

October 26, 2016

Notes on Audio files: Saanich Lands 100a and 100b

Found audio CD at 2905 Sasu Rd. on Tsawout Reserve on Central Saanich on October 25, 2016.

“SXIÁM, history WSÁNEC Elder recordings w/ Tim Montler” is written on the CD.

Two audio clips, *SaanichLands 100a* and *SaanichLands 100b* are a three way interview with Tim Montler (T.M.), Vi Williams (V.W.) from Pauquachin First Nation and Elsie Claxton (E.C.) from Tsawout First Nation (originally from Tsartlip First Nation). At the end of *SaanichLands 100b*, E.C. mentions her youngest grandson Daniel whom she was raising and was teaching SENCOTEN to, who was born in 1975. So, although the CD was made in 1991, it is assumed the interview is in the late 1970s.

Elsie Claxton was regarded as the oldest surviving and most fluent SENCOTEN speaker from the Saanich Tribes at the time of the interview. It is unknown how old she was as the Indian agents assigned a birthdate when they met her and she was already a girl – maybe between 5 and 10 years of age. So, most family members believe she was born around the year 1900, give or take a few years.

Tim Montler is a professor of North Texas University who has been coming to record SENCOTEN language in the Saanich Tribes for over 40 years.

There are a few notes of explanation to help understand some of the comments made:

- Generally, there was little inter-marriage between tribal groups of different languages until the late-1800s; this implies the population base of each group was sufficiently large enough for this before the onset of smallpox (1862/63) where it is assumed almost 60-70% of the population died)
- Vi Williams speaks SENCOTEN but less fluently than Elsie Claxton and she acts as an interpreter for Elsie; although sometimes both women speak SENCOTEN together without offering an interpretation
- There are both Hul’quimi’num people from Malahat and SENCOTEN people (Malahat represents the southern boundary of Hul’quimi’num as well as the northern boundary of SENCOTEN on the west side of Saanich Inlet)
- The transcribed interview is by Fiona XEIXÁITEN (original SENCOTEN spelling of Claxton) MacRaid and is an informal transcription, doesn’t conform to transcriber’s professional standards and they are only provided as a guide to the audio files

The Interview: Saanich Lands 100a

“Saanich people were very separate from Hul’quimi’num. Each group did not know how to speak the other language. This only changed when marriages started between the two groups, like now.”
(assumption that the interview takes place in the 1970s).

“You can’t just go and take a land because you wanted that land.”

“It had to become yours because it was your grandfather’s or great grandfather’s. It had to be your ancestor before you that lived in that land. And you have to bring your great grandfather or [indiscernible] out [there] because you’re in his land.”

“Everybody’s just mixed up now.”

(Vi speaking for Elsie) “When she sees people, she doesn’t even know who they are, and they don’t know who she is. They don’t know each other because they’re from someplace else.”

[indiscernible]...That’s why it’s called...

“The Indians a long time ago used to look for a good place to live, where they can put their canoe up. And they looked all over and had to come back to east Saanich to...see that it was a good place to live.”

The Interview: Saanich Lands 100b

“There was no Hul’quimi’num here [referring to Saanich territory). A lot of those islands are owned by east Saanich...Saturna...Pender Island...[indiscernible]...[indiscernible]...James Island wharf.”

“They had these, um, [indiscernible]...”

Tim Montler: “Cedar plank trampolines/”

“Yes, and it was made out of cedar, and they used to let the young people, the [girls?] used to use that when they jump around like a trampoline, and they had a song for that but she can’t remember. It belonged to the west Saanich.”

Tim Montler: “James Island?”

“Yes, and Sidney Island and James IslandPoint and another one is...[indiscernible]Bay. That’s the end of that.”

Tim Montler: “Are they the ones that built that?”

“Yes, their families.”

(Vi to Tim) “Ask where her mother came from. She got lots of relatives over there [west Saanich], close to her.”

“Her mother had a big land over there, where the Elliots are now, close to the graveyard where their land used to be...[“TSETSUMKEN” which is a name, meaning a mountain of the Malahat, who was a grandson of an ancient couple who lived in Todd Inlet at the time of the tragic Haida raids around 1600]. Her mother’s father was TSETSUMKEN [this meaning his Indian name given to him was that, as an ownership of that original person’s history].”

“Her mother’s mother came from Duncan. She got married in west Saanich but she never spoke Hul’quimi’num. She spoke Saanich. She had to, I guess.”

“Salt Spring Island belongs to Saanich. It’s just a little place now [meaning, the Reserve lands in Fulford Harbour], not very big. ..All belong to Saanich...It was my father’s land because he bought that land.”

“And over here where she’s at now [meaning Tsawout Reserve lands in Central Saanich) it came from her ancestors, the ones she was naming.”

“Oh, I was going to tell about Pauquachin, all those Pauquachins. Our people came from across Mill Bay and they settled down there. Everyone except Mr. Thom and, um, with an Aboriginal person, who is still alive yet. All the rest came from Mill Bay.”

Time Montler: “SENCOTEN?”

“No, Hul’quimi’num, but the real Cole Bay’s are hardly any more now. Everybody, even my ancestors, came from there too. So nobody really belongs to Cole Bay. Nobody. They can’t say they came here before everybody else.”

(Vi and Elsie speak for a time in SENCOTEN and Vi says in English “Yes, he’s buried over there” and “I’m not going to say too much about it”)

Elsie (in English): “It’s two o’clock already. Another five minutes.”

“What about Pat Bay?”

“A lot of people lived in Pat Bay. They always got attacked from the other tribes from the north. And some of the people went over to Lummi from Pat Bay. That’s why they have the same language as us, Saanich.”

Tim Montler: “Same as [Malahat]?”

“Yes, the same as Malahat. A little different. The language wasn’t mixed up like how it is now. It was always that a certain tribe had his own language. Well, Saanich had their own but it wasn’t just mixed up now, like nowadays.”

“Now it’s just talk, English talk now. Before it wasn’t like that. That’s why we’re forgetting a whole lot of our language.”

Elsie (in English): “They talk English. They have forgot already.”

Vi: "She says...and acting like white people."

Elsie (in English): ...my sons and grandsons...they are all English. None of my grandkids understand...Daniel...[indiscernible].. "

Vi: "It's going to get lost."

"It's true what I said. The Cowichans have a different language."

Tim Montler: "Lekwungen?"

"It's way different. I don't understand, just a little....Lummi, she can understand Lummi because it's the same as Saanich."