



Ninstints poles

on the little island appears to be about ten miles from the shore.

The Ninstints tribe, so named after their chief, lived on an island shown on the chart as Anthony at the entrance to Houston Stewart Channel. To-day this tribe are few in numbers, and their village is almost a ruin.

The Ninstints, described by J. R. Swanton (97: 105).

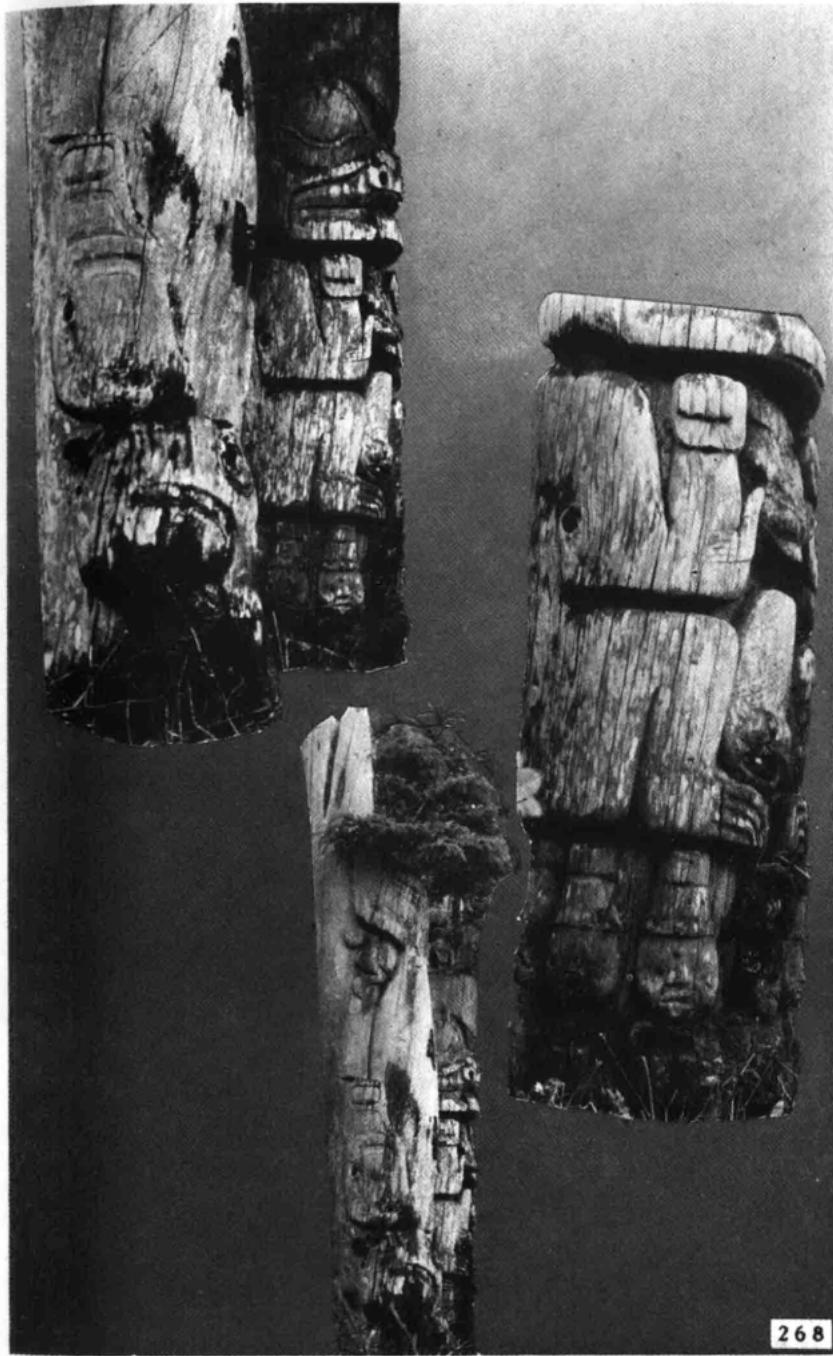
The Ninstints people had considerable racial individuality. They were great fighters and sent expeditions in all directions. Their greatest enemies were the people of Kloo; but they warred with those of Kaisun and Tca'atl on the west coast, with the people of Skidegate and Massett, with the Tlingit, Tsimshian, Bella Bella, and Kwakiutl tribes, as far, at least, as Alert Bay. Families of the other groups were also apt to war in company, except that in the second group the Kloo people seem to have done most of the fighting.

NINSTINTS

The Ninstints tribe becoming extinct, according to James Deans, in "Tales of the Hidery" (36: 64, 65).

Edensaw the chief, who was my informant, told me they [the Ninstints] had comfortable homes on a beautiful tract of land. Then hard luck seems to have followed them, because in 1883, when I was at their village, it was in ruins. Not a living soul of this once powerful tribe was left. First, children ceased to be born into the tribe. Then the few left died. Then one by one the old folks passed away until one old man alone of all the others was left in the village. Then kind folks in the next village took care of him until he was gathered to his fathers. There being no one left to take care of the houses, they soon fell to pieces. Even the tombs are falling and exposing the mummified remains of the dead. Their tall, elaborately carved totem poles are yielding to the inevitable.

Passing through their ruined village one day, I came to a little house about 6 feet square; looking inside I saw two or three coffins. Standing up against one of them was the insignia of the chief of this clan. On inquiry afterward, I found that this was the tomb of the last chief. When he died, there was none left to take his place. As it may be interesting to some to have a description of his insignia of office, I will give it here. First a wooden whale 14 inches in length. On its back was a dorsal fin about the same length, with the usual round hole in it. On the other side was a staff 3 feet in length, let into the fish's belly. As for the Skaggy going out to the little island and catching a whale and bringing it ashore, he was firmly believed in by all the people. The place where they lived



Totems at Ninstints



The Beaver totems of Ninstints

The Ninstints Tribe as now described. The Ninstints tribe of the Haidas at Anthony Island, southeast of Moresby Island at the southern end of the Queen Charlotte Islands. The author visited the site of this long-deserted village in July, 1947, and took photographs of the totem poles still standing.

According to Mrs. Elizabeth Jones of Canoe Pass on the Skidegate Channel, Tim Teit, whom she called "Old Man Teit," was known to belong to the Ninstints tribe, then about to become extinct. Thirty or forty years ago, Teit and Johnny Williams used to go to trap there in the spring



Totems of Ninstints

and stay a month. This spot had been deserted for years. The Ninstints and the Tanu people had been enemies; they used to kill one another.

The first night Teit and Williams camped there, one spring, they heard strange noises and felt uneasy. Teit wanted to move away and not meddle, but there was no wind just then, and their canoes were drawn up far above the tide line. In the middle of the night they heard their boats moving around, but they could do nothing about it. When they got up in the morning, they found Williams' boat floating about loose. They figured it was due to their enemies of former times, who did not want them there. So they pushed their canoes off and paddled away.



Totems of Ninstints

The Ninstints, according to W. H. Russ (66 years old in 1947, of the same group as Mrs. Jones, at Canoe Pass), spoke a different language from the Haidas. "They pronounced way different." They could not be understood. The only ones surviving now may be George Green, of Skidegate, a young fellow, and quite a few of them — a large family, with very tall girls — at Nanaimo, Vancouver Island. Of this the informant was sure, as he had seen these Nanaimo people.

The Ninstints Eagles, according to J. R. Swanton (97: 94).

Tradition says that the Ninstints Eagles lived first at Tlgadan, whence they afterwards scattered, especially along the western coast. Duck-Town (?) (Sgilgi), at the bottom of a wide inlet, seems to have been their chief settlement. In later days, when the families all came together in Ninstints, the Saki-born seem to have moved first. At any rate, their chief was chief of the town. Since that time there are said to have been only four chiefs of the family, but that must certainly be greatly underestimated.

Then follows a full version of Dzilaqons story: the Frog episode, etc. pp. 94, 95.

The Whale-Slave's Totem Pole. The Keel-coonuc or Whale's-Slave totem pole of Ninstints, on the Queen Charlotte Islands, according to James Deans (36: 65, 66).

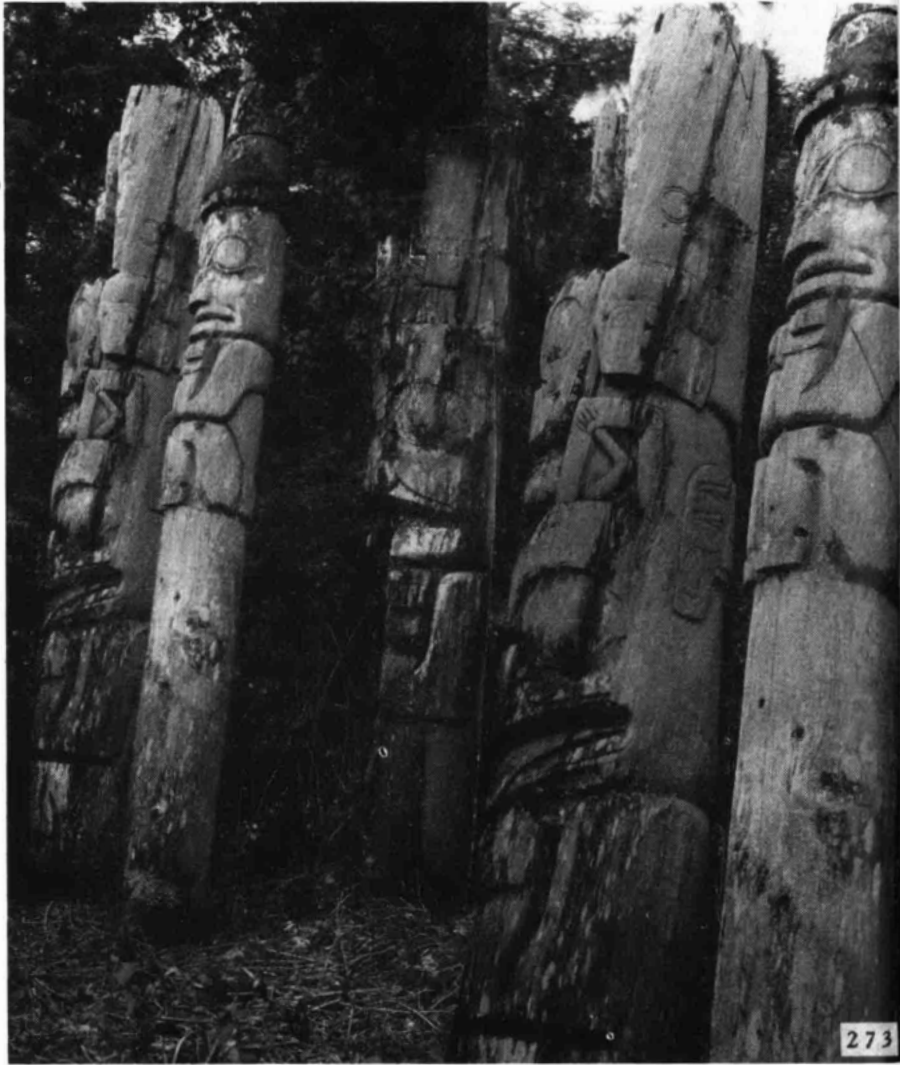
At one end of the division behind the model Hidery village in the Anthropological building of the Columbian Exposition at Chicago were several other models of Indian houses from different parts of British Columbia. In this smaller collection were two Haida houses. These were placed apart from the others, because they were part of Ninstints town, a village on the southern end of Queen Charlotte Islands. The name of one of the houses was nah-heeldans, house of the earthquake, because, it seems, while this house was being built,



Grizzly Bear of Ninstints

there was an earthquake. A man named Quill-ance built it; his wife was named Gawh-nutt. The figures on the totem post are, as follows: First, the lowest, is a sort of fish which was once very abundant in the waters on the Alaskan coasts and near Fort [Port] Simpson in northern British Columbia. The name of this fish was Keel-coonuc or whale's slave, because it seems to have always gone ahead of the whale, to lead it to good feeding grounds. As the principal story connected with it belongs to the Scannah totem, I shall give it here.

Long ago, at the Indian town Kitt-kathla [Tsimshyan] in northern British Columbia, lived a man who by birth was half Kitt-kathla and half Billa-billa, a neighbouring tribe. He always lived at Kitt-kathla. This man's name was Keel-coonuc, and he is said to have been a Scannah in disguise. Walking along shore one day, he espied four men coasting in a canoe. They were hunting and fishing. As soon as Keel-coonuc saw them, he made for the canoe and took possession of it and the men. He then pulled them under the water where he kept them a whole year. During the absence of the men, their friends who had been seeking them everywhere unsuccessfully came at last to the brother of Keel-coonuc and asked him if he ever saw four men who some time ago had gone hunting and fishing in a canoe. He replied that he knew nothing of them, but would ask his brother if he had seen them and would do everything possible to find them. The friends replied they would be glad if he could, for the families of the four men were starving. The house in which the two brothers lived



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Entrance pole at Ninstints

den, a young bear cub (with human features) and on his head a conical hat with three *skils*.

This pole, like the other restorations in the Prince Rupert park, is now covered with an unauthentic coat of gaudy paint.

The Raven with protruding tongue, possibly of Ninstints (Haida), now standing in the municipal park at Prince Rupert; according to Alfred Adams, in 1939.

A large and fine carving, this pole came from the Ninstints tribe of Cape St. James, now almost extinct, whose village was the southernmost of the Haidas and had been deserted for about sixty years. The carvings on it could not be identified, but Alfred Adams thinks that these are connected with the adventures of the supernatural Raven at the beginning of the world. The Raven not only had great creative powers but was also a jester, apt at times to make a fool of himself. Once he went fishing with Kyallo or Tsihaots, the Cormorant, but could not catch any fish, and he pulled his tongue out in jest. That is why the Haida carvers often showed him pulling out his tongue. Another time, while going about with his companion the Butterfly, he broke the Butterfly in two, in a mix-up with the Sea-Lion, and drew its insides out. But he spat on it all and brought back his friend to life. In Sea-Lion town, just to deceive the stupid Sea-Lion, he pretended to eat red-hot stones, and the

had no sides, only a roof, and was full of Scannahs. Amongst them were the four men kept as prisoners. When his brother asked him if he had at any time seen four men hunting and fishing in a canoe, he replied: "Yes, I have them here." So Keel-coonuc went and drove them all outside, saying, "Here are your friends; take them with you and go home." So all left for home, arriving safely in due course, after their initiation into one of the societies belonging to the Scannah crest.

Then follow "the traditions of the Skannah totem and stories" (recorded elsewhere but too long to reproduce here) (36: 66-70).

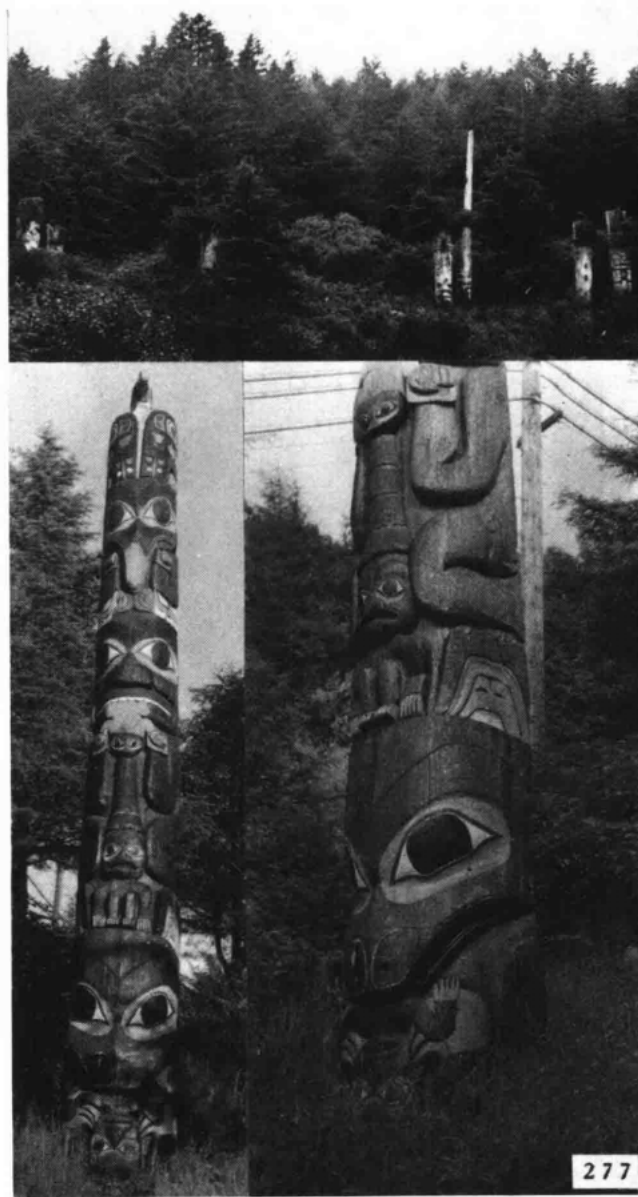
The Anget Totem of Cape St. James (the Ninstints tribe of the Haidas), identified by William Beynon; it now stands in the municipal park at Prince Rupert.

This pole may come from Ninstints, the remotest southern village of the Haidas, whose last known survivors moved to Captain Klue's village, then to Skidegate, about 60 years ago. It belonged to the Eagle phratry in the Anget family.

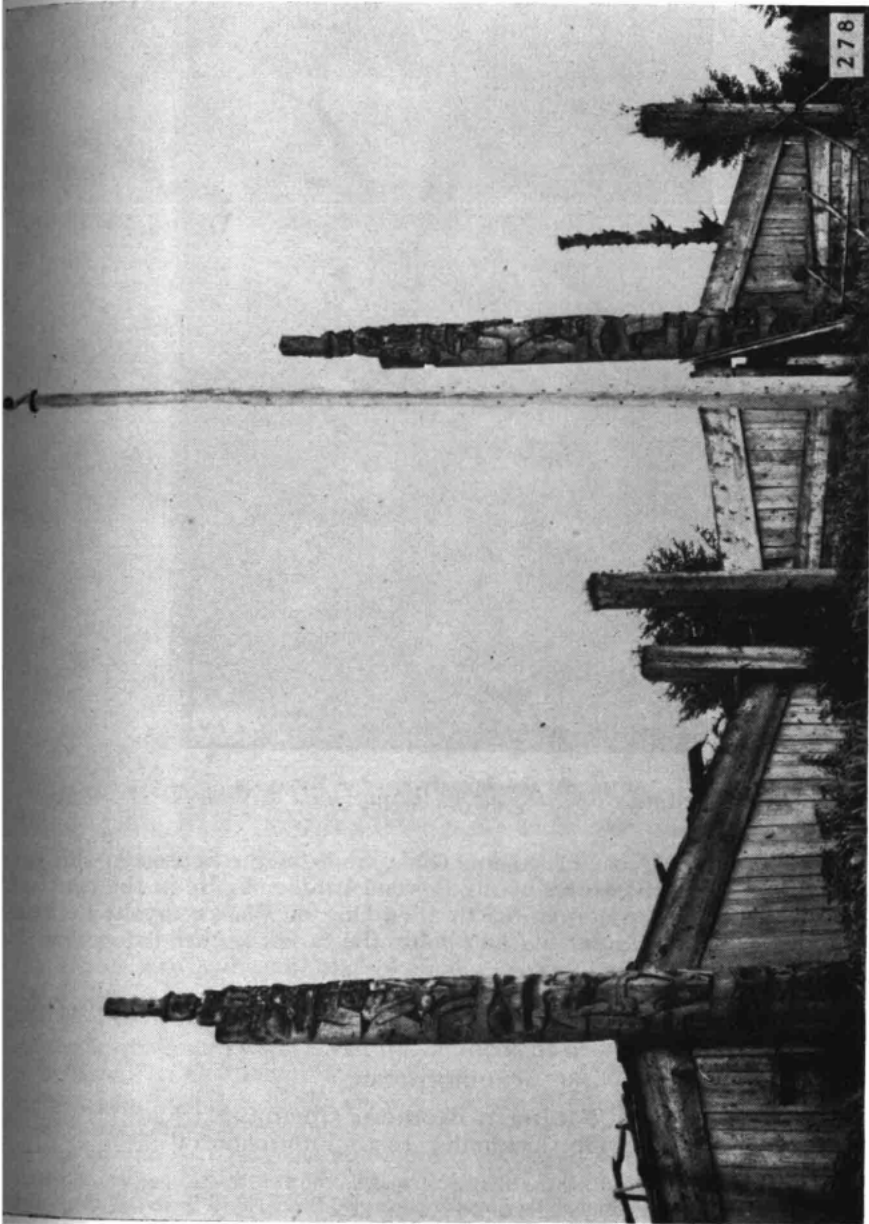
Its figures, from the top down, are: (1) Eagle, a substitute for the original figure that had fallen or had been lost before the restoration; (2) Eagle with beak bent down; (3) Bear with a small frog-like being hanging from its mouth; (4) Grizzly Bear carrying the young woman away to his



(Left) Totem pole of Ninstints at Prince Rupert



The Anget pole of Ninstints at Prince Rupert



Houses and totems of Kung village in Virago Sound



At the old abandoned village of Kyusta,
close to Langara

Sea-Lion (to his loss) tried the same trick. Some of the figures on this pole may refer to such adventures of the Raven. Another figure in the centre of the pole illustrates an episode of the Sea-Dog or Wasko myth; here the Strong-Man of the Haida (Su'san) holds the Sea-Dog, head down, in his arms.

This pole, like the others at Prince Rupert, has been luridly painted with commercial colours.

UNIDENTIFIED

The Killer-Whale Totem in Bremen, Germany (Stadt Museum). No. 43 (full face), and 43b (in profile). Ernst Fuhrmann (49).

A tall and very fine pole of the Skidegate style in the 1880's, showing, (1) the Killer-Whale and dorsal fin; (2) a human face upside down; (3) two Grizzly Bears, at the bottom.

House Posts at the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford, England. Two Haida house posts representing Bear Mother and the Double-Headed Monster.