REVENGE OF THE PEBBLE TOWN PEOPLE:

A Raid on the Tlingit As Told by Richard of the Middle-gîtî'ns to John R. Swanton

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RECONSTRUCTION

Qandawas was going to make a potlatch in Masset. She owned ten slaves, and she had eight storehouses[1] in the Kaigani country,[2] and she owned a copper worth ten young slaves. She intended to sell it for that price in the Tsimshian country. They offered her nine slaves and an eight-fathom canoe. She said she would not part with her copper because there were not ten slaves. So Qandawas returned to Raven Creek.[3] Later, as she was sailing north to House Point[4] with a south wind, a squall drove the canoe into the Kaigani country. There some Tlingit, who were gathering seaweed, invited Qandawas and her crew ashore. After these Tlingit had fed everyone, they killed them all.[5]

Thinking of this while we were growing up,
we grew up only to war with the Tlingit.[6]

[1] "Many of the chiefs had houses, concealed in the woods in various places, in which to cache their valuables." John R. Swanton, *Haida Texts and Myths*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 29 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905, reprinted Brighton, MI: Native American Book Publishers, 1991) 399, note 6.

[2] "Kaigani country," Swanton tells us, means "strait-country." This is a confusing designation; elsewhere he says that "Kaigani" was the name of a village (an abandoned village by this name is located near Cape Muzon on Dall Island, Alaska), and linguists have since decided Kaigani may be translated as "Crabapple Town." It is far simpler to think of "Kaigani country" as that portion of the southernmost tip of Southeastern Alaska more or less controlled by the Kaigani or Alaska Haida.

[3] Also known as Raven River. Today it is the Oeanda River.

[4] This long-abandoned town on the tip of Rose Spit was known variously as Point Town and Nai-kun.

[5] The six lines following Gandawas's death have been deleted.

[6] "The Haida sentence conveys the idea that they caused themselves to grow up for no other purpose than to make this war upon the Tlingit." Swanton, *Texts and Myths*, 370, note 4 [here 99, note 2].

In the very middle of winter we began to drink medicine;
and from Kitgoro[7]
the black-cod fishery, we went to war in two canoes.

That night we camped at Tlell,[8] the next at Nai-kun,[9]
in the morning we crossed over to the Straits Country.

And while it was yet daylight we saw rocks along the shore.
We waited for night. And when it came we landed inside the kelp.
In the early light we hid our canoes.
Then we drank four buckets of saltwater.
We were thirsty and ran to freshwater,
we drank it from spruce-bark pails.
And then we ran to the sea, our bowels steaming.[10]
That was when our lookout saw four Tlingit going by in a canoe.
When evening arrived[11]
we went looking for the people we knew lived in the inlet.
We found their smoke,
and before daybreak we found their camp,
four houses above a long stretch of steep shore.

Nearby we beached our canoes,
then Ankusta whipped our souls as a shaman must,[12]
then two men sought a closer look at the houses
but a big dog barking scared them away,
so Ankusta performed again:
he pretended to tie the dog's mouth shut,
and he told us,

"Now, friends, go look at the houses again.
Now, that dog will see you but he'll not bark."

[7] Kitgoro (Qa̱'itgaogao) was a fishcamp in an inlet of the same name on the westernmost corner of Moresby Island; Qa̱'itgaogao has been translated as "Inlet-from-which-the-trees-have-been-swept-away."

[8] In the original their camp was at Kwaitg.A'NL, a "small stream 2 miles north of Telel," according to Swanton. This was probably Geikie Creek. Since this creek does not appear on most maps, I have chosen to relocate the campsite to Tlell, a Haida word meaning — in one translation — "Land of Plenty."

[9] The Haida name for Rose Spit; also a village. See note 4 above.

[10] "One of the purificatory war regulations was to drink a great deal of salt water and then take fresh water after it, when the whole would be ejected." Swanton, *Texts and Myths*, 370, note 8 [99, note 6].

[11] Several lines inessential to the storyline were deleted at this point.

[12] In Swanton's text Ankusta (A'nkustA) is not identified as a shaman, but he notes that "each war party was provided with one." Swanton, *Texts and Myths*, 370, note 10 [99, note 8].

Three of us went this time.
Only a mat hung over the doorway,
so I lay there listening to the snoring,
then I tied my knife to my hand and entered,
and I found by feeling
that there were only women asleep there.

We returned to our waiting clansmen[13] and I said,

"Chiefs that I have for elder brothers
strengthen yourselves!"

Then we formed groups to enter the houses.

Huk[14]

we called to ourselves.

Huk.

Abalone[15] went ahead
and his younger brother followed me,
but when it came time to run in I looked back.
Instead of following, my crew were waiting,
preparing to shoot —
so I returned to the canoe in disgust,
and when they asked why, we almost quarreled.

We started off
and when we found a place to land among the driftwood
Ganai's[16] canoe followed us in.
He called out,

"Come, friends, light a fire,
I've got sockeye, they'll be good."[17]

[13] In the original Richard refers to "our people," but as this raid was very much a family or clan affair, "clansman" not only clarifies the sometimes confusing references to "elder brothers" and "those born with me" (see note 21 below), but it also reminds us that this raid belongs to a social order not unlike those recorded in Icelanic sagas and the stories of Sir Walter Scott.

[14] "The war cry raised when rushing upon the enemy, like the Dakota Anhe'." Swanton, *Texts and Myths*, 370, note 11 [100, note 9]. See also note 30 below.

[15] "Xa'nxaogu'tg.as" in the original. "Abalone," a recorded Haida name, is used here to make the text flow more freely.

[16] "Gana'-i" in the original.

[17] This suggests that Ganai and his crew have found a stream and spawning sockeye, which can hardly be possible: the men set out "in the very middle of winter" to revenge Qandawas's murder. Sockeye spawn in the summer and fall.

But I scolded Ganai for wanting to break our fast,[18]
so they left us as my crew argued whether to stay or follow.
And I said,

"My father-in-law is a chief.
If those who've been in our company kill some of the Tlingit,
and he receives nothing, we will feel sorry —
let's go down the inlet after them."

Paddle after.

Paddle after.

My brother may find people to kill.

And there they were around the point — [19]
Tlingit in a big canoe,
men standing in lines down the middle,
holding their rifles high.
There were a great number of guns in that canoe.

Huk.

HUK,

I called out to my men.

Let's kill people.

Seeing they were outnumbered
the Tlingit began fleeing, still they shot at us twice.
Then something struck me on the head,
and I fell. When I came to myself,
I was in the bilge, and I stayed there
in the bloody water until I grew stronger.[20]

Then I tied my knife to my hand,
the men told me my younger brother[21] was dead,
Beloved was hanging over the water,
then I told my men not to let him slip overboard.

[18] "Because they had not yet met an enemy or taken a slave, and therefore had no right to break the fast regulations." Swanton, *Texts and Myths*, 370, note 12 [100, note 10].

[19] This line takes the place of two relatively confusing sentences (we do not know to whom the pronouns refer).

[20] This line and the preceding nine elaborate details found in Swanton's seven lines.

[21] "G.A'NX.oat" in the original. Richard's order that the body be watched implies a closer relationship than "brother" or clansman. "Beloved" was a relatively common Haida nickname.

Now we were closing in on the Tlingit,
they beat their paddles against their canoe,
shouting,

A'lala a'lala

until one of my men stood up and shot their steersman.
As he fell away into the water
We, too, started shouting,

A'lala a'lala.

They shot at us and two of their bullets
went through the skin of my head.
Ankusta shot the one who was trying to steer, and that man
fell into the bailing place face first.[22]

A'lala a'lala

we sang, rapping the edges of our canoe.

A'lala a'lala

We mocked them, and when Ankusta[23] shot again
another Tlingit cried out.
And though the riflemen stood there in lines
between the paddlers,
and though it was a large canoe
and the number in it beyond counting,
they waved us away and called for a truce.[24]

The Tlingit sat down,
their rifle barrels pointed skyward,
then Ganai moved his canoe in close
and a man stood up and pointed his rifle.
One of my brother's crewmen speared the man
with a bone spear with a short handle,
and that man sat down quickly enough,

[22] "Bailing place" is the narrator's term. Earlier, when Richard is shot, he says that he "came to lying in the canoe," which I changed to "bilge," as he would have fallen into the bottom of the canoe or bilge. The "bailing place" is exactly that, a rectangular area slightly deeper than the inside skin of the bottom of the canoe.

[23] "SkA'ngwai's father" in the original, but who was he? To make the action more dramatic I reintroduced Ankusta, the shaman. This stanza and the following six dramatize the action, using Richard's language wherever possible.

[24] "Bade us cease shooting" in the original.

trying to pull out the spear,
but it was entangled with his guts, and when the spear
came free, his guts spilled out on his knees.
When he tried to push the spear back in
one of our spearmen jumped in the canoe and cut his throat.[25]

Now it was our turn.
I jumped into their stern,
everyone had long knives. I fell into the stern.
And someone stabbed at me. He hit me on the shoulder
and my insides seized up,
but I stabbed him in the side
and I felt his insides splash on my legs.
Another came at me and I struck him in his guts.
When I struck him again he died.

Another man came at me.
I dodged and struck and he went pale.
I told the man behind me to kill him.
An unarmed youth in the bow held up his arms.
I picked him up and threw him into the canoe.

Next the famous Yan came at me,
I had heard of his powers —
people were afraid to pass before his town,
he was too strong,
but when I knifed him, I left a slash down his back,
then he went into my canoe willingly.
No one believed it.
The famous Yan had become a slave.

Then the Tlingit saw their leader gone and heaved a sigh,
but they were strong and proud Wolves,[26]
so they fought on.
Too bad their luck had fled.

[25] "Someone in Gana'-i's canoe jumped in to him" in the original.

[26] These four lines form a transition, the necessity of which is explained in note 27. If, as I assume, the raid was made against the people of Tongas (a Tlingit village on Tongass Island near the mouth of Portland Canal), then the people were Wolves.

In the stern our men were pulling in the slaves.[27]
There was one woman we did not take,
she'd been shot in the leg, and there was one
who acted crazy, but when I was about to stab him,
the man held his hands out, so I tied them
behind his back, then I tied his legs together.

The property was captured at once.
Ganai's canoe had taken ten heads,
we had five; there were only nine slaves.

Then we began paddling,[28]
and the warriors sang their songs, but mine were sad;
two of my younger brothers were dead
and I sang for them,

There is no place where people do not die.
I do not know where my brother is.
If only I knew where to find the trail of the dead. [29]

When we were almost out of the inlet
someone shouted,

Look, there — [30]
the Tlingit are pursuing us.

Full canoes were behind us.
The canoes were close together.

We were brave in our canoe,
but the people in Ganai's canoe
started to paddle away from us. I stood up
and said,

[27] Almost a page of details of the battle precede this line. As none of it adds to the drama of the encounter, or to our knowledge of the men involved, I have deleted this material, which includes references to "so-and-so's grandfather" and "a certain one."

[28] This line replaces details of a wrangle between Ganai's and Richard's crews and a textual interpolation concerning their killing a whale and selling the oil at Port Simpson.

[29] Since Richard does not give us the text of the song(s) he sang, very Haida-like, I have borrowed from the Tlingit. The first line of this song is from a Tlingit song entitled "Song on the Death of an Uncle"; the second line is from the same piece, with "brother" replacing "uncle"; and the concluding line is adapted from a Haida mourning song. See *The Unwritten Song*, vol. 2, edited and with an introduction by Willard R. Trask (New York: Macmillan, c1968), 215-16.

[30] *Ix.iâ'+i* in the original. According to Swanton, it is "an exclamation indicating extreme terror." A similar Haida expression is *ha'maya*, which Swanton defines as "a very strong expression" and translates as "horrors!" See "The Haida Indian Language," in *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, Franz Boas, ed. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), 266.

Do not let anyone tell a bad story about us.
We have avenged the murder of Gandawas
and our friends. That is why they will kill us.
Before they destroy us,
we will destroy a whole canoe-load of them.

No one listened.
Ganai was fleeing.
My crew paddled away in fright,
singing a fleeing song,

Waho-o-o he-ooo waho-o-o he-o-o-o.[31]

After we had paddled away for a while in fright,

I looked back.
Instead of my seeing Tlingit I saw nothing
but seagulls sitting on top of driftwood.

Soon Ganai found a creek
where there were many humpbacks.
There they roasted humpbacks for us. We drank some whisky
and after we sent food through the fire
to those who had been unable to escape,
we ate and fed our slaves.[32]
I tied cedar bark round the arm of the man that they shot.
And the one shot in the head also returned to life.
He told us he would not die for some time yet.

Then we went away to Cape Chacon
and by evening we could see[33]
North Island and then Red Bushes Point.
While we were coasting along together
some one ahead of us shouted:

What warriors are those?

[31] "He sang a fleeing song: 'Waho-o-o he-ooo waho-o-o he-o- o-o+.'" Swanton explains that the song is "supposed to prevent pursuers from overtaking one." See Swanton, *Texts and Myths*, 410 and 412, note 18.

[32] See note 17 above. Humpback salmon spawn in late summer. The mention of whisky and the fire ceremony were borrowed from "Fights Between the Tsimshian and Haida and Among the Northern Haida," Swanton, *Texts and Myths*, 385.

[33] This line and the next two were added to bridge the abrupt jump from Cape Chacon in Alaska to Masset in the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Then Ankusta shouted:

Those are warriors from Masset,
low-class Eagles of no account.[34]

And they came out from their concealment.
They had new guns and two cartridge boxes apiece.
And when we came round the point,
the Masset people came down in a crowd.
They had a Kaisun man living at Masset
question us.
They gave him the following directions.
"If you recognize them, ask them,
Is it you?"
and if you do not know them ask,
"What warriors are you?"
That was the way in which he questioned us.

One of the Eagles held a gun.
Two cartridge boxes hung from his side.
They said he was a brave man.
He said,

Tell me, Pebble Town People, what did the
Tlingit do to the people of your family in former times?
When the Tlingit formerly beat them everytime why do you do this?
I could do something to you for your foolishness.
You might be shot to pieces.

And, when he aimed his gun, he pointed it at us.
His name was Stawat.

I felt as though I had been struck in the face.
He had pointed a short gun at me.
I seized my long one, and I jumped ashore.
I ran to him.
I struck him at once with the gun.

[34] The encounter and subsequent evening with these Masset people is an uneasy one for the raiders. No reason for this is given, so to underline the touchy mood of both groups, as well as to stress how little the people of the different towns trusted one another, I have chosen to make the Masset Eagles parvenus. And like the people of Skidegate, they could be pirates when so inclined.

I struck him in the neck.
And when he was about to strike me
I got my gun ready for him,

Strike me and I will shoot you.

Two of my friends came ashore behind me
and they struck him with their rifle barrels.
Ankusta[35] said to him,

This is not the first time men of your clan
have acted so brave and made trouble.
Why don't you strike back?

Then someone said,

Stop it. You have struck him more than enough for his talk.

It was late and we were tired.
So the people took us over to the camping place.

Ganai did not trust these low-class Eagles,
so he went around Entry Point.[36]
The Masset people went down to the canoes in a crowd.
And, when they had nearly reached our slaves,
I handed my gun to Ankusta's father.
I then ran down to our canoes.
I made fast my knife in my hand.
I then pushed them away and anchored the canoes outside.

They then began to offer us food.
And we had on our cartridge boxes.
We also kept our guns at our right sides,
and we had our knives hanging down in front.
At the same time we ate.
Then we finished, and they gave us tobacco.

In the evening my Masset clansmen
made me an offer for Yan.
They offered sixty blankets for him,
an unused musket,

[35] Natqa;g.on in the original.
[36] In Swanton's text Richard says, "A part of our people went round the point," which was presumably Entry Point at the mouth of Masset Harbour.

a whole suit of clothes,
two bags of shot,
a big canoe,
and many things of all kinds.
I refused everything.
Yan was mine.

We remained awake that night.
Some of the crew slept ashore.
Very early on the next day
we started for the west coast.
And, when we were ready to go,
Ankusta's father went after some water.
He was gone for a long time.
While he was still away, Ganai's canoe set off.
The wind was in the north.
I then left directions for Ankusta's father.
And we left him.
The Masset people afterward took him in.

And that day, when it was almost evening,
we sailed by the long town of Skidegate.
The Skidegate people came out in a crowd to watch us.[37]
We did not stop.
They stood behind us watching.
We spent that night at Water Hole on Maude Island.
The wounded one in our canoe was still alive.

And we started from there at night.
Then we made a campfire on the inlet above Chaatl.
From there we started very early to Kitgoro.
At that time we sang a war song.

We went into Kitgoro, singing songs of victory,

Hu hu hu hu.

We sang songs of victory for many nights.

Hu hu hu hu.

[37] "The people of Skidegate, when they had an opportunity, were wont to intercept West Coast war parties on their return through the channel and take their slaves away from them." Swanton, *Texts and Myths*, 370, note 16 [103-04, note 14].

COMMENTARY

The original account of this raiding party's foray into Alaska was told to the American ethnologist John R. Swanton by Richard of the Middle-gîtî'ns. It was the winter of 1900-01 and both men were living at Skidegate, Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia. Swanton later published the story as "A Raid on the Tlingit" in *Haida Texts and Myths.*

I have heard it said of this story, and many similar ones, that it makes perfectly good sense as it stands. Perhaps. More likely, the effort to wade through the unexplained allusions, cross-references, repetitions, unusual names, geographical confusion, and (for us) arbitrary use of pronouns has deterred everyone. Only this explains why this story, despite its saga-like qualities, has been ignored for ninety years.

Having grown up near Tongas and Gash, both places that I explored as a boy, I have been intrigued by this story ever since I discovered it in Margaret Bell's library at Naha Bay, the site of another Tlingit village (but one too far north to be considered as the camp Richard and his companions discovered). In the late 1950s Margaret, whose juvenile novels (particularly *The Totem Casts a Shadow* and *Daughter of Wolf House*[1]) are set near the Haida villages on Prince of Wales Island in Alaska, and I talked about methods of exploring early Coastal history. Since then I have experimented with various ways of retelling the myths and stories collected by Swanton and others, but none satisfied me. They didn't sound like much of anything, and their appearance was not quite right.

That was in the 1970s. Recently I began thinking about reconstructing history; that is, taking a fairly complete story and, using details from similar stories, building a more complete structure. It is hardly a new concept. Reconstructions have been a common practice since Homer's time.

"Revenge of the Pebble Town People" is an attempt to reconstruct a few moments of Northwest Coast history. It is now literature, not a story lost in a book that has been out of print for almost a century and that cannot be found in most public libraries. But those who compare my version to Swanton's (pages 142-47) will find that little has been changed, though a deal has been left out and, if anything, it is now more Richard's story than it was in Swanton's account. This

[1] New York: W. Morrow, respectively 1949 and 1957.

may be to our benefit, for in his *New Science* Giambattista Vico tells us that "History cannot be more certain than when he who creates the things also narrates them."[2]

There is another consideration. As the author of *Just East of Sundown*, a history of the Queen Charlotte Islands, and as editor of *In the Wake of the War Canoe*, *Warriors of the North Pacific* and *The Ghostland People*,[3] all of which contain nineteenth-century accounts of life among the Haida, I know how rare it is to find first-hand nineteenth-century Haida accounts. Mostly we find Haida words that have been paraphrased by explorers or churchmen, or stories caught in a limbo beyond our reach. Straight autobiography is rare to non-existent and, as we will soon see, Richard's story may have important autobiographical qualities.

Of Richard of the Middle-gîtî'ns, Swanton had this to say: "The storyteller was an interesting old man who ... had lived a life full of adventure. He belonged to the Middle-gîtî'ns ... a branch of the Pebble-Town Gîtî'ns of the west coast, but, while still a young man, had gone to live with members of his family in Alaska. After that he and his uncle were in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company for a long time, until he finally came back to Skidegate to live." In other words, Richard was probably born and raised in the town of Chaatl, on Chaatl Island at the western entrance to Skidegate Channel, thus only a few miles from Skidegate. Chaatl was not the original Pebble Town, but the people from that town, located near Skidegate, moved to Chaatl some time in the mid-1850s. This date is firm.

Another date is only slightly less firm. In another story, Richard told Swanton that "[w]hile they were still trying to kill one another, when I was yet a boy, there came a great pestilence, and, when the people on the Haida islands were being destroyed, they stopped fighting." The "great pestilence" obviously refers to the smallpox epidemic that swept the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1862-63. If we think of a boy as someone just short of puberty — say eleven or twelve years old — then Richard was probably born about 1850.

If 1850 is the pivotal year, then it is possible that his war stories date to the late 1860s and early 1870s, when Richard was a teenager and a young man. This makes a certain amount of sense, as he does not mention Whites in his story, and we know there were no White

[2] Giambattista Vico, *The New Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968).

[3] Respectively, Victoria: Horsdal & Schubart, 1995; Victoria: Sono Nis, 1981; Victoria: Sono Nis, 1984; Victoria: Sono Nis, 1989.

settlers on the Queen Charlotte Islands, or in the area around Cape Chacon and Tongas, until the late 1870s. However, by 1880 the Church of England at Masset had become an established fact of life, and there were Methodists at Skidegate. About this same time, in Southeastern Alaska American and British entrepreneurs began developing salteries, which were usually near Haida or Tlingit villages.

Beyond these assumptions, there is no way to date Richard's story. Although Port Simpson, which was established near the mouth of the Nass River as Fort Nass in 1831 and moved to the vicinity of present-day Prince Rupert in 1834, is mentioned in the original story, it is clearly part of an interpolation. Skidegate and Masset were busy towns throughout most of the nineteenth century. At some point there was a village in Kitgoro Inlet, but when Dr C.F. Newcombe visited the location in 1901, its name was not remembered and he was told that "long ago" the village had been raided. All the men were killed and the women and children enslaved.

So far as internal evidence is concerned, cartridge boxes, muskets, and spears were contemporaneous on the islands, and the Haida were wearing European clothes by the 1790s. Canoes were in use throughout the nineteenth century and were so popular that by the 1879s they were being sold to tourists at Port Simpson.

Slavery among the Coastal peoples was not made illegal in Alaska until 1880; while slavery had been abolished in the British dominions since 1834, the law was rarely enforced on the Coast. As late as the 1870s able-bodied slaves were selling for 200 to 300 blankets each.

Chronology is an important feature of any reconstruction, for it is one of the yardsticks with which we can measure the historicity of a text. In this case the pieces form a reliable picture, and there is more than a touch of poignancy to this story. Richard was one of the last Haida warriors, perhaps *the* last. There could not have been many men on the Queen Charlotte Islands, where the Haida lost most of their population during the epidemic of 1862-63, who retained the strength and willpower to continue a way of life that was as serious and honourable to them as was the code of chivalry to Sir Galahad.

Once the text's historicity has been established, we can turn to geography. Where was Qandawas murdered? Richard names all of his Queen Charlotte Islands campsites, but his voyage into Alaska is a voyage into the rainshadows, where there are neither echoes nor headlands. It is at this point that I took a limited number of liberties with the text. These, but not my rationale, are explained in the footnotes.

With some assurance — where else would they have gone? — it can be said that the original raiders, knowing how slight the chance of finding a small and undefended Tlingit camp near any of the Haida villages along the shores of Cordova Bay (which separates Dall Island and the west coast of Prince of Wales Island), had no choice but to seek out camps on the east, and predominately Tlingit, coast of Prince of Wales Island. Farther east at Gash, near Cape Fox, and Tongas, near the mouth of Portland Canal, were prominent Tlingit villages. This assumption is further supported by the mention of Cape Chacon.

This cape reaches so far south as to almost touch the British Columbia-Alaska boundary. Haida on their way to visit their kin in Alaska knew it as a landmark, as did Haida traders bound to or from Fort Simpson and the Nass River. Prevailing winds or inclement weather often forced the Haida to use Cape Chacon as a halfway point on their trading voyages. A westerly such as the one Qandawas encountered would not necessarily have driven her canoe into Tlingit territory, but her attempt to get to Cape Chacon might well have taken her to the east coast of Prince of Wales Island. There I believe she and her men were slaughtered. As the Tlingit and Haida were busy traders at Sitka, Port Simpson, and Fort Victoria, it was not long before her family learned of her fate.

Another geographical point mentioned in the original was Port Simpson, but for reasons already mentioned I deleted that portion of Swanton's text. It is worth noting that the Haida had been visiting the post since the 1830s and that this was their window to the Tlingit world. Tongas and Gash were only some twenty-five kilometres north of Port Simpson.

I have not given the linguistic evidence much consideration. Some will think my handling of names, for instance, has been unnecessary. I do not agree. Richard's story is a chronicle: there is no characterization in the story, point of view is never developed, and there is no plot. Perhaps, if we had Swanton's Queen Charlotte Islands papers at hand — as well as someone who could read them, our situation would be different. As this is an initial reconstruction, and one that attempts to add a few more minutes to what we know of the history of the Islands in the 1870s, names are unimportant so long as they are authentic. These are.

Still, linguistic problems worry me, or rather their shadows do. How good was Swanton's Haida, Richard's English? How much re-

writing did they do? Whose fault was it that the warriors started out in two canoes in "the very middle of winter"? This is hardly the time to be crossing Dixon Entrance. Besides, the people would be in their strongly fortified and well-guarded winter villages. But the warriors go, they find a small camp, they find other travellers, and they find salmon spawning. Somebody is at fault here, and it would be satisfying to know who.

The appearance of the text on the page is not as novel as it may seem. Certain influences are obvious: David Jones's *The Anathemata*, Christopher Logue's not always happy adaptations from the *Iliad*, Peter Matthiessen's *Far Tortuga*. But, to give credit where credit is due, I owe an equal debt to Wendy Wickwire who, in her *Write It On Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller*,[4] observed: "I searched for a presentational style to capture the nuance of the oral tradition — the emphasis on certain phrases, intentional repetition, and dramatic rhythms and pauses. I have, therefore, set the stories in lines which mirror as closely as possible Harry's rhythms of speech." And, as I am still learning, Dell Hymes has a good deal to say about oral presentation in his *"In Vain I Tried To Tell You": Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics*.[5]

[4] Penticton: Theytus, 1989.
[5] Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.

ORIGINAL OF "A RAID ON THE TLINGIT"

From John R. Swanton, *Haida Texts and Myths*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 29 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905).

Told by Richard of the Middle-gîtî'ns

Qä'ndawas was going to make a potlatch in Masset. She owned ten slaves. And she had eight storehouses in the Kaigani country.[1] She was going to have [her property] brought over from there.

And she owned a copper plate worth ten slaves. She intended to sell it for that price in the Tsimshian country. They offered her nine slaves and an

[1] The Haida name means literally "Strait-country."

8-fathom canoe. Thereupon she said that she would not part with it because there were not ten slaves. They then returned. And they came to Raven creek.

And, after they had sailed from there to House-point with a south wind, a strong land breeze came upon them (i.e., a west wind). They were then carried away. And it carried them to the Kaigani country, where some Tlingit were gathering seaweed. Then the Tlingit invited them in. And they got off. After they had given them food they killed them.

The slaves saw then that they killed those who were on shore, and the five who had remained to take care of the canoe put up the sails. And, after they had sailed along for a while, they ran upon a reef and capsized there. The canoe, filled with the property, then sank. It was a 10-fathom canoe.

Thinking of this while we were growing up, we grew up to war with the Tlingit.[2] In the very middle of winter we began to drink medicine, and right from Qa-itg.a'og.ao,[3] where we were fishing for black cod, we went to war in two canoes. We camped for the night at Kwaitg.A'nL.[4] On the following night we camped at La-ut-g.A'nL.as.[5] On the next day we crossed.

And, while it was still yet daylight, we came in sight of the rocks along shore. We then waited for night. And, when evening came, we went in to land. At daylight we pulled up the canoes. Then we drank there four buckets of salt water. We were thirsty and ran to the fresh water, and we drank fresh water out of spruce bark sewed together and ran to the sea.[6]

And, keeping a sharp lookout unobserved by them we saw four people going along in a canoe. And, after they were gone, we drew up our canoes again. There I smoked, after which I was dying of thirst. They did not think it well to put fresh water on me then,[7] and they put sea water on me.

After that we went to look for people. We knew that people lived there. Then we saw smoke far up the inlet. And when evening came we started thither. Just before daybreak the canoes came in front of it. There were four houses there. Below was a long stretch of steep shore.

And, when we got off, A'nkusta[8] whipped the peoples' souls. He then told us to go up to look at the houses. And two persons went to look. Just as they got there a big dog barked at them. And when they came back A'nkusta performed again. He then pretended to tie fast the dogs mouth. And he said: "Now, friends, go to look at the houses again. Now although he sees you, he will not bark." I then went with two others to look. Only a mat hung in the doorway. I lay down in the doorway. They were snoring in

[2] The Haida sentence conveys the idea that they caused themselves to grow up for no other purpose than to make this war upon the Tlingit.

[3] A camping place about halfway between Te!ā'ƛand Kaisun.

[4] A stream 2 miles north of Telel.

[5] Another creek. I do not know the location.

[6] One of the purificatory war regulations was to drink a great deal of salt water and then take fresh water after it, when the whole would be ejected. The same thing was done at other times.

[7] That is, they thought that the use of sea water was more in conformity with the regulations.

[8] The shaman. Each war party was provided with one.

the house. And, having fastened my knife upon my hand, I entered. I found by feeling that there were only women there.

And after we had come to where our people were sitting, I said: "Chiefs that I have for elder brothers, strengthen yourselves." They then divided to enter the house. And they said: "Huk" ("Go on").[9] I let Xa'nxaogu'tg.as go ahead, and his younger brother followed me.

And, when we were about to run in, I looked toward the beach [and saw] that, instead of coming after us, they were preparing to shoot. We started away then in disgust. We got into the canoe. There they asked us why we came down. And we almost came to a quarrel.

We then started off. And, when we landed among the driftwood, Gana'-i's canoe came up behind us. They were going to land after us among the driftwood. He said then: "Come, friends; light fire here for the sockeyes, which are good to eat." But I scolded them for it,[10] and they got in against their will.

And they remained there still. And, after they had talked for a while about parting company with the other canoe, I said: "My father-in-law is a chief. If those who have been in your company kill people and he receives nothing, you will feel sorry for it. Let us go down the inlet after them."

We then followed them down. After we, had gone along for a while Gana'-i's canoe passed out of the inlet around a point. I then said: "Let us paddle after them. Paddle after. Paddle after. They might meet somebody."

And, when they had nearly rounded another point, they pulled back. Some time after that guns sounded, and they went ashore. Some Tlingit came then in a big canoe. They stood in lines in the middle. There were a great number of guns in this. We then started out to head them off.

As they paddled away from us they shot at us twice, when something struck me in the head and I lost consciousness. I came to myself lying in the canoe. By and by, after I grew stronger and had fastened my knife upon my hand, they said to me: "G.A'nx.oat was killed." I then looked at him. He was hanging over into the water. And I told them not to let him fall in.

The Tlingit then shouted at us. They made a noise on the edges of their canoe: "A'Iala a'lala." Upon this Gā'ala stood up in ours, and he shot the man in the stern, so that he fell into the water. Then we said the same. We, too, said: "A'Iala a'lala." When they shot me two bullets went through the skin of my head.

And, when SKA'ngwai's father stood up and aimed at the one next to the stern, who was paddling and moving his head as he did so, and shot him, he also fell upon his face in the bailing place. We then again said the same thing. We rapped on the edges of our canoe, saying at the same time: "A'Iala." And, when he shot again, another cried out in it. They stood in lines in the middle of the canoe. Others paddled at the sides. They then bade us cease shooting. They motioned us away with their hands. We did then accordingly. The canoe was so large that the people in it could not be counted.

[9] The war cry raised when rushing upon the enemy, like the Dakota Aṅhē'.

[10] Because they had not yet met an enemy or taken a slave, and therefore had no right to break the fast regulations.

Then Gana'-i's canoe went quickly to it. And, when they got close by, a Tlingit in the middle stood up with a gun. He pointed at this one and that one among them. Someone in Gana'-i's canoe speared him with a bone spear that had a short handle. He dropped the gun. The Tlingit then quickly sat down. He pulled out the spear. His intestines came out at the same time. He broke it. And, when he started to shove the spear back into the wound, someone in Gana'-i's canoe jumped in to him, and the people in the canoe stood up.

Then our canoe went thither. And I went to the bow and jumped into it. All had long knives. I fell in the stern. And the one I fell near stabbed me. When he struck shoulder I felt my insides come to together [with pain]. Nevertheless I struck him in the side, and his insides fell upon me. After that another one came toward me from the bow. I stabbed him also in the side. When I struck him again be died.

After that another came at me. When he tried to stab me I dodged him. And when I struck him he grew pale. I told Gā'ala, who came behind me, to kill him. A youth having no knife then made with his hands the motion of surrender to me from the bow. And I picked him up, and I threw him into our canoe. When another came at me I struck him. It grazed him. He went at once into our canoe. He let himself be enslaved. I made a cut down his back. He was a brave man. People did not pass in front of his town. They were afraid of him. When it was reported that he had let himself be enslaved the Tlingit became boneless [with astonishment]. They did not believe it. His name was Yāñ.

After we had fought for a while some one called to me from the middle: "So-and-so's grandfather, they are too much for me." I then ran to him. And they had one of our friends in the bottom of the canoe. A Tlingit whose knife had dropped from him was moving it toward himself with his feet when I struck him.

And while I was striking one after another some one shouted to me from the stern. A Tlingit was lying upon one of our young men. And, pushing away his knife, I cut off his head. After that I saw some one who got in out of our canoe and a Tlingit strike each other at the same time. The Tlingit fell upon his breast. Some time after that he (the Haida) called to me: " So-and-so's grandfather, they have broken my arm." I looked at him. There was a wound in his right arm. They shot him from beneath hides lying near. I did not hear the sound of the gun. Neither did be hear it. Those who were with us instead [of helping us] stood near looking on. They were afraid.

After we had fought for a while, and had killed nearly all, I ran to the bow. The many women, who sat in two places, I pushed apart. I passed between them to the bow. Then the one who had concealed himself in the bow rose. When he was about to strike me, I struck him in the side. At once tried to close with me. I kept striking him. By and by he died.

And in the stern out of Gana'-i's canoe they struck a certain one. He jumped then into the water and struck the edges of the canoe with his knife. They jumped upon the Tlingit and stabbed him.

And after I had gone about in the bow for a while I looked toward the stern. They were already pulling in slaves. And when I went thither I saw a

woman left. She had been shot in one leg. And I did not take her. One that I had struck acted as if he were crazy. Then I jumped into [our canoe], and, when I was about to stab him, he held up his hands to me. I then tied his legs together with a rope, and I tied his hands behind his back.

The property was captured at once. Into Gana'-i's canoe they took ten severed heads. There were only nine slaves. And after SKA'ngwai's father had brought five heads into ours, they found fault. He stopped then. And they took all the property.

In front of the place whence we had been wrangling a whale swam about with its young one. And we shot at the young one. We killed the young one. We took its oil to Port Simpson[11] to trade. There we bought all kinds of stuff. We carried the things away. And, when the canoes were filled with property, some was left behind.

The warriors now got in. And, as they went along, they began to sing war songs. It was hard for me. Two of my younger brothers were killed, and I sang differently from them.

When they were almost out of the inlet some one shouted "Ix.iâ'+Î, they are pursuing us." Full canoes were behind us. The canoes were close together. They were brave ' in Sg.ã'gia's canoe (the narrator's). And the people in Gana'-i's canoe began to paddle away from us. I then stood up and I said: "Chiefs whom I have for fathers-in-law and my sons-in-law's nephews, do not tell a bad story about us. For that we are out here. That is why they will kill us. Before they destroy us we will destroy a whole canoe load of them." After we had paddled away for a while in fright I looked back. Instead of my seeing them they were gone. It was nothing but driftwood, on the top of which sea gulls sat.

Then the people of Gana'-i's canoe started a fire in a creek where there were many humpbacks. There they roasted humpbacks for us. When we were done eating we went away. We also gave food to the Tlingits.

We then went to Cape Charcon. [We crossed, and], while we were going along together, some one ahead of us shouted: "What warriors are those?" Then SKA'ngwai's father said: "These are, Sg.â'gia's warriors." And they came out from their concealment. They had guns with red outsides (i.e., new ones) and two (cartridge boxes apiece. No one could touch me [I was so dirty]. I had on a white shirt, and I wore a blanket doubled). Where they ate humpbacks I tied cedar bark round the arm of the man that they shot. And the one shot in the head also returned to life. He told us he would not die for some time yet.

And, when we came round the point, they came down in a crowd opposite us. They had had a Kaisun man living at Masset question us. They gave him the following directions. "If you recognize them ask them 'Is it you?' and if you do not know them ask 'What warriors are those?'" That was the way in which he questioned us. They then called ashore from our canoe a Masset man who was born in the same place with a certain one [of them].

[11] The Haida word for this place, Î'ngilin, looks as though intended for "English." The principal Hudson Bay Company post of this district was there.

We four stayed then in the canoe. But no one got out of Gana'-i's canoe.

A man of the Sg.adji'goal lâ'nas[12] then stood near them, holding a gun. Two cartridge boxes hung from his side. They said he was a brave man. He said: "Tell me, Pebble-town people,[13] what did the Tlingit do to the people of your family in former times? When the Tlingit formerly beat them every time why do you do this? I could do something to you for your foolishness. You might be shot to pieces." And, when he aimed his gun, he pointed it at us. His name was StAWa't.

I felt as though I had been struck in the face. He had pointed a short gun at me. I seized then a long one, and I jumped off. I ran to him. I struck him at once with the gun. I struck him in the neck. And when he was about to strike me I got my gun ready for him. "Now, if you strike me, I will shoot you." Two of my friends who were ashore then struck him with their guns. And Natqâ'g.oñ said to him: "This is not the first time [men of his family have done such things], and they are also brave. Why don't you strike back?"

Then some one said to us: "Cease doing it to him. You have struck him more than enough for his talk." We then stopped, and they took us over to the camping place. A part of our people went round the point. Then GustAMA'lk invited us. And there they pulled in the two canoes. There were a great number there of my father's nephews, born in the same town with me. They set us then in a line.

And, after he had begun to give us food, the Masset people went down to the canoes in a crowd. And, when they had nearly reached our slaves, I handed my gun to SKA'ngwai's father. I then ran down. I made fast my knife in my hand. I then pushed them away and anchored the canoes outside.

They then began to give us food. And we had on our cartridge boxes. We also kept our guns at our right sides, and we had our knives hanging down in front. At the same time we ate. Then we finished, and they gave us tobacco.

And in the evening those born with me and my father's nephews gave me tobacco. Besides, they made me an offer for one of my slaves. They offered sixty blankets for him, an unused musket, a whole suit of clothes, two bags of shot, a big canoe, many things of all kinds. I refused them.

We remained awake that night. A part of us slept ashore. I was all covered with blood from fighting. Very early on the next day they started in this direction. And when we were ready to go, SKA'ngwai's father went after some water. He was gone for a long time. While be was still away, Gana'-i's canoe started. The wind was in the north. I then left the people directions what to do about him. And we left him.

The Masset people afterward took him in. They landed him at Rose spit. He walked home from there. And on that day, when it was almost evening, we sailed by in front of Skidegate. The Skidegate people came out in a

[12] An Eagle family at Masset. It was formerly regarded as one of low rank, but the head of that family is now chief of Masset.

[13] So called from the name of their old town on Skidegate inlet. This is not a family name, the members of this expedition belonging to the Gîtî'ns.

crowd to us. We did not stop.[14] They stood behind us [watching]. We spent that night at Water-hole.[15] The one in our canoe whom they had wounded was still alive.

And we started off from there at night. Then we made a camp fire on the inlet above Tc!âal. From there we started very early to Qa.itg.a'og.ao. At that time we sang a war song.

We then went into Qa-itg.a'og.ao, singing songs of victory. Hu hu hu hu. When we were going up to the houses we landed the slaves. Some of them carried children. After having fought we sang songs of victory for many nights.

Here is all of this story.

[14] The people of Skidegate, when they had an opportunity, were wont to intercept West Coast war parties on their return through the channel and take their slaves away from them.

[15] A camping place on Maude island.