



LIǵʷILDAǰʷ RESEARCH CENTRE



We are continuing regular newsletter updates to share exciting LiǵʷilDAǰʷ history from the Research Centre. Some of you know these stories but others do not, so it is our pleasure to introduce you to our fourth installment of: **Tales from the Vault.**

The two Mǎǰʷinuǰʷ (Orca) Totems

It may be hard to believe now, but Quathiaski Cove on Quadra Island was once the bustling economic centre of this area. Before Campbell River had much more than a hotel, Quathiaski Cove was home to a post office, general store, police station, school and the Quathiaski Cannery.

The Quathiaski Cannery was the first cannery in the Campbell River area when it was built in 1904 by the Pidcock brothers. It was originally named Pidcock but was renamed Quathiaski by W.E. Anderson and W.H. Malkin when they bought it in 1908. The cannery then burnt down in 1909 and was rebuilt the following year.

When it came time for Anderson to sell the cannery in 1938, he asked his four top fishermen – Billy Assu, Harry Assu, Johnny Dick and Jimmy Hovel, all LiǵʷilDAǰʷ fishermen – to choose the next cannery owner from among three competing bids. The fishermen chose BC Packers as their new employer.



The mǎǰʷinuǰʷ (orca) totem pictured here stood in the LiǵʷilDAǰʷ village of Cape Mudge until it was moved to the BC Packers store. It eventually fell down and was taken back to the village.

First mǎǰʷinuǰʷ totem, at Quathiaski Cove, Quadra Island. No date.

Call 250-287-9460 (ext.3) or email: LRC@wewaikaitreaty.com to reach us at 664 Seahawk Drive.
8:30am - 4:30pm, Monday – Friday.

In early 1949, the Courier newspaper wrote that the totem at Quathiaski was known amongst the local people as the Emblem of Liḡʷiḡdaḡʷ. “It recalls their early history, the story of their creation, and their traditional story of the flood.” It also tells the story of their first ancestor, Wekai.

The pole is “topped by an eagle. This represents the eagle that one time dropped from the skies and upon touching the ground removed the clothes of the bird and emerged as a man.” He was known as Wekai, the first ancestor to Liḡʷiḡdaḡʷ peoples.

“Later on, Wekai took a wife and became father to a boy known as Lalakutze. When he became a man he once became very sick. Then while settled on the beach of a village called Ṭəka, a huge blackfish [mʰaḡʰinuḡʰ] swam close to the shore and opening his mouth close to Lalakutze, threw up a spring salmon.

The sick man got right up and took the fish, cooked it and ate it and became better immediately.”

Because of this Wekai took the blackfish [mʰaḡʰinuḡʰ] as the second figure on the crest.

“Once when Lalakutze was going around the mountain at the village of Ṭəka he saw a bird called huxʰhukʰ (cannibal bird). This bird is the next on the crest. It is remarkable for its strength and powerful jaw.” The man at the bottom of the crest is Wekai. The grizzly bear was brought to Wekai “by his son and it was also used as a weapon by him.”



First mʰaḡʰinuḡʰ totem at Cape Mudge, 1921 Photo Courtesy of Museum at Campbell River



Both totem poles visible at Cape Mudge



Assu to Quocksister pole at Campbell River

This second m'aḥ?inuḥ^w (orca) totem, shown in the pictures above was carved by Johnny Klakwatsi of Salmon River, and originally stood outside Billy Assu's house in Cape Mudge.

In 1915, Billy gifted the pole to the Quocksister family of Campbell River in honour of his daughter Susan's marriage to John Quocksister. It displays family crests including an Eagle, Killer Whale, hux^whuk^w (cannibal bird) and a Beaver.

It stood proudly in the center of the Wei Wai Kum community at Campbell River until 1933 when it was sold to the Calgary Zoological Society for \$400. In 1979 a request was made for its return to the community and in 1983 it was repatriated and now lies outside the Museum at Cape Mudge to return to the earth, thereby completing its life cycle.



*Getting a new coat of paint in
Calgary, 1958*



*Fallen
Totem at
Cape
Mudge
Museum
- Photo
from
Pauline
Bryant*

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