves known, and became members of this village; the woman, a member of this tribe and of the house of Neeskyimæs, and the man, who was an Eagle, a member of the Eagle group of Neeshlil.

Klarhkyæls river was then only a small stream; the Skeena itself was not very big either and, in those days, it flowed into the Kitamat country (not as it does now, to the West), because giant beavers had made their dams in such a way as to block the river's course, and make a lake. Only that which ran over the dam, at the Klarhkyæls, was what flowed down Klarhkyæls river. The same with Skeena River. The giant beaver had constructed a dam at what is now the canyon, thereby diverting the river to the Kitamat country. The people at Klarhkyæls feared the giant beaver who, with his large tail, caused storms to break over the lake. So the new Eagle man and all the Gillodzar planned to destroy the giant beaver.

They armed themselves with large spears and went to the huge dam. When they had dug a channel through it, and the water had run out, the great beaver came in search of the break to repair it. The hunters had hidden themselves near the break, and as the beaver was making repairs, the watchers came out of hiding. The Eagle and the Gispewudwade spearmen attacked the beaver at the same time, and it struggled. In the struggle the spear of the Gispewudwade broke, and the Eagle man thrust another spear into the beaver. Eventually they killed it, and all beings that were on its body; they died at the same time. In each paw and on the large tail were human faces. While the beaver was alive, the eyes of these faces opened and closed, but now that it was dead they were shut. Since the Eagles had actually killed this giant beaver, they claimed it as their own exclusive property, to be used as their crest. Had the spear of the Gispewudwade people not broken, they too would have had the privilege of using this crest. As it was, it became the exclusive property of the Eagles, and was first used by the Gillodzar Eagle.

The people were now free to catch the salmon which abounded in the lake and the stream flowing into the Kitamat country, and which had been denied them before the killing of the great Beaver. Also now that the beaver dam was broken, the waters of the lake flowed into the Klarhkyæls and the Skeena Rivers. The Gillodzar people moved down to the mouth of the newly-widened river; they made their village at the mouth. On one side was the village of the Gispewudwade people of this tribe, and on the other, that of the Kanhade clan. Here too the Eagle group lived, each having its own fishing stations where they used their *mawhl* traps.

When they had stayed here for a considerable time, the Eagle man Tigyai'on went hunting into the Large-('weetin) Valley. This was a place where everyone was afraid to go, as it was the abode of the giant Beaver. Tales were told of strange beings that had been seen in this unclaimed region. As the Eagle man had no hunting territory of his own, he went up into this valley. For a long while his wife and one of her own phratric cousins, a Gispewudwade named Sunæts, had taken every opportunity for meeting secretly. Sunæts had been cautioned by his own uncle Neeshlkumeeek the Gillodzar chief, but the young man disregarded warnings and kept right on in his illicit love affair. When the Eagle went to his hunting territory, he saw that the valley was abundant in game. In spite of this, all his snares remained empty.

One day he heard a groundhog whistling right behind him. The Eagle now suspected that his wife was unfaithful. He had told them at his house that he would be gone many days, but he now decided to return unexpectedly at night. Next day he said to his nephews who were with him, "We will return to-morrow. There is something wrong which causes our bad luck." Early next day they set out on their return journey, and neared the village just before night. "We will wait here till dark," the Eagle man said to his nephews. "When everyone is asleep, I will go to my wife and see for myself whether all is as it should be." When everything was quiet, he entered his house and went directly to where his wife was sleeping. A man slept with her whom he recognized as one of his own clan relations. He crept close up, killed the man, and, taking the head, placed it over the doorway inside of the house. The woman escaped and hid in the woods. After the Eagle man had killed Sunæts, he rejoined his nephews, and they returned to his hunting ground. The woman, who had seen her husband go away again, returned to the house. She buried the remains of her lover under their sleeping place, and then went about as if nothing had happened. A few days later, the Eagle man returned and behaved as usual.

In the meantime, Neeshlkumeeek, the Gillodzar chief, had missed his nephew Sunæts. While he suspected that he had been killed, there was nothing he could say until he was sure. So one day he sent his slave woman over to the Eagle house to bring back live fire. The slave woman entered and said, "My master's fire has gone out. He has sent me to get live coals to start it again." So saying, she took her pitch-wood torches, put them in the fire, and looked about the house for anything suspicious. Taking her pitch torch she went to the door, just as she was about to step out, a drop of blood fell on her hand. Without emotion she went out, stumbled, and extinguished her fire torch. She returned at once, saying, "I fell as I went down the bank and my *tu'elk* (torch) went out. She warmed herself by the fire before re-lighting her torch, and cautiously looked towards the door. There was a human head on the drying sticks. As she went out with her lighted torch she recognized the head of her master Sunæts. The Eagle man knew that she had found out, and he told all in the house to prepare for battle. The chief's house would certainly seek revenge, and the Eagles were out-numbered.

As soon as the slave woman returned to Neeshlkumeeek's house, she said, "They have killed my master. His head hangs over the door of the Thoughtless-One's house." She started to weep, and so did everyone in the

house. The young men rose, thinking of immediate revenge, but Neeshlkumek spoke: "Do not be hasty. Remember that Sunæts was having an illicit affair with his own clan relation. This in itself is a disgraceful thing among our people, and will bring great embarrassment to me and my house. We will be dubbed as *kæts'* (endogamic) people, who sleep with their own clan relations. As we are in difficulties, avoid bringing ridicule upon us." Even though the chief was dissuading them from retaliating, some of the young hot-heads went over and saw that the Eagle group wanted to fight. They returned and made their own preparations.

The Eagle group knew the Gillodzar would come back in greater numbers, so during the night they fled down the Skeena River. Some went to the Gitandaw, some to the Gisparhlawts. Those who went to the Gisparhlawts joined their clan relations *Kæ'welrh*; those of the Gitandaw joined the Neershlaw group. With them they took their giant Beaver crest. It was thus that these other Eagle houses were able to use it. In turn, the Eagle crest in another form, that of "Gnawing Beaver," became the emblem of the royal Eagle houses. This was the last of the Eagles in the Gillodzar tribe. No way could be found by which the Gillodzar could ask for *kseesk* (compensation) for the death of their relative without exposing themselves to ridicule. While it was common knowledge among all the people, nothing could be done, for then the house of Neeshlkumek would be called a *kæts'* house.

The Beaver Poles of Neeskawdeks, two totem poles of the Beaver, belonging to Neeskawdeks, of the Eagle clan of Gitrhawn, at the canyon of the Skeena.

Myth of the Beaver crest on the totem pole belonging to Neeskawdeks related by S. W. Gaum, Raven chief of the Gilarhdzoks, in 1926.

(Interpreter, William Beynon.)

This narrative explains the reason why the people once left Git'aus for the Fortress (*ta'awdzep*) at the canyon.

A little above the place where the people lived, in the vicinity of Git'aus, there was a lake in which many beavers had built a dam. The beaver hunters had a trail leading from Git'aus to the lake.

One night, after the villagers had retired, one of the chiefs called Kwanqat, belonging to the Eagle household of Neesnagwulk, died by an arrow. The family found this out next morning; his body was covered up with a mat, and the arrow was still sticking up in his body. Nobody knew how it had happened, or for what reason. Usually the people could recognize who had made an arrow, but this one was of a strange make.

After Kwanqat had been cremated and the funeral had taken place, the villagers played gambling games and held competitions. While a game was on, an unknown man arrived, wearing a beaver garment in the style familiar at the canyon. Before they had finished their game, the arrow that had killed the chief was once more passed around for inspection. As usual, nobody could identify the maker. When the arrow passed to the hands of the stranger, he said, "This is the arrow point of my brother Pelhemgwa'." And at once he pulled his beaver garment over his head and walked out of the house



Tsimshyan Beaver pole and house post of the Gitsalas Canyon



35

taking the arrow with him. Some men followed him and watched him, to find out in what direction he was going. He disappeared up the trail leading to the beaver lake. They spied him as he stood at the edge of the lake, and saw him jump in. He reappeared as a beaver on the far side. So it was obvious that the stranger who had come to their house was a Beaver man.

When the men tracking the stranger returned home, they said, "A beaver has killed the chief." For this reason, the people decided to wreck the beaver dam. While they were lowering the waters of the lake to destroy the dam, beavers began to come out. They were slaughtered, all of them. In the midst of the lake, a huge beaver slowly emerged from the water. This they recognized as the Chief Beaver, the one who had killed Kwanqat. He was at once attacked by two young Eagle clansmen of the middle class (*lekarh-kiget*), Larhayaurh and Haksumksk. They killed the Beaver.

The household of Neeskilawp received this Beaver as a crest, and it was represented thereafter on their totem pole at the Fortress (*ta'awdzep*). It is the tallest of the poles still standing at the Gitsalas canyon, with a large Beaver at the bottom. It had fallen, but the people recently put it up against a wild crabapple tree. Formerly the house to which it belonged stood near it, but it collapsed many years ago.

According to the tradition, the Beaver found in the lake had human faces or figures all around it, in the hands, on the head, and on its tail.

I. THE OLDER BEAVER POLE:

Age, particulars. This Beaver totem pole was erected before the informant, old chief Gaum, was born; but he remembers having seen the aged Neeskawdeks who had it erected. The name of the carver had been forgotten.

We are told that after the villagers had drained the lake and killed the

Tsimshyan Beaver house post



Beaver's Gnawing-Stick of Gitsalas

beavers, they left their houses and moved from Git'aus to the Fortress at the canyon, because it was more convenient for fishing. Other people who at that time resided at Gitrhtsærh, also moved down to the canyon. At one time they had lived at the edge of the Beaver Lake. The two groups established themselves on both sides of the canyon. The name of Gitrhtsærh is a (*gyanemrh*) term for Gitlarhtsærhl-tax (People-at-the-edge-of-the-lake).

The other half of the tribe was called Gitlarhdzawrh (People-on-ravine), which was the name of the hollow behind the Fortress.

II. THE NEWER BEAVER POLE:

This pole, on the island at the canyon, shows the whole Beaver (or two Beavers) in flat form. This is called Squatting-Beaver (*haitkem stsawl*). It was erected about 1886. Its carver was Neeslaranows (Wolf chief of the Gitlæn tribe), whose work counts with the best among the Tsimshians proper (Beynon stated that some of his work is found at Gitrhahla on Porcher Island.)

This pole was re-erected in 1929 under the joint auspices of the Federal Government and the Canadian National Railways.



Beaver pole of Luleq, at Port Simpson

The Pelemgwa Pole, totem pole of the Beaver (*pelemgwa'*) belonging to the house of Neeskawdeks, member of an Eagle clan, on the Fortress (*ta'awdzep*) in the Gitsalas canyon of the mid-Skeena River. Fallen down, it was re-erected in 1928, under the auspices of the Dominion Government and the Canadian National Railways.

(Informant, Rosa Herring, Port Essington, of the household of Qawm, Gitsalas canyon, 1926.)

The Beaver Pole of Gitsalas (Tsimshyan), at the canyon of the Skeena River, according to Mrs. Agnes Hudson, of Vanarsdol (in 1926).



Gnawing-of-the-Stick house posts, Gitiks (top). Haida Beavers (below)

The pole of the Beaver belongs to Neesharh of the house of Neeshagwalk. It was erected when she was small, during the plague.

The Remnants-of-Gnawing of Gwunahaw, the totem pole of Remnants-of-Gnawing (*kamnakæ'ike*) at the Gwunahaw deserted village site, on the south side of the canyon of Nass River.

Description, age. This pole, showing the Sitting-Beaver gnawing a stick, bears the name above, and was the property of Gitsæ'en, an Eagle (*larhskeek*) of the group of Na'us, independent of that of the local head-chief Gwirhmaaurh, also an Eagle, of the canyon of the Nass. Gitsæ'en's family is now extinct. This pole was erected about the same time as the few others at Gwunahaw, that is, from 1890 to 1910.

(Informant, Peter Neesyawq, an old Wolf chief of Gitlarhdamks; William Beynon, interpreter, 1929.)

The Beaver House of Tralarhætk, with its symbol the Gnawing-of-the-Stick (*kamangaaiqai'*), belonged to chief Tralahæth of the Gitrhawn clan at Gitiks. It had not yet entirely disappeared in 1927. At that time, two of its uprights were still standing, supporting a heavy frontal beam. These three main posts and beam bear the representations of the incisor marks of the Beaver (as shown on the photograph). Old Tralarhæt (Bolton or Gitiks), the last owner of this house, had stayed on with his three wives at Gitiks many years after the other villagers had become converts and moved down to Kincolith, on Portland Canal. According to Lazarus Moody, of Gitrhadeen, it was built about 50 years ago.

The Standing-Beaver of Sqagwait, the pole of the Standing-Beaver (*hæitkem-rhstsawl*), also called Remnants-of-Chewing (*kam-nakækesk* or *nakam-kæike-rhstsawl*: stick gnawed by beaver) of the Beaver, belonging under this form exclusively to Skagwait among the Tsimsyans, the Eagle head-chief of the Ginarhangyeek tribe of the Tsimsyans proper at Port Simpson.

Description. This pole consisted formerly of the Standing-Beaver, about 15 feet high, surmounted by many disks (*lanemreit*), more than 17. According to an informant, this pole bore many marks of the gnawing by the beaver. In 1947, it still stood, but without the disks, which were cut down some time before 1915. A photograph, reproduced on page 106, shows the whole pole as it formerly stood in front of the old house with a painted front with the same Beaver crest, and a round front opening. This painting in the old style represented the Eagle, the main crest of the phratry associated with the Beaver.

Function. It stands in memory of a former Skagwait.

Carver, age. Carved by Kamayæm, a member of a Gispewudwade clan of the Git'andaw tribe of the Tsimsyans proper, it was one of the earliest poles erected in Port Simpson, before the pole of Kansuh, at the time when informant Herbert Wallace was still young. (He was 72 years old in 1926.)

The Gnawing-Beaver, the Gnawing-Beaver of Chief Skagwait, of the Gitandaw tribe of the Tsimsyans at Port Simpson, according to Mrs. Viola E. Garfield (50: 211).

Another commemorative pole is that of Chief Skagwait of the Gitandaw tribe, called the Gnawing Beaver. A fifteen-foot wooden pole, on which is carved the Beaver figure with a five-ringed hat, marks the burial place of Paul Skagwait, who died in 1887. The wooden

pole faces the water. Behind it, facing the street, is a marble representation of the same crest, erected in memory of the predecessor of the present chief. He died in 1914 or 1915.

The Beaver-House Front of 'Neesrhlaw, chief of an Eagle household and part of the Skagwait clan in the Gitandaw tribe, at Port Simpson; and the same Beaver crest carved on the totem pole of Gistæku, at the same place.

Description. The Spirit-Beaver (*narhnarem-rhtsawl*), its head turned down, to distinguish it from the Sitting-Beaver, the emblem of the highest Eagle clan, had no chewing stick in its mouth, but was characterized by a checkered tail in which a human face was carved.

It was carved on the totem pole of Gistæku, and also represented on the four corner posts of Gistæku's house. Here a chewed (with rings) stick protruded from the back of the Beaver. The name for the stick here was Old-Remnants-of-the-Chewing-Stick (*kamnagyæikask*). Another chewed stick protruded over the roof of the house at the four corners; it had about three sections like a ceremonial hat (*lanemræt*).

(Informant McKay and wife, of Skagwait's house; interpreter, William Beynon. Port Simpson, 1915.)

The Eagle and Beaver Pole of Luleq (Corpse or Ghost), chief of an Eagle clan in the Gitandaw tribe at Port Simpson, on the island (near McKay's house facing the inlet).

Description. The Eagle (*rhskyæk*) sat at the top of the pole, and the Erect-Beaver, at the bottom, with another figure between them.

Function, carver, and age. In memory of a former Luleq, it was carved by Kamayæm (of a Gispewudwade clan in the Gitandaw tribe), when informant Herbert Wallace (aged 72, in 1926) was a young boy. Still standing in 1926, it was photographed.

(Interpreter, William Beynon, in 1926.)

The Beaver-House Posts of Gilæskemeren, member of an Eagle clan in the Gitandaw tribe on the lower Skeena. Probably no longer in existence in 1915, but recently seen.

Description. The crest of this household was the Spirit-Beaver (*narhnarem-rhtsawl*), represented on the four corner posts of the house, inside, and without the chewing stick or rings on its head. This emblem had been adopted in a feast by the chief of the house, this without an explanation or a mythical account.

(Informant McKay and wife; interpreter, William Beynon, Port Simpson, in 1915.)

The Beaver and Eagle Pole of Qagwæis, an Eagle chief of Gitrhahla, a coast Tsimshyan tribe. This chief was of Gitlaw'p (Stone-People) extraction; his close relative at Gitlaw'p, a southern coast Tsimshyan tribe, was Qallamil; and he claimed other relatives at Kitamat. These Eagles were not of Fugitive Tlingit stock.

Description. On the pole the only figures carved were:

1. The Sitting-Beaver gnawing a stick, at the base;
2. The long round shaft, upon which the Eagle sat at the top.

Age. It no longer exists, having fallen down before the informant was born.

(Informant, Oswald Tolmie, an old Gitrhahla chief; William Beynon, interpreter, 1939.)

THE BEAVER

HAIDA

Weeæ's House and Totem Poles at Massett, Queen Charlotte Islands. The information given here on the house and four poles of Weeæ's, the head-chief of the Graham Island (northern) Haidas after the 1870's, is derived from two sources, plus the author's own interpretation of the crests as seen on the photograph.

First. An old photograph (presumably taken in the early 1880's) found in the files of McGill University, Montreal. Written in pencil at the verso we read: "McCord Museum, now McGill University, A. 20.11./5178./ Chief Weah's House/ Massett/ Belonged to Kitelsewas/ Pole sent to Oxford University England/ Judge J. G. Swan of Port Townsend always stopped here"/ [Added much later in ink: the photo] "Property of McGill University Museums, Montreal."

Second. Verbal information recorded by the author in 1939 from Alfred Adams, of Massett (Adams died about 1946), as follows:

Old Massett's Haida name was Had'aiwas, "the Hanging Light," which presumably was given to the village at the time, soon after 1880, when Collison, the missionary, established his school and church there, with a light at times hanging outside over the door. The new village was built on the site of an ancient village under the leadership of Chief Skidahlko.

At the time of Collison's arrival, the leadership of the tribe had changed from Skidahlko to Weeæ, chief of the Eagles in the middle of Massett, who belonged to the Gitrhun (or Gitrhawn), Salmon-Eater clan. The other local chiefs in the same Eagle clan were: Sanheegens, Githegwa, and Steelte (the totem-pole carver). At Skidegate to the south the following were his relatives: Gitrhun and his people, or Captain Khlu, John Cross, Paul Jones.

The special crests of the Weeæ households (of the Gyt'ens phratry) at Massett were: 1. the Fairy Skyil, a small supernatural woman with a young child described in stories and personal names; 2. Qingk, a mythical being looking down into the sea described in the clan tradition and shown on the carved poles; and 3. the Eagle Oot, a general emblem of the whole clan at Massett and elsewhere.

The Fairy Skyil belongs to a group of households whose name is People-of-the-Kelp or People-anchored-by-kelp-fast-on-the-bottom (*sadzughllanes*). Their foremost chief once in the past began to fast and to drink the medicine called *helawk*, the bitter herb, while staying in a mountain behind Yan River. He stayed there in seclusion for many days waiting for a vision. Finally the Fairy appeared to him with her baby, and he gazed at her. He took hold of her baby, and returned it to her only after she had promised him that he would become a great chief. Several of the traditional names of the family allude to details in this supernatural vision, for instance, Skyilqihlas (he-Gazed-at-the-Fairy), Skyihlhegen (News-of-the-Fairy-goes-round or makes a noise, is famous), Skyilqalkwun (Hunting-for-the-Fairy), Skyilkyiwat (He-lays-across-the-Fairy-trail or Fairy's-trail), Skyildugehl (Going-out-to-get-the-Fairy, that is, going out to the woods), Skyilqadzo (Waiting-for-Fairies).

The Qingk supernatural being of the sea is presumably the same as the Trhakawl of other Githrawn families on the Nass and the Skeena, among the Tsimshians. It was shown as a crest on the main totem pole in front of the house that Adams saw, when young. The tradition relates how, at one time long ago, the head-chief, who was the father of the Raven, summoned the chiefs to a big feast. At the time the Raven was still white. After the guests had come in, one of the chiefs caused the Flood: the tide came in and never stopped. The host erected a tall pole and made it grow for the chiefs, his guests, to climb and escape drowning. The White Raven meanwhile sat at the top. Actually the Raven, son of Qingk, was the power producing the magic that made the pole grow. This, in very brief, is the tradition of Weeæ's family and clan, now illustrated on their totem poles.

The house of Weeæ' according to Alfred Adams, was called Big-House (*niyu'wans*). Inside, it had two deep steps down, each of three feet.

Third. The crests on the four totem poles in front of Weeæ's house, for lack of definite information, may be interpreted as follows. The main totem pole, about 50 feet high, was carved from one half of a very large red cedar tree, and presumably was hollowed out at the back. The figures from the top down, are:

1. The Eagle Oot, small, sitting between
2. Two "watchmen" facing in opposite directions, sideways, and wearing conical hats with three *skills* or cylinders each;
3. Qingk, the large supernatural human-like being looking into the sea;
4. Three of the chiefs, wearing conical hats with cylinders, climbing the pole sectioned in the form of eight cylinders, to save themselves from waters of the Flood (according to the clan tradition);
5. Presumably the White Raven, the large figure at the bottom, back to house front; the Raven, who, with his father Qingk, was connected with the Flood, here carries a small animal whose body is in his mouth, its head outwards; this may be his escort, the Butterfly, in his early cosmic activities; the other, held head down against his body, may be the Mink.

The two corner posts, about half the length of the tall frontal pole, both elaborate beautifully some episodes of the Bear-Mother myth (developed elsewhere in this book). Two or three Grizzly Bears are shown on each pole, together with the twin cubs or with the woman ravished by the Grizzly. These corner posts must have displayed the crests of Weeæ's wife, as they belong to the phratry opposite to that of the owner.

The next pole to the right, presumably erected at a later date, shows:

1. Eight cylinders once more illustrating the episode of the Flood;
2. The man at the top may be another representation of Qingk with a conical hat;
3. The bird with a long bill is the Raven with his Son between his folded wings (in an episode of his career given elsewhere); and at the bottom,
4. The Beaver with his twin incisors; this crest was derived from the fur-trade connections, after 1830, with the Hudson's Bay Company, particularly with Legyarh of Port Simpson, who belonged to the same Eagle clan.



Sitting-Beaver of Weeæ at Massett (right).
southern Haida Beaver pole (left)

The Sitting-Beaver of Weeæ, Eagle head-chief of Massett, Queen Charlotte Islands, now at the National Museum of Canada (No. VII B.17).

The catalogue record is: "Pole No. 1 from Massett. Beaver pole from inside Chief George's house represents a Beaver crest . . . Collected by Dr. C. F. Newcombe in 1900."

Actually this stately post, about 18 feet high, in an old photograph from the American Museum of Natural History, is seen standing, one of a pair, some distance in front of the large ceremonial house of the head-chief of the Massett Haidas. Chief George is meant for George Weeæ, head of the Eagle clan under his leadership, close relative of Legyarh of Port Simpson, to whom he was said to owe his ascent to the head-chieftainship. His name in Tsimshyan (*weerhæ*) means Big-Slave. Still in use among the Tsimshyans, it is intended to convey the opposite meaning, a boast familiar not only on the north Pacific Coast, but also in Asia.

The Beaver emblem on this post, one of the finest of its type, is more elaborately carved, although not more impressive, than Skagwait's Beaver pole at Port Simpson, one of the last still to stand there. It displays its essential stylistic features, the large incisors, the chewing stick across its mouth, and the checkered tail. A large face is engraved on the body, and human faces in high relief decorate the tail and the two paws of the Beaver.

The Eagle and Beaver House Post of Skedans No. 1 (Haida) belonging to the wife of the owner, collected by Dr. C. F. Newcombe for the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, where it stood for a time. (It bore the Museum number 79716.)



Haida Beaver pole of Skidegate

Description. From 10 to 12 feet high, with hollow back, it is a very fine carving of the figures (from top to bottom) of: 1. the Eagle with folded wings; 2. a human face with short feathers erect round the head; 3. the Sitting-Beaver with long incisors, checker tail turned upwards and decorated with a human face (but without a chewing stick); 4. an unidentified human face with hands in front of its body. Dr. Newcombe stated that the smaller figures are merely ornamental.

Function, age. It stood first at the rear end of the Grizzly-Bear house at Kona or Skedans, and represents the crests of a woman belonging to the family of "Those-born-at-Kona" (Kona-kehawai), of the Eagle phratry. The owner of the house belonged to the Ravens, and displayed his own crests on the high totem pole outside.

It may have been erected at Skedans about 1875.

The Eagle and Beaver House Post of Skedans No. 2 (Haida), Queen Charlotte Islands, collected by Dr. C. F. Newcombe for the American Museum of Natural History, New York (No. 79716). The photo was found in the files of the National Museum of Canada. It formerly stood at the rear of the Grizzly-Bear house at Kona or Skedans. The owner of the house was a member of the Raven clan who displayed his crests on the totem pole outside his house (in front). The crests on this house post belonged to his wife, a member of the family of Those-born-at-Kona (*kona-kehawai*) in the Eagle clan. Her main crests on this inside post are the Eagle above and the Sitting-Beaver below. The three smaller human faces, the topmost with three *skil* (cylinders), were not interpreted; they may be merely ornamental. Or the one in front of the Beaver, with its sharp nose, may allude to the Raven transformed (in the creation myth) into a little boy for the purpose of stealing the salmon from the beaver traps. The long incisors of the Beaver, and the checkered tail, are not accompanied here by the usual chewing stick.

The Eagle and Beaver Pole of Skedans (Haida), Queen Charlotte Islands, now standing in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (R. O. M. A. 1724).

Unpainted and standing 52 feet, 9 inches high, it is one of the tallest and finest Haida poles, still quite new when collected some time before the Royal Ontario Museum was built (no data seem to be available). It no doubt belonged to the Eagle clan of Skedans or Kona, and possibly to the household of Those-born-at-Kona (*kona-kehawai*). This clan was connected with the leading Eagle chief Gitrhun or Gitrhawn (Salmon-Eater) whose relatives abroad — at Massett, on the Nass, and on the Skeena — own the same emblems. Their myth of southward migrations down the sea-coast from the North is given in the Salmon-Eater chapter above.

The pole is surmounted by:

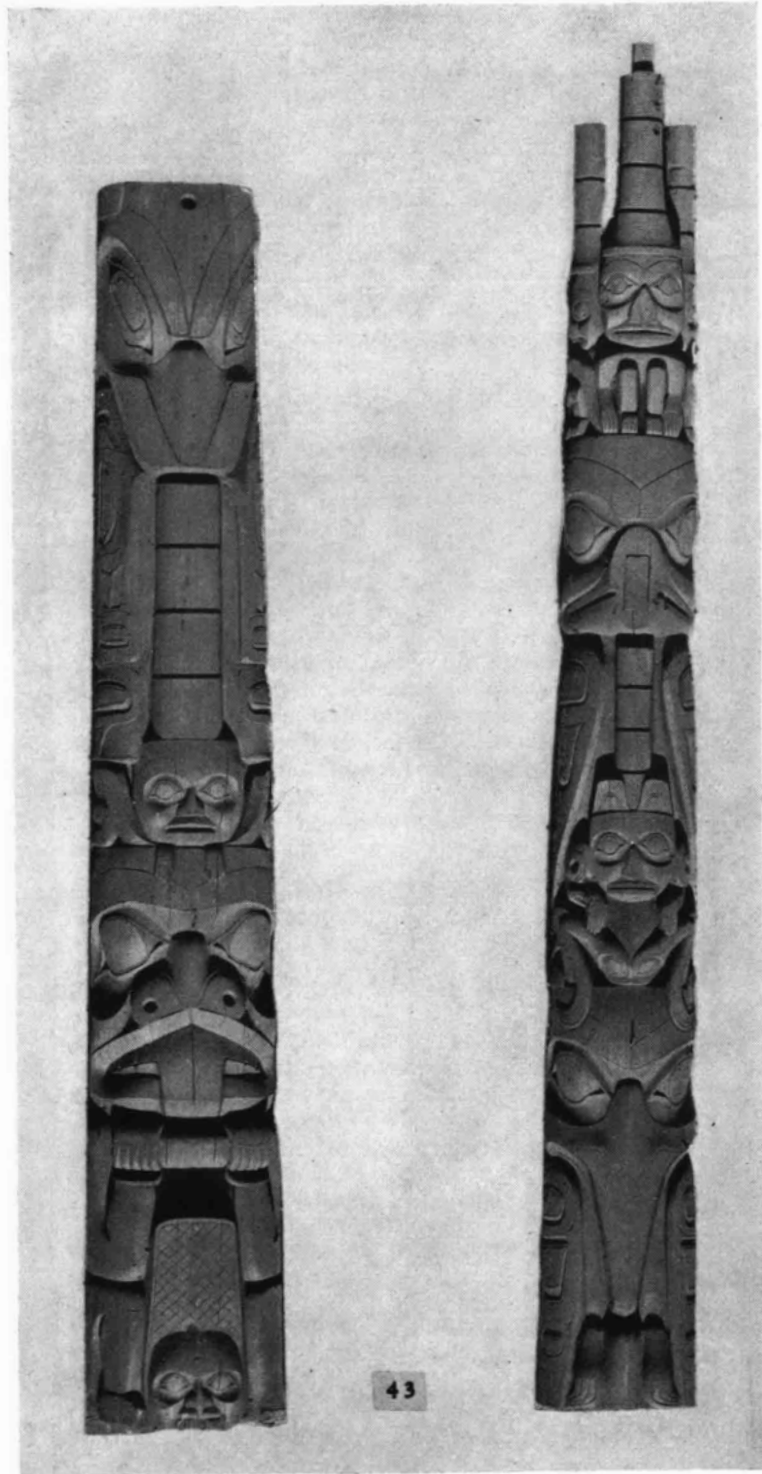
1. The Eagle perched on the central *skil* (cylinder) on the head of
2. One of the three "watchmen," a familiar group of figures chiefly in the southern villages of the Haida;
3. The large bird below is the Eagle (without its beak) with folded wings;
4. A small human figure holding the Frog, presumably an allusion to



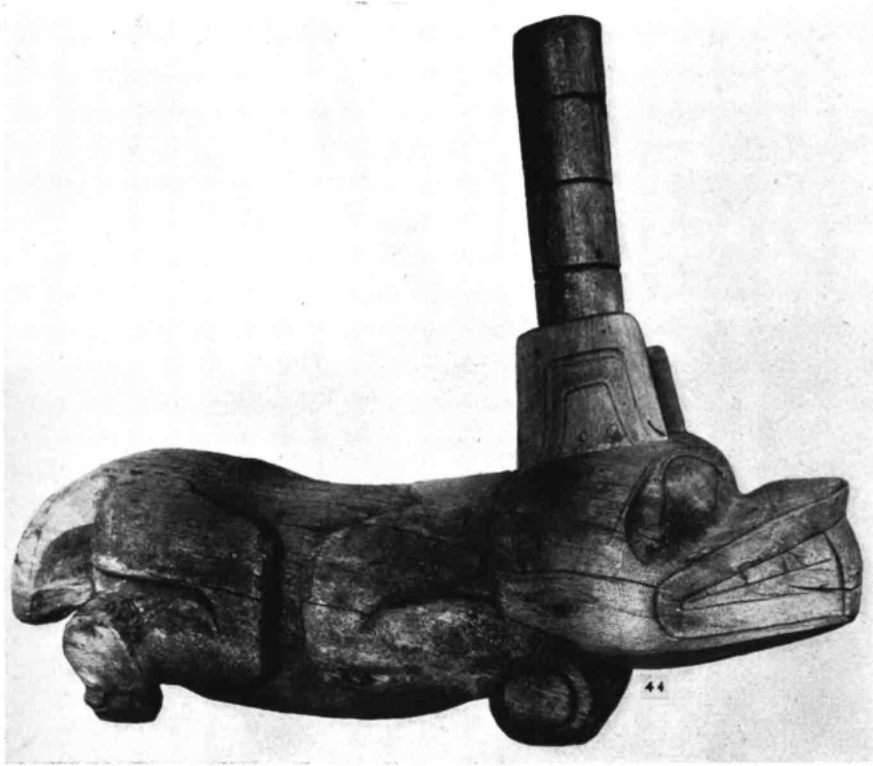
Haida Beaver post, at Skedans



[] Eagle and Beaver of Skedans



Eagle and Beaver of Skedans, Royal Ontario Museum



The Beaver, at Skedans

Volcano or Frog Woman, who, according to the Gitrhawn myth, appeared after the volcano eruption;

5. The Thunderbird with its bill bent down and its wings folded;
6. The Whale with a spouthole in its forehead; it is here associated as usual with the Thunderbird who has captured it in the sea;
7. The Sitting-Beaver displaying its long incisors, its checkered tail with a human face, and its gnawing stick.

Because of its close resemblance to "The Eagle and Beaver house post of Skedans" collected by Dr. Newcombe for the American Museum of Natural History, New York, it seems to have been from the hands of the same carver, and to have belonged to the same household. The small human face on the Beaver's head is also surmounted by four *skil* cylinders. Other similarities all tell the same story.

The Eagle and Beaver of Gitrhun, of Skedans (Haida), now in the municipal park of Prince Rupert. Information from William Beynon and Alfred Adams, in 1939.



Beaver totem poles of Skedans

The ancestor Gitrhawn or Salmon-Eater is also claimed by Gitrhun of Skedans, whose name in Tsimshyan is the same. It was carved about 60 years ago, possibly by a Skidegate carver. Its present gaudy coat of paint is not authentic. Its crests, from top to bottom, are:

1. The Eagle, whose head is surmounted by two cylinders (*skils*); the small figure below was not identified — it probably belongs to the figure below;
2. Presumably the Raven with its long beak bent down and cut out of a log; the small being, with pointed ears on its head, may be the Butterfly or the Mink, Raven's companions at one time;
3. The Beaver crest, with its large stylized incisors and checkered tail;
4. The Grizzly Bear carrying in his mouth the woman he was kidnapping.

This pole obviously brought out mixed crests, until then customary only among the Haidas, of the husband and the wife; he belonged to the leading Eagle clan of the coast, she to the Raven phratry.

The Eagle and Beaver at Ninstints, recorded by J. R. Swanton (97: 122. Pl. I, Fig. 1).

Plate I, Figure 1, shows the model of a pole which formerly stood in front of the house of one of those-born-at-Saki at the town of Ninstints. At the top is an eagle, and at the bottom a beaver, both of which belonged to the husband's family; while the wolf carved between them belonged to his wife, a woman of the Rhagi-Town-People, the most important Raven family in the same town.

Origin of the Beaver Crest among the Haidas, indicated by J. R. Swanton (97: 109).

The beaver was brought back from the Tsimshian country by the children of Property-making-a-Noise.

A woman of the Widja-Gitans was carried off to Port Simpson as a slave, and a chief's son there married her. Some of her children returned to their own country; and when they did so, they brought back the beaver and humming-bird crests with them.

[M. B. This is due to the Beaver as a coat of arms having been introduced by the fur trade through the North West Company, whose emblem the Beaver was: Beaver Hall was its headquarters in Montreal since about 1800. After the amalgamation of the North West Company and the older Hudson's Bay Company, the new concern, under the name of the Hudson's Bay Company, maintained the use of the Beaver as a trade emblem. Fort St. James in the Northern Rockies was established in 1808 by the North West Company; the Nass River post was founded by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1831, and transferred to Fort Simpson (later Port Simpson) in 1833. Fort Victoria as a centre was established in 1843. The use of the Beaver as a privilege to native middlemen in the fur trade business was adopted soon after. These middlemen belonged to the very Eagle clan that had assumed the same function farther north with the earlier Russian fur traders.



Short Haida pole, at University of British Columbia

The Eagle and Beaver were, therefore, the main crests of two branches of the same clan. Both were derived from the white man's use of the Eagle and Beaver emblems.]



Beaver pole of an old Haida house, at Tanu

THE BEAVER

TLINGIT

The Beaver Pole of Kasaiks, the Qatakaite or Beaver totem pole of Chief Kasaiks, Tlingit leader of an Eagle clan, formerly of Cape Fox, now of Saxman (near Ketchikan), Alaska. According to information received from Chief Kasaiks (C. T. Johnson), in 1939.

Description. From the top down: 1. the Beaver (*cyikaite*); 2. the Eagle (*ts'ake*); 3. the Halibut (*tcathl*). The name of the totem pole — Qatakaite — is obviously derived from that of the Beaver.

Function. It was erected in memory of Jos. Thomas, a brother of the informant, about 50 years ago when at Cape Fox, at the southernmost point of Alaska close to the Tsimshyan country when the informant was about 30 years old. It was erected at Saxman, after the Cape Fox tribe had moved to the new mission at Saxman.

Carvers. It was carved by Johnny and George Kayan, Benny Johnson, Jos. Thomas (different from the one above), and Henry Denny, all working



Killisnoo Beavers of the Tlingits

at it together. The night after the pole was erected the craftsmen were paid off, each of them getting \$50. Then a dance was held, with a good time for all. Jos. Thomas, carver at Wrangell, is now the only brother of the informant Kasaiks Johnson.

A marble monument standing close to the totem pole commemorates the older Kasaiks (the informant's maternal grand-uncle), who died at Saxman some time before the totem pole was erected. It was carved by a white man. The totems on it are: 1. the Eagle's-Nest (*khutch*); 2. the Beaver.

This family belongs to the clan of Salmon-Eater (Gitrhawn) the ramifications of which extend from the Tlingits to the Tsimshyans and the Haidas, probably also to northern Kwakiutls. The crests and myths are identical.

The End-of-the-Beaver-Trail House at Angoon (Tlingit), South-eastern Alaska, according to Mrs. E. Garfield (113a: 439-440).

The Dog-Salmon and Beaver crests, associated together within the same tribes at Angyadae on Nass River (Niskæ), and particularly at the Gitsalas Canyon on Skeena River (Tsimshyan), have been described below by Mrs. Garfield for the southern tribes of the Tlingits. The Tsimshyan tribes involved migrated southward from Alaska in the recent past, and the crests, recently adopted, having been obtained by the Tlingits from their Tsimshyan kinsmen. Both are genetically inseparable (M.B.).

(Mrs. Garfield:) The *Daicitan* are descendants of the builders of *Daicuhit*, "End-of-the-(Beaver)-Trail House." The name goes back to the discovery or recognition of Angoon as a desirable townsite. Informants believed that the name of Dog-Salmon People was dropped after the house was built and that other *Thlanaidi* in the area gradually became absorbed as part of the *Daicitan*, losing their former name. Previous to building the new house the people were living on Kootznahoo Inlet.

One day men from one of the camps were hunting beaver. They saw one swimming across the inlet and followed it. It swam ashore and disappeared across the narrow neck of land where Angoon is located. The men found that it followed a well-defined trail.

Later when houses were built on the site, those who followed the beaver built at the end of the village and the townspeople honored them by naming it End-of-the-[Beaver]-Trail House."

The *Daicitan* have five named houses in Angoon besides *Daicuhit*.

The painted room partition bearing a design of two beavers, reproduced by Dr. Swanton,¹ was in *Goonhil*. *Toogkwahit*, "Front, High House," descriptive of its location, is the fifth-named dwelling. The above houses excepting *Yaihl'agehit* are in a row near the center of the modern town.

A separate group of the *Daicitan* is descended from the settlement at Basket Bay. This bay together with Basket and Kook Lakes comprised their only ancient holdings.

The Basket Bay people claim the beaver as their special crest, though the story explaining it is completely different from the swimming beaver of the other *Daicitan*.²

"The people had a beaver for a pet. Every day the beaver disappeared but the people could hear him singing in the woods: 'Never before has such a thing happened to a village. As a legend, I have crumbled a village. As a legend a village I have carried away.'

"No one paid any attention to the beaver who was fashioning a new kind of spear point and a powerful bow and arrow. He planned to kill the house chief.

"One day the spear and bow and arrows were discovered where beaver had hidden them in the woods, and were brought to the chief. While the people were examining them and speculating over who had made them, beaver came in and asked to see the weapons. He drew the powerful bow and sent an arrow through the chief's heart. Beaver then slapped his tail on the ground and disappeared. The whole town turned upside down, and most of the people were killed. Those who survived adopted the new type weapons and took the beaver as their crest to pay for their dead relatives."

In 1902 there were two occupied houses at Basket Bay presided over by a house head known as Basket Bay Chief, who exacted a toll of a dollar each from hunters and fishermen entering his area. When he died the occupants moved to Killisnoo and Angoon. Four carved beaver corner posts supported the roof of one of the houses. When they were set up a woman slave was ordered to get down into each post hole in turn. At the subsequent potlatch she was given her freedom.

¹ J. R. Swanton, (119: Fig. 106, p. 420). Informants denies that it was in a house in Killisnoo.

² See also Swanton, 1909, p. 227. Here called the Beaver of Killisnoo.

Two house-posts, each a standing beaver in human form, are now in the totem park at Saxman. One beaver holds a spear, the other a bow and arrow. These were carved for a Tongass Tlingit house but are said to belong to a Haida house group, which acquired them through marriage of one of their ancestors to a Basket Bay woman. According to the Angoon members of the clan, the Tongass Tlingit have no right to the Basket Bay Beaver.



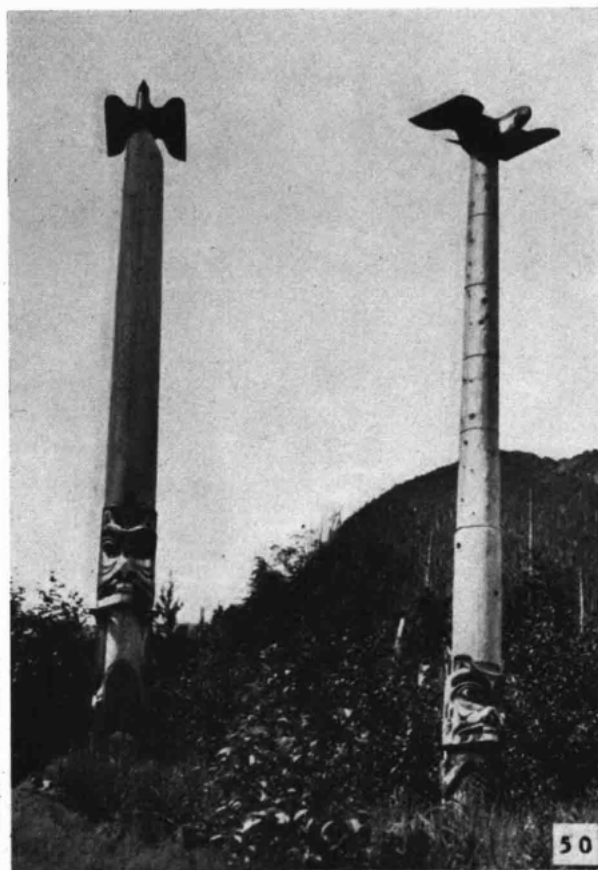
Tlingit totem poles of Beaver and Eagle, at Saxman

The Killisnoo Beaver with a Bow, of the Decitan clan of the Tlingit Ravens, explained by Edward L. Keithahn, (62: 156, 157).

The use of the Beaver as a crest of the Decitan clan of the Tlingit Ravens is traced to an experience with a supernatural beaver. A chief of the Decitan, who are principally from the

vicinity of Angoon, once kept a small beaver which he had captured, as a pet. He was fascinated by its cunning ways and its clean habits and came to giving it more attention than he accorded the members of his own household. On account of this, jealousy arose, and some of the clansmen began abusing the beaver out of spite.

The beaver not only appealed to the chief for protection but demanded that his tormentors be punished. Unsuccessful in thus securing the aid of his master, the beaver prepared to take action himself. Secretly it began composing songs by which it invoked the aid of certain spirits. Then it dived into its pond, whereupon it became a giant beaver in which form it dug great tunnels under all the houses of the whole village. Nobody knew what the beaver was up to, for it always resumed the form of a common beaver whenever it was among the people.



Beaver and Eagle poles, now at Saxman

One day it went into the forest and fashioned a beautiful spear with its teeth. When it was finished the beaver hid the spear in a hollow tree and went back to the village. But a passing hunter, noticing the fresh chips, investigated and found the weapons. He brought it at once to the village and showed it to the chief. Everybody gathered around to see the remarkable craftsmanship, for it was the finest spear they had ever seen.

The chief questioned each man, trying to find who had made it, but each denied having ever seen such a spear. Finally, the beaver spoke up saying, "That is my make!" It sounded

so ridiculous that even the Chief laughed derisively with the rest, whereupon the beaver was enraged.

"You are lying when you say you made that spear," said the chief. At that the beaver grasped the weapon from him, saying, "I will show you that I am strong enough to use it," whereupon it thrust the chief through the heart. Then it slapped its tail against the earth with tremendous power. The village shook as if in a terrific earthquake, then fell apart and disappeared into the beaver's excavations. Not a house in the whole village was saved.

Those who escaped with their lives, knowing the cause of the disaster, took the beaver as their crest. They made a Beaver Hat and since then people who can trace their ancestry to the Decitan clan may have the Beaver insignia on their blankets and carve it on their totem poles. It may always be recognized because of its prominent teeth, its cross-hatched tail, and the magic spear which it holds.